



## Have a say and help us improve the sport for female players

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England international Emma Vickers (now National Lead for Research at TASS, the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme) is helping Table Tennis England to find out how to optimise female player experience and keep women in the sport long term – and players of all levels have the chance to have their say.

Emma, who has both played for and coached the senior England women's team, is using her expertise, along with the TASS research team, to help a dual project between TASS and Table Tennis England.

The organisations are working together to understand what helps female players between the ages of 18 and 30 to have positive, long-lasting experiences and to stay in the sport, and what leads them to drop out.

The first stage is a survey, which opens today, of female players who are English or have moved to England and are aged 18-30. All players who meet these guidelines – whether they play at social, league or elite levels and whether or not they are still involved in the sport – are urged to complete the survey before the closing date of 23:59 on Thursday February 18th.

[Click here to take part in the survey](#)

The second stage of the research will be to conduct in-depth focus groups with female players at different levels of the game, and the coaches of female players in this age group. These focus groups aim to unpick in more detail some of the outputs from the survey.

Using the data gathered, TASS will provide recommendations for Table Tennis England on how to improve participation and experience for female players in this age group and to help identify different pathways for female players to follow.

Emma Vickers, who studied dual career pathways and transitions of student athletes for her PhD, said: "As a female player who has played for over two decades, this research is really important to me, as I have seen so

many players I have grown up with drop out of the sport.

“At TASS, we conduct research with different sports on topics such as athlete transitions, talent pathways and athlete dual careers.

“It’s really exciting for our team to branch out to a new sport, and look exclusively at the experiences of females, in an important age bracket where we know there are a lot of lifestyle factors that could impact engagement.”

## Who are TASS?

TASS is a Sport England-funded partnership between talented athletes, education institutions and national governing bodies of sport. The organisation has been a support provider to England’s top table tennis players in education for many years.

Over the past few years, TASS has developed a leading research group in the field of athletes’ dual careers, transitions, athlete pathways and experiences. They conduct research for English national governing bodies and leading sport organisations across Europe. This research group is led by Emma Vickers.

Among the leading England table tennis athletes to have been supported by TASS are Tin-Tin Ho, Maria Tsaptsinos and Charlotte Bardsley. Maria was [TASS Star of the Year](#) in 2018.



The England squad and coach Emma Vickers (left) with their silver medals at the Commonwealth Championships in 2019

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