

University Success

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Roehampton University has proved that table tennis can take off in a big way across the country in all our sporting universities.

From humble beginnings, the staff and students have taken to table tennis like a duck to water, and in a short space of time they have shown what a success table tennis can be and how popular the game is.

David Bush, the Sports Development Officer at Roehampton explains how the sport has grown over a short period of time:

"After receiving five table tennis tables from ETTA, Sport Roehampton deployed table tennis activity for the first time to its students. After heavily publicising this new addition to the sports programme at the fresher's fair, Sport Roehampton ran six weeks of taster sessions, immediately engaging with almost 60 students who were keen to participate in regular and structured table tennis sessions. After an AGM for those interested, Sport Roehampton Table-Tennis club was established early in the second term with a variety of sessions across each week for club members to attend and practice, and they also offered a bimonthly club tournament for students to participate in.

Outside of the club structure, Sport Roehampton relocated two of the tables to social areas on campus, one in a common room area and one in the Student Union bar area. The presence of these tables created a huge amount of interest in recreational play, and modified versions of the game such as 'around the world' where more people could participate at one time. With a basic sign-up sheet to loan out paddles and balls, Sport Roehampton registered over 200 users on these tables, a majority of which were regular participants (five or more registrations) in table tennis activity.

Beyond the student use of these tables, we were surprised at the amount of staff interest that had developed about using the tables at lunch, after work and for recreational competitions. This only increased during the summer break where the tables were more regularly free for staff use away from students. This inspired regular staff use, and social competitions in departments and between departments. By the end of the first month Sport Roehampton had unexpectedly engaged with 25 staff members on a regular basis and is currently developing a slightly more structured way of organising the participation.

The final strand of the development of table tennis over what was essentially a six month period, was a strong link that Sport Roehampton holds with a local charity who work with hard-to-reach and disadvantaged youth groups, called Regenerate. After the students term had finished Sport Roehampton loaned a table to the charity to base at its local youth centre on the Alton Estate. This table received a similar amount of attention from community groups involved with Regenerate and it was reported back to us that the charity had held competition evenings and social competitions similar to those taking place on campus, and engaging with another 30 individuals on a regular basis.

Looking forward to the year ahead, the university has now entered a Men's Team into the BUCS table tennis league for 11-12, and has ambitions to source more tables and widen the reach of table-tennis around the university and local community. As well as providing a popular social game which can take place almost anywhere, table-tennis had an established club which is keen to grow quickly and develop as the structure to lead on all other table-tennis activities."

If you feel inspired by the success of table tennis at Roehampton and would like your college or university to get involved with table tennis contact the ETTA for more information.

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