

O2 Touch step-by-step PR guide

INTRODUCTION

This guide has been developed in order to help you gain exposure for your rugby club in the local media, and in doing so aid the recruitment of new players via the O2 Touch programme.

A Regional Press Officer in your region will support your club closely and will be on hand with additional ideas and help should you require it.

The guide aims to make the process of promoting your club in the local media as easy as possible. In order to assist you, we have also provided information within this document, as well as the pack itself, which will help you to:

- create newsworthy stories around O2 Touch and the initiatives at your club
- get your local media onside and involved during the summer
- take an appropriate photo which can be used by print media

You will be provided with other collateral to help you with the activity below including:

- template press release
- O2 Touch and Choose Rugby logos
- central imagery

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

Initial phase - build awareness

Recommended timing: 20 June - 1 July

1. Create a list of local press and broadcast contact details with email addresses and telephone numbers
 - Visit the “contact us” section on your local press websites (both newspapers and radio stations) and record details in spreadsheet for later use. Liaise with RPO to agree on key targets
2. Tailor RFU release and choose/take a relevant photograph
 - Use the template release you have been provided with and fill in the blanks with details of your club, upcoming events and club contact numbers for people wishing to get involved
 - Choose a relevant photo from the pool of ‘north’ or ‘south’ images we have sent you or take a photo of players at your club playing touch rugby (see photo ideas below)
3. Distribute release and relevant photo to local media and follow-up
 - Send amended press release and chosen photo to local media contacts
 - Call media contacts to check that they received the information. Explain you are from the local club and see if they can run a story encouraging people to come down and get involved

Second phase - participatory approach

Ongoing

1. Invite local press, radio and television to a touch rugby session at your club to see the game in action and cover it as a story
2. Offer your club captain up for interview on the day so he/she can encourage people to come down and try touch rugby
3. Liaise with journalist about follow-up article, sound bite or news clip

CREATING NEWS FOR YOUR CLUB – see *WHAT MAKES AN O2 TOUCH RUGBY STORY BELOW*

In order to create additional news about your club after the initial awareness push, here are some ideas for you to continue raising the club's identity during the summer and attract new players:

- 'XXXXXX RFC aims to play at Twickenham'
 - Drum up support for your club by announcing entry into the Twickenham Touch Challenge, which could result in your club playing at Twickenham if you receive a number of Facebook 'likes'

If you are successful in winning the Facebook challenge or tickets to Twickenham, the RFU will support you in driving extra media coverage.

PHOTO IDEAS

A strong photo can be more effective than a news story and be key to securing print coverage. The photo needs to emphasise that touch rugby is for everyone and include at least one club official (chairman, captain etc.), a veteran, men and women players.

It is important that the O2 Touch programme is reference in the photo. If you are able to wear the shirts you have been provided with, and play with the branded touch rugby ball, the programme will be obvious in the photo. Final image should be distributed with a quote saying, "X, Y and Z from XX RFC take part in a game of touch rugby as part of the O2 Touch initiative, which aims to get England playing rugby this summer".

For example the image could be:

- A staged game of touch rugby in front of your clubhouse/post pads with club representatives in branded shirts and playing with branded ball

KEEPING YOUR RPO UPDATED

This guide aims to help you drive media coverage for your club however your RPO should be your first port of call for advice. He/she should be kept updated with your progress and be alerted to any media coverage you secure. Make contact whether you already know your RPO or not.

In the first instance, please contact your RPO to inform them of your plan of action. Depending on which area your club is based in please contact the relevant RPO below:

MIDLANDS	Paul Bolton	paulbolton@rfu.com	07966 102495
NORTH	Tony Simpson	tonysimpson@rfu.com	07764 336708
LONDON & SE	Hugh Godwin	hughgodwin@rfu.com	07968 392688
WEST & SW	Julia Hutton	juliahutton@rfu.com	07971 474557

WHAT MAKES AN O2 TOUCH RUGBY STORY?

Below are a few ideas of what might make your O2 Touch rugby programme/event into a story that would interest the local media. It is not an exhaustive list – simply a collection of 'leads' that might spark recognition of what makes YOUR event special.

There's a tale in every O2 Touch initiative if you look for it! What's yours?

PS. And don't forget the old adage 'one picture is worth a thousand words!' It might be a group shot or a stunning action pic or an image of special people who make your event newsworthy. Pictures are gold dust for the media.

PPS. And there's the video competition with the North v South element you need to consider. A place at Twickenham is on offer, but you need to get the footage uploaded to the Facebook page - <http://www.facebook.com/ChooseRugby> to have a chance.

Do you recognise your club from these story lines? If you do, get writing!

1. O2 Touch has delivered an influx of 10+ numbers turning up for the first time this summer or members have supported the new initiative in significant numbers;
2. A local/regional/national celebrity is getting involved – can be a new or existing club member;
3. A former club member has returned for Touch – back in the game after retiring from XV's, or being injured long-term, or being away for study or work;
4. Do you have a Touch player who has a fascinating/pressurised job the rest of the time - an MP, firefighter, actor, singer, TV presenter, undertaker, miner, oil-rig worker... and playing Touch might be a release from their cares and woes or helps them get fit to do a public service job.
5. Bob met Alice playing Touch and got married! Or Bob and Bob, or Alice and Alice... any union or reunion that shows the social side of the game. There's a husband-and-wife pair of referees at Ealing RFC – doesn't always have to be players, could be coaches, referees, fixture secs...;
6. The lads and ladies of the club were playing Touch in the local park and a local friend/rival club was playing there too – so they got together and made a Touch league or regular fixture.
7. Relatively speaking - any cross generation teams/competition story ie grandfather/father/son or similar, playing Touch together. Can anyone find four generations?!
8. Touch with a difference: fancy dress, night-time/floodlit, unusual venue, handicapping system (non-players get one try start to create balance), maybe a marathon Touch session for charity?
9. A clutch of new members have signed up to play next season having been tempted to the club by the O2 Touch programme and their experience of it?
10. A group of schoolmates or students have got together to play at or return to the club in the O2 programme?

11. A group of parents who normally come because their kids are involved have got together and supported O2 Touch
12. A group of women have become involved and are thinking about launching a women's team
13. New O2 Touch attendees have been drawn to the club by a novel form of recruitment
14. New faces have been wooed into staying/joining by innovative marketing ideas eg free drink, free supper etc.
15. It is possible to quantify what a significant revenue bonus O2 Touch has been to the club.
16. A well-known player from another sport has taken time out for a spot of recreation and enjoyed his first taste of Touch Rugby.

RFU Regional Press Officers

They can help you get your message to the right people. Get in touch.

Julia Hutton | RFU South West Press Officer | Mobile 07971 474557 | email JuliaHutton@rfu.com | www.rfu.com

Hugh Godwin | RFU Regional Press Officer - London & South East | Mobile 07968 392688 | hughgodwin@rfu.com | rfu.com

Tony Simpson | RFU Regional Press Officer - North | Mobile 07764 336708 | tonysimpson@rfu.com | rfu.com

Paul Bolton | RFU Regional Press Officer - Midlands | Mobile 07966 102495 | paul bolton [member@bolton80.freemove.co.uk] | rfu.com

If you require additional help or information on gaining PR coverage for your club please contact Freddie Sassoon at Four Communications on freddie.sassoon@fourcommunications.com