

Olympic Handball Ireland
Strategy '22–'37

The Future of
Olympic Handball
in Ireland

Olympic Handball Futures



What Olympic Handball offers

Our Purpose

Olympic Handball Futures 2022-2037



What Does Our Community Say?

We engaged leading brand agency, Image Now, to review and develop a new strategy for Olympic Handball. As part of this work, we gathered opinions and learnings from numerous people across the sport – including teachers, NGBs, players and managing bodies from neighbouring countries.

We know that Olympic Handball is a **well-loved, inclusive and accessible sport**, that appeals to, and can support a huge variety of people and their different reasons for getting involved in sport.

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“It’s a game that can be played anywhere, by anyone – that’s what builds communities”

“We see that IOHA have new energy around them!”

“Fun, inclusive, dynamic, community, successful, respectful, team spirit.”

“I like seeing kids succeed in this sport when they might not be as successful in other sports”

“The game can be adapted depending on the team skills, or team numbers”

“OH is one of the most inclusive sports there is; simple to teach & learn and everybody can play”

“Everyone has a chance for success – everyone can score a goal”

“OH teachers love the sport because it’s co-ed”

“The sport seems to thrive in small pockets of places where committed individuals or small groups help”

“Very inclusive – no matter your background, size, ability etc.”

Ireland is a diverse community

Our diverse community has many different faces and needs. Everyone has different reasons for getting into – or back into – sport at every level.

Olympic Handball is Ireland's most accessible, inclusive and diverse team sport, played at different ability levels from grassroots to Olympic standard.

We exist to create a place for everyone.

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The changing face of sport in Ireland.. .



Women in Sport

Women have been under-represented in sport, but this is changing. In the UK, the Lionesses’ win at the Euros championship triggered a wave of interest in the game. Commonwealth successes over the summer sparked interest from women and young girls at grassroots level to feel empowered about getting into sport.

Now is the time to capitalise on this positive engagement and interest. Olympic Handball is inclusive and accessible for players of all genders and abilities, and is ideal for women looking to get into - or back into - sport at any level of ability or fitness.

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News Clippings

We are on the crest of exciting wave for women’s sport, says England Hockey CEO

The Observer
‘We want to emulate them’: Lionesses inspire England’s rugby league side

Success in this year’s home World Cup could take the sport to heights nobody would have thought possible only years ago

Value of women’s sport could treble by 2030 as UK viewership hits 33 million

Women’s sport enters ‘new era’ after Lionesses’ historic win

England’s 2 – 1 victory over Germany to clinch the nation’s first Euros win – in either the men’s or women’s game – was watched by record-breaking TV audience of 17.4 million.

‘History in the making’: Lionesses’ Euros success sparks booming interest in women’s football

Leaving a legacy: Why brands are going back to the grassroots of women’s sport

If brands are serious about closing the gender gap in sport they should start by challenging the cultural barriers at a grassroots level.

Our Strategy

We engaged leading brand agency, Image Now, to review and develop a new strategy for Olympic Handball.

We have created a long-term brand growth strategy and marketing programme to;

- > Build better awareness of our sport across the country
- > Build a strong profile internationally
- > Build deep community links via a quality club network within Ireland
- > Tap into Ireland's increasingly diverse and multicultural environment and communicate our inclusivity for all
- > Encourage under-represented groups to discover a new way to play sport, especially those who might be intimidated by team sport

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Working with Ireland's leading brand and marketing agency, Image Now, we have created an ambitious strategy, identifying opportunities to grow the sport and bring the multiple benefits of sport and Olympic Handball to communities across Ireland. Working from a grassroots level, we have created a long-term plan to set Olympic Handball and Ireland up for international success and recognition.

Our strengths

- > OH has an international profile
- > Played at elite competitions i.e. Olympics
- > Clubs instil a sense of community and belonging
- > One of the most inclusive team sports - anyone can play
- > One of the few truly co-ed team sports
- > Anyone can be successful, whatever their ability or fitness
- > Energetic, exciting and entertaining
- > One of the most popular team sports in Europe
- > Anywhere can become a court
- > Built on strong values - respect, inclusivity and enjoyment

Our unique positioning

- > High international awareness and recognition (unlike some Irish heritage sports)
- > We are positioned to capitalise on this awareness in Ireland
- > Growing international communities in Ireland bring this awareness with them - they want somewhere to meet, play and embrace different cultures
- > Adaptability of the game means we can appeal to, and cater for, a diverse mix of profiles
- > International relationships and leagues mean we can build international links for schools
- > OH is easy to learn, easy to teach and easy to play
- > OH is one of the most inclusive team sports - we can provide equal player, volunteer and coaching opportunities for all genders

Our ambition

- > To build awareness across Ireland
- > To better communicate the benefits of the sports
- > To showcase a new kind of team sport
- > To build trust and connection with new audiences
- > To bring under-represented groups into sport - women, physically disabled, disadvantaged, those intimidated by sport and fitness
- > To build a strong club network across Ireland
- > To set Ireland up for long-term international success by beginning at grassroots level

Our opportunities

- > International communities who are already aware of the sport, settled in Ireland
- > The momentum building around Women In Sport - we can engage and provide opportunity for all; from those already in sport to those who have not played in a long time
- > Under-represented groups such as the physically disabled (we have already established wheelchair handball)
- > The building interest in modern team sports, especially the co-ed i.e. Aussie Rules, Tag Football, Kickball
- > Capitalise on the frustration with the entrenched organisational approaches in other sports - OHA is open, transparent, forward-thinking and can demonstrate this

A Clear Growth Strategy

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Vision: to be the most-played co-ed team sport in Ireland with a network of community clubs across Ireland

Mission: to increase awareness of the sport and better sell its purpose, values and USP to the audiences who would most benefit from being a part of Olympic Handball

Pillar 1

Educate & Engage

- > Expand outreach programme (more regular community and school communication, increased events)
- > Build awareness of the sport with the identified target audiences
- > Recruit coaches and local volunteers, as well as players
- > Build and communicate a better brand story - showcase our purpose, values and unique positioning

Pillar 2

Develop & Grow

- > Establish more competitions, clubs and leagues to drive membership
- > Build personnel network, creating jobs with the OH community
- > Introduce variations of the game (such as wheelchair handball, beach handball) to attract diversity of players
- > Establish international partnerships and collaborative opportunities with other sporting bodies
- > Develop sponsorship opportunities

Pillar 3

Promote & Perform

- > Create a modern and impactful new identity
- > Execute marketing plan to increase reach, drive engagement and build membership
- > Membership drive to reach new target audiences
- > Develop improved multimedia resources and digital communications

What Activity do We Want to Implement?

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Short term

1. A New Brand Identity

A new identity to better represent our position as the most exciting, modern and inclusive team sport in Ireland.

2. Marketing Campaign

Multi-channel marketing campaign to communicate our new identity and connect with people across Ireland.

3. Brand Video Creation

Introduction to Handball video explaining and promoting the sport, that would be suitable for multiple channels i.e. paid media, events, schools outreach.

4. Digital Learning Resources

Refresh our existing online and offline teaching, training and learning resources.

5. Website Review & Development

Update of our website, content and improved user experience. Creation of an engaging and informative hub and home of Olympic Handball, for all our different audiences.

Mid term

1. Fundraising & Sponsorship

With a new brand identity and engaged audience, we will be in a stronger position to secure sponsorship via a strong business case.

2. Membership Packages

Create strong membership packages to attract and drive membership.

3. Schools' Programmes

Revised and streamlined training, education and training programmes to support and engage schools.

4. Uni & Club Engagement

Centralised, structured programmes and resources for clubs and unis.

5. Diversity & Inclusion

With the groundwork established, implement programmes to specifically engage with, and support, under-represented groups such as women, physically impaired, low socio-economic backgrounds etc.

6. Ambassador Programmes

Specific programme to engage volunteers into the OH community through coaching, volunteer and refereeing opportunities.

7. Ongoing Marketing Plan

Create a long-term marketing plan to keep momentum and interest, drive participation and membership.

8. Cultural Change Workshops

On-board volunteers, referees and ambassadors via purpose-led workshops with defined responsibilities.

9. Collateral & Merchandise

Design of merchandise with updated branding to create a sense of pride, participation and belonging.

10. Club Naming Conventions

A naming exercise will better communicate excitement for the sport, streamline clubs and build energy around leagues.

Long term

1. Uni & Club Competition Drive

Promote, on-board and run national and international seasonal competitions.

2. Road to Olympic Success

Our ultimate goal is international success. Our long term ambitions include plans to promote, on-board and develop the Irish National team via investment in coaching, international exchange and marketing programmes.

4. Local and International Competition Programmes

Re-design of Competition structure and international connections.

5. 5,000 in 5 years

Membership drive to build out programme or participation and culture drive. Series of events and activities to engage with Irish NGBs etc.

6. Handball for everyone

Build out adaptability and flexibility of the sport and grow other areas in addition to the existing games such as beach handball, wheelchair handball street etc.

7. Cross-Sports Programmes

Build out programme to engage with volleyball, basketball, GAA — discover opportunities for collaboration, leagues, joint membership etc.

8. Environment & Sustainability Plan

As part of our social and corporate responsibility planning, we will create our carbon footprint plan and sustainability agenda — travel, resources, equipment etc.

9. Creation of Corporate/ Business Leagues

We plan to develop localised city-wide leagues amongst corporate and business institutions i.e. Google, KPMG etc. to support employee wellbeing and team building.

The Road to International Success

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We know that international success is built over time, from strong foundational activity. Our 5-year focuses make achieving our long-term goals measurable, achievable and easy to adapt.



5 year goals Short-term

- > 1,000 players by 2027
- > 50% membership increase
- > 80 more schools by 2027
- > 10 new club / unis set up by 2027
- > 50% increase in diversity amongst players
- > New female only league by 2027
- > Strong social media engagement
- > Refreshed & engaged community website
- > O.H. Academy commences
- > 50 new Ambassadors & Volunteers
- > 10+ journey maps
- > New club naming structure
- > Strong local and international connections
- > 100% increase in funding and sponsorship
- > New brand video
- > Sustainability & Environment Report

10 year goals Mid-term

- > 3,000 players by 2032
- > 300% membership increase
- > 150 more schools by 2032
- > 15 new clubs set up by 2032
- > 100% increase in diversity amongst players
- > Growth of female league with addition of 5 new teams
- > New meta social channels
- > Enhanced website and online shop
- > O.H. Academy stadium and grounds
- > 100 new Ambassadors & Volunteers
- > 15+ new journey maps
- > Advanced club naming structures
- > Enhanced connections locally & globally
- > 150% increase in funding and sponsorship
- > TV and streaming advertising
- > Strong Business League
- > Advanced Sustainability Reports

15 year goals Long-term

- > 5,000 players by 2037
- > 500% membership increase
- > 300 more schools by 2037
- > 25 new clubs set up by 2037
- > 150% increase in diversity amongst players
- > Advanced female leagues
- > Advanced meta social channels
- > Further enhanced website, app and online shop
- > O.H. Academy and international exchange
- > 250 new Ambassadors & Volunteers
- > 20+ new journey maps
- > Refreshed club naming structures
- > Advanced connections locally & globally
- > 300% increase in funding and sponsorship
- > Global TV and streaming advertising
- > Globally-connected Business League
- > Globally aligned Sustainability Reports

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For more information or if you
have any queries please contact:

Joao joao@olympichandball.org

Caroline womeninhandball@olympichandball.org



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