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Girls Tackle Rugby

Insight report

Commissioned by:

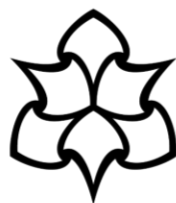
Sale Sharks Foundation

Research conducted by:

Manchester Metropolitan University Institute of Sport

Dr Ben Ives, Thalia Holdom, Dr Adam Runacres, and Dr Kelly Bowden Davies

September 2025



**Manchester
Metropolitan
University**

| Institute
of Sport

Executive summary

This report presents the findings from a commissioned evaluation of Sale Sharks Foundation's *Girls Tackle Rugby* (GTR) programme, carried out by researchers from Manchester Metropolitan University Institute of Sport.

About Girls Tackle Rugby

GTR was developed to challenge stereotypes, create opportunities, and inspire the next generation of girls to play rugby. Targeting girls in Years 7 to 9 (aged 11-14 years), the programme is delivered through curriculum-based sessions led by elite female players from Sale Sharks Women. It aims to provide high-quality coaching that develops rugby skills, physical literacy, confidence, resilience, and wellbeing.

Research design

Mixed-methods approach: Pre- and post-intervention surveys, five focus groups, and five one-to-one interviews.

Participants: 266 girls, two teachers, and three GTR coaches.

Surveys: Assessed changes in the girls' physical literacy, wellbeing, confidence, and physical activity, as well as their enjoyment and engagement with rugby.

Focus groups and interviews: The focus groups explored the girls' experiences in more depth, while the one-to-one interviews examined the perceptions of teachers and coaches.

Key statistics

Physical literacy: 20% increase in the girls' overall physical literacy score ($P < 0.05$).

Wellbeing: 6% increase in the girls' psychological wellbeing score ($P < 0.05$).

Confidence: 88% of girls reported feeling more confident.

GTR coaches: 97% of girls described the GTR coaches as inspiring practitioners.

Perceptions of rugby: 97% of girls reported a more positive view of rugby.

Key findings

High-quality coaching: Coaches combined technical expertise with strong interpersonal skills to create a safe, inclusive, and motivating environment.

Game-based delivery: Sessions prioritised fun, teamwork, and enjoyment over technical drills and competition, which reduced anxiety, promoted engagement, and supported sporting, physical, and social development.

Girls-only environments: GTR provided a supportive space for girls to express themselves, build confidence, and strengthen peer connections.

School partnerships: Strong teacher-coach relationships were important for creating a positive learning environment.

Clear and accessible pathways: Early and ongoing signposting to rugby opportunities (e.g., local clubs, extracurricular sessions, community initiatives) is essential for sustained participation.

Female role models: Delivery by elite female players inspired participation, ambition, and positive attitudes towards rugby.

Conclusion

The evaluation demonstrates that GTR is effective in promoting girls' physical literacy, wellbeing, confidence, and positive attitudes towards rugby, providing a strong evidence base to support the programme's continued investment, delivery, and expansion.

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About Sale Sharks Foundation

[Sale Sharks Foundation](#), the charitable arm of Sale Sharks Rugby Club, is dedicated to transforming lives across the North West through the power of rugby. Guided by its mission, *Level the Field*, the Foundation breaks down barriers, builds belonging, and fosters happier, healthier communities. It delivers inclusive, trauma-informed, and values-led sport and physical activity programmes that inspire connection, confidence, and change among diverse groups, including women and girls, disabled people, those experiencing poverty, and at-risk youth.

About Girls Tackle Rugby

[Girls Tackle Rugby](#) is a flagship programme of Sale Sharks Foundation. It was created to challenge stigma, create opportunities, and inspire the next generation of girls to play rugby. The programme targets girls in Years 7 to 9 (aged 11–14 years) through curriculum-based sessions delivered by elite female players from Sale Sharks Women. It provides inclusive, high-quality coaching that develops not only rugby-specific skills but also physical literacy, confidence, resilience, and wellbeing. By embedding rugby within the school environment and connecting girls with professional players, Girls Tackle Rugby aims to make rugby an accessible, enjoyable, and sustainable option that supports the growth of the female game.

About Manchester Metropolitan University Institute of Sport

[Manchester Metropolitan University Institute of Sport](#) is committed to transforming sport, health, and human performance through world-leading research, innovation, and strategic partnerships. It unites cross-disciplinary researchers with key stakeholders in policy and industry to deliver work with real and lasting impact - from strengthening communities and building a healthier society, to inspiring the next generation and pushing the limits of human performance.



About the authors

Dr Ben Ives is a Senior Lecturer in Sport Coaching. His research focuses on community sport coaching and its contribution to the health and wellbeing of diverse communities. Using participatory, mixed-methods approaches, Ben collaborates with academics, practitioners, and policymakers to co-design and evaluate sport and physical activity programmes. For this project, Ben was the Principal Investigator, responsible for project and budget management, as well as being directly involved in all stages of the research process, from design through to public engagement.

Thalia Holdom is a PhD Candidate. Her research focuses on developing a critical psychosocial analysis of the emotional dimensions of community sport coaching work. For this project, Thalia acted as a research assistant, supporting data collection, analysis, and write-up, as well as participant recruitment and project administration.

Dr Adam Runacres is a Lecturer in Sport and Exercise Sciences with expertise in mixed-methods research. He has collaborated with organisations including the Welsh FA, British Cycling, and Welsh Hockey on youth development pathways, and has published widely on children and young people's physical activity levels and barriers to participation. For this project, Adam helped design the mixed-methods survey and led the quantitative data analysis.

Dr Kelly Bowden Davies is a Senior Lecturer in Exercise Physiology. Her work focuses on understanding how lifestyle behaviours, such as physical activity, affect health outcomes, with a strong commitment to reaching underserved communities and delivering impactful research through public engagement. For this project, Kelly played an active role in all stages of the research process, including overseeing the quantitative data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

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Evaluation aims and focus

This project aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of *Girls Tackle Rugby* (GTR). To do this, the evaluation explored five key questions:

1. **Impact on participants:** Did GTR improve girls' physical literacy, wellbeing, confidence, and activity levels?
2. **Programme experience:** What factors supported or limited participants' enjoyment and engagement?
3. **Role models:** How did being coached by elite female players from Sale Sharks Women shape participants' experiences and perceptions?
4. **Attitudes to rugby:** Did girls' perceptions of rugby change following participation in the GTR programme?
5. **Future development:** What practical lessons can strengthen GTR delivery and support the growth of the women's game?

Methods and procedures

Overview

This project used a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the GTR programme. A combination of surveys, focus groups, and one-to-one interviews was used to explore how the programme influenced participants' physical literacy, wellbeing, confidence, and activity levels, as well as their enjoyment and engagement in the sport.

Full ethical approval for the study was granted by the Science and Engineering Research Ethics and Governance Committee at Manchester Metropolitan University (code: 65116).

Participant information

Data were collected from 266 girls who participated in a 12-week curriculum-time GTR programme at either Stockport High School or Didsbury High School (approximately one 60-minute session per week). The average age of the girls was 11.6 (± 1.8) years, and they came from a representative range of ethnicities: White (53%), Mixed (15%), Asian (13%), Black (3%), other (3%), and prefer not to say (14%).

In addition to the girls, data were also gathered from two teachers (one from each school) and three GTR coaches to capture multiple perspectives on the programme's successes, challenges, and areas for improvement.

All research participants provided written and verbal consent. For those under 16, consent was provided by their teachers acting in loco parentis, alongside the young person's own consent.

Co-production

To enhance the quality, relevance, and impact of the study, Sale Sharks Foundation were actively involved in all stages of the research process, from developing the research questions through to dissemination. Regular meetings were held with Jack Leech (Head of Rugby Development & Operations) and India Perris-Redding (Rugby Development Manager,

Women & Girls) to share progress, explore ideas, and agree on next steps. Their contributions included supporting participant recruitment and retention, advising on the design of data collection protocols, and helping the research team to develop context-relevant recommendations.

Data collection

Survey

Before the start of the 12-week GTR programme, 266 girls completed a pre-intervention survey. The survey included demographic questions (e.g., age, ethnicity), three validated questionnaires (i.e., Australian Physical Literacy in Children Questionnaire; KIDSCREEN-27; Physical Activity Questionnaire for Older Children), and an opportunity to volunteer for a focus group to discuss their experiences in more detail.

At the end of the GTR programme, 253 girls were invited to complete a post-intervention survey (N.B., 13 were not invited due to school absences and related factors). The post-intervention survey repeated the same core components as the pre-intervention survey, with the addition of Likert-scale and open-ended questions about their experiences of GTR.

Survey completion was facilitated by Thalia Holdom and Sale Sharks Foundation staff at the school delivery sites. Both surveys were administered via Qualtrics and completed using school IT equipment (e.g., iPads or computers), with each taking approximately 15–20 minutes to complete.

Focus groups

A total of five focus groups were conducted to explore the girls' experiences of the GTR programme in more depth (Stockport High School $n=2$; Didsbury High School $n=3$). Each focus group included seven girls, was facilitated by Thalia Holdom, and lasted between 30 and 50 minutes. Topics included enjoyment, motivation, perceived benefits, GTR coaching, and future engagement with the sport. All focus groups were audio-recorded and professionally transcribed by UK Transcription Ltd.

One-to-one interviews

Individual, semi-structured interviews were conducted with two teachers and three GTR coaches to gather their perspectives on the programme delivery, successes, and challenges. These interviews were conducted by Thalia Holdom and lasted on average 45 minutes. Topics included coaching approaches, participant engagement, perceived benefits, logistical challenges, and suggestions for future delivery. All interviews were audio-recorded and professionally transcribed by UK Transcription Ltd.

Data analysis

Quantitative

Validated questionnaires

Survey responses from the three validated questionnaires were coded according to their respective scoring instructions. Individual pre- and post-intervention responses were matched to enable direct comparisons of physical literacy, wellbeing, and physical activity levels before and after the 12-week GTR programme.

Of the 266 pre-intervention responses, 111 were excluded due to incomplete or unmatched data. Specifically:

- 30 could not be matched (e.g., did not provide clear identifying details),
- 68 provided incomplete data (e.g., missing responses on physical literacy, wellbeing, or physical activity in either the pre- or post-intervention survey),
- 13 did not complete the post-intervention survey (e.g., due to school absence).

This left 155 matched pre- and post-intervention responses for analysis. For each outcome (e.g., physical literacy) and its sub-components (e.g., cognitive, social, physiological, and physical), the mean and standard deviation were calculated alongside percentage changes. Statistical significance was tested using paired t-tests, with the threshold for significance set at $P < 0.05$.

Programme experiences

Post-intervention Likert-scale responses ($n=253$) focusing on the girls' experiences of GTR (e.g., changes in confidence) were analysed descriptively using frequency distributions to illustrate how often each response category (e.g., extreme, high, moderate, slight, none) occurred. Ten responses were excluded due to missing data, leaving a final sample of 243.

Qualitative

All focus group, one-to-one interview, and open-ended survey responses were analysed using thematic analysis. The analysis was led by Thalia Holdom, who read the transcripts multiple times and applied codes to highlight important ideas, experiences, and perspectives. These codes were then grouped into broader themes, which captured the main successes, challenges, and learning points from the GTR programme.

The wider research team, including Jack Leech and India Perris-Redding from Sale Sharks Foundation, played an active role in this process by acting as 'critical friends'. This involved holding regular team meetings to listen to, reflect on, and challenge Thalia's developing interpretations, offer alternative explanations, and provide constructive feedback to strengthen the rigour and quality of the analysis.

Research findings and analyses

In this section, the key findings from the evaluation are presented and discussed. They are organised into two sub-sections: 1) Programme outcomes, which examines changes in the girls' physical literacy, wellbeing, and physical activity before and after the 12-week GTR programme; and 2) Programme experiences, which explores the perspectives of girls, teachers, and coaches involved in the programme. Importantly, no differences were observed by background (e.g., ethnicity, age) among participating girls, suggesting that the findings are broadly generalisable.

Programme outcomes

This sub-section presents the measurable impacts of the 12-week GTR programme on the girls' physical literacy, wellbeing, and physical activity levels.

Physical literacy

As shown in Figure 1, all components of the girls' physical literacy significantly increased following participation in the 12-week GTR programme ($P < 0.05$). The total score improved by an average of 18 points, representing a 20% increase. Domain-specific improvements were observed as follows: cognitive +20%, social +22%, psychological +18%, and physical +20%.

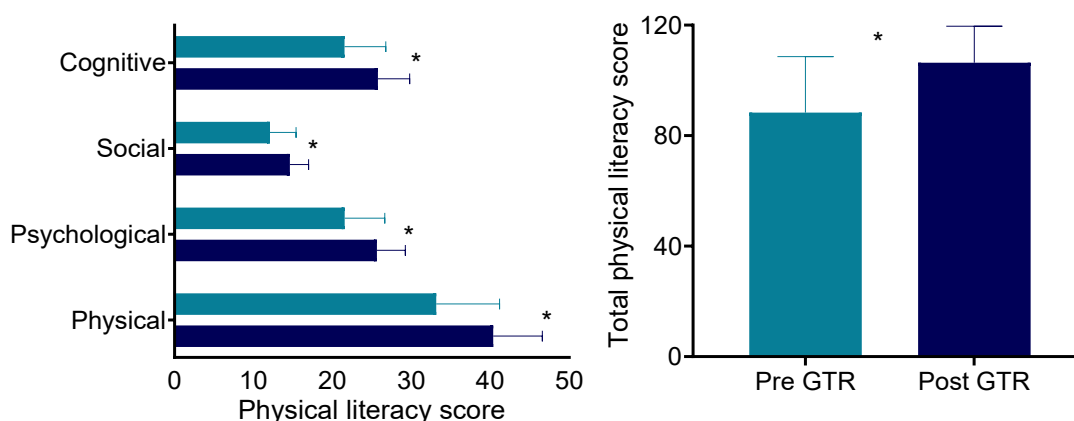


Figure 1. GTR participant responses ($n=155$) presented as mean \pm SD from pre- and post-intervention Australian Physical Literacy in Children Questionnaire. The left panel presents the four domains, and the right panel presents the total score (out of 120). *Denotes statistically significant change ($P < 0.05$).

Wellbeing

As shown in Figure 2 (next page), the girls' psychological wellbeing significantly increased by 6% following participation in the 12-week GTR programme ($P < 0.05$). Overall wellbeing, as well as the other domains (i.e., physical, social, and school connectedness), remained unchanged ($P > 0.05$).

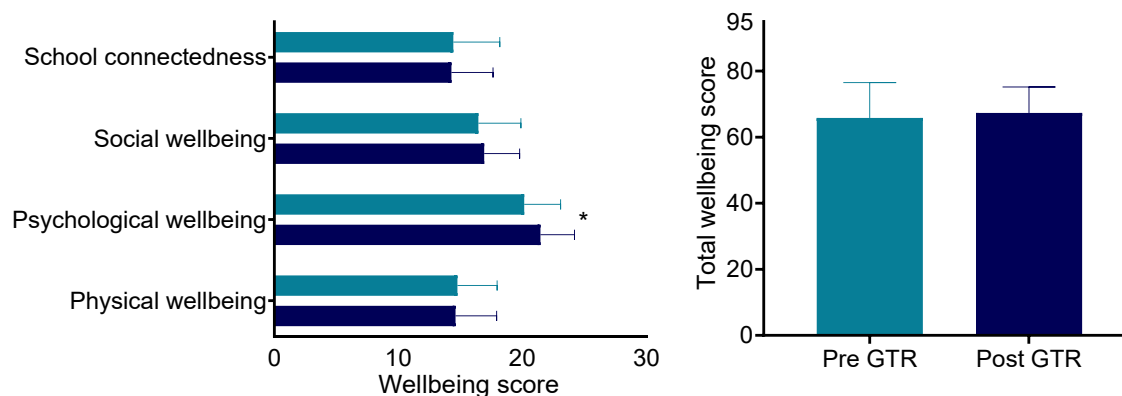


Figure 2. GTR participant responses ($n=155$) presented as mean \pm SD from pre- and post-intervention KIDSCREEN-27 questionnaire. The left panel presents the four domains, and the right panel presents the total score (out of 95). *Denotes statistically significant change ($P<0.05$).

Physical activity

As shown in Figure 3, there was no statistically significant change in the girls' daily physical activity levels following the 12-week GTR programme ($P>0.05$). This suggests that the improvements observed in other outcomes (e.g., physical literacy) were likely attributable to the programme itself rather than changes in physical activity levels.

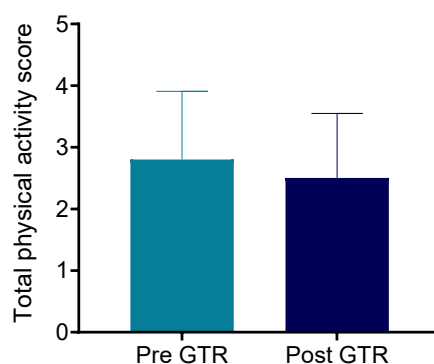


Figure 3. GTR participant responses ($n=155$) for total physical activity score (out of 5) presented as mean \pm SD for pre- and post-intervention Physical Activity Questionnaire for Older Children.

Programme experiences

This sub-section explores the experiences and perceptions of girls, teachers, and coaches involved in the 12-week GTR programme. The findings are presented across six key themes.

Confidence

As shown in Figure 4, 88% of girls reported feeling more confident by the end of the GTR programme.

How helpful was the Sale Sharks Girls Tackle Rugby programme for improving your confidence?

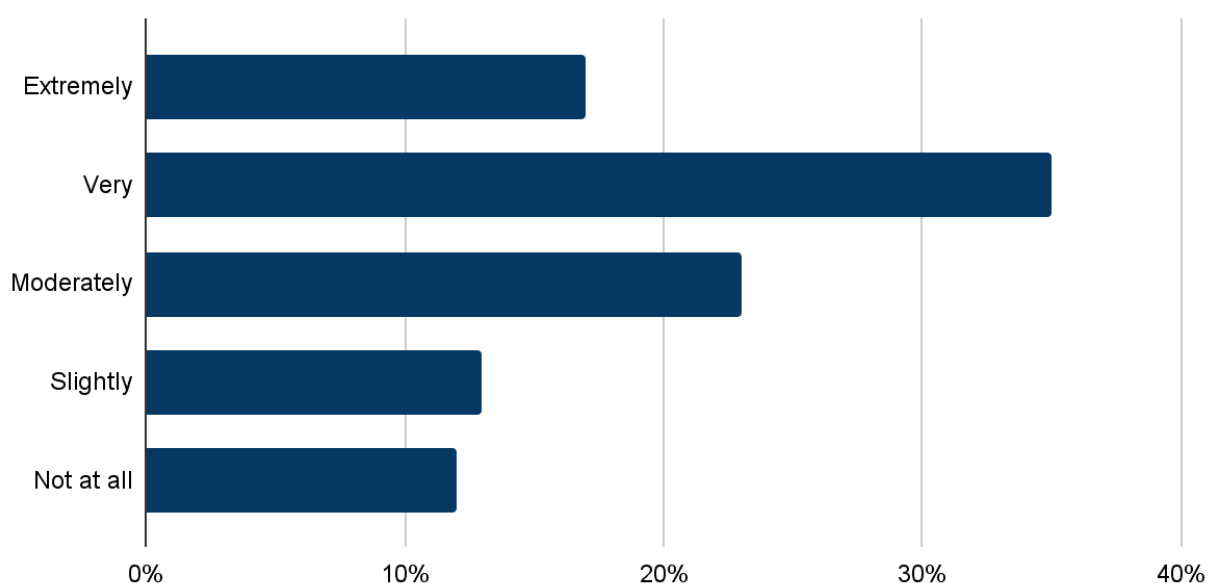


Figure 4. GTR participant responses ($n=243$) to the post-intervention survey question about confidence following the 12-week programme.

The girls described how their confidence grew as a result of learning new skills, such as tackling, through step-by-step instruction in a safe, supportive, and non-judgemental environment:

“Throughout the programme, my confidence really went up and by the end, I was tackling left, right and centre” (GTR participant).

“I’m more confident [...] it’s taught me, if you lose it doesn’t really matter and it’s nothing to be nervous about at the start of something new” (GTR participant).

“[The GTR coaches] made me feel very safe in the sport [...] the way that they acted made me feel like if I were to get hurt, then they would know what to do” (GTR participant).

“Because [the GTR coach] taught us how to do it properly [...] step by step” (GTR participant).

“[The GTR coaches] had confidence in us as well, which made me even more confident” (GTR participant).

The girls also highlighted how sharing the experience with friends, as well as the chance to form new friendships, contributed to their improved confidence:

“I knew that my mates were doing it too [...] made me more comfortable” (GTR participant).

“It made me interact with other people I’m not really friends with and got to know them” (GTR participant).

Girls Tackle Rugby coaches

The quality of coaching was a central factor in shaping positive GTR participant experiences. As shown in Figure 5 (next page), 97% of girls described the GTR coaches as inspiring practitioners.

How inspiring were the female coaching staff who delivered the Sale Sharks Girls Tackle Rugby programme?

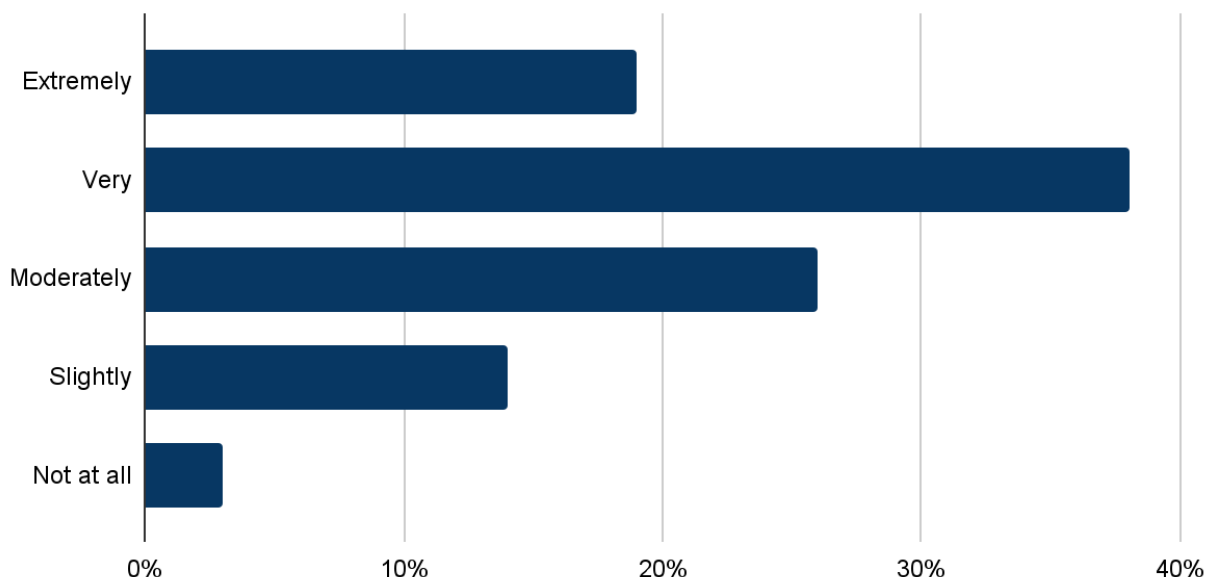


Figure 5. GTR participant responses ($n=243$) to the post-intervention survey question about how inspiring the coaches who delivered the 12-week programme were.

For many, having female coaches who were also elite female rugby players was a powerful source of inspiration and motivation. This challenged stereotypes about rugby being a ‘male sport’ and demonstrated that rugby can be a sport for everyone:

“I was really happy when I saw [the GTR coach] because I didn’t really think that girls could play rugby” (GTR participant).

“It just proves that girls are as strong as boys, and it’s not a stereotype that boys have to do rugby and stuff” (GTR participant).

“I liked being taught by professional players” (GTR participant).

The teachers echoed these views, emphasising how the presence of elite female players as coaches not only sparked motivation and excitement among the girls, but also provided them with credible role models:

“When I was introducing [the GTR coach] at first, professional rugby player, it is a bit of a big thing. Then, even in the classroom when we had five or so minutes putting highlights on, and it is that role model, that they’re like, ‘Wow, that is where you can get to if you take it seriously’ [...] definitely a good role model to have” (Teacher).

“It would probably be good for them to do a presentation of the players because, again, I don’t think the girls realise how high up they are [...] I think they need to realise their talent, and maybe where they’ve played, where they’ve come from. I think a presentation on the players that are coaching would be great at the start of the lesson” (Teacher).

Enjoyment and inclusion

As shown in Figure 6, 60% of girls rated the programme as moderate-highly or high-extremely enjoyable.

Overall, how enjoyable have you found the Sale Sharks Girls Tackle Rugby programme?

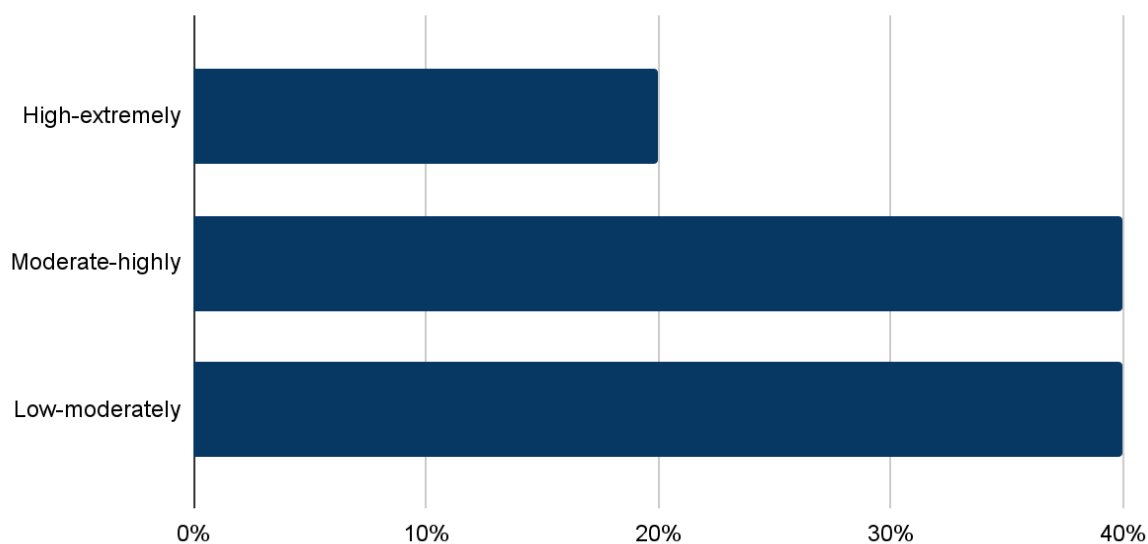


Figure 6. GTR participant responses ($n=243$) to the post-intervention survey question about how enjoyable the 12-week programme was.

During the focus groups, the girls highlighted several reasons for enjoying the programme, including the opportunity to try a new sport, the girls-only environment, and the supportive atmosphere created by the female GTR coaches:

“I liked the rugby programme because it was fun and exciting as I have never played rugby [...] I liked learning a new sport, especially when we were playing in teams” (GTR participant).

“Usually, I don’t really like PE because it’s a lot of the same thing, but I liked how it was different to the PE lessons that we usually had, and that it was all girls, and I really liked it” (GTR participant).

“[...] actually getting to learn to do it properly, like run with the ball, score tries and stuff, was really nice” (GTR participant).

“I love how it was only girls and that it wasn’t tag rugby, it was physical tackling rugby. I also enjoyed how the coaches were only women, and they were very inspirational” (GTR participant).

The girls also emphasised how the social and interactive elements of the sessions made the GTR programme engaging and enjoyable. The warm-ups were described as fun and energising, while team-based activities provided opportunities to make new friends and strengthen social connections:

“I really liked the warm-ups, the partnering warm-up things, they were so fun” (GTR participant).

“I liked how we were put into groups so I could meet new people. I have more friends now, which is really nice, and that is because of the rugby activities” (GTR participant).

“The types of warm-ups helped me to talk to more people, and we ended up having lots of fun because we were learning the warm-ups and how to tackle together, no one was left out or anything, which is really good” (GTR participant).

Perceptions of rugby

The GTR programme helped many girls develop a more positive view of rugby. As shown in Figure 7, 97% of participants reported that their perceptions of the sport had improved following the 12-week programme.

Has the Sale Sharks Girls Tackle Rugby programme improved your perceptions of rugby?

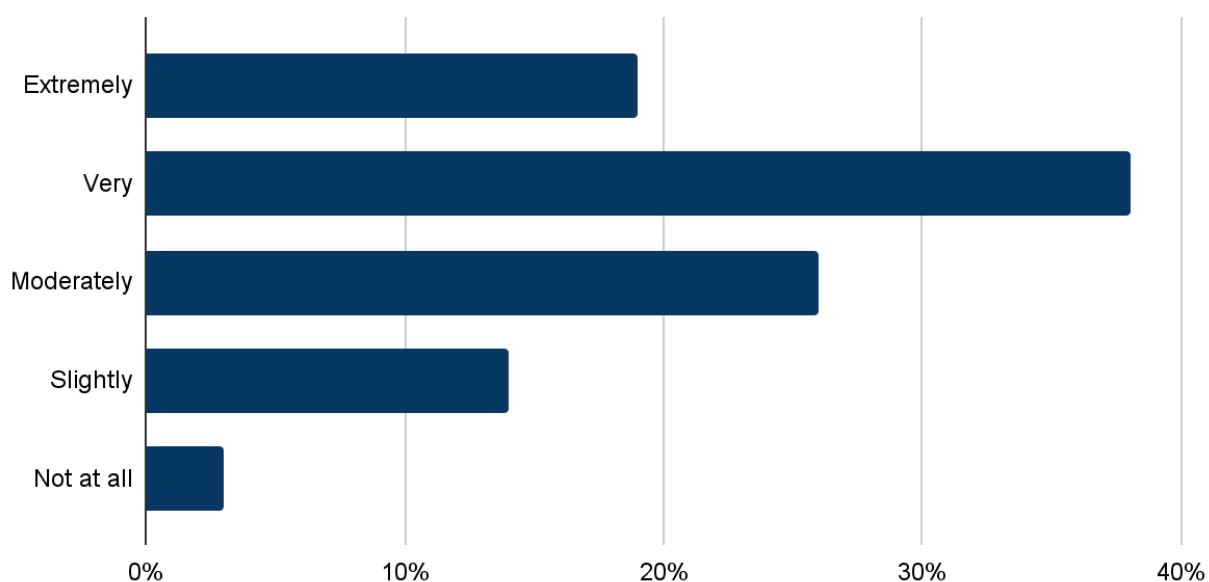


Figure 7. GTR participant responses ($n=243$) to the post-intervention survey question about their perceptions of rugby following engagement in the 12-week programme.

During the focus groups, participants explained how learning the rules, developing new skills, and experiencing tackling in a supportive environment, alongside being coached by elite female players, shifted their understanding of the game and challenged previous assumptions about who can play rugby:

“Yeah, because when I was younger, I used to think things like rugby was just a men's sport, but now you, kind of, see it in a different way” (GTR participant).

"I just thought it was, kind of like, just running around with the ball, there wasn't really offside, and you just tried to get it to the other side. But now I know all the rules and how you actually play it and how you tackle and stuff. So it's more interesting now" (GTR participant).

"I thought I wouldn't enjoy it, but then I've actually discovered that I'm not the best at it, but I definitely am better than I thought I would be, so that's quite good" (GTR participant).

"It doesn't matter who you are, anyone can play rugby and enjoy it. I didn't really know lots about rugby, and now I do. I thought it was like really violent, but it isn't really" (GTR participant).

Future participation

A positive outcome of the GTR programme was the extent to which it encouraged girls to consider continuing rugby beyond the 12-week initiative. As shown in Figure 8 (next page), survey responses indicated that 29% of the girls were interested in playing in the future, and 1% had already joined a local rugby club since engaging with the programme.

How do you feel about playing rugby with a local club since participating in the Girls Tackle Rugby programme?

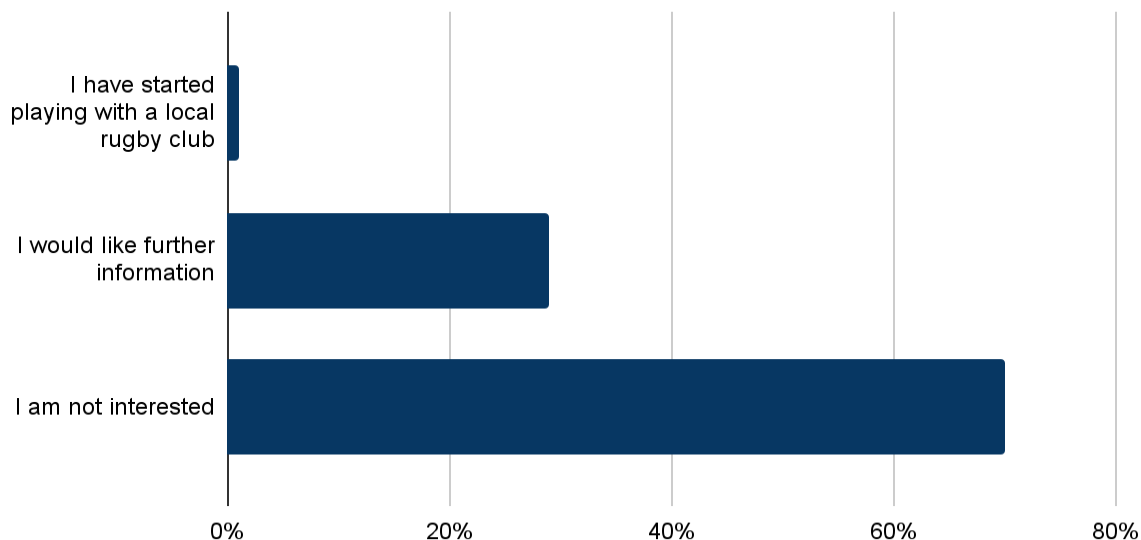


Figure 8. GTR participant responses ($n=243$) to the post-intervention survey question about playing rugby with a local community club.

The findings arguably reflect the positive shift in attitudes GTR created, where rugby moved from being perceived as ‘not for me’ or a ‘just a men’s sport’ to something achievable, enjoyable, and worth pursuing:

“I feel that Sale Sharks have inspired me by teaching lots of different skills, and I think that I might consider joining a rugby club outside of school” (GTR participant).

“Yeah, I’m going to probably join a rugby team. That’s what I want to do [...] which is surprising because I don’t usually like that kind of thing, but I really enjoyed just tackling people to the ground and then not getting in trouble for it. (Laughter). It was great” (GTR participant).

“I would like to keep learning more skills that are to do with rugby, like kicking [...] I would like to try it, maybe at a non-competitive level until I get more into it and feel more confident to join an actual club” (GTR participant).

“I had lots of fun and now I have friends and they can also do the same thing as me, I would do it if my friends went and we could have more fun playing rugby together [...] and if it was with the Sale Sharks coaches that would be even better” (GTR participant).

The survey data also highlights a crucial point: interest alone is not enough. Indeed, while the GTR programme successfully sparked enthusiasm and motivation for the sport, sustained participation depends on clear and accessible pathways, supportive school environments, and ongoing visibility of female rugby role models.

Partnerships with schools

The one-to-one interviews with coaches and teachers highlighted the important role of strong school-coach partnerships in shaping the success of the GTR programme. Coaches consistently emphasised that establishing trust and collaboration with teachers was vital for securing pupil engagement, ensuring sessions ran smoothly, and creating a positive learning environment:

“My school were really supportive and sent messages saying, ‘Pre-warning it’s rugby for their child, so they are allowed to stray from the usual kit policy’ [...] they’re helping me in regards to kind of doing what they can to keep the girls warm and limit the messing around at the start and get engagement from the moment I come in” (GTR coach).

“After you get that initial foot through the door, I think it’s probably the most important part, because if you can’t create and can’t establish those relationships with teachers, then you’ve got no hope. If the teachers aren’t buying into the sessions, the kids aren’t going to buy into the sessions” (GTR coach).

“Having the teachers and schools on board is important for behaviour management. We are then able to get on with the session and be coaches focusing on the rugby rather than having to risk enjoyment by dealing with bad behaviour [...] it only works though if the teachers buy-in and don’t use it as a free period or a break” (GTR coach).

The teachers also reflected on the professional benefits of their involvement. By actively observing and co-delivering alongside the coaches, they developed knowledge, confidence, and practical strategies for teaching rugby. This suggests that the strong teacher-coach relationships not only enhanced the immediate delivery of GTR but also provided the teachers with informal learning opportunities that may help them embed girls' rugby more sustainably within their schools going forward:

“From a teacher's side of things, I think being in those lessons with [the GTR coach] and seeing how she structures it and how she progresses each skill, then I'm able to take it into other groups and do it myself, feeling confident enough to deliver, especially the contact side” (Teacher).

“I have more knowledge now of rugby. I am normally football or netball oriented, but I was learning with the girls and now probably could deliver rugby at the school” (Teacher).

Key learnings and recommendations

This evaluation has identified elements of the GTR programme that worked particularly well, alongside areas that could be strengthened to achieve even greater success. These are presented below.

What worked well

- **Female role models:** Professional female coaches inspired ambition, challenged stereotypes, and provided relatable examples of what girls can achieve in rugby.
- **Girls-only spaces:** Safe, supportive girls-only environments enabled girls to express themselves freely, build confidence, and develop stronger peer connections.
- **Flexible formats:** Offering both contact and non-contact options reduced barriers, gave girls choice, and fostered inclusivity.
- **School engagement:** Enthusiastic teachers and administrators are important. They provide vital logistical support, promote engagement, and support behaviour management.

- **High-quality coaching:** Coaches combined technical expertise with strong interpersonal skills. This helped build trust and created a respectful, inclusive, and motivating environment where girls felt valued.
- **Progressive, games-based delivery:** Sessions built skills gradually and emphasised fun, teamwork, and enjoyment over competition. This approach reduced anxiety, maintained high levels of engagement, and developed both physical and social skills.
- **Match play:** Opportunities to apply skills in real game scenarios, adapted to ability, boosted confidence, provided a sense of progress, and created excitement.

Areas for development

- **Early and ongoing signposting to pathways:** Clearly highlight opportunities to continue rugby (e.g., local clubs, extracurricular sessions, community initiatives) from the start of the programme and reinforce them regularly to sustain girls' long-term participation in the sport.
- **Additional school-based opportunities:** Establish after-school or lunchtime clubs to provide informal spaces for practice, embed girls' rugby into school culture, and strengthen long-term engagement with the sport.
- **Celebrate achievements:** Conclude the GTR programme with a closing event, such as a festival, showcase, or stadium visit, to create a motivating goal, reward participation, and leave lasting positive associations with rugby.
- **Stronger storytelling around female players:** Share the journeys and stories of the elite female rugby players more prominently to strengthen role modelling, inspire ambition, and deepen connections between GTR coaches and participants.
- **Clearer Sale Sharks Foundation identity:** Communicate the Foundation's role and values more visibly so that GTR participants feel a sense of belonging and connection to the wider rugby community.
- **Increased visibility of women's rugby:** Use guest visits, videos, or media content showcasing women's rugby to inspire girls to engage with the sport within and beyond the GTR programme.

Concluding comments

The evaluation has demonstrated that GTR is an effective, inclusive, and inspiring programme. Through combining high-quality, game-based coaching, supportive school partnerships, and exposure to elite female rugby players, the programme enhances girls' physical literacy, wellbeing, confidence, and positive attitudes towards rugby. The evidence makes a compelling case not only for continued investment in GTR but also for its expansion, so that even more girls can benefit from the health, wellbeing, and social outcomes it delivers.

