

1. Welcome and Introduction

The Oxford University Touch Rugby Club is delighted to welcome you to the Sixth Touch Rugby Varsity Match between the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge. The Varsity Match tradition began in June 1827 when Charles Wordsworth, Christ Church, Oxford, organised a two-day cricket match against Cambridge at Lords. The first Boat Race came two years later in 1829. During the second Boat Race, in 1836, a Cambridge oarsman tied a light blue ribbon to the bows of the Cambridge boat, in commemoration of his school, Eton College. Oxford chose the dark blue colour of Christ Church College.

The first Touch Rugby Varsity Match took place in 2017. Oxford won the first matches until 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic cancelled the 2021 edition. Cambridge returned to win the two most recent fixtures in 2022 and 2023. In the background of this competition, the sport of Touch Rugby flourished. In 2022, the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) included Touch Rugby in its calendar. Shortly after, in May 2023, the Federation of International Touch (FIT) awarded England “tier one” nation status, recognising their self-sufficiency, attendance at World Cups, sound administration and large player base. Most recently, in October 2023, Touch Rugby received recognition from Sport England as its own code of rugby.

This year’s Touch Rugby Varsity Match will mark the inaugural fixture under elevated Half Blue status. It will be an exciting day of sport and a high standard of Touch. The event will follow the [Federation of International Touch fifth edition rules](#), except where mentioned in this event guide.¹ Sportsmanship, safety, competition, and fun are our key priorities for the day.

2. Brief Overview

EVENT: The Sixth Touch Rugby Varsity Match

DATE: Saturday 24th February 2024

PARKING (BY INVITATION): St Anne’s College, 56 Woodstock Rd, Oxford OX2 6HS

LOCATION: Worcester College Playing Fields, Oxford, OX1 2HB

TIMINGS: 12:00 pm – 4:30 pm (playing fields open at 11:00 am)

FOOD AND DRINK: A snack shop will be available at the venue.

PLAYING SURFACE: All games shall be played on grass.

Parking Info

Some parking spots have been allocated at St Anne’s College, 56 Woodstock Rd, Oxford OX2 6HS. **Do not park without prior coordination with the event organiser. See below for guest parking information.** Once arrived, you will be asked to share your driver’s name and car registration with the Lodge. Cambridge University has been reserved two spaces; and the referees have been allotted four. There will be someone there to escort

¹ See section 5.

The Sixth Touch Rugby Varsity Match

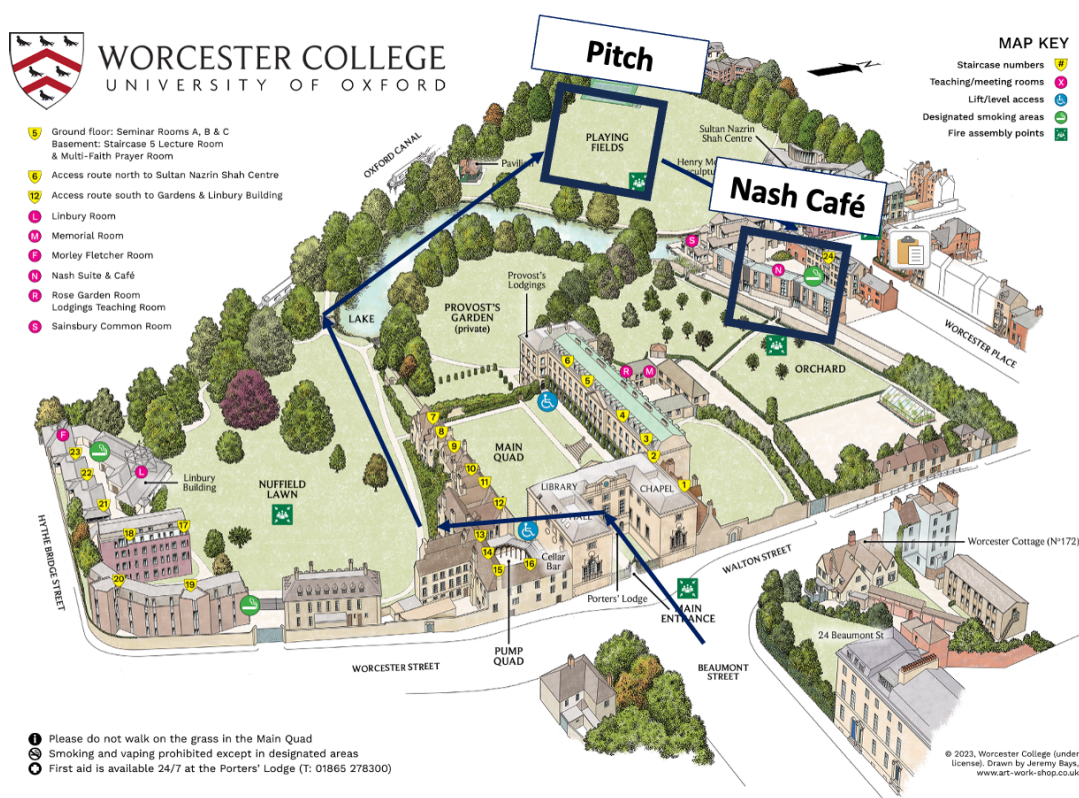
Oxford University Touch Rugby Club

you from the parking area to the playing fields. It is best to transit to the playing fields as one large group.

All other guests can access Worcester College via nearby Oxford Railway Stations, buses from Park & Ride at Seacourt, national coaches via Gloucester Green Bus Station, or by pay and display car park, also at Gloucester Green – all are just 5-minutes' walk from the College.

Venue Info

Worcester College has kindly agreed to host the Sixth Touch Rugby Varsity Match. Changing facilities and showers will be available throughout the day. We suggest placing belongings along the side-line.² Weather is not expected to be hot, however, please still ensure that players bring enough water and appropriate clothing/attire for the day. A map to the playing fields is below; please also note the Nash Suite & Café for food and drink.



Weather Alternative

In the event of bad weather, the event will be postponed. However, should the weather be fine and the Worcester College Playing Fields be unusable for any reason, we will resort to our secondary option, Rugby Pitch 5 at University Parks. These changes will be communicated to club presidents in advance.

² All items are left at the owner's risk and OUTRC cannot accept any responsibility for any items that are lost, stolen, or damaged.

Kit

It is expected that all teams bring their own playing jerseys. It is also required that players wear moulded, plastic studded boots while playing as these are required in accordance with Federation of International Touch rules. All jewellery also needs to be removed or covered before playing (watches, earrings, necklaces, wristbands, etc). The referees reserve the right to enforce these requirements at any point.

Disclaimer and Code of Conduct

All participants must comply with the ETA and OUTRC Codes of Conduct while taking part and supporting at OUTRC events. The full details can be found at <http://www.EnglandTouch.org.uk/play/code-of-behaviour/>.

The ETA Code of Behaviour applies to all participants including players, coaches, referees, administrators and supporters and sanctions can be applied to individuals, teams and clubs as necessary. Participant enjoyment should not be compromised at any point and necessary actions will be taken should they be needed to ensure this. The decision will be made by the tournament control. Your cooperation on this matter is greatly appreciated.

3. Schedule of Events

A live schedule of events is available here: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1gLM-mEx7rGORWf1O51YNdWmpMQkDIRUTEmtNeVk6XI0/edit?usp=sharing>.

Timings	Description
11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Registration and Arrival: The playing field will be available for warm-up at 11:00 am. The referees will host a Captain's Briefing at 11:30 am. The team sheets must be completed by this time.
12:00 pm – 12:45 pm	Mixed 2s: The Orcas vs. Cambridge 2s
1:00 pm – 1:45 pm	Mixed 1s: The Blues vs. Cambridge 1s
1:45 pm – 2:15 pm	Lunch Break
2:15 pm – 3:00 pm	Men's Exhibition Match
3:15 pm – 4:00 pm	Women's Exhibition Match
4:30 pm – 5:00 pm	Presentation Ceremony in Worcester Bar: Guests welcome. The following awards will be presented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referee and Volunteer Appreciation Most Valuable Players Varsity Match Trophy
5:00 pm – 6:00 pm	Post-Event Celebration in Worcester Bar: The post-social and dinner are for <i>players only</i> .
6:00 pm – midnight	Dinner and After Party at Balliol College MCR: During this time, buddies will be assigned between Cambridge and Oxford players for overnight accommodation.

4. Medical Support

A full-time physio will be on site and available during this event. Any injured players should be reported through team captains to event control. **We highly recommend bringing your own medical bags.**

Team captains are responsible for familiarising their team with the event's risk assessment, England Rugby's HEADCASE programme, and Worcester College's emergency procedures.

5. Rules and Match Format

We will be playing to the Federation of International Touch (FIT) 5th edition rulebook. We recommend familiarising yourselves with this prior to the day. Rules can be found [here](#). Matches will be played with 20-minute halves and a 5-minute half-time during which teams should switch ends. A field of play will be marked according to the specifications in Appendix 1 of the rulebook. Any deviations to the rulebook must be approved by the tournament organiser in consultation with the referees and team captains.

The referees are sourced from, badged with, and qualified by the England Touch Association.

6. Post-Social

The post-social and dinner are for *players only*. We are excited to celebrate the day's events during the post-social, which will include a dinner and after party. Safety, inclusivity, and responsibility are non-negotiable principles of our socials.

At the end of the final match, players are advised to proceed to the shower and changing rooms for hygiene. Clubs are responsible for keeping account of their individual players, especially until the dinner. We recommend you travel as a group.

A presentation ceremony will take place in the Worcester College Bar from 4:30 pm to 5:00 pm. At 6:00 pm, we'll depart to Balliol College for dinner and a post-social. During the dinner, we will assign "buddies" between Oxford and Cambridge players to ensure appropriate safety and accountability during the evening. We will also confirm overnight accommodation arrangements. The buddy system will encourage players to exchange contact information, travel together, and collectively proceed to their overnight accommodation at the end of the night.

The social secretary will announce evening plans at the dinner, which will include Park End's The Varsity After Party. Ticket information is available through your club's social secretary. Please purchase tickets early and in advance.

If at any point a player becomes lost, or there is an issue with accommodation, please contact Aryemis Brown at +44 (0) 7495 704427.

7. Further Particulars

Tournament Control

Event Control: Anika Fisher

Event Organiser: Aryemis Brown and Ava McCarthy Kerrigan

Oxford University Rugby Football Club (OURFC) Representative: Simon Brown

Worcester College Representative: Simon Bagnall

Feedback

We welcome your feedback on the event! Please communicate through your club's president.

Finally...

Thank you so much for being a part of the Sixth Touch Rugby Varsity Match! It's promising to be a brilliant day and we can't wait to see you all out on the pitch. Any problems or questions, please don't hesitate to get in contact (Aryemis Brown – aryemis.brown@some.ox.ac.uk).