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# Trinity Sport – raising our game and realising potential

**Michelle Tanner,**  
**Head of Sport and Recreation**

**Trinity has a rich and unrivalled sporting heritage, with a strong history of providing extra and co-curricular opportunities and enabling lifelong institutional pride.**

The range of sporting facilities and activities available to Trinity's students, staff, and communities is a key part of campus life and integral to the Trinity experience. Trinity Sport has achieved much over the last ten years.

Trinity College Dublin's first integrated *Strategy for Sport* titled '*Raising Our Game*' was officially launched in 2015 and reached its final phase of planning implementation at the end of 2018. Trinity Sport addressed many challenging issues and achieved momentous success in several areas, most notably it:

- 1.** Established a Sport Development Unit which set out a clear pathway from participation to performance, and a host of programmes and supports.
- 2.** Established a new identity of 'Trinity Sport,' which is now recognisable and familiar with the wider Trinity College Dublin community.
- 3.** Implemented an integrated staffing structure which addressed the previous cumbersome structure.

These initiatives led directly to increases in participation levels, success for teams and athletes, and investment in facilities, all of which are key to building the foundations for the future of Trinity Sport. Published results from the '*Raising Our Game*' strategy for sport can be found here [www.tcd.ie/Sport/about/raising-our-game/](http://www.tcd.ie/Sport/about/raising-our-game/)

**RIGHT** – Trinity Sport Ambassador, Nicole Owens, who is a Dublin Ladies GAA player and Trinity alumna at the launch of the Trinity Sport Ambassador Programme.



→ Everything we do at Trinity Sport is about helping people to participate more and perform better so that together we can reach our potential.



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### Sports facilities investment

Trinity Sport has made significant changes and invested about €6 million in sport facilities within the last ten years including the successful purchase and operation of the Iveagh Sports Grounds and improvements in infrastructure at Santry Sports Grounds, College Park, Islandbridge Boathouse and the Trinity Sport Centre. The completion of the Santry Sports Grounds has had a significant impact on quality and overall usage of Trinity Sport facilities, contributing to a 125% increase in usage since 2015. The Sport Centre reconfiguration project carried out in 2017 includes a new fitness studio, a high-performance gym and the expansion of the main fitness theatre to 420sqm – these enhancements have helped attract more than 500k visits p.a. to the Centre.

Exciting infrastructural projects, including the outdoor sports development at Iveagh Sports Grounds, are in progress while Printing House Square is in the final stages of development and will host a world class standard rifle range and bring squash, handball, and racquet sports back to campus.

Trinity Sport has raised a further €6 million in additional income from sponsorships and other sources during the decade. For seven consecutive years, Trinity Sport has achieved the highest standards in sports facility provision in the annual National Quality Awards and won the 'Third Level Education and Fitness Club of the Year' at the inaugural Nutramino Health and Fitness Awards in 2018.

### Celebrating success

A calendar of high-quality sporting events is hosted by Trinity Sport each year, from the annual Trinity Sports Awards and the Trinity Sport Scholarship Awards to the annual rugby and rowing colours events and the Trinity Regatta.

The annual Sports Awards are open to all college clubs and acknowledge the extraordinary commitment made by the Trinity sporting community. A highlight was in 2016 when sporting legend Sonia O' Sullivan presented the awards and competed in the annual campus 5k. In the course of the decade, Trinity Sport has recruited notable graduate sporting ambassadors including Nicole Owens (Dublin Ladies GAA player and Trinity Alumna), Mark Pollock (motivational speaker and author), Ailish Egan (former Irish Rugby international), Ed Joyce (former Cricket international and Head coach of Ireland's women's cricket team) and Hugo MacNeill (former British and Irish Lions Rugby Union international).

In February 2018, Trinity hosted the GAA Higher Education Sigerson Cup Finals weekend at Santry Sports Grounds and showcased the newly refurbished facilities. In February 2020, Trinity Sport hosted the 100th edition of the IUFU Collingwood Cup, the men's soccer intervarsity competition, with eight teams competing in the quarter finals, semi-finals, and finals across three consecutive days. Trinity won the Farquhar Cup on the final day in an exciting penalty shoot-out at College Park.

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**LEFT** – Sport Scholars Max Neville (Cricket), Luke Corcoran (GAA - Hurling), Danielle Semple (Rowing), Kate Doherty (Athletics), Rebecca Stokell (Cricket), Michael Silvester (Rugby) and Luke Hayes Nally (Rowing).

**BELOW** – Members of Dublin University Boat Club at the Rowing Colours 2019.

Performance by college athletes has improved significantly over the course of the decade – by the end of time period covered by *‘Raising Our Game’ Strategy for Sport*, athletes had won 29 league, cup, intervarsity, and colour games and twenty national caps. Highlights include the Trinity Rugby Men’s team consolidating their position in Division 1A of the All-Ireland League (AIL) by reaching the semi-finals for the first time in its history. In March 2020, Trinity Fencing club was crowned intervarsity champions for the 13th year in a row. Trinity Meteors won the Basketball Ireland women’s Division One title and earned promotion to the Super League. Dublin University Harriers Athletics Club (DUHAC) had an impressive season in 2020, dominating the colours cross country by taking home the top three spots in the men’s and women’s races.

Trinity has supported numerous student athletes to compete on the international, national, intercounty, and interprovincial sporting stages, including Olympians Natalya Coyle (Pentathlon), Scott Flanigan (Sailing), Maeve Phillips (European and World Down Syndrome swimming medallist), Paralympians, Rugby Internationals including Linda Djougang, Kathryn Dane and Ryan Baird and a host of other amazing athletes.

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### Connecting with college and other communities

Trinity Sport prides itself on its collaborative work within the University and has made some important and lasting connections to enhance the Trinity student experience. Trinity Sport collaborated with Trinity Access (TAP) to increase engagement among potential students through the Sporting Talent with Academic Rewards (STAR) programme. Trinity Sport also takes an active role in supporting local communities through the Trinity Sport Junior Leadership Programme, which offers transition year students from all backgrounds intensive training in areas such as leadership skills, group management protocols, sports coaching, and teamwork-based exercises. Many volunteers have gone on to utilise their newly acquired skills within their own communities through coaching local teams and youth groups as well as managing events for charitable organisations.

A founding member of the Healthy Trinity initiative, Trinity Sport develops, and activates physical activity throughout the campus and beyond. Trinity Sport is the lead partner in the European Union Erasmus+ Sport funded *‘Mind Body Boost’* project. After pioneering numerous pilots, Trinity is now responsible for this mental and physical health intervention programme which will benefit third level students across seven campuses in Ireland and Europe.



Trinity Sport is setting standards across several areas: it established the first Sports and Physical Activity Inclusion Officer in any Irish university, as well as a comprehensive sports medicine support programme for student athletes. The Trinity Olympians Project received the European Network of Academic Sports Services Award in 2012.

None of the above would have been achievable without the input of a talented, qualified, and experienced team of staff including graduate interns and experts in fitness, coaching, sports management and operations, many of whom are representatives and leaders in international and national sporting organisations. Most notable was the appointment of Michelle Tanner (Head of Sport and Recreation) as President of the European Network of Academic Sport Services (ENAS) in 2013 – a landmark appointment as Michelle was the first representative from Ireland and the first female to be appointed to the prestigious position. Recently, Matthew Dossett (Deputy Head of Sport and Recreation) was elected to the position of President of Student Sport Ireland, the first representative from Trinity to be elected to this role.

Trinity Sport is currently in the final phase of the development of the Strategy for Sport 2021–2025. Aptly titled *‘Realising Potential’*, the strategy sets an ambition for Trinity Sport to enable and develop potential on three levels: as individuals, for the Trinity Sport unit and for the University. Everything we do at Trinity Sport is about helping people to participate more and perform better so that together we can reach our potential.