

# **BUCS STUDENT SURVEY FINDINGS**

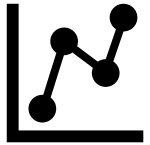
## **2024-25**



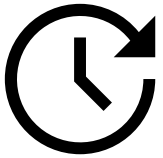
# TABLE OF CONTENTS



Introduction to the research



BUCS Student Survey findings  
2024-25



Actions and recommendations



# **BUCS STUDENT SURVEY: AIMS**

- **Understand the experiences of BUCS students**
- **Track our current position against the 2023-24 benchmark**
- **Work on areas BUCS control**
- **Supporting areas our members control**





# BUCS STUDENT SURVEY 2024-25 - SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

120

**BUCS MEMBER INSTITUTIONS  
THAT HAD AT LEAST ONE  
STUDENT RESPONSE**

1,346\*

**RESPONDERS**

50

**BUCS SPORTS WITH AT  
LEAST ONE STUDENT  
RESPONSE**

Students who took part in BUCS events completed the survey after they finished their event. Students who took part in the BUCS league/knockout programme completed the survey in April 2025, at the end of the sporting year.

\*This is the number of respondents who provided at least one response to the core student experience questions.



# BUCS STUDENT SURVEY 2024-25 - DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN

**MEN**

**WOMEN**



This is the biggest shift from the 2023-24 survey. In that survey, only 35.7% of respondents were women.

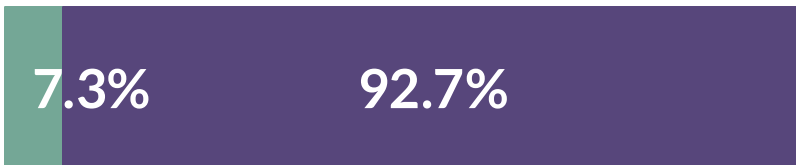
**POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS**

**UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS**



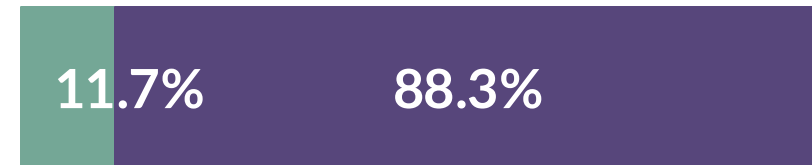
**COMMUTER STUDENTS**

**NON-COMMUTER STUDENTS**



**INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

**UK STUDENTS**



The demographics on this slide are important for findings later in the survey. We also looked at other demographics, including students with disabilities or long-term health conditions (5.3% of respondents) and ethnicity (9% of respondents were Asian/Asian British, 4.5% were Black/Black British, 3.8% were from a mixed or multiple ethnicity background, and 72.4% were White/White British).

# **BUGS STUDENT SURVEY 2024-25**

**THE EXAM QUESTION...**

**"TO DELIVER...**

**EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT  
SPORTING EXPERIENCES**

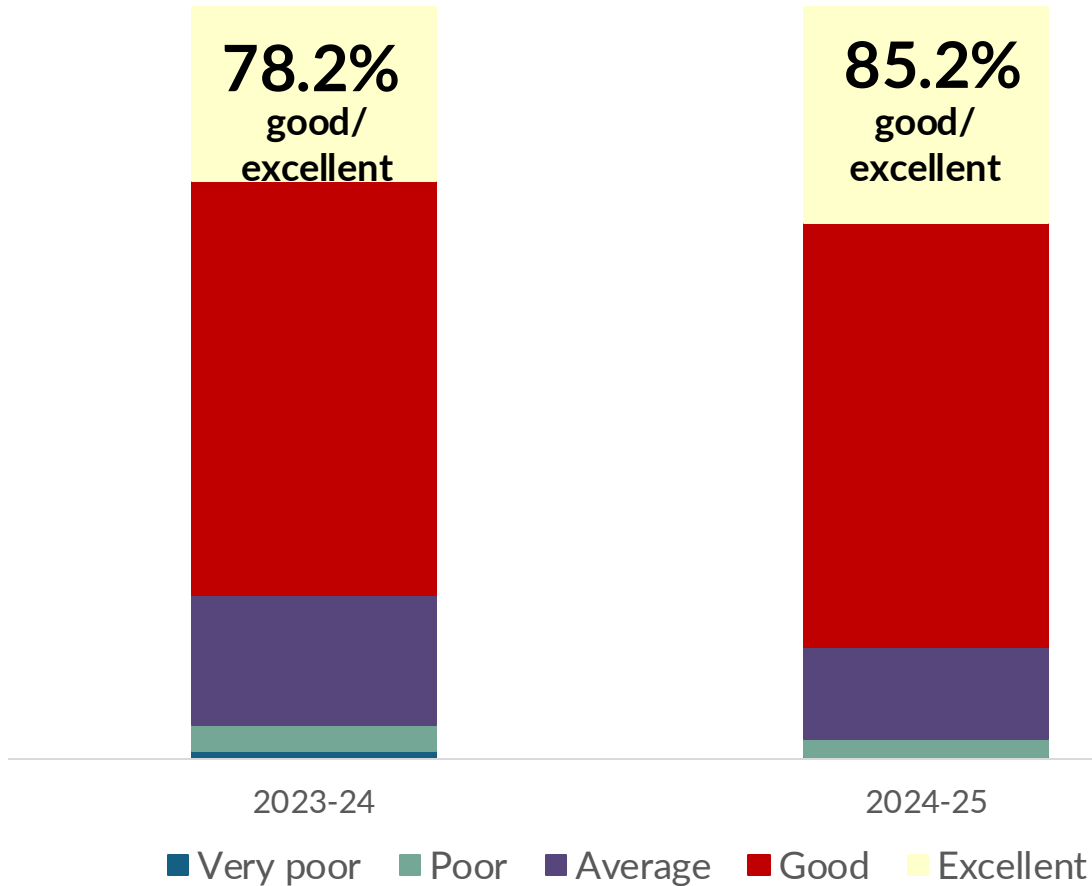
**THAT**

**INSPIRE, DEVELOP & UNITE"**

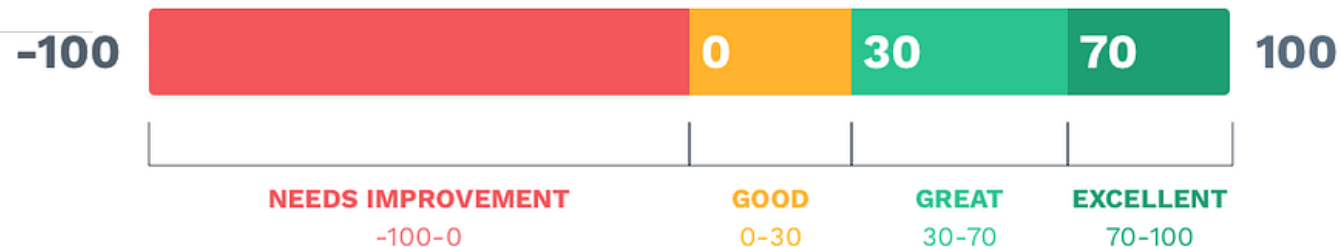
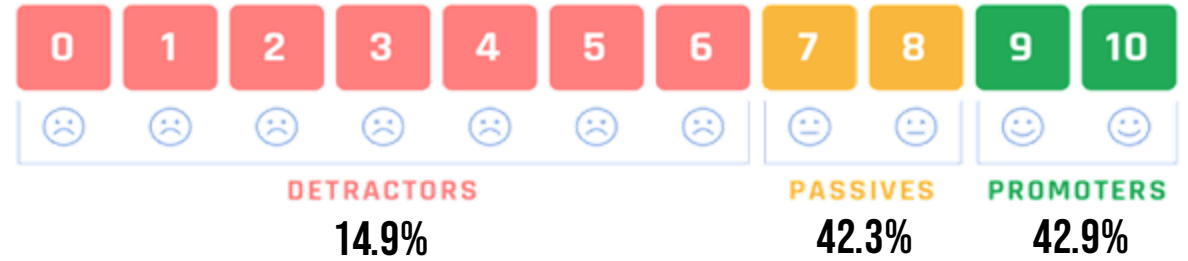


# OFFERING EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT SPORTING EXPERIENCES

Overall, how would you rate your BUCS experience?



HOW LIKELY IS IT THAT YOU WOULD RECOMMEND BUCS TO A FRIEND?



**90.3% (+1.8) OF  
RESPONDERS AGREED  
THAT BUCS SPORT HAS  
CONTRIBUTED  
POSITIVELY TO THEIR  
HIGHER EDUCATION  
EXPERIENCE.**

The +1.8 denotes the percentage point increase from last year's results.



**47.2% (-3.2) OF  
RESPONDERS AGREED  
THAT TAKING PART IN  
A SPORTS CLUB OR  
TEAM KEPT THEM  
FROM DROPPING OUT  
OF UNIVERSITY.**

The -3.2 denotes the slight change from last year's results.



“It's lots of fun, and one of the main reasons I stayed in university.”

“BUCS American football was a large part of why I chose to do a doctorate.”

# EXPERIENCES THAT INSPIRE

Enabling students to perform at their best, to influence others and be a role model to their peers.

**90.3% (+1.6)**

positive impact on **mental wellbeing**.

**84.4% (+1.9)**

achieved/continue to strive towards my **personal sporting ambitions**.

**78.9% (+0.9)**

given the opportunity to perform to the **best of my ability**.

**77.0% (+4.2)**

setting **personal ambitions higher** than when entering higher education.

The numbers in brackets denote the changes from last year's results. The +4.2 change is statistically significant.

**"It has reignited my passion** for the sport that I play and encourages me to continue to play at a high level."



# EXPERIENCES THAT DEVELOP

Providing students with the opportunity to grow in both a personal, and sporting, way.

**82.8% (no change)**

have **developed softer skills** (e.g. communication, leadership, time management).

**67.4% (+3.4)**

the soft skills developed have **enhanced my ability to study** (i.e. through improved discipline).

**53.3% (-2.1)**

the soft skills developed have improved **my ability to gain the job I want**.

**“[BUCS] was a great part of my 4 years at university and allowed me to become who I am today.”**

The numbers in brackets denote the change from last year's results. The +3.4 change and the -2.1 change are statistically significant.



# EXPERIENCES THAT UNITE

Ensuring that all students feel like they belong, and they are connected through participating in sport.

**94.4% (+0.9)**

playing sport gave **sense of belonging** to my institution and its community.

**91.9% (+1.5)**

I felt **proud** to represent my university.

**85.4% (+0.9)**

playing sport meant I interacted with **a wider cultural and social group of students**.

“It gives you a chance to feel like you're **a part of something**, not only representing as a team player of your chosen sport but representing your university.”

The numbers in brackets denote the changes from last year's results.



# HOW SPORT IS ENHANCING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

HE students not in sports club/society

BUCS competitors

Sense of belonging

52.8% said they felt a sense of belonging to their institution and its community.

94.9% said playing sport gave them a sense of belonging.

Interacting with a wide group of students

67.1% said they had been able to interact with a wide cultural and social group of students during their time in HE.

85.4% said playing sport meant they interact with a wider cultural and social group of students.

Developing softer skills

68.0% said they had been able to develop softer skills during their time in HE.

82.8% said playing sport helped them develop softer skills.

The percentages on the left come from the BUCS Student Active Wellbeing Survey, carried out in 2024 with both active and less active/inactive students; the percentages on the right come from the BUCS 2024-25 student survey. The questions asked were not identical so we cannot compare the statistics like-for-like, but the comparisons do suggest that sport can help increase the percentage of students who feel these benefits of higher education.

# WHAT IS DRIVING STUDENT EXPERIENCES?





# WHAT IS DRIVING POSITIVE STUDENT EXPERIENCES?

Factors ENHANCING the student experience	% of students who agreed	
	2023-24	2024-25
The club committee	65.2%	61.4%
Quality/skill level of training and matches	56.3%	60.4%
Quality of coaching	49.3%	53.3%
Playing facilities (home and away facilities and/or neutral venue)	45.0%	50.4%
Access to and standard of training facilities used (including gym access)	44.7%	49.9%

Students were asked which factors enhanced their experience in higher education sport and they were able to choose as many options as they wished. As the table above shows, there are only slight shifts from the previous survey, with club committee and quality/skill level of training and matches remaining the top two enhancing factors.

# WHAT IS DRIVING POSITIVE STUDENT EXPERIENCES?

“BUCS has been extremely fun and it has made me have more of a passion for sport than I already did before.”

**FUN**  
(13%)

“Fun and competitive atmosphere and set up allowing you to play many other universities at different levels.”

“Opportunities, community and it’s just fun!”

“The social aspects and the friends gained from playing sports definitely helps the university experience be better.”



**FRIENDSHIP**  
(8%)

“The people and relationships you make are the best part.”

“Very social, how I made most of my friends at university.”

“Helps people make new friends, easier transition into university life.”

# WHAT IS DETRACTING FROM STUDENT EXPERIENCES?

Factors DETRACTING from the student experience	% of students who agreed	
	2023-24	2024-25
Standard of officiating	22.7%	20.3% 
How my university promoted my team/sport success	23.7%	16.9% 
Quality of the membership perks (e.g. kit, travel, gym, nutritional and other support)	20.6%	15.9%
How BUCS promoted my team/sport successes	19.2%	13.1%
Support from university staff members	15.5%	11.9%

Students were asked which factors detracted from their higher education sport experience and were able to pick multiple options. The main year-on-year change was that standard of officiating rose to become the top factor detracting from the student experience.

# WHAT IS DETRACTING FROM STUDENT EXPERIENCES?

“League season could be longer with more games included in the rugby season.”

**League structure** (6%)

“Although had good experiences there’s been times like this year where we have not had a lot of matches.”

“BUCS Wednesdays clash with not only mine, but most of my teammates’ ...compulsory contact hours, so we were not always able to put the best team out.”

“The app crashes a lot but there is a lot of good things on it!”

**BUCS Play** (5%)

“The app makes it a particularly stressful experience for team captains.”

“The app is painfully slow, especially on match days.”

“Still improvements to made on app.”

# WHAT IS DRIVING STUDENT EXPERIENCES?

## EXPERIENCE OF ENGAGING WITH BUCS

Experience of competing at BUCS competitions: 88.8% of students said good/excellent

“It perfectly balances the competitive nature of student sports while allowing for the development and enjoyment of said sports. It is a welcoming atmosphere and feels professional, allowing athletes to focus on nothing but the sport in which they are taking part.”

“BUCS is one of my favourite places to play hockey in. The community at BUCS games and the crowd and the team I have all loved.”

“It’s been so beneficial for me in my first year, creating a friendly, competitive environment.”

# WHAT IS DRIVING STUDENT EXPERIENCES?

## EXPERIENCE OF ENGAGING WITH BUCS

Organisation of BUCS competitions: 73.2% of students said good/excellent

“My BUCS experience has been fun and well-organised. I really enjoyed the level of competition, even though I found it challenging at times. The team spirit and opportunities to travel were definite highlights for me.”

“Super fun, and such a well-organised programme. Made tons of friends and improved in my sport so much.”

“BUCS exceeded my expectations at competition and has made my first-year experience very memorable.”

# WHAT IS DRIVING STUDENT EXPERIENCES?

## EXPERIENCE OF ENGAGING WITH BUCS

General communications from BUCS: 56.6% said good/excellent  
BUCS Play: 46.4% said good/excellent

“As captain BUCS have been very helpful every time I have needed help with anything and reached out to them.”

“The livestream for my event was great.”

“Communication has been very clear through emails.”

“Good clarity for any information you need.”

“Good communication, great centralised way to give university students access to sports.”

# WHAT IS DRIVING STUDENT EXPERIENCES?

## EXPERIENCE OF ENGAGING WITH BUCS

Representation of my sport/activity: 54.9% said good/excellent

Representation of people like me: 54.6% said good/excellent

“I tagged BUCS in everything I posted on our Sheffield uni gymnastics club’s Instagram and we actually got a response and a repost which was nice.”

“Much more on Super BUCS than other typical BUCS leagues - it would be nice to see some representation across other leagues.”

### Requests for more representation from...

LGBTQIA athletes

Plus-sized athletes

Women

Beginners

Lower league participants

# WHAT IS DRIVING STUDENT EXPERIENCES?

Representation of people like me in BUCS communications



“Postgrad students are not very represented in BUCS.”  
PhD student

# WHAT IS DRIVING STUDENT EXPERIENCES?

## EXPERIENCE OF ENGAGING WITH BUCS IS IMPROVING

	2023-24	2024-25	Change
BUCS Play	37.4%	46.4%	+9.0%
General communication from BUCS	48.1%	56.6%	+8.5%
Organisation of BUCS competitions	68.3%	73.2%	+4.9%
Representation of people like me in BUCS communications	50.4%	54.6%	+4.2%
Experience of competing at BUCS competitions	84.7%	88.8%	+4.1%
Representation of my sport/activity in BUCS communications	51.7%	54.9%	+3.2%

# IMPROVING THE BUCS STUDENT EXPERIENCE

## SUPPORTING “PASSIVES” TO BECOME “PROMOTERS”

42.3% of students are “passives” on the NPS scale so we took a deeper look at what’s preventing these students from having an exceptional experience. Below are the biggest gaps in elements of the BUCS experience.

Element of BUCS experience	% of passives who answered good/excellent	% of promoters who answered good/excellent	Difference
General comms from BUCS	49.4%	67.2%	-17.9%
Representation of people like me in BUCS comms	48.2%	63.6%	-15.5%
Representation of my sport in BUCS comms	49.9%	62.7%	-12.8%
Organisation of BUCS competitions	68.7%	81.3%	-12.6%

**WHO NEEDS MORE  
SUPPORT TO HAVE AN  
EXCEPTIONAL  
STUDENT  
EXPERIENCE?**



# COMMUTER STUDENTS

## What we know

- “Commuter” is an intersectional demographic. In the 2025 Student Active Wellbeing Survey, we found that commuter students were more likely to be from areas of high deprivation, have a disability that had a major impact on their daily activities, and to be older than non-commuter students.
- They have a lower NPS: +21 (compared to +28 across all respondents)
- 93.1% agreed that taking part in BUCS sport gave them a sense of belonging, which commuter students can struggle to feel.

## What commuter students are telling us

“I have struggled so much more and recently been struggling with childcare and it’s putting me under a lot of stress.”

“Lack of financial support from my university in an already expensive sport in which we are expected to pay almost £250.”



# POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

## What we know

- Postgraduates are generally less likely to take part in sport at university.
- They have a lower NPS: +20 (compared to +28 across all respondents).
- In previous qualitative research, BUCS has found that postgraduates can struggle to fit sport in their busy academic schedules.

## What postgraduate students are telling us

“BUCS American football was a large part of why I chose to do a doctorate.”

“I enjoy volleyball. It's my passion. BUCS helped me keep attached to my sport.”



# INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

## What we know

- International students are less likely to be members of university sports clubs than British students, especially postgraduate international students.
- They have a lower NPS: +15 (compared to +28 across all respondents).

## What international students are telling us

“I would want to see a higher number of international students participate in BUCS matches. All my teammates were British, no complaints, but there were times in the beginning of the season where I felt slightly left out. But, once I got comfortable with the format, I could be with the team more comfortably.”

“I think attending BUCS can help international students get involved with local communities.”



# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Overall, students are having a positive experience in BUCS sport and there has been year-on-year improvement in most metrics.
- Experiences of BUCS are INSPIRING, DEVELOPING AND UNITING students.
- ‘Club committee members’ is the most reported factor **ENHANCING** the students’ experience.
- ‘Standard of officiating’ is the most reported factor **DETRACTING** from the students’ experience.
- International students, postgraduates and commuter students are having worse BUCS experiences. More research is needed to understand why.

# ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- What BUCS has done in 2024-25
- Collaborative recommendations



# WHAT WE'VE DONE



## Findings

In the 2023-24 BUCS Student Survey, students reported that BUCS Play was detracting from their BUCS experience. Only 37.4% said they had a good/excellent experience with it.

Students reported that it was slow, crashed often and was not intuitive to use.

## Action taken

**The team made tweaks to the app across the 2024-25 season and launched a new app for the 2025-26 season.**

- The percentage of students rating their BUCS Play experience as good or excellent rose by nine percentage points this year and we expect further gains in the 2025-26 survey now that the new app has launched.

# SUPPORTING STUDENT LEADERS

## Findings

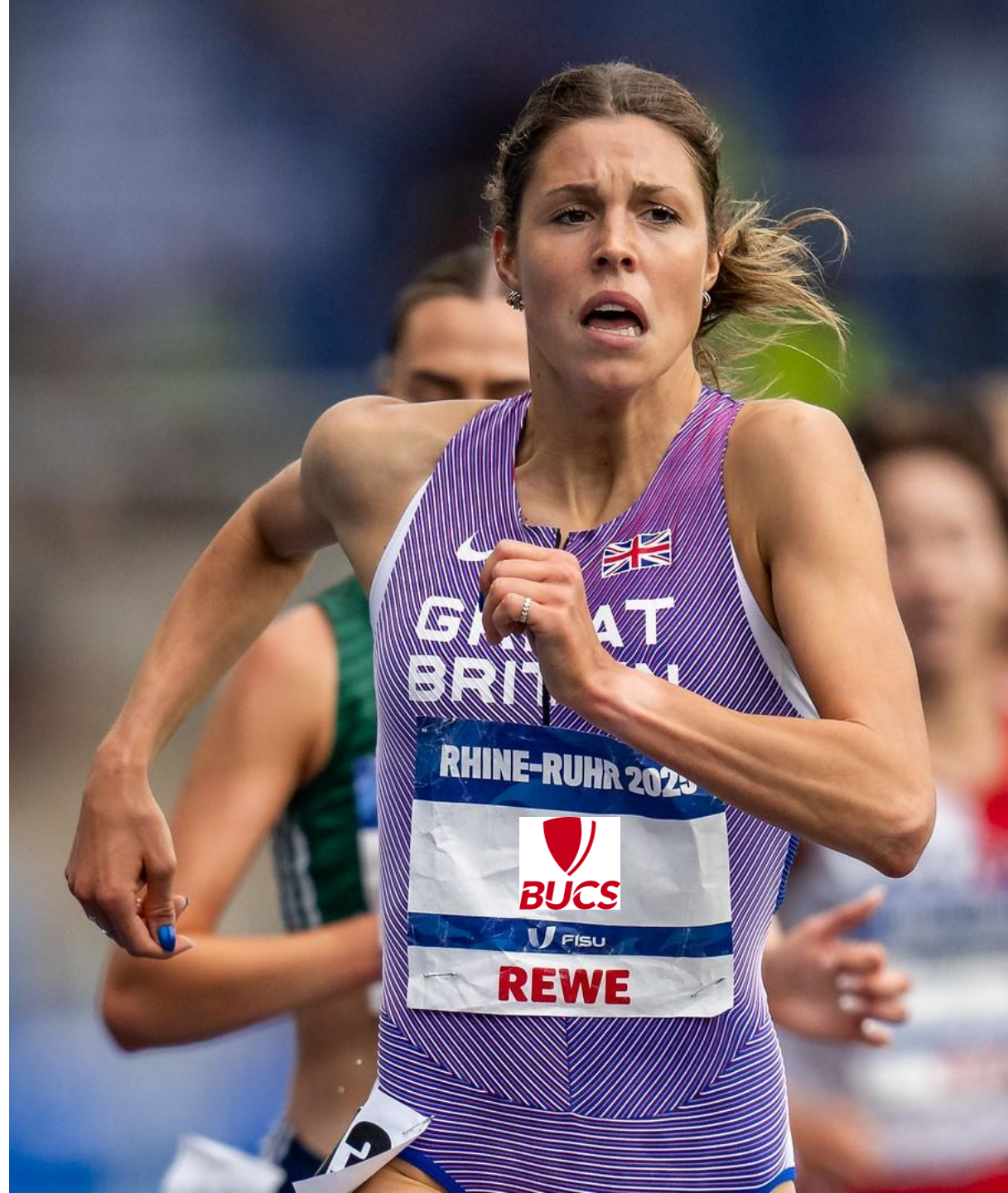
37.7% of students on club committees in 2023-24 disagreed or were neutral to the statement they felt adequately trained to carry out their role.

Club committee members play a crucial role in student sport, with 65.2% of students in 2023-24 agreeing/strongly agreeing that CCMs enhanced their experience.

## Action taken

The team piloted online workshops for student leaders in partnership with add-victor.

- Following positive feedback from students, the workshops will run again this year. There is more information on the next slide.



# BUCS X ADD-VICTOR WORKSHOPS

## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS FOR STUDENT LEADERS IN SPORT

- **WORKSHOP 1: Tuesday 21 October** - Unleashing the leader within you
- **WORKSHOP 2: Tuesday 18 November** - How to effectively deal with conflict resolution
- **WORKSHOP 3: Tuesday 9 December** - How to become a master of networking at your university and the wider sector
- **WORKSHOP 4: Tuesday 20 January** - How to manage and maximize your time efficiently
- **WORKSHOP 5: Tuesday 17 February** - How to present leadership roles on CVs and application forms
- **WORKSHOP 6: Tuesday 17 March** - How to sell yourself in interviews / future opportunities

Bookings for the first two workshops are now OPEN for registration. Each workshop will run twice on the date given – 12pm and 6pm. Each workshop will last 50 minutes. Workshops are targeted at student leaders in sport.

**BUCS**

[Further info: BUCS Resource Hub](#)



# SPOTLIGHTING A RANGE OF INSTITUTIONS AND SPORTS

## Findings

Only 51.7% felt BUCS did a good or excellent job representing their sport or activity in communications in 2023-24.

## Action taken

The team set targets in 2024-25 around their sports coverage, including covering sports that weren't featured in 2023-24.

	KPI (2024-25)	Actual (2024-25)
	30 sports to be covered	35 sports covered
	3 new sports covered	6 new sports covered

# COLLABORATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS



# COLLABORATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

## Finding

20.3% of students reported that 'standard of officiating' detracted from their BUCS experience, making it the most common detractor.

## Recommendation

**Support the collaboration of institutions, BUCS and national governing bodies to help progress the standard of officiating to improve the experience of students across the sector.**

- Standard of officiating is not something that one party improve on their own; this requires a collaborative effort.
- This year, BUCS will audit the coaching and officiating landscape and identify next steps to address this issue in partnership with members.

# COLLABORATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

## Finding

Commuter students, international students and postgraduates are reporting lower NPS ratings than the average respondent.

## Recommendation

**Institutions and BUCS should continue to identify enhancing and detracting factors of the sport experience for these groups to improve their student experience.**

- BUCS will join the wider conversation about commuter students to identify levels of sport participation in this group.
- The Football Development team, in partnership with members, will trial opportunities for international students to identify their needs and preferences.

# COLLABORATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

## Finding

International students report that sport can help them make friends and become part of a community, but they also face additional barriers that British students don't.

## Recommendation

**Club committees should consider having an international student rep.**

- This representative could help international students overcome the initial hurdles and feel welcome.



# ANY QUESTIONS?

For further information, please email me  
at [Liz.Prinz@bucs.org.uk](mailto:Liz.Prinz@bucs.org.uk)

