

Government announces latest tranche of funding from winter phase of sport survival package

The Government has announced the latest tranche of funding from the winter phase of its Sport Survival Package, which will see £40 million provided to horse racing, rugby league, speedway and drag racing, alongside approximately £10 million in further support for National League football clubs across Steps 1-6.

The horse racing industry will benefit from £21 million in loan support, committed to the Levy Board. The funding will ensure essential race day integrity costs and related health and safety expenditure are safeguarded, enabling the Levy Board to continue their programme of financial support and funding into the industry which has suffered considerably as a result of Covid-19.

Men's professional Rugby League clubs will receive a further £16.7 million in loans, delivered as a top-up to the [existing £16 million emergency loan scheme provided by the Government in May 2020](#), to reflect current circumstances. This is in addition to £1.45 million of grant support from the scheme for the community and women's games which complements £300,000 grassroots financial support through the Sport England Tackling Inequalities Fund. It follows the National Lottery announcing it had become an official partner of the Rugby Football League and of Women's and Girls' Rugby League last week.

Motorsports on both two wheels and four will also benefit, with Speedway clubs and Europe's first permanent drag racing venue set to receive funding. Speedway clubs have been offered £300,000 in loan support, while Santa Pod Raceway will receive £843,000 in loan support.

Meanwhile a further 20 clubs across Steps 1 and 2 of the National League system will receive funding of loans and grants worth £6.8 million, bringing the total provided to clubs at these levels through the winter phase of the Sport Survival Package to £11.5 million. It follows the Government announcing [an initial 19 Step 1 and 2 clubs had been offered loan packages worth up to £5.4 million on 19 February](#).

Steps 3-6 of the National League System have also been awarded a further £3.1 million of grant support, following [up to £10 million grant funding for clubs in Steps 3-6 being announced on 27 January](#). This will bring the total support for the 880 clubs at Steps 3-6 of the National League system to up to £13.1 million, with funds again to be distributed to clubs through the Football Stadia Improvement Fund, administered by the Football Foundation.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

We promised to stand by and protect our major spectator sports when we had to postpone fans returning.

Through our Sport Survival Package and existing business support schemes, we have helped hundreds of clubs to survive this difficult winter period. As the turnstiles begin to open over the coming weeks, players, staff and fans across the country can now look forward to a full return to action with confidence.

Chair of the independent Board, Sir Ian Cheshire said:

As we look to the conclusion of the Winter phase of the Sport Survival Package, this tranche of £50 million in support funding for rugby league, horse racing, speedway, drag racing, and clubs playing in football's National League will ensure these clubs and organisations are able to sufficiently recover from the financial impact of the pandemic.

Following the government's announcement that a further £300 million of Sport Survival funding has been made available, the Independent Board will now focus on getting this funding to those summer spectator sports in most urgent need.

Today's announcement comes as Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden is set to visit Victoria Park in Warrington, where the Year 8 girls of Cardinal Newman High School will be the first team in the country to get back into organised outdoor team sport through a pre-school training session with the Warrington Wolves Foundation.

It marks the start of a major year for Rugby League. The Culture Secretary will make the draw for the third round of the Challenge Cup today, and the season will culminate with the men's, women's and wheelchair World Cups in October and November, and around 90% of matches being hosted in the North of England. Victoria Park will use a new 3G pitch that has benefited from the Government providing £25 million towards the staging of the Rugby League World Cup, and improving community facilities to help grow the sport at grassroots level.

The £300 million winter phase of the Government's Sport Survival Package is focused on helping those major spectator sports severely impacted by coronavirus restrictions survive the winter and cover essential costs. Over recent weeks funding has also been provided to rugby union, National League and women's football, badminton, basketball, netball and ice hockey. Yesterday the Government announced £88 million in loan support to men's Premiership Rugby Union clubs. Submissions for support have been made from individual sports to an [independent decision-making Board, supported by Sport England](#).

The Sport Survival Package is the most generous bespoke support from any Government for its domestic sport sector in the world. It comes as part of

the sector benefiting from more than £1.5 billion worth of business support that has been made available by the Government, including the furlough scheme, business rates relief and business interruption loan scheme that has helped many sports clubs and leisure businesses to survive.

Earlier this month [the Chancellor announced a further £300 million of support](#) via the Sport Survival Package that is expected to benefit major summer spectator sports such as cricket, tennis and horse racing, as the path out of lockdown continues and sports stadia initially open at reduced capacities. Further details, including how cash will be distributed, how organisations can apply and timeframes, will be announced by Sport England in the coming weeks.

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Notes to editors:

- A detailed [factsheet](#) on how the Sport Winter Survival Package works and the criteria when assessing applicants has been published by Sport England.
- Julie Harrington, Chief Executive of the British Horseracing Authority said: “We are extremely grateful to officials at Sport England, DCMS and the Treasury for their support in agreeing this funding to racing. We are grateful also to the Horserace Betting Levy Board for agreeing to our proposal and borrowing this money to support the central funding of racing. This money will help ensure racing continues behind closed doors despite the absence of spectator revenues. This will benefit our racecourses, our participants and their communities, and the vital role racing plays as an employer and contributor to the rural economy.”
- Ralph Rimmer, Chief Executive of the Rugby Football League, said: “We are very grateful to Government and Sport England for their ongoing practical support to Rugby League. Lockdowns and restrictions have meant a two-season impact in Rugby League with professional and community clubs having had virtually no revenues from spectators for the whole of the 2020 season and the first part of this season. Playing, watching and being involved in the sport will be central to the recovery of our communities. We’re excited to be back at all levels with clubs delivering outstanding sporting entertainment and a huge range of vital activities at the heart of their communities; and fantastic grassroots playing opportunities for girls, boys, women and men including our physical and learning disability offers, Wheelchair RL, Touch, Tag and Masters RL. We were delighted to announce last week the new commercial partnership with The National Lottery which focuses on Women’s Rugby League, helping to ensure that the momentum which has seen Women’s Rugby League grow by 53% since 2017 continues in this special World Cup year and beyond.”
- Mark Bullingham, Chief Executive of the Football Association said: “Clubs across the NLS system play a pivotal role in the heart of their communities and often support many youth teams. Support for them is crucial at this difficult time, so we welcome the Government’s additional funding.”
- Rob Godfrey, Chairman of British Speedway, said: “Government and Sport

England have been very supportive of the needs of British Speedway clubs and the effect the pandemic has had on them. Taking the time to understand our sport, they have worked closely with a number of speedway clubs to understand their needs, and ultimately provided this crucial funding to help them make it to the starting tapes in May. We hope this is the start of support for speedway with our most vulnerable clubs accessing early funding support.”