

## Summary of the Discussion with Clubs – AGM Part II (In-Person Session)

Touch Switzerland

29 November 2025, Bern

### 1. Purpose of the Session

After the formal AGM concluded, representatives from several clubs stayed for an in-person facilitated discussion. The goal was to:

- Share club-specific contexts and ambitions for 2026
- Identify common challenges across clubs
- Explore regional formats, development pathways, and competition structures
- Receive updates from on coaching and high-performance plans

Participants came from Lakers, Terre-Sainte, Basel, Switzers, Uri, Bern, and representatives from the Executive Committee (which included unofficial representation from Zug and Geezers).

### 2. Club Contexts and 2026 Goals

Each club briefly presented their situation, strengths, challenges, and their focus for 2026.

*Bern (Roger)*

- Player growth slowed: only two new players this year (compared to ~10 previously).
- Introduced internal pillars/roles (social media, tournaments, meetings) to reduce over-reliance on one organiser.
- Strong interest in women's development, but tension between:
  - A desire to let women play more mids to develop, and
  - A high-performance core focused on international tournaments.
- For now, the club will continue prioritising its competitive pathway while looking for ways to develop women more intentionally.

*Basel (Pete)*

- Basel remains a primarily social club, with large attendance (30-50 players in summer).
- The challenge is balancing:
  - Highly social players who want casual touch, and
  - Players wanting more training for Swiss Cups.
- Increasing numbers of national-team players in the club.
- Positive referee engagement – often 2-3 volunteer referees at trainings.
- Goal: continue strengthening structured training and maintain a healthy social core.

*Terre-Sainte (Alex)*

- Club is young, restarted in July 2022; now at 28 registered members with ~15 attending weekly.
- Only five women and one youth player – aims to grow female participation significantly.
- Level improved rapidly thanks to a dedicated head coach (Leo).
- Competed in all four Swiss Cup stages in 2025, showing meaningful progress.
- Challenges include:
  - Managing a mix of new and more experienced players
  - Keeping training positive and development-oriented
- 2026 goals:
  - Play all Swiss Cup stages
  - Compete 2–3 times abroad
  - Increase coaching knowledge (Alex plans to obtain coaching certification)
  - Encourage refereeing within the club
  - Engage local schools and expand youth pathways

#### Switzers (Fede & Vic)

- Historically a casual club; training culture now improving.
- Significant growth in women's numbers in 2025 (five new women since January).
- Introducing a mid-week coached training session to improve technical play.
- Strong performance in plate divisions during the season.
- 2026 goals:
  - Better structured training
  - Identify players interested in Swiss Cup competition
  - Maintain growth in women's participation

#### Uri (Raph & Ramona)

- Hosted their first-ever home tournament, which successfully engaged the local community and brought new players.
- Strong women's numbers – unlike many clubs, no shortage of female players.
- Two referees currently, with a third in development.
- Major challenge: athletes also play Rugby 7s and Rugby Union, causing scheduling conflicts during key periods.
- 2026 goals:
  - Grow tactical understanding (“new moves”)
  - Participate fully in regional and national events
  - Continue building mixed-gender participation and community engagement

#### Lakers (Stéphane)

- Focus areas:
  - Recruiting more players
  - Improving skills and increasing coaching quality
  - Creating a second competitive team
  - Developing touch within Lausanne and Vaud region

- Concern: lack of competitive fixtures nearby; to access strong opposition, Lakers must travel abroad.
- Encouraged more structured coaching pathways and coach certification.
- Want a more predictable competition structure to sustain player motivation throughout the year.

#### *Zug (Tom, unofficial representation)*

- Very strong development environment: new players join almost every Saturday.
- The club regularly fields two teams and benefits from strong youth/teen engagement.
- Long-term, steady growth driven by clear structure, strong coaching, and patience.

#### *Geezers (Jen, unofficial representation)*

- Zurich introduced separate trainings for Cup and Plate teams → improved team identity, especially for the Plate team.
- Experienced success implementing:
  - A small intra-club league
  - Opportunities for members to obtain Level 1 referee badges
- 2026 focus: strengthening internal pathways and maintaining team-identity culture.

#### *Shared Themes Across Clubs*

- Many clubs are transitioning from fully social to semi-structured models.
- Women's participation varies widely: some clubs struggle; others (e.g., Uri) flourish.
- New player onboarding processes differ – Zug was noted as an excellent example of integrating complete beginners.
- Several clubs seek guidance on:
  - Structured coaching
  - Recruiting and retaining women
  - Running intra-club leagues
  - Finding ways to field complete teams consistently

### **3. Breakout Discussions – Regional Formats & Scheduling**

Groups discussed how best to run regional events under the flexible structure Touch Switzerland proposes for 2026.

Key points reported back:

- *Flexibility is essential*  
Many clubs want freedom to schedule games:
  - On weekday evenings
  - Across multiple small meetups instead of fixed full-day tournaments
  - Adapted to regional school calendars and pitch availability

- *Interest in continued 4v4 formats*  
Benefits noted:
  - Excellent for development
  - Easier to organise with small numbers
  - Accessible for new players
  - Good for training referees
 Clubs emphasised the need to eventually transition to 6v6.
- *Some clubs need mixed-gender support; others need men's/women's tiers*  
There is no one-size-fits-all:
  - Some clubs can field men's/women's teams easily
  - Others rely heavily on mixed formats and composite teams
  - Mixed remains important for many social-level clubs
- *Regional boards suggested*  
Groups recommended forming a small regional coordinating body to manage:
  - Scheduling
  - Communication between clubs
  - Allocation of pitches
  - Setting local formats (4v4, 6v6, coaching before games, etc.)
- *Hosting considerations*
  - Weekly or fortnightly match nights were popular in several regions.
  - Some clubs noted challenges with their assigned region and suggested realigning for 2026.

#### **4. Discussion: Domestic Competition Format**

Discussion around the structure of the Domestic Competition Format.

Key concerns from some clubs:

- Lack of competitive women's teams makes 6v6 women's games difficult.
- Some regions cannot reliably field full Mixed teams (West Division).
- Fear that certain formats may "punish" clubs without sufficient gender balance.

Creedy and Jen clarified:

- The goal is long-term development.
- Mixed is already well established; men's and women's touch need growth.
- Regions can decide their own selection processes for Men's & Women's regional teams.
- Flexibility will be maintained; feedback is heard and will inform adjustments.

#### **5. High Performance and Coach Development**

Creedy concluded the session with several important updates.

- High Performance (HP) 2026

Switzerland will send the following teams to the European Championships in 2026:

- Mixed Open,
- Senior Mixed 30,
- Men's 45

Decision explained transparently: Women's numbers in eligible age brackets were too low for competitive women's teams at Euros.

HP training will be open to everyone:

- Not just national squad players
- Fast-track development for ambitious players
- Younger talents will be included in HP training even if not age-eligible yet.

- Coaching System Launch

Creedy unveiled components of the new Coaching System:

- Core Framework (principles + delivery + reflection)
- Tactical Playbook
- Coaching Solutions Manual (answers to club-submitted questions)
- Users' Guides for implementing the system in trainings
- The system is designed to support 3+ years of structured training.

TS will run:

- Online walk-throughs
- In-person sessions for coaches
- A future day of filming for video explanations using ~16 volunteer players

- Offer of HP staff to support regions

Creedy offered support from HP coaches (e.g. Creedy or Peri) to attend regional match days or development days to:

- Coach
- Mentor club coaches
- Help regions build competitive capacity

- Emphasis on Women's Development

Creedy highlighted:

- Long-term necessity of building strong women's touch
- Importance of modified formats (like 4v4) to develop all playing roles for women
- Current age distribution constraints that made certain divisions unviable in 2026

## 6. Closing

The session closed with agreement that:

- Clubs share many of the same challenges and can learn from each other.
- Flexibility is key to making regional events successful.
- More coach education, shared resources, and HP involvement will benefit every club.
- The proposed coaching system and increased regional autonomy offer strong foundations for 2026.

Participants left with a clearer understanding of:

- Each other's club environments
- The reasoning behind TS competition formats
- The support available from HP and TS leadership
- Shared goals for growing touch across Switzerland at every level

TS will follow up with groups and individuals.