Sports Tech Ireland

Industry Report
2024

Ireland, the place to be for
SportsTech Talent, Research,
Innovation and Enterprise.

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99%

Contents

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Ireland's Sports Tech Industry Overview

About this report

Overview

The last 5 years has seen exponential growth across the sportstech industry both in Ireland and globally with significant growth and success for the industry in Ireland. There is a lot to be excited about considering the momentum that this sector is experiencing – sportstech entrepreneurs, researchers, educators, government and established companies, must innovate and evolve if Ireland wants to be a leader on a global stage.

This report is designed to present an overview of the sportstech industry in Ireland, profiling the size, geographic distribution, and the technologies used by the indigenous and multi-national companies, and the market segments targeted. It delves into the distribution of tech types, company stages, and the growing presence of international companies within the Irish market, and profiles some thought-leaders, supporters and entrepreneurs in Ireland.

Many of the insights are generated from conversations with key industry leaders and contributors and includes some key themes and opportunities for the evolution of the sportstech industry in Ireland over the next five years.

Sports Tech Ireland

Established in 2017, SportsTech Ireland is the leading not-for-profit cluster initiative dedicated to the sports technology and innovation sector in Ireland.

SportsTech Ireland's purpose is to represent, connect and grow the sportstech industry so that Ireland can be a global leader in sports technology. Our role is to serve as a central platform to bring together all stakeholders within the industry to share ideas and knowledge to propel the industry forward, across talent development, research & innovation and enterprise development.

We are committed to expanding our industry reputation, global connections and entrepreneurial ecosystem, and continuing to play a leadership role in the future development of the sportstech industry in Ireland.

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EY Ireland are the official data partners of Sports Tech Ireland in the delivery of this report. EY are the market leaders in delivering data & analytics strategies for clients.

EY are the largest data & analytics practice in Ireland and their team has unmatched experience in developing pragmatic, focused, data & analytics strategies across a range of clients. Their multi-disciplinary team has over 300 data and analytics professionals across Dublin, Cork, Belfast, Limerick, Galway and Waterford with a further 400 employees within their Global Offshore talent hub.
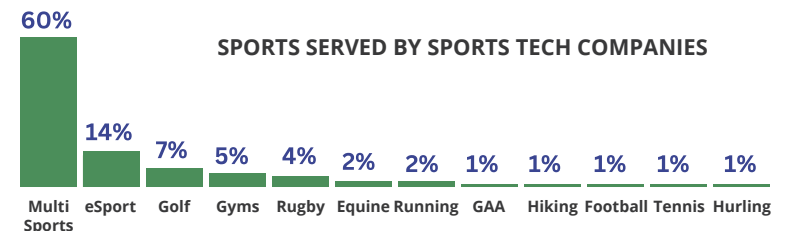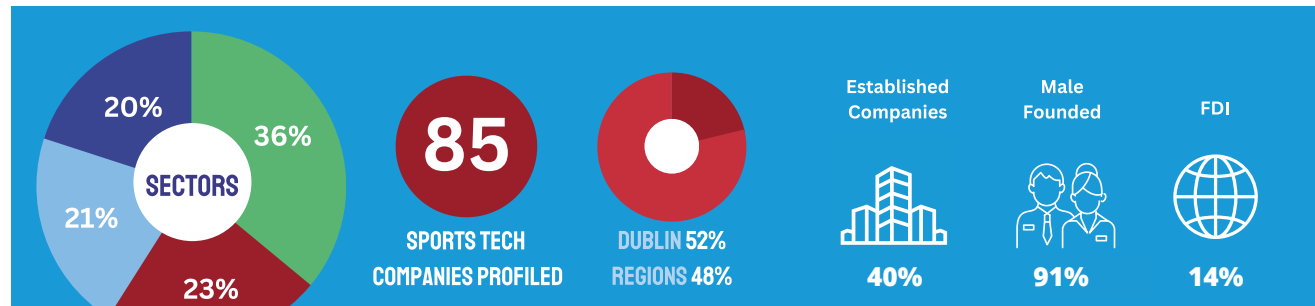
Executive Summary

The world of sport engages all. Like most industries, sport is converging with the world of technology, innovation and digitalisation to form a new industry, Sportstech. Today, Sportstech is a booming global industry that leverages cutting-edge technology solutions creating a new ecosystem of sports, talent, and organisations. The definition of sportstech includes companies working at the intersection of data, digital, science and technology applied to the fields of Sport, Health & Fitness, Media and Sportainment, eSports, Stadium and Fans.

This report explores the Irish sportstech industry, based on an analysis of the indigenous and multi-national companies operating here, in key segments such as Athletic Human Performance and Participation, Fan Engagement, and the Business of Sport. The report explores the industry's features, such as sectoral growth, geographical distribution, technology usage, company maturity, and sports diversity. It also identifies the main technologies that drive innovative solutions for the industry, and the main market segments that the sector targets.

The report shows the current situation and future potential of the industry, with some key themes and opportunities highlighted for the development of the sport tech industry in Ireland. With rapid sportstech growth projected world-wide, and many major sporting events on the horizon for Ireland, this is the moment to create a strategic vision for the Irish sportstech industry. This is the time to develop a national strategy for industry development, research, collaboration and innovation.

Industry Overview : The Irish Sports Tech Industry in Numbers

Sectors pie chart:
- Athletic Performance: 36%
- Business of Sport: 23%
- Sports Participation: 21%
- Fan & Consumer Engagement: 20%

85 SPORTS TECH COMPANIES PROFILED

DUBLIN 52% REGIONS 48%

Established Companies **40%**

Male Founded **91%**

FDI **14%**

SPORTS SERVED BY SPORTS TECH COMPANIES

Multi Sports	eSport	Golf	Gyms	Rugby	Equine	Running	GAA	Hiking	Football	Tennis	Hurling
60%	14%	7%	5%	4%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

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The Sports Tech Industry Overview

The Sportstech industry is booming, fuelled by a huge increase of interest in sports, which is simultaneously revolutionising the sports industries, creating new opportunities for athletes, fans and the business of sport. In 2022, the industry was valued at $22bn globally, with predicted growth to $42bn by 2027 and continuing to $79bn by 2032.

This global industry growth is attributed to:

- The continuous innovation in sports analytics driving athlete and team performance.
- Increased focus on fan engagement, through mobile and social technology
- The digital transformation of stadiums
- And the surging adoption of esports

All these factors are driving a sharp interest from big tech with regards to the technologies being deployed by companies in their sportstech solutions, with **61% ICT-based** (cloud, data, mobile), **15% advanced materials**, **14% sensor-devices** and **10% health and biotech**. Technologies like AI, blockchain, AR & VR and now 5G, Web3, and ChatGPT will further drive opportunities to new levels and change

the sports industry in ways we have not yet imagined.

Live sports data capture and content distribution is a key driver for the industry fuelled by the demand from fans and media broadcasters alike. The convergence of entertainment with sports is fuelling an appetite for streaming and behind-the-scenes action into the world of athletes and the sports industry. Across the global, fans & content has seen the most investment is technology solutions to enhance the fan experience.

Furthermore, VCs and Private Equity are moving more towards sport, with investment coming from all parts of the world, which has a natural capital flow onto the sportstech industry. In Ireland, we have seen evidence of this with the series C round by Kitman Labs, and the sale of Kairos sportstech to Teamworks.

The possibilities for AI in Sport are virtually endless in their application, particularly across both computer vision and generative AI, and this will further propel the exciting growth of the sportstech industry in the coming years.
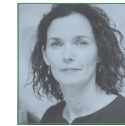
Gráinne Barry
SVP Operations Stats Perform /
Co-Founder SportsTech Ireland

" The sportstech industry has experienced exponential growth and is forecasted to double once more in the next five years. This surge is driven by leveraging technological advancements in various aspects of sports, including enhancing human performance, engaging fans, and optimizing the business of sport. Opportunities abound with the integration of AI and the intersection with other sectors like sustainability, future mobility, eSports, and health.   This results in an industry driving job creation, economic growth and trade and investment. "

Martina Skelly
Founder YellowSchedule.com /
Co-Founder SportsTech Ireland

" In Australia, the size of the Sportstech industry is close to that of the Fintech industry. This reflects the ambition of the industry and the dedicated support of the government, in enabling the industry to thrive both domestically and internationally.

The Sportstech and Healthtech industries are closely aligned and this presents a key opportunity for Ireland in developing technologies to empower people to live healthier lives, through digital tools and data which drive great physical participation. "

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Why Ireland for Sport Tech?

The importance of sport for the Irish economy and society is undeniable. According to a 2021 study by Sport Ireland, sport contributes €3.7bn to the national GDP, and has grown faster than the overall economy in the last decade. Ireland now has over 60,000 people employed in sport across Ireland.

Sportstech is a relatively new industry in Ireland, but one that has grown rapidly in the last five years. Ireland has a competitive advantage in the field of sports technology, thanks to its strong ecosystem of data, engineering and regulatory expertise. In addition, Ireland is world-renowned in the field of sports performance analysis, with many of our Irish-trained analysts working with some of the best clubs, leagues and federations internationally. The pool of sports analysis talent in Ireland is a valuable asset for the development and growth of sports technology companies. Our third level institutes are responding to the growth in the industry with programme development in both the technical and non-technical fields of the business of sport.
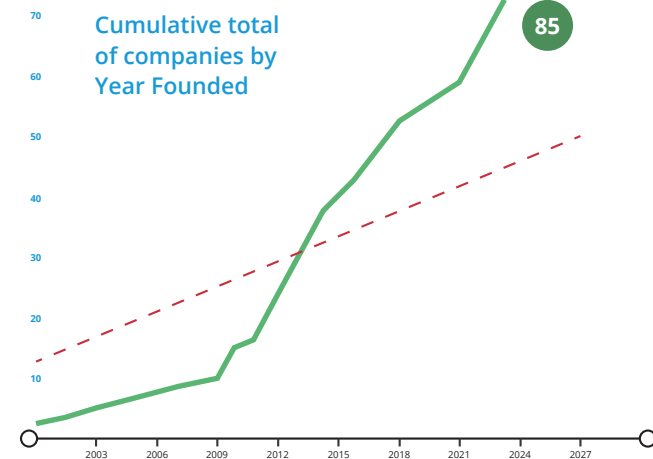
Moreover, Ireland's achievements in various sports at international level attracts global attention and create opportunities for innovation and collaboration. In Ireland, sport is in our DNA, as is being sporting, and Irish fans play their part in the ecosystem, particularly with customer and fan engagement within the sportstech industry.

At a European level, countries such as the Netherlands and France have been proactive in establishing sportstech as a key part of their regional development planning, alongside fintech and healthtech. Denmark has focused their efforts on the development of a national strategy for a thriving eSports industry. And internationally, best practice in Australia has demonstrated the value of industry building and economic impact from sportstech.

Ireland has the potential to become a thought-leader in SportsTech across Europe and has some unique opportunities. By combining our expertise in Cybersecurity, the new opportunities in Sustainability and most importantly in Data, and Data Analytics, areas where we already have significant competitive advantage, Ireland can lead the way.

Company Growth

Cumulative total of companies by Year Founded

85

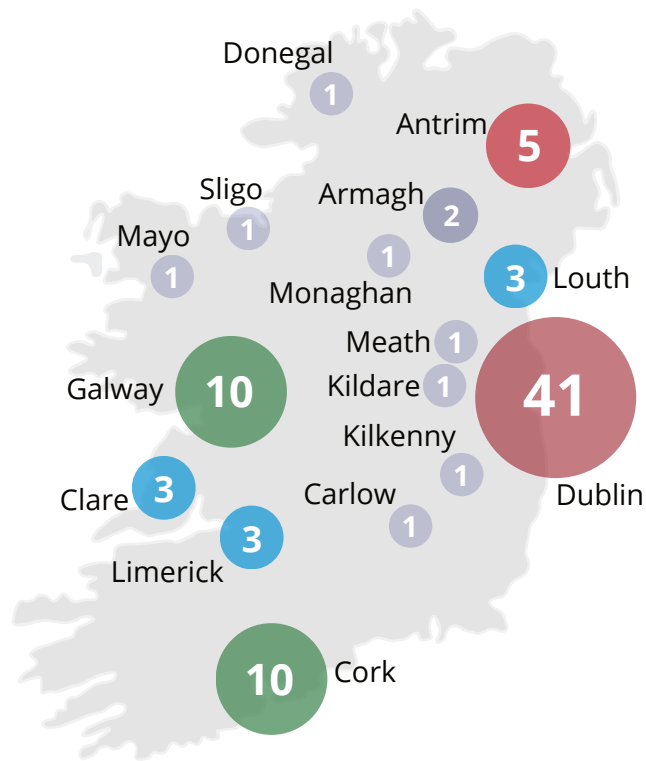EY Building a better working world   Official Partner

Geographical focus of Sport Tech Businesses

The sport tech industry in Ireland has a strong presence across the country, with a concentration of businesses based as expected in our capital city, Dublin. It's positive to see a nationwide spread, with almost 1/3 of companies based in the mid-west Atlantic corridor from Galway – Limerick – Cork, and representation across 16 counties. A strong presence in Northern Ireland, with 8% of all companies profiled, indicating potential for an all-island approach to industry development.

Most of the sportstech companies are city-based locations, demonstrating suitable ecosystems of supports required. Talent availability, skills education and funding opportunities are the main drivers behind their city locations, as well as flexibility of co-working spaces and innovation hubs which can assist with accelerating early success.

% of Sports Tech Companies by County

Donegal 1
Antrim 5
Sligo 1
Armagh 2
Mayo 1
1
Louth 3
Monaghan
Meath 1
Galway 10
Kildare 1
Dublin 41
Kilkenny
Clare 3
Carlow 1
Limerick 3
1
Cork 10

Ian Sheerin
Senior Manager - Data Analytics, EY

" The combination of a highly skilled workforce, the cultural significance of sport in our everyday lives, and supportive government bodies leading to big tech interest and investment mean that Ireland is fast becoming a big player in the ever-growing Sports Tech industry.

From large-scale, globally recognised companies who are partnered with some of the biggest sports organisations in the world to locally focussed SMEs aiming to help their clubs, patrons and communities the industry in Ireland has never looked so vibrant.

As technology improves so does the appetite to use it in new and exciting ways – we are starting to see the impact that A.I. capabilities are having across all industries and the Sports Tech industry is no different in this regard.
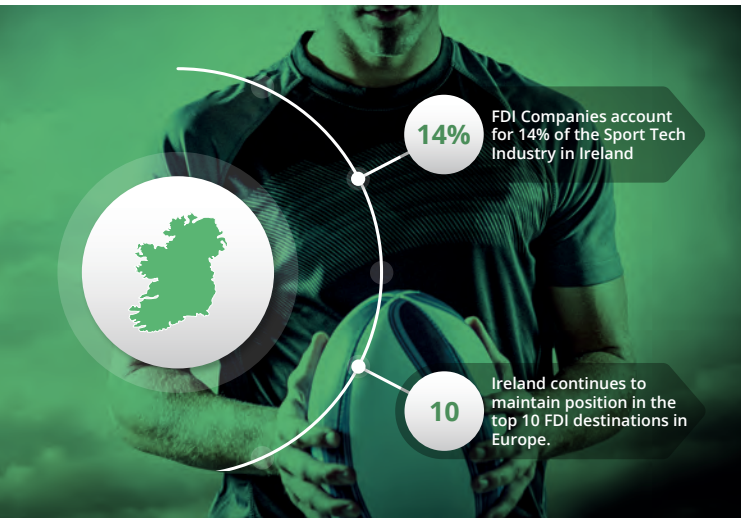
The highly-skilled nature of the workforce here in Ireland has helped fuel the growth in the industry and we are seeing more and more demand for these skill-sets – with specific, tailored third level options surely not too far away.

We look forward to continue to seeing the Sports Tech industry thrive in the future. "

FDI Spotlight

14% — FDI Companies account for 14% of the Sport Tech Industry in Ireland

10 — Ireland continues to maintain position in the top 10 FDI destinations in Europe.

FDI Growth

FDI Companies account for 14% of the Sport Tech Industry in Ireland, 42% of which are at an established company stage. 2021 saw FDI companies in Ireland jump by 3 which is an increase on the average of 1 per year. The IDA have provided funding and support to 75% of the FDI Companies in Ireland with 4 of the companies in the esports sector and the remainder combined in performance, analytics,

health and well being. Multi Sport and esports are the primary sports serviced by FDI's with 50% of them selling B2B and 17% adopting a hybrid approach of B2B and D2C.

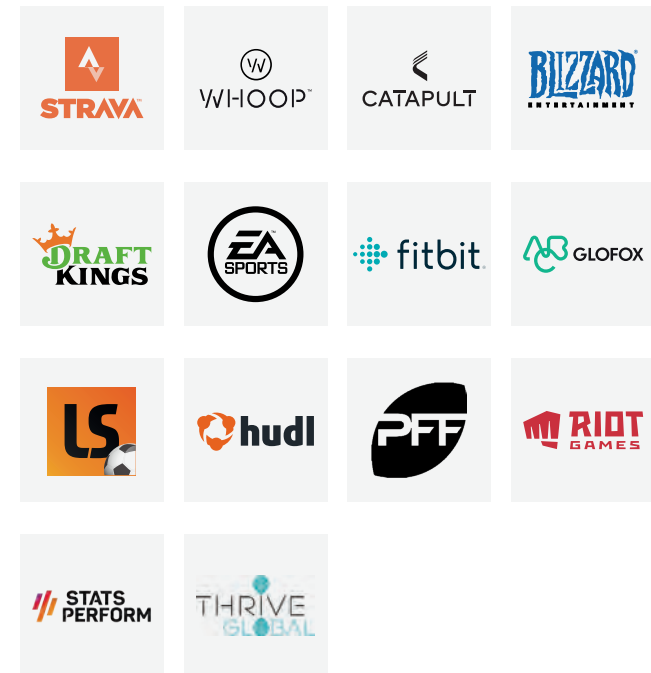**Ireland continues to maintain position in the top 10 FDI destinations in Europe.** Ireland has the highest FDI per head of population within the Top 10. Dublin is the 4th most popular FDI destination with taxation, our education system and business friendly environment contributing to Ireland's attractiveness for FDI's to establish themselves here.

The growth of FDI Sports Tech Companies in Ireland aligns to the overall growth in FDI reported in 2022 with numbers directly employed in the multinational sector in Ireland reaching 301,475, the highest Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) employment level ever and a 9% increase on 2021. 127 of the 242 investments won went to regional locations – with employment growth in every region of the country reported.

Source https://shorturl.at/tvGV6

FDI Companies

Sports Tech Ireland are delighted to partner with the following FDI Companies:

STRAVA WHOOP CATAPULT BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT

DRAFT KINGS EA SPORTS fitbit GLOFOX

LS hudl PFF RIOT GAMES

STATS PERFORM THRIVE GLOBAL

FDI Company Spotlight

James Farrell
SVP Content, Consumer,
Business Services & Emerging Business
at IDA Ireland

"Ireland's depth of skills, capability and partnership opportunities are delivering a vibrant and welcoming ecosystem for global SportsTech and SportsData companies. More than 20 such companies are located here, operating as part of this dynamic sector. Ireland's strengths across digital, data and people make it a prime location for the SportsTech industry to drive growth, develop and test solutions and to analyse performance, engagement and reach.

As a global technology hub, Ireland has core capabilities that can deliver exceptional complementary services, products, supports and innovation to the SportsTech industry. World class digital and data research centres provide access to valuable know-how and Ireland's talented, flexible workforce offers the digital and data expertise necessary to help global firms serve global markets.

Our connected ecosystem of networks and partners enhances Ireland's attractiveness as a location. A prospering homegrown SportsTech sector and various national partnerships and initiatives delivered by government agencies such as IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, Sport Ireland, Science Foundation Ireland and Sports Tech Ireland further support this exciting sector."

Riot Games, (Riot), founded in 2006, and headquartered in Los Angeles, CA, is a direct-to-consumer video game developer and publisher of premium, competitive online games for consoles and PC's. It has over 20 locations globally, including teams in Berlin, Germany, Sao Paulo, Brazil, Tokyo, Japan, Singapore, China and Seoul, Korea. In 2009, the company launched its debut title, League of Legends, which has gone on to be the most played PC free to-play mid-core title in the digital gaming market. Following the launch of League of Legends in Europe, Riot decided to insource support to drive user engagement and growth across Europe. As a result, in 2010, Riot established its own Customer Service Centre in Dublin, initially employing 50 people. Riot subsequently took the decision in 2013 to establish its European HQ in Dublin. The centre is now responsible for publishing and operating the game in Europe and comprises a broad range of functions including, EU leadership, creative management, financial planning, localisation, publishing, and marketing of the game in Europe together with

player support, community, technical operations, billing/finance, and HR. Headcount in Dublin currently stands at 165.

In July 2022, Riot opened a new Remote Broadcast and Content Production Centre (RBC) in Swords, Dublin. This new centre is the first of up to three facilities in a global follow-the-sun model chosen by Riot with two further RBCs under development for the USA and Asia/Pacific regions. Each will be able to produce six events simultaneously across production and audio rooms, bullpens, and live stages. The aim is to cater for Riots' 234 million plus fans around the world and an industry that is valued at €1.6 billion annually. The RBC in Dublin is positioned to transform the future of broadcasting and content production on a global scale. It is the culmination of €17 million investment by Riot and will create a further 120 new roles when fully operational. The new jobs will include positions across broadcast engineering, production, control crew and event production.

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FDI Company Spotlight

Strava is a social athletic platform that provides an app for tracking exercise which incorporates social network features. The service was founded in 2009 and is headquartered in San Francisco. Primarily, the Strava app operates as a dashboard for its members' fitness. Additional features include a calendar for inviting friends to work out, a feed to follow others' activities, a blog for race reports, photographs and a message board. The Strava app is applicable across a range of sports but is primarily associated with cycling and running. Strava has approximately 100 million users globally, with the app having been downloaded 10 million times in 2023 alone. Strava first established an operation in Ireland in 2021. It selected Ireland as its newest office location in order to access the high-calibre talent available, as well as for its proximity to and European market and Strava's UK office. The team in Dublin covers a number of functions including product and design, community management, content moderation, and trust and safety. Approximately 20 people are employed by Strava in Ireland.

Stats Perform is the market-leading sports technology company across media and tech, betting, and team performance. Originally founded in 1981, Stats Perform provide content to multimedia platforms, television broadcasters, leagues and teams, fantasy providers and players, in addition to major B2B and B2C brands. Stats Perform have a diverse client listing which includes: the NBA, FIFA, IRFU, NFL, Google, Yahoo, Apple, Duke University and NBC. In 2014 Stats Perform was acquired by Vista Equity Partners. Since then, a new professional management team has been put in place, including Vista Senior Managers and a range of bolt-on acquisitions and divestments have been carried out by Stats Perform to diversify its product and client base. Vista specialises in corporate restructuring and has been highly successful in building new businesses around fast growth technology opportunities. Stats Perform is the global leader in sports intelligence, operating at the intersection of sports and technology. The world's most innovative brands, technology companies,

leagues and dozens of world championship teams trust Stats Perform to find their winning edge. Stats Perform combines the industry's fastest and most accurate data platform with video analysis, sports content and research, player tracking through STATS SportVU®, and a range of customizable digital solutions for brands. Stats Perform employs over 2,500 people, in 25 locations globally with operations and sports coverage on every continent.

In 2017 Stats Perform opened their EMEA HQ in Limerick with roles across Customer Support, Product Support, Broadcast Research, HR, Finance and Data Collection agents. Limerick was chosen due to its lead location for the sports technology cluster in Ireland, and the availability of talent within the local region. In 2022 it added a Global Rugby Centre of Excellence and is now the world's leading data provider (media and performance) to the world's top rugby governing bodies and teams. New hires support video operations, data quality control and business intelligence in the area of the Rugby Union, Rugby League and Soccer. The company currently employs over 220+ full-time and part-time staff.

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Indigenous Irish SportsTech

Leading Irish Innovators

Over the past decade, the sports technology market has undergone a seismic increase in innovation and the adoption of digital technologies. Some of the leading Irish lights during that time include Kairos, Orreco, Kitman Labs and Statsports, all of whom have scaled internationally and are world-renowned for their research, science and innovation. Despite their success only 31% of the indigenous companies have received funding to date. Further growth in Sports tech startups with the ability to scale internationally could be achieved if start-up funding pathways could be further enhanced, and Ireland lags behind the big 3 funders in Europe, UK, Germany, France, with Europe accounting for 20% of all sportstech industry funding globally (source: sportstechX)

SportsTech Ireland have created a directory of all indigenous sportstech companies in Ireland, to help raise the profile of this 'sunrise' industry and a growing area of innovation for Ireland.

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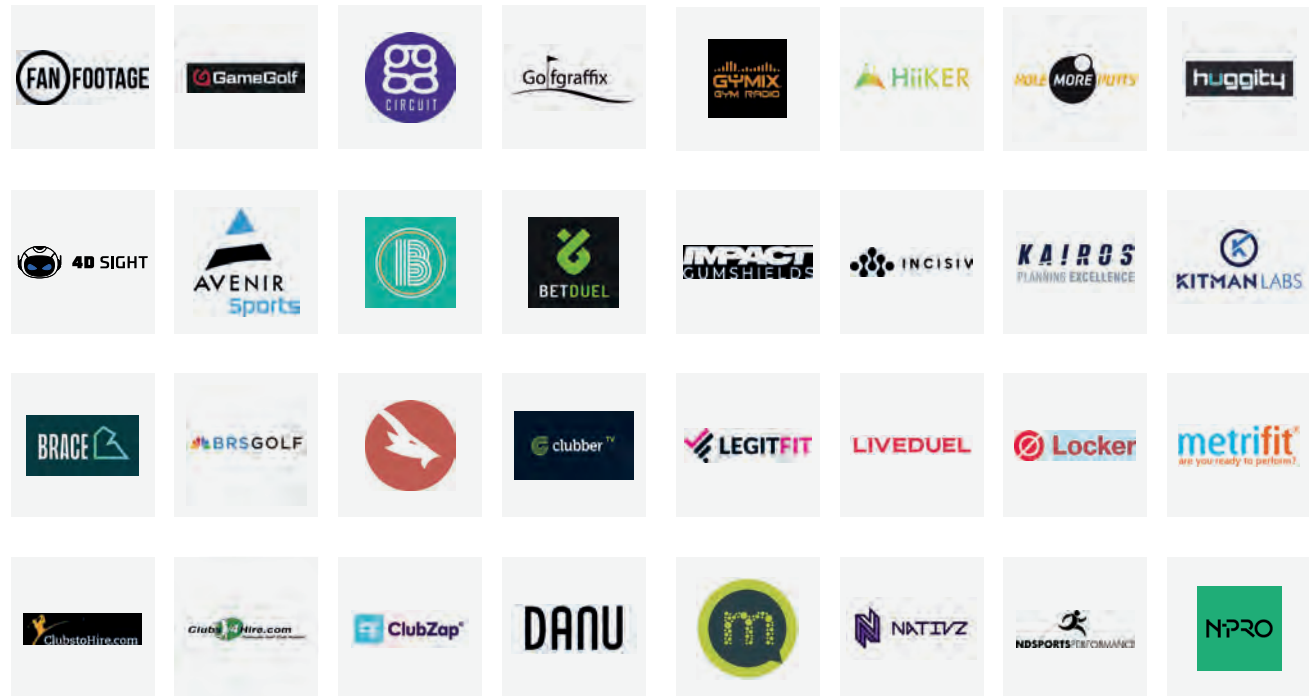
Indigenous Companies
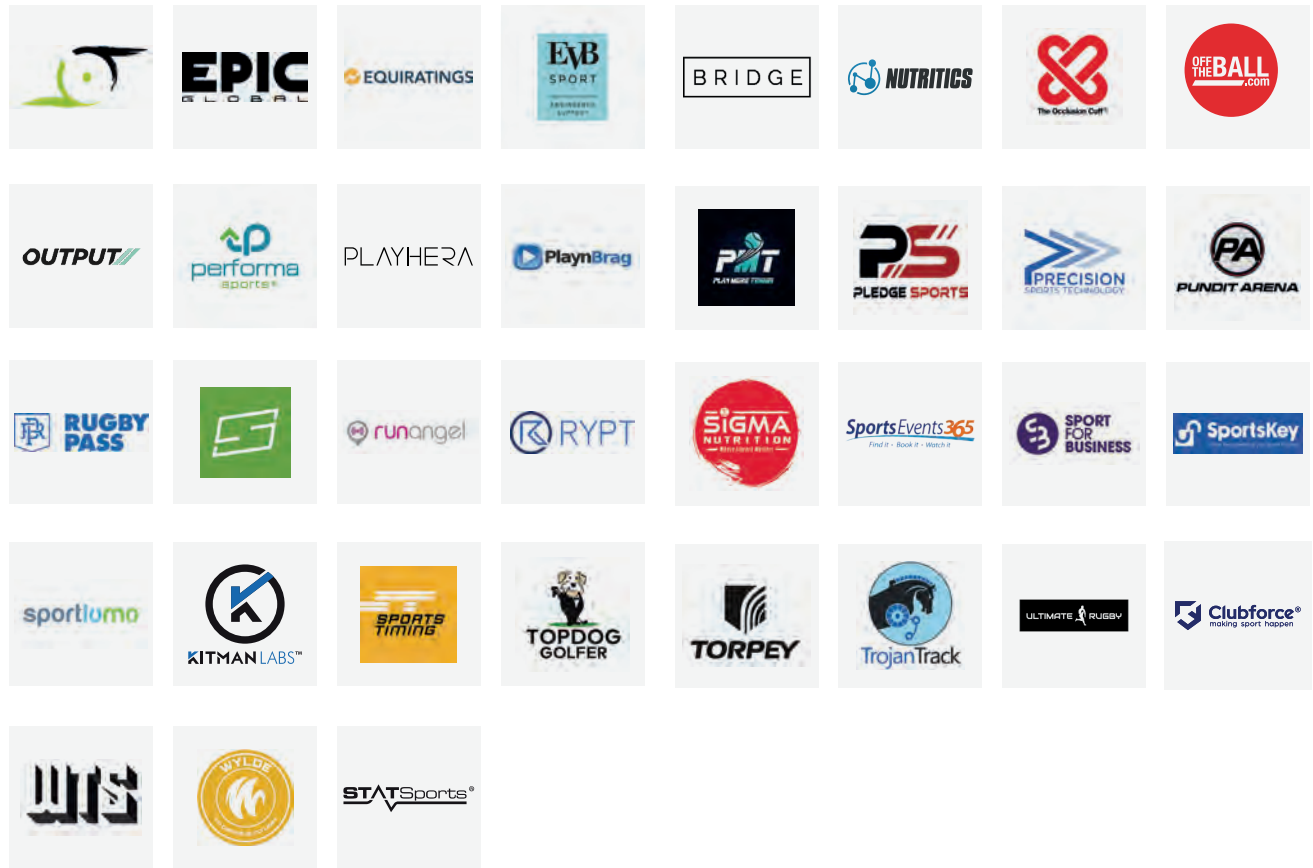
Keith Brock
Senior Development Advisor
for Sports Tech
Enterprise Ireland

"In the world of sports, where inches can determine victory and milliseconds can break records, technology is emerging as the game-changer. Ireland has become an international powerhouse in the sports tech industry, spearheading innovation that's changing the face of athletics worldwide.

From enhancing athlete performance to redefining fan engagement, Irish sports tech companies are leading the way with cutting-edge solutions that have caught the attention of major global sports leagues and brands from the NFL to NBA, English Premier League Teams, PGA golfers, Olympians and F1 drivers.

Enterprise Ireland is supporting and investing in a cohort of 40 Irish sports tech companies. Enterprise Ireland entered into a strategic innovation partnership with the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU), the governing body for rugby in Ireland. This partnership is designed to support Irish companies by giving them access to a unique evaluation environment to trial, test and validate their products in an elite sports organisation."

Indigenous Company Spotlight

KAIROS

Kairos is a Team Operations & Communication system, trusted by elite teams worldwide. This comprehensive platform seamlessly integrates team planning, daily communication, and player management, streamlining essential functions into one centralised system. Teamworks' acquisition of Kairos represents a significant investment in the Professional Sports market.

orreco

A fast-growing west of Ireland-based sports tech firm uses machine-learning and data analytics to monitor the health of athletes, helping to accelerate recovery, optimise performance and prolong careers. The company has profiled more than 2,000 athletes on the PGA tour, players and teams in the NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL and the World Cup-winning United States women's national soccer team.

OUTPUT

Output Sports make elite-level sport-science data simple and scalable. Output Sports off-field athlete testing and monitoring system provides data akin to a range of lab-based sports-science equipment with a single wearable sensor. Working across elite sports, universities, grassroots sports and strength and conditioning, clients include English FA, Premier League Clubs, Olympic athletes, Coach Les Spellman (speed coach to top NFL draft picks) and multiple performance centres.

> " ORRECO is a sports and data science company supporting the best athletes on the planet. Our team includes 19 PhDs who have together published over 300 Peer Reviewed scientific papers. Since the launch of our AI-powered 'Te@m' platform in 2023 we have elevated our business beyond the UK and US and we've secured multiple new clients in leagues around the world including EPL, WSL, NBA, NFL and the WNBA.. Te@m is a ground-breaking Data Analytics and risk management platform for performance staff allowing our clients to surface insights from their athlete's data. Awarded best in athlete performance in the SBJ Tech Awards and Irish Times Innovation of the Year Award for the FitrWoman our team, client lists and datasets are growing rapidly. "

> " Output Sports is a wearable sensor solution used to track progress in weight rooms & rehabilitation settings. It also centralises this data to allow for improved training programs, injury risk stratification and talent identification. The company originated as a spin out from the UCD School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science, launching our first product in 2020. Following the release of our V2 system in October 2022, we have scaled considerably, particularly in the US. We plan to double our workforce to 40 people over 2024 & continue product development to ensure practitioners at all levels of sport have access to high quality performance data. As the company has grown we have been supported by groups such as Enterprise Ireland & Sports Tech Ireland in areas such as network development, industry engagement & go to market planning. "

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Key Insights & Ireland's Opportunity

Business models and maturity within the Sport Tech Industry

In the Irish Sport Tech industry, 54% of companies focus on selling B2B, this reflects the collaborative nature of the sector, where companies work together to enhance the overall Sport Tech ecosystem. Meanwhile, 36% opt for a D2C approach, prioritizing personalized experiences for end-users, signifying the industry's commitment to delivering innovative products and services that cater to individual sports enthusiasts.

Additionally, 10% employ a hybrid model, catering to both B2B and D2C markets. This highlights the industry's adaptability and flexible approach to serving diverse customer segments, maximizing business opportunities. Examining business types across sports

reveals noteworthy trends. Esports, following Multisport, stands out as the second-highest sport with companies adopting a B2B model at 12%. Gyms also play a role in the B2B category, constituting 5% of businesses, emphasizing the need for fitness and training innovations.
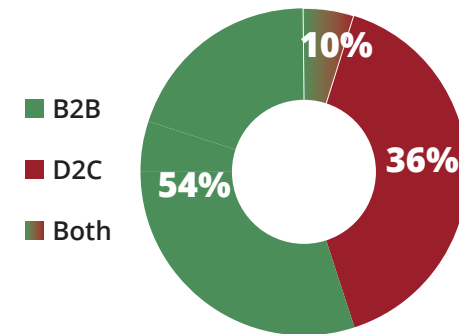
In the D2C category, Golf is prominent after Multisport, highlighting a focus on personalized experiences for golf enthusiasts who seek tech solutions to improve their game.

Multisport, esports, golf, and football companies often employ a hybrid model, combining B2B and D2C approaches. This recognizes the diverse needs of both businesses and individual consumers, showcasing adaptability within the industry.
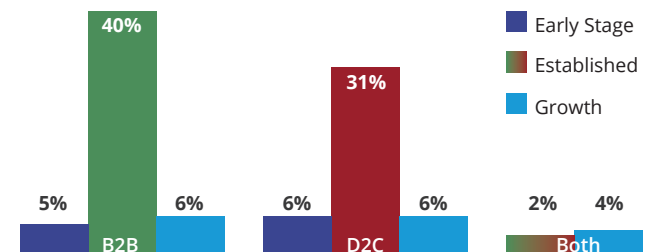
When considering the correlation between company maturity and business models, we observe certain trends. Established companies, comprising 40% of the industry, are more likely to focus on B2B services, leveraging their experience to support other businesses within the Sport Tech ecosystem. On the other hand, companies in the early and growing stages

exhibit a more balanced distribution, with 6% adopting a D2C approach in each category. This suggests that younger companies are exploring direct engagement with end-users to establish their brand presence and gain market traction.

Business profile

B2B — 54%
D2C — 36%
Both — 10%

%GT Count of Tech Type by Business Type & Company Size

Early Stage
Established
Growth

	B2B	D2C	Both
Early Stage	5%	6%	2%
Established	40%	31%	
Growth	6%	6%	4%

Sports represented by the Sports Tech Industry

The sports tech industry in Ireland paints a vivid tapestry of innovation, embracing a wide spectrum of athletic pursuits across 12 distinct categories.

- **The multi-sport sector** dominates the market with 59.5% market share, indicating its significance. Among these companies, 68% are well-established, demonstrating their ability to develop versatile technologies. Only 8% of these companies offer hybrid models, favoring B2B solutions. Amidst the multi-sport realm, further layers of insight emerge. Of the companies catering to a multitude of sports, 63% actively engage in the broader athletic arena. These ventures can be categorized into segments such as athletic performance enhancement, sports business operations, active participation facilitation, and fan engagement strategies. With 13.6% deploying mobile applications, 11.1% relying on Real Time Feeds (RTF), and 8.6% harnessing GPS technology, the multi-sport sector underscores its commitment to staying at the forefront of technological innovation. Furthermore, within this multi-sport category, 17.3% of companies focus on elevating fan engagement and entertainment, utilizing real-time feeds, mobile apps, and GPS tools to foster deeper connections with audiences. Another 14.8% concentrate on optimizing athlete performance and averting injuries, reflecting the industry's conscientious dedication to athletes' holistic well-being.

- **Esports** constitutes 14.3% of the companies, they offer a comprehensive suite of services, encompassing tournament management, game development, content delivery, event orchestration, platform advertising, and fan engagement. This segment's ascent highlights its growing influence both as a competitive arena and as a platform for immersive fan experiences.

- **The Golf industry** is represented by 7.1% of companies who have introduced a host of tech based solutions for event coordination and performance enhancement.

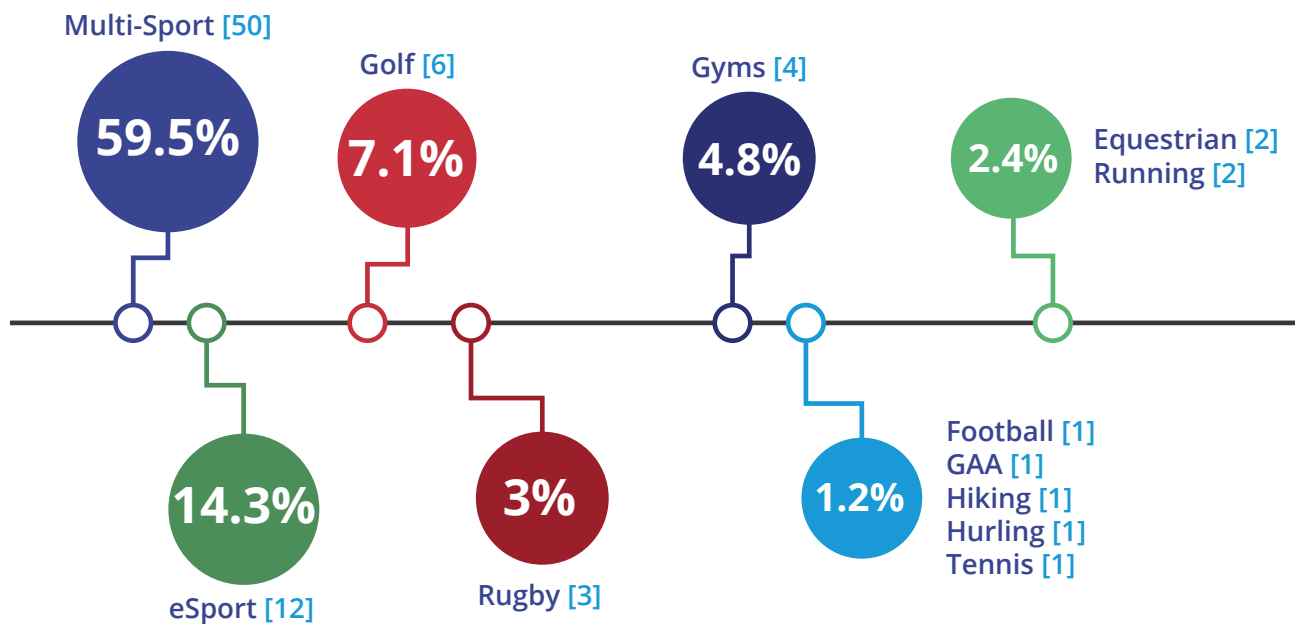- **Fitness facilities and gyms** constitute 4.8% of the market bringing technological advancements to the workout domain ranging from curated workout music to efficient facility management and customer interactions.

- **Rugby** technology claims 3.6% of the market share manifesting in athlete performance analysis, dedicated rugby news apps, web platforms, and real-time broadcasting. This smaller percentage illuminates the industry's recognition of the value of data-driven insights and instantaneous information dissemination within traditional sports.

- **Equestrian sports** represent a modest 2.4% of the industry demonstrating that sports technology is permeating into the less conventional sports. Companies here specialize in injury prevention, equine performance analysis, and data-driven event result enhancement.

- **Gaelic Athletic Association** sports like hurling, tennis, and hiking collectively account for just 1% each. However, these sports are also encompassed by the multi-sport sector, showcasing its adaptable nature and the industry's potential for cross-disciplinary innovation.

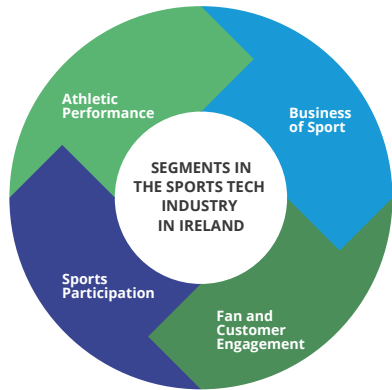# Sports represented by the Sports Tech Industry

In summation, the Irish sports tech industry presents a mosaic of innovation, spanning a multitude of athletic pursuits across various categories. The dominance of multi-sport companies reflects their agility, while specialized sectors like eSports, golf, and fitness underscore the industry's commitment to innovation and service. This intricate tapestry of sports technology solutions exemplifies the broader trend of harnessing cutting-edge tools to enrich performance, fan engagement, and the overall sporting experience across a spectrum of sports.

Sports Tech Companies Focus

Multi-Sport [50]
59.5%

Golf [6]
7.1%

Gyms [4]
4.8%

2.4%
Equestrian [2]
Running [2]

14.3%
eSport [12]

3%
Rugby [3]

1.2%
Football [1]
GAA [1]
Hiking [1]
Hurling [1]
Tennis [1]

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Sports Tech Industry Segments

This report includes data on the sector breakdowns within each segment

Athletic Performance

The Athletic Performance segment consists of solutions aimed at enhancing athletes' training, performance and injury prevention. The segment encompasses 30 businesses in Ireland (36%). Among these, 67% utilize software technologies, while the remaining 10% employ hardware and 23% have both which is the only segment fully utilising the use of the hybrid model. In this segment 27% of companies focus on serving multi-sport.

Equestrian emerges as the second highest sport served by the Athletic Performance segment, assessing horse injury and performance as well

as the use of data in event performance.

The Athletic Performance segment can be further categorized into two sectors:
- Performance analytics, and
- Health and Wellness

96% of businesses focus on performance analytics solutions while the remaining 4% specialize in health and wellness.

Technologies are mainly deployed through Saas solutions within this segment at 31%.

Business of Sport Segment

The Business of Sport segment comprises solutions that cater to various aspects of sports administration, management, team communication, funding and operations. 19 businesses are represented within this segment amounting to 23% of the businesses surveyed. The majority (84%) of these businesses are developed through Saas solution offerings, while 11% focus on hardware. The types of businesses that they sell to are predominantly Multi sport with e sport also prevalent

Fan & Customer Engagement

The Fan and Customer Engagement segment includes technologies designed to enhance fan experiences, ticketing, loyalty programs, and customer engagement in the sports industry with 17 businesses operating within this segment accounting for the 20% share in this segment. 100% of these businesses have developed SaaS solutions with e sports rating highest of all segments.

Sports Participation Segment

The Sports Participation segment encompasses technologies that promote and facilitate sports participation among individuals and professionals across all sports. The segment consists of 18 businesses and 21% of the segment breakdown.

SaaS solutions dominate the market with a share of 72%. Hardware solutions represent 28% of the businesses. Multi-sport holds the majority share, but Golf leads the way as the next sport with Gyms also rating highly.

The Sports Tech Sector Breakdown

The sector breakdown of the sports tech industry provides valuable insights into the distribution and focus of various segments within the industry.

Performance analytics emerges as the dominant force, commanding 35% of the share, indicating the significance of data-driven performance assessment and leveraging technologies such as AI, ML, GPS, RTF, and VR for performance evaluation.

AI/ML integration is a prevailing tool at 11.9% with GPS technology (7.1%) employed to monitor player fitness and positioning.

The Organization and Venue management segment constitutes 14.3% of the sector with the leveraging of software applications (58.33%) as the primary means of serving their organisational needs. These Saas solutions leverage data cloud, apps, and API technology.

The Media, Content, and Broadcast segment contributes 10.7% of the sector. Software applications (67%) and platform/website integration (33%) are the predominant channels for information sharing with RTF, APIs and GPS leveraged for real time broadcasting.

Health and Wellness constitutes 6% of the industry focusing on nutritional supplements, performance psychology and women's health products. API, data/cloud and 3D technology are prevalent in this sector. There is opportunity for growth here.

In conclusion, the sports tech industry's sector breakdown showcases a balanced distribution of segments The dominance of performance analytics underlines the data-driven evolution of sports while the evolving role of technology in enhancing fan experiences, club management and athlete wellness highlights the industry's dynamic nature.

AI ML driven solutions make up 52% of the Global Sports Technology market, IOT stands at 26% and AR/VR solutions make up 22% of the Global Sports Technology market. AR/VR driven solutions are predicted to experience significant growth over the coming years.

The Sports Tech Solutions

Companies within the sport tech industry have innovated by developing Software, Hardware and in some cases both as a hybrid. In some cases the progression of product growth can lead to a hybrid model which is evident in the high proportion of established companies at 75% in this category.

Among the companies surveyed, 79% provide software solutions, this showcases the prevalence of technology-driven innovations in this sector. Software as a service is used strongly at 50% in the software offering with mature companies high in this category, also platform and mobile rank high. But 64% within this software offering target the B2B sector which could signify future growth for providing services to other sports tech companies.

With respect to hardware only 12% of companies specialize in providing only hardware solutions. These companies are mainly D2C at 70% with 30% selling B2B. These hardware technologies are delivered through E commerce and SaaS solution offering predominantly. Of the companies surveyed, 10% are providing Integrated Solutions.

This indicates a comprehensive approach to addressing the industry's requirements. This offering of both hardware and software solutions features among 75% of established companies and 25% early stage companies who are equally targeting B2B and D2C. These hybrid technologies are deployed through mainly Saas and E Commerce solutions.

The Sport Tech Industry in Ireland is broken down into five technology categories Software as a service (SaaS), Platform, Mobile, eCommerce and hardware. These cover solutions for each sector across indigenous and FDI companies.

- **SaaS Solutions**
  The industry predominantly relies on Software as a Service (SaaS) as its primary tech delivery method across multiple sports categories, accounting for 61% of the split. This indicates the industry's preference for cloud-based solutions that offer scalable, subscription-based services.

  Multisport holds the largest share, with 35% of SaaS solutions deployed in this

category. Esports follows with 12%, indicating the importance of software-driven solutions in the rapidly growing esports sector. Gyms, Golf and Horse Racing account for the remaining 9% of SaaS usage. SaaS solutions are being adopted across all sectors namely Athletic performance at 31%, e sports at 14% with clubs and organisations at 8%.

- **Platforms**
  Platform delivery holds a significant share of the market at 20%. This highlights the importance of integrated platforms that facilitate various functionalities and streamline operations within the sport tech ecosystem. Media, Content and broadcast sectors lead this tech usage.
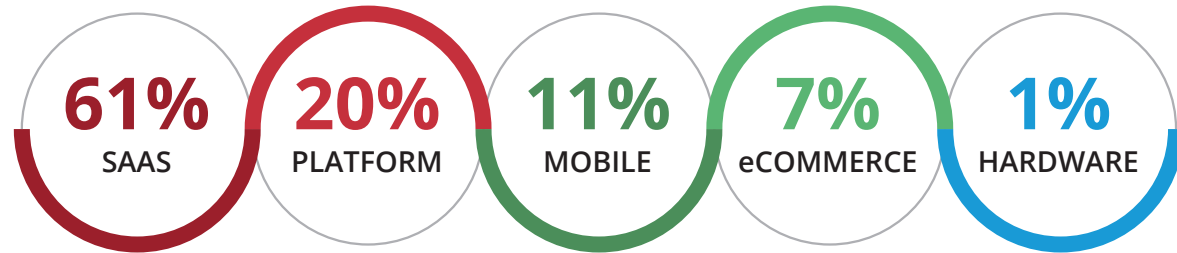
- **Mobile**
  Mobile applications play a notable role, accounting for 11% of the tech delivery split. This reflects the industry's recognition of the growing reliance on mobile devices and the need to offer user-friendly and accessible solutions on the go aimed at multi-sports (5%).

- **Ecommerce**
  Ecommerce solutions, enabling online transactions and commerce, represent 7% of the tech delivery split. This indicates the importance of providing seamless purchasing experiences and enabling digital commerce within the sport tech industry Ecommerce delivery solutions primarily cater to the multisport category. Sports participation and fan engagement are the two segments utilising digital commerce.

- **Hardware**
  Hardware solutions have a smaller share, comprising just 1% of the tech delivery split, there is a preference therefore for SaaS and platform based solutions.

- **Graphic (opposite)**
  Sports Tech Company Modalities

61% SAAS   **20%** PLATFORM   **11%** MOBILE   **7%** eCOMMERCE   **1%** HARDWARE

Brian Moore
CEO, Orreco

"Orreco was co-founded by Dr Andy Hodgson and I in Sligo. Andy had the clinical background, and I had the sports science side and we built from there. We sought the expertise of Prof John Newel and Dr Colm O Riordan to integrate machine learning from the start and ensure we were building our architecture optimally to benefit from the power of AII.

Along with angel support from very successful business people in Ireland like Pa Nolan (Fexco), Brian Patterson (Vodafone), John Moloney and Kevin Toland (Glanbia) we were blessed to be selected by Enterprise Ireland Accelerator programmes. That led to us becoming an Enterprise Ireland High Potential Start-Up. Their support was pivotal.

A big moment was when we secured VC investment, from Silicon Valley based True Ventures who were the first investors in Fitbit and Peloton. We've managed to secure other investors from the world of sports and business including Padraig Harrington, Graeme

McDowell, NBA hall of fame player and Executive Joe Dumars, Intercom co-founder Des Traynor, agent Todd Ramasar, Stride VC founder Harry Stebbings, Amazon's former VP of Technology Tom Killalea, and Jason Calacanis, who as entrepreneur-in-action at Sequoia Capital led early investments in companies including Uber. We were established in Olympic Sport, our first big break with elite teams came early on when Dr Paul Catterson, at Newcastle United, asked it to look at a player who had become fatigued and wasn't playing at his normal standard. It began to become known in professional sports circles, largely as a result of word-of-mouth recommendations from backroom staff and athletes who were thankful to get back to peak performance.

We're very proud to have an Irish heartbeat, but a global pulse. All of our R&D, engineering and AI work is still based out of our office in NUI Galway. We also have an office in London and one in LA.

Orreco is one of the leaders in our space, combining AI and bio-analytics to optimize performance and accelerate recovery of elite athletes. Orreco's bio-statisticians and sport scientists use AI to identify risk profiles from athlete training sessions, physiological data, match performance, travel schedules, styles of play, environmental conditions and recovery times. Allowing elite athletes and eventually us all to have an AI coach in our pockets".

Leading Target Markets in Sport Tech Industry

The sport tech companies in Ireland primarily focus on three target segments:
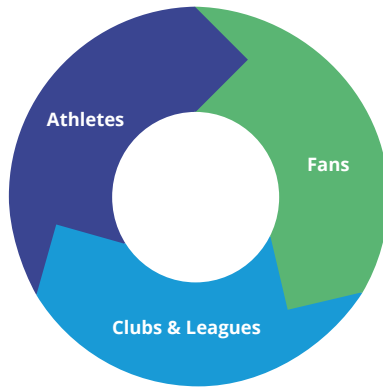
The Athlete Target Market holds a substantial share of 48% in the overall distribution of Companies targeting athlete performance. Of this, a notable 16% comes from Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs), reflecting a global interest in investing in athlete-focused technology solutions. It is mainly established companies targeting this market segment with the athlete target market also claiming the highest proportion (22%) within the Growing Company category showcasing the innovation happening within this market. Sport wise, the Athlete Target Market boasts a diverse range of interests after Multi-Sport, with Golf leading the way. Athlete Target Market thrives in the Athletic Performance sector (31%), while Sports

Participation represents 11%, indicating a focus on optimizing athletes' abilities and fostering active engagement.

Within the Fans target market 31% of companies are targeting this segment. E sports emerges as a major player at 31% following closely behind Multi sport at 68%. The market's indigenous nature (84%) reflects a localized approach to enhancing fan experiences, with a relatively equal spread across the Business of Sports and Fan & Customer Engagement sectors.

The clubs and leagues target market identify that 100% of this target market consists of indigenous organizations and the majority are at an established stage of maturity. Highlighting the strength and stability of this target. This is spread over Multi-sport, esports, Gyms, Horse Racing and Tennis showing the multitude of sports in this target market. Companies commenced by targeting domestic sporting entities showing their commitment to nurturing Irish sports, many have successfully scaled into the UK and international markets. Only 4% of these Clubs & Leagues targeting companies

have obtained funding from Enterprise Ireland. This target market is spread over all sectors but a stronger presence in the sport participation sector followed by the Athletic performance sector.

The target market could be enhanced by further innovative solutions if there was a collaborative efforts between Tech Companies and funding agencies.

Target Market Breakdown
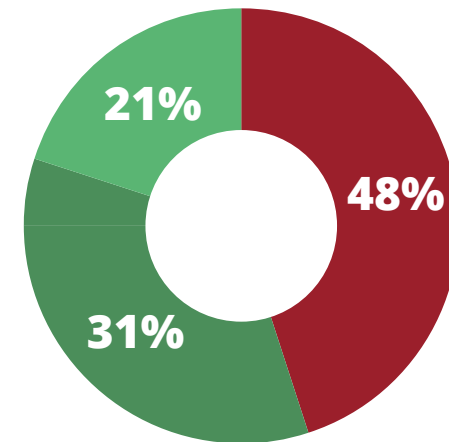
- Athletes
- Clubs & Leagues
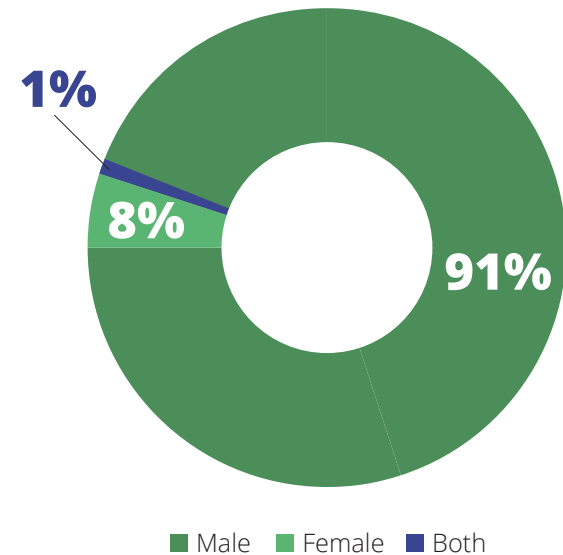- Fans

Sports Tech Founders, Gender Diversity

supporting female entrepreneurs to develop their skills and networks and to enter the sports tech market. The continued growth in Women's Sport, Femtech, STEM initiatives and diversification of the sports industry into FanTech, Customer Experience (CX), data and digital technologies is attracting more women into the sportstech sector.

Interestingly 38% of Founders have a sporting background, their insights may lead to more innovative and tailored solutions to meet their relevant target market, and it is also interesting to see their pursuit of entrepreneurial activity. The development of entrepreneurship and technology modules within our Sport Science, Performance Analysis, and athlete education programmes, can further fuel our future innovators. Monitoring and encouraging representation at all stages of company development will be crucial for fostering a more inclusive and balanced entrepreneurial landscape within the sports tech industry.

As expected, the sports tech sector is dominated by male founders (91%), reflecting the gender imbalance in both sports and technology fields. However, there are some signs of progress and diversity, with 8% of companies founded by women and 1% by mixed-gender teams. Initiatives by Awaken Hub, Network Ireland, EY and Sports Tech Ireland are

Founders by Gender

1%

8%

91%

■ Male ■ Female ■ Both

62% Non Athlete

38% Athlete

Women in Sports Tech Spotlight

Emma Meehan
Founder at Precision Sports Technology

Precision Sports Technology is a software startup developing a platform for real-time feedback and analysis on exercise technique to reduce risk of injury, enhance performance and increase participation in strength & conditioning and physiotherapy. The company was founded in 2021 by Emma Meehan after having spent four years writing code for the software part-time while undertaking her BSc in Computer Science & Information Technology and working as a software engineer with a large multinational firm. Since then, the company has grown to seven full-time employees based in Ireland, secured fundraising from Enterprise Ireland and angel investors and fifty customers on-board for pilots across professional sports and clinical physiotherapy.

"Ireland is an incredible place to start a company and I feel privileged to have access to this ecosystem. Between Enterprise Ireland, NDRC and Sports Tech Ireland, there are so many incredible resources available and people ready to help you. You just need to reach out - step outside of your comfort zone and see what you can achieve"

Precision Sports Technology is closing pre-seed fundraising at the end of 2023 and launching pilots with first customers.

Odharnaith Mc Kenna
Customer Insights Manager at Stats Perform

In the **Sports Tech** sector, my career journey is guided by a commitment to harnessing customer intelligence aimed at deepening our understanding of the sports tech industry. With roots in Sport Data Science, my initial focus was on enhancing athlete and team performance through game intelligence. Notably, I've contributed to groundbreaking projects, providing crucial insights into Women's Gaelic Football by offering benchmark data to better grasp game demands and provide actionable information for women in the GAA. Today, I leverage that expertise to elevate customer intelligence in the sports industry, focusing on transforming data into actionable strategies for meaningful improvements and exceptional customer experiences. Contemplating the exponential growth of the Sports Tech sector, encouraging more women to pursue careers in this environment is not just a necessity; it's a catalyst for innovation and success.

Envisioning the future of Sports Tech, it's not just about participation; it's a call for female leadership at the forefront, steering towards technology solutions that resonate across all sports spheres. Fostering an inclusive environment where women lead change is essential for shaping the evolving landscape of Sports Technology.

Sinead Hussey
Co Founder/COO at Epic Global

Epic Global is an industry leading gaming and esports agency bridging the gap between rights holders, elite talent, brands and the lucrative gaming and growing esports market. Established in Ireland in 2020, they're now a trusted partner of international sporting giants, world leading athletes and artists, global brands and agencies, enabling them to authentically impact gaming, esports and web3 audiences.

It's been an incredible journey over the past 3 and half years, we've grown the agency remotely in Ireland to now having teams across UK & Ireland with an ever expanding global client base.

There's incredible pride seeing an Irish owned start up compete and thrive on international sport & esports stages. We're privileged to count PSG, Munster, FAI, Everton, Norwich and so many more incredible rights holders as clients. 2024 is lining up to be our most ambitious and exciting year yet with significant expansion planned across our service offerings in addition to entering new markets and regions.

Talent and Skills Development

What an exciting time to work in Sports! Like most other industries, FinTech, AgriTech or HealthTech, the adoption of technology and the associated cultural and social shifts, are rapidly changing the game. The sports tech industry offers a range of exciting career opportunities for individuals with advanced data, AI and technical and commercial skills, combined with sports domain knowledge.

The Irish sports and technology education sector offer a variety of courses that prepare students for the intersection of sports and technology. Currently, there are 98 courses across 30 campuses and universities, covering both technical and non-technical aspects of the industry. The majority of the courses (85%) focus on coaching and performance, and sports management, which equip students with the skills to combine athletic and business expertise.

The remaining 15% of the courses concentrate on technical career paths, such as game design, CAD, design engineering and product design. These courses reflect the specific skill sets needed to advance the sector further.

Additionally, some specialized courses have been co-designed by Sportstech Ireland and Technology Ireland Digital Skillnet including the Digital Athlete programme for women joining SportsTech organisations, 'Transform'- A Postgraduate Diploma in Digital Transformation and Innovation and an innovative Postgrad Diploma and Masters in Sports Technology, Analytics and Innovation with Technological University Dublin. These recent developments directly address the needs and challenges of a data-driven environment and fuel the pipeline of talent for the sector.

To ensure that Ireland stays at the forefront of talent development and innovation in the sports tech industry, it is important to continue to identify and fill the gaps in skills and education. Furthermore, there is an opportunity to foster entrepreneurship and problem-solving skills among students, as well as to engage and inspire young people to pursue STEM careers through the lens of sports. By doing so, Ireland can position itself as a global leader in the sports tech sector.

Maire Hunt
Technology Ireland Digital Skillnet

" When people hear the words sports data and analytics, they think heart rate monitors and match stats. The reality is that for every sports analyst, there are 2 to 3 times more analysts looking and at fan behaviour trends and commercial data. This offers an opportunity to build new career pathways for those with a passion for sport, combining with technical and business skills. "

Dara Calleary TD
Minister for Trade Promotion and Digital Transformation

" Speaking at the launch of Ireland's first Postgraduate Diploma in Sports Technology, Analytics and Innovation.
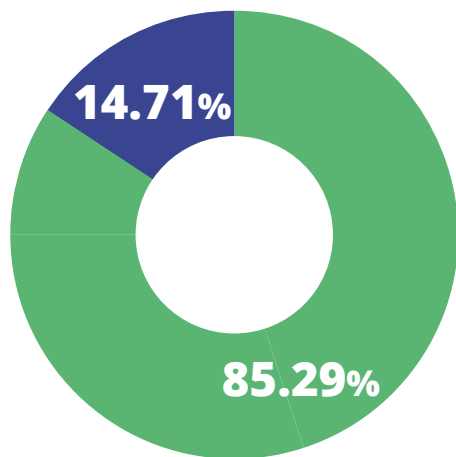
This exciting programme addresses the surging demands of the growing sports technology sector. Ireland has doubled its sports-tech foreign direct investment in the past three years, and this Diploma aims to further fuel this success by nurturing skilled talent. This is indeed good news for our nation's technological and sporting advancement. "
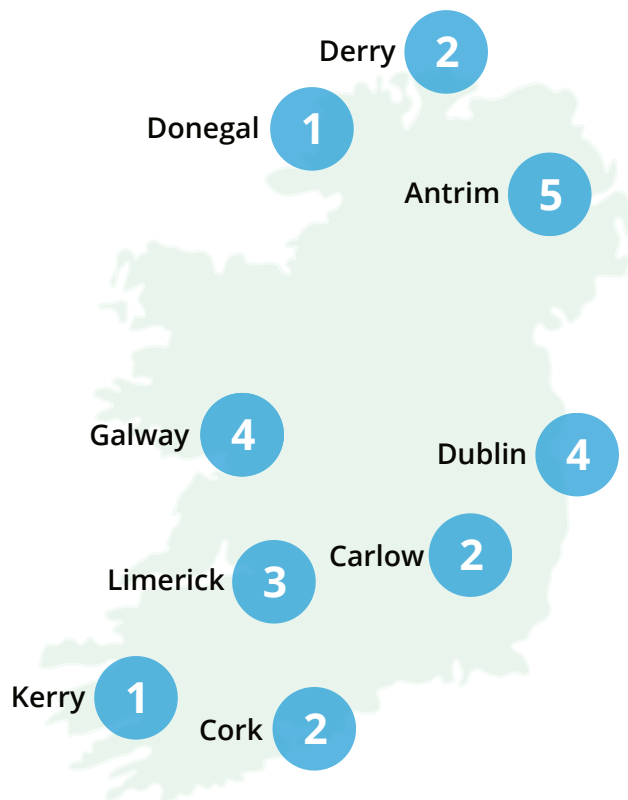
Education & Skills Development

% of College/Uni by Course Type

14.71%

85.29%

■ Non-Technical ■ Technical

College/Universities Location

Derry 2

Donegal 1

Antrim 5

Galway 4

Dublin 4

Limerick 3

Carlow 2

Kerry 1

Cork 2

Career Pathways

12 Sports Product Developer

Sports & Club Manager 5

7 Sports Scientist

5 Health & Fitness Coach

5 Physiotherapist

6 PE Teacher

5 Rehabilitation Therapist Sports Pscchologist

5 Rehabilitation Therapist

Future Industry Growth

SportsTech Ireland was established with an ambition to create a new industry for Ireland. We have created a directory of all the sportstech companies on the island of Ireland, which provides the foundation for the analysis of the industry. Since SportsTech Ireland started in 2017, the number of companies in the industry has grown significantly by over 200%. Ireland now has a strong and diverse Sports Tech ecosystem, supported by government, industry, and research. Ireland's digital and data skills, global connections, and innovation culture make it an ideal place for Sports Tech companies to grow and thrive.

SPORT

INNOVATION

TALENT DEVELOPMENT
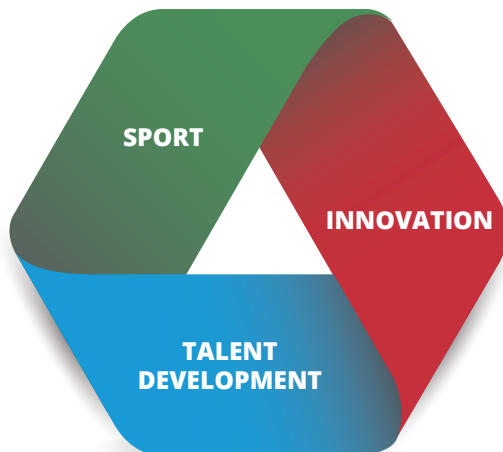
SportsTech Ireland have identified six key themes that will provide future strategic opportunities for the Irish sportstech industry.

1 **AI in Sport:** AI in sport will further enhance the performance, training, health, and entertainment of athletes, coaches, and fans, with unprecedented demand for data analysis and the application of AI.

2 **Women in Sportstech:** As in sports, women in sportstech are a minority, and the industry must work together to improve the ratio through STEM initiatives, female founder supports and education programmes.

3 **eSports:** Like Denmark, Ireland has the opportunity to embrace eSports as technologies evolve sports business opportunities, and look to combine on-field and off-field sporting activities.

4 **Sustainability & Sport:** Sports can lead the way in sustainability, with technology and innovation helping drive more sustainable practices within the sports industry.

5 **Active Living:** Technology can enhance the quality of life and well-being of people by promoting active living and healthy lifestyles. From wearable devices, to gamified fitness apps and smart clothing, technology can support participation and wellness.

6 **Web3:** Predicted to be the new frontier in technology, Web3, the decentralized and user-centric web, enabling new forms of interaction and collaboration among sports fans, players, and organizations.

Thank You

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working world   Official Partner

Supporters & Partners

Report Contributors
Sportstech Ireland would like to thank the following contributors for the research and analysis into this industry report:

Brenda Farrell,
SportsTech Ireland; Fiona Ryan,
SportsTech Ireland; Punam Mund,
EY; Ian Sheerin, EY

Sports Tech Ireland Company Directory
https://shorturl.at/cj258

Our Supporters
SportsTech Ireland would like to thank our anchor partner, Limerick City & County Council for their continued support of the cluster initiative, and their ongoing contribution to the SportsTech Ireland Advisory group.

SportsTech Ireland would like to acknowledge the contribution of Technology Ireland Digital Skillnet to the formation of the Sportstech Talent Advisor Group (STTAG), and the development of dedicated educational programmes for the sportstech industry.

SportsTech Ireland would like to thank all our collaborators across Sports, Education & Research and Government, who support our passion for building a sportstech industry for Ireland.

SportsTech Ireland | National Headquarters
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Report Methodology
SportsTech Ireland has applied a ground-up approach in developing this report in partnership with EY, using publicly available information as well as measured assessment with the industry.

EY
Official Partner

Appendix

EY

EY Ireland are the market leaders in delivering data & analytics strategies for their clients. With a global network of EY Data & AI capabilities at your fingertips.

EY are the largest data & analytics practice in Ireland and our team has unmatched experience in developing pragmatic, focused, data & analytics strategies across a range of clients who are facing the same challenges as the EPA. We have selected an experienced team who will bring a proven approach, supported by our unique accelerators like Wavespace, which has been developed with and refined across dozens of engagements, to deliver successful outcomes for your business.

CAPACITY & CAPABILITY

LOCAL

300+ Data & Analytics Professionals across Dublin, Cork, Belfast, Limerick, Galway and Waterford Offices

EY Ireland Wavespace AL Lab
Established in 2022 in Dublin to help clients shape and deliver the potential value. Includes partnership with ADAPT, Ireland's AI university collaboration and sponsorship of Sustainability PhD

Learning & Development
150+ EY Badges offering specialist training and accreditation, e.g. various MSFT Azure. Data Governance, etc.

Skills Matrix
Strategy, Architecture, Engineering, Data Science, Data Management, Data Integration, Advanced Analytics, ML, AI, Cloud Architecture & Engineering

GLOBAL
OFF-SHORE TALENT HUB

Europe
Data & Analytics
Government & Semi-State
Sustainability

Data & Analytics Centre of Excellence for Consulting and Delivery across **11 Cities** in India

COE and research hubs In Madrid, Spain and London, UK. Includes Europe Sustainability Data Analytics COE

400+ Data and Analytics Professionals with industry specific expertise across Europe

5,000+ Strong team of Data & Analytics
350 Digital Analytics Professionals
55 Global Implementation Engagements
3,400 EY Digital Badges
1,809 External Certifications

Other nearshore locations:
Belfast	Argentina
Poland	Mexico
Philippines	Spain
China	Sri Lanka

ALLIANCES

20+

Global Alliances with local delivery expertise (incl. Microsoft, SAP, IBM, Adobe, SAS)

2021 & 2020 Ireland Data Analytics Partner of the Year
Multiple Gold MPN Competencies Achieved by EY Globally
(incl. Gold Data Platform & Gold Data Analytics)

EXPERT SERVICES

Data & Analytics Expert Services

D&A Strategy | D&A Architecture | Data Governance | Cloud Arch & Implement | Data Engineering | Data Migration & Integration | Fin. & Reg. Reporting Transformation | Data Analysis MI & BI | Data Science, ML, AI

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Sports
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