

Running a grassroots sports club — be it football, netball, cricket, or any community-centered sport — often feels like juggling flaming torches. You've got registrations to handle, events to ticket, members to communicate with, and, of course, that all-important club website acting as your digital front door.

In the past decade, the rise of dedicated SaaS tools to handle each of these tasks has been both a blessing and a headache. Suddenly, your club's software stack might include one subscription for your site, another for registrations, a third for ticketing, plus messaging services for emails or SMS. Before you know it, your club is buried under subscription bloat — paying monthly fees that add up way beyond what you'd expect for grassroots budgets.

Today, let's dig into whether having a club website, event ticketing, and registrations all in one platform is realistic — especially for clubs managing ~500 players, parents, and supporters. We'll also cover how pay-per-send messaging fares against monthly tiers, the role free forms can play, and how to keep your costs (and admin time) manageable.

The Typical Tool Stack for Grassroots Clubs

Let's map out common tools at many grassroots clubs and their average costs per season (usually about 9 months, so I'll break down the math accordingly):

Tool Type	Example	Monthly Cost	9-Month Season Cost	Notes	
Club Website Builder	Wix / Squarespace	\$25	\$225		
Includes hosting & domain; limited forms	Registration Software	TeamSnap / SportsSignup	\$60	\$540	Handles player registrations, payments
Event Ticketing Platform	Eventbrite / Ticket Tailor	\$30	\$270 + per-ticket fees	Often charges per-ticket fees (hidden in pricing)	
Email/SMS Messaging	Mailchimp / Twilio	\$25	\$225 + per-message fees	Some platforms prefer pay-per-send	

Total: At least ~\$1,260 per season + ticket fees + per-message charges

When your club size approaches 500 players, parents, and supporters, these charges can escalate fast. Most subscription plans are tiered by contact counts or message volume — and often charge just for storing contacts in the system, not even using them.

The Hidden Costs: Per-Ticket Fees and Contact Storage Charges

One of the biggest annoyances I regularly see in club committee handovers is the shock of finally noticing "hidden" fees on ticketing platforms. For example, Eventbrite advertises free set-up and monthly fees but tacks on a 2%-3.5% fee plus 99¢–\$1.59 per ticket sold. For a club running a fundraising event with 400 tickets at \$15 <https://thetechleaders.com/how-sports-clubs-are-saving-thousands-by-replacing-paid-software-with-one-free-platform/> each, this can eat 10-15% of revenue.

Also, many messaging tools charge monthly fees on contact lists — meaning you pay simply for having a large group of contacts saved, regardless of whether you send them anything that month. It's frustrating because grassroots clubs don't send marketing campaigns daily; instead, they need occasional, timely messaging for game-day announcements, roster changes, or weather alerts.

Example: Messaging Costs for ~500 Contacts

- If a platform charges \$25/month for up to 500 contacts, but you only send 3 emails/month, that's \$225 per season.

- If using pay-per-send SMS, say 500 texts at 5¢ each, that's \$25 per major notification round.

Pay-per-send is often underappreciated in pricing comparisons but may offer the best bang-for-buck when messages are occasional and targeted.

Can Free Forms & Registrations Help?

Many clubs lean on Google Forms or Microsoft Forms for free registration forms. These are zero-cost and integrate fast. But...

- **They often lack secure payment options.** Payment collection usually requires manual follow-up or separate payment gateways like PayPal.
- **Reporting & data export is limited.** Importing registrant data manually to other systems creates admin headaches.
- **They do not integrate with club websites or ticketing events easily.** So, while free for forms themselves, they contribute indirectly to subscription bloat in other software.

Useful for low-volume registrations or auxiliary signups, but for 500+ players and families, free forms rarely replace specialized registration and ticketing software.

All-in-One Platforms: Fantasy or Feasible?

All-in-one platforms promise to combine club websites, registrations, ticketing, and communication under a single subscription — simplifying login woes, integrating data, and slashing fees. But how realistic are they for grassroots clubs?

Advantages

- **Simplified admin:** One login and system reduces committee handover friction.
- **Unified data:** Player registrations feed directly into ticketing (for events like season launches, fundraisers).
- **Better cost predictability:** Flat fees instead of surprise per-ticket fees.

Challenges

- **Subscription bloat remains:** Most all-in-one tools still charge monthly fees tied to contact counts or seat licenses.
- **Feature compromises:** The website builder might not be as powerful; ticketing features may be basic.
- **Limited personalization:** Off-the-shelf "all-in-one" platforms aim for mass adoption, so may not fully fit your club's workflows.

Sample Pricing Scenario: An All-in-One for 500 Members

All-In-One Platform Monthly Fee Season Cost (9 months) Includes Additional Fees ClubHub Pro \$85 \$765
Website + registrations + ticketing + messaging ~3% payment processing fees

Here's a story that illustrates this perfectly: made a mistake that cost them thousands.. Compared to fragmented solutions (\$1,260+), this seems attractive. But clubs must evaluate if the platform's features meet their detailed needs — especially if they require advanced ticketing options or complex registration forms.

Key Tips for Grassroots Clubs Considering an All-In-One Solution

1. **Map your workflows first.** Write down exactly what your club needs for site content, registrations, ticketing, and communication. Don't buy on hype.
2. **Investigate how platforms count contacts and message volumes.** Avoid platforms that charge for every stored contact regardless of activity.
3. **Calculate your true per-season costs.** Don't get fooled by low monthly prices without understanding message or ticketing fees.
4. **Run pilot tests if possible.** Try free trials to see if integration and usability meet your club's changing committee members.
5. **Keep backup exports and documentation.** User-friendly data export avoids painful committee handovers.

Conclusion: Is It Realistic?

For clubs with approximately 500 players, parents, and supporters, consolidating club website, event ticketing, and registrations in one place is increasingly realistic but varies by club priorities and budget. All-in-one platforms reduce subscription bloat and administrative overhead, but usually at a higher upfront subscription cost and with some feature trade-offs.



If your club values streamlined admin and predictable costs over granular ticketing features or advanced website customization, combined platforms can be a game-changer. However, be vigilant about understanding all fees, and don't default to building a Frankenstein stack of different tools — the confusion and cumulative costs often outweigh the convenience.



Ask yourself this: above all, keep your pricing math per season (not month) in front of committees and preserve thorough handover notes. With the right approach, your club's online management can support your volunteers and members — not bog them down.