

RUGBY LEAGUE COMMUNITY BOARD STRATEGY



Year Two Report



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RUGBY LEAGUE. It's a whole different ballgame®

BACKGROUND

The vision as expressed in the Community Board Strategy was to achieve the following -

- Rugby League at Community level to be well governed in a low profile way with good leadership and a process that enables clear decisions to be made in the best interests of the game
- For players and clubs to be in an environment that makes playing Rugby League available to the maximum number of people possible with the minimum number of barriers in the best quality conditions

In order to achieve this, the Strategy was divided into five sections with sub-sections for each area of work. This report will cover each section and sub-section.

OUTCOME KEY
● Not yet started
● Progress
● Complete

GOVERNANCE - STRUCTURE OF BOARDS, PROJECT GROUPS

- Three or Four Year Plans presented by Combined Services, English Schools Rugby League, Student Rugby League, Rugby League Services and Rugby League Conference are now in operation
- Congress was held at the George Hotel, Huddersfield with 150 delegates in attendance
- The Community Board has instituted a review group for Discipline which will report in December 2008
- The Community Board has approved the establishment of two new membership programmes aimed at further supporting the development of clubs and playing leagues
 - Club Membership - a formal agreement between the RFL and a club that defines a list of benefits to the club from its membership of the RFL, for example access to ticket offers, access to centrally negotiated commercial packages. It also identifies a list of obligations that the club undertakes such as active support of the RESPECT Programme, whilst the club also agrees to work towards Club Mark League Partnership - is a formal agreement that identifies the level of support that a League can expect from the RFL, for example support with equity issues, advice on policies such as safeguarding, as well as full support to run their league. In return the League agrees to work towards and achieve the League Mark Award
- In an attempt to address the expansion of the game and in order to ensure that people have a voice in the important decisions made about the community game, the Community Board has started the process to slightly enlarge the representation at its meetings by creating a specific seat for both Youth & Junior and Open Age League. It is also in the process of amending its terms of reference in order to have "Other Leagues" represented by someone elected from that group rather than an officer

OUTCOMES

- 4-Year Plans Published
 - BARLA ●
 - SRL ●
 - Combined Services ●
 - English Schools ●
- Rugby League Services Plan ●
- Review Group Established ●
- Publish Community Board Terms of Reference ●





THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS ENSURE THE TRADITIONAL HEARTLAND OF RUGBY LEAGUE IS STRONG AND MAINTAIN GEOGRAPHICAL EXPANSION AT A SUSTAINABLE RATE

- Strong junior growth has continued during 2008. All Leagues have reported continued growth in both numbers of players and in teams registered. There has been significant improvement with the establishment of formal leagues in Wales and in London and The South. In addition less formal leagues/ Merit Tables have started in Scotland, the North East and the Midlands. The London League has involved 831 registered players playing in 157 official games across four age groups
- The Community Lions Open Age travelled to Australia to play in the Quad Series with representative teams from Queensland and New South Wales. The competition was very tough with the Lions going down to four defeats, however the experience for the players and staff was outstanding and has highlighted the amount of improvement that can be made to our community game playing standards
- The Community Lions Under 18's played two games against France with a draw away and a narrow defeat at home
- Initiatives to support the development of Rugby League in the traditional areas have included,
 - Step into Sport - which has continued to offer volunteering opportunities to young people
 - Match Official Development Officers have increased the number of active match Officials to over 750
 - Northern Rail and Sportsmatch continued to support the BARLA Youth & Junior Cups Programme which once again were a huge success and held at the John Charles Centre for Sport, Leeds
 - Co-operative/Sportsmatch Programme has supported the growth of mini and mod teams
 - Halifax Home Insurance concluded their sponsorship of the National Youth League. Leigh Miners Rangers won the Grand Final and took the opportunity to travel to France to play the French under 18 Champions
- The Rugby League Conference grew again to 90 clubs and was supported by a further 24 teams playing in the London and Midlands Merit Leagues. The Rugby League Conference National included new entrants from South Wales and from Liverpool
- The Carnegie Champion Schools competition has grown to over 26,000 players representing 1318 boy's teams and 185 girl's teams. The finals of which took place at the end of August at RAF Uxbridge on Friday 29th August
- Three junior playing leagues have been accredited with "Leaguemark" an award recognising quality administration developed by Rugby League Services, - The Fraser Eagle National Conference League, North West Counties Youth and the Yorkshire Junior League

- The Community Board approved and supported a League for All Programme which covers Masters of League, Touch and Tag Rugby. All the programmes got off to a good start with over 300 Masters registered in the first three months. There were new tag competitions in 12 venues with the first National Touch Festival attracting 11 entries. Tag Rugby League grew into a formal Merit League and featured at the Carnegie Challenge Cup Semi Final when teams representing Hull and Wakefield played in the curtain raiser
- Sport England Yorkshire Region was able to support the programme through their Community Investment Fund which has allowed the RFL to employ four full time League for All Officers
- Research has been conducted by Rugby League Services into the attitudes of Open Age BARLA players
 - 188 players responded to the on-line survey of which 89% are current players
 - 60 % had played for more than five years
 - 90% of players highlighted a regular game each week as important to them and yet 59% enjoy the variety provided by different cup competitions
 - 58% of respondents are in favour of more local games
 - 66% of players feel that the game is well disciplined
 - 95% of players said that they "love playing the game" and 82% indicated that they will continue this season
 - 82% also indicated that they will be interested in carrying on playing in the Masters of League once they cease playing Open Age Rugby League



OUTCOMES

- Rugby League Conference Plan ●
- Champion Schools Plan ●
- School-Club Links Plan ●
- League For All Strategy ●
- Match Officials Development Programme ●



DIRECT COMMUNICATION TO PLAYERS AND CLUBS

- The Rugby League Services Department has produced a Communications Strategy which was approved and adapted by the Community Board
- The Community game website continues to be a popular source of information with over 230,000 hits since the last Strategy report
- An on-line survey facility has been added to the Community game Section and this has been used to facilitate research into Open Age Rugby League, RESPECT Survey and Satisfaction Surveys for a number of services
- The Rugby League Bulletin is produced six times per year with a mix of Community news, stories and topical items from the professional game. Each issue is advertised online
- Every official match programme for RFL games contains news and stories about the Community Game
- Congress topics were then carried into local and regional workshops. Topics covered included "Gift Aid" and Positive Coaching

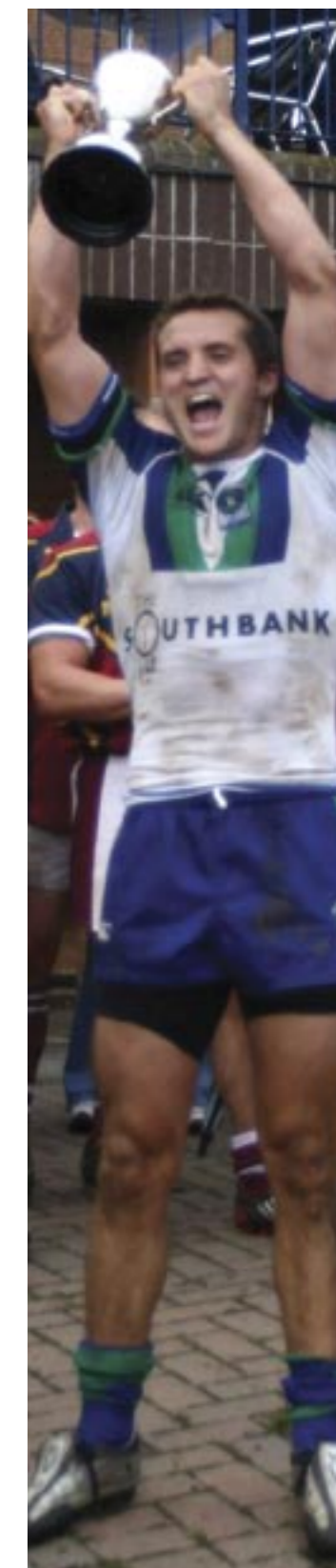


OUTCOMES

- Develop Media Strategy for the Community Game ●
- Develop RFL Website ●
- Create Membership Services Programme ●
- Integrate all Community Game websites ●

PLAYER FOCUSED

- Numbers of players are recorded and announced annually. The latest figures show over a quarter of a million participants, including over 41,000 registered participants
- The game has included new clubs in Scotland, North Yorkshire, East Yorkshire, Cheshire, Eastern Region, and South East
- The South West Conference has enjoyed a second successful season with all scheduled games played
- New junior activity has been arranged in the Midlands with activity in Derby, Nottingham, Coventry, Birmingham, Redditch, Telford and Northampton
- GB Community Lions have selected squads from all constituents and played against France and Australia
- The Female Game Strategy started to be implemented across the country. Girls Festivals have been strong in the North West with over 583 registered girl players now playing regularly. This represents a perceived fall from last year however the number this year is registered players rather than participants
- The Rugby League Conference has organised its first national competition with 22 teams from across the country taking part. The Grand Final took place in September
- England Women have selected a squad and played against France. They are preparing to go to Australia to play in the Women's World Cup
- Wheelchair Rugby has been trialled, a number of club festivals have taken place with around 40 people participating. For the second successive year England have played France home and away. With the home game being played on the Friday before the Challenge Cup Final
- The RFL has adopted the Equality Standard and has published the Equity and Diversity Strategy aimed at removing barriers to participation.
- The Coach Education Programme - approximately 900 candidates have taken the UKCC level 1 and 2 so far this year. In addition, 571 existing coaches have taken the Bridging Course to up date their old qualification. Level 3 has now been accredited and the first course has started
- The Match Officials Development Programme has continued into Year 2 of its current strategy with over 750 match officials now qualified and active
- The RESPECT Programme continues to be promoted to every part of the game. One hundred and twenty portable touchline barriers have been issued to clubs along with six thousand Hi-vis Jackets to identify club officials within Technical Areas



- The Newly Sponsored Gillette National Youth League is now in its fourth year. We have been able to attract a truly National representation, with teams as far North as Gateshead and West Cumbria and as far South as North London Stags and Celtic Crusaders complementing teams from the heartland in a 14 team, 20 week high quality league
- An enhanced sponsored Gillette Future Champions programmes has been approved by the National Sports Foundation, this will assist the game in retaining and attracting new players and coaches to the difficult 16 - 18 age group



OUTCOMES

- Publish LTAD and National Framework Reports ●
- Publish Integrated Representative Programme ●
- Publish Female Game Strategy ●
- Publish Disability Strategy ●

HELP CLUBS AND LEAGUES TO HELP THEMSELVES

- Regional Staff working with clubs and leagues to assist in funding, facility development, volunteer recruitment and development, RESPECT, Clubmark and Leaguemark
- The Rugby League Foundation has continued to assist development programmes this year. Significantly a Community game Raffle aided by Gillette raised over £20,000 for community clubs across the country
- The Community Club Development Programme has assisted in new facilities opening at Siddal, Thatto Heath and Wigan St Cuthberts among others
- National Sports Foundation, which came on line two years ago, has been an integral funding stream for the RFL as well as Professional and Community clubs around the game with Thatto Heath ARLFC accessing over £250k support from the NSF to match funding raised within the club to complete their magnificent new facility in St Helens. In total nine programmes have been supported by the NSF which has matched £921,000 to make a total of £1,842,000
- In addition, community clubs have benefited from £667k of funding generated from such areas as Awards for All. Sportmatch has been much reduced this year due to Sport England's change in structure. It is hoped that there will soon be a re-launch
- 110 Community clubs are now accredited as "Clubmark" clubs with 96 working towards
- Club Survey - will see our database updated with the accurate number of volunteers at clubs and the age categories they fall in to. We will also be able to identify the training needs of the volunteers which will help us to plan how we can assist in the formal training of volunteers
- V Funding - We have received funding, in conjunction with the Student RL, to employ eight Regional Youth Volunteer Coordinators and a National Youth Volunteer Manager. Their remit is to create a larger, better trained, well motivated volunteer workforce operating in an environment where they are valuable and respected
- Young Leaders and Volunteer Development - the following training courses/ workshops have been provided for volunteers across the whole country
 - Junior Rugby League Organisers award
 - Rugby League Leaders Award
 - Positive Coaching
 - Touchline Manager training
 - Funding (CASC) workshop delivered
 - Match Official training



OUTCOMES

Publish CCDP Strategy

Update Volunteer Strategy

Update Clubmark Strategy

Publish Equity Policy

Extend RESPECT Programme



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