

# RFL ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2014 USHERING IN A NEW ERA



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## OUR MISSION AND VALUES

### OUR PEOPLE

Our people are at the heart of our corporate agenda. The RFL recognises that without their commitment, professionalism and expertise in delivering customer service excellence it would be unable to achieve its goals. We are committed to providing on-going investment to their learning and development to achieve the highest standards. We fully support all opportunities for employment, career progression and development, irrespective of age, ethnicity, gender, disability or religion through our equality and diversity action plan. The RFL's core values were developed in a consultation process with staff, and we believe that these values remain relevant today. We are all committed to ensuring that we continue to embed these values with our colleagues. The values can be summarised as Fair, Care, Share and Dare and are defined as:

- FAIR** – We are Fair, open, honest and inclusive, demonstrating integrity to all.
- CARE** – We Care for our stakeholders, the environment and the sport.
- SHARE** – We Share through teamwork, open communication and spreading best practice.
- DARE** – We Dare to achieve our objectives through innovation.

The RFL and its employees believe that by following our values we will ensure that the RFL is delivering the best service to all its stakeholders, whilst being an employer of choice.

### OUR COMMUNITIES

As a leading National Sports Governing Body we are committed to transforming our local communities by delivering an approach to corporate social responsibility encompassing cash donations, support for volunteering, environmentally friendly practices and investment in our people. In line with this commitment we have supported a number of sports-related charities including the RFL Benevolent Fund, the RFL Facilities Trust, Rugby League Cares, The Rugby League Foundation and The Rugby League Heritage Trust. We support these organisations in cash and in kind. We have much more under consideration and planned for the future.

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# CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

It would be difficult to imagine a more exciting time in Rugby League than we are currently enjoying in the three-year period from 2013-15. Of course the memory of a wonderful Rugby League World Cup in 2013 which showcased the very best of international Rugby League to the widest possible audience lives on; this was followed in 2014 by the excitement generated by the announcement of a new league structure which looks to galvanise competition in the professional pyramid by re-introducing the prospect of promotion and relegation. It will be interesting to measure, at the end of the 2015 season, the impact that this may have had on our primary objectives of delivering more viewers, spectators and of course participants in and around the sport.

Turning to 2014 in more detail, I am delighted to report that the RFL has achieved another strong year of turnover (£19.2m) and a profit (£219k) for the thirteenth consecutive year. A feature of the year was the winding down of the organisation following the expansion required to deliver the World Cup, together with the international programme for the year (the Four Nations against Australia, New Zealand and Samoa) held in the southern hemisphere. Notwithstanding this, investment in the sport by the RFL, through club payments and other expenditures was at its highest-ever level at £10.9m up from £10.7m in 2013. Finally, it would be worth pointing out that financial stability around the professional club network was at its best for some time with the increased revenue flowing into the club game providing some relief against the continuing hardships of a challenging economic climate.

## BROADCASTING

Early in the year, the RFL and SLE Ltd agreed a new extended television contract with Sky Sports which would take the broadcasting of our sport on Sky through to 2021. Our new agreement provides both improved revenues and stability for the sport and allows our clubs to plan, invest and build over the medium term. It is no coincidence that the level of financial stability within Rugby League is currently better than it has been in recent years.

The new agreement with Sky Sports also offered the opportunity to develop Sky Try a vibrant seven-year programme to develop and promote Rugby League within local communities across the country reaching 100,000 people per year. We recognise that most people touch the sport for the first time as children and this terrific initiative provides our sport, at long last, with precisely the right programme and resource to reach the maximum number of young people, through the club foundations and other appropriate groups.

## INTERNATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE

Internationally, England competed in the Four Nations held in Australia and New Zealand in October and November 2014 and whilst not making the final, delivered performances considered by most to have been both creditable and competitive.

The tournament commenced with a victory in the stifling heat of a Brisbane afternoon over an extremely combative Samoa side before the team travelled to Melbourne where they were extraordinarily unlucky to lose 12-16 against the Kangaroos. Similarly in Dunedin the team lost by the narrowest of margins when chasing the 10-point victory that would be required to qualify for the final. Over the three games England emerged from the tournament with a neutral for and against points total. Of course in 2015 we look forward to entertaining the Kiwis, newly installed as the best team in the world, for what should be a thrilling three-match series featuring Rugby League's debut in the Olympic Stadium in London.

On the wider international agenda, the Rugby League International Federation,





ENGLAND IN THE FOUR NATIONS



to which the RFL, together with other leading nations, provides both directional leadership and support, had a very strong year. Considerable work has been undertaken to give the international game the structure, profile and resources it undoubtedly deserves and we can expect significant advancement in this area of the sport. The long held ambition to create an independent executive for the Federation came to a successful conclusion in early 2015 and the International Strategic Plan and Competition Programme will be a very worthwhile tangible legacy of the World Cup in 2013.

In Europe the Rugby League European Federation continues to go from strength to strength, with more nations playing the sport than ever before in this part of the world. Rugby League 9s made its debut

as a demonstration sport at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in a further example of the growing breadth of the sport.

### GEOGRAPHICAL EXPANSION

The expansion of Rugby League at semi-professional level in the UK was further strengthened by the decision to admit Coventry Bears into League 1 for the 2015 season. With Gloucestershire All Golds, Oxford and Hemel Stags before them, along with London Skolars and South Wales Scorpions, the admission of a new club, which in effect represents a whole region, in this case the Midlands, can only be seen as a positive for the sport as we look to achieve the widest possible national footprint.

### COMMERCIAL

Commercially, the sport's portfolio of partners continues to strengthen with First Utility taking the title sponsorship for Super League and Kingstone Press building upon their outstanding inaugural year as sponsors of the Championship. With other blue ribbon brands such as Gillette, Specsavers and Alcatel firmly committed to the sport, Rugby League can be proud of its stable of commercial partners with new partners Ladbrokes coming on board for 2015.

### THE FUTURE

Moving forward, 2015 will see the adoption of the RFL's new suite of Strategic Plans for the whole of the sport, covering the seven-year period to 2021. Detailed work on the Super



## LADBROKES CHALLENGE CUP

League and Championship competitions and the Performance Strategy for England have been published while the Community Game Strategy continues to be developed through the second half of the year. Central to the RFL's endeavours in 2015 is to become the very best National Governing Body on its journey in the pursuance of the High Performing NGB framework being promoted by Sport England as part of the modernisation programme for sport in the UK.

The sport has continued to make strong advancements on the back of the league restructure. The RFL acquired new office facilities at MediaCityUK, Salford, to build upon the presence achieved there during the Rugby League World Cup 2013. MediaCityUK is fast emerging as the location for dynamic media, marketing and sports organisations in the North West and the fact that the RFL has taken space on the developing complex is an appropriate reflection on the importance of the region to the sport.

The RFL has also upgraded office provision in London to ensure that one of the country's leading sports has an appropriate presence in the nation's capital city as we continue to defy misconceptions and challenge pre-determined stereotyping.

In 2015 it will be the 120th anniversary of the creation of Rugby League when

22 clubs met in 1895 to discuss the ruling which prevented them from paying their players. Of course the rest is history, as they say, and 120 years on, the sport of Rugby League has changed beyond all recognition to represent the very best in athletic contact-based collision sport. As you would expect, the RFL will be celebrating the 120th anniversary with a full programme, culminating with the unveiling of the statue at Wembley Stadium representing the rich history the sport has at that iconic venue, stretching back to 1929 when the Challenge Cup final was first moved there. There are, of course, a number of other celebratory events planned throughout the year to allow supporters and followers of Rugby League to engage positively with the sport and perhaps even raise some much-needed money for the myriad of Rugby League good causes.

### **SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

Finally it is appropriate at this time to recognise and acknowledge the outstanding contribution of one of the RFL's most long-standing Non-Executive Directors, Bob Stott, who is retiring from office. Bob has served the sport with great distinction for eight years in a Non-Executive capacity, bringing to his duties all the skills, knowledge and

experience acquired over a lifetime in senior positions in retail management, culminating in his role as CEO of Morrisons supermarkets. Throughout his time on the RFL Board, Bob has never been anything less than diligent, conscientious and meticulous whilst instinctively seeking to support Board policy and executive efforts. In addition to his general duties as a NED, Bob has chaired the Championships Club Forums, the Audit Committee and the Risk Committee, amply demonstrating his highly-regarded attention to detail and professionalism. The RFL and the wider sport owe Bob a considerable debt for his endeavours on our behalf.

In closing can I thank everyone involved in the sport, in whatever capacity they work for the betterment of Rugby League. Whether playing, coaching, officiating, volunteering or simply watching and enjoying, we have a fine sport, accessible to all, built upon respect and discipline. There are always challenges to face in an ever changing world but we can be sure that the resilience and essential honesty of Rugby League, being a force for good, will ensure that our sport will continue to rise to the challenges we face. It is a great time to be a Rugby League supporter.

**Nigel Wood**  
Chief Executive Officer

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The sports moves forward with confidence...

**2014 was a year when the building blocks were put in place for a positive and exciting future whilst still getting on with the daily business of running the high-octane sport of Rugby League.**

The 'big ticket' item was an unprecedented new broadcast deal with Sky Sports until 2021, guaranteeing Rugby League both fresh and increased levels of TV income and extended coverage of its top competitions.

In 2014 the RFL set about opening an exciting new base at MediaCityUK in Salford whilst retaining the organisation's established home at Red Hall as well as its busy London office.

The game's commercial, communications and marketing activity will be centred at the new Salford offices - and, once again, I am encouraged that there is significant upturn in these crucial areas of the promoting and projecting of our sport.

Modern thinking, coupled with modern facilities, will drive the sport forward and that work is underway. Understanding the customers better,

helping the sport serve its valued fan base more effectively and 'selling' Rugby League to an increasingly aware commercial sector are all aspirations for the future.

Also, our combining of traditional media outlets and a targeted use of the social media 'juggernaut' to extend our public reach is vital.

Of course, part of 2014's daily business was also to get out there and explain the new league structure to be introduced in 2015.

Change is always something to be made with care - and the return of potential promotion and relegation with a new format was something we needed to guide the Rugby League family for 2015 (including the Chairman!) through both conscientiously and in easy-to-digest chunks.

On the international front, England competed in the Four Nations in Australia and New Zealand. Once again the team showed real signs of progress but victories over the home sides still proved frustratingly elusive.

The sport, and its geographical spread, continues and we welcome Coventry Bears to the family for 2015.

And faced with a headline-grabbing unsavoury incident in the opening moments of the 2014 First Utility Super League Grand final, the sport, and those involved, showed admirable leadership in dealing with it swiftly, maturely and appropriately.

Perhaps, the most poignant moment for me personally was having the honour of laying a wreath at the Cenotaph in London on behalf of the RFL on Challenge Cup final eve. Along with representatives from finalists, Leeds Rhinos and Castleford Tigers, and other political and public figures, it marked our respect for those lost in the Great War.

And so, the sport moved forward into 2015 with renewed confidence, a feeling of stability and a real sense of purpose.

**Brian Barwick**  
Chairman  
The RFL



# THE RFL BOARD

## **BRIAN BARWICK** Chairman

■ Brian Barwick was appointed independent Non-Executive Chairman of the RFL at the beginning of 2013 and has brought a wealth of experience in sport and broadcasting to the role.

He has held a number of senior executive positions including Chief Executive of the Football Association, Controller of Sport at ITV and Head of Television Sport at BBC during his career.

He is a visiting Professor of Strategic Leadership at The School of Management at Liverpool University and a founding partner at the global sports and media consultancy - Barwick Media and Sport.

In his time as CEO of the FA from 2005 to 2008, Brian saw through the completion of the new Wembley Stadium, launched the Respect campaign and was involved in the appointment of two senior coaches for the national team. He was also a board member of Wembley Stadium Ltd and FIFA's Legal Committee plus UEFA's National Teams Committee.

At ITV, he was responsible for all the broadcaster's sport coverage, including the 1998 FIFA World Cup during which the highest audience in the network's history was achieved when 28million people tuned in to watch England v Argentina.

From 1979-98, he held a range of senior roles at BBC Sport and was responsible for award-winning coverage of the BBC Sport portfolio, including the summer and winter Olympics, FIFA World Cups and outstanding national events like the Rugby League Challenge Cup final, Wimbledon, the Open golf championship, the Grand National and the FA Cup Final.

He was Editor of Match of the Day from 1987 to 1995.

## **NIGEL WOOD** Chief Executive Officer

■ A Director at the RFL for the last 13 years, Nigel has been Chief Executive Officer since 2007 and in May 2014 was appointed Chairman of the Rugby League International Federation.

His appointment to head the body which is responsible for the development, governance and organisation of the game internationally comes just a few months after he helped to deliver the most successful international Rugby League tournament of all time in his role as Tournament Director of Rugby League World Cup 2013.

Nigel was elected Vice Chairman of the RLIF in May 2012 having worked in support of the Federation for a decade. He is Chairman of the Business, Finance and Grants Sub-Committee, which has

overseen the implementation of a formal grants protocol for the first time in the history of the organisation.

His work at the RFL has supported the development of the game both in the UK and Europe including working with broadcast partners to ensure the widest possible audience for international matches.

Nigel joined the RFL in 2001 and has held a number of positions in the organisation, including Chief Financial Officer. Prior to working for the RFL, he was Chief Executive of Super League club Halifax Blue Sox and Deputy Head of Finance for BBC North. He graduated from the University of Bradford in 1996 with a MBA in Business Administration.

Nigel played Rugby League for Bradford Northern and Halifax RLFC at junior levels and Huddersfield at reserve grade, together with a number of seasons playing community Rugby League in the Pennine League.

He enjoys spending his spare time at Brighouse Rangers ARLFC where he assists with the coaching of the Under-14s team.

## **RALPH RIMMER** Chief Operating Officer

■ Ralph Rimmer joined the RFL board last year and is one of the most experienced development and

management executives in British sport.

His Rugby League career began 23 years ago in South Yorkshire when he joined Doncaster as a Development Officer and he took up a similar role three years later at Sheffield Eagles. In 1997 he was appointed General Manager and then became Chief Executive of the Sheffield Super League club. Under his tenure, the club won the Challenge Cup following the memorable final victory over Wigan at Wembley.

Ralph then moved to a similar role at Huddersfield Giants for five years before joining the Board as a Non-Executive Director and taking on the role of Managing Director of the stadium company Kirklees Stadium Development Ltd.

The last decade has also seen him take on a directorship at Huddersfield Town FC, where he helped them to come out of administration. He also managed the Ireland national Rugby League team from 1997 to 2002 and the Yorkshire Origin team in 2002.

He was Managing Director of The Galpharm Stadium and Project Lead on the £2million redevelopment in 2007 and also undertook a similar role on the £150million HD One Leisure Development. He acted as Management Consultant on the Leigh Sports Village development, and similar initiatives at Colchester United FC and Salford City Stadium.

A player with Ulverston ARLFC, Ralph captained the Liverpool University team and played at student international level before joining the Wakefield club, Stanley Old Boys.



## **SIMON JOHNSON**

### **Non-Executive Director**

■ Simon Johnson was appointed Non-Executive Director of the RFL in July, 2014.

He has a wealth of experience in the sports and media industry, together with a widely acknowledged expertise in sports law and governance.

Simon has previously held positions as Director of Corporate Affairs and Company Secretary at the Football Association, Director of Legal and Business Affairs at the FA Premier League and



Director of Rights and Business Affairs at ITV. He was Chief Operating Officer of the bid to host the 2018 FIFA World Cup in England and is currently a member of the Group Board of the Amateur Swimming Association.

After a highly successful career in broadcasting Simon is looking forward to lending his considerable experience to the RFL and adding value to the sport.

## **BOB STOTT**

### **Non-Executive Director**

■ Bob has extensive experience in the highly



competitive supermarket industry, including 20 years at director level at Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc, together with a successful period as the company's Chief Executive.

He is currently a Non-Executive Director on the Boards of Leeds Building Society, the Greyhound Board of Great Britain, Frank Roberts and Sons and First Milk Ltd.

Bob brings a wealth of knowledge to the RFL in commercial skills, cost control operations and strategic management from his vast corporate experiences and is a keen follower of team sports.



## **CLARE MORROW**

### **Non-Executive Director**

■ Clare Morrow played a pivotal role in the successful bid to secure the staging of two stages of the Tour de France in Yorkshire in 2014, as she is Chair of the award-winning marketing agency Welcome To Yorkshire. She is also a non-executive director of the Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.

She also sits on the Board of Sheffield Theatres and is a trustee and school governor of Hollybank School in Mirfield.

A highly-experienced television executive, she was Controller of News and Regional Programmes at ITV Yorkshire. During her time there, she also held the position of Head of Sport and was responsible for Yorkshire Television's Rugby League output. This included the creation, development and production of the award-winning Rugby League Raw Series.

## **BOARD COMMITTEES**

The Board has established four specific committees, each with defined terms of reference. Minutes of the meetings are circulated to and reviewed by the Board.

### **THE AUDIT COMMITTEE**

This consists of the three Non-Executive Directors and the CEO. This Committee is chaired by Bob Stott, and normally meets once a year and in addition to the Committee members is attended by representatives of the external auditors and the Director of Finance and Central Services. The Non-Executive Chairman, and all other board directors, have a standing invite to attend. The Audit Committee considers the Annual Report and Accounts before submission to RFL Council for approval. The Committee also reviews accounting practices to ensure compliance with accounting standards. In addition it recommends the appointment of the external auditors for approval at the AGM, gives consideration to the scope of past and future audits, deals with matters arising from the audit and reviews internal control procedures. All non-audit services provided by the Group's auditors are considered by the Chairman of the Audit Committee and the Chief Executive Officer and are reviewed by the Audit Committee where expenditure is above a set limit for this type of work.

### **THE REMUNERATION COMMITTEE**

The Board of Directors consider it important to benchmark key staff against other businesses of similar size and against other sports governing bodies. To this end, the Remuneration Committee meets as appropriate under the chairmanship of Clare Morrow and also comprises Simon Johnson and Bob Stott. The Committee determines the terms and conditions of employment for executive directors and agrees the level of remuneration for senior managers whose earnings are in excess of the committee's prescribed limit.

### **THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

The RFL believes that there should be a formal and transparent procedure for appointing new members to the Board of Directors. To this end the Board established a Nominations Committee which will lead the process for board appointments. This Committee is chaired by Brian Barwick and includes Bob Stott, Clare Morrow, Simon Johnson and the RFL CEO. The Committee is responsible for nominating candidates to fill board vacancies for the approval of the Board as and when they arise. Before considering any appointment, the balance of skills, knowledge and experience on the Board is evaluated and, in the light of this evaluation, a description of the role and capabilities required for a particular appointment is prepared. In addition full consideration is given to succession planning in the course of its work, taking into account the challenges and opportunities facing the company and the skills and expertise that are therefore needed on the Board in the future as well as regularly reviewing the structure, size and composition (including skills, knowledge and experience) of the Board and making recommendations to the Board with regard to any changes.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**

The RFL have had a Risk Management Control Group for a number of years. This group has reported into the Board since its inception, but in 2013 the Board decided that this group should be a formal Committee of the RFL Board to further demonstrate the Board's commitment to risk. The Committee is chaired by Bob Stott and also includes the RFL's Company Secretary and Director of Finance and Central Services, Sue Allan; the RFL's Legal and Compliance Officer, Robert Hicks; the RFL's Facilities Manager, Sarah Trumble; and an external insurance specialist from Bartlett & Company. The Committee reviews the risks of the business and investigates appropriate responses to the identified risks.



# EMERGENCE OF A NEW STRUCTURE

How the new structure was arrived at and how it will work...

**From 2015, Rugby League in the United Kingdom will adopt its biggest and most innovative change since the game moved to the summer months in 1995.**

The new structure, which sees the return of promotion and relegation in a sustainable manner, replaces the licensing system in a bid to make every minute of every game matter from February to October.

Research and consultation with fans, players, sponsors, broadcasters and clubs was held to see how interest in Rugby League can be increased.

The return of promotion and relegation was the outcome from the meetings with everyone connected with the sport, combined with research carried out to ensure of creating its sustainability.

Members of the RFL visited fans' forums to spread the message about how the new structure would operate.

Super League General Manager Blake Solly said: "We undertook a vast amount of consultation. Fans, sponsors, clubs, broadcasters and players were all consulted and informed about the change in structure.

"We were mindful of the uniqueness of the structure and in order for it to be

a success, we had to make sure that everyone was comfortable with the rationale.

"There's no doubt that the new structure gives the sport a compelling narrative from February to October. We had to make sure that there were no excuses for fans to not miss games or turn off their televisions.

"In order for promotion and relegation to return, we had to make sure it was sustainable in order to allow ambitious clubs to move forward and provide a safety net for clubs who might be relegated."

With promotion and relegation being the focal point of the new structure, which aims to increase participation, spectators and viewers of Rugby League to help create some extra revenue for the sport, three objectives were outlined.

The first was for competition matches to matter and make them an interesting watch from the first kick of the ball to the last in the season.

Secondly, for more matches to have uncertainty of outcome in a bid for better spectacles.

Finally, for promotion and relegation to be restored, but in a sustainable way for



clubs to build on promotion and be able to manage relegation from the First Utility Super League or the Kingstone Press Championship.

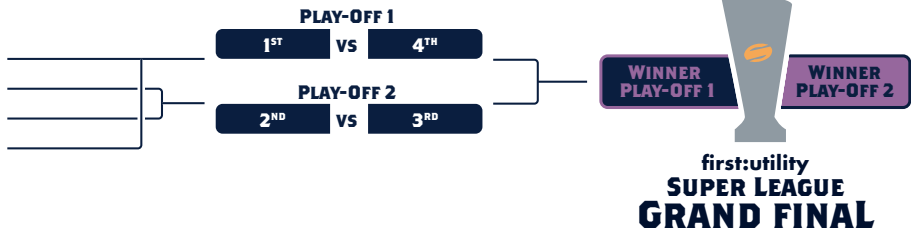
The new structure sees the 12 teams of Super League and the Championship each play 23 matches, home and away, as well as Magic Weekend and Summer Bash fixtures in their respected leagues.

At the end of the regular season, the Super League and Championship will split into the Super 8s - Super League, the Qualifiers and the Championship Shield.

The top eight of Super League will make up the first Super 8 with the bottom four of Super League joining the top four of the Championship in the Qualifiers and the remainder of the Championship clubs



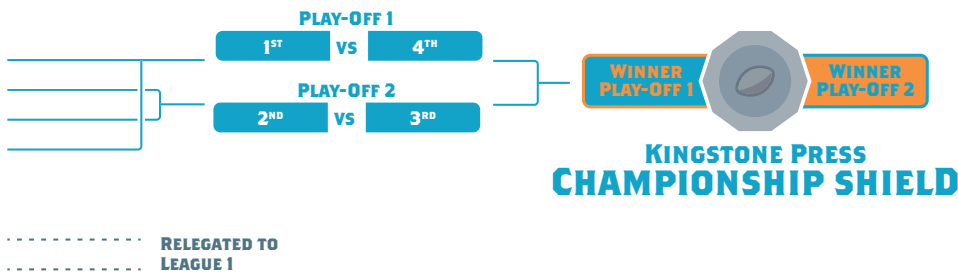
POINTS CARRIED OVER



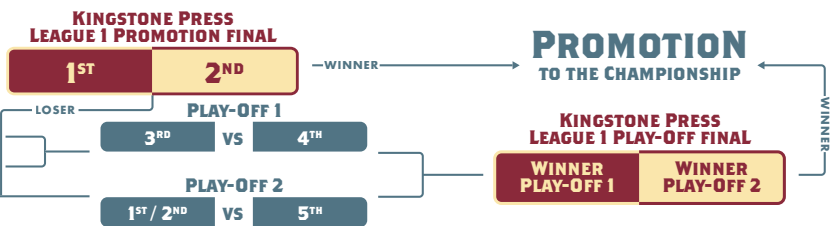
POINTS RESTARTED AT ZERO



POINTS CARRIED OVER



RELEGATED TO LEAGUE 1



## RUGBY LEAGUE 2015 - EVERY MINUTE MATTERS #RLNEWERA

competing in the Championship Shield.

The Super 8s will consist of seven games, with the winners of first v fourth and second v third in Super League progressing to the Grand Final at Old Trafford.

The top three in the Qualifiers will be automatically promoted to Super League, while fourth and fifth will play-off in the Million Pound Game for the final promotion spot.

In the Championship Shield, first v fourth and second v third will play-off to reach the final and the bottom two of the third Super 8 will be relegated to League 1.

League 1 comprises 14 teams playing 22 games - 11 home and 11 away. At the end of the regular campaign, first will play



second for the first promotion place to the Championship with the loser of that game joining third, fourth and fifth in a play-off series for the remaining spot.

The innovative structure is unique to sport worldwide, and has what's desired in the return of promotion and relegation as Rugby League enters its new era.

# COVENTRY BEARS



Professional Rugby League comes to the Midlands...

**The introduction of Coventry Bears into Kingstone Press League 1 for 2015 will give professional Rugby League a firm foothold in the Midlands.**

Coventry join the likes of Oxford, University of Gloucestershire All Golds, the rebranded Newcastle Thunder, North Wales Crusaders and South Wales Scorpions to give the sport its widest ever geographical footprint.

The Bears were founded in 1998 and within two years had clinched the Rugby League Conference Western Division title before winning the RLC Midlands Division in both 2001 and 2002.

Following a period of growth Coventry were admitted to the National Conference League Division Three in 2013, from where they joined 13 other clubs in Kingstone Press League 1 for 2015.

The division is the third tier of Rugby

League's exciting new structure and sees Coventry face regular fixtures against some of the newest and longest established clubs in the sport.

RFL Chief Operating Officer Ralph Rimmer said: "The Bears have made the stepping stone into League 1 at the right time, having undoubtedly benefited from the extra year they have had to prepare.

"The piece of work that has seen the entry of Coventry, the All Golds, Hemel and Oxford has changed the Rugby League landscape of this country and the next step would be the real advancement of one of those clubs up the competitions. Their stabilization and progress is a significant step forward for the sport."

In 2012 Hemel Stags joined the professional ranks while the All Golds were granted entry to the sport's third tier in 2013.

Oxford, were also admitted to Championship One for the 2013 campaign, just 12 months after their formation.

In March, Gateshead Thunder were taken over by Newcastle Rugby Limited, which is owned by the chairman of rugby union side Newcastle Falcons Semore Kurdi.

The expansion of League 1 with Keighley Cougars, Rochdale Hornets, Barrow Raiders, North Wales and Swinton Lions relegated from the Championship, sees League 1 increase from nine teams to 14 for 2015.

After 22 games, first and second in the League 1 table will fight for promotion to the Championship and the losing side will join third, fourth and fifth in a play-offs series to claim the second promotion spot, which could see one of the new teams work their way up the ladder.



COVENTRY BEARS BREAK NEW GROUND

# THE MOVE TO MEDIACITY

A new base for the RFL in the UK's vibrant media hub...

2015 will see the commercial, marketing and communications departments of the RFL and Super League relocate from Leeds to Salford's MediaCityUK.

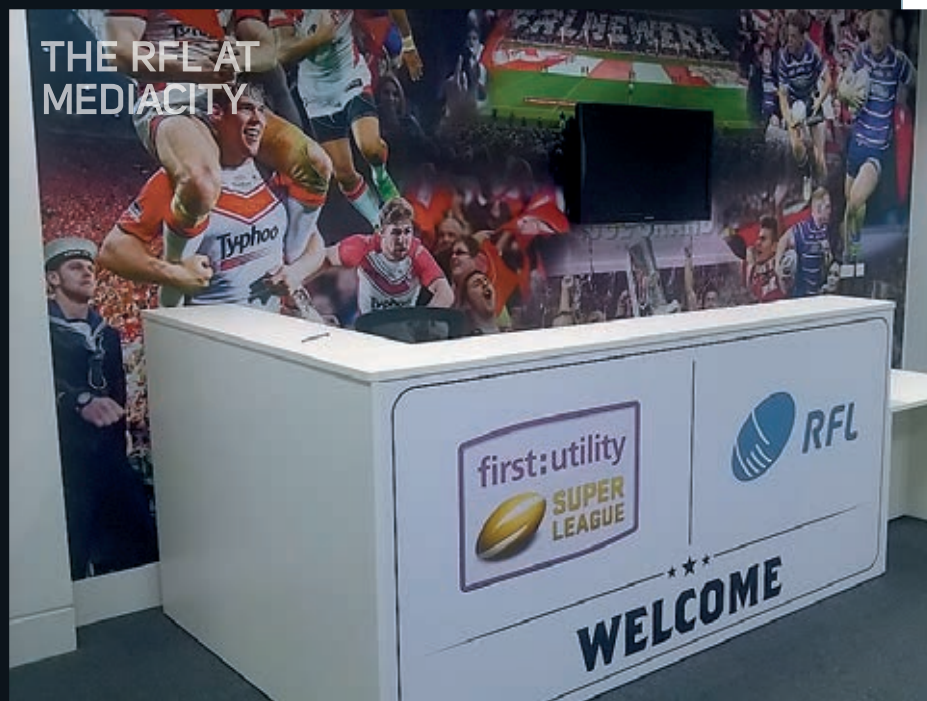
The move aims to raise Rugby League's profile nationally and be a focal point for the sport in the region.

The administrative headquarters for the Rugby League World Cup 2013 was housed at The Greenhouse in MediaCityUK, which was the most successful tournament on the international stage in the sport's long history.

The commercial, marketing and communications departments, who join the ticketing and events departments at MediaCityUK, will be based in Quay West on the banks of the Ship Canal in a 4,000 square foot office space close to national broadcasting companies such as BBC Sport and ITV.

Swapping West Yorkshire for Manchester means that the RFL becomes the first major sporting organisation to base itself at MediaCityUK.

Super League General Manager Blake Solly said: "MediaCityUK was a great office space during the World Cup in 2013. Being based in MediaCityUK is great in terms of being close to media, marketing and sponsors. The chance to take a longer



lease for Rugby League to be based in Media City was too good to refuse. The offices are a modern, vibrant base for the RFL in Manchester and we're really proud of it."

With offices now in Manchester, Leeds and London, the RFL is able to liaise with

everyone involved with the sport from three different locations in the country.

The move to MediaCityUK is part of the new era that Rugby League will embark on in 2015 in the sport's most exciting time since it moved to the summer era in 1995.



# RFL EVENTS DEPARTMENT REVIEW

Another successful year for Rugby League's showpiece events...

## **Following the successful 2013 Rugby League World Cup, it was back to domestic duties for the RFL Events Team in 2014.**

May saw a return to the Etihad Stadium, the third year of Magic Weekend to be hosted there. Blue skies and bright sunshine was the order of the weekend, and the action on the pitch did not disappoint the 67,000 fans who attended. It has become clear that Magic Weekend is not just about the on-field action, with attendees enjoying the Fans' Village and in-bowl entertainment just as much.

The Tetley's Challenge Cup final weekend saw a unique event take place

at The Cenotaph in central London on the Friday morning. The RFL, along with the two competing finalists Leeds Rhinos and Castleford Tigers, remembered those servicemen who had lost their lives in action. It was a poignant occasion for all involved, and for the hundreds of fans who attended many of whom lined the streets in their club colours.

The action on the pitch did not disappoint with Leeds taking the trophy they had so longed for. The RFL's VIP guests were treated to memories from yesteryear in The Great Hall, courtesy of Professor Tony Collins and the RL

Heritage Project.

The showpiece event in the Super League calendar, the First Utility Grand Final, certainly lived up to its status as one of the UK's best events. The atmosphere pre-match was electric, helped by music from the band James and their iconic anthem 'Sit Down', as well as the 20,000 club flags given to supporters.

This brought the curtain down on a successful year for the Events Team, with the autumn spent looking ahead to 2015 with much enthusiasm as we prepared for the 'New Era'.





BRIAN McDERMOTT,  
KEVIN SINFIELD AND  
GARY HETHERINGTON  
AT THE CENTOTAPH



JAMES WOW  
THE SUPER  
LEAGUE GRAND  
FINAL CROWD

# ENGLAND 2014 REVIEW



How the national team fared in the Four Nations...



RYAN HALL  
TOUCHED DOWN  
AGAINST AUSTRALIA  
IN THE FOUR  
NATIONS

**After their exploits in the Rugby League World Cup 2013, England headed Down Under to compete in the 2014 Four Nations in Australia and New Zealand.**

The Four Nations was the first competition England were involved in since their narrow World Cup semi-final defeat by New Zealand at Wembley Stadium.

England coach Steve McNamara, who was appointed as the assistant coach of Sydney Roosters ahead of the 2014 season, included nine uncapped players in his squad: Joe Westerman, Elliot Whitehead, Josh Hodgson, Dan Sarginson, Daryl Clark, Mike Cooper, Stefan Ratchford, Matty Smith and Joe Burgess.

McNamara included six NRL players in his squad: NRL Grand Final-winning



SAM TOMKINS WAS ONE OF SEVERAL NRL-BASED ENGLAND INTERNATIONALS



## TOM BURGESS DRIVES ENGLAND FORWARD

brothers George and Tom Burgess from South Sydney Rabbitohs, James Graham of Canterbury Bulldogs, New Zealand Warrior Sam Tomkins and St George Illawarra Dragons duo Gareth Widdop and Mike Cooper.

With Kevin Sinfield retiring from international Rugby League in early September, Wigan Warriors captain Sean O'Loughlin was chosen to lead the side.

England began the Four Nations with a competitive game against Samoa. At one point it looked as though the Pacific Islanders would spring a shock result at Brisbane's Suncorp Stadium in the opening game of the tournament but England came through 32-26.

However, they suffered a narrow defeat in their next game against favourites Australia in another close contest. A try by Michael Jennings opened the scoring but England hit back with touchdowns from Ryan Hall and Kallum Watkins, with Widdop adding a conversion to lead 10-4 at the interval.

However tries by Bent Hunt and Greg Inglis, plus a goal from Cameron Smith, gave Australia a 16-12 lead going into the final minutes of the game. England looked to have salvaged at least a point when Hall crashed over in the corner but the try was disallowed and the game was lost.

England's next game against New Zealand was win or bust. Another tough

contest saw the Kiwis make it two wins against England in the space of a year. Two tries from Jason Nightingale, and another from Manu Vatuvei gave New Zealand a 16-14 victory and put them into the final where they went on to defeat Australia.

The England Knights programme did not run in 2014, but England Academy, under the stewardship of Richard Marshall, competed against Australian Schoolboys in a two-game series with the Australians winning game one and

England Academy triumphing in the second game at Leigh Sports Village.

With no Four Nations tournament in 2015, England will face New Zealand in a three-match series with games to be played at Wigan's DW Stadium, Hull FC's KC Stadium and the Olympic Stadium in London.

The series will provide England with the preparation needed for the Four Nations the following year and the 2017 World Cup which will be hosted Down Under.



## ENGLAND ACADEMY DREW THEIR SERIES AGAINST THE AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLBOYS



# SUPER LEAGUE REVIEW



Another dramatic climax to a thrilling campaign...

**St Helens claimed their first Super League title since 2006 as they defeated the 12 men of Wigan Warriors in front of a 70,102 crowd at Old Trafford.**

Wigan forward Ben Flower became the first player to be sent off in a Grand Final when he was shown a red card for punching St Helens half-back Lance Hohaia.

Saints, who had managed to grab the League Leaders' Shield following Castleford Tigers' defeat to Catalans Dragons in the final round of the regular season, were 6-2 down at the break through a Joe Burgess try.

However, in the second half touchdowns from Sia Soliola and Academy product Tommy Makinson secured St Helens' fifth Grand Final win.

Coach Nathan Brown, who was heading back to Australia, helped steer St Helens towards Grand Final victory after the club had made five successive appearances on Rugby League's biggest night of the year without coming away with the spoils.

St Helens' dramatic triumph capped

off a thrilling season for Super League, which saw Castleford accomplish their first top-four finish since Super League's inception.

The Tigers, who proved to be the surprise package of 2014, were within 80 minutes of topping the table at the end of the regular season for the first time in their history but they fell at the final hurdle against Catalans in Perpignan and were eliminated from the play-offs by fifth-placed Warrington Wolves.

Man of Steel Daryl Clark was at the heart of the Tigers' success, and his solo effort against Widnes Vikings was one of the stand out tries of the season.

Beaten Grand Finalists Wigan, who finished second, displayed their attacking prowess once again as they notched up an impressive 834 points - the highest in the league.

Huddersfield Giants, who claimed the League Leaders' Shield in 2013, finished third, but fell to Catalans in the play-offs, who themselves had claimed the scalp of Leeds Rhinos in week one of the play-offs.



**TOMMY MAKINSON SEALS VICTORY FOR ST HELENS**

The Rhinos, who finished in their second lowest position in the summer era of sixth, endured a disappointing second half of the season after not registering a win in Super League since the end of July.

Despite Catalans finishing seventh, their play-off surge saw them leave Leeds and Huddersfield stunned with full-back Morgan Escare a shining light for the Dragons, chalking up 27 tries in the process. They were 80 minutes from a first-ever appearance at Old Trafford but fell to eventual winners St Helens.

Widnes claimed notable wins against the likes of St Helens, Wigan and Warrington during the campaign and recorded their first play-off appearance since their readmission into Super League.

Hull Kingston Rovers missed out on the play-offs by three points, as did the re-named Salford Red Devils, whose high-profile recruit Kevin Locke couldn't inspire the Red Devils to a place in the top eight.



Hull FC and Wakefield Trinity Wildcats steered clear of relegation, but their appearances in the Magic Weekend, which saw a record attendance of 64,552 across both days, were games to forget, succumbing to defeats by Hull KR and Castleford Tigers respectively.

Bradford Bulls' turbulent campaign resulted in the former Super League champions losing their top-flight status for the first time in over 40 years.

The Bulls, who have been Super League champions four times, were dogged by financial problems, which saw them deducted six points for entering into administration.

Like Bradford, London Broncos lost their Super League status and were doomed as early as July. The Broncos only recorded one victory all season - a home win against Leeds Rhinos.

Both teams embark on life in the Championship, and will have to fight for their way back into Super League as Rugby League heads into its new era.



**CASTLEFORD TIGERS  
CAME WITHIN ONE WIN  
OF CLAIMING THE LEAGUE  
LEADERS' SHIELD**

# TETLEY'S CHALLENGE CUP REVIEW



Rhinos charge to Wembley triumph...

**Leeds Rhinos claimed their first Challenge Cup final victory since 1999 when they defeated Castleford Tigers at Wembley Stadium.**

During that 15-year period they had been to six Challenge Cup finals and lost them all, including three on the trot between 2010 and 2012.

The 77,914 crowd witnessed Ryan Hall, the competition's joint top try-scorer, charge his way over the line twice, a performance which earned him the Lance Todd Trophy as man of the match.

Tom Briscoe and Danny McGuire, who slotted over a drop-goal four minutes from time, also touched down for the Rhinos

who never trailed in the game despite tries from Daryl Clark and Oliver Holmes for Castleford.

The Rhinos began their road to Wembley with a dominant display over Wakefield Trinity Wildcats and recorded an impressive win against St Helens in the fifth round at Headingley Carnegie Stadium.

However, they were made to work for their fourth Challenge Cup final appearance in five seasons by Leigh Centurions in the quarter-finals. The Championship side matched Leeds up until the last 13 minutes, when tries from Robbie Ward and Zak Hardaker, as well as

a drop-goal from Kevin Sinfield, secured a 25-12 victory that sent the Rhinos into the last four.

Leeds put in another strong performance against fellow top-flight opposition Warrington Wolves in the semi-finals, with two tries from Hall, as well as touchdowns from Briscoe and Joel Moon, sending the Rhinos back to Wembley.

Castleford's route to the final began with two comprehensive victories against Batley Bulldogs and Sheffield Eagles and then saw them spring an upset in the quarter-finals by inflicting Wigan Warriors' first home defeat in a Challenge Cup tie since 1986.

LEEDS RHINOS ENDED THEIR 15-YEAR WAIT FOR THE FAMOUS SILVERWARE IN 2014

# 2014 WINNER





**77,914**  
**FANS WITNESSED**  
**THE RHINOS LIFT**  
**THE CUP AFTER A**  
**15-YEAR WAIT**

Tries from James Clare, Kirk Dixon and Lee Jewitt put the Tigers in the the semi-final draw where they were convincing 28-6 winners over Widnes Vikings, which included a try for the ever-impressive Clark.

Rugby League's oldest competition saw two Championship sides in Leigh and Keighley Cougars reach the quarter-final stage only for both teams to lose out to Super League opposition in Leeds and Widnes, respectively.

The fourth round of the Cup was the entry point for the Super League teams, and the 2006 finalists, Huddersfield Giants and St Helens, served up a cracker at the John Smith's Stadium with Luke



**NORMANTON KNIGHTS AND**  
**WORKINGTON TOWN GOT CUP**  
**FEVER IN THE THIRD ROUND**

Walsh's drop-goal separating the two teams after Danny Brough's attempt was ruled out.

The third round saw community clubs Milford Marlins, West Hull, East Leeds, Hull Dockers, Pilkington Recs, Wath Brow Hornets, Kells, Normanton Knights, Egremont Rangers and Wigan St Patricks pitted against Championship and Championship One opposition, but all were unable to progress to the next stage.

Despite their off-field troubles, Bradford Bulls, who last won the competition in 2003, booked their place in the quarter-finals following wins over Oldham and Catalans Dragons before succumbing to Warrington Wolves, 46-10 at Odsal.

Yet it was ultimately Leeds and Castleford who made it an all-West Yorkshire showdown at Wembley with the Rhinos ending 15 years of Challenge Cup heartache.



**FROM GRASSROOTS RUGBY TO**  
**WEMBLEY STADIUM, THE CUP IS THE**  
**PINNACLE OF EVERY CLUB'S CALENDAR**

# KINGSTONE PRESS CHAMPIONSHIP REVIEW

Centurions lead the way...



## Leigh Centurions rounded off an impressive season in the Kingstone Press Championship by defeating serial finalists Featherstone Rovers in the Grand Final at Headingley Carnegie Stadium.

Paul Rowley's side only lost one league game throughout the regular season and defeated Doncaster and Dewsbury Rams in the play-offs on their way to the final.

The Centurions cruised into an 18-0 lead inside 22 minutes at Headingley through tries from Matt Sarsfield, Gregg McNally and Tom Armstrong, all converted by Martyn Ridyard.

Featherstone, who were playing in their fourth Championship Grand Final in five years, clawed their way back into the contest through Will Sharp's double strike but further scores from Adam Higson, Sam Barlow and Ryan Brierley pushed Leigh further in front for a well-deserved 36-12 win.

Leigh's achievements in 2014 were reflected in the Championship awards with Brierley, who touched down over 40 times, claiming the Young Player of the Year award with his half-back partner Ridyard taking the honours of Player of the Year.

Although the Centurions ran riot in the Championship, Rovers finished a strong second having gone on a four-match

unbeaten run heading into the Grand Final.

Second spot was all but decided when Featherstone squared off against Halifax at The Shay in August with Rovers ending Halifax's nine-match winning run to leapfrog them into second place.

Doncaster, who defeated Halifax the week after the Featherstone game, finished in an impressive fourth under the stewardship of Paul Cooke. In their second season back in the Championship they also inflicted on Leigh their only league defeat of the campaign.

Sheffield Eagles, who came into the 2014 season as the back-to-back champions, finished in fifth and were 80 minutes from another Grand Final appearance until they were defeated by Featherstone.

Mark Aston's men played their home games at Owlerton Stadium following the demolition of the Don Valley Stadium.

Dewsbury Rams improved on their seventh-place finish in 2013 to finish sixth, and came within one game of an unexpected Grand Final appearance following their impressive 25-0 win against Halifax, who had sacked head coach Karl Harrison two weeks earlier.

With the top six teams from 2014 all vying for a place in the Grand Final, the

2014 season was remembered for the drama served up on the final day of the regular season which saw five clubs relegated as Rugby League embarked on a new era for 2015.

Bobbie Goulding's Barrow Raiders were the first team to be relegated when they fell to a 34-14 defeat to Dewsbury in July and Swinton Lions joined them in early August.

Rochdale Hornets and North Wales Crusaders followed in August, too, when four teams battled it out for Championship survival.

Keighley Cougars joined the four other already-relegated teams into League 1 following their final-day defeat to Featherstone, with Whitehaven, Workington Town and Batley Bulldogs playing their part in a bid to preserve their Championship status.

With Bradford Bulls and London Broncos joining the Championship, the battle for promotion promises to be intense as all 12 clubs will be hoping to force their way into Super League in the new era for Rugby League.



LEIGH CENTURIONS

# KINGSTONE PRESS CHAMPIONSHIP ONE REVIEW

York City Knights finish top but Hunslet Hawks clinch promotion...



**Hunslet Hawks earned a swift promotion back to the Kingstone Press Championship in dramatic fashion with a Thomas Coyle drop-goal in golden point extra-time sealing a 17-16 victory over Oldham in the Grand Final at Headingley.**

Oldham, who have now appeared in seven losing Grand Finals, led 10-6 at half-time through tries from Steve Roper and Dale Bloomfield, with Roper adding a conversion. Jimmy Watson touched down for Hunslet and David March converted but they took control in the second-half thanks to tries from James Duckworth and Coyle with March adding another conversion.

However, in the 74th minute Danny Langtree crossed for Oldham and Roper levelled the scores with the conversion. Danny Ansell and Richard Moore attempted to win it for Hunslet but both drop-goal attempts failed, which sent the

game into extra-time. Coyle's one-pointer was to prove third time lucky.

Hunslet, who were relegated in 2013, reached the final following a 32-24 victory over League Leaders York City Knights but they had to overturn a 12-0 half-time deficit to do it.



Oldham, who finished third in the table, had defeated York in the qualifying semi-final. Ironically they had beaten Hunslet in the qualifying play-off by a single point, a drop-goal by Josh Crowley proving crucial.

Promotion for the Hawks saw them part of the exciting new Championship structure. Five sides were relegated to make it a 12-team competition with Bradford Bulls and London Broncos joining them from Super League.

After 23 rounds, the top four of the Championship will join the bottom four of Super League competing in the Qualifiers with the remaining clubs in the Championship battling it out for the Championship Shield.

The bottom two clubs in the Championship Shield 8s will be relegated to League 1 in the new era of Rugby League.

# HONOURS BOARD

A look at some of the outstanding achievers in 2014...



DARYL CLARK

## MAN OF STEEL

**Daryl Clark** capped off a fine 2014 for his club, Castleford Tigers, by taking both the Steve Prescott Man of Steel Award and Super League's Young Player of the Season accolade.

Clark became only the third player in the 37-year history of the Man of Steel awards to claim both titles, after Leeds hooker David Ward in 1977 and Widnes centre Joe Lydon in 1984.

The 21-year-old was instrumental in the progress of the Tigers, his lightning breaks from dummy-half being a particular feature. This form earned him an England call up for the Four Nations and he made his presence felt with his first touch of the ball. Coming off the bench against Samoa he created a wonderful try for his club-mate Michael Shenton.

## COACH OF THE YEAR

It was no surprise that this honour went to **Daryl Powell**, coach of the Castleford Tigers. Daryl took over in the middle of the 2013 season and turned around the fortunes of the club in remarkable fashion. He got the best out of his players and his team while playing a sparkling brand of rugby to live up to their nickname of 'Classy Cas'.



DARYL POWELL

The Tigers made their first appearance in the Challenge Cup final since 1992 and came within one game of finishing at the top of the First Utility Super League.

## LANCE TODD TROPHY

Leeds Rhinos and England winger **Ryan Hall** earned the man of the match award in the Tetley's Challenge Cup final at Wembley. Hall demonstrated his lethal finishing with two tries, one in each half, which helped the Rhinos to lift the trophy for the first time since 1999.



RYAN HALL



JAMES ROBY

## HARRY SUNDERLAND TROPHY

St Helens and England hooker **James Roby** won the man of the match award in a highly charged First Utility Grand Final at Old Trafford. There was plenty of incidents in their victory over great rivals Wigan Warriors but Roby's class shone throughout.

He was on the field for the full 80 minutes, putting in a huge tackling stint as well as being a constant threat from dummy-half. Roby's composure shone through in the final 30 minutes when, after a rocky start, he helped to steady the St Helens ship as they marched on to victory.

## KEVIN SINFIELD MBE

England and Leeds captain **Kevin Sinfield** was made an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2014.

The 34-year-old is one of the most successful players in Super League history. He has led the Rhinos to six Grand Final victories and three World Club Challenge triumphs as well as Challenge Cup final glory in 2014.

The Oldham-born player has spent his entire career with Leeds, making his debut as a 16-year-old in 1997. He



is the club's record points-scorer and is the highest points-scorer in Super League history and the third highest in British Rugby League history, behind Jim Sullivan and Neil Fox MBE.

During a stellar career he has played loose forward, hooker and stand-off. The former England captain has won the Lance Todd Trophy, the Harry Sunderland Trophy and the Golden Boot, one of only four British-based players to receive the latter award.

## SALLY BOLTON OBE

Sally was awarded an OBE in the 2014 Queen's Birthday Honours list. As Rugby League World Cup 2013 General Manager she led a team that delivered the most successful international tournament in the sport's history

Sally spent seven years in her most recent spell with the RFL, during which time she held positions as the RFL Events Director, RFL Director of Projects and Planning and, latterly, RLWC2013 General Manager.

The sporting world took note of her success with the RFL and she left later



in the year to take up a new position as Managing Director of the Organising Committee for the World Athletics Championships in London 2017.

## RFL ROLL OF HONOUR

Three people, who have made extraordinary contributions to the game of Rugby League had their achievements recognised in 2014 when they were inducted onto the RFL Roll of Honour.

**Natalie Gilmour, Ron Girvin and Keith Burhouse** were added to the list which was introduced in 2003 and recognises individuals whose efforts encompass exceptional service across both playing and off-field service, and those unsung heroes whose work behind the scenes is so essential to the fabric of the game.

Natalie Gilmour's inclusion comes as a result of her role in developing Women's Rugby League. She has enjoyed a 15-year international career, appeared in every tour and international tournament since 2000, captained her country since 2007 and led her country in two World Cups – including last year's Festival of World Cups – all the while juggling massive career demands

in the Police Firearms Department and contributing massively to the community game.

Ron Girvin's sheer longevity and commitment to Rugby League has earned him a deserved place on the RFL Roll of Honour. He has been heavily involved in the sport since writing about the community game in 1955 and working in administration for the North West Counties (NWC) competition for over three decades. Ron has received a multitude of awards for his service to the game including President of North West Rugby League and is still the North West Counties League secretary.

Keith Burhouse played an active role as a volunteer for 30 years. A Huddersfield fan for more than six decades, Keith dedicated himself to helping his beloved club, carrying out a vast array of voluntary tasks from replacing roofs and rewiring the old Fartown ground to driving the team bus and raising money for associated charities. During 2013, Keith catalogued the collection at the Heritage Centre and arranged for it to be stored securely until a new home is found.

## MATT KING OBE

**Matt King OBE** collected two of the most prestigious awards at the Spinal Injuries Association's 40th anniversary celebrations in 2014.

Matt, who was paralysed from the neck down in a tackle during his first game for the London Broncos Academy in 2004 at the age of 17, was commended as a positive role model for spinal cord injured people and for his charitable work.

He shared the Inspirational Achievement Award for Adults with Lucy Robinson and then claimed the main honour, The Stephen Bradshaw Award for Rebuilding Lives after a SCI.

Matt's latest accolades sit alongside his OBE awarded to him in the Queen's Birthday Honours list in 2012.





# COMMERCIAL REVIEW

Income up and new partners on board...



## NEW PARTNER: SPECSAVERS

**2014 was an exciting period as the impact of Rugby League World Cup 2013 started to show tangible benefits to the commercial revenues at all levels within the domestic game.**

Overall, commercial income grew by a third across Super League as First Utility commenced their new three-year partnership and several new partnerships were unveiled, including Alcatel, Isuzu and Specsavers.

The Magic Weekend Fan Park at the Etihad Stadium was the biggest yet, with existing and new partners all benefiting from the opportunity to engage with fans by being able to showcase their products and services.

The year also saw the end of the Tetley's Challenge Cup sponsorship





agreement after Carlsberg UK decided to move investment into new brands within their portfolio. However, Carlsberg UK still remain committed to the sport with long term pouring rights deals with several clubs, including Leeds Rhinos, Castleford Tigers and Dewsbury Rams.

In the second half of the year, the commercial team commenced negotiations with Ladbrokes, BLK and

Kingstone Press which culminated in outcome to both grow revenue and replace existing commercial partners.

Ladbrokes signed a three-year agreement to sponsor the Challenge Cup from 2015 and also become the official betting partner of the First Utility Super League. BLK replaced ISC to become the official kit partner to the England Rugby League team and Super League match officials in a four-year deal that commenced in December 2014.

Finally, Kingstone Press Cider elevated their position within the game by adding to their title sponsorship of the Championship and League 1, with additional Super League rights and also extended their agreement with England until 2017.

In August, Chris Rawlings joined the RFL as the new Commercial Director, based at MediaCityUK. Chris

has previously operated with leading sports and entertainment agencies, Sport Five and James Grant PLC and is highly respected in the industry having represented global brands and international governing bodies, including UEFA.

Chris's role is to further grow sponsorship revenue across the sport across all levels and also assist Blake Solly in exploiting other areas of the commercial portfolio, including digital and the RFL Events Department.

In conclusion, Rugby League's commercial portfolio is now respected across the UK sports market in terms of the quality of brands that have invested in the sport for the long term. It is important that we now ensure that these new partners are well serviced and hopefully remain committed to the sport, as we seek to further grow the family of sponsors in the New Era.



# HIGHER EDUCATION

Re-branding and rapid progress...

**2014 saw the re-brand of Student Rugby League to University and Colleges Rugby League which is a return to its original name when the competition was started by pioneers Andrew Cudbertson and Jack Abernathy many years ago. The decision was made by the University and College Rugby League Board to ensure the name continued to reflect the individuality of the University and Colleges programme as they both develop.**

The university programme continued to progress at a rate of knots in 2014. The new RFL Higher Education Offer was launched, which was based around five key strategic themes for the sector - Performance, Participation, Employability, Player Experience, Income Generation and Recruitment.

Within the participation strand, a new Development 9-a-side festival pilot was launched which has been developed around participant insight. Development 9s are less formal, social-style festival events which take place on weekends and evenings away from traditional Wednesday afternoon student sport. The festivals have been created to allow new

teams and individuals the opportunity to play in a less formal environment without having to commit to regular BUCS League competition.

The pilot, held in Yorkshire and the Midlands, has engaged 10 new teams of which three have transitioned into the BUCS competition. The Development 9s festivals will be rolled out nationally in 2015-16 and are expected to significantly increase engagement in Rugby League within the university sector.

## Competition

Leeds Beckett dominated the BUCS Championship finals. They took both pieces of silverware at the BUCS Big Wednesday, held at Surrey Sports Park in March 2014. Leeds Beckett first team defeated Loughborough in the Championship Final and were crowned BUCS Champions for the ninth consecutive season. Their second team were victorious against University of South Wales in the Trophy final.

## Representative

England Universities were crowned the

2014 Four Nations Champions after beating Wales 32-20 in the final of the competition which was hosted at Nottingham University.

2014 was also featured Great Britain and Ireland Students, a team which runs every three years. A squad of 25 players were selected from those competing at the Four Nations. The Great Britain and Ireland squad were crowned the 2014 RFL Associations Cup winners after defeating GB Police, GB Teachers and GB Armed Forces.

The Great Britain and Ireland squad set out on a two-week tour of South Africa in September and were undefeated in a three-game Test series against South African Students.

Higher Education Manager James Szymik said: "2014 has been another fantastic year for University Rugby League. The standard of the representative teams keeps improving and the BUCS competition keeps growing. We have more registered players than ever before and the number of university teams engaging keeps growing."



**ALISTAIR LEAKE  
IN ACTION FOR  
LEEDS BECKETT  
DURING THEIR BUCS  
CHAMPIONSHIP  
FINAL VICTORY OVER  
LOUGHBOROUGH**

# FURTHER EDUCATION

Pivotal year for Colleges Rugby League as it gained its own identity...

**The RFL began to work with the Association of Colleges (AOC) and Sport England to re-shape Rugby League's offer to the Further Education sector during 2014.**

There have been some significant changes in the colleges sport sector and the RFL is working with key national partners to ensure the Rugby League offer is fit for purpose and is developed around the needs of the participants within the sector.

A new offer was launched with a key focus of engaging colleges with Rugby League throughout the curriculum and not just on the pitch.

A highlight of the 2014 colleges programme was the introduction of a new women's competition. The offer, which is based around festival formats, has been designed to keep girls who have previously played in the Champion Schools programme, or who play in the community, engaged during the academic term.

Two pilot festivals were run in the North West and the North East, with a total of six new teams participating.

**Competition**

The league structure for the 2013-14 college season consisted of five leagues with the following teams finishing top of their respective tables:

- Northern Premier 1A (North West) – Hopwood Hall College
- Northern Premier 1B (Yorkshire) – Calderdale College



- Northern 2A (North West) – Carmel College
- Northern 2B (Yorkshire) – New College Pontefract
- Northern 3B (Yorkshire) – Calderdale A

The National College Cup saw Calderdale College and Hopwood Hall College reach the final after some impressive results in the earlier rounds. The final proved to be a physical encounter with Calderdale College winning 50-6 and being crowned 2014 National College Cup winners.

**Representative**

The re-named English College Lionhearts went on a four-day tour of

Belgium in May 2014 to play against the Belgium national side. The Lionhearts are made up of a selection of the best players playing in the College Rugby League competition.

The Lionhearts confirmed their strength and ability by capping off a rewarding tour with an emphatic 72-6 win against the Belgium open age team in Brussels.

RFL Education Officer Steve Guan said: "It's an exciting time for College Rugby League as we're starting to gain some stability within our competition structure.

"The development of new initiatives is starting to have an impact with the number of colleges and sixth forms getting involved in activity."



# CHAMPION SCHOOLS

Rugby League's flagship schools competition continued to flourish...



THE YEAR 9 BOYS FINAL BETWEEN WARRINGTON'S GREAT SANKEY HIGH SCHOOL AND SOUTH HOLDERNESS COLLEGE FROM HULL

**Castleford Academy crowned a remarkable year in the Champion Schools competition when their Year 7 Boys beat The Brooksbank School of Halifax in the traditional curtain-raiser to the Challenge Cup final at Wembley Stadium.**

Of the eight Champion Schools finals in 2014, Castleford Academy appeared in six, winning five of them, including the Wembley triumph. They beat Brooksbank 36-14 with Bailey O'Connor taking the player of the match award following his hat-trick and immaculate goal kicking - he converted all of his side's six tries.

The rest of the finals were played at the Richmond Athletic Association grounds in Surrey on Friday, August 22. Castleford Academy's Year 7 Girls preceded the boys triumph at Wembley with victory at Richmond against Halton's Wade Deacon High School, the North West champions.

The Year 8 Girls final was contested between St Peter's RC High School from



CASTLEFORD ACADEMY YEAR 7 BOYS ON THE CHARGE AGAINST THE BROOKSBANK SCHOOL AT WEMBLEY



**CASTLEFORD ACADEMY YEAR 7 BOYS CELEBRATE THEIR WEMBLEY TRIUMPH**

**CHAMPION SCHOOLS NATIONAL WINNERS**



**SCHOOLS RUGBY LEAGUE THE YEAR 10 GIRLS TEAM FROM LEIGH ACADEMY BEAT CASTLEFORD ACADEMY IN THE FINAL**



**ACTION FROM THE YEAR 8 GIRLS FINAL**

Manchester and Sirius Academy (Hull) with the Hull side winning 24-12.

Castleford Academy's Year 8 Boys were victorious over fellow West Yorkshire side St Wilfrid's High School while Castleford Academy's Year 9 Girls beat Ossett Academy.

Warrington's Great Sankey High School succumbed to South Holderness College from Hull in the Year 9 Boys final.

The one blip in the march of Castleford Academy came in the Year 10 Girls final when they played Leigh Academy of Dartford in Kent. The Kent girls had won the Year 9 title in 2013 and became the first team from the South to claim back-to-back titles with an impressive 48-12 victory over the Yorkshire side.

Castleford Academy got back on track in the final game of the day at Richmond with their Year 10 Boys beating St Peter and Paul High School of Widnes 36-16.

RFL Education Officer Steve Guan said: "This year the Champion Schools competition saw over 1,300 boys and girls teams take part from over 500 schools throughout England and

Wales. With each school starting the competition at local level there are so many fantastic stories of schools, many new to the game, having initial success within these local competitions and then moving through to their regional stages and, if successful, then the national stages.

"The most rewarding aspect for me is to see the geographical spread of schools taking part throughout the competition not only in the local and regional stages but making it through into the national stages and representing their school at the finals weekend. Over the last few years southern schools have become formidable opponents, the Year 10 Girls from Leigh Academy in Dartford being a prime example this year. I believe this will continue as Rugby League in schools spreads and new institutions take up the game."

Recognising the work put in off the field Guan, said: "Champion Schools coordinators are the gatekeepers of the competition and manage each local stage. Without their time, energy and support the competition would not take

place or be the success it is. Our Reward and Recognition programme gives us the opportunity to say 'thank you' to these individuals on a personal level and also acknowledge their school or organisation that supports their role."

One particular success this year was the use of neutral venues in round one at Years 10 and 11. This created a great atmosphere and a schools Magic Weekend-type of event and led to it being rolled out across all age groups for 2014-15.

Along with young players, the Champion Schools has been a stepping stone for some of the young match officials in the sport who are looking to reach the pinnacle of officiating.

In the past, the Wembley curtain-raiser has seen some of Super League's current crop of match officials progress up the ladder, including Chris Leatherbarrow and Warren Turley.

Tim Roby, now a match official in the NRL, christened the new Wembley in 2007 by refereeing the curtain-raiser for the Challenge Cup final between St Helens and Catalans Dragons.



Supporting the Rugby League family & its community



Enhancing and enriching people's lives through the power and positive influence of Rugby League.

 Grants

 Welfare

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 Benevolent Fund



[www.rugbyleaguecares.org](http://www.rugbyleaguecares.org)

# PLAY TOUCH RUGBY LEAGUE

A successful launch to Rugby League new social offer...

**Play Touch Rugby League is a licensed participant product which was launched in 2014 after two years of development. Since its launch, the product has grown to deliver activity in 50 profitable licensed sites across England with 3,500 players attracted by the exciting new social offer.**

Play Touch RL was created and developed to provide a sustainable delivery model to allow organisations to run profitable licenced sites. The ultimate aim was to extend people's playing careers, attract new players or allowing people to return to Rugby League in a minimal contact version of the sport that suits their busy lifestyles.

In 2014 the average age of Play Touch RL participants ranged from 22 to 45 with the oldest being 74. The diverse range of players in the programme is one of its real strengths with brothers and sisters, wives and husband, grandads and grandsons all playing within the same teams. Across the board only 20 per cent of all participants are registered at a community club, which shows the great accessibility of the game. It was also great to see that 15 per cent of all participants are women.

To support the delivery, over 400 'action visits' were conducted at licensed sites. The aim was to gain a greater understanding of what the customer desires from a service by listening to feedback and making quick and speedy improvements. This has involved a 'mystery shopper' programme using a group of trained participants to rate licensed site delivery and identify any potential gaps. This has certainly



highlighted the fact that the licence model does work and licensees are delivering a fantastic product.

To support the delivery, the Play Touch RL team has assessed every touch point with the customer in a licensed environment to understand what they want and where they go to find information. A great example of this involves reviewing monthly website data and understanding where a participant goes online and what section of the website they spend their time on most. The team has used this insight to develop more suitable content online that ensures the participant has a better experience. This has led to increased views on the [playtouchrugbyleague.co.uk](http://playtouchrugbyleague.co.uk) website.

To launch the year and the new product we created our first innovated marketing campaign - Why Work Out When You Can Play. In total, the

campaign had a reach of nearly 16 million people, with exposure on BBC Sport, the Daily Express, The Mail on Sunday and Sky Sports News. To support the campaign we ran a number of roadshows, where we went directly to the fans and ex-players to encourage them to take up this exciting non-contact sport. This culminated in a big presence at Magic Weekend with 1,000 people signing up.

Mike Horrocks, who was involved in the original pilot programme, said: "We are now into our second year of running a Play Touch Rugby League licence. We can definitely see a step up from year one, especially in regards to marketing and general support and feel across the country, the fact 50 licences are running is great.

"As with last year, it's really easy and straightforward. With all the support and resources you get from the RFL, it's hard to go wrong. It's a great way to expand the provision of the community club and have a greater reach and connection with the local community."

The year ended with the Community Awards at the Super League Grand Final which saw the inaugural awards for Licensee of the Year, Player of the Year and Referee of the Year. The same event also saw a celebration of Play Touch RL with all the licensees and partners.





# RUGBY LEAGUE CARES REVIEW

Rugby League's major charity continued to have a huge impact during 2014...

**Massive strides were taken by Rugby League Cares in 2014 with good progress across their four good causes during the course of the year.**

Jamie Peacock of Leeds Rhinos and League 13 joined the board of trustees to represent players and provide a boost for the charity's profile.

One of the areas that has seen significant achievements in 2014 was the distribution of grants to different parts of the game, ranging from community to professional.

Twenty two different projects benefited to the tune of £32,000 from grants including the student game as well as community tours, with £1,000 grants aiding five tours.

The Community Game Raffle brought in an additional £42,000 for community clubs and Rugby League Cares, a fund-raising venture that was partnered by Rhino Rugby League.



## Rugby League Cares

The majority of successful applications centred on a project to provide education for coaches to work in schools with the aim of targeting new players.

The welfare programme is supportive of every aspect of Rugby League, from current professionals to former players and those involved in the community game.

The Past Players' committee re-named their programme Rugby League Cares

'Reunions' which coincided with a new central database of ex-players. Eighty per cent of Yorkshire clubs and 30 per cent of clubs based in the North West have had data collected, with support offered to Cumbria and London.

Colin Maskill, Mike Nicholas and Dave Howes have all become voluntary representatives for Yorkshire, the North West and London respectively, to promote the programme.

The welfare programme hosted two successful events in 2014 with the centenary of the Rorke's Drift Test commemorated by a lunch held in July. Malcolm Reilly OBE and Willie Horne were inducted into the Hall of Fame at a dinner hosted by Rugby League Cares in November.

Over 200 people were in attendance for the Year of Health and Wellbeing conference at the AJ Bell Stadium to promote the myriad of great projects delivered by Rugby League benefiting public health. Many involved in health at local level attended, which resulted in an increase in activity.

Following the closing of the Rugby League Heritage museum at the George Hotel in Huddersfield, Rugby League Cares moved to carry on showcasing its heritage collection. A £140,000 grant came from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the University of Huddersfield, with the funds being used in a variety of ways.

The grant has been used to purchase the collection of



**THE COMMUNITY GAME RAFFLE WAS PARTNERED BY RHINO RUGBY LEAGUE**



memorabilia belonging to Mike Stephenson, the Sky Sports pundit, who had his collection on display in the George Hotel. Other items were secured with a view to forming a travelling exhibition, with Hull hosting the first one during August

A full-time Heritage Manager was appointed to display the collection.

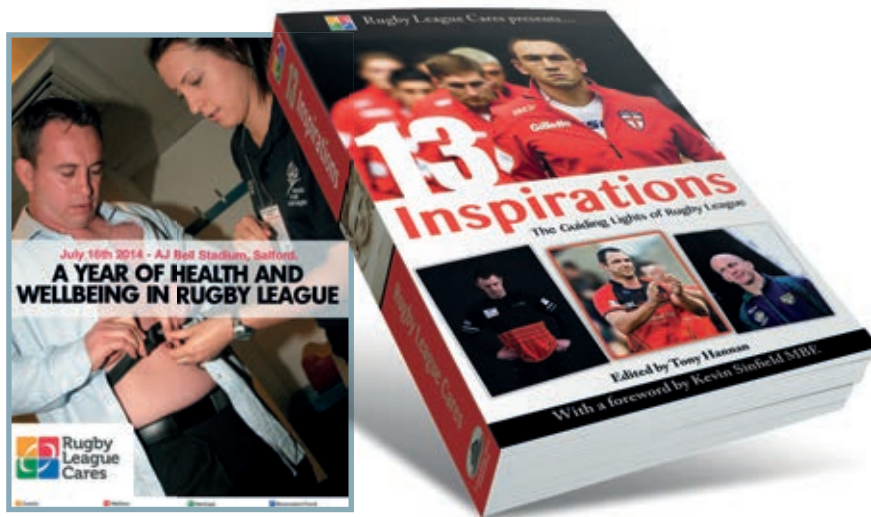
The book, '13 Inspirations', which celebrates 13 inspirational individuals involved with Rugby League, was published by Scratching Shed Publications to celebrate some of the most significant figures in the sport.

The final area that has seen significant growth in 2014 was the Benevolent Fund. Financial support was used to enhance physiotherapy and educational re-training to help players in all aspects of Rugby League.

The Benevolent Fund isn't just assisting current players in the sport, but moving into 2015, it will also be coming to the aid of former players.

Luke Byran, who became severely disabled at the age of 19 during the 1990s, is to be part of a major project by the Benevolent Fund to help him be re-housed.

With continued support from volunteers, these four key areas of Rugby League will continue to progress year on year.



2014 RL HALL OF FAME INDUCTIONS

# STATE OF MIND



Continuing to break new ground on mental health...

**State of Mind continued to blaze a trail alongside the RFL during 2014 by taking mental fitness messages and promoting Rugby League to a range of audiences across the country. The main feature was the State of Mind round of fixtures supported admirably by the RFL and Rugby League Cares.**

Round 25 of the First Utility Super League was dedicated to State of Mind with fixtures taking place on August 28, 29, 31 with match attendances totalling 69,306 at an average of 9,900 supporters at each game. State of Mind mental fitness cards were given out to over 5,500 fans and many were engaged in conversations.

"If it wasn't for State of Mind I wouldn't be at the match today," said one. "I was going to kill myself last year but spoke to someone from State of Mind and changed my mind, got help and now I am going to be a grandad. Thanks so much without you I would be dead."

Another said: "I've got bi-polar. What State of Mind are doing is breaking down stigma using my favourite sport, outstanding!"

There were a record number of volunteers at the games during Round 25.

Sky Sports and State of Mind were rewarded with a MIND Media Award in 2014 for the features by Brian Carney and Angela Powers during the 2013 campaign. The award took place at the British Film Institute on the South Bank in London. Premier Sports showed the State of Mind family trailer during their NRL coverage in August 2014

Paul Farmer, CEO of MIND Charity, the largest mental health charity in the UK, attended his first-ever game of Rugby League during the State of Mind Round in 2014 and said: "What a fantastic thing to see so many people in T-shirts challenging stigma."

In 2014, State of Mind presented at the MIND AGM in Leeds to all the chief executives from MIND groups across the UK.

State of Mind delivered mental fitness sessions across the country to 2,345 people during 2014 and Twitter ambassadors, including Paul Wellens and Earl Crabtree, and sent



ENGLAND  
CAPTAIN SEAN  
O'LOUGHLIN

out mental fitness messages during the week of the State of Mind fixtures which amassed a total of 4, 351,492 followers.

State of Mind continued to work closely with Emma Rosewarne and Sporting Chance to facilitate help and support for players, fans and communities across the Rugby League family.

State of Mind featured on BBC TV's Panorama programme for the innovative 'Boot Room' project piloted with Warrington Wolves. They were featured in the programme as an example of positive initiatives to encourage mental fitness and prevent suicide using the power of classic Rugby League games to reduce social isolation.

In 2015 State of Mind are hoping to sign a two-year partnership agreement with Rugby League Cares to take the State of Mind round of fixtures to even more people across the country and the world with the NRL State of Mind campaign.



AN AWARD-WINNING CAMPAIGN



# PLAYER WELFARE

Achieving high standards and good practice for 2014...

**Last year's report stated that the focus for 2014 was to achieve high standards and good practice at all Super League clubs with transferable systems and quality outputs for players.**

During 2014 a number of clubs improved their player welfare provision considerably, although there are still clubs that gave cause for concern. A number of clubs are now delivering excellence in this area, others are developing their provision quickly whilst it is very disappointing to report that a small number are still substandard.

The RFL continued to develop central provision in all key areas which can be drawn down by the individual club and/or player. This has the advantage of ensuring that the player welfare model is similar in all clubs and that services are transferable when players move from club to club.

As the policy attempts to mirror the welfare provision in the NRL it is becoming increasingly transferable as players move to and from the NRL and Super League and strong relationships with the NRL Welfare Department have been forged.

During 2014 considerable time was spent in revising the Player Welfare Policy to take account of changes over the last three years and in drawing up delivery standards to sit alongside the Policy. This work should help in continuing to increase the quality of Player Welfare delivery across clubs and to assist in standardisation and transferability. The Player Welfare Policy and accompanying Standards are published on the RFL website.

The Player Welfare And Education Forum with an independent chair, Mike Farrar, and representatives from all stakeholders was also established during 2014 and will be a key component in monitoring progress against the Policy and Standards in future.

Independent research on the players' views on the welfare provision by the RFL and at their club was commissioned through Huddersfield University.

## PLAYER WELFARE MANAGERS (PWM)

From January 2014 each club should have had a Player Welfare Manager (PWM) available as a three-day-a-week resource. There has been a relatively high turnover of PWMs over the last 12 months which is concerning in a role where building up the trust and confidence of the players is essential to achieving successful outcomes.

The Player Welfare Managers in post are usually highly-committed individuals who have a personal belief in the importance of Player Welfare, however in order to succeed in their role they need to be working in an environment where the Head Coach and CEO are vocal advocates for player welfare. Without this buy-in from the top, welfare provision will never be seen as important throughout the club and players will be unsure about whether the club is really committed to improving their welfare, education and training for a post-RL role.

## Player Welfare Software (PWS)

In 2014 the RFL purchased the NRL Player Welfare Software (PWS) package which was developed specifically for the NRL to monitor players' careers, education and training development. The majority of PWMs found the system a huge benefit allowing them to keep tabs on progress within the club. It also has the benefit of providing a standardised method of keeping records which can be transferred when a player moves club simply by pressing the transfer button.



MIKE FARRAR

The PWS also allows the RFL Welfare Department to monitor the input by PWMs and to draw down statistics in key areas such as careers and education. However the RFL cannot see any private notes on a player's record.

## MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL BEING

### Sporting Chance

The relationship with Sporting Chance continued to be fundamental to the Player Welfare programme. The number of players accessing services continued to rise on an annual basis from two in 2011, to around 30 in 2012, to 50 in 2013 and around 70 in 2014. In 2014 there were eight players who attended the Sporting Chance Clinic for residential treatment, a considerable increase on previous years.

Sporting Chance (Tony Adams MBE & Colin Bland) together with Tony Smith and some players made a presentation to the SLE meeting in October which gave CEOs and Chairmen a good insight into the number and type of issues Sporting Chance is helping players with.

### Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)

The RFL held a two-day MHFA course early in the year for PWMs who had not already obtained the qualification and later in the season a group of 16 first team players with a personal interest in this area from a cross section of clubs attended a two-day MHFA course.

The majority of clubs held a MHFA Lite training session either on their own or shared with a neighbouring club for their coaching and physio staff. In addition a MHFA Lite session was held for Super League coaches at the end of one of their meetings.

### Social & Non-Prescribed Prescription Drug (SNPDD) Policy

The SNPDD Policy was finalised and roll out began with education workshops held for first team squads at all Super League clubs during the year to inform players about the policy, increase awareness



CHRIS HILL

## WHEN SENIOR PLAYERS LIKE WARRINGTON'S CHRIS HILL SIGN UP FOR COURSES IT ENCOURAGES YOUNGER PLAYERS TO DO SO.

about the issues and encourage players to come forward for help. The policy is driven by welfare concerns and is not intended to be punitive. The testing programme began early in 2015.

### Gambling

It became clear during the year that there is a substantial problem with gambling addiction amongst the professional players with Sporting Chance reporting an increase on the number of referrals

and Yorkshire Bank helping more players to resolve the financial issues caused by their addiction. In addition several of the players making a residential stay at the Sporting Chance Clinic were referred due to gambling addiction.

The Welfare Director and a number of PWMs attended the Professional Players' Federation conference on Problem Gambling in Sport in December at which research from football and cricket was published showing that professional

sportsmen tend to have a higher propensity to problem gambling than the population at large. The RFL was offered the opportunity to take part in the second tranche of research in early 2015.

Tackling the area of problem gambling will be a priority area for 2015.

## LIFE STYLE & PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Social media

The RFL introduced a Social Media Policy for distribution to players. The majority of clubs ran one or more internal workshops for players detailing the dangers and potential benefits of a social media presence.

### Presentation skills

The RFL provided presentation skills workshops with Speak the Speech (providers to rugby union and cricket) to help develop players confidence and skills in public speaking. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

## KARL FITZPATRICK

**Player Welfare Manager at Warrington Wolves, Karl Fitzpatrick highlights the importance of players preparing for life after Rugby League and how helpful resources such as Sporting Chance are to players.**

"It's not just one person's job to get players ready for work, ie the Player Welfare Manger," he said. "It's a collection of people, from the head coach to the physios, it's a culture that we provide to look after players' welfare.

"There's a study which says that if players are happy and content away from the sport, then they are likely to perform better on game day. We have 82 per cent of players involved with something - whether it's courses, education or taking care of their own businesses.

"The big aspect of getting players involved with something is the players themselves. In my experience at Warrington, you get Chris Hill is on board and he starts doing courses, that rubs off on the younger players who then do it, which increases performance.

"Tools like Sporting Chance are great. As a Player Welfare Manager, I'm not a professional in dealing with depression, but I always provide the best support I can for players and I put them up in front of an expert at Sporting Chance to provide the help they may need to get better."



## FINANCE AND CONTRACTUAL

### Yorkshire Bank

Yorkshire Bank continued to provide a good service to players. In particular their help in resolving debt issues (usually caused by gambling addiction, pay day loans or marital breakdown) was critical. A number of clubs now have regular visits from Yorkshire Bank which allows informal meetings with the players whether or not they are private banking customers. In addition an increasing number of clubs use the Yorkshire Bank service which sets up bank accounts in this country ready for overseas players to access on arrival.

### Career Ending Insurance

The RFL continued to explore the possibility of a game wide career ending insurance policy but currently hasn't been able to find an affordable solution to this problem.

## CAREERS

### Career Workshops & One-to-Ones

The take up of career workshops and one-to-ones continued to increase with good feedback from players on the content and helpfulness of both workshops and one-to-ones.

### Personal Development Plan (PDP)

2014 saw the introduction of standardised PDP which can be attached to the player's record. This is usually produced by the career coach following a careers one-to-one and shared with the player, PWM and the Welfare department. The PDP sets objectives and action points which will help the player achieve his career goals.

### Career Engaged

The purpose of the career workshops and one-to-ones is to help players prepare for their career after Rugby League whilst they are playing. With this objective in mind the Player Welfare Policy measures "Engaged in Education or Career Training" as the main KPI in this area. The definition of 'Engaged' is a player who is exploring options or has decided on his post Rugby League career path and that he is taking action to achieve that.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### RL Cares Grants for Training and Education

The RFL continued to donate 80 per cent of all money raised from fines to Rugby League Cares for use as a Training and Education Fund (the remaining 20 per cent is donated to the RFL Benevolent Fund). There was a significant increase in the number of applications against the Fund with around £60k being awarded in grants

### European Social Fund/Warrington Collegiate Courses

A considerable proportion of the players that took courses in 2013 went on to study further so the objective of running the courses as means of encouraging players back into training and/or education appears to have worked.

Warrington Collegiate ran a L1 Electrician's course at Castleford Tigers' ground for Yorkshire-based players. The course was doubly oversubscribed and again a large proportion of those players who did get places on the course went on to enrol on further courses for 2015.

### Functional Skills

One of the KPIs for the Player Welfare programme is to ensure that all players obtain Functional Skills at L2 in English, Maths and ICT before leaving the game. The current government focus on all school/college leavers having Functional Skills will leave those players who left school without achieving Functional Skills at a huge disadvantage in the job market. Warrington Collegiate have provided access to their online Functional Skills system for all clubs.

## TRANSITION

### General

Many players struggle with transition some with fairly disastrous consequences for their lives, usually but not always short term. Unfortunately there are still a significant number of players leaving the full-time game ill-prepared for life post-RL either emotionally, financially or career wise. In 2014 the RFL provided assistance in one form or another to around 20 recently retired players who are struggling in one way or another. The support is usually either access to Sporting Chance's services and/or career advice and RL Cares education and training grants. Although there is substantive research to show that a proportion of professional players from all sports suffer emotionally regardless of how well prepared they are for the transition, it is also clear that where players are financially secure and have

a second career that they are ready and happy to take up, the emotional strain of leaving a team environment is likely to be alleviated.

### Transition Meeting

In 2014, for the first time, the RFL held a transition meeting for those players who through choice (or otherwise) did not have a full-time playing contract for 2015 by September 1, 2014. The purpose of the meeting was to help prepare them for transition by giving them an opportunity to explore, in a safe environment, some of the emotional turmoil that they may face in the future and allowing them to meet those welfare partners who remain available to them after leaving the game.

The format was informal with lunch followed by a thank you address by the RFL CEO, then a workshop with Sporting Chance and some recently retired players outlining some of the issues that players may face on retirement, some of the coping strategies and how to get help, in particular how to use counselling as a preventive tool. There was also an opportunity to meet with the career coaches and a "speed dating" session to allow the players to meet briefly with the RFL, RL Cares, RL Learning, Yorkshire Bank and the RLPA to gain awareness of the welfare services which remain available to them.

The feedback from the players that did attend was excellent and the event will be repeated in 2015 with the learning points from 2014 being put into effect.

## ANDY RALEIGH

**Former Super League forward Andy Raleigh on how he got involved with player welfare, and the way the system has progressed.**

"When I was at Huddersfield, I spoke with Emma Rosewarne who said that they were keen to bring in Player Welfare Managers to try and replicate what was being done in Australia," he said.

"Things have started to really take shape with that side of the game for when players decide to retire. My experience was talking to Julie Measures, who is a careers person, and she put on talks about what to do when retirement draws near.

"I think it's been good that clubs and the RFL are really on board with it and are keen to deal with players to make sure they have something in place.

"From when I started playing, it's come on massively. The fact that it's in place now and every club has someone looking after players is a really big thing going forward."



# HALL OF FAME

Two new members added to its illustrious ranks...

**The sport's most exclusive club welcomed two new members to its ranks in 2014 when Malcolm Reilly OBE and Willie Horne were inducted into the Rugby League Hall of Fame.**

The inductions took place at a celebratory dinner hosted by Rugby League Cares at Huddersfield in October and saw Malcolm and Willie, who was represented by his widow, Bessie, become the 22nd and 23rd members of the Hall of Fame.

They were welcomed into the game's pantheon by fellow Hall of Fame inductees Garry Schofield OBE, Billy Boston MBE, Roger Millward MBE, Lewis Jones, Neil Fox MBE and Tom Van Vollenhoven, who flew in from his home in South Africa to attend.

Hailed as Barrow's favourite son, Willie Horne captained Barrow, Lancashire, England and Great Britain between 1943 and 1959.

Courageous and inspiring, Horne played for England between 1945-53 scoring 38 points in 14 games, in addition to representing Great Britain on eight occasions during the 1946-52 seasons, scoring 20 points.

Malcolm Reilly's playing career spanned three decades, during which he cemented his reputation as one of the games genuine hard men. Reilly debuted for Castleford aged 19 and played for his home town in two stints, first between 1967 and 1971 and then between 1974



and 1986 after returning from a successful stint in Australia with Manly.

The loose forward won the Lance Todd trophy with Castleford in their 11-6 victory over Salford in 1969. Reilly appeared at Wembley again the following year in Castleford's 7-2 triumph over Wigan.

He coached Castleford to a Wembley victory in 1986 and enjoyed success in the 1997 Australian Grand Final as coach of Newcastle Knights.

The 2014 inductions followed on from a similar event in 2013 when, after an eight-year hiatus, four new members

were inducted into the Hall of Fame: Lewis Jones, Martin Offiah MBE, Mick Sullivan and Garry Schofield OBE.

Two more inductions are planned for the autumn of 2015, taking the total of Hall of Fame members to 25 in a year that will see the sport celebrate its 120th anniversary.

Membership of the Rugby League Hall of Fame is restricted exclusively to the greatest Rugby League players of all time. Each player must have:

- ➔ A record of outstanding achievement at the very highest levels of the game;
- ➔ A reputation that transcends the era in which he played;
- ➔ Made a contribution to the game that will last as long as Rugby League is played.

To be eligible for nomination to the Rugby League Hall of Fame, players must have:

- ➔ Played professional Rugby League in the UK for at least 10 years;
- ➔ Played their last professional match in the UK at least 10 years before the date of the Hall of Fame induction ceremony.



The 23 members of the Rugby League Hall of Fame are as follows:

## 1988 Inductees

Billy Batten  
 Brian Bevan  
 Billy Boston MBE  
 Alex Murphy OBE  
 Jonty Parkin  
 Gus Risman  
 Albert Rosenfeld  
 Jim Sullivan  
 Harold Wagstaff

## 1989 Inductee

Neil Fox MBE

## 2000 Inductees

Vince Karalius  
 Tom Van Vollenhoven  
 Roger Millward MBE

## 2005 Inductees

Eric Ashton MBE  
 Douglas Clark MM  
 Ellery Hanley MBE  
 Martin Hodgson

## 2013 Inductees

Lewis Jones  
 Martin Offiah MBE  
 Garry Schofield OBE  
 Mick Sullivan

## 2014 Inductees

Willie Horne  
 Malcolm Reilly OBE



# OPERATIONS AND LEGAL DEPARTMENT

2014 saw a merger of several departments...

**September 2014 saw the merger of the Professional Game Operations and Community Game Services departments, together with the Legal and Welfare and Safeguarding teams, to create a new Operations and Legal Department. At the same time Karen Moorhouse (former Head of Legal) was appointed as the director of the new department.**

The newly-merged department seeks to ensure that our internal systems and processes reflect the Whole Game Solution that we continue to strive to achieve across the RFL and Rugby League.

The new department brings together a wealth of knowledge from all tiers of the

sport. There are four sub-teams within the department: Operations; Registrations and Salary Cap; Welfare and Safeguarding; and Legal and Compliance.

The Operations team is headed up by Kelly Barrett, who has almost 20 years of experience within the community game. This team has responsibility for administering competitions across all tiers of the game, including the compilation and management of fixtures and results and managing the disciplinary systems. In addition the team monitors compliance with the Facility Standards.

The Registrations and Salary Cap Team is headed up by Samantha Allen. Sam joined the RFL over seven years ago

having previously worked at Wakefield Trinity Wildcats. This team is responsible for the registration of all players and all other individuals (including agents, coaches, first aiders, and club welfare officers) across all tiers of the game and for managing all Operational Rules that relate to all such individuals. In addition the team manage the Super League, Championship and League 1 Salary Caps.

Emma Rosewarne is our Welfare Director. Emma has over 30 years experience within the sport. The Welfare team seeks to ensure the welfare of all participants in the game. In relation to professional players this includes health and mental well-being, financial



COMMUNITY GAME

## DISCIPLINARY



and lifestyle advice and training and education for post-Rugby League careers. In relation to the community game, their focus is on ensuring compliance with the Safeguarding Policy. The team also lead on medical standards and equality and diversity across the whole game.

Graeme Sarjeant is the Head of Legal having previously held the role of Compliance Manager. The team advise all other departments on all legal matters including the application of Operational Rules and the negotiation of all contracts (such as media, commercial and consultancy agreements).

Dean Hardman, Compliance Manager, is responsible for investigating and prosecuting breaches of the Operational Rules.

Internally we are already seeing the benefits of the merger with the sharing of best practices from the former departments. This should ensure the department continually delivers a high quality service to the sport.



# RLEF REVIEW

Rugby League continues to grow and prosper internationally...

**Internationally the sport continued to prosper in 2014 with more nations joining the RLEF and members continuing to mature in their roles as national federations. An example of this maturation is Rugby League Ireland, which benefited for the first time from Irish Sport Council funding in 2014.**

In February, Spain became the 18th European Union affiliate, further increasing the Federation's European dimension. The benefit European Commission engagement has had on the RLEF's ability to grow and administer the game in Europe and its surrounding territories cannot be understated.

Europe has had a remarkable effect on the RLEF's ability to operate and extend the sport's boundaries. Succeeding the Governance Foundation Project (2012-13), the complementary Leadership Devolution Project, launched in January 2014, is designed to continue to impart the principles of good governance and devolve strategic leadership from the sport's historically Anglo-French core by giving more responsibility to the five most senior RLEF nations, mentoring five younger nations; and for those five in turn to mentor the seven youngest Programme Countries.

Commencing in January, the project expanded its work programme mid-term

through Spain's arrival on the scene, and grew further still through a demand for additional local activities in Greece, Hungary, Malta and Sweden. By year's end, 17 trans-national activities had taken place in Scotland, Latvia, Holland, England, Czech Republic, Wales, Denmark, Ireland, Italy and Greece.

The last London Congress for a few years attracted a record attendance from the members, with nine of 11 Full and six of eight Affiliate Members present and exercising their constitutional rights.

2014 was undoubtedly the Board of Directors' busiest year. Elections conducted in July saw the members return Scotland's Graeme Thompson and Serbia's Nebojsa Sretenovic to the Board. Paul Nicholson, who was co-opted onto the Board late in 2013, served his first full year and will continue to focus his attention on developing the RLEF's relationship with broadcasters in an effort to generate additional revenue, especially for the European Championship tournaments.

In May, Nigel Wood was elected chairman of the Rugby League International Federation, becoming the first English chair since Maurice Lindsay. Nigel is a keen advocate of the sport's international expansion and a great supporter of the RLEF.

In August, the RLEF reached the halfway point of its eight-year strategy. The report delivered to the members at the Congress in August illustrated the progress the Federation is making in key strategic areas, namely domestic competition development, technical education, strengthening member capacity through good governance, and improving the RLEF's central performance.

There are now 18 nations with domestic championships compared with 12 four years ago. To support this growing number of competitions, the RLEF has trained and qualified 16 coach educators and 14 match official educators with, for the first time, non-Anglo-French personnel licensed to deliver Level 1 courses trans-nationally across Europe. This trend will continue in the future as the European dimension of the RLEF grows.

Eleven nations have government recognition compared with seven in 2010. This number is set to increase when Rugby League achieves membership of SportAccord. The RLEF work closely with the RLIF, which lodged the application for membership of SportAccord, the umbrella group for Olympic and non-Olympic sports. Affiliation with SportAccord is crucial to



**A BIG YEAR FOR RUGBY LEAGUE IN IRELAND**



## THE RLEF'S COMPETITION CALENDAR CONTINUES TO PROVIDE A STABLE FRAMEWORK FOR ASPIRING NATIONS

so many members, as a large number of governments now determine a sport's legitimacy solely based on whether it has SportAccord recognition or not.

Government recognition is a sign of an organisation settling into its national sporting landscape. A sign of the progress being made in this area is the elevation in members. There are now 11 Full Members compared with five in 2010; eight Affiliates compared with five; and 12 Observers compared with eight.

Prior to 2010, the RLEF had not raised any external funding; this compares with €525,000 generated in the four-year period 2010-14. The bulk of that investment has been from the European Commission, with UK Sport International and private sponsors contributing the rest.

On the field, Scotland and Greece were respective winners of the European Championship and European Championship C. Scotland, finalists in 2009, won the competition for the first time with Scotland Rugby League reporting that the victory generated more national press coverage than the World Cup campaign a year earlier.

In June there was African involvement in the sport's first ever Commonwealth Championship, contested by eight nations from five of six Commonwealth regions. This is part of a long-term, RLIF-led initiative to affiliate with omnisports organisations such as the Commonwealth Games Federation. SportAccord membership and then IOC affiliation are the next two objectives.

The RLEF's competition calendar, reorganised before the 2012 season,

continues to provide a stable framework for aspiring nations to plan, improve their organisational capacity, not to mention their technical level. Championship B saw some great matches and ended with three teams locked on six competition points. It has provided precisely the right amount of football for the participants, allowing them to organise other initiatives around their three annual matches and all the organisations have improved both on and off the field as a result of their participation.

As the Federation looks forward, one of the most important challenges is the commercialisation of the European Championship, which represents the RLEF's ability to grow the business to support the increasing amount of Rugby

League activity in Europe. Although matches from past tournaments have been televised, the competition as a whole has never had its own television deal. The 2014 edition witnessed some wonderful matches and came down to the last minute of the last game - that the Rugby League public were denied the chance to watch most of the games needs to be addressed.

In addition to constantly upholding high standards of governance and emphasising domestic championship growth, enlarging the visibility and value of the European Championship will be a key objective going forward. Coupled with the RLIF's own hard work on the global calendar, success in this area will see Rugby League reach new levels in the near future.



SCOTLAND CAPTAIN DANNY BROUGH AND COACH STEVE MCCORMACK WITH THE EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHY

# REVIEW OF FINANCES

Another strong year of financial performance reported...

**We are delighted to report that the RFL has achieved another strong year of turnover of £19,222k in 2014 (2013: £34,810k). The record turnover for the sport in 2013 was due to the consolidation within the accounts of the financial performance of Rugby League World Cup 2013, managed and organised by the RFL in 2013, which took place in England, Wales and France. However, as the 2013 World Cup was a one-off event, this will clearly distort the year on year comparisons. It should be noted that without the World Cup activity the year on year consolidated turnovers would have been much closer in number, with a reduction to £19,080k in 2014 from £19,385k in 2013.**

Match income saw a significant decrease from £9,285k in 2013 to £2,902k in 2014. However, this reduction was entirely due to the World Cup matches in 2013. Excluding the World Cup income the level of match income has increased year on year from £2,755k in 2013 to £2,891k in 2014.

Not staging a World Cup in 2014 also had a negative impact on Sponsorship Monies, which saw a 63.9 per cent decrease in these funds which moved to £776k (2013: £2,149k). However, excluding the World Cup income, this income remained static at £764k (2013: £763k).

Grant income received decreased from £8,744k in 2013 to £4,916k primarily due to the additional income received in

2013 for the World Cup. Excluding the World Cup-related income, this element of turnover has decreased from £5,951k in 2013 to £4,916k in 2014.

As with other funding streams, the World Cup also accounted for a decrease in broadcast income of 41.9 per cent with income generated decreasing from £9,916k in 2013 to £5,757k in 2014. All other existing RFL long term BBC and British Sky Broadcasting contracts continued in line with previous years.

Within the RFL accounts, the cost of sales heading is broken down into two sections. The first being the external, third party costs of making the sale and the second being those costs of sales that are internal to the RFL's stakeholders such as payments directly made to clubs. External cost of sales decreased in 2014 by 53.4

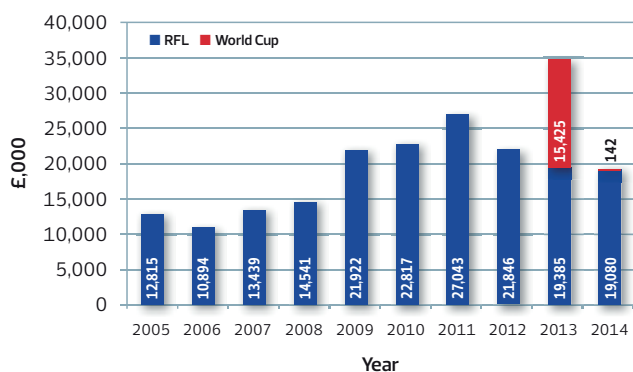
per cent from the 2013 figure of £19,899k to £9,270k. This was again primarily due to the increased cost of staging the World Cup.

Payments to and on behalf of clubs is made up from the cost of sales element of £2,235k (2013: £2,459k) and a further amount shown below Gross Profit on the Profit and Loss Account, which in 2014 brought the total payable to and on behalf of clubs to £6,582k (2013: £6,583k). While the overall amount has remained constant it is worth noting that there were movements on individual elements, notably a decrease in central prize monies paid and an increase of TV distributions paid out (due to a signing-on fee paid to Championship clubs early in 2014).

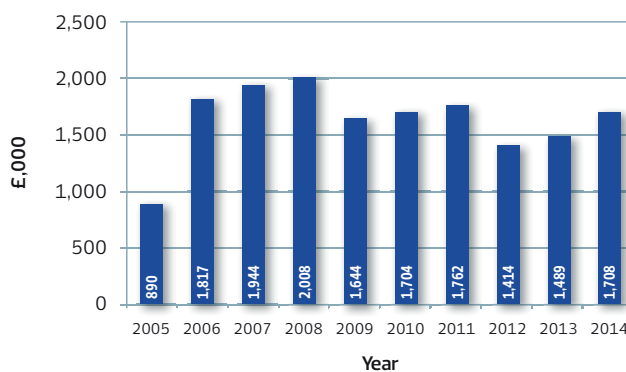
The RFL has a policy of continuously monitoring operating costs. Whilst in 2014,



**RFL TOTAL REVENUE**



**NET RFL VALUE**





these costs have decreased significantly to £3,132k from £8,226k in 2013 this decrease can be attributed entirely to the staging of the World Cup in 2013, in particular the cost of the Staging Fee for the rights to host the World Cup of £3.5m. Removing the World Cup expenses, the operating costs for the core business are £2,967k, representing a 7.6 per cent increase on 2013's equivalent figure of £2,756k. This increase is over a number of expenditure lines.

Once again, it is worth noting that interest receivable by the RFL, which has historically been a very significant income stream, was again low at £59k (2013: £71k). The relatively low amount is a result of the general economic impact felt from banks offering much lower interest rates over the last five years.

Given the underlying economic issues, it is pleasing to report that for the thirteenth year in succession the RFL has posted a pre-tax profit, on this occasion of £295k (2013: £172k).

#### FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

2015 will be the first year of the RFL's new seven-year Strategic Plan. The Plan has the customer at its heart and looks particularly at broadcast viewers, spectators at games; participants playing

the sport at all levels; and of course winning internationally.

The current broadcast contract with British Sky Broadcasting was due to expire at the end of 2016. However, at the start of 2014, a new contract was negotiated to cover the period 2017 to 2021 thereby extending our relationship with Sky to beyond 30 years. The new contract, which sees record levels of investment from British Sky Broadcasting, ensures that more matches than ever before will be shown live on TV with both Super League and Championship clubs benefiting from the increased exposure. The clubs will not only enjoy financial stability during the next seven years but the game as a whole will benefit from the investment made by BSKyB across every level, including investment in the community game.

Following the success of the switch to a summer playing season, the community game has seen more participants engaging with the sport than ever before. The RFL has aspirations for the community game to become less dependent on government funding in the future, whilst ensuring that activity at the grassroots level is maintained or bettered. The sport regularly sees the introduction of new initiatives to deliver

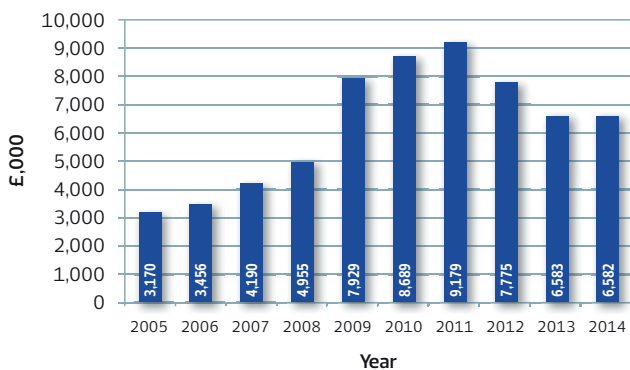
this aspiration. The Play Touch Rugby League programme continues to grow - this initiative encompasses a franchise model, generating additional income for the sport whilst also increasing participation. It is expected that this will see further significant growth through 2015. In addition the relationship between the community game's many stakeholders and the RFL will be further strengthened in the next few years with the roll out of a formal membership structure of the RFL for all clubs, leagues and organisations who wish to directly affiliate.

#### SUMMARY

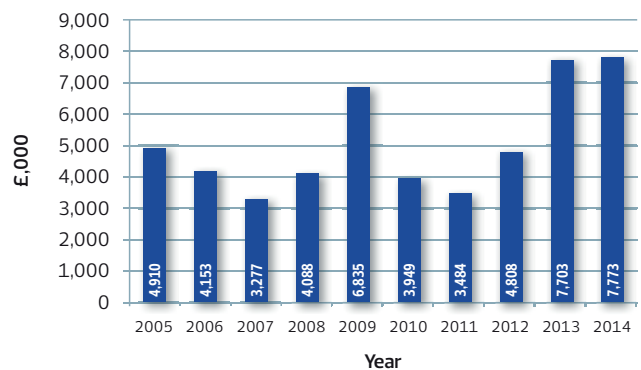
The trading results in 2014 were once again strong and signs for the future of the game are promising. The conclusion of a new BSKyB broadcast contract provides stability through to 2021 for both the RFL and its member clubs and we are therefore, convinced in the RFL's ability to continue to execute its strategy through 2015 and beyond.

We would like to close by thanking the clubs, volunteers, staff and everyone associated with Rugby League for their hard work and support throughout the year, and look forward to the challenges that 2015 will bring.

**RFL INVESTMENT TO THE SPORT**



**CASH BALANCES**



# Consolidated profit and loss account

for the year ended December 31 2014

	Note	2014		2013	
		£	£	£	£
<b>Turnover</b>	1		<b>19,221,513</b>		34,809,805
Cost of sales	2	<b>(9,270,375)</b>		(19,899,050)	
Cost of sales – payable to or on behalf of clubs	3	<b>(2,234,602)</b>		(2,459,457)	
Total cost of sales			<b>(11,504,977)</b>		(22,358,507)
<b>Gross profit</b>			<b>7,716,536</b>		12,451,298
Payments to or on behalf of clubs and other member organisations	3	<b>(4,347,591)</b>		(4,123,977)	
Operating costs		<b>(3,132,716)</b>		(8,225,836)	
Administrative costs			<b>(7,480,307)</b>		(12,349,813)
<b>Operating profit</b>			<b>236,229</b>		101,485
Other interest receivable and similar income			<b>58,797</b>		70,666
<b>Profit on ordinary activities before taxation</b>			<b>295,026</b>		172,151
Tax on profit on ordinary activities			<b>(76,225)</b>		(97,809)
<b>Profit for the financial year</b>			<b>218,801</b>		74,342

## Notes

1	Turnover	2014	2013
		£	£
	Match income	<b>2,901,925</b>	9,285,312
	Broadcast	<b>5,757,000</b>	9,916,057
	Sponsorship	<b>775,950</b>	2,148,736
	Government funding	<b>4,915,915</b>	8,744,197
	Other	<b>4,870,723</b>	4,715,503
		<b>19,221,513</b>	34,809,805

<b>2 Cost of sales</b>	<b>2014</b>	2013
	£	£
Match costs	<b>1,381,043</b>	11,693,572
Grant funded activities	<b>5,086,253</b>	5,115,080
Sponsorship and promotional costs	<b>303,392</b>	525,566
Other	<b>2,499,687</b>	2,564,832
	<b>9,270,375</b>	19,899,050

<b>3 Payments to or on behalf of clubs and other member organisations</b>	<b>2014</b>	2013
	£	£
Awards to clubs	<b>2,581,637</b>	2,126,215
Awards to other sections of the game	<b>174,633</b>	243,413
Match officials	<b>703,420</b>	871,191
Insurance	<b>478,720</b>	501,422
Disciplinary costs and banned substances testing	<b>240,183</b>	222,479
Player Welfare	<b>168,998</b>	159,257
	<b>4,347,591</b>	4,123,977

In addition to the amounts above, further amounts were paid to or on behalf of clubs relating to events or government funding. These amounts are contained within Cost of Sales – payable to or on behalf of clubs and are as follows:

	<b>2014</b>	2013
	£	£
Match costs	1,376,196	1,623,602
Grant funded activities	858,406	835,855
	<b>2,234,602</b>	2,459,457
Total payments made to or behalf of clubs and other member organisations	<b>6,582,193</b>	6,583,434



# Consolidated balance sheet

at December 31 2014

	2014		2013	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>				
Tangible assets		3,003,042		3,176,948
Investments		1		1
		<b>3,003,043</b>		<b>3,176,949</b>
<b>Current assets</b>				
Debtors	10,166,240		6,165,768	
Cash at bank and in hand	7,773,298		7,702,688	
	<b>17,939,538</b>		<b>13,868,456</b>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(19,234,982)		(15,556,607)	
<b>Net current liabilities</b>		<b>(1,295,444)</b>		<b>(1,688,151)</b>
<b>Total assets less net current liabilities</b>		<b>1,707,599</b>		<b>1,488,798</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>1,707,599</b>		<b>1,488,798</b>
<b>Capital and Reserves</b>				
Revaluation reserve		456,591		456,591
Accumulated surplus		1,251,008		1,032,207
<b>Shareholders' funds</b>		<b>1,707,599</b>		<b>1,488,798</b>

The auditor has substantially completed the audit of the accounts for the year ended December 31 2014 and currently expects to issue an unqualified audit opinion. The auditor has reported on the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2013; their report was unqualified, did not include a reference to any matters to which the auditor drew attention by way of emphasis without qualifying their report, and did not contain statements under section 498(2) or (3) of the Companies Act 2006.