



**COMMUNITY RUGBY LEAGUE
MORE THAN A SPORT UPDATE
AUGUST 2022**

THE RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE

COMMUNITY RUGBY LEAGUE – MORE THAN A SPORT UPDATE

AUGUST 2022

1 INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the latest Community Rugby League – More Than a Sport Update. This update summarises the activities undertaken by the Development and Community Game Delivery Team contributing to the RFL Strategy and Vision 2022-2030. It also provides an update on relevant Talent Programmes and work undertaken by the Match Officials Department.

2 COMMUNITY RL STRATEGY & VISION 22-30

The Community Strategy is available on the RFL website and can be found [HERE](#).

This includes a focus on three key areas: -

- Supporting our Core Community Game participants and clubs
- Delivering broad and flexible pathways in Education
- Tackling Inequalities and having a positive Social Impact

As part of the April 2022 update, we referenced the importance of our partnership with Sport England, confirmation of an investment of £11.9m over the next five years and the appointment of Jodie Cunningham as the National Women and Girls Manager. Jodie was the first of several new staff appointments and repurposed roles as part of a restructure to ensure we are in the best possible shape to deliver the new strategy. The full Development and Community Game Delivery Team are set out in the organograms in appendix 1.

In May the RFL and Super League announced a 12-year strategic deal with global management company IMG to help reimagine Rugby League. Following the decision by the RFL and Super League to re-align, IMG will work with the newly combined entity to strategically reposition the sport to maximise its commercial potential for long-term growth. IMG will initially focus on competition restructuring, content production, domestic and international distribution of media rights and digital transformation. The IMG Team has embarked on a thorough consultation process which included attending June's Community Board meeting. The bulk of the agenda time was set aside for what proved to be a positive and beneficial conversation. The various members of the Community Board set out the challenges the sport faces across the areas they represent giving great insight. Whilst as set out above IMG are initially focussed on certain key objectives, the IMG Team is very aware of the role the Community Game can play in delivering the sports long-term growth objectives.

3 CORE COMMUNITY

The Community Game provides the foundation on which the sport is built. Our priorities are to ensure growth through ensuring the sport is sustainable, offer targeted growth initiatives, and provide appropriate and flexible playing opportunities.

Player retention is key to our ability to grow. To achieve this our ambition is to deliver culture change, improving our environments, and ensuring we are player centred.

Poor behaviours both on and off the field continue to impact on our ability to retain participants including players and match officials. A key outcome of the Whole Game Review, which was published in 2018 and reflected in the Community Rugby League Strategy, is to deliver culture change and make sure our environments are safe and welcoming.

To ensure we deliver the changes necessary a series of initiatives are underway some of which are detailed below.

3.1 Deliver culture change to change behaviours

3.1.1 Enjoy the Game Update

The Campaign's objective is to deliver a safe and inclusive sport for all to "Enjoy the Game". This will be measured as follows:

Reduction in Referee Abuse in the Community Game

- In 2021 there were around 200 cases relating to Match Official abuse. It is expected that this figure will increase in 2022 due to increased promotion and awareness around ETG and new reporting mechanisms resulting in the renewed confidence and assurance for Match Officials in the systems in place. A target for 2023 will be set at the end of the 2022 season.
- In order to fully understand the landscape, we are monitoring behaviour via Match Official reports. In 2022 all youth and junior cases relating to match official abuse are being referred to the Safeguarding Case Management Group. In addition, we will use disciplinary panel data on the number of other cases of touchline behaviour and issues from adult matches. This will be utilised to assess impact and numbers.

Improve behaviour of touchlines in the Community Game

- There were 1,010 off field misconduct cases across the Community Game in 2021. Given that Rugby League activity was still restricted as a result of the pandemic during this time, an increase in these numbers is possible for 2022. The aim, however, is to see no more than a 10% increase on these figures.
- In addition, our aim is to drive consistency across leagues with regard to how cases are investigated and processed.

Improve behaviour of coaches and players in the Community Game

- The data on the number of coaches and players appearing at disciplinary hearings for poor behaviour is included within the figure above. In 2022, Disciplinary Panels have been specifically asked to categorise and report on when a player or coach has been charged with a breach of the Respect Policy and/or Enjoy the Game campaign so that accurate reporting can be produced, and appropriate measures put in place.

As part of our efforts to improve the community game environment the following work has been undertaken.

- Reporting – There is a section on the standardised dismissal report that enables match officials to report any issues with touchlines.
- A webinar was held with all Clubs to reinforce Respect/ETG and changes to the sentencing guidelines.
- We created and circulated a Guidance note on spectator safety and misconduct at grounds.
- The National Conference League are trialling the use of Head Cams across some of their games. Building on this pilot and using monies from 2021 Misconduct cases, the RFL has funded a game-wide project to purchase Head Cams for Match Officials, and hope this will help to curtail poor behaviours across the board from coaches, players and touchlines. This will also assist with the education of Match Officials, the wider game through use of the footage, whilst acting as contemporaneous evidence for discipline panels.
- We have commissioned Liverpool John Moore's University to undertake a research project to monitor touchline environments. This will see them observe games, undertake focus groups and conduct a survey.
- Game Day Managers are required to wear bibs to identify their role.

Regulate

- All Match Official abuse cases at Youth and Junior level are now referred to the Safeguarding Case Management Group for assessment (this could result in an immediate Temporary Suspension Order (TSO) for the offender).
- All Match Official abuse in the Community Game is submitted to the RFL to monitor.
- We have provided training and support for the discipline panels to ensure consistency across sanctions imposed across Competitions.
- The Respect Code of Conduct was circulated to all Clubs, Players, Parents and Volunteers.
- We have standardised reporting forms for Match Officials to use.

Educate

- The Game Day Manager (GDM) course was reviewed and updated. Every team must have a GDM in attendance at games.
- The Coach Right Course was updated to reference the role and responsibility of a coach and how their behaviour can have a positive influence.
- A Coach Behaviour workshop was created and delivered to Primary Rugby League coaches.
- Primary Rugby League Coaches handbook created.
- Match Officials Behaviour workshop created and will continue to be delivered at the match official regional centre of excellences.
- We are working with Leeds Beckett University and their behavioural change specialist to provide education and support to implement behaviour change across the sport.

- We held a meeting with Head Coaches and Heads of Youth to reinforce the Respect Code of Conduct.

Marketing

- Enjoy The Game continues to be promoted throughout the season via CRM.
- Enjoy The Game featured at all RFL major events via LED, big screen, and matchday programmes.
- Enjoy the Game present on the Our League website and app.
- The Enjoy the Game logo next to the scorecard on OurLeague games during live streaming.

Compliance

- Mandatory education is ordered for first offences of use of Unacceptable Language and Behaviour.

3.1.2 Coaches

Coach education is an integral part of delivering our strategic objectives. We need to give coaches the right tools to create a safe and welcoming environment for players to learn and develop through Rugby League.

Coach development is a key part of attracting and retaining more and better-quality players and retaining coaches within the game.

Below is a summary of work undertaken supporting the development of coaches.

Coach Registrations

- Currently 3108 coaches are registered for the 2022 season.

Coach Education Programme

- The Coach Education programme currently has 117 candidates booked on Level 1 and 2 courses which are currently in progress/due to begin, this brings the total to 712 since September 2021. The team are currently in the planning phase for courses due to begin in the off-season.
- The RLWC2021 InspiredBy funding will also be subsidising coach education courses for volunteers covering the price increases from September 2022 until March 2023. This is in order to assist community clubs in qualifying the number of coaches required to meet the demand for the expected increase in participation post tournament.

Coach Right 2022 Mandatory CPD Education

- As of 22nd July, there were 3294 completed courses across all versions of Coach Right (Primary 1295 Youth 1290 Adult 709). We are starting to look at content for Coach Right 2023.

Women's Leadership and Performance Coach Development Programme

- From the 2021 – 2022 cohort the following coaches are working on the Girls Talent Hubs, Gemma Banks, Kirsty Maroney, Laura Wilson, Shereen McCartney & Kirsty Crehan. Places for the new cohort were re-advertised to ensure we recruit coaches of the right calibre. Currently a cohort of 12 has been identified for the 22-23 programme with the 1st workshop planned for September.

Women into Coaching Programme

- The First Women into Coaching Level 1 course will run throughout September at Leeds West Academy with 6 candidates currently enrolled. Currently 7 candidates have confirmed their interest in a North West based equivalent, we are now looking at potential dates and venues.

Primary Rugby League (PRL)

- Primary Rugby League Coaches workshops have been delivered to 400 coaches in junior leagues across the country. A Coaches 2022 handbook has been circulated to coaches via CRM and made available on OurLearning Zone and the RFL website. A PRL festival took place prior to the Challenge Cup final with over 30 teams playing more than 100 small sided games across the morning. A video of the event promoting PRL is to be released shortly as part of the InspiredBy campaign.

Coaching Masterclasses

- All participating nations (men, women & wheelchair) in RLWC2021 will deliver one coaching masterclass during the tournament. We are working with colleagues at the RLWC2021 to produce a calendar of delivery alongside the host venues. The RLWC2021 will be advertising these coaching masterclasses leading up to the tournament.

RAMPAGE Injury Prevention Project

- Injuries and the fear of injury has been identified as a contributing factor which leads players to leave the game. To help understand the challenges and mitigate we are working with Leeds Beckett University to roll out this project in 2023 using the RAMPAGE framework to reduce injury in community boys RL (u12's to u16's).

3.2 Targeted Growth Initiatives

Growing the game and the number of participants every year across all forms of the game is a priority. There are numerous examples of how we are looking to do this throughout this report and such initiatives will continue. However, 2022 offers a golden opportunity to accelerate that growth. The RLWC2021 starts on Saturday 15th October and for the first time includes the men's, women, and wheelchair competitions. There will be more RLWC2021 games shown across the BBC channels than the FIFA World Cup. Every second of every minute of every game will be live on the BBC with a significant number on BBC 1 AND 2. It is the sports moment to shine, and we hope full stadia and a vibrant tournament will drive interest and participation. The community game has a key role to play in getting behind the tournament.

To maximise the potential of the RLWC2021 the RFL has launched a new campaign, InspiredBy.

3.2.1 InspiredBy

The aim of "InspiredBy" is to be an all-encompassing campaign to attract new participants who we can then transition into regular Rugby League activity. In addition, we aim to support community clubs to become "World Cup Ready" and build support for our three England teams.

InspiredBy was launched early August with a Community Clubs Programme involving clubs being supported with microgrants to deliver festivals or other activity to encourage people to come and try Rugby League. The Community Clubs Programme will end with a 'Leagues Round' at the beginning of September with every fixture taking place that weekend being an InspiredBy fixture, encouraging clubs to be "World Cup Ready". At the end of September/beginning of October 'Three Lions Week' will take place. Foundation led activity will take place simultaneously across multiple areas for current and new players to engage in. This activity will be free, coordinated and take place across every setting.

As we move into tournament time activity within host towns and city will take place, led by the respective host towns and cities, and linked to specific games.

In the three weeks immediately following the three finals, specific Masterclasses for Girls and Wheelchair turn up and play sessions will take place. The bulk of the activity post World Cup will take place from January onwards, through the Club Transition Programme. This will support transition for participants previously engaged in InspiredBy programmes and the tournament itself. Again, much of the activity will be Foundation led with clubs encouraged and supported to host open days and run taster sessions.

3.2.2 Area Development Plans Update

The other key initiative to drive growth linked to the RLWC2021 is through our Development Plan work.

Midyear reviews have now taken place with all Foundations and partners. These plans are focusing on new participants within community, education, inclusion, and social environments. The emphasis is on targeting growth in new and existing clubs, the women and girls' game, and player development leagues thus ensuring we represent the diverse communities in which we work. Our next step is to work with these partners on 2023 delivery plans which will ensure work on growing our game continues in these areas.

Other growth initiatives that are ongoing include

3.2.3 Player Development Leagues (PDL)

- Greater Manchester RL – 5 festivals have taken place in 2022, with between 100 and 200 players participating at each. In total there are 121 players registered.
- Midlands – Player Development Festivals are going well, with over 200 players playing at each. Festivals have taken place across the region from Shrewsbury to Sherwood, and over 600 players are registered to clubs in the league.
- West of England – All Golds are taking a lead in the region and junior development games are taking place across the summer. Cheltenham Phoenix and All Golds have played their first ever junior games in 2022, West Oxford Levellers continue to grow, and Swindon St George have also been involved in activity.

Embedding within existing competition framework

- The City of Hull and North East continue to lead the way in this regard. However, we are piloting in 2022 a new player and coach development programme which will see a new player development offer. This will be non-competitive and help significantly towards embedding player development principles (which go a long way towards addressing the key recommendations from the Whole Game Review). This would see more people viewing the PDL principles in action.
- There is also a project underway to review the existing playing calendar (more details below).

Providing appropriate playing opportunities is crucial to attract and retain players. One way we look at doing this is through: -

3.2.4 Customer Centric Competitions Update

The finish is approaching for all our Member League competitions. July marked the start of our events season, so from now, through to the middle of October the Community Game team will be busy delivering events up and down the country.

The NCL Finals Day will be held at Featherstone Rovers on Saturday 8th October with the Premier Division Grand Final. The NCL have also agreed with OurLeague to show 10 games

this season, which they are funding, this will include the NCL Grand Final. The viewing figures so far for the games shown are very favourable.

The Yorkshire Men's League hosted 4 Cup Finals on Saturday 6th August at The Fox's Biscuit Stadium, home of Batley Bulldogs. The day was a big success with all 4 games being streamed via OurLeague. We will return to Batley on the 1st & 2nd October for the end of season Playoff Finals, this will see 6 games across 2 days.

The North West Men's League delivered 3 Cup Finals, also on Saturday 6th August. The event was successfully hosted by Salford City Roosters, and all games were streamed via OurLeague. The end of season Playoff Finals will take place on the 1st & 2nd October at Victoria Park in Warrington. This will again see 6 games taking place over the 2 days.

Both the YML and NWML have conducted midseason reviews in order to reflect on the season to date, draw comparison to previous seasons, and start to think how any issues can be addressed ahead of the 2023 season. This is something that we do annually to ensure that we continue to provide customer centric competitions. We expect both competitions to see an increase in fixtures when compared to last season.

The Southern Conference League will culminate with the Grand Final on 17th September at London Skolars' New River Stadium. This event will be a double header in conjunction with the London Men's League Grand Final.

The East of England League has now come to an end with the Grand Final taking place at Hemel Stags on Saturday 6th August. The Midlands Men's League season also ended with a Grand Final on Saturday 20th August hosted by Leamington Royals. The West of England and South West Leagues operated on a Merit basis this season, with teams involved in both competitions arranging their own fixtures to suit their needs.

As we reach the end of the regular league season before the school holidays, in the Barrow & District Youth Competition fixture completion is close to 100% and we have two closely contested leagues at U12s and U14s. After the holidays, the younger age groups will come back to a Primary RL festival at Craven Park (home of Barrow Raiders), whilst the older age groups will come back for the Top 4 playoffs and the Cup Semi-Final and Finals. The West Cumbria Youth League has seen an increase in the number of teams and fixtures, with fixture completion also being very high. Again, the leagues have been closely contested as well as the cup competitions. Before the break for school holidays, we will see the return of the Cumbrian State of Origin, with games between Barrow & District and WCY at U14s and U16s.

We will be conducting end of season reviews with players and clubs in September to seek feedback on the season and any improvements that can be made.

3.3 Continuing the accelerated growth in the number of Women and Girls playing Rugby League remains a priority.

3.3.1 Summary of key Women and Girls Development Initiatives, Programmes and Events

Futures Programme

- In July we launched the Futures girls growth programme providing opportunities to girls inspired by the RLWC and the accelerated growth of the women's game, to try Rugby League for the first time. This was particularly focussed on expansion areas which currently don't have established playing offers for girls. In our first year we have launched a total of 7 hubs in Bedford, Bristol, Cornwall, West Cumbria, Barrow, Sheffield and Newcastle with the support of the Betfred Women's Super League South Clubs and Rugby League Foundations.
- The programme is targeted at U14s and involved 6-8 weeks of training, culminating in a playing opportunity with another Futures hub linked around another event such as a BWSL South game, BWSL game or championship men's fixture.

Women's Nines

- A new competition was introduced into the women's game this year, the Women's Nines, which was delivered in a 2-event series. The first round was a festival feel designed to connect players with fans, allowing teams from across the Women's Rugby League landscape to compete together without too much pressure in an exciting format of the game. 20 teams competed in the festival event including teams from BWSL, BWSL South, Championship and a travelling French team which provided a day of exciting Rugby League. This was complimented by Inspiration Sessions for our young fans delivered by stars of the game.
- The festival was followed by a finals event where the winners of each group plus the next highest placed team qualified for a final's day. This saw BWSL sides Huddersfield Giants, St Helens, Leeds Rhinos, York City Knights, Warrington Wolves and the travelling Catalan Dragons team compete to be crowned inaugural nines champions at the AJ Bell Stadium, Salford. York City Knights came out on top in a thrilling final against Leeds Rhinos and secured their first Women's trophy as well as earning prize money for their victory in a first for domestic Women's Rugby League.

3.3.2 Update on Women and Girls Competition's

As expected, we have again seen an increase in the numbers of players registered across both the Women's and Girls Leagues, with two months of the seasons still to play.

Women's RL

- The leagues are all going well with fixture completion rates on the whole very positive.
- The first silver wear of the season was won by Salford Red Devils who defeated Orrell St James in the League Cup, Stanningley also defeated Leigh Miners A in the Plate Final.
- The Championship and League One Grand Finals are inked in for Sunday 2nd October at Odsal Stadium, Bradford.

Betfred Women's Super League South

- The Betfred Women's Super League South is now in its second year. 2022 saw the introduction of a new team in Oxford Cavaliers but sadly the ever-rising travel costs and other factors meant that Cornish Rebels had to withdraw from the competition, we therefore retained a 6-team competition. The regular season fixtures are now complete. Cardiff Demons won the Betfred Women's Super League South trophy against London Broncos on the 27th of August.

Girls RL

- The Girls game has continued its growth in 2022. Players are still registering weekly, and we have already overtaken the 2021 end of season registration figure.
- We are receiving expressions of interest from new clubs frequently with Heworth in York being the latest.
- The U16's Premier Division concluded on 17th July when Oulton Raidettes beat Leigh Miners Rangers in Golden point extra time, a game played at the fantastic LNER Stadium in York.
- In the U16's Premier Division 60 out of 63 scheduled games took place. This would compare favourably with any of the boys' divisions at this age group.
- The younger age groups are all progressing well also, and we are confident of positive fixture completion rates and an increase in games played when compared with 2021.
- A series of summer festivals are planned across the school holidays before a new set of fixtures start in September.
- The Girls Finals Day will take place on Saturday 8th October at Featherstone Rovers.

3.4 Ensure players have access to appropriate playing opportunities through improved player engagement and development

3.4.1 Update from the Player Development Group

This group is continuing to drive cross-departmental work to establish a more connected approach for the game via Coaching, Development, Operations, and Performance.

The focus is on collaborating on key interventions within the strategies of each department (Sport England and Community Game Strategy 2022-2030) with the aim to deliver the player development framework in the following projects:

- Player Development Leagues - Develop new offers in new areas and incorporate values in existing leagues.
- National Player Development Framework roll-out - Ages and Stages to be progressed with visibility game wide on player centric access.
- Player Engagement Project including App/comms - Player access to view skills and learning relevant to their age and stage.
- Digital Engagement - Using the digital world to connect more with players and develop feedback loops.
- Community Coach Development - Using the PRL, ETP, ETP14+ and Community Lions Programmes to drive Coach CPD.
- England Talent Pathway (ETP) - New playing offers that are easy to access, open to all and support Coach Development.
- ETP 14+ - Continue to use as a retention offer and link closer to the Community Lions programme.
- Girls Development/Talent - Work with Women & Girls Team to provide all opportunities within the boy's game.
- Talent Inclusion - Using ETP and ETP14+ as modes of engagement for harder to reach demographics.
- Primary RL - Laying the right foundations for the game via Ethos, Rationale and Coach CPD.

3.4.2 Player Engagement

The Player Engagement App, a key part of Player Engagement, is a digitisation of the National Player Development Framework. It is in the development phase and currently the content map is complete, videos are complete, the platform is built, and work on the access method is in progress. The app will give each player a unique opportunity to see what age and stage-specific skills look like and provide the ability to track their own progress. Together this will provide a deeper understanding of whether they can complete the skill in a range of different settings and where they need to develop.

The app will sit within OuRLeague and will include the modules Skill to Play, Move to Play, Live to Play and Think to Play. A Soft launch is planned for 2022 with a full roll out in 2023.

3.4.3 England Community Lions

Preparations continue for the England Community Lions U19's as they prepare to compete in the European Championship's in Italy between 1st-10th September. After Development days had taken place across the regions, 60 players were invited to a final selection day to pick the train-on squad. The 32 players selected for the train-on squad was reduced recently to 21 players who will represent England in the European Championships.

Over 160 players were nominated and invited to attend Development Days, for both the U16 & U17 Community Lions teams. The players were whittled down to 40 at age group and attended a final trial day. 20 players were chosen to play for the U16's who played Wales at Steboneath in June, Scotland away in August and will host Wales in September.

The remaining 20 players from the final selection day who didn't make the Lions U16 squad were invited to play Ligue Sud Paca, a French U16 Regional team, who were touring in the North West, these games took place on 26th June and 2nd July. The U17's Lions team toured France between 20th-26th July and played two games against the France U17 team. We will host a French regional team in late October/early November, playing four games against them providing an opportunity for 40 players who trialled for the Lions U17 but were unsuccessful in achieving a place in the 20 man squad a chance to play in a regional representative Lions team. As well as playing the games against the Lions Regional team, the France squad will also watch the French Men's, Women's, and Wheelchair teams in action at the RLWC2021.

The PDRL team will compete in the Festival of World Cups in October and work is currently continuing with classification and selection days ahead of the event, which will be held in Warrington. The Lions Women's team will host Ireland in early November, the day before both teams go and watch England Men and England Women in the RLWC2021.

England Universities (Men) competed in the Presidents Cup, finishing runners up on points difference to the UK Armed Forces prior to participating in the Student Tri Nations which was held in Galway, Ireland in June, where they returned as champions. The England Colleges (Women) participated in the Women's Presidents Cup competition, where they defeated both the GB Teachers and UK Armed Forces to win the inaugural Women's Presidents Cup.

The Lions have also recently advertised and appointed coaches to their U19's and Men's programmes to commence in January 2023 and to the Women's programme which has started in preparation for the Ireland game in November. The successful candidates for the U19's were Gary Hewer (Head Coach) and Stuart Simmons (Assistant Coach), for the Women's Peter Grayburn (Head Coach) and Jack Coates (Assistant Coach), and the Men's Paul Couch (Head Coach) and Gary McMahon (Assistant Coach). A few interviewed candidates were invited to become Development Coaches on the programme and will receive some mentoring, CPD, and hands on coaching with the Lions, as part of the programme which will commence in 2023.

3.4.4 Social Rugby League Update

We recognise that not everybody wants to play the full contact version of our sport. Flexible ways to play provide customer choice, important retention, transition offers, and support equality.

All delivery is now aligned to Local Area Plans being delivered through Foundations, with the aim of maximising participation and opportunities to play ahead of the RLWC2021.

Summarised below is an update on our social offers:

Try Tag

- Our relationship with Try Tag Rugby (TTR) started in 2017 and continues to be beneficial to all parties. There are circa 10,000 players that have took part in activity during 2022. The development aims this year are for more exposure of the playing offer via Our League which was used to showcase the TTR National Series. In addition, the

development of a junior playing offer, which is in the advanced pilot stage, and to connect with a wider playing audience that has shown through the post-Covid recovery growth and largest ever festival to date with 108 teams participating.

Touch RL

- During 2021 we had 40 sites with all registrations via GameDay. To date we have 50+ sites delivering activity and a formal relationship in place with the England Touch Association governed by a memorandum of understanding. We have seen rules standardisation happen as a priority, and local partnerships develop to grow more opportunities to play. The Foundation Touch series for 2022 has reacted to 2021 feedback and been split into East and West with an expected 7 men's, 5 women's teams participating. A junior offer will launch in 2023.

Masters RL

- Throughout 2022 there have been 1,800 players to date and further growth is anticipated. The offer has seen its first season post-Covid, return to a national delivery of monthly festivals and weekly fixtures running from March and will culminate in a Festival of World Cups event in November. The Masters Management Group has delivered on plans to grow in 2022 having already delivered a larger calendar of mass participation events including Blackpool, regional festivals, international festivals, and later this year a Festival of World Cups. Masters are now aligned to the Community Lions programme for all ingoing and outgoing tours and associated selection criteria. Growth plans include targeted work with NCL clubs and progress within the Women's game, which has seen 8 new teams thus far.

X-League

- The twelve clubs that played in 2021 have translated to 2022. The offer is now also aligned to the Community Lions programme. There is now more emphasis on reward and recognition via Lionhearts and will be the criteria for selection of coaches and players for the Festival of World Cups event in November. The Rule standardisation that took place throughout the close season and work with the RFL Match Officials Dept and Master's RL has seen more sustainable growth and a more consistent playing format. The revised Match Officials Course that has been developed has now been delivered. There will be 6 big events throughout the year as part of the X-League Grand Prix, 4 have been delivered to date. The year will culminate in Festival of World Cup Activity in 2022.

3.5 The final area of our work supporting the core community game focusses on supporting Clubs Foundations and RFL to become more sustainable. This will deliver a more sustainable Community Game, less reliant on public funding and generating additional funds to invest in growth.

3.6 Club's

3.6.1 Community Clubs are continuing to work with the development team to access the provision of toolkits, templates, and online learning modules. Working in conjunction with Club Matters, Sport England and other NGB's to allow additional support tailored to each club's size and needs.

We continue to work with Community Clubs to produce Club Health Checks with the aim of assessing and providing recommendations for club management rather than playing activities. Such Health Checks assist with collection of data around club tenure, organisational structures governance and legal status. Health Checks not only identify areas where support may be required but also assists the RFL in securing additional funding to support clubs and target it effectively.

We are working on some bespoke support with the "Cost of Living" rises as we work with Sport England, Club Matters and other NGB's to understand the impact across the sports sector

3.6.2 Play, Fund, Win

- Community Game Raffle – Fundraising for Rugby League Clubs!
- Raising important unallocated funds for Rugby League Clubs we are continuing to give weekly updates and advice to clubs to maximise the potential monies that could be secured.
- We have materials to help in promotion of the draws and are able to share a promo pack with message templates and social media graphics.
- Tickets for the draw cost just £5 each – with 70% going directly to the Community Rugby League club. £1 from each entry also goes into a club-specific jackpot which one of the Clubs supporters is guaranteed to win. Entrants also have the chance to win a host of fantastic prizes in a nationwide draw.

3.7 **Foundation's**

- 3.7.1 Work has begun to create a 'Foundation Funding Network' bringing the RFL and its Community Foundations together to collaborate in securing new income opportunities for the sport.

3.8 **RFL - Our League Active**

- 3.8.1 We currently have over 40,000 Our League Active (OLA) Members.

- 3.8.2 The introduction and roll out of OLA has gone remarkably well. The consultation work we undertook during 2021 clearly assisted in ensuring that this did not impact on players registering or indeed the optional donations that we have received. We had players paying at the point of registration and then 120 Clubs were invoiced for their players once the season commenced. There has been a tremendous amount of administrative work that has had to take place behind the scenes; however, this again did not impact on the roll out.

- 3.8.2 The primary benefit of OLA is the services that the Governing Body provide; however, to add additional value we have sought to offer a range of additional benefits. This has also assisted in delivering additional value to our partners. A summary of the benefits is below:

Core Benefits - Insurance

- Players currently benefit from insurance centrally provided by the RFL. This includes Personal Accident insurance for catastrophic injuries, Public Liability Insurance and Death by Natural Causes cover.

Partner Benefits

- There have been several benefits for participants as part of the OLA membership which include:
 - 1) Opro – 20% off mouth guards
 - 2) Nuffield Health - 10% off Gym Membership/ 20% off Physiotherapy Treatment Science in Sport (SIS) - 40% Discount on all full priced items
 - 3) England Supporters Club - Adults Member offer £15 – Total £10 discount / Kids Participant Member offer £10 – Total £5 discount
 - 4) Oxen
 - Get 10% off England RL merchandise and the club benefit
 - Get 10% OFF England RL merchandise (full priced items only) – Plus every time England RL products are purchased the community club will receive 10% off the purchase value to used towards buying any merchandise from OXEN for the 2023 season including playing kit, warm-up gear, match balls and more.
 - 5) Oxen – Exclusive access to Oxen Outlet with up to 90% off products
 - 6) Oxen - England Replica Shirt - £20 (Usually £49.99)
 - 7) Pulseroll - 10% off

- 8) England Double Header Tickets - OLA Members receive Get two tickets for every one purchased
- 9) Challenge Cup Final Tickets – 10% Off
- 10) Watch NRL - 25% discount on the 12-Month Subscription for the first 12 months.
- 11) Premier Sports - New and returning customers to Premier Sports can get their first month completely FREE

Rewards4

- Rewards4 enables players to earn points for making an appearance, scoring a try or if they are awarded player of the match. 200pts equates to a £1. Points can also be earned by using the Our League App to play things such predictor games and taking part in polls.

The below explains the engagement and reward level:

- 3,648 members/grass roots players have been rewarded.
- 38,150 points have been collected (some points for drop goals and tries but the majority are for appearances) and this will continue to increase.

Monthly Prize Draws

- We have been conducting monthly prize draws for an adult player, a youth player and a youth and junior team to receive exclusive prizes and money can't buy experiences. To date we have provided iPad's, Xbox's, kit and equipment, amazon vouchers and dedicated coaching sessions. An example of a press release with the July winners can be found [HERE](#).

Newsletter

- We communicate monthly with the OLA members to encourage members to find out more about the available benefits including information on the Rewards4 scheme.

- 3.8.3 We will be holding focus groups with players to discuss what benefits they would like to see introduced.

3.9 Provide Strong Governance and First-Class Administration

3.9.1 Update on Regulatory Matters

From the 1st of August we began our consultation process with the Community Game on the proposed changes to the Operational Rules.

The timetable is listed below

- Consultation Commences – 1st August 2022.
- Consultation Closes – 31st August 2022.
- Community Board Regulatory Meeting – 21st September 2022.
- Final proposed rules to be circulated to the Leagues by the 7th of October for a final 7-day consultation.
- Deadline 14th October.
- Community Board – Approval of Final changes by the 30th of November.
- RFL Board Meeting – 8th December 2022

3.9.2 Update on Governance work

As advised in the April report we will be introducing a Governance Guide for Community Clubs. The purpose of the guidance is to assist Clubs and raise awareness of legal, regulatory, tax and other statutory requirements and to improve Club sustainability by encouraging good management and governance. It is not intended to provide detailed commentary on every

matter but to set out key considerations in one place and to function as a checklist that will point Clubs in the right direction of these key issues upon which they need to focus. This in turn will enable Clubs to better identify areas where they need to act and to seek further information and advice where necessary.

The document sets out the 13 principles of good governance approved by the RFL and can be used as a blueprint for Clubs to follow. The plan is to introduce this in the New Year.

The 13 principles are:

1. Structure
2. People
3. Recording of Structure & Decision Making
4. Strategic Planning
5. Values, Vision, and Mission
6. Financial Management
7. Policies
8. Processes
9. Risk Management
10. Inclusivity
11. Integrity
12. External Communication
13. Internal Communication

3.9.3 Whole Game Calendar work update

- A draft paper has been circulated to relevant stakeholders an initial meeting was held in August to begin the process of deconstructing the existing calendar and reconstructing a new one.
- The aim is to develop a model which supports inclusivity of all players, guards against overplaying and underplaying, and limits conflict between the various offers.
- A follow up meeting will take place in September.

3.9.4 Regional Groups work focussing on South

- A key aspiration following the Game Wide Review was to build and develop a 'One Game structure'.
- An intervention aligned to this aspiration was to establish Regional Development Forums which will be made of key stakeholders to ensure that the recommendations can be met and that the game can continue to flourish.
- A pilot was undertaken in 2021 to establish these groups in the South of the country with the formation of the Southern Regions Development Forum (SRDF) which has now met three times and started to plan out the next phase of the pilot, implemented key interventions, and supported the creation of the Southern Regions Strategic Framework.
- Part of this next phase is the forming of four Regional Development Forums, London and South East, Midlands, West of England and South West. Stakeholders have been identified and approached and are being invited to initial meetings which will take place in September 2022.
- One intervention already actioned is the formation of the Southern Competition Management Group (SCMG) which has been formed to be able to support and develop competition structure and format across the South of the country. This group will provide transparency and connectivity across the four regions and competitions and will sit as a subgroup of the SRDF.
- A competition review led by the RFL and Stuart Sheard (independent) will provide recommendations for the development of the Open Age Mens Competition and provide both the SRDF and SCMG with direction and insight into this area of the game.
- A report will be submitted towards the end of 2022 which will provide learnings and recommendations for the future formation of such groups.

4 EDUCATION

4.1 Schools

- 4.1.1 The Champion Schools competition culminated in a finals weekend in Newcastle in early July, tied in with the activity in the area around Magic weekend. The Y7 (Girls) to Y10 finals were held at Kingston Park on Friday 8th July, providing a full day of thrilling games ahead of the Friday Night Lights fixture between Newcastle Thunder and Bradford Bulls. The Y7 Boys Steven Mullaney Memorial Game kicking off the activity at St James' Park for Magic weekend as the curtain raiser to the opening fixture on Saturday 9th July. The standards across all games were impressive, but it was especially noticeable how much the girls game has improved since the finals were last held in 2019; a theme that was evident throughout all of the festivals and knock out games regionally and nationally.
- 4.1.2 The National 9s finals also returned during National School Sports week, with 50 school teams participating in 122 fixtures across 3 days at Victoria Park in Warrington. This included a Girls competition for the first time and was well received and attended. The teams qualified for the finals days by taking part in local festivals hosted by Foundations as part of their Development Plan activity, aimed at emerging schools and pupils new to the game. We have already received enquiries from schools who took part in the festivals and finals about the pathway to full participation in local and regional Champion Schools activity, proving the worth of the 9s competition as an introduction to Rugby League in schools. The event was supported by student volunteers from Priestley College who had previously completed our 'Leaders Award', along with a young Match Official from the St Helens Referee's Society, providing an excellent opportunity for his development in a safe and nurturing environment.
- 4.1.3 The "Introduction to Teaching Rugby League" course delivered to ITT students completing post-graduate teaching qualifications and the next generation of the PE workforce in schools was delivered to 242 students across 13 cohorts at 10 institutions. The forecast for 22-23 is to add at least another 4 Universities and continue delivery to those where relationships are already established.

4.2 Colleges

- 4.2.1 The college season ended with a very successful event at Headingley Stadium as we hosted our Cup Final there for the first time. The game was won by Warrington Wolves Development Academy, beating Leeds Rhinos Development Academy. Both teams have applied to join the Premier competition this season, testament to the success that they are having with their recruitment and development of students. Further proof of this is players from both teams gaining Scholarships with their respective clubs, despite being overlooked in previous years.
- 4.2.2 We will undertake a slightly different approach to the league structures in 22-23, including a grading phase in September and October to place Colleges in competitions suited to their playing level. We have also linked up with the AoC once again to explore ways to grow the game in colleges outside of our core areas with flexible playing offers and both staff and player development opportunities.

4.3 University

- 4.3.1 There has been no further on-field activity in the University sector since the last report, but plans are in place for an opening 9s event in October to kick-start the new season, tied into the RLWC2021 opening weekend and the game at Headingley. Applications from University teams to participate in the BUCS competition are now all confirmed.
- 4.3.2 Off field, work has been done to improve the status of Rugby League within Universities participating in the BUCS competitions; Heads of Sport from key institutions were invited as guests to the Triple Header at Elland Road, Jodie Cunningham gave a key-note speech at the BUCS Conference outlining our desire to see Women's Rugby League introduced as a BUCS sport in 2023, and regular meetings continue with the SAG.

SOCIAL IMPACT

Supporting our people and communities drives us. We are working to become more inclusive through expanding our disability offers and more diverse in supporting our clubs to become more representative of the communities within which they are based. We deliver our positive social impact work through 'Our League Life', the RFL's social impact brand.

The various funding and programme initiatives that the RFL's Impact Team are currently working on are outlined below.

5.1 Learning Disability Rugby League

Learning Disability Rugby League continues to grow with over 300 registered participants in the Community Integrated Care Learning Disability Super League. With 16 foundations now delivering a Learning Disability offer, there are more opportunities for people living with learning and intellectual disabilities and associated conditions to participate than ever before. We continue to create life changing moments and development opportunities through Community Integrated Care and the RLWC2021 inclusive volunteering programme, aiding its participants in becoming more socially mobile and accessing genuine working skills. Furthermore, we saw this year a return to Magic Weekend, where over 300 players took part in festival type and on pitch activities at St James' Park.

5.2 Physical Disability Rugby League

The Physical Disability Rugby League competition has grown and seen participation from Bradford and Salford in addition to those who have historically engaged in the game. Registrations continue to rise and have already surpassed the previous seasons end of year total by the midpoint. The variant has also continued to progress from a representative point of view, and we have seen a significant number of participants go through the classification process. The England Community Lions PDRL extended squad have also continued to train throughout the year in preparation for this autumn's world cup. Notably the team were invited to attend the national disability sports organisation Limb Power, where the team stayed in camp and engaged with people with limb difference who were looking to engage in sport.

5.3 Wheelchair

The wheelchair competition has continued to develop with growth in facilities, resources and developing competitions. One highlights this season has been the interaction with French Champions Catalans Dragons and their entry into this years Betfred Wheelchair Challenge Cup. Eventually, after a fantastic festival qualifying event, they met Leeds Rhinos in the final with Leeds coming out on top and retaining the trophy. Away from this, the Wheelchair Super League saw its first ever Magic Weekend hosted at the National Basketball Centre in Manchester, bringing 8 teams to one venue over a single day, in line with the men's running game. Over the last 18 months, through different funding channels, we have also been able to deliver over 100 sports chairs into the game meaning more teams have more resources and more opportunities to engage with the sport.

We deliver our positive social impact work through 'Our League Life', the RFL's social impact brand. The various funding and programme initiatives that the RFL's Impact Team are currently working on are outlined below.

5.4 Tackling Inequalities Fund

5.4.1 Continuing with Phase Two, the RFL Development Team have targeted Women & Girl's RL, PDRL, LDRL, Masters, smaller clubs who are in a deprived area, and clubs who have players travelling from deprived areas. We are working hard with Community Clubs, Teams, and Foundations to ensure we are supporting Rugby League to continue to tackle inequalities across the sport having signed off £245,000 in total with £55,000 remaining to be awarded by September 2022.

5.4.2 The Tackling Inequalities Fund has now evolved into the Together Fund which will run until March 2023 and further opportunities to secure funding will be considered.

5.5 Rugby League Survival Fund

- 5.5.1 Although this fund has now closed and all award decisions were signed off by the 31st of March 2022, the monitoring and evaluation process is underway. This process, in partnership with Sport England, was updated to streamline the journey for community clubs and foundations. 17 organisations have started the process from the 56 who have currently been sent the information. The RFL Development team will continue to support the organisations to complete this process.
- 5.5.2 Out of the total £1,501,500 fund for the community game across 191 awards, we have distributed all but 9 awards. We are awaiting partnership agreements to be signed and returned to release the last payments.

5.6 CreatedBy Funding

- 5.6.1 The Community Development team with RLWC2021 are working with Community Clubs, Schools, Local Authorities and Foundations. The RLWC have received good numbers of application and processed over 40 applications since April 2022, and we have made 29 Awards. (approx. £150k to be allocated).

5.7 RLWC2021 – InspiredBy

- 5.7.1 This includes Community Club and Foundation activity, Leagues Rounds and micro grants with equipment and resources. The grant scheme is the first stage of the RFL’s InspiredBy campaign, which aims to drive participation in Rugby League in all its variations across England before, during, and after RLWC2021.
- 5.7.2 Community clubs are being supported in their efforts to encourage children and young people to give Rugby League a go as a step towards becoming regular players. InspiredBy will also help community clubs to become ‘World Cup Ready’ and build support for the three England teams.
- 5.7.3 Community clubs have been urged to apply online now, outlining their proposed activity, and explaining how it will attract new participants to Rugby League. The application process is quick and easy, and successful clubs will also be offered a range of support in promoting their activities along with a grant of up to £500. We have received 31 applications after the first weekend of this grant scheme being live.

5.8 Our League Life Community hubs - Wellbeing Hubs Pilots

- 5.8.1 The concept is that the RFL want to support how community club resources are used in more innovative or diverse ways that have a wider social impact. The creation of a ‘Social Wellbeing Hub’ will allow a facility placed and recognised as being at the centre of the community. The community clubs currently involved in the pilot are:
- Shevington Sharks ARLFC, Wigan, Greater Manchester.
 - West Hull ARLRFC, Hull, Yorkshire
 - Salford City Roosters ARLFC, Eccles, Greater Manchester
 - Portico Vine ARLFC, St Helens, Greater Merseyside
 - West Leeds ARLFC, Leeds, Yorkshire
- 5.8.2 All Community Clubs are at different stages of engagement and are looking at their local needs and supporting all the off-field activity. This is to enable the clubs to be truly representative of the wider community and provide the benefits inclusive.
- 5.8.3 We are looking to gain internal support from the club’s volunteers and community club leaders.
- 5.8.4 This project engages the wider local community including:

- Local Government, Council / MP's
- Health and Primary Care Clinical commissioning groups
- Education Primary Schools, Secondary schools, FE and HE
- Public Services Police, Fire Brigade, Ambulance Services, Community Support Officers
- Youth Wellbeing
- Local Charities
- Local Businesses
- Professional Rugby League Clubs and Foundations

5.8.5 Activation of the partnerships will bring benefits to the local community including healthcare, and education improvement via social and environmental improvements and services available.

5.9 Partnerships

5.9.1 Street Games and the Rugby Football League (RFL) are working in partnership to pilot a Rugby League Offer. 4-a-side RL is a game designed to be played on any surface. 4-a-side is a new format of the sport, which is non-contact but retains all the speed and dynamism of Rugby League. The new offer is being trialled at the Hideout Youth Zone in Gorton, Manchester.

5.9.2 This format is ideal for new participants and requires no previous participation experience. The offer has been designed to engage non-traditional participants, both female and male. StreetGames will recruit locally trusted organisations to receive a support package during 2022/23. An activators resource is being developed in conjunction with Street Games with the possibility of a RLWC2021 Inspired 4-a-side Youth Zone competition

5.10 Community Integrated Care

5.10.1 The RFL and Community Integrated Care announced a long-term extension to the sport's pioneering Social Care Partnership on 8th June as Community Integrated Care celebrates its fifth anniversary of working in Rugby League. The relationship between Community Integrated Care and the RFL is a ground-breaking 5-year partnership.

5.10.2 Community Integrated Care is one of Britain's biggest and most successful social care charities, supporting more than 3,000 people who have learning disabilities, autism, mental health concerns, dementia and complex care needs to lead the best life possible.

5.10.3 Since 2016, the charity has pioneered many innovative programmes with the sport of Rugby League at a local and national level that promote the health, happiness and inclusion of people who access support, and help impact paid and family carers.

5.10.4 This work was taken to new levels in 2018, when the Rugby Football League and Super League allied with the charity to become the first governing body and topflight league with a dedicated Social Care Partner. With a shared vision of using the power of Rugby League to change lives, this collaboration has formed many innovative programmes, and helped bring significant investment, resources, and skills to support the sport's disability inclusion efforts. This has changed the lives of tens of thousands of people, creating unprecedented opportunities across communities.

5.10.5 The Community Integrated Care Learning Disability Super League has given more than 300 people who have learning disabilities or autism the chance to play for the clubs that they love, enjoying a specially accessible and adapted form of Rugby League. This programme was named as the 'Best Model of Integrated Care' by Skills for Care, the national body for training and innovation in social care.

5.10.6 The Inclusive Volunteering Programme has supported more than 350 people to access life-changing mentoring, support, and opportunities, through projects inspired by Rugby League and the RLWC2021, and opportunities to volunteer at major games. The project has already

provided more than 4,500 hours of support to participants, enabling people to fulfil their greatest dreams and grow in independence.

- 5.10.7 At a local level, Community Integrated Care works directly with many of Rugby League's charitable foundations and clubs. With programmes including accessible sports classes for people with profound learning disabilities, education and vocational programmes, social clubs, campaigns to promote inclusion, dementia cafes, and carer wellbeing programmes, this represents a uniquely diverse commitment to social impact through sport.
- 5.10.8 Through the Inspiring Futures project, funded by the Youth Endowment Fund, we partnered with 7 of our club's Foundations to deliver mentoring in schools to young people who were displaying behaviours in and out of education which would be considered as putting them at risk of involvement with crime. The targeted interventions have been delivered in schools across the last 12 months, with a pilot project completed between January and May. The results of this are currently being evaluated by MMU to measure the impact of the programme on the participants. Over the course of the project, which reached its conclusion in July, over 650 young people received individual mentoring through our club partners, a further 6700 participated in diversionary community outreach sessions at evenings and weekends, and assemblies which tackled societal problems and highlighted the importance of sport in improving the outlook, choices and prospects of young people were received by more than 18,000 pupils.

5.11 Facilities Update

- 5.11.1 We continue to work with Sport England on the planning and policies focusing to support Community Clubs.
- 5.11.2 We are Currently involved with over 30+ Playing Pitch Strategies in the planning system. This is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), with the purpose of the planning system being to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. In contributing to sustainable development, the NPPF highlights the need for the planning system to perform an economic, social and environmental role.
- 5.11.3 The Pitch Advisory Service ("PAS") is a combination of the multi-sport program that includes the RFU, the RFL the ECB and FF.
- 5.11.4 We have had over 100 Community Rugby League club pitches assessed and reports provided to the clubs involved with access to support and guidance to improve the pitch conditions. We are also working closely with the Football Foundation with 10-15 Rugby League clubs looking to provide multi-Sports pitch investment.
- 5.11.5 We have provided support and assistance to show the impact on community clubs and organisations following the change in legislation related to red diesel to Treasury.
- 5.11.6 Working with FF and other NGB's to establish a process to manage the Multi sports investment of £15m into grassroot sports.
- 5.11.7 We have submitted a data sharing partnership agreement with Pitch Power 2.0 where we will be able to assess playing pitches via an online system as part of the PAS programme.
- 5.11.8 We have secured partnership funding from Sport England to recruit and appoint a Facilities Manager to support the progress and developments we are making with a 3 year investment towards the role.

5.12 Volunteering

- 5.12.1 Ben Hardman is the RFL Volunteer Manager, and he's been very busy since starting in June 2022. Work has focused on introducing the RFL/RLWC2021 Volunteer Portal which will assist community clubs with advertising volunteer opportunities. The Volunteer Portal will streamline the process for where opportunities are advertised for the community game, whether that be

community club roles or opportunities that are provided through Rugby Football League events. Having the portal will help direct new potential volunteers that want to get involved in our game to opportunities that are available to them whilst removing barriers for finding the information. Further information will be shared with clubs in due course. The RLWC2021 has recruited 1500 volunteers into 'The Power Squad' and we want to try and transition as many of these 'Power Squad' members into community rugby league via community clubs or our central volunteering team. This will be supported through the Volunteering Portal.

5.12.2 Key focuses have been:

- 250 Placements in the community game
- RFL Central volunteering team established
- Managing and supporting workforce across the RLWC2021
- Assisting community clubs to understand their workforce needs

5.12.3 Ben has supported 100 volunteers to get qualified via the GMA as a level 1 groundsman working with Richard Eastham to provide placements in a community club setting, with RLWC Volunteer funding.

6 MATCH OFFICIALS

6.1 Match Official Recruitment

To date we have held 25 Match Official Courses, further course are scheduled in August and September and can be found [HERE](#).

6.2 Women and Girls Match Official Recruitment

6.2.1 The 'all ages and stages' programme will cover all variations of Rugby League and cater for all levels of interest and ambition, from the community game to Super League, in a bid to boost numbers and aid development of existing officials ahead of the 2023 season.

6.2.2 Key dates for people who are interested are Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th September, when RFL match officials will be hosting free online courses, as well as Sunday 18th September when an Open Day for women and girls will be held at Ruskin Sports Village (9am-12noon).

6.2.3 The Open Day will be an interactive event where those attending can hear from and engage with current match officials, find out more about the future events, get advice on volunteering and career progression, and enjoy refreshments before heading to the Totally Wicked Stadium for Women's Super League finals day.

6.2.4 Anybody interested in being a part of the programme should register their interest online [HERE](#). Email enquiries can also be made via Rlwgoprogram@rfl.co.uk.

6.3 Retention

6.3.1 The number of female officials we have recruited this year has been very pleasing, following on the back of the all-female match officials team for the BARLA Final we are making great progress.

6.3.2 Match Official abuse continues to be a problem within the sport, and we are taking steps to tackle this issue with strong sanctions and the introduction of head cams working as a deterrent.

6.4 Champion Schools Match Officials

6.4.1 Lucas Seal (Barrow), Josh Pemberton (Warrington), Oliver Salmon (Huddersfield), Ben Brocklehurst (Castleford & Featherstone), Henry Winnard (London & South), Luke Flavell (Wigan) and Milo McKelvey (Huddersfield) were all selected as the 2022 Champion Schools Finals Match Officials officiating games at Kingston Park on 8th August and the boy's final at

St. James Park on 9th August. The feedback was excellent with all officials performing well, however most importantly all enjoyed the experience at what was a well organised event.

6.5 Head Cams

6.5.1 The head cam trial in the NCL has been successful with the footage being used as evidence in NCL Disciplinary Hearings, but also as coaching feedback for Match Officials. As part of the wider Enjoy the Game project, more head cams will be rolled out in the Community Game both in the North West and Yorkshire from September.

6.6 Society Engagement Evenings

6.6.1 Wigan Society have held engagement evenings at many local clubs this year –they have now presented at 8 community clubs and this is something we plan to roll out across more societies in order to build relationships.

7 TALENT PROGRAMMES

7.1 Embed the Pathway 12-14

- ETP to be retitled from England Talent Pathway to proposed title of “Emerging Talent Pathway”.
- Pilot of new ETP programme to run in 4 weeks leading up to October ½ term.
- Pilot to include more coach development and community club coaches delivering on the programme, internal and external playing opportunities, and use of modified constraints-based games.
- Programme to be tied to the Player Development App.
- Pilot to be reviewed to inform 2023 launch.

7.2 Embed the Pathway 14+

- Programme is scheduled to take place in Autumn/Winter 2023.
- 12 Foundations committed to taking part with another 4 applying to be part of the programme.
- All Foundations, Coaches and Players who participate in 2023 to be surveyed.

7.3 Talent Inclusion

- Manchester schools’ pilot has been run which is leading to a bigger programme with 6 schools commencing in September.
- Exploration of a college partnership with Manchester College.
- Engagement with Street Games and the Youth Zones.
- Appointment of Inclusion Ambassadors at Elite Academy clubs.

8 ACADEMIES

8.1 Licensed Academies

- 8.1.1 Academies have started to receive the newly adopted format of the Accreditation process and all visits will be completed by the end of October 2022. The visits are being carried out by an independent assessor, who will then report back to the Clubs individually and the RFL. The results will be made known once all Academies have been visited had their reports signed off by all parties.
- 8.1.2 Player registrations have been closely monitored by the RFL in light of clubs being able to sign Academy players on professional contracts or on community registrations. Analysis shows that Community players do keep connected with Community Clubs despite being also registered at an Academy.
- 8.1.3 The U-16 Scholarship games programme were completed in July. Ninety-six scholarship graduates were offered professional terms for the 2023 season and beyond.

8.2 Reserves

- 8.2.1 The fixture format will remain the same for the 2023 season with Reserves and Academy U-18 matches taking place on alternate weeks.

8.3 Development Academies

- 8.3.1 All development academies have just completed a survey the results of which will be shared once compiled.
- 8.3.2 Swinton, Keighley and Hull KR (New partnership) are looking to apply for Development Academy status.
- 8.3.3 A more extensive support package is to be developed for the Academies which would include Inclusion workshops, introduction to coaching and Match officiating.

MID YEAR REPORTING

9.1 Below are the mid-year reporting figures

9.1.1 We report to Sport England twice yearly on numbers of active participants at the end of August and end of December. The mid-year reporting focuses on the numbers of our participants in core community club settings with other settings such as Education and Social activity reported in full at the end of each year. The baseline represents the number of active rugby league players at the start of 2017.

9.2 The mid-year reporting below shows a comparison between the 2019 and 2022 season. 2019 was the last full year of activity pre-covid with 2022 the first full season since the pandemic.

Core Indicators	2017 End of Year Baseline	2019	2022	2019 to 2022 % Difference
		Mid-Year	Mid-Year	
U7 to U11 (Primary)	12,000	11,836	13,030	10.09%
U12 to U15 (Junior)	9,400	9,482	10,870	14.64%
U16 to U18 (Youth)	4,800	4,237	5,266	24.29%
Open Age	18,099	12,875	10,800	-16.12%
Totals	44,299	38,430	39,966	4.00%

9.3 There were genuine fears during the early stages of the pandemic that sports could see a collapse in participation with forecasts of up to 40% loss in participants. It is very encouraging to see that the Primary, Junior, and Youth sections of the sport have returned strongly post pandemic. Certainly, the continued growth of the girl's game will account for some but by no means all the growth and more detailed reporting including gender breakdown will follow at the end of the year.

9.4 The introduction of Our League Active, the RFL's new membership scheme, was accompanied by some ultimately inaccurate assertions concerning the impact of the introduction of membership which have proved to be unfounded.

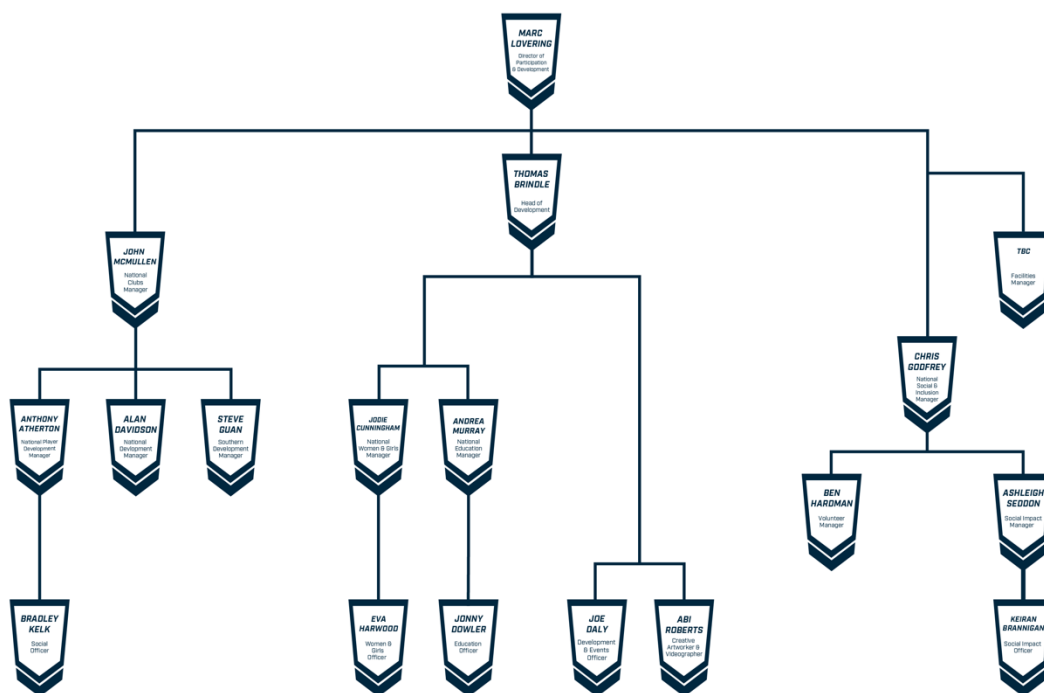
9.5 In common with most team sports the news around open age was far less positive with the numbers of participants in this setting showing a significant decline. Work has already begun to try and understand the reasons for this decline and what changes may be required to ensure the numbers begin to increase again.

9.6 Overall, a 4% increase in 2022 figures contrasted with 2019 is a huge positive but shouldn't mask we have key challenges both geographical and at open age.

APPENDIX ONE

Below are the organograms for the Development and Community Game Delivery Teams.

DEVELOPMENT TEAM



COMMUNITY GAME DELIVERY TEAM

