

TEAMtalk

AUGUST 2007

WELCOME

Message from Scottish Rugby Union President George Jack



Welcome to the fifth edition of TEAMtalk, Scottish Rugby's quarterly electronic communication to the rugby community and my first message to you as President.

Since my appointment just over one month ago I have written twice to clubs, once as a follow-up to my comments at the Annual General Meeting of 29th June, the other regarding the recent situation with Edinburgh Rugby.

There will be a further letter before the end of August laying out an in-depth pattern of visits to clubs. Given the new role for the President, adopted two years ago by clubs, this will be my main priority during the season. Meeting and speaking with rugby folk, discussing the many positive developments, sometimes updating clubs on the issues of the day and trying to support you in growing our game and resolving any issues you may have – this is all very important to me in my role as President.

There are many good things happening in our sport, although unfortunately they seldom made the headlines prior to the major announcement on 10 August regarding Edinburgh Rugby. Given that when I was elected the dispute had already 'gone legal', I'm sure clubs will understand that it has proven difficult during the past weeks for the Union to communicate details of the dispute publicly. Suffice to say that your elected Council members were kept fully up to

date and they unanimously reaffirmed their support of the stance taken.

The Good News

I am delighted to say there has been quite a lot of positive progress made in the sport, as has now been outlined in the 2006-07 Annual Report sent out to clubs last week and available on the Scottish Rugby website. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of this progress for you here in **TEAMtalk**.

- There has been a significant increase in the numbers playing the game. Youth participation is up 19% and adult participation by 7%.
- We are seeing new clubs spring up all around Scotland at an incredible rate. In the last few months these have included the likes of Alford, Atholl, Arrochar, Buckie and many more. We now have more clubs in membership than for many years.
- Scottish Hydro Electric will sponsor the domestic league and cup this season.
- Other recent sponsors will support different aspects of the sport – such as Baxters, Martin Currie, John Lewis and Emirates Airlines
- A National Academy has been set up, giving our best young players the best opportunity to progress in the game
- On the financial front our debt is beginning to reduce and our Union's finances continue to turn around. You will see much more details in the Annual Report
- The Bank of Scotland has reduced the interest charge on the debt – a clear indication of their growing confidence in the management of the governing body.

- Our Parliamentary lobbying has resulted in plans to bring about a change in the alcohol licensing position at Murrayfield and we have made a firm commitment that any new money arising from this would be invested into the Community game.
- For 2007-08 the compulsory Club Accident Insurance premium will be paid in full for Clubs by the SRU, saving clubs almost £400 per team

On the international front, this season has many challenges, given this month's Bank of Scotland Corporate August Tests, followed by the Rugby World Cup and with the RBS 6 Nations Championship to come. The national squad has been undertaking in-depth preparation for the World Cup, as well as looking to engage with several different strands of Scottish Rugby.

I am sure that you'd want me to offer our best wishes to Frank Hadden and his Scotland squad for the South Africa August Test on 25 August, following as it does the well deserved victory over Ireland on 11 August. More than anything, continued success at this level would go a long way to enthusing our sport and helping to grow the game. We hope to see as many of you as possible at Murrayfield this season to support the Scotland team.

Finally, with the start of the domestic season less than a month away, I hope the focus can now be on playing rugby, and I look forward to being out and about in Clubs meeting with you.

George Jack

President, Scottish Rugby Union

The Capital's Pro Team Plans

Following the announcement on 10 August that Scottish Rugby and Edinburgh Rugby had reached agreement over the future of the capital's professional club, the Edinburgh team has now returned to Scottish Rugby's ownership and a new Edinburgh Chief Executive, Nic Cartwright has taken up his post this week.

Scottish Rugby's agreements with Edinburgh Rugby Limited and its holding company, Murrayfield Sport and Leisure Limited were terminated by mutual consent and both parties agreed to drop all claims against each other. A name for the new professional team to replace Edinburgh Rugby is now being considered and all existing players and the majority of the management and backroom staff have moved to the new team.

Scottish Rugby has begun the process of assessing the coaching and management requirements for the new pro team and a new coach, to replace Lyn Howells, is now being sought. Meanwhile Henry Edwards, Scottish Rugby's Head of Player Development, is acting as the team's interim head coach.

The new Edinburgh Chief Executive Nic Cartwright, together with Scottish Rugby Chief Executive Gordon McKie, meet supporters clubs' representatives this week.

Previously Cartwright was Chief Executive of Harlequins Rugby League Club, having been with what was formerly known as the London Broncos since 1998 as Commercial Director, then Chief Executive. Already living in Edinburgh, he offered his first observations on his new position.

"Inevitably there is a huge job to be done and there will be some challenging times ahead but I'm very excited by what I have seen to date. The Edinburgh players and staff are passionate about their club and I already feel enthused working with them.

"I want to ensure we speak to as many people as we can over the next few days and weeks and make sure we get their input into all the big decisions that we need to make. We have a very busy few weeks ahead of us, but I believe we will spend that time wisely in preparing the team for the first kick off next month."

To facilitate the Edinburgh Rugby transaction, Scottish Rugby agreed to make a settlement to Murrayfield Sport and Leisure to terminate that company's future right to be the exclusive concert promoter at the national stadium, and a further sum will be paid to facilitate the transfer of the goodwill and undertaking of Edinburgh Rugby to Scottish Rugby. Agreement was also reached on the clear understanding that Murrayfield Sport and Leisure and Edinburgh Rugby will use the settlement figure to discharge all remaining liabilities of those companies.

UNION

MEETINGS ON THE CARDS

Delegates To Meet Their Match at FGM

This year's Financial General Meeting (FGM) will be held on Saturday 25 August, in the Rowan Suite at Murrayfield, starting at 1.30pm. The business of the FGM – to approve Scottish Rugby's financial statements for the year ended 30 April 2007 and to agree the reappointment of the Union's auditors – will also feature a presentation on the financial statements by Scottish Rugby's Finance Director, Eamon Hegarty.

Information on the Meeting sent out to club secretaries includes the new 2006-07 Annual Report. The mailing also asks Full Member clubs to confirm whether they're sending delegates to the FGM, as each will be provided with a match ticket for the Bank of Scotland Corporate August Test later that afternoon, when Scotland take on South Africa.

Surprise in the Pack at AGM

There was an unexpected twist in the tale at this year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) when it came to electing the new President for season 2007/08, as the outcome looked like resting on the turn of the cards – literally.

The AGM, held at Murrayfield on Friday 29 June, convened to consider motions put forward to the meeting in addition to electing a President for season 2007/08:

- **Motion 1**, which sought to reinstate the position Vice President, was defeated
- **Motion 2**, to amend the Union's Bye-Laws in line with recommendations of the Working Party on Bye-Laws and Governance. was approved
- **Motion 3**, concerning replacements in Championship matches, was approved
- **Motion 4**, regarding replacements in Premier 1 league matches was withdrawn following the previous motion being passed
- **Motion 5**, surrounding player eligibility (which effectively amended provisions whereby overseas players can play in club rugby) was approved
- **Motion 6** concerned regionalisation of the Cup competition. An amendment to the motion (put forward by Glasgow Hawks and Dundee High School FP) was approved and this amended motion was then approved. It now means that the Cup will be regionalised to the point where the Premiership clubs enter the competition
- **Motion 7** related to the composition of the Championship Committee whereby, currently, Premier 2 and Premier 3 share one delegate on the committee. The proposal to give each league a delegate of their own was approved
- **Motion 8** concerning ticket commission (where the Union sought the ability to vary the rate of commission paid to clubs depending on the level of match) was approved
- **Motion 9** on national competition rules (regional competitions) – whereby more authority was given to local competition commissions to run their own competitions was approved

So on to the other major part of the evening, the election of a President for 2007/08, which saw three candidates stand for the post – Peter Brown (Gala), George Jack (Leith) and Jim Stevenson (Cambuslang).

In the first round of voting, Brown polled 56 votes, Jack 57 votes and Stevenson 56 votes. Under the Union's election rules, the candidate with the lowest number of votes then retires – when there's a tie, however, that decision goes to a cut of cards. Prior to Company Secretary Graham Ireland having to shuffle the pack, however, Peter Brown chose to withdraw. The final run-off then saw George Jack poll 91 votes and Jim Stevenson 75, with George Jack duly elected President.

'The tally after the first round was quite unbelievable,' said Graham Ireland. 'We had four recounts, just to make sure. A tie is quite likely to happen, say, in an election within an individual league where there are a smaller number of clubs but I would never have expected to see it happen in a situation where there were so many clubs involved – though I did have a pack of cards with me, just in case.'

TIMELY SUPPORT



It's all kicking off for Scotland's rugby supporters with the Bank of Scotland Corporate August Tests against Ireland and South Africa closely followed by the pinnacle of oval-ball action – Rugby World Cup 2007 – with two games happening here on your national stadium doorstep.

So there's surely no better time to enlist as a Scotland Rugby Supporters Club member, catch up with all the news and experience all the benefits on offer.

Adult membership, at just £35 a year, offers benefits including:

- Members only early ticket ballot for the chance to buy two tickets per member for Scotland Grade A home internationals (Six Nations fixtures)
- Priority booking period to buy tickets for Scotland Grade B home internationals (against world top 10 ranking sides)
- Access to player news, your views, competitions and inside information at www.tunnelpass.org, your password controlled web site plus a members only online newsletter, emailed to you regularly
- A members-only ballot to join in the official post-match function at Murrayfield, after Scotland home games, where the lucky winners will be joined by the home team and visiting players
- Exclusive member-only events, such as the recent Scrum in the Sun evening at St Andrews , with the Scotland team
- Members beanie hat and badge



Meanwhile junior membership, for children under 16, is absolutely FREE and features:

- Password-controlled access to the junior section of the website with fun photos, competitions and facts on all your favourite players
- The chance to be chosen at random as the main Scotland captain's mascot for home internationals, appear before tens of thousands of cheering fans and meet your rugby heroes

For more on membership email admin@tunnelpass.org or telephone 0131 346 5028 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

INTERNATIONAL

CUP OF CHEER

It's the highpoint of every rugby fan's four years – and it's coming here!

Rugby World Cup 2007 features 48 matches, played over 44 days – with two of those matches played in September at Murrayfield.

The event, hosted by France, sees Scotland hosting two of its pool games – against Romania on Tuesday 18 September, and New Zealand on Sunday 23 September – on home turf, giving fans the chance to cheer on the national side.



Tickets for these fixtures and all RWC 2007 matches are available via www.ticketmaster.co.uk/rugbyworldcup, and Scottish Rugby have a small number of tickets on sale at the Murrayfield Ticket Office, for the two home pool games (Romania, all prices; New Zealand, selected prices). For further information and to check the latest availability call the Ticket Office on 0131-346 5100 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm). Ticket prices are set by the Rugby World Cup committee who also decide when, and for how long, batches of tickets are released for sale.

TESTING TIMES AHEAD

It's been game on at Murrayfield this month with the arrival of two of the world's top five playing nations, taking on the home team in the build-up to Rugby World Cup 2007.

First up was Ireland on Saturday 11 August, where a cracking win put Scotland firmly on track for the rest of the season. Captain Jason White was back to lead his troops in a hard-fought battle, with particular try-line heroics from Man of the Match Andrew Henderson. Next in line are South Africa, who run out at the home of Scottish rugby on Saturday 25 August. The Boks, somewhat bruised and battered after their recent defeats in the Tri Nations where they finished bottom of the table, will be raring to go out and prove their form as fourth-ranked nation in the world. And it's all to play for.

Tickets for both these Bank of Scotland Corporate August Tests cost from just £10, £20 or £30 for adults and from £5, £10 and £15 for under-18s, students and OAPs. They're available via the credit card hotline on 0131 346 5100 (Monday to Friday 9am - 8pm. Saturday and Sunday 9am - 5pm) and in person from the Scottish Rugby Ticket Centre, Roseburn Street , Murrayfield (open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm). Booking fees apply.

There will be no tickets on sale on match days.

ACADEMIC CHOICES

In line with Scottish Rugby's long-term commitment to produce future professionals and internationalists, 47 players have been selected for the National Academy for the 2007/08 season. All have been chosen because of previous performances in age-group international, club and school matches, along with their potential to progress in the game.

Three Academy coaches, supported by two strength and conditioning coaches and two physiotherapists, will coach the 19 senior and 28 junior players. Staff will work with the relevant club and school coaches to ensure that every Academy player receives top-class support specific to their individual needs. Throughout the season, all players will be involved at the appropriate level of rugby for their development including clubs/schools, pro-teams, national age-grade sides and the Scotland 7s squad.

The National Senior Academy is based this year, for the first time, at Murrayfield, allowing access to the excellent facilities on offer. Such a professional environment has seen all the players make significant improvements in their strength and conditioning during the pre-season, as well as benefiting from specific coaching input to boost their rugby development.

For these talented players, exposure to professional rugby is a vital part of their development and the Academy will ensure that these opportunities continue to be provided. In the next few weeks, as the build-up to the season gathers

momentum, senior Academy players will be given further opportunities (where appropriate) to experience rugby at this level through involvement in pro team warm-up matches.

The 28 Junior Academy players will combine their academic studies with their rugby commitments and benefit from additional support from the six Area Institutes of Sport in areas such as performance lifestyle, nutrition and video analysis, while being supported and coached in their area by their relevant Academy Coach.

National Senior Academy: Ben Addison, Willie Brown, Adrian Duncan, Scott Forrest, Calum Forrester, Roddy Grant, Richard Gray, Graham Hogg, Jamie Hunter, Rory Hutton (part-time), Ruaridh Jackson, Peter Jericevich, Allan Kelly, Chris Kinloch, Pat McArthur, Bruce McNeil, Joe Stafford, Kyle Traynor (part-time), Colin White

National Junior Academy: Ross Aitken, Steven Aitken, Grant Anderson, Fraser Brown, Tom Brown, Kevin Bryce, Tom Bury, Gavin Cameron, Nick Campbell, Struan Dewar, Tom Drennan, Andrew Dymock, Chris Fusaro, Ross Gibson, Finlay Gillies, Robert Harley, Gregor Hunter, Stuart McNally, Richard Mill, Nicky Little, Dougie Orr, Craig Owensen, Gordon Reid, Neil Rodger, Gary Strain, Michael Tait, Andrew White, Steven Wilson

THE MAGNIFICENT 7s



One of the huge successes of the last season was the Martin Currie Festival Of Rugby. An integral part of the Emirates Airline Edinburgh 7s, the Festival ran alongside the International 7s and filled Murrayfield's back pitches over two relatively clement days.

The first day focused on young people and families and featured New Image, Tag and full contact events. Competitions included a primary school mixed New Image rugby festival, S1 mixed Tag rugby tournament and S2 boys Pathway 7s tournament – sporting 16 teams apiece – and two full contact girls youth 7s tournaments.

Hundreds of youngsters also participated in a skills challenge and games zone, had their photograph taken with the William Webb Ellis World Cup trophy, watched as the international teams warmed up and met their Scotland rugby heroes including Jason White and Donna Kennedy.

The day ended on a high when all the participants were invited trackside for the 'Best Seats In The House', to cheer Scotland to a historic victory over South Africa.

Next day, which was more adult-oriented, saw nearly 400 enthusiasts take part in a women's senior 7s tournament, mens club and student 7s and a mixed adult touch tournament before all teams voted to suspend play and go to cheer on Scotland against Argentina in the quarter final of the main competition in the stadium.



Looking back, the participation of nearly 100 teams plus volunteers, referees, club development officers and SVQs summed up, in one weekend, all that's great about Community Rugby in Scotland .

And stay tuned for further information on the IRB Sevens World Series 2008-09 when, once again, Scotland hosts the final tournament over the weekend of 31 May 1 June.

RDM / PDM UPDATE

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGERS UPDATE:

TEAMtalk finds out about what's going on out and about in clubs and schools from a selection of RDMs...

CENTRAL

John Manson, Regional Development Manager for Central rounds up developments in his area.

DOs Keep In Touch

Central Rugby's Club Development Officers have been busy over the summer months organising and running summer rugby camps at Alloa, Hillfoots, Falkirk, Grangemouth, McLaren, Strathendrick and Stirling County rugby clubs. Over 400 children, aged from 5 to 16, relished the opportunity to have fun and improve their rugby skills during the better (well, sometimes!) weather.

There were also three highly successful Touch Tournaments in Central. Stirling County, Hillfoots and Grangemouth rugby clubs all hosted events catering for the young and old of all abilities. Over 300 players took part in the events that will hopefully become regular fixtures in the Central rugby calendar.

Three new Central SVQ Apprentices start in August – Jason Morgan and Ashley Ireland will work as part of the Clackmannanshire Rugby Development Team and Christian Wallace (Grangemouth Rugby Club) will work alongside Graham Lindsay, the Falkirk Club Development Officer. These new appointments, along with the three apprentices staying on into the second year, will increase the number of apprentices to six supporting the Club Development Officers across the Central area.

On Target

Central Rugby's Strategic Targets for season 2006-07 were mostly achieved and in some cases surpassed – the number of adult women rugby players rose by 112%, and there was a 62% increase in the number of coaches working in the community game, for example. Thanks must go to the local development groups, Club Development Officers, SVQ rugby apprentices, club volunteers and schools staff for their hard work.

The local development groups will be meeting in August to map out the forthcoming season with the Rugby Development Staff to ensure that the structures are in place to continue the growth in numbers playing the game. Top of the list will be the very popular UKCC Programme where the club representatives will be keen to get the next Central course details in place.

Fun and Games

The Central Rugby Festival Programme, involving monthly P4/5, P6/7 and S1/2 festivals hosted by each of the Central clubs, is about to get underway.

The programme, to be run from September to December and March to May each season, aims to reduce the amount of cancelled fixtures due to bad weather. It's also hoped that the locality of the festivals will reduce travel expenditure and time commitment for clubs and volunteers alike.

Dates and venues are as follows:

Sunday 30 September

P 4/5 - Falkirk RFC
P 6/7 - Strathendrick RFC
S1 / S2 - Hillfoots RFC

Sunday 28 October

P 4/5 - Stirling County RFC
P 6/7 - Grangemouth RFC
S1 / S2 - Strathendrick RFC

Sunday 25 November

P 4/5 - Alloa RFC
P 6/7 - Bannockburn RFC
S1 / S2 - Midlands Tournament Stirling County

Sunday 30 March

P 4/5 – Bannockburn RFC
P 6/7 - Stirling County RFC
S1 / S2 – Grangemouth RFC

Sunday 27 April

P 4/5 – Grangemouth RFC
P 6/7 – Falkirk RFC
S1 / S2 – Stirling County 10s Tournament

Sunday 25 May

P 4/5 – Venue TBC
P 6/7 – Hillfoots RFC
S1 / S2 – Falkirk RFC

Although the festivals will focus on player development, with coaches ensuring that all players get equal game time to develop their skills, all the clubs are free to organise fixtures (competitive or otherwise) to fill the rest of their calendar.

Central clubs have mascots present at each of the August Tests and next year's home Six Nations matches, as reward for taking part in community rugby in their area. The lucky youngsters come from Grangemouth RFC, Hillfoots RFC, Alloa RFC, Falkirk RFC, McLaren RFC, Bannockburn RFC, Strathendrick RFC and Stirling County RFC.

For more information on Central Rugby please contact: john.manson@sru.org.uk

GLASGOW NORTH

Kenny Murray, Regional Development Manager for Glasgow North, rounds up recent activity in his area.

Ferry Well Done

They were dancing in the streets of Mull in June when Tobermory High School won the S1 7s at the IRB's Martin Currie Festival of Rugby at Murrayfield. The team, coached by Fergus and Babs Whyte from Mull RFC, was late arriving at the event due to ferry times but still managed to put on an outstanding display and won the main cup as well as the fair play award.

Hawks New Eye on the Game

Glasgow Hawks recently appointed Grant Talbot as their new Club Development Officer, a post run in partnership between the club and the SRU. Grant, who will be responsible for developing the game within the cluster areas, can be contacted on 07825181041.

The Hawks also hosted the latest UKCC Level 1 course in Glasgow, with 52 coaches taking part. Over 100 coaches from Glasgow have now experienced the new course this year, clearly highlighting the commitment to coach education and development from the rugby community in Glasgow.

The next UKCC Level 1 course in Glasgow is at Inverclyde, Largs on September 14/15/16. As maximum numbers will be 42, interested coaches should submit applications immediately.

Best of the Fests – and Tests

Rugby festivals, held throughout May and June, attracted around 2000 children. Run by local development officers and clubs, the largest event was at Hillhead/Jordanhill RFC where over 300 primary children enjoyed a festival organised by the club and local Active School co-ordinators.

Meanwhile the Lanarkshire U20 7s, funded by the SRU and Hamilton Sports Council, was held at Hamilton Rugby Club in May. Although only six teams took part, due to outstanding league fixtures, the event was a great success with Biggar running out convincing winners against a spirited Hamilton side.

Glasgow North will also feature at the upcoming August Tests with Community Mascot places allocated at both internationals to young members from Cowal RFC, Waysiders/Drumpelie RFC, GHK RFC and Oban RFC.

Wishes Granted

Congratulations to Lanark RFC and Kintyre RFC on their recent funding applications. Lanark received a £3,000 Sportsmatch grant to help them promote the game in local schools while Kintyre RFC gained a £5,000 Awards for All grant to deliver a community programme to introduce rugby to children.

For more information on Glasgow North rugby please contact: kenny.murray@sru.org.uk

GLASGOW SOUTH

Glen Tippett, Regional Development Manager for Glasgow South, is delighted to report on the rise in player numbers in his area where action has exceeded expectation in many community initiatives.

Your Number's Up

Overall there's been a 29% increase in youngsters and an 8% increase in adults playing rugby in the region this year. Thanks here are largely due to local development groups, development officers, SVQ rugby apprentices, club volunteers and schools staff for their time and effort.

Areas of particular success include Ayrshire, where a 40% increase in the number of youths playing rugby – including a rise from 16 to 61 in the number of girls – is partly down to Kilmarnock, Ardrossan, Marr and Irvine seeing well over 25 new players at each youth section.

Wigtownshire, meanwhile, has been doing some great work in the community by increasing its youth section from 30 to 45 players and putting 12 coaches through a foundation course. In the Inverclyde and Renfrewshire area, Birkmyre has seen an increase from 44 to 97 players, GHA 216 to 260, and Paisley 65 to 75 in their youth sections while, overall, Dumfries & Galloway and Inverclyde & Renfrewshire have achieved increases of 9% and 12% respectively in the number of adults playing competitive rugby.

Winning Ways

The stream of trophies making their way into regional club cabinets lately includes Club of the Season and National 3 Player of the Season for Dumfries RFC at the Scottish Rugby Awards.

Meanwhile Ayr achieved second place in Premier 1, GHA gained promotion to Premier 1 for next season and Irvine won National 1 with Ardrossan second. Garnock reached the Shield final, Millbrae won West Division 3 group 1 and Braidholm West Division group 2 just ahead of Paisley.

Work To Do

Murray Richardson has recently been appointed as the Stewartry Club Development Officer (CDO) while two new SVQ apprentices – Euan Stuart for Paisley RFC and Darren Cruickshank for Dumfries RFC – began work this month. Dumfries, which also has a CDO in place, has plans to extend part of their clubhouse to accommodate a specific strength and conditioning area. The SRU will be supporting this project that will allow talented younger individuals throughout Dumfries and Galloway to access the facility.

Elsewhere, Langholm is also seeing the benefits of a CDO, with a youth section that is growing from 52 players last year to 70 this year.

DOs continue to work with clubs, colleges and local authorities to run foundation courses (click on the coach link on the SRU website for information on these courses). Glasgow fielded 52 candidates on the last UKCC level 1 course, held at Hawks and a further level 1 course is being held at Largs from 14-16 September. Call 08451260664 to book – it's filling up fast.

It's All Kicking Off!

With Rugby World Cup action about to start DOs, clubs and councils are working together to hold festivals to inspire the community to get behind the Scotland team. These are planned for:

Monday 24 September

Dumfries
P5-P6

Tuesday 25 September

Irvine RFC
P5 – P6

Thursday 4 October

Birkmyre
P5 – P7

Thursday 11 October

Langholm
5 – 16 years

Tuesday 11 September

Kilmarnock
P6 – P7

Wednesday 5 September

Cumnock
P6 – P7

More festivals are planned, to complement the clubs' programme of festivals and tournaments. These will focus on player development, with coaches ensuring all players get equal game time to develop their skills. Dates so far are: Sunday 28 October, Sunday 16 March and Sunday 27 April (for S1 and S2); and mini festivals on Sunday 30 September and Sunday 16 March.

As part of the Community Mascots programme, Glasgow South clubs are delighted to have a presence at each August Test and both home RBS 6 Nations fixtures in 2008. The lucky mascots hail from Paisley RFC, Garnock RFC, Ardrossan RFC, Wigtownshire RFC, Greenock RFC, Newton Stewart RFC and Dumfries RFC.

For more information Glasgow South rugby please contact: glen.tippett@sru.org.uk

EAST 2

Greg Cann, Regional Development Manager for Edinburgh City , Midlothian & West Lothian pitches in with news of developments in his area.

Picture (Almost) Perfect

After a year of the new-look regional structure, the picture within the region looks promising. An overall increase in participation by adults and young people – including many new schools and pupils – has been matched by a rise in the active number of coaches and referees. Thanks here goes to the clubs, schools, coaches and teachers as well as the additional volunteers on the development groups and the development staff (Club development officers and SVQ coaches).

Developments Planned

Joe Edwards, key to driving the development of rugby in North Edinburgh, is moving on and his post will be filled by a new club Development Officer (DO), as well as returning SVQ Lewis Niven. There will also be new staff working with Murrayfield Wanderers (Stuart Dennis) and Lismore RFC (Hamish Skene) on a sessional basis. Existing staff in Edinburgh include the City DO, plus staff at Currie and Forrester, two DOs in West Lothian and potentially a part-time DO in Midlothian. Returning SVQ second year students and a number of first years are a welcome help with the workload. Meanwhile the three local development groups will soon be meeting to support the delivery of local Area Action Plans that will direct all development work.

On Course

During the summer break, two UKCC Level 1 coaching courses were run in the area. Both were fully booked, allowing over 40 coaches to gain a new qualification. Similar courses are planned for February/March and June 2008; a full programme of Foundation coaching and refereeing courses has also been put forward, in conjunction with the Development Groups and the various tutors and a new course aimed at supporting the development of teachers is planned from September.

Youngsters' Summer-y

Camps and activities for youngsters have been hugely popular this summer, including Livingston RFC which held a week-long camp for over 40 members, and Linlithgow RFC's inaugural Summer Camp for over 60 attendees.

And four local clubs will be represented at the August Tests, with Boroughmuir and Lasswade RFCs providing mascots for the Scotland v Ireland game, and Linlithgow and Watsonians matching that for the South Africa fixture.

For more information on Edinburgh, Mid and West Lothian rugby please contact: greg.cann@sru.org.uk

GRAMPIAN

Pete Young, Regional Development Manager for Grampian, reviews the state of play in his part of Scotland's rugby world.

They Gave It A Try – Totally!



It's been a busy summer in Aberdeen with a primary schools rugby festival at Sheddocksley Sports Centre, then four weeks of 'try rugby' camps run by Aberdeen Youth Rugby Association development staff, followed by a week-long 'total rugby' camp at Aberdeenshire Rugby Club. Development staff and club volunteers have also run camps at Mackie, Banff and Aboyne rugby clubs and at Peterhead, organised through the Active Schools coordinator.

Action for Local Developments

The three local rugby development groups in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray will be meeting this month to discuss action plans for the forthcoming season with the Regional Development Manager (RDM). It's hoped that local groups will also contribute, on behalf of their clubs, to make sure that the plans reflect all the stakeholders.

Four partnership agreements are currently in force for Scottish Rugby to support development staff at Garioch, Mackie and Ellon clubs – this season it's hoped to extend these agreements to include staff at Banff and Aboyne. Meanwhile Aberdeen Youth Rugby Association, with one full time development officer and two part time coaches, have submitted a funding bid to the Big Lottery to continue this project for the next four years.

A Touch of Summer

Despite variable weather, the highly successful Aberdeen Touch Rugby summer leagues and one day summer tournament were held again at Aberdeenshire RFC. The leagues ran for 10 weeks, with nearly 500 men and women taking part, and the summer tournament attracted 16 teams from across the country.



The 'A' Team

Aberdeen Wanderers, Alford Junior Rugby and Aberdeen Grammar are the proud Grampian clubs who'll be cheering particularly loudly at the upcoming August Tests – along with the rest of us – as three of their younger members have earned their places as Scotland team mascots for their participation in mini rugby in the region.

For more information on Grampian rugby please contact: peter.young@sru.org.uk

HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

There's been plenty of fun, games and growth in player numbers up north as Highlands & Islands Regional Development Manager, Brian Bell, reviews recent developments.

Some of the primary school pupils and coaching staff who attended the Celtic Games in Lochaber.

Culture Cultures

As part of the Scotland's Year of Highland Culture, Inverness College students will continue to deliver Tag rugby for primary school children across the Highlands. With Skye, Lochaber and Caithness already visited, primary school pupils in the Inverness area will be given the opportunity on 26 October to play rugby together with curling and golf – though not all at the same time!



Mascot Moments

After the outstanding success of last season's Community Mascot programme, Scottish Rugby is again giving mini rugby players the opportunity to be Scottish team mascots for the August Tests and home Six Nations 2008 fixtures.

The lucky Highlands & Islands clubs who are providing mascots for the first two tests are Strathspey RFC and Shetland RFC (Scotland v Ireland on 11 August) and Caithness RFC (Scotland v South Africa on 25 August).

Clubbing Resources

In addition to the ongoing partnership with Highland RFC, towards the end of last season Scottish Rugby entered into partnerships with Orkney RFC and Caithness RFC, providing investment which will allow the clubs to grow and develop the game at mini and youth levels in the coming season.

The Orkney RFC partnership will see after school rugby clubs established in both Pierowall and Sanday Junior High Schools, the development of after-school rugby at Kirkwall Grammar School and Stromness Academy and will ensure greater competition between the four schools. The investment will also support competition outwith Orkney to provide meaningful competition to help the development of Orkney's young rugby players.

Meanwhile the partnership with Caithness RFC addresses the shortage of mini rugby and schools rugby in Thurso and aims to develop after school rugby clubs in Thurso High School and feeder Primary Schools, help sustain mini rugby in Wick and ensure ongoing recruitment, retention and development of new and existing coaches and match officials – targeting senior school pupils as well as players and parents.

Highland's Coaching Force

After some years' absence, rugby is once again a core sport within Coaching Highland. This is tremendous news for clubs and coaches across the region as it provides access to funding and advice to coaches in terms of their own development, and offers funding for tutor training and mentoring.

Coaching Highland runs a website www.coachinghighland.com, designed to support coaches, that includes coach education courses, downloads of strategies and discussion forums. It also has four coaching resource centres in the region and can provide information about reduced cost public liability insurance for sports clubs, a scheme set up in partnership with the Highland Council.

All Action

Future priorities and suggested actions for the region are set out in the draft *Highlands and Islands Community Rugby (HICR) Action Plan for 2007-08* which is currently with clubs and partners for comment prior to approval at the next HICR meeting on 27th August.

These priorities include an increase in the number of meaningful games for non National and District League teams and 2nd XV's to encourage growth in adult player numbers and working closely with SWRU to address the decline in the number of women players. By working to the action plan, clubs can help the continued growth of players and volunteers which is critical to strengthen the rugby community in the Highlands & Islands.

Back on Course

After the very successful UKCC Level 1 Course held in Inverness from the 6-8 July, coach education in the early part of the new season is concentrating on combined foundation courses for refereeing and coaching. These will take place at Ross Sutherland RFC, Invergordon on Sunday 16 September and at Stornoway RFC, Stornoway on Wednesday 3/Thursday 4 October.

Further details are available from the SRU website or contact Brian Bell brian.bell@sru.org.uk . Remember to register early to avoid disappointment.

BORDERS AND EAST LoTHIAN

Brian Renwick, Regional Development Manager for East Lothian and the Borders reports on some promising developments in his area.

Posts Deliver

Over the last few months we have successfully recruited club development officers (CDO) for Ross High (Gordon Galashan), Haddington (Greig Munro), Musselburgh (Craig McGeary) and Jedforest (Greig Walker) These four join Graeme Paterson (Peebles), Ian Millar (Gala), Ross Miller (Melrose), John Johnstone (Hawick), Stewart Milne (Kelso), Niall Cubban (Langholm), Andrew Clark (Preston Lodge) and Dougie Hall (Berwick) who, together with the new East Lothian rugby development officer, will be working in local schools and clubs to maintain the high levels of participation and promote the game in certain areas.

East Lothian's recent recruitment for a replacement for Graham Shiel resulted in the appointment of Clark Laidlaw, who began work on 6 August. Clark, a former professional player for Border Reivers, was also a regular in the Scottish sevens squad.

The regional development groups have also been busy in creating development plans for both regions for the season 2007/2008 these plans are almost complete and once agreed by everyone will be started after the summer holidays.

Borderline Decision

When the Border Reivers team was disbanded there had been some debate on the future of the pro team's gym and it was decided that the region's players would benefit best if the equipment was distributed throughout the Border clubs. As a result, Peebles, Selkirk, Gala, Kelso, Jed, Melrose, Hawick, Langholm and Berwick all received gym equipment in July, worth around £30,000 in total, to improve their club facilities.

Three-Day Event

The first UKCC Level 1 Course held in the region took place in June with 20 coaches attending the three-day course at Melrose. Although it was a hard three days it was enjoyable for both tutors and coaches and thanks to Andrew Clark, Rocky Johnstone and Stewart Milne for their tutoring skills. Another course is planned for October / November.

Those wishing to attend, or for any further information on developments in the region, please contact Brian Renwick on 07764178901 or at brian.renwick@sru.org.uk

TO TRAIN IN SPAIN IS TO FOCUS ON THE GAME

Forty boys from last season's U17 group took part in a three week training camp in Valadolliid , Spain . Funding for the event was received through Cumbernauld college and the Leonardo da Vinci European funding programme. The focus for the camp was on strength and conditioning, with the rugby coaches working on key national themes, and these players will now be working hard to gain selection for Scotland's U18 squad in the forthcoming season.

Elsewhere, the Performance Development Managers (PDMs) have been working hard in preparation for the U15 and U16 Pathway programme which starts in August. These teams, who play within their regions, are vital components in Scottish Rugby's talent identification process.

PROFESSIONAL

WARRIORS PREPARE FOR BATTLE



The excitement is building at Glasgow Warriors' training base, at Whitecraigs RFC, ahead of the new Magners League season.

Nine quality signings have bolstered the squad over the closed season, including former All Black centre Daryl Gibson and New Zealand A prop Michael Collins (pictured: right). That's matched by a raft of young Scottish talent which sees Scotland 7s starlets Mike Adamson and Colin Shaw linking up with gifted Scotland U20 flanker Richie Vernon.

The good news continues with confirmation that Firhill will be home to the Warriors for the next two seasons, at least. It's no secret how highly the players regard Firhill's playing surface and modern facilities, requirements for any professional rugby club in today's highly competitive environment.

In July, Ian Riddoch was appointed Warriors Chief Executive following his interim position as General Manager. Ian has been working hard to ensure that this season will be one to savour for both supporters and the club's valued stakeholders.

Meanwhile 20 club teams from all over the West of Scotland recently gathered for the Glasgow Warriors' Touch Tournament and Fun Day, a perfect way for the club and professional games to come together to support each other. Warriors' head coach, Sean Lineen, joined one of the two 'home' teams entered into the competition, with Warriors 1 scooping the Touch Tournament title as they beat Glasgow Hawks in the final.



All eyes are now on the season ahead and the pre-season campaign that begins against Rotherham on Friday 24 August (kick-off 7pm), returns to Firhill for the visit of Newcastle Falcons on Friday 31 August (kick-off 7:30pm), and ends with a clash at Adams Park against Heineken Cup champions London Wasps on Thursday 6 September (kick-off 7:30pm).

It's then on to Magners League action when the Warriors travel to Cardiff and Swansea to take on the Blues and the Ospreys before their first of five consecutive home games at Firhill, starting with Connacht on the first weekend of September.

Tickets for the Warriors' friendly against Newcastle Falcons are priced at a discounted rate for adults (£10) and £5 for concessions (U18s, students and OAPs).

Call the Ticket Hotline on 0131 346 5100 or log onto www.glasgowwarriors.org.

Season ticket information will be announced shortly, along with details on new and improved booking procedures.

Stop Press

Flying Samoan winger Lome Fa'atau has just joined Glasgow Warriors on a two-year-deal from Super 14 side Wellington Hurricanes. The top try scorer in last season's Super 14 Championship, Fa'atau will arrive in Glasgow after Manu Samoa's Rugby World Cup campaign.

CLUBS

STRATHMORE TAKE STEPS

After many years of struggling to emerge from the District/Regional Leagues, Strathmore RFC has at last made it into National League 3, and is determined to continue the steady upwards progression.

With a new clubhouse (opened by Andy Irvine in 2005) and greatly improved facilities, membership at all age levels has soared, and there is a real buzz at Inchmacoble for the coming season.

With an ambitious ten-year plan, including a strength and fitness suite, a newly appointed Angus Rugby Development Officer and an upgrade to the existing floodlights, the Angus club is leading the way for rugby in the area.

The arrival of two New Zealanders, from the North Harbour area, is set to add to the player pool for the coming season; the second team will start a second season in the national leagues; the Angus Colts provide a consistent throughput of quality players to the senior clubs; and there are plans for a third/over-35s team to take the field as well.

The junior section is one of the largest in the area – with teams from Micro up to S2 – and the annual Strathmore Junior Tournament has reached legendary status!

JOINT ADVENTURE



There's a new club in town – or at least in Clackmannanshire – in the shape of Hillfoots/Alloa RFC. In a move approved by the Scottish Rugby Board on 28 June 2007 and reported back to the clubs in July, Hillfoots RFC and Alloa RFC agreed to merge their playing resources with the aim of keeping the better players in the county and providing them with the level of competition to help achieve that.

The merger involves all senior and junior teams with only the P4-P7 operating as the old clubs. The first, second and third fifteens will all play competitively in their respective league (check out the websites for fixtures).

Alloa captain Stevie Jack, Hillfoots captain Mike Slade and club coach Brian Ireland (pictured here) are leading the playing side of the club, ably supported by Willie Duncan, Jim Syme, Alan Aaron, Dave Lewis, Gary Bryce and Dave Stirratt.

Pre-season training is now well underway and the first practice match took place last week with a narrow loss to Kirkcaldy, a great result given the Fife club's more senior position in the Premier Leagues. Training sessions are going well and a strong reminder is sent to all players that to gain selection regular training is required – this takes place at Hillfoots every Tuesday and Thursday, from 7pm to 9pm .

Practice matches have been arranged for the rest of August with the first league game on 1 September, away to Garnock, and the first home game at Hillfoots on 8 September when Langholm visit. The first league game for the seconds is 22 September, away to Ellon, and for the thirds at home on 8 September. The U18 league is under review, with the scheduled first game at home on 1 September and a full fixture card for U16, U15 and S1/S2 is being developed. Meanwhile the Cast Tups resume their social brand of rugby with fixtures starting later in September.

The annual Bob Marfleet Memorial game, played between Hillfoots and Edinburgh Borderers is on Wednesday 15 th August at Hillfoots (kick off 6:30 pm). Bob was a volunteer winchman on a rescue helicopter that sadly went down on a mission in the North Sea on 14 September 1982. In Bob's memory a trophy has been contested for the last eighteen years between Hillfoots and a visiting select side. All members of Hillfoots/Alloa as well as those associated with the original clubs and all sponsors are invited along.

For further information please contact Steve Leitch, Jimmie Gracie or any committee member.

TRAINING IN STYLE

Berwick Rugby Club has started training for senior players and colts on Tuesday evenings at Scremerston. Training – 7 for 7.30 start – already attracts a large number of players. Pictured with this season's new strips (left to right) are Colin Young, Robert Haggerston, Richard Hume and Richard Ayre while Mak Wilson (front) represents the future of the club. Anyone who would like to attend training is more than welcome and can telephone the club on 01289 302141.

STUDENTS SUS OUT THE OPPOSITION

With a 20% increase in women's playing numbers and 16% in men last season, hopes are high that University and College rugby will continue the upward trend over the coming season.



Following Fresher's Sports Fayres in September, the traditional Wednesday afternoon leagues will start at the beginning of October, with Edinburgh University looking to retain their titles in the top men's and women's leagues. After the success of last year's inaugural SUS Cup, Finals Day will again take place at Murrayfield next Easter, giving students the chance to showcase their talents at the home of Scottish Rugby, and St Andrews and Dundee Universities to retain their respective men's and women's titles.

With fixtures confirmed against Irish Colleges (Ravenhill, 22 February); England Students (Edinburgh, 7 March); and Combined Services (Edinburgh, 14 March), planning for the new men's representative season is almost finalised and it's hoped that season 2007-08 will also see the formation of a women's representative team, in conjunction with the SWRU.

New and returning committee members will be invited to Murrayfield in October to be brought up to speed on developments over the summer and to get to know other University and College contacts with plans afoot to get clubs producing Development Plans for future seasons.

For more information on University and College Rugby, contact Andrew.Macpherson@sru.org.uk,

YOUTH & SCHOOLS

STRUAN RUIN LEADS TO AYR REPAIR

Thursday 26 July at 2pm was when the disappointing news broke that Struan Camp 2007, scheduled for the following week, had been cancelled due to adverse weather. The camp, which Scottish Rugby runs in association with youth organisation SSC, hosts around 200 of Scotland's best young players, aged 14 to 17, in the Perthshire countryside.

Despite exploring every avenue to keep the camp afloat – literally – it was agreed that all but the U17 programmes would have to be cancelled. This then brought about another set of organisational challenges – basically where, when, how and who.

However after two full days of hard work, the U17 crew were rerouted to the Scottish Agricultural College at Auchencruive in Ayrshire. The Coaching Team of Grant McKelvey, Bryan Easson and Gordon Henderson was joined by National U17 Squad Video Analyst Murray Craig, Doctor Mike Proudfoot, Physio TJ and Player Development Manager Adam Gray to ensure that the U17 program went ahead with as much vigour as usual. Head of Player Development, Henry Edwards, was also on hand to cast his eye over proceedings.

Players arrived on the Sunday morning and after a quick lunch, a squad meeting and brief outline of the week, were soon experiencing the superb playing surface that was on offer. Two rugby sessions a day were supplemented by five strength and conditioning sessions delivered by SRU Conditioning Coach Val Houston and three team building sessions facilitated by Scottish Rugby's Ritchie McGee and SSC stalwart Pete Lavery.

Five days later with seven rugby sessions under their belts – plus a visit to the cinema to see The Simpsons Movie – the players were asked to perform in a practice game of three 20-minute periods. This proved to the coaches that many of the key national themes that had been delivered throughout the week had been taken on board and transferred into the pressure situation of a game.

Thanks go to all concerned with running the camp and a special mention to all the staff at Auchencruive who couldn't have been more helpful in making sure our stay was both comfortable and productive.

GENERAL

COACH EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Coach Education and Development has been moving at pace over the summer months, reports Jock Peggie, UKCC Development Manager. Coaching is now high on the political agenda with the new UK Coaching Framework led by SportscoachUK is developing across the four home unions. The five project plans of the UK coaching framework concern the creation of a UK wide coaching system, front line coaching, support for coaches, coaching as a professionally regulated profession, and research and development.

Scottish Rugby has, as a result, been working hard with our English and Welsh counterparts to develop a UK wide coaching framework for rugby. We have recently been classified as one of five trailblazer sports who will work to roll out the framework. This is tremendous news and tribute to Rugby's UK national coaching development group – Scottish Rugby should reap the benefits in the future.

Foundation Level

Courses are running throughout the country and many are now joint courses with a referee qualification included. For details of all these, please see the coach page of our website.

UKCC Level 1

Twelve courses have now been run with a further one this weekend and another scheduled for the weekend of 14–16 September at Largs. Places for the Largs course are still available – please see the coach page of the website for application instructions.

There are now 292 UKCC Level 1 qualified coaches who have achieved their award with 12 candidates working towards completion. These numbers are testament to the hard work of all the coaches, course leaders and coach educators who have been involved so far.

UKCC Level 2

Scottish Rugby is to pilot the UKCC Level 2 qualification to our Jointly Funded Development Staff throughout August. This is a four-day course and, once complete, we will plan for the roll-out to the rugby community.

Pathway Course

Our third annual Pathway coaching course was held at Tulliallan Police College, Kincardine in May. Around 60 coaches involved in our Pathway programme attended with keynote speakers on the Friday evening Frank Hadden (National Coach) and Dr Malcolm Fairweather (Scottish Institute of Sport). Themes were the national style of play and maximising the skill acquisition environment in your coaching. The Saturday workshops, led by the performance development team, covered topics such as the contact area, hand catch and speed of attack, defence, and coaching through games. The event proved very successful with all coaches leaving with ideas to develop their coaching practice.

Workforce Development

In order to deliver the robust competency based UKCC programmes, Scottish Rugby has invested significant time and resources in developing a suitably qualified workforce. This is ongoing and our workforce numbers are now as follows; Senior trainers (3), Trainers (1), Trainee Trainers (12), Coach Educators (24), Trainee Coach Educators (26).

Alongside our own UKCC workforce, Scottish Rugby personnel are involved in assisting the IRB in the delivery of their coach education programme, from time to time. So far Scottish Rugby has two Accredited IRB Trainers and four Accredited IRB Coach Educators.

Updates

Coaching Updates will continue this coming season and are seen as CPD opportunities for the developing coach. This coming season's programme will be released soon and details will appear on the coach page of the website. Last season over 500 coaches attended the updates and we are looking to improve on this figure for season 2007-08.

Strength and Conditioning

Scottish Rugby, in conjunction with the UKSCA (United Kingdom Strength & Conditioning Association), has recently developed and piloted a Level 1 Course in Weightlifting. It is planned to hold six Level 1 courses across the nation this coming season – details of this as well as the National Fitness Course will be released as soon as they are available. Again, details will appear on the coaching page of our website.

Website

After feedback from the community roadshows, we have recently improved the coach page of the website in order to make it more user friendly. Details of all coach education programmes, courses, networks and opportunities appear in the coach section as well as number of resources to help you in your coaching.

Thanks to you, the coach

Your contribution as a coach at whatever level is greatly valued and we at Scottish Rugby thank you for your time and effort in growing our game.

AND THE WINNER IS...

At the annual Scottish Rugby Awards dinner on 25 May, the real winner was rugby, as playing and coaching at all ages and stages of the game in Scotland were celebrated.

Hosted by BBC TV sports presenter Jill Douglas, the event welcomed 400 guests to Murrayfield for a night of glittering prizes and thoughts for others, with raffle proceeds and donations going to the Wooden Spoon charity for injured rugby players.

The full list of winners reads:

Premier 1 player of the season

(sponsored by Scottish Hydro Electric)
Bruce McNeil (Hawick)

Premier 2 player of the season

(sponsored by Scottish Hydro Electric)
Dan Teague (Edinburgh Academical)

Premier 3 player of the season

(sponsored by Scottish Hydro Electric)
Elliot McLaren (West of Scotland)

National 1 player of the season

(sponsored by Scottish Hydro Electric)
John Muir (Irvine) *(pictured: right)*

National 2 player of the season

(sponsored by Scottish Hydro Electric)
Paul McCrorie (Garnock)

National 3 player of the season

(sponsored by Scottish Hydro Electric)
Stuart Clanachan (Dumfries)

East Region player of the season

(sponsored by Scottish Hydro Electric)
Grant Craig (North Berwick)

West Region player of the season

(sponsored by Scottish Hydro Electric)
David Milne (Waysiders Drumpellier)

Caledonia Region player of the season

(sponsored by Scottish Hydro Electric)
Dave Lyle (Crieff & Strathearn)

Club of the season

(sponsored by Scottish Hydro Electric)
Dumfries



Try of the season

Euan Shand (Fettes College), Scotland U17

Coach of the Season

(sponsored by Scottish Hydro Electric)
Ally Donaldson (Currie) (*pictured: right*)

Youth coach of the season

(sponsored by Scottish Hydro Electric)
Gary Horne and John Lathangie (Howe of Fife/Bell Baxter HS) (*pictured: below*)

**SVQ of the year**

(sponsored by Scottish Hydro Electric)
Peter McCartin (Dalziel High School)

Referee of the year

(sponsored by Scottish Hydro Electric)
Neil Paterson (Dundee HSFP)

Spirit of Rugby award (sponsored by John Lewis)

Donald Swanson (Peebles)

Scotland U17 player of the season

Stuart McNally (George Watson's College)

Scotland U18 player of the season

(sponsored by Martin Currie)
Steven Aitken (Ellon) (*pictured: right*)

Scotland U19 player of the season

Joe Stafford (Hillhead/Jordanhill)

Scotland U20 player of the season

(David McGavin Cup)
Richie Vernon (Border Reivers and Stewart's Melville FP)

Scotland 7s player of the season

(sponsored by the Famous Grouse)
Mike Adamson (Glasgow Hawks and Glasgow Warriors)

Magners League player of the season

Chris Paterson (Edinburgh Rugby)

Scotland player of the season

(sponsored by Greaves Sports)
Sean Lamont (Northampton Saints)

Scotland women's player of the season

Tanya Griffith (RHC)

Special Recognition award

Donna Kennedy (RHC) (*pictured: right*)

**REFEREE'S ROUND UP**

The referee department has been extremely busy since the last edition of TEAMtalk, with much detailed work taking place in preparation for the 2007-08 season, and also a number of staff changes.

In January 2007 a working party undertook a total review of all processes in the selection, training and support of match officials chosen to join the SRU panels. In May a number of recommendations were produced from its findings

and the department has been working towards implementing the majority of those. A copy of the full report is available on the [Referee Section of the SRU website](#).

A new National Referee Academy has been approved, and will be managed by Iain Heard. The aim of the academy is to provide extensive support to those referees in the societies identified as having the potential to referee Premier Rugby. The selection process is well underway with successful candidates beginning a two-year programme on 1 September. This is a very exciting development and progress of all candidates will be reported in the next edition of **TEAMtalk**

Bill Calder (Borders RRDM and Equity officer) has taken early retirement to spend more time with his family and have more available time to follow Scotland in the RWC in France. We all wish Bill well in his retirement and have no doubt we will see him at some point in the future as a consultant in Equity in Sport to help us reach the next level.

Bill's replacement, Iain Heard, will take on a slightly different role. Iain will spend 50% of his time as the Borders RRDM and the other 50% as the Manager of the newly formed Referee Academy (more on the academy later). Iain started work with the SRU on 1 August 2007 and is now getting to grips with his new job – a lot to learn in a short space of time but we know Iain will be a huge asset to the department and the SRU.

Colin Brett has joined the team as the RRDM in Edinburgh replacing Roy McCombe who moves to the post of Referee Manager on a full-time basis. Colin joined the team on 1 May 2007 and has had a very busy few months; he attended an IRB Referee Educators course, ran his first TJ course and helped prepare and deliver the Level 2 referee course in July. Colin also had the difficult task of preparing and delivering the law exam to the Level 4 course (pre-season course for all Senior Officials). In addition to reducing the average age within the team, he will be a big asset to the training and development of referees in Scotland.

Out and About in the Regions

Edinburgh

'These first months here have been enjoyable and challenging, from being involved within refereeing as an active referee to now working to develop referees within the Edinburgh region,' says new RRDM Colin Brett. 'My first thought was to offer weekly training sessions where referees could not only focus on the fitness and technical aspects of their game but, most importantly for new referees, would be able to feel part of a group within the game.'

'In the coming months much of the focus will be on referee training courses to increase the number of people refereeing age-grade rugby as well as senior rugby. The national referee academy will be up and running and we look forward to welcoming some promising referees from Edinburgh.'

Glasgow and the West of Scotland

Over the summer period – normally quiet – a lot of work has been done to prepare for the new season. The WSRRS Annual Conference, being held on 17/18 August, invites club coaches along on the Friday evening for discussion with the Society members.

A recruiting campaign has attracted a few new referees but some are still working to recover from old injuries. Pre-season training has started and the numbers have been encouraging – the highest figure so far has been 27. Emma Graham, the Society fitness coach, has moved to a new job in Northern Ireland but the Society has been fortunate to get an excellent replacement in Lindsay Robb. Our thanks go to Emma for the way she has brought on the fitness of the referees and we wish Lindsay all the very best in her new role.

Caledonia

June and July were very busy months spent planning and organising courses, re-licensing referees who did courses three years ago and preparing for the new season.

Three Level 1 Refereeing courses, attended by 26 people, took place in Aberdeen and Perth with further courses planned for Elgin and Dundee (September) and Stirling (October). The annual National Level 2 and Level 3 Refereeing courses took place in Stirling with 20 attending Level 2 and 14 on Level 3.

The Caledonia Referees Pre-season Conference – bringing together the Aberdeen, Highlands and Midlands Referees Societies – takes place in St Andrews on Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 August. Club coaches are invited to join the discussions on the Sunday morning.

Neil Paterson, meanwhile, had a very busy June. He was at the IRB U19 World Championships – where he refereed a number of major games and a semi-final – refereed his first Magners game and was also involved at the two IRB 7s tournaments in London and Edinburgh. Congratulations to Neil who was awarded Referee of the Year at the Scottish Rugby Awards in May.

Charles Samson made the trip to Canada on the annual exchange with the Toronto and Ontario Referees Society. He found it very challenging refereeing in the intense heat but a huge learning experience, living and breathing rugby refereeing for 14 days. Charles (21) only started refereeing in August 2006, has progressed well in his first season and will be a member of the new National Referee Academy.

Another young referee, Fraser Balharry (also 21), has just been promoted to the new streamlined SRU panel of referees and will be refereeing Premier three this season. Congratulations to Fraser on his promotion and also his recent marriage.

Referee Coaching

A recent six-month review of all aspects of refereeing, particularly the structure at SRU level, has produced a very interesting report whose findings are now being implemented.

Coaching is now at the forefront of referee development. A new coaching form was under trial last season at Premier 3 and this was well received. It has now been accepted at all levels of refereeing, apart from beginners.

A new 'Report on Referee' Card has been produced to link in with the new coaching form. It is hoped that Clubs will complete and return the card so that as much feedback as possible on the referees' performance can be obtained.

Professional Referees

Malcolm Changleng

'Every referee awaits the next list of appointments in anticipation of a tasty fixture, sure to challenge and excite. Last month I was not disappointed with my first visit to Ellis Park, Johannesburg scheduled for the visit of Samoa taking on the Springboks. Both teams are now ranked in the IRB top 10 and so preparation was thorough. The day finally arrived and, as I blew my whistle to start proceedings, a rush of thoughts went through my head;

...this is the 1995 World cup pitch, I hope my family are proud, the Scottish refereeing community will be watching my every move and I hope I cope with the altitude!.....



This all happens in a second or two because the overriding thought is to perform well as a referee – it will all mean nothing if you don't take control and perform. Thankfully the game went very well, with the Springboks winning 35-8 and some good rugby played in an excellent spirit. Some of the big contacts were truly awesome but the physicality was always controlled which was a credit to the players as they sought to impress pre World Cup. After the match I caught up with Semo Setiti, Samoa Captain and ex Borders, and both sets of players commented that I had gone well, allowing the game to flow which is always satisfying.



After a full blooded Test match it was good to unwind with visits to Sun City, a tour of Kruger game park, vineyards and a chance to visit Soweto, a very humbling experience. Preparations now begin for my appointments at the World Cup in September.'

Scottish Rugby Referees` Association (SRRA)

Role and Aim

The SRRA is the association of Scotland's rugby referees, referee coaches and touch judges which is recognised by and affiliated to the Scotland Rugby Union (SRU).

The SRRA exists to serve the best interests of rugby refereeing in Scotland and as a support, unifying and coordinating body for Scotland's rugby referees

The SRRA is the body that agrees the principles of the refereeing and referee coaching working practices and procedures with the SRU.

The Association are very pleased to announce that David Wright has been recently appointed as Chairman. David brings a wealth of experience to the post and I am sure his tenure will be a very successful one.

The Association has recently discussed and approved the new career pathway for match officials and, more recently, received a presentation by Roy McCombe on the report produced by the working party. After a period of consultation the report was given the full support of the association.

SRRA has also forged closer links with the discipline panel and its workings and has been able to review the detailed data on levels of red and yellow cards. There is very positive news in that all referees are receiving a greater level of support from the panel when their case is being considered

The Association recently had a lengthy discussion into the insurance cover provided for referees injured as a result of refereeing and concluded it should be terminated, mainly due to the cost and lack of claims. Those referees who do not have any personal injury cover should consider obtaining this themselves.

To discuss SRRA issues please contact the secretary, Andy Clift on 07712 869820 or at andrew.clift@amersports.com

WIN WITH JOHN LEWIS



John Lewis has teamed up with Scottish Rugby to offer a fortunate TEAMtalk reader the chance to win two tickets for the Scotland v South Africa game at Murrayfield on Saturday 25 August. The lucky winner will also receive a signed Scotland Rugby World Cup shirt.

As the official sponsor of the Youth League Cup and Schools 7s, John Lewis is committed to developing grassroots rugby and providing more opportunities for young players throughout Scotland. John Lewis will be working in partnership with the Scottish Rugby Community Department to increase the current playing base and attract more young people into the game.

For your chance to win, just answer the following question:

Who is the current captain of the Scotland team?

To enter simply e-mail the answer, with your name, address and contact details to johnlewisrugby@trimediahc.com by Monday 20 August 2007 .

Log onto www.scottishrugby.org to find out more about the 2007-08 youth competitions, how to get involved in rugby opportunities near you and to keep up to date on all the latest Scottish Rugby news and activities.

For more information on the John Lewis sponsorship initiative contact our team via johnlewisrugby@trimediahc.com.



CALLING ALL BIG KIDZ!

Would you like to change roles with your offspring for two days? Hang up the work clothes and go back to the relative ease (?) of the classroom? Even return to mini rugby on a Saturday morning? Well, the BBC are currently looking for families from all over the UK to take part in a new children's show – a family game show called Big Kidz – and have asked us to spread the word throughout the rugby community.

For more information call the Big Kidz production team on 0207 644 0042 or email apply@bigkidz.tv.

And if you make it to small-screen fame, drop us a line at **TEAMtalk!**