

ANNUAL REVIEW 2024



RUGBY PLAYERS
IRELAND

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON - PETER O'MAHONY

It was an honour to be on the field when Cian Healy became the most capped Irish Rugby player of all time in November. It's an unbelievable achievement and appropriate that it came on the 150th anniversary of the IRFU.

When Cian first played for Ireland back in 2009, we were only beginning to see the fruits of professionalism. However, despite winning our first Grand Slam in 61 years with some of the best players in the game, I think the rugby world continued to see us as plucky underdogs who were happy to scrap away for respect.

Like many involved in the game at the time, Cian would admit that it took a while to come around to the idea of professionalism. Being paid to play was nice but with it came the obligation to buy into a culture of discipline, sacrifice and relentless standards. I'm not sure when it first clicked with him, but once it did Cian became one of the most dedicated and meticulous professionals in our game. Even now, with 134 Irish caps to his name, he's still looking for those extra margins.

From my vantage point as Chairperson of Rugby Players Ireland, I've seen the game in a different light. Results on the field undoubtedly help, but ultimately the foundations for the successes enjoyed by many of the teams Cian has played in are put in place long before the lights turn on at the Aviva.

It's in the small margins we find in our environment—whether it's in the logistics of managing travel and recovery, in supporting players' mental wellbeing, or in the community work that strengthens our connection to the fans. It's also in the collaborative efforts of the IRFU and Rugby Players Ireland to create a professional environment that enables us to thrive, while giving us the space to be ourselves.

While our pursuit of excellence will not always guarantee results - that's sport - we must remember where we have come from. We are a small nation that punches well above its weight in what is an increasingly global game. To see us compete at this level, inspires many. It still inspires me.

As we look toward 2025 and beyond, I see great potential. We're not a finished product, nor should we be but as a rugby nation we are no longer considered plucky underdogs either. We are continuously building. And so the journey continues, and it's one I'm proud to be part of, in whatever capacity I'm called upon.

I wish to thank my fellow players for their efforts throughout 2024. The standards we set today, are the foundations for tomorrow.



A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

SIMON KEOGH

Such has been the success of Irish Rugby in recent years that this note has almost written itself. We could easily lean on the familiar themes of growth, progress, and achievement that we have become accustomed to... but therein lies the risk.

It's crucial that we don't take our accomplishments for granted. While they are significant, we must ensure that the standards we have set are upheld and not allowed to slip. Our focus must be on building upon the strong foundations we've worked so hard to establish on and off the field.

With the IRFU marking 150 years, 2024 was always destined to be a historic chapter. Milestone occasions are important because they give us an opportunity to celebrate, yet they also give us a natural lens by which we can benchmark ourselves, to reflect on where we stand and give us a renewed direction.

Despite a second successive Six Nations title, a stunning victory over the World Champions in Durban, and three wins in the Autumn Nations Series, the Irish Men's XV's enter 2025 in reflective mode rather than a celebratory one. This is testament to their elevated standards.

Off the field, the Women's XV's have put in a huge amount of work to raise their own standards and so I was delighted to see them excel at WXV1, capping a transformative year as they gear up for the Rugby World Cup. Not long ago we would have shuddered at the prospect of facing the Black Ferns but now we know we can compete at the top table.

Although an Olympic medal eluded both our Men's and Women's 7s teams, they can look proudly upon enjoyed a year of SVNS podium finishes. The retirements of Lucy Mulhall, Billy Dardis, and Harry McNulty mark the end of an era, but they leave the programme in a stronger position for the future.

It is individuals like Lucy, Billy and Harry who really drive group standards. We hope they continue to play a role in the future of rugby in Ireland like Rob Kearney who has been appointed to World Rugby's Executive Board. Using his experience as a former Chairperson of Rugby Players Ireland, Rob will ensure that players' voices will be heard at the sport's highest level.

Our players continue to thrive beyond rugby as well. I think of Kathryn Dane who returned to the rugby field and completed her PhD after a brain injury. I also note Joe McCarthy's recent graduation from Trinity College while excelling on the field for Ireland. Success like

that enjoyed by Kathryn and Joe inspire all of us at Rugby Players Ireland, and renews our determination to help our members realise their full potential, on and off the field.

This continues into a player's post rugby career with the launch of Beyond the Game, a vital support service for retired players. Supported by the Global Rugby Players Foundation, World Rugby, and our own foundation, it offers tailored assistance for life after rugby. Additionally, our new Brain Health Service, developed with World Rugby, sets a benchmark in player welfare.

Meanwhile, with almost 300 registered schools, Tackle Your Feelings continues to empower young people with tools for mental wellbeing, sparking impactful conversations across communities.

As good as 2024 has been, we know we cannot rest. The standards we've set demand that we keep pushing forward. As our players continue to scale new heights, the challenge for us as their representative body is to match their trajectory.

Therefore, as we approach 2025 our focus remains clear: to build on the successes of 2024 and ensure that Irish rugby continues to thrive. The successes of today are only as meaningful as the foundations they lay for tomorrow. With your continued support, we will ensure that Ireland remains the best place in the world to play rugby.



SECTION 01

REPRESENT



WHO WE ARE

Now seen as one of the leading player representative organisations in sport, Rugby Players Ireland was formed in 2001 as the Irish Rugby Union Players' Association (IRUPA). It is committed to making Ireland the best place in the world to play rugby.

Following discussions between Donal Spring, Peter McKenna, Liam Toland and the IRFU, Rugby Players Ireland came into being with the remit of promoting and protecting the welfare of all professional players across the four provinces. The association has evolved considerably over the past 19 years and its membership now encompasses female international players in addition to former professionals.

While the functions of the association have grown to include a world-leading player development syllabus, a dedicated past player programme 'Beyond the Game' and a community engagement portfolio that includes a public mental wellbeing campaign in 'Tackle Your Feelings', the backbone of the organisation remains in the representation of its membership on issues of importance in the game.

THE RUGBY PLAYERS IRELAND EXECUTIVE BOARD

Following the conclusion of our Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) negotiations with the IRFU, our Executive Board met with IRFU CEO Kevin Potts to discuss the practicalities of the new deal and raise other matters arising within the game. The meeting, which took place in the lead up to Ireland's Six Nations opener against France, featured plenty of productive conversation. The facilitation of this meeting underpinned the process of our CBA, which saw players feed into discussions at various stages.

In what is a new venture in 2024, a new Risk and Advisory Committee was established. The sub-committee, which comprises Tom Conachy, Conor McKeon, Mark McHugh and Maura Quinn has responsibility for evaluating strategic and operational decisions of the Executive Board, and advise on compliance and governance practices. The establishment of the sub-committee further solidifies the off-field experience met by Non-Executive Directors Maura Quinn, Peter McKenna and Ciarán Medlar.

For the first year in some time, there has been no change to the Executive Board's composition, with Enya Breen having been elected by her Women's XV's peers in late 2023. Incidentally, Enya, Peter O'Mahony, Billy Dardis and Amee-Leigh Murphy Crowe all had the privilege of captaining their national teams over the past 12 months, while Rob Kearney became the first player elected to World Rugby's Executive Board.



Peter O'Mahony
Chair/Munster Rugby



Enya Breen
Women's XV's



Dave Heffernan
Connacht Rugby



Iain Henderson
Ulster Rugby



Rob Kearney
Former Chairperson



Amee-Leigh Murphy Crowe
Women's 7s



Billy Dardis
Men's 7s



Garry Ringrose
Leinster Rugby



Ciarán Medlar
Non-Executive Director



Peter McKenna
Non-Executive Director



Maura Quinn
Non-Executive Director



Simon Keogh
CEO, Rugby Players Ireland



THE BOARD GIVES US A MECHANISM TO FEED BACK OR VOICE ANY CONCERNS, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY I THINK, IT'LL ALLOW US TO TAP INTO THE VAST EXPERIENCE AROUND THE TABLE, LEARN FROM OTHER PLAYERS, COMPARE TO THEIR PROGRAMMES, AND EVEN GET SOME REASSURANCES THAT WE'RE HEADED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

Enya Breen

Rugby Players Ireland Executive Board



MEMBERSHIP

Since 2018, Rugby Players Ireland has expanded its offerings to cater for all professional rugby programmes in the country. This includes the provision of representation, personal development services and corporate engagement opportunities, with a dedicated Player Development Manager (PDM) assigned to each group. In 2023, contracted members of the Irish Women's XV's and Sevens programmes were captured in the latest Collective Bargaining Agreement with the IRFU.



AS AN ORGANISATION WE'RE CLEARLY REPRESENTING QUITE A BROAD RANGE OF PLAYERS FROM THOSE STARTING OUT, THE MEN'S GAME, THE WOMEN'S GAME, THE 7S PROGRAMME, SO WE NEED TO BE VERY AWARE OF THE DIFFERENT REQUIREMENTS OF EACH LEVEL WITHIN THE ORGANISATION AND THAT WHEN WE COME TO THE TABLE WE NEED TO BE CERTAIN THAT WE'RE COVERING ALL BASES AS BEST WE CAN.

Ciarán Medlar

Rugby Players Ireland Non-Executive Director



THE PLAYERS' VOICE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE WE'RE KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE GAME.

Garry Ringrose

Rugby Players Ireland Executive Board Member



BRITISH & IRISH LIONS AGREEMENT

A new player agreement will see players selected for 2025 British & Irish Lions Tour to Australia benefit from a profit share model for the first time. The agreement will see the creation of a new partnership model whereby a portion of distributable post-tour profits will be made available for sharing between players.

In addition to the new financial model, the agreement will also result in increased collaboration between the British & Irish Lions and the players, particularly around scheduling and preparation. Working together, they will create the optimum schedule to give the players the best chance to prepare for a successful tour.

Alongside on-the-pitch-preparation, the new agreement will see the British & Irish Lions support players off the pitch through a range of activity and initiatives.

The move was welcomed by representatives of the international sides including Jamie George, Finn Russell, Jac Morgan and Peter O'Mahony.

Rugby Players Ireland played a central role in the negotiations with Simon Keogh appearing on behalf of all players. At the announcement of the new deal, Keogh said: "Players are central to the ongoing success of the British & Irish Lions tours, and we are delighted that their views – including those of Lions heroes of the past – have been heard throughout this process.

"I'd like to thank the British & Irish Lions for their honesty, transparency, and genuine consideration of the players' voice. As a result, I believe that we have reached an agreement that is both fair and reflective of the strong collaboration between all stakeholders in rugby."



THIS AGREEMENT RECOGNISES THE ROLE PLAYERS PLAY ACROSS THE LIONS TOUR, BOTH ON AND OFF THE FIELD. IT'S GREAT TO SEE A COMMITMENT TO ENSURING EVERYONE BENEFITS FROM THE SUCCESS OF EACH TOUR.

Peter O'Mahony



IRISH ATHLETES ALLIANCE

The formation of the Irish Athletes Alliance marked a significant milestone in the Irish sporting landscape. Led by the Gaelic Players' Association, Rugby Players Ireland, the Irish Jockeys Association and the Professional Footballers' Association of Ireland, the Irish Athletes Alliance aims to serve as a voice and as a catalyst for positive change within Ireland's high-performance sporting community.



TRADITIONALLY, IRISH SPORTS HAVE TENDED TO FORGE THEIR OWN WAY. HOWEVER, AS EACH SPORT HAS GROWN, SO TOO HAS OUR RECOGNITION OF SHARED CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES. BY POOLING OUR RESOURCES, KNOWLEDGE, AND EXPERIENCES, THE IRISH ATHLETES ALLIANCE CAN FURTHER HARNESS IRELAND'S VAST SPORTING POTENTIAL BY WORKING TOGETHER TO ENSURE OUR ATHLETES HAVE THE SUPPORT AND RESOURCES THEY NEED TO THRIVE.

Simon Keogh



EUROPEAN ATHLETES AND PLAYERS ASSOCIATION (EAPA)

Members of Rugby Players Ireland's team travelled to Alicante, Spain for the EAPA General Assembly. This year the meeting marked a pivotal moment in the European player movement as a large number of representatives from associations across the continent came together to ensure that the voices of their athletes and players remain at the fore of European sport.

The gathering also facilitated the PROtect Integrity Online Conference which seeks to educate athletes on the promotion of integrity and values in sport, with a focus on match-fixing. Having participated in the project for several years, Rugby Players Ireland will continue to play a part in PROtect Integrity Responsibly which kicks off in 2025.



CASES

Along with the EAPA, the Major League Baseball Association, the NHL Players Association, the World Cricketers' Association and AJFSF, the representative body for female futsal players in Spain, Rugby Players Ireland have been invited to participate in the CASES project led by World Players. The initiative aims to build capacity among player union legal teams and executives to support athletes who have faced abuse.

AGENT REPRESENTATION

Since 2015, Rugby Players Ireland have administered the Agents Registration Scheme on behalf of the IRFU. Designed to safeguard the players in addition to improving the agency environment, the scheme is also on a similar footing in both Wales and England.

25 agents are currently registered in Ireland.

WORLD RUGBY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT

Former Rugby Players Ireland Chairperson Rob Kearney has been appointed to the Executive Board of World Rugby alongside former Black Fern Melodie Robinson. The historic decision sees players sit at rugby's top table for the first time. Both Kearney and Robinson were appointed following a nomination process led by International Rugby Players.



I'M ACUTELY AWARE OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS ROLE AND I'M READY TO WORK HARD TO MAKE SURE THE COLLECTIVE VOICE OF PLAYERS IS HEARD AND THAT PLAYERS ARE PART OF THE GLOBAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN OUR SPORT.

Rob Kearney



SECTION 02

DEVELOP



THE PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (PDP)

The aim of the Personal Development Programme is to foster the personal growth and development of players while they are still playing and ultimately prepare and support them for life after rugby.

The Player Development Programme (PDP) is a jointly funded initiative between Rugby Players Ireland and the IRFU. It is a person-centred approach, where the individual needs of each player are assessed, and personal development action plans are tailored to those needs. The PDP encompasses six fundamental areas that contribute to the overall personal development and growth of players while supporting a positive transition from the game.



UNDERSTANDING WHO YOU ARE - NOT JUST AS A PLAYER, BUT AS A PERSON, IS ONE OF THE MAIN GOALS OF OUR PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME. HELPING PLAYERS TO UNCOVER THEIR VALUES, STRENGTHS, MOTIVATORS AND PASSIONS ALLOWS THEM TO MAXIMISE THE OPPORTUNITIES THEY HAVE OPEN TO THEM AS PROFESSIONAL AND ELITE PLAYERS, AND ALSO EASE THE TRANSITION INTO THEIR NEXT CAREER.

Dr Deirdre Lyons

Director of of Player Development & Welfare at Rugby Players Ireland



Rugby Players Ireland would like to thank the IRFU for their continued engagement and support of the Player Development Programme.

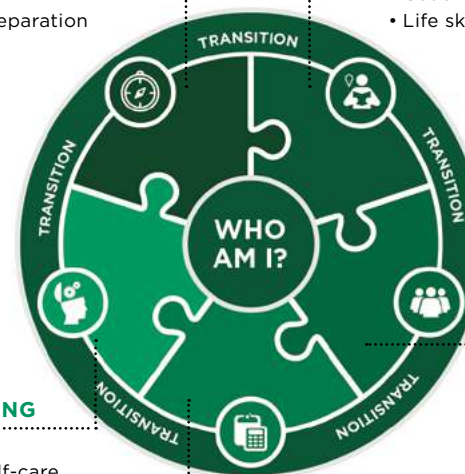


CAREER ADVICE & GUIDANCE

- Career coaching, advice & guidance
- Work experience
- Mentoring
- Networking
- CV & interview preparation

EDUCATION, TRAINING & SKILLS

- Academic & trade qualifications
- Flexible learning options
- General interest courses
- Coaching qualifications
- Life skills



PLAYER WELLBEING

- Mental health
- Physical health & self-care
- Self-awareness & personal leadership
- Player representation
- Sport integrity

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

- Brand awareness & development
- Social media
- Media & public speaking skills
- Community & charity engagement
- Personal responsibility

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & PLANNING

- Basic financial education
- Long term planning
- Tax advice
- Pension advice
- Insurance advice

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT TEAM

The Player Development Programme underpins the work of Rugby Players Ireland. Each Player Development Manager (PDM) works with emerging players (academy and pre-academy) and currently contracted players across the men's and women's squads. In October 2024, the PDP expanded its support services for retired rugby players with the launch of Beyond the Game led by Dr Deirdre Lyons.



Dr Deirdre Lyons
*Director of Player
Development &
Welfare*



Aaron Buggie
*PDM
(Ireland 7s)*



Dr Emma Burrows
*PDM
(Leinster Rugby)*



Pamela Gilpin*
*PDM
(Head of Player
Development & Wellbeing,
World Players)*



Marcus Horan
*PDM
(Munster Rugby)*



Aoife Lane
*PDM
(Ireland Women's XV's)*



Ronan Loughney
*PDM
(Connacht Rugby)*



Paul Marshall
*PDM
(Ulster Rugby)*

“ THE ROLE OF THE PDM IS TO PROMOTE THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING OF PLAYERS BY EMPOWERING THEM TO TAKE OWNERSHIP OF THEIR OWN DEVELOPMENT BOTH ON AND OFF THE SPORTING FIELD.

World Players

**While continuing her work with Rugby Players Ireland, Pamela Gilpin has been appointed Head of Player Development & Wellbeing at World Players.*

“

RUGBY PLAYERS IRELAND ARE VERY IMPORTANT FOR ALL PLAYERS. THEY WERE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL TO ME WITH MY RETIREMENT. THEY'RE WORLD LEADERS. PEOPLE COME FROM ALL OVER THE PLACE TO LEARN OFF THEM. I THINK WE SHOULD BE VERY PROUD OF WHAT WE HAVE.

Keith Earls

Owner, ELEVEN14 Coffee Roasters



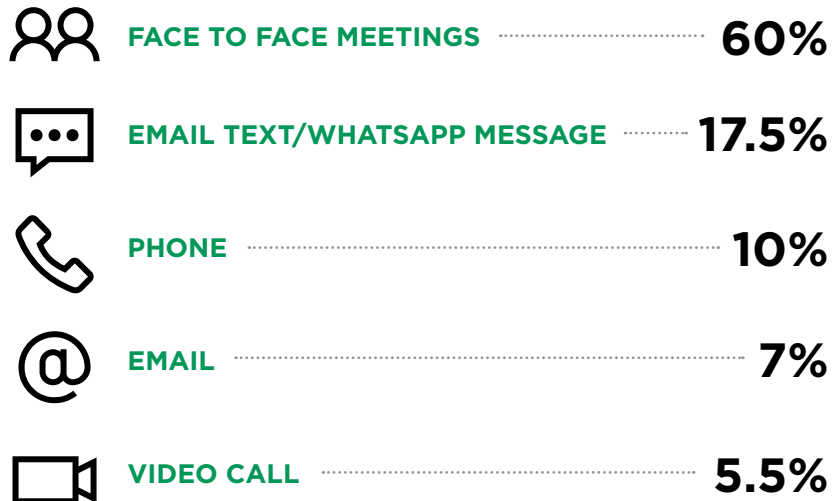
2023/2024 SEASON

407

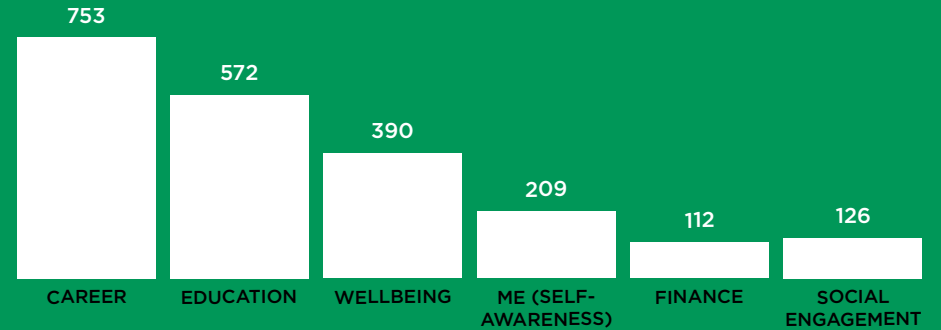
PLAYERS ENGAGED WITH THEIR PDM IN THE 2023/24 SEASON ACROSS THE ACADEMY, SENIOR, 7S, WOMEN'S AND PAST PLAYERS MEMBERSHIP, BREAKING THE 400+ MARKER FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN A ROW

1,394

CONSULTATIONS WERE HELD WITH PLAYERS, THE HIGHEST NUMBER TO DATE. FACE TO FACE MEETINGS ACCOUNTED FOR THE VAST MAJORITY OF INTERACTIONS (60%), WITH PLAYERS CHOOSING A VARIETY OF WAYS TO CONNECT WITH THEIR PDM.



What do players want to talk about?



Based on the main pillars of the Player Development Programme, RPI have developed a database to track the areas players want support from their PDM with.

Education was discussed in over half of all consults, with post playing career planning arising in over 40% of consultations. Wellbeing issues were discussed in 29% of all interactions. It is important to note that player consultations can cover more than one area of personal development e.g., finance and wellbeing.

Who did we work with across the 2023/2024 season



PLAYER STATUS	NO. OF CONSULTATIONS	% OF CONSULTATIONS
SENIOR MEN	509	36
ACADEMY & NTS	337	24
7S	137	10
WOMEN'S XV's	207	15
RETIRED & RELEASED	153	11
OVERSEAS	51	4



WE AIM TO PROVIDE A SPACE FOR THE PLAYERS TO BE ROBUST AND READY FOR THE PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENTS THEY FACE, TO GIVE THEM A HOLISTIC SENSE OF BEING THE BEST PERSON THEY CAN BE IN ORDER TO BE THE BEST ATHLETE THEY CAN BE, AND THEN TO PREPARE FOR THEM INEVITABLE TRANSITION OUT OF THE GAME.

Aoife Lane

Player Development Manager, Women's XV's



THE PDP OFFERS UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT AND INVALUABLE RESOURCES. WITH THE UNDERSTANDING AND CARE OF A TRUSTED FRIEND, PLAYERS ARE EMPOWERED TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO THEM THROUGHOUT THEIR RUGBY CAREERS, ENABLING THEM TO EXCEL BOTH ON AND OFF THE FIELD.

Billy Dardis

Operations & Partnerships, TritonLake



PDP REVIEW

Throughout 2024, an extensive project to evaluate the Rugby Players Ireland/IRFU Player Development Programme was conducted by Growth Unlimited. This process involved several consultations with the IRFU, RPI PDMs, current and past players from the men's and women's 7s and 15s game and management staff connected to all professional rugby teams in the country.

In 2025, Rugby Players Ireland in partnership with the IRFU will look to action a series of recommendations. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive with over 90% of players reporting their satisfaction with the programme.

WORLD PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE



Rugby Players Ireland had a strong presence at the 7th World Player Development Conference held at Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) offices in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Led by former Ulster Rugby Player Development Manager Pamela Gilpin who is Head of Player Development & Wellbeing at World Players, the Conference hosted over 100 representatives from the professional Players' Association all around the world. This strong attendance is a credit to the wonderful community and generous sharing that characterises the Player Association movement at its best, but more specifically the player development managers and professionals working in it.

COLLABORATION

Following greater exposure to international practices, Rugby Players Ireland has been firmly established as world leaders in the Player Development space. Learning from best practice all over the world, and not just in rugby, has enabled the PDP to grow and constantly evolve to meet players' needs.

Professional Players Federation

In May we welcomed the PPF's Education & Training committee to Dublin. Over the course of two days, a range of opportunities for cross-sport learnings and collaboration were discussed with various sport representatives from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Edgbaston

Following the conclusion of another rugby season, our PDP team were hosted by the Professional Cricketers' Association (PCA) at the historic Edgbaston Stadium to meet with PDMs from the Rugby Players Association (RPA) for a series of workshops centred on learnings from the campaign.

Irish Athletes Alliance

In addition to ongoing discussions regarding the safeguarding of Irish athletes and players, we joined the IAA for a two-day Mental Health First Aid workshop. The course teaches participants to recognise the signs and symptoms of mental health problems and provides a framework for offering initial help to guide people towards appropriate support.

GAINLINE

Added to the PDPs resources in 2023, all players have access to the IRFU GAINLINE platform. Developed in partnership with the IRFU, the e-learning series compliments the workshops and one-to-one coaching already being offered by players' PDMs. Programmes currently available include:

Smart Money Habits

- Money Goals and Budgeting; Tax and Payslips; Getting Mortgage Ready; Pensions; Loans & Credit Cards; Savings & Investments; Paths to QFA

The Professional Game

- Active*Consent: How to Support Yourself and Your Peers; Contracting an Agent; Professional Standards of Behaviours Men's XV's; Social Media & You; Being Online as a Professional Athlete

Career

- CV Development; Networking 101

Player Wellbeing

- Accessing Support

NEW ADDITIONS

Following Pamela Gilpin's expanded responsibilities as Head of Player Development & Wellbeing at World Players, her long association with Ulster Rugby has come to an end. During that time, Pamela mentored many, including Paul Marshall. Capped by Ireland, Paul earned 204 caps for his native province, assuring him of a much-respected legacy. A qualified teacher, Paul has returned to the Kingspan to empower the next generation.

Meanwhile, with Dr Deirdre Lyons assuming responsibility for RPI's dedicated past player service, former Connacht Rugby stalwart Ronan Loughney steps up to bring his considerable experience in the game to the PDM role. We have no doubt that Ronan will build on the foundations laid by Deirdre in what was a hugely impactful decade for the PDP in Galway.

HERFORM

In 2022, Rugby Players Ireland secured EU Erasmus Plus funding to lead the HerForm project, an initiative aimed at addressing the unique developmental needs of female elite athletes. Often lacking the structured pathways and support systems available to their male counterparts, female athletes face additional challenges as they transition into high-performance sports environments. Supported by groundbreaking research conducted in 2023, HerForm is now focused on identifying key support areas for these athletes and developing a digital training platform designed specifically for their personal development.

Through research conducted with over 130 elite female athletes across 17 countries, key challenges were identified at various career stages. The top concerns highlighted were contract negotiation, returning to sport post-maternity, securing sponsorship, managing mental health, and developing a personal brand. Early-stage athletes emphasized the importance of contract negotiation and managing social media, while those in later stages of their careers focused on balancing sport and family life. Additionally, six focus groups were held across five countries with athletes and support staff to explore these issues further. Common themes included a lack of information on essential topics, inadequate support structures, limited diversity in coaching staff, and the pressure of maintaining a perfectionist mindset.

Building on these findings Rugby Players Ireland is now working closely with TWIN, a globally recognized consultancy leading the way in organisational development and athlete care for high-level sport, on the creation of a digital learning platform that will focus on the five key areas identified in the

research. These modules will cover:

- 1. Her Foundations:** Exploring personal growth topics like self-esteem, success, values, and perfectionism.
- 2. Her Body & Mind:** Addressing female-specific health issues, including body image, dietary needs, mental wellbeing, and hormonal adaptations.
- 3. Her Relationships:** Improving communication skills in the high-performance environment, including team dynamics and personal branding.
- 4. Her Rights:** Focusing on gender rights, consent, financial planning, and managing risks like discrimination and abuse.
- 5. Her Transitions:** Supporting athletes through career and life changes, retirement, and financial planning.

The platform will offer 10 hours of self-paced training through video content and interactive materials. These modules will be complemented by hybrid on-site training during the pilot phase to enhance skill development. The platform will be hosted on LearnWorlds, available via the HerForm website (herform.eu), and will be continuously updated to stay relevant in the ever-evolving world of women's sports.

Rugby Players Ireland would like to thank our HerForm partners: the Spanish Women Futsal Players Association, TWIN, NYSA, South African Cricketers' Association, the German Sports University of Cologne, and the European Commission for their ongoing support.



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

HerForm RESEARCH REPORT

25.9

Mean age of participants

17

Different countries (10 European Union)

37%

In the early stage of their career

29%

In the mid stage of their career

42%

In the late stage of their career

132

Competed on an Olympic level athletes from different team sports across the globe who participated in the project

7%

Competed on an Olympic level

59%

Competed on an international level

33%

Competed on a national level

approx. **1 in 3**

Had a high school diploma



Career Stages

Early-stage athletes

Contract negotiation, return to sport after having a child, obtain sponsorship contracts, develop and manage a personal brand, manage mental health, deal with sexist/racist comments, social media.

Middle-stage athletes

Contract negotiation, return to sport after having a child, obtain sponsorship contracts, adapt training to menstrual cycle, develop and manage personal brand, manage mental health.

Late-stage athletes

Obtain sponsorship contracts, return to sport after having a child, contract negotiation, develop and manage a personal brand, balance sport and family life.

Overall, when all athletes are grouped together, the most important topics for them are: Contract negotiation, obtain sponsorship contracts, return to sport after having a child, manage mental health and develop and manage a personal brand.

VISIT HERFORM.EU TO READ THE FULL REPORT >>

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT CAMP

Organised in partnership with the IRFU, our Personal Development Camp for the Irish Women's XVs and Sevens programmes provided insights into the expectations and realities of being an elite rugby player with an added focus on life away from the game. Hosted by Druids Glen Hotel & Golf Resort and led by Aoife Lane and Aaron Buggle, the camp was the first of its kind for these squad groups.

In addition to a range of interactive exhibits and workshops, our Women's XVs attendees heard from Ali Miller and Nora Stapleton about their respective transitions out of rugby. We were also joined by the IRFU's new Performance Director, David Humphreys and former Irish Women's XVs and 7s player Hannah Tyrrell to discuss the future of high-performance rugby in Ireland.



MODULES INCLUDED:

- **The Collective Bargaining Agreement**
Simon Keogh
- **Media Training for the Olympics**
Heather Boyle, Cliona Foley, Annalise Murphy, Kieran Jackson
- **Women's XVs Transition Talk**
Alison Miller & Nora Stapleton
- **Thoughts: Catch Me if Your Can!**
Mark Smyth
- **Future of High-Performance Rugby**
Hannah Tyrrell & David Humphreys
- **Olympic Games Transition Talk**
Paul Gaffney
- **Leadership & Communication Under Pressure**
Rossa O'Donnell
- **Personal Branding: Utilise your Brand**
Wilson Hartnell
- **Navigating Boundaries**
Active*Consent



ROOKIE CAMP

This year we were at The K Club for the Rugby Players Ireland/IRFU Rookie Camp 2024. Led by Marcus Horan and facilitated by Rugby Players Ireland staff over two days, 52 of the latest recruits in the men's game joined us for a comprehensive series of workshops which operate to introduce them to various aspects of life as a professional athlete.

Run in partnership with the IRFU, the players also had the opportunity to get to know their Player Development Manager who will be an integral part of their professional rugby journey. Over the coming years, our PDMs will help every player to develop the skills, competencies, behaviours and relationships that a rugby career can help to nurture so that they can maximise their time in rugby, however long that may be.

A particular thanks to Bank of Ireland for their support of the event.

Modules included:

- Media Awareness - Evanne Ní Chuillinn
- Relaxation - Nichola Farrell
- Leadership - Odessa Leadership
- Social & Online Behaviours - Active* Consent
- Gambling Awareness - EPIC Global Solutions
- Mastering Patience - Cathal Sheridan, Eoin Rheinisch, Aaron Buggle
- Planning your Best Year - Dr Emma Burrows
- What to Expect as an Academy Player - David Humphreys & Jordi Murphy



IT'S GOOD TO HEAR FROM THE PEOPLE AND THE PLAYERS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCE THROUGH THE GAME AND PICK UP ON LEARNINGS THEY HAD ON THEIR WAY THROUGH.

Ronan Foxe



THIS YEAR WE PLACED A FOCUS ON LEADERSHIP AND PATIENCE. WE WANT GUYS TO LEAD THEIR OWN PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT BUT ALSO TO HAVE PATIENCE AS THEY CLIMB THE RUGBY LADDER. AS THEY ENTER THE SENIOR RANKS, THEY MIGHT HAVE LESS PLAYING OPPORTUNITIES BUT THAT COMES WITH A CHANCE TO KEEP THINGS TICKING OVER ON THE OTHER SIDE.

Marcus Horan

PDM, Munster Rugby





RUGBY PLAYERS IRELAND ARE THE LINK BETWEEN EVERYTHING I DO.

Dr Eimear Corri
Medical Doctor



I GOT TO A POINT WHERE I FELT LIKE I NEEDED SOMETHING OUTSIDE OF RUGBY, AND TO START PUTTING A PLAN IN PLACE. I WENT TO RUGBY PLAYERS IRELAND AND THEY SET ME ON MY JOURNEY.

Calvin Nash
Strength & Conditioning, Setanta College



MENTAL WELLBEING SERVICE

Promoting Player Wellbeing is integral to the work that we do at Rugby Players Ireland. We deliver our wellbeing support using a three-pronged approach of:

- Individualized Support
- Education & Awareness seminars
- Stigma Reducing Campaigns (Tackle Your Feelings)

Rugby Players Ireland provide support to current and former players mainly through the Player Development Managers that are based at each professional club, national 7s squads and women's XV's programme. Players can also email the service directly while referrals can also come via Team Doctors or Physios. Since October 2020, our Mental Wellbeing Service has been supported by Sporting Chance, a UK charity dedicated to current and former professional athletes. In a welcome move, the IRFU have established a wellbeing service for our current members. Our PDMs will assist in appropriate signposting.

The most important piece of information to know about the service is that there is no minimum threshold to access the service. The core principles behind the service are one of early intervention. Once a player feels they might benefit from talking to a professional, they then meet the threshold.

Since 2017 we have had 192 people use the service 59% of these were current players from the men's game across academy (19%), Senior (36%) and Sevens (4%). Our services were also used by our women's teams (36%: XV's and 7s).

Our PDMs signpost players to specialist support via the Mental Wellbeing Services network, which begins with an initial screening process via Zoom. Players also complete the International Olympic Committee Sport Mental Health Assessment Tool 1 (SMHAT-1) in advance of the screening. The highest ranked items by players on the SMHAT-1 have been:

1. I could not stop worrying about injury or my performance.
2. I found training more stressful.
3. I was less motivated.

Following the screening process players can access a large network of experienced psychologists, counsellors and psychotherapists. Some of the issues that players may need support with include stress and anxiety, burn out, adjustment and relationship difficulties, bereavement, addictions, coping with long-term injury and depression. Sessions can be facilitated face to face or via zoom.



“

NOW IT'S SUCH A BETTER PLACE AND PLAYERS FEEL SO MUCH MORE COMFORTABLE IN CONFIDING IN SOMEONE AND OPENING UP. AND EVEN IF YOU DIDN'T WANT TO OPEN UP TO A TEAMMATE, THERE ARE SOME GREAT RESOURCES THROUGH RUGBY PLAYERS IRELAND THAT YOU HAVE ACCESS TO, COUNSELLORS AND EXPERTS THAT YOU CAN TALK TO. FOR SOME PEOPLE, THAT MIGHT BE A GREAT WAY TO GET THE BALL ROLLING.

Andrew Porter

Mark Smyth

Mark Smyth is the lead Clinical Psychologist for Rugby Players Ireland Mental Health service and Clinical Consultant for the Tackle Your Feelings campaign. In 2020 he was the 50th President of the Psychological Society of Ireland. He is also a Chartered Senior Clinical Psychologist with over 20 years' experience.

Mark specialises in working with clients with difficulties in the areas of anxiety, trauma and self-harm. He has a deep interest in the psychology of social media, politics & policing. Mark is a frequent contributor in the media on mental health and psychology matters.

"Pressure of expectations, anxiety and over thinking would probably be the most common issues that players report. As part of their role as a professional rugby player they are expected to achieve to an exceptionally high standard and there is a constant pursuit of excellence. Sometimes a player brings those standards and expectations of perfection into other aspects of their day to day lives or into their relationships which is much less realistic than trying to achieve sporting excellence.

"The numbers of players coming forward to seek support has remained consistent that I think is due to better awareness of early intervention with mental health in combination with a willingness and confidence from players from academy all the way to senior players to be more open about when they have struggled with their mental health & the benefits of seeking support. Rugby players in Ireland have been exceptional role models for mental health help seeking, both within rugby and without."



BEYOND THE GAME

In 2024 Rugby Players Ireland expanded its support services for retired rugby players with the launch of Beyond the Game. Rugby Players Ireland are delighted to be supported by the Global Rugby Players Foundation (GRPF), World Rugby and the Rugby Players Ireland Foundation in providing proactive, tailored assistance for players transitioning into life after professional or international rugby.



Led by Dr Deirdre Lyons who will act as a dedicated resource for former players, the focuses on four key pillars: **Change, Care, Connection, and Community**, ensuring that former players receive comprehensive support in all aspects of their post-rugby lives through tailored transition support, career mentoring, and resources that promote mental, physical, social and financial wellbeing, ultimately helping them to thrive in retirement.



WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE TRANSITION FROM PROFESSIONAL RUGBY CAN BE CHALLENGING. BEYOND THE GAME ENSURES THAT EVERY PLAYER HAS ACCESS TO RESOURCES THAT EMPOWER THEM TO EMBRACE NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND NAVIGATE THE CHANGES THAT COME WITH LEAVING THE GAME.

BY OFFERING A RANGE OF LOCAL SOLUTIONS, WE'LL HELP THEM ADJUST TO THE CHANGE, PROVIDE ACCESS TO CARE, HARNESS A COMMUNITY OF FORMER PLAYERS TO ENCOURAGE POSITIVE IMPACT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION, AND CONNECT THEM BACK TO OLD NETWORKS AND ESTABLISH NEW ONES.

Dr Deirdre Lyons

Director of Player Development & Welfare



Beyond the Game is supported by the Global Rugby Players Foundation (GRPF), a new charitable organisation founded by 10 prominent former and current rugby stars, including Dan Carter, Jonny Wilkinson, Rachael Burford, and Siya Kolisi. GRPF's mission is to help players around the world navigate the period of adjustment that follows the transition from playing professional rugby to life after sport, through locally tailored, holistic support programmes.

Chaired by former Wallabies captain George Gregan and led by CEO Sara Heath, the GRPF ensures players, regardless of their location, have access to vital resources like mental health support, career coaching, and physical wellbeing programmes.

Through the partnership with GRPF, Beyond the Game will provide players with support in the following ways:

- On-the-ground funding for local players' associations and partners.
- Mental and physical health programmes, including proactive support for wellbeing.
- Career and business coaching to help players define and pursue new career paths.
- Community support via a dedicated app, keeping players connected globally.
- Partnership programmes to create opportunities with organisations and sponsors.

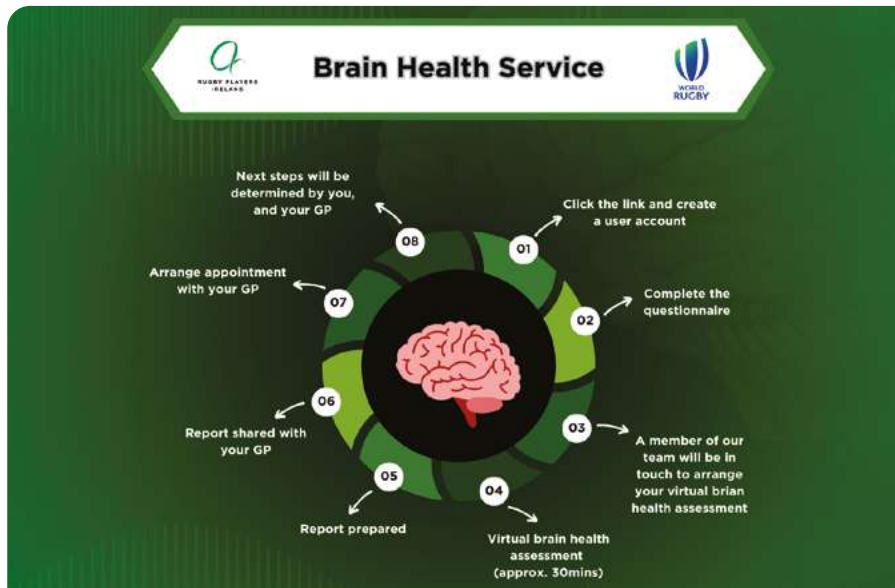
For players, leaving the game is not an end – it's the beginning of a new journey. With Beyond the Game, Rugby Players Ireland and the Global Rugby Players Foundation are ensuring that every player can step into the next phase of their lives with confidence, purpose, and the support they deserve.

BRAIN HEALTH SERVICE

Together with World Rugby, Rugby Players Ireland have launched a new Brain Health Service to support former elite players who have concerns about their brain health. Since followed by Australia, Ireland was the first country in the world to launch the new initiative which is available to any retired player, male or female, who has played international XV's or 7s rugby, as well as any player who has played at a provincial level.

The first of its kind, the service includes an awareness and education component, a general health questionnaire followed by an online cognitive assessment with a trained brain health practitioner. This service assesses players for any brain health warning signs, provide advice on managing risk factors and signpost anyone in need of specialist care.

In all instances, a comprehensive report, including medical recommendations, will be forwarded to the individual's General Practitioner. Any individual exhibiting potential indicators of mental or physical health issues or notable challenges in cognitive functioning, will receive a recommendation for evaluation by a specialist. Individuals will also receive guidance on optimizing brain health and address modifiable risk factors, offering targeted strategies to enhance an individual's overall brain health. All individuals who sign up to the service will receive the most up-to-date advice on keeping their brain health in-check and will also be advised of Rugby Players Ireland's broad range of services which are available to past players. These include mental wellbeing support, personal development initiatives, career guidance and community engagement opportunities.



RUGBY PLAYERS IRELAND FOUNDATION

VISION:	MISSION:
To empower rugby players to lead healthy and fulfilling lives beyond the game	A benevolent fund that provides programmes to support rugby players, in hardship and in health, during their rugby career and beyond

The Rugby Players Ireland Foundation aims to provide financial and practical support for players and their families who find themselves in difficult situations such as career ending injury, illness or disability. As a registered charity, the support provided by the Foundation will take many forms including financial assistance, help with medical treatment, rehabilitation equipment, counselling and education. The Foundation provides an emergency support for those who are struggling in various ways while also giving players the opportunity to be part of a 'players supporting players' community.





AS BLESSED AS WE WERE TO PLAY PROFESSIONAL RUGBY, IT ALL HAS TO COME TO AN END. YOU CAN DO ALL THE PREPARATION YOU WANT BUT IT'S ONE OF THE HARDEST EXPERIENCES OF MY LIFE, AND IT'S SOMETHING I CONTINUE TO WORK ON WITH THE SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE OF RUGBY PLAYERS IRELAND WHO ARE A MASSIVE HELP.

Jonny Murphy

The Hungry Hooker



RUGBY PLAYERS IRELAND ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. THE SUPPORT THE PLAYERS' ASSOCIATION GAVE ME THROUGHOUT MY CAREER ALLOWED ME TO PREPARE FOR LIFE AFTER RUGBY AND MADE THE TRANSITION MORE MANAGEABLE. IT'S STILL VERY TOUGH FOR ANY RETIRING RUGBY PLAYER BUT WHAT THEY DO IS INVALUABLE.

Johnny Sexton

Ardagh Group



SECTION 03

ENGAGE





2024 WINNERS

BDO Ireland Men's XVs Players' Player of the Year
Bundee Aki

Strata Financial Women's XVs Players Player of the Year
Aoife Wafer

TritonLake Men's 7s Players' Player of the Year
Zac Ward

TritonLake Women's 7s Players' Player of the Year
Megan Burns

Zurich Contribution to Irish Society
Keith Earls

Nevin Spence Men's XVs Young Player of the Year
Joe McCarthy

Energia Women's XVs Young Player of the Year
Aoife Wafer

Mercedes-Benz Ballsbridge Men's XVs Try of the Year
Craig Casey (v Leinster Rugby)

AIB Corporate Banking Women's XVs Try of the Year
Katie Corrigan (v Italy)

Druids Glen Hotel & Golf Resort Moment of the Year
Ireland's Six Nations Win
(accepted by Calvin Nash)



RUGBY PLAYERS IRELAND ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC

The Annual Rugby Players Ireland Golf Classic took place at Druids Glen in August. Bringing together a host of players past and present, along with sponsors and guests, the event remains an important part of Rugby Players Ireland's social calendar.

This year we were delighted to have several members of Team Ireland in attendance following their Olympic adventure, while others used the day to break from the intensity of their pre-season schedules.



1ST PLACE:

Paul Marshall & Druids Glen

2ND PLACE:

Darragh Fanning, James Downey & Wasserman

3RD PLACE:

Dylan O'Grady & Rugby Players Ireland



HEINEKEN HALL OF FAME

Earlier this year, Rugby Players Ireland took a significant step forward in supporting retired players with the launch of 'Beyond the Game,' a comprehensive programme designed to help former players navigate life after rugby.

Under the direction of Dr. Deirdre Lyons, who will serve as a dedicated resource, Beyond the Game expands Rugby Players Ireland's range of services by offering proactive and tailored assistance to players as they transition from professional or international rugby careers. This programme exemplifies the association's focus on building a lifelong network for past players, providing guidance as they establish new personal and professional paths beyond the sport.

In line with this commitment, this year Rugby Players Ireland honoured three outstanding figures in Irish Rugby history - Lynne Cantwell, Marcus Horan, and Donncha O'Callaghan - by inducting them into the Heineken Rugby Players Ireland Hall of Fame. In an event hosted by Darren Cave and embellished with tales from Fiona Coghlan, Denis Fogarty and Frankie Sheahan, they joined a celebrated group that includes legends of the Irish game such as Brian O'Driscoll, Fiona Coghlan, Ronan O'Gara, and the late Anthony Foley.

With friends, family and teammates in attendance, the event not only recognised the former players on-field accomplishments but also highlighted the enduring impact of their respective legacies on Ireland's rugby community.



“ IT'S A REAL PRIVILEGE TO BE RECOGNISED ALONGSIDE SUCH INCREDIBLE PLAYERS IN IRISH RUGBY HISTORY. RUGBY HAS GIVEN ME EVERYTHING - LIFELONG FRIENDS, UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS, AND A DEEP SENSE OF BELONGING. TO BE INDUCTED INTO THE HALL OF FAME IS A WONDERFUL WAY TO REFLECT ON THOSE TIMES WITH THOSE CLOSEST TO ME.

Marcus Horan

“ OUR RUGBY JOURNEYS ARE VERY UNPREDICTABLE WHICH FOR ME IS WHERE THE ADVENTURE LIVES. I'VE GOT TO EXPERIENCE THAT TIME WITH SOME INCREDIBLE PEOPLE AND TO BE RECOGNISED BY THOSE PEERS IS VERY HUMBLING. I AM BEYOND GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITIES RUGBY HAS GIVEN ME AND HOPE I AM USING THAT TO REFLECT PROGRESS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE GAME.

Lynne Cantwell

“ THIS IS AN AMAZING HONOUR. RUGBY IS ABOUT TEAM, NOT INDIVIDUALS, SO TO BE RECOGNISED IN THIS WAY IS VERY SPECIAL. I'VE BEEN LUCKY TO HAVE HAD A LONG CAREER, SURROUNDED BY GREAT PLAYERS AND FRIENDS. IT'S MOMENTS LIKE THIS THAT ALLOW YOU TO REFLECT ON WHAT AN INCREDIBLE JOURNEY IT HAS BEEN.

Donncha O'Callaghan

BUNDEE AKI VISITS LAURALYNN

Before the start of the 2024/25 season, Bunde Aki took time out an intensive training schedule to visit LauraLynn, Ireland's Children's Hospice, and to show his support for the children, families, staff, and volunteers who make up a special community. His visit was a heartfelt tribute to the incredible work carried out by LauraLynn for families across Ireland.

During a visit facilitated by Rugby Players Ireland, Bunde met with the children and their families, staff and volunteers creating cherished memories. He took time to sign jerseys, pose for photos, and hear directly from families about the profound impact LauraLynn has had on their lives. His warmth and genuine interest brought smiles and uplifted spirits, making the day a memorable one for everyone involved.

Bunde's career is marked by perseverance, community spirit, and unwavering support for his teammates—qualities that resonate deeply with the mission of LauraLynn, who strive to create a haven of care and comfort for children with life-limiting conditions and their families.



TEAM RPI

Will Connors, Max Deegan, Aoife Wafer and Energia ambassador Hugo Keenan formed a formidable team at the Barnhall RFC All-Inclusive Tag Rugby Blitz.



WILD ATLANTIC ADVENTURE

Rugby Players Ireland teamed up with Rugby League Cares for the charity's fundraising bike ride which this year came to Ireland. Established in 2019, RL Cares delivers wellbeing support to rugby league players and maintains regular contact with representatives in other sports to ensure athletes get the best support possible.

The ride builds on the already strong relationship between the two organisations and will saw riders, which included several RPI members and staff, take on an epic 300-mile cycling challenge over four days between Cork and Limerick along Ireland's rugged south coast.



“

RUGBY PLAYERS IRELAND'S EVENTS ARE IMPORTANT. IT'S GREAT THAT PLAYERS HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO RECOGNISE ALL THE GOOD WORK THAT IS DONE IN OUR FAVOUR BY THEM TO MAKE OUR CAREERS THE BEST THEY CAN POSSIBLY BE.

Joe McCarthy

Nevin Spence Young Player of the Year 2024



“

IT'S ALWAYS NICE TO SEE SOME OF MY FORMER TEAMMATES AND CURRENT SUPERSTARS AT THESE THINGS. A LOT OF PEOPLE GO THEIR SEPARATE WAYS WHEN THEY FINISH SO IT'S ALWAYS GOOD TO SEE A FEW FAMILIAR FACES AND ALSO CHAT TO GUYS I WOULDN'T GET TO SEE VERY OFTEN.

Darren Cave

Host, Heineken Hall of Fame



TACKLE
YOUR
FEELINGS

TACKLE YOUR FEELINGS 2024

ZURICH®

JANUARY

SPEAKING UP

We were immensely proud of Andrew Porter who featured prominently in Six Nations: Full Contact which was released on Netflix in January. The cameras followed Porter through Ireland's Grand Slam winning campaign of 2023 and lifted the lid on how he has become one of the best props in the game, highlighting the many challenges he has had to overcome to get there. Porter first linked up with Tackle Your Feelings (TYF) last year to emphasise how he values his support network.



FEBRUARY

LEARNING FROM THE BEST

Our Expert Advisory Panel was established to inspire the progress of the TYF Schools programme. It brings together a number of experts in the fields of education, psychology and wellbeing as well as other relevant individuals whose experience can support the expansion and development of the programme. It has met on a quarterly basis since the beginning of 2023.

MARCH



WORKSHOPS

Over the course of the year we facilitated several workshops both with and without rugby players. Our thanks to those who were willing contributors to a range of talks with schools, our partners and our friends at Zurich Ireland who also introduced us to role models like Sonia O'Sullivan.

APRIL

ONLINE PLATFORM GOES LIVE!

Our sincerest thanks to Ryan Baird and Deirbhile Nic A Bháird who were on hand to talk about the updated TYF Schools Programme which provides teachers with a brand-new online platform making it easier for them to deliver the programme, supported by greater accessibility and updates to content.



MAY

PRIDE

Ahead of Pride Month, we visited Zurich Ireland with Brittany Hogan and Chris Cosgrave to explore the power of diversity, inclusion and allyship. We learned that by celebrating our differences, we learn to lift each other up, no matter what community we belong to.

JUNE

SEVEN LESSONS WITH RUGBY 7S

In the lead up to the Olympic Games, we rounded up seven members of the Irish Rugby 7s programme and brought them back to where it all began as part of our TYF Schools campaign. Each shared their own personal experiences of school with revealing insights into the good days and the challenging ones.



 JULY

TESTIMONIALS

We caught up with Laois footballer Eoin Lowry ahead of the Tailteann Cup Final at Croke Park. Eoin is a teacher at St Mary's CBS Portlaoise, and has been a lead advocate for the TYF Schools programme.

 AUGUST

TRANSITION

Before returning to AFLW in Australia, Vikki Wall linked up with TYF as her teammates kicked off their Olympic journey in Paris. Vikki spoke openly to the media about the challenges she has overcome in moving between several sports, her experience with the Irish 7s, her disappointment in missing out on the Games and how changing things up keeps her fresh.


 SEPTEMBER

ROOKIE CAMP

With the latest recruits to the professional rugby system being welcomed at the K Club for the Rugby Players Ireland/IRFU Rookie Camp, we introduced the young players to the TYF campaign. With special TYF treats supplied by the Hungry Hooker (aka Jonny Murphy) and a Hang Tough competition keeping everyone engaged, we hope to benefit from their support over the coming years.

 OCTOBER

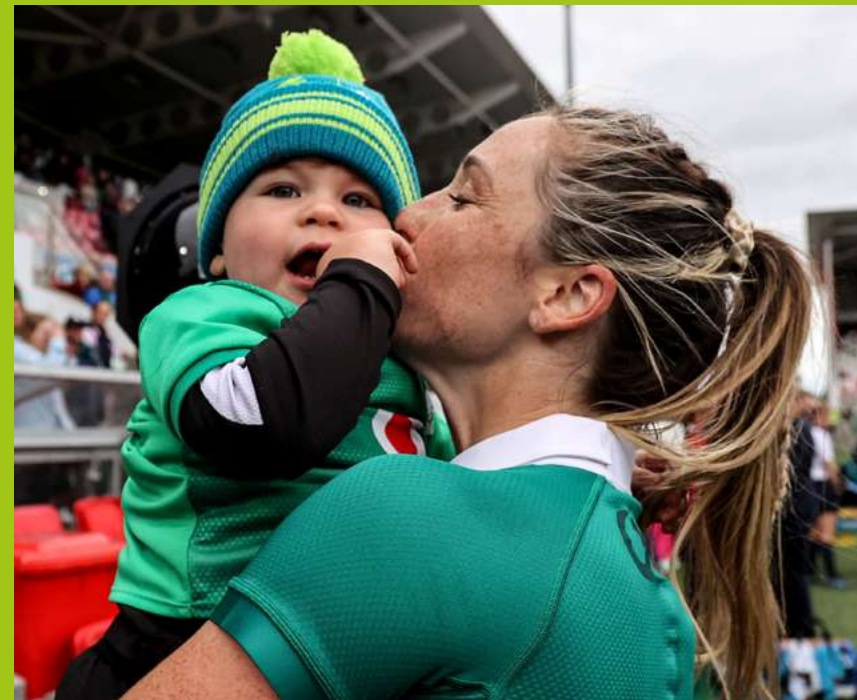
REGIONAL APPROACH

In a bid to bring our TYF Schools programme to all corners of Ireland, we teamed up with four provincial representatives to further our message. Our thanks to Christy Haney (Leinster), Calvin Nash (Munster), Béibhinn Parsons (Connacht) and Zac Ward (Ulster) for helping us to kick-start a new rugby and academic season.


 NOVEMBER

A NEW AUDIENCE

Before she returned to international action, Eimear Considine met with the BBC StoryWorks team to reflect on her own career, the highs and lows, and how Tackle Your Feelings is giving teenagers the tools to care for their own mental health and wellbeing through sports. Produced as part of the Game On series, the episode also features Diarmuid Barron and Roman Salanoa who join Dr Hannah McCormack on a visit to Eimear's school in Spanish Point.


 DECEMBER

PLANNING AHEAD

With over 300 schools now registered on our platform, we want to ensure that Tackle Your Feelings continues on its journey to becoming the go-to wellbeing programme across the island. To this end, we are getting ready for a new strategic approach, a new look and feel, and fresh TYF energy!

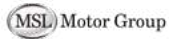


TO OUR MEMBERS

A special thank you to our members who have participated in events throughout the year. Rugby Players Ireland is a player-led body. Without your involvement, we would not be here to represent you. Working together, we can realise our ambition of having Ireland become the best place in the world to play rugby.

TO OUR SPONSORS & PARTNERS

Without the support and assistance of our corporate partners much of what we have been able to achieve at Rugby Players Ireland in 2024 would not have been possible. We would like to thank all our partners and supporters, particularly the IRFU and Zurich Ireland. Through the backing of Rugby Players Ireland, we can ensure that our members have a strong independent body that prioritises them as individuals.





RUGBY PLAYERS
IRELAND

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