



ANNUAL REPORT

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CONTENTS

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION | 4 |
| CEO'S INTRODUCTION | 6 |
| 2017 IN NUMBERS | 8 |
| AUDIENCES | 13 |
| PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMERCIAL | 16 |
| 2017 DRAMAS AND TROPHIES | 18 |
| ENGLAND | 20 |
| RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP 2021 | 26 |
| 2017'S STAR MEN | 28 |
| PUTTING PLAYERS FIRST | 34 |
| PARTICIPATION AND DEVELOPMENT | 36 |
| SAFEGUARDING | 40 |
| EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY | 44 |
| GOVERNANCE | 46 |
| FINANCIAL REVIEW | 48 |
| RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE BOARD | 54 |



CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

SPECIAL WORLD CUP YEAR AND STRONG DOMESTIC SPORT



In 2017 the sport enjoyed a wonderful World Cup and outstanding campaigns by each of the England squads. Across the sport significant progress was made in investing in all England teams, alongside the continued modernisation of the sport, the increased breadth and depth of the sport's commercial portfolio, media engagement, safeguarding and player welfare, and growing participation and inclusion in our sport - all of which are detailed in full elsewhere in this report.

2017 gave us on-pitch spectacle, jeopardy and drama. Hull FC edged Wigan to lift the Ladbrokes Challenge Cup. Castleford Tiger's expansive style won new fans to the sport and took them to top of the table for the first time in their 91-year history, and a place at the sell-out Betfred Super League. Leeds lifted the trophy winning a record eighth Super League Grand Final. The 'Million Pound' game saw Catalans Dragons score 22 second-half points to come from behind and overcome Leigh. In the stadia themselves, and via viewing at home, fans enjoyed the sport's Dacia Magic Weekend and Summer Bash.

The pre-World Cup fixture against Samoa saw victory for England and a new fan experience via streaming. The World Cup, and Festival of World Cups, celebrated the passion and ambition of international Rugby League with memorable performances which demonstrated that emerging nations have arrived.

England Senior Men's team reached the World Cup Final and narrowly lost to Australia after an outstanding run in the competition. And their displays under Coach Wayne Bennett showed their potential for the 2021 tournament, which will be held in this country. England Women, and England Students regrouped from Australia and also look to 2021 with renewed vigour. The England Wheelchair squad lost narrowly in a thrilling final in France and inspired more players to take up the sport. All the squads come together in the new England Performance Unit developed in 2017.

Rugby League continues to deliver compelling

experiences in a crowded sporting and entertainment market. The Rugby Football League continues to flex and adapt to a changing landscape, working in partnership with member clubs, leagues and stakeholders. 2018 will see further innovation and change as the sport looks with excitement and confidence to the unique opportunity presented by Rugby League World Cup 2021.



Brian Barwick
Chairman
Rugby Football League

CEO'S INTRODUCTION

INNOVATION, INCLUSION AND INVESTMENTS PUT RUGBY LEAGUE IN A STRONG POSITION TO MAXIMISE NEW OPPORTUNITIES



2017 was a year of outstanding on-pitch action and off the field, continued innovation combined with strategic development, some challenge, change and investment to help fit the sport for the future and the opportunity presented by the World Cup in 2021.

The Rugby Football League was delighted to deliver four England teams to the Rugby League World Cup and Festival of World Cups: England Wheelchair team; England Students team, England Women and England Men. Wayne Bennett's first full year as England head coach began with a very powerful performance in the pre-tournament fixture against Samoa and that intensity grew to a point which brought England to its closest ever result in a World Cup.

To build on this and prepare for success in 2021, the Rugby Football League has developed a new, strategic unit supporting six England teams – the England Performance Unit led by Rugby Director Kevin Sinfield MBE is focused on the objective of winning three World Cups in 2021.

The Super League title partnership of Betfred – the world’s largest independent bookmaker - got off to a very strong start with a sell-out Betfred Super League Grand Final at Old Trafford. We continued to activate our partnership with Renault Dacia and Princes Food’s Batchelors Mushy Peas brand; as well as developing a new relationship with Arriva Trains Northern. Significant work took place to secure a new apparel partner in Danish brand hummel, for England, match officials and the community game. Further income was derived through the Rugby League World Cup with agreements with Watch Finder and Betfred which complemented Main Partner Kingstone Press, and via the Official England RL Travel Programme.

The trans-Atlantic dimension to Betfred League 1 succeeded in bringing the sport to new and wider audiences in stadia, and via broadcast and online media relationships. The Betfred Championship continued to demonstrate that some of the most exciting games in Rugby League can be enjoyed by fans of clubs in this competition.

The Dacia Magic Weekend visited Newcastle for the third time with strong attendances and fan feedback and showcase on Sky. The Summer Bash was enjoyed by Championship fans as it returned to Blackpool. The magic of the Ladbrokes Challenge Cup delighted fans, old and new, throughout the rounds, at Wembley and across the BBC.

By evidencing the sport’s significant impact in communities across the country, the Rugby Football League secured significant public funding in a challenging climate to support community Rugby League and talent progression. On the political stage, the Rugby Football League signed a memorandum with Government on behalf of the sport to become the official sport of the Northern Powerhouse.

Inclusion in the sport was major theme throughout 2017, from the season launch event which featured all tiers of the sport onwards, leading to new developments and investments. 2017 saw the development and launch of the Women’s Super League and the inaugural WSL Grand Final. The Rugby Football League worked with member clubs and foundations in readiness for the launch of both physical disability and learning disability leagues in 2018.

Throughout 2017 work continued apace to ensure that the successful bid to host the 2021 World Cup will include game-changing capital funding for facilities projects in the grassroots game.

A restructuring of the Executive team, as well as teams in Operations, Performance and Development was managed carefully without disruption to services provided to the sport. Scheduled investment in the digitisation of the sport continued, to support strong league and competition management, and player retention. The new Our League membership scheme was launched for all in the sport, enabling new content delivery and interactive fan engagement, and opening up new commercial and media opportunities.

Everyone associated with the Rugby Football League embraces the exciting and unprecedented opportunities presented by RLWC2021 and looks forward to working collaboratively to maximise all of them.



Ralph Rimmer
Chief Executive
Rugby Football League

2017 RUGBY LEAGUE IN NUMBERS

99,358

PLAYERS
IN ALL SETTINGS
& FORMATS



5,976

WOMEN
IN ALL SETTINGS
& FORMATS

↑ UP FROM 3,760

36%

**INCREASE IN
MASTERS RUGBY
LEAGUE**

12,787

**U7S TO U11S
UP 6.6%**







184,674

CUMULATIVE ATTENDANCE AT LADBROKES
CHALLENGE CUP (UP ON 2016)



BETFRED
SUPER LEAGUE
GRAND FINAL

72,827

INSIDE OLD TRAFFORD

ROUND 9 - MOST ATTENDED
BETFRED SUPER LEAGUE ROUND

SPECTATING



ALL EYES ON RUGBY LEAGUE

460,400

SUPER LEAGUE GRAND FINAL PEAK
VIEWING AUDIENCE ON SKY SPORTS
UP 17%



170K LIKES

OFFICIAL SUPER LEAGUE FACEBOOK ACCOUNT - UP 15%



NEW OUR LEAGUE
MEMBERSHIP WEBSITE
AND APP – FOR ALL FANS,
PLAYERS AND COACHES



VISITS TO
RUGBY-LEAGUE.COM
ROSE BY 3% IN 2017 TO 6.5 M



2017 SAW FURTHER INNOVATION AND AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT ACROSS TELEVISION, WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA FOR NEW AND EXISTING RUGBY LEAGUE FOLLOWERS

Rugby League remained deserving of its place in the national ranking of most watched broadcast sports. The sport cemented its position as one of the UK's most popular television sports with strong broadcast results and by bringing the product on the pitch to audiences in new digital-first ways.

In stadia

The cumulative UK attendance for the Ladbrokes Challenge Cup increased to 184,674 in 2017 compared to 183,303 in 2016. These increases were most significant in rounds 5 and 6 and the Semi-Finals.

The Betfred Super League held strong in an ever more crowded sport and entertainment market during 2017 with total attendances for the 2017 Season decreasing slightly by 0.5%, to 1,751,253.

Super League saw some strong attendances, in particular in the perennially popular derby games. Leeds Rhinos v Castleford Tigers had an attendance of 18,029 – a 94% increase on the season average. Wigan Warriors v St Helens had an attendance of

23,390 - a 152% increase on the season average.

Average home attendance for a Super League game was 9,297. Average home attendances were greatest for Leeds Rhinos and Wigan Warriors at 14,953 and 13,983 respectively.

The most attended round was Round 9 – Good Friday/Easter. This was driven by the Wigan Warriors v St Helens game which had 23,390 people in attendance.

2017 saw cumulative attendance for the season including Super 8s and the Betfred Super League Grand Final of 1,592,859.

For the second time in three years the Super League Grand final had a sell-out crowd with 72,827 inside Old Trafford a 3.7% increase on 2016.

The growth of new audiences in new and existing markets was further demonstrated by the success of Toronto Wolfpack, Toulouse Olympique XIII and Catalans Dragons. Toronto Wolfpack began their debut season in Kingstone Press League 1 and finished with average

attendance of 6,639 – twelve times higher than their competition – with their highest attendance of 8,456 against Doncaster RLFC.

Toulouse Olympique were promoted to the Kingstone Press Championship and doubled their attendance figures compared to 2016. Catalans Dragons maintained strong home attendances on the back of their five-year high in 2016.

In the Championship, Featherstone Rovers had a +18.5% increase in average attendance in 2017 compared to 2016. Rochdale Hornets and Toulouse Olympique also had significant rises in attendances after being promoted - as demonstrated by respective +66.2% and +33.8% increases in average attendances compared to 2016.

In League 1 York City Knights proved the value of a focus on innovative marketing and had an average attendance increase of 44.0%. London Skolars had an average attendance increase of +58.7%

Summer Bash attendance rose +3.3% compared to 2016.

TV and online audiences

The 2017 Super League Grand Final had a peak viewing audience of 460,400 on Sky Sports which is a 17% increase on 2016 (392,700).

Television audiences enjoyed both the Ladbrokes Challenge Cup Final and the Australia v England World Cup Final which had a peak audience on the BBC of 1,368,300 and 2,078,000 respectively. The 2017 Challenge Cup viewing audience on the BBC had a cumulative average match audience of 5,568,800 which is a 1.7% increase on 2016. In total, the Challenge Cup and World Cup reached 10.1m people on BBC Sport.

Non-live programming continued to engage substantial viewer numbers on the BBC. The cumulative Super League non-live programme audience for 2017 was 3,888k which is up 2% on last year's audience of 3,815k.

2017 was the year that streaming of matches became a mainstay of Rugby League media for all tiers of the sport. The Rugby Football League streamed more community Rugby League than ever before from children's, youth, college and university Rugby League to community league finals, as well as wheelchair Rugby League. The mid-season test against Samoa as well as the pre-World Cup game against Affiliated States, both streamed, presented further opportunities to explore different platforms and different methods of delivery direct to fans.

Rugby League continue to significantly increase its audience across multiple digital platforms.

The BBC Rugby League site peaked at 2.4m weekly in 2017. Visits to the official Rugby League website rugby-league.com rose by 3% to 6.5m visits in 2017 and page views also increased from 14.9m to 29.7m up by

50% on 2016. There were 3,842,354 article views in 2017 with the most viewed articles including those featuring Magic Weekend, and England RL. There were 15,618,775 total page views. Time spent by users on the site also increased.

Social media engagement was taken to new heights with dedicated content capability and partnerships with brands and sports media. On Facebook, the official Super League account reached 170k likes - a figure up 15% on the previous 12 months and Twitter followers increase from 151k to 197k.

Content generated by the in-house team provided fans with unique access to players. The 'behind the scenes' videos of England v Tonga, of leading players, and at the Ladbrokes Challenge Cup were the most viewed videos on the YouTube channel in 2017. The most watched curated video on the Facebook page was 2017 Season Launch featuring Johnny Vegas with 908k views and 1.7m reach; and the most watched in-house production was 'Biggest hits of Super League 2017' with 832k views and a reach of 1.1m.

In 2017 the Rugby Football League delivered the Our League membership project – a first in the sport - providing a membership product, website and app for all Rugby League fans, coaches and players, helping to deliver on customers' preferences to consume their sport often in segments across multiple devices. 2017 results indicated that the age of the average Our League member was younger than that of the average game attendee or viewer and that the App and website appealed to both men and women.

Throughout the year Rugby League continues to embrace new digital opportunities, fitting the sport for the future and anticipating continued changes in how fans chose to consume their sport.





PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMERCIAL GROWTH

2017 saw Rugby League increase commercial growth and continue to deliver for existing partners.

The 2017 season saw the inaugural year in Betfred's 3-year title partnership of Super League. The leading bookmakers invested further into the partnership by increased branding of stadia, including virtual pitch painting for the first time. They also donated over £20k in charity donations made by each Man of the Match at televised games. Betfred also sponsored the Man of Steel Awards ceremony doubling prize money for award winners. Speaking at the Betfred Super League Man of Steel Event, Betfred Chief Fred Done said this was the 'best partnership' they had ever done.

Train travel operators Northern were announced as Super League partners for 2017, and several key partners renewed their commitment for 2018 onwards.

Ladbrokes confirmed they would remain partners of the Challenge Cup in 2018, and after an exciting introduction to the sport Princes Foods renewed their partnership for a further 2 years. Long-term partners Kingstone Press, and Specsavers, also extended their partnerships through to the end of 2018.

England reaching the final of the Rugby League World Cup presented additional value for partners with Kingstone

Press as the principal partner and new company Watchfinder taking up the sleeve sponsorship for the duration of the tournament. England was also pleased to announce a four-year partnership with Danish kit manufacturer hummel.

Some outstanding activations were also rolled out by Rugby League partners in 2017. Dacia hosted their nationwide grassroots skills competition encouraging participants to send in a clip of them demonstrating a skill or piece of flair. The ultimate prize was to win a team training session with Super League players and coaches.

Specsavers also launched the 5th Official competition offering young aspiring officials the chance to join the match officials at the Ladbrokes Challenge Cup Final. The eventual winner, 9-year-old Jessica Marsh from Ribbleton in Lancashire, got the chance to go behind the scenes with the video referee, perform the coin toss and present the match ball.

The number of existing commercial partners renewing in 2017 for 2018 onwards demonstrated the value in associating with Rugby League and the commitment from the Rugby Football League partnerships team to help brands achieve their objectives.



**BETFRED THRILLED WITH
INAUGURAL YEAR IN THE
SPORT**

**LADBROKES EXTEND THEIR
ASSOCIATION WITH THE
CHALLENGE CUP TO 4
YEARS**

**FAN ENGAGEMENT
INCREASED THROUGH
PARTNER ACTIVATIONS**





2017 DRAMA AND TROPHIES

An exciting 2017 saw 40 teams deliver thrills, spills and entertainment in a year of on-field drama that once again proved Rugby League is the foremost summer sport. The enthralling season produced team and individual performances which delighted lifelong

fans, brought new spectators to the sport, and inspired the young people taking their first steps in Rugby League.

Back-to-back victories are a special achievement, and Hull FC took the



spoils in a memorable Ladbrokes Challenge Cup Final against Wigan Warriors. Wigan's record 19 Challenge Cup wins, compared to Hull FC's four prior to this game, did not daunt Lee Radford's team. Two tries from Mahe Fonua proved crucial, while Marc Sneyd was awarded the Lance Todd Trophy for the second time. Scrum-half Sneyd landed all three of his goal attempts, and his kicking game contributed to all three Hull FC tries.

On his Lance Todd Trophy success, Sneyd said:

“It’s unbelievable when you see the names that are on the trophy. You can’t quite believe that your name is on there. To be there twice - I’m over the moon with that.”

A memorable Betfred Super League season for Castleford Tigers fans and neutrals alike saw Daryl Powell's team take its place in the history books by winning the League Leaders' Shield. A 45-20 win over local rivals Wakefield Trinity in August sealed Castleford's place at the top of the table – the first time in the club's 91-year history that it had finished top of the pile.

“It’s just an awesome feeling,” said Powell.

“It’s a good news story for Rugby League.” But less than two months later, there was disappointment for the Tigers in the Betfred Super League Grand Final. A packed Old Trafford echoed to the sound of Leeds Rhinos fans celebrating a 24-6 victory as Danny

McGuire marked the end of his Leeds Rhinos career with a mercurial performance.

The Leeds captain delivered two second-half tries, two drop goals, and became one of just three players to have twice collected the Harry Sunderland Trophy as the Grand Final's Man of the Match. McGuire and retiring team-mate Rob Burrow lifted the Super League trophy together in what was the pair's eighth Grand Final victory.

In the Qualifiers, Hull KR's resilience, team ethos, and Tim Sheen's strategy was rewarded with victories in their first five fixtures as they earned promotion back into Super League.

Toulouse Olympique delighted fans old and new as they lifted the Kingstone Press Championship Shield after a 44-14 win over a strong Sheffield Eagles side.

In League 1, Toronto Wolfpack marked a stunning debut and unbeaten league season by being crowned champions of League 1. They secured promotion to the Championship alongside spirited South Cumbrian side, Barrow Raiders.

Bradford Bulls Women were strong contenders for women's sports team of the year – in any sport – as they achieved a historic triple, winning the Women's Challenge Cup, the League, and the inaugural Women's Super League Grand Final held on Grand Final day.





ENGLAND PROGRESS ON FOUR FRONTS

Wayne Bennett's squad performed strongly, only to fall to an agonising men's World Cup final loss against Australia in Brisbane

- England Wheelchair suffered a dramatic 38-34 defeat against France in the Wheelchair World Cup final
- England Women lost in the semi-finals of their World Cup
- England Universities lost in the semi-final of their tournament
- England Rugby League Performance Unit - preparatory work on the EPU in 2017 to deliver improvements until 2021 and success on home soil

England Rugby League came within a whisker of winning two World Cups during a 2017 campaign that will be remembered for the quality and commitment of all involved.

In front of more than 40,000 fans at

Brisbane's Suncorp Stadium, the England men's team – led by captain Sam Burgess and coached by Wayne Bennett – lost 6-0 to Australia in the World Cup final.

And England could easily have been celebrating its first men's Rugby League World Cup victory since 1972, had it not been for Josh Dugan's ankle tap on Kallum Watkins 16 minutes from full-time.

Boyd Cordner had fired the Kangaroos into an early lead after bursting on to Michael Morgan's pass. In a bruising encounter played at a breath-taking pace, England enjoyed the better of much of the game, only for the hosts to hold on and clinch an 11th world title.

Bennett said: "I'm really proud of them. They were wonderful and it's a pity there has to be a loser. The effort and intensity from both teams was outstanding."



But while the World Cup final loss was disappointing, Bennett, his backroom staff, and the Rugby Football League and member clubs can reflect on 2017 as a year of genuine progress for the England men's team.

In May, they overcame a gruelling flight and jet-lag to emerge 30-10 winners against Samoa in a mid-season international in Sydney. Tries from Ryan Hall and Stefan Ratchford helped to build a 14-0 half-time lead, before Josh Hodgson, James Graham and Jermaine McGillvary completed the scoring.

Five months later, England completed their World Cup preparations with a 74-12 victory over Affiliated States at Perth Oval. The following week, England's World Cup campaign started in Melbourne with an 18-4 defeat against Australia.

However, a 29-10 triumph over Lebanon in Sydney, followed by a 36-6 win against France in Perth, ensured England progressed to the quarter-finals.

Another 36-6 victory, this time against Papua New Guinea, booked England's place in the semi-finals and a showdown against Tonga.

England led that match 20-0 with just 10 minutes remaining, but were given the ultimate test of their mental resilience when Tonga launched an audacious comeback in the closing stages. At 20-18, England survived – and went on to earn considerable pride in the following week's final.



ENGLAND
RUGBY LEAGUE



ENGLAND WOMEN MAKE THE LAST FOUR

While the England men's team was battling past Tonga, England Women were preparing for their World Cup semi-final against New Zealand in Sydney. It was to prove to be their final match of the tournament.

England Women's path to the World Cup had been encouraging, securing a 26-16 victory over France in June, thanks in large part to Amy Hardcastle's 10-minute hat-trick.

Come November, a 36-8 victory over Papua New Guinea ensured England Women progressed from the group stages, despite losses against Australia (38-0) and Cook Islands (22-16).

England Women looked in contention in the semi-final, with Tara-Jane Stanley's first-half try keeping the scores close. But New Zealand pulled clear after the break and eventually emerged 52-4 winners.

HEARTACHE FOR ENGLAND'S WHEELCHAIR SQUAD

In July, two late tries gave France a dramatic World Cup final victory over a determined England team in Perpignan.

Just a week earlier, England had lost 71-31 against the same opponents. But it took a match-winning try from Nicolas Clausells to eventually settle the final 38-34 in France's favour.

England Wheelchair RL's campaign also included a 78-32 triumph over Wales and two wins over Australia, 80-26 and 78-36, before their final heartbreak.

England Wheelchair RL captain Jack Brown said: "It's a young team, but they've performed so well. The future is looking bright."

A month earlier, England Universities had also completed their Student World Cup campaign in Australia.

They opened the tournament with a 54-10 defeat against Australia, before racking up wins over Wales (22-4) and Scotland (30-20) to set up a rematch with the hosts in a semi-final fixture that Australia won 46-18.





UK ARMED FORCES PLAYED WITH PRIDE AT DEFENCE WORLD CUP

The UK Armed Forces Rugby League team claimed third place in the 2017 Defence World Cup in Australia.

Led by Head Coach Flt Lt Damian Clayton, the cream of Services Rugby League players left for Sydney on June 30, looking to avenge their previous last-gasp defeat at the hands of the year's tournament hosts, Australia.

The UKAFRL side began their World Cup account with a clash against an unknown quantity in Fiji on July 7 at St Mary's Stadium, suffering a 40-20 loss to the eventual surprise World Cup winners.

They then took on Australia on July 9, falling to a 38-12 defeat against the reigning champions. But a 40-30 win over New Zealand on July 12 saw them end the group stages on a high, before a 36-18 win over the Kiwis in the third-place play-off match.

Si Wray, Ryan Matthews, Kev Brown and Jordan Andrade were all named in the Team of the Tournament.



ENGLAND PERFORMANCE UNIT LOOKS AHEAD TO 2021

Alongside the preparations for all four Rugby League World Cup tournaments in 2017, the Rugby Football League developed the England Performance Unit (EPU) in readiness for its launch in 2018.

Tasked with developing more world-class England players for all senior squads by 2021, and led by RFL Rugby Director Kevin Sinfield, the EPU will focus on creating an England Performance Pathway that delivers better quality players to the senior squads.

Sinfield said: “The men’s senior squad at the 2017 World Cup tournament showed how close and committed we are to achieving success on the biggest stage.

Underpinning their performance was a culture of high standards and behaviours, and that is something we want to replicate with all players who represent England at senior Men, Knights, Women, Wheelchair RL, Academy and Youth level.

Others involved in delivering the EPU include Paul Anderson, Paul Sculthorpe, Dave Elliott, Chris Black, Jane Phillips, Wayne Bennett, and Jamie Peacock.





RUGBY LEAGUE
WORLD CUP
ENGLAND
2021

LEGACY STARTS NOW

Having won the bid to stage the 2021 World Cup at the end of 2016, the focus in 2017 was establishing the necessary structures to ensure its success. A full time dedicated CEO, Jon Dutton, was appointed by the Rugby League World Cup 2021 Board which itself was fully established during the year and is fully compliant with the Code of Sports Governance.

Preparation commenced to launch the host bid process to select venues, training camps and team bases and will conclude with announcements being made in January 2019. The commercial programme was launched in 2017 along with early plans being drawn up for a comprehensive legacy programme titled 'Inspired by RLWC2021'. Additionally, a cohort of staff attended RLWC2017 as part of an observer programme that enabled rich knowledge transfer.

International: Nigel Wood continued as Chairman of the RLIF with Brian Barwick also representing the RFL on the Board. The main focus of work was oversight of RLWC2017 and continuing efforts to establish the international calendar. In addition to men's and women's World Cups held in October and November the Wheelchair Rugby League World Cup was staged in France in July and world tournaments were also staged for the Armed Services and Students in Australia in July 2017. At the AGM held in Sydney the RLIF confirmed they had 71 affiliated members including awarding full membership to Italy.





| Year | Winners | Runners-Up |
|------|---------------|---------------|
| 1954 | GREAT BRITAIN | FRANCE |
| 1957 | AUSTRALIA | GREAT BRITAIN |
| 1960 | GREAT BRITAIN | AUSTRALIA |
| 1968 | AUSTRALIA | FRANCE |
| 1970 | AUSTRALIA | GREAT BRITAIN |
| 1972 | GREAT BRITAIN | AUSTRALIA |
| 1975 | AUSTRALIA | ENGLAND |

MEET 2017'S SHINING STARS



STEVE PRESCOTT MBE MAN OF STEEL: LUKE GALE (CASTLEFORD TIGERS)

Gale fought off competition from a plethora of Betfred Super League talent to claim his first Man of Steel Award in 2017.

The England halfback enjoyed arguably the best season of his career as he helped lead Castleford to their first-ever League Leaders' Shield and a Grand Final appearance.

Gale began his career with Leeds Rhinos and spent time with Doncaster and Harlequins RL before suffering relegation with Bradford Bulls in 2014, but has flourished under the guidance of Daryl Powell since joining the Tigers in 2015.

He racked up 20 assists and 317 points during a groundbreaking 2017 campaign. Castleford team mate Zak Hardaker came second in the voting, with Hull FC's Albert Kelly in third.





Betfred Super League
Grand Final
Castelford II leads
Old Trafford Manchester
7/10/2017

Engineering

GMB

MI
HYD

MI
HYD

SUPER LEAGUE YOUNG PLAYER OF THE YEAR: OLIVER GILDART (WIGAN WARRIORS)

One of the competition's brightest young talents, the Wigan St Pats junior product bagged 11 tries and seven assists while running over 1,500 metres during an impressive campaign for the Warriors.



SUPER LEAGUE COACH OF THE YEAR: DARYL POWELL (CASTLEFORD TIGERS)

Powell masterminded a historic campaign for his expansive Castleford side as they romped to the League Leaders' Shield by ten points.



CHAMPIONSHIP PLAYER OF THE YEAR: SHAUN LUNT (HULL KR)

After suffering relegation in 2016, Lunt captained Rovers back to Betfred Super League in 2017, leading his side through an impressive Qualifiers campaign on the back of a table-topping Championship season.

CHAMPIONSHIP YOUNG PLAYER OF THE YEAR: JAMES BENTLEY (BRADFORD BULLS)

Despite relegation to League 1, Bentley shone for the Bulls. The now 21-year-old back-rower scored an impressive 15 tries in 23 appearances, his form rewarded with a move to St Helens.



CHAMPIONSHIP COACH OF THE YEAR: ANDREW HENDERSON (LONDON BRONCOS)

Henderson was voted by his peers as the division's top coach after guiding London into the Championship's top four.





LEAGUE 1 PLAYER OF THE YEAR: CRAIG HALL (TORONTO WOLFPACK)

Toronto Wolfpack's first-ever captain starred as the Canadian outfit stormed to the League 1 title. His prolific try-scoring and accuracy with the boot racking up over a third of his club's total points haul.

LEAGUE 1 PLAYER OF THE YEAR: LEWIS YOUNG (NEWCASTLE THUNDER)

The Castleford-born full back or halfback was spotted while playing for Northumbria University and starred as Newcastle secured a top six finish in 2017.



LEAGUE 1 COACH OF THE YEAR: CARL FORSTER (WHITEHAVEN RLFC)

The youngest coach in the professional game, player-coach Forster built an impressive squad which pushed Toronto Wolfpack all the way, finishing second in the League 1 table.





Kingstone Press Cider

Air transat



PUTTING PLAYERS FIRST

2017 saw further great strides in the crucial area of Player Welfare, and a renewed commitment was made to continue the considerable work required to become the leading NGB in this field.

The RFL ran the first assessments of the Player Welfare Policy, with a response rate of more than 70% of players and fifteen Player Welfare Managers (PWM) who completed the 80-question club survey and headline results are referred to in this report.

In 2017 Super League clubs committed to making the welfare provision full-time for 2018 onwards, with a significant impact on the wellbeing, playing and future careers of players and a positive outcome for coaching and club staff. The clubs' support will improve holistic player welfare provision in a cost-effective way.

Most clubs now provide at least reasonable welfare provision, with some delivering excellence in many areas, and a few who still have room for additional progress to be made.

2017 demonstrated that the clubs that perform well, have strong leadership and buy-in at senior level, including CEO and Head Coach, to support the progress of the PWM. The 2017 Player Survey showed positivity in this area with 83% of players agreeing that their Head Coach promoted player welfare. 80% of PWMs believe that their Head Coach actively promotes player welfare and is supportive of their role with 73% agreeing that their CEO takes an interest in player welfare and ask for updates and reports.

2017 saw regular meetings of the Player Welfare and Education Forum (PWEF), with an independent Chair, Mike Farrar; and has

been invaluable in providing a critical and constructive view on the progress of Player Welfare Policy. 2018 will see further work to increase player representation. During 2017 the number of clubs causing the PWEF concern through a low level of achievement and/or compliance dropped significantly; and the Forum believes that some clubs are beginning to deliver excellence on a regular basis.

2017 activity included:

- Repeat of the previously successful two-day residential meeting including best practice presentations from the Premier League, the Rugby Players' Association and the Jockeys' Training and Education Scheme and detailed work, discussion and training on several new projects.
- Production of a comprehensive Player Welfare Managers' Manual, setting out in detail how to deliver the Player Welfare Policy at club level and pulling all resources together in one place.
- Supporting Super League clubs in the process of helping all PWMs to gain counselling qualifications, with significant benefits for the role and developing a clear career pathway for players interested in this line of work.

On average 96% of players agreed that they could contact their PWM and 94% strongly agreed or agreed that they trusted their PWM. The PWM assessment of welfare at their

club showed several areas where key Player Welfare Policy requirements were not in place. It is expected that the 2018 move to full time will address these additional areas.

Sporting Chance services remain fundamental to the success of the Player Welfare Policy:

- On average 95% of players are aware of the services and know how to access them.
- The 2017 Sporting Chance workshop focused on resilience during change.
- Short workshops for PWMs included Motivational Interviewing and Substance Abuse.
- 103 players and retired players accessed support from Sporting Chance counsellors or therapists over the course of the last year, an increase from 84 in 2016.
- Presentations for counselling and therapy included anxiety, loss, low mood, substance use and gambling. The number of individuals accessing the residential facility decreased (from eight participants in 2016 to five in 2017).
- A Sexual Consent workshop was delivered by a retired police officer to all clubs and academies.

The player survey contained several questions focusing on 'club culture' such as gambling and alcohol cultures and bullying. Overall the results were positive and with further actions planned for 2018.

ON AVERAGE

96%

**OF PLAYERS AGREED THAT THEY
COULD CONTACT THEIR PWM**

PARTICIPATION AND DEVELOPMENT

MORE PLAYERS ENJOYING RUGBY LEAGUE

2017 saw good progress by the sport as a whole against inclusion, participation and player development targets as evidenced in The Rugby Football League's 2017 end of year report to Sport England. The three contractual targets on which the Sport England public funding award was based were met, including the number of people regularly participating across all settings and variants of Rugby League including Touch and Tag. 99.6% of the target was achieved with just under 100,000 players participating in the sport across all formats. This equates to 5% growth.

2017 figures showed an increase of 6.6% in primary school aged children's Rugby League and a smaller (0.5%) increase in junior Rugby League. Measurements of youth and junior players in an education setting show steady progress with growth targets achieved in 2017. This is important given that as many young players play Rugby League in schools as in club settings. 2017 saw considerable work to revamp the schools' offer within both the national Champion Schools competition and School Games 9s.

Work throughout the year was focused on addressing areas where important challenges remain, including in the youth game, and open age game. Some of the reduction in open age players on the registration system was a factor of clubs no longer leaving non-playing players on the system. 2017 efforts included preparedness for the 12-18 Review – a major consultation to identify issues and propose

game-wide solutions to the challenges around retention and progression. The 12-18 Review, which is by the sport and for the sport, and headed up by Paul Sculthorpe, will provide a data grounded series of recommendations to form the basis of further discussions and actions in 2018; concluding with a full report written by an independent expert.

Inclusion in Rugby League is central to the strategy agreed with Sport England on behalf of the sport. 2017 saw good results in several areas with growth in differing formats of the sport including Touch, Tag, Masters and Wheelchair Rugby League.

One of the highlights of 2017 was the introduction of the inspirational new Women's Super League. A partnership campaign by the Rugby Football League, Rugby League Foundations and clubs, resulted in a transformation of the women's game, in particular around the profile and reach of the sport with media coverage at an all-time high. A record number of clubs entered the various women's competitions and a new Women's Framework was developed bringing together all the ways the sport can grow the number of women who play, coach, volunteer and support Rugby League. 2017 also saw the preparedness work for an integrated new pathway including girls' development hubs. The team worked closely with Sport England, including the 'This Girl Can' national campaign, and took learnings from other sports at the forefront of the growth in women's sport.



The variant offers were widened to include Disability Rugby League, including both Physical Disability Rugby League and Learning Disability Rugby League. Both the introduction of and campaigns around Women's Super League and Disability Rugby League are testament to the collaborative approach with Rugby League Foundations.

2017 also saw the development of new flexible playing offers including the Player Development League aimed at encouraging additional junior activity, and the Rugby League Conference facilitating merit style fixtures at open age.

Support for coaches, and coach development, continued to be at the heart of the strategy. Coaching initiatives such as 'Women into Coaching' supported by 'Reach into Coaching' from UK Coaching and the RFL Coach Developer Programme were extended to benefit clubs and volunteers, particularly in the most socially and economically deprived areas.

The Rugby Football League agreed a target and approach with Sport England around the support for players from lower socio-economic groups - with 46% of all players from the top quartile of social deprivation. 2017 saw

further work to develop support for volunteers from similar groups who are nationally underrepresented, supporting better mental health and wellbeing outcomes in deprived communities.

Talent progression activity throughout 2017 increased the number of athletes within the England Youth cohort to allow more athletes greater opportunity to access a higher level of Talent Development Environment. This approach was supported by current talent development research and 8 years of data that suggests progression (i.e. better players populating higher up the pathway) will be enhanced by having a larger talent pool at this age.

The profile of the community game continues to reach new heights with 2017 the most successful year to date in increasing the number of online and print features, interviews, streamed games and social media activity designed to promote all formats of the game. This was achieved through a combination of appropriate additional investment, the skill and commitment of the in-house team, and partnership working with clubs, Rugby League Foundations and media outlets.









SAFEGUARDING

A GAME-WIDE RESPONSIBILITY

2017 saw Safeguarding issues in sport become national news as a result of the widespread publicity given to the non-recent child sexual abuses cases and allegations in football. These cases, along with other high-profile cases in cricket and tennis, remind everyone that any sport can be vulnerable to those with predatory intentions and emphasise the need to continually improve compliance with the Safeguarding Policy. There is no greater priority for all in the sport including the Rugby Football League Board and Executive.

2017 was a positive year for Safeguarding in Rugby League with all key indicators moving in the right direction. DBS applications and education course attendees increased to record numbers. Both overall case numbers and serious cases were down. There remained concern around some junior

coaches who demonstrate a ‘win at all costs’ mentality and less strong coaching practice.

2017 saw the launch of ‘The Listening Club’ initiative – a positive and inclusive child-centred project to help clubs to give children a voice and encourage clubs to achieve ‘Listening Club’ status. Congratulations to Heworth – the first club to do so. Children taking part feel fully part of the club, sharing their thoughts on staying playing and on how matches and training are organised; and most importantly feel safe to speak out about any concerns. The activity will scale in 2018.

The Rugby Football League was proud to maintain its Child Protection in Sport Unit green rating in a climate of ever more rigorous examination.

Throughout 2017, the Rugby Football League engaged in Government-led activity to

address issues and share best practice, including round table events, meetings and information sharing. The Rugby Football League lobbied for and supported steps taken by Government to amend legislation to ensure that the law-making relationships between teachers and their 16 and 17-year-old pupils illegal is extended to cover coaches and players. All sports have already outlawed these relationships (Relationships of Trust) within their Safeguarding Policies.

The Rugby Football League analysed and acted on Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson's report on Duty of Care in Sport, published in April 2017 and will work with the Major 5 Sports Group and the wider National Governing Body network, as well as Government agencies, during 2018.

The Safeguarding team revised the Action Plan and has made steady progress in rolling it out throughout the year. Activity included:

- Presentations at the Super League and Championships club meetings, the professional club Heads of Youth meeting, the Foundation Managers' Meeting and the Ground Safety Officers' meeting.
- Annual Safeguarding Conference attended by over 90 CWOs and other interested

volunteers with a keynote speech by Paul Anderson, Assistant England Coach, who emphasised the need for enjoyment and fun whether age 7 or playing for England. Other sessions included how clubs and local authorities can work together to support children with mental health issues, on identifying grooming behaviour and/or sexual abuse, an update on the non-recent case review and the Listening Club Project. Delegate feedback was positive with most attendees finding all the sessions 'extremely useful'.

- Safeguarding Newsletter (x6 issues in 2017), now distributed through the CRM system, allowing the RFL to assess read-rates.
- Safeguarding and Protecting Children Refresher course online - rolled out with 74 coaches/volunteers using the course during 2017. To scale in 2018. It is expected this number will increase year on year.
- A project to ensure that the Rugby Football League has the up to date records for each club's CWO on record.

The number of Safeguarding cases referred to the Safeguarding Case Management Group (SCMG) is the lowest since 2013 but at 179 remains within the year on year trend. Of the 179 cases, 144 were dealt with and closed during 2017 with a significant number of



serious and complex cases from 2016 and a small number from 2015 carried over. There remain some clubs where foul and abusive language is normalised, and number of clubs still display a ‘win at all costs’ mentality which leads to players not being given playing opportunities and contributes to players dropping out of the sport. The Rugby Football League invests significant resources in supporting the sport around DBS (Disclosure and Disbarring). There were significantly fewer cases for which a Temporary Suspension Order was imposed (13 during the 2017 season, with 8 remaining in place at year end), suggesting that the number of cases categorised as serious has reduced and that there have been fewer high risk DBS disclosures. Five new cases involved working in partnership with the statutory authorities.

During 2017 the Safeguarding Case Management Group (SCMG) continued to encourage clubs involved in racism cases to accept education rather than investigation and possible charges. The rationale for this approach being that educating a whole team and their volunteers (and in some cases parents) can be more effective than drawn out investigations. The SCMG continued, where appropriate, to refer cases back to the League and/or club.

The overall increase in the volume of DBS applications processed, demonstrated that that the eBulk on-line portal works well for Rugby League and has simplified the system. All disclosures with a criminal record continue to be individually risk assessed. Clubs worked particularly hard in increasing the number of DBS applications in 2017. The Rugby Football League will continue to monitor relevant post holders to ensure they hold a DBS. Currently the National Governing Body covers the administration costs for DBS processing and systems (other leading sports typically charge around £12 per volunteer).

During 2017, 1685 people attended 89 courses in addition to those completing the online refresher course. Rugby League Learning delivered the increased number of Safeguarding and Protecting Children workshops with another record number of courses and attendees; and Time To Listen sessions delivered by the RFL Safeguarding team also had a record-breaking year. The team looks to 2018 with a renewed focus on compliance with mandatory requirements by all clubs at all times; as well as the continued roll out of the Listening Club project so that children and young people remain front and centre of all activity.



RUGBY LEAGUE FOR EVERYONE

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

In early 2017, the Rugby Football League set out its intentions about both acting and campaigning on Equality and Diversity in a statement of intent which was shared via rugby-league.com

From this the Equality and Diversity plan was refreshed in line with those of other National Governing Bodies of sport. The Rugby Football League worked with Sport England and their advisors to ensure the plan met the standards set out in the Sports Governance code and was approved in November 2017. The organisation has a strong record in this area and currently holds the intermediate standard for E and D as awarded by Sport England.

The three-year plan outlines policy, activity and campaigning by the Rugby Football League as an employer, and the role the National Governing Body will play in supporting the sport across these agendas with a strong focus on training and engagement. 2017 saw a renewed commitment to Government and other partners to ensuring that Rugby League at all levels understands the legal requirements and the significant audience-development opportunity presented by an inclusive and more diverse workforce, player pool and fan base as we look to the most inclusive Rugby League World Cup ever in 2021.





THE CODE OF SPORTS GOVERNANCE

The RFL has demonstrated full compliance with The Code for Sports Governance

Sporting Future, the Government's Strategy for an active nation (published in 2015), set the requirement for UK Sport and Sport England to agree a new code for sports governance to protect the value for money the public receives from investment into sport. The Code for Sports Governance (the "Code") was published on 31 October 2016.

Many of the principles set out in the Code are widely accepted as being elements of

good practice in corporate governance, where applicable, tailored for the sport sector. Throughout 2017, the Rugby Football League worked to ensure that it remains a leading National Governing Body on sports governance matters. All organisations seeking public funding from Sport England or UK Sport must comply with the mandatory Requirements of the Code. The Code is tiered and proportionate, expecting the highest standards of good governance from organisations requesting the largest public investments.

PRINCIPLES

The Code is based on 5 'Principles' of good governance. In relation to each Principle there are specified mandatory Requirements.

The 5 Principles are:

1. **Structure** - This Principle states that organisations should have a clear and appropriate governance structure led by a Board which is collectively responsible for the long-term success of the organisation and exclusively vested with the power to lead it. The Board should be properly constituted and operate effectively.
2. **People** - This Principle states that organisations shall recruit and engage people with appropriate diversity, independence, skills, experience and knowledge to take effective decisions that further the organisation's goals.
3. **Communication** - This Principle states that organisations shall be transparent and accountable, engaging effectively with stakeholders and nurturing internal democracy.
4. **Standards and Conduct** - This Principle states that organisations shall uphold high standards of integrity and engage in regular and effective evaluation to drive continuous improvement.
5. **Policies and Processes** - This Principle states that organisations shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations, undertake responsible financial strategic planning, and have appropriate controls and risk management procedures.

The Code has 3 tiers with each having a different level of mandatory governance requirements. The RFL is Tier 3 (the level representing the highest standards).

Since the publication of the Code the Rugby Football League worked with Sport England to ensure that it met and demonstrated compliance with the Code. Sport England confirmed in December 2017 that the Rugby Football League fully complies with the Code.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

SUMMARY AND RESULTS

Business review and results

The consolidated accounts for RFL (Governing Body) Ltd show a loss for the financial year of £2,029,409 for the year ended 31 December 2017 (2016: loss £1k). RFL (Governing Body) Ltd has maintained an aggregate positive cash and short-term deposit balance throughout the year. At 31 December 2017, this aggregate balance was £3,291k (2016: £3,407).

Future expectations for the financial position of the League are positive, and the Board of Directors expect to build on the results of recent years by increasing the Net Assets of the Group and extending support to all sections of the game.

Analysis of Trading

Year on year turnover has decreased by 20% from £27,395k to £22,037k which can be attributed in the main to the RFL hosting The Ladbrokes Four Nations Tournament in 2016 and there being no event of similar size in 2017 due to the holding of the Rugby League World Cup 2017 in Australia.

Match income decreased from £4,954k in 2016 to £2,466k in 2017 – a decrease of 50%. This is again a feature of hosting the Four Nations Tournament in the autumn of 2016 and there being no equivalent event in 2017 (as above). Sponsorship income decreased to £1,265k (2016: £1,441k) – a decrease of 12% again reflecting the impact of the Four Nations tournament in 2016 which attracted significant sponsorship income.

Government funding through Sport England has decreased in 2017 from £3,956k in 2016 to £2,960 – a decrease of 25% in line with the profile submitted for 2017 to 2021.

The existing BBC and Sky contracts continued in 2017. Overall broadcast income fell from £12,534k in 2016 to £9,867k in 2017. The fall is due to there being no broadcast income in 2017 to replace that generated by The Four Nations Tournament in 2016.

Within the RFL accounts, the cost of sales heading is broken down into two sections. The first being the external, third party costs of making the sale and the second being those cost of sales that are internal to the RFL's

stakeholders such as payments directly made to clubs.

External cost of sales decreased in 2017 by 37% from £11,771k in 2016 to £7,449k in 2017. This is primarily due to costs of hosting the Four Nations Tournament in 2016. Grant funded activities expenditure has decreased from £3,951k in 2016 to £2,857k in 2017 reflecting the level of programme delivered and associated income. Whole Sport Plan expenditure within this line has decreased in the year, with the overall decline mitigated by expenditure on the Sky Try programme. The income for the Sky Try programme is contained within Other Income.

Payments to and on behalf of clubs is made up from the cost of sales element of £2,887k (2016: £4,222k) and a further amount shown below Gross Profit on the Profit and Loss Account, which in 2017 brought the total payable to and on behalf of clubs to £11,021k (2016: £12,170).

In 2017, Operating Costs have increased to £5,630k from £3,519k in 2016. This is predominantly due to a change in the method

of Sport England Funding under the new funding cycle and an increased allocation of this funding to programme delivery in order to enhance impact. This resulted in an increase in operating costs due to costs being classified as operating costs in 2017 rather than government funded cost of sales as in 2016.

Interest receivable by the RFL, which has historically been a very significant income stream, was again low at £34k (2016: £71k). The relatively low amount is a result of the general economic impact felt from banks offering much lower interest rates since 2008 and lower average bank balances in 2017 than in 2016.



FINANCIAL REVIEW

CONSOLIDATED PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2017

| | | 2017 | | 2016 |
|--|-------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Turnover | | 22,037,280 | | 27,394,921 |
| Cost of sales | (7,449,029) | | (11,770,974) | |
| Cost of sales – payable to or on behalf of clubs | (2,886,968) | | (4,222,350) | |
| Total cost of sales | | (10,335,997) | | (15,993,324) |
| Gross profit | | 11,701,283 | | 11,401,597 |
| Payments to or on behalf of clubs and other member organisations | (8,134,423) | | (7,948,012) | |
| Operating costs | (5,630,242) | | (3,518,722) | |
| Administrative costs | | (13,764,665) | | (11,466,734) |
| Operating profit | | (2,063,382) | | (65,137) |
| Other interest receivable and similar income | | 33,933 | | 71,138 |
| Loss on ordinary activities before taxation | | (2,029,449) | | 6,001 |
| Tax on profit on ordinary activities | | 40 | | (6,703) |
| Loss for the financial year | | (2,029,409) | | (702) |

Notes

1 Turnover

| | 2017 £ | 2016 £ |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Match income | 2,466,182 | 4,953,952 |
| Broadcast | 9,866,597 | 12,353,721 |
| Sponsorship | 1,264,835 | 1,440,748 |
| Government funding | 2,959,736 | 3,955,910 |
| Other | 5,479,930 | 4,690,590 |
| | <u>22,037,280</u> | <u>27,394,921</u> |

All turnover is generated in the UK

2 Cost of sales

| | 2017 £ | 2016 £ |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Match costs | 1,807,405 | 4,316,303 |
| Grant funded activities | 2,856,525 | 3,950,595 |
| Sponsorship and promotional costs | 271,662 | 696,962 |
| Other | 2,513,437 | 2,807,114 |
| | <u>7,449,029</u> | <u>11,770,974</u> |

3 Payments to or on behalf of clubs and other member organisations

| | 2017 £ | 2016 £ |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| Awards to clubs | 5,518,043 | 5,315,405 |
| Awards to other sections of the game | 191,136 | 189,739 |
| Match officials | 1,503,409 | 1,440,694 |
| Insurance | 519,789 | 543,127 |
| Disciplinary costs and banned substances testing | 207,770 | 232,319 |
| Player Welfare | 194,276 | 226,728 |
| | <u>8,134,423</u> | <u>7,948,012</u> |

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

| | 2017 £ | 2016 £ |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| Match costs | 1,232,864 | 2,500,946 |
| Grant funded activities | 1,654,103 | 1,721,404 |
| | <u>2,886,967</u> | <u>4,222,350</u> |
| Total payments made to or on behalf of clubs | <u>11,021,390</u> | <u>12,170,362</u> |

FINANCIAL REVIEW

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2017

| | | 2017 | | 2016 |
|---|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Fixed assets | | | | |
| Tangible assets | | 1,947,219 | | 1,737,803 |
| Investment property | | 750,000 | | 1,122,361 |
| | | <u>2,697,219</u> | | <u>2,860,164</u> |
| Current assets | | | | |
| Debtors | 12,683,079 | | 17,377,423 | |
| Cash at bank and in hand | 3,290,615 | | 3,406,785 | |
| | <u>15,973,694</u> | | <u>20,784,208</u> | |
| Creditors: amounts falling due within one year | (18,890,650) | | (21,834,701) | |
| Net current liabilities | | <u>(2,916,956)</u> | | <u>(1,050,493)</u> |
| Total assets less net current liabilities | | <u>(219,737)</u> | | <u>1,809,671</u> |
| Net assets | | <u>(219,737)</u> | | <u>1,809,671</u> |
| Capital and Reserves | | | | |
| Revaluation reserve | | 419,875 | | 419,875 |
| Accumulated surplus | | (639,612) | | 1,389,796 |
| | | <u>(219,737)</u> | | <u>1,809,671</u> |
| Shareholders' funds | | <u>(219,737)</u> | | <u>1,809,671</u> |



THE RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE BOARD



BRIAN BARWICK CHAIRMAN

Brian Barwick has a wealth of experience in sport and broadcasting and is the founding partner of Barwick Media and Sport, a global sport and media consultancy. In February 2013, Brian took up the role of Non-Executive Chairman at the Rugby Football League. In June 2015 he was also appointed as Chairman of football's National League and was Chairman of Liverpool's bid to host the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Brian has held a number of senior positions including, Chief Executive of the Football Association, Controller of Sport at ITV, and a number of key roles within the BBC, including Head of Television Sport.

Brian was Chief Executive of the Football Association from 2005 to 2008 where he saw through the completion of

the new Wembley Stadium, launched the Respect campaign and was involved in the appointment of England's senior coach on two occasions. He was also a board member of Wembley Stadium Ltd and FIFA's Legal Committee and UEFA's National Teams Committee.

At ITV he was responsible for all ITV Sports coverage including the 1998 FIFA World Cup during which the highest audience in ITV's broadcasting history was achieved (28 million people for the England vs. Argentina World Cup tie).

From 1979-1998 Brian held a range of senior roles within BBC Sport. He was responsible for award winning coverage of the BBC Sport television portfolio including, the summer and winter Olympics, FIFA World Cups and outstanding

national events like the Rugby League Challenge Cup Final, Wimbledon, the Open Golf and the Grand National, and the FA Cup Final. He was Editor of Match of the Day from 1987-1995.

Brian studied economics at Liverpool University and began his career as a reporter on the North Western Evening Mail. He is married with two sons. He currently holds a number of posts including a visiting Professorship of Strategic Leadership at The School of Management at Liverpool University and Chairman of the Advisory Board at the University College of Football Business.

In September 2015 Brian was made an honorary doctorate by Buckinghamshire New University in recognition of his career in broadcasting and sport.



RALPH RIMMER CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Ralph Rimmer was appointed onto the board of the Rugby Football League in 2013 after joining the organisation as Chief Operating Officer in October 2010. He has a wealth of experience at every level of the game, coupled with extensive knowledge in stadia and leisure development. He played community Rugby League for many years as a junior and senior for Ulverston ARLFC and went on to captain the Liverpool University team and play at student international level, before playing for Wakefield side, Stanley Old Boys.

He retains a passion for the grassroots game and in particular for inclusion in the sport. In recent years he has been at the forefront of expansion and developing all tiers of the sport including taking the lead on the introduction of the first ever Trans-Atlantic professional club, Toronto Wolfpack, to enter a UK domestic sports competition. He has led significant reform across several core areas of the Rugby Football League including Match Officials, the

Laws Committee and Judicial system. He championed and delivered the Transformational Change of the business which will culminate with the move to the Etihad Campus. He began his professional career within Rugby League in South Yorkshire in 1991 as a Development Officer with Doncaster. He then took up the role of Head of Youth development with Sheffield Eagles three years later in 1994, going on to become Chief Executive of the then Super League club in 1997.

Following the club's historic Challenge Cup Final victory over Wigan at Wembley in 1998, Ralph went on to spend 5 years as the Chief Executive at Huddersfield Giants from 2000 and remained on the Board for a further 5 years as a non-executive director when he took up the role as the managing director of the stadium company, Kirklees Stadium Development Ltd.

From 2004 he spent five years as a non-executive director of Huddersfield Town AFC, helping to take the club out of administration and win promotion from League

Two into League One. He managed the Irish national Rugby League team from 1997 to 2002 (including the 2000 Rugby League World Cup) and the Yorkshire Origin team in 2002. He was also non-executive Chairman of The Sporting Pride Community Trust, in Huddersfield, between 2007 and 2010.

As Managing Director of KSDL he was Project Lead on the £2m stadium redevelopment in 2007 and also spent 6 years leading on the £150m The HD One Leisure Development. He acted as a management consultant on several stadia developments including; Leigh Sports Village, Colchester United FC Stadium and also the Salford City Stadium. He has chaired a number of sporting, business and community organisations and is a committed champion of the work of the Rugby League charities and the club Foundations.

In 2017 he became the Interim Chief Executive of the Rugby Football League and was appointed Chief Executive Officer in July 2018.

THE RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE BOARD



SIMON JOHNSON NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Simon Johnson is the Chief Executive of the Jewish Leadership Council. Before that, he had a 20 year career that saw him operate at the highest levels of the sports and media industries. After a period as the senior lawyer at the Premier League, Simon's career in sport saw him spend 4 years as Director of Corporate Affairs at The Football Association, followed by a role as COO of England's Bid to host the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

He started his career as a lawyer, spending 10 years with ITV, the majority as Director of Rights and Business Affairs. He is a member of the Group Board of the Amateur Swimming Association.

Away from sport, Simon lives in London with his wife and three children. He is an active participant in community and charitable institutions.



CLARE MORROW NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Clare, a former journalist at ITV and the BBC joined the Rugby Football League Board in 2008. She was Chair of the award-winning tourism marketing agency Welcome to Yorkshire from 2008 to 2015, and led the successful bid for the Tour de France Grand Depart to be staged in Yorkshire in 2014. She is currently a non-executive director of Bettys and Taylors of Harrogate.

Clare spent fifteen years at ITV Yorkshire, where she was Controller of News and Regional Programmes. During her time at ITV, Clare also held the position of Head of Sport for a time and was responsible for Yorkshire Television's Rugby League output for many years. This included the creation, development and production of the Rugby League Raw series of programmes, which won several National Royal Television Society sports awards.

She is also Chair of the Yorkshire Film Archive, and a trustee at Hollybank Trust in Mirfield, where her profoundly disabled daughter Mary lives.

THE RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE BOARD



CHRIS BRINDLEY MBE NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chris is the previous Chair of one of the UK's leading charities, GreaterSport; and is Independent Non-Executive Director of Manchester Football Association and Chair of Total Swimming, Total Gymnastics and Becky Adlington Swim Stars.

He is also in demand as an Executive Coach and Mentor for Business Leaders throughout the UK. He is a renowned keynote speaker on topics, which include, Customer Experience, Leadership, Teamwork, Change Management and Performance Management.

His sporting background puts him in a unique position to blend sporting high performance techniques and apply them successfully in business.

Chris has held Executive positions at NatWest, where he was the Managing Director of the Retail Bank for North of England and Scotland. At British Gas, Chris acted as Business Director North of England and Scotland and was also National Sales Director for Central Heating and Installations.





KAREN MOORHOUSE COMPANY SECRETARY

Karen is the Rugby Football League's Director of Operations and Legal with overall responsibility for all regulatory matters across the whole of the Game including Salary Cap and Player Registrations, Facility Standards, Safeguarding, Medical, On Field and Off Field Disciplinary matters and Player Welfare. In addition, Karen is the Company Secretary (a role she has held since late 2016).

Karen joined the Rugby Football League in 2008 as Compliance Manager. In 2009 she became Head of Legal and then in 2014 assumed her current role. Whilst Head of Legal, Karen was also on the Project Board of the Rugby League World Cup 2013.

Karen is a qualified solicitor having read law at Cambridge University graduating with a First Class Degree (whilst also gaining a Blue for Rowing). Karen completed her solicitor training contract at Magic Circle law firm Linklaters: subsequently qualifying into the Banking Department.

In 2005 Karen joined The Football Association as an In House Lawyer with responsibility for a range of sponsorship, commercial and other legal matters.



RUGBY-LEAGUE.COM

