

YEAR IN REVIEW 2021



VISION | COMPETITIONS | PARTICIPATE | ENGAGEMENT | THE GAME | WAYS OF WORKING

TEAM POWERED



WOMEN
RUGBY

VISIT
WOMEN.RUGBY

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER. TOGETHER RUGBY IS STRONGER

Friends in rugby,

On behalf of World Rugby, it is my great pleasure to introduce the 2021 Year in Review.

The last time we produced a Year in Review, we were basking in the success of a truly exceptional men's Rugby World Cup in Japan.

Few could have imagined that the world would change so rapidly, so drastically, for all of us, both in life and in rugby.

I would like to pay special tribute to our own frontline heroes and all the unsung heroes, medics and scientists that continue to work hard to contain the pandemic.

An unprecedented challenge called for an unprecedented response and when the pandemic hit, we got to work to shore up our immediate future and build a brighter longer-term future, together.

Our values guided our thinking as we started to consider how we can futureproof our sport, not just from the pandemic but from a rapidly changing business, sporting and entertainment landscape.

Our first priority was to support our unions and to help ease the financial strain.

Our second priority was to get the sport up and running through COVID protocols, COVID law variations and extensive education. I am proud of the leading role rugby has played in getting people back to sport around the world and I would like to thank you all for the role you played.

Amid all of this, we heard the moving accounts of former players that are struggling with their health as the concussion conversation grew. They are members of our family. We stand by them and we are unwavering in our commitment to further cement rugby as the most progressive sport on player welfare, guided by a clear and transformative six-point plan.

Bernard Laporte and I were elected almost two years ago to lead the sport forward, to grow the sport, to attract new fans and to change our ways of working across the rugby family.

Guided by a bold, new strategic plan and in full collaboration with regions, unions and players, we are honouring that commitment. We have implemented transformational governance and national team eligibility reform, reimagined our Rugby World Cup hosting processes, launched a new participation programme and remodelled the future of the women's game with the launch of WXV.

And, despite the challenges, we delivered successful men's and women's rugby sevens events at the Olympic Games. All of these achievements were possible through teamwork and a clear plan.

Bernard and I are at 'half-time' in our mandate. I am hugely optimistic about the future of our sport.

We are redoubling our efforts to secure an annual competition calendar that is good for players, clubs, unions, fans and partners. We are reimagining sevens to ensure an exciting, sustainable and youth-oriented future. We are committed to strategically investing in the growth of the game, to advance welfare at all levels and attract a new fan base and grow revenues for reinvestment in our great sport. We are also busy preparing for a landmark Rugby World Cup 2021 in New Zealand and a special spectacle at Rugby World Cup Sevens 2022 in Cape Town.

As we advance, we must place the next generation of players and fans at the heart of what we do – we must be purpose-driven, understanding the changing needs of young people and society as a whole.

We must work harder to protect our environment, to tackle discrimination in sport and society and act on our pledges to further diversity across our organisations and every level of the sport.

I will end where I began. My deep gratitude goes to everyone in the rugby family for achieving these milestones at a challenging time. Together we are stronger. Together rugby is stronger.

**“I am proud
of the leading
role rugby has
played in getting
people back to
sport around
the world.”**

**Sir Bill Beaumont
CBE DL**
World Rugby Chairman



CONTENTS

VISION

New strategic plan	08
Women's plan	10
Environmental Sustainability Plan	12

COMPETITIONS

Olympic legacy	16
Olympic review	18
Men's sevens review	20
Women's sevens review	22
Tournaments review	23
WXV	24
RWC 2021	26
RWC Sevens 2022	32
RWC 2023	34
Future RWCs (2025-31)	40

PARTICIPATE

Participation map	44
Youth rugby	46
Participation plan	48
Game On Global	50
Regional associations	52
Olympic Solidarity	59
Rugby for development	60

ENGAGEMENT

Social media and digital	64
World Rugby Awards	68
World Rugby Hall of Fame	70
Youth Unstoppables	72
Commercial partners	74

THE GAME

Player welfare	78
Research corner	82
Law trials	86
Game analysis	88
High performance	90
Match officials	94
Training and education	96
Keep Rugby Clean	98
Integrity	100
Disciplinary	101

WAYS OF WORKING

Governance	104
Financial statements	106
Meet the team	110



VISION

New strategic plan	08
Women's plan	10
Environmental Sustainability Plan	12





BOLD, NEW VISION FOR THE GAME AS NEW STRATEGIC PLAN LAUNCHED

Long-term sustainable market, fan and participation growth, reimagination of key properties, a dedicated focus on women, world-class player welfare programmes, and a leadership position on environmental sustainability, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of a bold new strategic plan for the advancement of the sport through to 2025.

While recognising the challenges facing society and sport as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the new plan launched in 2021 sets out World Rugby's long-term mission to support and enhance the game. It builds on strong foundations, with seven million people playing the sport globally and the worldwide fan base increasing by two-thirds in rugby's established markets and doubling in emerging markets over the past decade to more than 405 million.

The strategy aims to welcome existing and new participants beyond the pandemic to unite the rugby family and strengthen and grow the sport by striving to make it as safe, enjoyable, appealing and accessible as possible at all levels. It focuses on four key areas that are vital to the future prosperity of the sport – Competition, Participation, Engagement and the Game itself. For each, World Rugby has set a series of game-changing targets that reflect its ambition and values.

Player welfare transcends everything that World Rugby does and continues to be the number one priority. Throughout the life of the strategic plan, World Rugby will lead an open discussion with the rugby family and independent experts to continually advance player welfare guided by evolving research, science and technology. It will continue to lead targeted research to inform and advance injury prevention and mental wellbeing and drive player welfare-centred law review and trials to further protect players at all levels of the game.

Alongside this, World Rugby is collaborating with the global rugby family to evolve the game to ensure

it is attractive and relevant to a new generation of participants. This includes exploring ways to supercharge sevens, enhance the community game and further develop the non-contact offering for emerging nations, where shorter formats such as Touch and Tag are attracting newcomers to the sport. Recent Nielsen data demonstrates that in some nations two-thirds of new rugby followers are introduced via non-traditional formats.

In delivering the plan, World Rugby is further tapping into the depth and range of expertise across the sport and beyond, building on the increasing number of players, players' representatives and coaches on World Rugby's committees. Similarly, its Fan Panel, which was launched in 2020, and in-depth research are being used to inform planning and ensure fans remain at the forefront of decision making.

World Rugby Chief Executive Alan Gilpin said: "Our role is an enabler, a collaborator and facilitator. More than ever, we are engaging and listening to not just our immediate stakeholders, but the views of players and fans on the big issues and opportunities. That's the type of authentic leadership that the sport wants and needs from World Rugby right now."

For more on the new strategic plan, visit www.world.rugby/organisation/strategic-plan.



“More than ever, we are engaging and listening to not just our immediate stakeholders, but the views of players and fans on the big issues and opportunities. That’s the type of authentic leadership that the sport wants and needs.”

Alan Gilpin

World Rugby Chief Executive





REFRESHED STRATEGIC PLAN TO ACCELERATE WOMEN'S RUGBY DEVELOPMENT

The first phase of World Rugby's women's strategic plan concluded at the end of 2021 with some spectacular results achieved over the course of the four-year period.

Launched in November 2017, the transformative plan has been a game-changer in terms of gender equality and inclusiveness, player and fan engagement and the commercial appeal of women's rugby.

More and more women and girls continue to play rugby globally as well as there being further progression of key female decision-makers in the sport than ever before thanks to initiatives such as the Executive Leadership Scholarship programme. The first phase of the 2017-25 plan also delivered landmark global marketing campaigns 'Try and Stop Us' and 'Team Powered' and welcomed Mastercard as the founding partner of the Women in Rugby programme.

This progress is in addition to unveiling the new three-tiered WXV international competition, which

will begin in 2023 and an aligned global calendar that will give more opportunities for competitive rugby in the years ahead.

Diversity, inclusion and engagement remain consistent themes as World Rugby looks to pick up the pace and accelerate the global development of women's rugby even further in the second phase.

Reviewed and refreshed in collaboration with stakeholders across the game, the plan remains focused on:

- Growing sustainable participation
- High performance quality competitions
- Inspirational leadership on and off the field
- Profile with impact inspiring engagement
- Driving strategic sustainable investment

Alongside these key areas will be a new pillar of activity dedicated to women's player welfare, aligned to World Rugby's six-point action plan. A dedicated Women's Player Welfare Steering Group has been established that will exclusively focus on the advancement of player welfare initiatives and interventions designed specifically for the women's game at all levels. This will feature a focused women's research stream and expansion of injury surveillance studies, including the ground-breaking Otago Rugby Community Head Impact (ORCHID) study, and a bespoke performance analysis resource to track the game and inform law and technical considerations. These projects will assist in determining future women's medical and coaching best practice.

Meanwhile, the high-performance pillar will see the roll out of the first cycle of the exciting new WXV and Pacific Four Series competitions, and Rugby World Cup 2021, playing in New Zealand in 2022, will be the first women's tournament to be played since a gender-neutral approach was taken to the naming of World Rugby's major competitions.

As part of its focus on inspirational leadership, World Rugby will continue to implement targeted leadership development programmes and, working with International Rugby Players (IRP), create a new Player Assistance Programme to help players with seamless pathways and networks, focused on off-field career transition, personal development opportunities and peer and mentor networks to create future leaders in sport and business.

Underpinning the plan will be further work to significantly increase direct investment in the women's game, enhance the commercial value

of all Women in Rugby properties and develop a strong and engaged portfolio of global sponsors.

World Rugby Chief Executive Alan Gilpin said: "As we reach the midway point of our strategic plan, much has been achieved. From greater leadership representation and the launch of WXV, through to the inspiring Team Powered global marketing campaign and welcoming Mastercard as the founding partner of the Women in Rugby programme, the game is going from strength to strength.

"We now look ahead with excitement to the next four years, guided by this new expanded and enhanced plan, which will be a catalyst for further change. We will remain focused on player welfare with a new dedicated pillar of activity rooted in research and analysis. We will also seek to increase capability and capacity to grow the game and continue to drive high performance. All while sharing best practice, supporting inspirational leaders and working to further raise the game's profile, increasing fan engagement and sustainable investment opportunities."

"We now look ahead with excitement to the next four years, guided by this new expanded and enhanced plan, which will be a catalyst for further change."

Alan Gilpin

World Rugby Chief Executive

BELOW

The best of the women's 15s game will meet at Rugby World Cup 2021



SECURING A BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL

World Rugby's Environmental Sustainability Plan 2030 developed in advance of 2022 launch.

It's clear that 2021 was an important year for World Rugby, the sport and its stakeholders as the very real impacts of climate change continued to disrupt a global sporting landscape already battling with the challenges of the global pandemic.

An active advocate of positive change and among the first sports organisations to sign up to the United Nations Sports for Climate Action Framework in 2019, we know that the clock is ticking and that rugby and sport, like all sectors of society, must do more with greater conviction and move from commitments to actions.

The science is clear – climate change is upon us, and it is affecting all aspects of society. In the rugby world, we see this particularly sharply given that several of our member unions from the Pacific islands are among the most vulnerable communities on the planet to the impacts of rising sea levels as a direct result of climate change. There are increasing examples of rugby grounds being unplayable because of flood or drought, and instances where games must be cancelled because of smog from bush fires, or extreme heat or storm events.

True to our values of solidarity and respect, we have begun to take stronger action on behalf of the global rugby community and play our part in addressing the climate crisis and related environmental issues.

Building on earlier work to enhance the environmental sustainability of the organisation, World Rugby undertook a range of concrete actions to formalise its approach to reducing the climate impact of its operations and encouraging the rugby family to follow suit.

Actions included:

- A stated objective in the Strategic Plan 2021-25 to create and publish a formal environment sustainability plan, based around the UN Sports for Climate Action Declaration and Framework.
- Linked to the above, a wide-ranging consultation process supported by external sport sustainability experts to engage with our stakeholders – unions, regions, players, fans, partners, staff and



others – to understand their priorities, needs and expectations of World Rugby in relation to environmental sustainability.

- Identifying opportunities to hold and support events remotely, thereby reducing travel, costs and carbon impact, including virtual stadium tours and the first-ever online General Assembly.
- Participation in the IOC Carbon Award to track and measure our carbon footprint as an organisation.
- Collaboration with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and other sport organisations.

Concerns around climate change are not simply isolated environmental concerns; they have profound economic and social consequences too. We have all seen the devastating effects the COVID-19 pandemic has had on sport. Yet climate change is already affecting people's lives, their health, their prosperity and general wellbeing. Acting on climate change and protecting our natural resources are, therefore, among the most socially progressive initiatives an organisation can undertake.

World Rugby's Environmental Sustainability Plan 2030 crystallises that ambition. It is both a statement of intent and a tangible roadmap for tackling the environmental sustainability issues that both affect our sport and are affected by our sport.

In addressing the three priority themes of climate action, circular economy and protecting the natural environment across all our spheres of responsibility, we can collectively harness the passion and power of rugby to secure a bright and sustainable future for everyone.

For more information, visit www.world.rugby/sustainability.

PRIORITY THEMES



Climate action



Circular economy
(managing materials
and resources)



**Protecting
the natural
environment**

OUR COMMITMENTS

1

Governance

2

**Addressing
our direct
impacts**

3

**Delivering
and supporting
sustainable
rugby events**

4

**Promoting
sustainability in rugby
through education,
advocacy and
knowledge sharing**



COMPETITIONS

Olympic legacy	16
Olympic review	18
Men's sevens review	20
Women's sevens review	22
Tournaments review	23
WXV	24
RWC 2021	26
RWC Sevens 2022	32
RWC 2023	34
Future RWCs (2025-31)	40







TOKYO OLYMPIC RUGBY SEVENS CREATES HUGE GLOBAL IMPACT

Following rugby sevens' memorable Olympic debut at Rio 2016, which was estimated to have attracted 30 million new fans around the globe, the stage was set for the sport's highly anticipated second Olympic appearance in Tokyo in July 2021, in the wake of the success of Rugby World Cup 2019 in Japan.

While Fiji's men and New Zealand's women took honours on the pitch, off the field the Games were tailored to the huge worldwide broadcast audience as there were sadly no fans in attendance due to COVID-19 restrictions, meaning Tokyo was the first truly digital Olympics. Anticipating this unique scenario, World Rugby launched the 'This is how we sevens' campaign in June, promoting the exciting, dynamic and action-packed nature of rugby sevens and showcasing the breadth of personalities within the sport while aiming to connect with a younger, more diverse global audience.

World Rugby's digital platforms performed superbly to achieve 22 million video views, 3.4 million social media engagements – up 77 per cent from Rio – and capture 313,000 new social media followers in July alone. The Olympic hub website received 522,000 page views, almost double the number in Rio, while more than five million emails were sent to fans that had signed up to receive sevens news.

These results saw World Rugby ranked the second fastest growing international federation among team sports in terms of percentage growth on social media during the Olympics.

THIS IS HOW WE SEVENS CAMPAIGN IN NUMBERS



22M
video views across
all social channels



3.4M
engagements – a 77%
increase on Rio 2016



2.4K
social posts across
all social channels



2ND
fastest-growing team
federation in terms of percentage
growth on social media



313K
new social followers
across World Rugby
channels in July



522K
Olympic hub
pageviews – an
increase of 298k
on 2016

LEFT
IOC president
Thomas Bach
with Japan's
women's sevens
team at the Tokyo
Olympic Games

Gender equality was a key message in the narrative of the Tokyo Games and the outstanding women's rugby sevens competition produced extraordinary content with the gold medal match taking place on 'Super Saturday'. World Rugby's social channels achieved a strong equity of coverage with 44 per cent women's content, 48 per cent men's and eight per cent unified.

Independent Nielsen research conducted across 11 established and five emerging rugby nations in September 2021 again highlighted the positive and far-reaching impact of Olympic participation on the sport.

Interest and awareness continues to grow with an overall increase in followership of the Olympic rugby sevens event from 28 to 37 per cent across the nations that were surveyed in both 2016 and 2021.

The impact of Olympic participation on the sport is of huge significance, demonstrated by the growth from 26 per cent in 2016 to 41 per cent in 2021 in agreement that rugby sevens being in the Olympics has 'increased my interest in the sport'.

In the emerging rugby nations, such as Brazil, China, Germany, India and the USA who were involved in the study, 44 per cent of the general population reported following the Olympic event, with 26 per cent watching some part live.

Overall sentiment from the Olympic event was extremely positive with 'competitive, entertaining, exciting and fast' the top attributes associated to the sport.

The Paris 2024 Olympic Games are just around the corner and fans will be looking forward to another edition of high-octane Olympic rugby sevens in the French capital.

FIJI AND NEW ZEALAND STRIKE GOLD IN TOKYO

After a year-long delay due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, rugby sevens wasted no more time in reminding the wider world what an exhilarating sport it is with high drama and excitement in abundance at the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020.

Old rivalries were rekindled, new heroes emerged and there were many moments to remember in both the men's and women's competitions. But, by the end of it all, the destiny of the gold medals was not entirely unexpected.

Fiji's men had won the first gold medal on offer in Rio and were regarded as one of the frontrunners again, along with New Zealand, while 2016 women's silver medallists New Zealand were even hotter favourites to go one better and take home the top prize. Neither disappointed the hordes of fans watching back home.

Now under the stewardship of Gareth Baber, Fiji's men started slowly against hosts Japan, coming from behind to win 24-19, but soon grew into the tournament. Comfortable pool wins against Canada and Great Britain, in what was a re-run of the Rio 2016 gold medal match, secured them a place in the last eight.

New Zealand overcame Canada 21-10 and Fiji beat Australia 19-0 in the quarter-finals but the story of the last eight belonged to Argentina and Great Britain, who pulled off Houdini acts to make it through. Los Pumas Sevens defeated South Africa despite losing Gastón Revol to an early red card, while Great Britain dug deep to overturn a 21-0 deficit and beat USA 26-21.

Beaten in the semi-finals by Fiji and New Zealand respectively, Argentina and Great Britain were left to compete for the bronze medal with Los Pumas Sevens emerging victorious, 17-12.

The gold medal match was between the two best teams in the world and it was Fiji who came out on top, 27-12. At the final whistle the Fijians fell to their knees as emotions overflowed – with Jerry Tuwai becoming the only player to have two Olympic gold medals to his name.

Fijiana had travelled to Tokyo perhaps more in hope than expectation but came mighty close to pulling off the biggest upset in women's rugby sevens history. Beaten by France in the opening match of the tournament, Fijiana reeled off wins against 2016 bronze medallists Canada, Brazil and then reigning champions Australia to set up a date with New Zealand in the semi-finals.

The Black Ferns Sevens had already survived one major scare, in the pool stages against Great Britain, on their way to reaching the last four. It appeared to be the wake-up they needed and they looked unstoppable in recording emphatic back-to-back victories against the Russian Olympic Committee.

But Fijiana pushed them to the limit, despite having never beaten their highly decorated opponents in 16 previous outings, and the game was only decided in extra-time by Gayle Broughton's deadlock-breaking try.

ABOVE RIGHT
Gayle Broughton scores in the women's gold medal match

RIGHT
Fiji's men's team claimed a second consecutive Olympic gold

MEN'S RANKINGS

1. Fiji
2. New Zealand
3. Argentina
4. Great Britain
5. South Africa
6. USA
7. Australia
8. Canada
9. Kenya
10. Ireland
11. Japan
12. Republic of Korea





WOMEN'S RANKINGS

1. New Zealand
2. France
3. Fiji
4. Great Britain
5. Australia
6. USA
7. China
8. Russian Olympic Committee
9. Canada
10. Kenya
11. Brazil
12. Japan

Having missed out on the chance to emulate the men and win gold, Fijiana bounced back to win the bronze medal at the expense of Great Britain, becoming their nation's first female Olympic medallists.

While Fijiana had been the surprise package in one half of the draw, France – who only confirmed their place a month earlier at the World Rugby Sevens Repechage in Monaco – embarked on an amazing run to the gold medal match in the other half. Following up their opening-day victory against Fijiana, Les Bleues saw off Brazil, Canada, China and Great Britain.

But New Zealand proved too strong for them in the gold medal match, with Michaela Blyde's seventh try of the tournament setting the reigning Rugby World Cup Sevens, Commonwealth Games and HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series champions on their way to a 26-12 victory.

Five years after finishing second to Australia, New Zealand had the Olympic gold medal to complete their collection.



SOUTH AFRICA POWER TO SERIES TITLE

Following rugby sevens' captivating second appearance at the Olympic Games in Tokyo, the sport made a welcome return when Canada hosted the HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series 2021 on back-to-back weekends in September.

With the health and welfare of players, fans and the wider public a top priority, the Series was restricted to two tournaments – one in Vancouver and the other in Edmonton – due to the ongoing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

While a number of core Series teams were unable to participate in Canada due to travel restrictions, this gave other teams an opportunity to shine and some invitational teams to gain experience at the top table of rugby sevens.

Jamaica and Great Britain made their Series debuts while Mexico contested their first event since Hong Kong in 2011, Germany their first for 12 years and Hong Kong their first outside of Asia since the 2006-07 Series in Adelaide.

For South Africa, the abbreviated Series gave the three-time former Series winners the chance to put a disappointing fifth-place finish at Tokyo 2020 behind them, while also blooding a number of exciting and talented young players.

Six members of the Blitzboks' Olympic squad travelled to North America, including captain Siviwe Soyizwapi, and they took Vancouver and Edmonton by storm, winning all 12 of their matches and breaking all manner of other records along the way.

In Vancouver, the Blitzboks came up against Kenya in the first all-African final since Adelaide in 2008.

The rampaging runs of Alvin Otieno had been the feature of the Shujaa's campaign but even the man known as "The Water Buffalo" was powerless to stop South Africa taking the title with a 38-5 win.

Angelo Davids scored twice in the final to take his tally for the tournament to 10 – the first player to reach double figures in a men's Series event since France's Terry Bouhraoua in Cape Town in 2016.

Great Britain's first Series tournament ended with a bronze medal after a 24-14 win over Ireland.

A fractured hand meant Davids did not travel to the new Series destination of Edmonton, but, in Muller du Plessis, the Blitzboks had another deadly finisher.

Du Plessis went one better than Davids with 11 tries as the Blitzboks excelled in attack and defence. Neil Powell's side scored 39 tries to beat the HSBC Canada Sevens record they had set the week before, while only conceding four at the other end.

An emphatic 33-7 victory against Kenya in the semi-final had already assured South Africa of their fourth Series title and they finished unbeaten with a 24-12 victory over Great Britain in the final.

Kenya denied hosts Canada a podium finish by winning the bronze medal decider, while Germany's gathering momentum throughout the two weeks culminated in a hugely creditable fifth-place finish.



LEFT
South Africa won all 12 of their matches in the 2021 Series

RIGHT
Alvin Otieno played a key part in Kenya's journey to the final in Vancouver



2021 SERIES

Vancouver (18-19 Sept)

Gold: South Africa
Silver: Kenya
Bronze: Great Britain

Edmonton (25-26 Sept)

Gold: South Africa
Silver: Great Britain
Bronze: Kenya

FINAL STANDINGS

1. South Africa – 40
2. Great Britain – 34
3. Kenya – 34
4. Canada – 24
5. USA – 22
6. Ireland – 20
7. Germany – 16
8. Hong Kong – 16
9. Spain – 10
10. Chile – 5
11. Jamaica – 5
12. Mexico – 2

2022 SERIES

Dubai (26-27 Nov)

Gold: South Africa
Silver: USA
Bronze: Argentina

Dubai (3-4 Dec)

Gold: South Africa
Silver: Australia
Bronze: Argentina

Malaga (21-23 Jan)

Seville (28-30 Jan)

Singapore (9-10 Apr)

Vancouver (16-17 Apr)

Toulouse (20-22 May)

London (28-29 May)

Los Angeles (27-28 Aug)

FOLLOW THE SEVENS



@WorldRugby7s



www.world.rugby/sevens-series



GREAT BRITAIN SHINE IN FAST FOUR EVENTS

With no women's HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series 2021, two invitational Fast Four tournaments formed part of the HSBC Canada Sevens schedule.

Involving the host nation Canada, USA, Great Britain and Mexico, the Fast Four tournaments were played alongside the men's Series events in Vancouver and Edmonton on consecutive weekends in September and gave fans the chance to see some of the leading lights from the Tokyo Olympics as well as some potential household names of the future.

In helping herself to 16 tries – six in Vancouver and 10 in Edmonton – Great Britain's two-time Olympian Jasmine Joyce was the standout player. The Welsh flyer wowed the crowds with her acceleration and footwork in attack as well as her cover-tackling ability in defence as Great Britain claimed both titles.

Great Britain were unbeaten in their 10 matches, with USA defeated in both finals, 34-12 in Vancouver and 22-5 in Edmonton. In Edmonton, Canada managed to hold Great Britain to a 7-7 draw but they were still unable to improve on their third-place finish from the week before.

For Mexico, the Fast Fours were a steep learning curve but Las Serpientes will take much encouragement from the way they developed as a side. Having lost their first seven matches, Mexico gave Canada a wake-up in Edmonton by scoring two first-half tries before ultimately losing 40-12.

As such, the Fast Fours were an excellent vehicle to support player development and underscore World Rugby's commitment to increasing elite competition opportunities in women's rugby.

The Series returns with six rounds, beginning with back-to-back tournaments in Dubai. The Spanish



ABOVE
Great Britain won nine of their 10 matches across the two tournaments

LEFT
Mexico battled heavyweights Canada, USA and Great Britain

2022 SERIES

Dubai (26-27 Nov)	Malaga (21-23 Jan)
Gold: Australia	Seville (28-30 Jan)
Silver: Fiji	Langford (30 Apr-1 May)
Bronze: France	Toulouse (20-22 May)

Dubai (3-4 Dec)
Gold: Australia
Silver: Fiji
Bronze: France

cities of Malaga and Seville are new destinations, while Langford, by now well-established as a women's Series venue, will be the penultimate tournament in 2022 before the French rugby hotbed of Toulouse plays host to the Series for the first time.

FOLLOW THE SEVENS

@WorldRugby7s www.world.rugby/sevens-series



WORLD RUGBY AMERICAS PACIFIC CHALLENGE 2021



WINNERS: Argentina XV
WHEN: 22-30 October, 2021
WHERE: Montevideo, Uruguay

FINAL STANDINGS:

1. Argentina XV
2. Chile A
3. Brazil A
4. Uruguay A
5. USA Select XV
6. Paraguay A

LEADING POINT-SCORER: Lucas Spago (Brazil A), 41

LEADING TRY-SCORER: Geronimo Prisciantelli (Argentina XV), 3

BACK WITH A DIFFERENCE:

The World Rugby Americas Pacific Challenge returned after a two-year absence, albeit with different participants to previous editions. None of the Pacific teams who'd previously taken part were able to travel to Uruguay and Canada were also absent, so it was left to three Sudamérica Rugby teams – Brazil A, Chile A and Paraguay A – to take their place.

ARGENTINA XV RECLAIM THE TROPHY:

Having won the first two editions in 2016 and 2017, Argentina XV lost their crown in 2018 when Samoa A took the last title. Argentina XV had a three-year wait to set the record straight and, even then, their first match with USA Select XV was cancelled due to logistical problems. The game was declared a 0-0 draw but wins over

Paraguay A (146-7) and Uruguay A (24-17) saw them accrue enough points to be declared winners despite only playing two games.

CLOSELY FOUGHT: Runners-up Chile A, third place Brazil A and hosts Uruguay A all won two games apiece and only two competition points separated the top four teams. USA Select XV finished fifth which left Paraguay A to prop up the table.

PROMOTING TALENT: The Americas Pacific Challenge continues to be a key development tournament for countries in the respective regions. The proof is in some of the line-ups in the Rugby World Cup 2023 Americas qualifiers in July and the November internationals. Los Pumas fly-half Santiago Carreras graced the tournament, while Uruguay's back three in defeats to Romania and Italy – Rodrigo Silva, Federico Favaro and Gaston Mieres – all have APC experience. Baltazar Amaya started all three games in Uruguay and then made his Los Teros debut a week later in Bucharest.

PACIFIC FOUR SERIES



WINNERS: Canada
WHEN: 1-5 November, 2021
WHERE: Infinity Park, Glendale, Colorado

The inaugural Pacific Four Series took place between Canada and USA in November with Australia and New Zealand unfortunately unable to meet due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.

With both nations playing their first tests for more than two years, it was Canada who emerged 15-9 winners. First-half tries from debutant winger Renee Gonzalez and Karen Paquin had put Canada in the ascendancy, although USA remained in touch with three

penalties from fly-half Megan Foster. A penalty from Mastercard Player of the Match, goal-kicking number eight Sophie de Goede, with an hour gone proved to be the final score.

Four days later USA struck first through captain Kate Zackary's try, but De Goede, Courtney Holtkamp and Alexandria Ellis dotted down to give Canada a 19-10 half-time advantage. Gabby Cantorna's early penalty gave USA hope, but Canada made certain of a 26-13 victory thanks to Player of the Match Paquin's try.

The Pacific Four Series will be used as a qualification tournament for the new



WXV competition, which starts in 2023, with the top three teams to take their place in WXV 1 and the remaining team in WXV 2. Australia and New Zealand will join Canada and USA in the Pacific Four Series in 2022.

WXV COMPETITION TO SUPERCHARGE WOMEN'S GAME

A new 18-team, three-tier WXV global competition will begin in 2023 and combined with international playing windows will optimise player welfare and performance.

World Rugby launched WXV, a new annual global women's 15s competition model, in March to underscore its commitment to increasing competition, commercial and fan engagement opportunities while raising the competitiveness of the women's game on the road to an expanded 16-team Rugby World Cup.

Supported by an initial £6.4 million investment from World Rugby, the three-tier WXV competition will feature 18 teams and be hosted within a new September-October global competition window, except in a Rugby World Cup year.

Teams will qualify annually into the WXV competitions courtesy of their finishing positions within the respective existing annual regional competitions, such as the Women's Six Nations. These regional competitions, played within a new regional window, must be completed by June each year.

To support the implementation of the WXV competitions, a new annual cross-region

competition has been established to act as one of the principle qualification routes into the top tier. The Pacific Four Series will feature Australia, Canada, New Zealand and USA and provide a regular annual international competition for these teams for the first time.

Recognising that globally women's high-performance programmes are currently at differing levels and stages, World Rugby is committed to working in partnership with unions to support collective ambitions to progress women's high-performance programmes forward in a realistic and appropriate pace of development to ensure optimal performance within the WXV.

World Rugby will work with all remaining high-performance teams, outside of the global competitions, to coordinate matches, should they wish to do so, within the global competition window, either in their own region or cross-regional. WXV will also form part of the qualification process for Rugby World Cup 2025 with details to be announced in January 2022.

18

teams will
take part

£6.4M

investment from
World Rugby

3

tiers for the
women's
international
15s game



HOW IT WILL WORK



WXV 1

WXV 1 will consist of six teams and be played in a cross-pool format, at a standalone tournament in one location, which will be determined on a year-by-year basis.

Participating teams will include the top three teams from the Women's Six Nations (Europe) and the top three teams of the Pacific Four Series, a cross-regional tournament featuring Australia, Canada, New Zealand and USA (Oceania/Rugby Americas North (RAN)). Each team will play three matches.

There will be no promotion or relegation in the first cycle (2023 and 2024) of WXV 1.

WXV 2

The WXV 2 competition will consist of six teams, playing in a cross-pool format, as a standalone tournament in one location, which will be determined on a year-by-year basis.

Participating teams for 2023 will include two teams from Europe, the fourth-placed team from the Pacific Four Series alongside one team from Oceania, Asia and Africa.

The sixth-placed regional position in the WXV 2 competition at the end of each season will be relegated to WXV 3.

WXV 3

WXV 3 will be a cross-pool format and will consist of six teams with the winner and rankings determined by a points table. Participating teams will include two teams from Europe and one team from Asia, Africa, Oceania and South America.

The top ranked regional position in the WXV 3 competition will be promoted to the WXV 2 competition at the end of each season.

A play-off between the sixth-ranked team and next-best-ranked team from another region in the World Rugby Women's Rankings powered by Capgemini will determine regional position for the next year.

“We are creating a platform for the women’s international teams to compete in more consistent, competitive and sustainable competitions at regional and global level.”

SIR BILL BEAUMONT, WORLD RUGBY CHAIRMAN

WXV will be supported by a dedicated Women in Rugby commercial programme that sets out to actively further profile, engagement and sustainable growth, driving revenue back into the development of the game, and therefore supporting another key objective of the Women in Rugby Plan 2017-25. Mastercard has since been announced as the founding partner of the Women in Rugby programme.

World Rugby Chairman Sir Bill Beaumont said: “This is a landmark moment for the sport. The announcement of a new, global international 15s calendar will underpin the future success and accelerate the development of the women’s game. By establishing a unified international 15s calendar and introducing WXV we are creating a platform for the women’s international teams to compete in more consistent, competitive and sustainable competitions at regional and global level.”

STAGE SET FOR RECORD-BREAKING RUGBY WORLD CUP 2021 IN NEW ZEALAND

THE MUCH-ANTICIPATED RUGBY WORLD CUP 2021 WILL TAKE NEW ZEALAND BY STORM IN LESS THAN A YEAR AS 12 OF THE WORLD'S BEST WOMEN'S TEAMS COME TOGETHER FOR THE SHOWPIECE EVENT.



Fans showed just how excited they are for RWC 2021 to come around with the unique Mastercard Tournament Pass offering selling out in just minutes in October.

Responding to the huge demand for tickets, World Rugby and New Zealand Rugby announced their target to set a Rugby World Cup and world record for attendance at a standalone women's rugby match-day when the tournament kicks off at Eden Park (pictured) on 8 October, 2022.

Of the 12 teams that will compete for the coveted trophy, 11 have now been confirmed after Italy and

Japan joined 2019 qualifiers South Africa and Fiji this year, leaving the final piece of the jigsaw to be determined at the Final Qualification Tournament in Dubai in February 2022.

The Sevens Stadium will host this new addition to the women's Rugby World Cup qualification process as Scotland, Samoa, Colombia and the winner of the Hong Kong v Kazakhstan play-off bid to claim the place in Pool A alongside hosts New Zealand, Australia and Wales.

RWC 2021, playing in 2022, will push boundaries and set new standards for the women's game, both

"RWC 2021 HAS ALL THE INGREDIENTS TO BE A TRULY GREAT SPORTING EVENT. WOMEN'S RUGBY WILL RIGHTLY TAKE CENTRE STAGE NEXT YEAR, AND RWC 2021 IN NEW ZEALAND IS POISED TO SUPER-CHARGE THE WOMEN'S GAME GLOBALLY."

SIR BILL BEAUMONT

World Rugby Chairman

on the field of play and behind the scenes with a new match schedule that prioritises player welfare and sees matches played on weekends.

In September 2020, World Rugby launched a transformational RWC 2021 Coaching Internship Programme, providing talent-identified female coaches with a unique 12-month placement opportunity with a team competing at the tournament.

The coach interns will be fully embedded into each competing RWC 2021 national coaching team, where they will gain meaningful professional development opportunities and experience in a high-performance sporting environment, leading up to and during the tournament. Nine of these interns are already working with teams, with Italy and Japan's to be announced in due course.

World Rugby Chairman Sir Bill Beaumont said: "RWC 2021 has all the ingredients to be a truly great sporting event. Women's rugby will rightly take centre stage next year, and RWC 2021 in New Zealand is poised to super-charge the women's game globally.

"This is a Rugby World Cup that continues to set new standards on and off the field and I am sure



that fans will seize the opportunity to say they were there when what we hope will be a new record attendance for a standalone women's match day is set at Eden Park."

As plans continue to progress going into the new year, including the launch of the official RWC 2021 Trophy Tour, this tournament will be an historic occasion for women's rugby and fans from all four corners of the globe are being urged to show their support and to be part of something very special.

ROAD TO RWC 2021

ONLY ONE PLACE REMAINS TO BE FILLED AT RUGBY WORLD CUP 2021, PLAYING IN 2022 IN NEW ZEALAND, AFTER ITALY AND JAPAN BECAME THE LATEST NATIONS TO EMERGE FROM THE QUALIFICATION PROCESS.

There was joy for Italy and Scotland but heartbreak for Ireland and Spain as the European qualification process for Rugby World Cup 2021 reached a thrilling denouement in Parma in September.

For the winner of the quadrangular tournament, the prize of a place in Pool B was at stake, alongside the two North American teams, Canada and USA, and it was the host nation Italy who won through.

Heading into the final round at Stadio Sergio Lanfranchi it was still all to play for with all four teams having a won one, lost one record.

Italy had beaten Scotland 38-13 but then lost to Ireland 15-7, however their superior points difference made them favourites to claim the ticket to New Zealand – so long as they defeated Spain in their final game.

The Azzurre saw off Spain 34-10 with a crucial bonus point in the first game of the day to move onto 10 points, meaning Ireland had to beat Scotland with a bonus point to claim the Europe 1 spot on the head-to-head rule.

It soon became apparent that Ireland had a job on their hands just to win the game let alone with a bonus point as Scotland fought tooth-and-nail to stay in the qualification hunt themselves.

With time nearly up, Ireland held an 18-13 lead and looked set to confirm their place in the Final Qualification Tournament as runners-up. But they did not bank on Chloe Rollie scything through their defence for a try that levelled the scores. Sarah Law then kept her composure to kick the match-winning conversion and snatch a 20-18 victory that keeps alive Scotland's hopes of reaching a first Rugby World Cup since 2010.

Scotland are one of three teams confirmed in the Final Qualification Tournament which takes place in Dubai on 18 and 24 February next year, alongside Samoa and Colombia with Hong Kong or Kazakhstan to complete the line-up. The winner of this tournament will claim the 12th and final place at RWC 2021, alongside hosts New Zealand, Australia and Wales in Pool A.

Samoa had confirmed their place in the Final Qualification Tournament after beating Tonga 40-0



LEFT
Manuela Furlan and Sara Barattin celebrate Italy's qualification for RWC 2021

RIGHT
Scotland's Chloe Rollie takes on the Spanish defence

in New Zealand in November 2020, while a first Rugby World Cup appearance is still possible for Colombia after they overcame Kenya 16-15 in a thrilling play-off game in Nairobi in August.

Winger Maria Arzuaga scored all of her side's points as Las Tucanes negated Kenya's homefield advantage and higher World Rugby Women's Ranking with an impressive display that belied the fact they had never played away from home before or in fact at all since they'd defeated Brazil in March 2020 to reach this play-off.

Japan, meanwhile, were confirmed as the fourth team in Pool B in October when, as a result of the ongoing travel and quarantine challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, World Rugby announced a revision to the Asia qualification pathway. As the highest ranked team in the region, Japan will qualify automatically while Hong Kong and Kazakhstan will meet in a play-off match to determine which team progresses to the Final Qualification Tournament.

For more information on RWC 2021, visit www.rugbyworldcup.com/2021.



MATCH SCHEDULE

POOL
A

-  **NEW ZEALAND**
-  **AUSTRALIA**
-  **WALES**
-  **FINAL QUALIFIER
WINNER (FQW)**

SAT 8 OCT - 19:15
EDEN PARK

AUSTRALIA v NEW ZEALAND

SUN 9 OCT - 17:45
NORTHLAND EVENTS CENTRE

WALES v FQW

SAT 15 OCT - 15:00
NORTHLAND EVENTS CENTRE

FQW v AUSTRALIA

SUN 16 OCT - 15:15
WAITAKERE STADIUM

WALES v NEW ZEALAND

SAT 22 OCT - 14:15
NORTHLAND EVENTS CENTRE

AUSTRALIA v WALES

SAT 22 OCT - 16:45
NORTHLAND EVENTS CENTRE

NEW ZEALAND v FQW

POOL
B

-  **CANADA**
-  **USA**
-  **ITALY**
-  **JAPAN**

SUN 9 OCT - 12:45
NORTHLAND EVENTS CENTRE

USA v ITALY

SUN 9 OCT - 15:15
NORTHLAND EVENTS CENTRE

JAPAN v CANADA

SAT 15 OCT - 17:30
NORTHLAND EVENTS CENTRE

USA v JAPAN

SUN 16 OCT - 12:45
WAITAKERE STADIUM

ITALY v CANADA

SUN 23 OCT - 12:45
WAITAKERE STADIUM

JAPAN v ITALY

SUN 23 OCT - 15:15
WAITAKERE STADIUM

CANADA v USA

POOL
C

-  **ENGLAND**
-  **FRANCE**
-  **SOUTH AFRICA**
-  **FIJI**

SAT 8 OCT - 14:15
EDEN PARK

SOUTH AFRICA v FRANCE

SAT 8 OCT - 16:45
EDEN PARK

FIJI v ENGLAND

SAT 15 OCT - 20:00
NORTHLAND EVENTS CENTRE

FRANCE v ENGLAND

SUN 16 OCT - 17:45
WAITAKERE STADIUM

FIJI v SOUTH AFRICA

SAT 22 OCT - 19:15
NORTHLAND EVENTS CENTRE

FRANCE v FIJI

SUN 23 OCT - 17:45
WAITAKERE STADIUM

ENGLAND v SOUTH AFRICA



#RWC2021
[RUGBYWORLD CUP.COM/2021](https://www.rugbyworldcup.com/2021)

ALL MATCHES ARE NZST/NZDT. TM © RUGBY WORLD CUP LIMITED 2007-2021. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

WORLDWIDE PARTNER



PROUD HOST



*SHOULD THE HOST NATION REACH THE QUARTER-FINAL STAGE OF THE TOURNAMENT, THEIR FIXTURE WILL BE SCHEDULED IN THIS QUARTER-FINAL SLOT.

EXCITEMENT BUILDS AS RWC SEVENS HEADS TO AFRICA FOR FIRST TIME

South Africa will host Rugby World Cup Sevens 2022 in Cape Town from 9–11 September, the first time the tournament has been hosted on the African continent.

The iconic Cape Town Stadium will host Rugby World Cup Sevens 2022, the eighth edition of the prestigious tournament and the fourth to feature men's and women's competitions.

RWC Sevens 2022 will again feature 24 men's and 16 women's teams, who will converge on the 57,654-capacity stadium – which has hosted a round of the HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series since 2015-16 – to compete for the right to be crowned world champions.

The tournament is expected to build on the massively successful 2018 edition hosted at AT&T Park in San Francisco, which attracted a record attendance for a rugby event in the USA with a total attendance of more than 100,000 fans across the three days.

RWC Sevens 2018 also attracted cumulative domestic and global broadcast audiences of more than 24 million and 34 million viewers respectively, which included a record-breaking live broadcast audience of 1.7 million on its final day. The tournament also leveraged 22.5 million social media views on World Rugby channels over the course of the event.

World Rugby and hosts SA Rugby confirmed the tournament dates in May and launched a striking RWC Sevens 2022 brand, one which radiates unity, energy and passion and celebrates the spirit of rugby sevens that will ignite Cape Town's finest rugby stage. Earlier in May, the first partners were announced by World Rugby for RWC Sevens in DHL, the Official Logistic Partner, and Tudor, the Official Timekeeper, with both extending their partnerships ahead of the eighth edition of the tournament. They were joined by Kingsley Beverages as Official Hydration Sponsor in December.

The qualification process was also confirmed in May with the top eight men's teams and four women's teams from RWC Sevens 2018 all qualified directly. For the men's event, that is defending champions New Zealand, England, hosts South Africa, Fiji,

Argentina, USA, France and Scotland, while in the women's it is defending champions New Zealand, France, Australia and USA. South Africa will join the quartet as the host nation.

That leaves 16 men's and 11 women's spots to be filled and the regional process that will deliver these qualifiers kicked off in November in South America and Asia. Brazil's and Colombia's women were first to qualify by reaching the final of the Sudamérica Rugby Sevens in Uruguay, with Japan and China quickly joining them as the top sides in the Asia Rugby Sevens Series event in Dubai. Hong Kong and Korea claimed the men's qualification places for Asia, the latter beating Japan 21-14 in the semi-finals to confirm their place, with Uruguay and Chile booking their tickets in Costa Rica a week later. The remaining qualifiers will be determined in 2022.

For more information on the qualification process, visit www.rwcsevns.com/qualifying.



57,654:
the capacity of
the Cape Town
Stadium

RIGHT
Uruguay and
Chile battle
it out in the
South American
qualifying
tournament



CONTRA EL



40

teams will compete for the two titles



100,000

fans attended the 2018 edition in San Francisco

RUGBY WORLD CUP 2023 AIMS TO SET NEW STANDARDS

With less than two years to go until Rugby World Cup 2023, momentum is building in France and around the world for an event that will demonstrate the unifying power of sport on and off the field in rugby's 200th anniversary year.

France 2023 will be a tournament with fans and players at heart. Its much-anticipated match schedule, unveiled in February, is delighting fans with a mouth-watering blockbuster opener between hosts France and New Zealand on 8 September, 2023 at the iconic Stade de France.

For the first time in Rugby World Cup history, the men's showcase event has been extended by one week to provide all teams with a minimum of five rest days between all matches and squad size has been increased to 33 players, optimising recovery and preparation, and improving on-field performances.

Since the announcement, RWC 2023 fixtures have captured fans' imagination and an unprecedented demand for tickets has been registered with half a million people subscribing to the popular France 2023 Family to benefit from exclusive opportunities. The first sale phases, organised in March 2021, saw a record one million tickets sold in a matter of hours, illustrating the tournament's popularity in France and abroad.

Rugby enthusiasts lucky enough to get their hands on tickets will enjoy the best of France, its culture and its state-of-the-art infrastructures. Across the nine world-class venues and 10 host cities, France 2023 will deliver special moments and unforgettable experiences to millions of fans.

France 2023 is also proving popular among commercial partners and broadcasters. The renewal of World Rugby and TF1's long-standing partnership for Rugby World Cup broadcast rights in France means that the French public will enjoy free-to-air coverage of the 10th edition. Five of the six Worldwide Partners in Société Générale, Mastercard, Asahi, Capgemini and Land Rover, as well as all eight Official Sponsors, have already committed to France 2023, bringing their expertise to support the tournament's success.

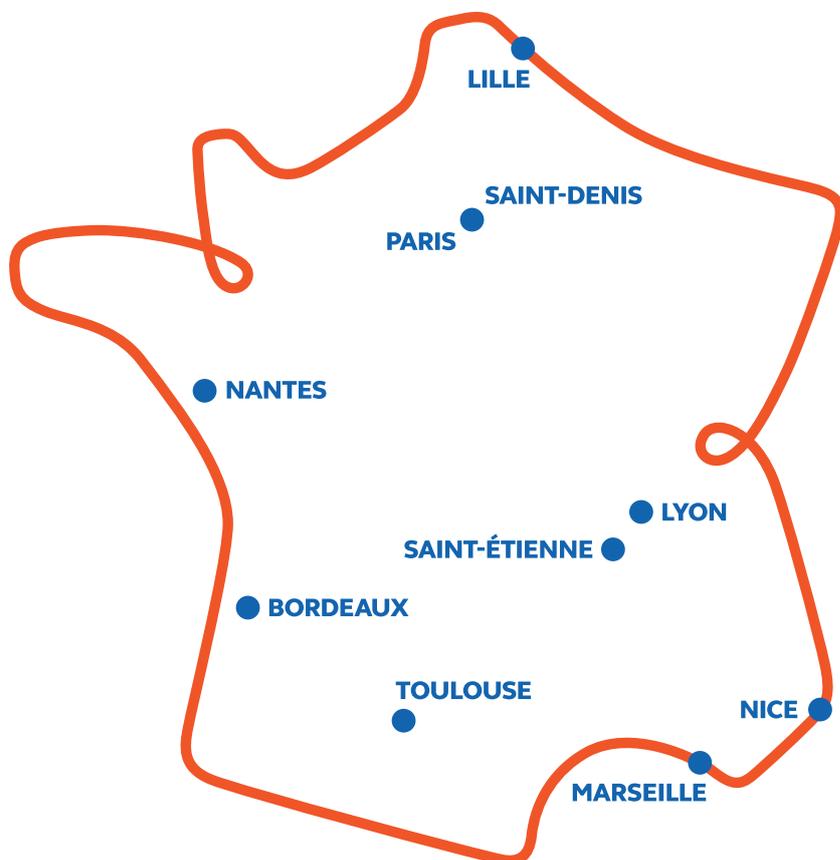
On 8 September, the world celebrated two years to go to RWC 2023 through a live event involving World Rugby Chairman Sir Bill Beaumont and Chief Executive Alan Gilpin during a live show in Paris. The event culminated with the unveiling of the official Gilbert Rugby World Cup 2023 match ball, the design of which symbolises the special unity between rugby and the French host cities that will provide the welcoming backdrop to the teams and fans from across France and around the world.





ABOVE

The Webb Ellis Cup and the official RWC 2023 ball



With preparations well on track, efforts have been deployed to fulfil France 2023's vision of delivering a Rugby World Cup with a positive impact. Promoting inclusivity and diversity through the sport and its values, the tournament's Official Charity, Rugby au Cœur, already uses the power of rugby as a vehicle for social development, funding a wide range of cultural, educational and rugby programmes, both on a domestic and international basis.

In Paris, Rugby World Cup France 2023 and World Rugby also cemented their ambition to raise the existing standards for international sporting events in terms of social responsibility, inclusion and sustainable development. France 2023 will harness the opportunity of staging one of the world's biggest and best-loved sports events to leave a social and environmental legacy that will resonate long beyond the seven weeks of action.

For more information on RWC 2023, visit www.rugbyworldcup.com/2023.



ROAD TO RWC 2023

The Rugby World Cup 2023 qualification process kicked off in March and by the end of 2021 43 matches had taken place across Europe, Oceania, the Americas and Africa with two nations celebrating after booking their tickets to France.

Samoa were the first to secure their passage to France 2023 following a 79-28 aggregate win over Tonga in the Oceania 1 play-off in July, and can now look forward to matches against England, Japan, Argentina and the Americas 2 qualifier in Pool D.

Holding a healthy 42-13 advantage over Tonga from the first leg in Auckland, Samoa needed to avoid defeat by 30 points a week later to confirm their place at France 2023. They did more than that in Hamilton, running in four tries and holding off the threat of a Tongan comeback for a 37-15 win.

Tonga bounced back to defeat the Cook Islands 54-10 to keep their dream of appearing at a ninth Rugby World Cup alive. The 'Ikale Tahi will now face the yet-to-be-decided Asia Rugby Championship 2021 winners in the Asia/Pacific 1 play-off for a place in Pool B.

Meanwhile, Uruguay created history in becoming the 14th confirmed participant at RWC 2023. Los Teros have featured at four previous tournaments but have never qualified as Americas 1, their status this time around after defeating USA 50-34 on aggregate in October.

Los Teros' task looked difficult when they trailed USA 19-3 going into the final quarter of the first leg in Glendale, Colorado, but 13 unanswered points in the final quarter meant it was still very much all to play for in the return match a week later.

Again, there was not much in it at half-time in Montevideo with the home side 13-8 up and only holding a two-point advantage overall. But a three-try salvo in 15 minutes after the break put the result beyond doubt and Los Teros went on to secure a famous 34-15 victory.

While Uruguay have confirmed their place in Pool A along with New Zealand, hosts France, Italy and the Africa Cup 2022 winner, RWC 2023 will

BELOW
Samoa qualified after claiming the Oceania 1 spot

RIGHT
Uruguay have also qualified, and Chile could yet join them





be the first tournament without Canada present after they lost out to Chile 54-46 over two legs. Los Condores will now play USA in a home-and-away series to determine which of the teams fills the Americas 2 slot in Pool D.

The qualification process is also well underway in Europe, where Georgia have stolen a march on their rivals after five straight wins secured them a fourth consecutive Rugby Europe Championship title in 2021. The top two teams across the 2021 and 2022 Championships will qualify as Europe 1 and Europe 2 with Georgia currently holding a nine-point lead over nearest rivals Romania and Portugal.

Eight teams, meanwhile, remain in contention for the Africa 1 spot after finishing in the top two of their respective pools in a Rugby Africa Cup 2021 that began with a bang as Namibia, bidding for a seventh successive Rugby World Cup appearance, lost 24-13 to Ivory Coast and Kenya were beaten 20-19 by Senegal.

A third upset followed a fortnight later when Uganda lost 22-16 to lower-ranked Algeria in Kampala. These six teams all remain in the hunt, joined by Zimbabwe and Burkina Faso – who were assured of qualification with Tunisia unable to take part in Pool D due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The 2022 edition will be a knockout competition, hosted by France 2023 in July, with pool winners Namibia, Senegal, Uganda and Zimbabwe to face Burkina Faso, Algeria, Kenya and Ivory Coast respectively in the quarter-finals on a road they all hope will lead to France.

The last step on the road to RWC 2023 will be the Final Qualification Tournament in November 2022, when four teams – one each from the Americas, Africa, Europe and Asia/Pacific – will battle it out for the 20th and final place.

For more on the RWC 2023 qualifying process, visit www.rugbyworldcup.com/2023/qualifiers.

RWC 2023 QUALIFIED TEAMS



POOL
A

**NEW ZEALAND
FRANCE
ITALY
URUGUAY
AFRICA 1**

FRANCE v NEW ZEALAND
Fri, 8 Sept – 21:00
Saint-Denis – Stade de France

FRANCE v AFRICA 1
Thu, 21 Sept – 21:00
Marseille – Stade Vélodrome

ITALY v AFRICA 1
Sat, 9 Sept – 13:00
Saint-Étienne – Stade Geoffroy Guichard

URUGUAY v AFRICA 1
Wed, 27 Sept – 17:45
Lyon – OL Stadium

FRANCE v URUGUAY
Thu, 14 Sept – 21:00
Lille – Stade Pierre Mauroy

NEW ZEALAND v ITALY
Fri, 29 Sept – 21:00
Lyon – OL Stadium

NEW ZEALAND v AFRICA 1
Fri, 15 Sept – 21:00
Toulouse – Stadium de Toulouse

NEW ZEALAND v URUGUAY
Thu, 5 Oct – 21:00
Lyon – OL Stadium

ITALY v URUGUAY
Wed, 20 Sept – 17:45
Nice – Stade de Nice

FRANCE v ITALY
Fri, 6 Oct – 21:00
Lyon – OL Stadium

POOL
C

**WALES
AUSTRALIA
FIJI
EUROPE 1
QUALIFIER WINNER**

AUSTRALIA v EUROPE 1
Sat, 9 Sept – 18:00
Saint-Denis – Stade de France

WALES v AUSTRALIA
Sun, 24 Sept – 21:00
Lyon – OL Stadium

WALES v FIJI
Sun, 10 Sept – 21:00
Bordeaux – Stade de Bordeaux

FIJI v EUROPE 1
Sat, 30 Sept – 17:45
Bordeaux – Stade de Bordeaux

WALES v QUALIFIER WINNER
Sat, 16 Sept – 17:45
Nice – Stade de Nice

AUSTRALIA v QUALIFIER WINNER
Sun, 1 Oct – 17:45
Saint-Étienne – Stade Geoffroy Guichard

AUSTRALIA v FIJI
Sun, 17 Sept – 17:45
Saint-Étienne – Stade Geoffroy Guichard

WALES v EUROPE 1
Sat, 7 Oct – 15:00
Nantes – Stade de la Beaujoire

EUROPE 1 v QUALIFIER WINNER
Sat, 23 Sept – 14:00
Toulouse – Stadium de Toulouse

FIJI v QUALIFIER WINNER
Sun, 8 Oct – 21:00
Toulouse – Stadium de Toulouse

POOL
B

**SOUTH AFRICA
IRELAND
SCOTLAND
ASIA/PACIFIC 1
EUROPE 2**

IRELAND v EUROPE 2
Sat, 9 Sept – 15:30
Bordeaux – Stade de Bordeaux

SCOTLAND v ASIA/PACIFIC 1
Sun, 24 Sept – 17:45
Nice – Stade de Nice

SOUTH AFRICA v SCOTLAND
Sun, 10 Sept – 17:45
Marseille – Stade Vélodrome

SCOTLAND v EUROPE 2
Sat, 30 Sept – 21:00
Lille – Stade Pierre Mauroy

IRELAND v ASIA/PACIFIC 1
Sat, 16 Sept – 21:00
Nantes – Stade de la Beaujoire

SOUTH AFRICA v ASIA/PACIFIC 1
Sun, 1 Oct – 21:00
Marseille – Stade Vélodrome

SOUTH AFRICA v EUROPE 2
Sun, 17 Sept – 15:00
Bordeaux – Stade de Bordeaux

IRELAND v SCOTLAND
Sat, 7 Oct – 21:00
Saint-Denis – Stade de France

SOUTH AFRICA v IRELAND
Sat, 23 Sept – 21:00
Saint-Denis – Stade de France

ASIA/PACIFIC 1 v EUROPE 2
Sun, 8 Oct – 17:45
Lille – Stade Pierre Mauroy

POOL
D

**ENGLAND
JAPAN
ARGENTINA
SAMOA
AMERICAS 2**

ENGLAND v ARGENTINA
Sat, 9 Sept – 21:00
Marseille – Stade Vélodrome

ENGLAND v AMERICAS 2
Sat, 23 Sept – 17:45
Lille – Stade Pierre Mauroy

JAPAN v AMERICAS 2
Sun, 10 Sept – 13:00
Toulouse – Stadium de Toulouse

JAPAN v SAMOA
Thu, 28 Sept – 21:00
Toulouse – Stadium de Toulouse

SAMOA v AMERICAS 2
Sat, 16 Sept – 15:00
Bordeaux – Stade de Bordeaux

ARGENTINA v AMERICAS 2
Sat, 30 Sept – 15:00
Nantes – Stade de la Beaujoire

ENGLAND v JAPAN
Sun, 17 Sept – 21:00
Nice – Stade de Nice

ENGLAND v SAMOA
Sat, 7 Oct – 17:45
Lille – Stade Pierre Mauroy

ARGENTINA v SAMOA
Fri, 22 Sept – 17:45
Saint-Étienne – Stade Geoffroy Guichard

JAPAN v ARGENTINA
Sun, 8 Oct – 13:00
Nantes – Stade de la Beaujoire

WORLDWIDE PARTNERS





MATCH SCHEDULE



JOIN THE 2023 FAMILY AT
TICKETS.RUGBYWORLD CUP.COM

ALL MATCHES ARE CET (UTC +1). SUBJECT TO CHANGE. TM & © RUGBY WORLD CUP LIMITED 2023.

#RWC2023

WORLD RUGBY ADOPTS PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

With the process to select the hosts for future Rugby World Cups having begun in February 2021, the year ended with England and Australia named as Preferred Candidates for the 2025 and 2027 editions and USA awarded Exclusive Targeted Dialogue status.

The World Rugby Council approved revisions in November following a full review of the Rugby World Cup host selection process, the objectives for the showcase tournament and the current global environment to ensure the international federation is in step with a rapidly changing world.

The reforms will deliver greater alignment between future Rugby World Cup hosts and World Rugby's long-term goals, while delivering an exceptional experience for players and fans. Ultimately, the new model will supercharge the global growth of the sport into new markets, attracting new fans and participants.

The Preferred Candidate process will introduce a new philosophy for invited potential hosts to present a flexible approach with hosting proposals

that best fit their sporting, economic, social and environmental planning needs rather than trying to fit the local context to a set Rugby World Cup hosting model.

The ultimate goal is to create a delivery model that maximises financial and operational efficiencies, while unlocking greater value for hosts and global rugby development, with a strong emphasis on building sustainable relationships with host countries and broadening fan and commercial appeal.

World Rugby will work with Preferred Candidates to set robust strategic objectives and build efficiencies of delivery and resourcing, helping to reduce hosting costs from the outset, while maximising revenue and delivery opportunities. All of which will lead to even greater direct





“We must continue to keep up with the fast pace of change in our current world and provide value for our future host nations and unions. Flexibility is a necessity.”

Alan Gilpin
World Rugby Chief Executive

investment back into the game at all levels. The awarding of Preferred Candidate status to England and Australia follows extensive dialogue with interested nations over the last year.

It comes with the full support of the respective unions and key financial commitments from their governments and will enable the sport to move forward with a clear 10-year roadmap.

The Council also voted to engage in extensive further dialogue with USA in relation to hosting of the men’s Rugby World Cup in 2031. As an emerging rugby market and with a 10-year lead-in to the tournament, the USA will require a unique and extended approach requiring more extensive dialogue with key stakeholders. This will take place with a view to developing

the most effective hosting model for a Rugby World Cup in North America and the global game in the long term.

World Rugby Chief Executive Alan Gilpin said: “We must continue to keep up with the fast pace of change in our current world and provide value for our future host nations and unions. Flexibility is a necessity to ensure good governance and to have successful sustainable men’s and women’s Rugby World Cups. We will do that while maintaining the personality of our events and our commitment to having players and fans at the heart of everything we do.”

The final hosting rights will be awarded by Council in May 2022.

PARTICIPATE

Participation map	44
Youth rugby	46
Participation plan	48
Game On Global	50
Regional associations	52
Olympic Solidarity	59
Rugby for development	60





GLOBAL PARTICIPATION IN RUGBY



Country	Total active players	Total participants
Andorra (1991)	390	2,085
Austria (1992)	1,850	2,200
Azerbaijan (2004)	Associate Member	
Belgium (1988)	12,259	10,715
Bosnia and Herzegovina (1996)	726	482
Bulgaria (1992)	3,020	3,154
Croatia (1992)	1,022	27,000
Cyprus (2014)	Associate Member	
Czechia (1988)	4,216	0
Denmark (1988)	4,036	1,400
England (1890)	1,925,000	0
Finland (2001)	586	2,557
France (1978)	191,126	226,231
Georgia (1992)	8,018	8,018
Germany (1988)	11,640	42,399
Greece [^] (2009)		
Hungary (1991)	1,055	570
Ireland (1886)	44,257	141,796
Israel (1988)	1,150	1,870
Italy (1987)	47,982	2,000
Latvia (1991)	1,194	369
Lithuania (1992)	2,559	2,781
Luxembourg (1991)	731	4,596
Malta (2000)	175	100
Moldova (1994)	1,330	595
Monaco (1998)	373	467
Netherlands (1988)	15,800	71,000
Norway (1993)	2,028	5,093



Country	Total active players	Total participants
Bahamas (1994)	515	160
Barbados (1995)	114	295
Bermuda (1992)	625	625
British Virgin Islands (2001)	Associate Member	
Canada (1987)	20,973	8,450
Cayman (1997)	753	3,727
Guyana (1995)	915	515
Jamaica (1996)	870	388
Mexico (2006)	13,413	27,016
St Lucia (1996)	Associate Member	
St. Vincent and The Grenadines (2001)	344	235
Trinidad and Tobago (1992)	2,189	4,142
USA (1987)	56,592	732,500
Total	97,303	778,053



Country	Total active players	Total participants
Argentina (1987)	86,326	0
Brazil (1995)	7,193	11,470
Chile (1991)	27,765	21,000
Colombia (1999)	18,870	0
Costa Rica (2014)	530	240
Guatemala (2016)	Associate Member	
Panama (2020)	Associate Member	
Paraguay (1989)	2,059	0
Peru (1999)	404	542
Uruguay (1989)	11,090	6,250
Venezuela (1998)	1,110	0
Total	155,347	39,502



Country	Total active players	Total participants
Algeria (2019)	13,968	13,638
Botswana (1994)	5,715	1,062
Burkina Faso (2018)	1,149	5,111
Burundi (2004)	4,512	1,260
Cameroon (1999)	4,120	4,120
Eswatini (1998)	1,360	2,318
Ghana (2004)	2,360	5,357
Ivory Coast (1998)	3,756	10,102
Kenya (1990)	9,075	9,490
Madagascar (1998)	150,730	149,520
Mali (2004)	Associate Member	
Mauritania (2003)	Associate Member	
Mauritius (2004)	720	17,099
Morocco [^] (1988)		
Namibia (1990)	5,975	17,177
Nigeria [^] (2001)		
Rwanda (2004)	8,365	10,800
Senegal (1999)	16,894	12,030
South Africa (1949)	550,637	177,034
Tanzania (2004)	Associate Member	
Togo (2004)	Associate Member	
Tunisia (1988)	10,032	6,522
Uganda (1997)	13,629	18,167
Zambia (1995)	3,886	15,400
Zimbabwe (1987)	60,034	42,012
Total	848,437	503,321

[^]Numbers not available

Country	Total active players	Total participants
Poland (1988)	7,476	30,470
Portugal (1988)	7,071	41,800
Romania (1987)	8,788	30,060
Russia (1990)	51,006	75,218
Scotland (1886)	42,474	0
Serbia (1988)	5,583	4,028
Slovakia (2016)	Associate Member	
Slovenia (1996)	292	712
Spain (1988)	39,882	31,839
Sweden (1988)	2,532	8,500
Switzerland (1988)	5,020	1,185
Turkey (2020)	Associate Member	
Ukraine (1992)	3,845	11,593
Wales (1886)	46,879	0
Total	2,500,986	791,718

^Numbers not available

128 countries

110 member unions
18 associate unions

7.6m players/participants

4.2m total active players*
3.4m total participants**

These total figures include:
971,598 female active players
849,070 female participants

*Active player: a person who is currently a member of a recognised team playing in organised games on a regular basis within a current season

**Participant: a person engaged in any form of rugby activity as part of a mass participation/ engagement programme (i.e. GIR or try out sessions in schools or local community, is not playing regularly as part of a team) and who has not yet progressed to being an active player



Country	Total active players	Total participants
Brunei (2013)	Associate Member	
China (1997)	33,750	37,561
Chinese Taipei (1988)	7,978	7,978
Guam (1998)	60	60
Hong Kong (1988)	7,832	2,292
India (1999)	76,745	97,979
Indonesia (2008)	322	457
Iran (2010)	13,500	3
Japan (1987)	183,402	815,551
Jordan (2020)	Associate Member	
Kazakhstan (1997)	4,210	2,026
Korea (1998)	3,978	1,574
Kyrgyzstan (2004)	Associate Member	
Laos (2004)	5,620	2,166
Lebanon (2018)	Associate Member	
Malaysia (1988)	39	39
Mongolia^ (2004)		
Nepal (2020)	Associate Member	
Pakistan (2004)	3,309	1,221

Country	Total active players	Total participants
American Samoa (2005)	620	525
Australia (1949)	75,851	42,304
Cook Islands (1995)	1,556	1,616
Fiji (1987)	100,536	94,297
New Zealand (1949)	84,279	135,833
Niue (1999)	2,350	1,034
Papua New Guinea (1993)	9,433	3,360
Samoa (1988)	8,100	13,896
Solomon Islands (1999)	4,380	16,825
Tonga (1987)	1,916	2,000
Vanuatu (1999)	420	420
Total	289,441	312,110



Country	Total active players	Total participants
Philippines (2004)	0	80
Qatar (2020)	Associate Member	
Singapore (1989)	0	7,000
Sri Lanka (1989)	280	546
Thailand (1989)	1,400	1,900
United Arab Emirates (2012)	3,380	0
Uzbekistan (2004)	10,620	3,950
Total	342,925	982,380

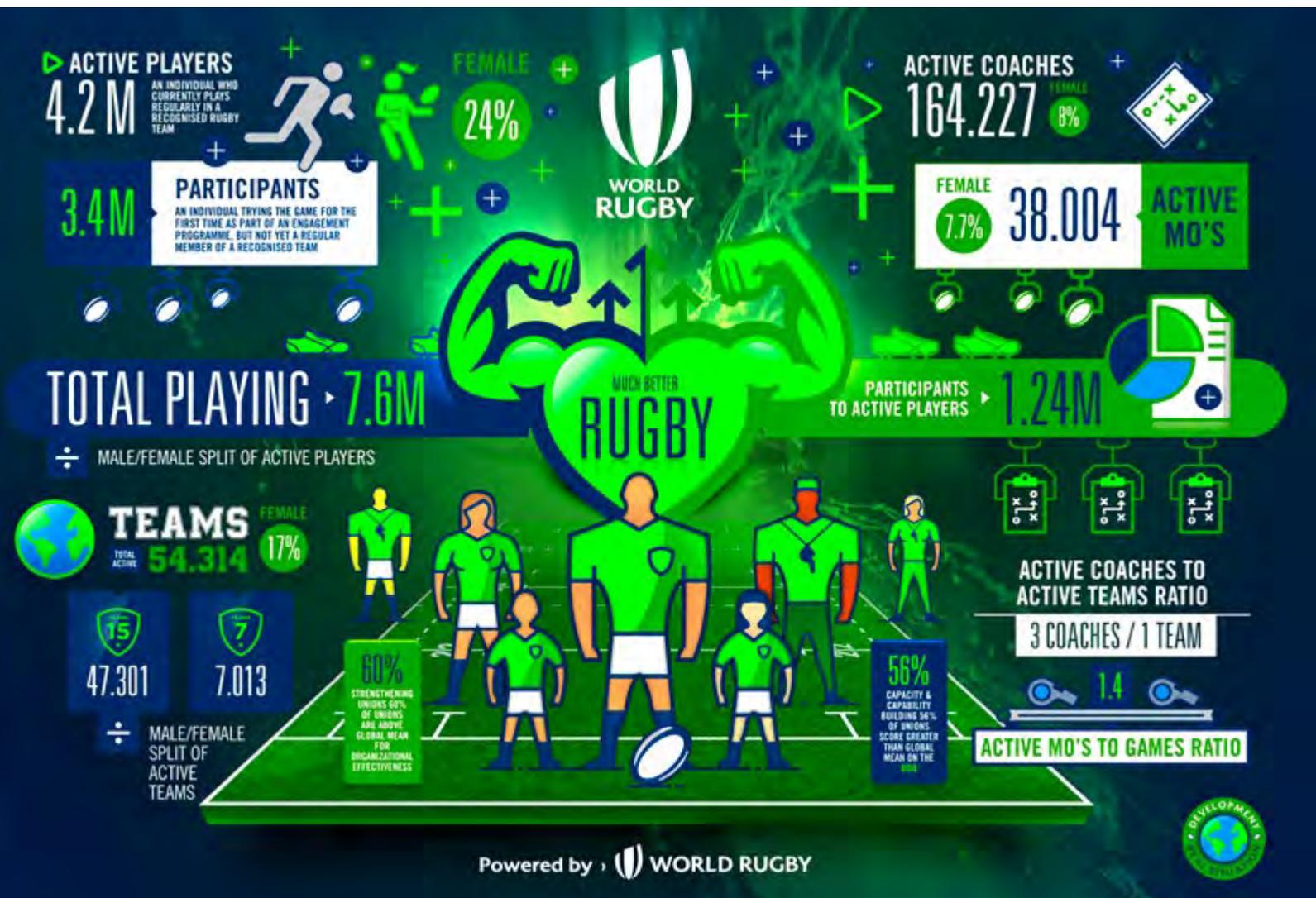
^Numbers not available

PLAYERS RETURN IN THEIR MILLIONS FOLLOWING GLOBAL COVID-19 DISRUPTION

Rugby participation may have been significantly impacted by the global pandemic, but the sport is fighting back, driven by a bold new strategic plan and a strong sense of community.

Millions of participants returned to rugby this year after the global pandemic – the largest societal disruption in living memory – brought almost all rugby to a halt around the world for much of 2020 and into 2021 as it did for most team sports.

Over the last 18 months, World Rugby has worked with its member unions to support the return to play. In addition to this support, World Rugby has worked with unions to raise the bar in defining who is currently playing the game.





Participation is a central pillar of World Rugby's new strategic plan, and this year the international federation launched a new Participation Plan in partnership with unions and regions. At the heart of the plan is supporting unions to develop their capability and capacity, the 'Game On Global' community law variations are a great example of how World Rugby can support unions to drive the accessibility and sustainability of the sport. Aimed at simplicity, enjoyment, safety and getting games on irrespective of numbers, the programme provides a menu of options for unions.

While the effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continue to impact all sports, World Rugby's participation plan aims to implement the foundations of long-term, sustainable growth. This will be achieved by supporting unions to increase their capability to promote participation through reaching new recruits, but also the retention of existing players.

With uniting and inspiring the rugby family at its heart, the plan sets out how the sport will attract new participants and welcome back players following the global pandemic through a commitment to make it as safe, accessible, attractive and enjoyable as possible for all.

World Rugby is investing £570 million in the development of the sport between 2020-23, including support for unions and regions for the development of the game. This will be further enhanced through the provision of a greater range of services to better enable them to grow the game around the world.

The participation plan recognises the diversity that exists across the globe and that unions are at different stages of development, with the need to adopt a differentiated approach that sees resources concentrated on supporting player retention in established nations, and on reaching new players in emerging nations.

Using revised definitions of participation, which categorises participants as active registered players, active non-registered players and participants, the global participation figures for 2021 demonstrate that 7.69 million returned to rugby this year, a drop of 2.7 million on 2019 under the old reporting system.

Member unions were asked to interrogate their data and triangulate playing numbers with additional data relating to active teams and clubs in their union. This more robust and refined reporting process will have accounted for an adjustment in the figures as the sport looks to more accurately understand global participation. The other significant driver in the reduction was the inability for casual rugby in schools and introductory Get Into Rugby (GIR) programmes to be run in many nations. GIR has traditionally engaged as many as two million participants annually, so with a complete cessation of GIR activity in some unions it is understandable that participant data was down.

Encouragingly, the return to rugby in the 15s game in 2021 is being driven by pre-teens with 55 per cent of all players around the globe pre-teen (66 per cent of this group are girls), demonstrating a deep connection between the attractiveness of the sport and the next generation of adult community players. The number of clubs has increased over the period, though the number of teams per club has declined slightly.

Central to the return to activity, return to play guidelines, new community law variations and a series of online workshops during the year helped support accessibility, capacity and capability to support rugby's safe return at all levels around the world.

PLAYING DEFINITIONS

Participant: An individual trying the game for the first time(s) as part of an engagement programme, but not yet a member of a recognised team.

Active non-registered: An individual who currently plays regularly as part of a recognised team, but whose personal details are not currently held by the rugby union.

Active registered: An individual who currently plays regularly as part of a recognised team, whose personal details are currently held by the rugby union on its registered player database.



PARTICIPATION PLAN PARTNERING WITH UNIONS AND REGIONS TO GROW THE SPORT

On 1 September, World Rugby published a modern, ambitious and player welfare driven participation plan focused on empowering its 128 member unions and six regions by increasing their capacity and capability to deliver participation growth for all forms of the sport around the globe.

Participation, alongside competition and engagement, is one of the three core pillars of World Rugby's strategic plan – 'A global sport for all, true to its values' – which was launched in April with a key aim to advance the growth of the sport through to 2025.

Rugby is a global growth sport, seeing strong upward trends in participation and gender equality over the last decade with more women and girls being encouraged into the game than ever before.

While the effects of the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic continue to impact all sports, World Rugby's participation plan aims to implement the foundations of long-term, sustainable growth. This will be achieved by supporting unions to increase their capability to promote participation

through reaching new recruits but also through the retention of existing players.

With uniting the rugby family at heart, the plan sets out how the sport will attract new participants and welcome back players following the global pandemic through a commitment to make it as safe, accessible, attractive and enjoyable as possible for all.

The successful Get Into Rugby and Impact Beyond programmes will continue to be core elements of World Rugby's participation plan with an ambition to promote greater retention in the game.

World Rugby is investing £570 million in the development of the sport between 2020-23. Long-term outcomes will focus on creating stronger unions and regions, as measured by a new Union



Development toolkit and an ambition to increase the total global playing population to more than 10 million, and those playing regularly in active teams to over six million by 2025.

In line with World Rugby's ongoing strategic commitment to grow the women's game, the participation plan aims to increase active female players by a further 10 per cent by 2025.

A big focus of the plan is to create longer sustainable structures to promote lifelong participation in the game. The ambition to reach 60,000 active teams globally is an important part of establishing those structures.

World Rugby Chief Executive Alan Gilpin said: "The unions and regions are the lifeblood of the sport and our participation plan is rightly focused on strengthening and empowering our members to increase their capacity and capability to grow the game around the globe, reaching out to both existing and potential new participants.

"Participation is one of three core pillars in our new strategic plan, alongside competition and engagement, and is ultimately the reason we exist as an organisation. Our resolute focus on player welfare transcends all of our strategic planning and underpins this new participation plan. The future for rugby is bright and this plan aims to capitalise on the opportunity to further globalise and grow the sport we love, a game for all."

For more on the participation plan, visit www.world.rugby/the-game/game-participation.



£570M

investment from
World Rugby
into development
between 2020-23



10M:

World Rugby's
2025 target for
the global playing
population



10%:

the targeted
increase in active
female players
by 2025



"Our resolute focus on player welfare transcends all of our strategic planning and underpins this new participation plan. The future for rugby is bright."

Alan Gilpin

World Rugby Chief Executive



GAME ON GLOBAL COMMUNITY LAW VARIATIONS TO ADVANCE ACCESSIBILITY AND WELFARE

Welfare and accessibility are at the heart of Game On Global, a programme of optional community law variations launched by World Rugby and national member unions following approval at November's World Rugby Council meeting.

The introduction of Game On Global builds on the participation plan, launched earlier in 2021 to accelerate sustainable rugby involvement beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, and is in line with the transformational strategy to cement rugby as the most progressive sport on player welfare.

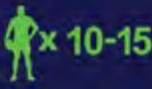
Game On Global provides national unions with the ability to implement modified laws at a domestic mass participation level, furthering

game experience and safety for participants. Unions can pick and choose depending on their context and purpose.

Promoting global consistency in the law variations that are currently open to unions at the community level of the game, a menu of 10 law variants are now available to all unions. From January 2022, the Game On Global principles can be utilised by all World Rugby member unions at their discretion.



GAME ON GLOBAL COMMUNITY LAW VARIATIONS

 x 10-15	Numbers		Lineouts
 80	Game duration		Kicking
	Replacements		Weight based banding
	Tackle height		Pitch Size
	Ball size		
	Scrum		



Implementation of the law variations will be centrally monitored, and a global research project will provide an evaluation of the impacts of the variations in terms of injury prevention and overall participation impact.

The law variations were developed by the Community Laws Flexibility Working Group, which was set up in November 2020, following a World Rugby survey in relation to law trials that received more than 1,800 respondents, reflecting the international federation’s mission to engage with the rugby family.

The working group, which involved member union Community Rugby Directors, World Rugby Council members, World Rugby Community Rugby Committee members and World Rugby regional and executive staff, was tasked with developing a set of community laws relevant and attractive to adult community participants that drive enjoyment, accessibility and retain the character of the game.

World Rugby Chairman Sir Bill Beaumont said: “The community game is the heart and soul of our sport. It is the foundation upon which our house is built

and the launch of Game On Global represents a landmark for rugby around the globe with the introduction of optional community law variations for our national member unions.

“We are constantly listening to and engaging with the global rugby family at all levels, and I am delighted that today’s tangible outcomes were born out of an initial survey that received more than 1,800 respondents from around the world and built upon existing models in England, New Zealand and Wales. A major benefit of the global nature of the project will be the ability for the sharing of best practice across unions and having one set of guidance that players can recognise no matter where they play in the world.

“The law amendments are a key element of our long-term objective to make the game more accessible, more sustainable, safer and available to all across the globe. The passion, commitment and enjoyment that is seen on rugby pitches up and down countries around the globe is what drives us on with the determination to continue to evolve and improve the game we love for all.”

ABOVE
The law variations are designed to be implemented at a mass participation, domestic level



1. Kenya's women faced Canada at Tokyo 2020

2. USA edged Canada in their Rugby World Cup 2023 qualifier

3. Japan's women at Tokyo 2020

4. France's women claimed Olympic silver in Tokyo

5. Samoa beat Tonga to qualify for Rugby World Cup 2023

6. Argentina's Ignacio Mendy and Gastón Revol celebrate their Olympic bronze





OLYMPIC GAMES PUTS ASIA IN THE SPOTLIGHT IN 2021

With Japan hosting the Olympic Games in July and August, 2021 was always going to be a year like no other in the region. But with COVID-19 refusing to go away, it was even more so.

Staying connected and engaged with stakeholders was one of the major challenges for Asia Rugby member unions, who had welcomed Iran and Laos into the fold towards the end of the previous year.

Little or no face-to-face contact meant a different approach to training and education and development and participation was necessary.

Member unions across Asia further developed their own social and digital engagement platforms to connect with their local stakeholders as well as benefitting from Asia Rugby's key initiatives.

The Asia Rugby Live magazine show, for example, featured 150 guests, ranging from those involved in the elite end of the game to community level, and reached three million people.

One of the targets for 2021 was to help unions develop their staff and the union's capacity and capability to run the sport more professionally on and off the field through a series of certified training and education courses. A total of 47 virtual training and education sessions – a mix of online courses, webinars and workshops – were conducted at regional level.

Beyond the traditional training and education course, Asia

Rugby has also developed other online courses for their member unions. To date, Asia Rugby staff have delivered and facilitated 210 workshops and courses across coaching, officiating, player welfare, leadership and management, sponsorship and marketing, and social and digital media content.

As with all regions, returning to play in a safe environment has been the primary objective and this was achieved in Malaysia, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Hong Kong, Lebanon, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates among other countries in the second half of the year.

After careful planning and support by the host unions and local government agencies, the first two return to play tournaments were held after almost two years of inactivity, with an under-18 girls sevens tournament in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, as well as a West Asia return to play sevens tournament in Doha, Qatar, taking place in October.

Even in the absence of fans, the Olympic Games rugby sevens tournament in Tokyo was deemed a huge success. While hosts Japan's men and women struggled to make an impression and Korea made their debut in the men's event, it was China's women (pictured) who caught the eye in finishing seventh.

Very soon the eyes of the rugby sevens world were on Dubai, as the Asia Rugby Sevens Series returned with Hong Kong and Japan winning the men's and women's title respectively, to qualify for Rugby World Cup

Sevens 2022. Korea and China will also be present in Cape Town as the beaten finalists.

Dubai was also the setting for the opening two rounds of the HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series 2022, and both tournaments were won by South Africa's men and Australia's women.

Meanwhile, rugby sevens became a medal sport in the 20th edition of the Indonesia National Games in 2021, where six men's and six women's provincial rugby sevens teams competed for a place on the podium.

As the UAE Rugby Federation celebrated the 10th anniversary of their Player Pathway programme partnership with HSBC, which sees rugby introduced in all government schools, there were positive developments on this front in other countries, with Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal Rugby all signing agreements with their respective Ministries of Education to enable closer cooperation between the unions and their education authorities.



www.asiarugby.com



Twitter: @AsiaRugby



Facebook: @asia.rugby





OLYMPIC SUCCESS CAPTURES IMAGINATION ACROSS OCEANIA

While COVID-19 had a major impact on rugby activity across the Oceania region, there was still much to celebrate on and off the field in 2021.

Oceania Rugby, like its fellow regional associations, saw a number of competitions become casualties of the pandemic, including both of the U20 events and the men's and women's sevens and 15s Championships, while Rugby World Cup 2021 in New Zealand was postponed until 8 October, 2022.

The Olympic Games once again provided cause for celebration as Fiji and New Zealand dominated the podium in the men's and women's rugby sevens events in Tokyo in July.

Fiji's men successfully defended their title from Rio 2016 with a 27-12 victory over New Zealand in the gold medal match, while Fijiana secured an historic bronze medal, the first Olympic medal won by any Fijian women. New Zealand's women went one better than the men by claiming the gold medal at the expense of France, triumphing 26-12 to ensure no repeat of their Rio heartbreak.

In 15s, Samoa's men became the first to emerge from the Rugby World Cup 2023 regional qualification process to secure their place in France, beating Tonga 79-28 on aggregate across two Oceania 1 play-off matches in New Zealand in July. Samoa won the first leg 42-13 in Auckland and followed that up with a 37-15 victory in Hamilton a week later to take their place alongside England, Argentina, Japan and the Americas 2 qualifier in Pool D.

After losing to Samoa, Tonga defeated the Cook Islands and

will now play the winner of the Asia Rugby Championship in July to decide who qualifies for RWC 2023 as Asia/Pacific 1. A place in Pool B alongside defending world champions South Africa, Ireland, Scotland and Europe 2 awaits the triumphant team with the loser progressing to the Final Qualification Tournament.

One huge positive was confirmation of Fijian Drua and Moana Pasifika's participation in the new-look Super Rugby Pacific 2022 competition supported by a three-year funding package of £3.6 million from World Rugby. The decision was made following a detailed financial, performance and commercial feasibility study in partnership with New Zealand Rugby and the respective unions of Samoa, Tonga and Fiji. Having two teams in Super Rugby will enhance the player development pathway in the Pacific Islands, improving the opportunity for the three countries to perform to their full potential on the world stage.

Meanwhile, women's rugby continues to keep pushing back the boundaries in Oceania and on 8 March, the Fiji Rugby Union chose International Women's Day to celebrate those who've contributed to the growth of the game. No individual has been more influential than women's rugby trailblazer and Oceania Rugby Board member Cathy Wong and the day was a fitting way to mark her Fiji Commemorative 50th Year of Independence Award.

Respecting the contributions of women to the game is vital

to continue to inspire the next generation – in leadership as well as game-related roles – and that theme continued in September with a series of Women in Rugby activities. More than 700 people registered to attend one of the four Oceania Rugby online webinars; 46 people attended a stakeholder engagement workshop in Samoa with UN Women, the Samoa Association of Sports and National Olympic Committee and other national organisations; and over 40 women attended a World Rugby Principles of Leadership and Management (PLM) regional course from Samoa, American Samoa, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu, Fiji, Tonga, Kiribati, the Cook Islands and Solomon Islands.

The Kiribati Rugby Union became an associate member of Oceania Rugby at the AGM in October, only two years after it was established. The AGM, held virtually due to travel restrictions, also saw the final adoption of constitution changes approved at May's early meeting of the membership. These changes included the chair becoming independent once elected and gender balance clauses introduced to mean at least 37 per cent of one gender – or three of eight elected members – on Oceania Rugby committees is required.



www.oceania.rugby



Twitter: @OceaniaRugby



Facebook: @oceaniarugbyunion



RUGBY AFRICA LAYS FOUNDATIONS FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE IN CHALLENGING TIMES

Flexibility and adaptability were the words of the year for Rugby Africa as they worked closely with unions to get the region back playing again in challenging circumstances.

The regional association delivered more than 20 international matches in June and July alone, including the Rugby Africa Cup as qualification for Rugby World Cup 2023 in France kicked off with Burkina Faso winning the Repechage to take their place in Pool D. Namibia, Senegal, Uganda and Zimbabwe finished top of their respective pools and will be joined in the final stage in France next year by runners-up Ivory Coast, Kenya, Algeria and Burkina Faso. The competition did witness some shocks with Ivory Coast beating Namibia and Senegal defeating Kenya, while Tunisia were unfortunately unable to participate due to COVID restrictions.

The road to RWC Sevens 2022 has also begun with men's and women's pre-qualifiers taking place in November and December, with more to come in January, as teams bid to reach the Rugby Africa Sevens in April that will qualify one women's and three men's teams for the global showpiece in South Africa. This was the first

time a women's pre-qualifier has been held, further evidence that women's rugby has been identified as a key strategic area of growth in Africa.

Eleven nations played in 10 matches under the Rugby Africa Women's Cup banner, five making their international debuts in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Tunisia, Senegal and Ivory Coast. A 12-team competition is planned for 2022 as the introduction of WXV in 2023 represents a huge opportunity for growth in Africa. The region had already seen the profile of women's rugby increase with the unveiling of Rugby Africa's 12 Unstoppables and their inspiring stories in October 2020.

Four teams – Tunisia and Madagascar's women and Uganda and Zimbabwe's men – flew the flag for Africa at the World Rugby Sevens Repechage in Monaco but were unable to join South Africa's men and Kenya's men and women at the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020. The Blitzboks finished fifth, while Kenya's

men and women bettered their placings in Rio by finishing ninth and 10th respectively. South Africa would finish the year strongly with four consecutive titles on the HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series for the first time, winning the 2021 Series and setting the pace in the first two events of the 2022 Series in Dubai.

Off the field there was also significant progress made on a training and education front, both online and in the second half of the year on site with 14 unions visited. Alain Rolland and World Rugby's Alhambra Nieves also supported a continuous online training programme for referees and coaches of match officials.

Rugby Africa also launched its Sports Management Training Programme in September, which will run over six months with participants receiving 12 days of online training across presentations, workshops, expert testimonials and case studies. Open to female volunteers or employees of rugby unions or those responsible for women's rugby who have the potential to be future leaders, the programme allows the 26 participants to develop their managerial skills and enable them to put the theory they've learnt into practice with projects for their own unions.



 www.rugbyafrique.com

 Twitter: @RugbyAfrigue

 Facebook: @RugbyAfrigue



RUGBY WORLD CUP A FOCUS ON AND OFF THE FIELD

Qualifying for Rugby World Cup 2023 in France was the primary focus for USA and Canada in 2021 as they contested the Rugby Americas North (RAN) 1 berth that would result in a play-off against Uruguay for the right to qualify as Americas 1.

USA lost the first leg in Newfoundland 34-21 but came good in the return in Glendale to win 38-16 and go through 59-50 on aggregate. That left Canada facing a home-and-away series against Sudamérica Rugby 3 Naciones runners-up Chile, with elimination from the race to France 2023 the unwanted consequence for the losing team.

Unfortunately for Canada, they came up against a rapidly improving Los Condors side and were beaten 54-46 across the two legs. USA also suffered disappointment on the same weekend as Uruguay bounced back from a 19-16 first-leg defeat with a 34-15 victory in the second encounter in Montevideo, to secure qualification as Americas 1. USA will now face Chile in 2022 in the Americas 2 play-off.

While losing their proud ever-present Rugby World Cup record was a blow for Canadian rugby, there were still plenty of positives as the women's team beat USA twice to win the inaugural Pacific Four Series. Off the field, the appointment of Sally Dennis as Chair of Rugby Canada was significant in that she is the first

female to hold the role, while Dr Araba Chintoh, one of 12 recipients of the inaugural World Rugby Women's Executive Leadership Scholarship in 2018, became Canada's representative on the RAN EXCO. In another first, Maria Thomas was elected as president of the Trinidad and Tobago union.

Canada was also the focal point for sevens as the men's HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series 2021 was exclusively based there, with back-to-back tournaments in Vancouver and Edmonton in September. Jamaica's men made their World Series debut and Mexico were also present alongside USA and hosts Canada. USA and Canada had failed to medal at Tokyo 2020, finishing sixth and eighth respectively, and missed out on a place on the podium in the Series, during what was an otherwise successful fortnight. A Fast Four women's tournament ran alongside the Series, featuring USA, Canada, Great Britain and Mexico with both Canada and USA in particular taking the opportunity to blood the next generation of players.

USA Rugby had formally announced in June that it would be launching a bid for future men's (2027 and 2031) and women's (2029) Rugby World Cups in what would be a game-changing move for rugby in the region. The women's tournament has been held in the region before, in Canada in 2006, but if USA are successful in being awarded hosting rights, the men's tournament would venture into new territory. In November, World Rugby's Council voted to engage in extensive future dialogue with

USA Rugby in relation to hosting RWC 2031.

In October, Belize competed in their first international tournament as the sport of rugby sevens continues to push back boundaries. Jamaica beat Mexico in the RAN-organised event in Turks and Caicos to qualify for the men's World Rugby Sevens Challenger Series. Mexico and the Cayman Islands also met in December, the region's only teams other than Canada and USA to play a test match in 2021.

Elsewhere, the appointment of former England international Mercedes Foy as women's rugby manager in July reignited interest in rugby among women and girls in the Cayman Islands. A Get Into Rugby festival proved very popular, and overall participation numbers are up.

A new RAN President was also elected in November in George Nicholson, who takes over from Miguel Carner following his four-year term.

As the year drew to a close, Rugby Americas North was on course to deliver 140 training courses which, considering the restrictions of COVID-19 across the region, was a considerable achievement and not too far down on pre-pandemic levels. Encouragingly, many of the participants were women.



 www.rugbyamericasnorth.com

 Twitter: @RugbyAmericasN

 Facebook: @RugbyAmericasN



EXCITING YEAR FOR RUGBY IN EUROPE

Amid the challenges presented by COVID-19, it has been another productive and exciting year on and off the field in the region.

One of the most exciting and significant developments was the launch in September of the first-ever club competition for the emerging unions in Europe. Supported by World Rugby, the Rugby Europe Super Cup involved eight teams from seven different countries split into two Conferences, East and West.

Russia had two entrants, Enisei-ATM and Lokomotiv Penza, and they were joined in the Eastern Conference by Georgia's Black Lion and Tel Aviv Heat from Israel. The Western Conference was made up of Lusitanos (Portugal), Brussels Devils (Belgium), Delta (Netherlands) and Castilla Leon Iberians (Spain). Lusitanos were the standout team in the pool stages, winning all six games. The Super Cup semi-finals are scheduled to take place in April 2022.

The Rugby Europe Super Cup is seen as another important step in the player development pathway towards test rugby. The highest level of rugby in the region continues to be the Rugby Europe Championship, with

Georgia still the standard-setters. The Lelos won two titles in the space of four months – both by way of a grand slam – with the delayed 2020 edition and the 2021 tournament played to a conclusion in the same year.

With points from the 2021 Championship counting towards Rugby World Cup 2023 qualification, unbeaten Georgia have put themselves in a very strong position to make it to the game's flagship tournament in France as Europe 1, while Romania and Portugal are currently leading the way in the race to the Europe 2 qualification spot.

For the first time since 2021, the Rugby Europe Championship involved the Netherlands after the Dutch won an emotional play-off against Belgium in May. All the games were broadcast on Rugby Europe TV with across-the-board English commentary, while the introduction of a TMO and HIA protocols were two other important developments in a competition that continues to go from strength to strength in terms of profile and standard.

In sevens, Olympic year brought an historic silver medal for France's women in Tokyo and a World Rugby Women's Sevens Player of the Year accolade for Anne-Cécile Ciofani in December, while Great Britain's men and women each missed out on a bronze medal in finishing fourth.

At regional level Russia's women were crowned champions of Europe for the seventh time since 2013 and Spain's men won their first title. In the middle of the year, while COVID-19 infection rates were still worryingly high, Rugby Europe managed to safely deliver 13 international sevens events involving more than 2,000 players.

In 2021, the Rugby Europe family grew to 47 member unions, with the addition of the Kosovo Rugby Federation.



www.rugbyeurope.eu



Twitter: @Rugby_Europe



Facebook: @rugbyeurope



SOUTH AMERICA REAPS REWARDS OF HARD WORK DURING PANDEMIC

The whole of South America was hard hit by COVID-19, but players of all ages and clubs found inventive ways to stay connected with the game, despite domestic rugby not being what it was before the pandemic.

Sudamérica Rugby (SAR) worked extremely hard to convince unions and national governments that competition was crucial. The region's professional league, Superliga Americana de Rugby (SLAR), had been cancelled after three games in 2020 and the goal was to complete the tournament with Cafeteros Pro (Colombia) having joined Jaguares XV (Argentina), Peñarol Rugby (Uruguay), Selknam (Chile), Olimpia Lions (Paraguay) and Cobra Brasil XV (Brazil).

After much consultation with health authorities, governments and franchises among others, SLAR was completed with the Jaguares XV crowned champions. Only one match was cancelled due to logistical issues, with teams sequestered in two bubbles, one for the first five rounds in Chile and the second for the remaining five rounds and knockout stage in Uruguay.

The successful delivery was due to the unfaltering commitment of everyone involved and, although played without crowds, SLAR was screened on a sports network with reach in the whole region, producing some impressive ratings, even outside those nations involved in the tournament. At one stage, it was the only live sport in South America.

SAR had started work to establish high performance plans two years out from the inaugural SLAR season in 2020 and thanks to this, the standard of rugby met with approval from viewers and unions. Another benefit was that teams were match-fit when it came to

the region's Rugby World Cup 2023 qualifiers.

In the race to make it to France 2023, Uruguay overcame Brazil and Chile to book their place in the Americas 1 play-off, while Chile advanced to the Americas 2 qualifier after beating Brazil. Chile lost the first leg to Canada, 22-21 in Langford, but then bounced back with one of their best-ever performances to triumph 33-24.

Uruguay trailed by 16 points in the first leg of their play-off with USA but finished strongly in Glendale to only lose 19-16. A 34-15 win in the second leg in Montevideo ensured Uruguay qualified as Americas 1 for the first time, taking their place in Pool A alongside New Zealand, France, Italy and the Africa 1 qualifier. Chile will now face USA in the Americas 2 play-off next July and are guaranteed at worst a place in the Final Qualification Tournament.

With little domestic rugby played over the first half of 2021, SAR continued developing the region's human resources. An innovative programme of training and education and creative use of online content and tools enabled unions to upskill and reach out to those looking to help rugby grow and improve in the region.

Women's rugby continued to inspire, on and off the field. Colombia earned a place in the Final Qualification Tournament for Rugby World Cup 2021 after beating Kenya 16-15 in Nairobi in August, while the Sudamérica Rugby Sevens took place in November with finalists Brazil

and Colombia securing their places at RWC Sevens 2022. The region's first women's coaching workshop also saw 10 coaches from seven nations meet with SAR's high-performance team across four days in Argentina.

High performance continues to be a priority and the third High Performance Academy, with 107 participants from six countries, met in Mar del Plata, Argentina, over five days, covering coaching, match officiating, S&C, nutrition, medical, physio and video analysis areas.

In a first for Central America, Costa Rica hosted the men's regional qualifier for RWC Sevens 2022 with Uruguay and Chile joining Argentina in South Africa next year. Argentina had plenty to celebrate themselves, having won Olympic bronze at Tokyo 2020 and seen Marcos Moneta named World Rugby Men's Sevens Player of the Year.



www.sudamerica.rugby



Twitter: @SudamericaRugby



Facebook: @sudamericarugby



OLYMPIC SOLIDARITY 2021–24 CYCLE OFF TO A FLYING START

Unions and National Olympic Committees join forces to grow the game while applications for female teams and coaches increase.

National Olympic Committees (NOCs) were faced with a busy 2021 following the postponement of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games due to the global pandemic, meaning they had to prepare for both the Games and the launch of a new Olympic Solidarity cycle in the same year.

Covering the period 2021–24, the new Olympic Solidarity quadrennial once again enables national federations attached to their respective NOCs the opportunity to avail of a range of specific supports to further develop capacity in their unions through a variety of programmes, including:

- Team support grants
- Development of national sports structures
- Technical courses for coaches
- Olympic scholarships for coaches

Funding for the above programmes can range from US\$5,000 up to US\$100,000 and, since 2013 when World Rugby members, regional association members and foundation unions first became eligible for funding by virtue of rugby sevens' inclusion on the Olympic programme, more than US\$5 million across 200+ applications has been allocated to rugby.

Despite the ongoing challenges COVID-19 posed for the rugby family and their communities in 2021, 18 applications have already been approved across four regions, totaling US\$660,000 in 2021 and with more in the pipeline.

Applicants for the team support grant have been able to access significant funding to support



their national men's and women's sevens squads over the four years. Funding covers:

- Costs relating to the organisation of national or international training camps for teams preparing for a specific competition
- Coaching and training costs for the team; and
- Costs relating to the organisation of friendly matches that are useful to the team's general training programme.

Successful applicants in 2021 included American Samoa, Andorra, Egypt, Guinea, Madagascar, Paraguay and Tunisia. Notably, of these seven, four unions applied for both their men's and women's teams, so with 11 applications in all, seven of these targeted the women's teams which represented 64 per cent of the applications – a figure which demonstrates the growing impact and positive outcomes of the Women in Rugby strategic plan.

Further illustrating the growth in female participation there were four applications for the

Olympic Scholarship for Coaches programme, with these equally split between male and female coaches. Beneficiaries included Hong Kong, Lesotho, Uganda and Uruguay. This grant supports coaches officially recognised by their union and active in their country to benefit from continuous high-level training and acquire experience and know-how, which they will then be responsible for placing at the service of their national sports system and further building capacity.

With restrictions on travel and large groups impacting the delivery of face-to-face courses, many training and education sessions have had to move online. However, while waiting for restrictions to ease, unions are encouraged to follow the lead of those applicants in 2021 and engage their NOCs to discuss their objectives for growing rugby, competition ambition, and the proven and positive impacts that rugby can have on youth and their communities.

For further information, visit www.world.rugby/tournaments/olympics/solidarity.

ABOVE
A technical course for coaches held in Burkina Faso in November



LANDMARK YEAR FOR RUGBY FOR DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

The spirit of rugby shines through in several rugby for development programmes leaving a positive environmental and social impact across the game.

The Spirit of Rugby programme concluded at the end of 2020 following four successful years of collaboration between World Rugby, its regional associations, member unions and organisations using rugby as a tool for development.

core values such as respect, passion and solidarity, continues to create a positive and lasting impact wherever rugby is played while seeking out new opportunities to grow the game and benefit communities.

Successful Spirit of Rugby partners were delivering programmes aligned to the attainment of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in areas such as health, education, gender equality, and social inclusion for mixed ability rugby athletes and programmes supporting migrants and refugees.

With environmental sustainability ever-growing in importance, World Rugby continued its support for long-standing kit collection and redistribution partner SOS Kit Aid, which in 2021 celebrated 20 years of operations. Well done to John Broadfoot and all the SOS Kit Aid team (www.soskitaid.com).

Given the continuing challenges arising from the global pandemic, World Rugby is taking the opportunity to review its approach to rugby for development activities and partnerships to ensure the spirit of rugby, driven by the sport's



ABOVE
Rugby for development programme Get Into Rugby Plus in Oceania



SOS Kit Aid celebrated 20 years of operations in 2021



ChildFund Rugby – Principal Charity for Rugby World Cup 2021 (playing in 2022)

For Rugby World Cup 2019 in Japan, a record-breaking charitable partnership between World Rugby and ChildFund resulted in more than

£2 million being pledged by rugby fans and stakeholders to support ChildFund Pass It Back rugby for development programmes in Asia, along with funding for emergency and recovery relief following the devastation of Typhoon Hagibis in Japan.

Building on the success of this collaboration, in May World Rugby was delighted to announce ChildFund Rugby as the Principal Charity for Rugby World Cup 2021, playing in 2022, a first in the history of the premier women's 15s event.

With a focus on gender equality initiatives, ChildFund works with

partners, including Oceania Rugby, to provide vulnerable girls and women with opportunities to learn skills to overcome challenges and be active leaders in their communities.

Rugby fans will have the opportunity to engage with and support the work of ChildFund Rugby, ChildFund's dedicated rugby for development unit, via an opt-in mechanism to donate when purchasing match-day tickets, with funds raised through the partnership supporting the expansion of rugby for development programmes in Oceania.

For more, visit www.rugbyworldcup.com/2021/about/childfund.



Rugby au Coeur – Official Charity for Rugby World Cup 2023

Using rugby for social development is the mission of Rugby au Coeur (Rugby at Heart), the transformational endowment fund set up by France 2023 that will positively impact participants, communities and wider society.

Reflecting the organisations' joint ambition of delivering the most socially impactful and sustainable rugby tournament ever, World Rugby and France 2023 announced in June the collaboration that would see Rugby au Coeur appointed "Official Charity", the first time any charitable initiative linked

to a Rugby World Cup has received such a designation.

Rugby au Coeur will harness the power of rugby as a vehicle for social development, funding a wide range of cultural, educational and rugby programmes, both on a domestic and international basis. As well as opportunities for corporate donations, fans buying tickets for RWC 2023 can make an opt-in donation when purchasing their tickets from the official RWC 2023 website or via tickets.rugbyworldcup.com/donation.

ENGAGEMENT

Social media and digital	64
World Rugby Awards	68
World Rugby Hall of Fame	70
Youth Unstoppables	72
Commercial partners	74





NEW APPROACH ENGAGES FANS ACROSS SOCIAL AND DIGITAL

Despite another year disrupted by COVID, 2021 has proven to be a record-breaker across the board for World Rugby's social and digital.

With a refreshed approach to content, bolstered by a number of specialist agencies, we delivered more impressions, views and engagements for a non-Rugby World Cup year than ever before.

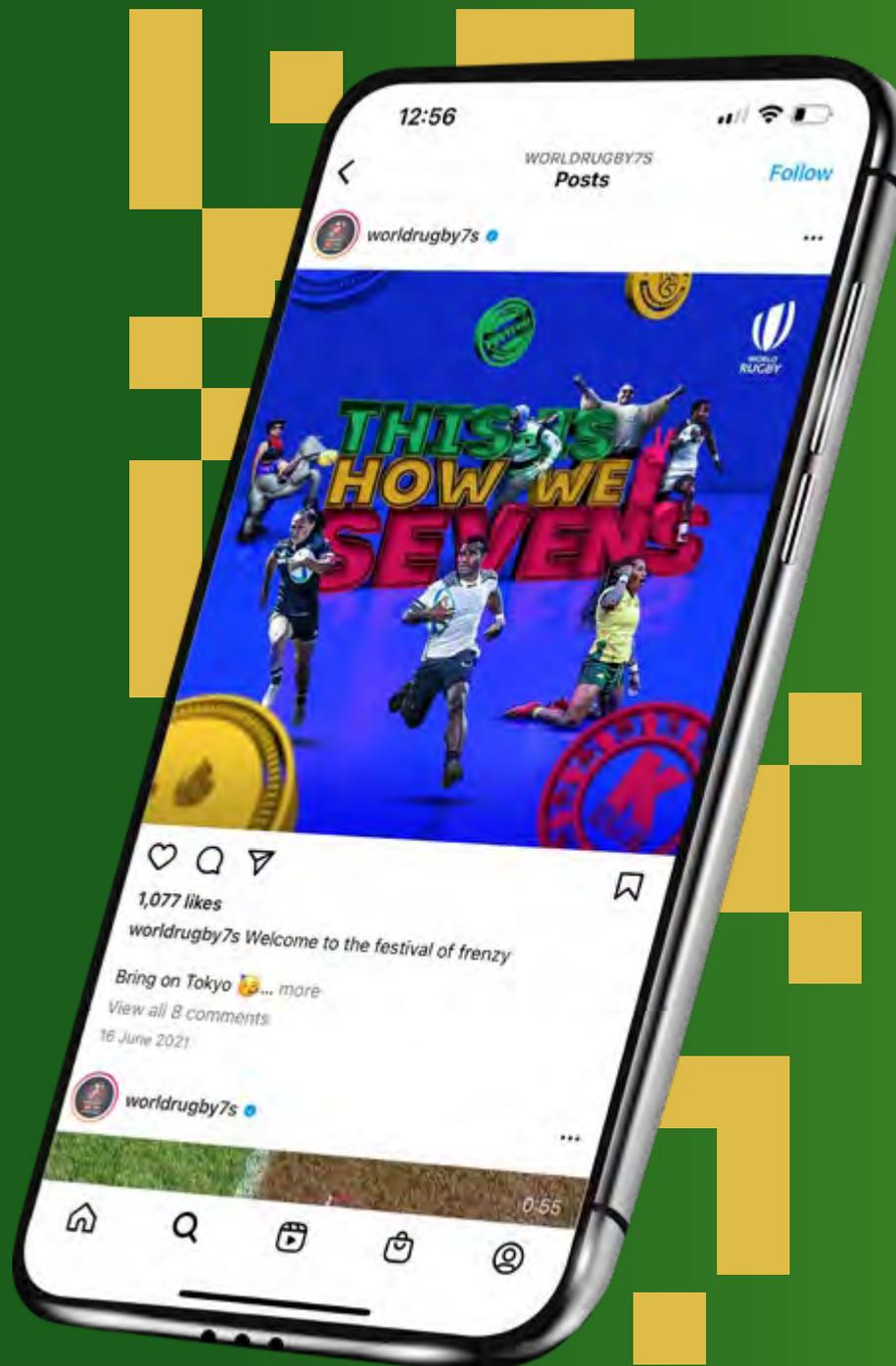
Adapting our strategy towards an “always on” approach, not reliant on events, has been key to engaging fans across the globe throughout the past 12 months, with the World Rugby CRM programme also evolving and growing to increase audience engagement and support of this approach.

Our desire to become an entertainment property, rather than just a governing body for the sport, started with a new suite of content strands designed to reach not just our core rugby fans, but also casual sports fans.

The now award-winning Whistle Watch, hosted by former referee Nigel Owens and filmed on his farm in Wales, achieved the most views and engagement of any serialised content we've produced, which is set to continue in 2022. Ultimate Rugby Challenges, where we pit the best talent in the world against each other, was a huge hit with our YouTube audience and was no surprise given the likes of World Rugby Men's 15s Player of the Year Antoine Dupont featuring in a fastest pass episode against All Blacks star Aaron Smith. Women's 360, a self-shot UGC style series around the Women's Six Nations, also proved a hit as women's content across the board picked up massive engagement across the year.

With content strands up and running providing a solid bedrock for engagement, all eyes were set on the biggest event of the year as players descended on Tokyo for the pinnacle of rugby sevens. To mark the occasion, we crafted our first-ever Olympics campaign, “This Is How We Sevens”, which was designed to help World Rugby be one of the most prominent international federations at the Games.

There were three objectives in mind: transitioning fans across to the men's and women's HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series, providing unions with a creative toolkit and becoming a top three international federation for growth or engagement. And through a number of tactics some great results were achieved. World Rugby finished second overall





Increased engagement for women's content across all platforms



75% increase on page views to the Olympic hub



Record viewing for Nigel Owens's Whistle Watch content





150k
votes by fans
across during the
social-first World
Rugby Awards

out of team sports for percentage social growth, achieved our largest ever share of engagements for women's content, saw record uplifts in page views to the Olympics hub on world.rugby with a 75 per cent increase on Rio 2016, and our best-ever open-rate for all CRM during the Olympics period.

Women's content during the Olympic Games, spearheaded by the likes of USA's Ilona Maher on TikTok and New Zealand's Ruby Tui, who gave one of the most watched interviews of any sport, was reflective of a growing trend we've seen during the year: women's rugby is growing and growing fast.

To capitalise on the incredible entertainment on show and the values that we see entrenched in the women's game, we developed our second women's campaign: Team Powered. Featuring a hero launch film featuring global stars, a vibrant new creative platform, a new women.rugby website offering a digital hub for the content, and our first-ever Women in Rugby partner in the form of Mastercard, Team Powered landed well with audiences and is still gaining momentum heading into a Rugby World Cup year.

One of the content streams born out of the new Team Powered campaign is the Youth Unstoppables. Focusing on up-and-coming rugby stars across the globe, camera crews have been out filming in incredible locations to tell some of the most compelling stories in the women's game. Episodes from South Africa, USA, France, Norway





and Paraguay went out in 2021, with plenty left in the first quarter of 2022 from territories such as Australia, Mexico and New Zealand.

Keeping up the tradition of finishing the year in style, the World Rugby Awards went social-first for the first time, utilising all World Rugby platforms. A bespoke website hosted fan votes for a number of categories, while a new creative platform brought the Awards to life across social through videos and graphics. With a host of partners involved in the Awards, special surprises were set up for winners, with crews mobilising across the globe to capture the emotion of these global superstars receiving their recognition. This success of this approach was born out in the numbers with double the number of social engagements compared to 2020 and 150,000 votes by fans across six of the categories.

2021 also saw the launch of a new official Rugby World Cup app, which lets fans enjoy unrivalled coverage of the sport's showpiece events, with dedicated sections to cover all the action from Rugby World Cup 2021, playing in 2022 in New Zealand, and Rugby World Cup 2023 in France.





WORLD RUGBY AWARDS

A YEAR TO REMEMBER

Two decades on from the introduction of the World Rugby Awards in 2001, choosing the standout players, coaches, referees and tries remains as difficult as ever.

The standard of rugby on show and the calibre of player in 2021 made drawing up a shortlist for the six awards that the public would vote on a real challenge for the panel of assembled experts.

In recent years the Awards have been dominated by the southern hemisphere but this time around there was a distinct Gallic theme as winners were celebrated virtually through an innovative digital format across five days.

After capping a tremendous year for club and country by leading France to their first win over New Zealand since 2009, scrum-half Antoine Dupont was

named World Rugby Men's 15s Player of the Year in association with Mastercard ahead of other nominees Australia duo Michael Hooper and Samu Kerevi and England and British and Irish Lions star Maro Itoje. Dupont is the first French recipient of the prestigious award since Thierry Dusautoir in 2011 and only the third ever.

Damian Penaud and Emilie Boulard made it a double for France in their respective International Rugby Players Try of the Year categories with two very different but equally spectacular scores, while Tokyo 2020 Olympic silver medallist Anne-Cécile Ciofani was named

World Rugby Women's Sevens Player of the Year in association with HSBC. Argentina youngster Marcos Moneta also enjoyed a superb Olympics, finishing as top try-scorer and was just as taken aback when receiving the Men's Sevens Player of the Year award.

Two French players – Caroline Boujard and Laure Sansus – were also nominated for the World Rugby Women's 15s Player of the Year award, but that was claimed by England forward Zoe Aldcroft. A key figure in an unstoppable England team who beat world champions New Zealand twice in November, Aldcroft described the honour as “the proudest moment of my career”.



WORLD RUGBY AWARDS 2021 WINNERS

World Rugby Men's 15s Player of the Year in association with Mastercard
Antoine Dupont (France)

World Rugby Women's 15s Player of the Year in association with Mastercard
Zoe Aldcroft (England)

World Rugby Men's Sevens Player of the Year in association with HSBC
Marcos Moneta (Argentina)

World Rugby Women's Sevens Player of the Year in association with HSBC
Anne-Cécile Ciofani (France)

World Rugby Breakthrough Player of the Year in association with Tudor
Will Jordan (New Zealand)

World Rugby Coach of the Year
Simon Middleton (England)

International Rugby Players Men's Try of the Year
Damian Penaud (France)

International Rugby Players Women's Try of the Year
Emilie Boulard (France)

World Rugby Men's 15s Dream Team of the Year in association with Capgemini:
1. Wyn Jones (Wales) 2. Malcolm Marx (South Africa) 3. Tadhg Furlong (Ireland) 4. Maro Itoje (England) 5. Eben Etzebeth (South) 6. Siya Kolisi (South Africa) 7. Michael Hooper (Australia) 8. Ardie Savea (New Zealand) 9. Antoine Dupont (France) 10. Beauden Barrett (New Zealand) 11. Makazole Mapimpi (South Africa) 12. Samu Kerevi (Australia) 13. Lukhanyo Am (South Africa) 14. Will Jordan (New Zealand) 15. Stuart Hogg (Scotland)

World Rugby Women's 15s Dream Team of the Year in association with Capgemini:
1. Annaëlle Deshayes (France) 2. Agathe Sochat (France) 3. Sarah Bern (England) 4. Safi N'Diaye (France) 5. Abbie Ward (England) 6. Zoe Aldcroft (England) 7. Karen Paquin (Canada) 8. Poppy Cleall (England) 9. Laure Sansus (France) 10. Caroline Drouin (France) 11. Abby Dow (England) 12. Beatrice Rigoni (Italy) 13. Stacey Fluhler (New Zealand) 14. Caroline Boujard (France) 15. Jasmine Joyce (Wales)

World Rugby Referee Award
Andrew Cole (Australia)

Vernon Pugh Award for Distinguished Service
Jacques Laurans (France)

For more details on the World Rugby Awards, visit www.world.rugby/tournaments/awards.

A remarkable record of 15 tries in 11 tests in 2021 earned New Zealand's Will Jordan the Breakthrough Player of the Year in association with Tudor award and also a place in the World Rugby Men's 15s Dream Team of the Year in association with Capgemini in an exciting back three of Makazole Mapimpi and Stuart Hogg. While Hogg was the only Scottish player to make the cut, Mapimpi is kept company by four other Springboks, including captain Siya Kolisi, an ever-present source of inspiration throughout the year.

Unsurprisingly, the World Rugby Women's 15s Dream Team of

the Year in association with Capgemini was predominantly Anglo-French in its make-up, the European powerhouses contributing 11 players in total. Unbeaten England also had the honour of seeing Simon Middleton being named World Rugby Coach of the Year, the first coach of a women's team to win the coveted award.

Now retired but still an influential figure in officiating, Australia's Andrew Cole received the World Rugby Referee Award, while Jacques Laurans added his name to the list of French winners by taking home the Vernon Pugh Award for Distinguished Service.

SALUTING THE GREATS OF THE GAME

Six legends of the game were inducted into the World Rugby Hall of Fame in October, taking the overall number up to 154.

It was fitting that in an Olympic year four players with strong ties to the world's biggest sporting event were among the latest inductees.

Humphrey Kayange and Cheryl McAfee were recognised for not only having stellar careers in their own right but also for their contribution towards getting rugby back into the Olympics programme.

Australia's Rugby World Cup Sevens 2009-winning captain McAfee and Kenya legend Kayange successfully presented the case for rugby sevens' inclusion to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) members in 2009.

"Obviously, it's a huge honour and a privilege, and when I found out I was elated, but just very, very surprised," said McAfee.

Rugby sevens made its debut at Rio 2016 and, while the tournament came too late for the retired McAfee, Kayange was able to bow out at the very top.

Fiji took the first of their two men's Olympic gold medals in Rio and the man who led them to victory, the inspirational Osea Kolinisau, has joined McAfee and Kayange in the World Rugby Hall of Fame.

So too Huriana Manuel-Carpenter, a multiple Rugby World Cup winner, in sevens and 15s, and a silver medallist in Rio with New Zealand.

In recognition of the 150th anniversary of the first international match between Scotland and England at Raeburn Place in Edinburgh on 27 March, 1871, former Scotland captain and coach Jim Telfer and England captain Will Carling were also inducted.

Both very different characters but unified by the pride and passion they have for their respective countries and the British and Irish Lions.

Not normally someone who is lost for words, England's double Grand Slam-winning captain Carling admitted to being taken aback by the news of his induction.

"At school you used to watch England or internationals and you used to think those people were different," he said.

"You never thought you'd play, and then you play and to a certain extent, you know, you see kids look at you in a certain way and you feel like saying to them: 'No listen, I'm just the same as you'.

"And I think that's the way I look at the Hall of Fame, just like 'wow, those people are different' — and I just don't see myself in that way."

The latest inductees were welcomed virtually into the World Rugby Hall of Fame by Panel Chairman John Eales, who became the first of 18 Australians to be inducted in 2007.

"The 2021 inductees for the World Rugby Hall of Fame are representative of all that is good in our game. Each of them have been outstanding players in either sevens or 15s and they have also been important contributors to rugby, in their own countries and globally, off the field," said Australia's Rugby World Cup 1999-winning captain.

World Rugby Hall of Fame inductees in 2021

- 149 – Osea Kolinisau (Fiji)
- 150 – Humphrey Kayange (Kenya)
- 151 – Huriana Manuel-Carpenter (New Zealand)
- 152 – Cheryl McAfee (Australia)
- 153 – Will Carling (England)
- 154 – Jim Telfer (Scotland)

For more information on the 2021 inductees and the Hall of Fame itself, visit the dedicated website www.world.rugby/halloffame.



Humphrey Kayange (Kenya)



Osea Kolinisau (Fiji)



**Huriana Manuel-Carpenter
(New Zealand)**



**WORLD RUGBY
HALL of FAME**

Presented by



TUDOR



Cheryl McAfee (Australia)



Jim Telfer (Scotland)



Will Carling (England)

YOUTH UNSTOPPABLES

Only months after World Rugby announced a ground-breaking partnership with Mastercard to accelerate the development of women in rugby, the Youth Unstoppables campaign launched.



YOUTH UNSTOPPABLES

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



As the exclusive partners of the Youth Unstoppables campaign, Mastercard will work with World Rugby to inspire young women and girls to get involved in the sport through a unique digital content series championing inspirational females around the world.

The Youth Unstoppables were launched to coincide with one year to go to Rugby World Cup 2021 in New Zealand and by the time the tournament comes around, 17 players from 14 different unions will have shared their story and what rugby means to them.

The first episode of the series aired on 11 October – to celebrate International Day of the Girl Child 2021 – and featured South Africa’s Youth Unstoppable Zikhona, from the Langa Township in Cape Town.

“Having sport, having something to do without school keeps you out of the streets and doing wrong things,” said Zikhona, who first took up the game at the age of 15 and is now Western Province girls’ U18s vice-captain.

Speaking about the positive influence rugby has played in her life, Zikhona added: “I am confident in myself, and when I am on the field, I make sure I do what I need to do never mind what the people outside or in my community say behind my back. I want to be unstoppable; no one will stop me.”

Since then, other youngsters have been unveiled and told their stories as Youth Unstoppables, which is part of World Rugby’s strategic plan aiming to accelerate the development of women in rugby from 2017-25.

The second episode introduced Elin, from the USA, who attended her first USA Women’s Sevens tournament aged six and was immediately taken aback by the power, speed and skill of the players on show at Infinity Park in Glendale, Colorado.



Zikhona

“I am confident in myself. I want to be unstoppable; no one will stop me.”



Mari



Vacalaini



Talei



Téani



Andrea



Astrid



Kristin

As the family made their way home that evening, she had only one thought in her mind: “I want to play that sport!” Fortunately for Elin, she was allowed to enrol a year young into the Girls Rugby Inc programme in Colorado. It’s fair to say she has not looked back. “I play rugby because it’s fun!” Elin, now nine, said.

Not only that, but Elin’s generosity of spirit has also seen her give something back to the game. During the COVID-19 pandemic, in the hope of recruiting new players and getting to know some of her classmates better, Elin introduced them to rugby as she led an online PE lesson.

“Rugby players are tough and competitive. Playing rugby has helped me to challenge myself and has increased my self-confidence,” Elin said. “If more women played rugby, they would think of themselves more positively.”

In addition to South Africa and USA, Youth Unstoppables from Paraguay, France, Norway and Fiji have also been unveiled, reflecting the widespread and growing appeal of women’s rugby around the globe, with further names to follow in 2022.

To meet the Youth Unstoppables, visit www.women.rugby/youth-unstoppables.

LANDMARK PARTNERSHIPS SECURED IN 2021

Despite the challenges of a global pandemic, 2021 was a year that saw World Rugby announce a number of significant partnerships with its showpiece events and campaigns.

Women in Rugby partnership with Mastercard

In June, World Rugby announced a transformative five-year partnership with Mastercard to accelerate the development of women in rugby as per its 2017-25 strategic plan.

Mastercard became the founding Global Partner of World Rugby's Women in Rugby programme, focusing exclusively on growing youth participation and raising the profile of women's global competitions and the international calendar.

They are also the first Global Partner of WXV, the new annual global women's competition that will start in 2023, and the first Worldwide Partner for Rugby World Cup 2021, playing in 2022, and the next women's edition in 2025 as preferred card.

World Rugby also launched its new Team Powered marketing campaign, with Mastercard the exclusive partner of the Youth Unstoppables element, working with World Rugby to inspire young women and girls to get involved in the sport through a unique digital content series championing inspirational females around the world.



Global Digital Transformation partnership with Capgemini

In September, World Rugby announced a wide-ranging partnership with Capgemini that sees them join the family of Worldwide Partners for Rugby World Cup 2023 in France and become World Rugby's Global Digital Transformation Partner.

A world leader in helping organisations to transform by harnessing the power of technology, Capgemini will harness its innovation and

technology expertise to enrich the tournament experience for millions of fans in stadia and watching via broadcast and digital platforms.

Capgemini will also deliver innovative digital solutions to support the growth of rugby at all levels and will be the first-ever partner of the men's and women's World Rugby Rankings as well as the sponsor of the Men's and Women's 15s Dream Team of Year at the World Rugby Awards.





Free-to-air coverage

On a broadcast front, World Rugby also signed a deal with TF1 in France to provide free-to-air coverage of the next men's and women's Rugby World Cups, in New Zealand next year and in France in 2023.

The deal extends a partnership that stretches back to 1991 and has delivered some of the largest audiences ever recorded in rugby, underscoring TF1's ambition to provide free-to-air coverage of the best international sporting events.

A first for Rugby World Cup

Rugby World Cup also welcomed its first Asian Worldwide Partner with the news in April that Japanese brand Asahi would be the Official Beer for RWC 2023 in France. Coming on the back of a record-breaking 2019 tournament in Japan, the deal reflects rugby's increasingly global presence and impact and Asahi's ambition to use Rugby World Cup as a platform to penetrate new markets and launch new products.

A fifth Worldwide Partner was confirmed in November with Land Rover extending their association with the tournament, having inspired

thousands of children through their extensive grassroots activities and the RWC mascot programme giving youngsters the chance to join team captains on the pitch before every match. The 2023 mascots will be known as Land Rover Drivers for Change and will reflect the company's strong sustainability objectives by selecting children for their passion and commitment to changing their world for the better. Land Rover's participation in the tournament will also be crucial in achieving the sustainability strategy of France 2023 through their provision of a hybrid fleet.

WORLDWIDE PARTNERS



THE GAME

Player welfare	78
Research corner	82
Law trials	86
Game analysis	88
High performance	90
Match officials	94
Training and education	96
Keep Rugby Clean	98
Integrity	100
Disciplinary	101







**ADVANCING WELFARE
FOR PLAYERS – PRESENT,
FUTURE AND PAST –
AT ALL LEVELS OF THE
GAME**

1 **AFTERCARE FOR FORMER PLAYERS**
Developing a best-practice approach to care and support for former players.



2 **INNOVATION LED BY SCIENCE AND RESEARCH**
Investing in concussion and head impact studies, and acting on the evidence.



3 **LAWS OF THE GAME EVOLUTION**
Reviewing and updating the laws to further safeguard players at all levels.



4 **DEDICATED FOCUS ON THE WOMEN'S GAME**
Holistic approach including bespoke scientific research and game adaptations.



5 **EDUCATION AND INJURY-PREVENTION INITIATIVES**
Easy access to information, tools and resources for everyone involved in rugby.



6 **OPEN ENGAGEMENT WITH THE RUGBY FAMILY**
Engaging with players, coaches, medics, fans and parents to shape together the future of the game.



ADVANCING RUGBY AS THE MOST PROGRESSIVE SPORT ON PLAYER WELFARE

In 2021 World Rugby launched a new six-point strategy to further cement rugby as the most progressive sport on player welfare, building on strong foundations to advance player safety and wellbeing at every level.

Launching the plan, World Rugby Chairman Sir Bill Beaumont said: “I am clear that continuing to put player welfare front and centre is critical if we are to grow our sport. The welfare of our players has always been our number one priority, and the plan we are releasing today underlines that commitment.

“It is a plan by the game, for the game, and will have consultation at its heart. We want to build on recent constructive conversations with current and former players, fans and organisations, to make sure we hear from everyone on how to secure the future of the game we all love.”

Under six clear action areas, the plan sets out how welfare will be advanced via an evidence-based approach across the game, supporting all players – current, former and future – mitigating risk and embracing the latest scientific knowledge, research and technology.





Since its launch, World Rugby, in full partnership with member unions, International Rugby Players and independent experts, have made strong collective progress:

1. A focus on former players

Advancing best practice in care, information, education and support for former players struggling or concerned about their health:

- In 2021, World Rugby launched the 'Brain Health Initiative' to educate all players on how to promote good brain health away from the field and after rugby, while doubling down on the sport's commitment to reduce the risk of head impacts.

2. Innovation led by science and research

The cornerstone of the sport's evidence-based approach to player welfare advances, World Rugby doubled its player welfare and research budget in 2021, leading to:

- Evidence-based training load guidance limiting the amount of full contact training to 15 minutes a week, based on a study involving 700 elite men and women players across 16 leagues [see page 81].
- World Rugby has partnered with the University of Otago and the University of Ulster on the biggest-ever study of head impacts in sport using Prevent Biometrics' instrumented mouthguards. This will inform the moves to make the game safer, while providing a detailed understanding of risk [see right].
- World Rugby is examining the latest eye-tracking technology as an objective means to support both the Head Injury Assessment and Graduated Return to Play.
- World Rugby are working with Sports Labs and the other Accredited Test Institutes to develop a more specific and reliable test method for skin injury risk on rugby surfaces. This is focusing, initially, on artificial surfaces but will be applicable to natural surfaces too.

ABOVE AND OPPOSITE

The Otago Rugby Community Head Impact Detection study and Prevent Biometrics technology

GAME-CHANGERS: HOW WORLD RUGBY IS EMBRACING TECH TO MAKE THE GAME SAFER

A joint project between World Rugby, New Zealand Rugby, the University of Otago and the University of Ulster is aiming to deliver a more informed approach to head impacts and concussion in rugby, helping to shape the future of the sport.

Mouthguards that contain accelerometers and gyroscopes have been provided to more than 1,000 elite and community players via agreements with their clubs and unions to measure the frequency and nature of head impacts in training and match environments.

In the largest study of its kind, impacts that register 'G forces' are being analysed using data via the mouthguard and time-coded video to provide a detailed picture of the events or factors that contribute to head accelerations and impacts, and importantly provide an insight on how to prevent them.

The study is being run in two parts – a detailed look at the community level of the game, men and women, boys and girls from under-13 to senior – in partnership with New Zealand Rugby, Otago Rugby and the University of Otago. The ORCHID (Otago Rugby Community Head Impact Detection) study, which followed 700 players for eight weeks of matches and training, is the first of its kind to feature community-level players.

The second part of the study involves elite men's and women's teams, including the Black Ferns, Red Roses, Leinster, Clermont Auvergne, Benetton Treviso, Worcester Warriors Women and Northampton Saints, and is being analysed by the University of Ulster. The outcomes will be peer-reviewed and published.

Importantly, both studies are using the same technology and data evaluation using Prevent Biometrics' industry-leading instrumented technology. This will enable like-for-like comparisons across age-grade, community and elite rugby and enable World Rugby to understand where to focus risk mitigation strategies.

3. Continue to review and evolve the laws of the game to safeguard players

Welfare-driven law review boosting safety and accessibility at every level:

- Welfare-focused global law trials, including the 50:22, goal-line drop-out, latching restrictions and the scrum brake-foot, have been implemented.
- In November, the injury-preventing 'Game On' community game law variation programme was launched and World Rugby continue to evaluate reduced tackle height and the impact of substitutions on injuries.
- Independent Concussion Consultants have been introduced for all competitions involving the Head Injury Assessment to independently assess any player returning within 10 days and those who have a concussion history, adding an extra supportive layer to the rehabilitation process.

4. A dedicated focus on the women's game

Recognising both the growth potential and unique nature of women's rugby, World Rugby is prioritising research, law review and specific medical support for women in rugby:

- World Rugby commissioned women's specific research and launched the first ever women's welfare advisory group to steer unique research and injury prevention programmes for women ahead of what will be a massive year for women's rugby with Rugby World Cup 2021, Rugby World Cup Sevens 2022 and the Commonwealth Games 2022 sevens.

5. Continued investment in education

World Rugby is strengthening the provision of information, tools and resources to everyone involved in the game when it comes to head impacts and player welfare:



- The Tackle Ready programme was launched in 2021, providing a simple, evidence-based approach to the promotion and practice of safe tackle technique.
- The Activate injury-prevention programme is now running in more than 100 national unions worldwide. If used regularly, it has the potential to reduce concussion risk by up to 60 per cent.

6. Open engagement with the rugby family
In partnership with unions, World Rugby is consulting widely and deeply across the community and professional game, for men's and women's rugby:

- World Rugby is listening constantly to players, medical experts, scientists and lobby groups with the common aim of making the sport the best it can be.
- In the UK, World Rugby, the Rugby Football Union and Welsh Rugby Union have been actively engaged with the government's inquiry into Concussion in Sport.

World Rugby will not stand still. The sport must continue to renew its mandate from parents and players to grow participation in the game, by demonstrating progressive change. This commitment is shared by everyone at World Rugby and across all 128 national member unions.

In an open letter to the rugby family Beaumont added: "To the former players who are struggling, your rugby family cares deeply and I will not rest until we understand how we can make rugby as safe as possible. No former player will be left behind."

"In 2022, we will kick on and take our support for player welfare to the next level. We will implement our brain health action plan, including supporting former players who have worries about their brain health via access to specialist support and information, and to further understand any links between the game and neurodegenerative diseases."

World Rugby will redouble on investment to better identify and manage head injuries, promote individualised risk-based rehabilitation following a head injury and will also sign innovative technology and research partnerships that will inform meaningful changes. By the end of the year, World Rugby will have a new intuitive digital hub for welfare and a new concussion education app.

The sport's approach to player welfare will be shaped by everyone who has a stake in the game – from fans, to players, coaches, and medical staff. To that end, World Rugby will undertake rugby's widest ever consultation on player welfare, with an intention to kick off the process during the 2022 Six Nations.

Ultimately, the sport is united in its desire for parents across the world to view rugby as a game that they want their sons and daughters to play because of the many benefits it brings.



LIMITING CONTACT TRAINING TO BOOST WELFARE AND PERFORMANCE

New guidance limiting the volume of contact in training was launched in August 2021, coming with the full support of players, clubs and unions.

The best-practice guidance (www.world.rugby/news/664156) focuses on the intensity and frequency of contact training and was designed with the input of leading players, coaches, and conditioning and medical experts.

While the incidence of training injuries is low relative to that of matches, the volume of training performed means that a relatively high proportion (35-40 per cent) of all injuries during a season occur during training, with the majority of these being soft tissue injuries. Since the training environment is highly controllable, the guidelines have been developed to reduce injury risk and cumulative contact load to the lowest possible levels that still allow for adequate player conditioning and technical preparation.

Instrumented mouthguards are being used to help monitor and validate the guidance.

“To the former players who are struggling, your rugby family cares deeply and I will not rest until we understand how we can make rugby as safe as possible. No former player will be left behind.”

Sir Bill Beaumont
World Rugby Chairman



RESEARCH CORNER

RESEARCH FUNDING CALL

Following a COVID-induced postponement in 2020, the research funding programme resumed in 2021 with the renewed aim of funding external research with the potential to advance practice and knowledge of player welfare across the game.

Thirty-two initial proposals were received and reviewed by World Rugby's Scientific Committee, of which eight proposals were selected to provide more detailed project plans. These project plans were again reviewed by the Scientific Committee, and five proposals were subsequently recommended to be awarded funding.

This represented the most projects (five) and total amount of funding awarded (£500,000) in a single cycle since the research funding programme started. Furthermore, the funding awarded in the 2021 cycle pushed the total amount of funding awarded through the research funding programme to more than £1.2 million.

A second impressive feature of the 2021 funding cycle was the nature of the proposals that were

awarded funding. All proposals will feature female participants and four of the five proposals will focus specifically on advancing player welfare in women's rugby across both active and recently retired playing groups. This underlines World Rugby's commitment to advancing player welfare across both women's rugby and across the lifespan of players.





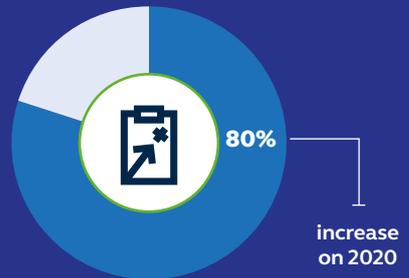
ACTIVATE

2021 presented a challenging year for the roll-out of the Activate injury prevention programme with limited opportunities for in-person course delivery. Despite these challenges, the training and education workforce delivered impressive growth in awareness and interest in Activate throughout the six regions.

As a result, 2021 saw almost 30,000 individual users accessing the online coaching content for Activate, reflecting an increase of 80 per cent on 2020. Users were located in 172 countries (an increase of 60 per cent on 2020, while 95 per cent of World Rugby's member unions were represented. Where some regions were able to maintain face-to-face course delivery, a total of more than 1,300 coaches attended over 100 workshops led by members of the regional workforce.

The disruptions due to the pandemic provided an opportunity to expand the range of languages that Activate content is available in, with resources now available in nine languages – English, Spanish, French, Czech, German, Japanese, Dutch, Portuguese and Simplified Chinese.

30,000
users accessed online
Activate coaching content



95%
of World
Rugby's member
unions were
represented
by users from
172 countries

1,300
coaches
attended
over **100**
workshops

Activate is
available
in **9**
languages

In addition, the acquaint for regional workforce was translated into an online course in Passport, offering a second option for certifying workforce to lead coach workshops in future. 2021 also saw the introduction of Activators within each region – local champions of Activate that will assist regional training managers with future roll-out plans within their region.





INJURY SURVEILLANCE

Expanding and supporting injury surveillance research across all ages and levels of rugby remains a priority for World Rugby, especially with the return of competitive rugby in 2021.

To support competitions and unions with data collection, World Rugby has made available a web app that is already used across our own competitions. This web app was used across the Rugby Europe Championship and the newly created SúperLiga Americana de Rugby in 2021, and continues to be used by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland to conduct injury surveillance across the Leinster Schools Cup competitions.

The current trends in injury surveillance across both community and elite rugby were presented at the 2021 Player Welfare and Laws Symposium. Using injury data kindly provided by elite competition organisers around the world, World Rugby provided estimates of the frequency and severity of injuries sustained by players, both for overall match injuries and concussions.

Key findings indicated that approximately three injuries occur per match on average in elite men's rugby, while concussions were estimated to occur

once in almost every two matches. In elite women's rugby, approximately two injuries occurred on average in each match and concussion occurred once in every three to four matches on average. Concussions resulted in 16-17 days' absence in male and female players, which helps to highlight that the graduated return to play process following concussion is a six-stage process rather than a six-day one, as has been portrayed in some corners.

Injury frequency varied with age in community rugby, with an average of one injury forcing a player to be unavailable for more than seven days occurring every five matches for male players aged 12-13 years, once every three matches for players aged 14-16 years, and once every two matches for players aged 16-18 years. For adult players, a time-loss injury occurred once every match on average for male and female players.

For youth players, concussions occurred once every 14 matches (U13 players) to every seven matches on average (U18 players). For adult players, concussions occurred on average once every five matches for female players once in every six matches for male players. Concussions were associated with 27-29 days of missed time for youth players and 29-30 days for adult players. These findings are helpful in reinforcing the return to play guidance that is in place for community-level players following concussion.

SKIN INJURY PROJECT

While artificial turf is used as a suitable surface for all levels of rugby, complaints on the propensity for skin injuries still arise. While World Rugby believes that the majority of these issues can be resolved through proper maintenance, it is not possible to remove this risk entirely (skin injuries occur on both natural and artificial surfaces).

World Rugby has engaged with Sports Labs and the University of Cardiff with support from the other Accredited Test Institutes to develop a skin injury test device.

The project aims to develop, manufacture and peer review a new test apparatus that will enable better understanding of skin injury risk. The prototype has been presented to,

and scrutinised and widely accepted by the turf testing community and is recognised as having the potential to revolutionise strategies to mitigate skin injury risk, both in rugby and, through support from FIFA and FIH, the wider sporting environment.

The realistic impact velocities generated coupled with the development of an impactor possessing good biofidelity demonstrate that this device applies a holistic approach for assessing skin injury risk on artificial turf. Consequently, this device should have improved validity versus the existing Securisport device. Initial testing has produced encouraging results that demonstrate suitable sensitivity of the impact and dynamic frictional coefficients, which will be used to provide an insight into the contact scenarios that are most injurious.



WELFARE-DRIVEN LAW TRIALS BUILD MOMENTUM

World Rugby's mission to cement rugby as the most progressive sport on player welfare was supported in 2021 by the global adoption of a package of welfare-driven law trials as part of a holistic approach to reducing the risk of injury at all levels of the sport.

Following game-wide consultation, expert evaluation and modelling, a package of five laws were approved by the World Rugby Executive Committee for trial in 2021-22, all with an underlying evidence-based aim of enhancing welfare outcomes.

Welfare-focused law trials approved for global trial

- **50:22:** This law trial is intended to create space via a tactical choice for players to drop out of the defensive line in order to prevent their opponents from kicking for touch, reducing impact of defensive line speed. A team that successfully kicks the ball from their own half indirectly into touch in the opposition's 22m will be rewarded with the throw into the lineout.
- **Goal-line drop-out:** This law trial is intended to reduce the number of scrums, reward good defence, encourage counterattacking and increase the rate of ball in play. If an attacking team carries the ball into goal and is held up or kicks the ball into in-goal and then the ball is grounded by a defender, then the game

restarts with a drop out anywhere along the goal-line.

Welfare-focused breakdown law amendments approved for global trial

- **Pre-bound pods of players:** Outlawing the practice of pods of three or more players being pre-bound prior to receiving the ball. The sanction will be a penalty kick.
- **Sanctioning the lower limb clear-out:** Penalising players who target/drop their weight onto the lower limbs of a jackler. The sanction will be a penalty kick.
- **Tightening law relating to latching:** One-player latch to be permitted, but this player has the same responsibilities as a first arriving player (i.e. must stay on feet, enter through gate and not fall to floor). The sanction will be a penalty kick.

In addition, the Executive Committee approved two trials specifically for rugby sevens, including the men's and women's HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series.



Sevens law trials

- The Law Review Group approved a two-year extension of the trial whereby a team may nominate and use up to five replacements (this is in addition to substitutions to cover HIA, blood, injury or foul play incidents). The substitutions can be made on a rolling basis. In the event of extra-time, a sixth replacement can also be utilised.
- The Group recommended to Council that in-goal assistant referees will no longer be permitted where there is a TMO present at a competition.

The trials will be evaluated by the Laws Review Group with recommendations made to the High Performance and Community Rugby Committees and Executive Committee before the World Rugby Council considers in May which trials are adopted into Law.

Women's specific initiatives

In launching its six-point welfare advancement action plan, World Rugby also announced that it would initiate a dedicated focus on the women's game, including law review and trials.

This was a position endorsed by the newly established Women's Player Welfare Steering Group, which met in London in November, with priority areas set for 2022 as the sport anticipates Rugby World Cup 2021 in New Zealand.

For more information on the Laws of the game, download the World Rugby Laws App or visit www.world.rugby/the-game/laws/home.



Law amendment process timeline

2019

- Law Review Group (LRG) meets to analyse previous cycle and identify law priorities. Meeting is run alongside the Player Welfare and Law Symposium
- Closed law trials in specific competitions are implemented

2020

- LRG meets at Player Welfare and Law Symposium to monitor law trials
- High Tackle Sanction review is undertaken and work on the Head Contact Process begins
- Breakdown Working Group recommends clear priority focus areas for players, coaches and referees. This is supported by the Rugby Committee and Executive Committee and introduced as a law application guideline

2021

- High Tackle Sanction review recommends the Head Contact Process, which is wholly supported by Executive Committee and introduced as a law application guideline
- Breakdown Working Group reconvenes and recommends tweaks to the law application guideline and three welfare-driven global law trials
- LRG meets to analyse the closed trials and make recommendations
- High Performance Rugby Committee (HP RYC) considers LRG recommendations
- Executive Committee considers LRG and HP RYC recommendations
- Global law trials commence on 1 August

2022

- LRG meets to analyse all current law trials and recommend some laws for adoption into full law
- HP RYC meets to consider the recommendations and agree what goes to Council
- Council meets to determine which laws are adopted in full
- One-year moratorium on law changes (save for player welfare purposes) begins



GAME ANALYSIS

A function of the Player Welfare and Rugby Services department, World Rugby’s game analysis unit delivers important insights into the playing of the game, which underpins the sport’s evidence-based approach to law review and injury-prevention.

A number of law application guidelines and global law trials have been introduced over the past 20 months.

These include:

- **Breakdown** – Law Application Guideline (March 2020).
- **Head Contact Process** – Law Application Guideline (March 2021).
- **Global law trials** – 50:22, goal-line drop-out, flying wedge, one-player pre-latched, cleanout and the safety of the jackler (August 2021).

The breakdown law application guideline was introduced to enforce current law. The focus was on referees to deal with the following:

- **Tackler** – The tackler must still release and get out of the way immediately.
- **Ball carrier** – The ball carrier is limited to one dynamic and immediate movement. More onus

on the ball carrier presenting or releasing the ball more quickly.

- **Jackler** – The first arriving player must enter legally, be on their feet and on the ball, with an attempt to lift it. Likely to be rewarded more quickly and there is no longer the expectation to “survive the clear out”.
- **Other arriving players** – Side entry will be refereed. Legal entry expectation with players required to “drive not dive”.
- **Foul play** – This will continue to be a priority in the interests of player safety.

The impact of this law application has seen the number of penalties being awarded at the breakdown increase in all competitions.

However, the enforcement of law has seen much quicker speed of ball and a greater contest which are real positives that have a huge impact on the game.

ABOVE

Ruck speed has increased in The Rugby Championship

RIGHT

The new Head Contact Process is designed to improve tackle safety

As an example, here is the data for the Six Nations and The Rugby Championship.

	2019-20 6N/TRC	2020-21 6N/TRC	Difference
Ruck PKs	7	10	+3
Ruck speed (attacking half)	3.00s	2.79s	-0.21s
Turnovers	7	9	+2

The Head Contact Process was designed to protect the head, neck and throat area of players. The process can be applied to:

- High tackles
- Shoulder charges
- Dangerous cleanouts
- Head-to-head collisions
- Leading elbow/forearm

The impact of this law application has also been significant with the number of yellow and red cards increasing dramatically in all competitions.

However, this has now started to decrease as players change tackle behaviour and start to understand that there is a risk when there is head contact with dangerous or poor tackle technique.

In regard to the global law trials, the two most talked about laws are the 50:22 and the goal-line drop-out.

50:22

- There has not been an increase in the number of kicks per match as a result of this law trial and in fact there have been few successful 50:22 kicks. On average there is only 0.5 per match.
- There were three successful 50:22 kicks in The Rugby Championship (South Africa with two and Australia one).

Goal-line drop-out

- On average, there has been one goal-line drop-out per match with the ball either being held up in goal or forced out by a player.
- The most goal-line drop-outs have been in the women's competitions, including the Allianz Premier 15s in England and the Farah Palmer Cup in New Zealand.
- Each goal-line drop-out saves around 50 seconds of match time.

This objective data doesn't illustrate too much change in the shape of the game. However, a number of coaches have commented that these subtle law changes are having an impact on tactics and player safety.





HIGH PERFORMANCE INVESTMENT

UNION COMPETITION AND PREPARATION INVESTMENT

The postponement of Rugby World Cup 2021 by a year due to the pandemic saw World Rugby's Executive Committee approve a £2.6 million investment to support a high-performance preparation and competition programme for teams that had qualified or were involved still in the qualification process for the tournament in New Zealand.

The High Performance (HP) team engaged with the 19 unions to provide initial investment, capability development and to identify opportunities for teams to play fixtures with the pandemic creating disruption and uncertainty to team preparations, assembly opportunities and fixture schedules.

Nicky Ponsford joined as World Rugby's Women's High-Performance Manager in July on a two-year secondment from the Rugby Football Union, bringing with her significant experience to help support unions to deliver HP programmes and the development of international standard training environments, structures and practices to ensure teams will be at their best come RWC 2021.

With the investment enabling teams to assemble for more preparation camps in high-performance training environments, there were also opportunities to accelerate the development of union personnel with an innovative seminar series and workshops to grow capability across the women's 15s programmes.

A first-ever S&C seminar series dedicated entirely to the women's game and specifically tailored to women's high-performance rugby was held over four days in August and September. The series

focused on key areas such as endurance training at elite level, optimising training around the menstrual cycle and demands of the women's elite game to ensure teams could successfully develop and deliver S&C programmes to maximise performance and aid injury-prevention.

Nineteen unions were invited to attend the series, which was held online and featured a series of presentations from keynote speakers covering a range of topics including strength, acceleration and endurance training, developing team training culture, understanding the specific needs of women players and Rugby World Cup preparedness.

This was in addition to the Women's High-Performance Academy, which returned for a third year in 2021. Led and coordinated by World Rugby Hall of Fame inductee Carol Isherwood, World Rugby High Performance Consultant Greg McWilliams, Japan head coach and World Rugby High Performance Rugby Committee member Lesley McKenzie and World Rugby High Performance Consultant David Hadfield, the online HP Academy covered six modules aimed at driving a broad range of knowledge and expertise among national coaches in a high-performance environment and supporting long-term growth and development.

On the pitch, the inaugural Pacific Four Series took place, albeit only with Canada facing USA as COVID restrictions prevented New Zealand and Australia meeting, while South Africa, Japan, New Zealand, USA and Canada travelled to Europe in November for test matches.



£2.6M

of investment approved by World Rugby's Executive Committee to support high-performance preparation for Rugby World Cup 2021

High performance investment and programme reviews

The High Performance review process is a fundamental part of how World Rugby monitors the allocation of HP investment and takes place twice during a four-year cycle, typically the year after a union's performance case submission.

The reviews provide union leadership and HP staff with the opportunity to present on their performance achievements and engage in dialogue around risks in their national team programme.

Twenty unions' programmes – 13 men's and seven women's – went through the individual review process in 2021, which involved a presentation and discussion on critical areas with HP programmes evaluated on five performance management frameworks in past performance, future potential, RWC campaign, HP programme and HP budget.

Two overarching themes emerged from the reviews related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on union HP programmes. The first, that teams who have been able to assemble regularly and play more frequently are meeting or exceeding performance expectations, while the return of rugby activity is also linked to the financial recovery of the union.

Olympic Games rugby sevens preparation

In the backdrop of the global pandemic, which resulted in disruption to competitions and profound financial challenges for member unions, World Rugby allocated US\$2.5 million to support unions in preparing for the postponed Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

Unions submitted operational plans and programme budgets to World Rugby, which saw allocations of US\$100,000 investment allocated initially to the 21 qualified teams (11 men's and 10 women's) to directly support their preparations.

This investment was largely used by unions to enhance the daily training environment and for teams to play in adapted competition programmes, but was also used for recruitment and training of coaching staff, sports science and sports medicine as well as player welfare and development.

For the three teams that emerged from the World Rugby Sevens Repechage in June 2021, investment was available three weeks before the Games to offset additional costs of pre-Games training camps and performance support.

The quality of preparations was a significant contribution to the performance of teams in Tokyo as teams seized the opportunity to showcase rugby sevens to a worldwide audience as one of the most exciting sports in the Games and expand the global reach of the sport.

Major market

Seventy-six players have participated in four talent identification and player development initiatives since 2018, including the North American Combine and the USA Rugby National Academy. Forty-five players have subsequently earned professional contracts in Major League Rugby (MLR), nine have played in the SuperLiga Americana de Rugby (SLAR) with three playing professionally in France. The success of these programmes was further highlighted with 26 players selected in their national team squads for the July internationals.

With the continued growth of MLR and the pressure that this places on a shallow USA-qualified player pool saw World Rugby and USA Rugby partner in a new approach to talent identification and targeted player development in 2021. More than 400 athletes attended seven talent identification camps that were held over six weeks in May and June, strategically targeting non-traditional pathways, including domestic Pasifika communities and transfer athletes between 18 and 24 years of age. Twenty-five players from the talent identification camps were selected in the USA Rugby National Academy, a 10-week programme conducted in Glendale, Colorado, which aims to accelerate the development of players by exposing them to a HP daily training.

Meanwhile, the Sudamérica Rugby (SAR) High Performance team continue to work closely with their six HP unions in the region in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay and Uruguay. With national programmes at differing levels of maturity, unions are provided with tailored levels of support across key HP areas. SAR has identified that the development and training of domestic HP staff is critical in the delivery of union HP centres as well as their respective SLAR and national team programmes.



20
unions'
programmes
went through
the HP review
process in 2021



400+
athletes
attended talent
identification
camps in USA



CAPABILITIES AND EXPERTISE

High Performance Academy 2021

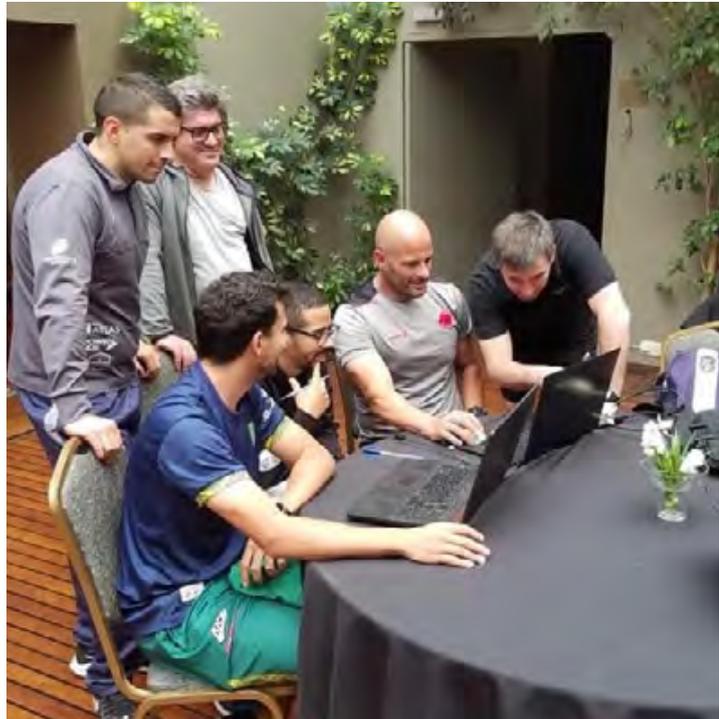
The first stage of the High Performance Academy in 2021 saw six modules delivered over 12 weeks from April to June across three streams for Coaching, Athletic Performance and Physiotherapy with the latter included for the first time.

The curriculum for each learning stream was specially designed and administered by assigned stream leaders with expert presenters also engaged, including the likes of former England coach Stuart Lancaster and World Rugby Director of Rugby and High Performance Joe Schmidt.

All 18 unions participating in World Rugby's HP programme were invited to nominate candidates to take part in the programme. The first stage of the HP Academy provided a group learning environment delivered regionally, while the second was a targeted and individualised development programme only available to selected participants of high potential in the Athletic Performance and Coaching streams.

In total, 10 S&C coaches and eight coaches were selected to take part in stage two, with 14 of the 18 participants working directly with teams in the men's and women's Rugby World Cup qualifying processes or with a team that has already qualified and is preparing for RWC 2021 or 2023.

A week-long academy, led by Sudamérica Rugby's High Performance Manager Daniel Hourcade, was also held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, involving aspiring coaches, trainers, physiotherapists, nutritionists and video analysts from the region's HP unions in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay and Uruguay.



Over the course of the week, the participants were divided into two groups and each given an age-grade team from the local union to work with and prepare for a match on the penultimate day. The HP Academy participants received high-level support across areas such as coaching, nutrition, video analysis, fitness, game areas and media.

Women's head coach and lead S&C series

As part of the Capability and Expertise workstream the High Performance Team has delivered a series of seminars to both head coaches of teams who have qualified or are part of the qualification process for Rugby World Cup 2021, playing in 2022, and lead strength and conditioning coaches.

The seminars are part of ongoing support for unions ahead of Rugby World Cup 2021 with the focus being on areas of the game, both on and off the pitch, that are relevant to preparing teams for the showpiece tournament.

The coaches and S&C leads have been able to listen to presentations from world-class coaches such as Joe Schmidt, Andy Farrell and Eddie Jones. The programme, which continues into 2022, offers participants the opportunity to learn from vastly experienced practitioners and their peers in a collaborative environment.



6
modules in
the first stage
of the High
Performance
Academy,
delivered over

12
weeks with

18
unions
participating



PATHWAY AND PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Pacific Island Super Rugby franchises

Fijian Drua and Moana Pasifika's inclusion in the new-look Super Rugby Pacific in 2022 was the culmination of a journey which had begun back in 2016 when World Rugby's Rugby Committee met in Suva to consider opportunities to further support Pacific Islands rugby on and off the field.

A key priority in the strategy was to bridge the gap between local and international rugby by creating strong domestic pathway opportunities including professional teams that compete in elite cross-border club competitions and are directly aligned to national teams. These strategies subsequently enhance the competitiveness of national teams and provide an alternative to players being exported to overseas clubs to continue their development and further their rugby careers. World Rugby's Pacific Challenge and Pacific Combine continue to act as key initiatives that underpin the talent identification and player development of Fijian, Samoan and Tongan players for the Fijian Drua and Moana Pasifika.

Fijian Drua and Moana Pasifika will share a £3.6 million funding package from World Rugby over an initial three-year period, which was approved in March 2021. Both teams also have additional support from their respective unions, governments and sponsors, while there has also been New Zealand government support for Moana Pasifika.

Since the first Pacific Combine in 2018, 75 players have graduated and 17 have gone on to represent the Pacific Islands on the world stage, including seven at Rugby World Cup 2019. Nine of the current 40-strong Fijian Drua squad have graduated from the Pacific Combine, while one – Henry Stowers – is the sole graduate in a Moana Pasifika 38-man squad featuring 36 players eligible for Samoa and Tonga.

Pathway competitions and team investment

Teams playing in high-quality cross-border competitions are key to creating competitive national teams and promoting the game within regions, something Rugby Europe and Sudamérica Rugby have done with the Super Cup and SuperLiga Americana de Rugby (SLAR).

The Rugby Europe Super Cup launched in 2021 with teams from Belgium (Brussels Devils), Georgia (Black Lion), Israel (Tel Aviv Heat), the Netherlands (The Delta), Portugal (Lusitanos), Spain (Castilla y Leon Iberians) and Russia (Lokomotiv Moscow and Enisei-STM) split into two conferences.

SLAR, meanwhile, completed its second season in 2021 with teams from Argentina (Jaguars XV), Brazil (Cobras Brasil XV), Chile (Selknam), Colombia (Cafeteros Pro), Paraguay (Olimpia Lions) and Uruguay (Peñarol Rugby). The benefit of SLAR was evident for both Uruguay and Chile as they overcame USA and Canada respectively in Rugby World Cup 2023 qualifiers in October.

The two competitions enable unions to enhance player and team development, widening their talent pool and ultimately increasing competitiveness of teams at future Rugby World Cups. Not to mention providing an opportunity to take the sport to new audiences in non-traditional rugby markets, creating new fans and generating commercial revenues.



£3.6M

funding package shared between Fijian Drua and Moana Pasifika

10

of the current squads have graduated from the Pacific Combine



A CLEAR COMMON FOCUS FOR MATCH OFFICIALS

2021 dawned with a new management team for 15s and three focus areas for Emirates Match Officials to underpin clear and consistent officiating.

Joël Judge returned to World Rugby as the High Performance 15s Match Official Manager in January and joined a new-look management team with Joe Schmidt as Director of Rugby and High Performance and Graham Mourie as Chairman of the Match Officials Selection Committee, which now features former referees Tony Spreadbury, Bryce Lawrence and Craig Joubert.

Ahead of the men's and women's Rugby World Cups, the referee group were introduced to the key focus areas – Safety-Speed-Space – with an emphasis on addressing the clear and obvious. The continued focus on safety underscores the commitment to consistent sanctions for head contact involving foul play. Speed equates to allowing faster ball from rucks and breakdowns and Space largely about offside lines and creating space for teams to attack and counterattack. Both have positive impact on safety and spectacle.

These three areas, together with lineout, maul and scrum, will be constantly reviewed and revisited by the referee group, taking learnings from each international window or domestic competition to fine-tune with competition wide open to secure a place on the match official panel for RWC 2023 at this stage in the cycle.

On the pitch, Joy Neville (pictured below) had already created history in November 2020 as the first female to perform Television Match Official duties in a major men's international competition and the Irish official did so again with her involvement in the men's Six Nations in 2021.

Throughout the year the Selection Committee had to be fluid and reactive, often needing to change match official appointments due to new travel restrictions or an official contracting COVID-19. In December, they appointed 15 different referees for the 15 matches in the Six Nations for the first time, although travel restrictions would ultimately prevent this from happening.



Joy Neville took on TMO duties during the 2021 men's Six Nations





LEFT
From left:
Hollie Davidson,
Sara Cox and
Amy Perrett

TOKYO PROVIDES FITTING FINALE FOR SEVENS REFEREES

Twenty-three match officials from 12 countries were selected for the delayed Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 in Japan.

The Olympic Games is the pinnacle for match officials and for the 15 male and eight female referees selected the excitement and desire to perform on sport's greatest stage was as evident as among the players across the 24 teams in action.

Only two officials, Great Britain's Sara Cox and Australia's Amy Perrett, had refereed on the Olympic stage before at Rio 2016, while six had gained experience at the Youth Olympic Games 2018 in Buenos Aires, including Portugal's Paulo Duarte who would officiate in both the men's and women's tournaments in Tokyo.

Australia's Damon Murphy (pictured right) had the honour of refereeing the men's gold medal match as Fiji defended their title against New Zealand at Tokyo Stadium, with New Zealand's James Doleman overseeing Argentina's victory over Great Britain in the battle for bronze.

Three days later, Cox took charge of the women's gold medal match as New Zealand went one better than Rio to claim gold after beating France, with Duarte refereeing the bronze medal match which saw Fiji create history by beating Great Britain.

Following Tokyo, the majority of referees on the panel moved on to focus on 15s and the decision was taken to disband the referee squad and select a new one leading into Paris 2024. For some, sevens

is a career path and for others the start of a path towards refereeing 15s at the highest level.

On the men's front, six remain in Duarte, France's Jérémy Rozier – who missed the Games through injury – Australia's Jordan Way, Tevita Rokovereni of Fiji, Uruguay's Francisco González and Argentina's Neheun Rivero. They will be joined by 13 new referees with the view of reducing the squad to 12 for the Paris 2024 Games.

Tokyo was the last event for Cox and Perrett among the female officials, but the others remain involved with the sevens programme. This group will be reviewed at the end of a busy year for sevens in 2022 in order to form a squad to build towards the Paris 2024 Games.



2

Sara Cox and Amy Perrett were the only officials who also refereed at Rio 2016

TRAINING AND EDUCATION IN 2021

Delivery of World Rugby's training and education portfolio crucial as unions return to play in 2021 with almost 1,800 courses delivered across 99 unions.

With member unions returning to play after an extended lay-off due to COVID-19, it is more important than ever to make sure that the players are coached, officiated, cared for and administered by well-trained people.

It has therefore been a busy year for the Training and Education team of Regional Training Managers and Medical Education Managers as they have adapted and evolved to a more hybrid learning environment. Changes have had to be made to make courses more deliverable in the new COVID environment with many having introduced pre-course webinars to cut down face-to-face delivery time and travel.

World Rugby's online learning portfolio has had a refresh and a new platform introduced, which offers increased functionality and ease of use. This has enabled the launch and refresh of a number of new online modules. The highlight of the year in this space was undoubtedly Tackle Ready – World Rugby's guide to safe and effective tackling – which provides players and coaches with an in-depth framework which focuses on five key stages, each with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The programme aims to build on the safe tackling introduction provided in RugbyReady to increase technical understanding and mastery for both player and coach. This programme will allow coaches to analyse, coach and assess the individual tackling skills of their players in detail and to foster the development of a "tackle culture" within their rugby environment. With more functionality to be launched in the new year we are excited about our online provision in 2022.

Some 1,792 face-to-face courses have been delivered within unions and regional associations, from American Samoa to Zimbabwe, with 20,156 certifications across the portfolio.

We are indebted to our workforce of more than 2,500 Licenced Trainers and Educators across the globe who deliver these courses on our behalf within their unions and regional associations. We give special thanks to our network of First Aid Educators, Medical Educators and Medical Trainers who have been on the front line, selflessly fighting the pandemic in their hospitals, surgeries and ambulances. As we strive towards our strategic goal of having one qualified First Aider or Medic at every match, one qualified referee for each match and a qualified coach for each team, then the role of this valuable network has heightened importance. Over 500 of them attended our





1,792
face-to-face
courses delivered



2,500
licenced trainers
and educators



20,156
certifications across
the portfolio

first-ever Virtual Training and Education Conference in December where they were provided with some valuable professional development and briefed on the exciting journey over the duration of World Rugby's new strategic plan.

Building union capability and capacity is a vital goal of World Rugby; to this end our Training and Education team have been working hand in glove with our team of Regional Rugby Service Managers to encourage our member unions to take a longer-term view of their workforce needs across the game as we link training needs with development investment.

To help strengthen our unions, we were delighted to launch a refreshed Administrators Academy with

three different levels of courses. Our Introduction to Leadership and Management course is now being rolled out across the regions, as is our Union Management Programme for targeted unions. We are also pleased to be able to offer scholarships for the third level of the course - the Postgraduate Certificate in International Sport Management in conjunction with our academic partners the World Academy of Sport.



KEEP RUGBY CLEAN

2021 saw World Rugby continue to break new ground with its anti-doping programme, despite a challenging year for international sport in the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Against the backdrop of fluctuating access restrictions and competition schedule changes that COVID brought to sport and anti-doping worldwide in 2021, World Rugby continually adapted its testing and education operations to deliver an agile, scientific and targeted programme.

2021 also saw World Rugby cement its reputation as a leader in anti-doping programme management, by commencing a partnership with the Six Nations and European Professional Club Rugby (EPCR) to deliver contracted test services within both competitions.

Anti-doping education took on a new focus as well for 2021 and saw the implementation of the World Rugby anti-doping education programme for member unions in line with the World Anti-Doping Agency International Standard for Education. The programme's goal is to raise the standard of anti-doping education provided to international-level players and support staff working in unison with national-level programmes delivered by National Anti-Doping Organisations.

Other milestones through the year include:

- A new e-learning programme created with the support of the European Union's Erasmus+ programme, and the national member unions of Portugal, Czechia, Poland, the Netherlands and Denmark. The programme is available in 14 languages (English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Danish, German, Romanian, Czech, Polish, Dutch, Georgian, Russian and Japanese) and is aimed at players and team support staff.
- A new 'Keep Rugby Clean' website which provides a central hub for anti-doping news and information in rugby, featuring all of World Rugby's education

and information materials as well as all historical statistical reports. The website is available in four languages with many of the materials contained on the site translated into additional languages.

- Promotion of Keep Rugby Clean in partnership with Six Nations Rugby in round four of the U20 Six Nations. All players from the six participating squads took to the pitch for their warm-up wearing 'Keep Rugby Clean' T-shirts designed to highlight the message of clean sport and a fair, level playing field for all.

The testing programme delivered more than 1,550 samples (including 147 Athlete Biological Passport [ABP] blood samples) collected from players across 52 nationalities with around 60 per cent of samples collected out of competition.

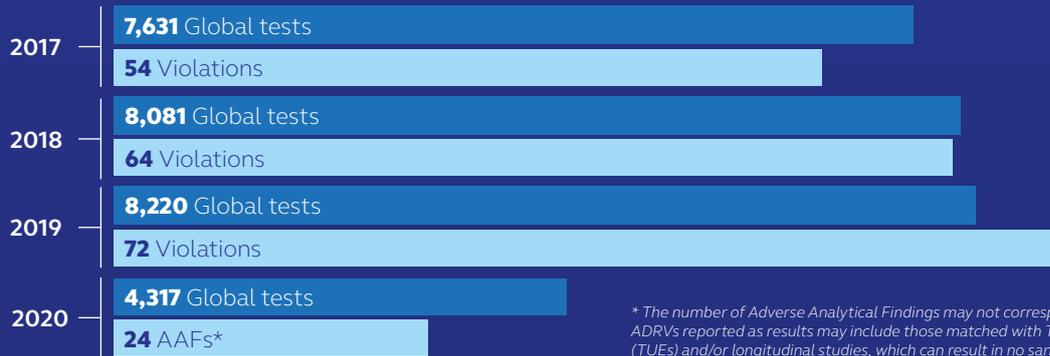
Under the in-competition testing partnership with Six Nations and EPCR, 189 samples were collected across both competitions. The programmes demonstrate the commitment of both organisations to invest in the integrity of their competitions.

Five anti-doping rule violations were reported from the 2021 World Rugby programme, with one pending.

WORLD RUGBY ANTI-DOPING CASES IN 2021

Member union	Substance/violation	Sanction
Colombia	5-methylhexan-2-amine (1,4-dimethylpentylamine)	2 years
Argentina	19-Norandrosterone	3 years
Colombia	19-Norandrosterone and Boldenone	3 years
Russia	Clomifene	3 years
Namibia	Metandienone and Tamoxifen	3 years

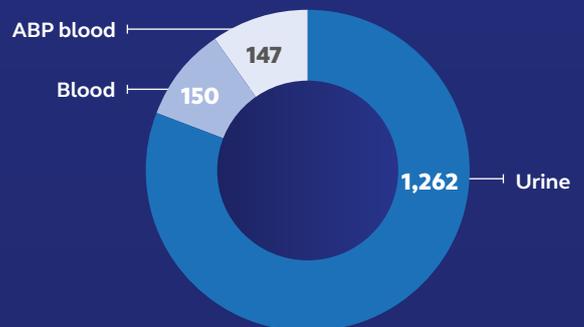
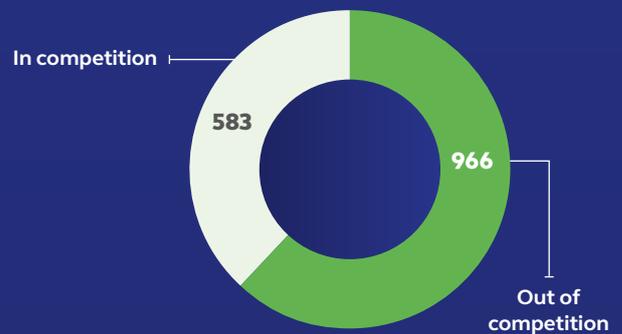
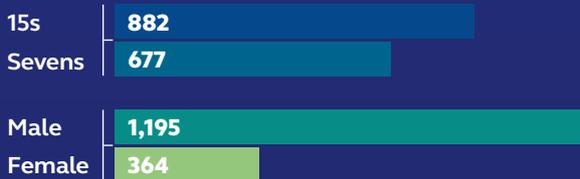
Global number of rugby tests and anti-doping rule violations



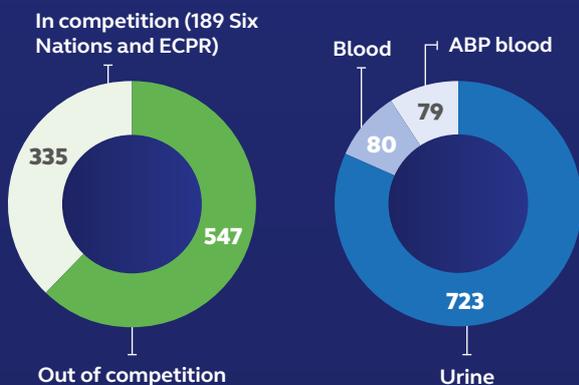
* The number of Adverse Analytical Findings may not correspond with the number of ADRVs reported as results may include those matched with Therapeutic Use Exemptions (TUEs) and/or longitudinal studies, which can result in no sanction.

TOTAL SAMPLES
1,559

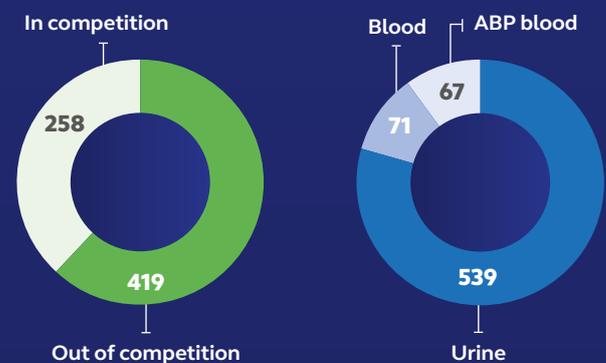
2021 World Rugby testing figures



15s



Sevens





EDUCATION KEY TO PROTECTING THE SPORT FROM CORRUPTION

World Rugby provided integrity training to all teams participating in the rugby sevens competitions at the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 in July.

The Games in Tokyo was like no other in many ways, however one key element which remained the same was World Rugby's commitment to protecting the sport from corruption.

With the unprecedented interest in Rugby World Cup 2019 in Japan, and with the Olympic Games drawing in an estimated 372 million viewers in Europe alone, it was a priority for World Rugby to provide teams with the necessary information to avoid any integrity-related issues.

Speaking prior to the Olympics, World Rugby Chairman, Sir Bill Beaumont said: "It has been a uniquely challenging journey for all involved to reach these Olympic Games and we thank the IOC, Tokyo 2020 and the Japanese authorities for their hard work and dedication to ensure the delivery of a safe, secure and high-quality environment for the 12 men's and 12 women's teams to perform at the best of their abilities in a truly world-class venue.

"During this difficult time for humanity the Tokyo Olympics will act as a symbol of global unity, solidarity and inspiration. We are stronger together and we believe there is no better sport than rugby to reflect those integral values both on and off the pitch."

World Rugby provided education to all teams participating in the Olympic Games, through World Rugby's comprehensive online integrity programme Keep Rugby Onside, supplemented by workshops where World Rugby joined forces with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to provide remote integrity training workshops to all teams in their own language where available.

Along with the provision of education, World Rugby worked closely with the IOC and local police, using a sophisticated technology system to monitor global betting activities and trends. World Rugby linked with these stakeholders to monitor gambling trends worldwide.

"We are stronger together and we believe there is no better sport than rugby to reflect those integral values both on and off the pitch."

Sir Bill Beaumont
World Rugby Chairman

NEW PROGRAMME AIMS TO IMPROVE PLAYER TECHNIQUE AND LOWER INJURY RISK

2021 saw the introduction of the Coaching Intervention Programme to the sanctioning process in an effort to raise awareness and reduce the number of cards.

World Rugby has taken steps to further its commitment to reduce concussion in the sport with the launch of a coaching intervention for players who receive a red card for head contact with a view to improving player technique.

Designed to work in conjunction with World Rugby's Head Contact Process (HCP), the coaching intervention is aimed at raising awareness among players and coaching staff of the importance of correct technique, which lowers injury risk, and reducing the number of red cards over time.

The Coaching Intervention Programme was operational for the July tests and is running as a one-year pilot programme in elite competitions that operate the Head Injury Assessment (HIA) protocol.

Any player who has received a sanction from a disciplinary committee for a red card or a citing for any offences involving contact with the head may apply for mitigation of their sanction by participating in a coaching intervention which will analyse tackle/contact technique and identify and implement positive modifications to reduce the risk of injury. This intervention is overseen by an independent

expert coaching review group and is only available on a one-off basis to players.

A player participating in the coaching intervention works with their coach to identify how technique contributed to the foul play. The coach and player then provide video evidence of the interventions and modifications that they undertook. The coaching intervention is then assessed by an independent review group of expert coaches, who will work with the coach where necessary to ensure that the highlighted areas of technique have been addressed.

The completion of a successful coaching intervention will reduce the player's sanction by a week/match.

Since its introduction, the Coaching Intervention Programme has seen 22 applications, of which 18 have been approved, two are pending, one was withdrawn and one was declined.

The process reflects the sport's multi-faceted approach to reducing head contact in the game along with the current package of law trials. For more information on disciplinary processes, visit www.world.rugby/discipline.

BELOW
Argentina's Juan Cruz Mallia received a red card against Wales in July. He was the coaching intervention's first participant



WAYS OF WORKING

Governance	104
Financial statements	106
Meet the team	110





3

6

MAHER

EMBA

KIRSHE

12

2

1

PROGRESSIVE GOVERNANCE REVIEW AND NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE APPOINTED

World Rugby agreed progressive governance reform in May after its Council endorsed a package of interim recommendations by the independent-led Governance Working Group.

The review aimed to strengthen the effectiveness, agility and representative nature of the international federation's governance structures to further reflect and serve the universality and diversity of rugby and support robust decision-making processes for the betterment of the global game.

Chaired by British Olympic Committee Chairman and former UK Olympics and Sports Minister Sir Hugh Robertson, the Working Group comprised independent experts, union and regional representatives and player representation from emerging and established rugby nations, with a broad range of experience and expertise.

The reforms include the reclassification of unions, implementation of an enhanced integrity code and wider representation on committee structures.

These reforms built on the interim recommendations approved by Council in November 2020, which included the establishment of an ethics and conduct charter for elected officials; introduction of a fit and proper persons test for Council, EXCO and all standing committees under its jurisdiction; a robust conflict of interest management process which protects the integrity and effectiveness of decision-making; a target of at least 40 per cent female representation on committees with the promotion of women leaders in the sport; player representation throughout all the committee structures, including EXCO, to ensure player-centric decision-making; continued focus on diversity, skill set, independence and capability; and geographical representation when forming committees.

In a truly inclusive process, unions, regions and International Rugby Players (IRP) were invited to make submissions to the Governance Working Group with 64 unions, six regions and IRP completing a questionnaire and providing comments and recommendations on World Rugby governance.

Meanwhile a change of leadership was announced on 18 March with the appointment of Alan Gilpin as World Rugby's new Chief Executive Officer.

GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Independents

Sir Hugh Robertson (Chair),
Angela Ruggiero,
General Sir Peter Cosgrove

Northern hemisphere unions

Bernard Laporte (FFR President),
Julie Paterson (WRU Council Member)

Southern hemisphere unions

Mark Alexander (SARU President),
Marcelo Rodriguez (UAR President)

Regions

Cristina Flores (Rugby Americas North),
Cathy Wong (Oceania Rugby)

Emerging rugby nations

Alin Petrache (FRR President)

Player representative

Omar Hassanein (IRP CEO),
Safi N'Diaye (France women's player)

“I am immensely proud and honoured to take up the role as Chief Executive of World Rugby, and to lead an organisation that is at a really exciting stage in its history.”

Alan Gilpin

World Rugby Chief Executive



Gilpin had performed the role of Interim Chief Executive following Brett Gosper's departure in January and is highly regarded within the rugby and wider sports business community.

He has a broad and intimate understanding of World Rugby's business operations having performed the dual role of Chief Operating Officer and Managing Director of Rugby World Cup since 2016, after joining the international federation to run the portfolio of Rugby World Cup properties in 2014.

His leadership expertise, ability to assemble strong delivery teams and focus on innovation, along with the fan and player experience, have played a strong role in the hosting of the most successful men's and women's Rugby World Cups to date. He has also transformed the future hosting model to broaden interest and impact.

At the time of his appointment Gilpin said: "I am immensely proud and honoured to take up the role as Chief Executive of World Rugby, and to lead an organisation that is at a really exciting stage in its history."

Updated Membership Criteria

During 2021 a review of the World Rugby Associate Membership Criteria was undertaken. The outcome of the review identified the need to bring to the forefront of the Associate Membership Criteria application process the need to assess the three key criteria of the domestic game, international participation and player welfare. In November, the World Rugby Council approved the recommendation of the Executive and Regional Committees to amend the Associate Membership Criteria to include assessments of the domestic game, international participation and player welfare.

Three new full member unions

In May, the World Rugby Council approved the recommendation of the Executive and Regional Committees to elevate the Fédération Algérienne de Rugby and the Fédération Burundaise de Rugby to full member status. They were joined by the Mongolian Rugby Football Union in November, continuing the global expansion of the sport, which has 128 members across six regions.

WORLD RUGBY CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR-ENDED 31 DECEMBER, 2020

Introduction

World Rugby prepares statutory consolidated financial statements on an annual basis. At the time of going to print, the 2021 statements are in the process of being finalised for audit. The following pages present the most recent consolidated financial statements for the year ended 31 December, 2020.

Due to the statutory nature of the following report, the categorisation of amounts differs to the preceding pages (which presented a summary review of 2021 financial activities). This report is also an abridged version of the 2020 statements; the Notes have been omitted. The full report can be accessed at www.worldrugby.org/documents/annual-reports.

Statements

CONSOLIDATED INCOME STATEMENT

Year-ended 31 December, 2020

		2020	2019
		Stg£	Stg£
Revenue	5	10,836,529	381,401,604
Tournament related expenses		(16,732,325)	(107,976,256)
Grant related expenses	6	(20,600,417)	(106,192,829)
Administration expenses	7	(33,837,176)	(42,025,077)
Other income	8	2,999,981	2,032,614
Other gains	9	15,220,722	1,713,545
(Loss)/profit before income tax		(42,112,686)	128,953,601
Income tax expense	11	(113,088)	(141,081)
(Loss)/profit for the year		(42,225,774)	128,812,520

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

Year-ended 31 December, 2020

	2020	2019
	Stg£	Stg£
(Loss)/profit for the year	(422,225,774)	128,812,520
Fair value (loss)/gain on financial assets	(3,963,451)	7,156,485
Total comprehensive (loss)/profit for the year	(46,189,225)	135,969,005

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

Year-ended 31 December, 2020

	Total equity
	Stg£
Balance at 31 December, 2018	61,266,298
Total comprehensive income for the year	135,969,005
Balance at 31 December, 2019	197,235,303
Total comprehensive loss for the year	(46,189,225)
Balance at 31 December, 2020	151,046,078

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET

As at 31 December, 2020

	Notes	2020 Stg£	2019 Stg£
ASSETS			
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	12	10,357,244	10,542,241
Intangible assets	13	676,313	769,804
Trade and other receivables	16	34,720,702	-
Deferred expenditure	14	762,000	-
Financial assets	15	168,595,138	113,008,555
		215,111,397	124,320,600
Current assets			
Trade and other receivables	16	9,573,518	107,875,201
Deferred expenditure	14	1,678,323	3,264,460
Cash and cash equivalents	17	63,581,903	93,728,831
		74,833,744	204,868,492
Total assets		289,945,141	329,189,092
EQUITY			
Capital and reserves			
Retained earnings	21	151,046,078	197,235,303
LIABILITIES			
Non-current liabilities			
Loans and borrowing	18	32,495,621	-
Trade and other payables	20	9,803,484	9,879,426
Deferred revenue	19	82,487,401	44,769,651
		124,786,506	54,649,077
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	20	13,036,754	69,212,747
Deferred revenue	19	1,075,803	8,091,965
Total liabilities		138,899,063	131,953,789
Total equity and liabilities		289,945,141	329,189,092

CONSOLIDATED CASHFLOW STATEMENT

Year-ended 31 December, 2020

	2020 Stg£	2019 Stg£
Cash flows from operating activities		
Cash generated from operations	22	77,426,583
Income tax paid		(147,013)
Grant payments		(96,920,629)
Net cash (used in) operating activities		(19,641,059)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchases of property, plant and equipment		(114,421)
Purchases of intangible asset		-
Purchase of financial assets		(129,639,233)
Proceeds on disposal of financial assets		85,414,397
Lease payments		(855,735)
Interest received		2,999,981
Net cash (absorbed by)/ generated from investing activities		(42,195,011)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Bank loans		32,495,621
Net cash generated from financing activities		32,495,621
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents	(29,340,449)	23,097,929
Exchange loss on cash and cash equivalents		(806,479)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the year		93,728,831
Cash and cash equivalents at end of the year	17	63,581,903
		93,728,831

STATEMENT OF COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Statement of Council's responsibilities in respect of the financial statements

World Rugby is the world governing and law-making body of rugby union. It is made up of 108 member unions and 20 associate member unions. World Rugby Council has a current representation of 52 members, including an Independent Chairman and a Vice-Chairman. It is comprised of representatives of unions and associations appointed as set out in the World Rugby Bye-Laws and acts in accordance with the powers conferred upon it by the World Rugby Bye-Laws.

The Council is required to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of

the state of affairs of World Rugby and of its profit or loss and cash flow for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the Council is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- comply with applicable accounting standards, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume the association will continue its objectives.

The Council is responsible for maintaining records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the association and its subsidiaries and to enable the Council to ensure that the financial statements have been properly prepared. The Council is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the association and its subsidiaries and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

B Beaumont, Chairman
D Griffin, Chair of Audit
and Risk Committee

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE COUNCIL OF WORLD RUGBY

Report on the audit of the non-statutory financial statements

OPINION

In our opinion, World Rugby's group non-statutory financial statements (the "financial statements"):

- give a true and fair view of the group's assets, liabilities and financial position as at 31 December, 2020 and of its loss and cash flows for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards ("IFRSs") as adopted by the European Union; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the provisions of the World Rugby Bye-Laws.

We have audited the financial statements which comprise:

- the Consolidated Balance Sheet as at 31 December, 2020;
- the Consolidated Income Statement and Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year then ended;
- the Consolidated Cash Flow Statement for the year then ended;
- the Consolidated Statement of Changes in Equity for the year then ended; and
- the notes to the financial statements, which include a description of the significant accounting policies.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) ("ISAs (Ireland)").

Our responsibilities under ISAs (Ireland) are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Independence

We remained independent of the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Ireland, which includes IAASA's Ethical Standard and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

Conclusions relating to going concern

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the group's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least 12 months from the date on which the financial statements are authorised for issue.

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Council's use of the going concern basis of accounting in preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

However, because not all future events or conditions can be predicted, this conclusion is not a guarantee as to the group's ability to continue as a going concern.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Council with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Reporting on other information

The other information comprises all of the information in the Consolidated Financial Statements other than the financial statements and our auditors' report thereon. The Council is responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion or, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in this report, any form of assurance thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify an apparent material inconsistency or material misstatement, we are required to perform procedures to conclude whether there is a material misstatement of the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report based on these responsibilities.

Responsibilities for the financial statements and the audit

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

As explained more fully in the statement of Council's responsibilities set out on page 3, the Council is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view.

The Council is also responsible for such internal control as it determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Council is responsible for assessing the group's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Council either intend to liquidate the

group or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

AUDITORS' RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these consolidated financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the IAASA website at:

https://www.iaasa.ie/getmedia/b2389013-1cf6-458b-9b8f-a98202dc9c3a/Description_of_auditors_responsibilities_for_audit.pdf

This description forms part of our auditors' report.

USE OF THIS REPORT

This report, including the opinion, has been prepared for and only for the Council as a body in accordance with the World Rugby Bye-Laws and for no other purpose. We do not, in giving this opinion, accept or assume responsibility for any other purpose or to any other person to whom this report is shown or into whose hands it may come, including without limitation under any contractual obligations of the group, save where expressly agreed by our prior consent in writing.

PricewaterhouseCoopers
Chartered Accountants
Dublin

June 2021

GENERAL INFORMATION

Council Members as at 31 December, 2020

B Beaumont
(Independent) Chairman

B Laporte
(France) Vice-Chairman

S Iglesias (Argentina)

F Rizzi (Argentina)

M Rodriguez (Argentina)

P Marlow (Australia)

H McLennan (Australia)

B Robinson (Australia)

P Parfrey (Canada)

D Griffin (England)

B Sweeney (England)

J Webb (England)

J O'Connor (Fiji)

B Jugla (France)

S Simon (France)

G Nijaradze (Georgia)

S Carty (Ireland)

J O'Driscoll (Ireland)

P Orr (Ireland)

A Gavazzi (Italy)

N Sacca (Italy)

S Vecchi (Italy)

K Iwabuchi (Japan)

N Saiki (Japan)

B Campbell (New Zealand)

D Robinson (New Zealand)

M Robinson (New Zealand)

A Petrache (Romania)

T Malielegaoi (Samoa)

M Dodson (Scotland)

J Jeffrey (Scotland)

L Thomson (Scotland)

M Alexander (South Africa)

V Doble (South Africa)

J Roux (South Africa)

F de Posadas (Uruguay)

B Latham (USA)

R Butcher (Wales)

I Evans (Wales)

J Paterson (Wales)

T Khoo (Asia Rugby)

A Milby (Asia Rugby)

R Sapias (Oceania Rugby)

C Wong (Oceania Rugby)

K Babbou (Rugby Africa)

R Boro (Rugby Africa)

D Dwyer
(Rugby Americas North)

C Flores
(Rugby Americas North)

O Morariu (Rugby Europe)

V Muehlhofer (Rugby Europe)

M Enya (Sudamérica Rugby)

S Pineyrua
(Sudamérica Rugby)

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

A Gilpin

PRINCIPAL BANKERS

Barclays
1-20 Chemin de
Grange-Canal
CH1211 Geneva 3
Switzerland

Bank of Ireland
St Stephen's Green
Dublin 2
Ireland

AUDITORS

PricewaterhouseCoopers
Chartered Accountants and
Statutory Audit Firm
One Spencer Dock
North Wall Quay
Dublin 1
Ireland

MEET THE TEAM IN 2022

Sir Bill Beaumont CBE DL
Chairman

Bernard Laporte
Vice-Chairman

Alan Gilpin
Chief Executive Officer

Cara Gorey
Executive Assistant

COMPETITIONS AND HIGH PERFORMANCE

Nigel Cass
Chief Competitions and
Performance Officer

Caroline O'Connell
Competitions and Performance
Team Assistant

Clara Gonzalez
Competitions Co-ordinator

Michael Groom
Competitions Operations
Manager – High Performance
and Regional Competitions

Simon Kibble
Planning and
Operations Director

Sue O'Connor
Competitions Project Manager

Carmel O'Dwyer
Competitions Co-ordinator

Deirdre O'Sullivan
Competitions Operations
Manager – Regions and Sevens

Elaine Taylor
Competitions and
Performance Co-ordinator

COMPETITIONS STRATEGIC PROJECTS

Linda Hoey
Head of Competitions
Strategic Projects

Ruth Dillon
Strategic Projects Co-ordinator

HIGH PERFORMANCE

Peter Horne
Director of High Performance

Agnès Congoste
High Performance
Operations Manager

Conor Molan
High Performance
Investment Manager

Nicky Ponsford
High Performance
Manager – Women's

Chris Thomson
High Performance Project
Manager – Pathways and
Player Development

SEVENS COMPETITIONS
Douglas Langley
Head of Sevens Competitions

Cian Twomey
Sevens Project Manager

RUGBY WORLD CUP
Michel Poussau
RWC Executive Director

Rob Abernethy
General Manager,
RWC 2027 Operations

Eva Agliardi
RWC Team Assistant

Ross Aitken
RWC Venues Director

Nicola Alesbrook
RWC Planning and
Programmes Director

Amy Bell
RWC Projects Manager

Carol Casey
Ticketing Sales Manager

Enda Connolly
RWC Team and Rugby
Services Director

Stephanie Diccone
RWC 2023 Team
Services Executive

Delphine Dierstein
RWC Travel and
Hospitality Manager

Rita Figueiredo
RWC Rugby
Services Manager

Louise Jolly
RWC Ticketing
Sales Director

Nicola Murphy
RWC Ticketing
Operations Director

WOMEN'S COMPETITIONS

Alison Hughes
Head of Women's Competitions

Courtney Allison Young
RWC 2021 Tournament
Services Manager

Simone Papirnik
RWC 2021 Team
Services Manager

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Robert Brophy
Chief Financial Officer

Anthony Downey
Business Partner and
Projects Manager

Margaret Downey
Financial Accountant

Lynn Donohoe
Accounts Payable Manager

Emma Dunne
Accounts Assistant

Caroline Murnane
Business Insights Analyst

Joan McElwain
Finance Manager

Clare Skelly
Enterprise Resource
Planning Project Manager

Susan Spellman
Financial Controller

HUMAN RESOURCES

Lisa Lowry
Head of Human Resources

Sarah Carew
Human Resources Advisor

Andrew Kieran
HR Co-ordinator

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND PARTICIPATION

David Carrigy
Chief International Relations
and Participation Officer

Erin Brown
Tournament Guest Programme
and Meetings Manager

Bruce Cook
Regional Partnership
Manager – Oceania

James Davy
Travel Manager

Gilles Fabre
Language Services Manager

Jennifer Gray
Regional Partnership
Manager – North America

Cormac Horgan
Governance Assistant

Colum Lavery
Head of Governance

Jason Lewis
Director, Participation

Steph Nel
Regional Partnership
Manager – Europe

Anne O'Callaghan
Investments Manager

Santiago Ramallo
Regional Partnership
Manager – South America

Ridzal Saat
Regional Partnership
Manager – Asia

Coralie van den Berg
Regional Partnership
Manager – Africa

LEGAL DEPARTMENT

Alistair Maclean
General Counsel

Alexander Barker
Legal Counsel

Brian Hammond
Legal Counsel, Regulatory

Joyce Hayes
Assistant to General
Counsel and Disciplinary
Co-ordinator

Lynsey Mulvihill
Head of Legal Counsel,
Commercial

Tom Murray
Legal Counsel

Caroline Nolan
Legal Assistant

Yvonne Nolan
Deputy General Counsel

PLAYER WELFARE AND RUGBY SERVICES

Mark Harrington
Chief Player Welfare
and Rugby Services Officer

Philip Davies
Director of Rugby

GAME ANALYSIS

Rhys Jones
Head of Game Analysis

Ben Hester
Player Welfare Game Analyst

Matthew Johnston
International Sevens
Game Analyst

Tom Sorsby
International 15s Game Analyst

Adam Smith
Domestic 15s Game Analyst

MATCH OFFICIALS

Steve Hinds
Citing Manager

Craig Joubert
Match Official Talent
Development Coach

Joël Judge
15s Match Official Manager

Alhambra Nieves
Women's Talent
Development Manager

Paddy O'Brien
Sevens High
Performance Match
Official Manager

Tracy O'Callaghan
Match Officials Co-ordinator

TRAINING, EDUCATION AND COMPLIANCE

Jock Peggie
Head of Education,
Laws and Compliance

Isabel Grondin
Medical Education Manager

Joseph Kajubi Kalanzi
Medical Education Manager

Keith Lewis
Laws Co-ordinator

ANTI-DOPING AND GAME RESEARCH

Mike Earl
Director of Anti-Doping
and Game Research

Ross Blake
Anti-Doping Education
Co-ordinator

Marc Douglas
Game Research and
Development Manager

Martha Hassett
Anti-Doping Administrator

Mike Hislop
Injury Prevention and
Surveillance Researcher

David Ho
Anti-Doping Science and
Results Manager

Stuart Kelly
Anti-Doping Science and
Testing Co-ordinator

Clive Kennington
Anti-Doping
Testing Administrator

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER
Dr Éanna Falvey
Chief Medical Officer

Dr Martin Raftery
Deputy Chief Medical Officer

Deirdre Keating
Player Welfare and Rugby
Services Project Manager

REVENUE AND FAN ENGAGEMENT

Richard Heaselgrave
Chief Revenue and Fan
Engagement Officer

Niamh Holmes
Assistant

Ben Slack
General Manager, Commercial

BUSINESS SOLUTIONS
Kalle Kauppila
Head of Business Solutions

Cathy Newman
Business Solutions Analyst

Michelle O'Loughlin
Revenue and Fan Engagement
Team Assistant

Marie Therese Duignan
Business Solutions
Team Co-Ordinator

CONTENT

Namrata Desai
Designer

Amanda Godson
Broadcaster Operations
Manager

Steve Jamieson
Executive Producer

Lynda Jones
Designer

Chris Synott
Head of Media Rights

Dominic Young
Media Rights Executive

EXPERIENTIAL

Bree Hassanein
Experiential Manager

FANS

James Bass
Social Communities Manager

Adrian D'Arcy
Social Communities Executive

Nick Morris
Commercial Programme
Manager

Joe Pecchia
General Manager, Marketing

MARKETING PARTNERSHIPS

Georgie Simmons
Head of Marketing Partnerships

Harry Bridgland
Global Partnerships Account
Executive, Sevens

James Cloake
Marketing Partnerships
Manager Sevens

Pauline Dugravot
RWC Marketing
Partnerships Manager

Rachel Godsavé
Marketing Partnerships
Account Manager

Youssef Hassan
Marketing Partnerships
Executive

Pierre Alexandre Martini
RWC 2023 Global
Partnerships
Account Executive

Meg Mitchell
Marketing Partnerships
Manager

Kenzo Pannell
Partner Operations Manager

Chris Thompson
Business Development Manager

Susannah Weyman
Marketing Partnerships
Account Director (RWC)

Nina Wright
Marketing Partnerships
Account Director (Women's)

PLATFORMS

Katt Wright
Head of Platforms

Pierre Turpin
Digital Manager

STRATEGY AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mihir Warty
Chief Strategy Officer

Atlanta St John
Women's Projects Manager

Keisha-Ann Down
Women's Programme Manager

Anne Grumelard
Women's Programme Manager

Jaime McKeown
Sustainability, Diversity and
Inclusion Manager

COMMUNICATIONS

Dominic Rumbles
Chief Communications Officer

Karen Bond
Media Services and
Publications Manager

Dorian Grimaud
PR Manager

Peter Hannon
Player Welfare PR Manager

Charlotte Harwood
PR Manager

Suzi Murray
PR Manager

Phil Wilkinson
Head of PR and
Communications

TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

John Corbett
Head of Technology

Ronan Donagher
IT and Broadcast
Technology Manager

Darren Gibson
Projects and Support Analyst

Chris Hope
RWC Technology Director

Shane Kelly
Desktop Support Analyst

Adrian McDonagh
Technology Project Manager

Gearóid Slowey
Senior Systems Administrator

Sevim Sonmez
Desktop Support



**WORLD
RUGBY**

World Rugby House
8-10 Pembroke Street Lower
Dublin 2
D02 AE93
Ireland

T: +3531 240 9200
info@world.rugby

world.rugby

BUILDING CHARACTER SINCE 1886