



FRANCE
VS
WALES
20.10.12



DRAGONS

WALES RUGBY LEAGUE ANNUAL REPORT 2012

WRL Vision

“To be a world top four Rugby League nation in performance and governance”

WRL Mission

“To increase the awareness of Rugby League in Wales through a lifelong participation in the sport”

WRL Values

PASSION: To never give up; believe in feedback and not failure; strive to make our people happier and above all to have a compelling emotion for our Vision

INTEGRITY: To have unity; transparency and to work effectively towards our Mission Statement

RESPECT: To work with a demonstrative admiration and consideration alongside our colleagues to enhance our International esteem

INNOVATION: Develop and improve everything we do as we grow and sustain participation numbers through creative and progressive concepts

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

MIKE NICHOLAS



MIKE (RIGHT) RECEIVES HIS WRL LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FROM LEGEND BILLY BOSTON LAST YEAR



MIKE (LEFT AND BELOW) IN HIS PLAYING DAYS FOR WARRINGTON



It was an interesting and eventful 2012 for all of us at Wales Rugby League, I think we all agree.

On the playing field, we had a lot to be happy about with our age group and Academy developments coming along leaps and bounds.

Additionally, the senior international side under head coach Iestyn Harris, while not winning a Test match, saw a number of new, young faces who will drive our team on in the future, given a chance to join the squad for the games against France and England.

Given a fair wind, we hope that these young players will graduate through to the professional ranks and form the basis of our future World Cup and Test squads.

Our Under-18 national side really came of age with victories over Scotland and England before losing to a full-strength Australia Institute of Sport XIII. In players like Courtney Davies, captain of the side, and Rhys

Pugsley, who was signed by Wigan Warriors last season, we have some outstanding players to develop.

There was a truly historic moment for Wales RL too back in August when Ystalyfera's Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg became the first Welsh language school to reach the National Finals where they put up a brave performance before losing.

It was pleasing to see the North Wales Conference developing through Matt Pritchard, Mark Jones and all the teams and coaches. We have work to do in the South but that can be achieved as we all know it can be.

I would also like to say what an ambassador for our game Brian Juliff has been. It is good to see that under his stewardship we have become more professional as an organisation and we are now heading in the right direction.

We know we can go forward through 2013 and beyond - so let's do it!

... ON A PERSONAL NOTE

It was quite a year for me on a personal level. In January, I had the honour of being inducted into the Rugby League Hall of Fame and then the WRL Hall of Fame where I was presented with my trophy by the legendary Welsh star Billy Boston before the Wales v

England game in Wrexham.

I would, therefore, like to thank the Wales Rugby League for bestowing this honour on me and I hope I can continue to be of service for years to come in my role of President.



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

BRIAN JULIFF

It has been an interesting and challenging year for Wales Rugby League both within our 'Core Product' and our professional pathway clubs.

It was very encouraging to see the Crusaders finish the year with a run of victories and setting themselves up as play-off challengers for the coming 2013 season.

This really shows that hard work and clear focus alongside the passion of the supporters, directors, management team and players as well as the massive amount of community work being carried out in North Wales has started to pay dividends.

Clive Griffiths, as expected, has used his vast experience and contacts within rugby to build a sustainable and entertaining Championship One outfit.

Similarly, the efforts of Dave Clarke have not been without success as he approached the Scorpions season with a focus on home grown Welsh talent to establish a solid platform for the growth of Rugby League in Wales.

As anticipated the journey was tough and challenging but the derby games attracted good viewing numbers and were very competitive matches paving the way for a very exciting challenge in 2013.

The South Wales Scorpions and North Wales Crusaders games are surely going to attract ever growing crowds as Rugby League establishes a strong foothold in Wales.

It is firmly expected that we will get success from one or both of these pro-

gressive clubs in the year of the Rugby League World Cup and I anticipate promotion very likely.

Matt Pritchard, our development Officer in North Wales, was rewarded for his hard work in the community by having the privilege of carrying the Olympic Torch in the build up to the 2012 summer Games.

This really was a well

offered to me in May and I accepted the role with great pride.

The performance of the national side in the Autumn Series was mixed but was a great credit to our young players who stepped up to face Super League opposition against France and England.

Contrary to expectations we faced a very strong

phy of bleeding our young future stars to prepare for RLWC2013 and beyond.

We scored two tries against England which was more than the French could deliver but the physicality and level of intensity of their top players proved too much for us. Nevertheless we learnt far more than either England or France from both those games as we look forward to our RLWC launch against



deserved accolade and I can't speak highly enough of Matt's commitment to Wales Rugby League and his success in developing Street Rugby League has been nothing short of sensational.

In the Boardroom, there have been changes with Janet Ryder and Bethan Jenkins leaving their roles on the board but still offering active support when required as volunteers.

Bethan has been replaced by Martin Roddy MBE, a former police officer and current coach at Oxford. Janet's position of Chair was

French team in Lens but we stuck with our plan and played a youthful Wales team with an average age of 22 years four months.

We took the game to the home side and lead until ten minutes before the end of the half when France scored the points required to eventually win the match.

Our lads played magnificently in the second period with some outstanding personal performances and great team spirit and commitment.

The game against England was a huge challenge but we stuck with our philoso-

Italy at the Millenium Stadium on October 26.

I want to thank all the players who committed so much to our development plan in 2012 and also to our excellent young coaches, Iestyn Harris, Lee Briers, Damien Gibson and Dave Clarke for an outstanding effort in preparing such a young team for battle.

I would also like to thank everyone on the Wales Rugby League staff on and off the field who helped to support and prepare all our international teams and the South Wales Academy throughout 2012.



The Dragonhearts had a disjointed season culminating in a loss to Scotland when we were forced to select a very young team due to players deciding not to travel.

This was very upsetting for everyone but we were determined not to lose face despite the fact that we would relinquish our Championship title.

I am grateful to those Under 18 players who earned their caps at senior level and it was encouraging to see selections from our North Wales Conference. Their courage and fortitude showed why we are known as the Dragonhearts and we will bounce back stronger this year.

The Dragonhearts remain a pathway to the professional game and we will again fund the team in the Four Nations to reward the stand-out talent from the Conference season.

We will, however, expect a full commitment from selected players throughout the campaign this year.

Our U18 international side were very successful in

2012 beating Scotland with a strong second-half performance at Queensway in Wrexham and then England Community Lions at Leigh Sporting Village.

Their season ended with a defeat by the Australian Institute of Sport but not without some outstanding individual performances and also plaudits from the Australian management.

The only downside was a very bad injury sustained by Jason Blackmore, an outstanding young talent in the final minutes of the game.

I wish Jason the very best of luck with his recovery and hope we have the privilege of watching him pull a senior Wales shirt over his head in the near future.

The core product of Wales Rugby League is our community game and we must protect and further develop this aspect of our structure if we are serious about achieving our vision in 2017.

I am encouraged by the efforts in North Wales with five teams committed to playing regularly in the Open Age North Wales

Conference in 2013. The 2012 champions Conway Celts await renewed rivalries with Prestatyn and Rhyl Panthers; Flintshire Falcons; Dee Valley Dragons and Wrexham Bradley Raiders.

The South Wales Conference was not supported as effectively as we would have required in 2012 and, from that, our development team have learned some harsh lessons, most notably was the failure to compete in the Challenge Cup first road and, of course, our failure to retain our Drangonhearts champions tag.

It is encouraging, though, to see a resurgence in the south with eight teams committing to the 2013 seasons fixtures and the return of Blackwood Bulldogs, Torfaen Tigers and Newport Titans as well as emergence of the new Chepstow Borderer Bears offers some exciting challenges.

I know our champions from Bonymaen Broncos will be relishing the challenge as will Bridgend Blue Bulls, Valley Cougars and Cardiff Demons and I look forward to watching all the

teams in action this year and wish everyone the very best of luck,

As ever, we are always looking for more volunteers to support and encourage the growth of Rugby League in Wales. It is important that we establish sustainable junior teams attached to our Conference clubs as this, alongside our schools programme, will build the strength of our future league's and uncover our international stars of the future.

With this in mind, I would like to thank you for your involvement in our game whatever the role you have taken within the best family sport in the world.

None of this can happen without you, so on behalf of the Board of Wales Rugby League, your National Governing Body, I would like to thank you very much for your support and commitment.

Cynru Am Byth

CONFERENCE PREMIER MARK JONES

The League became a one-tier, six-team championship in 2012. The season structure was ten weekly rounds with teams playing each other both home and away with the winner of the League progressing to the Grand Final and second and third progressing to a play-off.

Out of six teams entered, only three teams completed all their fixtures. There were 31 scheduled fixtures, 18 were played (58 per cent) and 13 cancelled (42 per cent).

The Bonymaen Broncos were crowned 2012 Premier League champions beating the Bridgend Blue Bulls 46–28 in an entertaining Grand Final at Virginia Park, Caerphilly. This completed an unbeaten season for the Broncos for the second year running.

South Wales Grand Final

Bonymaen Broncos 46–28 Bridgend Blue Bulls

South Wales Play Off



**BONYMAEN BRONCOS WIN THE SOUTH WALES
CONFERENCE GRAND FINAL**



SOUTH WALES JUNIOR CONFERENCE

The 2012 Welsh Junior Conference League saw two new age grades Under-nines and Under-12s added to the established Under-13s, Under-14s, Under-15s and Under-17s. New clubs were established in Rhymney (Gwent Chiefs), Cardiff (Cardiff Barbarians), Neath (Neath and District Scorpions), Caerphilly (Aber Valley Wolves), Swansea (South Gower Rebels and Swansea Valley Rhinos), Treharris (Treharris Pheonix) and Magor (South Monmouthshire Dragons joining Gower Gladiators, Bridgend Blue Bulls, Glyneath & Abercrave Giants, Neath Port Talbot Steelers, Penallta Storm,

Panthers (Pontyclun), South Coast Spartans (Cardiff), Bonymaen Broncos and the Tydfil Wildcats (Merthyr) in the South Wales Junior Conference.

The junior season started in May with three Origin Series Festivals, Wolves Super Sunday at Virginia Park, Caerphilly, Scorpions Super Sunday at Bonymaen RFC and The Gnoll, Neath and Panthers Super Sunday at Pontyclun RFC, Pontyclun. The festivals were held at U13s, U14s and U15s age grades with each team playing each other in a round robin tournament with the top two qualifying for the Final.

Throughout the summer, junior clubs at U13s, U14s, U15s and U17s played weekly rounds in a league format where each team played each other at least once.

At the end of the season the top four progressed to the knockout play-offs, with the winners of the play-offs progressing to the finals. The 2012 season also saw the first friendlies played between the U12s teams and the under nines teams.

The junior season concluded in August, where Wales Rugby League held their Junior Club Grand Finals on one day and in one location for the very first time. A bumper crowd were treated to a magnificent day of Rugby League at Virginia Park, Caerphilly, It was the first time in Wales Rugby League history where the Premier League Senior Conference final and the Junior Finals were held at the same venue.

The first game saw the Aber Valley Wolves play the Panthers in the U14s Welsh Junior Final.

The Panthers went into the match

as favourites finishing the league campaign unbeaten but Aber Valley Wolves in their first season in rugby league pushed the Panthers all the way. The first half saw open rugby from both teams with Jack Thompson, Regan Wilson, Sion Jones and Zac Byard scoring tries for the Panthers and Ryan Davies and Connor Kawlock replying for the Wolves to make the half time score, Panthers 16-8 Wolves.

The Wolves started the second half in spectacular fashion with a second try for Ryan Davies and converted by Liam Waters making the score 16-14. They then pressed on the Panthers line and an upset look on the cards, but superb defence kept the Wolves out and resulted in a try from Corrie Tarrant.

The Panthers then went on to score two tries through Christian Bird and Scott Griffiths converted by Zac Byard with the Wolves adding a try through Connor Kawlock making the final score Panthers 30 Wolves 18. Panthers Sion Jones took the man of the match award with a barnstorming performance.

The Penallta Storm took the honours in U15s Welsh Grand Final with an outstanding performance against

a very experienced and previously unbeaten NPT Steelers. A five try first half blitz from the Storm saw both Lewis Alexander and Lloyd Bowman score a brace and Alex Stickler get on the scoring board with all the tries being converted by man of the match Arwel Robson.

In response the Steelers scored two tries through Regan Grace converted by Jay McBride and Ben Howells making the half time score Storm 30 Steelers 10.

The NPT Steelers rallied well after the break scoring tries through Regan Grace and Connor Davies both converted by Jay McBride, but a try from Patrick Lewis and goal by Arwel Robson halted the Steelers comeback. The final score was Storm 36 Steelers 20.

The last Junior Final of the day saw the reigning U17s champions Penallta Storm compete against this year's newly formed Treharris Pheonix. The Storm eventually lifted the title with a 40-28 win but were pushed all the way by a plucky Pheonix team who showed they could play good football when they had possession.

Storm try scorers were Man of the Match Jack Condry, Rhys Fitzgerald Lewis Barnett, Ryan Davies (2), Elliot Keep and Ryan Davis, goals by Kane Greenslade (3) and Joseph Scrivens (1) with Pheonix scoring through Conor Jones (2), Sean Blunt, Nathan Evans and Andrew Llewellyn, goals by Sean Blunt (4)



STUDENT, UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE

In June, Wales Students won the 2012 Four Nations Championship beating England Students 20 -18 in the final game and also taking the Grand Slam.

The players then went on to dedicated the win over England Students to the late Dr Phil Melling, the founder of Student Rugby League in Wales.

Dr Melling sadly died of cancer last November aged 64. He founded the first ever Wales student side at Swansea University in the 1970s, the Welsh national Rugby League Students side in the late 1980s and was involved in the set-up until his final years.

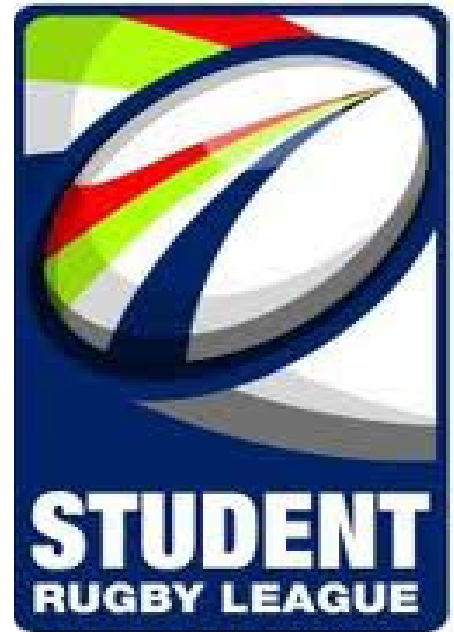
The win over England on Friday night gave Wales the British Isles Rugby League Four Nations Championship.

Wales had already beaten Scotland 74-4 and Ireland 64-4 before the England game, all in the space of five gruelling days, to take the trophy back to Wales for the first time since 2009.

Five Welsh Universities, Cardiff Met(UWIC), Glamorgan, Swansea, Aberystwyth and Bangor represented Wales in the BUCS leagues in 2012/2013 with great success. Cardiff Met won the National South League, Bangor came second in the North West 1.

Then Glamorgan and Aberystwyth university sides went on to win their respective national Student Rugby League Grand Finals.

Glamorgan won the Shield Final, the third ranked competition in the UK, beating Leeds University by a whopping 58-10. Then Aberystwyth won the Plate Final, the fourth ranked student competition, beating Chester 32-12.



DR PHIL MELLING. A LEGEND OF THE WRL



Dr Phil Melling, a pioneer of rugby league in Wales, died during 2012 after a battle against cancer.

Phil's career in the game was vast and his achievements too many to recall here.

Born in Wigan in 1947, the son of a miner, Phil was a unique character who had a fierce and evangelical love of Rugby League. He moved to Swansea in the late 1970s, after attending University of Manchester and University of Indiana, and was responsible for much of the development of the game in South Wales from then on.

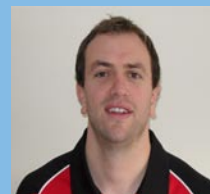
He established the Swansea University Rugby League club in the late 1970s when he was a lecturer and professor in American

Studies at Swansea University. It was the only Rugby League club in Wales at the time, with no opponents within 100 miles, and was formed by Phil in the face of hostility from the Welsh Rugby Union, who would threaten to ban any player from every playing rugby union again in those days even if they played Rugby League for no recompense.

His final involvement in Rugby League in Wales came in 2010 when he was again appointed Team Manager of the Wales Students side by Clive Griffiths for that year's Student Home Nations tournament where Wales finished second. He considered this a great honour after creating the student game in Wales.

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

DAN CLEMENTS



2012 was a landmark year for rugby league in Wales with the player development programme expanding to provide more opportunities for the most gifted and talented athletes in Wales to progress in rugby league. From the regional performance programme right through to the U18 academy the performance department focused on developing the next generation of talented players.

Regional Performance Development Centres

For the first time in its history, Wales Rugby League had a programme that catered for U14 players across the country with regional performance development centres opening in the north, east and west of the country. These centres provided local, accessible performance coaching for players that were identified through the talent recruitment programme on a regular basis. Delivered in a 12-week block, these centres focused on individual core skill development, they met at Builth Wells RFC in November to showcase their progress and put into practice what they had been working on.

South Wales U16 Scholarship

Continuing the ethos of long term player development, the South Wales Scholarship had an extremely successful year in 2012. With a year-round programme in place, players progressed through the Player Pathway from member schools and clubs to access regular coaching from the Wales Rugby League performance department as part of the scholarship programme. Fostering an elite environment, the most gifted and talented players were developed holistically through specific individual long-term development programmes. The programme then culminated in a small number of games at U15 and U16 level against Super League clubs and regional academies. Notable successes include the graduation of Bradley Mais to Wigan Warriors and the progression of a number of players through to the South Wales U18 academy.

North Wales U18 Academy

In 2012, Wales Rugby League made the decision to take a lead on the U18 programme in North Wales as this was identified as an important step on the player pathway within Wales. In its first year, the programme competed in the National Youth League competition and after overcoming some difficulties enjoyed a strong finish to the year with two players progressing through to the Wales U18 programme. This was followed by the progression of Andy Oakden through to the North Wales Crusaders first team.

South Wales U18 Academy

As a part of the Valvoline Academy Programme in 2012, the South Wales U18 academy had a strong year with some impressive performances against well established opposition. The programme focused on the individual development of the players around technical, tactical, physiological and psychological traits whilst also giving them the opportunity of competitive rugby league on a regular basis.

Following the success of the programme, a number of players progressed to Super League, most notably Rhys Pugsley and Rhodri Lloyd to Wigan Warriors and Jacob Morgan to Leeds Rhinos, with the former making his senior international debut against France. 2012 also saw five players secure part time contracts within rugby league at the South Wales Scorpions and Gloucestershire All Golds.



WALES UNDER-16 TEAM V AUSTRALIA INSTITUTE OF SPORT 2012

Wales Schoolboys

2012 was a difficult year for the U16 national programme as following a defeat away against England Youth at Easter, the programme was cut short following the decision by England not to play the return fixture during the summer.

The programme pre-first test was a huge success with players gaining access to elite facilities and coaching and sampling the international environment and what it means to prepare to play for your country. Following this programme, two players went on to play for Wales U18 in the same year highlighting the transition through the player pathway.

Wednesday 4th April

England Youth 30 – 6 Wales Schoolboys

Wales U18

In their most successful international programme to date, the Wales U18 squad came close to completing the clean sweep for the first time in its history but were ultimately overcome by a strong Australian side. With players drawn from all over Wales from the professional and community game the squad worked together at the Sport Wales national centre in Cardiff and the Wales rugby league performance centre in Deeside for 2 months ready for the 3 test series. The programme gave them an experience of an international programme and is designed to prepare them for the step up to senior international honors. This was highlighted in 2012 with eight former Wales U18 players making the progression to senior international.

Saturday 3rd November

Wales 46 – 28 Scotland

Saturday 10th November

England Community Lions 24 – 30 Wales

Thursday 29th November

Wales 12 – 52 Australian Institute of Sport

NORTH WALES DEVELOPMENT

MATTHEW PRITCHARD

After the demise of the Crusaders Super League club it was imperative the community work and forged links in North Wales were not lost with this in mind Wales Rugby League invested in North Wales and I was offered and accepted the full time role as North Wales Development Officer in October 2011.

In 2012 North Wales really took flight with the development of the first North Wales Conference League, 4 out and out Rugby League pitches, North Wales 9s & Grand Final club events, Referees Society and the Launch of a Development Centre at Deeside Leisure providing a North Wales Base for Rugby League. School work continued to increase and started to develop across the region and a strong rugby league network of volunteers and partnerships started to form underpinning this year's success.

The development of a brand new club "North Wales Crusaders" competing in Cooperative Championship One has provided a professional pathway within the region and reminds us the effect we can have with this can do attitude and highlights a community

- Rugby league family coming together to better the game.

Jamie Thomas, Clive Griffiths, John Field House, Stephanie Hutchinson, Hanna Clarke, all the back room staff and the fans must be congratulated on this achievement and for their passion and drive to develop a club for the North Wales community to look up to, and I am sure we will continue to see this club grow for the better of the community.

The North Wales Crusaders U18s continued ensuring those players who were involved the previous year were not lost, and the regional performance u14s developed later on in the year as part of a 22 week programme running into 2013. We must remember the stage of development our region is at and we have a long way to go in terms of developing a full academy and to do this a strong community game is vital providing a solid base and platform, and 5 years down the line we may see a solid academy within the region taking shape.

Although early in its development within the region we have already seen 5 players from



North Wales
Development Officer
and 2012 Olympic Torch
Bearer Matt Pritchard

North Wales representing Wales Dragonhearts against Scotland A and 2 players from the regional u18s representing Wales International U18s. International events took place within the region: Wales students 4 nations, Wales vs Scotland and England Lions U18s.

Holding such games helps speed up the development of rugby league on the ground providing a chance for us to sell the sport and increase our members.

Street Rugby continues to develop further across North Wales bringing organisations together working towards similar aims and objectives for effective change. By

adapting the game and making sport less rigid and flexible has encouraged those who haven't been involved in sport before underlining a demand for both rigid and flexible forms to develop sport for all.

The programme has increased sporting opportunities in less prosperous areas and has saved government money decreasing police call outs for anti social behaviour, providing health benefits and volunteer opportunities. The development of these Non Traditional Door Step Sport Clubs has increased our volunteer base, marketed the game and has started to form natural feeder clubs into the community clubs as Flintshire Falcons now has a full u16s age group and Wrexham Bradley Raiders have signed 5 Street Rugby Players, both club chairmen have also evolved through Street Rugby into their current roles.

Through these range of programs we have seen an influx in rugby league participation and Rugby League work force with 1695 playing the sport and 46 volunteers out of 52 actively involved developing the game within the region.

NORTH WALES CONFERENCE

In 2012 5 community clubs developed although 3 weeks into the league Montgomeryshire Marauders pulled out, this highlighted the need to look at an evaluation procedure before clubs can form in the future.

This set back produced an opportunity for a new club to form and in the short space of time Flintshire Falcons Rugby league club became the 5th club in North Wales .

The club must be congratulated on their achievements in a short period of time.

The first North Wales Senior Conference League was established with five clubs playing (Flintshire Falcons, Wrexham Bradley Raiders, Conwy Celts, Dee Valley Dragons & Prestatyn and Rhyl Panthers) eight weekly rounds with teams play-

ing each other both home and away with the top four teams progressing to the play-offs where we saw Conwy Celts 25 – 18 Dee Valley Dragons



Conwy Celts RLFC receive their Club of the Year award at the Conwy Council Sports Awards 2012 along with WRL President Mike Nicholas

and Prestatyn and Rhyl Panthers 38 – 34 Flintshire Falcons.

Conwy Celts and Prestatyn and Rhyl Panthers then progressed to the finals where we

saw a junior festival take shape beforehand making it a day of rugby league. Conwy Celts became the first North Wales Conference

champions as they beat Prestatyn and Rhyl Panthers 48-26 in an exciting Grand Final. Conwy Celts then went on to be the only Club at the Conwy Sports awards

(600 people were in attendance) and won club of the Year and Coach of the Year awards at the Conwy Council Sports Awards 2012.

In addition to this league two club events were developed North Wales 9s which will be built on annually and saw 101 registered players, 8 teams competing 13 matches played , helped to spread the word of the up and coming league and brought all the community clubs including Bangor and Aberwsyswyth Universities together as a Rugby League Family.

The senior Conference Grand final was the second event where we held a junior festival with 7 teams from 6 clubs and 80 players playing before the senior grand final.

NORTH WALES COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

2012 saw primary school delivery develop in Wrexham and across Flintshire, this further increased since the employment of North East Community Coach Allen Jones by Glyndwr University in partnership with Wales Rugby League, Flintshire and Wrexham Council, Rugby League has been delivered to 55 schools with the majority of these being primary schools.

The provision of rugby league in North Wales cannot develop or expand without the expansion of a solid work force.

In this document the work force relates to paid staff and volunteers. Both are Ambassadors of Wales Rugby League as

they are all actively out promoting the game.

A total of 18 paid staff members were developed (1 full time North Wales Development Officer, 1 Full time community coach delivering in Wrex-

ham and Flintshire, 8

part-time flexi coaches, 6 active referees and 2 performance physios along with a total of 51 volunteers of whom 46 are active in North Wales delivering Rugby League.

Street Rugby workshop in partnership with National Charity Organisation Street Games, best practice coaching workshop in partnership with Wigan Warriors super

in sport through Rugby League.

The first Wales Rugby League skill camps and primary after school clubs were developed providing provision for children enabling parents to drop their kids off before and after work. Adult touch continued to be delivered providing non contact rugby league for 18 plus with great health outcomes and gives those who cannot play contact sport to be involved.

Street Rugby increased and developed in 9 areas across Wrexham, Flintshire and Denbighshire, 5/9 are structured areas and saw 80 registered members and 120 sessions delivered in disadvantaged areas.



Street Rugby League takes the game into Estates

ham and Flintshire, 8 part-time flexi coaches, 6 active referees and 2 performance physios along with a total of 51 volunteers of whom 46 are active in North Wales delivering

league club, Safe Guarding & protecting children, club welfare officers, referees, secondary school teacher workshop courses were delivered up skilling 70 people

2012 IN PICTURES

SENIOR TEST SERIES AUTUMN



**FRANCE V
WALES**

LENS

**OCTOBER 20
2012**

David James scores
against France (left)



Rhodri Lloyd on the attack (left) while Jordan James takes on the French (right)

**WALES V
ENGLAND**

WREXHAM

**OCTOBER 27
2012**

Joe Burke scores
a try against
England (right)



UNDER 18 TEST SERIES



**ENGLAND 24
WALES 30**



STREET RUGBY LEAGUE INITIATIVE



STUDENTS FRESHERS WEEK - SEPTEMBER



**PENALLTA
STORM**

**WRL CLUB
OF THE YEAR
2012**

MEDIA AND PR REPORT

Ian Golden. January - July 2012

Gary Baker. August - December 2012

INTRODUCTION

Gary Baker came into the role of Media Manager in August 2012 after Ian Golden moved on to work fully with the South Wales Scorpions. Therefore, this media and PR review is split into two, one for the first seven months of the year that Ian has written and the other for the remaining five months from Gary.

JANUARY – JULY - Ian Golden

January – Mike Nicholas making the RFL role of honour. Reported in local Welsh newspapers and trade press.

March - The announcement that Matt Pritchard was to be an Olympic torchbearer. It made North Wales newspapers and the trade press.

The announcement that the Millennium Stadium would open the 2013 World Cup. The launch was made at the Stadium and as well as appearing on Welsh news and in newspapers, it made many international outlets in the rugby league world.

April – Crusaders v Scorpions screened live across the globe, over 30 countries around the world thanks to Premier Sports and Setanta.

National semi-final of Champion Schools contested by two Welsh speaking schools. This was publicised and reported in two different S4C programmes – Newyddion and Ffeil.

May – The launch of the North Wales Conference. Reported in The Leader, Daily Post and national trade press.

June – Opening of the new Deeside Centre. Reported on by local and national media, newspapers, radio and TV. There was a nine-minute segment on Boots N All. This doubled up as a preview for the Wales v France summer game.

Wales winning the Student Four Nations. Reported in most major Welsh newspapers and in the trade press. Some local media attended the final game.

July – Wales Rugby League started a Wheelchair team and came second in the Four Nations.

AUGUST – DECEMBER - Gary Baker

Wales Rugby League saw one of their schools Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg in Ystalyfera in the National Schools Rugby League finals in Bradford who became the first Welsh-

speaking school to reach the tournament final and, though they lost to Wakefield's Outwood Grange School, we received a number of column inches in Welsh and specialist rugby league media (League Express and League Weekly) on this. Indeed, League Express and League Weekly have been particularly keen to help the WRL in promoting the sport here, while, when there is a good story to be told, the national media have been interested. During this initial week, the North Wales Conference final was also coming to a climax with games receiving extensive coverage in the local regional media.

Wales Rugby League continued to use social media as a medium to reach more people and provided regular updates via Facebook and Twitter.

October was jam-packed with the Autumn Test matches, particularly the preparations for the match with England. The WRL appointed Huw Evans Agency, Cardiff, as our official photographers. Mark Rowley made initial contact and asked Gary to liaise with them. As such, Huw Evans travelled to France to take pictures of our Test match which, despite losing, gave us exposure, with Gary's match report words, throughout many national publications from the BBC both nationally and in Wales to the Sunday Times, Sunday Telegraph, Sunday Mirror and Mail on Sunday.

Preparations for the Wales v England game began many weeks before the October 27 match which included arranging media accreditation for national broadcasters and newspapers, local media and RFL and Rugby League World Cup 2013 public relations operations.

In the pre-match week, there was a press conference at Deeside Leisure Centre in association with the launch of the North Wales RPDC. That saw reporters coming from the likes of BBC National radio/TV and BBC Manchester (Ray French), The Sun (Gary Carter), The Guardian (Andy Wilson) and other national media to speak to Iestyn Harris, Ben Flower and Rhodri Lloyd.

September was also busy with the build-up towards the Autumn Test matches with France in Lens and England at Wrexham's Glyndwr University Racecourse Ground. This included obtaining interviews with players and management for the home programme, putting our profile out to the national media for these games and publishing them via a social media campaign. Additionally, the WRL looked at launching a women's team for this year's World Cup where we again received some publicity, including BBC Wales online, when Commonwealth Games athlete Carys Parry took part in a training session.



**WRL Media
Manager Gary
Baker**

There were also various meetings along with Mark Rowley with Welsh sportswoman Non Evans, who was helping to spread the word, along with contacting specialist women's magazines, especially the on-line site Sportsister.com

The end of the year, late November and December, was dominated by two things. The One Year To Go evening for the Rugby League World Cup which was reported around Wales and in which Wales RL had a large part with contribu-

tions on stage from Iestyn Harris in a Question Time-style talk and with the presences at The Senydd, Cardiff Bay, of Brian Juliff, Mark Rowley and Wales international Rhodri Lloyd, among others.

Secondly, the Wales Under-18s Test match programme which culminated in the game against the Australia Institute of Sport at The Gnoll, Neath. Wales played outstandingly well to beat both Scotland and England in these first two matches, with the English victory particularly pleasing. For these, we gained many column inches and space on websites before another good PR show including Footy News website in Australia.

Overall, a very busy year with great feedback from the various partners worked with in the local and national media.

