

Wales Rugby League Annual Report 2017-18



Covers Period 1.4.17 to 31.3.18

Welcome by WRL Chairman Brian Juliff

2018 is a historic year for Wales Rugby League as it signifies 110 years since Wales played the first ever Rugby League international against the touring New Zealand “All Golds” at the Ynys Playing Fields in Aberdare on January 1st 1908, winning 9-8.



Since then much has been done to prevent the growth of League in Wales and this was wonderfully documented and presented by Carolyn Hitt in her televised documentary, “Rugby’s Codebreakers” on BBC2 - an outstanding depiction of the nations past prejudices.

Despite this, the game has survived and continues to thrive thanks to the outstanding support of so many volunteers within the game here in Wales.

We remain indebted to our main sponsors My Club Betting, Buy Sports Kit Pro, Errea, Feisal Nahaboo, integrity, Vaughan Davies, Cutpay, Analysis Pro, JBC and Energy Check. We are also fortunate and very thankful to receive continued support from the RFL and Sport Wales.

The list of achievements in 2017 indicates a record breaking 12 months for us as an organisation. Everyone involved should feel extremely proud and I give thanks to you all.

Now the WRL Celebration Dinner has become an established event in our annual calendar and proving very popular, we plan to add a Golf Day and a further Celebration Dinner in West/South Wales to embrace the growth of the community game.

On a personal note it was a pleasure to induct the magnificent David ‘Dai Watkins’ into our ‘Hall of Fame’ at a dinner organized by our colleagues from the Welsh Charitables RFC. A wonderful organisation that have been very proactive in breaking down prejudices and barriers between the two rugby codes here in Wales with their last three dinners focusing on Rugby League players.

As I bring my introduction to its close I want to pay tribute to the legendary Les Pearce and Johnny Freeman who both represented their country and Halifax R.L.F.C with such outstanding service but unfortunately passed on this year. They will be remembered and respected forever within our history.

I want to thank our Chief Executive, Chris Thair for his continued enthusiasm and support in building a better future for our game and to the Board of Wales Rugby League for their commitment, ideas and outright determination to make us a sustainable organization.

Finally, and very importantly I want to thank our staff, magnificent volunteers, parents, grandparents and all the loyal supporters for your support.

Without you there would not be a future!

Cymru Am Byth,

Brian

WRL ACHIEVEMENTS & MILESTONES

April 2017 to March 2018

1. 1585 Registered Players in 2017 season, highest in four years.
2. Biggest ever grant award from Sport Wales.
3. Wales teams participate in three World Cups - Wheelchair, Students and Mens.
4. Wales men compete in the 2017 Rugby League World Cup:
 - Broadcast to 150 countries
 - PNG v Wales – Sell out 14,800 crowd
 - Three group games. Average attendance 12,425
 - Huge exposure domestically and worldwide
5. Wales U16s beat England for the first time.
6. A record 24 Welsh players aged 14 to 16 sign with Super League clubs.
7. Regan Grace makes sensational Super League debut.
8. Jamie Jones is the first Welsh-based official to referee a pro game and Bianca Zietsman officiates in the Women's World Cup in Australia.
9. Wales Wheelchair won the Celtic Cup and competed in the World Cup in France, finishing fifth in the World.
10. Wales play a record 10 different nations in internationals.
11. A record number of overseas tours took place for WRL national teams with games played in PNG, France, Ireland and three teams travelling to Australia. WRL ran 16 rep teams who played 33 games.
12. Glantaf School U14s crowned UK Champions for the second time in three years having still only ever lost one game since starting as a group when aged 11.
13. Wales U23s beat England in the Commonwealth Championships.
14. New WRL website launched becoming the sports first NGB to go completely with online player registrations.
15. New corporate branding launched with great feedback.
16. New kit supplier and shirt design for the World Cup.
17. Record social media numbers smashing the 10,000 Twitter followers milestone.
18. Dai Watkins and Mike Nicholas inducted into WRL Hall of Fame.
19. Over 100 caps awarded at WRL Cap Presentation Night.
20. Financial reserves retained in a year of high activity and exposure.

WRL Wales Representative Teams and Results

Wales Men

World Cup Finals in PNG & Australia (Oct/Nov)

PNG 50 WALES 6

WALES 16 FIJI 72

IRELAND 34 WALES 6



Wales Wheelchair

Celtic Cup (April)

IRELAND 6 WALES 51

SCOTLAND 0 WALES 72...Cup winners

World Cup in France (July)

AUSTRALIA 72 WALES 24

WALES 32 ENGLAND 78

FRANCE 118 WALES 10

WALES 24 ITALY 105

WALES 66 SPAIN 45...5th Place



Wales U23s

Commonwealth Championships in Australia

AUSTRALIA 30 WALES 0

SCOTLAND 20 WALES 0

WALES 10 ENGLAND 8

SCOTLAND 16 WALES 10

6th Place Finish



Wales U18s

ENGLAND LIONS 42 WALES 24



Wales U16s

WIGAN WARRIORS TRAINING

WALES 32 IRELAND 18

IRELAND U17s 10 WALES 32

WALES 18 ENGLAND 10



Wales Students

NORTH WALES 12 WALES 40
(April) GRIFFITH UNI 16 WALES 28
(June)

World Cup in Australia (June)

WALES 18 SCOTLAND 40 (Sydney)
WALES 4 ENGLAND 22 (June)
PACIFIC ISLANDS 40 WALES 12
WALES 28 IRELAND 16...5th Place

Wales Dragonhearts

WALES D'HEARTS 34 GERMANY 38



WRL Regional Representative Teams and Results

Three Regional U15 Teams

EAST 4 WEST 34 (May @Glamorgan)
WEST 42 EAST 22 (Sept @Stebonheath)
SOUTH WALES 20 CARCASSONNE 26

Three Regional U17 Teams

EAST 30 WEST 44 (May)
SOUTH WALES 20 CARCASSONNE 22

3 Regional Open Age Teams

EAST 66 WEST 18 (May)
SOUTH PROBABLES 34 BRITISH
ARMY 26
NORTH 22 SOUTH 20



AMAZING 2017/18 REP TEAM FACTS

- Wales' played a record 10 nations, more than any other year in its history
- A record number of representative overseas tours also took place with Wales Men playing in PNG, Wales Wheelchair in France, Wales U16s in Ireland and Wales Men, U23s and Students (total three teams) touring Australia.
- Three Wales rep teams - Wales Men, Students and Wheelchair, played in their respective World Cups in 2017.
- WRL ran 16 rep teams playing 33 games.
- Seven national Wales teams played 25 games against 10 Nations: England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Australia.

International

Wales Senior Men

14 Nations in the 2017 Rugby League World Cup.

Games broadcast to global TV audience: 150 Countries.

Wales' three group games had attendances of 14,800 (sell out), 7732 and 14,744.

Ran community engagement programmes in Port Moresby, Townsville and Perth during the tournament.

Moved from 9th to 12th in the World Rankings



Cultures, standards and experiences people will never forget!

WALES SENIOR TEAM




SUPPORTED BY FANTASTIC PARTNERS



THANK YOU

Emergence of Regan Grace



Regan Grace


Born and raised in Port Talbot

Product of the WRL System

Made one of the best Super League debuts ever in April 2017 for St Helens

Scored for Wales in 2017 World Cup

Media Sensation



Thank you to retiring players Phil Joseph, Ant Walker, Christiaan Roets and Matty Seamark for great service and outstanding contribution on the field.



Senior player Ant Walker (pictured left lifting the 2015 European Championship trophy for Wales) unfortunately had to retire from playing just before the World Cup following a head scan and consultation organised by Wales Rugby League.

Twelve senior players who had played for Wales in previous years missed the World Cup due to injuries or unavailability.

Wales Wheelchair

Led by head coach Ste Jones and captain Mark Williams, Wales retained the Celtic Cup in April and then flew to France in July to play in the 2017 Wheelchair Rugby League World Cup.

Wales Wheelchair played seven internationals in 2017 beating Ireland, Scotland and Spain.



Wales before playing Australia in the 2017 World Cup



Senior Wheelchair player Gary Taylor speaking at the WRL Celebration Dinner



Wheelchair Manager Mark Jones MAJ won Wrexham's Volunteer of the Year

Wales Wheelchair team were the first WRL representative team to wear the new Wales World Cup Errea kit.

Harry Jones' seizure due to flash photography during a game against France in the World Cup made national news. The story became the headline BBC Sport news item alongside Neymar signing for Paris St Germain FC.



2017 Celtic Cup Winners

Junior Pathway

The primary objective of the junior pathway programme is to increase the number of Welsh players in the professional pool and this was WRL's most successful year ever.

A record number of 23 Welshman, 18 living in Wales, aged 14 to 16 signed with Super League clubs in 2017.

Nine Welsh players signed with →
(Five Glantaf School, three Aber Valley Wolves RLFC and one Bristol School)



Eight Welsh players from West Wales Raiders RLFC →



One Welsh player from Anglesey signed with →



WIDNES VIKINGS

Why were clubs interested in Young Welsh talent?

Wales U16s (nine of whom were U15) beat England for the first time ever



Wales U16s trained with Wigan Warriors scholarship in 2017 (pic below at Wigan), the year before visited Hull FC and in 2015 were coached by Widnes Vikings coaches to maintain strong annual links with Super League clubs.



Glantaf School, Cardiff, have twice been crowned UK Champions and have lost once in three years. Other Welsh schools also reach UK Finals showing depth of talent in Wales



New Welsh Talent Emerged in Super League



LEFT: 16-year old Regan Grace at launch of WRL AASE in September 2013.

RIGHT: Regan Grace made his St Helens first team debut in April 2017

*Regan Grace from Port Talbot, South Wales



New Welsh Talent Emerged in the Championship:



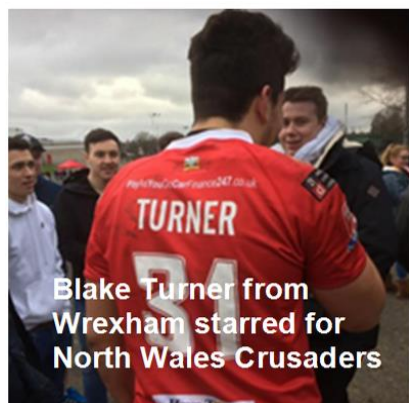
LEFT: Sion Jones MOM for Wales U16s v England in 2014

RIGHT: Sion Jones made his Halifax first team debut in March 2018

*Sion Jones from Barry, South Wales



New Welsh Talent Emerged in League 1



Blake Turner from Wrexham starred for North Wales Crusaders



Zac Williams in action for Coventry RLFC



Continuing with tradition South Wales Ironmen RLFC provided first team debuts for over 15 young Welshman in 2017.

Supporting Systems in the Junior Pathway System

Both professional Welsh Clubs ran supporting reserve teams:



Regional WRL representative teams ran at U15, U17 and Open Age

Regional rep players at the WRL Cap Presentation Night



Cultural and Rewarding Experiences In the WRL Junior Pathway System



Wales U16s toured Ireland



South Wales
play French rep
team
Carcassonne at
U15 and U17



Wales U23s at Brisbane's Suncorp Stadium



Wales U23s beat
England on live
stream



Wales U23s play Fiji



WRL Cap Presentation Night

Community

More Players and Greater Depth to Clubs

Registered Club Players	2014	2015	2016	2017
Men	774	624	644	737
Women	0	0	0	0
Boys	672	844	850	842
Girls	4	14	20	6
Total	1450	1482	1514	1585

No. of Clubs	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total	33	31	32	29

Registered Teams	2014	2015	2016	2017
Men	28	24	25	29
Women		0	0	0
Boys	34	41	35	36
Girls	0	0	0	0
Total	62	65	60	65

WRL Match Officials



LEFT: WRL Match Official Bianca Zietsman officiated in the 2017 Womens Rugby League World Cup in Australia.

Bianca was the only female in the team of UK officials sent over to Australia for the World Cup.



LEFT: WRL Match Official James Jones (pictured in centre) became the first ever welsh based welsh match official to officiate a professional first team game after taking charge of Oxford v Hunslet in League 1 in 2017.

New Initiatives to Increase Numbers & Diversity



LEFT: Raiders launch first **women's team** "West Wales Raiders Ravens" and director Andy Thorne is pictured with Keely Evans and Katherine Gravell.

RIGHT: WRL launch the **Four Game League** in 2018 to help entice new clubs and teams into playing four games of rugby league during the summer.



LEFT: WRL launched a new partnership with **Beach Rugby Wales** running a successful event...on the beach! Valley Cougars (below) represented WRL and live Facebook views were amongst our best rated ever.



LEFT: North Wales Buccaneers Masters began in July 2017 at Colwyn Bay RFC.

Masters is an adapted game for the over 35s.

WRL Grand Finals Day

1000 people in attendance on a day @ Glamorgan Wanderers

Men's Champions

Valley Cougars RLFC

Men's Grand Final
Valley Cougars 32
Torfaen Tigers 18



U17 Champions

Cardiff Blue Dragons RLFC

U17's Grand Final
Cardiff Blue Dragons 38
Torfaen Tigers 4



U15 Champions

West Wales Raiders

U15's Grand Final
West Wales Raiders 42
Torfaen Tigers 6



U13 Champions

Bridgend Blue Bulls

U13's Grand Final
West Wales Raiders 14
Bridgend Blue Bulls 18



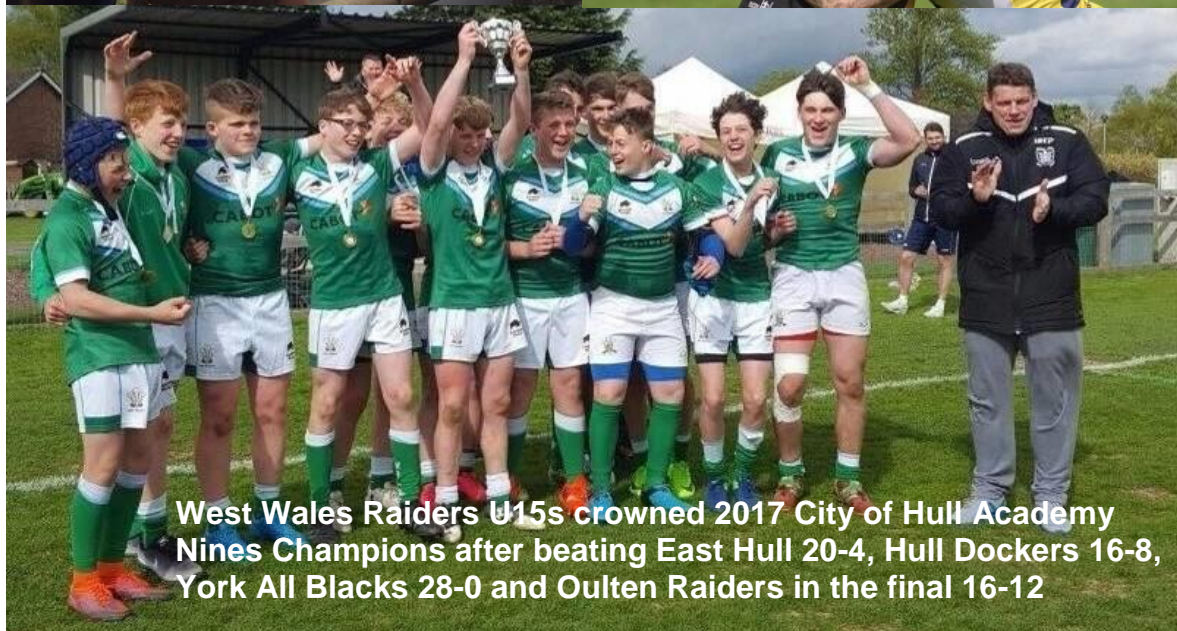
Mud, Fun, Fitness and Great Sport



Cardiff players
at halftime



Torfaen Tigers
RLFC



West Wales Raiders U15s crowned 2017 City of Hull Academy
Nines Champions after beating East Hull 20-4, Hull Dockers 16-8,
York All Blacks 28-0 and Oulten Raiders in the final 16-12



Flintshire Falcons
U9s (left) and
U11s (right)

Winning the North of
England Festivals



Rhonddda Outlaws
v Valley Cougars
@Sardis Rd



YEAR 9 CHAMPION SCHOOLS UK FINAL
SGOL GYFUN GYMAREG GLANTAF 28 MIRFIELD FREE GRAMMAR SCHOOL 0



Wales Dragonhearts with Germany players after the game in Cardiff



Wales Dragonhearts with Germany Post Game

Wales Dragonhearts are a representative team consisting of the best players from the domestic community game in Wales.

Leading up to the international with Germany, players played a number of regional representative games to aid the selection and preparation process.

South Wales Dragonhearts Probables beat the British Army 34-26 and then lost to North Wales Origin 22-20.



Universities

Five universities in Wales play Rugby League: Bangor, University of South Wales (USW), Aberystwyth, Cardiff Met and Swansea.



WRL support universities at Freshers Fayres to aid recruitment into teams

Any student attending a university in Wales or who is eligible to play for Wales may play for Wales Students.

Wales Students

Before travelling to Australia for their World Cup, Wales Students played North Wales in April (both teams pictured below)



As part of their pre-tournament training camp in Brisbane, Wales Students played Griffith Uni in Australia winning 28-16. Both teams pictured below.



Wales Students Played in their eighth World Cup in Sydney, Australia



Wales player embraces the opposition following defeating Ireland 28-16 to secure fifth place in Sydney during the Student Rugby League World Cup



Huge thank you to outgoing team manager Mark Jones and head coach Latham Tawhai for a long and distinguished career with Wales Students.

LEFT: New Wales Students head coach Paul Emmanuelli (left) for 2018 talking over from Latham Tawhai (right).

Governance

Mike Nicholas inducted into WRL Hall of Fame

In October 2017 for outstanding services to the sport in Wales, WRL President Mike Nicholas was inducted into the Hall of Fame at the WRL Celebration Dinner.

Mike Nicholas aka “Nicko” born in Port Talbot, Wales

- Actively involved in developing Rugby League in Wales since 1981 when along with Dai Watkins helped set up Cardiff City Blue Dragons.
- Wales Students team manager in 1989.
- Wales senior men team manager between 1993 and 2000 which included Wales reaching two World Cup semi finals in 1995 and 2000.
- Founded South Wales RLFC in 1996, co-founder of Celtic Crusaders in 2005, and also inaugural Board member of South Wales Scorpions.
- Helped set up the Welsh Conference in 2003 and assisted in setting up three clubs: Torfaen Tigers, Bridgend Blue Bulls and Aberavon Fighting Irish.
- WRL President since 2003.
- 50 Welsh Internationals including 11 in the 2017 World Cup squad at some point engaged with a club or competition that Mike helped set up.
- Active patron of two charities: Warrington Wolves Foundation and Rugby League Cares
- 2012 RFL Roll of Honour Inductee for services to the game, Mike Nicholas has also had an outstanding playing career and was inducted into the Warrington Wolves Hall of Fame.
- Wembley try scorer winning the Challenge Cup in 1974 and won seven caps for Wales.
- No other person has done more to develop the sport in Wales.

Pic Below Left: Mike Nicholas inducted into the WRL Hall of Fame by WRL Chairman and friend Brian Juliff. Also pictured right with the WRL Board.



Dai Watkins inducted into WRL Hall of Fame

In March 2018 the only player to captain both codes of the British Lions, the legendary Dai Watkins was inducted into the Hall of Fame at the Welsh Charitables Dinner. Months earlier Dai was presented with the Special Recognition Award at the BBC Wales Sports Awards.



David Watkins MBE born in Blaina, Wales in 1942

- Only man to captain Wales and the British Lions in both codes, Dai is recognised as being one of the greatest players to pull on a Welsh Shirt
- Played for Newport for seven seasons scoring 294 points in 202 games beating the All Blacks in 1963. Dai was capped 21 times for Wales and six times for the Lions. Dai was captain of all three teams when he signed for Salford in 1967. This was huge global news at the time.
- For Salford Dai scored points in a record 92 consecutive matches from 1972 to 1974 helping the club win two league titles.
- Salford's record points scorer with 2907 points in 407 games, kicking a world record 221 goals in one season.
- Won 16 Wales Rugby League caps and captained the 1975 World Cup team to wins over New Zealand, France and England. He also won six GB caps.
- Coach of Great Britain in the 1977 World Cup, losing 13-12 in the final.
- Coach of Wales and founder and coach of Cardiff City Blue Dragons in 1981.
- Awarded an MBE for services to Rugby League in 1986.

Anthony Seibold becomes Rabbitohs Head Coach



Anthony Seibold who spent five seasons in Wales from 2006-10, working in Rugby League with Celtic Crusaders (player and assistant coach), South Wales Scorpions (head coach) and the WRL (head of development), was appointed head coach of NRL side South Sydney Rabbitohs in 2017.

WRL Launch New Branding

Following a two-year process at no cost to the organisation, thanks to volunteers from around the world, most notably Martin Riding from New Zealand, Wales Rugby League launched new branding in September 2017.



The new branding has a modern look and has meaning due to its symbolic imagery and colours. The logos portray the sport and the nation in an extremely good fashion and offers some consistency that will make us easily recognisable across all our programmes.

The rebranding includes a number of new shield logos that will be used on the playing kits however fans can be reassured WRL are keeping the Prince of Wales feathers on the left breast of all our international jerseys.

Sport Wales Recognition

For the fifth year in a row, WRL received the highest governance grading by Sport Wales in the annual self assurance review.



For the first time ever, Sport Wales provided performance funding to support Wales' preparations for the World Cup. WRL have doubled the investment levels from Sport Wales in the last five years compared to the previous five:

£308,000 from 2013 to 2017

£133,000 from 2008-12

131% Rise

Thank You Idris Evans

Idris Evans, after two years in position as the WRL National Development Manager left the organisation in November 2017 to pursue a career in the medical profession. A long-time volunteer in the sport, Idris served the organisation with distinction and merit during his time in post and everyone wishes Idris well in his new job.



WRL Board Member Dick Greenwood Awarded an OBE

John Richard Heaton "Dick" Greenwood was awarded an OBE on the Queen's Birthday Honours list in June 2017 for services to rugby.

Colwyn Bay-based the 75-year old has sat for three years on the WRL Board and has been the chairman of Rhyl and Prestatyn Panthers RLFC and Rhyl RUFC overseeing a new club facility.



Greenwood is also well-known for his charitable work. He is a driving force behind Wooden Spoon - the children's charity of rugby, since 1994, first as a fund-raiser and latterly as an ambassador. In addition, he has raised thousands of pounds for seriously injured rugby players in North Wales since 2012.

A firm believer in the power of sport, Greenwood is the ex England Rugby Union captain and head coach who has resided in North Wales for many years and has been pushing rugby league in North Wales since 2011. The OBE marks an outstanding reward for a wonderful selfless man.

NEW KIT PARTNERS



Playing Strips

Training Kit

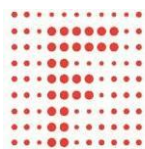
Leisure Wear

**For all WRL
Representative
Teams**

Players & Staff



NEW WALES SENIOR PLAYING KIT PARTNERS



FEISAL
UK ENTREPRENEUR



PROFESSIONALS YOU CAN TRUST
NTEGRITY
GROUP

CutPay
Merchant Services

**THANK
YOU**

Feisal Nahaboo

Ntegrity Group

**Cut Pay
Merchant Services**



NEW WALES U23 PLAYING KIT PARTNERS



“I am absolutely delighted to be supporting Wales Rugby League team at the 2018 Rugby League Commonwealth Championships in Australia. As one of the world’s top Rugby League playing nations, we are very proud to be named as the Official Energy Partner”

David Winton
CEO, The Energy Check
www.theenergycheck.co.uk

NEW PLAYER SPONSORS

Nearly 40 businesses backed Wales as player sponsors at Rugby League World Cup 2017.

Pictured below is Wales player Ben Morris with his player sponsors (centre left) at the WRL Dinner and then in action at the Rugby League World Cup.



RLIF and RLEF

In 2017/18 a resolution put forward by Wales Rugby League to double the amount of domestic quota players in European international games was approved by the Rugby League European Federation and its members.

Wales Rugby League remain full members of both the RLIF and RLEF.

OFFICIAL WRL MENSWEAR PROVIDER

Wales players and staff pictured in Australia in their formal polos, shorts and shoes provided by Vaughan Davies Menswear based in Mold, North Wales.



OFFICIAL WRL PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS PARTNERS

Nacsport and AnalysisPro became the Wales Rugby League's official Performance Analysis partners for the 2017 Rugby League World Cup providing video analysis software, training and hardware for the coaching and technical staff.



Pic: WRL CEO
Chris Thair (left)
with Llanelli based
company Analysis
Pro Director Jon
Moore



Main Partner & Biggest in WRL History



My Club Betting has provided more sponsorship funds to Wales Rugby League over the tenure of the partnership than any other commercial partner.



My Club Betting has sponsored Wales Rugby League since 2014.

WRL's biggest ever sponsor.

Pic left to right: WRL CEO Chris Thair, first team player Regan Grace and MCB CEO Stephen Wundke.

"It was an easy choice to put Dragonsbet on the Wales shirt for 2017 because this is Wales Rugby League's own betting site and this site will ensure a legacy funding for Wales RL for many years to come. We are so proud to be involved and wish them every success in the future."

My Club Betting CEO Stephen Wundke

Successful WRL Cap Presentation Nights

Over 500 people have attended two WRL Cap Presentation Nights in 2017/18 with regional and national representative players presented with their caps.

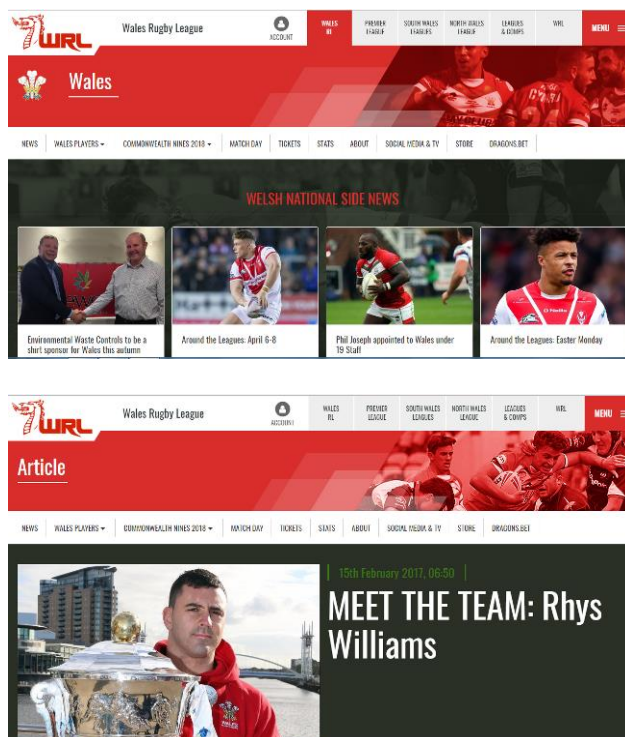


Pic left: Former Wales and St Helens player Chris Seldon presenting the caps in March 2018.

Pic Below: Proud players and parents from the May 2017 presentation night.



WRL Launch New Website



Website launched July 2017

Allows online club, team and player registrations.

WRL became the sports first NGB to completely go to online player registration in 2017.

Websites within websites which allows competitions to look as though they have their own website whilst allowing user to search through a lot more.

Mobile and tablet friendly the numbers using the website significantly increased in 2017.

Social Media Barriers Smashed



Twitter smashed 10,000 followers.

Year end 12,145



Facebook smashed 5000 likes

Year end 5947



Extensive use of WRL Instagram account during 2017 World Cup

More Media Ideas and Support



Ian Golden, the WRL Head of Communications, continues to lead an increasing amount of output. 238 articles were posted on the official website in 12 months.

Ryan Gould was the Wales National Team Media Manager and travelled with team to World Cup.

Ian Lovell (pictured right) continues to provide fantastic images as WRL Photographer, travelling to the World Cup in Australia under his own expense.

A Welsh speaking BBC news reporter followed Wales during the World Cup and had full access to the team producing numerous features for BBC TV and radio, as well as S4C.



The all new “Meet the Team” articles were some of the most popular items along with the announcement of the Wales squad. WRL had TV reports previewing the World Cup on “BBC Wales Today”, “S4C Newyddion” and “Rugby AM”.

“The Rugby League Show” produced by Calon FM and also broadcast on GTFM radio during the World Cup, ran a great weekly show from North Wales.

BBC Wales TV previewed the Wales Wheelchair team before travelling to the World Cup, all games were broadcast live online and reports featured on BBC.

Head of Communications Ian Golden travelled with the under 23 side to the Rugby League Commonwealth Championships and produced the most popular WRL online video ever with the Wales U23 team. All Wales U23 games were streamed live.



Great Imagery Sells Your Organisation

Happy Birthday International Rugby League

International Rugby League celebrated its 110th birthday on January 1st 2018 marking the sport's first ever full international. To further cement the nation's place in rugby league, this was played in Wales. Wales beat New Zealand 9 – 8 in a pulsating game played in front of nearly 20,000 people in Aberdare, South Wales on January 1st 1908. The Wales side included Dai “Tarw” Jones, Wales' first ever cross-code international and the only man to have ever played in Wales sides in both codes to have beaten New Zealand.

Codebreakers on BBC 2

Presented perfectly by Carolyn Hitt, Codebreakers is a wonderful programme highlighting the story behind the Welsh players who “went North” to play rugby league. First aired on BBC Wales in March 2018.



WRL at the BBC Sports Awards



Pic Left: Wales captain Craig Kopczak with athletics legend Michael Johnson attending the BBC Sports Personality of the Year awards [#SPOTY](#) at the Echo Arena in Liverpool.

WRL CEO Chris Thair Report

This was our busiest 12 months in my five-year involvement and whilst the senior team didn't get that elusive World Cup win there remains an outstanding amount to be proud of.

We are far from being the perfect organisation, as our ambition continually outstrips our resources, however what is certain, is that we continue to improve year upon year and we have lots of great people involved in the sport so a lot to be thankful for.

Sending five different representative sides on overseas tours to participate in games and World Cups is a huge financial and logistical task and a lot of credit must go to the volunteers who support all the teams. Too many to mention however Wales Team Managers such as Bob Wilson, Mark Jones, MAJ and David Albertelli do great unseen work behind the scenes along with those who help raise much needed sponsorship such as WRL Commercial Director Craig Poskitt.



The list of achievements in these 12 months is quite ridiculous considering we operated with one fulltime member of staff. Of course it is only possible due to the sports wonderful volunteers, supporting families and dedicated players, thank you all.

Sadly we had to spend time saving a Welsh professional club from going under in 2017. Thankfully we found new owners after doing the necessary due diligence and support; heavily supporting them in the change over process and with their application to the RFL. Whilst they are independent and controlled by their own board of directors both pro' clubs in Wales remain strategically important to WRL and therefore it is in our interest to see them succeed. In the last four years we have now saved both clubs from insolvency events a total of three times, indeed owning and running one club for two seasons. WRL had its own governance problems when I came into role in 2013 and I am a firm believer poor governance is the fundamental reason the sport is not much further ahead in Wales. Time spent reacting and dealing with pro' club problems, whilst necessary, is time taken away from being pro-active on measures needed to take the sport forward. For the fifth year running Sport Wales awarded WRL the highest grading for our governance and whilst we are in good shape we must now work and inspire others in Wales to do likewise.

It was a pleasure to be in Australia with the Wales team and see first hand the outstanding work of head coach John Kear and his team of staff. We have lots of fantastic people involved in the sport in Wales and getting more of these will be the key to improving the sport.

Thank you to everyone involved in making 2017/18 another successful year for Wales Rugby League.

Regards

Chris Thair
CEO and Director
Wales Rugby League

WALES RUGBY LEAGUE
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2018

	2017/18	2016/17
INCOME	£	£
Community Courses	0	55
Community Dragonheart Fees	360	6268
Community Gate Income	630	741
Community Students Fees	52556	42731
Community Wheelchair fees	11365	589
Events	1040	2005
RFL Distribution	58750	70000
Sport Wales Grant	75170	51041
International Cap Charges	3856	3964
International Gate and Hospitality	0	14551
Junior Pathway Fees	21766	7343
Other Revenue	2583	6705
RLEF	2533	11520
RLIF	0	11314
World Cup 2017	47494	0
Sponsorship	31660	37019
Donation	0	78877
Total Income	309763	344723
EXPENDITURE		
Audit and Accountancy	621	791
Bank Fees	382	456
Community Course Costs	646	124
Community Delivery	6930	4336
Community Dragonhearts	2694	9667
Community Match Officials	1521	1552
Community Students	44428	42683
Community Wheelchair	9954	4558
Event Delivery	3443	2476
Governance and Services	7499	4600
International Cap Costs	5430	310
IT Costs	8091	301
Junior Pathway Delivery	35872	7600
Junior Pathway Kit	6452	5860
Meetings	314	2123
Men's International Team	120408	69500
Postage and Freight	7	7
Scorpions	0	75
Staff	65253	105408
Travel	1007	1402
Vehicles	0	254
Total Expenditure	320952	266873
Deficit in year / Surplus in year	(11189)	77850

**WALES RUGBY LEAGUE
BALANCE SHEET
31 MARCH 2018**

	2017/18 £	2016/17 £
Fixed Assets	3320	4427
Stocks	271	1081
Debtors	7725	27320
Bank balances	55695	45372
Total current assets	63691	73773
 Creditors	 350	 350
Net current Assets	63341	73423
 Net Assets	 66661	 77850
Represented by:		
 Reserves brought forward	 77850	 0
Loss in year	-11189	77850
Reserves carried forward	66661	77850

Accounts prepared by Hansford Business Services Limited

Additional Financial Commentary by WRL CEO Chris Thair

In terms of financial performance this has been another satisfactory year. To maintain the bulk of the financial reserves in a year when there was a high amount of outlay on the teams participating in overseas World Cups and tours, plus investment into a new website is a good achievement.

Using rounded figures, losses of £11,000 means reserves of £67,000 can be carried forward beyond April 1st 2018. This will position the organisation well and enable it to deal with adverse conditions and maintain a good cashflow. £67,000 represents 22% of a business with an annual turnover of £300,000.

For the first time in an Annual Report, the previous years' figures are included in the accounts to provide a year to year comparison. The combined figures show the numbers for the first two years of the limited companies existence.

Wales Rugby League changed its legal status and constitution just over two years ago, moving from an association to a limited company. The 2016/17 accounts were the first of the limited company and the donation of £78,877 shown on the last line of the income column is the funding passed on by the old WRL association to the new WRL limited company.

Whilst necessary for the accounts this donation slightly distorts the figures that year and a more detailed description of these accounts can be found in the 2016/17 Annual Report.

Turnover remains over £300,000 and whilst £32,000 of monetary sponsorship was raised, this was lower than what was expected in the budget and the reason for the losses. It should be noted in kind sponsorship such as over £30k of provided kit and clothing plus £30k of technical software, hardware and supplements provided to WRL have not been included in the accounts.

The decision has been taken by the WRL Board not to include £38,000 of monetary sponsorship from one particular partner whose record of making payments does not provide confidence it will happen. Members should note an agreement signed by both parties is in place plus numerous written correspondence over the deal and the matter is being pursued. WRL will go to the claims court if necessary and should it arrive it will be included in that years accounts. Whilst the £38,000 would mean the 2017/18 accounts would show a profit of £27,000, the WRL Board deem it inappropriate to include such figures as there is a good possibility some or all of these funds will not materialise. Due to the signed deal being in place at the beginning of the financial year there was an expectation by the WRL Board that the year would show a profit however half way through when monthly payments were not being met by the sponsor then this changed to expecting a loss.

INCOME LINE ANALYSIS

When analysing the income lines of the accounts there are notable large differences in levels of income compared to the previous year. There are a number of reasons for this:

- Sport Wales (75k compared to £51k) provided £25,000 of performance funding to aid preparation for the 2017 World Cup which wasn't provided the year before.
- No income for international gates and hospitality (0 compared to £15k) could be made in 2017/18 as we had no home international.
- No donation (0 compared to £79k) was made this year as explained earlier in the report. £79k was passed on by the old WRL Association to the Ltd company.
- The RFL Distribution Grant (£59k compared to £70k) was lower due to the funding agreement coming to a close at the end of 2017 (WRL's third quarter in the financial year). A new agreement is in place for 2018 however funding support is much lower. WRL will now receive 36% of funding, a drop of 64%, compared to levels received in the previous three years and 10.5% of what it received in years previous to that. A drop of nearly 90%. These reductions will impact upon WRL delivery as this was used as core central funding which helped generate more funds in return.
- Differences in year to year Junior Pathway Fees and Dragonhearts Fees can be accounted for in teams touring Ireland and Germany.

MENS WORLD CUP PROGRAMME ACCOUNT ANALYSIS

For all big delivery programmes a separate account is kept to aid planning and help those involved stay within budget.

The programme account for the senior men's team participating in the World Cup is shown below. There will be slight variations compared to the main set of accounts as it includes the in-kind gift of kit and other figures.

The World Cup central organising body does cover the costs of a set amount of Welsh players and staff for a set period in the World Cup. These costs are not included in our accounts; so all funds are spent on the additional work required to help make it a success.

The programme account below shows losses of £20,000 however the £38,000 sponsorship agreement mentioned earlier in the report is not included in the account. If this sponsorship payment was made the programme would have provided an £18,000 profit to the organisation. If funds are received from this signed sponsorship agreement then the programme may yet become profitable but until then it shows a £20,000 loss.

PROGRAMME ACCOUNT FOR SENIOR MENS TEAM

INCOME	ACTUAL £
World Cup Provision Participation Fee £19.7k, VIP Allowance £2.8k, Daily Allowance £13k, Other £1.9k and Meals not in hotel £9.9k	47494
Sponsorship* * This figure does not include the £38k sponsor agreement mentioned earlier in the report. This of course would have made the programme profitable.	28,683
Kit	11000
Event	1270
Sport Wales	25000
TOTAL INCOME	113,448
EXPENDITURE	£
Pre-tournament camp	-9861
Pre-tournament dinner	-1080
Going early to Australia for two additional days	-10,810
Three additional staff -->	-13970
Two officials (VIP Allowance)	-9706.8
Meals not taken in the hotel	-9941
Physio, doctor, S&C equipment and supplies	-6763
Other (£415 Fuel and £604 Trip to Billabong)	-1019
Total staff fees and expenses	-17678
Travel Insurance	-2014
Kit	-11000
Bank Charges	-99
Contingency (£1,598 Shirt Printing and £1,273 Consumables)	-2871
Player Fees and Expenses	-36204
TOTAL EXP	-133,101
Diff / Profit and Loss	-19,653

EXPENDITURE LINE ANALYSIS

When analysing the expenditure lines of the 2017/18 accounts the reasons for the large differences in levels of expenditure compared to the previous year are as follows:

- Community Wheelchair (£10k compared to £4.5k) is due to the team playing in the 2017 World Cup in France.
- Men's International Team (£120k compared to £69.5k) is due to participating in the World Cup compared to two home games and one away in Italy the year before. Detailed analysis on previous page.
- Junior Pathway Delivery (£36k compared to £8k) is due to the tour to Ireland, Wigan and more games in the programme.
- Staff (£65k compared to £105.5k) is due to the variance in staffing levels during this period. The part time media position (1.3 days a week) and CEO position (3 days a week) remained stable throughout the two years and had no variance in expenditure levels however there was variance with the community staff. The North Wales and Junior Pathway posts (2 fulltime staff) finished after three quarters of the 2016/17 year and were not replaced. The National Development Manager finished three quarters of the way through 2017/18 and during the interim position until finding a fulltime replacement a part time consultant was found. This means the £65k expenditure on staff was lower than expected and will be higher in 2018/19 as the WRL NDM fulltime position has been replaced.
- IT Costs (£8,000 compared to £300) is due to the investment in the new WRL website.

BALANCE SHEET ANALYSIS

The £7,725 of debtors relates to monies owed to WRL from CP Consultants (2363) and two sponsors (3300 and 2062).

The £350 of creditors relates to a late invoice from accountants relating to our end of year but all other bills were paid within the 12 months ensuring growing confidence with working partners.

The "Bank Balances" shows a 'cash in bank' position of £55,695 which is healthy. The cash position was much lower for most of this 12-month period and this does not reflect upon the years cashflow position which fluctuated a lot due to the World Cups. Two days before the year end a £46,000 payment was made into the accounts making it into a good position.

£77,850 was brought forward from the previous year and after accounting for our 12-month losses of £11,189 it means £66,661 will be carried forward into 2018/19. In conclusion a satisfactory twelve months for WRL finances.



**THANK YOU TO EVERYONE
INVOLVED IN RUGBY LEAGUE IN WALES**



2017 WAS
ANOTHER
GREAT YEAR...



...BUT IT IS TIME
TO LOOK TO THE
FUTURE

Cymru Am Byth!