



Wales Rugby League Annual Report 2018–2019

Covers Period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019





Welcome by WRL Chairman Brian Juliff

As 2018 draws to a close I wanted to thank everyone for their support to Wales Rugby League during the year.

After returning home from RLWC2017, we faced questions about our strategy and direction following some very tough encounters in challenging conditions in Australia for our boys.

To the credit of everyone involved we took defeat without shame and built a tremendous spirit amongst a very brave young group of players and answered those questions with panache in 2018.

Collectively the senior squad displayed an outstanding turnaround during the European Championships / World Cup qualifiers this year after being “caught in the headlights” in France.

Our response was magnificent once we settled into our systems and patterns against Scotland in Gala, and similarly taking the game to Ireland in front of our home supporters in Wrexham, gaining very commendable wins and leaving a strong message about the developing quality of our squad.

The style of play and enthusiasm shown throughout the squad and staff has been commendable and rewarding.

To have qualified for RLWC2021 at this early stage allows our coaching and backroom staff to look ahead with confidence as we continually add quality players to the playing panel.

Once again we can start to believe that Wales Rugby League can start challenging the top rugby league nations. It is a shame that we are not given the financial resources that some of our competitors receive but despite this, we are still capable of developing a pathway for Welsh born players which is in contrast to many other nations.

I am grateful that we have also been very lucky that some wonderful young heritage players have chosen to represent the land of their fathers / grandfathers to give us a good mix of experience and skill across the squad.

It remains our goal to be a top three European and top four world ranking team in governance and performance and, with a few more successive wins, we can also dream about the crowds increasing to support their heroes.

John Kear and his staff are considering the next steps for the senior squad as they build towards RLWC2021 with the potential of choosing some exciting challenges for the team during 2019.

Congratulations once again to Wales Rugby League Wheelchair team on winning the Celtic Cup in some style for the third consecutive season and to the Dragonhearts following their successful win over their Serbian counterparts in Belgrade, as well as running the full national side close.

Internationally, we ran seven sides as our U23 side competed well in the Commonwealth Nines, beating England on the way to a sixth placed finish, our U19s finished third in the European Championships, our U16s recorded a big win over Scotland and our Wales Students hosted the Four Nations in Pontypridd, finishing third.

In the Welsh Premier League, we had Valley Cougars, Torfaen Tigers, Cardiff Blue Dragons, Bridgend Bulls, Rhondda Outlaws and Llanelli Knights participating, and it was congratulations to Valley Cougars on repeating their success of 2017 over Torfaen Tigers in the Grand Final.





Torfaen, Cardiff, Llanelli and Bridgend also entered teams into our junior competitions where they were joined by Aber Valley Wolves, who have a link with Valley Cougars.

Encouragingly the U15 structure was also increased by Penlan Wild Stallions from Swansea which really adds optimism for sustainably developing Rugby League talent across Wales.

Overall it's been another encouraging year for Wales Rugby League and I am forever grateful to everyone for your continued support.

Now, 2019 arrives with optimism as Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf and Aberdare Community School qualifying for the Year 11 national Champion Schools knockout stages. We also have Torfaen Tigers representing us in the Challenge Cup and they join the Cougars and Cardiff in the newly reformed Southern Conference.

On top of this, we have a major squad rebuilding process happening at West Wales Raiders with some exciting players being added to a predominantly Welsh squad and extensive efforts being made in the community to ensure a sustainable future.

North Wales Crusaders have also been adding more quality to an already competitive squad and they will be a force in Championship 1 this year.

With the emergence of the North Wales A and Origins sides during 2018, we have another pathway opened for Welsh players which will encourage further development of the game and add value over the longer term to the region, especially with their trials coming up in both the North East and North West of Wales. North Wales Crusaders must also be commended for successes with their junior and wheelchair sides in 2018.

We had our sad moments in 2018 with the passing of one of our great players, one of most respected coaches and two of our outstanding volunteers. Our condolences were sent to the family of the outstanding dual-code internationals John Mantle, who will be remembered with respect and emotion, we remembered Les Pearce who famously led Wales to third in the 1975 World Cup which included a win over England in Brisbane, and we sent our dearest respects to families of Clive Batchelor and Martin Roddy who both served Wales Rugby League so well.

I would like to thank Chris Thair for his outstanding contribution to Wales Rugby League and wish him every success in his new position as General Manager of the Rugby League European Federation.

Finally, another big thank you to all the volunteers, supporters, players, coaches, medical and back room staff across our teams for all their hard work and dedication in support of Rugby League in Wales.

We can look forward to an exciting 2019 both at club and international level as we look ahead to the 2021 Rugby League World Cup.

Cymru Am Byth,

Brian



WRL ACHIEVEMENTS & MILESTONES

1. [Wales Men Qualify for 2021 World Cup after finishing second in the European Championship.](#)
2. Six players were given their full Wales men's debuts. Five of those six came through the WRL development systems – [five from Wales U19, four from Wales Students, three from Wales U16.](#)
3. In total, from the 20 players used by Wales men, 13 came through the WRL development systems.
4. Wales Wheelchair win the Celtic Cup for the third year in a row
5. Wales U19 finish third in the U19 European Championship.

Wales Men - Senior

Wales Rugby League Senior Men qualify for Rugby League World Cup 2021 after beating Scotland and Ireland to claim runners-up in the 2018/19 European Championship.

Wales started off tentatively with a newly constructed squad and new captain in Elliot Kear (pictured left).

In fairness, Wales had little preparation time and literally got caught out by a strong and very committed French team in Carcassonne. The team then regrouped and performed exceptionally well in the second period which set us up for a successful drive to claim the runners up spot behind the unbeaten winners, France.

The squad had made great strides during the three games and the blend of youth and experience provided many positives going forward.

There were five new caps presented to Mike Butt (Swinton Lions), Elliot Jenkins (Rochdale Hornets), Connor Davies, Curtis Davies and Sion Jones (all Halifax).

- FRANCE 54 WALES 18
- SCOTLAND 12 WALES 50
- WALES 40 IRELAND 8



[**MEN – European Championships – finished second and qualified for RLWC2021**](#)



Wales Wheelchair – Celtic Cup Winners

The Wales Wheelchair squad once again distinguished themselves with some outstanding Rugby League as they won the Celtic Cup on home soil at Queensferry, North Wales.

- WALES 112 SCOTLAND 41
- WALES 84 IRELAND 30



WHEELCHAIR – Celtic Cup Winners – Wales hosted the tournament at Queensferry near Wrexham



Wales Men - Dragonhearts

It was another successful season for our community squad, despite narrow losses on both in Serbia and in a warmup game in London.

Pushing the Serbia National squad was a fine achievement, and also the narrow defeat by London and South East was a commendable effort whilst on route to Belgrade.

- LONDON AND SOUTH EAST 32 WALES DRAGONHEARTS 24
- SERBIA (FULL NATIONAL SIDE) 22 WALES DRAGONHEARTS 20
- SERBIAN LEAGUE 4 WALES DRAGONHEARTS 50

DRAGONHEARTS – toured Serbia

Wales Men U19s

Under the guidance of senior Wales Rugby League international, Anthony Walker the future looks very promising as the team develop new techniques and playing practices that mirror their senior mentors.



EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS IN BELGRADE (August)

- WALES 90 UKRAINE 0 (Age-grade record score and all-time winning margin)
- WALES 6 ENGLAND LIONS 48
- WALES 42 SCOTLAND 18 (bronze medal game)

U19 – Finished third in the European Championships in Belgrade in August



Wales Boys Youth U16s

We continued to impress at age group Rugby League and once again showed our ability to match the quality of our supportive colleague from England Rugby League.

- WALES 80 SCOTLAND 0 (in Wigan)
- WALES 4 ENGLAND 26 (in Llanelli)

WALES U16 – 2018 results

Wales Men Students

Wales Head Coach, Paul Emanuelli decided to embark on a development program with the 2021 World Cup prioritising his choice of squad based on future availability. This was a sensible and productive decision which boded very well for the 2021 World Cup.

- WALES 48 IRELAND 10
- WALES 16 SCOTLAND 23
- WALES 8 ENGLAND 36



STUDENTS – FOUR NATIONS – Wales were the hosts, finishing third with the tournament held at Sardis Road in Pontypridd.

2018 SENIOR ORIGIN SERIES - FIRST EVER TRI SERIES BETWEEN EAST, WEST AND NORTH WALES – East Wales won the title



WEST WALES 24 EAST WALES 24

(played before West Wales Raiders v Coventry Bears)

EAST WALES 30 NORTH WALES 8

(played as part of an “Origin Day” at Pontypridd – see below)

NORTH WALES 42 WEST WALES 16

(played before West Wales Raiders v North Wales Crusaders)

OTHER ORIGIN DAY RESULTS

U13 – EAST WALES 12 WEST WALES 8

U15 – EAST WALES 20 WEST WALES 6



WRL PREMIER LEAGUE 2018

[Wales Rugby League held a seven-team open-age men's league in 2018](#) (including two sides from Cardiff Blue Dragons), with 17 sides competing in three leagues at U17, U15 and U13 levels.

GRAND FINALS DAY – Congratulations to Valley Cougars who won the 2018 Community Senior Men's Premier League Final, beating Torfaen Tigers 28-12 at Sardis Road, Pontypridd.

[MEN'S – VALLEY COUGARS 28 TORFAEN TIGERS 12](#)

[U17 - CARDIFF BLUE DRAGONS 36 TORFAEN TIGERS 10](#)

[U15 - ABER VALLEY WOLVES 46 CARDIFF BLUE DRAGONS 40](#)

[U13 - ABER VALLEY WOLVES 22 BRIDGEND BLUE BULLS 18](#)





TEAMS PLAYING IN NON-WRL RUN LEAGUES IN 2018



SEMI-PRO SIDES AND COMPETITIONS

- North Wales Crusaders and West Wales Raiders competed in the RFL League 1 and the Challenge Cup.
- Torfaen Tigers also represented Wales in the Challenge Cup.
- North Wales Crusaders Reserves run a side in the North-West Counties Merit League.
- North Wales Crusaders also run an U13 side who play friendly matches.

STUDENTS

- Five sides represented Wales in the BUCS university leagues – Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff, Swansea and USW.
- The WRL's official college academy in Coleg y Cymoedd played friendly matches and reach the second round of the 2018-19 national college knock-out cup.



WHEELCHAIR

- North Wales Crusaders compete in the Wheelchair Championship 1 competition and reach the Final of the Wheelchair Plate, losing to Hereford Harriers.



PARTICIPATION

Registered Club Players	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Men	774	624	644	737	664
Women	0	0	0	0	6
Boys	672	844	850	842	589
Girls	4	14	20	6	6
Total	1450	1482	1514	1585	1261

No. of Clubs	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total	33	31	32	29	20

Registered Teams	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Men	28	24	25	29	25
Women	0	0	0	0	0
Boys	34	41	35	36	26
Girls	0	0	0	0	0
Total	62	65	60	65	51

SCHOOLS

WALES RUGBY LEAGUE PARTICIPATION (Schools, Colleges and Universities)

Schools PARTICIPATION NUMBERS:

10 schools competed in the UK Champion Schools' Competition in 2018-19

- Y Gwyndy
- Brynteg
- St Josephs
- Glantaf
- Cwm Rhymni
- Y Strade
- Croesyceiliog
- Aberdare
- Bro Edern
- Ystalyfera



41 School teams in total = 700+ participants.

	Year
• Y Gwyndy –	7/8/9/10/11
• Brynteg –	7/8/9/10/11
• St Joes –	7/8/9/10/11
• Glantaf –	7/8/9/10/11
• Cwm Rhymni –	7/8/9/10/11
• Y Strade –	7/8/9/10/11
• Croesyceiliog –	7/9/10
• Aberdare –	7/9/10
• Bro Edern –	9/10/11
• Ystalyfera –	9/10

NOTABLE RESULTS

Teams progressed to the 'National Rounds' from 6 different schools. (150 + participants)

• Glantaf –	Years 7, 8 & 11
• Ystalyfera –	Years 9 & 10
• Croesyceiliog –	Year 7
• Bro Edern –	Year 8
• St Josephs –	Year 9
• Aberdare –	Year 11

Glantaf produced 2 teams that progressed to the Quarter Finals

• Glantaf –	Year 7 & 11
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WRL UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE NUMBERS

Five teams in total = 125-145 Participants

- Coleg Y Cymoedd – 25-30 Participants (Friendlies and Colleges Cup)
- Swansea University – 30-35 Participants (BUCS Western League & Bucs Trophy)
- Cardiff Met – 30-35 Participants (BUCS Western League & Bucs Trophy)
- USW – 20-25 Participants (BUCS Western League & Bucs Trophy)
- Aberystwyth – 20 Participants (BUCS Western League & Bucs Trophy)

NOTABLE RESULTS

1. Swansea University - Semi Final BUCS Trophy & Western League Runners up
2. Cardiff Met Winners Western League
3. Coleg Y Cymoedd round 3 (quarter-finals) of the British Colleges knockout (defeated by Salford RL Academy 34-26)



Schools National Cup (Progress & Participation Numbers)

SCHOOL	YEAR 7	YEAR 8	YEAR 9	YEAR 10	YEAR 11	TOTAL
Y Gwyndy	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	5
Brynteg	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	5
St Joes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	5
Glantaf	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	5
Cwm Rhymni	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	5
Strade	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	5
Croesyceiliog	Y		Y	Y		3
St Johns	Y		Y	Y		3
Bro Edern			Y	Y	Y	3
Monmouth			Y		Y	2
St Cyres			Y			1
Aberdare					Y	
Cathays Cardiff			Y	Y		2
Fitzalan			Y		Y	2
Ystalyfera			Y	Y		2

The following schools have progressed to the final stages from Wales:

Year 7 – Glantaf (Cardiff Blue Dragons) and Croesyceiliog (Torfaen Tigers)

Year 8 – Glantaf (Cardiff Blue Dragons) and Bro Edern (Cardiff Blue Dragons)

Year 9 – Ystalyfera (Penlan/Swansea RL) and St Joseph's RC (Torfaen Tigers)

Year 10 – Ystalyfera (Penlan/Swansea RL) and Glantaf (Cardiff Blue Dragons)

Year 11 – have already played their next round Glantaf beat St Mary's Catholic School, Manchester 38-6 and St John's Aberdare who lost to Hinchley Wood 42-36.



WALES RUGBY LEAGUE – OTHER NEWS HIGHLIGHTS – APRIL 2018-MARCH 2019

In other matters it is with great sadness that I inform you of further deaths from our WRL family with the popular ex-international stalwarts Mick Murphy and Garfield Owen, plus Martin Roddy, a former director and active community coach and supporter and the very popular community volunteer and supporter, Clive Batchelor.

During the year Craig Kopczak retired from International duty, although continues with his successful playing career at Wakefield Trinity; Ben Flower is to be congratulated on winning a THIRD Grand Final with Wigan Warriors Kel Coslett is inducted into the Wales Rugby League Hall of Fame and the legendary Lee Crooks joins Wales Rugby League as Under 16 Head Coach.

APRIL 2018

Former Wales head coach Les Pearce dies aged 94



MAY

Craig Kopczak retires from international rugby league



JUNE

Roy Francis inducted into the Welsh Sports Hall of Fame





JULY

RIP Martin Roscommon Roddy MBE



AUGUST

RIP Clive Batchelor



SEPTEMBER

Elliot Kear named Wales captain



OCTOBER

Wales Rugby League congratulate Ben Flower following third Grand Final win



Chris Thair to leave Wales Rugby League





NOVEMBER

Kel Coslett inducted into WRL Hall of Fame



North Wales Crusaders Wheelchair stage charity Peacock Cup and hope will be annual event



RIP John Mantle



DECEMBER

Lee Crooks appointed Wales under 16 head coach





JANUARY
RIP Garfield Owen



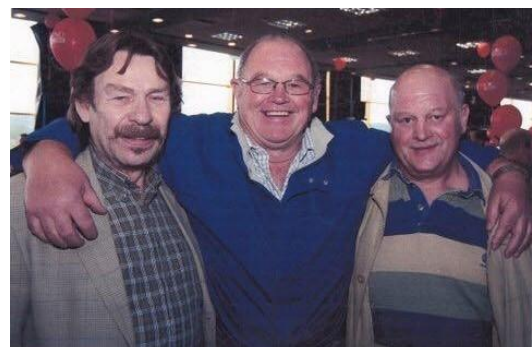
FEBRUARY
Gym equipment donated to West Wales Raiders and Co-leg y Cymoedd



MARCH
Regan Grace signs Saints contract extension



RIP Mick Murphy





**WALES RUGBY LEAGUE
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019**

The Financial report for 2018/19 is attached for your interest, perusal and comments.

WALES RUGBY LEAGUE LTD

Company limited by guarantee

Statement of financial position

31 March 2019

	Note	2019 £	£	2018 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	6	2,213		3,320	
		<hr/>	2,213	<hr/>	3,320
Current assets					
Stocks		-		271	
Debtors	7	19,809		11,269	
Cash at bank and in hand		27,996		52,152	
		<hr/>		<hr/>	
		47,805		63,692	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	8	(1,993)		(350)	
		<hr/>		<hr/>	
Net current assets			45,812		63,342
Total assets less current liabilities			<hr/> 48,025		<hr/> 66,662
Net assets			<hr/> 48,025		<hr/> 66,662
Capital and reserves					
Profit and loss account			48,025		66,662
Members funds			<hr/> 48,025		<hr/> 66,662
			<hr/>		<hr/>