

# ANNUAL REVIEW 2023



RUGBY PLAYERS  
IRELAND

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN PETER O'MAHONY

**Looking back on 2023 from a personal perspective, our Rugby World Cup exit obviously casts a large shadow on the year. As a result, it has been easy to lose sight of the various triumphs that, in any other year, would have marked the past 12 months out as being some of the best in Irish Rugby history.**

The support in France was about the best I've ever experienced in my career (and there have been some great occasions in that mix). As expected, the wins were celebrated in true Irish fashion, but more importantly, the Irish fans carried us off the field after that loss to New Zealand.

One of the great privileges of this career is being able to give communities of people some great days out. Sadly, with the good also comes the bad. But this is why we love sport. Sometimes the biggest disappointments give you the most. As Johnny Sexton said in his retirement statement, "we lost, but we won."

It was a great pity that Johnny and Keith Earls didn't ride off into the sunset with a Rugby World Cup medal in the pocket. It was the least their careers deserved. Instead, they will have to make do with lasting legacies that transcended our game. To me, Johnny and Earls represent the standard that all professional rugby players in this country should aspire to.

Of course, we're not doing too badly as it is. Grand Slam success at both senior and U20s levels; URC victory against all the odds for Munster Rugby in South Africa; Olympic qualification for the Sevens programme; promotion in the inaugural WXV competition.

At some stages it all seemed too good to be true and, unfortunately, we found out that it sometimes is. So as we dust ourselves down and ready ourselves for 2024, we have to appreciate that 2023 was a special year and the lessons it also taught us can lead opportunity and to growth.

Rugby Players Ireland has also faced down its own challenges over the years and yet continues to make great strides. The expansion of the Player Development Programme signals our commitment to nurturing the next generation of rugby stars. Sold-out events organised by the RPI team demonstrate the support of our fans and corporate partners who continue to underpin our game.

The successful negotiation of the Collective Bargaining Agreement also represents a significant milestone, showcasing the power of the player voice. It is a reminder that our unity

can shape the landscape of the sport we love, a testament to the hard work of Simon and the team, and continues to ensure that players' interests are prioritised.

Every player's journey will continue to have twists and turns in the months ahead but working together with Rugby Players Ireland we can help to support every individual no matter what they may face.

Onwards and upwards.

### PREVIOUS CHAIRPERSONS OF RUGBY PLAYERS IRELAND

2001-2005 - Liam Toland

2005-2007 - Mark McHugh

2007-2011 - Marcus Horan

2011-2012 - Brian O'Driscoll

2012-2013 - Johnny Sexton

2013-2021 - Rob Kearney

2021-Present - Peter O'Mahony



## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

### SIMON KEOGH

**As 2023 drew to a close, we concluded our Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) negotiations. Coming as it did after our Rugby World Cup exit, I felt this process stood for more than the words etched across the 170 pages of that document.**

Over the years, Rugby Players Ireland and the IRFU have established a collaborative relationship. This has meant for open dialogue and mutual respect as the issues that affect our game cross our desks. Inevitably there have been differences of opinion along the way but for the most part there has always been a recognition that the player and the good of the game must come first.

The co-operative relationship that marks these discussions is at a far remove from what has been experienced by some of our international colleagues over the past number of years. While some of the long-standing issues experienced by our fellow players' associations appear to have been resolved, we are fortunate that the doors have always remained open to us on Lansdowne Road.

As rugby continues to grow, the myriad of challenges we have to consider grow with it. The CBA therefore marks the next progressive step in the Irish Rugby journey. Taking the varied experiences of our members into account, I believe we have forged an agreement that meets the needs of all our membership while fostering a positive and sustainable future for the game.

Creating a sustainable future for our players is also a cornerstone of our work at Rugby Players Ireland and so I must acknowledge the invaluable contributions of the Rugby Players Ireland team. Their dedication, expertise, and tireless efforts behind the scenes have underlined our accomplishments. As an association, we are fortunate to have such a committed and capable group working to advance the interests of our players.

Equally, our corporate sponsors deserve special recognition. Their unwavering support has played a pivotal role in underpinning the off-field development of Irish rugby. Together, we have built a network of partnerships that not only protects our sport but also propels it to new heights. These collaborations have contributed both to the success of our players but have also played a crucial role in fostering the growth and sustainability of rugby in Ireland.

As we stand on the cusp of a new year, I am filled with optimism for what the future holds for Irish rugby. Our collective achievements in 2023 serve as a strong foundation for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.



SECTION 01

# REPRESENT

## WHO WE ARE

**Now seen as one of the leading player representative organisations in sport, Rugby Players Ireland was formed in 2001 as the Irish Rugby Union Players' Association (IRUPA). It is committed to making Ireland the best place in the world to play rugby.**

Following discussions between Donal Spring, Peter McKenna, Liam Toland and the IRFU, Rugby Players Ireland came into being with the remit of promoting and protecting the welfare of all professional players across the four provinces. The association has evolved considerably over the past 19 years and its membership now encompasses female international players in addition to former professionals.

While the functions of the association have grown to include a world-leading player development syllabus and a dedicated community engagement programme that includes a public mental wellbeing campaign in 'Tackle Your Feelings', the backbone of the organisation remains in the representation of its membership on issues of importance in the game.

## THE RUGBY PLAYERS IRELAND EXECUTIVE BOARD

**Our Executive Board were busy this year with the revised Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with the IRFU up for consideration. During this process, our Board members facilitated meetings with focus groups within their respective squads to identify the key issues. As an organisation, we felt it crucial that players feed into the process as every stage of the journey, and that the wider membership be appraised of developments.**

For the first time, the Women's XVs and the Sevens programmes have been captured in the new CBA which will be due for renewal once again in 2027. The first of its kind in northern hemisphere rugby, the CBA is the cornerstone of the professional game in Ireland and addresses a whole range of matters affecting players' employment.

This year the off-field experience of the Board was supplemented with the appointment of Ciarán Medlar. A leading voice in the sports tax industry, Ciarán was part of the team that set up the BDO Sports Advisory Unit, the first professional services firm in Ireland to have a team dedicated to the needs of professional sportspeople, clubs and national governing bodies.

Furthermore, Enya Breen was also elected to the Board as a representative of the women's programme. From Skibboreen, Enya is one of the most experienced members of the national squad and despite having been out injured for the past year, remains an integral voice in the dressing room.



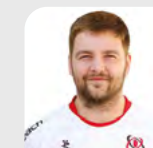
**Peter O'Mahony**  
*Chair/Munster Rugby*



**Enya Breen**  
*Women's XVs*



**Dave Heffernan**  
*Connacht Rugby*



**Iain Henderson**  
*Ulster Rugby*



**Rob Kearney**  
*Former Chairperson*



**Amee-Leigh Murphy Crowe**  
*Women's 7s*



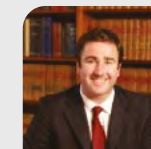
**Billy Dardis**  
*Men's 7s*



**Garry Ringrose**  
*Leinster Rugby*



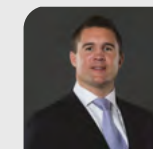
**Ciarán Medlar**  
*Non-Executive Director*



**Peter McKenna**  
*Non-Executive Director*



**Maura Quinn**  
*Non-Executive Director*



**Simon Keogh**  
*CEO, Rugby Players Ireland*



**IT'S A HUGE HONOUR TO REPRESENT MY TEAMMATES. AS A NEWLY ESTABLISHED PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMME, I THINK THERE IS ALSO AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FROM MORE ESTABLISHED SET-UPS TO ENSURE WE REMAIN ON THE RIGHT TRAJECTORY, AND THAT ARE VIEWS ARE COMMUNICATED APPROPRIATELY WHERE NECESSARY.**

*Enya Breen*

*Rugby Players Ireland Executive Board*



## MEMBERSHIP

Since 2018, Rugby Players Ireland has expanded its offerings to cater for all professional rugby programmes in the country. This includes the provision of representation, personal development services and corporate engagement opportunities, with a dedicated Player Development Manager (PDM) assigned to each group. In 2023, contracted members of the Irish Women's XVs and Sevens programmes were captured in the latest Collective Bargaining Agreement with the IRFU.



“

**I HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED PASSIONATELY ABOUT PLAYER WELFARE ISSUES, WITH A DEEP DESIRE TO HELP MAKE IRELAND THE BEST PLACE IN THE WORLD TO PLAY RUGBY. I FELT THAT IF THE RIGHT CONTRACT ENVIRONMENT EXISTED FOR PLAYERS, IT WOULD HELP PLAY SOME PART IN KEEPING OUR BEST TALENT HERE AND ATTRACTING TALENT IN.**

*Peter McKenna*

*Non-Executive Director, Rugby Players Ireland*



## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT (CBA)

2023 saw the successful conclusion of the latest Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) negotiations between the IRFU and Rugby Players Ireland. The 2019 agreement, the first of its kind in the northern hemisphere, has been updated to reflect enhanced benefits available for all contracted rugby players in Ireland. The introduction of the first professional contracts for Women's XVs back in November 2022 has ensured that they feature prominently in this renewal.

One of the cornerstones of the agreement is the enhancement and support of the Player Development Programme, highlighting a commitment to holistic player development beyond the playing field. This comprehensive approach underlines the importance of both physical and personal development for players, setting the stage for a well-rounded and successful career in rugby.

Another additional feature of this agreement sees academy players benefit from an uplift in pay, acknowledging the importance of nurturing and protecting Ireland's emerging rugby talent.

Additional highlights of the new Collective Agreement:

- Upgrade in insurance coverage ensuring improved protection for all players
- Tailored media guidelines for respective squad groups
- Establishment of players' right to fully disconnect during leave periods
- College relocation costs
- Improved sick pay provisions
- Clear maternity and paternity policies
- Recognition of changing player image properties
- Tailored break periods for Sevens players
- Defined structure on disciplinary processes
- Provision of psychological care

Simon Keogh, CEO of Rugby Players Ireland, expressed his satisfaction with the collaborative process, stating, "This agreement is a testament to the ongoing spirit of collaboration between the IRFU and Rugby Players Ireland. While we feel it addresses the needs of players at all professional levels, we also believe it safeguards the future of Irish rugby by placing a strong emphasis on inclusivity, equality, and player welfare."

Kevin Potts, CEO of the IRFU, said "This agreement reflects the progress of the game and helps us protect it for future generations. Player welfare is of the utmost importance for the IRFU, so it is imperative that this agreement protects the integrity of that programme. Our current model works well, so this process has been more about refining as there is a solid foundation to build upon."

## AGENT REPRESENTATION

Since 2015, Rugby Players Ireland have administered the Agents Registration Scheme on behalf of the IRFU. Designed to safeguard the players in addition to improving the agency environment, the scheme is also on a similar footing in both Wales and England. Currently, 27 agents are registered in Ireland.

## EU ATHLETES

At the General Assembly held in Bologna in June, Rugby Players Ireland CEO Simon Keogh was elected as Vice-President of EU Athletes, with Natalia Orive as President. Orive is currently the President of AJFSF, the Spanish Futsal Players Association for women and has recently played a key role in bringing about the first women's Futsal World Cup.

Together with EU Athletes and a number of players' associations across Europe, Rugby Players Ireland are also involved in two EU funded projects:

- Protect Integrity Online aims to educate athletes across Europe on the dangers of match-fixing
- Social Dialogue in Europe for Professional Sports aims to identify good practices and enabling factors for social dialogue. Social dialogue is defined by the ILO to include all types of negotiation, consultation or exchange of information between, or among, representatives of governments, employers and workers.



## LIONS NEGOTIATIONS



Rugby Players Ireland were tasked with engaging with the British & Irish Lions ahead of the 2025 tour to Australia. Assisted by Christian Day of the RPA, the player voice was represented by Simon Keogh and former Lions players including Rob Kearney, Ugo Monye, Stuart Hogg and Alun Wyn-Jones.

## SUPPORTING THE PLAYERS' VOICE

Now established as a leading voice for athletes, Rugby Players Ireland has been supportive of a number of initiatives by players, for players.

- Rugby Players Ireland expressed solidarity with the Welsh Rugby Players' Association in light of their dispute with their union over contract uncertainty. In a statement issued by players' associations connected to the United Rugby Championship, Simon Keogh said that [RPI] have found that forging collective partnerships between a union and its players is key to ensuring success."
- The United States Rugby Players Association (USRPA) announced it was calling for voluntary recognition as the players' collective bargaining representative by Major League Rugby (MLR) through the launch of their organising campaign RugbyUnionNow.com. Backed by the majority of players, the campaign calls on the league to address player concerns of player safety and security while working towards evolving the sport and helping the MLR strengthen the league.
- The Gaelic Players Association (GPA) embarked on a campaign for equality with senior inter-county ladies football and camogie panels playing under protest until there came a breakthrough in negotiations seeking a standardised player charter in 2024.
- As the Ireland WNT stepped up their preparations for the opening game of the FIFA Women's World Cup, members of Rugby Players Ireland including Jenny Murphy, Eimear Considine, Peter O'Mahony and Garry Ringrose, Jenny Murphy and Eimear Considine came together with the GPA to wish the team well and thank them for paving a path for women's sport in Ireland.



## WORLD RUGBY CALENDAR REFORM

Rugby Players Ireland and the IRFU reaffirmed their unwavering and continued dedication to player welfare in light of World Rugby's calendar reform.

Ahead of the World Rugby Council Meeting in October, Rugby Players Ireland CEO Simon Keogh and IRFU CEO Kevin Potts had engaged with a wide range of stakeholders including Six Nations, World Rugby, and International Rugby Players as part of the consultation process to outline player concerns, emphasising the implications of the new season structure on rest and recovery. RPI and the IRFU were aligned on the collective commitment to safeguarding the wellbeing of Irish players.

Following the announcement, Simon Keogh said, "We have consistently put forward the case that an overhaul of the men's international game will challenge the welfare of our members, particularly with a truncated Six Nations compounded by a potential additional fixture in November. Nevertheless, Rugby Players Ireland acknowledges that in the spirit of compromise, concessions have been made on all sides.

"As a responsible and forward-thinking association, Rugby Players Ireland is prepared to accept the anticipated changes to the men's game, and indeed welcomes the introduction of a set season structure in the women's game – especially where it can be shown to contribute to the greater good of rugby. However, such support is also conditional on the proposition being kept under close and regular review, and any concerns regarding player welfare being quickly and satisfactorily addressed."

## N-PRO PARTNERSHIP

Rugby Players Ireland and N-Pro, an innovative sports technology brand dedicated to revolutionizing impact protection for athletes, announced a new strategic partnership. This collaboration combines the players' association's commitment to player welfare with N-Pro's cutting-edge headgear technology, bringing unparalleled safety advancements to the game.

Through this partnership, Rugby Players Ireland and N-Pro aim to enhance the safety and well-being of elite rugby players across the country with all members of the players' association being offered headgear. Rugby Players Ireland will also work closely with N-Pro to promote the adoption and usage of the N-Pro head guard in the wider rugby community, creating a safer environment for rugby players at all levels.



SECTION 02

# DEVELOP

## THE PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (PDP)

The aim of the Personal Development Programme is to foster the personal growth and development of players while they are still playing and ultimately prepare and support them for life after rugby.

The Player Development Programme (PDP) is a jointly funded initiative between Rugby Players Ireland and the IRFU. It is a person-centred approach, where the individual needs of each player are assessed, and personal development action plans are tailored to those needs. The PDP encompasses six fundamental areas that contribute to the overall personal development and growth of players and contribute to a positive transition from the game.



**UNDERSTANDING WHO YOU ARE - NOT JUST AS A PLAYER, BUT AS A PERSON, IS ONE OF THE MAIN GOALS OF OUR PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME. HELPING PLAYERS TO UNCOVER THEIR VALUES, STRENGTHS, MOTIVATORS AND PASSIONS ALLOWS THEM TO MAXIMISE THE OPPORTUNITIES THEY HAVE OPEN TO THEM AS PROFESSIONAL AND ELITE PLAYERS, AND ALSO EASE THE TRANSITION INTO THEIR NEXT CAREER.**

*Dr Deirdre Lyons*

*Head of Rugby Players Ireland's Player Development Programme*



*Rugby Players Ireland would like to thank the IRFU for their continued engagement and support of the Player Development Programme.*



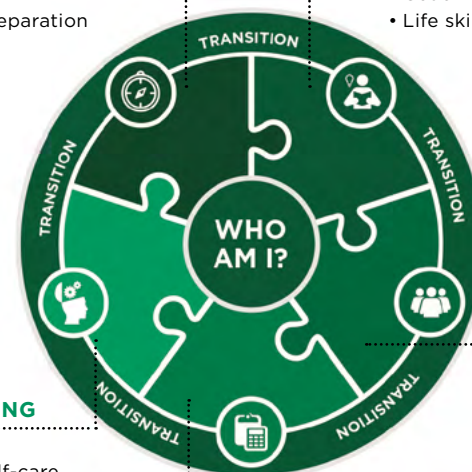
## RUGBY PLAYERS IRELAND / IRFU PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

### CAREER ADVICE & GUIDANCE

- Career coaching, advice & guidance
- Work experience
- Mentoring
- Networking
- CV & interview preparation

### EDUCATION, TRAINING & SKILLS

- Academic & trade qualifications
- Flexible learning options
- General interest courses
- Coaching qualifications
- Life skills



### PLAYER WELLBEING

- Mental health
- Physical health & self-care
- Self-awareness & personal leadership
- Player representation
- Sport integrity

### SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

- Brand awareness & development
- Social media
- Media & public speaking skills
- Community & charity engagement
- Personal responsibility

### FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & PLANNING

- Basic financial education
- Long term planning
- Tax advice
- Pension advice
- Insurance advice

## PLAYER DEVELOPMENT TEAM

The Player Development Programme underpins the work of Rugby Players Ireland. Each Player Development Manager (PDM) works with emerging players (Academy & NTS Players) and currently contracted players, as well as retired players in each province.

### STAFFING:



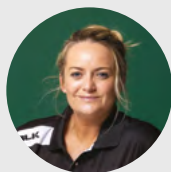
**Dr Deirdre Lyons**  
Head of Player Development Programme and PDM (Connacht Rugby)



**Dr Emma Burrows**  
PDM (Leinster Rugby)



**Carol Keenan\***  
PDM (Leinster Rugby)



**Pamela Gilpin**  
PDM (Ulster Rugby)



**Paul Marshall\*\***  
PDM (Ulster Rugby)



**Marcus Horan**  
PDM (Munster Rugby)



**Aaron Buggle**  
PDM (Ireland Sevens)



**Aoife Lane**  
PDM (Ireland Women's XVs)

“THE ROLE OF THE PDM IS TO PROMOTE THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING OF PLAYERS BY EMPOWERING THEM TO TAKE OWNERSHIP OF THEIR OWN DEVELOPMENT BOTH ON AND OFF THE SPORTING FIELD.

*World Players*

\*Denotes Maternity Cover. \*\*While continuing her work with Rugby Players Ireland, Pamela Gilpin has been appointed Player Development & Wellbeing co-ordinator for World Players.

## PLAYER DEVELOPMENT REPRESENTATIVES

The role of a Player Development Representative is to provide an additional link between the PDM and players. Whilst the PDM will be known to the squad, the Player Representative will provide extra depth by gathering information directly related to the needs of the players in their province or team and. plays an integral in the delivery of the programme.

The following have acted as PD Representatives over the past year:

### CONNACHT

Tom Daly (senior)  
Oisín Michel (academy)

### ULSTER

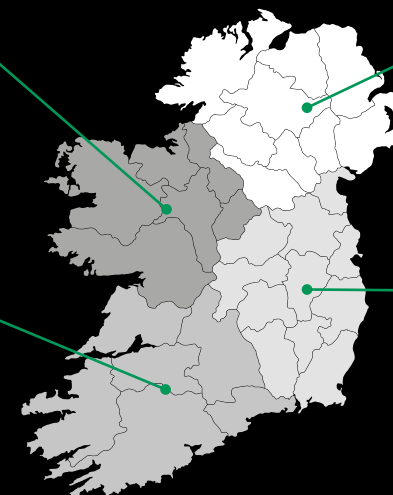
Dave Shanahan (senior)  
James Humphreys (academy)

### MUNSTER

Diarmuid Barron (senior)  
Tony Butler (academy)

### LEINSTER

Rhys Ruddock (senior)  
Ben Brownlee (academy)



### IRISH WOMEN'S XVS

Edel McMahon

### IRISH MEN'S 7S

Billy Dardis

### IRISH WOMEN'S 7S


Amee-Leigh Murphy Crowe

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415

PLAYERS ENGAGED WITH THEIR PDM IN THE 2022/23 SEASON ACROSS THE ACADEMY, SENIOR, 7S, WOMEN'S AND PAST PLAYERS MEMBERSHIP, THE HIGHEST ENGAGEMENT OF PLAYERS IN ANY SEASON.




810

PLAYERS ENGAGED IN FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS WITH THEIR PDMS. VIDEO CALLS DROPPED CONSIDERABLY AS COVID RESTRICTIONS LIFTED (FROM 265 LAST SEASON TO 84 THIS SEASON).


1,385

CONSULTATIONS WERE HELD WITH PLAYERS. FACE TO FACE MEETINGS ACCOUNTED FOR THE VAST MAJORITY OF INTERACTIONS (58.5%), WITH PLAYERS CHOOSING A VARIETY OF WAYS TO CONNECT WITH THEIR PDM.




58.5%

FACE TO FACE MEETINGS




16%

TEXT/ WHATSAPP MESSAGE




11%

PHONE



8.5%

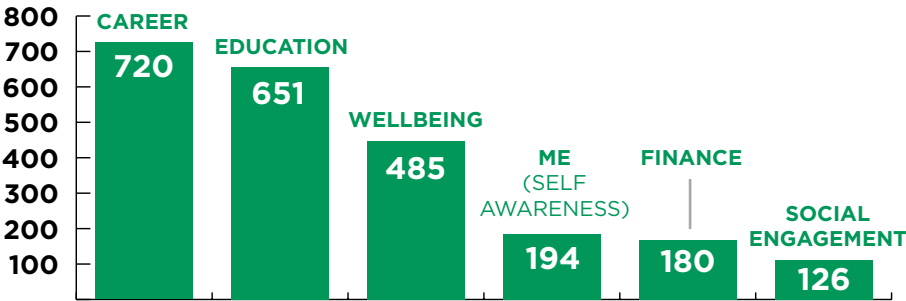
EMAIL



6%

VIDEO CALL

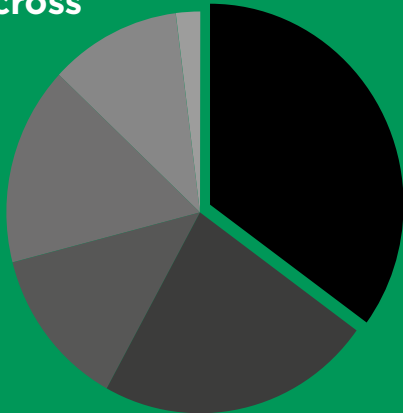
What do players want to talk about?



Based on the main pillars of the Player Development Programme, RPI have developed a database to track the areas players want support from their PDM with.

Career and/or education were discussed in nearly half of all consults, with wellbeing issues arising in 32% of all interactions. Player consultations can cover more than one area of personal development e.g., finance and wellbeing.

Who did we work with across the 2022/2023 season



- SENIOR MEN
- ACADEMY & NTS
- 7S
- WOMEN'S XVs
- RETIRED & RELEASED
- OVERSEAS

PLAYER STATUS	NO. OF CONSULTATIONS	% OF CONSULTATIONS
SENIOR MEN	482	35
ACADEMY & NTS	312	23
7S	176	13
WOMEN'S XVs	215	16
RETIRED & RELEASED	153	11
OVERSEAS	47	3

“

I REALISED THAT THERE ARE ENOUGH HOURS IN THE DAY. I PLAN OUT MY WEEK EVERY SUNDAY SO I CAN MAXIMISE THE TIME AVAILABLE TO ME FOR STUDY, RECOVERY OR EXTRA SKILLS WORK. I'VE FOUND TICKING EVERYTHING OFF AS I GO THROUGH GIVES ME A LOVELY SENSE OF PRODUCTIVITY.

*Jake Flannery*

*Bachelor of Engineering, University of Limerick*



“

EVEN IF WE WERE GETTING PAID HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS, I THINK IT'S A GOOD THING FOR ME TO HAVE THAT MENTAL BALANCE.

*Lucy Mulhall*

*Vice President, Business Development at TritonLake*



## INTERNATIONAL RUGBY PLAYERS PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

In March, Player Development Managers (PDMs) from across the globe met in Dublin to discuss the big issues players face off the pitch. Convened by International Rugby Players, delegates shared experiences around personal development, education, head injuries, the women's game, retired players and many other topics.

Dr. Deirdre Lyons, who organised the event, said: "This is a chance to get player development managers from all around the world together to discuss our collective issues. Whether you're in the northern or southern hemisphere, work with the sevens or XVs, men's or women's, we tend to have a lot of the same issues. There are challenges but also opportunities to grow."

"Whether you're starting a PDP or you've ran one for 20 years, we all have a lot to share. It's about sharing that knowledge and best practice, so maybe it can take another association less time to get up and running."

## ACTIVE\*CONSENT

Rugby Players Ireland were at Government Buildings in June for the launch of a new a five-year Active\* Consent programme.

The programme builds on the first cycle of the Active\*Consent curriculum which has been delivered to Rugby Players Ireland's members and to thousands of students across the country. Active\*Consent provide education and awareness-raising workshops and resources to players, encouraging open conversations on healthy relationships, emotional expression and personal responsibility.



## EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

Rugby Players Ireland have a number of partnerships with education providers that provide flexible courses that suit the busy training and competition schedule of rugby players and in many cases have discount and scholarships attached. These include the LIA, Griffith College, Setanta College and the UCD Professional Academy.

## PDP REVIEW

Towards the latter part of 2023, Growth Unlimited began an extensive project in reviewing the Rugby Players Ireland/IRFU Player Development Programme. This process will evaluate the efficiencies of the programme through consultation with the IRFU, RPI PDPs, players and management staff connected to all professional rugby teams.

## GAINLINE

In a significant expansion of the PDP, all players were given access the IRFU GAINLINE platform. Developed in partnership with the IRFU, the e-learning series compliments the workshops and one-to-one coaching already being offered by players' PDMs. Programmes currently available include:

### Smart Money Habits

- Money Goals and Budgeting; Tax and Payslips; Getting Mortgage Ready; Pensions; Loans & Credit Cards; Savings & Investments; Paths to QFA

### Career

- CV Development; Networking 101

### The Professional Game

- Active\*Consent: How to Support Yourself and Your Peers; Contracting an Agent; Professional Standards of Behaviours Men's XVs; Social Media & You; Being Online as a Professional Athlete

### Player Wellbeing

- Accessing Support

## HERFORM

In 2022 Rugby Players Ireland was successful in its application for European Commission Erasmus funding. This is the first time RPI applied as an Erasmus program co-ordinator and the association will manage the HerForm project for the next 36 months.

Together with the Spanish Women Futsal Players Association, NYSA Sweden, South African Cricketers' Association, TWIN and the German Sport University Cologne, Rugby Players Ireland are creating a Personal Development Platform that will be available to female athletes across Europe, with personal development modules designed to help athletes balance life and sport, and empowering them to excel at both.

This year, HerForm set out on its journey by undertaking a widespread research project, getting the feedback of female athletes from across the globe to determine the current practices in their sport. Focus groups took place in South Africa, Sweden, Spain and Ireland with members of the Irish Women's XVs and Irish Women's 7s rugby squads giving their time and sharing their opinions. Rugby Players Ireland would like to thank all players that engaged with HerForm research.

The aim of HerForm is to create personal development modules that will help athletes balance life and sport, allowing them to excel at both. 2024 will focus on creating the IT infrastructure and the content for the five personal development modules. HerForm will ensure that players will remain at the heart of the project by scheduling frequent check-ins with current and past players throughout the year.



## ROOKIE CAMP

All roads led to Glasson Lakehouse at the outset of pre-season 2023, as the Rugby Players Ireland/IRFU Rookie Camp 2023 took place. Led by Marcus Horan and facilitated by Rugby Players Ireland staff over two days, 52 of the latest recruits in the men's game joined us for a comprehensive series of workshops designed to help them transition into the world of professional rugby.

Run in partnership with the IRFU, the players also had the opportunity to get to know their Player Development Manager who will be an integral part of their professional rugby journey. Over the coming years, our PDMs will help every player to develop the skills, competencies, behaviours and relationships that a rugby career can help to nurture so that they can maximise their time in rugby, however long that may be.

### Modules included:

- Leadership in Action – Odessa Leadership
- Yoga & Breathwork – Gráinne Finnegan
- Positive Sexual Health – Active\* Consent
- Online Behaviours – B5 Consultancy
- Resilience & Managing Adversity – Peter Mitchell (B5 Consultancy)
- Authenticity – Richard McElwee & Marcus Horan
- What to Expect as an Academy Player – David Nucifora & Denis Leamy



“

FOR OUR YEAR ONE ACADEMY MEMBERS, IT'S THEIR FIRST REAL INTRODUCTION INTO LIFE AS A PROFESSIONAL SPORTSPERSON. HAVING THE YEAR TWOS THERE WITH THEM IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE THEY'VE EXPERIENCED A LOT IN THE YEAR AND CAN PASS ON ADVICE, ACTING AS MENTORS OVER THE TWO DAYS. THEIR FIRST-HAND STORIES AND EXPERIENCES ARE INVALUABLE TO THOSE COMING IN.

*Marcus Horan*

*Player Development Manager, Munster Rugby*



“

ONE OF THE MAIN THINGS I LEARNED WAS THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION. THERE'S A LOT OF STRONG CHARACTERS IN THE GROUP AND SO WE NEEDED TO IDENTIFY ONE LEADER AND HAVE HIS MESSAGE FEED DOWN THE LINE. WE ALL HAVE DIFFERENT ROLES TO PLAY AND EACH ONE IS JUST AS IMPORTANT.

*John Devine*

*Connacht Rugby*



## TRANSITION

The remit of Rugby Players Ireland extends beyond those currently in the game. As the network of retired professional rugby players in the country grows with every passing year, we have sought to expand our Player Development services further. Regular communications have also meant that past players are kept informed of various events, networking opportunities and roles that may be of interest.

While retirements are not unexpected at the end of a season, Covid-19 served to further highlight the precarious nature of a professional rugby career. With the retirements of some key players in the Irish system following the Rugby World Cup, media coverage has placed its focus on the frustrations, the anger, the bitterness, loneliness, panic, and depression that retired athletes can encounter. However, it should be noted that retirement can also bring about but a sense of relief, gratitude, optimism, a readiness to move on, and excitement for a new role.

Whether their experience is positive or negative, Rugby Players Ireland is here to help.

“

**WE WERE AWARE THAT OUR RUGBY CAREERS WOULD BE SHORT-LIVED, AND SO WE DECIDED TO GET MOVING ON SOMETHING A FEW YEARS AGO WHILE WE WERE STILL PLAYING. I'M GLAD WE HAD THAT TIME TO THINK IT ALL THROUGH.**

*Adam Leavy*

Co-Founder,  
Ogham Whiskey

“

**PLENTY OF PEOPLE TOLD ME ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A PASSION OUTSIDE OF RUGBY BUT IT WAS ONLY AS THE FINISH LINE STARTED TO CLOSE IN THAT I PUT A BIT OF THOUGHT INTO WHAT I WAS GOING TO DO NEXT. IT WAS FROM TALKING TO PEOPLE LIKE MY PDM THAT I REALISED MY PASSION WAS IN FRONT OF ME ALL ALONG.**

*Matt Healy*

Owner, My Little Flower

“

**WHILE RETIREMENT IS NEVER AN EASY DECISION, NOW IS THE RIGHT TIME AND I FEEL INCREDIBLY FORTUNATE TO GO OUT ON MY OWN TERMS.**

*Keith Earls*

Founder, Eleven14 Coffee

“

**[RUGBY GAVE ME] THE HAPPIEST OF MEMORIES, THE TOUGHEST OF CHALLENGES, LIFELONG FRIENDS, TWO DODGY ANKLES AND THE BEST OF LAUGHS ANYONE COULD ASK FOR.**

*Laura Feely*

Quality Engineer, Embecta



## RUGBY, SELF AWARENESS & IDENTITY

### Rugby is something you do, it is not who you are.

Playing rugby as a professional, or aspiring professional player, is not merely an activity; it is a distinct aspect of life. The term “athletic identity” refers to the degree to which a person identifies with their athletic role. This identification goes beyond the field of play, shaping a sense of belonging, fostering social connections, and instilling qualities like discipline, teamwork, competitiveness, planning, and resilience.

While common thinking suggests that in order to excel at something, you have to go “all in”, it is now widely accepted that a broader and more diversified identity reaps greater rewards, as it allows individuals to find stability in other aspects of life when facing significant changes in one area.



### WE'RE MORE THAN JUST PLAYERS.

*Erin King*  
*Irish Sevens*



### How can the Player Development Programme help?

Throughout the dynamic and unpredictable journey that is a professional rugby career, having a strong sense of self, and awareness of core values can help guide a player's decision-making. Working with a Player Development Manager (PDM) becomes instrumental in cultivating this self-awareness, both as a player and as an individual.

Building a strong sense of identity is a complex and ongoing process that involves self-reflection, exploration and personal growth. Here are some areas that players can delve into with their PDM:

#### Values

Core values are the fundamental beliefs and principles that guide a person's behaviour, decisions and actions, often unconsciously. They are shaped from a variety of sources including an individual's upbringing, culture, personal experiences and reflections. Identifying and acknowledging core values is a significant step towards personal growth and development.

#### Motivations

While core values represent the principles guiding a person's life, their motivations are the various reasons and incentives that lead to specific actions or pursuits. Core values and motivations, although distinct, can intersect. For example, a core value of continuous improvement may motivate a player to do extras on the training pitch, while studying a part-time education course.

#### Personality

Understanding preferred personality styles and behavioural tendencies can aid communication, highlight strengths and identify areas for potential development.

#### Strengths

Recognition of personal and professional strengths can be very beneficial, empowering individuals to lead more purposeful lives. Utilizing strengths is valuable in various contexts, including a player's professional rugby career, their personal relationships, and overall development, often giving them direction to where their post-playing careers may take them.

#### Interests and Passions

Developing interests beyond rugby brings various benefits, e.g., alleviating performance pressures, diversifying identity, fostering skill development, boosting creativity, and creating new social connections.

Building a multifaceted identity is essential, offering players the chance to build resilience and stability amid the uncertainties that a rugby career can bring. Collaboration with a PDM is a transformative journey toward self-awareness, personal growth, and a fulfilling life beyond the game.



### YOU DON'T HAVE TO CHANGE YOUR PERSONALITY TO SUCCEED. EMBRACE YOUR INDIVIDUALITY AND USE IT TO YOUR ADVANTAGE.

*Charlie Rock*  
*Chief Innovation Officer, MyClub360*



## MENTAL WELLBEING SERVICE

Promoting Player Wellbeing is integral to the work that we do at Rugby Players Ireland. We deliver our wellbeing support using a three-pronged approach of:

- Individualized Support
- Education & Awareness seminars
- Stigma Reducing Campaigns (Tackle Your Feelings)

Rugby Players Ireland provide support to current and former players mainly through the Player Development Managers that are based at each professional club, national sevens squads and women's XVs programme. Players can also email the service directly while referrals can also come via Team Doctors or Physios. Since October 2020, our Mental Wellbeing Service has been supported by Sporting Chance, a UK charity dedicated to current and former professional athletes.

The most important piece of information to know about the service is that there is no minimum threshold to access the service. The core principles behind the service are one of early intervention. Once a player feels they might benefit from talking to a professional, they then meet the threshold.

Since 2017 we have had 192 people use the service 59% of these were current players from the men's game across academy (19%), Senior (36%) and Sevens (4%). Our services were also used by our women's teams (36%: XVs and Sevens).

Our PDMs signpost players to specialist support via the Mental Wellbeing Services network, which begins with an initial screening process via Zoom. Players also complete the International Olympic Committee Sport Mental Health Assessment Tool 1 (SMHAT-1) in advance of the screening. The highest ranked items by players on the SMHAT-1 have been:

1. I could not stop worrying about injury or my performance.
2. I found training more stressful.
3. I was less motivated.

Following the screening process players can access a large network of experienced psychologists, counsellors and psychotherapists. Some of the issues that players may need support with include stress and anxiety, burn out, adjustment and relationship difficulties, bereavement, addictions, coping with long-term injury and depression. Sessions can be facilitated face to face or via zoom.

“

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT FEELINGS WERE A THING. I DIDN'T KNOW EMOTIONS WERE THINGS. I JUST FELT THEM AND DIDN'T REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT WAS GOING ON.

*Brittany Hogan*

“

WHENEVER I WAS ASKED, I'D JUST SAY: 'I'M FINE, I'M FINE,' AND NOT GIVE MUCH MORE THAN THAT, BUT EVERYONE HAS THEIR STRUGGLES, INSECURITIES, WORRIES AND ANXIETIES; THE MORE WE CAN TALK ABOUT THEM AND GET THEM OFF OUR CHESTS, THE BETTER.

*Caelan Doris*

### Mark Smyth

Mark Smyth is the lead Clinical Psychologist for Rugby Players Ireland Mental Health service and Clinical Consultant for the Tackle Your Feelings campaign. In 2020 he was the 50th President of the Psychological Society of Ireland. He is also a Chartered Senior Clinical Psychologist with over 20 years' experience.

Mark specialises in working with clients with difficulties in the areas of anxiety, trauma and self-harm. He has a deep interest in the psychology of social media, politics & policing. Mark is a frequent contributor in the media on mental health and psychology matters.

"Pressure of expectations, anxiety and over thinking would probably be the most common issues that players report. As part of their role as a professional rugby player they are expected to achieve to an exceptionally high standard and there is a constant pursuit of excellence. Sometimes a player brings those standards and expectations of perfection into other aspects of their day to day lives or into their relationships which is much less realistic than trying to achieve sporting excellence.

The numbers of players coming forward to seek support has remained consistent that I think is due to better awareness of early intervention with mental health in combination with a willingness and confidence from players from academy all the way to senior players to be more open about when they have struggled with their mental health & the benefits of seeking support. Rugby players in Ireland have been exceptional role models for mental health help seeking, both within rugby and without."



“

I KNOW I HAD MORE INJURIES THAN THE AVERAGE PLAYER, BUT I SEE THE SCARS I HAVE IN A POSITIVE LIGHT. THEY TAUGHT ME A LOT. EVERY TIME I WAS INJURED, I DID SOME WORK EXPERIENCE AND JUMPED ACROSS DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS.

*Adam Byrne*

*Sales Engineer & Performance Specialist, Output Sports*



“

I'M ALWAYS VERY BUSY BUT I DO THINK IT'S VERY IMPORTANT TO HAVE INTERESTS OUTSIDE OF RUGBY. IT HELPS TO GIVE ME PERSPECTIVE AND I ENJOY BEING ABLE TO FOCUS MY ENERGY ONTO DIFFERENT THINGS.

*Maeve Óg O'Leary*

*Masters in Public Relations and Strategic Communications, DCU  
Sports Marketing, Wilson Hartnell*



**SECTION 03**

# ENGAGE



## RUGBY PLAYERS IRELAND AWARDS WINNERS 2023

### BANK OF IRELAND IRISH MEN'S XV's PLAYERS' PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Josh van Der Flier

### BANK OF IRELAND IRISH WOMEN'S XV's PLAYERS' PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Neve Jones

### NEVIN SPENCE MEN'S YOUNG PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Jack Crowley

### IZEST MARKETING WOMEN'S YOUNG PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Aoife Dalton

### DRUIDS GLEN HOTEL & GOLF RESORT MOMENT OF THE YEAR

Irish Men's XV's Grand Slam

### ZURICH CONTRIBUTION TO IRISH SOCIETY

Alex Soroka

### TRITONLAKE IRISH WOMEN'S 7s PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Lucy Mulhall

### TRITONLAKE IRISH MEN'S 7s PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Andrew Smith

### MSL MERCEDES BENZ DEALERSHIPS' MEN'S XV's TRY OF YEAR

Mack Hansen v South Africa

### AIB CORPORATE BANKING WOMEN'S XV's TRY OF YEAR

Nichola Fryday v Scotland



## RUGBY PLAYERS IRELAND ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC

The recently redeveloped Druids Glen course played host to a memorable Golf Classic organised by Rugby Players Ireland. Bringing together players past and present, along with Rugby

Players Ireland's sponsors and guests, the morning was followed by a lunch and an insightful discussion on Ireland's World Cup prospects at both U20 and senior level with Alan Quinlan and Dan Leavy.

The Golf Classic is an important highlight of the players' association's calendar. While it goes some way to ensuring that the organisation can continue to support its members, it also gives attending players an opportunity to mingle with many of those who underpin their game. With the rain holding off and the sun drawing out all the colour on the course, there was a lively ambience throughout the day before the time came to announce the winners on the day...

### 1st Place:

Darragh Fanning &  
Druids Glen

### 2nd Place:

Leinster Rugby

### 3rd Place:

Jordi Murphy & AIB

### Longest Drive:

Niall Treston

### Closest to the Pin:

Gary Nolan  
(Leinster Rugby)



## RUGBY PLAYERS IRELAND HALL OF FAME

In November, Rugby Players Ireland announce the induction of two more illustrious figures into the prestigious Rugby Players Ireland Hall of Fame. The families, friends and former teammates of Alison Miller and Shane Horgan gathered at the InterContinental Dublin as the Irish rugby community paid homage to the outstanding careers of both players.



Boasting a distinguished lineage of inductees, including iconic names such as Brian O'Driscoll, Ronan O'Gara, Fiona Coghlan and Tommy Bowe, the Rugby Players Ireland Hall of Fame acknowledges the epitome of excellence in our game, while also recognising their respective contributions that have transformed Ireland into a global powerhouse of the sport.

Capped 65 times by his country, Shane Horgan enjoyed a remarkable 13-year career that coincided with the transformative journey of the Irish Rugby landscape. A towering figure on the wing, Horgan scored 21 tries as Ireland claimed three Triple Crowns and finally began to discard the label of perennial also-rans. On the domestic stage, Horgan was the first Leinster player to reach a landmark 200 caps. Since making his debut in 1998, he went on to win a



brace of Celtic League and Heineken Cup honours. He was also a British & Irish Lions tourist in 2005.



A key member of the 2013 Grand Slam winning team, Alison Miller's place in the annals of women's rugby has long been secure owing to her record breaking 10-year career. With 24 tries in 47 appearances, Miller was a feared presence in the both the XVs, while her prowess in the 7s games was similarly noteworthy and undoubtedly paved the way for future generations of female rugby players. A Six Nations winner once again in 2015, the Ballickmoyler native will always be fondly remembered for her contribution to Ireland's historic pool triumph over New Zealand in the 2014 Women's Rugby World Cup.

## MEANINGFUL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY

To mark Darragh Murray's first start at the Sportsground for Connacht Rugby, the forward shaved his renowned mullet in aid of two charities, LauraLynn (as Rugby Players Ireland's charity partner) and Mayo Roscommon Hospice, raising over €18,000 in the process.

Murray had been holding out on a much-needed cut to ensure his hair would benefit the Little Princess Trust and be used to provide real hair wigs for children who have lost their hair due to cancer treatment in Ireland and the UK.

“

**I'M STILL RELATIVELY NEW TO THE PROFESSIONAL RUGBY ENVIRONMENT BUT THROUGH MY TEAMMATES, CONNACHT RUGBY AND RUGBY PLAYERS IRELAND I HAVE LEARNED THAT IT'S IMPORTANT TO USE OUR PROFILE AND INFLUENCE IN POSITIVE WAYS FOR OUR COMMUNITIES. MY HAIRCUT IS A SMALL GESTURE BUT ONE I AM HAPPY TO MAKE FOR SUCH GOOD CAUSES.**

*Darragh Murray*



## RUGBY FOR ALL

With rugby dominating the hearts and minds during the Rugby World Cup, we joined Energia and Leinster Rugby for their Rugby For All blitz which took place at Energia Park. Members who turned out to support the event included Will Connors, Brittany Hogan, Dan Leavy, Martin Maloney, Ross Molony, Jordi Murphy and Mike Ross. The initiative seeks to grow participation in rugby among those with physical and learning differences and the blitz saw mixed ability teams from across Leinster take part.



## INCLUSIVE TRAINING SESSION

Following on from Ireland's Grand Slam triumph, rugby was the order of the day as Kathryn Dane and brothers Joe and Paddy McCarthy met up with the students from the Trinity Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities (TCPID) for a training session.

Organised in collaboration with the Trinity Sports Centre, the Trinity Business School, TCPID and Rugby Players Ireland, the event showcased the impact of inclusion in sports.



## RUGBY PLAYERS IRELAND FOUNDATION

**The Rugby Players Ireland Foundation aims to provide financial and practical support for players and their families who find themselves in difficult situations such as career ending injury, illness or disability.**

As a registered charity, the support provided by the Foundation will take many forms including financial assistance, help with medical treatment, rehabilitation equipment, counselling and education. The Foundation provides an emergency support for those who are struggling in various ways while also giving players the opportunity to be part of a 'players supporting players' community.

As the incumbents of fitted Irish shirts zoned in on Grand Slam triumph, the great and good of yesteryear took to Donnybrook for the first instalment of the Ireland v England Legends game on Irish soil since 2019. Almost 2,000 people were in attendance at Energia Park to see whether Sean O'Brien, Devin Toner and Sean Cronin could still get about just a few months after their respective retirements. Unfortunately, a refreshed Irish side struggled to deal with the likes of Delon Armitage, David Strettle and a few wily Legends players in the English squad. Our neighbours ultimately 'ran' out 35-24 victors... not that it really mattered to us... or did it?!

Fittingly, the game also gave the players an opportunity to pay their respects to Tom Tierney who passed away in February. Tierney lined out for the Irish Legends on several occasions.



“

**THIS GAME BEGAN IN 2009 AFTER THE UNTIMELY PASSING OF STUART MANGAN WHO PLAYED FOR HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM RFC IN LONDON. THANKS TO THE CONTINUED SUPPORT OF RUGBY FANS AS WELL AS OUR INCREDIBLE SPONSOR, ARK UNDERWRITING BERMUDA, WE HAVE RAISED OVER €1.5M WHICH GOES TOWARDS RUGBY CHARITIES BOTH IN IRELAND AND THE UK.**

*Shane Byrne, Captain*

# TYF TIMELINE

TACKLE  
YOUR  
FEELINGS

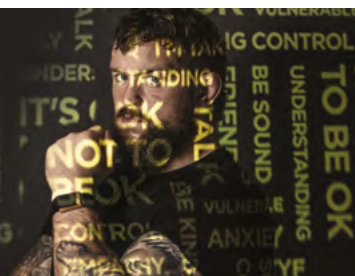
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## JANUARY

### TRUE STRENGTH

Andrew Porter became the latest addition to the TYF crew. In the last of a series of animated clips by Kavaleer Productions, Andrew highlights the impact of his family and friends on his mental wellbeing since the passing of his mother at a young age.



## FEBRUARY

### A VEHICLE FOR OPEN CONVERSATION

Hosted by Dr Hannah McCormack, the Tackle Your Feelings podcast was released to encourage listeners to rethink their approach to positive mental wellbeing by hearing from some of Ireland's best-known rugby players.

## MARCH

### BE WHO YOU ARE

Ahead of the inaugural Unity Round, TYF joined forces with the United Rugby Championship to highlight the importance of inclusivity in the game. A collaboration with the campaign saw Nick McCarthy sit down with Joy Neville to discuss how opening up also opens the door for others to share.



## APRIL

### CHECK IN ON YOUR SQUAD!

As a thank you to RPI members for their continued support of TYF, a unique range of bespoke merchandise was gifted to each squad group.



## MAY

### INSTIL POSITIVE HABITS

As part of our TYF Schools programme, our TYF ambassadors continued to meet with secondary students across the country to share their own tips on how they manage their mental wellbeing.



“

YOU CAN GET UP IN YOUR HEAD ABOUT THINGS SO WE DO A LOT OF WORK TO MAKE SURE WE DON'T GET IN OUR OWN WAY.

Tadhg Furlong

## JUNE

### FEEDBACK

In association with our research partners at the University of Limerick, a pilot study was conducted to assess teachers' experiences of the TYF Schools Programme.

## JULY

## SEND-OFF

Before they departed for France, TYF ambassadors James Lowe and Andrew Porter called by Zurich Ireland's offices in Blackrock to talk about how they mentally prepare for the Rugby World Cup.

## AUGUST

## SHARE THE LOAD

With schools getting ready to return, TYF brought Tadhg Furlong back to his old stomping ground at Good Counsel in New Ross to reflect on his time as a student, and to empower others to talk about their feelings.

## SEPTEMBER

## TEACHING THE TEACHERS

We spend a lot of time telling teenagers what their issues are but in September, BT Young Scientist Exhibition winners Liam Carew and Shane O'Connor sat down with Alan Quinlan to give an insight into their award-winning research.



## OCTOBER

## ONE YOUNG WORLD

An annual conference, One Young World convenes the brightest young leaders from around the globe working to accelerate social impact. Over four days, delegates participated in a range of workshops and heard from several influential people like legendary All Black Sir John Kirwan who spent some time with TYF discussing his own mental health journey and his life mission, embodied by MITEY – an organisation that seeks to help children mentally thrive in New Zealand.



## NOVEMBER

### SHOWING THE WAY

In 2023 the TYF Expert Advisory Board was established to inspire the progress of the campaign. The panel brings together a number of experts in the fields of education, psychology and wellbeing as well as other relevant individuals whose experience can support the expansion and development of the programme.



“

**CONFIDENCE IS KEY BUT  
IT CAN BE HARD TO FIND  
ON YOUR OWN.**

*Eimear Considine*

## DECEMBER

### GETTING READY TO LAUNCH OUR NEW AND IMPROVED TYF SCHOOLS PROGRAMME.

## TACKLE YOUR FEELINGS SCHOOLS

The Tackle Your Feelings Schools Programme is a classroom-based programme, centred on the use of the bespoke TYF Schools App. Students are guided through resources where they are tasked with completing exercises designed to make them more aware and knowledgeable about their own mental health and wellbeing, and enable the students to Take Control. Each section is augmented by the experiences of some of Ireland's best rugby players.

Almost 2,000 students are currently participating in the programme across Ireland. In all, 84 schools have signed up since TYF Schools was first launched in 2020. Working alongside teachers, students and a team of experts, TYF continues to grow and evolve in line with demand while a newly revised app will be launched in January 2024.



“

**BEING IN A POSITION  
TO INSPIRE THE NEXT  
GENERATION IS A PRIVILEGE.**

*Ryan Baird  
Strategic Advisor to the TYF Campaign*

“

**IF IT'S THE ONLY THING THEY  
LEARN BY THE TIME THEY  
LEAVE SCHOOL...  
I THINK THAT'S THE MOST  
IMPORTANT THING.**

*Teacher*

“

**IT PLANTS A SEED IN THEIR  
MIND THAT YOUR MENTAL  
HEALTH IS NOT JUST  
SOMETHING THAT HAPPENS.  
YOU CAN IMPACT IT. YOU CAN  
INFLUENCE IT.**

*Teacher*



**RUGBY PLAYERS  
IRELAND**

## TO OUR MEMBERS

A special thank you to our members who have participated in events throughout the year. Rugby Players Ireland is a player-led body. Without your involvement, we would not be here to represent you. Working together, we can realise our ambition of having Ireland become the best place in the world to play rugby.

## TO OUR SPONSORS & PARTNERS

Without the support and assistance of our corporate partners much of what we have been able to achieve at Rugby Players Ireland in 2023 would not have been possible. We would like to thank all of our sponsors, particularly Zurich Ireland and the IRFU. Through the backing of Rugby Players Ireland, we can ensure that our members have a strong independent body that prioritises them as individuals.



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