

INSPIRE | CONNECT | THRIVE

RUGBY IN

IRELAND

Strategic Plan 2024-2028





CONTENTS

Background	page 3
Introduction	page 4
Where We Are	page 6
Strategy Through Consultation	page 8
What Did We Hear?	page 9
The Headlines	page 10
Our Rugby Values	page 12
Welfare	page 13
The Way Forward	page 14
Delivering Great Rugby Experiences	page 16
Driving our High Performance Ambition	page 17
Accelerating the Women’s Game	page 18
Inspiring our Fans	page 20
Enablers For Success	page 21
Play Your Part	page 23

Click on the listings above to go directly to that section.
You can return to contents, by clicking the link at the bottom right of each page.



BACKGROUND

The purpose of this document is to set out a strategy for Rugby in Ireland - how we intend to continue to develop our game, embrace opportunities and tackle challenges over the next four years.

The strategy has been developed by the Irish Rugby Football Union in conjunction with Connacht, Leinster, Munster and Ulster Rugby.

We believe that delivering this strategy, in partnership with our Provinces, Clubs, Schools, partner organisations and commercial partners will drive us to ensure that Rugby in Ireland continues to thrive.

The volunteers and staff of Irish Rugby have been invaluable and their contributions and continued hard work are most appreciated.

A sincere thank you to everyone contributing to Rugby in Ireland. Our sport thrives thanks to the valuable time given by volunteers right across the game. Your involvement and support have made Rugby in Ireland what it is today, and we invite you to share in our excitement for the promising future that this next chapter will bring.



OVER 5,000 PEOPLE
CONTRIBUTED THEIR VIEWS
ALONG THE WAY.

[Return to Contents](#)

- [BACKGROUND](#)
- [INTRODUCTION](#)
- [WHERE WE ARE](#)
- [STRATEGY THROUGH CONSULTATION](#)
- [WHAT DID WE HEAR?](#)
- [THE HEADLINES](#)
- [OUR RUGBY VALUES](#)
- [WELFARE](#)
- [THE WAY FORWARD](#)
- [GREAT RUGBY EXPERIENCES](#)
- [HIGH PERFORMANCE AMBITION](#)
- [THE WOMEN'S GAME](#)
- [INSPIRING OUR FANS](#)
- [ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS](#)
- [PLAY YOUR PART](#)

INTRODUCTION

We are at one of the most exciting points in the history of Irish Rugby. As we reflect on a highly successful period at international level, the continued growth of Clubs and Schools, allied to the IRFU's increased investment in the Women's game at all levels, there is much to be optimistic about for a continually bright future in the months and years to come.

As the IRFU approaches its 150th anniversary in 2024/25, we are proud to present the Strategic Vision for Irish Rugby 2024-2028.

This plan, forged with the inputs of so many, is the solid expression of the vision and values of Irish Rugby and how they will form the basis for the development of the Game over this coming cycle and into the future.

Our vision is simple - **Inspire, Connect and Thrive**; **Inspiring** more people to play, support and volunteer in rugby; **Connecting** People and Communities through Rugby; and ensuring **Thriving** environments for Players and volunteers through Rugby.

Rugby is an all-Ireland sport, whose presence and attraction continues to grow across the island of Ireland, capturing the imagination of the Irish public, as evidenced by the magnificent support for our team, from all quarters, during the 2023 Rugby World Cup. We are determined to capitalise on this success by continuing to actively introduce and promote our game to communities across Ireland.

A key cornerstone of this plan is our ongoing and steadfast commitment to player welfare, which remains central to everything we do.

In this strategy we clearly define our ambitions, we articulate the main initiatives aimed at delivering these priorities and we commit to delivering the plan in a manner which is consistent with our values of **Respect, Integrity, Inclusivity, Fun** and **Excellence**.

This plan is the result of unprecedented collaboration; our Provinces, Clubs, Volunteers, Staff, Supporters, Partners and our Players have contributed to the development of this strategy, with over 5,000 people offering their views during the consultation process.

This diversity of opinion and level of collaboration, ensures that all constituent parts of Irish Rugby have been heard and can now align on the collective vision and comprehensive roadmap which is reflected in this plan.

OUR VISION:
INSPIRE, CONNECT
AND THRIVE



[Return to Contents](#)

- [BACKGROUND](#)
- [INTRODUCTION](#)
- [WHERE WE ARE](#)
- [STRATEGY THROUGH CONSULTATION](#)
- [WHAT DID WE HEAR?](#)
- [THE HEADLINES](#)
- [OUR RUGBY VALUES](#)
- [WELFARE](#)
- [THE WAY FORWARD](#)
- [GREAT RUGBY EXPERIENCES](#)
- [HIGH PERFORMANCE AMBITION](#)
- [THE WOMEN'S GAME](#)
- [INSPIRING OUR FANS](#)
- [ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS](#)
- [PLAY YOUR PART](#)



INTRODUCTION

continued



Collectively, we believe that the biggest opportunity for growth lies in the growing support and participation of women’s rugby and women *in* rugby, which is why this is again, one of the key pillars of our strategy. Everyone can help in this regard: by attending Women’s matches - whether that be at Club, Celtic Challenge or for our national teams - everyone can help inspire more girls to get involved in the game, deepen our player pool, and grow the commercial proposition of the Women’s game.

These are exciting times for Irish Rugby and there are endless opportunities for anyone who shares our values to contribute to the successful delivery of our collective ambitions; whether this is through volunteering with, or supporting our Schools, Clubs, Provinces or National Teams.

We believe that anyone involved in Irish Rugby - irrespective of their role - should, through this plan, be able to connect with others throughout the Game. Volunteers are central to all that we do, and we are fortunate to have volunteers with a wide range of skills and experience to help drive the game forward, both on and off the pitch.

The delivery of this strategy, in partnership with our Players, Fans, Provinces, Clubs, Schools, and commercial Partners, will help ensure that Irish Rugby continues to thrive.

It goes without saying that these ambitions will require significant investment over the course of this strategic cycle. In financial terms, the IRFU has always taken a long-term strategic view of investment. This allows for consistent levels of funding, even in years where there is a financial shortfall, ensuring that our various programmes are allowed to progress unimpeded. We intend to continue this policy, while living within our means.

Finally, as we approach the 150th anniversary of the IRFU, we want to extend our gratitude to everyone contributing to Rugby in Ireland. The formation of the IRFU was indeed a pioneering step and we are fortunate that the fortitude and vision of our founders has been replicated by countless individuals and committees down through the ages.

Our sport is thriving thanks to the valuable time given by volunteers and staff right across the island and beyond. Your involvement and support, in keeping with the ethos of our founders, have made Rugby in Ireland what it is today, and we hope that you share in our excitement for the promising future that this next chapter will bring.

Yours in rugby,



Kevin Potts
Chief Executive



Niall Rynne
Chair, IRFU Management Committee

- [BACKGROUND](#)
- [INTRODUCTION](#)
- [WHERE WE ARE](#)
- [STRATEGY THROUGH CONSULTATION](#)
- [WHAT DID WE HEAR?](#)
- [THE HEADLINES](#)
- [OUR RUGBY VALUES](#)
- [WELFARE](#)
- [THE WAY FORWARD](#)
- [GREAT RUGBY EXPERIENCES](#)
- [HIGH PERFORMANCE AMBITION](#)
- [THE WOMEN’S GAME](#)
- [INSPIRING OUR FANS](#)
- [ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS](#)
- [PLAY YOUR PART](#)



WHERE WE ARE

Rugby is a game for all, played in many formats including 15s, 7s, touch, tag and mixed ability.



TEAMS **1,720**

- ACTIVE COACHES **4,094**
- ON FIELD REFEREES **596**
- REGISTERED VOLUNTEERS **5,403**

CONTACT **97,105**

NON-CONTACT **182,852**

Definitions

Participation: A ball in hand player – all registered playing members in the current season in any format of the game and all participants who took part in sessions delivered by community rugby officers from May 1st, 2023 – April 30th, 2024.

Community Players: Participants who took part in sessions delivered by community rugby officers from May 1st – April 30th of the current season.

Total Registered Players: Includes active membership categories: Pre-Mini, Mini, Youth, Adult, School, Tag, Give it a Try and Provincial.

Full Onfield Referee: Fully trained onfield referee that has officiated at least one game in the season

Club Teams (15s)*: 15 a side teams that have a team panel set up and at least 4 games played in the season

Active Coaches: Registered coaches who are assigned to a team.

*No game management system for 7s or modified format teams.

- BACKGROUND
- INTRODUCTION
- WHERE WE ARE
- STRATEGY THROUGH CONSULTATION
- WHAT DID WE HEAR?
- THE HEADLINES
- OUR RUGBY VALUES
- WELFARE
- THE WAY FORWARD
- GREAT RUGBY EXPERIENCES
- HIGH PERFORMANCE AMBITION
- THE WOMEN'S GAME
- INSPIRING OUR FANS
- ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS
- PLAY YOUR PART

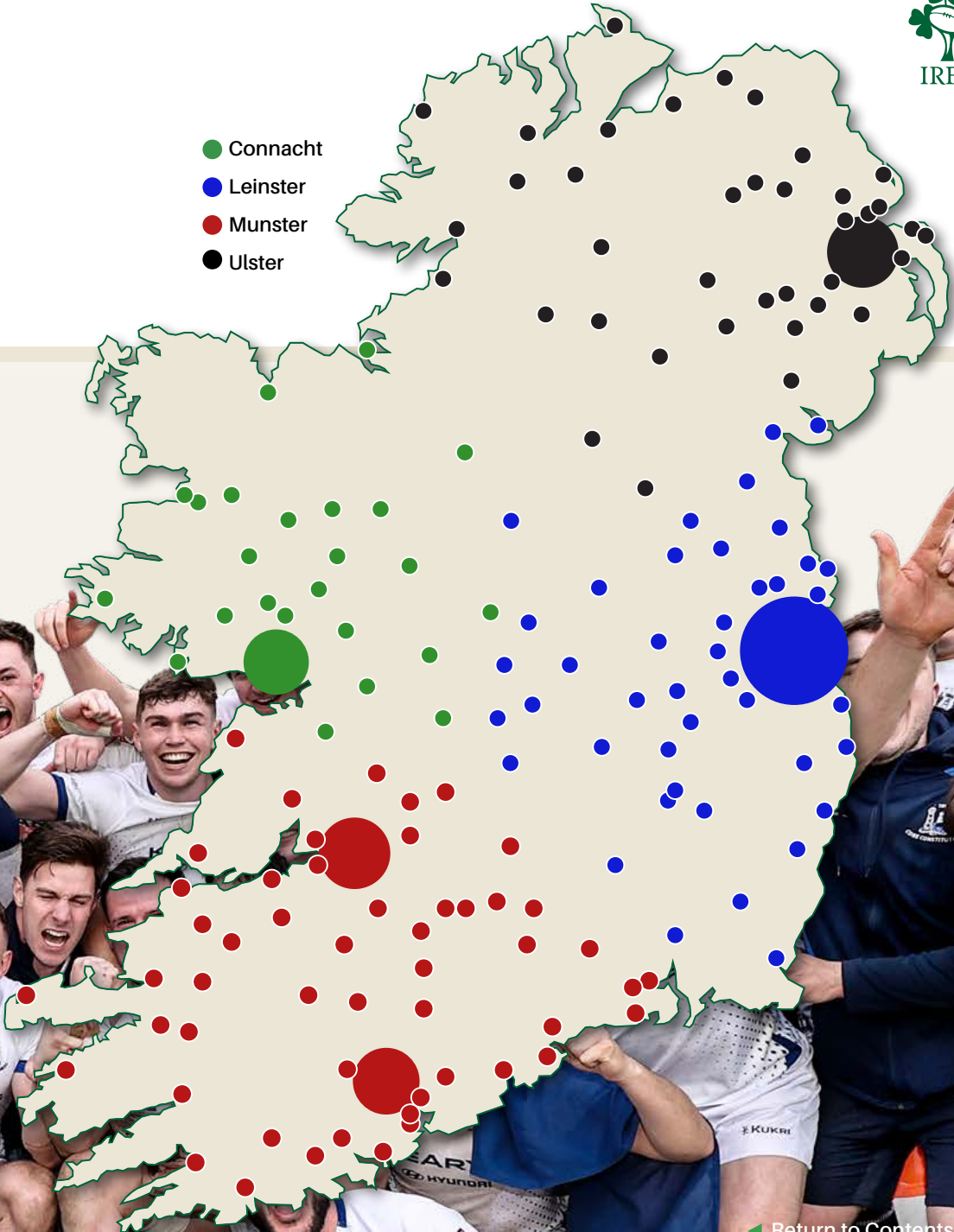


WHERE WE ARE

NUMBER OF CLUBS
IN IRELAND **220**

CONNACHT **26** | **70** MUNSTER
LEINSTER **73** | **51** ULSTER

- Connacht
- Leinster
- Munster
- Ulster



CLICK HERE TO FIND
YOUR LOCAL CLUB

- [BACKGROUND](#)
- [INTRODUCTION](#)
- [WHERE WE ARE](#)
- [STRATEGY THROUGH CONSULTATION](#)
- [WHAT DID WE HEAR?](#)
- [THE HEADLINES](#)
- [OUR RUGBY VALUES](#)
- [WELFARE](#)
- [THE WAY FORWARD](#)
- [GREAT RUGBY EXPERIENCES](#)
- [HIGH PERFORMANCE AMBITION](#)
- [THE WOMEN'S GAME](#)
- [INSPIRING OUR FANS](#)
- [ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS](#)
- [PLAY YOUR PART](#)

Return to Contents

STRATEGY THROUGH CONSULTATION



This Strategic Plan is the result of collaboration with the breadth of the rugby community in Ireland. We engaged with circa 5,000 people through our State of the Game Survey and a series of workshops. We complemented their feedback with desk-based research and insights from our partners.

IRISH RUGBY STATE OF THE GAME SURVEY

The Survey aimed to understand:

- Satisfaction
- Motivation
- Barriers
- Likes
- Dislikes

Across the following groups:

- Players
- Participants (match officials, club officials, coaches, referees, volunteers)
- Supporters (lapsed and current)
- 4,800 respondents

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

FACE-TO-FACE WORKSHOPS

- Players
- IRFU Committees
- Provincial management and Committee members
- IRFU Directors and Provincial CEOs
- Youth Council
- IRFU and Provincial Staff
- Sport Ireland
- World Rugby
- Others

HORIZON SCANNING

- Fans of the Future
- Clubs of the Future
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
- The Future of Rugby
- Technology
- Sustainability



[Return to Contents](#)

- [BACKGROUND](#)
- [INTRODUCTION](#)
- [WHERE WE ARE](#)
- [STRATEGY THROUGH CONSULTATION](#)
- [WHAT DID WE HEAR?](#)
- [THE HEADLINES](#)
- [OUR RUGBY VALUES](#)
- [WELFARE](#)
- [THE WAY FORWARD](#)
- [GREAT RUGBY EXPERIENCES](#)
- [HIGH PERFORMANCE AMBITION](#)
- [THE WOMEN'S GAME](#)
- [INSPIRING OUR FANS](#)
- [ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS](#)
- [PLAY YOUR PART](#)

WHAT DID WE HEAR?

- [BACKGROUND](#)
- [INTRODUCTION](#)
- [WHERE WE ARE](#)
- [STRATEGY THROUGH CONSULTATION](#)
- [WHAT DID WE HEAR?](#)
- [THE HEADLINES](#)
- [OUR RUGBY VALUES](#)
- [WELFARE](#)
- [THE WAY FORWARD](#)
- [GREAT RUGBY EXPERIENCES](#)
- [HIGH PERFORMANCE AMBITION](#)
- [THE WOMEN'S GAME](#)
- [INSPIRING OUR FANS](#)
- [ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS](#)
- [PLAY YOUR PART](#)

THE HEADLINES WHAT DID WE HEAR?

PASSION

Irish Rugby is in a good place, with **much to be proud of**. We have more participants and fans than ever before. There is an entire rugby community excited to take rugby to the next level in Ireland.



OUR VALUES

Our values are unique and are a big part of why people choose to get involved and **stay involved in the game**. When behaviours on and off the pitch align to our values they enable and support everything else we are trying to do. We need to check and challenge behaviours that aren't in line with our values, or we are at risk of them eroding.



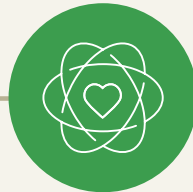
CLUBS+ SCHOOLS

Clubs and Schools **cultivate love** for the game and develop our future Provincial and International players. The continued growth in participation and success of our National and Provincial teams are dependent on ongoing development and investment in our grassroots game.



PLAYER WELFARE

Player welfare will continue to be **central to all** that we do. It is about ensuring that ALL players are conditioned physically and mentally, and coached to play, perform and enjoy rugby. We support everyone to achieve their ambition at the level they aspire to.



VOLUNTEERS

Our sport thrives thanks to the valuable **time given** by volunteers right across the game. Your involvement and support have made Rugby in Ireland what it is today, and we invite you to share in our excitement for the promising future that this next chapter will bring.



- [BACKGROUND](#)
- [INTRODUCTION](#)
- [WHERE WE ARE](#)
- [STRATEGY THROUGH CONSULTATION](#)
- [WHAT DID WE HEAR?](#)
- [THE HEADLINES](#)
- [OUR RUGBY VALUES](#)
- [WELFARE](#)
- [THE WAY FORWARD](#)
- [GREAT RUGBY EXPERIENCES](#)
- [HIGH PERFORMANCE AMBITION](#)
- [THE WOMEN'S GAME](#)
- [INSPIRING OUR FANS](#)
- [ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS](#)
- [PLAY YOUR PART](#)

THE HEADLINES WHAT DID WE HEAR?

WOMEN’S RUGBY

Women’s Rugby is a major opportunity to **grow the number of people** playing and enjoying the game and has the potential to create a whole new audience for Rugby in Ireland. We should continue to accelerate this growth.

PLAYER EXPERIENCE

A **positive experience** for all of our participants starting with our players is crucial. We must ensure the game is as safe as it can be and that our players are coached and educated in the skills, and that we continuously demonstrate the values of our game of so they can have fun, thrive and achieve their ambition.

SOCIETY + DEMOGRAPHICS

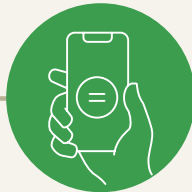
The **next generation** of fans (10-14 year olds) embrace innovation and technology. They want to connect with rugby in this way. **EDI and sustainability** values, behaviours, policies and track records are increasingly important when choosing where to work, who to support and follow and where to spend money. Organisations are also evaluating partnerships through these lenses.

REVENUE

We need **more revenue** to fuel our ambition. 80% of our revenues are generated by the Men’s National team, therefore its continued competitiveness is vital for Rugby in Ireland at all levels. But generating new revenue streams is also critical.

OUR FANS

Our fans are so important to us. Not only do they inspire and spur on our teams, but their financial commitment allows us to continue to invest in the game. We need to deliver **outstanding rugby experiences**, both physical and digital.



- [BACKGROUND](#)
- [INTRODUCTION](#)
- [WHERE WE ARE](#)
- [STRATEGY THROUGH CONSULTATION](#)
- [WHAT DID WE HEAR?](#)
- [THE HEADLINES](#)
- [OUR RUGBY VALUES](#)
- [WELFARE](#)
- [THE WAY FORWARD](#)
- [GREAT RUGBY EXPERIENCES](#)
- [HIGH PERFORMANCE AMBITION](#)
- [THE WOMEN’S GAME](#)
- [INSPIRING OUR FANS](#)
- [ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS](#)
- [PLAY YOUR PART](#)



OUR RUGBY VALUES



At the core of all that we do will remain our Rugby Values. Every participant needs to know that they will be offered a positive experience through rugby, and that starts with the welcome at the gate.

INCLUSIVITY

DIVERSITY OF OPINION AND CULTURE MEANS WORKING TOGETHER TO BE A VIBRANT RESPECTFUL ORGANISATION.

- Rugby is a team sport and members are equally important.
- Be a good team member, respect the ethos of rugby.
- Each member who walks through the gates of our rugby Clubs has a right to belong.

RESPECT

FOR ALL THOSE INVOLVED IN THE RUGBY COMMUNITY, THE WIDER COMMUNITY AND SELF.

- Treat all members as you would want to be treated.
- Never take advantage of others.
- Never use coercion as a means to gain advantage.
- Show gratitude to our volunteers and officials.

FUN

A PASSION FOR THE GAME ON AND OFF THE PITCH, RUGBY IS A SOURCE OF JOY FOR ALL.

- Winning and losing are not the only aspects of the game.
- Never trade off enjoyment for the outcome of a game.

INTEGRITY

ACTIONS ON AND OFF THE PITCH THAT ARE OPEN AND TRANSPARENT.

- Behave with honour, even when no one is looking.
- Challenge unfairness in all forms at every opportunity.
- Keep rugby clean.
- Measure success by more than the result of the match, failure is not the same as losing.

EXCELLENCE

STRIVE TO BE THE BEST WE CAN BE.

- Strive to always do your best.
- Win with humility and accept defeat with dignity.
- Act with honesty in all dealings with members and be open and honest with what you say and do.

We heard your feedback in the State of the Game Survey and now we're asking for your support. We need you to help us put **our values into practice**. Together, we play a role in creating and maintaining a welcoming culture in our Clubs, that is in the best interest of every member, regardless of the level at which they are involved.

WELFARE

Rugby is a magnificent team sport and for the vast majority of who play our sport the risks involved are far outweighed by the lifelong enjoyment and benefits it brings.

- No one cares more about the **health and well-being** of players than those of us involved in the running of the game across the island, many of whom are parents or relatives of participants.
- **Player welfare is of paramount importance to the IRFU and our Provinces, and we are constantly reviewing safety protocols for all players.** Our approach, based on scientific evidence, involves a commitment to ongoing education, monitoring, and application of safety protocols across the game, including proactively managing elite player game time with a focus on injury prevention and oversight.
- IRFU conducts **independent analysis of injuries** in our game, in partnership with University of Limerick, and publish these full reports annually.
- Rugby is a **physical sport**, which like other sports carries a risk of injury. That is a fact which we fully recognise and are candid about.
- Within that context player welfare is of paramount importance to World Rugby, the IRFU and our Provinces, and we are constantly reviewing **safety protocols**.
- **Tackle height reduction trial for amateur game 2023/24 following widespread consultation.** Our whole engagement around the tackle height was another opportunity to **engage with parents and players** and assure them of our continued efforts to make rugby as safe as possible, which we will continue to do.

CLICK HERE
FOR MORE INFORMATION
ON THE PROGRAMMES AND
INITIATIVES AVAILABLE.



- [BACKGROUND](#)
- [INTRODUCTION](#)
- [WHERE WE ARE](#)
- [STRATEGY THROUGH CONSULTATION](#)
- [WHAT DID WE HEAR?](#)
- [THE HEADLINES](#)
- [OUR RUGBY VALUES](#)
- [WELFARE](#)
- [THE WAY FORWARD](#)
- [GREAT RUGBY EXPERIENCES](#)
- [HIGH PERFORMANCE AMBITION](#)
- [THE WOMEN'S GAME](#)
- [INSPIRING OUR FANS](#)
- [ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS](#)
- [PLAY YOUR PART](#)

THE WAY FORWARD

[BACKGROUND](#)

[INTRODUCTION](#)

[WHERE WE ARE](#)

[STRATEGY THROUGH
CONSULTATION](#)

[WHAT DID WE HEAR?](#)

[THE HEADLINES](#)

[OUR RUGBY VALUES](#)

[WELFARE](#)

● [THE WAY FORWARD](#)

[GREAT RUGBY EXPERIENCES](#)

[HIGH PERFORMANCE
AMBITION](#)

[THE WOMEN'S GAME](#)

[INSPIRING OUR FANS](#)

[ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS](#)

[PLAY YOUR PART](#)

THE WAY FORWARD

OUR VISION

INSPIRE, CONNECT AND THRIVE.



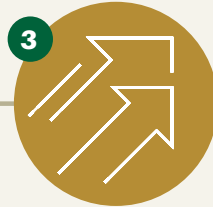
DELIVERING
GREAT RUGBY
EXPERIENCES
A THRIVING
GRASSROOTS GAME



DRIVING OUR HIGH
PERFORMANCE
AMBITION
WINNING TEAMS



ACCELERATING
THE WOMEN'S
GAME



INSPIRING
OUR FANS



ENABLERS



LEADERSHIP
AND PEOPLE



ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY



GOVERNANCE AND
PARTNERSHIPS



TECHNOLOGY AND
INNOVATION



SUSTAINABLE
FINANCIAL MODEL

- [BACKGROUND](#)
- [INTRODUCTION](#)
- [WHERE WE ARE](#)
- [STRATEGY THROUGH CONSULTATION](#)
- [WHAT DID WE HEAR?](#)
- [THE HEADLINES](#)
- [OUR RUGBY VALUES](#)
- [WELFARE](#)
- [THE WAY FORWARD](#)
- [GREAT RUGBY EXPERIENCES](#)
- [HIGH PERFORMANCE AMBITION](#)
- [THE WOMEN'S GAME](#)
- [INSPIRING OUR FANS](#)
- [ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS](#)
- [PLAY YOUR PART](#)

DELIVERING GREAT RUGBY EXPERIENCES

A THRIVING GRASSROOTS GAME



PEOPLE

Support our Provinces, Clubs and Schools to sustain and grow the 15-a-side game.

Modernise and enhance training and upskilling of our players, coaches, match officials, volunteers and staff.

Empower individuals and groups to achieve their ambitions.

How will we achieve this?

Listen to and **collaborate** with our community.

Lead on **research and innovation** to develop our people.

Resource and promote self-directed **learning and development** opportunities across Irish Rugby.

PARTICIPATION

Provide a range of game formats and access for all participants.

Enhance the overall rugby experience and satisfaction of participants.

How will we achieve this?

Review competitions and provide greater choice for our participants. Prioritise **participant welfare**, the **spirit and ethos** of rugby and the positive benefits of involvement.

PROMOTION

Celebrate Club and School communities in the domestic game.

Modernise our communication strategy with our participants.

Connect people to Irish Rugby and each other.

How will we achieve this?

Showcase **best practice** in our Clubs and Schools. Have a strategic approach in how we tell the story of our **grassroots game**. Utilise **modern platforms** to engage with our demographics.

PLACE

Create positive, welcoming and inclusive rugby environments.

Raise the standard and quality of our Club facilities.

How will we achieve this?

Implement **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion** (EDI) policies and action plans.

Provide **leadership guidance** and support to our Clubs to enhance governance structures.

Continue the **IRFU Club Facility Grant Scheme** and assist Clubs to maximise external capital development grant opportunities.

PERFORMANCE

Provide coordinated resources and opportunities for players, coaches and match officials to fulfil their potential in the Performance environment.

How will we achieve this?

Clearly define what **'Performance' rugby** means to Clubs and Schools and how it connects to High Performance.

Ensure **coordinated training, education, and support** is available for those involved in Performance rugby.

Optimise alignment between domestic pathways and HP programmes to enhance clear connections and support for all participants.

[BACKGROUND](#)

[INTRODUCTION](#)

[WHERE WE ARE](#)

[STRATEGY THROUGH CONSULTATION](#)

[WHAT DID WE HEAR?](#)

[THE HEADLINES](#)

[OUR RUGBY VALUES](#)

[WELFARE](#)

[THE WAY FORWARD](#)

[GREAT RUGBY EXPERIENCES](#)

[HIGH PERFORMANCE AMBITION](#)

[THE WOMEN'S GAME](#)

[INSPIRING OUR FANS](#)

[ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS](#)

[PLAY YOUR PART](#)



DRIVING OUR HIGH PERFORMANCE AMBITION

STRATEGIC ANCHOR

PERFORMANCE PARTNERSHIP

Our strength is in our unity through a **performance-driven** partnership with the four Provinces.

PERFORMANCE INTEGRATION

Our performance model supports Irish teams and players to excel on the International stage.

Up and down
National to Provincial

Across
Players and Staff

PERFORMANCE IMPACT

World class talent performing in world leading environments.

WINNING TEAMS

Sustain and grow the current success of Irish Rugby while **targeting and supporting** future high performance opportunities.

COMPETITIVE EDGE

Foster and enhance an **unrelenting competitive edge** through targeted performance innovation and investment.

BY 2028 YOU WILL SEE...

An Integrated, Vibrant, Smart Performance System.

Continuously maximising our competitive edge to produce winning teams.

[BACKGROUND](#)

[INTRODUCTION](#)

[WHERE WE ARE](#)

[STRATEGY THROUGH CONSULTATION](#)

[WHAT DID WE HEAR?](#)

[THE HEADLINES](#)

[OUR RUGBY VALUES](#)

[WELFARE](#)

[THE WAY FORWARD](#)

[GREAT RUGBY EXPERIENCES](#)

[HIGH PERFORMANCE AMBITION](#)

[THE WOMEN'S GAME](#)

[INSPIRING OUR FANS](#)

[ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS](#)

[PLAY YOUR PART](#)

ACCELERATING THE WOMEN'S GAME

- [BACKGROUND](#)
- [INTRODUCTION](#)
- [WHERE WE ARE](#)
- [STRATEGY THROUGH CONSULTATION](#)
- [WHAT DID WE HEAR?](#)
- [THE HEADLINES](#)
- [OUR RUGBY VALUES](#)
- [WELFARE](#)
- [THE WAY FORWARD](#)
- [GREAT RUGBY EXPERIENCES](#)
- [HIGH PERFORMANCE AMBITION](#)
- [THE WOMEN'S GAME](#)
- [INSPIRING OUR FANS](#)
- [ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS](#)
- [PLAY YOUR PART](#)

OUR TARGET OUTCOMES

TO ACCELERATE THE GROWTH OF THE GAME AND INSPIRE A GENERATION OF PLAYERS, VOLUNTEERS, COACHES, MATCH OFFICIALS AND FANS THROUGH WORLD-CLASS RUGBY EXPERIENCES AND COMPETITIONS:

- Create **inspiring** and truly **inclusive experiences** for all involved to attract and retain participants.
- Grow the game - creating sustainable environments leading to **lifelong career** and **volunteering opportunities** in the game.
- **Empower** players, match officials, coaches and all our volunteers to achieve their **full potential**.

[Return to Contents](#)

ACCELERATING THE WOMEN'S GAME



THRIVING GRASSROOTS GAME

Driving a **club ethos and culture** that will accelerate the development of the women and girl's game through leadership, mentoring and recognition programmes.

Providing vibrant Club **competitions** at National and Provincial level.

Accelerating Schools and University programmes to create **more entry points** to the game.

Creating an attractive pathway for both male and **female** coaches/ match officials and volunteers in the women and girl's game.

WINNING TEAMS

Providing a platform for players to **compete** and **achieve success** on the world stage.

Delivering a thriving Provincial game, with a move towards **four contracted** Provincial teams, where we are competing in cross-border, season-long tournaments.

Offering clear and defined **Talent Identification** and **High-Performance Pathways** with access at multiple entry points for girls and women to get involved.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Appointing a **Strategy Implementation Lead** dedicated to the Women's Game, both on and off the pitch.

Working towards **40% female** Governance representation at Provincial and Club level.

Ensuring women are included as **key decision makers** in the Club.

Driving targeted **leadership development programmes** to support the current and the next generation of female leaders.

DRIVE IN INVESTMENT AND REVENUE

Increasing significantly direct investment in the women's game across the IRFU and the Provinces.

Building effective relationships with Sponsors, Donors and Government Agencies to drive investment in the women's game.

Driving close alignment with our **partners in broadcasting** on the Women's Game.

STEP CHANGE IN VISIBILITY AND ENGAGEMENT

Creating **dynamic marketing campaigns** with a view to lifting the profile of women in rugby and attracting new players, fans and investment partners.

Developing a strategy to engage with **current and new potential fans** of the women's game.



INSPIRING OUR FANS



OPTIMISE SPONSORSHIP AND BROADCASTING

Optimise sponsorship, broadcast deals and partnerships for maximum impact and growth both nationally and globally.

How will we achieve this:

Working with leagues and partners to deliver **brilliant broadcast experiences** for Irish fans. To secure **new revenue streams** by developing our brand globally and exploring new market opportunities.

EMPOWER OUR FANS

Empower our fans with unforgettable rugby experiences while maximising revenue through ticket sales, memberships and hospitality offerings.

How will we achieve this:

Continue to **maximise our fundamentals** (i.e. ticketing, sponsorship, hospitality and broadcasting).

Evolve and build our connection and relationship to reflect the needs of the modern fan and current Irish society.

INSPIRE, CONNECT AND ENGAGE

Inspire, connect and engage with our current loyal fans and the next generation of fans, through harnessing of innovation and technology.

How will we achieve this:

Create **new and exciting content**, available on new and existing platforms, and use ever-evolving products to **tell our stories** and engage our fans.

Develop an **outstanding digital experience** to underpin the fan connection.

Make **strategic decisions** informed by **research and data** to better understand, engage with, and serve our fans.

TV RATINGS IN 2023, SIX OF THE TEN TOP-RATED PROGRAMMES ON RTÉ, AND EIGHT OF THE TEN TOP-RATED PROGRAMMES ON VIRGIN MEDIA TV WERE ACHIEVED BY IRISH RUGBY, DURING THE RUGBY WORLD CUP.

OVER **3 MILLION** SOCIAL FOLLOWERS
+19% YOY IN 2023 | **122 MILLION** VIDEO VIEWS IN 2023

BEST PERFORMING PLATFORM FASTEST GROWING PLATFORM

FULL CONTACT (NETFLIX SIX NATIONS SHOW) WAS THE NUMBER ONE SHOW IN IRELAND ON NETFLIX FOR ITS LAUNCH WEEK AND THEN INTO THE START OF THE 2024 CHAMPIONSHIP

- [BACKGROUND](#)
- [INTRODUCTION](#)
- [WHERE WE ARE](#)
- [STRATEGY THROUGH CONSULTATION](#)
- [WHAT DID WE HEAR?](#)
- [THE HEADLINES](#)
- [OUR RUGBY VALUES](#)
- [WELFARE](#)
- [THE WAY FORWARD](#)
- [GREAT RUGBY EXPERIENCES](#)
- [HIGH PERFORMANCE AMBITION](#)
- [THE WOMEN'S GAME](#)
- [INSPIRING OUR FANS](#)
- [ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS](#)
- [PLAY YOUR PART](#)

ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS

1 LEADERSHIP AND PEOPLE

Outcome:
Living and promoting our core values and reflecting the diversity of Irish society.

- Outputs:**
- Embrace, recognise and celebrate the contribution that **volunteers and staff** make to our game.
 - Attract and retain top talent through **promotion and communication** of Irish Rugby.
 - Continue to achieve a diverse and inclusive workforce through promoting a culture of **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion** within Irish Rugby.
 - Foster a **people-first culture** focused on employee wellbeing, growth and collaboration.



2 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Outcome:
As a leading Irish Sport, we will use our position to promote environmental sustainability practices.

- Outputs:**
- Establish an advisory group to undertake an **Environmental Sustainability Review**, leading to an action plan with specific targets to cut carbon emissions, waste and other environmental impacts.
 - Become a signatory to **United Nations Sports for Climate Framework**.
 - Implement an **awareness and education programme** with volunteers and staff to ensure sustainability is embedded in our day-to-day operations and decision-making processes.
 - Continuously review the use of materials with objective of **reducing single-use products** and greater use of reusable products.



- [BACKGROUND](#)
- [INTRODUCTION](#)
- [WHERE WE ARE](#)
- [STRATEGY THROUGH CONSULTATION](#)
- [WHAT DID WE HEAR?](#)
- [THE HEADLINES](#)
- [OUR RUGBY VALUES](#)
- [WELFARE](#)
- [THE WAY FORWARD](#)
- [GREAT RUGBY EXPERIENCES](#)
- [HIGH PERFORMANCE AMBITION](#)
- [THE WOMEN'S GAME](#)
- [INSPIRING OUR FANS](#)
- [ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS](#)
- [PLAY YOUR PART](#)

ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS

3 GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

Outcome:
Provide leadership and governance structures that support the sustainability and the vision for Rugby in Ireland.

- Outputs:**
- Review and update governance models to reflect modern sports best practice to ensure that the IRFU and the Provincial branches can lead the game effectively at every level.
 - Investigate the future governance models for Irish Rugby, including benefits, opportunities and challenges of incorporation.
 - Deepen our relationship with **Government, Sport Ireland**, and other partners who support the vision of Irish Rugby.
 - In collaboration with **Rugby Players Ireland**, continue our commitment to holistic development of contracted players beyond the playing field.
 - Continue to evolve our **Data Protection programme** to ensure that the IRFU, Provinces and Clubs follow best practice in the management of personal data.



4 TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Outcome:
Foster a rugby organisation that is enabled by technology and data.

- Outputs:**
- Maintain and enhance a modern, resilient, user-friendly and secure **technology infrastructure** across Irish Rugby.
 - Prioritise investment in integrated technology systems to **streamline organisational processes**.
 - Foster a culture and capability for **leveraging data** and insights in growing participation, revenues and engagement.
 - Collaborate with our partners to **adopt new technologies** to support the ongoing development of Irish Rugby.
 - Research supporting **data-informed decision making** that enhances health and performance.
 - Develop an **Irish Rugby mobile app** to provide effective **channels for communication** with our participants, volunteers and fans.



5 SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL MODEL

Outcome:
Ensuring a sound financial base for Irish Rugby.

- Outputs:**
- Implement **changes to Funding Model** to deliver a simpler, more transparent, and equitable model ensuring better incentivisation and alignment.
 - Continue to **maintain financial sustainability** with prudent financial management, planning and practices.
 - Invest in **targeted technology infrastructure** to drive financial efficiency across Irish Rugby.



- [BACKGROUND](#)
- [INTRODUCTION](#)
- [WHERE WE ARE](#)
- [STRATEGY THROUGH CONSULTATION](#)
- [WHAT DID WE HEAR?](#)
- [THE HEADLINES](#)
- [OUR RUGBY VALUES](#)
- [WELFARE](#)
- [THE WAY FORWARD](#)
- [GREAT RUGBY EXPERIENCES](#)
- [HIGH PERFORMANCE AMBITION](#)
- [THE WOMEN'S GAME](#)
- [INSPIRING OUR FANS](#)
- [ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS](#)
- [PLAY YOUR PART](#)

PLAY YOUR PART

Whether you want to play, coach, referee or just support - there are lots of ways you can play your part in helping achieve the ambitions in this Strategic Plan.

To find your **local Rugby Club**: www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/club/

Interested in becoming a Coach? You can find details here: www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/coaching/

To learn more about **refereeing** or becoming a **match official** www.irishrugby.ie/playing-the-game/refereeing/

To join our **Supporters Club** click here: supporters.irishrugby.ie/

Our **past players** have a valuable role to play in Irish Rugby. Your experience and skills can assist the game at all levels, and we encourage you to stay in contact with your Clubs and Provinces, and to get involved in past player initiatives where you can.



If you are interested in becoming an **Irish Rugby sponsor** please contact our Chief Commercial Officer, Padraig Power padraig.power@irfu.ie

◀ Return to Contents

- [BACKGROUND](#)
- [INTRODUCTION](#)
- [WHERE WE ARE](#)
- [STRATEGY THROUGH CONSULTATION](#)
- [WHAT DID WE HEAR?](#)
- [THE HEADLINES](#)
- [OUR RUGBY VALUES](#)
- [WELFARE](#)
- [THE WAY FORWARD](#)
- [GREAT RUGBY EXPERIENCES](#)
- [HIGH PERFORMANCE AMBITION](#)
- [THE WOMEN'S GAME](#)
- [INSPIRING OUR FANS](#)
- [ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS](#)
- [PLAY YOUR PART](#)**

irishrugby.ie

Irish Rugby Football Union
10/12 Lansdowne Road, Dublin 4, Ireland
+353 (0) 1 647 3800

