

# Play. The Result





Every player who pulls on an England jersey began their rugby at a club or school. Whether you play rugby professionally or for fun, nothing beats the challenge and camaraderie of a great team sport. But for some social players finding a balance between family, work and club can be difficult and they drift away from the sport. There are thousands of them who just need a little help and encouragement to come and join clubs again. It's good for us as a sport and it's good for them as human beings.



ROB ANDREW  
RFU ELITE RUGBY DIRECTOR

**“Go Play Rugby is the single most important event in grassroots rugby in our lifetime. The game is thriving currently throughout England but this is our best chance to nourish the roots of the game to ensure a positive legacy for future generations to enjoy the game we love. With one year of concentrated effort we can lay the foundation for 100 years of rugby.”**



When I gave the quote on the opposite page I had no doubt about the importance of Go Play Rugby but very little certainty as to what we would achieve. I can now say, with absolute confidence, that Play (as it has become known) has outstripped every expectation I ever had.

From the initial pilot exercise, in Surrey, in 2006 to today much has happened. We have created and delivered not only a resoundingly successful campaign but, perhaps more importantly, also redefined what it is possible to achieve working together as a sport.

Play has demonstrated that it is possible for a diverse range of clubs and individuals to work together to achieve a collective goal. How have we achieved that? That is the question this book goes some way to answering. We have included information relating to all the major activities undertaken as part of Play as well as providing case studies and quotes from clubs across the country.

In the book you will find images, statistics and stories that help explain what Play involved and what Play has become. You will find the results of what we have achieved.

What you won't find is details of the everyday efforts; the phone calls, the letters, the impromptu meetings, working through the night to achieve deadlines, the ideas that never made it... the sheer hard graft from clubs, volunteers and everyone involved in the campaign. It is that hard graft that to me epitomises the spirit of Play and, ultimately, the spirit of rugby.

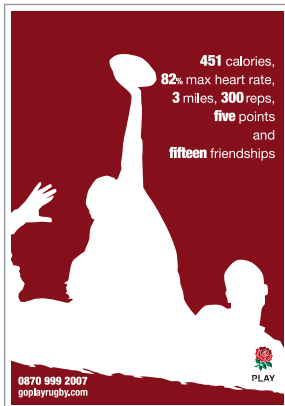


ANDREW SCoulAR  
COMMUNITY RUGBY DIRECTOR

To establish the best way of attracting players back to the game we tested a broad range of campaign styles, messages and mediums. This work was supported by focus groups and an online survey to enable us to refine the approach for the national campaign.

The purpose of the pilot was primarily to establish whether a national campaign was viable and if so what the most appropriate approach would be. Achieving a player uplift of 6.8% in an 11 week period confirmed that a national campaign had merit.

Thank you to all of the clubs in Surrey who gave a huge amount of time, energy and support to make the pilot campaign a success.



451 calories,  
82% max heart rate,  
3 miles, 300 reps,  
five points  
and  
fifteen friendships

0870 999 2007  
goplayrugby.com

PLAY



fitness...  
but with no fresh air,  
friendship, victory or craic

0870 999 2007  
goplayrugby.com

PLAY



**PUBLIC HEALTH NOTICE**  
ISSUED BY THE RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

# **INFECTIOUS OUTBREAK**



TRIED, TESTED AND FAILED  
WE FOUND WHAT WORKED AND WHAT DIDN'T



Passo

The success of the pilot campaign provided the RFU with the direction to plan and drive a national recruitment campaign.

The aim was to recruit 6,000 adult (17-30) players back into Rugby Union against the backdrop of the 2007/2008 World Cup Season.

A national campaign was developed that directly supported clubs with their recruitment activities and launched a national brand for Community Rugby. That brand was Play. It encapsulated the benefits and personality of the sport, reminding former players what rugby offers, what they are missing and how they could get back to the game.

ision



In July 2007 I attended the official launch of Go Play Rugby at the House of Commons. Despite the levels of research, planning and preparation we had undertaken the target of 6,000 players still seemed very ambitious. That we have achieved over 9,000 players is testament to the innovation, commitment and hard work of all those involved. It is an exceptional result.

The level of support we have received, for an initiative of this nature, is unprecedented; Rob Andrew and the England team featured in a broad range of promotional materials, hundreds of clubs up and down the country worked tirelessly to recruit players using the support and materials from the Play team, thousands of

volunteers helped deliver hundreds of rugby events and our own network of Rugby Development Officers helped co-ordinate these efforts. It was a significant undertaking that has yielded rich returns.

Finally I must extend my thanks to all our partners and sponsors without whom we could not have achieved such a tremendous result.



BOB TAYLOR  
RFU PRESIDENT

9

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8

365

**new players...**

**2,484** VO

8 week sp  
live rugby

**1.9** million

Involvement of 15 En

**200** press

**70,000** viral cam





**Volunteers**

**Sponsorship deal, showing  
in 20 major city cinemas**

**in viewers**

**England internationals**

**releases**

**campaign recipients**

PHOTOSHOOT  
PHASE ONE



A photoshoot to capture images for  
the campaign was held at Hillsbury  
College on 1st Oct 2007.

From the 600 photos taken, a  
selection process took place to  
choose the best for the campaign.



PHOTO SHOOT  
SELECTION PHASE



"Go Play Rugby will show former rugby players exactly what they are missing. Getting people excited again about sports is just as important as attracting fresh faces. Sport England wants to get two million people doing more sport by 2012. Initiatives like Go Play Rugby - which the National Sports Foundation is delighted to support - show that sports are becoming more savvy when attracting new participants."

JENNIE PRICE  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE, SPORT ENGLAND





Central to the success of the campaign was sufficient funding. We developed a sponsorship strategy that secured support from Chelsea Building Society, O2 and UCAS. The combined value of that support exceeded £400,000. With the additional support from the Rugby Football Foundation and the National Sports Foundation, Go Play Rugby became a one million pound programme.



The Play brand has already extended itself beyond that of a single recruitment campaign and is part of the everyday language in rugby circles.

“Chelsea Building Society is proud to be the official partner of Go Play Rugby. Our passion for success and outstanding performance are values closely linked to the RFU’s and we believe that with values so closely matched, our partnership with the RFU is a strong and successful one.”

RICHARD HORNBOOK  
CHELSEA BUILDING SOCIETY

O2 are extremely proud to have played a part in the huge success of the Go Play campaign. A healthy player base is crucial to the future success of the game, so supporting grass roots initiatives and enabling players to connect with rugby at all levels goes hand in hand with O2’s long commitment to England Rugby’s elite.

NIC FLETCHER  
O2









The final chosen images were used throughout the campaign. Posters and Postcards were included in the club recruitment materials. Over 1.7 million pieces of print were sent out to clubs and universities.

I'm back. Back on the pitch. Back on the team. I still have the passion.

# Play.

Visit [www.gopplayrugby.com](http://www.gopplayrugby.com) or text your postcode to 64411 to find your nearest club.



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**PLAY**    

Something missing. Something you've longed for since you stepped away. It's not unusual. It happens to us all. Through the seasons. The autumns. That great explosion of energy and being part of something that really matters, and everyone around you. Moments. The attraction of clubbing or travel. Making it seem so easy. But you're still missing it. You're missing the individual achievement and team purpose. The passion and the glamour. Oh the feel you get in the clubhouse. It's time to re-connect. To feel alive again.

## Feeling alive?


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nearest club.




ROYAL SOCIETY  
FOUNDATION





Play.



CASE STUDY  
CORSHAM RUGBY CLUB

Cross Club Campaign Team put in place a new website to co-ordinate the campaign:

- > Social events – South African BBO night, Curry nights and family days
- > Created welcome pack and 'Buddy System'
- > Incentives – £5 off subs per player introduced
- > Contacted all ex-players
- > Mail and poster campaign, plus stalls in local market and town fete
- > Radio interviews
- > 42 new players (over 50% uplift)
- > 3rd team available every week
- > 25 new players into youth section as by-product
- > Sponsor interest increased
- > Word of mouth increased visitors
- > Not cancelled a single fixture
- > All stakeholders feel 'ownership'
- > Retention issues already being addressed

- > Identify 10 local pubs
- > Allocate 3 current members to each to help organise a team
- > 6 week league moving around pub venues
- > Win – Win. Pubs sell more beer and club recruits players
- > Established women's and colts team and 2nd team available each week
- > Women's team coach recruited
- > Raised profile of club in the area
- > School leavers reintroduced to the game
- > Transfer of players from football
- > More families involved with the club

**Tying up my boots and taping up. The clatter of studs. Tension. Anticipation. I know what's coming. We all do. But it still stirs me, like it's always done. I'm part of something that matters, that everyone around me treasures. Why does it mean so much? Maybe it's that great explosion of energy and adrenalin. The thrill of contact and scrambling for possession. A killer tackle. The feeling when it all comes together. Or a pint with your mates in the clubhouse. One thing I do know. I couldn't live without it.**

**Can you?**



CASE STUDY  
NORTHAMPTON

- > 250,000 visitors at Northampton Balloon Festival
- > 30 volunteers from 7 Northampton clubs working together at the event
- > 5 Tag demos a day using club members and festival attendees
- > Music and live commentary
- > Club information and data capture leaflet produced for all 7 clubs.
- > 7 display boards developed by the clubs
- > 18 players recruited
- > Much improved profile for the clubs and the game







**ELITE ENDORSEMENT**  
ROB ANDREW AND WILL GREENWOOD INTERVIEWED AT TWICKENHAM



#### CAMPAIGN INVOLVEMENT

**715 clubs** (target 600),  
**106 universities** (target 0),  
**34 colleges** (target 0), and  
**2,484 volunteers** were all  
involved in the campaign.

#### WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

- > All **715 participating clubs** have received training and support
- > Workshop programmes developed for the CB and club network
- > **2,332 people** have attended **143 workshops** to date

#### PLAYING EVENTS

- > Together with Leisure Rugby events there have been over **309 playing events** since the launch
- > **26,241 attendees** over all events
- > Tag, Touch, 7's, Floodlit Forties, Pub Crawls, Beach Rugby, Family Fun days

#### EQUIPPING THE CLUBS

- > **1,680 resource boxes** have been sent out to 715 clubs and 130 universities and colleges
- > In total over **1.7 million** items were printed and sent to clubs
- > A dedicated club and public website for recruitment
- > **17,540 enquiries** to find clubs via an online postcode search
- > **11,210 individual enquiries** to date to a dedicated text number to find nearest clubs

#### PR AND ELITE ENDORSEMENT

- > Involvement from **Will Greenwood, Mike Tindall, James Simpson-Daniel, Jill Douglas** and **Rob Andrew**
- > Also key interviews with all England players for radio, TV, cinema and online
- > Media launches at the House of Commons and Bath University

## MEDIA ACTIVITY

RADIO, INTERNET, TV AND PRESS

### RADIO

- > **19 hours of live** and recorded **interviews** on almost 400 radio stations, including Talk Sport, BBC Radio 5 Live and BBC Radio 1
- > **120 radio competitions** run on local radio
- > **42 million listeners** and 45 hours coverage in total

### ONLINE

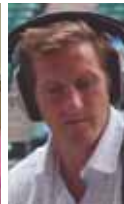
- > **45 online competitions**
- > Online coverage of Will Greenwood interviews (web TV) **32 sites**

### TELEVISION

- > Sky Sports News, Channel 4 and ITV (national and local) news coverage total **16 stations** and 36 minutes

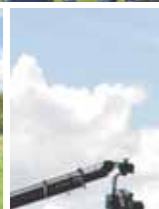
### PRESS

- > **165 regional press packs** sent to newspapers
- > **200 press releases** went to national and lifestyle media
- > PR pieces run in The Guardian, Telegraph, The Times, The Daily Mail, Metro, The Independent, GQ, Radio Times and many regional press titles



CINEMA ADVERT  
FILMshoot





CINEMA CAMPAIGN  
FINAL ADVERT STILLS











- > **8 week sponsorship deal** to show live rugby in **20 major city cinemas**
- > **5 minute show reel** each game – the only advertiser
- > **30 second advert** at each location 2 weeks prior to the first game
- > Foyer presence throughout with **3 metre tall stands**
- > Over **100,000 people saw a match** at one of the locations
- > **2 week campaign in 361 screens** nation wide around the **Bourne Ultimatum** box office smash
- > Reached our key target audience
- > Admissions were **33%** higher than estimated
- > **1.9 million** people in cinemas
- > Press releases about the advert and campaign featured in regional press



MEDIA ACTIVITY  
INTERNET, VIRALS AND RETAIL

TV.COM

- > A microsite of Play content went live on [www.itv.com/rugby](http://www.itv.com/rugby) the week leading up to the final
- > Play featured as part of the navigation across the top of the home page
- > The ITV site received over 12 million page impressions and the Play microsite had just under **750,000 visitors**

VIRAL MARKETING ACTIVITIES

- > The longest pass viral ran through yougofurther (UCAS) and other online networks (itv.com and odeon.co.uk)
- > Emails promoting the viral were sent directly to **70,000 students** and England Rugby Supporters Club members
- > **15 England internationals** were involved in the pass

O2 STORES

- > **375 stores** involved across the UK
- > Staff wore branded clothing
- > In-store marketing collateral







Play would not have been a success without the dedication and support of clubs and volunteers. Thousands of people gave their time, energy and enthusiasm to ensure that the campaign was constantly alive and innovative across the country. Thank you to everyone who made this campaign thrive on the ground.

Clubs now have the chance to win a training day with the England elite team at Twickenham, thanks to O2. This unique prize will be awarded to those who can show the most connections made in their community during the campaign.

We are delighted to have been shortlisted for the 2008 Sport Industry Awards for Best Promotion of a Sport by a Governing Body.



The text 'Thank you' is rendered in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. The letters are filled with a collage of images: the 'T' shows a person's arm; the 'h' shows a person's face; the 'a' shows a person's face; the 'n' shows a person's hand; the 'k' shows a person's hand; the 'y' shows a person's hand; the 'o' shows a person's hand; the 'u' shows a person's hand; and the final 'u' shows a person's hand. The background of the collage is a mix of green grass and people's hands and faces.

**Thank  
you**

**A big thank you to all of our sponsors and supporters.**





It's one thing getting people to play rugby and quite another to keep them playing. So, as well as continuing with our recruitment efforts we will concentrate next year on retention.

Plans are already well underway to extend Play into 'Play On'. In addition to keeping our recent new recruits Play On will focus on areas where, historically, players have drifted away from rugby. The moves from school to sixth form to university will all be targeted to ensure we keep as many players in the game as possible.

Building on Play we are creating a network of 1,300 'pathfinders' who will help current players stay in the game as they move around the country. This will be supported by the existing Play infrastructure and promoted by targeted awareness campaigns. We have succeeded in achieving our recruitment goals. An even greater achievement will be to keep teenagers playing the sport into full adulthood. This will be good for the players, good for rugby and good for society as a whole.

Play On...

