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A NEW OPPORTUNITY

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

2013

HOSTING THE BEST
WORLD CUP EVER

The final sentence of last year's Chairman's report was "I believe that 2009 will undoubtedly bring new challenges, but we will all face these challenges together and continue the work of progressing the sport we all love", and certainly the year has lived up to those predictions. Rugby League generally and the RFL specifically has not been immune from the economic chill that has affected the wider financial environment, as disposable income available to spend on sport and leisure activity has undoubtedly been restricted. Accordingly, it is particularly pleasing that the RFL has been financially resilient through what has proven to be a difficult year, thanks mainly to decisions taken in 2008 and earlier and the long-term nature of our relationships with key stakeholders such as broadcast partners and sponsors.

Also in the year it was pleasing to see the RFL's excellent community development and participation programme recognised by Sport England with an increased level of funding for the period 2009-2013.

The financial climate in which our professional clubs have operated has been as testing as we have experienced over the recent past. And it has resulted in a large amount of Executive time that has been expended in supporting some clubs in navigating these particularly hazardous financial waters. It is clear that the challenges facing the sport, indeed all leisure sports, continue into 2010 and once again the RFL will pride itself on working with the clubs as supportively as possible during these times.

The community game continues to go from strength to strength with new clubs entering the Rugby League Conference for the 2010 season. I am confident that the sport's very challenging participation targets over the next four years will be delivered by the RFL's development and coaching workforce and I am particularly pleased that this area of activity will be led by David Gent, who joined the RFL in September 2009.

Internationally, the England national team performed credibly in the inaugural Gillette Four Nations competition, reaching the Final in what proved to be Tony Smith's last act as National Coach. Tony is of course not lost to the British game, returning to club coaching with Warrington and has already achieved some success in this regard.

Also in 2009, the RFL was awarded the right to host the 2013 World Cup and this is a task that the British game will tackle with relish. Already plans for this event are well advanced and now centre on a 14 team tournament played in the Autumn of 2013, providing 28 compelling fixtures across 37 days. As planning continues to develop for this tournament, the RFL will ensure that the legacy of staging such a prestigious event will be felt by all the communities within Rugby League - the professional clubs, community clubs, supporters, viewers and volunteers.

As noted in last year's report, in February 2009 I was appointed Chair of Sport England. Although clearly an individual responsibility in nature, this appointment is a positive commendation for the sport of Rugby League and the progress that the RFL and the wider sport generally have enjoyed over the past few years. As part of this role I will also ex-officio be a member of the UK Sport Board.

Could I close by once again thanking everyone involved with Rugby League for their continued efforts, particularly at this time, to promote our great sport.

Richard Lewis
Chairman

RAISING STANDARDS ACROSS THE GAME

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S STATEMENT

With the well publicised economic situation, it comes as no surprise that 2009 proved to be a difficult year. It is therefore especially pleasing to record that the RFL has delivered a profit before tax for the eighth consecutive year. Further, and perhaps of more significance, I am delighted to report that the organisation's turnover for the year was at its highest ever levels and that, as a consequence, distributions to clubs and around the wider game reached unprecedented levels, which was of particular benefit given the wider economic circumstances.

The adverse economic environment has certainly hampered the efforts of RFL member clubs and it has been a feature of the year that the Governing Body has spent considerably more time assisting and, where necessary, positively intervening on behalf of its stakeholders. Certainly Rugby League has felt the impact, with spectators having less disposable income to spend, and particularly in the corporate hospitality and sponsorship markets. Whilst reductions in external income levels have undoubtedly been felt, these have been partly compensated by the increase in central monies being made available to clubs as discussed in more detail in the Financial Review. To assist clubs the RFL also extended its dedicated Club Support Team to focus on areas such as marketing, lottery and club finances.

For the third year the Carnegie Challenge Cup took place at the new Wembley Stadium. The crowd whilst down on previous years was still an impressive 76,560 (2008: 82,821), and the game did not disappoint with Huddersfield and Warrington contesting a compelling final before the Cheshire side prevailed to lift the trophy for the first time since 1974, with a score of 25-16. The Carnegie Challenge Cup at Wembley continues to be an iconic event in the UK sporting calendar, supported by the game at large and enjoyed in full in the impressive new surroundings at this venue that has been home to the final since 1929. The competition itself enjoyed a resurgence in interest with the draw providing compelling fixtures at every round, particularly in the nine televised contests, producing Rugby League drama at its best.

In addition, a number of initiatives were rolled out in the early rounds of the Carnegie Challenge Cup competition to maximise attendances. These initiatives were largely successful, with the Fourth Round in particular seeing a dramatic increase of 69% in cumulative attendance.

The Engage Super League competition yet again delivered Rugby League of the highest quality, as the competition was contested by an expanded league of fourteen clubs for the first time since 1999. Champions Leeds Rhinos, who recorded an unprecedented third consecutive title, fought their way through a new and innovative eight team Play-Off featuring "Club Call" at the semi-final stage, an initiative that attracted widespread positive comment.

These fourteen member clubs were selected by a thorough licensing and evaluation system and each has been issued with a three year licence to participate for the seasons 2009, 2010 and 2011. Whilst still in its infancy, the licensing system has already provided evidence of delivering against its objectives, with a perceptible increase in the number of home produced young athletes being delivered by clubs and improvements across the board in many club facilities. More needs to be done in these areas, as does our objective to further stabilise the financial climate in which Super League clubs operate, which remain priorities going forward.

Innovation was once again evident in the Co-operative Championship competition in 2009, which delivered arguably the most intense competition for many years. French side Toulouse Olympique were admitted to the league and performed commendably despite early setbacks, eventually winning nine out of twenty games. The competition was of such intensity that despite finishing tenth Toulouse were only 14 points behind league leaders Barrow at the end of the regular season. Similarly Championship One produced thrilling Rugby League with Dewsbury proving far too strong for the other clubs going through the league season undefeated – the first time a club side has achieved such a feat since Hull FC in 1979.



14

LICENCES AWARDED TO SUPER LEAGUE CLUBS

Congratulations are also due to Widnes Vikings who lifted the Northern Rail Cup, beating Barrow Raiders 34-18 in a fiercely contested match in front of a large crowd at Bloomfield Road. Finally, mention should be made of Blackpool Panthers who lifted the inaugural Northern Rail 9s trophy and in so doing claimed their first silverware in the club's history.

The Co-operative Championships once again benefited from the excellent coverage of Sky Television on Thursday evenings, with virtually all selected games producing high quality contests. The spread of clubs covered was at its greatest level seen to date and included York City Knights, London Skolars and Keighley Cougars making their first ever TV appearance in the modern era. The expansion of the Co-operative Championships will continue in 2010 with South Wales Scorpions joining the Co-operative Championship One clubs.

The inaugural Gillette Four Nations tournament between England, Australia, New Zealand and France took place in the UK in October and November. The tournament was widely perceived to be an outstanding success with some compelling group matches including two staged in France. The England versus Australia final at Elland Road, Leeds delivered a thrilling contest for the first hour before Australia

pulled away to claim a well deserved win. The work carried out by Tony Smith and the Performance Department over the year to strengthen the support of the England team certainly showed, and a good base was laid for the new coach Steve McNamara to build on in 2010 and beyond.

The RFL's commercial performance was stronger than ever in 2009. The new three year broadcast contracts with Sky and the BBC started in 2009 and were at much higher levels than ever before as discussed in more detail in the Financial Review. The portfolio of sponsors and partners was enhanced for 2009 with the Four Nations partners of Gillette, Valvoline, The Co-operative and World Sports coming on board. A number of existing contracts have been signed up for a number of years, providing some stability for the organisation – Leeds Met's sponsorship of the Challenge Cup for example runs until the end of 2012.

2009 was also the first year of the new grant from Sport England to increase participation in the sport. This funding covers a four year period ending in March 2013, so we are still in the early stages of delivering the project. However early results are encouraging, and are providing a solid foundation to build on. It is important to note, as I did in the 2008 Financial Review, that public monies assist the sport on a much larger scale than just the funding that flows through the RFL. Many of our member clubs, both professional and amateur, are able to take advantage of numerous initiatives and schemes to improve both participation and facilities for participants.

Community Game Services continues to provide a valuable and important service to the whole of the community game, to BARLA, Combined Services, Conference leagues, Schools and Students. It is vital that the RFL through Community Game Services communicates efficiently and effectively with the grass roots of the sport and ensures that participation levels continue to rise.

In addition to the support from Sport England, the RFL also assists the sport with facility developments and grass roots activities through donations made to the RFL Facilities Trust and the Rugby League Foundation. During the year charitable donations to the RFL Facilities Trust amounted to £400k

(2008: £190k). This Trust was created to assist clubs with improving their facilities by the giving of loans and grants. Charitable donations to the RFL Foundation also increased to £35k from £25k in 2008. The Foundation's objective is to assist in the improvement of facilities for children and young adults playing Rugby League.

One key component of an organisation's ability to remain profitable is its ability to control costs. The RFL is constantly reviewing and monitoring central operating costs to ensure that they are controlled. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure that all staff keep costs at as low a level as possible. The economic situation seen elsewhere in the economy has affected the RFL and it has taken careful management of costs to ensure that the impact of the downturn has not been more damaging than could have occurred.

After protracted negotiations, it is pleasing to announce that the freehold of Red Hall has finally been obtained at a favourable rate, which will strengthen the balance sheet in the longer term.

Summary

The RFL set itself a vision of being recognised throughout the world as a leading Governing Body of sport. Work continues to realise this vision, and I believe we will achieve our aim. It is important to note, as I did last year, that the RFL's values of Fair, Care, Share and Dare apply to the governing body as well as its staff, and it is by living up to these values that we will continue to improve.

I started this statement by stating that 2009 was always going to be a difficult year. I believe that it is because of the hard work and efforts of all concerned in the sport: the players, coaches, club officials, volunteers and spectators and finally the RFL's staff and management, that the sport continues to thrive and prosper. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved for their hard work during the year.

Nigel Wood
Chief Executive Officer

OUR KEY PLAYERS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board of Directors

All non-executive directors are subject to election by the RFL Council at the first opportunity after their appointment, and to re-election at regular intervals and at least every three years. Non-executive directors retire by rotation and may offer themselves for immediate re-election. There were no changes to the members of the Board during the year, although as noted in the Chairman's Statement Richard Lewis was appointed the Chair of Sport England during the year and consequently now shares his time between the RFL and Sport England.

The Board undertakes a formal and rigorous annual evaluation of its own performance and that of its committees and individual directors. This includes a review of whether each director continues to contribute effectively and demonstrate a commitment to the role (including commitment of time for Board and committee meetings and any other duties). The evaluation process is used constructively as a mechanism to improve Board effectiveness, maximise strengths and address areas of improvement.

Day to day management of the RFL is delegated to the management team under the leadership of the Chief Executive Officer. The Board of Directors receive written reports from every member of the senior management team at each Board meeting and may also request updates or attendance at Board meetings from an individual departmental manager if there are significant issues to discuss in a particular area.

Management of the business is organised through four areas:- Commercial, Compliance & Regulatory, On-Field Management and Participation, together with Central Services, which provides support to all areas.

Work on the strategic plans for the sport was continued in 2009, providing a road map for Rugby League over the next few years. These plans cover distinct areas of activity: the elite full time competition, the semi-professional national competition, the community game and the international game. Over the next few years performance against these strategic plans will be closely monitored.

Board committees

The Board has established three specific committees, each with defined terms of reference. Minutes of the meetings are circulated to and reviewed by the Board.

The Audit Committee

This consists of the three non-executive directors and the Chief Executive Officer. This Committee is chaired by Bob Stott, and whilst it will meet twice in 2010 it normally meets once a year with representatives of the external auditors and is attended by the Director of Finance and Central Services when required. The Audit Committee will consider the Annual Report and Accounts before submission to RFL Council for approval and review accounting practices to ensure compliance with accounting standards. In addition it will appoint the external auditors, give consideration to the scope of past and future audits, deal with matters arising from the audit and review internal control procedures. All non-audit services provided by the Group's auditors are considered by the Chairman and the Chief Executive Officer and are reviewed by the Audit Committee where expenditure is above a set limit for this type of work.

The Remuneration Committee

The Board of Directors feel it is important to benchmark key staff against other businesses of similar size and against other sports governing bodies. To this end, the Remuneration Committee meets as appropriate under the chairmanship of Maurice Watkins and also comprises Clare Morrow and Bob Stott. The Committee determines the terms and conditions of employment for executive directors and agrees the level of remuneration for senior managers whose earnings are in excess of the committee's prescribed limit.

The Nominations Committee

The RFL believes that there should be a formal and transparent procedure for appointing new members to the Board of Directors. To this end the Board established a Nominations Committee which will lead the process for board appointments. This Committee is chaired by Richard Lewis and includes Bob Stott, Clare Morrow and Maurice Watkins. The Committee is responsible for nominating candidates to fill board vacancies for the approval of the Board as and when they arise. Before considering any appointment, the balance of skills, knowledge and experience on the Board is evaluated and, in the light of this evaluation, a description of the role and capabilities required for a particular appointment is prepared. In addition full consideration is given to succession planning in the course of its work, taking into account the challenges and opportunities facing the company and what skills and expertise are therefore needed on the Board in the future as well as regularly reviewing the structure, size and composition (including skills, knowledge and experience) of the Board and making recommendations to the Board with regard to any changes.



Directors from left to right:
Clare Morrow, Nigel Wood, Bob Stott, Maurice Watkins and Richard Lewis.

Richard Lewis - Chairman

Richard joined the RFL in 2002, since when the organisation has grown to become widely acknowledged as one of the most efficient and professionally managed governing bodies in the country.

In the last eight years Richard has overseen the successful unification of a sport which enjoys record levels of sponsorship, spectators, television viewers and is played by more people than ever before.

As well as leading on television negotiations with broadcasters, Richard chairs the Rugby League Council, RFL Board, Engage Super League and Co-operative Championship club forums and the Rugby League Community Board.

In 2009, Richard was appointed Chairman of Sport England, a role he successfully combines with his position at the RFL and his roles as Vice-Chairman of the Rugby League International Federation and Chairman of the Rugby League European Federation.

Prior to his career in Rugby League, Richard was a Davis Cup player and international tennis coach of Grand Slam champions who worked at the Lawn Tennis Association from 1988 to 2000. In 1996 Richard was Team Manager when Great Britain won a silver medal at the Atlanta Olympics.

Nigel Wood - Chief Executive Officer

Appointed Chief Executive of the RFL in October 2007 after six years as Finance Director and Chief Operating Officer, Nigel has led the organisation's financial recovery which resulted in the incorporation in 2006 as well as consecutive years of profitable trading.

At international level, Nigel is a Director of Rugby League's European Federation. In addition to this he serves as a trustee of the RFL Facilities Trust and the Rugby League National Museum, Heritage and Arts Foundation.

Before joining the RFL, Nigel was Chief Executive of Halifax RLFC during their time in Super League. He had previously enjoyed a long career playing and administrating in grass roots Rugby League.

Prior to this he worked as Deputy Head of Finance for BBC North.

Maurice Watkins - Non-Executive Director

As a senior partner at Brabner Chaffe Street, a successful law firm based in Manchester, Maurice is one of the most prominent lawyers in sport. A Director of the world's biggest football club, Manchester United FC, he also holds a number of high-profile positions in football both at home and abroad. He is a Director of the British Association for Sport and Law, a member of the FA Premier League Legal Advisory Group, Regional Chairman for Coultts Bank, Chairman of the Greyhound Board for Great Britain, and Chairman of Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Charity.

Bob Stott - Non-Executive Director

Bob has extensive experience in the highly competitive supermarket industry including 20 years at Director level with Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc including a successful period as the organisation's Chief Executive. Bob is currently a Non-Executive Director on the Boards of Leeds Building Society, the Greyhound Board for Great Britain and Frank Roberts & Sons Ltd.

Bob brings a wealth of experience to the RFL having enjoyed a track record of success and delivery in an organisation where cost control was of paramount importance. He also boasts strong commercial skills and significant experience on various Board committees, as well as being a keen follower of many sports.

Clare Morrow - Non-Executive Director

Clare is currently Chair of the tourism marketing agency Welcome to Yorkshire. She previously spent 15 years at ITV Yorkshire, where she was Controller of News and Regional Programmes. During her time at ITV, Clare also held the position of Head of Sport for a time and was responsible for Yorkshire Television's Rugby League output for many years. This included the creation, development and production of the Rugby League Raw series of programmes which won several national Royal Television Society sports awards.

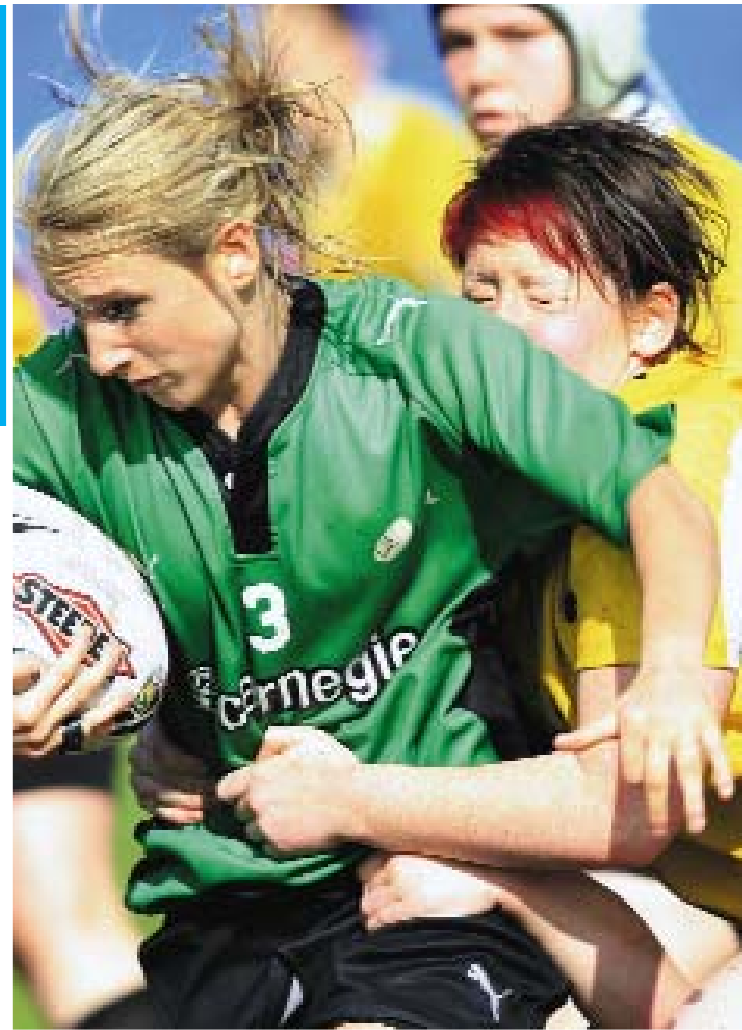
Clare is a non executive director of the Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and Network Manager of the Broadcasting and Creative Industries Disability Network. She is also a trustee and school governor at Hollybank School in Mirfield.

THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

RFL KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2009

£7.9M

HIGHEST PAYMENT TO CLUBS EVER



429

SCHOOLS HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE
CARNEGIE CHAMPION SCHOOLS TOURNAMENT



46,000

REGISTERED RUGBY LEAGUE PARTICIPANTS



250,000

PEOPLE PLAYING RUGBY LEAGUE

8TH

CONSECUTIVE YEAR ENGAGE SUPER LEAGUE
CROWDS HAVE INCREASED

£21.9M

HIGHEST TURNOVER EVER

674

NEW COACHES HAVE BEEN RECRUITED AND
TRAINED AT LEVEL 1 AND 2

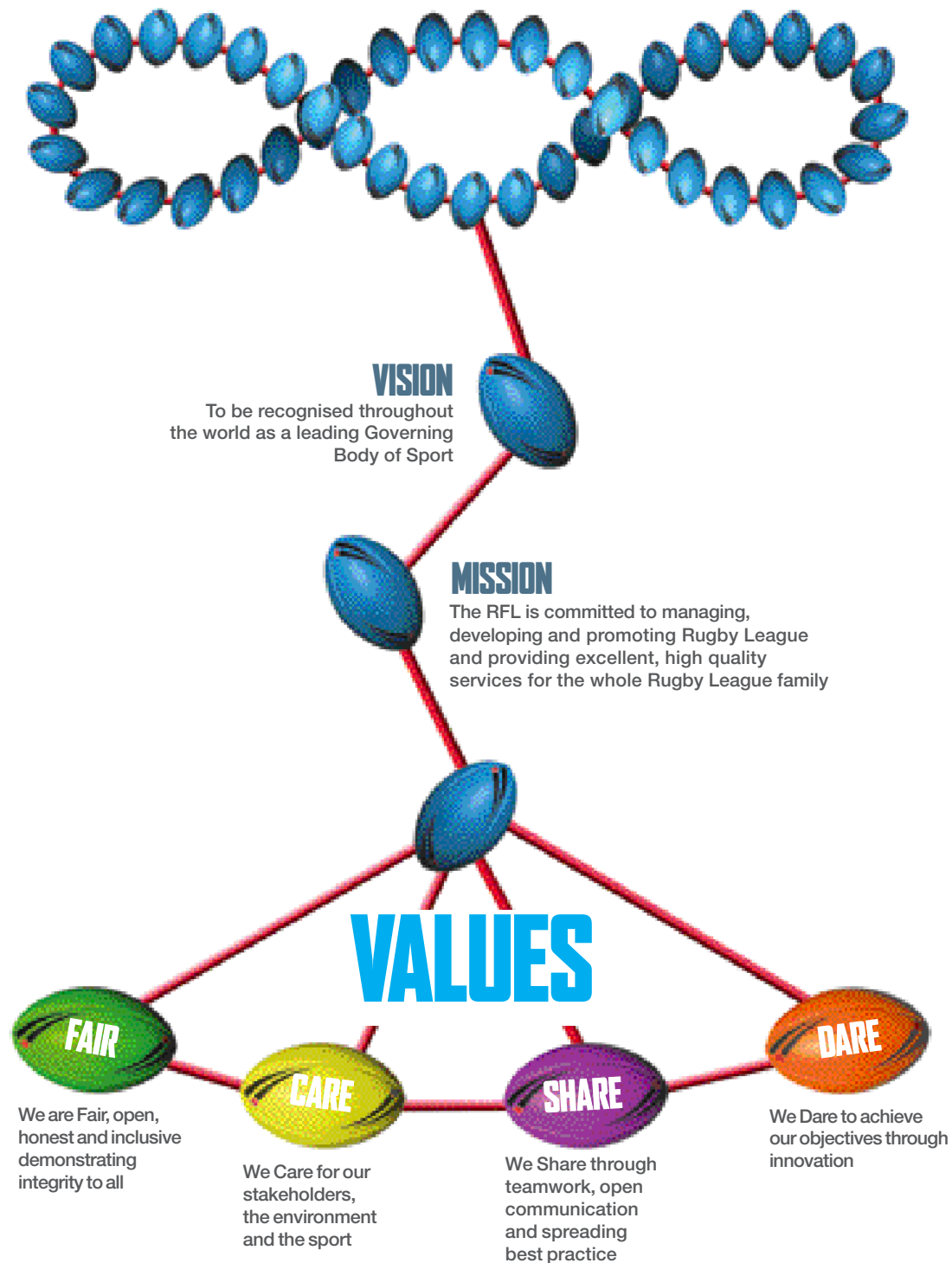
29

CO-OPERATIVE CHAMPIONSHIPS
GAMES TELEVISED LIVE ON SKY



DNA OF THE RFL

OUR MISSION AND VALUES



DEVELOPING OUR PEOPLE SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES

OUR MISSION AND VALUES

114

PAYMENTS TOTTALLING **£146,385** MADE ON BEHALF OF BENEFICIARIES OF THE BENEVOLENT FUND

Our People

Our people are at the heart of everything we do. Without their commitment, professionalism and expertise in delivering customer service excellence, we would be unable to achieve our goals. They're fundamental in helping us maintain our high standards. So much so, we're committed to providing ongoing investment in their learning and development. We fully support all opportunities for employment and career progression, irrespective of age, ethnicity, gender, disability or religion, through our equality and diversity action plan.

In 2008, we developed with our employees, the RFL's core values. Since then, we've been working together to deliver our shared values and principles. These can be summarised under four key headings:

Fair - We're open, honest and inclusive; demonstrating integrity to all.

Care - We care for our stakeholders, the environment and the sport.

Share - We share through teamwork, open communication, and spreading best practice.

Dare - We dare to achieve our objectives through innovation.

We believe that by demonstrating consistency in our values we'll ensure that the RFL is delivering the best service to all its stakeholders, whilst being an employer of choice.

Our Communities

As a leading National Sports Governing Body we are also committed to transforming our local communities - it's our social responsibility. This can be achieved through cash donations, support for volunteering, environmentally friendly practices and investment in our people. Sports related charities we already support include the RFL Benevolent Fund, the RFL Facilities Trust, the Rugby League Foundation and the Rugby League Heritage Trust. Below are a few examples of how we helped over the last year.

The RFL Benevolent Fund continue to award a number of grants to help the rehabilitation of recently injured players, or to enhance the life of those for whom rehabilitation is no longer an option.

In 2009, 114 separate payments totalling £146,385 were made to, or on behalf of beneficiaries of the Benevolent Fund, compared with 97 totalling £148,770 in 2008.

The Rugby League Foundation also made grants to beneficiaries throughout the year, principally to assist with Community Coaches. In all, 15 separate payments totalling £54,109 were made, compared with 21 totalling £69,990 in 2008.

The RFL Facilities Trust was established to assist clubs with improving their facilities through the awarding of grants or loans. The Trust is in its infancy, but has already assisted one club by providing £12,830 in funding, and is in discussions with other clubs about future distributions.

This is just a selection of the support we've given recently, we have much more being planned for the future. Watch this space.







BUILDING NATIONAL PRIDE

ENGLAND/GILLETTE FOUR NATIONS

44

COUNTRIES BROADCAST
THE GILLETTE FOUR NATIONS

After the disappointment of the 2008 World Cup, 2009 was a much more positive year for England. The inaugural Gillette Four Nations, which took place in England and France during October and November, proved a great success with matches being broadcast by both Sky Sports and the BBC in the UK and televised to over 40 countries worldwide.

In preparation for the tournament, England played two internationals. The first was against France at Stade Jean Bouin in Paris in June, in a match which saw a new-look England team cruise to a 66-12 victory. In their second outing they defeated Wales 48-12 at Brewery Field, Bridgend.

England opened the Four Nations tournament with a 34-12 victory over France at the Keepmoat Stadium in Doncaster where a crowd of 11,529 saw France take a 12-4 half-time lead before Tony Smith's side stormed back with an impressive second half performance.

In their second match the home nation faced Australia at Wigan's DW Stadium and produced a magnificent second half fightback, rattling up 16 points without reply. It wasn't quite enough to overhaul a first half deficit of 26 points but there were encouraging signs in their performance.

In fact, England carried on where they left off in that match when they took on New Zealand at the Galpharm Stadium, Huddersfield. They beat the World Champions 20-12 to set up another meeting with Australia in the final at Elland Road, Leeds. For over 60 minutes of a pulsating contest, in front of over 31,000 fans, there was little to choose between the sides. But an injury to Castleford centre Michael Shenton, who was knocked out in a heavy tackle, drained England's momentum. Three late tries from Australia gave them a 46-16 victory, a scoreline which was not a true reflection of how competitive England had been for the majority of the game.

This proved to be Tony Smith's last game in charge with England. The day after the final, Smith announced he would not be seeking a contract extension because of his desire to focus on his club commitments with Warrington Wolves.

The England Women's team recorded a resounding 2-0 Test series triumph over France, winning 36-0 and 22-8 against their hosts.

A disappointing season for England Students saw them defeated by both their Welsh and Irish counterparts at the SRL Four Nations Championships in April. However, head coach Gareth Pratt was upbeat, stating that he'd selected a very young squad with an eye on the 2012 Universities World Cup.

England Women Students played just one game and were narrowly beaten 10-8 by their French counterparts. The England Wheelchair team, reigning World champions, lost their only game of 2009 going down 38-36 against France in a thrilling contest at Uxbridge University in August.



A BIGGER FINISH

ENGAGE SUPER LEAGUE

1,731,466

AGGREGATE SUPER LEAGUE CROWD

Engage Super League broke new ground in 2009 with an eight-team Play-Off at the end of a season which saw the competition expand to 14 clubs. This included a presence in Wales for the first time with Celtic Crusaders' inclusion in the sport's elite competition. The 27 rounds of Engage Super League XIV attracted an aggregate crowd of 1,731,466 with two clubs, Catalans Dragons and St Helens, posting record average attendances.

After two years in Cardiff, The Magic Weekend moved from Wales to Scotland, where Edinburgh proved a popular destination for Rugby League supporters. Over the weekend of May 2 and 3, the 14 Engage Super League teams battled it out at Murrayfield, producing some enthralling Rugby League in front of 59,749 people. The Magic Weekend wasn't just about the elite clubs, however, because the Engage Super League Fanzone and back pitches buzzed with skill challenges and Masters Rugby League matches as supporters turned out to sample a carnival Rugby League atmosphere.

Scotland's performance in the 2008 World Cup did a lot to raise awareness of Super League north of the border and The Magic Weekend gave the local development team something more to build on. After the event, Scotland registered the highest ever level of participation in the sport with almost 1,000 players registered, and more than 3,000 children being coached by community officers.

The Engage Super League season built to another exciting climax with Leeds Rhinos taking the League Leaders Shield. They then beat St Helens in the Grand Final at Old Trafford to become the first team to win the trophy in three consecutive years.

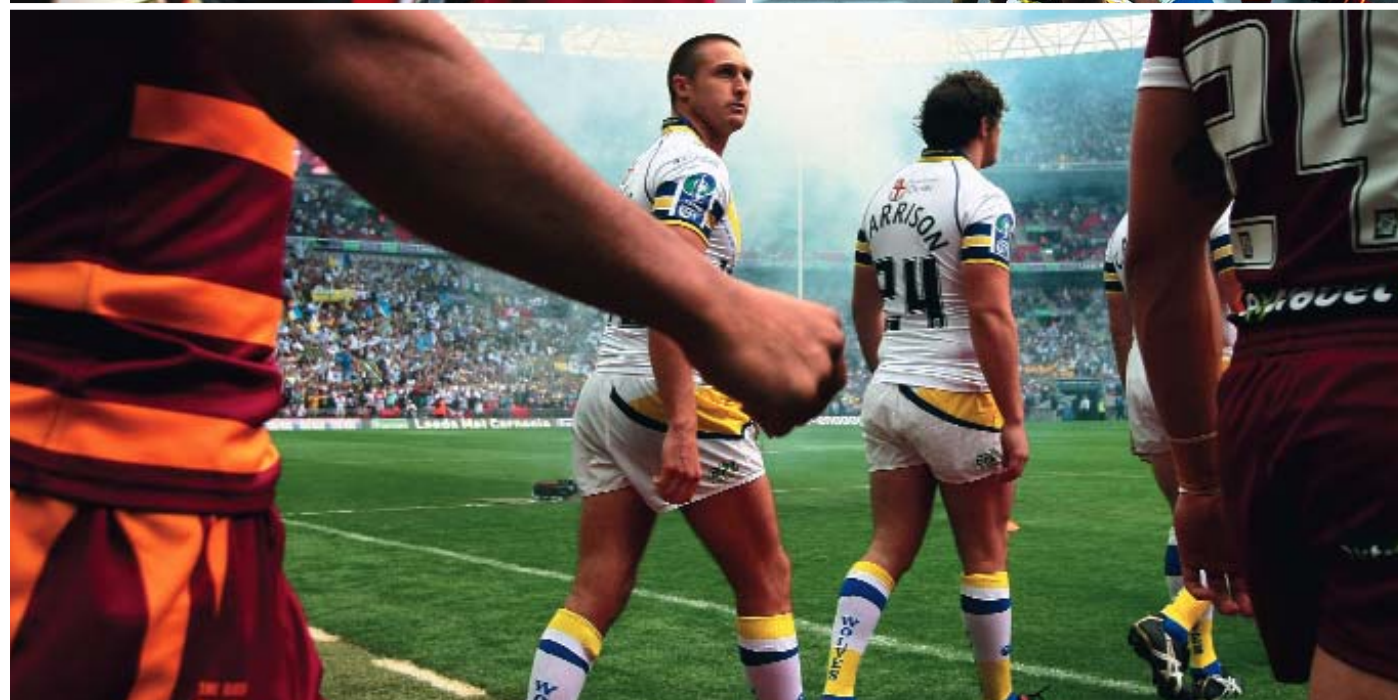
The newly-expanded Play-Off system proved a winner too. The race to get into the top eight threw up some enthralling contests and gave added meaning and significance to every match in Round 27. The surprise packages turned out to be Catalans Dragons who, after an indifferent start to the season, not only made the Play-Offs but came within one game of reaching Old Trafford. Catalans also held the distinction of becoming the first club to be chosen by their rivals, Leeds, as Play-Off opponents under the new Club Call system, an initiative which generated

worldwide media interest and added another exciting dimension to the Engage Super League season.

The effect of having no automatic promotion and relegation had quite an effect on the teams in the lower half of the table. With the threat of relegation removed they relied less on overseas players, preferring to invest in the future by bleeding their own youngsters.

Celtic Crusaders struggled in their first season in the top flight and were threatened with extinction. However, a late rescue effort saw them relocate to Wrexham in North Wales at the end of the year. The Welsh club recruited a top class coaching team in Brian Noble, Jon Sharp and Iestyn Harris and managed to assemble a competitive squad in time for the start of the 2010 season.

The average attendance for an Engage Super League game in 2009, rose for an eighth consecutive year to 10,545. Sky Sports viewing figures remained at 2008 levels, with an average of just under 150,000 tuning in for each match.



RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

CARNEGIE CHALLENGE CUP

1.2

MILLION VIEWERS WATCHED THE FINAL ON BBC

Warrington Wolves broke the dominance St Helens had enjoyed in the Carnegie Challenge Cup for the last three years by beating Huddersfield Giants in the final at Wembley, lifting the famous old trophy for the first time in 35 years in front of 76,560 supporters.

Huddersfield, who defeated St Helens in the semi-finals, found themselves trailing 18-6 after just 14 minutes and managed to cut the deficit by a further four points at the interval, but the Wolves moved further ahead midway through the second half and they eventually ran out 25-16 winners.

The competition got underway in the depths of winter, but despite the harsh conditions there were some red-hot contests. The best result of the opening round was Edinburgh Eagles' 18-16 victory away to the RAF, becoming the first Scottish side to reach the second round. The Army completed a fine 30-12 win at Featherstone Lions to reach the third round, where they were joined by the Co-operative Championship sides. Unfortunately for the Army, Featherstone Lions' professional neighbours Featherstone Rovers exacted revenge in emphatic style with a 94-2 victory.

2009 will not be remembered as the year of the Carnegie Challenge Cup giant-killer: no community club reached the last 32, while the teams from the Student Rugby League had all exited the competition by the fourth round stage. Special mention must go to Leeds Metropolitan University for a strong effort in a 38-24 third round defeat by Rochdale Hornets.

French club Lezignan were the only overseas team to make it to round four following an 18-6 victory at Workington Town. The big guns of Super League joined the competition at this stage and the highlight was a terrific contest between Leeds Rhinos and St Helens, which saw the holders squeeze through 22-18. However, the performance of the round took place in the South of France where Catalans staged one of the most remarkable comebacks in Challenge Cup history. At one point they trailed Bradford Bulls 26-0, but an amazing fightback saw them squeeze through 40-38.

The fifth round saw the first Challenge Cup tie ever to be decided by the golden point rule. With Castleford Tigers and Halifax locked at

34-34 after 80 minutes of thrilling Cup action at The Jungle, the Engage Super League side earned their place in the last eight through a drop-goal by Brent Sherwin in the first minute of extra time.

Remarkably, the quarter-finals threw up another golden point decider with Warrington Wolves just edging out Hull Kingston Rovers at Craven Park 25-24. The Wolves reached Wembley with a 39-26 victory over Wigan Warriors at The Stobart Stadium. The following day, Huddersfield Giants caused an upset by denying St Helens a third successive appearance at Wembley with a 24-14 win at the Halliwell Jones Stadium.

The final itself was an entertaining match, which saw Warrington Wolves complete a famous win. The highlight was a man-of-the-match performance from Michael Monaghan, who became only the third Australian player to win the Lance Todd Trophy.

BBC viewing figures for the final topped 1.2 million; a 14.5 per cent share of the audience, with the nine televised Carnegie Challenge Cup games drawing an average of just over 802,000 viewers.



NEW BRAND NEW TERRITORIES NEW FANS

CO-OPERATIVE CHAMPIONSHIPS

60

PERCENT OF THE CLUBS SAW A RISE
IN ATTENDANCE IN 2009

What used to be known as the National Leagues were re-branded in 2009. The new Co-operative Championships promised more excitement and action than ever before, and the season didn't disappoint. Toulouse Olympic joined the league from the French Federation to add a European flavour and an innovative new 9s tournament ensured fresh appeal; the season went on to become the most competitive ever.

Widnes Vikings won the Northern Rail Cup for the second time with a 34-18 win over Barrow in the well-attended Blackpool Final. Northern Rail, enjoying its fifth season as cup sponsor, extended this to the inaugural Northern Rail 9s tournament held on the same weekend as the cup final. Eighteen clubs from the Championships competed in Blackpool over two days. Blackpool Panthers won the 9s to take the first ever silverware in the club's history. Halifax were winners of the plate trophy.

More games than ever before were covered by Sky as 29 fixtures involving clubs in the Championships brought combined audience figures of 1,382,200. This was up 8% on the previous year. Eight clubs posted their best attendance of the season whilst appearing on Sky, with Championship side Widnes posting a 5,021 crowd and York in Championship One 3,106, both season records for their respective divisions.

With only three games left in the Co-operative Championship season, just three points separated the top six. After a titanic struggle Barrow Raiders lifted the League Leaders trophy before entering the Play-Offs. Barrow went on to enjoy further success by beating Halifax 26-18 on Finals Day in Warrington in front of 11,398 sun-baked fans.

Championship clubs also continued their proud tradition of reaching the latter stages of the world famous Carnegie Challenge Cup. Gateshead Thunder reached the quarter finals, while others proved difficult opposition in earlier rounds. Championship club season ticket holders were allowed free entry into round three of the Cup helping to raise this round's average attendance by 22% on the previous year.

Dewsbury Rams entered the record books by remaining unbeaten throughout their entire 18 game Co-operative Championship One programme, gaining promotion as Champions. The Play-Offs saw Keighley beat Oldham in the Final to also gain promotion, as Doncaster and Gateshead moved down a tier.

There were innovative marketing ideas aplenty as the Co-operative All Star Teams for each division were introduced into the end of season awards. Clubs such as Dewsbury Rams also boosted their attendances with the "World's Cheapest Season Ticket" campaign. 60% of the clubs in the competition saw a rise in attendances compared to 2008.

All 21 clubs continued their fantastic community programmes and went onto engage with 918 schools, 84,423 people and attract £1,086,205 worth of investment in 2009. Sheffield Eagles epitomised this great work. Winners of 'Best Community Programme' in 2009, their Charitable Foundation engaged first team players in work which covered 96 schools in South Yorkshire.

The competition embarked on its first year of the accepted Co-operative Championship Strategy 2009-2012, which seeks to move the clubs in a positive direction. Hugely improved central funds to member clubs provided the necessary resources to lay a platform from which each club could move forward. Whilst other supporting interventions were applied, such as Carnegie Business Degree students being placed with 13 Championship clubs (three gaining employment), the wider economic climate ensured finances became stretched at most clubs. Rochdale became the first ever professional Rugby League club to be run as a co-operative at the end of the season and others such as Doncaster, Gateshead and Keighley had to start as new entities.

The Co-operative Championships has gained an exciting reputation which aids its profile and appeal to supporters. The competition will look to grow from this, and from a proud past which includes eight clubs who were founding fathers of the sport, embrace the challenges and opportunities of the future.





A GROWING COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

2889

TOTAL NUMBER OF LEVEL ONE AND TWO QUALIFIED COACHES IN THE COACH EDUCATION PROGRAMME

In December 2008 the RFL secured £29.4 million of funding from Sport England to cover the four-year period from April 2009 - March 2013. This provides the Community Game with a great opportunity to expand and engage with more people. The investment was achieved following the successful submission of the RFL's Whole Sport plan. It will deliver in all nine Sport England regions and support the organisation's bid to increase participation in sport by one million by 2012-13.

Rugby League continues to expand nationally and the latest figures show over a quarter of a million people taking part, including over 46,000 registered participants. One of the most successful driving forces behind this growth is the summer-based Rugby League Conference. This continued to expand with the launch of the Southern Conference, involving new teams such as Southampton and Guildford. There was also an increase in the number of teams taking part in Merit Leagues in London, Midlands, North West and Yorkshire, as well as new clubs being formed in Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

League For All continues to be a key tool in attracting more people to play the game, while England's Wheelchair Rugby World Cup victory in 2008 has seen the sport go from strength to strength with over 60 registered players across three clubs. There were a large number of Touch, Tag and Masters events staged across the country and there are currently almost 5,000 participants registered for these easily accessible derivatives.

One of the key objectives of the Community Strategy 2010-2013 published this year is to get more females participating in Rugby League. A Female Game strategy has now started to be implemented across the country. Girls' festivals have continued with particular success in the North West with 455 registered girls now playing regularly. The Rugby League Conference organised its first national female competition with 22 teams and 244 registered players from across the country taking part. The Grand Final took place in September and saw Bradford Thunderbirds defeat Coventry Bears. Meanwhile, at the highest level England women followed up their promising 2008 World Cup campaign with an away victory over the French in a Test Match.

The Carnegie Champion Schools competition, open to every secondary school in the country, continued to grow in 2009. 1,678 different teams took part showing an increase of 175 teams on the previous year. Yorkshire had the greatest increase with an additional 88 teams, jumping from 551 to 639, whilst other areas that saw a dramatic rise in teams were London (up 27), Wales (up 17) and the North West (up 31). Overall, 27,537 students took part in the 2009 Carnegie Champion Schools Tournament; an increase of 2,911 players from 2008 and 22,369 more than when the competition was re-launched in 2002.

The Gillette National Youth League is now in its fourth year and started in September with teams from around the country including Gateshead, West Cumbria, North London Stags and Celtic Crusaders taking part in a high quality 18 team league. Elsewhere, the Midlands Junior League was established and played at three levels: Under 12, 14 and 16. A Community Finals Day was held in Derby, including Junior's, Women's and Men's teams.

As the number of players grows there is an even greater focus on recruiting more match officials to cover the increase in fixtures. The Match Officials Development Programme has continued into year three of its current strategy with 763 active officials. In addition, a group has been established to discuss and review the Match Officials' fees for the

Community Game. Work has also commenced on Societymark, to ensure Match Officials are looked after in well-managed societies. While Match Official Development Officers have worked with volunteers to develop and provide modular training sessions.

The Coach Education Programme now boasts a total of 2,889 Level One and Level Two qualified coaches and the 'bridging programme' to convert old qualifications is now complete with 815 coaches bridging over. The RESPECT Programme has continued to grow with initiatives such as the recruitment of 1,622 Touchline Managers and pitch barriers available to all clubs at a subsidised rate.

Helping clubs and Leagues to help themselves continued to be a high priority with regional staff assisting groups with funding, facility development, volunteer recruitment, RESPECT, Clubmark and Leaguemark amongst many other things. Indeed club membership at all levels has seen an increase and the number of clubs achieving Clubmark status has also continued to grow which shows the success of this work.

The Rugby League Foundation has continued to award grants to a wide range of applicants including changing room facilities and coach appointments. New and upgraded facilities have been opened at Oulton, Peterlee, Leigh Miners Rangers and West Bank in Widnes as part of the remaining projects involved in the Community Club Development Programme.

One of the key focuses in the Community Strategy 2010-2013 alongside Competitions, Clubs, Player Development and Coaching is increasing the Visibility and Profile of the Community Game. Great strides were made in 2009 on this with every official match day programme for central RFL events containing news and stories for the Community Game, effectively linking up the pinnacle of the sport with the grassroots.

The Community Game website continued to be a popular source of information and has been added to significantly with a new online survey facility. It is continually being updated as part of the campaign to increase the visibility of Rugby League's grassroots.



GROWING THE FAMILY

THE EUROPEAN GAME

75

NUMBER OF YEARS THE EUROPEAN CUP HAS BEEN PLAYED

In 2009, Rugby League was being played in more countries on the continent than ever before. The Rugby League European Federation had expanded its borders in all directions, and by the end of the year, had crowned not only European but Atlantic champions too.

Wales, who first took the continental title in 1936, claimed their fifth European crown, and first since 1995, defeating Scotland 28-16 on November 8 in Bridgend. 2009 saw a revival of the European Cup after a four-year hiatus, and was the most geographically diverse in its 75 year history, with Serbia, Italy and Lebanon all making their debuts.

The Dragons remained undefeated in Group 2, defeating Ireland and Serbia, while Scotland who were equally dominant, beat Italy and Lebanon. In an unprecedented finals day in South Wales, Serbia lost to Italy 42-14, while Lebanon ensured a third place finish with their 40-16 demolition of Ireland – exacting some revenge for Ireland's marginal win in their epic 2008 World Cup qualification tussle. Wales, whose victory earned them an automatic berth in the 2013 World Cup, will seek to retain the title in 2010, when the cup reverts to four teams and sees seven-time champions France re-enter the fray. The prize is a significant one: a spot in the 2011 Four Nations.

In the tiers below the European Cup, the RLEF's now traditional summer tournaments, the Bowl and the Shield, saw Ukraine and Italy crowned champions respectively, with the latter being elevated to the Cup as a result. The Shield was also significant for the Czech Republic. They recorded their first victory in International Rugby League after seven attempts, by beating Germany 30-4 in July. First-time entrants Ukraine won the Bowl with two emphatic victories, against Latvia 40-6 and a weak Estonia 86-0, impressing everyone with their athleticism.

It's a sign of the growing maturity among Europe's incipient Rugby League organisations that 2010 sees the expanded, six-team Shield divided into West and East groups. Serbia, Czech Republic and Germany will face off in a repeat of the 2007 tournament, emphatically won by the Balkan nation; while Latvia and Ukraine join regional powerhouse Russia, with the Bears coming out of a three-year hibernation on the

international scene. With Serbia and Russia having World Cup and European Cup experience, and Germany, Ukraine and Czech Republic all showing marked signs of technical improvement, the 2010 Shield promises to raise the bar in terms of on-field quality and performance.

At the entry level to Rugby League, the Euro-Med Challenge offered sides Belgium XIII, Catalunya XIII and Morocco XIII the opportunity to compete. The Moroccans, boasting a side selected exclusively from France's pro-leagues, ran out easy winners with a 29-6 win against the Catalans and a 46-12 dismantling of the Belgians.

Aside from recognised competition, several countries began the hard work of developing Rugby League within their homeland. Denmark, Sweden and Norway all commenced operations; Poland formed a Rugby League committee and is poised to begin development work in 2010; Greece's Hellenic Rugby League Committee gained official recognition; and in Central Asia the RLEF met with officials from Kazakhstan and two neighbouring states who showed keen interest.

In the Middle East North Africa theatre, structured Rugby League was played in four nations – Lebanon, UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia – while Pakistan, Kuwait and Palestine, the latter backed by the UN, all agreed to join the MENA group's newly agreed calendar of events. These include the MENA U16 Championship, for national teams or full rep sides; the MENA U14 9s, for schools and club sides; and the MENA Championship, for open age national teams or rep sides, played annually. History was also made in the Middle East in 2009. In October, Lebanon U16, the 'Junior Cedars', defeated Saudi Schools Select in the Middle East's first official youth representative match; while in July, Liban Espoir toured the UAE, and Dubai's stunning, brand new 'The Sevens' stadium, home to the established Dubai 7s rugby union event, was anointed by two games of Rugby League.

Finally, across the pond in Jacksonville, Jamaica and the USA played the first ever Atlantic Cup on the same day as the Gillette Four Nations final. The Americans defeated Jamaica 37-22 in one of the most exciting international games of the year.

DEVELOPING OUR TALENT

PERFORMANCE AND COACHING

2009 saw a significant increase in the development of home grown players produced by Super League clubs. Out of a total of 350 players in first team squads, 148 were classified as home grown, club-trained athletes. This figure continues the rising trend of Super League clubs and Championship clubs providing opportunities for English players. 2010 will see further growth.

Player Development Groups

2009 has been a year of transition in terms of player development, mainly due to the introduction of the new player development pathway. A revised staffing structure has commenced and three staff have been recruited in National Player Development roles. A team of professional coaches has also been appointed across the player pathway, to lead player development groups up to regional level. These include five Regional Talent and Coach Managers and 11 Talent Development Coaches. A total of 2,256 players attended district player development groups over June and July for boys aged between 13 and 16, with programmes in 22 Service Areas.

Scholarship

The size of Super League club scholarships was increased from 12 athletes to 24 athletes at U15 and U16 age groups. In all, this has resulted in an increase in the number of athletes on the Scholarship scheme to over 1,000. In 2010, clubs will play scholarship games at both age groups for the first time, as club scholarship programmes become the key talent identification vehicle.

Academy

Wakefield Wildcats won the Academy competition in a closely fought final against Wigan Warriors. The competition structure has been revised for 2010 in order to promote player development rather than game preparation. Other news worth mentioning is the successful piloting of the Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence by Sheffield, Widnes, St. Helens and Hull FC. A total of 47 athletes were involved in the scheme, developing their education alongside their rugby skills, working with local colleges to deliver a high quality programme. A training provider has also been identified by the RFL - their aim being to expand the scheme to other interested clubs in 2010.

Women and Girls

Women from all over the country and Armed Services took part in the Super 4's programme last year. This gave the opportunity for 120 women to take advantage of a development and playing opportunity, over and above the standard of their weekly fixtures. The girls took part in the Super 2's, which allowed 60 girls at U14 and U16 age groups to play some representative rugby, in addition to focusing on skill development and player/parent education.

International

England youth were successful in a very competitive match against Wales U16 and continue to develop as young players. The English Schools U16's won both games against France at Easter and were also successful in the European Cup tournament in Serbia throughout August.

Dave Elliott was appointed as the first full-time National Development coach. Dave will take charge of the development of the U16 and U18 international programmes, led by ex-international BJ Mather who was appointed as Head of Player Development for the RFL.

Coaching

2009 saw the RFL continue to be recognised as a leader in the Coach Development field. Our Head of Coach Development Vinny Webb, was awarded the UK Coach Developer of the year at the prestigious sports coach UK Coaching Awards in London.

We led the way at the Sports Coach UK Coaching summit, delivering a number of key note speeches to over 600 delegates. We spoke about innovative and world leading workforce modelling, and discussed creative approaches to meeting the education needs of coaches with a disability through the Access for All coaches initiative. Since then two candidates with disabilities have been engaged on courses, one candidate is blind and the other is tetraplegic. Their coaching is supported by the Benevolent Fund.



500,000

TOTAL COACHING HOURS

The coaching section has delivered five courses for under-represented groups (Women, Wheelchair, BME and Faith Communities) driving forward the RFL's Equality and Diversity objectives. This has resulted in an increase of 55 coaches from these groups now coaching our sport.

More qualification courses than ever have been delivered in 2009. A total of 674 coaches have been recruited and trained at level 1 and 2, with 58 courses running across the country. This has resulted in an increase in active coaches from 2,583 to 3,257. On average each qualified coach delivered a total of two sessions per week of about 90-120 mins over the year, that's over 500,000 total coaching hours, an increase of 100,000 hours.

This programme gives the coaches the opportunity to update and develop in 'new' coaching techniques, which will support their players' development. Plus, there are seven courses at UKCC Level 3 which will develop 85 candidates, and six candidates have registered on a two-year programme that leads to a Level 4 UKCC qualification and Post Graduate Diploma in Elite Coaching Practice.

John Kear	Steve McCormack
Dave Elliott	Dave Rotherham
Stuart Wilkinson	Andrew Proctor

A survey conducted with our coaches showed a total of 62% of qualified coaches completed formal workshop based continual professional development in 2009. And that 80% of coaches in the professional game are now on a formal course to up-skill their coaching knowledge and to meet operational requirements.

Human Performance

During 2009, there was substantial investment into the area of Human Performance. Clive Brewer commenced the role of Head of Human Performance and Paddy Mortimer, Head of Elite Training Squad. Dr Chris Brookes was appointed as interim Chief Medical Officer. Their aim is to enhance the technical leadership and strategic management for the inter-related fields of sports science, sports medicine and strength and conditioning across all levels of the game.

In December, an RFL sports medicine strategy together with a human performance strategy was completed and a CPD programme was initiated with a four-day strength and conditioning workshop, which included input from internationally renowned sports nutritionist Matt Lovell. This was followed by consultation and CPD events attended by 43 medical staff in total.

The application of science and technology continued with GPS player tracking systems integrated into the England Four Nations training and playing programme – a world first at international level. Nutritional, hydration, recovery protocols and other support service provision aided the team in reaching the final with no soft tissue injuries.



INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

MATCH OFFICIALS

204

DIFFERENT OFFICIALS WERE USED

2009 was the third season in which full-time officials operated in the Engage Super League. Ashley Klein returned to Australia in January for family reasons, leaving six full-time referees to bring the season to a conclusion. Three part-time officials, Gareth Hewer, James Child and Jamie Leahy also refereed at Super League level on a regular basis - terrific experience for them all, which will help with their future development. The squad also included Thierry Alibert who moved over to England to take up a full-time role. Since his arrival in 2009, he's refereed in every round of Super League.

In 2009, a total of 204 different officials were used on all Super League, Championship, Under 20's, Academy and Foundation games. In addition to that, 15 individual referees were used in the Co-operative Championships, with most of the referee squad also touch judging in the Engage Super League. This is part of the departmental policy which will ensure that the best referees officiate the top games. Touch judging on Engage Super League games also helps the Championship referees progress - they experience many new and different scenarios and develop a variety of strategies to deal with them. Mohamed Drizza from the French Federation, also refereed a number of games in the competition this year. The invaluable experience he gained has helped with both his and the FFR XIII's development. He's been offered more games in 2010 as a result.

The full-time officials all completed and passed the Rugby League's Level One Coaching Award and will undertake their Level Two Award in 2010. This is all aimed at widening their knowledge of the game and developing their game awareness.

Two English officials were selected to the Match Officials panel at the Gillette Four Nations Tournament. Steve Ganson was selected as referee and Clint Sharrad was selected as Touch Judge. Phil Bentham and Ian Smith were appointed as Video Referees, which were provided by the host nation. Both Clint and Phil were appointed to the Final as Touch Judge and Video Referee respectively.

Steve Ganson refereed both the Carnegie Challenge Cup Final and the Engage Super League Grand Final, while Ron Laughton was named as the Championship Referee of the Year and officiated the Championship One Grand Final.



SETTING THE STANDARD

ANTI-DOPING

500

NUMBER OF TESTS UNDERTAKEN
IN 2009

The RFL prides itself on being a clean sport and works hard to maintain its image. It is committed to ensuring that high standards are set for fair play and a drug-free sport while protecting the spirit of the game. It's doing this by increasing the level of awareness of all anti-doping issues. The RFL want to create a generation of players who have confidence in their ability to succeed in Rugby League without the misuse of prohibited substances or methods, and empower Rugby League clubs to be competent in supporting their players.

2009

100% ME Anti-Doping education

The RFL is committed to the principles of drug-free sport and work with UK Sport and UKAD to regularly educate and inform players through their '100% ME' campaign. It teaches them about the dangers of drugs and the consequences of taking drugs or breaching the Anti-Doping Regulations. The RFL train club staff who can provide player education both formally and informally.

Introduction of NRTP

As part of the RFL's WADA compliant anti-doping programme 17 players signed up for the National Registered Testing Pool for Rugby League. These players were obliged to provide whereabouts information to UK Anti-Doping, detailing where they are for one hour every day so they can be tested. They've been inducted and supported by the RFL to ensure that they are compliant with the system and are able to say with pride that they are amongst the most tested athletes in sport.

Testing

According to UK Sport figures, Rugby League players were tested 508 times for prohibited substances from April 1 2008 to March 31 2009. This is the third highest of all UK major sports behind football and athletics. Approximately 628 tests were expected to have been taken from April 1 2009 to March 31 2010 and for the year 2010-2011 the RFL have requested 650 tests from UKAD.

Blood testing is common within Rugby League which makes our testing programme even more effective.

Looking ahead

Social drug education

The RFL are currently working with potential partners to deliver education to players regarding social drugs and alcohol. The intention is to support these players and help them make the right choices throughout their career to protect their health, well-being and reputation.

Development of the Community Game Well-Being programme

In response to the Community Club Survey, the Operations department has been tasked with developing a variety of Community Game Well-being workshops. The aim is to educate players and coaches within the community game about a variety of aspects related to their well-being and game preparation. These include smoking, drinking and drugs (performance enhancing and social). The information will be delivered in an engaging and Rugby League focused way with the intention of enforcing positive player choices.



RECORD TICKET SALES

MARKETING AND COMMERCIAL

4

NUMBER OF NATIONS TAKING PART AS THE RFL HOSTS THE FIRST UK-BASED FOUR NATIONS TOURNAMENT

2009 saw the largest number of tickets sold for Rugby League fixtures across the year since 2004. This is testament to the continued work of the RFL, clubs, broadcasters and commercial partners in promoting the game, as well as the comprehensive sales plans all parties were involved with.

Although the winter weather put a stop to the official launch of Engage Super League in the capital, it didn't prevent 15,000 people attending the first ever Anglo Welsh Super League fixture. A freezing winter's evening at Headingley Carnegie soon turned red hot as Leeds Rhinos faced the Celtic Crusaders.

The Carnegie World Club Challenge was once again played at Leeds' Elland Road stadium, with NRL Champions Manly Sea Eagles providing tough opposition for the Leeds Rhinos. An attendance of 32,569 and a record average of 322,000 viewers watched the Sea Eagles triumph.

Sky Sports continued to cover Engage Super League, Co-operative Championships and Northern Rail Cup matches, with a total of over 100 live games across the season. Unfortunately average TV audiences across the season faced a downward trend in Engage Super League, dropping 7% despite a 16.1% increase in coverage from 135 hours to 157 hours. Channel programming is essential for success in average audience numbers and the RFL continue to work with Sky Sports for the best broadcast times available for Rugby League. The Co-operative Championships' Rugby League coverage continued to grow on Sky Sports in 2009 with 26 'Thursday Night Thrillers' broadcast live, showing an average increase in viewers of 32.2% over the season. With the continued work of the RFL's Marketing and Club Support Team, a number of record attendances were achieved in the Championships when the Sky cameras were in town.

In May, Engage Super League travelled north of the border for the first Magic Weekend to be based at Edinburgh's Murrayfield Stadium. With fantastic support from event partners Visit Scotland and Edinburgh Council, we achieved a Magic attendance of 59,749 across the weekend. This contributed to a fantastic Rugby League Weekend with fans decorating the famous Royal Mile and Edinburgh Castle with their replica shirts.

France competing in a round robin tournament over October and November. The tournament was unique in that it was shared by three broadcasters who each took at least one live game. Credit must go to Sky Sports, BBC and Orange France for continually delivering high class pictures with a similar look and feel across the whole tournament. Although facing a global credit crunch, the RFL are pleased to announce that the tournament sponsorship income exceeded the initial budget. Gillette committed themselves to International Rugby League once more with title sponsorship and two new partners were brought into the game in Valvoline and The Co-operative Travel Sports & Events Group.

Many of the RFL's partners are already in existing contracts due to the previous Autumn's renewals. However, new agreements were concluded with International Hotel Group, which sees the worldwide Holiday Inn brand visible at RFL Events, and Peter's Foods Services who launched the Super League Pie across UK supermarkets and at Rugby League grounds.

The growing phenomenon of Social Media has increasingly become a big part of the RFL's communications strategy. This has further developed over the last 12 months, with the growing dominance of Facebook and Twitter providing a cost effective and efficient way of communicating with Rugby League fans. The RFL has continued to invest in its internet coverage, building individual competition websites for the Co-operative Championships and Carnegie Challenge Cup to sit alongside the Engage Super League and RFL websites.

The live coverage of the Carnegie Challenge Cup started in late April with a double header across two countries. Games were televised from both Perpignan and Leeds on the opening weekend. The Semi Finals once again proved to be fantastic occasions with two sell-out crowds at the Stobart and Halliwell Jones Stadiums. This set up a Carnegie Challenge Cup Final between Huddersfield Giants and Warrington Wolves, with the latter succeeding on another warm day in the capital in front of 76,560 fans. The Final continues to be a special Rugby League day out and attracts the biggest TV audience of the calendar with BBC Sport coverage remaining at an average audience of over 800,000 per game throughout the season.

The Engage Super League Grand Final once again grew in broadcast coverage with a record average audience of 355,700. 2010 will see a new initiative for the Grand Final, namely Grand Final 500, which will look to encourage every Engage Super League club to be a part of the season finale.

Autumn saw the RFL host the first UK-based Four Nations Tournament, with England, Australia, New Zealand and

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2009



The financial information set out below does not constitute the Company's consolidated statutory accounts for the year ended 31 December 2009 but is derived from those accounts. Statutory accounts for the year ended 31 December 2009 will be delivered to Companies House following the Company's Annual General Meeting. The auditors have reported on those accounts; their reports were unqualified and did not contain statements under section 498 (2) and (3) of the Companies Act 2006.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Turnover in the year has increased to £21,922k from £14,541k in 2008, which represents a 50.7% increase. As detailed in Note 2 of the accounts, match income, broadcast income, sponsorship and other income were all significantly ahead year on year, while income received from Government was slightly lower during the accounting period.

Match income in 2009 increased significantly to £5,291k in 2009, a 42% increase on the previous year (£3,731k in 2008), largely as a result of hosting the 2009 Four Nations tournament in the UK. Broadcast revenue was also significantly higher at £7,401k (£2,927k in 2008) as a consequence of the commencement of the new three-year broadcast contracts with the BBC and Sky which were negotiated in 2008. Sponsorship monies were also higher (by 40.6%) from £1,306k in 2008 to £1,837k in 2009. This increase is partly due to the additional sponsorships delivered for the Four Nations tournament, together with year on year increases in other categories of sponsorship.

Government funding decreased to £4,434k compared with £5,348k in 2008. The new Sport England funding cycle 2009-2013 was slightly delayed in its commencement until October 2009, which consequently explains the year on year reduction. This position will correct itself going forward.

Other income has increased from £1,229k to £2,559k, a 108.2% increase, during the year. The majority of this increase being monies received from Super League (Europe) Limited to support the RFL's Championship clubs.

Cost of Sales at £10,843k have risen from the 2008 level of £6,730k (a 61.1% increase), due to achieving the increased turnover discussed above. Payments to or on behalf of clubs contained within Cost of Sales have risen from £2,569k to £2,582k, and is discussed in more detail below. Cost of Sales in total now represents 61.2% of turnover, a decrease on the 63.9% in 2008.

Total payments made either to or on behalf of clubs or other member organisations are detailed under Note 4 to the accounts. In summary, payments such as these were 60.0% higher in 2009 at £7,929k against the £4,955k paid out in 2008. The majority of the increase was within Awards to Clubs (where the Awards increased to £3,247k from £798k, a 306.9% increase mainly as a result of the increased broadcast monies) and Awards to other sections of the game (where the Awards increased to £781k from £235k largely as a result of increased payments to the RFL Facilities Trust). There were also increases in the cost of match officials, and disciplinary costs and banned substance testing. Insurance costs reduced from £565k to £502k through negotiating lower cost insurance. In addition, prize monies and event profit distributions funding increased year on year from £1,693k to £2,094k. Grant funded activities decreased from £875k in 2008 to £487k in 2009 as the focus of the funding shifted, and some of the payments previously made were made directly by the RFL and are contained in the figures above. As in 2008 the RFL will make a year-end payment to members to reflect participation in the Challenge Cup, in 2009 this is at a level of £150k. The RFL will also make an additional year-end payment for 2009 to members of £210k.

Operating costs have increased from £2,949k in 2008 to £3,214k in 2009. This increase is over a number of areas, however the generation of new income streams has resulted in additional costs in 2009, such as the one off recruitment costs associated with the new staffing positions required to deliver the Sport England objectives.

As has previously been intimated, the 2009 season was particularly challenging for member clubs and over the course of the year the RFL provided such support as was available and deemed reasonable given the potential reputational damage to the sport and the financial loss to the remaining clubs that losing any club mid season would

create. In a number of cases this has involved advancing clubs own income to assist cashflow in both Super League and Championship. The most significant example of this support occurred at the end of the 2009 season when Celtic Crusaders moved from Bridgend in South Wales to Wrexham in North Wales, taking the opportunity to change their name to Crusaders at the same time.

In all circumstances where clubs have been advanced money appropriate security and guarantee has been secured. Despite this the Board considers that a prudent approach to advances should be taken and to that end much of the advanced monies have been expensed fully through the Profit and Loss Account in 2009 which also ensures that any future licensing process is not contaminated.

Finally, it is worth noting that interest receivable by the RFL which historically has been a very significant income stream was significantly lower in 2009 as a result of the much lower interest rates being commanded around the world. Accordingly interest was 65.9% lower at £77k (2008: £226k).

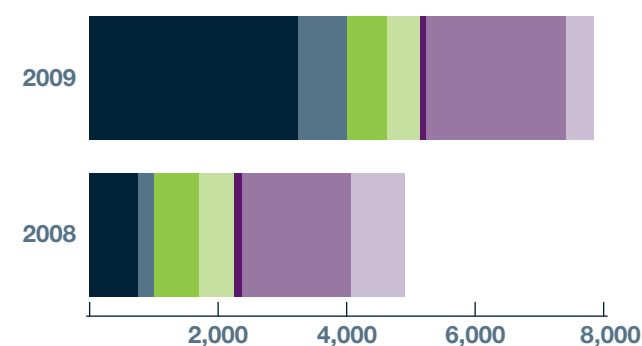
The balance sheet at 31 December 2009 has slightly decreased from the position at 31 December 2008. This reduction is entirely due to the revaluation of the RFL's assets, notably Red Hall and its bank of playing fields, and in line with weak valuations across the property markets generally. Therefore the revaluation reserves now stand at a balance of £843k. As a consequence the net asset valuation for the RFL company balance sheet as at 31 December 2009 now stands at £3,129k (2008: £3,530k). The RFL Board is committed to further consolidation of the organisation's balance sheet to protect the RFL from potential future adverse trading conditions. However the Board is also seeking to achieve year on year increases in payments to or on behalf of the game.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Income (£'000)

2005	£12.8m
2006	£10.9m
2007	£13.4m
2008	£14.5m
2009	£21.9m

Payments to or on Behalf of Clubs and Other Membership Organisations (£'000)



- Awards to Clubs
- Awards to Other Sections of the Game
- Match Officials
- Insurance
- Disciplinary Costs and Banned Substance Test
- Match Related Costs
- Grant Funded Activities

Net RFL Value (£'000)

2005	£0.9m
2006	£1.8m
2007	£1.9m
2008	£2.0m
2009	£1.6m

Split of income 2009 (£'000)



● Match Income	£5.3m
● Broadcast	£7.4m
● Sponsorship	£1.8m
● Government Funding	£4.4m
● Other	£3.0m

Cash balances (£'000)

2005	£4.9m
2006	£4.2m
2007	£3.3m
2008	£4.1m
2009	£6.8m

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Consolidated Profit and Loss Account for the year ended 31 December 2009

	Note	2009		2008	
		£	£	£	£
Turnover	1,2		21,922,170		14,540,600
Cost of sales	3	(10,842,925)		(6,729,519)	
Cost of sales - payable to or on behalf of clubs	4	(2,581,626)		(2,568,808)	
Total cost of sales			(13,424,551)		(9,298,327)
Gross profit			8,497,619		5,242,273
Payments to or on behalf of clubs and other member organisations	4	(5,347,784)		(2,386,493)	
Operating costs		(3,214,407)		(2,949,419)	
Administrative costs			(8,562,191)		(5,335,912)
Operating loss			(64,572)		(93,639)
Other interests receivable and similar income	7		77,010		226,203
Profit on ordinary activities before taxation	6		12,438		132,564
Tax on profit on ordinary activities	8		(30,465)		(67,888)
(Loss)/Profit for the financial year	16		(18,027)		64,676

All the above results are derived from continuing operations

Consolidated Balance Sheet at 31 December 2009

	Note	2009		2008	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	9		1,962,816		1,865,738
Loans	11		–		120,000
			1,962,816		1,985,738
Current assets					
Debtors	12	4,732,958		4,391,863	
Short term assets	18	4,250,000		–	
Cash at bank and in hand		2,585,039		4,087,808	
			11,567,997		8,479,671
Creditors					
Amounts falling due within one year	13	(11,886,608)		(8,457,079)	
Net current assets			(318,611)		22,592
Total assets plus net current assets			1,644,205		2,008,330
Net assets			1,644,205		2,008,330
Capital and reserves					
Accumulated surplus	16		800,748		771,731
Revaluation reserve	16		843,457		1,236,599
			1,644,205		2,008,330
Shareholders' funds			1,644,205		2,008,330

Consolidated cash flow statement

for the year ended 31 December 2009

	Note	2009 £	2008 £
Reconciliation of operating loss to net cash flow from operating activities			
Operating loss		(64,572)	(93,639)
Depreciation charges		203,317	225,856
Increase in debtors		(342,399)	(1,519,770)
Increase in creditors		3,458,379	2,300,815
Net cash inflow from operating activities		3,254,725	913,262
Cash flow statement			
Cash flow from operating activities		3,254,725	913,262
Returns on investments and servicing of finance	17	77,010	226,203
Taxation		(58,011)	(54,125)
Capital expenditure and financial investment	17	(526,493)	(274,951)
Cash inflow before management of liquid resources and financing		2,747,231	810,389
Management of liquid resources	17	(4,250,000)	-
(Decrease)/increase in cash in the period		(1,502,769)	810,389
Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net funds			
Increase in cash in the period		(1,502,769)	810,389
Money placed on short term deposits	17	4,250,000	-
Movement in net funds in the period		2,747,231	810,389
Net funds at the start of the period		4,087,808	3,277,419
Net funds at the end of the period	18	6,835,039	4,087,808

Reconciliation of movements in members' funds

for the year ended 31 December 2009

	2009 £	2008 £
(Loss)/profit for the financial year	(18,027)	64,676
Movement on Revaluation Surplus for the year	(346,098)	-
Net (reduction)/addition to members' funds	(364,125)	64,676
Opening members' funds	2,008,330	1,943,654
Closing members' funds	1,644,205	2,008,330
Note of historical cost profits and losses for the year ended 31 December 2009		
	2009 £	2008 £
Reported profit on ordinary activities before taxation	12,438	132,564
Difference between a historical cost depreciation charge and the actual depreciation charge calculated on the revalued amount	47,044	52,511
Historical cost profit on ordinary activities before taxation	59,482	185,075
Historical cost profit for the year retained after taxation	56,119	117,187

NOTES

(FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS)

1 Accounting policies

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the organisation's financial statements except as noted below.

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards, and under the historical cost accounting rules, modified to include the revaluation of land and buildings.

Under s408 of the Companies Act 2006 the company is exempt from the requirement to present its own profit and loss account. The loss for the financial period was £54,898 (2008: £69,867).

Basis of consolidation

The consolidated financial statements include the financial statements of the Company and its subsidiary undertakings made up to 31 December 2009. The acquisition method of accounting has been adopted. Under this method, the results of subsidiary undertakings acquired or disposed of in the year are included in the consolidated profit and loss account from the date of acquisition or up to the date of disposal.

Fixed assets and depreciation

Depreciation is provided to write off the cost or valuation less the estimated residual value of tangible fixed assets by equal instalments over their estimated useful economic lives as follows:

Leasehold properties	4%
Fixtures & fittings	12.5%
Office equipment	25%
Computer equipment	25%
Motor vehicles	25%

The organisation has adopted a policy of revaluing its land and buildings, as permitted under FRS 15, Tangible Fixed Assets.

Post-retirement benefits

The organisation operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the organisation in an independently administered fund. The amount charged to the profit and loss account represents the contributions payable to the scheme in respect of the accounting period.

Taxation

Deferred tax is recognised, without discounting, in respect of all timing differences between the treatment of certain items for taxation and accounting purposes which have arisen but not reversed by the balance sheet date, except as otherwise required by FRS 19.

Turnover

Income comprises the value of sales, excluding VAT, of goods and services in the normal course of business, sponsorship monies, grant monies and revenue derived from television broadcasting contracts. Income includes amounts generated as principal and excludes transactions conducted as agent of the Clubs. Income is recognised in the period to which it relates and payments to clubs are recorded as 'payable to clubs' in the period in which the related income is recognised. Government grants are taken to income in order to match them against the related costs. Where amounts have not yet been spent, grant monies received are shown as deferred income.

Cash

Cash, for the purpose of the cash flow statement, comprises cash in hand and deposits repayable on demand, less overdrafts payable on demand.

NOTES

(CONTINUED)

2 Turnover

	2009	2008
	£	£
Match income	5,290,999	3,731,139
Broadcast	7,401,386	2,926,904
Sponsorship	1,836,497	1,306,357
Government funding	4,434,359	5,347,511
Other	2,958,929	1,228,689
	<u>21,922,170</u>	<u>14,540,600</u>

3 Cost of sales

	2009	2008
	£	£
Match costs	4,466,131	1,930,557
Grant funded activities	4,422,491	3,889,369
Sponsorship and promotional costs	499,303	364,593
Other	1,455,000	545,000
	<u>10,842,925</u>	<u>6,729,519</u>

4 Payments to or on behalf of clubs and other member organisations

	2009	2008
	£	£
Awards to clubs	3,247,054	797,815
Awards to other sections of the game	781,101	234,779
Match officials	698,239	679,007
Insurance	502,070	565,297
Disciplinary costs and banned substances testing	119,320	109,595
	<u>5,347,784</u>	<u>2,386,493</u>

In addition to the amounts above, further amounts were paid to or on behalf of clubs relating to events or government funding. These amounts are contained within Cost of sales – payable to or on behalf of clubs and are as follows:

Match costs	2,094,392	1,693,753
Grant funded activities	487,234	875,055
	<u>2,581,626</u>	<u>2,568,808</u>
Total payments made to or behalf of clubs and other member organisations	<u>7,929,410</u>	<u>4,955,301</u>

NOTES

(CONTINUED)

5 Directors and employees

	2009	2008
Staff costs (including directors):	£	£
Wages and salaries	4,753,673	4,257,471
Social security costs	423,593	386,668
Other pension costs	115,999	91,019
	<u>5,293,265</u>	<u>4,735,158</u>
	<u><u>5,293,265</u></u>	<u><u>4,735,158</u></u>
Average number of employees (including directors):	2009	2008
	Number	Number
On field staff	35	24
Administration staff	150	127
	<u>185</u>	<u>151</u>
	<u><u>185</u></u>	<u><u>151</u></u>
The aggregate emoluments of the directors amounted to:	2009	2008
	£	£
Remuneration	462,458	354,217
Contributions to money purchase pension schemes	32,774	22,137
	<u>495,232</u>	<u>376,354</u>
	<u><u>495,232</u></u>	<u><u>376,354</u></u>
The higher paid director received £204,010 (2008: £175,171) remuneration, and contributions to money purchase pension schemes of £24,774 (2008: £9,179).		
The number of directors to whom retirement benefits are accruing are:	Number	Number
Under money purchase pension schemes	2	2
	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
	<u><u>2</u></u>	<u><u>2</u></u>

NOTES

(CONTINUED)

6 Profit on ordinary activities before taxation

	2009	2008
Profit on ordinary activities before taxation is stated after charging:	£	£
Auditors' remuneration:		
Audit of financial statements	17,000	15,000
Other services - fees paid to the auditor and its associates for tax compliance and advisory services	3,500	5,000
Depreciation and other amounts written off tangible fixed assets:		
Owned	140,724	155,989
Leased	62,593	69,867
Hire of other assets - operating leases	<u>12,831</u>	<u>12,831</u>
	<u><u>12,831</u></u>	<u><u>12,831</u></u>
7 Other interest receivable and similar income	2009	2008
	£	£
Bank interest	77,010	226,203
	<u>77,010</u>	<u>226,203</u>
	<u><u>77,010</u></u>	<u><u>226,203</u></u>

NOTES

(CONTINUED)

8 Taxation

Analysis of credit in period

	2009		2008	
	£	£	£	£
UK corporation tax				
Current tax on income for the period	27,317		62,572	
Adjustments in respect of prior periods	3,363		(6,405)	
Total current tax		30,680		56,167
Deferred tax				
Origination/reversal of timing differences	(215)		11,394	
Effect of increased tax rate	-		-	
Adjustments in respect of prior periods	-		327	
		(215)		11,721
Tax on profit on ordinary activities		30,465		67,888
Factors affecting the tax charge for the current period				
The current tax charge for the period is higher (2008: higher) than the standard rate of corporation tax in the UK 28%,(2008: 28%). The differences are explained below.				
		2009		2008
		£		£
Current tax reconciliation				
Profit on ordinary activities before tax		12,438		132,564
Current tax at 28% (2007: 30%)		3,483		37,118
Effects of:				
Expenses not deductible for tax purposes		34,880		45,206
Capital allowances for period in excess of depreciation		215		3,996
Non taxable income		(2,155)		-
Utilisation of brought forward tax losses		-		(12,590)
Short term timing difference		-		(2,800)
UK Tax not at standard rate		(9,106)		(8,358)
Adjustment to tax charge in respect of prior periods		3,363		(6,405)
Total current tax charge (see above)		30,680		56,167

NOTES

(CONTINUED)

9 Tangible fixed assets

	Leasehold properties £	Freehold land and buildings £	Equipment, fixtures & fittings £	Total £
Cost or valuation				
At beginning of year	950,000	657,500	1,739,576	3,347,076
Additions	-	470,924	175,569	646,493
Disposals	-	-	(1,019,211)	(1,019,211)
Revaluations	(378,598)	32,500	-	(346,098)
Transfers	(571,402)	369,076	-	(202,326)
At end of year	-	1,530,000	895,934	2,425,934
Depreciation				
At beginning of year	139,733	-	1,341,605	1,481,338
Charge for year	62,593	-	140,724	203,317
Disposals	-	-	(1,019,211)	(1,019,211)
Transfers	(202,326)	-	-	(202,326)
At end of year	-	-	463,118	463,118
Net book value				
At 31 December 2009	-	1,530,000	432,816	1,962,816
At 31 December 2008	810,267	657,500	397,971	1,865,738

The following information relates to assets carried at revalued amounts.

Land and buildings

At 2009 open market value

Historical cost of revalued assets

Aggregate depreciation based on historical cost

Historical cost net book value

2009	2008
£	£
1,530,000	
929,512	469,367
(255,556)	(238,200)
673,956	231,167

The revaluations are based on open market value, and were performed by Knight Frank, Chartered Surveyors, on 31 December 2009. Other tangible fixed assets are included at cost.

NOTES

(CONTINUED)

10 Fixed asset investments

The undertakings in which the group's interest at the year end is more than 20% are as follows:

	Country of incorporation	Principal activity	Percentage of ordinary shares held	
			Group	Company
Subsidiary undertakings				
The Rugby Football League Limited	UK	Sports promotion	-	100%
ZZ Merchandising Limited (formerly Rugby League Enterprises)	UK	Sports promotion	-	97%
Rugby League Tri-Tournaments Limited	UK	Sports promotion	100%	-
RLIP Limited	UK	Holding intellectual property	100%	-

11 Loans

Group	Loans £
Cost	
At beginning of year	120,000
Disposals	(120,000)
	<u> </u>
At end of year	-
	<u> </u>
Provisions	
At beginning and end of year	-
	<u> </u>
Net book value	
At 31 December 2009	-
	<u> </u>
At 31 December 2008	120,000
	<u> </u>

NOTES

(CONTINUED)

12 Debtors

	2009 £	2008 £
Trade debtors	2,421,132	3,300,796
Other debtors	48,464	7,280
Deferred tax (see note 14)	1,734	1,519
Prepayments and accrued income	2,236,007	1,056,647
Loans to clubs	25,621	25,621
	<u>4,732,958</u>	<u>4,391,863</u>

13 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2009 £	2008 £
Trade creditors	1,040,975	684,374
Taxation and social security	308,553	586,631
Other creditors	129,895	2,511
Accruals and deferred income	10,379,868	7,127,396
Corporation tax	27,317	56,167
	<u>11,886,608</u>	<u>8,457,079</u>

14 Provisions for liabilities and charges

	Deferred tax asset £
At beginning of year	1,519
Recognised during year	215
At year end	<u>1,734</u>

The elements of deferred tax are as follows:

	2009 £	2008 £
Difference between accumulated depreciation and capital allowances	(1,734)	(1,519)
Tax losses	-	-
Deferred tax asset (see note 12)	<u>(1,734)</u>	<u>(1,519)</u>

NOTES

(CONTINUED)

15 Pension scheme

The organisation operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The pension cost charge for the period represents contributions payable by the organisation to the scheme and amounted to £115,649 (2008: £91,019).

There were no outstanding or prepaid contributions at either the beginning or end of the financial year.

16 Reserves

	Revaluation reserve £	Accumulated surplus £
At beginning of year	1,236,599	771,731
Loss for the financial year	(346,098)	(18,027)
Depreciation on revalued assets	(47,044)	47,044
At end of year	<u>843,457</u>	<u>800,748</u>

17 Analysis of cash flows

	2009		2008	
	£	£	£	£
Returns on investment and servicing of finance				
Interest received	77,010		226,203	
		77,010		226,203
Capital expenditure and financial investment				
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(646,493)		(154,951)	
Investment	120,000		(120,000)	
		(526,293)		(274,951)
Management of liquid resources				
Cash placed on deposit	(4,250,000)		-	
		<u>(4,250,000)</u>		<u>-</u>