



2011 RFL ANNUAL REPORT

FIRST AND FOREMOST



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First football code to have a **sponsored trophy**: 1962. Mackeson Trophy for club with best scoring record in 1962-63 season.

Have a **black international captain** when Clive Sullivan led Great Britain in 1972 to win the Rugby League World Cup.

The first National Governing Body to break into the Stonewall Champions and Workplace Index and **listed in the Stonewall Top 100 employers**: 2010

First football code to allow **substitutes**: 1964.

Have a **British Asian represent their country in any football code** when Ikram Butt played for England against Wales in 1995.

Introduce a **Salary Cap**: 1998

Have a **black international manager** when Abi Ekoku managed Great Britain: 2006

Introduce a **black international coach** when Ellery Hanley coached Great Britain in 1994

The **first known black professional** rugby league player was Lucius Banks, who made his debut for Hunslet in January 1912 however a photograph of the 1903 Pendlebury suggests earlier. Football records show the professional game had black players in the 1800s.

Have a **female president of a professional sports National Governing Body**. Kath Hetherington 1995.

Introduce a **full round of fixtures to one venue** and have a 'Magic Weekend': 2007

Take a **full round of fixtures on the road**: 1998

Introduce a **professional club with a black coach** (Roy Francis): 1961

George Bennett first **black Rugby League international** when he played for Wales in 1935, over 40 years before Viv Anderson played for England Football in 1978 and the first black cricketer for England appeared in 1981. Jimmy Peters played rugby union for England and St Helens. He remained the first and only black England rugby union international until 1988.

Introduce **Video Referees and Technology**: 1996

First of any football code to use **floodlights** for league matches in 1932 (first league game under lights for soccer was in 1956).

Introduce a **black international shirt sponsorship**: 1974

Rugby League is the first sport in the United Kingdom to allow **shirt sponsorship**: 1974

Have a **professional sports club play in shirts with an anti homophobia message** on: 2011 (Sheffield Eagles)

Introduce an **end of season play-off and Grand Final**. Originally in 1907 through to 1973 it was reintroduced in 1998 under its current guise and is now a major success

The RFL recognised as an **Investor in People** (2010)

First sport in the world to **design a competition specifically for TV** when in 1965 Sir David Attenborough who was then the controller of BBC2, set up the BBC2 Television Floodlit Trophy for rugby league in Britain. The sport was first broadcast in 1948 when the Challenge Cup Final was screened. Now "Selling Broadcasting Rights" is the main income stream for all major sports.

Rugby League is the first sport in the United Kingdom to introduce a **Matchday Entertainment Package**: 1991. Keighley began 'Cougar-mania' in the early 90s introducing music after tries, lively PA announcements and entertainers in the ground.

Took a **full round of fixtures on the road**: 1998

Rugby League is the first sport in the United Kingdom to introduce a **Matchday Entertainment Package**: 1991. Keighley began 'Cougar-mania' in the early 90s introducing music after tries, lively PA announcements and entertainers in the ground.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Rugby League is the first British Sport...
...to break into the **Stonewall Champions and Workplace Index** and listed in the **Stonewall Top 100 employers: 2010**

FOREWORD BY THE MINISTER FOR SPORT

This is an incredibly exciting time for sport in the United Kingdom. As Minister for Sport and the Olympics, I have the privilege of seeing the impact it has on individuals and communities across the country.

In an ever-diversifying marketplace, governing bodies of sport have to act differently and innovatively but, at the same time, to ensure that the traditions of the sport are still maintained.

Rugby League has seen growth in terms of viewers and revenue for almost a decade. In terms of participation, over the last year Rugby League has grown from 51,000 to 57,700 people playing regularly - and our aim is to build on this achievement.

📍 **Hugh Robertson MP**
addressing delegates
at the Rugby League
World Cup seminar

Over the next 12 months, Rugby League has the exciting prospect of staging the biggest sporting event after the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games when it stages the Rugby League World Cup in the autumn of 2013.

Fourteen countries from across the world will descend on England and Wales as the RFL embarks on staging what I am sure will be the best Rugby League tournament in the history of this proud sport.

It has been a privilege to see, at first hand, the hard work the RFL has already put into this tournament. Over the next 12 months, they will deliver an event which will convey a lasting legacy for the sport ultimately raising the profile of Rugby League across the country. Rugby League is a game embedded deep in the communities it serves.

The RFL should be very proud of the work it is doing from the grassroots game at community level right through to the Super League and the England team.

This is a fantastic time for Rugby League. As this country's Minister for Sport, and the Olympics, I could not be more delighted and wish the game every success.



Hugh Robertson MP
Minister for Sport and the
Olympics



CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

In what has been a challenging time for the sport over the past year, it is gratifying and pleasing that despite a tough economic climate the RFL demonstrated strong financial results which saw record levels of turnover for the business, with turnover increasing by 18 per cent on the previous year. As the organisation's turnover has increased, the RFL has continued to invest record amounts back into the sport. The distributions to our stakeholders, from the professional game to the community, has nearly tripled in the last five years and the sport is benefiting from the reinvestment made.

We now have strong foundations to take advantage of the perfect opportunity to raise the profile of the sport as we showcase Rugby League to the world in 2013 with the hosting of the Rugby League World Cup.

The tournament will be hosted by England and Wales but will be played in four countries with matches being taken to Ireland and France. Our aim is to stage the best Rugby League World Cup ever.

The tournament is an integral part of the golden decade of sport in the United Kingdom. Our tournament will be the first major event after the 2012 London Olympics and with planning moving at a pace, Rugby League has never been in such a strong position at this stage before a major tournament. To generate around £61.5m for the economy supporting 1600 jobs and with upwards of 500,000 people expected to watch the 28 matches live over the duration and a further 20 million viewers from 120 countries tuning in around the world on television, Rugby League will be enhanced by significant visibility and profile. If all goes to plan we will deliver a profitable tournament to benefit the development of the sport worldwide.

Domestically the sport is growing significantly. In 2013 the professional game will grow across strategically significant areas with Northampton, Hemel and Gloucester all making their debuts in the new-look Championships structure. The game at community level is



↑ The launch of the **Rugby League World Cup** at the Millennium Stadium, Cardiff

↓ **Carnegie Champion Schools** tournament, one of Rugby League's success stories

also progressing nicely. The biggest schools tournament in the country - the Carnegie Champion Schools - goes from strength-to-strength with in excess of 30,000 pupils playing in 1,700 teams across 500 schools turning out in 2011. We have seen a staggering growth of 24,000 in player numbers since 2002 and this is without doubt one of the biggest success stories in the sport and on a personal level very rewarding to see so many children playing Rugby League across the country.

I would like to close by thanking everyone connected to Rugby League for their outstanding effort and dedication in working tirelessly across all levels of the sport. It is a difficult period for everyone, from a financial point of view, but with so much to look forward to over the next two years, Rugby League is ready and prepared for the most significant period in the sport's history.

Maurice Watkins CBE
Interim Chairman



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The sport of Rugby League in the Northern Hemisphere continued to develop in 2011. The year represented an important period in which foundations were laid for the future growth of the sport. Preparations for the Rugby League World Cup in the autumn of 2013 showed tremendous progress with the final two qualifying nations confirmed in Italy and the USA, which demonstrates the continued spread of the sport internationally. The transformation of the competition framework of the sport below Super League commenced in earnest with four new Championship clubs identified in new areas for the sport and the seismic decision by the community game to move their season to the summer. This decision aligns the community game with the professional game and creates a truly integrated, pyramid competition structure for the sport. 2011 also saw several new stadium facilities opened, increases in homegrown talent and a return of the national side to Wembley, all strong foundations on which the further growth of the sport will be built in the coming years.

On the domestic front, Wigan Warriors' re-emergence as a major power was further underlined by their fine achievement in winning the Carnegie Challenge Cup for the first time in 16 years, after a thrilling 28-18 victory over Leeds Rhinos. The match at Wembley was a classic with Wigan eventually proving too strong for Leeds, who were playing in their second successive Challenge Cup

final. Viewing figures on BBC Television for Rugby League's oldest and most prestigious knockout competition were excellent with a 21.3 per cent increase on 2010, 27 per cent higher than they were in 2009. Nearly two million viewers watched the showpiece final with the other eight televised games on the BBC attracting an average audience of one million. It wasn't just television viewers that were engrossed in the action. Attendances for the Challenge Cup competition were the highest in seven years with 240,329 fans going through the turnstiles.

After their setback at Wembley, Leeds became the first club to finish outside the top three in the Super League regular season to win the Super League Grand Final at Old Trafford, defeating St Helens by 32 points to 16. The final represented Saints' fifth consecutive appearance, a remarkable achievement for this great club. It was, however, the Rhinos' fourth

Grand Final victory in five years to become the most decorated side in the Super League era. The Super League competition continued to attract people to watch both live and on television with 1.8 million people attending matches in 2011 and its popularity continued to soar on Sky Sports with Rugby League now firmly the second most viewed national league on TV with 24m viewers nationally.

During 2011, the RFL negotiated new, extended and improved television contracts with all of its broadcast partners. Principle among these were the new five-year agreement with Sky, which will run until 2016 taking the partnership between the competition and its host broadcaster to its 21st year - one of the longest in professional sport. Sky are firmly part of the Rugby League family and this partnership with one of the world's leading broadcasters has been and will continue to be significant to the growth

of the sport, focusing on innovation and pushing the broadcasting boundaries.

The Co-operative Championships provided us with yet more thrilling Rugby League action in 2011 as Featherstone Rovers secured the Championship title by defeating Sheffield Eagles on Championship Finals Day after Keighley Cougars beat Workington Town in the Championship One Play-Off Final to earn promotion to the Championship.

Swinton Lions also earned their place in the Championship following their Championship One-winning campaign, their first league title in 25 years.

In the Northern Rail Cup, Leigh Centurions were victorious in the final at Bloomfield Road, Blackpool with victory over Halifax in a dramatic last-minute fashion.

Television coverage of the Championships was strong with Sky's coverage proving to be popular on a Thursday night. With a new television partner on board for the 2012 season the appeal of Rugby League is spreading to other TV networks. Premier Sports, who will broadcast matches in the Championships from 2012, have a great enthusiasm for the sport and we believe will be a committed partner in our quest for innovation in this area.

The sport at semi-professional level remains an integral part of the Rugby League family, providing professional playing opportunities for numerous athletes across the country.



The Carnegie Challenge Cup final at Wembley Stadium is one of the sport's showpiece events



📍 Rugby League World Cup delegates from the 14 qualifying nations meet at the Houses of Parliament, London

Many of these clubs operate in difficult conditions and set about providing their respective communities with teams to support in what are always challenging financial circumstances and the Championship competition will remain at the forefront of the sport's push for national appeal as we spread the sport to new areas of the country from 2013.

Internationally, 2011 was a pivotal year for the sport with England returning to Wembley Stadium for the first time since 1997 as part of the Gillette Four Nations tournament. Over 40,000 attended the double-header with England losing out to eventual champions Australia, and New Zealand defeating Wales. A peak audience of 3.35m viewers tuned into the double-header in the UK with millions of viewers watching around the world. With Wembley selected as the venue for the World Cup semi-finals in 2013, we can look forward with relish to a return visit to this magnificent stadium.

The final, played at Elland Road in Leeds, saw England valiant in defeat against favourites Australia. Despite the result, a capacity crowd showed both their support and appreciation for England, generating an intoxicating atmosphere which was shared with over 650,000 viewers on Sky Sports.

Under coach Steve McNamara, England continue to make excellent progress and with a two-year programme in place ahead of the Rugby League World Cup the national team will be aiming to make a huge impact on the tournament.

Tremendous progress was made on planning and preparations for the Rugby League World Cup over the past 12 months with many initiatives and plans now implemented as we approach the tournament. Never before have plans been at such an advanced stage for this tournament two years out.

The Rugby League World Cup 2013 presents the Rugby League in the UK with an opportunity to showcase the sport to new audiences. As the first major international sporting tournament after the Olympic and Paralympic Games, we are uniquely positioned to take advantage of the spike in interest we will see in attending and being part of major events.

During 2011 the tournament concluded its Host City bid process and awarded Host Status to 21 towns and cities. We now have a group of excited, committed and determined partners who will be an integral part of the tournament, hosting matches and teams. We also announced the venues for the major showpiece occasions of the tournament, with Cardiff's Millennium Stadium hosting the opening ceremony on Saturday October 26, Wembley hosting the semi-final double header and Old Trafford hosting the World Cup Final on November 30.

The 2012 Super League season saw the first year of the new licensing period after the RFL announced the 14 licences for the sport's elite competition up until the end of the 2014 season.

Licensing is delivering on its core objective of raising

standards. During 2011, we saw an increase in club-trained players, with the average number of under-21s in each club's 17-man squad increasing by 30 per cent year-on-year. It is the fifth consecutive year that the sport's elite competition has recorded rises in homegrown players and is further evidence of the investment all clubs have made in their talent identification and development programmes.

The licensed environment has led to an increasing focus on investment in facilities and two brand new stadiums will be home to Super League teams in 2012 when Salford move to the City of Salford Stadium and St Helens will move into their new home at Langtree Park. The quality of stadium stock has never been higher in the elite competition.

Whilst no one could possibly underestimate the impact of the financial downturn, licensing has helped the vast majority of clubs weather the toughest trading conditions most businesses have ever experienced.

Rugby League continues to grow in every region in the UK, which is testament to the outstanding work being delivered on a daily basis by our development teams.

The data shows that our community strategy and the interventions we make to grow participation in the sport are working. We will continue to work closely with Sport England and other agencies to concentrate effort and investment in the areas where we can be most effective whilst at all times remaining participant focused.

Finally, 2011 saw one of the most significant decisions taken by the sport in its history. The community game made the bold decision to move their season from its current place between September and April to a March to November season, aligning this part of the sport with the professional game, which made the move to summer in 1996 when Super League was created. This switch further demonstrates the innovative culture at the heart of our sport and

our commitment to a shift towards being participant-focused.

For the first time, the whole of Rugby League in this country, from Super League right down to the grassroots, will have an integrated summer-based playing calendar commencing in 2012.

It is an exciting time for our sport with the majority of teams across the country now playing within a new four-tier competition structure eventually linking Super League with the community game in a clear pyramid structure. From the start of the 2013 season, four new teams across the country join the professional ranks from Gloucester in the South West to Northampton and Hemel Hempstead, with one other club whose identity has yet to be confirmed. The sport will be further strengthened by meaningful geographical expansion. It will open up Rugby League to new players, spectators and attendees. It is an ambitious project but something I know will benefit the development of Rugby League across the country.

The next 12 months will be pivotal to the sport's success. As planning continues to deliver the best tournament in the history of the sport, the RFL must ensure that the legacy of staging such a prestigious event is felt beyond the event itself. We must and will put the sport in the best position to benefit from the raised profile that the tournament will bring, inspiring a nation to support the World Cup and England's efforts in winning their first major tournament since Great Britain won the World Cup in 1972.

We will continue to focus on the growth agenda, delivering successfully on the community game's switch to a summer season, the launch of the new Championship clubs in new areas and the continued focus on profile and visibility for the sport coupled with commercial return.

The RFL has a passionate, committed and dedicated team of staff who will continue to work tirelessly on behalf for all of its constituents to ensure that the sport thrives in what remain difficult economic times for professional sport.

Nigel Wood
Chief Executive Officer

DIRECTORS' PROFILES



MAURICE WATKINS - INTERIM CHAIRMAN

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 former director at 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 Coutts Bank, Chairman of the Greyhound Board for Great Britain, and Chairman of Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trusty Charity and the Interim Chairman of the Rugby Football League.

In 2011 Maurice was made a CBE for his fundraising role at the Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.



📍 The administrative home of the RFL is Red Hall in Leeds



In 2012 Maurice became the Interim Chairman of the RFL succeeding Richard Lewis, who left the organisation in the spring to take up a role at the All England Lawn Tennis Club.

NIGEL WOOD - CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Nigel has been a Director of the RFL for 11 years, being appointed Chief Executive Officer in 2007. During this time the RFL has increased turnover from £13.4m in 2007 to £27.0m in 2011 and has delivered a profit in each consecutive year. In addition, investment around the sport has reached record levels.

Nigel is also a Director of Super League (Europe) Ltd, a position he has held since the creation of the company in 1996. In May 2012, Nigel was

elected as Deputy Chairman of the Rugby League International Federation.

Nigel has been a strong advocate for innovation in the sport, including the introduction of the eight-team play-off system competed for by Super League clubs and the six-team play-off system for the Championships, the creation of Rugby League's Magic Weekend in 2007 and the staging of the International Origin Match between England and Exiles in 2011 and 2012.

Nigel joined the RFL in 2001 when he authored the RFL Strategic Review. The Review made over 120 recommendations, the most fundamental of which instigated

the RFL Governance Structure, the creation of the Independent Board of Directors and the re-unification of Super League (Europe) Ltd into the RFL.

Prior to working for the RFL, Nigel was Chief Executive of Super League Club Halifax Blue Sox and Deputy Head of Finance for BBC North. He also graduated from the University of Bradford in 1996 with an MBA in Business Administration.

Nigel played Rugby League for Bradford Northern and Halifax RLFC at junior levels and Huddersfield at reserve grade, together with a number of seasons playing Amateur Rugby League in the Pennine League, for whom he was also the Public Relations Officer.

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 normally meets once a year with representatives of the external auditors and is attended by the Director of Finance and ICT when required. The Audit Committee considers the Annual Report and Accounts before submission to RFL Council for approval. The Committee also reviews accounting practices to ensure compliance with accounting standards. In addition, it recommends the appointment of the external auditors for approval at the AGM, gives consideration to the scope of past and future audits, deals with matters arising from the audit and reviews 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 bench mark 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 committees 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 Maurice Watkins and includes Bob Stott and Clare Morrow. 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.



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 together with 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, Frank Roberts & Sons Ltd and First Milk 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 brings 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 award-winning tourism marketing agency Welcome to Yorkshire, and a Non-Executive Director of the Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. 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 sits on the Board of Sheffield Theatres and is also a trustee and school governor at Hollybank School in Mirfield.

THE GAME



Rugby League is the first British Sport...

...to introduce an **end of season play-off and Grand Final**. Originally in 1907 through to 1973 it was reintroduced in 1998 under its current guise and is now a major success



THE GAME SUPER LEAGUE: GARY HETHERINGTON

LEEDS RHINOS PROVE A SUPER LEAGUE SENSATION

GARY HETHERINGTON, the Leeds Chief Executive, was not alone in watching in awe as the Rhinos won their fifth Engage Super League title in eight years, in what was hailed as the club's greatest triumph.





SUPER LEAGUE FACTS:

- 1.8m people attended Super League in 2011
- Second most viewed national league on TV - 24m viewers



Leeds became the first team from outside the top three to win the Super League Grand Final, having finished the 27-match regular season in fifth place, 13 points behind Warrington Wolves, who had collected the League Leaders' Shield.

They had been as far back as eighth place after a 38-18 defeat at Catalan Dragons in Round 20, at which point the Rhinos' season was turned around in dramatic fashion, starting with a home win against Hull FC. They only lost one more league match at Harlequins and against Wigan Warriors in the Carnegie Challenge Cup final at Wembley, after which they proved to be unbeatable.

"We've a very special group at Leeds, where the last few years have been referred to as the golden decade at the club. Without doubt it has been the most successful period in the club's history," Hetherington said.

"At the heart of it has been a group of players, the likes of Kevin Sinfield, Danny McGuire and Rob Burrow, who have scaled the heights and gone through the lows together. That group, moreover, has achieved success with three different coaches in Tony Smith, Brian McClennan and Brian McDermott.

"The players who have been part of all the Grand Final successes at Leeds since 2004 say, however, that none was as exciting or rewarding as getting to lift the Engage Super League trophy in 2011.

"The fact that we had been so comprehensively written off made victory all the sweeter, although it is fair to say that we had hit a slump two-thirds of the way through the regular season. When we lost to Catalan in July, we dropped to eighth and were dismissed out of hand altogether in terms of the title.

"I equate the achievement to Roger Bannister breaking the four-minute mile in 1954. Once

he ducked under that barrier, others quickly followed. For many in Super League, Leeds' win from fifth place has provided the belief that they can follow suit. As well as being a milestone for Super League, it has further stimulated the competition."

Bradford Bulls triumphed from third place in 2005, with a run of eight straight wins going into the play-offs. Leeds built up a similar momentum as they squeezed into the top half of the table.

"We lost narrowly to Wigan at Wembley, but won every game after that," Hetherington said. "We got some real inspiration from our critics, who questioned the team's commitment, desire and character. There was a huge determination to prove those people wrong. A terrific DVD was put together of the Green Bay Packers winning the Super Bowl in American Football from a similarly hopeless position.

"Brian McDermott, our coach, introduced Rudyard Kipling's poem *If* to team meetings, particularly stressing the line about keeping your head when all about are losing theirs. We saw people outside losing their heads. Within the camp itself, there was a belief and a quiet assurance.

"We went into the Grand Final on the back of three play-off victories. In many ways the final was a microcosm of our season. We were behind for three-quarters of the match. St Helens had momentum at 16-8 up and, had they scored again, that would probably have been game, set and match.

"To come back from that and win 32-16 with four tries in the last 15 minutes showed enormous character. I remember Royce Simmons, the St Helens coach, saying afterwards that they'd not lost the game but that Leeds had won it. For Kevin Sinfield to lift the trophy for a fifth time as captain was a great moment for him and a special group of players, who will have legendary status at the Leeds club when they eventually depart."

FAMILY VALUES SAW SEAN RISE TO THE CUP CHALLENGE

When **SEAN O'LOUGHLIN** raised the Carnegie Challenge Cup trophy aloft in the 2011 final, the Wigan Warriors captain felt the hand of history on his shoulder.

Sean O'Loughlin's father, Keiron, was in the crowd at Wembley to see his son lift the famous silver trophy, which he had picked up as a Widnes player in the 1984 Challenge Cup final.

"It was a special moment," Sean said. "It's a competition that means so much to me personally, the Wigan club and the whole of Rugby League. Dad having won it all those years previously, I felt that historic link."

Wigan beat Leeds Rhinos 28-18 in what was acknowledged as the best final played at the new stadium since Wembley reopened in 2007.

It was Wigan's first return to Wembley since 1998 in the Challenge Cup, which they won eight consecutive years from 1988 to 1995.

"As a club, Wigan were very conscious that it'd been a long time since the team had been at Wembley, especially having missed out on several years at

Wigan Warriors' captain **Sean O'Loughlin** holds aloft the Carnegie Challenge Cup trophy

the new stadium," O'Loughlin said.

"I'd been part of that Wigan supporters army in travelling to London to watch Wigan in Challenge Cup finals. For many people in the town, they'd been starved of that opportunity for a long time.

"The Challenge Cup is written into the fabric of the Wigan club. As a supporter and a player, you are very conscious of great past achievements and triumphs, particularly those at Wembley.

CHALLENGE CUP FACTS:

- 2011 Challenge Cup attendances were the highest in seven years - 240,329 fans
- Viewing figures on BBC Television for Rugby League's oldest and most prestigious knockout competition were excellent with a 21.3 per cent increase on 2010 and a magnificent 27 per cent higher than they were in 2009
- Nearly two million viewers watched the showpiece final with the other eight televised games on the BBC attracting an average audience of one million





we just managed to keep our noses in front, until Tommy Leuluai's deciding try near the end.

"The great moment for me in the match was seeing Sam Tomkins set up his brother Joel for one of the great Wembley tries. I'd seen Martin Offiah score spectacular tries like that for Wigan at Wembley, but to see what Joel did, from my perspective on the pitch, was really special.

"When I got to lift the trophy, I was conscious, too, of my very privileged position captaining the club. There was relief, too. We had gone there and achieved what we set out to do. All that hard work would have come to nothing had we lost. I suppose that's the magic of the Challenge Cup."

"The whole Challenge Cup run in 2011 felt special. We were looking as a club to back up our achievement of winning the Super League Grand Final the previous season.

"The draw didn't make things easy for us. To reach Wembley, we had to beat Bradford Bulls, Warrington Wolves, then St Helens in the semi-finals.

"There was a big expectation for us to go down to London and do well. That's what Wigan teams did in the past. The build-up itself was incredible, with the fans seeing us off and urging us to win. A lot of them were used to seeing Wigan at Wembley, but there was a whole new generation who hadn't.

"Especially for the Wigan lads in the team, there was a particular recognition of the Challenge Cup's importance to the club. The Super League Grand Final comes right at the end of the season, when the best team gets all the plaudits. but the Challenge Cup is the competition I grew up watching at Wembley and on television.

"I am a big believer in the history of the Challenge Cup. There's a particular excitement to the competition and playing

in the final was an experience that was like no other.

"We were favourites, more on the basis that Leeds had not been playing that well up to that point. We knew, though, that they would put in a big performance which, of course, they did.

"We got off to a good start. Leeds began to pull us back, but

⬇ Leeds Rhinos' **Danny McGuire** watches agonisingly as the ball squirms free

⬆ Wigan Warriors' **Sam Tomkins** relished a first Challenge Cup victory since 2002



CONSISTENCY THE KEY FOR ROVERS' ROARING RETURN

The 2011 campaign marked the culmination of two seasons of remarkable consistency for Featherstone Rovers and their coach **DARYL POWELL**.

Rarely in professional sport can a team have gone through two years losing just three league matches - but that is exactly what Powell's side achieved.

Then at the Halliwell Jones Stadium in October - the scene of their heart-breaking golden point Grand Final defeat to Halifax a year earlier - Rovers finally realised their dream of lifting the Co-operative Championship title.

Featherstone produced a near perfect performance in Warrington to beat rivals Sheffield Eagles 40-4, with their influential scrum-half Liam Finn at the hub of their triumph with 20 points.

For experienced coach Powell, who finished the year as assistant to Steve McNamara with the senior England side, it was just reward for two seasons of incredible hard work.

"To be so consistent and maintain the standards we had set the previous year was exceptional," Powell said.

"I thought to go through the 2011 league season and only lose one game, and it was our first, was an outstanding achievement by the players.

"We were delighted that we were able as a group of players to kick on from the year before when we didn't quite finish the job in the Grand Final against Halifax.

● Featherstone Rovers' **John Hepworth** touches down in the Championship Grand Final victory over Sheffield Eagles

"There has been a lot said about needing to lose a Grand Final before you can win one. It happened to Halifax and then to us, so maybe there's something in that.

"To only lose three games over the course of 40 league matches is a real achievement for this group of players, and it was pretty special to finish it off by going through the play-offs undefeated, and winning comfortably in the Grand Final.

"It meant a lot to everyone at the club."

For a club with the ambitions of Rovers, the Grand Final victory extended beyond simply being a first-team achievement.





Recent years have seen them pride themselves on developing every aspect of the club, with an ultimate goal of challenging for a Super League licence in the next round of applications.

The club has pushed back boundaries in its innovative community work in the local area, and has made extensive plans to develop their Big Fellas Stadium home.

Featherstone have also worked tirelessly on their development system, and 2011 saw their most high profile product yet, three-quarter Zak Hardaker, play a starring role in the Super League Grand Final for Leeds Rhinos.

"Apart from the under-20s team we've got the same development pathway as the Super League clubs, which is a fair statement in itself," said Powell, who has long been a champion of Rugby League development.

"Danny Evans is doing a great job with our Under-23s and works very hard, and off the field we're getting better all the time.

"But we're still looking to develop all areas, because while we are growing as a club we don't want to stagnate and stand still.

"It takes a lot of work to maintain the standards we've set ourselves and now better what we've done.

"But Featherstone people can be pretty critical when they want

to be, and it doesn't take them long to tell you if you've fallen off the horse a bit."

Featherstone's success on and off the field in recent years means that they are now being set by many as the benchmark for Championship clubs, and Powell knows that will bring its own challenges in itself.

"We're on an upward spiral at the moment, and you want to

↑ **Featherstone Rovers** claim the Championship crown

↓ Featherstone's Head Coach **Daryl Powell** and Captain **Stuart Dickens**

maintain that momentum that you've built for yourself," he added.

"That makes 2012 a tough challenge for us, but we've been showing really big signs that we're in a good place again.

"It's a culture that you set yourself, to win games playing in a certain style, and that's really important.

"We've been able to grow that culture with this group of players."



SWINTON LIONS ROAR ONCE AGAIN

A famous Rugby League club returned to its days of silverware again in 2011, when **SWINTON LIONS** secured the Co-operative Championship One title.

Swinton is one of the most decorated clubs in the sport's history, yet it hadn't tasted ultimate success since lifting the old Division Two Premiership at Old Trafford in 1987.

But that all changed in 2011, as experienced coach Steve McCormack guided his side to the Championship One title and promotion to the higher level.

For Director of Rugby Paul Kidd, a lifelong Swinton supporter who has been integral to the club's revival alongside dad and chairman John in recent years, that provided a special moment.

"It meant an awful lot to everyone at Swinton Lions, because it had taken a lot of hard work and a long time to achieve that goal," he said.

"It certainly isn't easy to get out of Championship One, and it was a bit of a dog fight between the teams at times last year.

➔ Celebrations as **Swinton Lions** lift the Co-operative Championship One trophy

⬇️ Trophy success capped a fine season for **the Lions**



"It was really pleasing to come through that.

"We got off to a fantastic start last season, and in the end that's what got us through.

"A lot of people expected us to go up quicker after that start, but in the end we crept over the line a bit because other teams came into it.

"Steve McCormack was a big part in our success.

"It was his experience that attracted a few players to the club,

and that played a massive part in us winning promotion."

The club now has major plans to use the success as a springboard to further progress in the new-look Championship from 2013.

The Lions spent 2011 playing at neighbours Salford's Willows home, and after a year at the Leigh Sports Village, they hope to move to a stadium of their own in 2013.

"With the stadium plans we have on the table, we felt it was crucial that we would be playing at the highest level possible," Kidd said.

"One thing that 2011 did show us was the potential that the club has got when we're playing back in the city.

"We had some really good crowds which were very pleasing for us, especially because it was a bit of a gamble for us to leave Sedgley Park.

"That gamble definitely paid off and the potential is now there for the club to grow and grow."



ROBBIE SIGNS OFF WITH NORTHERN RAIL CUP SUCCESS

ROBBIE HUNTER-PAUL battled back from injury to win one last trophy in the 2011 Northern Rail Cup final towards the end of the New Zealander's celebrated 17-year playing career.



Robbie Hunter-Paul's Leigh Centurions beat Halifax 20-16 in a classic final in Blackpool that was won by a last-gasp try for Leigh by Tom Armstrong.

For Hunter-Paul, a Northern Rail Cup ambassador, it was his second experience of lifting the Northern Rail Cup and provided Leigh with the opportunity to apply for a Super League licence in 2014.

"It was Leigh's Wembley and it meant everything to the club," Hunter-Paul said. "I was recovering from injury and targeted that final. I knew what it was like to win the Northern Rail Cup with Salford City Reds a couple of years before and the whole significance of the occasion.

"It is a competition that has built year-on-year and the atmosphere at Bloomfield Road is special. My family was there and, despite the rain, had big

smiles on their faces. Everyone had a ball. It's a great family day out. My first final came at Wembley in the 1996 Challenge Cup final and the energy I felt in Blackpool that day was exactly the same.

"I'd been out in my capacity as a Northern Rail Cup ambassador in one of the local Blackpool schools and I went to say hello to those guys and wish them good luck. They did me a favour because it allowed me to briefly switch my focus. Everyone was keyed up.

"Everyone at Leigh got caught up in the excitement of it. The impact on the community was huge. There was the added value of ticking the Super League application box at the same time, which only served to heighten the interest.

"Leigh hadn't won any silverware the year before and this provided a huge opportunity to do something special. We

Leigh Centurions were crowned Northern Rail Cup winners after beating Halifax in the final at Blackpool

didn't feel so much that we were doing it for the team or even the club but the town itself, one with a great and proud Rugby League history. In being my last winner's medal, the 2011 Northern Rail Cup proved especially memorable."



A LICENCE TO THRILL

Widnes Vikings Chief Executive **JULIE GASKELL** has seen first hand how beneficial the Super League licensing system can be for clubs.

Julie Gaskell was a newcomer to the sport when she was handed the reins at the Vikings in August 2010, and was charged with overseeing the club's bid to rejoin the top flight.

She had worked in significant sporting events such as the Commonwealth Games in the past, as well as being the Head of Corporate PR for United Utilities.

Gaskell admits that presenting a successful Super League licence application was a considerable challenge, but feels that it had tremendous benefits for the Vikings as a sporting organisation.

She said: "I absolutely understand and agree with the principles of licensing.

"The game wants to improve its facilities and standards, and licensing allows it to create a brand that is the right one for the sport.

"The experience of filling the application in is a good one for the clubs themselves.

"It makes you look at every area of your club in a more professional way as you go through the entire process, particularly if you are getting promoted from one league to another, as we were.

"It also helps you develop things like the way you work with your stadium partners, and there is a cherished prize at the end of it in a Super League licence.



📍 **Langtree Park**, home of St Helens

📍 **City of Salford Stadium** was another new arena for Super League

📍 Widnes Vikings' captain **Jon Clarke** at the Stobart Stadium



"There are a lot of people there who really love this sport and were willing to help.

"It's been a big challenge, but you meet great people in Rugby League and it's a great game."

Recent years have seen them pride themselves on developing every aspect of the club, with an ultimate goal of challenging for a Super League licence in the next round of applications.

LICENSING FACTS:

- 2011 saw the second phase of the licensing process
- 14 clubs received a three-year licence to participate in Super League from 2012
- Widnes Vikings became the newest Super League club after fulfilling the licence criteria
- Licensing delivers on raising standards, financial stability, improving spectator facilities and the number of home-grown players
- Licensing has delivered two new stadiums in the last 12 months: Langtree Park (St Helens) and Salford City Stadium (Salford City Reds), and improved facilities at The Halliwell Jones Stadium (Warrington Wolves), Craven Park (Hull KR) and Stade Gilbert Brutus (Catalan Dragons)



"Licensing can allow clubs to re-invent themselves and do certain things differently."

As a newcomer to the sport, Gaskell was also heartened by the support she and Widnes received from several sources during the process.

"The RFL certainly supported me, and allowed me to ask all kinds of naïve questions that perhaps someone who had been around the game for a long time wouldn't ask," she added.

"I also had support from people at other clubs, particularly locally.

NEW BLOOD TO INVIGORATE PROFESSIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE

"This is potentially the most important thing that's happened in Rugby League in 100 years." That's the verdict of **RALPH RIMMER**, the RFL's Chief Operating Officer, on the Championship Review process.

"We looked at what the Championship was, and we looked at what we needed to achieve," says RFL Chief Operating Officer Rimmer.

"We needed to bring life into the competition, and what followed on from that was a comprehensive consultation with all parts of the game - coaches, players, administrators, fans, media and sponsors. It was a really thorough exercise, and the outcome was to be the way forward for the Championship so that we could achieve what we need to achieve.

"Some people may disagree with some of the outcomes of it, but they couldn't disagree with how comprehensive the exercise was, and that's helped us drive some difficult issues forward."

Northampton Rebels, Hemel Stags and University of

Gloucestershire All Golds were the first three clubs to have their entry into Championship One confirmed, with one more to follow in the summer of 2012.

Rimmer adds: "If we continued to do what we were doing, then we weren't going anywhere specific. This is a coordinated and considered approach to expansion where we're going to introduce four new teams together to give them a safety net. We wanted to make sure these teams would be competitive.

"It's a completely holistic approach to how we might develop the Championship geographically, and therefore open up new players, spectators and attendees in the process. We want to develop more pools of talent.

"Each time we've announced a new club I've asked them to present themselves to the Championship table, and they've

NEW SIDES:

The following clubs will enter Championship One in the 2013 season.

- Northampton Rebels
- Hemel Stags
- University of Gloucestershire All Golds
- Fourth team TBC

brought new ideas. When you've got the same people sitting around the same table, the newer clubs can open some eyes. They have new ways of doing things and they're making other clubs think again."

He continues: "Not only will we unearth four teams in all this, but we've obviously done due diligence on others, and some more teams are now being identified for 2015.

"If by 2017 there are six new teams in professional Rugby League, with three in Championship One, two in the Championship and one knocking on the door of Super League, then we've completely changed the face of Rugby League.

"It's huge. Continually looking inwards would have been the wrong thing. It's not skin deep, it's a really complicated strategy for a lot of high level reasons."

↓ The **Hemel Stags**, **Gloucestershire All Golds** and **Northampton Rebels** will be joining Championship One for 2013



ENGLAND



Rugby League is the first British Sport...

...to have a **black international coach** when Ellery Hanley coached Great Britain: 1994

FOR CLUB AND COUNTRY! ENGLAND TAKE BIG STRIDES FORWARD AT ALL LEVELS

The concept of Brand England is one championed by **STEVE McNAMARA**, the England coach, for whom a successful 2011 programme was another significant step on the road to Rugby League World Cup 2013 and beyond.

"The brand is a vital part of our England philosophy," said Steve McNamara. "To be successful as a team, we need a strong player base and strong brand, which we further developed throughout 2011. We have deliberately fostered a two-team mentality, for club and country.

"For England, the England Knights, Under-18s and Under-16s set ups, the philosophy is one of belonging to two teams. You are Wigan and England, Leeds and England, St Helens and England, and so on. When we convene, we are one team or club coming back together."

A year-round programme that sees the Elite Training Squad and other England squads meeting up regularly has brought the players closer together under the Brand England banner, combined with establishment of the teams' training base at Loughborough University.

"We don't have an actual home like Twickenham or Lord's, but we have created an identity for ourselves in an elite facility at Loughborough. That is our England home now and where we meet up and prepare. The benefit of Loughborough being home to us was of huge importance throughout 2011," McNamara said.

In reaching the 2011 Four Nations final against Australia,

McNamara also stressed the importance of the inaugural mid-season fixture against the Exiles, which represented the cream of overseas talent in the Super League.

"It was a good year for us development-wise because all the things we had spoken about in 2010 were implemented and fully embraced, one of which was the introduction of the Exiles game," McNamara said.

"If we are going to be successful in international tournaments, our decision-making needs to be tested under the most extreme pressures. That is what the Exiles fixture was designed for, to come as close as possible to Test match conditions. The fixture at Headingley Carnegie Stadium did just that.

"The former Australia forward Craig Fitzgibbon told me that in his time in the Super League at Hull FC that the England-Exiles game was the toughest he experienced. Statistics from the GPS units worn by the players underlined that the intensity levels were well above what you see in the Super League and just below the levels in internationals against Australia and New Zealand. There were more play-the-balls and the ball was in play much longer.

"The fact that we lost was disappointing, but the fact also that the game was in the balance

ENGLAND FACTS:

- England defeated world champions New Zealand to reach the Four Nations Final, narrowly losing to Australia in the final at a packed Elland Road

- The return of international Rugby League to Wembley for the first time in 14 years resulted in massive media awareness on the international stage and a 'feelgood' factor amongst fans

- Sold out venues for three of England's matches in the Four Nations

- The tournament was watched by more people than have ever turned out for a Four Nations tournament in this country, with an aggregate attendance of over 128,000

- Record shirt sales with fans buying in excess of 10,000 new England shirts in 2011



and went down to the last 30 seconds was just the pressure we wanted to see replicated in the fixture. The concept was great, the players from both sides fully bought into it, and I was fully supportive of the fixture being extended to a two-match series in 2012, in further assisting our preparations towards the World Cup."

The New Zealand-born Rangji Chase's qualification for England under the three-year residency rule stimulated widespread debate following the Castleford Tigers player's selection by McNamara for the Four Nations series.

"Make no mistake that the identity of England is of paramount importance, but we live in a world now in which some players do qualify for different countries," McNamara said. "If players approach us and show a desire for England that we then determine is in the interests of everyone, then we are not going to shirk that opportunity to be successful internationally.

"Virtually all aspects of our preparations for the Four





Nations were spot on. We took the opportunity to go to France for a warm-up game that helped in our first encountering Wales, then moving on to face Australia at Wembley, which was a hugely successful return to the stadium for the international game.

"A great win over New Zealand took us into the final. We were second best on the night to Australia, but the way we stayed in the game for long periods, combined with our spirit and tenacity, bodes well for the future."

Continued growth of the player pathway, with England at the top of the pyramid, is a further source of encouragement for McNamara. "The more players we are now seeing moving into the bottom of the pyramid and working their way up the better in terms of quality and numbers. We have worked hard to align all the England squads and age groups to share the same ethos moving towards World Cup year in 2013."

🕒 **Steve McNamara** guided England to the Four Nations final in 2011

👥 **Brand England** has seen the players brought closer together

📈 A record number of **England** shirts were sold during 2011



ENGLAND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: DAVE ELLIOTT

TEAM ENGLAND CONTINUES TO DEVELOP

For National Development coach **DAVE ELLIOTT**, the 2011 season signalled the beginning of a year of preparation ahead of 2012's Academy tour of Australia.

While on-field performances fluctuated for both the England Academy and England Youth sides during the past 12 months, preparations for 2012 and continued off-field progress have laid the foundations for continued future success.

For the Academy, an impressive 28-19 victory over France in June was followed by a narrow 22-20 defeat at the hands of the Australian Institute of Sport in December, while the Youth side avenged a 19-18 defeat to France with a comprehensive 58-14 victory against their Gaelic neighbours second time out.

"The Academy was our focus in 2011 to give our players the best preparation possible ahead of 2012 and our tour of Australia will see the side play a two Test series against the Australian Schoolboys," said Dave Elliott.

"We played a young side against the AIS to give them the experience of playing in a high-intensity environment and while the result was disappointing, the experience will prove to be hugely beneficial going into an intense series in Australia.

"Our Youth players have also continued to make huge strides in both performance levels on the pitch and maturity off the field. It is never easy to play in your first international fixture and to show the strength of character required to rebound from a one-point defeat to secure an empathic victory is very encouraging."

While 2012 promises to be a year full of potential and promise for both the Youth



and Academy teams, Elliott has also been pleased to see the links between the junior and senior national sides continue to strengthen.

"The player pathway that was introduced by England coach Steve McNamara has given all our players a clear link from youth representation to senior representation and that gives them a vision of how they can progress," said Elliott.

"It's been very rewarding for us to see players like Rhys Evans make the progression from the Academy squad into the England Knights programme in the past year and we're confident that more players will make the transition in the forthcoming year as well."

For the England Women, the past 12 months have coincided with a period of transformation, with a new coaching set-up headed by Steve McCormack and a new-look player roster joining the existing ranks.

A comfortable 2-0 series win over France at Easter provided England Women with their first challenge under new leadership and signalled the first way-mark in the build-up to the 2013 World Cup.

In the wheelchair arena, England recorded a dramatic 34-32 victory over France at Leigh Sports Village to continue their preparation for the 2013 Wheelchair World Cup when the national team will be looking to defend the crown they won in 2008.

INTERNATIONAL FACTS:

- England Academy defeat Australia 2-0 - first series victory over Australia in six years
- Great Britain Students win Test series 2-0 - first ever series victory over Australia
- England Women defeat their French counterparts 2-0 in Test series
- England Wheelchair team defeat France 2-0 in series

HOME SUPPORT PUSHES ENGLAND TO THE BRINK OF FOUR NATIONS GLORY

As England captain, **JAMIE PEACOCK** was a key figure on the international scene since the 2000 World Cup, but the Four Nations in 2011 represented a watershed for him in terms of public support for England.

Whadn't experienced the levels of crowd support before that we got in the tournament, from Wembley to full houses at the KC Stadium in Hull and Elland Road in Leeds for the final against Australia. It was an amazing feeling," Jamie Peacock said.

"It is not just the players, coaches and administrators who have a part to play in growing international Rugby League, but the public in buying into the international game. The return to Wembley, after Great Britain had last played there in 1997, played a massive part in inspiring the support we received.

"Singing the national anthem at Wembley and playing Australia there again after such a long interlude provided a huge boost to the national team and the Club England mentality we have. That is why it is so good to know that the 2013 World Cup organisers are taking both semi-

finals to Wembley as a double-header.

"I've always loved playing for England in Hull and the passion and fervour of the fans at the KC Stadium was nothing short of astonishing on a night when we managed to beat the Kiwis, while the hairs stood on the back of my neck at times, such was the atmosphere at Elland Road."

The tournament began for England with a comprehensive win over Wales in Leigh before moving on to Wembley where England ran Australia close. The momentum of that performance was carried through to the encounter with world champions New Zealand at the KC Stadium, which England won in qualifying for the final against Australia.

"No-one expected us to reach the final. We went into the tournament ranked third behind Australia and New Zealand, so getting to Elland Road was



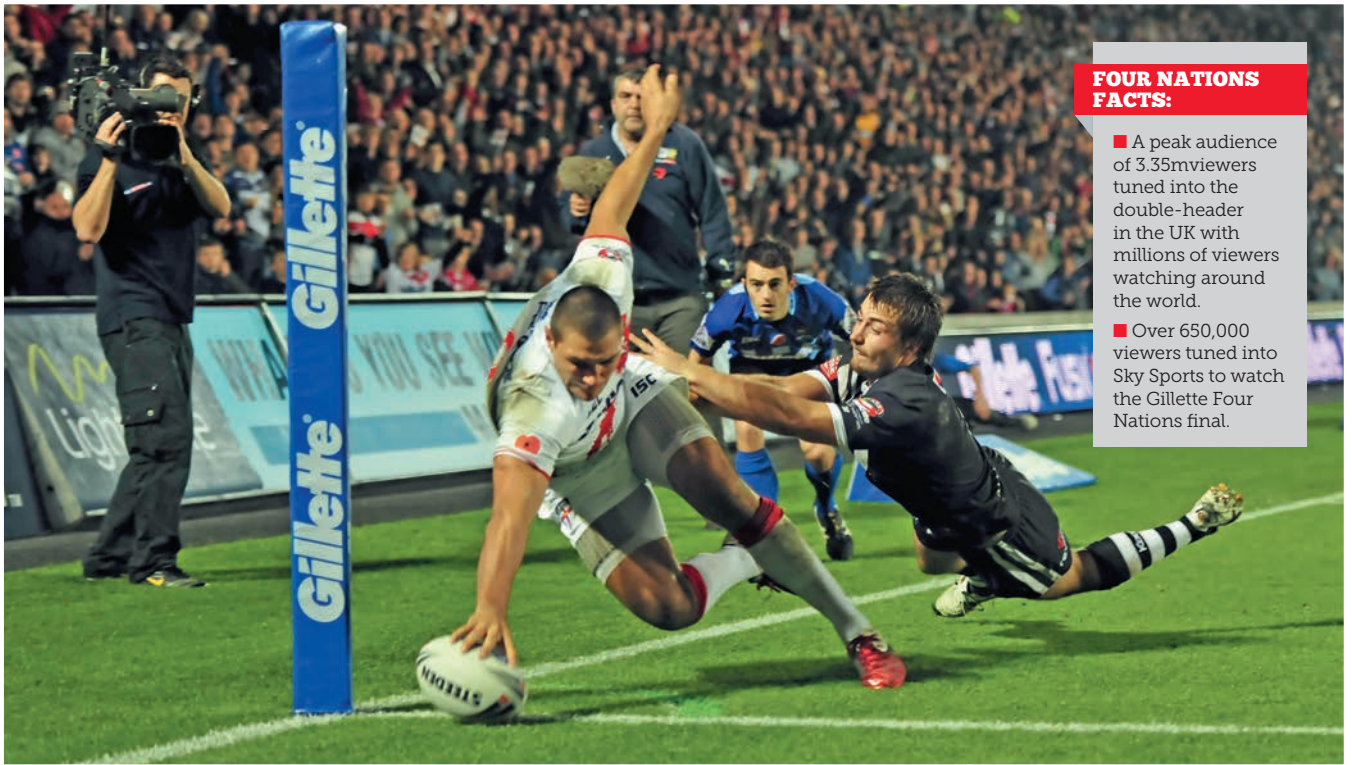
⬇️ The 2011 Four Nations final was Australia captain **Darren Lockyer's** last Rugby League game

⬇️ **Jamie Peacock** leads England out against Australia at Elland Road

viewed as a success from the outside. Within the team, though, we were disappointed not to kick on again in the final," Peacock said.

"We improved week by week up to facing New Zealand, for who we came up with our best performance a week before





**FOUR NATIONS
FACTS:**

- A peak audience of 3.35m viewers tuned into the double-header in the UK with millions of viewers watching around the world.
- Over 650,000 viewers tuned into Sky Sports to watch the Gillette Four Nations final.



the final. Australia had a lot to play for with it being their great captain Darren Lockyer's last game of Rugby League. Their players so badly wanted to win in sending him off on a high.

"Had we made the most of our opportunities in the game, we would have given ourselves a better chance of winning. But looking at the tournament overall, England made some big strides. I think the biggest was in the performance of our backs. It has been said for a number of years that we have the forwards

to compete at the highest level, but every one of the backs put their hand up in the series.

"It was a tournament in which Sam Tomkins and Ryan Hall, especially, proved themselves world class performers, not simply great players on a weekly basis in the Super League. Guys who come in from the NRL like Jack Reed and Gareth Widdop also played especially well in an England team that is going from strength to strength as we continue to build towards the World Cup in 2013."

① England backs **Ryan Hall** and **Sam Tomkins** excelled in the Four Nations series

➔ **Jamie Peacock** led England heroically from 2008 to 2012

MATCH OFFICIALS



Rugby League is the first British Sport...

...to introduce Video Referees and Technology: 1996

FITTER MATCH OFFICIALS, QUICKER VIDEO DECISIONS, AND FEWER PENALTIES

The appliance of science further improved the work and efficiency of the **RFL'S MATCH OFFICIALS** department in 2011, according to Stuart Cummings.

Referees wearing GPS units and help in training from RFL technical adviser Jon Sharp, the former Huddersfield Giants coach who has also worked with Great Britain, Hull FC and Crusaders, have served to boost fitness levels among match officials.

Match Officials Director Cummings said: "Having a former Super League coach as part of our coaching staff transformed a lot of our training. The drills are game-related in a better, more appropriate way. Jon even helped improve the ball handling skills. We don't drop it as much now.

"Jon's input has proved invaluable, in conjunction with his work on the match review panel. Combined with the GPS units giving us data on the movement of referees in matches, we have been able to work on different energy

MATCH OFFICIALS FACTS:

- In 2011 10 different referees were used during the season
- Two part-time referees were used
- A squad of 16 TJs were used including three full-time referees and eight Championship referees



systems, increase the intensity in training and better replicate match pressure.

"With Jon on board, we could best identify trends in matches and transfer that to our practice and training drills. We also increased our full-time squad from seven to eight officials, with Tim Roby's introduction for the 2011 season increasing the competition. There's new blood coming through and we will continue to add to the numbers.

"Ian Smith retired as a referee at the end of 2010 and took charge of the Championship referees, as well as working as a video referee and helping out with training."

In the Engage Super League in 2011, the average time taken for a video referee to arrive at his decision was reduced from 83 seconds to 56.1 seconds. An average 15.28 penalties per game compared with 15.73 the previous season.

➤ Improved fitness drills and a **scientific approach** have allowed officials to get more decisions right quicker

➤ **Phil Bentham** was one of the officials to benefit from RFL technical adviser Jon Sharp's involvement



PENALTY ANALYSIS:

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
TOTAL PENALTIES	2,503	2,251	2,474	2,618	2,806	2,727	2,974	2,889
AVERAGE PER ROUND	86.31	77.62	85.31	96.96	100.21	101	110.15	107
AVERAGE PER GAME	14.38	12.94	14.21	16.16	16.70	14.43	15.73	15.28

VIDEO REFEREE:

	TELEVISED GAMES	DECISIONS REFERRED	AVE REFERRALS PER GAME	AVERAGE TIME PER DECISION
2010	68	215	2.8	83 seconds
2011	90	292	2.46	56.1 seconds



A study in to referee consistency by Dr Bill Gerrard, Professor of Sport Management and Finance at Leeds University Business School, found a marked decrease from 11.6 per cent to 6.9 per cent in extreme deviations in individual team performances between 2010 and 2011.

"The principle conclusion of the frequency of penalties being awarded in Super League 2011 is that there has been no statistically significant inconsistency between referees, but there have been systemic differences between teams," Dr Gerrard's report said.

⬆️ **Steve Ganson** signals to stop the clock in a Leeds Rhinos game

➡️ **Phil Bentham** was in charge of the 2011 Carnegie Challenge Cup final



MATCH OFFICIALS LAWS COMMITTEE: BLAKE SOLLY

LAWS COMMITTEE

The 2011 campaign saw the implementation of a key decision-making board when the RFL launched its new **LAWS COMMITTEE**.

The sport's governing body decided to introduce a committee that could consult a wide cross-section of rugby league when looking to change the game's rules, or the interpretation of rules.

Blake Solly, the RFL Director of Standards and Licensing, explained: "The Laws Committee was set up after suggestions from Super League and Championship meetings over about 12 months.

"Until we set up a forum for the development, implementation and interpretation of new rules, it was simply being decided by the Super League coaches.

"Nobody else was really having a say, and those 14 coaches all had their own vested interests for putting forward and proposing new interpretations of the rules.

"That was not good for the sport as a whole, and we felt it would be better

to get a wider range of people around a table to discuss these kind of issues.

"It needed to be a more representative cross-section of the whole game, so we created a sub-committee of the RFL board, with Nigel Wood being the Director from the RFL chairing that.

"The England Coach Steve McNamara then represented all of the coaches, we had Stuart Cummings representing all the match officials, and elected representatives from the Super League and Championship chief executives.

"We also had the players represented, with two being drawn from the England training squad, to allow them to put their views over as well.

"That gave us a committee comprising players, coaches, match officials and administrators, providing a reflection of the sport as a whole

rather than just the Super League coaches."

Other governing bodies, including the NRL in Australia, have spoken about establishing similar committees in the future, and Solly feels that the move has been a considerable success.

He added: "The major changes that we have made to date include the move to 10 interchanges from 12, the handing back of the ball to a player if he passes after held has been called, and the exclusion of the corner flag when considering tries in the corner.

"All the clubs and coaches have the opportunity to put forward proposals, and after the committee discusses those, they then report to the RFL council.

"It's an on-going agenda, and there has been a lot of consultation with clubs over the various rules.

"We think it's working very well."

First football code to have a **sponsored trophy**: 1962. Mackeson Trophy for club with best scoring record in 1962-63 season.

Have a **black international captain** when Clive Sullivan led Great Britain in 1972 to win the Rugby League World Cup

substitutes: 1964.

The first National Governing Body to break into the Stonewall Champions and Workplace Index and **listed in the Stonewall Top 100 employers**: 2010

First football code to allow

Themed Round: 2011 ("State of Mind" in 2011 with another in 2012)
 Introduce **Licences** instead of an annual promotion and relegation model: 2009

The **first known black professional** rugby league player was Lucius Banks, who made his debut for Hunslet in January 1912 however a photograph of the 1903 Pendlebury suggests earlier. Football records show the professional game had black players in the 1800s.

Introduce a **Salary Cap**: 1998
 Have a **black international manager** when Abi Ekoru managed Great Britain: 2006

Have a **British Asian represent their country in any football code** when Ikram Butt played for England against Wales in 1995.

Introduce a **full round of fixtures to one venue** and have a 'Magic Weekend': 2007

Have a **black international coach** when Ellery Hanley coached Great Britain in 1994

George Bennett first **black Rugby League international** when he played for Wales in 1935, over 40 years before Viv Anderson played for England Football in 1978 and the first black cricketer for England appeared in 1981. Jimmy Peters played rugby union for Barrow and St Helens. He remained the first and only black England rugby union international until 1988.

Change the whole season of the professional game from winter to summer: 1996

Have a **female president of a professional sports National Governing Body**. Kath Hetherington 1995.

Rugby League is the first sport in the United Kingdom to play professionally on a **Sunday**: 1966

Have a professional sports club play in **shirts with an anti homophobia message** on: 2011 (Sheffield Eagles)

Introduce an **end of season play-off and Grand Final**. Originally in 1907 through to 1973 it was reintroduced in 1998 under its current guise and is now a major success

Introduce **Video Referees and Technology**: 1996
 First of any football code to use **floodlights** for league matches in 1932 (first league game under lights for soccer was in 1956).

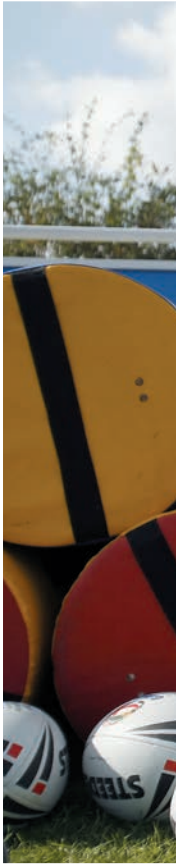
Have a **black CEO of a professional sports club**: 2000 (Abi Ekoru, CEO of Bradford Bulls):

PERFORMANCE & COACHING



Rugby League is the first British Sport...

...to introduce a **Salary Cap**: 1998;
and the first football code to allow **substitutes**: 1964.



PERFORMANCE & COACHING **PLAYER PATHWAY: JON ROBERTS & BJ MATHER**

PLAYING TALENT PRODUCTION LINE TAKES MASSIVE STRIDES FORWARD

A year of continued growth in talent identification and nurturing of that talent through the **PLAYER PATHWAY** to international level was topped off by England successfully reaching the 2011 Four Nations final.



The number of players accessing the talent development pathway increased by more than 1,000 to 5,156, ahead of target, while the number of active and qualified coaches reached 4,819, comfortably exceeding expectations over a four-year period.

"Massive progress has been made. It's an evolutionary process, with greater connectivity with the community game the next stage of growth," said RFL Director of Performance and Coaching Jon Roberts.

Professional clubs are now at the heart of the player pathway with a wider base of players across more parts of the country and access to a higher standard of coaching. Of professional coaches, 91 per cent are engaged on the RFL Coach Education Programme at Level Three or Level Four qualification.

"My role is very much overseeing the strategy in putting together the generic performance and sports science and ensuring its coherence in relating back to the rugby side," Roberts said.

HOMEGROWN TALENT

Figures from the RFL show that during the 27 rounds of Super League, the average number of Under-21s in each club's 17-man squad was almost three (2.72), a 30 per cent increase year on year.

It is the fifth consecutive year that the sport's elite competition has recorded rises in homegrown players and is further evidence of the investment all clubs have made in their talent identification and development programmes.

"One of the key points of a fully aligned pathway is that if you are a talented 11-year-old you can see how it is possible to get all the way up to England level. Each athlete will find their appropriate level, whether it be in Super League, the Championship or at a community club.

"The process began in 2008, when a lot of the talent pathway was run by the RFL outside of the club structure. It involved a change of philosophy towards players being developed at their community clubs, then in a professional environment through clubs' Academies and expanding scholarship structure.

"The impact has been a widening of the talent base, with those players having the environments and level of coaching to enable them to flourish. The player pathway exists across all regions and the RFL runs regional Academies in Cumbria, the North East and the Midlands to support those players beyond 16 into a professional arena.

"Players naturally want to improve their performance and seeing the pathway through to a higher level is also motivating more youngsters to play the sport. It is important to widen Rugby League's gene pool and we've already seen players from the likes of London get into the England squad."

RFL Head of Player Development BJ Mather, who is responsible for delivering the player pathway, said: "I'm fortunate in having such a skilled, experienced and passionate team in Dave Rotheram, Dave Elliott and Chris Chapman in helping nurture the talent we have coming through.



"The first step along the pathway is provided by the 30 Service Areas, which first see the players who have been recommended or identified. The next step is the regional programme, with players then moving on to scholarship programmes or club Academies, which also run alongside the England Youth and Academy programmes.

"Until 17, players remain linked to their community club, with an extension in 2012 of the dual registration system that exists in the Super League and Championship between the professional and community games, whereby Academy players at professional clubs can be

released to play for their community club if not selected on a week-by-week basis.

"Rugby League is a late maturation sport for many players. Sam Tomkins nearly got cut from Wigan's youth programme, but by sending players back to their community clubs they get the chance to try again. They are not lost from the system.

"Widening the base of Rugby League talent is key to the pathway's success. In the likes of Leicester, Northampton and Newcastle the feedback is that our systems are attracting youngsters to our game. They see it as a professional sport with a clearly defined path to the top."

FOUR SEASONS



The dawn of a new era is here

117 years in the making.

A newly aligned Rugby League structure has finally kicked off.

History has been made.

And now is our time to shine.

More rugby. More spectators. More opportunities.

For these momentous opening conference league fixtures

Rugby League is the first British Sport...

...to change the whole season of the professional game from winter to summer: 1996

FOUR SEASONS CONSULTATION LEADS TO HISTORIC SUMMER SWITCH

DAVID GENT, the RFL's Director of Participation and Strategic Partnerships, believes 2011 will be recorded as an historic year in Rugby League's continued development.

David Gent spent most of the year overseeing the Four Seasons consultation and implementation, ultimately leading to the sport switching en masse to a March-November playing season.

"The biggest development came in February 2011 when the Community Board agreed that the primary Rugby League season for tiers one to four is March to November," he explains.

"That decision was based on all the research we did, as well as consultations with each league, and in the end it was a unanimous decision of the Community Board members, including BARLA.

"Having made that decision, our focus was then on talking to each individual league, playing interim seasons in late 2011 and then making the massive step forward in early 2012."

FOUR SEASONS FACTS:

■ A huge change in the way Rugby League is played with the community game moving to a new season from March to November

■ Super League switched to a summer season in 1996 and the semi-professional tier to two competitions shortly after that but the majority of the grassroots continued to play in the winter up until this year

■ For the first time the whole of Rugby League in this country from Super League right down to the grassroots will have an integrated summer-based playing calendar

■ 1,586 teams in total - 86 per cent of all teams in the country - will be playing in this season structure including 91 per cent of all youth and junior teams

Now Gent is expecting to see a treble boost for the sport across the UK.

He says: "Firstly, making this move gives us a massive opportunity to promote the game, because change always gives you that moment to re-package the sport and show off Rugby League's fantastic qualities.

"Secondly, it was a player-focused decision. It wasn't just a decision taken by some faceless committee; it was based on lots of research about what the players wanted and when they wanted to play Rugby League.

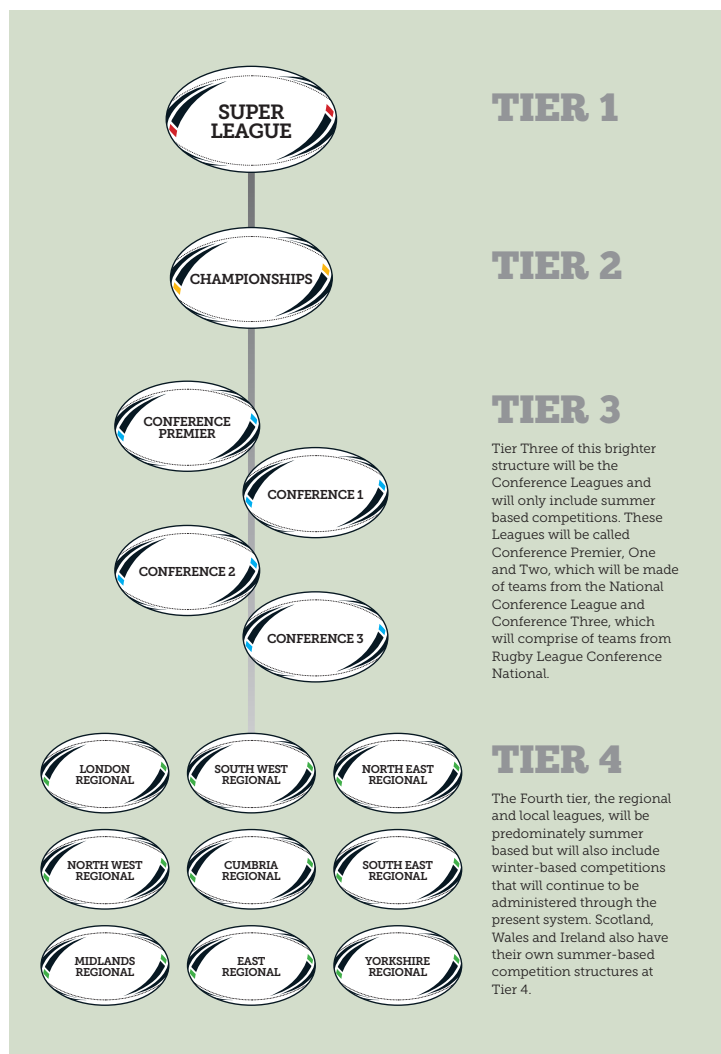
"And thirdly, we now have one integrated structure that connects all parts of the UK in one single competition structure. Whether you're in Exeter, Newcastle, Kells or Featherstone, we're all now playing in the same structure."

Ahead of the 2012 summer season, the RFL invested £250,000 during 2011 on improving pitches across the country.

"We're positioning the game into the best possible playing conditions to ensure regularity of participation," says Gent. "It will now be less likely that bad weather will cancel a game.

"There'll still be occasional flooding and things like that, but there won't be long periods where successive weeks are cancelled. The lighter nights also create more opportunity to play in midweek, and the pitches will be in better condition.

"We also carried out some research into how the clubs can develop financially, and there are so many more opportunities to make money in the summer rather than the winter. Barbecues, better events, people hanging around longer and improved bar sales - they are all different opportunities to make money that might not have been there in winter."



📍 The **Four Seasons** model sees Super League through to grassroots teams integrated on a summer-based playing calendar

SUMMER SWITCH WILL GIVE THE SPORT A HUGE BOOST

Medway Dragons coach **MARTIN COYD** has hailed the sport's future direction after witnessing and being part of huge success in the community game.

Medway Dragons were formed by 12 men in 2007, and now run 15 teams operating across women's, girls, junior, senior, masters and wheelchair Rugby League, with the club's youngest player aged just four and its oldest 58.

Martin Coyd said: "It doesn't matter who you are, or what age you are, there's always a place for you at the club. You don't have to play, you can coach, volunteer or do media work. We're really beginning to engage with a pretty big area, and there are pathways for players, coaches and match officials. Anybody and everybody can belong."

But it is the changes across the community game, heralded by the Four Seasons project, that most excite Coyd.

He said: "I believe 2012 is as big as 1895 and the formation of BARLA in the early-70s. It really is that big. I don't think we all realise it yet because we're in the middle of it, but we'll see it when we look back at this period."

"The game had to have a real look at itself and change the way it did things. Now I see great work in the Midlands, the South East and South West, and to enable us to continue the game, having good clubs in every



major city and town in the UK will help us to do that. We should be immensely proud of our past, and excited about our future."

He added: "Our heart is that we're a family club. We want everybody to feel as though they can participate, regardless of whether or not they play, and because we play in the summer there are no barriers."

"People don't get cold or wet, and I honestly believe the game is better in the summer because people are more disposed to play exciting football. People can sit in the sunshine, and there's a

➊ **Medway Dragons** run 15 teams despite only being established in 2007

➋ **Dragons head coach Martin Coyd** believes standards are improving nationwide in the community game

➌ **Youngsters** as young as four are learning the game with the Medway Dragons

real social side and a sense of community."

Coyd, who played a key part in establishing Rugby League in the Army and the rest of the Armed Forces during the 1990s, believes three key cornerstones have contributed to the success of the Dragons.

"It's about attention to detail, having a consistent set of values and sharing your goals. Over time your goals might change, but your values never should."



- Have a **black international captain** when Clive Sullivan led Great Britain in 1972 to win the Rugby League World Cup
- The first National Governing Body to break into the Stonewall Champions and Workplace Index and **listed in the Stonewall Top 100 employers:** 2010
- First football code to allow **substitutes:** 1964.
- Have a **British Asian represent their country in any football code** when Ikram Butt played for England against Wales in 1995.
- George Bennett first **black Rugby League international** when he played for Wales in 1935, over 40 years before Viv Anderson played for England Football in 1978 and the first black cricketer for England appeared in 1981. Jimmy Peters played rugby union for Barrow and St Helens. He remained the first and only black England rugby union international until 1988.
- Introduce **Video Referees and Technology:** 1996
- First of any football code to use **floodlights** for league matches in 1932 (first league game under lights for soccer was in 1956).
- Have a **black CEO of a professional sports club:** 2000 (Abi Ekoku, CEO of Bradford Bulls):
- Have a **female president of a professional sports National Governing Body.** Kath Hetherington 1995.
- Introduce an **end of season play-off and Grand Final.** Originally in 1907 through to 1973 it was reintroduced in 1998 under its current guise and is now a major success
- Introduce a **full round of fixtures to one venue** and have a 'Magic Weekend': 2007
- Have a **black international coach** when Ellery Hanley coached Great Britain in 1994
- Rugby League is the first sport in the United Kingdom to allow **shirt sponsorship:** 1974
- Take a **full round of fixtures to one venue** and have a 'Magic Weekend': 2007
- Have a **professional sports club play in shirts with an anti homophobia message** on: 2011 (Sheffield Eagles)
- Rugby League is the first sport in the United Kingdom to play professionally on a **Sunday:** 1966
- Introduce a **Themed Round:** 2011 ("State of Mind" in 2011 with another in 2012)
- Introduce **Licences** instead of an annual promotion and relegation model: 2009
- The **first known black professional** rugby league player was Lucius Banks, who made his debut for Hunslet in January 1912 however a photograph of the 1903 Pendlebury suggests earlier. Football records show the professional game had black players in the 1800s.
- Introduce a **Salary Cap:** 1998
- Have a **black international manager** when Abi Ekoku managed Great Britain: 2006
- Rugby League is the first sport in the United Kingdom to introduce a **Matchday Entertainment Package:** 1991. Keighley began 'Cougar-mania' in the early 90s introducing music after tries, lively PA announcements and entertainers in the ground.
- Rugby League is the first sport in the United Kingdom to introduce a **Matchday Entertainment Package:** 1991. Keighley began 'Cougar-mania' in the early 90s introducing music after tries, lively PA announcements and entertainers in the ground.
- Rugby League is the first sport in the United Kingdom to introduce **Sin Bins:** 1982
- Roy Francis: 1961
- George Bennett first **black Rugby League international** when he played for Wales in 1935, over 40 years before Viv Anderson played for England Football in 1978 and the first black cricketer for England appeared in 1981. Jimmy Peters played rugby union for Barrow and St Helens. He remained the first and only black England rugby union international until 1988.
- Have a **professional club with a black coach** (Roy Francis): 1961
- Took a **full round of fixtures on the road:** 1998
- First sport in the world to **design a competition specifically for TV** when in 1965 Sir David Attenborough who was then the controller of BBC2, set up the BBC2 Television Floodlit Trophy for rugby league in Britain. The sport was first broadcast in 1948 when the Challenge Cup Final was screened. Now "Selling Broadcasting Rights" is the main income stream for all major sports.
- The RFL recognised as an **Investor in People** (2010)

PARTICIPATION & COMMUNITY



Rugby League is the first British Sport...

...to introduce **Sin Bins**: 1982

COMMUNITY GAME FLOURISHING NATIONALLY

2011 saw Rugby League's **COMMUNITY GAME** continue to flourish across the country as highlighted by these community clubs.

WATH BROW HORNETS - CUMBRIA

Wath Brow Hornets are a well-established and successful Rugby League club who are now benefitting from some fantastic new facilities.

Alongside a new floodlit pitch and clubhouse the Clubmark Gold-accredited club also have a wind turbine on site to cater for their power as well as a gym facility which is used by the community and helps support the running costs of the club.

The club also have a community function room, a fitness suite and a golf society whilst a football team and equestrian club also use the club's facilities.

Wath Brow Hornets run a number of junior and youth teams at Under-8s, 9s, 11s, 12s, 14s, 16s and 18s, as well as two open age teams and the Copeland Wildcats Ladies team.



ASHTON BEARS - NORTH WEST

The club was established in 1987 with a junior section and 10 years later the open age teams were formed.

In recent times the club have overcome a number of challenges and have now embraced the change in playing seasons with two teams operating in the North West Men's League.

As with many teams their success is due to the hard work

⬆️ **Wath Brow Hornets** open their fantastic new facilities

⬇️ **Five players** from the 2011 formed **Croydon Hurricanes** have already made it onto a London Broncos Scholarship

from the club personnel with Vinny Smith, Kevin Hinnigan, Brian Naylor, John Duffy and a number of other people giving time and energy to make the club the success it is today.

CROYDON HURRICANES - LONDON

In 2011 Croydon Hurricanes had 102 players across three age groups and in 2012 have 120 with a new Under-18s section formed.

Fifty eight per cent of these players are from a BME background and 45 players were inactive prior to joining the club and have since gone on to play other sports as well.

The club has enjoyed rapid success in terms of player performance with five players making it onto the London Broncos Scholarship and six involved with RFL Player Development Centres.





have opened many doors at local secondary schools and recently launched their own Play Touch Rugby League programme.

The Chargers currently have 12 players on scholarships with professional clubs and the Midlands Regional Academy.

OULTON RAIDERS - YORKSHIRE

Oulton Raiders have a rich tradition of producing talented Rugby League players with Leeds Rhinos winger Ryan Hall just one of the club's graduates.

They currently boast 19 Rugby League teams across all age groups with training and fun sessions run for four to six-year-olds. All teams have made the transition to summer Rugby League and embraced the new playing season.

Oulton have five coach co-ordinators covering the different playing sections with qualified coaches engaging in regular CPD.

They took part in the autumn pitch remediation programme which has a remarkable effect on the playing surface and their facilities have hosted schools' semi-finals and regional training for Yorkshire squads.

👉 Oulton Raiders players will be hoping to follow in former club graduate **Ryan Hall's** footsteps

👇 **Oulton Raiders** boast 19 Rugby League teams across all age groups

KEY FACTS:

PARTICIPANTS

- 100,000 milestone reached for registered participants
- 20,000 open age players
- 3,000 student players - 70 universities and 130 colleges
- 1,000 Armed Forces players - 40 teams across the country
- 21,000 junior Rugby League players

LEAGUE FOR ALL

- 30,000 people aged over 16 play new forms of the sport through 'League For All' initiatives such as Touch, Masters and Wheelchair Rugby

CHAMPION SCHOOLS

- The biggest schools tournament in the country and the biggest Rugby League competition in the world
- In excess of 30,000 pupils playing with 1,700 teams across 500 schools
- Open to every secondary school in England, Scotland and Wales
- A staggering growth of 24,000 since 2002

The club's facilities at Archbishop Lanfranc School were re-developed with support from the RFL Facilities Trust and were officially opened by Martin Offiah.

NORTH DERBYSHIRE CHARGERS - MIDLANDS

North Derbyshire Chargers have entered their fifth season this year and it has been their most successful to date.

A move to Barlborough Country Park has seen them have a dedicated facility that they can now call home 12 months of the year.

They have benefited from a number of grants to stimulate the growth of Rugby League in their catchment area, which has led to the launch of an Under-9s team this year. The club's Under-15s team have entered the Yorkshire League.

Utilising a community Rugby League coach, they



SCHOOLS COMPETITION CONTINUES TO EXCEL

THE CARNEGIE CHAMPION SCHOOLS, the world's biggest Rugby League knockout competition, has continued to go from strength-to-strength over the last 12 months.

The tournament, which was re-launched back in 2002 by the RFL and the English Schools Rugby League, is open to every secondary school in England, Wales and Scotland.

It has played a vital role in introducing the game to an ever-increasing number of young people throughout the United Kingdom.

As National Schools Officer, Halima Khan is responsible for overall organisation of the Carnegie Champion Schools, and saw yet more growth in the tournament in 2011.

"When we did the audit, 30,773 players took part, with 1,785 teams, of which 239 were girls teams. That's a massive increase on the year before when we had 210 girls teams," Khan explained.

"The competition has grown year-on-year, and we expect that to be the same when we finalise the 2012 figures.

"In Yorkshire, 50 per cent of the schools now compete in the Champion Schools, and in the North West last year St Peter's School entered for the first time and had a team in each age group.

"The South West hadn't competed before last year, but they also entered boys teams in



each age group from Years 7 to 11.

"Those snapshots just show how much the competition continues to grow every year."

The 2012 competition will also see a bold new move, with the finals day moving away from its regular home in London as part of further expansion plans.

📌 The Carnegie Champions Schools competition involved 1,785 teams and more than 30,000 young players

"In 2012 we are going for a new finals day venue at Odsal Stadium in Bradford, although the boys Year 7 final will continue to be a curtain raiser to the Challenge Cup final at Wembley," Khan explained.

"There are a couple of reasons for moving it from London, and we'd also like to take the finals to different venues and see how well it is received.

"We may take it to other Super League clubs in the future, and give them the chance to host one of the biggest schools competitions in the world."

Khan also paid tribute to her support staff.

"I'd like to thank all the schools teachers and local clubs, as well as all the staff at the RFL for making the Champions Schools what it is," she added.

"We want to carry on growing it every year - it's the biggest Rugby League competition in the world, and long may it have that title."



'MODIFIED' RUGBY REACHES MORE AND MORE

A total of 28,175 participants were registered in 2011 for modified versions of the sport - **WHEELCHAIR, TAG AND TOUCH RUGBY LEAGUE** - which all come under the League For All banner.

The end of 2011 saw pilot schemes for the newly-branded Play Touch Rugby League introduced. These sessions took place in Wigan, St Helens, Hull, York and the Midlands.

These 10-week initiatives were designated as either social or competitive in order to increase participation levels as part of a new approach to Touch Rugby League and proved successful.

There are now over 50 of the schemes running nationally with both social and competitive Touch Rugby League forming a key part of the RFL's development strategy.

The total number of Touch Rugby League players in 2011 was 20,752, 16,155 of whom were male players and 4,597 female.

This highlights one of the key selling points of Touch Rugby League that people of both sexes can play together meaning that whole families can compete in the same game.

Another version of the sport which is accessible to everyone is Tag Rugby League and 4,581 Tag Rugby League players were registered in 2011.

Masters Rugby League continued to go from strength-to-strength in 2011 with the RFL holding eight national festivals with the opener at Caerphilly involving teams from Wales, Medway Dragons and the Royal Marines.

Westminster-based Political Animals also played a number of high profile Masters fixtures throughout the year which saw a total of 1,822 players registered.

It was also a big year for Wheelchair Rugby League which saw 749 male participants and 271 female participants registered and the RFL launch a new competition structure for the sport.

Wigan, Halifax, Mersey Vikings, Bury Jigsaw and Wolverhampton Rhinos competed in the Wheelchair Super League which ran from April 2011 through to the Grand Final in September.

The Wheelchair Championship featured Bradford Bulls, Mersey Vikings A, Wakefield and Medway Dragons from Kent.

Wheelchair Rugby League also enjoyed some great publicity with Gina Smallwood becoming the first female Wheelchair Rugby League player to represent England as they took on France in October.

👥 The **League For All** programme ensures players of all abilities enjoy the sport of Rugby League



COMMUNITY RUGBY LEAGUE KEY POINTS

MASTERS RUGBY

- Masters Rugby is for players aged 35 and over
- Established in 2009
- At the end of 2011 over **1,800** participants play from the age of 35 to 80
- Some of the former greats of the sport play at regular times including Sky's Mike 'Stevo' Stephenson
- It is a great way to re-engage with the sport and gets people playing and involved with their local community club - it is a great social game. There are no winners, no champions or cup finals. It is all about the spirit of the game
- Coloured shorts are worn to designate player age
 - White 35 – 39 years
 - Black 40 – 49 years
 - Red 50 – 59 years
 - Gold 60+

There is a range of rules depending on your age. For example, players wearing white and black shorts can tackle in normal fashion with full contact against each other, whereas players with gold shorts only need to be touched to be tackled

GENERAL STATS

- In the last five years **over one million** participants aged between five and 19-years-old have received coaching tuition from professional players
- In excess of **2,500 teams** compete in all forms of the game
- **Over 100,000 adults** played any form of the game in 2011, which has **increased by 30,000** in the last 12 months
- **Over 19,000 active volunteers** work in the sport from grassroots right through to the professional game

MARKETING & COMMERCIAL



Welcome to The Magic Weekend

Rugby League is the first British Sport...

... to introduce a **Matchday Entertainment Package:**
1991. Keighley began 'Cougar-mania' in the early 90s
introducing music after tries, lively PA announcements and
entertainers in the ground

RUGBY LEAGUE'S INNOVATION SWELL ATTENDANCES

The 2011 season saw a series of **RUGBY LEAGUE'S** showpiece events attract significant attendances.

From the moment the campaign kicked off for the first time with Millennium Magic, through to the Gillette Four Nations final at Elland Road, spectators flocked to matches, much to the delight of RFL Marketing Manager Phil Williams.

"Both the Engage Super League Grand Final and Carnegie Challenge Cup final met our sales expectations, but two events particularly stood out in 2011 - the Exiles and the Four Nations tournament," Williams said.

"As a new concept and brand it was essential to create intrigue and awareness around the Exiles, and get the fans on board with the game as early as possible whilst raising the profile of England RL.

"The 2011 marketing campaign for the inaugural International Origin Match was one of the most

EXILES CONCEPT KEY FACTS:

- The creation of new international opponents to improve intense competition for England
- Team made up of the finest overseas players in the Super League
- Fans encouraged to pick the Exiles team via innovative 'Fan Pick' web-based application
- Over 10,000 separate application received from fans to be involved in selection process

innovative campaigns undertaken by the RFL to date.

"It still used traditional communication tools like press, radio, DM and PR to successfully target fans. However, we also tried to interact with fans through engagement ideas like the Fan Vote to select the Exiles squad to take on England.

"The campaign also had an element of mystery that meant the media and fans went out of their way to find out more about the Exiles and who they were."

Williams was also pleased with the marketing strategies and attendances at the autumn's Four Nations competition.

"For the first time in 14 years England returned to Wembley Stadium and faced Australia in a double header featuring all four participants," he said.

"A nationwide marketing campaign raised the profile of the tournament to new levels and led to the highest level of sales for an England international in more than 20 years with 42,344 fans attending.

"The final at Elland Road was watched by a sell-out crowd of 34,174. A hugely patriotic pre-match entertainment package raised the atmosphere to unprecedented levels when the two teams took the field.

"The tournament was hailed a resounding success for International Rugby League and an excellent stepping stone to the Rugby League World Cup in 2013."

The RFL's marketing department also developed its customer relationship management (CRM) and offered





extended professional club support during 2011.

"The Marketing Department has taken great steps forward in the development of its CRM delivery, with improved targeting and segmentation leading to a more bespoke communication with our customer base," Williams added.

"We have also been able to increase the level of support offered to Super League clubs.

"Every UK-based club has taken advantage of our support this year in terms of bespoke CRM communications to their supporters on the RFL central database.

"We have also now recruited a new dedicated staff resource to work predominantly with the Super League clubs on improving their marketing."



THE FUTURE

What are the key targets for the Marketing Department moving forward?

The main responsibility for us is to help grow the sport in general, specifically for marketing that means to focus on building the number of consumers of the sport; either attending live matches, watching the TV broadcasts or as a participant out on the pitch. Currently, all of these aspects are being met which is highly encouraging when compared to similar team sports. However, in terms of attendance, those enjoy the experience live at Stobart Super League, it is only growing at organic levels, year-on-year. In the past, we have traditionally marketed to the core support in the main, those fans who exhibit great loyalty and passion for their team and the sport, through their family connections and personal network bring new supporters along with them. However, we now need to move forward and develop the greater ambition to reach the mainstream audiences, who in many cases are unaware of the major strength of Rugby League. We need to communicate those attributes in all our marketing that help create the fantastic atmosphere of live match and deliver a truly compelling occasion for all. We know from our research that once a new fan sees a live game, they quickly become captivated by the experience.

To make that step change, we need go beyond the traditional geographical boundaries and our previous goals and objectives. In the next 12 months we need to build an identity for Rugby League as a brand that stands out in the sporting landscape around its major strengths that will help us secure the greater media visibility and profile that we require. Together, this will allow us to change the misconceptions that have held the sport back previously. It represents a huge new opportunity for Rugby League. We need to showcase what wonderful sport it is to a much wider audience. Over time the return on this investment in the brand, will make a very positive change in terms of increased attendance at Rugby League matches, those who watch the game via live TV coverage which will certainly help move the commercial platform of the sport in the right direction. We need to have the courage to take on that huge challenge and opportunity.

What would be deemed a success over the next 12 months for the awareness and growth of the sport?

In addition to driving the Magic Weekend, Carnegie Challenge Cup final, Stobart Super League, England RL internationals and other centrally-marketed RFL events, we have very new challenges ahead next year. Tickets will go on sale to the general public later this year ahead of the Rugby League World Cup 2013. To achieve the projected sales and continue to build the momentum for the tournament, our marketing must capture the public imagination of an entirely new audience both in the communities in the host venues for the group games and for the final stages at Wembley and Old Trafford.

Similarly, we aim to start to drive further expansion of the support base for the Super League by developing a brand identity for Rugby League and launch engaging campaigns into new, non-traditional markets.

If we are to achieve these goals and objectives, we will undoubtedly moved the promotion the sport into a very different sphere and with it the start of a new era for Rugby League.



FINDING NEW WAYS TO CONNECT WITH SUPPORTERS

More people than ever before are being exposed to Rugby League thanks to the remarkable efforts of the RFL's **DIGITAL MEDIA UNIT (DMU)**.

The DMU employs five full-time members of staff, including two video journalists, and produces output that is seen on YouTube, Super League TV and national media websites and national and regional television.

RFL Director of Communication Niel Wood said: "The DMU has really overachieved on the figures it originally set out to attract. It's proved very popular for two reasons: a) the quality of the output, and b) the reach of where it's getting to.

"It's now being so successful that there are a lot of times when people are watching DMU output and not knowing it, because it's being incorporated into Sky Sports News, the Super League Show on BBC, and BBC regional output. It's going mainstream, and it's absolutely seamless. You wouldn't know it was DMU output."

Wood added: "We're at the forefront of this, and that position

is just getting better. That's credit not only to the people who produce the content, but also the Super League clubs that are creating the stories of interest.

"It's the most cutting-edge and innovative thing in media at the moment. More and more people are consuming their news in a digital fashion, and the DMU is an initiative supported by every Super League club for the benefit of the whole game."

Wood also describes Twitter and Facebook as "incredibly important going forward", while at the same time continuing to lead the sport's relationship with traditional media such as national newspapers.

"It's a challenging environment," he admits. "National papers are still mass circulation, but they're declining in sales and profitability, and therefore they are declining in investment in all sports - not just Rugby League.

Players from Australia, England and New Zealand pose for the media in front of **Wellington Arch** in London ahead of the Gillette Four Nations double header at Wembley Stadium

Martin Offiah talks to the media during the rebrand of London Broncos



"But the 2011 Four Nations was fantastic, and it was a sea change in some newspapers. We are creating a new relationship with the national media.

"We understand from their point of view what drives them, and the crucial thing is perception. They perceive us as one thing, and we have to change that perception."

Booming television figures also continue to give the RFL huge encouragement, with a total of 21 million viewers watching Rugby League in 2011.

BROADCASTING KEY FACTS:

- Super League negotiated an improved television contract with Sky - a new five-year agreement until 2016
- 26.5m viewers watched Rugby League in 2011
- Agreement will take the partnership to its 21st year - one of the longest in professional sport
- 69 live TV matches and over 250 magazine shows each year
- £7.8m media values from live TV broadcasts alone, 226 per cent growth in five years
- Huge audiences tune in to the most watched league outside football
 - 10m Sky viewers
 - 9.5m BBC viewers
 - 7m magazine show viewers across the season



GROWING COMMERCIAL PRESENCE WILL REAP REWARDS

Newly-appointed RFL Commercial Director **JAMES MERCER** believes Rugby League's revenues are set to show dramatic growth over the coming years.

James Mercer, who was appointed in March 2012, works from a London office as the sport continues to develop its commercial presence.

And after just a few months in the job, he is already excited about the prospects for Rugby League.

Mercer said: "We're always looking for partners to help the sport grow and develop. The sport is very commercially raw, which is hugely exciting; it's a relatively clean platform for a brand to come in and make a huge difference, and that's a very enticing opportunity."

He added: "The focus is on getting partners on board that will make a difference. It's a well-used word today - people talk about partnership rather than sponsorship - but in our instance we have huge growth aspirations and we're growing nationally very quickly, so we're looking for partners to help us grow the sport and invest in the sport at every level.

"We're trying to make sure that in 10 years' time there'll be even more people watching Rugby League than there are today."

The last 12 months have seen the RFL attract a new headline



① Australian international **Johnathan Thurston** being interviewed by Sky Sports during the Gillette Four Nations

sponsor for Super League, with Eddie Stobart signing a three-year deal for the game's elite domestic competition.

Mercer said: "We've some fantastic brands currently involved in Rugby League. The Co-operative, Heinz, Gillette, Irn Bru and Stobart are all fantastic brand ambassadors for the sport, but in terms of the future, our focus is on continuing our growth and making sure current and future partners have access to all the amazing initiatives we run within the sport.

"The great thing about Rugby League in the UK is that it's a very unified sport. The RFL is involved in all initiatives from the elite level through to schools, universities and armed forces.

"All of these are tremendous initiatives and very exciting for brands to get involved in. At the moment we're only touching the surface of the commercial opportunities in the sport."

TITLE SPONSORS

- Stobart SUPER LEAGUE
- Carnegie Challenge Cup
- HEINZ BIG SOUP WORLD CLUB CHALLENGE
- The co-operative CHAMPIONSHIPS
- NORTHERN RAIL CUP
- Gillette RUGBY LEAGUE FOUR NATIONS
- WORLD CUP OF RUGBY

OFFICIAL COMMERCIAL PARTNERS

- Valvoline
- IRN-BRU
- LEEDS METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
- The co-operative
- Stobart
- Gillette
- HEINZ BIG SOUP
- engage Mutual Assurance
- northern
- MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

OFFICIAL SUPPLIERS

- STEEDEN
- POLAR LISTEN TO YOUR BODY
- ISC

MEDIA PARTNERS

- sky SPORTS
- sky SPORTS HD
- sky SPORTS 3D
- BBC SPORT
- BBC RADIO 5 live
- BBC RADIO 5 live
- fasttrack

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Rugby League is the first British Sport...

...to have a professional sports club play in **shirts with an anti-homophobia message on**: 2011 (Sheffield Eagles); and to introduce a **'Themed Round'**: 2011 ("State of Mind")

TACKLE IT! CAMPAIGN TAKES EQUALITY DRIVE BEYOND THE TIPPING POINT

Rugby League's commitment to **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY** continued at a pace in 2011, with leading officials being invited to a 10 Downing Street reception with Prime Minister David Cameron in recognition of those efforts.

During the last 12 months the sport's achievements have included the development and implementation of a major Tackle IT! initiative, the first mainstream sports fixture with an anti-homophobia message and a Super League-wide commitment to the government's Whole Sport Charter.

RFL Equality and Diversity Manager Sarah Williams said: "For us to go forward as a sport, we need to be welcoming to all backgrounds. 2011 was about getting all the development and groundwork done, and building for a programme that will add real value to our clubs and sport.

"The Tackle IT! programme was developed to look at expanding our original theme, which was around tackling racism, in order to tackle all the equality strands simultaneously. Tackle IT! is now an umbrella programme that includes guidance for clubs, a suite of seven posters featuring Rugby League ambassadors representing the equality strands (gender, Sarah Bennison; race, Anthony Sullivan; faith, David Solomona; sexual orientation, Mitch Stringer; age, three generations of a Bradford Bulls-supporting family; disability, Ryan Owens) and a DVD including an endorsement from Lynn Featherstone MP.

"Every professional club has received that package, as well as ground safety officers, and in time it will become part of coach training and all RFL inductions.

"This is the first time any sport has had an overarching approach to tackle all strands of equality.

"Rugby League celebrates diversity and has zero tolerance towards any unacceptable language or behaviour, and we encourage anybody who hears or sees anything to come forward and report it."

Williams's role has also seen considerable time spent working

☛ The **Tackle IT!** initiative saw the RFL become the first sporting organisation to reach the Stonewall Workplace Equality top 100

☛ A total of **seven posters** on equality and diversity were created to give Rugby League clubs guidance

as part of the Rugby League World Cup team.

"Equality and diversity has been built in as an important part of the Rugby League World Cup," she said.

"From the start we made sure we had an equalities target for the host cities. Every host city had to complete an equality procurement questionnaire, and they were scored and assessed so that equality was a part of the decision-making process when it came to finalising the host cities. That took a lot of time, but it was so exciting to be part of that process."

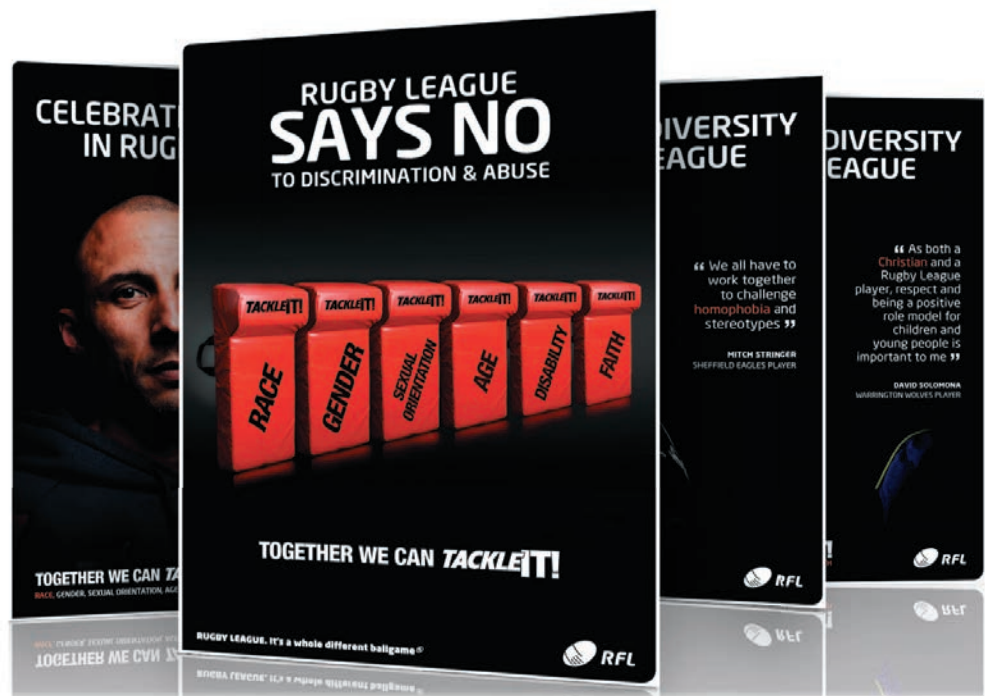
Williams now believes equality and diversity has reached a genuine tipping point within Rugby League. The RFL became the first sporting organisation to reach the top 100 of the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index when it jumped from 169th to 53rd in 2011, and Williams believes even more success is to follow.

She said: "Having worked on this agenda for the last four years, it's now well and truly embedded within the culture of the organisation."

Ninety three per cent of all RFL staff have now undertaken equality and diversity training, with that figure set to rise to 100 per cent during 2012.

And there were other eye-catching achievements during a hectic 2011. "The firsts for Rugby League in 2011 included Sheffield Eagles' anti-homophobia game against Widnes Vikings on March 13," said Williams.

"That was the first time any mainstream sports team had taken on the LGBT issue. They wore their shirts with anti-homophobia and Tackle IT! messages on them, and we received messages of support from the likes of Sir Elton John and other high profile personalities. The media



TACKLE IT FACTS:

- First sport governing body and the first sports organisation to break into the Stonewall Top 100 Employers Index. Ranked 53rd
- Recognises Britain's top employers for lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) staff
- Sheffield Eagles become the first British sports club ever to wear a playing kit displaying an anti-homophobia message
- All 14 Super League clubs signed the Government's charter for action against homophobia and transphobia
- RFL became the first UK Sport Governing body to launch 'Tackling Homophobia' guidance for clubs in early 2011



coverage Sheffield Eagles and Rugby League got from that event was the equivalent of £25,000 worth of advertising.

"Sheffield were also the first sports club to have a float at Manchester Pride. They had their players, and a couple of players from Oldham, on a float with a message saying 'Rugby League says no to homophobia'."

She added: "Elsewhere, all our UK Super League clubs signed

up to the Government's Whole Sport Charter simultaneously. All the clubs' CEOs, plus Sheffield Eagles and the RFL, were invited to 10 Downing Street to the Prime Minister's LGBT reception in June. That was a moment where the whole of the sport was recognised for its commitment to tackling homophobia.

"And for International Women's Day, we developed an online resource that celebrates

women in Rugby League in roles you wouldn't necessarily expect. Claire Morrow, Julie Gaskell, Angela Powers and Sally Bolton are all on there, and the idea is that over the years that resource will continue to be built on to become a real celebration of women in the sport."

Super League CEOs meet with Prime Minister David Cameron at Downing Street promoting equality and diversity in Rugby League

Rugby League's welcoming culture is something the whole sport can be proud of.



CHARITABLE FUND-RAISING TAKES A NEW DIRECTION

Two new brands will lead the **RFL'S FUND-RAISING EFFORTS** over the next decade after an extensive period of research developed a clear path forward for the sport's charitable aims.

Rugby League Cares' and 'League For Life' will provide simple, easy-to-understand fund-raising opportunities and cover a range of worthy causes within the sport and the communities it serves.

RFL Head of Partnerships and Community Projects Chris Rostron said: "We've been working with various communities and constituencies within the game to identify what are the charitable needs for the sport, and how we can positively respond to those needs.

"Those needs can be broken down into two parts: the first is the relationship with all the charities in the game, such as the RL Foundation, the RFL Benevolent Fund and the RL National Museums and Arts Foundation; the second part is the relationships with the professional clubs' foundations.

"The RFL said, 'we've got these relationships, but how can we improve and make life easier for all those constituent parts?'

"During 2011 we consulted with those constituents, and



↑ **The Rugby League Foundation** will now work in conjunction with **Sport Relief**

↪ **Bradford Bulls** players Heath L'Estrange and Adrian Purtell bare all for charity

the resulting piece of work tried to eliminate a very confusing picture and enable the public to support a simple, easy-to-understand message. We needed one charity to represent all these aspects.

"The mandate that came out from every part of the game, whether community or professional, is that the Rugby League Foundation can be the global foundation and they will take on an umbrella role for the whole thing.

"We also looked at other charities and the one that jumped off the page was charity projects, which are more commonly understood as Comic Relief and Sport Relief. You might not know charity projects exists, but their campaigns are very visible. In June 2012, we'll be launching two campaigns of our own."

Rostron hopes those campaigns will become synonymous with Rugby League.

He said: "The first campaign works with the professional clubs on areas such as sport, health, education, social inclusion and the environment, and will go under the title Rugby League Cares.

"That brings all the clubs together and presents their programme as one. Wherever any club goes out to do charity work, we'll brand it up as Rugby League Cares.

"That simplicity enables us to attract partners, and



RFL CARES FACTS:

- 34 community outreach programmes delivering award-winning, bespoke projects in sport, health, education, environment and community cohesion
- A combined workforce of 500 employees changing the lives of 600,000 people annually
- Each year high quality sport and educational services are provided to 2,700 schools and 400 community rugby clubs throughout the country



Sport Relief will be working in partnership with Rugby League Cares over the coming years to raise awareness of mental health issues, train up 400 mental health first aiders and provide activities for at risk groups in communities."

The second programme, 'League For Life', will incorporate fund-raising and

support for initiatives such as the RFL Benevolent Fund.

Rostron explained: "What we need to do with that work is create a mechanism for the public to become supporters of it. We've called it League For Life, and anyone can be a part of it.

"You can become a member of it, and your support can

⬆ Over the coming years 400 mental health first aiders will be trained thanks to **Rugby League Cares**

⬇ **League For Life** will focus on initiatives involving the Benevolent Fund and the sport's heritage and junior players

help the RFL Benevolent Fund, or develop the heritage of the sport, or go into grants programmes to help juniors play the sport. The message is 'become a member, and change the wealth and health of our sport'.

"You can also stage events or volunteer on our projects, and anyone volunteering will come under a 'Wear The Jersey' tag."

A further initiative, 'Engage with your club', which has been described by Rostron as a Rugby League version of 'Ground Force', was also introduced in 2011.

Rostron said: "Times are tough for young people. There are a million young people unemployed and these charities can be a huge force for good in those communities.

"The thing we're most looking forward to is changing people's lives, and elsewhere the RFL Benevolent Fund continues to do great work with acutely injured players.

"Over the next 10 years our focus will be on raising the profile of 'League For Life' and 'Rugby League Cares', and embedding them within the psyche of Rugby League fans."



MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE BROUGHT TO CENTRE STAGE BY RUGBY LEAGUE STARS

The 2011 season saw the launch of **STATE OF MIND**, a programme aimed at improving mental health awareness in Rugby League, with the full backing of the RFL.

The programme sought to raise awareness of mental health issues within the sport, and Round 27 of the Super League season was officially named as the State of Mind Round.

It was backed by a long line of the sport's top stars - along with others from football and rugby union - including the current England international Adrian Morley.

The experienced Warrington Wolves prop has seen two of his former team-mates, Terry

● England international **Adrian Morley** was quick to back the RFL's State of Mind campaign

● Round 27 of the 2011 Super League season was dubbed the **State of Mind Round**

Newton and Mick Shaw, die in tragic circumstances, and was determined to do everything he could to encourage players to talk about their mental health.

"I thought State of Mind was a fantastic initiative," Morley said. "I was very close to Terry Newton, and played alongside Mick Shaw as well, and the Rugby League family doesn't want any more tragedies like that.

"It was great that the RFL recognised that players may have a few problems here and there; both ex-players and current

players. I got asked whether I would put my name to it and I jumped at the chance.

"Rugby League players do need help. It's a macho sport and some people can be reluctant to come forward when they do need help.

"We've all got our problems and issues, and the fact that the sport is tackling mental health is tremendous."

State of Mind is now keen to develop its programme further in the coming years, and Morley wants to retain his association and see its impact widen even further.



"Last year there was a lot of coverage on television, and a full round of Super League was dedicated to State of Mind," he added.

"There was plenty of publicity there and that got people talking about it. If people have got problems then it doesn't seem such a taboo subject, and they can feel confident about talking about any issues and problems they may have. That's half the battle, and State of Mind has given people a network of support.

"Now that it's out there, hopefully it can grow and build in momentum, because none of us want to see any more tragedies."



CSR **PLAYER WELFARE: EMMA ROSEWARNE**

SUPER LEAGUE CLUBS ADOPT THE PLAYER WELFARE POLICY

Professional Rugby League players are being given more **HELP AND ADVICE** than ever after steps taken by the RFL and leading clubs were implemented in 2011.

Super League players can now expect to receive advice about finances, mental health, their careers outside of rugby, gambling, and broader welfare issues after a number of initiatives were introduced or expanded.

RFL Operations Director Emma Rosewarne said: "The key thing in 2011 was the Super League clubs unanimously adopting the Player Welfare Policy (PWP), in which they all undertook to appoint Player Welfare Managers.

"Some clubs already had Player Welfare Managers, but now all 14 Super League clubs have got them on board. The overall aim of the PWP is to educate and support players from when they enter the professional game up to and beyond when they leave the sport.

"It's about making sure they can cope with life as a professional player, and then that they're ready for a career and life whenever the point comes when they are no longer a professional player."

Clubs will be required to have full-time PWMs by 2014, while partnerships have been agreed with

the Yorkshire Bank, State of Mind and the Sporting Chance Clinic in an effort to broaden the other resources available to players.

Rosewarne explained: "The main parts of the PWP are about communicating with players and ensuring that they're getting education on dealing with their finances. The RFL has entered into an Memorandum of Understanding with Yorkshire Bank on that front, and they'll provide private banking for players as well as workshops aimed at players at different stages of their career.

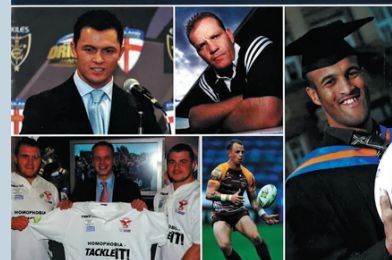
"We're also providing support through the State of Mind programme, and all players have mental health awareness sessions, while a number of club staff have been trained as mental health first aiders. We've also teamed up with the Sporting Chance Clinic."

Integrity workshops have given players an understanding of their responsibilities under the 2007 Gambling Act and the RFL's own rules, while careers advice is also being offered.

"We've developed centrally-provided careers workshops, and

they're aimed at three different groups; when they first come into the game and they may or may not have a long-term career; once they become established in the first-team squad; and a transition programme for players approaching retirement."

PROFESSIONAL PLAYERS' GUIDE



Social Media
Preparing For Life After Rugby
Education & Training
Tackling Your Finances
Homophobia
Lifestyle Issues



First football code to have a **sponsored trophy:** 1962. Mackeson Trophy for club with best scoring record in 1962-63 season.

substitutes: 1964.

Introduce **Licences** instead of an annual promotion and relegation model: 2009

The **first known black professional** rugby league player was Lucius Banks, who made his debut for Hunslet in January 1912 however a photograph of the 1903 Pendlebury suggests earlier. Football records show the professional game had black players in the 1800s.

Introduce a **Salary Cap:** 1998

Have a **black international manager** when Abi Ekoku managed Great Britain: 2006

Introduce a **Themed Round:** 2011 ("State of Mind" in 2011 with another in 2012)

Introduce **full round of fixtures to one venue** and have a 'Magic Weekend': 2007

Take a **full round of fixtures to one venue** and have a 'Magic Weekend': 2007

Introduce **Change the whole season** of the professional game from winter to summer: 1996

Introduce **shirts with an anti homophobia message** on: 2011 (Sheffield Eagles)

Introduce an **end of season play-off and Grand Final.** Originally in 1907 through to 1973 it was reintroduced in 1998 under its current guise and is now a major success

Have a **black international captain** when Clive Sullivan led Great Britain in 1972 to win the Rugby League World Cup

The first National Governing Body to break into the Stonewall Champions and Workplace Index and **listed in the Stonewall Top 100 employers:** 2010

First football code to allow

Have a **British Asian represent their country in any football code** when Ikram Butt played for England against Wales in 1995.

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Take a **full round of fixtures on the road:** 1998

Have a **female president of a professional sports National Governing Body.** Kath Hetherington 1995.

Introduce **Video Referees and Technology:** 1996

First of any football code to use **floodlights** for league matches in 1932 (first league game under lights for soccer was in 1956).

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT



Rugby League is the first British Sport...

... with a governing body recognised as an
Investor in People: 2010

OUR MISSION AND VALUES

The RFL continues to be regarded as one of **SPORT'S INNOVATIVE** governing bodies. The organisation's mission and values enables it to continue its progression.

VISION

To be recognised throughout the world as a leading Governing Body of Sport.

MISSION

More people playing, watching and involved in Rugby League by 2013.

VALUES

Our actions - the actions of all employees - are governed by our Aims, Values and Behaviours. Our core values, fair - care - share - dare set a tone of integrity for the governing body - one that is reinforced consistently at all levels and by all staff.

FAIR

We are Fair, 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, solid leadership and spreading best practice.

DARE

We Dare to achieve our objectives through innovation.

OUR PEOPLE

Our people are at the heart of our corporate agenda. The RFL recognises that without their commitment, professionalism and expertise in delivering customer service excellence it would be unable to achieve its goals.

We are committed to providing on going investment into their learning and development to achieve the highest standards. We fully support all opportunities for employment, career progression



and development, irrespective of age, ethnicity, gender, disability or religion through our equality and diversity action plan.

In 2008 the RFL's core values were developed in a consultation process with staff. Work started in 2008, and continued in 2009, to embed these values with all staff. The values can be summarised as Fair, Care, Share and Dare and are defined as:

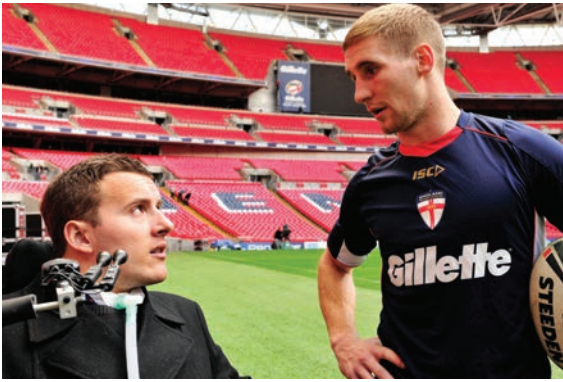
Fair - We are Fair, open, honest and inclusive demonstrating integrity to all.

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.

The RFL and its employees believe that by following the above values we will ensure that the RFL is delivering the best service to all its stakeholders, whilst being an employer of choice.



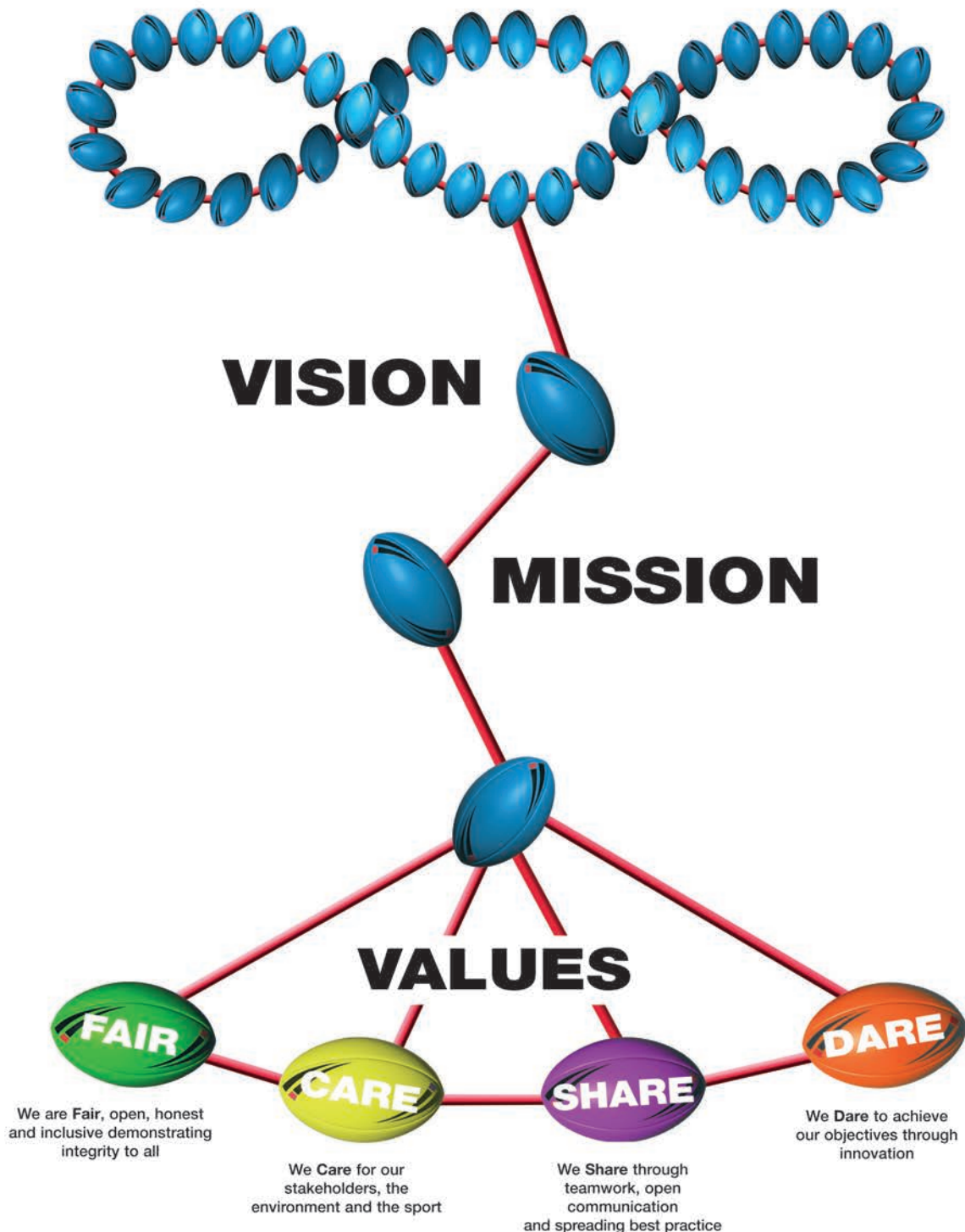
➤ The inspirational **Matt King**, who has gained support of the RFL Benevolent Fund, is seen talking to England international Sam Tomkins before the Gillette Four Nations match at Wembley Stadium

OUR COMMUNITIES

As a leading National Sports Governing Body we are committed to transforming our local communities by delivering an approach to corporate social responsibility, encompassing cash donations, support for volunteering, environmentally-friendly practices and investment in our people.

In line with this commitment we have supported a number of sports-related charities including the RFL Benevolent Fund, the RFL Facilities Trust, the Rugby League Foundation and the Rugby League Heritage Trust. We support these organisations in cash and in kind. We have much more under consideration and planned for the future.

THE DNA OF THE RFL





STAFF DEVELOPMENT HUMAN RESOURCES: JOHN HICKSON

INNOVATIVE AWARDS AND REWARDS KEEP STAFF MOTIVATED

An innovative series of staff awards have reinvigorated the **RFL'S WORKFORCE** during 2011.





RFL's Head of Human Resources John Hickson has overseen the introduction of a new Reward and Recognition Policy that aims to acknowledge outstanding achievements within the workplace.

And crucially, some of the awards are given on the basis of recommendations from fellow staff, creating a peer-to-peer recognition that Hickson describes as "extra special".

Hickson said: "There were two main things the HR department aimed to achieve in 2011.

"One was our Investors in People re-recognition, where we were aiming for a Bronze Standard. We did an internal survey with Investors in People, and we were pleased to discover that we were at the level of the Bronze Standard.

"The other achievement was the launch of our Reward and Recognition Policy. Many organisations have some form of performance-linked payment scheme, and at the RFL we wanted a way that staff and management could recognise each other's achievements or long service. To that end we created a Reward and Recognition Policy and rolled it out in 2011.

"There are a few different awards that fall under the policy. For example, a long service award is awarded each year. The person who in 2011 has worked the longest for the RFL gets invited to the Queen's Garden Party. Only one person each year will get that invite, and you can only go once."



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Hickson continued: "The next award is the Chairman's Award, where staff are nominated for extending Rugby League's reach. The recipient receives two tickets to Wimbledon as a guest of former RFL Chairman Richard Lewis, who is now Chief Executive of the All England Lawn Tennis Club."

However, it is the 'radical' introduction of peer-to-peer awards that has given Hickson the most pride.

He explained: "We have introduced Management Awards, where a manager can put forward a member of staff for recognition, and the member of staff does not have to be someone the manager in question directly manages.

"Below that we have the Staff Award, where staff can recognise each other. Everybody who is nominated receives a letter to say they've been nominated, although they don't know who has nominated them or what for. We get the nominations in, and people from the non-affected departments then help to decide where the awards should go. It is complete staff-to-staff recognition, and these awards have proven to be really popular.

"The key thing, and what makes it extra special, is that it isn't something that's lost in a massive system; it's about an individual thinking 'they've really helped me, I'll put them forward'. For example, in the week before the Four Nations final we were snowed under sending tickets out, and a

member of staff walked by, saw people struggling and spent 40 minutes helping out with putting tickets in envelopes.

"The Reward and Recognition Policy has been one of our most significant achievements of the year. It's a bit radical for staff to be able to nominate other staff, but it's been very well received. The power of peer-to-peer recognition is much, much stronger than an award dropping out of the sky."

Hickson will continue to lead the RFL's HR policies in 2012, and has plenty of determination to push through a number of other exciting ideas.

He revealed: "During 2012 we will be going for the full Silver award from Investors in People. For the initial Investors in People recognition, you need to achieve approximately 40 standards, whereas for Silver you need to achieve 215 standards. It is a significant piece of work and there are big steps to be made, but it's well worth it.

"On top of that we'll also be rolling out a new e-learning system in 2012. That will start with a driving course, where anyone driving company vehicles or pool cars gets a training course about the implications of driving at work, and we expect it to grow quickly as the year rolls on."

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- The first National Governing Body to break into the Stonewall Champions and Workplace Index and **listed in the Stonewall Top 100 employers:** 2010
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RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP 2013



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BRITAIN'S GOLDEN DECADE OF SPORT CONTINUES WITH RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP

Plans for **RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP 2013** reached an advanced stage during 2011, with host cities being finalised, all 14 competing nations being confirmed and a base being established at Salford's MediaCityUK development.

A formal link with the Welsh Assembly government was confirmed, while specialist staff were also recruited as Rugby League officials to set their sights on staging the most successful tournament in the sport's history.

Rugby League World Cup 2013 General Manager Sally Bolton said: "2011 was about laying foundations, and we feel that's been done very well.

"The host process took the best part of a year, so that isn't something you can decide to do six months before the tournament.

"The other big part of 2011 was starting to get staff in place, and we made some key appointments on that front as Jon Dutton (Operations Director), Martin Johnston (Communications Manager) and Mark Foster (Marketing Manager) all joined the team."

A total of 21 different venues will stage 28 games across four countries when the world's biggest Rugby League tournament arrives on these shores in 2013.

And Dutton has been staggered by the amount of interest and enthusiasm generated by the host tender process.

He said: "We invited towns and cities to bid for the rights to host part of the tournament. That process started in January 2011 with a series of seminars across



Some 21 venues over four countries will stage the **Rugby League World Cup 2013**

Welsh rugby legend **Gareth Thomas** is delighted that Wales are co-hosting the Rugby League World Cup 2013

the UK, and we made the formal announcements of who the hosts were in November 2011.

"We mainly wanted local authorities to form the consortia and

drive the bids, and that's been very successful. But the most pleasing thing for me was the enormous amount of enthusiasm and goodwill that emerged during the host process and then remained afterwards."

Bolton believes the potential growth the World Cup can deliver is enormous. She said: "In existing towns and cities where Rugby League is already strong, we've pulled together different groups that haven't worked together before, so we're getting clubs and local authorities working together in a way they haven't done previously.

"For example, Warrington might have a Rugby League team that is successful, but not everybody in Warrington goes to watch the Wolves or is a season-ticket holder.

"What we hope for the World Cup, following on from the excitement and engagement



GOLDEN DECADE OF SPORT

YEAR	EVENT
2012	Summer Olympics, London
2013	Rugby League World Cup, England & Wales
2014	Commonwealth Games, Glasgow
2015	Rugby Union World Cup, England
2017	Athletics World Championships, London
2019	Cricket World Cup, England



of the 2012 Olympics, is that people will want to watch and be involved in another major international sporting event. It doesn't have to be about attracting new people in new areas; it can be new people in existing areas."

On the pitch, Italy and the USA - who will be playing in their first Rugby League World Cup - qualified for the competition's final two spots after winning tournaments in autumn 2011.

England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, France, Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and the

⌚ In the shadow of the **Palace of Westminster**, RLWC2013 will be the first major UK event after London 2012

➔ RLWC General Manager **Sally Bolton** believes the tournament has the potential for enormous growth

👥 Next year's competition is expected to support **1,600 jobs**

AIMS:

- Deliver a profitable tournament to benefit the development of the sport worldwide
- Establish the RLWC 2013 as a premier global sporting event
- Increase the profile of the sport in the UK and internationally
- Leave a lasting legacy



Cook Islands will join them in a truly global jamboree of Rugby League's most brilliant athletes.

Bolton adds: "This is the biggest opportunity that the game will have in this country for a very long time. We have to make the absolute most of it, and to do that it means this is not the RFL's tournament - it's the game's tournament.

"I'd urge everyone in the game to get behind it and create a tournament we can really be proud of. The next time this tournament comes to the UK, you don't want 14 teams - you want 20."

She continues: "I can't wait for it to get here. 2011 was about seeing a project that has been so long in the making starting to genuinely come together. When you can say 'that game is going to be played at that stadium', you can see it starting to come together.

"We've got dedicated staff and a World Cup office, and that's huge given that three years ago we were talking about the idea of what a World Cup here would look like.

"We've got an opportunity to have a step-change in the perception of the sport. People ask about the legacy of 2000,

but our approach this time is completely different. We've had more time to prepare and the way we're working with the Government is a very different approach. It's very exciting."



KEY FACTS:

- The Rugby League World Cup is an integral part of the golden decade of sport in the UK along with other major events such as 2012 London Olympics, 2014 Commonwealth Games and the 2015 Rugby Union World Cup
- The first major event after London 2012
- Expected to generate around £61.5m for the economy, supporting 1,600 jobs
- Dedicated team moved into MediaCityUK - Spring 2012
- Already announced 18 venues across four countries - England, Wales, France and Ireland
- A total of 34 bids, comprising 30 stadia, 47 team training sites and 87 team base camps, were submitted to the RFL
- Upwards of 500,000 people are expected to watch the 28 matches live over a six-week period in the Autumn of 2013, with a further 20 million viewers from 120 countries tuning in around the world



- Have a **black international captain** when Clive Sullivan led Great Britain in 1972 to win the Rugby League World Cup
- The first National Governing Body to break into the Stonewall Champions and Workplace Index and **listed in the Stonewall Top 100 employers:** 2010
- First football code to allow **substitutes:** 1964.
- First football code to have a **sponsored trophy:** 1962. Mackeson Trophy for club with best scoring record in 1962-63 season.
- Have a **British Asian represent their country in any football code** when Ikram Butt played for England against Wales in 1995.
- Have a **black international coach** when Ellery Hanley coached Great Britain in 1994
- Rugby League is the first sport in the United Kingdom to allow **shirt sponsorship:** 1974
- Take a **full round of fixtures to one venue** and have a 'Magic Weekend': 2007
- Have a **female president of a professional sports National Governing Body.** Kath Hetherington 1995.
- Have a **professional club with a black coach** (Roy Francis): 1961
- George Bennett first **black Rugby League international** when he played for Wales in 1935, over 40 years before Viv Anderson played for England Football in 1978 and the first black cricketer for England appeared in 1981. Jimmy Peters played rugby union for England and St Helens. He remained the first and only black England rugby union international until 1988.
- Introduce **Video Referees and Technology:** 1996
- First of any football code to use **floodlights** for league matches in 1932 (first league game under lights for soccer was in 1956).
- Have a **black CEO of a professional sports club:** 2000 (Abi Ekoku, CEO of Bradford Bulls):
- Have a **black international manager** when Abi Ekoku managed Great Britain: 2006
- Introduce a **Salary Cap:** 1998
- Have a **black international**
- The **first known black professional** rugby league player was Lucius Banks, who made his debut for Hunslet in January 1912 however a photograph of the 1903 Pendlebury suggests earlier. Football records show the professional game had black players in the 1800s.
- Introduce **Licences** instead of an annual promotion and relegation model: 2009
- Introduce a **Themed Round:** 2011 ("State of Mind" in 2011 with another in 2012)
- Rugby League is the first sport in the United Kingdom to introduce a **Matchday Entertainment Package:** 1991. Keighley began 'Cougar-mania' in the early 90s introducing music after tries, lively PA announcements and entertainers in the ground.
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- Rugby League is the first sport in the United Kingdom to introduce **Sin Bins:** 1982
- Took a **full round of fixtures on the road:** 1998
- First sport in the world to **design a competition specifically for TV** when in 1965 Sir David Attenborough who was then the controller of BBC2, set up the BBC2 Television Floodlit Trophy for rugby league in Britain. The sport was first broadcast in 1948 when the Challenge Cup Final was screened. Now "Selling Broadcasting Rights" is the main income stream for all major sports.
- The RFL recognised as an **Investor in People** (2010)
- Introduce an **end of season play-off and Grand Final.** Originally in 1907 through to 1973 it was reintroduced in 1998 under its current guise and is now a major success professionally on a **Sunday:** 1966
- Rugby League is the first sport in the United Kingdom to play professionally on a **Sunday:** 1966
- Have a professional sports club play in **shirts with an anti homophobia message** on: 2011 (Sheffield Eagles)
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EUROPE



Rugby League is the first British Sport...

... to have a **British Asian represent** their country in any football code when Ikram Butt played for England against Wales: 1995.

PUSHING NEW BOUNDARIES IN EUROPE

Rugby League is continuing to push new boundaries all across the continent through the **RUGBY LEAGUE EUROPEAN FEDERATION**, with Italy a shining example of what has been achieved over the course of the last 12 months.

The Italians secured the final place in the 2013 Rugby League World Cup when a 78th-minute drop-goal by their scrum-half Ryan Ghietti secured the 19-19 draw they needed against Lebanon in Belgrade to qualify on points difference.

It sparked scenes of great jubilation among the Italians, and the culmination of years of hard work by officials establishing the sport in the country.

And as RLEF General Manager Danny Kazandjian explains, their success cannot be measured just on those dramatic 80 minutes in Belgrade in October.

"The Italian Rugby League has been around for roughly a decade now, but in the last couple of years there has been a lot of effort put into creating a stable operation," Kazandjian said.

"The big project they have been working on is the registration of clubs, and the redrafting of their constitution in accordance with the regulations of the CONI (Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano) committee.

"All of the sporting federations in Italy must adhere to their regulations.

"Prior to 2011 the Italian Association had a constitution

🇺🇦 **Ukraine Rugby League get ready for their international against Serbia**

that we vetted, but as part of our new strategy in August 2010, we want countries to fall in line with what is required in their own country.

"We want all of our organisations to be sustainable, and a big part of that is earning recognition from their own governments. It's really important that all of our nations work towards that.

"Italy is an example for other countries to follow, because the domestic stability of an association is paramount to having a long-term future.

"That primary goal is also clearly supported by the





international progress and exposure Italy have gained by getting to Rugby League World Cup 2013.

"This season they will have a minimum of eight clubs, and now we have the correct registration process, it will be a lot easier to sign up further new clubs."

The Italians certainly haven't been the only RLEF success story of the last year, however.

Kazandjian has seen a host of nations make genuine progress as they look to put down sustainable Rugby League roots for the coming years.

"On March 20, Ukraine became the latest nation to receive full recognition, and this year we are going through

📍 **Serbia v Italy in RLWC2013 qualifying action from 2011**

📍 **Malta v Norway from the 2011 European Shield**

the process of registering clubs in Norway and the Czech Republic," Kazandjian said.

"Lebanon and Serbia became full members of the Rugby League European Federation, and they are probably the first two non-traditional rugby nations to achieve that. They will also apply for full RLIF membership this year.

"Four countries have now moved up to become affiliate members - Germany, Norway and the Czech Republic, plus Canada, and all of those have shown a marked increase in participation numbers.

"Germany and the Czech Republic won their first ever silverware, with the European Shield and Bowl respectively."

Kazandjian believes that the overall strategy of the RLEF means that nations will be able to develop into stronger positions domestically, rather than just being able to field a national side.

"Our objective is that once all the clubs are registered within state laws, we have a really solid argument to approach the various senior sporting organisations in those countries," Kazandjian added.

"We want to be in a position to inform them that a significant

number of their citizens are playing Rugby League, and that recognition of our associations would be sensible.

"Our big strategic approach has been all about participation numbers and registering clubs, and that is incredibly important foundation work.

"The key message of 2011 is sustainability, and making sure that all of our associations are part of the fabric of sport in their own countries, rather than just having a national side."



Themed Round: 2011 ("State of Mind" in 2011 with another in 2012)
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THE NUMBERS



Rugby League is the first British Sport...

...to introduce **Licences** instead of an annual promotion and relegation model: 2009

REVIEW OF FINANCES

The RFL is pleased to report that 2011 saw record levels of turnover for the business, with turnover for this period rising from £22,817k to £27,043k. This 18.5 per cent increase was largely due to the staging of the Four Nations tournament in the Northern Hemisphere which saw match income rise from £3,313k in 2010 to £5,941k in 2011 (the 2010 tournament having taken place in Australia). This tournament also impacted on the RFL year on year total sponsorship monies which at £1,858k (2010: £1,499k) were 24 per cent up on the previous year. In addition, 2011 saw increased Government funding during the year, which in the period saw grant income rise again, from £7,493k to £8,166k. Broadcast revenue remained stable at £7,433k (2010: £7,381k).

Within the RFL accounts, the cost of sales heading is broken down into two sections, the first being the traditional costs of making the sale and the second being those costs of sales that are directly payable to clubs. This second section of the cost of sales is discussed in more detail below. The traditional cost of sales items increased in 2011 by 38 per cent from the 2010 figure of £10,371k to £14,312k. This was again primarily due to the costs incurred in staging the Four Nations on home soil.

Payments to and on behalf of clubs is made up from the cost of sales element of £4,351k (2010: £3,826k) and a further amount shown below Gross Profit on the Profit and Loss Account, which in 2011 brought the total payable to and on behalf of clubs to £9,179k (2010: £8,671k). This total figure has continued to rise year-on-year.

The RFL has utilised the increased grant funding to assist clubs with the work they carry out to increase participation in the game. This has resulted in an increase of 34.2 per cent to £2,196k in 2011 (2010: £1,635k). In 2011 £130k was paid to the RL Foundation (2010: £30k) which accounts in part for the increase in grants to other areas of the game. The increase in payments to match officials, disciplinary costs, player welfare and banned substance testing also contributed to the increase in the amounts paid on behalf of member clubs.

Once again, profits generated from trading have enabled the RFL to make a year-end surplus to distribute to clubs which is in line with previous years at £150k. In addition the RFL was pleased to repeat previous year-end distributions to reflect participation in the Challenge Cup. In 2011 these account for a further £210k of distributions to clubs.

Despite the increase in turnover, the RFL has been careful to monitor operating costs and it is gratifying to see that these have reduced from £3,732k in 2010 to £3,505k in 2011. This reduction is over a number of expenditure lines, albeit that the main decrease is a reduction in professional fees.

Once again, it is worth noting that interest receivable by the RFL which historically has been a very significant income stream was low at £51k compared with £65k in 2010. This is the result of both distributing funds to clubs earlier as well as the general economic impact felt from banks offering much lower interest rates over the last three years.

Of Directors the RFL Board is committed to further consolidation of the group's balance sheet to protect the RFL from potential future adverse trading conditions. It is in light of this that the RFL purchased a leasehold property in the form of Odsal Stadium in Bradford to the value of £1,324k during 2011. The Board also carried out a review of properties and determined there was no impairment of their value. An external review of the assets will be sought during 2012.

The board is also seeking to achieve year on year increases in payments to or on behalf of the game.

FUTURE FORECASTS

Going forward, 2012 is expected to be another challenging year given the current economic climate. Certainly early indications are that household disposable income continues to be under pressure with spectators being more selective about the matches they choose to attend. In addition, discretionary business expenditure in areas such as sponsorship, hospitality and advertising remain lower than that experienced previously. Consequently the professional



club game is responding positively to these challenges and the RFL centrally continues to provide such support and flexibility as it reasonably can to keep intact the game's existing professional club network. Centrally, the RFL will continue to be financially stable, despite the traumatic economic situation.

Broadcasting contracts are secure for the next five years following the successful negotiation of new contracts with the BBC and British Sky Broadcasting. Commercial contracts are less secure at the date of signing, with the Challenge Cup title sponsor rights reaching the end of the contract at 31 December 2012. A new Commercial Director has been appointed in the first quarter of 2012, and so far the outlook for a replacement sponsor is encouraging.

As discussed in the 2010 Operating and Financial Review, it has been widely reported that there continues to be downward pressure on public sector expenditure and, while mindful of this, we are firmly of the belief that Rugby League continues to offer a tremendous vehicle to promote the policies, strategies and values of the Government in terms of increasing activity amongst the wider population. The RFL believe that a strong case has been made in the recent Whole Sport Plan submission for funding between April 2013 and March 2017, however the outcome of this submission will not be known until December 2012.



Significant investment continues to be made in the sport's information management system, covering registrations, playing records, fixtures and other similar operational processes. It is hoped that upon completion, it will continue to improve the level of service experienced by RFL members and the wider Rugby League community.

During 2011, the community game undertook a review of the most appropriate playing season

for juniors and seniors. We are now at the end of a process which has been wide ranging and robust. This review (the Four Seasons review) has seen a shift in the structure of the community game, with a wider integration of clubs and leagues across the sport. The RFL seeks to facilitate an environment which provides the most enjoyable experience for participating in the sport. With continued assistance from the game as a whole and Sport England, the RFL will continue on the path of promoting participation and improving facilities at this level. The RFL will continue this support for the efforts of our volunteers and participants whichever season they play in.

2012 will see the start of a new three-year licensing period for the Super League clubs. The strength of the Super League Licensing system has been shown in the competitiveness of the league over the last three years, and 2012 will see two brand new stadiums become operational as standards across this section of the game continue to rise. Whilst some clubs have undoubtedly struggled through the economic difficulties there have also been successes, and we are pleased to welcome Widnes Vikings to the Super League competition.

The Championship Review carried out in 2011 has set the path for further development of the semi-professional game. An expanded Championship of 14 clubs in 2013 offers the opportunity for the members to develop commercial revenues. Championship One will be enhanced by the addition of four clubs in 2013, developing from the strong work done within the Tier 3 and Tier 4 of Rugby League. It has been confirmed that Northampton Rebels, Hemel Stags and The University of Gloucestershire All Golds have all been successful in their applications. During 2012 the RFL will support these and the fourth confirmed club with development of their business, as they prepare for the 2013 season.

SUMMARY

The trading results for the year are solid, especially in the current economic climate. Our expectations for the coming year are to deliver a profit, and our initial sales for 2012 events are encouraging. The stability of some of our revenue streams will allow the RFL to continue to support its member clubs throughout 2012 and beyond. Finally, our corporate governance remains as strong as ever, providing a quality foundation for all our commercial activities and it is against this backdrop that we remain confident of the RFL's ability to perform in 2012 onwards.

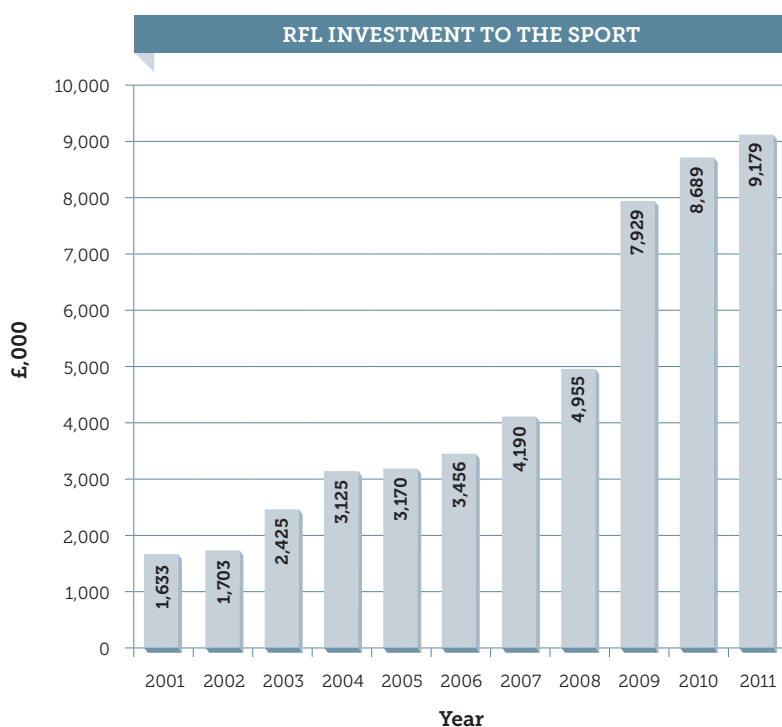
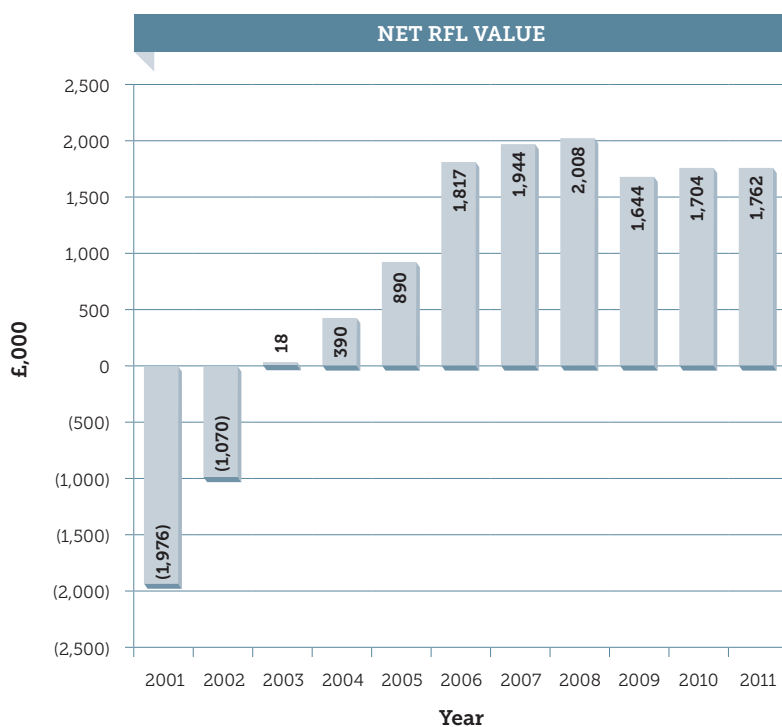
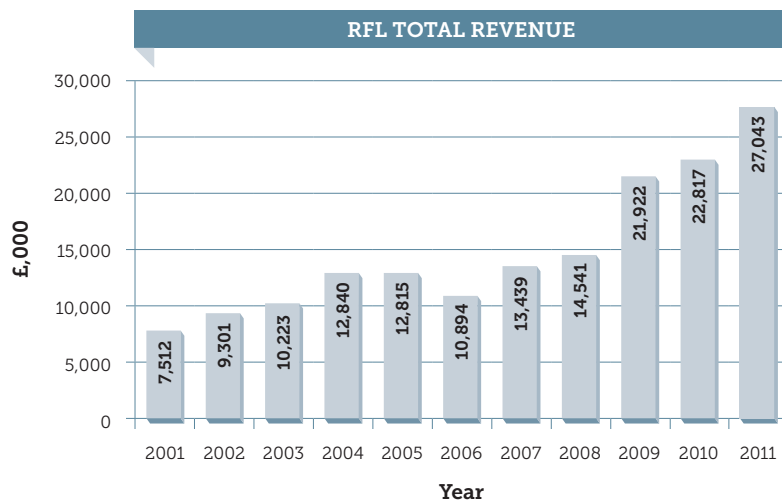


FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Revenue has continued to increase, reaching an all-time high of £27m in 2011. The increases across the 11 years shown opposite are across all areas of income, but most notably in the broadcast revenues and Government funding. In 2011, with the Four Nations taking place in the UK, the match income is also at an increased level.

The RFL's net value has increased again in 2011, following the delivery of a post-tax profit. The net value had reached an organisation low of almost £2m in 2001, but this net liabilities position was improved to a record net assets position of just over £2m in 2008. This was achieved through the delivery of record profits, and by revaluing the RFL's land and buildings. This position was eroded when the land and buildings were impaired in 2009, but has increased since then resulting in a net asset position of £1.76m at the end of 2011.

As the organisation's turnover has increased, the RFL has continued to invest record amounts back into the sport. The investment of £9.18m in 2011 is nearly triple that invested five years previously when £3.46m was invested in 2006. The investment is mainly comprised of direct cash payments to member clubs, but also includes payments made on behalf of clubs where the RFL is able to take advantage of economies of scale, in areas such as insurance.



CONSOLIDATED PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT

for the year ended 31 December 2011

	Note		2011		2010
		£	£	£	£
Turnover	1		27,042,589		22,816,517
Cost of sales	2	(14,312,050)		(10,370,995)	
Cost of sales – payable to or on behalf of clubs	3	(4,350,578)		(3,826,169)	
Total cost of sales			(18,662,628)		(14,197,164)
Gross profit			8,379,961		8,619,353
Payments to or on behalf of clubs and other member organisations		(4,828,480)		(4,845,015)	
Operating costs		(3,504,854)		(3,731,781)	
Administrative costs			(8,333,334)		(8,576,796)
Operating profit			46,627		42,557
Other interest receivable and similar income			50,869		64,673
Profit on ordinary activities before taxation			97,496		107,230
Tax on profit on ordinary activities			(39,096)		(47,771)
Profit for the financial year			58,400		59,459

All the above results are derived from continuing operations.

1 Turnover	2011	2010
	£	£
Match income	5,940,509	3,313,487
Broadcast	7,433,017	7,381,124
Sponsorship	1,858,404	1,499,231
Government funding	8,165,944	7,493,019
Other	3,644,715	3,129,656
	27,042,589	22,816,517

2 Cost of sales	2011	2010
	£	£
Match costs	5,115,678	2,223,486
Grant funded activities	6,366,560	6,051,696
Sponsorship and promotional costs	404,189	507,575
Other	2,425,623	1,588,238
	14,312,050	10,370,995

3 Payments to or on behalf of clubs and other member organisations	2011	2010
	£	£
Awards to clubs	2,616,986	2,892,056
Awards to other sections of the game	483,409	350,638
Match officials	805,012	796,346
Insurance	501,575	468,012
Disciplinary costs and banned substances testing	302,847	231,739
Player Welfare	118,651	106,224
	4,828,480	4,845,015

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:

	2011	2010
	£	£
Match costs	2,154,728	2,190,947
Grant funded activities	2,195,850	1,635,222
	4,350,578	3,826,169
Total payments made to or behalf of clubs and other member organisations	9,179,058	8,671,184

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET

at 31 December 2011

		2011		2010
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets				
Tangible assets		3,571,912		2,163,940
Current assets				
Debtors	4,364,097		4,680,068	
Short Term Assets	-		2,006,970	
Cash at bank and in hand	3,484,929		1,942,293	
	7,849,026		8,629,331	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(9,658,874)		(9,089,607)	
Net current liabilities		(1,809,848)		(460,276)
Total assets plus net current assets		1,762,064		1,703,664
Net assets		1,762,064		1,703,664
Capital and Reserves				
Accumulated surplus		918,607		860,207
Revaluation reserve		843,457		843,457
Shareholders' funds		1,762,064		1,703,664

The financial information set out above does not constitute the Company's consolidated statutory accounts for the years ended 31 December 2011 and 31 December 2010 but is derived from those accounts. Statutory accounts for 31 December 2010 have been delivered to the registrar of companies, and those for the year ended 31 December 2011 will be delivered to Companies House following the Company's Annual General Meeting. The auditors have reported on those accounts; their reports were unqualified, did not include a reference to any matters to which the auditors drew attention by way of emphasis without qualifying their report, and did not contain statements under section 498(2) or (3) of the Companies Act 2006 in respect of the accounts for 31 December 2011 or 31 December 2010.

FIRST AND FOREMOST

Introduce a **Themed Round**: 2011 ("State of Mind" in 2011 with another in 2012)

Introduce **Licences** instead of an annual promotion and relegation model: 2009

Introduce a **full round of fixtures to one venue** and have a 'Magic Weekend': 2007

Take a **full round of fixtures to one venue** and have a 'Magic Weekend': 2007

Change the **whole season** of the professional game from winter to summer: 1996

Introduce an **end of season play-off and Grand Final**. Originally in 1907 through to 1973 it was reintroduced in 1998 under its current guise and is now a major success

Have a **professional sports club** play in **shirts with an anti homophobia message** on: 2011 (Sheffield Eagles)

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Rugby League is the first sport in the United Kingdom to play professionally on a **Sunday**: 1966

Rugby League is the first sport in the United Kingdom to allow **shirt sponsorship**: 1974

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Have a **black international coach** when Ellery Hanley coached Great Britain in 1994

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The **first known black professional** rugby league player was Lucius Banks, who made his debut for Hunslet in January 1912 however a photograph of the 1903 Pendlebury suggests earlier. Football records show the professional game had black players in the 1800s.

Introduce a **Salary Cap**: 1998

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Have a **black international manager** when Abi Ekoku managed Great Britain: 2006

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Have a **British Asian represent their country in any football code** when Ikram Butt played for England against Wales in 1995.

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George Bennett first **black Rugby League international** when he played for Wales in 1935, over 40 years before Viv Anderson played for England Football in 1978 and the first black cricketer for England appeared in 1981. Jimmy Peters played rugby union for Barrow and St Helens. He remained the first and only black England rugby union international until 1988.

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Rugby League is the first sport in the United Kingdom to introduce **Sin Bins**: 1982

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Took a **full round of fixtures on the road**: 1998

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First sport in the world to **design a competition specifically for TV** when in 1965 Sir David Attenborough who was then the controller of BBC2, set up the BBC2 Television Floodlit Trophy for rugby league in Britain. The sport was first broadcast in 1948 when the Challenge Cup Final was screened. Now 'Selling Broadcasting Rights' is the main income stream for all major sports.

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The RFL recognised as an **Investor in People** (2010)

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Rugby League is the first sport in the United Kingdom to introduce a **Matchday Entertainment Package**: 1991. Keighley began 'Cougar-mania' in the early 90s introducing music after tries, lively PA announcements and entertainers in the ground.

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Have a **black international captain** when Clive Sullivan led Great Britain in 1972 to win the Rugby League World Cup

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First football code to allow **substitutes**: 1964.

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First football code to have a **sponsored trophy**: 1962. Mackeson Trophy for club with best scoring record in 1962-63 season.

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