



## Accelerating the Global Development of Women in Rugby – December 2018

Well it's been a year now since the World Rugby Council signed off on the new global women in rugby plan. So much has happened the momentum is really building throughout the world with new programmes initiatives and successes in every region. Exciting times! Time for an update which is a year one plan implementation report card.

### Participation and Development

#### More women and girls playing

The numbers continue to grow. The KPI for this work stream is to double the number of registered women playing rugby globally. The reports in from the unions show a 27% increase in registered women players since 2017. There are currently 577K registered women playing rugby. This is a 223% increase since 2013. There has been some outstanding “movers and shakers” in the last 12 months and the list below shows some of these.

- Mexico +20%
- India + 32%
- China +164%
- Australia +19%
- Kenya +372%
- Argentina +66%

#### Regional growth strategic framework - Africa

You may remember in the last update I talked about the progress being made by Rugby Africa with developing a new strategic framework. This [new strategy](#) has now been endorsed by the Rugby Africa Board. But Africa is not alone here, there is great work and progress happening in all regions. Can I again encourage you to share your success stories either directly or via giving us information to put onto the [women's development page](#) of the World Rugby website.

### High Performance

A huge work programme has been driven by the CAP (Competition and Performance Department) under the leadership of Mark Egan, Head of CAP and Peter Horne, GM High Performance.

## **WRWC 2021**

Congratulations to NZ for being awarded host of WRWC 2021 and a huge acknowledgement to Rugby Australia for all the work they put into developing what was an incredibly impressive professional bid. Early in the new year we will be announcing the confirmed details of the WRWC 2021 qualification process. What I can tell you at this stage is that there will be four regional qualifiers – Africa, Oceania, Asia and Europe. The winners of these regional tournaments will join the seven unions already qualified due to their placings at the WRWC2017. The final position will be decided by a global repechage which will involve unions from the regional qualifiers and possibly, still to be confirmed a team from South America.

## **International Competition Review**

In the last newsletter I outlined a series of meetings that were taking place between CAP key managers and regions and unions in reviewing the international calendar. On the 8<sup>th</sup> November representatives from the top 14 women's 15s unions were invited to a high-performance workshop in Dublin to discuss the international calendar. The findings from these workshops were discussed at the Women's Advisory Committee meeting. It was agreed to look at the competition development in two phases. Phase one up is the period from 2019 through until WRWC 2021 and phase two post 2021. In the first phase we are looking to strengthen some of the regional 15s competitions. We are also looking into the feasibility of introducing two or possibly three new cross regional 15s competitions. This work is still very much in development but ideally the intention is that these new cross regional competitions would be in place in 2020.

Post 2021 there is a wider discussion to be finalised and a further workshop on this will take place in the first half of 2019.

## [Leadership](#)

### **Women in HP Coaching Review**

Well it was a huge effort particularly by Carol Isherwood but thank you to all of you that were involved in inputting into this significant review. In addition to the surveys and interviews that were undertaken, we hosted a meeting in London to debate and discuss the findings. The following people were involved in this workshop;

- Isabel Perez Vice-President Federación Española de Rugby, Former HP coach
- Jo Hull Hong Kong Rugby Union Women's Performance Manager & Head Coach
- Helen Buteme Head Coach Uganda National Women's team
- Giselle Mather HP Coach: England; Tyrells XVs Premiership; London Irish
- Nicky Ponsford Head of Women's Performance RFU; Rugby Europe Board Member
- Emilie Bydwell General Manager of Women's High Performance - USA
- Jason Lewis World Rugby Regional service Manager; Former Welsh Women's Coach
- Jock Peggie Training Manager, World Rugby
- Amanda Bennett Former HP Coach, Wales, England and Saracens

The full report with recommendations was discussed and well received by the Women's Advisory Committee. The report has a suite of recommendations which have implications for World Rugby, unions and coaches. These recommendations are currently being costed and prioritised. We will look to launch the review and its recommendations at a suitable event early next year. The ultimate vision for this programme is that

- By 2025 it will be normal for women to be appointed into head coaching positions at a high-performance level.
- Women will see themselves and be seen by others as just "coaches" not female coaches.
- At the 2025 Women's Rugby World Cup women will make up at least 40% of coaching teams including head coaching roles.
- The makeup of coaching teams both men and women's programmes will be more diverse.
- There will be a greater prominence of women coaching both male and female teams

### **Scholarships**

It's been a great first year with the introduction of the executive leadership scholarship programme, the 2018 recipients have been working on some interesting work.

The regional associations are now in the process of considering the second years intakes with a prioritised recommendation list due with World Rugby by the end of January. The 2019 scholarships will be announced on international women's day 8<sup>th</sup> March.

At this stage I'd like to acknowledge the mentors that have freely given up their wisdom and time to work with the first group of scholarships. The 2018 mentors are:

- Steve Tew                      CEO NZRU
- Carol Isherwood              World Rugby Hall of Fame
- Tom Jones                      Ex GM, World Rugby
- Mark Harrington              Head of Technical Services, World Rugby
- Katherine Henderson        VP Rugby Canada
- Cathy Wong                      Fiji, Rugby Asia
- Sue Day                          CFO RFU
- Eliseo Patron-Costas        Secretary General Spanish Rugby

If you are interested and able to help out as a mentor for this programme, I'd love to hear from you.

### **Leaderships Forums**

I have already highlighted the successful Rugby Africa Forum in Botswana. The second forum was held in Madrid under the leadership of Nicky Ponsford in her capacity as Chair of Rugby Europe Women's Commission and her wider organising committee. A special thanks to Jose Gorrotxategui from Rugby Europe for delivering such a high-quality event. The outcome of this forum will be discussed at the Rugby Europe Exco meeting this month. Rugby Americas

North also ran a successful workshop of key influencers across North America which involved the three RAN scholarship recipients. This forum identified the critical strategic issues facing the development of women in rugby in North America. This group named the WiLD group (Women in Leadership Directors) presented their thoughts to the RAN exco.

The third significant leadership forum is taking place in Thailand in December. Ada Milby will be working with Women Win ([www.womenwin.org](http://www.womenwin.org)) on this forum that will be integrated into the Asia Rugby AGM.

Next year there will be forums in South America and Oceania and North America.

## Profile

I know that many of you have been involved in some capacity on what will be the first global marketing campaign to lift the profile of women in rugby. After going through a competitive tender process, we appointed Matta, a UK based creative agency, to work with us to develop this 3-year campaign that will be introduced in March and launched in April 2019. A letter has gone out to all CEOs/Presidents at a union and regional level to notify them about the intended campaign and to get a contact for us to work with to assist with local and regional amplification.

The campaign which is currently in development aims to create an increase in interest and awareness from players, fans and investors.

## Diversified Investment

The current base line review into the status of commercial and other investment has been completed. The six regions and 15 Unions provided input into the review. The key recommendations from this independent review are;

- **Develop new women's rugby properties and premiums**, identifying potential partners and investors, in particular those from new categories
- **Consider a separation of men's and women's rugby commercial programmes**, to grow investment in the women's game, including a separate and dedicated agency to support the sale of the women's game
- **Develop a global women's rugby brand and communications strategy**, to increase profile and awareness of the game, its leaders, talent and impact – focusing initially in those markets where there is a high level of interest and growth in the game
- **Lead the development of a value proposition for women's rugby**, securing independent advisory on the valuation of women's rugby properties to form the basis of commercial and non-commercial investment in the game
- Ensure that commercial proposals that include women's rugby properties (**bundled proposals**), are **individually valued and sold on the premise of commercial partner commitment** to those properties and their leverage and activation

Thanks again to all those that provided information for the status review. The Commercial team at World Rugby is now considering this report, its recommendations and other market research completed to develop a consolidated commercial strategy with the aim of completing this work in the first quarter of 2019 ready to be in market next year with a range of properties for commercial partnerships.

And rolling on to 2019 😊

Next Year- year two of the global plan implementation- will be another full on year. Some of the key deliverables being

- We will finalise international competition model through to 2025
- The World Rugby High Performance Academy in Stellenbosch in May will be focused on Women's Rugby
- We will roll out key recommendations in the HP Coaching review
- We will deploy a global marketing campaign to lift the profile and awareness of Women in Rugby commences in March
- We will announce up to 16 new executive leadership scholarships
- We will confirm and deploy new commercial strategy

I am currently writing this having just left Charlotte North Carolina where I participated in the Women's Rugby Coaches and Referee Association conference. This was an excellent gathering of some 120 women and men all committed to developing women in rugby in north America. Congratulations to Kerri Heffernan and her wider organising board for putting on the event. My next stop is Thailand for the women in rugby leadership workshop and then I will be heading home to NZ for Christmas with my family.

May you all have a wonderful break over December and January. Thanks for all the support in 2018 and I look forward to catching up with you in the new year.

If you know other people who would benefit from receiving these updates, can you let me know and I'll add them to the list

Katie