

RUGBY LEAGUE SPORT REVIEW PROPOSAL

PREPARED BY BUCS RUGBY LEAGUE SAG | OCTOBER 2019

CYCLE TWO



SUMMARY

The British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) Rugby League SAG propose the introduction of new university female Rugby League offer. The proposal is to implement a four stage development plan which will conclude with the introduction of a 13-a-side BUCS competition offer.

There is currently no formal competition offer for female Rugby League within the Higher Education (HE) sector. Increased Female participation is one of the National Governing Bodies (NGB) key objectives over the next three years as they build towards hosting the World Cup. The HE sector is of key significance to helping them achieve their goal of having 21,000 female participants playing Rugby League by 2021.

This proposal sets out the implementation of a strategically important programme for Rugby League which has full support from the National Governing Body - the Rugby Football League (RFL).

This proposal has been prepared by the BUCS Rugby League SAG in collaboration with the Rugby Football League (RFL). The SAG is composed of the following representatives:

- The Partnerships and Projects Manager of a Premier League University - University of Hull
- The Education Manager of the Rugby Football League
- A PHD Student Representative from Tier 2 University of Manchester
- An FE/HE Rugby League specific consultant
- The Head Coach of Northumbria University (Current Rugby League and Championship Winners since 2016-17)
- A BUCS representative

INTRODUCTION

Female participation in Rugby League has increased from 8,000 to 15,000 since 2016. There has been a particularly significant increase in the number of secondary schools (21%) leading to an increased demand for a Further Education (FE) Colleges offer, which has seen a 200% increase in colleges participating in regular Rugby League competitions since 2016.

In 2018 the RFL launched a Women's Super League competition and as part of their new strategy as they build towards hosting a World Cup, the NGB have committed to encouraging 21,000 females to be playing Rugby League by 2021.

However, whilst the Schools and College programmes are experiencing growth, (see appendix A) there is currently no formal offer for female Rugby League within the HE sector. This creates the potential for player drop-off as students transition through to Higher Education.

Whilst there is no formal offer for Rugby League at present a small number of determined students have established Rugby League within their Universities, there are currently three university clubs in existence. During the research phase of this proposal the SAG have found several additional institutes that are in support of the introduction of a women's programme due to them having existing demand amongst their student population PLEASE SEE APPENDIX B.

The SAG in partnership with the RFL would therefore like to propose the introduction of a new female Rugby League offer which will be developed over a four stage period.

1. PROPOSAL

The proposal is to create a female Rugby League offer for the UK University sector which will include the implementation of a four stage development plan that concludes with a formal 13-a-side competition offer within the BUCS competition programme. This proposal sets out the implementation of this strategically significant programme of Rugby League that will appeal to all student athlete types.

The SAG are aware that there needs to be an element of fluidity in the annual progression of the offer. The advisory feel that developing the offer over a four stage period is a conservative approach that allows small but gradual progression towards a 13-a-side competition.

A full review will be complete at the mid and end of season stages of each academic year to ensure the progressions are achievable.

To facilitate the development of this plan a steering group will be recruited that represents the players, university staff, BUCS, SAG and NGB.

Currently the majority of demand for Women's Rugby League exists in the North West, Yorkshire and North East regions. This is reflective of the participation across the community and professional game also. Having a focused, target geographical area to develop the offer within in the early stages will be a positive factor.

The SAG envisage that initial demand for Women's Rugby League will sit within the aforementioned regions and these will continue to be regions with the majority of the activity. However, this should not be deemed a regional offer. The men's competition is a good example of how the offer in time can develop nationally, the development of a new club often requires just one motivated student who has played the game before.

Stage 1: (to start 2019)- Non-BUCS

During the first year a series of Rugby League 9's festivals will be delivered across the academic year to offer a structured introduction Rugby League.

There are currently four university women's Rugby League Clubs that have established organically, these clubs will form the base of eateries for the first festivals. Appendix C and D provide evidence that Salford and Hull will also commit to entering. All Institutions, that have highlighted to the RFL, interest in a women's offer will be invited to the events. There are other institutions shown in appendix E that have current female players who would have played Rugby League at University had there been an offer.

Festival	Date	Format	Delivered by
1	October	Coaching workshop + modified games	RFL education lead + talent coaches
2	November	Coaching workshop + modified games	RFL education lead + talent coaches
3	December	Coaching workshop + modified games	RFL education lead + talent coaches
4	February	Coaching workshop + modified games	RFL education lead + talent coaches
5	March	9 a side festival + talent pathway workshop	RFL education lead + England Coaching Team.
6	April	Inaugural RFL HE Women's championship 9 a side.	RFL education lead

Festival Format

Each festival will be designed to cater for athlete types 1-5. Festivals will begin with a coaching workshop that focuses on individual player development, these will be lead by a team of RFL coaches. Teams will then play modified games deemed suitable by the coaches to ensure welfare of all players. These festivals are designed so that teams do not need to bring a whole squad of players.

Festival 5 will be an opportunity for the England coaching team to present the talent pathway to players and discuss opportunities within Rugby League outside of HE.

Festival 6 will form the Inaugural RFL Women's Championship 9 a side festival – teams will have the opportunity to compete for the championship title. This event will be the test event for the proposed stage 2 BUCS Championship event.

Responsibility

The festivals will be delivered by the RFL Education lead with support from the event staff and performance coaches. The RFL will lead on all aspects of delivering the events – however marketing support from BUCS would be beneficial.

Resource Requirements

To participate in the stage 1 festivals – teams do not necessarily need to provide their own playing kit. The RFL will provide bibs or playing shirts where required. The purpose of this approach is to keep costs down to a minimum for institutes in their first year. Institutes will be required to organise the logistics of transport and associated costs. There are deemed to be no additional costs for a team or individuals to attend stage 1 festivals.

The RFL will cover the costs for delivering all aspects of the festivals, this budget has been allocated from the annual Education Budget.

Stage 2: (c.2020)

Stage 2 will see the additional of a formal BUCS event opportunity – the Women's Rugby League Championships. The calendar for activity will replicate stage 1 with 6 RFL led festivals. In addition to this established teams will be encouraged to organise 13-a-side fixtures in between festivals dates.

Festival	Date	Format	Delivered by
1	October	Coaching workshop + modified games	RFL education lead + talent coaches
2	November	Coaching workshop + modified games	RFL education lead + talent coaches
3	December	Coaching workshop + modified games	RFL education lead + talent coaches
4	February	Coaching workshop + modified games	RFL education lead + talent coaches
5	March	9 a side festival + talent pathway workshop	RFL education lead + England Coaching Team.
6	April	Inaugural BUCS HE Women's championship 9 a side.	RFL education lead – Linked to a BUCS Event.

Festival Format

As per stage 1 – festivals will include coaching workshops and modified games at the beginning of the year to cater for athletes of all categories. A focus will be on skill development and safety. The RFL will again be responsible for resourcing all aspects of these festivals.

BUCS Championship 9s

In stage 2 the inaugural BUCS championship 9s will take place. This event will replicate the men's championship 9s and will be a one-day standalone event. The SAG would like to propose this event is showcased at a major BUCS event.

13-a-side Fixtures

Established teams will be encouraged and supported to organise 13-a-side fixtures. The RFL will cover the costs of match officials for any inter-university fixture which is played with at least 13 players during stage 2. The RFL will also provide loan playing kits to any clubs who have not yet purchased a playing kit.

Resource Requirements

All festival costs including match officials at the BUCS Championship 9s will be covered by the RFL. Teams will again only be required to fund transport and training facilities on campus. Playing kits can again be loaned by the RFL to help reduce the cost of entry.

Where geography allows, universities will be introduced to professional clubs who may be able to offer support such as in-kind coaching – this will be on a case-by-case basis.

Stage 3: (c.2021)

The third stage will build upon the festival format, however clubs will be encouraged to play festival fixtures in a 13-a-side format. Alongside the festivals an RFL led merit League structure will be created which encourages teams to organise and fulfil 13-a-side fixtures outside of the festivals. From this league structure an RFL cup and plate competition will be introduced. The BUCS Championship 9s will remain as a one-day festival event.

Festival	Date	Format	Delivered by
1	October	Coaching workshop + modified games	RFL education lead + talent coaches
2	November	Coaching workshop + modified games	RFL education lead + talent coaches
3	December	Coaching workshop + modified games	RFL education lead + talent coaches
4	February	Coaching workshop + modified games	RFL education lead + talent coaches
5	March	13 a side festival + talent pathway workshop	RFL education lead + England Coaching Team.
6	April	BUCS HE Women's championship 9's	RFL education lead – Linked to a BUCS Event.

Festival Format

As per stage 1 and 2 – festivals will include coaching workshops and modified games at the beginning of the year to cater for athletes of all levels. A focus will be on skill development and safety. The RFL will again be responsible for resourcing all aspects of these festivals.

BUCS Championship 9s

In stage 3 the BUCS championship 9s will again take place as the pinnacle event of the calendar. This event will replicate the men's championship 9s and will be a one-day standalone event. The SAG would like to propose this event is again showcased at a major BUCS event.

RFL Merit League

Established teams will be encouraged and supported to organise 13-a-side fixtures as part of a Merit League structure administered by the RFL. The merit league will culminate in a play-off series where teams will compete for a Plate and Cup Competition drawn based on their finishing position in the Merit League. The RFL will again provide loan playing kits to any clubs who have not yet purchased a playing kit. However, teams will now be responsible for referee fees which is circa £30 at the time of writing. All competition costs including competition administration and facilities for final events will be covered by the RFL.

Resource Requirements

All festival costs including match officials at the BUCS Championship 9s will be covered by the RFL. Teams will again be required to fund transport and training facilities on campus. Playing kits can again be loaned by the RFL to help reduce the cost of entry. Additionally

Where geography allows, universities will be introduced to professional clubs who may be able to offer support such as in-kind coaching – this will be on a case-by-case basis.

Stage 4 (c.2022)

Stage Four will see the introduction of the inaugural BUCS League competition structure. The development festivals will remain; however, they will reduce in frequency. The purpose of keeping the festivals is to support the development of new participants and those athletes in the lower tiers.

BUCS League

It is proposed this will start with a single 'national' league. However, the league structure will be dictated by the number of teams and their geography. To support clubs with limited membership a deregulated game element will be introduced to foster transition from 9 to 13 a-side. This would be similar to the Men's proposal and number matching would be an option. A draft copy of the deregulation guidelines can be found in Appendix F.

Festival Format

As per stages 1-3– festivals will include coaching workshops and modified games at the beginning of the year to cater for athletes of all levels. A focus will be on skill development and safety. The RFL will again be responsible for resourcing all aspects of these festivals but they will be limited to three-festivals.

BUCS Championship 9s

In stage 4 the BUCS championship 9s will again take place, this allows teams not participating in the BUCS League to compete in a BUCS event. This event will replicate the men's championship 9s and will be a one-day standalone event. The SAG would like to propose this event is again showcased at a major BUCS event.

Festival	Date	Format	Delivered by
1	October	Coaching workshop + modified games	RFL education lead + talent coaches
2	December	Coaching workshop + modified games	RFL education lead + talent coaches
3	February	Coaching workshop + modified games	RFL education lead + talent coaches

2. STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The proposal has been developed to ensure it aligns with a number of strands within the BUCS strategy and the wider strategy of the National Governing Body which includes their ambitions to achieve 21,000 women playing Rugby League by 2021 – a programme supported by Sport England.

2.1 Inter-university Sport

The proposed offer currently sits within the Inter-university sport strand of the BUCS strategy. The purpose of the offer is to create inter-university competition opportunities for female Rugby League participants.

2.2 Social & Recreational Sport

The structure of the offer will allow for clubs who may not necessarily want to compete in formal BUCS competition yet, compete in the 9-a-side festivals. The proposal is not specifically a social and recreational sport offer but it does provide less formal competition opportunities. The RFL are continuing to develop the Tagged offer which sits within the social and recreational sport strand. It's believed Tagged may also act as a recruitment tool for new participants who may want to transition into contact.

2.3 Physical Activity & Health

The proposal includes playing opportunities for students in athlete types 1-5. From informal 9-a-side festivals, to formal BUCS competition and access to talent pathways where players could represent their country or gain professional contracts. The diversity of the offer means that there is a greater chance individual students needs and motivations are met which in turn should improve the retention of participants and therefore increase their ongoing levels of physical activity.

2.4 Performance Sport

It provides a superb opportunity to underpin the numbers playing within the female game and the RFL acknowledge the huge role HE has played in the development of the Men's game. University RL is still the second biggest entry point behind primary RL within Rugby League with 60-80% of players being new to the game, on an annual basis.

Support from the RFL in the proposal comes from both the Development Team and the Performance Team through the England Performance Unit (EPU) who are very keen to explore talent transfer and attract new players ahead of the RLWC2021

It is noticeable from analysing the players registered in Women's Super league that, of the 205 registered players there are 39 University students (19%) that are spread between 8 teams. The RFL would work with Universities to identify potential partnerships to support the University clubs.

Regarding performance sport the RFL are working hard on a dual career pathway for the women's game, as the only people who will currently receive remuneration for participating are the England Women's team travelling to the World 9s in Australia later this year.

- **Women's Development Academy (FE)** – the RFL have launched a Women's Development academy programme. This programme is a relationship between a College and Professional club or foundation. The aim of the programme is to offer an enhanced Rugby League programme that fits with the individuals chosen course of study. There are currently 4 Women's Development Academies that have all listed University as an exit route within their application.

- **DISE** – the RFL have just rolled out the first year of its Diploma in Sporting Excellence – DISE programme. This is exclusively for talented female athletes at college (16-18). From 50 trialists (Sept 2019) 30 athletes have been offered places on the programme. Of these 50 90% said they aspire to go to University. Therefore, we need to ensure that we have an offer in place by the time they transition to University or we risk further potential drop out.
- England Women – this is the elite level team for Women’s Rugby League in England. Of the 24-player squad that played in the World 9s and touring PNG in 2019 5 of these are University Students (20%), with a further 2 being in Further Education. (total of 29% being students). A further 7 are former University students, hence 62% of the squad are have been students. There is a real opportunity for new players to progress quickly to the England programme and we have seen student’s talent transfer and make this squad.
- England Students Women – This programme last ran in 2016 but with the relaunch of the England Women’s teams as part of the EPU (England Performance Unit) it was dropped. The intention has always been to bring back this team when we have participation programmes running in, HE and FE settings. This programme was officially relaunched in September 2019 (Appendix H). The England Students Women’s team will participate in the Festival of World Cups in 2021 so the increase on participation programmes can give participants a real opportunity to be part of a representative programme leading into a home World Cup in 2021.

2.5 Profile and Influence

The RFL have an excellent recent track record of introducing new offers or programmes and enhancing the visibility and profile if the offer. One example of this is the Women’s Super League, the competition was only launched in 2017 when the Women’s competition was given an ‘elite amateur competition’ status and aligned with the Super League brand and club brands through brand extension. (APPENDIX I). We believe that through working closely with BUCS, HEI’s, Professional Clubs and Foundations we could take University Rugby League on a similar journey to the journey taken by Women’s Super League. The aim of this process would be to promote the high quality product we have within University Rugby League to a wider audience, showcase how more universities could promote and grow their Rugby League programme and fundamentally grow the number of students being given the opportunity to engage with Rugby League. There has been a specific effort made to promote the Women’s game through the female TASS athletes (APPENDIX J)

The SAG are currently investigating a Talent ID Roadshow across England, with sessions open to any English HE Student.

The Talent ID days are linked to a realistic pathway to the World Cup 2021 which will be hosted in England but will also offer student-athlete types 4 & 5 pathways to playing Rugby League even if their University does not currently have a team.

The profile of the Talent ID element linked to the World Cup 2021 will support the awareness of the role of HE Sport in the sport sector and offers BUCS a unique opportunity to partner with an initiative that is open to any female student athlete in the UK.

2.6 Inclusion

The proposal to introduce a Women's Rugby League offer aligns strongly with the inclusive strand. Through the design and development nature of a brand new Women's offer, the proposal will provide playing and participation opportunities that appeal to all student-athletes types across the four stageprogramme.

2.7 Professional & Workforce Development

To support the introduction of a brand-new competition there is an identified need to provide support for the Rugby League workforce in University Rugby League.

- **Workforce development** – the RFL will work with institutions who have shown an interest in developing Women’s Rugby League (APPENDIX A) to develop coaches, match officials and support the volunteer student committees to run the clubs, games and festivals. The RFL would start to include the Women’s club committees in the Regional Steering Group Meetings alongside the Men’s clubs. These meetings are RFL led and an opportunity to disseminate information, gain insight and feedback from the players, clubs and committee members.
- **Match Officials** – Match officials are key to the successful delivery of a new offer. The SAG has consulted the Match Officials department at the RFL who have suggested that where possible matches could be double-up with Men’s fixtures to reduce the burden on new officials. However, the SAG believe that as the offer develops there will be a requirement for more officials. Therefore as part of the four stage development plan the RFL have committed to running a free Match Officials workshop at every institution who register a team to compete in Women’s Rugby League activity. Players will be encouraged to attend these workshops as a learning and development opportunity to better understand the rules of the game.

Figure 1: Steering Group Coverage September 2019

- **PGCE Programme** - The RFL have launched a PGCE CPD programme in 2019, the ITT Rugby League Coach Education session has been developed to support Trainee PE Students to be able to deliver Rugby League in a school setting. The focus of the session is to build on the Trainees teaching skills and coaching pedagogy with specific rugby league activities and the confidence to deliver an invasion sport safely.

The aim of the programme is to increase the number of teachers who are able to deliver Rugby League. This should lead to an increase in the number of schools who have rugby league on the curriculum and take part in competitions alongside expanding the geographical footprint of the sport.

With more children introduced to rugby league there will be more competition for players moving through the player pathway for both men and women and so raise the standards of athletes in these systems.



3. CONSULTATION AND SUPPORT

Initially the proposal will target 6-8 institution for stage 1 of the programme. The SAG has held conversations with these institutions, and they have been advanced with events being planned in and the first event will take place on the 13th October 2019, with interest from 8 institutions. There are two institutions already playing 13 A-side Rugby League in the community game, the SAG has spoken with both and they are very keen to be able to part of the process of getting a women’s Rugby League offer into other institutions. This is evidenced by an email sent by Amy McQueen, University of Leeds (APPENDIX K) that offers the teams support at other universities freshers’ fairs and the offer was taken up by the University of Manchester

The RL SAG are acutely aware that within stage one and two of the proposal it is likely to be a regional offer, focussing on the North West. North East and Yorkshire. Where some people may see this as a negative the

SAG feel that this shows the level of insight we have gathered and will allow us to grow strategically instead of trying to grow too quickly.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The Rugby League SAG anticipates that support from BUCS will be required in the following areas:

4.1 Competition and Event Delivery - The Rugby League SAG anticipates that support from BUCS will be required in the following areas:

Stage 1

- The RFL will be responsible for the delivery of events

Stage 2

- The RFL will be responsible for the delivery of all festival events.
- BUCS to include the Championship 9s event in their event programme – BUCS resource requirements for this will be a minimum. The event could be linked onto an existing event and the RFL Development team will take a delivery lead.

Stage 3

- The RFL will be responsible for the delivery of all festival events and the administration of the RFL Merit League structure.
- BUCS to include the Championship 9s event in their event programme – BUCS resource requirements for this will be a minimum. The event could be linked onto an existing event and the RFL Development team will take a delivery lead.

Stage 4

- The RFL will be responsible for the delivery of all festival events.
- It is envisaged at this stage that the league structure will become a formal BUCS League, however additional administrative costs will be covered by team entry fees.

4.2 University Resource Requirements – The proposal has been developed to ensure start-up costs for institutes are kept to a minimum. Only in stage four of the proposal will institutes be required to invest in regular travel, playing kits etc as they join the BUCS leagues. At that stage, the clubs should have built playing memberships that generate income to help subsidise these costs for an institute.

4.3 Funding for new clubs

- RFL Allocated Development Budget – The RFL annually commit budget to the development of new clubs and this support will continue to exist. RFL support will focus on sustainable development areas such as coaching and volunteer development.
- CreatedBy - as part of the RLWC2021 legacy funding there is the opportunity for new clubs to bid for kit and equipment to support the growth of new teams and increase playing numbers. Three of the existing four women's university teams - The University of Manchester, University of Leeds and the University of Liverpool have already been successful in securing funding through this programme.

4.4 Additional Funding Information

There would be no entry fee in the first stage with there being no formalised league season; the institutions that would be targeting in the first instance will be those already with rugby league teams so any affiliation fee increase would be minimal.

The RFL Development team will provide the officials for all games ensuring they are controlling and safe game in a development environment and in doing so providing an additional development pathway for young and developing officials.

5. WIDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

As part of the RFL's AU and SU survey there was a specific question around the introduction of a Women's Rugby League offer. In total 8 Universities said they were interested in Women's Rugby League were a further 13 said they maybe interested. With some further consultation through the institutions it has been pointed out that there are several rugby league playing girls who are participating in Rugby Union as there is no Rugby League offer to get involved in. (Appendix B, D and L) with feedback from Leah Burke (Leeds Beckett) Grace Field (York St John), Heather Steel Northumbria and Salford University (Casey Blagg).

6. CONCLUSION

The RFL and the RL SAG feel that is essential to launch a Women's offer in Higher Education to ensure the momentum through education is continued from School to College to University. The opportunity for growth within the University sector is huge, especially if you consider the Men's University programme is a major entry point for new players with 80% of all players playing Rugby League for the first time.

The SAG are asking for minimal investment from BUCS to support the development of this new competition offer. In year one (2019) there is no impact on BUCS. In stage 2 and 3 the RFL and RL SAG are asking for the introduction of a standalone Championship 9s event, which will mean minimal impact on the administration process through BUCS and for the AU / SU members of staff.

Whilst stage 1 of the offer requires no engagement from BUCS, its vital that for credibility purposes and to help institutes justify investment in Women's Rugby League that the offer sits within the BUCS programme.

Women's Rugby League is growing fast and the opportunity for BUCS to be involved in this journey begins now. We know that 19% of Super League registered players are currently studying at Universities and the SAG are confident that as participation increase, the number of players transitioning into the professional game will rise rapidly, this creates opportunities for profiling BUCS.

APPENDIX A – Current Women’s Rugby League Activity

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Women’s Super League		6	8	10*	12*
Girls Champion Schools Teams	266	276	338		
College Teams		4	8	12	
College DISE Places	0	0	0	30	60
University TASS Places	0	4	8	10	10
Community Club Registered Players					
U15’s and 16’s	203	423	619		
U17’s U18’s	114	196	251		
U19’s – U21’s	65	164	206		

*Plans are in place to add further teams to this

APPENDIX B – Table of Interest from AU/SU Survey Results

What University do you work for?	The Rugby Football League are introducing a Women's Rugby League 9s offer for the 2019/20 academic year, this offer would likely be a monthly festival-based competition, would your institution be interested in being involved?
Cambridge	Maybe
Coventry	Maybe
Lancaster University	Maybe
Loughborough Students RL	Maybe
Manchester Met	Maybe
Newcastle University	Maybe
Northumbria	Maybe
Sheffield Hallam	Maybe
UClan	Maybe
University of Bristol	Maybe
University of Nottingham	Maybe
University of Sheffield	Maybe
Brunel University London	No
Reading University	No
Uni of Bath	No
University of Gloucestershire	No
University of Leicester	No
University of Northampton	No
Bangor	Yes
Leeds Beckett University	Yes
Leeds Trinity Students' Union	Yes
Loughborough University	Yes
Sheffield Hallam University	Yes
St Mary's	Yes
University of Liverpool	Yes
University of Salford	Yes
University of Manchester	Yes
University of Hull	Yes

APPENDIX C – Email from Casey Blagg – University of Salford

Good afternoon,

Thank you for your email and apologies for the delay in reply.

We are looking to transfer our Women's Rugby Union team in a Rugby League club, many of the members here are Rugby League players who have been almost forced to play union as this is the only offer at university level in this area.

Therefore, the answers to your questions are as follows;

1. I will be your main point of contact for this in the future.
2. I think the question is what kind of support do you have the capacity to give us? We would love coach, if we were to set up a WRL session we would require someone to lead the sessions. we would require somewhere to signpost students to in order to view all WRL offers.
3. Maybe, what would this consist of?
4. Not this year, but next year this would be a big opportunity for us.

The festivals sound like a great idea and we would be 100% to find enough ladies to participate.

Any further questions please let me know.

Many thanks

Casey



Casey Blagg

Student Opportunities Coordinator (Club Sport)

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1/10/19

Dear Adam,

Please see this letter as the University of Hull showing interest and supporting the Women's Rugby League initiative which you outline.

I am currently the Fitness & Performance Manager at Hull Sport and looking after our sporting excellence clubs, which include rugby league, and the Talented Athlete Programme which again hosts a number of rugby league athletes.

We would like to show our support for the plans to host and run women's rugby league events and festivals at the University of Hull. With the 2021 World Cup fast approaching we see this as a fantastic opportunity for the University to host such events within our new world class facilities. With regards to promoting the Women's Rugby League project at Hull within the first 2 weeks of our students arriving on campus we would certainly wish to run a number of 'Give it a Go' taster sessions as well as hosting stalls and activities at the large number of fairs that are on offer to students on their return to the University.

We have spoken to a number of female students who are both fans and enjoy playing rugby league who would really value and be engaged with taking part in rugby league planned programmes. Not only would this be a chance for them to learn a new sport but a great way to keep fit and meet new like-minded friends.

Hull, as you know, as a city has a massive rugby league following hosting two Super League teams and we would aim to use our links with these clubs to build this programme. We already have support from the City of Hull Rugby League Community Board who have offered support to the University to establish a rugby league offering. This will be supported by both Super League clubs and their associated foundations. The programme will be designed to provide a series of introductions to rugby league, coaching advice and guidance and will be linked to female playing opportunities in the City of Hull. Anything that we could do to get the Women's Super League ambassadors involved alongside this programme would be a bonus.

Thanks for the contact and as you can see, you have the support of the University of Hull.

Regards

Tim Purdy

Fitness & Performance Manager at Hull Sport

APPENDIX E – Emails from current female players (Grace Field – York St John and Leah Burke Leeds Beckett)

Hi Adam,

1. The benefits you have got from being on TASS- I think everyone around me can agree that TASS has been very beneficial for me. It has allowed me to balance my education with my sport better. The S+C support has helped me to become a better player as I have gotten stronger, leaner and faster. Without TASS I doubt I would have been selected for the upcoming tour to PNG! I have also found psychology and nutrition sessions have also impacted my performance positively. And access to excellent physiotherapy has benefitted me.
2. The impact the lifestyle support has had on you through TASS- Kirsty at LBU has had a profound impact on my university time; helping me manage my finances, time management and organisational skills. She has also provided reassurance and constant support outside of our sessions to make sure I am reaching targets we have set.
3. How you would have engaged in Rugby League at University if there was an offer
 - a. Obviously stating, that I only played Rugby Union as there was no Rugby League offer, had there been a Rugby League offer at university I would have chosen this over rugby union as Rugby League is the sport I have grown up playing and having to code hop once at university has potentially slowed my RL career outside of university.

Many Thanks

Grace Field

Hi Adam,

Benefits I have received through being on TASS -Personal S&C coach provided programmes throughout the year, including summer, allowing me to achieve my goals and plan for both short term and long term performance and goals -The money allowed me to travel to training e.g. helping with the cost of trains - When needed the physio was very good and easy to gain an appointment, allowing small injuries to be sorted out and prevented in the future

Impact of lifestyle support

-Helped having someone to talk to about both university and sporting issues -Enable me to plan and start thinking about what I want to do after university -Helped plan goals and set deadline for university work

When starting rugby at university, if there was a rugby league team to the same standard and set up as the rugby union team, I would have 100% joined that team. As this wasn't available, I joined the rugby union team instead.

Thanks

Leah Burke

APPENDIX F – Deregulation Example



Rugby League 9s Key Rules

- 9 players on the pitch at one time squad sizes can be up to 15 players, institutions could have more than one team in an event. If agreed between team's number matching can take place up to 13 a-side.
- 4 points for a try and optional 1 point for a drop kick dependant on the pitch and access to posts
- Pitch size maximum full-size pitch, Recommended 100m x 40m (full size pitch with narrower touch lines, marked by cones, Minimum 60 x 40m (see diagram below))
- The pitch doesn't need to be a fully marked rugby field and can be played on a safe adequate grass surface at the University or University Sports Facilities
- Simplified Version of the game kicking in only permitted on the 5th and last tackle – to encourage more play ball in hand



NOTES TO REFEREES

Both teams must agree which of the Uni RL's deregulation rules will apply to the match and notify the referee at least 30 minutes prior to kick off. If both teams cannot agree which principles to apply the match will proceed without the application of the deregulation rules.

1. Let the game flow
2. Do not put up every error
3. Allow players to have ball in hand for as long as possible
4. Be willing to explain the decisions to develop understanding
5. No kicking until the last tackle
6. Encourage, Educate and Enjoy!

Please refer to your Uni RL, trialling notes for more information.

FAQ's

Q. Are there any scrums? A. There are no scrums in a Rugby League 9s game any infringements result in a turnover (play the ball to the opposition)

Q. How many subs do we need? A. There are up to 15 players in a 9s squad, a University may enter more than one team to any event.

Q. How long are the games? A. 9s games are anywhere from 10 – 20-minute games in a festival format but the total game time should not result in more than 60 minutes of game time.

USEFUL TIPS

1. Use cones to mark the touchlines and in goal areas

2. The Pitch doesn't have to be on a current rugby pitch. For example: if you are using a football pitch make sure there is a safe distance between the end of the pitch and posts

3. You can provide the grounds team with this diagram if they wanted to mark out the pitches

4. Rugby League 9s is a great way to allow new players to experience rugby league

APPENDIX G -RFL Senior Manager Support

Director of Participation and Development

Hi Adam,

Following on from the BUCS Sports Advisory Group meetings that I attended in relation to the BUCS Sport Review, in particular the introduction of a Women's University offer, please accept this email as support for the proposal you and the SAG are developing.

The wider benefits of the new offer would be;

- Supporting the Rugby Football League's 21,000 by 2021 campaign
- Provide an attainable player pathway to Women's Super League, England Student Women and England Women's programme
- Capitalise on the growth of the Girls Champion Schools and Colleges programme
- Provide a progression for the DISE athletes (Diploma in Sporting Excellence)
 - o All Rugby League DISE athletes are female as there are no professional players in the women's game

I have also attached the Women's Super League presentation which I am happy for you to submit as part of the proposal to show the strategic relevance and importance of the new Women's HE offer.

Good luck with progressing the proposal.

Kind Regards

Marc



Marc Lovering

Director of Participation and Development

The Rugby Football League

07515 753884 | Marc.lovering@rfl.uk.com

APPENDIX H – England Students Women Relunched (www.rugby-league.com)

ENGLAND STUDENTS WOMEN TO RELAUNCH | VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Women's Rugby League is set to finish 2019 on a high - and the Rugby Football League is seeking to capitalise on the game's profile with the return of the England Students Women's team.

The team last played in 2016, but with England Students Women set to compete in 2021's Women's Students Festival of World Cups, the race is on to re-establish the student game. A growing number of women are playing Rugby League and the re-emergence of the England Students Women side means that exciting volunteer opportunities have emerged to support preparations for 2021.

Applications are required for the following roles:

- Head Coach
- Assistant Coach
- Team Manager

CVs and covering letters should be emailed to adam.hughes@rfl.co.uk by Friday, October 11.

Adam Hughes, education lead, said: "We are actively lining up England fixtures with the UK Armed Forces, Great Britain Teachers and others as preparations for 2021 gather momentum. For anybody interested in these roles, it would be an exciting time to be involved.

"Fittingly, the game against the Armed Forces will be played for the Emmeline Pankhurst Trophy. Emmeline herself was denied higher education, yet emerged as one of the most important female figures of the 20th Century and an inspiration to women the world over."

Selection for the England Students Women's team will be open to every female college and university student qualified to play for England.



APPENDIX J – TASS ATHLETE RECRUITMENT POSTERS

21,000 BY 2021

PLAY
UNIVERSITY
RUGBY LEAGUE

21,000 girls and women playing Rugby League by 2021

@UniversityRL

RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE

21,000 BY 2021

PLAY
UNIVERSITY
RUGBY LEAGUE

21,000 girls and women playing Rugby League by 2021

@UniversityRL

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RUGBY LEAGUE

21,000 girls and women playing Rugby League by 2021

@UniversityRL

RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE

APPENDIX K – Amy McQueen Email – University of Leeds Women

Hi Adam,

Thanks for sending the ppt over, good to read. Brilliant to hear of your and the RFL's aim at setting up a Women's BUCS for 2021.

I'll save some of my questions for when we meet – but in advance of the meeting I wondered if you wouldn't mind mentioning this on my behalf?

Just to say that as an up and coming WRL club, the Uni of Leeds team committee are more than happy to give advice, help set up and run joint events with prospective new teams from universities across the country. If anyone does register interest at their fresher's fairs/ talk to their coaches who may know of girls in local teams – then please feel free to pass on our contact details to them:

E: luuwrlc@outlook.com

FB: @ LUUWRL

Happy for you to put these details on the slides or in the info given out if you would like.

Might work well also for the men's teams at Trinity and Beckett, as we don't have enough girls to attend their fairs as well as do our own as they're on similar days.

But we're off to Manchester freshers fair next Tuesday to support the Men's committee there who are trying to set up a Women's team this year, so just an example of maybe how we can help promote that women do play the sport.

Brilliant to read about the Student team relaunching! Can't wait to hear more.

Thanks

Amy

APPENDIX L – Northumbria University students eligible for Rugby League TASS

This helps to show the number of girls in institutions that are already Rugby League players.

Number of female TASS eligible students (Women's Super League players / Women's Championship players – part of the England Women's programme)

1. Georgia Cutt (Wakefield Trinity)
2. Brogan Churm (Featherstone)
3. Jasmine Hazell (Featherstone)
4. Zoe Teece (Featherstone)
5. Yasmin Copeland (Wakefield trinity) however she has been injured and had surgery, so is out for the next season and is on placement for 19/20 season.
6. Charlotte Firth (Championship players)
7. Lauren Roberts (Championship players)
8. Lauren Day (Championship players)