



WALES RUGBY LEAGUE

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

Period April 2013-March 2014

WELCOME FROM WRL CHAIRMAN Brian Juliff

Hello and welcome to our 2013 Annual Review.

The cover picture is from the Rugby League World Cup at the Millennium Stadium and highlights the exhilaration and pride of representing your country at the highest level of International Rugby League by a player born, bred and developed through the 'Wales Rugby League Pathway'.



In terms of performance, the North Wales Crusaders led the way with promotion to Championship 1 which was a huge success for Rugby League in Wales and led to some ground breaking community work being done in the region, which in turn will strengthen the foundations for the game to flourish.

It was a pleasure to witness the passion of the Crusaders travelling band of supporters when they defeated London Skolars at New River Stadium, White Hart Lane, to secure their right to promotion.

The board of directors at the Crusaders enter the new season under no illusions as to the enormity of the task of surviving in Championship 1. Clearly investment in the squad will be necessary to push on and the club will be keen to attract new partners/sponsors to enhance their wonderfully vociferous and very popular group of fans.

North Wales Crusaders have also set up a Charitable Foundation in the region which supports the growth of disabled sport in the area and have expanded their community portfolio by launching a new wheelchair rugby league club team.

South Wales Scorpions are on a slightly different trajectory, of course, with the focus on the pathway from our South Wales Academy to Senior Rugby League for our emerging Welsh talent and this team will grow steadily stronger over the next few years. The Scorpions have been competitive and the 'local derby' between the two Welsh teams has become a calendar favourite for both sets of supporters.

We are very proud of our two semi-professional clubs in Wales and look forward to the future when, hopefully, both clubs will be filled with Welsh talent.

The South Wales Conference had 25 clubs competing at different age categories from eight years old inductee's to senior men's teams with Cardiff Demons continuing as our longest surviving team after joining the Conference in 2001.

There were eight senior teams participating in a competition made up of: Aber Valley Wolves; Bridgend Blue Bulls; Cardiff Demons; Cardiff Spartans; Gwendraeth Valley Raiders; Newport Titans; Torfaen Tigers and Valley Cougars playing 23 fixtures in comparison to 18 fixtures in 2012.

We suffered from eight cancellations during the season, all of which are frustrating to both sets of players, but this was an uplift from the 13 cancelled games in 2012.

On that Basis we are as ever very grateful to the volunteers and enthusiasts who make this championship a success year in, year out and recognize that this league needs more support, legislation and direction and WRL are committed to re-launching this product by 2015.

Add to this the North Wales Conference which only started in 2012 and, not of course without its challenges, pressed on with steady growth in 2013.

Encouragingly we experienced a huge increase in the number of junior teams participating in the region with 60 schools involved in Wrexham alone offering high levels of future optimism.

There were twice as many club rugby league games played across the North Wales Conference in 2013 compared to 2012 with five senior teams participating in the competition which was made up of: Flintshire Falcons; Wrexham Bradley Raiders; Conwy Celts; Prestatyn Panthers and Dee Valley Dragons

Commercially a number of new investors came on board for the World Cup in 2013 increasing Wales Rugby League's portfolio of partners and with a late front of shirt sponsorship significantly adding to our financial revival.

Our partnership with Wigan Warriors RLFC continued as they supported many of our youth development programs. The foresight and vision of Wigan Chairman Ian Lenagan, who is a great believer in the international game, ensures both Wigan and Wales Rugby League continue to benefit from the partnership.

The planning for RLWC13 was all consuming, extensive, exhaustive, stressful and at times confrontational as Wales Rugby League continued to suffer from insufficient funding from various governing bodies in comparison to our competitors.

However, we managed to find the resources and the team was well prepared for the World Cup. We were met by strong team performances from Italy and particularly U.S.A with both fielding very experienced Australian based professionals who exposed the lack of balance in our team. There were many fine individual performances with plenty of courage and effort from our boys but this was not sufficient to progress from our group.

We had always set our sights on 2017 as the year that we could compete at this level and that remains our focus having taken many lessons from RLWC2013.

With the numbers of young people being attracted to the sport so our need for more volunteers increases. We need more people to get involved as volunteers if we are to maintain the progress made in Wales over the past 13 years.

The school and youth development programmes cannot move forward without more match officials, player support and club administrator's so please, if you can find the time, speak to Mark Jones our National Development Manager or Chris Thair our Chief Operations Officer and get involved with Wales Rugby League.

To those of you who have added your time and resources to support us through 2013 we are very grateful that you are involved in our 'Rugby League Family'.

We have had some disappointments this year, notably RLWC2013, though this was to some extent anticipated but we have also tasted many successes of which we are very proud and are shared within this review.

The successes have come from your involvement so, on behalf of the Board of Wales Rugby League, I want to thank you once again for your support.

Cymru Am Byth,

Brian.

Welsh Passion at the 2013 Rugby League World Cup



Community

Wales Wheelchair Team reached the semi-final of the Wheelchair World Cup.

Beating Australia and Ireland on the way and gaining a ranking of third in the World.



Crusaders Wheelchair club continue to grow and be the flagship club for Wales.



Wales Students Team reached the semi-final of the Student World Cup and also achieved a ranking of third in the World. Led by experienced Welsh Coach Clive Griffiths they contained the very best Welsh players attending University.

University Rugby League continues to thrive with three out of the five universities who play rugby league in Wales winning silverware in 2013. Whilst South Wales University (Glamorgan), Cardiff Met, Swansea, Bangor and Aberwyswyth University continue to play.

Wales Dragonhearts represents the very best of the two welsh conference leagues, providing opportunity to players and coaches to play international rugby league. The side were runners up in the 2013 Four Nations.



The **South Wales Conference** which culminated in a fantastic Grand Finals day watched by over 1000 people.

Grand Finals Results

Torfaen Tigers 24 Valley Cougars 18 - **Men**
S-Gower Rebels 24 Penallta Storm 16 - **U16s**
Aber Valley Wolves 38 Bridgend BB 28 - **u15s**
Aber Valley Wolves 36 Penallta Storm 10- **u14s**
N&D Scorpions 36 Cardiff Spartans 20 - **u13s**





The **North Wales Conference** was won once again by Conwy Celts who overcame Flintshire Falcons 50-30 in the Men's Grand Final.

This fledgling conference had 12 Junior teams join the competition building upon the fantastic school work in the region. Twice as many club games took place in 2013 compared to 2012 in North Wales.

Flintshire Falcons RLFC coach Mark Parry was awarded the 2013 Flintshire Chronicle Community Sports Champion.



Street Rugby League in partnership with Street Games continued to be delivered in four disadvantaged areas across North Wales, taking the sport to peoples doorsteps. One award nominated project which started delivering rugby league in a local park led to a new community led sports club including dance and rugby league in a facility which was previously closed in the evenings.

"This is the great thing about Street Rugby, it just engages people because it puts opportunities in front of people when previously there were none".

Lexi, Street Rugby Volunteer Coach, Aged 23

Champion Schools continues to engage over 100 teams from 65 Welsh secondary schools into WRL competition. This culminates in regional and national finals plus teams get the opportunity to represent Wales in the wider UK Champion Schools competition.

Primary School Coaching and Festivals involved over 100 schools.

Schools Coaching is still the best method for taking rugby league to new audiences and inspiring children to take up the sport. An extensive schools coaching programme is delivered in Wrexham and Flintshire by Allen Jones which has resulted in rugby league being the number one coached sport in Flintshire. Over 10,000 children in Wales were introduced to rugby league through Schools Coaching in 2013.

Right; Community Rugby League Coach Allen Jones part funded by Wales Rugby League received two awards from Wrexham Council for work carried out in 2013 including the council's Values Commitment Champion.



The Fastest Growing Sport in Wales?

In 2000 due to having a strong contingent of welsh professional players plying their trade in England, Wales reached the semi-finals of the 2000 Rugby League World Cup. Domestically however there was very little rugby league activity in Wales. In 2000 there were six rugby league teams in Wales: four from the various universities and two adult teams from the only two clubs, one in the North and one in South Wales, the latter being the newly formed Cardiff Demons RLFC. Following the 2000 World Cup, the RFL made the decision to invest in Wales and employed a fulltime member to develop the domestic game. Since this time the RFL has invested annually in Wales and the sport has enjoyed **unprecedented levels of growth during this 13 year period** which culminated in record participation levels in 2013:

	Participation			Clubs		Competition
	Participant (Had at least one fun session of rugby league)	Regular Participation (Completed 6Hrs)	Club Member (Registered)	No. Clubs	No. Club Teams	Domestic Club Leagues
2000	110	110	110	2	2	0
2013	14015	8262	1890	43	83	2

13 Years of Growth



Professional Clubs

Wales very proudly has two professional clubs competing in a UK competition. Both clubs continue to provide opportunities to talented Welsh players and greater exposure for the sport of rugby league which in turn benefits the grassroots game.

North Wales Crusaders

were crowned Kingstone Press Championship One League Champions in 2013 gaining promotion to the Championship.



South Wales Scorpions gained a ninth place finish in Championship One and inaugural Chairman Phil Davies stepped down after years of good service. Following the breakdown of numerous takeover talks, Wales Rugby League took the unusual step of taking over the club in January 2014. All the players recruited for the 2014 season are 100% Welsh as the governing body looks to turn around the fortunes of the club.

Welsh Players Continue to Shine at other Clubs...



Welsh born and raised Internationals **Ben Flower and Gil Dudson** helped Wigan Warriors win the Super League Grand Final and the Challenge Cup Final in 2013 and star weekly for one of the biggest rugby clubs in the World. Both players originate from Cardiff and came through the WRL system.



Wales World Cup Captain **Craig Kopczak** is one of the most respected props in Super League and helped Huddersfield Giants win the League Leaders shield in 2013.



Wales and Widnes Vikings star **Lloyd White** from Cardiff.



Wales and Warrington Wolves star **Rhys Evans** from Bridgend



Wales and Bradford Bulls star **Elliot Kear** from

Lloyd White, Rhys Evans, Elliot Kear, Ben Flower, Gil Dudson and many more professional players all came through the WRL Player Pathways

Junior Performance Pathways

Wales U18 Results

Wales 40 England Lions 10
Wales 0 England Academy 38
Wales 4 England Academy 64
Scotland 0 Wales 30

Wales U16 Results

Wales 18 England 22
Wales 18 England 25



To underpin the U18s academy structures Wales Rugby League launched the **Maesteg Academy** in September 2013 in conjunction with Maesteg School, Coleg y Cymoed and Wigan Warriors contracting 19 players on part time professional contracts as part of a government backed welsh pilot for the **AASE Programme**.

Wales Rugby League pulled out of the U20s Championship **Academy Competition** in 2013 following a strategic review of the programme. This would revert to an U19 Academy in 2014 playing teams in the South of the UK.



The **U16s Scholarship Team** continue to compete well in the U16 Super League competition and are underpinned by regional **U14 train on squads**.

U16s South Wales Scholarship (March to August)			U20s South Wales Academy (March to July)		
Salford City Reds	22-18	W	Featherstone Rovers	12-82	L
Widnes Vikings	22-24	W	Leigh Centurions	4-64	L
Huddersfield Giants	26-32	L	Salford City Reds	22-40	L
London Broncos	36-8	W	Salford City Reds	18-38	L
Wakefield T' Wildcats	26-26	D	Halifax	36-38	L
Gloucestershire All Golds	12-20	L	Rochdale Hornets	28-20	W
Midlands Hurricanes	32-22	W	Leigh Centurions	4-64	L
Gloucestershire All Golds	28-14	W	Keighley Cougars	10-38	L
Wigan Warriors	16-26	L	Keighley Cougars	0-98	L
Featherstone Rovers	18-41	L	Hemel Stags	26-30	L
			Gloucestershire All Golds	22-20	W

International Team



2013 Rugby League World Cup Results:

Wales 16 Italy 32 Millennium Stadium, Cardiff

Wales 16 USA 24 Glyndwr University Racecourse Stadium, Wrexham

Wales 24 Cook Islands 28 The Gnoll, Neath



Wales scored 56 points in 3 matches

Wales appointed a new
International Team Manager Bob Wilson



Pictured Left to Right

Player Ben Flower, Chairman
Brian Juliff and Head Coach
Iestyn Harris meet the Prince of
Wales, Prince Charles at Clarence
House, London

Wales' participation in the 2013 Rugby League World Cup brought huge benefits...



45,052 was a record attendance for a Welsh international fixture. Set at the Wales v Italy World Cup home opener. Pictured Left, Welshman Rhodri Lloyd races clear of Italy's defence to score at the Millennium Stadium and below scenes from the opening ceremony before the game.

WRL secured **record levels of sponsorship** for the 2013 World Cup.



The Direct Economic Impact for Cardiff, which hosted the Opening Ceremony, was **£8.5 million.**

Research carried out by Repucom on behalf of RLWC2013 and Direct Economic Impact is defined as all 'new money' brought into host region economy due to the staging of the event.

International Rugby League is important to Wales ...

The 2013 Rugby League World Cup had huge television coverage in **114 territories worldwide reaching 134m viewers.**

All three Wales International Fixtures in 2013 were broadcast live on British Television with an average of **1.3m viewers watching the Wales v Italy game live on BBC 2.** All internationals provide strong UK and domestic media coverage.

Research carried out by Repucom with Welsh Resident Spectators of the 2013 Rugby League World Cup highlighted **huge positives by the nation's residents.** Percentages taken from those in the "agree and strongly agree" categories:

- 86% Made me excited to be part of the major event
- 73% Gave me pride in my country
- 82% Raised our sporting profile & will help to bring other major events to the area.
- 64% Helped to enhance community spirit
- 67% Created a buzz for the country
- 74% Show-cased our country as a tourist destination



Welsh TV Presenter Gethin Jones was part of the 2013 RLWC

Commercial

A Rugby League World Cup hosted in Wales and England represented a huge opportunity for Wales Rugby League and many new commercial deals were struck, including a record front of shirt sponsorship deal with Probiz and a record kit deal with Raging Bull. Pictured left is a gathering of rugby league legends for the 2013 Wales Rugby League World Cup Fundraising Dinner organised by WRL President Mike Nicholas.



Proud Partners of Wales Rugby League in 2013



Tried any lately?



Governance and Leadership



Experienced rugby league administrator Chris Thair joined the WRL Board in 2013 and became the part time Chief Operating Officer, moving from a senior role with the sports U.K Governing Body, The RFL, with a remit to stabilize our finances in the lead-up to RLWC2013 and help plan ahead to 2017.

Sport Wales measure how strong National Governing Bodies Governance are by evaluating evidence covering 62 criteria across six areas: Governance, Strategic Planning, Financial Management, Human Resources, Organisational Policy and Risk Management. Sports receive a score and a traffic light grading, red being poor. Wales Rugby League's submission moved them from red to the top status of green, another indication of the improvements being made.

The WRL Board for the majority of 2013/14 were as follows:

Community Member Representatives (max 3):

Gerard Keenan	North Wales Community Members
Idris Evans	South & West Wales Community Members
Ian Curzon*	Community Members

Professional Game Representatives

Jamie Thomas	North Wales Crusaders
Phil Davies (finished Dec 13)	South Wales Scorpions RLFC
Vacant	The RFL

Co-opted Members (max 3)

Brian Juliff	Chairman
Chris Thair	
Martin Roddy MBE	

Finances

WRL INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT (Year ending 31/3/14)

1 INCOME

	£
Community Delivery	23469
Fundraising event	4850
Grants RFL WRL	203991
Grants Sport Wales	49322
Grants Community	22000
Grants RLIF	14563
Grants Tournaments	62965
Grants RFL Scorpions	21436
Performance Delivery	10112
Scorpions	500
Sponsorship	43350
TOTAL INCOME	456,558

2. EXPENSES

	£
AASE	18097
Community Delivery	46001
fundraising event	2540
Governance and Services	10151
National Team	117842
Junior Pathway (Performance) Delivery	39563
Players in Junior Pathway	5680
Scorpions	30701
Sponsorship	1000
Staff Central Services and Media	45254
Staff Community	68385
Staff Junior Pathway (Performance)	24936
Vehicle	18975
2010 & 2012 Tournament Costs	25890
Depreciation – office equipment	734
TOTAL EXPENSES	455749

EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE 809

WRL BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH 2014

FIXED ASSETS

Office equipment	1468
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CURRENT ASSETS

Stock	2601	
Debtors	6316	
Accrued Income	15000	
Cash at Bank	36404	<u>60321</u>
		61789

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Creditors and accruals	<u>53846</u>
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NET ASSETS	7943
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REPRESENTED BY:

CAPITAL AND RESERVES

Balance brought forward	7134
Excess of Income over Expenditure in the year	809
	7943

Accounts prepared by Hansford Business Services and approved at the July 2014 Wales Rugby League Board meeting.

Commentary to the Financial Figures

The period April 1st 2013 to 31st March 2014 represented a very financially challenging time for Wales Rugby League.

Whilst addressing the financial state of the business, the figures show the WRL Board made a hugely significant effort to support the National Men's team in 2013 as they were to play in the Rugby League World Cup on home soil. The £118,000 spent on the national team in this period represents 26% of turnover and every level of income from the World Cup tournament grant, raised sponsorship, fundraising and half of the RLIF grant.

For every £1 invested by Sport Wales, Wales Rugby League spends £4 on governance and community programmes, so we continue to represent good value for money. No junior pathway or performance delivery is included in these figures as this is not supported by Sport Wales who continue to prioritise the Commonwealth games sports, football, rugby union and golf for performance investment.

The Scorpions represents a new account line to Wales Rugby League and became active from January 2014 when taking over the club.

The RFL £203k investment into Wales is slightly less than previous years as the final quarter payment covering the January to March period was 40% less. This was the part of the phased financial reduction from the RFL which would provide 40% less grant in the 2014 calendar year and 100% less in 2015 i.e. zero. The RFL investment is a major contributor to the management, admin, junior pathway and community costs of WRL. Unless these funds can be sourced from other partners then the impact to these areas will be significant.

Table 1: WRL Income and Expenditure Annual Overview Over the Last 12 Years

	2002 £	2003 £	2004 £	2005 £	2006 £	2007 £	2008 £	2009 £	2010 £	2011 £	2012/13 (15months) £	2013/14 (12months) £
INCOME	6,124	6,122	8,099	69,089	132,069	127,272	146,306	167,636	368,289	481,997	412,083	456,558
EXPEN- DITURE	4,386	8,407	7,328	68,572	124,514	135,872	145,941	157,590	349,295	390,284	527,536	455,749
SURPLUS	1,738	-2,285	771	517	7,555	-8,600	365	10,046	18,994	91,713	-115,453	809
									Increase d RFL Grant	4 Nations Grant	Unsustain able Structures	

With the benefit of the £161k Four Nations Grant the published Surplus of Income over Expenditure was £92k in 2011. However, this surplus was exceeded by a deficit of £115k in the 15 month period to 31st March 2013. It is worthy of note that the Annual Accounts up to 2011 were merely a statement of Income and Expenditure and did not therefore include a Balance Sheet statement, thus not providing a true position.

The financial performance in 2012/13 is an indication that the financial practices and management systems in place were inadequate for an increasingly complex organisation. The aforementioned practices have seemingly not presented problems to the organisation in the period up to 2009 as turnover remained relatively low and income was rising annually. From this poor foundation though, financial issues have manifested themselves from 2010 through to 2013 as revenues significantly grew.

Table 2: WRL Levels of Annual Income and Growth

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012/13
Income (£1000s)	127	146	168	368	482	412
Change from Previous Year	N/A	+15%	+15%	+119%	+31%	-14.50%

Strong management decisions taken during 2013 have certainly resulted in the avoidance of an insolvency event and have placed the business on a much better financial footing to drive it forward in the future. Difficult decisions were taken in 2013 which resulted in cost savings of £185,000 in the 2013/14 financial year, but simply the inherited structures and programmes were unsustainable. Despite a reduction in seven members of staff all central programmes were delivered, which was a great credit to the remaining staff.

The tough decisions taken to yield the financial cost savings have led to a new culture of financial prudence and value for money so that all who are involved with WRL have a renewed consideration of the financial effect of decisions. In addition, the Board achieved success in obtaining £43,000 of new Sponsorship in 2013 for the World Cup teams which assisted in bringing Income and Expenditure into balance.

An independent financial review of Wales Rugby League confirmed *“The appointment of a new Chairman in June 2012 and a new Chief Operating officer in May 2013 have been pivotal in improving the fortunes of the organisation. These two appointments and roles are critical to the success of this organisation. The relationship and exchange of information between them has been highly significant in helping to ensure the business is properly managed”*.

The financial figures for the year to 31st March 2014 show a break even position for the year which indicates that significant progress has been achieved in stabilising the business. Given that in the 15 month period to 31st March 2013, an excess of expenditure over Income of £115k was reported and vastly unsustainable structure was in place, the turnaround was strong and robust.