



# RFL STRATEGY 2015-2021

RFL RESET INCLUDING MID-TERM STRATEGY REVIEW | MARCH 2019





**BETFRED**  
CHAMPIONSHIP

OURLEAGUE

**RUGBY**  
FOOTBALL  
LEAGUE

**ENJOY**  
THE  
GAME

**2019**

**ENJOY**  
THE  
GAME

**WOMEN'S**  
SUPER  
LEAGUE

OURLEAGUE

**BETFRED**  
LEAGUE 1



# 1. INTRODUCTION | RALPH RIMMER, CEO, RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE


The 2015-2021 strategy included a scheduled mid-term game-wide review. This is a summary of the results of the consultation which involved stakeholders from across the sport.

The strategy has been refreshed and targets have been amended to reflect changes to the landscape within rugby league and external factors which impact on the sport, as part of a reset of the Rugby Football League, and our work alongside Super League Europe.

This summary details the role of the RFL – what we do for the sport, why and how we do it and what we are responsible for. It shares our focus in 2019 and our clear priorities to 2021 and how they are measured. As we look with excitement to our home world cup, it is vital that the sport makes the most of every single opportunity offered by the nation's largest sporting event in 2021, and the most inclusive international sporting event ever staged.

The Rugby League World Cup 2021 will be transformative for our sport. Work is underway to ensure that the governing body, and the sport, is positioned for continued success with the opportunities presented by a changed landscape beyond 2021. We will continue to take an open and consultative approach, and I am grateful to everyone in rugby league at all levels who contributed to the strategy refresh consultation and I look forward to continued partnership working for our amazing sport.

Thank you.



Ralph Rimmer, CEO, Rugby Football League





## 2. STRATEGY REVIEW

***Scheduled mid-strategy review***

***Game-wide***

***Reflecting macro and immediate landscape***

***Ensuring readiness for new opportunities***

***Clear, measurable operational plans ensuring effective delivery to 2021***

***Clear preparedness for post-2021 environment***



## 2. STRATEGY REVIEW | LANDSCAPE

***Political***

***Economic and commercial***

***Media, digital and technological***

***Ecological/Ethical***

***Socio-Cultural***

***Legal/Regulatory***

***Sport England Strategy & Funding***

***Sport Events***

***RFL role with RLEF - Northern Hemisphere growth***

***RFL role with RLIF - International growth***





## **3. CONSULTATION**

### ***GAME WIDE***

***Large Scale and Inclusive:***

***Board***

***Professional Clubs***

***Leagues***

***Community Game and Regions***

***Other Stakeholders***





## 4. THEMES EMERGING FROM THE CONSULTATION

*Income generation and diversification of income*

*Enhanced communication across game*

*Sharing evaluation of key activities*

*Preparedness for 2021 on and off-field*

*Capitalising on RLWC2021*




*Increased focus on reputation and reach of the sport and RFL*

*Monitoring audience diversity and its growth*

*Game-wide accepted definition of the role of NGB*



# 5. STRATEGY SUMMARY - ORIGINAL

 <b>STRATEGY FOR RUGBY LEAGUE 2015 -2021</b>							
← GROWTH →							
FOCUS	BROADCAST & DIGITAL	MEMBERSHIP	RLWC2021 & LEGACY	NORTHERN POWERHOUSE	CUSTOMER	ROI	INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS
TACTICS	<b>FROM 2015-2017</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NEW STRATEGY</li> <li>IMPLEMENT POLICY REVIEW</li> <li>NEW STRUCTURE, NEW ERA</li> <li>TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE</li> <li>INTRODUCTION OF MINIMUM STANDARDS</li> <li>TALENT RETENTION &amp; ATTRACTION MEASURES</li> <li>SPORT ENGLAND NEW 4-YEAR PLAN</li> <li>2021 WORLD CUP BID SECURED</li> <li>MEMBERSHIP SCHEME LAUNCHED</li> <li>NEW FACILITIES STRATEGY</li> <li>NEW CUSTOMER / DIGITAL FOCUS</li> <li>4-YEAR INTERNATIONAL CALENDAR AGREED</li> <li>SIGNIFICANT REVIEWS UNDERTAKEN OF LAWS, MATCH OFFICIALS AND DISCIPLINARY PROCESSES</li> </ul>	<b>TO 2018</b> <p><b>SUPER LEAGUE STRUCTURE:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LEAGUE LEADERS R23/30</li> <li>SUPER 8S OPTIONS</li> <li>INTERNATIONAL WINDOW</li> <li>CALENDAR OPTIMISATION</li> </ul> <p><b>CHAMPIONSHIP &amp; LEAGUE 1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CHAMPIONSHIP SHIELD</li> <li>LEAGUE 1 STRUCTURE</li> </ul> <p><b>DEVELOP PLANS FOR:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INTERNATIONAL GROWTH</li> <li>REGIONAL GROWTH</li> <li>NORTHERN POWERHOUSE INFLUENCING</li> </ul>	<b>TOWARDS 2019-2021</b> <p><b>REFRESH STRATEGIES:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COMMUNITY</li> <li>CHAMPIONSHIP &amp; LEAGUE 1</li> <li>SUPER LEAGUE</li> <li>PERFORMANCE</li> </ol> <p><b>ENHANCE:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DIGITAL PLAN</li> <li>CUSTOMER FOCUS</li> <li>MEMBERSHIP</li> <li>EVENTS &amp; VENUES PLAN</li> </ul> <p><b>DELIVER:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE CENTRE</li> <li>RLWC2021 + LEGACY</li> </ul>	<b>THE PRIZE</b> <p>DELIVERY OF:</p> <p><b>VISION</b></p> <p><b>MISSION</b></p> <p><b>BROADCAST CONTRACT</b></p> 			
	CORPORATE GOALS	<b>VISION</b> A GROWING, ACCESSIBLE AND VIBRANT SPORT	<b>MISSION</b> TO CONSISTENTLY DELIVER GREAT RUGBY LEAGUE EXPERIENCES	<b>VALUES</b> UNITED   PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENT   RESPECT	<p>MORE PLAYERS    MORE SPECTATORS    MORE VIEWERS    ENGLAND WINNING    FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY    EXCELLENT GOVERNANCE</p> 		



# 5. STRATEGY SUMMARY - REFRESHED

## 2019-2021 STRATEGY REFRESH



### CORPORATE GOALS:



**MORE PLAYERS**



**MORE SPECTATORS**



**MORE VIEWERS**



**ENGLAND WINNING**



**FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**



**EXCELLENT GOVERNANCE**

### VISION

A GROWING, ACCESSIBLE AND VIBRANT SPORT

### MISSION

CONSISTENTLY DELIVER GREAT RUGBY LEAGUE EXPERIENCES

### VALUES

UNITED PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE RESPECT

### BY 2021 THE RFL WILL ACHIEVE:

#### COMMUNITY

FLEXIBLE, INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE PLAYING OFFERS FOR EVERYONE

#### BROADCAST

MORE OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS MORE PLATFORMS FOR MORE NEW VIEWERS

#### ENGLAND TEAMS

MEN'S, WOMEN'S AND WHEELCHAIR SENIOR TEAMS READY TO WIN IN 2021; WORLD CLASS YOUTH AND ACADEMY TEAMS

#### EVENTS

OUTSTANDING WELL-PROMOTED EVENTS FOR NEW AND EXISTING FANS

#### WOMEN

MORE THAN DOUBLE THE NUMBER OF WOMEN PLAYING

#### DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

DIRECT ENGAGEMENT WITH THE MAJORITY OF FANS AND ALL PLAYERS, VOLUNTEERS

#### REGULATION & ADMINISTRATION

TRUSTED REGULATION AND EFFICIENT, RESPECTED ADMINISTRATION

#### RLWC2021 LEGACY

TRANSFORMATIONAL AND LASTING SPORT-WIDE LEGACY

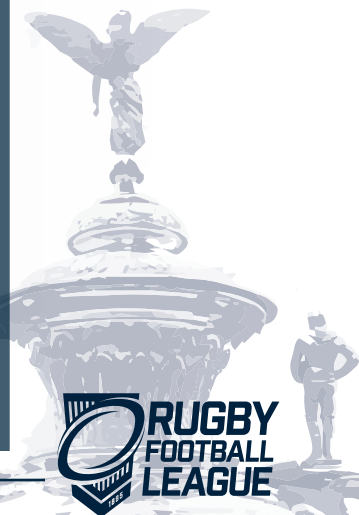
2019

- INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION
- STRONG, PROFESSIONAL LEAGUE COMPETITIONS
- ENGLAND PERFORMANCE UNIT
- REFRESHED CHALLENGE CUP
- GB&I LIONS
- NEW BROADCAST AND MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES
- MEMBERSHIP GROWTH
- INCOME DIVERSIFICATION
- RLWC2021 FACILITIES INVESTMENT

2020 > 2021

- ENGLAND PERFORMANCE UNIT
- NEW BROADCAST DEALS
- SUSTAINABILITY
- CHALLENGE CUP GROWTH
- ENHANCED PROFESSIONAL LEAGUE COMPETITIONS
- POST-2021 PREPAREDNESS
- NATIONAL CENTRE
- RLWC2021 + LEGACY
- COMMUNITY GAME ASSETS

DELIVERED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SUPER LEAGUE EUROPE, RUGBY LEAGUE CARES AND RLWC2021



## 6. THE ROLE OF THE RFL

# THE ROLE OF THE RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE

**THE RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE IS THE NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY OF RUGBY LEAGUE - IT GOVERNS, DEVELOPS, PROMOTES AND GROWS THE SPORT.**

**THE RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE IS RECOGNISED BY GOVERNMENT, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL BODIES AS THE SINGLE LEAD ORGANISATION WHICH GOVERNS RUGBY LEAGUE IN THIS COUNTRY.**

**FUNDING:** Like most NGBs, the Rugby Football League is primarily funded through a combination of broadcast and other commercial rights fees, event income and public funding for specific contracted outcomes.

**GOVERNANCE:** The Rugby Football League is fully compliant with the Code of Sports Governance and, with the majority of the Board being independent non-executive directors, is recognised as being a model of best practice.

**MISSION AND VISION:** The mission of the Rugby Football League is to consistently deliver great rugby league experiences, and the vision is to be a growing, accessible and vibrant sport.

**CORPORATE GOALS: TO INCREASE TV VIEWERS; TO INCREASE SPECTATORS; TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION; TO MEET ENGLAND PERFORMANCE TARGETS; FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF THE SPORT; EXCELLENT GOVERNANCE**

**IN PARTNERSHIP:** In delivering all its functions for the sport, the Rugby Football League works in partnership with all its stakeholders including Super League (Europe) Limited (SLE), RL Cares, RFL Facilities Trust, professional clubs and community game leagues and clubs.

**GOVERNANCE:** The Rugby Football League governs the whole sport – all clubs (including Super League clubs), all players and other participants. Regulatory and operational matters concerning the entire sport are the function of the governing body: the appointment of match officials, player registrations and the enforcement of the salary cap, facility standards, safeguarding, medical standards and on-field and off-field disciplinary matters.

**PARTICIPATION:** Working with foundations and other partners, the Rugby Football League remains focused on developing and growing grassroots rugby league in clubs and educational settings. Inclusive playing offers range from primary school age opportunities to youth, open age (including Women's Super League), Touch, Tag, Disability RL (physical disability and learning disability), Masters and Wheelchair RL.

**PROFESSIONAL COMPETITIONS:** The Rugby Football League owns and is responsible for the operation of and marketing, promotion and presentation of the Challenge Cup, the 1895 Cup, the Championship and League 1. Super League (Europe) Limited is responsible for the marketing, promotion and presentation of the Super League competition. The Rugby Football League provides several core services to the SLE in relation to the operation of the Super League. SLE pays a management fee to the RFL and makes a further solidarity payment towards the operation of the other professional league competitions.

**REPRESENTATIVE TEAMS:** The Rugby Football League is responsible for the England Performance Unit made up of the England Men's Senior, Knights, Women's Senior, Wheelchair, Academy and Youth teams. The Rugby Football League is also responsible for the Great Britain Rugby League Lions.

**WORLD CUP 2021:** The company running the Rugby League World Cup in 2021 (RLWC2021) is a wholly owned subsidiary of the RFL with an independent Board. The Rugby Football League works closely with RLWC2021 to ensure that the benefits and legacy of hosting the World Cup benefit the whole of the sport.



## 6. THE ROLE OF THE RFL (Cont.)

# THE ROLE OF THE RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE BOARD

**THE BOARD IS THE ULTIMATE DECISION-MAKING BODY AND EXERCISES THE POWERS OF THE ORGANISATION.**

**The Board is responsible for:**

- setting the strategy of the organisation;
- approving the long term financial plan and annual budget;
- monitoring delivery of the strategic plan and objectives;
- periodic review of the financial plan and performance against annual budget;
- periodic review of major risks;
- discussion of, and engagement with, stakeholder proposals and concerns.

**The Non-Executive Directors carry out duties in various parts of the game, performing roles as observer, or chairman to ensure that all parts of the game are fairly represented around the Board table. Since the 2017 AGM, the representative duties have been performed as follows:**

- **Super League** – Brian Barwick has performed his duties as both the Chairman of the Rugby Football League and ex-officio his chairmanship of Super League (Europe) Limited (“SLE”).
- **Championship and League 1** – Simon Johnson has chaired the Championship and League 1 meetings.
- **Community** – The Community Board was chaired by Ralph Rimmer during 2017 and has been chaired by Chris Brindley since the start of 2018.
- **International** – Currently, the RFL has the right to nominate x2 directors to the RLIF Board. (Previously Nigel Wood and Brian Barwick). Ralph Rimmer now sits on the RLIF Board. A governance review by RLIF will see new Non-Executive Directors join the RLIF Board.
- **Rugby League World Cup 2021 Limited** – The RFL has the right to nominate x2 directors to the RLWC2021 Board (including the Chairman). These were Nigel Wood (as Chairman) and Brian Barwick. Since the departure of Nigel Wood the RFL nominations are Brian Barwick (as Chairman) and Chris Brindley.

Day to day management of the RFL is delegated by the Board to the management team under the leadership of the Chief Executive. Financial authorities are in place for each level of the Executive structure.

## 7. 2019 FOCUS

RFL budget delivery of  
**£200k**

**Reset RFL**

Support for reset  
Super League Europe  
and  
Rugby League Cares

**SALES OF  
RED HALL  
AND ODSAL**

**Growing to  
200k**  
emailable customer contacts (currently 127k)

**75,000+**  
at Wembley for the  
Challenge Cup  
Final

Commercial Partnerships  
Income of  
**£1.87M**

**175k**  
**OURLEAGUE** Members

Growing and supporting  
a more inclusive and  
diverse volunteer base

**5%** participation  
growth across  
all formats:  
revamped social offers; junior;  
12-18; disability RL; open age;  
new HE and FE formats

**10%**  
growth in girl's and women's games

Successful GB&I Lions Tour

**75%**  
win record

RLWC2021 maximisation:  
**£4 million**  
Invested via large and small grants  
in community legacy in projects  
worth £10m



# 8. KPIs

## 33 DETAILED MEASURES

- Viewing x 6
- Digital x 4
- Spectating x 6
- Participating x 4
- Finance x 2
- Governance x 9
- Performance x 2

## VIEWING

- TERRESTRIAL VIEWERS (AVERAGE PROGRAMME AUDIENCE)
- SUBSCRIPTION VIEWERS (DOOS)
- TERRESTRIAL VIEWERS (AVERAGE MATCH AUDIENCE)
- SUBSCRIPTION VIEWERS (AVERAGE MATCH AUDIENCE)
- OUR LEAGUE STREAMING VIEWERS
- OUR LEAGUE (AVERAGE VIEWS)

CONSISTENT AMENDED ADDED REMOVED

## DIGITAL

- UNIQUE VISITORS TO RUGBY-LEAGUE.COM
- OUR LEAGUE MEMBER COUNT
- EMAILABLE CUSTOMER CONTACT RECORDS
- AVERAGE DWELL-TIME RUGBY-LEAGUE.COM

CONSISTENT AMENDED ADDED REMOVED

## SPECTATING:

- NUMBER OF SPECTATORS CHAMPIONSHIP AND LEAGUE 1
- NUMBER OF SPECTATORS AT CHALLENGE CUP FINAL
- NUMBER OF SPECTATORS ACROSS ENGLAND HOME INTERNATIONALS
- NUMBER OF SPECTATORS ACROSS CHAMPIONSHIP
- NUMBER OF SPECTATORS ACROSS LEAGUE 1
- AVERAGE NUMBER OF SPECTATORS CHAMPIONSHIP AND LEAGUE 1
- NUMBER OF SPECTATORS ACROSS CHALLENGE CUP
- NUMBER OF SPECTATORS ACROSS SUPER LEAGUE
- NUMBER OF SPECTATORS FINALS, PLAY-OFFS, MAGIC, SUMMER BASH, WCS AND INTERNATIONALS
- NUMBER OF SPECTATORS CHALLENGE CUP (ROUND 3 ONWARDS)

CONSISTENT AMENDED ADDED REMOVED

## PARTICIPATING

- NUMBER OF REGISTERED COMMUNITY CLUB PLAYERS
- NUMBER OF PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH THE SKY TRY PROGRAMME (CUMULATIVE AND PRO RATA)
- NUMBER OF REGISTERED TOUCH & TAG PARTICIPANTS
- NUMBER OF REGISTERED COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PARTICIPANTS
- REGISTERED PLAYERS OF RUGBY LEAGUE VARIANTS
- NUMBER OF ACTIVE PLAYERS

CONSISTENT AMENDED ADDED REMOVED

## FINANCE

- COMMERCIAL INCOME (DOO'S)
- RFL COMMERCIAL INCOME (DOO'S)
- RFL OPERATING PROFIT
- SUPER LEAGUE (EUROPE) LTD TURNOVER
- RFL LTD TURNOVER
- PROFESSIONAL AND SEMI-PROFESSIONAL CLUBS TURNOVER
- SUPER LEAGUE CLUB PROFIT & LOSS ACCOUNTS

CONSISTENT AMENDED ADDED REMOVED

## GOVERNANCE

- SPORT ENGLAND EQUALITY STANDARD FOR SPORT
- MEDICAL STANDARDS
- FULL TIME PLAYERS CAREER ENGAGED
- SAFEGUARDING
- SPORTS GOVERNANCE CODE
- CUSTOMER SATISFACTION
- EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION
- NUMBER OF MATCH OFFICIALS REGISTERED
- NUMBER OF ACTIVE MATCH OFFICIALS
- INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

CONSISTENT AMENDED ADDED REMOVED

## PERFORMANCE

- ENGLAND PERFORMANCE TARGET
- PLAYERS THAT CAN ACCESS TALENT DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENT
- SUPER LEAGUE ACADEMIES RATED AS OUTSTANDING
- ENGLAND ACADEMY PLAYERS MAKING A SUPER LEAGUE DEBUT
- ACADEMY PLAYERS THAT GRADUATE TO SUPER LEAGUE

CONSISTENT AMENDED ADDED REMOVED

## 9. THE TEAM

Chief Executive  
**Ralph  
Rimmer**

Chief Operating Officer

**Tony  
Sutton**

Chief On-Field Officer

**Vacant**

Chief Regulatory Officer

**Karen  
Moorhouse**

Chief Commercial Officer

**Mark  
Foster**

Director of Rugby

**Kevin  
Sinfield**



## 9. THE TEAM (Cont.)

Chief Operating Officer  
**Tony Sutton**

Systems Manager

**Richard  
Donlon**

Director of Insight & Customer

**Alison  
O'Brien**

Director of Finance

**Robert  
Graham**

Director of People

**David  
Connor**

Head of Technology

**Matthew  
Dews**

## 9. THE TEAM (Cont.)

Chief On-Field Officer

**Vacant**

Director of Participation  
and Development

**Marc  
Lovering**

Head of Match Officials

**Steve  
Ganson**

Head of Coaching and  
Player Development

**Dave  
Rotheram**



## 9. THE TEAM (Cont.)

Chief Regulatory Officer  
**Karen Moorhouse**

Director of Legal & Projects

**Alan Darfi**

Head of Legal

**Matthew Barnes**

Welfare Director

**Emma Rosewarne**

[Part Seconded to RL Cares]

Head of Delivery Community  
Game Competitions

**Kelly Barrett**

Head of Delivery  
Professional Game Competitions  
and Salary Cap

**Sam Allen**

## 9. THE TEAM (Cont.)

Chief Commercial Officer

**Mark  
Foster**

Head of Partnerships

**Bobby  
Bahadori**

Head of Media

**Andy  
Wilson**

Head of Events

**Nicola  
Moloney**

[Maternity Cover]

Digital Manager

**Vacant**

Head of Marketing

**Vacant**





WOOLSTON ROVERS

ONEFX Beauty  
Salon Lynn  
Tel: 01925 794451

3  
O'Neill

X-Press

JMC Removals

JMC Removals

JMC Removals

JMC Removals

19  
GJM

TRY 1

WOOLSTON ROVERS

WOOLSTON ROVERS

WOOLSTON ROVERS



A dark blue, semi-transparent overlay covers the entire image. The background is a collage of various images related to rugby league, including players in action, a trophy, and a crowd. The text 'RUGBY-LEAGUE.COM' is centered in white, bold, uppercase letters.

**RUGBY-LEAGUE.COM**