



Schools Rugby Champions (Supported by Scottish Widows Bank)

Annual Progress Report 2010-11

INTRODUCTION

In June 2010 Scottish Rugby announced that it had surpassed its strategic target to grow its playing base by over 50%, two years ahead of schedule, pointing to the steady recovery of extra-curricular state school rugby as key to rugby's increasing popularity. This positive trend has continued over the past year with a further increase in registered youth (club and school) players of 15% in 2011.

This growth is thanks, in part, to the successful Rugby Champions initiative supported by Scottish Widows Bank, which last season saw 264 state secondary schools register a 'Rugby Champion' to be their school's key point of contact with development staff, and the driving force for developing rugby in their school.

BACKGROUND

Scottish Rugby recognises the valuable contribution that teachers have made for many years, and continue to make, in supporting, organising and coaching rugby in schools across Scotland. Therefore, in 2008-09 Scottish Rugby launched the Schools Rugby Champions initiative in partnership with Scottish Widows Bank. Our aim being to identify, recruit, support and reward a suitable member of staff in each state secondary school in Scotland, to act as the Champion for Rugby in that school, and help us 'grow the game' in communities across the country so that more young people can enjoy the benefits that involvement in rugby brings.

Each Rugby Champion receives a package of incentives including branded clothing and equipment, as well as the support of local and regional development staff, as they progress towards the Bronze, Silver and Gold awards. These awards reflect the level of rugby participation they have achieved in their schools and the valued service they provide to the local rugby community.

2010-11 – GROWTH THROUGH THE AGE GROUPS

The past year produced some interesting trends and highlighted ongoing challenges that will help shape a revised programme in 2011-12:

- 43 new schools register with Rugby Champions (including 8 re-joining after a year out of programme)
- State secondary schools field 633 teams, an increase of 25 on the previous year
- 21 of these new teams were at the U15/U16 level – demonstrating growth up through the age groups
- 31 schools achieve the Rugby Champions Gold Award (up from 26 in 2010)
- 67 schools achieve the Rugby Champions Silver Award (up from 62 in 2010)
- 166 schools achieve the Rugby Champions Bronze Award (up from 154 in 2010)

However, there are still major challenges in some schools with many PE teachers on short term or probationer contracts. As a result maintaining a Rugby Champion and rugby programme in some schools is an annual challenge:

- 56 schools saw their registered Rugby Champion move on to be replaced by another/new member of staff
- 21 schools were unable to replace their Rugby Champion and dropped out of the programme

GOLD & SILVER REWARDS

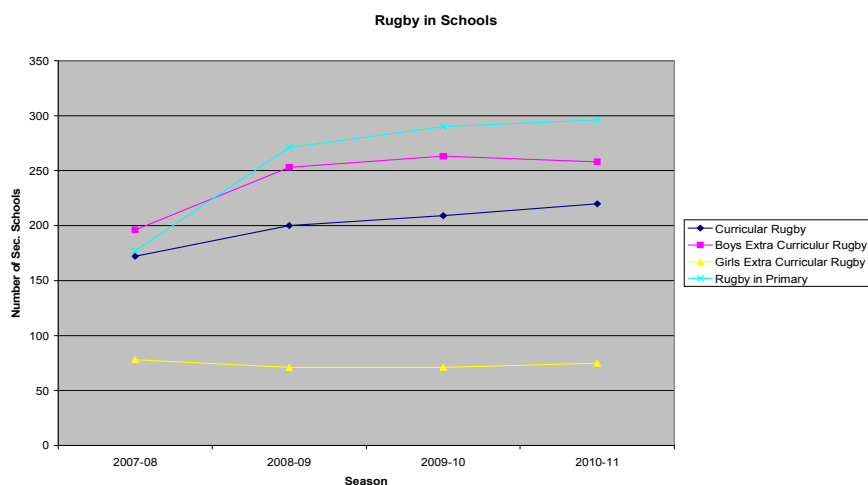
Over the past year 3 schools took advantage of a coaching master-class in recognition of achieving the Gold award. Simon Cross, former professional player with Edinburgh and now defence coach with Scotland U20 & U18, went out to Ross High School (Tranent), Douglas Ewart HS (Wigtownshire) and The Gordon Schools Huntly, to work with the players and coaches on areas such as defence and the key national themes.

17 schools took up the option of tickets to see the professional teams, Glasgow Warriors and Edinburgh Rugby, in Celtic League action. A further 49 schools opted for tickets to the IRB 7's at Murrayfield in May. Our thanks go to the teachers and other volunteers who made these trips possible for their pupils.

KEY TRENDS SINCE 2008

With three years of Rugby Champions under our belts it has been interesting to look at trends during that period to help us identify where the programme might better support the sustainability and ongoing growth of rugby in state secondary schools.

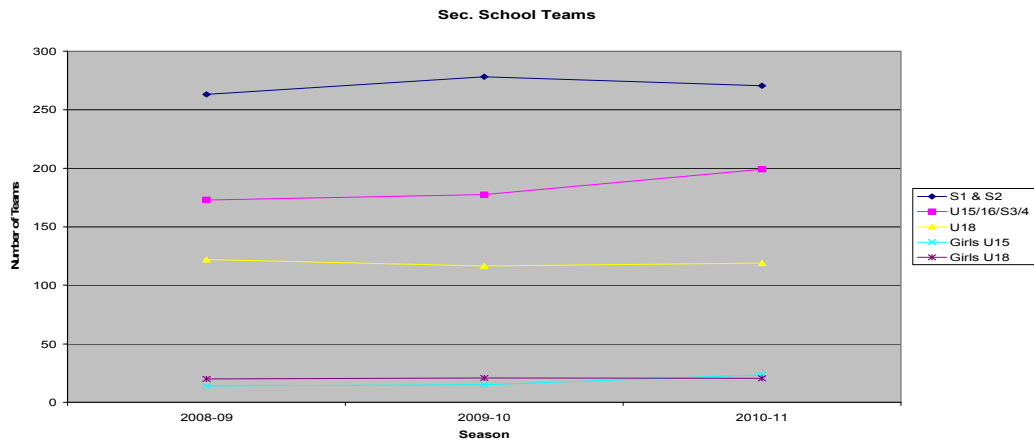
Compared to the position in 2008 before the start of the project, there has been a good increase in the number of secondary schools able to offer rugby in the curriculum; as an extra curricular activity (through staff and CDO time); and in the number of schools whose catchment primary schools are receiving rugby (via the CDO and MA network).



Sustaining / building large rugby programmes is a tough challenge and only 12 schools have maintained their Gold level throughout the three years. Others dropped back a level before returning to gold this year. There are a number of factors at work here including change in staff and volunteers, change in school priorities and the impact of changing age-grade policies such as 'Are You Ready to Play Rugby'.

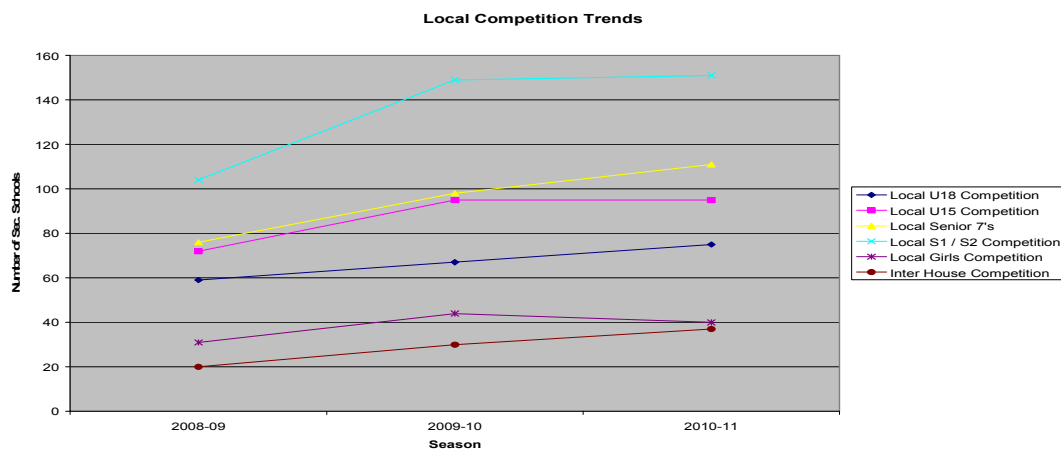
139 schools maintained their award level during the 3 years (74 of which were Bronze). To help these 74 schools move forward would require significant investment of time and resource from school and local development staff. Despite having over 70 rugby development officers around Scotland, there are some areas where there simply isn't the capacity to support these schools to grow their programmes. The graph above reflects the fact that despite a small increase in the proportion of schools achieving Gold and Silver, overall proportions are similar.

On an annual basis Scottish Rugby audits the number of teams being fielded on a regular basis by the schools and it makes for interesting reading.



By the end of 2009 the CDO network had quickly helped to re-establish rugby at S1/2 in many schools and the trend has increased only slightly over that period (bearing in mind that this trend includes many schools starting S1/2 rugby, but also many dropping back due to staff turnover and other reasons mentioned above). U18 teams have been relatively flat with a small drop (in part as a result of the 'Are You Ready to Play Rugby' safety policies). However, growth is now occurring across the S3/4/U15/U16 age groups. There has been some reorganising of teams as a result of the 'Are You Ready...' age grade policies and changes in the schools cup, but the overall trend is increasing and demonstrates that participation levels are now moving up through the schools and we would expect to see growth at U18 level in the next few years. Girls U15 rugby is also showing a pleasing increase which again should flow through to U18 provided we can sustain the level of teacher, volunteer, CDO support.

Since 2008 there has been a gradual shift towards providing local competition for schools. Transport budgets in schools are very limited. New/emerging schools can struggle to find/cover the cost of buses to distant fixtures, and even well-established rugby schools are facing the threat of major transport budget cuts next year. Therefore, the emphasis has been on providing meaningful local competition for schools at 7, 10 or 15 a-side, utilising school mini buses where possible.



By securing ongoing and increased investment from the Scottish Government's CashBack for Communities scheme for the next 3 years, Scottish Rugby will be able to sustain its investment in the development officer network to continue to support schools to maintain and grow their rugby programmes. The launch of the School of Rugby project will also see increased resource provided to approximately 20 schools to enable them to dedicate the staff time required to build a programme which benefits pupils right across the school. The revised Rugby Champions programme will also aim to provide greater flexibility around the type of support provided so that it caters to the specific needs of that school.

APPENDIX 1: LOCAL AUTHORITY COMPARATIVE TABLE

	Position 2010-11	Position 2009-10	Total Registered 2010-11	% registered	RC GOLD 2010-11	% of total	RC SILVER 2010-11	% of total	RC BRONZE 2010-11	% of total
EAST LoTHIAN	1	2	6	100%	5	83%	1	17%	0	0%
BORDERS	2	1	10	100%	5	50%	4	40%	1	10%
STIRLING	3	5	7	100%	2	29%	3	43%	2	29%
PERTH & KINROSS	4	4	10	100%	2	20%	4	40%	4	40%
FALKIRK	5	14	8	100%	1	13%	1	13%	6	75%
ORKNEY	6	7	2	100%	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%
CLACKS	7	6	3	100%	0	0%	2	67%	1	33%
SHETLAND	8	26	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%	2	100%
EDINBURGH (Cof)	9	10	22	96%	2	9%	8	36%	12	55%
NTH AYRSHIRE	10	12	8	89%	0	0%	0	0%	8	100%
ABER'SHIRE	11	13	15	88%	2	13%	7	47%	6	40%
STH AYRSHIRE	12	16	7	88%	2	29%	1	14%	4	57%
FIFE	13	17	16	84%	2	13%	6	38%	8	50%
MIDLoTHIAN	14	8	5	83%	1	20%	1	20%	3	60%
WST LoTHIAN	15	18	9	82%	0	0%	2	22%	7	78%
ABERDEEN	16	9	9	75%	0	0%	1	11%	8	89%
STH LAN'SHIRE	17	15	12	71%	0	0%	4	33%	8	67%
ARGYLL & BUTE	18	11	7	70%	1	14%	1	14%	5	71%
HIGHLAND	19	20	20	69%	1	5%	7	35%	12	60%
EAST AYRSHIRE	20	19	6	67%	1	17%	0	0%	5	83%
DUMF. & G'WAY	21	23	10	67%	1	10%	3	30%	6	60%
EAST DUNB'SHIRE	22	22	6	67%	0	0%	0	0%	6	100%
ANGUS	23	24	5	63%	0	0%	3	60%	2	40%
MORAY	24	25	5	63%	0	0%	2	40%	3	60%
NTH LAN'SHIRE	25	28	16	62%	1	6%	0	0%	15	94%
GLASGOW (Cof)	26	29	18	58%	2	11%	1	6%	15	83%
EAST RENF'SHIRE	27	27	4	57%	0	0%	0	0%	4	100%
WSTRN ISLES	28	3	1	50%	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%
DUNDEE	29	21	5	50%	0	0%	2	40%	3	60%
INV'CLYDE	30	32	4	50%	0	0%	0	0%	4	100%
RENF'SHIRE	31	30	5	42%	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%
WEST DUNB'SHIRE	32	31	1	14%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%

APPENDIX 2: AWARD LEVEL CRITERIA

There will be some regional flexibility to cater for schools with smaller school rolls.

A Bronze Rugby School would have completed the following:

- Coordinate / deliver school coaching sessions at one age group.
- Play appropriate fixtures at one age group.
- Participate in one local or national competition.
- Ensure awareness & provide info on local youth rugby clubs.
- Register all players on Scottish Rugby's player registration system.

Bronze schools received a Rugby Champions plaque and equipment pack costing £125 (£230 value at retail prices).

A Silver Rugby School would have completed the following:

- Coordinate / deliver school coaching sessions at two age groups.
- Play appropriate fixtures at two age groups and enter local competitions.
- Enter one national competition e.g. BD U18 & U16 Schools Cup, Girl's U15 & U18 Youth Cup.
- Offer taster sessions for girls as a minimum and sign-post to local/national girls' development programmes.
- Deliver curriculum rugby taster sessions as a minimum.
- Evidence of active links to local clubs e.g. exchange of coaches, use club facilities, increase in junior club membership.
- Register all players on Scottish Rugby's player registration system

Silver schools received a Rugby Champions plaque and a equipment pack costing £185 (£348 value at retail prices), and a choice of tickets to selected professional team matches and events.

A Gold Rugby School would have completed the following:

- Coordinate / deliver school coaching sessions at 4 age groups
e.g Boys S1/2, U16, U18, Girls U15 or U18
- Actively organise appropriate fixtures for those 4 age groups
- Actively recruit new girls into rugby and organise appropriate fixtures/participation in suitable events.
- Participate in U16 & U18 BD Schools Cup.
- Evidence of active links to local clubs e.g. exchange of coaches, use club facilities, increase in junior club membership.
- Senior pupils involved in organising and coaching rugby
- Rugby offered as part of the curriculum
- Register all players on Scottish Rugby's player registration system

Gold schools received a Rugby Champions plaque and equipment pack worth £270 (£630 value at retail prices), and a choice of tickets to selected professional team matches and events.