

Scottish Rugby Moving Clubs Forward Workshop

How to: Run an open day

Introduction

Running an “Open Day” at your club could bring a range of benefits to the club which include a) generation of income b) building up the awareness of the club in the local community c) building up the reputation of the club in the local community and d) it could attract new people to the club for the first time who could become “customers” of the club – participants, volunteers, sponsors, members, spectators or participants for the events. The club will need to decide why it is running the event and which outcomes it is hoping to achieve. This information will be included in the event plan and will, to a certain extent, dictate what happens on the day.

The information included in the background notes are there to a) provide you with a framework for the event b) provide you with some ideas on which activities to run on the day c) provide you with an overview on which new customers you could target and why they should join your club. The information includes best practice from the Leinster Clubs who ran a range of successful Open Days last year.

The Open Day Plan

There are four phases of planning an Open Day event and they are outlined below;

- Define the event – what are its objectives of the day, what is the vision that the stakeholders have, what is the budget, who is on the committee, what is happening on the day and what is the pricing structure of event (if any).
- Marketing the event – Who are you targeting to come along on the day and why should they come, how to contact these individuals, which marketing material to use and how this links into media plan.
- Operational plan – preparation of the venue and the staff, development of a customer experience and delivery on the day.
- Review – what went well and what didn't.

PHASE ONE

The information given below is very general and won't be applicable for all Open Days. However, it is hoped that it will provide some guidance towards the type of decisions that need to be made.

The Clubs Commitment

The club will need to develop a committee to run the event. An example of the people involved is outlined below.

- Mini Rugby Coordinator
- Youth Rugby Coordinator
- Women's rugby Manager and Captain
- One member of the social committee
- One member of the Membership committee
- One Marketing Person
- The grounds manager

- Bar manager
- Plus one chair

Objectives of the day

- To create visibility/brand awareness for the club in its local community
- To create an event that will attract individuals and families to the ground and provide a fun day out
- Whilst they are in the club the aim will be to introduce and sell the attendees the “club products” of mini rugby, tag, senior rugby, club events, membership and facility hire.
- To collect data from the individuals present.
- To generate an income

The Open Day activities

These could vary depending on the objectives of the day. For example if the club is wanting to recruit new family members for Mini rugby then it needs to ensure that it attracts families to the day and that there is a Mini Rugby demonstration taking place. If they want to attract people who could join the Tag Rugby nights then they need to attract the target audience to the day and possibly have a Tag rugby demonstration taking place. If it wants to attract people from the local community who might enjoy a family day out then they need to have the relevant activities taking place on the day.

Examples of activities:

- Demonstrations of tag, mini rugby and conditioning training throughout the afternoon
- Information stations giving out information packs about the club
- Entertainment from local performing arts college
- Food Fayre
- Cake, book, flower/plant stalls
- Children’s games
- Stalls for local businesses
- Car washing

PHASE TWO

What is the marketing message?

This could vary depending on who the club is trying to attract. Below is one example of a marketing message.

Open Day – come along for a fun day out and find out what your club has to offer you and your family – sport, healthy activity, social events, facilities for events and the opportunity to support your local community through volunteering.

One possible message on the banners, flyers etc. could be;

FAMILY FUN AND OPEN DAY
A great day out at your local community rugby club
Find out what we have to offer you at Railway Union RFC
Participation, Fun, fitness, social events, spectating, volunteering opportunities and much more

Developing the Marketing Plan

The club will need to develop a plan which will include;

- 1) The time Line – what is happening and when it is happening
- 2) The Marketing Plan – which marketing channels is the club using and which messages are being passed through these channels.

Marketing channels -

- Banners
- Posters
- Flyers
- Press releases
- E mail template
- Social Media templates
- Word of Mouth – can all members be made responsible to invite certain people to the event e.g. ex-players, families in the locality

New “Customers” for the Club

Who are the “customers” for the club we are trying to attract and what are we selling them?

- Players – see the facilities, the coaching structure and learn about the social side of the club
- Families – learn about the benefits of playing mini rugby – team work, health, friends, challenging and confidence building in a safe environment. Also come along to the family social events.
- Play “Tag Rugby” – social and health benefits
- Past players - come back and play or enjoy the social side of the game
- Businesses – see the facilities for business meetings and parties
- Businesses – sponsor the local sports club and support your local community
- Families and Individuals – wide range of social events are run
- Volunteers – do you want to enhance your CV and have fun with like-minded people?

PHASE THREE

The Operational Plan

The delivery of the event; what is happening on the day and what needs to be prepared beforehand?

On the day – what needs to happen on the day? is there a timetable of events and what are the roles and responsibilities of everyone who is involved?

Much of what happens on the day will depend on the objectives for the event. As an example, if the aim is to collect data from everyone who attends the event then the club will need to decide how it can achieve this. Is it through a competition on the day or do they try to get people to sign up for a monthly newsletter?

Information Booklet

The club could aim to produce a small “Booklet” explaining what the club has to offer in all areas and who the contact person is. It should also have a data collection sheet on the back for individuals to

fill out. It could have a tick box area of what they are interested in and to encourage people to fill it out each form could be added into a prize draw.

PHASE FOUR

The review and follow up. It is essential that there is a review about the day, what went well, what didn't and what they would change for next year.

It is also essential that the information collected is acted upon – are individuals who were interested in Tag sent some information, did the person who said he may be interested in sponsoring the club leave his contact details and will he be called and was the ex-player who said he may be interested in coaching called up after the event?