



SUOMEN RUGBYLIITTO FINNISH RUGBY FEDERATION

Member of World Rugby
Member of Rugby Europe
Member of Finnish Olympic Committee (NOC)
Member of Suomen liikunta ja urheilu (VALO)

Executive Summary

Suomen Rugbyliitto spent 2014 consolidating the structural changes that have been steadily put into place over the past five years. Unfortunately early in the year Salla Salo had to resign from the Treasurer's position, but was replaced by Iida Myllymäki who had also been elected into the Board during the Spring General Meeting as a result of a vacancy from 2012.

Multiple changes have occurred at the regional and global level for Rugby. Fédération Internationale de Rugby Amateur-Association Européenne de Rugby (FIRA-AER), the European Regional Rugby Association, voted to change its name to Rugby Europe (RE) at the Annual Congress. During the World Rugby Conference in London in November, the International Rugby Board (IRB) became World Rugby.

Both the Mens 15s and the Womens 7s National Teams have competed more competitively in 2014 at the European Level than in previous years. This seems to correlate with an increase in domestic game time and the coaching staff placing a great emphasis on player management & training throughout the year.

The challenge for the women 7s will be to progress to the next level of competition and efforts are in progress to engage with the National Olympic Committee in order to seek support, both financial and technical, to help them gain promotion to the European Grand Prix series, the top 7s competition in Europe.

The mens National Team bid a fond farewell to Alan Hine this year. Alan had moulded the team into a cohesive unit that worked on the basics of being a team prior to him stepping down in the spring. Bob took over during the summer and it seemed fitting that both of the coaches were present to see Finland dominate Norway in Myllypuro which saw Finland finally moving off the lowest ranked team in the world standings.

During the Autumn General Meeting, the difficult decision to suspend the operations of the Women's 15s National Team was taken. It should be emphasised that this is a suspension, and not as some would portray it, a death knell to the team. The budget for the team that was planned will be transferred to the Women's Academy who will focus on intermediate skills and above.

Clubs will remain responsible for the basic skills and safety training for new players. This decision was taken as a result of not having good results over the last several years, the lack of any access to European Competitions and the number of games played in the domestic competition with squads with insufficient numbers to play 15 a side. It is incumbent on the SRL and its member clubs to not only recruit sufficient women players, but also to retain and up skill the current player base, in order to support a national team of 15 a side.





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Moving into 2015, a Rugby World Cup year, the SRL's current strategic plan will expire. Chris Gibbons and Mathieu Nicodeme have been tasked to write the next Strategic Plan, outlining the SRL's plans until 2019. This will involve consultation with the member clubs as well as current SRL staff before final approval in the 2015 Autumn General Meeting. Finances will also be migrated to an online tool called Holvi to ensure accurate and timely reporting that will increase the transparency of the SRL's financial operations even more.

Organisationally, 2015 must see the SRL secure funding for a full time Technical Director in Finland for a minimum of three years. It has become apparent that the current operational tempo is the upper limit with voluntary staff due to time constraints. This should not be seen as a comment on current and past volunteers' commitment to the SRL, but rather that the growth of Rugby in Finland is taking hold and the efforts of a full time employee would return on the investment almost immediately.



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Rugby Development

Get into Rugby

Get into Rugby has seen over 4000 children with a rugby ball in their hands in 2014, some of these are repeat visits to schools that have decided to make tag rugby a regular initiative, the work has mainly been carried out by Linna Rugby club. Many clubs are doing youth work and visiting schools but are not always logging their activities on the GiR website.

Training & Education

A Level 1 Match Official course was held in the beginning of the year by Olli Linnossuo which had 15 attendees. A Level 2 Match Official course was held by George Mossford which had eight attendees, four of which have passed and four are still pending some outstanding work.

A Level 1 Coaching course was held in Åland and nine persons 'graduated' from that course, a level 2 coaching course was held in Hämeenlinna with several attendees.

A CMO (Coach of Match Officials) course was held in Helsinki with 7 attendees.

A Medical Education course was planned and to be held by Mikko Korte, who is the SRL's Medical Educator but this course was not carried out.

Lauri Ylönen participated in a Level 2 Strength & Conditioning course held in Portugal. Chris Gibbons participated in the Referee's Educator course held in Switzerland and is awaiting a few final checks before becoming a referee educator for the SRL. No Anti-Doping lectures were held in 2014 but relevant information and emails were distributed by the General Secretary.

World Rugby Trust Grant

The World Rugby (IRB) grant was completed as per the relevant KPI's set by the union in June 2013. Most were carried out as per the set criteria, the only changes were in the Schools Rugby section that saw tournaments and schools visits not generating much expense, clubs did not ask for tag sets and some clubs said they had sufficient supplies. It was decided to invest in clubs with a financial sum that would assist the clubs in their youth endeavors. This money was earmarked to be used only for youth work. The 2015 grant was completed in June and was in a different format to previous years, asking now only for specific information on the KPI's that World Rugby money would fund. As of yet there has been no confirmation or rejection on approval of the grant application.





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Technical Director

A Technical Directors course was attended which consisted of 3 * 1 week segments on 3 different areas; A professional environment with Castres Olympique, in Castres France, a youth rugby camp with Pierre Villepreux in Lubersac, France and the final practical week on a Rugby Europe U20's tournament held in Brno, Czech Republic.

A report had to be made on each module on what the course was about, what I could take from the module and how I could implement it into the Finnish Union, at the end of the 3 modules a report had to be made about the course as a whole. This si to be followed up by a live presentation to the Rugby Europe board and the 2 Regional Development managers for Europe, Douglas Langley and Michel Arppillainge. The presentation will be in February 2015 and will last for 40 minutes followed by a 20 minute Question and Answer session.

The TD and Gen Sec conference was also attended in Romania.



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National Team Operations

Mens National Team

The men played 4 games in 2014, 2 of those games were the last 2 games in the ENC 2D 2012-14 season. The first was an away game in Luxembourg which saw the team lose 27-7. This was a disappointing result as the game had a few things hanging on it, such as a strengthening of the team's position in the league. This led into the next game which was to be held in Turku and the opponents were Bosnia, winning this game would guarantee a 4th place in the league and for one of the few times that Finland haven't been fighting a drop the league below. The game resulted in a great win with a 4 try bonus point. 29-25. The Bosnians took the loss quite hard as we had denied them an automatic promotion to 2C. There was a strong Bosnian presence at the game but the Finnish supporters got behind the team. It was a solid display with everything going right on the day.

It was after this game and during the summer months that the management of the Men's team changed. The Coach Alan Hine who had been a loyal servant felt he had taken the team as far as he could. The position was opened up for open applications with 4 candidates submitting their résumés. 3 were based in Finland and 1 from the UK, it was this persons CV that had the most experience and relevant skills required. Bob Hussey was his name and he also happened to be the father of an NT player.

The 2014-16 season started off with a game against Norway, in Helsinki. The feel good factor from the last game against Bosnia was carried over with an impressive win. 32-10. which gave us a 4 try bonus point and denied Norway the losing bonus point.

This was the first time in a good while that the team had won 2 games in a row and also the first time they had beaten Norway since 1991. Unfortunately the price of a solid victory was some injuries and with the return fixture to be held in Oslo 2 weeks later. However the team now has more depth in player numbers. The game in Norway was played and some silly (at least from the sideline) decisions cost the team a losing bonus point. The team was stronger in several areas but unfortunately couldn't bring it together on the day. The lads were disappointed as this win would have taken the team to the top of the league table.

However, the team finished the year ranked 98th place in the World Rugby rankings, up 4 places from the previous: bottom, or 102nd.

The coaching team for 2014 consisted of Bob Hussey as Head Coach, Issac Visser and Alastair Davies as Assistant Coaches, Stephen Whittaker as Team Manager and Anna Viljämä as Physio. Chris Gibbons was also included as a specialist scrum coach but has now become a regular in the management team.





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The next game is April 2015 in Bosnia, with a home game in May against Turkey.

Womens 7s National Team

Naisten maajoukkueen päätähtäin vuodelle 2014 oli Bergenissä Norjassa pelattu A-ryhmän EM-turnaus 7.-9.6., missä 12 joukkuetta kamppaili noususta top12 -ryhmään. Turnauksen 2 parasta nousivat (Ukraina ja Skotlanti) ja 2 heikointa tippuivat (Kroatia ja Tanska) B-ryhmään. Suomen rankingsijoitus turnaukseen lähdetessä oli 11. ja lopullinen sijoitus 6., mikä tarkoitti toukokuussa 2012 asetettujen tavoitteiden toteutumista.

EM-turnauksiin valmistauduttiin seuraavilla leireillä:

23.2. Helsinki
8.-9.3. Eerikkilä
29.-30.3. Eerikkilä
26.-27.4. Vantaa
23.-25.5. Rantasalmi

Suomi pelasi 2 harjoitusturnausta kahdella joukkueella Lontoossa: Floodlit 7s turnauksen 15.5. ja Wasps 7s 17.5., minkä Suomi voitti.

Lauri Ylönen - Päävalmentaja
Jani Parkkinen - Fysioterapeutti
Teija Alasalmi - Joukkueenjohtaja

Turnauksen tulokset:

Pool games

Finland-Scotland 0-36

Finland-Moldova 17-5

Finland-Croatia 7-12

Quarter-finals (1st –8th)

Finland-Scotland 10-20

Plate Semi final (5th–8th)

Finland- Czech Republic 15-0

Plate Final (5th–6th)



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Finland-Moldova 5-10

EM-turnauksen jälkeen alkoi valmistautuminen kaudelle 2015 seuraavin leirein:

25.-26.10. Eerikkilä

8.-9.11. Eerikkilä

6.-7.12. Eerikkilä

Womens 15s National Team

The main events for 2014 were the friendly games played against the Swiss 15's national team, the Swiss 15's development team and the French Army 15s National Team. Each of these resulted in a loss. During the three game events as well as the four training camps and two training days the team developed continuous play skills, performed well against more experienced and skilled teams. The team had one third of new players.

In the past two years the main challenge has been to integrate new players, as the more experienced players have chosen to concentrate on the 7s game and some have quit rugby altogether. The integration process has been successful, but in 2015 the challenge will continue and for this reason it is good to be doing a partnership with the Academy.

The team was coached by Tytti Yli-Viikari and the team manager was Sonja Herrala, the physio/ caretaker was Riko Oksanen. There were 34 players in the development squad.

Women's Rugby Academy 2014

In Spring 2014 two camps were organized by Academy coordinator Satu Raudasoja:

- Camp 2.3. in Eerikkilä, 15's NT development group and Academy
 - coaches Jim Wetterström and Satu Raudasoja
 - present: 15's NT development group players 15, Academy and other invited players 15 (See Appendix 1).
- Camp 3.-4.5. in Eerikkilä, general camp
 - coach from IRB: Noel O'Meara
- Munster Rugby Coach Development and Education Officer
- Qualified IRB Coach Educator
- Qualified IRFU Tutor





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- open for everyone
- 41 participants
- Theme of the camp: General Movement
- Goal: to understand the concept of General movement and be more efficient on the pitch

In May-June 2014 Academy head coach changed to Jim Wetterström, who has coached Warriors ladies 2012-2014. Satu Raudasoja continues as the coordinator. Academy started with a new 1,5 year program in autumn.

In Autumn 2014 three Academy camps were organized and Jim Wetterström coached all these camps.

- 4.-5.10. in Eerikkilä
 - 27 participants (of which 20 players were chosen to Academy from this camp)
 - Theme: Tackling and securing the ball in contact situation
- 8.-9.11. in Eerikkilä
 - 14 participants (of which 1 new player was chose to Academy)
 - Theme: rucking in 7's rugby and communication
- 13.-14.12. in Eerikkilä, together with 15's NT development group
 - 26 participants (of which 6 new players were chosen to Academy)
 - Theme: defence, maul and position specific skills in 15's rugby

Together 23 players. Also 4 other players were selected to Academy, but they were selected to women's 7's national team group.

NT U20's / U17's / Youth Rugby

Juniori- ja nuorisorugbylle vuosi 2014 oli viisivuotissuunnitelman ensimmäinen vuosi. Se oli uudelleenjärjestäytymisen ja tavoitteidenasettelun vuosi. Vuoden aikana kartoitimme seurojen junioritilannetta, määritimme ikäluokkia ja järjestimme leirejä ja muuta toimintaa





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niin pelaajille kuin seura-aktiiveillekin. Kevätkokouksessa Snow Rugbyn yhteydessä viisivuotissuunnitelma esiteltiin seuroille. Tavoitteet ovat korkealla niin koulurugbyn kuin seurarugbynkin osilta. Yksi vuoden onnistumisista on ehdottomasti viisivuotinen sopimus valmentaja Peter Tennetin kanssa. Peter on osoittautunut paitsi erinomaiseksi valmentajaksi myös kiinnostuneeksi Suomen nuorisorugbysta laajemmin. Peterin laajan kokemuksen avulla saamme suunnitelmiamme ja rakenteisiimme vahvuutta.

Lippu- ja koulurugbyn vuosi alkoi lupaavasti kun Ari Tikkasen (KRC, SRL YDO 1.6.2014 saakka) johdolla saimme kirjoitettua säännöt suomeksi ja Kuopiossa järjestettiin Get Into Rugby tapahtuma helmikuussa. Seurojen toimesta yhteensä yli 5000 nuorta ja lasta kokeili rugbya joko kouluissa tai erilaisissa tapahtumissa vuoden aikana. Aktiivisimpia seuroja olivat Linna ja HRC, mutta myös Espoo, Åland, Jyväskylä ja Kuopio osoittivat aktiivisuutta. SRL etsii edelleen ihmistä, joka ottaisi vastuulle lippu- ja koulurugbyn kehittämisen kordinoimisen Suomessa. Potentiaalia näissä lajeissa on valtavasti, mutta ilman suunnitelmallisuutta ja järjestäytymistä tulokset jäävät vähäisiksi.

Vuoden aikana järjestimme yhteensä neljä leiriä nuorille, jotka pelaavat rugbya seuroissa. Osanottoprosentti oli koko maan pelaajamäärään nähden korkea. Leireille osallistui 36 pelaajaa kahdeksasta eri seurasta. Leireistä suurimmaksi muodostui lokakuun leiri Eerikkilässä, jolle osallistui 27 nuorta pelaajaa. Erityisesti Turku Eagles kunnostautui pelaajamäärän kasvattamisessa nostamalla alle 17 vuotiaiden porukan muutamasta pelaajasta kokonaiseksi joukkueeksi. Pelejä järjestettiin muutamia. Alle 20 vuotiaat pelasivat osana Old Boys ft Honey Badgers- joukkuetta Midnight rugbyssa ja alle 17 vuotiaalle järjestettiin kaksi näytösottelua (MRT ja finaali-ottelu). Alle 17- vuotiaissa pelasivat vastakkain Turku ja HRC kummallakin kerralla. Lisäksi osallistuimme kansainväliseen opiskelijaturnaukseen (SELL-games) Virossa joulukuussa, jonka pelaajat olivat kaikki alle 30 vuotiaita.

Haasteellista nuorisorugbyssa on edelleen se, että seuroissa on varsin rajallisesti resursseja ja ne ohjataan lähes poikkeuksetta aikuisjoukkueiden pyörittämiseen. Vaikka lähes jokainen seura ilmaisee halunsa tukea juniorirugbya, käytännössä teot jäävät vähäisiksi. Nuoria pelaajia on seuroissa korkeintaan vain muutama ja esimerkiksi alkeiskurssit halutaan järjestää ensisijaisesti aikuisille, jolloin uusia pelaajia ei noin vain ilmesty mukaan.

Tulevien vuosien suurin haaste onkin löytää keinoja, joilla seurat voisivat siirtyä sanoista tekoihin helpommin. Lajin kestävä kehitys vaatii panostamista nuorisoon - sen tietänee lähes jokainen mutta käytännön tasolla jäämme edelleen junaamaan lyhytkestoiseen ajatteluun.

Vuoden alkupuolella tehdyn kyselyn mukaan seurojen mielestä yksi suurimpia haasteita juniorirugbyssa on se, että nuorille ei ole tarjota oikein mitään; ei pelikavereita, ei sarjaa, haasteita tai muuta motivaation lähdeä. Tällä hetkellä meillä on hyvä, sitoutunut valmentaja sekä leirejä ja muita tapahtumia useasti vuodessa. Heti, kun pelaajamäärä sen





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sallii, polkaisemme käyntiin myös sarjan. Suunta on oikea ja nuorisorugby puksuttaa eteenpäin hyvässä hengessä!



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General Secretary Report

Domestic Issues:

The player numbers for 2014 season are as follows (including historical details):

	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
# Clubs	14	13	14	11	11
Male Adult	405	300	422	353	270
Female Adult	178	165	157	119	90
Youth (under 18 years)	7	3	25	?	30
Total Players	590	468	604	472	390

The 2011 and 2012 figures include all the duplicate licenses sold in that period. As Rugby Europe and World Rugby require as accurate figures as possible, 2013 and 2014 now only include individuals playing in Finland. This now gives an accurate portrayal of “real” players in Finland.

It is worth noting that these do not include any licenses bought after 1st Jan 2015, meaning that any licenses purchased for the Ladies 7s tournament are not included. These will be amended when the 2014/15 license season finishes on March 31st 2015.

These figures only count the clubs as a single entity. In order for us to become full members of VALO, we need 1000 players or 20 clubs. With the addition of VASP in 2015, the total will be 15 clubs.

There have been instances where players registered in Finland have played in tournaments abroad. In most cases the clubs have completed the correct documentation, but there are instances where this is not the case- especially in the case of individuals/small groups not travelling as a team. If any players or clubs wish to play abroad, then they must obtain an invitation from the host union and written approval from the SRL. This will avoid any World Rugby requalifications problems.

June and August also saw the ticket applications for the Rugby World Cup 2015. In addition to the normal Non-participating Union allocation, were awarded an extra allocation. In both cases these were balloted out to members of the SRL.

The RWC organising team have confirmed that they have received payment for both applications and they will contact us in 2015 with the details for the ticket distribution (they will arrive July/August).





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International Issues:

In March 2014 FIRA hosted a General Secretary and Technical Directors' conference in the National Olympic centre of Romania just outside of Bucharest. The full report from both the General Secretary and Technical Director is available on request.

A formal apology was sent to the Bosnian Rugby Federation which was passed on to the Bosnian Sports Ministry due to an oversight with regards to the flag that was shown before the Finland v Bosnia game in May 2014. Apparently the original flag, which was very small was swapped to one that represented a minority within the country and this was taken as an affront by some in Bosnia. The apology was accepted and from now on at all internationals only the official flag given to us by the opposition will be flown, regardless of the size.

FIRA-AER has now changed its name to Rugby Europe. Likewise the IRB is now known as World Rugby.

No one from the SRL attended the Rugby Europe General Assembly in December 2015 due to no-one being available.

In General administration notes. The SRL has organised liability insurance for referees and officials at SRL competitions. This has been organised in conjunction with Valo and will continue for the following years.





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Domestic competitions report:

Winners 2014:

Championship:	Helsinki Rugby Football Union Club
Women's Championship:	Helsinki Warriors
Division 1:	Hämeenlinna (promoted)
Men's 7s:	Espoo
Women's 7s:	Helsinki Warriors

The season introduced a new format in which the Championship was contested between ten teams, each playing each other only once during the regular season. This reduced the number of teams in Division 1 to five, but this was played home/away (in contrast to previous years which have seen some Division 1 pools following a tournament structure).

The Women's Championship format remained unchanged from 2013, with six teams competing in a home/away format. The Championship and Women's Championship season culminated in two semi-finals and a final, and the winner of Division 1 played the lowest-ranked team in Division 1 in a playoff/playoff promotion fixture. The Men's 7s series had only one event in May, whereas the Women's 7s boasted five, all played on astroturf during the off-season.

Overall, the feedback for these formats was entirely positive and will be repeated in 2015 (with the exception of the Men's 7s series will also be contested in the winter). In sum, Helsinki won their first Championship in 11 years after capping an undefeated season with a 12 – 5 over city rivals, Warriors. In the Women's Championship final, Warriors ended their season on a high, beating Helsinki 7 – 22.

The other match to be played on Finals Day – hosted by Porvoo – was the first ever promotion/relegation match to be played in Finnish rugby history and saw Division 1 winners, Hämeenlinna, beat lowest-ranked Pori 8 – 28, thereby securing a spot in next year's Championship. In their inaugural season, Espoo secured the 2014 Men's 7s trophy, while Helsinki Warriors won four of five of the tournaments in the Women's 7s series on their way to a comfortable 7s victory.





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Match officials

Following from the 100% appointment rate in all competitions in 2013, this year saw only one match – a Women’s Championship fixture – not appointed a match official (due to an inability to reappoint following a cancellation). In real terms however, the number of matches appointed officials increased dramatically this season, with 48 matches played in the Championship compared to only 20 the previous year (with a further increase in the number of fixtures in the Women’s Championship and a comparable number of match days in Division 1). In total, Finland Rugby Referees Association boasted 26 members. The breakdown of qualifications is as follows:

level 3 = 2 officials.

level 2 = 8

level 1 = 16

There are many other members of the rugby community holding a level one qualification, but these are not members of FRRA.

Education:

One IRB level one course (Helsinki, January 2014) and one IRB level two course (Helsinki, March and November) were held during the year. In addition, Finland’s first IRB level one coach of match officials (CMO) course (Helsinki, April) was organised and resulted in the accreditation of seven CMOs.

George Mossford also attended the meeting of the Nordic and Baltic referees. The outcome of which was an increased amount of co-operation between the countries and knowledge-sharing.

International Appointments.

Finland’s International Match Officials officiated a number of fixtures this year, with George Mossford (now a level 3 official) officiating 2 ENC internationals, Emmi Laine officiating in the IRB Amsterdam 7’s amongst others and Stevan Thorne attending as Match Commissioner for 3 internationals.

Annual report from SRL's representative in Finnish Olympic Committee Delegation

Finnish Olympic Committee (FOC) Delegation had spring general meeting on April 22nd 2014 and autumn meeting on November 27th. The Olympic Committee (whole association) had an extra general meeting on the same day as Delegation's autumn meeting. Ville Siiskonen, SRL's representative in Olympic Committee Delegation, attended these meetings.





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- Annual report and closing of accounts of 2013 was presented and accepted in the spring meeting. Annual plan and budget proposal for 2015 was presented and accepted in the autumn meeting.

- Suomen Amerikkalaisen Jalkapallon Liitto's (Finnish American Football Federation) membership application was presented and accepted by the Delegation in the spring meeting and their membership was formally accepted in the FOC's extra general meeting.

- FOC's Elite Sports -unit implemented the new operational mode. Co-operation between different sports has been strengthened.

- Sochi Winter Olympics took place in early 2014.

The annual report and plan can be found via the following websites:

<http://www.sport.fi/kirjasto/teos/suomen-olympiakomitean-vuosikertomus-2013>

<http://www.sport.fi/kirjasto/teos/suomen-olympiakomitean-toimintasuunnitelma-jatalousarvio-2015>

Anti-Doping Report:

The updated banned products lists were distributed in December 2014 to all clubs via email. Clubs must ensure that all of their members are sent this list.

There were no in-competition tests conducted in 2014 by FINADA.

Palemia Field, Chairman

Stevan Thorne, General Secretary



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APPENDIX:

Appendix 1. List of players in the Womens' Academy 2014:

Anna-Maija Naakka (Turku)
Anne Närhi (Turku)
Elisa Miettinen (Warriors)
Heidi Koffert (Jyväskylä)
Heini Saari (Turku)
Ida Salminen (Warriors)
Ifeoma Kulmala (Helsinki)
Iida Myllymäki (Warriors)
Jenna Koskinen (Jyväskylä)
Miia Ritala (Vaasa)
Niina Antila (Turku)
Noora Kallio (Pori)
Päivi Ylä-Anttila (Warriors)
Reetta Alanko (Pori)
Reetta Pulli (Jyväskylä)
Riikka Kuusisto (Turku)
Riina Mylläri (Tampere)
Saara Kantokorpi (Helsinki)
Shanti Karinen (Warriors)
Soile Runtti (Jyväskylä)
Taru Kiiski (Vaasa)
Tiia-Mariia Nevalainen (Warriors)
Tuuli Willgren (Helsinki)

Together 23 players. Also 4 other players were selected to Academy, but they were selected to women's 7's national team group.

