

SUOMEN RUGBYLIITTO ANNUAL REPORT 2011

In 2011, the Suomen Rugbyliitto has sought to build upon the administrative changes seen in 2010. This year saw the first time where the board and chairman were elected for a period longer than a year. This meant that longer term decisions could be made.

2011 saw the focus shifting from administrative improvements, to developmental improvements. Rugby was demonstrated in central Helsinki in front of weekend shoppers in the lead up to the Rugby World Cup in New Zealand. This meant more press coverage than in previous years and it is the intention of the SRL to continue this. Involvement in bigger youth sports events have taken centre stage with rugby being an option at the Your Move event in Helsinki over five days and the Pitkis camp in Western Finland in a similar time frame.

A more structured schools programme has been implemented with IRB money being directed towards the purchase of tag rugby kits, a standard six lesson tag rugby programme being issued by the SRL. By standardizing the programme, we hope to be able to grow the player base of potential junior rugby players joining the clubs.

Rugby continues to penetrate the 'non traditional' locations. Continuing from the previous year's autumn general meeting, in 2011, the member clubs voted to allow Linna Rugby Club (Hameenlinna), Pori Rugby Club and Rugby Club (Porvoo) to join the Division 1 competition, and Pori RC will also provide an extra team to the womens championship. Each of these three clubs have been recipients of coaching and other support from established clubs, proving that the ethos of Rugby is alive and well within Finland.

Financially, we have been able to maximize the partnership deal with Samurai Rugby Gear, the official kit suppliers to the SRL. Indeed, replica sales of the new National Teams' jersey, prominently featuring the Finnish Lion, have been able to provide significant additional income along with other staple items such as SRL branded rugby balls and kit bags. Better planning for SRL events have ensured that budgetary limits for the various SRL events have been maintained, meaning that more money can be put into development projects.

1. Administration

The SRL board has held two meetings since the 2010 AGM. Both of these have been held via teleconferencing or Skype and are in conjunction with decisions made on the secure SRL board forum at www.rugbyfinland.com. Appointments are:

Board

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Chairman | Palemia Field |
| Vice Chairman | Stephen Whittaker |
| Members | George Mossford, Jouni Raninen, Merita Valkeapää, Patrick Vikström, |
| Deputy members | Mikko Korte & Katri Nummelin |

Officers

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| General Secretary | Stevan Thorne |
| Treasurer | Ville Siiskonen |
| Technical Director | vacant |
| Competition Coordinator | George Mossford |
| Womens' Rugby | Sonja Kivelä |
| Webmaster | Stephen Whittaker (John Maxwell) |

IRB Accredited Educators:

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Match Officials | Olli Linnossuo & George Mossford |
| Coaching | Roni Riekki & Stuart Reynish |
| Strength & Conditioning | Roni Riekki |

As in 2010, the Finland Rugby Referees' Association continued to appoint the referees to competitive matches during the domestic season, as well as where FIRA appointments were required.

2. Finances

The SRL balance sheet and other official financial figures can be found in the audit report 2011 (Finnish Rugby Federation financial statement 1.1.2011-31.12.2011). The 2010 accounts were accepted and closed by the member clubs at the AGM in February 2011 in Jyväskylä. The 2012 Budget was presented and accepted at the EGM held on 19 November in Helsinki.

SRL were granted 17 396,55€ by IRB for year 2011. For year 2012 the grant is 17 753,04€. SRL received a grant total of 12 000€ in four instalments over the year 2011 from Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö (Ministry of Education and Culture, OKM), which will be the same in 2012.

3. Sponsorship

Samurai Sportswear become the Official Kit Supplier to the SRL as of 1 August 2010. This partnership continued through 2011 and will do so through 2012.

Eerikkilä Urheilupuisto and the SRL signed a supplier contract to provide travel expenses and a wage to coaching staff, on a sliding scale based on participants, for all training camps held in 2011.

DHL and the SRL signed a benefit in kind contract, in return the SRL has acquired inflatable rugby posts to be utilized for youth development and other significant events (eg NT games, finals days)

4. Junior Development

FIRA-AER U17 Development Camp

Finland hosted this camp in 2011 at Eerikkilä Sports Centre, during which the Norwegian Rugby Federation was also hosted. However, this camp suffered from a massive lack of participants both at the under 17 level and adults. As a consequence, the SRL has been fined by FIRA-AER and suffered other expenses for the FIRA-AER educators repatriation. In 2012, Finland will host this again with Estonia and Lithuania. It is absolutely imperative that Finland puts up a strong showing.

5. Women's Development

Beginner's Camp

Two beginner's camps were arranged in 2011 with Thierry Demoulin being the lead coach for both camps. The second camp in December has large responsibility for the support of a new womens team in Pori.

Women's Rugby Academy

Women's Rugby Academy was founded in late 2009 to ensure the elite players development in the future and to provide for newer players a step towards of national teams. The year 2010 was therefore a pilot year in all respects, and this transaction by transaction basis College applied for a decisive form. 2011 was intended to be operating at full speed with the familiar pohjalla. Toiminta is voluntary and the author's editions have been selected for operation.

The Academy was organized during the four years of his own camp, two of which are held in the spring season and two in the autumn. Camps held Eerikkilä Sports Institute from 15 to 16.1, and 3 to 4.12 19-20.3, 1-2.10 as planned. The first two camps were activated 15s Rugby Women's National Team use.

Participated in the activities of a group of volunteers and coaches to parents. Head coach was Henri Tyrväinen and rugby coach was Lauri Ylönen, mental coach, Satu Häkkinen, fysiona Jani Parkkinen and carers as well as observers in the tests has been the players who have not been able to take part in training or testing. Volunteers participation has been free of charge as well as costs incurred have been paid money raised by the players. Coaches receive compensation for Rugby League and Eerikkilä Sports Institute between Boot Throwing Association agreement.

Players from the Academy of events during the year were 17 and 33, between, on average, 23.5 players. The player selections were carried out in the autumn of 2011. Clubs, coaches, players recommended Academy of qualifiers which are carried out. Some of the individual players are individually called to action qualifying the outside.

The 2011 game was the main theme of the development of intelligence in different game situations. Part of the 2011 theme moves to the beginning of 2012 and autumn 2012 will focus on re-training of the individual company and outside it.

Academy testipatteristo was used to guide the individual's physical exercise and Training programs were available for those who want. Players were tested according to plan far in the camps and far in clubs. The tests took place in March and October in the camps.

In addition to e-mail operations are conducted by roll call, youtube and HeiaHeia internetsovelluksia. Roll-call is a tool for events, registrations, information sharing and electronic distribution of materials and storage. Youtube used to distribute the described materials and tools that can be HeiaHeia training for programming, monitoring and motivation.

6. Domestic Competitions

2011 saw the most competitive season to date within the Finnish Championship.

As in previous seasons three XV-a-side competitions were run: the Finnish Championship, the Finnish Cup (split into North and South divisions), and the Women's Championship. 7s Championships were also run for the women and juniors and a two-leg 7s Championship tournament was introduced for the men for the first time. The following table gives pertinent information on each of these competitions:

All of the above XV-a-side competitions culminated in a playoff series with the respective finals played on "Finals Day" on 25.9. In 2010 this was hosted by Helsinki Warriors RC. In general there were very few problems encountered with the leagues and most clubs are happy with the current structure and administration.

The competition results and tables are attached to the end of this report as an enclosure.

7. National Teams

From 2010, all Senior Men and Women are required to sign compliance with the National Team's Code of Conduct.

Senior Men

The 2010-2012 ENC season (2010-2012) continued with Finland being grouped into ENC Division 2D. The first game was played against Luxembourg in Jyväskylä, unfortunately Finland suffered a loss but has set itself target for the remainder of the season. The first away game was against Bulgaria and was played in March of 2011, Whilst Finland suffered what could be classed as a heavy defeat the team was commended by Cyprus on it's scrummaging abilities and the determination to the end. The next game was played in May and was away to Bulgaria. Finland showed a great improvement compared to previous games and were leading the game for the large part of it, unfortunately in the dying moments Bulgaria scored and the game finished 12-10 in Bulgaria's favour, the loss whilst a bitter one again proved to show that the team has progressed. The last game of 2011 was hosted in Helsinki and was against Greece. Despite some last minute changes to the team from injuries the

team were feeling confident and as the final whistle blew, Finland had recorded it's 1st win in 4½ years. Needless to say the season finished on a positive note. And meant that Finland were placed 4th in the league table above Luxembourg.

Alan Hine has continued to be the Head Coach for the Senior Men with Stephen Whittaker continuing as the Team Manager.

Women XV

The women's National Team started in the winter 2008. The head coach for the Womens XV squad is Lauri Ylönen.

In May 2011, the team competed in the European Nations Cup in A Coruña. Finland's pool is France, Spain and Sweden, while England, Italy, Netherlands and Russia will compete in the other pool.

as you might already heard, final score Finland-Spain was 0-119. Defending European Trophy winner was as good as supposed, but we went the game through by our game plan, and we was able to find positive aspects from our game. Our drift defense and filling the width of the field in defense were the positives. Yet the spanish ladies were a step ahead in every aspect of the game. Considering that Spain missed the last World Cup (due the performance of Swedes), the resources they have invested in the team really show remarkable results. Even though number at scoreboard were quite ugly, we have a good team spirit and we will start preparing for the big game against Swedes on Monday. We are expecting a relatively young but enthusiastic team which is missing most of the WC players. The game will most likely be the decisive match which shows the current level of finnish team.

final score 20-0 to Sweden. First 17 minutes we were leading the game and had a ball possession. Then Sweden got 3 trys in 9 minutes, and eventhough we did not stop trying, we couldn't keep our game at the level we wanted. Both girls and management are not satisfied with the result. My personal opinion is that we had a fair chance to win the game, but this wasn't our day. Lack of routine and tough matches made the difference today. After we got back to the hotel and had dinner, we showed the game to girls who didn't go sleep, and we analysed our game and found plenty of things to improve.

Overall even there is dissapointment in the air, I sense we have a strong team spirit and we can put this loss aside, and focus on 2nd half of the tournament. Next is France, then probably Holland. France will be very tough but the last game if against Holland will be even.

Some pictures here filmed by our liaison officer Miguel (Spain game fotos also by him), I think he has gotten some pretty nice shots.

Time to go to sleep now, after all, tomorrow is another day...

Played against France yesterday, 3-107. So we got our first points. Game is getting better with every match. Now a day off rugby, tomorrow start to get ready to meet russians on saturday. Will send pictures when i have chance, im on mobile now. Here is some thoughts from capten's point of view:

As a whole the tournament went good. Nobody injured and everybody was smiling after it. So something we did right. As a team we got positive feedback from outsiders that Finland is behaving good (polite, smiling, cleaning after themselves etc.) and also despite the two big losses to Spain and France we never stop fighting in the pitch. It really showed. The reason we lost was because of lack of individual skills not rugby heart.

So as the team's captain I want to emphasize that factor!! As women rugby players we have a huge heart for this thing. I'm proud of that kind of team.

Also for the first time we had an excellent background group! The importance of a physio and a psychology was huge. It helped the players to concentrate to just rugby. Also Mika's role was big in this one. I understood that all the information didn't get to us or to the officials so that caused little difficulties. Mostly waiting time was longer..

Things to improve: We really didn't look as a team what came to the clothes. People wearing whatever because we didn't have any suitable uniforms to everybody. At least we should put effort to get a samekind of warm-up shirt. This clothing this goes also to the playing jerseys. It makes a difference, if you are playing with a jersey that fits than jersey that is really easy to opponents to grasp.

What comes to financing the tournament: thanks to all the players that made it happen! Everybody put an individual effort to pay the trip. That's why players appreciated the fact that we had quite much free time besides trainings and games. For the future, keeping the sponsor or even getting more we need help from the union. For example, having a home game with the national team would help us. I know that it's not easy to teams to play here, but that would be a good realistic goal for us.

yep, I think that's all.. Tell me if you want more info or thoughts. I hope I covered at least something valuable..

Women 7's

Women's rugby 7s funding was used for three events. These events included the Emerging Nations Training Camp in Hungary, the Amsterdam 7s and the European Nations Cup Top 10 in Moscow. In addition to the foreign training camps, skills were honed by six women's rugby academy camp sessions and the ENC preparation camp in Taipalsaari.

The U20 team competed in Kiev 15-18 September against teams from significantly bigger unions. The team was coached by Jan Airola, team manager was Bro Ballantyne and the physio was Antti 'Pikkis' Nieminen and only 17 players were able to travel. However, the feedback from the FIRA-AER representative on site was that the team continued to fight hard and maintained their dignity. With such a small squad, injuries were also a significant setback.

In 2011, the tournament will be held in Lithuania in August and the U20 coach has already identified potential candidates and will be holding more regular training camps. The target is to travel with a full squad of 26 fit players. By also putting the U20 coach in as the coach for the U17 FIRA-AER development camp, the strategic goal is to establish a long term player development pipeline from 15 years of age to Senior National Team level.

8. Match Officials

Season summary

Two iRB-recognised training courses

9. IRB/ FIRA-AER

The following personnel participated in IRB/ FIRA-AER courses and conferences during 2010:

Level 3 Coaching (Part 2), Madrid 29-31 January

Level 2 Sevens Coaching, Odense 20-21 March

Level 2 Match Official (Part 1), Stockholm 27-28 March

General Secretaries and Technical Directors' Conference, Rome 28-30 May

FIRA-AER Annual Congress, Gran Canaria 24-26 June

Level 1 Match Official, Vaasa, 24 July

Level 3 Coaching (Part 1), Marcoussis 6-8 August

FIRA-AER Annual General Meeting, Paris 3-4 December

13. The Finnish Sports Federation, SLU

In January, the SRL was accepted as an associate member of the SLU. This has given significant returns already in terms of licensing, financial oversight and administrative support.

2011 saw the first time that the licensing of rugby players in Finland was undertaken online. During the licensing process, players are able to sign up for the SLU's sports insurance, or can opt out as long as they are able to prove they have other insurance.

14. The Olympic Committee

The SRL is a full member of the Finnish Olympic Committee. In the 2012 Spring General Meeting, new NOC representatives are to be elected.

Palemia Field
Chairman

Stevan Thorne
General Secretary

