



# SUOMEN RUGBYLIITTO

## FINNISH RUGBY FEDERATION

Member of World Rugby  
Member of Rugby Europe  
Member of Finnish Olympic Committee (NOC)

### ACTION PLAN 2023

This action plan focuses on six main objectives which are addressed individually in this action plan. Clear strategies are presented for each objective to enable the objectives to be achieved (part 1).

In addition to these main goals, the federation will continue to work within the framework of the organisation's vision, mission, values, and strategic goals to achieve the set goals. These are presented in bullet points, as they relate to ongoing activities rather than significant or unique objectives (part 2).

#### ***Vision***

To be a self-sufficient association with the necessary and required structures and with authorised, trained, qualified and dedicated staff that promote Finnish rugby locally and globally in accordance with the recommendations of the relevant governing bodies, in order to secure rugby growth in Finland.

#### ***Mission***

Promote, develop, and maintain the sport among all stakeholders in Finland, including players, administrators, coaches, sponsors, supporters, and governing bodies.

#### ***Values***

The values follow the values of World Rugby: Integrity, Respect, Solidarity, Passion, and Discipline.

#### ***Strategic objectives (SRL's strategic plan 2021 - 2024)***

- Promote the values, ethos, and spiritual atmosphere of rugby in Finland
- Enable and support the long-term and continuous participation of all stakeholders in the sport, encouraging collaboration and mobility between different stakeholders
- Increase the number of players registered in a sustainable way in each category each year, emphasis on junior rugby
- Identify, acquire, and retain long-term sponsors and ensure that they achieve benefit through their own investment



## **PART 1: Main objectives**

### **A) JUNIOR RUGBY**

#### **Challenge**

Finnish clubs target their activities to different age groups (from 6 to 10 years old to 15 to 17 year olds). Because there are so few success stories, Finnish rugby is unlikely to reach critical mass, so that several clubs would have enough junior players of the same age group at the same time to start competition between clubs. A nationwide strategy meeting was held in April 2019, which resulted in the compilation of the club-driven strategy for 2020. The strategy agreed was to focus nationwide to 16-17 year olds to be able to integrate them more quickly to the adult's competitions. However, making a junior strategy did not help clubs start junior rugby. Year 2021 was difficult due to the pandemic so the plan to start junior games did not succeed but in 2022 a few junior rugby events were organised and also a U18 boys rugby match on the finals day.

#### **Strategy**

Continue the junior rugby games in 2023.

1. Junior rugby coordinator recruited in 2022 will continue driving the operations in collaboration with club's representatives
2. Utilising club's events, collaboration with schools and local sports associations in recruitment of kids and juniors.
3. Target recruitment to 15-17 year old players who can train with seniors from local clubs, in which case clubs may not be required to provide additional resources for junior coaching
4. Aim to motivate young people to join teams by providing instant games and a credible competition calendar. Competitions will be planned and started by utilising different forms of the game. e.g. 7s, rugby X and Touch rugby.
5. SRL supports the junior work of the clubs by organizing start-up and follow-up meetings between the clubs, providing equipment and know-how and organizing joint training camps

#### **Timeline and milestones**

- The started junior activities will be continued.
- SRL will organise a camp or camps where all clubs are invited.
- Aim is to play junior games in all age groups where there are enough players (exhibition matches and/or tournaments are also possible).



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### Additional notes

Even though the recruitment will be focused to 15-17 year olds other age groups can also be taken into account in the organised junior events.



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### **B) MARKETING**

#### **Challenge**

Rugby is one of the world's best-known and most popular ball sports, but it is among the marginal sports in Finland and poorly known. We want to increase people's awareness of rugby, make it more attractive and easier to follow.

#### **Strategy**

The marketing plan approved before will be developed ([attached](#)) to take concrete steps to increase marketing activity, especially digitally, and to make marketing regular and consistent. Clubee service will be continued and developed which will allow us to automate and harmonize our operations.

#### **Timeline and milestones**

- The current marketing plan will be developed further which is a part of the current strategic plan 2021-2024.
- Produce more content about international and national matches, junior rugby, club activities, etc. The aim is to make the activities even more regular.
- Aim to increase the number of followers on all available social media platforms by 5-10 %.
- Using Clubee will be continued at the association and club level and the platform development will be continued together with Clubee.

#### **Additional notes**

Clubee is a multi-platform tool that includes a website, data collection, social media and aims to facilitate the creation of digital content to be shared on social media. Clubee can be activated for multiple users with different permissions. Using the full range of tools in Clubee, we hope to reach a wider audience through our channels, which are followed by potential future players in our target audience. By using this partially automated set of tools, we enable the SRL and its member clubs to share information more easily and better market future games, gaming events and their outcomes. This is a multi-year project that was launched in early 2021



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### C) REGISTERED PLAYERS

#### Challenge

It is especially important that the number of registered players increases. This is one of the key metrics used by many of the organisations we depend on (e.g. World Rugby and the Finnish Olympic Committee). Grants and resources from the Olympic Committee will increase significantly as we achieve more than 1,000 annual licenses (Note! Total number of licenses, not just player licenses) and the number of clubs increases to 30.

#### Strategy

Ensure that all active members of the rugby community have a valid and appropriate license each season. This is achieved by:

1. Continuing the active recruitment of players and other staff
2. Players that play a game without a valid license receive disciplinary action
3. Ensuring that on the day of play, the staff involved in the team have a valid managers / coach license so that they are covered by the association's insurance
4. Working closely with the FRRRA to ensure that all referee's have a valid license
5. Clarifying the possibility to get a cheaper license with an insurance for the non-contact rugby and persons who try out rugby.
6. Facilitating the reporting of participants' license numbers to reduce the administrative burden on clubs and to ensure that club members comply with the rules

#### Timeline and milestones

- All strategic points will be implemented by the beginning of 2022 and they will be continued in 2023.
- In 2023 the option of the non-contact license will be clarified.

#### Additional notes

The purpose is not to artificially increase the number of participants, but to better identify the actual number of participants to enable good governance, to prepare impact assessments of actual measures, and to help our license numbers grow per critical 1,000 licensees. By no means is this plan intended to replace active recruitment and a real increase in the number of participants.



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### **D) FOCUS ON RECRUITMENT**

#### **Challenge**

There is a real need to recruit new players to the sport and keep those committed to the sport. This is important for long-term sustainability and growth in terms of domestic competition series, player development, competitive national team's, and financial sustainability. The association must play an active role in supporting and encouraging clubs' recruitment efforts, but the desire to recruit new players, active planning, and the implementation of local recruitment must be club-driven.

#### **Strategy**

The aim is to motivate, inspire and promote local recruitment campaigns by coordinating a national recruitment week, during which the SRL promotes the national event, and the clubs organise their own beginner courses and recruitment events, in which the target audience is instructed to participate. This approach:

1. Help motivate clubs to ensure they are part of this initiative and take responsibility for overall recruitment
2. Develop the competition regulations in a way that the regulations encourage the clubs to recruit new players
3. Activate funding channels (Get Into Rugby)
4. Ensure that a wider audience is reached than what the clubs individually could reach

#### **Timeline and milestones**

- Preliminary dates for these events will be decided at the end of 2022 in collaboration with clubs.



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### ***E) Development of national rugby leagues alongside 15s and 7s series activities***

#### **Challenge**

Along with the development of the adult national 15s and 7s rugby series, e.g. the junior activities has been in its infancy. Working junior competitions are needed alongside adult competition activities, so that juniors can be active in clubs and prepare for adult's rugby activities. There is no non-contact rugby option for adults, which could offer opportunities for competitive activities on a wider scale and also e.g. after a player stops playing contact rugby.

#### **Strategy**

SRL's Technical Director and Junior Coordinator will start competitive junior rugby activities with the clubs. The goal is to play competitive junior rugby in the 2023 season. The scope of competition activities, game formats and schedules are planned together with the clubs. In addition, the possibility of starting the Touch Rugby competition will be investigated.

#### **Timeline and milestones**

- During the beginning of 2023, the clubs participating in competitive junior activities will be determined and the age groups, goals and schedules of competition and game forms will be defined.
- During 2023, competitive activities in juniors will be implemented.
- Clarifying the possibility of starting Touch Rugby competitions.



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### ***F) ESTABLISHMENT OF PERMANENT RUGBY FACILITIES (currently on hold)***

#### **Challenge**

Rugby is a small sport in Finland, so in field reservations we are often on the bottom of the list of priorities for sports reservations. Under our federation, four successful national teams compete, and the metropolitan area also has several clubs that would greatly benefit from the facilities dedicated to rugby.

#### **Strategy**

The City of Helsinki has earmarked land on which to build Finland's first artificial turf field in accordance with World Rugby Act No. 22, which would operate on the terms of SRL. The construction of the field is part of a multi-year plan and part of the 2021-2024 strategic plan.

1. Make a statement to the City of Helsinki whether we will join the project
2. Establishment of a Limited Company operating under the SRL, which is responsible for running the field
3. Obtaining and securing funding

#### **Timeline and milestones**

- Based on the notification of the City of Helsinki's Sports Department, the project has been suspended for the time being due to the current situation [Corona] and the resulting financial problems.
- The project will be continued by clarifying the City of Helsinki's situation of the offered area and starting a clarification also of other possible areas, funding and collaborations.





## **PART 2: Ongoing activities and proposals to support wider goals**

### **1. Monitor the sustainable development of domestic competitive series**

- a. Support all clubs in recruiting, developing, and retaining player numbers by either participating or providing information as needed
- b. Ensure an appropriate balance between 7's and 15's for both sexes
- c. Continue to develop women's division 1 and when teams are ready enable the transition to championship
- d. Re-evaluate the current player loan provisions for both men and women (end-of-term assessment) to ensure that future emphasis is placed on internal recruitment and development
- e. Maintain an active relationship with both men's and women's rugby coordinators to ensure a smooth flow of information and the opportunity to be proactive in identifying and addressing potential issues

### **2. Continue to support all four national teams**

- a. To develop and promote the existing partnership with Eerikkilä to increase its importance as a national rugby training centre
- b. Provide ongoing support and guidance in acquiring sponsors
- c. Continue to work closely with team management to facilitate proactive communication

### **3. Improve the coordination of education and teaching**

- a. Giving organising clubs / associations more decision-making power over how courses are organised and managed
- b. Work with local World Rugby trainers to ensure that courses from all groups are held as often and as needed (coordination with the Technical Director)

### **4. Continue to represent Finland's interests in cooperation organisations and administrative bodies**

- a. Ensure continuity of funding
- b. Drive access to international competitions (especially the newer national teams)
- c. Aim for better collaboration when it comes to accessing information and resources

### **5. Improve the visibility of rugby nationwide and increase its attractiveness for business cooperation**