



RUGBY LEAGUE EUROPEAN FEDERATION

ANNUAL REPORT|2015|





Canada was edged out by the USA for the Americas berth at RLWC2017 - December



Rugby league kept moving forward in Ukraine despite the political upheaval, hosting an English Lionhearts tour in Kiev - June

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The twelve months covered by this annual report were, typically, full of activity in many different areas and once again demonstrated not only the increasing capability of our diverse membership but also the capacity of the RLEF as a governing body. That the federation's name is a misnomer is well documented, with our European territories joined by American, Caribbean, African and Middle Eastern nations, and 2015 certainly ensured that the RLEF was active in its farthest outposts.

At the end of the year, two more nations qualified for the 2017 Rugby League World Cup following historic firsts, not just for the RLEF but for the sport itself. Compared with the previous tournament in 2013, the qualifying events administered by the RLEF increased from two to three, with the Atlantic group replaced by 'Americas' and the Middle East Africa regional qualifier introduced for the first time, in an exciting signal of the sport's burgeoning geographical ambitions.

I would like to congratulate Peter Illfield, chairman of the United States Association of Rugby League, and Mohamad Habbous, president of the Lebanese Rugby League Federation, for their nations' qualification to the finals in 2017. Both nations represent exciting opportunities for rugby league in two very different but quite lucrative regional markets.



They will be joined by three more European nations at the end of 2016, at which time the 14-team line-up for Australia and New Zealand will be known.

Those qualifiers capped a very busy year of international rugby league in Europe itself, which saw Wales win the 2015 European Championship, Serbia win European Championship B 2014-15 and, remarkably, Spain continue its fairy-tale run towards world cup qualification by dint of an unexpected victory in the European Championship C competition.

The Spaniards, who only joined the RLEF in 2013, defeated Latvia in a Euro C pre-qualifier before beating favourites Malta and then Greece to secure the title and progress into the final stages of the World Cup. International competition is unique and I am pleased to see more nations being able to compete in a structured, multi-year format that will allow the sport to grow further. My congratulations, then, to Brian Juliff, Wales Rugby League chairman, Predrag Pantic, Serbian Rugby League Federation president, and Salome Sansome, the Asociacion Española de Rugby League's president.

Significantly, the European Championship was accompanied, for the first time, by a media rights sale negotiated by the RLEF. While the agreement with French broadcaster beIN Sport was modest it should be seen in context, as the tournament's first rights deal in its 80-year history. The Board is committed to securing a long-term broadcast partner for a European Championship that has a fixed slot in a broader RLIF competition calendar, enabling us to secure institutional sponsors and augment the scope of what is, undeniably, a strong brand.



The 2015 Congress maintained a record membership attendance - August

At Board level 2015 saw some changes through five plenary Board Meetings and four further sub-committee meetings, which demonstrates a high level of commitment and leadership from my fellow Directors. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Richard Graham for his two solid terms as an Independent Director. Richard joined the organisation in 2011, before I did in fact, and led the Finance, Audit and Risk sub-committee with skill and humour.

Richard gave a lot of his time to the RLEF but following his appointment as interim-CEO of the English Commonwealth Games Association he felt it would not be in the RLEF's best interests to pursue a third term. His departure allowed us to recruit a replacement and I was delighted, after yet another impressive list of applicants, to be able to welcome Sally Bolton OBE back into the sport in October. Sally, as we all remember so fondly, was the General Manager of the superb 2013 Rugby League World Cup, and her experience and skills will be great assets to the RLEF.

Next year will see another election held for the two Member-Elected Directorships. This staggered change to personnel promotes stability, allows for continuity while ensuring that, crucially, the membership's voice is always heard.

The Board led on further, structural, change, through an amendment to the constitution itself. It is quite often difficult, due to its hardly precipitate nature, clearly to observe governance changes in an organisation as it matures, but I believe we can point to such change in 2015. Good governance is inherently cautious and inclusive, requiring consultation and consensus to be truly effective, and the RLEF has always set itself the very highest standards of governance. We began a consultation with our membership in 2014 concerning the structure of the Board and the possible increase of the number of Independent Directors from two to three. This recommendation was adopted by the Council in the summer, giving the RLEF the flexibility to recruit more expertise at the Independent Director level if it so chooses. The Board also agreed to consider the joint Rugby Football League-Federation Française de Rugby a XIII veto at the end of the current eight-year strategy, which concludes in 2017.

Another element of good governance is responsible oversight, and the role the RLEF played in ensuring a more pluralistic and inclusive Canada Rugby League Association is a manifestation of that oversight role. Grassroots sports governing bodies can sometimes, through nothing more than unfamiliarity with the sector, find themselves, from time to time, in disagreement with a variety of stakeholders. The RLEF Board and executive, over a period of years, worked closely with the CRLA to ensure the sport was protected by robust governance practices and in October this culminated in the adoption of a new constitution, the election of a new Board and the admission of new clubs which must be seen as a major benefit to the sport in such a strategically important country.

Last year I reported on the Members' resolution to adopt a tender process for the RLEF Congress. The first year was a great success, with the Serbian Rugby League Federation hosting a highly successful two-day meeting in the beautiful city of Belgrade. The consensus from the attending delegates was that it was a very valuable event. It was excellent value for money for the RLEF, built up our European dimension, encouraged networking between delegates, thereby strengthening the ties between Members and providing opportunities to share ideas and make bilateral arrangements.



Russia and Ukraine's captains put politics to one side ahead of their Euro B clash in Belgrade - July

The Congress was followed by a six-team 9s event, attended by RLIF chairman Nigel Wood, who particularly noted the absence of any English-speaking teams - Bosnia & Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Hungary, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine competed – a clear indication of the sport's growth outside its

traditional heartlands. I can report that the RLEF received seven expressions of interest for the 2016 Congress, assessed three formal bids and selected Ireland as the host for next year's Congress, with Bray 2016 scheduled for late October, with Ireland scheduled to play Russia in a world cup qualification match on the same weekend.

Finally, but importantly, the RLEF changed its official company address from Red Hall, Leeds, to 20 Fitzroy Square, London, where it shares an office with the Rugby League International Federation. The latter continued to develop its own organisation through the engagement of a first ever chief executive officer in May, when Dr David Collier OBE was hired. On behalf of the RLEF I would like to congratulate David and I look forward to a close collaboration between both organisations to further the sport's interests.

Maurice Watkins CBE

Chairman

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maurice Watkins".

RLEF PROFILE & VALUES

The Rugby League European Federation's statutory objectives are to foster, develop, extend, govern and administer the sport of rugby league throughout Europe. Its rapid growth since 2003 has impelled the extension of that remit to additional, non-European regions. In 2015, the RLEF administered national governing bodies [NGBs] in Africa, the Middle East, the Caribbean and North America, in addition to its diverse European responsibilities.

EMPOWERMENT

Enhance the growth of rugby league among members, in all facets, through a policy of empowerment

Coaching Manager Martin Crick delivering in Budapest, Hungary – May



DYNAMISM

The RLEF recognised as a dynamic, results-based leader

RLEF regional director Jovan Vujosevic and FIRL's Tiziano Franchini at the EU Sport Forum in Milan - December



CULTURE

Cultivate rugby league culture among member nations, making the sport a habitual part of participants' lives

Rugby league continues to entrench its appeal in the Czech Republic through its local clubs



GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

In my comments in the 2014 annual report I suggested that the events of that year represented a profound shift in the Federation's position as the sport's regional confederation, the point at which the RLEF's European dimension truly began to take shape through a planned pivot from the UK to the Continent. I based this view on four factors, one of which was the European Commission's support for our *European Leadership Devolution Project* – one of 14 projects accepted from 135 applications – which was, in short, aimed at reinforcing a transfer of technical knowledge (in coaching and match officiating) from England and France to the Continent. My belief in that seminal change in the federation's positioning became even more entrenched in 2015 following what I believe, simply, to be the greatest boost to European rugby league since the creation of the RLEF in January 2003; namely the European Commission's selection of our latest project, the *Training and Education Portal*, in October.



From concept to submission, this project took fully six months of very detailed preparation but the opportunity it now presents to us is considerable. In my opinion it will change rugby league from being a *sport that is played in Europe to a European sport*. That is a significant difference and we are prepared to embark on the greatest reform in RLEF history with great enthusiasm.



Left to right: action from the European Championship in Wales; European Championship B in Serbia; and European Championship C in Latvia, with Wales, Serbia and Spain all triumphant.

The RLEF was awarded a biggest-ever grant of €466.000 (part of a total project value of €739.000) from the European Union's Erasmus+ programme and was one of only 22 projects selected for funding from over 330 eligible applications. The 'TEP' involves 21 nations involved in six clusters of between three and four nations over three years, although the benefits and impact of the project will be felt in perpetuity, such is its potential for real change.

The TEP will see the formation of the 'RLEF Education' department, will increase the federation's suite of qualifications from four to ten and see them registered on the European Qualifications Framework,

giving our courses supra-institutional legitimacy. It is based on a user-friendly technical portal, www.rlef-edu.eu, but its unique feature is its continuing professional development and quality control framework. In the past there has been a gap between a learner receiving a qualification and then nurturing that learner's knowledge and quality of output, which consequently risks affecting the integrity of the sport if standards are low. This project addresses that head on. The methodology employed will, over time, augment the experience and skills of a growing number of technical educators through multi-directional learning, sharing of best practice and a constantly refreshed and expanded repository of practical resources, both text and video. This will mean that an already highly motivated and talented set of European deliverers will become increasingly knowledgeable and connected through the portal, which is also supported by Leeds Rhinos, St Helens and the RLIF.

The TEP is the heir to the aforementioned *Leadership Devolution Project*, which was our fourth EU-backed project, and which concluded in June. The 18-month project, supported with €195.000 of public funding, resulted in 31 technical educators and 224 new Level 1 coaches and match officials achieving their qualification throughout the 17 partner countries.



Left to right: Wales Rugby League match official educators Steve Allen and Ian Curzon teaching and mentoring in Germany – March; Hungarian coaches going through scenarios in Budapest – April.

The value of these complementary, consistent training programmes cannot be understated. Fundamentally, they are the device through which the sport, its skills, techniques, laws, tactics and culture, are disseminated throughout the recipient bodies. They offer nations that have been negatively impacted a certain amount of stability through close contact with our expert technical leaders, and allow for replenishment of local leaders when personnel changes – an inevitable and common challenge to all grassroots sports organisations. We must always remember that, largely, those responsible for local success are volunteers who are balancing work or study with their rugby league responsibilities. I should add that the RLEF itself can be included in that group, with Coaching Manager Martin Crick and Match Officials Manager Tom Mather both volunteers, although the TEP has allowed us to contract Martin, which will lead to increased output and excellence.

I would like to pay tribute to Martin and Tom for their truly inspirational dedication, leadership and hard work in progressing the critical sector of technical dissemination and development.

On the field, 2015 was by far the RLEF's busiest. In 2012 we logged 21 games for world rankings points involving RLEF Members; that number rose to 35 in 2013 (a world cup year, of course), then an impressive 30 last year but this year set new records, with 41 games being played for world rankings points. That included the administration of three European Championship and two world cup qualification competitions, a total of 20 official tournament matches in three continents. Those qualifying tournaments, which certainly tested the RLEF's flexibility, were beset by a number of challenges, not the least of which was a shift of venues, from Dubai to Pretoria, following the unfortunate arrest of Sol Mokdad in May. The RLIF acted swiftly to free Sol and the episode brings into perspective the need for rugby league to obtain government recognition and international legitimacy through SportAccord and the International Olympic Committee.

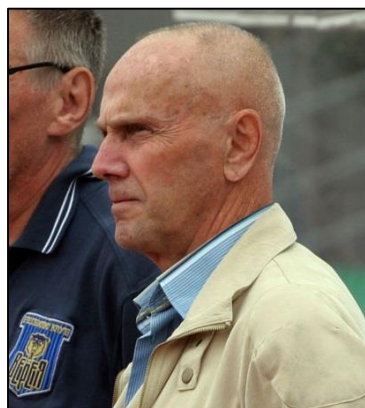
I had the pleasure and opportunity to act as Tournament Director for four of those tournaments and it was a real privilege to be able to interact with so many people on the territorial boundaries of the federation who are working so hard and represent such potential for rugby league to grow. Both the United States Association of Rugby League and Canada Rugby League Association are relatively young but they are focusing on developing their club competitions and, in Jamaica, they have an excellent partner and example of good practice and organic growth. The Jamaican Rugby League Association now runs 10-round competitions at club and college level, which is a real milestone, and for the second successive year recorded 100 games of domestic 13-a-side rugby league.

Lebanon and South Africa (right) also used 2015 to forge strong bilateral relations that originated in Belgrade and strengthened through and after the MEA qualifying tournament. This was despite South Africa moving to the Asia-Pacific Rugby League Confederation, where it feels more at home amongst southern hemisphere nations, it continues to work closely with the Lebanese Rugby League Federation. Both have assumed a leadership role in the region and both represent hugely important constituencies.



In Europe itself, the most notable upsurge in activity came in Russia. Since the Association of Rugby League Clubs (ARLK) took over from the Russian Rugby League Federation in 2010 it ensured it kept the rugby league flame burning, and has gradually breathed more and more oxygen into the sport. Having recorded 25 senior 13-a-side club games in 2013, then 30 in 2014 it had 86 this year, in addition to 60 junior games. After England, France and Wales nowhere sees more domestic rugby league played than Russia, which is fitting for one of the RLEF's original Full Members. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to vice president Edgard Taturyan, whose dedication to rugby league is exceptional. Having

steadied the ARLK ship he has now bowed out, handing the baton to executive director Denis Korolev and his colleagues without fuss or fanfare.



EDGARD TATURYAN

- *Introduced rugby league to the Soviet Union in 1989*
- *Started the 'Rugby-13' semi-professional competition with Moscow Magicians, Spartak Moscow, EOLIS Tiraspol, Barsa Alma Ata; joined by Lokomotiv in 1991 and others in 1997*
- *Served in various positions with the Russian RL Federation*
- *Formed the ARLK following collapse of RRLF in 2010 and removal of official status of RL by Russian sports minister*
- *Relinquished presidency in 2014 and vice-presidency in 2015*

Lest we forget more prosaic aspects of the RLEF's work, increases in participation are assisted by our distribution of over 1000 Steeden rugby balls to our members in 2015, giving them the tools of their trade to continue with the exemplary and inspirational work in growing the game.

Another enhanced aspect of the federation's activities was its judiciary role. The RLEF assumed total control of all disciplinary matters for matches and events not governed by their own specific set of rules. This meant that the RLEF convened a number of committees empanelled by volunteers keen to contribute to this important area. It is an important area for the RLEF to assume more authority as transnational touring becomes more common.

Financially, revenues were similar to the previous period, at just over half a million pounds despite a 15% increase in activity costs, while administration costs reduced 11%. Savings were made against the prior year in both Central and Regional Administration despite adverse exchange rate movements. We also received confirmation from HMRC that the RLEF will no longer be subject to corporation tax. However, increasing the federation's revenue is critical and the best opportunity to do this is through the European Championship. It is imperative that the RLEF agrees cyclical arrangements with a major broadcaster which will allow us to acquire major sponsors.

Finally, the RLEF bade farewell to Andy Mulhall, Czech Development Manager, in April. Andy was universally liked and universally acclaimed as one of the major reasons rugby league is flourishing in the country. It is thanks to people like Andy that the sport has such a good chance to succeed in Europe and on behalf of the RLEF I wish him and his family every success in the future.

Danny Kazandjian
General Manager



TECHNICAL

COACHING

2015 was a busy year on the coaching front, with 11 countries completing Phase 3 of the coaching project i.e. delivering Level 1 courses. These were: Belgium, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Lebanon, Malta, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden and Wales. Results were very mixed, with some undoubted successes offset by some disappointing events, and the year highlighted some of the problems we face in developing the sport.



Very successful courses were delivered in Greece, Norway, Spain and Wales, with a good number of successful candidates and the qualification of one or more coach educators. Conversely, in Belgium, Hungary, Malta and Sweden it was not possible to qualify any Level 1 coaches and only in Malta was it possible to approve any coach educators. There were a number of reasons for this: a lack of candidates, lack of knowledge of the game and the inexperience of the coach educators. This reflects the very shallow roots that the game has in these countries. In Germany, Lebanon and Poland we had more success; although numbers on the courses were low, the coach educators performed well and were able to qualify some candidates. In Germany there is a problem with opposition from rugby union, which appears, at a purely local level, to be deliberately obstructive. In Poland the problem is quite simply a lack of familiarity with the sport, and this can only be rectified by playing more games, whether 9-a-side or the full 13-a-side game.

Martin Crick delivers to Hungarian, Greek and Italian coach educator candidates - May




There was a very specific problem in Greece. Upon my arrival I found two factions at loggerheads with each other; one group had been refused entry to the course, supposedly on the grounds of late applications, which they disputed. They in turn were referred to as 'rebels' by the Greek RL. I spent part of the morning of Day 1 mediating between the two groups; it would have been possible to accept more on the course

given we had three coach educators. This situation clearly threatens the future development of rugby league in Greece and the RLEF is taking steps to resolve this through application of good governance principles.

Obviously the situation varies from country to country, but there are some members where there is very little activity taking place, and this needs to be rectified. Importantly, our education programmes will increase the chances of supporting quality output when participation does increase. The second issue concerns those coaches who have been qualified. There is little point directing resources to coaching courses if the coaches are then not deployed to help develop the sport. The coach educators need to mentor the new coaches and the governing body needs to have a development plan which utilizes them once they are qualified. Only then will we gain full value from the programme.

Martin Crick

Coaching Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Crick', with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

MATCH OFFICIALS

2015 saw a number of key achievements in the area of match officials development and performance. At the latter stages of the European Union-funded Leadership Devolution Project, we were able to qualify six EU-based 'MODS' (Match Officials Development Squad) to train local officials in the delivery of the RLEF Level 1 match officials qualification, sending them on the path to Tutor status.



This means that there are now several officials at points in the game where there have not been any before and reduces the reliance on UK-based officials to deliver educator courses where they are required. The programme also enabled us to train officials outside of the EU, with Ukrainian and Serbian officials also becoming part of the programme. Following on from the success of the LDP, a significant portion of my time in 2015 was spent helping develop the new RLEF technical system, including the 'CATO' continuing professional development model. The new programme will be implemented in 2016 and will increase the quality control in European match official training, resulting in more competent referees.

Steve Ganson, head of match officials for the RFL, ran a preliminary educator training workshop in Florida during the 2017 RLWQ, which was attended by eight officials from the United States, Canada and Jamaica. The importance of following up on these visits is not lost on the development team, and as a result of this new ways of working with these areas are being incorporated into future projects.



In the classroom and on the field: RLEF Tutor Phil Smith leads an LDP activity in Budapest - April

The first steps towards not just improving education but improving the standard of officiating also occurred in 2015. The RLEF ran a Level II workshop weekend, in collaboration with St Helens RLFC and the St Helens Match Officials Society which was a great success. Sixteen officials experienced first-hand Super League-quality match official training, Super League-quality player coaching, visited Super League stadiums and officiating in high standard UK amateur fixtures.

This has formed the basis for work going forward with a Level II qualification and has started a blossoming relationship with both the St Helens club and the St Helens Match Officials Society. The latter will be a key delivery partner in 2016 when the new technical programme is rolled out.

Local officials were once again involved in all the European Championship B and C fixtures and an appointments criteria was developed with the RFL for future international appointments.

Finally, work has begun to align all Match Officials standards and development pathways across the Northern Hemisphere. The group is led by the RFL, RLEF and FFRXIII and aims to give the same educational base to all officials regardless of their country of origin before developing them as individuals and giving them a clear pathway to the professional and international game.

Tom Mather

Match Officials Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Mather', with a stylized, cursive script.

MEDIA

In an ever-changing media world, it is inevitably more difficult to assess the impact of stories and, to some extent, their reach. What we have managed to capitalise upon is that the various, especially electronic, outlets are increasingly content driven and so a significant amount of our releases are being featured on such as 'Love Rugby League' - the leading site for news in the UK and 'Total RL,' along with the 'Sky Sports' news ticker on their rugby league programmes.



There also appears to be a heartening increase in radio output picking up on the news and looking for further interviews although, again, it is extremely difficult to monitor. The potential downside of that, and a message we are constantly stressing, is that the nations themselves are tending to use social networking as their first port of call when issuing news items and, thereby, distilling, diluting or ignoring the formal press release, which goes directly to targeted international news agencies.

Partly for that reason, we beefed up our established media protocols to further stress the need to preview, report and review and to look to get all releases quote driven. The biggest concern remains when an event is previewed and highlighted but there is no follow up or result indicating that the activity has been delivered or match happened.



Liam Finn, Craig Kopczak and Danny Brough at the 2015 European Championship media launch - September

The big success in 2015 was the road to the world cup with European Championship C linking into Euro B and the draw for the 2016 European Qualifiers all producing a compelling narrative and running story. The same was true of the Americas qualifiers in which there was significant interest, although, ironically not in the USA and with Lebanon also claiming their place in the 2017 after a gap of 16 years.

There is still a shortage of bespoke media officers in the nations, too much onus is placed on the president, coach or secretary to fulfil that function too which is often why there is an actuality delay, which

is self-defeating – a number of stories have had to be rewritten on the basis of legacy rather than newsworthiness.

Again in 2015, the big success and barometer was the Thursday bulletin sent to key global media partners in English and French, which we were able to put out virtually every week such was the depth and breadth of the news, especially thanks to the EU Leadership & Devolution project.

There is constant feedback to it from major media outlets. The bulletins included signs of the first seeds of growth in Africa, again highlighting the need for follow up stories once initial interest has been gained.'

Phil Caplan

Media Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Caplan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

GOVERNANCE

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

Following a consultation process of one year, led by Director Graeme Thompson, the membership was presented, at the 2015 Annual Council Meeting, with the Board's recommendation to amend the constitution to increase the number of permitted Independent Directors from two to three and consequently the plenary Board from six to seven Directors. Following the meeting in Belgrade, Serbia, Members were invited to cast ballots on amending Articles 57 and 58(d) and voted 20-1 in favour of both resolutions on 10 August 2015.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Changes to the Board

The chairman reported to Council in July that RLEF Director Richard Graham had notified him that he intended to step down from his role after four years on the Board. The chairman reported that the Board felt that the replacement Independent Director should cover one or more of the following sectors: event management, EU / EC relations; international sporting relations.

Eight applications were received and in October Sally Bolton OBE was appointed after a four-month recruitment process. "I'm delighted to be joining at such an exciting time for the development of the sport internationally, but particularly in Europe," she said. "Following my involvement in the delivery of the World Cup in 2013, the opportunity to play a role in securing the legacy is very exciting".

The two-year mandates of both Member-Elected Directors, Nebojsa Sretenovic (Serbian Rugby League Federation) and Graeme Thompson (Scotland Rugby League), expire at the 2016 Annual Council Meeting.

Board meetings

The Board held five meetings throughout the year. These were on 17 February (London), 11 May (London), 4 July (Belgrade), 17 September (London) and 24 November (London).

	No. of meetings attended	No. of meetings held during Director's period of office
Sally Bolton	1	1
Richard Graham	0	3
Paul Nicholson	4	5
Nebojsa Sretenovic	5	5
Graeme Thompson	4	5

Maurice Watkins
Carlos Zalduendo

5	5
4	5

SUB-COMMITTEES

The RLEF administers three sub-committees, all of which operate independently of the plenary Board and reporting to it at the subsequent Board Meeting.

Financial, Audit and Risk Committee

The purpose of the FARC, constituted in February 2012, is to advise the Board on financial management, audit and risk management matters. It was chaired by Richard Graham, with Nebojsa Sretenovic and Graeme Thompson members. Following Richard's departure in the summer Nebojsa assumed the chair. The FARC held three meetings throughout the year, compared to two in 2014. These were on 9 February, 6 May and 16 June (all via teleconference). In addition to providing account and budget oversight, and recommendations to the plenary Board, FARC also monitored the risk register in close consultation with the executive team.

	No. of meetings attended	No. of meetings held during Director's period of office
Richard Graham	2	3
Nebojsa Sretenovic	3	3
Graeme Thompson	2	3

Media and Commercial Committee

The purpose of the MCC, constituted in June 2012, is to create and oversee a strategy that maximizes commercial opportunities and visibility for the RLEF. It is chaired by Paul Nicholson, with Richard Graham and Phil Caplan members. The MCC did not meet at all in 2015 as Paul Nicholson focused on confirming the RLEF's commercial properties and then securing media partners for those properties.

	No. of meetings attended	No. of meetings held during period of office
Phil Caplan	0	0
Richard Graham	0	0
Paul Nicholson	0	0

Remuneration Committee

The purpose of the Remuneration Committee, constituted in September 2011, is to oversee a formal and transparent procedure for developing policy on executive and consultant remuneration. It is chaired by Maurice Watkins, with Graeme Thompson and Carlos Zalduendo its members. The committee held one meeting throughout the year, on 17 February (London).

	No. of meetings attended	No. of meetings held during Director's period of office
Graeme Thompson	1	1
Maurice Watkins	1	1
Carlos Zalduendo	0	1

COUNCIL

There were two changes to the Council in the year. The Asociacion Española de Rugby League became the ninth Affiliate Member in February while South African Rugby League resigned its membership in July. SARL felt that, as the only southern hemisphere organisation in the RLEF, it would benefit more from joining the Asia-Pacific Rugby League Confederation. SARL's departure reduced the number of Full Members to 10. Consequently, although the number of Members remained the same, total votes were reduced.

Congress | AGM

The thirteenth Annual Council Meeting and sixth RLEF Congress was, historically, held on 4 July in Belgrade. It was the first time a Council Meeting was held outside of England or France. It was attended by 19 countries (decrease from 23 in 2014) and 15 members (which was the same number as in 2014, and a record). The Congress included an official reception hosted by Belgrade's Stari Grad (old city) municipality for the Russian and Ukrainian delegations, RLIF chairman Nigel Wood and the UK ambassador to the Republic of Serbia, and was delivered in four languages.

COUNCIL AT A GLANCE

2014

52

VOTES

19

COUNTRIES



2015

49

VOTES



19

COUNTRIES



Petar Bojovic, member of the council of the Municipality of Stari Grad, addresses dignitaries as well as the Russian and Ukrainian squads in Belgrade.

The Serbian Rugby League Federation had offered to host the Russia versus Ukraine European Championship B match, neatly side-stepping the political crisis between the two countries and the backdrop of violence in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine. The project's successful conclusion was a testament to the transcendent power of sport.

The RLEF Congress included a presentation from the Serbian Rugby League Federation on its work and a joint-RLEF-Wales Rugby League governance workshop.

Nations represented at the 2015 Annual Council Meeting:

Bosnia & Herzegovina, Czech Republic (CZRLA), England (RFL), France (FFRXIII), Greece (HFRL), Hungary (HRLF), Ireland (RLI), Italy (FIRL), Latvia (LRL), Lebanon (LRLF), Netherlands (NRLB), Norway (RLN), Scotland (SRL), Scotland (SRL), Serbia (SRLF), Spain (AERL), South Africa (SARL), Sweden (SwRLF), Ukraine (UFRL), Wales (WRL).

MEMBERSHIP AUDIT

The Annual Membership Audit (AMA) was augmented again in 2015 and continues to play a critical compliance role in the RLEF's governance methods. All nations submit AGM minutes, a comprehensive document detailing fundamental areas of a sports organisation (governance, finance, participation, international programme, technical development and strategy), accounts and a match-log. This latter is a crucial tool to ensure compliance with membership criteria.

STRATEGY

The 2010-17 strategy was adopted in August 2010. This year was its fifth full year.

KEY FOCUS AREAS

PARTICIPATION NUMBERS

Domestic championships
Technical empowerment

STRONG MEMBERS

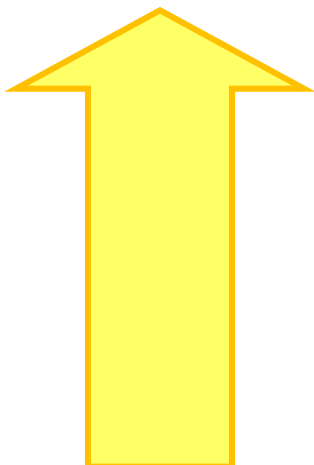
Independent Members
Cluster system
Increase in membership

CORPORATE RLEF

Staff productivity
Focused investment
Increase revenue & visibility

PARTICIPATION NUMBERS

Significantly increasing participation numbers is the principal aim of the 2010-2017 RLEF strategy. Developing national championships is the main indicator to realising this strategic imperative, while the creation of technical departments, manned by trained and qualified local tutors, will support increasing participation numbers by providing competent coaches and match officials all of whom meet an RLEF standard.



11

...of 19 Members recorded increased participation in their open age categories.

MEMBER ACTIVITY

SENIOR [community | military | professional | student | wheelchair | women]

	TEAMS 2014	TEAMS 2015	MATCHES 2014	MATCHES 2015
CANADA	4	12	13	31
CZECH REPUBLIC	10	13	42	43
ENGLAND ¹	950	573 ²	8200	4722 ²
FRANCE ¹	128	119	1160	1080
GREECE	10	14	27	18
IRELAND	12	12	22	23
ITALY	9	4	12	7
JAMAICA ¹	20	19	79	84
LATVIA	4	4	12	12
LEBANON ¹	12	11	28	47
MALTA	5	-	7	-
NORWAY	4	6	8	10
RUSSIA	14	22	30	86
SCOTLAND	11	7	14	13
SERBIA	19	16	69	53
SPAIN	4	18	15	56
UKRAINE	18	10	35	21
USA	14	14	43	60
WALES	23	24	171	173

YOUTH [clubs | schools]

	TEAMS 2014	TEAMS 2015	MATCHES 2014	MATCHES 2015
CANADA	-	-	-	-
CZECH REPUBLIC	4	8	-	8
ENGLAND ¹	2740	1436 ²	10750	6195 ²
FRANCE ¹	490	520	3950	4120
GREECE	-	-	-	-
IRELAND	4	0	2	0
ITALY	3	3	5	3
JAMAICA ¹	34	21	21	16
LATVIA	2	-	-	-
LEBANON ¹	8	9	15	11
MALTA	-	-	-	-
NORWAY	-	-	-	-
RUSSIA	54	27	24	60
SCOTLAND ¹	3	8	6	12
SERBIA	11	14	31	17
SPAIN	-	3	-	-
UKRAINE	34	20	12	12
USA	1	-	-	-
WALES	200	93 ²	500	263 ²

1. 2014/15 season.

2. NSA-recorded figure (compared to approximate figure in previous year).

REPRESENTATIVE MATCHES [national | regional | women | wheelchair | student]

	YOUTH 2014	YOUTH 2015	SENIOR 2014	SENIOR 2015
CANADA	2	-	2	7
CZECH REPUBLIC	2	-	2	5
ENGLAND	9	9	27	35
FRANCE	6	3	14	13
GREECE	-	-	3	1
IRELAND	2	-	3	12
ITALY	1	1	3	6
JAMAICA	2	-	1	2
LATVIA	2	-	1	1
LEBANON	8	2	1	4
MALTA	-	-	2	4
NORWAY	-	-	3	3
RUSSIA	-	-	3	3
SCOTLAND	2	-	11	9
SERBIA	1	4	11	13
SPAIN	-	2	2	5
UKRAINE	-	2	3	3
USA	-	-	1	4
WALES	20	15	12	12



From left: Russia saw significant domestic growth in 2015; continued growth in Jamaica's leagues; the CZRLA continued its methodical expansion of the sport, at both junior and senior levels (photo credit: Oldřich Horák)

Technical Strategy

The Technical Strategy was launched in 2011 and the initial phase was completed in 2013. The principal objective of the strategy was to train and qualify technical educators in participating countries. The project was the RLEF's first organisation-wide investment in technical education. Its main obstacle was the possibility of high personnel turnover throughout what are predominantly volunteer NGBs and while this was evident in some countries, the project, as a foundation to European rugby league technical education and development, was a success. It allowed the RLEF to fine tune its courses and delivery, preparing the ground for the next phase of education, from 2014-15, under the *Leadership Devolution Project*.

Leadership Devolution Project

The Project represented the biggest transfer of knowledge and responsibility in 120 years of rugby league's European history. With an ever-expanding European footprint, the sport is faced with the fundamental need to ensure its member organisations are equipped with knowledgeable, competent and qualified staff able to disseminate the sport's on- and off-field values and techniques, and ensuring it is administered by robust, democratic and transparent National Governing Bodies. The Project, which saw 17 original participants who were later joined by Spain, implemented a transfer of leadership through a hierarchical structure that was aimed at increasing the European dimension of the sport while demonstrating sustainability and European added value. The Project contained nine specific objectives.

No.	Objective		Outcome
1	Form five operational Project 'clusters'	✓	Led by Full members with hierarchy Mentors > Leaders > Learners
2	Partner with five National Sports Authorities	✓	FR Ministry of Youth and Sport, Sport EN, Sport SC, Sport WL and the IE Sports Council all partners
3	Conduct two coach and two match official tutor education courses within each cluster	✓	Project exceeded planned output (see below)
4	Qualify key local volunteers who will assume leadership roles nationally	✓	Key leaders continued to increase their capacity through RLEF programmes
5	Conduct technical courses in each of the 17 countries involved and qualify new tutors	✓	Courses were run in 18, not 17, countries
6	Qualify 42 new RL tutors and between 100-250 new coaches and match officials	✓	31 Educators and 224 Level 1 practitioners qualified (details below)
7	Assemble all participants in London for the RLEF AGM to conduct governance workshops	✓	15 of 18 nations sent delegations to the 2014 RLEF Congress in London
8	Form consultative athlete committees	X	Participants felt this layer would be counter-productive
9	Deploy <i>Tacklesport</i> coaching software	✓	Distributed upon graduation

Full analysis of objective 6

This assessment was in two parts; part 1 addressed the educators (note: this rating was referred to as 'tutor' in the application but the RLEF has renamed it 'educator', which it will be referred to as henceforth); part 2 the Level 1 practitioners (coaches and MOs).

*Leader / Learner technical educators qualified **

COUNTRY	COACH EDUCATION		MO EDUCATION	
	In training	Qualified	In training	Qualified
BE	4	0	3	2
CZ	2	0	2	0
DK	2	0	2	0
DL	3	3	2	2
EL	3	3	2	2
ES	3	1	3	2
HU	4	0	2	2
IT	1	1	1	0
LV	3	2	2	0
ML	3	2	2	0
NL	3	2	2	2
PL	2	1	2	2
SK	2	0	2	2
Total:	35	15	27	16

** Details of Educator programme*

Cluster 1 (SC, LV, PL)

- Two Polish match official educator candidates, Jacek Galeza and Lukasz Lucka, achieved their Level 1 Educator rating. Two Latvian candidates, Nauris Baumanis and Viktors Silvoniks, remain on development pathway.
- One Polish coach educator candidate, Lukasz Lucka, and two Latvians, Aivis Asmanis and Vilmaris Sokolovs, received their Level 1 Coach Educator rating while one Polish candidate, Adam Adamcewski, and one Latvian, Elmars Sefanovskis, remain on the development pathway.

Cluster 2 (FR, NL, BE)

- Two Dutch match official educator candidates, Jorge Vazquez and Tom van Gorkum, and two Belgians, Salvatore Liga, Ilias Laarchiri, achieved their Level 1 Educator rating. One Belgian candidate, Mohamad Belakhdar, failed to complete the course.
- Two Dutch coach educator candidates, Marijlou Benders and Thijs van der Zouwen, received their Level 1 Coach Educator rating. Three Belgian candidates, Idriss Tiogum, Jimmy Mulumba and Seif Abdelkefi, and one Dutch candidate, Daan van Rossum, remain on the development pathway. A fourth Belgian candidate, Mohamad Belakhdar, failed to complete the course.

Cluster 3 (EN, CZ, MT, SK)

- Two Swedish match official educator candidates, Rajendra Shah and Paris Ghavidel-Asgari, achieved their Level 1 Educator rating. Two Maltese, Aleksandar Markovic, Anthony Micallef, remain on the development pathway. Two Czech Match Official Educators, Petr Sedina and Matt Smith, who received their qualification under the 2012-13 GFP began their training under the new course guidelines.
- Two Maltese coach candidates, Sam Blyton and Anthony Micallef, achieved their Level 1 Coach Educator rating. Two Swedish candidates, Ashley Brown and Paul Briggs, and one Maltese, Clifford Debattista, remain

on the development pathway. Two new Czech coach educator candidates, Ladislav Cintler and Jaroslav Bzoch, began their training.

Cluster 4 (WL, DL, DK)

1. Two German match official educator candidates, Bob Doughton and Simon Cooper, achieved their Level 1 Educator rating. Two Danish candidates, Christoffer Ellebirk and Allan Llobel remain on the development pathway.
2. Three German coach educator candidates, Mawuli Amefia, Bob Doughton and Simon Cooper, received their Level 1 Coach Educator rating while two Danish candidates, Richard Naylor and Nigel Kitching, remain on the development pathway.

Cluster 5 (IE, IT, EL, HU)

1. Two Greek match official educator candidates, Aris Dardamanis and Dimitrios Minadakis, and two Hungarian candidates, Zsolt Lukacs and Balint Mezes, achieved their Level 1 Educator rating. One new Italian Match Official Educator, Ciprian Gajulete, began his training under the new course guidelines.
2. One Italian coach educator candidate, Chris De Meyer, and three Greek candidates, Anastasios Pantazidis, Nikolaos Kostakis and Matthew Ashill, achieved their Level 1 Educator rating. Four Hungarian candidates, Lenard Grimm, Norbert Csapka, Gyula Herpai and Jeno Juhasz, remain on the development pathway.

Spain (not part of original application)

1. Two match official educator candidates, Ezequiel Perez Fuster and Antonio Palacios achieved their Level 1 Educator rating. Cristian Maurin did not complete the course.
2. One coach educator candidate, Aitor Davila, achieved his Level 1 Educator rating. Two others, Matthew Dulley and Rodrigo Bernejo, remain on the development pathway.

Leader / Learner Level 1 practitioners qualified

COUNTRY	COACH EDUCATION		MO EDUCATION	
	In training	Qualified	In training	Qualified
BE	4	4	5	5
CZ	15	15	25	16
DK	6	2	4	4
DL	4	4	7	7
EL	16	13	11	11
ES	35	35	41	41
HU	4	4	2	2
IT	13	13	9	9
LV	3	3	5	5
ML	2	2	4	4
NL	4	3	7	7
PL	8	1	6	6
SK	3	3	5	5
Total:	116	102	131	122

The EU-branded Tacklesport USB, which contained multiple animated skill drills and games in every technical category of the sport.



STRONG MEMBERS

Governance is one of the key themes disseminated throughout European rugby league. The RLEF, an award-winning governing body in the field of governance, continues to work closely with its member organisations to ensure that the basic principles of good governance are observed at all levels.

The RLEF works on a daily basis with the membership on all facets of governance in line with the European Union's precepts on good governance.

“The framework and culture within which a sports body sets policy, delivers its strategic objectives, engages with stakeholders, monitors performance, evaluates and manages risk and reports to its constituents on its activities and progress including the delivery of effective, sustainable and proportionate sports policy and regulation. ”

- EU definition of good governance

The RLEF has used the 'Annual Membership Audit' since 2010 to keep an accurate record of the membership's size and activity. Accurate record keeping is essential for government and omnisport organisation admission, as is a complete dedication to good governance practices.

The AMA has been augmented annually, from submission of accounts and a self-reporting form in 2010 to the current protocol, which comprises a standardised financial reporting mechanism (for all organisations that do not have professional account reporting); analysis of the member's finances; submission of AGM minutes and cross-referencing with the relevant constitution; an enhanced self-reporting document and a championship log, to ensure compliance with relevant membership categories.

Recommendations at the conclusion of the 2015 AMA included an enhanced compliance mechanism for logged matches, as an amendment to the RLEF operational rules for added clarity; new loan protocols, to add transparency to any loan to a member's business; and key performance indicators that will link directly to the size of grants.

Active Members

An involved membership corps has always been an integral part of RLEF governance practice, with full stakeholder involvement essential to a vibrant and healthy organisation. The 2014 Member Elected Director election saw 89% of the members participate, compared to just 27% in 2012. This year saw another increase in the number of members participating at the AGM, while the amendment to the Articles concluded a two-year consultation process that ensured stakeholder contribution.



Africa

Due to the rapid expansion of the sport in the last few years, the RLEF has assumed temporary responsibility for African development, under the Middle East Africa department, led by Remond Safi. The year was indeed a historic one for the region, with a first world cup qualification tournament contested by the region's two leaders, Lebanon and South Africa (see below). While South African Rugby League resigned its membership for geographical reasons, there was plenty of promising work in other nations, which continue to promote the sport despite a general lack of resources.



Remond Safi and Kareem Captain (3rd and 6th from left) join Ralph Rimmer in welcoming the new Board of Ghana Rugby League - November

In Ghana, a new Board took over, led by local businessman Kareem Captan and officered by local businessmen. The new Board and the RLEF are working on a new strategy to ensure that the investment in Ghana continues sustainably and over the long term.

In November RFL Chief Operating officer Ralph Rimmer and Remond Safi joined a high level UK Sport International delegation to Ghana. The visit was part of an executive leadership programme which can facilitate further cooperation between the RFL and Ghanaian rugby league in the future. The UK body also continues its support of rugby league through the IDEALS Professional program, valued at £17,500 over four years.

Ralph Rimmer delivers introductory league to the British International School in Accra - November



Sierra Leone began to show signs of recovery after their Ebola outbreak, and is in the process of obtaining new sports ministry recognition and support. Development officer Magnus Campbell is sourcing new support to help him with coaching in schools.

Ethiopia has shown slow development due to the chairman Ahmed Abubeker taking on too many roles with other sports and university. New personnel are being looked at to take lead on the development.

Morocco continues to seek a roadmap for official recognition and the RLEF is working with Theresa Griffin MEP, to achieve a satisfactory outcome.

All operations and programmes conducted in Africa are externally funded, through public and private sector sources.

MEMBERSHIP AT 31/12/2015

Full



Affiliate



New member

Observer

Belgian Rugby League Association, Dansk Rugby League Forbund, Ethiopia Rugby League, Fédération Marocaine de Rugby League, Rugby League Federation of Ghana, Hungarian Rugby League Federation, Nationaler Rugby League Deutschland, Nigerian Rugby League, Nederlandse Rugby League Bond, Palestine Rugby League, Saudi Arabian Rugby League Association, Sierra Leone Rugby League Federation, Svenska Rugby League Förening, Trinidad & Tobago Rugby League

CORPORATE ORGANISATION

The RLEF is committed to becoming a more efficient and productive organisation at every level of the business.

Staff

In April Andy Mulhall returned to his native Queensland with his family, ending his seven-year spell as the RLEF's Czech Development Manager. A teacher in the Czech Republic, in 2006 Mulhall (right) read in a rugby league magazine that local enthusiasts were starting the sport. An offer to help out with coaching led to his unbroken and extensive involvement in developing the sport, both on and off the field.



“There is no doubt that Andy's tenacity has massively contributed to the development of rugby league in the Czech Republic,” said CZRLA director Iain Sellers. “Although a team effort, Andy has singlehandedly contributed to our growth more than any other individual. His passion for the game is evident to anyone who spends any amount of time with him. He displays a single-minded determination and has been involved as a player, coach, administrator, referee, mentor, sponsor and, most importantly, a motivator in his time involved with us. He has laid down roots for the sport in central Europe.”

Mulhall said on his departure, “It has been a great honour to play a role in introducing rugby league to the Czech Republic, and an immense pleasure to see the sport gradually taking hold here in local communities, to the extent that it is now firmly established at a legitimate grassroots level and will continue to flourish. I thank all the many people who I have had the pleasure of working with in the process, both in the Czech Republic and from the international RL community.”

Elsewhere, the remaining national officer in Europe, Kelly Rolleston, reduced his commitment to eight months as the RLEF continues to streamline its central administration.

The RLEF's three regional directors, Romeo Monteith (Caribbean), Remond Safi (MEA) and Jovan Vujosevic (Central and Eastern Europe), continued to develop their roles. Although the Caribbean area is very young in terms of national development, Romeo has continued to strengthen the Jamaican Rugby League Association's institutions and has become the RLEF's intermediary with various South American enquiries. To aid this, Romeo has started learning Spanish.

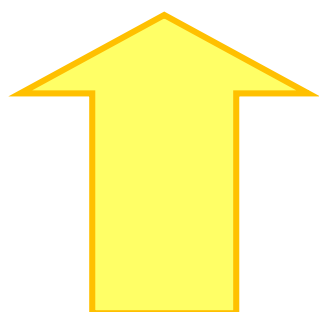
In addition to making his first visit to West Africa, Remond broadened his work by beginning a systematic process of applying for public grant aid from donors such as foreign embassies, supranational organisations such as the United Nations and charities. He understands the need for the region, for the time being at least, to endeavour to raise its own funding to support its grassroots programmes. The very important governance work being done now with these fledgling nations will contribute to their stable growth

in future years. The opportunities for the Middle East region to develop as a result of Lebanon's world cup qualification are considerable. The RLEF expects other Middle Eastern countries to take more than a passing interest in the visibility afforded to Lebanon as a result of the Cedars' exploits and open up new opportunities in the event-rich Gulf.

Jovan now deals with nine countries in his region and discharged his responsibilities as the European Championship C tournament director. The year challenged Jovan to handle some difficult situations within his home country, Serbia, but Jovan demonstrated his absolute commitment

Focused investment | revenue | visibility

With the RLIF supporting the RLEF's Full Members with A\$25,000 administrative grant, the RLEF's own grant provision centred on Affiliate Members to run their domestic competitions. The Czech Republic, Italy, Latvia, Malta and Norway all received grants. Improved compliance mechanisms and performance related indicators will further strengthen the link between grants and output in the field.



15 % INVESTMENT IN PROGRAMMES
2% REVENUE

For a full report on the RLEF's revenue please refer to the financial report, below.

OFFICIAL COMPETITIONS

Two thousand and fifteen saw a record amount of international activity amongst RLEF Members, smashing the federation's previous record of 35 world rankings points games, which included 20 matches of the 2013 Rugby League World Cup involving RLEF Member nations.

The 26 nations involved in world rankings matches was another record, beating the previous record of 24 set in 2014.

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**WORLD RANKINGS
MATCHES INDEPENDENTLY
ORGANISED BETWEEN
MEMBERS**



EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

	W	L	PF	PA	+/-	Pts
WAL	3	0	62	22	40	6
FRA	2	1	69	46	23	4
IRE	1	2	42	83	-41	2
SCO	0	3	52	74	-22	0

RESULTS

16 OCT	WAL 18-12 SCO	Wrexham
17 OCT	FRA 31-14 IRE	Albi
23 OCT	SCO 22-24 IRE	Galashiels
31 OCT	WAL 14-6 FRA	Cardiff
7 NOV	FRA 32-18 SCO	Avignon
7 NOV	IRE 4-30 WAL	Bray

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP B 2014-15

	W	L	PF	PA	+/-	Pts
SER	5	1	196	73	123	10
RUS	4	2	137	92	45	8
ITA	3	3	142	134	8	6
UKR	0	6	80	256	-176	0

RESULTS (2015 only)

16 MAY	SER 20-15 RUS	Belgrade
20 JUN	ITA 14-21 SER	Gemona
4 JUL	UKR 20-34 RUS	Belgrade
18 JUL	UKR 12-40 ITA	Irpin
12 SEP	UKR 6-64 SER	Chop
12 SEP	RUS 26-6 ITA	Moscow

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP C

The road to the 2017 world cup began in earnest with European Championship C 2015, which served as part of the European qualifying tournament. Latvia lost the pre-qualifying match at home to Spain, who then joined defending champions Greece and Malta in the three-way competition. Internal problems afflicting the Hellenic Federation of Rugby League prevented Greece from travelling to Malta, with the RLEF awarding Malta the match 30-0. Spain's victory saw them qualify for the final round of the qualifiers in 2016.

	W	L	PF	PA	+/-	Pts	RESULTS		
SPAIN	2	0	116	34	82	4	9 MAY	LAT 12-32 SPA	Riga
MALTA	1	1	60	40	20	2	26 SEP	SPA 40-30 MAL	Valencia
GREECE	0	2	4	106	-102	0	10 OCT	MAL 30-0 GRE	-
							17 OCT	GRE 4-76 SPA	Athens



From left: Serbia defeated Russia for the first time on their way to the Euro B title; Wales's defence handed them the European crown; Spain upset the odds to book their place in the European zone of the world cup qualifiers in 2016.

EUROPEAN WHEELCHAIR CHAMPIONSHIPS



RESULTS

24 SEP	SCOTLAND 32-16 IRELAND	GROUP
24 SEP	IRELAND 8-100 FRANCE	GROUP
24 SEP	WALES 24-25 SCOTLAND	GROUP
24 SEP	FRANCE 26-24 ENGLAND	GROUP
25 SEP	ENGLAND 56-8 WALES	GROUP
25 SEP	FRANCE 52-5 WALES	GROUP
25 SEP	IRELAND 16-66 ENGLAND	GROUP
25 SEP	SCOTLAND 6-88 FRANCE	GROUP
26 SEP	ENGLAND 28-24 FRANCE	GROUP
26 SEP	SCOTLAND 0-102 ENGLAND	GROUP
26 SEP	IRELAND 46-36 WALES	GROUP
26 SEP	SCOTLAND 16-20 IRELAND	3 rd PLACE PLAY-OFF
26 SEP	ENGLAND 28-24 FRANCE	FINAL



2017 RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS



	W	L	PF	PA	+/-	Pts
LEBANON	2	0	90	24	66	4
S. AFRICA	0	2	24	90	-66	0

RESULTS

25 OCT RSA 12-40 LEB Pretoria

31 OCT RSA 12-50 LEB Pretoria



	W	L	D	PF	PA	+/-	Pts
USA	2	0	0	54	38	16	4
JAMAICA	0	1	1	32	38	-6	1
CANADA	0	1	1	42	52	-10	1

RESULTS

4 DEC USA 20-14 JAM Jacksonville

8 DEC CAN 18-18 JAM DeLand

12 DEC USA 34-24 CAN Jacksonville



AFFILIATED COMPETITIONS

BELGRADE 9s

GROUP A	W	D	L	PF	PA	+/-	PTS
SER	2	0	0	50	8	42	4
CZE	1	0	1	32	18	14	2
HUN	0	0	2	4	60	-56	0

GROUP A RESULTS – 5 July

CZE 24-4 HUN	SER 36-0 HUN	SER 14-8 CZE
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The SRLF hosted the six-team Belgrade 9s at FC Makis on 5 July, on the second and final day of the RLEF Congress. RLIF chairman Nigel Wood attended the tournament, which saw regional rivals Russia and Serbia contest the final.

GROUP B	W	D	L	PF	PA	+/-	PTS
RUS	2	0	0	50	8	42	4
UKR	0	1	1	18	34	-16	1
BiH	0	1	1	10	36	-26	1

GROUP A RESULTS – 5 July

UKR 10-10 BiH	BiH 0-26 RUS	RUS 24-8 UKR
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FINALS RESULTS – 5 July

5 th place play-off	BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA 18-10 HUNGARY
3 rd place play-off	CZECH REPUBLIC 0-26 UKRAINE
Final	SERBIA 12-26 RUSSIA

NORDIC CUP



The sixth edition of the Nordic Cup saw the Danes become the first side to win back-to-back trophies after victories over both Sweden and a come-from-behind effort against Norway.



	W	L	PF	PA	+/-	Pts
DENMARK	2	0	54	28	26	4
NORWAY	1	1	42	44	-2	2
SWEDEN	0	2	36	60	-24	0

24 MAY SWE 16-30 DEN Lund

13 JUN DEN 24-12 NOR Roskilde

17 OCT NOR 30-20 SWE Oslo

OTHER INTERNATIONALS

Below is a list of all internationals with at least one RLEF Member national team participating.

SENIOR INTERNATIONALS

DATE	FIXTURE	LEVEL / COMP.	VENUE
1 FEB	GB POLICE 0-38 ROCHDALE MAYFIELD	CHALLENGE CUP	Stanningley
14 FEB	WIDNES WEST BANK 38-16 GB POLICE *	CHALLENGE CUP	Widnes
26 FEB	LEBANON 50-0 COOK ISLANDS (AUS.)	MEN	Sydney
2 APR	ENGLAND STUDENTS 56-0 GB ARMY	MEN	Nottingham
18 APR	BELGIUM 50-12 CZECH REPUBLIC	MEN	Brussels
18 APR	SCOTLAND 28-52 IRELAND	WHEELCHAIR	Dundee
29 APR	PHILIPPINES 28-32 SOUTH AFRICA	MEN	Hammondville

SENIOR INTERNATIONALS (Cont.)

DATE	FIXTURE	LEVEL	VENUE
29 APR	GB ARMED FORCES 50-6 GB TEACHERS	MEN	Stanningley
29 APR	GB POLICE 8-72 ENGLAND STUDENTS	MEN	Stanningley
2 MAY	NETHERLANDS 12-60 BELGIUM	MEN	Rotterdam
2 MAY	NIUE 48-4 SOUTH AFRICA	MEN	Leamuah
3 MAY	LEBANON 34-16 MALTA	MEN	Sydney
9 MAY	SERBIA 20-22 ENGLISH LIONHEARTS	MEN	Belgrade
22 MAY	FRANCE 68-8 SERBIA	MEN	Saint-Estève
23 MAY	IRELAND 80-48 SCOTLAND	WHEELCHAIR	Blackpool
27 MAY	GB TEACHERS 14-36 ENGLAND STUDENTS	MEN	Wigan St Pat's
27 MAY	GB ARMED FORCES 32-28 GB POLICE	MEN	Wigan St Pat's
6 JUN	SPAIN 16-32 GERMANY	MEN	Valencia
7 JUN	GB ARMED FORCES 10-52 LIONESSES	WOMEN	Stanningley
7 JUN	GB TEACHERS 14-46 ENGLAND STUDENTS	WOMEN	Stanningley
10 JUN	GB ARMED FORCES 28-4 ENGLAND STUDENTS	MEN	Featherstone
10 JUN	GB TEACHERS 34-18 GB POLICE	MEN	Featherstone
13 JUN	UKRAINE 24-32 ENGLISH LIONHEARTS	MEN	Kiev
17 JUN	FRANCE 4-24 ENGLAND	WOMEN	Tonneins
20 JUN	GERMANY 46-12 NETHERLANDS	MEN	Karlsruhe
20 JUN	FRANCE 14-14 ENGLAND	WOMEN	Biganos
21 JUN	BELGIUM 34-35 MALTA	MEN	Leeds
28 JUN	GB ARMED FORCES 10-50 ENGLAND STUDENTS	WOMEN	Wigan St Pat's
28 JUN	GB TEACHERS 18-36 LIONESSES	WOMEN	Wigan St Pat's
3 JUL	QLD COMB. UNIS 22-18 GB ARMED FORCES	MEN	Brisbane
8 JUL	COMB. AUS FORCES 26-24 GB ARMED FORCES	MEN	Brisbane
12 JUL	IRELAND 34-0 BELGIUM	MEN	Bray
19 JUL	GB ARMED FORCES 18-24 GB TEACHERS	WOMEN	Featherstone
25 JUL	CZECH REPUBLIC 12-40 SWEDEN	MEN	Tis
29 AUG	SERBIA 16-24 IRELAND	MEN	Belgrade
5 SEP	MALTA 22-34 IRELAND	MEN	Pembroke
19 SEP	SERBIA 12-20 ENGLISH LIONHEARTS	MEN	Belgrade
19 SEP	SPAIN 36-24 ITALY B	MEN	Muro de Alcoy
20 SEP	USA 28-36 CANADA	MEN	Philadelphia

SENIOR INTERNATIONALS (Cont.)

DATE	FIXTURE	LEVEL	VENUE
23 SEP	ENGLAND 56-26 FRANCE	WHEELCHAIR	Gillingham
3 OCT	CZECH REPUBLIC 14-4 BELGIUM	MEN	Tis
17 OCT	USA 28-34 CANADA	MEN	Philadelphia
25 OCT	ENGLAND 84-4 FRANCE	MEN	Leigh
1 NOV	ENGLAND 26-12 NEW ZEALAND	MEN	Hull
7 NOV	ENGLAND 2-9 NEW ZEALAND	MEN	London
14 NOV	ENGLAND 20-14 NEW ZEALAND	MEN	Wigan
29 NOV	ENGLISH LIONS 56-10 WALES DRAGONHEARTS	MEN	Wigan

* Rochdale Mayfield was disqualified from the Challenge Cup, resulting in GB Police taking their place in the ensuing round.



STUDENT INTERNATIONALS

DATE	FIXTURE	LEVEL	VENUE
23 MAY	HUNGARY 10-74 ENGLAND UNI. & COLLEGES	WOMEN	Budapest
14 JUN	SCOTLAND 6-56 ENGLAND	MEN	Bray
14 JUN	IRELAND 20-12 WALES	MEN	Bray
16 JUN	WALES 34-7 SCOTLAND	MEN	Bray

STUDENT INTERNATIONALS (Cont.)

DATE	FIXTURE	LEVEL	VENUE
16 JUN	IRELAND 24-44 ENGLAND	MEN	Bray
18 JUN	IRELAND 20-8 SCOTLAND	MEN	Bray
18 JUN	ENGLAND 42-26 WALES	MEN	Bray

YOUTH INTERNATIONALS

DATE	FIXTURE	LEVEL	VENUE
13 FEB	LEBANON 18-4 SAUDI RL SELECT	U18	Beirut
15 FEB	LEBANON 40-6 SAUDI RL SELECT	U18	Beirut
3 APRIL	ENGLAND 16-6 FRANCE	U16	Wakefield
7 APRIL	ENGLAND 8-20 FRANCE	U16	Featherstone
28 APRIL	BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA XIII 6-36 SERBIA	U18	Vitez
16 MAY	FRANCE 35-34 ENGLAND	U18	Carcassonne
17 JUN	ITALY U19 0-68 ENGLISH LIONHEARTS U18	YOUTH	Gemona
19 JUN	ITALY U19 0-38 ENGLISH LIONHEARTS U18	YOUTH	Gemona
5 JUL	ENGLAND COLLEGES 42-18 SCOTLAND	U19	Newcastle
24 JUL	CZECH REPUBLIC U20 0-96 ENGLAND COLLEGES	YOUTH	Vrchlabi
26 JUL	CZECH REPUBLIC U20 0-72 ENGLAND COLLEGES	YOUTH	Vrchlabi
31 JUL	UKRAINE 34-32 SERBIA	U18	Uzhgorod
2 AUG	UKRAINE 0-18 SERBIA	U18	Uzhgorod
22 AUG	WALES 12-52 ENGLAND	U16	Cardiff
26 SEP	WALES 14-42 ENGLISH LIONS	U18	Taff's Well
27 SEP	CUMBRIA 32-28 SCOTLAND	U19	Barrow
10 OCT	ENGLISH LIONS 44-10 SCOTLAND	U19	Leigh
24 OCT	SCOTLAND 30-12 IRELAND	U19	Edinburgh
25 NOV	SOUTH AFRICA 4-32 ENGLISH LIONS	YOUTH	Pretoria
28 NOV	SOUTH AFRICA 18-26 ENGLISH LIONS	YOUTH	Pretoria

FINANCIAL REPORT

Income Statement

Year to 31 December 2015

	2015	2014
	£	£
<u>Income</u>		
Members Fees	4,610	5,187
RFL & RLIF Contribution	468,873	365,790
Grants	48,257	134,579
Commercial Income	5,479	10,082
Other income	-	-
Turnover	527,219	515,637
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Grants	16,715	17,513
Activity	388,805	338,858
Administration	121,116	134,311
Taxation	-	4,991
Total Expenditure	526,636	490,682
Surplus	583	19,964

Balance Sheet

As at 31 December 2014

	2015		2014	
	£	£	£	£
<u>Current Assets</u>				
<i>Cash</i>	268,129		120,180	
<i>Debtors</i>	15,398		7,654	
<i>Accrued Income</i>	214,521		818	
		498,048		128,652
<u>Current Liabilities</u>				
<i>Creditors</i>	250,756		77,200	
<i>Accruals</i>	22,316		27,156	
<i>Deferred Income</i>	203,462		3,365	
		(476,534)		(107,721)
Net Assets		21,514		20,931
<u>Equity</u>				
<i>Retained Surplus</i>		21,514		20,931
Total Equity		21,514		20,931

2015 FINANCE REPORT – RLEF Ltd

1. This Report covers the accounts for the year to 31 December 2015. The financial result was neutral with a small profit reported.
2. The draft accounts for the year ended 31 December 2015 show a profit of £583 as compared to a profit of £19964 in the year to 31st December 2014 and a budgeted loss of £22555. There is no tax charge in the year.
3. Total revenues for 2015 at £527k were similar to 2014 (£515k) but increased activity costs (2015 - £391k; 2014 - £339k) resulted in the profit being reduced from the comparative year.
4. RLIF income was the same as in 2014 at £95k whereas the RFL Income reduced from £89k in 2014 to £40k in the current year.
5. RLIF funding is routed through the accounts of RLEF to finance the world cup qualifiers and European Championships but the impact is neutral in the RLEF accounts as the income received matches exactly the costs that are incurred.
6. Grant income for the African projects in Ghana and Sierra Leone was close to budget expectations but it is worthy of note that there is no profit impact on the financial statements of RLEF as the costs are covered by externally raised grants and sponsorship.
7. Member fees were similar to 2014 and Budget at £5k.
8. The European *Leadership Devolution Project* had a small loss in the year (approx. £2k) but the surplus from 2014 more than covered the loss in the current period which arose mainly from losses realised on exchange rate transactions. It was reported in last year's financial report that the timing of costs on the project were not evenly spread and it was always anticipated that 2015 would incur proportionately more costs than 2014.
9. Grant expenditure was as planned and similar to 2014.
10. Administration costs have been well managed and have reduced from £134k to £121k in the current year. Savings against the prior year were achieved in both Central and Regional Administration despite exchange rate movements moving adversely.

11. There was a tax charge of £5k reported in the 2014 accounts but we have been provisionally advised by HMRC that the activities of the RLEF will not be subject to corporation tax and once this has been confirmed we will be able to release this charge and will provide a boost to the 2016 accounts.
12. The statutory accounts for the federation are to be prepared and we expect that statutory accounts will be completed in March.
13. The financial outlook for 2016 and beyond is challenging and a break even budget is the best outcome that can be predicted at this time. Careful financial management will be required to help to ensure profitability.
14. The new EU Project has been confirmed and the initial payment has been received so that although profitability is under pressure the bank position is healthy and is expected to remain so for the next year.

Nigel Hansford FCA

RLEF Accountant

THE RLEF BOARD

MAURICE WATKINS CBE – CHAIRMAN

Maurice became RLEF chairman in August 2012 when serving as the interim chair of the RFL. He is Joint Senior Partner in a prominent law firm and a former Director of Manchester United. Maurice is on the boards of RFL, RLIF and Lancashire County Cricket Club. He is also currently chair of The Greyhound Board of Great Britain, British Swimming and Barnsley Football Club.



SALLY BOLTON OBE - INDEPENDENT

DIRECTOR

Currently the Head of Corporate Affairs at the All England Lawn Tennis Club, Sally is the former Managing Director of World Athletics Championships 2017 and led the team that delivered the Rugby League World Cup 2013. Sally has extensive experience in event management and rugby league, holding several roles within the RFL, as well as being the former Chief Executive at Wigan RLFC



PAUL NICHOLSON – INDEPENDENT

DIRECTOR

Paul Nicholson is a sports media specialist who has worked with a number of governing bodies and federations. He is currently CEO of Insideworldfootball. He worked with London Broncos in the early days of their set up and coached a development group in the community and is a former international water polo player for Wales.



NEBOJŠA SRETENović – MEMBER

ELECTED DIRECTOR

The first ever Serbian national team captain, Nebojša Sretenović played a pivotal role in the formation of the Serbian rugby league in 2001 and has been an ever-present member of the SRLF Board, serving as president from 2009-11. In 2010 the RLEF Council elected Nebojša to the RLEF Board.



GRAEME THOMPSON – MEMBER ELECTED

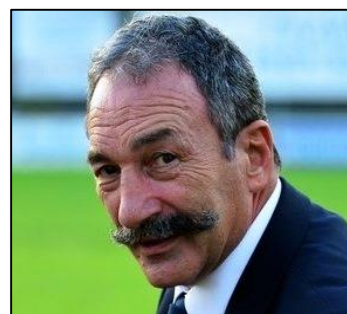
DIRECTOR

The RFL's former Performance Director and England team manager during the 2008 Rugby League World Cup, Graeme, a former Scotland rugby league international, was elected to the RLEF Board in 2010. He is currently the Performance Director for GB Curling. Graeme represents the RLEF on the RLIF board.

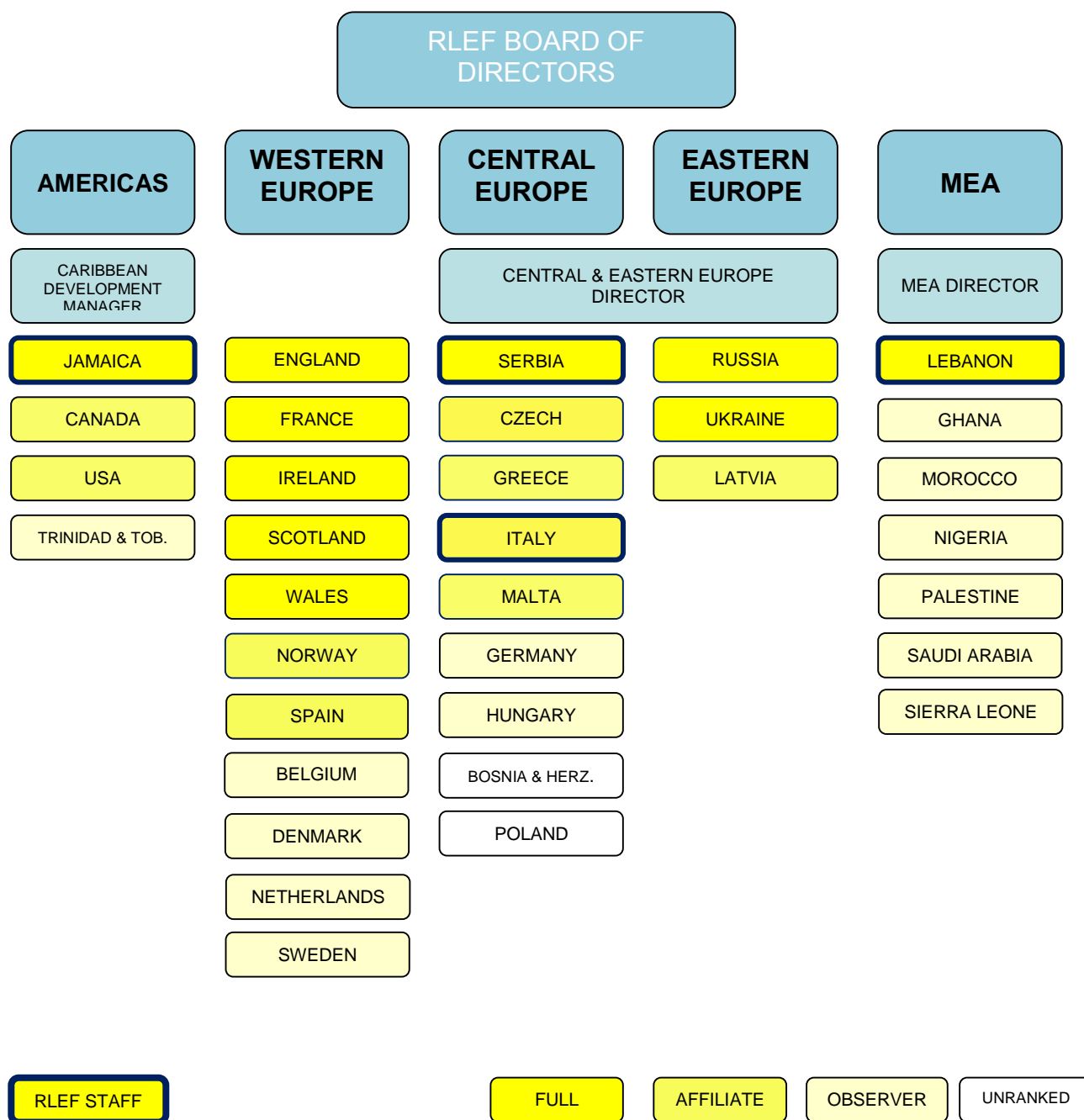


CARLOS ZALDUENDO – VICE CHAIRMAN

Upon assuming the presidency of the French Federation in November 2012, Carlos joined the RLEF Board, becoming vice chairman in February 2013. Capped 25 times for France, Carlos spent 10 years as a Director of the FFRXIII and has a long association with Toulouse Olympique. He is a retired police officer. Carlos represents the RLEF on the RLIF board.



APPENDIX 1: RLEF ORGANISATION



APPENDIX 2: DOMESTIC CHAMPIONSHIPS

MEMBER	LEVEL	Sr. LEAGUE [teams] CHAMPIONS	2 ND DIVISION* [teams]	Jr. LEAGUE [teams]
ENGLAND 2015	FULL	First Utility Super League [12] Leeds	Kingstone Press Ch. [12] Kingstone P. Lg. 1 [14] Multiple amateur comps	Multiple
FRANCE 2014-15	FULL	ELITE 1 [8] Toulouse Olympique	ELITE 2 [12] National Division [17] Fédérale [42]	Multiple
IRELAND 2015	FULL	Leinster Conference [3] Munster Conference [4] Ulster Conference [4] Treaty City Titans	-	-
JAMAICA 2014-15	FULL	Championship [6] Duhaney Park Red Sharks	Division 2 [7] Colleges [6]	U19 [7]
LEBANON 2014-15	FULL	Championship [4] Immortals RLFC	College Division 1 [3] College Division 2 [4]	U18 [8]
RUSSIA 2015	FULL	Centre Conference [8] South Conference [6] North East Conference [4] Crimea [4] Vereya	-	Multiple
SCOTLAND 2015	FULL	-	-	-
SERBIA 2015	FULL	First Division [6] Dorcol RLFC	Second Division [4]	U18 [5]
UKRAINE 2015	FULL	Championship [6] Legion XIII	-	U18 [4]
WALES 2015	FULL	South Wales Conference [6] Bridgend Blue Bulls	North Wales Conf. [3]	Multiple

CANADA 2015	AFFILIATE	Ontario Championship [4] Toronto Centurions British Columbia [5] Capilano Cougars	Alberta [2]	-
CZECH R. 2015	AFFILIATE	First Division [7] Orli Havlickuv Brod	Second Division [4]	-
GREECE 2014-15	AFFILIATE	First Division [5] Pegasus Neos Kosmos	-	
ITALY 2015	AFFILIATE	Campionato [4] Brescia Lions	-	U18 [3]
LATVIA 2014-15	AFFILIATE	Latvian Championship [4] Valmieras Fēnikss	-	-
MALTA	AFFILIATE	-	-	-
NORWAY 2015	AFFILIATE	Premiership [6] Bodø Barbarians	-	-
SPAIN 2014-15	AFFILIATE	Elite [7] Custodians Madrid	-	-
USA 2015	AFFILIATE	USARL Championship [14] Boston 13s	-	-
BELGIUM- NETHERLANDS 2015	OBSERVER	BNRL [4] North Brussels Gorillas	-	-