



RUGBY LEAGUE EUROPEAN FEDERATION

ANNUAL REPORT|2016|





Serbia U21 hosted Lebanon U21 in a two-match series – September.



Coach Manager Martin Crick lectures Level 2 candidates in Leeds - September

CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR	1
RLEF PROFILE & VALUES	4
GENERAL MANAGER	5
COACHING MANAGER	8
MATCH OFFICIALS MANAGER	10
MEDIA MANAGER	12
GOVERNANCE	14
STRATEGY	18
RLEF COMPETITIONS	27
AFFILIATED COMPETITIONS	29
OTHER INTERNATIONALS	31
FINANCIAL REPORT	35
THE BOARD	46
APPENDIX1: ORGANISATION	48
APPENDIX 2: DOMESTIC CH.	49

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

On behalf of the entire organisation, I am delighted to welcome you to the 2016 RLEF annual report. Notably, the year ended with the final three participants of the 2017 Rugby League World Cup established following autumn's European qualification competition. I would like to congratulate Wales Rugby League and Rugby League Ireland for winning their respective pools, and the Federazione Italiana Rugby League for claiming the coveted fourteenth and final berth. I am sure all, alongside England, France and Scotland, will represent Europe with distinction.

I would also like to pay due respect to Russia, Serbia and Spain for their contribution to the final stage of what was the largest European qualifying competition in the sport's history. Six games between four countries – one of which was non-European Lebanon – determined which nations would qualify for the 2013 world cup in 2011. In contrast, the 2017 qualifiers began in 2014 and featured, in addition to the final six group participants, Greece, Latvia, Malta and Ukraine. A total of 22 games spanning three established European competitions provided a strong framework for many of these nations over multiple years. Providing such frameworks is a central part of the RLEF's approach to international planning.

Strengthening working relations with key stakeholders is crucial for our federation, and 2016 saw a series of interventions with the European Union. I represented the RLEF in Brussels at the launch event of the flagship European Week of Sport in September, while



at the same time in the UK 61 European rugby league leaders from 20 different countries were participating in an EU-supported event celebrating the European Week of Sport. The latter was part of the *Training and Education Portal* project, which we launched in January, and there is more on that exciting programme in the following pages. The Board does not expect Brexit to adversely affect the RLEF, which may have to open a new entity in one of the member states, but British government ministers have spoken favourably of the Erasmus+ programme, through which the RLEF draws its European Commission funding, so until the full terms are known we have taken a watching brief.

Another key stakeholder is the Rugby League International Federation, which has been a great supporter of the RLEF over the years, and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Nigel Wood, who was re-elected as the RLIF chairman in November. Nigel, who is also the English RFL's chief executive officer, has a strong personal belief

in the international game and considers the RLEF an important organisation in the dissemination of rugby league as a truly international sport. His own national federation is representative of the sport's growing geographical spread, with the admission of the Toronto Wolfpack into the English championship in 2017 and the announcement that England will be the host nation of the 2021 Rugby League World Cup. I am sure Nigel's tenure will be very successful and we look forward to working with him and RLIF CEO David Collier, who has been a regular collaborator with the RLEF, both at Board and executive levels.

One example of this close collaboration was the re-drafting of the Asia-Pacific Rugby League Confederation constitution in line with the RLEF's, which shows a consistent approach to good practice and governance. The RLEF continually discusses governance, how to improve our own practices and whether to implement new practices throughout the federation. In 2016 we issued new loan guidelines to the membership as a protection against financial maladministration; in October the Board adopted a new conflict of interest policy and, for the first time in RLEF history, appointed auditors, in Haysmacintyre. The Board also performed a self-evaluation exercise, using "A Code for Sport Governance", published by the UK national sports authorities in November, as a framework to assess our own governance. While the latter is designed for UK bodies, and does not take into consideration the multinational nature of the RLEF, the different stages of societal or economic development of some of our member nations, their size, demographics, wealth, legal or regulatory frameworks, the Board was satisfied with the outcome of the exercise.



Wales fans were able to see Craig Kopczak's side defeat Serbia on S4C - October



The European Commission's new EWS initiative launched in Brussels - September

In October we welcomed our colleagues and members throughout the RLEF family to the annual congress, held in Bray, Ireland, for the first time. It was the second time the congress has been awarded through the tender process, and now the hosting award is a full year in advance, with the event returning to Belgrade in June 2017. This is another example of the type of longer-term planning the RLEF supports and I look forward to the tender process attracting an increasingly interesting array of bids in future years. In Bray 2016, independent director Paul Nicholson was re-elected for a further two years, and I would like to pass on my thanks to Paul for the effort he has and continues to put in to establishing the RLEF's media presence. Paul is singularly determined, as we all are, to pursue an

advantageous position for the European Championship. That Wales's home qualification match against Serbia was televised was largely thanks to Paul's intervention.

In addition to Paul extending his mandate on the Board, we were joined by Marc Palanques, who was elected president of the *Federation Française de Rugby a Treize* in May and assumed France's permanent seat on the Board in September, replacing Carlos Zalduendo. I would like to thank Carlos for his service to the sport in France and Europe and look forward to strengthening the RLEF's relationship with the FFRXIII, the Continent's leading rugby league nation.

The membership ran an election for the two member-elected directors. Due to two ineligible candidacies, incumbent Graeme Thompson, from Scotland, and Serbia's Blagoje Stojiljkovic were elected unopposed for a two-year term. The RLEF is blessed with capable people and I am sure everyone would agree that contested elections are more favourable than unopposed ones. Following this sizeable movement at Board level, the RLEF nominated Sally Bolton to join Graeme as our second RLIF Director. The pair of them have an important role to play in voicing our members' interests and providing context to the RLIF Board, many of whom will discuss northern hemisphere rugby league primarily through Sally and Graeme's interventions at RLIF Board meetings.

Historically, the Bray Council Meeting was the second of the year. In April an extraordinary general meeting was held to debate and decide upon the status of the Hellenic Federation of Rugby League, which had been under investigation for various governance and financial irregularities since 2015. The membership voted 33-1 in favour of suspending the HFRL, which was then, following a period of non-cooperation, expelled from the membership on 8 August. While this whole episode was extremely unfortunate, it demonstrated the robust governance oversight role the RLEF plays in protecting the sport's integrity, and I am pleased to report that we expect to admit a new Greek body in the following year. A postscript to the Greek affair was a constitutional amendment, supported unanimously by the membership, to increase the disciplinary options available to the Board, which believed they were too restrictive in their previous form.

Finally, I would like to wish all participants, but especially the RLEF's eight members, the very best of luck at next year's world cup. It promises to be an excellent tournament that will showcase the very best of our sport, both on and off the field, and I wish all RLEF members and affiliates a very profitable and productive 2017.

Maurice Watkins CBE

Chairman



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 2016, the RLEF administered national governing bodies [NGBs] in Africa, the Middle East, the Caribbean and North America, in addition to its diverse European responsibilities.



Czech match official candidates taught by local leaders – March



England Women beat France Femenin in Avignon - October



Building relationships in where else but the City of Brotherly Love? - July

EMPOWERMENT

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

DYNAMISM

The RLEF recognised as a dynamic, results-based leader

CULTURE

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

GENERAL MANAGER

I would like to welcome everyone to the RLEF's review of a characteristically busy year in which the federation concluded its management of the 2017 Rugby League World Cup qualifiers and launched what I consider to be the greatest technical development project in international rugby league history. That may sound like a grandiose claim, but the EU- and RLIF-funded *Training and Education Portal* project represents the most thorough commitment to the sport's fundamental building blocks – its laws, skills, tactics and techniques – and how they are taught and, crucially, monitored, in rugby league history. Prior to the TEP the RLEF periodically ran technical courses in the twin strands of coaching and match officiating on an ad hoc basis.



Then, in 2011, we launched our first 'technical strategy' which was sustained through a series of publicly funded projects from 2012-15. All of the projects and missions followed a consistent theme and were led by the same management but the outcomes were difficult to gauge. The missing link was the absence of any quality control mechanism, which is what RLEF technical managers Martin Crick and Tom Mather purposefully set about fixing in 2015, supported by French and English experts in their fields. The pair of them deserve an enormous amount of credit for the hours they put into devising and writing our qualifications. The successful TEP application, which I reported in my opening remarks in the 2015 annual report, provided us with €466.000 of public money, plus over €200.000 contributed by the sport, through the members and RLIF, to implement the project to 21 countries, create the RLEF Education department and finalise our suite of 10 qualifications. The added value is that the methodology and framework will live on long after the project's 36-month term, providing the sport with a robust series of qualifications and multi-directional learning opportunities. The strategic objective is to ensure that the sport's technical leadership is devolved throughout its coterie of member nations and that the quality of the rugby league they are producing is authentic and of an increasingly high standard.



Hungarian coaches being assessed as part of the ground-breaking Training and Education Portal project - April



Technical development is now being taught in more languages than ever before

In 2016 the RLEF ran technical courses in the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden and Turkey. The results of those courses are detailed on page 20, below. It is exciting to see how the standards of our European technical leaders are improving, and the increasing capacity the sport has as a result. For example, Serbian and Greek educators were deployed in Turkey to qualify dozens of locals to support their burgeoning operation, while a Greek referee officiated the Spain-Serbia international too. We also have plans to clarify a performance pathway for all our European officials, leading up to the 2021 Rugby League World Cup. None of that would have been possible a few years ago but now, not only is it possible but the quality of the work is being managed and is assessable through the technical portal, at www.rlef-edu.eu, which was launched in the summer. Early in 2017 it will be available in French and Russian.

It's incredibly important that we mentor all our educators conscientiously and subject them to regular evaluation to always ensure standards are being raised. They are new assets to the game and through them the sport is growing. We also rolled out the prototype Level 2, attended by dozens of educator-candidates in September but the courses begin their Continental dissemination in June, when Serbia will host the first Level 2 Match Official course in Europe. The next phase for us is to ensure that the sport has a coherent, collective approach, which means mapping our qualifications to RFL and FFRXIII qualifications and discussing with the RLIF the adoption of our courses as the international models. In practical matters, the RLEF sent out 1700 footballs to its members, by far a record, and those footballs, coupled with the massive investment in technical development, provides the foundation on which RLEF members can promote the sport.



Wales and Jamaica drew in Wakefield – October [credit: I. Lovell]



Russia has benefitted from a multi-year international calendar



The EU features RLEF results in its media - March

On-field matters were dominated by the European world cup qualifiers. We ran seven games in seven countries on four consecutive weekends. It was a difficult competition to run, given the variance of experience levels, the preponderance of volunteer-driven organisations and customary Russian visa issues, but the RLEF's staff, deployed in the various countries as event commissioners, dealt with every eventuality professionally. David Butler managed the Welsh, Spanish and Italian games, as well as the final; Jovan Vujosevic the Russian and Irish matches; and Remond Safi the Serbian tie. Although some of the games in the competition were one-sided, they need to be viewed in context. For the likes of Russia and Serbia, the tournament was a culmination of five years of international competition, dating back to European Championship B 2012-13. Russia, despite losing heavily to a strong Italy team

featuring former Kangaroo Terry Campese, played 15 international fixtures in the series – including two victories against Italy – which provided ARLK with stability and certainty in a period when its president resigned and removed his financial support from the organisation. Russia's experience in isolation demonstrates the importance of a multi-year international calendar and the RLEF continues to work with the RLIF to piece one together that has the maximum possible impact for members at every level of the sport.

Jamaica had an impressive year, with all the participation statistics available below in the strategy section, beginning on page 17. The Jamaican association completed its MOU with BARLA in 2016 and we are encouraging nations to enter similar, multi-year arrangements with each other as they provide certainty of activity while strengthening bilateral relations. There are more and more working relationships that members are fostering themselves, which is very encouraging as it demonstrates a more confident group of organisations, led by capable administrators, executives and Boards.

In March I attended the EU Sport Forum along with my colleague Jovan Vujosevic. I was asked to present the results of our previous EU-backed project, the *Leadership Devolution Project*, to the plenary (the results of which are detailed in the 2015 annual report). I cannot stress enough just how transformational the EU has been for the RLEF. We have already begun making contingency plans for a post-Brexit world, and as disappointing as that sentence is to say, the RLEF's commitment to Europe and to increasing its European identity remains as strong as ever.

Danny Kazandjian
General Manager



COACHING MANAGER

2016 was another very busy year on the coaching front, with a number of significant developments, including the launching of the new education portal and the pilot Level 2 programme in Leeds in September. Meanwhile normal activity continued apace. I visited the following countries, eight in total, to oversee the delivery of Level 1 coaching courses: Czech Republic; Eire; Greece; Hungary; Netherlands; Poland; Serbia; Sweden.



In most cases these were very successful. The newly recognised governing body in Greece ran an excellent course in Athens, with 14 candidates. The two new educators, proved highly competent and Michalis Chatziioanou has since organised and delivered another successful course on the island of Rhodes. Serbia and the Czech Republic ran similarly successful programmes, with good numbers and excellent educators. An innovative and commendable development saw the Nederlandse Rugby League Bond run a course in Rotterdam with coaches from both the Netherlands and Belgium attending. Previously courses run in the individual countries have limited attendance but this time we had 13 coaches in attendance, which meant a much more dynamic environment and successful course.



Martin Crick begins the roll out of the RLEF Level 2 course - September



Leeds head coach Brian McDermott addressing Level 2 candidates - September

In Poland we had a good turnout of 12 candidates. Many of these were completely new to the game, however, and their limited knowledge meant we could only qualify five of the candidates. However Lukasz Lucka, the Polish coach educator, has since done further work with some of these, another example of good practice which all educators should emulate.

A very noteworthy development was the launching of the game in Turkey, and the first Level 1 coaching course there, attracting 22 candidates. More importantly still, the course was run by Slobodan Manak, a Serbian coach educator. This was a very successful example of our technical programme working as planned, with educators from one country working in other countries in the region to assist their development. Slobodan is to be congratulated on his work here.

In September 32 coaches from 19 countries attended the pilot of the Level 2 programme in Leeds. This ran over four days and was an invigorating, exciting, and very encouraging event. Huge thanks must go to the Leeds Rhinos club, who provided facilities and staff free of charge, provided tickets for Leeds v Batley on the Friday evening, as well as hosting the farewell dinner, attended by Gary Hetherington, the CEO. The input of Rhinos' coaching staff was immense and highly educational. There was considerable divergence in knowledge and ability amongst those attending, reflecting the differing stages of development in our member countries. Overall, however the programme, was very successful and feedback very positive. We will be rolling out the Level 2 programme in 2017, with the Czech Republic, Serbia, Italy and Wales hosting the courses.



Serbia's Slobodan Manak delivers the coaching course in Kadikoy, Turkey - July



Czech educator David Lahr delivers the L1 course - July

The new education portal means that we are now able to fully implement our technical model. A level 1 coach, once qualified, has two years to complete four CPD tasks (called CATO), and he can then apply to access the Level 2 programme. Only Level 2 coaches are qualified to become Level 1 coach educators. On completion of the Level 2 qualification there is a further CPD programme, completion of which allows a coach to apply to join the elite group of educators able to deliver Level 2 qualifications. This programme will undoubtedly raise standards. The main task going forward is for our educators to familiarise themselves with the portal and to monitor the work of local coaches. If this is done successfully then we will overcome one of our major issues, that of coaches who attend courses and then remain inactive thereafter.

As we move forward into 2017 we will be looking to place the RLEF coaching qualifications on the European Qualifications framework, a significant step forward which will undoubtedly assist our members in terms of gaining government recognition and grants. We also need to find ways to include our colleagues in MEA and Americas in the technical programme, via the training of educators and coaches and familiarisation with the portal. This is vital if the game is to continue to progress in those territories. We have made tremendous progress in the last year, and I would like to thank all those educators, coaches and administrators who are working so hard across Europe to develop our great game.

Martin Crick
Coach Manager

MATCH OFFICIALS MANAGER

2016 saw the launch of the Training and Education Portal and with it, a large stride in a positive direction in relation to match official education within the RLEF, both with regards education and performance of match officials. As the first phase of the TEP worked through its major parts in earnest, another eight Level 1 Educators were signed off having completed their training. This led to courses being independently arranged in Ireland, the Netherlands, Wales, Spain, Italy, Serbia and Ukraine, with all participants joining the RLEF TEP.



The quality of the feedback from tutors and educators has improved in line with the new tools, raising learning and assessment standards across the region, and ultimately the quality of those now officiating the game as participant numbers of officials continues to rise. The TEP also offers the opportunity to further enhance skills through CATO, a continual professional development tool which allows match officials to be mentored through their learning and officiating, with participants from Ireland and Wales leading the way in the first year. The Level 1 educational programme will complete in 2017 when Educators trained through the programme will act as Tutors to courses in the USA and Germany, demonstrating the true potential of the education system that is now being rolled out.



Tom Mather leads the new RLEF Level 2 Match Official qualification roll out in St Helens - September



Italian referee Guido Bonatti officiated in the French Federale league

The year was completed by a Level 2 weekend launch in St Helens in September, which was attended by 29 participants from 18 countries. The participants were treated to expert tutorage in key match officiating fields from officials from the RFL and the St Helens society, FFRXIII and staff from St Helens RLFC; the full Level 2 launch will follow in 2017. The facilities provided to us by Cowley International College and St Helens RLFC were second to none which allowed a large amount of training and development work to be completed in three days of training.

On-field standards continued to be a challenge, but a robust disciplinary and feedback system supported players, coaches and officials where issues raised themselves. Coupled with the new educational resources, this will mean that on-field performances will come under greater scrutiny, leading to an overall improving performance and accountability scenario. This was shown at the very

end of the year, with Ukrainian, Serbian, Irish, Spanish and Italian officials, supporting their colleagues from France and England in officiating in the RLWC 2017 qualifiers.



Rugby League Ireland qualified a new batch of officials, overseen by Welsh, German and Danish colleagues - April



RLEF staff assess Spanish match officials - July

It is an exciting time to be a match official across the RLEF and the opportunities being afforded to match officials now mean that it is becoming a real possibility that we will see match officials appearing in the professional game from the RLEF programme in the not too distant future.

Tom Mather

Match Officials Manager

MEDIA MANAGER

Whilst there is clearly a growing awareness of the need to publicise the activities being undertaken within nations, there is still a dislocation of information. Understandably, especially within an emerging or developing nation where volunteer resources are scarce, media is often secondary to the logistics of staging matches but the two must go hand in hand to have a more lasting benefit. As is typical of the sport as a whole at all levels, there is a tendency to be reactive rather than proactive, much of the work



of the RLEF media is to retrospectively comment on events with quotes-led pieces rather than report outcomes; ideally it should be a combination of both. To support this, one of the notable achievements was the creation and dissemination of the *RLEF Media Guidelines to Members* which provides a framework to assist organisations to plan their media output, focussing on what is important and when.



Nations need to discipline themselves more to report results in the immediate especially if they have been previewed and, whilst there is an understandable desire to do that on social media in this era of the instantaneous, there needs to be record through the outlets that run build up that matches have taken place too.

Sam Burgess breaks away - October

The big success has been the weekly bulletin both in terms of frequency and reach. The plan was to have at least three stories within it, showing the depth and breadth of activity and there was more reported via it in 2016 than in any year previously, as a true testament to growth across the northern hemisphere. It is our most valuable snapshot.

In terms of reaction, more follows on social media and stories in various global media outlets, together with regular inclusions in places like the Sky Sports 'ticker' justify the process; bitesize news not only sells but creates an extremely favourable impression of strides being made, a clear example of collaboration for greater good. Hopefully, the growing awareness will translate into greater sponsorship and media opportunities for all.

What would further help in terms of commonality is that if every championship decider in any nation at any age level is labelled as a Grand Final, and that the practice of preview/report/review whether that be a domestic league season or cup final is adhered to; it amounts to three bites of the same cherry.

Accuracy is also key, there have still been occasions when scores and scorers reported do not correlate. To be taken seriously, that is a minimum requirement. Additionally, there is still not enough feedback of either stories being generated and reported locally - we do not have an overall media portfolio which affects implementing a broader media strategy - and impact of centrally sent out stories finding the right media contacts in competing countries so that the database can be constantly kept up to date.

Phil Caplan
Media Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Caplan'.

GOVERNANCE

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

Following a consultation between the RLEF and RLIF, on 6 June 2016 the Board resolved to introduce greater consistency between the two organisations' rules on disciplining members through amending RLEF articles 18 and 19. There was a perceived imbalance in the RLEF constitution in that the Board has the power to expel (Article 18) but not suspend a Member. A Member could be suspended only following a complaint by another Member (Article 103).

At the Annual Council Meeting on 29 October 2016 the resolution was carried unanimously and the constitutional amendments were lodged with Companies House.

Changes to the Board

There were two changes to the Board in 2016. On 2 July the Federation Française de Rugby a XIII elected Marc Palanques as its new president. Marc duly succeeded Carlos Zalduendo in France's permanent seat on the RLEF Board. Then, in October, Blagoje Stojiljkovic (Serbian Rugby League Federation) and Graeme Thompson (Scotland Rugby League) were both elected unopposed to the two Member-Elected Directorships. Their mandate expires at the 2018 Annual Council Meeting. It was Blagoje's first and Graeme's fourth two-year term on the Board. Blagoje replaced compatriot Nebojsa Sretenovic, who had been a director since 2010.

In addition to these changes the Board nominated Sally Bolton to assume the RLEF's second directorship on the RLIF Board.

Board meetings

The Board held five meetings throughout the year, on 19 February (London), 6 June (London), 2 September (London), 29 October (Bray) and 16 December (London).

	No. of meetings attended	No. of meetings held during Director's period of office
Sally Bolton	3	5
Paul Nicholson	5	5
Marc Palanques	1	3
Nebojsa Sretenovic	4	4
Blagoje Stojiljkovic	1	1
Graeme Thompson	5	5
Maurice Watkins	5	5
Carlos Zalduendo	1	2

SUB-COMMITTEES

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

Dispute Resolution Committee

The DRC was created following a Board resolution taken at its 19 February 2016 Board Meeting. It is a standing committee of the RLEF and is the first instance organ for Members to lodge formal grievance. The Committee is convened by order of the Board upon formal complaint being lodged in writing to the RLEF General Manager or the Board and therefore there are no sitting members or fixed terms.

In 2016 the Board convened the DRC to hear two complaints brought by the Hellenic Federation of Rugby League; the first against Serbian Rugby League Federation; the second against General Manager Danny Kazandjian. Neither complaint was supported.

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. FARC was chaired by Nebojsa Sretenovic, with Graeme Thompson a sitting member. A third member, independent accountant Nigel Hansford, was co-opted onto the committee in October. Upon Nebojsa's departure from the Board in October Graeme Thompson took over as interim chair.

Meetings are usually held approximately two weeks prior to Board Meetings, to enable FARC to make recommendations to the Board. FARC held five meetings throughout the year, compared to three in 2015. These were on 10 February, 16 May and 16 August, 19 October and 5 December (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 Member's period of office
Nigel Hansford	2	2
Nebojsa Sretenovic	4	4
Graeme Thompson	5	5

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 RLEF Facebook volunteer George Stilianos, webmaster James Vukmirovic and Media Manager Phil Caplan members. The MCC did not meet at all in 2016 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 (until his departure from the Board in July). The committee did not meet in 2016.

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

COUNCIL

The RLEF Council is constituted by the members of the company. There was one change to the Council in 2016, with the Greek member, the Hellenic Federation of Rugby League, expelled following disciplinary action. Full Members have four votes each; Affiliate Members have one vote each.

Congress | Annual Council Meeting

The fourteenth Annual Council Meeting and seventh RLEF Congress was held on 29 October in Bray, Republic of Ireland. It was attended by 16 countries (decrease from 19 in 2014) and 12 members (decrease from 15 in 2014). The Congress was held in the middle of a busy international fixture list, including the European qualifying competition of the 2017 Rugby League World Cup. Delegates in Bray were guests of Rugby League Ireland for the national team's home qualification match against Russia at the Carlisle Grounds.

COUNCIL AT A GLANCE

2015

49
VOTES



2016

48
VOTES

19
COUNTRIES



18
COUNTRIES

Extraordinary Council Meeting

As a result of disciplinary action taken against its Greek member the RLEF convened an extraordinary council meeting for the first time. On 19 February 2016 the RLEF Board resolved to take constitutional measures to suspend Hellenic Federation of Rugby League for financial impropriety in relation to the 2015 Euro C grant. This action was triggered by Malta Rugby League's formal complaint against the HFRL.

The extraordinary council meeting was held on 5 April and members voted 33-1 in a secret ballot in favour of the resolution to suspend HFRL for wilfully acting in a manner prejudicial to the interests of RLEF / international rugby league. Following HFRL's suspension the RLEF began implementing a Rehabilitation and Reconciliation Plan. Following a period of two months without cooperation the RLEF Board warned HFRL that unless it can establish its membership its legitimacy is without basis. On 2 August the RLEF sent HFRL an expulsion notice and on 8 August the HFRL complied with the notice and relinquished its membership of the company.

Council Meeting attendance

	2016				2015			
	Full Members		Affiliate Members		Full Members		Affiliate Members	
	Present	Total	Present	Total	Present	Total	Present	Total
Annual meeting [Oct]	9	10	3	8	9	11	6	9
Extraordinary [Apr]	8	10	7	9				



Delegates assembled at the Royal Hotel, Bray, Republic of Ireland, for the 2016 RLEF Congress - October

Nations represented at the 2016 Annual Council Meeting:

Bulgaria, Czech Republic (CZRLA), England (RFL), France (FFRXIII), Greece, Ireland (RLI), Lebanon (LRLF), Netherlands (NRLB), Norway (RLN), Russia (ARLK), Scotland (SRL), Serbia (SRLF), Spain (AERL), Turkey, Ukraine (UFRL), Wales (WRL)

STRATEGY

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



Cardiff City [credit: Ian Lovell]



Spanish Town and Campion
College U19

3

The number of successive years France and Wales have recorded player registration increases

5

The number of successive years England has recorded player registration increases

142

The number of domestic matches in Jamaica, smashing the 100-game mark set in 2014 and 2015.

3231

The number of registered French women players

MEMBER ACTIVITY

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

	TEAMS 2015	TEAMS 2016	MATCHES 2015	MATCHES 2016
CANADA	12	8	31	14
CZECH REPUBLIC	13	13	43	58
ENGLAND ¹	573 ²	611	4722 ²	4581
FRANCE ¹	119	112	1080	1080
IRELAND	12	9	23	29
ITALY	4	12	7	31
JAMAICA ¹	19	16	84	99
LATVIA	4	3	12	3
LEBANON ¹	11	17	47	56
MALTA	-	3	-	-
NORWAY	6	6	10	15
RUSSIA	22	14	86	41
SCOTLAND	7	6	13	8
SERBIA	16	17	53	42
SPAIN	18	17	56	57
UKRAINE	10	14	21	31
USA	14	14	60	59
WALES	24	25	173	103

YOUTH [clubs | schools]

	TEAMS 2015	TEAMS 2016	MATCHES 2015	MATCHES 2016
CANADA	-	2	-	1
CZECH REPUBLIC	8	6	8	12
ENGLAND ¹	1436 ²	1312	6195 ²	5809
FRANCE ¹	520	542	4120	4103
IRELAND	0	2	0	2
ITALY	3	6	3	18
JAMAICA ¹	21	19	16	38
LATVIA	-	-	-	-
LEBANON ¹	9	9	11	17
MALTA	-	-	-	-
NORWAY	-	-	-	-
RUSSIA	27	19	60	48
SCOTLAND	8	2	12	1
SERBIA	14	13	17	7
SPAIN	3	3	-	3
UKRAINE	20	22	12	18
USA	-	-	-	-
WALES	93 ²	87	263 ²	249

1. 2015/16 season.

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

	YOUTH 2015	YOUTH 2016	SENIOR 2015	SENIOR 2016
CANADA	-	1	7	4
CZECH REPUBLIC	-	2	5	5
ENGLAND ¹	9	11	35	28
FRANCE ¹	3	3	13	2
IRELAND	-	2	12	9
ITALY	1	-	6	6
JAMAICA ¹	-	1	2	6
LATVIA	-	-	1	-
LEBANON ¹	2	5	4	4
MALTA	-	-	4	1
NORWAY	-	-	3	3
RUSSIA	-	-	3	3
SCOTLAND	-	5	9	16
SERBIA	4	3	13	10
SPAIN	2	-	5	5
UKRAINE	2	-	3	2
USA	-	-	4	4
WALES	15	6	12	15

REGISTERED PARTICIPANTS [coaches | match officials | players]

	2015	2016	Notes
CANADA	12	239	No player registration recorded in 2015.
CZECH REPUBLIC	217	250	-
ENGLAND	63,016	64,699	RFL switching data registration systems which may result in anomalies over the next 1-2 years until the process is complete.
FRANCE	11,895	12,533	8403 players participating in competition; 3672 in 'leisure' category.
IRELAND	274	565	Registration system had lapsed; but applied stringently in 2016.
ITALY	247	661	-
JAMAICA	764	752	-
LATVIA	151	105	-
LEBANON	1048	1055	785 registered players in Lebanon; 224 in Australia
MALTA	256	285	Large majority of players registered in Australia.
NORWAY	191	252	-
RUSSIA	340	-	ARLK did not keep a register in 2016
SCOTLAND	532	442	-
SERBIA	590	590	-
SPAIN	231	278	-
UKRAINE	790	739	-
USA	441	494	-
WALES	1577	1592	-



Marvin Thompson chose a rugby league theme for his wedding – our sport's culture alive and thriving in Jamaica. Congratulations Mr & Mrs Thompson!

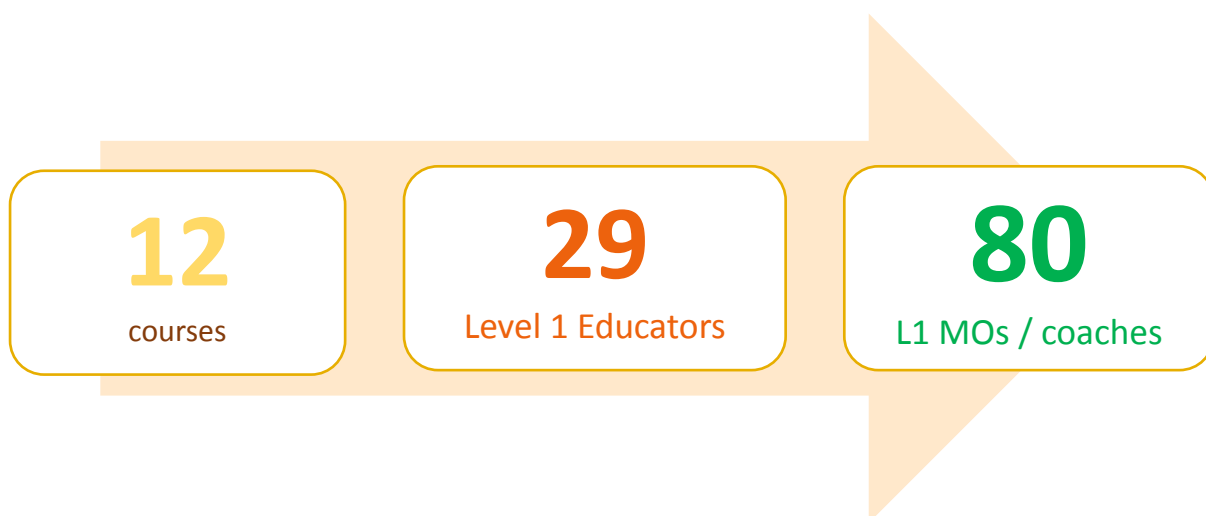


Torfaen Tigers and Valley Cougars contributed to further growth in Wales [credit: Ian Lovell]

Technical empowerment

The year saw the launch of the RLEF's biggest technical development programme, entitled the 'Training and Education Portal' (TEP) which will be implemented through six clusters. The TEP, which is funded by the EU's Erasmus+ programme and the RLIF, will see the formation of the RLEF Education department, increase the federation's suite of qualifications from four to ten and see them registered on the European Qualifications Framework. It will also introduce an e-Learning component and technical portal. Additional funding is being supplied by the Rugby League International Federation.

The project lasts for 36 months, in three phases: a series of Level 1 courses in a selection of the 21 partner countries to train and qualify local educators to use the new system; then to introduce the Level 2, which was trialled among the European educator corps in the UK during the European Week of Sport in September; and finally, to provide professional placements to a select group of six coach and six match official educators. The year saw the project produce the following output:



In addition to the courses run as part of the TEP, the RLEF serviced a new territory, Turkey, which hosted a Level 1 coaching course in July and the equivalent match officials course in November. Regional leader Serbia sent educators to each, while Greek educator George Stilianos supervised the match official course.

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 daily 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 uses the Annual Membership Audit as a gauge to chart the capacity of its members. In the wake of the RLIF adopting new membership criteria in October 2014, several members are adjusting their calendars to meet the heightened standards. There was an increase from three to five Full Member compliant with the membership policy, in addition to the following positive indicators:

- **ENGLAND** registered a 14th consecutive annual profit
- **IRELAND** launched its player registration system and is confident of meeting senior participatory criteria in 2017
- **JAMAICA** had a record year of participation, completing 138 of 142 scheduled domestic matches, and remains the fourth most active country in the RLEF. It also generated 55% of its revenue locally compared to 43% in 2015 and recorded its strongest cash position, suggesting it is becoming more sustainable
- **LEBANON** received its highest sports ministry grant (US\$50k) and is budgeting a 2017 surplus that will take it into the black for the first time since inception

- **SCOTLAND** hired a full-time development officer through **sportscotland** funding and continues to restructure the organisation, developing a solid foundation for future growth
- **WALES's** balance sheet is in its strongest historical position as a result of WRL's reserves policy, with £79k in the bank. Between 2007-10 WRL held between £1k-£11k cash; and between 2010-15 between £30k-£47k cash
- **ENGLAND, FRANCE, JAMAICA, LEBANON, IRELAND, UKRAINE** and **WALES** all recorded increased participation (measured in registered participants and / or matches played)
- All eight Affiliate Members completed the AMA on time, compared to five in 2015
- **ITALY** achieved Full Member standards and continues to improve its governance and internal processes conscientiously
- The **CZECH REPUBLIC** continues to grow organically. Well governed, with historic high cash reserves, steady competition growth at senior and youth levels, the NRL was also shown in the country for the first time in 2016
- **NORWAY** and **ITALY** completed 100% of their championship matches
- **USA** has improved its financial position, showing prudent financial practice, doubling its cash reserves and generating 55% of its income internally, from player and club registration fees
- Among the Observers, **NETHERLANDS** continues to be an exemplary organisation and should achieve Affiliate Member status in 2017
- Twelve members recorded **PARTICIPATION INCREASES**

MEMBERSHIP AT 31/12/2016

Full



Affiliate



New member

Observer

Belgian Rugby League Association, Burundi Rugby League, 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 RLEF

The RLEF is committed to becoming a more efficient and productive organisation at every level of the business. Discounting the specific RLIF funding for tournaments, fresh investment came through the EU. Aside from this important source, major increases in revenue will only be forthcoming through a successful European Championship, with broadcast and sponsorship income. The Board is committed to pursuing this objective.

The RLEF continued to provide frontline support through cash grants to its Affiliate Members. The Czech Republic, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Norway and Spain all received small grants to support their domestic championships. However, combined these totalled £12,800, with no nation receiving more than £3000, so the direct financial support is minimal. Fortunately, thanks to the *Training and Education Portal* project the level of targeted investment in the technical sector was significant, totalling over £134,000 directly through the project, with a further £3000 spent on non-project activities, including work in Turkey. The RLEF was also able to supply a record 1700 Steeden footballs throughout the membership, compared to 1000 in 2015. Footballs and technical development are the tools with which rugby league will be developed, in an authentic manner.



In addition to the important work being undertaken by the RLEF technical and media managers, which is discussed above, the organisation's three regional directors have also been instrumental in building organisational capacity and achieving RLEF strategic goals. **Jovan Vujosevic** is the Central and Eastern Europe Director, responsible for supporting the work from Germany to Russia and Latvia to Turkey. In 2016 Jovan was instrumental in supporting the creation of the Turkish Rugby League Association and the Bulgarian Rugby League Federation, as well as managing the difficult Greek issue. Turkish and Bulgarian representatives attended the RLEF Congress in October and both are actively creating clubs and forming governing bodies as per local laws. Turkey launched a five-team 2016-17 championship in the autumn, with Bulgaria set to launch a four-team competition in 2017.

In February, Jovan and RLIF CEO David Collier conducted a fact-finding mission to Athens to recommend a course of action to the RLEF Board. The investigation into the Hellenic Federation of Rugby League's practices surpassed the year mark in February and thanks to Jovan's close attention was resolved later in the year. Jovan also worked with the active clubs in Greece with a view to admitting a new Greek governing body early in 2017.

As the statistics on page 19 show, 2016 saw rapid advancement in Jamaica, with RLEF Caribbean Regional Director **Romeo Monteith** providing excellent leadership to the flourishing Jamaican Rugby League Association, which is now the fourth most productive RLEF member in terms of rugby league being played. There was an increase in participation at every level, with one of the representative highlights Jamaica's first youth international, in addition to four senior international matches. This increased activity was supported by an additional government grant of almost €7000. As our sport becomes more popular governments will be more inclined to support the governing bodies in various ways.



UTECH Knights, like an increasing number of Jamaicans, are enjoying more rugby league, more of the time!



Action from the inaugural Turkish league, which kicked off in the autumn

In the expanding Middle East Africa region, **Remond Safi** administers a growing stable of aspiring rugby league nations. While many countries share the same issues, at least many European countries share borders and, through the EU, a legal framework. The same cannot be said in this fertile territory for the game. We need to be realistic about what can be achieved with our limited resources, which is why a key competency our regional directors must develop is the acquisition of public funding. In this area, Remond had a breakthrough year, winning two Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade grants, one a A\$10,000 *Sport for Life* programme grant to aid South African youth development and the second A\$12,000 to support Lebanon's youth and women's rugby league programmes.

Finally, the Board also decided that a new social media plan would increase the sport's visibility, align the work of the RLEF members through a coherent approach and present the RLEF and its members in a more advantageous light. Director Paul Nicholson is leading this project, whose overall mission is to increase the available analytical data throughout the RLEF's social media, implement a more systematic approach to social media output, which has been desultory in the past, and build up a quantifiable community, which can be referenced in future sponsorship negotiations.

Those negotiations, ultimately, will surround the European Championship. The overall visibility of the sport will best be heightened through a successful elite European international competition. The RLEF is committed to pursuing this objective through aligning its existing stakeholders – namely its members and the RLIF – to present an agreed, multi-year schedule, and then taking that schedule to the market place and attracting media partners.

OFFICIAL COMPETITIONS

32

World rankings
points matches...

...contested by

22

nations

and a RECORD...

14

...youth
internationals
between full
national sides



Russia and Italy tangle in the rain – November



England Academy take on France U18 - May

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP C



						+/ -	Pts
UKRAINE	2	0	0	108	18	90	4
CZECH R.	0	2	0	18	108	-90	0

RESULTS

25 JUN	UKR 46-6 CZE	Rivne
8 OCT	CZE 12-62 UKR	Havlichkuv Brod

2017 RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

In the 2017 Rugby League World Cup European zone qualifiers Wales and Ireland advanced automatically by dint of winning their respective pools. In the final qualification match of the entire world cup, Italy defeated Russia on a rainy night in Leigh to claim the 14th and final berth of the finals.



Final elimination play-off: 2nd place Pool A versus 2nd place Pool B

5 NOV

ITALY 76-0 RUSSIA

Leigh

POOL A

	W	L	D	PF	PA	+/-	Pts
WALES	2	0	0	70	14	56	4
ITALY	1	1	0	76	34	42	2
SERBIA	0	2	0	14	112	-98	0

RESULTS

15 OCT	WAL 50-0 SER	Llanelli
22 OCT	SER 14-62 ITA	Belgrade
29 OCT	ITA 14-20 WAL	Monza

POOL B

	W	L	D	PF	PA	+/-	Pts
IRELAND	2	0	0	116	22	94	4
RUSSIA	1	1	0	56	76	-20	2
SPAIN	0	2	0	12	86	-74	0

RESULTS

15 OCT	RUS 40-6 SPA	Moscow
22 OCT	SPA 6-46 IRE	Valencia
29 OCT	IRE 70-16 RUS	Bray



AFFILIATED COMPETITIONS

AMERICAS CHAMPIONSHIP



	W	L	D	PF	PA	+/-	Pts
USA	2	0	0	68	12	56	4
CANADA	0	1	1	46	16	30	2
JAMAICA	0	1	1	6	92	-86	0

RESULTS

17 JUL	CAN 38-2 JAM	Levittown
23 JUL	USA 54-4 JAM	Philadelphia
12 DEC	CAN 8-14 USA	Toronto



NORDIC CUP

	W	L	D	PF	PA	+/-	Pts
NORWAY	1	0	0	40	24	16	2
SWEDEN	0	1	0	24	40	-16	0

RESULTS

4 JUN	NOR – DEN (cancelled)	Oslo
6 AUG	DEN XIII 50-18 SWE XIII	Roskilde
16 JUL	SWE 24-40 NOR	Stockholm

The Nordic Cup was disrupted by defending champion Denmark's withdrawal from the opening fixture against Norway. Sweden and Denmark played in an unofficial representative match, while Norway won the trophy with a victory in Sweden.



WHEELCHAIR FOUR NATIONS

Played in Rochdale. The Exiles team comprised players from the three competing nations plus Ireland.

RESULTS		
24 SEP	ENGLAND 98-10 SCOTLAND	GROUP
24 SEP	WALES 42-18 EXILES	GROUP
24 SEP	WALES 41-28 SCOTLAND	GROUP
24 SEP	ENGLAND 94-0 EXILES	GROUP
25 SEP	ENGLAND 56-14 WALES	GROUP
25 SEP	EXILES 62-18 SCOTLAND	GROUP
25 SEP	EXILES 26-23 SCOTLAND	3 RD / 4 TH PLACE PLAY-OFF
25 SEP	ENGLAND 52-26 WALES	FINAL



	W	L	PF	PA	+/-	PTS
ENGLAND	3	0	248	24	224	6
WALES	2	1	97	102	-5	4
EXILES	1	2	80	154	-74	2
SCOTLAND	0	3	56	201	-145	0

OTHER INTERNATIONALS

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

SENIOR INTERNATIONALS

DATE	FIXTURE	CATEGORY	VENUE
31 JAN	WEST HULL 36-4 GREAT BRITAIN POLICE	MEN	Hull
5 FEB	PHILIPPINES 18-12 SERBIA	MEN	Cabramatta
26 MAR	SERBIA ARMY 18-4 LEBANESE AMERICAN UNI.	MEN	Belgrade
20 APR	GB ARMED FORCES 52-18 GB POLICE	MEN	Stanningley
22 APR	SPAIN 46-16 ENGLISH LIONHEARTS	MEN	Valencia
24 APR	SPAIN 28-14 ENGLISH LIONHEARTS	MEN	Valencia
30 APR	WALES 92-22 SCOTLAND	WHEELCHAIR	Blackpool
30 APR	IRELAND 16-76 WALES	WHEELCHAIR	Blackpool
30 APR	SCOTLAND 58-58 IRELAND	WHEELCHAIR	Blackpool
8 MAY	COOK ISLANDS 30-20 LEBANON	MEN	Belmore
11 MAY	GB ARMED FORCES 44-24 GB TEACHERS	MEN	Wigan
14 MAY	CZECH REPUBLIC 4-32 SERBIA U21	MEN	Vrchlabi
22 MAY	ENG. LIONESSES 62-0 GB ARMED FORCES	WOMEN	Stanningley
25 MAY	JAMAICA B 10-58 BARLA U23	MEN	Spanish Town
28 MAY	HURRICANES JAMAICA 6-38 BARLA U23	MEN	Kingston
5 JUN	JAMAICA A 0-46 BARLA U23	MEN	Kingston
8 JUN	GB TEACHERS 18-30 GB POLICE	MEN	Featherstone
12 JUN	ITALY 22-26 LEBANON	MEN	Catania
25 JUN	BELGRADE XIII 12-60 ENGLISH LIONHEARTS	MEN	Belgrade
26 JUN	ENGLAND LIONESSES 38-10 GB TEACHERS	WOMEN	Wigan
26 JUN	SCOTLAND CLUB XIII 28-50 BRITISH ARMY	MEN	Bradford
27 JUN	SERBIA 14-16 ENGLISH LIONHEARTS	MEN	Belgrade
10 JUL	GB TEACHERS 32-14 GB ARMED FORCES	WOMEN	Featherstone
10 JUL	GB TEACHERS 18-24 GB POLICE	MEN	Batley
6 AUG	GERMANY 12-26 BELGIUM	MEN	Dortmund
13 AUG	NETHERLANDS 6-8 GERMANY	MEN	Rotterdam
14 AUG	SERBIA 68-22 SERBIA U21	MEN	Belgrade
17 AUG	ONTARIO 6-38 ENGLISH LIONHEARTS	MEN	Burlington
20 AUG	CZECH REPUBLIC 64-0 CANADIAN MILITARY	MEN	Krupka
20 AUG	CANADA EAST 6-38 ENGLISH LIONHEARTS	MEN	Toronto
20 AUG	CANADA 12-26 FIJI	MEN	Hawaii
27 AUG	CANADA U23 4-54 ENGLISH LIONS YOUTH	MEN	Toronto

31 AUG	CAN. TEACH/STU. 16-70 ENG. LIONS YOUTH	MEN	Toronto
3 SEP	BELGIUM 32-12 NETHERLANDS	MEN	Brussels
3 SEP	CANADA 18-22 ENGLISH LIONS YOUTH	MEN	Toronto
3 SEP	ITALY XIII 26-60 IRELAND XIII	MEN	Palazzolo
24 SEP	SPAIN 4-64 SERBIA	MEN	Valencia
24 SEP	CZECH REPUBLIC 12-6 NORWAY	MEN	Krupka
1 OCT	USA 20-14 CANADA	MEN	Wilmington
2 OCT	WALES DRAGONHEARTS 54-6 DEVON	MEN	Merthyr Tydfil
8 OCT	IRELAND 58-10 MALTA	MEN	Bray
15 OCT	EAST CANADA 10-22 SOUTH WALES IRONMEN	MEN	Toronto
16 OCT	IRELAND 16-68 JAMAICA	MEN	Bray
21 OCT	WALES 16-16 JAMAICA	MEN	Wakefield
21 OCT	CUMBRIA XIII 16-48 SCOTLAND	MEN	Barrow
22 OCT	FRANCE 6-40 ENGLAND	MEN	Avignon
22 OCT	FRANCE 6-36 ENGLAND	WOMEN	Avignon
22 OCT	GERMANY 32-40 WALES DRAGONHEARTS	MEN	Osnabruck
27 OCT	POLAND XIII 6-76 GB TEACHERS	MEN	Lodz
28 OCT	AUSTRALIA 54-12 SCOTLAND	MEN	Hull
29 OCT	POLAND XIII 0-88 GB TEACHERS	MEN	Skierniewice
29 OCT	ENGLAND 16-17 NEW ZEALAND	MEN	Huddersfield
20 OCT	ITALY A 16-26 BELGIUM	MEN	Monza
5 NOV	ENGLAND 38-12 SCOTLAND	MEN	Coventry
11 NOV	NEW ZEALAND 18-18 SCOTLAND	MEN	Workington
12 NOV	FIJI RESIDENTS 16-16 ENGLISH LIONS	MEN	Ratu Cakobau
13 NOV	ENGLAND 18-36 AUSTRALIA	MEN	London
16 NOV	FIJI RESIDENTS 20-18 ENGLISH LIONS	MEN	Lawaqa
19 NOV	FIJI RESIDENTS 19-12 ENGLISH LIONS	MEN	Sigatoka

YOUTH INTERNATIONALS

In 2015 there were nine youth internationals between the recognised full national sides of RLEF members. This year a new record was set with 14 youth internationals played.

DATE	FIXTURE	CATEGORY	VENUE
25 MAR	FRANCE 16-28 ENGLAND	U16	Pia
29 MAR	FRANCE 20-28 ENGLAND	U16	Pia
30 MAR	LEBANON 22-10 PALESTINE	U18	Beirut
8 MAY	COOK ISLANDS 16-14 LEBANON	U16	Sydney
28 APR	BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA XIII 12-38 SERBIA	U18	Vitez
27 MAY	ENGLAND 52-20 FRANCE	U18	Warrington

1 JUL	BOSNIA & HERZ. XIII 0-64 ENGLISH LIONHEARTS	U18	Belgrade
1 JUL	SERBIA 18-4 LEBANON	U18	Belgrade
3 JUL	SERBIA 4-46 ENGLISH LIONHEARTS	U18	Belgrade
3 JUL	BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA XIII 4-28 LEBANON	U18	Belgrade
3 JUL	SCOTLAND 22-30 SOUTH WALES SCORPIONS	U19	Northumbria
13 JUL	CZECH REPUBLIC 32-34 MORETON COLLEGE	U18	Krupka
16 JUL	CZECH REPUBLIC 20-46 MORETON COLLEGE	U18	Krupka
16 JUL	ENGLAND COLLEGES 66-4 SCOTLAND	U19	Featherstone
24 JUL	WALES 34-6 CATALANS DRAGONS	U16	Llanelli
30 JUL	ENGLAND COLLEGES 70-10 WALES	U18	Loughborough
31 JUL	AUST. SCHOOLBOYS 50-26 ENGLAND ACADEMY	U18	Redcliffe
3 AUG	WEST HULL 38-16 WALES	U16	Hull
6 AUG	AUST. SCHOOLBOYS 50-12 ENGLAND ACADEMY	U18	Cronulla
7 AUG	WALES U16 12-22 ENGLISH LIONHEARTS U17	YOUTH	Llanelli
27 AUG	JAMAICA 4-24 CANADA	U17	Kingston
27 AUG	IRELAND 6-52 SCOTLAND	U19	Belfast
28 AUG	IRELAND 0-56 WALES	U16	Co. Meath
11 SEP	CUMBRIA 22-22 SCOTLAND	U19	Maryport
21 SEP	SERBIA 18-18 LEBANON	U21	Belgrade
24 SEP	SCOTLAND U19 0-48 ENGLISH LIONS U18	YOUTH	Edinburgh
25 SEP	SERBIA 6-22 LEBANON	U21	Belgrade
8 OCT	ENGLISH LIONS 74-6 WALES	U18	Manchester
22 OCT	FIJI 14-6 LEBANON	U18	Sydney



Canada U17 made a historic tour of Jamaica - August



England Academy defeated France in Warrington - May

STUDENT INTERNATIONALS

DATE	FIXTURE	CATEGORY	VENUE
6 APR	ENGLAND 44-6 RAF	MEN	Nottingham
20 APR	ENGLAND 32-8 GREAT BRITAIN TEACHERS	MEN	Stanningley
1 MAY	GREAT BRITAIN POLICE 40-10 SCOTLAND	MEN	Newcastle
11 MAY	ENGLAND 58-4 GREAT BRITAIN POLICE	MEN	Wigan
14 MAY	IRELAND 4-24 ENGLAND LIONS U18	MEN	Bray
22 MAY	GB TEACHERS 16-10 ENGLAND	WOMEN	Stanningley
28 MAY	SCOTLAND 28-46 ABERDEEN WARRIORS	MEN	Edinburgh
8 JUN	ENGLAND 36-26 G. BRITAIN ARMED FORCES	MEN	Featherstone
13 JUN	IRELAND 4-52 ENGLAND	MEN	Edinburgh
13 JUN	SCOTLAND 12-56 WALES	MEN	Edinburgh
15 JUN	WALES 20-42 IRELAND	MEN	Edinburgh
15 JUN	SCOTLAND 10-40 ENGLAND	MEN	Edinburgh
18 JUN	WALES 34-10 ENGLAND	MEN	Edinburgh
18 JUN	SCOTLAND 52-26 IRELAND	MEN	Edinburgh
26 JUNE	ENGLAND 21-16 GREAT BRITAIN ARMED FORCES	WOMEN	Wigan
10 JUL	ENGLAND LIONESSES 36-14 ENGLAND	WOMEN	Featherstone
23 JUL	MAGYAR BULLS 0-80 GB STUDENT PIONEERS	MEN	Budapest



England Students score a try in their Associations Cup victory over GB Armed Forces - June



Scotland and Ireland clash in Edinburgh in the annual Student Four Nations - June

FINANCIAL REPORT

1. This Report covers the accounts for the year to 31 December 2016. The financial result was a net profit of £3476 as compared to a budgeted exact break even position and a profit of £583 in 2015.
2. The Accounts this year have been subject to audit by Haysmacintyre. The audit has now been completed and statutory accounts are available.
3. Total revenues of £398,000 were achieved in the year as compared to budget income of £396,000. Members will recall that the revenue and costs on the EU project are matched to expenditure in each financial year so that there is no profit or loss effect in the accounts for the year arising from the activity. Income is released from a deferred income account each year and set against the actual expenditure in that year. In 2016 £134k was expended on the 2016-2018 project and so a similar income is recorded in the accounts. The EU project money is received from the EU in two tranches. The first 60% was received in late 2015 and the balance will be received at the completion of the project in Spring of 2019.
4. RLIF Income was £111,000 in the year and is similar to the Budget of £112,000. This income is based upon the invoicing of AU\$180,000 for the year and is subject to exchange rate fluctuations dependent on the timing of the receipt of monies from Australia.
5. RFL income was £40,000 in the year and the same as budget and the prior year.
6. Income from Members fees at £5000 is consistent with budget expectations and is derived from the federation fees for Full and Affiliate members. The current fees are €500 for Full Members and €100 for Affiliate members and for the RLEF accounts the income is converted at the prevailing exchange rate at the time the invoice is raised to Member federations.
7. The EU project income and costs were £134,000 in the year which is £12,000 higher than planned but as noted above the costs are spread over the period of the project and careful management of the project's expenses will help to ensure that all costs are covered by income.
8. Grant expenditure was in line with our plan and was similar to those from 2015.
9. The 2017 Rugby League World Cup qualifier expenditure is covered by funding to be recovered from RLIF and so in a similar way to the EU project there is no profit effect in the statutory accounts. The full costs have now been established and reconciliation of the accounts with RFL and RLIF will be completed in 2017.

10. Administration costs have been well managed in the year with some higher employment costs as compared to budget being offset by exchange rate gains in the year.
11. RLEF has combined bank balances of £142,000 down from £268,000 at December 2015 just after the first tranche of the EU project funding was received.
12. Accrued Income of £279,000 relates predominantly to the monies owed by RLIF to RLEF in connection with the recovery of costs incurred by RLEF in staging the World Cup qualifier fixtures.
13. The RFL creditor was £286,000 at 31st December 2016 (2015 £246,000). Once the funds owed by RLIF are recovered it is intended that the debt to the RFL will be substantially reduced.
14. Reserves have increased by the profit in the year of £3576 and now total £24,989.
15. The RLEF has now been given exemption from the requirement to pay corporation tax. As a result of this exemption the small amounts paid have been refunded by HMRC and the provision in the accounts of £5000 has been reversed in this year's accounts.
16. The financial outlook for 2017 is challenging and another break-even budget has been prepared. There is upward pressure on overhead costs and income levels are expected to be at similar levels to 2016

Nigel Hansford FCA
RLEF Accountant

RLEF LIMITED ACCOUNTS

Year to 31 December 2016

Prepared by independent auditors haysmacintyre of 26 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4AG

Directors' Report

The Directors present their report with the financial statements of the company for the year ended 31st December 2016

Directors' Responsibilities Statement

The directors are responsible for preparing the Directors' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'. Under company law the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Company and of the profit or loss of the Company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies for the Company's financial statements and then apply them consistently;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Principal Activity

The principal activity of the company was as the Governing Body for Rugby League within Europe.

Directors

The directors shown below have held office during the whole of the period from 1st January 2016 to 31st December 2016.

G Thompson

M Watkins
P Nicholson
S Bolton

The directors shown below were appointed to the company during the period:

M Palanques (appointed 29th October 2016)
B Stolicjkovic (appointed 29th October 2016)

The following resigned as directors during the year:

N Sretenovic (resigned 29th October 2016)
C Zalduendo (resigned 29th October 2016)

Disclosure of information to auditors

Each of the persons who are directors at the time when this Directors' Report is approved has confirmed that:

- so far as the director is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Company's auditors are unaware, and
- the director has taken all the steps that ought to have been taken as a director in order to be aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Company's auditors are aware of that information.

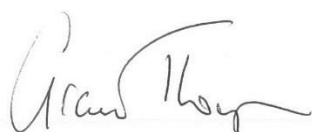
Auditors

The auditors, haysmacintyre, will be proposed for reappointment in accordance with section 485 of the Companies Act 2006.

Small Companies Note

In preparing this report, the Directors report have taken advantage of the small companies exemptions provided by Section 415A of the Companies Act 2006.

The report was approved by the Board of Directors on 30 May 2017 and signed on behalf of the Board by:



G. Thompson
Director

20 Fitzroy Square London
30 May 2017

Independent Auditors' Report to the Members of RLEF Limited

We have audited the financial statements of RLEF Limited for the year ended 31 December 2016, set out on pages 5 to 15. The relevant financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is the Companies Act 2006 and the United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' Section 1A (Small Entities). This report is made solely to the Company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditors' Report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Company and the Company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of Directors and Auditors

As explained more fully in the Directors' Responsibilities Statement on page 1, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

A description of the scope of an audit of financial statements is provided on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditscopeukprivate.

Opinion on financial statements

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Company's affairs as at 31 December 2016 and of its profit for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Opinion on other matter prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, the information given in the Directors' Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with those financial statements and this report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Independent Auditors' Report to the Members of RLEF Limited (continued)

In the light of our knowledge and understanding of the Company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Directors' Report.

Opinion on other matter prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, the information given in the Directors' Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with those financial statements and this report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

In the light of our knowledge and understanding of the Company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Directors' Report.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of directors' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the directors were not entitled to take advantage of the small companies' exemption from the requirement to prepare a Strategic Report or in preparing the Directors' Report.

Jeremy Beard (Senior Statutory Auditor)

for and on behalf of

haysmacintyre

Statutory Auditors

26 Red Lion Square London

WC1R 4AG

30 May 2017

Statement of Comprehensive Income
Year ended 31st December 2016

	Note	2016 £	2015 £
Turnover		397,539	527,219
Cost of Sales		<u>(399,176)</u>	<u>(526,636)</u>
Operating (loss)/Profit		<u>(1,637)</u>	<u>583</u>
Tax on profit on ordinary activities		<u>5,113</u>	<u>-</u>
Profit for the financial year		<u><u>3,476</u></u>	<u><u>583</u></u>

There was no other comprehensive income for 2016 (2015:£NIL).

The notes on pages 10 to 12 form part of these financial statements.

Registered number: 7508065
Statement of Financial Position
As at 31 December 2016

	Note	2016 £	2015 £
Current assets			
Debtors	4	287,479	229,919
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>141,831</u>	<u>268,129</u>
		<u>429,310</u>	<u>498,048</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	5	<u>404,320</u>	<u>476,534</u>
Net current assets		24,990	21,514

Net assets	24,990	21,514
Reserves		
Profit and loss account	24,990	21,514

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to Companies subject to the small companies' regime and in accordance with the provisions of FRS 102 Section 1A – small entities.

These financial statements were approved by the Board of directors on 30 May 2017 and were signed in its behalf by:



G. Thompson

Director

The notes on pages 10 to 12 form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2016

1. General information

The principal activity of the company was as the Governing Body for Rugby League within Europe.

The company is a private company limited (registered number: 7508065) limited by guarantee and was incorporated in England and Wales. The company's registered office is 20 Fitzroy Square, London, England, W1T 6EJ.

2. Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with Section 1A of Financial Reporting Standard 102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland and the Companies Act 2006.

The following principal accounting policies have been applied:

Turnover

Income comprises the value of sales of goods and services in the normal course of business. Income is recognised in the period to which it relates and costs of sales are recorded in the period in which the related income is recognised. Government grants are taken to income in order to match them against the related costs. Where amounts have not yet been spent grant monies received are shown as deferred income.

Debtors

Short term debtors are measured at transaction price, less any impairment.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash equivalents are highly liquid investments that mature in no more than three months from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

Creditors

Short term creditors are measured at the transaction price.

Financial instruments

The Company only enters into basic financial instruments that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities like trade and other debtors and creditors.

Defined contribution pension plan

The Company operates a defined contribution plan for its employees. A defined contribution plan is a pension plan under which the Company pays fixed contributions into a separate entity. Once the contributions have been paid the Company has no further payment obligations.

The contributions are recognised as an expense in the Statement of Comprehensive Income when they fall due. Amounts not paid are shown in accruals as a liability in the Balance Sheet. The assets of the plan are held separately from the Company in independently administered funds.

2. Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was 1 (2015 - 1)

During the year, no director received any emoluments (2015 - £nil)

3. Debtors

	2016	2015
	£	£
Other debtors	4,475	15,398
Prepayments	3,986	-
Accrued Income	279,018	214,521
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	287,479	229,919
	<hr/>	<hr/>

Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2016

4. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2016	2015
	£	£
Trade Creditors	285,973	245,765
Taxation and Social Security	2,074	4,991
Accruals and Deferred Income	116,273	225,778
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	404,320	476,534
	<hr/>	<hr/>

5. Reserves

Profit and loss account

Includes all current and prior period retained profits and losses

6. Company Status.

The company is a private company limited by guarantee and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the members is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the company in the event of liquidation. The number of these members at 31 December 2016 was 10 (2015: 11).

7. Controlling Party

The Directors consider that there is no ultimate controlling party

8. First time adoption of FRS 102

The policies applied under the entity's previous accounting framework are not materially different to FRS 102 Section 1A and have not impacted on equity or surplus or deficit.

THE BOARD

MAURICE WATKINS CBE

Maurice became RLEF chairman in August 2012 when serving as the interim chair of the RFL. He is Senior Partner in a prominent law firm and a former Director of Manchester United. Maurice is on the board of the Lancashire County Cricket Club, and is currently chair of British Swimming and Barnsley Football Club. He is President of the British Association for Sport and Law.

CHAIRMAN



MARC PALANQUES

Elected president of FFRXIII in July 2016, Marc joined the RLEF in September. A former captain of France and ranked in the world's top 10 players in 1986, he won four cups and three championships. Outside his rugby career, Marc founded sports equipment company Kingsport, was responsible for trade negotiations with INTERSPORT France, and sold his company in 2014 allowing him to return to a leadership role in rugby league.

VICE CHAIRMAN



SALLY BOLTON OBE

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, and represents the RLEF on the RLIF Board.

INDEPENDENT DIRECTOR



PAUL NICHOLSON

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

INDEPENDENT DIRECTOR



BLAGOJE STOILJKOVIC

Currently the Serbian Rugby League Federation Vice President. He has been involved in rugby league in Serbia from 2003, and has served as Acting President, Board Member, and Director of the Technical Staff. A career engineer, Blagoje has been responsible for project managing several SRLF initiatives, including the 2016 tour to Australia, many schools projects, and has represented Serbia internationally since 2004.

MEMBER-ELECTED DIRECTOR



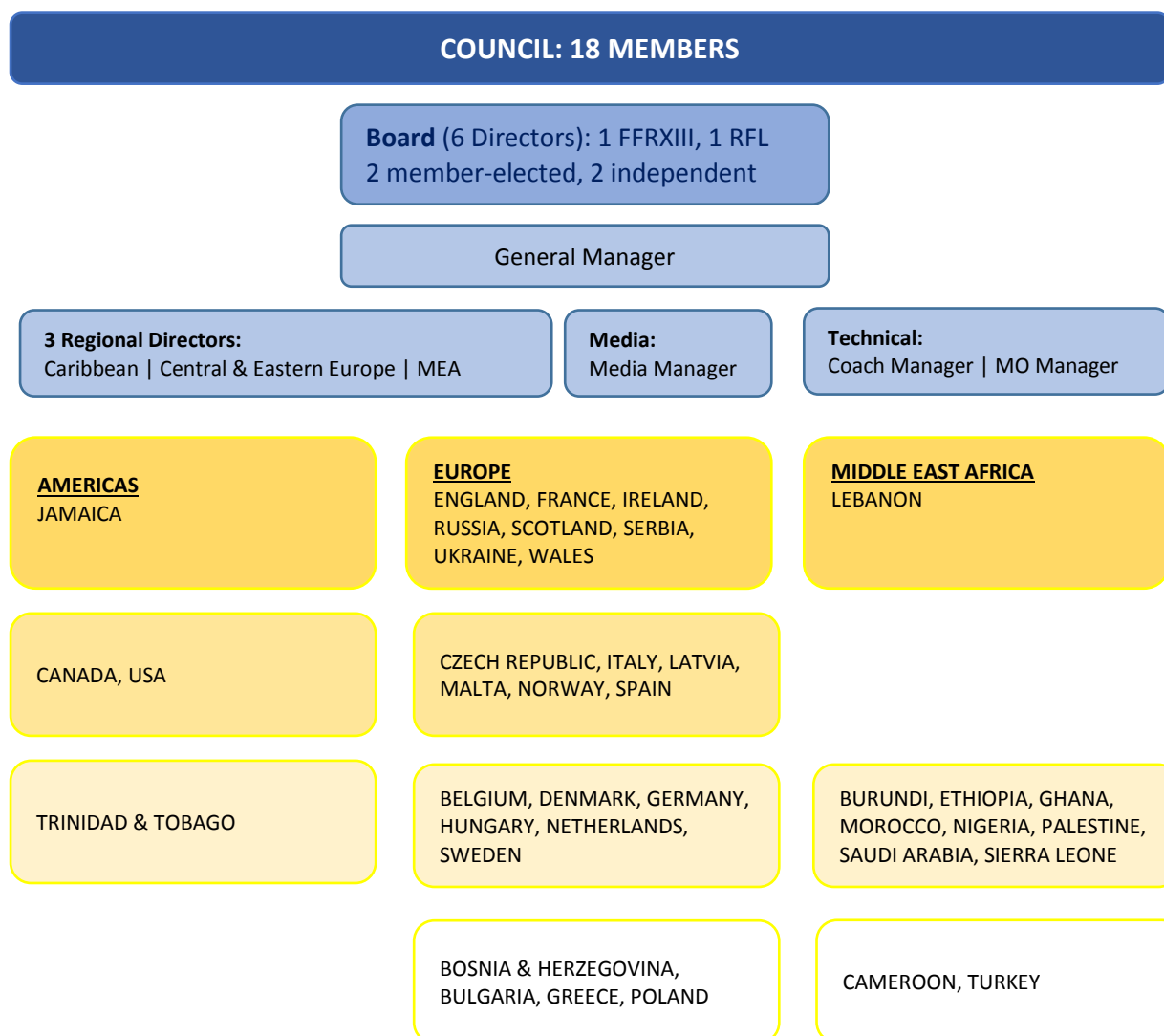
GRAEME THOMPSON

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, having also served as the performance director for GB water polo. Graeme is the second RLEF representative on the RLIF Board.

MEMBER-ELECTED DIRECTOR



APPENDIX 1: RLEF ORGANISATION



KEY:



APPENDIX 2: DOMESTIC CHAMPIONSHIPS

MEMBER	LEVEL	Sr. LEAGUE [teams] CHAMPIONS	2 ND DIVISION* [teams]	Jr. LEAGUE [teams]
ENGLAND 2016	FULL	First Utility Super League [12] Wigan	Kingstone Press Ch. [12] Kingstone P. Lg. 1 [14] Multiple amateur comps	Multiple
FRANCE 2015-16	FULL	Elite 1 [9] XIII Limouxin	Elite 2 [9] Division Nationale 1 [16] Fédérale [35]	Multiple
IRELAND 2016	FULL	Rep. of Ireland League [6] Ulster League [3] Galway Tribesmen	-	-
JAMAICA 2015-16	FULL	Championship [7] Duhaney Park Red Sharks	Division 2 [4] Colleges [5]	U19 [9] U16 [10]
LEBANON 2015-16	FULL	Championship [5] Immortals RLFC	College Division 1 [4] College Division 2 [5]	U18 [6]
RUSSIA 2016	FULL	Centre Conference [4] South Conference [4] North East Conference [2] Crimea [4] Moscow Magicians	-	U18 [6] U16 [6] U14 [7]
SCOTLAND 2016	FULL	Deuchars IPA League [4] Aberdeen Warriors	-	-
SERBIA 2016	FULL	First Division [6] Dorcol RLFC	Second Division [5]	U18 [3] U16 [2]
UKRAINE 2016	FULL	Championship [8] Legion XIII	-	U16 [6]
WALES 2016	FULL	South Wales Conference [5] Bridgend Blue Bulls Various RFL leagues [6]	North Wales Conf. [3] BUCS Student comps [7]	Multiple
CANADA 2016	AFFILIATE	British Columbia [5] Capilano Cougars	Alberta [2] Ontario [2]	U17 [2]

CZECH R. 2016	AFFILIATE	First Division [7] RLC Dragons Krupka	Second Division [4]	U18 [4]
ITALY 2016	AFFILIATE	Serie A [8] XIII de Ducato	Serie B [3]	U18 [6]
NORWAY 2015	AFFILIATE	Premiership [6] Trondheim-Lillestrøm	-	-
SPAIN 2015-16	AFFILIATE	National League [8] Torrent Tigres	Valencia [4] Andalusia [4]	-
USA 2015	AFFILIATE	USARL Championship [14] Philadelphia Fight	-	-