

IRISH RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

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ANNUAL REPORT
2016/2017





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T. Grace

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Committee

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Committee

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N. Comyn

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J. Gibson

T. Hennessy

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STANDING COMMITTEES

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M. O'Sullivan, D. Devaney,

I. McIlrath,

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National Professional

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D. Nucifora, P. Browne,

G. Fitzgerald, W. Ruane,

F. Sowman, D. Millar, R. Ryan,

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M. Quinn, J. Robinson,

M. Cunningham, J. Gibson,

D. Kavanagh, S. Black (Ulster

Rugby Chair), P. Brady

(Leinster Rugby Chair),

B. Smith (Munster Rugby

Chair), T. Carty (Connacht

Rugby Chair), S. Walker

and G. Black.

Finance

T. Grace - Chairman,

D. Madden, A. Leddy,

J. Gibson, M.P. Coghlan,

J. Robinson, P. Browne,

K. Potts, C. O'Brien, F.

O'Rourke (co-opted)

and L. Quinn (co-opted).

Commercial and Marketing

D. Devaney - Chairman,

T. Grace, T. O'Beirne, P. Dean

(co-opted), P. Browne, P.

Power and S. McNamara

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

STEPHEN HILDITCH



It was an honour and a privilege for me to be elected as President of the IRFU in July 2016.

It has been a memorable season which has seen a rare mix of historic triumph and deep tragedy. The news that Anthony Foley had died suddenly while in Paris with Munster, stunned every member of the rugby community in Ireland and across the world. The impact of his loss was felt most keenly in Munster but it was gratifying to witness the unity and strength of the rugby family in both its grief at their common loss and in support of Anthony's family. He was a giant in every respect; an icon in Munster; a legend in Irish rugby; a wonderful husband and father. Axel's death was also linked to our greatest triumph. In the unfamiliar surroundings of Soldier Field in Chicago, the New Zealand All Blacks, unbeaten in eighteen international matches, prepared to perform the haka. The Irish team faced the haka by forming a figure eight in dignified tribute to their former comrade. It was a moving and poignant action which will never be forgotten by those of us privileged to be there. The match which followed saw the Irish team play what was arguably their finest match in the long history of Irish rugby. Five tries against a team which had been described as the greatest ever; a convincing victory over New Zealand after 111 years of trying.

In the November series of matches, the Irish team was successful against Australia and so, in a period of less than six months, we had defeated all three of the Southern Hemisphere giants and justified our position of fourth in the World Rugby rankings.

The RBS Six Nations matches resulted in mixed outcomes. Losses to Scotland and Wales in matches which could have been won were balanced by good wins over Italy and France. The final match of the series saw an English team which was hoping to break the New Zealand record of 18 successive victories together with the achievement of a Triple Crown and Grand Slam. As in Chicago, Ireland produced a magnificent performance to dominate the game and win convincingly.

All the Irish players are deserving of great praise for the hard work and commitment throughout an historic and memorable season. At times the quality of their play was simply sublime.

Ireland is fortunate to have Joe Schmidt as head coach. He leads an outstanding group of coaches, technical and support staff, each of whom have played their part throughout the year. I know that I speak on behalf of the IRFU and all Irish rugby supporters in expressing our gratitude for a job well done.

Our Women's team have also had a successful year. Having won their first four matches, Ireland played the unbeaten English Women's team in a Grand Slam decider. Despite giving a good account of themselves, they eventually succumbed to the power of the current World Champions. Women's rugby is one of the most vibrant and expanding aspects of our game and with the World Cup to be held in Dublin and Belfast next August, it is likely that a consequence will be a heightened interest and increased participation in the women's game.

The Irish U20's participated in the Junior Rugby World Cup in June in Georgia and, due to a number of injury setbacks were unable to emulate the successes which our team had in last year's tournament. All our age-grade sides are competitive and contain players of great potential. This reflects the outstanding work done within our Clubs and schools, often by volunteer coaches. The further development of talented players by the High Performance Unit and the professional staff of the Provincial Academies is also of the highest calibre and our talent identification and player development programmes are respected and, indeed, envied, by rugby playing countries throughout the world. Of equal importance for the wellbeing of our game, is to ensure that the vast majority of players who do not progress to high performance levels, continue to play in our clubs when they go beyond age-grade rugby. Clubs need to offer a warm welcome and a quality and enjoyable experience to encourage young men and women to get involved and to stay involved.



Throughout my year as President, I have visited countless clubs for pre-match lunches, for matches and for club dinners. The common theme at all club visits has been the warmth of welcome which I encountered and the outstanding hospitality which I have enjoyed. The enthusiasm and commitment of club officials never ceases to amaze. A successful club scene is essential for the future of Irish rugby at all levels and men and women who serve as officials in clubs are the cornerstones of our game. In support of these volunteers, I commend the work of the Rugby Committee of the IRFU under the direction of Scott Walker and Chairman, Ian McIlrath. After a number of setbacks along the way, we now have a computer system which is functioning and which

allows us to have accurate information on a whole range of indicators regarding the player population. This allows trends and concerns to be identified and informs the strategies and priorities for the Rugby Committee. The successful implementation of these initiatives is dependent upon the work done in the Provinces and I commend the ever-closer working relationship between the IRFU and the Provinces.

Last season the wonderful success of Connacht in the Pro12 final was one of the few highlights by our Provincial teams. This season, both Munster and Leinster qualified for home quarter finals of the European Cup and excellent performances by both resulted in two Irish Provinces featuring in the semi-



finals. Unfortunately the adventure ended there and despite an excellent Scarlets team defeating Leinster in the semi-final and then Munster in the final of the Pro12, it was a reassuring return to prominence in both Pro12 and European competition.

One topic which has been ever present throughout the season and has occupied a great deal of the available time of both the professional staff and a significant number of volunteers, is Ireland's bid to host the 2023 Rugby World Cup. The bid was accepted as a contender along with South Africa and France. The vote will take place in November of this year. Everything about the Irish bid has been first class and very professional. The partnership between the IRFU and GAA is key to success. Full support and enthusiastic backing has been forthcoming from governments north and south. The bid process has been overseen by a Steering Group, chaired by Dick Spring and the extensive communications process has been expertly planned and executed by Kevin Potts who, along with the Chief Executive and our World Rugby representatives, has travelled the world encouraging support from individual rugby nations and groups of countries. No stone has been left unturned and nothing left to chance. I am quietly confident that this highly professional and exhaustive process



will reap reward in November and the consequent benefits to the profile of our game and participation in rugby in all of Ireland will be immense.

Finally, I would like to thank all who have helped me throughout my year as President. Declan Madden, our Chairman, has been a constant support. He is a man of integrity and common sense who is highly regarded by all involved in rugby in Ireland. I have been fortunate to have Philip Orr and Ian McIlrath as my Vice Presidents and have relied heavily upon them both throughout the year. The IRFU Committee is populated by men and women with a life time of experience in rugby football and a great deal of professional knowledge and expertise. The committee meetings have been valuable and largely enjoyable experiences.

The financial health of the Union is fundamental to sustain our success. Honorary Treasurer, Tom Grace and Financial Director, Conor O'Brien form a formidable and highly successful team. The financial future of the IRFU is in safe hands.

I cannot speak highly enough of the staff of the IRFU. Philip Browne represents us in negotiations and discussion on matters of global importance. We are fortunate to have such a respected and able advocate at such a challenging time in world rugby. The entire staff are a pleasure to work with but four people have made my life so much easier over the season. Louise Hart, Jean Casey, Eimear McCusker and Eugenie Thornton have been wonderfully supportive at all times. My final thanks go to my Province, Ulster, my club Grosvenor and to my wife Anne who could not have been more supportive.

As I said at the beginning of this report – it has been an honour and a privilege to be the President of this wonderful organisation. We face an exciting future.





CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

PHILIP BROWNE

Rugby football is an important part of the lives of all involved in the game here in Ireland, delivering sporting highs and lows across each season, providing us all with entertainment and challenges either on or off the pitch. However, this past twelve months was different as we were witness to firstly the unfolding tragedy of Anthony Foley's untimely death in Paris in October and secondly to the power of the "rugby family" in rallying around his traumatised family and also the Munster team which was such an important part of Anthony's life. Anthony's death certainly put sport into perspective but it also highlighted the importance of the values and ethos of rugby which came to the fore in October. Our thoughts continue to be with Anthony's wife Olive, his two sons Tony and Dan and the extended Foley family.

On the field, the achievement of the Irish team in beating South Africa, New Zealand and Australia in a calendar year cannot be overlooked. A daunting tour saw the team gain its first win on South African soil and they narrowly missed out on winning the three match series. That was followed by an extraordinary weekend in Chicago in November where Ireland convincingly beat New Zealand for the first time after 111 years, in front of 62,000 people at Soldier Field Stadium, most of whom were drawn from the Irish-American diaspora. The return fixture with New Zealand in Dublin delivered a victory for New Zealand but it did nothing to tarnish that Chicago weekend. Finally having beaten Canada in the first match of the November Guinness

Series, Ireland beat Australia in the last match of the series. There were mixed results in the Six Nations with losses to Scotland and Wales and victories over Italy, France and England – the English match on St Patrick's weekend was a thunderous occasion at the Aviva Stadium. Ireland are 4th in the World Rugby rankings which was important in respect of the RWC 2019 pool draw which took place in May. Great credit is due to the coaching and management team under Joe Schmidt and also to the players led by Rory Best. A strong squad of players with real depth across many positions is being assembled through their combined efforts and through the efforts of the Provinces, the Academies, the clubs and schools all under the watchful eye of David Nucifora and his team in the High Performance Department. It was equally gratifying in June 2016 to see the Ireland U20s reaching the final of the 2016 Junior World Championship in Manchester albeit beaten by a very strong English team.

Our four professional provincial teams represented Irish Rugby in the PRO12 and European competitions with Munster and Leinster both reaching European Champions Cup semi-finals and Munster progressing to the Pro 12 final. It has been a more difficult and inconsistent season for Ulster and Connacht not helped by injury. Ulster have qualified for next year's European Champions Cup and Connacht missed out in playoffs. It is also worth recording that Munster "A" Team won the British and Irish Cup.



NATIONAL TEAM

CHICAGO

Ireland ended New Zealand's unbeaten run of 18 games with an emphatic 40-29 victory at a sold out Soldier Field in Chicago. The win was a first over New Zealand in 111 years.

GUINNESS SERIES

The 2017 Guinness Series resulted in a win over Canada 52-21, a loss to New Zealand 21-9 and ended with an impressive 27-24 victory over Australia. With the victory over Australia Ireland had beaten all three southern hemisphere sides in the one calendar for the first time, following the victory over South Africa in Cape Town in June.

RBS 6 NATIONS

The 2017 RBS 6 Nations Championship resulted in a 27-22 loss in Scotland, a comprehensive 63-10 win in Italy, a 19-9 win over France, at the Aviva Stadium, a 22-9 loss away in Wales, before ending the campaign with an absorbing 13-9 win over England at the Aviva Stadium, to secure a second place finish in the tournament.

SUMMER TOUR

Ireland will play three Tests in June, one against the USA in New Jersey and two against Japan, the first in the Ecopa Stadium, Shizuoka and the second at the Ajinomoto Stadium, Tokyo.

LIONS TOUR

11 Ireland players were selected in the original Lions squad for the Tour of New Zealand – Robbie Henshaw, Conor Murray, Jared Payne, Jonathan Sexton, Rory Best, Tadhg Furlong, Iain Henderson, Jack McGrath, Sean O'Brien, Peter O'Mahony, CJ Stander. IRFU employees involved in the tour include Ireland Defence Coach Andy Farrell, Performance Analyst Vinny Hammond and Head of Operations Gerard Carmody.



THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S XV

This season, Ireland Women took part in their first ever November Series when they welcomed England (10-12 loss), Canada (7-48 loss) and New Zealand (8-38 loss) to UCD.

Ireland opened their Six Nations campaign with a 22-15 victory in Scotland, a 27-3 win in Italy, a 13-10 win against France in Donnybrook, and a 12-7 win in Wales, setting up a Grand Slam decider in Donnybrook.

Over 6,000 fans turned out to cheer on the Irish side in what was a double header with the Ireland U20s. Watched on by President Michael D. Higgins, the current World Cup holders, England, claimed a 34-7 win, sealing their own Grand Slam.

With the Women's Rugby World Cup 2017 taking place in Ireland in August, this extended campaign has allowed players the best opportunity to stake a claim for selection.

PROFESSIONAL GAME

Leinster and Munster both qualified for Home Semi-Finals in the European Champions Cup Rugby. Munster lost out to holders, Saracens, while Leinster's run ended in Lyon, with a loss to Clermont.

Irish teams were to the fore in the Guinness Pro 12 throughout the season with Leinster and Munster vying to be the highest placed Irish team for most of the campaign. The prize of qualification to next seasons Champions Cup led to a very competitive campaign with Ulster also obtaining qualification for the Champions Cup.

AGE GRADE RUGBY REPORT ON NATIONAL SQUADS

UNDER 20

Junior World Championship 2016

Ireland finished second overall after winning their group matches v Wales (26-25), New Zealand (33-24) and Georgia (35-7) and beating Argentina (37-7) in the semi-final before losing to England (45-21) in the final.



6 Nations 2017

Ireland finished 4th in the tournament with victories over Scotland (19-20), Italy (26-27) and France (27-22) and losing their last two matches v Wales (41-27) and England (10-14).

UNDER 19

Ireland won their first international fixture of the season (50-30) against the touring Japan U19 team. The annual International Series with the French U19's took place in Bordeaux with Ireland losing the two match series (42-15) and (28-24).

UNDER 18

Under 18 Clubs v Portugal U18

A team was selected after the inter-provincial matches to play in an international match against Portugal U18 with Ireland winning the match (46-12).

U18 INTERNATIONAL SERIES – WALES 2017

Canada was added to list of participants for the festival in Wales where Ireland played Italy (39-23) win, England (39-20) loss and Wales (28-36) win.

IRELAND U18 CLUBS AND SCHOOLS

France withdrew from the annual Tri-nations festival and it was agreed to replace this festival with a two match series between Ireland U18 Clubs and Schools and England U18 Counties. The matches took place at Ashbourne RFC with Ireland winning both matches (29-17) and (24-13).

REFEREES

The 2016/2017 was a busy one for IRFU Match Officials. John Lacey and George Clancy refereed in the autumn test window. John refereed a game in the 6 Nations, and will referee Argentina v England in June 2017. Andrew Brace acted as Assistant Referee in November, and in the 6 Nations, and will referee two tier two tests in June. Sean Gallagher and Frank Murphy were involved in the U20 6 Nations, while in June 2017 Frank Murphy will referee in the U20 World Championship. Helen O'Reilly, Sean Gallagher, and Joy Neville refereed in the Women's 6 Nations, while Joy and Sean will referee in the Women's Rugby World Cup, where Helen will act as assistant referee. Joy Neville will also referee in three World Series 7's Tournaments and has also been promoted onto the Pro 12 Development Panel. Finally Sean Gallagher, and Dudley Philips refereed European Nations Cup.

SEVENS

WOMEN

Although the team showed improvement throughout the season they were unable to secure Olympic qualification. Ireland's 3rd place finish at the repechage tournament, hosted in UCD, earned them qualification as a core team for the 2016/17 World Series.

The team finished 3rd, in the Rugby Europe Women's Grand Prix Series, which is the highest placed finish the team has achieved.

The 2017 Rugby Europe tournaments will have added significance in that the Irish team will require a high ranked finish to qualify for the 2018 Sevens Rugby World Cup. Already, there has been improved results with the team having made the Quarter Finals on two occasions with three tournaments remaining in the season.

MEN

The Men's Sevens dominated the Trophy Division of Rugby Europe and qualified for the Grand Prix Division of Rugby Europe in 2017. Rugby Europe will provide four tournaments against quality opposition and the opportunity to qualify for the 2018 Sevens Rugby World Cup and also the Sevens World Series Repechage Tournament in Hong Kong.

The team also participated in the Olympic Repechage Tournament in Monaco where they were narrowly defeated by Spain in the Quarter Final. Spain went on to win the tournament and earn the last position in Rio. This experience will be invaluable for the squad as they prepare for the 2017/18 season.

The Men's Sevens programme continues to provide a pathway for players and also the opportunity for them to earn provincial XV's contracts. Six players from

the 2015/16 season programme earned provincial contracts following their sevens performances.

Added to the success of the senior programme was the winning of the Rugby Europe Youth U18 Tournament. This programme will help develop players for the senior squad and expose players to a high level of youth sevens competitions.

RUGBY DEVELOPMENT

To strengthen the ability of the IRFU to make strategic decisions, work has continued under the direction of Ian McIlrath, Chair of the Rugby Committee, to modernise the IRFU Rugby Committee, respective Provincial Rugby Committees, and Elite pathways in regards to coaching, player development and competitions.

A 12 month programme of modernisation has occurred in the way the IRFU and Branches manage the investment and resource dedicated to the development of the game. An external review of IRFU and Branch operations has been undertaken to ensure national and provincial alignment. This has been a very comprehensive process, and the benefits have already been seen through enhanced game, coach and player development activities.

RUGBY PARTICIPATION

During the season Aldi became the main sponsor of our Play Rugby programme. The partnership exponentially increased the profile of rugby through national promotion. The support of Aldi has resulted in a significant increase in the reach of rugby with the programme being delivered in 895 schools and to over 70,000 primary school children. There will be further expansion of the programme in the 2017/18 season.

The IRFU's Tag Rugby programme, sponsored by Volkswagen, was played by 11,000 players in spring, summer and autumn leagues, across 23 venues. For 2017/18 season we have increased our reach to three new venues, UL, Greystones RFC and Buccaneers RFC. These leagues are complimented by beach tag



events and the All-Ireland Finals day in Old Belvedere RFC where 60 teams contest national titles. Success stories from Tag are Corinthians RFC who have over 80 teams (1,100 players) playing every Thursday in a nine-week league.

Cadbury Boost Touch saw over 60 teams take part in structured adult competitions around Ireland and more than 4,000 students playing at third-level colleges and universities. This year will see the continuation of summer touch leagues in Cork, Limerick, Dublin and Belfast.

ULSTER BANK LEAGUE

The 2016-17 season saw the second season of five divisions of 10 clubs in the Ulster Bank League playing home and away fixtures. The extended play-off system, introduced last season with only the winners of each division guaranteed promotion, has continued as it had been seen to revitalise the leagues.





In Division 1A Clontarf and Cork Constitution progressed to the final which was played in the Aviva stadium in early May and saw Cork Constitution win in a thrilling encounter which was televised live on RTE. Buccaneers won Div 1B, Bainbridge won Div 2A and Greystones won Division 2B on a dramatic final day. Division 2C was won by Navan, and Malahide and Omagh joined Division 2C.

In late April Old Belvedere hosted Cork Constitution in the Bateman Cup Final live on RTE with Cork Constitution emerging victorious. Ashbourne won the Ulster Bank Junior Cup Final for the first time in a dramatic finish, beating Enniscorthy, the holders, (22-20) at Donnybrook in late January.

The IRFU again held a number of information gathering meetings around the country with groups of senior clubs amidst ongoing discussions regarding the best structure of the UBL as part of the overall picture of rugby in Ireland.

The Women's AIL was run on a home and away basis this season. UL Bohemians dominated the women's game recording a historic triple of All-Ireland, Munster Senior Cup and All-Ireland Cup victories.

COACH DEVELOPMENT

The IRFU and Provincial Coach Development departments are committed to ensure coach education, training and development is world leading and meeting the individual needs of all school, club and professional coaches. Continuous improvement is a key objective, with new opportunities to positively change coaching behaviour being explored, tested and implemented.

The latter half of the year has also seen increased focus upon the improved alignment and integration of playing, coaching and coach develop between national and provincial participation and performance departments, facilitated largely through frequent national meetings and working groups. Some specific advancement and achievements from the 2016-2017 period are listed overleaf:

- Significant revamp of IRFU Coaching Course content and accreditation procedures.
- Expansion of access to the Clubhouse 'Event Management System' for volunteer coaches across the country. Investigation and progress towards the implementation of blended-learning opportunities through online resources and post-course CPD activities.
- Development and delivery of IRFU and provincial staff professional development, education and training.
- Ongoing provincial engagement and interaction through provincial Coach Development Managers and Domestic Rugby Managers.

SPIRIT

SPIRIT ANNUAL REPORT

The Spirit Committee continues to implement the roadmap for the Spirit Programme, a series of value activated initiatives. The focus of the first year was supporting clubs in compliance with Safeguarding and anti-doping. In line with changing legislation IRFU centralised its safeguarding processes, including a new online vetting system.

Twenty-five anti-doping workshops were held, aimed primarily at Age-Grade elite players as they embark on their rugby career, but also included professional players, men's and women's representative sides as well as parents and club members in the amateur game. In addition a Schools and Clubs Pack was developed for youth players and distributed to over 400 clubs and schools throughout the season.

The National Disability Committee met three times and the Disability Inclusion Coaching Module was finalised. Disability Advisory Boards have been formed in three of the four branches and five additional disability sections within existing clubs have been formed as a result of school-club coaching projects. With the assistance of a Sport Ireland grant this work is being expanded to develop further club resources and train additional coaches and volunteers.

2017 WOMEN'S RUGBY WORLD CUP IMPACT PROGRAMME

2017 will be a landmark year for women's rugby, with Ireland hosting the Women's Rugby World Cup (WRWC). The IRFU is also maximising the opportunity to grow the participation and reach of the women's participation in sport through a WRWC Impact Beyond legacy programmes. There are currently 100 young participants in the WRWC Ambassadors programme. The WRWC Trophy Tour creates the opportunity for the event to touch all 32 counties. The Tour began on 17th March and is currently making its way around the country, taking in over 190 different events in clubs and schools. The trophy tour has meant that promotion of the WRWC is constant on social media with regular updates using the hashtags on various social media channels.

'2017 in 2017' will have numerous initiatives feeding in to the participation growth side of the legacy programmes. Give It A Try Club Hubs will be set up around the country for June, July and August. Clubs will have the opportunity to sign up to be selected as a Hub for rugby for 9-15 year olds. Give It A Try 3rd Level Roadshows will see the IRFU run pop up taster sessions in colleges/universities in September/October 2017 to encourage new players to join the sport. These players will have the opportunity to play in a Give It A Try Fresher Festival in November as part of this initiative. The girl's secondary school X7s competition will continue to take place in November of the school year. Each Branch will run qualifying competitions in their Province with four teams qualifying to the National Finals on Wednesday 8th November.

The Give It A Try programme was rebranded and launched with a new range of promotional videos which gained significant social media exposure. This programme has supported the recruitment of female youth players, however, greater focus needs to occur on retaining female players. Girls Mini Rugby is growing.



WOMEN'S GAME

Leinster beat Munster to claim the Women's Interprovincial Series in December 2016. Connacht had their best campaign to date and were in with a chance of winning the championship on the last weekend.

The first U18 XV Interprovincial Series took place in September/October. All games were extremely competitive with many players making the step in to adult rugby post matches. Ulster won the series.

The girls U18 Seven's Interprovincial Development blitzes took place last summer and served their purpose of supplying girls to the Ireland U18 Seven's team. These blitzes have now moved and will take place in April.

STUDENT RUGBY

Over the past few seasons the IRFU has increased the investment into Third Level Rugby and currently has eight funding partnerships with academic institutions for the development of rugby. In addition the IRFU has a long working relationship with Student Sport Ireland (SSI) to manage men's and women's rugby

across third level institutions. In total over 40 men's and 15 women's teams participate in the leagues with 44 teams participating in Cup competitions which culminated in a finals day hosted by Athlone Institute of Technology at Buccaneers RFC on March 29th.

IRISH UNIVERSITIES RUGBY UNION

The IRFU continues to work with IURU to further develop student rugby and implement initiatives to increase the number of student players. UCD claimed the Dudley Cup hosted by UCC. The Maughan-Scally Cup was won by UU Coleraine with the Bowen (Women's) and Conroy (U20) competitions scheduled for mid-late April.

On Sunday April 2nd, the Combined Students of Ireland played out a pulsating 36 all draw with the England Students at Iffley Road, Oxford. The Irish side were captained by Darren Hudson of Maynooth University, with the squad being made up of players from 11 different Colleges and Universities. For the first time, the squad was coached by IRFU employees, Dan Van Zyl of Leinster and Brendan O'Connor of Munster.

AGE GRADE RUGBY

Under the direction of John Robinson, Chair of Age Grade, the recommendations of the Invigorating Age Grade Rugby report are being implemented to address a number of challenges in retaining youth and school players. This included a more strategic approach to the delivery of IRFU Coach Development programme through the use of a club coaching audit which identifies the 'landscape' within a region. This strategy will continue to evolve as the coaching course programme and content develops.

Rugby SMART project rolled out with first phase 'Tackle SMART' - this online video resource identifies key factor and safety focus for coaches across a range of game levels. Further resources on other contact areas are planned. The stricter compliance / interpretation of the law is championed through the Ref Smart programme, which was rolled out to all branch referees, and continues to be highlighted on referee workshops.

The development of a modified version of 7's rugby (X7's), aimed at schoolgirls at U15's and U18's, has provided a pathway into the game for schools that can't

field a 15 aside team, don't have the technical ability to play 15 aside rugby or don't have the accredited coaches to train a 15 aside team.

This season 2,000 participants from 120 clubs participated in the Provincial Aviva Mini Rugby Festivals culminating in the National Festival at Aviva Stadium on Saturday, 20th May. Provincial festivals took place at: Ballyclare RFC (Ulster), UL Bohemian RFC (Munster), Carlow FC (Leinster) and Ballina RFC (Connacht)

IRFU CLUBHOUSE

The IRFU further enhanced the Clubhouse database system, with deployment of the Education Management module and the Club Development module to improve the efficiency of administration in both the running of IRFU coaching courses and subsequent coach accreditations. The Club Development System enables clubs to administrate memberships, take payments online, electronically manage teams and team sheets, and communicate directly with specific groups within their clubs increasing their ability to attract sponsors and entice past members to come back to the club.



PARTICIPATION NUMBERS FOR THE 2016/17 SEASON				
SECTOR	SEGMENT	DEFINITION	NUMBER	TOTAL
Club Rugby	Senior Males	Adult and U20s playing in a structured league	16,184	81,004
	Senior Women	Adult females playing in a structured league	4,338	
	Youth Rugby males	Males playing in League Structure between U13-U18 years	27,794	
	Youth Rugby Females	Females playing in League Structure between U13-U18 years	4,097	
	Mini Rugby	Registered male and female Mini Rugby participants	28,631	
Schools Rugby	Schools	Playing figure across 82 secondary schools	20,683	96,683
	School Development Programme	This the number of participants in school development programmes (Primary & Secondary rugby, play rugby or give it a try programmes)	76,000	
Social Rugby	Adults participating in Tag and Touch Activities		12,500	16,700
	Teenagers participating in Tag and Touch Activities		4,200	
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS				194,387

Notes:

- Adult numbers are collated from the number of players who appear at least once on an Electronic Team Sheet
- Youth Numbers are collated from a combination of Electronic Team sheets and audit of playing numbers. As more leagues move to electronic team sheets this data will become more accurate. The increase in number is a result of the strategic approach over the last two seasons of ensuring games are played
- Mini rugby numbers are calculated by registrations on the Clubhouse system.
- School playing numbers is a male participation figure reported by the Schools; this figure does not include participation numbers in Development Schools or Girls numbers.
- School Development Programme is calculated through data collated from Development Officers Portal and Branch Audits; Work will be undertaken in 2017/18 of increasing the accuracy of these participation figures. Increase due to new programmes (i.e. GX7s) and expansion of Community Rugby Programme.
- Tag/Touch numbers are an estimation extrapolated from number of teams and various activities to capture data on participants

COMMERCIAL AND MARKETING

The Commercial and Marketing Committee is chaired by Damian Devaney. The IRFU extend our thanks to all of our commercial partners and sponsors for their support during this past season.

Vodafone Ireland have already done a fantastic job of bringing the 'Team of Us' campaign to life across all platforms. The support shown to the IRFU by CEO, Anne O'Leary, and all of the Vodafone team has been outstanding.

The IRFU wish to thank Canterbury CEO, Chris Stephenson, and Commercial Director, Sean Kavanagh. Our kit partner continues to provide the Union with rugby products that are of an extremely high performance quality and as the economy continues to move out of recession it is gratifying to see sales of replica Irish kit continue to increase.

We are delighted to have renewed partnerships this past season with Electric Ireland, Eden Park and Diageo. Diageo is one of the IRFU's longest standing and most committed partners and we look forward to continuing our work with Head of Sponsorship, Rory Sheridan, and his team.

New to the family of sponsors are Official Supermarket partner Aldi who have hit the ground running with their sponsorship of the Play Rugby initiative. We are really grateful and very excited to welcome Aldi to the Irish rugby family. The campaign messaging and innovation that has been demonstrated augurs well for the future. The IRFU would also like to acknowledge all of our sponsors including Aviva, RBS, Ulster Bank, Aer Lingus, Volkswagen, PWC, Aon, DHL, Lucozade Sport, Dove, Glenisk, Cadbury, Gilbert, Tipperary Crystal, Lease Plan and to our many other partners listed elsewhere in this document, we remain most grateful for your valued contribution and continued support.



MARKETING AND GAME PROMOTION

Match attendances and live TV remain a key promotional and marketing performance indicator on the position of where the sport of rugby resides in the Irish national psyche.

The Ireland rugby team remains our most important and effective marketing tool. The IRFU thank Head Coach, Joe Schmidt, past Team Manager Mick Kearney, present Team Manager Paul Dean, all of the national management staff and players for their assistance with the Union's commercial programmes.

TV continues to present a high quality and exciting product which greatly helps to promote the sport and we look forward to working alongside our broadcast partners for the forthcoming season. Ireland v England in the 2017 RBS 6 Nations was the most viewed game of the championship peaking at over 8.6m viewers.

Match Day attendances figures this past season were also very encouraging. New Zealand and Australia in the Guinness Series and our two RBS 6 Nations 2017 fixtures against France and England were all sell outs, with the latter delivering record breaking numbers for official corporate hospitality. The match against Canada last November saw over 45,000 tickets sold for a 2nd Tier match which also represented another record for the Union.

We continue to work with our clubs to ensure that we achieve the balance between access to match tickets for club members and catering for the new rugby fan that is not attached to a club.

We thank all of our ticket purchasers, especially our 10 year ticket holders and our corporate box holders. We are very grateful for your patronage which plays a pivotal role in funding the game in this country.

In addition to the strong attendances at the National Team games in Aviva Stadium, Ireland under 20s and Ireland Women enjoyed very strong support in

Donnybrook Stadium for each of their games, which is encouraging ahead of this summer's Women's Rugby World Cup.

Positive progress also continues to be made in promoting all of the domestic game programmes and grassroots rugby initiatives under the Union umbrella. The Ulster Bank sponsored, 'Your Club Your Country' IRFU Grand Draw, is a significant marketing initiative which continues to deliver for the clubs who participate. This past five seasons has seen over €3m raised for the club game in this country.

THE PATRONS CLUB

The Patrons Club continued to add value for Premium and Ten Year Ticket holders at home and through trips to away matches.

The Patrons Club was part of the hugely successful win in Chicago with members enjoying a full hospitality and a post-match dinner with the Ireland team.

Ireland's match in Rome in February was the backdrop to our largest trip to date with over 240 guests travelling and enjoying the services of the Patrons Club.

Increased communication with members – via regular match week ezines and the presence at home matches of our Client Relationship team – has also added to the service on offer.

A survey of members in late 2016 indicated a high level of satisfaction with their match day experience.

THE SUPPORTERS CLUB

The Supporters Club continues to provide an excellent revenue stream whilst offering members value for money and opportunities to purchase tickets when available. Membership numbers increased year on year – testament to the performances of the team against South Africa, New Zealand and Australia and the demand for tickets.



WEBSHOP

The webshop is proving very popular with website visitors and a change in the layout resulted in an excellent increase in conversion rates. The response rates to email, organic and referral traffic is extremely good which means that Canterbury get a very good return on investment.

IRISHRUGBY DIGITAL

Irish Rugby's online presence enjoyed impressive growth over the last season with supporters engaging with our digital content across our range of platforms – IrishRugby.ie, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram and email. Video and live events were the key growth areas for Irish Rugby's digital channels this season.

The launch of the #Ireland2023 video reached over 7 million people on Facebook while the behind the scenes video of the victory over New Zealand reached over 4 million.

In the key period of the Guinness Series and RBS 6 Nations our video content had over 13 million views across Facebook and Youtube.

Twitter followers grew by 15% last season to over 600,000 followers, while our Instagram audience has grown by 33% and has become one of the key platforms for informal content with the introduction of brand stories proving extremely popular.

Live streams of Ulster Bank League and club games and Ireland Women's Internationals also proved extremely popular. The livestream of the All Ireland Junior Cup reached over 600,000 people on Facebook while the Women's November Series reached over 1.5 million people on Facebook.

In addition, we have worked with sponsors to create bespoke branded content such as Vodafone's Team of Us documentary to help them reach the rugby audience across all our platforms to great success.



The large audience and strong engagement rates have also helped the IRFU in areas such as ticket sales – selling out the Donnybrook Double, Women’s Rugby World Cup – and showcasing key IRFU initiatives such as SAFE Rugby, TackleSMART and Eat2Compete.

MEDICAL

Player welfare continues to be a very important priority for the IRFU Medical Department with work ongoing in the areas of education and injury prevention.

SAFE RUGBY

The IRFU’s rugby specific pitch side first aid and basic life support programme is in its fourth year. It continues to provide coaches, doctors, physiotherapists, parents and players with practical tuition on rugby specific injuries. There have been 32 SAFE Rugby level 1 courses, to date this season, with a total of 537 attendees. A minimum of another 12 SAFE courses are planned for this season. Several courses were run in conjunction with the Sports Physiotherapy group in both Northern Ireland and the Republic this year.

CONCUSSION

The IRFU’s education drive focusing on the recognition and management of concussion continued this year with the delivery of 30 concussion talks nationwide with 1071 attendees.

The Referee, Rugby and Medical departments jointly rolled out new interpretations to the present laws based on improving player safety. These new interpretations focused on the tackle area. In January 2017, just before the schools cup campaigns, the IRFU Medical Department in conjunction with Referee Department ran joint educational seminars, in all four provinces, on concussion recognition, management and the new law interpretations for schools cup team coaches.

INJURY REPORTING

The Medical Department continues to drive the reporting of injuries throughout the game using the reportable injury system. These figures are collated monthly and used to drive areas of research and education.

GUIDELINES

The IRFU Medical Dept. continued to review guidelines to improve player welfare and safety. The following guidelines, which are available online for the domestic game were updated:

- Guidelines for Medical Rooms and Equipment
- Guidelines for Team Doctors
- Guidelines for AEDs
- Guidelines for Emergency Action Plan
- Guidelines for First Aid Kits

The following guidelines were developed:

- Prescribed Drug Management within a professional team
- Guidelines for Medical Cover at IRFU Rugby Events
- IRFU Entry Medical and Exit Medical within the professional game.

RESEARCH

Audit and research are an essential part of the Medical Departments work. We are continuing to collaborate with World Rugby, University College Dublin, University of Limerick and Trinity College. The injury surveillance study in school’s rugby in Ulster (RISUS) is ongoing. The Medical Advisory Committee are in the process of developing a Research and Education Sub-Committee.



ANTI-DOPING

The IRFU once again commissioned anti-doping tests through the Sport Ireland, supplementing Sport Ireland's National Anti-Doping Programme.

Details of the tests performed are outlined below:

2016/17 ANTI-DOPING PROGRAMME	
In Competition	Players Tested
Senior XV	10
Provincial	24
U20s	11
Age Grade	06
Women's XV	02
Women's Sevens	07
Men's Sevens	01
All Clubs	08
Out of Competition	Players Tested
Senior XV	22
Provincial	46
U20s	18
Academy	10
Age Grade	06
Women's XV	02
Women's Sevens	23

CHARITABLE TRUST

The core of the work of the Trust remains the personal relationship between the Trust and the 33 seriously injured players we currently support. Other features of the year include the first steps in becoming involved in research to help our injured players. Our Fundraising Group has had an extremely busy year. The highlight being an extremely successful event in Chicago. Whilst our Corporate Patrons scheme goes from strength to strength. The Trust continues to fulfil its responsibilities as set out by the Charity Regulator and this has been helped by the guidance from our Auditors.





COMMITTEE

Retiring from the IRFU Committee is immediate Past President, Martin O'Sullivan. He was elected to the IRFU Committee in 2005/2006 and held a number of important roles during his time including the Chair of the Representative Game Committee from Season 2009/2010 to Season 2014/2015, the body responsible for the management of the representative teams and the professional game. More recently in 2016/2017 he has been the interim Chairman of the National Professional Game Board which was set up following the adoption of Plan Ireland. Our thanks and best wishes to Martin and his partner Edel.

OBITUARIES

Bertie O'Hanlon (Dolphin) – 12 caps – 1947 – 1950

Grand Slam winning team of 1948

Triple Crown winning team of 1949

Henry Wall (UCD & Dolphin) – 2 caps – 1965 – 1965

Anthony Foley (Shannon) – 62 caps – 1995 – 2005

Triple Crown 2004

Paddy Darcy (Young Munster) – 1967 – 1975

Refereed 17 International matches

Kevin Kelleher – 1960 – 1972

Refereed 23 International matches

Arthur Tanner – 1996 – 2014

Leinster Team Doctor

Ken Armstrong (Dungannon) – 2 caps – 1960 – 1961

Former Irish Schools Coach

HON. TREASURER'S REPORT

TOM GRACE

It is my privilege to present to you the Union's financial statements for 2016/17. As I have done in the past it is my intention to report primarily on the Union's accounts and to limit my comments on the consolidated accounts to reconciling any significant differences between them and the Union's accounts.

In 2016/17 the surplus in the consolidated accounts amounted to €0.3m compared with the Union only deficit of €2.8m. In the consolidated accounts the amortisation of the Union's investment in joint ventures and subsidiary undertakings is replaced with a share of the losses in those undertakings, the amortisation of goodwill and the write-down of a capital contribution to the company running the Women's Rugby World Cup. Further details can be found in notes 1, 5, 8 and 9 to the Union accounts.

As you can see from the Union's Income Statement the Union suffered a deficit for the first time since 2007/08 and it is important that all readers are aware of the background to this deficit. In April, 2016 the Union Committee unanimously agreed a budget which would give rise to a deficit for the year 2016/17 of €4.7m. This budget had to address the immediate funding problems facing all four Provinces in light of player cost inflation being driven elsewhere in the game whilst continuing to increase the investment in the grassroots game and player development. It was also acknowledged when agreeing the budget that it was anticipated that the Union would return to a breakeven situation no later than 2018/19. It was made clear to all at the time that should Brexit occur this budgeted deficit could worsen considerably due to the impact of exchange rates on the Union's sterling-denominated broadcasting income.

The Union and Provinces had a good year on the field and this has fed into the Union's financial result for the year with the deficit for the year of €2.8m



some €1.9m better than that budgeted. On the face of it total revenues are relatively unchanged up c. €0.5m to €76.6m. International Rugby income falls by €1.7m due to the absence of Rugby World Cup income and the positive net effect of replacing the warm-up programme with a full Guinness Series together with the match against the All-Blacks in Chicago. The combination of prize-money and an increase in contract amounts outweighed the negative impact of exchange rates on Six Nations broadcasting income. Commercial revenues improved due to new sponsorships whilst amortised income improves due to the match schedule for the year and the sale of additional corporate boxes.

Against budget total revenues were €2.9m ahead due to Guinness Series gates, Six Nations hospitality, prize-money and share of gates.

Turning to expenditure we can see that costs increased by €8.3m to €79.4m due to a combination of factors. Professional game costs includes the cost of the National team together with the Union's contribution to the cost of the four Provincial teams. The increase of €3.5m is due to no tour taking place in 2015/16, match costs for a full Guinness Series together with the Chicago match, insurance costs, player and management bonuses and increased funding for the Provinces.

Elite player development increases by €1.1m due to the continuing activation of the new player pathway programmes together with once-off costs relating to the hosting of the Women's Sevens Olympic qualifying tournament. Domestic and community Rugby expenditure increased by over €0.66m reflecting the agreed increased investment in the game together with an increase in net insurance costs.

Marketing costs increased by c. €0.2m due to additional staff and website costs. Grounds costs return to more normal levels after the impact of the VAT refund to Aviva Stadium on last year's figures. Administration and overheads increase by €1.2m due almost entirely to an increase in professional fees. Included in here are the costs for the year of the RWC 2023 bid together with costs to date of the Women's Rugby World Cup 2017 tournament which Ireland are hosting later this summer. In relation to the RWC 2023 bid I would like to pay particular thanks to Failte Ireland and the Northern Ireland Tourism Board for their assistance, financial and otherwise with the bid process.

In total costs came in €0.9m over budget with the primary reasons for this being player bonuses and the timing of payments in respect of the RWC 2023 bid and Women's Rugby World Cup 2017 and increased investment in the area of marketing and communications.

The Union's net assets fell by €2.3m to €69.7m reflecting the deficit for the year together with the improvement in the Union's net pension liability the movement on which, in line with best practise is taken through the Union statement of comprehensive income rather than through the income statement.

The Union's cash balances declined by just over €10m during the year reflecting the cash loss suffered by the Union on its operations. Amortised income and costs do not result in any cash movement and once they are stripped out of the income statement it becomes apparent why the Union's cash balances fell significantly.



Debtors and prepayments increased by c. €3m due to increased Branch amounts due together with prize-money and corporate box debtors. The rise in creditors and accruals is due to increased amounts payable to Branches together with an increase in deferred sponsorship income.

Although the Union has suffered a deficit this year it is a significantly smaller deficit than was budgeted for despite the very significant impact of Brexit to date. Whilst some of the improvement must be regarded as temporary (prize-money, gate share) there were sustainable increases in the Union's commercial revenues whilst beyond the 2017/18 season we would expect substantially all costs relating to the RWC 2023 bid and the hosting costs of Women's World Cup 2017 to be eliminated.

The broader Irish economy continues to improve (Brexit notwithstanding) but there are still very real challenges facing us in the Rugby economy not the least of which is player cost inflation. This is driven by the relative financial strength of the leagues operating in England and France compared to the Guinness Pro12. With the appointment of a CEO for the Pro12 together with a dedicated support team a substantial effort is being made to address this deficiency and the next twelve months will give us a clearer understanding of the future of the competition.

In conclusion I would like to thank all of those who have contributed to the Union's financial performance during the year. In particular I would like to thank my Committee colleagues especially those on the Finance Standing Committee for their support and advice throughout the year. I would also like to thank the Union staff in particular Conor O'Brien and his team in the Finance department.



THE IRFU WISHES TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS & SUPPLIERS OF IRISH RUGBY



The official sponsor of the Irish rugby team



Official Kit Supplier to the IRFU



Match Sponsor of the Guinness Series, Official Beer Supplier to the IRFU



Official Sponsor of the Ireland Women's Team



Official Formal Outfitters to the IRFU



An Official Partner of the IRFU



Sponsor of the RBS 6 Nations Championship



Official Community rugby partner to the IRFU, sponsor of the Ulster Bank League, Club International and Ulster Bank RugbyForce



Cadburys Boost: Official chocolatebar of the IRFU and sponsor of IRFU Touch Rugby



Official Express and Logistics Partner to the IRFU



Stadium and Insurance Partner to the IRFU, sponsors of the Aviva mini rugby festivals



Official airline to the IRFU



Official Supermarket Partner



Official yoghurt and partner of Irish Rugby /IRFU



Official match ball supplier to the IRFU



Fleet Management Services



Official Sponsor of the U20, U19 & U18 and Ireland Schoolboy teams



Official vehicle supplier to the IRFU, Official sponsor of IRFU Tag Rugby



Official Gift Supplier to the IRFU



Supporting Irish Rugby

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Detailed schedules for the Union income statement

UNION INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

		2016/17 €	2015/16 €	2014/15 €
Income:	Schedule			
Representative matches	1	73,064,202	72,295,701	70,194,760
Other income	2	3,521,631	3,814,311	3,949,433
		<u>76,585,833</u>	<u>76,110,012</u>	<u>74,144,193</u>
Expenditure:				
Professional game costs	3	41,156,891	37,600,703	32,983,398
Elite player development	4	8,570,856	7,466,126	6,733,212
Games support costs	5	274,112	320,641	330,717
Domestic & community rugby	6	10,248,298	9,587,545	8,443,731
Marketing	7	1,941,583	1,736,811	1,563,396
Grounds	8	2,601,147	901,564	3,317,902
Administration & overheads	9	7,491,161	6,323,692	5,740,972
Depreciation	(Note 4)	1,189,827	1,210,502	1,213,288
Amortisation of financial fixed assets	(Notes 8 & 9)	5,907,292	5,907,292	5,907,292
		<u>79,381,167</u>	<u>71,054,876</u>	<u>66,233,908</u>
(Deficit) surplus for the year		<u>(2,795,334)</u>	<u>5,055,136</u>	<u>7,910,285</u>

T. Grace
Honorary Treasurer

P. R. Browne
Chief Executive

CONSOLIDATED INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

		2016/17 €	2015/16 €	2014/15 €
Income:	Note			
Representative matches		73,064,202	72,295,701	70,194,760
Other income		3,605,630	3,898,311	4,054,433
Share of loss of joint ventures	8	(2,189,641)	(2,768,415)	(1,868,812)
		<u>74,480,191</u>	<u>73,425,597</u>	<u>72,380,381</u>
Expenditure:				
Professional game costs		41,156,891	37,600,703	32,983,398
Elite player development		8,570,856	7,466,126	6,733,212
Games support costs		274,112	320,641	330,717
Domestic & community rugby		10,248,298	9,587,545	8,443,731
Marketing		1,941,583	1,736,811	1,563,396
Grounds		2,601,147	901,564	3,317,902
Administration & overheads		7,309,844	6,406,152	5,842,278
Depreciation	4	1,689,827	1,710,502	1,713,288
Amortisation of goodwill	5	366,563	366,563	446,754
		<u>74,159,121</u>	<u>66,096,607</u>	<u>61,374,676</u>
Surplus for the year		<u>321,070</u>	<u>7,328,990</u>	<u>11,005,705</u>

T. Grace
Honorary Treasurer

P. R. Browne
Chief Executive

UNION STATEMENT OF OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

	2016/17 €	2015/16 €	2014/15 €
(Deficit) surplus for the financial period	(2,795,334)	5,055,136	7,910,285
Actuarial gain (loss) on assets	410,000	(419,000)	1,386,000
Experience gains on pension scheme liabilities	323,000	342,000	840,000
Effect of changes in actuarial assumptions	(294,000)	1,089,000	(3,630,000)
Total (deficit) surplus relating to the period	(2,356,334)	6,067,136	6,506,285
Total (deficit) surplus recognised since the last annual report	(2,356,334)	6,067,136	6,506,285

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

	2016/17 €	2015/16 €	2014/15 €
Surplus for the financial period	321,070	7,328,990	11,005,705
Actuarial gain (loss) on assets	410,000	(419,000)	1,386,000
Experience gains on pension scheme liabilities	323,000	342,000	840,000
Effect of changes in actuarial assumptions	(294,000)	1,089,000	(3,630,000)
Total surplus relating to the period	760,070	8,340,990	9,601,705
Total surplus recognised since the last annual report	760,070	8,340,990	9,601,705

UNION STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN FUNDS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

	2016/17 €	2015/16 €	2014/15 €
General reserve	69,521,101	63,453,965	56,947,680
Ground development reserve	1,269,738	1,269,738	1,269,738
Financial assistance to clubs reserve	1,269,738	1,269,738	1,269,738
Balance at 1 May	72,060,577	65,993,441	59,487,156
Total recognised (deficit) surplus relating to the period	(2,356,334)	6,067,136	6,506,285
Balance at 30 April	69,704,243	72,060,577	65,993,441

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN FUNDS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

	2016/17 €	2015/16 €	2014/15 €
General reserve	86,217,709	77,876,719	68,275,014
Ground development reserve	1,269,738	1,269,738	1,269,738
Financial assistance to clubs reserve	1,269,738	1,269,738	1,269,738
Balance at 1 May	88,757,185	80,416,195	70,814,490
Total recognised surplus relating to the period	760,070	8,340,990	9,601,705
Balance at 30 April	89,517,255	88,757,185	80,416,195

UNION STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30 APRIL 2017

	Note	30/04/17 €	30/04/16 €
Tangible fixed assets	4	30,566,898	31,756,725
Financial fixed assets			
Loans to clubs	6	2,039,137	1,743,978
Other loans	7	9,561,778	9,661,778
Joint ventures	8	70,647,819	76,055,111
Investment in subsidiary undertakings	9	6,500,000	7,000,000
		88,748,734	94,460,867
Current assets			
Debtors and prepayments	10	20,211,490	17,207,534
Cash at bank and in hand		5,255,232	15,351,199
		25,466,722	32,558,733
Current liabilities			
Creditors and accrued expenses	11	15,593,901	13,990,607
		15,593,901	13,990,607
Net current assets		9,872,821	18,568,126
Total assets less current liabilities		129,188,453	144,785,718
Pension liability	12	(2,531,000)	(2,884,000)
Deferred ticket fund	13	(52,936,390)	(64,743,532)
Deferred naming rights fund	14	(4,016,820)	(5,097,609)
		69,704,243	72,060,577
Financed by:			
Union funds		69,704,243	72,060,577

T. Grace
Honorary Treasurer

P. R. Browne
Chief Executive

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30 APRIL 2017

	Note	30/04/17 €	30/04/16 €
Tangible fixed assets	4	37,066,898	38,756,725
Intangible fixed assets	5		
Goodwill		8,268,722	8,904,607
Negative goodwill		(3,290,085)	(3,559,407)
		4,978,637	5,345,200
Financial fixed assets			
Loans to clubs	6	2,039,137	1,743,978
Other loans	7	9,561,778	9,661,778
Joint ventures:	8		
Share of gross assets		185,984,497	190,264,195
Share of gross liabilities		(100,792,092)	(102,882,149)
		96,793,320	98,787,802
Current assets			
Debtors and prepayments	10	20,447,942	17,268,587
Cash at bank and in hand		6,313,202	15,367,685
		26,761,144	32,636,272
Current liabilities			
Creditors and accrued expenses	11	16,598,534	14,043,673
		16,598,534	14,043,673
Net current assets		10,162,610	18,592,599
Total assets less current liabilities		149,001,465	161,482,326
Pension liability	12	(2,531,000)	(2,884,000)
Deferred ticket fund	13	(52,936,390)	(64,743,532)
Deferred naming rights fund	14	(4,016,820)	(5,097,609)
		89,517,255	88,757,185
Financed by:			
Union funds		89,517,255	88,757,185

T. Grace
Honorary Treasurer

P. R. Browne
Chief Executive

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

	30/04/17 €	30/04/16 €
Cash flows from operating activities		
Operating surplus	321,070	7,328,990
Deposit interest receivable	(23,045)	(428,390)
Unwinding of discount (Note 14)	643,020	609,076
Depreciation	1,689,827	1,710,502
Profit on disposal of tangible fixed assets	-	(84,486)
Movement in shares of net assets of joint ventures and Union share of capital contribution	2,189,641	2,768,415
Amortisation	366,563	366,563
Movement in provisions against loans to clubs	8,865	(20,402)
Movement in debtors	(3,179,355)	(2,411,427)
Movement in creditors	2,554,861	(7,874,218)
Current service costs less return on investment on pension	325,000	366,000
Pension fund contributions	(239,000)	(290,000)
Transfer to revenue – deferred naming rights	(1,723,809)	(1,723,809)
Transfer to revenue – corporate boxes and ten year tickets	(12,553,142)	(11,213,324)
Net cash outflow from operating activities	(9,619,504)	(10,896,510)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Interest received on bank deposits and other loans	963	421,229
Interest received on loans to clubs	22,082	7,161
Net advances to clubs	(304,024)	(141,323)
Repayment by Munster Branch IRFU	100,000	-
Disposal of tangible fixed assets	-	450,000
Net cash (outflow) inflow from investing activities	(180,979)	737,067
Cash flows from financing activities		
Proceeds on sale of deferred tickets and boxes	746,000	7,827,907
Net cash inflow from financing activities	746,000	7,827,907
Decrease in cash	(9,054,483)	(2,331,536)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of period	15,367,685	17,699,221
Cash and cash equivalents at end of period	6,313,202	15,367,685

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

1. Accounting policies

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently, except as stated below, in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the accounts.

a. Basis of preparation

The accounts have been prepared on the going concern basis in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in Ireland.

The preparation of financial statements in compliance with FRS 102 requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires the Committee to exercise judgement in applying the Union's accounting policies (see note 2).

b. Basis of consolidation

The group accounts include the accounts of the parent undertaking and its wholly owned subsidiary undertakings, Lansdowne Car Park Limited and Irish International Rugby Competitions Company Limited by Guarantee.

c. Goodwill

Goodwill is the difference between the fair value of the consideration given on the acquisition of a business and the aggregate fair value of the separate net assets acquired.

Goodwill is being amortised through the income statement in equal instalments over its estimated economic life of up to a maximum of 20 years on a straight line basis.

Negative goodwill is amortised through the income statement in equal instalments over the remaining life of the asset to which it relates. This is considered to be 20 years.

Goodwill is reviewed for impairment at the end of the first full financial year following acquisition and in other periods if events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying value may not be recoverable.

On transition to FRS 102 it was determined that there was no change in circumstances that would amend the useful life over which both goodwill and negative goodwill were being amortised. The goodwill is linked in all cases to the life of the underlying tangible fixed assets which is considered to be 20 years.

d. Turnover

Turnover is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable, net of discounts. Turnover includes revenue earned from the sale of goods and from the rendering of services.

The Union, when acting as principal, recognises revenue when (a) the significant risks and rewards of ownership have been transferred to the buyer; (b) it retains no continuing involvement or control over the goods; (c) the amount of revenue can be measured reliably; (d) it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to it and (e) when the specific criteria relating to each of its sales channels have been met, as described below.

Ticket income, competition income and other event income are recognised as revenue when the related event is staged.

Sponsorship income, TV rights income and other commercial agreements are recognised as revenue based on the relevant contractual terms. Where consideration is received in kind, income and expenditure are grossed up on the basis of arm's length commercial rates.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

1. Accounting policies (cont'd.)

e. Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are shown at their historic cost net of any capital grants received or receivable.

f. Depreciation

Depreciation is charged in order to write off the assets over their expected useful lives, on a straight line basis, at the following annual rates:

Land	Nil
Stands, buildings, etc.	2.5%
Car park	5%
Fixtures, fittings & equipment	33.33%, 25% and 12.5%
Computer equipment	20% and 33.33%
Grounds purchased and leased to clubs	Nil

g. Joint ventures

The Union's 50% interest in New Stadium DAC and Thomond Park Stadium Company DAC are accounted for in accordance with 'FRS 102: Part 5 Associates and Joint Ventures'.

In the individual accounts of the Union, investments in joint ventures are treated as financial fixed assets and valued at cost less provisions for impairment in value. The provision for impairment in value of these investments is based on the estimated useful lives of the underlying fixed assets, which is estimated to be 20 years, and written off on a straight line basis. The estimated useful life for calculating amortisation of the underlying fixed assets in the individual accounts of the joint ventures is significantly longer than 20 years.

In the consolidated accounts, the Union's share of the profits less losses are included in the income statement. The Union's interest in the net assets is indicated as a financial fixed asset in the statement of financial position at an amount representing the Union's share of the fair values of the net assets at acquisition plus the Union's share of post acquisition retained profits or losses.

The amounts included in the accounts of the Union are taken from the management accounts of the joint ventures made up to the Union's year end. Audited accounts of the joint venture companies made up to 30 April are not available as both joint ventures have different year ends to the Union.

h. Financial fixed assets

Investments

Investments are valued at cost. These are reviewed annually and provision is made where it is considered that there is an impairment in value.

Income from investments is recognised in the income statement in the year in which it is receivable.

Investment – subsidiary undertakings

In the individual accounts of the Union, the investment in and advances to the Union's wholly owned subsidiary, Lansdowne Car Park Limited, are valued at cost less provisions for impairment in value. The provision for impairment in value is based on the estimated useful life of the underlying fixed asset, which is estimated to be 20 years, and written off on a straight line basis.

The investment in Irish International Rugby Competitions Company Limited by Guarantee is valued at cost less provision for impairment in value. This investment has been fully provided for on the basis that it is expected to be loss making.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

1. Accounting policies (cont'd.)

i. Grants

Capital grants received are set off against the cost of related fixed assets.

Grants towards revenue expenditure are released to the income statement as the related expenditure is incurred.

j. Foreign currencies

Functional and presentation currency

Items included in the accounts are presented in 'Euro', the currency of the primary economic environment in which the entity operates (the 'functional currency').

Transactions and balances

Transactions in foreign currencies are recorded at the rate ruling at the date of the transaction or at a contracted rate. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are retranslated at the rate of exchange ruling at the statement of financial position date or the contracted rate. All differences are taken to the income statement as part of the fair value gain or loss.

k. Pension costs

The Union operates a defined benefit pension scheme for certain employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the Union.

A defined benefit plan defines the pension benefit that the employee will receive on retirement, usually dependent upon several factors including age, length of service and remuneration. A defined benefit plan is a pension plan that is not a defined contribution plan.

The liability recognised in the statement of financial position in respect of the defined benefit plan is the present value of the defined benefit obligation at the end of the reporting date less the fair value of the plan assets at the reporting date.

The defined benefit obligation is calculated using the projected unit credit method. The Union engages independent actuaries annually to calculate the obligation.

The present value is determined by discounting the estimated future payments using market yields on high quality corporate bonds that have terms approximating the estimated period of the future payments.

The Union also operates defined contribution schemes for its employees. Pension benefits are funded over the employees' period of service by way of contributions to insured funds. The Union's contributions are charged to the income statement in the period to which they relate.

l. Deferred ticket income

Monies received in respect of corporate boxes and five and ten year tickets have been treated as deferred income and have been released to the income statement over the period to which they relate based on the estimated number of fixtures and the expected admission prices. Details of the amounts deferred are set out in note 13.

m. Liquid resources

In the statement of cash flows, liquid resources include cash on deposit at banks with more than 24 hours' notice.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

1. Accounting policies (cont'd.)

n. Financing

Amounts received in respect of the transfer to the counterparty of the Union's contributions receivable under the stadium naming rights agreement (see note 14) are recorded as deferred income. Interest is accrued using the rate implicit in the financing agreement and is charged to the income statement in the period to which it relates.

2. Significant judgements and estimates

When preparing the financial statements, the Committee undertakes a number of judgements, estimates and assumptions about the recognition and measurement of assets, liabilities, income and expenses. These are continuously evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

The following are the significant judgements made in applying the accounting policies of the Union that have the most significant effect on the financial statements;

Allowances for impairment of trade receivables

The Committee estimates the allowance for doubtful trade receivables based on assessment of specific accounts where the Union has objective evidence comprising default in payment terms or significant financial difficulty that certain parties are unable to meet their financial obligations. In these cases, judgement used was based on the best available facts and circumstances.

Information about the estimates and assumptions that have the most significant effect on recognition and measurement of assets, liabilities, income and expenditure is provided below. Actual results may be substantially different.

Impairment

In assessing impairment of the intangible assets, the Committee estimates the recoverable amount of each asset based on expected future cash flows. Estimation uncertainty relates to assumptions about the determination of a suitable discount rate.

Deferred ticket income

In assessing the release of deferred ticket income, the Committee estimates the number of future matches, future ticket price and rates of inflation in order to calculate the release of income in the current and future periods.

3. Income and expenditure recognition

Income and expenditure are recognised in the season in which they arise and are incurred.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

4. Tangible fixed assets

Union	Cost at 01/05/16 €	Additions €	Cost at 30/04/17 €
Premises and grounds	49,732,572	-	49,732,572
Fixtures, fittings & equipment	7,497,273	-	7,497,273
Grounds purchased and leased to clubs	368,713	-	368,713
	57,598,558	-	57,598,558

	Accumulated depreciation at 01/05/16 €	Charge for year €	Accumulated depreciation at 30/04/17 €
Premises and grounds	18,344,697	1,189,827	19,534,524
Fixtures, fittings & equipment	7,497,136	-	7,497,136
Grounds purchased and leased to clubs	-	-	-
	25,841,833	1,189,827	27,031,660

Net book value	31,756,725		30,566,898
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Consolidated	Cost at 01/05/16 €	Additions €	Cost at 30/04/17 €
Premises and grounds	49,732,572	-	49,732,572
Fixtures, fittings & equipment	7,497,273	-	7,497,273
Car park	10,000,000	-	10,000,000
Grounds purchased and leased to clubs	368,713	-	368,713
	67,598,558	-	67,598,558

	Accumulated depreciation at 01/05/16 €	Charge for year €	Accumulated depreciation at 30/04/17 €
Premises and grounds	18,344,697	1,189,827	19,534,524
Fixtures, fittings & equipment	7,497,136	-	7,497,136
Car park	3,000,000	500,000	3,500,000
Grounds purchased and leased to clubs	-	-	-
	28,841,833	1,689,827	30,531,660

Net book value	38,756,725		37,066,898
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NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

4. Tangible fixed assets (cont'd.)

- (i) The Union consider the accumulated cost, less related depreciation, on expenditure capitalised in respect of the previous stadium at Lansdowne Road as relating to enhancing the value of the land on which the stadium is situated. As stated in note 8, the Union is in receipt of annual rental income of €750,000 for this land. The net amount included within premises and grounds above in respect of this expenditure is €5,398,504.
- (ii) Under a Memorandum of Understanding dated 10 December 2007, the Union entered into arrangements with the Munster Branch IRFU and Thomond Park Stadium Company DAC to redevelop the stadium at Thomond Park. As part of these arrangements, the Union advanced a loan to the Branch (note 7) and acquired a 50% interest in Thomond Park Stadium Company DAC (note 8). In addition, the Union have granted an option to the Branch to acquire the freehold interest that the Union holds in Thomond Park. The option price will be based on the original cost of the grounds to the Union adjusted for inflation by reference to the Consumer Price Index from the date of the granting of the option.

This option will be exercisable by the Branch on the earlier of ten years from the date of practical completion of the stadium or by 1 January 2019.

The accumulated cost of the old stadium, less related depreciation, amounts to €3,312,031 and is included within premises and grounds above.

5. Intangible fixed assets

	30/04/17	30/04/16
	€	€
Goodwill arising on share of New Stadium DAC		
Cost		
At 1 May	11,898,642	12,144,850
Union share of movement on capital contribution	-	(246,208)
At 30 April	11,898,642	11,898,642
Amortisation		
At 1 May	(2,994,035)	(2,358,150)
Charge for the year	(635,885)	(635,885)
At 30 April	(3,629,920)	(2,994,035)
	8,268,722	8,904,607

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

5. Intangible fixed assets (cont'd.)

As part of its investment in the development of the Aviva Stadium, the Union incurred certain expenditure, which was not directly advanced to the joint venture company. In addition, the Union's capital contribution exceeded 50% of the overall capital contribution made to the joint venture company.

This additional expenditure referred to above, the effect of conversion of the loan to share capital and premium as referred to in note 8, and the excess capital contribution, which represents the fair value of the cost of the development of the stadium over the Union's share of the separate net assets of the joint venture company, have been treated as goodwill.

This goodwill is being amortised over a period of 20 years on a straight line basis.

	30/04/17	30/04/16
	€	€
Negative goodwill arising on share of Thomond Park Stadium Company DAC		
Cost		
At 1 May	(4,578,474)	(4,538,474)
Union share of movement on capital contribution	-	(40,000)
At 30 April	(4,578,474)	(4,578,474)
Amortisation		
At 1 May	1,019,067	749,745
Credit for the year	269,322	269,322
At 30 April	1,288,389	1,019,067
	(3,290,085)	(3,559,407)

Negative goodwill arose on the Union's share of a capital contribution in Thomond Park Stadium Company DAC.

Negative goodwill is being amortised through the income statement in equal instalments over the remaining life of the asset.

6. Loans to clubs

Interest on loans to clubs is generally charged at a rate of 1%. Terms of repayment are generally over 10 years.

Loans to clubs included in the statement of financial position are net of provision where applicable. Provisions against loans to clubs at the year end amounted to €565,368 (2016: €556,503). The movement on these provisions has decreased net income by €8,865 (2015/16: €20,402 increase, 2014/15: €46,944 decrease).

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

7. Other loans

	30/04/17	30/04/16
Union and Consolidated	€	€
Loan to Munster Branch IRFU	9,561,778	9,661,778
<hr/>		
Amount due within one year	4,800,000	4,400,000
Amounts due after one year	4,761,778	5,261,778
<hr/>		
	9,561,778	9,661,778

The Union advanced funds to the Munster Branch in order to assist with the development of Thomond Park. The amounts advanced are secured on the Branch's share in Thomond Park Stadium Company DAC and on the loan advanced by the Branch to that company. Interest is chargeable on the loan to the Branch based on the effective cost of funds to the Union.

The schedule of loan repayments was agreed as follows:

30 April 2016	€200,000
30 April 2017	€4,200,000
30 April 2018 - 30 April 2026 (per annum)	€500,000
30 April 2027	€761,778

The loan is to be fully repaid by 30 April 2027.

Repayment of this loan has not been in accordance with the agreed schedule of loan repayments and current arrears amount to €4,300,000 (2016: €200,000).

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

8. Joint ventures

The Union holds 50% of the ordinary share capital of New Stadium DAC and 50% of the ordinary share capital of Thomond Park Stadium Company DAC (companies formed to develop the Aviva Stadium and Thomond Park respectively).

	30/04/17	30/04/16
	€	€
Investment at cost		
- New Stadium DAC	108,145,832	108,145,832
- Thomond Park Stadium Company DAC	5	5
<hr/>		
	108,145,837	108,145,837
Amortisation in respect of New Stadium DAC		
Accumulated balance carried forward	(32,090,726)	(26,683,434)
Charge for the year	(5,407,292)	(5,407,292)
<hr/>		
	70,647,819	76,055,111

On 11 September 2014, the Union exchanged the existing loan to New Stadium DAC for 1 ordinary share of €1 nominal value. The excess of the liability at that date, over the nominal value of the share received was recognised as share premium. This gave rise to additional goodwill as referred to in note 5.

Disclosures in respect of New Stadium DAC, based on the company's management accounts, required under 'FRS 102: Part 5 Associates and Joint Ventures' are as follows:

	30/04/17	30/04/16
	€	€
Share of turnover	5,290,989	5,184,413
<hr/>		
Share of operating loss	(1,744,340)	(2,053,386)
Share of tax	-	-
<hr/>		
Share of loss after tax	(1,744,340)	(2,053,386)

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

8. Joint ventures (cont'd.)

	30/04/17	30/04/16
	€	€
Share of fixed assets	169,332,406	173,980,210
Share of current assets	3,029,218	2,211,586
Share of gross assets	172,361,624	176,191,796
Share of current liabilities	(1,085,046)	(1,148,343)
Share of non-current liabilities	(87,810,828)	(89,833,363)
Share of gross liabilities	(88,895,874)	(90,981,706)
Share of net assets	83,465,750	85,210,090

Disclosures in respect of Thomond Park Stadium Company DAC, based on the company's management accounts, required under 'FRS 102: Part 5 Associates and Joint Ventures' are as follows:

	30/04/17	30/04/16
	€	€
Share of turnover	1,237,976	1,098,178
Share of operating loss	(445,301)	(715,029)
Share of tax	-	-
Share of loss after tax	(445,301)	(715,029)
Share of fixed assets	13,416,128	13,941,873
Share of current assets	206,745	130,526
Share of gross assets	13,622,873	14,072,399
Share of current liabilities	(202,863)	(207,088)
Share of non-current liabilities	(11,693,355)	(11,693,355)
Share of gross liabilities	(11,896,218)	(11,900,443)
Share of net assets	1,726,655	2,171,956

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

8. Joint ventures (cont'd.)

The Union has entered into lease agreements with each of these companies to lease land on which the stadia have been redeveloped on the following terms:

Company	Term of lease	Annual rent
New Stadium DAC	99 years from Dec 2005	€750,000
Thomond Park Stadium Company DAC	55 years from Oct 2006	€9,600

The rents due became payable during the year ended April 2011 in the case of Thomond Park, and became due from May 2010 in the case of the Aviva Stadium.

9. Investment in subsidiary undertakings

	Irish International Rugby Competitions Company Limited by Guarantee €	Lansdowne Car Park Limited €	Total €
Cost			
At 1 May	-	10,000,000	10,000,000
Additions during the year	315,000	-	315,000
At 30 April	315,000	10,000,000	10,315,000
Amortisation and Impairment			
At 1 May	-	(3,000,000)	(3,000,000)
Charge for the year	(315,000)	(500,000)	(815,000)
At 30 April	(315,000)	(3,500,000)	(3,815,000)
	-	6,500,000	6,500,000

The Union owns 100% of the ordinary share capital of Lansdowne Car Park Limited, and Irish International Rugby Competitions Company Limited by Guarantee. Both companies are registered in the Republic of Ireland and their registered office is at 10/12 Lansdowne Road, Dublin 4.

The Union advanced funds to Lansdowne Car Park Limited in order to finance the construction of a car park located adjacent to the Aviva Stadium. The Union are amortising the investment in the subsidiary over the expected useful life of the car park which is estimated to be 20 years.

The loan is unsecured, interest free, has no fixed date of repayment and is repayable on demand.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

9. Investment in subsidiary undertakings (cont'd.)

Irish International Rugby Competitions Company Limited by Guarantee was set up in order to run the Women's Rugby World Cup 2017. This venture is not expected to generate profits and for this reason the Union decided to fully provide against its investment. The losses relating to this venture to 30 April 2017 amounted to €53,338.

10. Debtors and prepayments

	Union		Consolidated	
	30/04/17	30/04/16	30/04/17	30/04/16
	€	€	€	€
Sponsorship debtors	3,769,618	3,822,050	3,769,618	3,822,050
Ticket debtors	3,404,966	3,392,562	3,404,966	3,392,562
Other debtors	2,118	12,874	2,118	73,927
Prepayments and accrued income	12,911,084	9,780,137	13,147,536	9,780,137
Stock of sportswear and equipment	123,704	199,911	123,704	199,911
	20,211,490	17,207,534	20,447,942	17,268,587

Trade debtors and short term receivables above are stated net of provisions, where applicable. Provisions against debtors at the year end amounted to €4,967,120 (2016: €4,958,935). The movement on these provisions has decreased net income by €8,185 (2015/16: €3,236,490 decrease; 2014/15: €115,283 decrease).

Included in ticket debtors above are amounts receivable in two to five years of €1,570,970 (2016: €2,530,136).

11. Creditors

	Union		Consolidated	
	30/04/17	30/04/16	30/04/17	30/04/16
	€	€	€	€
Accruals	11,516,671	10,739,129	11,569,728	10,774,695
Income received in advance	3,953,816	3,151,771	4,845,075	3,169,271
PAYE/PRSI	64,514	56,815	64,514	56,815
VAT	58,900	42,892	119,217	42,892
	15,593,901	13,990,607	16,598,534	14,043,673

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

12. Pension commitments

The pension entitlements of certain employees of the Union arise under a defined benefit scheme and defined contribution schemes which are funded by annual contributions by the Union to separately administered pension funds.

The latest actuarial valuation for the defined benefit scheme was dated 1 August 2014. The assets of the fund, which amounted to €8,676,000, showed that, on an immediate discontinuance basis, the assets of the fund were adequate to meet the plan's statutory minimum funding liabilities. The assets represent 91% in aggregate of the benefits which would accrue to members at the valuation date after allowing for future salary increases. The actuarial report is not available for public inspection.

The valuations employed for FRS 102 disclosure purposes have been updated by the scheme's independent and qualified actuary to take account of the requirements of the accounting standard in order to assess the liabilities of the scheme as at 30 April 2017.

The amounts recognised in the income statement are as follows:

	30/04/17	30/04/16
	€	€
<i>Amounts charged to income statement:</i>		
Current service cost	309,000	340,000
Total operating charge	309,000	340,000
<i>Amounts charged to finance cost:</i>		
Net finance expense	62,000	82,000
Total charge to the income statement	371,000	422,000
Actual return on scheme assets	582,000	(274,000)

Actuarial gains of €439,000 (2015/16: €1,012,000) have been recognised in the statement of other comprehensive income.

The amounts recognised in the statement of financial position are as follows:

	30/04/17	30/04/16
	€	€
Present value of funded obligations	(11,326,000)	(11,033,000)
Fair value of scheme assets	8,795,000	8,149,000
Net pension liability	(2,531,000)	(2,884,000)

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

12. Pension commitments (cont'd.)

	30/04/17	30/04/16
	€	€
Opening defined benefit obligation	11,033,000	11,971,000
Current service cost	309,000	340,000
Interest on scheme liabilities	229,000	209,000
Actuarial gain	(29,000)	(1,431,000)
Benefits paid	(216,000)	(56,000)
Closing defined benefit obligation	11,326,000	11,033,000

Changes in the fair value of scheme assets are as follows:

	30/04/17	30/04/16
	€	€
Opening fair value of scheme assets	8,149,000	8,151,000
Expected return on scheme assets	172,000	145,000
Contributions by employer	239,000	290,000
Contributions by scheme participants	41,000	50,000
Actuarial gain (loss)	410,000	(419,000)
Pension levy	-	(12,000)
Benefits paid	(216,000)	(56,000)
Closing fair value of scheme assets	8,795,000	8,149,000

The fair value of the major categories of scheme assets as a percentage of total scheme assets are as follows:

	30/04/17	30/04/17	30/04/16	30/04/16
	%	€	%	€
Equities	39	3,427,000	33	2,698,000
Bonds	31	2,734,000	33	2,706,000
Property	2	130,000	2	119,000
Cash/Other	1	124,000	2	160,000
Global Absolute Return Strategies Fund	27	2,380,000	30	2,466,000
		8,795,000		8,149,000

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

12. Pension commitments (cont'd.)

The principal actuarial assumptions as at the reporting date were:

	30/04/17	30/04/16
	%	%
Rate of increase in salaries	1.80	1.80
Rate of increase in pensions payment (pre 2009)	5.00	5.00
Rate of increase in pensions payment (post 2009)	1.80	1.80
Discount rate	2.00	2.10
Inflation assumption	1.80	1.80

The mortality assumptions used were as follows:

	30/04/17	30/04/16
	years	years
Life expectancy of male/female currently aged 65	22.9/25.1	22.8/25.0
Life expectancy of male/female at 65 currently aged 45	24.8/27.2	24.7/27.1

13. Deferred ticket fund

	30/04/17	30/04/16
	€	€
At 1 May	64,743,532	68,128,949
Transfer to revenue account	(12,553,142)	(11,213,324)
Proceeds in respect of tickets sold during the year received and receivable	746,000	7,827,907
At 30 April	52,936,390	64,743,532

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

14. Deferred naming rights fund

The Union entered into an arrangement with Hibernian Aviva Group plc ('Aviva') in respect of naming rights for the stadium. The Union, the Football Association of Ireland and New Stadium DAC will receive payments over a ten year period which commenced in July 2010 in return for the naming rights to the stadium. The Union agreed to transfer the rights to future elements of these payments in return for an upfront payment of €8,333,333. These funds, together with other amounts received, are shown as deferred naming rights and will be released to the income statement over the period of the naming rights agreement.

	30/04/17	30/04/16
	€	€
At 1 May	5,097,609	6,212,342
Unwind of discount	643,020	609,076
Transferred to income during the year	(1,723,809)	(1,723,809)
At 30 April	4,016,820	5,097,609

The financing element of the arrangement is secured over future payments receivable from Aviva only.

15. Revenue grants

The following grants were received and used for the stated purpose in the year ended 30 April 2017.

	30/04/17	30/04/16
<i>Sport Ireland</i>		
- game development and participation	€2,250,843	€2,250,843
- women in sport	€114,000	€114,000
- high performance women's sevens	€275,000	€275,000
- dormant account funding for national activity plan	€34,200	-
<i>Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport</i>		
- capital sports grant	-	€93,790
<i>Olympic Council of Ireland/IOC Solidarity Funding</i>		
- women's sevens	-	€77,047
<i>World Rugby</i>		
- game development and participation and elite player development	Stg£200,000	Stg£200,000

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

16. Commitments and contingencies

Commitments under operating leases

On 12 November 2010 the Union entered into an operating lease in respect of property at 10/12 Lansdowne Road at an annual rent of €350,000. This lease will expire on 31 December 2023 with a tenant only break clause on 31 December 2018. The amount charged in respect of this rent in the current period amounted to €350,000. During the year the Union incurred operating lease rentals on motor vehicles amounting to €248,504. The commitment in respect of existing lease agreements on vehicles within twelve months amount to €72,733 and after twelve months amount to €4,261.

Contingencies

In terms of agreements between the Union, the Football Association of Ireland, New Stadium DAC and the Government for the provision of grants amounting to €191 million for the redevelopment of the Aviva Stadium, the Union have agreed that in the event that the land on which the stadium is built is not used for sporting and recreational activities for a period of thirty years from the date of payment of the grants, the grants or a portion of the grants could become repayable.

In terms of agreements between the Union, the Munster Branch Irish Rugby Football Union, Thomond Park Stadium Company DAC and the Government for the provision of grants amounting to €9 million for the redevelopment of Thomond Park, the Union have agreed that in the event that the Stadium is not used as a facility for the playing of Rugby Union and associated social, recreational and cultural activities for the people of Munster and surrounding district for the period of fifteen years from the date of payment of the grants, the grants or a portion of the grants could become repayable.

The Union have pledged the lands at Thomond Park as security in respect of any liability which may arise in this regard.

The Union issued a joint and several letter of undertaking in conjunction with the Football Association of Ireland to secure a bank guarantee issued by New Stadium DAC, trading as Aviva Stadium, in favour of Iarnród Éireann in the amount of €2,250,000.

17. Related party disclosures

The Union is controlled by the Council of the Irish Rugby Football Union.

The day to day affairs are managed by a Committee comprising various members, the majority of whom have been elected.

The Committee consider that all material transactions with related parties have been adequately disclosed in these financial statements and the notes thereto.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

18. Financial risk management

The Union has exposure to three main areas of risk - foreign exchange currency, liquidity risk and customer credit. To a lesser extent the Union is also exposed to interest rate risk.

Foreign exchange transactional currency

The Union is exposed to currency exchange rate risk due to a significant portion of its receivables and operating expenses being denominated in non-euro currencies. The net exposure of each currency is monitored and managed by the Committee on a continuous basis.

Liquidity risk

The objective of the Union in managing liquidity risk is to ensure that it can meet its financial obligations as and when they fall due. The Union expects to meet its financial obligations through operating cash flows. In the event that the operating cash flows would not cover all the financial obligations the Union has credit facilities available.

Customer credit

The Union may offer credit terms to its customers and allow payment of the debt after delivery of the goods or services. The Union is at risk to the extent that a customer may be unable to pay the debt on the specified due date.

19. Financial assets and liabilities

	30/04/17	30/04/16
	€	€
Union		
Financial assets measured at amortised cost	31,812,405	28,613,290
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	15,470,487	13,890,900
Consolidated		
Financial assets measured at amortised cost	32,048,857	28,674,343
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	16,414,803	13,943,966

Financial assets measured at amortised cost include loans to clubs, other loans, debtors and prepayments. Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost include accruals and income received in advance.

20. Approval of accounts

The accounts of the Union were approved by the Committee on 6 June 2017 and signed on its behalf by the Honorary Treasurer and the Chief Executive.

STATEMENT OF COMMITTEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Committee is responsible for preparing accounts, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Union at the end of each financial period and of the surplus or deficit for the period. They are responsible for keeping proper accounting records, for safeguarding assets, and for preventing and detecting fraud and other irregularities.

The Committee confirms that suitable accounting policies have been consistently applied, that reasonable and prudent judgements and estimates have been used in the preparation of the accounts, and that it is appropriate to assume that the Union will continue in being and to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

We have audited the accounts on pages 40 to 64 which comprise the Union and consolidated income statement, the Union and consolidated statement of other comprehensive income, the Union and consolidated statement of changes in funds, the Union and consolidated statement of financial position and the consolidated cash flow statement with the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council and promulgated by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland (Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland), including Financial Reporting Standard 102.

Respective responsibilities of the Committee and the auditors

As explained more fully on page 65, the Committee is responsible for preparing the accounts giving a true and fair view. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the accounts in accordance with Irish law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Union's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Committee; and the overall presentation of the financial statements.

Opinion

In our opinion the accounts

- give a true and fair view, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland, of the state of affairs of the Union as at 30 April 2017 and of the deficit of expenditure over income of the Union for the year then ended.
- have been prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland.

Grant Thornton
Registered Auditors
Chartered Accountants

Molyneux House
Bride Street
Dublin 8

Date: 6 June 2017

INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

Schedule 1: Representative matches

	2016/17 €	2015/16 €	2014/15 €
International rugby income	37,933,469	39,610,945	36,790,118
Commercial income	10,478,441	9,161,895	8,566,907
Deferred ticket income	14,276,951	12,937,133	15,129,752
Provincial competition income	10,375,341	10,585,728	9,707,983
	73,064,202	72,295,701	70,194,760

Schedule 2: Other income

	2016/17 €	2015/16 €	2014/15 €
Other rugby income	365,469	294,957	337,280
Revenue grants	2,674,043	2,810,680	2,639,843
Other income	482,119	708,674	972,310
	3,521,631	3,814,311	3,949,433

EXPENDITURE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

Schedule 3: Professional game costs

	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
	€	€	€
National tours, camps and squads	993,567	123,760	934,619
National match costs	3,361,467	2,511,503	3,064,765
Player and management costs	36,801,857	34,965,440	28,984,014
	41,156,891	37,600,703	32,983,398

Schedule 4: Elite player development

	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
	€	€	€
Wolfhound/Emerging Ireland teams	-	105,764	232,352
Women's representative teams	2,155,495	1,758,559	1,825,204
Sevens	268,136	219,595	121,795
Under 20s	460,331	517,397	493,002
Age-grade teams	400,668	348,581	404,871
Academies	2,758,686	2,422,012	1,768,449
High performance unit	2,527,540	2,094,218	1,887,539
	8,570,856	7,466,126	6,733,212

Schedule 5: Games support costs

	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
	€	€	€
Referee costs	274,112	320,641	330,717
	274,112	320,641	330,717

EXPENDITURE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

Schedule 6: Domestic & community rugby

	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
	€	€	€
International club team	37,612	63,590	71,032
Domestic competitions	279,635	279,192	284,237
General development costs	636,679	574,151	641,218
Development resources	299,568	330,724	270,377
Coaching courses	269,171	237,743	218,729
Youth and schools	334,900	348,797	261,611
YDO and provincial staff	3,419,938	3,265,619	2,737,349
Clubs and schools support	1,332,509	1,135,942	1,367,726
Referee development	553,889	601,404	544,959
Participation rugby	545,183	333,682	345,863
Community rugby and other funding	2,539,214	2,416,701	1,700,630
	10,248,298	9,587,545	8,443,731

EXPENDITURE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

Schedule 7: Marketing

	2016/17 €	2015/16 €	2014/15 €
Marketing	1,413,428	1,258,051	1,126,673
PR and communications	172,134	175,450	125,692
Website	356,021	303,310	311,031
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	1,941,583	1,736,811	1,563,396

Schedule 8: Grounds

	2016/17 €	2015/16 €	2014/15 €
Licence fees, rates and insurance	2,255,236	517,527	2,882,361
Repairs and renewals	289,972	167,947	289,278
Other facilities	55,939	216,090	146,263
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	2,601,147	901,564	3,317,902

EXPENDITURE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2017

Schedule 9: Administration & overheads

	2016/17 €	2015/16 €	2014/15 €
Governance costs	390,524	354,298	360,544
Salaries and pension	2,925,900	2,791,254	2,926,246
Printing, postage and stationery	103,850	229,759	136,961
Rates, rent, insurance and telephone	741,775	781,616	668,504
Office maintenance	500,446	734,707	363,907
Professional fees	2,359,039	954,093	849,764
Miscellaneous administration costs	469,627	477,965	435,046
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	7,491,161	6,323,692	5,740,972



D AND IN LIFE WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK!

AIG



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