

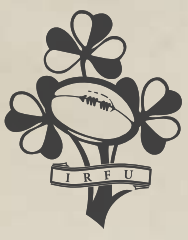
*IRFU*

Irish Rugby Football Union Annual Report 2006/2007




*Making history*

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**“VICTORIES IN THE AUTUMN AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA, AUSTRALIA AND THE PACIFIC ISLANDERS, FOLLOWED BY RBS 6 NATIONS WINS AGAINST WALES, ENGLAND, SCOTLAND AND ITALY AND A DEFEAT IN THE LAST 2 MINUTES V. FRANCE IS ALMOST AS GOOD AS IT GETS.”**

At the Council meeting last June, I identified two IRFU priorities (i) Lansdowne Road development and (ii) the domestic game and that really has been the agenda bar normal ongoing rugby matters — more later.

To reflect on the season 2006/07, it seems hard to comprehend the extent of the “highs” for Irish rugby, with 1 or 2 lesser moments which merely need to be put into context. The National Team under the careful tutelage of Eddie O’Sullivan and his colleagues and the captaincy of Brian O’Driscoll have brought great honour and happy memories to Irish rugby. Victories in the autumn against South Africa, Australia and the Pacific Islanders, followed by RBS 6 Nations wins against Wales, England, Scotland and Italy and a defeat in the last 2 minutes v. France is almost as good as it gets. However, it would be remiss not to reflect on the first half performance v. Australia when in many commentators eyes, Ireland gave the best wet weather performance of rugby ever seen in the world, later to be followed by our most comprehensive ever defeat of England.

The 2 matches at Croke Park turned out to be monumental sporting occasions that brought credit to the Irish Nation and sport was indeed the winner. I must acknowledge and thank yet again Nicky Brennan and the GAA for all their efforts and indeed, reflect on their shared disappointment with us of the last 2 minutes against France.

As I write, and look forward, a trip to Argentina and the Churchill Cup are on the horizon, followed by the World Cup in France — I wish all involved every success.

Beyond the National Team success, the U.20s Grand Slam performance in the 6 Nations warrants special mention under the care of Philip Orr, Eric Elwood and wonderfully led by David Pollock, a young man of rounded ability, good on the field and following a career in medicine. One only needs to reflect on how few grand slams happen to realise the magnitude of this achievement — well done fellas and we look forward to your future achievements.

The U.19s competed manfully in a World Cup, very successfully and well-staged in Ulster. The crowd support in Belfast was fantastic and the tournament brought great credit to the province. The Ulster Branch Committee and staff deserve full credit for a job well done.

The U.18s were beaten in a “penalty shootout” by host nation, France, in the U.18 FIRA Tournament Final and the Schools performed well in their Easter Tournament. All in all, our National Teams are

# *President's Report*



competing in a serious manner, which merits great credit to all our coaching and management personnel — I won't mention them individually here but just to say a big thank you on behalf of the IRFU. In addition the Irish Womens Team has had it's most successful 6 Nations to date with 2 wins — well done.

As I wrote above, one of the major issues on the IRFU's mind, was Lansdowne Road and as we now know, the planning process is almost complete and is well chronicled. Unfortunately, litigation followed from Wanderers FC, now thankfully settled.

The domestic game, which in my view underpins the professional game, is nearing the end of a review process. The process has been made more drawn out due to the amount of time required to deal with Lansdowne Road and related issues. However the IRFU, in addition to reviewing the structure, is also looking at ways to try and get funds down into the domestic game particularly from our successful provinces. No sooner than this review nears completion, but the ERC crisis erupts, so all aspirations are on hold for the moment. I have watched many AIB League games this season, and I don't subscribe to the "doom and gloom" merchants' view — sometimes people talk things down too much but the brand of rugby played by the likes of Garryowen, a rejuvenated Old Belvedere, Greystones, Wanderers, and in the latter part of the season, Belfast Harlequins was worth the admission money. In addition the IRFU are constantly examining the issue of getting academy and non-playing provincial players, game time with AIB League clubs — these are complex issues. The club/non-contracted players drawn from the AIB League again brought success to the game, defeating England and narrowly losing to Scotland — plenty of talent there.

Our provinces have done well whilst not reaching the halcyon levels of 2005/2006, but both Munster and Leinster reached Heineken Cup quarter finals and at

the time of writing Leinster and Ulster are competing for Magner's League honours. Connacht are regrouping and it is nice to see some of their players returning from sojourns across the water. I repeat my view; I believe we need 4 professional teams to underpin our National Side. Let us hope this is not undermined in any shape or form, but it does bring home the importance of ERC to Irish rugby, both the professional and domestic game, — selfish interest must not be allowed to prevail and it must be remembered Unions are there for the benefit of all rugby participants not the lucky few. It is also important in the context of the Thomond Park, Musgrave Park, Ravenhill, Donnybrook and RDS projects.

In closing, yet again I'd like to acknowledge the role throughout the game of referees assessors, coaches and club alickadoos — mostly unsung heroes, save for the lucky few who achieve success like Alain Rolland, Alan Lewis and Donal Courtney — yet they too have put in huge sacrifice. Thanks to one and all.

To conclude I'd like to say a particular thank you to the IRFU Committee — a capable and under-acknowledged group. There is a wealth of experience, commonsense and rugby "know how" amongst this group, allied to an outside world "know how" that benefits Irish rugby hugely. It was a privilege to work and serve with you and indeed enjoy your company on the odd social occasion permitted. I thank the Past Presidents for their continued support, to the Committee and their valued advice. I also wish to make special mention of John Lyons, standing down as Treasurer and Andy Crawford leaving the Committee — thanks for your work and friendship.

Finally to Philip Browne and all his colleagues at 62 Lansdowne Road and at other venues — many thanks again for your valued and ongoing efforts on behalf of Irish rugby. It is only when one gets closely involved, does one realise the pressure that is there and the quantum of work done — well done to all and thank you.



"I MUST EMPHASISE THAT THIS SURPLUS IS NECESSARY TO OFFSET A SIGNIFICANT FORECASTED DEFICIT NEXT YEAR CONSEQUENT ON PARTICIPATION IN THE RWC AND LOSS OF REVENUE FROM AUTUMN INTERNATIONALS."

JOHN LYONS



# Honorary Treasurer's Report

For the last time it is my privilege to present to you the Accounts of the IRFU. As I indicated in my report last year 2006/07 was very positive in financial terms for the Union with a net operating surplus of over €5m being generated from the Union's activities. The size of this surplus is not due to any one factor but as we shall see is rather due to a range of positive effects on the Union's revenues throughout the year. I must emphasise that this surplus is necessary to offset a significant forecasted deficit next year consequent on participation in the RWC and loss of revenue from Autumn Internationals.

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

Overall income rose from €46.4m to €55.5m in the year under review due largely to the factors outlined below:

The importance to the Union of performance-related income cannot be over-emphasised. This substantial source of income is entirely dependent on the performance of our National and Provincial Teams and will only be generated if the Union continue to invest wisely in these resources to ensure the future competitiveness of our National and Provincial Teams.

The 2 matches at Croke Park were historic and momentous occasions and helped generate significant additional income for the Union. A very high level of preparation and planning went into these events and I would pay particular

thanks to Martin Murphy and his team and their counterparts in Croke Park for their meticulous planning during the months leading to the games against France and England.

The efforts of the Union's Commercial and Marketing Committee under the chairmanship of Pat Fitzgerald are often not given the credit they deserve but I would draw your attention to the increase of over €1m from last years commercial revenue. This increase is in fact somewhat understated as 2005/06 included a very significant level of hospitality income which has been reallocated this year to International Rugby Income. Among the new initiatives which came to fruition this year was the Supporters Club which netted over €250k for the Union.

As can be seen in the accounts Heineken Cup and Magners League provided very significant income for the Union in the year under review. It is of critical importance that the Union does all in its power to ensure the continued success of these tournaments into the future because as well as the entertainment they provide they are also an essential part of the Union's player development process.

Whilst the Union suffered a reduction in rental and other income from the stadium this was somewhat offset by a rise in interest rates and positive exchange rate movements. It should be noted however that with the financial demands imposed by the construction of the new stadium rising interest rates are not in the Union's best interests in the medium term.





Accompanying the increase in revenues inevitably we find an increase in the Union's costs. It should be emphasised that certain of these costs arise as a result of performance-related success while other cost increases were only permitted in the interests of real and sustainable revenue growth.

Overall costs increased by €4.7m to €50.3m. The main increases and the reasons underlying them are outlined below:

Professional game costs increased by €1.8m due to the success of the National Team and additional match costs for 6 Nations.

Elite player development rose by over €750k reflecting the Union's increased investment in the high performance area together with the cost of participating in international competitions below senior level.

Expenditure on the domestic game increased by €1.5m due to the costs of hosting the U.19 RWC, the funding of new domestic game managers in the Branches, the player registration process and the Union's commitment to pay out all budgeted costs in respect of the club game. It is regrettable to note however that much of the increase in domestic competition costs related to legal fees resulting from the court actions of certain All Ireland League clubs.

Marketing costs increased by c. €200k but this increase should be viewed in the light of the significantly increased revenues generated from commercial operations.

Ground costs showed a reduction from last year's level due to the closure of Lansdowne Road at the end of December.

Administration costs increased by c. €700k due to the increased cost of good governance and costs attributable to the implementation of the Strategic Plan which is now subject to ongoing review. In

addition there were significant costs associated with negotiations with Wanderers FC to enable construction of the new stadium proceed without imposing additional costs to the project in the future.

## BALANCE SHEET

I would draw your attention to the fact that despite a surplus of over €5m the Union's cash balances actually declined by €3.6m. This is due to a combination of factors namely the addition of further properties to the Union's portfolio, 10 year ticket income which is an amortisation rather than an annual cash flow and the decrease in the level of creditors and accruals. Significant cash receipts including Government grant were received in early May thereby re-establishing our liquid funds at their normal level. I would take this opportunity to thank the Government for their most generous support of the Union's development programmes and I would also draw your attention to the generous funding of programmes provided by the IRB which is shown under Other Rugby Income.

You will note under current assets an amount representing the pension scheme asset of €123k which compares with a deficit in last year's accounts of €407k. In the year under review the Union made a once-off cash injection to the scheme with the result that the scheme is now adequately funded.

May I draw your attention to the Accounting Policies and Notes 3, 4 and 7 which explain the accounting treatment appropriate to expenditure on redevelopment of Lansdowne Road and which enable the Union comply with best accounting practise.

In conclusion may I thank Conor O'Brien, the Finance staff in particular and all at the Union's offices for their support to me over my tenure as Honorary Treasurer.

I would like also to wish my successor every success and as happy and fulfilling a tenure as I have enjoyed and I am certain that with the same co-operation and assistance as I have received from Philip Browne, Head Office staff and successive Committees he will be not be disappointed.





**“ON ANY GIVEN DAY THIS IRISH TEAM IS CAPABLE OF BEATING THE BEST TEAMS IN THE WORLD.”**

It has been a momentous season in many respects both on and off the pitch. The exploits of our National Team on tour in New Zealand last summer, against Australia and South Africa in November and in the 6 Nations are well documented and are summarised later in this report and on the DVD. Their performances over this period allow us to approach Rugby World Cup (RWC) with cautious optimism in the knowledge that on any given day this Irish Team is capable of beating the best teams in the world.

However, for once it is perhaps matters off the field that grabbed headlines this year. Firstly, the closure of Lansdowne Road for the redevelopment programme was marked by a memorable send off by the Irish Team at the Pacific Islanders match in November and finally on 31st December by Leinster in a full house for a Magners League match against Ulster. The stadium in its present form served Irish rugby well and the IRFU owes Ronnie Dawson a debt of gratitude for the work he has done over many years to ensure that the stadium fulfilled its function for the IRFU. However, time has

certainly caught up with the stadium and it has rightly been retired to make way for a modern facility Irish rugby will be proud of.

In July 2006 the Lansdowne Road Stadium Development Company (LRSDC) was granted a planning permission to develop a new 50,000 capacity stadium on the site at Lansdowne Road. The planning permission was appealed to An Bord Pleanala and following an 8 day oral hearing in December, an Bord Pleanala granted a planning permission subject to certain conditions. These conditions have been met and the demolition of the old stadium is now underway. The completion of the project is scheduled for December 2009 and the cost of the project will be €365m. This has been a challenging process to date given the complexity of the site and the number of parties involved including the State, the FAI, CIE, Dublin City Council, 2 tenant clubs and obviously our neighbours. It was regrettable that Wanderers FC who instituted proceedings in the High Court to prevent the redevelopment until their commercial demands were met. The matter

PHILIP BROWNE



# Chief Executive's Report



was settled out of court and the proceedings were dismissed but not without significant cost to Irish rugby in terms of time and legal fees. Thankfully the project is now underway which is of huge importance to the future wellbeing of Irish rugby. This new facility will be the financial engine for Irish rugby into the future. Once again I must thank the Minister of Arts, Sport and Tourism, John O'Donoghue, for his constant support of this project and also his colleagues in the Department in particular the recently retired Secretary General, Philip Furlong.

With the closure of Lansdowne Road the RBS 6 Nations fixtures against France and England moved north across the Liffey to Croke Park, thanks to the generous gesture made by the GAA in making their excellent stadium available to us. There was a very significant workload on Martin Murphy (Director of Corporate Affairs), Pdraig Power (Director of Commercial/Marketing) and their staff in interfacing the IRFU operations with that of Croke Park. The demands of international fixtures are perhaps somewhat different to those normally encountered by Peter McKenna, Croke Park Stadium Director, and his staff at Croke Park but there was great co-operation between the 2 organisations and both fixtures, passed off successfully with few hitches. The English match in particular struck all sorts of resonances in Irish society and it was one of those events where people will be proud to say "I was there". The performance of the crowd in respecting the anthems only superceded by the performance of the Irish Team in comprehensively beating England. We look forward to playing the 2008 6 Nations in Croke Park and there will be negotiations over the coming months to extend this arrangement during the redevelopment of Lansdowne Road.

Alas politics of the "rugby kind" emerged yet again during the last year in the form of a dispute between the English Premier Rugby League (PRL), representing the professional club owners in England, and the English Rugby Football Union (RFU). This dispute seems to revolve around a variety of issues including money, power, control of international players, control of the structure of the season amongst other things. The battleground on this occasion was the Heineken Cup where current agreements between the 6 Unions and the club associations in England, France and Italy were under renegotiation given the current agreement expires at the end of this season. Negotiations faltered over the insistence by PRL that it should be given a shareholding in European Rugby Cup Ltd. (ERC) by the RFU. The RFU at the time of writing have not agreed to this given that this does not resolve the other items over which PRL are in dispute with the RFU. The matter has been exacerbated by the French League (LNR) led by Serge Blanco who have decided to boycott Heineken Cup for a year, ostensibly because the RFU have not ceded a shareholding to PRL, but more likely because of fixture congestion in France during RWC year as the LNR will not play its fixtures during RWC.

The consequences of these various squabbles and power plays in both England and France are potentially catastrophic for professional rugby not only in Europe but also throughout the rugby world. The Heineken Cup has become critical to the professional rugby environment, particularly for those Unions in Europe that cannot create a professional league within their own jurisdiction. It is a vital revenue source to fund those professional teams and most importantly it has been the reason why the standard of international rugby in the RBS 6 Nations has moved to levels currently enjoyed.





The quality of the RBS 6 Nations as a competition drives the revenues that not only fuel the professional game but more importantly they drive investment and support for the club and schools game. Damage to the Heineken Cup strikes right at the heart of the future wellbeing of all aspects of the game in Ireland and other Unions. It also undermines the competitiveness of international rugby to the detriment of the southern hemisphere Unions and RWC.

Whilst all efforts are being made to resolve the complex issues which lie behind this current difficulty, it is a concern that the club owners have a very narrow agenda in terms of making more money to bring more foreign star players in to their clubs, boost attendances and to increase shareholder value. The Unions naturally have a much wider agenda of the wellbeing of the game at all levels and the security of international fixtures and competitions. Hopefully sense will prevail and the club owners in England and France can reach agreement whereby the professional club game can co-exist and co-operate with the Unions for the benefit of all. The fact is that this sort of dispute does not reflect well on the game or its administration and the damage that may be done will impact the professional clubs just as much as the Unions.

The IRFU Strategic Plan expires at the end of the RWC and already internal reviews of the existing plan are taking place with a view to updating and renewing the plan for a further 4 year period. What the initial reviews have shown is that there is some tremendous work being done in the domestic game in terms of introducing new ideas, new dynamism and vigour to the club game in particular. This has arisen through the very specific focus put on this area by the last strategic plan and as can be gleaned from the section on the domestic game later in this report, significant efforts in this area are reflected in the numbers playing the game which are now over 100,000. It is hoped to have the new strategic plan in place by the end of the calendar year and this will guide us over the next RWC cycle.

The level of activity across these various fronts has been intense and the value of having a Management Committee to deal with these complex issues on behalf of the Union Committee has never been more evident.

A special mention must be made of the IRB U.19 World Championship held in Belfast and organised in a faultless fashion by the Ulster Branch. In exceptional spring weather the tournament showcased U.19 rugby talent in front of excellent crowds and it also demonstrated the capacity of Irish rugby to take on IRB tournaments and run them effectively. It proved to be one of the best U.19 tournaments ever and it left our international colleagues with a positive and lasting impression of Belfast, Ulster rugby and Irish rugby.

**“THE THEME OF THE LAST FEW SEASONS HAS BEEN ‘CONSISTENCY’ AND CERTAINLY THIS LAST 12 MONTHS HAS BEEN NO DIFFERENT WITH THE NATIONAL TEAM PUTTING IN CONSISTENT PERFORMANCES WINNING 7 OUT OF 11 FIXTURES.”**





## NATIONAL TEAM

The theme of the last few seasons has been "consistency" and certainly this last 12 months has been no different with the National Team putting in consistent performances winning 7 out of 11 fixtures. Along the way there were good victories against Australia and South Africa, a fourth successive victory over England at Croke Park, only a single loss in the RBS 6 Nations Championship to France and yet another Triple Crown. By any standards a good season but some disappointment again that an elusive Grand Slam and Championship were not achieved. The standards our National Team now aspire to are the highest.

The summer tour to New Zealand and Australia also produced some disappointment as in both the New Zealand test matches the Irish Team played at a level of intensity, skill and commitment that put New Zealand under significant pressure and in the first Test in particular Ireland put themselves in a position to win the match but once again were thwarted in the final stages of the match. There is no doubt that the Team and Team Management have genuine expectations of their level of performance that perhaps makes this group stand out certainly in the context of modern Irish rugby.

The results of the National Team's fixtures are documented on the DVD but the focus is now on the next 6 months. During that time Ireland tour Argentina and more importantly we embark on RWC in France in September. The challenge for the Irish Team is to extract itself from the so called "pool of death" with Argentina, France, Namibia and Georgia and to qualify for the knock-out stages of the tournament, preferably as leaders of the pool. Eddie O'Sullivan, the Team and the Team Management have this single focus for the next few months and every effort has been made to ensure the preparation of the team is optimised including the appointment at the beginning of the season of a performance nutritionist to ensure the individual dietary requirements of the National Squad are met.

The work and commitment put in by the Coach, the Team and Team Management over the past 4 years has been instrumental in the performances and success enjoyed by the Irish Team in that period and our best wishes to them for RWC 2007 and hopefully they will achieve the performances that they and supporters of the Irish Team aspire to.

## PROVINCIAL TEAMS/ PROFESSIONAL GAME

After the high's of last years Munster victory in the Heineken Cup, it was always going to be a challenge to emulate last seasons success at provincial level. Having said that great credit is due to both Leinster and Munster in reaching the quarter final stages, Leinster once again topping its pool. There were some tremendous performances along the way, Ulster's memorable demolition of Toulouse at Ravenhill, Munster's hard fought victory in Welford Road against Leicester and Leinster's victory over Gloucester in front of nearly 30,000 people at Lansdowne Road. Leinster and Munster ended up with "away" quarter finals both losing to Wasps and Llanelli, respectively.

Connacht perhaps not living up to their performances of previous seasons failed to make it through beyond the pool stages of the European Challenge Cup being particularly unlucky in some very narrow defeats at the start of the campaign.

The Magners League moved on to a new level this season with support from the new sponsor and also a genuine level of increased support and interest in the competition which acts as a qualifying tournament for the Heineken Cup. In particular, the interprovincial fixtures produced high quality intense rugby fuelled by local pride. Attendances at these matches were significantly increased on last season with peak attendances in Lansdowne Road where Leinster v. Munster achieved 22,500 spectators and Leinster v. Ulster after Christmas achieving 48,000.



*7 out of 11*





In Ulster the support of Magners League fixtures has been consistently high at 8,000-10,000 for all fixtures. This is a very healthy situation and the quality of some of the rugby has been excellent. Ulster and Leinster have vied throughout the season for the top spot in the Magners League. The final weekend of the League saw 3 teams, including Leinster, being in a position to win the competition. Unfortunately Leinster could not muster an away win at Cardiff and the following day Ospreys won the Magners League.

As reported earlier, the uncertainty that exists as a result of the current dispute between the English and French clubs and the English Rugby Union may require a temporary or possibly a longer term readjustment of the fixture list for the professional provincial teams next season. It is hoped that having achieved a degree of stability and credibility in the Magners League after several difficult years that the current dispute in relation to the Heineken Cup/ERC Ltd. will not unduly impact on the professional game. Having said that there is potential for significant and lasting damage to be done to professional rugby throughout Europe and the IRFU, through its representatives, is working hard to avoid such circumstances. A meaningful and commercially viable fixture list is a sine qua non for a professional sport and this is what we must continue to strive for.

An issue of continuing importance to the IRFU is the need to ensure that we have in place a robust and quality system of player identification

and development. The current age grade representative structures at provincial and national level working in harmony with the many coaches in schools and clubs has been a successful vehicle in this regard to date. This identification and competition process backed up by the professional inputs at Academy levels are working hard to ensure a regular throughput of quality Irish players to the professional ranks.

There is much public and media debate surrounding the nature of the sub 18 game at this time of the year. In that regard the Union understands the pressure for match success at all levels be it Schools Cup or RWC at U.19 levels. It acknowledges "the academic priority" and we are confident that the various sectors can function together to meet the many challenges and requirements of the modern game.

In the post second level education area the Provincial Academies and the new U.20 age grade systems are "bedding in". The need for increased levels of induction of Irish Academy players into the professional ranks is the primary role of the High Performance System. It is a key performance indicator which is closely monitored by the Player Advisory Group. The Union and the provinces are facing many challenges from the open market for our players and this is particularly so in respect of our Academy and Development players. The introduction of the provincial "A" games structures combined with the quality game time in the AIB League will be vital for young elite player retention in Ireland in the years ahead.

U.19  
U.20  
U.21  
Magners  
League

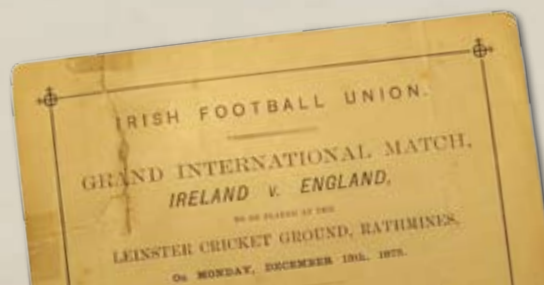


The integration of the High Performance Plan into the provinces continues at pace. The recent launch of the High Performance Select Group to meet the successional needs of the National Team is reflective of the initiatives in the programme. The increased levels of involvement of the National Management staff at provincial and Academy level over the last 16 months has greatly assisted the pace of programme development.

The work of the Player Advisory Group continues to protect the interests of the National Team now and more importantly into the future. At times it can be difficult to balance the aspirations of the provincial teams to have a squad of players capable of winning Heineken Cup with the needs of the IRFU to provide sufficient Irish players in positions 1 to 15 to ensure the competitiveness of the Irish National Team not only in 2007 but also in 2011 and beyond. The PAG works very closely with the professional coaching staff in all 4 provinces to maintain a reasonable balance of these objectives and to ensure that players are in a squad where they can maximise their development potential. It is certainly not a science and it is unlikely that we will get the right result every time but a partnership between the Provincial Coaches, National Coach/PAG and the players themselves is critical to deliver the future competitiveness of Irish rugby. There is still a clear need to bring in players from abroad who can add real value to our provincial squads and can help with player development. This will continue but not at the expense of the development of Irish players in those positions where we have a deficiency at national level.

The demand for professional success both in Ireland and Europe has given rise to many tensions in the game. The heavy recruitment by both French and English clubs of southern hemisphere internationals over the last number of months will further aggravate these tensions. The PAG are confident that with the throughput of quality Irish players and prudent contracting at provincial level we can look forward to continued Irish success in an increasingly expensive rugby marketplace.

To sustain success on the field requires considerable resources in terms of personnel, equipment and facilities and the cost of operating a Heineken Cup Squad is in excess of €5m. Whilst the IRFU is in a position to pick up the cost of player salaries and the cost of some of the technical staff, the reality is there is a significant balance to be covered by revenues generated locally in the provinces through the individual provinces' commercial activities. The performance of each of the provinces in this respect has improved considerably over the past few years attributable to team performances, competition quality and stability and importantly also attributable to increasing professionalisation of the provincial Branch operation. This was inevitable and professional staff led by a Chief Executive in each Branch are responsible for the promotion of the professional team and for the generation of revenues to fund the operation of the team. The Chief Executives are all now directly employed by the IRFU and form part of the IRFU's Senior Management Team and have a greater input into policy development. Their reporting lines are to the IRFU Chief Executive in relation to







their responsibility and accountability for the professional game in the province. The recent successful commercial deals announced such as the new Adidas kit sponsorship in Munster and the Bank of Ireland sponsorship in Leinster all demonstrate the progress that has been made in the off-field activities at provincial level. This is critical as it is simply not possible for the IRFU to cover the entire cost of the professional teams and also look after its other responsibilities to the community game in clubs and schools.

The Union continues to work with IRUPA on a number of fronts and it is hoped that a new player contract will be finalised in the short-term which will be more relevant than the existing contract which is now 10 years old. Further initiatives with IRUPA are outlined later in this report.

## OTHER REPRESENTATIVE TEAMS

The other representative teams are an important part of the Union's elite player development programme, providing opportunities for players to develop within a squad structure against international opposition whether it be at the age grade levels or up to Ireland "A".

In June 2006, Ireland "A" participated for the first time in the Churchill Cup, part of a 2 year commitment by the IRFU to that competition. The Ireland "A" team, coached by Michael Bradley and Mark McCall, played 3 fixtures in San José and Edmonton. In the pool stage they beat USA but lost to eventual tournament winners, New Zealand Maori. However, in the third/fourth play-off with England Saxons, Ireland "A" put in an excellent performance, winning by 30-27. The experience gained by the players was very beneficial and out of that group J. Heaslip, P. Wallace and T. Hogan were later to gain full international caps.

There were 2 other Ireland "A" fixtures, Ireland "A" v. Australia "A" in Thomond Park in November 2006 where Australia "A" won narrowly by 17-24 and again some impressive performances by some players led to full international caps including L. Fitzgerald and S. Ferris. The final fixture was Ireland "A" v. England Saxons at Ravenhill where a heavier and more skilful England Saxons team won convincingly by 8-32.

The Churchill Cup is due to be held in England at the end of May and once again the Ireland "A" team will be selected with player development in mind.

Due to a change in age grade structure within the 6 Nations the U.21 team has now become an U.20 team as this resolves issues of interference with the professional game structures in England and France. The U.20 team was coached this year



by Eric Elwood and Dan McFarland with Philip Orr providing experience as Manager. The team showed great character and skill to achieve a "Grand Slam" in the 6 Nations U.20 competition. The matches against Wales, France and England in particular were hard fought won by 2, 3 and 7 points, respectively. There is no IRB U.21 Championship this season and it now seems probable that the IRB will drop its U.19 and U.21 World Championships in favour of a single U.20 World Championship. This will suit Ireland well.

At U.19 level Ireland had the privilege of hosting the IRB World Championships at Ravenhill in Belfast as referred to earlier in this report. The team coached by Charlie McAleese performed bravely in the tournament running Australia close in their opening fixture. They beat Scotland by a single point in a last gasp effort in injury time and were subsequently out played and out muscled by a very physical South African team. Further victories against Japan and Scotland again left Ireland placed ninth – probably a realistic reflection of our standing. The skill, strength and size of the leading teams in this competition places a spotlight on the Irish player development systems at underage level. This is a debate that will continue and the need for contact between the IRFU High Performance systems and players at U.17 upwards has never been so obvious. The demise of the U.19 World Championship to some extent is of benefit to Ireland in that it gives another year in which to improve levels of skills and conditioning in players at 18 to 19 years of age.

The U.18 Club Team had a great tournament in FIRA/AER U.18 European Championship in Dax losing out in a penalty competition in the final having drawn 8-8 with hosts, France. Again some true Irish character was shown in some very close run matches.

The U.18 Schools Team took part in the 6 Nations U.18 Tournament in Glasgow. They beat Italy and France but lost to England. To mark the 50th anniversary of Japanese Irish diplomatic contacts, they also played the Japanese U.19 Team prior to the IRB World Championships in Belfast. The results of these matches and indeed the other age grade fixtures are recorded on the DVD.

At club level the AIB Irish Club Team had 2 fixtures against England Counties and Scotland, providing an opportunity to amateur club players to represent their country. This initiative has been very well received by players in the AIB League and the team recorded a narrow win against England Counties in Donnybrook and a loss to Scotland in Edinburgh.

Finally, the Irish Womens Team had a full season with the Women's RWC in Canada in September where Ireland performed with great credit recording victories against Scotland and South Africa. Sarah Jane Belton, Captain of the Irish Team, had the distinction of being named in a World XV after the Tournament. In the Womens 6 Nations Championship, Ireland recorded 2 victories for the first time against Scotland and Italy.







**“THE CLUBS REMAIN THE BEDROCK OF IRISH RUGBY.  
A THRIVING DOMESTIC GAME IS VITAL FOR THE  
CONTINUED SUCCESS OF OUR PROFESSIONAL TEAMS.”**

### **DOMESTIC GAME**

Rugby has never been as popular as it currently is. The success of the National and Provincial Teams in addition to the implementation of our development programmes has resulted in greater numbers of players in schools and clubs. There are more than 100,000 playing rugby in Ireland. The breakdown of participation figures are shown on the DVD.

The clubs remain the bedrock of Irish rugby. A thriving domestic game is vital for the continued success of our professional teams.

The IRFU is pleased that domestic game strategies set out in the 2004-2008 plan have generally been achieved or exceeded. We have more players, coaches and referees and many clubs are now planning for the future and upgrading their facilities to meet the modern needs of participants.

Of course there are challenges ahead, not least of which is how to retain more adults in our club game. These we will address in our next plan which is under construction. However, it is important that we acknowledge and celebrate what has been achieved. We have a solid base from which we will build a world class domestic game over the next decade.

Key strategic issues identified by the IRFU Domestic Game Committee this season include:

1. Recruitment and retention of Adult players.
2. Modernisation and mobilisation of our Clubs.
3. Recruitment, retention and recognition of Volunteers.
4. Improved Communication at all levels.
5. Development of Infrastructure of Artificial/Floodlit pitches.

### **Market Research**

We recognise the needs of players have changed. As a National Governing Body we must keep pace with this changing social dynamic and provide a game and structure that suits participant's hectic lifestyles.

We have therefore commissioned independent market research through the Commercial and Marketing Department to establish what participants, especially players want in the future from the IRFU. This research will be completed in May and its findings will provide a vital input to our 2008



Strategic Plan. The IRFU is committed to ensuring that future strategic direction and programmes meet the expectations and lifestyles of the grassroots of the game.

We are grateful to the many players, coaches and club presidents participating voluntarily in the research programme.

The IRFU has established working parties covering each of the above mentioned strategic issues. These will be activated following the results of the survey.

#### Branch Empowerment

We are nearing the end of the first year of the Branch empowerment process. Provincial Domestic Game Managers ("PDGMs") are now in place in each Branch:

- ◇ Munster — Ultan O'Callaghan
- ◇ Ulster — David Boyd
- ◇ Connacht — Martin Gallagher
- ◇ Leinster — David Ross

PDGM's are responsible for driving the development of the domestic game within their respective Branches, reporting to Branch CEOs and Branch Domestic Game Chairmen. The appointments are underpinned by a service level agreement between the IRFU and each Branch. These agreements set out annually agreed KPIs covering each of the following aspects of the game:

- ◇ Players
- ◇ Coaches
- ◇ Referees
- ◇ Club Development (incl. Volunteers)
- ◇ Schools
- ◇ Leadership and Operations
- ◇ Marketing and Promotion

The performance of each Branch will be subject to annual audit at the end of each season by an IRFU appointed review group. This will be chaired by George Spotswood and assisted by Dion Glass and a Branch nomination. The audit process is a critical part of the empowerment programme. It provides transparency and accountability for the significant investment by the IRFU and Branches in the domestic game. The first review will occur in May 2007.

#### Long Term Player Development

The IRFU Long Term Player Development ("LTPD") model – "From 6 to 6 Nations" was officially launched by the Minister of Arts, Sport and Tourism, John O'Donoghue, in November 2006. LTPD will provide the basis for how rugby will be delivered and experienced in the future. It will provide a quality assurance mechanism to ensure that players at all levels, especially children enjoy a quality experience in the game. LTPD will be rolled out to clubs and schools over the coming season. This will initially take the form of an awareness campaign.

#### Development Staff

We employ 120 full time and part development staff around the country. The majority, (RDOs, YDOs, etc.) now work directly for Branches reporting to the PDGM's. Ultimately it is the responsibility of the IRFU Domestic Game Manager, Kevin Potts, to ensure that staff delivers a world class service to clubs and schools.

There are 5 Club Development Managers/Officers assisting clubs with "off-field" activities including funding applications, club development planning and volunteer recruitment. 30 clubs were awarded almost €3m in lotto funding in 2006.





As part of our commitment to increasing our adult player base we have also appointed a new Leisure Rugby Manager, Olly Hodges. The leisure team are responsible for the new IRFU Tag programme which will kick-off this summer. We will expand this programme significantly in the years.

**Women's Rugby**

The popularity of the women's game continues to grow. The National Team finished eighth in the Women's RWC in Canada. It came fourth in the 2007 6 Nations, both our best placings ever. The IRFU now provides full operational logistical support to the Womens National Team similar to any other National Side. Underage Women's Provincial Representative Sides at U.18 and U.21 are also in place.

Women's development officers have been appointed in all provinces and we expect to appoint a national position later this year.

A full integration process has been agreed between the IRFU and IWRFU and Women's development committees are in place in each Branch.

**Club Facilities**

A key strategic priority remains the development of an infrastructure of floodlit, all weather pitches in clubs to retain and attract adult junior/social players. We believe that midweek rugby is the way forward at this level; we expect this to be validated in the research findings. We are also exploring the use of fully artificial pitches as part of this process.

The IRFU/AIB capital assistance scheme is now

active and available to qualifying clubs.

The scheme provides loans towards the installation of match quality floodlights and the above mentioned pitch upgrades. Interest on the loan will be paid by IRFU. We believe that this facility coupled with lotto funding and club member contributions will improve the ability of clubs to upgrade their facilities. The scheme is operated by the Club Development Managers in each Branch.

**AIB League**

The IRFU has carried out an extensive review of the structure of the AIB League over the course of this season. We have through our Branches had a widespread and thorough consultation process. The debate has raised many issues which the IRFU responded to in a discussion paper issued in January. We will be holding a special Union meeting in May to consider the results of the consultation process and decide on the resulting structure.

We are grateful to AIB for the ongoing support of the AIB Community Rugby Programme. This includes the AIB League, AIB Cup, AIB Junior Cup and sponsorship of the AIB Club International Team.

The arrival of the Irish Amateur International Club Side has been acknowledged by clubs as a very important reward mechanism for those players not intent on pursuing professional rugby careers.

An expansion of the AIB Programme this season will see the AIB League Champions represent Ireland at a 4 Nation Amateur Tournament in Languedoc, France during the upcoming RWC.



“THE IRFU INVESTED €10M IN THE DOMESTIC GAME THIS SEASON. BRANCHES WILL INVEST A FURTHER €4M. THIS BRINGS THE TOTAL INVESTMENT BY THE IRFU SINCE THE GAME WENT PROFESSIONAL IN 1995 TO MORE THAN €100M.”

#### Registration

We are continuing to implement our registration system – “Player Reg”. Adult and Youth players are now registered, with mini players expected to be done by 1st June. We are grateful to the Club Registration Officers around the country for their assistance. We are in phase 2 of this project and expect to have second level schools on the system by 1st November, 2007.

#### Volunteers

The need to recruit and retain volunteers has never been greater as our player numbers grow. There are now recognition schemes in place in each Branch. The IRFU participated in the Governments inaugural “National Awards for Volunteers in Sport” and are delighted that Harry Brooks from Clontarf RFC was the recipient of an award. Harry has given more than 53 years service to his club. We congratulate him and thank the many thousands of selfless volunteers around the country for their ongoing and vital contribution to Irish rugby.

#### Funding

The IRFU invested €10m in the domestic game this season. Branches will invest a further €4m. This brings the total investment by the IRFU since the game went professional in 1995 to more than €100m.

We have completed an in-depth review of the Clubs of Ireland Scheme. This will be replaced by a new Club Support Programme from the beginning of the 2007/08 season.

The funding available will be increased to €1.9m from €1.2m. This will be paid to clubs that achieve the performance criteria. 97% of clubs will receive more funding. There is included for the first time a contribution from the professional game in each province. This is an important principal and we hope that this will be increased in the years ahead. The scheme will provide support for areas of the game that the IRFU believe require greatest attention. These include, coach development, adult/ U.20/women’s team participation, volunteer recognition, referee development, child protection and club development. Ultimately the goals are to:

1. Increase participation especially at adult level.
2. Move towards an equality of performance funding to AIB and Qualifying League Clubs.
3. Provide a link between the professional and club game.
4. Improve coaching quality throughout the game and raise playing standards as a result.
5. Strengthen and energise the two-way link between Branches and their constituent clubs.

We continue to recognise the important role played by schools/clubs in professional player development through the Reward for Development Scheme. €90,000 was paid out this season. We also support development of schools, youth, women’s and U.20 sectors by fully funding team insurance and by heavily subsidising the insurance costs of adult sides.





### Participation Programmes

33,000 children or 630 schools participated in the IRFU primary schools rugby programme.

The Ulster Bank summer camps – “Summer Scrummage” is entering its third year. Almost 10,000 children have developed their skills and had a lot of fun in the first 2 years of the camps. We expect more than 6,500 children to participate this summer.

The Community Development programme now encompasses Tallaght, Ballymun, Swords, Fingal and Dublin City centre. 5,000 children are experiencing rugby on a weekly basis. The programme will be extended to County Donegal in September 2007.

### Coaching

This season a total of 62 coaching courses were run attended by 1,800 coaches. This brings the total number of registered qualified coaches on our pathway to 5,800.

In addition update clinics were undertaken for Level 1 and Level 2 coaches with the aim of exposing those who had previously attended these courses to new initiatives now included in the new courses.

The new IRB Scrum Engagement law variation (crouch-touch-pause-engage) commenced January 1st, 2007, this required the Coach Development and Referee Development Department to jointly prepare all coaches and referees to safely and competently apply this new directive. Numerous clinics, workshops and media mechanisms were successfully undertaken nationwide prior to Christmas which ensured that we made the transition smoothly. We have also developed a new assistant coach pathway.

**“33,000 CHILDREN OR 630 SCHOOLS PARTICIPATED IN THE IRFU PRIMARY SCHOOLS RUGBY PROGRAMME.”**



## AIB CUP AND LEAGUE

17 teams again qualified from the provincial leagues or cups to participate in the AIB Senior Cup. The nominations were increased to 4 representatives per province for the AIB Junior Cup.

With the closure of Lansdowne Road, Cup Finals Day this season was held in Dubarry Park Athlone on 14th April and hosted by AIB. There were 4 new finalists this season and congratulations go to Garryowen for defeating Belfast Harlequins in the AIB Cup Final and to Seapoint in the AIB Junior Cup for their victory over Coleraine.

The results of the AIB League are covered on the DVD. Congratulations to winners of Division 1 Garryowen, Division 2 Old Belvedere and Division 3 Wanderers. The Division 2 and 3 Divisional Finals were played in St. Mary's RFC on 28th April with the Division 1 Final being played a week later in Musgrave Park, Cork.

During this season a full review has been carried out on the AIB League with the views of all 48 senior clubs obtained and correlated. This review will lead to the format of the League which will come into operation for season 2008/09.

The AIB League Working Party met on 3 occasions during the year with the aforementioned league review being the main item on the agenda. This season saw the introduction of a restriction on the number of fully contracted players (3) that can play for any club in an AIB League or Cup Match and this was generally well received. A number of minor changes have been agreed for next season.

We have 470 qualified referees at IRFU and Branch level. The requirement is to have 540 within 2 years in order to service the increasing number of games. The Referee Department under Owen Doyle has delivered 85 referee courses/workshops during the season.

### Development Programme

This was a very interesting and innovative season. As indicated last year, the restructuring of the referee development programme was completed and it was rolled out in its full capacity.

The Trial Members and Level 1 workshops have ensured that new recruits receive IRFU training from the earliest stage of their careers. A total of over 40 new workshops were introduced nationally at these levels.

### Recruitment and Retention

Working with the PDGM's, a lot of input is being made to persuade the clubs to promote refereeing and to provide new recruits into the system. Ultimately, the clubs must realise that it is essential for the future of the game that they are proactive in this respect. Refereeing needs to be high on the agenda of each club.

### Associate Referees

This scheme continues to grow, and circa 3,000 have now completed accreditation. Re-accreditation starts in earnest over the coming 2 seasons, and this will present a significant challenge to the department.

### Elite Referees

We are represented on the IRB test panel by 2 referees, and a further 4 are officiating in Europe and Celtic competitions. The elite development programme is on track to produce the next group of referees capable of performing at these levels.





## MEDICAL

The Medical Department has had a busy year in the lead up to the RWC 2007. The ongoing provision of excellent medical care has helped to keep our injuries at a relatively low level. The successful underage teams during this season have been cared for by an excellent group of doctors and physiotherapists who deserve significant credit for their time and expertise. This season saw the appointment of the first IRFU High Performance Nutritionist, Ruth Wood-Martin. Her work has had a significant impact in the whole approach of the IRFU and of our professional rugby players to understanding ways of improving nutritional support to maximise performance.

The main areas of activity have included:—

- Player Welfare
  - ◊ Injury tracking/monitoring and development injury prevention protocols.
  - ◊ Introduction of new concussion assessment techniques.
- Education, Training and Research
  - ◊ In service training programmes for physiotherapy staff.
  - ◊ Organisation of Sports Medicine Conference.
  - ◊ Research in variety of areas including sports psychology and injury rehabilitation technology.
- Organisation of medical services for IRB U.19 World Championship in Belfast.
- Introduction of High Performance Nutrition Programme.

## ANTI-DOPING

The IRFU once again commissioned anti-doping tests through the ISC supplementing the ISC National Anti-Doping Programme. Details of the tests performed are outlined below, all tests resulted in a negative finding.

### 2006/07 ANTI-DOPING PROGRAMME

#### In Competition Testing

TEAM	NO. OF PLAYERS TESTED
Senior XV	10
"A" Team	4
U.21	6
U.19	4
Women	8
Youth	2
U.18 Schools	2
ERC and Magners League	24
AIB League Club XVs	16

#### Out of Competition Testing

TEAM	NO. OF PLAYERS TESTED
Senior	12
Provincial Squads	27
Clubs	8
U.21	3
U.19	3
"A" Team	2





## FACILITIES

Leaving aside the redevelopment of Lansdowne Road which has been mentioned earlier in this report there have been some other important developments in provincial facilities. These developments are important in terms of providing the range of facilities and comforts expected by patrons and which also provide important revenue generating opportunities currently unavailable.

The well publicised redevelopment of Thomond Park in Limerick has commenced and with very welcome grant aid from the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism Sports Capital Grant programme, it is hoped to have the partially built stadium available for Heineken Cup fixtures in autumn 2007 and have the new 26,000 capacity facility completed for autumn 2008.

The redevelopment of Leinster's facility at Donnybrook is also underway with the completion of a new 2,500 Stand scheduled for this coming autumn. The Leinster professional team will be using the new RDS facilities which will boast a capacity of 19,000 by next autumn and the RDS have already laid a new playing surface in October 2006 which is designed for both equestrian and rugby. The IRFU have made a grant contribution towards this new playing surface.

In Ulster the result of a planning application for a phased development at Ravenhill is awaited from Belfast City Council. This will see a new stand and upgrade spectator facilities together with other necessary refurbishment works. At the same time the UK government through the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (NI) and the Strategic Investment Board are progressing plans to develop a 42,000 capacity stadium on the Maze site. This facility will be available to Ulster and also to the IRFU if required.

In Connacht the installation of floodlights at the Sportsground have been very successful in helping boost attendances and further plans are in place to extend and cover the terrace opposite the main stand along with the development of enhanced training facilities.

## CHARITABLE TRUST

In a year where there was thankfully no serious injuries in Ireland there have been some developments under the chairmanship of Jeff Smith to report.

- ◇ HM Revenue and Customs accepted the IRFU Charitable Trust (NI) as a charity for tax purposes.
- ◇ The IRUPA Seriously Injured Players Fund merger with the IRFU Charitable Trust was completed.
- ◇ The sixth Friends of the Charitable Trust dinner was held on the eve of the Ireland v. South Africa match in November.
- ◇ €237,000 generated in revenues and €208,000 assistance provided to seriously injured players.
- ◇ Pro-Am golf tournament to take place in Mount Juliet on 1st June which will raise considerable funds.
- ◇ Charity walk to take place in France during RWC which will also raise funds.

It is sad to note the death of long standing member and founder Trustee of the Manxie Club, Ronnie Boston, who was a great servant in the cause of our seriously injured players.





“THE IRISH RUGBY BRAND IS CURRENTLY VERY STRONG AND COMMERCIALY THIS PAST SEASON HAS AGAIN BEEN ONE OF CONSIDERABLE GROWTH.”

### COMMERCIAL AND MARKETING

As the business model for the game in Ireland centres on creating a revenue stream on the back of the professional game to fund both the professional and domestic games, the focus of the past season has been to build on the high profile which rugby is enjoying in Ireland.

#### Commercial Review

The Irish rugby brand is currently very strong and commercially this past season has again been one of considerable growth. The National Team sported O2 branded jerseys for the first time at home in the hugely successful Guinness Autumn Series. The move to Croke Park for the RBS 6 Nations matches brought additional revenues with greater capacity both in terms of ticket sales and corporate facilities, albeit that additional revenue must be tempered with the forthcoming loss of income to the Union with no November Internationals in RWC 2007 season.

Our sponsorship portfolio is performing strongly and this past season has seen a consolidation of our arrangements with several new partners (listed below). Our thanks to O2, our National Team sponsor, and to Danuta Grey, CEO of O2, and all of her team for their support this season.

Equally our thanks go to all our sponsors and partners. Without the support from corporate Ireland, the game cannot aspire to the level it does and we would not be enjoying the success that we have.

#### New sponsorships this past season include:

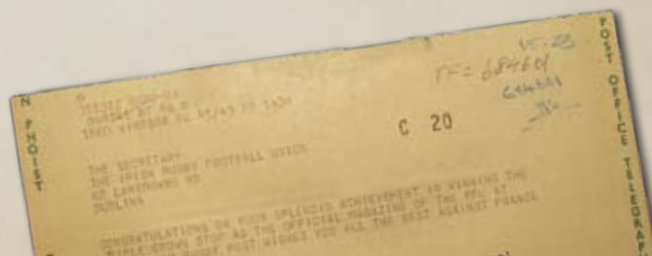
- ◇ Wolf Blass as official wine partner
- ◇ Bushmills as official whiskey
- ◇ Turner Print as official print partner
- ◇ Irish Independent as *In Touch* magazine distributor

#### Renewed sponsorships:

- ◇ Paddy Power as official betting partner

Over and above the traditional revenue streams, the closure of Lansdowne Road provided an opportunity for an on-line auction of merchandise, memorabilia and a series of limited edition prints of various aspects of the stadium from which additional revenues were generated.

The development of the new stadium also requires considerable funding and to that end, the IRFU 10 year ticket scheme issue was recently launched and the Union will soon be marketing the corporate boxes in the new stadium. Demand is very strong and it appears we may be over-subscribed for both boxes and seats.



### Marketing and Communications Review

Following on from last season, the emphasis has been to continue to raise the profile of the game in Ireland which has led to increased marketing activity driving greater numbers of people into the game.

*In Touch* the official magazine of the IRFU was launched with great success this season. Two issues were published, in September 2006 and in January 2007, and were distributed free with the *Irish Independent* resulting in a circulation of over 166,000 copies and a readership figure of nearly 500,000 people. The objective behind the magazine is to effect better communications with rugby stakeholders as well as bringing the game to a new audience. Further issues are planned for next season.

Our television broadcast partnerships continue to show growing viewership figures. Our RBS 6 Nations matches broke all previous records with over 1.3m viewers for the Ireland v. England game in Croke Park on RTE and over 8.5m on the BBC in the UK. This comes as a further benefit for our commercial partners and to all in the game. Another first for us, was the commissioning of an 'in the moment' documentary following the Irish Team marking the historic nature of this past season, this was shown recently on RTE and will be available soon for purchase.

Again this past season, RTE's 'Against the Head' weekly magazine programme, has transmitted more AIB League, Cup and Club International rugby than ever before. Additional coverage on the successful U.21 matches, Schools Cup competitions and Magners League on Setanta and of course the Heineken Cup further demonstrates the variety of rugby on offer.

On the participation side of the game, the marketing effort has been channelled into supporting Rugby Department programmes driving numbers into our Coca Cola schools tag rugby, Ulster Bank summer camps and launching our own IRFU Adult Tag Rugby programme which goes live in 7 venues across Ireland this coming summer.

Along with our community rugby partners, AIB, we have been working to help rejuvenate club rugby in Ireland. The first issue of *Engage* our club newsletter was published recently and was circulated to over 20,000 registered players.

As part of the new strategic planning process, an audit of the Union's Communications policies and structures is underway in order to develop a new strategy for both internal and external communications. The objective is to continue to drive awareness and developments within the game to all relevant stakeholders.

### [irishrugby.ie](http://irishrugby.ie)

The website [www.irishrugby.ie](http://www.irishrugby.ie) has been moved to a new host partner, Sotic, resulting in a refreshed and increased functional offering online including multimedia podcast and video offerings. The increasing popularity of the site as the major news source for rugby in Ireland was borne out by consistently higher site visits, with over half a million site visitors during the RBS 6 Nations.

### Irish Rugby Supporters Club

This was a year of unprecedented growth for the club. Membership numbers were up every month on the previous year with strategic advertising and a very strong 'word of mouth' appeal. There are now 12,000 members who will be giving up to following Ireland in RWC 2007.







## CORPORATE AFFAIRS

International teams and events dominated the activity of the Corporate Affairs Department in addition to supporting the various Committees and Sub Committees of the Union as well as specialist input into the design of the new stadium. Staff at Lansdowne Road provided support and made arrangements for the management and squads of 9 separate teams involved in international competitions. 53 international matches were played with over 50% hosted and organised by the Union with assistance from the Branches. The very successful U.19 World Cup Tournament in Belfast was organised separately in exemplary fashion by Ulster Branch IRFU. Kit was issued to all 9 squads and management, referees and for the 53 matches. Referees were appointed to officiate at 210 matches which entailed travel arrangements. The movement of teams and referees is a considerable exercise particularly during the 6 Nations, with up to 4 teams travelling, which is co-ordinated through the in-house IRFU Travel Section. This season the arrangements for the Irish Womens Team were handled by the Union Office as part of the integration process of IWRFU.

The matches at Croke Park absorbed a significant amount of time and effort with the planning process being carried out for 12 months. The IRFU was responsible for the running of both matches and IRFU staff worked closely with staff at Croke Park to ensure their successful management. Over 300,000 tickets for all matches were printed and managed by the Ticket Office.

The significant activity of the various IRFU Committees and Sub Committees was also supported by our Staff. Over 102 meetings were arranged with administrative backup provided by Lansdowne Road. Our Strategic Plan is being constantly monitored and planning is also underway to develop the next Strategic Plan post 2007.

Planning is already well advanced for season 2007/08 which in addition to RWC 2007 sees 3 matches in the RBS 6 Nations Championship at Croke Park, a tour to New Zealand and Australia, hosting the U.18 Schools Tournament as well as the other 6 Nations matches for Women and U.20 level.

Given the size of our organisation the Senior Management Team now includes the Branch CEOs and meets monthly to keep abreast of activities and plan forwards. We are indeed fortunate to have such a dedicated and hard working staff to support the activity of the Union both on and off the field of play.

“PLANNING IS ALREADY WELL ADVANCED FOR SEASON 2007/08 WHICH IN ADDITION TO RWC 2007 SEES 3 MATCHES IN THE RBS 6 NATIONS CHAMPIONSHIP AT CROKE PARK, A TOUR TO NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA, HOSTING THE U.18 SCHOOLS TOURNAMENT AS WELL AS THE OTHER 6 NATIONS MATCHES FOR WOMEN AND U.20 LEVEL.”





## HUMAN RESOURCES

We are continuing to work with IRUPA and the Irish Sports Council (ISC) to put in place a support service for players in the area of career and lifestyle issues. The intention is to put in place resources that will address the specific concerns of professional rugby players at all stages of their playing career. While we have not yet decided on the most appropriate format for the delivery of this service, we have instigated a pilot project that will focus on those players who will exit the game at the end of the current season. As part of this initiative we are also in contact with senior academics to explore the idea of 'modularised' courses that can be tailored to players' commitments during the season. Ultimately the programme aims to encourage players to focus on and to proactively manage personal, educational and career transitions.

Senior managers attended a development programme that was conducted last autumn. The programme focussed on self awareness, executive coaching and people management skills. The programme was delivered by expert practitioners in each of these fields both here and in the UK and was well received.

Work is continuing on HR policy development. In light of the review of the strategic plan, the organisation structure and governance issues are the subject of particular attention at present to ensure that we are appropriately aligned to deliver on objectives and targets over the next 4 years.

## COMMITTEE

It is important to record the work done by the elected representatives on the various IRFU Committees and Sub Committees. There were 102 Committee and Sub Committee meetings held this last year, all attended by elected representatives giving their skills and experience on a voluntary basis in their own free time. The nature and complexity of the game and its governance provides the Committees with challenging tasks and difficult decisions. This is equally reflected in the challenges faced by Branch Committees and indeed Club Committees that successfully run our clubs. This resource is critical to the success of any sport and is something to be protected and respected. It is good to see our Branches instigating volunteer recognition programmes which in some small way demonstrate an appreciation of the role of the volunteer.

The end of the season marks the end of John Lyons' tenure as Honorary Treasurer of the IRFU. John became Hon. Treasurer in 1996/97 when the IRFU had a turnover of €12.6m and a surplus of €1.1m. In 2007, at the time of writing, we expect a turnover in excess of €50m and a surplus in excess of €4.5m. His husbandry of the IRFU finances whilst at the same time recognising the need to invest in all levels of the game during a time of huge flux, sees John leaving Irish rugby at the end of his term in as good shape as it has ever been in. We wish him well in his role as Senior Vice President.

Andy Crawford retires from the IRFU Committee after 15 years. He has always had a focus on the club game and served for many years as the Chairman of the IRFU Youth Sub Committee ensuring that the player pathway to international representation through U.18 club structures was developed and enhanced. He became President in the 2005/06 season and presided over a Triple Crown and the Munster Heineken Cup victory. Best wishes to Andy and his wife, Joan, on his retirement from the IRFU Committee.

## OBITUARIES

### **Robin Godfrey**

2 Caps 1954. Played for UCC, UCD and Waterloo.

### **Tom Cullen**

1 Cap 1949. Played for UCD.

### **Larry L'Estrange**

1 Cap 1962. Played for Dublin University.

### **Jimmy C. Davidson**

6 Caps 1969-1976. Played for Dungannon.

### **Charles Vesey Boyle**

9 Caps 1935-1939 and the British and Irish Lions Tour to South Africa - 1938.

### **Ronnie Boston**

President Bangor RFC 1978-1979, Chairman Manxie Club and long standing member of IRFU Charitable Trust.

### **Brian McLoughlin**

IRB Match Commissioner.

### **G. (Ken) Goodall**

City of Derry, 19 Caps (1967-1970).

### **George E. Cromey**

9 Caps 1937-1939. Played for QUB, Ulster, Ireland and the British and Irish Lions 1938.

### **Ham Lambert**

Lansdowne FC, 2 Caps (1933-1934) and refereed 11 internationals (1947-1952).

### **Dave Egan**

Chief Steward Lansdowne Road.

### **J. H. Smith**

12 Caps 1951-1954. Played for Queens University and London Irish.

### **Keith Rowlands**

President WRU.





# Office Bearers & Committee

## PRESIDENT

P.J. Boyle

## SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

D.V. Healy

## JUNIOR VICE PRESIDENT

J.P. Lyons

## HON. TREASURER

J.P. Lyons

## CHAIRMAN OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

J.D. Hussey

## IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

D.A. Crawford

## COMMITTEE

J.R. Callaghan

C. Fitzgerald

P. Fitzgerald

T.H.N. Jackson

C.C. Powell

G.C. Quaid

P. Whelan (Co-opted)

## BRANCH REPRESENTATIVE MEMBERS

F. Crowley

L. Galvin

W.B. Glynn

S.R. Hilditch

D. Keohane

L.P. Magee

F. MacLoughlin

M. O'Sullivan

C. Watson

## INTERNATIONAL RUGBY BOARD REPRESENTATIVES

N.A. Murphy

P.J. Boyle

## TRUSTEES

A.R. Dawson

T.J. Kiernan

W.S.H. Lavery

Dr. S. Millar

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE

P.R. Browne

## DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS

M.P. Murphy

## DIRECTOR OF RUGBY

E. Wigglesworth

## FINANCIAL CONTROLLER

C. O'Brien

## DIRECTOR OF COMMERCIAL AND MARKETING

P. Power

## DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

M. Dowling

## NATIONAL COACH

E. O'Sullivan

# Standing Committees and Sub Committees

## MANAGEMENT

J.D. Hussey, P.J. Boyle, J.P. Lyons, N.A. Murphy,  
T.H.N. Jackson, D.V. Healy, P. Fitzgerald, P. Browne,  
M. Murphy and E. Wigglesworth.

## REPRESENTATIVE GAME

T.H.N. Jackson, P.J. Boyle, N.A. Murphy, C. Watson,  
M.J. O'Sullivan, W.B. Glynn, P. Whelan, P. McNaughton,  
P. Browne, E. Wigglesworth, E. O'Sullivan, M. Dowling  
and G. Black.

## DOMESTIC GAME

D.V. Healy, J.R. Callaghan, S.R. Hilditch, G.C. Quaid,  
D. Keohane, C.C. Powell, L.P. Magee, F. Crowley,  
L. Galvin, E. Wigglesworth, K. Potts and G. Black.

## FINANCE

J.P. Lyons, P.J. Boyle, S.R. Hilditch, C. Fitzgerald,  
L. Galvin, F. Crowley, P. Whelan, P. Browne, M. Murphy,  
C. O'Brien and L. Quinn (co-opted).

## COMMERCIAL AND MARKETING

P. Fitzgerald, J.P. Lyons, C. Fitzgerald, J.R. Callaghan,  
P. Browne, M. Murphy, P. Power, J. Redmond,  
K. Richardson and J.F. Smith (co-opted).

## CHARITABLE TRUST

J.F. Smith, J.R. Callaghan, C. Fitzgerald, P. Fitzgerald,  
J. Doherty, J.B. Stevenson, S.O. Campbell, P.F. Madigan,  
Dr. L.N. O'Mahony, J.E. Gallagher, M.A. Quinn,  
W. Dawson, Dr. C. Beirne, E. Feely, K.D. Crossan  
and N. Woods.

## DISCIPLINARY

F. Crowley, G. Black, P. Barriscale, H. Blake, C. Callan,  
M. Coghlan, D. Glass, J. Kirwan, H. Logan, D. Martin,  
H. McKibbin, M. McPharland, Dr. B. O'Driscoll,  
P. O'Connor, P. Orr and G. Spotswood.

## APPEALS

W.B. Glynn, G. Black, P. Barriscale, H. Blake, C. Callan,  
M. Coghlan, D. Glass, J. Kirwan, H. Logan, D. Martin,  
H. McKibbin, M. McPharland. Dr. B. O'Driscoll,  
P. O'Connor, P. Orr and G. Spotswood.

## EXILES

P.J. Boyle and F. MacLoughlin.

## MEDICAL

W.B. Glynn, Dr. C. McCarthy, Dr. L. Hennessy,  
Dr. W. Rainey, Dr. B. O'Driscoll, Dr. W. O'Flynn,  
Prof. A. Tanner, Dr. T. O'Sullivan, Dr. G. O'Driscoll,  
C. Steele and B. Greene.





**REFEREES**

J.R. Callaghan, T. Aplin, J. Irvine, B. Smith,  
D. Templeton and O.E. Doyle.

**REGULATIONS**

F. Crowley, G. Black and G.C. Spotswood.

**REPRESENTATIVE TEAM APPOINTMENTS**

N.A. Murphy, T.H.N. Jackson, P. Whelan, J.D. Hussey,  
P. Browne and E. Wigglesworth.

**SCHOOLS**

C.C. Powell, L.P. Magee, G. Quaid, S.R. Hilditch,  
B. Derrane, Fr. J. Gough, K. Patton, P. Rossiter,  
L. Balfe, P. Cafferkey, C. Cullinane, Fr. G. Slattery,  
F. Gault and J. Murphy.

**YOUTH**

J.R. Callaghan, L.P. Magee, G.C. Quaid, S.R. Hilditch,  
W. Gribben, B. Mescal, H. Woodhouse, T. McCoy,  
J. Best and H. Kruger.

**WOMEN**

D. Keohane, and S. Carty.

**PLAYER ADVISORY GROUP**

T.H.N. Jackson, P. Whelan, J.D. Hussey, J.P. Lyons,  
P. Browne, E. Wigglesworth, E. O'Sullivan, M. Dowling  
and C. O'Brien.

**AIB LEAGUE**

F. Crowley, O. Allen, E. Hosty, Dr. W.A. Mulcahy,  
D. Workman and G. Black.

**6 NATIONS REPRESENTATIVES**

N.A. Murphy and P.J. Boyle.

**ERC REPRESENTATIVES**

P.J. Boyle and P. Browne.

**CELTIC LEAGUE REPRESENTATIVES**

J.D. Hussey and P. Browne.

**FIRA REPRESENTATIVE**

S.R. Hilditch.

# Appendix

	ULSTER	MUNSTER	LEINSTER	CONNACHT	TOTAL 2007	TOTAL 2006
Adult	5,296	8,657	9,583	1,635	25,171	21,740
Secondary Schools	8,800	4,200	11,044	2,200	26,244	23,586
Youth	1,973	5,905	5,026	1,544	14,448	12,472
Mini	3,646	3,700	3,620	1,808	12,774	10,967
Primary School TAG	8,196	11,993	12,060	3,741	35,990	32,209
Total	27,911	34,455	41,333	10,928	114,627	100,974

NB. These figures subject to Branch audit in May and may change



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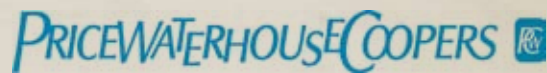


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Official Spirit of the IRFU



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*Irish Rugby  
Consistency*



IRISH RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION  
DIGITAL INTERNATIONAL  
**Ireland v. Scotland**  
RDS, DUBLIN 4  
FRIDAY, 15th FEBRUARY, 1992  
KICK-OFF: 2.45 P.M.  
Headquarters:  
TEAM and COMMITTEE  
City Court Hotel — 601711  
S.R.U. TEAM  
City Court Hotel — 2840700  
U. COMMITTEE  
City Court Hotel — 6791122



*IRF/LL Accounts  
2006/2007*

*Income  
Expense  
Balance  
State  
Fund*

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# INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2007

	SCHEDULE	2006/07 €	2005/06 €	2004/05 €
<b>INCOME:</b>				
REPRESENTATIVE MATCHES	1	48,741,571	39,398,903	32,937,287
OTHER INCOME	2	6,758,886	7,029,528	5,915,250
		55,500,457	46,428,431	38,852,537
<b>EXPENDITURE:</b>				
PROFESSIONAL GAME COSTS	3	27,374,513	25,575,678	23,485,308
ELITE PLAYER DEVELOPMENT	4	2,896,585	2,125,136	1,721,347
GAMES SUPPORT COSTS	5	691,528	612,055	422,814
DOMESTIC AND COMMUNITY RUGBY	6	10,713,727	9,222,150	8,131,350
MARKETING	7	1,121,108	926,666	1,036,073
GROUNDS	8	1,631,957	1,975,878	1,878,611
ADMINISTRATION AND OVERHEADS	9	4,615,410	3,927,341	3,602,442
DEPRECIATION	(Note 3)	1,281,272	1,247,512	1,448,340
		50,326,100	45,612,416	41,726,285
<b>SURPLUS(DEFICIT) FOR YEAR</b>		5,174,357	816,015	(2,873,748)

J.P. Lyons  
Honorary Treasurer

P.R. Browne  
Chief Executive



## STATEMENT OF TOTAL RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2007

		2006/07 €	2005/06 €	2004/05 €
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR THE FINANCIAL PERIOD ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE UNION		5,174,357	816,015	(2,873,748)
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EXPECTED AND ACTUAL RETURN ON PENSION SCHEME ASSETS		140,000	577,000	(36,000)
EXPERIENCE GAINS (LOSSES) ON PENSION SCHEME LIABILITIES		100,000	(320,000)	(170,000)
EFFECT OF CHANGES IN ACTUARIAL ASSUMPTIONS		(321,000)	(4,000)	(4,000)
TOTAL SURPLUS (DEFICIT) RELATING TO THE PERIOD		5,093,357	1,069,015	(3,083,748)
PRIOR PERIOD ADJUSTMENT	(NOTE 5)	-	(828,000)	(781,000)
TOTAL SURPLUS (DEFICIT) RECOGNISED SINCE THE LAST ANNUAL REPORT		5,093,357	241,015	(3,864,748)

## RECONCILIATION OF MOVEMENT IN UNION FUNDS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2007

		2006/07 €	2005/06 €	2004/05 €
BALANCE AT 1 MAY AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED		16,432,150	16,191,135	19,227,883
PRIOR PERIOD ADJUSTMENT	(NOTE 5)	-	(828,000)	(781,000)
		16,432,150	15,363,135	18,446,883
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
		18,971,626	17,902,611	20,986,359
TOTAL RECOGNISED SURPLUS (DEFICIT) RELATING TO THE PERIOD		5,093,357	1,069,015	(3,083,748)
BALANCE AT 30 APRIL		24,064,983	18,971,626	17,902,611

# BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 30 APRIL 2007

	NOTE	30/04/07 €	30/04/06 €
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>			
TANGIBLE ASSETS	3	28,467,212	26,962,557
STADIUM REDEVELOPMENT IN PROGRESS	4	606,468	606,468
		29,073,680	27,569,025
<b>FINANCIAL ASSETS</b>			
LOANS TO CLUBS		1,548,693	1,781,706
FINANCIAL INVESTMENTS	6	5,078,952	5,078,952
JOINT VENTURE:	7		
- SHARE OF GROSS ASSETS		2,461,450	1,901,616
- SHARE OF GROSS LIABILITIES		(2,461,449)	(1,901,615)
		6,627,646	6,860,659
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
PENSION ASSET	8	123,000	-
DEBTORS AND PREPAYMENTS		9,674,389	9,482,665
CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND		21,775,787	25,391,951
		31,573,176	34,874,616
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
CREDITORS AND ACCRUED EXPENSES		8,566,594	11,349,255
NET CURRENT ASSETS		23,006,582	23,525,361
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
		58,707,908	57,955,045
PENSION LIABILITY	8	-	(407,000)
DEFERRED TICKET FUND	9	(34,642,925)	(38,576,419)
		24,064,983	18,971,626
<b>FINANCED BY:</b>			
UNION FUNDS		24,064,983	18,971,626

J.P. Lyons  
Honorary Treasurer

P.R. Browne  
Chief Executive

# NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2007

## 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the financial statements.

a. *Basis of preparation*

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with accounting standards generally accepted in Ireland. Accounting Standards generally accepted in Ireland in preparing financial statements giving a true and fair view are those published by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland and issued by the Accounting Standards Board.

b. *Fixed tangible assets*

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

c. *Depreciation*

Depreciation is charged in order to write off the assets over their expected useful lives at the following annual rates: -

Land	Nil
Stand, buildings, etc.	2.5% straight line
Fixtures, fittings & equipment	25% and 12.5% straight line
Computer equipment	20% straight line
Grounds purchased & leased to clubs	Nil

d. *Stadium redevelopment in progress*

The Union has contracted to redevelop the Lansdowne Stadium through a separate company which is jointly owned by the Union and the Football Association of Ireland, each of whom hold 50% of the ordinary share capital.

The redevelopment is being funded by way of agreed contributions from the government, the Union and the Football Association of Ireland as disclosed in note 12. The contributions from the government are non-refundable unless they are used for purposes other than redevelopment of the stadium.

The nature of the agreements in place between the Football Association of Ireland, the joint venture company and the Union are such that the risks and rewards relating to the redeveloped stadium lie principally with the Union and, therefore, in accordance with Accounting Standards, the Union have recognised stadium expenditure as an asset of the Union. Once the redevelopment has been completed it will be transferred to tangible assets

e. *Joint venture*

The Union's 50% interest in Lansdowne Road Development Company Limited is accounted for using the gross equity method in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 9 - Associates and Joint Ventures.

The Union's share of the profits less losses are included in the income and expenditure account. The Union's interest in its net assets is indicated as a fixed asset investment in the balance sheet at an amount representing the Union's share of the fair values of the net asset at acquisition plus the Union's share of post acquisition retained profits.

The amounts included in the financial statements of the Union are taken from the latest audited financial statements of the joint venture company which were for the year ended 31 December 2006.



# NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2007

## 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONT'D.)

### f. *Financial fixed assets*

#### *Investments*

Investments are shown at cost less provision for permanent diminution in value. Income from investments is recognised in the income and expenditure account in the year in which it is receivable.

### g. *Grants*

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

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

### h. *Foreign currencies*

#### *Functional and presentation currency*

Items included in the financial statements are presented in 'Euros', 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 balance sheet date or the contracted rate. All differences are taken to the income and expenditure account as part of the fair value gain or loss.

### i. *Pension costs*

The Union operates a defined benefit scheme for certain employees.

#### *Income and expenditure account*

The pension costs in respect of defined benefit schemes are charged to the income and expenditure account on a systematic basis, based on the actuary's calculations. Amounts charged are calculated using the following rates:

Current service cost	Discount rate at the start of the year
Interest cost	Discount rate at the start of the year
Expected return on assets	Expected rate of return at the start of the year

Past service costs are recognised in the income and expenditure account on a straight line basis over the period in which the increases in benefit vest.

Differences between the amounts charged in the income and expenditure account and payments made to pension funds are treated as assets or liabilities.

# NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2007

## 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONT'D.)

### i. Pension costs (cont'd.)

#### *Balance sheet entries*

Assets in the scheme are measured at their fair value at the balance sheet date. Defined benefit liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method. The assets and liabilities of the scheme are subject to a full actuarial valuation by an external professionally qualified actuary triennially and are reviewed annually by the actuary and updated to reflect current conditions.

The excess/shortfall in the value of the assets in the scheme over/below the present value of the scheme's liabilities is recognised as an asset/liability when the amounts can be recovered through reduced contributions or refunds from the scheme.

Actual gains and losses that arise on the valuation of the scheme's assets and liabilities are released to the statement of total recognised gains and losses.

### j. Deferred income

Monies received in respect of five and ten year tickets have been treated as deferred income and have been released to the income and expenditure account over the period to which they relate based on the estimated number of fixtures and the expected admission prices. Details of the amount deferred are set out in note 9.

## 2. 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 2007

## 3. TANGIBLE ASSETS

	COST AT 30/4/06 €	ADDITIONS €	COST AT 30/4/07 €
PREMISES AND GROUNDS	33,831,112	2,583,874	36,414,986
FIXTURES, FITTINGS & EQUIPMENT	6,436,432	202,053	6,638,485
GROUNDS PURCHASED AND LEASED TO CLUBS	368,713	-	368,713
	40,636,257	2,785,927	43,422,184
	ACCUMULATED DEPRECIATION AT 30/4/06 €	CHARGE FOR YEAR €	ACCUMULATED DEPRECIATION AT 30/4/07 €
PREMISES AND GROUNDS	8,533,689	826,160	9,359,849
FIXTURES, FITTINGS & EQUIPMENT	5,140,011	455,112	5,595,123
GROUNDS PURCHASED AND LEASED TO CLUBS	-	-	-
	13,673,700	1,281,272	14,954,972
<b>NET BOOK VALUE</b>	26,962,557		28,467,212

As more fully explained in Note 12 the stadium at Lansdowne Road is being redeveloped. The Union consider the accumulated cost, less related depreciation, on expenditure previously capitalised in respect of prior construction work on the stadium as enhancing the value of what is to be constructed. Consequently the Union have ceased depreciating such expenditure until the new stadium has been completed and is in use. The net amount included above in respect of these amounts is €7,251,840.

## 4. STADIUM REDEVELOPMENT IN PROGRESS

	30/4/07 €	30/4/06 €
BALANCE AT 1 MAY	606,468	424,655
EXPENDITURE IN YEAR	12,865,465	9,906,587
GRANTS	(12,865,465)	(9,724,774)
BALANCE 30 APRIL	606,468	606,468



# NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2007

## 5. PRIOR PERIOD ADJUSTMENT

Financial Reporting Standard 17 - Retirement Benefits was adopted in full by the Union with effect from 1 May 2005. The adoption of FRS 17 required a change in the accounting treatment of defined benefit pension arrangements so that the Union now includes the assets and liabilities of these arrangements in the balance sheet. Current service costs and net financial returns are included in the income and expenditure account in the period to which they relate. Actuarial gains and losses are recognised in the statement of total recognised gains and losses.

The impact of the adoption of FRS 17 on the Balance Sheet is the recognition of a net pension liability of €407,000 as at 30 April 2006 and a net pension liability of €828,000 as at 30 April 2005.

## 6. FINANCIAL INVESTMENTS

Financial investments comprise term investments at a cost of €5,078,952, the market value of which at 30 April 2007 amounted to €9,296,903 (2006 €9,109,215).

## 7. JOINT VENTURE

The Union holds 50% of the ordinary share capital of Lansdowne Road Stadium Development Company Limited, a company formed to redevelop the stadium at Lansdowne Road.

Additional disclosures in respect of Lansdowne Road Stadium Development Company, based on that company's audited accounts for the year ended 31 December 2006, required under Financial Reporting Standard 9 - Associates and Joint Ventures are as follows:

	31/12/06 €	31/12/05 €
FIXED ASSETS	27,536	51,611
CURRENT ASSETS	2,433,914	1,850,005
SHARE OF GROSS ASSETS	2,461,450	1,901,616
LIABILITIES DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	2,461,449	1,901,615
SHARE OF NET ASSETS	1	1

The turnover, profit before and after tax of Lansdowne Road Stadium Development Company Limited for the year ended 31 December 2006 and for the period to December 2005 were all nil.

# NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2007

## 8. PENSION COMMITMENTS

The pension entitlements of employees of the Union arise under a defined benefit scheme which is funded by annual contributions by the Union to a separately administered pension fund.

The latest actuarial valuation for the scheme was dated 1 August 2005. The principal assumptions made by the actuary were that the rate of return on investment would exceed the increase in pensionable salaries by 3%. The assets of the fund, which amounted to €2,826,000, 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 84% 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 17 disclosure purposes have been updated by the scheme's independent and qualified actuary to take account of the requirements of the new accounting standard in order to assess the liabilities of the scheme as at 30 April 2007. The valuations have been completed using the projected unit method.

	30/4/07 %	30/4/06 %	30/4/05 %
<b>MAIN ASSUMPTIONS:</b>			
RATE OF INCREASE IN SALARIES	4.00	3.75	3.75
RATE OF INCREASE IN PENSIONS PAYMENT	4.50	4.25	4.25
DISCOUNT RATE	5.00	5.00	4.50
INFLATION ASSUMPTION	2.50	2.25	2.25
RATE OF RETURN ON PLAN ASSETS	6.38	6.50	6.74

Assumptions regarding pre and post retirement mortality rates remained unchanged.

# NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2007

## 8. PENSION COMMITMENTS (CONT'D.)

The assets and liabilities of the scheme and the expected rate of return at 30 April were:

	30/4/07		30/4/06		30/4/05	
	LONG-TERM RATE OF RETURN EXPECTED %	VALUE €	LONG-TERM RATE OF RETURN EXPECTED %	VALUE €	LONG-TERM RATE OF RETURN EXPECTED %	VALUE €
EQUITIES	7.0	3,968,000	7.0	3,054,000	7.5	1,993,000
BONDS	4.4	615,000	4.3	412,000	4.0	368,000
PROPERTIES	6.0	246,000	6.0	229,000	6.5	212,000
OTHERS	2.5	297,000	2.5	122,000	2.5	110,000
TOTAL MARKET VALUE OF ASSETS		5,126,000		3,817,000		2,683,000
PRESENT VALUE OF SCHEME LIABILITIES		(5,003,000)		(4,224,000)		(3,511,000)
PENSION ASSET(LIABILITY)		123,000		(407,000)		(828,000)
ANALYSIS OF THE AMOUNT CHARGED TO INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT:						
					2006/07 €	2005/06 €
CURRENT SERVICE COST					269,000	226,000
ANALYSIS OF THE AMOUNT CREDITED TO OTHER FINANCE INCOME:						
					2006/07 €	2005/06 €
Other finance costs: expected return on assets in the scheme					(276,000)	(193,000)
Other finance costs: interest costs					219,000	163,000
Net return					(57,000)	(30,000)



# NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2007

## 8. PENSION COMMITMENTS (CONT'D)

ANALYSIS OF THE AMOUNT RECOGNISED IN STATEMENT OF TOTAL RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES:			
	2006/07 €	2005/06 €	
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EXPECTED AND ACTUAL RETURN ON ASSETS	140,000	577,000	
EXPERIENCE LOSSES ARISING ON SCHEME LIABILITIES	100,000	(320,000)	
EFFECT OF CHANGES IN ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING THE PRESENT VALUE OF SCHEME LIABILITIES	(321,000)	(4,000)	
ACTUARIAL (LOSSES) GAINS RECOGNISED IN THE STATEMENT OF TOTAL RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES	(81,000)	253,000	
MOVEMENTS IN ASSET(DEFICIT) DURING THE PERIOD:			
	30/4/07 €	30/4/06 €	
AT 1 MAY	(407,000)	(828,000)	
TOTAL OPERATING CHARGE	(269,000)	(226,000)	
TOTAL OTHER FINANCE INCOME	57,000	30,000	
ACTUARIAL (LOSSES)GAINS RECOGNISED IN THE STATEMENT OF TOTAL RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES	(81,000)	253,000	
EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS	823,000	364,000	
AT 30 APRIL	123,000	(407,000)	
HISTORY OF EXPERIENCE GAINS AND LOSSES:			
	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE EXPECTED AND ACTUAL RETURN ON SCHEME ASSETS:			
AMOUNT (€)	140,000	577,000	(36,000)
PERCENTAGE OF SCHEME ASSETS	2.73	15.12	(1.34)
EXPERIENCE LOSSES ON SCHEME LIABILITIES:			
AMOUNT (€)	100,000	(320,000)	(170,000)
PERCENTAGE OF THE PRESENT VALUE OF			
SCHEME LIABILITIES	2.0	(7.58)	(4.84)
TOTAL AMOUNT RECOGNISED IN STATEMENT OF TOTAL RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES:			
amount (€)	(81,000)	253,000	(210,000)
percentage of the present value of scheme liabilities	(1.62)	5.99	(5.98)

# NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2007

## 8. PENSION COMMITMENTS (CONT'D)

RECONCILIATION OF NET ASSETS AND RESERVES UNDER FRS 17	30/4/07	30/4/06
NET ASSETS AND RESERVES	€	€
NET ASSETS AND RESERVES AS STATED IN BALANCE SHEET	24,064,983	18,971,626
FRS 17 DEFINED BENEFIT (ASSET)LIABILITY	(123,000)	407,000
NET ASSETS EXCLUDING DEFINED BENEFIT (ASSET) LIABILITY	24,941,983	19,378,626

## 9. DEFERRED TICKET FUND

	30/4/07 €	30/4/06 €
BALANCE AT 1 MAY	38,576,419	28,132,559
ISSUED DURING THE YEAR	232,800	14,721,750
TRANSFER TO REVENUE ACCOUNT 2006/07	(4,166,294)	(4,277,890)
BALANCE AT 30 APRIL	34,642,925	38,576,419

## 10. REVENUE GRANTS

The following grants were received and used for the stated purposes in the year ended 30 April 2007:

IRISH SPORTS COUNCIL	- GAME DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION	€3,606,200
INTERNATIONAL RUGBY BOARD	- GAME DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION AND ELITE PLAYER DEVELOPMENT	Stg£400,000

## 11. CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

At the 30 April 2007, the Union had contracted to purchase fixed assets of which €8,100,000 (2006: €765,000) remains outstanding.

## 12. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

In January 2005 the Government approved the concept of building a new 50,000 seated stadium at Lansdowne Road. The Government have allocated €191 million to the project with the IRFU and the FAI contributing the balance of €174 million.

The development is being carried out as a joint venture between the IRFU and the FAI through a jointly owned development company, called Lansdowne Road Stadium Development Company Limited. The IRFU will lease the appropriate tranche of land to the development company for the useful life of the stadium after which the land will revert to the IRFU.

# NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2007

## 13. COMPARATIVE FIGURES

The figures for prior years have been restated, where necessary, so as to be on a consistent basis with those for the current year.

## 14. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS

The accounts of the Union were approved by the Committee on 28 May 2007 and signed on its behalf by the Honorary Treasurer and the Chief Executive.



# STATEMENT OF COMMITTEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Committee is required to prepare financial statements, 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 judgments and estimates have been used in the preparation of the financial statements, 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 2007

We have audited the financial statements on pages 35 to 47 which have been prepared under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies set out on page 38 to 40.

## RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE AND THE AUDITORS

As described on page 48, the Committee is responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and the accounting standards issued by the Accounting Standards Board and published by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland (Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland).

Our responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

This report is made solely to the members as a body. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

## BASIS OF AUDIT OPINION

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the Committee in the preparation of the financial statements, and whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Union's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the accounts are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

## OPINION

In our opinion the financial statements 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 2007 and of the surplus of the Union for the year then ended.

Grant Thornton

Registered Auditors  
Chartered Accountants

24-26 City Quay  
Dublin 2

Date: 28 May 2007

# INCOME

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2007

## SCHEDULE 1: REPRESENTATIVE MATCHES

	2006/07 €	2005/06 €	2004/05 €
INTERNATIONAL RUGBY INCOME	29,780,411	23,744,705	20,918,891
COMMERCIAL RUGBY INCOME	7,898,965	6,760,257	4,546,060
DEFERRED TICKET INCOME	4,465,745	4,798,587	3,608,632
ERC AND PROVINCIAL INCOME	6,596,450	4,095,354	3,863,704
	48,741,571	39,398,903	32,937,287

## SCHEDULE 2: OTHER INCOME

	2006/07 €	2005/06 €	2004/05 €
OTHER RUGBY INCOME	784,431	625,050	447,543
PERCENTAGE OF ADMISSIONS	1,043,869	1,931,550	1,055,532
GOVERNMENT GRANTS	3,606,200	3,530,000	3,500,000
OTHER INCOME	1,324,386	942,928	912,175
	6,758,886	7,029,528	5,915,250



# EXPENDITURE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2007

## SCHEDULE 3: PROFESSIONAL GAME COSTS

	2006/07 €	2005/06 €	2004/05 €
NATIONAL TOURS, CAMPS AND SQUADS	989,105	802,211	538,499
NATIONAL MATCH COSTS	3,637,467	2,748,339	2,696,109
PLAYER AND MANAGEMENT COSTS	22,747,941	22,025,128	20,250,700
	27,374,513	25,575,678	23,485,308

## SCHEDULE 4: ELITE PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

	2006/07 €	2005/06 €	2004/05 €
IRISH "A" TEAM	382,290	163,265	1,494
UNDER 21'S	533,967	529,163	509,993
SEVENS	-	736	131,807
ACADEMY AND HPU	1,593,693	1,050,140	693,177
FITNESS PROGRAMME	386,635	381,832	384,876
	2,896,585	2,125,136	1,721,347

## SCHEDULE 5: GAMES SUPPORT COSTS

	2006/07 €	2005/06 €	2004/05 €
REFEREE COSTS	353,010	374,876	281,355
MEDICAL COSTS	338,518	237,179	141,459
	691,528	612,055	422,814

# EXPENDITURE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2007

## SCHEDULE 6: DOMESTIC AND COMMUNITY RUGBY

	2006/07 €	2005/06 €	2004/05 €
UNDER 19'S	859,973	286,409	256,066
IRISH SCHOOLBOY TEAMS	189,153	183,307	263,801
IRISH YOUTH TEAMS	230,451	168,078	223,227
WOMEN'S RUGBY	127,722	-	-
CLUB IRELAND	82,669	-	-
DOMESTIC COMPETITIONS	820,614	688,499	784,307
GENERAL DEVELOPMENT SALARIES	1,393,898	1,574,622	1,200,187
GENERAL DEVELOPMENT EXPENSES	266,289	342,351	348,798
DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES	137,075	17,036	11,878
COACHING COURSES	224,597	181,486	233,557
YOUTH AND SCHOOLS	477,447	302,972	204,148
YDO SCHEMES	977,473	997,583	1,082,371
CLUBS AND SCHOOLS OF IRELAND SCHEME	1,777,885	1,880,379	1,607,667
REFEREE DEVELOPMENT	350,433	322,393	284,133
TAG, BUNTAS AND TALLAGHT SCHEME	375,108	303,448	299,373
OTHER DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONAL GRANTS	1,017,735	689,948	872,039
OTHER COMMUNITY RUGBY FUNDING	1,405,205	1,283,639	459,798
	10,713,727	9,222,150	8,131,350

# EXPENDITURE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2007

## SCHEDULE 7: MARKETING

	2006/07 €	2005/06 €	2004/05 €
MARKETING	779,480	355,672	335,923
PR AND COMMUNICATIONS	110,961	206,466	138,871
WEBSITE	230,667	364,528	561,279
	1,121,108	926,666	1,036,073

## SCHEDULE 8: GROUNDS

	2006/07 €	2005/06 €	2004/05 €
RATES AND INSURANCE	648,297	578,248	702,384
REPAIRS AND RENEWALS	207,181	480,085	470,250
WAGES, CLEANING AND PITCH	351,682	473,896	386,397
GAS, ELECTRICITY AND WATER	140,371	89,383	27,862
PROVINCIAL GROUNDS	284,426	354,266	291,718
	1,631,957	1,975,878	1,878,611

## SCHEDULE 9: ADMINISTRATION AND OVERHEADS

	2006/07 €	2005/06 €	2004/05 €
GOVERNANCE COSTS	568,937	497,529	454,480
SALARIES AND PENSION	1,907,647	1,729,351	1,439,291
PRINTING, POSTAGE AND STATIONARY	190,271	171,997	152,174
RATES, RENT, INSURANCE AND TELEPHONE	619,209	571,178	566,371
OFFICE MAINTENANCE	244,450	172,634	228,899
PROFESSIONAL FEES	704,445	518,879	499,853
MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATION COSTS	380,451	265,773	261,374
	4,615,410	3,927,341	3,602,442

# FUNDS FLOW STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 APRIL 2007

	2006/07 €	2005/06 €
NET SURPLUS	5,174,357	816,015
<b>NON-CASH ADJUSTMENTS:</b>		
DEPRECIATION	1,281,272	1,247,512
MOVEMENT IN DEBTORS	(191,724)	(2,177,191)
CURRENT SERVICE COST AND NET RETURN ON PENSION	212,000	196,000
MOVEMENT IN CREDITORS	(2,782,661)	452,079
TRANSFER TO REVENUE ACCOUNT – FIVE AND TEN YEAR TICKETS	(4,166,294)	(4,277,890)
OPERATING CASH OUTFLOW	(473,050)	(3,743,475)
<b>OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDS</b>		
ISSUE OF TEN YEAR TICKETS	232,800	14,721,750
NET REPAYMENT OF LOANS BY CLUBS	233,013	73,756
	465,813	14,795,506
<b>APPLICATION OF FUNDS</b>		
EXPENDITURE ON FIXED ASSETS	(2,785,927)	(2,563,005)
PENSION FUND CONTRIBUTIONS	(823,000)	(364,000)
	(3,608,927)	(2,927,005)
<b>NET CASH FLOW</b>	(3,616,164)	8,125,026
OPENING CASH BALANCES	25,391,951	17,266,925
CLOSING CASH BALANCES	21,775,787	25,391,951



*New Lansdowne  
Stadium*

*A new chapter*





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