



**The Club Excellence Award** has been developed by the Irish Rugby Football Union to celebrate and promote best practice in on & off pitch management of a Rugby Club.

To achieve the IRFU Club Excellence Award, a club must demonstrate that it has established above average standards in the areas of Club Operation: Rugby Development, Club Management, Child Protection, Volunteer Management, Community Engagement and Health & Safety.

The award process takes between 3-6 months to achieve, and is valid for an initial three (3) years, with a yearly 'health check'. Clubs are assisted through the process by their assigned Community Rugby Officer. Clubs who attain the required standard receive a certificate and IRFU flag to promote their achievement of the required standard and are also eligible to receive special benefits from the IRFU. (further information is available from your Branch Community Rugby Manager).

In 2011, eight clubs achieved the award. Below is the feedback from the clubs who were the first recipients of the IRFU Club Excellence Award;

*'The Club Excellence award provided a Road Map for the Club to put our entire operation on a more professional footing. It made us examine how we run the Club and how we could do it better. We now have a system in place which not only makes us a better Club, but also one that is more structured for Members and Players alike' [Ballina RFC]*

*'The Club Excellence Award Scheme gave us a clear definition of roles that each individual has to undertake within the club. Our Club Excellence Manual is a living document that can be updated, revised and improved upon' [Galway Corinthians RFC]*

*'The Club Excellence Award made Midleton RFC more focused on aspects like Child Welfare and Health & Safety. It also provide us with the impetus to review our long term club needs and launch a fund raising initiative with a view to developing all weather facilities at our grounds' [Midleton RFC]*

*'For Seapoint Rugby Club, being involved with the Club Excellence Award gave the Club Executive the impetus to take a step back and examine our practice in all areas of the club from minis through to "Golden Oldies", and to identify area's to focus on going forward' [Seapoint RFC]*

*'The Club Excellence Award has made our club much more aware of the importance of having correct policies in place, like Child Protection and Health & Safety, and ensuring all club members and parents are aware of them' [Suttonians RFC]*

*'The Club Excellence Award will ensure all members, parents, sponsors and external bodies of the club have confidence that Clondalkin RFC operates to the highest standards in the management and development of Rugby' [Clondalkin RFC]*

*'The Club Excellence Award Scheme has given the club the opportunity to re-structure, re-organize and move forward. We would like to thank the Ulster Branch for helping us achieve this' [Randalstown RFC]*

*'The Club Excellence Award Scheme has made us look more closely at how we function as a club and at how we can improve for the benefit of all our members' [CIYMS RFC]*

## How does our club begin the process to achieving the IRFU Club Excellence Award?

It is relatively straight forward for a club to become involved with the IRFU Club Excellence Award. Initially clubs should make contact with their Provincial Community Rugby Manager, who will be able to give an overview of the scheme and undertake an initial assessment.

Following this initial meeting it is then the responsibility of the club to put together their portfolio of evidence which shows how they meet the scheme's criteria. During this time the Community Rugby Officer will be available to offer advice and support.

## How long will it take?

The length of time taken from the initial expression of interest through to the awarding of the IRFU Club Excellence Award is entirely dependent on each individual club and how long they take to put together their portfolio of evidence. As a guide we would expect the process to take approximately three to six months.

## Assessment of Clubs

Completed applications will be accepted at two different periods during the season, usually in April and November of each year. Clubs will be assessed in a two stage process.

- i. A club submits a portfolio of evidence to the Branch which shows how they meet a number of the scheme's criteria. The IRFU has developed guidance notes and generic policies to support clubs in achieving the award. The process is presently paper based, but it is hoped that the management of the scheme will be electronic by 2012/13 season.
- ii. The Branch will review the portfolio and a club visit will be organised where the remaining criteria will be reviewed on site. Once a satisfactory club visit has been completed, and the Branch has confirmed that all criteria have the required standard, the portfolio will be submitted to the IRFU to confirm the award.

## How will achieving the IRFU Club Excellence Award benefit my club?

There are a number of benefits which clubs can avail of as a result of achieving the IRFU Club Excellence Award.

- An IRFU Club Excellence Award certificate and flag will be presented to club representatives at a high profile occasion.
- All IRFU Club Excellence Award Clubs will be listed on the IRFU Web Site.
- Suitable publicity will be given to all successful clubs in the national media.
- Clubs, with the permission of the IRFU, may use the logo on all club correspondence and communication
- IRFU will provide special benefits to clubs who achieve and retain the required standard

For more information please contact the relevant Provincial Community Rugby Managers listed below.

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