

IRFU Welcoming Clubs Programme



Malone RFC

A Focus on Women's and Girls' Recruitment

Overview

When Malone RFC made the decision to develop Women's and Girls' rugby at the club they decided to build the teams from "the bottom upwards". The teams did grow and develop well until the girls reached 18 when unfortunately a) many of them left for University and b) those that were left didn't have sufficient numbers for a team and therefore many left for other clubs. Malone is addressing this situation at present through the recruitment of women's players and their presence after only four weeks is having a positive impact within the club.

Recruiting the girls for the Youth teams

The recruitment began five years ago when the club relied on the regional development officers to recruit the girls through their work in the schools. However, this didn't always connect the girls in sufficient numbers for the club to run teams and therefore they decided to run their own schools programme. Using funding from Sport Ireland they ran a 10 week course in 6 local schools focussing on the 14 to 16 year olds. They then ran a tournament at the club between the 6 schools and this worked to introduce the club and the coaches to parents and players.

This proved to be very successful and when it was combined with several very innovative Facebook campaigns the club was successful in attracting the required number of players.

How does the club retain the young players?

The club focuses on creating a very friendly and productive environment in which the girls are valued. They aren't pushed in any way but are supported to achieve at their own individual levels.

Recruiting the women's team

During the summer of 2012 the club focussed on recruiting women for a new senior team. They initially tried to recruit from the Tag Rugby programmes that were running across the City but this didn't prove to be very successful. Instead they launched a Facebook campaign and advertised on Gum Tree, both of these proved to be very successful.

The aim is for the Women to be fully integrated into the main club and already after 4 weeks there are already seeing integration through a) the women working with the 4th XV to run a Halloween disco b) the women are coming to watch the men play on a Saturday and are staying (and attracting the young men to stay) in the club house until late and c) the coaches from the 1st XV spending time with the girls on training night.

Conclusions

The concept of building the teams "bottom up" will work well until 18 when University and work may take the players away it is therefore essential that if the club wants to develop a women's team it does so at the beginning. As many businesses are finding Social Media if run well can be very successful indeed in attracting new customers (players) to the business (club).

http://www.irishrugby.ie/club/welcomingclubs/welcoming_clubs_index.php

IRFU Welcoming Clubs Programme; An IRFU initiative which provides clubs with a road map and training for the "team off the field" to assist them in running their sports club as efficiently as possible.