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| **WRU Status Update 14/10/2020**  |

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1. **CEO comment**

*I’m sure member clubs will join me in welcoming our new technical partner Macron to Welsh Rugby on the day when the new international kit range has been revealed in all of its glory. Our new Wales jersey, from Macron is a striking representation of Welsh Rugby tradition and we are delighted to have been able to begin our new seven-year partnership with Macron in such a spectacular way. The Italian sportswear manufacturer and technical supplier have a tried and tested rugby pedigree. The first rugby kit they produced worldwide was for Neath RFC in 2008 and they not only supply over 50 clubs from the community game, including the likes of Merthyr, Bedwas and Llandaff, already but also two of our regional sides in Cardiff Blues and the Scarlets. The deal has also seen Macron take over the WRU’s merchandising operation – just as it has done for the Blues and Scarlets - running its vibrant online shop and flagship store at Cardiff’s Principality Stadium.But it is the unique community element to this new partnership that excites us all the most.  Over the following six years, starting in 2021/22 season £1m worth of Macron kit will be made available, each year, to the community game at no charge. More details will follow on the mechanisms we will employ to get this kit to the areas most in need throughout Welsh Rugby, but this direct investment in our community game is most welcome at this time given the ongoing pandemic situation.*
*The WRU Group Annual Report was published at the start of this week and it describes how managing the impact of Covid-19 down to a £5.3m deficit would not have been possible without the efforts of the Board, Council Members, employees, our commercial partners and the wider rugby family – our member clubs.*
*We had expected to show a break even result for the current year and were on track to achieve this up until the business and economic disruption that was caused by the pandemic. Its impact on the Group has meant an unanticipated loss, but we expect to be able to retain profits over the medium term to be able to offset this loss and return net assets to previous levels. The Group has a healthy business, with a strong balance sheet and adequate liquidity. Immediate measures were taken to reduce costs and protect our financial position with the outbreak of the pandemic. However, it is too early to quantify the full impact of the Covid–19 pandemic on future financial performance and the Group will continue to closely monitor the developing situation.*
*We are all delighted that international rugby will return this autumn but the prospect of playing without spectators has an obvious and directly negative influence on our ability to generate revenue and, of course, we want to be in a position where the whole game can return without restrictions. We have contingencies plans in place, for example for the prospect of home matches in the 2021 Guinness Six Nations having to be played in front of part capacity crowds, due to social distancing, but no crowds will present severe challenges. We have sufficiently robust banking facilities but there is no doubt that YE21 is when the full impact of this pandemic could be felt. I believe we can all be proud of what we have achieved so far and, under present circumstances, only making a £5.3m loss in YE20 can be viewed in a positive light, but there is also much hard work ahead, just as there is for all in the sports, leisure and entertainment industries as we continue to navigate through the uncertainties arising from the current pandemic.*

*Stay safe,*
*Steve Phillips*
*WRU CEO*

**2.**     **Annual Report: Losses limited to £5.3M but ‘severe challenges ahead’**

The WRU Group turned over £79.9m during the year ending 30 June 2020 and was able to limit retained losses to £5.3m despite the Covid-19 pandemic. The Group’s Annual Report, published last week reveals the full impact of cancelling the final round 2020 Six Nations clash with Scotland – due to the health crisis – and describes how some 78% of income is derived from staging international matches featuring the Welsh team and the commercial activities associated with it. The postponement of the Scotland game alone amounted to c.£8.1m deficit and the Group’s loss was also influenced by the absence of other planned events such as Judgement Day and a Rammstein concert. But a swift response to the crisis saw the Group reduce costs.
It paused and alleviated non-essential capital, reduced employee salaries and utilised the Government Coronavirus Job Retention scheme. This, together with £4.9m of income, provided by the Group’s share of CVC Capital Partners’ investment in the PRO14 competition, helped to mitigate the pandemic’s effect.
Alongside the natural reduction in costs arising from the early curtailment of rugby activities, measures reduced costs by c.£1.9m in YE20 and are expected to further reduce costs by up to c.£2.5m in YE21. Decisive action meant the Group was able to continue with re-investment in community clubs, including making c.£1.0m available as emergency funds to assist with rebuilding after Storm Dennis and dealing with the Covid-19 issue.
The Group’s re-investment in community rugby increased during the year to £4.6m (from £4.5m in 2019) and, although overall investment in the game decreased to £47.5m (2019: £49.6m), this is largely due to the unexpected early end to the rugby season.
More here: [https://www.wru.wales/2020/10/annual-report-ye20-losses-limited-to-5-3-but-severe-challenges-ahead/](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=7e1f6645b4724ab5c5295c3afd677ef7&i=526A533A1A1524)
Download Annual Report YE20 here: [https://community.wru.wales/the-wru/reports/](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=7e1f6645b4724ab5c5295c3afd677ef7&i=526A533A1A1525)
*NB. The Annual Report is currently in the process of being translated and the translated version will be made available once it is ready.*

**3.**     **New Wales jersey unveiled today**

The new Macron Wales kit, to be worn for the first time against France in Paris in ten days’ time, has been unveiled simultaneously in the private changing rooms of the national team headquarters in Hensol and the Wales Women squad’s current base in Swansea University. Jonathan Davies and Ross Moriarty were joined ‘virtually’ by Wales Women captain Siwan Lillicrap and Gwen Crabb to reveal the kit against a backdrop of jerseys from the community game in Wales which have also been produced by the WRU’s new official technical partner. The launch of the new kit has taken on a post-Covid feel with both squads currently living in respective ‘bubbles’ and so the community aspect of the partnership - £1m of free kit to be supplied yearly to Welsh rugby clubs over six years – has been reflected by a display of existing Macron community rugby shirts. The new, bespoke, custom-made ‘home’ jersey from Macron is a deep traditional Welsh red. It has a classic white v-neck collar tipped with green trim, with the same detailing to be found on the sleeve. A set of unique features sees the red dragon of the Welsh flag embossed across lower back of the shirt, an embossed pattern covering the sleeves - cleverly transforming the hexagonal shape of the WRU three-feathers logo into ‘dragon scales’ - and the Welsh word ANRHYDEDD (honour), also embossed, on the back of the collar. The new Wales jerseys, both ‘home’ (RED)  and ‘away’ (BLACK), are available exclusively from the WRU both online ([store.wru.co.uk](http://store.wru.co.uk)) and at its flagship store in Cardiff now, where prices match or beat all Guinness Six Nations competitors in like for like categories, with the replica top priced at £70 and the bespoke, authentic playing jersey retailing at £96.
LINK: [https://www.wru.wales/2020/10/the-new-wales-kit-by-macron-revealed/](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=7e1f6645b4724ab5c5295c3afd677ef7&i=526A533A1A1526)

**4.**     **AGM**

As Members will be aware, this year’s Annual General Meeting (“AGM”) of the WRU will be hosted virtually on Wednesday 28 October 2020 commencing at 7:00pm and Member representatives will regrettably not be able to attend this meeting in person. Please note that any Member representative or proxy seeking to attend the AGM in person will not be admitted. A maximum of two (2) nominated representatives per Member will be provided with individual log-in details to virtually attend the AGM. To ensure that the relevant log-in details can be circulated to your Member’s nominated representatives in advance of the AGM, please provide us with name and email contact details for each of your Member’s nominated representatives, via email to agm@wru.wales as soon as possible. Given the manner in which this year’s AGM will be held, we also encourage all Members to submit questions and any relevant observations, also via email to agm@wru.wales , by no later than 5pm on Friday 23 October 2020, so that these can be received in advance of and responded to during the AGM, given that there will be no ‘real time’ interaction due to the format of the AGM this year.

5.     **Wayne Pivac names seven uncapped players in Autumn squad**

Head Coach Wayne Pivac announced his 38-man Autumn campaign squad last week featuring seven uncapped players. Two uncapped forwards are named in hooker Sam Parry and back-row Josh Macleod, whilst five uncapped backs are included: Kieran Hardy, Callum Sheedy, Johnny Williams, Louis Rees-Zammit and Ioan Lloyd. RWC squad members Tomas Francis, Rhys Patchell and Jonathan Davies who all missed the Guinness Six Nations campaign earlier this year, return from injury to be included. Speaking about the return of international rugby and his plans for the campaigns ahead Pivac said: *“This campaign is hugely important looking to the future and long term to the RWC in 2023. “We kick off the campaign with a game against France which will help prepare us for the re-arranged Six Nations match versus Scotland which is an important game and important we get a good performance from the Players”. “We then go into the Autumn Nations Cup (ANC) which is an exciting tournament and a great opportunity for us.  It is a chance for us to continue developing our game, give opportunities to players and test them at this level. It is ideal preparation for the all-important 2021 Six Nations which will come around quickly after the ANC.”*
Full story: [https://www.wru.wales/2020/10/seven-uncapped-in-wales-autumn-squad/](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=7e1f6645b4724ab5c5295c3afd677ef7&i=526A533A1A1527)

**6.**     **Suspension lifted in Swansea**

The temporary suspension of community rugby in the Swansea area has been lifted with immediate effect after reviewing of the situation in conjunction with the clubs within the respective Local Authorities and more than two weeks after a local lockdown was imposed.
Along with clubs and teams in Caerphilly County Borough, RCT, Newport, Merthyr, Bridgend and Blaenau Gwent where the temporary rugby suspensions have already been lifted, teams of all ages in the Swansea Local Authority may now return to training within the current return to rugby guidelines, if they feel they can provide a safe environment for players, coaches and volunteers. It is important to stress that pending new regulations covering travel for children to attend sporting activities, Welsh Government local restrictions still prevent players, parents and coaches from entering or leaving areas where local lockdowns are in place in order to attend training sessions. Players and parents have also been reminded they must complete the symptom checker on the WRU Game Locker ahead of every training session.
[https://community.wru.wales/2020/10/13/return-to-rugby-for-swansea-clubs-reminder-of-travel-restrictions/](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=7e1f6645b4724ab5c5295c3afd677ef7&i=526A533A1A1528)
More on this subject:
Caerphilly returns: [https://community.wru.wales/2020/09/29/statement-on-community-rugby-as-caerphilly](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=7e1f6645b4724ab5c5295c3afd677ef7&i=526A533A1A1529)
RCT temporary suspension lifted: [https://community.wru.wales/2020/10/02/63331/](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=7e1f6645b4724ab5c5295c3afd677ef7&i=526A533A1A1530)
Return of community rugby activities for Newport, Merthyr, Bridgend and Blaenau Gwent: [https://community.wru.wales/2020/10/07/return-of-community-rugby-activities-for-newport-merthyr-and-bridgend/](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=7e1f6645b4724ab5c5295c3afd677ef7&i=526A533A1A1531)

**7.**     **Minecraft Education**

The Welsh Rugby Union joined forces with Minecraft: Education Edition and Hwb, the Welsh Government’s digital platform for learning and teaching to successfully launch ‘The Club of the Future Challenge’ on Monday 5th October.  This unique competition is part of an exciting, first of its kind partnership to use rugby and the digital gaming platform – Minecraft: Education Edition to enhance learning and engagement within the classroom in line with the curriculum for Wales. Learners will have the opportunity to design and build their own virtual club of the future on the gaming platform starting with a virtual tour of the iconic home of Welsh Rugby, Principality Stadium!  Information gathered from the stadium tour and the subsequent tasks delivered in the classroom are geared up to challenge what each learner’s ‘Club of the Future’ might contain. The areas covered may include inclusion and diversity, team training regimes and player nutritional requirements to the fan experience. Learners will be encouraged to consider their local community, research and explore the needs in their local areas to then start to develop a plan for a ‘rugby club of the future’. Rugby clubs are often the heart of local communities, so learners will learn about the values of rugby and how this can be used to provide everyone with a positive experience and contribute to the long-term health and wellbeing of society in Wales. From the plan, learners will then begin to bring their own vision for a club of the future to life within Minecraft: Education Edition.
The competition is open to all maintained schools across Wales however, they must register via the dedicated Microsoft competition Team: [https://hwb.gov.wales/news/article/dfa48424-898c-4522-9b49-23062fc441e1](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=7e1f6645b4724ab5c5295c3afd677ef7&i=526A533A1A1532)

**8.**     **Rugby news**
 **GONGS FOR WALES LEGENDS**
Wales captain Alun Wyn Jones, former Wales head coach Warren Gatland and ex-Wales wing Gareth Thomas were all awarded honours in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List. Ospreys second row Jones was made an OBE while both Gatland and Thomas were awarded a CBE.
The Queen’s Birthday Honours List was due to be published in June, but was pushed back to enable nominations for people playing crucial roles during the first months of the Covid-19 crisis. Jones said: “It is a huge honour to receive such an accolade”. “I was initially reluctant to receive such an award in these trying times when there are so many people doing so much good for the community and are more worthy, but I see this as an acknowledgement to all the people who have helped me throughout my career”.
“It is recognition for everyone that has supported me from grassroots and intermediate, to professional and international rugby”.
“It is for my family, those who aren’t here anymore and those who are still here and fully behind me and for all their support in what I have done and what I want to continue to do.”
Gatland added: “I am incredibly honoured to receive a CBE. This award is recognition of everyone involved in Welsh rugby and all that we achieved together during my time as head coach,” Gatland said.
“I feel very fortunate to be able to do something I love every day and I would like to thank everyone who has supported me during my career.”
CLICK HERE: [https://www.wru.wales/2020/10/jones-gatland-and-thomas-honoured/](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=7e1f6645b4724ab5c5295c3afd677ef7&i=526A533A1A1533)

**SAM’S THE MAN**
Dragons fly-half Sam Davies joined an illustrious band of Welsh regional players at Rodney Parade in the Dragons win over Zebre as he became just the seventh player to reach 1,000 points. His first penalty in the Dragons’ 26-18 triumph took him level with Ceri Sweeney on 1,000 and then his second took him to within 43 of Stephen Jones. He also went through the 750 points barrier in the Guinness PRO14 on the night. Another 76 points this season could see him move into third place, but he still has a long way to go to catch the man in whose footsteps he followed in his early days at the Ospreys, Dan Biggar. The Wales No 10 notched 2,203 points during his 221 games for the Swansea-based region. Biggar has continued to be a points machine since moving to Northampton Saints and has scored a further 318 in 38 appearances for the English Premiership outfit, albeit at a slightly lesser strike rate of 8.37 points per match. He also appears in the Top 10 scorers in world rugby since the regions began on 3 September, 2003. The current World Rugby record points holder, Dan Carter unsurprisingly leads the way with more than 4,000 career points.
More: [https://www.wru.wales/2020/10/davies-joins-select-band-to-reach-1000-regional-points/](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=7e1f6645b4724ab5c5295c3afd677ef7&i=526A533A1A1534)

**WELSH STARS IMPRESS IN ALLIANZ PREMIER 15s**
The opening round of the Allianz Premier 15s season kicked off in fine style with plenty of Welsh representation in the four games played in the opening round. Carys Phillips’ try edged Worcester Warriors 25-24 in front of Saracens at Allianz Park but a late rally saw Saracens claim a 34-25 victory in what was the game of the day. Elsewhere, Hannah Jones, playing in the unaccustomed position of full-back, was on the score sheet as Gloucester-Hartpury began their campaign with a 34-14 win over newcomers Exeter Chiefs. The clash between Bristol Bears and Wasps was postponed due to a Bristol player contracting COVID-19.
Full story: [https://www.wru.wales/2020/10/64039/](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=7e1f6645b4724ab5c5295c3afd677ef7&i=526A533A1A1535)

**JERSEY A GOOD FIT FOR WALES TRIO**
The Channel Islands club of Jersey Reds are hoping to add to their international hall of fame after Wayne Pivac named three players in his Wales squad for the forthcoming autumn campaign who have played in England’s second tier of rugby with the Reds. Wasps second row Rowlands retained his place in the Welsh squad and will hope to add to the cap he earned in this year’s Six Nations championship. Rowlands spent four months on loan with the Reds during 2015/16 season. Bristol Bears fly half Callum Sheedy featured in the 2017 British & Irish final in Cork for Jersey. He moved to Jersey on loan from Bristol in January 2017, aged 21, and spent the remainder of the season with the Reds, making 12 appearances.
Scarlets scrum half Kieran Hardy moved to the Island aged 20 in the summer of 2016 from his native Wales and was able to develop his game under the tuition of Jersey Director of Rugby, former Wasps’ scrum-half Harvey Biljon. The young scrum half played more than 50 games in the Greene King IPA Championship and British & Irish Cup for the Reds, helping his club achieve top-half placings in the league table and reach the final of the British & Irish Cup. Since returning to West Wales in 2018, Hardy has become an increasingly important part of the Scarlets’ squad, playing regularly in the Guinness PRO14 and eventually forcing his way into national contention.
More: [https://www.wru.wales/2020/10/reds-pinning-hopes-on-further-caps-with-hardy-and-sheedy/](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=7e1f6645b4724ab5c5295c3afd677ef7&i=526A533A1A1536)
 **GRIFFITHS AIMS TO GET BACK**
Will Griffiths may not have been retained by the Dragons, but the ex-Wales U20 hooker hasn’t given up on becoming a professional rugby player. Griffiths, who played for Ebbw Vale in the Premiership last season, is now working on car body repairs and has signed for Newport, refusing to give up on his rugby dream.
Former Dragons head coach Bernard Jackman believed Griffiths to be the equal of Wales’ Elliot Dee when he was in charge at Rodney Parade, but the two are now at different stages in their respective careers. Dee is a regional regular, has 29 Test caps, and has been to a World Cup while Griffiths has now left professional rugby and hopes to play for Newport in the Welsh Premiership this season.
“There was an offer to stay and train with the seniors to see if I could get a Dragons contract for six months, but I decided not to take that risk,” Griffiths said. “It was at the start of lockdown and I thought I should take a job, be safe, and play for Newport. In two years’ time if I play well for Newport hopefully I can get back into the system”. “It was tough, really tough, and there were days when I was wondering what I should do, but I’m not giving up – not at all. It’s still on the table for me, but it’s also not the end of the world if I don’t get it. As a front row forward it takes longer to develop so I’ve still got time.”
Link: [https://community.wru.wales/2020/10/09/griffiths-not-giving-up-his-dream-after-joining-newport/](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=7e1f6645b4724ab5c5295c3afd677ef7&i=526A533A1A1537)

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