

IRFU Welcoming Clubs Programme



Case Study #5: Claremorris RFC

Claremorris Colts RFC was founded in the summer of 2009 by a number of players who had played in an adult Tag Rugby league that was run in the town over the summer. From the onset, the mission of the club has been to promote the core values of rugby - Teamwork, Respect, and Enjoyment, Discipline and Sportsmanship to children and young adults in Claremorris and the surrounding South Mayo vicinity. In three years the club has grown to have over 200 girls and boys playing mini and youth rugby each week and is building a strong reputation for being run in a very professional manner within the region. The club achieved a major milestone in April 2012 when Claremorris Colts won 'Club of the Year 2012' from the Connacht Branch of the IRFU.

Claremorris – a community sports club business

The primary focus of the club is the customer and it is structured to ensure that the quality of the playing experience of the girls and boys is optimised, the parents are assured that their children are coached and mentored in a very professional manner, the club volunteers feel that the donation of their time is valued and the sponsors are getting a return of their investment in the club.

The Young Players

Every participant is given the opportunity to play and to enjoy the game of Rugby Union. The club strives to create a positive and supportive environment and expects that all stakeholders play their part in achieving this objective. There is a basic code of conduct that is signed by all players, parents and coaches at the start of the season which is made up of 10 points and which covers areas of attitude and behaviour.

To ensure that the players receive quality coaching every coach is actively encouraged to take the coaching qualifications relevant to the group with which they are involved. (interestingly over 50% of the coaches have come from other sports).But it isn't all rugby; the young people are also involved in social fun days such as a beach and surf day when all families and the coaches spend the day playing on the beach with a BBQ at the end of the day. The club was also able to influence Leinster Rugby to lend them the Heineken Cup for a day and it was taken around the local schools. Coaches take part in various charity fundraising initiatives such as the annual 'Movember' campaign and the club is a prominent participant in the local St Patrick's Day parade.

The Parents

The club recognises that the parent's lead busy lives and that having a very well organised timetable for training and games for the children is of substantial benefit for time management purposes. At the start of the season Claremorris Colts RFC publishes a calendar of all training, games and events which is ruthlessly adhered to throughout the year. Training sessions start and end as advertised, the games kick off and finish as scheduled which in turn allows the parents to plan their other activities. If changes do take place i.e. cancellations due weather then there are a multitude of communication channels in place i.e. text, email, website and social media to relay any changes.

The Teams

When the club was launched in September 2009 there were 81 mini players. There are now over 200 young people playing at mini level, u13, u14 and u16 as well as a girl's only mini rugby team. The girl's only mini rugby programme was introduced on feedback from parents that some girls left the club because the boys would not pass the ball to them when playing mixed mini rugby.

The club is active in the local national and secondary schools coaching the children during their Physical Education sessions. These sessions are important for developing "brand awareness" in the local community. Other initiatives on this front are the distribution of club apparel displaying the distinctive Colts logo on registration, all players must wear their club playing kit i.e. playing shirt, white shorts and red socks (also given with registration) and regular articles and features in all the local newspapers. The club also makes use of social media and its website as communication tools and channels to promote awareness of the club.

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

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The Future

At the moment the mini section play and train on a pitch rented from a local school. Youth rugby training is held on a 60mx40m AstroTurf pitch rented from the local soccer club and all u13, u14 & u16 home games are played at Ballyhaunis RFC (18KM away). The acquisition of a home pitch is crucial for the development of the club and to that end the Claremorris town committee have recently awarded the Colts a 5.6 acre site of community land located on the outskirts of the town to develop our own facilities.

The Volunteers

The organisational structure of the committee has been based on the IRFU club excellence award scheme. There are a small group of very committed volunteers at the moment but the club is aware that in order to grow more people of the right calibre need to be involved. An initial step to engage these people has been to hold an open meeting to inform the parents and other interested parties about the forthcoming developments. Over 50 individuals attended the meetings, many of whom left the meeting having pledged their support in terms of time and or money.

Fund Raising

Sponsorship – the club has four main sponsors at the moment who are sponsoring the club playing shirt.

Fund Raising Activities

The club has been running a wide range of fund raising events throughout the year but has recently made the decision (following a request from the parents) to only run one major fund raising event each year. This year's activity is outlined below;

Claremorris Colts RFC Pitch Development Prize Draw Fundraiser

Background

The next stage of development for Claremorris Colts RFC is to acquire playing facilities in the town. To that end, the Claremorris Racecourse Trustee Committee have granted the club a twenty five year lease on a 5.6 acre plot of land on the outskirts of the town. The site development plan includes one competition sized rugby pitch and two training pitches. Feedback from parents & other stakeholders in the club suggested that a single large fundraising event would get more support rather than a multitude of smaller events. To that effect, a major fundraising prize draw is going to be launched on the weekend of the 13/14th July 2012.

Launch Event Detail

Claremorris Colts RFC is launching a major fundraising prize draw on the weekend of the 13th/14th July 2012 to raise funds for the development of club playing facilities. The pitch site is being divided into 2,000 equal sized rectangular areas and the rectangles will be 'auctioned' with a €50 price tag. Each person(s)/organisation purchasing a rectangle will also be entered into a draw for various prizes ranging from a sunshine destination holiday, weekend breaks in Ireland and rugby match tickets. The draw will be launched on Friday 13th July with the assistance of George Hook (rugby pundit & presenter on Newstalk 106), Jim Glennon (RTE radio rugby pundit & Sunday Independent Columnist), Alan Quinlan (Ex Munster & Ireland) and Roly Meates (Leinster Rugby Scrum Coach) and will be followed on Saturday 14th with Claremorris Colts RFC hosting a family fun day and Scrum Clinic in the town. The celebrities involved in the Friday night launch event will lead the scrum clinic and youth rugby coaches from clubs in Connacht and further afield are invited to attend. Call Paul Cunnane on 087 661 0968 for more detail.

Other Fund Raising Activities

Tag Rugby – the club generated over e 5000 last season through the tag rugby programme on a Wednesday evening.

Interest Free Loans – the club has received an offer from many members of interest free loans to be paid back in 5 years' time.

Monthly Direct Debit – the club is running a direct debit scheme for membership. If the member pays e10 a month, e5 goes towards the membership and e5 goes towards the club Lotto.

Communication

The club has an outstanding communication model which includes email text, web site and social media which is very strong within the club. Facebook is the dominant social media channel with over 850 'likes', twitter account has 350 followers.

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Key Points

- The club strives to create a very positive environment and supportive. This attracts many children and families many of whom without a previous rugby involvement.
- The club is run in a very professional manner – annual plan is drawn up at start of the season and a multitude of communication channels to make it easy for parents to plan their busy weekend schedules.
- Coaching is focussed on developing a positive learning environment.
- The club understands the “wants and needs” of parents, participants and business supporters ensuring that they attract new “customers” on a regular basis and retain a high percentage of them.

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