

IRFU Welcoming Clubs Programme



Case Study #4: Cork Constitution FC

Cork Constitution is one of the most established and successful clubs in Ireland with a heritage to be proud of. They have been to in the All Ireland Finals six times since 2001 and have produced a string of Internationals including Ronan O’Gara, Donncha O Callaghan and Denis Leamy.

The main aim of the club is to introduce the game to young people, to provide them with an enjoyable and constructive experience and then to support the development of these players throughout their rugby careers. Ultimately their focus is about supporting players in fulfilling their potential with an aim of producing players who perform on the International stage.

The Business Structure

The aim of the management structure is a) to have a strategy that everyone understands. The focus this year is in the development of the new clubhouse building which will include a gym and social facilities. b) There are a range of committees; each one has a strong leader who understands fully the individual roles and responsibilities of his committee members. They are then expected to work to achieve their goals and to report back to the executive committee. Above the executive committee is the Chairman and Management committee who develop the clubs strategy.

The sports club business is also run in a very “open” way with information being accessible by all committee members.

Membership

A decision was made several years ago to simplify the membership structure. There is now only one level of membership (therefore an individual or a family will pay the same price) and they all have the same voting right. There are a wide range of benefits offered to the members including free entry into 9 home games during the season and a 10% discount in the shop and over the bar. To encourage early payment of memberships any member who makes payment before September will receive an e20 voucher to use in the club shop. The club has also decided that there shouldn’t be any raffles or draw during the season to try and generate further income from the members after they have paid their memberships.

Player Development

Young Players – the club has over 460 children registered and 60 coaches involved in the mini and youth sections. The main aim is to ensure that “every child gets an opportunity to enjoy and to participate in the game”. The secondary aim is to provide an experience which will ensure that the player is retained through to adulthood as a player, supporter, volunteer or member. An emphasis is placed on the heritage of the club and the development of the club’s spirit. This is highlighted by the fact that a) the senior players are involved in the training of the young players b) as well as training on match days there are often activities for the young players such as Blitz’s which take place either before the game or at half time.

Senior Players – The club aims to develop, retain and attract the best players available. To achieve this the club focusses on the “wants and needs” of the players and strives to offer high quality coaching, fitness facilities, medical back up and financial support to fulfil the needs of the players

Fund Raising– in common with other clubs there is a sponsorship and fund raising committee. The club is increasingly focussing on connections and contacts through their members and parents to find business connections. There are also a wide range of fund raising activities that take place in the club including;

Cheltenham Gold Cup Day – over 200 people attended a fund raising event which had big screens, tipsters, food and drink.

Italian Night – prior to one of the junior team’s tour to Italy the club ran an Italian night when there were a wide range of stalls selling Italian food, drink and merchandise. Funds were raised from the stalls and from an entry fee.

Tag – the venue is the largest tag venue in Ireland. A private company runs the programme; it attracts A) 400 people during the Spring Time and b) over 1000 participants each week over two nights during the summer months.

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

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.

Community Links

The club works hard to foster community relations with local schools using the facilities on a regular basis and with the local GAA club providing car parking, changing and warm up facilities during the finals time.

Key Points

- Focus on the “wants and needs” of the players in order to attract and retain them.
- Recognise that the young players want to enjoy and participate in the game. Winning isn't everything!
- Once members have committed to paying their membership they don't want to be chased on a regular basis for raffles and other fund raising activities.