

INSPIRE | CONNECT | THRIVE



WOMEN AND GIRLS

RUGBY STRATEGY

ACCELERATING THE WOMEN'S GAME



OUR TARGET OUTCOMES

TO ACCELERATE THE GROWTH OF THE GAME AND INSPIRE A GENERATION OF PLAYERS, VOLUNTEERS, COACHES, MATCH OFFICIALS AND FANS THROUGH WORLD-CLASS RUGBY EXPERIENCES AND COMPETITIONS:

- Create **inspiring** and truly **inclusive experiences** for all involved to attract and retain participants.
- Grow the game - creating sustainable environments leading to **lifelong career** and **volunteering opportunities** in the game.
- **Empower** players, match officials, coaches and all our volunteers to achieve their **full potential**.

CURRENT STATE OF PLAY



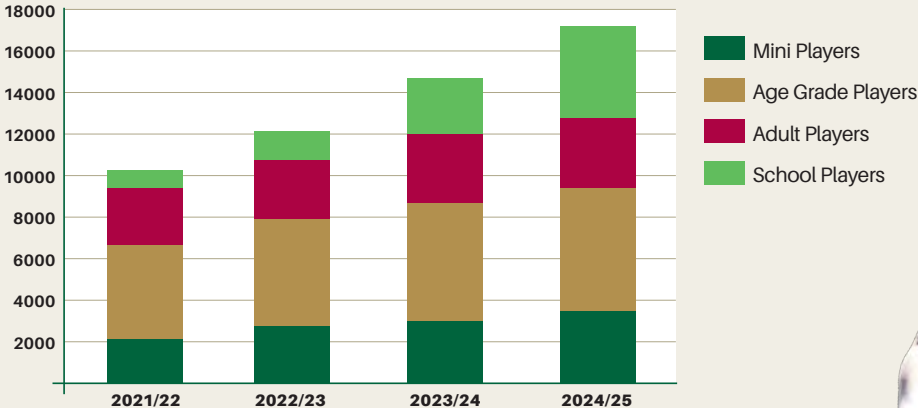
1 GROWTH

Increasing **Women and Girls (W&G)** in your club, **drives both male and female growth** in your club.

2 GROWING PARTICIPATION

Based on the growth in W&G rugby over the past 3 years, by 2030 the game can **grow from 17.5K participants to 35K**.

W&G PARTICIPATION GROWTH 2021-2025



3 WOMEN VOLUNTEERS, COACHES AND REFEREES

The growth in boy/men participants matches growth in male coaches (1:6 ratio players – coaches). **This ratio is 1:10 for women coaches and 1:6 volunteers.**

QUALIFIED WOMEN COACHES	WOMEN HIGH PERFORMANCE COACHES	QUALIFIED ACTIVE WOMEN REFEREES
x629	x19*	x25

* Coaches in teams that include players who are part of a HP national programme.

4 RETENTION


Clubs who have more players, have a higher retention rate. Clubs who have fuller pathways, have higher retention stats.



GROWING
WOMEN & GIRLS RUGBY
MAKES RUGBY BETTER

CURRENT STATE OF PLAY

continued

 Full Pathway  In Progress  Footprint

14% OF CLUBS PROVIDE A FULL PATHWAY FROM MINIS TO ADULT

23 stand-alone clubs have full pathway, and 56 clubs have access to full pathway through amalgamations

TOTAL CLUBS WITH W&G SECTIONS
163/217

NUMBER OF CLUBS

2008	2018	2025
12%	49%	75%

NUMBER OF TEAMS*

2008	2018	2025
44	328	391

NUMBER OF SCHOOL TEAMS

2008	2025
14	101

*Different formats of game included in earlier figures ie. 7s, 10s, festivals.

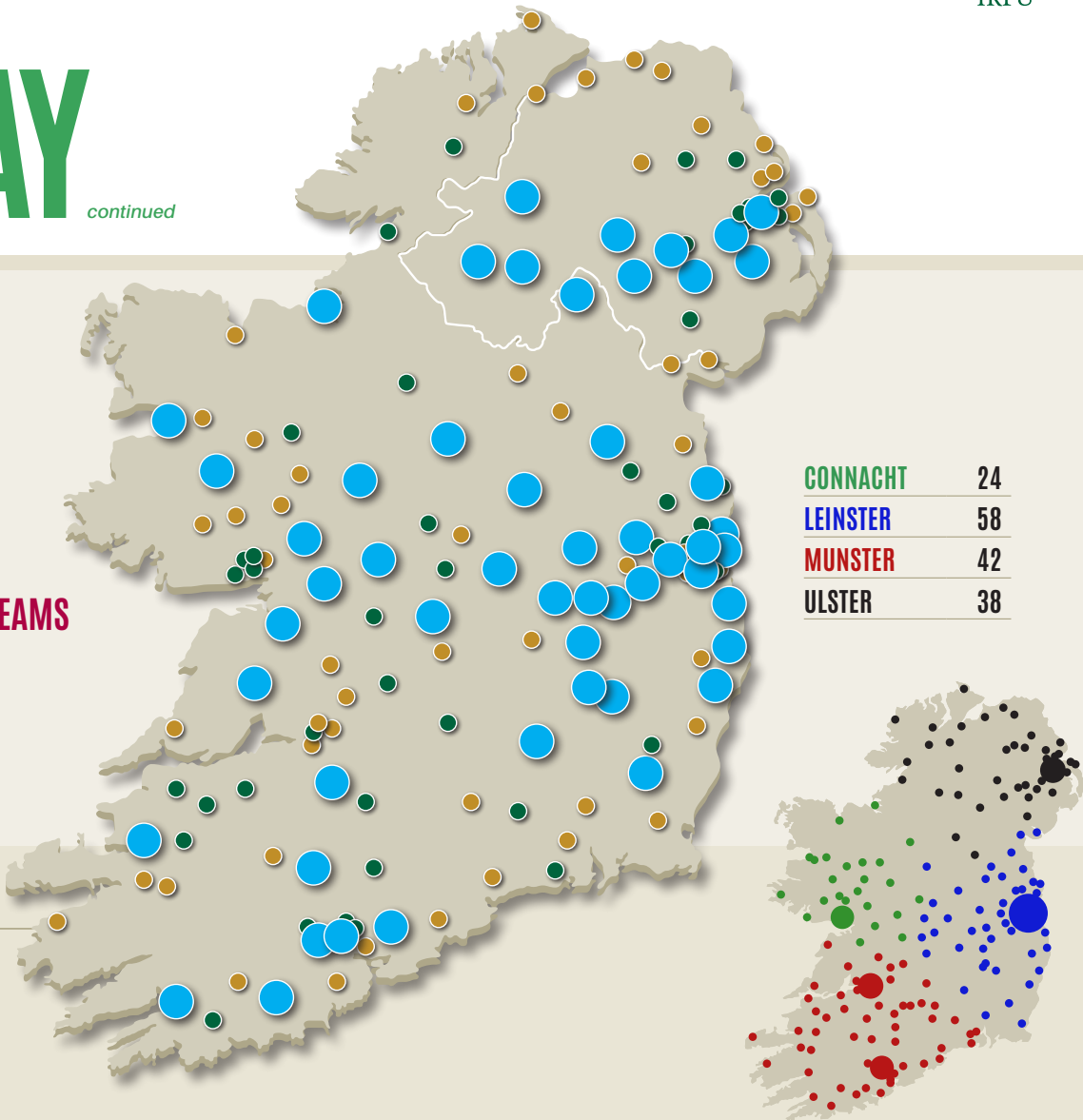
GOVERNANCE

40%  | **60%** 
UNION REPRESENTATION

25%  | **75%** 
PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATION

15%  | **85%** 
CLUB REPRESENTATION

*131 females in leadership pipeline programmes since 2019



PERFORMANCE AND PATHWAY

↑ CONTRACTED PLAYERS

20 SEVENS CONTRACTS
IN 2022

45* WOMEN'S CONTRACTS
IN 2024/25 *UK based players included

↑ WORLD RANKING

8TH IN 2022 **5TH** IN 2025

8TH IN PARIS OLYMPICS, 2024

↑ CELTIC CHALLENGE

14 GAMES IN 2023

20 GAMES IN 2025

↑ NATIONAL TALENT SQUAD GROWTH & REPRESENTATION

PROVINCE	2023	2025
LEINSTER	20	28
MUNSTER	8	19
CONNACHT	12	20
ULSTER	13	13
TOTAL	53	80

↑ NATIONAL TRAINING SQUAD

X 3 CENTRAL STAFF
X 4 PROVINCIAL TALENT COACHES
X 4 PROVINCIAL ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT
COACHES

NATIONAL TEAMS
X 13 NATIONAL STAFF 2023 TO 20.5 STAFF 2025

↑ ATTENDANCE RECORD:

7,754 IRE V ENGLAND
VIRGIN MEDIA PARK 2025



PRINCIPLES DECISION MAKING GUIDE

GROWTH IN WOMEN'S RUGBY, MAKES RUGBY BETTER

Women and girls are **at the centre** of what we do

Drive connectivity across the game

Driving the quality of rugby is always our top priority

Continually articulate a **new narrative**, to help people understand how to behave in new ways

Be open to **change**, engage in **understanding difference**

Align to wider Irish rugby **strategic priorities**

Aim for **meaningful gains at systems-level**, alongside marginal gains at player-level



MEET ANNA CHOICE AND CHANCE

I'M HAVING FUN WITH MY FRIENDS, AND THE COACHES SEE ME AND HELP ME TO LEARN.

6 YEAR OLD ANNA

- **Girls only** mini and age grade teams but **options for me to play mixed** if I want to
- **A team at each age grade** to help me keep playing as I grow
- **Training and games are fun**, and I learn through having fun exploring
- **Avoid judgements** about whether I am 'Sporty or not Sporty', give girls the chance to be what they can be!!

I'M LEARNING A LOT AND BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN MYSELF AND WHAT I CAN DO. I'M HAVING FUN WITH MY FRIENDS IN TRAINING AND GAMES. MY BODY IS CHANGING AND I'M JUGGLING A LOT AT SCHOOL AND OTHER SPORTS, SO HAVING A FLEXIBLE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT HELPS A LOT.

16 YEAR OLD ANNA

- **A full club pathway** to help me learn from and stay in rugby in an environment that I can play **socially or be competitive**
- Coaches who **listen and respect my questions & opinions** and **develop my game understanding and physical fitness**
- An environment that supports me as my **body and world is changing**
- Non contact **options for me** to play if I'm new or need **flexibility during exams**
- Access to **facilities that are hygienic, inclusive and safe**

I HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE MY BEST WITH MY CLUB, MY PROVINCE OR WITH IRELAND. I CAN PLAY TO HAVE A LAUGH WITH MY TEAM OR BE COMPETITIVE AND PROGRESS. I CAN SEE THAT I'M A ROLE MODEL TO YOUNGER GIRLS, WHICH IS PRETTY COOL AND IT MOTIVATES ME FURTHER.

26 YEAR OLD ANNA

- Provincial Seniors Leagues accessible across the country to play socially or competitively
- **Provincial and National Elite Player Selection opportunities** and competition
- **Feeling welcome** within our club that is seen through **quality coaching**, helpful training slots, facilities and kit
- Inclusive environment where **men's and women's team support each other** on game days and through the season
- Access to play **socially for fun with my friends or competitively** for as long as my body wants to
- Have access and **opportunity to coach, referee and other roles** in my club

I HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES AT WORK AND HOME NOW AND I ENJOY BEING PART OF THE RUGBY COMMUNITY. I CAN HELP A LOT BY APPLYING THE SKILLS I HAVE ON OR OFF FIELD. FLEXABILITY OF TIME HELPS ME JUGGLE IT ALL.

36+ YEAR OLD ANNA

- Access to play socially or competitively for as long as my body wants to.
- There's a **rugby club in my community I can access for exercise** that welcomes me in multiple volunteer roles.
- My club **welcomes families through age grade opportunities** to play and a family friendly culture all round.
- **Opportunities to Coach, Referee and be part of Committee Structures**

The global momentum of Women's Sport

There has been unprecedented growth in the profile and commercial value of women's sport



£465M

Total value of India's Women's Premier League (cricket) franchises



24M

Record-breaking peak broadcast audience for NCAA Women's Final, beating Men's final figures (basketball)



900M

Views of the #womensrugby hashtag on TikTok



\$250M

The most expensive purchase in the history of women's professional sports (soccer)



\$570M

Revenue generated by FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023 (soccer)



91,648

World record for women's soccer Barcelona v Wolfsburg in Champions League



92,003

World record attendance for women's sporting event – Nebraska Volleyball Day 2023



17.4M

Peak broadcast audience for Women's Euro 2022 (soccer)



Serena Williams

@serenawilliams

I wear Chelsea blue but pro woman on my heart.
Any color goes. #womensport

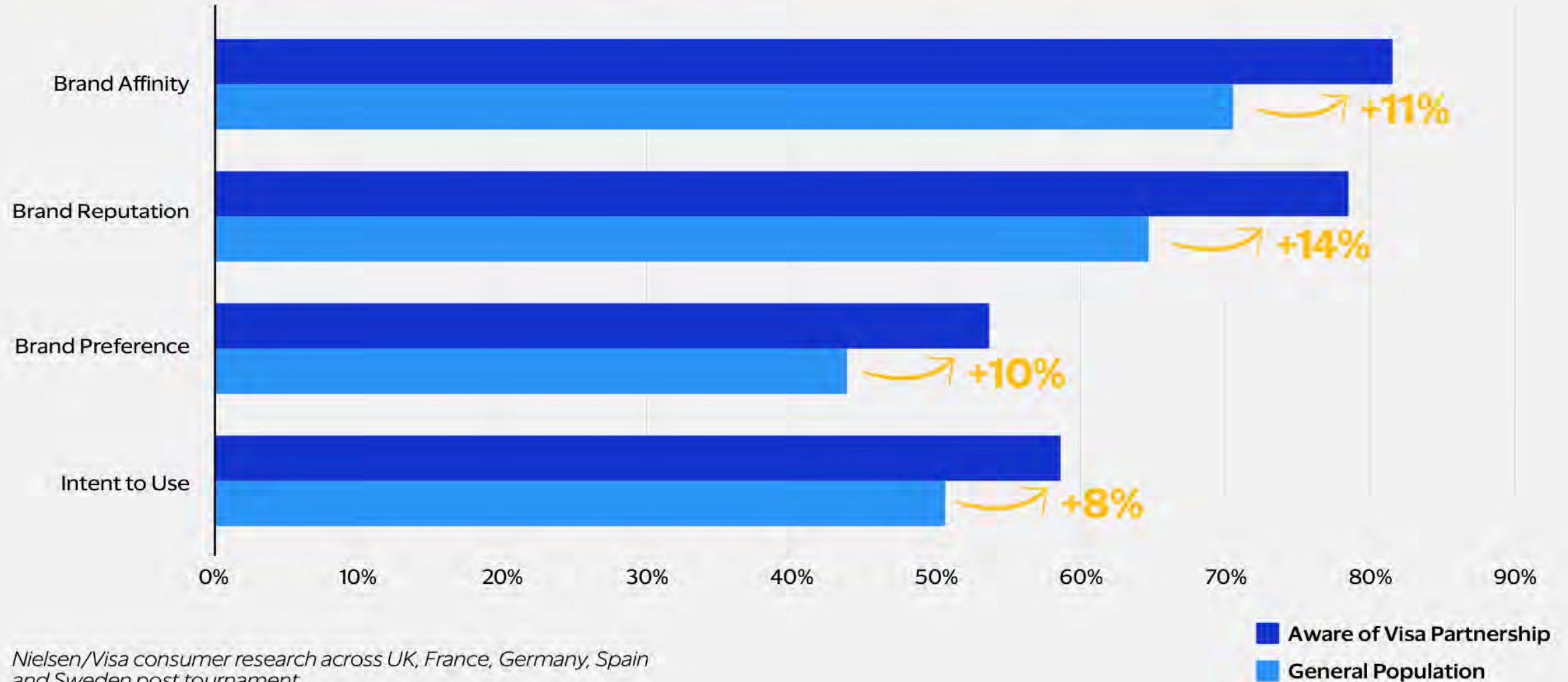


Michele Kang donating \$4 million to USA Women's Rugby program

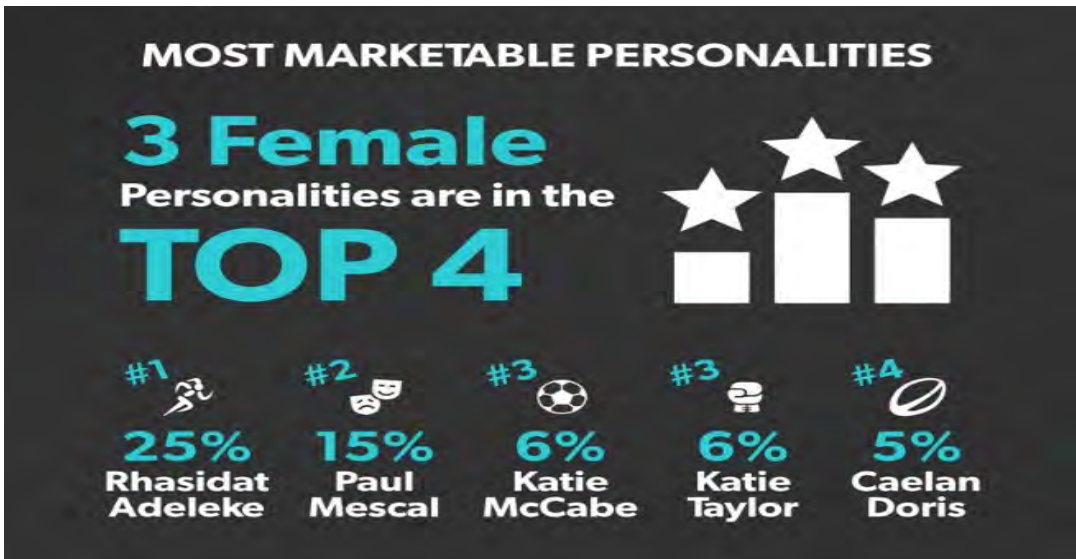
Kang, an investor who owns three international women's soccer clubs including the NWSL's Washington Spirit, donated a \$4 million gift that will be paid out over the next four years in advance to the 2028 Olympics, USA Rugby announced Tuesday.

Brand Impact

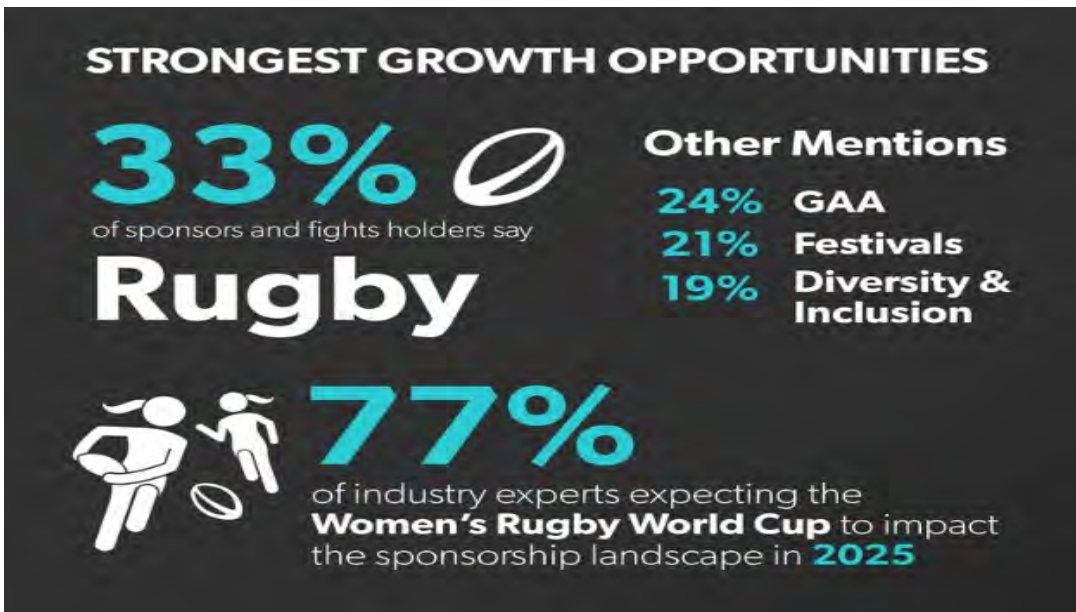
Visa's Partnership Brand Impact: UEFA Women's EURO 2022



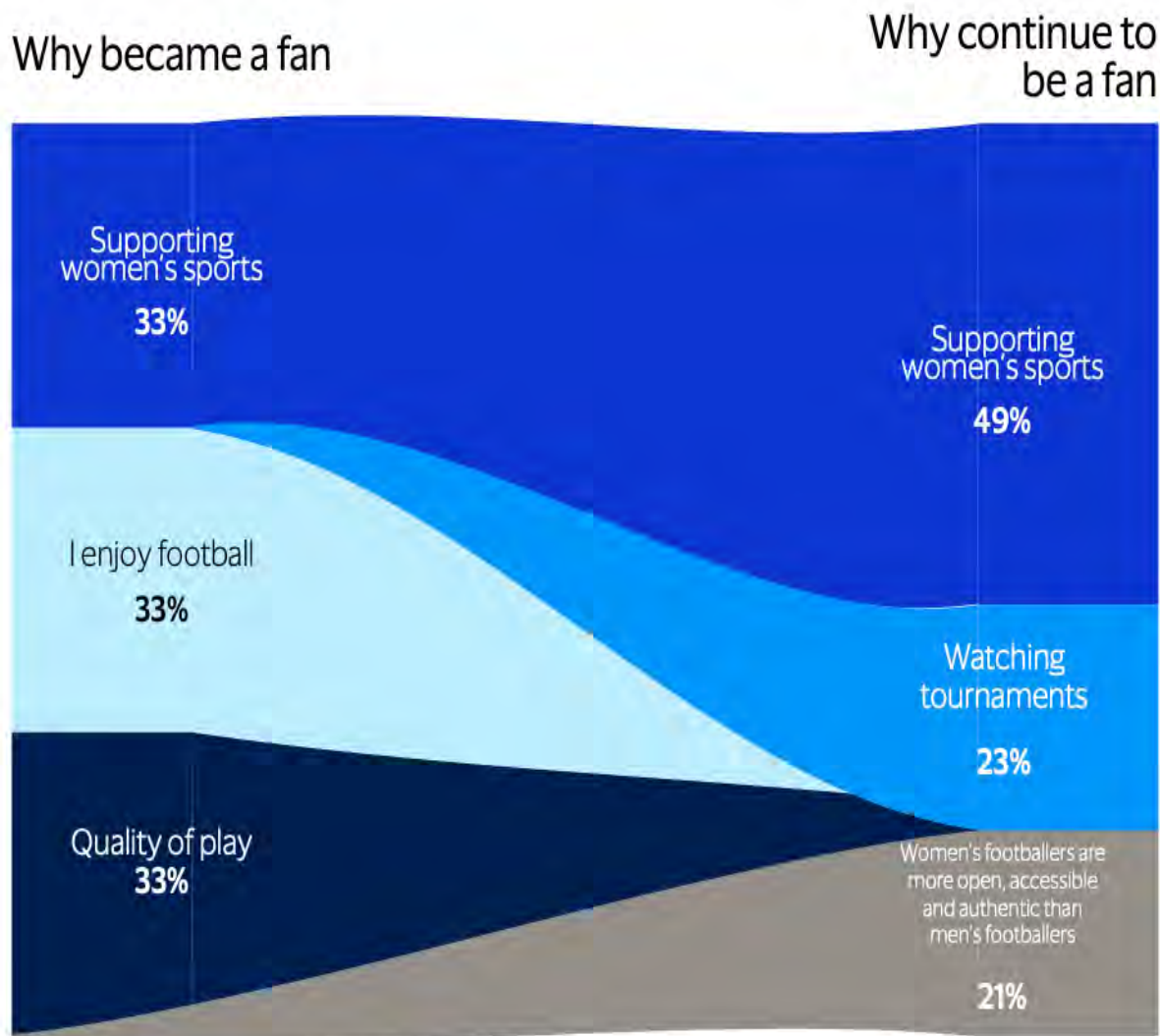
Nielsen/Visa consumer research across UK, France, Germany, Spain and Sweden post tournament
Sample size per market = 1,000 nationally representative



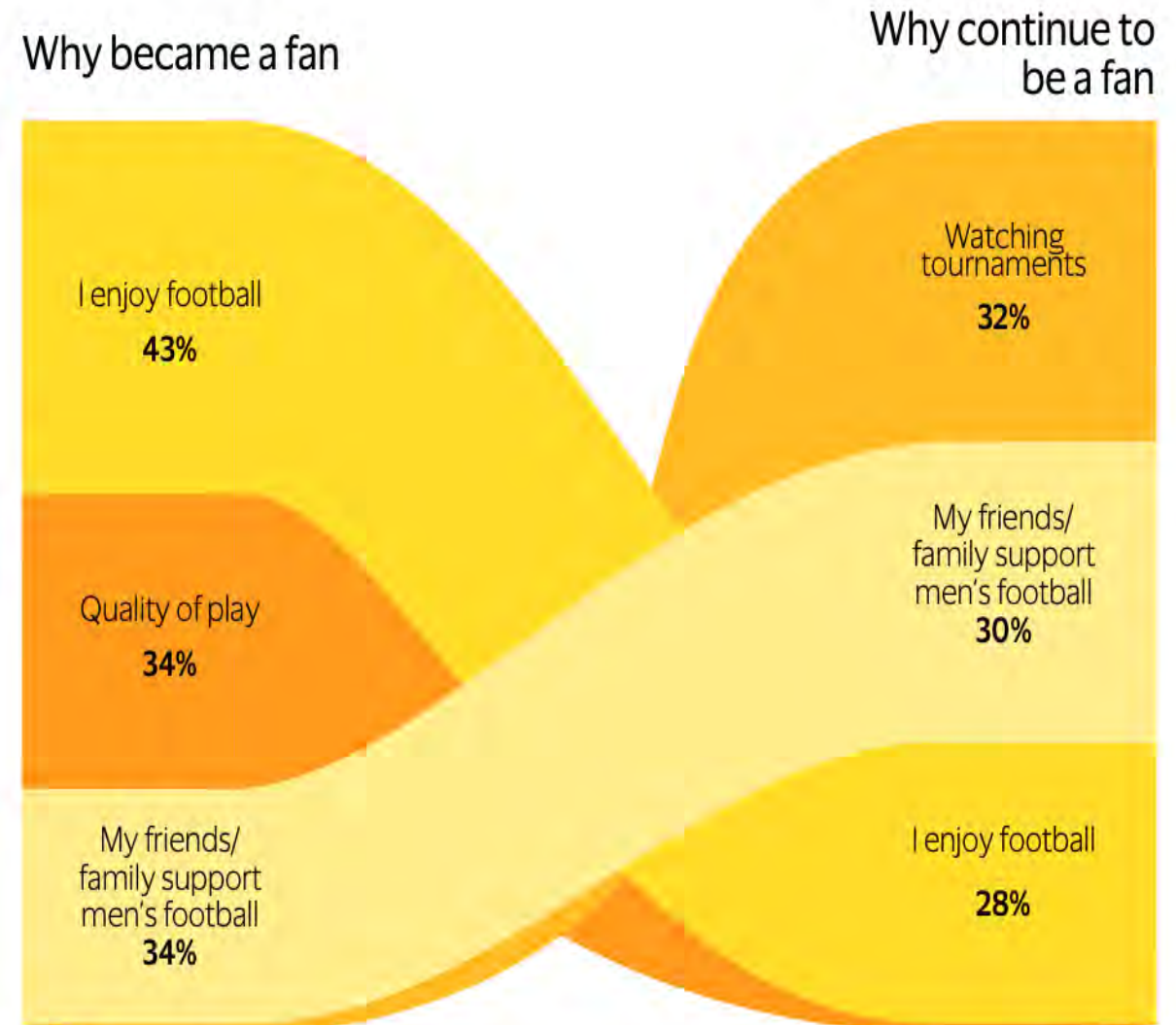
Reference: Onside.ie



The Sports Fan: Women & Men's Sport



Source: Visa Whitepaper Fan Survey 2024, (n=3867 FOW)



Source: Visa Whitepaper Fan Survey 2024, (n=2968 FOM)

GROWING THE WOMEN'S GAME

WOMEN'S GAME GROWTH IS ONE OF OUR FOUR STRATEGIC AND GROWTH PRIORITIES



OUR
STRATEGIC
PRIORITIES

DELIVERING
GREAT RUGBY
EXPERIENCES

1



DRIVING OUR HIGH
PERFORMANCE
AMBITION

2



ACCELERATING
THE WOMEN'S
GAME

3



INSPIRING
OUR FANS

4



THIS REQUIRES A CROSS-FUNCTIONAL PLAN TO MAXIMISE STRATEGIC GROWTH ACROSS THE WOMEN'S GAME

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE



OBJECTIVES

Irish rugby has the governance structure, people and training to enable decision making that benefits the Women and Girls game

Design a long-term business plan for investing into and building commercial value in Women and Girls rugby

Position and demonstrate intentional leadership of Women and Girls nationally, provincially and in the community game

Invest in the workforce of Volunteers, Coaches, and Referees to service the growth in the Women and Girls game



THRIVING GRASSROOTS



OBJECTIVES

Increase number of Women and Girls playing rugby in Ireland

Increase retention of Women and Girls in rugby by managing transitions from age grade to senior rugby

Elevate Standards of domestic competitions and clubs

Establish key standards and practices delivering quality player and coaching experiences across all levels of the game

Enhance the overall rugby experience and satisfaction for Women and Girls in rugby

Successfully embed athlete welfare awareness and education into the culture of the Women and Girls game

Deepen connection between grassroot and performance rugby to maximise player development and experience



WINNING TEAMS



OBJECTIVES

Establish Ireland as a leading nation in Women's Rugby by attaining and maintaining a top 5 XV's World Ranking annually and securing qualifications for LA Olympic Games

Journey with our four Provinces to deliver an elite women's domestic/ cross border competition developing and propelling Ireland's best talent

Offering clear and defined Talent Identification and HP Pathways with access at multiple entry points for girls and women

Drive physical robustness and mental resilience in a positive, impactful and gender specific environment

Build and develop a skilled, aligned, and adequately resourced workforce to deliver on the strategic intent of the women's high performance programme



REVENUE AND INVESTMENT



OBJECTIVES

Attract year on year growth in commercial investment that is channelled back into national, provincial and grassroots game

Review current commercial approach to help explore effective ways of unlocking/unbundling investment opportunity for Women and Girls game

Increase investment from engaged communities of women's sport in Ireland through Government and Donors.

Develop strong partnerships with provinces to host & deliver dynamic National & Provincial women's events

Build year on year match day fan data to inform marketing and ticketing approach to future women's rugby events.

Increase broadcast platforms for national and provincial competitions

VISIBILITY AND ENGAGEMENT



OBJECTIVES

Broaden the Women and Girls rugby insights to effectively elevate understanding and profile of Women and Girls rugby

Inspire the nation of Ireland to watch and play Women and Girls rugby by driving visibility of the game

Increase the following of Women and Girls rugby on digital platforms by engaging with dynamic and impactful content

Demonstrate system step change to Women and Girls rugby by developing team of advocates and partners to help redefine and promote positive culture



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THANK YOU



LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

STRATEGY GOAL	OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY AREAS	KEY INDICATORS 2025-2028
1	Irish rugby has the governance structure, people and training to enable decision making that benefits the W&G game	Governance and Representation	Increase and maintain female representation at Provincial and Club level towards 40%
		Leadership Recruitment and Pipeline	Governance structures reflecting Strategic Priority of Women's Rugby
			Annual increase in women in leadership programmes
			Positive Impact on governance and decision making
2	Design a long-term business plan for investing into and building value in W&G rugby	Long - Term Business Planning	Conclude and begin implementation Q1/2 2026
		Leadership and Staffing Structure	Conclude and begin implementation by end of 2025
		Reporting and Oversight	Conclude and begin implementation by end of 2025
3	Position and demonstrate intentional leadership of W&G nationally, provincially and in the community game	Leadership capacity and staffing	Increase Capacity of Leadership and Staff in Women's game at national and Provincial Level
		Collective Planning and Alignment Nationally, Provincially and Clubland	Positive feedback from participants annually and improved performance
			Quarterly reporting of progress and alignment
4	Invest in the workforce of Volunteers, Coaches, Referees to service the growth in the W&G	Recruitment and retention of Women Volunteers, Coaches and Referees	Increase Capacity of Leadership and Staff in Women's game at national and Provincial Level

THRIVING GRASSROOTS GAME

STRATEGY GOAL	OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY AREAS	KEY INDICATORS 2025-2028
5	Increase number of Women and Girls Playing Rugby in Ireland	Participation Age-Grade and Adult	10% annual increase in participants
		Club Pathway	40% clubs with full club pathway by 2028
		Schools and University Teams	5-10% increase in schools and university teams playing annually
6	Increase retention of W&G in rugby by managing transitions through age grade to senior rugby	Player Retention	Increase and maintain Player Retention through all stages of pathway
		Growing social rugby and other Inclusive formats of game	10% increase in girls only minis rugby
			Establish a baseline of transition into contact programmes running across clubs and grow annually
7	Create a comprehensive competition structure that supports players at all levels have access to the right level of competition and development	Domestic Game Competition Structure	New Provincial Game Competition format for 2026/27 season
			Increase in participants and teams accessing rugby in local league formats
			Annual season planning done collaboratively with domestic and performance rugby
8	Establish key standards and practices delivering quality player and coaching experiences across all levels of the game	Coaching	Design and deliver an integrated long term player development model that reflects stage appropriate demands of the game and athletic, technical, tactical development plan
		Quality of Rugby Development and Experience	10% annual growth in female coach recruitment while retaining current coaches
			Increase in coach mentorship through pathway to performance annually

THRIVING GRASSROOTS GAME_{continued}

STRATEGY GOAL	OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY AREAS	KEY INDICATORS 2025-2028
9	Enhance the overall rugby experience and satisfaction for W&G in rugby	Participant Experience	Increase in satisfaction and metrics from Women and Girls reported through State of the Game survey annually
		Culture and Inclusion	Increase in positive experiences reported by participants and volunteers in Women's Rugby in annual survey
			Driving inclusivity from grassroots to performance through ED&I strategy and Key Indicators
10	Successfully embed athlete welfare awareness and education into the culture of the Women and Girls game.	Female Athlete Welfare	Establish Women's Medical Strategy Committee as part of IRFU Medical Strategy, to guide data gaps in women's game by end of Q2 2025
			Increase access to and delivery of Women's Health insights from domestic to performance game
11	Deepen connection between grassroots and performance rugby to maximise player development and experience	Grassroots to Performance Connections	Unity of purpose amongst staff and volunteers along the pathway evidenced by communication and alignment that maximises player management and experience
			Annual season planning done collaboratively with domestic and performance rugby to enable effective connection throughout full pathway

WINNING TEAMS

STRATEGY GOAL	OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY AREAS	KEY INDICATORS 2025-2028
12	Establish Ireland as a leading nation in Women's Rugby by attaining and maintaining a top 5 XVs World Ranking annually and securing qualifications for LA Olympic Games	National Team Performance Cycle Planning	Undergo annual Performance Planning process to plot the course of the National Programme to achieve performance goals
		Player Development and Performance Plans	All contracted players have access to a Daily Training Environment annually
13	Journey with our four provinces to deliver an elite women's domestic/cross border competition developing and representing the best talents in our provinces and Ireland	Elite Domestic Competition	Annual progress towards maximally competitive games and success of Irish Celtic Challenge teams
		Four Provincial Performance Planning	Evidence of performance capacity increases in women's provincial senior programme annually across all four provincial unions
14	Provide clearly defined and accessible Talent Identification and high performance pathway for girls and women, with multiple entry points and aligned development stages	Talent Identification and Development	Annual evidence of a clearly defined talent pathway for players, coaches and performance staff, aligned to national programme goals and working collectively with domestic rugby
		Performance Pathway	10% increase in talent within NTS annually with evidence of consistent transitions to national teams
			Measurable year on year growth of National Talent pool depth chart from age grade to senior representative players
15	Drive Physical robustness and mental resilience in a positive, impactful and gender specific environment	Athletic Development and Athlete Welfare for Women	Establish by end of Q2 2025
16	Build and develop a skilled, aligned, and adequately resourced workforce to deliver on the strategic intent of the women's high performance programme	Performance Staff competence and delivery	Annually appraise and support Coaching and Performance staff to continue to achieve world class standards of delivery

DRIVE INVESTMENT AND REVENUE

STRATEGY GOAL	OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY AREAS	KEY INDICATORS 2025-2028
17	Attract year on year growth in commercial investment that is channelled back into national, provincial and grassroots game	Commercial Sponsorship and Partnerships	Conduct research to gather women's rugby commercial and marketing insights to inform approach to increase investment in the game
			Track sponsorship revenue to Women and Girls programmes annually as part of Women's Rugby business plan
18	Review current commercial approach to help explore effective ways of unlocking/unbundling investment opportunity for W&G game	Commercial Model	Establish a fit for purpose commercial model that addresses the growing needs of the game
19	Increase investment from engaged communities of women's sport in Ireland through Government and Donors	Engaged Communities: Government and Donors	Build a case for Government and Donors investment in W&G rugby in Ireland and evidence the impact of the investment annually
20	Develop strong partnerships with provinces to host and deliver dynamic National and Provincial women's rugby events	Dynamic Women's Rugby Match Day Events	Annual Increases in audience satisfaction scores and positive feedback through post match surveys
21	Build year on year fan data to inform women's rugby marketing for maximal fan engagement of women's rugby fans	Women's Rugby Audience and Fan	Grow fan database by minimum 10% annually, including fan segmentation to enable targeted engagement and fan experience
22	Increase broadcast platforms for national and provincial competitions	Broadcast	Deepen relationships with our National Broadcasters to grow women's rugby audiences annually for Provincial and National fixtures

STEP CHANGE IN VISIBILITY AND ENGAGEMENT

STRATEGY GOAL	OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY AREAS	KEY INDICATORS 2025-2028
23	Broaden the Women and Girls rugby insights to effectively elevate understanding and profile of Women and Girls rugby	Women's Rugby Insights	Conduct and apply research to understand the identity and brand of women's rugby in Ireland to inform Communications and Marketing approach
			Increase fan base annually by apply fan insights
24	Inspire the nation of Ireland to watch and play Women and Girls rugby by driving visibility of the game	Visibility	Create dynamic marketing campaigns that lifts the profile of women and girls rugby to help attract players and fans.
			Use personalities and stories from within the game to amplify the positive messaging of the impact sport has on women and girls in Ireland.
			Increase visibility of the grassroots game that champion the people that make rugby great
25	Increase the following of Women and Girls rugby on digital platforms by engaging with dynamic and impactful content	Digital Fan Engagement	Develop and deliver a clear content strategy to engage with fans and the women's rugby community in an impactful way
26	Demonstrate system step change to Women and Girls rugby by developing team of advocates and partners to help redefine and promote positive culture	Advocacy and Networks	Grow the numbers of advocates for Women's Rugby in the game to help amplify the growth and movement behind women's rugby
			Establish former International playing group to engage in growth of the game by end of 2025