

Promotion is the Name of the Game

Mansfield Rugby Club is going from strength to strength

Words

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Promotion is the key word at Mansfield RUFC this year - on and off the field. Promoting a key sporting environment at the heart of the area the club have a target of promotion for the First XV alongside providing rugby for all from seven year olds to Vets. Promoting local businesses with a range of marketing opportunities is also a key task. 'We have a loyal and growing group of sponsors, which is essential to help us provide all that we do', said Marketing Team leader Paul Elliott. 'There are no paid players or officials so everything is for providing sporting opportunities, and promoting our friends to members and visitors.'

A bright future is certainly on the cards as this autumn as the club floodlights its main pitches. 'We will then have all our playing surfaces lit for training and competitive matches' Treasurer Mike Copestake That is the next in a long list of improvements and initiatives that have seen a modern, atmospheric clubhouse grow out of the former Crown Farm colliery land. Now with a gym and one of the best sports hall facilities attached to it the training experience was completed three years ago when the RFU decided Mansfield would be home to one of their state of the art artificial turf surfaces.

The clubs Youth section has extended its coaching to bring Minis in at seven as well as further strengthening its links into schools in the Mansfield area. Last season the Colts and Under 16's sides carried off the Three Counties trophies and provided numerous players to the NLD and County squads. The club also had the largest representation, six players, on the recent NLD tour

to Australia. 'Youth is our life blood' explained Youth Chairman Alan Fores. 'We don't pay players so have to grow our own and that is very much the Mansfield way.'

Despite a slip down the league structure last year Mansfield have retained all their first team squad and added new faces. 'With half a dozen of our most experienced players retiring or missing for most of the season we had to bring in youth players. It was earlier and in greater numbers than is ideal. At Northampton we had eight under twenties in the squad.' commented Coach Steve Shaw. 'The youngsters responded well and it will be apparent in the next how much they have learnt.'

Steve is also Community Rugby Coach for Mansfield and North Notts. His role in bringing players through from schools will be supported this autumn by the RFU Go Play Rugby initiative. Mansfield is one of the county's initiative clubs and will continue to be pro-active in developing sport, rugby, and enjoyment in the area.

'Mansfield Rugby Club has gone from strength to strength over the years and we have a team of volunteers who are determined to ensure that our development continues positively. We celebrated our 50th Anniversary recently and were able to stage a series of events culminating in the Anniversary Ball for 300 people. Many past members of the club have been impressed with how we have developed our facilities and we believe that we have something that we can all be very proud of', Chairman Andy Foster commented.■