

For the 2016/2017 season I have one clear aim:

**To win the Babcock Inter-Services' Competition in 2017 and win it convincingly.**

The Army Senior squad has failed to win the Inter-Services' competition for the last two years. We must win the Babcock Inter-Services' competition in 2017.

The tempo of daily Regimental life puts a great deal of pressure on all units that supply representative sportsman and the commitment and sacrifices that are made by players, coaches and management as well as their units to support Army Rugby is recognised and greatly appreciated. But, in order to achieve success in the 2017 Inter-Services' competition there will need to be a subtly different approach in preparation, mindset and delivery on and off the field. Those players that make the Senior Army Inter-Services squad must aspire to reach a new professional level, to be the difference, create history and inspire the future. The 'difference' will be an individual's ability to rise above everyone else mentally and deliver success when under the greatest of pressure. Players must have a passion for success, recognise that they are gladiators but ambassadors too.

**The 2017 Senior Rugby Inter-Services squad will exploit their full individual and collective potential that is built on a desire to be the best they can, to strive for team excellence and to understand the honour and responsibility for representing the Army - to represent the Army must be second only to representing your country.**

Key to achieving individual and collective success is the ability to mentor, nurture and develop individuals both on and off the pitch. We must identify where the individual and collective marginal gains are, break down the building blocks of the game and look to improve every element. Fitness and game time, coupled to individual and collective tactical intelligence, will be paramount in order to implement what the squad is being asked to do. But, player commitments and welfare must be managed more intelligently to ensure that professional Army careers are not compromised and that players have time to physically recover after representative sport – there will need to be an agreed balance between representing units, Corps, the Army and civilian clubs. To that end, communication with individuals, their unit and Corps coaches and their chain of command will be vital to ensure availability and exploit opportunity. Senior players, coaches and management must lead by example, encourage and inspire the younger generation to success. Coaches, management and medical staff must constantly strive for continuous improvement, assurance and financial propriety. Equally, succession planning of key management and coaching appointments will be fundamental to future success beyond 2017.

The first half of the season (Sep to Jan), the Senior Army trial on 21/22 Nov 16 and the U23 Inter-Services' competition in Nov 16, will be used to develop existing representative players as well as identify and nurture new talent to compete for a place in the 2017 squad. An initial squad of 50 will be named on 9 Dec 16 with the final 2017 Inter-Services squad of 30 confirmed by mid Feb 17. We cannot afford to use the subsequent developmental matches as trials and the strongest side possible will be selected for each match to build collective approach, ethos, confidence, skill and success.

Colonel A W A Griffiths  
Director of Senior Rugby