



RUGBY

THE ARMY'S GAME



ARMY RUGBY UNION

Our strategy to 2028

Context

Rugby is the Army's Game.

It is the sport most closely aligned to the operational outputs of the service with direct correlation to the conduct of war across the components of fighting power[1]. And, as a game played by all - soldiers and officers, men and women and with strong representation across ages and cultural groups - it is the sport most closely aligned to the values[2] of the Army.

At the top of the sport, our men and women compete regularly on the national and international stage, with the annual Twickenham fixture against the Navy forming part of the fabric of service life.

But the environment is changing. The Army is smaller and increasingly committed, team sport participation is falling and COVID caused significant disruption. The same can be said more generally for rugby in society, with rapidly reducing playing numbers in the men's game, increasing concerns around the impact of injuries and signs that the financial foundations of the professional game are shaking.

This strategy outlines how the ARU will navigate these challenges over the coming years by re-enforcing the centrality of rugby to our operational outputs, Op TEAMWORK and 'the offer', while being prepared to adapt and change to remain competitive and relevant. We have made significant improvements to 'level up' previous disparities between the men's and women's codes and we will remain at the forefront of demonstrating that the Army is an inclusive forward thinking employer and that rugby union, and the benefits it brings, remains a core part of 'the offer'.

[1] Moral, Physical and Conceptual.

[2] Army = Courage, Discipline, Respect, Integrity, Loyalty, Selflessness.

RFU = Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline, Sportsmanship.

Our Purpose is...



Lead **our sport**

The Army Rugby Union exists to govern the sport of Rugby Union within the British Army following the direction of the Rugby Football Union and Army policy. We are responsible for bringing together player, coaches, match officials, clubs, competitions and supporters.



Inspire **our rugby family**

In leading our sport and delivering success on and off the pitch, we will grow and inspire our rugby family, exploiting the benefits of rugby union to the Army and wider society.

Our objectives

Our strategy is underpinned by five objectives.



Maintain – financial stability; a suitable competitive rugby league system, the Army Representative teams, adherence to the guiding principles as laid down by the Charity Commission and the Rugby Football Union and World Rugby.

Sustain - the current excellence in reputation, branding, discipline and sponsorship in order to make rugby available to the widest possible Army community.



Develop - an improved engagement plan with key stakeholders through targeted opportunities to engage, encourage and garner wider support both within the Army (particularly its leadership) and externally with sponsors, Chain of Command and geographical communities.



Grow - opportunities for rugby union in the Army to be more inclusive and representative of its population and embracing new enterprises being introduced by the RFU such as Touch Union and X-Rugby and Game On.



Succeed - in providing rugby in all its formats to all levels of players, both men and women. Winning the annual Inter Services Competition.

All of which supports the values and standards of the British Army.

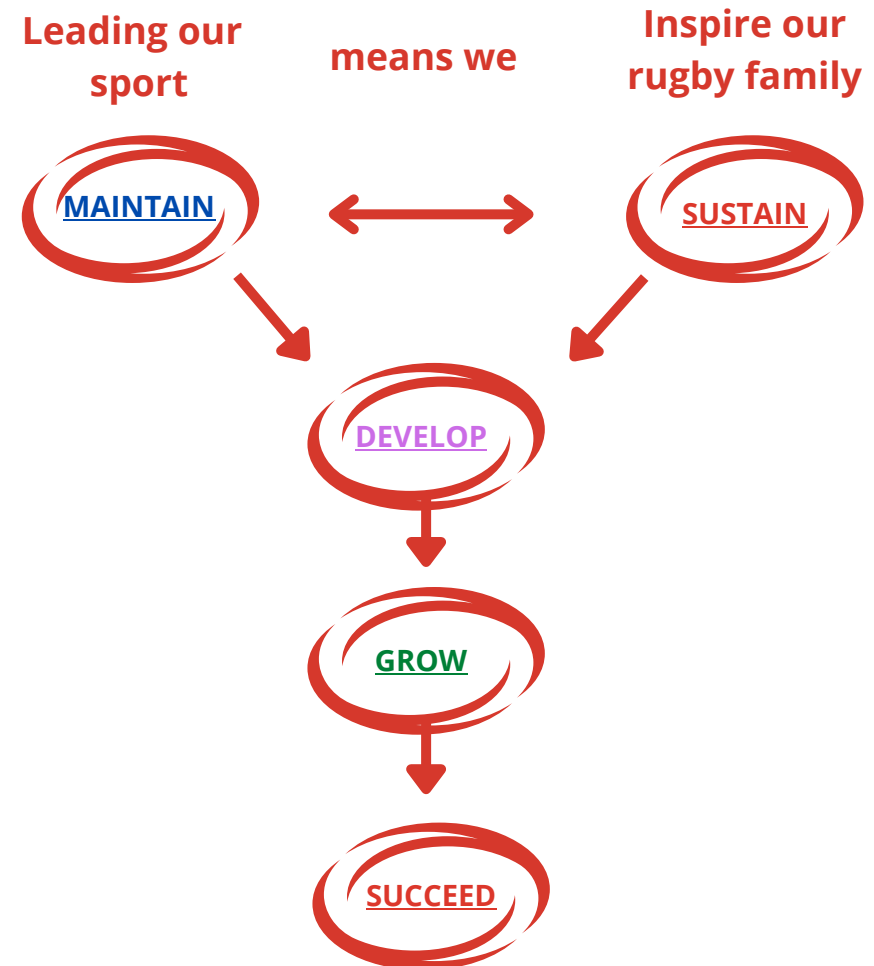
Loyalty - Courage - Integrity - Discipline - Respect for others - Selfless commitment

How it works

The strategy has been developed alongside the Army Sport Control Board Directive and the RFU Strategic Plan and the major themes of the latter (**Protect, Engage, Grow, Win**) map very closely to the ARU objectives:

As with any strategy the 'means' with which to deliver it are key. As such, the ARU must live within its constraints of money, volunteer time, facilities and Army priorities at a time when the Army is smaller and busier than before.

The ARU focuses on five overarching objectives aimed at maintaining what is good, sustaining current levels of support throughout the organisation; developing in line with the RFU to ensure inclusiveness and relevance, growing areas within the ARU that still have the stretch potential and to evolve and innovate in order to succeed as an organisation and to win the annual Inter Services Competition at all levels. Our priorities are interconnected and flow from each other; the future success of the ARU is dependent upon the delivery of each objective and the interactions between them.



Maintain

The interest levels, investment, enthusiasm, player population, inclusivity and support of the Army, the ASCB and the RFU.

Good governance and safety management, accessible competitions throughout the Army community and with the ability to play to the highest levels of individuals' ambitions and talents. Understand the commitment of those who contribute to the fabric of rugby in the Army from unit to representative levels, all contributing to the Army's teamwork.



Maintain

What is maintained	Who is responsible?
Maintain a suitable reserve to offset a failure in either sponsorship and/or Army v Navy match revenue to cover a years operating costs.	Director of Finance and Director of Sponsorship
Maintain sporting opportunity by promoting short versions of the Army's game. Where demand is identified, provide competitive structure in short forms (RugbyX, 7s, 10s, Game On etc) as well as the XV's game.	Chair of Community Rugby
Maintain the Army representative teams on a national and International stage.	Chair of Representative Rugby
Adhere to the guiding principles laid down by the Charity Commission, Information Commissioners Officer, RFU and the ASCB.	Director of Finance
Maintain engagement with the Chain of Command (CoC) and Commanding Officers (COs) to release players and staff for training and fixtures	Chair of Representative Rugby

Maintain

What is maintained	Who is responsible?
Maintain the Single Service CB status by having a coherent Management Board, including the appropriate Non-Executive Directors.	ARU Council Rep
Maintain an open and fair selection process for all Army teams.	Chair of Representative Rugby
Maintain stability and growth in order to continue a solid financial position.	Director of Finance and Director of Sponsorship
Maintain the consent and support of the Army Chain of Command	Chair
Maintain the health and well being of all our rugby family.	Chair

Sustain

The current excellence in reputation, branding, discipline and sponsorship in order to make rugby available to the Army community.

Through continued engagement with our sponsors, supporters, the ASCB and the RFU to generate resources and strengthen the reputation of Rugby, the Army's game.



Sustain

What is to be sustained	Who is responsible?
Sustain a principle sponsor of Army rugby as well as securing secondary sponsors (seeking > £225K annually*).	Director of Sponsorship
Sustain a fair and comparable contract with the RFU for the annual A v N Inter Services matches at Twickenham.	Director of Finance and Chief Operations Officer
Sustain the amount of community league fixtures and tournaments.	Chair of Community Rugby
Implement and sustainment of qualified medical staff to support all Red shirt teams.	ARU Medical Lead
Sustain an appropriate discipline system to deal with match sanctions and protect the reputation of the Game.	ARU Chair of Discipline

*The ARU annual accounts are available to view via the Charity Commission website - <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/5031555>

Develop

Develop a succession plan for the ARU volunteer structure to ensure that it is capable of fulfilling its current and evolving roles (cognisant that the organisation is based on the willingness of volunteers to conduct its business).

Co-ordinating an internal and external engagement plan to expand the potential player base linking in with the Premier 15s and Premiership academies.

Establish a relationship with the Scottish and Welsh RUs (given the Army's demographics).

Develop a plan to support Army Recruitment.



Develop

What are we developing?	Who is responsible?
Produce ARU 'Key Messages' for all levels of participation.	Director of Communications
Develop new initiatives to encourage more women to play the Army's game.	Chair of Diversity & Inclusion
Develop a coaching pathway.	Director of Coaching
Develop adult player registration.	Chair of Community Rugby
Develop a volunteer succession plan	Vice Chair

Develop

What are we developing?	Who is responsible?
Encourage more individuals to train and participate as rugby officials (allocation of ARU funding).	Chair ARURS
<i>Tri-Service relationships to grow the Army/RAF and the RN/RAF matches annually.</i>	<i>Chief Operations Officer and Director of Finance</i>
Ensuring players, coaches and staff are adequately recognised and their efforts acknowledged by the chain of command.	Vice Chair
Develop a plan and secure RFU funding to improve the facilities at the Aldershot rugby stadium to include a second stand with additional changing rooms and hospitality boxes and an AGP pitch with better floodlights.	NED Commercial

Grow

Opportunities for the Army's game to be more inclusive and representative of its population and to embrace enterprises being introduced by the RFU such as Touch Union and X Pitch 7s.

Through attracting more players to the sport for both XV's and VII's, trialling touch rugby at unit and garrison levels and by maintaining coherence with national RFU programmes. Grow the women's game in all areas.



Grow

What are we growing?	Who is responsible?
Grow Women's participation in rugby (15s and 7s).	<i>Director of Rugby Development</i> and Chair of Community Rugby
Introduce a separate Sevens Competition catering for units struggling to field full fifteens teams regularly to provide a Community rugby structure that encompasses competitive matches and affords players the opportunity to graduate from Community to Representative if they are of the required standard.	Chair of Community Rugby
Grow and exploit other endorsed RFU formats of the game i.e Touch Union and X Pitch 7s	Chair of Community Rugby
Expand Army Rugby Union Referee Society by running two courses per season.	Chair ARURS
<i>Grow the Twickenham and Gloucester events to be a 'sell out' through positive marketing and ticket sales, specifically focusing on family attendance.</i>	Chief Operations Officer, Director of Finance and Director of Communications
Grow the amount of community league fixtures and tournaments to sustain the Army's game by playing it at all levels throughout the Service (Unit, Garrison, Corps and Division) and that every soldier, male and female. has the opportunity to play at thier level	Chair of Community Rugby

Succeed

Why is it important and why is it the priority.

In providing rugby in all its formats to all levels of players supports well being, mental resilience and operational output. Winning the annual Inter-Service (IS) Competition and encouraging mass participation and support at the International Defence Rugby Competition (IDRC) every four years.

Through an Army wide series of inclusive community competitions and tournaments and competing in the Inter Services, contribute to the United Kingdom Armed Forces (UKAF) ambition of winning the IDRC.



Our Purpose and Strategy

Our purpose is to

Lead our sport - Inspire our rugby family

Which will be lived through our five strategic objectives for the next four years.

We will measure our progress through our key success measures in the short term, as well as set the foundations for our longer term vision of continuing to live our purpose.

Maintain

The interest levels, investment, enthusiasm, player population, inclusiveness and support of the Army, the ASCB and the RFU.

Success measures

- Maintain a suitable reserve.
- Maintain sporting opportunity by promoting short versions of the Army's game.
- Maintain the Army representative teams on a National and International stage.
- Maintain engagement with the Chain of Command and Commanding Officers.

Sustain

The current excellence in reputation, branding, discipline, and sponsorship in order to make rugby available to the widest possible Army community.

Success measures

- Sustain a principle sponsor of Army rugby as well as securing secondary sponsors (seeking < £225K annually).
- Sustain a fair and comparable contract with the RFU for the annual AvN Inter Service matches at Twickenham.
- Sustain the amount of community league fixtures and tournaments.
- Sustainment of qualified medical staff to support all Red shirt teams.
- Sustain an appropriate discipline system to deal with match sanctions.

Succeed

In providing rugby in all its formats to all levels to all of our players. Winning the Inter Services competitions in all categories.

Success measures

- Win all 4 Inter Service Championships - Masters, U23s, Senior Women and Senior Men
- Creation of a development plan to support all levels of rugby union in the Army.
- In continuing a solid financial position

Develop

An improved engagement plan with Key stakeholders, through targeted opportunities to engage, encourage and garner wider support both from within the Army and local communities, aligning with the Army Engagement Strategy where appropriate.

Success measures

- Develop new initiatives to encourage more women to play the Army's game.
- Develop a volunteer succession plan.
- Develop a plan to secure RFU funding to improve the pitch and facilities at the Army Rugby Stadium in Aldershot.
- Develop a plan to engage players cut from Premiership Academies to join the Army.

Grow

Opportunities for Army rugby to be more inclusive and representative of its population and to embrace new enterprises being introduced such as Touch Union.

Success measures

- Execute plan for growing Women's participation in rugby (15s and 7s).
- Introduce a separate Sevens Competition catering for units struggling to field full fifteens teams regularly.
- Expand the ARURS by running at least two courses a season.
- Grow the amount of community league fixtures and tournaments to sustain the Army's game by playing it at all levels throughout the Army.