

EVENT GUIDE BOOK

Make Contact

EVENTS



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WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Events can be among the most exciting of days at a rugby club. Sports events that test sporting prowess through competition are some of the most enduring human activities – as a nation we love them.

They bring a variety of benefits to the host organisation and to those who take part, like players, coaches and officials.

They also offer entertainment to those who attend or watch them; the fans, the supporters and parents.

Rugby events could include activities such as:

**Tournaments,
festivals and
competitions**

**League, Cup and
County matches**

**International
matches**

Tours

Press conferences

Taster sessions

Charity fundraisers

Pre-match lunches

Dinner dances

Awards ceremonies

Family fun days

Event management

Organising an event may seem quite straightforward. Of course, like many things in life, something that seems in essence quite simple may soon prove pretty complicated!

Events can become all-consuming; taxing your determination, your energy and your emotional reserves.

This is because designing, planning and delivering events is a bit like directing a live stage show. However, unlike a show, there are usually no dress rehearsals or safety nets, and once your event has started, there are no second chances!

All teams and participants need to ensure that they comply with the relevant RFU regulations (particularly RFU Regulation 15 – Age Grade rugby – and RFU Regulation 21 – Safeguarding) and have the appropriate safeguarding and disciplinary arrangements in place.

Hopefully, our event planning guide will help you to:

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | learn how to design, plan and deliver high-quality small rugby festivals and successful events | 6 | market, programme and promote your event |
| 2 | build up your own event management skills and confidence | 7 | undertake a basic event risk assessment |
| 3 | deliver great events for individuals or organisations | 8 | identify key health and safety issues on your site |
| 4 | plan your basic infrastructure and service requirements | 9 | appoint and manage competent contractors and attractions |
| 5 | evaluate, plan and design your event | | |

What this guidance will not do for you

This guidance will not give you the answers to specific questions about each different type of event – you will need to use your own in-depth knowledge to do that – neither will it find you the perfect venue or give you details of the best event contractors.

Remember this is about the **event planning** – the imaginative execution is down to you and your committee. However, this guide will give you a great start, as will reading about and attending other events. The more you practise, the better and more confident you will become – with practice comes experience, with experience comes confidence. The problem is, of course, that we have to practise events in public.

Remember, events are live projects, but unlike most projects they have a very definite and very public end date – the event day!

Although every event is different, well-planned events share the same core principle whatever the size or type of initiative being organised.

Event management can seem a little chaotic at times. It is your job to bring order to the proceedings, using strong leadership to keep everyone on track.

THE PROCESS

1

Purpose

why an event, who is it for and is it a good idea?

2

Presenting

design your event: event brainstorm, themes, date setting, idea evaluation

3

Planning your event

project plans, budgeting, contractors, infrastructure, planning for safety

4

Place

choosing and evaluating your venue, site plans

5

Programmes

designing a great programme of competitions, matches and activities

6

Promoting your event

getting people to attend your event

7

Production

making your festival happen, operational plans, risk assessments, leading your event team, event evaluation

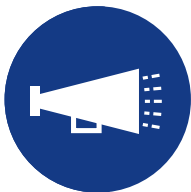
The main advantage of using this process is that you can tell your event teams what needs to happen first and why, helping them to focus on immediate priorities. Although the process has a sequence and each step has its own requirements, it's wise to remember that everything is interlinked; this is what makes event management so challenging.

What makes a well-planned, memorable and successful event?

Just to give you some idea about what a successful event or festival is all about, take a look at the following:



**Engaging and informative
pre-event information**



**A well-thought-
through programme of
attractions, speakers,
games and activities**



**An accessible venue with
good parking**



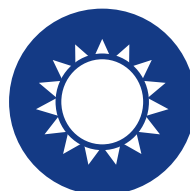
**A great welcome and
customer service**



A well-planned event site



The food



The weather



**Good on-site information
and signage**



**Helpful event staff and
officials**



Promotion



**Opportunities for
interaction and
engagement at the event**



Attention to detail



Toilets



Value for money



Time management



**The chance to be with
other like-minded people**

• THE ENJOYMENT FACTOR!

In the early stages of planning an event it pays to be curious, ask lots of questions and really listen to the responses. You need a very clear picture in your head about what sort of event you are trying to deliver to achieve the best result.

PURPOSE

So why do you want to have an event? Do you want to raise money, attract new players.... or do you just love having fun? Having a great event idea is one thing; finding a receptive and enthusiastic audience in sufficient numbers is altogether more challenging. Events add an air of anticipation to the club environment and help to bring people together, working towards a common goal.

Developing the type of events that potential visitors would like to attend or participate in requires you doing a little research. You need to find out what they think and, just as importantly, what your competitors are doing.

You are looking for answers to the following:

- Are there any emerging trends in the world of rugby?
- Any there any new activities beginning to make waves or working well in other regions?
- Have you already identified demand?
- Is there existing competition from other clubs and organisations in your area? Can you work with them or should you compete against them?
- Do you have a sizeable target market – clubs, schools, businesses, players, supporters, parents or organisations – to sell to in order to make the event viable?

At this point it is often wise to conduct a SWOT analysis:



By conducting this kind of research, you can identify any factors that may prevent the event from being a success, understand what you are up against and take advantage of any developments or trends that may help your cause.

Why are you running this event?

Knowing why makes your life a lot easier. It gives you direction, ensures you channel all your energies into achieving that single aim and helps you to say 'yes' to ideas and activities that support your cause and 'no, thank you' to those that don't.

Each event should have one main overarching purpose, but can have a couple of other subsidiary objectives. For example, the main purpose of a 50th-anniversary dinner dance would be a celebration of the highs and lows of 50 years of a rugby club. The subsidiary objectives could be to recruit new volunteers by running a pledge sign-up for coaches and to raise funds for the club through an auction or raffle.

Working your way through the list below, tick your probable reasons WHY:

Exchange information, generate new ideas	
Provide training	
Educate	
Thank officials, players, volunteers, supporters	
Celebrate awards, milestones, anniversaries	
Support a company-sponsored charity/fundraising efforts	
For a public / partner organisation	
Develop a mailing list	
For fun, entertainment, competition	
Raise money for a good cause or new piece of equipment	
Send a message	
Increase brand awareness	
Improve quality of life	
Encourage healthy living/exercise	
Recruit and retain new/existing players, volunteers or officials	

Who is the event for?

Events need audiences or they fail. So you need to have a clear idea as to who your likely attendees will be. Who's likely to want to come to, or benefit from, this event. Who's it for?



Your signed-up players, supporters and officials?



Other clubs and associations in your league or region?



The business community?



Education institutes (schools, colleges, universities)?



The local population as a whole?



A sector of your local population in terms of age, gender, location or interest?

If you cannot describe your audience – who they are and where to find them – how can you provide them with an event they want?

Having decided this, work out how far they are likely to travel and whether they have any time constraints.

An important part of your research must be to ascertain what kinds of competitors exist, such as other event providers in your geographic and/or interest area.

Now ask yourself the following questions:

Can you, or should you, compete with them in terms of appeal or available budget?

Can you identify enough clubs, players, schools or businesses to market to?

Are there enough of the right people (bearing in mind most won't attend) to make your idea a financially viable one?

DESIGNING YOUR EVENT

With a clear idea of why and for whom you are organising your event, and an indication that others think your idea is a good one, you are now ready to start designing the event.

The following points will allow you to build up a full description of the task. You need to ascertain the following:

- some background information about the host organisation
- details about the event's target audience
- the event's principal purpose
- key timelines
- any 'must happens' (speech, awards)
- the budget
- what your event is going to look and feel like
- what people are going to do at the event
- does it need a theme?
- what sort of memories do you want your visitors to leave with – "loved it", "learnt something", "tried something out for the first time today"



At the design stage, you're trying to create a blueprint of your proposed event in words, pictures, images or numbers but always with your agreed objectives in the forefront of your thinking.

If you usually take on everything yourself, now might be a good time to recognise that designing a great event is not something you can do on your own. For help in generating lots of great ideas, look for people who have creative flair and a range of different experiences and interests. Between five and eight people is an ideal number for ensuring a great planning session to collaborate and share ideas.

For this to work effectively and in a creative way, try to remove all thoughts of actual and perceived boundaries (including budget) and allow attendees to let their imaginations run wild! Before you start being creative, you need to agree what type of event yours is going to be.

The options are generally as follows:

- indoor/outdoor
- evening, afternoon, day, weekend, week
- free or charge entry
- scale – local, regional, national appeal
- special – one-off, celebration of a moment in time, club milestone

At the start of the meeting tell your colleagues why you believe you are organising the event and for whom. Take a look at the following list to give your creative meeting some food for thought:

- | | | | |
|-----------|---|-----------|---|
| 1 | a themed event | 11 | decoration, tables, venue, room |
| 2 | different formats of games, competitions, tournaments | 12 | food to eat, to make, to learn about |
| 3 | music | 13 | dress, uniforms, costumes |
| 4 | exploring the use of different types of venue | 14 | sights, sounds and smells |
| 5 | bespoke structures, stages, marquees | 15 | differing modes of transport |
| 6 | projection, plasma screens, laptops | 16 | gifts, giveaways |
| 7 | tours and visits | 17 | art in its many different forms |
| 8 | speakers/presentations/workshops | 18 | think about the five senses – touch, smell, taste, sight and hearing – and incorporating them all |
| 9 | things to do, take part in, play, learn | 19 | sensible/relevant ‘wow factors’ |
| 10 | different types of entertainment | | |

Theming your event

While most of your events will have a rugby theme, the way you present it can take many forms. Theming can be very elaborate, involving a wide range of different elements, or it can be a much simpler affair. Once agreed, all elements of the event must then fit the theme in a relevant and consistent way – with perhaps the odd wow too!

Anything can be used as an event theme – statements, colours, numbers, historical events, health, exercise, films, fashions and so forth. Rugby-related themes could be anything: world rugby, rugby legends, nutrition for rugby, rugby as exercise, etc.

You may want to consider theming:

The venue

inside and outside

Infrastructure

marquees, staging, barriers

Catering

food, drinks, table settings,
serving staff

Audiovisual

sound, lighting

Special effects

lasers, fireworks

Artists, entertainment, speakers

Decoration, props, scenery

Sounds and lights

All forms of communication

invites, websites, posters

Transport

Event staff

male/female/age/
uniform/look

How much you let the theme dictate your event designs will depend on how much money you have to spend and on how creative you are in finding alternative solutions to some of the more costly theming elements.

Which event ideas to select?

Having made a note of all the ideas generated at your creative planning meeting, it's now time to start reducing this long list into a shorter one that the team really likes. This will include incomplete ideas considered to be of sufficient interest to warrant further work. With your ideas to hand, it is now necessary to make a more reasoned assessment of the relative merit of each idea. Now try to evaluate your thoughts against the following criteria:

- 1** How well does it match your original event purpose and your reason for organising the event?
- 2** Audience acceptance (marketing). Test your ideas out on a few people who might attend and see what they say. Do they like it? Do they understand what they are coming to? Would they recommend it to a friend?
- 3** Can you afford it financially? Start getting some estimates in place to give some idea of how much your event is going to cost and how much it might raise.
- 4** Can you or your team plan and deliver the event successfully (operational)? Do you have the skills to do it or do you need to buy in some expert help?



Deciding on your event date

Setting your event date is an important decision. Make sure the date and time you select suits your target audience. The following list outlines some of the key factors to consider: /

- target the general availability of your audience
- availability of key services, activities, people
- particular limiters to time – i.e. families with young children
- is it wise to compete with long weekends over a bank holiday?
- past event history
- significant religious occasions
- likely weather conditions at that time of year
- other events happening at the same venue that may restrict parking/catering options
- other local events
- availability of the venue
- school holidays
- national events – key sporting, annual and one-off national occasions

Event objectives

You will now have a pretty good idea about what you want to do. To ensure your event can demonstrate real value for money or effort, set some objectives. These will give the event's team something to aim for and to measure the events success against.

Coming up with a return-on-event figure is not always easy, especially for public events, as it may be more about the experience - but you do need some sort of target to aim for, such as:



The general rule of thumb on objective setting is to try and make your aims:

Specific

Does what it says on the tin, simple clear wording needed

Measurable

What does success look like?

Agreed

Is everyone on board?

Realistic

Can you really achieve it?

Timed

When does it need to happen by?

Exciting

Does it provide enough motivation for you to get it done?

Recorded

Make sure it is written down

In order to get a true measure of the success of your event, the value it has created and whether it fulfilled its objectives, you will need to know all your costs and sources of income.

Writing an event brief

You now have all the information you need to write a complete description of the task in an event brief, which should cover the following:

- background information about the organisation
- target audience – what sort of people do you want to attract and a guesstimate of how many
- principal purpose / outcome
- timelines
- outline of the programme of demonstrations, speakers, workshops, etc.
- any ‘must happens’
- the budget

You might also want to make a brief evaluation of the impact on the communities living and working around the event. Consider the traffic, noise, rubbish and possible damage to the venue. Be aware that poorly managed events can have a negative impact on the communities around them. Keep local residents and businesspeople onside.



Writing an event report

If you need to write a report to justify the time spent on your event so far, or for funding purposes, address the following subject areas:

- concept and vision
- desired objectives
- an explanation as to how the event will fulfill the objectives
- past/current evidence of demand
- your experience, track record, expertise
- how it is achievable and appropriate
- costs versus projected income and acceptable risk
- attractiveness to sponsors and grant-making bodies
- what is going to make it inclusive, spectacular, distinctive and popular
- established interest from partners and stakeholders
- ability to attract a new audience or develop an existing one
- venue, time and day
- appeal – local, regional, national

EVENT PLANNING

Now you have a clear why, what, how, where and when of your event, it's time to start planning it. Success will depend on how much time and effort you put into planning.

At the event planning stage, it is all about the detail, your ability to drive things forward, to stick to the agreed event aim and hit your key deadlines. This stage is primarily concerned with the end result and the means of achieving it and delivering that all-important high-quality event experience. It is in the planning stage that you put together your team, the project plan, hire competent contractors, establish any additional insurance you may need, agree contracts and start planning for a safe event.



Event project plans

A Gantt chart created on Microsoft Excel generally works in terms of managing the event planning process and provides you and your team with a visual representation of your event. There will be a series of sequential (and parallel) tasks with deadlines. You can establish these by looking at the following core areas and breaking them down into start and end dates, as well as key milestones – the meeting of these milestones could be critical to the overall success of the event.

Your event project plan will include tasks relating to the following key work areas:



Setting of event aims and objectives



Design and creative tasks – brainstorming, themes, event briefs



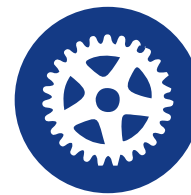
Venues – selection, site visit, booking, site planning



Planning – infrastructure requirements, contractors, insurance, health and safety



Programming – timings, booking of key personnel, joining instructions



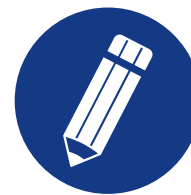
Operational tasks – relating to the set-up, event and clearing up



Finance – securing funding, costing, budgeting



Marketing – pricing, all promotional activities, public relations



Administration – updating the plan, sending out information, signing contracts

A word of warning: each of these work areas needs to appear in the project plan on more than one occasion. They are not actions that can be completed at once; you will have to revisit them several times. Have a look at the sample event project plan in the event resources pack. It will help you see the types of activities you need to think about for your event.

For an event plan to be of real assistance it must contain a comprehensive set of actions and realistic timescales and be driven forward by an event manager who always injects continuous urgency into the process – making sure things get done. Creating event project plans are not one-off exercises. They are active documents to be regularly reviewed, consulted on and adapted to meet changing circumstances.

Event budgets

The event budget covers your event plans in monetary terms – so you should be able to look at it and get a pretty good idea about how the event is being delivered. Event budgets are initially a mixture of fact and educated guesswork. There will be fixed costs that remain the same whatever the size of the event, and variable costs which go up or down according to attendance level.

Build in a 5 per cent contingency figure to cover any unforeseen or additional costs. All items of expenditure need to be backed up by a formal quote, ensuring a little more fact than guesswork!

Not everything has to cost money. Events can offer a range of opportunities for in-kind deals where no money changes hands – for example, where goods and services are provided in exchange for promotional opportunities.

A few words of advice: once you have acquired all your quotes, it is better to defer the event if there is any sense that you are not going to get sufficient funding to deliver a high-quality event in the way you intended.

You should also determine your event's break-even point, where income matches expenditure. The event manager must also keep control of the budget through regular reviews and discussions with the events team. Together, you will need to keep an eye on individual areas within the event, as well as the overall event figure.

Event programme

The event programme outlines what your audience is going to do, take part in, listen to, watch and eat. It can make or break an event. Some would say that it is the most important component of any event because it is generally the reason that your audience is there. The event programme has to be exciting, interesting, engaging, enjoyable and memorable if you want your audience to remember it for all of the right reasons.

The event programme is the schedule of activities, entertainment, speakers and catering over a set period. It is constructed much like a play – scene by scene. Each element is carefully considered by the event manager in terms of its impact, relevance and time taken.



The key factors to consider when you are planning your event programme are as follows:

- What do you want to achieve?
- What will interest your audience?
- What do you want them to think, feel or learn?
- Venue constraints – what can you actually do at the venue?
- Do you and/or your team have the necessary skills and experience to make it work?

Programme content

Your event programme could be made up of any number of the following items:

- games, competitions, tournaments, taster sessions
- music description/discos/musicals
- mix-and-mingle entertainment, close-up magic
- children's and adult entertainment
- celebrities and their look-a-likes
- speakers – business/motivational, after-dinner, comedians
- games/competitions/videos
- street entertainment/theatre/cabaret/shows
- children's or adults' workshops
- photographic displays, illustrations, artworks
- special effects, fireworks, lasers, large-scale projection
- mass participatory activities or parades
- presentations/lectures/interactive question and answer sessions
- demonstrations/seminars
- static exhibitions
- speakers
- ice rinks, funfairs...
- ...and of course, what are they going to eat!



Always ask yourself – does the activity fit the space, occasion and time and is it likely to leave the audience wanting more and not wishing for less! Where possible, you should try to build a varied programme that has changes of tempo, style and format.

Please see resource pack for model checklist.

Booking a DJ

DJs are the ideal option for any party lacking the budget or space required to hire a live band. Quality DJs offer a high level of interaction with audiences and can keep a dance floor packed all night.

Quality

Are they reliable and recommended? Do they carry professional equipment and have considerable experience of events like yours? Can they provide a more budget show with a small amount of equipment right up to a large show incorporating equipment such as video projectors, large sound systems, elaborate lighting shows and live dancers?

Playlist and song list

When hiring a DJ it's important that their play list suits your taste and fits the tone of your occasion. Review or ask for a sample play list.

Experience

A good-quality function DJ will be experienced and have many previous engagements under their belt. Ask for references to ensure their experience and showmanship is well above average!

Equipment

DJs can carry quite an array of equipment to functions, ranging from small mixing decks, CD and mini-disk players, to quite large sound systems and disco lighting. Try to establish what they have by way of back-up, should an item break down.

Cost

When booking a DJ, it's important to understand that you get what you pay for. Experienced DJs are in demand and command higher fees than newer inexperienced DJs who may have starter-range equipment.

Space

Do make sure you have enough space for a DJ and their equipment, and a dance floor. Also, make sure they are near to a source of power.

Event insurance

Check to see exactly what cover you already have in place. Ask the difficult questions – you need to know what you are or are not covered for. If you have any queries concerning the insurance provided for your rugby club as an RFU affiliate member, please contact Marsh, the RFU's official insurance brokers, via the following: **email: rfu.clubs@marsh.com**

For further information, please follow the RFU Insurance web link: **www.englandrugby.com/governance/insurance**

The three key policies relating to events are as follows:

Public Liability

Product Liability

Employers' Liability

Other general insurance policies relevant to events and event managers are:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 non-appearance: when the key person doesn't turn up | 5 rain: covers income lost through ticket sales because of rain and costs already incurred |
| 2 all risks/equipment hire: typically covers loss or damage to goods hired to you | 6 event-specific policies – such as street parties, exhibitions |
| 3 cancellation/abandonment/postponement: covers actual events costs and sometimes income lost | 7 multiple events: as the name suggests, covers 15+ events a year |
| 4 damage to event: covers damage to a venue before, during or after the event | 8 prize indemnity: financial reimbursement for prize pay-out |

You will not require all of these policies to be in place every time you organise an event, but, as a basic minimum, you will need Public, Employers' and Product Liability if you intend to sell products.

It is also recommended all risks/equipment insurance if you intend to hire any high-value equipment. In addition, it is worth considering other risks your event may face, such as the loss of the key sponsor or strategic partner and poor ticket sales. What would happen to your event if any of these occurred? Could you still run it?

Notes for assessor

This template is supplied as a generic form. Each club will be unique and have its own specific issues. Where an existing control is identified but is not yet implemented, it should be moved to the 'Further Controls Recommended' section and then the 'Action' boxes completed with a timescale. The residual risk level should be reduced to a level which is as 'low as reasonably practicable'. If a control is not included in the 'Controls Currently in Place' section but the club has implemented it, then it should be added into that column.

If a control or hazard is not applicable, then it should be deleted from the assessment form. Do not leave hazards or controls on the form that do not apply. This will only confuse people who read the assessment.

The assessment should be revised at least once a year. Additionally, it may need to be revised if the assessment is no longer considered valid (for example, if the club has had repair or refurbishment work undertaken,) if there has been an accident or if there has been a change to legislation that may apply.

Copies of risk assessments should be kept available in the club for anyone who needs to read them, including employees, volunteers and contractors.



Further resources and support are available at:

www.englandrugby.com/governance/legal-and-admin/health-and-safety

Alternatively, phone the RFU Legal Helpline on **0844 561 8177**, quoting scheme reference number **81066**, to speak to a health-and-safety expert.

PROMOTING YOUR EVENT

Your event may be the next big thing, but if your promotion misses the mark it may fail.

Great event: poorly promoted = certain failure

The aim of all your promotional activities must be to draw people to your event: to excite them to buy, enquire, email, talk to you, sign up, purchase tickets and/or to register interest. Therefore, it is important to use a combination of great words and visuals wherever you can. You will also need a promotional plan.

Here are six things you should consider when putting an event promotion plan together:

1

How does your target audience typically find out about events?

2

The more you spend on the event, the greater the risk, the harder you have to work to get people to the event and therefore the **bigger the promotion budget you need**.

3

For a new event, you may have to spend around 10-20 per cent of the total event budget (creative input, graphic design time, print costs, distribution costs, adverts, updates) on promoting it.

4

Where you are purely promoting to an existing list of subscribers or members, it is possible to spend very little. But you have to be persistent; very few of us actually sign up straight away and we need persuading.

5

Your promotional plan needs time to succeed. We are all busy people, with busy lives, who need time to plan any event visits. Delays in getting the word out about your event can be very costly - ensure deadlines don't get missed.

6

If your intended audience uses social-media sites (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn etc.), it might be beneficial for you to do the same. However, it might be a good idea to take expert advice before running a social-media campaign.

Here are some of the promotional possibilities available to you:

**Adverts in
magazines/ specialist
press/parish
bulletins**

**Adverts on
radio/TV**

**Direct mail/text
messages/DVD/save-
the-date campaigns**

**Exhibitions/guides/
listings/events
diaries**

**Press releases/
editorials/
advertorials**

Open days/seminars

**Personal selling/
speeches**

**Money-off
coupons/pricing
offers**

**Public relations/
stunts/events/
hospitality**

**Website/email/
blogs/podcast/social
media/mobile phone
advertising**

**Banners/pop-ups/
drops**

**Leaflets/stickers/
inflatable blimps**

**Partnerships –
forming mutually
beneficial
relationships**

How to write a great creative brief and get what you want

You will need to brief a graphic designer or someone on the team with skills in that area. It is really important to think about the best design, copy and messaging for your event – if you get this right, everyone will be happy.

Description of task

Complete description of design/copywriting task and the promotional media being used, i.e. website, brochure, poster, direct-mail campaign.

Event/club background

Any important information about the host, what they do and how they do it and any historical data about previous events is useful.

The audience

Provide a very clear idea of the target audience – who they are, what they do/like, what they might want to see/read about – so your designer can consider what sort of images will excite/interest them.

Purpose

What is the principal purpose of the poster, email and website? The design needs to reflect what you want the reader to do.

Timeline

Great design and copy takes time to produce. There will be first, second, third drafts, so allow plenty of time for the designers to get it right. Find out what your media deadlines are– you don't want to miss them.



With thanks to Youth Sport Direct for the design of this document.



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