

# CARRICK RFC ANNUAL REVIEW 2023/4



**Aiden Strachan,**  
Development Officer



*"This year has been a huge success for our Club, growing from strength to strength on and off the pitch. We have now laid the foundations for playing pathways in both the male and female game, which is a massive achievement for the club. We are excited to see where 24/25 takes us!!!"*

The 23/24 season was a huge success for the club, with plenty of growth seen across all aspects of the club. We have delivered rugby to over 500 young people across the entirety of Carrick, at both Primary and Secondary School level. This has given us an exceptional platform to promote Carrick Rugby as a club, as well as what the game of rugby can offer young people. Our facilitation of rugby has certainly thrived this past season, with rugby on offer every day of the week in some capacity, whether through club training sessions, matches, or school delivery. This format has been highly successful for us, leading to growth in all sections of the club in terms of participation rates, as well as volunteering numbers, which in turn ensures our expansion is sustainable. As a result we have been able to field sides from P1 up to U16 Boys and Girls, as well as competing well within West Regional League Division 2 at Men's 1st XV level. We have also successfully begun the development of a Women's 1st XV at Carrick RFC, and have confirmed our place in Scottish Rugby's Aspiring League for season 24/25. We are proud to say we have a squad of 25 women who are already committed to the game and excited to represent the region of Carrick. We are now delighted to say that Carrick RFC has in place a full player pathway for the Girls game, running from U12 Girls, all the way through to Senior Women's, whilst also offering the exact same for Boys running across all age groups into Senior Mens.

Sole provider of rugby in the Carrick Region

200+ Club Members  
& second most affordable rugby club in the country

£89,000 covers overall costs to run Carrick RFC

500 kids playing rugby in school delivery sessions

100+ mini & micro players, P1-7

60+ teenagers in youth teams

FREE Easter & Summer camps

3000+ FREE meals delivered to children over a season

90+ FREE bus journeys to & from training

60+ FREE bus journeys to matches

15 coach journeys for family & supporters to join in the fun



# MINIS & MICROS



Back in 2017 when Andy Gamble stepped into the role of Youth Convener, there were just 9 youth players and very little in the town of Maybole to keep young people focused and out of mischief during their free time. The improvements in the club's playing standards, boom in young player registrations and retention, and overall positive impact on the local community, is in no small part down to Andy's passion for giving kids of all abilities and backgrounds equal opportunities to play sport and socialise in their local community. We are immensely proud of the youth section's progress made under his tenure and unique delivery style, and are very pleased to say his involvement with Carrick RFC will continue as he moves on to coach the Senior squads. He hopes to continue developing the young talent in the 1st XV and, ideally, win the league. Mon the 'rick!

Stepping into his shoes is Phil Porter, whose friendly face is already familiar around the training ground. Volunteer coach and parent to two youth players, Phil's strategy going forward is to continue to involve more kids in rugby and build the number of volunteers helping sustain our thriving and welcoming club.

Our Minis and Micros teams have had an exceptional season, marking their biggest turnout yet. We faced off against tough opponents such as Kilmarnock, Wigtownshire, Irvine, Dumfries and Newton Stewart, among others, showcasing the depth of talent within our ranks. With a remarkable 70 kids on board our growth is undeniable, culminating in the establishment of our inaugural U12 girls' team, a significant milestone in our club's history.

Transitioning to a new school venue presented its challenges initially but through perseverance and dedication we successfully navigated the change. This success would not have been possible without the unwavering commitment of our coaches, whose tireless efforts deserve our utmost gratitude.

Special recognition is also due to our hospitality team for ensuring that over 1,000 kids were nourished on days when school meals were not available. Additionally, we extend our heartfelt thanks to Anna Connon for her exceptional fundraising efforts and her invaluable contributions in various capacities. The support of our committee has been instrumental in sustaining our endeavours and we express our sincere appreciation for their continued backing. Finally, of course, none of this would be possible without the kids and parents whose enthusiasm and dedication drive our club forward.

As we reflect with pride on the past year's achievements and challenges, we stand united in our commitment to nurturing young talent and fostering a vibrant rugby community.





# BOYS



# YOUTH RUGBY

At the beginning of the 23/24 Season, numbers were dwindling in the boys and girls' youth section. We persevered and upped our recruitment focus, managing to pull in some new and older, more familiar faces to get sides out.

Our U13 boys started out with a harsh defeat against Wigtownshire RFC, but with numbers on the rise and two dedicated coaches in Matthew Currie and Robert Gibson, the U13 boys grew to a playing squad of 26. Despite the rocky start they went on to record wins against the likes of West of Scotland and GHA, whilst also competing well against Ayr RFC. The biggest win for the boys was defeating Wigtownshire RFC at home, overturning their first defeat of 82-0 and coming out 40-31 winners. That win was particularly sweet, showcasing the progress achieved throughout the season.

Our U16 Boys pulled together to complete Carrick RFC's first 15-a-side U16 fixtures since 2019, where they were narrowly defeated by Marr & Wigtownshire. On the flip-side, during their 10's action throughout the season they only lost one fixture to Largs Academy, where they then defeated the likes of Marr College and Greenock, whilst also drawing against Kilmarnock and others. The U16 boys were also well represented during Scottish Rugby's U15 Player Development Hub Programme, where Ewan and Johnathon represented Glasgow South. Ewan has been invited to the Academy for a further 4 weeks, whilst Johnathon will be invited later once recovered from injury.



# GIRLS

Our Girls' section had grown a great amount from 22/23 into 23/24, going from 6 girls across all age bandings, to fielding an impressive 40 different players from U12's all the way to U16 Girls.

The season began with both the U14 & U16 Girls being placed within the Lift-Off section of the Girls Playing structure, which was mostly development festivals. However, due to our growth in playing numbers and ability, both sides were promoted to the highest structure available, with the U14's joining the Challenge League and the U16's joining the West Plate. Both age bands performed well, with the U14's conquering girls rugby giants such as Biggar RFC and Dumfries Saints RFC, as well as beating the likes of Ayr RFC, Marr RFC, Kilmarnock RFC, and Cumnock RFC on numerous occasions, demonstrating their dominance across Ayrshire. Our U16 Girls finished 3rd in the West Plate Competition behind Oban and Galloway, whilst finishing ahead of Marr, Cumnock, and Cambuslang.

We also had 5 girls representing Carrick at the Girls U15 Player Development Hub: Ceilidh, Ammie, Abbey, Skye, and Eilidh. Having now completed the PDH sessions we are delighted to announce that Abbey and Skye have both been selected to progress on to the next stage of national training opportunities.







## MEN'S SENIORS

This season Carrick RFC 1st XV competed in the West Regional League Division 2 after facing a tough season the year prior. Coming into the 23/24 season, the team came together early in May 2023 to prepare for the season, hoping that an earlier start would allow for the boys to get ahead of the remainder of the league. After a tough pre-season programme, the team was feeling strong and ready to take on their new league.



The hard work paid off, with the Men's 1st XV winning 3 out of their first 5 fixtures. Driven by their robust start the boys continued to push on, and were considered potential contenders for promotion as they picked up multiple bonus-point victories in the run-up to Christmas. The New Year arrived with plenty to play for as the club welcomed a fixture versus Oban Lorne RFC in the National Shield, where old foes from the Western Highlands got the better of us. However, the team bounced back in league action fighting for a top 3 finish, which capped off another long, yet positive season for Carrick RFC Men's 1st XV, as they secured their place in West Regional League Division 2 for next season.

Following the conclusion of the 23/24, the club hosted its' annual Senior awards evening, where the below awards were presented:

**Player of the Year 23/24: Kieran McCurdie**  
**Player's Player of the Year 23/24: Kieran McCurdie**  
**Young Player of the Year 23/24: Markuss Boyd**  
**Most Improved Player 23/24: Scott Blackhurst**  
**Club Person of the Year 23/24: Daryl Conway**

Numerous successful fundraising events ensured that the club remains a focal point for the community, attracting new players in both Senior Men's and Women's sections, and developing strong relationships with all of our community partners. This year we look forward to building on the success of the 23/24 season and moving forward on and off the pitch.





In April 2024 Carrick Rugby welcomed Daryl Conway and Joanne Henry as the new Women & Girls' coaching and coordinating team. They will be working closely with Aiden Strachan and the club committees in continuing to build on this season's unprecedented growth and success within the Women & Girls' sections.

DC is a familiar face at Carrick RFC, having been an active member of the club since 2016 and currently playing as a centre in the Men's First XV. A dedicated volunteer coach with the club for the past four years, we are delighted to welcome him on board.

As a parent to two youth players, Joanne has been an enthusiastic pitch-side supporter since January 2023. With a background in the non-profit and association sectors she hopes to grow the club membership and offerings, with a particular emphasis on developing support and opportunities for Women and Girls in the Carrick region.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to both new members of the team, and our gratitude to our funders for making these new appointments possible.

The tail-end of the 2023/24 season has brought the development of Carrick RFC's new Women side. In April the group began training with touch rugby and are now preparing for full-contact, which will allow them to play within Scottish Rugby's Aspiring Leagues during the 2024/5 season. Focused on fostering a positive team environment from the off, this group of women have come together amazingly well, with over 25 different women attending the sessions since initiation.

## New Women's Team



## Friday Night Lights

Over the past 4-years, Carrick RFC has focused significant effort on developing a sustainable Diversionary Project, centred around using rugby as a vehicle for diverting anti-social behaviours on a Friday evening within the region of Carrick. This has led to the creation of our Friday Night Diversionary Rugby. Thanks to the support of Lynch Homes and our volunteer drivers, we are able to provide transport from around South Carrick for young people aged 11 to 18 to participate in rugby, in a fun, safe and supportive environment. This unique project regularly attracts upwards of 70 youngsters every Friday. During her visit in November last year, MSP Elena Witham recognised what a fantastic project this is and one of which we are incredibly proud. This ever-growing initiative is a prime example of the tangible benefits for our youth, borne of sport and community collaboration.



RESPECT INTEGRITY AMBITION





# Funders' Report

**THANK YOU** to all our funders who made this such a successful year on and off the pitch.

Your help has allowed us to continue offering transport, food and kit to all sections of the club.

This year we have achieved funding to extend our social remit. VASA provided funding for a safe social space and related activities through the Ruck 'n' Roast and the Mental Health and Wellbeing fund. These activities are open to everyone, running alongside our Friday night Diversionary programme, and include a series of events based around improved mental health for adults. Friday nights have now extended to Tartan Touch whereby the funding is supporting a fun, social space and activity for over 80 people a week. This helps to provide relief from social isolation during the off-season for players of all ages and a safe, fun space for people who have never played or even watched rugby in their life - men and women, boys and girls, ages 10 to 60 - all socialising in one safe space with great food and chat.

Pathways for All funding will allow the club to offer transport to games and training for players and non-players who can enjoy walking around the many beautiful places we visit and then watch their friends, family and community playing for Carrick Rugby - yet another valuable social asset that we could not provide without funding. Foundation Scotland have offered superb support through a variety of funds allowing us to deliver rugby to Invergarven School for the first time and supporting our Summer and Easter Camps where we address both holiday hunger, loneliness and the huge move for young people from very small rural primary schools to the academies. This addresses the issue of rural isolation and limited public transport.



Working closely with Community Wealth Building we have developed a robust business plan and are now looking to develop in a fully self-sustainable way. Watch this space for exciting developments and new directions.

Of course, our main remit is playing highly competitive rugby over a very long season with an incredible range of teams at all ages, male and female. Offering opportunities for young people and adults to experience the unique culture that is RUGBY - making lifelong friends, learning the qualities that go on to make valuable members of our community and supporting each other in what is an increasingly challenging environment for young people. This is only possible because of the funding we receive to support our game. As one of the only clubs offering the depth of support for players that we do, your funds give opportunities to young people who would not be able to play, learn or develop in the ways they do without you.

**THANK YOU** funders, sponsors, supporters, local businesses and everyone who contributes in any way at all. We can assure every penny is accounted for and spent to achieve the best results for our community.







## Congratulations Glen!

In March 2024 Glen Brown was awarded joint Volunteer of the Season in Schools Rugby by SRU at its Community Recognition Awards for Glasgow South Region. His aim to open avenues for all pupils to take part and improve within rugby, Glen's dedication has increased the popularity of rugby within Girvan Academy, driving numbers up in both boys and girls rugby. By aligning with Carrick RFC there is now a fully established girl's side at Girvan Academy. Between coaching, logistical organising and taking up the role of bus driver, he allows students access to a plethora of opportunities.

Glen is a huge team player and has been a real asset to both club and school. Well done and thank you for all you do, Glen!

Club trip to The Hive at Murrayfield to see Scotland's women's team meet the mighty French in this year's Six Nations Series.

A great day was had by all!



## Volunteers Always needed!



Looking to feel more energised, confident, motivated and contented in life?

**Put your needs first and volunteer with CARRICK RFC!**

Don't believe the old-fashioned notion that volunteering is simply an act of kindness towards others. It's one of the best things you can do for yourself.

Whenever you set foot near a Carrick RFC match or training session, whether you know it or not, you'll be surrounded at all times by volunteers who choose to spend their free time coaching, cooking, driving or sorting through smelly kit, all of whom collectively keep the club thriving and delivering rugby in South Ayrshire. Besides the ubiquitous parents and extended family lending a hand, most uplifting of all is that many of our volunteers are younger adults who, having come through the ranks of the club themselves, choose to return and keep that circle of mentoring and building community flowing.

As we grow in player numbers and community initiatives, so does our need for volunteers. **Would you be willing to sign up to coach, coordinate, fundraise, drive, become a first aider or host in the hospitality suite?**

Contact Aiden or email: [rbdocarrickrugby@gmail.com](mailto:rbdocarrickrugby@gmail.com) for more information.



# Our Year In Numbers

## U13 Boys Results

Carrick 0-82 Wigtownshire  
Carrick 40-31 Wigtownshire  
Kilmarnock 42 - 68 Carrick  
Carrick 52 - 25 Kilmarnock  
Ayr 40 - 22 Carrick  
Carrick 42 - 40 West of Scotland  
West of Scotland 34 - 26 Carrick  
Irvine 15 - 55 Carrick  
GHA 7-21 Carrick  
Carrick 70 - 21 Ardrossan

## U16 Boys Results

Carrick 3 - 10 Largs Academy  
Carrick 5 - 3 Marr  
Carrick 6 - 3 Clydeview Academy  
Carrick 25 - 45 Wigtownshire  
Marr 64 - 19 Carrick

## U14 Girls Results

Carrick 33 - 17 Kilmarnock  
Ayr 2 - 10 Carrick  
Ayr 5 - 4 Carrick  
Ayr 2 - 3 Carrick  
Cumnock 15 - 20 Carrick  
Kilmarnock 9 - 12 Carrick  
Oban Lorne 8 - 28 Carrick  
Biggar 3 - 6 Carrick  
Biggar 2 - 7 Carrick  
Dumfries Saints 3 - 5 Carrick  
Biggar 6 - 3 Carrick  
Dumfries Saints 2 - 1 Carrick  
Carrick 7 - 6 Marr  
Biggar 4 - 2 Carrick  
Dumfries Saints 3 - 2 Carrick  
Carrick 5 - 2 Marr  
Biggar 4 - 2 Carrick  
Cambuslang 4 - 3 Carrick  
Carrick 2 - 5 Marr  
Carrick 8 - 7 Ayr  
Carrick 9 - 8 Cumnock  
Carrick 10 - 4 Kilmarnock  
Carrick 43 - 33 Dumfries Saints

## U16 Girls Results

Cumnock 15 - 16 Carrick  
Kilmarnock 9 - 12 Carrick  
Carrick 9 - 4 Cumnock  
Carrick 50 - 7 Cumnock  
Carrick 14 - 20 Moffat  
Moffat 31 - 14 Carrick  
Moffat 42 - 7 Carrick  
Carrick 19 - 14 Cumnock  
Carrick 50 - 15 Kilmarnock  
Carrick 55 - 20 Cumnock

## 1st XV Men Results

Carrick 1st XV (Men) 20 - 12 Strathendrick 1st XV (Men)  
Paisley 1st XV (Men) 15 - 31 Carrick 1st XV (Men)  
Carrick 1st XV (Men) 21 - 13 Lomond & Helensburgh 1st XV (Men)  
Cambuslang 1st XV (Men) 41 - 30 Carrick 1st XV (Men)  
Carrick 1st XV (Men) 14 - 17 Uddingston 1st XV (Men)  
Clydebank 1st XV (Men) 28 - 27 Carrick 1st XV (Men)  
Carrick 1st XV (Men) 32 - 15 Cumbernauld 1st XV (Men)  
Bishopton 1st XV (Men) 37 - 31 Carrick 1st XV (Men)  
Carrick RFC 1st XV (Men) 27 - 16 Waysiders/Drumpellier 1st XV (Men)  
Strathendrick 1st XV (Men) 10 - 20 Carrick 1st XV (Men)  
Carrick 1st XV (Men) 66 - 24 Paisley 1st XV (Men)  
Carrick 1st XV (Men) 39 - 15 Cambuslang 1st XV (Men)  
Uddingston 1st XV (Men) 21 - 21 Carrick 1st XV (Men)  
Carrick 1st XV (Men) 26 - 17 Clydebank 1st XV (Men)  
Oban Lorne 1st XV (Men) 69 - 0 Carrick 1st XV (Men)  
Waysiders/Drumpellier 1st XV (Men) 15 - 17 Carrick 1st XV (Men)  
Lomond & Helensburgh 1st XV (Men) 36 - 31 Carrick 1st XV (Men)  
Carrick 1st XV (Men) 28 - 37 Bishopton 1st XV (Men)  
Cumbernauld 1st XV (Men) 15 - 25 Carrick 1st XV (Men)





# Thank you



**DAILY ROAD**  
GENERAL STORE  
HOT & COLD SNACKS



**KILGALLIOCH**  
COMMUNITY FUND



**ROBERTSON & ORR**  
VETERINARY PRACTICE

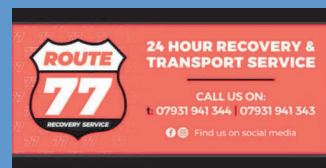
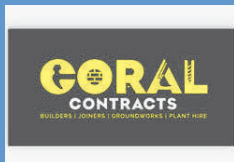
**BYNEHILL**  
Carron Park  
Girvan



**Colmonell Gas & Refrigeration Services**  
01465754889



**BAKERS AND CONFECTIONERS**  
**SIMPSON'S BAKERY**  
EST. 1905



LandEnergy







## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### TOUCH RUGBY TOURNAMENT

Saturday 29 June  
Raising funds for  
Carrick RFC & SAMH

### SUMMER CAMPS

8-12 July  
Carrick Academy,  
Maybole  
15-19 July  
Victory Park,  
Girvan



### PLAYER REGISTRATION DAY

Sat 11 August  
The Glebe, Maybole



*Start piling up your pre-loved items!  
We will be taking over the  
Maybole Charity Shop in October.*

