



CONFERENCE SESSIONS

TOPIC: Rugby sevens beyond Rio - the golden opportunity

2016 will be a game changing year for rugby sevens with its successful return to the Olympic programme at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games central to its transformation. With sevens and its exciting brand of dynamic, fast-paced action ready to set the Deodoro Olympic Stadium alight, this session will examine how rugby can make the most of its opportunity on sport's greatest stage.

What does the future hold for our crowd-pleasing game of sevens, which has experienced record growth over the past 12 months? What can we learn from analysing rugby's Olympic experience and how do we maximise the opportunity presented by Rugby World Cup Sevens 2018 in San Francisco?

SPEAKERS:

- Rachel Burford, England Rugby 7s and Fifteens
- Mark Egan, Head of Competitions and Performance, World Rugby
- Mike Friday, Head Coach, USA Rugby Sevens

TOPIC: Fan Engagement – connecting in a digital world

In today's crowded entertainment marketplace, this session will examine the converging worlds of digital, mobile, and e-sports and explore what viewers, fans, participants and stadium audiences expect from sports media. It will also look at how they can change the way fans connect with sporting events and impact on sponsors' choices.

Rugby must innovate to ensure it continues to maintain its global appeal amongst viewers and we'll look at growing entertainment trends such as VR to enhance engagement.

SPEAKERS:

- Lawrence Dallaglio, BBH Sport
- Mark Parkman, General Manager, Olympic Channel Services

TOPIC: Breaking new markets – delivering and sustaining a truly global and inclusive game

As rugby embraces its position as a truly global sport we look ahead at the opportunities for additional growth over the next decade. With more than 7.73 million men, women and children currently playing the game across 120 nations rugby has the momentum behind it to reach out, engage and inspire new audiences worldwide.

Driven by the success of Rugby World Cup and its status as an Olympic sport, rugby is in a great position to break into and build its profile in new and emerging markets. But what are the challenges to that growth and what barriers might the sport face?

SPEAKERS:

- Giles Morgan, Global Head of Sponsorship and Events, HSBC
- Agustin Pichot, Vice-Chairman World Rugby
- Doug Schoninger, Chief Executive, PRO Rugby
- Mark Waller, Executive Vice-President of International, NFL



TOPIC: Protecting sport from corruption

How can sports governing bodies and regulatory authorities retain and restore faith in the honesty of sport? And what does this mean for clean athletes, fans, sponsors and other major stakeholders?

Against a backdrop of integrity issues across sport the session brings together world leaders in sports governance, anti-doping and anti-match-fixing to discuss and debate how sports can be best protected from the scourge of corruption and how rugby can ensure its strong values continue to resonate.

SPEAKERS:

- Chief Karl Bennison, Nevada Gambling Control Band
- Sir Ronnie Flanagan, Chairman, International Cricket Council Anti-Corruption Unit

TOPIC: Image of the game: Respect for match officials in rugby – a tradition worth maintaining?

Evidence – academic and anecdotal – indicates that respect for referees among players, coaches and supporters is being eroded. This is leading to issues in relation to the recruitment and retention of match officials at all levels. With rugby traditionally setting itself aside from other sports in the way referees are treated and with companies citing respect as a reason for becoming sponsors of the game, this panel will consider if it can be protected in the modern era and, if so, where rests the responsibility for this task.

TOPIC: Performance management – a data driven approach

Big data is playing an increasingly important role across sports with teams and clubs from different codes and disciplines using technology to enhance player performance, monitor fitness, analyse opposition and prevent injury.

Sport scientists and performance analysts are fast becoming a crucial component of any team structure, where an evidence-based approach to performance is now the norm. But how far can technology go to help rugby? Our experts debate the future potential of this growth area.

SPEAKERS:

- Paul Neilson, Marketing Manager Pro Zone

TOPIC: Marketing the game – using insight to grow audiences and partnerships

Audiences generate a massive amount of data during interactions with the teams and stars they follow. How can national member unions and clubs leverage this data to identify which trends and what insights will increase fan-engagement and match attendance? How can data trends and audience insights be used to attract and create more effective sponsorships and partnerships and improved commercial returns across the board?

SPEAKERS:

- Aiden Cooney, Chief Executive, InCrowd Sports
- Fiona Green, Chief Executive, Winners
- Matt Rogan, Chief Executive, Two Circles