

Dundee: a city discovering a love for rugby

The mounting interest and enthusiasm for rugby in Dundee received yet another boost as Scottish Rugby teamed up with Dundee City Council, Morgan and Panmure rugby clubs to appoint the city's second development officer (DO).

The collective commitment to the game adds around £30,000 of investment into rugby in the area with DO, Barry Crookston, employed to maximise the opportunities to play rugby in a city whose youngsters have caught the rugby bug.

Outdoor education and environmental studies graduate, Crookston, speaking over the clamour of 200 youngsters at the DO's first primary school rugby festival, said: "There's certainly a real buzz about rugby in Dundee at the moment. All the primary schools have reacted positively to rugby and were really looking forward to today's festival where they got the chance to show what they've learned over the past six to eight weeks.

"The interest and enthusiasm in rugby is really high but we need to keep pushing it on. There are still plenty of youngsters in Dundee who aren't taking part in any sport and, if given the chance, could benefit hugely from being involved.

"It's a very exciting time for rugby in Dundee and I'm really looking forward to increasing the club's contribution to the rising number of, particularly young, rugby players Scotland."

As a Development Officer, Barry's main aim is to recruit and retain rugby players in the city and work continuously to create links with schools to maximise the opportunities to play rugby and increase participation at all levels of the game. Barry will be working closely with all age groups at Morgan and Panmure Rugby Clubs to ensure the clubs continue to develop as clubs at the centre of the community.

Crookston added: "there's a wonderful set-up for promoting sport in the city and through the active school co-ordinators I can easily block book rugby sessions and draw up a season long rugby timetable for the schools in the area which helps me work towards my aim of creating stronger school club links and providing the lifelong involvement in rugby that comes from being a member of a rugby club."

Doc McKelvey, Regional Development Manager for Tayside and Fife, added: "I am delighted with the appointment and the continued commitment shown to develop the game in Dundee.

"Providing quality, fun opportunities for Scotland's young people to experience and play rugby is vital for the future of the game and for Scotland's young people and the fact that Morgan and Panmure Rugby Clubs now have a dedicated development officer in the area is a massive step forward.

"The network of development officers across Scotland is fundamental to Scottish Rugby ensuring that rugby is open and available to all, while providing the foundations for our strategic targets of a 38% increase in young people playing rugby, and a total playing population of 38,000 by 2012."