



# The Role of the Public Relations Officer (PRO) within Rugby Clubs of Leinster Rugby



FROM  
THE  
GROUND  
UP

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# The Role of the Public Relations Officer (PRO) within Rugby Clubs of Leinster Rugby

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The PRO is a key person in promoting the club and rugby in Leinster. It is therefore important that this is done in a positive manner and that it reflects well on the club thereby encouraging sponsors, volunteers and others to support and become involved in the club.

Every rugby club needs publicity – it helps development and attracts new members and sponsors as well as encouraging and motivating present members. A good PRO can be very beneficial to the club. The main function of the PRO is to communicate with the general public on behalf of the club presenting a positive image to the club and rugby in the local community and beyond.

## How is your Club Perceived by the community at large?

For example a club might not dominate in the trophy stakes but may have fantastic opportunities for young people to participate. Maintaining a high profile within a given community underlines the good work— all voluntary – undertaken by the club and generates goodwill which in turn is vital in attracting sponsorship.

### Remember:

1. Public Relations is the practice of managing the flow of information between the club and the public
2. No longer is it good enough for a Club to do good work: people must be told about it!
3. The biggest mistake that a PRO can make is to assume that people know!

## How to Operate

- Be well informed of all club activities
- Keep in touch with officers and team coaches/managers
- Build up links with local newspaper and radio personnel
- Consult widely with relevant people
- Bring a camera to games and events (even a good mobile phone camera), as a picture can tell a thousand words and adds to your story
- Get to know your Leinster Rugby CCRO; share and learn positive initiatives to/from other clubs

## The Clubs Audience

The cornerstone of any public relations approach is basic communications with those who matter most to the club.

- Club Members & Players
- Supporters
- Community
- Funding bodies
- Sponsors

## The Media

- Local Radio
- Local Press
- National Press
- Regional/National Radio

## Leinster Rugby CCRO (Club Community Rugby Officer)

We have 41 CCRO's representing Leinster Rugby in our rugby clubs around the province, working with clubs, schools and community groups to deliver tailored rugby programmes and expand the game within the clubs and schools of the county.

It is essential that each PRO has a relationship with their club CCRO to ensure excellent communication 'from the ground up' – from the club to the Leinster Branch and beyond.

The CCRO is there to assist with promotion of your club and raise awareness of rugby within the community, so a good working relationship with your CCRO is essential to the role of the club PRO.



## PRO Key Responsibilities

- Develop a good working relationship with your Leinster Rugby CCRO, the local media, papers and radio in the area
- Be accessible to local media as often as possible
- Liaise with the media in relation to matches, e.g. semi-finals/finals
- Arrange a weekly/bi-weekly column with local newspapers to cover rugby news in your club
- Submit an article on the news within your club on a bi-weekly basis by the stated deadline.
- Publish results after the weekend or week of games on the clubs website and social media pages.
- Know the format sports editors require the information in e.g. Word
- Fixtures should be in the format – time, venue, teams
- Always attach a good quality image, with the caption included e.g. action shot/team photo.
- Publicise club activities such as fundraisers, initiatives, family days etc.

The two main responsibilities for the PRO are being consistent with match reports and press releases, as these are examples of how to communicate to the wider public and build relationships with the clubs audiences, e.g. the public, your sponsors and the media.

Ensure that both match reports and press releases are not only sent to sponsors and the media but shared on your own clubs website as well as sharing them across the clubs social media platforms.

## Match Reports

PRO's should attempt to do a match reports for every club game and any local competitions. It can be impossible for the PRO to attend all games therefore it is important to meet all teams at the beginning of the season and have someone assigned to forward a few lines about their game to you as PRO. This will allow the PRO just to compile all match information.

- Keep your report simple and to a reasonable length
- Give all relevant information such as teams, scorers, referee and venue
- Use players full names
- Make sure your report is balanced – remember there are two teams
- Remember your W's – who, what, where, when
- Keep paragraphs in sequence
- Add in a quote from a manager or key player
- Remember to reference and thank club sponsors as appropriate

## Press Release

Press releases are an effective tool you can use to publicise news from your rugby club. As the release you produce is straight from the source, you can control the message you want your audience to receive about players, coaches, and other news, in a factual and concise manner.

There are many occasions when it could be necessary to write a press release. The club has a new coach, or elected a new club president, announcing a new sponsor, get into semi-final/finals of a league, minis blitz, fundraisers, family days etc. Anything newsworthy, is worthy of a press release.

Here are a few tips to help you write a good sporting press release.

- Keep it short and sweet. Most press releases don't exceed 500 words from top to bottom
- Keep fonts simple and in standard formatting
- Consider the "Five W's"
  - Who or what you're talking about
  - Where the release or event you are discussing occurred
  - When your news occurred
  - Why this information is important
- Always edit and proofread!

### Key Components of a Press Release;

#### "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE"

This should be at the top of your press release in all caps. This phrase lets your audience know that there is important news that is ready to be released ASAP!

#### Headline (title)

This is the first piece of information your audience will see when they look at your press release, which is why it's important. You should make the headline catchy and intriguing, but also to the point and it should tease what's to come in the rest of the release.

The headlines should only be one line in length.

### Opening Paragraph

Is another critically important component of the press release. The first paragraph is a summation of the press release, and like the headline, entices your audience to read the rest of your release.

### Body Paragraphs

Your body paragraphs contain the story and should be 3-5 paragraphs in length.

### Boilerplate

Though it's not necessary to include a boilerplate in your press release, it is a useful to include for your readers who might not know too much about your club or on the story of what you are releasing. The Boilerplate should be a short paragraph with relevant background information about the club/person/team/the topic of the press release.

### ENDS

This is to be stated at the end of your release, so the editor knows that any information below 'ENDS' is not to be released into the paper/site.

### Contact Information

Include contact information so if the editor needs any more information on the press release they can contact you easily and will include;

Contact name & title

Phone number

Email address

Rugby clubs website address





## Article Writing

Before a club sends in an article, they should use this checklist:

- Where is the event on?
- What is the event (charity, blitz, youth development, match report, fundraiser etc.)?
- What age group is involved?
- Who is involved (clubs, schools, youths, senior teams etc.)?
- What was the aim of the event? Was the event a success? If so, why?
- Who was present?
- Was there anything different about this event?
- Was there a winner? If so, did they receive anything?
- Who needs to be acknowledged?
- Is there any other information that needs to be included?
- When is the next event taking place?
- How and where can you find information on this?
- Is there a contact name/email address mentioned?

## Maximising local press and club news via the Leinster Rugby channels

*Each club PRO should ensure that the article is published on their own clubs website and platforms before sending it into Leinster Rugby.*

### Website

The Leinster Rugby website, [www.leinsterrugby.ie/domestic-rugby](http://www.leinsterrugby.ie/domestic-rugby) is a great tool for clubs self-promotion and to gain publicity. We would encourage all clubs to actively participate in submitting articles/news to the Leinster site directly by emailing [stories@leinsterrugby.ie](mailto:stories@leinsterrugby.ie)

### Submitting an article

When submitting articles to [stories@leinsterrugby.ie](mailto:stories@leinsterrugby.ie) please ensure you have done the following:

*Title:* No more than eight words long

*Abstract:* This is the first opening sentence and should be captivating with a lot of information included.

*Main Body:* Article should be three/four paragraphs long and should be spelt and paragraphed properly.

### Example:

*Title:* Age Grade sides in good shape for Interpros

*Abstract:* Leinster Rugby has four different age grade teams which include Leinster Under-20's, Under-19's, Under-18 clubs and Under-18's schools team

*Main body:* Leinster Under 20's, sponsored by SWORD Security\* will face Connacht Under 20's at home in Donnybrook at 7.30pm on Friday, 6th of September. Last week the Under 20's were victorious by 20-13 over the Leicester Academy in Ashbourne RFC.

Saturday the 7th will see the Leinster Under 19's play Connacht possible U19's in Old Belvedere at 2.30pm. This squad narrowly lost to Northampton Saints last Friday in Donnybrook with Saints Harry Mallinder scoring a late try in the final play.

The Under 19's who are also sponsored by SWORD Security\* are hoping to see some support in Old Belvedere on Saturday while across the pond the Under 18 Schools team, sponsored by Newstalk\*, play Munster in Donnybrook at 2.30pm. These future stars need your support so come out and give a shout for our boys in blue. To keep up with the action, log on to [http://www.leinsterrugby.ie/domestic/repsides/representative\\_sides.php](http://www.leinsterrugby.ie/domestic/repsides/representative_sides.php).

*\*(Name Sponsors where possible)*

This should be submitted in a word document, attached in the email. Leinster Rugby prefers pre-event articles as this lets your target audience know of an event that's upcoming rather than an event that has happened.

*Photo:*

The photo is more important than the article. Group photos of no more than five people or action photos are preferable. They should be submitted in a separate attachment in jpeg format.

Landscape photos are the only format of photos that can be posted on the Leinster Rugby site (horizontal) and no promotional posters can be used as photos.

*Caption:* A caption should be included with the photo and should include names of those pictured (where possible and with consent), venue, ages of those pictured and the title of the event.



## Communication (Internally & Externally)

While Communication is a key component of the role of the PRO, it is not the preserve of the PRO. All members of the club by either their actions or inactions play a role in the communications and projecting a positive image of the club.

For the PRO to be effective it is essential that there is a good working relationship with fellow executive members, committee members, team management, players and officers of other units. Much of the internal communications will be through the club secretary.

Communicating with club members on a regular basis is an important aspect of the PROs work and this can be achieved by means of regular updates on website and social media, newsletters, texting, emails and local media.

### Internal Communications;

- Club Officers
- Executive committee and Sub-Committee Members
- Players
- Coaches
- Parents
- Active members (volunteers)

### Internal - What to communicate (examples):

- Date, time and venue of club games, training, meetings and all activities
- Details of programme of games activities
- Details of the Club Plan
- All club activity

### Effective Internal communication ensures that:

- Everyone connected with the club is aware of what is happening
- People know their roles and responsibilities
- Everyone knows the details of the club plan and the direction the club is taking

### External - Communications

The PRO is a key person when communicating with the public. It is essential that there is an agreement within the executive that all official press statements are made through the PRO.

External communications includes supporters, sponsors or potential sponsors and general community served by the club. The main external audience is the media, local newspapers and local radio. Establishing good relationships with editors, sports editors and agreeing deadlines and content is important.

Like internal communications there are various means by which external communications can be delivered by website, social media, newsletters, mail shots, notices in prominent local places e.g. community notice boards, supermarkets etc.

## External - Communications;

- Supporters
- Parents
- Sponsors
- Media
- The community in general

## External - What to communicate (examples):

- The Club Plan – Games plan, club objectives etc.
- Club match, results and reports
- Club's social and other activities
- Positive stories e.g. fundraising events, family days, players being selected for provincial panel, new sponsor etc.

## Good External Communication Ensures:

- The club is seen as 'alive, active, positive and progressive' in the general community
- Parents see that their children get meaningful activity and enjoyment
- Sponsors see a benefit in being associated with the club
- Encourages people to become involved
- Remember: Everyone in the locality is a potential member!



## Key Points to Remember;

The PRO is a key role, because encouraging new volunteers, successful fundraising etc., depends on the club having a good image in the locality. It is important to note that a Club does not have to be winning championships every year to be seen as an 'active' Club.

There are many examples of positive stories in the Club including; Anniversary of past glories, fundraising success, club social nights, family days, pitch and clubhouse development, minis & youths blitzes, Leinster players/Leo the Lion visiting the club, club player making the provincial/international side.

It is not possible for the PRO to be present at all games and activities and to this end the PRO should at the beginning of the season ensure that each team has a contact person for the supply of details to you pertaining to players, results, scorers, etc. Set out for them the format in which you require the information and deadlines.

## Leinster Rugby and Clubs Working Together

Leinster Rugby and clubs need to work together to promote rugby in the province across as many media channels as possible. If your club send in a story for the

Leinster Rugby Website and we post a link on Twitter, the social media person in the club should make it their aim to retweet this story in order to showcase that your club is getting provincial recognition-tell them about the work that you are doing!

## How do clubs contact Leinster Rugby?

In order to send in an article to promote your club via the Leinster Channels, email [stories@leinsterrugby.ie](mailto:stories@leinsterrugby.ie).

In order for us to support the clubs twitter feed, be sure to **always tag @LeinsterBranch** and use the hash tag; **#FromTheGroundUp**

For all other queries in relation marketing and communications for the domestic game, please contact [lisa.doyle@leinsterrugby.ie](mailto:lisa.doyle@leinsterrugby.ie).



# Leinster Rugby Submissions Overview

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## **Leinster Rugby Website:**

**Deadline** - no deadline but where an item is time sensitive this should be outlined

### **Submissions must:**

- Have a high resolution landscape image attached
- Have a minimum of 350-500 words with maximum of 1,000 words

## **Irish Independent Supplement:**

**Deadline** - 11 am on the Tuesday of that week.

### **Submissions must:**

- Be accurate in every detail and fact checked rigorously
- Have a high resolution image attached ideally close up (e.g. no shots of action/people in the distance that can't be easily identified)
- Word count of between 200 minimum and 250 maximum

## **Leinster Rugby Match Programme:**

**Deadline** - Submitted by Friday, 12 noon the week before a game

### **Submissions must:**

- Have at least one high resolution image attached for one page article
- Word count of between 500 minimum and 750 maximum for one page article
- Where agreed in advance with Domestic PR Team, between 900-1,200 for a two page feature
- Have at least three high resolution images attached for two page articles

*Please Note:*

### **Items that won't be considered for all platforms:**

- Match reports/previews that lack parity in terms of coverage
- Items championing a local sponsor or sponsorship agreement
- Local summer/Easter camps organised internally in club/school

# PRO Area Representatives

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Area	PRO Representative	Email
Metro	Darren Morin	darrenmorrin88@gmail.com
North East	Caroline McFadden	cmcfadden1@gmail.com
South East	Debbie Carty	dcarty1@eircom.net
North Midlands	TBC	
Midlands	TBC	
Women's Rugby	Marta Giner	womenspro@leinsterrugby.ie
Senior Rugby	Jacinta O'Rourke	jacintaorourke@gmail.com
Junior Rugby	David McFadden	david.mcfadden@djei.ie
Youths Rugby	James Ferris	jferrisie@gmail.com





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