

Premier Rugby announces EDF Energy community partnership

Premier Rugby has announced a three-year deal with EDF Energy to become its Community Partner and sponsor of the National Schools Rugby Programme.

The deal will run alongside the company's sponsorship of the EDF Energy Cup.

The programme is one of the most comprehensive in world rugby and will involve close to 100,000 children and teachers at primary schools across England. Schools where rugby has never been played before will be targeted.

Not only will the programme give children an introduction to rugby union through the tag rugby version of the sport, it will also ensure that teachers receive quality coaching and provide enough equipment to leave a rugby legacy in schools for years to come.

Each Premiership club will work with over 100 schools during the three year programme.

"Our goal at Worcester Warriors has always been to have a club firmly rooted in its community and working with children from some of the under-privileged areas of Worcestershire is a key part of that," said Worcester Warriors captain Pat Sanderson.

"We need to encourage more children to lead healthy lifestyles and take up sport, and I firmly believe that should be through rugby. That's why I'm so pleased to be helping to launch the new programme today and am grateful to EDF Energy for their long-term commitment, which means Warriors and the other clubs will be able to run this programme and introduce thousands of children to the game."

The EDF Energy National Schools Rugby Programme will be aimed at boys and girls aged 8-10. Tag rugby is a non-contact version of the sport that teaches the skills necessary to go on and play rugby union. Schools are already being signed up, with the first coaching sessions starting in January.

"EDF Energy's investment in our Community Programme is a ringing endorsement of the work all 12 clubs in the top flight have been doing over many years," added Premier Rugby's Community Manager, Wayne Morris.

This programme will reach out to nearly 100,000 children over its three years and will be supported by high-profile players like Pat, Jason Robinson and Jonny Wilkinson. In fact, on average, a Premiership player will visit a school every day of the three-year programme."

Louise Poole, EDF Energy's Head of Brand said: "We're delighted to become Premier Rugby's Community Partner. We're committed to rugby at all levels from the EDF Energy Cup to the grassroots and want to make sure our involvement leaves a lasting legacy for hundreds of schools and tens of thousands of children.

"The EDF Energy National Schools Programme is about getting children involved in rugby and making sure as many schools as possible have the teachers trained to coach and the right equipment to play the game for years to come. Children need role models and so we're really pleased that Premiership players are going to be involved throughout the programme."

Every school involved will also have the chance to play in local tag rugby festivals and regional finals. Some of those will go on to take part in tag rugby demonstrations at the EDF Energy Cup semi-final and then the final at Twickenham.

"I am grateful to EDF Energy for their investment in rugby, from the EDF Energy Cup at the apex, through their other tournaments to the support of grassroots rugby via the EDF Energy National Schools Rugby Programme announced today," said Jon Varney, Premier Rugby's Commercial Director. "We now have an opportunity to build a long-term relationship that includes EDF Energy, our great supporters and thousands of schools across England."

