

Melrose Rugby – A Vision

Semi-professional (Super6) rugby has the potential to be the catalyst for positive change in Scottish Borders and Scottish rugby.

Not in its current form but certainly as recognition of the developing young talent, a conduit for recovering, injured, professional players and the pinnacle for the best in the amateur game.

Like the vast majority of team sports, rugby depends on the amateur game and every person involved in it.

It is the army of volunteers which enables amateur rugby to exist and provides the base from which our International team has an opportunity to succeed. Scottish rugby relies on the heart and soul of its passionate family.

I believe that Scottish rugby should always be searching to find innovative ways of providing pathways for players, officials and supporters to reach their personal ambitions in the sport. There are alternative and more beneficial ways forward than the current, SUPER6 structure.

The Scottish Borders has the opportunity to create its own semi-professional structure within the current SUPER6 franchise agreement. Discussions and proposals for positive change to this sector of rugby, can be considered during the remaining 3 years of the franchise agreement secured by Melrose Rugby.

This requires Melrose Rugby to be willing to take the lead in discussing what is best for Scottish Borders rugby.

Scottish Borders rugby has a unique opportunity to recreate itself and to be a leader in the development of the amateur game in Scotland.

The 3G and overall ground development at the Greenyards, has placed Melrose Rugby in a position that any other Borders Club will struggle to replicate without substantial financial investment.

The Greenyards is the home of Sevens, and the abbreviated game continues to be one of the areas of growth globally. Melrose Rugby have the admirable ambition of hosting an IRB Sevens tournament in 2033, however the Greenyards will need to undergo substantial development if this objective is to be achieved. Melrose Sevens is profiled and marketed as a Scottish Borders event and it has the potential to attract large numbers of seven-a-side supporters from all around the world.

The Greenyards could be developed as the Performance Centre for Scottish Borders rugby. It is the Greenyards that provides this potential, because of Sevens rugby, however, Melrose Rugby, the local community, Scottish Borders rugby and the whole region would benefit from what can be created at the home of sevens.

There can be exciting times ahead for Scottish Borders rugby if visionary thinking and bold steps are taken to produce positive change. The future strength of rugby union depends on the action of those involved in developing and administering the game at present.

The current Board of Melrose Rugby have the potential to create the vision to deliver something very special and could provide a legacy that would be second only to that of Ned Haig.