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### **WELWYN RFC WIN PRESTIGIOUS RFU PRESIDENT'S XV AWARD, SUPPORTED BY QBE**

**London, 11 June 2010**

Welwyn RFC has won a President's XV Award, supported by specialist business insurer QBE, in acknowledgment of their initiative to promote the development of rugby at a grassroots level.

Welwyn was presented with the President's XV *Schools Young Volunteers* Award for the amazing work undertaken by two 15 year old club members in setting up *Herts Rugby Awareness Week* to boost the profile of youth rugby within Hertfordshire.

Oren Blindell and Rachel McCullough were successful in securing almost £10,000 from The Big Spend (Youth Opportunities Fund) to fund their idea of Rugby Awareness Week, which took place between 16-20 November last year. The initiative saw rugby playing teenage volunteers raise awareness of the sport by making speeches during assemblies at more than 40 of the county's schools, as well as distributing leaflets, posters and a 'This is Rugby' DVD.

Each year the President's XV Awards, supported by QBE, recognise and reward projects that have been run in a voluntary capacity at rugby organisations.

Amongst some stiff competition it was Welwyn's innovative thinking that set them apart from the other entries. The RFU received a record 296 entries this year, representing a 33% increase on 2009 entries.

The club was awarded with a cheque for £500 and a special trophy to mark the achievement, handed over by the RFU at a special awards night presented by England rugby legend Jason Leonard.

The President's XV judging panel this year included RFU President John Owen, Senior Vice President Richard Appleby, Junior Vice President Willie Wildash, RFUW President Gill Burns,



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England's most-capped player Jason Leonard and Paul Morgan, editor of Rugby World magazine.

Bob Swindell, *Chairman of Welwyn RFC*, said: "I am delighted that the amazing achievements of Oren and Rachel have been recognised by receiving the Presidents XV *Young Volunteers Award* – their efforts are a credit to Welwyn RFC, the county of Hertfordshire and the sport of rugby as a whole.

"The club would like to thank the RFU and QBE for their fantastic work in supporting grassroots rugby through the President's XV initiative, and the icing on the cake was certainly having Jason Leonard at our club to present the trophy and £500 cheque!"

*John Owen, President of the RFU, commented:* "It's gratifying to see clubs like Welwyn RFC coming up with creative solutions to help develop and progress our game. There are so many volunteers across the country working hard to support rugby in their area, who all deserve praise for their ongoing commitment".

"The winning President's XV schemes have demonstrated a great deal of creativity in coming up with imaginative ideas to benefit rugby in the community, and Welwyn is no exception. We are delighted to be celebrating and rewarding their success. No doubt the example they set will be followed by volunteers across the country.

*Steven Burns, CEO of QBE European Operations, added:* "As Official Insurance Partner of England Rugby, QBE is proud to be involved with such a prestigious scheme. Supporting the President's XV Awards forms part of our commitment to supporting rugby at a grassroots level."

"The innovative thinking demonstrated by the Welwyn is typical of the dedication shown by club volunteers all over the country, and we are pleased to be able to recognise their achievements."

For more information on the President's XV Awards, please visit [www.qbeeurope.com/rugby](http://www.qbeeurope.com/rugby)



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For further information please contact:

Sandra Villanueva, QBE European Operations  
Tel: +44 207 105 4428; email [Sandra.Villanueva@uk.qbe.com](mailto:Sandra.Villanueva@uk.qbe.com)

Nina Cresswell, Generate Sponsorship  
Tel: 0845 241 8111; email [nc@generatesponsorship.com](mailto:nc@generatesponsorship.com)

Henny Breakwell, Haggie Financial  
Tel: +44 20 7417 8989 email: [Henny.Breakwell@haggie.co.uk](mailto:Henny.Breakwell@haggie.co.uk)

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### Notes to editors

### About QBE

Founded in Australia over 100 years ago, QBE is a specialist business insurer, now operating out of 47 countries across the globe. We have been active in the UK since 1904, originally within the marine insurance market, but branching out more recently to offer commercial insurance to companies across the UK.

At the end of 2009, the Group's turnover was over £6bn. It is one of the largest insurance firms in the UK providing a wide range of insurance cover, including property, motor, liability and professional indemnity across a broad range of business types and sizes.

QBE is proud to be the Official Insurance Partner of the Guinness Premiership and England Rugby. Our partnerships with two elite properties in the sport will allow QBE's brand to continue to develop and business to grow.

### About the RFU

The Rugby Football Union is the National Governing Body for rugby union in England and supports participants and fans from the grassroots to the national team.