

ROBBIE'S RUGBY FESTIVAL

IN AID OF THE ROBBIE ANDERSON CANCER TRUST AND THE JAKE MCCARTHY FOUNDATION

LOUGHBOROUGH GRAMMAR SCHOOL PLAYING FIELDS | 27 JULY 2019



Robbie's Rugby Festival braves the rain!

Leicester Tigers Tom Youngs makes an appearance as the largest 10s Rugby tournament returns for its eleventh year!

Despite the typically damp British weather, Loughborough Grammar School Playing Fields filled with spectators and scrummers alike on Saturday (27th July) to celebrate another year of charity sports event, Robbie's Rugby Festival. Originally curated as an old boy's reunion match by a group of school friends, Robbie's Rugby Festival has grown to become the largest 10's rugby tournament in the midlands, raising vital funds for two incredibly worthy charities, The Robbie Anderson Cancer Trust and The Jake McCarthy Foundation, inspired by two young men who tragically lost their lives to cancer. Determined not to be beaten by the elements, players and fans braved the rain this weekend ready for an action-packed day of rugby rivalry, family fun and the famous 'Party on the Pitch' in the evening.

For 2019 Robbie's Rugby Festival saw the appointment of two new ambassadors, present and former England players and brothers, Tom and Ben Youngs. Although his brother Ben was in Italy, training for the upcoming Rugby World Cup over the weekend, Leicester Tiger Tom attended on day, getting stuck in amid the action, spectating and cheering from the side-lines. Tom was also called upon to present the highly coveted Cup, Plate and Spoon awards, alongside the Mayor of Charnwood, Councillor Brenda Seaton. In May of this year, alongside his Tigers' teammates, Tom Youngs opened a Therapy Room for the children's oncology ward and Teenage Cancer Trust Unit at Leicester Royal Infirmary, paid for by funds raised by Robbie's Rugby Festival.

Tom Youngs said: "Ben and I are extremely proud to have been event ambassadors for the eleventh annual Robbie's Rugby Festival. Although Ben couldn't make it on the day due to his busy World Cup training schedule, I was able to

attend and felt incredibly humbled to be a part of such a special event. Having opened the Therapy Room for Ward 27 and Teenage Cancer Trust Unit at Leicester Royal Infirmary earlier this year, it was amazing to see where the funds for these life changing resources were raised. It's truly heart-warming how the rugby family can come together to make a real difference to people's lives."

Robbie's Rugby Festival in numbers:

- 2019 is the 11th year for Robbie's Rugby Festival
- Funds raised are donated to 2 charities – The Robbie Anderson Cancer Trust and The Jake McCarthy Foundation
- Year one saw 100 people attend, a figure that has grown to over 1,000 supporters in 2019
- 2 teams played in the first tournament, which has grown to 18 teams in the 2019 tournament
- The event takes over a week to build up and 2 days to dismantle
- More than 50 volunteers freely donate their time to help bring the event together
- 14 sponsors and partners generously supported Robbie's Rugby Festival 2018
- Over 950 pints, 400 slices of cake and 600 bacon rolls and burgers are consumed
- 500 guests attended the POTP evening celebrations
- Greater than 100 raffle prizes were donated

Towards the afternoon, the rainclouds subsided just in time for the awards presentation, where the winners of the main tournament were announced as 'Charlie's Angels' – captained by Charlie Richardson, who has experienced first hand the fanstatic work on Ward 27 during his recent battle with cancer. Coincidentally, Tom Youngs' was also routing for Charlie's team on the basis that their fathers used to play rugby together back in the day. The winners of the Round Robin tournament were 'Huge Tackle' and the Women's 7s tournament were 'Coalville RFC'.

Founder of ADDO Events and Robbie's Rugby Festival, Georgie Fowle said: "We are so incredibly grateful to everyone who turned up on Saturday, despite the weather, to contribute to another successful year of Robbie's Rugby Festival. We are always overwhelmed with the generosity and support we receive for the event and an enormous thanks must go out to the festival committee, our families, loyal supporters and everyone else involved, without whom Robbie's Rugby Festival would not be possible. We also wanted to say a huge thank you to Ben and Tom Youngs for helping to raise the profile of the event by being our wonderful event ambassadors this year. The funds raised from the event will allow our two exceptional charities to continue their vital work in making a real difference to those battling with cancer and their families at what is an unimaginably tough time. Unfortunately, due to the weather, attendance was a little down on previous years, so for anyone who planned to come but were unable to, there is still time to donate either via the Robbie's Rugby Festival Facebook page or directly to the charities via their websites."

Robbie's Rugby Festival returns for a twelfth year on Saturday 11th July 2020. In the meantime, Festiball, the prestigious black-tie event which took place last year to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of RRF, returns this year for New Year's Eve. Get your tickets via the Robbie's Rugby Festival website.

Robbie's Rugby Festival 2019 event was generously supported by a wealth of sponsors including **Rugby Village Sponsor** The Loughburians Alumni Association; **Group Sponsors:** The Little Retreat and Emery Johnsons Astills. **Scoreboard Sponsor:** Audacity Task. **Partners** include ADDO Events, EI Group, Pipers Crisps, EFS, Loughborough Schools Foundation, Function Jigsaw, Buster Marquees, EFS Europe, OddBalls (balls partner), RS Print (print partner), Challenge Trophies (trophy sponsor) and Nottingham Rugby (partner club). Official event photography: Lifetime-event-photography.co.uk.

A variety of sponsorship packages are available for Robbie's Rugby Festival 2020. For more details on how to get involved, visit: www.robbiesrugbyfestival.com.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

Members of the media are invited to contact Josie Chapman at Bloxham PR – josie.c@bloxhampr.com, 01452 346466 – with further press enquiries.

ABOUT ADDO EVENTS

www.addoevents.com

Addo Events was founded by Georgie Fowle and Katie Tottenham with a dedicated vision to creating and executing inspirational events for corporate, private and charity clients throughout the UK and abroad. Their overriding aim is that all their events leave a lasting memory long after the last guest has departed.

ABOUT THE ROBBIE ANDERSON CANCER TRUST

www.robbyanderson.org.uk

The Robbie Anderson Cancer Trust was set up in December 2005 by 13-year-old cancer patient Robbie to improve the quality of life for young people spending long periods of time on the children's cancer ward. Robbie knew his cancer was terminal and facing his second (and last) Christmas in hospital, he set about fundraising for a large plasma tv screen for his ward. He wanted the children on the oncology ward to be able to do what everyone else was doing – playing games and watching Christmas films with their families. On December 24th it was fixed to the wall in the Day Room. Sadly, ten weeks later, Robbie passed away.

Today, The Robbie Anderson Cancer Trust continues to improve the quality of life for all young people fighting cancer in the Leicestershire area. Vital funds raised enable the trust to support the children's oncology ward and teenager cancer unit, at the Leicester Royal Infirmary, with recreational comfort and new hospital equipment. On 8th May 2019, a Therapy Room for the children's oncology ward and Teenage Cancer Trust Unit at the Leicester Royal Infirmary was opened by Tom Youngs and a number of his fellow Leicester Tigers players, funding for which was facilitated enormously by money raised from Robbie's Rugby Festival. The new Therapy Room will be a haven where young people undergoing treatment for cancer and often enduring long stays in hospital will be able to relax, unwind, have fun and feel very special.

Education is also core to the trust's work. The Robbie Anderson Cancer Trust continues to encourage all who can give lifesaving blood and platelet donations, while raising awareness of the Anthony Nolan Register, which matches people who need bone marrow transplants with suitable donors worldwide.

ABOUT THE JAKE MCCARTHY FOUNDATION

www.jakemccarthyfoundation.co.uk

Jake McCarthy, a former Loughborough Grammar School pupil, was found to have a large brain tumour whilst on holiday in December 2012. Jake underwent emergency surgery to remove this, but tragically did not regain consciousness, and passed away aged 24. His condition had gone undiagnosed. As a result of overwhelming support from those who knew Jake, his family decided to set-up a Foundation in his memory.

Through fundraising events The Foundation aims to raise money for further research into the treatment of brain tumours as well as improve earlier diagnosis by alerting medical professionals, parents and carers, through clearer guidelines, to identify the signs of those with persistent symptoms to seek urgent further treatment. Catching this condition in its infancy can dramatically increase a patient's chance of survival.

The Foundation are currently donating vital funds to a research programme about the blood-brain barrier called "The Grand Challenge" (further details below), a unique fundraising partnership between Brain Tumour Research and another leading UK charity, The Dr.Hadwen Trust. The research team at the University of Portsmouth are currently developing a high throughput 3D all-human model, that mimics the blood brain barrier, and which could pave the way for better, more efficient and reliable tests of drugs to treat brain tumours like this.

The reason that this is important is because if you grow brain cells in a petri dish and put a drug on them, you might manage to kill the tumour cells. However, if you test the same drugs on tumour cells grown amongst normal brain cells, the tumour cells can sometimes persuade normal cells to protect them and so the same drug may be less effective.