



HELSINKI RUGBY CLUB

ACADEMY

REPORT

2024

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INTRODUCTION

In the future when we reflect on the history of Helsinki Rugby Club, we hope that we will look back at 2024 as the year that we laid a foundation for a thriving junior rugby programme.

This year was an exciting milestone for Helsinki Rugby Club as we made a commitment to introduce the sport of rugby to a new generation.

With a focus on our 'mini' rugby section at ages 3-12, we have begun to lay the foundation for what promises to be a thriving youth rugby community. The focus has been on building enthusiasm for the sport, teaching fundamental skills, and understanding how rugby's core values can contribute to the development of young people in our club.

The success of this inaugural year is a testament to the dedication of our coaches, the support of parents, and the eagerness of our young players. Together, we've established a welcoming and inclusive environment where every child can grow, learn, and have fun.

We are incredibly proud of the start that we have made and we are extremely thankful to the board of Helsinki Rugby Club for their constant support. We have been learning along the way and we hope that we are constantly improving our capacity and the quality of the experience that we can offer to our young players, their parents or guardians and the volunteers that we work with.



In this report, we reflect on the achievements of the academy's first year, highlight the milestones reached by each age group, and outline our vision for the future. We are proud of what we've accomplished in 2024 and look forward to continuing this journey, with plans to introduce opportunities for competition and expand the program in the coming years.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this promising start. Here's to building the future of rugby in Helsinki!



Meet Pete and Pipsa, our Helsinki Rugby Club minis mascots

OUR GUIDING MISSION

OUR MISSION

We believe that in Finland, junior sport suffers from two major challenges. To play club sport as a child is expensive and it requires a large time commitment.

We see plenty of high-quality sports programmes are not available to everyone due to the high costs of fees, insurance and equipment. In addition to this, training and games can be 3 or more times per week, leaving little spare time to access a range of different sporting activities.

Our mission at Helsinki Rugby Club is to provide an affordable, inclusive, and flexible rugby program that encourages young athletes in Helsinki to develop a broad range of physical and social skills. We aim to challenge the current model of early specialisation by promoting multi-sport participation, fostering a lifelong love for physical activity, and building a community where every child can thrive regardless of their background or experience.



400+

CHILDREN HAVE EXPERIENCED
RUGBY WITH HRC
FOR THE FIRST TIME
THIS YEAR

HRC ACADEMY STRUCTURE



HRC MINIS

HRC Minis is the name of our programme for children until the age of 12.

SIILIT
3-4 YEARS OLD

LUMIKOT
5-6 YEARS OLD

KETUT
7-9 YEARS OLD

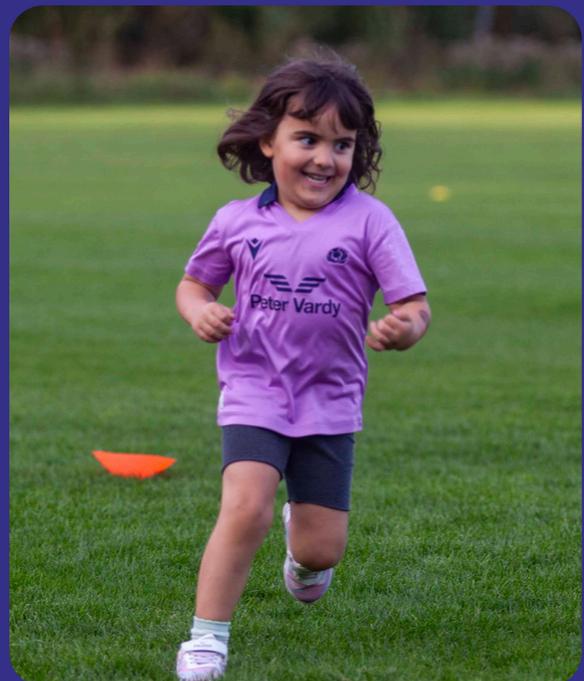
ILVEKSET
10-12 YEARS OLD

HRC YOUTH

HRC Youth comprises all age groups from 13 to 18 years of age.

We took the decision at the start of 2024 that we would not focus any resources on developing our Youth section until our Mini section is firmly established.

We do have some club members who fall into these age categories, but currently we find ways to include them in the adult training where possible.



MEET OUR TEAM



LEADERSHIP TEAM

Our programme is guided by a small leadership team that drives what we believe to be our priorities:



Peter Eagling
Academy
Manager



**Sabina Wright-
Pannuzzo**
Recruitment and
Retention



Essi Kara
Safeguarding



Bam Hennessy
Coaching



Heidi Hennessy
Board Member

CORE COACHING TEAM



Miina Porkka
Siilit



Sofia Ukkonen
Lumikot



Mikko Moilanen
Ketut



Elias Tritter
Ilvekset



Manu Holmila
Assistant

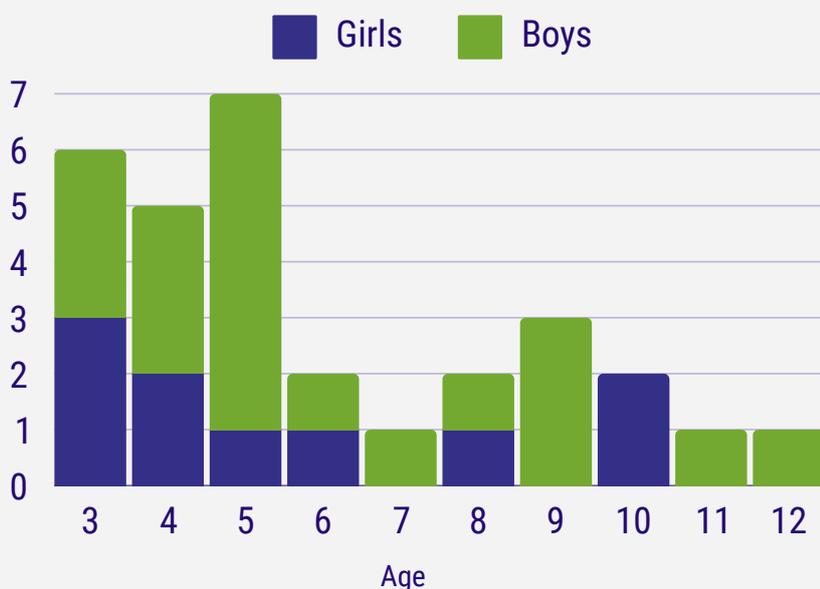
WHO ARE OUR JUNIOR MEMBERS?



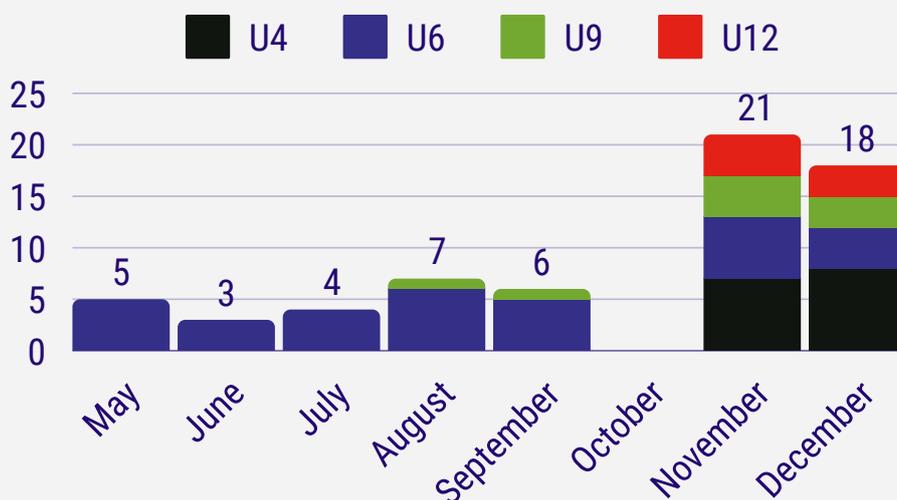
Who are the real stars of this show?

Of course the main part of our club is the players themselves. From our first sessions in January 2024, we have registered 30 members to our club.

Registered Members by Age



Average Registered Participants at Training



These figures only include registered members and do not include participants who are coming to try the sport.

OUR 2024 PROJECTS



This year's focus has been on ensuring that Helsinki Rugby Club has the capacity to offer a high quality rugby programme to young people in our city.

We have taken a staged approach to our club programme so that we continue to grow, whilst ensuring that we have enough resources to make rugby safe and enjoyable for everyone. Maintaining our focus on the Mini rugby section means that the children, club and coaches can grow together.

PROJECTS	DETAILS	OUTCOME
Launching the HRC Minis section	3 age groups with coaches and 10 players per group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 age groups • 20 aged 3-6 • 6 aged 7-9 • 4 aged 10-12
Generate a safeguarding policy and culture	Appointment of safeguarding manager. Policy and processes in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding policy created and ratified. • Processes in place for safeguarding.
Community Engagement	2 camps to be run in summer and autumn.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No camps run. • School engagement project launched with over 400 children exposed to rugby

OUR 2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

Our goals in 2024 were built mostly around building our capacity to deliver great rugby sessions. But we still exceeded our expectations in terms of the number of children that we were able to introduce to our sport. Most importantly we built a foundation that relies of a team of highly motivated volunteers to keep us going.

40

We introduced rugby to over 40 children in a club environment

From our first sessions in January, we have seen over 40 children visit at least one rugby session at our club. Since we started using the Myclub system in the summer, we have been able to register 30 young players to at least one of our seasons.

6

We have trained 6 coaches to deliver age-appropriate sessions

All of our head coaches and several of our assistants have achieved their level 1 coaching award this year. In addition, our coaches have been cleared to work with children through a vetting process led by our safeguarding manager.

1

We have designed and published a safeguarding policy

The core pillar of our programme is to provide a safe environment for children to enjoy playing sport. Our safeguarding policy and training is available to everyone associated with the rugby club to ensure that every child's rights are protected.

400

We have built partnerships with local schools to deliver to 400 children

Dedicated community coaches have begun to deliver sessions in school time, with after-school clubs set to launch in early 2025. Engaging with local schools will be vital to our aim of providing rugby to children without barriers.



HOW DID WE SPEND MONEY?



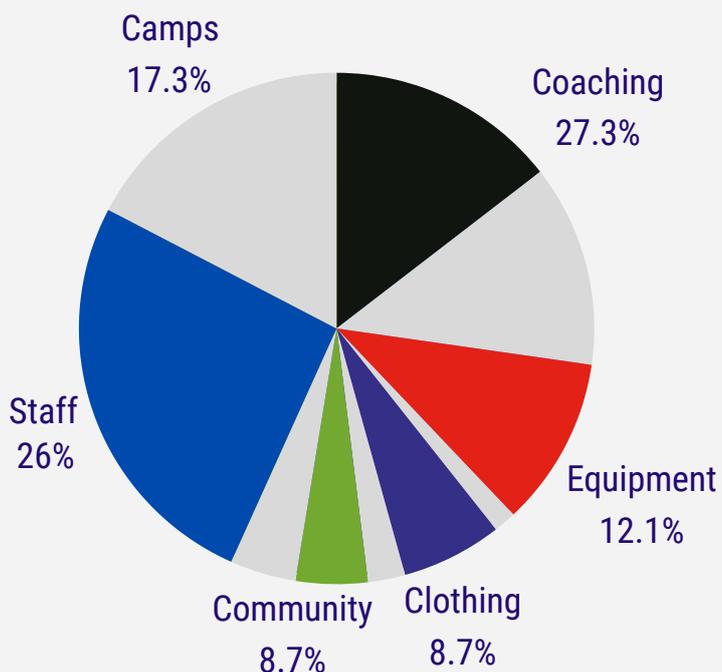
We were fortunate to have a generous budget from Helsinki Rugby Club to launch our junior programme. We chose to invest in staff and coaching expenses.

For 2025 we are hoping to continue to apply for grants to keep our programme growing.

€11550
Budget

€2960
Income

€7159
Expenditure



Spending in 2024

This is how we spent the money allocated to us in 2024. The **grey** areas represent areas where we underspent from our budget.

A big challenge for us in 2025 will be to create a sustainable funding model for our programme, whilst maintaining a low cost for participation.

Our goal is to apply for grants and sponsorship to cover the costs of our programme.

1

Successful grant application

€500

Grant money has helped us to offer low-cost programmes this year



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Helsinki Rugby Club Junior Leadership Team would like to thank the following people for helping us to deliver the programme this year:

Helsinki Rugby Club
www.helsinkirugby.fi/juniorit
juniors@helsinkirugby.org

The **Board of Helsinki Rugby Club**

The **Coaches of Helsinki Rugby Club**

The **Children** who play rugby and motivate us every week

The grant decision committee of the **Suomen Rugbyliitto**

The **Parents** and **Volunteers** who make this all happen.

Paulo Pannuzzo and **Yasir Al-Ani** for their photographs and graphics.

WE THANK YOU
FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AT
HRC ACADEMY