



**CASHBACK
2025/26**



CASE STUDY

Seeing the Bigger Picture

Creating Memorable Experiences and Wider Connections

SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE

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For many young people involved in the programme, some of the most memorable moments happened nowhere near a school rugby pitch – stepping into Murrayfield for the first time, travelling with teammates to watch Scotland play, attending Edinburgh Rugby fixtures at The Hive or meeting players they had previously only seen on television.

Across the phase, these experiences increasingly became part of how young people connected not only with rugby itself, but with the wider rugby community around them. For some pupils, trips to international fixtures or professional matches were experiences they may never otherwise have accessed outside school. For others, they became moments that strengthened friendships, built aspiration and reinforced a stronger sense of connection to school, teammates and local clubs.

Through partnerships with Scottish Rugby, Edinburgh Rugby, Glasgow Warriors and community clubs, young people across CashBack schools regularly attended Scotland Men's and Scotland Women's fixtures, the 1872 Cup and wider rugby events throughout the year. While these opportunities were often enjoyable in themselves, staff also reflected positively on the impact of young people experiencing the wider rugby environment first-hand.

At several schools, pupils who initially engaged through lunchtime sessions or school rugby activity later found themselves watching elite players in the national stadium alongside teammates, coaches and staff they had come to know well. In many cases, the significance lay not simply in the match itself, but in the feeling of being connected to a wider community beyond their own school environment.

Keith Wallace, President of Scottish Rugby, reflected following visits to several CashBack communities:

“Friendship values of fun, discipline, respect, teamwork and friendship are making a huge difference to many young lives.”

Keith Wallace, Scottish Rugby President

Visits from players and wider rugby role models also left a lasting impression on many young people. At Northfield Academy and Greenfield Academy, Scotland international Jamie Bhatti spent time speaking with pupils, sharing his experiences and answering questions from young people involved in the programme.

Reflecting on the visit, Keith Wallace noted:

“Both schools had kids listening intently to Jamie, who nailed it so well. A good sign.” Keith Wallace, Scottish Rugby President

Across several schools, staff also reflected positively on the visibility of women's rugby within these experiences. Attendance at Scotland Women fixtures and girls' rugby events increasingly helped younger female participants see clearer pathways within the sport while reinforcing that rugby environments belonged to them too.

Importantly, these opportunities were rarely described solely in terms of elite performance or sporting ambition. While some young people undoubtedly left inspired to push themselves further within rugby, many others simply gained experiences, memories and friendships that strengthened their confidence and wider connection to school and community life.

For some, it was the first time travelling with a team. For others, it was meeting players they had previously only seen on television or realising that the local sessions they attended each week were connected to a much wider network of clubs, communities and opportunities across Scotland.

Across Phase 6, these moments helped reinforce one of the programme's clearest themes: rugby created not only participation opportunities, but shared experiences and lasting connections that extended far beyond the pitch itself.

Reflection and Learning

Throughout the phase, memorable experiences and wider connections often became important drivers of aspiration, confidence and long-term engagement. For many young people, opportunities to travel, attend major fixtures or meet role models strengthened their sense of belonging within both rugby and the wider school community.

Importantly, these experiences also helped many pupils view themselves differently — not simply as spectators of the game, but as young people who had a place within it.