

## Sport Scholarship programme Rugby at Birmingham



University of Birmingham Sport (UBSport) Rugby has a culture that encourages attractive running rugby, and allows the development of all players under the guidance of an experienced coaching team. The 1st XV teams play on the Bournbrook rugby pitch – one of the top university pitches in the country. For the 2010–11 academic year, the club has been awarded the UBSport 'team scholarship' which has enabled players to benefit from specific strength and conditioning sessions and access to the performance gym.

### Current students



Garnet Mackinder currently has six caps for England U20s which include matches versus France, Canada, USA and Wales.

*'The scholarship programme has provided me with financial and physiotherapy support, very effective strength and conditioning training and knowledge about injury prevention. I am thoroughly enjoying playing rugby for the University and I feel that having a scholarship has enhanced my performance greatly.'*

### Famous alumni



Kat Merchant (2007 Sport and Exercise Science) plays winger for local side Worcester. She gained her first England cap whilst at university, playing a season for the England A team before being

selected for her 3rd cap in the 2008 6 Nations. Since then, Kat has played in three 6 Nations and various tours, such as the European championships. In 2009 Kat was selected for the England 7's squad and took part in the 2009 World Cup where they won the plate final against Canada. Kat has 33 caps and 29 tries to date.

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### Competition

The men's club have three teams competing in British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) competition as well as one freshers team who compete in the southwest freshers league.

The women's 1st team competes in the BUCS Midland Premier League and due to increasing squad sizes, have recently added a freshers team to the club.

### Famous Alumni

University of Birmingham graduates who have subsequently achieved great success include Kat Merchant a regular in the England Senior women's side; recent graduate Laura Keates who has made the step up to the England elite squad this year; and on the men's side, Victor Ubogo a member of the full England squad 1992–1999; James Rodwell and Neil Starling (England rugby 7's); and premiership players Alex Clarke (Bristol) and Leigh Hinton (Leeds Carnegie).

### Sport scholarships

The University currently fund up to 40 scholarships each year for talented young sports people who have represented their country at International level.

There are different level packages (Gold, Silver, and Bronze) and can be worth between £4,000 to £6,000.

Scholarship benefits include:

- Free Gym and Swim membership at the Munrow Sports Centre and use of training facilities for additional practice
- Weekly strength and conditioning training sessions with our fully qualified staff, regular functional strength assessment and a personalised strength and conditioning programme
- Sports medicine support including musculoskeletal screening, physiotherapy and massage treatments
- Sports Science support including psychology, nutrition, fitness testing and monitoring
- Mentoring and lifestyle support by a member of University sports staff to help combine sporting and academic demands
- Access to a series of lifestyle workshops and scholar resource library
- Funding of between £750 and £1500 towards competition, training and equipment costs
- Funding available for international competitions and/or specialist coaching

### Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS)



Birmingham is a TASS hub for women's rugby – one of only 13 in the country and is well respected for it's good practise in student-athlete support.

TASS athletes receive sporting support and services to the value of £3,500, TASS provides athletes with a tailored package comprising of services such as elite level coaching, strength and conditioning; lifestyle support; physiotherapy; access to a medical scheme; support with competition and training expenses; access to additional high quality training facilities. National governing bodies regularly monitor and assess the performance of TASS athletes to ensure that they make full use of the services and facilities provided for them in order to fully develop as an athlete.

### Coaching



The club has a strong coaching team headed up by former Samoan Rugby Union International Mike Umaga. With Provincial honours for The Wellington Lions (50 caps), International honours with Samoa (31 caps) and involvement in two World Cup campaigns (95, 99) he brings a wealth of experience to the club. Mike became head coach at UBSport in 2008 and won Midlands coach of the year in 2009. Joining Mike as the new development coach is former premiership player Ed Binham.

The club also has specialist guest rugby coaching sessions throughout the year. These include Isaac Feaunati (former Bath and Samoan #8) and Matt Ferguson (RFU senior coaching staff).

The women's side of the club has John Critchlow, a former Moseley player and Birmingham alumnus, as their new coach. Their aim this season is to secure promotion back into the Premier BUCS league.

Eligible individuals can apply for both UBSport and TASS scholarships, but can only receive one. Individuals studying a Physics or Astronomy related course will also be eligible to apply for a Physics Sports Bursary.

Scholarships are open to individuals of any nationality, and the closing date is early July each year. For further details please contact the Scholarships Manager, Luke Gunn on 0121 414 4519 or [l.s.gunn@bham.ac.uk](mailto:l.s.gunn@bham.ac.uk)

### Studying at Birmingham

The University of Birmingham was established in 1900 and has long been one of the premier academic institutes in the UK. As a top three university for sport it is an ideal place to combine sport with a well respected programme of study. For more information on undergraduate courses visit [www.birmingham.ac.uk/students](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students)



[www.sport.bham.ac.uk/scholarships](http://www.sport.bham.ac.uk/scholarships)