



### **Rugby Expo Hooks Rafael Ibanez**

**London 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2008.** Rugby Expo is pleased to announce the signing of Rafael Ibanez (Wasps and former France International) as its latest Rugby Expo ambassador.

Ibanez, the world's most capped hooker with 98 games for his native France, joins an illustrious list of global rugby names supporting this unique event, including Danny Cipriani (Wasps and England), Martin Bayfield (former England International), Tim Horan (former Australia International), Dean Richards (former England International) and Abi Ekoku (former Great Britain Rugby League Coach) to name a few. As an Ambassador, Ibanez will be involved in promoting the Expo through various personal appearances and press interviews in the coming months.

Scheduled to take place on 17-18 November 2008 at The Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, London, and timed to tie in with the Autumn Internationals programme, Rugby Expo 08 will be the world's first ever global business-to-business rugby union and league convention.

Keiran Gaffney, Commercial Manager Rugby Expo, said: "We're thrilled to have Rafa on board, he's a big name in the world of rugby and a true ambassador for the sport in general. We have a sound panel of ambassadors, all of whom share our passion for the development of the game, and adding Rafa to this list takes it from strength to strength."

Rafael Ibanez, said: "When asked by Rugby Expo to become an ambassador it was not a difficult decision to make, as the plans they have for this year and the themes running through it are hot topics in the rugby world. The more backing we can give to the game and the more awareness we can create, the better, and I am very excited to be part of this project, especially if I can help to develop the concept in France."

Rugby Expo 08 will create a perfect networking opportunity for rugby focussed businesses, where well known figures in the rugby world will host debates and forums giving an insight into various

aspects of the sport. For a full list of the forums, contributors and panellists and to find out more about the event and how you can become involved, visit the website on [www.rugbyexpo.com](http://www.rugbyexpo.com).

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Notes to Editors:

Rugby Expo aims to be the premier global business-to-business rugby union and league convention. Rugby Expo 08 in London will be the largest ever gathering of business people involved in and passionate about the world of rugby union and league, including clubs, administrators, companies that support rugby and suppliers of services to the rugby community. Rugby Expo will be a festival celebrating and supporting the development of rugby union and league as a truly global sport and will offer wide-ranging and exciting business opportunities.

Rugby Expo 08 will take place on 17–18 November 2008 in London, England at The Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, adjacent to the Houses of Parliament. The inaugural event coincides with the union Autumn Internationals programme, with matches to be played on 8, 15, 22 and 29 November 2008. The Northern Hemisphere union countries will be playing teams from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands during this programme.

The event will be attended by the business power brokers in the rugby union and league community; administrators from the international and national rugby authorities; executives from rugby clubs from all the rugby playing nations; executives from global, national and local companies interested in getting involved with rugby; and suppliers of services to the rugby community.

The event will be directed to helping businesses achieve their goals: whether this is generating more revenue, finding the right partners or discovering business opportunities. The forum sessions will be led by globally acknowledged opinion formers and will offer unique insights into rugby's hot topics. The exhibitions and social networking areas will provide an intensity of activities and opportunities to make contacts in a few days that would otherwise take months to achieve.

The key themes for the inaugural event are:

- Professionalism – building closer links between rugby and business, with a shared commitment to success.
- Grass Roots – attracting and nurturing talent, and supporting development of the game through the ranks.
- Developing Nations – enabling growing rugby nations to establish viable financial structures, so rugby can develop as a genuinely global sport.

Quite simply, if you're a serious player in the rugby business community, you need to be at Rugby Expo.