



Rugby Fosters International Interaction

The Rugby World Cup, a quadrennial sports event, will be held in Japan from September to November 2019. Rugby is enabling people to participate in positive international interaction in many parts of the country.

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THE Rugby World Cup 2019 will be held in Japan from September to November 2019 under the vision of “Connect Create Go Forward.” Twenty teams, including Japan, will be competing in this World Cup, the first to be held in Asia. The teams are divided into four qualifying pools for the round robin phase of the tournament. The top two teams in each pool will advance to the knock out stage. The tournament begins with the Japan-Russia match at Tokyo Stadium on September 20, with forty-eight matches being held at twelve stadia across the country, until the finals at International Stadium Yokohama on November 2.

The Rugby World Cup provides people with excellent opportunities for international interaction through rugby in many parts of the country. The city of Kitakyushu, Fukuoka, is holding interaction events with Wales, whose national team will be based there during the tournament. In the city of Kitakyushu,

Rugby World Cup 2019 Pools

POOL A	POOL B	POOL C	POOL D
Ireland	New Zealand	England	Australia
Scotland	South Africa	France	Wales
Japan	Italy	Argentina	Georgia
Russia	Namibia	USA	Fiji
Samoa	Canada	Tonga	Uruguay

there used to be a shipping port for coal produced in Kyushu island, and the city developed mining and heavy industry. Based on the historical similarity between Kitakyushu and Cardiff, the capital of Wales, and the fact that the University of Kitakyushu has exchanged students with Cardiff University since 1992, the city campaigned to invite the Welsh national team to set up a training camp. In August 2018 and March 2019, the Welsh Rugby Interaction Program in Kitakyushu was held for five days on each occasion. A total of about twenty people, including the chairman



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- 1 Welsh Rugby Union members parade with local citizens in Kitakyushu
Photo: Courtesy of Kitakyushu City
- 2 Christ's College rugby squad members play a practice game with high school students in Kitakami City
Photo: Courtesy of Kitakami City
- 3 Christ's College rugby squad members experience traditional performing arts at a high school in Kitakami City
Photo: Courtesy of Kitakami City

No Drones!

During the Rugby World Cup 2019 and Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, it is prohibited to fly unmanned aircrafts or drones over the event facilities, including event venues and airports, except for cases prescribed in the applicable law. The Civil Aeronautics Act also prescribes general flight rules on unmanned aircraft or drones such as prohibited airspace for flight and operational limitations.

of the Welsh Rugby Union and ex-players of the Welsh national team, participated in this program to teach rugby to local citizens and to train referees and coaches, and also attended local festivals.

The momentum to support Wales is growing among local citizens. The Welsh love singing so much that the country is known as the “The Land of Songs.” The whole stadium erupts in songs in any home game where the national team competes. Citizens of Kitakyushu will gather to sing Welsh songs at the Welsh national team’s public workout shortly before the World Cup.

Interaction events have been held in many parts of Iwate Prefecture as well. The coastal areas of Iwate were heavily damaged by tsunamis in the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011, but the prefecture and the City of Kamaishi jointly bid to host the World Cup and were selected in 2015.

Kitakami City, Iwate, was selected as the camp for the Uruguayan national team that will play matches at Kamaishi Unosumai Memorial Stadium. All of the city’s elementary and junior high school students are making support flags for the Uruguayan national team. Each flag will be about seven meters wide and about one meter tall, to which about 10,000 origami cranes in blue and white, the colors of the Uruguayan national team, will be attached. The blue background of the flags highlights white letters saying “¡Arriba, URUGUAY!” (Go! URUGUAY!) Seven flags will be made and displayed at the practice field.

In addition, Kitakami City is furthering interaction with New Zealand. In May 2017, ex-national team players, including Richard Hugh McCaw, who captained the New Zealand national team to its victory in the 2015 World Cup, participated in rugby events for children at Kitakami Sports Park. In October 2018, twenty rugby squad members from Christ’s College, a New Zealand high school, visited a high school in Kitakami City and played a practice match. 