

Rugby community descend on Scottish Gas Murrayfield to celebrate 100th anniversary

Members of the rugby community descended on Scottish Gas Murrayfield yesterday to mark 100 years since the stadium opened in 1925.

Scots young and old were treated to an array of rugby activity on the hallowed Murrayfield turf and inside the confines of the century-old stadium.

An Entry of the Greats made their way out of the tunnel to the acclaim of hundreds of local school children and hundreds more from across Scotland, each famous Scottish player welcomed to the sound of bagpipes and rapturous applause.

To showcase each of the past 10 decades, the rugby greats – or family members of those no longer with us – walked out, each dressed in resplendent jerseys from when they were capped.

It started with Julie Beavon, granddaughter of Jimmy Nelson, 1925 Grand Slam hero, and continued through the ages with: 1930s and 1940s represented by Wilson Shaw's son and Douglas Eliot's daughter; at 98, Scotland's oldest living internationalist, Lorn Cowie (1950s), accompanied by his grandson Tom; British & Irish Lions hero David Rollo (1960s); Scottish rugby royalty in the form of Andy Irvine and then John Rutherford (1970s and 1980s); Gregor Townsend, Kim Littlejohn and Scott Hastings from the 1990s, after Scotland

Women's inaugural match in 1993; cap centurions Donna Kennedy and Chris Paterson (2000s); fellow centurion Ross Ford and Sarah Law from the 2010s; and current Scotland stars Grant Gilchrist and Emma Wassell from the 2020s.

All in, the players that were on show have won an astonishing 930 Scotland caps.

Expertly hosted by Caroline Blair, the masses were then told to make some noise as Scotland's stars of the future (18 schoolchildren) marched out to highlight that after 100 years of Murrayfield, there are plenty more memories to make in the future.

At the culmination of the Entry of the Greats, three more events were held across the Murrayfield campus to continue the centenary celebrations.

More than 220 children took part in the Scottish Gas Rugby Festival: Powering Rugby's Future, where four stations were set up for rugby activity, fun skills tests and a behind-the-scenes tour. The youngsters were drawn from nine schools from around Scotland: Montrose Academy, Lochaber High School, Northfield Academy, Kelso High School, Newbattle High School, Leith Academy, Biggar High School, St. Matthew's Academy and St. Paul's RC High School.

At the same time, Scottish Rugby's retrospective capping campaign took in a further eight referees to now have been awarded a physical cap for officiating in a Test match involving a Tier 1 nation. Ken McCartney, Eddie Murray, Iain Ramage, Chuck Muir, Malcolm Changleng, Rob Dickson, Brian Anderson and Jim Fleming MBE.

After a brief lunch intermission, it was straight to the President's Suite for the annual Community Recognition Awards, where some 36 unsung heroes were celebrated for their contribution to their local club's successes over the past year.

And the day was topped by a huge group photo, involving many of those who helped make such a grand occasion a roaring success.

100 years on from that inaugural Grand Slam triumph against England, Murrayfield Stadium was crackling with the sounds and sights of rugby, as Scotland's international stars, and perhaps those of the future, gathered as one to revel in a century of memorable moments.