



WHEELCHAIR RUGBY FIVES STRATEGY 2026/29



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> **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Wheelchair Rugby Fives (WR5s) has expanded rapidly in both participation and visibility since its inception, across Great Britain and increasingly on the international stage. Introduced to broaden access at community and grassroots level, WR5s is an inclusive discipline open to anyone with a permanent physical disability that prevents them from playing running rugby, including those not eligible under Paralympic classification criteria.

This growth has created a strong platform for the next phase of development. To sustain momentum and maximise opportunity, there is a clear need to strengthen the structures that underpin participation, competition and player development, while positioning WR5s to play a leading role in shaping the sport's future globally.

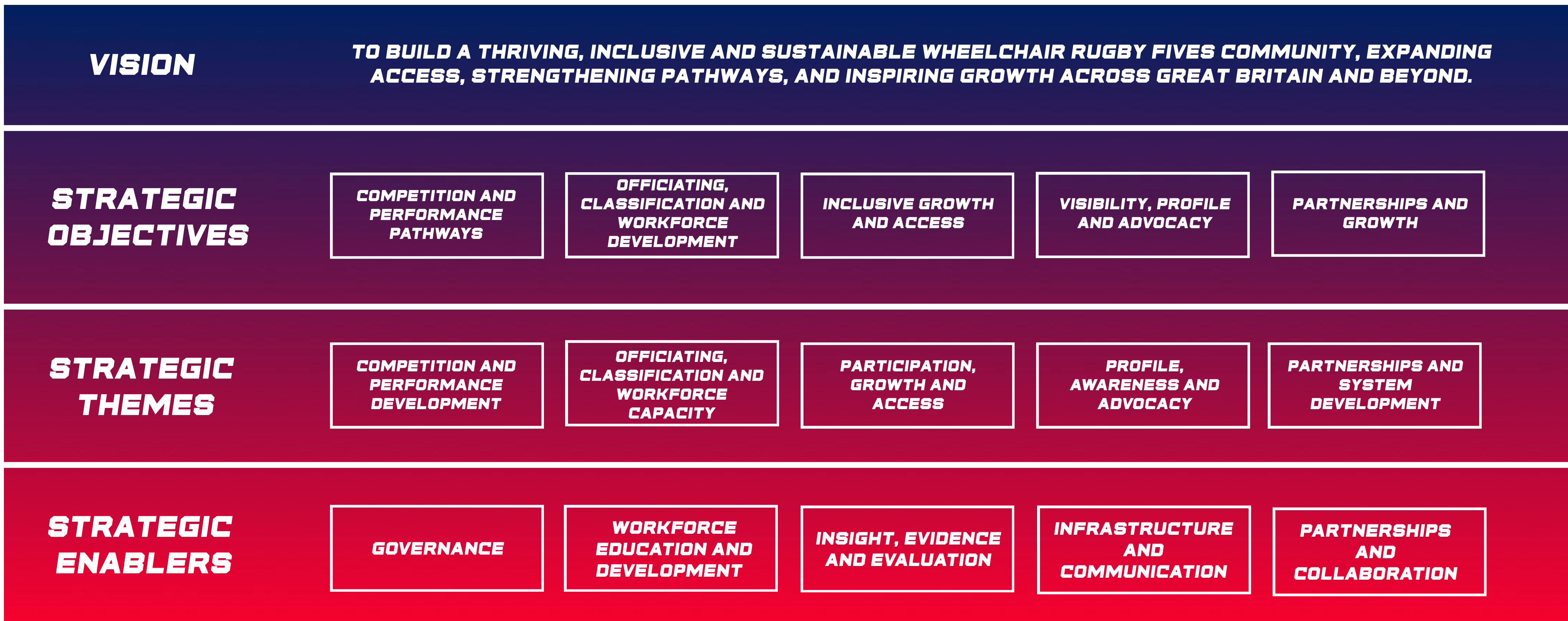
Across Great Britain, WR5s is building on strong regional foundations, with clear opportunities to expand access and increase participation nationwide. As the sport matures, priority will be placed on enhancing competition structures, strengthening development pathways, building workforce capacity and increasing the visibility and recognition of the game.

At the same time, there is a significant opportunity to influence and lead the international growth of Wheelchair Rugby Fives. As interest develops globally, Great Britain is well positioned to help shape emerging structures, standards and competition frameworks, supporting the sustainable development of the discipline worldwide.

This strategy sets out the direction for Wheelchair Rugby Fives in Great Britain over the next three years, aligned to the wider GBWR strategy through to 2029. It establishes clear priorities and actions to support both the domestic development of the sport and its growing international role. The strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains responsive to changes in funding, emerging opportunities and the evolving needs of the Wheelchair Rugby Fives community.

Through this approach, GBWR aims to build a thriving, inclusive and sustainable Wheelchair Rugby Fives community across Great Britain, while playing a leading role in driving the sport's growth and development beyond it, creating high-quality opportunities for people to participate, compete and progress at every level.

➤ STRATEGY ON A PAGE



> **DEFINITIONS**

Our vision: The vision sets out the long-term ambition for Wheelchair Rugby Fives. It describes the future we are working towards and provides a clear, shared sense of purpose and direction.

Our strategic objectives: The strategic objectives define the key outcomes this strategy aims to achieve. They set the priorities for development and provide a clear focus for what success will look like.

Our strategic themes: The strategic themes identify the five core areas of focus through which the objectives will be delivered. They group activity into key areas and describe where effort and investment will be concentrated.

Our strategic enablers: The strategic enablers are the foundations that support delivery across all themes. They ensure the structures, systems, people and resources are in place to turn ambition into action.

> **OUR VISION**

"To build a thriving, inclusive and sustainable Wheelchair Rugby Fives community, expanding access, strengthening pathways, and inspiring growth across Great Britain and beyond. "



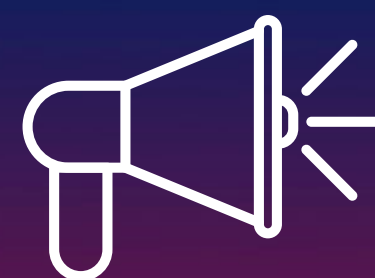
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



Competition and performance pathways are strengthened by providing regular, meaningful opportunities for all players, underpinned by a clear and sustainable national pathway for progression.



Inclusive growth and access are strengthened by driving participation growth and creating inclusive, accessible opportunities for communities across Great Britain.



Visibility, profile and advocacy are elevated by increasing awareness and understanding of Wheelchair Rugby Fives, inspiring engagement and participation growth.



Officiating, classification and workforce development are developed through a focus on consistent standards and high quality delivery of Wheelchair Rugby Fives.



Partnerships and growth are advanced by building strong relationships that support sustainable development across Great Britain and enable international growth of Wheelchair Rugby Fives.

STRATEGIC THEMES

- **COMPETITION AND
PERFORMANCE
DEVELOPMENT**
- **OFFICIATING,
CLASSIFICATION
AND WORKFORCE**
- **PARTICIPATION, GROWTH
AND ACCESS**
- **PROFILE, AWARENESS
AND ADVOCACY**
- **PARTNERSHIPS AND
SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT**



➤ **STRATEGIC THEMES**

Our approach is shaped by five clear strategic themes that guide delivery and focus activity across Wheelchair Rugby Fives.



➤ **1: COMPETITION AND PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT**

This theme focuses on developing a connected competition and performance structure, linking community participation with regional and national opportunities, and supporting progression through aligned competitions and a clear performance pathway.

➤ **2: OFFICIATING, CLASSIFICATION AND WORKFORCE CAPACITY**

This theme focuses on strengthening the workforce and systems that underpin high-quality delivery, including an enhanced classification framework and supported development pathways for referees, officials, coaches and volunteers.

➤ **3: PARTICIPATION, GROWTH AND ACCESS**

This theme focuses on increasing participation by reducing barriers and supporting equitable growth, strengthening club provision, improving access to facilities and equipment, and prioritising development in underserved regions.

➤ **STRATEGIC THEMES**



➤ **4: PROFILE, AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY**

This theme raises the profile of Wheelchair Rugby Fives through stronger digital presence, improved competition coverage, and consistent branding, while supporting wider recognition of the sport and disability awareness.

➤ **5: PARTNERSHIPS AND SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT:**

This strategic theme focuses on building and strengthening partnerships that enhance delivery, expand opportunity and drive system-wide growth. It positions us to lead the international development of Wheelchair Rugby Fives, shaping emerging global structures, shared standards and future competition frameworks. We will collaborate across rugby, disability sport and community partners throughout Great Britain, while taking a proactive leadership role with international stakeholders to influence and accelerate global growth.

STRATEGIC ENABLERS

- GOVERNANCE
- WORKFORCE EDUCATION
AND DEVELOPMENT
- INSIGHT, EVIDENCE
AND EVALUATION
- INFRASTRUCTURE
AND COMMUNICATION
- PARTNERSHIPS AND
COLLABORATION



➤ **GOVERNANCE**

Effective governance provides clarity and consistency in how Wheelchair Rugby Fives is developed and delivered across Great Britain. This enabler focuses on strengthening structures, improving communication and ensuring appropriate oversight across key areas of delivery.

WE WILL:

- Define clear governance structures, roles and decision-making processes
- Embed regular engagement with clubs, players and the workforce to ensure decisions are transparent and informed by lived experience
- Review and update regulations to ensure they remain fair, robust and responsive
- Ensure safeguarding, welfare and duty of care remain central to all WR5s activity



➤ **WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

A skilled and supported workforce is essential to delivering safe, enjoyable and high-quality WR5s activity at all levels. This enabler focuses on developing consistency, capability and clear development opportunities across all roles.

WE WILL:

- Provide clear education and progression pathways for referees, classifiers, table officials, coaches and volunteers.
- Develop accessible learning resources, including guidance, e-learning, video content and best-practice toolkits.
- Strengthen and formalise mentoring and peer support to better support new and developing workforce members.
- Recognise and celebrate workforce contributions to encourage retention and long-term engagement



➤ **INSIGHT, EVIDENCE AND EVALUATION**

Insight and evaluation will guide priorities, support continuous improvement and ensure the strategy remains responsive to the needs of the WR5s community.

WE WILL:

- Build on existing data and analysis across participation, competition, workforce and classification
- Deliver an annual Wheelchair Rugby Fives survey to capture feedback from players, clubs and the workforce
- Use insight to inform competition structures, club development and performance pathways
- Track and report progress against strategic objectives and key measures to support continuous improvement



➤ **INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNICATION**

Accessible environments, appropriate equipment and clear communication underpin sustainable growth and a positive participant experience. This enabler brings together infrastructure and communication to ensure clubs feel supported, connected and visible.

WE WILL:

- Support clubs to access suitable venues, including through a national facility directory and new venue partnerships
- Review and enhance access to equipment through loan schemes, refurbishment and supplier partnerships
- Provide clear guidance on facility standards, accessibility and safe delivery environments
- Deliver WR5s communications in line with the GBWR marketing strategy, supporting clubs in strengthening local engagement and visibility



➤ **PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION**

Collaboration is central to building a connected, resilient and sustainable Wheelchair Rugby Fives system. Strong partnerships will expand reach, strengthen capacity and create new opportunities.

WE WILL:

- Build and strengthen relationships with rugby organisations, disability sport partners and community groups
- Work with education, health, military and veteran sectors to widen participation and workforce pathways
- Strengthen collaboration with facility operators and equipment providers to further improve access, affordability and sustainability
- Take a leading role in international partnerships to drive the growth and development of Wheelchair Rugby Fives globally, shaping standards, structures and opportunities for future competition



> 3 YEAR ROADMAP



2026-27

- 1: GOVERNANCE ESTABLISHED**
- 2: CLASSIFICATION REVIEWED**
- 3: WORKFORCE FRAMEWORK ESTABLISHED**
- 4: CLUB AND REGIONAL GROWTH PRIORITIES REFINED**
- 5: ELEVATED NATIONAL FINALS**

2027-28

- 1: COMPETITION EXPANDED, PERFORMANCE PATHWAY ADVANCED**
- 2: NEW CLASSIFICATION FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTED**
- 3: WORKFORCE EDUCATION PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTED**
- 4: INAUGURAL CLIVE RICHARDS CUP DELIVERED**

2028-29

- 1: COMPETITION AND PATHWAYS EMBEDDED**
- 2: SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE ESTABLISHED**
- 3: PARTICIPATION GROWTH ACHIEVED**
- 4: WRSS PROFILE ELEVATED**
- 5: STRATEGY IMPACT EVALUATION**



➤ **THANK YOU**

To all our members, players, officials, referees, coaches and volunteers, including those who support GBWR governance through formal and informal member committees and our Board of Trustees.





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