



## **Rugby's stars of the future shine at the first-ever Six Nations Women's Summer Series**

- The Six Nations Women's Summer Series 'Most Valuable Player' (MVP) Award has been introduced to recognise the brightest stars of the competition
- Six players, one from each participating team, have been voted their sides' MVP
- The award winners were voted for by their teammates, after a shortlist of three players per side was identified based on performances across the Series.
- The Women's Summer Series is a development pathway competition intended to offer players a new opportunity to gain vital experience and bridge the gap between U18s and Senior rugby.

### **For immediate release**

**18<sup>th</sup> July 2024: London, UK**

Six of Europe's most promising young rugby players have received the Most Valuable Player (MVP) accolade following the conclusion of the inaugural Women's Summer Series.

Margherita Tonello, the Italian back row, French centre Hawa Tounkara, England hooker Niamh Swailes, Ireland prop Sophie Barrett, Scotland flanker Gemma Bell, and Wales prop Maisie Davies have been named MVPs of their respective teams following standout performances across the three match days in Parma, Italy.

Performance statistics highlighted these players, accompanied by insight from the Women's Summer Series match commentator who covered every minute of the action. However, it was a peer vote that ultimately decided the award winners. Each Six Nations side had a shortlist of three players named, before teammates were asked to vote for their MVP.

The Women's Summer Series, a first of its kind at this age level, was staged at the Stadio Sergio Lanfranchi, home of Zebre Rugby Club. Introduced by Six Nations Rugby and its member unions, the new tournament offers young players, coaches, and match officials a vital opportunity to gain further international rugby experience.

Following the success of hosting the recent Six Nations U18 Men's Festival, and the Men's U20 Summer Series in 2022, the Italian Federation once again showcased its support for staging high-quality events designed to create meaningful and competitive experiences that can foster the growth of the development pathway.

With a Women's Rugby World Cup on the horizon in England next year, and the Guinness Women's Six Nations cementing itself as an annual appointment to view, the rise of women's rugby is continuing at pace. For the players taking part in Parma, the pathway to follow in the footsteps of the stars of the elite international women's game reflects the rise of the sport.

Following the conclusion of the Six Nations Women's Summer Series and the naming of the MVPs for 2024, Julie Paterson, Chief of Rugby at Six Nations Rugby, commented:



“The Women’s Summer Series highlighted the next generation of exciting young women’s rugby players. It also showed just how important it is for Six Nations Rugby and its Unions and Federations to create opportunities for the players, coaches, and match officials to gain

invaluable experience that could propel them towards senior international honours in the Women’s Six Nations, or even the Rugby World Cup later next year.

“The MVP award winners, and those on the shortlists, are a testament to the incredible talent coming through the development pathway at each of the six nations, and highlights the great work led by our Unions and Federations to accelerate the growth of the women’s game. The MVP winners have been nominated by their peers, which makes these awards more meaningful and relevant for all nominees. Congratulations to all the players, coaches and the brilliant team of match officials for making the first-ever Women’s Summer Series an experience to remember for all involved.”

**ENDS**