



1. Simon Easterby – Ireland Coach

PREPARATION AND PLAYER PRESSURE:

“We’re trying to build continuity, and there’s a genuine internal motivation to achieve that. The competition is incredibly finely balanced, both in terms of each game and the momentum you can create.

“I’m hugely excited about the group of players we have to work with. There hasn’t been much change since the autumn or even last Six Nations, but the players are a year older now.

“They’re under a bit more pressure because there’s something meaningful to play for, and that’s great for us. I think they’re also highly motivated to keep being successful and to stay ahead of the other teams.”

TRANSITION TO LEADERSHIP ROLE:

"I want to embrace this opportunity. I’ve loved my time working under Joe [Schmidt] and Faz [Andy Farrell], and I get to work with great people every day.

“Not just the coaching group but also the incredible staff and players. It’s an unbelievable group of people, all striving in the same direction to achieve something special.

“After 10 or 11 years in an assistant role, I genuinely feel fortunate to have had that time. It's an opportunity for me to try and make sure that we kick on and keep evolving and keep getting better, because we're going to have to be successful this year.”

ON FACING ENGLAND FIRST AND ITOJE BEING CAPTAIN:

“Maro has led from the front for a number of years, along with a number of England players.

“When England play well, he’s usually at the forefront of it. He leads by example, is a talisman for the team, and is an obvious choice for Steve to name as captain.

“He’s a challenging prospect for us.”

THOUGHT ON CAELAN DORIS RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

“Caelan’s got a really good way about him. First and foremost, he's a great guy.



“He leads by example, but he's also finding his own way to do things in his captaincy. He's supported in Leinster by a couple of senior players, as he is in the Irish system as well.

“He's definitely one that when a bigger occasion comes, he steps up and he's proven that.”

“He's very durable and robust. He looks after himself, both physically and mentally, and I think that's been a big strength of his.”

COMPETITION AT FLY HALF BETWEEN JACK CROWLEY AND SAM PRENDERGAST

"Those two, in particular, have come in with a bit of form. I thought Jack [Crowley] did really well in Northampton. Sam [Prendergast] has had a great opportunity with Leinster since we broke up from the November internationals, and he's really taken it.

“Ciarán has had a few injuries, which meant Sam has been able to spend more time in that jersey, and that's been great for us.”

“There's always a balance between who starts and who sits on the bench. That guy of the bench can often have a massive influence, as Jack [Crowley] did in the Autumn, and as Ciarán Frawley did in South Africa.”

“I think the dynamics of those, whoever starts, whoever's on the bench kind of shift from week to week. You need someone to start the game, but you also need someone that's strong enough and ballsy enough to come on and do something.”



2. Steve Borthwick – England Coach

PLAYING FOR THE SHIRT

“The players have spoken about wanting to be connected with our supporters and bring the supporters with us on our journey.

“In the Autumn International Series, we didn’t get the results we wanted in tight games, but the supporters were very much with this team and the players talk about that.

“They speak about the supporters on a daily basis and want to make sure that they have a team that they are proud of.

“They want to play in a manner that has the supporters excited and proud of them.”

ON SERIES 2 OF NETFLIX FULL CONTACT

“Rugby needs to grow its presence with younger audiences, and it is the superstars of our game that connect best with them.

“We've got a great bunch of players. They're really good players and they're really good people as well, and I know that they can connect with supporters whatever their age is to make sure more people are interested in our game.

“Our game continues to grow because I think we've got a phenomenal game and increased profile of our players is very important to this.

“I want the players to be brave and make sure we are brave on the ball. I want them to play aggressively with the ball and in a manner that fits the strengths of this team.”

PLAYERS COMING THROUGH FROM THE U20s

“There are a number of the squad that have come through from the England Under 20 squad [that won the World Cup last July] and the thing that really stands out is their fearlessness.

“Whether it's that fearlessness youth or just that they have just won what they won in the summer, but they seem to really believe in themselves.”



3. Warren Gatland – Wales Coach

Celebrating 25 years of Italy in the Six Nations

“It's a great venue.

We were looking at the Colosseum and took some photos this morning. Probably the downside is we're missing training.

We had to leave early yesterday and got here late last night. But it's just a part of the role in promoting the Six Nations”.

New faces in the squad

“It was a good vibe with the new guys coming in, welcoming each other. A few handshakes, headshakes, slaps and high fives. There was a good vibe around the group, so I was really pleased with that”.

Dan Edwards and Wales leaders

“We've been impressed with him in the last twelve months. He gets an opportunity to stake his claim without any pressure.

The nice thing is you see some of that experience in the squad, in terms of the voices of Liam Williams and Josh Adams and their leadership, Toby Faletau and Dafydd Jenkins coming back into the squad as well.

It's good vibe, and we're excited about our preparation”.

Toby Faletau's return

“At the moment the update from the medical team is that everyone should be available for selection for the first game.

Even in the Autumn when Toby wasn't 100 per cent fit, you could see what a quality, experienced international he is in terms of some of the lines that he ran and his touches.

I know he's worked really hard in the last year in terms of getting back. He's motivated and wants to have a really good Six Nations.”



Preparation Approach

“We had changed things up in the November window. We looked at where, traditionally, we might have done double days and had one double day a week but have now gone back to single days. We’ve changed where we have our meetings and timings. There is always subtle changes that you can make in terms of how you prepare and do things a little bit different.

When you go through a period of not having a great run, sometimes everyone’s looking for the magic bullet. You can’t change everything, Subtle changes is what you have to make to look at improving environments, changing things up and being better.”

If Louis Rees-Zammit could return...

“We would love to have him back if he was available to us.

Whenever he wants to come back, he’d be more than welcomed back into the fold.

When you make such a big commitment to wanting to follow your dream, is 12 months long enough to say that you've tried? I don't know what the answer to that is, only he would know. We just continue to wish him all the best, if he does decide to come back, that we would welcome him with open arms.”

Antoine Dupont’s quality

“You can see why he is one of the best players, if not the best player, in the world. Moving to the Sevens, winning the gold medal, and having the impact on that, his ability to hold defences by when he goes forward or backwards or lateral, and then the strength and power and pace. Even though they’ve got some other quality scrum-halves, he's definitely pretty special.”



4. Jac Morgan – Wales Captain

Birthday celebrations in Rome

[Ever spent your Birthday in Rome?]

“No never, never.

It’s been a good day. It was a great experience this morning, being able to go to the Colosseum. We had photos with the other captains and the coaches this morning. It was a good experience, I had never been inside the Colosseum before so it was good to see it.”

Yeah, it is a bit surreal, really, you know, growing up, I never thought that I would be in the Colosseum with the other captains and the coaches as well. It was a great experience to be in there.”

The growth of Dan Edwards

“He’s really matured this year and he’s grown in confidence. What’s great is that he’s talking to us forwards, telling us where to go, where to be. It’s just easier sometimes if the boys are coming up from a Scrum or something, or a maul, and he’s telling us where to go and we just go without thinking.

He’s been great this year, and I think he’s grown in confidence. He’s great at communicating with us on what he wants us to do and what he wants the team to do.”

2025 aspirations

“We’re hoping to be better this year.

There was a lot of games last year where we probably could have won looking back.

It’s a year where we learn from the mistakes we made. We’re going to be looking forward now to the Six Nations this year and hopefully can be a little bit better and just keep on improving and getting better as a squad and improving our performances and hopefully, a few results will come through that.”

“It’s international rugby, so anything can happen on the day in a way. We look back and there’s a lot of games last year that we probably could have won. They were close.

There was a lot of good last year. It’s just understanding that we’re still young and we’re still improving and getting better.



Having the other boys like Liam Williams, Josh Adams, Toby, boys like that back and the experience back into the camp is great, and especially with their leadership as well. So yes, it's an exciting time.

We know that we just got to keep on working and trying to improve to get the best out of the weekend and try and put in the best performances on the field.”

Memories of France

“Yeah, it was good. I really enjoyed France, it’s a lovely country and the World Cup was great. It will be exciting. We spent a bit of time in Nice in the World Cup, so it’ll be great to go back down there in between the two games and have all the boys together, but obviously we’ll cross the bridge after the French game.

Welsh Childhood Memories

“I think probably the biggest memory is that England game in 2013. That’s one big memory that sticks.”

On Adam Jones’ Return

“He’s world class. He's brilliant, and he's a great guy as well. It’s great to have for him in the camp, he brings a lot of experience. It's great to have Adam back in the company.”