



AREA COMUNICAZIONE E RELAZIONI CON I MEDIA

GUINNESS SIX NATIONS, 2019 BEGINS FROM THE LIVING ROOM OF ITALIAN SPORT 2ND FEBRUARY IN SCOTLAND, DEBUT AT THE OLYMPIC STADIUM ON 9TH AGAINST WALES

Rome - Twenty editions of the Guinness Six Nations: the date 5th February 2000 does not seem so long ago, when at the Stadio Flaminio, the Italian National Rugby team joined the oldest and most prestigious international rugby tournament for the first time.

An unforgettable afternoon, defined by the kicks of Diego Dominguez and the try by Giampiero De Carli, ending with a 34-20 victory over reigning champions Scotland and making Italy's début a historic one.

Between that afternoon and the upcoming season's opener of the XV led by Conor O'Shea on Saturday 2 February at Murrayfield, against Scotland once more, have been a series of unforgettable moments: the two away victories against the Thistle, the début at the snowy Olympic Stadium in 2012, the next two against France in the last outing at the Flaminio and in 2013 at the Olympic Stadium are just some of the indelible memories in Italrugby, which go shoulder to shoulder with the victories in Wales by the Women's Team - their entry into the tournament dates back to 2007 - capable of conquering the Principality Stadium last year and finishing in third place in 2015.

Today the CONI Hall of Honour, the home of Italian sport, hosted the launch of the Guinness Six Nations 2019, which kicks off on 1st February, with the Italian Women's Team and the Italian U20s playing in Scotland the day before the Men's National Team. Attending the *vernissage*, now a permanent fixture in the winter calendar of Roman sport, were the Chairman of CONI, Giovanni Malagò, Federation Chairman Alfredo Gavazzi, CEO of Cattolica Assicurazioni Alberto Minali and Alessandro Araimo, CEO of Discovery Italia, which will broadcast the entire Men's Guinness Six Nations games live and in FTA on DMAX Channel 52 and the Italian Women's Six Nations games on Eurosport 2.

Alfredo Gavazzi, Chairman of the Italian Rugby Federation, said: *"Twenty years of participation in the Tournament have profoundly changed the Italian rugby movement, significantly increasing our season ticket holders, the penetration of our sport into the collective imagination, and interest from sponsors. They have been twenty*



AREA COMUNICAZIONE E RELAZIONI CON I MEDIA

extraordinary years, which have brought enthusiasm, growth and profound changes from every point of view. The appeal of the Tournament remains unique and unparalleled, this I say as a former rugby player but also as a sports person and businessperson: strengthening ourselves at Women's National level and seeing a National Men's team increasingly capable of performances like those last March against Scotland is what I expect from this edition. The Guinness 6 Nations at the Olympic Stadium is valuable to our entire ecosystem. The will to excite our long-standing fans and attracting new ones with an event that unites sporting spectacle with entertainment, culture and sociality must continue to guide us. In 2017 we recorded an average of over 47,000 spectators at the three games played at the Olympic Stadium, repeating or improving this spectator result is one of the objectives that - beyond the sporting aspects - we hope to achieve in the two months to come. At the same time", concluded Gavazzi, "I trust that the long collaboration with Discovery Italia will bring the Tournament to even more homes in Italy, contributing to making our splendid sport even better known by Italian families and young people and getting us excited about the Women's and Men's performances, who for the first time will head on to the pitch in the Tournament with their jerseys signed by Cattolica Assicurazioni, which, in June, signed a significant partnership agreement with the IRF".

"With the Guinness Six Nations, the Italian National Rugby Team walks onto the pitch for the first big international competition of the season, where the players will be wearing the Cattolica Assicurazioni jersey", said Chief Executive Officer of Cattolica Assicurazioni, Alberto Minali. "This event represents one of the most prestigious challenges in the rugby world by virtue of a rugby tradition that is putting down roots at the beginning of a discipline spanning three centuries. It is impossible not to be filled with enthusiasm, therefore, about the start of this new adventure that will see the Azzurri take on the strongest teams in European rugby with courage and sporting spirit in a tournament rich in meaning, especially in 2019 – the year that Italrugby celebrates its twentieth anniversary of joining the Six Nations", said Chief Executive Officer of Cattolica Assicurazioni, Alberto Minali.

Alessandro Araimo, Chief Executive Officer of Discovery Italia, commented: *"Our journey with the Italian Rugby Federation and the National Team continues with great pride and*



AREA COMUNICAZIONE E RELAZIONI CON I MEDIA

satisfaction. Year after year, we bring an increasingly compelling event to our audience's homes, with the most important world rugby event offered for free, on all platforms and with even better content, which this year will be joined by coverage of the Women's Six Nations on Eurosport. This partnership has taken on an even deeper meaning in the recent Test Matches with the Azzurri, who, in conjunction with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, announced Discovery For Good, the brand that groups together our social activities."