

DEFENDER CELEBRATES INSPIRING TRAILBLAZERS TO LAUNCH RUGBY WORLD CUP FRANCE 2023 PARTNERSHIP

- Defender is a Worldwide Partner of Rugby World Cup France 2023, kicking off its campaign with a launch event at the Palais de Tokyo, in Paris, to honour inspirational amateur players
- Celebrations pay homage to Defender Trailblazers – those who embrace the impossible to change the face of the sport, from overcoming disability to tackling discrimination
- Unique steel sculptures made using material reclaimed from the production process will accurately portray the Defender Trailblazers, using 3D scanning technology
- Pioneering British rapper and actor, Kano, who recently launched the Defender TikTok channel, takes to the stage alongside the Rugby World Cup 2023 Limited Edition Defender
- Bryan Habana, former South African winger, hosts a panel discussion with the Defender Trailblazers who represent the very best of rugby and inspire others to be capable of great things
- Rugby World Cup France 2023 starts on 8 September and Defender is available to order [here](#)

Paris, France, Thursday 7 September 2023: Defender is a Worldwide Partner of Rugby World Cup France 2023. The launch campaign kicked off on the eve of the tournament with an event honouring Defender Trailblazers – modern-day heroes who are changing the face of rugby through their determination, resilience and human spirit.

Cast from the same mould as Defender, these rugby talents embody its strength of character. They include a 90-year-old doctor who refuses to hang up his shirt, international para-athletes and the founder of the first LGBT+ friendly rugby club in France.

Rugby World Cup France 2023 kicks off on Friday 8 September, preceded by an audio-visual spectacle at the Palais de Tokyo, a modern art gallery in the heart of Paris that provides the perfect backdrop for Defender with its reductionist industrial design.

The launch night was headlined by pioneering British rapper and actor, Kano, alongside the Rugby World Cup 2023 Limited Edition Defender. Famous for heroic capability and exceptional all-terrain adventures, Defender is now exploring a musical world it has much in common with, through innovative collaborations with renowned artists such as Kano. Like the best music, Defender represents losing yourself in the experience and taking the road less travelled.

Mark Cameron, Managing Director, Defender, said: *“Defender pushes boundaries and enables people to achieve the exceptional. The show we are putting on for Defender to showcase our pride in being a Rugby World Cup 2023 Worldwide Partner is exceptional in itself, as we celebrate inspirational individuals – our Trailblazers – who embrace the impossible with their incredible inner strength and unstoppable spirit.”*

Modern-day heroes

On the eve of Rugby World Cup France 2023, the launch event celebrated Defender Trailblazers – individuals who represent the very best of rugby and inspire others to be capable of great things. Each has demonstrated immense courage, inner strength and determination in the face of adversity. The Defender Trailblazers will be immortalised in statue form, made with steel reclaimed from the vehicle chassis production process using 3D scanning technology.

The Defender Trailblazers are:

- **Ryuichi Nagayama:** the oldest active member of Fuwaku Rugby Club is a 90-year-old practicing doctor who lives for the sport. He and his teammates are tackling ageism and he intends to play until he is physically unable to take to the pitch. Ryuichi explains his mindset, by asking: “Without rugby, what would I become?”
- **Cyril Leroy:** founder of Les Gaillards, the first LGBT+ friendly rugby club in France, which celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2023. The club brings together players of all genders, ages, sexual orientations, origins and sporting backgrounds and unites around the values of rugby.
- **Jacob Pickering:** Jacob, 14, was born without his left forearm due to congenital upper limb deficiency, but he hasn’t let this stop him playing the game he loves. He began playing at the age of nine and relishes the physical challenge – he loves tackling.
- **Zainab Alema:** a female Muslim rugby player, Zainab runs Muslimah Rugby, a community for Muslim women in rugby. She is also founder of Studs In The Mud, a non-profit project that supports rugby in Ghana. She was shortlisted in the sports category for the 2022 Women of the Future awards.
- **Kylie Grimes:** in 2009, Kylie started playing for the London Wheelchair Rugby Club, and then for Great Britain in 2011, before going on to play at the 2012 Paralympics. She also cycled 450km from Vietnam to Cambodia after a life-changing spinal injury to raise money for Regain, a charity dedicated to helping newly injured tetraplegics back into sport.
- **Irtiqa Ayoub:** the 28-year-old from Kashmir, India, is levelling the playing field by introducing rugby to women in Kashmir and Muslims in the wider community. She dreams of playing for

India and is the youngest Rugby Development Officer in Jammu and Kashmir. This fearless, passionate and determined advocate for the sport, aims to inspire girls all over the world.

Rugby World Cup 2023 Limited Edition Defender

The exclusive Rugby World Cup 2023 Limited Edition Defender will also be present at the event. Taking inspiration from the Rugby World Cup 2023 Trophy Car – which has been touring France showcasing the famous Webb Ellis Cup – the Limited Edition Defender 110 is crafted in a unique specification. Finished in Santorini Black with Gold exterior detailing, including bonnet script and alloy wheels, with embroidered headrests and blue interior stitching, the collection of just 23 vehicles has been introduced exclusively to the French market.

Defenders of Tomorrow

Defender's "Defenders of Tomorrow" campaign celebrates the diversity and inclusivity of the game at youth level, with 96 mascots taking to the field. Defenders of Tomorrow has found 96 special youngsters who want to change the world for the better. Whether at home, school, in the local community or their rugby club, Defenders of Tomorrow play an active role in improving the lives of others around them. Every chosen Defender of Tomorrow from different countries will act as a mascot in the Rugby World Cup 2023, with Defender supporting the cause they are passionate about to protect and promote it for the future.

Electric hybrid fleet

Defender is also supporting the Rugby World Cup France 2023 by supplying a fleet of Defender 110 plug-in electric hybrids, all capable of zero-emissions driving in EV mode for up to 51km (32 miles)¹.

ENDS

¹ The figures provided are as a result of official manufacturer's tests in accordance with EU WLTP legislation derivatives with a fully charged battery. For comparison purposes only. Real world figures may differ. CO₂, fuel economy, energy consumption and range figures may vary according to factors such as driving styles, environmental conditions, load, wheel fitment, accessories fitted, actual route and battery condition. Figures shown are for European EU6 markets. Other market fuel economy and range certification and figures published at www.landrover.com. All emissions, fuel economy and EV-only range figures are EU WLTP (TEL) Combined.

Notes to Editors

About Defender

Defender embraces the impossible. Each member of the Defender family is purposefully designed, highly desirable and seriously durable. A modern-day hero that respects the past but at the same time anticipates the future.

Available in 90, 110 and 130 body styles, with up to eight seats, each has a charisma of its own.

As part of a sustainability-rich vision of modern luxury by design, Defender 110 is available as an electric hybrid.

Defender Hard Top means business, with 90 and 110 body styles for professional capability.

A beacon of liberty since 1948, Defender supports humanitarian and conservation work with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Tusk Trust.

The Defender brand is underpinned by Land Rover – a mark of trust built on 75 years of expertise in technology and world-leading off-road capability.

Defender is designed and engineered in the UK and sold in 121 countries. It belongs to the JLR house of brands alongside Range Rover, Discovery and Jaguar.

Defender & Rugby

Defender, proud Worldwide Partner of Rugby World Cup France 2023, has over 20 years heritage within rugby around the world, from grassroots to elite. As Official Vehicle of Rugby World Cup 2023, Defender will play a functional role to the tournament organisers providing a fleet of cars to World Rugby helping facilitate the sporting event as well as providing Defender experiences within the Official Rugby Village in central Paris.

Defender's campaign, "Defenders of tomorrow", celebrates the diversity and inclusivity of the game, especially at youth level, with 96 mascots taking to the field. Defenders of Tomorrow aims to find special youngsters who want to change the world for the better. Whether at home, school, in the local community or their rugby club, Defenders of Tomorrow play an active role in improving the lives of others around them. Every chosen Defender of Tomorrow will act as a mascot in the Rugby World Cup 2023, with Defender supporting the cause they are passionate about to protect and promote it for the future.

Defender's campaign for the Rugby World Cup 2023 celebrates those who have demonstrated the courage and inner strength to overcome what others may have seen as impossible. 6 Defender Trailblazers have been identified - a group of inspiring individuals who represent the very best of rugby and, like Defender, encourage others to do exceptional things and strive to achieve more in a world full of potential. They have demonstrated immense courage, inner strength and determination in the face of adversity.

Important notice

JLR is constantly seeking ways to improve the specification, design and production of its vehicles, parts and accessories and alterations take place continually. Whilst every effort is made to produce up-to-date literature, this document should not be regarded as an infallible guide to current specifications or availability, nor does it constitute an offer for the sale of any particular vehicle, part or accessory. All figures are manufacturer's estimates.