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For immediate release

Next stop Leeds for Northern Rail 9s winners

Blackpool Panthers' stunning victory in the Northern Rail 9s final has earned them the final place in the prestigious Carnegie Floodlit Nines tournament.

Following their dramatic victory in the inaugural Blackpool competition, the Cooperative Championship 1 club will step out onto the famous Headingley Carnegie turf next month alongside 11 other clubs including five engage super league teams.

The Panthers won the inaugural Northern Rail 9s on home soil, after a nerve-jangling 14-10 victory over Sheffield Eagles in the final.

Blackpool Panthers coach, Martin Crompton, spoke of his excitement following their victory. He said: "It was a monumental effort and I'm so proud of all the players. We have pace throughout the team and nines suits us. We deserved to win because we played with discipline on the ball throughout the tournament. We showed our quality."

He continued: "Nines is an exciting and entertaining brand of rugby league. It is a big honour for a little club like ours to be invited to take part in the Carnegie Floodlit 9s. Our players and fans are looking forward to challenging Super League, international and representative teams next month in Leeds."

The Panthers will line up in Group B against forces opposition in Cheltenham 9s winners the Royal Navy and the British Army. Should they win through the group they will face current champions of the Carnegie Floodlit Nines, Huddersfield Giants.

Carnegie Floodlit 9s tournament director, Lionel Hurst, was present at Blackpool's history making moment. He said: "I was fortunate enough to witness the Panthers' pulsating encounter in the Northern Rail 9s Final. They will provide a stern challenge for the Army and the Royal Navy who are both specialists in the condensed version of the game."

Blackpool club Chairman John Chadwick added, "The Northern Rail 9s triumph was a marvellous achievement made even more fantastic by being in our home town. To now line up in the Carnegie Floodlit 9s against some of world rugby's biggest names will be fantastic for us. We intend to enjoy what will be a red letter day."

Blackpool's joy does not cease with the Nines as they are entitled to enter one of their top players in the rugby league's Fastest Man sprint that will also unfold at Headingley Carnegie Stadium on Wednesday August 26.

ENDS

For further details please contact Mark Dorey at Leeds Met on 0113 812 3021 or email m.dorey@leedsmet.ac.uk

Totesport has also compiled odds on all of the confirmed competitors for the race to find 'Rugby League's fastest man'

Current odds are:

Kevin Penny 2/1 Warrington Wolves
Scott Donald 4/1 Leeds Rhinos
Dave Halley 9/2 Bradford Bulls & Wales
Peter Fox 5/1 Hull KR & England
Craig Calvert 6/1 Whitehaven and Cumbria
Roy Calvert 6/1 Duhaney Park Sharks & Jamaica
Paul Ballard 8/1 Celtic Crusaders
Luke George 8/1 Wakefield Wildcats

Amos Roberts 12/1 Wigan Warriors
James Ford 12/1 Castleford Tigers
Tangi Ropati tbc Sheffield Eagles & Samoa
James Nixon 6/1 Barrow & Cumbria

The Carnegie 9s draw in full:

Qualifying Group A: Jamaica, Cumbria RL, Leeds Met Carnegie
Qualifying Group B: Army RL, Royal Navy, Blackpool Panthers

Round 2
Hull FC v Group A winners
Warrington Wolves v Leeds Rhinos
Hull KR v Wakefield Wildcats
Huddersfield Giants v Group B winners

Please see www.floodlit9s.co.uk for ticket info.

Notes for editors:

Carnegie Floodlit Nines

The Carnegie Floodlit 9s will be a one-day rugby league 9s tournament, which will host 12 senior teams including five Engage Super League clubs. Preceding the showpiece event, an invitational junior tournament will take place. The competition will take place on Wednesday August 26 at Headingley Carnegie Stadium.

Leeds Metropolitan University

- Leeds Metropolitan University has 30,000 students and over 300,000 associate students through its partnerships with 24 colleges.
- The University has achieved its best ever Research Assessment Exercise results. Sports-Related Studies is in the top 6 institutions in the country with research rated at the highest levels of 4* and 3*.
- The University scored highly in the Times Higher's Student Experience and was ranked 2nd in the category 'Good library and library opening hours'.
- Leeds Metropolitan University won the 'Coaching Environment of the Year' award at the sports coach uk 2008 UK Coaching Awards and was announced as the home of the UK Centre for Coaching Excellence.
- The University is home to The UK Centre for Coaching Excellence.
- Leeds Met Carnegie is the primary partner of rugby league's Carnegie Challenge Cup.