



Northumbria's BUCS Super Rugby players Louis Musetti and Laurence Lilley meet Matt Dawson.

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Rugby ace Matt Dawson tries Northumbria's hospitality

Rugby star and TV presenter Matt Dawson touched down at Northumbria University, Newcastle, to explore the latest in student accommodation and catch-up with some of rugby's rising talent.

The former England captain paid a visit to the University's newly refurbished Winn Studios accommodation which is located in the city's vibrant Ouseburn Valley.

Operated by student accommodation provider Student Living by Sodexo, Rugby World Cup winner Dawson took the chance to look around the flats in his role as Sodexo UK ambassador for health and wellbeing.

“It’s the first time that I’ve had a good look around Newcastle and I’m very impressed,” he said. “I particularly like how city central the University’s campus, accommodation and facilities are, which makes the University and Newcastle feel like a very close community.

“Sodexo has done a fabulous job working with Northumbria to find out exactly what students want from their accommodation and the result is telling. Many students are young and leaving home for the first time and it’s important that they live, work and socialise in an environment they feel comfortable in.

“But it shouldn’t end there – it’s about enabling students to live independently, helping them to cook, clean, even wash their clothes. The University and Sodexo are providing that education for students which is what really stood out for me.”

Fiona Stewart, Contract Director, Student Living by Sodexo said “Working in partnership with the University to refurbish the reception areas and student social spaces within Winn Studios this year has been instrumental in creating a much better living learning environment for our students” “Students are using this space more than ever, encouraging students to make more social connections and lifelong friends was one of the key drivers of the refurbishment.

The Question of Sport panellist took time to visit the University’s £30 million state-of-the-art Sport Central facility, where he spent time talking to two of the University’s British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) Super Rugby players, Louis Musetti and Laurence Lilley.

He also expressed particular interest in the University’s new ‘Active Halls’ programme which encourages students in Northumbria halls of residence to take part in an annual tournament that includes activities such as pool, Frisbee and dodgeball.

“Sport should be accessible for anybody that wants to be active,” said

Dawson. “It’s about looking after yourself both physically and mentally and if that means playing a game of pool with your mates or simply getting off the bus one stop early and walking the rest of the way, then that’s what it’s all about.

“For those students who play more competitive team sports, I would always recommend playing in different positions. It improves your game and it makes you aware of what the rest of your teammates are doing. But most of all enjoy what you’re doing and be open-minded. I learnt more in the last two years of my professional playing career, so be mindful, you never stop learning or developing.”

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