



CEO of British Cycling, Jon Dutton OBE.

Jul 14, 2023 14:30 BST

## **Rugby League World Cup chief is honoured by Northumbria University**

The man at the forefront of the most inclusive Rugby League World Cup tournament in history has been awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law by Northumbria University in Newcastle.

Jon Dutton OBE was Chief Executive of the Rugby League World Cup 2021 having been involved in the project since its inception in late 2015, and successfully led England's bid to host the competition, which kicked off at St James' Park in Newcastle last October.

A [Sports Management graduate](#) from Northumbria, with 28 years of experience in the sports industry, Jon led an event which saw the men's, women's and wheelchair tournaments played simultaneously for the first time. The spectator attendance was the highest recorded in the sport's history, bringing significant economic and social benefit to towns and cities across England.

The Rugby League World Cup, under Jon's leadership, also incorporated a Cultural Festival, which was an ambitious, multidisciplinary event bringing together audiences for sport and art around the tournament. Taking place in Newcastle, Hull, Leeds and Manchester, the festival amplified *The Power of Together* and included an outdoor show incorporating dance, music and aerial performances, as well as a touring public art and poetry commission and a programme of engagement projects rolled out across 40 library services in the North of England.

Jon initiated a fully inclusive volunteer programme, which included a broad range of rugby-themed activities including walking groups and hospital community gardening. The event was also the first global sporting tournament in history to launch a Mental Fitness Charter, endorsed by the Rugby Football League's patron at the time, the Duke of Sussex.

In June, Jon was included in the King's Birthday Honours and awarded an OBE for his contribution to rugby league.

Before the Rugby League World Cup, Jon was Director of Projects and People for the Rugby Football League, and Chief Executive of Manchester Football Association, which included a secondment to UEFA. He has also served as Director of Readiness for the 2014 Tour de France Grand Depart and Special Events Coordinator of the PGA European Golf Tour.

Jon is a current member of the UK Sport Major Events Panel and has lectured on topics including leadership, futurology, and diplomacy. He has given guest lectures at Northumbria and also found time to launch the University's new [Sport \(Coaching and Officiating\) scholarship](#) during the week of the Rugby League World Cup Opening Ceremony last year.

Jon Dutton OBE is given a cycle training system demonstration by Northumbria staff.

In April, he was appointed the new CEO of British Cycling, the national governing body for the sport in Britain.

Speaking about his connections with the University and receiving his honorary degree, Jon said: “I am truly honoured and humbled to be recognised by Northumbria University in this way.

“My time at the University helped make me into the person I am today. I fondly remember being a student, playing for the University Rugby League team, being Sports Secretary of the Students' Union and having the most wonderful life experience.

“With the support of my family I have had some incredible work experiences which I have used to try and make a difference beyond the sporting field of play by tackling inequalities through providing opportunities.

“To receive an honorary degree is undoubtedly a career highlight and something I am very proud of.”

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## Contacts



### **Rik Kendall**

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences

[rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk)

07923 382339



### **Andrea Slowey**

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences

[andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk)

07708 509436



### **Rachael Barwick**

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

[rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk)

07377422415



### **James Fox**

Press Contact

Student Communications Manager

[james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk)



### **Kelly Elliott**

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

[kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk)



### **Gemma Brown**

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

[gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk)