**GAELIC football is set to receive a major boost after current and former students have joined together to launch a new team.**

Glamorgan do not currently have a Gaelic football side, despite the fact it is the most popular sport in terms of attendance in Ireland. The lack of attention in Britain is not enough to stop a group of students who are looking to set-up a team to contest in next seasons BUCS division.

Vice President Student Support, Sarah Valkenborghs, 21, is hoping to make the most of the vast amount of Irish students studying in Glamorgan to help create a Gaelic football side – a sport which is heavily contested back in her homeland of Ireland.

Valkenborghs believes that the sport can thrive, it’s just a case of getting the players together, she said: “There are a lot of Irish people at the University of Glamorgan and back home in Ireland Gaelic football is the biggest sport - It’s something that is central to the culture.”

“I looked up the amount of Irish people in the uni and it turned out there was around 300 students from Ireland who are studying here and in surrounding areas, so I felt there had to be at least 15 students who were interested in creating this Gaelic football side – It is such a big sport back home after all.

“Glamorgan did actually used to have a Gaelic football side that were in fact really good, winning the cup and league on separate occasions, hopefully we can get back to a similar level one day”

The former volleyball player of three years believes that the interest is definitely there, and with the help of surrounding universities, the sport can really take off.

“Two years ago a student from Cardiff Met tried to set up a side, but found that there weren’t enough players from that university alone. He asked some of the universities close by to advertise the team and work together to create a combined team.”

“We went ahead and set up this joint team, and there was a lot of uptake from students at Glamorgan – even those who weren’t actually Irish – which was promising.

“We had rugby players who were interested in giving it a try, they would go for a few weeks but because the training fields were so far away and hard to get to, they would stop coming after a few weeks because it simply wasn’t worth the hassle.

“So the interest was definitely there, but it was too inaccessible for the Glamorgan students.”

This early interest in the team has left Valkenborghs with the bare bones of a squad, but she is hopeful that by this time next year Glamorgan will have a squad ready to compete in the BUCS league.

“We are not looking at getting into a competitive league at this moment in time, it’s just a case of registering as a club for the time being.

“Although there is a BUCS league around, we missed entry to join due to a lack of players at the time. So this year we will set it up, before looking ahead to next year’s Fresher’s Week where we will have a stall to really push it and hopefully get into the league system.”

For the time being, the Treforest based graduate is focusing on building the team to enter certain one off events, but is also still looking for more players.

“We can still enter one off competitions at the moment, but obviously we would really like to get the squad available to compete in the BUCS league.”

“There are local teams in the area away from the uni who are trying to recruit students to play, so we will look into that.”

“If there’s anyone interested – whether they have experience or not – come and have a go. There’s nothing to lose by giving it a go and it can be really fun.”

“We’ve only had a few meetings and this week had a training session, so people who come along now don’t need to worry about having missed anything.”

It is the start of a process that the current students setting up this Gaelic football team hope will continue down the years, but for now it is a case of simply getting a team in place.

* **For more information visit ‘University of Glamorgan Gaelic Football on Facebook.**