

For Manjinder Nagra, rugby was never part of the expected script. Growing up in an Indian household in Slough, she had no connection to the sport and little exposure to rugby culture. That changed during her first year studying Economics and Politics at the University of Bath, when she was persuaded by a group of female students to attend training. Within days, she was playing on the Sunday, and from that moment, rugby became a defining part of her life.

Playing as a loosehead,

Manjinder balanced university rugby with playing for Bath Women, training twice a week and competing every weekend. Results were mixed, but her talent and commitment stood out. She was soon selected for England Students, becoming the first Sikh woman to achieve representative honours, at a time when an Asian woman playing rugby was highly unusual. At times, her journey felt like a real-life version of Bend It Like Beckham.

Manjinder continued playing for England Students while completing a Law conversion

course and turning out for Waterloo. However, returning home without financial support, she made the difficult decision to step away from rugby during her peak athletic years to focus on qualifying as a solicitor. The process was challenging, marked by rejection and self-doubt, yet rugby proved invaluable. At a crucial interview, she was asked about her representative rugby experience, a moment she believes played a key role in securing her training contract.

Now a contracts and procurement lawyer with Brighton & Hove City Council and a mother of three, Manjinder returned to rugby with Hove Women, captaining the team to promotion to the Championship. Recognising the power of sport to empower girls, she helped establish a girls' section at the club, growing from six players to around 80 girls aged U12-U18.

Still deeply involved, Manjinder coaches, serves as Senior Vice



President of her club, sits on the Sussex RFU Disciplinary Panel, and is President of the Sussex Law Society. She has also founded British Asian Women in Rugby, creating space, visibility, and connection for others who once felt alone in the game.



“ RUGBY HAS GIVEN ME RESILIENCE AND CONFIDENCE IN ABUNDANCE. IT'S OPENED DOORS AND CREATED OPPORTUNITIES ”

