



➤ Top class rugby league, left, has come to Newcastle for the last three years – and will be back again in 2018. Right, the fans clearly relish their trips to the North East



Rugby league set to bring the magic back for the fourth year

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ONE of the biggest events in the rugby league calendar is set to return to Newcastle for an unprecedented fourth year in a row.

The Rugby Football League (RFL) has announced that the Dacia Magic Weekend will be coming back to St James' Park in May 2018 after the venue cast its spell on thousands of fans.

The event will once again see fans from across the country flock to Tyneside to watch 12 of the sport's top teams face off against each other.

The games will take place on May 19 and 20 next year.

Magic Weekend is a huge event in the RFL calendar and for the past three years has made its home in Newcastle.

This year, five other UK cities were in the running to host the games but Newcastle beat off this stiff competition to secure the games for the fourth year in a row, something no other UK city has ever achieved.

The three previous Magic Weekends have achieved the top three record-breaking attendance figures ever recorded for the games.

Last year, audience figures topped 65,000, with more than 90% of supporters attending from outside the region.

Organisers say it was worth £9m to the local economy last year.

Super League general manager, Mark Foster, said: "We had a number of other cities bid to host what is a fantastic event but Newcastle is a great venue for us – the stadium, the welcome we receive from the people of the North East mean



➤ NE1 chief executive Sean Bullick

that our fans love to come to Newcastle for the weekend."

Sean Bullick, chief executive of NE1 Ltd, said: "We are delighted to be hosting Magic Weekend in Newcastle for a fourth year running, something no other city has ever achieved.

"Each year the event gets bigger and better as more people get acquainted with the phenomenon that is Magic. The impact of Magic Weekend on the city is significant."

Lee Charnley, Newcastle United's managing director, added: "We're very proud to have hosted the Dacia Magic Weekend for the last three years, and as excited as always to be hosting this magnificent sporting event once again in 2018.

"As everyone who's attended in previous years will know, it's a fantastic weekend of rugby which has consistently welcomed sell-out crowds and has become one of the 'jewels in the crown' in Newcastle's annual sporting calendar."