

RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP *cultural event*

TV actor tries first stage role with the story of rugby league

AN ACTOR from hit BBC show *Waterloo Road* has joined the cast of a Workington play celebrating the Rugby League World Cup's imminent arrival in the town.

Reece Douglas, 18, best known for his role as tear-away teen Denzil Kelly in the drama series set in a troubled comprehensive school, will play three separate characters alongside a large community cast in *Trying For The World*.

The play is being staged at the Theatre Royal on Washington Street from Tuesday to Friday to coincide with the two Rugby League World Cup Scotland games at Derwent Park.

Mr Douglas, from Manchester, jumped at the chance to be involved in his first theatre production



By James Broadhurst

james.broadhurst@cnmedia.co.uk

when he was contacted by the show's director Ian Hinde.

He said: "I have never done theatre before and the play really interested me. I have never played rugby before but the production and the story behind it fascinated me.

"With the Rugby League World Cup coming to the town it's a great time to stage the play and for people to come along and watch."

He played Denzil in *Waterloo Road* from 2009 to 2012 and his character was killed in a car crash at the end of series seven.

He appeared in the BBC

daytime soap *Doctors* and has recently finished two films, *The Knife That Killed Me* and *Cruel Summer*.

Trying For The World is a series of sketches involving four rugby players, whose stories are based on real Workington Town players who were in important matches in the past.

Mr Hinde has woven anecdotes from local fans and players, past and present, into the plot.

As part of his research he travelled on the current team bus to away matches and spoke to lifelong fans.

Mr Hinde, 53, said: "The story will follow a young boy whose hero plays for the team and wants to be like his hero when he grows up, and an established player who wants to play for the national team but faces a

series of disappointments along the way."

Mr Hinde, who works for Allerdale council and is a member of the Workington Playgoers Group, said it would be a community project.

The production will also include a strong focus on the role of women in rugby league.

Mr Hinde said: "I'm hoping it comes across as a feel-good show. It's to get people excited about the Rugby League World Cup matches coming to Workington."

Derwent Park will host Scotland's two group games, against Tonga on October 29 and Italy on November 3.

Trying For The World opens on Tuesday at 7.30pm. Call the box office on 01900 602122.



TOUCHDOWN: Actor Reece Douglas is to star in *Trying For The World* at the Theatre Royal in Workington