As a keen rugby player Steven Miller is no slouch when it comes to the Big Ouch.

The head coach of Cumnock Rugby Club has suffered more than his fair share of bashes, bumps, bruises and breaks.

However, it’s not just on the field of play that Steven has taken his lumps. He has also felt the economic pain of losing his job as a transport and distribution manager, after 35 years of useful toil in the local open cast mining industry.

But being a sporting stalwart with plenty of stamina, Steven brushed himself down and bounded back into the employment game.

With the invaluable help of the Scottish Government’s initiative for responding to redundancy situations, Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) he is now achieving his goals.

PACE is delivered by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) in conjunction with other partners and provides vital guidance and support to help reduce the time people are out of work.

Adapting his love and knowledge of sporting activity into a fulfilling career, Steven is now the Assistant Supervisor at Auchinleck Leisure Centre.

“I’ve always been heavily involved in sport,” grins the 52-year-old. “Rugby’s one of my favourites. What I like about team sports is that you make really good friends.

“There’s a downside, too. I’ve pulled the odd ligament and had a few broken fingers and ribs over the years. But nothing too bad. You could say I’ve got off lightly.”

He didn’t get off lightly when it came to his career. Finding himself out of a job after three-and-a-half decades of success and promotion wasn’t easy. However, Steven, who is also passionate about swimming, remained energised and determined. Last summer he started volunteering at New Cumnock’s Community Open-air Swimming Pool.

Crucially, he went to PACE for advice about forging a fresh career in the leisure industry.

PACE identified the best training for him and funded a pool plant course which ultimately led to the full time job at Auchinleck Leisure Centre.

“I’ve always got on well with people,” says the Cumnock man. “That’s tied in with the whole involvement in sports thing. It’s certainly been an important aspect in how my career has progressed over the years, also in me starting my current job.

“The PACE team were very helpful. I had a good idea what I wanted to do and PACE identified the best way for me to focus my energies.”

If you are facing redundancy call 0800 917 8000 or visit [www.redundancyscotland.com](http://www.redundancyscotland.com) to find out how PACE could support you.