

Bringing people together
to enjoy rugby.

NEWSLETTER

140th Anniversary



President:
Peter Baveystock

Edition No 20, Tuesday 23rd November 2020

Presidents Message

I've been working with LVP, Mike Searls over the past couple of weeks creating a definitive and up to date email list of our Past Presidents, Life Vice Presidents and Vice Presidents. During this work I've had some very positive messages back from many of them and am please not say that they continue to enjoy reading the Newsletter.

Those of you who attended the Group meetings would have noted my request for **RugbySafe Club Leads** so please check your GMS and ensure that you have one registered, especially as this is a 'golden role'. We're also trying to recruit a County Lead and will be sending out the details of this via the Groups. However, if you would like to know more about this role then please get in touch on: peter.baveystock@middlesexrugby.com

Peter

Message from Eddie Keal, Chairman Middlesex County RFU

We are now just past the planned half-way point in Lockdown 2 and I'm as busy as ever.

I have received more than the usual amount of feedback about the recent round of Group meetings, all of which was very welcome, and we are grateful for it. It seems we haven't got the balance right between Club/County/RFU topics and voices. We will bear that in mind for next time. Zoom meetings can be challenging sometimes.

The County Report and Accounts for Financial Year ended 30th June 2020 will be sent to all Clubs and posted on the website shortly. As always, we would like to hear your questions and comments.

The Management Board minutes have already been distributed for November. We meet on the second Tuesday of each month and getting the minutes out quickly was a commitment we made to all of you.

Even in lockdown, I spend a great deal of time simply keeping in touch. I know the rest of the Management Board does the same. It is so much harder without the Saturday networking. Whether it is talking to our kit supplier, club, universities or RFU staff, it is important. We are all facing many of the same challenges. It was nice to see the Government found some money to support the Game yesterday.

Looking forward to the next couple of weeks, we have some work to get our remaining policies in place, and to then start a review cycle for each to keep them up to date and relevant. As always, we will be supporting our clubs with information and guidance on funding and grants and competitions and plans for post-Christmas. I sense a flurry of information coming down the tracks.

I hope you have all found a way to watch the Autumn Internationals on Amazon Prime and have plans for weekends of TV rugby.

Eddie

Update from Lou Latter – Chair of Rugby Development

Still no news of what stage we may exit lockdown at but hopefully in the next couple of weeks we will get a clearer picture of moving away from Stage A of the [return to rugby roadmap](#) from the 3rd December.

It was great to see 13 Middlesex Clubs represented at Twickenham at the England v Georgia game. These included: Actonians, Belsize Park, Enfield Ignatians, Grasshoppers, Hammersmith & Fulham, Haringey Rhinos, Mill Hill, Northolt, Old Grammarians, Quintin, Teddington, Twickenham and Uxbridge. Do remember that there is still time to send your shirt to Twickenham

KEEP UPDATED
FOLLOW US ON :

 Middlesexrugby.com

 [@MiddlesexRugby](https://www.facebook.com/MiddlesexRugby)

 [@MiddlesexRFU](https://twitter.com/MiddlesexRFU)

 [@MiddlesexRugby](https://www.instagram.com/MiddlesexRugby)

Middlesex Rugby, PK1 Twyford Avenue Sports Ground, Twyford Avenue, Acton, London W3 9QA
tel: 020 8896 3400 email: countyoffice@middlesexrugby.com www.middlesexrugby.com

Middlesex Rugby is the operating name of Middlesex County Rugby Football Union Ltd. Registered in England no. 29174R
Registered Office: Sproull & Co, 31-33 College Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 1EJ // VAT NO.223174395

to have it displayed around the ground and be part of the [#ShowYourShirt campaign](#).

We will be running a Tax/VAT webinar on Wednesday 2nd December at 7pm. Russell Moore, the RFU retained VAT advisor, will be talking Middlesex clubs through the specific VAT relief available to Not-For-Profit sports clubs. 50+ clubs across the country have successfully had retrospective claims settled for between £5k and £28k and we would encourage all clubs who might be eligible to take opportunity of this windfall to attend this webinar. To register for the webinar please complete the [Google Form](#) and zoom detail will be sent out to you.

I have attached the England Rugby Training Courses and how to run an England First Aid Course safely to this Newsletter. While we are expecting face-to-face training courses to resume in January, you can see what is on offer. Please visit the GMS Course Finder for available courses (there are Kids First courses scheduled at Middlesex clubs in January and February) and on-demand webinars will also be released in the coming weeks for U10, U11, U12 and U13 coaches to support them with the progressions to their new age groups. Any questions or information about the course that your club is interested in running, then please do let me know.

There are also two free player welfare eLearning courses available. Please do remind players, coaches, match officials and volunteers to access and complete the courses ([Headcase Concussion Awareness](#) and [Introduction to Safeguarding](#)).

Good news this week from Government in the funding available to Rugby Union. Once we know more of how clubs can access this funding and what form it will take, I will let you know.

We know how difficult it is for clubs and individuals at the moment. The [Middlesex Immediate Support Fund](#) is still available and we will support you in making any applications (which must be related to the COVID situation). The Sport England [Return to Play Fund](#) is also available for clubs. Please do reach out to Andy and/or I if you have any concerns, whether immediate or longer term. For those players under 18, the [Middlesex Hardship Grant](#) is still available to support

disadvantaged youngsters with membership or kit requirements.

While we have some time on our hands, please remember that clubs can ensure that GMS and your Golden Roles is up to date, and your Club Safeguarding Audit has been completed.

As ever, please do get in contact if you want to discuss anything.

Stay safe and well

Lou

Louise.latter@middlesexrugby.com

Update from Andrew Smart – Chair of Competitions

Whilst we remain in lockdown, the RFU, despite the valid concerns raised by the London and SE Competitions Organising Committee that without knowing when or what type of game we will be able to play that it was pointless pushing out the invitations to their alternative competition offering, but they decided to go ahead anyway. This means that all Middlesex Clubs playing in the leagues should have received their invitation to join this competition which should also have included the opt in/out link. Your response has to be returned by Monday 30th November at the latest.

Why the hurry you might ask, when we are not playing any rugby and we have no idea when we will? Good question. Who does the timetable benefit? Not the clubs who are being asked to commit to a competition where apart from knowing who is in their cluster know nothing else.

Unsurprisingly I have been fielding questions all week about when the competition will start and what type of game we will be playing. Questions to which I and everybody else cannot answer. Those decisions will ultimately have to be signed off by the Government and they have recently announced an extension of the furlough scheme through to the end of March which cannot give anyone much confidence that we will be playing much rugby in the meantime. As it stands around 40% of the eligible clubs across the country have now replied. So, if your club hasn't done so yet

**KEEP UPDATED
FOLLOW US ON :**

expect to be hearing from your league secretary in the next few days with a gentle reminder. Clubs of course don't have to enter, and I am aware of at least one Hertfordshire Club who have already opted out, which will of course have some ramifications for one of our Herts/Middx Clusters. Of course, the decision to enter or not is completely one for each club to make and for those who might be concerned about what might happen if they decide not to, I refer to the following that came from the RFU which should hopefully allay any of your fears.

Participation is optional and the results of any matches will have no impact on promotion or relegation in the league pyramid. Clubs are free to opt out of being included if they wish to play in another locally organised model or to simply arrange matches on an ad-hoc basis.

I am aware of at least one CB who have arranged their own competition, which looks like it will be supported by their clubs. If this is the case the potential withdrawal of two of clubs will impact on one of the level 5/6 clusters involving some of our own. Nothing can be done until full returns are made, and they know who is in or out. At that point it is likely that there will have to be a re-jigging of some of the clusters and where that happens it will probably mean more travel.

Anyway, the invitations went out to the league contact for each club. If for some reason you haven't received it, or you can't find the link by all means come back to me and I will send them onto you.

Following the RFU announcement about the leagues I felt I had no option but to reassure our Merit Table teams that they had not been forgotten, with the following communication:

'Can I just confirm that it is my intention to provide a similar competition for the MMTs clubs to work to the same timetable and format as the RFU Competition once we have a start date and know exactly what sort of rugby we are allowed to play. These will be based on the MTs clusters I circulated with the fixtures in September. Only slight differences are that we are 10 team MTs so our clusters are in 5s, not 6s, except of course for MMT5 who will play as usual, who they want and when they want with however many they want.'

I will send our further details once we get some idea of when, indeed if the RFU Cluster Competitions will start I enclose the Clusters and fixtures for each of the MTs, although obviously without any dates.'

The national lockdown is due to finish at midnight on Wednesday 2nd December. At the moment we are back to Stage A, but my hope is that we will be able to return Stage D immediately. Perhaps more hope than expectation but if that is so then three men's and women's Ready4Rugby competitions will start again on the weekend of the 5th/6th December. The re-arranged fixtures and dates have been circulated to all the clubs by the three organisers and our intention is to keep providing competition until we are stopped, or the clubs/teams no longer want it or the RFU competition actually starts.

The other big event this week is that the broad outline of the Adult Competitions Proposal (including the request to put the implementation back by a year to the 2022/23 season) goes before council for approval. This includes the still most contentious issue around 2ndxvs. My understanding is that council members are being asked to vote on the whole package and not on individual parts. Why you ask? Why indeed....

Keep safe.

Andrew

Update from Andrew Smart - Chair of Groups

Decent numbers again for the Zoom group meetings across November with clubs continuing to engage fully. Not always acknowledged, but thanks should go to the Group Officers for well managed and interesting meetings. Clearly the Zoom format is not perfect, but it makes such a difference that everyone involved wants to engage and make a contribution.

Generally, clubs remain in good spirits and confident of their ability to survive these unprecedented times certainly for the remainder of this season. Obviously, the big talking point was the new lockdown and the potential impact that it would have on retaining players after it ends at midnight on the 2nd December, as we hit the change in the weather, and if we continue to have no

access to either changing rooms and showers. There was some discussion of the cancellation by the RFU of the 2020/21 league season and an explanation of the alternative competition offering.

Some better news though for clubs required to close due to lockdown who pay business rates after it was confirmed that they would be eligible for the following grants. Indeed, some clubs have already seen the money transferred into their accounts whilst others will need to chase their local authorities for the money. If anyone requires any help in accessing the funding, please come back to me and I should be able to point you in the right direction. Summary of details:

- For properties with a rateable value of £15k or under, grants to be £1,334 per month, or £667 per two weeks
- For properties with a rateable value of between £15k-£51k grants to be £2,000 per month, or £1,000 per two weeks
- For properties with a rateable value of £51k or over grants to be £3,000 per month, or £1,500 per two weeks.

Once again, the grants will be paid via your local authority with the big difference from the first round of awards being that our clubs with rateable values of £51k or over who weren't eligible for the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant, will now receive some support.

I am also looking at the funding opportunities for clubs, again who pay business rates, to receive some funding for the period London went into Tier 2. This appears to be a bit more discretionary, but it relates to businesses 'which are not legally closed, but which are severely impacted by the restrictions on socialising'. Again, the rates depend on your rateable value with £934 for £15k or under, £1400 for below £51K and £2210 for above £51k. These figures are per month, so with London in Tier 2 from the 16th October until we went into full lockdown on the 5th November, they would be pro-rata.

There was also the news this week that the Government has allocated £23 million in funding for rugby clubs below the Championship. As yet there is no detail on the funding or how and when clubs can apply but it does

seem likely that the majority, if not all of the money will be allocated in the form of loans and not grants. Still some significant funding to support our clubs through these difficult times. I will update you with all the criteria once it is announced

Finally, I just wanted to reinforce something already covered by Louise in her report about the Tax/Vat Webinar on Wednesday 2nd December. This is an All Clubs Meeting and invitations have gone out separately to all club treasurers who will get first refusal. A second invitation has gone out to the normal county circulation list. This should be a really beneficial presentation for clubs with the chance to see some significant savings. Only those people who respond to the invitation will be provided with the Zoom login details, with club treasurers only guaranteed a place.

Quite a lot of work has gone into organising this meeting for your benefit, so please make sure your club don't miss out. We are working on a twenty-minute presentation with a further twenty minutes or so for questions. So, forty minutes of someone's time could end up saving thousands of pounds for your club

Keep safe

Andrew

Playing & Coaching Activities Since Last Newsletter

13/11/2020, Middlesex Coaching Association Age Grade Webinar. All Middlesex coaches, parents & players were invited to join a Middlesex Webinar looking at the Journey into and through the London Irish DPP and onwards towards the Middlesex U17s & U18s Representative Playing Programme.

The main points coming from the group were:

- Middlesex Chairman's welcome & CB Activities
- DPP Update on DPP & Activities from U14s – U16s
- Pathway to the U17s Programme & Playing Opportunities – 28/02, 11/04, 02/05
- U18s Playing Programme. Due to current situation the U18s programme is on hold

**KEEP UPDATED
FOLLOW US ON :**

18/11/2020 RFU discussion group on Girls Rugby (attended by Middlesex Managers & Lead Coaches with the U15s & U18s)

The main points coming from the group were:

- There was a feeling that some form of engagement with the girls occurs where possible on the days scheduled in the calendar
- U18 – 24th Jan, 7th Feb, 28th Feb, 14th Mar, 11th April
- U15 – 31st Jan, 21st Feb, 21st Mar, 18th April, 2nd May
- A desire to keep things simple this season and essentially the likelihood is standalone games with neighbouring CB's
- Format to be confirmed following RFU/Government advice in the new year (some flexibility may be required)
- Funding will remain as is unless no rugby is delivered, this should be £3600 from the £12.5k RFU contribution towards CB representative rugby (medical cover, facilities, post-match meals and kit costs are factored into this spend and should be prioritised)
- Centre of Excellence programme will be discussed on the January meeting
- Coach development will also be discussed on the next call but please see below for some pointers.

2020/21 Age Grade Playing Calendar

We are pleased to confirm the following points relating to the Age Grade Playing Calendar this season, as outlined to RFU Council on 11th November:

- The Age Grade season, as previously communicated, is extended and will end on Monday 31 May 2021
- Flexibility is permitted and encouraged in the approved 2020/21 calendars to keep as many players engaged and included as possible. This requires local collaboration and decisions by CBs

with CSUs and other age grade stakeholders. There is no need for national approval

- Once we recommence contact rugby, CB representative rugby activity will pick up from that point – there is no regression to, or rearrangement of, what has not happened this season. However, what remains scheduled can still go ahead, including, at this point, the Under 17 male and Under 18 and 15 female programmes after Christmas.

Middlesex Rugby Online Fitness Programme

Fitness Coach Ian Burbidge of Hammersmith and Fulham R.F.C invites all players to engage with this free online fitness programme. First 3 short videos on warm up & core stability exercises are posted on the www.middlesexrugby.com website.

Middlesex Coaching Association 23/11/2020

John Fletcher will be leading a Level 3 Coaching Webinar which will be looking into and discussing trends in the game since the rugby world cup.

Stay Safe

Bob

What's On

Tax/VAT webinar on Wednesday 2nd December at 7pm.

To register for the webinar please complete the [Google Form](#) and zoom detail will be sent out to you.