

Bringing people together
to enjoy rugby.

NEWSLETTER

140th Anniversary



President:
Peter Baveystock

Edition No 23, Tuesday 9th March 2021

Email: countyoffice@middlesexrugby.com

President's Message

I know it has been some time now since our last Newsletter but as you'll appreciate there's not been much to communicate. However, the RFU have now reviewed the Government's announcement on our exit from the lockdown which provides us a chink of light at the end of what seems to have been a very long, and at times, dark tunnel.

I have been keeping in touch with our Past Presidents and Life Vice Presidents via Zoom and over the phone, and all seem in good spirits. I can report that Andy Mortimer is very well albeit still in residential care in Bicester but is happy to receive calls on his mobile; Charlie Madge is doing well and passes on his best regards to the County and looks forward to meeting us in person with a pint very soon. Lastly, Colin has passed his 90th Birthday during the lockdown and was magnanimous enough to let me raise the Wales v England result but was pleased that I did!!

So, as we all look forward to starting to get back to some normality let's look forward to that chat at the bar about old times with a pint!

Stay safe

Peter

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Message from Eddie Keal, Chairman Middlesex County RFU

Hopefully, you will skip quickly through this part of the Newsletter to get to the good news below. The annual Zoom renewal invoice appeared in my mail this week, which means it is a full year since County meetings

switched to online. The light at the end of the tunnel is most welcome.

We have just had the election for the Council Member position at the RFU, and I will keep my remarks about that separate from what I write here as Chair of the County, with the exception of thanking Tim Miller and Simon Hardcastle for running the process. There is a small section on the topic of RFU Council below.

We chose not to issue a Newsletter until we had something meaningful to say, and some rugby content to publish. I think we are back on the path now, so our communication through this Newsletter, our website and social media updates will increase. We can expect a significant hike in output from the RFU, which we will attempt to distil for you.

Stay safe and well, stay at home!




Eddie

Update from Lou Latter – Chair of Rugby Development

Great news, rugby is returning as of 29th March. So, what does this mean?

While schools and colleges will be slightly more advanced than clubs due to their activity guidance that begins on 8th March, rugby clubs will be able to do limited contact training and Ready4Rugby matches against other clubs from 29th March. Do watch [Steve Grainger's video](#), which provides more information and keep an eye on the [Coronavirus resources](#) on the RFU website which will have updated FAQs and everything you need to get ready for the end of March.

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Middlesex will be running an All-Clubs meeting on **Thursday 11th March at 7pm** to talk clubs through the new [Return to Rugby Roadmap](#). Please let Andy know if you wish to attend.

In February, we communicated with clubs that Middlesex had taken the decision to cancel all Age Grade festivals for the remainder of this season. This will remain in place until further notice. This will include:

- Middlesex U12 Boys Competition
- Middlesex Minis festivals (U7 – U11)
- Middlesex St George's Day Girls festival
- All requests for clubs to host festivals
- In line with RFU guidance, tours will not be approved

We are currently finalising the Age Grade Calendar for the 2021-2022 season and aim to have this out to clubs and schools by the end of March.

In preparation of rugby returning, please do let Andy and I know who your COVID Manager is so that we can ensure clubs are receiving the most up-to-date guidance and details around returning to rugby activity.

As a reminder there is a lot of information in the [Club Support Centre](#) on the England Rugby website.

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

Finally, as expected on Friday the RFU did provide the first guidance on how rugby will run from the 29th March. It was a most comprehensive circulation which deals with the proposed timetable, includes an updated Return to Community Rugby Roadmap and an informative video from Steve Grainger, the RFU Director of Development. For those of you who have not yet had an opportunity to see the circulation or video I attach the link [Community rugby set to return from 29 March \(englandrugby.com\)](#) Peter, this needs a link

The headline dates are as follows – these are the earliest possible and are totally reliant on each of the four tests set out in the Government's roadmap being achieved.

- Stage D1. 29th March - contact training (no scrums or mauls) with clubs able to play each other under Ready4Rugby regulations
- Stage D2. 26th April – contact training (no scrums or mauls) with clubs able to play each other under the adapted laws
- Stage E1. 17th May – full contact training including scrums and mauls
- Stage E2. 31st May – Full contact matches
- Stage F. – June 21st – All restrictions both on and off field will be removed

Clearly some good news at last and every indication that the expectation is that we will be on for a full, restriction free 2021/22 season both on and off the field for both Leagues and Merit Tables.

That only leaves us to consider what to do about the rest of this season working within the restrictions and dates above. First of all, I need to establish the expectations of our clubs and see what I can do to support and fulfil those expectations.

Hopefully you would have seen last week that in anticipation of the announcement, Louise and I have organised an All-Clubs meeting for this Thursday 11th March at 7pm to help clubs prepare for this return and to cover any questions or issues that will might arise. The meeting will also explore what options we as a CB have to do to provide meaningful rugby for those clubs who want to play matches, whether it be under adapted laws or the Ready4Rugby format.

I hope very much that clubs will support the meeting and enable me to get a flavour from as wide a selection of clubs and teams as possible, of what you want and have a full discussion about what we can provide. I have some ideas, but it would be good to get some feedback to see if there is any support.

I then intend to communicate with all our clubs following the meeting with our plans. I have already started speaking to the London Society of Referees to see if they are in a position to support us. We have a

little bit of time as although we return to rugby from the 29th March, which is a Monday, we go into Easter and so reasonably the first time that anyone might be looking for competition, at this stage under R4R it, will be the weekend of the 10/11th April.

I absolutely understand that some of our players and clubs are simply not interested in the R4R format and some probably are not interested in playing under the Adapted Laws. I will do what I can to provide offerings that support your club's desires

Keep safe
Andrew

Update from Andrew Smart - Chair of Groups

Of the four group meetings due to be held in late January/early February, only the North West meeting went ahead. It was a pretty good meeting identifying some common themes across the participating clubs. Generally, they all reported that they were in decent financial shape but all raised concerns about engaging with their players since the introduction of the third lockdown. Hopefully the news last Friday concerning the return to rugby roadmap, leading ultimately to the relaxation of all restrictions both on and off the field for next season will hopefully in the short term see clubs able to re-engage successfully with their members and players as the opportunities open up for training and playing R4R from the 29th March and then Adapted Laws from the 26th April.

Despite the lack of rugby activity during this third lockdown we have been quite busy with the Government's £23 million Winter Survival Funding for both grants and/or loans, making sure that all our clubs are aware of the funding opportunities and providing support and advice when asked. As it turned out the criteria for applying for the grant proved pretty tough for most of our clubs. In the end only thirteen were able to apply and let's hope that they will all prove successful. The requirements for loans is simply an expression of interest at this stage. I am told that the uptake amongst our clubs was much more significant than for the grants although I don't yet have the numbers. A most

worthwhile exercise and the relationships and contacts built up over the last year as we have faced this pandemic proved instrumental in getting the information out quickly and to the right people at our clubs

Thanks to Rob Bruce, the treasurer of Enfield Ignatians, who reported that his club had been successful in obtaining Tier 2, 3 and 4 business grants and that he had also been told to expect their lockdown 3 funding. They are the first club that I am aware of, certainly in the county, to have secured this Tier funding and must give hope that our other clubs paying business rates will also benefit. I have already made application for all this funding on behalf of my club and where applicable I suggest that you do the same.

For those clubs who might also benefit it might help to have the relevant dates:

- Tier 2 from 2nd December
- Tier 3 from the 16th December
- Tier 4 from 20th December and Lockdown 3 from the 5th January

Finally, hopefully you will all have seen the circulation last week of an All Clubs meeting this Thursday 11th March at 7pm. Agenda and Zoom invitation details to follow. We have these now, can that sentence be modified? I have covered some of the main reasons for holding the meeting in my Competitions report, so I won't duplicate them here. Suffice to say that the meeting can only be successful if you attend and make a contribution. We need to know what you want for your club for the rest of the season and what you expect of the County.

Keep safe
Andrew

Representative Playing and Coaching Update

Age grade rugby representative programme has been cancelled, which allows clubs to concentrate through the RFU road map in keeping players engaged with their clubs.

There is a girls U15s & U18s discussion forum taking place on Monday 15th March, our U15s & U18s management teams have been in attendance on a

number of these meetings and the idea of these meetings is to assist in the planning of girl's rugby. The Meetings are chaired by the RFU Playing Pathways Manager.

The Age Grade Playing Calendar for season 2021/2022 has been completed. Next season the U18s run from Nov – Dec. U17s post Xmas – U15s/U16s in May alongside the academy DPP.

Interviews for the position of Chair of Representative Playing will be held on Thursday 18th March.

London Irish Developing Playing Programme (DPP) & Academy Update

Summary points include:

- The Developing Player Programme (DPP) has been delayed until Easter
- There have been 4 London Irish Academy players named in the England U20s squad
- 7 Academy players invited to the England U18s development camp
- 6 Academy Players made their first appearances for the 1st team since the summer. An U18 made his debut for London Irish at Leicester in the Premiership last Friday evening
- Coach Development sessions taking place monthly online, with tutor John Bates
- The Scouting network which develops coaches to work in the DPP, have vacancies for suitable coaches, those interested Middlesex coaches please get in touch and I will forward you details
- Next Middlesex / London Irish RPPG meeting will take place on Friday 26th March.

Coaching Development

There have been online coaching webinars running monthly this season. They have covered various themes and have been specific to various coaches from Minis / Youth, Club Coaches, Level 3 Coaches and Female coaches. The plan is to continue with the online Webinars up to May, with various themes around sharing ideas for the remainder of this season and player preparation for next season

The coaching programme contained the following themes. **Sept** - Exploring Coaching Ideas **Oct** - A practical experiences of coaches through the RFU Return to play road map **Nov** - What is trending in Rugby since the

world cup. **Dec** – An Introduction to Female Coaching. **Jan** - Design Amazing Training Sessions – **Feb** - Female Coaching Evening follow up - **March** – What's Your Process - **April** – Analysing tactical trends of the 6 Nations - **May** – tba

There following 5 Coaches have been selected to participate on the new RFU Mentoring Programme, Lachlan Dunbar, Hari McCormack, Bianchetto Valentina, Richard Wilmot, Charlotte Brady

Middlesex RCD Newsletter is circulated each Friday and has become very popular with increased membership. The newsletter has been circulated each Friday throughout the lockdowns. The circulation goes out to 460 Middlesex Coaches

Website Coaching Videos

Since Monday 16th November 2020, Fitness Coach, Ian Burbidge of Hammersmith & Fulham RFC, has put together a number of weekly Fitness Sessions, these are displayed on the Middlesex Website. The fitness sessions are designed to motivate and improve core stability and will run until April.

For more information on any playing or coaching topics, please contact Bob Lawless Chair of Representative Playing & Coaching (M) 07803 196 409 (E) bob.lawless@middlesexrugby.com.

Stay Safe

Bob

A Reminder from our Treasurer

We all know this year has been trying for our member Clubs on the financial front as you continue to pay your ongoing fixed expenses with no income being generated by rugby activity. However, a gentle reminder from me about sending the County copies of your latest financial statements so that we can monitor the financial health of the Middlesex rugby community.

My apologies for the reminder to all those Clubs who have already sent us your accounts.

Stay safe and let us all hope that vaccines and easing of lockdown let us rugby activity begin again soon!

Thanks, in anticipation.

Charles

RFU Council Elections 2021

It's my pleasure to confirm, that Eddie Keal has been elected to represent the County on the RFU Council for three years from August 2021 and see below the 250 words that Eddie submitted with his intention to stand that may be helpful to anyone whose interested in standing for our next Council Election in 2022.

On behalf of Middlesex, I'd like to express our massive thanks to Rob Udwin for his unstinting service in representing us over a 20 year period. Rob decided not to put his name forward on this occasion and we will be marking Rob's service appropriately prior to him finishing his term.

Peter

Eddie Keal – credentials and experience

I am standing as a candidate to be an RFU Council Member for Middlesex because I am...

1. 100% grounded in community club rugby and will put club needs first.
2. In touch with our Middlesex clubs and their needs.
3. Experienced in club and county management.

I am highly motivated to represent our Middlesex clubs and pledge to make a real difference to the community game.

I have been Chair of Ruislip RFC for over 10 years, overseeing development and change which includes new women's and girls' teams. The core Saturday game remains a priority.

I have been a County Officer since 2014, first Treasurer and now Chair. I have been instrumental in putting club needs first. I led the creation of a modern set of rules and as Treasurer I prioritised resources to direct rugby support.

For the avoidance of doubt, I have announced my resignation from Ruislip RFC, but I intend to continue as County Chair. I have abundant time and energy for County and Council roles. Many counties have a similar arrangement and I see it as a distinct advantage,

I have personally supported the game at mini, youth and senior levels, for boys and girls, women and men. I have practical experience of delivering effective, diverse and inclusive outcomes.

At the national level. I have been on plenty of RFU committees. I know the organisation and the challenges.

I may have been an enthusiastic and untalented player, but I'm a great club member.

What's on

- Middlesex will be running an All Clubs meeting on **Thursday 11th March at 7pm** to talk clubs through the new [Return to Rugby Roadmap](#). Please let Louise or Andy know if you wish to attend.

Dial in details

Topic: Middlesex All Clubs Zoom Meeting

Time: Mar 11, 2021 07:00 PM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85614654037?pwd=bS9sSTlTRHJwRFZES003bFJFdEprUT09>

Meeting ID: 856 1465 4037

Passcode: 987770