

Bringing people together
to enjoy rugby.

NEWSLETTER

140th Anniversary



President:
Peter Baveystock

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Email: countyoffice@middlesexrugby.com

President's Message

Sandra and I had a great time at Harrow last Saturday, popping in to see Andy Smart as they played Ealing 1871 under the R4R system with end-to-end rugby which saw Harrow win 11-6. Whilst on Ealing, I would like to wish them a happy 150th anniversary and understand that they have several events to mark the milestone.

If you have anything specific going on, please let me know and I would be honoured to pop along.

Stay safe

Peter

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Message from Eddie Keal, Chair, Middlesex County RFU

We have a steady momentum building on our return to the game. Many clubs have gone back to training and there are some fixtures this weekend, albeit for the Ready4Rugby format.

I see plenty of good advice on club websites and via the usual social media channels. Everyone wants to provide an environment that is safe, above all other considerations.

The most used emojis on Facebook seem to be rugby balls, sun and beer. There is a message in that about what people are missing!

Sunday rugby is also back in many of our clubs, with the expected necessary restrictions. In most clubs, the staggered start times mean the club is open for much

longer than usual, which puts an additional burden on the facilities managers. Please think of them when you are visiting.

I had a 2nd vaccination this week, in a centre at Hayes, staffed entirely by volunteers. I know that many of our rugby family have been part of the community effort in vaccination centres and I applaud you all. We should build a roll of honour and display it on the website, even if it's only club names to protect the modest.

The RFU Council voted on the Future Competition Structure. I'm sure that more will be said about that below, so I'll thank here those who turned up at the All-Club meeting to give their point of view. It was a valuable session.

Please keep the end of season activity in perspective. In the long run it will do no good to start pre-season in May. Training and being together is fun, but we all want to arrive in top shape for the new season, not weary or injured.

Enjoy the sunshine while it lasts.

Stay safe and well.

Eddie

Update from Lou Latter – Chair of Rugby Development

As I write this, we are still at Stage D1, but as you read it we will have moved into Stage D2.

Stage D2 sees us back to introducing contact (excluding scrums and mauls) and adult and age grade matches can now be played to adapted laws (excluding scrums and mauls). As a reminder, you can find all the information

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around the latest [Return to Rugby Roadmap](#) in the a [Coronavirus resources](#) section on the RFU website which will have updated FAQs and everything you need as we move through the stages. There is also a lot of information in the [Club Support Centre](#) on the England Rugby website.

On Monday 26th April, we would have held our Age Grade All Clubs Meeting. Thank you to Mark Saltmarsh from the RFU for taking the time out to explain the [out of season activity](#) and changes for the 2021/2022 season. More detailed guidance and resources will be made available after the 10th May to support players and coaches. This will also include live Q&A webinars, which I would urge you to attend.

As a reminder, if you are wishing to run Rugby Camps which will be permitted, you will need CB approval and will need to follow the out of season framework. CB approval (Waheed and I) will also be required for out of season festivals, with no more than 4 teams allowed.

The [Mitsubishi Motors Volunteer of the Year](#) Nominations are still open and have a closing date of 2nd May. Please, please, please nominate your volunteers that have gone above and beyond during the last 12 months. Please also nominate your club or a neighbouring club that has done great work. There have been some amazing stories from Middlesex clubs, and I'd love to see you all recognised.

We will be hosting a Women and Girls Club Forum on 10th May at 7pm. We will have a special guest to talk to us about utilising our brands to empower clubs and help with recruitment and marketing. Further details will be sent round in the next few weeks.

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

Stay safe and well

Louise

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Update from Andrew Smart - Chair of Competitions

The big news in competition is obviously the Future Competition Structure and their recommendations that went before Council on Friday 16th April for ratification. All three were passed conclusively including the mandatory introduction of lower XVs into the league structure for the 2022/23 season

If you haven't seen the Community Game Update from the 20th April, you can find an explanation for why it was believed that the changes were required via the link below:

[Adult Male Future Competitions Structure from season 2022/23 \(englandrugby.com\)](#)

And a summary of the changes:

[Adult Male Future Competitions Structure from season 2022-23 Summary.pdf \(englandrugby.com\)](#)

It now goes over to the implementation team (still to be put together but expected to be led by Stephen Pearson who attended our All Groups meeting and led the original FCS) to put together the regulations that will support the changes and the expected timetable is that those are not expected to go before Council until December in readiness for the 2022/23 season.

Some big changes then in the season after next both for the leagues, national cups and indeed our merit tables and some interesting times to come for those of you who will have responsibility for competitions then.

I can now confirm following on what I reported in the previous newsletter that the structured season for 2021/22 has now been confirmed.

Headline points and the CB offering for clubs in September:

1. The league season for level 5 and 6 clubs will start on 4th September 2021 whilst for level 7 and below whether you are in a ten or twelve team league your league campaign will begin on the 25th of September
2. There will be no relegation for the 2021/22 season

3. There will be no national cup competition for the 2021/22 season
4. The last league weekend of the season for all leagues at 5 and below will be Saturday 23rd April 2022
5. 5 There will be no playoffs at levels 5 and 6
6. At the moment I am thinking of offering three CB Cup competitions in the first three weeks of September for clubs at level 7(The Bowl), Level 8 (The Tankard) and level 9 and below (The Vase) The format will be as follows. Straight knock out. Teams that win the first round on the 4th September go into the semi-final on the 11th September. First round losers into the plate semi-final also on the 11th September. Winners into the main and plate finals on the 18th September. Every club that enters is guaranteed two matches with the four finalists three games.
7. MT Cup/Bowl/Vase Finals from the 2019/20 season will be played in the first three weeks of the September provided the clubs involved are happy to play the games
8. The MMTs will also start in tandem with the leagues with the first games on the 25th September.

Finally, the London DOC Competitions AGM is this Wednesday evening. If anyone has any issues that they would like me to raise then by all means let me know.

Keep safe

Andrew

Update from Andrew Smart - Chair of Groups

We have now had all four Group AGMs and I am delighted that the following officers were re-elected by their groups in order of the meetings

- South: Chairman Jerry Rogers (London Cornish). Secretary Lyndon Walters (H&F)
- West: Chairman Andy Brooks (O Isleworthians). Secretary (Nick Dance (Grasshoppers)
- North West; Chairman Andrew Smart (Harrow) Secretary Mark Foster (OMTs)
- North: Chairman Jon Boyle (Hampstead). Secretary Sean Burke (Finsbury Park)

Congratulations/commiserations to one and all. I am sure I speak for all the clubs when I thank them all for their leadership and support across some very difficult times. They have performed a crucial job in keeping our clubs up to date with everything that has been going on in our game through some of the most difficult times that our game has had to deal with and their experience and knowledge will be invaluable as we navigate a new season with all the issues that we will continue to face.

It is now down to Simon Hardcastle the Group Secretary to deal with the election of the Group Chairman who represents the Groups and therefore all our clubs on the Management Committee. The position is voted for by the eight group officers.

The general feedback from all the group meetings is that most clubs are reporting strong training numbers for male adult, excellent training numbers for the women's game and those clubs with junior sections. Question marks still around the return of front five forwards and whether and when strong midweek training numbers will translate into Saturday fixtures. Interesting last weekend there were only four games of R4R across the county. As we go into D2 from Monday 26th April allowing us to play under Adapted Laws it will be interesting to see whether that will change.

Finally In case you didn't see the update on the Payment of Players Declaration in last week's community game update I include it here. It should make things considerably easier for many of us.

Keep safe

Andrew

Representative Playing and Coaching Update

Although the representative playing programme at all levels is on hold until next season, this downtime will allow planning for all the Age Grades for next season. With the Playing Calendar in place and funding transferred to next seasons programme. This is something we are looking forward to.

At Senior level, there is currently a review going on in respect of the Senior Women, Senior Men and U20s. A

questionnaire has recently been circulated asking for views from those involved with any of the three programmes. More information will be given when the results of the review are known.

There is also a review taking place with the aspirational pathway at U18s & U20s Divisional levels. Both these groups together with the England aspirational teams are on hold.

The recent U15s & U18s girls forum took place on the 19th April, where the aims & objectives were discussed for the next 15 months. Other areas of discussion were ideas about the summer programme, centres of excellence and coach development. With no representative games being played this is an ideal opportunity for clubs to put in place a fun, and skill development programme, underpinned by the RFU Activate programme over the summer months.

London Irish Developing Playing Programme (DPP)

The DPP U14s is currently on hold waiting for a National Academies agreement on when the U14s programme will recommence. U15s will resume in September and currently the focus is on U16s, festivals in August and the Academy U18s games which are currently up and running as part of the elite playing programme.

London Irish Coach Development sessions have taken place monthly with online webinars with tutor John Bates and interviews have taken place for interested Middlesex coaches to get involved with the London Irish DPP scouting network.

The next London Irish / Middlesex Playing Regional Playing Pathway meeting will take place on Friday 18th June 2021.

Middlesex Coaching Development

There have been online coaching webinars running monthly during the lockdown with increased participation. The webinars have been tutored by the Magic Academy and by our Middlesex Senior Coaches. The next coaching webinar is being held on Monday 26th April 2021 which is being tutored by the Magic

Academy is looking at England's performance in the 6 Nations. Registration has gone very well with over 40 coaches registered.

The Coaching Webinars will run up to the end of May and will be targeted at all Middlesex Coaches. These will be advertised on Middlesex Social Media Platform.

The Middlesex RCD Newsletter is circulated each Friday and has become extremely popular with increased membership. This is a free service offered to all Middlesex Coaches.

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

Up and Coming Issues/Actions

The [Mitsubishi Motors Volunteer of the Year](#)

Payment of Players (see below)

Following RFU Council's vote on Friday, the below changes have been agreed to Payment of Players, Regulation 7.

1. The following changes to the thresholds at Level 3, 4 and 5 for season 2021-22. While clubs can pay above the threshold, if they do, they will lose access to RFU Benefits as defined by Regulation 7. The revised thresholds are:
 - Level 3 - £250,000 (down from £275,000)
 - Level 4 - £125,000 (down from £157,500)
 - Level 5 - £50,000 (down from £65,000)
 - Level 6 - £0 - no change
2. All clubs at Level 8 and below and all non-voting clubs will only need to complete the

declaration annually if they pay their players or player coaches and wish to be eligible for RFU Benefits.

3. There will be no requirement for Student clubs to complete the declaration annually unless the Student club plays in an RFU League at level 7 and above.

Any questions please

contact paymentofplayers@rfu.com.

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