

Bringing people together
to enjoy rugby.

NEWSLETTER

140th Anniversary



President:
Peter Baveystock

Edition No 28, Tuesday 22nd June 2021

Email: countyoffice@middlesexrugby.com

President's Message

Well, we did not get our lockdown as promised on 21st June, but I suppose it is better to be safe and let's put all of our efforts into having a fantastic start to season 2021/22.

Congratulations to Rob Udwin who was recognised by the RFU for 20 years of service on the RFU Council. This is well deserved and he has served both the RFU and our Clubs well.

Congratulations also go to Ealing Trailfinders major sponsor, Mike Gooley who received a Knighthood in the birthday honours list for services to business and charity. Ealing Trailfinders did brilliantly to get to the Championship play-off and I was privileged to attend the home leg on 13th June as a guest of Dick Craig and yes over the two legs Saracens put on two fantastic displays, but I have to congratulate Ealing Trailfinders to getting to this point.

I attended the Chiswick 7's on Saturday 19th June and saw some outstanding and well organised 7's and caught up with friends from Chiswick, Hammersmith & Fulham and Old Streetonians. The Cup tournament was won by Oxfam Crusaders who just pipped Hammersmith & Fulham in the final.

Stay safe

Peter

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Message from Eddie Keal, Chair, Middlesex County RFU

I am pleased we took the decision to issue another Newsletter, there is plenty to share. We will continue to issue these through the close-season as they are a well-received supplement to the website and social media channels.

The season is over, but the County Board continues to meet, laying down plans for next season as best we can. This week is budgets and then preparation for the AGM in July.

I'm sure you will find the information below to be useful. I won't clutter up the newsletter by repeating it here, but please get in touch with any of us if you want more explanation or help.

Stay safe and well

Eddie

Update from Lou Latter – Chair of Rugby Development

A few more weeks of lockdown beckon but at least some rugby continues at Stage D2 and a Lions tour to look forward to over the summer.

There has been a lot of information out of HQ over the past few weeks, so I hope to cover some of the key points for you to be aware of.

As a reminder we remain at [Stage D2](#). This means that scrums and mauls are still NOT permitted within adapted laws. The RFU continue to work closely with Government and DCMS to move us to Stage E.

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For clubs that are continuing to play over the summer, please ensure you follow the [Summer Activity](#). There are resources available on the England Rugby website, especially around what Age Grade Players are permitted to do.

You will have seen in last week's Community Game Update that there will be [Age Grade tackle height law changes](#) at the start of the season. The existing rules for those playing full contact rugby at U9 to U14 has an imagined line between the armpits as the maximum height of the legal tackle. This will continue and under the law change, these rules will now extend across all U15 to U18 age groups, bringing the tackle height down from shoulder level (as per previous rules) to the armpit. This means that ALL age grade players from U9-U18 will play to the same tackle height law.

The Girls National Cup has had some changes for U15 and U18s. Out of the 64 clubs entered, Middlesex will have three clubs at each age group. Clubs will be invited to express their interest to the enter the National Cup in July and we will then look to how we peer-rank the teams to get to the three teams. Further information will come out to clubs in July. For those interested in entering the National Cup then please do let me know. More localised playing opportunities will be organised for all age grade girls' teams through pitch up and play days and other opportunities. For clubs wishing to host a pitch up and play please do let me know.

Congratulations to all those that were nominated for the [Mitsubishi Motors Volunteer of the Year](#) awards. And the winners are..... well, you will have to wait a little bit longer. Two lucky winners from Middlesex will find out in the next week or so and will be invited to the National Awards at Twickenham on 6th August. We are still trying to finalise the Middlesex awards, but are still subject to government restrictions. Hopefully once lockdown is lifted in July, we will be able to firm up a date and celebrate with you all.

I have had a number of enquiries around training courses recently. There has been a change to the training course programme so some courses are no longer available or have been replaced with refreshed

content and some are now available online. Please see the [England Training Courses Booklet](#) to find the course you are looking for.

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

Stay safe

Louise

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Update from Andrew Smart - Chair of Competitions

The league fixtures have now been circulated. If you have not seen them all the fixtures for all the leagues across London and SE Division can be found on the news section of the London website www.rfulondon.com.

As already announced, the 14 team leagues will start on the 4th September, the 12 team leagues on the 18th September and the 10 team leagues on the 2nd October. If anyone would like a copy of the structured season by all means come back to me.

Some bits of interest

On Saturday the 22nd May, only six days before the fixtures were due to be circulated, Kilburn Cosmos made application to be relegated from L3NW into H/M1 for the new season. With such a short space of time available there was some work to be done in order to accommodate their request. A number of options were looked at but, in the end, it was decided that the most practical solution was to exchange Kilburn Cosmos with a team currently in H/M1 and that the most appropriate would be the only team relegated from L3NW at the end of the 2019/20 season. In effect Kilburn would become the relegated club and would take the place of that club who would instead be reprieved from relegation. That club was Harrow and who stated after consultation that they would accept the invitation if offered. The decision was passed up to Terry Burwell the Chairman of the RFU Adult Competitions Sub Committee who agreed that it was the correct course of action but passed it back to the

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London DOC for the final say As I sit on the DOC, I quite rightly took no part in the deliberations but London also supported the move and now Harrow will play in L3NW for the new season and that KC will play instead in H/M1.

Brunel will return to the leagues after a number of years, coming in at H/M2 albeit with restrictions agreed with the club and circulated throughout the league. If anyone wants more information about those restrictions, please come back to me. As I said in my last report this will make H/M2 an eleven-team league playing in a 10-team matrix with the league splitting after the first 10 league games after everyone has played each other once. The top five will then go in a mini league playing the other teams once again but where for instance in the first round they played their opponents at home away in the second round the fixture will then be reversed. Results only against the other clubs in the mini league will be carried over into the second round. The bottom six will also split into their own mini league where the same will apply. Both mini leagues will finish on the 2nd April.

Harlequin Amateurs also return to the leagues after a number of years in the MMTs although rather than return to the H/M leagues they will now play in the Surrey CB leagues in Surrey 4 where their opponents will include two other Middlesex Clubs in Old Paulines and Old Hamptonians.

In the week that I will be circulating the MT fixtures there has been an excellent response from our clubs. I appreciate that until we get back for the new season clubs won't really know what their playing strengths are likely to be but still two seasons ago, we had 46 sides in our first five merit tables with MT5 an unregulated league with teams able to play how often as they want against who they want, when they want and with as many as they have. This season we have seen a slight increase with 47 sides in the top five MTs and this despite the loss of three teams (One has as I have said has returned to the leagues and two unfortunately are really struggling for numbers and weren't able to commit to the Mts this season for their lower xvs. We welcome a new club in London Sussex (Old boys of Sussex University) with Harrow 2nds moving from the HMMTs where they have always played into our MTs. We also welcome Old

Millhillians into the regulated MTs after they won MMT5 in the 2019/20 season. There are also once again excellent numbers for the MMT5 (12 so far) which is a league that can accommodate as many sides as want to enter and where teams can join at any time even well after the season has started. Still early days obviously for all our clubs but encouraging news at a time when we wondered whether our clubs were under pressure for numbers.

Despite deciding to start the 10 team leagues on the 2nd October finishing on the 2nd April which gave a better balance than the other option of starting on the 18th September finishing on the 12th March I have decided for our MTs that we will play to the second timetable. This is because although the league part of our MTs will finish as I say on the 12th March, we have semi-finals and finals of the MT Cup/Bowl/Vase plus the playoff semi-finals and finals to fit in after the league part of our season has been completed. This earlier date clearly works much better for the MT format.

Vets MT Invitations to go out at the end of June although I have already had four entrants.

So, plenty going on with competitions and a lot of work still to be done but at the moment encouraging signs as we prepare for a full return to rugby.

All the best

Andrew Smart
Chairman of Competitions

Keep safe

Andrew

Update from Andrew Smart - Chair of Groups

So, with the majority of our clubs going into a short summer recess it is hardly surprising that there is not much to report on behalf of our groups. We have however been able to agree the meeting dates for the new season which are as follows.

South All Mondays **13/9. 1/11. 24/1. 4/4.**

West All Wednesdays **15/9. 10/11. 26/1. 6/4.**

North All Mondays **6/9. 8/11. 7/2. 11/4.**

North West All Wednesdays **8/9 (Harrow). 3/11. 12/1 (Zoom). 2/3. 13/4.**

All four April meetings will be preceded as normal by the Group AGMs

Our plans are to get back into our clubs for the new season so there is some work for the group officers to do now to find venues for our meetings with Harrow (perhaps unsurprisingly) the only confirmed venue for the North West Group on the 8th September. So, if you're club is in a position to host one of your group meetings, please contact one of your officers direct or by all means come back to me and I will pass on your request. Historically the North West Group has always had five meetings as opposed to the four held by the other groups and this season I intend to use that extra date, in this case the 12th January for a Zoom meeting. Early January is always our most problematic meeting, much I suspect from asking people to travel across North West London at a time when because of the cold and weather most of us would rather be at home. At the moment the Group Officers are in agreement that they would prefer that all the other meetings go back to being held at our clubs and at a time when the County budget has been cut by the RFU from about £100k to less than £30k, this season and maybe a couple more going forward, it is pleasing that the management committee will continue to support the budget for each meeting at existing rates.

The county has had an application from a new club London Sussex (former students of Sussex University) to become a Middlesex Club. Should their application be accepted, they will join the South Group.

Finally, I have asked Simon Hardcastle the Group Officer Secretary to arrange the election for the Group Chair to be completed by the end of June in good time for the County AGM

All the best

Andrew

Representative Playing and Coaching Update

For season 2021 – 2022, New chair of playing Jok Dunbar & Deputy Chair Hari McCormack, have the playing calendar in place and are currently planning the playing strategy and coaching & managing positions for next season.

The Girls playing Programme at U15s will take place in May 2022 and the U18s on various dates from January 2022 – April 2022

U15s & U16s playing are now integrated with the DPP in line with the single pathway. U15s will have inter games in May 2022. U16s will have county playing opportunities within the DPP in November 2021 & February & March 2022

U17s Have a new playing window in May 2022 to ensure schools & clubs finish their playing programmes.

U18s Selection will take place in October 2021 with training and games through November, December 2021 and January 2022.

Senior Women, Senior Men & U20s, are currently under review.

London Irish DPP & Academy Update

DPP – The DPP Programme will resume in September 2021. We wanted to give players a chance to train/play for their schools & clubs during March, April & May. The U14s trials will be held in October 2021, half term dates tbc by London Irish

Middlesex Players Selected for England U20s.

Congratulations to Middlesex Players, **Luke Green** (London Irish Academy on loan at Richmond FC) & **Tarek Haffar**, (London Irish Academy / Grasshoppers RFC) who have both been named in the England U20 6 Nations squad for the upcoming 6 Nations in Wales (June/July 2021). Both Luke & Tarek have come through the Middlesex Representative teams, London Irish DPP & Academy

England U18

Seven players from the London Irish Academy, are included in the England U18 Development squad And four Players have been selected for the Internal England U18 game.

Young Referee Development

Preparation is being made with discussions with the RFU referee development officer in running a young referees award Programme in season 2021 – 2022. This will be a yearlong Programme run in partnership with the RFU

Coaching Development Information**Coaching Summer Conference, run by Coach Centered Limited – Sunday 25th July 2021**

This conference is targeting coaches of the XV aside game, with an opportunity to observe a range of high-performance coaches, operating within the elite game. A range of 6 coaching seminars will be available, that are designed to offer current and thought-provoking content.

To register for the event, please follow the link below:

<https://www.coachcentered.com/rugby-union-xv-aside-coaching-conference>

RFU Director of Rugby Course

2 DOR courses will be run, one in the North of England and 1 in the South

The South course will be run in Buckinghamshire on the following dates –

Workshop 1 – 6th & 7th October 2021

Workshop 2 – 2nd & 3rd March 2022

England Mentoring Award

Richmond FC – Sunday 15th August

Information on booking for the DOR & Mentoring courses can be found on the RFU website, or contact me for more information

Middlesex Rugby Coaching Drills, (RCD) Weekly Newsletter

The Middlesex Newsletter will continue to be sent out to those coaches registered throughout the summer months. This will enable coaches to call upon the coaching toolkit of over 2,500 drills to assist in their summer pre-season preparation

For Information on any of the above topics please contact Bob Lawless

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Stay Safe

Bob

What's on**RFU Director of Rugby Course**

Workshop 1 – 6th & 7th October 2021

Workshop 2 – 2nd & 3rd March 2022

England Mentoring Award

Richmond FC – Sunday 15th August

**Virtual Middlesex County RFU Annual General
Meeting – Monday 26th July via Zoom.**

Calling notices and agendas to follow.

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