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to enjoy rugby.

NEWSLETTER

140th Anniversary



President:
Peter Baveystock

Edition No 30, Tuesday 21st September 2021

Email: countyoffice@middlesexrugby.com

President's Message

County Dinner – I'm pleased to confirm that our delayed 140th County Dinner will be held at London Welsh RFC on Friday 29th April 2022. As previously stated RFU funding has meant that we won't be able to subsidise this event as in previous years and we didn't want to reduce or devalue this prestigious event. We will be meeting LW soon and will confirm the cost but this won't exceed £60 per head. Also, as this is a break even price all tickets, including any guests you may wish to bring will be the same price.

Having dropped into North West Group by Zoom and attended South & West Group I was in the main encouraged by the preparedness of the attending Clubs although there were some concerns. However, given the disruption we've all been through over the past eighteen months or so I think that looking at the three weeks of league rugby our Clubs have fared pretty well but we're not complacent.

I attended Chiswick on Saturday 18th for a memorial lunch to remember four Chiswick stalwarts; Tony Pannel, Doug Burford, Slim King and David Goodenough. It was great to see Sue Goodenough who gave a brilliant eulogy to David preceded by equally fitting tributes to Slim, Doug and Tony. It was also good to see Past Presidents, John Gunner and Charlie Madge also paying their respects.

However, the most enjoyable and fitting epitaph was a great 1st XV win against Winchester. Well done to Kelvin and Gavin!

Stay safe

Peter

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Message from Eddie Keal, Chair, Middlesex County RFU

It was good to see the round of Group Meetings went well, and to have two of them as real in-person events was a bonus.

I think that almost the whole Management Board has been out and about over the last two weeks. I have seen 5 Middlesex clubs in action. Ruislip Men and Ruislip Women counting as one club, but two matches, in case you are querying my maths.

I haven't seen the final Middlesex match numbers for Saturday 18th September yet, but I know from reports and the Fixtures & Results website that a lot of matches weren't played. Addressing the reasons for that (referee and player availability) is getting our full attention as an urgent priority.

Clubs are also reporting several issues with the IT systems which are core to our organisation and management of the game. I will be personally engaged in getting to the root causes of why this is. Feel free to write to me or call me directly.

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I am delighted that that Peter has positive news about the plans for a County Dinner. We also need to finalise our position for the Middlesex 7s at the end of the season. Regarding nearer term events, I hope you have all replied to Lou about the Volunteer Awards Evening invitations.

My marathon training is done, I am now “tapering” or easing off before the 3rd October. That seems to involve pasta, stretching and sleep in large doses. I have been warned that nobody signs up to sponsorship until almost the last day, so if the urge to support the Injured Players Foundation grabs you at some point between now and then, please visit my page here.

<https://rfuipf.enthuse.com/pf/eddie-keal-london-marathon-for-rugby-ipf>

I am sure that someone from the Management Board will be in touch with every club regarding the issues above in the next few days, but please contact any of us directly if your need is urgent.

Stay safe and well

Eddie

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Update from Lou Latter – Chair of Rugby Development

Where has September gone? Three weekends already behind us.

The [Middlesex Hardship Grant](#) is again proving to be well received to support players who are experiencing financial difficulty. The grant covers 50% of club membership with the club paying the other 50% and club kit (shirts, shorts and socks). In just two weeks we have supported nearly £2,000 of support to keep age grade players under the age of 18 playing rugby.

On 18th September we held our first of four first aid courses at Harrow Rugby Club. 12 volunteers received their Emergency First Aid in Rugby Union certification. Our next two courses are on 25th September at Grasshoppers and 26th September at Chiswick, with the final course at Old Grammarians on 16th October. There are still a few spaces left so if you have a volunteer that needs to attend a First Aid course, please do let myself and Andy Smart know.

Our first marketing women’s rugby workshop was held on Monday evening with the second workshop scheduled for the 27th September at 7pm. Clubs interested should contact me for details. This workshop will help club volunteers, teams & players understand the importance of branding their team & players to make the most of new opportunities in the sport.

The [Rugby Leadership Network](#) is back with a closing deadline of 10th October. Please do encourage your future leaders to apply. There is also a specific Network for W&G leaders. For those that are unsuccessful in the applying for the Area networks, we will also be running a specific Middlesex Rugby Leadership Network this season as well. More information will come out in the coming weeks but if you are interested then please do let me know. I am also looking for mentors to support the programme.

We are in the final stages of the organising the Middlesex Volunteer Awards Evening at the Spirit of Rugby on Friday 8th October. 250 volunteers over the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 seasons have been invited and we will announce the Middlesex volunteer awards during the evening. It will be great to have so many volunteers being recognised in one place after such a tough 18 months.

For our girls' teams, 12 of our 16 clubs have entered the Middlesex Girls Cluster competition. This will see four clusters of three teams each playing once a month around the county at U13, U15 and U18 age groups.

Please remember you can get up-to-date information from the [Club Support Centre](#) and [Helpdesk FAQs](#).

And finally, I am looking for a new volunteer to become the Women and Girls CB Lead. The job description has been shared with W&G contacts and is on the website for reference. For further information on this role or other opportunities within the Rugby Development committee, do let me know as I'm happy to talk through the role with anyone that is interested.

<https://middlesexrugby.com/county-vacancies/women-girls-cb-lead/>

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

Stay safe

Louise

Louise.latter@middlesexrugby.com

Message from Andy Smart, Chair of Competitions

After a couple of weekends of just level five and six rugby, this Saturday saw the league campaigns start for the majority of our clubs, first at levels 7 and 8 and also just as importantly for our Merit Table clubs and teams

So, a busy weekend of matches beset with all sorts of problems. On Thursday the London Society North and West list who service all but a few of our clubs

were still forty-two games short of appointments. I described this as a crisis at the Management Meeting on Tuesday night and whilst of course there is always added pressure on the Society up to Christmas with their commitments to the schools and now the Ladies who have changed from Sundays to Saturday those are truly significant numbers and of a huge concern. I am told that this is not just a problem with the London Society but across the country where it appears that referees like players have been slow to return to the game, if they intend to return at all. We, of course must be patient and support the society in any way we can as they face these difficult weeks but clubs must understand that there is a very good chance that they will find referees/volunteers from within their own clubs if they want to get games on. I know the CB is seeking urgent funding from the RFU to support referee training courses but in the short of course this will do nothing to alleviate the problems we currently find ourselves facing

On top of that we have had all sorts of problems with Who'sTheRef (WTR) first identified about five weeks ago with a large proportion of the MMT fixtures showing correctly on the RFU website but reversed on the WTR. Many thanks to John Durkin at the London Society who painstakingly went through every fixture making the changes required. He then sent them to me and I checked every one against the listed fixtures and apart from a couple they were all correct. Anyway, whatever he did then, they appear to have reversed themselves again. Simply when I create the fixtures for each Merit Table on the GMS, I then "publish" them to the RFU website and at the same time they should automatically populate the WTR at the same time. Any changes in dates or reversal of fixtures should also reflect on the WTR. Whilst many fixtures are correct many more are wrong. I have no idea how they fix it or how long it is going to take but that is what I am going to be trying to sort out this week.

Apologies to the re-appointment's officers for both lists who not only had to deal with the clamour for referees but found them appointing to incorrect fixtures. Absolute mayhem and perhaps more of the same to come

Somewhere amongst this some rugby was played. I always said that the real test would be for clubs be this weekend when they would actually have to get out players to honour appointed fixtures in the leagues and Merit Tables and although the percentage of walkovers wasn't as bad as in Surrey this week which for their MTs was at 42% ours was close with 7 of our 23 games going down, a 30% walkover rate. To be fair all the teams who wanted to play did manage to get other games. Indeed, two of the sides who had games go down in the same MT played each other in a game due to be played in February. The result is on the GMS but won't show until the round date arrives. Let's hope that this is just some of the clubs slow to get their players out at the beginning of the season but of course it might be much more serious than that. We will have a better picture in three to four weeks and whilst it is better than some of our neighbours it is not a great start.

Lots of headaches at the moment for all of us involved in administrating our game at all levels but at least we have rugby back and that is hugely important after the last eighteen months.

I very much hope that when I report again to you in a couple of weeks it is very much on field that I will be telling you about.

Stay safe

Andrew Smart

Update from Jok Dunbar, Chair of Representative Rugby

It has been a long 18months since we've had representative rugby and are looking forward to it starting back with the U18 Boys programme at the end of October. Nomination forms and notifications will be sent out in the next week to Middlesex clubs and schools. This is a great opportunity for our older youth players to wear the Middlesex shirt and possibly be seen by England counties selectors.

Please contact Jok Dunbar or Richard Wilmot if you have not received the joining letter or nomination form by the 1st October.

U18 Boys Programme

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Sunday October 31st | Assessment |
| Sunday 7th November | Squad Development |
| Friday 3rd December | Training |
| Sunday 5th December | Game vs Eastern Counties Essex to Host |
| Friday 17th December | Training |
| Sunday 19th December | Game vs Hertfordshire TBC |
| Friday 7th January | Training |
| Sunday 9th January | Game vs Essex Herts to Host |

Jok

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Report from Chair of Groups, Andy Smart

Having attended all four first round group meetings with two on Zoom and two back in clubs it is

perhaps too early to reach any proper conclusions of the relative successes of either format. Interestingly the North Group had surveyed their own clubs across the summer and the preferred option was to go with two Zoom meetings and the other two at the club. The North West had decided to go with one Zoom meeting in January with the other four back in clubs. Unfortunately, with the Group Secretary, Mark Foster, still struggling with the effects of Covid we decided with a couple of days to go to change that meeting meant to be held at Harrow to Zoom. Meanwhile the South and West meetings went ahead at London Cornish and Grasshoppers respectively. These were important meetings but the numbers at the two held in clubs were poor in comparison to the two Zoom meetings. To be fair the North and North West meetings have in recent years always been better attended. However, the disparity in numbers of clubs attending between the two formats were significant. Perhaps people are not yet ready to make the commitment to go out to clubs' midweek. Maybe the ease of Zoom was more attractive than driving. Maybe there is just an information overload. Maybe I am reading too much into the first round of meetings. Still, we have some thinking to do if we are going to properly service the needs of all our clubs. This was an important round of meetings with any amount of important information required by clubs as we start the 2021/22 season and we didn't succeed in getting that information out to everybody that needed to have it.

Still, I enjoyed my trips to London Cornish and Grasshoppers where the hospitality was great as always. The conversation good. Some proper discussions with rugby people in a club house with a beer and some sandwiches. Great to be back. This format has so much to recommend itself. So much important discourse before and after the formality of the meeting. So much gained. Some laughs with people I like and respect. A chance to catch up. Just not enough of you.

Anyway, back to business. On Saturday the first Emergency First Aid in Rugby Course took place at Harrow with a full attendance which was great. This

week we have courses at Grasshoppers on Saturday and Sunday at Chiswick. There are still places available at both so if there is anyone in your club who would like to take advantage of this great opportunity, paid for in full by the county, then please get in contact with Louise or myself to book your place at loulatter@hotmail.com or andrew-smart@ntlworld.com with the following details:

- Name of proposed attendee
- Contact details including email and phone number
- Club and position held
- RFU ID number: - This is required for booking on any RFU Course"

The final course to be held at Old Grammarians on Saturday 16th October where there are still also places available but plenty of time still to push on that date. This weekend is of a course more of a priority. Can't do Saturday, Sunday at Chiswick. Can't do Sunday Saturday at Grasshoppers.

So plenty of thinking to do for the Group Officers. If you have any thoughts or have something to add to the conversation, I would be delighted to hear from you. The Groups remains central to the County's vision of the way forward and we need to get it right across the whole county.

All the best and keep safe

Andrew Smart

Update on Coaching & Refereeing Development

- **New Law Variations** - To date 3 informative sessions were run on the new law variations for this coming season. Simon Hardcastle delivered the on-line sessions and these were well attended by both female & male coaches, a total of 173 coaches attended.
- **RFU mentoring programme** - to date we have 7 coaches who have attended this programme and currently are being paired up with coach mentees from Middlesex clubs. The course consists of a 1-day

attendance and monthly webinars and support throughout the season while mentoring Middlesex coaches & referees. If any coach is interested in attending the RFU mentoring programme please get in touch, details below.

- **RFU Young Referees Award** – Invites are welcome from any young persons both Female & Male U16s – U18s, who are interested in learning to become a match official. The course will contain both practical & theoretical elements with ongoing support. The practical elements will be using the new found skills with the partner Academy at London Irish. Throughout the season there will be regular webinars and mentor support.
- **Local Introduction to Refereeing** – Invites are welcome from any players both Female & Male who have an interest in attending an Introduction to refereeing. This is an evening's course which is suitable for any person who would like to become a match official and possibly get involved with refereeing at a local level. Ongoing support and further sessions will be available throughout the season.
- **Entry Level Referee Award** – Any person who has an interest in attending an RFU ELRA award course is welcome to apply. This award is a 2-day course over a season with ongoing Webinars and support. Middlesex will support all interested applications in their refereeing journey.

For further information on any of the above course please contact –

Bob Lawless, Middlesex Chair of Coaching & Refereeing Development

(e) bob.lawless@middlesexrugby.com (m) 07803 196409

What's on

Emergency First Aid in Rugby Union

- 25th September at Grasshoppers
- 26th September at Chiswick
- 16th October at Old Grammarians

Marketing Women's/Girls Rugby

- 27th September over zoom

Middlesex Volunteer Awards Evening

- 8th October at Twickenham Stadium

Group Meetings

- **South-Mondays 1/11. 24/1. 4/4**
- **West-Wednesdays 10/11. 26/1. 6/4.**
- **North-Mondays 8/11. 7/2. 11/4**
- **North West-Wednesdays 3/11. 12/1 (Zoom). 2/3. 13/4**

RFU Coaching Courses in Middlesex & Hertfordshire

Principles of the Lineout

- UCS – 28/09/2021

Principles of Scrum

- Verulamians – 04/10/2021
- (Hertfordshire)Ealing – 14/10/2021
- Fullerians – 18/10/21 – (Hertfordshire)
- Enfield – 25/10/2021

Rugby Referee Award (ELRA)

- Harrow School (2 Days) - 23/10/21 & 02/07/22
- Enfield Grammar School (2 Days) & 28/11/21 - 12/06/22

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