

**Edition No 33, Tuesday 2nd November
Season 2021/22 week 9**

Email: countyoffice@middlesexrugby.com

County Dinner – 29th April 2022, London Welsh RFC

As mentioned in previous newsletters we've finalised negotiations with the team at London Welsh and can confirm that the covid-delayed 140th Anniversary County Dinner will now cost £60 per head- a break-even price point. The decision was taken that the subsidy this event was due to receive pre-covid be allocated to front-line rugby as the sports financial landscape has changed around us.

The evening will still offer drinks on arrival, table wine, a four-course dinner and we still have RFU Chief Executive, Bill Sweeney as a guest speaker, as part of a what we expect to be a fantastic night.

Below are details if you would either like to attend and have not previously confirmed, or previously expressed an interest and the County is holding your previous £50 per head payment.

- 1) If you have not expressed interest before and would like to now attend, please could you respond by email to **Beena Chadha at beenie1989@gmail.com by Sunday 28 November 2021.**
- 2) If you have previously expressed interest in attending and have your initial payment held in the County account, a message will follow in December 2021 from the County Office email address around how to pay the additional £10. It will be assumed you still wish to attend unless you inform Beena on the above email address otherwise.

With a capacity of 120 at London Welsh, we're hoping to get as many Clubs represented at the Dinner as possible to belatedly mark our 140th

Anniversary so we are extending this invite to every club to nominate **two** persons to attend.

If however a member of your club serves on the County Management Committee (or a Sub-Committee) is a County Past President, Life Vice-President, Vice President, Group Officer or Group Representative they can be either (or both) of your two nominees, or be exempt from this initial allocation, and one/two additional others can be nominated alongside him/her. So please make sure your Club is part of the celebration and book a place now. If unsure please contact Mark Coles on: mark.coles@middlesexrugby.com

Further communication will be sent out to those attending with the final arrangements of the dinner evening and method of payment, during December 2021.

**Yours in Rugby
Mark Coles**

President's Message

President's Walk – Friday 5th November – Unfortunately, due to the RFU President and his wife testing positive this event has now been cancelled but is expected to be re-scheduled at some stage in the future. We wish Jeff and his wife Sally a speedy recovery.

Another great couple of weeks of rugby and I've watched plenty of rugby at various levels. I was particularly please to talk to Bank of England second team when they played at Grasshoppers in the merit table and the team looked pretty enthusiastic despite a narrow loss to Grasshoppers 3rds. In relation to merit-table rugby my feeling is that it's first teams that are suffering from unavailability due to injuries and players taking out of the ordinary weeks off. I know that colleagues are keeping an eye on this and am sure they are available if help is required.

**KEEP UPDATED
FOLLOW US ON :**

Stay safe

Peter

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Message from Eddie Keal, Chair, Middlesex

We are still seeing a number of walkovers recorded in the results each weekend, plus several scores which reflect very unbalanced teams. It's a situation that is mirrored over the whole country. Players are slow to come back, and the backlog of weddings, holidays and family celebrations is taking precedence over rugby. These are still difficult times.

We are doing what we can to predict and assist with problems, but I feel it will be a long hard season.

I was pleased to see the announcement that all three traditional County Championship competitions will be run this season (Men, Women and Male Under 20). Middlesex will have a team in each.

I visited Ealing Trailfinders on Saturday for their 150th Anniversary celebration. It was a great evening of memories and good company. During the day I had watched teams from Ruislip, Wasps and Hackney play so I took Sunday off for a change and watched England Women on BBC2.

Another round of Group meetings is in the diary over the next two weeks, so I look forward to seeing many of you at those – Ultra Low Emission Zone rules permitting.

I'll be joining the RFU President's walk on Friday. Please come along and walk with us, even if only for a part of it.

The Autumn Internationals started yesterday at Sandy Park in Exeter and if the other matches are only half as thrilling, we should have plenty of reasons to fill our clubhouses.

The County Board are all committed to getting out and about to our clubs every weekend, so if you feel you aren't getting a visited often enough, let me know!

Stay safe and well

Eddie

eddie.keal@middlesexrugby.com

Update from Lou Latter – Chair of Rugby Development

Welcome to November and a feast of grassroots and international rugby on offer over the next few weeks.

The Middlesex Rugby Leadership Network is now open for applications. If you have a volunteer and future leader that would be interested in participating, then please do let me know.

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

Stay safe

Louise

Louise.latter@middlesexrugby.com

Message from Andrew Smart, Chair of Competitions

There has nothing changed over the last two weeks that persuades me that my assessment that a number of clubs both within the county and beyond are continuing to struggle to get out their players out to play consistently and that there are significant and worrying issues that continue to face our game I think it is likely that these challenges will remain probably for the remainder of this season

and that we can't really expect any real stability until the beginning of next. I still maintain unfortunately that it continues to appear that rugby at the edges is in a far more fragile state than perhaps we believed when we went into this new season.

Anyway, after a further two weeks of league rugby here is a breakdown of how our clubs are doing. In the Championship, Ealing Trailfinders are now two points clear at the top after six rounds still with a game in hand whilst London Scottish unfortunately remain winless at the foot of the table now ten points adrift and having just conceded over 100 points at the league leaders on Saturday.

At level 5 in the London and SE Premier League CS Stags 1863 remain winless after eight rounds although with a couple of bonus points to partially offset the 5-point sanction they received earlier in the season for being unable to field a front row. They however remain rooted to the bottom of the table still ten points adrift.

At level 6 in L1N Belsize Park are in eighth whilst Old Haberdashers remain tenth. However, in L1S London Welsh continue their outstanding season unbeaten and top by two points after seven rounds with a game in hand whilst H&F are up to 4th with London Cornish battling a long injury list still winless and bottom.

At level 7 in L2NW, HAC, and Old Priorians both remain unbeaten after sixth rounds, both with try bonus points from every match so far this season with HAC remaining top on points difference. Old Streetonians who have lost their last two games drop to fifth to be overtaken by Ruislip in fourth. Grasshoppers sixth, Enfield Ignatians seventh. Hampstead still tenth with Hackney who remain winless at the bottom and pointless. In L2SW Chiswick are top by two points with Twickenham

dropping to ninth whilst London Exiles eleventh with minus twenty points still having only honoured one game so far this season. Not sure how long they will be allowed to continue in the leagues and yet amazingly they are not bottom with a club below them on minus 25 points also having honoured only one game this season. Dark times for our friends at London Exiles.

At level 8 in L3 Essex Epping Upper Clapton drop to eighth whilst in L3NW, Finchley are now top, Hendon fourth, Finsbury Park fifth, Harrow ninth with OMTs currently bottom having also conceded over 100 points at the league leaders on Saturday

In Surrey One Teddington are currently sixth with a solid won three lost three record whilst in Surrey four Old Hamptonians drop to fourth with a couple of games in hand. Old Paulines are equal top although they have played a game more whilst Harlequin Amateurs are third also with a game in hand.

In the Herts and Middx County leagues at level 9, after four rounds there are three teams sharing top spot all on 17 points with Wasps FC second and London Scottish Lions third on point difference. Saracens Amateurs are fourth (apologies to Lawrie McNulty and Saracens Amateurs who contacted me to ask whether in fact they were still a Middlesex Club as I had missed them out of the last newsletter completely. Apologies Lawrie. No excuses and I am delighted to inform you that yes you are still a Middlesex Club. Won't happen again) BoE drop from first to sixth with Ealing Trailfinders 1871 fifth, Kilburn Cosmos seventh, Actonians eight and Thamesians off the bottom to ninth after securing their first win of the season. In H/M2 at level ten Old Millhillians are top and undefeated although they have played a game more than Brunel University and Uxbridge who are also undefeated in third and fourth respectively. UCS are fifth with Staines sixth,

West London ninth, with Mill Hill and London French who were both unable to raise sides on Saturday, conceding walkovers for their respective games, pointless and at the bottom.

In the Allianz Premier XVs there have been no further matches since my last report so Saracens Women after five rounds remain undefeated but second on points difference, Wasps FC Ladies third and Harlequins Women fifth.

I am still chasing five results from the Middlesex Merit Tables which is irritating but what is clear is that we continue to experience a higher than normal number of walkovers, a theme that is consistent with our neighbours across London. This is now beginning to impact on some of the teams that want to play with one side now not having played for three weeks as matches have gone down. I am looking this week at what I can do to support the teams that want to play and also those who are struggling to get out. A reorganisation of the merit tables where appropriate might be required with the struggling teams offered an opportunity to go into a new Merit Table based on MT5 where they organise their own fixtures when and where they want with what they have allowing the teams who can get out teams to continue in a regulated merit table. Early days, lots of work but I will be contacting every team in the merit table this week to see what can be done.

I am not sure what else to say except that it is a real concern and that I maintain that very few clubs would say at the moment that they have emerged from the pandemic in a more robust playing position that they went in.

Andrew

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Report from Jok Dunbar, Chair of Representative Rugby

County youth rugby is back and looking good! Sunday 31st October saw the first weekend in selecting this years U18 playing squad and was well attended with over 70 players representing a great variety of Middlesex clubs and schools. We had ten of the counties finest coaches putting the lads through their paces as we looked for players to fill the positions required to make up this years U18 squad of approximately 30 players. It is always difficult in these assessments but with many eyes on, we had clear picture of the players as they were put through their paces in small sided games and then progressing to a bigger 15 a side game.

Announcements will be made this week to all the boys that attended, either inviting them back for a second look or giving them constructive work ons as to why they have not been selected this time. Competition for all the positions is tough, as the standard of all the players was extremely high, its really encouraging to see so many lads at this age group playing so well and obviously enjoying their rugby. The future looks bright!

Jok

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Report from Chair of Groups, Andrew Smart

The November round of the Group meetings are now upon us and I hope to see a representative of your club at one of the four meetings across the county. Slight change in the South Group meeting which was due to be held at Chiswick on Monday 1st November will now be on Zoom. The other meetings are all physical meetings. Its going to be great to get out, catch up with you across a pint and a sandwich and talk about rugby. Can't wait.

So, Wasps FC for the NW Group on the 3rd, Old Grammarians on the 8th (might be a bit late for this one but am definitely coming. I will be supporting one of my players at Finchley for a discipline

hearing on the same evening. Hoping we can get on first, take our punishment and then onto O Grammarians with the condemnation of Mr Brooks and his fellow panel colleagues still ringing in my ears as I seek solace with my “friends” on the Group. Then to Actonians on Wednesday 10th. Can’t remember going to Actonians before for a West Group meeting before so a new experience (In front of Mr Brooks again. Hope he will be in a better mood.....) Anyway, two of the agenda points will be the same across the four meetings.

1 Defibrillators 2. New Low Omission Zone

So, if you have an opinion or something to add to the discussion it would be great to see and hear from you

In relation to defibrillators Simon Hardcastle has done some excellent working creating a couple of pages on the County Website that are really worth a visit [Middlesex Rugby : Club Defibrillators - should you have one? : Middlesex Rugby](#) This includes information supplied from a number of our clubs and also an offer secured by David Gershlick of Hendon RFC from SR8 Medical available for a fully automated defibrillator at a reduced cost. If you require further information, please contact David direct. It is important to reiterate that whilst the County is not able to offer advice or make recommendations, we hope that having access to as much information as possible will make it easier for you and your club in any deliberations

The second page deals with up to 20 defibrillator grants available from the Richmond Heavies Foundation (the vets of Richmond RFC) who set up the charity following the death of three of their players including their skipper in 2018. The aim of the charity

- Set up to extend lives and prevent avoidable early deaths by facilitating cardiac screening
- provide access to confidential mental health services

- increase health awareness – physical, mental and emotional – through education programmes and campaigns

They are doing some really fantastic work and their website is well worth a visit. For information about the grants available from the charity please use this link. [Middlesex Rugby : Defibrillator Grants Available for 20 Community Rugby Clubs : Middlesex Rugby](#)

As I was writing this report it struck me as my club is going through the process from sending off, reporting, setting up and running a club discipline hearing and then onto the full CB Discipline hearing and beyond looking at the fees and sanctions this is a really important topic and would be a very useful for the next round of Group meetings in January early February to ensure that clubs don’t fall foul of the process through lack of knowledge what is expected of them and the steps they need to follow to fulfil their obligations. After speaking to John Orr, the CB’s super-efficient Discipline Secretary our sending offs are currently about a quarter of some of our neighbours which is good news but that still doesn’t negate the fact that occasionally some of our clubs not used to the system and unaware of where to find the information fall foul of the system.

Please if anyone has any ideas about suitable topics for Group Meetings, I would be delighted to hear from you

All the best, keep safe and hope to catch up with many of you across the group meetings where apart from Defibrillators, Low Omission Zone there will Inputs from our RFU Club Development Officer Sagan Daniels the normal updates from the CB, RFU, London Society. Plenty going on. Plenty to talk about. If you are not there don’t complain about not knowing what is going on or having the opportunity to have your say.

Andrew

andrew.smart@ntlworld.com

Update by Bob Lawless, Chair of Coaching and Referee Development

- **RFU mentoring programme** – Middlesex have 5 RFU trained Mentors looking after the coaching development of 15 mentees. The Middlesex mentoring programme is available for all those interested in developing their leadership and mentoring skills. The Mentoring Programme is also available to any coach coaching at any level who would like to be mentored through the coaching pathway.
- **RFU Young Referees Award**
Middlesex in Partnership with the RFU, Surrey and the Regional Academies held a Young Match Officials award course at London Welsh on Saturday 30th October 2021.
24 Youth between the ages of (U16s – U18s) (12) from our Middlesex Clubs and (12) from Surrey Clubs enrolled on the yearlong course.
The course was open to all Middlesex youth both male & female. After this first, face2 face day, the young referees will have access to monthly webinars and gain experience at refereeing with Middlesex St Georges day festival and assisting with London Irish academy training & games. The next F2F day is next May when all will gain the RFU Match Official Certificate.
- **Middlesex Coach Education**
Coach education will be offered to all Middlesex Coaches throughout the season, it is intended to run both on - line and outside practical sessions. During October there were 2 CPD sessions run for both Women and Youth Coaches with a Theme of Developing a Coaching Philosophy, 48 coaches attended the on-line interactive sessions. Late November there will be a

Coaching CPD targeted at our higher level & representative coaches. More information will be included in the next newsletter

- **RFU Coaching Courses**

Throughout the month of November coaches, teachers, players and anyone are welcomed to join us for our series of Gamechangers online development sessions.

This dial in session will get people from across the National rugby community connected, developing knowledge of how to make sessions more impactful and enjoyable for everyone involved.

Anyone keen to recruit and retain players will enjoy this quick, easy to access and information packed event. There are lots of easily actionable take away points for people to implement and this should be a great conversation starter for coaching groups in clubs and schools.

People that are interested should go online to our course finder at EnglandRugby.com where they will find a large number of session times, across days and evenings throughout the month, so finding a suitable time has never been easier.

Any questions please contact GrantHathaway@rfu.com

Grant Hathaway - England Rugby Coach Developer
07731 008175

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

Bob Lawless, Middlesex Chair of Coaching & Refereeing Development

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Bob Lawless

For more information on Coaching & Refereeing
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What's on

**Presidents Walk – Friday 5th November (see
details above)**

Group Meetings

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