

## August Newsletter 2022

Email: [countyoffice@middlesexrugby.com](mailto:countyoffice@middlesexrugby.com)

### President's Message

Well, what a scorcher of a summer which was great if you like the sun but has caused some problems with our pitches hence us working with the RFU to ensure that player safety is out 100% top priority.

**Independent Non-Executive Director** – Bob Lawless, Nigel Orton and I (The Nominations Committee) following an open selection process, made a recommendation to the board to appoint Kasey Allen of Wasps for this post for a three year term and we look forward to working with her in this relatively new but important role.

See below a personal thank you from Chris Cuthbertson and I would like to thank him for his hard work and dedication over this time.

**PERSONAL MESSAGE TO ALL MIDDLESEX CLUBS FROM CHRIS CUTHBERTSON** - After nineteen years as Middlesex Representative on the RFU Council, I have finally hung up my laptop. But I couldn't fade away without thanking you all for your support and encouragement. It has been an enormous privilege to represent the County and its clubs. Andrew Smart, who most of you know, took over from me on 1<sup>st</sup> August. Andy brings an enormous energy to the role as well as an unparalleled knowledge of the game in our area – he will be a great addition to the RFU Council.

You will not be getting rid of me completely; I am continuing as Secretary of Hammersmith & Fulham for at least another year, so I look forward to seeing many of you on a muddy touchline (assuming we ever see rain again) during the coming season.

Have a great season and don't forget to enjoy it.

Best wishes

Chris

Have a fantastic 2022/23 Season and I hope to visit you at your Clubs very soon.

**Peter**

[peter.baveystock@middlesexrugby.com](mailto:peter.baveystock@middlesexrugby.com)

### Message from Eddie Keal, Chair, Middlesex

Here we go again! The formal start to the season is almost upon us and hopefully the chance to reap the benefit of all that pre-season training. The County agenda is clearly dominated by the weather and the state of our pitches. I won't dwell on it here, but rest assured we are working on it. We have an All Clubs meeting on Monday evening (22<sup>nd</sup> August) so although this Newsletter will go out only just before the Zoom call, I'm sure many of you will already have it in your diaries.

I note the recent Community Game Update is a large and detailed document. Please don't let that put you off reading it. There have been several changes and it's incumbent on all of us as participants to understand the changes. The County will support you as much as we can.

I know I speak for the rest of the Management Board in welcoming Kasey Allen with enthusiasm. She will help all of us make a real difference to our clubs.

And I have no doubt we will absolutely **not** be getting rid of Chris Cuthbertson completely! He will be missed from the Management Board table (or Zoom) but still engaged in other ways.

We will be re-doubling our efforts to get out and visit all the County's clubs this season, and will also

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be assigning Board Members to County representative teams.

I look forward to seeing all of you at some point.

Enjoy the weather while it lasts, but celebrate the rain when it finally comes.

**Eddie**

[eddie.keal@middlesexrugby.com](mailto:eddie.keal@middlesexrugby.com)

### **A message from County Treasurer, Charles Portsmouth - Club financial statements**

To All Club Treasurers

It is a condition of membership of the County that we receive copies of the latest set of Club Accounts or Financial Statements. The accounts enable the County to monitor the financial health of our member Clubs. The due date for receipt of the accounts is by 30 September.

A copy of your Club's accounts should be emailed directly to me [charles.portsmouth@middlesexrugby.com](mailto:charles.portsmouth@middlesexrugby.com) or to the County Office [accounts@middlesexrugby.com](mailto:accounts@middlesexrugby.com).

Thank you in advance

Charles

### **Update from Lou Latter – Chair of Rugby Development**

Whilst the pandemic is now behind us, we are facing a new challenge of heatwaves and what this means for our pitches, and ultimately our player safety. We will keep pushing out communications on any guidance that comes out and I know Andy is keeping a close eye on things on how this affects the adult competitions. Please do reach out if you need

additional help or support while we wait for some rainfall. We will touch on this at the All Groups meeting on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> August when we talk you through the new adult competition [Regulation 6](#) (this covers both men's and women's competitions)

For all Age Grade teams please ensure you read the updated [Regulation 15](#) and appendices. There is new playing up and playing down information. Now is the time to be getting your age grade parents and players working on re-affiliating for the season. You can find information and Affiliation FAQs on the [Help Portal](#). Parents/Guardians will need to renew their child's affiliation by logging onto their GMS profile and re-affiliating to their club. For those new to affiliation, they will need to create a login to affiliate their player(s) to the club. A full guide can be found [here](#).

As a reminder to clubs and Safeguarding Officers, DBS certification for all those involved in the age grade game and vulnerable adults should be checked and updated if required ahead of the season starting.

Age Grade Summer Framework Update - You will also have seen in the Community Game Update this week the Summer Framework Update for August. With more age grade rugby starting to take place this month, anything you can do to help people see and understand how far they can go to this month, before the season starts in September would be great. Reminder of the link to the webpage - <https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/coaching/age-grade-rugby/summer-activity> and I have attached the pdf for the Adapted Contact for U14-18 too.

The 2022/2023 season sees the new [Girls Age bandings](#) come into effect, moving to U12, U14, U16 and U18. The new age bandings will automatically

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be updated in GMS to assist with the affiliation process. Please do double-check dates of birth are correct. As a reminder, there is NO playing up in girls age bandings and this will be the same with the new age bandings. Playing players out of age bandings is a breach of regulations and does have discipline repercussions. The Middlesex Girls Fixtures have all been sent out to club contacts for each age group. The scheduled webinar on 30<sup>th</sup> August has been moved to Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September so please do let me know if you have not received an invitation.

For new committee members or those that would like a refresher, we will be running a 'Rugby Landscape' webinar on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> September. This will cover off the role of the RFU, Council and Middlesex. This is a really useful session for you to understand the support that is available to you. Watch out for zoom details to follow in the next few weeks. Please do let me know if you wish to attend or have committee members who would like to attend.

The London Referee's Society is running a Women and Girls only Referee course at Wasps FC in Action on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> September from 7pm – 9.30pm. Cost is £10 per person (subsidised by LSRFUR from £25). Register for your place [here](#).

Applications are now open for the [RFU Rugby Leadership Network](#). This will be the London and South East Network as Middlesex will run a specific Middlesex Rugby Leadership Network in the 2023-2024 season if there is appetite. This is a great leadership programme for new and aspiring committee members to participate in for rugby and personal development.

And finally, we are just finalising the Middlesex Hardship Grant programme for the 2022-2023 season. This will again provide financial assistance

to those families that need a little helping hand with membership and club kit costs.

If you want to have more involvement in Middlesex, Rugby Development and shaping our activities and focus areas, please do get in touch. We have some exciting projects across schools, adult playing, age grade and volunteers for you to get involved in.

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

Stay safe

Lou

[louise.latter@middlesexrugby.com](mailto:louise.latter@middlesexrugby.com)

### **Message from Andrew Smart, Chair of Competitions**

By the time you read this you will hopefully have seen the circulation from the RFU Competitions Sub-Committee which met on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2022 providing the protocols clubs will have to adhere to if they decide against starting their season on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September either because of unfit pitches or because of the unpreparedness of players to play. I understand that the London DOC intends to meet on Thursday to decide how to respond and to determine whether the RFU has gone far enough. I wasn't at the meeting and as I write this report, I haven't seen the protocols, however as it stands it is my belief that this is a totally inadequate response and a cop out by the committee

In order to support the DOC as it made application for a delay to the start of the season, I sent out the following message to the league clubs across Middlesex and Hertfordshire via their league secretaries.

*"Anyway, before next Monday's RFU Competitions meeting I wonder if each club could give me an update on your pitches and where you see you are at the moment in relation to being able to start on the 3rd September. I would be interested to*

*know what sort of training you are able to do with special reference to player safety including any injuries you have picked up that you believe could be put down to the hardness of your pitches. I appreciate that some of you have AGPs and others might have been able to get water to your pitches. I would nevertheless like to hear from you all. I am looking to provide as much evidence from clubs to support the DOC at the RFU meeting on Monday evening”*

I received 31 responses in three days which was pleasing. However, what was clear is that whilst there are clubs either with AGPs or who have had the ability to water their pitches there are considerably more clubs whose pitches are unplayable and dangerous. These clubs have reported that their players have been unable to train safely, have had no contact or tackling, been unable to play or host pre-season friendlies and are unprepared for competitive contact rugby. It is inconceivable to me that even if by some miracle pitches are playable in just over two week it is safe or fair to make players play league rugby when so many are clearly unprepared. I hope that London continues to make the case that the Division is not ready to play league rugby and that might be for considerably more than simply one week. For me as is likely a significant number of games do go down then all the game should be postponed. It will chaos if some games are played and hundreds are not and what happens to those clubs who can't host on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September when they are due to play away the following week on pitches that are still not safe.

I have a copy of the comments that clubs made in response to my circulation which I served on the London DOC before Monday evening's meeting and am happy to circulate to anyone that is interested

Although I have covered it in my Group Officer report can I remind clubs of the All Clubs Zoom Meeting on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7pm specifically on Adult Competitions. Again, it is very much centred around Adult Competitions and will look at four key areas

- New Adult Competition Regulations for women and men - Regulation 6
- Promotion and Relegation
- An update on the options if the Adult Male League programme does not if start on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September and the implications for the season
- Post league National Cup versus County Cup Options

For those looking to join us the meeting details, which will also be circulated via the County Office, are as follows

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82023872607?pwd=VE54QStyK3VxUUNrd3FXNzF1ck1sdz09>

Meeting ID: 820 2387 2607. Passcode: 542271

Apologies for duplicating this all again in this report but It's a very fluid situation and we should all have a much clearer picture of where we are next Monday so make sure you join us.

All the best and keep safe

Andrew Smart

[andrew-smart@ntlworld.com](mailto:andrew-smart@ntlworld.com)

### **Report from Chair of Groups, Andrew Smart**

There is a lot going on with the Groups as we approach the new season

We start next Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> August, with the All Clubs Zoom meeting starting at 7pm which I will be running with Louise. It is very much centred around Adult Competitions and will look at four key areas

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We then follow this with the first round of Group meetings

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September – North.

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September – North-West

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September – South.

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> September – West

Because of the All-Club Meeting and the questions about the start of the season the Group Officers are discussing whether it is sensible to stay with these early dates or look to put them back. We have decided that we will make the decision after we see the attendance of clubs at the August meeting. So please bare with us. Each Group will make their own decision.

Finally, after discussions with the London Society and Middlesex it has been decided that this season each of the groups will host a “Pick Up The Whistle” Course for their clubs. I have been in contact with a club for each Groups to see if they are willing to host. Dates for each course will be agreed between the host club and the London Society and will be circulated once agreed.

West Group. Grasshoppers October 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> October

North Group. Old Grammarians - November

North West Group – January 2023

South Group – April 2023

So, plenty going on but many, many questions about when this season will be able to start safely

Looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible next week.

All the best

Andrew Smart  
Chairman Group Officers

[andrew-smart@ntlworld.com](mailto:andrew-smart@ntlworld.com)

## Coaching & Refereeing Update, Bob Lawless

### What's On in the Coaching & Refereeing Development World in Middlesex

#### Interested in gaining a Coaching Qualification?

- Middlesex are inviting member clubs to nominate Senior players who would like support in achieving, The England Rugby Coaching Award (this replaces the old L2 award, which is now more commonly known as the ERCA)
- The programme is free and is open to all who have an interest in coaching in the Senior game. Middlesex currently run a support coach development programme for youth coaches, which includes mentoring support and those interested youth coaches can apply separately.
- The interested persons would have support throughout this season long programme and would have access to development programmes involving session design, coaching philosophy, CPDs involving, skill development individual and unit skills. Information on the relevant RFU regulations would form part of a programme involving on line learning and face2face sessions.

- The design of this programme would allow candidates to continue playing while obtaining this coaching award, a number of the sessions will be duplicated to allow flexibility on availability.
- The funding for this programme is a joint venture between the RFU & Middlesex County and access to all information is free and just require the commitment to see through the season long course
- There will be no interviews and on application there will be a follow up call and those interested in the programme will have a group on line meeting to fully discuss the programme with Q&A
- Those interested should apply to Bob Lawless Chair of Coaching Development on [bob.lawless@middlesexrugby.com](mailto:bob.lawless@middlesexrugby.com) or on (M) 07803196 409 by call, text or WhatsApp

### **Middlesex Coaching Activities**

Middlesex Coaching, with our Academy Partners London Irish and the RFU aims to assist interested persons in their coaching development. This is achieved by running regular Coaching CPDs and assisting those interested in further development by mentoring support. The programme is there for all coaches in Middlesex to assist them on their coaching journey.

### **RFU GMS Coaching CPDs**

There has been some great take up on RFU courses. There is a Tag Course, suitable for all coaches being run at London Welsh RFC on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022 from 19.00hrs – 21.30hrs. for a link to book on this course please contact me direct.

### **Middlesex Coaching CPD**

The next Coaching CPD will be held at Wasps on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and the theme will be building the lineout and is suitable for all youth

coaches. More information on booking for this course will be in the next Middlesex Newsletter

### **Referee Development**

In addition to Middlesex running regular Referees Webinars, the following referees' courses are available.

**Take up The Whistle Courses.** These short courses are a nice introduction to assist interested persons becoming a referee. The idea is to have enough trained up local referees to referee in their own club and clubs in close proximity. Those interested if they wish can go on to achieve the England Refereeing Award (ERA). On completion of the 2-evening classroom / on pitch course each person completing the course will be presented with a whistle, Lanyard and a Middlesex Referees Jersey.

### **Take Up the Whistle Courses**

- Middlesex are looking to hold 5 Take up the Whistle Courses which will be spread amongst the groups
- The Courses will be run in clubs throughout Middlesex. There is a mixture of internal theory and external practical work. The sessions generally run from 19.00hrs – 21.30hrs over 2 evenings
- The next Referee courses will take place in 3<sup>rd</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> October 22, And further information on the dates & Venues for courses in November, January, February and April will be published in the Middlesex Newsletters.

### **Young Referee Match Officials Award**

- This award is open to all youth players between U15s – U18s
- The purpose of the award is for Young Match Officials to help, when possible, in

their clubs / schools and at Middlesex festivals

- On completion of the Course each young match official will receive a Certificate, Whistle, Lanyard and Middlesex a Referees Jersey
- The course will consist of 2 face to face meetings, regular webinars and practical experience.
- For further Information please reply to the contact details below

#### **LSRFUR Take Up the Whistle Course for Women & Girls**

- When - Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2022
- Where - Wasps, Twyford Avenue, Acton, W3 9QA
- Times - 19.00hrs – 21.30hrs
- Cost - £10.00 per person (Normally £25.00 subsidised by the LSRFUR)
- For a booking link please contact me below

**For Further Information on any queries on Coaching or Referee development contact Bob Lawless Chair of Coaching Development on [bob.lawless@middlesexrugby.com](mailto:bob.lawless@middlesexrugby.com) or on (M) 07803196 409 by call, text or WhatsApp.**

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#### **What's On**

**All Clubs Zoom Meeting on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7pm**  
- specifically on Adult Competitions. Again, it is very

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