

December Newsletter 2022

Email: countyoffice@middlesexrugby.com

President's Message

Brian East's Funeral – The County, Old Vulgarians & Belsize Park were out in force to give Brian a wonderful send off at his "Celebration of Life" service and afterwards at his wake.

Middlesex Schools Finals – See below, Middlesex Schools Chairman, Davey Jones' full run down of the week's finals and Festivals where we saw some fantastic Rugby.

Mick Collins – Mick has decided to step down as Chair of Discipline after a magnificent stint. So on behalf of the whole County, I'd like to thank Mick for his unstinting dedication to duty. However, we're pleased to announce that Andy Brooks was appointed by the Board as Mick's replacement, at its December meeting.

Despite the cold weather I've been out and about for Club and County watching Enfield Ignatians, Finchley, Old Streetonians, Hampstead, Old Priorians, Belsize Park & Chiswick in league games as well as watching the Under 20's trials on 10th December and last weekend saw the Under 18's have a good win against Herfordshire at Wasps.

Have a fantastic festive season and a very happy new year.

Kind regards

Peter

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Message from Eddie Keal, Chair, Middlesex

Christmas is almost here! I hope you all find time to take a break and enjoy the time with family and friends. There is a lot of news to share, hence we decided to press on with issuing this Newsletter. We've had sun-dried, waterlogged and are frozen pitches so far this season. Let's hope we get some better and more consistent weather. It's all given me good reasons to visit several Artificial Grass Pitches in the county over the last three weeks. There is much to be positive about between now and the end of the season, and you will get the full support of the County team to help you through some of the inevitable speed bumps. Look out for more news about the Middlesex Sevens and the other end of season finales after the break

Merry Christmas!

Regards

Eddie

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Update from Lou Latter – Chair of Rugby Development

Another year is drawing to a close and we are half way through the 22-23 season already.

Please ensure that you have completed your Club Safeguarding Audit by 31st December. This is a mandatory requirement. If your Club Safeguarding Officer requires assistance with completing the audit by GMS then please reach out to the Middlesex Safeguarding Officer, [Neil Horchover](#).

The Saracens Foundation are running a free webinar as part of their Empower Her programme on Menstruation, with guest speaker Dr Nicky Kear (Hormone Health Expert and Honorary Clinical Lecturer in Medicine at UC:) taking place on

Wednesday 21st December at 4.30pm. You can access the Microsoft Teams invite [here](#).

The RFU have announced funding to improve facilities as part of the [Rugby World Cup 2025 Impact Facility Fund](#). There are two opportunities for clubs to apply before the closing deadline of 31st January 2023.

- [Sanitary Provision Package](#) – clubs can apply to receive sanitary packages from the RFU for their toilets and changing rooms. The value of these packages will be dependent on the existing toilet and sanitary provision at each club but will be approximately £1,000 and include wall mounted sanitary product dispensers, sanitary bins, stock refill packages of period products and innovative items to enhance your female facilities.
- [Toilet Upgrade Grant](#) - Grants of £5,000 will be awarded to clubs to upgrade their female toilet provision. This can include creation of new toilets or the refurbishment of existing facilities.

Watch out for the Honda Volunteer of the Year applications that will open on 16th January 2023 and close on 24th February 2023. Get thinking of your deserving club volunteers to say thank you too.

Wishing you and your families and all your players, volunteers, supporters a very happy festive period. I look forward to working with you all in 2023.

Stay safe

Lou

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Message from Andrew Smart, Chair of Competitions

Since my last report in our newsletter, we have lost a further three community clubs from the RFU league structure for the rest of the season. Unfortunately, this now takes us to five in total for

the 2022/23 season and we now have 36 of our community clubs playing in the RFU leagues down from the 41 we had going into the 2022/23 season.

Finsbury Park, from Counties 2 Herts/Middx, Staines from Counties 3 Surrey and London French from Counties 4 Surrey. All three clubs have only one team, have struggled with injuries, lack of players and availability Each has conceded walkovers, and none of them was able to record a win in their respective leagues before their withdrawal

Staines have now picked up the fixtures of the London French in Counties Four Surrey for the rest of the season effectively dropping a level in standard but playing the fixtures as friendlies whilst London French have now picked the fixtures of University of Surrey (who have also withdrawn from the leagues) in Counties 5 Surrey. Again, effectively dropping a level in standard but again playing the fixtures as friendlies Both clubs did as you know elected for level transfer to Surrey for their league rugby over the summer. stating that it would be easier for their players to travel to Surrey clubs than continue to travel up into Hertfordshire

I have been able to find a place for Finsbury Park in MMT2, playing fixtures from the beginning of January. They are committed to continuing to play and have already played a couple of friendlies. They assure me that they will be applying to re-join the leagues for next season. The most important thing for these clubs plus Mill Hill and West London is that we, together with our partners in Hertfordshire and Surrey, have been able to provide alternative playing opportunities which hopefully will allow each of them to rebuild their playing numbers and secure their future, certainly in the short to medium term.

At the same time the final figures have emerged for the Papa John Community Cup. Across the Country 62% of all eligible clubs, have entered including twenty-five from Middlesex, which is just under 70% of our eligible clubs. I suspect that overall, the RFU Competitions Sub-Committee will be pleased with those numbers but of course the real test will

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come at the end of March when clubs will be asked to honour those commitments. There is still no real detail of how the competitions, especially at level 7 and below will look. and no indication at all of when the draw will be made and the fixtures published.

We have now had two weekends devastated by the weather. On the 10th December only 34% of the matches were played because of the bad weather whilst in the weekend just gone that dropped to just below 8% with only 14 games going ahead out of 117 scheduled. We already had five Middlesex clubs who are now having to play ten games in a row after Christmas, playing every weekend from the 7th January right through to the 11th March inclusive although those numbers have increased since last weekend. Of those five, three are now also playing on the 18th March and all three Teddington, Hackney and HAC have also entered the national cup competition with up to another six consecutive matches depending on how far they get in their competition. I am still working out what the re-arranged fixtures are looking like for the rest of our clubs and who else is having to play on the 18th March but I count at least another nine who will be playing over that weekend and beyond of course if they have also entered the National Cup. Should the bad weather continue in early 2023 and fixtures continue to go down we are very close to being in a situation, with the pressure from the start of the National Cup competition, the lack of flexibility of the structured season, where some clubs will not be able to complete their league season.

Despite these strains on our game and clubs, rugby of course continues to be played and as we go into the Christmas break (and indeed the last break in the season for some of our clubs) it is time for an update on how our clubs are doing

In the Championship Ealing Trailfinders continue their perfect start with nine try bonus point wins, although they now trail unbeaten Jersey Reds by three points albeit with a game in hand. Their home fixture against Jersey on Christmas eve ko midday should be an absolute cracker for anyone looking for some rugby to watch. Unfortunately, London Scottish continues to struggle although they have

now recorded their first win of the season away to the side immediately above them but they remain bottom six points adrift.

At level 5, in Regional 1 Central, London Welsh continue to improve after an uncertain start and are now up to eighth. In their sister league Regional 1 South-East CS Stags 1863 have again dropped slightly off the pace and drop to seventh

In Regional 2 Anglia HAC who have been one of the worst affected clubs by postponements have dropped to fourth some ten points behind Southend the new leaders although with two games in hand. In Regional 2 Thames Hammersmith and Fulham, remain top by ten points over Old Priorians. London Cornish drop to seventh with Belsize Park ninth and Old Haberdashers eleventh and currently in one of the two relegation places two points adrift of safety

At level 7 in Counties 1 Essex, Epping Upper Clapton remain tenth. In Counties 1 Herts/Middx Grasshoppers now only lead the table by one point following their home loss to Chiswick on Saturday who move up to third. Old Streetonians drop to fourth. Finchley remain seventh, Hampstead remain eighth, Ruislip up to ninth. Enfield Ignatians eleventh and Hackney with two games in hand remain bottom. In Counties 1 Surrey/Sussex Twickenham are fifth but with one game in hand

At level 8, in Counties 2 Surrey, Teddington unbeaten sit proudly top by seven points and with a game in hand points whilst London Exiles drop to bottom having failed to honour three fixtures. In Counties 2 Herts/Middx Ealing Trailfinders 1871 drop to second by one point from Cheshunt who have a game in hand., nine points ahead of London Scottish Lions who have two games in hand. Saracens Amateurs remain fourth also with two games in hand, Wasps FC up to fifth, Hendon drop to eighth whilst Harrow remain eleventh and bottom following the withdrawal of Finsbury Park

In Counties 3 Herts/Middx Brunel University who remain unbeaten are top by eight points. Old Millhillians remain third, Bank Lane up to fourth UCS drop to fifth Thamesians are seventh,

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Actonians eighth, Kilburn Cosmos and Uxbridge swapping places now ninth and tenth respectively

At level ten in Surrey 4, Old Paulines remain second on points difference although they have played a game more, Harlequin Amateurs up to third with London French withdrawing from the league

At level 11 in Surrey 5, Old Hamptonians remain top by six points

Next to Wasps. I am delighted to say that the Wasps Men's professional side returns to the leagues next season in the Championship having satisfied all the requirements set out by the RFU for their return following administrations. At the same time, we heard the disappointing news that Wasps were unsuccessful in their tender to remain a part of the Allianz Premier XV's competition for next season. With four Middlesex clubs applying together with London Irish all so close to each other, it was always going to be difficult for them all to succeed especially as the RFU was keen to expand the competition geographically. In the end Harlequins, Saracens and Ealing were all successful with London Irish joining Wasps as two of the unsuccessful clubs. There are still two places to be filled, appeals process to go through but it seems unlikely that the RFU will be looking for more London clubs especially with the complete lack of clubs from the North

In this year's competition which started late because of the women's World Cup Harlequins Women are fourth after five rounds, Saracens Women seventh but with a game in hand, Wasps Women ninth with no points only sitting above DMP Sale on points difference

Finally, can I take this opportunity to wish you and all your families a very happy Christmas and all the best for 2023

Please enjoy your break. I don't see the rest of the 2023 season being any easier for many of us than it has been so far

Keep safe

Andrew Smart

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Report from Chair of Groups, Andrew Smart

Not much to report as we approach the Christmas break, which for some of us can't come quickly enough. The next round of Group meetings are as follows. Venues and Agendas to be circulated closer to the dates

South Group Monday 23rd January

West Group Wednesday 25th January

North Group Monday 6th February

North West Wednesday 8th February

With two very successful "Pick Up the Whistle Courses" already been held for the West Group at Grasshoppers in September and the North Group at Old Grammarians in November joining details for the North West group at Harrow on the 23rd and 30th January and South Group at Twickenham on the 17th and 24th April are below.

[Book your Place – LSRFUR Take Up the Whistle Course \(Harrow RFC\) - over 2 Nights – Harrow RFC, Mon 23 Jan 2023 7:00 PM - Mon 30 Jan 2023 9:30 PM \(tickettailor.com\)](#)

[Book your Place – LSRFUR Take Up the Whistle Course \(Twickenham RFC\) - over 2 Nights – Twickenham RFC, Mon 17 Apr 2023 7:00 PM - Mon 24 Apr 2023 9:30 PM \(tickettailor.com\)](#)

These courses continue to be very successful and well supported. Once again, many thanks to Bob Ockenden from the London Society of Referees and our own Bob Lawless for all their work in getting these courses organized and running and of course

to the county for continued financial support. At a time when the North and West Referees list continues to struggle to allocate referees to our game these are absolutely crucial in identifying and supporting the referees of the future without whom we would have no game at all.

Finally, can I take this opportunity on behalf of everyone from the Group Officers Committee, as we approach a well-deserved break, to wish you all and your families a very happy Christmas and all the best for what continues to be a very challenging 2023

Andrew Smart
Chairman Group Officers

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Coaching & Refereeing Update, Bob Lawless

RFU / Middlesex Targeted funding Coach Development. - The Middlesex Coaching group started Day 1 of The England Rugby Coaching Award (ERCA) on Sunday 4/12/2022. Day 2 will be on Sunday 2nd July 2023. A group of **26** coaches from the following Middlesex clubs, Quintin, Finsbury Park, Old Actonian's, Uxbridge, Old Streetonians, Feltham, London French, Harrow, Twickenham, Old Grammarians, Hammersmith & Fulham and Hampstead are on the Middlesex ERCA coaching course and **19** attended the first day. Others will attend the next ERCA course in 2023. Support in the form of Webinars, on field coaching CPDs & mentoring will be available for each of these coaches in preparation for the final day.

Referee Development - This season and to date there have been **4** Take up the Whistle referee courses in Middlesex with **70** newly trained up referees in attendance. In addition, the RFU have run an England Rugby Referee Award (ERRA) at Harrow School with **24** candidates attending.

Further Take up the Whistle Courses will be taking place in Middlesex at the following venues.

Mondays 23rd & 30th January 2023 "Take up the Whistle Course" Venue Harrow RFC

Mondays 17th 24th April 2023 - "Take up the Whistle Course" Venue Twickenham RFC

"Take up the Whistle Course" Young Match officials Course – Grasshoppers & Finchley Dates TBC

Middlesex Coach Education sessions. - To date this season Middlesex have run **6** Coach education sessions, with **127** coaches attending and **68** young players gaining personal development while participating in the coaching sessions. Further Coach education sessions will take place at Hampstead, Haringey, Finchley and Twickenham in 2023. The focus groups will be girls & youth coaches, senior coaches and an advanced Coaching CPD for our higher-level coaches to be held at London Irish. In addition, a number of coaching webinars are planned. At the end of the season a Coaching Conference is being planned together with a summer programme for coaches linked with player development.

Middlesex On Line Coach Education Weekly Update of Rugby Coaching Skills. - A weekly update of all skills which are trending is available to all Middlesex Coaches. There are **450** Middlesex coaches registered to receive the Friday Newsletter which gives them access to over **2,500** skill development drills. In addition, Middlesex clubs can advertise for coaches in this weekly circular.

London Irish Coach Education Programme. - Our London Irish & Middlesex partnership, allows Middlesex coaches to view DPP / Academy sessions, where coaches are updated on the DPP & Academy programme. Coaches also get a close-up view of what is trending in skill development and have explained to them the various techniques and practices currently being used in player

development. To date 3 sessions have taken place with more sessions planned for the spring. In addition, the London Irish have a monthly coaching webinar available for coaches to log into. There is also access for Middlesex Coaches to get involved with coaching in the DPP and these coaches will have access to further coach education sessions and mentoring from the Academy Coach Development Officer. Other coach education sessions are being planned for 2023 and these will be circulated through the Middlesex communication platforms

RFU Coaching Courses - RFU Courses to date this season have included – Emergency aid in rugby union – England rugby coaching award (ERCA) – England rugby mentoring award – England rugby referee award (ERRA) - kids first contact, kids first tag, play it safe and principles of scrummaging all held in Middlesex, these courses have upskilled over **700** Middlesex coaches.

Currently the RFU Coaching staff are mentoring with coaches, referees and mentors who have attended the recent RFU courses. Preparation continues for the Principles of Lineout Courses in March and preparing courses for the rest of the calendar year. School coaching days are being agreed and constructed for the summer and they are looking at colts' transition and other specific work strands. There is a large piece of data and insight work to make sure they are working with the right people in the game and being as inclusive as they can to enhance diversity in the sport.

For More Information on any areas of Coach & Referee development or an update on any of the above information. please contact Bob Lawless on bob.lawless@middlesexrugby.com or (M) 07803 196409.

Middlesex Referee Course

Interested in commencing a pathway to becoming a referee.?

“Take up The Whistle Course” is available to any person in Middlesex who would like to take up this new challenge. This course will give you enough knowledge to referee youth and local senior games and is a great stepping stone to those who wish to take up refereeing at a higher level. The Course is run over 2 evenings and contains some indoor theory work combined with the outdoor practical sessions. All candidates will be able to claim back their joining fees and be presented with a Middlesex Referees shirt on completion of the course and practical refereeing of number of youth Senior or Festival games.

See below links to book these two courses:

For Further Information or any queries on Coaching or Referee development contact Bob Lawless Middlesex Chair of Coaching & Referee Development on bob.lawless@middlesexrugby.com or on (M) 07803 196 409 by call, text or WhatsApp.

Middlesex Chairman Schools Rugby Report December 2022

This year Middlesex Rugby had the pleasure of hosting seven festivals and five finals, which represented the best of schoolboy and schoolgirl rugby in the county. 126 teams entered this year's Middlesex tournaments, which culminated in an exciting and hotly contested finals week.

Please see below the **2022/23** results:-

- U18 Plate **Winners Cardinal Vaughan 33** v Greycourt 28
- U16 cup **Winners Mill Hill** and Runners up Hampton School
- U16 Plate **Winners St James' Boys School 43** and Runners up Greycourt 14

- U15 Boys Cup **Winners Hampton School v** Runners up St Benedicts
- U15 Plate boys **Winners Greycourt 33** and runners up The Richmond upon Thames School 29
- U14 Boys Cup **Winners St Richard Reynolds 31** and Runners up Hampton 22
- U14 Plate **Winners St James's Boys School 17** and runners up Fulham Boys School 12
- U16 Girls Cup **Winners The Richmond upon Thames School v** runners up St Richard Reynolds School
- U14 Girls Cup **Winners St Richard Reynolds v** runners up Waldegrave School
- U12 Girls Cup **Winners Waldegrave School v** runners up Richmond upon thames School

U13 Rugby Festival

Cup winners – Hampton School

Cup runners up – St Benedicts School

Plate Winners – Enfield Grammar School

Plate runners up – The Douay Martyrs School

Vase winners – Latymer Upper School

Vase Runners Up – Orleans Park School

Shield Winners – Greycourt School

Shield runners up – Turing House School

U12 Rugby Festival

Performance Leagues

Cup

Winners - London Oratory School

Runners up - Hampton School

Plate

Winners - Halliford School

Runners up - Cardinal Vaughan

Shield

Winners - The Richmond upon Thames School

Runners up - Greycourt School School

Bowl

Winners - Latymer Upper School

Runners up - St James Boys School

Development Leagues

First

Winners - Christs School

Runners up - London Oratory School (B)

Second

Winners - St Benedict's School (B)

Runners up - London Oratory School (C)

Third

Winners - UCS School (B)

Runners up - Ealing Fields School

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO:-

- **Kevin Moran** for leading a fantastic U12 Festival at Grasshoppers RFC
- **Ben Wassell** for hosting an excellent U13 rugby festival at St James Boys' School
- **Connall Devlin** (Middlesex Secretary) for his hard work and organisation with the festivals
- **Nicky Fielder and Charles Portsmouth** for their help and assistance
- **Matt Gillmore** for the fantastic contribution and hosting of the competitions at Grasshoppers RFC and for skillfully refereeing two finals
- **Philip Willis** - for outstanding refereeing
- **Ellie Pritchard and Sarah Dider** our physio team who provided excellent pitch side medical care
- **Peter Baveystock** and his team of blazers (**Nigel Orton, Bob Lawless, Jerry Rogers, Tom Brownsell, Charles Portsmouth, Steve Rac, Mike Searls, David Hiles, Jok Dunbar**) who warmly welcomed all teams.

I am delighted that we were able to deliver another fantastic season of Middlesex rugby and look forward to the eagerly awaited Middlesex Schools sevens competitions. Details of which will be published shortly.

I wish you all and your families a very merry Christmas.

Yours faithfully



David Jones

Chairman Middlesex Schools Rugby

What's On

Take Up the Whistle:

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Next Round of Group Meetings:

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North West Wednesday 8th February

**Middlesex 7's – Saturday 13th May –
Grasshoppers RFC.**

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Hold the Date - Middlesex Clubs Dinner

Friday 19th May at London Welsh RFC

Guest Speaker RFU Chairman, Tom Ilube

- £65 per head
- RFU League Winners Awards to be presented
- Lots of interactive stuff

Booking details out soon

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