

## January Newsletter 2022

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

### President's Message

**Deputy President** - Do you know anyone of high rugby standing within Middlesex who might be a suitable candidate for Deputy County President? If so, or you wish to nominate yourself then please let me know [peter.baveystock@middlesexrugby.com](mailto:peter.baveystock@middlesexrugby.com) know asap. The post is open to all players, coaches, match officials and club/county volunteers from any background. Given the role's status, candidates would need to be able to give time and have high integrity to act as the County's ambassador.

The vacancy will arise as the current Deputy, Nigel Orton, is due to accede to the Presidency this July. We are starting our search to replace Nigel and seek to appoint someone to act for two seasons (2023-2025). The Deputy normally expects to progress on to become President, this being from 2025 to 2027.

*The Appointments Committee: (Peter Baveystock, Nigel Orton & Bob Lawless)*

### Congratulations to:

**Floyd Steadman OBE** - Awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honours List for services to Education, Charity and Rugby.

<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/jun/04/floyd-steadman-the-saracens-scrum-half-turned-headmaster-that-spotted-marco-itoje-potential-england-lions>

**Deborah Griffin, Mary Forsyth & Sue Dorrington** - Who've been inducted into the **World Rugby Hall of Fame** for their part in instigating the 1991 Women's World Cup. All three played for Finchley Women. Amazingly, eleven of that Finchley side went onto play international Rugby.

It's been a great rugby month for me including Club and Age Grade visits which included Friday night visits to Chiswick when they played Ruislip and the following week it was off to Saracens Amateurs to see them play Tabard.

My Age Grade visits started in a very wet Thurrock to see the under 18's beat Essex. Then last weekend it was off to Wasps to see the Under 18 Girls play Surrey and although they lost they thoroughly enjoyed the game and plays so great rugby despite it being their first game.

Kind regards

Peter

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

### Message from Eddie Keal, Chair, Middlesex

Here is another action-packed edition of the Newsletter. We do our best to get information out each month, rather than showcasing the huge amount of work that goes on behind the scenes running the County. I think that you, the County members, prefer it that way. I'm sure it's clear to everyone that it takes a lot of volunteer time to make the wheels go round.

I'm delighted that once again we are able to reward a small number of volunteers with Twickenham tickets for the Six Nations. The gesture is money well spent.

You can sense that end of season planning is upon us from some of the articles in this issue. And with end of season comes a lot of County events, almost all of which will be at club venues.

This should reach you before the next round of group meetings commences (but only just) and I look forward to seeing many of you at those. If you think you would be interested in a County role, please talk to one of us. We need to cast the net as widely as possible!

Regards

Eddie

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

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

Happy New Year to you all (hopefully it's not too late to say that now we are mid-January?).

The [Honda Volunteer of the Year nominations](#) are now open and deadline for entries is 5pm on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> February. Please do get nominating your club volunteers. All nominees from Middlesex clubs will be invited to our awards evening at Twickenham Stadium on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> July, where we will announce the overall volunteer winners and club winners.

Please remember to look at the facilities funding available as part of the [Rugby World Cup 2025 Impact Facility Fund](#). There are two opportunities for clubs to apply before the closing deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> 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.

Sport England have also relaunched the [Sport England Small Grants programme](#). The grant has a maximum potential grant of £15,000 and any application should have planning consent or landlord's consent submitted with the application and the project be ready to start within 6 weeks of the award date. Closing date is 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

As we head into the final months of the season, we will see the Middlesex Mini's festivals take place at clubs across the county. Please do get the dates in your diary.

U7s – Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> March at Teddington  
U8s – Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> March at Rosslyn Park  
U9s – Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> March at Ealing  
U10s – Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> March at Ruislip  
U11s – Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> March at Wasps FC

As ever, if you need any help and support on or off the field, then please do reach out and let me know.

Lou

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

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

The Christmas break has allowed me to do some analysis around where our clubs currently are, what their commitments are for the rest of the league season and to start some work on some options for our Counties leagues for the 2023/24 which I will be circulating to clubs later this week for consultation. As we know the last two rounds of league matches before the Christmas break were devastated by the weather, with 34% of matches only being played on the 10<sup>th</sup> December, dropping to just below 8% the following weekend. Added to the fixtures lost at the beginning of the season because of the drought and the lack of flexibility in the season we now have six Middlesex Clubs now playing on the 18<sup>th</sup> March which is the last break

weekend before the National Cup Competition starts the following weekend. As it stands, we have twenty-one Middlesex Clubs now playing on the 4<sup>th</sup> February, twelve playing on the 25<sup>th</sup> February, of which ten will also have played on the 4<sup>th</sup> February, and finally seven on the 18<sup>th</sup> March. Of those four clubs, Teddington, Hackney, HAC and now Hampstead, who also need to play on both the 4<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February (eleven consecutive weekends of league rugby) and of those four, three apart from Hampstead have also entered the national cup competition with up to another six consecutive matches depending on how far they get in their competition. There is no doubt that this fixture congestion will continue to put a severe strain on our clubs with the resultant pressure on our faltering merit tables. Although very wet we got nearly two full league programmes since the league programme re-started on the 7<sup>th</sup> January gone but 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.

Interesting the completion rate for our three counties leagues ranked nationally (out of 102 leagues) as of the 22<sup>nd</sup> December are as follows

Counties 1 H/M 23<sup>rd</sup> 97.3%  
Counties 2 H/M 87<sup>th</sup> 75.3%  
Counties 3 H/M 95<sup>th</sup> 71.4%

Not great reading I'm afraid for two out of the three leagues although there were 100% competition rates across both Counties 2 and 3 H/M since the New Year which should see their percentage rates improve.

There has a raft of work completed by the RFU Competitions Task and Finish Group looking at the leagues and structured season for 2023/24. They have maintained that everything is on the table and they intend to have decided on their position about the way forward by around the 8<sup>th</sup> February. However, from what I have been have been hearing

the best that can be said is that apart from tinkering around the edges the basic premise will remain the same with the league season due to start on the first week on September, ending in the second week of March and with the Papa John's Cup dominating the last six weeks, with little or no consideration about the World Cup running from the 9<sup>th</sup> September until the 28<sup>th</sup> October which for some reason they believe will have little impact on the league programme. Absolutely extraordinary. There is nothing we can do about the Regionals Leagues. They are regional and under the control ultimately of the RFU. The Counties leagues are a different proposition albeit we need to work with our partners in Hertfordshire. However, I believe that if what I am being told is ultimately correct that is not good enough for us and if we continue as we have this season, we will continue to see our clubs and game under significant strain locally with a further significant downturn on participation. We have I believe no other option the in conjunction with the clubs start making some decisions about the future of our leagues and the clubs that play in them for next season. I don't trust the RFU Competitions Sub-Committee to get it right for us. I very much hope that what they produce in February proves me wrong but I fear that another season of doing what we are now will see our game locally continue to fail.

Anyway, this week I am taking the first steps by preparing a paper looking at a number of different options for our three Counties leagues for next season. The idea is to provide three options which will first go out to the first to our DOC representatives Bob Lawless for Middlesex and David Toon for Hertfordshire and also the league secretaries for the three Herts/Middx Counties leagues before sending out to the clubs for consultation I expect to get something out to our clubs across Middlesex and Hertfordshire in the next couple of weeks and will be an agenda point at the four Group Meetings which start on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January.

Finally, onto the rugby and how are clubs are doing

In the Championship Ealing Trailfinders after thrashing top of the table Jersey just before Christmas then had a horrendous loss at second bottom Caldy. Still a try bonus point victory on Saturday sees them top by five clear points. Unfortunately, London Scottish continues to struggle, bottom and now eight points adrift.

At level 5, in Regional 1 Central, London Welsh, continue to improve and move up two places to sixth. In their sister league Regional 1 South-East CS Stags 1863 are currently going in the wrong direction and have fallen two places to ninth albeit with a six-point cushion from the relegation places

In Regional 2 Anglia HAC move up to third with a game in hand over the top side in the league and two over the club in second place. In Regional 2 Thames Hammersmith and Fulham, remain top now by twelve points with thirteen over third placed Old Priorians. Belsize Park jump two places to seventh. London Cornish drop to eight with Old Haberdashers moving up to tenth and out of a relegation position after their home win to Cornish on Saturday.

At level 7 in Counties 1 Essex, Epping Upper Clapton go up a place to ninth. In Counties 1 Herts/Middx Grasshoppers drop to second behind Hemel Hampstead with the same number of points but the Herts recording one more victory sees them at the top of the table. Chiswick remain third, Old Streetonians fourth. Finchley seventh, Hampstead remain eighth, Ruislip up to eighth. Hampstead drop one place to ninth, Enfield Ignatians eleventh one point off the team above them and a game in hand and Hackney with two games in hand remain bottom. In Counties 1 Surrey/Sussex Twickenham remain fifth but with two games in hand

At level 8, in Counties 2 Surrey, Teddington continue their brilliant season, still unbeaten, top by seven points and with a game in hand points whilst at the other end of the table London Exiles continue to struggle but recorded an excellent win against mid table opposition on Saturday remain bottom. In Counties 2 Herts/Middx Ealing Trailfinders 1871 remain second by two points from Cheshunt who

have a game in hand., eight points ahead of London Scottish Lions who have two games in hand. Saracens Amateurs remain fourth also with two games in hand, Hendon up to fifth, Wasps FC drop to sixth 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 fifteen points. Old Millhillians up to second with two games in hand, Bank Lane remain fourth, Thamesians up to fifth UCS drop to sixth Kilburn up to eighth, Actonians drop to ninth and Uxbridge remain tenth. Much still to play for all these clubs with only Brunel and Thamesians having played the full number of games before the league splits in phase two

At level ten in Surrey 4, Old Paulines remain second with Harlequin Amateurs dropping a place to fourth.

At level 11 in Surrey 5, Old Hamptonians remain top by two points but with a game in hand.

In the Allianz Premier XV's, Harlequins Women up to third after seven rounds, Saracens Women up to sixth but with a game in hand, Wasps Women remain ninth with no points only sitting above DMP Sale on points difference

Finally, a Happy New Year to you all

Andrew Smart

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

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

Not much to report as we come out of the Christmas festivities. I trust everyone had an enjoyable and well-deserved break. Can I take this opportunity to wish you and your families a belated Happy New Year and all the best for 2023 The next round of Group meetings are as follows. Venues and Agendas to be circulated closer to the dates

South Group Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> January

West Group Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> January

North Group Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February

North West Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> February

One of the agenda points as I have mentioned in my competitions report will be a consultation with our clubs about potential formats for our three H/M Counties League for next season and discussions I will be having with the CBs who have responsibility for our clubs who play in Essex in Surrey about their own plans for their leagues for next season

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 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> January and South Group at Twickenham on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> April are below.

At the moment fourteen of the twenty places at Harrow have been taken so there is room for anyone even this close to the course start

At Twickenham which is just about three months to go four of the twenty places have been taken. So, plenty of time and plenty of availability. Don't lose your opportunity by waiting to long. For those of you still interested in attending either course the joining details are as follows

[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 \(tickettailor.com\)](#)

Andrew Smart

Chairman Group Officers

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

### Update on Coaching and Referee Development

The following online sessions are available to all Middlesex Coaches

**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023** – Online Webinar – **Theme** is, **Feedback** and runs from 19.00hrs – 20.00hrs. The Tutor for this session is London Irish Academy Coach Development Officer, Matt Fiander.

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023** – Online webinar – **Theme** is, **Session Design** and runs from 19.00hrs – 20.00hrs. The Tutor for this session is London Irish Academy Coach Jack Pattinson.

**Monday 30<sup>th</sup> January** – Online Webinar – **Theme** is, **Learning Styles & Behaviours** and runs from 19.30hrs – 20.30hrs. The Tutor for this session is Mark Turner, St Marys University

**For Login details please contact Bob Lawless on [bob.lawless@middlesexrugby.com](mailto:bob.lawless@middlesexrugby.com) or (M) 07803 196 409.**

### Refereeing Development.

#### Middlesex Referee Course

Interested in commencing a pathway to becoming a referee.?

The following: **“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 will be presented with a Middlesex Referees shirt on completion of the course.

### **Course Title – Take up the Whistle**

**Venue – Harrow RFC**

**Dates - Mondays 23<sup>rd</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

**For more information and a link to joining this refereeing course please contact - Bob Lawless on [bob.lawless@middlesexrugby.com](mailto:bob.lawless@middlesexrugby.com) or (M) 07803 196409.**

### **Calling All Involved with AGE Grade Rugby both in the Girls & Boys game**

To all involved with Age Grade Rugby, Administrators, Directors of Youth Rugby, Team Managers, Coaches & Parents. You are invited to an online Age Grade Update session,

**Host** - Mark Saltmarsh, RFU National Age Grade Player Manager.

#### **Topics Covered**

- (1) Current state of Play in Age Grade and Future developments
- (2) Key Regulations Update
- (3) Support & Resources
- (4) Q&A

**Date** – Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

**Time** - The online session will take place between 18.30hrs – 19.30hrs

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88285763474?pwd=U3E3WU55dUs3MVIQMjE3d2t1M0N5QT09>

Meeting ID: 882 8576 3474  
Passcode: 770417

**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](mailto:bob.lawless@middlesexrugby.com) or (M) 07803 196409.**

### **What's On**

#### **Calling all budding Referees**

[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 \(tickettailor.com\)](#)

#### **Next Round of Group Meetings:**

South Group Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> January

West Group Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> January

North Group Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February

North West Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> February

**Middlesex 7's – Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May –**

**Grasshoppers RFC.**

**KEEP UPDATED  
FOLLOW US ON :**

## County Clubs Dinner

To *Committee members, match officials and players, volunteers, and coaches in Middlesex's Clubs*



**Friday 19 May 2023, Old Deer Park, 187 Kew Rd,  
Richmond TW9 2AZ, 7.00 for 7.30**

**KEEP UPDATED  
FOLLOW US ON :**