

March Newsletter 2023

Email: countyoffice@middlesexrugby.com

Middlesex All Club 7s 2023 Invitation

We're opening this month's newsletter with an invitation to the revitalised Middlesex All Club Sevens 2023. The Middlesex All Club Sevens competition is back in style with a new format!

The primary change is that the whole day has been designed around the needs of our County's clubs. It's your festival and we plan for every one of you to enter at least one of the competitions. The competition will only be open to Middlesex and/or affiliated sides.

The second big change is that this should cost you nothing! There is a £120 registration fee, but it will be returned on the day in the form of cash vouchers for food or the bar.

Date: Saturday 13th May 2023

Venue: Grasshoppers RFC

Cost: £120 per team (inc VAT)

There will be three competitions

Male Open

Female Open

Male Social

**To register, simply use the blue button below
(CTRL and click)**

Get me in Now!

There will be plenty of rugby for everyone. After the group stages, teams will compete for either the main Cup, Plate or Bowl Trophy in the Men's Open competition, the Vase, Shield and Jug Trophies in the Men's Social competition, or the Flynn Rose bowl for the Women's Open competition.

We are still working on the prizes but aiming to include – Stash, Playing Shirts, Match Balls and bragging rights to be the best 7's team in the county.

Clubs can enter as many teams as they like into the competitions.

Please do sign up at the soonest (**no later than Friday 7th April**) to help with planning and administration ahead of the day.

President's Message

"Here comes summer" Yes last week the sun didn't set until 6pm and it won't set before 6pm until the end of October! However, we've still got a lot of rugby to play until the end of this season. The leagues are over for many of us but some still have league games to play this weekend. Then on 1st April we start the various levels of Papa John's Cup so for those who have entered that I wish you well.

As for season 2022/23 I've been busy seeing as many end of season games starting at Hackney v Grasshoppers last week and then under lights last week it was: Hammersmith & Fulham v Old Haberdashers on Thursday then on Friday I went to see Twickenham play Old Tiffinians. With H&F and Twickenham running out winners and H&F being the league Champions.

On Saturday I went to Chipstead to see Teddington win to take that league Championship.

I rounded off on Sunday with a visit to the last Festival with the Under 11's at Wasps. I have to say a big thanks you to Waheed and the respective Clubs for making them all a great success once again.

Finally, please see details enclosed for the Middlesex 7's on 13th May and the Middlesex Clubs Dinner on 19th May and I look forward to seeing to at both.

Kind regards

Peter

peter.baveystock@middlesexrugby.com

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Message from Eddie Keal, Chair

The 6 Nations is over, I hope your bar tills are full and everyone enjoyed the tournament. Congratulations to Ireland and let's hope England will be resurgent for the Men's Rugby World Cup later this year.

The Women's 6 Nations starts this weekend so we have the opportunity to spend a few more afternoons in our clubhouses! The round-five fixture on 29th April at Twickenham will hopefully be a chance to see England take the silverware.

Thank you for all the volunteer nominations. We have some judging to do which will fill a couple of evenings.

I met the RFU Chair, Tom Ilube recently, and he mentioned that he is very much looking forward to visiting London Welsh (his old club) for our County Clubs Dinner. Tom will be speaking.

I'll be watching as much of the North West Group floodlit cup competition as I can, starting at Harrow tomorrow evening.

I hope you've all booked your Middlesex 7s places - or you just needed this little nudge to get on with it! We have shamelessly put the invitation and link right at the top of the letter so you can't miss it!

Finally, we are in the middle of the Tackle Height consultation, so more of that next time, probably after we've had another All-Clubs Zoom on the topic.

Regards
Eddie
eddie.keal@middlesexrugby.com

Message from The County Secretary

GOING ON TOUR – remember to get approval.

At this time of year many clubs think about going on tour both adults and youth. Whether you are an England international or a part time player for your local side, going on tour is a fantastic way to build team spirit, morale and identity. It provides a rare and exciting opportunity for players and coaches to get to know each other that little bit better and helps to establish a common style and purpose. Tours often provide memories and friendships that will last a lifetime; the camaraderie can be second to none.

When planning a tour, whether overseas or hosting a team from another country, clubs, teams, and schools (of any level or any age, male or female) need to obtain approval from your CB. If you're planning on touring with children and/or vulnerable adults it is essential that you read our [Touring with Children](#) Guide. If you are a school then please refer to the [schools page](#) of the RFU website.

Similarly, for those planning an Age Grade festival or tournament approval from the CB is needed before advertising your festival.

Forms and how to apply for a tour/Age Grade Festival can be found on the Middlesex Rugby website at [Middlesex Rugby : Rugby Tours, Tournaments and Age Grade Festivals](#)

Whatever you do, enjoy the Rugby.

Regards
Tim
Tim.miller@middlesexrugby

Update from Lou Latter – Chair of Rugby Development

Congratulations to Ireland on winning the men's 6Nations. All eyes now turn to the women's 6Nations and the culmination of the Red Roses playing France at the first ever standalone women's 6Nations fixtures at Twickenham on the 29th April (don't forget to get your [tickets](#)).

The [Honda Volunteer of the Year nominations](#) are now closed and Middlesex clubs submitted 109 nominations covering 40 clubs and over 200 volunteers across the 3 categories. We are now busy organising the event where all our nominees will be invited to Twickenham in a celebration of their contribution to their clubs on 7th July. Invitations will be coming out shortly. Congratulations to all the volunteers who have been nominated.

The Middlesex Mini's festivals have yet again been a great success and have seen hundreds of U7, U8, U9, U10 and U11 players enjoying their rugby at the five festivals. Special thanks go to Teddington, Rosslyn Park, Ealing, Ruislip and Wasps FC for hosting the festivals over the last three weekends.

As the Age Grade season draws to a close (Monday 1st May 2023), clubs are reminded to check [Regulation 15 Age Grade Out of Season Activities Guide](#) for what you can and can't do with the different age groups over the off season. As you prepare for the 2023-2024 season, which starts on the 2nd September please refer to the [Age Grade calendar](#). Clubs are also reminded that all club festivals need to be approved by the County so please direct any festival enquiries to [Waheed Aslam](#) and for those clubs/teams wishing to tour, please do ensure you get the correct approvals from the [Middlesex County Office](#). More details on incoming and outgoing tours can be found on the [England Rugby](#) and [Middlesex](#) websites.

We are excited to be collaborating with Surrey CB and London Irish for the St. George's Day Girls Festival this year, which will be held on Sunday 30th April at the London Irish Hazelwood ground. 76 teams have entered across the U12, U14, U16 and U18 age groups in what will be a great end of season festival for the girls.

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

Message from Andrew Smart, Chair of Competitions

Although there are a couple of leagues still to be decided involving Middlesex Clubs, the first catch up weekend just passed of the 18th March, has seen the conclusion for most of our clubs of their league's campaigns. With the draw for the Papa John's Cup due to be made on Monday 20th and released on the 21st reliant in many cases on where clubs end up in their leagues this is absolutely crucial. Also more importantly we are now able pretty much able to confirm the final league placings of our clubs and congratulate champion clubs

We start with the Championship where Ealing Trailfinders with five rounds to go lead Jersey Reds by six points although they have played a game more. Unfortunately, London Scottish remain rooted to the bottom now eight points adrift

At level 5, in Regional 1 Central, London Welsh, finish sixth whilst in their sister league Regional 1 South-East CS Stags 1863, after a disappointing second half of the season. nevertheless, did enough to avoid the relegation places, finishing in tenth

In Regional 2 Anglia HAC finish runners, an excellent performance after their return to level six rugby, perhaps a bit disappointed with only the

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champion club being promoted. In Regional 2 Thames we have our first champions club with Hammersmith and Fulham, despite a nervy end to season finishing top by five points promoted to level 5, I believe for the first time in their history. Old Priorians finish fourth. London Cornish sixth, Belsize Park ninth with Old Haberdashers This is important because as I have said before, any relegations from level 6 leagues by Herts or Middlesex clubs creates a further relegation place in the Herts/Middx Counties leagues.

At level 7 in Counties 1 Essex, Epping Upper Clapton finish seventh. In Counties 1 Herts/Middx Grasshoppers are top by two points although they have played a game more than Hemel Hempstead who play their final game next week. With only the eighteen champion sides at level 7 guaranteed promotion, the result of next week's game would be crucial not only to determine the league winners but also as to who goes up. Nevertheless, the outstanding points percentage of both clubs means that whoever ends up second will also be promoted as one the six runners-up with the best playing record. So many congratulations to Grasshopper, who are promoted whatever the result Chiswick finish third, Old Stretonians fourth. Ruislip sixth, Finchley seventh, Hampstead ninth, Hackney eleventh and Enfield Ignatians bottom.

In Counties 1 Surrey/Sussex Twickenham finish fourth.

At level 8, in Counties 2 Surrey, Teddington still with a game to play are champions, unbeaten and 15 points ahead whilst at the other end of the table London Exiles despite a couple of excellent late wins finish bottom. In Counties 2 Herts/Middx London Scottish Lions, achieving their second promotion is a row finish runners-up behind an unbeaten Cheshunt team. Ealing Trailfinders 1871 finish third, Saracens Amateurs fourth, Wasps FC fifth, Hendon seventh and Harrow tenth.

In Counties 3 Herts/Middx Trophy Competition Old Millhillians for the second season are Champions with Brunel University runner-up. Both are

promoted again for the second season in a row. Bank Lane finish third and UCS fifth. In the Shield Competition Actonians are champions, with Kilburn Cosmos in second, Uxbridge fourth and Thamesians sixth.

At level ten in Surrey 4, Old Paulines finish third with Harlequin Amateurs fourth.

At level 11 in Surrey 5, Old Hamptonians finish champions by ten clear points

Whether there will be any relegations from the Herts/Middx Counties leagues will now depend on the result of the consultation with the 34 Middlesex and Hertfordshire Clubs that we expect to make up those leagues for the 2023/24. The consultation document was circulated at the beginning of March and the invitation to the Zoom meeting went out at the end of last week

The Herts and Middx Competitions Sub-Committee would like to invite representatives of your club, and in particular your senior men's playing section, to this Zoom Meeting on Monday 27th March 2023 at 7pm. The joining details are below

This meeting is part of the consultation process to allow Herts and Middlesex clubs who will be playing in the three Counties leagues next season to decide the competition offering that best suits them. This meeting follows on from the circulation of the League Consultation Document (attached) which provides four options to consider about the format of those leagues for the 2023/24 season. In the meeting we will seek to answer any questions you may, address any particular concerns, ensure that all the clubs get a chance to have their say and of course understand what the other clubs are thinking.

At least one week after the meeting, to allow the representatives time to discuss the issues throughout their club, we will then enter the formal vote

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The decision will be made by the clubs so make sure you engage in the process, explained in the paper, so that you have a voice in the final decision

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89665231952?pwd=dGwxSEhIM01BSDdld1h6dWY5OUJ2QT09>

Meeting ID: 896 6523 1952

Passcode: 633180

Of course, the meeting is open to anyone across the County who is interested in the various offerings presented to our own leagues for next season but if your clubs is one of those who will be playing in the Herts/Middx Counties leagues for 2023/24 it is absolutely crucial that you are represented at the meeting. If anyone needs or would like a copy of the consultation document then by all means email me directly andrew-smart@ntlworld.com

In the Allianz Premier XV's with rounds to go before the play-offs, Saracens Women are third, Harlequin Women drop to fifth whilst Wasps Women, who continue to have a really torrid time, are bottom one Of course, point

In the Middlesex Merit Tables I am delighted to confirm our champion teams

Premier - H&F 2's
Division 1 - Belsize Park 3's
Division 2 - Wasps 2's
Division 3 - London Japanese
Division 4 - Actonians 2's

Many congratulations to the five sides and in particular Hammersmith and Fulham our most successful club this season not only champions of our top merit table for the first time, in the same season as their 1stxv finish of Regional 2 Thames and promoted to level five also for the first time in their history. Outstanding double achievement.

The venues for both the MMT Cup/Bowl/Vase and MMT Play-Off Competitions have been decided and will be announced later this week.

Andrew Smart

andrew-smart@ntlworld.com

Report from Chair of Groups, Andrew Smart

Going forward our next round of Group meetings which will include our AGMs are as follows with agenda and minutes to follow closer to the meeting dates

North-West – Wednesday 12th April - Wasps FC

South – Monday 3rd April - Old Paulines

West – Wednesdays 5th April

North – Monday 17th April

I am delighted to report that with still more than a month to go the “Pick Up The Whistle Course” for the South Group at Twickenham RFC on Monday 17th and 24th April is already full with all twenty spaces taken which is excellent. This continues to be a great success. A great testament to the work of Bob Lawless and Bob Ockenden from the London Society of Referees and a fantastic example of the CB who continue to provide the finance working with the Groups and in the best interests of its clubs

Finally, the “Tackle Height Consultation”, if you can call it that continues across March, with the only in person meeting within the M25, at which the majority of the Middlesex representatives will be in attendance, at Richmond on the 28th March. Council members were also allowed to attend meetings on top of the CB representation and so I attended the in-person meeting at Chinnor last Wednesday, where I was joined by one of the representatives from Middlesex, Thom Arnott a player with Old Haberdashers. Eddie will be attending the Richmond meeting

Unsurprisingly perhaps we were up to our full complement of volunteers of 45 by Thursday evening before the Friday midday deadline which turned into nearly 60 the following morning. In the end I had to narrow it down to the 45 but I think we got some excellent representation across the whole of our game in Middlesex from 26 of our clubs, up to 27 if you include my club Harrow. Really impressed with the quality of those people across our clubs who put themselves forward and hopefully many who perhaps who have not featured before outside their clubs will be motivated to remain involved and looking to take on other responsibilities or roles across Middlesex.

However, what is clear to me following the meeting that this consultation is not around where the tackle height should be. That you will see has already been decided.

I thought I would share with you my own thoughts about the process so far which is absolutely It is around these issues and which I have already shared with the other Middlesex Representatives. These of course are my own views about the process and not necessarily where we finish up

- Helping Us (The RFU) define how to describe a lower tackle height to reflect what the research is telling us, in a way that is understood by all, to reduce the incidence of head-on-head impacts whilst retaining the physical confrontation of the tackle.
- The responsibilities and actions of both the tackler and the ball carrier
- The practice known as “Pick & Go”
- How the law will or won’t affect goal line defence
- Clarification on where these changes will and won’t apply. For example, the maul is a separate event in the game and there is no evidence to suggest this is an area of high concussion risk and therefore there is no recommendation to change the maul.

Now if you go into the meeting understanding that this is what the consultation is about then you won't be disappointed. If like me your expectation was that you were going to have a part in determining the tackle height for the community game then you are going to be very disappointed. The new tackle height as you will see is from around the bottom of the sternum or so downwards. The area from the bottom of the sternum to the top of the head is designated as the Red Zone and dangerous. No specific figures could be provided to explain how many concussions there were from the bottom of the red are to below the armpits for instance. It appears that the figure the RFU are relying on are for the whole of the red zone. All that Simon Kemp would say was that the lower down the body the safer it was. There is no debate or discussion about where the tackle height should be. It is presented as already decided. In no way can be this process be described as a “consultation”. As someone described it to me it is a “roll out”.

I finished with the following comments:

All I ask is that you go to your meetings with an open mind but please if there are areas around the consultation itself or perhaps lack of it which you are unhappy with, please challenge. Make the organisers explain how the decision has already been made and to provide the data to support their decision

It will be interesting to see if the anger that is clearly still out about this process, around the perceived lack of available data, the unwillingness to debate or accept any other position, the lack of confidence or trust is reflected in the final document. If it is anything like the FCS consultation, I fear not.

Andrew Smart
Chairman Group Officers

andrew-smart@ntlworld.com

Update on Coaching and Referee Development

- 17 Middlesex Coaches are on the RFU Middlesex Targeted Funding England

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Rugby Coaching Award (ERCA) Course.
With 10 waiting for the next ERCA course to begin.

- 8 Coach education sessions have taken place this season with 182 coaches attending.
- There were 2 Coach education sessions run since the last newsletter (1) was a live session at Hazelwood, London Irish, run by the London Irish, Academy Coaches on Back Play looking at different attacking shapes. (2) Was an online coach session, themed Coaching for Player Development, run by St Marys University.
- Next Coach on line education session will take place on Wednesday 22nd March run by London Irish Academy Coaches. Themed "Players are learning more than we think, so what should coaches, look out for"
- I will be accompanying a number of Twickenham RFC, youth coaches at a coaching skill development session at Hazelwood London Irish on Tuesday 28th March 2023
- I will be accompanying a number of Hampstead RFC youth coaches at a coaching skill development session at Harrow School on Wednesday 19th April 2023
- RFU Principle of Lineout course will be run at Ruislip RFC on Monday 27th March 2023.
- Summer programme for young player development / coaching development with Academy coaches is in the planning phase and in addition, Middlesex is planning to run a coaching conference on Sunday 9th July run in partnership with London Irish Academy.

Referee Development,

- To date this season our Middlesex clubs have run 5 Senior Take up the whistle courses & 2 Young Match official's course. 128 new referees have been upskilled.
- 1 further Take up The Whistle Courses is planned for this season at Twickenham RFC on Mondays 17/04/23 & 24/04/23

Other Activities

- The next Regional Organising Committee, (ROC) meeting is on Monday 27th March. Regular updates on the RFU league situation and the Papa Johns cup will be covered by the Chair of Competitions report. Andrew has forwarded the consultation document to all Middlesex Member clubs. A main concern from our member clubs I have visited, is the structured season which they feel is not compatible with the existing club rugby landscape.
- London Irish Regional Plying Pathway Group, (RPPG) met on Friday 17th March 2023. All partners from Middlesex, Buckinghamshire & Hampshire gave very positive reports. A more detailed report on London Irish Academy can be found on the Middlesex Web site.
- Player Development Sub Committee (PDSC), next meeting is on Thursday 25th May. I am on a working review group looking into the future of the Aspirational Game, (Chair Garnet Mackinder), other review groups are set up looking into Age Grade Pathway (Chair Gary Henderson) and The Age grade Calendar (Chair Fred Batchelor)
- In my role as Divisional Player Development Chair (DPDC) I have attended the U18s Divisional weekend at Warwick school and attended both L&SE Games (Game 1 L&SE 12 – North 5) (Game 2, L&SE 36 v South West 26), 6 Middlesex Players represented the London & South East Division. I am currently supporting the L&SE Division U20s who are viewing & assessing the CB games for players to gain selection to the U20s Divisional weekend at Broadstreet RFC on 9th – 11th June 2023.

For More Information on any areas of Coach & Referee development or an update on any of the above information. please contact Bob

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Lawless on bob.lawless@middlesexrugby.com
or (M) 07803 196409.

What's On

The Herts and Middx Competitions Sub-Committee would like to invite representatives of your club, and in particular your senior men's playing section, to this Zoom Meeting on Monday 27th March 2023 at 7pm. The joining details are below:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89665231952?pwd=dGwxSEhIM01BSDdld1h6dWY5OUJ2QT09>

Meeting ID: 896 6523 1952

Passcode: 633180

Referee Development,

- A further Take up The Whistle Courses is planned for this season at Twickenham RFC on Mondays 17/04/23 & 24/04/23

April Group Meetings / AGMS

- North-West – Wednesday 12th April - Wasps FC
- South – Monday 3rd April - Old Paulines
- West – Wednesdays 5th April - TBC
- North – Monday 17th April - TBC

Calling all budding Referees

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

Middlesex 7's – Saturday 13th May at

Grasshoppers RFC.

The invitations and online registration form have been sent but are also included in this Newsletter.

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**

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