

April 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 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 to help with planning and administration ahead of the day.

President's Message

It's been another busy month in the County but I have to start with some very sad news at the passing of Past President, Andy Mortimer on Monday 17th April. Andy, who was President from 2005 to 2008 also served as Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee, Chairman of the Selectors Committee and organiser of the Middlesex Sevens. Andy had been ill for some time and was a lifelong supporter of Old Millhillians and he will be deeply missed by his family, Amy, Sophie, Max and Rosie and their respective families and we send them all our heartfelt condolences. Andy's funeral will be held on Wednesday 17th May at noon, St James Church, Muswell Hill, N10 1PP and details of the wake will be sent out soon.

See below the link to a wider obituary: https://alumni.millhill.org.uk/webview/OTk2NTM5 LTcxOWU4M2NJNmVHTg==

We had some more sad news in that we heard of the passing of Beryl Ransom (wife of Past President, David Ransom) after a very short illness and we'll let those who knew her know about the funeral arrangements as soon as we get them for those who either wish to attend or send letters of condolence.

I enjoyed some fantastic Club and County rugby last weekend starting at Chiswick on Friday with the semi-final of the Vets Cup with Old Priorians beating Chiswick by 5 points. Then on Saturday it was off to Wasps to see the Middlesex Merit Table playoffs brilliantly organised by Steve Partridge.













On Sunday it was off to Hertford to see the Under 20's play Hertfordshire in a close fought game that was won by the home side but more importantly they really enjoyed the experience.

You will soon be receiving the first calling notice for the Annual General Meeting at Grasshoppers on Monday 3rd July so please come along and have your say about how Rugby is run in Middlesex.

Kind regards Peter peter.baveystock@middlesexrugby.com

Message from Eddie Keal, Chair

Busy, busy, busy seems to sum up the Management Board this month. So much to do, so many places to visit. My highlight this weekend will be supporting Hackney's women's team, the Gladies, at their Papa John's Women's Intermediate final at Twickenham. We completed the final round of Group meetings on Monday evening at Old Grammarians. Thank you to the outgoing and incoming (pretty much the same list!) Group Officers who do so much to keep the wheels turning. We're firmly entrenched now in a hybrid model of Zoom and in-person.

There should soon be a flood of information about Tackle Height from the RFU, so we'll re-assemble the very large Middlesex interest group on Zoom and share how the plans affect us all.

There is a large amount of good work referenced in this Newsletter, please take time to read it and share it. We will also be promoting it on other channels, as we are aiming to increase the readership. Your support would be welcomed!

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 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

I hope you have all been enjoying the Women's 6Nations. The Red Roses have been dominant and now head to Twickenham on Saturday for a Grand Slam Decider against France. This will be a cracking game, the first ever standalone Red Roses fixture at Twickenham Stadium and a world record crowd with over 50,000 tickets already sold. If you haven't got your ticket, then you can still purchase tickets.

All volunteers who were nominated for the Honda Volunteer of the Year Awards will soon be receiving their invitations to the event at Twickenham Stadium on 7th July. Club representatives will then receive their invites, as we try and get representatives from all clubs within Middlesex at the event to celebrate the great work our volunteers do each season.

With the new tackle height being introduced next season, and with the Age Grade season finishing on 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.

The St George's Day Girls festival, in conjunction with Surrey CB and London Irish Amateurs 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. Please do try and get down and cheer on the girls if you can.

The RFU have introduced an Active Bystander training programme that helps continue building to a more inclusive game. This is an interactive 2-hour session and deals with all forms of unacceptable behaviour. This session is a core education module that is being rolled out to the game and I would

encourage all clubs to get the session booked in for players, coaches, volunteers parents/spectators. I have attached the flyer for more information.

Lou

louise.latter@middlesexrugby.com

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

An update on the March newsletter confirms two more league champions.

Hammersmith and Fulham duly beat Belsize Park under lights at Chiswick to take Regional 2 Thames and next season will be playing level 5 rugby for the first time in their history. We now have three clubs playing level five rugby with CS Stags 1863 and London Welsh which is great news for our local community rugby.

In Women's NC Southeast (West) Ruislip Ladies with their home win over Ealing Trailfinders Ladies picked up the title winning eleven of their matches out of twelve.

In all we now have six league champions to celebrate. All of whom we are hopeful will be attending the County Dinner to pick up their league winners' plaques

Hammersmith and Fulham Teddington **Ruislip Ladies** Old Millhillians **Old Hamptonians** Actonians

Unfortunately, it is now highly unlikely to be seven with Ealing Trailfinders in the Championship just going down away at the new leaders Jersey Reds by 19-13. Both clubs have one to play which both would expect to win and Jersey going into the game one point behind are now two points ahead and it is











difficult to see them slipping up now. Still, we can all hope.

A couple of the outstanding Merit Tables have also been decided and congratulations to Chiswick Vets who are once again champions of the Middx Vets MT1 and to Hampstead Vets who although new to Vets competition are now the champions of Middx Vets MT2

At the Middx Cup/Bowl/Vase Finals on the 15th April and the following Saturday for the Play-Off finals perfect conditions and in front some good crowds we saw some excellent rugby. Thanks to all the teams who made such a large contribution to two most enjoyable afternoon celebrating all that is good about our merit tables and our clubs. Many thanks in particular to Wasp FC who proved such great hosts and to Steve Partridge who ran the competitions to Peter Baveystock our President who did all the post-match presentations across the eight finals and of course to the London Society of Referees without whom we would not have any games and who made such a huge contribution to the two days as they have to the whole sason

The results from Saturday 15th at Wasps FC are as follows

MMT Cup London Welsh Druids 12 - 39 London Cornish 2nds MMT Bowl Feltham 7 - 24 Hanwell MMT Vase Wasps Dev 5 - 13 Actonians 2nds

Then the results of the MMT Play-Off Finals this weekend 22nd April also at Wasps FC are as follows

Premier Plate Final Old Streetonians 2's 23 - 22 New Zealand Kiwis MMT1 Play-Off Final London Sussex 7 - 20 H&F 3's MMT2 Play-Off Final Twickenham 2's 43 - 31 Hanwell MMT3 Play-Off Final Quintin 29 - 20 Old Streetonians 3's MMT4 Play-Off Final Ealing Exiles 26 - 31 Belsize Park Bulls

The excellence of the two finals days and the quality of rugby on show doesn't hide though the issue and problems that have beset our merit tables and to be fair most merit tables nationally across the season. A couple of weeks off and then Steve and I will get together to see what we can do to support our competitions next season and make sure that those who want to play do.

Nevertheless, many congratulations to our cup winners and play-off winners and to all our clubs and teams who continue to support our competition. Tough season.

Following the meeting of the Herts and Middlesex Competitions Sub-Committee last week I sent out the following message to the 35 clubs who will make up our county's leagues for next season

"Following the Herts/Middx Competitions Sub-Committee meeting on Wednesday 19th April 2023 the applications of Stevenage, Finsbury Park and Berkhamsted to join the leagues for the 2023/24 season were approved

We can also now announce the results of the Consultation and with it the makeup of the three Counties Leagues for the 2023/24 season

Of the 35 clubs eligible to vote 33 recorded a vote, one club voted after the deadline and one club didn't vote

14 clubs voted for option 1, 3 for option 2, 2 for option 3 and 14 for option 4

As pre the instructions for the consultation as there was a tie, Andrew Smart and Simon Embleton abstained for the final decision about the make-up of the leagues for next season.

The remaining members of the committee decided that with no clear mandate for change and the leagues for the 2023/24 season would be as follows

Counties 1 H/M 12 teams playing home and away

Counties 2 H/M 12 teams playing home and away













Counties 3 H/M 11 teams playing home and away

At the moment unless there are changes to the format of the structured season following the review of the Papa John's Cup all three leagues will start on Saturday 2nd September

Counties 1	Counties 2	Counties 3
Chiswick Eal	ing T'finders 1871	Verulamians
Old Streetonians Saracens Amateurs UCS		
Hitchin	Wasps FC	Actonians
Ruislip	Tabard	Kilburn Cosmos
Finchley	Hendon	Watford
Welwyn	St Albans	Uxbridge
Datchworth	Barnet Eliz's	Chess Valley
Hampstead	Harrow	Thamesians
Hackney	Royston	Berkhamsted
Enfield Ignatians Old Millhillians F		Finsbury Park
Cheshunt	Brunel University	Stevenage
LS Lions	Bank Lane	

To be absolutely honest this is not what I expected. I cannot pretend that I am not disappointed in the result and genuinely believe that more of the same with everyone starting on the 2nd September is not in the best interests of our clubs. I now understand why the RFU only run "Consultations" where they have already determined the result. This however was a genuine consultation and whilst I may not like it and continue to struggle with the implications of the vote, decisions have been made and we have to get on with it. The only good news I guess is that the structured season next year will see the league campaign extended from the second week in March to include the first week in April

Nearly there but we still have some exciting rugby left. In the Vets Cup we will have a new name on the trophy with Old Priorians reversing last season's

final defeat to Chiswick in a superb semi final last Friday night under lights at Chiswick winning by 22 points to 17 to face Hampstead Vets who overcame Old Streetonians Vets by 43 to 19. The venue and date of the final still to be announced

We are also now at the Semi-Final Stages of the various Papa John's Community Cups with four Middlesex sides still in the competition with all fixtures due to be played this Saturday

At level 5 CS Stags 1863 travel to Launceston in the Regional 1 Plate semi-final. The final of this competition will be on Saturday 6th May at Sixways Stadium

At level 7 Twickenham host Weybridge Vandals in the Counties 1 South Plate semi-final. The final will be at Stonex Stadium on Saturday 6th May

At level 8 and Teddington host St Ives in the Counties 2 Championship semi-final. The final will be at Twickenham Stadium on Sunday 7th May

Also, at level 8 in Counties 2 South Plate Semi-Final Ealing Trailfinders 1871 travel to Chipstead. The final will be at Stonex Stadium on Saturday 6th May

So, if you are looking for some rugby this weekend you can do worse than support one of our Middlesex clubs as they continue their search for some silverware. All the best to all four clubs this weekend. I am sure that they will be grateful for your support. I for one will be going to Chipstead to cheers on Ealing Trailfinders 1871.

Finally, for those with interest in these things these are the walkover rates in the Papa John's Community Cups so far this season and thanks to Paul Astbury who has provided all the detail

Saturday April 1st		196 matches	82
walkovers 42	1.83%		
Saturday April 8	3 th	19 matches	11

walkovers 57.89% 19 matches 11











Saturday April 15th 172 matches 59 walkovers 34.30%

Saturday April 22nd 96 matches 16 walkovers 16.66%

TOTAL to date 483 matches 168 walkovers 34.78%

There is no doubt that a full and honest review is going to be required if this competition is enjoy the support of the clubs for next season

Andrew Smart andrew-smart@ntlworld.com

Report from Chair of Groups, Andrew Smart

With the North Group meeting at Grammarians on Monday night we have now completed all four Group AGMs and the final group meetings of the season. A couple of things of note that might be of interest

1. I believe that this is the first round of Group meetings that were all in person for the first time since the pandemic

I firmly believe that a mix of Zoom and in person meetings are the best way forward for the Groups but boy it has been great to catch up with people across the county, share a beer, a sandwich (or two) and a laugh (or two) with some great rugby people.

South at Old Paulines, West at Feltham, North West at Wasps and finally North at Grammarians

2. Once again, all eight group officers were voted back into office by their clubs

South - Chair Jerry Rogers (London Cornish), Secretary Lyndon Walters (H&F)

West - Chair Andy Brooks (O Isleworthians), Secretary Nick Dance, (Grasshoppers)

North-West - Chair Andrew Smart (Harrow), Secretary Mark Foster (OMTs)

North - Chair Jon Boyle (Hampstead), Secretary Debbie Stockman-Rose (o Grammarians)

On the one hand this can be seen as a ringing endorsement of their qualities, on the other hand a real issues around viable alternatives from our clubs who perhaps don't value the groups and what we do as much as we want. Probably a combination of both. However, there is definitely a succession issue and whilst our excellent Group Officers continue to make themselves available it is very likely that this position will not change. More likely the lack of people willing to volunteer for these roles mean that the current group officers are unable to step down. I know we have committed to a review and whilst this season with all its problems both locally and nationally have meant that we have not been able to follow through on this commitment I think that it has to be absolutely essential that Tim, Eddie and I get a grip of this across the close season. In the mean-time every Group Officer continues to do an excellent job on behalf of their clubs and groups and it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge that and thank them on behalf of their CB and its members for all that they do

Simon Hardcastle the Group Secretary will be conducting the lection for the Group Chair for the 2023/24 season in the next couple of weeks.

By the beginning of next season, we expect to have a new voting club in Middlesex with Hanwell having just been endorsed by the CB Management Committee at our latest meeting and hopefully now onto RFU Governance for final validation. This has been initiated and driven by the County Secretary Tim Miller and it will great to join another Middlesex Club through to full voting rights within the Union and with it access to International Tickets

Finally, a couple of dates for your dairy that must not be missed

Friday 26th May is the deadline date for all voting clubs to ensure that all their matches from U14s unwards across the season are all on the GMS and resulted for them to receive their full benefit for international ticket allocation. For anyone who











might be struggling with the process, please contact me andrew-smart@ntlworld.com and I will be happy to assist

Friday 30th June is the deadline date for clubs to submit their "Payment of Player" Declaration against the following criteria

For clubs whose men's first XV team play at Counties Level 2 (formerly Level 8) and below the declaration is only required to be submitted if the club provides Material Benefits (as defined in Regulation 1) to players and/or engages a player coach.

Clubs at Counties Level 2 and below DO NOT **NEED** to submit a completed declaration if they **DO NOT provide** Material Benefits to players and /or a player/coach. These clubs will not lose access to RFU

If a club at Counties Level 2 or below does not submit any declaration and is later found to have paid Material Benefit to a player or a player coach, disciplinary sanctions will be considered.

As a reminder, the declaration covers the period of 1 June 2022 - 31 May 2023.

Regulation 7 (Payment of Players) can be found in full **here** providing further information on thresholds and definition of RFU benefits.

The entire process will be completed within GMS and requires the three nominated club officers to be able to log into GMS and approve the declaration. It is therefore important that each authorising club official has the most up to date email address listed against their account in GMS before starting the process.

A list of FAQs has been produced around Payment of Players declarations (Material Benefit and Regulatory) and can be found here.

Andrew Smart Chairman Group Officers

andrew-smart@ntlworld.com

Update on Coaching and Referee Development Referee Development.

- 17 Coaches are on the RFU Middlesex **Targeted Funding England Rugby Coaching** Award (ERCA) Course. Final day is on Sunday 2nd July 2023
- Middlesex to date have run 10 Coach education sessions, targeted at all levels of Middlesex Coaches, with 204 coaches attending.
- Tuesday, 18th April, Youth coaches of Twickenham RFC, attended an open coaching evening at Hazelwood DPP, to view what's trending in youth skill development
- Wednesday, 19th April, Youth coaches of Hampstead RFC, attended an open coaching evening at Harrow School DPP, to view what's trending in youth skill development.
- Summer programme for Middlesex young players & coaches, will take place in the summer months dates tbc in the May Newsletter. The sessions will take place in various locations throughout Middlesex and will cover Safety in building a successful scrummage and developing the lineout. These will be an excellent fit for Middlesex Youth coaches and will involve Middlesex Youth Players
- Sunday 9th July 2023, London Irish will be running a Coaching conference suitable for all levels of Middlesex coaches. The Coaching themes and tutors will be published in May

Referee Development

Tuesday 31st May To date this season our Middlesex clubs have run 6 Senior Take up













the whistle courses & 2 Young Match official's courses. 148 new referees have been upskilled. This is in addition to the England Rugby Referees Award (ERRA) where 2 RFU referee courses, involving 45 new referees, have taken place in Middlesex.

To all Middlesex Coaches interested in working their way towards the England Rugby Coaching Award (ERCA the Old Level 2)

Middlesex are looking to support Coaches who are interested in growing the Senior game by becoming an RFU qualified coach. Those who are interested in gaining a coaching qualification would be supported through the following syllabus -

- Gaining an understanding of the coaching pathway.
- Developing a coaching philosophy
- Structuring a coaching session.
- Attending relevant structured coach education sessions.
- Understanding, activate and strength & conditioning.
- To gain an understanding of Regulations 9, 15 & 21, especially young players transitioning into the senior game.
- To attend the RFU, GMS courses in preparation for attending the England Rugby Coaching Award (ERCA)
- To embrace the support of an RFU qualified mentor, to support each candidate through an agreed Personal Development Plan while working towards an RFU coaching qualification
- Please confirm by Wednesday 31st May 2023, if you would be interested in joining this coaching programme, on the contact details below.

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@middlesexrugbv.com or (M) 07803 196409.

A Report from Playing - Jok Dunbar

Girls U16 ERDPP

This programme finished earlier this month after a twenty-week engagement with 40 girls taking part form various clubs across Middlesex. It did not take long for the girls to come together as group, and this made the coaching really enjoyable. Initially we tried to ensure that the sessions would move every five weeks around the county but sadly poor weather in November and December meant we had to settle at the wonderful facilities at Grasshoppers.

The session content was designed around improving core skills through small, sided games then working towards more technical aspects by position. The sessions were fun and well attended, and the girls really responded well to the coaching. we had the opportunity to play games against other counties and it was good to see how evenly matched the games were. Most importantly it was great to share best practices with the other counties and facilitate some great playing opportunities through true collaboration.

We have learnt a great deal after this inaugural season and will be making small tweaks to the programme for next season. Some of the girls that will be moving up to U17 will be given the opportunity to experience the Centre of Excellence over May and June with a trial and selection process taking part in July.

Thank you to the RFU for this great programme, thank you to our host clubs this season, Finchley, Ruislip and Grasshoppers and of course a huge













thank you to our coaches and physiotherapist for their time, planning and dedication. Lastly Thank you to the parents that enable your children to take part, the girls were coachable, respectful, hard working and a great deal of fun. Those are all skills that cannot be taught and only inherited through

Please come and support the girls when you can as we have great ambitions this season and hopeful to make it out of the pool.

Fixtures:

Warm up Game Friday 28th April vs Brunel



their home environment.

Womens Rugby

After a phenomenal response for nominations we now have a squad of 41 women made up from 26 Middlesex clubs and universities. We've had a few of training sessions over the last few months so as not to overload players at the tail end of the season. The hard work now starts with a warm up game against Brunel women on Friday 28th April at Wasps FC kicking off at 8.00pm. Due to the fixture cycle we only have two competition fixtures one away against Devon and home against Dorset & Wilts (details below).

Women @ Wasps FC 8.00pm Kick Off Sunday 7th May vs Devon @ Sidmouth RFC













1.00pm Kick Off Sunday 21st May vs Dorset & Wilts @ Wasps FC 1.00pm Kick Off

Mens U20's

After two years of not having an U20's programme this was very much a rebuilding season. It has had its challenges form the outset but thanks to Andy Cunningham as our University Liaison calling, coercing and building links with universities and the usual nomination process through clubs we had over fifty individuals sign up. This didn't translate to numbers on the field as we had hoped but this that did attend were of high quality and we had a strong core for the squad. In that group were some great young men who recruited from players they knew either at club or their university and it helped fill the gaps in the squad.

The first game against Essex was challenging on many levels not least ensuring that our players met the latest regulations and a steep learning curve for the lads. Playing on

Easter Sunday affected availability so were pleased to have field a team although a number of lads were playing out of position, Essex were clinical in the delivery and had obviously had more time together. We had opportunities in the first half but just couldn't convert those to points. Essex struck hard and fast when they could optimising our errors resulting in a 50-0 scoreline. The game was called at 60 minutes due to Charlie Keane our captain taking a nasty head knock, thankfully he has made a good recovery and been supporting the boys in training and at our subsequent game.

Hertford played hosts to our second game on Sunday 23rd April. This was a tightly fought, high scoring game, Hertford won 36-27 but if you review

the game by performance rather than scoreline the improvement and cohesion shown by the lads was a huge improvement on the previous game. although a loss it didn't feel like it, it was played in great spirit and provided a great spectacle for the supporters. Hertford coaches, players supporters we most welcoming and it was good day for rugby. All the boys showed great resilience and dedication but a special mention to Charlie Keane and Sam Bourke for their leadership skills, to Morgan Poiner for his recruitment campaign and to our youngest player Tiarnan O'Mongain for his inspirational chat. Thank you to Andy Cunningham for his constant support, to Sam Challenor for leading the coaching, Jerry Hedigan, Sam Gratton for their assistance, to Ollie Brown for his Physio, taping and first aid skills and to Richard Wilmot for his co-management of the squad.

Lastly thank you to all the lads that took part in training and games, as most of them will still be











age eligible for next season we have a solid

Thank you to MCRFU committee for their support



foundation to build on.

Boys U17

After training of sessions spread over the last few months to keep in touch with the U17's during the season we start the lead up to matches on Sunday 7th May with a squad development day, we then go into an intense three weeks of training and games.

Fixtures;

Sunday 14th May vs Sussex (East Grinstead RFC 12.00pm KO)

Sunday 21st May vs Hampshire (Grasshoppers RFC 2.00pm KO)

Sunday 28th May vs Devon (Tiverton RFC 2.30pm KO)

on and off the field especially when navigating regulations and ensuring we can just play some rugby.

Jok Dunbar Chair of Playing

What's On

Middlesex 7's - Saturday 13th May

Grasshoppers RFC (see details above)

County Clubs Dinner - Hurry it's not too late!

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

Peter.baveystock@middlesexrugby.com

Middlesex County RFU AGM

Monday 3rd July 2023, Grasshoppers RFC





