

## June Newsletter 2023

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

### President's Message from Peter Baveystock

This will effectively be my last message to you as President and I have to say it's been an absolute pleasure and privilege to carry out this role on your behalf. I'd like to start by thanking all the Clubs I visited for making me so welcome. I'd also like to thank my Management Board colleagues for their help and support and finally, to Nicky in the County Office, who is fantastic.

On the field my season ended with the Middlesex 7's at Grasshoppers which was a fantastic day and more especially a day that we could focus 100% on our own Clubs. See below a link to the photos:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QjrfV-nigHeJmTDoEQem4r6Gk2vewlcO?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QjrfV-nigHeJmTDoEQem4r6Gk2vewlcO?usp=drive_link)

Off the field the focus turned to the newly branded Middlesex Club Dinner at London Welsh. This was the second year in the new "Club Focused" format and we had 100 in attendance and whilst the feedback was positive the Dinner Group of Mark Coles, Kate Hallett, Nicky Fielder, Nigel Orton and I will be looking to improve it further in 2024 and especially around the "Your Experience". See below the link to the dinner photos:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1WVYooWRaCenKQK\\_F9KLIONKCsyycbMDI?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1WVYooWRaCenKQK_F9KLIONKCsyycbMDI?usp=drive_link)

Kind regards  
Peter

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

### Message from Eddie Keal, Chair

We've reached the end of the season in the County with a flourish of activity on the pitch at the Middlesex Club Sevens and off the pitch with a County Clubs Dinner. Both events were designed and delivered around County clubs and both were very successful.

We have just the staff-work and governance of the AGM to come in early July followed the same week by the Honda Volunteer Awards, which will have more of a party atmosphere. I'm looking forward to seeing many of you on those occasions.

Peter has written his last Presidential Message in this Newsletter, but we have plenty of plans for keeping his talents on the team, so I won't say goodbye here, but I will say a massive Thank You to him for all the club visits he has done as President.

We will present a short summary of the season and the Financial Year at the AGM and lay out some thoughts and aspirations for the next one. I encourage every club to attend, it will definitely be worthwhile.

I hope you continue to find the Newsletter useful. Once again it is packed full of content

Regards,  
Eddie

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

We are at that time when the season's intermingle as we close out one season and look forward to a new season.

The focus for Rugby Development is on our season highlight of welcoming over 100 volunteers to the Honda Volunteer of the Year Awards. The awards evening, being held at Twickenham Stadium on 7th July will recognise the fantastic club volunteers we have in Middlesex and we will announce the Middlesex and Honda winners.

As a reminder, clubs wishing to enter their U18 boys and U16 & U18 Girls teams in the National Cups, entry deadlines are on Friday 30th June. The information has been sent out to Club Secretaries, Youth Chairs and Age Grade Fixture Secretaries or use the following links: Boys U18, Girls U16/U18.

As we head into the 2023-2024 season, please familiarise yourself with the new tackle height information. This can be found on the Tackle Height Resource Hub. .

As a reminder, age grade clubs are asked to ensure any activity they undertake over the summer is in line with Regulation 15 Age Grade Out of Season Activities Guide.

The 2023-2024 regulations will be available on the England Rugby website in July. We will look to hold some sessions with clubs to go through some of the changes, which include Pitch Side First Aid, Regulation 15 and the Safeguarding Audit will now have a deadline of 29th October 2023 (was December in previous years).

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

Lou

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## Message from Andrew Smart, Chair of Competitions

I mentioned at the Clubs Dinner (really good night) that despite all the on-field problems experienced by so many of our teams across leagues and merit tables nevertheless 17 of our clubs have picked up some sort of silverware across the season. In fact, after Vets Cup Final played last Friday night for the inaugural "Brain East" Trophy that rose to 18 with Old Priorians picking up the new award with an impressive 62-21 victory over Hampstead vets. The scoreline didn't really reflect the game with Old Priorians scoring twice in the last five minutes, and there is no doubt that Hampstead played a full part in an exciting conclusion to the 2022/23 season scoring three excellent tries themselves. It has been a long time since I have witnessed a pitch invasion at the end of a community game but at the final whistle, we had the glorious sight of a bunch of four- and five-years old running onto the field to be with their dads. Indeed, one your lad asked if he could present the trophy to his dad because he was the "captain". Anyway, before Bob or I could say no he had picked up the "Brian East" Trophy and followed the others onto the field to give it to his father who gently ushered him back to the presentation party for the official ceremony. It was a lovely, lovely evening and a fitting testament to the memory of our friend and a great Middlesex man who I know would have loved every minute. Loads of young families out enjoying a beautiful evening at Chiswick supporting husbands and fathers. Great atmosphere, played in a great spirit, excellently hosted by Chiswick and well refereed by Piers Skinner. Super evening and a great end to our season. Well done to all concerned.

As I write preparations are already well underway for next season. A comprehensive survey has gone out to all our Merit Table Clubs, looking at the how we can improve the competition offering and ensure that more games are played. The returns are due in by the 30<sup>th</sup> June. We will go through them in depth before we decide the formation of our merit tables and competitions for next season. We have already decided that the invitations for next season's competition will be

distributed much later than normal, well into pre-season, to ensure clubs have as much time as possible to satisfy themselves that they have enough players to honour commitments. It is much better for our competitions to add teams later than remove those who simply don't have enough players to honour the commitments

Link to the Survey [Middlesex Merit Tables Feedback Form \(google.com\)](https://www.google.com)

I tried to save some costs by not asking for teams of three for each of our finals. Unfortunately, the touchline behaviour at some of our merit table finals has meant that we will have to reverse that decision and those extra costs will have to be found by savings in the competitions' budget in other areas. We will also be asking for minimum standards for any clubs that will host country finals days going forward. I have also applied for a one payment of up to £600- for six sets of portable respect barriers sets to ensure that where clubs are unable to provide pitch barriers for county finals/junior festivals we are able to do so. No matter who is the host club, these are our finals and we need to be proactive to ensure that they continue to be afternoons of hard competitive rugby, yes, but more importantly of enjoyment and fun for all those that attend.

A similar consultation across March and April took place with the thirty-five clubs that will make up the Herts and Middlesex Counties leagues for next season. However, following concerns raised about the conclusion, " **no clear mandate for change**" this led to a number of appeals, included requests from some clubs to take voluntary relegation and from others to revisit the results. As a result, the Herts and Middlesex Competitions Sub-Committee conducted a long and detailed examination of the results and have accepted that their original conclusion should be revised

The new leagues will now be 12.10,13 with Counties 3 splitting Middlesex and Herts after everyone has played each other once. There will then be two play-off games on the 6<sup>th</sup> April to determine the promoted sides with the champions

determined by best points percentage across the season. A zoom meeting will be held

This decision was circulated with the following "Whilst we accept that some clubs would prefer the original format circulated on the 20<sup>th</sup> April, we are confident now that we have a structure and competition offering that best protects the future of our game locally and indeed the health of the majority of our clubs"

The London Regional Organising Committee decided at their AGM that unlike the rest of the country, who will be starting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September, all our country leagues will start two weeks later on the 16<sup>th</sup>. For some reason having given us the option to start on the 16<sup>th</sup> if we wanted, the RFU got stropky that London had decided to do so. Anyway, with the leagues finishing on the 6<sup>th</sup> April some four weeks later than last season, (although that does now include Easter weekend) there is a little more flexibility next season, than was last. It is clear that the RFU have listened at least in part to what clubs were saying but whilst the Papa John's Community Cup continues to dominate across April and May it will never be enough.

Finally, I must thank my committee for all their hard work on behalf of our clubs. It has not been easy, but we start refreshed again in September committed to doing the best we can to support and grow the game in Middlesex but also with our partners in Hertfordshire

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

### Report from Chair of Groups, Andrew Smart

So, quite rightly following the end of the 2022/23 the playing sides of our clubs are now pretty much closed down for a couple of months for a well-deserved break for their players and volunteers

However, as we know that is very rarely the case for everyone and work continues especially for those

clubs who will be or have hosted Tackle Height Clinics. Hopefully each of our clubs will be represented at one of the following clinics although many have already reached their quotas for attendees. If your club has been unable to get onto one of the clinics please get in contact and I will see what I can sort out for you. You will see that we have courses into August and for some clubs on our borders there are other opportunities in Hertfordshire, Essex and Surrey

So far Middlesex have or are hosting the following clinics

Tuesday 6th June at Chiswick  
Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June at Harrow  
Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> June at Grasshoppers  
Monday 24<sup>th</sup> July at London Welsh  
Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> July at Ealing Trailfinders  
Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> August at Finchley

As I say please make every effort to make sure your club gets to one of the clinics. It is a vital in preparing your club and players for the introduction of the new tackle height across the community game

Also a gentle reminder that **Friday 30<sup>th</sup> June** is the deadline date for clubs to submit their "Payment of Player" Declaration against the following criteria and is mandatory for Middlesex clubs at level 7 and above

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 benefits.

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. (It is therefore not relevant for Teddington and London Scottish Lions who will be playing their rugby at level 7 next season following promotion)*

**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](#).

I am chasing those clubs who haven't as yet started or indeed completed the process and so far, we are well on course to have a 100% return at 7 and above

Finally, a reminder to the seven Middlesex Clubs who will be playing in Counties 3 Herts and Middlesex that I will be hosting a Zoom meeting for them and the six Hertfordshire Clubs that will be making up that league for the 2023/24 season on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> June at 7pm and will deal with the following topics.

- How the Champions and second promoted side will be decided
- De-Regulation Yes/No
- NAW
- Ring Fencing
- Game On
- Front Row Replacement Required Yes/No

Hopefully you will have received your joining instructions. If not please come back to me at

**KEEP UPDATED  
FOLLOW US ON :**

[andrew-smart@ntlworld.com](mailto:andrew-smart@ntlworld.com) and I will forward them onto you

All the best

Andrew Smart  
Chairman Group Officers  
[andrew-smart@ntlworld.com](mailto:andrew-smart@ntlworld.com)

### **Update on Coaching and Referee Development from Bob Lawless**

#### **Achievements for Season 2022/23**

- Middlesex have supported & developed **17** Coaches up to the ERCA coaching award
- Middlesex have run **10** Coach Ed sessions during the season with **243** Middlesex attending
- Middlesex weekly newsletter RCD is sent to **450** Middlesex stakeholders each Friday
- RFU have run a number of coaching workshops in Middx with a total **745** Coaches attending
- Middlesex regional Academy partners have run a number of skill development sessions & webinars with **220** Middlesex coaches attending
- Middlesex clubs have run **7** Senior & **2** Youth Take up the Whistle courses with **125** new referees being upskilled.
- The RFU have run **2** England Rugby Referees awards in Middx with **45** attending
- Middlesex is currently running a Summer Coaching education & player developer programme and to date have run **2** developing the scrummage sessions at Finchley RFC and Hackney RFC with **93** in attendance. **3** more sessions will be delivered and these will be advertised on the Middlesex social media platforms.

#### **Middlesex Coaching, Player Development & Mentoring Opportunities**

- Any coaches who would like support in your coaching pathway towards the England

Rugby Coaching Award, (contact details below)

- Would your Middlesex Club like to host a summer youth player & coaching development session (contact details below)
- Middlesex are looking to sponsor experienced Coaches & Referees to attend the England Rugby Mentoring Award If interested (contact details below)  
If interested on any of the above opportunities contact Middlesex Chair of Coaching & Refereeing development - [bob.lawless@middlesexrugby.com](mailto:bob.lawless@middlesexrugby.com) (m) 07803 196409

#### **Update on our Academy Partners London Irish**

- Friday 9<sup>th</sup> June the RFU put out a press release on London Irish filing a notice of intention to appoint an Administrator. The RFU can confirm it intends to take on the running of the London Irish DPP & Academy for U18s, U17s, U16s & DPP age groups. And working on this with former staff to set this up as quickly as possible. The Academy manager in addition to helping some staff seek alternative employment. He is working on getting new clubs arranged for the 21 Senior Academy players. Monday 12<sup>th</sup> June, there was an online call to all parents involved on the way forward. The Academy partners, Middlesex, Hampshire & Berkshire have been informed on progress and the RFU Martin MacTaggart and Academy Manager Patrick O'Grady are keeping us informed of progress.

#### **RFU update on Coach Development from Grant Hathaway: England Rugby Coach Developer.**

Staff are currently focused on wrapping up the internal verification of the Advanced Award learners to be able to award those who have made it through. Those who haven't been deemed competent yet, will be able to move forwards supported so they can hopefully achieve completion of the

award in a time frame that fits their situation.

Staff are also delivering the Day 2 window for the 22/23 season award courses, the ERCA (Coaching) and ERRA (Refereeing). There have been an incredible **549** coaches and **199** match officials supported in the South East just in May and these courses continue across June and July.

There are more Tacklesafe courses exploring the tackle height law change than anywhere nationally, with more spaces been made available than anywhere else. Nearly all those have been taken up but Middlesex coaches can still get involved, just go to England Rugby course finder to book.

As we go into July, there will be attention given to the Mentoring Award, a L3 equivalent course which trains you to develop the people around you and harness the traits, skills and qualities you already have within. Whether those skills are directly rugby based or maybe you have skills from other areas of your working life and experiences, all of these could benefit a coach/match official/player to improve their experience of the game. Jump on a course and learn skills and strategies which will benefit you in your day-to-day life, as well as your rugby involvement.

- Cheshunt ERMA - 15th July  
<https://bit.ly/MentoringAwardCheshunt>
- London Welsh ERMA - 16th July  
<https://bit.ly/MentoringAwardLondonWelsh>

There are also some others, Champion School and Dorking RFC would most likely support Middlesex coaches.

At the start of July, you will be able to book

the new ERCA/ERRA window courses, which will be run across Oct/Nov. There will be more and larger courses, run over a greater variety of dates.

On top of this you will be able to book Kids First Contact and Tag courses which will run Aug-Oct, Scrum in Nov and Lineout in March.

We are already preparing the target clubs we work with for our transition work, where we will support clubs with their transition of male and female players into senior rugby, based on data and insight.

This will explore ways which work for each club, receiving support from us as coach developers but also those from other departments such as the club developers. We will engage those clubs ahead of the season and begin moving into the 23-24 season.

If you ever have any questions about anything to do with developing yourself or the people in your club or school, get in touch with Grant on 07731 008175 or at [granthathaway@rfu.com](mailto:granthathaway@rfu.com)

**Bob Lawless Chair of Middlesex Coach Development (M) 07803 196 409**  
[bob.lawless@middlesexrugby.com](mailto:bob.lawless@middlesexrugby.com)

## A Report from Chair of Playing - Jok Dunbar

### Representative Rugby June 2023

#### U20's

After a good start with the 20's this season in spite of the issues with regulations, we are looking to build on the pathway we have developed in the 17 and 18's. We believe we can create a truly exciting journey from U17's through to senior rugby.

Congratulations to Will Harrison and Angelo Valentine on earning their places in the London & South East Divisional team.

### Boys U17

The u17 programme was another great success in terms of developing players and giving many of them their first experience representing their county. Although we had some contact with the players released from the academy at U16 it was a very light touch. This group has had the benefit of a number of sessions throughout the season building to the training and games in May. With strong coaching group the boys very quickly became a connected squad and that reflected in their games and how they performed. Having suffered a 17 - 22 loss against Sussex in the first game, it was clear we missed opportunities to score, the game at Grasshoppers vs Hampshire showed how the team had listened and grown in connection with a 38 - 17 win. Results are a good indicator but it's the way they played that showed grit determination and working together that really impressed us.

The boys had a third game against Devon as return 'friendly' from last season and in spite of the journey times involved again the lads did well leading 21 - 5 at half time. Devon came back strong second half but Middlesex held them off to win 28-26.

We have a number of online and in person



sessions through June introducing Strength and

conditioning goals, developing high performance mindsets, nutrition and game tactics. so far these



have been well received and a good way of keeping in touch with the squad over the summer.

### Senior Women

The women played their final game against Dorset and Wiltshire and showed how far we had come since our game against Devon. Having a full bench helped a great deal but more important was the home crowd support, the fight in the ladies was strong as they played some of their best rugby. The D&W defence was too good as we dominated territory and possession for much of the game but couldn't convert that to points. The game was played in great spirit and in spite of our loss 14 - 35 it was a much improved performance on the previous game. Much of squad was new to us this season and the way they have developed and bonded proves promising for next season.

### Next season...

We have already started planning for next season with fixtures and dates in place for the U18 Girls and the ERDPP u16 Girls. We are seeking nominations in the next week or two for the U16's section so we can invite nominees for taster session in August, we hope to alleviate some of the stress and nerves that the girls can experience in assessments.

**KEEP UPDATED  
FOLLOW US ON :**

Follow the link below to nominate for next years U15/U16 Girls ERDPP.

Nomination Form;

<https://forms.gle/hAmUtrDHqjWXmQHLa>

### Senior men coaching vacancy

We look forward to restarting the Senior mens team next season and are looking for senior mens coaches to lead the team and work within the



culture we have in the representational coaching team.

### Thank you!

Thank you to all the coaching and support team we have built over the last few years, they all volunteer their time and have been quite exceptional in creating a great playing environment, we are been seeing better game results but more importantly we are helping individuals develop and grow in their abilities, skills and gameplay.

Jok Dunbar

[jok.dunbar@middlesexrugby.com](mailto:jok.dunbar@middlesexrugby.com)

## What's On

### Middlesex County RFU AGM

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023, Grasshoppers RFC

### Honda Volunteer Evening

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> July, Twickenham Stadium (by invitation only)

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FOLLOW US ON :