

December Newsletter 2023

Email: countyoffice@middlesexrugby.com

**Friday 17 May 2024, Olympic Pavillion, Ealing
Trailfinders Sports Club, Vallis Way, London
W13 0DD**



On behalf of the Middlesex County Rugby Football Union, we would like to invite you to the 2024 Middlesex Annual County Clubs Dinner to be held at Trailfinders Sports Club, home of Ealing Trailfinders and Ealing 1871 RFC.



Building on the 2022 and 2023 event, the now annual All Club dinner is our county's way of saying thank you to all our volunteers both across our county and clubs for the hard work put in over the season.



The evening will offer a four-course dinner with an after-dinner speech/Q&A by RFU Senior Vice-President and Chiswick RFC club member Rob Udwin, followed by a County update from the Middlesex Chair, Eddie Keal.

We are also planning some fun with prizes available and presentation of trophies for the County competition winners.



The cost of the evening with a complimentary drink on arrival and table wine will be £70.00 per person.

As with last year we have decided to open this event to accommodate couples in recognition of the unwavering support many partners afford us to give to rugby.

If you, or members of your club would like to attend please fill out the below form by **Friday 22 December 2023** to secure your place.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1WW5t0tac76nHnYyob7M8RH3IMEGNJxAsFENSKjpn04k>

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We will need to firm up numbers two weeks prior to the event so we will not be able to take late entries as we have in previous years. Likewise, refunds post 3rd May 2024 will only be given in exceptional circumstances.

Further communication will be sent out to those attending with the final arrangements of the dinner evening and method of payment, during March 2023.

For any questions or queries please contact: countyoffice@middlesexrugby.com

Yours in Rugby,

Middlesex County Rugby Football Union

From the President

A roundup of my presidential rugby travels in November:

I was warmly welcomed to **Wasps v Tabard** for their Counties 2 (Herts/Middx) league match and a lunch that was well attended by past playing legends and current supporters.



Wasps President, Sol N'Jie welcomes lunch guests.

My thanks to manager, Kate Hallett for the excellent lunch arrangements and to Club President, Sol N'Jie, Chair, Richard Green, and Lachlan 'Jok' Dunbar for their hospitality. It was personally good to meet Graham Wynde after a gap of too many years and

recall his late father, Reg who use to run touch for the Vandals (Wasps 2s) and ran the Harrow Referee Society in his later years; he encouraged me in my early refereeing days.



Referee, Blair Cooper (LSRFUR) supervises a Wasps' scrum.

A closely fought game was won by Wasps 21-14 pts. Tabard were a tough outfit to beat, and it was achieved only by Wasps swarming with a concerted team effort, and their forwards dominating the set pieces. The side was captained by Sam Williams (12). Both teams played entertaining rugby that flowed well and this was enjoyed by the touchline support. You can watch the match's TryLights [here](#).

Call me old fashioned, but I enjoy seeing a printed match programme in which I read Head Coach, Hugo Lewis' welcome. He identified seven homegrown players in their squad with wing, Zane McLeod (11) making his 1st XV debut. Wasps have a buoyant Sunday morning mini/youth programme and have done well recently to have built up their girls' section. Generally, the club is thriving; sadly, no longer linked to the professional sides they are free to determine their own future. Good luck to Wasps!

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Wasps youngest supporter? 12-week-old Beatrix in kit with dad, ex-head coach Dan Shanahan.



IC (blue) win scrum possession



H/M Merit Premiership: London New Zealand Kiwis (black tops) v HAC 2s.

I was also able to briefly see some of **London New Zealand Kiwis 1s v HAC 2s** game on the next pitch. HAC won, 19-54 pts, although that scoreline didn't reflect the competitive nature of the match. I witnessed good play from both teams.

I watched **Imperial College 2s v University of Sussex 2s** in the BUCS' Southern Conference Cup at Imperial's Harlington ground. Imperial (IC) won 19-18 pts in a cracking match played at real pace and kept flowing by Greg Reed (LSRFUR). The standard of play was easily akin to league 7 or higher.



IC snuffe out a Sussex attack.

I was made very welcome by club captain Louis Beucher (9) and coach, Andy Evans. IC field 3 XV's and a women's XV. The college also has Imperial Medics with two XV's and feed players to London Imperials RFC, an alumni/student team in Mx Merit Division 3.

With 22,700 students IC, and our many other higher education institutions, provide a rich source of

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future club players. It is imperative our clubs create good links with the universities to recruit and thus help to retain these good players, so they can continue to *enjoy* our sport.



Louis Beucher ready to pass after IC win a ruck.

I attended *Friday Night Lights* at Ealing Trailfinders for a thrilling game between **University College School and Latymer Upper School**. Well done to coaches Dan Brown (UCS) and Ross Doneghan (LUS) on producing two well drilled squads who energetically entertained a large crowd of fellow pupils, friends, and family with good *teamwork* and *discipline*. Kevin Allum (LSRFUR) officiated.



Action, LUS (blue) UCS (black)

UCS had the bigger pack, which gave them the edge in an otherwise evenly contested clash with both sides showing very tight defences. UCS won 22 – 3 pts, their tries coming from Oscar Brown (captain), Ben Criag, Itay Greenbaum and a penalty try. The UCS ‘man of the match’ award went to Charlie

Wheeler, and Latymer gave their award to John Cooper (2); Jody Bardell (10) captained LUS.



LUS' left wing widens the attack.

It is hoped these talented sixth formers will continue to *enjoy* rugby both at university and beyond in community clubs. Again, I urge clubs to forge good club/school links to encourage this pathway. And our schools need to actively promote the positive benefits of continuing to play rugby to their students.



Respect and sportsmanship.

Finally, when Santa delivers your 2024 calendar, please pencil in your **County Clubs' Dinner on 17 May**. I end this piece by sending one and all my

Season's Greetings!

Nigel R Orton

President

nigel.orton@middlesexrugby.com

Message from Eddie Keal, Chair

The Christmas and New Year holiday break is almost upon us. The Management Board will be taking a few days off to relax with friends and family, and I hope you all find time to do the same too.

Whilst we are firmly focussed on getting successfully to the end of this season, we are already thinking about activities for the next one. Building succession and development plans for the volunteer team will be top of our list for at least one of the Management Board meetings early in 2024.

The representative rugby competitions are keeping everyone's diaries full. The best of luck to all our teams! The County Championships will be here before too long, and the finals of the Bill Beaumont (men), Gill Burns (women) and Jason Leonard (male under-20) championships will be played at Twickenham on 15th June.

Thank you for the hospitality we have all received in 2023 – Here's to a flying start to 2024!

Have a good break

Regards
Eddie.

eddie.keal@middlesexrugby.com

Update from Lou Latter – Chair of Rugby Development

A short note from me as we head into the festive period.

Clubs have been sent the annual [Facilities Audit](#) to complete. So far, 8 clubs have completed and whilst

not mandatory it does help us prioritise any potential investment given to clubs if we have an up to date record of your facility needs.

Age Grade registrations are now tracking in line with player numbers from last year. However, we still have some clubs that are well behind on age grade registrations. Please do reach out if you are struggling with getting parents to complete the registration process.

The Honda Volunteer of the Year nominations will open on January 8th so get thinking about those volunteers that have gone above and beyond and get nominating.

It just leaves me to wish you a very Happy Christmas and Happy New Year. Wishing you and your families an enjoyable festive period. I look forward to seeing you in 2024.

Lou

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Message from Andrew Smart, Chair of Competitions

With rugby now finished before the Christmas break, the majority of our clubs are now over the halfway point in their league campaigns.

The biggest issue that we face going forward, are the postponements that have been generated by the dreadful weather over the last three weeks although we got a pretty full programme this weekend and a couple of postponed games in Counties 2 Herts/Middx who had a break weekend, played to take some pressure off the forty-eight games we have across the division still to be played

We currently have 39 clubs currently playing their rugby in the leagues at level 5 and below and eligible to enter the Papa John's Community Cup competition. There are three competitions at each level from Regional 1 down to Counties 2. There are still three competitions at Counties 3 and below, but instead of them being split at each level, the three levels are combined.

Anyway, entries are now closed with the draw to be announced following the completion of this weekend's round of matches with the clubs entered into the relevant competition at each level dependent on their league position after this round on matches. To ensure fairness where some clubs are still behind in their fixtures, either from postponements or perhaps playing in an odd sized league where they might have played less matches than some others the Best Playing Record (Best Points Percentage) will be used to calculate their "true position" in their league.

As it stands of our 39 league clubs at Regional 1 and below, we have twenty-six who have entered the competition. This is 66.6% of our clubs. At Regional 1 and 2, we have only four out nine, less than 50% of the clubs at those levels, leaving 22 out of 30 in the Counties competition.

Once the draw is all clubs will be given a two-week grace period to decide whether to honour their commitment to the competition or withdraw. Much I guess will depend on the expectations of each club and whether they get a home draw.

Anyway, a look now at how our clubs are faring as they begin a two week break before the leagues start again on the 6th January 2024.

In the Championship Ealing Trailfinders remain top by 2 points after seven rounds despite their loss last week at London Scottish, which lifted them off the bottom. The Ealing v Cornish Pirates match was stopped today at 62 minutes after a Pirates player was knocked unconscious in a tackle with Ealing leading 12-0. I suspect that the game will have to be

re-played and of course we wish the very best to the young Pirates player who remains in hospital.

At level 5 in Regional 1 South, after twelve rounds, London Welsh have dropped to fifth, CS Stags 1863 remain at sixth and Hammersmith and Fulham drop to seventh, 10 points outside the relegation places.

At level 6, in Regional 2 SE, also after twelve rounds, London Cornish are now bottom six points from safety. In Regional 2 Thames, H.A.C remain second, undefeated but with two draws leaving them six points behind the leaders. Belsize Park up from third to second, HAC despite only one loss but including two draws drop to fourth, Old Priorians drop to sixth Grasshoppers, who had initially struggled have now won five of their last six and remain at seventh with Old Habs, up to eighth, Fullerians remain eleventh and in a relegation spot which is a worry. As I have said any Hertfordshire or Middlesex side that gets relegated from a level 6 league this season, into Counties 1 H/M, will create an extra relegation into the leagues below. That doesn't apply to London Cornish as they are on a permanent level transfer to Surrey and if relegated would drop into Counties 1 Surrey/Sussex.

At level 7, in Counties 1 Essex, after twelve rounds, Epping Upper Clapton are second. In Counties 1 H/M also after twelve rounds London Scottish are top by two points over Chiswick, Finchley remain fourth, Old Streetonians sixth with a game in hand, Ruislip drop to eighth, Hackney remain ninth, Enfield Ignatians drop to bottom whilst Hampstead after two victories in a row go up to eleventh. In Counties 1 Surrey/Sussex Teddington continue on from last season, undefeated after twelve rounds with maximum points and top by ten. Twickenham jump one place to fifth.

At level 8 in Counties 2 H/M after nine rounds (a ten-team league) Ealing Trailfinders despite their loss in a high-quality game to Brunel University remain top with Brunel still second but now only three pints behind. Old Millhillians up to third, Wasps FC drop to fourth whilst Harrow after

consecutive draws drop to sixth, Saracens Amateurs remain seventh, with Hendon bottom.

At level 9, in Counties 3 H/M its all change after eleven rounds. UCs up to second, Bank Lane with a game in hand drop to seventh, Finsbury Park drop to eighth (but are entering a 2nxv into our MTs after Christmas which after their travails of last season is hugely to their credit) Actonians remain ninth, Thamesians tenth, Kilburn Cosmos remain eleventh Uxbridge up to twelfth. In Counties 3 Surrey also after eleven rounds London Exiles go up one to eighth.

At level 10, in Counties 4 Surrey after nine rounds, Old Hamptonians are top by two points with Old Paulines down to fourth albeit with a game in hand, Harlequin Amateurs drop one place to sixth, whilst Staines go off the bottom to ninth.

At level 11 Counties 5 Surrey, after nine rounds, London French with a game in hand are up to third.

In the Allianz Premiership Women's Rugby after four rounds, Saracens Women are top undefeated with maximum points, Trailfinders Women, are sixth and Harlequins Women seventh.

Enjoy the break. It won't be long before it all starts again.

It just remains for me to wish you all, your families and friends a very Merry Christmas and all the best for 2024.

Andrew Smart

andrew-smart@ntlworld.com

Report from Chair of Groups, Andrew Smart

Not much to report as we approach the Christmas break, which for some of us can't come quickly enough. I think it is fair to say that the Groups still

haven't got back to the pre-covid numbers of attendees whether on Zoom or in person. We nevertheless still have a hugely important function to perform, helping to verbalise all the information that comes out from the RFU and indeed the County, but also so that we can continue to hold to account our management committee to ensure that it continues to do the best it can for our clubs. We still haven't got the balance right and on occasion we still don't always engage with the right people at the clubs. However, it is likely that the introduction of the monthly newsletter which continues to go from strength to strength in tandem with the Groups are filling those gaps and ensuring that our clubs are very clearly being kept abreast of all that they need to know.

The next round of Group meetings are as follows. Venues and Agendas to be circulated closer to the dates

- South Group Monday 12th February
- North West Wednesday 14th February
- North Group Monday 19th February
- West Group Wednesday 21st February

With two very successful "Pick Up the Whistle Courses" already been held for the West Group at Grasshoppers in September and the North Group at Old Grammarians in November joining details for the North West group at Harrow on the 15th January and 22nd January 2024

[Book your Place – LSRFUR Take Up the Whistle Course \(Harrow RFC\) - over 2 Nights – Harrow RFC, Mon 15 Jan 2024 7:00 PM - Mon 22 Jan 2024 9:30 PM \(tickettailor.com\)](#)

The details for the South Group course at Twickenham are still to be finalized although the course over two evenings will be held across April

These courses continue to be very successful and well supported. Once again, many thanks to Bob

Ockenden from the London Society of Referees and our own Bob Lawless for all their work in getting these courses organized and running and of course to the county for continued financial support. At a time when the North and West Referees list continues to struggle to allocate referees to our game these are absolutely crucial in identifying and supporting the referees of the future without whom we would have no game at all.

Finally, can I take this opportunity on behalf of everyone from the Group Officers Committee, as we approach a well-deserved break, to wish you all and your families a very happy Christmas and all the best for what continues to be a very challenging 2024

All the best

Andy

Coaching & Referee Development and Emergency First Aid Update. December 2023

Coach Education

Since the last November Newsletter, Middlesex have run the following activities.

(1) Coaches & volunteers update on Age Grade Regulations, run by RFU Age Grade & Education Manager, Mark Saltmarsh. This online session attracted 34 candidates.

(2) A Scrum Half workshop was run at Hazelwood, which was attended by 62 coaches.

To date this season, Middlesex have run 7 Coach Education Sessions which have attracted 302 coaches. The clubs that have hosted the Coach Education Workshops are, Grasshoppers, Finchley, Hackney, Hampstead and Hazelwood.

More Coach education's sessions will be run in 2024 and advertised on the Middlesex Social Media Platforms and Newsletter

Referee Education

To date in the first half of the season There have been 2 Take up the Whistle courses run in Middlesex with 34 in attendance.

Future courses are being arranged for Old Grammarians, Harrow & Twickenham with 2 Young Match Official courses being arranged at Finchley and Hazelwood

The below photographs show Young Match Officials from Ealing Trailfinders and London Welsh receiving their Middlesex Refereeing Jerseys. This is the best way for clubs to train up your own Young Match Officials to officiate the age grade games on a Sunday. This will allow young players to gain leadership experience, become more knowledgeable as a player and free up the coaches to oversee the development of these young match officials, which can be achieved while rotating their game time.

Please do get in touch if your club is interested in running the Young Match Officials Course.





RFU Emergency Aid Courses.

The following Emergency Aid Courses have been arranged in Middlesex

Old Grammarians - January 2024

Saracens - January 2024

Hackney - January 2024

London Welsh - March 2024

Ealing - tbc

Hazelwood - tbc

Middlesex clubs are encouraged to submit names to attend these RFU Emergency Aid courses. This will ensure that they are compliant with Regulation 9 player safety, which calls for a competent trained person in first aid, who is required at every training session and game. The RFU Emergency Aid Course which is run over 2 evenings or in one session day time, is the ideal award that clubs should aim to achieve.

For more information on Coaching, Refereeing Development, please do get in touch.

For any further information on Rugby Safe and RFU Emergency Aid Courses, contact Mary Impey on maryimpey@btinternet.com

Wishing you and your families a great festive time & an enjoyable 2024.

Bob Lawless

Middlesex Chair of Coaching Development

(M) 07803 196409.

All the best

Bob

Middlesex Chairman Schools Rugby Report December 2023

This year Middlesex Rugby had the pleasure of hosting seven festivals and five finals, which represented the best of schoolboy rugby in the county. Please see below the **2022/23** results:-

- U18 Plate **Winners UCS** v Cardinal Vaughan
- U16 cup **Winners London Oratory** and Runners up UCS
- U16 Plate **Winners St Benedicts School** and Runners up The Richmond upon Thames School
- U16 Shield **Winners London Greycourt** and Runners up Christ
- U15 Boys Cup **Winners Mill Hill**
- U15 Plate boys **Winners St James' Boys**
- U15 Vase boys **Joint Winners Fulham Boys and Orleans Park School**
- U14 Boys Cup **Winners Latymer A** and Runners up Gunnersbury
- U14 Plate **Winners Greycourt** and runners up Cardinal Vaughan
- U14 Shield **Winners Isleworth & Syon** and runners up Halliford
- U14 Bowl **Winners Latymer B** and runners up St Richard Reynolds

U13 Rugby Festival

- Cup winners – London Oratory
- Cup runners up – Christs

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- Plate Winners – Grey Court School
- Plate runners up – Isleworth and Syon
- Vase winners – Halliford
- Vase Joint Runners Up – Cardinal Vaughan and UCS
- Shield Winners – Twyford
- Shield runners up – Turing House School

U12 Rugby Festival

Cup Winners Halliford School v Runners-up UCS

Plate Winners Latymer Upper School v Runner-up Hampton School

Shield Winners Christs School v Runners-up Enfield Grammar School

Bowl Winners Greycourt School v Runners-up Richmond Upon Thames School

Performance Leagues

- **Cup** Winners - London Oratory School - Runners up - Hampton School
- **Plate** Winners - Halliford School - Runners up - Cardinal Vaughan
- **Shield** Winners - The Richmond upon Thames School - Runners up - Greycourt School School
- **Bowl** Winners - Latymer Upper School - Runners up - St James Boys School

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO:-

- **Kevin Moran** for leading a fantastic U12 Festival at Grasshoppers RFC
- **Ben Wassell** for hosting an excellent U13 rugby festival at St James Boys' School
- **Connall Devlin** (Middlesex Schools Secretary) for his hard work and organisation with the festivals
- **Nicky Fielder and Charles Portsmouth** for their help and assistance
- **Matt Gillmore** for the fantastic contribution and hosting of the competitions at Grasshoppers RFC and for skillfully refereeing two finals.
- **Philip Willis** - for outstanding referring
- **Morgan Churchill** and **Sarah Dider** our physio team who provided excellent pitch side medical care.

- **Peter Baveystock, Bob Lawless and Andy Smart** together with their team of blazers who warmly welcomed all teams and presented the trophies and medals.

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

In the new year there will be a variety of Girls competitions and an inaugural tag festival for years 5 and 6.

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

Yours faithfully



David Jones

Chairman Middlesex Schools Rugby

Colin Bosley - A sad farewell to a Rugby Great

Colin Bosley was given a fond farewell at Hendon Crematorium on 19th December with a celebration of his life which rugby formed a large part of. This included eulogies from his daughters, Hillary & Joanna, former pupil, Joseph Giret KC and London Welsh President John Taylor, recognising his services to Schools Rugby, London Welsh as a life member and Middlesex Rugby as a Life Vice President.

What's On

Take Up the Whistle Referee Course - £25 per person.

Next Course :-

Harrow RFC on 15th. 22nd. January 2024 – 7.00pm to 9.30pm. Click on <https://buytickets.at/lrurfur/1031729> to enroll.

The next round of Group meetings are as follows. Venues and Agendas to be circulated closer to the dates:

- South Group Monday 12th February
- North West Wednesday 14th February
- North Group Monday 19th February
- West Group Wednesday 21st February

See below the timetable for the up and coming Middlesex Age Grade matches:

U18B	Sun, 7 Jan 2024	2.00 - 4.00	Game vs	AWAY	TBC
U18G	Sun, 14 Jan 2024	2.00 - 4.00	Game	Wasps	
U16G	Sun, 28 Jan 2024	2.00 - 4.00	GAME	Grasshoppers	Berkshire
U20's	Sun, 28 Jan 2024	2.00 - 4.00	Touring side	Wasps	Belgrano
U20's	Sat, 17 Feb 2024	2.00 - 4.00	Touring side	Grasshoppers	Champagnat
U16G	Sun, 18 Feb 2024	TBC	GAME	Wasps FC	Berks, Bucks

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