

April Newsletter 2024

Email: countyoffice@middlesexrugby.com

President's Corner

The County President, Nigel Orton shares his Middlesex travels and encounters:

*On field: **The Middlesex Schools' U18 Boys' Sevens, 2024** was hosted by St Benedict's School, Ealing W5 with thanks to their Director of Sport, Zoran Higgins who organised the event on behalf of the Middlesex Schools' Union (the County President is also their President). A team of London Society referees gave up their afternoon to officiate. Thanks to: Tom Roberts, Paul Willis, Matt Blackett, David Plews, John Payton, Piers Skinner, Gary Spencer, Guy Morris, and Liam Collins.*



St Benedict's (green) 31 v 5 Latymer Upper (blue).

This is an open event, 16 invited schools competed. Middlesex's entrants were Hampton, Latymer Upper (W6), London Oratory (SW6), Bishop Wand CofE (Sunbury), Grey Court (Richmond), Harrow and St Benedict's. The draw and results are at <http://www.middlesexschools7s.co.uk/Competition.asp?TSID=8431>.



*Hampton (black) in possession v Bishop Wand.
Hampton won 26 - 17 pts*

I enjoy watching sevens. All the squads played well, appeared to have fun, showed skill and athleticism with well-rehearsed attack and defence strategies that produced exciting games. The 55th annual event culminated in four finals:

The Cup Hampton School beat Wellington College (Berkshire) 31 - 5 pts
 The Plate Millfield School (Somerset) beat Bishop Wand CofE School 17 - 14 pts
 The Shield St Benedict's School beat London Oratory School 19 - 5 pts
 The Bowl Oaklands College (St Albans) beat Latymer Upper School 17 - 12 pts



Grey Court on an attack v Harrow; Grey Court won 35 - 21 pts

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The many Yr 13 players present will either be on a gap year or entering higher education next season, let us hope clubs and universities reach out to these very talented players to give them opportunities to continue enjoying rugby and retain them in our sport! And, that their schools are encouraging that transition.

2 March: **West London 1s v Old Streetonians 3s** (Merit Table, Mx Div 3). The referee was Matthew Calabria (LSRFUR), West London won 41 - 12 pts. My thanks to chairman, Jim O'Keefe and team manager, David Williams for the invite and welcome to Birkbeck Avenue, Greenford. West London run one side but are hoping to recreate a 2s. They are coached by Andy Flavin and the skipper was Richard Parillon (12). Match photography by Mark Bannister.



Timmie Barnett in possession

West London was formed in 2000 by the merger of Old Gaytonians, Roxeth Manor and my club, Old Kingsburians. At lunch former players attended an 'Old Sods' reunion. It was good fun to reminisce, view memorabilia and meet former teammates alongside current club members.



Charles Perry scores for West London

West London played with cohesion and produced a strong first half up the slope, scoring 33 points by halftime, but sat back a bit in the second half letting Streetonians back into the game. The 'Old Sods' were treated to an entertaining game with nine tries. The WL 'man of the match' was Olly Plummer (10). Also, Timmie Barnett (7) Sam Zuyerohoff (14) and 'Luke' Zexing Li (6) stood out for me.



Alex Colthart charges forward

Old Streetonians' base is the *Howl at the Moon* pub in Hoxton Street, N1. Streetonians 3s in their multi-coloured tops were coached by Gar Boohig and their captain was Benno Sorensen. Their 'man of the match' was Alistair Chambers playing at prop and he received the accolade for his work rate and strong carries. His fellow prop, 'Posty' (Craig Donoghue) at double the age of many of his teammates still plays full games most weeks. Given

very wet conditions the forwards' shirt colours had been lost by the end, but well done to both teams for so few handling errors with such a slippery ball.

14 March: I was at Twickenham Stadium for the **ERFSU's Schools' Day** sponsored by Continental Tyres when the main event was the U18 Cup Final: **Harrow School v Kirkham Grammar School**. The Cup was won by Harrow School 29 - 27 pts. It was a thrilling game with Harrow's winning try coming in the dying seconds from Reggie Hammick (8). Kirkham had three England U18 players on show and Harrow's vice-captain was England and Saracens', Charlie Griffin (13).

Trophy last term and finished top of the pile in the *NextGenXV* League. Enroute, they dispatched Newman College, Hove 25 - 10; Royal Grammar School, Guildford 47 - 22; Hurstpierpoint College 46 - 5, Ipswich School 47 - 5, and Blundell's School, Tiverton 39 - 14 pts. Harrow run 24 teams under the leadership of Director of Rugby, James Melville and are congratulated on their stellar season. Alan Chandrahurd (Hampshire Referees) officiated. *The brilliant match photos, (marked *) are credited to: Leo Wilkinson Photography ©*



*Harrow score a try **



*Another score in the corner **



*"COME ON!" **

Harrow (like Kirkham) were unbeaten in their autumn 15-a-side season collecting the *Daily Mail*



RFU VP, Deborah Griffin OBE (Ex- Finchley, Richmond, and England) presents the Cup to Harrow's captain, Filip Edstrom (10)

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Also, at the stadium enjoying playing on the hallowed turf as one of 30 schools participating in the Year 7 (U12) girls' showcase were **Totteridge Academy, N20**. I apologise that I failed to get any photos of them.

22 March: **Kilburn Cosmos 1s v Actonians 1s** at Gladstone Park, NW6. Hugh Evans, LSRFUR, officiated in this Herts/Middlesex Counties 3 league match, which Actonians won 0 - 29 pts. Thanks to co-chair, Rick Gibbs for hosting me. The Kilburn coach was Danny Clarke, and the captain was Cameron Crane. Front rower, Charles Migliore played in his final club game, having started with Kilburn in 2008. This popular player was well supported on the touch line.



Kilburn in navy, Actonians in striped jerseys

Actonians were coached by Andrew Barrington and Shane Donaldson with Andy Perch as captain. Actonians dominated the scrummage and had faster, more accurate passing among their backs, which produced the competitive edge in their favour. Actonians run two sides; Kilburn run one, plus a women's team.

My congratulations to **Finchley Girls' U16s** on reaching the final of their national cup after beating Dings Crusaders, Bristol 22 - 21pts in the semi-final. Good luck girls for the 28 April at Sixways Stadium (see below a report of the game from Clive Roberts)

Off field: Congratulations to **Helen Rayfield, Haringey Rhinos RFC** who received the British Empire Medal (BEM) in the New Year Honours List for services to rugby and to the community in her borough. Helen is a key driver of Rhino's youth section and does much to assist the children off the pitch. Since 2011, Helen has raised over £200,000 in funding to support the club, enabling floodlights and the provision of match kit for poorer families.

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National Cup Semi Final U16 Girls

Finchley 22 v Dings Crusaders 21

Dings Crusaders were not expecting much of a challenge having won every game this season with some ease and were shocked when Finchley's left wing scored in the corner. This fiercely contested game continued, and Dings responded, with one of their big forwards finally going over.

Finchley hit back with a try, this time by the right wing in her corner. Then disaster, as a Finchley pass was intercepted forty metres out, conceding the softest of scores.

10-14 at half time.

When Dings added another 7 points, Finchley got straight back but were held up over the line and the game was left in the balance for some time. Eventually, Finchley pressure added a try and conversation. It was now a 4 point game.

Working up the field but with time running out Finchley managed the all-important try leaving 3 minutes to hold out for victory!

Finchley will play Sandal RUFC from Wakefield in the Final at Sixways on 28th April 11 am kick off.



Message from Eddie Keal, Chair

It is a busy fortnight for Middlesex meetings as we've had the final round of Group Meetings with AGMs and a County Management Board meeting. One of the questions we asked at each meeting was about the value of this Newsletter. It clearly remains popular, and the Presidential Report is far and away the highlight! Well done Nigel! I see some splendid photos are included above in this month's edition proving you have some talent behind a camera too.

Nigel R Orton

President

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Our North-West Group meeting was held at Northolt's smart, newly-upgraded clubhouse.

I'd like to add own my congratulations to Helen Rayfield of Haringey Rhinos for her BEM. Thoroughly deserved, and I look forward to seeing you all at the Rhinos clubhouse again soon.

Our Middlesex 7s festival looks as if it will be a bigger and better event than last season, so the steady year-on-year build continues. There is still room for a few more entries if you are very quick. I don't want to make Steve Partridge's job any more difficult with very late changes.

The judging is almost complete and I'm looking forward to receiving my script for the volunteer evening soon. It's always one of the best evenings of the year. We should be sending out invitations shortly.

I see our Coach and Referee Development continues to reach new heights in terms of quality and quantity and we expect to announce a host of Summer opportunities and additional courses soon. I'm planning to get to as many finals, play-offs and County senior matches as I can in the next few weeks, and I'm also keeping an eye on Papa John's progress as we had two Twickenham finalists last year.

Thank you to all the contributors to this Newsletter. It makes a big difference to our County communications. Andrew Smart's attention to detail and completeness in this edition is awe-inspiring!

Eddie

Regards

Eddie.

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Update from Lou Latter – Chair of Rugby Development

Well, the Women's 6Nations as kicked off with the Red Roses proving dominant once again. 45,000 tickets have been sold for this weekend's fixture at [Twickenham on Saturday 20th April](#) when the Red Roses play their penultimate 6Nations game against Ireland, before heading to France for (fingers crossed) a grand slam decider. Although I'm sure Ireland will have something to say about that.

A successful Middlesex Emerald International Girls Festival was held at London Irish Hazelwood



ground



last weekend (13-14th April 2024) with 34 clubs represented across England, Ireland, Jersey and Guernsey. 61 teams competed across the four age groups with over 750 girls enjoying their rugby. Congratulations to the three winners, Reading

(U14s), Eton Manor (U16s) and a Middlesex club winning the U18s. Congratulations to Finchley.

Finchley U16 girls also deserve congratulations for beating Dings Crusaders in a tightly fought National Girls Cup semi final. They now play Sandal RFC U16 girls in the National Final at the end of the month.

With the end of the season fast approaching, Rugby Development now focuses on planning for welcoming all our Honda Volunteer nominees to Twickenham in July. Invitations will be sent out to all nominees in May with further information on the event.

For any aspiring competition organisers, we are looking for someone to job share the Herts & Middlesex Junior Boys leagues for next season. If you are interested and would like to know more then please do get in contact with [myself](#) or [Waheed](#).

Club reminder:

- [Age Grade registrations](#) should still be completed, especially as we start to look ahead for next season.
- Adult Registration for [men](#) and [women](#) will be mandatory from the 2024-2025 season. In preparation, please do ensure your adult players emails addresses are up-to-date and have been verified on GMS. This will make the start of next season a lot easier if the work is put in now.
- For pitch side first aid care provision and training courses. please review the [RugbySafe](#) requirements.

As ever, if you need help and support then please do reach out to me.

Lou

Louise.latter@middlesexrugby.com

Message from Andrew Smart, Chair of Competitions

So, we are at that part of the season for our community clubs where league rugby has ended and we go into the early rounds the of the Papa John's Community Cup with the same applying for our merit table clubs as the leagues go into the play-offs and cups. It is time to do an analysis of how all our clubs have fared and to acknowledge both our champions and also our promoted clubs across both the men's and women's game.

Starting with the Championship, after sixteen rounds Ealing Traifinders remain top by nine points with four to go whilst London Scottish finally get themselves off the bottom and up two places following their excellent try bonus point win at Cambridge on Saturday

At level five, an excellent season for London Welsh who finished third and also for CS Stage 1863 who after the problems of the last couple of season's since covid, a very creditable sixth. Hammersmith and Fulham had their excellent start to the season to keep them at this level for next season albeit by only three points, losing their final eight matches and with no victories since December. Still, I am sure that in their first season at this level survival would have been the primary ambition and this they achieved

At level six in Regional 2 Thames, Belsize Park just failed to take the solitary promotion position falling two points short of Amersham and Chiltern and yet securing more wins. HAC finished a further two points behind them this time with the same number of wins as the champions. After such a strong season you expect both of our clubs to be challenging strongly for promotion next season. O Priorians finished fourth and Grasshoppers in their first season at this level a very credible sixth. Old Haberdashers were eight. In Regional 2 South-East London Cornish finally relinquished their hold at level six finishing bottom and relegated.

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At level 7 in Counties 1 Sussex/Surrey we acknowledge our first Champion club in Teddington who have won their league and been promoted in consecutive seasons. Another decent season from Twickenham who finished fourth. In Counties 1 Herts/Middx congratulations to London Scottish Lions, champions and promoted to level 6 for the first time in their short existence. Old Streetonians who won twelve in a row were second and you might well ask what might have happened if they hadn't lost three of their first four games. Finchley third, Chiswick fifth, Ruislip eighth, Hackney ninth. Relegated were Hampstead, eleventh and Enfield twelfth

In Counties 2 Herts/Middx it went to the wire with Brunel University champions and Ealing Trailfinders 1871 runners up and promoted. Both now playing at level 7 next season for the first time. Wasps FC were third, Saracens Amateurs fourth, Harrow fifth, Old Millhillians seventh with Hendon bottom and relegated

In Counties 3 Herts/Middx UCS were runners -up and promoted. Finsbury Park third on their return to the leagues, Thamesians sixth, Actonians seventh, Bank Lane ninth, Kilburn Cosmos eleventh and Uxbridge thirteenth

In Counties 4 Surrey we have our fourth champion club Old Hamptonians. Old Paulines were fifth and Harlequin Amateurs in a season which started with their club house burning down in an arson attack, seventh. Staines finished tenth and bottom and were relegated

In Counties 5 Surrey London French won their outstanding fixture at Woking on Saturday making them runners up and promoted.

In the Women's League I confess that for many of our clubs because of bad weather they are many games behind. Nevertheless, I will report where I can

In the Women's Championship South East 2, Hampstead Ladies are third, H&F Women are

fourth, Belsize Park Women fifth and Hackney Ladies are sixth

In the Women's NC1 SE (North) Thamesians Women finished second, Wasps Amateur Women finished third and London Welsh Women finished tenth and bottom.

NC2 South-East (Central) Epping Upper Clapton Women. Top on wins with two matches to play and the team in third only one point behind. This is going to the wire. H&F Women 2nds 4th, Belsize Park Women 2nds are 5th and Hampstead Ladies 2nds 6th

NC2 South-East (West) Ruislip RFC Women finished fourth and Teddington Antlers Ladies seventh and bottom

In Women's SE 1, Teddington Antlers Ladies A finished seventh and bottom

NC3 South-East (Central) Hackney Ladies 2nds are our fifth champions by six points with Ealing 1871 Women third, Kilburn Cosmos Ladies sixth and Belsize Park Women 2nds seventh

Now onto our Merit Tables with the following Champions

Premier – London Welsh Druids

Division 1 – London Sussex

Division 2 – Finchley 2nds

Division 3 – West London

Vets A – Chiswick Silverbacks

Vets B – Whitton and CSSC Barbarians

For our 1stxvs playing in our merit tables

In the Premier MT NZ Kiwis finished sixth.

In MMT1 as I have said London Sussex are Champions.

In MMT2 London Japanese finished second, Quintin third, Whitton Lions sixth, Hanwell seventh and Old Isleworthians ninth and bottom

In MMT 3 West London are champions with Haringey Rhinos third and Northolt eight and bottom

In Surrey MTs Conference League Feltham finished runner-up

In the Herts and Middx Merit Tables Merit Championship O Grammarians are second with Mill Hill fifth.

In Merit South Pinner are third with Southgate fifth

So, a long detailed and fairly boring report for which I apologise and especially if I have missed anyone. I make that currently four men's league champions and one Ladies team and a further six merit table champions sides. Eleven teams from eleven different clubs. Many congratulations to all our champion clubs and with a couple of women's leagues, Middx Merit Table Cup/Bowl/Vase finals this weekend, Papa John's Community Cup in full swing and a Vets cup final still to be decided that list can only go up

Finally, some excellent news that Mill Hill after a number of years in the merit tables have applied to re-join the Herts and Middlesex Counties leagues from next season. A decision about their application will be made in the next days

Dates for your diary

Saturday 20th April Middx Merit Table Cup Finals at Chiswick

Cup CS Stags 1863 2nds v HAC 2nds ko 3pm

Bowl Quintin v Finchley 2nds ko 2pm

Vase Actonians 2nds v Northolt ko 1pm

Saturday 27th April at Wasps FC Middx Merit table Play-off Finals

Premier MT NZ Kiwis v Belsize Park 3rds

MMT1 Chiswick 2nds v O Priorians 2nds or London Scottish Lions 2nds

MMT2 London Japanese v Quintin

MMT3 Actonians 2nd v Haringey Rhinos

So, plenty of rugby still to be played. Hopefully see you on a touchline somewhere

Andrew Smart

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Report from Chair of Groups, Andrew Smart

As I write this, we are right in the middles of the AGMs and last round of Group meetings for the 2023/24 season are as follows.

Monday 8th April 2024 – South Group at CS Stags 1863

Wednesday 10th April 2024 – North-West at Northolt RFC

Monday 15th April 2024 – North Group Old Grammarians

Wednesday 17th April 2024 – West Group Feltham

Perhaps unsurprisingly at the first two group meetings the sitting Group Officers were voted back into position by their clubs.

South Group Chairman Jerry Rogers (London Cornish), Hon Secretary Lyndon Walters (Hammersmith and Fulham)

North West group Chairman Andrew Smart (Harrow) Hon Secretary Mark Foster (OMTs)

A couple of crucial dates for your dairies which must not be missed

Payment of Player Declaration for the 2023/24 season is 30th June.

I attach the link for how to complete the declaration for all clubs currently at level 7 and above and for those below paying players [How to complete Payment of Players 2024 : RFU](#)

Any questions about the process or issues about how to complete the declaration please come back to me

Perhaps more important for our clubs the deadline for getting all your played 15 a side fixtures on the GMS to be eligible for International Tickets is just over a month away (Sunday 26th May). The following criteria applies

RFU Voting Clubs Only

- Every voting club receives an initial allocation of **six tickets**.
- Each voting club with an aggregate total of 30 players or more at U13 and below correctly affiliated on GMS, will receive an additional **two tickets**.
- **All remaining tickets** to be divided between voting clubs, based on the number of 15 a side games played by the club (male and female teams). U14 -U18 age grade teams are limited to a maximum credit of 16 matches per season in accordance with the RFU Age Grade Code of Practice. The club must have enough affiliated players on GMS to fulfill the number of fixtures stated.

In past allocations this has meant for every three to three and half resulted fixtures on the GMS (not walkovers) you have received an extra ticket. This is by no means guaranteed and will go up or down depends completely on the number of fixtures on the system divided by the number of eligible clubs.

Pease use this link to take you through the process [Team_Management_\(englandrugby.com\)](http://Team_Management_(englandrugby.com)). Once again if you need help inputting your matches played and resulted, please come back to me

Finally, many congratulations to Northolt who have completed the refurbishment of their club room, cellar, kitchen and ladies' toilets from over a £115,000- RFU Covid loan with a grand opening on Saturday 6th April followed by hosting the NW Group AGM the following Wednesday. All completed from within the club and in good time,

they have made a truly magnificent job Many congratulations to Geoff Payne, his committee, and members for all that they have achieved. All they have to do now is pay back the loan.....

All the best


[Andrew Smart](#)


Coaching & Referee Development


Bob Lawless


The last Coach Education session of the Season will be popular and suitable for all coaches at all levels. Early booking is advised.


 Middlesex Coaching presents a "Tactical & Technical, Kicking Workshop"


 The workshop will be of great value to all coaches.


 Venue - London Irish, Hazelwood TW16 6QU


 Date - Wednesday 24th April 2024

 Time - 19.00 hrs - 20.30hrs

 Tutor - Patrick O' Grady. Patrick is a Level 4 coach and has represented England at youth level and has been the Academy Manager for the past 8 years, coaching with the elite youth and Senior players

 Note - The workshop will give ideas to coaches in the development of the core kicking skills, trending in the modern game.

 The session commences with the theory work indoors followed by practical work on the AGP.

 To confirm your attendance - WhattsApp or email Bob Lawless on (m) 07803 196 409 (e) robjlaws@aol.com,

RFU Emergency Aid Course

Your Rugby Club is responsible to provide suitably trained Emergency Aid volunteers attending all training sessions and all games at all levels and this is a mandatory Regulation.

Would your club like to run an RFU Emergency Aid Course. The course duration is run over 2 evenings for 3 hours or 6 hrs on a Saturday or Sunday.

Interested Middlesex clubs would have to provide a quiet area to accommodate 12 candidates. There is a current waiting list where I can help to increase your numbers if short.

If your club is interested in running an RFU Emergency Aid Course in June or July, please do get in touch with me on the number below. The Emergency Aid Course is free to Middlesex Member Clubs.

Referee Development

To date Middlesex have run 8 Take up the Whistle Courses this season with 126 Middlesex Volunteers completing the courses.

A popular course is the Young Match Officials course ideal for U14s - U18s. This will allow clubs to upskill young players to help officiate games on Sundays. Each person completing the 2 evening course will be presented with a Middlesex Referees Jersey.

The course is free to all Middlesex Clubs who would like to run a "Take up The Whistle Course" either for Young Match Officials or Seniors.

For all, Coaching, Refereeing and Emergency Aid information contact -

Bob Lawless, Chair of Coach & Referee Development on (e) robjlaws@aol.com or on Whatsapp (m) 07803 196409

The below photograph is of a "Take up the Whistle Course" run at Hazelwood.



Persons interested in any of the above development opportunities or have any questions on Coaching or Referee development please do get in touch, by call, WhatsApp or email:

bob.lawless@middlesexrugby.com

Bob Lawless Chair of Middlesex Coaching on (M) 07803 196 409

Middlesex Representative Rugby

U16 Girls

We played our last county U16 game against Sussex at Crawley RFC in some of the most challenging conditions I've seen for a number of years. In spite of the mud, all the girls remained high spirited, Sussex won one game we won the other. Both games were played in great spirits and our thanks to Sussex for hosting and to Crawley RFC for the facilities.

the last 8 years, leading the U18 Girls for the last two



We had a touring team from QMS, Vancouver that brought U18 and U16 girls on to Wasps FC, it was opened to all comers, not just the Middlesex squad and some great rugby was played by all the girls and new friendships forged.



Monday 25th March saw our end of season for the girls with awards being given for, Coaches Player, Most Improved, Players Player and a Chairmans award. Thank you to Bryony Cleall for making the presentations. Chris Mason was presented a plaque in recognition of his coaching for the county over

years, assisting with the U16 girls and the women's squads as well.

U17 Boys

We've selected the final squad for this season and its looking strong, there has been great upheaval for many of the boys since the breakdown of the DPP system and much uncertainty to player futures. We continue to remain as an alternative pathway to high level representation.

Games

Sun 12th May 2.00pm KO @ TBC vs Kent

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Sun 19th May 2.00pm KO @ Grasshoppers vs Hampshire

Sun 26th May 2.00pm KO @ Grasshoppers vs Devon

Please pass this onto your players, coaches & volunteers – tables of up to 10.

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

Senior Rugby

Training is well under way and the squad is continuing to grow in strength, we have had a couple of joint sessions with the Middlesex Men with nearly 70 players in attendance across both squads. We have sixteen Clubs represented in the woman's squad and 17 clubs in the men's squad.

Women's Games

Sun 19th May @ Wasps FC, 2.00pm KO vs Devon

Sun 26th May @ TBC, 2.00pm KO, vs Sussex

Sun 2nd June @ TBC, 2.00pm KO vs Dorset & Wilts

Men's Games

Sat 11th May (Friendly) TBC

Sat 18th May @ TBC 2.00pm KO vs Hertfordshire

Sat 25th May @ Wasps FC 2.00pm KO vs Leicestershire



What's On

Saturday 20th April Middx Merit Table Cup Finals at Chiswick

Saturday 27th April at Wasps FC Middx Merit table Play-off Finals

See full details in Andy's Competitions Report

Middlesex 7's Saturday 11th May – Grasshoppers RFC

Middlesex County Clubs Dinner – Friday 17th May – Ealing Trailfinders - £70 per head.

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