

October Newsletter 2024

Email: countyoffice@middlesexrugby.com

President's Corner

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

28 Sep: Ickenham 1 v University College School Old Boys 2. A Mx MT Div 3 game played at Ruislip RFC. The referee was Nick Carbone (LSRFUR). My thanks to Ickenham's chair, Richard Simmons and club captain/fixture secretary, Andrew Mead for hosting my visit. I know Andrew's dad, Steve Mead who is a RFU Council colleague. Phillipa Wells responded to their community plea for a photographer and attends some games to provide gallery shots for their Instagram ([here](#)) and has kindly provided the images below.



There is a lot of red this month, Ickenham with white hoops, UCS in Marron and black

This season, UCS Rugby launched a second team, branded as their [Development XV](#). We very much hope they enjoy their rugby and can sustain this growth. UCS' captain was Dougal Johnson Stewart. Their 'man of the match' was Conal Maccabe. UCS trace their foundation to 8 October 1892 when they played Malborough Nomads at Surbiton.



Ickenham Saints were captained today by Jamie King. [Saints](#) have been through a bumpy period in recent years but are optimistic for this season. Formed in 1964 they are celebrating their 60th anniversary. We wish them good luck as they rebuild. The game was played in a good spirit, and I believe all enjoyed their afternoon.



The match result was 41 – 17 pts. It was an entertaining game with two well-matched sides. Overall UCS looked more threatening and especially up front. Ickenham's backs exhibited good handling and pace. UCS's Olly Pell (10), Johnny Harper (8), Conal Maccabe (12), Dougal Johnson Stewart and Fraser Ramsay (15) all stood out. As did, for the Saints, Aarun Lungley, the veteran Bill Urwin (2), Ieuan Jones (10) and Sam Richardson (14). Sam

scoring two fine tries, he was their 'player of the match' and has bombed into every photo here!

On the neighbouring pitch was **Ruislip 2 v Belsize Park 4**. [Mx MT Div 2] Ruislip lost 17 – 37 pts. Livia Brangra (LSRFUR & Barnes Ladies) was the referee.

9 Oct: **Middlesex University 1 v Royal Holloway College, Uni of London 2** [BUCS SE 5A league] Played at Stone-X Stadium, the referee was Murph Murphy (LSRFUR).



Middlesex Uni in red and black hoops

I wanted to forge links with our 15 universities to give our clubs access to promote themselves to the students. The Hendon campus has 15,000 students plus staff and operates one men's team, involving less than 0.003% of their uni strength. RHUL are Surrey affiliated, but some students hail from our county too or have digs here. Both recruited new players at the Freshers' Fayre. These are large communities where rugby can grow and we can't ignore this potential player pool. I am having similar conversations with UCL, KCL and RUMS. The uni has a training arrangement with Hendon RFC and some of the players turn out for Hendon's 2s.



The match was the season opener, and a big sports social was planned for that evening. I thank Middx's sport administrator, Oren Flynn for hosting me. The captain was Ahmad Hert (8) and for RHUL: Charlie Houghton Clarke (10).



Middx v RHUL was a tough encounter. RHUL were bigger, heavier and gelled together better, but Middx persisted in defence, and by the second half had contained them. Joe Ryan scored for Middx after sustained forward pressure near the end. Ahmad (8), Sam Brown (9) and Medhen Prased (18) stood out. The score was 7 - 48 pts.



Of interest, was that smart balls used in the 6 Nations were used in this match, with tech operators tracking the ball's speed, distance covered etc during various play scenarios, on a suite of laptops.

12 Oct: Pinner 1 v Watford 2 [Herts/Mx MT South Div 1 & Herts/Mx MT Cup] The referee was Nick Carbone (LSRFUR), Pinner won 38 – 6 pts.

Thanks to Pinner's President, Peter Hudspeth for hosting me at their pre-match 90th Anniversary Lunch. Congratulations on this milestone. It was good to see so many (67) club members and friends at the lunch, together with Dennis Reilly, Watford's President. When the club caterer pulled out Harrow RFC's catering team of Linda, Marty, Nellie and Fleur provided a four course treat, at short notice, well done ladies and thanks to Deputy County President, Andrew Smart.



Pinner red and black, Watford red with wide dark and white narrow hoops

An August 1934 meeting in the Queen's Head, Pinner confirmed the formation of Pinner rugby club, the President was Mr A E Yarrow JP. A press report says they had secured a ground and pavilion at the top of Hill View Gdns, off Headstone Lane. They had a full fixture list playing their first game on 15 Sep 1934 against R M Leon's XV. A season ticket for all 20 home games cost 5 shillings.



Ody (15) heading for a score

The club has produced 3 County Presidents, Cyril Gadney MBE being the earliest, he went on to become RFU President (1962-63) and arranged for the club to host the All Blacks for Christmas 1962 in Pinner! Mike Barnes being the most recent County President. Long serving County Secretary, David Hiles always deserves a salute, too for his long association with the club.



Pinner's coach was Sean Silver and their captain was Miltiadis Tsartsidis (12). Milto along with his brother Odysseus Tsartsidis (15), Harry Shaw (9) and Netanel Lawrence-Ojo all stood out. We wish Pinner well for the rest of their special season.



Pinner RFC celebrate their win, match photos provided by Luke Georgiou

Off Pitch: 100 Years Ago. *London Daily Chronicle*, 1 October 1924: "It was announced at the meeting of the Middlesex Rugby Union last night that W. W. Wakefield, the English captain, will play for the Metropolitan county this season. He was elected captain of the county team, and he will also lead the Harlequins during the season. Last season the famous forward played for the Leicester club. E. Temple Gurdon was re-elected President of the Middlesex County Rugby Union."

We mourn the passing of Janet Keal, wife of our chairman, Eddie. And, Middlesex Vice President, Kevin Bowring who played for London Welsh RFC, coached Wales, taught at Clifton College and worked for the RFU. Recently he led our senior county coaches on leadership and mentoring. A legend in of our sport.

Nigel R Orton, President

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Message from Vice Chair, Bob Lawless

Dear Middlesex Volunteers, welcome to the October Newsletter. There has been much going on in and around the County, which is described by our president on his club visits and Ideas on university links. Our new directors share information on outreach work in our Middx clubs and work with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award schemes in community clubs. Updates on the representative sides, girls' foundation & assessments and development work with the U17s & U18s boys. The Chair of Competition take you on a guided tour through the RFU leagues & the Middx merit leagues, and attention is given to the current vote on lower XVs being allowed into the RFU league structure. It is worth clubs noting in the Groups section information on the Community Rugby Support Fund. It is worth looking at Coaches Corner and how Middx is supporting our member clubs with coach & referee education and Emergency First Aid Courses. Note also, Save the date in 2025, to see what's going on with the Middx 7s & the County Clubs Dinner. I appreciate all the work that our volunteers do in our community clubs in growing the game while making Middlesex a great place to belong. Finally, if we could spare a thought to our Chair Eddie and his family on a difficult few months.

Bob Lawless

Middlesex Vice Chair

Update from Fred Cracknell – Chair of Rugby Development (on the field)

This last month was my first on the road and I enjoyed getting out and meeting the clubs.

My month kicked off at Haringey Rhinos, meeting Helen and Haz, to talk about all things rugby development and the great work they're doing in to drive participation. We also touched on the geographic challenges of representative rugby and how Middlesex can support the North Group clubs in opening up the pathway. I learnt a lot from this session, the big thing for me was that the Rhinos are a true representation of their community. As Helen pointed out, having developed their coaches through the club, their community outreach and work in schools is now delivered by coaches who understand the students, and crucially, the students can relate to. I think there's something in which other clubs can apply in their own community outreach. Thanks for having me Helen, I'm already looking forward to coming back with my boots.

Next up was Hamstead, where I turned up on one of the wettest training nights of the season to date. It was great fun having a run around and getting to understand the culture of the club from the pitch - thank you for having me crash your session, Peter. Following training I had a long conversation with Debbie. Much of the conversation I had with Debbie centered around supporting women into coaching and refereeing roles, as well as ways that we as a county can engage and support the under 35-ish year olds in leadership positions. Something I look forward to discussing with the rest of the board and actually something that touches back to a conversation with Haz at Haringey, where we discussed opening up a DoR's forum around Middlesex for peer-to-peer mentoring.

I managed to squeeze a lunch in with London Scottish Lions before the CS Staghounds played Dorking at King's House and then caught the second half of the Lions vs HAC game - the joys of shared facilities! The conversation with Lions was

very much tackling a different set of challenges to those I'd had previously. The club wants to do something really interesting around supporting junior boys who are not part of the professional pathway, but want to push themselves as far as they can to be the best player they can. I look forward to working with Dean and Andy to see how we can keep talented young players engaged outside of the professional pathway, which while it may feel like it at the time to the player, isn't where their rugby journey ends.

My final club visit was on Sunday to meet Mary, Peter, Steve, Shelley, AJ and the team at Hackney. It was really interesting listening to their experience with community outreach and how Middlesex and the RFU can support with further community coach training. One great thing they're doing at Hackney is a girl's round robin multi sports school holiday camp, which is a free initiative in partnership with two other local sports clubs and the local council, giving girls the chance to try rugby at the club. This is a great example of a rugby club engaging with the community to drive participation. Again, thanks for having me and I'm looking forward to coming back in a few weeks with my whistle to referee the colts.

Midway through the month I popped up to Finchley for the North Group meeting. This was a great opportunity to hear about some of the great work going on around the county. I would signpost anyone struggling with recruitment to review the Old Streetonians targeted Instagram advertising report - Please reach out if you can't find it.

Finally, I had three RFU meetings this month. Firstly, the RFU Rugby Growth subcommittee covered some interesting topics which the council will update us on as they work through them. A few highlights are the School Rugby manager role, which is being rolled out, the role of 7s in the rugby pathway, and the roll out of T1 to schools. I had an interesting meeting with the Partnerships team about DoFE. The RFU are running a trial on this partnership this season. Unfortunately no Middlesex Clubs are included but the premise is that the whole award apart from the expedition

can be completed at a rugby club, so let's formalize it. This will be a vehicle in future seasons which we can use to help grow and develop young match officials, coaches, and club volunteers. Lastly, was our Middlesex meeting with the RFU Development Team. Much of this was around funding off-field activities and it's worth touching base with Andrew Walker to see if you're eligible for any of the facilities grants. I'm looking forward to getting around the clubs who will be actively supported by the Scaracens and Harlequins community coaches and seeing how we can replicate the model for the other clubs in the county.

Thus far I only have Hendon and Hackney on my list to visit next month. If you're reading this and are in need a referee for a Sunday or would like the chance to put me through one of your fitness drills at training as Hampstead did, please reach out.

Please reach out if you have any ideas, wants, challenges, or to simply introduce yourself – Fred.Cracknell@middlesexrugby.com

Fred

Message from Andrew Smart, Chair of Competitions

Just a quick update on the Lower xv Vote that began last Wednesday 9th October at midday and which will close at midday on Friday 25th. Of our 56 voting clubs as of 7pm on Monday 14th October, 17 have now voted. Voting instructions went out to every club chair and secretary so if for some reason you haven't received anything can you please let me know. Still, plenty of time to get your vote in and we will be sending out a reminder to those clubs that are still to vote at the beginning of next week

It's good to have some rugby to actually talk about. In the Championship after four rounds Ealing are currently second three points behind Coventry.

London Scottish after some difficult years are currently seventh.

At level 5 in Regional 1 South Central after five rounds London Welsh are top by one point over Jersey with CS Stags 1863 in third and Hammersmith and Fulham tenth

At level six in Regional 2 Thames, again after five rounds H.A.C are currently second three points behind London Irish Wild Geese, London Scottish Lions in their first season ever at level 6 are third, Grasshoppers are fourth, Belsize Park fifth, Old Priorians seventh, Teddington again in their first season at level six are tenth and Old Haberdashers bottom.

At level seven in Counties 1 Sussex/Surrey again after five rounds Twickenham are second two points behind Trinity and London Cornish sixth. In Counties 1 Essex again after five rounds Epping Upper Clapton are ninth. In Counties 1 Herts/Middx, Finchley are top after five rounds with maximum points, with Brunel also undefeated two point behind, followed by Ealing Trailfinders 1871, third, Old Streetonians fifth, Ruislip seventh, Hackney tenth and Chiswick eleventh.

At level eight in Counties 2 Herts/Middx at level eight also after five rounds, Hampstead are top on points difference with Saracens Amateurs, Harrow are fourth, Wasps FC fifth, U.C.S. sixth, Enfield Ignatians ninth, Old Millhillians tenth.

At level nine in Counties 3 Herts/Middx after three rounds Thamesians are top, Finsbury Park second, Actonians fifth, Kilburn Cosmos eighth and Mill Hill on their return to the leagues are ninth. This continues to be a league under real stress after Hendon became the fourth to withdraw from this league since the fixtures were first announced. In Counties 3 Surrey after five rounds Old Hamptonians, unbeaten with a game in hand are only one point behind the leaders whilst London Exiles are fifth

At level ten in Counties 4 Surrey, after three rounds, Harlequin Amateurs are sixth, London French ninth and Old Paulines really struggling at the bottom.

At level eleven in Counties 5 Surrey after three rounds, Staines undefeated and on maximum points are second on points difference with Feltham on their return to the leagues in fifth

In the Middlesex Merit Tables Premier Division after three rounds NZ Kiwis are top with London Sussex sixth.

In MMT1 after four rounds London Japanese are top with Quintin in second place

In MMT2 West London are in second place after three rounds, Haringey Rhinos third, Old Isleworthians seventh, Hanwell eighth, Whitton Lions ninth and Uxbridge who have not been able to get out so far this season tenth

In MMT3 after four rounds Ickenham are ninth and Northolt tenth

In the Herts and Middlesex MTs Championship South after four rounds Old Grammarians sit top undefeated. In Merit Table South 1 with a game in hand Pinner & Grammarians are first, undefeated, by three points. Hendon are fifth and Southgate seventh

Fifteen of our 1stxvs playing in the merit tables

In the Premiership Women's Rugby after two rounds Saracens Women's are top, Trailfinders Women are fourth, Harlequin Women are sixth

All the best

Andrew Smart
Chairman Competitions
andrew-smart@ntlworld.com

Group Officers Report

Following the first round of Group meeting, on Monday 30th September we held an All-Clubs meeting on Zoom on the Lower XV Vote. Apart for some issues with the link for which I apologise, this was a well-supported meeting (for those that could get on) and hopefully useful for those clubs who have the opportunity to vote. As we are currently in the middle of voting I don't want to say too much except that I was impressed by both the knowledge of the issues and the quality of the questions. In my opinion a very useful exercise. We await the results which will be circulated immediately after the vote closes at midday on Friday 25th October.

Next, I would like to take this opportunity to signpost clubs to the £500- grant (plus a further £375- for those in greatest need) available from the Community Rugby Support Fund for 2024/25.

Simply to be eligible you need to be

1 A Voting Club of the RFU

2 Have an annual turnover for last year of less than £125,000-

3 Complete the application (takes no more than one minute)

Just to give some background, as I remember it this fund took over from the Supplementary Pot. Simply, unsold International Tickets from the community game allocation, which were not picked up or returned by clubs were then sold on by the RFU with the money going into the Supplementary Pot. The money raised was then distributed to each voting club without the need for any application. It used to be about £800- or so. Now if you want the money you have to apply for it but it is a quick and easy application to complete, slightly longer if you wish to apply for the extra £375- grant.

Only three Middlesex Clubs applied last year and all three got the full grant

It is so easy and provided you fulfil the criteria you will get the money

The following came from the Community Game Update of the 8th October for those of you looking for more information

The Community Rugby Support Fund for 2024/25 is now live! The purpose of this fund is to support voting member clubs, CBs and referee societies who are in greatest financial need. Clubs can claim a one-off payment of £500.

If you indicate that your club has an additional need for help with one-off essential costs, you can claim an enhanced grant of an extra £375 - subject to available funds.

To be eligible, clubs must be voting members of the RFU and be able to show evidence of an annual turnover of less than £125,000 in the 2023/24 season.

*Only one claim may be submitted per club. **The claim window will close on 5 November.** Payments will be made by the middle of December.*

[Community Rugby Support Fund Application 24/25 \(smartsheet.com\)](https://middlessexrugby.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Middlesex-County-RFU-Womens-Head-Coach.pdf)

Please make sure you don't miss this opportunity

Any questions or issues please feel free to come back to me at any time.

Keep safe and all the best.

Andrew Smart

Update from Chair of Team Middlesex – Mark Coles

I hope this finds you all well. Regarding Representative rugby, whilst we are yet to get into the games (more on later), we are seeing more of our age group teams assessments taking place.

Our Girls U16 Foundation (formerly the Girls ERDPP) is now into its third week post the assessments held with around 50 girls taking part in the programme. Our U17's Boys assessments have been taking place last Friday and this (11th and 18th October respectively) with strong

numbers of player nominations from clubs for what we hope will be a competitive team and leave the coaching team with a few hard decisions after we have seen all players. We'll be aiming to give players as much individual feedback as possible so they can keep developing whether make the final programme or not.

Our U18's Boys and Girls assessments are also happening towards the end of the month (27th October) and again we will be blessed with strong numbers giving our coaching teams a 'nice problem' to have in assessing players moving up from the U17's Boys and U16 Girls cohorts, and new/returning talent coming in. With first matches on 1st December, we're all looking forward to the squads developing in the coming weeks. I spoke last month around bringing back is the U20's men now the eligibility criteria have been simplified and we'll be contacting clubs in the coming weeks with further details on putting players forward.

To close and as a call to action, we did recently share job descriptions for the three vacant roles we have, and given this newsletter is going out this week if you may know of anyone who might be interested in the roles below, please do point them my way or share the below links with

Senior Women's Head Coach

<https://middlessexrugby.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Middlesex-County-RFU-Womens-Head-Coach.pdf>

U20's Head Coach

<https://middlessexrugby.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Middlesex-County-RFU-U20-Head-Coach.pdf>

U20's Team Manager

<https://middlesexrugby.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Middlesex-County-RFU-Team-Manager.pdf>

Next month, I'm hoping to update on the progress we will have made on the above appointments, share more on the assessments and game we have coming up but for now thanks as ever for reading and for your support

Thanks as ever for reading and for your support

Mark

Mark.coles@middlesexrugby.com

Coaching & Referee Development

Coaches Corner

After a successful summer programme of Safety in the Scrummage & Lineout and developing back play. A recent Coach Education session was run at Ealing Trailfinders on Thursday 10th October 2024, the Theme of the session was Safety in the Contact Areas. A total of 35 Middlesex coaches attended and there was 18 - U14s players from Ealing Trailfinders, involved with the practical's, all had a great fun time and will have benefited enormously, along with all coaches in attendance.

Middlesex Youth Coaches



Under 14's players



Arrangement are being made for Youth coaches in the Saracens catchment areas i.e North Middlesex clubs to visit a PDG / Academy session in Nov / Dec. More information on this will be forwarded through the NW & N groups, any coach interested in attending please contact me.

Referee Development

During October a "Take Up the Whistle" course was run at Grasshoppers RFC, on Mondays 7th & 14th. 16 candidates attended and the course was run by Rob Park and Nick Edmonds.

The next Take up the Whistle Course will be run at Old Grammarians on Mondays 7th & 21st November, Other referee's courses will be taking place throughout the season. Please do get in contact for more information

Take Up the Whistle Course 14th October at Grasshoppers



RFU Emergency First Aid Courses have been run at the following venues –

Old Grammarians RFC – Sat 24/08/24 – 10 in attendance

Ealing Trailfinders – Sat 28/09/24 – 10 in attendance

Grasshoppers RFC – Sat 05/10/24 – 10 in attendance

Harrow RFC – Sat 01/02/24

Thamesians RFC – TBA

If any club would like to run an RFU Emergency Aid Course contact Middlesex Rugby Safe Lead Mary Impey on safeguarding@hackneyrfc.co.uk

If your club would like to host a coach education session on any topic of interest, please do get in touch. Also, if you have any questions on Coach or Referee Development please do contact me.

Age Grade Update & Resources

RFU Mark Saltmarsh, Age Grade Pipeline Manager, delivered an Age grade Update to Middlesex Coaches Managers & Volunteers involved with the Age Grade groups. The following topics were discussed.

- **Age Grade Registration**
- **Girls Game Development**
- **Rugby World Cup 2025**
- **Girls' development in Middlesex**
- **Playing out of the Age grade**
- **Values & Behaviors**
- **Rugby Safe – injury prevention – headcase – activate – training & coaching CPD – safeguarding**
- **CRISP injury reporting**
- **Support & resources**
- **Q&As**

The online event was attended by 45 members from 21 Middlesex Community Clubs
Those in attendance will be sent the slides and resource information. Anyone who did not attend and would like to receive the slides & resource information do get in touch.

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

What's On

Upcoming Take up The Whistle Courses

Next Course :-
Old Grammarians RFC on 7th. & 21st.
November 2024 – 7.00pm to 9.30pm

Click on <https://buytickets.at/lrurf/1335772> to enroll

Middlesex Schools Cup and Plate

Festivals	Date	Venue
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(please note these are in age order and NOT date order)

Under 12's Boys Festival	29/11/24	Grasshoppers
Under 13's Festival	25/11/24	St James'
Under 14's Boys Festival	26/11/24	Grasshoppers
Under 16's Boys Festival	20/11/24	Grasshoppers
Under 18's Boys Festival	04/12/24	Grasshoppers

These festivals generally start at 11am and run through to 2.30pm approx. so please try to get down and support them.

Save the Dates in 2025:

County Clubs 7's Saturday 10th May, Grasshoppers RFC

Entry details to follow from Organisers, Steve Partridge & Mark Coles

County Clubs Dinner - Friday 16th May at Ealing Trailfinders – Booking information to follow from event organizer Alice Urquhart.