

November Newsletter 2025/26

Email: countyoffice@middlesexrugby.com

President's Corner – Andy Smart

With the England Quilter series across four weekends in November and other RFU Competition responsibilities it has made it extremely difficult to get out and watch any Middlesex Clubs. Since my previous report I did manage to get down to London Cornish to watch them host Chiswick in a re-arranged first round game in the Counties 1 South Plate. A fiercely competitive game that was in doubt right up to the final whistle that was finally won by London Cornish

Interestingly despite some success for our Clubs in the Pap John's Community Cup we only have six clubs left in the new Community Cup and none unfortunately in the any of the three Champions competitions

Anyway, in the third-round draw to be played on the 31st January in Counties 1 Southern Shield we have

Old Elthamians v London Cornish and East Lonon v Old Streetonians

In the Counties 2 Southern Shield we have

Tabard v Harrow and Old Blues v Old Hamptonians

In the Counties 3 Central Shield we have

London Exiles v Southwark Lancers and Old Grammarians v Farnham Royal

The 31st January is a non-league weekend so if you are looking to watch some rugby then please support one of the six Middlesex side that will be playing

With England playing against Argentina on the Sunday I am going to take the opportunity to go to Saracens Amateurs v top of the table Finchley on the Friday 21st November and then onto Ealing 1871 V Old Streets also in Middlesex Counties 1 on Saturday 22nd. It should be a couple of great games especially the at Ealing where second host third with only one point between the two sides. It will good to get back on a touchline again and I am really looking forward to both games and a chance to catch up with some friends from all four clubs

Other than that, I was unable to attend the November Management Meeting on Tuesday 11th

November as I was at the South Group meeting at Kings House School Playing Fields hosted superbly by David Chaytor the Chairman of CS Stags 1863. A lively meeting where some of the issues that came out at the AGM were aired again.

Then I chaired the North-West Meeting on Zoom the following evening where we had an interesting presentation by Sophie Johnson and Henry Kilton who sit on the RFU Council as representative of the Youth Council on their ideas to set up a Middlesex Youth Rugby Council. They will present again at the North Group meeting on Monday 17th and again at the West Group meeting once the date has been agreed. It is my intention to be at both meetings

With my RFU hat on I attended all seven RFU Competition Webinars and also one of the four in person meetings following on from the Webinars this time the L&SE meeting at Esher on Monday 3rd November where I caught up with Dickon Moon of London Cornish and Tim Cunis from Old Pauline together with Paul Astbury Past President of Middlesex and like me representing the RFU Adult Competitions Management

So, a lot going on, unfortunately at the moment almost entirely off the field but it won't be long before I am back on a touchline supporting our Clubs

Hopefully see you on a touchline or clubhouse soon

Andrew Smart

President Middlesex Rugby

13th November 2025

andrew.smart169@gmail.com

Message from Chair, Eddie Keal

I am editor-in-chief of the County Newsletter this month as Peter Baveystock is away. I hope it meets the high standard Peter sets every month.

It's been an exceptionally busy month as we are in full swing doing what we do best – bringing people together to enjoy rugby. I've been out and about at our clubs and am now in the middle of the 2nd round of Group meetings this season.

I'm inspired by the depth of talent and dedication we have amongst our cub volunteers, and also our

desire to help and support each other across club boundaries.

The Management Team is working well. I don't often single any one of them out for praise, but I'd like to recognise the contribution made by our Independent Member, Emma Wiggs. Her insights make a real difference to many of our debates and decisions. If you want to know more about Emma, have a look at her personal website here. <https://emmawiggs.com/>

We have a lot of work to get through in the next few months. Some is background tasks, such as updating our Policies and Rules. Some is front and centre, principally competitions and club visits. But we also have end-of-season events to plan and deliver. I'm very grateful to those volunteers who have come forward to offer their services, many on a project or limited-term basis. All help is welcome!

In spite of some recent distractions, we aim to spend **all** of our Middlesex time making rugby happen. Without the game, we serve no purpose. As a group of volunteers we are motivated exclusively by what works best for our Member clubs. Long may it remain that way.

Here's to a wet weekend!

All the best

Eddie

Middlesex Chair
eddie.keal@middlesexrugby.com

Message from Steve Partridge, Chair of Competitions

We are now entering month 3 of the season, with the days shortening, which brings earlier kick-off times, the completion of round 2 of cups, the Autumn Internationals, some dodgy-looking moustaches, all in aid of the Movember charity, and our first Super Vets County game versus Hertfordshire at the end of November.

Here is how our clubs are faring in their respective leagues.

London Welsh have moved up 2 places to 12th place of National League 2 East, having played 8 games with 2 wins and 6 losses.

In Regional 1 South central **CS Stags** are sitting in 5th place with 23 points, having won 4 games and lost 3, whilst **London Scottish Lions** leapfrog into joint 3rd place in the same league on 26 points with the with 5 wins and 2 losses. Jersey, who are currently at the top of the league on 34 points, are unbeaten with 7 out of 7 wins. Only 2 points separate 2nd place from 4th place in the league. **Hammersmith and Fulham** have moved off bottom place into 11th place, having won 1 game and lost 6 games but picked up 5 bonus points along the way.

In Counties 1 Essex **Epping Upper Clapton** are currently joint top of the table on 20 points having played 5 games and won 4.

H.A.C. are sitting joint 3rd place in Regional 2 Anglia on 27 points, having won 5 games and lost 2, and are 4 points behind league leaders Brentwood.

Twickenham are currently sitting 8th in Regional 2 South Central, with 17 points, having won 2 games and lost 5. There are 2 clear leaders in Winchester and Bournemouth, who have won all 7 of their opening games.

Belsize Park are currently sitting 2nd in Regional 2 Thames, on 35 points with 6 wins and a loss. **Brunel University** have overtaken them in to 1st place with an unbeaten record of 7 wins out of 7 and sitting on max 35 points. **Teddington** in 4th place on 26 Points, **Old Priorians** in 6th place on 22 points and **Grasshoppers** in 9th place on 11 points.

In Counties 1, Middlesex **Old Streetonians** are currently sitting unbeaten at the top of the table on 24 points, with 5 wins out of 5. followed closely by **Finchley, Ealing Trailfinders 1871 & Old Haberdashers** who are all sitting on 4 wins and 1 loss, followed by **Chiswick, Hampstead, Ruislip, Saracens Amateurs**, with both **Wasps**, & **UCS** sitting bottom of the league with 5 losses out of 5,

In Counties 2 Middlesex, **Barnet Elizabethans** are joint top of the table with **Actonians** on 14 points having both won 3 and lost 1 game, Then the league is comprised of the following teams by league position **Hackney, Enfield Ignatians, Harrow, Finsbury Park, Kilburn Cosmos** and **Old Millhillians** in last place on 7 points with only 7 league points separating 1st place to last place, this looks like a very tight league and bonus points will have a large impact on the overall league positions this season.

In Counties 4, Surrey **Staines** are currently sitting 5th on 6 points, having played 3 games and won 1 and lost 2 and are 9 points behind league leaders Old Freemans

Old Grammarians are 3rd in Counties 3 Herts on 19 points, having played 5, won 4 and lost 1 and are 4 points behind Hitchin II who sit 5 out of 5 wins at the top of the league table.

In Counties 5, Surrey **Harlequin Amateurs** are in 4th place on 15th points, having played 3 and won 3 and are 5 points behind **Old Paulines**, who are league leaders on 20 points, and Feltham are in 9th place on 1 point, having lost all their 4 games.

Middx Merit Tables

Overall

We are sitting below the unusually high national average of circa 80% for game completion at 72% so we have work to do to get our numbers up and games played.

Overall

Premier Total 20 Games - 20 Played(1 Game On), 0 Void & 0 w/o - 100%

Div 1 Total 20 Games - 14 Played (0 Game On) 1 Postponed & 5 w/o - 70%

Div 2 Total 36 Games - 24 Played, 2 postponed & 10 w/o - 66%

Div 3 Total 36 Games - 23 Played (1 Game On) 1 Postponed & 12 w/o - 64%

Totals 112 Games 81 Played (2 Game On), 2 PP, 27 W/O's - 72%

Just focusing the commentary below on our Merit teams, who are a single team club, and how they are faring this season so far

The Premier Merit table sees the top 5 places held by lower 15 sides, with New Zealand Kiwis as our highest non-league team in 6th place, followed by Quintin 1 place behind in 7th place.

Division 1 Merit table, **London Japanese** in 1st place on 29 points, with **West London** in 3rd place on 26 points

Division 2 Merit table **Pinner** in top place on 39 points having won 5 and lost 2 games this season so far with **Hendon** in 10th place on 18 points, **Haringey Rhinos** in 11th place with 17 points and **Whitton Lions** at the footer of the league with 4 points.

Division 3 Merit table Newly formed **Ickenham & Uxbridge** are currently top of the league on 51 points having played 8 games and won followed by **Hanwell** in 8th on 22 points, **Old Isleworthians** in 9th place on 18th points and **Northolt** in 11th place on 14 points.

Weekly results for the merit tables can be found [here](#)

Finally hold the date May 9th Middlesex 7's at Wasps FC.

If you need anything from me please do not hesitate to reach out.

Steve Partridge

Update from Chair of Team Middlesex - Mark Coles

Hello, its November already (I know!) and I hope this finds you and your club well. The season is flying and we're already into the autumn internationals.

Regarding Representative rugby, our first games are kicking off later this month (U16G and U18B) and

we've had a flurry of activity across our age group teams assessments and subsequent initial training sessions and discussions with potential coaches for the vacancies I spoke about last month am looking to fill.

In Age Grade, in all we had over 300 young people nominated for our four programmes which shows the ongoing health of our programmes and the clubs/schools who put them forward. For those that were unsuccessful this time I am also proud we've been able to give players individual feedback so they can keep developing and highlighted the fact they are welcome back to the respective age bracket assessments they find themselves in next year. Whilst this is no doubt disappointing, I have seen first-hand that parents and players alike appreciate the effort that has gone into providing so a doth of the hat to Jok Dunbar who has led on this means of engagement is certainly in order.

Turning towards the adult age groups, we've just received the dates for our U20s programme and will be launching full dates soon (keep your eyes peeled for!) and are awaiting the Senior Men's and Women's so we can push on with discussing those campaigns with the leadership teams and hope to share in December's newsletter.

We have though announced our first Vets and SuperVets activity since pre-covid. Our male Super Vets (50+) will be taking to the field against Hertfordshire on Saturday 29th November at Wasps FC (2pm K.O) and our Vets team will be taking on the RAF Vets at Harrow RFC on Wednesday 21st January.

The links to sign up to either of these teams for eligible persons from our clubs are still open and can be found below

To register yourself or players for this match interest please sign up on the below link:

SuperVets

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1vtznzicqNUJWBau6hpP3-_edYVVVLGKpqfk6SQo70TDTM

Please sign up by no later than **Friday 21 November** to allow time for administration to be sorted.

Vets

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/19-IDhXbULbEazGdHlbl1U72yIOlJ9zyG9RxIFk4h42Q>

Please sign up by no later than **Friday 9 January 2026** to allow time for administration to be sorted.

I am always impressed by the enthusiastic, passionate people we have in our midst and hopefully our Vets offer gives the chance to bring a different cohort of people into our programmes to complement their rugby journeys which I feel is important for when we all look back on our engagements with the game.

Next month, I'm hoping to update on the progress we will have made on the above appointments, share updates on the games we have been playing and more details on the open age programmes, 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

A Report from Chair of Groups. Andy Smart

So, we are right in the middle of the November round of Group meetings, with the South Group meeting hosted by CS Stags 1863 on Tuesday 11th November and the North-West on Zoom the following evening. Next week on Monday 17th November we have the North Group meeting again on Zoom with the West Group meeting still be confirmed. The Group meetings on Zoom will or have had presentations from local players Sohie

Jonson and Henry Kolton, both sitting on the RFU Council as representatives of the Youth Council. Their intention is to set up a Middlesex Youth Council to help and support young players locally. Two very bright young people with loads of enthusiasm to make a difference in Middlesex. They have already presented to the Management Committee

At the moment the four Groups are pushing to increase the completion rate of the two surveys sent out to Middlesex Clubs recently. One by Middlesex the other for the RFU. At the moment we only have had 17 clubs complete the RFU survey and we need to push on that so that Laura Westlake the RFU Middlesex Club Developer can get a full picture of the issues facing our clubs and what she and her colleagues can do to support. This is especially important as Laura and her team will be running workshops for Middlesex Clubs in February on these issues

1) Club Development Requirements – 2025/26 Season

Action Required by 5pm on Sunday 30th November 2025. Laura is keen to understand how the season has begun for your club. To help build a comprehensive, whole-club picture, please consult your wider Club Committee and section leads to support the completion of your Club Development Requirements. These submissions will inform Middlesex RFU and the RFU Club Development & Facilities Team of your club's current needs, ensuring alignment with existing programmes and interventions. Once received, we will review your responses and begin providing the support required. Please click on the links to complete the following:

• [Middlesex Club Development Support Capture 2025/26](#)

• [Middlesex Clubs Annual Facility Needs Capture 2025/26](#)

The Middlesex Clubs who have completed the survey so far

- Whitton Lions
- Hampstead
- CS Stags 1863
- Old Hamptonians
- Staines

- Saracens Amateurs
- Ruislip
- Twickenham
- West London
- Old Priorians
- Enfield Ignatians
- Mill Hill
- Finchley
- Harrow
- Hendon
- Old Isleworthians
- Ealing Trailfinders

So please if you not one of the seventeen Clubs who have completed the surveys, please make sure you do. It is five minutes of your life and it will help to provide a comprehensive picture of the issues facing our clubs

Once again I can confirm the dates and venues for the Group's Pick-Up-The Whistle Course for this season

North Group Old Grammarians 20th and 27th November

North West Group Harrow 19th and 26th January

West Group Grasshoppers 9th and 16th February

The details for the South Group Course are to follow but likely to be at Twickenham RFC in April 26

A busy time for the Groups. Some good work going on.

Andrew Smart

Chair of Group Officers

14th November 2025

andrew.smart19@gmail.com

Middlesex Coaching & Referee Development

Middlesex Coaching Corner

The photographs below is of Middlesex senior club coaches, attending a workshop on Monday 27th October 2025. The coach education session was tutored by Rich Whiffin who is currently coaching at International level. The theme of the session was "Ball carry in the middle of the pitch" The session was a presentation indoors on the session theme and how this is developed in a game situation. The outdoor

practical showed game ideas on ball carry presentation, running lines and how to develop this in small sided games. Coaches then retired inside and worked in small groups evaluating the session. The evening was well attended with some very positive feedback from those coaches in attendance.

Group Photograph of Middlesex Coaches and session tutor Rich Whiffin



and will take away much knowledge which will assist Middlesex youth players in their development.

Focus on Middlesex Coaches.

This section is to highlight the experiences and thoughts on our Middlesex coaches who are engaged with Middlesex clubs and other areas of development. Many of our coaches have also played or coached with our Middlesex teams, schools & universities. This month we introduce Andrew (Andy) Barrington, Andrew after an interesting playing career, took up coaching and have been developing players in our Middlesex Clubs. I have known Andrew for many years and it is great to see Andrew coaching with a Middlesex club & university. Andrews enthusiasm for rugby is infectious and is evident by his continued involvement, and his dedication to his personal development is unwavering.

Photo of Andy Barrington at one of his coaching sessions.



Upcoming Coach Education

Monday 17th November 2025, a coach education suitable for senior coaches. Course tutor Nick Evans will be sharing ideas with coaches on Developing Counter Attack principles through Drills & Games

Wednesday 26th November 2025, Middlesex Youth coaches are invited to attend a Saracens Player Developing Group (PDG), at Harrow School. The PDG Manager Edd Conway will spend time with coaches in explaining how the PDG / Academy works and what's Trending in Skill Development. Those coaches who attend will be close to all practical skill development

In Andy's words -

I arrived in London in 1985 after playing rugby in France. New to the big city, my Father suggested 'join a rugby club and you'll have 100 mates', and he was right. As my career began, playing rugby was the antidote to work, and clubs like Haringey Rhinos and Chiswick became my family and my friendship group. I owe rugby a great deal and in my coaching I try to pay back that debt in everything I do.

Bob Lawless suggested coaching, after a tour to Canada with Middlesex Rugby. At the time Chiswick had single

figures at training and were not winning many games; I learned that turning up is half the battle; that with hard work and commitment, big things can be achieved – and, to quote my Father again ‘you get out what you put in’.

My coaching journey has included stints with Chiswick, Belsize Park, London Welsh Amateurs and Hammers women.

For three years I have been head coach at Actonians and I believe that we are doing well not just to survive, but thrive as a club in the lower leagues. I recently also became head coach of KCL university rugby and loving that experience.

I believe any coaching philosophy must reflect your life philosophy; for me, for the life I’ve lived and from the inspiration of my rugby-loving Father, I have concluded that I am motivated by the satisfaction of ‘The Win, Hard Won’

Referee Development

The next Take up the Whistle short course will take place at Old Grammarians RFC on Thursdays 20th & 27th November 2025.

First Aid Courses

London Welsh are running a series of First Aid Courses to primarily meet their own needs, but also open for other Clubs. The next one is planned for Tuesday 2nd & 9th of December 2025. 19.00hrs - 21.30hrs. The cost is £55.00

This is an accredited EFAW Level 3 course tailored for rugby and meets RFU requirements. For further information, please contact David Brunson, London Welsh Welfare Officer on (M) 07766 426 250

For further information on coach / referee education sessions. Contact Bob Lawless (M) 07803 196 409

For further information on the above coach / referee education sessions. Contact - Bob Lawless on (m) 07803 196 409

All the best

Bob

Bob.lawless@middlesexrugby.com

A Call for applications for the Financial Support Fund from Andrew Walker

MIDDLESEX RUGBY FINANCIAL SUPPORT FUND 2025/26

Middlesex Rugby are pleased to continue their commitment to supporting disadvantaged young people at our rugby clubs. Clubs, teachers, and parents or guardians can now apply for a grant to help with membership fees and/or club kit and rugby boots for economically disadvantaged children and young people up to the age of 18. To access the application form, please scan the QR code below. For successful applicants, Middlesex Rugby will contribute up to 50% of the annual costs of membership fees, with the expectation that clubs will cover the remaining costs. Middlesex Rugby may also contribute towards the cost of club playing kit, sports bras, boots and gum shields. Applications will be reviewed by a panel consisting of the Chair of Rugby Development, the Chair of Groups, the County Treasurer and the Club Representative. The panel’s decision is final.



Applications will remain open until 30 November 2025

financialsupport@middlesexrugby.com

Thank you.

Andrew

andrew.walker@middlesexrugby.com

Reminder from the County Office

A reminder from Carmine, our County Administrator

A reminder to those clubs who have been issued an invoice to pay their Middlesex membership subs and have not done so.

Please do so asap!

Thanks,

Carmine.

carmine.brudenell@middlesexrugby.com

What's On

Take up the Whistle

The next Take up the Whistle short course will take place at Old Grammarians RFC on Thursdays 20th & 27th November 2025.

First Aid Courses

London Welsh are running a series of First Aid Courses to primarily meet their own needs, but also open for other Clubs. The next one is in November (dates below)

Details are:

London Welsh are hosting a Rugby Ready First Aid Training Course - run over two evenings Tues 11 Nov & 18 Nov 7pm - 9:30. Old Deer Park TW9 2AZ, near to Richmond Station, parking available. £55 book here: <https://www.londonwelshrfc.com/events>. This is an accredited EFAW Level 3 Course tailored for rugby and meets RFU requirements.

For further information. Please contact

David Brunsdon
London Welsh Welfare Officer
m: 07766 426250

November Group Meetings

- South Group Tuesday 11th November at CS Stags 1863
- North West Group on Wednesday 12th November on Zoom
- North Group Monday 17th November on Zoom
- West Group to confirm their meeting date but will be on Zoom

May 9th Middlesex 7's at Wasps FC.

Club Surgeries from the RFU

Please note that the RFU will be running a Local Club Surgery on Thursday 22nd January 2026 at Grasshoppers RFC. Our RFU delivery team will be there to answer any questions you may have and offer any advice and assistance they can. Find out more and register, here.

https://share.articulate.com/oquTbm3_6tiCzJt28z6FW#/lessons/0huDtxHulDI8MwLRkW9C_j-DPFS5Np1r.