

## April Newsletter 2025/26

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

### Middlesex Clubs Award Supper, Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2026, 7.00 for 7.30pm

Middlesex County Rugby warmly invites you to the 2026 Middlesex Clubs Award Supper, to be held at Grasshoppers RFC Syon Lane, Osterley, TW7 5PN.

The Supper is on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2026, with the usual welcomes and speeches, followed by a presentation of trophies to the County's competition winners.

The cost of the Supper is £40.00 per person, which includes a complimentary drink on arrival, table wine and three courses. Our MC for the evening will be our very own Steve Partridge. In recognition of their support that allows rugby to continue to grow, plus-ones and other rugby colleagues are very welcome.

If you, or members of your club would like to attend, please fill out this form via the link below by Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May.

[Book your place here](#)

We need to confirm catering numbers by Friday May 15<sup>th</sup> May, so we are regrettably not able to accept late entries after this date. Likewise, refunds after this date will only be given in exceptional circumstances.

Further details with final arrangements and payment details will be sent out in April 2026.

#### **Travel information**

- It's a 12 minute walk from Syon Lane station direct from Waterloo

- There will also be a courtesy mini bus shuttle from Osterley station (more details to follow after you've booked)

Questions or queries please reply to this email, or contact [peter.baveystock@middlesexrugby.com](mailto:peter.baveystock@middlesexrugby.com)



#### **President's Corner**

On Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March together with Eddie, we were guests of Ealing 1871 before their Middlesex Counties 1 league match against Hampstead. An outstanding performance by the home side saw them pick up a try bonus point victory sufficient to make them Champions with one game left to play and promoted to level six for the first time in their short history

The following day, Paul Astbury and I were guests of Old Pauline FC as they hosted Egham Hallowegians in Surrey 5. Unfortunately, the visitors were unable to raise a team so after an excellent lunch Paul and I made our apologies and made our way to Watch Teddington host Beaconsfield in Regional 2 Thames. Excellent game in superb conditions. Paul and I enjoying a drink to finish off the day in Teddington's

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clubhouse, as we watched herds of deer enjoying their last feed of the day in Bushey Park. Lovely, lovely evening.

On Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March I was on an RFU Adult Competitions meeting

The following Saturday I was a guest of CS Stags 1863 for their home level 5 game against Farnham. Another superb afternoon, so well hosted by David Chaytor and our friends at CS with another excellent performance by the home team.

This was followed by further RFU Competitions meeting on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> on the Play-offs and the following day on the Transfer Deadline Date.

No rugby to watch across the Easter weekend and to be honest I was a bit lost.

On Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> I chaired the final NW Group meeting of the season. Excellent turnout, so well hosted by Ruislip. Eddie chaired the AGM and both Mark Foster and I were re-elected Group Secretary and Chairman respectively.

Saturday I was at Wasps FC for the MT Cup/Bowl/Vase finals. Some excellent rugby played across the three matches. Well run by Steve Partridge and Laurel Dunn with great support from the host club. Bob Lawless and I had the easy task of doing the post-match presentations and it was great to see Waheed. Another great advertisement of all that is good about our clubs, the rugby they play and the organisation that goes in to support them

Monday evening it was to Old Grammarians for the North Group AGM and then Group meeting with Eddie. Another very good meeting, well attended by the North Group clubs and as always excellent hospitality from our hosts. John Boye and Debbie Stockman-Rose re-elected as Chairman and Group Secretary for next season

Tuesday I chaired the monthly RFU OC meeting before joining the management meeting on Zoom.

Friday I met up with some Past President' LVPs and VP in town for a bit of a clear the air meeting. Very

useful and I one I have committed to supporting every three to four months

On Saturday I went to Cheshunt to support Old Grammarians as they celebrated promotion to level 8 on their first season back in the leagues. With the game well won I rushed over to Enfield Ignatians to try to get the last few minutes of their match against Old Millhillians. Dreadful traffic so I only got there for the post-match which was a pity. Managed to catch up with Martin Baker, Chris Phillips and Mick Collins so well worth the journey.

On Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> I was at Saracens Amateurs to do the presentations for the Middlesex U15s Cup Finals. Four competitions with sixteen teams from fourteen clubs (13 Middlesex and one from Herts) Beautiful sunny day. Some great rugby. The competition was brilliantly organised by John Georgiou from Saracens Amateurs and there was an outstanding job on the day by the volunteers at the host club led by their chairman Steve Lightley. They had much to be proud of. A brilliant success. Really enjoyed it.

On Tuesday we are hosting Ruislip at Harrow in the second semi-final of the NW Middx Floodlit Cup. Wednesday at the Allianz for an Adult Competitions meeting. Back on Friday for a RFU Council meeting followed by the SGM

Haven't decided yet this Saturday whether I will be supporting the Merit Table Play-Off finals at Wasps or go to Beaconsfield to watch them host Belsize Park in the play-offs in the league I run.

So much going on loads of rugby but also perhaps too many meetings.....

Andy Smart

### [Message from Chair, Eddie Keal](#)

We're almost at the end of the season and the appointments, events, meetings, visits and finals are coming thick and fast.

The league play-offs are providing some great entertainment and engagement – the best of luck to our teams.

The senior County representative teams begin their competitive matches shortly. Please come along and support where you can. Details of fixtures are most easily found by following the County's Instagram posts.

I was sorry to miss the recent men's Super-Vets match against Bedfordshire, but we got a result in a very exciting game. A season undefeated!

The Management Board remains heads-down on getting to the end of the season. We have started our thinking on the Management changes and recommendations to the membership and will be sharing those shortly. It's never too late to volunteer! If you would like to explore County roles, please get in touch with me.

I know we still have spaces at the Club Awards Supper, so as per Baver's note above, please book your places!

All the best

Eddie

Middlesex Chair

[Eddie.keal@middlesexrugby.com](mailto:Eddie.keal@middlesexrugby.com)

### **Message from Steve Partridge, Chair of Competitions**

The finish line is now in sight after what feels like a very long season. Well done for getting this far, I have no doubt volunteers and players need a well-earned break to recharge batteries before we go again...

There is work to do in the upcoming weeks to confirm our Rugby offering to Middlesex Clubs next season, and we will be communicating our options and plans very soon.

Good luck to our 3 remaining Middlesex teams in the national cup Qtr. finals on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May

Counties 1 Southern Plate **Old Streetonians** – Saffron Walden

Counties 2 Southern Plate **Old Hamptonians** – Folkestone

Counties 3 Southern Plate Southwark Lancers – **Old Grammarians**

We held our Cup, Bowl and Vase finals at Wasps FC on the 11<sup>th</sup> April and were treated to 3 fantastic finals. Many thanks to Kate and her team at Wasps for being the perfect hosts, and to the amazing Laurel Dunne for assisting me on the day, ensuring everything went smoothly as she always does. Well done to all our finalists and congratulations to our 3 winners.

Vase Final Actonians 2's 24 – 26 **Ealing 1871 3's**  
Bowl Final **Belsize Park 4's** 32-12 Hendon  
Cup Final **Twickenham 2's** 29-19 RP 4ths

Below is an overview of how Middlesex clubs fared in their respective leagues.

**London Welsh** finished in 10th place in National League 2 East, with 59 points from 25 games (9 wins, 16 losses).

In Regional 1 South central **London Scottish** are in the play-offs, facing Tunbridge Wells on 25th April, having finished second on 91 points, with 18 wins and 4 losses, and were 14 points behind league winners Jersey on 105 points, who had 21 wins and 1 loss. **CS Stags** finished in 5th place on 71 points, having won 12, drawn 1 and lost 9 games. **Hammersmith and Fulham** finished 2<sup>nd</sup> from bottom of the table on 29 points with 3 wins and 19 losses

In Counties 1, Essex, **Epping Upper Clapton** are second in the table on 72 points, having played 17 games and won 14, drawn 1 & lost 2. Thurrock, currently top with a record of 17 wins & 1 loss but have had -4 deducted.

**H.A.C.** are in the playoffs facing Wymondham on the 25<sup>th</sup> April in the next round having finished in 2<sup>nd</sup>

place in Regional 2 Anglia on 100 points, having won 20 games and lost 2, and finished 2 points behind league champions Eton Manor on 102 points, who have won the same number of games 18 out of their 20 games and lost 2, but finished ahead due to 2 extra bonus points.

**Twickenham** finished 8th in Regional 2 South Central, with 57 points, having won 10 games and lost 12. Bournemouth finished as champions at the top of the table on 103 points with 21 wins and 1 draw from their 22 games played.

**Brunel University** are champions of Regional 2 Thames with 21 wins and 1 loss (courtesy of Belsize Park) on 107 points. **Old Priorians** reached the play-offs having finished in 3rd place, but lost to Belsize Park, who face Beaconsfield in the next round. **Teddington** are on 60 points in 7th place with 10 wins and 12 losses. Finally, Grasshoppers in 9th place with 8 wins, 1 draw and 13 losses on 48 points

In Counties 1, Middlesex **Ealing Trailfinders 1871** are league champions and will be promoted on 84 points, with 17 wins and 1 loss out of 18 games. Followed closely by **Finchley**, who are currently on course for promotion as a highest finisher and will be confirmed this weekend on 79 points with 15 wins and 3 losses out of 18 games. **Old Haberdashers** finished in 3rd place on 70 points with 13 wins and 5 losses, followed by **Hampstead** in 4th on 61 points, **Chiswick** in 5th on 55 points. **Old Streetonians** are in 6th place on 42 points, dropping down to Ruislip in 7th place on 34 points, Wasps FC is in 8th place on 23 points, U.C.S is in 9th place on 19 points, and in last place are **Saracens Amateurs** on -10 points with 1 win and 17 losses. **Saracens** will be relegated to Counties 2.

In Counties 2 Middlesex, congratulations to **Hackney**, who finished top as champions on 86 points and will be promoted. **Barnet Elizabethans** finished in second place on 75 points. **Kilburn Cosmos** in 3rd place on 49 points, and Harrow in 4th place on 47 points.

In the Shield competition, congratulations to Finsbury Park, who finished as champions with 25 points, 5 wins and 1 loss out of 6 games played; Actonians in 2nd place with 20 points, 4 wins and 2 losses. **Enfield Ignatian** in 3rd place on 15 points, with 3 wins and 3 losses. **Old Millhillians** in 4th place on 1 point, with 6 losses from 6 games.

We will be welcoming **Hendon** back to Counties 2 next season

In Counties 2 Surrey, **Old Hamptonians** will win the league this weekend and are currently on 93 points with 18 wins and 3 losses and are 16 points clear of Becs old boys, who they face on Saturday to finish the league.

In Counties 3 Surrey, **Thamesians** have gone unbeaten all season and will finish as league champions, with 19 wins out of 19 on 95 points, 17 points clear of 2nd place. They face the 5th-place Southwark Lancers on Saturday to finish the league.

In Counties 4, Surrey **Staines** finished 5th on 43 points, having played 16 games and won 8 and lost 8 and 23 points behind league leaders Old Emanuel, who have 66 points with 13 wins, 1 draw and 2 losses out of 16 games.

**Old Grammarians** finished 2nd in Counties 3 Herts on 69 points, having played 18, won 14 and lost 4, with Hitchin II top of the league on 77 points with 16 wins and 2 losses.

In Counties 5, Surrey. **Old Paulines** finished champions with 13 wins and a loss on 65 points. **Feltham** in last place having won 1 and lost 13 but with -22 points adjustment are sitting with -12 points. **Harlequin Amateurs** have withdrawn from the league.

### Middx Merit Tables

Middlesex Division 1 Merit table Champions: **Ealing Trailfinders 1871 2's**

Middlesex Division 2 Merit table Champions: **Belsize Park 4ths**

Middlesex Division 3 Merit table Champions:  
**Actonians 2's**

**Play off finals this upcoming weekend**

**Premier** London Scottish Lions 2's v HAC 2's

**Div1** West London v London Japanese

**Div2** H&F 3's v Hampstead 2's – London Scotti

**Div3** Ickenham & Uxbridge – Chiswick 3rds.

Steve Partridge

Middlesex chair of competitions

**Report from Andy Smart Chair of Groups**

We are now in the last round of Group meeting for the season which combines the Group AGM followed by the Group Meeting

We started with the North-West meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> April hosted excellently by Ruislip with Eddie in the Chair for the AGM, Simon Hardcastle stepping in to cover Mark Foster who was unwell, as the Secretary. It was also good to see both Bob Lawless and Tim Miller from the Management Committee in attendance. Both myself and Mark were voted back in as the North-West Chair and Secretary respectively. It was a very well attended and lively meeting, the best I think for some time with some excellent hospitality from the host club

Then on Monday to the North Group meeting at Old Grammarians. Again, Eddie was in the chair for the AGM. Both Jon Boyle and Debbie Stockman-Rose were elected back into post as North Group Chair and Secretary respectively. Again, another well attended and interesting meeting very well chaired by Jon and once again excellent hospitality from the host Club.

On Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> Harrow host Ruislip in the second semi-final of the North-West Floodlit Cup, the first semi-final having been won by Ealing 1871 who beat Old Priorians in an excellent game. Good to see

the second longest Middlesex Cup competition back up and running again. Thanks to Michael Searls for revitalising this competition and the North-West Clubs for supporting it

The West Group AGM and Group meeting will be held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April at Grasshoppers RFC with Peter Baveystock chairing the AGM. Group Chair Andy Brooks and Group Secretary Nick Dance will be standing again for re-election

On the same day Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April Old Pauline will be hosting the South Group AGM and meeting. Once again Paul Baskh will be standing again as Group Chair with Lyndon Walters as Group Secretary

After the Group AGMs then all that is for the Group Officers to elect their Group Chair to represent the Groups on Management

Andrew Smart

**Middlesex Coaching & Referee Development**

**Coach Development** - This season Middlesex Coach Education Programme have run **12** sessions which have been available to a variety of Middlesex Coaches. The themes have been varied and have attracted **256** mini /youth /senior coaches and involved **142** youth players from our Middlesex clubs. Both our partner Academies, Harlequins & Saracens have contributed to developing our coaches involved with the age grade and beyond.

Thanks to the following clubs for hosting a coaching & referee development session this season - Hampstead RFC, University College School, (UCL) Grasshoppers RFC, Harrow School and London Welsh RFC, Chiswick RFC, Ruislip, Hazelwood, Ealing Trailfinders, Old Grammarians RFC, Twickenham RFC & Epping Upper Clapton RFC

**Upcoming Middlesex Coach Education Sessions**

**Monday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2026** Theme Scrum Half

Workshop at Hazelwood, **Thursday**

**7<sup>th</sup> May 2026** Theme Catch & Pass at Twickenham

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RFC, **Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2026** Theme Tackle safe at Enfield Ignations RFC, **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2026** Theme Kicking at Grasshoppers RFC, **Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2026** Theme, Tackle safe at Ruislip RFC, **Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2026** Theme “In and around the breakdown workshop” at Ealing Trailfinders. All these courses will be advertised on the Middlesex platforms.

### Middlesex Clubs in Action

The below photograph was taken on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2026. Ruislip RFC hosted a Middlesex coach development session with the theme of 30 practical drills & games to improve the Ruck. Thanks to Chair of Mini's development Charlie Bradley for organising this evening and to Tutor Dan Cottrell for sharing the knowledge and developing **20** Youth Coaches. Middlesex Chair Eddie Keal attended the evening and shared the experience with our Middlesex Youth Coaches.

### Ruislip Youth Coaches



The below photograph was from a coaching session held at Ruislip RFC on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2026. On a cold wet windy evening. Saracens & their club partners Ruislip RFC run a Back play Workshop tutored by Saracens PDG lead, Ed Conway. The coach education session was targeted at Ruislip Youth Coaches and youth players at U15s - U18s were involved in the session that evening which was well attended by coaches & parents. Thanks to Ed Conway for delivering the session and to Ed Wood, Darren & Tom & all the Ruislip coaches for making this session possible. It was nice to see our Middlesex Safeguarding Officer Neil Horchover in

attendance. All coaches who attended and contributed to the evening, were circulated a lesson plan & took away much knowledge which will help in the further development of players at Ruislip RFC.

### Ruislip Youth Back Play Session



### Referee Development

This season Middlesex have run a "Young Match Officials" courses at Ealing Trailfinders, Old Grammarians RFC, and a "Take up the Whistle" course at Grasshoppers RFC, Twickenham RFC, Harrow RFC. A total number of **76** Middlesex volunteers have attended these short referee courses.

Upcoming RFU Level 2 “Ready2Referee” course on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at Ealing Trailfinders.  
Course Tutor Hannah Everitt

### Focus on Middlesex Coaches

In the series of Focus on a Middlesex Coach, It was nice to catch up with Phil Smith who has done stirring things on coach education and player development in Middlesex. I first met Phil at an U18s Divisional selection day while he was at Cambridge RFC. It has been great to see Phil's personal development and leadership skills while coaching with the Middlesex Senior XV in recent years and in our Middlesex clubs.

### Focus on Middlesex Coach Phil Smith.



Beginning at Bristol, where I completed the former Level 1 coaching award, my journey in rugby coaching has now spanned over two decades. What started as a natural extension of my passion for the game soon developed into a deeply rewarding career. Early influences played a significant role; I was fortunate to play under a number of outstanding coaches during my time in France and Italy, experiences that helped shape both my understanding of the game and my approach to coaching.

Progressing through the coaching pathway, I completed my Level 2 award and went on to secure a role as a Rugby Development Officer with the RFU. It was here that coaching evolved from a pastime into a professional pursuit. Access to England Sevens coaching environments, alongside roles with Northampton and as Head of the Eastern Counties Academy, provided invaluable exposure to elite player development. Supporting young players on their journeys—whether achieving international honours or securing professional contracts—remains one of the most fulfilling aspects of my career.

At club level, my experiences have been equally rewarding. As a player-coach at Bury St Edmunds, I was part of a promotion-winning environment that laid the foundation for my appointment as Director of Rugby at Cambridge, where I completed my Level 3 award. Achieving two promotions during this period was a testament not only to hard work, but also to the importance of building a strong, collaborative coaching team that challenges and supports one another.

A move to London brought a new challenge as Head Coach at Hendon. Starting with just 12 players at the first session, the journey that followed was remarkable: Middlesex Vase success, a London & South East Cup victory, and an unbeaten season winning Herts Middlesex 1. These achievements led to county recognition, coaching the Middlesex senior men's team, and opened the door to further opportunities.

At Beaconsfield, the team achieved promotion alongside a remarkable run of 24 consecutive victories in an unbeaten season—one of the standout highlights of my career. More recently, at Ealing 1871, success has continued with promotion to Level 6 secured through another unbeaten campaign. Across the club, it has been a memorable season, with the second XV also achieving promotion, losing just once, and the third XV lifting a cup—reflecting a collective commitment to excellence throughout the squad.

Throughout my coaching career, my philosophy has remained consistent. Well-structured, purposeful sessions are at the heart of effective coaching. When players understand not only what they are doing, but why they are doing it, genuine buy-in follows—and with it, the foundation for success. While tactics and techniques evolve, the key question remains constant: what is the intended outcome of each session, and how will it be measured?

For those developing their own coaching journey, my advice is simple: plan thoroughly, observe others, remain open to feedback, and trust your

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instincts. Above all, take positives from every session and continue striving to improve.

All the best  
Bob

Tours are fun and great bonding for players and parents, but can I draw your attention to the tours guidance.

### ALCOHOL & CONDUCT

The RFU does not encourage a drinking culture, be that for adults or for children. Clubs should remind all concerned of the law in relation to the purchase and consumption of alcohol in the UK.

If travelling to a country where the drinking age is lower than 18 years old, this may be more challenging to manage, particularly where parents are responsible for their own children and there is 'free time' away from organised tour activities. Regardless of the licensing conditions abroad, those under the age of 18 are still children. Clubs are reminded that no adult should do anything that places a child at risk of harm, and this includes drinking to excess.

Safeguarding concerns in this regard will be managed by the RFU Safeguarding Team in the same way as incidents that take place in this country. If it is felt that an adult, either by omission or commission, has placed a child at risk of harm, we will seek advice from statutory agencies.

The boundaries need to be clear. There is a vast difference between a 17-year-old having a glass of beer with their meal, and adults allowing or facilitating a child to be so intoxicated as to be a risk to themselves or others. No child should ever be placed in the position where they feel pressured to engage in any activity, and adults should be mindful of culture and peer (or other) pressure in this regard. Adults should never

encourage or be seen to behave in a way that does encourage children to consume alcohol, regardless of how close to adulthood they are.

Adults must ensure there are always enough adults who refrain from alcohol and able to look after children in case of an emergency. If adults are going to be drinking alcohol once children are in bed, all adults should be sensible and responsible.

Clubs should ensure adults always maintain professionalism and be positive role models for children. It is strongly recommended that all adults on tour are reminded of the club code of conduct and what is expected of them while

Many Thanks  
Neil Horchover  
County Safeguarding Officer

### What's On

- **May 9<sup>th</sup> Middlesex Senior Men v Eastern Counties Senior Men - Chiswick RFC 3pm KO**
- **May 9<sup>th</sup> Middlesex 7's at Wasps FC.**
- **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May Middlesex Senior Women v Sussex Senior Women at Wasps RFC 3pm KO**
- **Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June - Middlesex Clubs Awards Supper, Grasshoppers RFC, please book at the link below:**

**As Eddie states there are still plenty places left for you and your Club colleagues to get together for this end of season catch. It's also a chance to see those Clubs who have RFU League plaques or our own Merit Table winners to collect them.**

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**So, what do you get for your £40?**

- **The one and only Steve Partridge**
- **A pre-supper drink and wine on the table**
- **A 3 course meal including:**
  - **Tomato Bruschetta**



- **Lamb Shank, Mash and vegetables (vegetarian options available)**



- **Vanila Cheesecake with Raspberry and Raspberry Coulis**



- **There will also be a courtesy mini bus shuttle from Osterley station (more details to follow after you've booked)**

**Peter Baveystock**

[Book your place here](#)