

KENT COUNTY RFU INFORMATION SENDOUT OCTOBER 2020



1. KENT COUNTY CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION WITH ITS CLUBS 2020

Given the amount of communication from the RFU and from KCRFU since the game was locked down in mid-March of this year, we have tried to keep our contact with member clubs relevant and timely.

As we approach the winter months and still find ourselves at stage D on the return to Rugby Pathway, it is the right time to take stock of where we find ourselves.

Since March we have collected information on the game in Kent (receiving a response from over 10% of those registering an interest in club Rugby in the County)



We have appointed geographic cluster leaders for 5 areas of Kent and one for the Women's and Girls' game. These clusters have met twice to date, to share their thoughts with the County and to also let me know, as the RFU Councillor for Kent, what variants of the game you would like to play, what Competition formats you would like if the game does not restart until 2021, and the health of and activities being carried out by your clubs across the County.

The second round of these cluster meetings took place in early October, with 46 out of 59 voting clubs attending.

In summary, the clusters gave the following views:

- The majority of clubs that expressed a view are willing to look at competitively playing variants of the game, including the format used by the Women's game in the Allianz Premiership, if the full game laws cannot be authorised for return by the Government. Many clubs felt that the 2020/21 season for the RFU leagues should be suspended, with no promotion or relegation.
- Age Grade and Women's and Girls' Rugby have experienced increased numbers both recruited and at training. Men's Rugby has not yet experienced the same and it is becoming more difficult to hold interest in attending training. Many Men's sides are now only training once a week. Morale, however, is in general surprisingly high.
- With Covid Guidelines still firmly in place, many clubs are functioning and surviving financially, although investment in facilities is and is likely to continue to suffer as a full range of activities is unable yet to be delivered.
- Clubs are interested to see the new RFU staff structure and the individuals appointed to roles within the Counties of Hampshire, Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Surrey, Kent, Sussex and Essex, which together, make up Area B (London and SE). Over November and December, the appointees to the new roles will make themselves known to our clubs.
- Clubs that so far have not required any financial support may need to call upon both RFU and County funding streams, the longer that the full game cannot be played and limits are placed on full usage of clubhouses. Those in attendance were reminded that the KCRFU/RFU Covid relief fund is still open and that, if financial support is required, then applications should be made to Nigel Fray - Volunteer Facilities Funding Manager, outlining the position in which the club finds itself.

Clubs were given the latest position regarding discussions on restarting the game, being held between the RFU, the Department of Culture Media and Sport, Public Health England, and the Cabinet Office. We discussed the proposed restructuring of the RFU leagues and the possibility that this will not happen until season 22-23, the risk that the 20/21 RFU league season may be suspended, and the potential for small clusters of local games to be organised if and when the game is allowed to recommence in full.

Cluster leaders thanked all who attended for their full participation and their sharing of good practice, particularly relating to dealing with the Covid guidelines both on and particularly off the pitch. They also expressed pleasure that a number of DORs, Coaches, and particularly, players took part.

The Women's and Girls' Cluster welcomed Lou Latter – RFU Councillor with responsibility for the Women's game- who sought views and to gauge the level of support for setting up an U11 Girls' Age Grade structure.

Kevin Cope - KCRFU Club Development Chair was delighted with both attendance and participation, as well as clubs' willingness to share ideas. He also encouraged clubs to use Club Champions, to look at their current sponsorship and commercial offering.

The next round of cluster meetings is likely to take place either in late November or early December with further details published soon, and I strongly encourage all clubs to participate.

Roger Clarke – Chairman, KCRFU Executive Committee.
RFU Council Member for Kent.

2. YOUTH CHAIR



KCRFU have appointed a new Youth chair replacing Debbie Park who has sadly had to stand down due to increased personal commitments.

A message from your new Youth Chair Alan Erskine:

I want to publicly thank Debbie for her hard work and dedication to the role over the years, the shoes are indeed going to be very difficult to fill.

As a Coach, Player, Referee, Father and Rugby Administrator I know that the last few months have been challenging and that there is a very real threat to our game at grassroots and youth level.

Lack of games, limited and adapted training and the general loss of the team feeling imposed by the very real need to socially distance and obey the rules laid down by

the RFU and government, threatens player retention at all levels but most of all at youth level where this was already a growing issue.

I see my role as Youth Chair to be one of facilitating youth rugby and providing a framework within which clubs are able to offer opportunities to all youth players regardless of any perceived barriers all within the current RFU age grade regulations.

Clearly we have a challenge in providing countywide competition structure in these difficult times whilst also ensuring the health of our young players. We hope the landscape will be different in the Spring and we are planning to organise some sort of competition for teams to enter towards the end of the season but this is very much work in progress.

Meanwhile, I would urge clubs to investigate local friendlies utilising the Ready4Rugby format, (subject to club risk assessments etc) in order that our young players remain engaged in our game and resist the temptation of other sports who are further down the road toward normality.

Finally thank you for all you do for youth rugby in Kent. I look forward to time we can all meet in some semblance of normality and experience match days again.

Please feel free to email me with any queries or ideas. I look forward to speaking with you in the future.

Alan Erskine
KCRFU Youth Chair
Youth-Chair@kent-rugby.org

3. LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



We are pleased to announce the appointment of a new county Leadership Academy lead, Trevor Martingell who has a wealth of experience within our rugby community.

He was previously the Kent RFU's Universities & Colleges rugby coordinator and was instrumental in establishing the "Tag Rugby Trust"

working with young people and promoting rugby in Africa.

Now back from his challenges and travels abroad, he will use his knowledge and understanding of rugby to grow our Academy.

Kent will be looking to run the academy in the New Year, and are discussing options and materials with the RFU regarding final content, so details will be published later this year.

The format will be predominately online, with Zoom mentoring but we hope to include a weekend of face-to-face learning and networking, Covid permitting.

In the meantime, we would like clubs to identify suitable candidates who might attend; the Academy is targeted at Volunteers across all club activities and will provide an insight into how the RFU interacts with Kent RFU and Clubs. It will provide skills into differing aspects of managing club activities, while building confidence and preparing individuals to Lead.

Please contact Martin if you are interested in the course at leadership-academy@kent-rugby.org

4.COACHING COURSES

Please find below information regarding upcoming Kids First Contact courses and Kids First Tag Courses running in or near your area in November.

In the event of a National Lockdown these courses may not go ahead.

Use the links below for the course to book on the courses. If you require any support logging into or creating a GMS account to book please visit <https://help.rfu.com/support/home>.

Kids First Contact - 2 x 3 hour sessions

This course is for Coaches, Referees and Teachers new to contact rugby. It will help participants to safely coach and referee the contact areas of the game and it is recommended that everyone coaching or refereeing contact rugby has completed this course.

Tunbridge Wells RFC - 10th and 24th Nov 2020 at 7pm

Sidcup RFC - 11th and 25th Nov 2020 at 7pm

Barking RFC - 11th and 25th Nov 2020 at 7pm

Warlingham RFC - 17th Nov and 1st Dec 2020 at 7pm

Dover RFC - 18th Nov and 2nd Dec 2020 at 7pm



Kids First Tag - 1 x 2 hour session

The course is 2 hours long, and for those coaching and refereeing U6-U8 players. This course supports the development of active, purposeful, enjoyable and safe tag rugby environments for children. Participants will also learn the rules and practice refereeing tag rugby.

Crowborough RFC - 9th Nov 2020 at 7pm

Old Alleanians RFC - 9th Nov 2020 at 7pm

Dover RFC - 16th Nov 2020 at 7pm

Hastings & Bexhill RFC - 23rd Nov 2020 at 7pm

Dartfordians RFC - 30th Nov 2020 at 7pm

Medway RFC - 30th Nov 2020 at 7pm

5.SPORT ENGLAND FUNDING

Sport England has launched a new £16.5 million fund to provide additional help to the sport and physical activity sector during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

The Return to Play Fund will support groups, clubs and organisations who've been impacted by restrictions brought in to tackle the disease, and is part of their overall response to the crisis that now includes more than £220m of government and National Lottery funding.

The fund will especially seek to support those groups and organisations working with audiences they've identified as finding it more difficult to be active at this time.

Find out more **HERE!**

6.KENT SPORT VIRTUAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

On Thursday 19 November, Kent Sport are running a day of online presentations and workshops following feedback from their local partners. Sessions will include the future for sport and physical activity, insight into the lives of children and young people and a health focus on social prescribing.

The virtual conference will be FREE to attend, and you can pick and choose the sessions you would like to take part in during the day. There will be the opportunity to hear from national partners on some of the key developments as the sector has got to grips with the impact of Covid-19, and to hear plans for the future

The conference will also feature fantastic local examples of providers and organisations who have continued to make a difference in people's lives across Kent and Medway

To book your place please click on the link below to view the full agenda and select the sessions you would like to attend. You will receive a confirmation of your booking and the links to access each session will follow shortly before the event.

Book your place at the Everyday Active Virtual Conference **HERE!**

7.VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Due to Covid, Mitsubishi and Kent County RFU have been unable to organise their annual awards presentation for successful nominees.

Mitsubishi are hopeful that a Black Tie event may still be possible for the shortlisted finalists in the New Year. However, to ensure the hard work of club volunteers is not forgotten, Mitsubishi will be contacting Club Chairpersons and Secretaries shortly to arrange receipt of certificates and gifts for the remaining nominees to recognise their contributions. Clubs will then be asked to arrange their own local presentation to celebrate the individual's efforts.

Kent County RFU will also be coming to a club near you (**COVID restrictions permitting**) to deliver in person our own Kent County Volunteer awards to the deserving volunteers in our rugby community.