

KENT COUNTY RFU INFORMATION SENDOUT DECEMBER 2020



1. CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SEASON.

It is a welcome task at the end of an unwelcome year to thank all of those who have volunteered to work on our many County Committees, with coaching, refereeing, competitions, discipline, Age Grade, Senior Men's and Women's representative sides and with the player development pathway in conjunction with Saracens amongst others.

As importantly I would like to thank all of you for the work you have done since March in keeping our 59 voting clubs and our 11 affiliate clubs sustainable and healthy in a landscape where all the things we are involved with in the wonderful game of Rugby have not been available to us. In these circumstances so much dedicated work from so many with little to motivate them is a remarkable achievement which we are all going to have to maintain for a while yet.

It is still not clear with so much COVID infection in Kent and sitting as we do in Tier3 when and if we can get back to the full game, with full crowds and full clubhouses, and in the meantime, we have to keep our players of whatever level whether Men, Women, and Girls, or Age Grade players interested in wanting to still be involved with Rugby Union.

At RFU level and speaking with my RFU councillor's hat on, Bill Sweeney (CEO) and Steve Grainger our Rugby Development Director have done a great job in persuading Government to provide a substantial Community Game COVID aid fund. Discussion continues with Government on the exact detail and criteria for funding clubs but I expect Kent to be deeply involved in the selection and payment methods whilst being overseen by mediators from Sport England and appointees. We hope to have more detail on this by mid-January at the latest with the funding mechanism up and running as soon after that date as we can. We hope to brief clubs on this as one of the Agenda items for our next Round of club cluster meetings in the second or third week of January. More on that from Chair

of the county Club Development Committee Kevin Cope at the beginning of January.

Bill and Steve have also done a great job in getting us to phase D on the return to Rugby and the potential for Competitive variants of the game in the New Year.

Thanks to our Kent Competitions Sub-committee and to our DOC Dennis Attwood for getting suggestions on potential cluster competitions at RFU league and merit table levels out there quickly. These are bound to change as authorities change tiers and some experience higher levels of infection than others but I am sure we will remain quick on our feet in adapting to circumstances.



CLUB SUPPORT CENTRE

THE ONE-STOP-SHOP WHERE RUGBY CLUBS CAN FIND ANSWERS TO THE MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ACCESS ADVICE & SUPPORT EASILY AND QUICKLY

WWW.ENGLANDRUGBY.COM/CLUBSUPPORTCENTRE

During the period from March, I hope that the County Executive has moved quickly to adapt to circumstances and have: switched all meetings to virtuals through introducing the Zoom set up at the start of March - set up a substantial COVID sustainability fund to aid clubs in genuine financial need which remains open for application, appointed some outstanding leaders to handle a new set up of club and Women and Girls clusters which have enjoyed attendance

rates of close to 80% at its first two rounds of consultation. In the New Year, we will use these clusters to brief you on the way Government funding will be made available to the Community game- introduce you to the new staff members at the RFU and their roles- outline the key objectives for the RFU over the next 6 months to the end of the 20-21 Rugby year- and most importantly get your thoughts and views on player retention and ideas for recruitment before we hopefully get to the start of a new season in 21-22.

On the subject of a reduced number of RFU staff with totally different roles to those being carried out by our RDO's and CRC's in the past, we need to reflect on the fact that the way the RFU operates will be different as well. There will be fewer 'boots on the ground' although it's great to see County stalwart Mark Finnis operating as a club liaison man solely in Kent. Those who know Mark will appreciate the wealth of knowledge he has as a club volunteer as well as an RFU employee. However, he has 70 odd clubs to work with and will not along with Adam Cottingham the CB relationship Manager who has 7 Counties to provide cover to –be available at every moment.

For this reason I wish to re-emphasise the importance of using the new Club Support Centre on the RFU website where questions can be submitted across a total range of Rugby topics and turned around quickly. Details on how to submit questions and contact the Support centre were contained in a recent Community Game Update (CGU), but are contained in the graphic on the earlier page in the middle of this Kent County Christmas Summary.

Finally, I would like on behalf of the Executive Committee of KCRFU to wish all of you and yours a safe and enjoyable family Christmas. John Nunn our President, David Clent our Game Development Chair, Kevin Cope our Club Development Chair, and I look forward to getting out to visit you as soon as we return to some form of active competition and crowds are allowed to watch games again.

We certainly look forward to a full 21-22 season which will lead in the RFU leagues to a new and restructured set of leagues in 22-23 which should cut travel distances, provide a number of games tailored to player requirements, provide for set player breaks in the season and also involve clubs in end of season National Cup Competitions with finals at Twickenham just like the Intermediate RFU Cup has provided for RFU level 7 clubs in the past.

With thanks again for all you do for your clubs and with the wish that we come out of this with all of our 70 clubs intact and ready to play in Kent.

Roger Clarke.
Chairman Kent County RFU Executive Committee.
RFU Council Member for Kent.

2. COACHING & REFEREEING CHAIR FOR KENT COUNTY

Due to relocation of his job our Coaching & Refereeing Chair is leaving and therefore we need a replacement who will continue the great work he has achieved over the last 2 years.

Check out the role Descriptor [HERE!](#)

3. CLUB CHAMPIONS

Have you registered with Club Champions yet?

Back in October Kent RFU agreed on a deal with Club Champions, the UK's only business club for community sport, which enables all Kent associated clubs to become members free of charge. Every club in rugby union needs to protect and enhance its financial position and Club Champions, through their "squad member" programme will take you through a 9-month programme designed to help you increase commercial sponsorship. It works and it's free so please register by emailing Martha Mckerlie, Marketing Executive at martha@clubchampions.net



Here are a few comments from clubs in Kent and Herts who are already fully engaged.

Mark Elliot, Welwyn RFC: "As a non-marketeer, I found the session extremely useful and I took a page and a half of very useful notes."

Andy Bull, Thanet Wanderers: "Just wanted to let you know how helpful last night's webinar was. [...] It is obvious that Club Champions is going to be a fantastic resource for me and my colleagues to refer to."

David Suckling, Hertford: "Having watched the four (webinars), I thought we were doing ok, but it's really given us a great deal more focus [...] thanks to you (Club Champions) for putting this on because it has (shown us) there's another level that we can get to. It's what we needed!"

Rupert Waters, Bournemouth RFC: "I just wanted to say thanks for the access to the webinars. I completed watching them earlier this week. I learned a massive amount, they were very interesting and I thought very well done as well."

4. AGE GRADE COMPETITION SURVEY

The youth committee has been actively trying to bring some form of competitive rugby back to the county now that it appears, we are on the road to some semblance of rugby normality.

In order that we can try to accommodate as many clubs wishes as possible a google forms survey has been devised which we hope all clubs will complete so we can devise the right sort of competition for as many clubs as possible all within whatever guidelines are in place. A link has already been emailed to our noted team contacts for each club.

Please click on the relevant links below for each age grade to complete the survey. We are keen to get as many responses as possible and thank you to those teams who have already responded.

Colts:- <https://forms.gle/5wBbmEYfJZy5Rs5x6>

U16:- <https://forms.gle/N1d4SZYZJ7NKYQyk7>

U15:- <https://forms.gle/q8jLRRVBSB462d4d6>

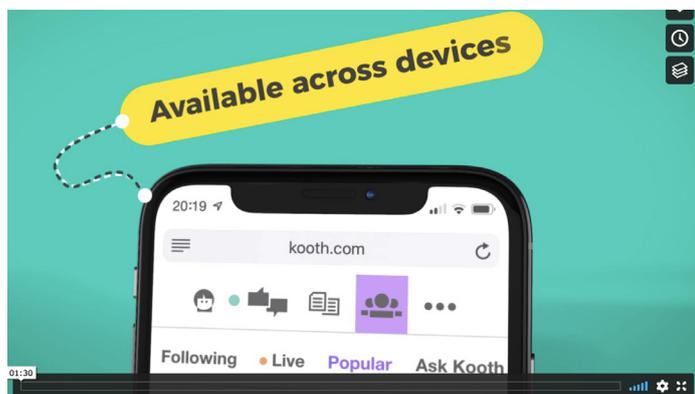
U14:- <https://forms.gle/jkVJEvC8bGx1K6cs8>

U13:- <https://forms.gle/AVE78riEe8C7XgiD9>

U12:- <https://forms.gle/h4Uk5QoTwZYkSJDw7>

5. KOOOTH

We are all aware of the difficulties everyone has faced as a result of COVID 19 and it has highlighted the struggles people, young and old have had this year which is why Kent Rugby is pleased to introduce Kooth, a free online counselling and emotional wellbeing support service for children and young people which has been commissioned by Kent County Council.



Watch the Video Above. CLICK on the graphic.

Kooth works with all organisations and professionals in Kent to support young peoples' mental health and wellbeing, both in and out of school. Alongside this, Kooth provides parent sessions, virtual assemblies in schools, staff training and workshops for young people, as well as ongoing support. They also have free posters, cards, fold-out leaflets, and digital resources, which they can send out to clubs, etc, and support to embed Kooth within each club.

Kooth provides online support tools and features that are available at any time, 365 days a year. (including Christmas Day) and online counselling 12 pm -10 pm during the week

and at the weekend from 6 pm to 10 pm, 365 days a year. (including Christmas Day) and is available to young people in Kent aged 10-16 (up to 17th birthday).

The online counselling is provided by a professional team of qualified counsellors and emotional wellbeing practitioners. Alongside the counselling, there are other online tools and features they can use, such as a daily journal, mini activities, and Kooth's magazine, with peer to peer and community elements. All of these are safe, secure, pre-moderated, and age-appropriate.

We would like all clubs to promote this service to their players in order that those who wish to use this excellent service can do so. <https://www.kooth.com>

6. THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

The Kent Leadership academy will start in 2021. It was due to start this year but with Covid and England RFU cut backs we decided to shelf the programme until the landscape became clearer.



It's not quite clear but we are working on a framework that could work to launch the academy around February or March 2021, watch out for pre-launch notifications in the next 6-8 weeks, and start to think about who in your club would benefit from this great programme run by existing leaders and mentors within Kent RFU.

Any questions can be sent to leadership-academy@kent-rugby.org

7. THE WHISTLER TROPHY

Every year the Kent Referees Society awards the Whistler Trophy to a club for being the most hospitable club in the eyes of the visiting referee.

Life as a referee can be very lonely and being treated well can make a big difference to Kent Referees Society in retaining and recruiting referees in order for the Society to be able to cope with the demand. Over the year Kent Society Referees have marked the clubs on their hospitality and they are delighted to say that Dartford Valley RFC are the winners for 2019-20.

1st - Dartford Valley

2nd - Sheppey RFC

3rd - Deal & Betteshanger RFC

4th - Brockleians RFC

5th - Sittingbourne RFC



Mention should go to both Sheppey RFC and Sittingbourne RFC who have been winners on multiple occasions and always finished in the top five.

8. COACHING/REFEREEING COURSES 2021

The England Rugby coaching & refereeing award courses are now open for booking.

As previously communicated, the delivery format for these courses has evolved. For 2021 both courses include:

- A series of monthly webinars
- Tasks to complete with the players you coach or in the matches you referee
- Access to digital resources to support your journey through the course
- Ongoing support via a community of practice
- Two face-to-face days in May/June

To book onto the January webinars please select the course registration link below:

Coaching Award

Referee Award

ENGLAND RUGBY COACHING/REFEREEING AWARD 20/21

The format for the England Rugby Coaching & Refereeing Award courses has evolved for the 20/21 season. The courses will be delivered via a series of on demand webinars, followed by two face to face days in your locality at the end of the season.

January	February	March	April	May	June
Webinar 1	Webinar 2	Webinar 3	Webinar 4	2 x Face to Face Days	

- Each webinar will include a monthly task to complete in the context of your own coaching/refereeing.
- Participants will get access to digital resources to support their coaching & refereeing and join a monthly online community of practice for additional support.
- Participants must complete all webinars and associated tasks before May.
- Booking onto the face to face days will open in March.
- **No cost to book onto the webinars.**

HOW DO I TAKE PART?

CLICK ON THE COURSE LINK TO REGISTER- COACHING AWARD REFEREEING AWARD

AFTER REGISTERING WEBINAR JOINING INSTRUCTIONS WILL BE SENT TO YOU

IF YOU MISS THE START DATE YOU CAN STILL REGISTER AND CATCH UP WITH THE WEBINARS ON DEMAND

9. KENT COUNTY U15 & U18 GIRLS NOMINATIONS

Kent County RFU is seeking nominations from coaches and teachers for Kent County U18 and U15 Girl's Development Days scheduled for Jan/Feb 2021. The nominations are open until 31st Dec 2020.

You can nominate a maximum of 6 players per club or school. Please see the selection criteria and the nomination link on our website **HERE**.

10.COACHING/MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Sidcup RFC is trying to recruit girl's coaches, managers, and volunteers.

The club offers good facilities and full support for a coaching journey for suitable people who wish to be involved. Coach education along your journey will be supplied free of charge and exciting development potential for those interested.



Contact In the first instance to register interest and the club will contact you to discuss the vacancies : girlsrugby@sidcuprfc.co.uk

11.COUNTY OFFICE XMAS CLOSING

The County office is now closed for the Christmas period and will re-open on the 4th of January 2021.

If your matter is urgent please use our contacts page on our website for alternative contact details.

