

KENT COUNTY RFU INFORMATION SENDOUT APRIL 2022



1. KENT REACH COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP U20 FINAL

Kent County U20s have reached the finals of the County Championship with a win over the defending Champions, Yorkshire, securing themselves a place in the National Final for the first time in their history.



Coach Taff Gwilliam said 'This is a fantastic achievement for these players. Most of them did not know each other when they came together. It is a brilliant advert for community rugby in Kent when players from 14 different clubs at different levels can come together and grow as they have to achieve a bit of history for themselves and Kent Rugby'.

He added 'Their families are proud, we are proud, Kent Rugby is proud. We now look forward to taking on another English County powerhouse, Cornwall, in the final' on 1st May at Sixways Stadium, Worcester kicking off at 5:15 pm

2. SENIOR COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

The Senior Men and Kent Women start their campaign in the County Championship.

Senior men

7th May 2022 – Hampshire v Kent,
21st May 2022 – Kent v Surrey,

Senior women

8th May 2022 – Berkshire v Kent
15th May 2022 – Buckinghamshire v Kent
22nd May 2022 – Kent v Surrey

3. KENT COUNTY FINALS DAY 1ST MAY

Medway RFC will be hosting Kent Finals Day on 1st May for what will be a great event. Despite several forfeits with dealing with a pandemic during the competition, the finals will show what is great about rugby in Kent. Games start at 11:30 am and continue throughout the day.

Kent Vase Final

Park House v Hastings & Bexhill KO 11.30 am PITCH 1

Kent Salver Final

Faversham v Kings College Hospital KO 12.30 am PITCH 2

Kent Shield Final

Dartfordians 2 v Old Colfeians 2 KO 1.30 pm PITCH

Kent Plate Final

Medway 2 v Sidcup 2 KO 2.30 pm PITCH 2

Kent Cup Final

Westcombe Park 2 v Sevenoaks 2 KO 4 pm PITCH 1

4. VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION- CLOSING SOON

Volunteers are the foundation of rugby and we consider them to be the most highly regarded of all club assets, supporting grassroots with their time, effort, and expertise. Their exceptional contributions to our game are deserving of recognition, whether helping on a matchday with catering, cleaning, pitch preparation, officiating at a club, preparing the team, or refereeing matches, all are truly valued by us all.

A reminder that there is still time to nominate your hero and show your volunteers your appreciation of their efforts

Nominate an individual by completing the form available on our website [HERE](#).

Entries close on Friday 29th April 2022.

5. COACHING & REFEREEING ROLE WITH KENT RUGBY

Are you able to assist Kent Rugby with coaching & refereeing development in Kent? If so we would love to hear from you. This is a volunteer role but a rewarding one where you will be able to make an impact on game development. Please view the role descriptor [HERE](#) and if interested please get in touch with the office.

office@kent-rugby.org

6. KENT COUNTY ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER 26th MAY

Invitations to our annual awards dinner at the Ashford International Hotel on 26th May have been sent to all clubs. The deadline for confirmation of places is **2nd May**.



As per usual 2 attendees for league winners and runners up for each league will attend for free. It will be great if our rugby community can come together for this evening and celebrate rugby once again.

The RFU President Jeff Blackett and his wife will be attending the dinner.

7. PAYMENT OF PLAYERS

The RFU initiated on 1 March 2022 its process for clubs to declare which of their players are paid.

The 2022 Payment of Players declaration window closes on 30th June 2022.

Declaration is mandatory for clubs whose men's first XV team play at Level 3 to Level 7 wishing to remain eligible for RFU Benefits. Clubs (Level 3 – 7) that do not submit a completed declaration within this time period or declare that they paid above the set thresholds during the designated period will lose access to benefits for the 2022/23 season.

For clubs whose men's first XV team play at Level 8 and below the declaration is only required to be submitted if the club provides Material Benefits (as defined in Regulation 1) to players and/or engages a player coach. This does not include reimbursement of proper expenses incurred for reasonable travel, accommodation, subsistence or other expenses incurred in relation to the Game and as particularised in RFU Regulation 7.3, which states:

Any person or entity giving or receiving (whether directly or indirectly) any Material Benefit for participation in the Game must ensure that:

(a) a Contract is in place;

(b) such Contract is in a form approved and/or distributed by the RFU; and

(c) RFU Regulation 14.6.3 is complied with in respect of all Contracted Players.

Clubs at Level 8 and below do not need to submit a completed declaration if they do not provide Material Benefits to players and /or a player/coach. These clubs will not lose access to RFU Benefits.

If a club at Level 8 or below does not submit any declaration and is later found to have paid Material Benefit to a player or a player coach, disciplinary sanctions will be considered.

What is a 'material benefit'?

Sanctions that may be imposed on clubs for not following the Regulations can be severe (including enforced relegation and/or loss of league points, even carried forward to a new season).

Recent cases of clubs being sanctioned for the non-declaration of payments to players have demonstrated that the RFU adopts a very broad definition as to what constitutes a 'material benefit'.

RFU Regulation 7.2.5 defines "Material Benefit" as money, consideration, gifts or any other benefits whatsoever contracted, promised or given to or by a person or any other individual, body corporate, partnership (or any other entity or body whether incorporated or not) at his/her direction in respect of such person's participation in the Game.

In practice, save for the reimbursement of proper expenses reasonably incurred (as mentioned above), although this is by no means an exhaustive list, such benefits include:

- Direct financial payments to players.
- Payment of travel (flights, train, ship) to and/or from the UK, especially, but not exclusively, for foreign players wishing to play for clubs in England / UK.
- Payment for accommodation (e.g. rent, mortgage payments)
- Payment of any or all utilities bills, including Council Tax.
- Provision of any paid employment taken up by a player, which has been offered by any official and/or sponsor of the player's club, which is or could be perceived to be as a direct outcome of both parties' relationship with the club, i.e. if the individual player moved to another club, their employment with the club official and/or sponsor would be terminated.

Clubs are strongly advised that, if in doubt when completing a 'Payment of Player' declaration, they should presume that any benefit and/or consideration constitutes a 'material benefit'.

Further information is available either from our RFU CB Relationship Manager, Adam Cottingham (07545602748

or adamcottingham@rfu.com) or to obtain free advice on any legal matter, as well as online support for the creation of standard employment agreements and legal documents, the RFU's Legal & Tax Helpline: 0333 0100337.

Nigel Fray

Hon. Secretary & Director of Governance

8. END OF SEASON THANKS FROM YOUTH CHAIR

As this will be the last send out before the end of the Age Grade Season I wanted to express my thanks to all the coaches, volunteers, club officials, and referees who have made this strange season as successful as it has been.

I honestly thought back in September that we would not have countywide fixtures or even much of a county competition at all. The Youth Committee has worked tirelessly in the background to ensure the competitions have gone as smoothly as possible and whilst there have been some issues on the whole they have been progressing well. Rest assured we have listened to your feedback and have taken this on board for next season (see later). The last thank you is for the players who, despite the difficult situations they have faced this season, have played with enthusiasm and enjoyment. We are looking forward to a more normal season next year and one which hopefully brings more players into the game.

9. 17-YEAR OLDS PLAYING ADULT RUGBY

Those players signed off by Kent Rugby as eligible to play and train in a contact setting with adults will no longer be able to do so after the 1st of May 2022 unless they have turned 18 since approval.

The approval process will commence again for the 2022 - 2023 season in September and clubs are reminded that club approval is required for all teams, be that women's, 2nd, 3rd, etc, who may wish to play a 17-year-old in their team. Please include all teams on your online club approval application.

10. AFFILIATION

In the 2021 -22 season the RFU changed the age-grade player registration to player affiliation and placed the responsibility to affiliate players in the hands of parents. It has had mixed results this season and clubs are reminded that it is a requirement of the regulations and the rules of any county or national competition that players are affiliated within 45 days of joining a club. Help is available for parents and clubs through the GMS helpline and the RFU club support.

Affiliation is important and must be done for all age grade players as it allows us to gauge the health club's youth sections and target support where it is needed.

11. KENT YOUTH COMPETITION 2022-23

Next season's competition will look different from our traditional format. I have spoken to a number of coaches and managers over the last season and we have devised

a competition that provides competitive rugby but which better reflects the aims of the RFU and developing the young players and retaining them in adult rugby.

Entries will be online as in previous years but the structure will be different for under 12 to under 14 players the season will be split into two stages pre and post Christmas.

Teams will be allocated a pool of four or five teams dependent on entry numbers. These will be designed to place similar strength squads together and there will be an initial consultation before finalising the pools.

Matches will be played on the allocated County competition dates as full length fixtures arranged on a blind draw Home or Away basis. Only one fixture will be played against each team in the pool and at the end of each stage the top two teams in each pool will move up a pool and the bottom two would move down.

This format should give the teams competitive matches they need whilst also providing free weekends train or arranging friendlies.

For U15s to Colts a similar structure will be in place except these matches will be administered through GMS and results and tables will be published on the England rugby website.

We also intend to use electronic match cards for these games which reduces the amount of admin from competition managers but also requires players to be affiliated.

At the end of the season, the top two teams in League One will play in the trophy final at the County showcase event as well as receive winners and runners up trophies. Leagues will be merit based and it is envisaged there will be 3 or 4 leagues depending on entry numbers rated strong, average, and developing.

These games will be played on the County dates in the Age Grade calendar. Further details will be sent out in due course.

**Keep up to date with Regulations on
Age-Grade Summer
Activity HERE!**

**KENT MINI FESTIVAL
40th ANNIVERSARY
SAVE THE DATE
SUNDAY 23rd MARCH 2023**