

# KENT COUNTY RFU INFORMATION SENDOUT AUGUST 2022



## 1. ON-AND-OFF FIELD DISCIPLINE: MATCH OFFICIAL ABUSE

We all welcomed the return of rugby last season, after the pandemic, with everyone involved in the game seeking to return to some form of 'normality'. The season, of course, had its difficulties, especially with clubs struggling regularly to field teams and with us seeing too many Home or Away Walkovers across the leagues.

Even more disappointing has been too many instances of poor discipline both from players and those off the field, which go against everything that the game of rugby stands for.

Thankfully, cases of foul play are rare. They have been replaced, however, by match official abuse by both players, coaches, and spectators, across all sections of the game (adult, youth and minis). In 2022-23, the adult and youth Discipline Committees dealt with a combined total of 25 cases of 'Match Official Abuse'.

Without match officials, no game would take place. Why should anyone officiate at a match, if their decisions are always challenged or they are subjected to 'back chat' or worse from players, coaches, and spectators alike?

Just as clubs struggle to recruit and retain players and to get their teams out each Saturday, so, too, does the County's Society of Referees. Just as clubs sometimes have to field players to secure 15 players on the pitch who may not be quite up to the standard required, so, too, does the Society. Referees, like players, learn from the experience of 'playing up', and neither always get decisions correct when doing so. Unlike players, who will rarely, if ever, face abuse from their team-mates for their mistakes, referees must deal with it on an increasing frequent basis.

Match official abuse will not be tolerated. Both the Kent County RFU (through its adult and youth Discipline Committees) and the KSRFUR will aim to deal with cases, if proven, as severely as possible.

We ask clubs to do their utmost to ensure that their players, officials, coaches, and spectators treat match



officials with respect and tolerance. To this end, we should be grateful if clubs would communicate our expectations widely, and trust that, should clubs come across such poor behaviour, they will use the full force of their own Discipline Committees and Constitutions to weed out the perpetrators and sanction them, including, if necessary, terminating their memberships.

The Executive Committee, working with the Discipline Committee Chairs and the KSRFUR, will monitor the position closely throughout the forthcoming season.

**Nigel Fray - Hon. Secretary and Director of Governance, Huw Gronow & Simon Corcoran - Joint Chairs of Adult Discipline Committee, Andy Gent - Youth Discipline, Alan Erskine - Youth Chair, Dawn Waters - Mini Chair, David Oliver - COO of KSRFUR.**

## 2. CLUB PARTICIPATION IN WALKING RUGBY

Are you developing or looking to develop walking rugby within your club? If so, we have funding to support this initiative.

Show your expression of interest by responding to our facilities manager, Garry Finnis regarding your club's position to developing Walking Rugby.

Walking Rugby is a simplified version of Rugby suitable for all ages, abilities & genders and being a competitive passing game, suitable for ex-rugby players, injured and rehabilitating current players and those interested in Rugby without any experience! Those past retirement age can still indulge in their passion without the full-on contact

- or those wishing to keep up their activity levels can try a new sport. Walking Rugby is a great leveller and you do not need to be fit.

Please register your position concerning walking rugby

Club Name

Current numbers participating in Walking Rugby

The Walking Rugby lead contact address

Contact : [facilities@kent-rugby.org](mailto:facilities@kent-rugby.org)

### 3. A REMINDER OF KENT COUNTY MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Subsequent to the decision taken at last month's AGM, the Individual Membership subscription is increasing from £10 to £20. All existing individual members will have received an email notifying them that their annual subscription should now be paid by Direct Debit, using the KCRFU's new online membership platform. Please action asap.



Once your direct debit is set up, it is very important that you cancel your existing Standing Order with your bank.

The payment is due on 1st September 2022.

For all Member Clubs – current rate £50, increasing to £100 per annum

Associate Clubs - current rate £20, increasing to £40 per annum.

All club will receive an invoice on 1st Sept for the membership fee. Again if you have a standing order set up please cancel.

### 4. AGP NOTICE

With growing concerns regarding the condition of our rugby grounds, we recognise that the current weather patterns and lack of rainfall has led to some clubs' inability to have meaningful contact training sessions, in readiness for the new season.

To assist in your clubs' potential training and preparation, please download from our website [HERE](#) a list of venues across Kent that are World Rugby Regulation 22 compliant Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs). Availability across the venues will be varied and you will need to be flexible as to when you train to use a facility, we would also encourage you to consider linking with other local clubs to book a facility for shared usage or joint training sessions.

## 5. PITCH UP AND PLAY

Pitch Up for Rugby Weekend 17th/18th September 2022



Are you planning an event for Pitch Up this September?

Let us know about it and you could win one of five £2000 Umbro kit packages!

Enter your event at '[Confirm your event](#)'

For a Guide to Pitch Up please visit [Pitch Up Activation Guide](#)

[Terms and Conditions](#)

### 6. APPROVAL PROCESS: TRANSITION TO ADULT RUGBY

To gain approval for a 17-year-old to play adult rugby, clubs must, each season and without fail, follow the two-stage process described below.



1. The Club must apply for and be approved by its Constituent Body (CB) to play 17-year-olds in adult rugby. This is done by completing and submitting the 'Playing Adult Rugby' application form – **Club Approval form and process here.**

Please ensure you name all coaches, team managers, first aiders and captains for the team(s) the player will be playing in. If you are seeking approval to play 17-year-olds in your male and female adult sides, you must provide this information for both sections.

2. Once the club has received approval, the Coach (level 2 qualified minimum) must assess each individual 17-year-old who wishes to play adult rugby and gain approval from its CB for the player to do so.

This is done by completing and submitting the **Playing Adult Rugby – Player Approval form and process, here.** Once approved, the individual can play adult rugby through to their 18th birthday.

Further information and advice may be found at: **HERE!** Club guide – Regulation 15.5. A 17 year old playing adult rugby.

**Nigel Fray**  
**Hon. Secretary & Director of Governance**

**Alan Erskine**  
**Chair, Youth Rugby**

## 7. COMBINED TEAMS AND PLAYING OUT OF AGE GRADE

As reported last month, it is mandated that ANY player playing out of their age grade and ANY combined team will be required to be signed off as approved by the Constituent Body.



Kent Rugby has designed online forms which are now live on our website **HERE**. They can be found under the Online Forms section of the Kent Rugby Website. Please note the mandatory requirements for Player Affiliation included in these forms.

## 8. DIVERSITY & INCLUSION: RFU TOOLKIT

*“Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. Sport can awaken hope where there was previously only despair. Sport speaks to people in a language they can understand.” – Nelson Mandela*

The RFU Council D&I Implementation Working Group was formed in September 2020, to:

- Build an inclusive and sustainable game through skilled and diverse leadership;
- Increase the number of people from under-represented groups across all Council and volunteer decision-making groups and sub-committees; and
- Introduce training and education to support diversity awareness and codes of conduct to establish principles, boundaries, guidelines and acceptable behaviour

The KCRFU has been closely associated with the Working Group’s activities, providing input to its deliberations, and seeking to ensure that both the RFU’s and KCRFU’s D&I strategy is workable and wins the support of clubs and individuals.

For its part, the KCRFU has determined that one of the best ways that we can support D&I in the game throughout Kent is always to seek to challenge ourselves to ensure that decision making is totally inclusive. Operationally, our approach to D&I aims to be pragmatic and apolitical. In short, we wish to see the broadest participation possible in the game.

We aim to achieve this together, by offering everybody, no matter their background and/or beliefs, the opportunity to participate (on or off the pitch) in our wonderful game, the values of which are widely recognised and admired.

This cannot be achieved overnight. Creating a diverse and inclusive environment is a process of cultural change – and it is not without its difficulties and sensitivities, as recent events have highlighted (e.g. Luther Burrell’s accusations of racism in the game, and the publication of the RFU’s gender participation policy).

It is for this reason that the KCRFU is of the firm view that clubs should move at their own pace, reflecting the views of their members and the needs of their respective local communities. We do not propose, therefore, to use any formal reporting system and/or scorecard to monitor clubs’ progress in attracting wider participation across all groups from across local communities. Having said that, we will, of course, be very interested to learn of clubs’ successes and to pass on best practice on how clubs can broaden and better engage with their local communities.

To facilitate this process and to assist clubs in whichever activities they wish to undertake, the RFU has produced a **Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan**, supported by set of training resources (or ‘**Toolkit**’). The ‘**Toolkit**’ covers six areas:

- 1) Volunteering and Inclusion
- 2) Disability and Inclusion
- 3) Diversity and Inclusion
- 4) Ethnicity and Inclusion
- 5) Gender and Inclusion
- 6) LGBT+ and Inclusion

We do not suggest any imposition of the ‘**Toolkit**’; indeed, not all of the six areas will be relevant to every club. Rather, the ‘**Toolkit**’ is there for clubs to use as they see fit.

In addition to the ‘**Toolkit**’, the KCRFU is also working to help implement the RFU’s ‘**Rugby United**’ project. This seeks to empower community clubs that are seeking to make long-term cultural change in how they engage and become more accessible to their local communities, in order to attract players, coaches, volunteers, and match officials from Black and South Asian communities.

We hope that all of the initiatives mentioned prove helpful in growing the game and help clubs to become ever more sustainable, by broadening their membership and being more reflective of the local communities in which they are located. To help those individuals who wish to learn more about the KCRFU's D&I strategy, we will be including this as part of the Leadership Academy curriculum, as well as being happy to discuss at our regular Club Cluster meetings any issues or questions arising from the RFU's and KCRFU's D&I strategy.

**Nigel Fray**  
**Hon. Secretary & Director Governance**  
**D&I Lead**

## 9. KENT COUNTY YOUTH COMPETITIONS

There are few clubs that have not yet entered their teams into youth competitions. Please contact Alan Erskine if you want to enter.

[youth-rugby@kent-rugby.org](mailto:youth-rugby@kent-rugby.org)



Howden have deep expertise protecting professional athletes, clubs, governing bodies, sponsors and brands. Whatever your risk challenges, we'll know the score.

## 10. COPING WITH DROUGHT CONDITIONS

Read the full article from the Community Game Update **HERE**.



Covers:

Update on leagues for the start of the season

Coaching to prepare players for firm ground

Managing Pitches in Drought Conditions

AGP support

Due to the dry weather the KCRFU Adult Competitions Sub Committee confirm that the season start dates for the following local Kent administered leagues are as follows;

Kent Invicta League 17th September

Kent Metropolitan Leagues 17th September

Kent Rural Leagues 1st October (but can bring back to 17th September if clubs are in agreement)

The above leagues remain flexible, as opposed to our clubs at the following levels ;

NCA level 4 administered

RFU / London & SE ROC levels 5 to 10 administered "

Confirmation is awaited

**Connect With  
Kent RFU Online**

Our Website:  
<https://www.kent-rugby.org>

  
<https://www.facebook.com/KentRFU/>

  
[@KentRugby](https://twitter.com/KentRugby)

  
<https://www.instagram.com/kent.rugby/>