

KENT COUNTY RFU INFORMATION SENDOUT JANUARY 2023



1. RFU COUNCIL VOTES TO LOWER THE TACKLE HEIGHT

From the commencement of 2023-2024

The RFU announced on 19 January that it intends to amend the Laws, to lower the height of the tackle. This will take effect across community rugby in England from 1 July 2023, in time for the beginning of the 2023-24 season.

The reaction from the rugby community has been mixed, to say the least, with a great deal of concern having been expressed about the decision and its long-term (and possibly, detrimental) impact on the community game. It is important to recognise, however, that this decision is not only about adult male players, but also about future male and female players in schools, colleges, Age Grade sections, and to address the concerns of parents of younger players.

I accept that the RFU's announcement should have set out more prominently and clearly the rationale (and supporting scientific evidence) for its decision.

As your RFU Council Member, I was one of only 14 Council Members who voted for an amendment to delay the final decision on this very important issue until the Council meeting scheduled for the 13th February. This was to allow time to share the science and data on the reasons for this change and to consult with our clubs prior to the vote being held.

However, that amendment failed. I then voted for the change, based on the research and medical advice provided by Dr Simon Kemp (RFU Medical Services Director), in particular the evidence cited on accelerated head contact in the game, namely:

From experience in New Zealand

Research carried out at Stellenbosch in South Africa;

The experience of the French Federation, which introduced this tackle rule some 18 months ago to sections of the French Community game;

From the data gathered from the use of 'intelligent' mouth guards in England; and

The last 7 years of evidence from the CRISP (Community Rugby Injury Surveillance Project).

I acknowledge that we should have shared this data and evidence much sooner with colleagues across our rugby community, prior to a vote being taken. As one of the Council's major Constituent Body members, this is a point that I made very clearly to the Council.



The original statement can be seen [HERE](#) with further links to the supporting evidence, a thinking paper and tackle height science presentation. I hope that this further information will help you to better understand some of the research upon which the decision was based. In addition, I would encourage you to read the material that was published in the most recent Community Game update, which not all players and administrators may see on a regular basis. The Community Game Update can be accessed [HERE](#).

Since the RFU made its original announcement, saying that it proposes to amend the Law to reduce the height of the tackle, we have received many representations from past players, coaches and elected officials from clubs across Kent. All have expressed strong views and posed a range of questions regarding the details of the change itself and its longer-term impact, especially with regard to the

Community Game. As your Council Member, I have done my best to reply to all of these, to help clarify the position and to answer your questions.

Because of the concern that has been expressed and in some cases anger at the announcement, an additional Council meeting was held on Thursday evening (26 January). As a result, the RFU issued a further statement (**ACCESSED HERE**) on Friday afternoon (27 January), apologising to the whole game for the way in which the communication and lack of consultation was handled.

The statement mentions that consultation on the tackle height will commence immediately, with invitations extended to players, coaches, match officials, and volunteers to attend workshops and forums to discuss in further detail how a law variation on tackling can be introduced. Kent will continue to be fully involved in this exercise and we will aim to ensure that as many as possible from Kent clubs will be given the opportunity to participate in these events, which will be held locally; we hope in clusters.

If you have further questions or comments, please continue to get in touch and I will do my very best to deal with them, unless they relate to detailed scientific questions, in which case I may refer them to the relevant RFU or World Rugby expert for a response.

**Roger Clarke.- Chair KCRFU.
RFU Council Member for Kent.**

2. KCRFU TO PUBLISH DISCIPLINARY PANEL JUDGEMENTS

Both the KCRFU and KSRFUR have expressed their concerns at the number and seriousness of cases that are coming before the Adult and Youth Disciplinary Panels. Despite the warning that was given at the beginning of the season (see Information Sendout of August 2022), we continue to see too many cases, in particular, relating to Match Official Abuse. Across the adult and youth game, and for all alleged offences, we have so far this season been presented with approaching 50 cases.

As previously stated, Match Official Abuse will not be tolerated; in proven cases, our disciplinary panels will aim to deal with these as severely as possible.



We have considered how we might reinforce this message and have decided that we will follow the RFU's (and other CBs') practice of publishing the outcomes of disciplinary panels. We hope that this information and especially giving notice of the level of sanctions that have been imposed for any given offence, will act as a

strong deterrent and provide the catalyst to see better behaviour across the rugby community (players, officials and spectators). We hope, too, that the information encourages clubs generally to improve the conduct of their members.

What are the CB's Disciplinary Panels' powers?

Both the adult and Age Grade Disciplinary Panels act under delegated authority of the RFU, in fulfilment of World Rugby Regulation 17. They normally deal with misconduct and foul play cases at level 5 and below

What information will be published?

Judgements are statements of fact. We will publish on the KCRFU's website the summary details of all cases heard, from the start of the 2022-23 season, where a guilty judgement has been determined.

We do not propose to publish the names of those individuals, whose cases were heard before 31 December 2022 and were judged by the Adult Disciplinary Panel to have breached a Regulation and a sanction imposed. These cases will anonymise the individuals concerned (but not their clubs), referring to them as 'player', 'official', or 'spectator' only, as appropriate.

The Adult Panel is convening to hear cases on 30 January and 6 & 13 February 2023. Summary details of these cases (**including the names of the individuals found guilty**) will be published by 23 February – and for all cases regularly thereafter.

For the avoidance of doubt, we **will not publish the names of those individuals aged under 18 years**, whether they appear before the Adult or Age Grade Disciplinary Panel.

We will publish broadly similar information to that which is published by the RFU, namely:

Panel hearing date

Date of match

Match (i.e. the clubs involved in the fixture)

Adult or Age Grade (and which level, e.g. U11, U16, etc.)

Club and/or team

Regulation under which the offence is being considered, typically, under Regulations 9 or 15

Type of offence and the entry point (low, mid-point or top-end) based on the assessment of the seriousness of an incident

Individual(s), aged 18 years and over.

Role - player(s), official(s), spectator(s)

Plea

Panel judgement

Sanction imposed

We will aim to publish judgements within 10 days of the hearing.

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.

3. KENT COUNTY RFU FINANCIAL AGM

Representatives from our member clubs, and Individual Members are invited to attend the Annual Financial General Meeting, which will be held via a Zoom meeting on Wednesday 1st February 2023 at 7.00 pm.

Those wishing to attend should email office@kent-rugby.org. Once registered, you will then receive the joining instructions and protocols for the meeting.

4. HONDA VOLUNTEER AWARD NOMINATIONS



Nominations for the England Rugby 'Honda Volunteer of the Year 2023' awards have just opened. There are three categories: Game for All/Unsung Hero/Challenging Spirit

More details on each category, along with nomination guidance, can be found [HERE!](#)

Nominations close on Friday 24th February.

5. MANDATORY PLAYER REGISTRATION

As communicated in November, RFU Council has agreed for mandatory adult player registration to be introduced from July 2023. All players, in all formats of the Game (including non-contact), will be required to register to play rugby annually within RFU member clubs.

This 'registering to play' principle has been in the age grade game for many years and is currently known as 'Age Grade Affiliation'. To align with the coming change across the whole game, we will be renaming 'Age Grade Affiliation' to 'Age Grade Registration' from next season. It is important to stress that the process for the Age Grade game is not changing, purely the name.

Different levels of data will be required from players depending on their playing level (aligned with adult league structures). The current Effective Registration as outlined in **Regulation 14** (opens in a new tab) will still apply to

Men's Premiership/Championship/ National 1&2 and Women's APXV's, whilst at lower levels, less information will be required to register, allowing for a simple process for players.

Some players may also wish to play for more than one club (for example where they live and work in different locations). To accommodate this a simple process of dual registration will be available for players in all clubs, with the exception of those playing 1st XV rugby in Women's Championship and above and Men's Regional 2 and above. Players will not be permitted to register for 2 clubs in the same league even at the lowest levels.

There will be a large degree of trust built into processes, particularly at Counties and below where any sanctioning will be extremely pragmatic. Sanctions will be enforced more robustly higher up the playing levels and the sanctions for not registering National league players and above will remain the same

6. PAYMENT OF PLAYERS REGULATION

The Payment of Players Regulation can be found [here](#). Declarations are due to be submitted between 1 March and 30 June 2023 and are mandatory for all clubs whose men's first XV team plays at: National League Rugby to Counties 1 (formerly Level 3 to Level 7 (inclusive); or Counties 2 (formerly Level 8) and below who provide material benefits to players wishing to be eligible for RFU benefits.

The process remains the same for this year. However, the number of club authorisers has been reduced from four to three. The declaration covers the period of 1 June 2022 – 31 May 2023.

Further detailed information will be provided prior to the declaration going live in March.

7. COACHING THE LINEOUT WORKSHOP

Kent County RFU is running a coaching workshop on Monday 27th February at Aylesford Bulls RFC, commencing at 7-30 pm.

Matt Corker and Nathan Morris will be delivering the session on 'coaching the line out'. It will start with an inside presentation followed by an outside for a practical session. There is no cost for the attendees. Tea, Coffee and refreshments will be supplied. Those wishing to attend need to book their place with Director of Representative Rugby, Taff Gwilliam : director-representative-rugby@kent-rugby.org



8. INTRODUCTION TO REFEREEING COURSE BY KENT SOCIETY OF RUGBY REFEREES



Introduction to Rugby Refereeing Course 15-a-side Game

Delivered by Kent Referees Society

**Evening 1: Monday 13th March
7.00-9.30pm @ Aylesford Bulls RFC**

**Evening 2: Monday 27th March
7.00-9.30pm @ Aylesford Bulls RFC**

£30 p/p. Book your place by contacting admin@kentrefs.co.uk

Kent Referee's Society is running another Introduction to Referee Course which was very popular last year. It is delivered over two evenings scheduled for Monday 13th March and Monday 27th March at Aylesford Bulls RFC. The course last year sold out within 2 days, so if you would like to book on the course, please contact the Society asap - admin@kentrefs.co.uk

9. KCRFU ONLINE SHOP

Last Month KCRFU launched its online shop, which is operated and managed by VX-3.

The shop offers a full range at competitive prices of adult- and youth-sized Kent Rugby-branded training and casual clothing and kit bags. All are available to be purchased directly from VX-3's online store: <https://vx-3.com/collections/kent-rfu>

10. SARACENS TICKET OFFER TO GRASSROOT CLUBS

As interested and valued members of the rugby communities I'm sure you have seen that Saracens are playing their Gallagher Premiership Fixture v Harlequins at Tottenham Stadium in March. Last year they played Bristol at the same stadium and it was a great day out – something for all the family.

They want to reach out to grass root clubs across the country and offer them a groups ticket deal to experience this great day out with amazing rugby on display as well as big entertainment – something for everyone. It falls outside the 6 Nations window so Internationals will be

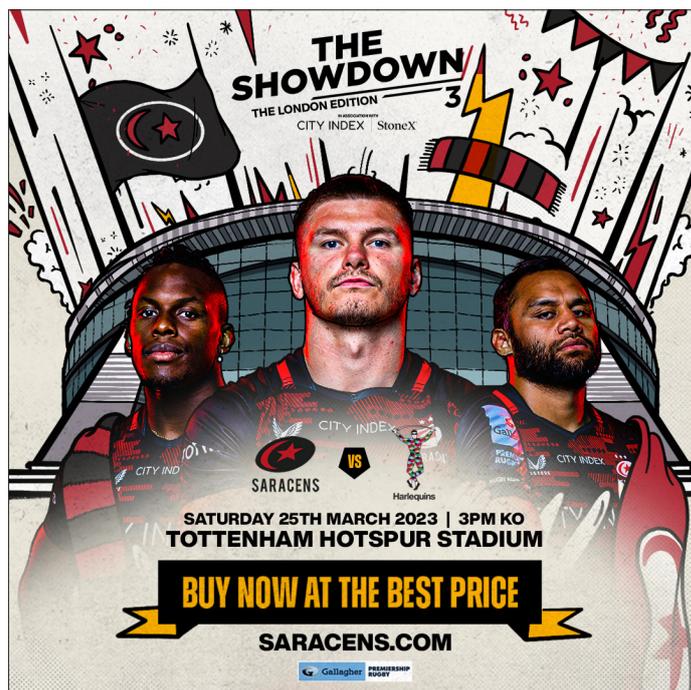
back in both sides – should be a mouth watering encounter played in what is probably one of the best football stadium in the country.

Saracens v Harlequins, Saturday 25th March 2023 at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium:

Web link <https://www.saracens.com/theshowdown3/>

For anyone that hasn't attended one of their Big Games before - they say it is way more than 80 minutes of world class rugby; the show before, during and after the game will be fantastic fun and a great experience to share - YouTube link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XkUk5xum8AU>

Full Price Tickets start at £15.75 for U16s and £31.50 for Adults. Ticket offers vary depending on the numbers attending.



THE SHOWDOWN
THE LONDON EDITION
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**SATURDAY 25TH MARCH 2023 | 3PM KO
TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR STADIUM**

BUY NOW AT THE BEST PRICE

SARACENS.COM

Gallagher PREMIERSHIP RUGBY

11. COUNTY YOUTH SEVENS COMPETITION 2023

The competition will be held on the following dates at the venues indicated. Start time will be advised by the host clubs but is likely to be 9.30 am. Host clubs will provide a timetable for the day.

Under 13s @ Canterbury RFC	23rd April 2023
Under 14s @ Folkestone RFC	23rd April 2023
Under 15s @ Ashford RFC	16th April 2023
Under 16s @ Beckenham RFC	16th April 2023
Under 17s/18s @ Charlton Park	16th April 2023

To enter the competition please use the application link **HERE**.

CLOSING DATE FOR ENTRIES 13th February 2023

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