

KENT COUNTY RFU INFORMATION SENDOUT NOVEMBER 2023



1. RFU COUNCIL UPDATE

Adult Registration.

Following a range of game consultations over the last month, the RFU Oversight Group on which I sit have discussed the views of the game and how proposals are required to be amended to take note of these. A final decision on how to introduce Adult Registration will be taken shortly. The RFU technical department is now sure that they have developed simple technology in order for registration to take place on tablets and iPhones as is the case with Age Grade Registration now in its third year of introduction.



Age-grade Registration.

As we send out this bulletin the Kent registered figure is 10,454 -(9,040 Boys and 1,414 Girls) which compares with the June 2023 figure of 11, 750. Thanks to all clubs for continuing to encourage registration and to move towards a full and relevant total which reflects the total number of boys and girls in the County playing the game regularly.

Merit Table Rugby.

RFU figures suggest that nationally to date some 79% of games in the county administered, merit tables have been completed as we reach the end of November 23.

In Kent, the 3 Rural Merit tables completion rates are looking good at this stage in the Season with any postponed games being played wherever possible on the next available free date. Some games are being played

under Game-On rules and a note from the County Hon Sec encouraging teams to use these rules has gone to all clubs.

In Metropolitan One Merit Table is working quite well but there have been some difficulties in completing games in Met B. As a result, a meeting was held at Charlton Park RFC in the middle of November to discuss the way forward and a range of constructive ideas were tabled by a good turnout of the clubs involved. Both the RFU and the County will work with the clubs to help them play as much rugby as possible over the second half of the season.

Kent County Club cluster meetings.

County RFU Club Developer Mark Finnis has delivered almost a full house of physical club meetings during November. County Exec Members have attended some of these meetings where clubs have highlighted their key needs from the RFU and KCRFU.

Mark has also offered meetings with individual clubs to discuss their future plans and how to deliver their top three priorities.

Tackle Height Law variations.

As we complete the first three months of the season trends nationally, and in Kent suggest that the new tackle law variations have been introduced sensitively with few red cards for high tackles. Research will continue using a range of data sources including the Community Rugby Injury Surveillance Project (CRISP) to monitor levels of concussion and or head injuries to see how the variations affect injury levels. Thanks to all Kent clubs who are taking part in CRISP but we need more to be involved at the start of 24-25, particularly at Age Grade level for Girls and Boys and Schools level.

Roger Clarke.

**Chair Kent County Executive Committee
RFU Council Member for Kent**

2. ON-AND-OFF FIELD DISCIPLINE: MATCH OFFICIAL ABUSE CASES INCREASING

Despite a clear and strong warning that the KCRFU and KSRFUR will not tolerate Match Official Abuse (MOA), we are already this season seeing cases of this serious offence being brought before the Discipline Panels (Adult and Age Grade). Alarming, many of the MOA incidents are arising from the touchline, particularly on Sunday mornings at Youth and Minis events. The 2022-23 season highlighted the impact of what now seems to be a pervasive yet unwanted feature of our game, which last season resulted in 7 referees no longer wanting to officiate, after having been subjected to criticism and abuse. This is completely unacceptable and needs to stop **NOW**.



Clubs are instructed immediately and without fail to bring this matter to the attention of all officials, coaches, players, volunteers and spectators (be they parents/guardians or others) and to warn them as to the good behaviour and respect for match officials that is expected.

The Discipline Panels are alive to this problem and for proven cases, and regardless of whether an individual perpetrator is identified or not, they will hold clubs to account with a view to imposing severe sanctions. Any such sanctions may not be restricted to a particular section or age group as discipline is regarded as a 'whole club' issue. Therefore, sanctions may include financial penalties, docking of 1st XV points, suspension of coaches and expulsion from competitions.

Nigel Fray
Hon. Secretary & Director of Governance

3. WORLD RUGBY PUBLISHES IMPORTANT COMMUNITY RUGBY HEAD INJURY RESEARCH

World Rugby, in a joint research project with the Otago Community Head Impact Detection Study (ORCHID),

Prevent Biometrics, New Zealand Rugby, Otago Rugby and the University of Otago, has published the first independent, peer-reviewed findings into community rugby following almost two years of trail-blazing research. The study measures over 17,000 separate head acceleration events across more than 300 players from senior rugby through to U13s level.

While rugby, like many other contact sports, is not risk free, the findings are a potential positive game changer in helping us to promote the game to schools and young players and encourage greater participation. The data will also help to reassure players (and especially parent / guardians of young players) and those responsible for Age Grade Rugby of the relative safety of the game, especially when coached correctly by trained coaches.

The headline findings from the research show that:

Independent, peer-reviewed studies show that 86 per cent of forces on the head in community rugby are the same or less than those experienced in general exercise such as running and jumping

Elite Extension and Ulster University study shows that most contact events in men's and women's elite rugby do not result in players experiencing significant force

The report which can be accessed **HERE** provides a summary of the research findings and further detail is available on the World Rugby website.

4. SAFEGUARDING AUDITS

Thank you to all those clubs that completed the safeguarding audit within the timescale.

I will choose a selection of clubs to complete the follow up visit and aid with any needs identified, please do get in touch if you would like me to come along and assist with anything.



A reminder to all clubs that your safeguarding details must be accessible via your website and displayed in the club, no **info@** or enquiry forms should be used for safeguarding enquiries and I have noticed when auditing websites that many are still using these, it should be a secure email address that only safeguarding officers have access to. Your safeguarding officer's contact details should be displayed on the poster in the club to be accessed by members and visitors.

If you have a change of safeguarding officer please update GMS with the correct information, all new safeguarding officers should introduce themselves to me via email and reach out if I can help with DBS checks in the transition period or any other assistance they may require.

I am here to support all safeguarding officers throughout the County, do not hesitate to reach out to me with queries, for support or to request a visit.

Ali Boyd
Player & Welfare Officer
safeguarding@kent-rugby.org

5. HONDA VOLUNTEER AWARDS 2024

Nominations for the Honda Volunteer Awards 2024 will open on Monday 8 January - we will send out further information in due course. These awards are a fantastic way of saying thank you to the amazing volunteers we have in our clubs, so please take the time to put forward your volunteers.



Pamela Kilmister
Volunteer Recognition, Kent Rugby

6. ONLINE APPROVAL FORMS

Kent Rugby RFU has our own approval forms for playing out of age grade, combining teams and club and player approval for playing 17 year olds in the adult game. These can be found on our website and are used instead of the smart sheet forms that are found on the RFU main website.

Ours are more comprehensive, approvals are quicker and easier and have been in existence for longer. Please do not use the RFU forms as these will be rejected.

Alan Erskine
Kent County RFU Youth Chair

7. HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL (HCP) TRAINING DAY

The first ever Kent Rugby Healthcare Professional (HCP) Training Day was held at KIMS Hospital on Saturday 28 October. Guy Slater, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon, match day doctor to Kent County RFU senior men's team and Blackheath, set up this training specifically designed for HCPs looking after Kent rugby union teams.

With a turnout of 40 attendees from various Kent Rugby Clubs, the event provided a unique opportunity to learn from experts and collaborate with like-minded professionals, as well as giving attendees the opportunity to expand their professional network.

The speakers on the day were Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeons: Mr Paul Gill, who spoke about knee injuries, Mr Bal Dhinsa, who talked about common foot and ankle injuries, Marcos Katchburian gave a tour around the injured hand and Prof. Biyayendra Singh spoke about shoulder sports injuries.

The presentations and discussions provided the attendees with the knowledge to enhance their healthcare skills and improve the well-being of rugby players. Dr Alan Thompson, Honorary Medical Officer to Blackheath Rugby, Kent RFU and National League Rugby shared invaluable insights into the minimum medical standards required for National Leagues 1 and 2. Sundip Mistry from Galen Ltd conducted a training session on the use of Pentrox in a rugby setting.



Our gratitude to the sponsors of this inaugural event, TRB Chemedica (UK) Ltd represented by Chris Shields, for their generous support and to the speakers for their valuable time. We hope to run a similar event annually and the next one is planned for **June 2024**.

Any Rugby healthcare professionals with Kent teams who weren't present on the day and wish to attend future events please contact Guy Slater (gjrslater@nhs.net).

8. FACILITIES AUDIT

Recognising the integral role facility development plays in supporting our voting member clubs (and non voting clubs) growth aspirations and retention needs, Kent County RFU seeks to update our Facility Development Plan with the full support of the RFU London and South East Facilities team.

The first part of this process is to ascertain the true facilities needs of each club which will give a comprehensive list of prioritised projects for Kent County RFU to solicit and direct support, resources and investment. Kent RFU and the RFU will use the updated Facility Development Plan to determine priority club projects for all future investments as/when this becomes available.

To ensure your rugby club's current needs are incorporated, please ensure you use the link below to complete the 2023/24 audit by 31st December 2023. Please take time to complete this even if you submitted a return last year, as this will enable the most accurate picture of facility needs across the county.

AUDIT 2023/24 LINK

9. KENT COUNTY RFU SMALL GRANTS OFFER 2023-2024

Kent County RFU is providing several 'small grants' to support clubs wishing to encourage participation by improving their facilities.

Grant awards help contribute to the fundraising that clubs are already carrying out to support their respective improvement projects – even relatively small awards can provide an exponentially beneficial impact to clubs struggling to raise funding during these challenging times.

We can offer grants between £500 - £2,500 towards works that deliver improvements to either player or referee's experience at your club. An example might be that your club is considering utilising one of the current RFU offers, found at; <https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/running-your-club/facilities/offers> or the grant could be utilised as part of an important club refurbishment project by providing additional funding.

To apply for a Kent County RFU Small Grant please complete our form and submit it to: office@kent-rugby.org copied to club-development-chair@kent-rugby.org (**download form HERE**)

Clubs are also reminded of the various financial support mechanisms that are made available by the RFU; <https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/running-your-club/funding> – and which the County's grants can complement.

Any Kent County RFU Small Grant award is dependent upon the applying club having submitted an up to date Club Audit Form.

For those clubs that have yet to complete the audit – or for those that wish to update their entry from last year below is the Club Audit Form

CLUB AUDIT LINK

NB: If you encounter any problems when completing the audit please contact rickbruin@rfu.com.

Further facilities support and information can be found on the RFU website at: **HERE**

10. ARTICLES FOR IN-TOUCH

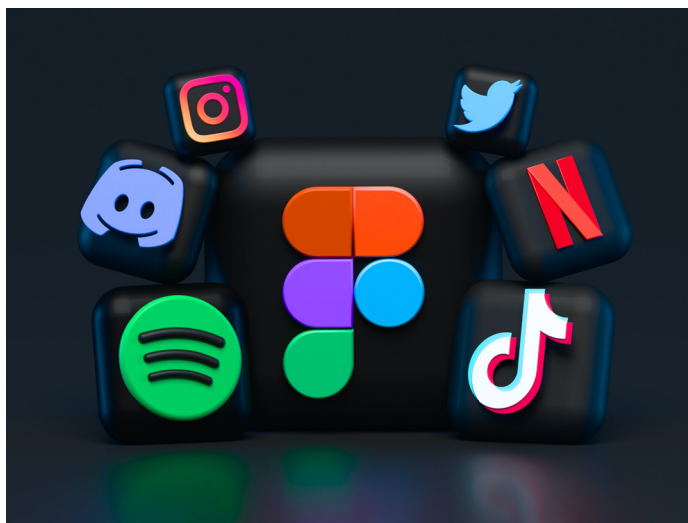
Share your amazing community rugby stories at your club for our publication of In-Touch, publication Feb 2024.

Do not miss out on sharing your club news and be part of our publication of In-touch?

Please send written articles with any good quality (large size) images for possible inclusion in the publication by the to office@kent-rugby.org

11. KENT COUNTY RFU SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

Kent County RFU are determined to increase our Social Media presence and report on more stories and events, which reflect and celebrate what is happening now in our rugby community.



With this in mind, our Social Media Manager is keen to hear directly from clubs with a story to be told.

We would like to celebrate your players, volunteers or club milestones and successes and share them with our wider rugby family.

The people at your club make a difference and their positive contributions to our game deserve recognition.

Contact Sophie Warren (socialmedia@kent-rugby.org) with your latest news and share your stories so we can promote and celebrate our game together.

Representative Games next month!

Kent County U18 Boys

Sunday 3rd Dec 2023,
Kent vs Eastern Counties, KO 11:00am, Hertfordshire to host.

Sunday 17th Dec 2023, |
Kent vs Essex, KO 11:00am,
Eastern Counties to host.

Kent County U18 Girls

17th December 2023
Sussex U18 Girls vs Kent U18 Girls
Eastbourne RFC – kick off at 2 pm.

