

KENT COUNTY RFU INFORMATION SENDOUT MARCH 2025



1. CONSULTATION - LOWER XV's AND COUNTIES 1 to 5: OUTCOME

Many thanks to those clubs that responded to the CB's consultation on whether to alter the structure of Kent Counties Leagues 1-5 and if so, to identify possible options for doing so.

Of 55 clubs in Kent, only 22 responded, as did 2 Sussex clubs (i.e. those which participate in the Kent Counties Leagues). Of these: 13 clubs were in favour of change; 8 were against; and 3, although they made general comments about the present structure, in effect abstained.

Given that so few clubs expressed a definitive majority position, we see no compelling case to amend the league structure for next season. However, we recognise that there are clearly some strongly held views about the introduction of lower teams, which followed a vote 3 years ago (although, again, based on a very low turnout relative to the number of voting clubs within Kent). We will continue therefore to monitor the situation. Should there be a stronger call to reverse that original decision, this would require the RFU (in consultation with Regional Operating Committees, as appropriate) to arrange another vote based on a new resolution, duly proposed and seconded.

Accordingly, the Counties Leagues will continue as this season. Once this 2024-25 season has ended, the Competitions Committee will decide which new teams should be admitted to Counties 5 for 2025-26. This may result in some teams which have applied to join Counties 5 for next season being unsuccessful.

Jarrod Lawrence (Executive Committee, KCRFU)
Tim Fagg (London and South-East Regional Organising Committee)

2. TOUR AND OVERNIGHT STAY RISK ASSESSMENTS- LOST CHILD PROTOCOL

Clubs will be aware that all applications to the CB to approve Age Grade tours and/or overnight stays (whether within or outside of England) must be accompanied by a full Risk Assessment (RA). We have noticed an increasing number of RAs which fail to include the detailed steps that should be taken if a child goes missing.



A clear set of rules is a crucial part of an RA and must be included regardless of whether children are accompanied by their parent(s) and/or club officials and coaches. This will enable everyone to be as calm and methodical as possible, to ensure that, hopefully in the unlikely event that it occurs, a lost or missing child is found quickly, with no harm done.

Every club should already have in place a clear and detailed policy to cover this risk, so it should be a straightforward exercise to transfer this into the RA, adapted as necessary for the tour or overnight stay in question. However, where no club protocol is in place, the KCRFU's website (Safeguarding page [here](#)) includes, with thanks to Darren Reeves of Tonbridge Juddians RFC, an excellent example, which clubs may use as the basis for their own missing child arrangements.

Nigel Fray
KCRFU Honsec and Director of Governance

3. COMMUNITY GAME INCLUSION & DIVERSITY (I & D): RFU SURVEY

The RFU recently published the results of its 'Community Game I & D Survey', based on data collected by the research team over the past two years.

The survey paints a mixed picture:

1. Participation rates have **increased** from 328k (Nov 2020-22) to 389k (Nov 2021-23). While this is an improvement,

it remains a long way from the 549k who participated in the game pre-Covid.

2. Participation has **decreased** across all age groups.

3. As a percentage of the total participating population, those from ethnically diverse groups has **increased** from 9 per cent (Nov 2018-20) to 10.6 per cent (Nov 2021-23). This still falls short of the 18 per cent of people in England & Wales who belong to a black, Asian, mixed, or other ethnic group (2021 Census data – no data exists for England, only).

4. Participation has **decreased significantly** among the second most and most deprived quartiles of the population.

5. Overall, the total number of people saying they follow the game has **increased** (by 0.3 million) – the first increase recorded since Covid.

6. Perceptions of inclusivity in the game in England have **increased**, incl. by those from all minority groups from 2023. However, the picture is not so rosy across the game more widely.

7. Experienced or witnessed incidences of discrimination have **increased**, but there is some comfort that that young people and those from LGBT + community have experienced less.

From the KCRFU's point of view, we seek to ensure that our game is open to all from across the County's varied communities and regardless of backgrounds. To that end, we will continue to provide clubs with the necessary information and tools to reach out to their communities; Ali Boyd, the CB's Player & Volunteer Well-Being Officer, is for example working with the RFU and Gravesend RFC to deliver an initiative on 'Neurodiversity and Inclusion', which is due to be launched in April 2025. However, as a game, we need to be realistic as to what we can achieve.

We are clear, therefore, that it is for each club to determine for itself and based on its own particular circumstances whether and how to do this, but the CB remains on hand to support clubs in their endeavours.

Nigel Fray

KCRFU Executive Committee lead on I&D

4. CHAIR OF KCRFU COMPETITIONS COMMITTEE: APPLICATIONS

The KCRFU has extended the deadline for applications to succeed John Day to 31st March 2025.

After 15 years as Chair of Competitions and service to Kent Rugby, John Day has decided to retire at the end of the current, 2024-25 season. The Executive Committee therefore invites applications from suitably qualified and experienced persons to succeed John, with a view to being in post by early in the new year, to facilitate a smooth handover and preparation for 2025-26.

What does the role entail? The Chair of Competitions leads a committee which has oversight of the CB-administered

Metropolitan and Rural leagues (including, also, liaison with the London & SE Regional Operating Committee(ROC) in respect of the RFU Club Championship, i.e. Counties Kent 1-5) and is responsible for organising each year the CB's Finals Day (Kent Cup, Shield, Plate, Vase, and Salver competitions), and Veterans' Cup competition. The Chair also sits as a member of the CB's Game Development Committee.

How to apply. Please submit your application (by email), setting out why you are interested in the role and providing details of your experience and skill set, to Nigel Fray (Honsec@kent-rugby.org) by no later than 31st March 2025.

5. AGE-GRADE KIT FUND

In addition to the support that the KCRFU provides to clubs to improve their facilities (both for whole club and Age Grade projects), we are making available for the remainder of this season only an additional £10,000 from Youth budget reserves to contribute to clubs' purchases of equipment for its Age Grade (i.e. minis and youth) activities.



We envisage that the Fund will be used to purchase such items as children-sized tackle bags, training and agility equipment (cones, speed ladders), tag rugby equipment, spectator barriers / rope cordons. Our focus is on Age Grade, so we do not envisage supporting from this Fund the purchase of 'big ticket' items as scrummage machines, which we consider to be more for use by players of all ages across a club's playing membership (subject to usual player safety regulations).

We will consider applications for funding up to a maximum of £500. Should your application be successful, the funding will be released only on production of invoiced proof of spend, with monies to be disbursed by no later than the end of July 2025.

Clubs wishing to apply must provide the following information:

1. The total number of Age Grade players your club supports and number of teams.
2. The equipment you intend to purchase and why (e.g. replacement of old / worn out equipment, new equipment to cater for increased playing numbers).
3. The total cost.

4. The amount your club proposes to contribute to the total cost.

5. The amount of KCRFU funding sought (bearing in mind that the £500 maximum amount is not a 'target').

Applications should be made by email, to Honsec@kent-rugby.org and office@kent-rugby.org by no later than Friday 11 April.

Nigel Fray
Hon. Secretary, KCRFU

6. WOMEN'S & GIRLS' EVENT

The KCRFU's Women's & Girls' Committee is hosting a double event **Friday 18th April at Beckenham RFC**.

Women's Forum - 11am

To talk through key topics impacting Women's teams and their clubs.

Bring Your Boots Home April '25 - 12.30pm

A social match for 18-25 year old female players wanting to reconnect and have some fun.

Players please register at <https://forms.gle/PXmeZtU3rvS8kBTa6>

Should you have any questions, please contact Natasha O'Leary on 07926 941136 (nolearycreative@gmail.com)

7. KENT COUNTY VOLUNTEER AWARD NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN

Every year, the Kent County RFU is proud to recognise dedicated and selfless volunteers from across our grassroots clubs, who are nominated by their peers for going above and beyond in their activities to support the game that we love.



Nominations for the volunteer awards open on Monday 10th March and will close on Friday 11th April. See our website for more details and for a link to the nominations form **HERE!**

The presentation evenings will be held on:

Wednesday **11th June 2025** at Ashford RFC at 7pm
Thursday **12th June 2025** at Beckenham RFC at 7pm

8. RFU INTRODUCTION TO REFEREEING COURSE

Is your club short of referees, particularly for your age grade matches? Then why not book an RFU Introduction to Refereeing Course at your club? You only need 9 candidates to book a tutor who will run the course.

If you are struggling with numbers, then the clubs are free to book a course as a joint initiative with another club. All the information on how to book a course and tutor can be found **HERE** on Kent County RFU website.

Anyone who is interested in hosting or participating in a course should contact with Billy Huntley, (**bill-huntley1231@hotmail.co.uk**) RFU tutor in Kent who will guide you an appropriate course.



9. UPCOMING EVENTS

Mini Festivals

March 23rd 2025 brings the 42nd Kent County Mini Festival. Events happening all around the county.

Kent U20s

Sunday 30th March Kent U20 v Hertfordshire U20 – Blackheath FC – KO 3 pm

Kent Cup Finals Day

Sunday 27 April 2025 at Aylesford Bulls RFC



Emergency Funding

Self employed?
Cannot work due to rugby injury?
Loss of income?
Access an application form [HERE!](#)



