



KENT COUNTY RFU — INFORMATION SENDOUT

1. INTRODUCING RUGBY MATCHMAKER

Kent County RFU have been in discussions with the founder of a new tool which is designed to support finding fixtures and encourage Kent clubs to utilise and provide feedback on the use and success of the platform.

**FIND YOUR
PERFECT MATCH
IN KENT.**

The opposition cries off on Thursday night. You've now got less than 48 hours to find a replacement fixture — so out come the phones and the Facebook groups. Often with hours spent chasing a fixture that does not materialise.

Kent County RFU introduce Rugby Matchmaker®. Tap broadcast, and your search for a perfect match goes out to every club in range at once. The ones chasing the same weekend see it straight away, and replies land fast — often within minutes. Pick the game and it's done. More often than not it's a club nearer than you'd expect, so shorter trips and more happy players.

And it gets better the more clubs that are on it. Every Kent club that joins puts more games in the pool — more opponents, more weekends covered, more rugby played. That's why Kent County RFU is introducing Rugby Matchmaker® across the county.

It's free for every Kent club until December 2026. After that, a single fixture found across the season more than pays for the year.

Getting started takes minutes: one person signs up — whoever looks after your fixtures — and the club joins them.

Take a look: rugbymatchmaker.com/kent

2. WELCOME TO NEW SEASON FROM OUR YOUTH CHAIR

I hope the first few weekends have brought keen and enthusiastic coaches and players back to your clubs and that everyone is raring to go.

Please note and adhere to the following important 'housekeeping' items:

- **Player Registration:** All youth players must be registered on GMS. This is carried out by parents and ensures that are appropriately insured and able to participate in Kent age grade competitions. Please ensure all your players have been registered.

Even if a player was registered last season on GMS for playing out of Age Grade or clubs received approval for combining teams, these registrations will now have expired. You must re-register! New applications must be made via the online forms on the Kent Rugby website. Please do not rely on previous approvals, as this could put you in breach of Regulation 15 and may result in serious sanctions for both the club and individuals.

- **Touchline behaviour and Match Official Abuse:** Sadly, last season there were far too many instances where the behaviour of parents and coaches resulted in disciplinary action. The KCRFU will not tolerate this type of conduct.

Players deserve to play in an inclusive and positive environment and should not be subjected to parental or coaching tirades directed at them, other players or match officials. They are not playing at Twickenham, nor are they playing in a Rugby World Cup Final.

The values of Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline, and Sportsmanship are integral to our game, and I would ask everyone involved to ensure that inappropriate behaviour is called out and dealt with early to avoid escalation.

We all want our young players to enjoy rugby well into adulthood. Parents, coaches and referees are all role models and have a responsibility to ensure that the environment in which our young people play is a positive one.

- **Kent Youth Competitions:** Again, this year, we are using the Electronic Match Card (EMC) system within GMS to administer the age grade competitions. Each age group has a Competition Manager who will be your point of contact throughout the season:

See [here](#) for contact details

Provision of Referees: The Kent Society of Rugby Football Union Referees will only appoint referees to Colts games. Please do not request Society referees for other age groups.

Please ensure that your EMC is completed in good time before and after the match and that the result is confirmed accordingly. This makes a significant difference

to the administration of the competitions. Penalty points will be applied to teams that do not comply with the competition rules, including the requirements relating to EMCs.

IMPORTANT: DO NOT USE THE EMC APP. It does not interface correctly with GMS and your score will not be recorded.

- **Regulation 15 and Approvals:** Regulation 15 has been revised for this season, and clubs should ensure that those involved in age grade rugby are familiar with the changes.

All applications for playing out of age grade, festivals, tours, combining and clustering are managed initially through the online forms on the Kent Rugby website. Please do not use the RFU forms in place of the Kent process, as applications submitted in this way will be declined.

- **Playing up into the Adult game:** A further change this season concerns clubs wishing to play 17-year-old players in the adult game, where an application will also need to be made through GMS. Following discussions with the RFU, we are concerned that the GMS process alone does not provide Kent with sufficient information regarding the club members holding key roles, the club's safeguarding position and the teams involved in the application. We have therefore decided to continue using the Kent online approval process in the first instance. Once both the relevant Club Approval and Player Approval have been granted by Kent, the club will then be asked to submit the corresponding applications through GMS. Subject to the usual requirements being met, these will then be approved without the need for the club to repeat the Kent assessment process.

We appreciate that this introduces an additional step but believe it is the best way to ensure that the correct decisions are made for the right reasons and, most importantly, in the interests of the players.

I hope you all have an enjoyable and successful season, and I look forward to seeing some well-fought games when I get out and about.

Alan Erskine
Kent County Youth Chair

3. EXPRESSION OF INTEREST NOW OPEN: U18 GIRLS LSE COMPETITION 2026-27



We are delighted to invite clubs across the London & South East region to submit an Expression of Interest for the new U18 Girls LSE Competition 2026-27.

This pilot competition has been created to provide meaningful additional playing opportunities for clubs that were unsuccessful in their National Cup application, chose not to enter or are seeking a competitive programme alongside local league rugby. With fixtures aligned to National Cup dates, opportunities for home and away matches, cluster teams permitted, and a tiered format based on entries, the competition aims to bridge the gap between local and national playing opportunities.

Entry is free of charge, and we encourage interested clubs to register before the closing date of 5pm on 10 October 2026.

Any questions or issues with the form, please contact Amanda Johnston
women-girls-rugby@kent-rugby.org

[APPLY HERE](#)

4 SAFEGUARDING OUR GAME.

As the season gets underway, a reminder that safeguarding is about more than completing the necessary checks and paperwork. It is about creating a rugby environment in which everyone feels safe, respected and able to enjoy the game.

There are a few simple messages we would ask clubs, coaches, parents and volunteers to reinforce:

Respect the field of play. Spectators, parents and other unauthorised people should not enter the playing area during a match. The referee is responsible for managing the game and everyone around the pitch has a part to play in supporting our match officials and keeping players safe.

Adults must not hold tackle shields for players under 18. Clubs should ensure that coaches and volunteers understand the appropriate safeguarding requirements when delivering training to children and young people.

Equality and equity both matter. Providing the same opportunity is not always enough. Some players may need additional support or reasonable adjustments to enable them to participate fully, safely and enjoyably in rugby. Creating an inclusive environment means recognising and responding appropriately to those individual needs.

These messages all come back to the same principle: the welfare of our players must be at the heart of everything we do.



News | FROM AROUND THE COUNTY

COUNTY DOCTOR RECEIVES INTERNATIONAL AWARD

Congratulations to Mr Guy Slater, Kent Rugby's Doctor, who has received the International Meritorious Award from the American College of Surgeons for his work developing the latest Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS) course.

Guy is a Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon and Chair and Clinical Lead for ATLS UK. Alongside his medical work, he continues to support Kent Rugby, including delivering training for physiotherapists working with our representative teams.

A fantastic achievement and well-deserved recognition. Congratulations, Guy, from everyone at Kent County RFUR



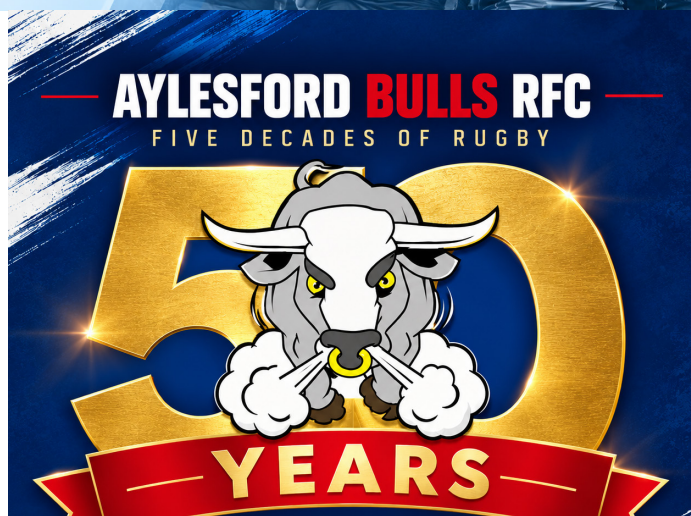
HOME-GROWN CANTERBURY PLAYER MAKES 1ST XV DEBUT

A lovely milestone at Canterbury RFC, where Stan Bull made his 1st XV debut against Oundle on Saturday 26 September.

Stan first joined Canterbury at just five years old and has progressed through the club's mini and junior sections and into senior rugby. Canterbury described his debut as a great example of the pathway available to young players within the club and paid tribute to the coaches, volunteers and teammates who have supported him along the way.

For Kent rugby, it is a great example of what the community game is all about – a youngster starting out at his local club and, many years later, pulling on the 1st XV shirt.

Congratulations Stan!



Congratulations to Aylesford Bulls RFC as the club begins its historic 50th season.

The Bulls marked the start of their landmark year this September, celebrating five decades of rugby and community. Their Senior Men's opening league fixture against Sittingbourne was the first competitive match of the anniversary season, with further celebrations planned during the year.

A fantastic milestone for one of our Kent clubs, and we wish everyone at Aylesford Bulls a very happy 50th season.

TWO CLUBS JOIN FORCES TO KEEP PLAYERS PLAYING

Old Gravesendians and Vigo have combined their second teams for the 2026/27 season after both clubs were unable to field a regular 2nd XV last season.

The newly combined side played its first competitive match on 26 September, narrowly losing 27–26 to Leigh. More importantly, the arrangement means players from both clubs have the opportunity to continue playing regular rugby. Vigo's match report says players from both clubs embraced the opportunity and describes the collaboration as something that can benefit both clubs.



COACH THE COACHES LIVE EVENTS

Learn from leading coaches.
Sharpen your practice. Make a greater impact.



Expert insights
from top coaches



Practical ideas
you can use now



Improve your coaching.
Elevate your players.



UPCOMING LIVE EVENTS

In-person evenings | Kent RFU discounted places*

12
OCT



DAI FLANAGAN

Saracens Attack Coach

- Monday 12th October 2026
- Theme: Attacking Phase Shapes
- Aylesford RFC, Hall Road, Aylesford. ME20 7DS
- 7.15pm registration | 7.30pm – 9pm
- Light refreshments available on the evening

- ★ 35% discount for first 30 Kent coaches

Code: **KENTDAIFLANAGAN26**



BOOK YOUR PLACE >

9
NOV



LOU MEADOWS

USA Eagles Women Attack & Transition Coach

- Monday 9th November 2026
- Theme: Kick Transition
- Aylesford RFC, Hall Road, Aylesford. ME20 7DS
- 7.15pm registration | 7.30pm – 9pm
- Light refreshments available on the evening

- ★ 35% discount for first 30 Kent coaches

Code: **KENTLOUMEADOWS26**



BOOK YOUR PLACE >



COSTS
£15 inc. VAT
or **£10** inc. VAT
when securing a
subsidised place



**LIGHT
REFRESHMENTS**
Available on
the evenings



**NETWORK
& LEARN**
Connect with
fellow coaches



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Take away strategies
you can apply
immediately

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and immediately relevant.*”

– Kent Coach



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