



I Newsletter | Nov 2020 |

A bi-monthly update published by the Yorkshire RFU



Welcome from Tony McNally - President of the Yorkshire Rugby Football Union

Welcome to the November edition of the YRFU newsletter.

The festive period is fast approaching and the Covid situation has still got us in its grip. Things appear to be changing hopefully for the better; national lockdown being lifted and a potential way forward with treatments on the horizon.

The RFU are still issuing their Covid bulletins and updating us with the latest developments, it is hoped the RFU will issue a detailed plan on return to play in the next week or so.

The Academy and Developing Players' Pathway managers' jobs have been filled and many congratulations to Stuart Dixon and Alex Grieve on their appointments. Work has begun on enrolling players into the Academy and the structures are in place to compete in the Academy League when we resume playing.

Hopefully, the cluster system of structured playing of games will have been agreed and be ready to be actioned when we return to playing. A large proportion of clubs have registered their views to date. As things change, we will update you via our social media platforms.

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you a special festive period and let's all hope for a better new year.

Stay safe and Strong
Tony McNally | Yorkshire RFU President

This newsletter includes: -

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Return to Rugby Roadmap: Community Game and Winter Sport Package

Following the Government's announcement on 23 November of plans for Covid-19 restrictions post the current national lockdown, Steve Grainger, the Rugby Development Director at England Rugby, outlined what this means for a return to play in the community game. You can watch Steve's update [here](#)

The headlines of the announcement are:

- Resume Stage D rugby activity of the Community Game Return to Rugby Roadmap from 2 December.
- England Rugby is optimistic on reaching agreement for adapted version of 15-a-side community game to be played in the new year.
- Detailed guidance to follow on what the tier system means to other issues including travel, opening clubhouses and use of changing rooms will follow.
- England Rugby welcome the dedicated allocation of funding for the community game.

Government announced a £300 million funding package for all sports and rugby union has received an allocation of up to £135 million. Within this total amount, the RFU has been allocated up to £44 million, Premiership clubs up to £59 million, Greene King IPA Championship clubs up to £9 million and a further £23 million has been allocated to clubs below that level.

England Rugby continued to work with Government to understand the details of the application process, the criteria under which submissions will be measured, and the composition of the independent panel and delivery mechanism. They will provide updates on this process in the coming weeks.

[Link](#) to our Return to Rugby Information Hub



#showyourshirt
watch England Rugby's video
[here](#).



**England
Rugby**

Read about the Community
Game support [here](#).

Yorkshire clubs show their support at Twickenham

Some of the Autumn international games might be being held behind closed doors, but many Yorkshire clubs have ensured that they will be in the stands at Twickenham for England's Men's and Women's games.

England Rugby has not been able to allow spectators to its series of Autumn Internationals, but they have come up with a novel way of creating some colour on the side-lines, and at the same time recognise the clubs at all levels of the game. They asked clubs to send a playing shirt to Twickenham to put on an empty seat in the stand for the matches.

"Grassroots rugby is, without doubt, the lifeblood of our game and it must be protected," said RFU President Jeff Blackett. "That is fundamental in our strategy and we continue to remind Government of that fact.

Clubs from across Yorkshire have been proud to take part and have been eagerly looking out for their shirt at Twickenham. If you'd like to hear what this means to the England teams, you can watch their video [here](#).

New structures for England Rugby' Community Game support

In September's County Newsletter, we told you that England had made around 140 people redundant and, as a result, was changing the way the community game will be supported in Yorkshire. The detail of these changes has now been shared and you read more about it [here](#).

We are hosting a series of online meetings with the team from England Rugby to discuss these changes with our clubs. We held the first meeting, with clubs from North District and we are currently putting meetings with the other Districts in the diary.

The sessions give us an opportunity to explain the new approach and to discuss in some detail what this may mean for our clubs. It also provides clubs with the chance to help shape and inform the activity that will be undertaken by the England Rugby staff.

We're pleased that we had representatives from 13 clubs on our call with North District. They were able to hear from Bill Sweeney (CEO RFU), John Lawn (RFU Head of Game Development), Barry Breakwell (Yorkshire RFU Chair), Jim McRobert (North District Chair), Toni Birch (Yorkshire Club Development Chair), and Andy Soutar (New RFU CB Relationship Manager).

We've also discussed the cluster approach to providing support in a meeting with our District chairs which was joined by John Lawn (RFU Head of Game Development),



Yorkshire Academy Update

It was great to see our Academy players back out on the pitch in October and November. We hosted three development and assessment days on the autumn half term and were able to showcase the talents of over fifty U17s and U18s. We're grateful to Woodhouse Grove School and York RI rugby club for hosting these assessment days.

Since then our Academy squad has been training on Friday evenings at Yarnbury and at Woodhouse Grove School with the new coaching group. Head Coach Tom Gilchrist (Bishop Burton College) is assisted by Joe Bedford (Woodhouse Grove School), Tom Ryder (Harrogate Grammar School) & ex-International Dan Scarbrough (Bradford Grammar School).

The group has shown lots of promise over the first few sessions and we are excited to see their progress this season.

Plans are still being developed around the Academy League playing opportunities for next year to ensure that players have the chance, if permitted, to play for club and school, alongside their Academy commitments.

A key part of any pathway structure is to make all the various opportunities link together and, with this in mind, we are looking forward to establishing strong relationships with Dave Francis (Chair of Coaching) and his coaching groups at Under 17 & 18 to ensure that as many players get the opportunity to represent the county either through the Academy or County Teams.



Read more about the Developing Players Pathway [here](#)

Developing Players Pathway (from Alex Grieve)

Firstly, it's great to be back leading on the DPP in Yorkshire, and I'm excited to see where we can take the programme, with the new opportunity that we have been given. I would like to give a brief overview of our current plans for the remainder of the 2020/21 season, however please be aware that these are subject to change, as the current landscape is ever changing, and the impact of any further updates are issued by both the government and England Rugby.

U14 Age Group - Our current plan is to run a first assessment opportunity on Sunday 21st February. At the moment, it is looking likely that this will be split into regional assessments on this date. A nomination period for this assessment will be opened in January, to run from the 11th until the 31st of the month. Please keep an eye on the website and social media for supporting information for those making nominations.

U15 Age Group - Our first planned activity is to begin sessions on Monday 4th January 2021. This will be for players who were part of the programme at the time we were brought to a halt in March. Details of the session and playing opportunity dates can be found on the website. We will also be running an assessment opportunity for this age group in the New Year. This is currently planned for Friday 2nd April and will provide players with an opportunity to join the groups as we move into their U16 year.

U16 Age Group - Unfortunately we have just lost our first planned block of activity for this age group, so we are now looking ahead to the next dates in the calendar, scheduled for February, with a further block planned for April.

We are also looking to run an assessment opportunity for players in this age group not currently on the programme, however the recent cancellation of sessions has impacted on our plans for this age group. We are currently reviewing when it will be most appropriate to run this assessment opportunity. Again, information will be pushed out via the website and social media when available"

The programme is delivered with the support of volunteer coaches and we'd like to thank them for so generously sharing their time and expertise.



More information about these proposals can be found [here](#)

Clubs can opt-in or out of their proposed clusters by filling in the following short survey [here](#) by 30 November.

Cluster Fixture Proposals published

Following the decision from the RFU Council to cancel the 20/21 League Season for Men's (Level 3 and below) and Women's (Level 2 and below) competitions, plans have been developed to instigate 'local cluster' fixtures to help facilitate a return to contact rugby match play when we are able (hopefully in the New Year). T

This proposal is based around five principles;

- Providing Clubs with structured local competitive fixtures
- Based on contact rugby (either full contact or adapted variations dependent on HM Government advice)
- Minimised travel times
- Local Clusters of up to 7 teams (the number will vary according to specific regions and on agreed local needs)
- Relaxed regulations to remove barriers to participation

The format of the game will be that agreed between the RFU and Government under return to contact rugby protocols and is likely, at least initially, to involve law adaptations. Clubs can opt-in or out of their proposed clusters by filling in the following short survey [here](#) by 30 November. Please be aware that clubs with multiple teams in the pyramid will need to fill out a response for each team.

If you have any queries or questions about the proposals, please contact David Clarke, David Thompson or Mike Smith.

Financial Annual General Meeting update

The Financial Annual General meeting for the County takes place on 7 December. In response to the current challenging circumstances, the Committee has taken the decision to hold the meeting online rather than requiring delegates to attend in person.

The key agenda items at the meeting will be the Treasurer's report. You can read all of the Financial AGM papers on our [website](#).

We also publish the minutes for our bi-monthly Committee meetings on our website. You can read them [here](#).

Read AGM the Financial papers [here](#)





Additional support for clubs

Following discussions with club representatives, we recognised the need to establish a clearer picture of the current status of clubs and what help and support they may need from us. We published a questionnaire in October for all clubs to help us to better understand what support was required during the Covid Pandemic.

All clubs received the survey and we are very grateful to the 153 people who took the time to reply. You prioritised six areas where you needed support and here's a summary of the actions we've taken to respond to these.

- Support with keeping players engaged – we organised a well-attended webinar with Magic Academy on 4 November. Thank you to everyone who participated.
- Support engaging with our volunteers – Club Matters are hosting a webinar for us on 8 December. You can register for it at cb-honsec.yorks@rfu.com.
- Concerns regarding members and players mental health – we worked with MIND and the Samaritans to put support in place and provided every club with posters to showcase this service. We also highlighted this through our online channels.
- Concerns regarding finances – we have provided details of all available funding both internally and externally and offered support through the Immediate Support Fund.
- Support with Covid Guidance – as soon as this information is available it is updated on our website and shared through our online channels.
- Support with Rugby Safe – new guidance is being developed and will be published soon.

A number of clubs had specific issues, and these have been addressed directly with them. Please do get in touch with us if there are any other areas where you need help and support.



Reminder about the Immediate Support Fund

The Immediate Support Fund has been created by the RFU and the Yorkshire RFU to provide rugby union clubs in Yorkshire with financial support to deal with current, short-term cashflow issues. The aim of the fund is to support the most vulnerable clubs in the region.

Initial applications should relate to one in-month cashflow issue. Further applications can be made to the fund should support still be required in subsequent months.

Information about making a request from Fund can be found [here](#)

We're trying to help as many clubs as possible through this process and you can find out more information about the Fund and how to apply [here](#)

Task and Finish Group- Diversity and Inclusion Guidance for CBs and Clubs

In November 2019 the RFU Council approved a number of outline recommendations around improving diversity and inclusion with the leadership and governance structure of the game and the RFU. The action plan was endorsed by the Council in April 2020 and it contains 10 recommendations.

Recommendation 9 relates to developing guidance for CBs and Clubs to support inclusive practices and to showcase best practise, including a best practice recruitment toolkit to attract a diverse range of candidates for each appointment and expanding the volunteer pool.

The responsibility for this task was given to the CB and Club Development Committee with support from RFU officers. The chair Roger Clarke, Kent RFU, has established a task and finish group to oversee the development of the required materials and to work in collaboration with all those involved.

Over the next few months the task and finish group will meet and develop the guidance. The group has the following objectives.

- Develop guidance for CB's and Clubs to support inclusive practices
- Gather and share best practice.
- Best practice recruitment tool kit to attract a diverse range of candidates for each appointment.

This is a great opportunity for clubs in Yorkshire to showcase and also receive and develop support around diversity and inclusion.

If you would like more information, contact the chair of the task group, Sally Burns (Chair of Community, Yorkshire) on 07881512046 and sallyburns678@gmail.com





You can view the Yorkshire Marketplace [here](#)

Introducing the Yorkshire Marketplace

We've created a new section on our website called the Yorkshire Marketplace. This provides a space for companies to offer services to clubs and everyone involved in the game in Yorkshire. If you'd like to us feature your products in our Marketplace, please send details to the County Office at cb-honsec.yorks@rfu.com. We need a short description of your products, some contact details and an image.

The following three companies are currently featured in our Yorkshire Marketplace.

- Rugby Union Coaching Services - [link](#)
- Gilbert Rugby – Gilbert are giving Yorkshire clubs a discount on purchased- [link](#)
- SNAP Sponsorship – SNAP help clubs secure sponsorship deals - [link](#)



Making sure our Honours records are complete

It has recently come to our attention that the record of honours for playing for Yorkshire RFU may not be complete. We know it's our responsibility to ensure that those who have represented the County are recognised and remembered and we need your help to make sure this happens.

Steve Corns, the County's Honorary Secretary, has set himself the task of researching Yorkshire records and other related documentation to make the record as comprehensive and up to date as possible. Hayley Lister is also kindly supporting us by pulling together the information about the Women's Teams.

One past player from the '70's and '80's vaguely remembers a small booklet, possibly produced by the County, listing the names of players and the opposition they had appeared against. We're also know that there is information on the YRFU Website but would like to add to this record.

We do have some YRFU Handbooks in the Office but would be more than grateful if anyone could produce any historical information that could help our search.

We're looking for records of Senior Men's and Senior Women's Teams that date back further than the U20's (we're grateful to Keith Dyas for his excellent record keeping for this group). If you are able to help, please contact Steve directly or through Lindsey in the office who has generously offered her assistance. Can you please send anything you have to the County Office at cb-honsec.yorks@rfu.com



You can read their update report [here](#)

RFU Council – Yorkshire representatives report

Yorkshire RFU has two representatives, Ted Atkinson and Jim Chapman, on the RFU council. They are elected by our clubs to represent our views.

Ted and Jim also both sit on sub-committees which report to the RFU's Community Game Board; Ted is on the Nominations, Age Grade and Education and Player Development Sub-Committees and Jim is Chair of the Competitions Development Sub-Committee. Jim also represents the RFU on the Board of the England Colleges RFU.

Ted and Jim regularly publish a comprehensive update of their work. Both have focussed on the financial impact of the virus and on creating appropriate and timely advice to support the Return to Rugby Roadmap. You can read their update report [here](#).



England Rugby training and development webinars

Over the past few months, England Rugby has created several exceptional training and development webinars covering club, referee, and coach development.

All these webinars are available on demand from the England Rugby website and you can access them using the following links: -

[Club webinars](#)

[Referee webinars](#)

[Coach webinars](#)

This newsletter is published every two months by the Yorkshire RFU. The next edition will be January 2021. If there's anything you would like to share with the Yorkshire rugby community through this update, please email yfumarketing@gmail.com.

Our values

Teamwork | Respect | Enjoyment | Discipline | Sportsmanship