



A bi-monthly update published by the Yorkshire RFU

# | Newsletter | Jan 2021 |

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



Welcome to our latest Newsletter the first of a new year and decade

We hope you enjoyed the festive period and New Year celebrations in spite of restrictions that were in place. One positive at the end of 2020 was that a small number of teams in Yorkshire actually played a game of Rugby against opposition.

But as we are all fully aware, we are back in full lockdown and we have no immediate prospect of playing or Training until March or April this year, depending how we go on with the worsening situation with the current outbreak. We will have to wait for RFU guidance on a planned return back to playing.

The Championship are returning to playing in their cup competition, along with an altered league structure starting in March. Hopefully, depending on tier restrictions, we may be able to go and watch some competitive rugby at Castle Park, home of the Doncaster Knights.

Over the coming months, we are planning for the return of playing in whatever guise. We may be allowed to play full contact or an adapted version of the game, in an extended season or starting again in September.

There is advice and information in this newsletter and in other communications from the Yorkshire RFU on the financial assistance that is available to clubs to assist with the impact.

There is a massive challenge ahead of us to re-invigorate players, officials, volunteers and supporters to get us back up and running. I am sure this will be met head on with true Yorkshire spirit and determination.

Please stay safe and hopefully we can meet up in the near future

Yours in Sport  
Tony McNally | Yorkshire RFU President

### ***In this edition of the newsletter***

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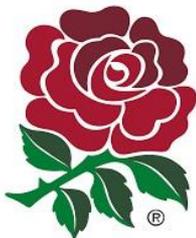
## **Lockdown support and advice and funding sources**

We were all really disappointed by the news that the community game is suspended as part of the current national lockdown. In terms of our Community Game Return to Rugby Roadmap that means we are back at Stage A.

To support all of our clubs during this very challenging period, England Rugby has created really helpful lockdown support materials covering areas like facilities pitch maintenance, club governance and business, revenue generation, keeping players active and connected communicating with members and engaging volunteers and mental health support. You can find all the materials [here](#)

They have also collected together information about funding routes that may be available to clubs. This includes the RFU Grant Finder Tool, RFU Loans, Sport England grants, Government support, Government Business Support Grants and the Additional Restrictions Grant. You can find the information [here](#)

Don't forget we also have our Immediate Support Fund. Find out how to apply [here](#)



**England  
Rugby**

Find lockdown support materials [here](#) and information about sources of funding [here](#)



### Cluster Fixtures & Friendly Matches

The proposed local cluster fixtures for Levels 5 and below were published in November, but as a result of Covid-19 and the introduction of the tier system amendments were necessary. The rapid spread of Covid-19 then caused rugby at all levels to be suspended.

England Rugby is in close contact with the Government and will issue new guidelines to the community game when the situation changes. They are considering a number of options.

The Yorkshire RFU has been asked to organise friendly fixtures when the time is right, but clubs may wish to contact their local teams to arrange fixtures.

The same will apply to Lower XV matches when the Government allows rugby to be played and should matches be arranged. The format of any games played will be that agreed between England Rugby and the Government.

Participation in games is a choice for individuals and for each club. The safety and well-being of players, match officials, volunteers, supporters and their families is our first consideration.

Peter Morgan | Chairman | Yorkshire Competitions

### Thank you to Prof Kester for your support

We'd like to thank Prof Ralph C Kester BEM MD CHM FRSC(Eng) for his many years of service to the Yorkshire RFU.

Prof Kester is a world-renowned vascular surgeon and alongside this, we are privileged to have benefitted from the invaluable support he has given to rugby in our region. He retired from his role as Honorary-Surgeon at the end of last year.

It was wonderful to see the response to the news of his retirement on our social media channels, but perhaps not surprising when you reflect on the number of clubs and teams he has supported and the many roles he has held within the county.

Prof Kester has been kind enough to document and share some of memories and his views on the best teams and best players he has seen. You can find out more about Prof Kester and read his thoughts [here](#). We do hope you'll enjoy them.

Thank you again Ralph, we're honoured to know you!

### Working with England Rugby's community teams

The England Rugby team in our region has changed and we have some great support available.

Our three new Club Developers are in the process of contacting each individual club to introduce themselves and discuss the new way of working going forward. They will also be attending our district meetings and, along with the Yorkshire Committee, use the information they collect to pull together a plan of support.

The Club Developers will host online cluster groups, either geographical or subject specific, bringing in specialists and best practice to help you with your issue and to help develop solutions. The clusters may be a one-off discussion group or could extend over a period of time, for example, the setting up of a women's team or diversifying revenue streams.

The first point of call for all club queries should be to check out the RFU website for information and answers to frequently asked questions [Club Support Centre \(englandrugby.com\)](#). If you can't find the answer then send an email to [clubsupport@rfu.com](mailto:clubsupport@rfu.com). The support centre will either be able answer your query directly or put you in contact with someone who can.

Remember the RFU staff and the Yorkshire RFU are here to help!

One the next page are pictures and contact details of each of our Club Developers, along with the areas they will be covering.



Read about Prof Kester [here](#)





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You can read all about it [here](#)

### The Bumbles take the field

A return to full contact rugby after months of lockdown would be reason enough to cheer, but Covid-19 and lockdown has had a disproportionate impact on many Mixed Ability rugby participants. Many of the Bumbles players have had to plot a course between greater risk of ill health if they catch Covid-19 and the significant harms of isolation including the loss of social capital, loss of physical fitness and reduced mental wellbeing. The fact that they navigated this is a great credit to the players and their support networks.

So, it was with great anticipation and excitement that that Bumbles team shaped up against Keighley just before Christmas. Described as an epic encounter, the Bumbles team ended the day as winners. This followed a curtain-raiser in which players in the developing women's mixed-ability team showcased their skills.

Really though, there were no losers in this epic collision. Keighley were brilliant hosts and the superb RFU artificial grass pitch under floodlights enabled both sides to play first class rugby. In the end, of course, as it is every weekend up and down the country, rugby was and is the winner.

Thanks to players, coaches, match officials for putting smiles on so many faces. You can read all about it [here](#)

### Yorkshire Rugby Academy

Firstly, we hope that everybody is staying safe and well in these continuing uncertain times. Here at the Academy, we have been extremely fortunate that we have been given exemption to carry on with rugby as part of the elite pathway.

Whilst this is tremendous news for the staff and players involved, we are constantly mindful that this also brings high levels of responsibility. Not only to those immediately involved but also their wider networks. As such we are very stringent around what each individual must do to ensure we remain as safe as we possibly can be. To that end, we thank all the players and parents for fully co-operating with these protocols on a weekly basis.

We would love nothing more than to have parents on the side-lines supporting their child but, whilst this is not possible, we cannot overstate how appreciative we are of their continued support to get the boys to sessions.

Over the past few months we have worked hard on building relationships with key partners to support the players with off field activities and the three key relationships so far are with Globalbridge, Yorkshire Sports Medicine and Hardgear sportswear. We will be releasing full details of how each of these partnerships will benefit the Academy and the players over the coming weeks, but wanted to take this opportunity to say a massive "Thank You" to each of them for their support.

Whilst we continue to train and prepare the group for the upcoming Academy League games later in the year, we want everyone, from clubs, schools to be proud of the part they have played in getting the boys to where they are now. We will do our utmost to represent the County with pride in the games, however many and under what constraints they may be.

Stuart Dixon | Programme Lead | Yorkshire Rugby Academy





### Developing Player Programme

As part of the current lockdown, the RFU has indicated that the Developing Player Programme (DPP) falls under the community game and not the elite pathway. As a result, the DPP activity in Yorkshire is suspended until further notice.

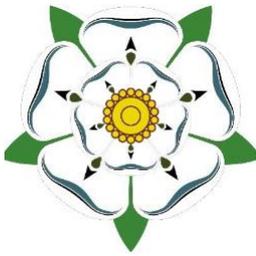
This applies to all our regular sessions for players currently on the programme, and also to planned nomination and assessment opportunities.

At the moment it is unclear when we will be able to resume the programme, however we are working with all partners to plan a way forward and will issue updates as soon as we have them.

Whilst it is understandably frustrating that development opportunities for players across Yorkshire have been further delayed, we will do all we can to provide the best opportunities for players moving forwards, when the time is right given the current circumstances.

In the meantime, thank you again for the support and positivity you have shown us over the past few months, and we'll look forward to better times ahead and being able to get up and running again when possible. If you have any questions at this stage, then please feel free to email me.

Alex Grieve | Programme Lead | Developing Player Programme



### Yorkshire's Centre of Excellence

As part of the current lockdown, the RFU has indicated that the Satellite Centre of Excellence also falls under the community game and as such Centre of Excellence activity in Yorkshire is suspended until further notice.

As with the Developing Player Programme, this applies to all our regular sessions for players currently on the programme, and also to planned nomination and assessment opportunities.

We're really disappointed that the development opportunities for players across Yorkshire have been further delayed, and please be assured that we're doing everything we can to secure new opportunities for our incredible players once it is safe again to do so.

In the meantime, we miss you and we're looking forward to better times, better news and getting our boots back on.

Dawn Rathmell | Rugby Development Chair  
Luke Pendlebury | Satellite Lead Coach



### Rugby clubs supporting the community

We're really proud to be able to share some of the incredible ways in which our clubs are going above and beyond to support their players and volunteers and their communities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We have to admit, we did a ring round because we were concerned that our clubs may be the ones in need of support. We're pleased to report that, on the whole, our clubs are in good shape and rather than needing help, they are taking the lead. Here's some examples of what our clubs are doing: -

- North Ribblesdale has given their car park to the NHS and it's now serving the community as Covid-19 test centre. Whitby and Wharfedale are also keen to support the NHS and have offered their clubhouses as vaccination centres.
- Nestle Rowntree are housing a foodbank. They've been encouraging donations, and as a result have been able to support the families most in need in their community.
- The Bumble Bees have been able to grow their numbers as they've identified seven new players who'll really benefit from the opportunity to exercise and play the Bumble-Bee way.
- The Sheffield Vulcans are growing and are hoping to adopt the Sheffield Tigers pitch as they are also growing, securing a new pitch and increasing their minis and youth numbers.
- Ossett are also hoping to secure a new home and are working in partnership with local cricket and football clubs to achieve this.
- Wortley are growing. Their minis and juniors section is particularly popular.

So, we'd like to see thank you to everyone of our volunteers. These are the most challenging of times and we're really proud of what you're achieving for your clubs and your communities.



### Call for Volunteers to get involved with management of the County and Districts

Volunteers are our greatest asset in Yorkshire, and we are so lucky to have so many dedicated people who want to support and develop our local game. There are lots of different roles in the County and Districts and we are keen to develop our progression pathway and succession planning.

We are really keen to recruit a wide range of skills and experiences for different roles, and on top of this we want our volunteer leadership base to be as diverse as possible. So, we are particularly keen to recruit from groups who are underrepresented in our structures at the moment.

If you think you could offer more to your County or District, and you would like to progress on your volunteer journey, please get in touch.

Sally Burns | Chair of nominations  
[Sally.burns678@gmail.com](mailto:Sally.burns678@gmail.com) | 07881512046



### Has your club got a RugbySafe Lead?

The RugbySafe Lead - one of the Golden Roles. It was previously known as the Medical Officer, but the role has expanded and is now a key role for player welfare across adult and age grade rugby.

You can read more about the Club RugbySafe role [here](#)

We are hoping that by the start of the 2021/2022 season all Yorkshire clubs will have filled this volunteer role, and as a constituency body, we can set up forums, webinars, training and (fingers crossed) face to face meetings throughout the districts to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all our players, at whatever level and any age.

This is very different to the role of the Safeguarding Officer, and ideally, we would really hope to have different people undertaking the RugbySafe Lead and the Safeguarding Officer roles. However, we also understand that it can be challenging to fill all these different roles.

You can read more about the Club RugbySafe role [here](#) and our RugbySafe team would be happy to help if anybody has any queries or just wants to know a bit more about RugbySafe generally. You can contact them at [rugbysafe@yorkshirerfu.co.uk](mailto:rugbysafe@yorkshirerfu.co.uk)

One final thing, when we can restart rugby activities again, please remember that Clubs should submit notification of all positive tests with in a club (including retrospective cases). This information is to enable the RFU to monitor the number of confirmed positive COVID-19 test occurring in Clubs and ensure the Club has the appropriate support. To do this, please complete the Positive Test Notification form, this link is [here](#).

Take care, look after yourself and your loved ones, and I hope we can meet up on the touchline or in the Clubhouse in the not too distant future

Kate Metcalfe | Yorkshire RFU Rugby Safe

### 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.

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](#)

Find out how to apply [here](#)



Find out about the role of an RFU council member [here](#)

Sign-up for the England Rugby webinar [here](#)

You can read the representatives update report [here](#)

### Informal notice of election to RFU Council Members

The member clubs and referee societies of the RFU are represented on the RFU Council. Since 2018 Council Members have been elected for a term of three years up to an aggregate of a maximum of nine years.

We are now at the start of our process to elect a new representative. Council members have two principle roles:

- To represent the views of their constituents and to be a conduit of information from the CB and clubs to the RFU and vice versa, and
- To make certain decisions on behalf of the RFU, primarily to provide monitoring and oversight of the Board on behalf of the members, and to put in place regulations and policies relating to the game. When making decisions, to act in the best interests of the RFU and its members as a whole.

The process for elections is set out in guidance from the RFU and formal notice will be provided to all clubs in February, with the elections taking place in March. The aim of this article is to give advance notice so that potential candidates have sufficient time to consider whether or not they would like to stand.

It is important that the RFU Council has a diverse range of talent available to it. It is also important that the RFU Council is representative of the game as a whole, and the wider rugby community, and that the candidates for Yorkshire reflect the game in the County. The Constituency Body can also nominate candidates for these roles, so the Yorkshire RFU Nominations Committee has recently met to consider this. If you'd like to read about the role of an RFU council member, you can find some information [here](#).

Further guidance on this process will be provided shortly to all clubs and will be available on the County Website, England Rugby is also hosting a webinar about the role on 28 January which you can join [here](#).

The Yorkshire RFU's current representatives are Ted Atkinson and Jim Chapman and they regularly publish a comprehensive update of their work. You can read their update report [here](#).



Link to the Yorkshire Marketplace [here](#)

### Offers in 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](mailto:cb-honsec.yorks@rfu.com). We need a short description of your products, some contact details and an image.

We're pleased to have added a new partner to our marketplace. **Veo** provide a complete and affordable solution for rugby clubs to record and analyse their matches without the need for a camera operator. As a result of our partnership with Veo, you can benefit from a £100 discount on the price of a the camera. You can find out more about this [here](#).

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](#)



**England  
Rugby**

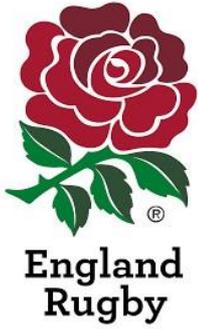
Watch a short video about the programme [here](#)

### Mitsubishi Volunteer Development Programme

The Mitsubishi Motors Rugby Leadership Network is an exciting and unique opportunity to acquire valuable skills and network with other rugby leaders. To ensure our clubs are fit for the future and self-sustaining, we are looking for aspiring rugby leaders who can take their club to the next level. We are looking for rugby leaders who:

- Don't want to stand still and watch from the side-lines
- Want to create sustainable clubs that are fit for the future
- Have the enthusiasm and openness for learning and supporting others to do the same

As part of the programme, you will also attend a special England Rugby hosted event which will provide an opportunity to share your experiences. The network is open to rugby leaders over 18 years old volunteering with a rugby club or constituency body. **Applications close on 8 February** and you will be notified by 26 February if you have been successful. You can find out more information [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 March 2021. If there's anything you would like to share with the Yorkshire rugby community through this update, please email [yorkshirerfumarketing@gmail.com](mailto:yorkshirerfumarketing@gmail.com).

Our values

**Teamwork | Respect | Enjoyment | Discipline | Sportsmanship**

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