



# Newsletter | September 2021

A bi-monthly update published by the Yorkshire RFU

## Welcome from Dave Hunter - President of the Yorkshire Rugby Football Union



It is my pleasure, as the county president, to welcome you in the first newsletter of the 2021/22 season.

Over the extraordinary past eighteen months clubs, players, volunteers and supporters have faced unprecedented challenges; not least of which has been the loss of loved ones, friends and colleagues; but finally we are seeing the return of rugby to our pitches and people into our clubhouses.

Many clubs have been able to access funding from a variety of sources and some have used this to create an enhanced experience within their club. Within this newsletter are details of some of the national and county-led initiatives aimed at continuing this enhancement. I hope you are able to support and participate in these.

On a personal note, I am intending to complete the task I set myself as County Chairman and visit all of our member clubs. I hope to see many of you on my travels. Any club desiring Presidential presence at the official opening of a new or improved facility or celebration of an important anniversary need only contact the County Office on 01132524300 or via [cb-honsec-yorks@rfu.com](mailto:cb-honsec-yorks@rfu.com) and I will be happy to attend if available.

We are a great sport, and we are not teetering on the edge of survival; with the support of current, and future, members we will diversify and grow.

Yours in rugby

Dave Hunter | **President Yorkshire RFU 2021/22**

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## Pitch-up for Rugby – 4-12 September



To celebrate rugby being back on the menu, clubs across our region hosted Pitch Up for Rugby celebrations.

It was a long 16-months, but it's been great to see the return to full contact rugby. Pitch Up For Rugby is about celebrating being together again. There's no rush for every one of us to be back to the top of our game – we've had a long break from rugby. We're so pleased that so many people have come down to support their local club as we all get back on our feet. Many clubs are continuing to offer a range of non-contact and modified contact rugby to suit all tastes.

Rugby to suit all tastes are available and all ages are welcome, with sessions scheduled across the weekend for each age group.

Remember, when you are out and about watching rugby don't forget to post some pictures on Twitter and Instagram, tag us in [@yorkshire-rfu](https://twitter.com/yorkshire-rfu) and [#WatchingYorkshireRugby](https://twitter.com/WatchingYorkshireRugby)

## Electronic match programmes

Huddersfield YM have developed and implemented electronic programmes, which they envisage will save them over £1000 per season. It has been very well received by spectators at the first game where it was trialed, and they'll continue to monitor the success of it during the season.

And they are not the only ones. We've also seen Ilkley RUFC and Otley implement this approach. When Ilkley posted it on Twitter, they shared some very good advice – if it doesn't work, ask you kids!

[See Ilkley's electronic matchday programme here.](#)

[See Otley's electronic matchday programme here](#)



Charlie Gill from Huddersfield YM pictured



You can read England Rugby's guidance for the 2021-22 season [here](#)

### Age grade rugby – changes for the 2021-22 season

We're all really pleased to see our age grade players back on the pitch. It's been incredible to see so many boys and girls back on the pitch and we've grateful to every parent, coach, referee and volunteer who has helped to get them all back on the pitch.

You'll be aware that some modifications have been made to the regulations for the age grade game for this season. Faced with the challenges and impact of Covid-19, the aim of modified guidance is to enable as many options as we can for players to return to rugby, while ensuring their safety remains top priority. It is critical for everyone involved in the age grade game to apply a player welfare and safety lens at all times.

If you're involved in the age grade game, you will be aware of the guidance but we thought it was worth sharing it again. Now you're putting it all into practice, it's worth another read.

[Read about England Rugby's Age Grade changes here](#)

Can we also remind all clubs that 17 year olds are NOT allowed to play adult rugby until 1st January 2022. We have heard that some clubs are not complying with this safety-led requirement. Given the importance of safety to our game, we may take disciplinary action against any club that is not complying with this requirement.

From that date, clubs will still need to seek agreement if they would like a younger player to play adult rugby. Please contact Dawn Rathmell at [Rugbydevelopmentchair@yorkshirerfu.co.uk](mailto:Rugbydevelopmentchair@yorkshirerfu.co.uk) if you want to get a player approved.

Once this form has been approved and logged - clubs must then register individual players to play adult rugby. You can submit the forms for individual players to us from November 2021 and once approved the player can play adult rugby from 1st January 2022.

[You can read the process and get the approval form here](#)

### Please support the Community Rugby Injury Surveillance Project (CRISP)



The Community Rugby Injury Surveillance Project (CRISP) team is currently inviting men's (levels 3-9) and women's club first teams to register to take part for season 2021-22. We mentioned this in the last newsletter and wanted to ask you again to take part if you can,

The project is managed by a team at the University of Bath and is funded by the RFU as part of the RugbySafe research programme to understand the injury profile of English community rugby. The Project team have now been collecting injury information for 11 seasons alongside projects in Premiership, Championship and University rugby.

[You can read previous season CRISP reports here](#)

#### How to register your club

This project is open to both men's and women's first teams. To nominate either or both teams or for any further information either,

[Contact the CRISP Team by email or](#)

[Contact the CRISP Team by completing the registration form](#)

### The Rugby Leaders Network

The Rugby Leaders Network provides the opportunity for rugby leaders to connect, exchange ideas and collectively develop clubs that are fit for the future. We are looking for aspiring rugby leaders who can take their club to the next level. The programme includes leadership develop modules, virtual networking sessions, webinars and virtual workshops.

England Rugby 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

For further information on the programme click here.

**Applications close 10th October and you will be notified by 22nd October** if you have been successful. If you require any further details, please contact [clubsupport@rfu.com](mailto:clubsupport@rfu.com).



For further information on the programme click here.



## The Yorkshire Rugby Academy

As the season has kickstarted with (finally) some games for our players at both club and school, it is time to reflect on pre-season and look ahead to an exciting autumn and winter in the academy.

The Academy Pre-season commenced on July 16th with over 80 boys engaging in either one or two sessions per week over a six-week period. We then had playing opportunities for both Under 17 and 18 age groups, firstly at Malvern College, then a training day at Sale.

After these events we trimmed the squad down to 38 boys with an even split of Under 17 & 18 players. This is a great step forward to allow us more time to work with the younger players over a two-year period both on and off pitch. The academy staff have committed to watching the Under 18 players released in their club & school environments ahead of another assessment opportunity in October. The Under 17 boys will continue to train in the three DPP centres on a Monday evening until their playing event, again in October.

After these events, we will select the final working Academy League Squad and support the County Under 18 Coaching team in selecting their group to play in the three county festivals later in the year.

The biggest positive for the academy this season is our partnership with **York St John's University**, in return for being our permanent base on a Monday evening with access to top class facilities, we are providing their students with opportunities to practically apply their learning across coaching, sports rehab, and strength & conditioning. We have been very impressed by the facilities so far, and it is paying dividends with six students already supporting our pre-season alongside the academy staff.

On the staffing front, there have been one or two changes after the end of last season. Kristian Sharples has become our full time Head of Athletic Development to support players develop their robustness to cope with the extra demands of academy rugby on top of existing commitments. Tom Gilchrist has formally been appointed as Academy Head Coach, a role which he will fulfil alongside his day job as Head Coach of the Bishop Burton ACE Rugby programme.

Unfortunately, we have lost the services, at least on a regular basis, of Joe Bedford, Tom Ryder, and Dan Scarborough who have all either returned to club coaching or, due to work commitments, cannot continue on a weekly basis. We cannot thank them enough for their time and dedication last season to ensure the programme returned and provided a quality environment for young players across the County. In their places, I will support Tom on the week to week coaching, with guest coaches coming in on an ad-hoc basis to provide specific coaching either on a positional need or other game skills, such as kicking.

The next few weeks will focus on developing the players' individual skills and allow them to focus on getting back into their club and school games, whilst providing some off field education sessions to both players and parents about various topics.

I look forward to updating everyone in the next quarter about how things are progressing but, in the meantime, I look forward to being at some more live games and enjoying watching the boys explore their skills and enjoy being back on the pitch with their mates.

**All the best for the season ahead**

**Stuart Dixon | Programme Lead | Yorkshire Rugby Academy**

## Adult Player Affiliation – Pilot 2021/22 season

Firstly, thank you to all our clubs for the work you have put in during the first few weeks of the season with the Age Grade affiliation.

As you are aware the Yorkshire RUFU, along with three other constituency bodies, is part of a project to affiliate all our senior players (men & women). This is like the age grade process and the aim is to give players greater control of their playing/data record and more involvement. This should also increase engagement opportunities for clubs, constituency bodies and England Rugby, which in turn should support player retention and transition and provide better data for decision-makers.

So far the following clubs have come forward to be part of the pilot :-

Acklam, Baildon, Bramley Phoenix, Driffield, Doncaster, West Leeds, Redcar, Ripon, Bumbles, Old Rishworthians, Huddersfield Ladies, Malton & Norton, Wharfedale, Sandal and Harrogate Pythons.

If your clubs would like to know more or would like to take part, please get in touch with **Toni Birch**. Toni is our Chair of Club Development at the Yorkshire RFU.

We will keep you informed of progress throughout the season and provide support with the process – this will include a number of help-videos which will be available shortly.

**Toni Birch | Chair of Club Development**





Fixtures for our Merit Leagues and Merit Tables can be seen on [the Yorkshire Rugby website](http://theYorkshireRugby.com)

### Competitions' update

The first Yorkshire Shield match was played on Friday August 27th under the Heath floodlights. The game between the two promoted teams from Yorkshire 1 two seasons ago, Old Brodleians and Heath, was keenly contested with Old Brodleians scoring the winning try 5 minutes from the end of the game. They will play the winners of Cleckheaton v Pocklington (this is due to be played on 9 October) when the Silver Trophy and Vase fixtures will be played.

The fixtures for the 5 Merit Leagues and 4 Merit Tables have been uploaded to GMS and [the Yorkshire Rugby website](http://theYorkshireRugby.com). The weekly results are maintained by Snowdon Sports who are well known to us. Frazer Snowdon may be contacting clubs on a regular basis, so please ensure that the Merit League/Table results are sent in using [yfrresults@btinternet.com](mailto:yfrresults@btinternet.com) as soon as possible after the completion of matches.

Some clubs are finding it difficult to select teams with a front row and COVID has caused the postponement of two league matches in Yorkshire 2 and 3. We anticipate that the season will be very difficult and COVID will feature heavily in matches being postponed.

We have a new initiative called Project Touchstone which will enable clubs to use the Electronic Match Card for Lower XV's matches, and we will notify you when this will start.

**Peter Morgan | Chairman Yorkshire Competitions**

### Become a referee – we need more referees in Yorkshire

Our referee societies work hard to ensure every club receives a referee each week to support their games, but we currently have a shortfall and are looking for more people to come forward. There are many great reasons for becoming a rugby referee:

- You stay involved with the game you love, the friendships and the fun
- You feel good knowing that you're giving something back
- You stay fit – mentally and physically
- You develop yourself personally and professional
- You inspire the next generation of players.

Whether you are a retired player, injured player or someone who would like to put something back into the game you will be more than welcome. The amount of time you spend refereeing depends on your availability and ability to travel.

Our societies are also there to support you if you aspire to become the next Wayne Barnes or Sara Cox. Please contact Yorkshire Referees in the first instance to register your interest.

[Contact Yorkshire Referees by email here](#)

The RFU offer the England Rugby Refereeing Award as an entry level qualification to officiating the fifteen-a-side game. It is not a requirement to have completed this qualification before becoming an active referee or joining a Referees' Society, however it provides an excellent grounding for new officials.

[You can search for upcoming courses on the England Rugby website here.](#)

Even if you only intend to referee to facilitate games at your club you can still be a member of your local Society. They are there to provide training and development for all those refereeing in the local community game.

[You can find out more at the RFU's Keep Your Boots On site which you can access here](#)

### Mental Health and Wellbeing support

Transitioning from lockdown can take its toll on people's mental health, with anxiety levels rising and many feeling upset by the changes. Please check in with your members and team mates to make sure they are ok and that everyone knows about support available.

Further information on the networks who can help can be found on England Rugby's [Mental Health and Wellbeing page](#)



[You can search for upcoming courses on the England Rugby website here.](#)







### Centre of Excellence – Developing Girls' Rugby in Yorkshire

The Yorkshire Centre of Excellence has made a busy start to the new season. With over 60 U18 girls attending their assessment day in July, the current squad stands at 31 players. As a coaching team we are pleased to see such a wide range of schools represented for the inaugural season and hope to see even more schools and clubs represented across the seasons to come. The coaching team and county are very pleased with the start the players have made and are looking forward to future playing and training opportunities against other Centre of Excellences from across the country.

18 schools and 10 clubs currently represent the Centre of Excellence with Selby, Old Crossleyans, Sandal, West Park Leeds, Cleckheaton, Castleford, Old Brodleians, Ripon, Hull Ionians and Scarborough all having players represent their respected clubs.

It is our mission this year to provide a top class product for our aspiring young players and I would like to extend my thanks to those that are helping support and allow this to happen.

Ossett RUFC, Wetherby RUFC, Sheffield RUFC and York RUFC have all provided their facilities during the week to allow us to train throughout the season, whilst Bishop Burton College will be our base on a Saturday morning to provide the players with classroom learning, strength and conditioning facilities, outdoor pitches and physio support. A big thank you to all our Yorkshire clubs and Bishop Burton College in supporting the programme for the 2021-22 season.

The Centre of Excellence are working very hard behind the scenes with sponsorship opportunities to support our players and if you wish to support the programme in any way please get in touch via email on [coe@yorkshirerfu.co.uk](mailto:coe@yorkshirerfu.co.uk).

I look forward to writing once again to update on the hard work that everyone is putting into the programme.

**Luke Pendlebury | Yorkshire Centre of Excellence Lead**



### The Developing Player Programme

It's been a busy summer of activity for DPP and it's been fantastic to be able to run sessions through June, July and August and help to make up for some of the lost time of the last 18 months. The players who have been involved in the sessions have responded well to the return to activity, and it's been great to see so many new faces attending sessions and moving through to U16 and U17 DPP this season.

A huge thanks must go to all those who have supported the sessions in what has been a busy programme of activity. The parents who have driven the boys to sessions on a weekly basis and across Yorkshire for playing opportunities, the coaches and medical staff who have enabled us to run the sessions, and finally the venues, who were so kind as to host us for a number of weeks over the summer

The venues are Roundhegians RUFC and Prince Henry's Grammar School for our Central groups, Bishop Burton College and Pocklington School for our East groups, Ripon RUFC and Ripon Grammar School in the North, Barnsley RUFC and Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School for the South groups, Keighley RUFC and Woodhouse Grove School in the West, and finally Wetherby RUFC, who have hosted two playing opportunities for the programme.

With the summer activity now done and dusted, it's time to look forward to what the 2021/22 season will bring for the various DPP age groups. With so much to catch up on across all the age groups, we will be implementing a phased return to activity, and you can read the detail on our website. Further detail will be added in due course where necessary.

[Read our DPP September 2021 update here](#)

**Alex Grieves | Programme Lead | Developing Player Programme**



**England  
Rugby**

[You can access the expression of interest form here](#)

### England Rugby is recruiting new tutors to deliver Safeguarding training courses.

Everyone shares the responsibility for safeguarding and creating safe environments in rugby union whether as a parent, coach, spectator or club official.

England Rugby is committed to ensuring staff and volunteers have appropriate safeguarding training. In addition to an online safeguarding awareness course, England Rugby regularly delivers 'Play it Safe' safeguarding courses countrywide. Play it Safe is a three-hour face to face course for any volunteer or coach working with or who has responsibility for children within rugby.

England Rugby is seeking to grow its pool of Play it Safe tutors, looking for individuals who have experience in safeguarding tutoring (formal or informal) and a robust understanding of rugby union and/or another sport. The individual would need to demonstrate a commitment to staying updated with latest safeguarding policies and a clear understanding of RFU Regulations that relate to safeguarding.

This position is casually contracted, tutors are paid £100 per course delivered (travel expenses are only paid on mileage over 100 miles) and are required to have their own laptop and means of transportation to course venues. They are also required to engage with England Rugby tutor updates and training, provided at least once a year.

If you are interested in this role, please complete expression of interest form below.

[You can access the expression of interest form here](#)



**England  
Rugby**

### RFU Club Development North

Team North is excited to announce we have recruited a new team member. With the recent changes in our facility team of Alex Bowden moving to a national role, Matt Coglan taking on Alex's role and Max Pridmore replacing Matt on a permanent basis, we had a vacancy for a new club developer.

We would like to introduce you to our new club developer Max Le Count-Ward. Max will be working with clubs in the Central Yorkshire, South and East Districts. Max is currently coaching at Harrogate RFU, he has worked for England Rugby previously as a CRC in Essex, before taking some time out to travel with his partner before moving to Harrogate.

Club Developers, Aaron, Laura and Max have been attending the recent district meetings held across the county to enable us to meet clubs, ensure clubs are kept informed on current RFU support and to discuss current themes/needs in the community game.

If your club has a current development need, please don't hesitate to get in touch;

Aaron.howorth@rfu.com - 07590890802  
Lauralines@rfu.com - 07711185219  
Maxlecount-ward@rfu.com

**CLUB DEVELOPMENT NORTH MEET THE TEAM**

<b>CLUB &amp; VOLUNTEER SUPPORT MANAGER</b> David Westhead	<b>CLUB DEVELOPERS</b>	
	Laura Lines	Max Le Count-Ward
<b>CB RELATIONSHIP MANAGER</b> Andrew Soutar	<b>FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT MANAGER</b> Aaron Howorth	<b>FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVE</b> John Foster
<b>FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT MANAGER</b> Matt Coglan	<b>FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVE</b> Max Pridmore	Liam Nicholls

@RFUNorthClubSup #TeamNorth



You can read their update report here

### RFU Representatives Report

Elected by our County's clubs, Yorkshire Rugby has two representatives on the RFU Council. They also participate in Sub-Committees of the RFU which report to the Community Game Board.

The next three-year term for the RFU representatives began on 1st August 2021 and there is no doubt it will be both a challenging and exciting time for the game. **Ted Atkinson** enters his third term as the Yorkshire RFU representative alongside **Joe Bedford** who was newly appointed this time, replacing Jim Chapman.

Together, they publish regular updates on their activity and you can read them [here](#)

### Offers in the Yorkshire Marketplace



Link to the Yorkshire Marketplace here

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.

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](#)
- Veo Video Game Analysis – Veo offers clubs in Yorkshire a £100 discount on the cost of a camera - [link](#)
- Sport Support -learn now to grow your community sports club - [link](#)

### England Rugby training and development webinars



England  
Rugby

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 November 2021. If there's anything you would like to share with the Yorkshire rugby community through this update, please email [cb-honsec.yorks@rfu.com](mailto:cb-honsec.yorks@rfu.com).

### Our values

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

Published by Yorkshire Rugby Football Union Limited | County Office | Griffin House | 24 Station Road | Morley | Leeds LS27 8JW | ☎ 0113 252 4300