



### Welcome from the President

It is my pleasure to be able to record that I have managed to attend a live rugby match every weekend of the season thus far; equally pleasurable has been the chance to meet some of the army of volunteers without whom our great game could not be staged week in, week out. This army can always use more troops so to misquote a poster seen recently in a rugby club – if you see something you think could be improved or changed become a volunteer and get it done.

It was my honour to be at Twickenham last weekend to see volunteers from various parts of the country, including Yorkshire, acknowledged and lauded by the great and good of the game and next week I will be equally honoured to be attending South Yorkshire's Volunteer Recognition Evening postponed from 2020. I suspect my involvement in the latter may be more hands on.

If you are having a volunteer recognition event and feel my presence would be a plus, don't hesitate to ask. Long may folk come forward to join our rugby family.

Yours in rugby

**Dave Hunter | President | Yorkshire RFU**

### Celebrating 150 years of rugby union



We were so pleased to be able to combine our day of celebration at Scarborough Rugby Club with a visit from the Rugby Football Union (RFU) President, His Honour Jeff Blackett, as part of the RFU's 150th Anniversary celebrations.

Jeff was walking 150 miles during a 15-day nationwide tour to raise money for the Injured Players Foundation (IPF). As the RFU's primary charity, the IPF provides support to any rugby player who sustains a spinal cord or brain injury, while training or playing the game and, in addition, funds vital injury prevention research to keep players safer on the field.

As well as the walk, everyone was able to enjoy loads of brilliant rugby, and we'd really like to thank the mixed-ability teams, the IGR teams, the women's team, and the men's teams, who all demonstrated why Yorkshire is such a great place for everyone to play rugby.

To mark the occasion, we even invited some of our guests to become members of Yorkshire rugby family. Here's RFU President Jeff Blackett, CEO Bill Sweeney and Chair Tom Ilube in their flat caps having been anointed honorary Yorkshiremen.



### Yorkshire Rugby Academy

Quick update from the Academy world as the season is in full swing for all our lads and staff, and it has been a great challenge managing players workloads now that everyone is fully up and running. Thanks to all our facility hosts at York St John's, Bishop Burton, and Queen Ethelberga's. Each one is a standout place for players to come and deliver excellent sessions in their learning journeys.

In this last period, we have been identifying player's development in their club and school environments and, whilst we can't get to every game, we have had at least one member of staff watching games every weekend to ensure we see as many players as possible in their natural environments. Some players have been signposted back to their clubs and schools to work on their game until we reconvene the under-17 specific group in the New Year.

Clubs observed are North Ribblesdale, Ripon, West Park, Sandal, Pocklington, York, Hull Ionians, Goole with plans to watch the U17s Premier clubs in the coming months.

Schools observed are GSAL, Woodhouse Grove, St Peter's, QEGS, Crossley Heath, Queen Ethelberga's, Hymers, Bradford GS, Giggleswick, Ermysteads, Ilkley GS, Bishop Burton, Harrogate, and Mount St Mary's

Worth noting that there are more opportunities to see schools play i.e. midweek, as well as weekends, plus every single player is at school and not necessarily playing at clubs, but we are mindful of the abilities of club's players hence our commitment to get out in the coming months.

We were also happy to support the County U18s team in their assessment process and believe they have a very strong group of players to represent themselves well in the coming games against Durham, Cheshire, and Lancashire before selection for the North division takes place.

Academy League preparations are scaling up ahead of our 2 pre-Xmas games against Wasps (18 December at Bishop Burton) and Northampton (23 December at Bedford Athletic).

A big thank you as always to all the parents, grandparents, teachers, and whoever else supports the lads in getting to and from sessions, without the support we couldn't do half of what we do. We look forward to seeing as many as possible cheering the boys on in our home academy league games as below:

- Sat 18 December - 2pm Kick-off vs Wasps @ Bishop Burton
- Sunday 23 January - 3pm Kick-off vs Sale @ Keighley RUFC
- Sat 12 February - 2pm Kick-off vs Worcester @ Doncaster RFC

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



**Fulfilling Potential**



Fulfilling Potential

## POSTPONED - Club Development Conference 12th December

After much deliberation it has been decided to postpone the conference planned for December until later in the season.

Following feedback from our clubs, unavailability of a number of presenters and bearing in mind the increasing cases of Covid in the county, we felt it was the right thing to do to ensure clubs had a quality experience.

We will advise you of a future date as soon as possible. All bookings will be automatically transferred to the new date.

Thank you to those clubs who have booked and provided feedback.

We look forward to seeing you in the Spring, until then stay safe, enjoy the rugby and the Christmas festivities."



Enjoyment

## Merit Leagues and Competitions Update

### Merit Leagues and Tables

In the Merit League/Table 216 matches have been played in the 9 merit leagues/tables with 107 No result/Postponed/Walkovers recorded.

Clubs are struggling to raise two teams and the outlook is not looking good. The regulations are flexible and include playing with 12 and starting games with uncontested scrums. Prop forwards are in great demand. England Rugby Club Developers are working with clubs to develop plans to help address this issue.

There is also a shortage of referees, which is extremely worrying, and some matches have been refereed by home members. Yorkshire Rugby Society are appealing for more people to come forward to be referees.

### Yorkshire Cup Competitions.

The Yorkshire Cup, Shield, Silver Trophy and Vase have been slow to set off, with a significant number of walkovers. February 5 was a key date for the next round of fixtures, but the wintry weather on the evening of 26 November saw more Cup matches being delayed until 26 February. The Yorkshire Cup has 5 entries including, Hull Ionians, Sheffield, Sheffield Tigers, Huddersfield, and Wharfedale

### Game-On

North DOC has allowed clubs from Level 8 downwards to use the RFU Game-On Principles from 27 November. This includes Yorkshire 2, 3 4NE and 4 SE. Club secretaries have been sent the RFU Game-On principles.

Game-On has been developed to allow teams to be more flexible and allowing matches to go ahead.

### Women's rugby

Women's rugby is going strong across Yorkshire with a good spread of clubs able to offer playing opportunities for all levels. Now the season has started, we have seen some clubs' player numbers impacted by Covid. This has sadly resulted in some clubs withdrawing from leagues this season.

York RUFC have withdrawn their women's team from NC1 North, but are working hard to re-launch their team with the hope to re-enter league rugby next season. Despite this Yorkshire is well represented across the RFU's competition tables:



Welfare

## Our clubs say "No" to bullying

To mark Anti-Bullying Week, we asked our clubs to make their own statement to demonstrate that there's no place for bullying in rugby in Yorkshire.

It was absolutely brilliant to see many of our age grade and women's players taking part on our #OddSocksSunday and showing everyone that they supported our anti-bullying message.

Just when you thought Sundays at the rugby club couldn't get any better, our players and coaches went that extra mile to get out this important message and to have fun whilst they were doing it!

Thanks for supporting #OddSocksSunday. Shall we do it again next year?



Engaging

## Using our social channels to stay connected and increase your reach

Yorkshire Rugby has Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn pages. We'd love it if you followed our channels and you can also use them to increase the reach of information that you would like to share. We can, for example, share vacancies, requests for new players and other relevant and appropriate information through our channels. As recent example was a request from Otlisians for a new coach. Just ask for a re-tweet when you post and we'll be happy to help. We can also post roles on our website.

We'd also be grateful if you could share the information we post so that we can reach a much wider audience with updates about our game in Yorkshire.



## Centre of Excellence

It has been a busy few weeks for the Yorkshire Centre of Excellence programme with the players enjoying some further coaching opportunities in and out of the county. We have also had the opportunity to take part in some challenging training against some of the other Centre of Excellence programmes.

October saw Sheffield RUFC host Yorkshire and Loughborough Centres of Excellence with players from both centres working on several different rotations. This session was the first opportunity for the players to see the standard of another centre and it brought the challenge needed for them to step up their skills. Yorkshire CoE then travelled to Darlington to train with DMP at the Darlington Arena. This was another chance for the players to train with a CoE and a massive thank you to Darlington for hosting us. It was great to see the players experiment with the themes we had been focusing on during some small sided training games.

The sessions come thick and fast ahead of the new year and we will also look to re assess some players who were given feedback to improve at the previous assessment date back in July. Further announcements and plans ahead of the 2021-22 season are well underway and we will be able to update the county with further plans for next season in the new year.

I will finish on a massive thank you to the volunteers, coaches, parents/carers and players who have been involved in the programme so far this season. We are excited for the future of the Yorkshire Centre of Excellence and a strong start to the season helped us succeed.

A final thank you to our hosts Bishop Burton College and Wetherby RUFC. These two venues have been very accommodating hosting us throughout the season so far. Our next sessions see us back at Bishop Burton College and then onto Ossett RUFC and York RUFC.

I look forward to updating you on the Centre of Excellence programme once again in the New Year.

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



**Fulfilling Potential**



**Welfare**

## Safeguarding update

We continue to try and bring safeguarding into the club spotlight, and not just within the age-grade sections. A number of visits have taken place across clubs to introduce ourselves, and make safeguarding an approachable subject that is here to help. The visits have included juniors, seniors, mixed-ability, Women's, and Girl's teams. Further visits are planned.

We have also shared a number of national safeguarding initiatives on our Social Media accounts, and ask that clubs share these with their own members.

Over 30 club safeguarding officers have attended a virtual In Touch Course with the RFU Safeguarding leads, and a further 147 coaches and club officials have attended the Play it Safe course. I thank you all for the time that you have given to this subject and the support you give to both your club and the county.

I will continue to contact clubs and ask that you ensure your coaches are entered onto GMS correctly, any review from the RFU will show a true picture of those coaches without a DBS.

England Rugby has confirmed that a GMS glitch has now been fixed and the 2021 Club Safeguarding Audit is now live on GMS. This has been opened up to all clubs who have age grade activity registered on GMS. Please note that adult-only clubs, or any clubs that we have omitted in error will need to raise a SCRUM ticket and the questionnaire will be added onto their profile.

The deadline, as noted in Regulation 21 is the end of December, however this has been extended to 7 January to ensure that there is a six-week window for completion. The questionnaire will remain live after this date for adult-only clubs who may be requesting permission for 17-year-olds to play up later in the season.

Thank again for your continuing commitment to safeguarding and please do get in touch if we can help in any way.

**Andy Pollard | Safeguarding Lead**



**Fulfilling Potential**

## County teams update

We're really pleased that England Rugby has announced that the County Championship's will take place this again this season. Team from Yorkshire will be competing for:-

- The Jason Leonard Cup for male under-20s
- The Bill Beaumont Cup for senior men
- The Jill Burns Cup for senior women

England Rugby has released dates and formats for the male under-20s and we have started process of assembling the 20s squad alongside a development squad based at Bradford Salem. A trial game has been booked for 10 December and further trials and training will take place up to first game away to Lancashire on 06 February. We'll let you know the venue as soon as we have it.

We'll let you know the formats and date for the other championships once they are announced.

**We have limited funding for these championships and would welcome any funding or sponsorship for teams within these championships programmes.** Please do get in touch if you would like to discuss this with us.

The boy's under-18s have completed their selection process and are looking forward to starting their program on Sunday 5 December at Billingham RUFC with a 3pm kick-off.

**Tony McNally | Yorkshire County Teams Chair**



## RFU Club Development North

Thank you to all clubs that have worked with us around adult male playing numbers. We are seeing feedback from across the country that the adult male game is struggling to get the numbers clubs would like post-Covid.

The feedback we are getting from clubs seems to be that players are training well but are not available as much as they used to be on Saturdays.

We are working with clubs to identify possible actions that can help them field the teams they would like. North Yorkshire District recently held a zoom call to cover this subject and share experiences from across a wide range of clubs and this was well received. If you are struggling in this area, please reach out to your club developer.

[Aaron.howorth@rfu.com](mailto:Aaron.howorth@rfu.com) – 07590890802 | [Lauralines@rfu.com](mailto:Lauralines@rfu.com) – 07711185219 | [Maxlecount-ward@rfu.com](mailto:Maxlecount-ward@rfu.com)



## Refereeing needs you!

The game we all love is back but as we know many players have not returned to the game for many reasons. This is a great opportunity for those players at your clubs to stay involved with the game and pick up the whistle! Remember the great memories we all have about the games we have played and none of them could have happened without the "Man in the Middle". Why not extend your playing days and stay fit at the same time?

It is NOT a requirement to have completed the England Rugby Refereeing Award to become an active referee or joining a Referees' Society, however it provides an excellent grounding for new officials with a good support network. The new cycle for the courses does not start till the 2022/23 season.

In the meantime, there are plenty of resources to access to get you started and upskill yourself to get refereeing for your local society. Whether you're a club referee or an aspiring future match official, take a look at our website for a selection of FREE training/CPD (<https://bit.ly/YRSBecomeARef>) and the RFU Kitbag (<https://linktr.ee/RFURefereeKitbag>).

Yorkshire Referees Society (YRS) is always on the hunt for those interested in refereeing. YRS has a wealth of experience and talent, with match officials operating at every level of the game from the very top of the men's and women's game, to the minis and juniors. If you're interested in learning more, or in joining your local society visit <https://www.yorkshirereferees.com/contact>.

**We would love to see you.**



Enjoyment

## Club Development – exciting ideas from our clubs

### Hull Roundheads awarded Grant

Hull Roundheads has been awarded a grant of £25k from 'The ideas Fund' supported by the British Science Association and the Wellcome Trust.

The Funding is to support a project exploring the obstacles which discourage LGBTQ+ individuals from participating in gay and inclusive sports teams.

The project has several strands but the priority one involved documenting the barriers to sports experienced by members before joining Roundheads. The project also sees to engage with organisations within Hull's Black, Asian and Eastern European communities to better understand any culturally specific barriers and stigma that the club might help to overcome.

These personal stories will be developed into short stories and plays to be showcased at the Hull Pride and Hull Freedom Festival in the Summer 2022.

### Wednesday Volunteering Clubs are paying dividends!!

Many clubs in Yorkshire already have Wednesday clubs, and recently more have been putting these in place. They are realising that these are a great way to benefit by retaining volunteers, getting essential tasks done and also ensuring that volunteers feel supported and valued.

Bradford Salem RUFC is the latest example. The club have recently introduced regular Wednesday gatherings for volunteers.

The day tends to involve carrying out tasks around the club such as painting and repairs etc, followed by a lunch and social event. It is also an opportunity to secure volunteers for additional tasks during matches at the weekend.

### Building an Inclusive Volunteer Team

England Rugby recently developed a toolkit to provide guidance, ideas and tools on how to recruit more volunteers.

The guide was launched in October and as part of the launch workshop, the Chairman of Otley, Paul Mackie was able to share his club's recent success with recruiting a significant number of new volunteers to support the development and delivery of the club's new strategic plan.

Paul was able to share his experience in creating new volunteering opportunities, engaging and recruiting from local communities, supporting volunteers and creating an action plan

[Link to England Rugby's Inclusive Volunteer Toolkit](#)



Diverse and Inclusive



Fulfilling Potential



Diverse and Inclusive

## 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 **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

The Yorkshire Marketplace on our website 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 companies are currently featured

- 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 discount on the cost of a camera – [link](#)
- Sport Support - learn now to grow your community sports club - [link](#)

This newsletter is published every two months by the Yorkshire RFU. The next edition will be January 2022. 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).

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

