



I Newsletter | Mar 2021 |

A bi-monthly update published by the Yorkshire RFU

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



Welcome to our latest Newsletter and I hope you are all safe and well

At last, we appear to have a light at the end of the tunnel. In line with the Roadmap, we can start our pathway back to playing our beloved game 29 March and hopefully playing by the end of April

England Rugby is in process of drawing up plans for the way forward on our return. This will include how the rest of season will pan out and how far we can continue playing through the spring and summer months.

Unfortunately, all league rugby, age grade and county rugby will be lost. We were trying to put together a Tri county tournament with Lancashire and Cheshire but this also has not materialised. The Academy has been training through and we are hopeful that they should be able to start their programme of games when given the green light.

It is anticipated that you should be able to open your clubs up in May to enjoy the feeling of being part of the rugby family as before.

Moving forward will be difficult and strange and we will need all the support of our volunteers that help us play our game. It will be important to re-engage everyone involved with your club especially the players who, after 12 months away, might need some additional encouragement. We, at the Yorkshire RFU, will help in any way we can to assist with the restart.

During the summer, we will need to focus on restarting our structured season and again will need an army of volunteers to make sure we are ready. This is particularly true for match officials as we can't play without them. Details of a wide range of courses that will run through the summer will be announced as they come available. These will include refereeing and coaching.

I hope as things ease that I will be able to get to visit as many of you as I can.

Stay safe

Tony McNally | Yorkshire RFU President

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Update on fixtures



The cancellation of the RFU league structure and the lockdown between January to March 29th has created a barren rugby landscape. There is good news however as the RFU Roadmap will from March 29th allow Ready4Rugby and Contact Training, with adapted law matches taking place from April 26th.

Yorkshire Competitions will not be involved in organising any fixtures which are friendlies. We have received a proposal from a club to organise Yorkshire Cup matches in August, and this will be discussed at our next meeting on March 30th. If approval is granted clubs will be asked if they wish to take part. Further information will follow.

David Towler, who has been Secretary of Yorkshire Competitions for 10 seasons, is retiring at the end of this season. David has been an influential member of the group and he will be difficult to be replaced. We'd liked to take this opportunity to thank him for his service to rugby in Yorkshire over the last decade.



Return to Rugby Community Roadmap

We are at Stage D1 of the Return to Rugby Community Roadmap. The Roadmap has been updated and all of the information can be found on the England Rugby website [here](#)

You find some detailed Stage D guidance here [Stage D Guidance](#)
Here's some detail of how England Rugby see the Roadmap rolling out over March, April and May.

All of the information can be found on the England Rugby website [here](#)

You find some detailed Stage D guidance here [Stage D Guidance](#)

When the Government Roadmap moves to Step One B – no earlier than Monday 29 March

- Adult and age grade community rugby (including schools and colleges) may resume at Stage D1.
- O2 Touch, Tag and Ready4Rugby training and matches are permitted within the club and against other clubs. We will confirm travel guidance when published by government.
- Contact training (excluding scrums and mauls) is permitted to introduce contact gradually and prepare players physically for the next stage on the Return to Rugby Roadmap. Our guidance strongly recommends a maximum of 20 minutes contact in total per session, with regular hand sanitising breaks during and after contact skills training, and equipment should be cleaned after use. Players should avoid face-to-face exposure of more than three seconds and more than 15 minutes of exposure at less than one metre with another player.

From Monday 26 April

- Having had four weeks of contact training, adult and age grade community rugby will be able to return to Stage D2 on the Rugby Roadmap from Monday 26 April.
- Again, guidance will recommend 20 minutes of contact training to be permitted (still excluding scrums and mauls).
- Matches will be permitted with adapted laws (no scrums & mauls) against other clubs. Again, travel guidance to be confirmed as above.
- Guidance for playing friendly matches over the summer will follow over the next few weeks to support maximising player retention and welfare.
- Matches will not be obligatory. It will be clubs' and players' individual choice as to when they feel ready to return to contact rugby. Please ensure players are given enough time to condition themselves physically, with a gradual return to contact built in. Ready4Rugby, O2 Touch and Tag can still be played if preferred.

When the Government Roadmap moves to Step Three – no earlier than Monday 17 May

- Adult and age grade community rugby likely to progress to Stage E1.
- It's anticipated that full contact training will be permitted (including scrums and mauls).

Two weeks after Stage E1 has been reached – no earlier than Monday 31 May

- It is anticipated that adult community rugby will progress to Stage E2.
- Adult full contact matches would then be permitted.
- The current age grade season ends on Monday 31 May. (See above for further information).
- Some off-field restrictions likely to still apply.

Developing a strategy for rugby union in our county



Since mid-December, a Task and Finish Group of the Yorkshire Committee has been working on the County's three to five-year Strategic Plan. The development approach and the strategy are mirroring England Rugby's national approach providing a consistent and connected approach for the County.

The development process is being informed by engagement with our stakeholders. Two zoom engagement sessions have been held with officers of the County, club chairs and other club officials, club & County coaches and club & County players. We've also had input from age grade administrators and referees. In total over 70 individuals were involved in providing feedback to the Strategic Planning Group.

The Group will be sharing those views and thoughts and the final Strategy will be published in June 2021.

Girls' Development Opportunities



We're pleased to say that we have the support of England Rugby in running three Girls' Development Days in the summer. These will be for the Under18 Age Group. The Development Days will take place on 24 July, 31 July and 7 August, and we plan to use different venues for each of the sessions.

Further details and joining instruction will be advised once the plans are finalised.

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

Celebrating women in rugby union



On International Women's Day, we celebrated the incredible contribution some amazing players have made to the development of rugby union for women in our County. We awarded representative Caps to 56 players who represented our County in the 1990s.

We awarded each of these representative Caps with our appreciation and gratitude. These players demonstrated that rugby union is a game for all and they built the path that the current generation of women players are following.

We were made aware in the autumn that these trailblazing women had not been awarded County Caps in recognition of their achievement, and we're grateful to Gillian Jew for raising this with us.

Since then, Hayley Lister has been working on behalf of the Yorkshire RFU, with Gillian, to identify those players who should be awarded their representative Cap. We'd like to thank them for their work on this issue.

Together they've identified 56 players – each one wore the white rose with pride and represented our County in matches against Lancashire in the 1990s. As there may have only been one County game per season for this group, we're awarding one Cap on the basis of one or more appearances for the County.

We also know that this is just the start. We may not have identified everyone and there will be more women in our rugby community who are entitled to this recognition. Please get in touch with us if you represented the County and have not received your representative Cap.

We now need the players to get in touch with us. We may not have up to date contact details so we need these to be sent to the County Office at cb-honsec.yorks@rfu.com. Once we have this information, we'll send your representative Cap to you.

Thank you again for transforming rugby in Yorkshire.

RFU Club Development North

The new team of RFU club Developers have introduced a pilot program to help support clubs across the north called "A Clubs Guide to...". The project is a mixture of webinars and posters designed to give clubs information on a certain topic that Club Developers have been asked for more information on or clubs have expressed a concern around to the county.

The project sees rugby clubs and volunteers asked to share their knowledge and experience on a certain topic, which is then facilitated by the RFU Club Developer team so clubs can learn from our experts in the game and people that clubs can relate to.

So far three topics have been piloted;

- Crowdfunding via a webinar seeing 22 clubs attend.
- Volunteering via a poster
- Website building via a webinar seeing 26 clubs attend. (You can watch the webinar [here](#).)

A big thank you to those clubs that have attended and contributed (Stockport RFC and Harrogate Pythons RUCF). If there is a topic you would like to see covered or something that your club is having real success with please contact LauraLines@rfu.com or Toni Birch, Yorkshire's Club Development Manager

In addition to the "a clubs guide to..." series we have also started to run a player retention working group pilot. Seven clubs have come together from across the county to discuss the problems they believe they'll face as we return to rugby.

The working group has received the support of the county through the attendance of Dave Duxbury, while being led by local RFU Club Developers as well as the expert support of Dave Livesey, who holds the position of Player Retention Manager at the RFU, and David Westhead, who is the North's Club and Volunteers Support Manager for the RFU. As a result of the pilot group, we hope to have a better understanding of the support that clubs will need with player retention as we return to rugby.

Laura Lines | Maxwell Pridmore



You can watch the website building webinar [here](#)



Yorkshire Rugby Academy

The academy has been continuing preparations for the Academy league games, which are pencilled in for May. We are indebted to the County and Yarnbury RFC for their continued support in providing access to their RFU Rugby 365 pitch.

We have appointed a Medical Lead for the Academy. Lindsay Whitaker will take up the position in the coming weeks, having previously been Lead Medic for Doncaster Knights. We look forward to being able to deliver an enhanced care package for the players should they need any support between sessions. We are grateful to Sarah Hattee for covering the sessions so far this season on top of her full-time role with Yorkshire Women's Cricket.

We are in the process of moving to Stage 2 on our journey, which will allow for us to prepare the players for the adapted laws that will be used in the Academy League. For this to happen we have some stringent processes to follow and want to thank players and parents for their support and patience with these.

Hardgear Teamwear have worked very hard to get the playing kits, players training kit and coaches attire ordered, embroidered and delivered in a short time frame and have surpassed all expectations on this front. The kit will look magnificent and we thank the main sponsors, Yorkshire Sports Medicine and GlobalBridge for their support this season. We look forward to representing the County with pride.

As we move towards the next phase of the season, we will be providing people with a bit more information about the journey so far, who are the people making the Academy succeed, where we are wanting to develop and grow as we head, very quickly, into preparations for 2021/22 season and, all being well, the resumption of something like a normal rugby season.

Stuart Dixon | Programme Lead | Yorkshire Rugby Academy

Supporting and developing rugby union in Yorkshire by volunteering

There is an exciting opportunity to support and promote player welfare within the County and to be our region's champion for England Rugby's RugbySafe initiatives.

With the support of the Club Development Chair at the Yorkshire RFU, you will receive/work with the England Rugby Player Welfare lead and benefit from regular updates, links with other RugbySafe leads, training and bi-monthly calls.

Kate Metcalfe has held this post for a number of years. We would like to thank Kate for all the time she has put into the game over the years, from club to Safeguarding at district level and latterly as RugbySafe lead. She's made a massive contribution to our game in Yorkshire and we wish her all the best for the future.

If you would like to know more about this role please contact [Toni Birch](#)

The closing date for applications is 9 April and applications should be sent to cb-honsec-yorks@rfu.com using the attached expression of interest form.

Perhaps you're not interested in this role but are interested in supporting rugby in the County. Do you have capacity to take on an additional role either in your district or the constituent body.

There are lots of different roles available for all skill sets.

Roles are advertised on the county website, but we are also keen to identify a pool of people who would be interested in being supported for future opportunities.

If you'd like to add your name to this pool please contact [Sally Burns](#) who heads-up our Volunteering and Nominations committees.

Can you help improve our communications and marketing?

We're developing a new strategy for our County and we're determined to play our part in supporting and developing rugby union for the enjoyment of everyone. To do this, we now we need some new volunteers to help us create impactful and engaging communications and marketing materials.

So, if you're expert at graphic design, can always land a story from a PR point of view, or have a knack for creating engaging social media content, we'd love to hear from you. Or you may just want to help us tell particular stories well – you may be committed to age grade rugby, mixed ability rugby and just think we don't hear enough about your particular patch of our glorious County.

Whatever your passion, your skills and talents in communications and marketing, we'd love to hear from you. Please email [Michelle Lewis](#) with some information about yourself and how you think you may be able to help us.



Find out more about the RugbySafe role [here](#)





Welcome our first Diversity and Inclusion Lead

Diversity and Inclusion is a key and integral strand of how we work as a county to support and develop rugby union for the enjoyment of everyone. It's been the subject of the some of our strategy discussion workshops and it has been great to hear what this means to our clubs. We're all keen to ensure that our activities are fully aligned to our communities.

To take this work forward, we have recently appointed Ross Barr-Hoyland as the Diversity and Inclusion Lead to the County. Ross is the Club Captain of Leeds Hunters RUFC (part of IGR - International Gay Rugby). Ross becomes the first openly gay member of our Management Committee in our 150-year history.

At the same time, England Rugby are also leading a consultation with Constituency Bodies and with clubs with the view to developing additional supporting materials and guidance. We are working hard to ensure that Yorkshire Rugby and our clubs are represented in this consultation and that we are able to shape this, and also share some of our experience and examples of best practise already in place.

If you would like to take part further in conversations, please contact [Ross](#).

Immediate Support Fund



Applications for Immediate Support Fund grants can still be made. The Fund was set up in partnership with the RFU to help Clubs through the pandemic. Fifteen clubs have already accessed the Fund. The application process is very straight forward and grants are agreed and paid normally within 7/10 days.

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](#)

Yorkshire Rugby Schools Union



Greetings to all from the Yorkshire Rugby Schools Union. What an exciting time to be part of school's rugby within Yorkshire. Over the last couple of months there has been a change within the committee for school's rugby within Yorkshire.

The key roles within the committee are now being taken by:

- Chairman – Mr Pete Latham – lathampa01@gmail.com
- Vice Chair – Mr Nick O'Connor – n.oconnor@crossleyheath.org.uk
- Secretary – Mr M Whiteley – whiteley@whitcliffemount.co.uk
- Treasurer – Mr Dean Hyman – HMD@princehenrys.co.uk
- Media – Mr Tom Baxter – tom.baxter@bbqacademy.com
- CPD Development – Mr Adam Falkner – adam.falkner@ilkleygs.co.uk
- Competitions Manager – Mr Dave Duxbury – dave.duxbury@whiteroserugby.com

There are also many other teachers who are all part of the group that are helping to shape the future of Yorkshire schools' rugby. We, as a group, would like to say thank you for all the time and effort that the old committee had put in.

As part of the new development we have amalgamated with White Rose Rugby, who have run a very successful rugby festival series, to offer rugby for all. We will still be having the Yorkshire Cup and have built competitive development opportunities into this so that all schools feel comfortable at the level that they are playing competitive rugby. We are also retaining the highly successful festival series for schools to be able to turn up and play. With all these opportunities to play, we are able to offer a playing opportunity for all schools.

We are looking at developing the links with the Development Player Programme and the Yorkshire Rugby Academy. This is being done through teacher coaching opportunities and also CPD development days that are directly linked to training sessions.

There is lots of other exciting developments that are currently being developed to expand the rugby opportunities within our school's community. Please keep an eye on our social media pages, Instagram – [yschoolsrugby](#), Twitter - [@YschoolsRugby](#) for all the developments.

We are also looking for sponsorship for the competitions. Please get in touch with Mr Dean Hyman for more details.

Kind regards The Yorkshire Rugby Schools Union



**England
Rugby**

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



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



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

Mitsubishi Volunteer Development Programme

In the last newsletter, we told you about the Mitsubishi Motors Rugby Leadership Network. This 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, England Rugby were looking for aspiring rugby leaders who can take their club to the next level.

We're really pleased to say that volunteers from seven clubs in Yorkshire have been accepted onto the programme and have already taken part in their first session. The volunteers are from Pontefract, Sandal, Skipton, Harrogate, Middlesbrough, Halifax and York RL.

We wish them every success on the programme.

RFU Council Representative Election Votes are being counted.....

Since early February the Election process for the County's RFU Council Reps has been steadily gathering momentum. 5 Excellent candidates have been nominated for the 2 posts available. The candidates are:

- Ted Atkinson, proposed by Yorkshire RFU and seconded by Drifffield RUFC
- Joe Bedford, proposed by Sandal RUFC and seconded by West Leeds RUFC
- Toni Birch, proposed by Yorkshire RFU and seconded by Wharfedale RUFC
- Hugh Gumbs, proposed by Moortown RUFC and seconded by Bradford & Bingley RFC
- Paul Taylor, proposed by Ossett RUFC and seconded by Wensleydale RUFC

All the Candidates have produced manifestos, which are on the County website.

Clubs are now considering who to vote for with ballot papers needing to back at County Office by 29 March. The result will be announced to the Clubs by 1 April. Best of luck to all the candidates.

Reflections on being an RFU Council Representative

First elected in 2011, Jim Chapman has been one of two County representatives on the RFU Council. He has been Chairman of the Competitions Development Sub-Committee and is a Community Game Board Member. He also represents the RFU on the Board of England Colleges RFU. Jim is standing down from this role and here are his reflections:-

"When the ballot paper for RFU Council Representatives comes out my name will not be on it. As you will know Council Members now have a three-year term and are allowed to be elected three times, giving them a possible full term of 9 years. I was first elected to the RFU Council in 2011 and have, therefore served for 10 years!! Under transitional arrangements I could have stood for election, but only for one year before being forced to stand down. I have, therefore, taken the decision not to stand at this election but to make way for another person to serve for the next three seasons (and possibly longer).

The past 10 years have been an incredible experience for me. Not least has been the honour of being allowed to represent the views of Yorkshire clubs at the "top table". That has been an absolute privilege and, whilst I do not fool myself that everyone within the CB will applaud the decisions of the RFU during that period, I always tried to reflect the views of clubs in coming to a decision. I hope I leave the Game in Yorkshire in a better place than it was ten years ago.

The last twelve months have, obviously, been unprecedented and it is with some sadness that I will not be able to participate in the recovery of the Game throughout the County. I am sure the Game will recover, hopefully stronger than it was twelve months ago. I wish you all well and Thank You for the work you do. I have made some wonderful acquaintances over the past 10 years and hope that we will meet each other again."

We'd like to thank Jim for this decade of service to rugby union in Yorkshire and England.



**England
Rugby**

You can make your nominations [here](#).

Mitsubishi Motors' Volunteer of the Year Recognition Programme

Nominations for the 2021 Mitsubishi Motors Volunteer Recognition Awards are now open and you can make your nominations [here](#).

To recognise what an unprecedented year this has been for everyone in the rugby community, England Rugby has introduced a new format for the awards. There will be three categories of awards to recognise the exceptional work that has gone into keeping not only rugby clubs going during the pandemic, but also local communities. These categories are Resilience in Rugby, Beyond Rugby and Diversity & Inclusion Award

Three Yorkshire Volunteers were recognised at the 2021 online celebration which was held this month. Jim Moffat was described as an inspiration to everyone at Northallerton RUFC. Den Plaistow was applauded for his enthusiasm and drive for the game which makes a positive difference to the flourishing juniors' section at Wortley RUFC. Ann Taylor was thanked for her inspirational leadership of the women's team and coaching of the under-15s girls' team at Malton and Norton RUFC.

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. 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 £200 discount on the price of a camera until mid-April. Then the discount reverts to £100. 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](#) They held a webinar with clubs in Yorkshire and you can watch it [here](#)



**England
Rugby**

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 May 2021. If there's anything you would like to share with the Yorkshire rugby community through this update, please email yorkshirerfumarketing@gmail.com.

Our values

Teamwork | Respect | Enjoyment | Discipline | Sportsmanship

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