



# Newsletter | June 2021 |

A bi-monthly update published by the Yorkshire RFU



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

We start on a sad note as we send our condolences to Henry Foster's family and friends. Henry had the honour of representing Yorkshire at U15-U18 level and it is a great loss to our rugby family that we have lost one so young.

We all should now be getting back into the swing of returning back to our clubs. I know some teams have started training and played some adapted games. As we know, it is also the end of the season and we can continue on with the RFU roadmap in line with Governments' staged return.

It is important that during the summer months we engage with our rugby family and prepare for our return to playing rugby next season. Further information regarding financial support will follow in this newsletter. Your districts will also advise of district meetings and events that will be taking place. South Yorkshire district will be holding the value the volunteer evening held over from last year to present last year's winners with their awards and hopefully get to meet old friends and new.

A lot of clubs will be holding summer events, it is important we support our clubs and get back to some kind of normality.

Stay Safe

Tony McNally | Yorkshire RFU President

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## Return to Rugby Community Roadmap



We are at Stage D2 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](#). The guidance also includes information about summer activity including camps.

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

### 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

- 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

- 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.

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

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



## Yorkshire Girls' Under 18 Summer Programme

It has been a difficult year for us all and very frustrating not to have any form of rugby throughout the county. However, plans are currently in place to host 3 consecutive Saturdays at 3 different venues across the county for girls who are U18. The 3 days will be held at the following venues, 10am-3pm:

- Saturday 24th July 2021 - Bishop Burton College
- Saturday 31st July 2021 - Sandal RUFC
- Saturday 7th August 2021 - Old Crossleyans RUFC

All players at U18 level will have the opportunity to self-nominate onto the three-day programme. The self-nomination process is an exciting opportunity for players to self-assess their skills and review what standard they feel they are currently at. To self-nominate onto the summer programme, players will assess themselves on the following playing criteria:

- Catch & Pass
- Contact
- Tackling
- Game Sense

Each criteria will be scored out of 5. If a player feels they score 14 or above as a total, then they are eligible to attend the summer training programme.

This is an excellent opportunity for players across the county to experience the Yorkshire player pathway and test themselves against players of the same ability. The self-nomination process will also allow players to assess where their current ability levels are, and we are hopeful it will allow players to have key work ones and improvements ahead of the 2021/2022 season. Coaches across the county will also be invited to one of the sessions as part of the Yorkshire rugby commitment to offer CPD to all of our coaches in the women and girls' team.

Further information regarding these dates will be distributed to all clubs and any self-nominations will be emailed to Luke Pendlebury on [lpb@waleshigh.com](mailto:lpb@waleshigh.com).

**Nominations will be open from 1st June 2021 closing on 16th July 2021**

## Update from Competitions



Clubs have been contacted regarding playing the Yorkshire Cup Competition matches in August. Whilst there were over 50 responses, the majority of clubs preferred to play friendly matches. A further email has been sent explaining the situation and clubs have been asked to respond to Competitions team by May 28th.

Subject to the Cup Competitions being based on a regional basis, the draw will be made in June. The aim is to play the earlier rounds on a geographical basis by the reserve Saturday dates.

Clubs have also been issued with a structure for the Merit League/Table Competitions and have been asked to comment on this by May 28th.

Community rugby remains at Stage D2 from May 17th until further notice. Contact training (excluding scrums and mauls) and 15-a-side adapted laws matches may continue. We are hoping that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) will approve the return to normal rugby by the end of July, but please review the information on the RFU website.

## Developing a Strategy for Rugby Union in our County



For the past 6 months a Strategy Group of 9 individuals have been working on a new five-year Strategy for the County. Through various meetings including consultation groups with player, coaches and administrators the Strategy is taking shape. It is hoped that the Strategy document including some challenging objectives will be put before the Yorkshire Committee at its' June meeting. It is further hoped that once the Strategy has been agreed it will be presented to the County at the July AGM. Thereafter roadshows are proposed (probably via Zoom) to take the Strategy to the County's Clubs – watch this space.

**Barry Breakwell | Chair | Yorkshire RFU**

## Support funds available to Clubs



The RFU have recently announced that the Immediate Support Fund, accessed during the pandemic by 24 Clubs is now suspended. This has been replaced by a new Rugby Reboot Fund. We are presently working with the RFU to put together guidelines for projects that the RRF can support and we will be coming out to Clubs shortly with further information.



## Diversity and Inclusion update

### June marks LGBTQI+ Pride month!

June is the month to celebrate LGBTQI+ Pride! Whilst sadly many prides have been cancelled this year, we hope that all of our clubs and members join us by doing their own posts to celebrate diversity and inclusion this month by using #YorkshirePrideMonth and #EveryonesGame.

### Diversity and Inclusion Roundtable

Last week marked the first meeting of Yorkshire's Diversity and Inclusion team. We have lots of exciting plans ahead and lots of things that we would love to do. We would love to invite anyone who wants to get involved to an informal roundtable to discuss diversity and inclusion and what it means to you.

We would love to invite people from all disciplines of the sport to come whether you want to add to the discussion topics, ask some questions and learn about diversity and inclusion in rugby and what we are up to in Yorkshire.

The date is 24th June at 19.00 and if you would like to attend or discuss the event, please email me at [rossbarrhoyland@gmail.com](mailto:rossbarrhoyland@gmail.com)

### Pride In Yorkshire Rugby Day

To celebrate Yorkshire Day 2021, the Leeds Hunters RFC will be celebrating by inviting all the Yorkshire International Gay Rugby (IGR) clubs for a Pride in Rugby event on the 31 July. This is second time they have done the event and sees the Leeds Hunters, York RI Templars, Sheffield Vulcans and Hull Roundheads all come together and celebrate what makes rugby great.

### Ross Barr-Hoyland | Diversity and Inclusion lead



## The Yorkshire Rugby Academy

As the academy league season draws to a close, it is time to reflect on the journey we have been on for just over 7 months. To say we have received amazing support and goodwill from all our stakeholders would be an understatement and, to see the boys represent this great county, has been a privilege.

The understandable constraints within which we have operated during these COVID times have been a real challenge with the biggest issue being that all the staff are fully aware there will be some boys who should have been involved who we just have not been able to see due to the lack of opportunity to run assessment days.

All I would say to those who have been fairly critical about the perceived bias to one school sector is please contact me directly to discuss this as there is certainly more to it than a badge on a blazer...

That being said, each and every one of the 11 schools and 13 clubs that have been represented in our 4 games should be very proud of the young men they have developed in their environments over the years as well as all the fantastic parents who support their child each and every week, mainly from within the confines of their cars this season.

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

## Yorkshire Rugby Academy 2021



*Back Row (left to right):* Dan Scarborough, Tom Ryder, Alex Grieve, Sam Longfellow, Harry Willard, Harry Mathew, Joseph Baker, Kobby Fofie, Oliver Davies, Joshua Norbury, Pharrell Parker, William Metcalfe, Kristian Sharples

*Centre Row (left to right):* Joe Bedford, Benjamin Carpenter, Tom Parkin, Edward Harrison, Edward Hasdell, Cameron Murphy, Chester Ribbons, Ben Turpin, Louis Guthrie, Willem Johnson, George Gillgrass, Obi Ene, Ben Pickin, Sarah Hattee

*Front Row (left to right):* Lindsay Whitaker, Stuart Dixon, Jonty Mainey, Freddy Clark, Barnaby Horberry, Olly Tomalin, Joe Mounsey, Ben Copley (Captain), Ben Markey, Jack Harris, Ned Hawker, Tomas Bairstow, Matt Tanner, Tom Gilchrist

## Future Competitions' Structures



After eighteen months where this group met and conducted surveys and webinars across a wide range of stakeholders throughout the Game, final recommendations were brought to the last RFU Council Meeting (16<sup>th</sup> April) where they were endorsed by an overwhelming vote.

It is important to note that Council had earlier agreed to delay any implementation until the 2022/23 season. The hope is that the 2021/22 season will progress as normal and will, in effect, be a "qualifying" season where finishing positions in leagues will inform the structure for the following season.

**Structure** – The current structure will be revised in terms of league sizes (reduced) and number of leagues at each level (increased). The following table summarises these changes :

	Current	Proposed
Level 3 (National 1)	1 league of 16	1 league of 14
Level 4 (National Division 2 North)	2 leagues of 16	3 leagues of 14
Level 5 (North Premier)	4 leagues of 16	6 leagues of 12
Level 6 (North East etc.)	8 leagues of 16	12 leagues of 12
Level 7 and below (Yorkshire 1)		Leagues determined by local Divisional Organising Committees (DOC) but capped a maximum 12 teams per. leagues

**Protected Breaks** – the Structured Season will contain weeks across Christmas/New Year and at points during the season (to be determined) where NO league rugby will be allowed. Other fixtures (e.g. Friendlies/local Cup Competitions etc.) will be permissible and it is hoped that the breaks will coincide with international fixtures helping clubs to maximise the opportunities raised by such events.

**Cup Rugby** – level 5 and below – Cup competitions will be introduced at each level (5,6,7, 8 and below) which will be optional with mid-season entry. These will culminate in a Festival of Community Rugby. Actual details are currently being worked on but it is likely that each level of the competition will be split into Cup, Shield, Plate etc. with participation based on finishing league positions.

**Lower XVs** – from season 2022/23 lower XVs will be permitted to enter the league structure (this already exists in some areas, notably the South-West). They will be able to play up to level 7 (the current cap is level 8) subject to meeting criteria within RFU Regulations which will be determined over the coming months. It is hoped that this will allow a decrease in travel distance and times.

**Rapid Reviews** – the group will carry out rapid reviews of various aspects of the structure on a 3 year basis. This will allow "fine tuning" of the structure to take place whilst also ensuring that the Game can meet changing demands of players and clubs.

**Implementation** – the RFU will, in the first instance, appoint an Implementation Group who will oversee proposed changes and will meet regularly and communicate with the Game during the 2021/22 season.



## The Boys' Developing Player Programme

Over the past 12 months, rugby has faced many challenges and it's fantastic to see players of all ages getting back out on rugby pitches across Yorkshire. One of these challenges has been around player pathway activity. Players previously involved with the various programmes have not had the opportunity to continue with these and players in clubs and schools across the county have not had the chance to access these programmes through nomination and assessment opportunities.

Following continuing updates from both Government and England Rugby, and the easing of restrictions across the country, we are happily now in a position to confirm how we will be looking to move forward with providing opportunities for the boys pathway in Yorkshire. [Find out about the Programme here.](#)

In the short term, please note: -

- Nominations are open at the moment for players currently in the U16 and U17 age groups, information has been emailed to youth contacts as listed on GMS and also through schools contacts.
- Summer DPP activity will begin on June 7th for players in the current U15 age group who have previously been involved with DPP. We will be inviting a small number of further nominations in June, with a view to potentially joining the programme for an assessment period in July. Again, nomination information will be sent to clubs via GMS and to schools through the County Schools Union.

I've been taking advantage of the extended age grade season, by getting out and visiting clubs and schools around Yorkshire, to support some education of DPP and the boys' pathway in Yorkshire. Clubs I've visited have been Wensleydale, Wharfedale, Barnsley, Aireborough, Whitby, Redcar, Huddersfield YMCA and Thirsk. I've also been to BBG Academy for a school visit. I'm looking forward to further visits to clubs and schools once the season get underway.

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



### Celebrating our rugby community volunteers - saying 'Thank You' for your contribution

Every year, we ask clubs to nominate their outstanding volunteers and their contribution is recognised at our District and County Mitsubishi Volunteer Awards Evenings. We couldn't hold the event last year, so we've created this [video](#) to celebrate the contribution that every one of our volunteers makes.

And, ahead of volunteering week, we thought it was worth a re-watch! We were grateful to the CEO of England Rugby Bill Sweeney, to world-cup winning England player Mike Tindall and to England 7s star Ellie Kildunne for contributing to this celebration of our volunteers' hard work.

[View our celebration video here](#)

Keep watching until the end ..... everyone nominated by their clubs is included in our Roll of Honour. Perhaps you'll see your name!

We'd also like to congratulate Old Brodleians on receiving the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in recognition of their work in providing rugby for all ages and delivering huge benefits to their community.

On behalf of everyone at the Yorkshire RFU and at your club, thank you for everything you do, and we look forward to celebrating with you when we can.



### Mental Health and Wellbeing support

Lockdown can take its toll on people's mental health, with anxiety levels rising and many feeling isolated without their normal support network provided by club communities and team environments. 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](#)



### RFU Club Development North

Max Pridmore has joined Matt Colgan in the North Facilities Team in the Facilities Development Executive on secondment until December 2021. Max brings a wealth of knowledge of how rugby clubs, of a variety of levels, operate from his former RFU roles as a Community Rugby Coach in North Midlands and as a Club Developer covering the East, South & Central Yorkshire areas.

If you could please notify your members clubs to direct any facility queries to both myself & Max (emails below) and/or Club Support Centre, it would be much appreciated.

If you need any help on these matters, please contact Matt or Max.

Facilities Development Manager: [MattCoglan@rfu.com](mailto:MattCoglan@rfu.com)  
Facilities Development Executive: [MaxwellPridmore@rfu.com](mailto:MaxwellPridmore@rfu.com)



### RFU Representatives Report

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

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

Jim will be stepping down from this role and Joe Bedford has been elected by our clubs to take his place. Joe is currently Head of Rugby at Woodhouse Grove School and a member of our Yorkshire Rugby Academy Coaching Team. This follows a very successful rugby career which included team playing and coaching at Sandal.



You can read their update report [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](#) They held a webinar with clubs in Yorkshire and you can watch it [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 July 2021. If there's anything you would like to share with the Yorkshire rugby community through this update, please email [yorkshirfumarketing@gmail.com](mailto:yorkshirfumarketing@gmail.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