



| Newsletter | July 2021 |

A bi-monthly update published by the Yorkshire RFU

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



It has been an honour to serve as your President in probably the worst season in our long history.

The Pandemic has caused many problems and great losses to our rugby family over the last 16 months. We have also had to deal with major overhaul of the RFU. Hopefully in the coming weeks we will move to some kind of normality that will allow us to plan for the 2021-22 season.

From a personal point it was disappointing not to be able to visit clubs and help you celebrate your functions as you would do normally but worry not, I will not be sailing off into the sunset. I will be still working on your behalf along with the rest of the committee who have worked tirelessly on your behalf during the Pandemic, ensuring clubs got all the help and advice available along with financial assistance in the form of the Immediate Support Fund and Rugby Reboot funds.

I wish you well and hope you achieve your goals in the upcoming season and if things get back to normal, we can meet up again soon.

Yours in Sport

Tony McNally | **YRFU President 20-21**

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Return to Rugby Community Roadmap – stages for adult rugby

From July 19, we got to Stage E1 of the Return to Rugby Community Roadmap.

Monday 19 July - Scrums and mauls can be re-instated in training only. A minimum 3-week preparation period of training sessions follows ahead of match play.

Coaches are reminded that they are responsible for working with all players to assess their physical readiness and technical competence before returning to scrummaging. Players may be at different levels of fitness and conditioning. Coaches must be satisfied that players have undertaken sufficient technical preparation, skill refinement and reconditioning work before returning to full contact match play.

Internal training games are allowed between Monday 19 July and Saturday 7 August. Training games should include an incremental approach to scrummaging and coaches should rotate players every 20 minutes. Clubs should not return to match intensity full contact 15 a-side training games immediately.

Saturday 7 August - Full contact 15-a-side and 10-a-side rugby matches, with scrums and mauls, may resume against other clubs from, and not before, Saturday 7 August. It is the choice of clubs and players whether they wish to compete in full contact matches from Saturday 7 August. There is no pressure to do so. Teams that do not yet feel ready for full contact 15s have the option of playing 7s, 10s, XRugby or 15-a-side rugby with uncontested scrums.

Saturday 4 September - Full contact 15-a-side league rugby commences for Men's Levels 3 and 4, and for 14-team men's leagues in Levels 5 and below.

Saturday 18 September - Full contact 15-a-side league rugby commences for 12 and 10 league men's teams in London & SE.

Saturday 25 September - Full contact 15-a-side league rugby commences for 12 and 10 league men's teams in North, Midlands & SW.

25/26 September - Full contact 15-a-side- rugby commences for majority of women's competitions.



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



Pitch-up for Rugby – 4-12 September

There are only 50 days to go until the start of the new season.

[Register your club's interest here](#)

To celebrate rugby being back on the menu, clubs across our region are being encouraged to host Pitch Up for Rugby celebrations. Book the date in your diary and Pitch Up to support the game as we create a national celebration of rugby.

It's been a long 16-months, but we can now look forward to a return to full contact rugby. Clubs can re-instate scrums and mauls in training from 19 July and in matches from 7 August, should they wish. Many will continue to offer a range of non-contact and modified contact rugby to suit all tastes.

Pitch Up For Rugby is about celebrating being together again. There's no rush to be back to the top of your game if you've had a long break from rugby. Instead, take your time to build back up. All we ask is for you to come down to support your local club as we all get back on our feet.

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

[Register your club's interest here](#)



Walking Rugby - A New Lease of Life for Players Old and New at Wath upon Dearne RUFC - Sally Nicole

As lockdowns eased in May 2021, we were finally able to get our planned Walking Rugby sessions up and running at Wath RUFC.

Countless meetings over Zoom with an all-inclusive plan to get people back into rugby and many revised start dates thanks to Boris, we were ready. Armed with a helpful grant from Sport England for kit and a group of experienced and enthusiastic coaches, we stocked up on sanitiser and headed for the pitch.

We had no idea what to expect at the first session. Having put the word out to retired players and those returning from injury via Facebook we had a few positive responses and a great deal of maybes. We kicked off with nine. Three coaches consisting of two first team players and the club President who hadn't played rugby for 30 years due to a rugby related knee injury, two ex-players, two first teamers who had just finished training and the wife of one of these players who I pulled off the side-lines as moral support for me – a 36-year-old female who has always been surrounded by rugby but never played the game.

It was clear from that first session that Walking Rugby was going to be massive! There was so much laughter and fun, but it was the encouragement, teamwork and positivity that really shone through. Everyone left after working up a sweat and a smile. I knew they would be back.

Numbers have increased week on week, testament to the spirit and enthusiasm of the players and the coaches, which hooks people from their first session.

We knew we could bring old players back but what we didn't expect was the amount of family time that would be generated. Several couples and families all play alongside each other. This is great because it creates much better rivalry on the pitch.

The benefits of walking rugby go far beyond fitness and helping people recover from injury. It has built confidence in those who lost it playing and those who have never thought they could play.

The session has started to feed some of our senior teams as people have grown in confidence and ability. It has also given the mums, wives, and girlfriends a chance to move from the side-lines and into the action! There is also a social side to be had on the other side of lockdown. Teammates meet regularly for a coffee or a pint post session!

There is a massive buzz within Wath RUFC around Walking Rugby, and I would recommend to any club to give it a go! If you would like to come down and give walking rugby a go we meet 12.15 at the rugby pitch on Recreation Road every Saturday.

If there are any Walking Rugby teams out there who would be happy for us to join one of their training sessions or organise a friendly game, please get in touch steve.corns@hotmail.co.uk

"Never in a month of Sundays did I think I would play rugby again. Then I saw Sally's posts. The date kept getting cancelled due to Covid but eventually the day arrived and all I can say is brilliant! Love playing, love the people, love the fun and above all the physical and mental well-being" John

"I love that I can play alongside my Hubby and my dad, a proper family affair. Walking rugby has given me the opportunity to challenge myself in a way I never thought I would and it's the first opportunity I've had to play on a team." Anna



[You can read all of our AGM papers here](#)

Yorkshire Rugby Football Union – Annual General Meeting

Many thanks to everyone who was able to join our Annual General Meeting on Monday 26 July. We're grateful to Morley RUFC for hosting the event for us.

This AGM was an important event for the Yorkshire rugby community as it provided us with an opportunity to reflect on what has been a very tough year for everyone involved in rugby union, to thank those who have made a significant contribution to our game and who may now be stepping back and to agree the new and ongoing appointments within our County roles.

It was pleasing to hear that we have maintained a stable financial position. This gives us some confidence to plan for the future as rugby restarts and to work with England Rugby to agree priorities going forward.

Congratulations to David Hunter on being appointed our President and to John Riley and Phil Shand for their nominations to senior vice president and junior vice president roles. We'd also like to welcome Mark Winder to the role of vice chairman.

[You can read all of our AGM papers 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.

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](#)

Participating clubs are requested to begin injury recording from the first league match of the season with the following information (reported via the CRISP online data entry system or paper forms):

- Brief details on age, weight and height for 1st team squad players and individual consent from each player (consent signed via an online link by players to remove the need for paper forms).
- Brief details for each 1st team match (score, weather, opponents)
- Details on any 1st team match injuries causing the player to miss one match or more (8 days or greater time-loss).

Participating teams will receive a report of their team's match injuries compared with the averages for teams of a similar playing level.

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](#)

Diversity and Inclusion update

Thanks to everyone who has taken part in our workshops to develop a Diversity and Inclusion Charter for Yorkshire Rugby. We're grateful for your input and we hope to publish the Charter soon.

England Rugby has also made significant progress in developing its approach to Diversity and Inclusion. In July, it published its four main areas of focus and these are

- Game leadership – volunteer leaders within clubs, constituency bodies and the Council,
- Game play – players, coaches, match officials and club volunteers,
- Fans, followers and partners, and
- Employees and Board

Over the next year, they will provide regular updates on each of the four work streams and the current focus is on workstream one, game leadership. Their work programme includes a training programme to support with diversity awareness and guidance to support inclusive practices and showcase best practice.

[You can find the Diversity and Inclusion Hub here.](#)

Ross Barr-Hoyland | Diversity and Inclusion lead





The Yorkshire Rugby Academy

After a very brief period of rest, we commenced identification of the group to represent the County in 2021-22. We have been able to increase the full-time staffing with the appointment of Kristian Sharples as Head of Athletic Development and also to retain the services of Tom Gilchrist and Joe Bedford as Head Coach & Back coach of the Academy respectively.

We were fortunate that we had support from some fantastic facilities whereby we could deliver our sessions alongside the DPP activity for the U16 group. Thanks to Prince Henry's Grammar School, Pocklington School, Ripon Grammar School, Queen Elizabeth Grammar School and Woodhouse Grove School.

Across the two age groups we have worked with well over 200 players for 4 weeks, after which, we identified 150 players to attend an assessment event at Wetherby RUFC. We have now taken an initial cohort of 75 players into the PDG (Player Development Group) who will work in their age groups on a Friday, alternating between Bishop Burton and Woodhouse Grove. We have also identified, from within that 75, a group of 28 players who are initially badged as England Academy Players (EAPs).

The key information for players, parents and beyond is that this is by no means the finished selection, we will observe the remaining U16 players again on 4th August, there will definitely be flexibility of migration between the two summer groups ahead of our two playing opportunities as below.

As we move into the new season, it is crucial that we work closely with the County Coaching Teams at both Under 18 & 17 so that we maximise the experience for players in those ages and that we don't simply ask already heavily burdened players to do more.

To aid this we will run, in collaboration with Yorkshire Rugby, another assessment event in October half term to help identify a core group that can attend the Yorkshire Rugby development day and identify a good number of players that will play in both Academy League and/or Yorkshire Rugby pathway.

It is inevitable that we will still be hampered by the ongoing effects of the pandemic, and we have had a number of players unable to attend some session due to isolation or infection. This makes even more important that the academy and County coaches can be visible around the school and clubs come September so that we can be as effective as possible in identifying suitable players.

Thanks as always to the County and community game for their ongoing support of the programme, we really do appreciate it.

Stuart Dixon | Programme Lead | Yorkshire Rugby Academy



Developing a Strategy for Rugby Union in our County

The County's Strategic Plan is now complete.

The Plan represents 8 month's work by the Planning Group having consulted over 70 individuals, the entire Yorkshire Committee and its Sub Committees. The aim now is to formulate Action Plans to deliver the challenging goals set. It is also planned to present the Plan to the County's Districts at their next available meetings.

Here's our new purpose statement, our principles and our objectives. We look forward to working with you to deliver this ambitious strategy.

Purpose	We support and develop Rugby Union for the enjoyment of everyone					
Principles	People first		Open to all		Innovative	
Objectives	Welfare – Deliver the safety, safeguarding and wellbeing of everyone involved in rugby union	Enjoyment – Ensure everyone involved in rugby union has a positive and enjoyable experience one and off the pitch	Diverse and Inclusive – Ensure that rugby union in Yorkshire reflects the whole community	Engaging – Through two-way communication, understand and meet the needs of rugby union stakeholders	Fulfilling potential – Develop our players, referees, coaches, and volunteers in line with their preference and potential	Sustainable – Manage the constituency in a way that delivers for today and enhances the future

Barry Breakwell | Chair | Yorkshire RFU



Competitions' update

Since the last newsletter, the Competitions' Committee has carried out a range of activities. Invitations were sent to clubs to take part in the four Cup Competitions. The relevant draws have been carried out and first round matches will be played on or before October 9th. [You can read about the Cup Competitions here.](#)

The structure for the nine Merit Leagues and Tables has been agreed and clubs are currently arranging fixtures. [You can read about the Merit Leagues and Tables here.](#)

The fixture template has been issued and the 110 teams are in the process of completing this. We require ALL templates to be returned to YRFU fixtures by 31 July.

We pleased to say that Andy Proud from Ripon RUFC has been appointed as the Yorkshire Representative on North DOC. [You can read more about Andy here.](#) We'd like to thank Mike Smith for his service in this role.

We are still seeking a secretary to replace David Towler. The Yorkshire 3 & 4 League Secretary's post is still vacant. Please consider this opportunity to help clubs in these two leagues. [You can read the role description here.](#) Please contact Peter Morgan if you require any further information regarding the role of a League Secretary.

Peter Morgan | Chairman Yorkshire Competitions

Centre of Excellence – Developing Girls' Rugby in Yorkshire



We were absolutely delighted when we were able to make the announcement that a standalone RFU accredited Centre of Excellence for u18 girls had been approved by England Rugby.

Having our own Centre of Excellence is something we have always aspired to in and were pushing to achieve. When Mike Umaga from Bishop Burton came on board offering us their full support both facilities and medical, it gave us further impetus and thankfully the RFU agreed.

I'd like to thank all who were with me every step of the way in the negotiations including Mike Umaga from Bishop Burton and the Player Development team and obviously the RFU staff involved. As they say 'mission accomplished' and we are looking forward to working with Bishop Burton going forward.

The Centre of Excellence will be lead by Luke Pendlebury with a team of Assistant coaches. Interviews for Assistants will take place shortly and an announcement will be made once they are appointed.

The assessment day will take place on 10 August at Bishop Burton and the nomination process is open now. Girls can either self-nominate or be nominated by their club/school. [Here's the link to the nomination form.](#)

Any queries can be emailed to CoE@yorkshirerfu.co.uk.

We look forward to giving the girls the best development experience we can with quality coaching and facilities. to take them on their journey.

The future in Yorkshire is looking bright.

Dawn Rathmell | Rugby Development Chair | 07831 292602



Support funds available to Clubs

Following the withdrawal of the Immediate Support Fund the County now has a Rugby Reboot Fund (RRF) to assist Club's to return to play for season 2021/22. The Fund is available to Clubs for essential return to play projects including equipment. The terms of the RRF in Yorkshire are very simple:

- Grants to Clubs will be a maximum of £500.
- Club matched funding requests will receive favourable treatment.

We would ask that all requests are with us by **31 July** and during the first week in August the County RRF Approval Panel will assess applications. A grant request will take the form of a simple email setting out the following:

- Grant Request Amount
- Club funds used to match
- Project/Purpose of the grant

Please send all requests for funding to cb-honsec-yorks@rfu.com

Barry Breakwell | Chair | Yorkshire RFU



The Developing Player Programme

DPP Activity has been in full swing over the summer, with U15 activity taking place on Monday evenings and U16 activity on Wednesday evenings.

The U15 sessions initially involved players who have previously been a part of the DPP through June, with nominations invited from clubs and schools, with nominated players joining the sessions from July. We have been able to deliver to nearly 250 players over the summer, with a view to progression to the DPP at U16s next season.

The June sessions for the U16 age group have been run in conjunction with both the Yorkshire Rugby Academy and Yorkshire Rugby County Teams. An initial 4-week block was rounded off with a playing opportunity to support the selection of the Academy group for their summer activity, with 35 players moving from DPP into some Academy activity over the summer. Those players not invited to attend this opportunity have continued with further DPP sessions over the summer, leading to another playing opportunity in early August.

We are now well into planning for the 2021/22 season and will look forward to sharing more information on this soon.

Finally, a huge thanks to all the coaches who have supported the DPP activity over the summer, particularly as it has been a very busy time making up for the lost opportunities of the last 12 months. Thanks also to our host venues; Roundhegians RUFC, Bishop Burton College, Ripon RUFC, Barnsley RUFC and Keighley RUFC on Mondays, as well as Prince Henry's Grammar School, Pocklington School, Ripon Grammar School, QEGS Wakefield and Woodhouse Grove School on Wednesday evenings.'

Alex Grieves | Programme Lead | Developing Player Programme

Holiday Activities and Food Programme in Wakefield - Castleford RUFC



The Government launched their Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme – know as the 'Marcus Rashford money' because of his campaign for provision of food for children on free school meals during holidays.

This has been expanded for the summer holidays and Wakefield Council's WF Happy Healthy Holidays (WF HHH) programme is aimed at providing activities and access to a healthy meal for primary and secondary school aged children who are eligible for income-based free school meals.

Instead of having the normal holiday camps, Castleford RUFC have teamed up with two local businesses, Focus Alternative Provision (a new operation based at Castleford RUFC) and GT Sports to be one of the 33 providers in Wakefield for the programme and provide all the activity sessions and meals to satisfy the requirements of the DfE's Framework of Standards in the programme, which is quite extensive.

The activities will vary with each of the three organisations playing to their strengths and all appropriate to the age of the participants.

We've met all the council's requirements which are of a similar vein to those required for the usual Yorkshire Rugby approval of holiday camps. The camps benefits children in receipt of income-based free school meals over 4 weeks in the coming summer holidays (4 hours a day for four days a week for 4 weeks) in and around Castleford - all for free for participants.

Booking for our part of the whole programme is through the dedicated council booking site and our programme can be accessed at <https://castlefordrucf.coordinate.cloud/>.

For more information: Wakefield's site about their organisation of the programme, funded by the DfE is <https://www.wakefield.gov.uk/schools-and-children/happy-healthy-holidays>

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](#)





RFU Club Development North

Team North continues to support clubs with online workshops and webinars around topics identified by clubs. Subjects recently covered have been girls' rugby, women's rugby, Inner Warrior support, establishing links with educational establishments and website options.

The events have been open to all and well attended, we have used clubs from across the North to share their experiences and talk through how their projects have worked and what their key pieces of advice are.

Next in the diary for webinars is age grade rugby where we cover subjects such as RFU staffing changes, regulation changes, Yorkshire Schools Union, IMAS and catching up with local clubs.

If you want to book a space, please go to - <https://forms.gle/H1sDNShi1FWEEBdq8>

Each Club Developer continues to work with their local Yorkshire Districts. WhatsApp groups have been created with club chairs to help share RFU key information. If you are not in one and would like to be added please contact lauralines@rfu.com

Current staff contacts;

Club needs;

- North Yorkshire- Lauralines@rfu.com
- Central Yorkshire- Lauralines@rfu.com
- West Yorkshire- Aaronhoworth@rfu.com
- East Yorkshire- DavidWesthead@rfu.com
- South Yorkshire- Davidwesthead@rfu.com

Coaching;

- North Yorkshire- Richardyoung@rfu.com
- Yorkshire- Clarissajackson-murphy@rfu.com

Facilities;

- Yorkshire- Maxpridmore@rfu.com



RFU Representatives Report

Yorkshire RFU has two representatives, Ted Atkinson and Joe Bedford, on the RFU council. Joe Bedford has been elected by our clubs to take Jim Chapman's place and commenced in this role on 1 July 2021. Joe is 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.

They are elected by our clubs to represent our views. Ted and Joe will regularly publish a comprehensive update of their work.

You can read their update report here.



Offers in the Yorkshire Marketplace

We've created a new section on our website called the Yorkshire Marketplace. This provides a space for companies to offer services to clubs and everyone involved in the game in Yorkshire. If you'd like to us feature your products in our Marketplace, please send details to the County Office at cb-honsec.yorks@rfu.com. 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
- 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](#)

Link to the Yorkshire Marketplace 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 September 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.

Our values

Teamwork | Respect | Enjoyment | Discipline | Sportsmanship