



## Welcome from the President

May saw the return of the county championships, many age grade inter-county games, and the culmination of the leagues and merit tables.

It was a privilege to be present at many of these but disappointing that I could not attend some because of the clash of dates – I am particularly regretful that I could not get to the girls U18 and U15 festivals; areas where the county has made fantastic progress in recent years.

Credit should go to the Girls Centre of Excellence and its coaches and management and also to the U15 girls coaching and management team who have drawn praise far and wide for their programme. The work they have done will progress further in next year's innovative Girls DPP.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the clubs that have hosted me this season and all the dedicated volunteers without whom none of the activities that take place within the boundaries of our great county (even the bits that other unitary authorities have tried to pinch).

To the players enjoy your rest before pre-season starts and to the administrators keep up the good work.

There are many challenges ahead for the game, but I am sure that we have the workforce (unpaid not under-valued) to continue to progress the game in Yorkshire.

**Dave Hunter | President | Yorkshire RFU**



### Welfare

## Rugby Safe Manager Role

Yorkshire RFU are still looking to appoint a RugbySafe Manager.

The appointment will be for a fixed one-year term, with the opportunity to be reappointed each year, subject to being elected by the Yorkshire Rugby Football Union (YRFU) Committee.

The Rugby Safe Manager is accountable to the YRFU Chair of Club Development Chair in the CB's Club Development Standing Sub-Committee (SSC) and work under the authority of the RFU Lead on Player Welfare.

### Purpose

Player welfare is the joint responsibility of all involved in the game. It is important that good practice is embedded across the wider game to promote a proactive approach to player welfare and safety. RugbySafe is the RFU's game-wide player welfare awareness campaign that aims to ensure that all rugby is played in a safe and enjoyable environment

More details can be found on our County [webpage](#)

## Club Development Conference

Date for your diaries is Sunday 4th September 2022 for the Yorkshire RFU Club Development Conference.

Having postponed the previous event late last year we are keen to get the event back in the calendar.

Save the date and also a questionnaire will be sent out within the next two weeks to clubs.

## Continuous Development and Training

As we are the "off-season", please take the opportunity to review your qualifications and accreditations. There are plenty of courses available on the England Rugby Course Finder site [RFU](#).

There are webinars and online learning sessions that are easy to access and take in a wide range of aspects of running a rugby club, from grass maintenance, safeguarding, coaching to commercial management.

## 1st July Game Management System (GMS) season switch over

With rugby union fully restarting less than a year ago, it has been great to see so many players, coaches, match officials, volunteers and supporters returning to the game in 2021-22.

As the new season preparations begin, and in response to Clubs' feedback to start affiliation and set-up processes earlier, we are pleased to confirm that GMS will switch over to the 2022-23 season from 1st July.

Affiliated players from this year will automatically be de-affiliated on 1st July, so clubs can begin their re-affiliation processes earlier if they wish to. We stress that this is in GMS only; the 1st of August is when the age grade game, regulations, age bands all move over to 2022-23.

Please [click here](#) for the dynamic graphic outlining these key dates.

## Club Vacancies

We are also promoting vacancies on behalf of clubs for coaching roles so please check out the "Be Involved" section on the County website.

Examples of the current roles on the page are Hornsea RUFC and Wibsey RUFC are both looking for Head Coach applicants.

Check the page [here](#)



### Fulfilling Potential



### Engaging



## Yorkshire Rugby Academy

As the season draws to a close, it has been a busy period in and around the academy.

We have had an Under 17 specific period, which saw us have playing opportunities at Warwick University, against Newcastle, Harlequins and Leicester.

In and amongst this period we were working hard on trying to build on a good foundation this season to allow us to progress even further next season.

To this end, we have agreed that we will base the vast majority of our training sessions at the Grammar School at Leeds (GSAL). This a great step forward which not only improves the facility provision that we have, but also gives us some much-needed storage of equipment that we can utilize more effectively within training sessions.

We have also been able to strengthen our staffing structure with the appointment of Tom Gilchrist as Full Time Head Coach. Tom has been leading the Under 18 squad on a part time basis, alongside his role at Bishop Burton College, for the last two seasons.

The key area this will allow us to improve in, is the off-field support for those with most potential to push on to Premiership rugby and England Under 18s.

With this in mind, the final bit of great news from the academy is that we have had two players selected for the Under 18s Summer Tour to South Africa.

Massive congratulations to Tom Burrow and Tye Raymont along with their clubs and schools, Morley, Heckmondwike GS, West Park Leeds and Bishop Burton respectively.

Enjoy the brief off season, we look forward to getting back into pre-season in the next few weeks...

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



Fulfilling Potential



Enjoyment

## Competitions

The Merit League/Table Competitions for 2021-22 ended with the semi finals and final of the Premiership Merit League Competition.

In the semi finals Wharfedale Foresters defeated Hull Ionians Buccaneers by 38-10 and Sheffield 2 defeated Driffield 2 by 26-13.

The final was held at Pontefract RUFC on 30th April between Wharfedale Foresters and Sheffield 2. An exciting game between two highly skilled teams ended up with Wharfedale winning 37-23. Congratulations to both team's, supporters and Pontefract RUFC for hosting the match.

In the East District Merit League Final, Scunthorpe 3 defeated Barton in a close game 22-25 and in the East Yorkshire Merit Table Final Driffield 3 defeated BP by 31-12. Congratulations to all players and Tim Robinson for ensuring that East District had a successful end to their season.

Congratulations to Wharfedale Foresters, Moortown 2, Old Crossleyans 2, Ilkley 2, Old Brodleians 3, Wath upon Dearne 2nds and Hallamshire for winning their respective Merit Leagues/ Tables. I am trying to locate some trophies and if the South Clubs could have a look in their club cabinet and trace the South Merit League and South Merit Table Trophy, and let me know if they have any, I would be much obliged.



Fulfilling Potential

## New League Structure

Whilst the season is now over there is a significant amount of work to do for season 2022-23.

On 23rd May the RFU published the new league restructure for 2022-23 season and on 24th May clubs were issued with the first draft of the Merit Table structure.

As the Constituent Board for rugby in Yorkshire, we have already been in contact with certain clubs and the RFU, regarding issues around the lack of promotion. We share the clubs' frustrations and disappointment at this initial decision, and we are lobbying for a change, to recognise the hard work and commitment last season by those clubs.

Note the change from Merit League to Table. A revised version will be issued by June 7th so that Fixture Secretaries can arrange matches when the English Club Championship fixtures are issued by 16th June.

Two players meetings have been held since 11th April and as a result, communication between clubs will be improved by using the WhatsApp Portal. A scrum development programme is being launched, to coach new prop forwards following Covid-19. A more flexible Game On is being trialled.

The Yorkshire Cup Competitions will be held next season and clubs will soon be asked if they wish to take part in one of the four Competitions.

Overall, a challenging season, and one which we can build on.

## Developing Player Pathway



### Fulfilling Potential

Now we have reached the end of May, we have come to the end of the first full season of DPP activity for a couple of years! There have been some challenges restarting the programme following the tribulations of the last couple of years, but we are happy to say that we have been able to get all age groups back up and running again over the course of the season, leaving us with a strong position from which to develop the programme into the 2022/23 season.

Initially we were able to run some U17 activity earlier in the season to help this age group make up for some of the lost development opportunities over the last 2 years, culminating in game opportunities in October, from which a number of players progressed to the U17 Academy group, with a large number also being involved in the County U17 programme over the last few weeks.

With the U16s this season, we have been able to run a full programme through the course of the season, with a Yorkshire DPP festival in December supporting the identification of this season's U16 Academy group. Following this, DPP activity continued into the New Year, which culminated with a number of playing opportunities for each regional group, including one for region outside of Yorkshire. We thank the Cheshire, Cumbria and Durham DPP groups for hosting us and providing an different challenge and enjoyable experience for our U16 groups.

With the U14 and U15 groups we have had to start from the beginning and run assessment processes for both age groups, which enabled us to get activity up and running from February and going through into May, with both groups successfully taking part in multiple internal playing opportunities across Yorkshire over the last few weeks.

As mentioned above, we are now into the off-season, which will allow us to start focusing on developments for the programme for next season, planning for which is already underway. We will be excited to develop the DPP with the work currently in the pipeline, both for players, parents, and the coaches currently on the programme, and those wishing to access it. We look forward to further support for the various clubs, schools and other stakeholders across Yorkshire who continue to support the programme so well.

Finally, I wish to thank all those who have played such a key role in supporting myself and the programme this season. There are too many to mention, but all the coaches, coach developers, referees, medical staff and other various support staff and volunteers who have enabled us to get the DPP back up and running this season.

Also, to our regional host venues for the season – Bishop Burton College, Queen Ethelburga's School, Doncaster Knights, Keighley RUFC, Yarnbury RUFC, West Leeds RUFC and Roundhegians RUFC, as well as those clubs who have hosted playing opportunities for us – Wetherby RUFC, Ripon RUFC, Old Brodleians RUFC, Pontefract RUFC, Harrogate RUFC, Thornensians RUFC, West Park Leeds RUFC and Kettlethorpe High School.

It's been a long season, but we're all ready for a break over the summer, alongside development of the programme for next season, and we'll look forward to getting going again in September.

**Alex Grieve – Programme Lead – Yorkshire DPP**



### Enjoyment



### Engaging

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

Yorkshire RFU 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. If there is something, you want to promote about your club or team let us know.

Just ask for a re-tweet or a share 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.

Additionally, if you are watching a game or training with Yorkshire teams or players involved, at any level, anywhere in the world, copy us in [@yorkshire\\_rfu](#) and use [#WatchingYorkshireRugby](#) on the posts. We want to celebrate all that is going on in Yorkshire rugby and spread the word.

**Twitter – @yorkshire\_rfu**

**Instagram - @yorkshire\_rfu**

**Facebook - @YorkshireRugbyUnion**



Fulfilling Potential

## Centre of Excellence

Firstly, it was great to see players from the CoE get the opportunity to play for the Women's County team in the Gill Burns County Championship against Northumberland and Lancashire.

After an exciting season of CoE rugby, it was a fantastic testament to all the hard work and commitment put by everyone involved to see all the players develop, and for some to play County and/or for Country. It's a brilliant reflection of the work involved to develop the pathways for players. Here's to next season.

### Yorkshire RFU Girls Summer Rugby Programme

U16s & U18s

Session 1: Saturday 13th August 2022

Old Crossleyans RUFC, 10am-12.30pm

Session 2: Saturday 20th August 2022

Ossett RUFC, 1pm - 3pm

All players and abilities welcome. An opportunity to test your skills ahead of the new 22-23 season. Guest coaches from around the county delivering on both sessions, including the Yorkshire COE coaching team.

Please complete the registration form before Monday 8th August 2022.

<https://forms.gle/7THVD6M4cEnimqUk7>

If any coaches around the county are interested in coaching on the days, please email [coe@yorkshireru.co.uk](mailto:coe@yorkshireru.co.uk) for an opportunity to coach and be involved in some coach mentoring across both sessions.

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



Welfare

## Safeguarding update

The summer gives us the opportunity to prepare for next season and ensure that all our coaches/volunteers have both a DBS and have completed a play it safe course.

We know that during the season everyone is giving both weekends and usually a night during the week to their club.

Would it be helpful to take some of that pressure off by arranging a training session during the summer? Maybe an opportunity for your club to connect with those coaches, complete DBS, assist with online training, plan for next season and complete a Play It Safe all in one go?

Hopefully we can move forward together and ensure we all meet the requirements of the RFU before the season commences!

Enjoy your summer, but we are still here to help!

**Andy Pollard | Safeguarding Lead**

## Age Grade

### 17-Year-old playing adult rugby

It may be the "off-season" for rugby, but the rules remain the same. Any club wishing to have players aged 17 playing adult rugby have to seek club approval from the Yorkshire RFU.

Below is a reminder of the process and requirements.

- Clubs must complete and submit the "RFU Club Approval Form"  
Please Note: Approval of this form can take a number of days while the requisite checks are made. These include amongst others, that the Club's GMS is up to date, and all DBS records are current.
- When the Club Approval has been approved the club may then send "RFU Player Approval Form" for individual players. The player cannot play until confirmation that the player is logged is received.
- The process is for both male and female 17-year-olds wishing to play adult rugby.

The club and individual player forms should be sent to [Rugbydevelopmentchair@yorkshireru.co.uk](mailto:Rugbydevelopmentchair@yorkshireru.co.uk)

One club in Yorkshire has already received sanctions by the RFU on this issue. Any club who is found to flouting these regulations and not registering themselves, and the players, as required, will be reported to the Yorkshire Discipline Committee and could be subject to sanctions.

## Women & Girls

The age banding for female rugby will change from the start of season 2022/23. The relevant age groups are u12, u14, u16 and u18 and Seniors. We are aware that we currently have a shortage of u12's to form full teams and are hoping clubs will step forwards looking for Club/School links to attempt to enable this and other age groups.

Please get in touch if this is something you would be willing to look at, we can provide the links, but the club must have someone willing and able to make contact and arrange events.

New for the girls is the introduction of DPP at u16. More on this when we have the definite information from the RFU. County teams will only run at u18 and Seniors.



## Fulfilling Potential

# County teams update

### Girls' U15s County

Following on from the assessment day, a squad was formed of circa. 30 players and three playing opportunities in May 2022 against Lancashire and Cheshire were undertaken.

Head Coach Neil Davies had asked the squad how they wanted to play together, and the answer was 'with Sass and Pizazz!'. And they did!

Three festivals to play together in 10 and 15 a-side formats and develop both individually and as a team.

The results have been nothing short of brilliant. Check out Neil's match reports on the County [webpage](#) for more background and detail.

'1,2,3, Yorkshire!!'

### Boys' U17s County

In a similar vein to the U15 Girls, the U17 Boys team was formed in March and had three playing opportunities against Lancashire, Durham and Cheshire.

After all the disruption of the pandemic, the development of the team was always the aim, and these boys did not disappoint. Playing with great fair and ability they put on brilliant displays of Yorkshire rugby.

Their schools and clubs should be very proud of these players. A true testament to all the hard work put in to develop these players over the last few years. Lastly a huge vote of thanks to the parents and guardians who support these players in the background, its greatly appreciated,

### Girls' U18s County

Having had their home festival at Pocklington in March, the U18 Girls County team were on the road for the next two festivals. Travelling to Northwich for the Cheshire festival and then over St Helens for the Lancashire festival to play 25-minute format 15-a-side games.

They were nothing short of brilliant with some top-quality rugby on display on both occasions. A strong team of talented players with many coming through the Centre of Excellence, is another testament to the large pool of club players being developed across the county. As ever the support of parents/guardians, schools and clubs is massively appreciated.

### County Championships

The RFU confirmed County Championships for Under 20s late in 2021, and for senior men and women in 2022. All with limited budget available, Yorkshire RFU agreed to ensure county championships would be contested.

All 3 teams gained sponsorship to assist with their programmes, and our thanks goes to all those sponsors for their support

### Men's U20s Jason Leonard Championship

Under 20s had long difficult programme affected by weather

Playing games at home in a pool match vs Cheshire at Sheffield RUFC (36-12), and a Quarter Final vs Leicestershire at Castle Park, Doncaster (61-7)

Many thanks to Sheffield and Doncaster for their great days out.

These good wins led to a Semi-Final away at Kent at Charlton Park RFC where they came up short, losing to Kent (34-13)

From this team of players, 9 were selected for the England Counties North U20s squad to play against Midlands U20 and Durham Presidents XV at Durham City RFC in May.

### Gill Burns Women's County Championship and Bill Beaumont Championship

The senior Men and Women took part in their programmes against Northumberland away, and Lancashire at home and fixtures were arranged as double headers.

Both teams travelled to Whitley Bay Rockcliff RFC and two fantastic games, especially the men where at one point it was thought we were playing basketball as the score ticked upwards for both sides. Yorkshire won the day with the Women's score at 22-7 and the Men's score 52-40.

Next it was the "Grand Day Out" at West Park Leeds in the Yorkshire V Lancashire Roses fixture.

Great Weather, Great Support, Great Games, Great Hospitality, Great Results

The women opened the day winning comfortably 36-5 and men winning by a last-minute penalty 33-31 in a closely fought encounter.

Everyone had a Grand Day Out, but unfortunately due to how the league is structured, teams not taking part, and lack of semi finals between North 1 and North 2 league winner, both the senior Women and Men teams were denied an even grander day out at Twickenham, by points difference!!

Special mention to Avril and her team at WPL for our "Grand Day Out"

Thanks also to the sponsors, CAST Media Group, E.P.E.S, CK Beckett, ENCS, Pascon and Bowers Electrical

We will re-group and start to prepare for next seasons Championships and hopefully take the next step and get all 3 teams to Twickenham

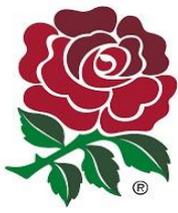
**Tony McNally | Yorkshire County Teams Chair**



## Diverse and Inclusive



## Enjoyment



England  
Rugby



## RFU Club Development North

We, as Club developers, would like to thank all involved in the game in Yorkshire, it has been fantastic to see the game resume after a worldwide pandemic. It's not been an easy season and we want to thank all of those volunteers that have reached out and worked with us across the season to ensure our game is available for all in Yorkshire to enjoy.

Please take time to step back and acknowledge the hard work and time you have all put in across the season and what you have achieved bringing the game back from a complete shutdown.

Thanks again and we look forward to working with you going forward.

Aaron, Max and Laura

Please remember Club Developers are in attendance of District meetings and can be contacted on the below.

North Yorkshire and North Leeds- [LauraLines@rfu.com](mailto:LauraLines@rfu.com)

West Yorkshire- [Aaronhoworth@rfu.com](mailto:Aaronhoworth@rfu.com)

South Leeds, South Yorkshire and East Yorkshire- [Maxlecount-ward@rfu.com](mailto:Maxlecount-ward@rfu.com)

## Who would be a referee?

Referees – people love to hate them, but the reality is there's no game without one. And just like players, coaches, and volunteers in rugby, referees travel around to different clubs, week in and week out, primarily for the love of the game.

In my early days as a referee, I faced regular speculation because of my gender. Pre-match misconceptions were made about my ability to referee and my understanding of the game, making the task of gaining the respect of players, coaches, and spectators that extra bit harder.

But by the end of the match, I often received comments of "you're the best ref, we've had all season".

See, there's an advantage to being a female referee – most people actually buy into the sentiment that you're there just to facilitate a game, in an unbiased and fair way.

Male refs don't always get that same belief.

Refereeing has given me invaluable experience which I've called upon at university, in job interviews, and at work – for example, managing diverse personalities, communicating effectively, and dealing with conflict.

When I first left university, I didn't have much work experience, so being able to draw upon my experiences in rugby helped me get through a job interview. And employers love sports people!

Throughout my refereeing career, I've been able to meet so many great people and be a part of incredible experiences. I referee in the women's professional league (Premier 15s), am an Assistant Referee in the National Leagues, and have ventured all over Yorkshire refereeing different clubs across different levels.

I've been able to travel throughout Europe for 7s and 15s and was part of the match official team at the Red Bull International 7s in May 2021, an Olympic warm-up tournament for Team GB, Ireland, France and USA.

I've been in the middle at Twickenham twice and refereed at several Premiership stadiums across the country.

I've been an Assistant Referee in the Women's Six Nations, and a reserve referee for other women's internationals.

And, within Yorkshire, I was the first female to referee a Yorkshire 1 league match, and a North One East league match.

All of this happened, because one day long ago I said "Yes" to qualifying as a referee and I joined my local referees' society.

The support of a local referee society is invaluable. They will provide training and education sessions, mentoring, coaching and off-field support.

Whether you want to be the next Sara Cox, or help your local club get a game on – a referee society will support you no matter what your ambition is.

The tide is changing for women (and girls) in sport, and that's no different for female rugby referees. There are more opportunities now than there ever have been.

There's more support. There's more resource. And there's a more positive attitude towards females in all aspects of the game.

Refereeing will also help you understand and appreciate the game in a whole new way. Be part of the team and come and join the referee family!

–

**Nia Parsonage**

**Premier 15s Referee National League & Yorkshire Match Official Referee Mentor**



### 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](#)

# South Yorkshire Volunteer Awards

South Yorkshire District had 26 nominations to RFU Honda and South Yorkshire District awards

The District held their 14th awards night at Castle Park Doncaster and were joined by 64 volunteers for a curry night and an enjoyable presentation evening, hosted by YRFU President Mr David Hunter. Castle Park did not let us down fantastic room, communications, and food. All Nominees received a certificate and beanie hat from RFU Honda



Welfare

South Yorkshire had 6 categories

- South Yorkshire volunteer
- Club volunteer
- Age Grade
- Referee
- Unsung Hero
- Chairman's Award

The Management Board had a difficult task to select the winners with nominations ranging from long service (with a club Long Service to South Yorkshire, and a Yorkshire Clubs Outstanding Service) to an association turning a club's fortunes around, and another for just being there on a Saturday in the background

The **Honda Award for Unsung Hero** was awarded to the Rotherham Phoenix trio Leanne Ghent Clark, Andrew Clark and Jo Clark and they will represent Yorkshire at the National Awards

**South Yorkshire Age Grade** winner was Owen Saunders of Rotherham Phoenix

**South Yorkshire Volunteers of the Year** The Mother Tuckers at Rotherham Phoenix for setting up and running Rotherham Phoenix catering, and being highly successful with the bacon sandwiches highly recommended

**Referee of the Year** was Kevin Crawshaw for outstanding contribution to South Yorkshire referees, as a Ref Administrator Trainer Assessor over a number of years

**South Yorkshire Club Volunteer of the Year** was Helen Oliver of Sheffield Tigers for long service to one club

**South Yorkshire Unsung Heroes** were Graham Severn, Neil Thompson, and Gary Scholes for always being there in background every Saturday and no one really notices.

**South Yorkshire Chairman's Award** was presented to Kathleen McNally, probably the most unspoken Volunteer in Yorkshire Rugby after 33 years of being a league secretary finally hanging her pen.

The South Yorkshire management board would like to thank all the volunteers in our District, because without them we can not play our great game, and we will be planning next season's Volunteer Evening as soon as we start the new season in September.



Enjoyment



## 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 <mailto:adminsecretary@yorkshirerfu.co.uk>.

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 July 2022. If there's anything you would like to share with the Yorkshire rugby community through this update, please email [adminsecretary@yorkshirerfu.co.uk](mailto:adminsecretary@yorkshirerfu.co.uk).

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



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Supporting and developing Rugby Union  
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Welfare



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