



Notebook

EC COMMUNITY GAME GROWTH UPDATE

Do you think the game has become stale?

When we look at growing the game, we immediately think of how we can make the game more attractive to capture a new audience and recruit new players. We look at different versions of the game like 7s, Xrugby 7s and Touch to try and introduce new players to the game with the hope of them transitioning to the 15s game.



Is that the right approach?

Are we not growing the game if we have a successful touch programme and why is it so important to get them playing contact rugby? Could the next 15s rugby players not be the sons and daughters of the touch players who are having a great time playing and have a sense of belonging at a club?

I recently had a conversation with a good friend and big rugby man who said he thought the 15s game was getting boring and we should be pushing a faster, less complicated game like 7s to a new generation of players. Is 15s rugby too complex for new players and is it stifling a new audience with all the different and sometimes confusing laws.

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Club Development, Volunteering, Funding & Facilities Programme 18-19

EC COMMUNITY GAME GROWTH UPDATE CONTD.

One of the best adverts for 15s is coming up with the 6 nations just a few days away. No one could say this competition is boring and with all the home nations looking to build something ahead of this year's World Cup, we should be in for some very exciting rugby.



Of course, Youth Rugby is key to a lot of game growth and player retention. There will always be a drop-off, but you'd think if we get more younger players playing the game and a bigger player base, the drop off shouldn't hurt as much. Did you know that on average, 43% of 18-year-old players fail to progress to play adult rugby and over 80% of 16-year-olds are not involved with their club or rugby by the time they reach the age of 20?

We all know the possible contributing factors to this drop-off are leaving school, starting work, moving away or full-time university education etc. but there are other contributing factors such as the quality of coaching they are getting, the successful management of their pathway into senior rugby and their club experience to name a few. Should clubs be considering at an early age, the kind of players they are likely to retain in the longer term and ensure those players are getting every chance to develop. These players are the ones who will generally sustain clubs in later youth age groups and hopefully into senior rugby but not if they are left on the side-lines every week in favour of feeding a coach's winning ego. How many age groups collapse because a coach is only interested in winning every week? As we go from Minis to youth it's far more important to keep all players engaged because when it gets to the 15 aside game these are the boys that will be your bread and butter.

There are many differing views to where Colts rugby sits in the pecking order at clubs but every time, we look at retention and drop off we talk about Colts. Many clubs seem to be almost reliant on their colts to support their perhaps over ambitions when entering one too many teams into a league, sometimes to detriment of the Colts team itself. Transition should be carefully managed in each case and only be done strictly in line with the needs of individual development and not the needs of the senior team but how often is that the case. What would happen if the senior playing age went up to 18 or even 19 and how many clubs would be able to have more than a 1st or 2nd XV if that was the case. The truth is many games are being cancelled in the lower leagues because clubs are overstretching themselves and only fulfilling a fixture when one of their other teams isn't playing. How is that sustainable? In reality, it isn't but would scrapping lower EC league rugby in favour of a merit league with teams playing fewer games help.

The Game growth articles are full of questions and topics to hopefully get you thinking. If you have anything you need to get off your chest or would like something talked about on this page, please contact us in confidence at gamegrowth@ecrugby.com

We will also be heading out to Norfolk for the 2nd leg of the tour at the next Norfolk RFU meeting on Feb 27th at the Best Western Hotel in Norwich and then onto Cambridgeshire on March 6th to listen to all things game growth and player retention related. Hopefully see you there.

Darren Wright – Chair Community Game Growth

Over the past few months, a number of referees and coaches have expressed concern about spectators being too close to the field of play. Home teams are reminded of their responsibility to keep the pitch appropriately separated from the spectating area.



OPPORTUNITIES AT EASTERN COUNTIES

If you are enjoying being involved in rugby and want to get more involved, or if you know of somebody who does, then we hope that you will think about getting involved at a county or Eastern Counties level. We are always on the lookout for new volunteers – so even if none of the specific roles advertised below appeals – why not send us a note letting us know a bit about what you'd like to do and some sense of what your background is – don't need a full CV, but a sense of what you would be bringing to the table would be fantastic.

Send it to loverugby@ecrugby.com – and we will take it from there.

Chairs, Managers, Volunteers

This year we have some specific roles we are looking to fill – some for our AGM on 1 June, some for next season, but no need to wait if you are interested in letting us know. There are also roles available at the three county unions and those are listed below as well. As above, send expressions of interest to loverugby@ecrugby.com and we'll be in touch!

Role	What do they do?
Rugby Safe Manager	The purpose of this role is to make the playing of rugby within the CB as safe as possible whilst ensuring player welfare standards are maintained at all times.
Chair of Club Development	The current Chair, John Winders, will become President of Eastern Counties at the AGM and we need to identify someone to take over this crucial role – which involves close liaison with the three counties and with the RFU team to support clubs in developing their organisation and facilities. A full handover will be provided, and the new chair will benefit from John's considerable expertise in the role.
Chair of Volunteering	The Volunteer Co-ordinators support clubs develop their volunteer base – more volunteers, better recognised, better supported. Working with volunteer co-ordinators in each of the three counties the Chair of Volunteering will work within the Club Development Committee.
Chair of Funding and Facilities	also working within the Club Development Committee, the Funding and Facilities chair will work closely with the RFU and counties to ensure that the support available to clubs is well spent and appropriately targeted.
Assistant Treasurer	To support the Hon. Treasurer, the Finance Committee and the Management Committee – particularly in the process of monitoring financial performance and the delivery of our action plan.
Chair of Coaching Committee	this post is currently occupied by Chris Capps-Jenner our Director of Representative Rugby and he is looking to step down to focus on the larger role. Working with the County Coaching Co-ordinators and the RFU professional team, the Coaching Committee's role is to promote coach development across Eastern Counties – and to organise the highly successful annual coaching conference each summer.
Boys Under 17/18 Manager	the incumbent, John Mackay, is relinquishing this role after many years as he becomes President of Norfolk RFU. The manager's role is to organise the coaching team, communicate with parents and players, clubs and opposing teams to ensure that the under 17 and 18 programmes run smoothly through the season. A challenging but highly rewarding role working with some of the best young players in our clubs

OPPORTUNITIES AT IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE, NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK

Role	Where?	What do they do?
Sponsorship Co-ordinators	Cambridgeshire Suffolk	Work with our Eastern Counties Sponsorship Co-ordinator, Davide Taylor – identifying opportunities in those areas to get sponsors on board.
Volunteer Co-ordinators	Cambridgeshire Norfolk Suffolk	All three counties are looking for someone to take the lead in this area: supporting clubs to support and recruit volunteers and working with the Chair of Volunteering at Eastern Counties to ensure that no stone is left unturned to ensure that this vital resource is recognised and developed.

Coaches

The process for coaches is slightly different – please send information about your coaching background to our Director of Representative Rugby, Chris Capps-Jenner at chriscappsjenner@sas-es.com Eastern Counties and the three counties run representative programmes at adult and age grade levels for both male and female players.

All of these programmes require coaching teams which are put together by our Director of Representative Rugby.

If you are coaching at a club or have experience of coaching in any environment – and would be interested in joining one of our teams then please let Chris know at the email above.

At Eastern Counties, we aim to improve the rugby experience for all involved in the game in our three counties – and to do that we have a continuous need to bring a wider range of people into our work – if you want to contribute then please put yourself forward. If you are not sure if any of the above are exact fits for what you want or are able to do – then let us know what you can do and we'll take a look at where you might fit in.

U13 FESTIVALS - SUNDAY 6th JANUARY

Eastern Counties ran the second round of the U13 Festivals on Sunday

13 teams from 10 clubs in Suffolk played at Ipswich

10 teams from 6 clubs in Cambridgeshire played at Saffron Walden

7 teams from 7 clubs in Norfolk played at Holt

Over 500 boys across the CB played!!

All competitions were seeded in order to allow a fair standard of competition, allowing all boys to develop at their own team's level.

Consequently, virtually all games were close and very competitive.

Competition Managers at all 3 events reported great days with some excellent rugby, excellent behaviour and a superb atmosphere

All teams progress, in waterfall fashion, to 5 final festivals, taking place at 1pm on Sunday March 3rd where they will play similarly match teams from the other counties.

Tier 1 – at Wymondham

Tier 2 – provisionally at Thurston

Tier 3 – at Sudbury

Tier 4 – provisionally at Stowmarket

Tier 5 – at Shelford

Wymondham, Holt, Shelford A, Cambridge A, Bury A, Ipswich A

N Walsham, S Walden, Royston, Colchester A, Southwold, Hadleigh

Crusaders, Cambridge B, S Walden B, Sudbury, Woodbridge, Ipswich YM

Beccles, Ipswich B, Bury B, Stowmarket, Newmarket, Ely

Norwich, W Norfolk, Colchester B, Harwich/Mistley, Royston B, S Walden B



Any queries to Ross Cowie, rossrugby@btinternet.com

MITSUBISHI MOTORS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS – NOMINATIONS OPEN



Nominations for the Mitsubishi Motors Volunteer of the Year Awards will open on 8 January – please [click here](#) to nominate a deserving volunteer. Volunteers are key to our game and now in its third year, the Mitsubishi Motors Volunteer of the Year Awards recognise and celebrate the vital role that is played by our volunteers all over the country. The Volunteer of the Year Awards are aimed at recognising those who have impacted their communities in the last 12 months specifically. Nominations are open until 24 February and shortlisted nominees will be announced in March. For more information, please [click here](#).

As part of the Mitsubishi Motors Volunteer Recognition Programme, club volunteers who already have match tickets for the Guinness Six Nations fixtures at Twickenham, are able to register up to four tickets for pre-match hospitality in the British Airways Fan Village.



MITSUBISHI MOTORS VOLUNTEER HOSPITALITY – GUINNESS SIX NATIONS FIXTURES

The aim of this recognition incentive is to identify and thank grassroots volunteers for their valued contributions to the game. We will be serving hot food and a variety of beverages, opening two hours before each match and closing just before kick-off.

Registration is open for one game only, and to volunteers who did not attend hospitality at one of the Quilter Internationals in November 2018. To register for tickets, please click on one of the links below:

[Sunday 10 February – England v France \(3.00pm kick off\)](#)

[Saturday 9 March – England v Italy \(4.45pm kick off\)](#)

[Saturday 16 March – England v Scotland \(5.00pm kick off\)](#)

WHEREABOUTS FEBRUARY



Roger Pierson
RFU Council Member

- 2 Dublin (Ireland v England)
- 4 Thurston RFC - GMS Workshop
- 5 EC Club Development/F&F
- 6 Cambridgeshire RU County mtg
- 7 Ipswich RFC
- 8 RFU Council Meeting
- 10 England v France
- 12 ECRU Governance Group
- 13 Coventry - RugbySafe meeting
- 16 Watton RFC
- 17 Wymondham RFC – Women's 7's
- 23 Wales v England
- 27 Norfolk Management meeting



John Winders
Chair Club
Development

- 3 Woodbridge - Suffolk Chadacre Cup
Quarter Final
- 4 Thurston - GMS Workshop
- 5 Club Dev/Funding &
Facilities/Volunteering Committee
- 9 February – Felixstowe
- 16 Mersea Island
- 24 Shelford - ECRU U20's v
Hertfordshire.



Robert Temple
ECRU Honorary
Secretary

- 9 Southwold vs Saffron Walden
- 12 Governance – Stowmarket
- 16 Dereham vs GY-Broadland
- 24 EC U20s vs Hertfordshire.



Darren Wright
Chair – Community
Game Growth

- 3 U16s V NLD U16s at Derby RFC
- 4 U15 and U18 Girls at Diss RFC
- 13 Northampton Saints RPPG
- 18 U15 and U18 Girls at Diss RFC
- 20 U16s at Thetford RFC
- 23 Northampton Saints U13 DPP at
Finborough School
- 24 U16s V East Midlands at The Leys
School
- 25 25th EC Youth and Girls Fixture
meeting at Diss RFC
- 27 Norfolk RFU Open Meeting



Ian Forton
ECRU President

- 2 Ireland v England
- 9 Hadleigh RFC
- 10 Haverhill Ladies RFC
- 16 March Bears RFC
- 24 Shelford ECRU U20 v
Hertfordshire



Alasdair Bovaird ECRU
Chairman

- 2 Scotland v Italy (on TV)
- 3 Kent v EC u20s at Tunbridge
Wells
- 4 GMS Workshop at Thurston
- 6 Southwold v Saffron Walden
- 16 Wisbech v Woodbridge
- 24 EC Girls matches or East
Midlands v EC u16s



Pamela Clarke
ECRU Treasurer

- 2 Dublin (Ireland v England)
- 5 EC Club Development/F&F
- 23 Cardiff (Wales vs England)



Chris Capps-Jenner
Director of
Representative Rugby

CLUBMATTERS WORKSHOPS COMING UP

Living Sport has announced a series of planned workshops across Cambridgeshire for local community clubs to access. These two-hour workshops will be led by experienced facilitators who aim to develop skills and improve knowledge of those involved with running community clubs. Ideally more than one person from each club should attend as this will enable procedures to be implemented back in the club environment.



Workshops cost £10 per person. The following workshops are coming up: -

- **28 February** – Club Structures – Hampton Library and Leisure Centre, Peterborough, 6.30-8.30pm
- **14 March** – Club Marketing – March Town Cricket Club, March 6.30-8.30pm
- **11 April** – Club Participant Experience – Hampton Library and Leisure Centre, Peterborough, 6.30-8.30pm
- **7 May** – Club Volunteer Experience – Meadows Community Centre, Cambridge, 6.30-8.30pm
- **TBC June** – Business Planning – Meadows Community Centre, Cambridge 6.30-8.30pm

Bookings can be made via the Living Sport website here: -

<http://www.livingsport.co.uk/events-courses-2/upcomingevents/>

Sally Gibson will answer any further queries; contact sally.gibson@livingsport.co.uk



PAYMENT OF PLAYERS UPDATE

We would like to remind clubs that Payment of Player declarations are due to be submitted between 1 March and 30 June 2019. The declarations will include any Gross Payments of Material Benefits paid or payable, between 1 June 2018 and 31 May 2019. The declarations are mandatory for clubs who wish to be eligible for RFU benefits, and clubs that do not complete a declaration within the designated window will lose access to these benefits for the 2019/20 season.

Regulations pertaining to payment of players were introduced on 1 August 2018 as part of Regulation 7 – Players, Approaches, Contracts, Payments and Player Movement. The regulation can be found in full [here](#), and a list of FAQs that we have produced can be found [here](#). A guide on how to submit the declaration can also be downloaded [here](#). For any further enquiries, please contact paymentofplayers@rfu.com.

FIXTURE SECRETARIES' MEETING

DISS RUGBY CLUB ON MONDAY 25TH FEBRUARY 2019 AT 6.30 FOR 7.00

This meeting will be for Youth (U13 through to U18), and also, for the first time, for Girls Fixtures – so please pass onto your Girls contacts.

I have also written separately to your Youth Fixture Secretaries

We are currently working on the Playing Calendar (more complicated than ever !!) – but this will, of course, be issued beforehand.

We have to submit our calendar to Twickenham for approval by 2nd February – there will obviously be some sort of time lapse after that.

Look forward to seeing you then

Ross Cowie
Chairman – CCPD – Eastern Counties



ECRU IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE A PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH HARROD SPORT.

HARROD SPORT is the principal suppliers of pitch-side equipment to Rugby Clubs and National Bodies and is the exclusive supplier of equipment for the Rugby World Cup in Japan.

Our Agreement will extend until the 2021-2 season.



This deal will benefit our Clubs through the provision of discounted equipment at a preferential ECRU price. In addition, we have agreed with HARROD SPORT to investigate the practicality of creating new designs of posts, with the idea of encouraging their use in Schools that are developing Rugby. This will highlight our intention to widen our Community development role where resources and use are limited.

For further information about the range of equipment from HARROD SPORT, please use the link below:
<https://www.harrodsport.com/rugby/c-rug>

If your Club wishes to take advantage of this offer, then please contact HARROD SPORT Sales Team on 01502 – 583515, or e-mail: sales@harrod.uk.com and quote 'ECRU'.



Eastern Counties Award Course Calendar 2018/19

England Rugby Training Course Descriptors [Click Here](#)

Online Course Booking Guide - [Click Here](#)

England Rugby Coaching Award – [Click Here](#)

Course	Date/Time	URL
England Rugby Refereeing Award University of East Anglia 3 Feb 2019	3, 17 Feb 2019 9am - 5pm	http://www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/courses/search/#/search?id=&c=&eventid=226340076
CPD Coaching Gamechangers Colchester RFC 6 Feb 2019	6 Feb 2019 7.30pm - 10pm	http://www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/courses/search/#/search?id=&c=&eventid=226341028
CMOD Communication & Management Diss RFC 21 Feb 2019	21 Feb 2019 9am - 12pm	http://www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/courses/search/#/search?id=&c=&eventid=226342494
England Rugby Coaching Award Beccles Free School 24 Feb 2019	24 Feb, 10, 24 Mar 2019 9am - 5pm	http://www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/courses/search/#/search?id=&c=&eventid=226340334
Play It Safe West Norfolk RFC 25 Feb 2019	25 Feb 2019 7pm - 9.30pm	http://www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/courses/search/#/search?id=&c=&eventid=226342766
CPD Principles of Attack Diss RFC 4 March 2019	4 March 2019 7pm - 10pm	http://www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/courses/search/#/search?id=&c=&eventid=226341352
CPD Principles of Defence Diss RFC 1 April 2019	1 April 2019 7pm - 10pm	http://www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/courses/search/#/search?id=&c=&eventid=226341353

***Courses highlighted in RED indicate those that may not go ahead if more people do not book on them, so please book soon to secure a place!**

A live calendar of CPD and Award courses, can be found clicking on this link:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1F9l3TQwMCriNQyMvA3wCiEnKfGB0dpmGnndHt1ffPa0/edit?usp=sharing>

JOIN EC FOR DRINKS AND NIBBLES IN THE CAR PARK



NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

If you would like your club article to appear in this Newsletter, then please send it (preferably with a related photo/image) to: -

Notebook@ecrugby.com

by the third Friday in the month.

Russ Clarke

ECRU – Chair Marketing and Communications

Eastern Counties Rugby Union

Tomo Industrial Estate
Tomo Rd
Stowmarket IP14 5AY
01449 614 674
Admin@ECRURugby.com

-  ECRURugby.com
-  [/ECRURugby](https://www.facebook.com/ECRURugby)
-  [@ECRURugby](https://twitter.com/ECRURugby)

Eastern Counties will be in the Cardinal Vaughan Car Part on Sat 16th March (from 2.30pm-4.30pm *30mins before KO). Anyone attending from an Eastern Counties Club, especially volunteers are invited to attend and have a drink and nibbles courtesy of our sponsors Greene King and Musk Sausages



EASTERN COUNTIES RUGBY UNION

Join us for Beer and Bangers!











EASTERN COUNTIES RUGBY UNION

CLUB DEVELOPMENT

FUNDING & FACILITIES

VOLUNTEERING

PROGRAMME OF ACTIONS 2018 – 19

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

John Winders – Chair Club Development – 01473 824359 – john.winders@btinternet.com

John Langford – Vice Chairman – 01502 568836 – johlangford52@gmail.com

John Baines – Norfolk Rep – 01603 279122 & 07919161603 - jbaines35@googlemail.com

Sam Carpenter – RDO, Norfolk – 07872 827151 – SamuelCarpenter@RFU.com

Steve Drawbridge – Cambridgeshire Rep – 07515 119605 – stevedrawbridge@live.co

Barry Male – Suffolk Rep – 01255 509700 – barrymale10@hotmail.com

Chloe McMorran – RDO Cambridgeshire / Suffolk – 07715 856728 – chloemcmorran@rfu.com

Nik O'Dwyer – Volunteer Support – 07877401508 - nicholas_odwyer@hotmail.com

Roger Pierson – RFU Council Member – 07974 619114 – rogerpierson@btinternet.com

Pete Shaw – RFU Area Facilities Manager – 07734 070674 – petershaw@rfu.com

PROGRAMME OF ACTIONS

Sustainability - It is the fundamental objective of Club Development to promote the sustainability of all Clubs in the CB. Any Club with any developing sustainability issue is recommended to make contact with their County Representative if advice is required.

Governance – It is the intention of Club Development to ensure that all unincorporated and non-CASC Clubs understand the benefits of incorporation, being registered as a CASC or a Charity and are aware of the methods for achieving this status. Any Clubs with related queries are invited to notify their County Representative of their needs.

Volunteering - The recruitment and retention of volunteers is expected to be a key part of each Club's Action Plan. The importance of the role of the Club Volunteer Coordinator will be promoted and support provided as required for CVC's that will help improve the recruitment and retention process. Key information on the subject of volunteering will be delivered to Club's when received. Any Club that wishes to obtain advice on this topic is invited to make contact with either Nik O'Dwyer or their County Representative.

Running Rugby Workshops - On 25th October a well-attended **Groundsmen's Evening** was held at the Bury St Edmunds Club to promote good practice in pitch maintenance. A second event is to be held at the Ely Club on **28th March 2019**. Further details of this event will be circulated closer to the date. Secondly, to ensure the Game Management System is further embedded in the RDO's are answering any queries raised in relation to the use of **GMS** on a one to one basis with the Club involved. Any Club with a query is invited to make direct contact with their RDO. In the medium term it is the intention to deliver a **GMS Workshop** on **4th February 2019** at Thurston RFC. The workshop programme will be designed to upskill clubs to fully utilise the system and to cover the requirements of RFU Accreditation. Further workshops may be arranged depending upon demand expressed by the County Unions.

Community Engagement – Club Development is offering support to Clubs to become more involved with their local communities. There is a budget of £1k to encourage Clubs to develop appropriate community engagement activities that will strengthen development. Applications for funding are invited from Clubs which will be assessed by the Committee upon receipt, * (see Applications for Financial Support). Further advice can be obtained from the County Representatives if required.



Alternative Forms of Rugby – Club Development is encouraging playing opportunities for the wider community to promote the social game and the attractiveness of Clubs. Applications are invited for modest funding to support leisure rugby including beach rugby, walking rugby, vets, touch and tag. The total budget is £500. Applications will be assessed on receipt, * (see Applications for Financial Support).

In addition during **April / May 2019** Club Development will be supporting our **Air Cadets Rugby Touch Programme** which will involve Squadrons throughout Suffolk and Norfolk and link in with their local rugby club. This scheme will be delivered by our RFU Local Delivery Team..

Goalpost Provision - An objective of the Funding & Facilities Action Plan is to ensure that unsafe goalposts or those in poor repair are replaced and that posts are provided on new pitches. Clubs are invited to notify their County Representative of cases where new posts or post repairs are required in order that consideration might be given to the provision of financial support. In total £1,600 has been allocated to this initiative. **Closing date** for applications **28th January 2019** * (see Applications for Financial Support)

Pitch Maintenance Grants – Applications are invited from all Clubs to apply for two £1k grants to help improve playing surfaces. The objective of the Funding & Facilities Action Plan here is to encourage improvements to the quality of the playing experience and to sustain fixture lists. **Closing date** for applications **31st March 2019** * (see Applications for Financial Support).

Helping Hands Grants – Applications are invited from clubs for financial support ranging up to £1k towards projects of a clubs choice relating to a social space or other development, possibly taking advantage of interest in the Rugby World Cup, that will be delivered and lead to an increase in the rate of member recruitment. A total of £4,250 is on offer. Grants will be awarded to Clubs on a £ for£ basis. **Closing date** for applications **28th January 2019** * (see Applications for Financial Support).

Pitch Flags – To help needy clubs maintain standards six sets of pitch flags are currently available. Any interest should be directed to John Langford.

Volunteer Recognition –

3rd November 2018 – All ECRU Volunteers were invited to a beer and sausage event in the Twickenham car park before the Autumn International game against South Africa.

9th March 2019 – A similar event is planned before the RBS 6 Nations game involving England and Italy.

In addition ECRU Volunteers are being invited to pre-match buffets before the following games:-

2nd December 2018 – U18 fixture against Essex at Shelford.

24th February 2019 – the Jason Leonard U20 Championship fixture against Hertfordshire at Shelford.

12th May 2019 – the Gill Burns County Championship game against Oxfordshire at Stowmarket.

18th May 2019 – the Bill Beaumont Senior Men's County Championship against Northumberland (venue tbc).

Leadership Academy – It is the intention this season to provide a forum to support and develop attendees of former Leadership Academies.

Encouragement for the 18/24 Age Group – The objective is to grow the game by encouraging the 18 to 24 age group who have either returned to rugby or have transitioned from age grade to adult rugby during 2018/19. To sustain this objective one hundred tickets are to be offered to attend the 2019 Quilter Cup with transport to Twickenham for the game, for qualifying players together with coaches and volunteers who have made a significant contribution to this age group. Nominations will be sought during **March 2019**.

Recognition Awards - To celebrate the game in the Eastern Counties invitations will be extended to lodge applications for the ECRU Recognition Awards. The categories of award are:-

- Club of the Year
- Lifetime Achievement Award
- Volunteer of the Year
- Coach / referee of the Year
- Young Ambassador of the Year, and
- Club Facility of the Year

With the exception of the Volunteer of the Year Award, nominations for these **Recognition Awards** will be invited during **March 2019**.

This season the Volunteer of the Year Award will be linked to the Mitsubishi Motors Volunteer Awards. Clubs will be aware that Mitsubishi Motors are the official performance partner to England Rugby and support grassroots rugby as part of this partnership through the Mitsubishi Motors Volunteer Recognition Programme. The aim is to enable both the RFU and ECRU to:-

- i) Identify and thank volunteers, no matter what their role, whether it be on or off the pitch, behind the scenes or on the committee, for their valuable and outstanding work across the game in clubs, schools and colleges; and
- ii) Inspire more people to volunteer and support rugby in the local community.

Nominations will be invited for the **Mitsubishi Volunteer of the Year Award** in **December** with a deadline for entries set for **24th February 2019**. Volunteers will be selected from the nominations and invited to Mitsubishi Motors Dealership events that will be held in the Eastern Counties after the close of the season where their work will be recognised and where they will receive a branded prize. One volunteer per Dealership Event will be selected as a finalist and invited to an awards event at Twickenham Stadium. The **ECRU Volunteer of the Year** will be chosen from these finalists and recognised at the **ECRU Annual Awards Dinner** on **1st June 2019** at **Diss RFC**.

The recipients of the other five Recognition Awards will also be invited to the **Annual Awards Dinner**.

NatWest RugbyForce 2019

This initiative was launched in November with clubs being invited to register before **17th March 2019**. The NatWest RugbyForce weekend will occur across **22nd and 23rd June 2019**. Rewards for registering include:-

- The opportunity for Clubs to receive support packages of £500 plus promotional material;
- The opportunity for a club to receive a grant of £3k; and
- Marketing and communications advice.

The Funding & Facilities Group will play a full part in the selection of clubs to receive these awards. All Club Secretaries are aware of the registration process.

***Applications for Financial Support**

Applications for financial support identified in this document should be submitted within the stipulated time period using the form found at <https://goo.gl/forms/qzKDRwnAxTUjt2O63>