

TOUCHLINE

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ROB ANDREW TO LEAVE ROLE AS RFU DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL RUGBY

GARETH MILLS

Rob Andrew will leave his role as RFU Director of Professional Rugby at the end of the current season.

Andrew, who resigned from his position having instigated discussions with RFU CEO Ian Ritchie for a number of months, has agreed that he will continue to work on completing the latest agreement with Premiership Rugby that will run through until after the 2023 Rugby World Cup.

Andrew, since joining the RFU in 2006, has made a major contribution to England Rugby and will leave the domestic game and England teams in excellent shape.

The former England international previously held roles including Rugby Operations Director and Elite Rugby Director at the RFU and led the negotiations that resulted in the existing eight-year Heads of Agreement deal between the RFU and Premiership Rugby.

In his current role he has overseen regional academies, medical, anti-doping, coaching development, referees, rugby events and competitions, rugby operations and the Greene King IPA Championship. He also sits on the Professional Game Board, European Professional Club Rugby Board and GB Sevens Executive Committee.

Rob Andrew, Professional Rugby Director of the RFU said: "After 10 years at the RFU and with the impending conclusion of the second Heads of Agreement, it feels like the right time to step down at the end of the season.

"My role has primarily been to set up a structure that would ultimately deliver long-term success to England through a pipeline of talented players coming through the academy system. Bringing together the clubs to support the new academy scheme required recognition from the RFU to reward them to bring on successful academy players and I believe we have achieved this.

"The staff and coaches who have delivered this at both club and England junior level are the unsung heroes and I would like to



give them the thanks and recognition they deserve. The pipeline is going from strength-to-strength and I believe will deliver Eddie Jones and his coaches the world-class players that England need to ensure increasing success going forward.

"The key to the relationship success between the clubs and the RFU has been the development of the academy system and desire by club and country to produce home grown players. The RFU now invests with the clubs significantly in the academy system and the England Qualified Player scheme. This has led to a progression of successful age grade teams with the U20s, in particular having reached six out of the last eight World Rugby U20 Championship finals and winning two of the last three.

"I hope and believe that I will leave a secure foundation to build a successful future and I will continue to give my support in any way I can to achieve this."

Ian Ritchie, CEO of the RFU said: "We are obviously disappointed to see Rob leave the RFU after 10 years which has seen him bring about a great deal of positive change at the professional end of the game in England in that time.

"Improving the relationship between the RFU and the professional clubs has been very important for us and Rob has been instrumental in that process. His experience at the time was vital as a former England player and having spent 10 successful years developing the Newcastle Falcons following the game going professional in 1995.

"Since that time Rob has delivered an English solution to an English challenge and the strong relationship between the RFU and the professional clubs should provide the basis for sustained success over the course of the coming years.

"The sustained investment in the English system is now producing a stream of talented age grade players who have quickly progressed to the England senior team. Rob was the architect of this structural legacy and should be justifiably proud of his achievements."

NIGEL MELVILLE WILL BECOME DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL RUGBY

GARETH MILLS

USA Rugby CEO Nigel Melville will join the RFU this summer as Director of Professional Rugby.

Melville will be responsible for professional rugby in England for the RFU, with particular focus around managing relationships with Premiership Rugby, the English Qualified Player scheme, the EPS agreement and the academy system. He will also lead on the player development pathway for men and women and the sevens programmes.

He will take over the remits of Rob Andrew (Director of Professional Rugby) and Joe Lydon (Head of International Player Development) and will be a member of the Executive reporting to Ian Ritchie.



Ian Ritchie, CEO of the RFU said: "We are delighted to welcome Nigel to the RFU in what is an exciting time for England Rugby for both the men's and women's games. He will bring a great deal of expertise from not only his experiences from working in England but internationally at USA Rugby."

Nigel Melville said: "I would like to thank USA Rugby for their support and I am very proud of what has been achieved in the organisation and the game in the US over the last decade. I feel I am leaving USA Rugby in a very strong place to continue the growth it has experienced in recent years and keep improving internationally.

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CUETO MARKS APPROACH OF U20 CHAMPIONSHIP

NICOL McCLELLAND

As the world's best Under 20s players were due to gather in Manchester for the World Rugby U20 Championship, former England and British & Irish Lions star Mark Cueto became official ambassador to back the event.

The tournament will see 12 teams compete over five match days, including the semi-finals on June 20 and the final on June 25. France will face Argentina at the AJ Bell Stadium when the tournament kicks-off on June 7, while South Africa will take on Japan at Manchester City's Academy Stadium.

England share pool B with Scotland and Italy, as well as 2010 World Rugby U20 Championship runners-up Australia.

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See the Future Stars of Rugby at the World Rugby U20 Championship in Manchester. To buy tickets, visit www.englandrugby.com/u20championship #FutureStarsofRugby

NIGEL MELVILLE WILL BECOME DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL RUGBY

“However, I am now hugely excited about this opportunity to join England Rugby in what is a very buoyant time. This year already the men have claimed the Grand Slam, the domestic game has continued to thrive, the U20s are looking to win the World Rugby U20 Junior World Championship in Manchester and the men and women will compete in the sevens competition at the Olympics in Rio for the first time ever.

“I am looking forward to helping bring further success to England teams.”

Rob Andrew added: “Having played with and known Nigel for a long time I believe that he is the best candidate to be appointed to take over the reins from me and I wish him well and I will support him in any way I can going forward.”

Melville, the former England international, has over 15 years professional rugby coaching experience and is in his 10th year leading USA Rugby, one of the fastest growing national governing bodies in the world.

He became Wasps’ first Director of Rugby in 1995 when rugby went professional and helped them win their first professional Premiership title in 1996, followed by three National Cup Final appearances, winning two. In 2002 he moved to Gloucester Rugby winning the National Championship Final, Powergen Cup and topped the Premiership table by a record 15 clear points.

He previously worked as a performance consultant for Reading FC during the 2005-06 season assisting them to win promotion into the Premier League.

A playing career saw him represent England 13 times and captain the national side on his debut as a scrum half in 1984 against Australia. Melville also played for the British and Irish Lions against New Zealand in 1983 and played domestically for Yorkshire, Otley, Headingley, Wakefield and Wasps.

During the 1980s he was head of UK Promotions for Nike and was Director of Rugby at Otley Rugby Club between 1990-95.



HATLEY JOINS ENGLAND TEAM

England Head Coach Eddie Jones has added scrum coach Neal Hatley to his backroom staff from the end of the season, moving from Bath Rugby, where he has been scrum and defence coach since 2012. Prior to that the former prop was head of London Irish’s academy and scrum coach, a position he took up after he retired from the professional game in 2007. He will work two days a week with the England team and the rest of his time working in the RFU’s player development pathway.

Jones said: “We’re delighted to have brought Neal into the coaching team. Successful English rugby teams have always had strong, powerful, dominant scrums. Neal is an experienced coach and I’ve no doubt he will thrive in an international environment. He’s a great addition to the team and will complement Steve Borthwick and Paul Gustard very well. We’re looking forward to working with him ahead of the game against Wales and tour to Australia.”

CUETO MARKS APPROACH OF U20 CHAMPIONSHIP

Cueto (36), who on the wing played a pivotal role for England and Sale Sharks, said: “Having lived in and around Manchester for the past 25 years, it’s fantastic to see a competition like the World Rugby U20 Championship head to my home city, especially after the buzz of Rugby World Cup 2015.

“It will underline the importance of rugby union in the North and, having played all my professional career with Sale Sharks, I know the support the Under 20 lads can expect when things kick-off on June 7.

“I came into rugby quite late at the age of 17 and the experiences I had in those early years helped give me a great career. The friendships you make, lessons you learn and skills you develop at age grade level shape you as a player, so it’s a massive opportunity for the guys heading into the World Rugby U20 Championship. I’m delighted to offer my support for the tournament and look forward to watching the future stars of rugby come under the spotlight in Manchester.”

As part of the RFU’s commitment to delivering the best World Rugby U20 Championship yet, a range of programmes will make sure everyone can get involved. A trophy tour is taking place throughout May, culminating in the official launch event on June 4, while team welcome ceremonies will ensure the visiting nations find a home away from home in the Greater Manchester area. There is a journalism competition for budding rugby writers, while a theatre group will be touring the city, telling the story of the sport. For more details on how to get involved, visit www.englandrugby.com/u20championships/get-involved.

RODWELL’S A SEVENS RECORD BREAKER



EMMA KENNEDY

When James Rodwell captained England at the Singapore Sevens last month (April) he set a new record of 69 consecutive tournaments on the HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series. The 31 year old’s 68 consecutive caps in Hong Kong equalled the record held by South Africa’s Frankie Horne.

Head Coach Simon Amor said: “James has set an incredible record that can’t be broken when you consider the intensity of the game now. To go 69 tournaments back to back is phenomenal. Most players can’t string together a handful on the bounce and for him to reach that number, especially as a forward with an aggressive style of play, shows just how durable he is. He really is a superstar.

“He is incredibly professional, as you must be to play this game, especially for as long and consistently as he has. What is also impressive is his desire to continue developing. He is the senior member of the programme but is still improving and has more years in him. It will be exciting to see how much better he can become as his experience continues to be so important for the young guys and their personal development.”

THAT’S THE SPIRIT MAGGIE

Women’s Rugby World Cup winner and TV personality Maggie Alphonsi has become the official ambassador for the Spirit of Rugby nationwide RFU project which aims to grow the game by appealing to young people not traditionally involved in rugby.

Funded by Spirit of 2012, the two-year project was set up to ensure that the spirit of the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics and Rugby World Cup is felt across 15 communities, with Spirit of Rugby devised, led by and targeted at 16-24 year olds

Maggie recently caught up with young volunteers interested in careers in rugby who were taking part in work experience at Twickenham Stadium and discovering how the RFU works. She explained how important volunteers are and why she wants to be involved.



Maggie said “Spirit of Rugby is an amazing project which will have a real impact on the lives and development of young people and the game. The volunteers I met were outstanding and I know that if you give young people opportunities they can achieve great things.”

Maggie, who earned the title Maggie the Machine as an England player, was awarded an MBE and became the first woman ever to receive the Rugby Writers’ prestigious Pat Marshall Award, as well as being named Sunday Times sportswoman of the year. She began her own rugby journey at school and knows first-hand the importance of volunteers to young players.

“I discovered rugby at Salisbury Secondary School in Edmonton, where my PE teacher was Lisa Burgess, who captained the Wales women’s team.

She sent me to train at Saracens when I was 14,” said Maggie. “I went with a friend, who soon decided it wasn’t for her, cutting the numbers by a quarter! There was just me and a couple of other girls there. With the help of Katie Ball, who ran the club’s junior section, we managed to get about seven young players together and I tasted my first competitive rugby at a festival.”

The Spirit of Rugby covers Rugby World

Cup host cities and team bases and communities not directly impacted by Rugby World Cup 2015, the RFU working with local community groups, County Sports Partnerships, universities and rugby clubs to support volunteers’ projects.

Steve Grainger, RFU Rugby Development Director said “We are already seeing some fantastic results from across the projects. Highlights include a regular touch rugby session bringing 50 new players to the game in football-mad Portsmouth, with a new generation of qualified coaches and referees; and Brighton volunteers using the Spirit of Rugby to break down barriers and common misconceptions associated with disability sport.”

With rugby sevens’ debut the Rio Olympics fast approaching and the World Rugby U20 Championship in Manchester this June, Spirit of Rugby projects are hoping to capitalise on this exposure.

Rebecca Tweedy, a Spirit of Rugby volunteer in Brighton, on work experience at Twickenham, said: “I got lots of helpful advice on how to grow my project. I’ve set up a new Facebook page for the event and a team email address so that organisations and companies can help us promote mixed ability and disability rugby.”

Linda Grant from Spirit of 2012, said: “Spirit of 2012 funds projects across the UK that help people become more active and increase the wellbeing of individuals and communities – and those are exactly the kinds of opportunities the RFU programme is providing. It’s especially great to see the young people really driving it in their communities.”

For more information on Spirit of Rugby and upcoming projects and events across the country, go to www.EnglandRugby.com/SpiritofRugby

HARBOROUGH'S CLEAN SWEEP

Market Harborough RUFC are celebrating winning all the season's Leicestershire junior county cup trophies, their U11s, U13s U14s and the U16s making it a clean sweep of the junior county cup trophies for the South Leicestershire club. With the U10s and U11s also successful in the Cup, the U12s making it to their Cup final and the U9s winning the County Bowl, it has been a very successful season for silverware for Harborough.



Mini Junior chairman Mike Fletcher said: "It is a great achievement to win all the junior cups in one season. More than 500 kids play rugby at Market Harborough and those who played in the winning teams are representatives of their age groups and of the whole club. We play inclusive, mixed ability rugby week in, week out and retain our players so that they are pushing for selection for cup games as they mature within their age groups.

"The players who are currently the strongest help the developing players improve and by keeping them all involved we give them all the opportunity to enjoy the game and to represent us in competitions. Those who won the U10 cup this year will be a different group by the time they compete as U16s. We hope those who leave our junior section now will join our Colts and then help our senior club sides build a strong future".

NEW DIRECTORS JOIN RFU AT EXCITING TIME

GARETH MILLS

Joanna Manning-Cooper took up the new role of RFU Director of Digital, Marketing and Communications this month (May). She is responsible for the digital, marketing and communications strategy, integration, planning and delivery. Her remit includes: England Rugby content and channels, team and corporate communications, media relations and media operations, CRM, the England Rugby brand as well as setting and delivering the fan's stadium spectator experience and match-day sports presentation.

Reporting to CEO Ian Ritchie, Manning-Cooper is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and said Ritchie: "Joanna brings a wealth of experience, knowledge and expertise which will be vital for England Rugby as we aim to utilise all available channels to reach more people and drive engagement to grow the game at all levels.

"I would like to thank Will Chignell, who leaves his position as Head of Communications, for his hard work and dedication over the past four and half years. We wish him the best in his new role at the America's Cup in Bermuda."

Manning-Cooper was Communications and Marketing Director for three years at England Rugby 2015, organisers of the Rugby World Cup 2015. The tournament delivered record ticket sales and digital reach, and the tournament's marketing campaign won a Sports Industry Award for the best integrated marketing campaign in 2014. Her previous roles include Head of PR and Media for LOCOG, organisers of London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games and Director of Global



Communications for the Financial Times. She has over 20 years' experience in communications roles.

Joining the RFU later this summer as Chief Commercial Officer is Simon Massie-Taylor currently Commercial Director at the British Olympic Association (BOA)

He will be responsible for all of the RFU's commercial operations and revenue-generating activities, including: sponsorship, commercial partnerships, broadcast deals, ticketing, stadium debenture sales and boxes, hospitality, licensing and retail.

Reporting to RFU CEO Ian Ritchie, Massie-Taylor will be a member of the Senior Leadership Team and the RFU Management Board.

Ian Ritchie said: "Simon's appointment comes at an exciting time for the RFU. His commercial knowledge and experience, and proven track record in developing

and delivering commercial strategies and programmes in international sport will help us generate funds to invest in the game, and continue to grow and develop rugby in this country."

Simon Massie-Taylor added: "I am thrilled to be joining the RFU at an exciting time for the game in England. I have loved my time at the BOA and within the Olympic movement over the past seven years and now I am looking forward to this new challenge in a sport that I am passionate about."

Before joining the BOA in 2014, Simon was Senior Vice President, Commercial, for Tough Mudder in New York and, prior to this, was part of the award-winning commercial team for LOCOG, organisers of London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. Previous roles include an Associate position at the investment bank Rothschild and Sons and an accountant at KPMG in London.



ENGLAND RUGBY LAUNCHES 24/SEVENS

SUZI MURRAY

England Rugby's 24/Sevens, an exciting new community sevens series, aims to increase participation among men and women in clubs via new and consistent playing opportunities for sevens players at grassroots level.

For the first time, domestic sevens festivals will be affiliated by England Rugby and aligned under the 24/Sevens competition structure. The new series will increase quality playing opportunities at recreational and competitive level for male and female teams, with local qualifier winners progressing to regional play offs and the competition culminating in a 24-team national grand final hosted by England Rugby at the end of July.

RFU Development Director, Steve Grainger said: "Sevens is an exciting format of rugby and with it being recognised for the first time at the Olympics in August 2016 it has potential to grow the game and create a lasting legacy."

England Sevens Head Coach, Simon Amor said: "This is a really exciting time for the game.



Sevens is a fantastic way to enjoy rugby over the summer as well as challenge core skills and fitness. It's great that 24/Sevens is encouraging more players to get involved."

England Sevens Head Coach

(women), Simon Middleton added: "The England sevens approach is focussed on creating an environment to ensure players are challenged and continually improve. The new sevens competition structure at community level is a positive step in aligning and connecting grassroots and elite strategies and will enable us to attract more women players into the sport and ultimately grow the game."

The local qualifier events take place throughout April, May and June, with regional play offs in the north, midlands, south-east and south-west in July, and the national grand finals at the end of July.

For more information on how you can be part of the 24Sevens series visit www.englandrugby.com/24sevens/



WORTHING SECURE DRAMATIC U17 CUP VICTORY

Worthing lifted the U17 Cup as Fergus Guiry's last minute score secured a dramatic 20-13 triumph over York at the AJ Bell stadium.

York's early 10-0 courtesy of Thomas Woffendin's try and Sam Elliot's penalty was followed by the West Sussex side hitting back to be three points in arrears at the break as Jack Forrest touched down and Marcus Hendry added the extras. Hendry then kicked two three-pointers in the second period putting Worthing went in front for the first time.

York levelled the game at 13-13 but Worthing finished the stronger, Guiry grabbing the final points.

Head coach Jack Roberts said: "We always had confidence in ourselves that, if we could keep the ball, we would be able to put enough tempo on it to win it. It was something we talked about at half-time and said if we didn't learn lessons in the second half then this game would have got away from us, but the boys resolved it and it was a great moment at the end."

York boss Paddy Stephens praised the quality of rugby on offer. "It was a great game," he said. "There were two good sides and in the end they converted their last chance in the last minute, which was a wonderful try."



Featuring regularly on englandrugby.com, as well as in Touchline, our Real Rugby Stories celebrate the achievements of those involved in the grassroots game. Whether it's supportive mums or medics, chairmen taking clubs places, or children with inspirational stories, let us know about your remarkable people by emailing: JoeOgden@rfu.com

NANDO STILL SWEEPED UP IN REFFING AT 80



Ferdinando Dimatteo arrived in England, with his hairpins and stylists scissors, in 1964. Having left his native Italy, he became beloved of the ladies in London's Soho, where he specialised in blow drying and pinning long hair into swept-up creations. Then he settled in Wellingborough and opened his salon, 'Hair by Nando'.

With his wife Adriana working for the Italian Consulate and his boys Gino and Patrick at Wellingborough School, what Nando didn't anticipate was swapping his scissors for a rugby referee's whistle, particularly as he had never played the game and his English was less than perfect.

But Nando, like many dads, got swept up by the game, stood in at a school match when the referee didn't turn up, and is still refereeing three times a week aged 80.

"I used to help out with the transport when my boys were playing at Wellingborough School and I started to follow the game. I had been a touch judge and one day when there was no referee I said I would do it. I enjoyed it so much that I took a course, joined East Midlands Referee Society. You got a whistle and off you went!"

And was it true that Nando's stock phrase was "Wadaya want? You want a scrummy down or a kicky back?"

"Oh yes," he agrees, "I had everybody laughing. At the beginning, not having played and with the language problem, it was very funny! Now I have experience and refereeing schools rugby

during the week and club rugby on Saturday and Sunday, I still enjoy it so much and want to carry on as long as I can. I feel better for it, much better than if I was sitting at home and my wife is happy to send me out refereeing. After 54 years of marriage, she feels sorry for me if I haven't got a game."

Not only has Nando refereed hundreds of domestic matches, in 1996 he refereed Argentina v Italy over 35s. "That was great," he recalls, "because they could understand me."

And he has also been an RFU liaison officer for international teams, including during the 1992 Rugby World Cup and for the U20s in 2002.

Says the RFU international tours and 7s manager, Pam Cartwright, "I first met Nando when he was recommended to look after the Italian team during the Six Nations - when Italy first joined. He was a breath of fresh air, he knew the role of liaison officer but also knew a lot of the management and players, had close bond with them, having looked after Italian teams.

"He knew how the Italians worked and what they needed and how to fulfil that. He was hilarious, always jolly, keen and very personable. He just got on with it in the most professional but unassuming way. I'm not really surprised that he's still refereeing, he seems so much more active and younger than his actual age.

For Nando age is simply a number and if a player steps out of line, he's got theirs!



OLDHAM'S UNSTOPPABLE COACH

John O'Grady isn't your typical head coach. At 75, he continues to lead training at Oldham RUFC twice a week as well as on match days and in the last season has overseen the club's rise to the top of the North Lancashire leagues. His commitment is even more impressive considering just 10 years ago he donated a kidney to save his son-in-law's life.

Having joined the army aged 16, John was first introduced to rugby while part of the Lancashire Fusiliers and has been involved in the game ever since. During his 27-year army service, which included several tours around the world as a Regimental Sergeant Major and then as a Captain, John played rugby regularly and took up coaching when he retired from service in 1984.

Then came John's biggest gift. "In 2006 my son-in-law Martin suffered total kidney failure," says O'Grady. "He was only 40 but the doctors said he didn't have much time to live. We had everyone in the family tested to see if we could find a kidney match but no one was."

John decided to get tested himself and remarkably was near enough an identical match. "The odds of that happening are unbelievable," says O'Grady, who adds that the next challenge was convincing Martin and the family that he was able to survive the operation.



"I was 65 at the time but I'd always looked after myself in the army and I knew I could get through the procedure," says O'Grady. "My family weren't sure but I made it clear that this was the only hope. Martin was dying."

The operation was a success for both Martin and John who was soon back on the rugby pitch.

"I've given most of my life to rugby and I still have a passion for it. It keeps me young," he says, having coached numerous teams across the country including the Sale Sharks Academy and Lancashire. John is also a committed fan and will be attending the World Rugby U20 Championship in Manchester this June with his entire family.

"We're really looking forward to it," he said. "To be able to see the future of stars of rugby leaves you with a good feeling that the game is in a good place."

Every year, John holds an annual dinner to raise money for Kidney for Life and Manchester Royal Infirmary where he and Martin received their treatment and to date have raised close to £15,000.

John has no plans to retire. "I've got coaching, I've got golf twice a week and I've got my grandchildren. They keep me busy enough and I'm so grateful to still be part of the sport."

To get involved with coaching yourself, have a look at the range of courses available here:

www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/coaches/

PLAN AHEAD FOR COACH & REFEREE COURSES

Aspiring coaches and referees lead busy lives, so the RFU is making planning easier by having specific windows for courses from 1st July 2016. A mixture of in and out of season courses will allow clubs, schools, colleges, universities, CBs, referee societies, coaches and referees to plan their attendance.

RFU Coaching Award Courses - Coaching Children in Rugby Union and Coaching the 15-a-side game will take place in September, October, November, February, May and June

RFU Refereeing the 15-a-side game courses will feature in September, October, November, January, February, May and June.

If you would like to host a CPD or Foundation course at your club please contact your local RDO or CRC

TEN FOR THE FUTURE

Ten members of the Northumberland Referee Society Youth Development Squad recently took part in a CPD evening looking at roles and responsibilities of Assistant Referees. After their training the 14-17 year olds be working in teams of three with established members of the Referee Society. The Young Referees were recruited from a series of courses where 83 young people from clubs and schools took part in L1 Referee Courses, from Clubs and All Schools. All signed up to become Young Rugby Ambassadors YRA and nearly all are logging hours as volunteers.



RFU WHISTLES UP REFEREE COMMUNITY BY LAUNCHING ENGLAND RUGBY REFEREES ASSOCIATION

Are you refereeing in England at any level? Then you will want to sign up to the newly-launched England Rugby Referees Association (ERRA).

Don't miss out on news and training tips, exclusive training and development Whistle-Stop videos and all that ERRA has to offer via e-newsletters, social media, and the dedicated website: www.englandrugby.com/erra.

In future anyone attending a Level One/Level Two Refereeing course will be automatically enrolled. If you already hold a Level One/Level Two Referee qualification, or an Entry Level Referees Award/National Foundation course qualification, please sign up now via the website.

With a predicted 1,000 new members in the first fortnight, the news has been spreading on Twitter @ERRefereesAssoc which now has over 1,800 followers, and via the Keep Your Boots On Facebook page.

With plans to connect ERRA to the RFU's My Rugby Academy there will be even more training materials available.

Watch the launch video:

www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/referees/erra/

Don't delay join today at www.englandrugby.com/erra
For more information, contact Clare Daniels



THINK RUGBY... THINK RUGBYSAFE

The RFU launched their overarching RugbySafe programme earlier this season to provide clubs, schools and other rugby activity organisers with all the information and guidance they need in order to provide safe playing and training environments.

RugbySafe provides an easy to access and understand approach to all player safety and welfare matters. The initiative is building momentum and clubs can expect to receive more information on RugbySafe and the resources available over coming months.

For more information now please go to www.englandrugby.com/rugbysafe/



DON'T BE A HEADCASE

Despite the increased awareness of the RFU's Don't be a HEADCASE programme there is still work to do to ensure everyone has a clear understanding of what approach should be taken with ANY suspected concussion. Concussion is an important issue and players, coaches, referees, teachers and parents must all be aware and involved in making sure that the long-term welfare of players is paramount. Don't be a HEADCASE is based on the RECOGNISE, REMOVE, RECOVER, RETURN principles and provides guidance and information including best practice guidelines for returning to play after a suspected concussion.

The RFU has free resources and encourages everyone to complete one of the short online Don't be a HEADCASE concussion education awareness modules and there is also a short animation video targeted at players, both at www.englandrugby.com/headcase.

You can also request free changing room posters and information z-cards by contacting www.englandrugby.com/rugbysafe/education

NEW CPD COURSES SUPPORTING AGE GRADE RUGBY

From September the rugby experience for children will be improved through the implementation of the Age Grade Competition Review for U7 - U13 players in all clubs and schools.

It is important that coaches and referees working with children understand how the changes will affect their rugby delivery, and how they can use the adapted game to make sure every child enjoys the game and achieves their rugby potential.

The Game Development Department have put together a series of short practical CPD courses for coaches and referees to become acquainted with both the rules and the philosophy behind the changes. From July, there will be age grade specific workshops available for every age group from U7 through to U13. They have been piloted and the training workforce updated by Area

Training Managers in order to equip every coach and referee with the knowledge and skills to give every child an excellent rugby experience and keep them coming back.

The New Rules phase the introduction of the skills needed to play the game, and emphasise the behaviours everyone should show on and off the pitch. The workshops provide a bank of activities and games appropriate to every age group so that sessions are enjoyable and safe and develop rugby's values in youngsters.

Local RFU staff will soon be speaking to your Club Coaching Coordinator about organising the courses in your area. More information about age grade rugby can be found here: <http://www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/players/age-grade-rugby/>



NEW EMERGENCY FIRST AID COURSE



Next season will see the launch of a new look Emergency First Aid in Rugby Union (EFARU) course, specifically developed for coaches and volunteers appointed as a recognised First Aider for an age group or team.

The existing RFU First Aid course has been delivered by an external provider, but now the RFU has developed its own course with 1st4Sport the awarding body and has recruited and trained more than 50 First Aid Educators who will deliver courses all over the country.

The EFARU course is a fully recognised Emergency First Aid at Work course and sits on the Qualifications and Credit



Framework, which provides learners with a nationally recognised qualification transferable to the workplace, other sports, or which can be credited towards a larger qualification.

The six-hour course (plus pre-course on-line learning) can be delivered as one session or as two three-hour sessions. The course costs £50, which is very competitive when compared to other Emergency First aid at Work courses.

To arrange a course at your club, school etc. please contact your local Rugby Development Officer or go to www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/courses/search to check for any courses running in your area.

For more information on this course and other First Aid and Player Safety courses please go to: www.englandrugby.com/rugbysafe/education

PATRON PRINCE HARRY JOINS INJURED RUGBY PLAYERS

Patron of the RFU Injured Players Foundation (IPF), Prince Harry joined nine of their clients as the IPF partnership with neurological specialists Hobbs Rehabilitation brought a demonstration of rehabilitation techniques and technology.

Thanks to the IPF, injured rugby players are staying active, continuing their studies, returning to employment and living a full family life, and Prince Harry saw some of this demonstrated, as he chatted with clients and their families.

RUSSELL CLARK is 50 this year and was injured in 1992. His new power chair, he says, “has lifted my whole mood. I fell into a rut after 20 years but this chair has changed that.”

It is a thing of wonder, allowing Russell to stand up or lie flat and able to travel over uneven ground. Says Russell’s mum Lorraine, “At 70, and with a shoulder and back problem, the IPF have taken a lot of work off me thanks to funded exercise and equipment which makes Russell stronger.”

“I can move around the house upright now,” says Russell with the help of his voice synthesiser, “though I have to remember to duck when going through doorways!”

TOM HUGHES, has just been “walking” up and down a treatment room using a cutting edge robotic exoskeleton. He’s a former army officer who loves challenges. Just returned from serving in Afghanistan he was seriously injured playing rugby, and the IPF have helped towards his academic studies and supporting him in continuing with a very active life.

In the final stages of a doctorate on international relations, at 33 Tom is a member of London’s Clidive club and will be a qualified diving instructor by the end of the year. With help from a Maidstone Rugby Club friend and businessman, Simon Wright, Dazcat Catamarans are creating a customized, wheelchair-accessible catamaran, with the ultimate aim of sailing and diving around the world.

Next month (June) he is competing in Race Across America, as part of a team of 8 from the Army and rugby, cycling from San Diego to Washington.

“It’s four hours on, four off and I’m on a hand bike. Apparently, we have to maintain 18 miles an hour for eight days non-stop, so it’s a bit of a beastling!” he says. But it’s beastling in a good cause as they are raising funds for Team Endeavour.



NICK WEBBORN, Professor of Sport & Exercise Medicine at the University of Brighton, demonstrates his IPF funded adapted Segway and races off over the grass outside the treatment centre. Nick, who was Chief Medical Officer at the Invictus Games and the London 2012 Paralympics, was injured in 1981.

“The RFU makes injured players feel valued,” he says. “The IPF charity really changes lives. I was unable to interact with the natural world but funding for this machine has enriched my enjoyment of life. It means I can go out, hold my wife Steph’s hand, own a dog. I can take my cocker spaniel, Archie, out over mud or sand, over the Downs, walk him independently in the woods. It’s the kind of real enjoyment others take for granted.”

“The Foundation helps in so many ways, adapting houses, keeping people mobile and there’s a recognition of the need to enjoy life and a sense of community. We know they are looking out for us.”

They have been looking out for 23-year-old **MAX LEVENE** (third from left) who having completed a Business Economics degree at the University of East Anglia, is now studying for a Development Economics



Caroline Searight, the IPF Client Services Manager



When Prince Harry met: Tom (above, left); Nick (left)

Masters. The IPF is funding his carer’s accommodation and helped him to spend six months in Ethiopia, where his parents live, trekking.

“I couldn’t have done my Masters without them and they have also provided things like my special electrical stimulation exercise bike that helps me with mobility and fitness and make a real difference. It’s so easy to apply for the help you need. After my Masters I want to find work. I think economics in the Civil Service would be my dream job.”

ROSS MORRISON is chatting about the forthcoming Rio Paralympics and his prospects of qualifying for the Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby squad, having made his Paralympic debut at the 2004 Athens Games. He currently coaches the GB Development squad and works at Salisbury Spinal Unit with Wheelpower, encouraging people with spinal injuries to take up sport.

He and his wife Eileen have a toddler son Luke, who is 17 months old. “Having moved house the IPF is helping with adaptations for Ross which is brilliant as it means he can lead a totally independent family life,” says Eileen.

“Yes, it means I get to be a dad and I am able to look after Luke,” agrees Ross. “The IPF have always supported me and funded equipment and my chair for wheelchair rugby. They have enabled me to be a full time athlete and the difference they make is huge.”

AARON WILLIAMS and his wife Elizabeth, introduce eight-month-old daughter Alexa to Prince Harry. A former Basildon full back, Aaron is spending less time now tearing up the turf in his adapted dirt buggy and devoting time instead to fatherhood.

“The IPF have been there for me since I was injured in 2007, with advice, financial support, house adaptations, helping pay for

Why not discover more about the work of the IPF and

MONEY RAISED BY GRAND DRAW TOPS £5MILLION

Since it was launched over a decade ago the England Rugby Grand Draw has been able to help hundreds of clubs and schools raise money for everything from new kit to helping with fund raising for a new pavilion or even going on a tour. This year the total raised since it started has reached £5m.

The Draw itself took place last month (April) at Barking RFC, home of RFU President Jason Leonard, who drew the major prizes from a container of all 400,000 stubs.

The 2015/16 Draw was again a big success with almost 550 clubs raising just short of £400,000, ninety percent of which is retained by them as a tax free donation through the RFU Draw Society.



Lucky winner of the top prize of £10,000 was Dan Teasdale from Kirkby Lonsdale RFC in Cumbria. When he was first told of his good fortune he was concerned that the ticket may have belonged to his father David. But a quick check of the handwriting on the stub avoided any family problems!

Selby RFC achieved top place for the club raising the most money, at £10,900. While, once again Bishops Stortford RFC managed to sell more than £7000 of tickets - making them the most successful club in the history of the Draw - with the total they have benefited from ticket sales past £50,000.

Simon Winman, promoter of the Draw at England Rugby commented, “The popularity of the Draw is undiminished, even after more than a decade. It is still a great fundraiser for the community because it is completely risk free for our clubs and schools, who just have to sell the tickets. Let’s hope even more take part next year.”

Visit www.englandrugby.com/granddraw



Ross (below, left to right); Jon; Aaron; Liam (right, top to bottom)



carers, my off-roading and now my electric chair, which means I can go out with the family," he says.

A serving police officer, now working in the "back office", Arron explains, "I wanted Alexa to be part of us going out as a family, that's really important. My new chair means she won't miss out now."

JON TERRY, a city trader, was playing for his local team Old Brentwood when he damaged his carotid artery and suffered a stroke which has affected the right side of his body and his speech. The IPF are funding specialist rehabilitation and exercise equipment.

Says his wife Marissa: "Jon was the one who handled all the family finances, while I looked after our daughter Eleanor, who's now four. When he was injured in November 2014, the IPF helped with everything, financial advice, support, travel to the hospital. They have been amazing and knowing you are not alone makes

such a difference. We have been to Twickenham internationals for the Rugby World Cup and RBS 6 Nations matches, you meet and talk with other clients which is fantastic."

JACK FISHWICK (28) is both IPF client and sports injury specialist, and says that his IPF funded rehabilitation at Hobbs "made my general strength and core control heaps better and my sitting posture improved a lot. When I came out of hospital I was under weight and wasn't in great shape. I'm working part-time at the moment as a knowledge resource for clinicians and trainers.

"After my injury in March 2014, the IPF were there, funding hotel accommodation near the hospital for my family, travel expenses for my girlfriend and providing a huge amount of reassurance and emotional support for mum and dad."

LIAM O'KEEFE (26) had travelled to the Hobbs Rehabilitation Centre from hospital in Salisbury, having been seriously injured just four months ago playing for St Mary's Old Boys, his specialist rehab will be IPF funded.

"Meeting and chatting with Prince Harry has been awesome," he says. His mum Carol and dad Alen, have always supported his rugby. Alen was on the touchline when Liam was injured and Carol says, "It was one of the few matches I missed. The IPF have been our rock, they are just at the end of the phone and take the pressure off."

Says Alen: "What I've discovered through all this is that the IPF strapline #rugbyfamily is not just words. When you need them and you see it in action you realise that there is a rugby family there for you and it's tremendous."

Caroline Searight, the IPF Client Services Manager said, "Everyone very much enjoyed spending time with Prince Harry. Having him as our Patron is an honour. His support really is invaluable."



RUNNING FOR INJURED PLAYERS

There were 21 runners taking on the challenge of completing the 26.2 miles of the 2016 Virgin Money London Marathon in support of the RFU Injured Players Foundation. Together they have so far raised an incredible £34,000 which will help the IPF continue supporting seriously injured rugby players across the country.

Feeling inspired and want to get involved? Why not join the IPF Team for the 2017 Virgin Money London Marathon! To find out more visit www.rfuipf.org.uk/run



RFU CHOOSES TICKETMASTER AS EXCLUSIVE TICKETING PARTNER

Ticketmaster UK, a Live Nation Entertainment company, is extending its relationship with the RFU as exclusive ticketing partner. The announcement follows the successful Rugby World Cup project which sold over one million tickets to fans for the tournament.

The renewed contract will see Ticketmaster providing its Ticketmaster Pro solution to the governing body, giving the RFU the ability to sell tickets to its fans through a fully branded experience, including the option for fans to manage their own tickets online.

RFU Chief Executive, Ian Ritchie said:

"Ticketmaster has been a trusted partner for over 15 years and we are looking forward to continuing our relationship with them. Their flexible technology, and expertise in sport, ensures that we are providing the greatest possible service for our fans."

Adam Newsam, Managing Director Ticketmaster Sport, said "Working in partnership with the RFU for so many years has given us a deep understanding of their unique business. We work hard to ensure we are providing hands on support to the team at all times, delivering the best ticketing solutions."

how you can help at RFUIPF.ORG.UK

GUERNSEY & JERSEY CLOSE CONTESTS

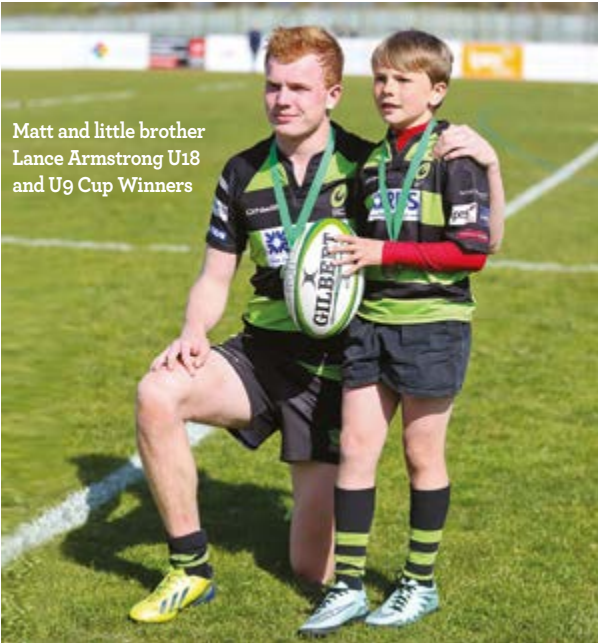
The annual clash between Channel Island neighbours Guernsey and Jersey, the Siam Cup, first contested in 1920 and one of the oldest rugby competitions, is preceded by the islands’ academies competing for junior honours.

Guernsey hosted their rivals, with 47 games played over five hours in four different locations. Teams from under 7s to under 18s, over 700 players and coaches all took part in front of large crowds.

The younger age groups played a round-robin event to give them the most rugby in the time available, with honours going to Guernsey in the under 8s and under 9s. Jersey won at under 11s, 12s and 13s, with the under 10s sharing their trophy.

At Footes Lane, the home of Guernsey Rugby, five great games were played, and girls were competing in the festival for the first time, with teams at under 13 and under 16. The introduction of the girls’ game has been a real success story in Guernsey and first up were the under 13s, where Jersey took the honours, followed by under 15s where the home team came out on top.

In the under 14s, a strong showing by Jersey saw the trophy heading back to them this year, with the under 15s a closely fought contest, the strength in depth of the Jersey squad allowing



Matt and little brother
Lance Armstrong U18
and U9 Cup Winners

them to snatch victory towards the end of the match

The under 16s, the penultimate game was only the Guernsey players’ fourth full match of the season, due to the pressures of school work and exams. The final whistle saw Jersey win by nine points.

The main event of the day, the under 18s Colts match saw both teams playing some great, expansive rugby providing a real showcase of young Channel Island rugby talent. The match was closely fought, a penalty in the dying minutes securing victory for the home team by only three points.

For coaches Matt Chammings, Seoirse Lee, Ian Farrell and Chris Monk, winning at this age group for the first time in a number of years was the icing on the cake of a season that saw them win the Sussex Championship League for the second consecutive time. Hampshire Safeguarding Officer, Michele Amos, representing Hampshire Rugby, presented the trophies and medals on the day.

Guernsey Rugby Development Officer Steve Melbourne said: “Overall the balance of wins went in Jersey’s favour but the standard of rugby and performance of all of our teams were really encouraging. Jersey has more than twice the number of players, but the score-lines are closing. With both Guernsey clubs using Sussex and Hampshire to develop their teams, and the girls’ game really starting to take off, the outlook here is really very positive.”



YORKSHIRE NURTURES YOUNG COACHES

Aspiring young coaches from Yorkshire have enjoyed a unique coach development programme as part of the Yorkshire Coaching Academy, with their graduation certificates presented by Sir Ian McGeechan at a Yorkshire Carnegie home game.

The programme is aimed at coaches aged 16 to 24 from across the county who are currently involved at their club, school, or university, coaching various age groups. The initiative was pioneered by Allan Secker, Yorkshire’s Chair of Coaching.

The students qualified through the Academy, by completing a series of RFU coaching courses: Putting Kids First, Rugby Ready, and UKCC Level 1 – Introducing Children to Rugby Union.

Academy Manager Dave Francis said “These highly motivated young coaches have shown great commitment and have already been applying their new qualifications back at their club. They each have a diary booklet to complete and share with their club coach coordinator for continuity in mentoring. The feedback from the students has been very positive and this has made a massive difference to their coaching confidence, especially at such a young age.”

The success of the scheme was thanks to Martin Webdale (Joint Academy Manager), the RFU Rugby Educator and Developer workforce, who delivered the training courses, Alan Moses (RFU Area Training Manager) and Yorkshire RFU who helped fund the project, through PFR (planning, funding, reporting).

PFR is the RFU’s funding to CBs to support local rugby development against the key drivers of the business plan. This project focussed on ‘Developing High-Quality Coaches, Referees, Volunteers’.

MP APPLAUDS CBRE ALL SCHOOLS

Mark Lancaster MP for Milton Keynes North applauded students’ enthusiasm and coaches’ commitment after watching Oakgrove one of 400 secondary schools taking part in the CBRE All Schools programme.

He met staff and students during a rugby session at the Milton Keynes school after seeing first-hand how the students have taken to rugby and the benefits that CBRE All Schools has brought, with the school receiving resources and funding over three years, including kit and equipment, as well as hands-on coaching support.

CBRE All Schools has reached its target of introducing the game into 400 non-rugby playing secondary schools by the 2015 Rugby World Cup and now aims to increase this to 750 by 2019.

Said Mark Lancaster MP: “I saw a great deal of enthusiasm from the students and an equal amount of commitment from the coaches. CBRE All Schools is a great initiative; developing elements of social interaction, discipline and fitness. I would certainly encourage more schools to get involved.”

Steve Grainger, the RFU Rugby development Director, said: “Rugby Union is a game for all – all schools can play, all young people in the school can play and rugby has an impact on all of the school. It is great to see so many more people playing and engaging in rugby thanks to CBRE All Schools. We are determined to keep the momentum going as we expand the programme further over the next four years.”



BABCOCK TROPHY BRINGS DRAW

ARMY 29 – 29 ROYAL NAVY

One national paper described it as the “best Inter-Service game in recent history” and there was plenty of drama in the Army v Navy match at Twickenham. Semesa Rokoduguni had crossed for a brace. No 15 Owain Davies crashed in at the corner and scrum half James Farrell stretched to finish a great team effort. The Army appeared to be cruising.

The Navy pack was a powerful weapon, however, and conceding a penalty try did not help. Maybe, the Army had not factored in replacement scrum half Gareth Rees, who has a habit of nipping round to the back door for his points. At 26 points each, four minutes on the clock and two emptied benches under the West Stand Owain Davies stood over the ball facing North. The Navy contingent in the 80,000 held their breath as Davies slammed the ball between the sticks for three points.

The crowd were at fever point when Jon Humphrey, Navy No15, inherited a similar situation under the South Stand. Head down, he levelled the match at 29 points each. The fact that the Navy came back from a 19 point deficit to earn the draw—and thereby the Babcock Championship—was a real achievement. Anything could have happened and in 2016 it did.

In the women’s match at Kneller Hall former England international Jane Leonard playing her final game in a Reds’ shirt led the Army to a resounding 74–0 victory.



EXPERIENCE ENGLAND RUGBY AT THE SPORTS SHOW

CHARLOTTE HARWOOD

England Rugby has partnered with the Sports Show – a brand-new two-day event taking place at the NEC in Birmingham on 25th and 26th June 2016.

The Sports Show is set to be the world’s biggest sports playground, with over 35 sports on offer for fans to visit and get hands-on coaching from over 100 world-class sporting heroes, including England Rugby legends Will Greenwood, Austin Healey and Martin Johnson.

England Rugby will have its own ‘Sports World’ consisting of two rugby pitches and a kicking zone where visitors can try their hand at tag, O2 Touch, contact, mixed gender and women’s rugby. There will also be a large LED screen showing the last England v Australia Test and the U20 World Championship.

For more information and tickets visit www.sports-show.co.uk



SEVENS SOMALI RUGBY

A CBRE All Schools project at Cranford Community College is where it all began. Some 60 students were looking to play club rugby, having begun the game at school. The RFU's Rugby Development Officers and Community Rugby Coaches set up a taster day at Grasshoppers RFC.

Result? Nobody turned up. Ty Sterry, RDO for Middlesex scratched his head and started asking questions. A meeting with the head teacher Alan Fraser led to the school hosting a recruitment workshop where boys met several local clubs.

Feedback from the youngsters suggested that their families were far from convinced that rugby was a sport for boys from their community. Ty met with Joan Conlon, Hounslow Borough's Partnership Inclusion Manager, who arranged a meeting with Ward Councillors, who unanimously supported the programme.

Ty then met Hounslow's Cultural Engagement Officer, Najeeb Ahmed, who took him to the Darussalam Mosque & Cultural Centre to meet Sahel Ali, the chair of trustees and other trustees. Ty explained how common values existed and that, with their support, the community and religious leaders could ensure that boys benefitted from playing rugby and all that it has to offer both on and off the pitch.

Fast forward three years and a lack of trust has become total trust, the mosque is firmly on board, Somali leaders have attended the Rugby World Cup as honoured guests. Their work has been recognised by London Sport and Middlesex RFU for engaging Muslim faith players in rugby. Rugby is no longer seen as a sport for white middle class players but is one embraced by the Somali community. Popularity is growing at a tremendous pace...

Cranford Community College pupils are joining and playing for local rugby clubs and Sahel Ali now chairs the Somali Rugby Development Group focused on growing sevens rugby in ten London boroughs. Already 60 brand new players are training for a multi-borough sevens festival, the Mo Farah Friendship Cup, to be hosted this August in a venue which may well be a Premiership club.

The RFU's Community Coaches have established links with local rugby clubs for the new players to join the 15-a-side game in the new season. This will both bring a whole new community of players into the community game and rugby family and help to make the clubs more sustainable.

"I never thought that rugby was a game for me and my friends," said one young player, "but since we started training we've loved it. They say rugby is a game for everyone and it's a game for us. We've got our own team and can't wait to take on some serious opposition!"

Said Nasradin Haibe Borough Team Manager for Ealing Borough, "I didn't know rugby at all and I was very sceptical. I can't tell you how hard we have had to work to convince these guys to try the sport. Since they have experienced it they have loved it and they can't wait for the tournament and neither can I. I'm predicting an Ealing win... Haringey will undoubtedly be serious competition, so bring it on!"

So there's the result, a whole community that felt excluded are the newest rugby players and fans. Can't be bad.

[Watch Video – HERE](#)



YOUNG SAINTS BEAT ARMY IN MOBBS MEMORIAL MATCH

Last month's Mobbs Memorial Match at Franklin's Gardens between Northampton Saints and the Army saw a young Saints side secure a deserved 24-10 victory.

A gritty and experienced Army side provided tough competition for the youngsters from the Gardens. Flanker Lewis Ludlum gave Saints an early lead from a driving maul before a penalty pulled back three points for the Army 10 James Dixon.

Army winger Chris Leatham's try then nudged the visitors in front before Saints' second row Jordan Onojaife powered over from a driving maul after sustained pressure, with fly half James Grayson adding the extras. Prop Gareth Denman then found himself in unfamiliar territory on the right wing to score Saints' third try.

In the second half, Saints' fourth try came in the 57th minute as Sion Bennett made the most of a strong scrum to crash over for a converted try and complete the victory despite late efforts from the Army to reduce the deficit.



Jordan Onojaife, a Junior World Championship winner with England in 2014, said: "It's a privilege to play in the Mobbs Memorial Match and represent a man who played for the Saints and did so much for the club and our country."

The Mobbs Memorial Match is played in memory of Edgar Mobbs, a former Saints and England player killed in action in the Battle of Passchendaele in 1917. This year's fixture was well supported, proceeds going to support the charitable aims of the Mobbs Memorial Trust, which donates much-needed funds to youth rugby in the East Midlands.

Mobbs' name is synonymous with that of Northampton Saints and, on the outbreak of World War I, he formed what became known as the 'Sportsman's Battalion' which largely made up the 7th Battalion, Northamptonshire

Regiment. Mobbs' body was never found, but his story lives on in the annual Mobbs Memorial Match.

Edgar Mobbs' World Rugby Hall of Fame cap has been loaned by the Mobbs family to Northampton Saints to be displayed at Franklin's Gardens. The cap was handed over at the Mobbs Memorial Match, Mobbs having been inducted into the World Rugby Hall of Fame in September 2015.

"As a family we were very honoured to receive the recognition for Edgar from World Rugby," said Mobbs' great-nephew, also named Edgar. "We thought that it would be wonderful if the cap could be displayed at Franklin's Gardens as he is the only Saints player to have received this award, and while the stadium may have changed, this is still the place where he played so many times."

READING LADIES' QUARTER OF A CENTURY AT HOLME PARK

Reading Ladies rugby team celebrated their 25th anniversary at a Holme Park dinner for current and former players, coaches and supporters. Guest speaker was RFU referee Sara Cox, who will be officiating women's rugby sevens at the forthcoming Olympics.

Youth Chairman Craig Hunter said: "From a very challenging start, they have helped establish the women's game not only at Reading but across Berkshire. Players and coaches have successfully built a thriving girls section for U13, 15 and 18s, in association with all Berkshire clubs, producing players who have gone on to represent their country at 7s, U20 and also international England level."

Reading Ladies began in summer 1990 with a dozen players in their first season. In season two they began playing other women's teams, losing each of six friendlies. Undeterred, in season three they entered the official League system in what was then South West 4. By then they had a full squad and even reserves.



They are now Berkshire's most established women's rugby team, having developed girls' teams and have been the instrumental in the development of the first girls league in the area in the Thames Valley League.

Craig is keen to encourage the continued growth of the team and said: "I would like to thank every single player, coach, administrator and supporter for their personal contribution. At the anniversary dinner were players who started it all off 25 years ago,

right the way through to some of our current U18 girls, the future of this team.

"Reading Ladies' contribution to Reading RFC is immense, both on and off the field they have embraced the rugby ethos and are a vital cog in the club wheel."

If you are interested in playing for Reading Ladies contact manager Charlotte Hunt on c_hunt@hotmail.co.uk



STAFFS UNIVERSITY WOMEN SET OUT ON RUGBY JOURNEY

Keele University women recently played Staffordshire University at Longton Rugby Club. The game was 12-a-side, with women's rugby pioneers Keele, taking on a brand new side in Staffordshire University, playing their third ever game. The club have recruited four new players from Staffs University this season and the university team will make their BUCS debut next season.



WIGS AND WINS FOR CORSHAM

Following their success in the Wiltshire Cup Final, 19 boys and 23 parents and siblings from Corsham RFC Under 13s went on tour to South Devon.

Their first game against Paignton RFC U13s on a mud soaked pitch courtesy of the advance weather conditions of Storm Katie, saw them undeterred and brought exciting rugby from both sides and a win for the tourists. At the evening get together head coach Jonny Gould took the prize for the wackiest wig, scrum half Joe Swain claiming the junior title.

Day two saw the young touring side at Brixham RFC in a first half of driving wind, rain and hail stones but bright sunshine greeting the second half as the visitors racked up a convincing victory.

The tour organised by Dave Lamb, Cath and Shannon Lawton, allowed Corsham to play some good rugby, enhance team spirit and build rugby memories. "Seeing the smiles on their muddy faces at the end of each game, I think we achieved that," said Tour Manager Dave Lamb. "Paignton and Brixham were superb hosts and we are most grateful for their hospitality."

WILKINSON PLAY RETURNS FOR WRU20 CHAMPIONSHIP

NICOL McCLELLAND

A play exploring the career of Frederick Stanley Jackson will be performed live on stage ahead of the World Rugby U20 Championship in Manchester this month (May).

Critically acclaimed stage production 'Hands Up For Jonny Wilkinson's Right Boot' will help celebrate the arrival of the World Rugby U20 Championship, which kicks-off on 7 June.

Produced by the award-winning Live Wire Theatre Company – which has previously toured in the North West with three Bronte adaptations – the stellar cast will be performing their fast-paced comedy which was first shown during the 2015 Rugby World Cup.

"As well as being a hilarious comedy, 'Hands Up for Jonny Wilkinson's Right Boot' offers a fascinating commentary on rugby's early years and its beginnings as an amateur game," said lead cast member Peter Twose, who starred in the National Theatre's War Horse production.

Thanks to the support of the Arts Council England and the Rugby Football Union, the production is back for a second run

DESTINATION DARLINGTON

PAULA ROWE

Speaking to 60 business representatives at Durham County RFU's inaugural business networking event at Darlington's Mowden Park stadium, RFU Chief Executive Ian Ritchie told north east businesses and educators that they hold the key to unlocking the sport's growth in the region.

Highlighting how the core values of rugby would benefit any business and any child, he said: "The RFU is focused on growing the game at both the grassroots and professional levels. Getting business leaders and their staff, and students involved in rugby is a really positive thing to do.

"By encouraging businesses, schools, colleges and universities to support rugby and these values we can help the game to develop in the north east. The Rugby World Cup, from the team's perspective, was enormously disappointing, but it did demonstrate the fantastic atmosphere rugby brings. It was electric and it was a real celebration of rugby across England. All of the volunteers, including those from the north east, did a fantastic job during the tournament".

Ian was joined at the event by RFU Development Director Steve Grainger. Steve, originally from Redcar and a former pupil of Sir William Turner School in the town, gave an insight into the work the RFU is doing to raise the profile of the game nationally.

Speaking about the CBRE All Schools programme, he was confident in its success so far. "We already have 400 schools signed up, which is a pretty significant number," he said.

"If we're going to keep attracting interest we need to ensure our values permeate into the schools. It's a huge opportunity to grow the game, which will see massive growth in the next decade as a result of significantly more youngsters playing the game."

Robin Wannop, Chairman of the local Regional Activation and Legacy Group for the RFU, said: "We want businesses and schools to get involved in the game of rugby, to help grow the game and to help spread the RFU's values. Rugby is a game for everyone and has a strong community aspect too. We want to promote that and encourage more businesses and children to get involved in the game."

Heather Linsley from Diamond Group, based in Sunderland said: "Anything that boosts the profile of the sport and makes people aware of what they've got should be applauded. Partnering with schools is another way to promote physical exercise, and gives children an insight into the game of rugby, and the game locally."

Ian and Steve also went to Darlington Rugby Club as part of their visit to the north east. The club hosted a CBRE All Schools Rugby festival, and on the same day received its RFU Club Accreditation Award.

Players from Longfield Academy, Hummersknot Academy and Darlington School of Maths and Science, showcased their rugby skills in a mini festival.

The benefits of the CBRE All Schools programme were highlighted by John Clegg, one of the PE teachers at Longfield who said: "It has been absolutely fantastic, since the programme started we have increased the team by fifty percent and the new team is made up of children who didn't previously participate in sport."

Head of PE and Performing Arts at Hummersknot, Stewart Souter agreed: "We have seen definite improvements having the rugby coaching in school, especially the technical input. For the first time, we have 13 girls to make up a new team; it is brilliant."



RFU RUGBY CONNECTED YEARBOOK 2016-2017

The deadline for amending information held on the Game Management System for the RFU Yearbook is Sunday 26th June 2016.

While the amount of information held in the yearbook will vary according to the club level, all entries will have club name, address, contact phone number, web and email address, and contact details for the honorary and fixtures secretaries.

- Go to www.englandrugby.com and log in at the top left hand corner – if you get the 'Cookie' message at the top you will need to close that first to see Login.

Login | Sign Up | Box Holders

- Once logged in select the 'My Rugby' tab

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- Select the 'Game Management System' tab. The tiles available to you will be dependent on the administrative roles you have against your profile.

Game Management System

Note: If you require a reminder of your user name or password please select the blue forgotten user name/password facility available on englandrugby.com/user/password-recovery/

Should you require any guidance on using the Game Management System there are user guides available on englandrugby.com - englandrugby.com/GMS or please do feel free to contact Game Management Support - GMS@therfu.com or 020 8831 6651

to coincide with the official World Rugby U20 Championship trophy tour in the North West.

The three-week theatre tour will entertain 20 different venues including schools and rugby clubs, as well as Manchester's Dancehouse Theatre on Friday 3 June.

The medley of song, dance and action sees four actors swap roles at breakneck speed to bring some of rugby's greatest moments to life, including the All Black Haka and Wilkinson's World Cup-winning drop goal with his right boot.

The play begins when three fans meet in a Twickenham pub before kick-off at a crucial England match. During an argument about the greatest moment in rugby history, a stranger tells them about Frederick Stanley Jackson, a Cornish tin miner who was on the first ever British Lions tour to New Zealand in 1908.

Travelling back and forth from the present day to the early 1900s, 'Hands Up for Jonny Wilkinson's Right Boot' explores Jackson's story.

TOURING SCHEDULE

Monday May 16 - Fallibroome Academy, Macclesfield
Tuesday May 17 - Cheadle Hulme Grammar School, Cheshire
Wednesday May 18 - Bramhall High School, Stockport
Thursday May 19 - Clare Mount Specialist Sports College, Wirral
Friday May 20 - Bolton School, Lancashire

Monday May 23 - Hageley Park Academy, Staffordshire
Tuesday May 24 - Saint Ambrose College, Altrincham
Wednesday May 25 - The Skipton Academy, North Yorkshire
Thursday May 26 - Sandbach High School, Cheshire
Friday May 27 - Lymm Rugby Club, Cheshire
Saturday May 28 - Manchester Rugby Club, Cheshire
Tuesday May 31 - Buxton Rugby Club, Derbyshire
Wednesday June 1 - Littleborough Rugby Club, Lancashire
Thursday June 2 - New Brighton Rugby Club, Wirral
Friday June 3 - Dancehouse Theatre, Manchester 20.00
Tickets £9/£6 concessions (£5 for groups)

Box Office: 0161 832 1111 or 0161 237 9753
Saturday June 4 - Holmes Chapel Rugby Club

See the Future Stars of Rugby at the World Rugby U20 Championship 2016 in Manchester this June. The tournament will be played across five match days at two venues: the AJ Bell Stadium in Salford and Manchester City's Academy Stadium, between 7 and 25 June. Tickets from £10 for adults, £5 for children.

For more information, including how to buy tickets, visit www.englandrugby.com/U20Championship

CONCUSSION EDUCATION CODE OF PRACTICE

The RFU, our national Constituent Bodies and partners are determined to ensure that we lead the way in keeping the welfare of our players at the forefront of all we do. Therefore, as part of your involvement in the 2016-17 NatWest Schools Cup, we alongside ERFU and NatWest, would like you to commit to a four-step Concussion Education Code as follows in your school:

- All staff coaching or refereeing contact rugby to have successfully completed the 30-minute Headcase Concussion Awareness Course for teachers and parents
- All players in extra-curricular contact rugby in Year 10 and above to have successfully completed the 20-minute Headcase Concussion Awareness Course for players
- All players in curricular rugby in Year 7 and above to have watched the 7-minute ERTV Concussion video

- Rugby parents in the school to have been signposted to the Headcase Concussion Awareness programme

James Skinner, CEO, Grammar School Heads Association commented: "The introduction of the Concussion Code of Practice for this year's NatWest Schools Cup, along with the RFU's Headcase online courses and resources, provides excellent support for schools to ensure their pupils can continue to safely benefit from all that rugby has to offer them."

Successful completion is proved by downloading the certificate at the end of the online course. The RFU believes your application to enter the NatWest Schools Cup is your commitment to deliver this code. A reminder will be sent out when the draw is published and again in September to ensure your staff and players have completed their course before your first round match.

For more information on the changes to the 2016-17 NatWest Schools Cup visit <http://www.englandrugby.com/news/natwest-schools-cup-restructured-for-2016-competition/>

RFU PARTNER WITH THE COMMUNITY HEARTBEAT TRUST

The RFU have partnered with the Community Heartbeat Trust to create a scheme for clubs, schools and other bodies to get expert advice, guidance and support on the selection, training and maintenance of defibrillators.

An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) could prove invaluable, with statistics suggesting that the survival rate after a sudden cardiac arrest with CPR alone is 5%, whereas by using a defibrillator the survival rate increases to 50%.

With many rugby clubs a hub of community activity, having an AED on site could prove a lifesaver as cardiac arrests are one of the biggest causes of death in the UK. The potential for saving a life is dependent on time; the faster medical help is administered, the better the chance of survival.

As part of the launch for this programme a series of CPR training sessions is being held at Twickenham delivered by the CHT, all free and open to local businesses and residents.

Wayne Barnes, ambassador for the RugbySafe and the CHT programme said: "When I was diagnosed with atrial fibrillation, I found out I also had a significantly higher chance of having a cardiac problem. With there being low general awareness of the condition, the challenge is two-fold: raising awareness of what it is, and the key signs to look out for and secondly, educating more people about CPR so that we all become more aware and are able to help someone in the

event it's needed.

"To know that members of my home town of Twickenham will be trained in CPR is a reassurance – not just for now but for the next generation. I now have a young family, and can see how, if we all try to spread the word, we can make a real impact on their futures by taking a few simple steps."

For more information on the AED scheme please go to: www.englandrugby.com/rugbysafe/playing-environment



Wayne with Twickenham MP, Dr Tania Mathias

NO SEPARATING TEAM FROM ACHIEVEMENT

Translating Pulborough RFC's motto you get 'Who will separate us?' and there was no separating their U18 Girls from their determination to become the 2016 Under 18 Girls National Champions. Last month (April) at Banbury RFC they beat Worcester 36-20 to take the title.

Pulborough RFC, a small rural club in West Sussex, with three senior sides, their 1st 15 in London 3 SE, is nonetheless at the forefront of the development of girls rugby in Sussex and the south east, with some 75+ girls involved over their U13, U15 and U18s. The girls section



was only formed four years ago, so winning the National Championship was some achievement! Along the way they defeated Surrey Belles 68-0 and Medway 52-0 in the London/SE Division Finals before at Royal Wootton Bassett RFC's Southern Finals defeating Cleve RFC 17-10 and last year's Champions, Berkshire Baabaas 19-5.

At the Banbury RFC final v Worcester RFC U18 girls, Pulborough had to battle back from a 7-15 deficit at the break and in the second half turned on the power, taking the final score to 36-20 despite feisty Worcester opposition.

Head Coach John Breach and his team and the entire girls section, led by Mike Fisher, were delighted and President Alex Steele and Chairman Philip Jordan, agreed that girls rugby has been both a valuable addition to the club and an illustration of their motto "Quis nos separatist?" or "Who will separate us?"



NATWEST SCHOOLS CUP RESTRUCTURED FOR 2016/17 COMPETITION

CHARLOTTE HARWOOD

The NatWest Schools Cup competition will be restructured for the 2016/17 competition following a consultation with schools across the country to make the tournament more inclusive.

The new structure of both the U18 and U15 NatWest Schools Cup will see both competitions divided into several tiers to create more competitive matches from Round One and also encourage more teams across the country to enter.

Schools will elect which tier they wish to enter, either the Cup or Vase, prior to the start competition.

In its new format the competition will allow teams knocked out in the first round of either the Cup or Vase competition to continue to compete in either the Plate or Bowl respectively.

As part of the changes, the Champions Trophy will now become the top tier of the NatWest Schools Cup U18 competition. The Champions Trophy was created in 2014 to engage 32 of the best rugby-playing schools across the country and give them the opportunity to compete against opposition not normally on their circuit.

The finals of both the Cup and the Vase will continue to be played at Twickenham with the venue for the Plate and Bowl finals to be announced at a later date.

New competition structure: (figures based on entry numbers for 2015/16 NatWest Schools Cup)

UNDER 18:

- Tier 1 - Champions Trophy (32 teams)*
- Tier 2 - Cup (128 teams)
- Tier 3 - Plate (Round 1 Cup losers – 64 teams)
- Tier 4 - Vase (256 teams, with the first round losers entering the Bowl.)
- Tier 5 - Bowl (Round 1 Vase losers – 128 teams)

UNDER 15:

- Tier 1 - Cup (256 teams)
 - Tier 2 - Plate (Round 1 Cup losers – 128 teams)
 - Tier 3 - Vase (256 teams, with the first round losers entering the Bowl.)
 - Tier 4 - Bowl (Round 1 Vase losers – 128 teams)
- The final of this competition will continue to be held in November.*

277 CLUBS ARE SPRING CLEANING!

TOBY JONES

277 clubs are already taking advantage of the RFU's support mechanism, launched last month, to help them 'spring clean' their membership information in the Game Management System (GMS).

Clubs updating their data in GMS will automatically be entered into a draw to win an incredible top prize of catered hospitality for 10 at Twickenham for the Old Mutual Wealth Series, England v Argentina.

There's also five great 'money can't buy' packages to win, which include kit, equipment, resources and England Rugby 2016 Grand Slam merchandise.

All clubs should take part by 30th June and follow the step-by-step video guides available via the new GMS hub at www.englandrugby.com/GMS

Clubs with clean membership information can improve their communications and better harness their members' support. Using GMS to the full ultimately helps with playing numbers, volunteers, revenues and admin!

It also places the club in a great position to receive support and resources from the RFU. Happy Spring Cleaning!





ROSE & POPPY GATES UNVEILED AT TWICKENHAM

There has never before been a public memorial at Twickenham Stadium to England's rugby players who made the ultimate sacrifice and gave their lives for their country.

That changed last month, a century after the Battles of the Somme, Gallipoli, Jutland and Ypres, when the RFU unveiled the Rose and Poppy Gates through which all international players will now walk on their way to each match.

In the 1914 Five Nations Championship, under Ronnie Poulton-Palmer's captaincy, England won the Grand Slam for the second time. It was the season before the Great War broke out, whole rugby teams signing up together, many falling together. Seven of that England Grand Slam winning team were to die.

Poulton-Palmer, hailed as the world's greatest player, was killed at Ypres by a German sniper, his last reported words, "I shall never play at Twickenham again".

Captain Robert Pillman, who won his first and only cap as flanker, was killed during the Battle of the Somme, trying to bring his men back from a night raid.

Royal Navy forward Arthur Harrison, the only England international awarded the Victoria Cross, took part in the Zeebrugge Raid in 1918, when the Royal Navy tried to block the German-held port, and was killed leading his landing party.

Scrum half and submariner Lieutenant Francis Oakley RN disappeared with his boat the D2.

By 1918 tens of thousands of rugby players had been killed and for years some endured the lingering death of mustard gas.

The Rose and Poppy Gates, part of the RFU's World War 1 commemorations, now remind us of all the players killed in action from 1914 onwards.

Artist and sculptor Harry Gray has incorporated 15 roses at the foot of the gates, copies of those on the 1914 England shirt, each cast in bronze and representing Poulton-Palmer's team. They rise into poppies near the top.

The 15th rose on each gate represents the man at the front, and forms the lock. A bronze bar at head height suggests the point where soldiers went over the top, beyond it the roses become poppies, each made from brass taken from shells fired by German artillery at the Allied trenches.

On 29 April, on the eve of the Army v Navy match, the gates were unveiled by RFU President Jason Leonard and the First



Sea Lord Admiral Sir Phillip Jones KCB. Music was provided by students of the nearby Royal Military School of Music and singing was led by Roisin Neligan-Ayling from St Catherine's School, Twickenham.

Among those also present were: the President Army RU & Chief Joint Operations Lt Gen John Lorimer DSO MBE; the President RAF RU & RAF Deputy Commander Operations Air Marshal Greg Bagwell CB CBE; RFU Commemorations Ambassador Lewis Moody MBE; RFU CEO Ian Ritchie; Twickenham MP Dr Tania Mathias; Richmond Mayor Cllr Martin Seymour; Hounslow Mayor Cllr Nisar Malik; the sculptor of the gates, Harry Gray; representatives of the Royal Navy and Army Rugby Union teams, together with other distinguished guests, descendants of rugby playing WW1 soldiers, local and national charities and residents of Twickenham and Hounslow.

Said the RFU's Great War commemoration ambassador Lewis Moody, "This is a great day and I'm delighted to see the launch of something so important that has been so long in the making. These Rose and Poppy Gates are a fitting tribute to rugby players who made the ultimate sacrifice. It is fantastic to have a place where we can all come and pay our respects."

And as all those gathered paid their respects it was clear that although Ronnie Poulton-Palmer may never again have played at Twickenham he and his team mates will now always be remembered there.

SINGING FOR A FATHER WHO IS NOT FORGOTTEN

Sergeant Michael McGrath was a career soldier in the British Army when, serving with the Connaught Rangers, he was killed in action on the 9th December 1916 during the defence of Ypres, leaving his only child, three-month-old Mary, fatherless. He is buried at Pond Farm Cemetery just outside Ypres and has never been forgotten by his family who visit his grave.

His granddaughter is also called Mary, Mary Neligan, and she was at the unveiling of Twickenham Stadium's Rose & Poppy Gates. It was an emotional afternoon for Mary as her 15-year-old granddaughter Roisin Neligan-Ayling, a fine young soprano, led the singing in the unveiling ceremony. Roisin is a pupil at Twickenham's St Catherine's School and daughter of Twickenham groundsman Ian Ayling and Niamh Neligan-Ayling, Sergeant Michael McGrath's great grand- daughter.

Said Roisin, "I have visited his grave on two occasions and am so proud to be singing at the unveiling of the gates, which is a great honour."



40 LOST PLAYERS REMEMBERED

Old Whitgiftian RFC lost 40 players in the Great War and have visited graves in France, leaving tributes. Their Chairman Sam Barke and Vice Presidents Nick Somers and Jonathan Bunn were at the Rose & Poppy Gates unveiling to remember their fallen players.



TOUCHLINE

Editorial input with pictures to: Touchline Editor, Patricia Mowbray
Email: patriciamowbray@rfu.com Direct Line: 0208 831 6514
Correspondence to:
Patricia Mowbray, Touchline Editor, Rugby Football Union, Rugby House, Twickenham Stadium, 200 Whitton Road, Twickenham TW2 7BA.

Mailing and Distribution: Enquiries or updates
Email: gameinvestment@therfu.com Tel: 0208 831 6762
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THE RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING WHO GENEROUSLY SUPPORT THE GAME