



Hertfordshire Rugby Football Union



President: John Gregory

CHAIRMAN'S NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2019

November started badly for English rugby as we all know with the loss in the world cup final to South Africa. After the euphoria of the triumph over New Zealand in the semi-final, in many peoples opinion the best England have played for many a year, came the disappointment of defeat by a better side on the day. On the plus side we got to the final and it's a young side that can only learn from that experience. Right elephant out of the room so what's been going on with the Hertfordshire Rugby Football Union? Answer a great deal to tell you about.

Firstly now we have a more user friendly website we are striving to get all the news on it so can I recommend that at least once a week you go and look at it, especially the "news pages" that have on them the latest news, they can be found using the link:- www.hertsrugby.co.uk/news and the latest information posts which can be found at the link:- www.hertsrugby.co.uk/news/#LPHRFU. We are attempting to post and report on news events as quick as we can to keep you up to date with what we are doing and what is going on around the county.

I am now going onto some good work being done by our RDO and our two CRCs (Tom Redfern, Sam Clapham and Tom Mowbray). Last Friday they 8th November they organised a series of events during the evening that resulted in to quote one report I had "An awesome evening across the county tonight maximising the use of our AGPs and R.F.U. invested facilities". At Cheshunt there was an Under 11s floodlit festival with Cheshunt, Barnet, Enfield, Welwyn and Hitchin in attendance. We've had great feedback already and this was completely run by the volunteers. At the same time there was a Girls Under15s pitch up and play on the grass pitches. Supported by R.F.U. staff it included some coach development work, modelling of good practise and player development. A great night for players and coaches. While all this happening across the county at Harpenden there were 80 Under 11s from Old Albanians, Verulamians, Hemel Hempstead Camelot and Harpenden enjoying their own Friday night under the lights. This again was delivered by volunteers and ran on the AGP. The pictures below show action from these events.



Now some updates on some of the big issues facing us. The main three being International Ticket Allocation, G.M.S. and the Adult Male Competitions Review. Let us start with GMS, after the meeting on International tickets held at Hertford in October David Roberts meet with a small group of Hertfordshire club representatives, some county representatives (including me) and a representative from the GMS programme from Twickenham. They pointed out a number of issues that had been highlighted. Further David Roberts continued to lobby behind the scenes for GMS improvements and changes are a foot. It has been agreed that in future the RFU are going to establish a GMS Steering Group that will have up to 3 Council Members and potentially some independent representation. They would then also set up a user group of ~20 individuals from across the country. The purpose of this group would be to help prioritise the backlog and potentially help test the improvements before they are released to the public. It is hope that these groups would be establish by the end of the calendar year, certainly early January, so they can support the planning and development ahead of season 20/21. Further work is going on fixes to certain problems highlighted by clubs and how these are reported back to the clubs.

On the subject of International Ticket Allocation David Roberts has been working hard behind the scenes. He hopes that has been able to procure and agreement that the deadline for putting fixtures onto GMS for the 2018-19 season will be extended to end of December 2019. He also hopes that he has procured that a "second indicative indication" of allocation will be given to clubs by January 2020. As it says he hopes that and we will let you know if that is defiantly happening as soon as we do.

On the topic of the Adult Male Competitions Review a meeting was held at Hertford in late October at which Paul Asbury was present (member of the RFU working party) at which various opinions were expressed. Peter Brady also invited clubs to comment to him by e-mail and has produced a summary of that meeting and the clubs responses. At the same time the Hertfordshire working party looking at retention and recruitment of players has launched an on line survey for players and individuals to get their opinions. The results of this survey will be combined with the Peter Brady report and be presented at the General Committee Meeting on 2nd December for discussion and approval to go forward to the RFU working party as a Hertfordshire submission.

Bill Sweeney is coming to Hertfordshire! He is coming to the next General Committee Meeting (Forum). This will be on Monday 2nd December 2019 at HERTFORD RFC at 7-30pm. Who is Bill Sweeney is the new Chief Executive Officer of the R.F.U. and he is coming to tell us about his vision for the future of the game. We hope that many people will turn out to hear him and to ask questions. As can be seen the 2nd December 2019 will be a busy night which will be split into two.

Firstly Bill Sweeney and then The Adult Game Review. The agenda may look different from the usual General Meeting Agenda but I hope you will see the importance of the two lead topics that may lead to curtailment of the normal agenda.

December will see the start of the representative rugby "season" with the under 18 boys' team taking on Middlesex at Cheshunt RFC on Sunday 1st December 2019 at 3pm. They then follow this up with an away game against Eastern Counties on Sunday 15th December 2019 venue and kick off time still to be confirmed. Their third game is in January 2020 and I will give further details of that in my next newsletter. For those wanting to see the current full list of fixtures for all the Hertfordshire representative teams use link:- <https://hertsrugby.co.uk/about/#fixtures>

I want to give some advanced publicity to a couple of events in January 2020. Firstly Monday 27th January 2020 will see an evening which is themed around "Planning for the Future". That night will see 3 presentations being given. The first is by Roger McKerlie of Beyond The Stadium. Roger comes to us recommended by Ian Bell our Independent Director. Roger is the Managing Director of Beyond the Stadium. They "find corporate clients that want to be involved in community sport through sponsorship". They find the businesses and then put them to the sports." They are building a network of "club champions" of flagship sports clubs around the country and have already worked with a number of major and minor soccer clubs. With our rugby clubs facing the perpetual problem of obtaining sponsorship this organization can help. Following Roger we will have Charlie White presenting on behalf of the Saracens Sport Foundation. Charlie will be talking about the aims and objectives of the foundation and how they may be able to help Hertfordshire rugby to "Inspire communities and changing lives through the power of sport". The third part of the evening will be led by a presentation from David Roberts on the Hertfordshire R.F.U. delivery plan for 2020-21 season. This will be an opportunity for the clubs and people of Hertfordshire rugby to tell the executive what they believe should be the focus of that plan and how as a result of that plan the budget for the coming season should be drawn up.

The second event is will be a new venture instigated by me. It will be a "Club Chairman's Forum" at which I hope all affiliated and associated Hertfordshire based club chairmen will attend. Hertfordshire R.F.U. will be represented by myself a Hertfordshire Chairman, David Roberts (R.F.U. Representative), Ian Bell (Independent Director) and Simon Embleton (Hertfordshire Secretary). The gathering will be for club chairmen to discuss the issues that are affecting their clubs and to share best practice through the clubs by a free exchange of concerns and ideas. It won't have a fixed agenda but will discuss the topics that the chairmen raise. This will take place on Monday 20th January 2020 at 7-30pm venue to be confirmed.

A couple of reminders, firstly the tendering process for county games at senior men's and women's level is open and closes next week on 23rd November 2019 so please get those tenders in. As well the tender process is also open for the "Herts President's Cup Finals Day" and that closes on 21st November 2019. Picking up from tendering for the President's Cup Finals the season now being in full swing we have had some "qualification league games" for the Cup and Tankard competitions. In the cup it's all very tight with Letchworth leading on 6 points with all the other 4 clubs on 5 points. In the Tankard competition Cheshunt lead with

15 points from Tabard with 13 points and these two have opened up a lead over the other clubs. To see results etc. follow this link:- <https://hertsrugby.co.uk/herts-comps/#HPCI>

I started this newsletter in Japan with the world cup and I am going to finish in Japan with the world cup. In case you missed it Nicholas Winwood who has been volunteering at Letchworth Garden City RUFC for the past 10 years, during which he dedicated countless hours to setting up and developing the mixed ability disability team, Braveherts was rewarded by the R.F.U. and Mitsubishi Motors. His selfless devotion earned Nicholas a place on Mitsubishi Motors' Journey to Japan initiative, which rewarded outstanding grassroots rugby volunteers with a special week-long trip to Japan during the world cup from 31st October to 6th November. Congratulations to Nicholas.

STOP PRESS

Yesterday (Thursday 14th November 2019) club secretaries and chairman would have received the latest R.F.U. Community Game Update for November. It leads with the "Adult Male Competition Structure Group" and explains that it is setting up a number of "listening panels". They say that "Each panel will have around 20 people involved to keep to manageable numbers, and is an opportunity for you to put forward your ideas to England Rugby about the sport that you are involved." One of these panels is meeting at Old Albanians RFC on 25th November 2019 and you are asked to sign up if you want to join one of these panels and then the R.F.U. will select a cross section of representation to be on the panel. Can I recommend that clubs think about applying to be on the panel meeting at Old Albanians.

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