



**Hertfordshire Rugby Football Union**



**President: John Gregory**

### **CHAIRMAN'S NEWSLETTER MARCH 2020**

**Well it only seems like yesterday that** I was writing the February newsletter. Time flies when there is so much going on in rugby. Let's start with the Coronavirus (Covid-19). We are fully aware of this and will attempt to keep clubs updated through posts on the website and e-mail to club secretaries. The current RFU/Herts advice can be found by following this link to our website which is:- <https://hertsrugby.co.uk/2020/03/02/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-to-clubs/> we will probably have to make some difficult decisions as regards festivals and games over the next few weeks but safety of players, officials and spectators will always be paramount in making those decisions. It may be that we will have to look beyond the game when making these decisions and take into consideration general public health issues. If needed, clubs will be able to access compensation funding from our contingency fund for any unrecoverable losses incurred caused by the cancellation of the Festivals and other similar events. If an event does not take place and an entry fee has been paid in advance then that also will be refunded to the clubs.

**BREAKING NEWS the following statement from Tim Bonnett has gone to clubs on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and appears on the website:-**

**"The Hertfordshire RFU have made a careful risk assessment of the situation regarding Covid-19 (coronavirus) precautions. Based on this risk assessment it is not felt appropriate to ensure the health and safety of the players and adults involved to continue the contact festivals for ages u9-u12 due to be hosted on Sunday 29th March by Hertford RFC and Fullerians RFC. It is regrettable that we have to take this decision but the Hertfordshire RFU have to be conscious of the wider impacts of this pandemic on society. It would be unforgivable to create a potential contact point that could result in severe or even fatal illness for a child or adult in Hertfordshire.**

**At this stage, the Festivals planned for Sunday 26th April 2020 at Barnet Elizabethans and Old Albanians are scheduled to go ahead but that is under review subject to how the situation develops over the coming weeks.**

**The CB safeguarding manager has received a number of queries regarding tours. The final payments are coming due and so there are a lot of implications of the decision. He is aware of a tour management company**

who has already had 7 of 8 incoming tours from abroad cancelled. No advice has been issued by the RFU at this stage.

The advice the CBSM has been giving is as follows:

- a) Consult the proposed host venue of the tour to check whether they are implementing control measures regarding their venue at present.
- b) Check with the clubs that are hosting matches on the proposed tour.
- c) Once the answers from venue and clubs are known - including any potential financial impacts of cancellation - hold a meeting with parents or tourists and discuss the situation.
- d) Unless or until any firm advice is given by the RFU, any cancellation decision is made by clubs. It is impossible for Hertfordshire RFU to risk assess and advise on the wide variety of tour contexts at this time."

**At present the under 13s County Festival at Hertford on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2020 will go ahead as planned!**

**At last Monday's General Meeting Colin Haslam** spoke about the Injured Players Foundation in which he is actively involved. On their website they say "We are here to give **support** and information to rugby players who have suffered a catastrophic spinal cord or traumatic brain injury which has resulted in permanent disability whilst playing rugby in England at any level and at any age. Our **support** is available to help players through recovery, rehabilitation, and for the rest of their life." Colin pointed out that if a player suffered such an injury his or her club should get in touch with the IPF as soon as possible within 14 days from the event. For further information visit their website:- <https://www.rfuipf.org.uk/>

**Some clubs have contact either David Roberts or I** about the second indicative international ticket allocation that came out recently. Firstly some clubs never got a second notice. That is because if your indicative ticket allocation the second time was within the range of + 3 or - 3 from the first indicative allocation you were not sent an update as you basically had not changed. If you were outside this range, your ticket allocation had risen by 4 or more or dropped by 4 or more you were contacted. David Roberts is aware of two clubs who still feel that GMS has not recorded their matches played correctly and is looking into these two cases. If there are any other clubs who feel this please contact David or myself. I would also like to thank David and Simon Embleton for all their work behind the scenes on GMS and ticket allocation.

**I now move on to the Adult Male Competitions Review.** The RFU had over 5500 people complete their on line survey of which over 60% were players. They have put forward a number of models which take into consideration these views. They openly state that the player's views will carry a great deal of weight. The next step is a series of "area meetings" at which a club is asked to send one "club official" and one "player". Clubs should register attendance on-line. The two nearest to Hertfordshire are on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020 with a 7-30pm start in Bishops Stortford and 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020 with a 7-30pm start at Twickenham. Full details can be found on the latest RFU Community Update which can be found on our

website at:- <https://hertsrugby.co.uk/documents/#RFUCGU> it is essential that all clubs engage with the process and let their views be known.

**Although now a RFU member in their own** right with their own Council representation I think I should mention the Hertfordshire Society of Rugby Referees. This band continue to service our game at all levels. I know they work hard on delivering the best possible referee to all games. For a small county they have been very successful and I recently saw Anthony Woodthorpe on B.T. Sports refereeing a premiership game. I learnt this week that Matt Sharpe has been promoted to the RFU panel, congratulations Matt. This means that a present Hertfordshire have six panel members, Anthony Woodthorpe, James Clarke, Richard Haughton (who spend half his time on the world sevens circuit), George Selwood, Jack Sutton and of course now Matt Sharpe. Thank you to the society for supporting Hertfordshire Rugby.

**An Update on "Club Champions". Roger Mckerlie writes:-** "Thanks again for the support you have given to Club Champions. We now have 4 clubs signed up with the expectation that at least 3 more will join but I would ultimately like every club in the county to become part of the group.

At the same time I would appreciate your further support for a new initiative we are about to set up. My colleague Gerry will provide you with an e-shot which I would really like to go to the clubs and the offer is this:

1. We need 10 clubs to join Club Champions.
2. We will invite a representative from each of them to a workshop – probably a 2 hour evening event at a club in Hertfordshire.
3. Once they have paid to join Club Champions this event will be free of charge.
4. At the workshop we will work through the most pressing issues involved in increasing commercial revenue so that they all have useful takeaways.
5. We will also invite each club to share their goals and challenges and we will take those away and work on a bespoke proposal for that club.
6. The event will be filmed so each club will be seen to be involved with a forward thinking new initiative and if any of them want to be feature as a case study for the newsletter we will return and film at their club."

Further information on this is on our website follow this link:- <https://hertsrugby.co.uk/clubs/#OPCFCC>

**For those who may have missed it congratulations** to David Roberts. David has been nominated by the RFU Nominations Board to take over from Rob Briers (Lancashire) as Chairman of the Community Game Board. This nomination must go to the council for voting on later in the spring and then to the RFU A.G.M. for ratification. Assuming there is not hitch to this process David will take up the role in the summer. The Chairman of the Community Game Board carries with it a seat on the RFU board. Well done David.

**Since I last wrote to you we have had the** "member's dinner" which took place at the Porters Park Golf Club. The dinner was attended by over 120 people. Peter King (President of Hertford RFC) was the master of ceremonies and speeches were

made by John Gregory (President Hertford RFC) and Chris Kelly (Immediate Past President RFU). The evening was rounded off by Arthur Smith comedian and raconteur. During the evening 7 ladies and 5 gentlemen received awards for gaining international representation, all being former or current members of Hertfordshire clubs. Thank you to Steve Waller and John Atkinson for organizing the event.

**Norman Lindop (Treasurer Bishops Stortford RFC)** has informed me that he engaged through the RFU with their V.A.T. expert Russell Moore. He tells me that it was time very well spent and that he and Bishops Stortford would benefit greatly from the advice given by Russell. The first half an hour of Russell's time is free! He recommends that all clubs look at this R.F.U. service. If you follow this link you will find out more on V.A.T. and how to contact Russell from the R.F.U. website:- <https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/running-your-club/tax/vat-clubs>

**On the representative rugby front this coming** Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2020 our Under 20s (Stags) team will play Kent at Cranbrook RFC kick off 2pm. Both these teams have won their first two pool matches and this is the "play off" to see who finishes with a home quarter final or an away quarter final. Those quarter finals will be played on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2020. We wish our boys good luck for that game. Some notes for your diary the Women's County XV start their campaign on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2020 with an away game against East Midlands which will be at Stockwood Park RFC kick off 2-30pm and our men will start their campaign on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2020 with a home game at Hertford RFC against Hampshire kick off 3pm. Please note that the County Championship Members Lunch will be held before the Cornwell game on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at Hertford RFC, details will soon appear on the website. Although this is "the lead county lunch" Hertford will also be doing a "small spectators lunch" before the Hampshire game.

**That brings an end to the March newsletter**, we face a challenging for months ahead and things could be changing on a daily basis. Please keep your eyes on the website, social media and e-mail for up to date news. Thank you for reading this newsletter.

Adrian K Sparks (Chairman Hertfordshire RFU)

