

LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

ANNUAL REPORT

2021-22

THE SECRETARY'S OPENING REMARKS

As ever my first job is to thank our President for the great work she has done over her term. Gill Burns has served the office for 3 seasons due to the recent global pandemic as it seemed unfair to curtail her Presidency. She has managed to watch all our clubs over that time as well as many Womens and Juniors teams. She has been a great President who has become a good friend to many in our clubs. With her mum Ann, she has cheered up many through the dark days of lockdown with their musical parody videos on social media. Her absolute passion for the sport is infective to all she meets.

As well as her Presidency, Gill has also served as our Director of Volunteering and has arranged dinners and function to celebrate many of our Clubs volunteers and unsung heroes. I would like to thank her personally for helping me with the Annual Awards Dinner at her club, Firwood Waterloo, which was a fantastic evening.

To Rugby, both our Senior Mens and Womens XVs failed to reach their finals which was not for want of trying, all our representative players should be thanked for the effort they put in to pulling on the Red & White hoops at the end of a long tiring club season. Within the Mens competition the cards were stacked against us with some other senior Counties pulling out due to lack of funding. The organisation of the Competition by the "professional" staff at Twickenham following this could be at best described as poor.

County rugby has once again been subject to a review, possible the most reviewed competition in the history of rugby union. Many of us in Lancashire and across the Country have been vocal in its support, we cannot let County rugby wither on the vine.

Thanks to Mark Nelson, Mike Dale, Steve Rigby, John Greenwood and all the backroom team who work hard to provide these opportunities.

Our 20s team did made their semi final where they went down to Cornwall , a game perhaps there for the taking. I'm sure we will be seeing more of these lads progressing through to our Senior XV and more success in County Rugby.

Sadly, this seasons our Royals team did not play but this project should be kept as a focus as it's an excellent link between our Clubs and County.

As highlighted at the Financial AGM in November times are tough. Our central funding from the RFU has been decimated last season and we are advised that it will remain the same this season going forwards. Aside from this funds seem to be increasing for projects that don't exactly seem to focus on Rugby. We have to fund projects that will recruit and retain players to the game and not focus on what is politically fashionable at any given time. The team of Chris Smail, Paul Deakin, Stephen

Briers, and Catherine Ryan are thanked for their continued work for the County and ensuring that the limited funds we are given are used wisely.

Our Mini & Junior Committee have had a turbulent time during this first season back after our enforced absence. They are an incredibly hard working team and should not need to be exposed to levels of social media scrutiny that they have been. Ian and Christine Spivey, along with their team are thanked and hopefully the forthcoming season will sail smoother seas. *Acta non verba*.

The Club & Community committee is our vital link between ourselves and our clubs. I pass on my thanks to Malcolm Worsley and his team for the worthy job they have done his season.

We are fortunate to have 3 voting members of the RFU Council. Due to many years of service to the Union, Rob Briers has this season served as the Junior Vice President and has stepped up to being the Senior Vice President. 2023-2024 season will see him as the President of the Rugby Football Union, the highest volunteer post and a role he fully deserves.

We also have Ken Andrews and Dave Clarke looking after the Counties interests at Twickenham. The amount of time spent within council and serving on sub-committees make the role a full time job. Their reporting both back to the Board and to the clubs via club representatives is clear and informative. Thanks to Rob, Ken & Dave for representing us so well.

The County Schools Union under the Chairmanship of John O’Ryan is bouncing back, and whilst it’s been a difficult year he has a great team working with him and the competitions have been a sound footing to help schools return. The County has invested in schools clubs links this season with coaching and mentoring and hope to continue the project.

Thanks to Mike Dale and Helen Duggan for their work with the Womens and Girls players and teams in the County. This is an area of high investment by our central governing body and something we should always strive to be ahead of the curve. Also thanks to Christine Spivey for working on the sections social media postings.

I make no bones about the fact that Club rugby at many levels of league, age and gender is suffering. We have seen a massive loss of players since the pandemic, with a myriad of reasons for this happening. Many clubs have lost lower teams, most clubs have lost fixtures, all clubs have lost players. Social media is awash with clubs trying to recruit new players and bring back lost players. There does not seem to be a panacea and I think it will be many years **IF** we recover.

It has taken the competitions department at Twickenham four seasons to understand our clubs issues with travel and the reasoning behind the formation of the ADM Lancashire Leagues. Off the back of a Future Competitions Structure Group review and the threat of more Lancashire clubs leaving the English County Championship, the professional staff have approached us. The result is that the ADM clubs will return to the ECC (RFU) leagues from next season with lower travel distances and some of the flexible rules that the Lancashire Leagues developed.

Once again the Disciplinary committee have been busier than ever, sadly things are on the up, gladly they are our best fundraiser. Thanks to John Greenwood and his team for dispensing justice.

My personal gratitude’s go firstly to Brian Stott the assistant secretary for covering for me when I have been unable to attend meetings and being a sounding board for decisions. Secondly, our

Chairman, Dave Clarke, Treasurer, Paul Deakin and Director of Rugby, Howard Hughes, a triumvirate who have been invaluable to me. Anne Clarke for her help with minute taking, communications and the website which continues to grow and lastly Anne-Marie Briers, our Membership Secretary, both ladies are invaluable.

To club administrators at all levels, to my County colleagues, players and members, as ever, summer well.

Mark Downs

Honorary Secretary

REPRESENTATIVE RUGBY

Its strange that after nearly 3 years of no Representative County rugby that I have to write in somewhat of a subdued state despite its return. The pandemic saw several changes for most if not all our Representative sides. Starting with the U15s, we no longer have a County side as the RFU deem local DPP activity sufficient. At U16s we now have a squad picked solely from those attending the DPP at Sale and whilst those players involved are happy to wear the County Shirt it leaves several later developers out in the cold which is hardly ideal.

We still have sole control of the U17s (that may also change) and the Management Group led by Team Manager Gavin Butterworth with Coaches James Smith and Chris Marsh saw their charges record a narrow loss to Yorkshire (lost 13-19) and solid victory over a useful Cumbria (won 29-26).

The U18s saw Team Manager Ian Pearson “retire” and he will be sorely missed especially by his Coaching Team of Rob Jones and Graham Higginbottom. Yet again the U18s provided a steady supply of players to the North U18s following decent performances against Cheshire (won 28-21), Yorkshire (won 16-15) sadly the 3rd game against Cumbria bit the dust because of Covid.

The U20s negotiated their Group with a win over Cheshire (won 17-29) and due Storm Eunice? Had to settle for an artificial 0-0 draw for the game against Yorkshire. The Quarter-Final meant a trip down to Luton to play East Midlands and the 20s showed true Lancashire grit to come thru winners again 17-29. After what can only be described as a comedy of errors by the Competition organisers, we eventually got things confirmed that Cornwall would visit us in the Semi-Final. The Kernow Boys set the pace and we were just getting on top late on in the game but left ourselves too much to do as the eventual winners held on to run out victors 20-24.

Both the Girls U15 and U18 Squads had very successful seasons with their “festival programme” with Mike Dale as the Representative Lead very pleased with both Squads.

The Senior Women started with a tough win over North Midlands (10-8) but found Yorkshire (36-5) too hot to handle on a warm day at West Park Leeds. The final game against Northumberland was a fine 34-5 victory. Again, with the Competition structure being less than ideal we didn't make it past the Group stage.

It was very much similar for the Men, a decisive opening Group game victory over Leicestershire (52-14) was followed by a last second loss at Yorkshire (33-31). Again the strange competition structure saw Cheshire breeze into the final without facing either ourselves or the Tykes.

I have serious concerns that CB Representative Rugby will no longer appear on the calendar as certain “forces” down at Twickenham see County rugby as a bygone era that needs to be consigned to history. We won't go lightly but by squeezing our funding to point where we cannot sustain our squads is a worry as to our future.

I will close by thanking our volunteers and all the Clubs/Schools that have assisted this season as without you it just doesn't happen.

Howard Hughes

Director of Rugby Development

WOMENS & GIRLS RUGBY

Representative Rugby

This year saw a marked improvement with the level of skills and physicality coming through the youth section. A small but noticeable difference was how much more kicking there is now within the girl's game.

This year the RFU split the u15s and U18s programme. Allowing us to maximise the coaching units across the 15s and 18s. U18s was earlier in the seasons and the coaches were supported through the selection process by U15s, enabling us to mentor the new coaching staff and preparing them for their playing programme later in the year.

Lancashire U18 Girls once again faced Yorkshire and Cheshire across three festivals. They had an excellent programme with three unbeaten festivals of rugby at all formats resulting in 3 girls being called up to the England u18 squad. Hopefully we will see their names on the team sheets soon.

Lancashire U15 Girls did very well playing in three festivals across Yorkshire, Cheshire and Lancashire. The with young teams across the three festivals took part in a variety of match styles including x10 & 15s. It was great to see 90 girls turn up to trial and shows the growing strength across the county.

Working the three coaching units together culminated within the senior women's programme, where we able to bring through some new coaches for their specific skills but also personal development.

A further development for next year will be the introduction of 4 new age bandings within the women's game and the creation of the Lancashire U16 Girls DPP to replace the end of season festival competition.

There is lots of planning underway to ensure that a suitable structure and format is created to fulfil the RFU stipulation that the players within the DPP will receive 40hours of coaching time over the next season. Although this does not mean out on the pitch contact time it is still a large commitment for Lancashire representative rugby team and supporting volunteers.

We will be working closely with the clubs and parents to ensure we implement a DPP next year that is providing development for both the players and the coaches. Unlike the boys DPP it will be run by Lancashire and only open to Lancashire players – same stipulation as the county eligibility. We hope to be able to learn through the year and from other counties so over the next few years we are able to put in place a strong Lancashire DPP that produces opportunities for all the Lancashire players who take part.

The Senior ladies won 2 out of the three Gill Burns County Championships against North Midlands and Northumberland and lost against a very strong Yorkshire team, over 96 ladies trialled for the team. We had 3 girls transition from U18 to Senior Ladies.

However, a success is the number of teams from across Lancashire that were represented within the women's squad. There were ten clubs and six universities.

The squad is young and in time it will grow to become very good and hopefully return the championship to Lancashire. We will be building on the lessons of this season, with so many different teams it takes time to gel and bond. With permission we aim to develop and maintain the core of the squad and play 2 / 3 pre championship friendlies and in season training sessions against county standard opposition (British police, Fire Service & England Deaf) prior to next year's campaign kicking off.

There are lots of positives to take out of this season and I would like to thank all those who have helped this year. County rugby would not be able to take place with out the volunteers, coaches and parents who ultimately ferry the majority of the players around.

Mike Dale

Womens & Girls Representative Rugby Lead

Helen Duggan

Women & Girls Club & Competitions Development Lead

WOMENS & GIRLS RUGBY

Club rugby

This is the first proper season of rugby since Covid and the easing of the lockdown restrictions and it has been difficult for everyone in different ways.

For women's and girl's rugby within the north west the biggest impact was that league rugby was able to get a foothold and restart before rugby union.

Some clubs have successfully countered the draw of the super league, which is able to boast terrestrial TV coverage, full fixtures, and a shorter pathway to representative honours.

However, some have struggled, and Lancashire has been assisting clubs on an individual basis with local needs. Some clubs have seen the opportunity to recruit more women and girl players and the growth of the Greater Manchester network has helped provide regular playing opportunities.

It is not all doom and gloom. Lancashire has had some real success stories with a local club representing our great county in both the U15 and U18 Finals.

Liverpool St Helen's has successfully drawn player over the code divide and had a marvellous run in the national cup competition. Their U15s reached the semi-finals and the U18s were runners up in the finals At Sixways Stadium.

It is a massive achievement for their players and a massive thanks must go to their coaches, volunteers and parents.

We also held the first ever Girls u15s and U18s cup competition. More than 100 girls descending on Southport Rugby Club in May to compete. The day was a great example of TREDs in practice and there were lots of smiling faces and a chance for some of the newly formed teams to meet and compete with their fellow Lancastrians.

Holding a meeting with clubs from across Lancashire we came together to discuss the impact of the new age banding on girl's rugby. The move to u12, u14, u16 and U18s puts increased pressure on

volunteers and player base numbers. It was agreed that we would move to a new fixtures model to maximise on playing numbers and ensure regular meaningful rugby for the girls. The structure is going to be formalised over the summer ready for the new season.

There is also a lot of to be positive about. We have been supporting a number of clubs that have never had a girl's section before, helping them take on this new exciting challenge and grow.

For our senior section, this year was a particularly tough year with many unfulfilled fixtures across all leagues and the disparity in strength across the region has created 6 or 7 team leagues next year – less than ideal. To help support growing the game and ensure meaningful rugby for our players – and stop the flow to league, we will be re-launching the women's county cup competition across the Cup, Plate and Bowl.

Many clubs have expressed their excitement at being able to have increased playing time and the opportunity of playing Lancashire clubs that are in different leagues to themselves.

Although the season started slow, momentum is building and as we build towards the 2025 Women's World cup it gives us the opportunity to refocus.

Helen Duggan

Women & Girls Club & Competitions Development Lead

CLUB & COMMUNITY RUGBY

Rugby is slowly returning to normal, but the aftermath has left most clubs short of players. It seems that the older players do not want to play every week if at all. Most clubs have lost at least one team over the season, the RFU staff organised meetings recently to discuss the problem's, but it was obvious that they had no answer's. It will be left to each club with the County's help to formulate some ideas to combat this for next season.

Malcolm Worsley

Club & Community Rugby Chairman

CUP & COMPETITIONS

First I must thank the Wigan Club and its members for an outstanding finals day and most of all Dave and Anne for the time and effort to make the day go so well .

It has been a difficult season due to Covid and this has not been helped by the usual bad weather at the start of this year. We made the draw early so that clubs could use this as part of the preseason warm up but only one game took place .It was only as we came to the end of March that clubs looked to play these games . It became clear that we could not meet the dead line for final day on May 1st in fact at one point it look as if it would drag on to next season but with some hard work by members of the committee we got to the finals day almost a month late . Due to teams in the bowl having difficulty getting teams out we took the decision to cancel the bowl this year , so for this season only we only three finals on the day ,

The plate final was the first game played and this was Eccles v Littleborough my own club with a good crowd from both clubs this was a very good advert for Lancashire rugby , with Boro making all the running until the final minutes when Eccles got in front with the final score 31- 26 , The next game was even closer Aldwinians piping De La Salle by one point to run out winners 26-27 this again being a very good advert for our county's rugby at level 7/8 .

In the final game for the cup it was a very good game of rugby if a little one sided, but both Widnes and Preston G H played some good open rugby, the game going to Preston 59-8 but the score should

take nothing away from Widnes ,who competed up to the end . I would like to thank the Manchester Refs Soc for the match officials who did a great job all afternoon .

Lastly I would ask you all to go back to your clubs and ask them to enter next seasons competitions, we need more of our most senior clubs to become involved , With the ladies game growing we would like to see a cup competition again open to all levels of Ladies rugby in our county

On behalf of the cup committee

Brian Hurst

Competitions Secretary

COUNTY SAFEGUARDING

Covid pandemic, lock down and the restrictions associated with the pandemic placed a huge stress and pressure on us all. Some pressures were seen and spoken of some remain(ed) hidden and unspoken. Throughout the pandemic rugby clubs and their safeguarding continued to be in place, but in different ways than we have previously been used to. Club Safeguarding officers in most clubs this season remained in post. I thank them all most sincerely for their continued commitment to the role. For those who have stood down and moved on, I and the county send our most heartfelt thanks.

The safeguarding of some players and their families were supported along with help from the “Cauliflower Ear” programme and Acorn counselling. The excellent and free counselling service provided by Lancashire Rugby in collaboration with RugbySafe and its lead Gary Morgan. I wish to thank Gary and Paul Deakin Lancashire treasurer and the management board of Lancashire, for ensuring this valuable service remains in place and funded.

The mental health of people seems to be a daily conversation in many differing arenas, not least our rugby family. To provide support and in some cases, solutions is vital and long may this service be available. So please continue to publicise and encourage people to use the “Cauliflower Ear” programme. If it is not used, then funding will have to be assessed.

Unfortunately, some reported cases in the public domain are now no longer “historical” cases. This is why parents coaches managers and club officials need to be appropriately appointed and trained especially when working with persons under the age of 18 years. Sometimes a coach can be the only regular and steady influence in a young person’s life and one who can be trusted. It is vital that people (coaches managers and officials at rugby clubs) are aware of signs of abuse or concern and can seek support advice and intervention at the earliest opportunity.

As I reiterate when training, most cases reported in the rugby environment are bad practice and require not much more than further training and monitoring, rather than Child protection reporting and incident investigating. This however does not negate the need for strict and up to date training and reporting and for paid professionals to decide if more serious investigations and interventions are required.

No longer can we or do we have the “keep it in the club” environment with rugby clubs dealing with incidents in-house. This is where child protection cases and the need for intervention falls and then heaven forbid, we learn of such failings via national media and public outcries.

The RFU reinforce the continuing need to have robust safeguarding training & measures in place to protect vulnerable & young people within our rugby environment.

The training throughout the pandemic has been led by the employed staff safeguarding team at Twickenham and has been like most, “on-line” rather than face to face. At this point in time this is

starting to change especially the Play it Safe courses which are delivered at grass roots in clubs and face to face.

The In Touch training (and a requirement of Regulation 21), which is Club Safeguarding Officer specific continues to be Twickenham led and is still online.

Changes to DBS application have changed this year and pre-application an online basic training in safeguarding is mandatory. Similar to HEADCASE – concussion training.

The dedicated CSO's, CBSM and deputy CBSM continue to improve and develop safeguarding practices, training, monitoring, and reporting, within the County to ensure we maintain a safe environment for our young people and vulnerable people to enjoy rugby union across Lancashire. There have been a number of face to face "in-depth" audits undertaken – the deeper audit process of Safeguarding in clubs – rather than the overview submitted by all CSO's at the start of the season via GMS.

Safeguarding continues to be robust and effective across the Lancashire. Nationally recognised as being one of the best counties within the Union. For which we should all be very proud. Safeguarding continues to focus on good practice and common-sense approaches. Backed up by Regulation 21 and national law.

The dispensation process for any person, under the age of 18 years old continues as in previous seasons. With applications sent to me and the governance committee making the final decision as to whether a child can play "out of age". In 2022/ 2023 season ALL dispensation decisions will be determined by this process and clubs can now longer decide, in the under 13s and above age grade if a person can play out of age. The application to play Open Age continues to be applied for as in previous years.

The Lancashire Safeguarding Officers conference is now re-scheduled for 10th September 2022 and will take place at Liverpool Collegiate RUFC. There will be interesting and varied speakers in attendance and as in the past the agenda will not be totally Rugby safeguarding specific but will have interesting and informative workshops from those working in the child protection arena. I will be sending agenda's out to all CSO's and clubs as soon as all speakers are 100% confirmed. If any other person wishes to register their interest in attending, please do not hesitate to contact me.

On behalf of myself and the county I wish to thank again all the CSO's and child workforce members (volunteers coaches and managers in clubs) for their continued and committed dedication to protecting and safeguarding children in clubs ensuring all continue to enjoy rugby in a safe environment. I also wish to thank the executive management board of Lancashire for their continued support and acknowledgment of the importance of Child Protection.

Let us hope that the new season greets us with a renewed appreciation of this wonderful sport and provides exciting expectation of getting back to rugby as we have previously enjoyed, whilst keeping children safe and happy.

Carol Baker

Lancashire CB County Safeguarding Manager

LIVERPOOL & DISTRICT REFEREES SOCIETY

Presidents dinner this year very well attended as we came out of C-19 with 200+ attending. Clubs and CBs more than welcome and details to be sent earlier next season as many clubs want to bring more people next season. Speaker Wayne Barnes was great value for money and entertainment.

Notable awards

David Yorke Club of the Year Award – Ormskirk.

Ian Robinson School of the Year St Edwards College, Liverpool.

Finance - Free subscriptions during C-19 period, reviewed and a new scale of fees proposed and agreed to meet costs and requirements to cover games and support Federation.

Thanks to CBs - Lancs and Cheshire for funding pledges to the Federation.

This year we have appointed to 1274 games we have appointed to a further 235 games which at the eleventh hour have been cancelled and moved to another date we actually appointed to 1509 games in total.

Of the above mid-week makeup 214 fixtures Sunday appointments 244 Saturday 816. One ref did 64 games and was awarded a good rest in the off-season for efforts.

Match Official Development group of MOD/Performance Reviewers watched 99 matches this season, plus we received 16 reports for our referees on exchange

COACHING

Our coaching cohort watched and reported on 98 matches and 37 different referees.

Conal Scholes

Hon. Secretary, Liverpool & District Referees Society

DISCIPLINARY REPORT

The previous season figures are based on 2019-2020. The season was incomplete, I have adjusted the figures to give a full season figure.

As you can see there is an increase in overall matters by 19%. The major increase is within youth matters which shows a 54% increase.

Referee abuse remains a concern and I am putting together a discussion document to try a new strategy to address the worrying trend.

The increase in dangerous tackling was to be expected due to it being “flavour of the month”

Adult Current Season Statistics

	Total	Proved	Denied	Dismissed	Sine Die
Current Season	144	130	16	14	0
Previous Season	129	122	5	4	4
Difference	15	8	11	10	-4
Difference %	12%	7%	227%	294%	-100%

	Striking	Kicking	Tackle	Foul Play	5.12	Balance
Current Season	62	11	15	30	12	0
Previous Season	52	10	7	33	18	1
Difference	10	1	8	-3	-6	-1
Difference %	18%	6%	118%	-8%	-33%	0%

Youth Current Season Statistics

	Total	Proved	Denied	Dismissed	Sine Die
Current Season	40	35	1	1	4
Previous Season	26	26	0	0	0
Difference	14	9	1	1	4
Difference %	54%	35%	125%	100%	100%

	Striking	Kicking	Tackle	Foul Play	5.12	Balance
Current Season	13	3	2	11	6	0
Previous Season	11	3	3	6	3	0
Difference	2	0	-1	5	3	0
Difference %	18%	0%	0%	83%	100%	0%

Combined Current Season Statistics

	Total	Proved	Denied	Dismissed	Sine Die
Current Season	184	165	17	15	4
Previous Season	155	148	5	4	4
Difference	29	17	12	11	0
Difference %	19%	12%	219%	322%	0%

	Striking	Kicking	Tackle	Foul Play	5.12	Balance
Current Season	75	14	17	41	18	0
Previous Season	63	13	10	39	21	1
Difference	12	1	7	2	-3	-1
Difference %	18%	5%	72%	6%	-14%	-100%

Brian Stott

Disciplinary Committee Secretary

COUNTY SCHOOLS UNION

The 2021/22 season has again been an extremely challenging one as we slowly begin to transition from pandemic restrictions nationally and locally, with our schools receiving often very different advice and instructions from their governing authorities, Governors and Headteachers. We are also trying to adapt to a very different support environment from the RFU which I referred to in my last report.

As a result of these factors, the numbers of schools involved in competitive rugby has fallen especially in the state sector which previously relied on festivals and coaching event presented by the RDO team. That said, in many such schools across our region, clubs have stepped in to provide structures and support to engage boys and girls, though it should also be noted that the other sports have increased their school engagement programmes.

The attraction and retention of players for the game is an issue that requires attention, but is one that is not unique to Lancashire. With so little development or support in schools for the past few years we will continue to see a decline in our club game. Our whole school curriculum became technological and sedentary during lockdown and we need to find a way to engage with clubs, school sports/games organisers and the wider rugby community to address this. On a more positive note, our congratulations to Kirkham GS on reaching the U18 RFU National schools final at Twickenham.

CUP COMPETITIONS

Robbie Jones has made a sterling effort this year to put together another calendar of fixtures and festivals – we are extremely fortunate to have Robbie’s experience and commitment to make our competitions happen and I would like to thank Robbie for the tremendous effort he has put in once again this year, with his usual blend of calm, confident authority and very good humour.

The differing restrictions on travel due to potential cross contamination through competitions, allied with some school’s reluctance to release examination aged pupils from class times has meant our cup competitions did have more conceded games than we would normally see.

John O’Ryan

Chair

Lancashire County Schools Union

Lancashire Schools Competitions Results

U18

Cup Final : Lancaster RGS won 20-10 v Manchester GS @ Fylde RFC
Plate Final : St Mary’s Crosby won 26-10 v Merchant Taylors @ Waterloo RFC
Vase Final : St Edward’s College won 58-7 v Bury GS @ Preston Grasshoppers RFC

U16

Cup Final : Kirkham GS won 34-5 v Lancaster RGS @ Fylde RFC
Plate Final : AKS Lytham won 50-0 v Darwen Vale @ Fylde RFC
Vase Final : Scarisbrick Hall won 34-5 v Birkdale @ Southport RFC

U15

Cup Final : Kirkham won 31-5 v Stonyhurst College @ Preston Grasshoppers RFC
Plate Final : Audenshaw won 19-0 v Manchester GS @ Aldwininans RFC
Vase Final : Scarisbrick Hall winners v Darwin Vale (Conceded)

U14

Cup Final : Kirkham won 29-12 v Stonyhurst College @ Preston Grasshoppers RFC
Plate Final : Audenshaw won 31-21 v Standish HS @ Preston Grasshoppers RFC
Vase Final : Bury GS drew 12-12 v Ripley St Thomas @ Preston Grasshoppers RFC

U13 Festival @ Preston Grasshoppers RFC

1-2 St Mary’s Hall 5-2 v St Mary’s, Crosby
3-4 Lancaster RGS 6-1 v Bury GS
5-6 Hutton GS 5-2 v Manchester GS
7-8 Kirkham GS 4-0 v AKS Lytham
9-10 Cowley HS 4-0 v Bolton School

U12 Festival @ Preston Grasshoppers RFC

1-2 Lancaster RGS 3-2 v Kirkham GS
3-4 Bolton School 2-1 v Audenshaw
5-6 Hutton GS 2-1 v St Mary’s Hall
7-8 Manchester GS 3-0 v Cowley HS
9-10 Ormskirk 4-1 v AKS Lytham

COLTS RUGBY

We had 70 sides start the NW colts league in early September. This was the largest number of sides entering the league for many seasons. There had actually been 74 applications but 4 clubs withdrew their applications before the season started.

These set off in the Prelim leagues (13 leagues, 7 Snr, 6 JNr)

- Lancashire 21snr/17 Jnr total 38
- Cheshire 14 snr/ 12 Jnr total 26
- Others 4 snr / 2 Jnr total 6

After the preliminary league we had 61 sides start the Conference Leagues (7 Senior, 5 Junior)

1. Lancashire 19 snr / 14 junior total 33
2. Cheshire 12 snr/ 10 junior total 22
3. Others 5 snr / 1 Jnr total 6

We had 5 sides combine age groups forming Senior colts sides - Blackburn, Littleborough, PGH, Southport & Fylde.

We have 3 sides made up from combined clubs TMV/Broughton Park , Marple/Glossop, Aldwinians/Ashton UL.

During the conference stage of the leagues we had 5 clubs drop out so by the end of the season there was no colts rugby at Altrincham Kersal, Vale of Lune, Trentham, Fylde and Sefton.

56 sides finished the league season. This is more sides than the 2019/20 season.

Of the 12 leagues

- Lancashire clubs won 4 – Warrington Snr A, Blackburn Snr G, Rochdale Jnr B, Garstang Jnr E
- Cheshire clubs won 4
- Cumbria, Staffordshire, Shropshire & Derbyshire won 1 a piece.

League Cup Competition

53 sides took part in the League Cup competition.

- Lancashire Clubs won 3 of the 6 Finals – Warrington Snr Cup, Heaton Moor Jnr Bowl, Garstang Jnr Plate
- Cumbria Clubs won 2
- Cheshire clubs won 1

Thanks to all involved at Heaton Moor & Eccles Rugby clubs for hosting the finals and for all the hard work that goes into making these days successful and memorable.

Lancashire Colts Cups – Finals Played at Fleetwood RUFC

We had 35 (20 Snr & 15 Jnr) Sides enter the county knock out competition, played across 5 rounds in the senior competition and 4 in the Junior Cup. Those sides losing in their 1st round went through to the plate allowing each side to enjoy a minimum of 2 knock out rounds.

The eventual winners in the 4 competitions were:

- Waterloo Snr Cup
- Manchester Snr Plate
- Rochdale Jnr Cup
- Liverpool St Helens Jnr Plate

Thank you to Fleetwood RUFC and in particular Andy Thompson for organising a great finals day. Special thanks for Alan James who put in enormous effort to make sure that all the background work of Cups, Medals, Programmes etc were all organised and that the day ran smoothly.

Squad Numbers during the 2021/22 season

Most sides appear to have built their squad numbers throughout the season, of course there are a few that have struggled with numbers throughout. There is a noticeable effect when the Rugby League season starts with some clubs struggling to raise sides on a Sunday due to dual code players choosing to play League in preference to Union.

Colts League Rugby for this coming season

Entries are in for the forthcoming 2022/23 season, with 59 sides confirmed. These are made up from 39 Senior and 20 Junior sides.

This is a significant decrease from last season, but is in line with the 2019/20 entries, however, it is anticipated that with a season of rugby having been played clubs and age group managers will have a better understanding of where their squads are and that there will not be so many drop outs.

- Lancashire have 31 of the 59 sides involved.
- Cheshire are at 21, Cumbria, Shropshire & Derbyshire at 2 each and 1 side from Staffordshire.

Lancashire based U16s sides coming through to colts for this season.

Of the 23 sides that entered the U16s 2021/22 junior competition 10 have come through to Junior Colts. Sefton & Westpark St Helens have merged their squads to form a side. There are a further 9 clubs that have merged their squads to make a single senior colts side. 1 Club that had an U16s side will not have a colts side at either group. We would normally expect to see more sides coming through as single age group side.

Changes /Challenges.

Rugby League appears to be more of a challenge than ever in Lancashire in particular. The RFL were quicker off the blocks in getting matches back up and running drawing players across.

Playing Down of Players – The RFU is pressing to allow more and more players holding a dispensation to play down.

Thank yous & Congratulations : As always our thanks to both Manchester & Liverpool Referee Societies; who rise to the task to provide Sunday Appointments for Colts games.

To the players who played for the County, The North & England Counties via the 17/18, congratulation's.

To the Coach's/Managers and parents who support their sons each week, as they travel around the North West of England, playing this great game which we are all privileged to be a part of. Without your commitment, Colts Rugby, on such a scale would be hard to achieve.

Thanks to my colleagues on the Halbro NW Colts League Committee who work so hard and with such enthusiasm and dedication to ensure that Colts Rugby is enjoyed & played by upwards of 2000 lads across as many clubs as possible in the Northwest of the country.

And last but not least to those that organise Rugby within the county & region for their valued support over the season.

Chris Barrett

Chairman

MINI JUNIOR (7 – 16 AGE GRADE) COMMITTEE

It's been a tough season for everyone after the long break due to Covid-19.

This has been the most difficult season to cope with

There has been a significant change of volunteers within clubs over the absence of rugby. These volunteers have been great in taking on the new challenges given to them and where needed we have guided them through the regulations and any administration needed.

So a big thank you to all volunteers new and old.

When expressions of interest were initially sent out to clubs we were over whelmed at the response. We had a 170 team's show early interest in participating in some form of Lancashire event. As final entries were being completed the number of teams did reduce as clubs realized the number of players missing grew due to the long layoff.

There were a higher number of age grade dispensations applied for this season which enabled players to keep playing for their clubs and to keep their teams active, and some clubs merged age groups to keep the game flowing, and the players playing. As the weeks went by it became apparent that during the season there would have to be a significant amount of work done to keep the pool groups with enough numbers to make games flow.

The organizers of the festival and challenge said they would do their best to get meaningful games together for the second half of the season. As the first half had to be played at the lower age regulations as per RFU guidelines, but this turned out to be more difficult than anticipated. The number of teams unable to fulfill fixtures became a never ending challenge. The end of season events days, were never going to please everyone, especially those clubs with more settled team numbers. The main aim was to give all participants some form of meaningful end to the season, playing in mini festivals.

Pleased to say there were some clubs who put events on and the day was enjoyed by those attended.

Lets now look forward to a more balanced season to come where we can all work together to grow the game.

Ian Spivey

Chairman, 7 – 16 Age Grade Committee

COUNTY OFFICERS & OTHER OFFICIALS 2021 - 2022

County President Gill Burns MBE
Vice Presidents:
Brian Stott (Senior Vice President)
Mark Nelson
Carol Baker
John Greenwood
Alan James
Brian Hurst

Members of the Management Board

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Hon. Secretary: Mark Downs
Hon. Treasurer: Paul Deakin

Dir. Rugby Development

Howard Hughes

Dir. Volunteering

Gill Burns MBE

Dir. Without Portfolio

John Greenwood
Tommy Hughes
Gary Morgan

World Rugby Chairman

Bill Beaumont CBE DL

RFU Junior Vice President

Rob Briers

RFU Council Member

Ken Andrews
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Hon. Membership Secretary

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Safeguarding Manager

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Deputy: Christine Spivey

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Club & Community Rugby Committee

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Asst. Treasurer: Stephen Briers

Cup & Competitions Committee

Chairman: Mike Cornelia

Secretary: Brian Hurst

Disciplinary Committee

Chairman: John Greenwood

Secretary: Brian Stott

Governance Committee

Director/Chairman: Carol Baker

17-18 Committee

Chairman: Tommy Hughes

7-16 (Junior Rugby) Committee

Chairman: Ian Spivey

Secretary: Christine Spivey

County Schools Union

Chairman: Robbie Jones

Secretary: Ken Andrews

Colts Competitions Committee

Chairman: Chris Barrett

Secretary: Jon Kitchen

Assistant Hon. Secretary

Brian Stott

Assistant Hon. Treasurer

Stephen Briers

Hon. Legal Adviser

John Bullough

Chairman of Selectors for

Senior XV John Greenwood

Team Manager

Senior XV Steve Rigby

Contact details can be found on the Lancashire County website:

www.lancashirerugby.com

Note to Annual Members:
Individual Subscriptions (£20.00) are due on 1st July 2022
Royal Bank of Scotland: 16-29-34 10251318
(not the former NatWest Account)

The Lancashire County Rugby Football Union was established in 1881

**Lancashire County Rugby Football Union
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Hanover Buildings, 11-13 Hanover Street, Liverpool, Merseyside L1 3DN
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Directors: D Clarke (Chairman), M Downs (Company Secretary),
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H Hughes, JT Hughes, GJ Morgan, MJ Worsley.

The Lancashire Rugby Union Youth Trust

Referred to in the Annual Report,
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**Contact details and other information can be found on the
Lancashire County
website: www.lancashirerugby.com**