

LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

ANNUAL REPORT

2018-19

THE SECRETARY'S OPENING REMARKS

As ever my first job is to thank our President for the great work he has done this season. Dave Clarke has been unfailing in his club visits and is a true supporter of Rugby. He has been instrumental in the formation of the ADM Lancashire Leagues which has helped many of our clubs play more local matches. This has seen a number of players staying within the game. With the frequency of his more than daily telephone calls to discuss some issue in the game my children now do a very good impression of the Ginger Ninja from Wigan.

Both Dave and myself are indebted to Mrs President, Anne. As well as being his secretary, Anne has deputised for me in meetings and acted as the minutes secretary in our general meetings. Thank you both.

To Rugby, both our Senior Mens and Womens XV's failed to reach their finals which was not for want of trying, all our representative players should be thanks for the effort they put in to pulling on the Red & White hoops at the end of a long tiring club season. We will be back.

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

Our 20s team did make their day out in Twickenham where they went down to a very strong Yorkshire team, I'm sure we will be seeing more of these lads progressing through to our Senior XV and more success in County Rugby.

Our Royals project goes from strength to strength with three games this season. New Counties are taking up the format with Eastern Counties and Northumberland setting up teams this season. We do need to sometimes remind them that this is not a development squad but a chance for players at Level 5 and below to play with their contemporaries and form new friendships through our great game.

As highlighted at the Financial AGM in November we remain the steady ship, however we have recently been advised that going forwards we will have our budget cut by 18%. It's a lot and we are going to rethink how we fund many of our projects and look to open up potential new income streams. The team of Chris Smail, Paul Deakin, Stephen Briers, Catherine Ryan and Mike Bailey are thanked for their continued work for the County.

Our Mini & Junior Committee must be doing something right, year on year we see increased numbers of players and teams entering the competitions they organise. Finals days are a pleasure to attend when we see so many children enjoying the game. Ian & Christine Spivey along with Mike Murphy, Allan Bower and the team should be applauded for their hard work, patience and understanding.

Our Club & Community committee is our vital link between ourselves and our clubs. This season has seen a change of format in the way our volunteers are recognised. In collaboration with Mitsubishi a great evening was had at Preston to thank some very worthy club people who give their time and energy freely. I pass on my thanks to Malcolm Worsley and his team for the worthy job they have done his season.

Our two RFU Council representatives have again served us with distinction. 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 both Rob & Ken for representing us so well.

The County Schools Union under the Chairmanship of Robbie Jones is in great form, with established and emerging schools forming the backbone of junior rugby. The County has invested in schools clubs links this season with coaching and mentoring and hope to continue the project.

We are now starting to see our efforts in this sector pay dividends with a number of our girls who have come through the ranks of age grade rugby graduating to senior rugby at both club and county Thanks to Helen Duggan and all who support this area of rugby from County & Club coaches, players and parents.

In club rugby I congratulate all who have gained promotion and with equal measure commiserate with all those who have been relegated. In that I include the ECC clubs, New ADM Leagues & NOWIRUL leagues, a big thanks to all those who organise these. Within this section I also remember the men in the middle. I thank all the whistlers of the Manchester & District, Liverpool District and Federation Referees Societies.

Once again the Disciplinary committee have been busier than ever, 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, David Herriman, a great mentor, who will sadly be stepping down from this role at the AGM but will continue his work with ERCA and the Schools Union. 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

SENIOR RUGBY

This seasons opening game saw us travel up to play Durham and the sunny delights of Sunderland RFC and we got off to a cracker. It really was shock and awe rugby with Lancashire running everything at Durham. Final score 73-7 to Lancashire. I must mention the great hospitality we received and the special award to Damon Hall our winger of a Teflon coated frying pan from our hosts. I think that would be self explanatory.....

Next up our long away day to Cambridge RFC and the tie against Eastern Counties. Again great open flowing rugby and a fantastic win 57-7. Special mention should go to Chris Johnson and Steve Collins who both played their 30th game for the County.

Going into the final game a win would see us in the final, Yorkshire could not qualify but Cheshire could if they beat Durham. The game was a tough one very physical up front and with defence seemingly to be everywhere with no room for manoeuvre. The highlight of the game was a fantastic finish by Tom Carlton which was sadly not enough for us as we went down 20-26.

I wish Cheshire well in representing the North in the final against what will be a strong Cornwall side.

Mark Downs

Honorary Secretary

LANCASHIRE ROYALS

This has been the third season of the Royals, and it is great to see other counties joining what I feel is a fantastic addition to county rugby.

This season the royals have added Eastern County Wanderers to their fixture list.

Giving new players the opportunity to play for the royals has continued this season the same as the last two. With 29 players making their debuts over the 3 games, with 12 different clubs being represented.

Our first fixture in the calendar saw us visit Chester RUFC to take on the Harvesters which has become a regular fixture. On a rainy cold Friday night a very strong effort was put in by the royals but we were unable to extract revenge for the previous season loss.

The regular Christmas fixture took place at Wigan RUFC on the 29th December against the AA's. the royals came up against a very strong AA team and again suffered defeat. I would like to thank everyone who came out to support both teams and the fantastic hospitality shown by Wigan.

The new fixture saw the royals travel to Cambridge RUFC to take on their new community county team the Wanderers as a curtain raiser to the Seniors county championship fixture.

The wanderers only formed 4 weeks prior to the fixture and having played a game the week before and training looked very strong. A great effort displayed by the royals on a very warm day was not enough to get the win.

I look forward to next season and hopefully the opportunity to reward more players from level 5 down the chance to pull on the Lancashire rose.

I must thank the coaching team for their fantastic efforts and time given up to support the royals.

Richard Buckley

Lancashire Royals Team Manager

UNDER 20s

After last season success in the Jason Leonard Division 2 Final this year was going to be our first dining at the top table of the Jason Leonard Division 1 County Championship since five years ago!

A good strong Trial was held at Preston Grasshoppers in early October, from that our Training Squad was selected once more under the tutelage of Martin Scott and Neil Ryan. Several training sessions at Wigan RUFC set us up for our first outing in a warm-up game against a very useful Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) even more useful that we had six members of their Squad in the County Squad also. It was cold but thankfully dry February day at Tyldesley RUFC and despite a slow start we won the game convincingly by 6 tries to 2.

The first of our opening Group games saw us travel over the "Southern Border" to Cheshire, again we nearly paid for a slow start going behind but we were resilient enough to come back and record the away win by a score of 11-18.

Our final Group was to be the big one, Yorkshire at Preston Grasshoppers RFC. Yorkshire U20 National Champions 5 out of the last 7 seasons hadn't conceded more than 3 tries in a game for two and half seasons, so when we led 20-17 with three tries in the bag we anticipated a close finish. Yorkshire levelled with a penalty and then following a break in midfield they were awarded a controversial penalty try which moved them in to 20-27 lead. Another penalty followed but we dug in rumbled up the pitch scored a try from a drive after a good lineout catch to leave the score line at 25-30 with 2 minutes left on the clock, Yorkshire held out but the relief on their faces was clear to see. That meant a 2nd place finish as Yorkshire just managed to edge Cheshire 17-13

Our Quarter-final saw us travel to Derby to face NLD the side we had beat in last year's Shield Final, we raced into a 21-0 lead but had a woeful mid-game spell we saw the home take the lead. Again the character of the lads could not be faulted as we patiently built toward the winning score.

The Semi-final draw was not kind and off to Cheshunt RFC in Hertfordshire we did go. Again we rode an early onslaught from the home side before taking control of a game we never looked like losing. The result of the other game saw Yorkshire trounce Gloucestershire so a Roses Final was in play.

The squad had a slightly patched up look we had sadly lost 3 Back Rowers with injury and two Wingers prior to the Semi-final and we had to call on Andrew Owens (Widnes) and Ryan Woolfenden (Tarleton) to come into the squad and both did a very creditable job indeed. However despite our best preparations Yorkshire had done their Home Work, some changes in their personnel also add to their strength in depth and we just couldn't cope with their pace, at 31-0 it looked like game over at half-time, but again our character showed and we scored on 69 mins to make it 31-5 we thought we could at least end the match in the ascendancy..... Yorkshire had other plans, 3 converted tries one on the very last play gave the score a humbling 52-5 look in the last ten minutes. However it was great experience for the squad with at least 9 players available again next season.

We had 11 players invited to the North U20 Trial and we managed to get seven selected and all seven did well in the new format Divisional weekend back at Derby RFC, from that 3 players stood out and gained selection for England Counties U20, Sam Stott (Preston Grasshoppers), John Blanchard (Sale FC) and Matt Gallagher (Sedgley Park) at the time of writing this report all three will be looking ahead to their tour of Romania.

In summary another excellent season for the U20s, thanks must go to our hosting Clubs Tyldesley, Wigan and Hoppers also our Clubs & Universities who have supported us with the use of your prized assets, your players.

Martin and Neil have always been good Coaches and Mentors to the lads and Stephen Briers did a brief cameo when Neil was off topping up his sun-tan. Jason Thomas and Doc John Morgan kept the boys

fit and healthy and Assistant Manager/Right Hand Man/Sidekick Richard “Dicky” Buckley was a very reliable member of our Backroom staff.

Results

Warm up – **Lancashire U20** 35 **MMU** 17 @ Tyldesley RUFC

JL U20 Cup Group A North

Cheshire 11 **Lancashire U20** 18 @ Wilmslow RUFC

Lancashire U20 25 **Yorkshire U20** 30 @ Preston Grasshoppers

JL U20 Cup Quarter Final

NLD 28 **Lancashire U20** 32 @ Derby RFC

JL U20 Cup Semi Final

Hertfordshire 12 **Lancashire U20** 22 @ Cheshunt RFC

JL U20 Cup Final

Lancashire U20 5 **Yorkshire** 52 @ Twickenham Stadium

Howard Hughes

U20s Team Manager

UNDER 18s DEVELOPMENT (UNDER 17s)

We had a total of 175 Players trial this season and managed to have recruited in enough assessors to complete the day with success.

The U17’s Season is obviously very much about development and we managed to reduce this huge number down to a 45 man wider development squad with also 5 unassisted injured players.

Following one trial & one training session we managed to select a side to play for our first game against East Midlands Away.

East Midlands Fixture

The match started well and quickly we built a half time lead of 0-12, but unfortunately East Midlands came back to beat us 14-12 in a keenly fought contest. Relationships with East Midlands after the game was brilliant and something that players will remember for the rest of their career.

This was a winnable game and the fact that East Midlands had over double the amount of training session and already played a trial game I think our lads missed out on Victory just through a lack of time being together.

Leicestershire Fixture

Firstly I would like to thank Trafford Metrovik RFC in hosting this game and would recommend the use of these facilities in the future.

Well the extra time spent as a squad really showed the 47-14 scoreline shows what could have been in the first game had we had more time together. Leicestershire had previously beaten East Midlands in a trial game.

Yorkshire Fixture

Firstly again I would like to thank Waterloo RFC on their hospitality for this fixture and would again recommend the use of these facilities in the future.

On to the game with Five Minutes to go it looked like the perfect Roses Battle at 27-27, which would have been the perfect result for a battle that would surely see the majority of next years North U18 Squad being picked. Unfortunately, it wasn't to be and with the last kick of the game Yorkshire landed a penalty to take the spoils. 27-30

All in all a great season for the U17's, the coaching staff of Carl Fox, Phill Mills & Nick Flynn Supported by the Management of Ian Jones will have learnt a lot about these players and what other players could develop into the squad for next year.

Development was the key for next years success and the friendship within the squad will remain for a number of years. I would also like to thank our key stake holding schools and colleges for their support in helping us at every chance. Thank you to Myerscough College, Kirkham Grammar school, Lancaster Grammar School & Sedburgh for their help and also to all the Parents for supporting their Child and Others through this process.

Ian Jones

Lancashire 17s Manager

Lancashire U15s & U16s

Organisation:

Group Head of Rugby – Bill Nichol

Group Chair Selectors – Iain Crossley

Group Manager – Rod Murray

U16 Coaches

Mark Goodman, Neil Ryan

Ricky Phillips, Richard Byrne

Andrew Groves

U15 Coaches

Mark Turner, Richard Byrne

Ricky Phillips, Mark Murray

Mike Smith

We started the 2018/19 season having refreshed the coaching group. Kevin Brookman, Bernie Bowers, Ian Graydon and Mark Baillie all moved on after years of dedication to county rugby which will always be appreciated. New in this season were Richard Byrne, Ricky Phillips, Andrew Groves and Mike Smith all of which had something new to bring to the group such as a better understanding of the players as some where DPP leads and an Irish viewpoint following Richard's work with Leinster.

U16's Season:

Fixtures:

20th Jan 2019 - Lancashire (A) 17 v 10 Cheshire (A) @ Burnage RUFC

20th Jan 2019 - Lancashire (B) 19 v 30 Cheshire (B) @ Burnage RUFC

3rd Feb 2019 - Yorkshire (A) 49 v 5 Lancashire (A) @ Keighley RUFC

3rd Feb 2019 - Yorkshire (B) 24 v 19 Lancashire (B) @ Keighley RUFC

The U16's season started back in October with the DPP (4 sessions) being delivered by the county management & coaching group at Sale Sharks Carrington ground. 30 players were selected from the 70 players that attended the DPP and these were joined with 16 players from the Sale Development Group (SDG) giving a county squad of 46 players.

For this season all the county sides adopted the half-game rule, which will become regulation for age grade rugby from the 2019/20 season. The first fixtures (A & B squads) were against Cheshire at

Burnage RUFC. Both games were evenly matched with the “A” game going to Lancashire and the “B” game to Cheshire.

We then played A & B fixtures with Yorkshire at Keighley RUFC, this was a big step up from the previous Cheshire games. The “A” team being comprehensively beaten by an exceptional Yorkshire outfit and certainly one of the best teams at U16 level for many years. However, the “B” team fared better narrowly losing out to Yorkshire.

Player demographics:

REGION				SCHOOLS		
Nth Lancs	Manchester	Merseyside	No Club	State	Grammar	Independent
14	12	19	1	34	2	10
18 Clubs represented				32 Schools represented		

SDG Players = 16 (Sale Academy U16’s took 28 players, 10 of which from Lancashire to attend and play in the Wellington Festival – April 2019).

U15’s Season:

Fixtures:

- 17th Mar 2019 - Lancashire (White) 5 v 43 Cheshire (Bears) @ Burnage RUFC
- 17th Mar 2019 - Lancashire (Red) 7 v 12 Cheshire (Lions) @ Burnage RUFC
- 31st Mar 2019 - Yorkshire (Blues) 47 v 15 Lancashire (White) @ Morley RUFC
- 31st Mar 2019 - Yorkshire (Whites) 19 v 15 Lancashire (Red) @ Morley RUFC
- 14th Apr 2019 - Lancashire 62 v 0 Staffordshire @ Trafford MV RUFC

For the first time at U15’s the Cheshire & Yorkshire games were mixed ability squads and adopting the half-game rule. Whilst we lost both sets of games all were competitively close despite some of the scores suggesting otherwise. This allowed all teams to play openly and without fear of expectation. Naturally players want to win and this they will experience in future games, but the level of rugby played was of a good to high standard. Some lessons learned by the management and coaching group with the mixed ability teams and half-game rule but will be the better for it next season!

The Staffordshire was one game only with a mixed squad selected and Lancashire proved too strong for the visitors, who never gave up right to the final whistle. Credit to the Lancashire players for keeping a clean sheet.

Player demographics:

REGIONS				SCHOOLS		
Nth Lancs	Manchester	Merseyside	No Club	State	Grammar	Independent
14	12	23	0	29	3	17
20 Clubs represented				33 Schools represented		

SDG Players = 19

Bill Nichol

Head of Rugby Lancashire U15s & U16s Group

WOMENS & GIRLS RUGBY

Club rugby

The 2018/19 season has been a year of change for Lancashire, and women's and girl's rugby across the country with the reorganisation within the RFU dramatically affecting the structured support for our section of the game.

The removal of the Women's Rugby Development Officers and a cut in the number of community coaches made the beginning of the season rather hectic, especially as the competition staff within the RFU who were also responsible for the management of the women's game were made redundant.

A thank you needs to go to the volunteers who stepped up at short notice and helped pull together the youth cup competition, Keri Bland and Dione Blignaut, with the support of the other CB leads in Area 5 we were able to ensure the competition went ahead.

Congratulations to West Park St Helens and Burnley who progressed well and to their respective area finals. It is great to see the numbers of girls entering the game increasing, we still need to work at our U18s age group to provide a sustainable base to ensure that there is transition to the open age game.

A thank you to the RFU staff across Lancashire, who have not had responsibility for the women and girls' game before and have embraced the additional challenge of helping to support our growth and development. We recognise that it may have been a challenge on occasions as the female game is rugby but, from my own experience of being involved in both the male and female game, there can be differences in approach. These differences have been a positive and provided an opportunity for us all to learn from each other to grow and expand our wonderful sport. So, a thank you for your patience and time.

One of the successes for this year was an open age merit league in the North of Lancashire and South of Cumbria organised by Kai Burns. More than six teams have come together to form a small merit league with flexible fixtures and venues. It was great to see the six teams at the beginning of the season all come together in Preston for the start of the competition. Feedback at the Lancashire North Forum has been positive, so much so that with the support of Steph Veal a merit league has been set up in Greater Manchester and there are plans for one in the South Lancashire North Cheshire area.

We hope the merit leagues will support the growth of the game and allow teams to develop at the right speed to encourage sustainable growth. Bringing new players into the grassroots game.

County representative rugby

For the female game County rugby remains part of the pathway towards wearing the England red rose.

From county, players are nominated by the coaches to the Centre of Excellence programme run by the Premier15 clubs. The programme is overseen by the RFU and is slightly different to the boys DPP. The players become part of the RFU centres of excellence not a specific club's centre of excellence. So, a number of Lancashire players have attended Loughborough's centre during term time and Firwood Waterloo's centre during holidays. This is all dependent on whether they are at college or at home.

To facilitate this process the RFU have brought in a new system for the U15s and U18s county rugby. The aim is focused on the development of the players rather than the traditional 15 a side game. There are three festivals between three counties and the players all take part in 7s, x7s and 15 a side game. It

is stipulated how many minutes they play, and they have to take part in at least one version of 7's rugby.

It has been an interesting experience implementing the new structure and there is a review session between the North Counties to look at how the festivals ran and what improvements we can make.

Feedback from the players has been mixed and the same could be said for the coaches. We have one more year of the new style before any changes will be made to allow it to embed and for us to refine the process. Lancashire will be pushing for a formal review of the new structure to outline the benefits, change is not a bad thing, but we need to ensure its achieving its goals and making the game and players better for it.

It will never remove the County pride or rivalry that the girls feel for playing for their county, especially the U18s who beat Yorkshire for the first time in 5 years in the 15 a side game at Southport during the last festival.

A thank you must go to all the coaches and volunteers that have helped may it happen – you can imagine with 3 games per age group happening at the same time it has taken a lot of volunteers to make happen. Many of them are new to County rugby with a change in coaching at youth and seniors last year.

The senior programme this year has seen a massive step forward. We have new coaches and it is great to see the influx of players from the junior section. Feedback from the players has been extremely positive and when one turned around and stated – before a game had even been played – that she was loving being part of Lancashire this year and had learned lots, our main goal had been achieved.

The team gelled well and won their pool games comfortably against North Midlands and Durham, facing Yorkshire in the semi-final. The game was tense, and the players did incredibly well to come back from a 0-17 deficit to tie the game 17-17 with 10 minutes to go. Unfortunately, Yorkshire seemed to rally from their yellow cards and came back into the game scoring three quick successive tries. A heart-breaking day for the players but with such a young side who are still growing and developing we know they have a bright future for County rugby.

A massive well done to Chris Hall, Stephen Tiernan and Adrian Moffatt who stepped into the coaching this year. Making the whole experience so positive for the players and a place they have developed. They were again supported by Mike Dale, team manager, who thoroughly deserved his President's Volunteer award for all he does for his club and the female County game.

Congratulations to:

Anya Richmond on her U20s England Cap

Laura Perrin on her selection into the U20s squad

Tysh Harper on her England Academy cap

Sarah Beckett on her England cap and winning the Six Nations Grand Slam

Helen Duggan

Women & Girls Chair

RUGBY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (RDC)

Rugby Development in Lancashire has a unique structure in that unlike other counties we not only have generic RFU centralised courses delivered by CRC staff (common with all counties) we have our groundbreaking projects run through the Lancashire Development Centre (LDC). The LDC was set up seven years ago and has evolved to cover all aspects of Coach and Player Development. We

also have instituted the Club Coach Mentoring programme and Academy both under the auspices of Chris Briers.

The LDC runs popular coaching programmes at clubs delivering themes on the game to Club coaches and teachers using the host club 1st XV to perform the tasks. To date we have staged over 70 sessions at 25 of our clubs with well over a two thousand attendees. In addition, we have our summer Coaching Conference and University Development Days. Another feature of our work is our support of Student rugby both male and female in the form of the 7s tournament at Trafford MV. Here we look to link students to local clubs by making them aware of the excellent facilities and opportunities to play the game and integrate into the local rugby community. We also do outreach coaching with highly successful sessions at Lancaster, Manchester, Liverpool University groups. I also act as a hub for clubs seeking to appoint coaches and general advice on coaching and player development. Another unique feature of the LDC is involving Lancashire Senior XV players and former players in delivering coaching sessions. This excellent cohort of expertise is a tremendous asset to the County and has been forged by the attachment to Lancashire Rugby that these players develop whilst representing Lancs in the County Championship then conveying their knowledge and enthusiasm back to the club coaches and teachers in the counties clubs and schools.

This is also the case with the representative side coaching group where we seek to appoint former and current county players to help coach our excellent age group sides. This success is exemplified by the U20s who were in the doldrums a few years ago but with players going through the system and the 20s coaching group linking closely with the senior XV they have this season reached the final. Of course not all coaches of the age group sides have played for Lancashire but many utilise the experience of former players to help in their preparation of teams, Carl Fox with the 17s being a good example.

In conclusion the LDC and Coaching Development element of the county operation provides a vital role in the advancement of the game at all levels in Lancashire. It is one of the key factors that keeps us at the leading edge of County Rugby in England, they say imitation is the best form of flattery and many other counties are now looking to follow our lead. Let's continue to be leaders in all aspects of Rugby.

Mark Nelson
Manager Lancashire Development Centre.
Chairman Lancashire Coaching Committee.

RUGBY DEVELOPMENT REPORT

It has been a very challenging year across the RFU and Local Rugby Delivery has not escaped. As part of a major cost saving exercise the whole of the organisation has had to make some very tough decisions and this has led to further widespread changes.

In Lancashire we now have 2 RDOs exclusively supporting Lancashire and the clubs, Stuart Urquhart covering the North and Liverpool and Dave Westhead covering Greater Manchester and the rest, Phil Clarke continues to provide his excellent support working specifically in the City of Manchester.

Both RDOs have 4 dedicated CRCs:

Stuart: Kevin Greaves, Kai Burns, Mark Sutcliffe & Mark Goodman

Dave: Aaron Howarth, John Foster, Steph Veal & Paul Arnold.

Established now we have Claire Antcliffe formerly our Women & Girls Officer in the Match Official Development Officer (MODO) for the Area, Dave Livesey Area Training Manager and Tom Bartram Facilities remain the same. The restructure means we have Matt Bryan as Competitions Development Officer for the North covering Lancs, and Peter Taylor with the same arrangement for Player Development.

Universities is quite a complicated picture and we have Mike Hart covering North Lancs, and Jon Pearce covering Manchester & Liverpool with Mike taking a liaison role with the County. We have also appointed in partnership with the Universities a Partnership Development Officer in the North and Manchester and hope to do so in Liverpool in the course of time.

The restructure has also led to a redefining of how the RFU and the CB work together and the funding arrangements, in a very positive step the former PFR funding now the Local Rugby Plan (LRP) has been overhauled and simplified with a far greater emphasis on partnership between the local RFU staff and the county, much more collaboration and consultation with the clubs and greater use of Data and insights from amongst other sources the National Rugby Survey.

Our core purpose remains the same:

“Strengthening our Member Clubs and Growing the Game in Communities around them”

Key drivers:

- Retaining & Developing Current
- Players
- Recruiting New
- Retaining & Recruiting high quality Coaches, Volunteers & Referees
- Integration with the Local Community
- Effective & Efficient
- Management & Governance
- Effective & Efficient Facilities

While not all activities of the team must support the above they are certainly the filter through which all potential activities must be viewed.

Big emphasis continues on the “Casual and Vets” rugby which caters to those players wanting to play less frequently and in a more relaxed informal programme continues to grow apace.

Women and Girls rugby in the county with new Women’s across the County and especially Girls Under 13, 15 and 18.

The Clubs have been well served by the North West Facilities Group, Lancashire are represented by RDO Stuart Urquhart and Dave Herriman. The group did their usual first rate job in helping clubs drive forward achieve their ambitions. I would emphasise it is important that clubs get in touch early in the planning process to avoid mistakes, duplication etc

As ever a big thank you to the CB and club volunteers who have helped with Development in the County, I must mention Rob Briers, Dave Herriman, Ken Andrews, Mark Downs and Paul Deakin have been exceptional in their work on establishing the new LRP system and ensure we are even more closely aligned.

Our monthly review meetings have helped streamline an increasingly complex process and help us to work more as closely as ever.

Dave Southern

Area 5 RFU Manager

CLUB & COMMUNITY RUGBY

The season finishes in turmoil, with vast financial cuts across the community game. This will affect our game in Lancashire, with less staff and much less money to spend in our county.

We have had a number of meetings in the county with regard to league rugby, and the ADM Lancashire Leagues. The meeting we did arrange was to explain to the clubs how the financial cuts would impact on the clubs in Lancashire, but the RFU Regional Manager did not think it was necessary, so we had to cancel the meeting.

We have discussed the ADM Lancashire Leagues at all our meetings this season and all the reports have been very positive about the impact on clubs, the only negative was that we need more clubs in the leagues.

The Lancashire Volunteer Awards Evening has joined forces with Mitsubishi to make a joint evening, very special, to all the volunteers.

Once again Jayne Dolloway has written a very fine article for Mums Blog.

I would like to thank all the committee members who give up their time to attend. Anne Clarke, Carol Baker, Jayne Dolloway, Kate Bennetta, Gill Burns, Gary Morgan, Tommy Hughes, Stuart Urquhart, Andy Kerboas, Helen Duggan and our secretary, Steve Blackburn, who arranges all the meetings.

As a footnote, I would like the club reps to suggest new topics for our Cluster / Presidents meetings for next season.

Malcolm Worsley

Club & Community Rugby Chairman

CUP & COMPETITIONS

This season has seen more of our clubs taking part in the senior cup competitions than the last few years, with thirty six clubs taking part in the four competitions. It is the first time that the John Burgess Lancashire Cup has been out of its box for several years, we hope that all clubs taking part have had a good season and look forward to more clubs making an effort to take part next season.

This years finals day at Rochdale was a big success for all concerned and a big thank you to the Rochdale club and all their staff and helpers who made the day the feast of rugby that it was. With four finals in one day it took some planning but it worked like clockwork, the Alan Stone Lancashire Bowl was a tight game with Garstang taking the game but it was a close run thing. The Lancashire Plate was won by Aspull who have had a good season and were just too good for Eccles on the day.

Widnes won the Brian Leigh Lancashire Trophy against Trafford MV who played right to the end, that gave Widnes a hatrick of wins this season to go with the ADM Lancashire Premier League and the League Cup.

Then we had the main event with host club Rochdale taking on Blackburn this was a great game of rugby with players from both sides giving their all, it was a pity that someone had to come second but Blackburn just had the edge and won by a slim two points.

Once again can I thank Rochdale for the super day and all the clubs who took part this season and look forward to you all taking part next year. Any club who may want to host our finals day should contact me for details as it is open to all.

Brian Hurst

Competitions Secretary

COUNTY SAFEGUARDING

Thanks again are extended to Christine Spivey and Sue Hopkinson, Lancashire's Deputy CBSM's for their help and hard work through this past season.

The 2018-19 season has continued to have clubs well run and professionally managed with regards to Child Protection and Safeguarding; with many Club Safeguarding Officers (CSO's) remaining in post.

As we approach the 2018-19 season, I have been informed that two officers are standing down but as yet no replacements identified. This will be something addressed over the closed season and suitable qualified persons appointed as a matter of urgency.

Child Abuse and the reporting of incidents (still mostly historical) within sporting arenas continues to make headlines, though not as prevalent as in the past two years.

The RFU Safeguarding and Governance department at Twickenham still oversee the safeguarding of incidents and child protection for the whole Union and liaise with Lancashire regularly when required. The newly appointed head of RFU safeguarding team Vivien Rimmer visited the county early in the season met with Carol Baker and was suitably impressed with all safeguarding that occurs within Lancashire County and its associations RPPDG (Regional Player Pathway Development Group) and Sale Sharks.

As in previous years Safeguarding audits were expected to be undertaken at 10% of our clubs (5 needing completion) as required under national regulations from RFU. The county officers completed 5 this season, which is below our usual 25%. There will be focussed work by all three CBSM's to ensure we meet our 25% County desired usual attainment.

Play it Safe and In Touch – RFU specific safeguarding courses, have been delivered within the county as in previous years.

The national RFU safeguarding courses were updated and re-written in the closed season 2017-2018. Carol Baker being invited to take part with this re-write and production.

The increase in participant and persons attending 'renewal' training bears witness to the importance and recognition of not only keeping young people free from harm but also strengthening the protection and training of our volunteers.

As in previous years The AGE GRADE regulation for all players under 18 years of age (regulation 15) is embedded and *most* clubs abide by the regulations. Clubs still need to seek advice and support if not fully understanding of this regulation and from the appropriate source (not hearsay nor the word of other clubs, which still continues). I again request that if clubs, coaches and managers witness or suspect "flouting" of this regulation PLEASE report to myself. safeguarding@lancshirerugby.com

As a point of note the Half Game Ruling will become MANDATORY from September 2019.

<https://www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/players/age-grade-rugby/half-game/#>

The clearest message from young players is that they want to play alongside their friends as part of the team. That's why from September 2018 England Rugby are asking all its Age Grade clubs, schools and colleges to make sure everyone in a match day squad gets to play at least half the game time available.

*The half game rule was introduced voluntarily in England and follows successful implementation in New Zealand and Wales and a trial in local club and school competitions in England last year. This voluntary year helped prepare for mandatory introduction **from September 2019**. RFU*

A safeguarding officers conference was not held this year, but one is being arranged for 2018-2019 season. It will be held in September 2019 hopefully at Waterloo RUFC. This year's main theme will be in relation to the Mental Health of players.

I again wish to thank the CSO's and officers at our Lancashire clubs who work tirelessly maintaining and continuing to provide robust and effective safeguarding for Young Persons involved within the game.

To those CSO's who are standing down; (and may not have informed me yet PLEASE get in touch); this year thank you for all your hard work and commitment.

To those newly appointed CSO's welcome, it's great to have you on board. Welcome you to the role, it is an exciting, challenging, so worthwhile but a necessary role.

Finally Thank you to Lancashire CB who continue to be supportive of and acknowledge the importance of Safeguarding Children, Young People in Lancashire Rugby Union.

Carol Baker

Lancashire CB County Safeguarding Manager

MANCHESTER & DISTRICT REFEREES

It is with regret that we have to report the sad loss of Rollo Hawkins, a member of Northwich Rugby Club and a great supporter of the Society

RFU and North Group

- Matt Turvey has been appointed to the Panel of the Professional Game Match Officials' Team.
- Elliott Lewis and Kieron Henry continue on the North Group
- David Guerin continued with the RFRU as Treasurer and is seeking reappointment for 2019/20. He is also an RFU Assessor.
- Nigel Yates continues to work as referee coach and match reviewer for the Elite panel.
- David Hudson and Tony Turner continue as Time Keepers, Trevor Fisher and Graham Hughes as TMOs and Mike Hamlin on the Disciplinary panel for the professional arm and as a Time Keeper.
- Andy McMillan has completed 19 years membership on RFU Panel and has been instrumental in driving the continuing development of MO's at monthly meetings and an annual conference at PGH.
- David Yates has been promoted from associate member to North Group.

Executive Committee

There are a number of changes to the Executive Committee this year: -

- Roger Bowden took up the position of Chairman
- Alan Woods stood down as Chairman of OPC due to work commitments and we owe Alan thanks for his efforts.

- We should like to extend our thanks to Alan for his work in OPC. We are grateful to Fred and Andy for taking up these positions at short notice.
- Elliott Lewis was elected as Referees' Representative at the AGM in 2018
- Mark Owen has accepted a new role as Young Match Officials Officer to look after and guide our junior referees and is looking to start in earnest next season.
- Alan Farmer completes his term as President and whilst his health has caused difficulties, Alan has carried out his duties as a leading member of the Society with great fortitude.

Appointments

- Against the backdrop of the "Who's The Ref" appointments system roll-out, changes and even later changes to the Leagues and in-season restructures; late publication of fixtures, late requests for officials; cancellations - especially the late ones and even more especially when clubs and organizers have failed to tell us! ... it has been another incrementally challenging season for the Appointments Team who have responded so well to the vicissitudes. The Game is lucky to be blessed with such servants and it is gratifying to know that their work is so highly valued by our 'customers'.
- Alan has expressed his thanks to the Appointments Team but we also owe thanks to him for his stoicism.
- If only all involved were able to match the quality of all the Halbro North West Leagues Committee: their efficiency and support for what we do is exemplary. A huge thank you must go to John Powell in particular.
- We are also fortunate that the vast majority of our Club Contacts (or Fixture Secs as WTR demand they are called) are so diligent and supportive. In the coming season we need to address the issue of those that fail to confirm with the referee, as this exacerbates the workload and creates stress in the system and, more importantly, for the Team!
- Recruitment and retention have gone well this season we have successfully recruited 24 new referees which is positive with only losing 5. This has made appointments easier, albeit we have had to continue to ask some refs to "double up" in the first half of the Season when there are additional schools' matches to cover. A total of 4,105 refs and ARs have been appointed.
- We continue to grapple with referee availability on Sundays and mid-week, a reflection on family life, work and the quality of the referees' experience and enjoyment. A challenge for the Society is the need to develop more referees capable of refereeing at the higher levels.

Match Observers

- Fortunately, we have maintained a good number of Match Observers thanks to the continuing efforts of both Bill Taylor and Clive Ennis with over 300 matches being watched this year. We have had reports from 25 MO's with 18 acting on a regular basis at level 9 and below this year.
- It has been more difficult for Level 8 and above to cover all exchange games. It has not been a good year in terms of observer numbers being available regularly plus North Group and Panel appointments have limited availability. Mike Hayward moved up to the top table and Mike Hull will be top table permanently next season.

Abuse

- We reported last season that referee abuse is on the increase and to all levels of referees but noticeably among junior games and from coaches. This has reduced from 19 to 15 incidents but the percentage of abuse reported from Colts games has risen from 26% to 60% of which 90% were from Colts coaches rather than players.

- We are aware that there are many instances of constant questioning of referees' decisions and whilst not amounting to abuse can have unfortunate consequences as we lost a long serving referee who had had enough of this behaviour.
- I am pleased to report that we continue to support our referees offering advice and guidance

Exchanges

- International Exchanges - Once again we hosted referees from Malta (twice) and Holland during the 2018/19 season. A number of our members have also been able to travel to Holland, Malta, the Dairibord Schools Rugby Festival in Zimbabwe and the Lisbon Youth Rugby Festival in Portugal.
- It is hoped to continue our relationships with the above countries and we are anticipating further potential exchange destinations following the networking that is only possible when being part of overseas exchanges.
- Our colleagues from Zimbabwe have confirmed they will be looking to send 2 referees to Manchester in October 2019 so watch this space for the plea for volunteers to assist with hospitality!

Federation

- The NW Federation has had 7 Thursday evening meetings this season with an attendance rate of approximately 70%. Once again, we are grateful to The University of Chester (Padgate Campus) for allowing us to use their facilities to accommodate both our meetings and fitness testing sessions.
- The Federation had a total of 6 referee members at some stages throughout the season from Liverpool and Manchester Societies and 5 advisors / coaches
- The referees in the NW Federation group worked very hard with their coaches in improving their performance as referees and it is pleasing to report that, as last season, every referee in the group has been promoted at least one level during the season. They also took an active part in the 7 Thursday evening sessions at the University. A number of the referees in the NW Federation represented us at the Rosslyn Park Sevens in London.

Website and WTR (Who's The Ref)

- A completely new website at madrefs.co.uk was launched last summer. At the same time the Society started to use the online system Who's the Ref (WTR) for appointing officials to matches. This enabled the Society to move from the previous integrated website and appointments system, which was being withdrawn by the supplier.
- The technology underpinning the new website offers functionality that is widely used online today e.g. embedding images and video in articles; the plan now is to make greater use of this capability to improve the online experience of all who use the website.
- WTR was used successfully throughout the season to appoint officials to all matches covered by the Society. There have been frustrations but special thanks are due to the Appointments Team for investing time in learning the new system and showing patience in working through the inevitable glitches and problems encountered in using new technology.
- WTR, which is provided by a 3rd party under contract to the RFU and is used by all but one of the Referees' societies in England, also stores the Society's membership records including, for example, contact details and referees' grades and matches refereed. The Society is involved in recommending improvements to WTR, some of which have already been implemented.

I am pleased to congratulate John Jeskins who has received the Presidents Volunteer Recognition Award. John has been in an administrative capacity at Heaton Moor for 46 years and a member of M&DRURS for 43 years where he is the Sunday Appointments Secretary and Minutes Secretary. John still gets out on the park, when he can, enjoying his refereeing.

Thanks must go to Peter Hughes who has stepped down as Midweek Appointments Secretary. How we will miss the interview at the Society Meetings when Peter was populating his appointments. Peter has been a member for 56 years and a strong supporter of the Society and his own club Burnley (nee Calder Vale). I wish Simon Vale well on following in Peter's footsteps.

John Harries is standing down as University Liaison, a role he has undertaken for 4 years being involved in establishing North West Universities Rugby Referees' Association, setting up inter-mural games and introducing students into refereeing, with 9 officiating for the Society. We should like to thank John for his work with the Universities.

Congratulations to John Pemberton who completed the London Marathon and raised over £14,000 for the Injured Players Fund.

Many thanks must go to all our volunteers without whom the Society would not function and who have given me support when needed as Hon. Secretary.

Paul Houston

Hon. Secretary, Manchester & District Referees Society

DISCIPLINARY REPORT

At the start of the 2018/2019 as part of our contingency and continuity planning we set ourselves the goal of finding an Assistant Secretary. At the time writing this report we have identified an individual and an announcement will be made at the next general meeting.

Referee Abuse

I am pleased to announce that there has been a decrease in match official abuse. However, it is not all good news as you will see in the table below whilst abuse at senior level is down the same cannot be said about under 18. From the 5 junior cases two are on the sine die list one for verbal and one for physical abuse.

This is step in the right direction. As a consequence we will be continuing the additional sanction policy started at the start of the season.

<u>Level</u>	<u>2018/2019</u>	<u>2017/2018</u>	<u>Difference</u>	<u>%</u>
Senior	5	11	-6	-120.00%
Junior	5	2	3	150.00%
Total	10	13	-3	-23.30%

Hearings

We have held 36 hearings so far this season, this includes 3 joint hearings with Cheshire. These have been both hearings at the Holiday Inn, Haydock and telephone conference hearings.

RFU

During the season John Greenwood became and RFU Panel Chairman, European Disciplinary Panel member and a Six Nations Panel member.

Also Phil Holden joined Alex Speed as an RFU Disciplinary Panel member.

I am also continuing as a hearing secretary on behalf of the RFU.

As you can see we are well represented within the RFU disciplinary process.

Season 2017/2018 Statistics

<u>Type</u>	<u>2018-2019</u>	<u>2017-2018</u>	<u>Difference</u>	<u>Difference %</u>
Pending	3	10	-7	-233%
Proved	164	155	9	6%
Dismissed	9	6	3	33%
Sine Die	6	4	2	33%
Total Cases	182	175	7	4%
Sent Off	155	154	1	1%
Charged	27	21	6	22%
Number of Clubs	49	50	-1	-2%

<u>Offence</u>	<u>2018-2019</u>	<u>2017-2018</u>	<u>Difference</u>	<u>Difference %</u>
Striking	63	73	-10	-16%
Kicking	13	4	9	69%
Dangerous Tackle	16	22	-6	-38%
Biting	1	0	1	100%
Contact with the Eye area	1	0	1	100%
2 Yellow Cards	26	15	11	42%
Referee Abuse	8	17	-9	-112%
Other	12	2	10	83%
Misconduct	27	23	4	15%
Dismissed	9	14	-5	56%
Sine Die	6	4	2	33%
Total	182	175	7	4%

Conclusion

In closing I would like to thank all clubs for their prompt and accurate responses to requests for information, the referees for sending in their reports accurately and on time and the members of the Disciplinary Committee for all their hard work during the season.

Brian Stott

Disciplinary Committee Secretary

RFU NORTHERN COMPETITION COMMITTEE (RFUNCC)

At the end of last Season there was uproar as further to the proposed ECC Leagues being published 19 Lancashire clubs resigned from the RFU Leagues to form two Leagues who were sponsored by ADM. This resulted in a meeting at Lancaster where a structure for the remaining clubs was agreed upon for a 12 month period whilst the North League Structure Review took place. Further to the review of the League Structure in the North, carried out by the RFU, several Counties are unhappy with 'Option X' which has been approved by the RFUNCC. Lancashire and Cheshire have appealed against the decision but that Appeal will not be heard until late May.

Without knowing the outcome of the above Appeal we will not be able to compose League Structures and produce any fixtures until early June. These questions aside both the ECC Leagues and the ADM Leagues have run very smoothly, aided by better weather during this season.

Electronic Match Cards have come down the structure to Level 8 but there are a number of clubs who still need to 'get a grip' of them. However, there will be changed made to the cards for next season which will hopefully enable clubs to complete them more easily. The EMC will be introduced at all levels next season.

League Winners

LC2 Aspull RFC Promoted to LCC1

League Runners up

LC2 Eccles RUFC Promoted to LCC1

Play Off Winners of N1W v N1E:

Blackburn RUFC promoted to Level 5

Cups

The Junior Cups are in some doubt about being held at Twickenham but that is still to be confirmed.

Lancashire nominations for the Junior Cups are set out below:

Intermediate Cup	Bolton RUFC
Senior Vase	Orrell RUFC
Junior Vase	Old Bedians RUFC

Dave Clarke

Northern League Rep, Divisional Organising Committee

COUNTY SCHOOLS UNION

Lancashire continues to play a leading role in the delivery of Schools and Youth rugby. The 2018/19 season has again been an extremely busy one for the Schools Union in which change continues meet the demands of the game and our young players.

As age-grade rugby continues to change it is paramount that all schools adhere to the spirit and regulations for the safety and wellbeing of all players, coaches and officials, including the Playing Calendar, half game rule and concussion protocols. Playing outside the allotted 'windows' or contravening age-grade regulations can potentially nullify insurance cover and is likely to result in serious sanctions being imposed by the RFU.

Thanks to the persistence of our CSU Secretary, Ken Andrews, the number of schools in membership is healthy. So too those involved in competitive rugby continues to improve as the standard of the previously termed 'emerging' schools goes from strength to strength. The streamlining of the CSU cup structure to align with the ERFUSU to develop such schools was not without its issues and will be adapted slightly for the 2019-20 season.

The retention of school leavers in the game is again on the radar, so too the issue of supporting schools that have in the past been rugby strongholds but are now experiencing a range of difficulties. Support for such schools has been, and continues to be, voiced at all levels from within the county and again are not unique to Lancashire. The development of the girls' game still requires our support in it's development both at local and county level.

The DPP structure and the close liaison with Sale Sharks continues, with regular and open dialogue in which there has been good opportunity to voice concerns, opinions and support the development

pathways of our young players. The number of teachers involved in this process is good and there are increasing opportunities for young teachers to gain involvement. Congratulations to both Louis McIlveen and Gareth Wake, who were presented with their Real Rugby Heroes awards at Twickenham on Schools Day.

CUP COMPETITIONS

Having amended the format of the cup competitions to become more streamlined to those of the ERFSSU and the national competitions, resulting in Cup, Plate, Vase and Bowl competitions for each age group, this years' competitions were not without their issues. The good intention of encouraging more schools to participate, of which there were 43, and reduce the number of walkovers/withdrawals did not materialise as anticipated. The plan to complete the U14 and U16 age groups before Christmas and bringing the Emerging competitions under the one banner was affected by the inclement weather and the fact that mock exams for Year 11 students were scheduled from November through to February throughout the county caused issues.

The change in format meant that the Finals Days were held individually for each age group rather than a collective, which in hindsight may be reversed in the future. The finals were played at Preston Grasshoppers, Liverpool St Helens and Southport RFC. We are indebted to the clubs and schools for being flexible and rearranging finals that had been cancelled due to the weather, etc.

The U13 Waterfall Cup, Plate and Vase festivals were held at Preston Grasshoppers and were extremely well received and it was great to see such close and competitive matches, with all schools benefiting from the number of games played. My thanks to Stuart Urquhart and in particular Kai Burns for their assistance with these festivals.

The standard of play in all of the finals was befitting of top schools' rugby. This was evident none more so than with the U15 Plate, Vase and Bowl finals day, whereby the standard of rugby played was quite excellent at all levels. This is something that as a CSU we should be immensely proud in seeing Lancashire Schools' rugby at its best.

Whilst the half-game was adopted by the CSU for cup competitions, this too caused some issues, none more so than the variation of squad sizes between schools, not to mention the front row replacements issues. It is nonetheless that, moving forward, will be adopted in all forms of the age-grade game.

Unfortunately, the U15 Cup and U14 Vase/Bowl did not take place due to the conflict of national cup commitments and poor weather. The support and effort to ensure that all the finals ran smoothly was a testament to the clubs and volunteers who assisted, not to mention the support from John Morgan, Ken Andrews and other members from this committee, whose contribution to the cup competitions has again been invaluable. The games were all played in terrific spirit and very competitive throughout.

Once again, our thanks to the officials and referees of both Manchester and Liverpool Societies for supporting our schools during the season and in particular the respective finals of the Schools Cup competitions, whereby in many age groups the boys were officiated by a team of three which certainly adds to the sense of occasion of a final.

Many thanks to all the teacher's in the respective schools for their continued support of the competitions and well done to those sides that had successful campaigns.

LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS COMPETITION RESULTS 2018-19

29th Jan 2019 (Cup & Plate) & 5th Feb 2019 (Vase) at Preston Grasshoppers RFC

Cup Final Placings:

1. Lancaster RGS
2. Kirkham GS
3. St Mary's Hall
4. AKS Lytham
5. Bolton School
6. Manchester GS
7. Ripley St Thomas

Plate Final Placings:

1. St Edward's College
2. Cowley Int College
3. Hutton GS
4. West Hill
5. St Mary's Crosby
6. Birkdale

Vase Final Placings

1. Rainford
2. Audenshaw
3. Standish HS
4. Liverpool College
5. Carnforth HS
6. Ormskirk HS
7. St Margaret's
8. Scarisbrick Hall
9. St Augustine's
10. Westholme
11. Unity, Burnley

U14 at Preston Grasshoppers RFC 3rd December 2018

The Peter Hughes U14 Cup

Kirkham GS 34 v 12 Audenshaw

U14 Plate

Lancaster RGS 5 v 36 **Manchester GS**

U14 Vase & Bowl Festival

Cancelled due to Snow

U15 at Preston Grasshoppers RFC 22nd January 2019

The Ian Sinclair U15 Cup

Manchester GS v Kirkham GS

U15 Plate

Ripley St Thomas 12 v 7 AKS Lytham

U15 Vase

Audenshaw 17 v 12 Standish High School

U15 Bowl

St Margaret's 40 v 0 Ormskirk

U16

The John Dewhurst U16 Cup

Manchester GS 29 v 13 Standish High School

U16 Vase

St Edward's College 22 v 27 Audenshaw

U16 Bowl

Ormskirk 38 v 7 Unity

U18 at Liverpool St Helens RFC

The John Fletcher U18s Cup

Lancaster RGS 45 v 5 Manchester GS

U18 PLATE at Waterloo RFC

St Mary's Crosby 19 v 10 Liverpool College

U18 VASE at Liverpool St Helens RFC

Runshaw College 21 v 19 Holy Cross

REPRESENTATIVE RUGBY

The conveyor belt of young players from Lancashire continues at all levels. A range of schools continues to provide players who represent the county at U15, U16, U17 and U18 age groups, with a commendable number of players achieving success at higher levels. The DPP process and staff at Sale Sharks continue to develop a programme that supports the CSU, and vice versa, to develop young players, including the transition of players to the appropriate development pathway. Many thanks to those involved in running the county programmes at respective age groups; for your time and dedication, commitment and enthusiasm. The reward for all involved is seeing those players fulfil their potential, both now and in the future.

Further information on these age group squads will be given by the relevant reports.

I would like to conclude by thanking those colleagues that have supported the CSU throughout the year whether on committees, assisting with the cup competitions or contributing to the selection and coaching of the county programme; The Senior County Committee, for their continued support, which was no more in evidence than David Clarke, the County President, attending to present the trophies and medals at many of our finals; To all the many individuals who support schools and youth rugby that Lancashire offers so well ... a big Thank you.

Robbie Jones

Chairman, Lancashire County Schools Union

COLTS RUGBY

Participation at Colts across the North West appears to have continued to decline in terms of numbers of clubs running colts sides as well as lads playing rugby. The Halbro North West Colts Leagues started the 2018/19 season with 68 sides from across Lancashire & Cheshire with sides from Cumbria, Staffordshire, Derbyshire & Shropshire making up the numbers. By the end of the season we were down to 56 sides – playing in 4 senior & 4 junior leagues.

Registrations at 67 are down this at season

The numbers are as follows:

Junior Colts – 28 sides, made up from 15 from Lancashire, 11 from Cheshire & 2 from Staffs

Senior Colts – 39 sides, made up from 22 from Lancashire, 10 from Cheshire, 3 from Cumbria, 2 from Staffs, 2 from Shropshire.

More clubs are merging to keep colts sides going, TMV & Broughton Park, Lymm & Ashton U Mersey, Marple & Glossop, Manchester & Stockport, Hoyle & Wallasey, Macclesfield & Knutsford. Registrations show that many clubs look to be running mixed age group U17/18 squads.

Lancashire Clubs gave a good account of themselves in the leagues winning 5 out of 8 leagues

	Senior U18s Winners	Junior U17s Winners
League A	Lymm	Warrington
League B	Altrincham Kersal	Sedgley Park
League C	Leigh	Keswick
League D	Eccles	Tarleton

Halbro Colts League Cup:

After the disappointment of having to cancel the League Cup competition last season we enjoyed good weather with very few weekends lost to the weather and have managed to play a full league programme including a re-jig of the leagues at the end of October and a meaningful League Cup Competition.

League Cup Winners

- Senior Cup – Lymm
- Senior Bowl – **Aldwinians**
- Senior Plate- **Eccles**
- Junior Cup – **Warrington**
- Junior Bowl - Lymm
- Junior Plate – Clady
- Junior Shield – **West Park st Helens**

The Lancashire Colts Cup(s):

Played on a fabulous day at Widnes – who made a fabulous job of hosting the finals. Thanks to all at Widnes for putting on a superb day.

County Cup Winners

Frank Morgan Snr Cup	Southport	35 - 28	Leigh
Joe McDonough Snr Trophy	Makos	34 - 17	Eccles
Rob Briers Jnr Cup	Warrington	14 - 12	Firwood Waterloo
Alan James Jnr Trophy	Bury	31 - 0	Tarleton

Well done to all the teams for getting to the finals

Cup Final Date: It is massively disappointing that the RFU have decided to schedule county age group sessions for the Counties U17 lads on the last Sunday of April! This date has for countless years been the date of the County Colts Cup finals. Whilst we had to move the Cup final this season and look as if we will need to move it again in the 2019/20 season, we must as a county work to have this date set back as the date on which the Colts County Cup Finals will be played.

Half Game Rule – we will be adopting the half game rule in the Lancashire Colts Cups, The Halbro Colts Leagues and the Halbro Colts League Cup Competitions in the coming season.

Thank you & Congratulations : As always our thanks to both Manchester & Liverpool Referee Societies; who rise to the task to provide Sunday Appointments for Majority of Colts games; an achievement in its self, given the falling numbers of referee's.

To the players who played for the County, The North & England Counties via the 17/18gp, congratulations.

I would also like to extend my thanks to all 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.

Warm thanks & appreciation to Alan James my predecessor as Chairman for all the years of hard work and dedication he has given to Colts Rugby in our area. Finally to all 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.

Chris Barrett

Chairman

MINI JUNIOR (7 – 16 AGE GRADE) COMMITTEE

This season saw 149 teams from across the county at under 12 to under 16. This number seems to be growing year on year, which must show something for how well the festivals and challenge are run. We have to give thanks to the four venues for hosting the festival days and the finals. These days have yet again been very successful due to the clubs hardworking volunteers.

The finals at both ALDWINIANS RUFC & LEIGH RUFC were very well attended; Spectators were witness to some extremely good and closely contested games. Yet again feedback from the final teams has been good.

OLD BEDIANS RUFC AND BOLTON RUFC did themselves proud with the way they approached the festival days. Pitches marked properly and a full day of rugby was had by all. Again, good feedback regarding all the festivals. Some teams just take a little longer to understand it's a festival and they're not playing for a trophy.

For the first time this season we have employed the services of a professional first aid company. We appreciate that this comes at a cost, but to know that all players are well covered should anything happen is very reassuring. Luckily there were no serious injuries, but when the medics were called for it proved very reassuring to those in need. One parent said "I am the club first aider", but as it was her own son that needed assistance mum's instincts took over and she was extremely pleased and grateful a professional was there. Over the four venues the feedback for the medics was very good. Hopefully we will be able you use them again next season.

There is more work than people realize in organizing these events, from the entries coming in and being seeded to trying to gather the trophies in for the finals. Thanks must go again to Allen Bower for his diligence in putting the festivals and junior challenge together. The leagues secretaries have worked well and we need to keep this going as it spreads the work load. As the festivals and the challenge are gaining momentum, it's now time to look for more volunteers to help spread the work load.

As is the norm we will of course sit and look at changes that the RFU bring in and find the best way to incorporate into the rules at both levels. The main change that has to be emphasised for next season is the half game rule.

I would just like to express my thanks to members of the Lancashire board for their assistance during this past season. We now will look forward to another successful season of age grade rugby for all.

Ian Spivey

Chairman, 7 – 16 Age Grade Committee

WEBSITE

This season has seen the use of the website continue to be consistently used as a source of information for what is happening in Lancashire County RFU. Facebook and Twitter continue to lead the way with information posted there signposting people to the website and the relevant section.

Recent analysis shows that the website is being used consistently with an average of 4.5K monthly views with 1,6K viewing weekly. The most popular ‘hits’ continue to be information about Fixtures/Results of County Squads and groups and the Disciplinary section where information is added weekly. Disciplinary Information continues to top the ‘Leader Board’ with the Lancashire Mini and Junior section information is also extremely popular.

It is hoped during the close season to look at how to develop the website and to build up links with the various County sections to ensure that all sections are represented.

Many thanks to everyone for their contributions this season, Secretary Mark Downs, who I am sure I have continued to hassle with constant questions and to Howard Hughes for his advice and expertise with the use of Social Media.

Anne Clarke

County Webmaster

COUNTY SQUADS RESULTS & SCORES – 2018/19

Senior XV – County Championship (Sir Bill Beaumont Cup – Division One)

04-May	v	Durham	Sunderland RFC	W	7-73
11-May	v	Eastern Counties	Cambridge RFC	W	7-57
18-May	v	Yorkshire	Fylde RFC	L	20-26

Senior Ladies XV – County Championship (Gill Burns MBE Cup)

28-Apr	v	North Midlands	Birmingham Exiles RFC	W	10-52
05-May	v	Durham	Firwood Waterloo RFC	W	31-5
19-May	v	Yorkshire	Leigh RUFC	L	17-32

Lancashire Royals XV

09-Nov	v	Cheshire	Chester RUFC	L	24-14
30-Dec	v	Anti Assassins	Wigan RUFC	L	19-45
11-May	v	Eastern Counties	Cambridge RFC	L	5-41

Under 20s XV – County Championship (Jason Leonard Cup)

20-Jan	v	MMU	Tyldesley RUFC	W	31-12
10-Feb	v	Cheshire	Wilmslow RUFC	W	11-18
24-Feb	v	Yorkshire	Preston Grasshoppers RFC	L	25-35
31-Mar	v	Notts, Lincs & Derbys	Derby RUFC	W	28-32
14-Apr	v	Hertfordshire	Cheshunt RFC	W	12-22
6-May	v	Yorkshire	Twickenham	L	5-52

18 Group County Squad

02-Dec	v	Cheshire	Chester RUFC	W	20-34
16-Dec	v	Yorkshire	Preston Grasshoppers RFC	W	36-10
13-Jan	v	Cumbria	Kingston Park	W	14-39

Under 18s Development (Under 17s) Squad

24-Mar	v	East Midlands	Kettering RUFC	L	14-12
07-Apr	v	Leicestershire	Trafford MV RUFC	W	37-17
28-Apr	v	Yorkshire	Waterloo RFC	L	24-27

16 Group County Squad A

20-Jan	v	Cheshire A	Burnage RUFC	W	17-10
03-Feb	v	Yorkshire A	Keighley RUFC	L	5-49

16 Group County Squad B

20-Jan	v	Cheshire A	Burnage RUFC	L	19-30
03-Feb	v	Yorkshire A	Keighley RUFC	L	19-24

15 Group County Squad A

17-Mar	v	Cheshire A	Burnage RUFC	L	5-43
31 Mar	v	Yorkshire A	Keighley RUFC	L	19-15
14-Apr	v	Staffordshire	Trafford MV RUFC	W	62-0

15 Group County Squad B

17-Mar	v	Cheshire A	Burnage RUFC	L	7-12
31 Mar	v	Yorkshire A	Keighley RUFC	L	41-19

Under 18s Girls County Squad

24-Feb	v	Yorkshire	Doncaster RUFC	L	5-0
24-Feb	v	Cheshire	Doncaster RUFC	W	0-29
24-Mar	v	Yorkshire	Southport RUFC	W	12-10
24-Mar	v	Cheshire	Southport RUFC	W	15-12

Under 15s Girls County Squad

24-Feb	v	Yorkshire	Doncaster RUFC	L	33-7
24-Feb	v	Cheshire	Doncaster RUFC	L	20-12
24-Mar	v	Yorkshire	Southport RUFC	L	0-17
24-Mar	v	Cheshire	Southport RUFC	W	26-7

COUNTY OFFICERS & OTHER OFFICIALS 2018 - 2019

County President Dave Clarke
Vice Presidents:
Gill Burns MBE (Senior Vice President)
Mark Nelson
Brian Stott
Carol Baker
John Greenwood

Members of the Management Board

Chairman: David Herriman
Hon. Secretary: Mark Downs
Hon. Treasurer: Paul Deakin

World Rugby Chairman

Bill Beaumont CBE DL

RFU Council & RFU Management Board

Rob Briars

RFU Council Member

Ken Andrews

Hon. Membership Secretary

Anne-Marie Briars

Hon. County Press Office

Howard Hughes

Safeguarding Manager

Carol Baker

Deputy: Christine Spivey
Sue Hopkinson

County Committees:

Rugby Development Committee

Chairman: Rob Briars
Secretary: Tom Fitzgerald

Club & Community Rugby Committee

Director/Chairman: Malcolm Worsley

Finance & Funding Committee

Chairman: Chris Smail
Asst. Treasurer: Stephen Briars

Cup & Competitions Committee

Chairman: Mike Cornelia
Secretary: Brian Hurst

Disciplinary Committee

Chairman: John Greenwood
Secretary: Brian Stott

Governance Committee

Director/Chairman: Carol Baker

Coaching Committee

Chairman: Mark Nelson
Secretary: Tom Fitzgerald

Womens Rugby Development Group

Chair: Helen Duggan

17-18 Committee

Chairman: Tommy Hughes

7-16 (Junior Rugby) Committee

Chairman: Ian Spivey
Secretary: Mike Murphy

County Schools Union

Chairman: Robbie Jones
Secretary: Ken Andrews

Colts Competitions Committee

Chairman: Alan James
Secretary: Jon Kitchen

Assistant Hon. Secretary

Brian Stott

Assistant Hon. Treasurer

Stephen Briars

Hon. Solicitor

John Bullough

Chairman of Selectors for

Senior XV & U20s John Greenwood

Team Manager

Senior XV Steve Rigby

The RFU's Rugby Development Team

Area 5 Manager Dave Southern
N-E Lancashire Stuart Urquhart
S-W Lancashire Dave Westhead
City of Manchester Phil Clarke

Area 5 Responsibilities:

Training Dave Livesey
Referee Dev Claire Antcliffe
Facilities & Funding Tom Bartram

*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 2019
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
is a company limited by guarantee**

Registered Office:

Hanover Buildings, 11-13 Hanover Street, Liverpool, Merseyside L1 3DN
Registered in England & Wales – 06959820

Directors: DN Herriman (Chairman), M Downs (Company Secretary),
K Andrews, CA Baker, RTJ Briers, P Deakin, T Fitzgerald, JRS Greenwood,
JT Hughes, AS Kerboas, JB Morgan, MJ Worsley.

The Lancashire Rugby Union Youth Trust

Referred to in the Annual Report,
Is a Charity Registered with the Charity Commissioners – 1014271

**Contact details and other information can be found on the
Lancashire County
website: www.lancashirerugby.com**