

Annual Report

**A report on the activities of
Essex County RFU for the season
2024-2025**

Essex County Rugby Football Union
Founded 1885 Re-formed 9th December 1954
Constituent Body of the RFU 13th July 2003



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Foreword

Keith Hill – President Essex County RFU

Firstly, can I thank you all for your support during my two years as your President. It has been an honour and a privilege, and I thank you all for what you do to help rugby in the County.

I have had the privilege of visiting many clubs throughout the County during my tenure, and I continue to be amazed at the commitment of the hundreds of volunteers who make our game possible. If we had to pay for a small fraction of the thousands of volunteering hours, all our clubs would be bankrupt!



It is for this reason, I particularly enjoyed the honour of presenting the Honda Valued Volunteers of the year awards to the many nominees from many clubs at a reception held at Thurrock RFC in May, ahead of our Men's senior XV's playing their County Championship fixture. It was a great occasion to see so many committed rugby people, and to thank them in person.

Whilst I have mentioned the fantastic volunteering within our clubs, I would also like to acknowledge the ample work undertaken by various people that operate the CB without whom the game wouldn't be possible. This includes activities ranging from volunteer recognition, discipline, tournament organisation, safeguarding & welfare, County representative sides and providing support to clubs in various ways. Their reports on the activities of the County follow on in this report. I would also like to thank Nick Bracken, our immediate past president from whom I took over for his support advice and assistance.

Most important though is the commitment of the members of the County Board of Directors and the chairs of our various management committees. In particular, I must mention and thank the extraordinary work and commitment of our Chair, Alan Brooking. Alan has brought a new dimension and direction to the County, in our Structure and Governance. To address this Alan, the Board and the management committee have implemented a process to redesign the way in which we as a constituent body of the RFU is organised and operates. We want to make sure it is fit for purpose and best meets the needs of our member clubs, whilst delivering those activities mandated by the RFU.

Whilst it is always easy to talk about the positives, in signing off I feel I need to talk about some of the worrying changes the game is still seeing post the covid pandemic. As chair of the County Discipline Committee, we are still seeing an erosion of the games Core Values, this is evidenced by the increase in match official abuse and off-field disciplinary matters. Though I believe we are turning the tide on this, there is still a lot of work to do to ensure that the Core Values of the Game are instilled in all who participate in this great game of ours.

For this to be successful we need the engagement and participation of all concerned and I would urge you to please give your full attention and input to the engagement process.

Yours in Rugby

Keith Hill – President Essex County RFU

Chairmans Report 2024-25

Firstly, I must thank the General Management Committee, all our hard-working Volunteers, the Clubs and our Patrons and Supporters. I also would like to thank Adam Cottingham, our RFU Regional Development Manager and the whole Essex RFU team for their support, and congratulations to Sally Russo on having her baby, we send them both all our best wishes.

Over the year we have continued to deliver our core RFU responsibilities as well as start work on building our Club Development objectives under the Chair of Club Development, Niall Hornett. We have already seen some development progress by working with Active Essex and the new T1 Rugby Managers in the southwest of the County.

Financially we have had another positive year and have grown our sponsorship to 24k, due to the work of Ivor Smith, Andrea Church and Fran Claydon-Brown.

We should give huge thanks to our band of volunteers which now number 90, as with every club without these we, as a constituent body of the RFU just could not exist. We were also very pleased that Nicky Worthington reached the finals of the Honda Volunteer Award, and huge congratulations to the other 38 that were nominated by their clubs.

The last 12 months have seen the CB not only continue to deliver on its core objectives, but has had to deal with several additional issues which took time out of our day-to-day work schedules, namely:

- A RFU Special General Meeting. This was because of the Whole Game Union, requesting the RFU to hold a special meeting to consider motions to remove certain RFU Executives. Following the initial request, Tom Illube Chair of the RFU Board of Directors, resigned. To combat the motion the RFU carried out a roadshow in various parts of the Country and due to the efforts of Nick Bracken, our Essex CB Council Representative, we managed to get the whole RFU team to attend a meeting of just our Essex club's chairs. The motions were rejected at the SGM.
- RFU Governance Review, one of the responses to the Whole Game Union's motions was a decision to speed up an ongoing RFU Governance Review, and as such they again went out on the road to present their initial recommendations. It is fair to say that they did not go down well with the Clubs or Members. The proposed recommendations are now going through further reviews and new proposals will be issued in early autumn.
- RFU Annual General Meeting. The Whole Game Union proposed 14 changes to the RFU Regulations to be voted on at the AGM, which generated a lot of discussion at RFU, CB and Club Level, Nick and I hosted a call with our Club Chairs where we discussed the whys and wherefores of each motion. The motions were rejected at the AGM.
- Lower XV's Entry into National League. Following a meeting of L5 and L6 Chairs to discuss the issues in the previous season with teams pulling out of Merit Table 1, or not honouring fixtures, there was a call to allow 2d XVs to enter the Essex National Leagues. As required by regulations we required 4 clubs to request a vote, which we duly received, and a vote was taken with each club entitled to 1 vote. The number of votes required to support such a move was not achieved. Post meeting, Craig Morgan, our Chair of Competitions was able to work with Hertfordshire to allow Southend and Eton Manor 2nd XVs to enter the Hertfordshire Leagues.

As we look forward to next year, our purpose will remain the same,

“To administer rugby union, working with the RFU, for the development of our Club’s, players, coaches, referees and volunteers across all ages and genders to enable them to fulfil their full potential.”

To achieve this, we will continue to deliver the core requirements of the RFU and the targeted areas of the player development pathway for boys and girls. Our CB will continue to fund representative rugby at U20, Senior Men and Senior Women.

We also recognise:

- That outcomes from the RFU Governance Review and the Community Game Board strategy plan will potentially devolve authority to a new Regional Body and to CBs. If we want to grasp the opportunities that devolving of responsibility will bring then we need to follow the RFU and bring our own governance into line with Sport England Code of Governance requirements.
- That we need to continue to grow our links and support to our Clubs. To strengthen this link, as well our Chairs annual meeting, we will look to create a CB Chairs Advisory Panel, which will have an oversight on the work of the CB to ensure what we propose is appropriate.
- We will create an Essex Rugby Ambassador Group that will be diverse and cover all areas of rugby, from which we look to find the leaders of tomorrow and ensure they have the skills required to take the roles required in running a Club or a CB as well as provide us insight to the needs of today and tomorrow.
- Total Club Support. We are aware that we have a number of clubs that could do with some help or are ready to move to the next level but just need advice and help in finding funding etc. We will be looking to start the process by having calls with several clubs in September.

In closing, I want to thank everyone involved in “Team Essex”, whether it be in playing for your club, running part of a club, coaching, refereeing, volunteering, being part of the discipline panel, or even being part of the CB Management Team, a CB volunteer, grounds staff, even if you only give 1 hour a week, YOU ARE ALL MAKING A HUGE DIFFERENCE, keep it going.

Alan Brooking,
Chair of Essex Rugby.

Finance Report.

This report covers the period, 1st July 2024 to 30th June 2025 (FY25). All figures quoted are fully inclusive of VAT. I confirm that during the period the County has met all its legal obligations as required by the FSA and HMRC in terms of VAT, Corporation Tax, Annual Accounts and FSA reporting.

At the beginning of this Financial Year, 2024-25 the County had a cash balance of £124,517. During the year our income was £143,717 with an expenditure of £125,435. This included International Tickets Sales.

In terms of expenditure, £39,460 was spent on supporting rugby, £25,272 on purchase of international tickets, and £39,460 on managing the CB.

In terms of Income £61,992 was from grants from the RFU. This was split by the RFU into supporting the CB to deliver our core responsibilities as a CB, and the balance was to support RFU targeted activity comprising of age grade pathways, representative rugby and delivery of merit tables.

At the end of this financial year the County has cash assets of £152,470 with known liabilities of £16,923, mainly relating to the purchase of international tickets which is due in September. During the year we have also given two Club loans / grants.

The continued use of the Xero Accounting package has enhanced financial transparency and introduced advanced reporting capabilities, allowing for real-time budget-to-actual analysis and supporting effective financial oversight. This has helped us stay on track.

Many thanks go again to Group 1 Automotive and Audi who were our main sponsor for the season. This generous sponsorship was added to by 10 other companies which has resulted in a 28% increase in sponsorship compared to last year. We will strive to increase sponsorship over the forthcoming year and if you know of any companies that would like to sponsor us please get in touch.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to our accountant, Laker Goodwin Jones, and to Alan Brooking, who, despite stepping into the role of Chairman, has continued to offer valuable support and guidance as I transition fully into my role.

I would like to extend my thanks to the Management Committee and budget holders for their support and cooperation throughout the year, which has been vital to our financial management.

I also appreciate the Clubs for their prompt payment of annual subscriptions and timely submission of accounts, which has helped ensure smooth financial operations and more effective governance.

A summary of accounts is shown below which shows comparisons with the last 3 years.

Profit and Loss Summary (Net of VAT, Tax, adjustments, and accruals)

Profit and Loss Summary (Net of VAT, Tax, adjustments, and accruals)

	FY25	FY24	FY23
Turnover	£88,273	£86,881	£112,800
Other Income	£1,846	£3,026	£399
Expenditure	£-77,220	£-84,212	£-89,474
	FY25	FY24	FY23
Tax	£-2,451	£-1,082	£-4,508
Profit Before Tax	£10,448	£4,613	£19,217

Balance Sheet Summary. (Net of VAT, Tax, adjustments, and accruals)

	FY25	FY24	FY23
Fixed Assets	£0	£0	£0
Current Assets	£154,627	£126,421	£126,650
Creditors	£-20,574	£-2,816	£-7,658
Net Current Assets	£134,053	£123,605	£118,992
Total Capital and Reserves	£134,053	£123,605	£118,992

Essex	CRFU	-	2024-25	Budget.	V	Actual
			FY 25 Budget Income	FY 25 Income Actual	Variance	% Of Income
Income						
Manage the CB	CB Sponsorship		£14,800.00	£23,582.00	£8,782.00	38.04%
Manage the CB	Club Subscriptions		£2,250.00	£2,240.00	-£10.00	3.61%
Manage the CB	Discipline		£3,000.00	£3,575.00	£575.00	5.77%
Manage the CB	Donations (Patrons)		£1,500.00	£1,494.00	-£6.00	2.41%
Manage the CB	Bank Interest		£2,000.00	£1,846.22	-£153.78	2.98%
Manage the CB	Miscellaneous		£1,500.00	£0.00	-£1,500.00	0.00%
Manage the CB	Event Income		£0.00	£3,987.58	£3,987.58	6.43%
			£25,050.00	£36,724.80	£11,674.80	
RFU Funding	Manage The CB (RFU General Grant)		£29,132.00	£29,132.00	£0.00	46.99%
RFU Funding	RFU Targetted Funding		£32,860.00	£32,860.00	£0.00	53.01%
			£61,992.00	£61,992.00	£0.00	
	Total Income		£87,042.00	£98,716.80	£11,674.80	
Expenditure						
			FY25 Budget Expenses	FY 25 Expenses Actual	Variance	% of Expenditure
Manage The CB	Audit & Accountancy Fees		£3,732.00	£2,160.00	£1,572.00	2.50%
Manage The CB	Bank Fees		£120.00	£102.00	£18.00	0.12%
Manage The CB	Club Development		£2,000.00	£0.00	£2,000.00	0.00%
Manage The CB	Club Grants		£15,000.00	£6,350.00	£8,650.00	7.34%
Manage The CB	Competitions		£6,250.00	£4,388.04	£1,861.96	5.07%
Manage The CB	Discipline		£3,500.00	£1,163.20	£2,336.80	1.34%
Manage The CB	Diversity and Inclusion		£500.00	£0.00	£500.00	0.00%
Manage The CB	Education		£2,000.00	£2,170.00	-£170.00	2.51%
Manage The CB	Manage The CB		£6,282.00	£8,093.00	-£1,811.00	9.36%
Manage The CB	Player Safety		£1,100.00	£0.00	£1,100.00	0.00%
Manage The CB	Safeguarding		£2,250.00	£875.91	£1,374.09	1.01%
Manage The CB	Volunteers		£4,250.00	£4,395.41	-£145.41	5.08%
Manage The CB	Xero Monthly Fees		£430.00	£428.40	£1.60	0.50%
Manage The CB	Event Costs		£0.00	£5,343.60	-£5,343.60	6.18%
			£47,414.00	£35,469.56	£11,944.44	
Manage Rugby	Age Grade		£500.00	£58.50	£441.50	0.07%
Manage Rugby	BU17-18		£8,000.00	£10,454.40	-£2,454.40	12.09%
Manage Rugby	RepU20		£3,000.00	£3,158.77	-£158.77	3.65%
Manage Rugby	REPSM		£5,000.00	£8,324.71	-£3,324.71	9.62%
Manage Rugby	GU12		£2,746.00	962.65	£1,783.35	1.11%
Manage Rugby	GU16		£10,700.00	£10,548.54	£151.46	12.20%
Manage Rugby	GU1718		£3,500.00	£3,755.75	-£255.75	4.34%
Manage Rugby	REPSW		£5,000.00	£7,892.00	-£2,892.00	9.12%
Manage Rugby	Coaching Conference & Pathway Coa		£5,000.00	£3,380.00	£1,620.00	3.91%
Manage Rugby	W&G Development		£2,700.00	£2,491.20	£208.80	2.88%
			£46,146.00	£51,026.52	-£4,880.52	
	Total Expenditure		£93,560.00	£86,496.08	£7,063.92	

Peter Phillips – Chair of Finance

Honda Motors Valued Volunteer of the year nominees.

Volunteers are the game's most important asset. This year the Honda Valued Volunteer of the year awards saw the County recognize just some of the outstanding volunteers who were nominated by clubs. It was pleasing to see most of the nominees attend the award presentations at Thurrock Rugby club prior to the County Senior teams taking on Sussex Women and Gloucestershire Men in their respective County Championships competitions.

Honda Motors have continued to support the RFU recognition and reward program for volunteers. The work of volunteers in our clubs is really appreciated. The nominations for recognition this season were slightly up on the previous year and the quality of volunteers nominated this year remained high.

This years Honda Valued Volunteer of the year focuses on Three categories:

Unsung Hero: This Category recognised a volunteer or group of volunteers who have gone above and beyond. Often working behind the scenes, to create positive experiences through formal or informal contributions.

Game for All: In this category, the award recognised a volunteer or group of volunteers who have developed an inspiring offer to make the game more accessible and attract new audiences or created a flexible and engaging offer to retain current players.

Connecting the Community - An individual or a group of volunteers who have strengthened the club's presence within the local community, helping to establish the club or organisation as a central part of community life.

Unsure Category - As with last year there has been an option for a nominator to select the 'Unsure' category if they feel that their nominated volunteer is very valued and worthy of recognition but did not fall directly into any of the above category's. These nominees wear many different hats in their club and could have fitted into any one or more of the categories and are worthy of such recognition for their contribution to the Game.

Congratulations to all our nominated Volunteers:

Unsung Hero	Leanne McAuliffe	Dagenham RFC
	David Hare	Basildon RFC
	Tom Clinton	Basildon RFC
	Russ Hambleton	Basildon RFC
	David "Ernie" Terrell	Basildon RFC
	Nicola Worthington	Romford & Gidea Park RFC
	Mario Borrageiro	Romford & Gidea Park RFC
	Tomas Karablikovas	Romford & Gidea Park RFC
	Brad Hill	Canvey Island RFC
	Neville Potts	Braintree RFC
	Ed Merry	Halstead Templers RFC
	Andy Hutchison	Southend RFC
	Helen Moore	Southend RFC
	Ebrahim Tavasoli	Wanstead RFC
	Gary O'Reilly	Wanstead RFC

	Johannes Mylburgh	Wanstead RFC
	Wayne Templeman	Wanstead RFC
	Lloyd Hinton	Wanstead RFC
	Paul Dribbel	Wanstead RFC
	Mario Tavasoli	Wanstead RFC
Game for All	Clare Bond	Dagenham RFC
	Samantha Appleby	Canvey Island RFC
	Paul Aldridge	Southend RFC
	Graham Jones	East London RFC
Unsure	Christopher Carpenter	Romford & Gidea Park RFC
	Richard White	Canvey Island RFC
	Brett Smith	Canvey Island RFC
	Danny Ryan	Thurrock RFC
	Ivan Fellows	Halstead Templers RFC
	Victoria Howard	Romford & Gidea Park RFC
	Ross Ashcroft	Harlow RFC
	Tasha (Natasha) Stallman	Harlow RFC
	Ben Norris	Harlow RFC

In addition to our County event, the RFU, with their Sponsors, Honda selected Nicola Worthington as their nomination from the Essex nominations to attend the National Honda Volunteer of the Year award presentation at the Allianz stadium in September.

Safeguarding

The CB Safeguarding team have worked hard to visit all our clubs in Essex this season and by getting all clubs safeguarding audits completed. This is an onerous task across our 45 clubs but one in which we can honestly say that Essex is one of the most UpToDate Constituent Bodies in respect of these audits. We also get to know all our CSO & ACSO personally. We had a great turn out for our Essex Safeguarding Conference back in September and we have started a 'WhatsApp' group to keep our officers up to date with RFU regulations and processes.



My thanks also to my safeguarding assistant managers, Liz Calvert, Angela Arnold and Jo Rasor who have helped me ensure that all our club audits and compliance are up to date.

Nicky Worthington
CB Safeguarding Manager

Women and Girls Development

2024-25 has been another successful year for the development of age grade Girls rugby in Essex, the highlight being Basildon U18 Girls retaining their Girls U18 National Cup title in the final at Worcester's Six Ways stadium



We have 9 Essex girls in the U18 Girls Player Development Group which is overseen by Saracens: Grace Chapman; Anna Frost ; Casey Castelyn ; Ella Barnes ; Izzy van der Straaten ; Lilly Hickey ; Sara Malach ; Sofia Carrillo ; Summer Smith.

This season three U18 Girls have also represented their countries.
Izzy van der Straaten – England, Mary Rudd - Scotland, and Karolina Wojtczak - Poland (7s).
Also at U20's Kaylee McHugh has represented Scotland and Martha Smith of Westcliff Lioness's represented England Deaf in their match against Jamaica.

A key objective this season has been to grow and develop the Girls game and provide valuable game time for them. To achieve this we arranged 6 PuPs (U12s & U14s) with 120 girls on average attending per session. At U16 and U18s there were 7 PoPPs (playing opportunities) having 70 girls on average at each session

Mia Blunden took the role U12 Ambassador and again very positive feedback on attendees on the four U12 events she ran. She now has her ERCA and will be supporting U16s PDG in 25/26

We were able this season to organise two Girls leagues. U16 and U18. At U16 the league Champions were Eton Manor. There were six clubs taking part this season and hopefully that will grow into the U18's this coming season. Clubs taking part included Eton Manor, Dagenham, Braintree, Basildon, Harlow and Canvey Island.

At U18 the league was won by Basildon, with Eton Manor, Braintree and Harlow also taking part. With the women's Rugby World Cup taking place in England in September, we shall be working hard to ensure that the opportunity for other clubs, who currently have low numbers, to recruit, cluster and grow.

In the Ladies game Thurrock II won Nat Challenge 1 South East (North) as well as the Final of the Papa Johns Cup at Twickenham. Westcliff won National Challenge 2 South East (North) and Braintree won National Challenge 3 (Midlands.)

Representative Rugby:

Another successful season for our Essex U18 girls who finished a remarkable season with 4 wins out of 4.

Essex Ladies didn't have the season they were hoping for and lost both games in the Gill Burns County Championship. Although their squad suffered the effects of playing on a bank holiday weekend when 3 of their teams were on tour there were many positives to look forward to.



RFU Women's Competitions

NC 1 SE (North)

Thurrock T-Birds II

Papa John Intermediate Cup

Thurrock Ladies II

NC 2 SE (North East)

Westcliff Ladies

Papa John Plate Final

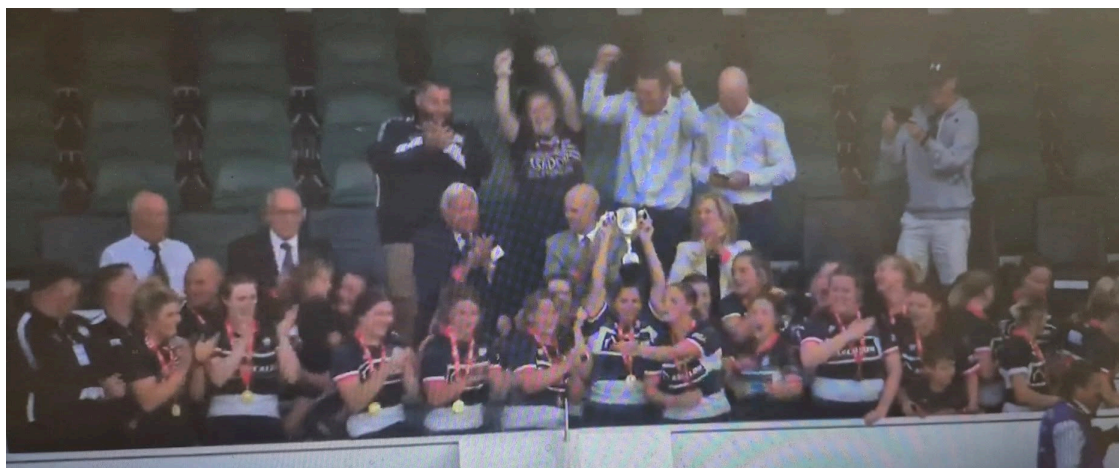
Runners Up - Westcliff

NC3 Midlands (East)

Braintree Ladies

RFU National U18 Girls Cup

Basildon U18 Girls



Growing the Game:

Another great all girls 'Pitch up and Play', this time was kindly hosted by Old Brentwoods RFC. Players had to tackle marathon runners, roadworks and other congestion before they arrived, but it didn't deter them from a great afternoon of rugby. Another very successful event, well done all!

The smiling players represented Southend Rugby Club , Westcliff RFC Wildcats , Eton Manor Rugby Football Club, Canvey RFC, Harlow Rugby Club , South Woodham Ferrers RUFC , Thurrock Rugby Club Minis/Youth , Dagenham RFC, Basildon Rugby Football Club , Romford and Gidea Park RFC , Bancroft Rugby Club , Wanstead Rugby Club , Woodford Rugby Club ,

Witham Rugby Club , Chelmsford Rugby Club , Brentwood Rugby Football Club , Clacton RFC and of course the hosts Old Brentwoods RFC.

Well done girls! Thanks to the parents and carers, coaches, managers and everyone else that made it a successful afternoon. Girls Rugby was the winner



Fran Clayton-Brown
Chair Essex Women and Girls Development

Competitions:

Fixture conflicts between RFU leagues and County cups once again meant that we were unable to schedule the County Senior Cup this season. However, we were able to complete the other County Competitions with

- Group 1 Automotive Intermediate Cup
Winners: Romford & Gidea Park bt Burnham
- Group 1 Automotive Essex Presidents Shield
Winners: Old Brentwoods bt Canvey Island
- Group 1 Automotive 2nd XV Challenge Cup
Winners: Southend II
- Group 1 Automotive John Adler Trophy
Winners: East London II bt Upminster II

The RFU leagues showed an almost 100% completion rate across all leagues with Westcliff winning Regional 2 Anglia, Braintree winning Counties 1 Essex and Stanford Le Hope winning Counties 2 Essex. All three club will be promoted next season.

In the merit tables we saw 18 clubs represented in 10 highly competitive matches at The Essex County RFU Group 1 Automotive sponsored Merit League Finals hosted by Rochford Hundred RFC. Whilst most clubs still had their first XV's playing elsewhere this was the opportunity for Lower XV's to shine. If anyone wanted to suggest that rugby outside of the Leagues and in Merit Table is irrelevant, they needed to have witnessed today. A very packed venue, with beer supplies running dry, it was a great day out and a worthwhile day for our hosts. Thank you to all clubs competing on the day and a very special thank you to Group 1 Automotive and especially our Competitions Chair Craig Morgan who worked so hard during the day and throughout the season. Thank you and well done Craig.

Div 1 Cup Hertford II 22 Eton Manor II 12
Div 1 Plate Wanstead II 17 Harlow II 10
Div 2 Cup Dagenham 29 Pegasus 21
Div 2 Plate Thames 14 Rochford II 50
Div 3 East Cup Upminster II 33 Runwell 10
Div 3 East Plate Basildon II 24 Billericay II 17
Div 3 West Cup East London II 22 Ilford 13
Div 3 West Plate Woodford III 19 Wanstead III 24
Div 4 East Cup Westcliff III 36 Southend IV 7
Div 4 West Cup Ravens 0 East London III 15

Essex CB Education Report – Season 2024/25

The following statistical report of the past season really says it all! A full season of activities offered to rugby playing schools and colleges in the County. Participation was up on the previous which resulted in some seventy plus active schools and colleges signing up to the playing programme.

The real saving grace of the season has been the generous financial sponsorship offered by Doug Cooke (CEO) of Principle Cleaning Ltd. Representatives of Principle Cleaning attended many of our events; certainly, the KO Finals for which we are appreciative. Further financial support from the CB helped to create an excellent finals week.



The County Schools Union would like to thank the Essex County Committee for their continued support of the County Schools Union and its activities, and to Principle Cleaning for their Generous support of our 25 County Schools Union events for 2024-25

Autumn Term Festivals

Boys

U12 46 participating schools; U13 59 participating schools; U14 38 participating schools; U15 37 participating schools; U16 31 participating schools; U18 14 participating schools/colleges

Girls

U12 9 participating schools; U14 9 participating schools; U16 6 participating schools

Spring Term Seven Aside Tournaments

U12 Boys (42 entries)

Main Winners Campion Runners Up Woodlands

Plate Winners Castle View Runners Up RGS Colchester

Bowl Winners Shenfield Runners Up Roding Valley

Shield Winners Hall Mead Runners Up Wanstead HS

U13 Boys (39 entries)

Main Winners Campion Runners Up Westcliff HS (GOLDEN TRY)

Plate Winners Castle View Runners Up RGS, Colchester

Bowl Winners Shenfield HS Runners Up Sydney Russell

Shield Winners Thorpe Hall Runners Up Wanstead HS

U14 Boys (36 entries)

Main Winners Campion Runners Up Felsted

Plate Winners Fitzwimarc Runners Up Castle View

Bowl Winners Boswells Runners Up St Martins

Shield Winners Emerson Pk Runners UP Becket Keys

U15 Boys (26 entries)

Main Winners Campion Runners Up Southend

Plate Winners Belfairs Runners Up RGS Colchester

Bowl Winners Wanstead HS Runners Up Hassenbrook

Shield Winners Thorpe Hall Runners Up St Martins.

U16 Boys (18 entries)

Main Winners Campion Runners Up New Hall

Plate Winners Westcliff HS Runners Up Southend HS

Bowl Winners St Marks Runners Up Helena Romanes

Shield Winners Woodbridge Runners Up Great Baddow

U18 Boys round robin 7 teams. (12 entries; Nat.KO games led to withdrawals)

New Hall 18pts Wins Main

Campion 15pts RUs Main

UPS 12pts Wins Plate

Brentwood 9pts RUs Plate

Westcliff HS 6pts Wins Bowl

King John 1pt (6 tries) RUs Bowl

Bancroft 1pt (4 tries) Wins Shield

Girls U12 (8 entries)

Castle View runners up

Robert Clack A winners

Girls U14 (12 entries)

Main Winners Robert Clack A - Runners Up Grays Convent A

Plate Winners Sydney Russell - Runners Up West Hatch

Girls U16 (4 entries, A & B)

Robert Clack A Winners; Runners Up Grays Convent A.

KO Tournaments

Boys U14 Main (18 entries); Winners Campion; Runners Up Robert Clack

Boys U14 Plate (10 participants) Winners Fitzwimarc; Runners Up Hedingham
Boys U15 Main (19 entries) Winners Campion; Runners Up Southend HS
Boys U15 Plate (10 participants) Winners Woodlands; Runners Up Saffron Walden HS
Boys U16 (18 entries) Winners Campion; Runners Up Westcliff HS
Boys U18 (11 entries) Winners Campion; Runners Up SEEVIC/UPS
Girls U14 KO Winners Robert Clack; Runners Up Grays Convent

Schools Competition Secretaries.

Boys: A number of new entries into the knockout competitions from Schools who have not previously entered or not been in for a while. Some schools with entries into only one age group but good to have different schools involved. Notable absentees from the competition who have previously been in and won competitions - CRGS, New Hall, Brentwood School (only entered U18s). It was noticeable though that Schools were much better at keeping to playing dates in general this year. Still some schools entering competitions and then pulling out of fixtures last minute which is disappointing.

Action point: An issue of schools not using the half game rule at U18 level was raised and will be pushed more next year as it is a regulation not a recommendation.

Finals week was a great success and there has been some feedback from schools about the venue and we are looking at alternative venues for next year's finals which is something that can be discussed.

Boys: This year was the first year of the Essex Plate. Losers of the first round were placed in the Plate competition, giving schools an added opportunity to play competitive rugby. The finals were held at Barking Rugby club, alongside the main competition. In the final of the Plate competitions were Fitzwimarc vs Hedingham in the U14 final, with Fitzwimarc winning a close final. The U15 Final was Woodlands vs Saffron Walden in another close affair. This competition was the first of it's kind and was well received from the schools involved.

Girls: The girl's season was successful for the U14 age group, with the highest number of participants across all competitions (Essex cup, festivals and 7's). Sadly, the U12 age group festivals had minimal attendees; attendance was better for the 7's. For the first time since starting the Essex Cup the U16 category did not run due to only Robert Clack x2 and Grays Convent having entered. Once again attendance was better at the 7's but still minimal.
Action Point : increase participation for next season with the influence of the Women's Rugby World Cup.

In keeping up with the RFU we held a Touch Rugby Course for Teachers was held at Barking RFC on the 27th. June; with 23 attendees.

Colleges /Universities: USP had a very positive season in the colleges' leagues and cups. All our Universities competed in the BUCS at their entry level.

Overall this was a very successful season placing Essex in a strong position nationally. As always, our thanks are recorded to both Clubs and Schools who hosted events throughout the season; Brentwood School, Barking RFC, Wanstead RFC, Robert Clack School, Westcliff RFC, New Hall School and our Medical Team

Mick Eyres
Chair of Education Essex CB - Hon Sec Essex County Schools RFU

Men and Boys Development

Essex Rugby Age Grade Boys Report 2024-25

Over 6,000 boys from age 5 to 18 played club rugby in Essex this season.

None of which would be possible without the continued support of our clubs, coaches and volunteers so a big thanks to all of you that support the Game of Rugby in the County.

In accordance with the Game Regulations and Competition Framework, from U13 upwards we offer a variety of competitions to suit the developmental stages and needs of the players. 27 Clubs in Essex run a Youth Rugby Section that Essex supports.

At U13 and U14 we provide a list of some 280 Friendlies for those clubs to play, or not. The rationale is it takes the pressure off Fixtures secretaries and empowers clubs to choose to play the games if they feel them to be at the correct standard or not. At this age, clubs know best about the relative strengths of teams so can make their own decisions.

To introduce a level of competition we also provide a Waterfall Cup meaning all teams stay in the Cup with round winners playing other round winners and runners up playing other runners up. This builds towards a final day where numerous finals are played, and a prime final takes place.

This year the U13 and U14 Waterfall Cup winners were Westcliff RFC, many congratulations. Beyond U14 through to Colts (U17/18) we introduce league rugby with a further 280 League Fixtures provide across those age groups.

Congratulations to the following 24/25 League Winners

U15 League 1 - Eton Manor RFC
U15 League 2 - Woodford RFC
U15 League 3 – Wanstead RFC
U16 League 1 – Eton Manor RFC
U16 League 2 - Rochford RFC
U16 League 3 – Bancroft RFC
Colts League 1 - Westcliff RFC
Colts League 2 - Maldon RFC



Westcliff Colts XV

Finally for the same age groups we run a Knockout Cup competition that culminated in a fantastic finals day hosted by Ilford RFC on 27th April.

Congratulations to the following teams on their cup success.

U15 - Westcliff RFC
U16 – Eton Manor RFC
Colts - Westcliff RFC

Overall Essex supports almost 700 games of rugby for the Youth Sections at our clubs but this does not happen by magic, behind the scenes we have a dedicated team of volunteers who give up their time to administer all of the above competitions, so on behalf of Essex Rugby, to every player, coach, parent involved in the game I want to say a huge thank-you to Gareth Sykes u13's Andy Brown U14s, Scott Savill U15's, Kes Flitcroft U16's, Tim Ablethorpe Colts and Marc Grange for sorting our finals day and trophies. Our thanks also go to **Group One Audi** for their generous sponsorship of our trophies

Whilst in all sports there will always be winners and runners up, I believe that winning is not just defined by the results of a game, it may be the day a player makes his first tackle, kicks his first penalty or scores his first try. This philosophy sits behind Age Grade Rugby – Player Centred, Development Driven, Competition Supported. At some point last season all of our 6,000 players did something that made them feel like a winner. We should not lose sight of this, we need that for the development of the game in the years to come.

To all of you involved in Age Grade Boys Rugby last season....Thank You !

Ian Hollingworth
Age Grade Lead Essex Rugby

Essex Senior Men Report 2024-25



The first match at the beginning of the Competition was against Middlesex which we lost 24 – 48. However, a trip to our old foes in Buckinghamshire produced an exciting match which Essex won 15 – 19. This led to a vital game against strong favourites for this level of competition our neighbours Hertfordshire. The match took place at Harlow and was preceded by two of our County Vets teams taking to the field. However, despite a brave effort by the Essex men, Hertfordshire who normally take part in this competition at a higher level were too strong for the County who lost 7-45.

Our thanks go to the team for their commitment during this competition and to the Coaching team led once again by Steve Killington.

Martin Jones
Chair Essex Country Player and Coach Development.

U20's



A good start to the competition saw a strong County U20's team take on Middlesex. Dominant from the start Essex ended the match with a 0-86 points win. In our next match we took on Surrey at home and again performed excellently striking up a 67 – 7 win. With two wins out of two Essex ended up at the top of the LSE pool two and took on Kent in the regional LSE final.

An excellent and exciting game with Kent leading with minutes to go 29 – 30. But a last gasp try and conversion gave Essex the win 30 – 36

The win took Essex into the Semi final in a playoff against Devon at Eton Manor RFC. Despite a bright and breezy start by Essex, Devon pulled away in the second half to win the match 15 – 40. Devon went on to take part in the final which was eventually won by Lancashire 36 – 22

Our thanks go to Richard Stock and his coaching team for putting together and coaching such a good strong squad and to Alex Evans, the physio for her support of the team as well. Though some of the players will be over age for next season the majority will still be U20 and with the experience of this season's matches behind them progress for next season is looking bright.

Richard Stock
Head Coach Essex U20s

U18

Another positive and successful season for the U18s, as a coaching team we continue to watch school and club games and building relationships with both and find players either missed for what ever reason in earlier pathways or late starters to game, this past group being Jerome (also got a crack at Sarries v Bristol 18s), Uche graded in all 3 games (rubbish reason why not selected), & Bill Bailey.

Results we beat Kent and Eastern Counties at Shelford and lost to Middlesex at Thurrock, which for 2/3rds of the game we were competitive with only 1 or 2 scores in it, but fell off in the final 15 mins. Many lads positively graded through the 3 games one in all 3 games but, amazingly as ever, the final divisional selection raise many eyebrows with no real responses when questioned. As disappointed and confused as we were as a coaching group we still had 5 players selected for the divisional training squad of whom 4 made the final match day 23

Elijus Junkus - USP / Thurrock
Finn Bannister - Henley College / Woodford *
Christian Whetton-Clarke - Romford & GP *
Tommy Langley - Campion / Romford & GP*
Bill Bailey - Campion / Thurrock *

* Denotes Divisional Cap

Great to see some of this 18s squad and those of last 2 years being a big contingent in the county 20s this year - is a positive county pathway 15s through 20s so far finally coming together again !!!!

Regarding the U17s, what an eye opening year group as a whole the general basic skill level and rugby iq is not where you would expect (was this the age group hurt most by Covid!?) that said we find more new players again not seen previously or spotted in prior pathway or new to the game made the final squad. The sessions and games did prove challenging due to lack of skill or knowledge initially but also that the desire to play as a group and for each other not for they little group of friends, but as we went on and adjusted as a coaching group to fit to this group's needs, many showed how coachable they can be. A good number of the squad bought in to the team ethic which from game 1 to game 3 clearly showed. Game 1 and 2 Sussex and Kent at Thurrock, we were notably beaten but a lot of this came from own mistakes and then heads going down, but we certainly showed glimpses of what could do when all bought in to process, and that led and finished with positive and comprehensive win against EC at Shelford. Excited to get this group back in for 18s and will be looking if others out there even in 17s especially front row that can last 50 mins

Special congratulations to Mohammed from Campion / Basildon who Captained the side, he stuck to the task and earned huge respect from his peers, coaches and match official with not only his playing ability but also his manner with all, every game the match official mentioned how well he conducted himself when communicating with them on the pitch and to his players.

The real challenge we face is the ever growing Ealing Trailfinders Academy and training / games clashing more and more with county weekends, I see this as another pathway for the lads, like Saracens etc, but does have adverse affect to team a so sporadic when lads called in.

I would like to say a big thank you to Ken Laybourne Manager, Alex and medical staff this season, and lastly the coaching team of Tom King, Joshua Toms, Eugene O'Herlihy, and Connor Mahoney. In addition to Paul Goodey, Laura Westlake and Hoops all of whom helped with the 17s trials.

Excited for the season ahead and would love the coaches to get some new stash please :-)
shorts, t-shirts, beanies, hoodie or sweater

Peter Mahoney
Head Coach Essex U17/U18

Saracens/Essex DPP/PDG Update July 2025

Overview – U15 & U16 squads – Saracens' U17-18 involvement

The U18 group completed a successful season, losing only one match, but developing lots of players for the professional game. Saracens U18 Academy League playing Squad for 24/25 season. Congratulations are due to: -

Thai Alleyne – contract trial period; Jack Marshall – contracted ; Owen Gillett – contracted; Gabrielle Registe - contracted

U16 Restart programme continued throughout the season culminating in a number of matches between Essex, Herts, London (new region) and Kent. Essex were competitive in matches and a number were selected to proceed for summer U17 Development squad training:

Cameron Hough; Josh Leek; Joe Linnen; Will Stock; Will Justier

The 24-25 season training blocks commenced in July with a re-trialling for the U16 group. 200 players trialled, 40 selected for PDG, 40 for the Development squad and the remainder released. Following this, Saracens selected two squads to train and play matches v Harlequins, Northampton and Sale.

U15 trials took place in February with over 200 players trialling. 200 players trialled, 40 selected for PDG, 40 for the Development squad and the remainder released. The group undertook matches versus Kent, Hert and London and were very competitive

Moving into the new season, a change of trialling has been introduced, where any player, parent, coach and club can nominate a player for U15, U16 and U17 age groups. Players trialling the U16 and U17 age group if successful would move into a Saracens Development squad.

Players trialling for U15's (Over 300 in number) will undertake two pre-assessment session to get to approx. 120 players. Thereafter, each player will take part in 4 trial sessions (4 sessions for backs, 4 sessions for forwards), which will lead to a selection of 40 PDG and 40 Development squad. This will provide definitive opportunities for players on the pathway.

Injuries:

No notable injuries to date

Facilities, Coaches, Physios and Admin

We have exclusively used the facilities at New Hall School, pitches, floodlit Astro and S&C suite, and continue to develop strong links with the School. Additionally, we have played matches at Dartford Valley, Merchant Taylors School, StoneX and Thurrock.

We have used upwards of 16 coaches over the course of the season with a strong core of 10. We have provisioned 1x physio each session ably assisted by a trainee. We use a co-coaching model during sessions, with a lead coach facilitating the game and focusing on "on ball" players. The Co-coach supports the lead coach by coaching "off ball" players. Where we have additional resource, we utilise an observer coach, who watched the practise from afar and feeds information into coaches/players.

We now have a 10 coach team for PDG and 16 coach team for Development squad (this includes the PDG coaches). All coaches have been given specific access to Saracens CPD's – e.g.

Role of Lead & Assistant Coaches and Player Feedback. The coach pool has the widest reach to date with each coach from a different school or club.

Summary

The schedule has been full, with a minimum of weekly sessions, and at time bi-weekly sessions. The pathway continues to go from strength to strength with very high numbers training throughout the summer, strong retention, due to delivery of a well managed, strongly coached and quality content programme.

To put this into perspective, for season 24-25, by the end of December 24, we would have regularly coached over 400 Essex players, played 4 x festivals, and moreover provided a strong development opportunity for players and coaches within the County. This could not have been achieved without the time and dedication of a few individuals who have delivered without compromise.

We aim to have more attendance at School and club matches to “scout” talent and lessen impact to clubs/schools.

Onto the next, onwards and upwards

Jamie Howard

Essex Bishops and Essex Wooden Spoon

Essex Bishops Vet Team: A Season of Success and Community Spirit

The Essex Bishops, the county’s veteran rugby team, have wrapped up a remarkable season, marked not only by their impressive performances on the pitch but also by their commitment to supporting local causes. Among their notable achievements was a fundraising initiative for Callum, a brave young boy from Brentwood battling an inoperable brain tumour.

The Bishops’ final match of the season took place at Harlow Rugby Club against Hertfordshire Vets. Clad in new shirts generously provided by Essex RFU, the squad was inspired by a special visit from Callum, who met the players before Kick Off. His courage and spirit motivated the team, leading them to a thrilling 47-29 victory. More importantly, the match raised a significant amount of money to aid in Callum’s treatment, showcasing the power of rugby to make a difference in the community.

This season also saw the introduction of the ArchBishops, Essex’s first ‘Super Vets’ team for players aged 50 and over. In their debut match, they triumphed over Suffolk with an impressive score of 82-38, further highlighting the depth of talent within Essex rugby.

County rugby is thriving, with Essex now fielding three men’s teams. In a grand showcase at Harlow, all teams took to the field against Hertfordshire, reinforcing the strength and camaraderie of the Essex rugby community.

The Essex Wooden Spoon teams, both men’s and women’s, continue their mission to raise funds for disadvantaged children across the county. They are set to travel to Tynedale RFC from August 22nd to 24th for this year’s VetsFest, where they will further their fundraising efforts.

In a competitive season, the Essex Men faced Eastern Counties twice, securing one win and one loss. Despite being unable to play a third match, they claimed the new spoon trophy, thanks to their collective try-scoring efforts across the two games.

Ben White, Captain of Essex Vets and Spoons, expressed his pride in leading both teams this season. "It has been a great honour to lead both Vets teams again this season. Essex rugby is really going from strength to strength. It is brilliant that we are able to support specific causes such as Callum, and with the Wooden Spoon, we support children across the county. Rugby is such a fantastic sport for bringing people together and helping those in need."

As the season concludes, the Essex Bishops and their fellow teams have not only showcased their sporting prowess but have also exemplified the spirit of community and compassion that defines rugby.

Wooden Spoon Essex fundraises to help Children in the County. Not forgetting our own support for children, the Essex Wooden spoon helped to support 3 teams from Essex who attended the **Wooden Spoon Charity TagFest 25** rugby tournament at **Broadstreet Rugby Club** for children of mixed ability. Over 100 players and parents from **Harlow Mixed Ability Rugby, SouthSEND Rugby, and Chelmsford Rugby Club** attended the festival. None of this would have been possible without the fundraising efforts of the **Wooden Spoon Essex** with a special thank you to Carl Andersen for all his hard work and dedication



Our Sponsors

Finally, but not least the County is once again very grateful for the sponsorship and opportunities offered by our sponsors for their continued support of Rugby in the Community. Their support has enabled us to maintain the Development of Women and Girls Rugby, supported our County Representative teams, the Merit Leagues as well as our Age Grade Competitions for both boys and girls. **Thank you.**

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May I wish you all a successful 2025 – 26 season with all fixtures fulfilled, loads of happy people playing rugby every week, bar takings at a record high and the women's Rugby World Cup back in England. If you think that there is anything that I, or any of the RFU staff or our Management Committee can do to help with this please do not hesitate to get in touch. We are here to support our clubs and increase participation in our great game of Rugby Union.

Ivor Smith
Hon Secretary Essex County RFU



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