



Dear Player / Parent,

The summer is upon us, and everyone, players, coaches, and parents alike, now has a well-earned chance to "re-charge batteries" in time for the coming season.

My personal view is that the recent season has been a somewhat mixed affair with the bad weather causing problems for all Youth age groups and also impacting the planned visit of Bridgend.

Playing results were also variable across the age groups with the exception of U14 age group who once again showed what a talented squad they are (or maybe it is the quality of coaches or both!) by finishing second in their league for the second season running and beating Richmond and Cobham in the process. Well done to all the players and coaches!

Notwithstanding this, given the size of our club and the relatively small player catchment area we have, there is no doubt we continue to "punch above our weight" – so the fact that we are disappointed when we fail on occasion to reach the highest standards / targets we set ourselves, shows we are still in pretty good shape. Linked to this, I could not help but notice how many teams were keen to play friendlies with Reeds at the Youth fixture exchange at Twickenham and another full fixture card of games awaits all Youth players next season.

Playing outcomes across all Youth age groups, also including next season's U13's are summarised more broadly below:

- Having been dogged with injuries during the course of the season, U15's A's finished 7th in Surrey 1 but managed to avoid relegation by virtue of Surrey's decision to compress the leagues from 5 to 3 at this age group and above.
- For the first time we also managed to field a B team at U15, which remained unbeaten all season in Surrey Division 5 – a good sign of the strength in depth of the squad and a great testimony to the players.
- U15's also reached the finals of the Weybridge Vandals 7's tournament finishing second solely by virtue of an inferior try count back, which again ranked as a very good achievement.
- U13's also managed to field 2 teams with our A team narrowly failing to avoid relegation from Surrey Division 1 and our B team playing very well indeed to finish mid table in Surrey Division 5– a great performance from a group of players that really came together and played well as a team when it mattered.
- The U12 were unfortunate to finish second in their group at Surrey A's albeit they then went on to win the Bowl competition for second placed teams. As a result they will play in Division 2 next season but have high hopes of securing promotion to Division 1 over the course of the coming season.
- As a result, next season, we will have Youth teams at U16's, & U15's playing in Surrey Division 1, with U14's & U13's playing in Surrey league 2.

Congratulations also go to a number of players who have achieved success at representative level this season including:

At U15, Dom Wooldridge and Harry Elrington trained with Harlequins SOR, with Harry going onto play for Surrey. 7 boys in featured in the Surrey Development Squad, 4 boys represented Welsh Exiles, 2 of whom Johnny Rogers and Robbie Hughes are currently summer training with Newport Gwent Dragons Finally, in this years U15 Daily Mail Cup, Tom Saville played for Wellington and progressed to the quarter finals.

At U14, Adam Hackett and Mikey McDonald trained with Harlequins SOR, Sam Hewitt and Ben Brimacombe were both selected to represent Middlesex this year.

Additionally, a number of U13 players were selected for the Surrey Development squad; namely Max Vangorken, Matt Connell, Freddie Higgs and Harry Edwards.

As always, player numbers are a good indicator of success / club vibrancy and next season we estimate we will have roughly 140 Youth players on our books. This is very positive but the introduction of some new rule changes next season by Surrey will require B squads to be larger next season. This can only make it harder to continue to field B teams at U16 & U14 over the coming season with the goal of ensuring "rugby for all." I suspect therefore that our ability to do this next season may be dependent upon our success in recruiting new players before the start of next season. The importance of attracting new players to our club cannot therefore be under-estimated so if you can encourage new players to join us, please do so!!!!

Critically, despite these activities / achievements, the club has and will continue to remain true to its traditions and offers a friendly and engaging environment where new players and parents are welcomed and strong friendships amongst players and parents can be formed.

The Forthcoming Season

Looking forwards, a number of activities are coming to together:

- Plans are forming to address pre and early season training. As part of this, this season's U14's will take a lead role in introducing the new U13 age Group to the demands of Youth Rugby.
- We will run a Youth specific training camp at the Club which is being run for us by Surrey Rugby on 22-24 July 09. (If you are still interested in attending this course, please contact Dave Woollatt).
- New equipment and playing kit is on order to meet the requirements of all Youth Age Groups for the coming season.
- Additional level 1 training for coaches is available over the summer for those who wish to attend such courses. Note, Giles Turrell and Dave Edwards have recently attended this coaching course.
- The current U15's will also tour to South Africa 21-30 August 09 inclusive in what promises to be a great experience for players & dads / families alike!
- Later on in the forthcoming season, we can again look forward to being hosted by Bridgend 26-28 March 2010.
- Summer training for next season's U15's started first Thursday in July with touch rugby, with fitness training starting on the first Thursday in August
- Plans are a foot to develop and expand our Clubhouse to potentially include amongst other things, bigger / more changing rooms, an expanded meeting area, and a club shop.

Membership Subscriptions

Please look out for the separate letter and subscription form for the coming season. These will be issued electronically.

After some deliberation, and mindful of the current economic situation, the Youth Committee has decided to set a two tier subscription for the coming 2009 -10 season as follows:

All new Youth playing members (including next season's U13's) will pay a subscription of £130 for the season. As part of this payment all such players will receive a free pair of Youth playing shorts and socks (in line with the agreed youth playing livery). Note this subscription has not increased from last season.

All existing Youth players will pay a reduced subscription of £120 for the season but will not receive a free pair of Youth playing shorts and socks

*Please note that players who are not registered paid up members of the club are not insured and with this in mind the Committee has decided that any player who has not paid his subs **by the end of October 2009** will be unable to play for the club until payment is received.*

Our new website

If you have not already noticed, please take a look at our new website which was launched at the end of April 2009. This is part of a broader drive aimed at improving our external profile with the outside world which in turn supports player recruitment and also increases the likelihood of securing club sponsorship..... www.reedsweybridgerfc.co.uk... hope you enjoy it!

Player Recruitment

I have already mentioned this point but it deserves another mention because of its importance.
In summary:

- any rugby club is only as good as its playing population.
- each Youth age group has its own player recruitment and retention challenges and which may ultimately affect our ability to be as successful as we would like.
- each Youth age group at the request of the Youth Committee is actively considering how they can tackle this issue.

With this in mind I would like to encourage every player to try to introduce one new player to Youth before the start of the new season.

If you can help please do so and speak directly to any one of your age group coaching team!!

Dates For Your Diary

We have a couple of external speakers coming to the club in 4th Quarter.

Specifically on 27 September 2009 at midday, David Tait, the only British man to have succeeded in traversing Everest from North to South will give a talk and on 10 December 2009 at midday, Tracey Edwards, the first woman to sail around the world single-handed will give a talk. Both promise to be very interesting.

We hope to announce other speakers nearer the time.

Some Closing thoughts....

I would also like to thank all the Youth Committee members for their hard work and support over the course of the season. As I hope you can see, the Youth section continues to develop and expand but we still have plenty to do, if we are to competing strongly at all Youth Age Groups, from U13 – U18 going forwards.

Not least of which we are dependent upon our marvellous coaching teams and team managers for their continued support and help, the players for their efforts particularly on the field of play, and to the parents who support the Club, no matter how small the contribution.

Thank you to each of you for your efforts. Have a great summer break and I look forwards to seeing you again at the start of what promises to be a great new season!!

Mark

Mark Sukiennik
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