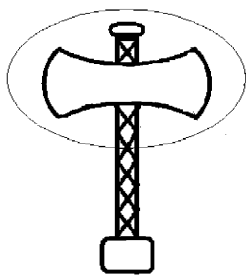


OCTOBER  
2015

## Chairman's Report .....



NORTH DISTRICT CLUB RUGBY FORUM

**NORTH** Newsletter

*Mike Monro, North League Representative on the Scottish Rugby Council and member of the SRU Board, as well as Chairman of the North Forum, writes:*

Welcome to the second North Newsletter of the season. Obviously it has been a shorter period between edition one and edition two due to the delay in edition one.

As an update on the medical reports of two of our Committee Members, Gordon is still very able and willing to edit the North Newsletter. He is awaiting his next operation on his troublesome knee. We wish him well.

Bob Richmond is back to hopefully full fighting fitness. We all know the work that he does for Mackie and also for the North Committee. It is a very corny saying but so true that without the likes of him at Mackie and so many others reading this North Newsletter at their own clubs, the regional clubs would not exist.

### Bowl and Shield Draws

There are some interesting draws in the quarter-finals. There are far flung games such as Stornoway v Shetland and the local derby such as Aberdeen Wanderers v Aberdeen Uni Medics. In the Shield there is the prospect of a brilliant match with Highland at home to Gordonians. Obviously, the Bowl is still regionalised and we will get together with our Midlands colleagues in the near future. The Shield is Pan-Caledonia. There is the possibility of the three of the four quarter finalists being from the North. Let us just hope that is the case.

### Leagues

Despite the World Cup league games are, by and large, being

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played. Caley Division One is already very interesting. Gordonians and Highland are certainly leading the pace. I have had the opportunity of seeing very few league games this season. I have to confess that I have been in England for the Scotland games. However, I did have the opportunity of seeing Gordonians recently. They certainly do look the part.

So far as Division 2 North is concerned Deeside are setting a very fast pace. A couple of games have been called off and again I would just urge clubs to play the games with as many players as they have. Unfortunately, with Division 3 North there are some difficulties with regard to clubs getting teams out. This is already showing up in Division 3 North. However, I do realise, as does Scottish Rugby itself, as to how dependent clubs are at all levels on its student intake. Perhaps as the term goes on so the numbers will increase. However, if it is you are in genuine difficulty getting a team out please get in contact with myself or Brian Bell so that we can meet with you to see if there is anything at all that we can do to assist.

### Insurance

So far as I am aware all of our senior clubs have returned their paperwork to BT Murrayfield which will allow them to be insured. Could I please ask that clubs just double check that they have done so. Obviously by now the participation paperwork will have been returned. I have not heard from Nick Rennie at BT Murrayfield advising of any missing forms.

This Newsletter is sent to all clubs which are on the mailing list. It may include clubs who are really are not playing any games of rugby and therefore should not be

chased up to have their insurance application forms submitted. I am going to be contacting a couple of clubs direct but if it is that you are genuinely not a playing club but still appear on a list, could you let me know.

### President's Roadshow

You will recall that at the recent Forum meetings that I had in Aberdeen and Inverness, I advised that there was consideration being made by this year's President, Ed Crozier, that perhaps replacing roadshows would be a Conference at BT Murrayfield in January 2016. We all know that Ed is very much a pro-club person like his predecessor in office, Ian Rankin. Ed has therefore agreed that even if there is to be a Conference he is more than happy to have roadshows in Inverness and Aberdeen. He appreciates the value of such roadshows and also the difficulty of clubs in the North making it down to BT Murrayfield on a Sunday morning in January. However, having said that, from the information I have got about the Conference it really is worth attending. If it is that you do not think a roadshow is necessary perhaps your Secretary or President could drop me an e-mail. There is little point my asking Ed and others from BT Murrayfield to come to Aberdeen and Inverness where at the end of the day the attendance is so small. There is no doubt at all but that Ed is very keen to hear as much as he can about the clubs. If the roadshow is the way to do this then he will certainly come up here.

### Murrayfield Injured Players Foundation (Formerly BT Murrayfield Centenary Fund)

I am a Trustee of the now newly named Murrayfield Injured Players Foundation

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(MIPF). All regional reps are appointed as Trustees. However, there may be some misconception as to how the charity works. It is in place to lend financial assistance to players who are injured and are unable to work and are therefore suffering financial problems. In exceptional circumstances the MIPF may also lend financial assistance to players who are in financial difficulties for other reasons. However it is not up to the Trustees to contact clubs when the Trustee is advised of an injury to a player. You will as a club always be submitting a Serious Injured Report to BT Murrayfield if unfortunately a player does suffer such an injury. As the Council Players Rep for Caley North, I am then advised of that report. I do **not** then contact the club automatically to enquire whether the player requires financial assistance. It is up to the player or his club to contact either myself direct or the MIPF.

Everyone is aware that the insurance cover that is obtained by BT Murrayfield does not ordinarily cover full loss of wages. The cover that there is, is generous to the extent that BT Murrayfield pays the premium for each club. I am forever suggesting that a club consider taking out the extended insurance which is available or, indeed, an individual player if he (or she) is in a position to do so, to take out their own personal insurance. Please ensure that all players are adequately advised and also that clubs are aware of the MIPF.

### Postponed Games

There has been games called off due to lack of players. The problems that we are having in the North and North-East is not unique. If a club is genuinely having difficulty and wishes to discuss this, contact Brian Bell and/or myself. We just do not want clubs to pretend they can raise

teams when they know that they cannot. I fully appreciate that the World Cup has not made it any easier given the fact that members of clubs obviously want to watch the games and to attend at the grounds in England. Please remember dual registration. At the lowest level please remember that players can be "borrowed". The mantra will never change: we just want games played and as many people on the pitch as possible.

### Visits To Clubs

As I indicated earlier, I have to confess that I have been at Gloucester, Leeds and Newcastle (twice). That has meant that I have not visited as many clubs by this time of year as normal. However, I did have a brilliant day out at Banavie to watch Lochaber v Aberdeen Wanderers. I have obviously seen a number of stadiums being used for rugby but none of these grounds compare to the view of being at Banavie on a wonderful late summer's afternoon. The hospitality was great, the pitch was in magnificent condition and the weather unbelievably brilliant. It makes my job worthwhile visiting grounds such as that. Again, it is also important that teams are prepared to go that extra distance to the likes of Banavie, Stornoway and Shetland in order that we can continue to have rugby in this part of Scotland.

Finally, I will be attending a Board Meeting later this month and a Council Meeting in November. If there are any matters that clubs collectively or individually want to raise with me, please contact me.

**Mike Monro**

# Youth & Schools Rugby .....

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THE number of competitive rugby matches played at youth level by Scottish schools and clubs has doubled in the past month, compared to September 2014.

The new Schools and Youth Conferences, developed by Scottish Rugby, have dramatically increased the number of scheduled competitive fixtures for young players in the under-13 to under-18 age groups.

The Conferences established for the 2015-16 season group schools and clubs based on the development programmes they have in place, the number of teams they operate and results over recent seasons.

The fixture programme, arranged by Scottish Rugby, has guaranteed blocks of 'school v school' or 'club v club' fixtures in the autumn phase of the season.

The new structure comprises 11 Conferences, six for schools and four for clubs, including one town vs town conference in the Borders. In all 71 clubs and schools across Scotland are involved.

After one month the new structure has increased the number of competitive schools and youth games scheduled by 56%, compared with September 2014, generating an increase in the number of competitive schools and youth games played by 107%

Keith Russell Scottish Rugby's Director of Domestic Rugby said: "This has been a good start for the new structure. There is now a focus for schools and clubs on the importance of putting teams out and playing games at all age-levels, and this will ultimately benefit the players participating in this structure and the rugby communities they represent"

Schools and clubs field teams at each age-level when the fixtures are played. Each participating team contributes points to their respective school or club total, with the school or club accumulating the most points across all age groups over the conference programme winning the conference. This is a unique schools and youth

structure, which meets the long-term needs of Scottish youth rugby.

The new Conference leagues provide a clear framework of fixtures and as a result the success rate of matches taking place has risen from previous seasons.

In September 2015 across all youth and school competitions 690 competitive games were scheduled, of which 589 (85%) were played.

This compares with September 2014 when 441 competitive youth and schools games were scheduled, of which 284 (64%) were played.

This evolution from the previous ad-hoc friendly matches to a fully competitive Conference structure has been a large undertaking by Scottish Rugby's domestic rugby team, but one that is now starting to bear fruit. Former Scotland head coach Frank Hadden helped to develop the concept and has acted as a consultant working within the domestic rugby department.

He describes the new Conference programme as a massive step forward in enhancing both opportunities, and development, for young players.

Frank Hadden said: "I have long been an advocate of more competition for players during their teenage years and it is encouraging to see this finally come to fruition across Scotland. This will undoubtedly improve the development cultures in our schools and clubs and this in turn will produce more players for the adult game, better players for the Academy process and a greater overall interest in our sport."

The 11 Conferences will continue to be played in the autumn term.

For more information please go to the schools and youth section of the Scottish Rugby website -<http://www.scottishrugby.org/fixtures-results-schools-youth>

# A Cup of Cheer .....

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*Jack Nixon, the P&J rugby columnist (although he writes here as a freelancer) writes:*

**OVER** a month into the eighth playing of the Rugby World Cup, and already it has been a huge success, full of quality rugby, courageous performances from the so called minnows of the game, and of course a huge commercial bonanza.

It now remains to see how the respective unions build on the success, for surely the game has been handed a marketing tool which must now be used to promote the game, for never in the 28 year history of the competition has rugby had a higher profile.

The attendances have in fact been quite staggering, and a credit to the organisers who must be rubbing their collective hands over the handsome returns from every venue used for the tournament. Interestingly the general public seem to have bought into the event, as all the feedback from those who have been watching the pool games on ITV at home and in pubs has been good, ranging from "brilliant" to "whose on next."

And yet despite all the euphoria built up over the month I have yet to hear the same public make any commitment to going along to local games.

This was most forcibly brought home to me when I watched the Scotland vs Japan game in a big Aberdeen pub packed with enthusiastic Scotland "supporters."

Looking round the busy bar I did not see one face who is regularly at Rubislaw, the Meadows, Canal Park, or Woodside, nor do I expect to see them at the same grounds after the final is played at Twickenham on October 31.

Should my summation be correct there then has to be a collective attempt to sell the game to these new converts in the North and North - East many of whom go to BT Murrayfield for Scotland's Six Nations games and the autumn tests, and some even go to the Pro 12 games in Edinburgh and Glasgow on Friday nights.

The local product is in fact in my opinion a good one, but badly sold by clubs who in fairness have enough on their plates getting teams out on a Saturday without having to worry about getting casual supporters to games. A recent visit to an old haunt in the Scottish Borders, reminding me that big crowds at club games are a thing of the past, never to be seen again. Less than 100 spectators at Jed - Forest BT Cup game has become the norm.

Perhaps I expect too much, but as a lover of the game would be happy to help bring about a strategy which looks at marketing a great sport in the Caley area.

There is one thing for sure, we cannot afford to miss out on selling the game to our youngsters after the heroics of Japan, Samoa, Georgia and the other alleged lesser rugby nations. We owe it to the game.

Jack Nixon

# New Schools Programme.....

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SCOTTISH Rugby has launched an innovative new schools programme to help promote rugby in Primary schools and encourage youngsters to take up the sport.

With Scotland currently in action at the Rugby World Cup in England, there is a unique opportunity to inspire the next generation of players. Scottish Rugby has teamed up with Glasgow Life and local rugby clubs to develop the 'Scotland and the Rugby World Cup' schools resources for primary schools across the country.

Scottish Rugby Ambassador, Chris Paterson MBE, said: "It is important for children to be given the opportunity to try as many sports as possible, to help them see the benefits of exercise and an active lifestyle.

"When I was at school I got my first taste of playing rugby and enjoyed the camaraderie of training alongside my friends.

"The aim of this project is to develop an understanding and appreciation of the game of rugby and to generate interest among pupils as they follow Scot-

land's progress at the Rugby World Cup."

The schools pack provides a set of key learning resources aimed at primary school teachers and children, to give them an understanding of rugby and in particular the rugby World Cup which is being hosted in England.

It covers a number of key areas including venues, team colours, flags, national anthems, players' diet, media coverage, television commentary and the rules of the game itself.

Deputy Leader of Glasgow City Council and Chair of Glasgow Life, Councillor Archie Graham, added: "Sport has the power to change lives and inspire as we are seeing just now with the Rugby World Cup and in particular the fantastic performances of the Scotland national team.

"The event might be taking place hundreds of miles away but this schools pack is bringing it to life in the classroom, helping take the sport to a new generation of young people.

"That will be a fantastic legacy from this project and one which will live on for years to come."

# Huntly Celebrate the RWC.....

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Earlier this year, Scottish Rugby invited clubs to register for the [Everyone's Game](#) initiative to coordinate grassroots activity during the six-week Rugby World Cup tournament.

Over 70 clubs shared their plans and Scottish Rugby provided promotional packs to help maximise their Rugby World Cup events. These included HUNTLY who started off with a tournament-inspired mini fes-

tival on Saturday 26 September. For all Scotland's Pool matches there were live screenings in the club house along with matches, refreshments and fun activities for families. Huntly is a growing club with a Development Officer newly in place. They'd like to hear from anyone interested in giving rugby a try, from P1 through to the senior team. The club is reporting in the local press, encouraging people to support the RWC and the club.

# BT Murrayfield Miscellany .....

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*Nick Rennie, BT Murrayfield's Domestic Game Manager, advises of some latest developments:*

## New development structure for Women's and Girls' Rugby

As part of the National Strategy for Women's and Girls' rugby, Scottish Rugby is committed to growing the women's and girls' game across the country.

The first step this season has been a re-organisation of the development team away from part time coordinators of the Scottish Rugby Union to full time posts. These posts will be more focused on supporting the development of the game in a targeted way where there is the potential and desire to have more players and more teams.

The Union is delighted to announce that three full-time women's and girls' development posts have been created and recruited and will be working in the following areas:

Sarah Quick: development manager for women and girls with specific responsibility for the **East** region, covering the Borders, Edinburgh, Lothian's and Fife.

[Sarah.quick@sru.org.uk](mailto:sarah.quick@sru.org.uk)

Jen Miller: development officer for the **West**, covering Glasgow South, Glasgow North & Central.

[jennifer.miller@sru.org.uk](mailto:jennifer.miller@sru.org.uk)

Kim Jamieson: development officer for the **North**, covering Tayside, Grampian, Highland & Islands.

[kimberley.jamieson@sru.org.uk](mailto:kimberley.jamieson@sru.org.uk)

Sarah, Jen and Kim look forward to meeting and working with many clubs and schools this season to support the good work that is already taking place across the country. If you have any enquiries regard-

ing women's and girls' rugby please direct them to your local contact.

## A tradition revived

The world's oldest varsity match has come home.

On Saturday 26 September the Universities of Edinburgh and St Andrews contested the Royal Bank of Scotland Scottish Varsity match on the international pitch at BT Murrayfield.

A stunning try in the last play of the game, converted magnificently from the touchline, by 18-year-old Finn Murphy, enabled the University of St Andrews to retain the Royal Bank of Scotland Scottish Varsity match trophy for the third successive year by 27 points to 26.

This, after all, was the world's oldest varsity match played out between two founder members of the Scottish Rugby Union.

As well as the men's first XV game, a women's game took place on the international pitch following the men's game, while there were second and third XV matches on the back pitches.

Once the honours had been decided there was an opportunity to watch the England v Wales Rugby World Cup match in the stadium suites.

In recent years the match has been played at the Richmond Athletic Ground, home of London Scottish, as

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both Universities sought to strengthen links with alumni in the London area.

Now, however, with the assistance of Scottish Rugby, of which both are founder member clubs, they have brought the fixture home.

### **Tartan Tens is underway!**

Tartan Tens is designed to keep adult males involved with rugby by providing a more informal format of the game that works around their lifestyles. If there are players within your club struggling to meet the demands of a full season, then Tartan Tens could be just the thing that enables them to keep on playing. It's also a great opportunity for players who haven't played competitively for a while, to get back into the game in a more relaxed atmosphere, and without the commitment of playing league club rugby.

Everything is simplified, from the rules to the number of players (10-a-side) – it's about getting people on the field and having fun! Scrums are uncontested, there's no jumping in the line-out and rucks are limited to two players per side.

Getting involved is easy, simply pick the closest venue, sign up online, and turn up on the day ready to play. You'll be provided with a match jersey for the game, and there'll be food on offer should you wish to hang around afterwards.

For more information visit - [scottishrugby.org/tartan-tens](http://scottishrugby.org/tartan-tens)

### **Club Sustainability Fund deadline**

Following the successful launch of

the Club Sustainability Fund in the 2014/15 season, Scottish Rugby is soon set to identify clubs who will benefit from the second roll-out of the capital and revenue strands of the fund for the 2015/16 season.

The Club Sustainability Fund was set up to help clubs improve facilities and generate new revenues and, with the £1.6 million sum being invested in the club rugby over a course of four years, is Scottish Rugby's largest ever cash injection into the domestic game.

The cash from the capital strand is granted to clubs so they can invest in facility improvement projects, giving a platform to continue the growth and development and increase rugby participation in their area.

The revenue strand is in place in to help clubs increase their income, membership and relationships with the local community and businesses.

The deadline for this season's capital and revenue strand applications is Sunday 1 November.

### **BT Club Awards are back**

September sees the return of the BT Club awards for the 2015/16 season, with deadlines for this month's awards being Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup>.

As per last season we have the BT Club, Volunteer and Try of the month, awarded each month, before we unveil the best from the year at our annual Club Awards night at BT Murrayfield.

The BT Club of the Month award takes three elements into consideration; performance, development work and discipline. To win, a club does not have to be the best in all three areas, but should show a successful balance, with potential for long-term growth.

The winning club will receive £200, plus a 12 month commercial BT Sport subscription for their clubhouse.

The Volunteer and Club awards also have some excellent prizes on offer.

So, if there's a worthy volunteer who puts in the hours at your club, or if you've managed to

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# BT Caley North Leagues/Cups



Composition of BT Caledonia North Leagues and BT Caley Shield and BT Caley North Bowl fixtures for 2015-16, following games played on **10th October**:

**BT Caledonia Division 1**

	p	w	l	d	f	a	bp	pts
Gordonians	5	5	0	0	253	36	5	25
Highland	4	4	0	0	151	17	3	19
Caithness	5	3	2	0	212	123	3	15
Glenrothes	4	3	1	0	174	106	3	15
RAF Lossiemouth	5	2	3	0	133	130	3	11
Caarnoustie	5	2	3	0	88	122	3	11
Strathmore	5	2	3	0	81	112	2	10
Dunfermline	4	2	2	0	106	121	1	9
Hillfoots	4	0	4	0	27	201	0	0
Mackie Acad FP	5	0	5	0	61	318	0	0

**BT Caledonia Division 2 (North)**

	p	w	l	d	f	a	bp	pts
Deeside	5	5	0	0	198	30	5	25
Ross Sutherland	5	4	1	0	122	89	3	19
Abdn Wanderers	5	4	1	0	122	89	3	19
Garioch	5	3	2	0	141	96	4	16
Kinloss Eagles	5	3	2	0	148	99	2	14
Stornoway	6	2	4	0	83	182	3	11
Shetland	5	1	4	0	132	208	3	7
Moray	4	1	3	0	88	122	2	6
Lochaber	6	1	5	0	72	251	2	6
Ellon	4	1	3	0	56	196	1	5

**BT Caledonia Division 3 (North)**

	p	w	l	d	f	a	bp	pts
Abdn Uni Medics	3	3	0	0	104	65	2	14
Abdn University	2	2	0	0	146	47	2	10
Aberdeenshire 5	3	1	2	0	118	120	4	8
Gordonians	3	1	2	0	69	64	3	7
Invss Craig Dunain	2	1	1	0	52	54	2	6
Banff	1	1	0	0	5	7	1	5
Dyce	1	1	0	0	60	0	1	5
Highland 2	2	1	1	0	38	65	0	4
North Police Scot	2	0	2	0	56	99	2	2
Peterhead	1	0	1	0	26	95	1	1
Fraserburgh	2	0	2	0	7	135	0	0

## Quarter Final : 7 November

Highland v Alloa or Gordonians  
 Carnoustie or Moray v Caithness  
 RAF Lossiemouth v Glenrothes  
 Strathmore v Dunfermline

## BT Caledonia Bowl (North)

### 1st Round; 26 Sept 15

Abdn Wanderers WO v Dyce  
 Inverness CD WO v Peterhead  
 Stornoway 17 Lochaber 12  
 Aberdeen Uni 56 Kinloss Eagles 3  
 Ross Sutherland WO v North Police  
 Fraserburgh v Abdn Uni Medics WO  
 Deeside 55 Banff 6  
 Shetland - Bye

## BT Caledonia Bowl (North)

### Quarter Final : 7 November

Inverness Craig Dunain v Deeside  
 Stornoway v Shetland  
 Abdn Wanderers v Abdn Uni Medics  
 Abdn University v Ross Sutherland

## BT Caledonia Shield

### 1st Round; 26 Sept 15

Garioch 12 Caithness 47  
 RAF Lossiemouth WO v Mackie P  
 Strathmore 41, Hillfoots 13  
 Ellon 19 Dunfermline 68  
 Harris 3 Highland 54  
 Morgan 7 Glenrothes 79  
 Alloa v Gordonians (17 Oct)  
 Carnoustie v Moray (17 Oct)

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## BT Murrayfield Miscellany (cont'd) ..

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capture a fantastic try – individual or team – let us know to be in with the chance of winning one of the awards.

For more information, visit the Clubs, Youth & Schools section of [scottishrugby.org](http://scottishrugby.org)

### BT Premiership highlights package

Scottish Rugby's Youtube channel, Scottish Rugby TV, this week launched a BT Premiership highlights programme.

The programme features all the best from each round of the BT Premiership in a comprehensive video package.

To watch the first instalment, click [here](#) or visit [scottishrugby.org](http://scottishrugby.org).

## and, finally! .....

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COMMENT on any of the items contained in the Newsletter is welcomed.

Additionally, if you or your club has something of interest you would like the rest of the North Forum members to know about, feel free to send in an article.

Articles and correspondence should be addressed to the Forum Secretary whose contact points, e-mail and telephone, are listed on this page.

## Coming Up .....

President's Roadshow/North Forum Gneral Meeting, (H&I), Highland RFC	tbc November
President's Roadshow/North Forum General Meeting (NorthEast), Seafield Club, Aberdeen	tbc Novermber

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