

EXTRA, EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!

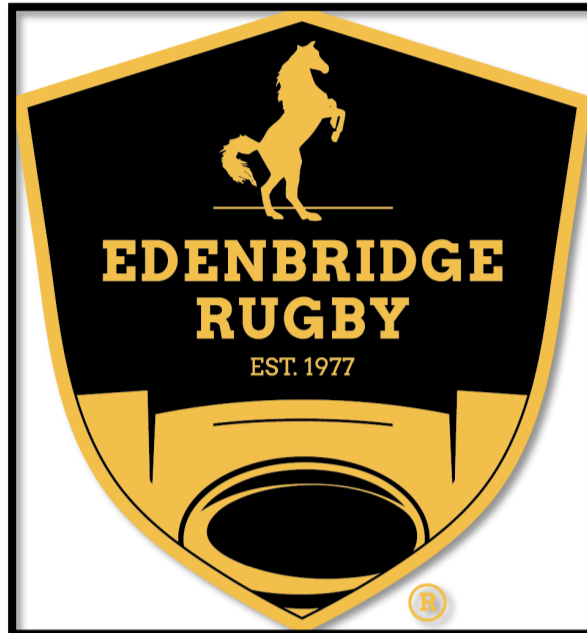
EDENBRIDGE TIMES

February 2022

Rugby back on the menu !!!

Pitch up and Play Huge Success!

Our pitch up and play event saw huge numbers turn out for a lovely Sunday mornings training in September. With the BBQ on for food afterwards and plenty of great sessions going on made for a great atmosphere around the club. Oh and the added bonus of having former England and Harlequins Captain Chris Robshaw drop in to meet players across the age groups and even stayed behind for a few burgers afterwards!



New Ladies Team Emerges

The start of the 2021/22 season saw a ladies team emerge. Starting in June 7 ladies joined for the first session and has been numbers grow week on week building to 28 players with more joining in the coming weeks.

The Ladies have been busy preparing for their first fixture later on in the season, with the majority not having played before and have picked up the game immensely well over the last 7 months.



U16's

First half of the season very positive. The boys are building a strong bond, playing with confidence, encouraging and playing for each other, making more good decisions than bad. Most importantly, they're all playing with a smile of their faces! We have 4 more league fixtures, with Jersey likely to be a double points game, as time evades us arranging a second meeting.

Our togetherness both in attack and especially in defence is improving game by game, a testament



to team bonding, training and tactics. Our tackling is now one of our assets, but we must remember it's technique, technique, technique.

The squad now has a confident air about themselves, with a positive attitude towards self and each other.

We are getting greater numbers as was seen in our last match, away against Seaford, where we had 20 players. This enables cover for game injuries and any change in tactics. Again against Seaford it appeared that our side-line support outnumbered the home team.

U14's

Well, it can only be described as a tough first half of the season for the resilient U14s. Some hard opposition, many injuries and the nearly whole squad having covid at different points has really tested the character of the boys (and even the coaches sometimes) but they have come through it intact and I'm sure the second half of the season will more stable.

We had a bright start in September with everyone excited to get back to playing some decent rugby with the new rule iterations. Our first match against Westcombe Park dusted off the cobwebs and reminded us that tackling is an important part of the game.

Jersey was our first league match and even though we went 3 tries down in the first half, the 'Bridge Spirit' shone through, and we ended the match 3-3. Real grit shown. Next on to the Sussex Festival where the boys play 5 matches almost back-to-back. It was tiring enough watching it! The results were a notable win against Brighton, then 2 draws and 2 losses. A tough day at the office, but some proud coaches and parents as the boys left it all on the field. Continuing through the season, we had a great match against Beckenham on Remembrance weekend that ended in a draw. By this point Covid was striking us hard and sadly we couldn't field a side for our last 2 league games against Lewes and Shoreham.

All in all a bit of a mix bag for the first half of the season. Although the results didn't necessarily always go our way there is plenty to be proud of: every week we see boys grow in skills and confidence,

Colts

The colts started out on their league run under turbulent circumstances with narrow losses to Eastbourne and Crowborough in the first two games.

School rugby on a Saturday left us with depleted numbers however the teams we sent put in amazing performances to take both teams close come the final whistle.



The next two games saw huge score lines in favour of the Bridge, with a 50-0 win over Hastings and Bexhill and a 50-0 win over Uckfield. Most recently a strong win over league leaders Lewes and a resounding win over Reigate sees the Colts top of the league with 1 game to go.

Good News

Pluck gets four quarters selection



Harry Pluck (under 17) was selected to play as part of the Harlequins U17's side that travelled to take on a Gloucester side. Harlequins emerged victorious with a 37-10 win.

Well done Harry on a fantastic achievement, we are all extremely proud.



Morton-Smith turns out for the bears

Sam Morton-Smith part of the same Edenbridge age group as Harry, has been selected to play for Bristol Bears.

Well done Sam, a huge achievement, We are all extremely proud of the achievement.

What's happening for the rest of the season?

The first half of the season has been packed with great successes on and off the pitch, here is a list of the of the main events going on at the club.

- 23rd January—Tackling Clinic U9— U13 10am—10.45am
- 29th January—Club Quiz
- 29th January—1st team v East Grinstead
- 6th February—Handling Clinic—U7—U11 10am—10.45am
- 20th February—Kicking Clinic—U12—U16 10am—10.45am (selected players)
- 27th February—Defensive Clinic U9—U12 10am—10.45am & 11am—12pm U13—Colts
- 20th March—Edenbridge Minis Festival —10am—2pm

U13

The season started with some disappointment as some experienced players left to pursue a thing called *soccer*. However with a strong core and enough players (just) to play matches we journeyed into the unknown with 2 friendlies against East Grinstead and Tunbridge Wells ahead of our Sussex waterfall set of fixtures. 2 defeats with teams quick out of the blocks meant our first league match away against Healthfield resulted in early preparation and a good warm being the prime focus.



Running out 10-15 winners was a great start to the

season proper.

Our next match was at home against an Eastbourne team that had nearly as many subs as we had in our squad. A valiant effort by an Edenbridge team with no reserves lost 15-25.

Next was a long trip away to Worthing which we lost 30 - 15 with a developing theme of ' if you can the ball out wide we will score'

Our last game of the waterfall series was at home in December to Horsham. Big smiles all around and a great confidence booster to head into the new year with a 40-15 win over Horsham.

U12

To get the boys back into the swing of things our first three Sundays were home training, allowing Jez and Chris to hone the boys skills, and make sure they were well prepared for the first game.

The boys soon got back upto speed with their tackling, rucking, passing and running moves and were excited and ready for it.

First up was an away game against Brighton. A beautiful sunny Sunday morning, and has previously always being closely contested games. This match didn't disappoint, with Edenbridge coming away with a well-deserved 35 – 30 win. The following Sunday we hosted Sevenoaks at home, the boys jointly warmed up and ran through some training drills before the games. The first game we won narrowly by a try 20 – 15. The second game we lost 15 – 5, against a well drilled team. The next couple of Sundays we had friendlies against Beccehamian's (home) and a return home fixture with Brighton. Beccehamian's brought two teams won the first, and to be honest not sure of the result in the second!! Brighton again was tight, but the home advantage worked in our favour (30 – 15 win). Our first game was against East Grinstead Spitfires (away). The boys were fired up for this and put a dominant performance together, there running and tackling were immense, racking up 50 points in the first half. Unfortunately due to the mis-matched teams the game got 'called' at half time. Following this triumphant win, we faced Crawley at home, again a bit of one sided game notching up 50 – 5 by the time of the half time pep talk. We scored an early try in the 2nd half and unfortunately the game got called due to an illegal tackle, ambulance on the pitch.



Having had 2 good results we were top of our pool and in 2022 moving up a pool – Happy Days.

Our last friendly before the Christmas break was an away fixture with Old Elthamian's, another win for the boys and a good way to finish before the festive activities. Our last training session was fun, and a few pints were enjoyed by the parents!!

U9

"In what has been a disjointed first half of the season due to Covid, the U9s have again shown fantastic progress over the last few months.

The main achievements during the first half of the season have been a good beginning to familiarising the tackle, extremely strong performances at the Medway, Chipstead and Old Whitgiftian festivals and continuing to build on the basics.

We have also been able to run joint training sessions with Tonbridge and Juddians. Key points to continue to improve on will be the move into full contact in January 2022 and game awareness.

With a big emphasis on DRIFT, it has been great to see the children continuing to uphold rugby values, especially supporting their teammates both at weekly training sessions but more pleasingly at festivals and joint training sessions. Keep up the good work!"



U8

The U8's have had a fantastic start to the year and have welcomed a good number of new players who have slotted seamlessly into our squad. At this age we are still focussed on the fundamentals and tag rugby matches but you can see the physicality increasing through the season and they are a hardy bunch that will be more than ready for contact next year.

We had our first friendly match against Warlingham and really demonstrated how a team working together can be a match for any



opponent. You could watch the confidence growing in our players as the matches went on and every player, parent and coach went home proud of what we had achieved. We have several matches and festivals planned for the rest of the season and we can't wait to see how we progress.

U11

The first thing you notice when the team get to U11 is having to walk a long way to your training pitch, but this is all worth it when you look back and see the younger kids growing up behind you and where you have once been. While the U11 have struggled to adapt to some of the biggest changes to the rules at any age group including rucking and mauling in a very short time frame, we are proud of where we now are. We are also proud to welcome 4 new members in Edwards Annys, Oli Stokes, Joe & Max Longley who are all proving to be great additions. So far this season the U11 have played in 3 tournaments and it's been great to see us compete with some huge clubs. Old Guildfordians was a hard entry into the game, facing up against Old Reigations, Trinty, Battersea Ironside and Old Wits, playing on a 3 in 1 hill with referees also new to the game, every game had its ups and downs. All close games, but



we did lose 3 but learnt some great lessons!

Next up was Chipstead with much greater success, facing Sutton & Epsom, Warlingham, Wimbledon and Old Reigations again, we scored 18 tries with 7 different try scorers with an enjoyable 6 to 5 revenge over Old Reigations. Most recently Old Whits, playing Blackheath, Old Alneyians, Old Colfs and Westcombe Park, this was a lesson in the worst conditions possible and how to keep going, there was 14 U11s for an 8 man game, we showed great persistence and helped out other teams who were short on the day.

U10

It was great to welcome back every player in September including a couple of new guys who had joined us at the end of the previous season.

More new players have joined us and numbers are up to 16 which is fantastic. The confidence and skills have grown so much we entered our first ever festival at Chipstead. After a slightly cautious start our strong squad of players entered into the competitive spirit. Nobody complained about being substituted but everyone wanted to get straight back on the pitch. The last hand was phenomenal. Every player tackled their hearts out and we scored some fantastic tries. Tackling is a weekly part of our sessions on.

Sunday and 'tower of power' has really helped as we integrate rucking into our game. Thanks to Sarah our manager Coaches Jon and Morgs who make sure there is a good mix of fun and learning. Sarah is our glue and whipping us into shape with regular comms and direction.

U7

U7's have progressed from games to drills and touch. However, we have retained the fun element through a light-hearted coaching style and rapport with players.

We have focused extensively on handling and U7's passing ability is comparatively good.

Solid progress has been made transitioning to touch. The first half of the season was spent bedding in the rules, and coaching has now moved on to running straight, passing and other fundamentals. The U7's have played with U8's various times this season and are able to hold their own. They also recently competed against Warlingham U8's performing well.

Contact has been limited to pads use / driving over, but we have introduced the importance of wrapping and strong body positions. Later this season we may introduce tackling with support from coaches with tackle experience, so we get the basics right.

The "One Club" initiative is working well. U7's have co-trained with U8's and U9's on a number of occasions and enjoy the challenge. U7's will continue forging strong ties with U8's and will be inviting Year 1 Broncos to train with during the later part of the season to help prepare to become U7's next year.

They are starting to become more competitive and we're seeing them bring our club values to life through teamwork, respect, and passion for their club!

We've added 3 new coaches to the setup - Steve Hogg (Head Coach), Mike Lewis (Assistant) and Dave Rooke-Bates (Assistant). Oli has partially transitioned to the U8's to be with his son, Lewis and is dividing his time across both age groups. Oli is continuing to mentor the new U7's coaches and help integrate them into the wider club.

Broncos

Bridge Broncos have got off to a brilliant start this season and it has been fantastic to see so many children returning and a large number of new members thoroughly enjoying the sport. Thanks goes out to coach Oli who has now moved up to the U7s and coach Matt now leads the sessions ably assisted by coach Rachel, Mike, Ian, James and Alex.



The children have enjoyed playing come rain or shine, through wind and rain and have been introduced to a number of basic rugby skills through games such as rob the nest and fox and hounds. Tug-of-war however against the coaches remains a firm favourite for all involved!

Each session ends with an agility course and the presentation of trophies to the players of the week.