

RUCKING GOOD NEWS



The AKRFC Monthly Newsletter: End of Season Edition 2011 / 2012

Introduction

Welcome to this final bumper edition of RGN for season 2011/12.

AK Development Matters

No doubt you will have noticed some changes that have taken place within the clubhouse, to make it more attractive for lettings etc. Further improvements will be continuing throughout the close season (see later on this). So if you have a special do coming up or know someone that has, please do consider using the AK clubhouse for your event. Club Steward Chris Barlow will be happy to discuss your requirements and can be contacted on 07983 724106. Chris also now has an album showing different layouts from recent events held at the club, which give you a really good idea of how good the club can look for that special do. A couple of examples are shown below



AK Clubhouse set up for formal dinner and for a children's party / christening

Agreement has been reached through the AK General Committee to finalise further work projects throughout the summer. These will include employing contractors for some repair work to roofs and guttering, the installation of patio style doors / security shutters on the pitch side of the clubhouse and some work to improve the changing rooms and floodlights. A number of club member working parties have been scheduled throughout the summer to continue the programme of improvements that is being put in place, particularly in relation to redecoration of the clubhouse both inside and out, some further updating of the changing rooms and work on the approaches to the clubhouse and surrounds.

The first of these work parties recently took place and was well attended, with a fair amount of initial work completed.



Grafting away on the first work party

However there is still much to do, particularly gardening type work and painting, so further volunteers are required to attend the working parties scheduled to start at 10.00 in June as follows.



9th June & 23rd June.



Lunch will be provided and there is a free drink afterwards for everyone that attends.

Remember this is your club and we can only develop and improve it with your assistance & support so please make every effort to attend at least one of these work parties

RFU Club Accreditation Scheme

A meeting was recently held with Andrew Soutar the RFU Regional Development Officer for the North West, to discuss AK's application in respect of the above, which has replaced the RFU Seal of Approval process. The application covers various criteria in relation to the club as a whole, plus sections relating to Junior and Women's rugby.

The initial indication from the RDO was that AK meets all the required criteria and the application will be forwarded on to the RFU for validation and award, once a Key Action Plan covering three areas has been put in place. This has now been done and covers the following

- **Club Development:** Initial development work being undertaken this summer plus longer term larger project work (funded by Firework Display profits) for such as new roof, heating system, improved car parking, floodlights & changing rooms. These to be linked into 6 year Development Plan to 50th Anniversary of playing at Stelfox and / or longer 10 year plan to 125th Anniversary of the formation of the club
- **Player / Team retention:** Active recruitment to at least maintain 3 senior mens plus a women's team, and Junior Teams at all levels from Under 7s to Senior Colts.
- **Mini / Junior parent involvement:** Through such as early season welcome pack, identification of employment / skills type on Junior Registration Form and involvement in such as working parties / coaching / volunteer roles within AK.

Receiving the award will be good news for the club, particularly as to receiving assistance and funding from the RFU and other organisations in the future. Also most importantly it shows as an amateur community sports club, that we are doing things right!

AK Club AGM

At the recent Club AGM certain new Club Officials were elected and Club Honours awarded for services to AK as follows.

New Officials

Club President: Denis Mallalieu
Club Committee: Barry Rogerson

Honours

Club Cap: Chris Nettleton
Honorary Vice Presidents: Liz Foster, Rob Neyton, Nigel Brooker and Allan Williams

Congratulations to all of the above for their well deserved awards.



Hopefully Denis won't scare the kids too much on Sunday mornings?

and Netty will wear a club top next time he is photographed!

Following the first General Club Committee meet since the AGM, there are still a number of key posts which need to be filled. These are as follows.

Assistant Treasurer, Assistant Junior Chairman & Sponsorship Coordinator.

It would also be good to get a number of further people onto the Club General Committee, so there is capacity to deal with other matters as they arise, rather than put further pressure on those already undertaking key roles for the club.

If you are interested in undertaking any of the above roles and / or consider you can assist the club in any such way, please speak to Committee Chairman Graham Makepeace-Warne, Club President Denis Mallalieu or any other AK Committee members.

AK End of Season Ball

A great night at the Cresta Court hotel, which was well attended and seemed to be enjoyed by everyone. Well done to Chris Barlow for organising and making the club a healthy profit on the night.



Ball in full swing



Would be Jimmy Bonds



Colts did well for themselves

Rugby – April & May Results plus End of Season Review

Men's Senior Rugby

Despite their best efforts the AK 1st Team were relegated in their first season back in National 3 North. They lost their last two games of the season against Burnage and then narrowly to Penrith. Penrith would themselves have been relegated had they not been fortunate with a couple of refereeing decisions late on, which effectively won them the game and saved them from relegation. That just about summed up AK's season as a whole as far as refereeing decisions went.

The team showed on occasions that they could compete at this level but injuries and unavailabilities in the first half of the season, plus a number of games lost or drawn in the second half, which really should have been won, condemned them to a return to North 1 West.

Good news is that Deano is staying on as Captain next season and John Geddis will be joining Dollars and Netty on the coaching team. That obviously means Dylan won't be around next season but thanks to him from everyone at AK for his efforts over the last few seasons. Also moving on are Hutch (to a new job in Norwich), Mike Marsden (to London), Bish (to Sedgley Park), Hulsey (to a club nearer his North Wales home) and to Nathan (a club nearer to his Sale home????). Thanks to all those guys too for their efforts over the last few seasons and just remember guys where your roots are, if ever back in the area!

Hopefully though a few of the successful AK Colts teams of recent years will be coming back into the area and playing for AK next season. More on that in the next pre season edition of RGN.



New player coach John Geddis in relaxed mode?

AK 2nd Team lost their final game of the season at Burnage but finished a credible fourth in revised Premier 2nd Team League. Well done to Ben as Captain, Trevor as coach plus Brian who was also coaching earlier in the season and to all the players.

AK 3rd Team lost their last two games of the season to finish 12th in their very tough league, which comprises mostly 1st or 2nd Teams. Well done though to Dicko and Gaz for fulfilling nearly all the team's fixtures and introducing a number of new players to AK.

With the Cumbrian Teams all dropping out of the North West leagues next season it has not been confirmed at this point which league the AK 3rds will be playing in next season.

Women's Rugby

The girls finished their season losing away at Waterloo, who only lost out on being top of the league due to points scored difference. The team though did record two wins more this season than last season and again despite the loss of several players this season for a variety of reasons, managed to fulfil all their fixtures. So well done to Rhino as Manager, Fiona as Captain, Tom as coach and all the girls who played this season.

The girls will probably be looking to drop down a league next season but await a RFUW decision on that at the mo.

So overall it has been a tough old season for all the AK Senior Teams. However that is to be expected when all the teams were playing at the highest levels possible, whilst AK is proud to retain its amateur ethos and mostly rely on Junior Team players coming through each season to play for the senior sides.

Club Tour to Madrid

On the plus side must mention the very successful club tour to Madrid for which JP but not Trizzo, gets a big round of applause for organising. The Alec Forbes lookalike theme went down really well with everybody it seems except Alec. Trizzo who is actually sat next to Alec won the lookalike comp



Alec lookalike competition

Arrived in Madrid to find we were not booked into the hostel we thought we were (Trizzo!) and went to completely the wrong grounds (that's two!) before we finally got to where we were playing on the Saturday. Think Trizzo was being sponsored by the Madrid Taxi Owners Association who did a great job of curing Spain's debt crisis, whilst we were there!!! Our wanderings did cause some hilarity though, particularly with a Women's Rugby Team who were about to have a team photo. Well they actually did, but just how it came out (the photo that is) is anybody's guess – bodies of the AK variety being the operative word on the photo no doubt.



Tour mascot 'Stelfox' – yes that's where the Under 8s shirt went

As for the rugby, it was a four way tournament between Madrid Lions (a mostly ex pat's team), some French Team, a team we think were from Oxford and a very varied assortment of AK players! AK were up against the Lions first and after a close first half led 12-7, the Lions score coming through their only attack of the game and a break away try after Big Steve dropped the ball and Goosie and Ben Harris got skinned by a very fast Spanish winger. Second half was though all one way with AK running out comfortable winners 39 – 7, which would have been a lot more if Bish had not insisted on taking and missing most of the conversions.

In the other game Oxford just beat the French Team setting up a final against AK. The third place game went on first (haven't a clue who won) and whilst this game took place the Oxford team who seemed totally sober took the opportunity of a serious warm up at the far end of the ground – honest!!! AK also indulged in a serious warm up, singing with the band that was there and doing their best to get through a second supermarket trolley of beer and wine before the final.

So on to the final, which forever more will be known as the Barrie Thorburn 'How much do you really want this' final, as Barrie gave a team talk beforehand, well assisted by at least 3 bottles of Rioja personally consumed up to that point. The game kicked off and Oxford spent the first few minutes with hands permanently in the rucks and laying on the wrong side. With the ref well out of his depth the AK forwards decided to take matters into their own hands with some good old fashioned shoeing, which the Oxford captain took exception to and threatened to take his team off the pitch (Posh, Southern Jessie!!!). The ref tried to gain some semblance of control, and with the Oxford players now somewhat wary about where they put their bodies AK ran out comfortable 20 – 0 winners with 4 unconverted tries. Nearest conversion attempt hit the flag on the 22!

Highlight of the game (outside of the whinge from the Oxford captain and Geddis' 'hands like feet' impression playing centre) was the appearance of Barrie on the pitch in kit at the start of the second half. Yes after at least 3 bottles of Rioja that day and not having played rugby for about 10 years (some would say much longer!) – the things you do on tour??? The actual highlight was not him actually taking the field but what he did at kick off. AK kicked off and Barrie had to quickly change direction. Unfortunately in doing so he (unsurprisingly) tripped over his own feet and fell flat on his face. He tried to get up thinking no one had noticed only to see a touch line full of supporters falling about laughing! To make matters worse Oxford had knocked on from the kick off but the game had to be held up for a few minutes whilst Trizzo, the AK hooker composed himself. Trizzo had been stood next to Barrie when he fell over and was now literally in hysterics laughing at what had happened. Oh the joys of coarse touring!!!



Competition winners in the new AK kit for next season?

Seem to remember AK were presented with a trophy at Finnegan's Irish Bar (which the Lions use as a clubhouse) that evening and the rest of the tour was just a blur. Well that's my story and I'm sticking to it. Remember 'what goes on tour stays on tour' – well almost!

Junior / Mini Rugby

AK Senior Colts went out of the Cheshire Cup at semi final stage to Lymm and likewise in the League Cup to Rossendale, which was a disappointing end to what had looked like being a good season. The team did though finish second in their league and good to see most of the players take the field for the senior teams this season.

The Junior Colts had a real revival towards the end of the season reaching the League Plate Final, where they played Rochdale in horrendous weather conditions at Sandbach. Both sides lost players to injury and even hypothermia, with AK at least a man short for most of the second half. Despite this AK created most of the chances but in the end had to settle for a 3 all draw. This should have led to a

penalty shoot out from the 22, but due to the conditions both sets of coaches came to the sensible decision of sharing the trophy.

The AK Under 16s finished their season in style with firstly a tour to Gloucester, which they obviously used as a good warm up for their Cheshire Bowl Final appearance, in which they beat Lymm by 50 points to 14.



AK Under 16s with Cheshire Bowl

The AK Under 15s started April by reaching the final of the Wilmslow competition where they lost narrowly to one of Leicestershire top teams Market Harborough, having beaten Wilmslow and Sedgely Park on their way to the final. They then had two big wins whilst on tour against Newport St Josephs and Tewkesbury, before having another big win in a friendly against Liverpool St Helens. This set them up nicely for their Cheshire Plate final against Caldby, which they won by 24pts to 12.



AK Under 15s with Cheshire Plate

The AK Under 14s finished their season with a few friendly games having earlier in the season won the Plate Competition at the Caldby Festival, before bowing out of the Cheshire Plate to Sandbach. Results and numbers of players have greatly improved for this team during the season, so well done to all the players and coaches.



AK Under 14s at the Caldby Festival

The AK Under 13s went out of the Cheshire Cup at the semi final stage to old foes Macclesfield, which was a big disappointment having beaten the same opponents for the first time earlier in the season.

Likewise the AK Under 12s lost their Cheshire Cup semi final to old foes Lymm, but made up for it to some extent by winning the Minehead and Wilmslow Festivals, to add to their earlier season success in the Manchester Festival Plate.

The AK Under 11s and 10s mirrored each other somewhat, in both winning all their pool games to reach the quarter finals of the Cheshire Festival before both losing narrowly. Earlier in the season both teams had been runners up in the Stockport Festival. The Under 10s also reached the semi final of the Minehead Festival whilst away on tour.

The AK Under 9s were semi finalists in the Vale of Lune Festival and reached the quarter finals of the Cheshire Festival

The AK Under 8s finished the season in style winning the Vase Competition at the Cheshire Festival, having earlier in the season won the Vale of Lune Festival Plate and receiving the Fair Play Award at the Manchester Festival

Unfortunately for the AK Under 7s their Cheshire Festival was cancelled due to the weather, but earlier in the season they did reach the semi final of the Vale of Lune Festival. Coach Rob Pattison and his better half Debbie also organised two excellent social dos at AK this season.

So overall then yet another reasonably successful season for all the AK Junior and Mini Teams and hopefully we will see lots of these kids playing on the AK senior sides in years to come.

AK Player of the Year Awards

In true tradition the senior awards were made at Captain's Awards Dinner, after the last senior games of the season. The Awards were made as follows

Jack Sanson Trophy for 1st Team Player of the Season: Jon Bishop

Percy Orpet Trophy for Young Player of the Year: Tony O'Connor

2nd Team Player of the Year: Sam Pitt

2nd Team Most Improved Player: Ben Harris

3rd Team Player of the Year: Paddy O'Driscoll

3rd Team Most Improved Player: Ollie Dutton

Women's Player of the Year: Ruth Abbott

Players Player: Kat Orchard

Most Improved Player: Eeron Cunningham

Neil Purcell Award for Clubman of the Year: Chris 'Diko' Dixon



Women's Team award winners celebrate???



Jim Purcell presents Diko with his award



Bish and some poser??



3rd Team celebrate???



Tony and that poser??

Junior Awards

Another great day at AK last Sunday, well attended by players, parents and coaches, particularly those coaches from certain teams who managed to drink throughout the whole proceedings!!! Well done to Dom Leach as organiser and compere (and forgetting the medals!), and to new President Denis Mallalieu for presenting the awards but not for his jokes!!! Also to Tom Brady from Sale Sharks for putting up with Dom's interview techniques???. Hopefully all the names for awards are correct below



Full house throughout the day



Dom's Q & A with Tom Brady

Team	Player of the Year	Clubman of the Year	Most Improved
Under 7s:	Kieron Booth	Freddie Marston	Aydin Azitepe
Under 8s:	Tom Slade Max Hastins	George Davies Oliver Dunne Yuan Chung	Harrison Davies Joe Tomlinson
Special award for Tagging:			
Under 9s:	Max Marston Sam Cooper Liam Hesketh	Joe Brookes Tyler O'Neil	Morgan Blair Ashley Ross
Under 10s:	Elliott Gourlay	Charlie Marston	Kian Hitchen
Under 11s:	Awards to be made in June		
Under 12s:	Patrick Kearns	Joe Horsfall	Luke Stone
Under 13s:	Adam Cosgrove	Will Rogan	Soloman Neild (Player's Player)
Under 14s:	Jacob Daldry	George Edge	Joe Issa
Under 15s:	Adam Welton	Alexander Fry	Eddie Brady (Player's Player)
Under 16s:	Nicky Cliffe	Tom Evans	Charles Leach
Junior Colts:	Sam Hunter	Brad Robinson	Ged Scrace
Senior Colts:	Harry Jones	Jack Emerson	Lewis Kitchener

RGN Awards

RGN Player of the Year – NOT!!!!

There was a late nomination, actually from much earlier in the season. One that somehow escaped the investigative journalism of RGN, or was the editor just comatose as usual??? A little story of JP waking in hospital after a rather long session, only to find he was wearing just one item of clothing. This just happened to be a pair of girls knickers, which he is still having difficulty explaining. However JP you are saved by Barrie's grand entrance and literal 'fall from grace' on tour as earlier reported in this edition of RGN. It just had to be seen to be believed and certainly deserves the RGN Award for this season. Well done **Barrie Thorburn** – fame at last or is it infamy???



Barrie warming the guys up on tour and his own personal warm up technique!!!

RGN Team of the Year

Now unlike the *Player of the Year – Not* award this is really a very difficult decision, as the award isn't just made on trophies and games won, but a whole heap of other criteria. There is no appeals procedure on this so if you don't agree with RGN choice, that is just tough I'm afraid! Several teams have struggled with lack of numbers this year, but have still managed to put a team out each week to put themselves into contention. Namely both the Senior and Junior Colts Teams who did still have some success on the pitch as recorded earlier, plus the 3rd Team and the Women's Team. The AK Under 14s improved greatly throughout the season and won their first ever trophy. All the other Junior and Mini Teams have had a successful season, winning most of their games, playing attractive rugby and developing the kids with their skills and team ethos, which has been great to see. Several as recorded earlier have also had some trophy successes and representative honours, as detailed later. It is also great to see how several teams (and coaches) this season, have greatly assisted with maintaining bar profits and supporting social dos etc! However taking all the above and some other factors into account RGN has decided to award the RGN Team of the Year to be **AK Under 8s**, as much for this great trophy winning photo below!



Would have suggested the team's coaches have a beer to celebrate but little point as they don't usually need an excuse for a beer and are probably still drinking after last Sunday's Awards Day???

Congratulations in relation to representative honours this season go to

Hopefully AK has got all these correct and not missed anyone out

AK Under 14s: Eliot Connolly and Jacob Daldry for being selected for the Elite Cheshire Squad

AK Under 15s: Jack Conteh and Matt Anderson on being called up to the Sale Sharks Academy EPDG (Elite Player Development Group). Danny Hough and Eddie Brady for being called up to the Cheshire and Lancashire squads respectively

AK Under 16s: Matt Geiger who played for England B North and Dave Jones for Cheshire

AK Junior Colts: Calum Robinson on being selected for the Cheshire Under 18s Development Squad.

AK Senior Colts: Calum Yates and Nathan Bailey for playing for Cheshire Under 20s, with Calum also going on to play for the North of England

Stop Press!

AK is really pleased to announce a new major sponsor for next season, who is Paul Thompson of Ace Training Solutions.



J Davidsons are also understood to be continuing with their support of AK next season and rumour has it (or was it just the booze talking Dom Leach on Sunday!) that both Eamon Dunne of Dunne & Gray and Tony Hughes are also on board sponsorship-wise for next season. More on all of that in the next edition of RGN, but a big thank you to all AK sponsors past and present.

There are a number of other sponsorship options available to local businesses and members, as detailed in the attachment which accompanies this RGN

Future editions of RGN

So trust that you have enjoyed reading this final edition of RGN for season 2011/12. The next edition will be a pre season one probably around late July / early August. Any articles suitable for that edition will be particularly welcome. Please email them to dave.elliott29@ntlworld.com



