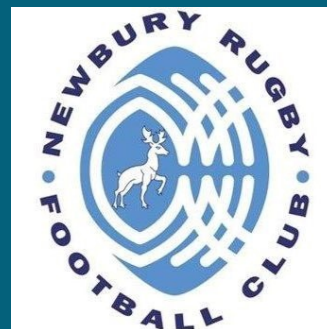


BLUES NEWS

KEEPING IN TOUCH - 6

JULY 2020



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100+ CLUB

Congratulations to the June draw winners:

1st Josh Winfield

2nd Dave Smith

3rd David GH Smith

What are the chances that both David Smiths in the 100 Club would be drawn?!!

To be in the next draw, buy your 100 Club ticket [online](#).

A **BIG 'THANK YOU'** to recent winners who have kindly donated their winnings to the Club's Good Exchange projects.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

If you would like to contribute to the next Blues News, please email content to [David Jones](#)

**NEWBURY
RUGBY CLUB**

THE CLUB IS NOW OPEN....

but following strict Covid-19 restrictions. See [pg2](#) for the plan for the next few weeks. It may seem cautious but we are feeling our way. The Club needs your support so we look forward to seeing you.

As we close on Month 5 of lockdown we should now be looking forward to the 20/21 season just one month away!! The RFU's six step 'Return to Rugby' still see us at Step B, so unfortunately a September start is unlikely, but hopefully we will move on in the next few weeks. The good news is the club is re-opening the Kickers bar from the beginning of August on selective dates for pre-booked gatherings, subject to the restrictions imposed on us. The senior players will trial the bar opening this weekend. Pre-booked tables of 6 in the Kickers Bar and outside will become the new normal. We hope this will be the beginning of renewed activities and a welcome back to meet up with old friends and the Blues family at the club!!

This will be followed with something similar on the 15th August for the Mini & Junior coaches and parents and will be repeated if successful later in the month. We also want to get the youngsters back as soon as we can.

A golf day to raise money for a specific project for the club has been arranged for the 21st August and we are planning an all day Sponsored Team Relay Fun run/walk on the 12th September to raise money and get the season underway. More to follow on this!!

The Club's financial year officially closed in June and the figures were read out by Club Treasurer, Adam Prickett at our first ever Zoom AGM. This time last year the club's operating loss pre-depreciation amounted to an unsustainable £135,000 despite the last land sale. We were facing a disastrous situation in 3 to 4 years' time. Despite Covid, which prematurely ended the season in March, with some fantastic financial and club management we have reduced this position by over £100,000 to end with a loss of approximately £28,000 pre-depreciation. An amazing effort and on behalf of all club members I would like to thank those on the management board especially, but also all volunteers for their support and efforts. The financial team (Rob, Adam and Steve) now have the challenge of putting together this year's budget. It will require a number of assumptions at this stage but one clear message is that without your support of activities as and when we can do them, income generation will be very hard. Please support your club and let us build on last year's incredible efforts and not waste them. We are not out of the woods yet!

Thank you to the new volunteers who have emerged during this shut down period; fresh input is always welcome and in particular, it would be good to hear more from the mini and junior sections.

Hopefully we will see you at the club (or the golf course on 21st August) very soon. Any form of rugby would be good but in the meantime I hope you will get behind the family sponsorship day which we hope will mark the beginning of the season and all activities which will help support YOUR club.

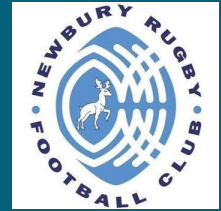
Stay safe and keep those around you well.

David Jones - President
dwsjones@hotmail.co.uk

KEEP IN TOUCH, KEEP FIT AND KEEP SAFE!

BLUES NEWS - KEEPING IN TOUCH

WHAT'S ON / SUPPORTING THE CLUB



THE CLUB IS OPEN

Sat 1st August

* **Players' Reunion - Senior Men and Senior Women, 3pm to 7pm**

This is a trial event, using the Kickers Bar and outside area. Seating only - tables of up to 6 must be booked in advance.

Sat 15th August

* **Mini & Junior Coaches, Managers and parents Reunion, 3pm to 7pm**

This event will again use the Kickers Bar and outside area. Seating only - tables of up to 6 must be booked in advance. This event will include an update from the committee on timescales for returning to rugby and progress made.

* These events will be repeated later in the month if successful.

Fri 21st August

Newbury RFC Golf Day at Donnington Valley

All funds raised will go towards our Good Exchange Project to refurbish/repair the Clubhouse Balcony and Fire Exit. Cost will be £50 per person, to include food before and after; there will be prizes, plus on course beer buggy. Teams of 4 people, or individuals can join up. Maximum of 40 people so book early to avoid disappointment. To book, please email [David Jones](#) or [Dan Thorne](#). This event was hugely successful last year so we hope it will be well supported again this year.

Sat 12th Sept

Whole Club sponsored Opening Day/Fun Run/Walk (Covid restrictions permitting)

To raise funds for the club and get all sections of the club together.

It is likely this will have to be an all day relay event for each age group and section throughout the club. Hopefully we might be able to have some form of rugby to watch in the afternoon but more details will follow, subject to RFU Guidance.



Our senior teams have just heard they will be testing Kickers bar on Saturday 1st August ...

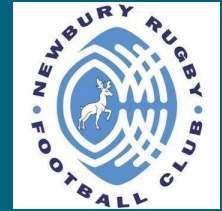
... their smiles say they like the idea.



KEEP IN TOUCH, KEEP FIT AND KEEP SAFE!

BLUES NEWS - KEEPING IN TOUCH

NEWBURY RFC GOLF DAY



NEWBURY RFC GOLF DAY **AUGUST 21st 2020**

To raise funds for Newbury RFC and have a fun day out, we are organising a Golf Day at Donnington Valley Golf Club. All funds this year will go towards our latest [Good Exchange project to upgrade the outside Balcony to meet HSE standards.](#)

Can you raise a team of 4 to join in, have a fun day and raise some money for your Club? Individuals obviously also welcome.

The day includes:

At £50 a head, bacon buttie and coffee before, 18 holes and sandwiches after the round (drinks not included), plus raffle and on-course competitions.

Great raffle prizes, including:

A lesson voucher with local Golf Professional Tim Butler.

A range ball voucher at the Newbury Race Course. The Range @ the Race Course (<https://www.timbutlergolf.co.uk/>)

Donations of £10 (on a Par 3) and if you hit the green – a 30 minute lesson with Tim Butler.

2 tickets for the Watermill Theatre (when fully open).

2 Tickets for an International at Twickenham (when fully open)

Sponsor a team:

Can't play / don't play..... so sponsor a team for £20. Half the money raised will go to the Club, the other half will be paid out to the top 3 winning team sponsors.

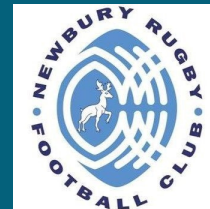
Even if you don't play or sponsor a team, you can enter the raffle. Tell us how much you are willing to spend, transfer the money and we will enter you into the raffle.

Contact [David Jones](#) or [Dan Thorne](#) for more info or to enter.

KEEP IN TOUCH, KEEP FIT AND KEEP SAFE!

BLUES NEWS - KEEPING IN TOUCH

PERSONAL PROFILES FROM ACROSS OUR BLUES FAMILY



SENIOR MEN



NEIL OWEN

Playing history: Chichester University and NRFC; position - outside centre
Favourite song: El by Nelly
Most admired person to invite for dinner: Michael Jordan or Michael Bisping
Most surprising fact about yourself: Talent scouted for England Men's Netball when playing in a charity netball game
Favourite rugby moment at NRFC: Winning the Vet's Cup a few years ago
Additional info: I didn't have opportunity to play rugby at school as they didn't do it so I played football and basketball, playing National League U 19 basketball for Coventry Crusaders whilst at school. I first played rugby when I went to university then went back to playing basketball when I left and didn't take up playing rugby again until my 30's when I started playing at NRFC

SENIOR WOMEN



ZEA DANIELS

Playing history: I began learning how to play Age 34. I've now Played two Seasons of Social Rugby to date, & am about to start my third.
Favourite song: Man in the Mirror - Michael Jackson
Most admired person to invite to dinner: My Grannie June
Most surprising fact about yourself: I'm diagnosed with High Functioning Autism. This means I can present well but have real difficulty with various things such processing information, processing a variety of sounds at the same time, reading facial expressions & interacting socially, amongst others .
Favourite rugby moment at NRFC: Walking back up the slope to training after lockdown and seeing the whole team were there, all as eager as each other to get back on the pitch & back together.

CLUB OFFICIAL



ESTELLE
DESSIAUME

Playing history: I've never played contact rugby as I had severe back problems as a child and it wouldn't resist it! However, I've been playing touch for about 10 years, most of them at the Club. I enjoy the fitness and social side of it.
Favourite song: Bohemian Rhapsody by Queen
Most admired person to invite for dinner: Greta Thunberg for managing to engage and mobilise in a few years an entire generation about the planet and how we need to protect it when scientists and politicians failed for decades.
Favourite rugby moment at NRFC: In 2015, my eldest son's team, U11s, won the Landrover Cup and got to attend the Premiership finale at Twickenham. All the winners were invited to do a lap of honour prior to the game, in front of a full stadium. Fantastic memory!
Additional info: Our family revolves around Rugby with my husband also playing touch and my 3 sons having played at Newbury since they were 5 years old. Between touch, first team games, 2 boys in Junior age groups and my eldest in Colts this year, I will continue to live at the club on Saturdays and Sundays.

SUPPORTER

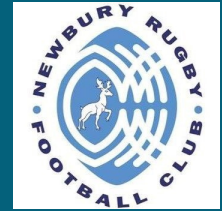


PETER BRANCH

Playing history: Played rugby at school and for my town; in the Army I also played rugby, boxed, competed in unarmed combat and ran marathons.
Favourite song: The whole of the moon by The Waterboys.
Most admired person to invite for dinner: Sir Ernest Shackleton
Most surprising fact about yourself: I was a Gotham City Policeman in the Batman film Dark Knight, where I chased Batman with my dog. I was also involved in filming in a sci fi film at Greenham Common Airbase patrolling the area with my dogs, looking very serious. The Director complimented me on my method acting!
Favourite rugby moment at NRFC: Watching my son Harry Waye-Branch start his first game for the Blues 1st team.
Additional info: AKA 'The Dog Man'; Proud dad to see my son play for such a great club as Newbury.
Peter has been a loyal and very generous supporter of the club and quietly has contributed a lot over the years, without seeking recognition. He is the stags most regular supporter and their unofficial photographer. A great clubman.

BLUES NEWS - KEEPING IN TOUCH

SENIOR BLUES RETURN TO RUGBY



Update on Training

After the first week's trials to suit the RFU Covid rugby road map, we are now able to run some great varied sessions for the players in their small groups. Feedback from the players has been good, which is a great positive. It's great to see Arch and Neil coming up with sessions that are rugby related, keep a competitive edge to training and which keeps the players on their toes. The Harwood brothers have also given some good input and help, ably supported by Martin Paice who runs the fitness sessions. Not sure if the boys enjoy this as much as the game orientated parts but they give it their all.



A couple of weeks ago Arch and Neil sorted an orienteering session so they set off in their small groups to get to the control posts and send back pictures etc to Arch so he could score the teams - it was a great session enjoyed by all.

We have been blessed with a great turn out from the players with a head count of 40 plus on most sessions, a testament of enjoyable sessions and great loyalty from the players. Great to see a lot of our ex colts joining in and great to see several new players coming to the Blues training sessions.

With the latest relaxation of what can be opened and carried out by sports clubs, pubs, businesses etc from the government, we will hopefully soon move to the next phase of the return to rugby roadmap which will allow us to

train with larger groups and lessen the social distancing rule as well as allowing limited F2F and limited contact, this will allow small sided touch games and give the coaches scope to set the sessions closer to normal training. Looking forward to the next step closer to normality

NEWBURY BLUES MANAGEMENT TEAM

SIMPLE WAYS TO SUPPORT YOUR CLUB

[PAY YOUR CLUB MEMBERSHIP](#)

[SPONSORSHIP](#)
Contact Richard Deal

[CLUB EVENTS](#)
Details posted on Pitchero

[LATEST GOOD EXCHANGE PROJECT](#)

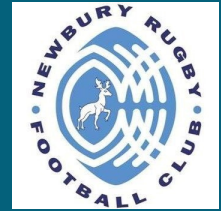
[NRF C GOLF DAY](#)
21ST AUGUST 2020

[100+ CLUB](#)

KEEP IN TOUCH, KEEP FIT AND KEEP SAFE!

BLUES NEWS - KEEPING IN TOUCH

HEROES AND VOLUNTEERS / SPONSORSHIP



NEWBURY RFC SPONSORS, SUPPORTERS & MEMBERS 'MUCK IN' TO SUPPORT THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Take a look at the latest [West Berkshire Council Covid-19 News](#) which includes an update on the Newbury RFC volunteers who have been working in conjunction with the Council and Spotlight UK using NRFC as a food distribution centre. The update includes a [YouTube clip](#), with Steve Jones and Jon Nelsey outlining the work of the volunteers and Spotlight. Jon Nelsey has managed the volunteer teams and distribution for the vulnerable and disadvantaged in West Berkshire, on behalf of Spotlight UK, the Council and the Newbury Volunteer Centre. This has been running throughout July and will continue through August on a reduced scale. **Big thanks to the Newbury RFC volunteer team - Jon Nelsey, David Jones, Ian Davies, Bridget Humphries, Colin Farrant, Tony Lloyd, Jo Lund, Ian Langley and Chris Moxham.**

Jon said 'It really has been fulfilling for all the volunteers at Newbury Blues to be able to help with the food hub. We are all aware, as a group and a club, of the difficulties that Covid has created and proud to have been able to help in our own small way. Thanks to all!'



SUPPORTING BUSINESSES POST LOCKDOWN

If you are a Club member and would like to promote your job, do please let us know. Coming out of lockdown will be tough and for many of us it will mean relaunching our business and working life, particularly for those recently self-employed who have not had the benefit of furloughing. If you provide us with your contact details and what you do, we will include in the next newsletter - [email David Jones](#).

Spotlight UK

work to increase confidence, self esteem, social interaction and mental wellbeing as well as provide a safe and fun environment for young people to have fun.

Over the last 11 years they have put on over 100 musicals and shows and for the last three years have taken over 185 per year to perform on a West End stage. It is about giving children the chance to engage with the arts at very low cost and have fun, make new friends and build in confidence and self esteem.

Spotlight's aim is to raise a further £24000 per year to pay for 2 x full time youth workers who will provide youth activities across West Berkshire 5 days a week and also provide 1-2-1 mentoring for young people in schools. They will also deliver courses on supporting young people who have experienced trauma including abuse, loss and separation and mental health issues. They will also look into work experience opportunities using the BNI networks through Julian Lewis and Linda Gale.

If anyone in our rugby community would be interested in getting involved, do get in touch with Spotlight.

SPONSORSHIP

Richard Deal has been busy generating new sponsorship for this coming season - not an easy task in the current circumstances, but he's doing a sterling job.

Thank you to all those sponsors who have already signed up and this week a 'thank you' to Russell Kennerley of CSS and Dangerous Dave Shields for their kind offers to continue to help financially.

Anyone wishing to sponsor or support the club, however small (or BIG), please contact [Richard Deal](#).

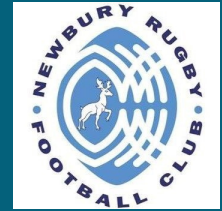
Please note that support of certain community club projects will be match-funded by Greenham Common Trust. Because of the Covid Virus, we have never needed sponsorship so much and will never be more grateful!

Thank you!

KEEP IN TOUCH, KEEP FIT AND KEEP SAFE!

BLUES NEWS - KEEPING IN TOUCH

SUPPORTING THE CLUB - GOOD EXCHANGE PROJECTS



GOOD EXCHANGE MATCH-FUNDING PROJECTS FOR THE NEW FINANCIAL YEAR

Back in May, in Newsletter 4, we outlined how the club has been using the Good Exchange match-funding scheme for community-benefit projects on the building and grounds. Each year the Good Exchange will match fund approved projects to a £10k maximum, with individual projects capped at £5k.

Our 25+ year-old building is the envy of many other Rugby clubs but requires increased maintenance & investment. For FYE 20/21, we now have a detailed & costed plan of Exterior/Interior maintenance works, along with new capital expenditure proposals, some of which are Covid-related. From this we have identified items that may be suitable for match-funding:

<i>Description</i>	<i>Benefit / Aim</i>	<i>Cost (ex VAT)</i>
Further LED lighting up-grading around the building and relevant Motion Sensors	Significant savings in utility costs and improved efficiency	£4,500
Repair / refurbishment of the Balcony	A must do as this is the main fire exit from the first floor	£8,500
Improved car park signage & CCTV	Safety and security	£2,500
Maintenance works to Top Pitches	To provide good pitch facilities for M&Js and for Senior Mens, Womens and Colts training	£4,500

The above alone cost c.£20k – and, provided the projects are approved for match-funding if we can raise 50% of the cost, they will provide the remaining 50%. **A £10k saving would be a significant and material sum for the club in the financial year ahead.**

Other major projects being considered include the replacement of the passenger lift, up-grading floodlights on the top pitches to LED and the eventual replacement of the boilers. While too big for the normal match-funding some of these may be suitable for other grant schemes which are being explored.

Fundraising is therefore key to achieving the above and current restrictions around events don't help. It will require yet again contributions across the Club – from members and supporters/companies/charitable foundations. Any suggestions on grant providers or ideas for Covid-compliant fund-raising activities would also be very welcome.

If you would like to make a donation, you can do so by one of two methods:

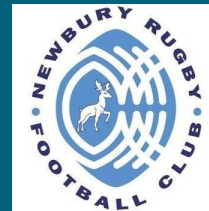
- via Newbury RFC (and we will direct these onto a suitable Good Exchange listed project unless specifically requested otherwise); or
- via the following link: <https://thegoodexchange.com>, where you can make a donation to your preferred project.

ROB HARRIS
24/7/20

KEEP IN TOUCH, KEEP FIT AND KEEP SAFE!

BLUES NEWS - KEEPING IN TOUCH

RETURN TO RUGBY 2020-2021/continued



LATEST FROM THE LADIES

What we've been up to:

We're back training on Tues & Thurs in small groups, which includes a lot of fitness; we're going to be the fittest in our league, whenever we can play. We're mixing things up with weekly themes, and mini competitions.

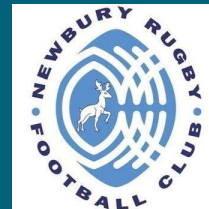
Something we'd like to shout about:

Vanessa Kadziya, who we've been very happy to have back with us from the University of Birmingham for pre-season, has created a clothing line called Viljoen. Their aim is to open up conversations about racial injustice through fashion. The thought provoking designs include educational messages, so that people can feel empowered to talk about racial politics. #BlackLivesMatter Their website is viljoenclothing.com and Vanessa is happy to bring purchases along to training sessions or deliver.



BLUES NEWS - KEEPING IN TOUCH

HELP IN THE COMMUNITY / SUPPORTING OUR MEMBERS



Free Career Consultation with Suzanna Adams of Varnium.

Let's make some positive career decisions, YES even in lockdown!!!

Looking for career opportunities? Perhaps you have just left School, College or University or maybe you are already working but you feel there could be something more inspiring and challenging out there for you?

Why not contact Suzanna Adams of Varnium for a conversation on where your future could take you.

Suzanna Adams - Recruitment Consultant
Tel: 07392 842606 www.varnium.com




VARNIUM

Strategic Consulting & Resourcing Specialists

Geoff Fisher is providing fruit and vegetable boxes for collection from their Hambridge Lane depot. Order online on the Fishers of Newbury website. Geoff has also been making weekly fruit and veg donations to NHS staff at Newbury Hospital.

Brian Lee is offering free A Level Economics tuition during the summer holidays to students who have just finished their Year 12 studies and who might recently have had to largely self-teach some aspects of the syllabus. Tutorials can be via telephone, Face Time or Zoom. Child safeguarding procedures mean initial contact must only be made by parents/guardians.
Email: brianchapel@hotmail.com; Tel: 07740351507

West Berkshire Council's Community Support Hub is available to help anyone in need. Anyone needing support from the Community Support Hub can email WestBerkshire@public.govdelivery.com.

 jones robinson

INCORPORATING



Martin Walker

We are proud to continue to support the Club and look forward to being able to enjoy our favourite sport soon!



MAC Tools of Basingstoke wishes all members of Newbury Rugby Club and their families well during this pandemic. Like our great rugby club, our business activity is almost completely shut down, but we are on hand if we can assist any of you or your businesses with tools from our catalogues. All will be delivered contact free and delivery free.

In the meantime, we very much look forward to supporting Newbury Rugby Club, and all of the teams, when playing resumes. May that day come quickly!



MAC Tools for Basingstoke - 07939155887

NUVIAS | UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS

Boardroom. Kitchen. Box room. Rugby stand.
Wherever you are, we can help with remote working

The recent pandemic has shaken the way businesses are working day-to-day. If there's one thing that we know for certain now, it's that the right communication tools are essential to retain business continuity. Fortunately, Nuvias UC are experts in communication - it's not just in our name, it's in our nature.

If you want to find out more about the software, hardware and services Nuvias UC can offer through our network of approved partners, please get in touch >>

Contact Us:



www.siphonnetworks.com



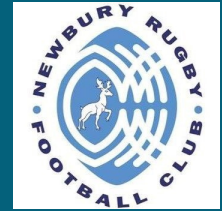
+44(0)1635 225000



uc.sales.uk@nuvias.com

BLUES NEWS - KEEPING IN TOUCH

COACHES' CORNER



ROSS NEWTON

By their very nature second teams can be very exciting or downright disappointing to play for. Young players, A's one week, potential shown and then Stags the following week. Wow. On the other hand Blues one week and for whatever reason, a tactical decision, players returning from injury, Stags the next week. Massive disappointment. This makes managing match days potentially quite difficult and it is testament to Ross Newton he has done this remarkably well, helped by a fantastic attitude from the players, all doing their best, in some cases despite obvious disappointment. Here Ross reflects on season 2019/20.

BRIAN LEE - STAGS MANAGER

The Stags had a very successful season, finishing second in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire 1, winning 13, drawing 1 and losing only 3 games all season. The aim for the season was to better the fifth placed finish of the previous season and after a somewhat rocky start the self belief began to grow, particularly after the draw against perennial league winners Chinnor III, who have proven to be unbeatable in this league for a good number of seasons so second place represents a fantastic effort from all players. In fact that 31 all draw against Chinnor was one of the highlights of the season and as the opposition said at the end of the game that was the hardest game they had played in for a good number of years. Stags had a strong team out that day and each and every one of the eighteen players produced a sterling performance, which they then maintained for the majority of games.

Psychology in sport is everything and in a season of disappointment for the Blues, the Stags players found a great deal of positivity and a number of the players pushed hard for a Blues spot, regularly turning up for training, developing a unity of purpose, all aiming for the same outcome. So often during games the players went through their processes and at times they showed a ruthlessness which one could only admire. Some games saw a number of Blues players selected for the Stags and this proved to be helpful to the team, with some of these established players helping the younger Stags players. There was certainly a great team ethos during the season and the very fact the team is called the Stags rather than the second team has helped develop this ethos and a pride in playing for the team.

In my second year with the team it has been important to get to know the individuals on a personal level and this has helped motivate the different individuals who make up the squad. Encouraging decision making within the group has also been important as has sharing a few beers with them after games. Getting to know them in this way makes it easier for individuals to accept constructive criticism to help improve their game.

A team game, yes, but within the team environment there has been some significant contributions. On the field, Ed Gavin has hopefully shown the way for other Colts to make the transition to senior rugby. As a rugby player Ed has a maturity beyond his years and has produced consistently high quality performances throughout the season. Tom Cole is another who has impressed this season. Tom is only in his second year playing rugby, having made the switch from football two years ago. A natural kicker of the ball he was top points scorer this season. Harry Waye Branch played in all bar one game this season and could have been given man of the match for virtually every game he played. His throwing into the line out is first class as is his attitude towards training. Oscar Astbury, new to the club this season has made an immediate impact. Potent in attack and strong in defence he has the ability to do very well at the club.

Off the field, Josh Passfield has been a great help this season as unofficial water boy. Josh had a nasty injury playing for the Colts a few seasons ago and has been undergoing a long period of rehabilitation. He has religiously turned up for every match and has become an integral part of the team. I hope to see him back playing soon. Pete Branch has been a great supporter of the team, taking many photographs and donating beer for the man of the match as well as writing reports for the newspaper when Manager Brian Lee has been unavailable. Scott Butterworth has also taken innumerable photographs during matches and like Pete many thanks to him. Jazz Latter our medical support has been first class all season and showed her expertise against Beaconsfield early in the season when the team suffered three head injuries.

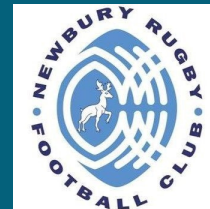
I have enjoyed this season and look forward to seeing his group of players develop even more next season in whatever format that will look like.



ROSS NEWTON

BLUES NEWS - KEEPING IN TOUCH

MINI & JUNIOR SECTION



UPDATE FROM CHRIS SMITH, CHAIR OF NRFC JUNIOR SECTION

Thanks everyone for your input at our meeting last week and based upon this I have pulled together the following schedule for pitch use:

Age Group	Day	Time	Pitches	# of Boys
U13	Wednesday	18.30 – 17.30	2 & 2A	29
	Sunday	09.30 – 10.30	2 & 2A	33
U14	TBA			
U15	Friday	18.30 – 19.30	5	25
	Sunday	10.00 – 11.00	5	25
U16	Wednesday	19.00 – 20.00	5	TBA

We will have to review these timings at the beginning of September to accommodate the minis if they decide to return.

As discussed last week and confirmed by the RFU yesterday, we remain at Phase B on the return to rugby roadmap. This means groups of a maximum of 6 including a coach, social distancing to be maintained, no physical contact and strict cleaning of any equipment used. The way the seniors have achieved this is by having 4 groups of 6 per pitch with a 4 meter path down the centre in both directions. This allows coaches to control multiple groups without being part of the 6.

The other important thing is that you will need to have a register of everyone who is at training and which group they are in. They have to stay in the one group for the whole session but can be in a different group for the next training session.

Also, we need to adhere to the regulations regarding pre-season training, in particular Regulation 15 (specifically Reg 15.8.5) whereby:

15.8.5: "...except that no training, matches and competitions involving contact are permitted save that"

15.8.5 (d): "in the last two weeks immediately prior to the start of the Season pre-season training and training matches are permitted"

Or put more simply there can be no contact training until two weeks prior to the start of the season. As junior rugby will not start until we reach Phase F, that could be months away. We all need to make sure we adhere to this as the RFU is keeping a close eye on what's happening at a community level. Which means we need to be innovative in how we deliver and manage our pre-season training. At this stage in most of the boys' rugby careers it's about having some fun with their mates. So, can I encourage you and your coaches not to focus on fitness training, but on fun activities that keep everyone engaged. There's a great deal we can share with each other and learn from other sports that have returned to action.

And finally, we must adhere strictly to the Covid-19 protocols that have been developed by the club. I have circulated a number of documents that should inform and help you and your coaches run your sessions in a Covid prevention compliant manner. Any questions please come back to me.

JUNIOR JOKES

Is it true that an apple a day keeps the doctor away, or is it one of Granny's myths?!

If it wasn't for Venetian Blinds it would be curtains for all of us.

A man walks into a zoo and the only animal was a dog. It was a Shitzu!

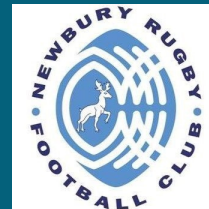
What do you call farm animals with a sense of humour? Laughing stock.

My friend has shut herself away in her house but keeps swinging from side to side. She is self-oscillating.

Why do cows have hooves instead of feet? Because they lactose!

BLUES NEWS - KEEPING IN TOUCH

THROUGH THE EYES OF THE PLAYERS



Through the Eyes of the Players - Neil Hunter (Coach, Senior Men)

Ben Mercer. Heard of him? Me neither until he published his book *Fringes—Life on the Edge of Professional Rugby*. Selling more copies than Warren Gatland's book by all accounts. He is destined to become more well known for his writing than anything he did on a rugby field playing for Plymouth Albion, Cornish Pirates or Rouen. I've got no financial interest in the book but it is up there as one of the best rugby books I've read and it gave me the idea for this series of articles called, "Through the Eyes of the Players," which will hopefully give a selection of players past and present a chance to reflect on their career to date.

First up is Neil Hunter, one of our senior coaches who started coaching at the club in December 2019. When he came to us, one of his immediate impressions was the number of asterisks in match day programmes, showing how many Blues players had come up through our Junior and Colts sections.

Before coaching Neil had a pretty good playing pedigree, being capped at U16 and U18 for England when he was at Merchant Taylor's school in Liverpool. He also played for his home club Waterloo and Sale Jets U21. Heady days. International schoolboy success led to a contract to play at Gloucester. Being brutally honest Neil says this was a big mistake because he turned down a place to study Economics at Loughborough University, to head to the West Country. He would urge any young player not to make the same mistake as so very few make it to the top in the game and an educational qualification, a successful apprenticeship or some other form of training is very important for life after rugby. As it was, two of the important rugby influences on him were associated with Gloucester at the time, Henry Paul and Paul Turner, so Gloucester it was rather than returning home and resuming his career at Sale. Things didn't really turn out well at Gloucester for Neil. A string of injuries as a result of too much emphasis on weights to bulk up was one of a number of reasons Neil didn't play much at Gloucester. But what an experience. He remembers fondly the passionate support, the high expectations, the calibre of team mates, although being a known face in the city was not that appealing to him as a somewhat reserved 19 year old lad.

For all the highs of playing professionally, Neil feels clubs back then did not do enough to encourage young players to become rounded individuals, to get an education, to support their studies. He recalls an incident at Gloucester where he was called in to speak to the Director of Rugby because he had missed two training sessions due to him considering taking up a place at Gloucester University. He was asked if he wanted to be "a full time student or a full time rugby player". Nothing in between, no compromise, one or the other. A surprisingly very unenlightened attitude and one which is hopefully changing for young professional rugby players.

It was whilst at Gloucester the phone rang one day and John Jeffries, the ex Scotland flanker and then Manager of Scotland U21 asked Neil if he wanted to play for Scotland U21. Neil's family heritage was Scottish and not surprisingly Neil accepted the invitation and played for the Scotland U21 team in the World U21 Championships, playing against people like Bryan Habana.

Neil briefly considered moving to Scotland to play club rugby and in retrospect feels this would have been a better option but by now Neil said he had lost the appetite to chase the rugby dream. He then decided to belatedly follow a degree course, this time in Law and Sports Science and started coaching rugby at Magdalen College School in Oxford. From there to Abingdon School and almost New Zealand but a first child saw him stay in the UK and then to NRFC.

In reflecting on his playing career Neil feels the game became almost too serious, it became a job and it was too easy to dwell on mistakes, mistakes which have to be parked almost immediately in professional sport and then move on. "This is what marks the Dan Carters. Jonny Wilkinsons. Tiger Woods. from the majority of other sports players."

At Blues games you will most likely see Neil behind one of the posts, watching running lines, scrutinising support play of players and making a mental note of player skills to be worked on. And a tip from Neil for young players, go watch the best player you can in your position. See what he or she does, watch as if you are a coach not a fan and keep watching this player rather than the ball.

So, a Liverpool lad who made his way to Newbury via that iconic club side Gloucester. From one great club to another.

Brian Lee