

## **Buckinghamshire RFURS**

### **Chairman's Report AGM 2017 -18**

#### **Bucks RFU**

It has been a good year for Bucks clubs on the field of play. Beaconsfield are top of their league and I think are guaranteed to win. Buckingham are in second place and if they maintain this will go into the playoffs. Slough are top of their league with Chesham in third place to date. Finally, Risborough are top of their league with Oxford hard on their heels. Well done to all these teams.

Congratulations to Amersham, Slough and Risborough for winning their respective County cup competitions.

Also, congratulations go to the U20s this year as they have progressed to the QF of the national cup and are to play Lancashire.

Ro Bates Trophy: Congratulations go to High Wycombe RFC winners of the 2017-8 trophy

#### **RFU**

The society was successful in its bid to become a voting member of the RFU. Internal changes in the administration of the game saw the RFRU become a constituent body in its own right (similar to a county) and become a member of the RFU council. Tim Miller is the RFRU representative and through him we have a voice for the first time at the RFU council. The RFRU has in turn its own council and I will represent our society on this council.

#### **Constitution**

Due to the changes mentioned above the society is changing from a society to a company limited by guarantee. This process is on going but hopefully nearing a conclusion.

#### **Recruitment strategy**

One of the issues concerning the executive is replacing referees that retire or leave the area. To this end we have been running referee courses in the county and have seen a steady number of new referees joining the society. I am pleased to say that junior sections of clubs have asked for courses and I have run courses this year at Aylesbury, High Wycombe, Marlow and Slough. I hope that in the long term some of these courses will yield referees in the future.

One disappointment was that I wrote to all clubs with ladies' sections asking that they provide ladies to become referees but sadly, the initiative did not succeed.

#### **YMO**

Another concern of the executive is the age of our referees. Time waits for no man! In conjunction with Alan Lane we invited rugby playing schools to become involved in a programme of young match officials. Sadly, the response from schools was apathy and so this programme did not get off the ground.

On a brighter note the refereeing adult courses led to two teenage referees joining our society. We will be mentoring these young people and hopefully seeing them progress through the ranks.

### **Advising**

Malcolm will be writing his own thoughts on advising but I wanted to mention two things. Firstly, we need more advisors. The society has a small group who do a sterling job but often Malcolm is struggling if one or two are unavailable. So, if referees do not have a game or are injured I would love to see them volunteer to assist the development of a junior referee.

The RFU are attempting to standardise the advising forms. Bucks are taking part in a trial so that we can give feedback to make sure that these forms are fit for purpose.

### **Support**

Whilst most referees will not need any help regarding how clubs, players or spectators interact with them, I want to make it clear that if any issues do arise I would want to hear about it no matter how small. There have been a few and a mean a few incidents in the last few years and as a society we have made sure that the incident is dealt with effectively which hopefully means there will be no repeat.

### **WTR**

WTR started out as a system for Norfolk referees and it has grown like topsy. It is now used across the RFU and other sports in the UK. Also, it is going international with NZ rugby taking an interest and sports in the USA taking interest. One concern for us is that the service side of WTR keeps pace with its expansion.

### **Mentor role**

I am pleased to say that Rex Da Rocha has taken on this vital role for us. He has put together a protocol that we will follow with all new referees to make sure that their introduction to refereeing and the society is a positive one. With our YMO's joining the society this will be a crucial role to make sure we help in the development of these young people.

### **Notable achievements**

I would like to mention three referees this year. Firstly, Mike Hudson who goes on climbing the match official's ladder and has had some notable appointments especially as an AR in Russia. Secondly, James Dowds who has developed his refereeing through commitment and hard work and is doing well on the Federation. Lastly, Clive Piggott who joined us a while ago and having a few miles under the belt could be considering a quieter life. Paul tells me that Clive is a someone who always turns out for the society week in week out.

### **Kit**

Richard will be giving a full account of the kit debacle but I would like to take this opportunity to apologise for the delays and problems we have had.

### **Junior head blows**

I would remind all referees that when officiating that they are the SOLE arbiter of whether a player is safe to continue playing and that under the Championship there is no Head Injury Assessment protocol. In conjunction with Bucks RFU we have agreed that if any junior receives a blow to the head they will NOT be allowed to continue or return to play in that match.

### **Thanks**

#### **Members and families**

Bucks referees is a society run by volunteers and without them it would not exist. So, thank you to all our members and their families for the support that they give to Bucks rugby

#### **Executive**

To all the exec that you for all the hard yards that you put in year upon year

#### **Bucks RFU**

Bucks Referees exists in the family of Bucks RFU. We enjoy a special relationship with the county that does not exist in all counties and also with Bucks clubs of whom many referees are members.

#### **Sponsors**

Thank you for your continuing support of our society.

#### **Ivan**

Ivan looks after our website and as we have seen he has kept us functioning even when hackers try and muck up our system. Thank you, Ivan.

#### **Phil Bowden**

**Buckinghamshire Referees Society Chairman (May 2018)**