

Minutes for Northumberland Schools Rugby Union AGM – Thursday 14th May 2009 at Percy Park RFC

1. Schools/Clubs represented

Ed Midcalf (Gosforth High), Jonathan Foster (King Edward VI Morpeth), John Hillier-Hall (Whitley Bay High School), Will Clarke (All Saints College), Douglas Hall (Berwick High School and Berwick RFC), Rob Snow (Kings School), Derek Todhunter (Haydon Bridge High School), Adam Pilkington (John Spence Community High School), Phil Taylor (RGS), Alan Rogers (Prudhoe High School), Bill Hudson (Dame Allan's School), Richard Brady (St Cuthberts), Barrie Bulch (RGS), Dave Best (Cramlington High School), Andy Sutherland (Bedlington High School), Dave Massie (Tyne Met College/St Benet Biscop's), Rob Jinks (Wellfield Middle School), Allan Atkinson (Ponteland High School), Simon Mcaree (Bede Academy), Paul Simpson (Coquet High School), Paul Ponton (RGS), Steve Mullins (Queen Elizabeth High School), Roz Lyall (County Under 18s), Max Proud (County Under 16s and Blyth RFC), Carlo Nardini (County Under 18s), Mark Watson (Community Rugby Coach), Andrew Axelby (Duchess High School/Community Rugby Coach), Merwyn Watson (Community Rugby Coach), Will Halford (RFU), Pete Telfer (Community Rugby Coach), Tamara Taylor (Community Rugby Coach), Tom Wilkinson (RFU), Alan Moses (RFU), Sally Hutton (NRU).

2. Apologies for absence

Craig Little (Chantry Middle School), Andrew Cleland, Chris Cook and Ben Segni (Heaton Manor School), Paul Rusby (Richard Coates Middle School), Rob Winter (County Girls Manager), Neil Sewell (County Girls Under 15s Manager), Dave Debbage (Duchess High School), Brian Smith (Valley Gardens Middle School), Gary Collingwood (Churchill Community College), Ian Dick (Newminster Middle School), Lee Hogarth (Newcastle School for Boys), Kevin Rhodes (Blyth Community College), Ryan Gumley (Lindesfarne Middle School), Dave Peffer (St Cuthberts), Steven Anderson (St Thomas More High School).

3. Minutes of the 2008 AGM

Max Proud proposed that the minutes of the 2008 AGM are an accurate record. Bill Hudson seconded and the minutes were agreed as a true record.

4. Matters arising not on the agenda from the 2008 AGM minutes

There were no matters arising.

5. Report – Chairman/Secretary

Steve thanked everyone for their support and help which led to another successful season.

1. Front row play: last year the issue of the need to improve front row play was raised. Steve said he has witnessed some good scrummaging this season, which has been assisted greatly by the sessions run by Mark Watson (Crusher).

2. Issue of discipline: due to the zero tolerance policy the behaviour on the pitch has improved. Steve thanked coaches for their continued efforts and support to ensure that the game maintains its high expectations.

3. Dave Peffer – Steve said that Dave Peffer has decided for personal reasons to stand down as Northumberland Rugby Football Schools' Union Representative after 20 years. Steve thanked him for his commitment. (A copy of Steve's report is attached)

6. Young Officials Award – Will Halford, Referee Development Officer

Will Halford said that following on from the success of the ELRA course, there is a new Award – Young Officials Award. This is targeted at 14-19 year olds in full time education. They attend a one day course, then record 10 hours as a touch judge or referee, and will receive a qualification. Will mentioned that this could be available for teachers to deliver not just RFU staff. Will gave out some forms and handouts, but if anyone requires further information contact him direct willhalford@rfu.com or 07894 790340

7. Development at Competitions – Tom Wilkinson, Club & Coach Development Officer

Tom said that at Under 18s a number of schools want to play rugby but the right levels were not being offered. So next season there will be a competition between North, Coast and City (West will be invited into the City). The clubs will host these competitions to encourage school players to join clubs. Tom suggested Wednesday evenings to play these matches which was agreed by those in the meeting as the best time.

Tom also mentioned that a lot of people were recruited to the Player Pathway initiative last year which helps with player retention in the game. Tom said If anyone else would like to sign up, contact him direct tomwilkinson@rfu.com or 07894 489096.

8. Rugby Development – Alan Moses, Rugby Development Officer

Alan Moses said the Northumberland Coaching Conference this year would be delivered by Brian Ashton on Transition Rugby. It will take place on Sunday 28th June from 10.30 to 3.30, £25 per coach. Information and booking form are on the NRU website.

9. Representative rugby

a) 17 & 18 Groups – Roz Lyall/Carlo Nardini, County Under 18 Manager
Roz gave a summary of Under 17/18 08-09 season (copy of report attached)

b) 16 group – Max Proud, County Under 16 Manager
Max gave a report on the Under 16 season 08-09 (copy attached)

c) 15 group – Kevin Dale, County U15 Group Manager
Kevin Dale not at the meeting, so Steve Mullins gave a summary of the U15s 08-09 season (copy of report attached)

d) Girls Under 15 and Under 18 (copy of both reports attached)
Steve Mullins reported that the RFU are cutting budgets by 25%, and NRU are cutting their budgets by 20%.

10. ERFSU – Dave Peffer – Rugby Football Schools' Union Representative

Steve mentioned earlier that Dave Peffer is standing down. A gift will be given to him on everyone's behalf to thank him for his many years of hard work. Steve asked if everyone would consider volunteering to take over from Dave as the RFSU Representative.

11. The scrum – Prop Development

Mark Watson (Crusher) said he held scrum sessions in clubs in Northumberland last season, using a variety of coaching techniques including using tackle shields and developing body positions. In September he would like to coach scrummaging in schools. He would like to do a total scrum development session which includes scrum safety, available to boys and girls at all levels and ages. All schools participating would be given a booklet and DVD and would be expected to commit to this training and continue working on the initiative. There is no charge

for the sessions, but each participating school must buy some kit, such as 2-3 Swiss balls at approximately £3.99 each. Mark said that schools could start booking him now for September. Steve Mullins thanked Mark and said it was a very well supported initiative in Northumberland, stressing that every shape and size of player should be given the opportunity to play rugby.

12. Conduct of Players – Teacher/coach responsibilities

Steve said this was covered in his report (see 5.)

13. Election of Officers

Steve Mullins offered to continue as Chairman, but would like to stand down at some time in the future.

Terry O'Neill has agreed to continue as Treasurer.

The following agreed to continue as Managers for their age groups:

U18 Roz Lyall and Carlo Nardini

U16 Max Proud

U15 Kevin Dale

Everyone in the room agreed that these people could continue in their existing posts.

14. School of Rugby/County/Area nominations for 2009/10 season

The School of Rugby/County/Area Assessment Sessions will all take place at Druid Park from 5.30 to 8 pm:

U13s/U14s Monday 8th June, 20th July, 10th August

U15s/U16s Monday 15th June, 27th July, 17th August

Letters will be sent to all school and club coaches shortly asking for nominations to be returned by 27th May. Letters will then be sent to all nominated players, together with an information sheet 'What is Northumberland School of Rugby?' which will also be available to read on the NRU website.

Alan Moses said that this year the assessment sessions will be held in the evenings which should be more convenient for coaches. Alan is very keen to get more teachers and club coaches involved in the coaching – level 2 minimum is required, there is no payment but travel expenses can be claimed. The County is looking for County Coaches, Managers and other volunteers to help with the County programme. Please get in touch with Alan if you are interested alanmoses@rfu.com or 07764 960388

15. Schools competitions, organisers, dates and cup finals package proposal

Steve Mullins said that, subject to budget cuts, he would like schools cup finals to be given the same package as club cup finals. Steve asked those at the meeting if they would like light refreshments to be served after cup finals, and it was agreed this would be a good idea. It was requested that a representative from the County is at each final to present the cup.

U18 Cup competition – RGS won. Andy Chuter organised but is standing down. Rob Snow offered to organise this next year.

U16 Cup competition – Haydon Bridge beat Whitley Bay. Alan Rogers organised and is happy to continue for another year.

U15 Cup competition – Duchess beat St Cuthberts. Allan Atkinson organised and is happy to continue next season

U14 Cup competition – King Edward VI beat Duchses High School. Paul Wardle organised and will continue.

U13 Cup competition – RGS beat Kings Tynemouth. Dave Massie organised but will not continue next season. A volunteer is needed to run this next season.

There was a lot of discussion about the way the Schools Cup Competitions are run. Teachers said there were frustrations with people not sticking to deadlines, not returning calls/emails to arrange fixtures, and of course problems with the weather. Steve said that even though some finals were played at Druid Park there are cost implications as the 4G pitch costs about £70 per hour to hire. The idea of a league was suggested instead of a cup but the general view of the meeting is that schools like to play the cup competitions, so it was decided to keep the County Cup in every age group. It was suggested that next year dates are set for each round to try to keep the competition on track. It was suggested that progress in the Cup should be put on the website and updated regularly. Some teachers felt that set dates were difficult for some schools, but Steve Mullins explained that finals have to fit into the structured season. Concern was expressed that some teachers may tick a boxes on the competition sheet in May entering their school for a particular age group competition, and in September realise they do not have enough players in that age group to put out a team. Alan Moses explained that there are limited resources in the County Office as Sally is only in the office 18 hours per week. However Sally did offer to email all schools 2-3 weeks into the September term reminding them of which competitions they had entered, and if they do not respond confirming their entry they will be removed from that age group competition. Hopefully this will stop the delay during the first rounds of the competitions, leading to the semi-finals and finals being played on time.

16. Emerging Schools' Leagues

Trophies were presented to the winners of the different age groups in the Emerging Schools Leagues 2008-09:

Under 18s Whitley Bay High School
Under 16s Haydon Bridge High School
Under 15s Duchess High School
Under 14s Haydon Bridge High School
Under 13s (no results submitted)

Alan Moses said that even though a number of schools entered the Emerging Schools' Leagues in September, several didn't either play matches or didn't send the results to Sally in the County Office. At Under 13 six schools entered the league but no results were sent to Sally, and at Under 14 18 schools entered, but less than half submitted results. Sally sends out weekly updates of the results by email to the relevant schools. Alan said that if schools are not interested in participating then the County Office will stop organising it. But the views from the teachers at the meeting were that it was worth continuing with. Alan reminded everyone that independent schools can enter their 2nd teams, and state schools can enter two teams if they have enough players. It was suggested that fixtures could be set for certain dates, or schools given a week to play a fixture.

17. Affiliation Fee

Steve Mullins said that there is pressure from the Northumberland Rugby Union to increase the Affiliation Fee paid by schools to NRU. The cost of affiliation is £20 (which includes free RFU insurance) but currently this is subsidised, so High Schools pay only £10 and Middle Schools pay £6. Steve proposed that next season there is an increase of 50% - ie High Schools will pay £15 and Middle Schools pay £12. It was agreed at the meeting that this increase would be implemented in May 2010 for the 2010-2011 season.

18. Any Other Business

i) Schools County Sevens competition

Results:	Under 18	RGS
	Under 16	RGS
	Under 15	RGS
	Under 14	King Edward VI
	Under 13	Dame Allan's School

Steve Mullins thanked Rob Snow and Andy Chuter for organising the Under 18s and Under 13s to U15s competitions, and Barry Bulch for organising the Under 16s competition. Next season the Under 16s County Sevens Competition will be held on Wednesday 16th September (2pm start), and the other age groups will be held on Wednesday 24th March.

ii) U14 State Schools Festival

Steve Mullins reported that this was a very successful event held at Tynedale RFC on Tuesday 10th March 2009. Eight teams from the Northern Counties took part, with King Edward VI Morpeth representing Northumberland (recommended by the CRCs). Steve thanked the CRCs in helping to organise this event, and Northumberland would be offering to hold the event at Tynedale again in March 2010.

iii) Under 18s Girls Competition

Steve reported that Hexham won this. Next year four events are planned.

iv) Floodlights

Steve said that the Rugby Development Partnership (Community) are keen to get more rugby played and are looking at encouraging clubs to provide facilities, such as floodlights, to schools free of charge. He said that discussions were on going.

The meeting concluded at 7.35 pm

The following are available to view on Northumberland Rugby Union website:

<http://clubs.rfu.com/Clubs/portals/NorthumberlandRugbyUnionCB/Default.aspx>

1. Chairman's Report 2008-09
2. U17s/U18s report 2008-09
3. U16s report 2008-09
4. U15s report 2008-09
5. Girls U18s report 2008-09
6. Girls U15s report 2008-09
7. Merit Table regulations
8. Pathfinders Role Description