

Fives Newsletter 2010

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The Fives Federation



The Fives Federation is now halfway

through its first decade, and the spirit of cooperation between the associations is really beginning to bear fruit. We are delighted, for instance, that the three associations' websites are to be integrated into one, in line with this Newsletter and the Annual Review; the new courts initiative started by Nigel Cox, too, is of huge importance in growing our game.

Of course, certain issues are unique to each version of our game, but both these projects above show the benefits of working together. Indeed, the exchange of ideas at Federation meetings is a wonder to behold; and it will undoubtedly bring huge benefits in how the game is run, where it is played, and by how many people.

Above all, such passion is not confined to a small group of people. Across the country – across the world, even – we see more and more players try their hand(s) at other versions of Fives – always with a smile on their face, and then taking new shots, new techniques and new friendships back to their original game. To our minds, that proves that there is no real divide between our codes. We can all learn much from each other's games that will go on to be of enormous benefit to our own. That is the spirit that underlies the Federation – and why we have much to look forward to in the next five years.

Richard Barber, Chairman EFA
Frank Akerman, President RFA

Rugby Fives returns to its spiritual home

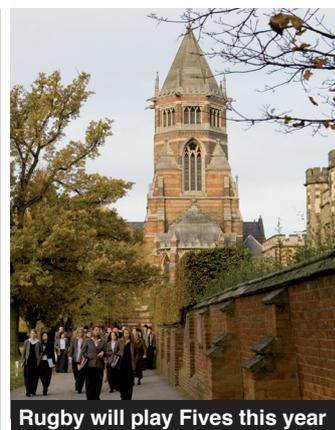
Work has already begun on Britain's newest set of courts – at the school that gave the sport its name

We're just a matter of months away from Rugby Fives making a return to Rugby School.

After announcing in October last year that it would build two brand new Fives courts, in December Rugby School began the construction work, which is expected to take some 36 weeks to complete. After the long drying-out process for the structure, the first games on the new courts should be played in September this year.

The courts themselves will be the first new courts to be built in the UK since the four were put up at Oundle School in 2007, and marks the first time Rugby has had courts for many years.

Crucially, they are to be at the very heart of sporting life in the school, in the sports centre, with a viewing gallery and next to the squash courts. The school has already nominated Trevor White to be Master-in-Charge of Fives, and the sport will be an option for pupils from September.



Rugby will play Fives this year

Before then, there will be an opening ceremony, although the date for that is yet to be confirmed, and both the RFA and Jesters plan to take teams to the school next season.

The news marks the end of a successful appeal to raise £200,000, which has been contributed to by many Fives players, as well as by the RFA and the RFA Charitable Trust.

One major turning point – when the appeal seemed to

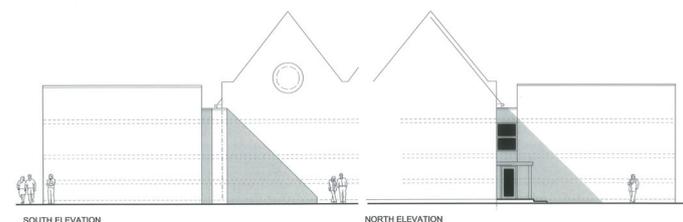
have stalled three-quarters of the way to its target – was the offer from OR John Harland to match any new donations, along with another major donation from an OR in Hong Kong.

The school paid particular tribute to Old Rugbeian – and now RFA Deputy President – Dick Warner, whose efforts in the 2008 Crick Run at the school raised more than £10,000 alone. John Evans, a former housemaster at the school and one of the leading lights of the fund-raising campaign, also paid tribute to Kerry Wilson, the school's Development Director, as well as to the many people whose gifts had enabled the target to be reached.

"We are all thrilled to think that our game will be played again, and this time by girls as well as boys! For those of you who still have children or grandchildren at the School (as I do), this is a tonic, but for all who have been so amazingly generous it is a just reward and inspiration.

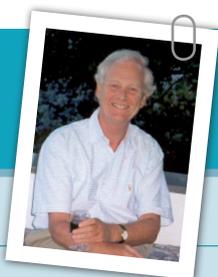
"Over 300 Old Rugbeians, parents and Fives players (and not just the Rugby version) have banded together in a wonderful spirit of bonhomie to bring us to our target. Court games, clubs and organisations have joined in and the final hurdle has been cleared with a magnificent donation by the Rugby Fives Association Charitable Trust.

"This has been a triumph of generosity, cooperation and camaraderie over the demons of doubt and pessimism. Thank you so much and here's to next September!"



Game on: work on the planned courts (above) began in December

Eton Fives Association Chairman's Report



PEOPLE

The EFA's season began with a farewell to Hon. Sec. Mike Fenn (see page 4), who – to our delight – will continue as a Vice President. He is succeeded by Gareth Hoskins, who is already proving a tower of strength.

Eton Fives flourishes only because people give freely of their time. At the AGM, we elected Ronald Pattison as Vice Chairman, and four Directors: Gerald Barber (ex-head of Ludgrove), Paul Bowden (former Master-in-Charge at Stowe and Mill Hill), Guy Chapman (who runs the Old Cholmeleians) and Kerry White (ten-times Ladies Champion). We also co-opted as a Director Peter Worth, 1970 Schools Champion and former Senior Vice President of IMG, the leading sports, entertainment and media company.

The EFA Board is the most active of any in my seven years as Chairman, and it boasts the youngest average age of any Board in EFA history. All are active in realising the strategic objective of the EFA: "to achieve a significant and sustainable increase in the number of people of all ages, both men and women, playing Fives regularly wherever there are courts throughout the UK."

FRIENDLY FIVES

Alongside competitive Fives, we are keen that "Friendly Fives" also flourishes. Every Club Secretary has been urged to:

- add extra non-counting pairs to existing league fixtures
- arrange fixtures with the team from the Club's home school
- arrange additional friendly fixtures with other clubs

Thus, we hope to ensure organised Fives for every player, that no one feels excluded from the game, and that adult Fives is not confined to the few players chosen to represent their clubs.

ANNUAL REVIEW 2008/09

Last year, we consulted widely about the Annual Review, and this comment is typical of the acclaim: "The colour coding, pictures and format all make it very readable. Lots of information, too, and delightful historical details and snippets. The best yet."

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

With the Eton Fives Charitable Trust, the EFA is putting as much money as possible behind key initiatives, including (since Autumn):

- Uppingham: refurbishing the court at Brooklands House
 - RGS, High Wycombe: re-roofing and re-flooring both courts
 - Coaching at Stowe, St. Bees, Rydal, Uppingham, KES Birmingham, Wolverhampton Grammar School and Wrekin School, who are playing again for the first time in decades!
- We are also discussing new courts at Packwood School in Shrewsbury; renovating Rydal's courts; resurrecting Dover Fives; strengthening Stowe Fives; and a modular construction for courts.

WESTWAY

The unique Partnership has been making progress and new initiatives are being developed to drive Eton Fives and 1-Wall Fives deep into a wide range of new Inner City Schools. The project is ambitious, but bookings so far give grounds for confidence of achieving the first year's financial target.

CONCLUSION

I am excited by our progress, confident of the success of our initiatives to strengthen the game, appreciative of the efforts of so many people, and grateful for the help which I receive. Eton Fives is all the richer for the support of so many people.

Richard Barber

Fives Online: Version 2.0

Nick Bunyan explains the new site that will soon appear on the web

The new Federation website (below) is almost complete, with a launch planned for Spring this year. The linking of the three codes' information, archives and news will be coupled with integrated sign-in and security systems, and a number of extra administrative functions for the site's editors. More exciting for the Fives community are the new calendar, discussion and match-organising capabilities.

The calendar should enable members to keep a record of their own selection of competitions, activities and matches, giving a personal diary of upcoming events. We hope that this will be integrated with an opt-in email reminder system, so there will be no excuse for forgetting commitments!

The discussion forums will be open to the public for viewing, and subject to moderation, but all registered members will be able to create and participate in online discussions and reviews. This will provide a perfect platform for the members to air their grievances and make suggestions, and may be how many announcements are made in the future.

The match-organising function will let each club's nominated representatives create events online, and advertise these to club members or to the whole community. Members can then use the site to indicate their availability for these upcoming events, and organisers can send notifications and reminders.

On top of these facilities, each code will be able to add all sorts of reports, photos, comments, articles and so forth to their area of the website, and the editorial committee will update the front pages with the latest news.

The Federation hopes that the site will help to bring Fives into the 21st century, and that bringing the old sites together will create a web portal which is greater than the sum of its parts.

Watch this space!



RFA 100 Club looking for higher numbers

The RFA's 100 Club is looking to attract new members to help its fund-raising – and who could win some money themselves.

To join, members pay an annual fee (£24 is suggested), which entitles them to enter the three draws each year. The winter and spring draws have a first prize of £50 and a second prize of £35, whereas the summer draw has a single prize of £150.

The Club started up some 30 years ago to raise funds for new courts, as well as for repairs and refurbishments. Since the advent of the RFA Charitable Trust, which is the vehicle for major projects, the 100 Club has looked after smaller projects and occasionally a donation towards the cost of a coach at a school. The most recent donation was to Rugby School (see page 1). Anyone wanting to join should contact RFA Treasurer Ian Fuller (ianfuller0@btinternet.com).



Record-breakers: EFA student players (left); David Gardner with Karen Rothery of BUCS (right)



England Handball accepted into CIJB

Fives received high praise and some major coverage in the Spanish media last December after a delegation from world pelota organisation the CIJB (the Confederation International de Jeu de Balle) visited England to accept the country into their Federation in time for the 2010 Europilota Championships.

The CIJB President José Luís López, with two officials, watched demonstrations of both Eton and Rugby Fives, before remarking, “the English players possess the greatest technical skill of any version of the game known to us.”

The day ended with a dinner hosted by Mr López, with Michael Constantinidi and Ron Pattison representing the EFA, Andy Pringle the RFA, and Peter Cohen from England Handball. Here, Mr López told his guests of his wish “to bring together the game of our forbears combined with the respect for diversity which they always cherished” and added, “We must strengthen the links between peoples who rightly celebrate their traditions and appreciate diversity.”

A record year for student Fives

It's been a momentous year for university Fives, with the highest-ever entry for the Eton Fives Championships and the 50th running of the Rugby Fives Championships.

27 pairs from 11 universities competed at Eton in November, with 13 Cambridge pairs joined by entries from Manchester, Cardiff, UEA, UCL, Imperial, Royal Holloway, Northampton, Oxford, Durham and Bristol.

This is a first for Eton Fives, as the fact that no universities outside Oxbridge have courts and the problems of keeping in touch with players after leaving school have prevented a large entry for years. However, a recruitment campaign using the EFA's Facebook group and a

grant from the Jesters for travel helped this year's tournament.

On court, the top pairs from Oxford and Cambridge went on to the final. In the early stages, the flair of Oxford's Worth and Kailey matched up to the consistency of Desmond and Brock. But, as the match wore on, Cambridge's steadiness turned into domination and they went on to take the title.

The Ladies tournament featured nine pairs, and as in the men's competition, the final saw Oxford take on Cambridge; and again Cambridge – Annabel Griffiths and Karen Hird – won.

Meanwhile, the RFA championships in Sherborne saw a different landmark: the 50th running of the event,

overseen - like the 49 before - by David Gardner, now assisted by British Universities and Colleges Sport, who (in some guise) have helped run the tournament since its second year.

On the Saturday evening of the tournament, a reception was hosted by Sherborne School, where a gathering of past and present players and champions showed their appreciation of his efforts. After speeches from RFA President Frank Akerman and BUCS Chief Executive Karen Rothery, David was presented with a small memento to mark his 50 years' organisation and duly received the round of applause he so richly deserved.

Many guests stayed to watch the finals, in what must have been the most experienced crowd ever for such games. They saw Oxford's Dan Tristao retain his singles title, and Durham's Alex Griffiths and Inigo Ackland win their second doubles title.

New Fives Court Company

Plans to spread the game through cheaper courts

EFA Member Nigel Cox has started work recently on a range of new projects looking to attract major funding into the Fives world, reduce the cost of building courts and expand the game into new areas.

He told the Federation: “John Reynolds, Jennifer Green and I have set up The Fives Court Company, whose principal aim is to extend the game of Fives by building cheaper, affordable [three- and four-wall] courts.

“The Company is now fully registered and two schools are interested. We hope to have the prototype court built by spring, although this will depend on

planning permission. There is a possibility of building four courts at St Bartholomew's, Newbury, too, which would be superb.

“As soon as the prototype is up and available for viewing and playing on, I will be marketing it to any school that we think may be interested. Some of the profits of the FCC will be



Cutting cost of courts is crucial

absorbed in trying to get grants for core funding for the EFA.

“Unfortunately, we did not get anything from the Sports England Innovation fund, who only passed six out of 218 applications, despite having intimated they would be giving about 100 grants. However, we have not given up trying to get courts into the State sector, although it will almost certainly be much easier to sell to independent schools. And, if anyone has any influence in University sport (or knowledge of how it is funded or run) please ask them to contact me [nigelcox@bowergroup.net].”



Flying the Fives flag: Spanish press coverage (top) and the CIJB delegation at Westway

Rugby Fives Association President's Report



Having watched a number of tournaments during this last Autumn, I am immensely impressed at the overall standards achieved and the general enthusiasm for the game. This, together with my own experience of helping to introduce 10-13 year-olds to Fives and then watching them progress, confirms just how much anyone and everyone can enjoy playing this great game. That much may be obvious to every player, but it appears to remain an almost impenetrable secret not only to the population at large, but even more sadly to the staff of schools with a responsibility for setting the sporting timetables – even where courts are easily available. That they are building new courts at Rugby is wonderful news, but at so many other schools there sometimes seems to be a reluctance to realise the huge potential benefits that courts can confer; the result is that the structural condition of the courts is often neglected, and they may then even be lost altogether.

These problems, of course, are also shared by the Eton Fives Association, and our discussions at meetings of the Fives Federation have encouraged the RFA to set up a system to identify under-used courts. The intention is that this information may then make it possible to arrange for some constructive help, funds permitting. However, much can be achieved by individuals, too: if all readers of this Newsletter, for instance, made sure that their nearest courts are used and then encouraged their friends (with their sons and daughters too!) to come and learn the game, a great deal would have been achieved very simply!

Broadening access to the game of Fives, whether it be Eton Fives, 1-Wall Fives or Rugby Fives, is surely key to the longer-term development of all three games, and to this end establishing a blueprint for a coaching qualification will be important in any application for funds from national bodies such as Sport England. Perhaps the idea of paid coaches, who would be responsible for organising 'evening classes' in all available courts, should not be regarded as wishful thinking, but as a realistic future ambition?

Meanwhile, encouraging existing players and especially school-leavers and university students to continue playing must be a high priority for the RFA. The incentive of four years of free membership for students and school leavers has worked well, but despite the great support from the masters in-charge at the various schools, many players still slip through the net. The progressive changes in mobile phone technology, which make communication so much easier, together with the planned conjunction of the three individual websites (CFA, EFA and RFA) under the single heading of Fives Online, will also all help with the day-to-day management and simplify public accessibility for the three games. Our own website, most efficiently maintained and updated, provides an excellent snapshot of what is currently happening and I hope is regularly used by all our members.

At the end of my Presidential term in June 2011, it would be good to report that the RFA membership has increased and that there is also sound evidence of more people playing!

Frank Akerman

Mike Fenn retires as secretary of the EFA

Richard Barber pays tribute at the end of Mike's 11 years in the role

The season began with a dinner at Eton to mark Mike Fenn's retirement from the EFA Secretaryship.

Mike was elected to the EFA Committee 33 years ago, before taking over as Hon. Secretary in 1998. He has had many distinguished predecessors, but in the combination of longevity of office, passion for the game, knowledge of its history, its players, its clubs, structures and folklore; in his attention to detail; and in the confidence he has enjoyed from players all over the globe, his position at the peak of our game is unrivalled.

All the time, Mike has been supported by his wife, Athene. It is one of the central features of our game that it can only be played in pairs; and accordingly the game can only truly be run and managed in pairs. Eton Fives is a mirror of life, and Mike and Athene are living proof.

Athene's support has kept the Fenn show on the road over all these years with her humour, her calm and her sense of perspective – not least, she revealed, in permitting Mike, for over 40 years, to sleep with a Fives ball beside the bed!

Mike has passed on the secretaryship to Gareth Hoskins, and he has already made a great impact, not least with his first Annual Review. And what happier note can there be for anyone ending their reign than to know that the future is in such secure and capable hands.

Eton Fives will always owe Mike a huge debt of gratitude. But his retirement is only a staging post in the story of his long service, for he has agreed to take on further duties as Vice President, and we say farewell with these words:

"So now Mike, with your office relinquished,

All reports and commitments extinguished,

We your friends all salute you!
And now we recruit you

To continue the work you've distinguished."



With thanks: Richard Barber (left) marks Mike's retirement

Westway appoints new Fives manager

The Westway Fives Partnership has appointed Peter Cohen as its new Fives Development Manager, writes Richard Barber.

Peter is one of the country's leading Eton Fives players and has been instrumental in growing 1-Wall Fives in the local community. He has also represented England in several handball events abroad.

Away from Fives, Pete has been involved in sales and marketing for two start-up businesses. His business knowledge and his passion for Fives and for sports in general qualify him ideally for the role at Westway.

The object of the Partnership is to enable Fives to break out from its narrow background into the inner city. Westway plays a highly strategic role in the development of the game, and I look to each club and player to support Peter and Westway Fives in every way.



New boy: Peter Cohen (right) will develop Fives at Westway



Just champion: England's two ELA squads (left) and the Ashes-winning team from Portland (right)

Best ever season for England Handball

The squad secures its first international titles

This year must surely go down as the most successful year ever in the short history of England Handball, with success on the international stage.

The season began with 18 players competing in the Irish National 1-Wall Championships in June, and it was immediately clear how much England had improved since the 2008 event. Over the weekend, the English played 53 matches, winning 31, and brought home three titles: Pete Cohen won the Men's Open Plate, with Jess Lumbard and Andy Pringle winning the Ladies' and Men's Challenger trophies respectively.

Buoyed by such success, 12 players travelled to Portland, Oregon, for the World Handball Championships and scored some truly impressive results: in the men's 1-Wall C grade,

Richard Price was a semi-finalist in both the singles and (with Andy Pringle) doubles, while Luke Stradwick and Gareth Price reached the quarter-finals of the four-wall event. This latter effort was particularly notable, given that none of the English players had even set foot on a four-wall court before reaching Portland.

The biggest success, however, came in the Men's B category: not only did Dan Grant reach the semi-final of the singles, the doubles final was an all-English affair, with the Rugby Fives pairing of Ady Lee and Dan Grant defeating the Eton Fives pair of Pete White and (a sadly flu-ridden) Pete Cohen.

The Federation Cup, a team event which was run alongside the World Championships, brought further good results. Although neither the men's nor

ladies' teams qualified for the Federation Cup finals, both reached the final of their ELA Cup (an event played between all but the final teams in the Federation Cup). The women (Kerry White, Anita Ganguly and Emmalina Thompsell) lost to the Dutch, but the men (Ady, Dan and the two Petes) went one better, winning their ELA Cup. As a result, the men are now ranked fifth in the world, while the women are fourth.

Last, but very definitely not least, the entire England team also played an Ashes series in Portland against their friends and rivals from Australia, and the Ashes are now back in England after a comprehensive 10-4 win. The Ashes themselves were handed over by the losers at the gala dinner during the World Championships.

New book on Jesters' co-founder

To mark the 80th anniversary of the Jesters in 2008 and, in 2009, the 60th anniversary of the Past versus Present match, Richard Morgan has put together a portrait of Jock Burnet.

A fine player of Fives at St. Paul's and Cambridge, Jock enriched the game at all levels. He also co-founded the Jesters Cricket Club while at school, out of which grew the world's premier court games club, the Jesters, and was President of Cambridge University Rugby Fives Club for 40 years.

Among the contributors to the book are three former captains of Cambridge Fives, with Bob Dolby relating Jock's contribution to Fives.

Dr John Hodgson Willis (father-in-law of the RFA's Dick Warner, and who knew Jock from the age of eight) said of the book, "I found the portrait nostalgic and beautiful. Each contribution emphasised the outstanding character he was."

A copy of the book costs £27.50 from Richard Morgan at: Warmans, Bodenham, Salisbury, Wilts. SP5 4EU (cheques to Richard Morgan – Book Account). Profits from the sales will go to Mencap.

New Beginning for Eton Fives in High Wycombe

The EFA have made their largest ever donation – to repair and improve the courts at the Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe, writes Paul Bowden.

In addition to a donation of £5,000, the EFA/EFCT are making an interest-free loan of £10,000 to refurbish the two courts: this will involve new floors, repairing and making good the walls and installing a new roof and lighting.

The financial support package was finalised at

a meeting held at the School between Richard Barber, John Rimer and Paul Bowden of the EFA/EFCT and Roy Page (the Headmaster), Ken Nelson (the Estates Bursar), Peter Johnson (Vice Chairman of Governors), and Liam Doubler (Director of Sport), representing the School.

This agreement represents nothing less than the opening of a new era for Fives at RGS High Wycombe. The enthusiasm and commitment of the School representatives to support this project will enable future

generations at the school to enjoy this wonderful game, to play matches against other schools and to participate in



Fixed: the courts should be in use by the end of the season

competitions. Eton Fives will become an integral part of the School games programme.

The two courts were erected in a central position in the school as a memorial to former pupils who were killed in the First World War, and it is hoped that they will be open for use by the end of the current season. They will also be available for use in the evenings by Old Boys and anybody in the local community interested in playing or learning the game.

News in brief

■ 44 players took part in November's Under 14 Individual Tournament at Eton. After six rounds, William Phillips (St.Olave's) and Tom Cloughton (KES) emerged as the winners.

■ After being inspired to play Four-Wall Handball at the World Championships, Dan Grant discovered courts in England – on an American Air Force base! He plans regular sessions there this year.

■ Following the renaissance of Rugby Fives at Stoke Newington School in North London, there are plans to start an adult club there.

■ Rainer Binder, CEO of tyre manufacturer Delticom and prospective Oakham parent, is planning to build an Eton Fives court in his home town of Hanover next year.

■ The boys at St. Paul's school in Darjeeling are using the gloves sent by the EFA following Peter Knowles' visit to the school last year. The school has a large number of keen players and a full house-match programme.

■ Wolverhampton Grammar School hosted the REFCA Midlands U14 tournament in November, where Wrekin College played alongside KES Birmingham, the hosts, St.Olave's and Emanuel School. King Edward's 1 won the final, while the Festival was won by St.Olave's 4.

■ There are plans to refurbish the court at High Elms – in a public country park managed by the London Borough of Bromley (below) – and bring it back into regular public use.



High Elms: to be refurbished?

ENGLAND HANDBALL REPORT

By James Toop



The 1-Wall season draws to a close in the winter months, but the CFA can look back on a successful 2010. Both at home and abroad, we have increased player numbers, growing recognition and interest in the game.

World Beaters

The highlight of the season was England's performance at the World Championships – congratulations to captains Ady Lee and Kerry White and the team on a fantastic performance (see page 5).

New Schools

Back home, we have been

pushing our strategy in London. There has been good interest from schools around the Westway following the summer programme. We now have nearly 10 schools playing handball regularly, including several schools starting breakfast and after-school clubs. Recently, we have been contacted by a new Academy in Greenwich, which is planning to build 1-Wall courts into their new building which opens in September.

Handball In A Box

We are close to launching a new product that will allow schools and clubs to start playing. It will contain everything you need

to start the game in a simple, easy-to-use box that will come at a low-cost. The first boxes will be available soon.

Branding

Conversations with schools and sponsors have led us to rethink our name and website. The 'England Handball' name resonates more strongly with most audiences, and so while the Association will very much continue its links to the EFA and RFA, the new name will be England Handball and its website can be found at www.englishandball.co.uk

RFA sub-committees set up to tackle vital issues

The RFA board has set up two sub-committees to look into some hugely important aspects of the game, and they will report on their recommendations during the course of this year.

The first, headed by David Gardner, is looking at the rules of the game, which were last revised almost 15 years ago. The process is not in response to any particular issue or event, but should be seen simply as a 'health check' to ensure that the rules as they stand still reflect the game as it is played.

The second sub-committee, involving Ed Fuller, Tom Maconie and Hamish Buchanan, is looking at a fundamental level into the future of the game;

where it needs support; and, how and where it can expand.

The first step in this process is to establish the current state of the game – how many people are playing the game, where, how often and so on – before going on to examine potential avenues for attracting more

people to the sport, as well as actively encouraging the game in places where it is dormant or, they believe, in danger.

Work on this first step is nearing completion, and the sub-committee will keep the RFA board informed of its progress during the year.



By the book: one RFA committee is revising the rules of the game

EFA Jesters head back to school

As 2009 closes, writes Martin Samuel, we have played against Harrow, Oakham, Uppingham and Bryanston, with the fixtures against Aldenham and Stowe postponed.

For those of you unaware of what these fixtures are all

about, we give a limited amount of coaching, as well as trying to show the boys and girls of these schools that our glorious game is extremely active well past their own school days. The scores are pretty much irrelevant, and often we end up splitting up the boys and girls to have adult/pupil.

Our thanks go to Martin Lindsay for organising the Harrow fixture yet again.

The Oakham/Uppingham weekend was the usual great success, and was made all the more enjoyable by the kind hospitality we receive from Ed and Susannah Wass each year.

Bryanston is always a fun visit, and this year did not disappoint us. Chris Poole has clearly got a great group of promising lads who really enjoy the game.

Finally, our thanks to all the schools for their hospitality.

The new Richard Black Cup is the first three-pair inter-club Ladies competition

News in brief

■ While in China, RFA member Charles Lamb made the discovery that, while it was possible to log on to the EFA website, the RFA site was apparently banned.

■ Michael Case is the new master in charge of Fives at Oundle School.

■ EFA member Martin Fiennes found an ancient handball game in Provence, played against the church. Search for "Paume Artignosc France" on YouTube to see clips of the game.

■ The Torry Hill court (below), owned by EFA Patron Lord Kingsdown, now has a roof

Here come the girls

The EFA wants to encourage more women players

The EFA has always sought to expand the game and it believes potentially the most exciting area of doing so lies in the development of Ladies' Fives. It is a core part of its strategy to increase significantly the number of girls and ladies regularly playing.

The Association believes that there is a large number of untapped potential playing members among ladies at schools, universities, clubs and in local communities, and that Eton Fives is an excellent game for ladies, as it relies on accuracy and placement rather than strength and stamina.

This season sees the introduction of a brand new tournament – The Richard Black Cup – which will be the Ladies' equivalent of the Alan Barber Cup and the first ever inter-club

three-pair competition in Ladies' Fives. In its initial incarnation, the tournament will include teams representing Highgate, Westminster, St.Olave's and Lancing, each school represented by a mixture of current and former pupils.

Hopefully, in subsequent years, the competition will evolve and expand, and at the same time, the EFA is looking to develop further competitions and opportunities specifically for Ladies' Fives for next season.

More and more schools are beginning to produce girls' pairs, and the National Schools' Championships now include Girls' Under 15 and Open categories; Rugby Fives and 1-Wall tournaments are being contested and trophies won by Eton Fives-playing girls; the Universities and Under 25s

Championships now have their own Ladies' tournaments, and clubs like Cambridge University, Oxford University, North Oxford, Old Ipswichians and Old Cholmeleians are all tentatively starting inter-club ladies fixtures.

It is therefore clearly time for the Ladies' game to push on to the next level, and one of the most crucial aspects of the EFA's agenda over the next few years is to build on this momentum, increase the numbers playing and, most importantly, provide suitable opportunities for girls to play.

These are undoubtedly exciting times for the Eton Fives Ladies' game, and with ten-time National Ladies' Champion Kerry White now a member of the EFA Board with responsibility for the Ladies game, the only way is forward!

RFA Club Secretary's report

Ed Fuller rounds up the latest results and action on- and off court



Court report: Club Sec Ed Fuller

I am pleased to report that the RFA has scraped to a winning margin at the halfway point in the season. As always, there are plenty of fixtures to be played in the second half of the season however, so I wouldn't put too much money on a successful season just yet!

As well as the chance to decide the outcome of a closely contested season, the remaining fixtures offer an excellent opportunity to play on different courts and enjoy the

great hospitality on offer from so many of our opposition teams. I am sure that all those who so regularly turn out for the RFA would join me in recommending getting involved.

As ever, I would like to thank the match managers for all their organisational efforts, and also all the players who dust off their gloves for our cause. Best of luck to all those playing in the rest of the season, I look forward to hearing of your progress during the course of this year.



Torry Hill: now under cover

and lights and can be used all year round.

■ The UCS Old Boys Rugby Fives Club wants new members for its Monday and Wednesday sessions in Hampstead. Huw Aveston invites anyone interested to get in touch via email: huwaveston@hotmail.com.

■ The date of the Winchester Fives Mixed Doubles tournament has changed to April 25th, although the venue remains Bradfield School.

■ 18 players took part in the Annual Repton Fives day, with S.Jordan and N.Wainwright ending up as winners.

■ Fives remains very active at the Union Boat Club in Boston, USA, and they hope to attract players from the UK to visit. 24 players took part in the 2009 Club Championship, with Matt Iler beating Nick Elfner 21-13 to claim the Gardiner-Norwood Trophy.

Lancing Old Boys will next face up to the Olavians



Alan Barber Cup – as easy as ABC for LOBs

The early rounds of this year's Alan Barber Cup have been all about the run to the semi-finals of the Lancing Old Boys. They had to play a preliminary round just to get into the first round, and after defeating the Etonians, they have since won potentially tough matches against two other recent Barber Cup semi-finalists without losing a pair.

The Ipswichians were defeated at Ipswich, where many a fancied team has come a cropper, and then the fourth-seeded Edwardians were defeated in fine style at Eton.

Under the guidance of veteran Nigel Cox, Lancing's first ever Barber Cup semi-final has been reached thanks to a generally youthful squad, with Will and Tom Betts, Mylo Scurr, Doug Foster and George Campbell all featuring prominently alongside the older generation represented by Nigel and Paul Baddeley.

Next up for Lancing are the Olavians, winners for the last six years, with the other semi-final between the Salopians and the Harrovians. Both matches will be played at Eton on Sunday 31st January.

RFA Tournament Results Round-up

President's Cup

Winners: John Minta & Rob Grey
Mate's Plate: Bruce Hanton & Bhaswar Baral
T-Pot: Richard Price & John Keyes
Love Mug: Gareth Price & Nick Hillier

National Open Singles

Champion: James Toop

National Ladies Championships

Singles: Claire Knowles
Doubles: Claire Knowles & Melanie Whitehead

National Student & BUCS Championships

Singles: Dan Tristao (Oxford)
Doubles: Inigo Ackland & Alex Griffiths (Durham)

Winchester Fives Northern Doubles Tournament

Champions: Dave Fox & Richard Guthrie

School Winchester Fives Doubles Championship

Champions: St Paul's I (E Kay & A Edmonds)

West of England Championships

Singles: James Toop
Doubles: Will Ellison & Hal Mohammed

Yorkshire Open Doubles

Champions: Hamish Buchanan & Ben Taberner

Owers Trophy

Champions: Old Pilgrims

London Open Championships

Singles: James Toop
Doubles: Ed Fuller & John Minta

EFA Mid-Term Tournament Round-up

Midland Tournament:

Final: H.Wiseman & S.Cooley beat R.Tyler & D.Mew 3-1

County Championships:

Semi-Finals: Herts bt Warwicks, Kent bt Middlesex
Final: Herts bt Kent

Universities Championships:

Men's Final: Cambridge 1 (R.Desmond & L.Brock) beat Oxford 1 (R.Worth & B.Kailey) 2-0.
Ladies' Final: Cambridge 1 (A.Griffiths & K.Hird) beat Oxford 1 (R.Scott & H.Cutmore-Scott) 2-0

London Tournament:

J.Toop & M.Wiseman beat H.Wiseman & S.Cooley 3-0

Graham Turnbull Trophy:

Lancing (H.Wiseman & J.Betts) beat Westminster (L.Brock & C.Brock) 15-11

EFA League (current leaders):

Division 1 – Old Olavians 1
Division 2 – Berkhamsted
Division 3 – Abbey Club

Alan Barber Cup:

Semi-Finalists: St.Olave's vs Lancing and Harrow vs Shrewsbury

Mens Under 25s:

R.Desmond & L.Brock beat A.Joyce & M.Scurr 3-1

Ladies Under 25s:

D.Redmond & A.Lumbard beat C.Cooley & A.Ganguly 3-0

Forthcoming events

Rugby & Winchester Fives

January		
Sat/Sun 30th/31st	National Under 25s Championships	M. Taylors
February		
Sat 20th	Oxford v Cambridge	St Paul's
Sat/Sun 27th/28th	North of England Open Championships	Durham
March		
Sat 13th	Ladies Winchester Fives singles/doubles	Bradfield
Sun 14th	Winchester Fives Doubles Championship	Bradfield
Sun 14th	National Under 13 championships	St Paul's
Sat/Sun 27th/28th	National Open Doubles (Final rounds)	Alleyns
Mon/Thu 29th/Apr 1st	National Schools Championships	St Paul's
April		
Sat/Sun 10th/11th	National Veterans & Masters	Horsham
Sat/Sun 17th/18th	National Club Championship (final rounds)	St Paul's
Sat/Sun 24th/25th	National Vintage	Oundle
Sun 25th	Winchester Fives Mixed	Bradfield
May		
Sat/Sun 1st/2nd	Scottish Open Championships	Loretto
July		
Sat/Sun 10th/11th	South West Championships	Blundell's

Eton Fives

January		
Sun 31st	Alan Barber Cup – Semi-finals	Eton
	EFA Trophy Qualifying Round	Eton
February		
Tues 2nd	Ladder Competition	Highgate
Sat/Sun 6th/7th	Northern Championships	Shrewsbury
Sun 21st	Alan Barber Cup & EFA Trophy	Eton
	Ladies Championships	Eton
Sat/Sun 27th/28th	Kinnaird Preliminary Rounds & Festival	Eton
March		
Tues 2nd	Ladder Competition	Aldenham
Sat 6th	Varsity Match	Eton
Sun 7th	Williams School Cup	Eton
Thurs 11th	Preparatory Schools Championship	Harrow
Sun 14th	Kinnaird Cup – Semi-finals	Eton
Tues 16th	Ladder Competition	Highgate
Sat 20th-Thurs 25th	Schools Championships	Highgate
Sun 28th	Kinnaird Cup Final & Richard Black Cup	Eton
April		
Sun 11th	Aberconway Cup & Graham Turnbull	Eton
	Ladies Championship Final	Eton
Tues 13th	Ladder Competition	Highgate
Sun 18th	MJS-J Cup (Veterans)	Eton
Sun 25th	Under 21s Championship	Eton
May		
Sat 1st	Mixed Championships	Eton
Sun 9th	Heath Tournament	Aldenham
June		
Sat/Sun 12th/13th	Engadin Challenge	Zuoz

1-Wall Fives

June		
Sat 5th	UK Open Singles	Westway
July		
Fri/Sun 2nd/4th	Irish National Championships	Castlebar
August		
Sat 21st	UK Doubles Championship	Westway
September		
TBC	CIJB Europilota (selective England team)	Valencia
October		
Sat 30th	England End-of-season tournament	Westway