



# RFA President's Newsletter

Autumn 2023



## Autumn greetings from Julie McIntyre, RFA President

Welcome to the first Newsletter of the 2023/24 season, and we hope that you have enjoyed getting back on court again.

### Missenden Meeting (23/09)

As many of you will know, the RFA Board, and 16 other RFA members/players representing a variety of locations, ages, experiences, and interests met for a day's meeting at Missenden Abbey on 23rd September, substantially supported by a generous contribution from Peter Mellor. The purpose of the meeting was to examine how to break the apparently inevitable gradual decline of our sport and look carefully at how we could run it in a way that would keep it alive in the 21st Century.

It would be impossible to capture in this newsletter everything that was discussed. What was heartening was the degree of energy, commitment and realism displayed. The idea was to set reasonable and attainable goals for the next 2-3 years. The main themes were as follows:

## Missenden Themes

- 1) Making the RFA more professional and recognising that we will need to find the money to pay for staff - “spend some money to make more money”. Our first appointment is an administrator, Laura Macaulay, who started by attending and taking minutes from the meeting. The General Secretary has also been in touch with a sports development professional who is able to advise us on grant giving bodies who might be willing to fund some projects. We also believe we need Schools Liaison officers and coaches (both paid and volunteer).
- 2) How to sustain the existing Fives estate, which links with coaching and schools’ liaison; getting Fives courts into a better, more attractive state; ensuring that pupils at the schools are given enough opportunity to play (including being able to provide coaches where needed) and finding ways to attract them to start and continue the sport; making schools understand the value of Fives as part of the sports curriculum.
- 3) Rejuvenating our evening Clubs, improving their social aspects, and preparing their structures for the inevitable demands from schools to share maintenance costs, and focusing on supporting existing Community Clubs.
- 4) Finding funds to do all the above. Our community projects are most likely to attract grants, and these are going to be our first priority. Some parallel funds from RFA members may help to obtain these grants.

## Coaching

There is certainly an urgent need currently for coaching staff. Schools are prepared to pay for coaches by the hour, where no existing member of staff plays Fives. Anyone who is looking for help with student fees, or maybe would like to work part time earning a bit of extra money please think about this. In the London area, additional coaching at Stoke Newington would be welcomed. Any courts which have vacant periods in the week or weekend can have separate school or community groups running, if a coach is available to run a session, and the owner is agreeable.

Please let the RFA know of any other coaching needs.

## New London Club Competition

Thanks to the initiative from Shinan Zhang and Penn Chai, a new London Club competition has started between Executioners, Old Gowers (UCS), Edward Alleyn Club and Stoke Newington Swifts. Each will play the other twice (home and away) during the course of the season to produce a winner, though it's meant to have a strong social component! As several regular players go to more than one venue, the first rule is that you can only play for one team during the season. The first match resulted in a victory for Executioners over UCS. Further updates to follow. If anyone feels inspired to organise something along similar lines in your neck of the woods, go for it!



## City of Durham Club

Work is underway to promote Fives in Durham, starting with this article:

<https://dialogue.durham.ac.uk/24/systems-developer-julie-mcintyre-helps-rugby-fives-club-blossom>

In an effort to spread knowledge of the sport to Schools in Durham, and widen the use of the University courts, the City Club paid a visit to Durham Johnston School (a large state secondary school) and talked to 280 Year 7 pupils about Fives, which was followed up by a taster session at the courts:

<https://durhamjohnston.org.uk/news/2023-10-13-friday-bulletin>

This initiative was fully supported by the school, with an official letter to parents, and the pupils transported by minibus to the courts. It will be followed up by a half-term holiday taster session, and another school group from Johnston.

At the same time a group of our members and students have completed a coaching training session and will be awarded Activator coaching awards, to support a potential extra weekly session.

<https://therfa.uk/coaching/> for more information about the Activator course.

We'll keep you posted on the results.

## Ladies U23 competition

After discussion with the organiser (Lena Barton), the organiser of the Ladies Winchester Fives Championship (Maddy Raynor), and Board members concerned with Fixtures and Women's Fives, we have decided to make some changes to this season's fixtures.

Firstly, we will widen the U23 competition to include **U25** players – in line with the equivalent men's competition, and also 25 being the age when full adult membership starts.

In order to ensure the tournament is available to schools' players (last year's singles and doubles winners were all still at school) the date of the tournament has been moved to (TBC) Saturday **March 9th**, which we believe doesn't clash with GCSEs, A Levels, Scottish Highers or University Finals.

The Ladies Winchester Fives Championship, which was originally planned for that weekend will now be held later, as it was last season, at a date/venue to be announced.

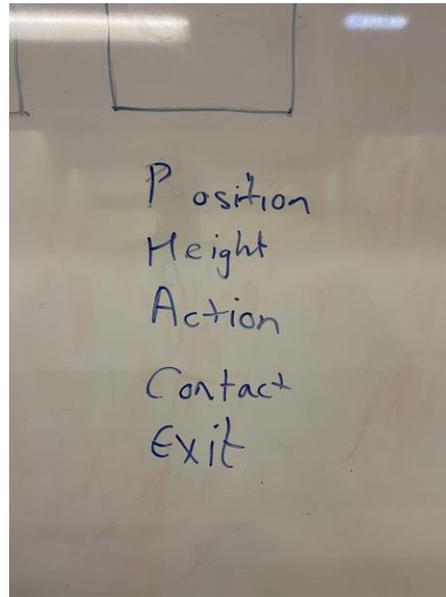
## Sponsorship and Corporate Social Responsibility

As emphasized at our Missenden meeting, the RFA needs all the income it can get to achieve our goals to broaden access to the sport and the number of players. You may be aware that the EFA gets sponsorship from Advanta Wealth. It would be great if we could similarly find a regular sponsor, whose name would be on our website, feature at all our Competitions (including the National Schools) and allow us to pay for such things as T shirts for participating schools players which would, of course, further advertise the game, as well as the sponsor.

Another possible pathway would be to support our current and future Community Clubs through the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs. This could be something as simple as allowing a Fives playing employee one afternoon a week to coach, right up to philanthropic support or matching funds for our projects (such as upgrading facilities for Stoke Newington Swifts). If you work in an organisation which you think might be open to such an approach, please ask. The General Secretary would be pleased to attend a meeting with the company to explain how this could work. The following link provides a brief overview of CSR

<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/corp-social-responsibility.asp>

There's a lot going on...





## THE SEVEN AGES OF FIVES

**Under 13s**

**Veterans**

**Students**

**Schools**

**Vintage**

**Open**

**Masters**

(clockwise from top left): Stephen Davis (2011), Chris Jones (2010/11), James Henderson (2010/11), Paul Rider and Tom Curtis (Chris's Hospital), Daniel Grant (Aberdeen Fives?), David Kirk and David Park (Cheltenham)

"He who takes to playing at fives is twice young.  
 He feels neither the past nor the future 'in the instant'"

William Hazlitt





### Fives Coaches needed:

There are fantastic opportunities at the moment for anyone interested in getting involved with well-paid and hugely satisfying Fives coaching; be it full-time ( a change of career or gap-year etc), or one afternoon a week. If you are able to offer your services for either Eton or Rugby Fives, then do please contact me as a matter of urgency.

I look forward to hearing from you...

Best wishes

Howard Wiseman

The Rugby & Eton Fives Coaching Agency  
07792226036





 **Edinburgh Ac...** · 02/10/2023 ...

A good run out for a mixed age-group @edinburghacad team against the local Adult Fives Club - The Caledonian Club. A win for experience over youth but a great experience for the youth!




♥ 🗨 📌

 Liked by **durhamfives** and **31 others**

**rfafives** Yorkshire Open: Tom makes it a double first collecting the Doubles title, too. 3rd time in this event for his partner Theo, having won twice with Ollie Arnold. With thanks to Derby Moor Academy and to organiser John Hawke.

11 September

Four Derby players competing in today's Midlands Eton Tournament



Thank you  
for your support.



rfafives



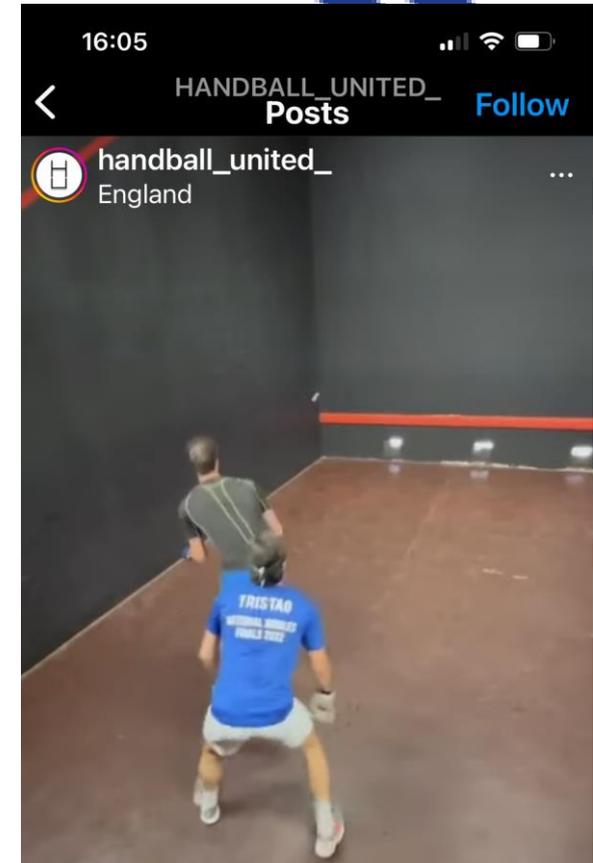
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