

THE RUGBY FIVES ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - SEPTEMBER 2012

General Secretary's Report

At the very beginning of the season we were thrilled to hear that our request to the Jesters Club for financial assistance towards our plans for supporting Fives more directly in schools had been approved and we were awarded a grant of £5000. This has enabled us to cover the travel costs of coaches to schools, assist younger competitors in their travel and accommodation costs to championships and to offer schools where Fives has 'died' some financial support to revive the game there. We are extremely grateful to the Jesters for their generosity in providing us with this grant and for funding a reception at the National Schools Championships which was much enjoyed by players and spectators alike. In talking to schools and in providing funding to competitors we have made them aware of the source of the funds and promoted the benefits of the Jesters Club to them.

Continuing with the theme of coaching, many of you will be aware that under the auspices of the Fives Federation we have developed a coaching qualification for Fives which was launched at the beginning of this year. The Board was delighted that Wayne Enstone led the way by becoming the first Rugby Fives player to qualify and he is now actively involved in accrediting others to become qualified coaches. More courses will be run in the autumn and details of these will be widely advertised once available. This initiative will both raise the profile of the game and enable us in due course to apply for funding from Sports bodies for development purposes.

After many many years of 'hope', the building of courts at Cambridge University has become reality and the first bricks have been laid. Whilst some funding is already available, more will be required and we will be initiating a fund raising campaign among members later this year or early in the New Year. The number of individuals providing financial support, regardless of amount, will be an important factor in demonstrating to the University the level of interest that exists among our membership. We are greatly indebted to Bob Dolby for all his tireless work over the years and for his continuing active involvement with the Cambridge authorities in this exciting project.

Other areas that have occupied your Board's time have included a review of our Insurance cover, Health & Safety policies and our control of risks. Stuart Kirby has now produced a revised and comprehensive Risk Assessment document which also includes some guidance to tournament organisers on Health & Safety and medical issues. Stuart has also started work on revising our court specifications and we are very grateful to him for his excellent and extremely thorough output. Apart from producing wonderfully readable and professional publications in the form of the Annual Review and Newsletters, Andy Pringle has been busy overseeing the inclusion of our website on the Federation's 'Fives Online' site and whilst for the present time both sites will run in parallel we will eventually move to a single site. Our thanks go to Andy for all his high quality work.

We were very pleased to mark the life of Ian Roberts in tangible form by presenting a trophy to Giggleswick school which they will use for their inter-house Fives competition. We are indebted to some of Ian's close friends and Board members for their generosity in providing funds towards the cost of this trophy.

In a similar vein we are looking at ways of recognising the life of Fred Beswick who sadly died early this year. Fred, a past President of the Association, was a true legend of the game in every sense and over the years inspired many people with his humour and passion for the game. The huge attendance at his funeral, with some people travelling hundreds of miles, was

testimony to the popularity that Fred enjoyed. He will be sadly missed.

In Olympic year, but not actually for that reason, the Board decided to switch from presenting tankards at championships to awarding medals. Part of the reason was cost driven but also it was felt that it was time for a change and that medals were a more 'modern' and appropriate award. This change has generally been well received.

On court, entries overall at senior competitions were good and we congratulate Dan Tristao and Dan Grant in becoming the youngest National Doubles winners for many years. Schools competitions were extremely well supported and the Board is very encouraged by not only the number of young players in the game but also the quality of their play. We believe the game is in a very healthy position at the present time. This season saw the first of what we hope will be more Regional schools competitions enabling some players to take part and gain success at the game which they might not otherwise be able to achieve at National level. The South East competition, held at Tonbridge, was a great success and will become a permanent fixture in the calendar.

The success of all our competitions (approx 30 in a season) is largely attributable to the huge efforts of our volunteer organisers and we greatly appreciate all their hard work.

Due to ill health, Jeremy Schroeter regrettably had to resign as Deputy President in January. We are delighted that Bob Dolby agreed to take his place and his appointment will be formally ratified by this meeting later. Adrian Lee has indicated his wish to step down from the Board and we thank him for his significant contribution whilst on the Board.

Ian Fuller,
August 2012