

**THE RUGBY FIVES ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 4th SEPTEMBER 2019**

General Secretary's Report

Last year, I reported that a new strategy for the RFA had been designed and implemented. One year on, I'm very pleased to report a number of exciting developments:-

- The new sub-committees have produced a number of positive achievements including:-
 - The allocation of grants to assist Merchiston Castle School (floor reconditioning), The Edinburgh Academy (floor reconditioning and court enclosure) and Loretto School (roof replacement). These awards were subject to a number of conditions not least allowing the courts to be used by members of the public. The funding for these awards was made possible by a substantial and much appreciated (anonymous) donation
 - The setting up of a Young RFA aimed at encouraging the greater participation of those in the 16-30 age group
 - An encouraging response to a members' survey which will help determine the activities of other sub-committees
 - The seamless transfer of the website into the RFA's ownership and control (www.rugbyfives.com)
- As Development Officer, Gareth Price played a key supporting role in a number of these activities. Going forward, his focus will be on building/renovating courts and getting more people from all sections of the community playing fives. One very promising project in its early stages is a joint partnership with Stoke Newington School aimed at re-introducing fives at the school and also making their six courts available to the local community. The head teacher is very enthusiastic so there is reason to be optimistic that this project will have a successful outcome.

Other news regarding courts was generally encouraging. The Manchester Y Fives Club has worked extremely hard to raise the profile of the game, including running regular sessions for beginners and juniors. In addition, the Ladies' National Tournament was held there this year and the RFA agreed to donate a sum of money to fund future coaching with the possibility of further assistance towards upgrading the lighting. Positive news was reported from St Dunstan's College with new courts included in the next phase of a development plan to begin in 2020. There will be a new leisure centre built there that includes new

fives courts. At the Stamford Schools fives was introduced (on squash courts) due to the enthusiasm of their new Head of Classics (Alex Smith). In the north of England the City of Durham Club continued to pursue plans to convert the two redundant squash courts at the University Sports Ground. At Cambridge, a newly formed Town Club is flourishing whilst James Powley, the squash professional, is continuing to conduct a drive to get local schools playing and a Saturday Junior Club underway.

As far as tournaments were concerned, both BUSF and the National Schools saw their first ever female participants – a welcome development. The latter event also had a taste of new technology with the live streaming of matches. A National Mixed Doubles tournament was held for the first time and was judged to be a resounding success as was the inaugural Grand Masters event for those of more mature years.

The new ball made by Gloves and Balls was available from early in the season and was deemed to be a satisfactory replacement for the G6. Regarding coaching, Cambridge is to become the dedicated national training centre for fives later this year. Wayne Enstone relinquished his lead role in this area having performed an invaluable service in getting countless individuals through their Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications over a number of years. The RFA is extremely grateful for his contribution to training and development.

This season saw the deaths of four distinguished fives players: Dennis Silk CBE (former Warden of Radley and four times National Doubles winner with John Pretlove); Alan Maltby (Honorary Secretary of the RFA from 1968 to 1973); Danny McGregor (President of the Manchester YMCA from 2012 to 2018); and Ted Isaacs (formerly of Dulwich College who was National Doubles champion in 1949 with Barry Trapnell).

In October, The Alastair Mackenzie Dinner celebrating the RFA's 90th anniversary was held at The Queen's Club with 75 guests. Expertly organised by Bernard Atkinson, a convivial evening was enjoyed by all giving an opportunity both to reflect on past achievements and look forward to the future of our much loved game with renewed optimism.

**Phil Atkinson
General Secretary
August 2019**