

Cobham Rugby and Sports Association

incorporating: Cobham Rugby Football Club,
Cobham Tennis Club, Cobham Netball Club and Cobham Lacrosse Club

From the Chairman

In these very difficult times the Board of the CRSA thought that it would be a good idea to share with every member a season summary of all the activities of sports associated with our club. We are a big club and as you will see below have a whole host of sporting activities ranging from Didi rugby for 18 month olds, right through the age spectrum. The CRSA continues to maintain and improve the sport facilities available to members and this season the new AGP has been a very important new addition to those facilities. It brings financial benefits to the CRSA, a new relationship with Cobham Free School, and attracts football clubs onto the grounds for evening rentals.

Throughout each section we know that this level of sport activity could not take place without a huge effort from many volunteers. To all those who volunteer their time and expertise we would like to say thank you.

Finally we are sure that as sports people you are all staying active in your own ways but of course we are missing the camaraderie and social interaction that goes with playing team sports with friends. Let's hope that we will be able restart our activities sooner rather than later.

In the meantime we hope that you and your families stay safe. **Steve Heard**

Cobham Rugby Club

Senior Section

Despite the season being sadly cut short, overall, this has been a positive one for Cobham Senior Section.

1st & 2nd Teams

The 1st Team are sitting in fifth place at the close, with the goal of a top three finish still possible with the remaining fixtures. The side has beaten each of the top four teams having played all season with attack and flair and on many occasions delivering some enthralling performances. A total of 40 individual players have represented the 1st team in 22 league games, 30 of which have come through the club at U21, youth and mini levels.

It was a disjointed and frustrating season for the 2nd Team this year, with availability hampering the ability to field a team on too many occasions, also experience by many opposition clubs. Next season will see a strong focus on ensuring the 2nd Team play on a far more regular basis.

Under 21s

Having won our two pool matches over the Christmas break: a competitive game against Reeds Weybridge and a resounding win against

Sutton & Epsom, a cup semi-final fixture v Guildford was scheduled. This is now postponed potentially could be played at the start of next season. This is a strong squad which has a very good chance of winning the cup.

3rd Team & Vets

This was a challenging season for the 3rd Team primarily due to being in an unsuitable league following recent promotions. Going forward a step-down will benefit the team of players that frequently interchange with the Vets, who have ended the season as League winners. The squad has seen continued recruitment of returnees to the game many of which have children playing mini and youth rugby at Cobham.

The senior teams at Cobham continue to offer a great level of rugby no matter what age, experience and ability you are. At a time when player participation across the UK is dwindling, it remains a priority to provide a pathway of bringing players through from junior to senior rugby and to be a welcoming club to anyone who wants to join, offering a broad and enjoyable rugby experience.

Steve Pope and Chris Melton

Youth Section

The U12s have very much enjoyed their first season in youth rugby. It takes a while to adjust to the new rules and organisation but there has been some excellent rugby played. A number of new boys have joined who have made a real impact to the squad, as has our new lead coach Nathan Spratt. Nathan has slowly got to know the boys well and has brought some excellent structure and fun to our training and improvement in our game play. There have been some excellent tournaments and some tough waterfall cup matches.

The U14s have had a very busy season in 2019/20 under the direction of new coach Harry Green. The squad had always been relatively small but our boys were shooting up as the season progressed. Harry's main goal this season has been to work on skills so that every player is confident enough to play in matches which benefits the boys in both their school and club rugby. We are fortunate to have in Harry such a well-qualified and dedicated coach. The boys are getting the same training and working on the same skills as they would get in the men's 1st XV.

On the playing front, we have had a busy season, taking on all-comers in fixtures, festivals, training matches and triangulars. A highlight was the narrow victory over Cranleigh in the Waterfall Cup but even the narrow losses against Richmond and Wimbledon showed how much we have improved against sides which used to be far stronger than us. There were matches against Esher and Camberley after a gap of a few seasons and our 10s festival was greatly enjoyed by our guests.

The U15s - have had a smashing season and are unbeaten to date.

The Colts have had a difficult year due to major school and academy commitments. We hope that the new U16s squad bolster the Colts programme greatly next season and get us back to being competitive.

County and DPP numbers have been high especially in the U13s.

As ever a huge thanks to all coaches, first aiders and volunteers. **Matt Lunn**

Mini Rugby

The CRFC Mini Section continues to flourish with the support of the club and its members.

After a slow start, we saw an encouraging pick-up in enquiries and interest as the season went on. It was particularly pleasing to see a turnaround in our two younger age groups, U5 and U6, helped by Vicky Alexander's hard work with club's Didi Rugby franchise. In spite of the unfortunately truncated season, it feels as if we finished with strong momentum.

The Braemar Festival proved as popular as ever with over 30 U11 teams, nearly 400 players, from 16 clubs. Our February home festival welcomed over 70 U7 and U9 teams, including representation from as far afield as Petersfield. Our autumn floodlit festival (U10 and U11) was a

hit, as would have been the spring floodlit, had we not had to cancel. I would like to thank all those involved for making the festivals such a success. In particular, thanks must go to Emma and Owen Ashton for the smooth running of these events.

My thanks to all our volunteers, especially our age group Head Coaches and Managers. We are very fortunate to have such a dedicated and talented group of individuals, who make the Mini section the success that it is. Also, we would not survive without Nicky Eggar sorting out our registrations, Kathryn Dawson coordinating first Aid, and of course Dino Adams and Denise Symons ensuring that we are all DBS cleared and that there are always pitches available for the children to play on. **Dan Cowan**

Girls' Rugby

The girls' section has seen huge growth in U11-U15 from only 10 players at the start of the season to 30 at present and we would like to encourage more to come and join us. We have a good set of coaches who make it all fun while really focusing on skills.

We also are supporting the after school rugby club for year 7s at Cobham Free School and hope to bring on some of those girls to further grow our squad.

Unfortunately our planned tour to Derbyshire was cancelled but our U18s did manage to play the Dutch national team in Amsterdam earlier in the season. It was a very tough game, as you would

expect, but great bonding and fun for the girls.

Nine of our U18s made the Surrey Squad and eight of these are in the Player Pathway at either Richmond or Harlequins. We were delighted that one of our U15 girls made the Surrey Squad.

The plan next season is to focus more on tournaments and festivals to get greater game time, while still playing the traditional 15 a side fixtures in the Surrey and Area Cups.

We encourage all of you to follow us on our facebook page:

www.facebook.com/CobhamGirlsRugby

Matt Lunn

Didi Rugby

Since the launch of Didi Rugby nearly a year ago we have seen an increase in new members and existing children have moved onto U5s. As well as the Sunday session we now run a midweek session.

Since the start of the Covid-19 crisis I have been running the Sunday sessions as online classes which has presented its own problems which I am working through. I am hoping that over the next few months of online classes we will see an increase in numbers.

We have created Didi Rugby survival packs which include a small Didi ball, water bottle, cone and T-shirt so the children can replicate our sessions at home with their parents. We currently have a competition running to win two of these online via Facebook which I am hoping to increase the number of followers.

This year we have also held our first birthday party which was very successful and led to further bookings.

Last summer we ran three rugby camps which were also successful and, depending on the situation, we are planning to run a full week of Didi Rugby camps for 3 to 6-year-olds.

We will also be looking at maintaining links with Walton Oaks School, starting links with Saint Andrews Primary School and engaging with Cobham preschool to deliver keystage 1 Didi

Rugby activities throughout the next academic year. This will include curriculum activities and after-school clubs and linking these into the summer Didi Rugby festivals which we plan to run on an annual basis.

I look forward to seeing where Didi Rugby will grow in a year as the feedback I have had from parents has been positive and the feedback I get from the kids is sheer delight! **Vicky Alexander**



Cobham Tennis Club

We are very excited to announce that we will have a new coach working with the club as soon as we are able to get back on court. Ben Cullen is an LTA Level 4 coach with 13 years' experience, having gained qualifications at top academies in France, Spain and the USA. He is currently Head of the Notre Dame Prep School Programme and coach to the Surrey U18 boys' team. He is also a hitting coach to top county and British juniors. Full details of the new coaching programme are yet to be agreed but it will include a range of options alongside private lessons and junior coaching. Let us know what you would like to see. Ben's details will be appearing on our website shortly and he can be contacted on 07818 260920. Denise's ladies' and individual coaching will continue as part of this coaching programme.

Our winter season was brought to an abrupt halt in mid-March with all social and competitive tennis being suspended. However, our ladies had managed to complete all of their winter season matches. We won four out of five matches in the mid-week league, finishing 2nd in our division so would expect to be promoted. The weekend results were rather more mixed and we finished in the middle of the division. The men's team were also standing at 2nd in their division when play was suspended.

Ladies' Thursday morning social tennis sessions continue to attract a good attendance and we are hoping to re-start social weekend tennis as soon as we can. **Jill Mann**

Cobham Lacrosse Club

To re-join TS Eliot '*This is the way the season ends, not with a bang but a whimper...*' A fitting quote, since all lacrosse, from national to club, training, leagues and more came abruptly to an abrupt halt in mid-March. Much is still undone for Cobham Lacrosse: leagues unfinished, awards not presented, our Tournament cancelled and more. Nonetheless, our decision to close (in line with PHE, England Lacrosse and CRSA) kept our membership, staff and families safe and well; that is our core responsibility in these trying times.

This past season has nonetheless been good. We have evaluated and bettered the value-for-money membership we have on offer. Our mini section is now coached by two fully qualified coaches and a team of junior coaches. We brokered our U12s friendly matches (sadly

cancelling the matches because of Coronavirus closedown). Our U13s and U15s performed amazingly well in their SE Junior League matches. The Firsts (15-18s) had training sessions from the England Senior Women's Head Coach (we're doing this next season too) and played well in Division 1 of the SE Ladies League.

What else have we had on offer for members? Our aim is to use fees to benefit the membership. So, we've had in-house goalie training, employed specialist coaches from Oodles Sport, offered Duke of Edinburgh accreditation within the club and trained our own junior coaches. Our coaching is structured, our coaches motivated by great pay bands, our umpires hired on good rates. Most of all, we listen and respond to our membership.

So, roll on 20-21. No whimpers. **Sheena Macrea**

Cobham Netball Club

Cobham netball started the season on a positive note with the arrival of new players from both outside of the club and junior players who transitioned into seniors. We also welcomed Jayne Booth as our new head coach for the 1st and 2nd teams. This season we ran four senior sides and a Vets team with the squads playing in the County, Kingston and Surrey netball leagues respectively.

As in previous seasons, we started off the season training as a group at St George's College and during the colder months split our training between the school and Brooklands college. As you can imagine this is not an ideal scenario for the club and throughout the season, we have continued our search for a suitable indoor venue which would allow us to train all together on one site. However an indoor venue with two good courts in a suitable location and available on the right evening is a real rarity. So, our search continues next season for this illusive all-singing, all dancing training venue.

Throughout the season, all the squads have

continued to train and play hard and have supported each other despite the loss of players to injury and pregnancy as well as people moving on. The real positive, as ever, is when players step up to the challenge of playing at a higher level than normal and demonstrate real tenacity and improvement in their play and, as chair of the club, I have been really pleased to see this throughout this season.

The arrival of coronavirus, as I'm sure with other sports, has presented a lack of clarity regarding how some leagues will conclude the season with games still outstanding. However, other leagues have decided to complete the season early. So, these are the current overall league positions for the teams - but these have not been officially confirmed.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the players, captains, coaches, umpires and committee members for their hard work and commitment to the club this season. **Louise Harburn**

Team	Kingston League	County/Surrey league
1st team	1st (Div 1)	*8th (County league)
2nd team	1st (Div 2)	6th (Prem A)
3rd team	1st (Div 5)	7th (Prem B)
4th team	6th (Div 7)	4th (Div 4)
Vets	4th (Div 6)	6th (Div 6)

*The Surrey county league have not yet announced whether they will continue with the league season and there are still three matches outstanding which could prove crucial to the 1st team knowing if they face a relegation playoff.

The Braemar Allstars Club

The club that is now Cobham RFC was formed in 1930 as Old Surbitonians RFC by the first group of school leavers from Surbiton County Grammar School for Boys. In 1949, as a memorial to those Old Boys who perished in WW2, the current site, known as the Old Surbitonians Memorial Ground, was purchased for £4500.

When Old Surbitonians RFC changed its name to Cobham RFC in 1989 The Braemar Club came into existence – its name coming from the name of a building at the old school – as both a supporter's club and an entity via which former players could keep in touch. Within its ranks there are still players of the 1940s and our clubhouse, 'The Peter Marsh Pavilion' is named after a long-time Club member and benefactor.

In 1995 Cobham RFC formed a vets / former players team and The Allstars Club was born – it goes strong to this day. Later, as players begun

'hanging up their boots' the Braemar Club opened its doors to them and thus The Braemar Allstars Club was formed.

As well as supporting Cobham RFC on the touchline, the Braemar Allstars Club seeks to help the CRSA with occasional donations to specific projects – the electronic scoreboard on the 1st XV pitch and the refurbishment of the old upstairs club office to form the Braemar Meeting Room are recent examples.

Most recently the members donated £750 to the Wounded Lions 500 Twickenham to Murrayfield bike ride in aid of the My Name's5 Doddie Foundation that raises funds for research into the causes of Motor Neurone Disease.

All former Cobham RFC players, as vets aged over 35, are invited and are very welcome to join our Club – please contact me.

Paul Hubbard, mail@paulhubbard.co.uk

