



Newsletter

Summer 2011

In very many ways it's been a successful season on and off the field. This newsletter celebrates our success across all the age ranges from seniors to Under 6 and aims to capture areas where we need to develop.

UPCOMING EVENTS

AGM – June 15th

At the **Annual General Meeting on June 15th** (7.00 p.m. for 7.30 p.m. at the Clubhouse), as well as the routine business of electing a new Board - though most current members will be standing again - there'll be an opportunity to reflect on where we are and where we want to be. You can find the agenda, nomination forms and 2009-10 accounts in the 'Documents section of the Club's website at:

<http://www.pitchero.com/clubs/haywardsheath/d/documents.html> - scroll down for the AGM papers.

Hope to see you there.

Masquerade Ball – July 9th

Only FOUR WEEKS TO GO and tickets for the **HHRFC SUMMER MASQUERADE BALL** on JULY 9TH are selling out fast.

If you have reserved a table or two please can you forward your payment by cheque made payable to HHRFC Limited and send to Gail Drage, 28 Western Road, Haywards Heath. RH16 3LP. Please supply us with your full postal address.

If you've not reserved your tickets, please let us know and we can try to squeeze you in. Don't miss out on a GREAT NIGHT.

Call one of the team: Gail Drage 07881485270; Sarah Fry 07977530663; Dan Vander 07793662616; Ellie Pritchard 07941959019

We also need contributions to the **Auction of Promises** that'll be held on the night. Use the above numbers to make your promises.

Wedding Bells – August 29th

Early congratulations to Charlie Fry (daughter of Sarah and sister to Dominic and Luke) who many will know from her work behind the Club bar, who marries Dan Fergusson, our Kiwi second row on August 29th followed by a reception at the Club. Looks like Dan will be around for a while!

OFF THE FIELD

Money

Our most recent published accounts for 2009-10 show a healthy position thanks mainly to the transfer of the final tranche of funds from the Supporters' Club, underspends on senior playing in that year and a good return on the Bar. That's given us a cushion this year to sustain a small operating deficit – a position we'll be aiming to turn positive in 2011-12 and to use some of the reserve to fund much-needed facilities improvement that will benefit all.

Many thanks to Mel Cook and Deidre Hope-Gates for their careful husbandry of the accounts and, to Tony Dalby for his work in finalising the end of year position.

The proceeds from the fiver raffle at each pre match lunch saw us donate £450 to St Peter & St James Hospice.

Club and Grounds

Generally good news too that we've been able to make progress on a number of fronts:

- In October, Nicholas Soames MP - our Club President - formally opened the **new car park** on Beech Farm Field. It has made a massive difference to traffic congestion and is also testament to an excellent working relationship with Cosmos FC. Many thanks to MSDC for their financial support and to Landscapes Ltd for their impressive work.
- If you've visited the Club recently you will probably have noticed the imposing **new floodlights** on pitch 3. They are state-of-the-art and a considerable advance on the old lights. As well as creating a much better-lit surface, they'll allow us to operate with two training areas, reducing the pressure on the existing training ground and the need to move off site - to Downlands for example for Mini and Junior training. We are very grateful to the RFU and HPC for their substantial financial support and to Rick Bruin (RFU) and Peter Mercer (Sussex RFU) for their continuing advice and support.
- There have been much-needed **improvements to the Clubhouse** – new radiators in the clubroom, WiFi, the ability to take credit and debit cards, a new plasma TV and projection facilities.
- In the **changing rooms** the showers have been re-tiled and the flow improved and, thanks to support from RBS and some self-help on our 'Clear Up and Improve Days' on June 11th/12th, the changing rooms have been painted and cleared and improvements made to the physio room, storage and the creation of an office and new club shop.
- On the field we continue to work with MSDC on **ground improvements** and, as well as the new lights and car park, you'll see permanent posts on two of the Mini pitches on Beech Farm Field.

Very many thanks to Pete Clark for his hard work on all the above and for his role in taking the Club further forward as a member of the Facilities Development Group (which includes expert input from Stephen Morgan, John Orchard and Brett Wharton). The group, working with Cosmos have been working on initial plans for a new clubhouse. Ambitious plans have been drawn but there's still much work to be undertaken on shaping those plans to reflect the needs not only of HHRFC but of other users of Whiteman's Green and, of course, on planning and funding such a much-needed development. Watch this space!

The Social Scene

Has been pretty lively and there's even more on the horizon for next year. We've enjoyed:

- The **Summer Ball** with 'In Yer Face' in July 2010 was a howling success with over 200 members and friends from across the Club enjoying a great night out in the marquee, for which many thanks to Murray and Mark Kallend for their continuing support.
- Two more marquee-based events in the spring with the annual **sponsors lunch** and, in the evening, almost 300 of us at '**The Spinettes**' night revelling in the music of the 40s and 50s.
- Smaller scale events such as the November **Quiz Night** and the **Halloween evening** were great fun – and raised money too!
- And, of course, before each 1st XV home game there's been the **pre-match lunch**. Many thanks to all the regulars. And we'll be looking forward, by theming a few more lunches (through the younger age groups for example), to other members and friends joining us next season.

Don't forget the **Masquerade Ball on July 9th** (see above) and watch out for the social calendar for 2011-12 on the website soon. It'll include some old favourites and some new ideas. If you have ideas yourself and/or would like to get involved in organising them, Gail Drage – to whom many thanks for her lead on the social side as well as her sterling work as Bar Manager - would be delighted to hear from you.

Our Sponsors

Our sponsors come in many forms and we're grateful to them all for the support provided to the Club. This isn't just the main sponsors such as HPC and Mansell McTaggart, both of whom will, thankfully,

be renewing their commitment next season, but a wide range of others - pitchside sponsors, programme advertisers, match sponsors, kit sponsors for teams across the Club. Without all this and more, we would be much more restricted in what we can do with a number of the very positive developments mentioned above being simply impossible.

We're all very grateful indeed for this support in whatever form it comes and whatever the amount. We're always keen to garner even more, especially in these difficult times for the economy, so please let me know if you can put us in touch with others who'd be interested in lending their support to HHRFC as we do our best to make a difference to the local community in the 'Big Society'!

Our Volunteers - You?

A big thank you again to all of you who are involved in any way, shape or form in managing, coaching, changing light bulbs and a host of other absolutely necessary activities that make Heath a great club. Rick Fieldwick is looking at ways of recognising the involvement of all our volunteers and, of course, involving even more people. More news later.

Alan Jenkins, Chairman

ON THE FIELD

Overall it's been a pretty good season. Each of the age groups from senior playing to the Under 6s summarise below where they stand at the end of 2010-11. Whilst there's been a lot of silverware filling the cabinet, one of the heartening features once again has been the massive participation in so many age groups – of young players and volunteers. The future of the Club on the field looks bright.

Seniors

After a tough time in 2009-10 the 1st XV (seen here in their final outing of the season at home to Portsmouth on April 16th) bounced back at the lower level, finishing in a creditable fourth place and playing some pretty good rugby en route. It was a very young side with an average age of barely 21 and some considerable potential for the future. It was great to see so many ex Minis, Juniors and Colts in the line-up, most of whom will be with us next season. The exceptions are Matt Walsh and Jake Henry, both off to university in Cardiff, Perry Parker, who's been recruited by Esher (see below) for their Championship campaign and Josh Burt who returns to Australia having joined Heath from Crawley last July. Thanks and good luck to all in their rugby careers which, let's hope, will see them all back at Heath at some point.

Thanks too to the coaching team of Adam Vander, Mick Orton and Jon Graham for their considerable efforts and to the physio (Barry, Andy, Ollie and Drew) and management team (Richard Swain, Eric Wash and Ali Travis) for their support. As many of you will know, Adam felt unable to continue next season and we wish him well for the future.



One of the biggest challenges is in addressing the diminishing player base below 1st XV level where it's often been difficult to field as many teams as we've been able to field in the past. Whilst this is currently a big issue for the game as a whole, we're working on Heath plans to improve this position.

Meanwhile, following the demise of the second team 'shadow league', the 2s will be returning to the RugbyTek Shield competition playing London Cornish, Hammersmith & Fulham, Old Reigatians, Rosslyn Park Hatters, Dorking, Brighton, Wimbledon, Guildford and Hove. The 3s will continue in Sussex 2 East where they finished in the top half last year.

On the website, you may well have seen the emerging plans for pre-season. If not, it follows:

'New Lead Coach, Mick Orton, has been busy putting together his coaching and support team to meet the challenges of the new season, opening with a tough game at recently relegated Basingstoke on September 3rd. Building on a talented group of young players, Mick - last year's forwards coach at Heath - is keen to maintain the positive momentum. His emerging team includes:

- A Level 3 coach, Mick Orton is a former staff sergeant in the Royal Engineers. With experience in various coaching roles – at Worthing including a successful spell as 1st XV coach, with England Deaf and London and South East Women, this year's national champions - Mick will also continue in his current day job as the Community Rugby Coach for Central Sussex working with schools and clubs in the area.

- Mick is joined by Adam Hopcroft, now teaching physics and coaching rugby at Hurstpierpoint College and in the Harlequins school of rugby. A Level 2 coach, Adam captained Bath University, propped for Bath and Leeds in the Premiership, Henley and Rotherham in the Championship and England Students. He may even put on his playing boots.

- Mick and Adam will be working closely with successful Colts coach Adie Winters who, having recovered from injury, will also be fit to play.

- Anna Hopcroft - yes, Adam's partner - will join the physio team with long-standing club member and chiropractor Sam Pargeter.

- Phoebe Hurrell will be the new 1st XV manager. A Level 1 coach and an ex Hove Ladies player, Phoebe teaches PE at Ifield School in Crawley.

With most of last season's side remaining and a number of promising new and returning players, the new team will have plenty to work with. Sadly though, last season's captain Perry Parker will be moving on. Perry has been recruited by Esher for their Championship campaign and moves to join other former Heath players – Roy Winters, Ben Broster, Joe Marler, Billy Twelvetrees, Ross Chisholm, Luke Wallace, Ben Maidment, Ollie Tomaszczk - in the Premiership and Championship. The first three have full caps and Billy is playing for the Saxons. We all wish Perry every success with Esher and, hopefully, will see him progress still further.

And, for your calendar, there's:

- touch rugby for all each Thursday evening until pre-season training starts on July 2nd and every Tuesday and Thursday thereafter.

- a two-day festival of rugby on August 6th/7th (more news very soon)

- warm-up games at home to Amersham and Chesham on August 13th and away to Havant on August 20th and,

- the first home league game will be the local derby against Hove on September 10th. Pencil in the trips to Basingstoke on September 3rd and to Guernsey on October 1st.

Bring it on!

Eric Walsh, Mick Orton

Colts

The Colts had a young Squad with many boys joining from last year's under 16's. Their youth did not deter them producing yet another successful season, but not quite making the finals yet again.

Playing in the East Sussex League they ended up undefeated, winning the League with nine straight wins, the highlight being the win at Lewes 29-26 (who went on to win the play-off final). Our semi-final against Brighton was lost 18-27 with 11 boys being unavailable due to school/Easter commitments. The semi-final of the Cup against Hove proved to be another close game with Hove winning 14-0.

Both games were won on the Guernsey Tour although we had to come back from 19-7 down at half time in the Sunday game (something to do with the night before?). Hopefully this link will be maintained as Guernsey 1st team have been promoted to the same league as our 1st team.

The following players have played for the seniors during the season;

Euan Greaves-Smith, Ed Marshall, Gavin Elliott, James Wright, Matt Pluckrose, Tomek Nawrocki, Sam Maynard and Dom Fry (who played regularly for the 1st XV towards the end of the season, including this try against Portsmouth in the final game).

This young side developed during the season with enormous help from Coach Adrian Winters who'll be continuing next season with many of the u17's and a large squad of u16's



Mike Travis, Team Manager

Under 16

Sunday the 27th March brought spring sunshine and youth rugby of the highest calibre to East Grinstead Rugby Club where Haywards Heath RFC Under 16's beat Heathfield & Waldron RFC Under 16's in the county Under 16 Final.

Having already completed an unbeaten league campaign with an enviable 39 league points out of a potential 40 and also having won 17 – 0 against Heathfield in the league earlier in the season, Heath were confident going into the match but not complacent.

Heath were worthy 17-0 winners and, having been the dominant side in the county throughout the season, they completed it as strongly as they started and were deservedly crowned County League and Final Champions for 2011.

Lead Coach Jon Graham later said "It was great to complete the league and cup double and finish the junior age group as the top U16 squad in Sussex. It was never going to be an easy game against Heathfield but our stronger skills and game structure pulled us through to a 17-0 victory. We dictated the game and had a far higher percentage of both possession and territory, which are statistics every coach enjoys."

The squad completed their Junior Rugby campaign with an enviable record having finished three seasons as county champions and appearing in every county final from U12 to U16 Perhaps most importantly, they developed a very strong group of players, most of whom will go on to play for HHRFC Colts in the forthcoming 2011 – 2012 season with eleven being offered rugby scholarships locally.

All involved were particularly delighted with James Chisholm's selection for England Under 16s and wish him well in what we're sure will be a great rugby future.

Rick Fieldwick, Team Manager

Under 15

The Under 15's have had a very challenging season, starting with the second weekend of the new season when we lost our new lead coach without warning, This was on the back of a poor (results) season the previous year and, as such, started a loss of boys to rival clubs, in particular Hove. However, squad development continued with the support of various club coaches and I would like to make particular mention at this point to Adam Vander; who after a conversation in the pub, stood up and took the boys under his wing and introduced Eric Liebenberg to the squad at our first League match. Eric was so impressed with the boys he took the squad on as Lead Coach.

What developed over the season was a squad who were always low on numbers, but who had Club and Squad loyalty, 100% commitment and dedication to their sport for the love of Rugby and not the pursuit of Glory. The squad numbers were gradually increased, but this also came at a price as many of the new players were new to Rugby or had had very little training. Results on the match field never went in our favour, but the spirit of the squad was unbeatable. We finally decided to pull from the A league to allow for positive squad development and recruitment. This paid off with the whole squad

being able to focus on their development and enjoyment of the sport rather than their next beating on the field.

The end of the season has seen our numbers crawl back up to 16 playing players (from a lowly 9 at one point) and a resounding and strong victory in the last match of the season. The defragmentation of the old squad has opened the door for new players who might not have been tempted to try the sport and bought in new blood to the club. It has developed the boys' characters and the squad as a tight-knit unit in ways that you wouldn't expect of 15 year olds. They, like myself, now look forward with some confidence to the 2011/12 season.

I would like to add a footnote to the above season summary. I would like it to go on record as a point of note that without the loyalty and hard work of a committed group of boys from the original squad, who have stuck with HHRFC, welcomed and developed new players and never turned their back on THEIR club, that it is very likely this seasons Under 15's would have folded completely leaving a void in the Club's development. The boys concerned are: Casper Brixey, Charlie Miller, Patrick Pritchard, Max Bergot, Jonathan Davies, Joel Bucket, Angus Harrison

It has been a difficult season with a positive end, thanks in no small way to the above boys.

Paul Pritchard, Team Manager

Under 14s

Having gained promotion to Sussex A last season, this season was always going to be a test to see whether we had fallen behind the best teams in Sussex, but also gave us an opportunity to put two sides into the league system, providing our B team players a chance to play regular competitive rugby for the first time.

The A team had tough exchanges in their first 2 league games, narrowly losing to Horsham and Hove in games that we should have finished off, but picking up bonus points all the same. At the same time the B team struggled to settle in their early games, losing heavily to Chichester and Pulborough, but managing to get some points on the board in the latter match to give them some confidence.

The A's followed up with three successive wins on the trot against Crowborough, Lewes and Heathfield while the B's won a thriller against Crawley (34 - 31), beating Midhurst and then losing out to an oddly over-strengthened Hove B. With both teams in third place, the run-in to the end looked promising, but losses in each of the next 2 games left both sides finishing mid-table, though with an overwhelming sense that a great deal had been achieved.

What is most pleasing is the growth and development of the B team and the players. This squad has competed hard and won some significant games, plus provided invaluable support to the A team when needed and blended well when we have played friendly/mixed fixtures.

Congratulations this season should go to James Francis, Max Filstow, Jamie Ure and Rhys Clarke have who have represented us at County level. Heath is the most represented team in Sussex, with Brighton and Worthing next with 2 each. Many more of our boys will go on to gain county honours - maybe higher - but we are equally impressed with boys who play the game every Sunday because they enjoy the sport, the friendship and the benefits that the game brings them.

Paul Crocker, Lead Coach

Under 13s



Haywards Heath U13s' main objective for this season was to gain promotion to the A league and they achieved this in a very convincing manner winning all six of their league games with 398 points for and just 5 points against.

Unfortunately, most of their league games were one sided affairs, but these were counter balanced by six friendlies against some of the A league clubs which were split into three 20 minute sessions allowing all the players to take part.

We currently have 34 players in the squad and have some very talented individuals, three of whom are in the Harlequins School of Rugby and a further nine who have been selected to attend the Sussex U14 trials next season. We also have lots of players who only started playing rugby this year and have great potential for the future.

Next season the squad will be split into As and Bs, with the As focussing on the league games and the Bs playing a series of friendly fixtures. We also hope to go on tour to Jersey at the end of March.

Mark Jenkins U13 Lead Coach

THE MINIS

Under 12s

Hello all and good-bye to another busy and fun packed season for the squad of 54 boys, who have gone from strength to strength in the 13 man game this season, the last of their Mini Rugby careers.

I start by saying how privileged I am at representing such a fantastic group of players, coaches, parents and supporters that make up such a great rugby club. There were a number of highlights throughout the season with both squads, Red and Blacks giving a good account of themselves in a number of tournaments both local and National.



Finalists Saracens Landrover Cup
Semi Finalists Wasps Landrover Cup
Quarter Finalists Braemar Cup

Blacks winning H Cup (B Team)
West Sussex Champions
Sussex Champions

Reds winning H Cup

A key success away from the tournaments was how easily both squads switched players in a number of friendlies and tournaments and went some way to achieving our goal of strength in depth for the combined squad.

The season ended well with us being crowned Sussex Champions and blowing away Brighton 25-0 in a truly awesome performance by the full squad. The tour to Abergavenny followed and was a fitting end to a thoroughly enjoyable and busy season,

Have a wonderful summer and note that there will be summer training starting soon to prepare us for the full 15 aside game and 50 minute matches next season.

Finally congratulations to the 7 boys selected for the Harlequins School of Rugby from our squad, Well done Lads!

Mark Newey Coach

Under 11s

The season wasn't our greatest and the silverware collection isn't bursting out of the trophy cupboard! There are good reasons for this but no excuses.

This year the U11s came up against size both at A and at B festivals. All squads moan about how they are the smallest on the circuit but I can hand on heart say that for our boys this is absolutely true. Many inches and even more kilograms were against the troops, which meant we had to play fast, mobile rugby and we had to try to stay away from contact situations as much as possible. What this produced was some truly spectacular champagne rugby with the play switching from side to side and many, many glorious tries scored as a team effort and most of these came from engineering space and stretching defences as the game should be played.

The scores we conceded were very few and always came from huge forward efforts against us and these, more often than not, came in the finals of the festivals we entered. Exhausted and battered, the boys would tackle anything that moved, destroy opposition moves and the line would hold but eventually size and weight would tell and a maul would crash over our line ending the battle. Blood, sweat and a few tears is what they gave for each other and that is the real triumph of our season.

The teams that beat us train as elite A and B squads and they train at least twice a week. It's their prerogative to do this but we trained as a unit, together and with full involvement of all who wanted to be there. Consequently we have more talent in depth, our boys play their rugby instinctively, as a team and they put on a show that other coaches and parents admire.

Size will equal out but skill, talent and teamwork will always be where our boys stand taller.....I am so very proud to have been involved with this bunch of lads.

Patrick Harrison Coach (moving with his family to Devon – very many thanks Patrick from us all)

Under 10s

Mixed emotions! The initial training sessions attracted up to 30 eager boys, and the entirely new coaching team had great expectations following some superb performances the previous season. Indeed, following cancellation of the Crawley Festival, the season kicked off well with the A's returning from the Chichester Cup as champions. The B's attended the Hastings Festival and put in a commendable performance, with all the boys getting a run-out.

A further few weeks of training passed before travelling to Saracens, where the A's came close runners up, losing 2-0 to Kings in the final. The boys were congratulated by the organisers for playing entertaining rugby, and the trip proved to be the highlight of the season. The B's attended Crowborough that day, and again were praised by the coaching team for their efforts.

November and December provided unwanted rest due to inclement weather, and a return to form proved difficult in the New Year. Our trip to Brighton for a triangular friendly with Lewes was well organised, quality training time, with both teams winning and losing matches. We welcomed Chichester to a training session and game at HHRFC and the game was abandoned at 9-0 due to the weather...with Chichester ultimately turning out to win the West Sussex Cup...they say as a result of the wakening!!!

The H Cup was a disappointment to the boys, losing to Hove who became their Achilles heel when losing 1-0 again in the semis of the West Sussex Cup. The second half of the season saw various friendly games and good performances by both teams, and the final outing at Worthing resulted in a close defeat to Cranleigh in the final. Cranleigh had in fact not lost in their previous 13 games, nor conceded a try (allegedly) but that was little comfort to the boys who had played their hearts out on a hot day and hard ground.



Sadly there are too many names to mention, but the following boys deserve further recognition:

A Team

Player of the Season – Louis Curtis

Most Improved Player – Hamish Ford

B Team

Player of The Season – Ed Ashdown

Most Improved Player – Thomas Audis

Summer sun, holidays and cricket will pass, and the 2011-12 season will arrive before you know it!!!!

Richard Batham-Read Coach

Under 9s

The 2010/11 season for the U9 age group was a season of transition making the big step from tag rugby to contact rugby for the first time - a new experience for both the coaches and the players. As is to be expected at this point in the players' rugby development there are some who don't enjoy the transition which meant that sadly, early in the season, we said good bye to a number of players. More positively we also welcomed some new boys into our ranks.

After the initial few weeks of training we played our first tournament, managing to field two squads for the Hastings and Chichester festival. Each gave a taste of what was to come in the rest of the season. For the B squad the challenge throughout the season was fielding a squad of enough players and for the A squad the challenge was turning great defence into tries. At Chichester the A squad were runners up - an excellent achievement so early in the season, in Hastings a Barbarians side found themselves up against strong opposition but put in a performance which parents and coaches alike were proud of.

The performance at Chichester was followed by another runners up place at Crawley where the boys relished a thoroughly muddy day in Somme like conditions needless to say the parents didn't quite relish the experience of washing the kit. Crawley was followed by winning the plate final in the Crowborough A festival. In each of these festivals the boys' commitment in contact was exemplary, as was their resilience and energy.

November saw the arrival of the cold and icy weather and a particularly frustrating trip to Harlequins with the games cancelled once we arrived due to icy conditions. Unfortunately this meant we were unable to complete in both this tournament and the Saracens cup which was also cancelled due to the snow in early December.

The New Year brought better weather and preparations for the big two, the H Cup at home and the West Sussex Finals.

The high point of the season was an amazing performance from the team playing in the H Cup winning all of their games and scoring 12 tries in 3 games without conceding a single point. The West Sussex finals proved a more challenging fixture with the team drawing in the second place final after strong performances in all their games not losing a single match but unfortunately coming second in our pool as a result of try count.

The season ended with a Plate final win at the Worthing festival followed by a very successful tour to a festival in Abergavenny in which the team narrowly lost their semi final by a "golden try" to the top U9 team in Wales after a very close game.

We're looking ahead to 2011/12 and also very much on the lookout for new recruits for the U10s next season - we would love to be able to put out a regular second squad to give all the players as much match experience as possible.

Andrew Scotland Coach



Under 8s

We started the new season full of hope and excitement with new players, additional coaches and a challenge to do better than the previous year.

Overall, the season was a roaring success. In addition to reaching the finals of almost every festival entered the squad were:

- Winners of the H Cup, Saracens Cup (see below), Heathfield, Chichester, Crowborough and Cranleigh festivals.
- Finalists for the Curtain Raiser Cup at Harlequins, narrowly getting to the final winning one and losing two, but only by one point in each game!



The Under 8's managed to do this whilst getting all available players participating in festivals and winning some silverware for them and the club - a truly huge achievement and testament to the quality of players joining HHRFC.

Next year we move into contact and I am sure the players will again build on their past successes and drive on to greater heights.

A huge thanks to the players, parents, coaches and sponsors for their support and encouragement last season.

Gary Slade Coach

Under 7s

It has been an enormously enjoyable season for the U7s with a squad of some 28 children learning the basics of this wonderful game that we all love. Their enthusiasm, determination and attitude has been exemplary, despite some pretty testing weather conditions at times. The season should be measured by so much more than simply silverware - despite having picked up more than our fair share of this - and the ability to read the game as it unfurls combined with developing the core skills for the future has been the children's greatest achievement. The emphasis has been on having fun and working together as a team - and making new friends.

We now have a group of players who enjoy coming to rugby each week to not only play but to see their friends. What has surprised the coaches has been just how much the children have developed as both individuals and as team players from when we first met them in September. Their ability to combine and execute so many new rules and tactics and to make their own decisions has been nothing short of amazing.

We have a group of players who are very hard to beat and their 'never say die' attitude, even from seemingly hopeless half time scorelines, has already been noticed and cited by opposing teams. We already seem to have a tough reputation. Players of all shapes and sizes have developed at different times and rates over the course of the season and often it is the less flashy players coming to the fore who have given the coaches the most satisfaction since these players have had to dig that much deeper.



Under 7 Red Barons (and friends)



Under 7 Back Knights

Our two teams have been the Red Barons and the Black Knights with children often playing at different times for both teams when required, with no complaint.

The Black Knights have won the Crowborough B festival with some all-round penetrative and tight defensive rugby and our Red Barons won both the West Sussex Cup and the H Cup and came Runners Up (by one try) in both the Sussex Final and the Chichester 'A' festival with some fierce defence and fiercesome fast-flowing, attacking rugby. With semi final qualification at the Harlequins Eithad Cup and quarter final qualification at London Wasps St George's Day Cup festivals the season has been full of close, competitive action and where the norm has been a winning outcome in the regular friendly match fixtures played over the season.

Truly we have been spoiled and it sets us up for an exciting second season of Tag rugby in September where no doubt the children's powers will again be raised to provide yet more great entertainment for the dedicated and wonderfully-supportive band of parents who I hope have enjoyed watching their offspring delight us week after week.

Simon Critchlow Coach

Under 6

Another successful year for the U6s - we had 58 registered players for the season and on a weekly basis approximately 40 children joining us for training. We attended one fixture/co-training session at Worthing RFC and we then reciprocated by hosting them at the end of the season. We enjoyed taking part in the Awards Day fun and games and the following children won awards:

Player of the Year U6 – Gus Toomer

Most Improved Player U6 – Zac Palmer

Best Tagger U6 – William Galbraith-Gibbons

Best Tag Avoider U6 – Wilf Batham-Read

Next year 38 of the U6s will be moving up to become the U7s under Lead Coaches, Dan Vander and Brett Wharton. The remaining U6s will be with Matt Griggs who takes on the role of Lead Coach for them. The Admin Manager for U6s will be Karen Jooste and for U7s Sarah Galbraith-Gibbons

A heartfelt thanks from Dan, Rob and Justine for all of the support given by our wonderful U6s parents during the season - we couldn't have done it without you and we appreciated your help enormously.

Justine James Manager