



# Hertfordshire Girls' Rugby



## Newsletter

May 2006

### A season to remember!

The Spring Bank Holiday finally brought to an end the busiest, and most successful, seasons ever for girls' rugby in the county.

Increased player numbers, success on the field at club, county and regional level, and to round it off establishing the county as home of one of

the country's biggest girls' rugby festivals – the 2006/7 season will have a lot to live up to!

Everyone will have their own individual memories, but among the highlights must be...



#### At county level...

- Nearly 100 girls attend county trials
- Herts U17s win region's first inter-county tournament at Hitchin
- U17 Sevens team win inter-county tournament at Wimbledon
- "Unofficial" U14 team also win regional tournament at Hitchin
- U17 A team beat Oxfordshire 1<sup>st</sup> XV!

#### At regional level...

- Twenty girls (thirteen U17s and seven U14s) from Herts clubs selected for East's regional squads
- Herts girls at core of most successful regional U14 team – ever.

#### At club level...

- Girls' rugby now available across the county – opportunities at Bishops Stortford, Cheshunt, Fullerians, Hertford, Hitchin, Letchworth, OAs, Saracens, Stevenage, and Welwyn

- A Herts club - Welwyn - dominant force in club rugby across the region.
- Welwyn U14s achieve regional "double" – champions at Rochford tens and Herts sevens
- Herts Sevens 2006, held this year at Letchworth, becomes one of the biggest festivals in the national girls' rugby calendar – and gets on TV too!

#### And at individual player level...

- More districts enter, and more girls play, at the Herts Youth Games' girls' rugby tournament than ever before.
- Seven girls from Herts clubs selected for RFUW national "Performance Development Academies" (PDAs)
- Herts RFU invites leading girls to participate in its "athlete support programme" for first time.

With thanks to all contributors, by most especially Mike Alcock, Amanda Bate, Phil Threlfall, and RugbyMatters.net.

Comments, contributions and suggestions for future editions to <http://hertsgirls.blogspot.com>

## Rugby big winner at Herts Sports Awards

Some familiar faces from girls' rugby were amongst the winners at the Herts Sports Awards (in association with Excel), held at Hatfield on 2nd May.

Seven categories were rewarded. Rugby picked up awards in five of them, and four of those were (wholly or partly) for girls' rugby!

**Community Coach of the year (female)** Vicky Lowe, (1<sup>st</sup>). *Vicky is the Girls U17 county coach, and also plays for Fullerians , helps with coaching there, and coaches Hertford women and coaches in schools.*

**Accredited club of the year** Hertford RFC (1<sup>st</sup>) *Hertford run both womens and a girls teams, the latter being runners up in Herts Sevens this year.*



**Community coach of the year (male)** Simon Shutler (2<sup>nd</sup>). *Simon is the U14 girls county coach, and also has coached many age groups, boys and girls and adults at Saracens. He also coaches in schools.*



**Junior Coach of the year (21 years or under)** Luke Williams (3<sup>rd</sup>) *Luke is the assistant coach to the U17 girls county team. He also coaches the junior girls at Welwyn RFC, and plays for the senior men's team.*

## Official county teams for all ages next season

County coaches for both age groups have now been appointed for next season, which means that there can now be official trials and selection for both the U14 and U17 sides.

The U17 coaches will again be Luke and Vikki, while the U14s will have three coaches with Simon Shutler (Saracens) as head coach, and Rachel Ansbro and Laura Broderick as assistants. In practice this is no major change as Simon and Rachel did much of the U14 coaching in the pre-Christmas period last year, and Rachel took the U14 County Sevens team to Wimbledon.

John Birch will remain team manager and press officer for the U17s and U14s.

The county does - however- need a fixtures secretary. If you are interested please contact Amanda Bate ([A.I.Bate@herts.ac.uk](mailto:A.I.Bate@herts.ac.uk)).

## “Super seven” selected for national PDAs

Seven girls from Hertfordshire clubs will all take one step closer to wearing a red rose on their chests following selection for this summer's RFUW “Performance Development Academies”.

For the first time the country's leading U14s will attend a PDA, and amongst those selected are Welwyn's Frances Dawson and Hannah Gallagher, and Claire Shutler from Saracens.

The U17 PDA will feature Fullers' Sarah McKenna, Sasha Acheson and Hayley Guilder from Letchworth, and Welwyn's Emma Cramphorn.



*Emma and Hayley on Anglia News – the first of many TV interviews?*

### Girls join Herts RFU's "Athlete Support Programme"

Hertfordshire RFU's "Athlete Support Programme" will be offering places to girls for the first time this summer.

These special training events for the most promising players will be held at Hatfield Sports Village on three dates in June and July, with a final event in December. Players and their parents will also get advice on nutrition and personal development.

Twenty places will be available - roughly half to last year's U14s and half to the U17s. Players and parents who have been selected will be notified shortly.

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### "Closed trials" for East Region in 2006/7

Selection for East's regional squads next January will now be based on "closed trials". This means that girls will have to be selected to attend trials by their county coaches, instead of anyone being able to simply turn up.

With both of its teams finishing in the top four for the second year running East is now the strongest region in English junior rugby. With so many talented girls available some form of pre-selection for trials is necessary and inevitable.

The formation of an Eastern Counties team (to cover girls from Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire) means that all girls will now be able to play county rugby – and the best girls from the three county squads will now be invited to attend regional trials.

This makes county trials in September and October, and the inter-county tournament in December (see "key dates" below), vital staging posts on the way to the regional team.

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### Grab a grant!

If there is one area where girls' sport has an advantage its in the area of grants. Most grant schemes see girls' sport as a priority area – did you know that boys are *six* times more likely to play a competitive team sport than girls?

Which is why these funds exist - to try to redress the balance, increase awareness and access, and raise participation.

One of the best sources for funding is the Local Network Fund (details to be found at [http://www.skillsforum.org.uk/Funds/LNF\\_herts.htm](http://www.skillsforum.org.uk/Funds/LNF_herts.htm)). Administered in the county by the Herts Community Foundation, LNF recently awarded over £6,000 to the county to support programme, and over £2,500 to Letchworth for its development work. LNF are keen to have more clubs apply for grants, and will help you complete your application.

"Awards For All" (see website for details - <http://www.awardsforall.org.uk/>) are another body worth contacting, though they tend to look for bigger, club level, bids, and Sportsmatch (<http://www.sportsmatch.co.uk/>) can double the size of any sponsorship money you raise. Also your local council may offer grants for clubs or individuals.

Filling in all the paperwork can take time, and the process if not quick – but as several clubs have found, its well worth it!

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### RFUW affiliation – you're not insured without it!

RFUW affiliation forms for next season will be dropping on many doormats around now – and its vital that you complete and return them as soon as possible. Some confusing and contradictory advice has been circulated recently, but the bottom line is simple:

- All club teams **must** be affiliated at each age group at which they play **or** coach (ie. U14, U17 *and* adult if players exist at all three levels);
- RFU affiliation **does not** cover girls' (age 12+) or women's teams;
- Adult RFUW affiliation **does not** cover junior teams;
- Clubs must **also** ensure that all girls' teams and women's are included on their "declaration of insured teams" submitted to the RFU; and
- Schools **must** be members of the ESRFU – but must **also** notify the RFUW about any girls teams

If you have not received your affiliation forms by the end of May contact the RFUW immediately, or download the forms from the RFUW website.

## One day in May



25 teams from eight counties, over 250 girls, TV cameras, and over eight hours of intense, competitive rugby – Herts Sevens really came of age on 14<sup>th</sup> May at Letchworth.

The threatened rain held off and teams from as far afield as Nottinghamshire, Norfolk, Essex, and London battled for the titles.

And our teams did very well. The U14 final was an all Hertfordshire affair, with Welwyn defeating Saracens, while three of the four U17 semi-finalists were from the county (though nothing Hertford, Letchworth and Welwyn could do could prevent Basildon taking the title over the border).

Anglia TV caught some of the action, which was shown on Sunday and Monday evenings.

More information, results, and photographs from the tournament can be found at <http://herts7s.blogspot.com>.

## Key dates for 2006/7

### County dates:

#### Training and trials:

17th September, 15th October, 12th November

#### Inter-county tournament:

3rd December

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### Regional dates:

#### Trials:

28th January

#### Training:

11th February, 25th February, 11th March, 18th March, 1st April, 22nd April

#### National Festival:

29th April

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### Club dates:

#### Beckenham festival:

8th October (TBC)

#### Rochford festival:

22nd October

#### National Knock-out cup

Qualifying: 19th November

Finals: 15th April

#### Hertfordshire Sevens:

20th May

#### National Sevens:

28th May

## For all the latest news of girls rugby in Herts...

A newsletter can only be as up-to-date as the day it was written – but things are happening all the time in the world of girls' rugby.

Following the success of the Herts 7s “blog” a new source of news has now been established – see <http://hertsgirls.blogspot.com>

Newsletters will continue to appear to coincide with key events, like trials and county matches, but to keep fully on the ball watch the ‘blog’!

And why not try setting up one for your own team – like the Letchworth one at <http://letchworthgirls.blogspot.com>. Its free, its easy, and it works!