

Essex County RFU Ltd
Annual Report on the Affairs of the Union
2003 - 2004

Foreword – Dai Davies President Essex County Rugby Football Union

The past year has been a momentous season for Essex Rugby. Since achieving our long term aim of Constituent Body status last July, the County has made great strides. We have been faced with great challenges which have been met head on and, whilst on a steep learning curve, we can be proud of the progress that has been made, both with increased administration and our successes where it matters - on the playing field.

Victories by the Senior XV against Somerset and Hampshire emphatically announced our arrival on the County Championship scene. The success, also, of the Eastern Counties XV, has shown that removing the logistical nightmares of the "old" Eastern Counties has benefited both new CBs. The new regional identities created have shown that our decision to "go it alone" has been entirely justified.

The "Sweet Chariot Tour" during March was another hit for the County. Organising eight very different events in little more than two days was a great credit to the management skills of Chris Dyer and the efforts of his hard-working volunteers. The visit of the World Cup to Magdalen Laver Church where Webb Ellis was Rector for many years was a unique occasion, and a personal highlight of a very successful "tour".

After 15 years, Mike Drinkwater is standing down as Hon Secretary. On behalf of the County, I thank him for his sterling service, not least for his guidance in the work leading up to our gaining CB status. He will, however, continue his important role as our CB representative on the RFU, and I am particularly pleased that he has accepted nomination for the role of President Elect.

Again, on your behalf, I would like to pay tribute to the enormous amount of work put in by the managers and coaches of the County XVs, schoolteachers, and all the other, often unsung, volunteers who do so much for our game. In addition to the representative games at all levels, there were 12 finals staged this past year. The support from the host clubs, and not forgetting the Referees Society, has been greatly appreciated.

My term of Presidency ends at the AGM in July when I shall be handing over to Mike Norris who has given great service to the County, along with invaluable support to me in his role as President Elect. I trust that he enjoys his term of office as much as I did.

May I thank you all for the privilege of serving as your President. I am also indebted to your Management Committee for all their endeavors, support and guidance. I trust that I can be of use to the County in the future, and took forward to the further progress of Essex Rugby during the coming season.

Dal Davies
President 2002-2004.

Report by President Elect – Michael Norris

Who could have envisaged such a successful and hectic first year as a Constituent Body. What a year it has been for County Rugby. Apart from our own County Competitions we also has to arrange many more County representative matches. First of all we had a pre match lunch at Westcliff before our first ever County representative match at U18's against Eastern Counties and then a post match player's dinner following the U20s games against Hertford and then Kent at Thurrock RFC. Both matches were well attended by members of our committee, players and spectators.

We had our first senior friendly against the RAF at Southend, where the attendance socially would have been far better had several people not been held up on the A13 that evening due to traffic accident. Once again our host club, Southend looked after us admirably.

Following the terrific win in Somerset in the County Shield, we came back to Essex to take on Hampshire at Thurrock, and once again we had a great turnout at the match and the post match player's dinner. In the Southern playoff we entertained Eastern Counties at Southend but though the match was lost it was good to see such a large turnout of spectators and supporters. I offer a big thank you to the committees and club members at Westcliff, Thurrock and Southend for their help and hospitality in hosting these games.

I would also like to give a big thank you to Westcliff, for hosting our Ruddles County Essex Senior Cup Final, Ilford Wanderers for hosting the Intermediate Cup, Basildon for a really great day hosting the Presidents Cup, and to Harlow, who hosted the Under 17s and U19's finals. Thank you to all these clubs for being so professional and helpful in the way they managed these events. I would also like to thank Ivor Smith for his invaluable help, Mike Drinkwater for sitting in at several meetings at various clubs, and Tony Guest as Chairman of Competitions.

I would like also to thank all those Team Managers who kept a good liaison with us so that the all the above could go ahead smoothly.

Last, but not least, it would appear that our first year will finish with a flourish at the Annual Dinner on 18th June, as we already have sold over 140 tickets. I now look forward to my forthcoming term as President and will try to get to as many clubs as possible during the season. Have a well-earned rest, gentlemen - it all starts again in September!

Mike Norris
President Elect

Hon Secretary's Report - Mike Drinkwater

Hon. Secretary's Report

When I reported last year, there was just one hurdle left to our application to become a CB and that was the RFU AGM. As you must know, that meeting gave us an almost unanimous vote in favour of our application.

Also, last year, I said that I would carry on for a 15th year as Hon. Secretary to help with the transition to Constituent Body. With that done, I am happy to pass the baton over to Ivor Smith, who must accept the credit for gaining Essex its CB status.

The work load for a CB is massive, particularly for a new CB trying to catch up, and the RFU really must look at the amount of information it is calling for from CBs. As an IT expert, Ivor is well-placed to deal with the many demands made on CBs but he will need support from the rest of the Management Committee.

It has been a privilege to see Essex teams playing in the national competitions. Our U20s and seniors did us proud with the U20s only losing one match and the seniors winning their pool. Other people will report on the detail of these campaigns.

We have seen a change in sponsor this year and we are being well looked after by Greene King and Ruddles County. Clubs are asked to give our new sponsor every consideration. Their product is excellent!

The RFU is going electronic from 1st July 2004 and will be using club pages for all information about clubs and club officers. If you are not up-to-date the wrong people will get all the RFU information!

This year we lost Clive Gildersleeves, a great servant of the game through the Essex and Eastern Counties Referees Societies. He was an ever popular figure around Essex. Scott Liebenberg our former County Coach. Joe Sullivan from Basildon, and Howard Hartley from Chingford will also be sadly missed.

I closed last year by saying "What more can England do apart from winning the World Cup?" Let us take full advantage of their win and produce more players at every level.

Mike Drinkwater
Hon. Secretary

Hon Treasurer's Report – Eugene Walsh

Financial statement will be presented at the AGM

Playing Development – Chairman Peter Howard

Our first year as a Constituent Body – and what a year it has been. It really has flown past and as you will see below our youth and senior teams have had an immediate impact on the County scene. The reports make impressive reading and behind each one of them is a dedicated team of Volunteers who have managed, coached and developed our County's youngsters. To each and every one of them involved in our County sides I would like to say publicly how grateful the management committee of Essex County RFU and I, are to them.

This season has seen one or two changes in our opposition at most age groups. Gone are the sub-county matches and in their place have been matches against other CB's in which we have either held our own or excelled. This all bodes well for the future and we are now recognised as a County to be wary of.

One noticeable improvement this season has been the work that has taken place in Primary and secondary schools all over the County through the support of Active Sport partnerships and the work of our own RDO Matt Davies and ARDO Chris Green in Inner London. They, together with many of our club coaches are bringing the game to many more youngsters in our local Communities and are building bonds between clubs and schools which should ensure the long term stability of the clubs and the game in Essex.

In May 2004 the County adopted the recommendations of the RFU Schools, Students and Youth Rugby review by renaming the Playing Development Committee the Constituent Body Rugby Development Partnership. This Partnership between the clubs and schools mean that both strands will be working together in developing the County's youngsters and will also provide a single pathway to representative Rugby for those who show the potential.

Perhaps the greatest display of youth Rugby comes during the inter club and inter school age group competitions. This year we saw an excellent display of U19 and U17 rugby at Harlow with Old Cooperians winning the Colts final and Romford the U17s. Romford also won the U16's final beating Brentwood. In the U15's final Brentwood were unlucky once again this time coming up against Westcliff. In one of the most exciting finals I have seen for many years Chingford just pipped Thurrock to the U14 Dennis Russell Trophy and in the U13's festival at Rochford it was Barking's turn to take the spoils.

To get to these finals, the teams had to progress through the other rounds of the competition against equally determined and well coached sides. The strength of youth rugby in Essex is amazing. Steven Jay and Adam Powell have represented England at U18 level and we could well be looking at one or two of our youngsters from the younger teams putting on that England jersey in the future.

To all the coaches, managers, parents and especially the players I would like to say thank you for all your efforts this season and hope that you will continue to enjoy this great game of ours.

Peter Howard

County Senior playing report – Manager Alan Stobbs

It gives me great pleasure to bring you an annual report that is full of positives.

The season started in November with our traditional fixture against United Banks. The opposition has struggled, in recent years, to field a competitive side in this early-season outing and this season was no exception. We won 93-0, but the selectors were still able to pick out one or two new players who showed potential for the squad.

After Christmas, we played the RAF and without our senior players available due to league commitments, we lost 10-31.

It was apparent that we would not be in a position to field our strongest side until later in the season, so we cancelled the planned fixture against Hertfordshire.

When we were able to secure the release of players from the senior clubs, we assembled a strong squad for a number of sessions, immediately prior to the County Shield competition. These sessions proved invaluable as we went to Somerset and recorded our first victory in the competition, 31-21. Unfortunately, we lost Paul Ansell with an injury and he was to play no further part in the competition.

A week later, we took on Hampshire and managed to secure top spot in our pool by beating them 23-20. This set us up for an eagerly anticipated semi-final against Eastern Counties. The Counties side, consisting mainly of North Walsham players, managed to beat us 15-32, through the power of their strong pack. We all learned some lessons that day, but we were by no means disgraced and the final score flattered them somewhat.

Although disappointed with this loss, we were left with an opportunity to gain promotion to the County Championship proper, with a play-off game away to Oxfordshire. Again, we were without key players, partly through injury but partly because the date clashed with a 7's competition in Holland. This was not helped by the RFU changing the dates of the play-offs and the other rounds of the competition. We lost that game 52-22, but again we were not disgraced.

We are left with a great deal to build on next season. We proved that we are worthy of our CB status, and the two wins we had, against strong opposition, coupled with Eastern Counties' achievement in reaching the Shield final, proves that the two parts are stronger than the whole.

I am grateful to Thurrock RFC, for providing us with excellent training facilities for all of our squad sessions and for hosting the fixture against Hampshire. Thanks are also due to Southend RFC who hosted our fixture against Eastern Counties, at very short notice.

I am indebted to the management committee, who have supported the team throughout, both in terms of finance and by attending all of the matches to encourage the players. We could not have achieved any of this without the commitment of the players, especially Gary Smith, our captain. I am also very grateful to the coaches who released players for the various games and training sessions. I hope that the experience has given the players the desire to do even better next year.

Last, but not least, I thank my management team of Keith Green, Ged White, John Williams and Ivan Loftman for their continued support of me, and the players. It is with regret that I report that Keith will not be part of the team next season, due to his other commitments in rugby. I thank him for his contribution to county rugby over the last 10 years (and his stash).

Watch this space.....

Alan STOBBS
Manager, Senior XV

Essex County U20's - Neil Mitchell

Essex having become a CB this season entered the R.F.U.'s Tetley U20's Championship for the first time.

In preparation for this a selection process was entered into whereby the county's clubs were invited to nominate eligible players to attend training sessions and a final trial game to enable the coaches to select a squad of 25 to 30 players for the championship matches. The initial response from the clubs was disappointing as only a minority nominated players, however after chasing clubs for nominations a squad of 25 players were selected for the championship.

In the beginning, as with all new ventures, we were apprehensive as regards to our ability compared with that of established CB's. Our apprehension was dispelled within 10 minutes of the start of our first match against Hertfordshire at Thurrock when two brilliant tries were scored. Essex won the match 41-0 and thus making an immediate impact on this level of rugby.

A fortnight later we played the Army U20's at Aldershot. Essex started with a bang going up 10-0 in 8mins. However the Army came back into the game but in the end Essex ran out winners 11-15.

Kent came to Thurrock a month later and this was always going to be the hardest fixture as they had played all the other sides in the pool, beating them convincingly. Essex was always on the back foot in this match going down 0-14 early on but showed considerable resolve to push them all the way only to lose 16-24.

Having lost to Kent, the route to the knockout stages was closed but with Essex's final match being against Eastern Counties, pride was very much at stake. The whole team made that extra effort and we ran out winners by 20 points to Nil.

Throughout the Championship, London Division graded the players. This led to 8 of Essex players being invited to the trials. These players were:

- Ian Rudgeley (Upminster)
- Kit Branch (Westcliff)
- Tyson Lewis (Basildon)
- Jody Wheelhouse (Exeter Chiefs)
- James Kellard (Woodford)
- Craig Sullivan (Saracens)
- David Hiles (Upminster)

Unfortunately Craig Sullivan was the only player to miss out, but he still has 2 years at this level his time will come. All the others were selected to play for London Division against the Midlands and James Kellard of Woodford, the Essex Captain, was selected to captain the Divisional Side.

At the end of the season both James Kellard and Ian Rudgeley went on to earn their County representative ties with the Senior XV in the RFU Tetley's County Shield campaign.

Finally I would like to note my thanks as Manager of the side, to a number of people and organisations:

1. Thurrock RFC for allowing us to use their club facilities as our base.
2. The Referees Society for supplying the referees for our fixtures
3. Essex Committee members provided assistance to me this season and in particular Mike Norris and Ivor Smith who took most the burden in arranging the venues, travel arrangements, meals, programmes and sponsors for match days.
4. My Coaches Tim Hughes (Thurrock), Ged White (Woodford), John Williams (Chingford), and Dave Redfern (Maldon) for the work they put in with the players.
5. Alan Stobbs (Senior Manager) for providing playing kit
6. The Clubs for providing the players
7. The players for giving their time and dedication, in providing Essex an Under 20's side to be proud of in our 1st season.

Neil Mitchell
U20's Manager

Essex County RFU U17's - Andy Mason

The season 2003-2004 can only be described as an outstanding success for the Under 17's in another difficult year. It began with the majority of the players being asked to play in the Under 18 divisional championship and whilst there were many notable performances wins were hard to come by. However 4 players made it to the divisional squad and 2 to England.

The decision was made by the coaching staff and myself, that instead of holding formal trials, potential Essex players would be identified at club level and invited to attend training sessions with a view to playing in the development side in the fixtures that had been arranged. This meant that we were able to identify players with the right attitude and commitment at an early stage and ask them to play in "real games" instead of playing against each other in training matches.

In all some 35 players were seen and all attended at least 2 training sessions and it was generally accepted that by the end of the 4 games played that the management would be able to select the best 22-24 players for the Under 18's divisional championship in the 2004-2005 season.

Whilst it is generally accepted that results are of paramount importance, in my opinion player development rates just as highly. As has been proved by the results, Essex have a competitive squad of players who are all better players from the experience of receiving quality coaching and playing against quality opposition. Indeed some have been transformed from “potential players” into “county players”

It has been noted that the Under 17's has been a particularly talented age group however the need for a structure and game plan had to be implemented so that all players were comfortable with what we were trying to achieve.

Whilst all the above is positive there are still problems that have to be addressed, namely some clubs still arrange games throughout the structured season on development days and deny their own players the opportunity of playing for Essex.

In summary please find below the results of the Under 17's

Essex 12 Surrey 12
Sussex 22 Essex 27
Hertfordshire 0 Essex 5
Eastern Counties 0 Essex 27

With the introduction of the CB Rugby Development Partnership, joining clubs and schools, I have no doubt that Essex will be in a strong position to improve on last season's performance and have greater representation at the divisional trials next season.

Personally I'd like to thank the coaching staff for their excellent support and for their wholehearted support of the people who are important, namely the players.

Andy Mason
Under 17's Manager

Essex County RFU U15's - Adrian Peters

- 97 players were reviewed during the 2003/4 season
- The squad contained representatives from 13 Essex Clubs
- 14 new players joined the Squad during the course of the season
- 8 new players represented the County
- a Core squad of 48 players was maintained throughout the season
- Average club representation for each county match was 11
- The Kestrels played 5 matches, won 4 lost 1
- The Eagle played 4 matches won 1 lost 1 drawn 2
- U15's Tens Squad won the Inter Counties Ten's Festival at Thetford
- U15's Tens Squad came 3rd in the Royal Sun Alliance National U15's 10-a-side Festival at Rugby.

The U15's program, completed this year, consisted of six full squad training sessions and five full county matches which exposed over ninety players to the county rugby experience. Feed back from the club coaches and the parents leads us to conclude that even for those who failed to make the grade the experience was positive and valued.

In terms of full County fixtures the Essex U15's have delivered a highly commendable set of results for the year:

Kestrels		Eagles	
Sussex A	(W) 29 – 10	Sussex B	(D) 18 - 18
Surrey	(L) 12 – 44		
Kent A	(W) 12 – 5	Kent B	(D) 15 – 15
Middlesex A	(W) 27 – 14	Middlesex B	(L) 0 – 22
Oxford A	(W) 34 – 0	Oxford B	(W) 12 – 5

Essex started the season in the same manner they concluded last year with a win and a draw away to Sussex at Hove. It was a positive start to the season and provided a platform from which we hoped we could further develop for the rest of the season.

Our next fixture was away at Dorking against Surrey. However this match proved to be a reality check for players and coaches alike. The Kestrels experienced their first serious defeat in two years and were outplayed by a superb Surrey team that proved their number one ranking in the UK later in the season.

Kent's return to Goresbrook was the second time these teams had met and Kent left frustrated again with Essex finishing ahead for the second year in succession.

The match against Middlesex was also held at Goresbrook with expectations of a win in both games. A lack lustre performance, for whatever reason, by the Eagles produced their first defeat of the season.

In the final fixture away to Oxfordshire everything finally clicked for both Essex teams. The Eagles had worked hard on their game since losing to Middlesex and Oxford struggled against a powerful forward performance. The Kestrels finally stepped up several gears and played to their full potential.

Tens Rugby:

The U15's had the honour of being the first squad to represent Essex in the Royal Sun Alliance national U15's Festival held at the Rugby School in Warwickshire. Twenty-one players were involved in the squad that formed to train for the competition with sixteen players finally being selected to represent the County. Needless to say the commitment by this group was outstanding and the final selection was hard.

Having won a pre-nationals tournament at Thetford in April against the other London North CB's, confidence was high. After two days of highly competitive rugby we unfortunately lost to Surrey in the semi-finals but beat our old rivals Lancashire for third place in the playoffs. I would love to know how they made the draw!

The National Tens is a fantastic experience where you get to play the best in the Country. It is a great pity that this only occurs for the U15 year group and a great indication of the quality of rugby that could be produced in a national county youth league.

I believe the U15's squad is very well positioned to fully exploit the changes in the game that take place in the U16 group which will suit their style of play. The expectations for the 2004/5 season are therefore very high.

As a result of their efforts this season thirteen members of the U15 Squad have been nominated to join three of their Essex colleagues who are already in the Saracens development programme at the Saracens U15 summer camp.

On behalf of the coaches and myself I would like to thank the U15 coaches and parents for their continued support to the programme this year. Our congratulations to all the players and we look forward to welcoming you back next season.

Adrian Peters

Essex County RFU U14's - Ian Cleveley

Trials began in November consisting of 2 area trials at Brentwood and Southend followed by a final trial at Coopers school. Prior to the area trials every club within Essex was contacted by phone by me directly.

The squad selected amounted to 26 players in total and these were given a fairly even chance to perform in the four County matches played.

The opening game was at Hertfordshire away in which the squad played well against a 'B' side. I was a little disappointed with Hertfordshire for fielding a 'B' side and made my feelings known to Mike Wood at the time.

The second game showed the squad how far they needed to progress when they were beaten heavily by a well drilled physical Lancashire team at Thurrock.

Their next game at home to Hertfordshire showed a lot of improvement and the side started to play the kind of rugby that head coach Matt Davis and I were looking for.

Lancashire away was the final match of the regular season. The squad travelled away for this game and stayed overnight. The performance the following day was in complete contrast to the earlier fixture between the two sides and the squad were very unlucky to have lost by a few points.

The season finally ended with a successful unbeaten tour to the West and South West of England in which the players had the chance to get to know their team mates a lot better.

Roll on next season.

Ian Cleverly

Essex County RFU U13's - Graham Venn

The coaching team ran a number of sessions around the county during the autumn which were open to schools and clubs. The team also spent a considerable amount of time viewing school and club matches in order to choose 60 boys to work as a development squad. In total about 180 boys attended sessions.

Once the development squad was established two coaching sessions were organised without making any changes and 10 were asked to take leave from the squad until certain deficiencies had been worked on and with this reduction 10 new potentials were invited along.

We now have a programme through the summer to continue the development in order to establish an Essex U14 team and a development squad for 2004/2005.

RFUW

During the past year, Ladies and Girls rugby in Essex has really gained momentum. This season has seen many, quality fixtures in the county. These range from the first ever Essex girls (U16) county game, [Essex 15 Kent 9], a visit to Basildon by Heidelberg [19-36 to Basildon] to Regional rugby for many of our Essex young ladies.

This year Essex was represented by 9 girls playing in the Eastern Region squad, reaching the final for the first time ever. Two girls were selected for the England Performance camp at Loughborough University and our senior Ladies are attending PDA trials in July.

On the clubs scene the Basildon U16's finished 3rd in the country at the recent National 7's at Newcastle and the work being done in Schools is at last paying off with increasing numbers of girls seeking to continue to play contact Rugby. This is however causing a problem as not all clubs have the facilities or organisation to cater for these girls

We have had major financial commitments from private sponsors. Lots of very positive press brings in money and new players and with the establishment of Romford and Gidea Park Ravens and a ladies team at Braintree, Essex can certainly look forward to further progress next season.

All in all a very good season.

Disability Rugby.

In my role as Community Rugby Development officer for Basildon I have been involved with Patric Redding of Westcliff in a Disability Rugby project funded by the Children's Fund of Essex County Council and supported by the Youth Development Committee of Essex County RFU. I would like to report that this project has brought enormous fun and fulfilment to a group of children who would

otherwise have not been included in the County's rugby programme. Most of the sessions take part in schools or at the clubs involved. The children have also had the opportunity to take part in a demonstration of disability rugby during the Sweet Chariot tour and at the Essex Youth Games.

As a result of this activity Stephen Eastwood of Sport England visited a demonstration of the project at Westcliff RFC and the Essex project is now being viewed as an example of best practice in Disability Sport by Sport England. I would like to thank Dominic Everett the Essex County Council Disability Sports Development officer for getting this project off the ground and for his continued support of it. If any other club would like to join in or receive advice then they are most welcome to get in touch with Patric or me

Wendy Le Grave
Community Rugby Development Officer (Basildon)

Essex County Schools Rugby Football Union – Bob Whittle (Hon Sec)

Having made the decision to play as a District Union for the current season the traditional pattern of area and final trials took place in late September and early October. Nominations for trials were received from both member schools and clubs.

15 Group

Four area and two inter area trials led to a final trial at Coopers Coborn School. Numbers seemed to be down on previous seasons at the first round of area trials. However, with the final trial complete a squad of twenty five players was selected to represent the county. All attended a squad session held at Coopers Coborn School. The three autumn term fixtures were completed with wins against Cambridgeshire 29 – 5; Norfolk 15 – 10; Suffolk 30 – 13.

It is of interest to note that some fourteen boys had attended the Essex U14/15 development sessions. Non Dev. Squad players were invited to attend future U15 D.D. Thanks are recorded to Tony Richards, Paul McManus and Michael Eyres for their management and coaching commitments. (Subsequent results V Sussex A XV W 10-29, B XV D 18-18: v Surrey L)

16 Group

Whilst Essex representation remained a pathway to Eastern Counties selection a new system had been put in place for 2003/4 season. Players identified from last seasons U15 successful Essex squad attended E.C. development sessions in September. These players, eighteen Essex representatives, were excused from the County trial system being invited straight to the EC final trial in October.

Meanwhile the normal half County area trials took place with a final trial at Coopers Coborn School. A squad was selected and attended a midweek session before playing Norfolk at Culford School in October. They won 48 – 0!! Remember, that's without the boys already attending the EC development session!

As a result of that game a further eleven players were invited to the final EC trial, a record twenty nine in all! Of these, fifteen were selected for E.C. who played their first game V Middlesex Schools winning 22 – 0. A further seven players represented EC B XV hurriedly put together to play Kent B XV. EC won 26 – 10. Further wins recorded against Hampshire 42 – 12; V Hertfordshire 14 – 13. The B fixture V Herts. was also won.

After such a successful season EC players attended the Div. Trial in numbers resulting in seven being selected for the first Div. weekend. Of these Gareth Hoadley (Wm de Ferrers), Adam Capper (Gt.Baddow), Nick Treadwell (Shenfield HS), Leon Gateson (Wm de Ferrers) and Tom Coxhall (Saffron Walden CHS) are Essex players. All were involved with the England 16G Dev.Squad; N.Treadwell played in all three 16G Internationals; three of the mentioned represented England 16G A XV; Hoadley played only for the Millfield Festival B Squad.

Thanks recorded to Jon Robert, Michael Eyres & Paul McManus for their management and coaching at both levels. A whole series of 16G development fixtures have been played at both A & B level.

18 Group

Regretfully only a handful of nominations were received for a trial/development session in late September. As a result no side was fielded at a round robin EC Festival played at Swaffham. NB five Essex schoolboys represented 18G. (W2, 1 cancelled) Tim Saull (Bancroft) was the only Essex Divisional final trialist. He later attended a 1st.Jan. trial and was selected for the Division.

A development squad of year 12(LVI) players was identified via a member schools notice; not a great response, however, a squad played an EC Dev. Squad at Colchester RFC. All involved found it a worthwhile exercise.

Tournaments

An U17 X aside tournament took place in late September when Coopers Coborn beat William De Ferrers S. in the final.

The Schools Day at May & Baker, with thanks, proved to be a successful day. Thanks to WC, ME, AR, PS and others involved on the day.

Results:	U13	Alan Lewin Trophy	Gt.Baddow HS bt St.Martin's S
	U14	Mike Dargon Trophy	Saffron Walden S bt Gt.Baddow HS
	U15	KO Trophy	William de Ferrers S bt St.Martin's S
	U15	Plate	Not completed
	U16	Chairman's Trophy	Campion S bt Saffron Walden S.
	U15	Seven Aside Tournament	St.Martin's S bt Helena Romanes S

Once again our thanks must be recorded to Bill Coley for his administration and patience in organising and collating the progress, including the finals, of all tournaments.

Honeywood School, Coggeshall and Robert Clack CS, Dagenham, represented the county in The Emerging Schools Festival. Robert Clack progressed through their pool to win their quarter final which led to an appearance at Twickenham (Army/Navy Day). Regretfully they lost their semi final game to Norton Hill S, Somerset.

Ongoing dialogue has taken place throughout the past year between the Schools and Senior Union. With the implications of the SS & Y Review to be considered; the formation of a CB Development Partnership for next season; co-operation and integration continues albeit only with the goodwill of the personnel involved.

Grateful thanks are extended to all parties who have helped complete a successful season. Teacher/coaches; host schools and clubs; the Essex Referees Society; St.John Ambulance; and finally, the committee.

Bob Whittle
Schools

Competitions - Tony Guest

Fortunately the season was not troubled too much by inclement weather and most games in all the Essex competitions went ahead without a hitch. There were a few problems. Success in the RFU cup competitions (a problem?) saw a few clubs running out of dates to play certain rounds of Essex Competitions and a few postponements of other competitions also meant that Essex Competitions took second place. Unfortunately there is no sign that the lack of dates will be eased, in fact some clubs will find they have to play more league games next season, cutting down available dates for County cups even further.

A sad note for 2003/4 was the cancellation of the Essex Sevens. Early in 2004 a simple questionnaire was sent to all Essex clubs. Less than ten clubs replied and only four said that they would be entering the sevens. With this level of support – a majority of clubs apparently saying that they “couldn’t be bothered to tell us they couldn’t be bothered” – a senior sevens competition was not viable. Only a few clubs entered the Colts Cup so there was little scope for a Colts sevens to run on it’s own.

This season the finals of some competitions were among the best ever. Of particular note was the afternoon of the U14 & President’s Shield finals. Both games were very close; the U14 final won by only two points and the Shield final by the last kick of the game.

One thing that is clear, is how much a host club can benefit financially from the effective running of a finals day on behalf of the County. We have never asked for accounts but we hope to share more “good practice” to make future finals days even more successful.

Congratulations to all clubs who won our finals and I hope that all clubs, which entered, enjoyed the experience. For many players an appearance in a County final at any level will be the pinnacle of their rugby career and I believe that we must find space in the crowded season for County competitions in the future.

With the elevation of Essex to Constituent body status, the County took responsibility for League competitions. The leagues previously known as Eastern Counties South became the Essex Leagues. In the London leagues, 4NE had an Essex champion but London 1 lost it's only Essex club with the relegation of Harlow.

Len Hymans is the County's League representative on the London Competitions Committee and he has worked very hard to ensure the smooth running of the leagues at all levels. The four Essex clubs which were champions of their leagues will have been presented with County plaques at the annual County dinner by the time this report is published.

The two second XV Cups were strongly supported and the BL Merit Table continues to provide competitive rugby for teams of all levels, which desire it. All in all, Essex must have one of the most comprehensive competitive structures of all the English CBs.

My thanks to Mick Norris who has worked tremendously hard to organise the venues, to Eric McLaughlan and the Essex Referees Society and to all who have contributed towards the organisation and running of the Essex competitions.

Tony Guest
Chairman of Competitions

Essex Clubs BL Merit Tables – Alan Gold

This is the first year that the BL Essex Clubs Merit tables have been asked to contribute to the Annual report of the Essex County Rugby Union. It shows that the merit tables sponsored by Brian Larman of BL Office Systems have really been accepted into the Constituent Body.

Last season the BL merit table provided competitive rugby for junior clubs first teams who were not in the Essex Leagues, second teams, third teams, fourth teams and even fifths. We divided them up into 5 divisions of eight clubs. Though most of the clubs taking part fulfilled all their fixtures there were occasions when some did not. However it is hoped that during this coming season with more structure to the tables clubs will reap the benefits of playing in our Merit tables.

The Division winners for last season were:

Division 1	Romford & GP II
Division 2	Romford & GP III
Division 3	Writtle Wanderers
Division 4	Old Bealonians
Division 5	Bancroft II

Congratulations to the winners and our commiserations to the runners up – there are no losers in our divisions as every one has gained by participation. Next season, our 18th, looks as though we shall have six divisions each comprising of 10 teams taking part. Another innovation will be the scheduling of fixtures so that all clubs will know what games they are playing throughout the season.

Alan Gold
Chairman

Discipline - Gerry Mansfield

As we put the season to bed I would like to give an overview of the last 9 months from my prospective. I am pleased to report that cases we have had to deal with are significantly down on last season. Hopefully this means that most clubs and players alike are getting the message, and that discipline both on and off the field is paramount.

I must add that everything is not as rosy as at first seems. My committee has had to deal with an alarming number of cases involving ABUSE aimed at referees, both from players and spectators alike. This, both I and the RFU feel is totally unacceptable and will continue to be dealt with severely.

I would like to take a moment to thank all the club Disciplinary Committees throughout the County for their support and urge them to keep up the good work, however there is still a long way to go before we start congratulating ourselves. Whilst I am thanking people, I must give a special thanks to my committee, Lawrence Crispin, Simon Wakefield, and Ivor Smith for all their hard work, time and effort.

My aims for the coming season are to see a further reduction in reports and an increase in the willingness of clubs to keep their own houses in order.

Finally I would like to make myself available to any club seeking advice on matters of discipline.

Gerry Mansfield

Referees Society – Eric McLaughlan

The increased activity brought on by the newly won CB status with the county having its own games rather than as part of the Eastern Counties umbrella was the new feature of the season and by and large was managed very well by the society. The hiccups occurred when county games were made in the short term and at times (mainly in youth games), it seemed that it was almost an afterthought to request referee cover. To a degree, this was repeated when we were not always in the loop for rearranged league games. An exception was in the cup competitions and thanks must go to Tony Guest for his efficiency.

Fewer club games and those that are cancelled during the season is a national problem but the latter does mean that there continues to be extra administration in reappointments to keep referees occupied.

While numbers remain relatively healthy, referees, like players, do have a shelf life. Whilst all leads supplied by the RFU are followed up, less than 1% actually come for interview with even less ultimately "taking up the whistle" so there does seem to be a niche for a positive approach to the clubs for this society by the county and its' committee members so that there is a constant supply of new blood.

Eric McLaughlan

Public Relations - -Ivor Smith

The role this year has covered a multitude of tasks mainly in support of my colleagues on the other Committees. Concentration has this year been focused on communication between the CB and its member clubs especially through the increased use of electronic mail and the web site. Judging from the speed of responses and number of queries received I would say that we have definitely improved in this area.

The Essex Rugby web site at www.essexrugby.com still provides an invaluable source of information for all those seeking information about EssexRugby and during the season averaged over 800 hits per week. The site is being revamped over the summer to provide even more relevant and current up to date information. The downside to this has been a lack of opportunity to publish "In Touch" for those members and Patrons who do not have access to the Internet – yes there are still a few. The answer may well be to seek an aspiring editor to help out with this publication.

The weekly results are now sent out electronically every Saturday night and most secretaries should receive them by 9pm, in time for display in the club house Sunday morning. The weekly roundup of the weekend's matches and events is circulated by e-mail to all on our mailing lists. It also appears on the County web site as well as most of the local papers throughout Essex. Club press officers and the local editors have had a positive impact on publishing all that is good about the game in our County. An important link has also been established with BBC Essex and I hope that next season we may even get the results out on the radio during their sports roundup.

This year also saw an increase in the number of match and ball sponsors for our County Competition finals and matches. All sponsors received an appropriate recognition of their contributions to Essex Rugby in the match day programmes.

We are also grateful to Brian Larman of BL Office Centre who continues to sponsor the Essex Clubs BL Merit table. The merit table is now approaching its 18th season of providing competitive rugby for club second, third and fourth teams and now has six divisions comprising of 60 teams.

Our thanks go to the following companies and persons:

Mark Standen and Keith Bishop	Ruddles County Ales
Andy Thorne and Mark Pattison	Kestrel Liner Agencies
Andrew Barry	Fine Art Mouldings Ltd
John Bastick and Jim Lampoon	Clavis Insurance Services
Simon Wakefield	Contech Consulting
Tim Hughes	Hughes Associates
Steve Foster	A & B Taxis
Brian Stanley	Photofix Ltd
Tony Janaway	Nockolds Solicitors
Brian Larman	BL Office Centre
Peter Durka	Toynbee Housing Association
Brian Stanley	Photofix

Our thanks also go to our President Dai Davies who also sponsored our first ever home County match as a Constituent Body when our U18's played Eastern Counties at Westcliff RFC on the 26th October 2003 and Mick Norris for his generous donation of the Essex County RFU Intermediate Cup.

Sponsorship of matches, our teams and competitions is vital to the progress of and growth of the community game in Essex and your committee continues to seek opportunities to involve Essex companies in supporting the game at all levels.

Ivor Smith
Public Relations

Club Development and Community Rugby - Chris Dyer

The R.F.U.'s strategy for Community Rugby was formulated from the Blackman Report to halt the decline in rugby participation both on the field and among amateur administrators. The four main areas of the programme are, facilities management, funding and finance, club development, and encouraging the volunteers. Meeting these objectives in Essex is very much a joint enterprise between the County Committee and the professional programme of our R.D.O., Matt Davies.

We received excellent support from the R.F.U for our first Running Rugby Roadshow held in the early part of the season at Basildon RFC, at which Alan Black the Community Rugby Manager and Dave Stubble on finance and funding outlined areas where the RFU could provide specific help to clubs.

Facilities Management.

The County are currently in the process of completing a full review of all club facilities within the C.B. This will be published shortly as part of our County strategy. The R.F.U. have a great deal of professional expertise in areas such as facilities development, pitch maintenance and improvement and health and safety issues. The County is able to provide clubs with the relevant points of contact for this advice and assistance.

Funding and Finance

The County has supported eleven clubs over the past season in their applications for loans and grants both to the R.F.U. and other agencies. The Rugby Football Foundation has provided £43,000 in "ground match" grants and £189,000 in loans with a further £100,000 agreed in principle. A further £95,000 has been made available to two clubs under the Community Club Development Programme.

It is our intention to be more pro-active in this area in the future and to work with club committees at the early stages of any development plans that require sources of external finance.

Club Development

It is a key objective of the County to ensure that it provides the clubs with the maximum support to ensure their development. We are actively developing links with various local authorities through their S.D.O.'s and in the county with Active Sports. Club school links provide an opportunity for ensuring club development and the County are keen to assist in this process where clubs believe it will be helpful and beneficial.

The Volunteers

The R.F.U. have an established programme for encouraging the recruitment of volunteers within clubs and recognising and valuing volunteers who already dedicate their time to rugby. We will be featuring these programmes in the club meetings / conferences that are planned for next season.

The Sweet Chariot Tour

The organisation of the tour of the William Webb Ellis trophy in the County came within the remit of this committee. In the short period of just over two days in mid-February, we achieved most of our objectives in reaching the important constituencies for the County.

We were able to bring the cup to the Essex public with an evening event at Barking and a full day at Lakeside. Schools rugby was catered for in a successful tournament at Great Baddow school which also accommodated a coaching session for disability rugby. The club and county sponsors had their opportunity at Chigwell and the clubs themselves and Essex youth rugby at an evening function at the Old Brentwoods. Two high profile events with the media and opinion leaders well represented, took place with a morning service at Magdalen Laver church, where William Webb Ellis was rector, and at Hylands Hall where a lunch time reception was hosted by the Mayor of Chelmsford. Over £2200 was raised for the rugby charity the Wooden Spoon Society at the Lakeside session alone.

The County would like to thank the host of volunteers and helpers from among our clubs who gave up their time over these two days to ensure the success of the various events.

C.N.Dyer

Reports from our representatives on Associated Committees

RFU Representative's Report – Mike Drinkwater

This year has of course been dominated by the World Cup victory but the RFU wants to use the victory to good effect and reverse the decline in playing numbers. The IMPACT strategy was started before the World Cup and the various initiatives are having an effect and we can look forward to an expanding game rather than a contracting game.

In leagues, level transfers have been introduced to reduce the "cascade" effect.

The RFU has been receiving substantial funds from the Government towards grass roots rugby but this all comes at a price. One of the reasons for all the questionnaires and forms coming out of Twickenham is that the Government wants the information to justify the expense.

The Sweet Chariot tour was a huge success around the country and particularly in Essex. Chris Dyer did a superb job in organising the Essex tour.

There will almost certainly be changes to the County Championship next year but they have still to be agreed. A league system may well be introduced.

The Schools, Students and Youth Review Report has finally been agreed by the Schools and the RFU and will have a significant impact on the 7 to 24 years age groups. We have therefore renamed and re-structured our Playing Development committee which now becomes the CB Rugby Development Partnership.

Ticketing has been a major issue throughout the year and many people do not like the concept of licensed hospitality companies. However, they are here to stay and it is almost certain that clubs will receive fixed entitlements in future, based on previous usage. The RFU Council is ensuring that the clubs' entitlements do not go down.

As the Essex representative on the RFU Council I am here to serve you, the clubs, and if you need help on any subject please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

Have a good season!

Mike Drinkwater

LONDON R.F.U.

On 24 November 2003, we attended a committee meeting of London R.F.U. Essex County R.F.U. was congratulated on achieving Constituent Body Status and were welcomed to membership of London R.F.U. London R.F.U. is comprised of the following Constituent Bodies:- Eastern Counties, Essex, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Middlesex, Surrey and Sussex. Sub Committees have been authorised for Competitions, Discipline, Under 18, Under 20 and Youth. These consist of hard working representatives of the afore-mentioned Constituent Bodies. Schools and N.C.A. are also represented by co-option. London R.F.U. is actively involved with the County Championship Task Group and the development of the English Counties XV, which is now in its third season, and will shortly be on tour in Canada. Attempts are currently being made to re-establish the London V Paris fixture, despite the problems of the professional era. Current Hon. Secretary, David Straw, will stand down shortly after many years of unstinting service to London Rugby, and has been proposed as a Vice President.

The following have been proposed as Officers for 2004/05:-

Chairman	David Briggs	Kent
Hon Secretary	David Hiles	Middlesex
Hon Treasurer	Graham Thompson	Sussex

Howard Cross & Alan Stobbs.

E.R.C.A.

I have attended several meetings of the England Rugby Counties Association (E.R.C.A.) at Coventry R.F.C. since Essex County R.F.U. gained Constituent Body Status on 12 July 2003. E.R.C.A. has complimented Essex R.F.U. on attaining Constituent Body Status and welcomed it to membership of the Association. There are currently twenty three Constituent Bodies in membership of E.R.C.A., which provides a less formal forum for the exchange of information on a variety of subjects. Francis Baron, Chief Executive, R.F.U., Graeme Cattermole, Chairman of the Management Board and Carole Thelwall-Jones, Constituent Body Volunteer Manager, have been guest speakers at meetings. Recent topics for discussion have included the County Championship, the Constituent Body Congress and Annual General Meeting, English Counties XV, Conditional Funding and International Match Tickets. There has been input to the R.F.U. on these topics, and special concern has been noted with regard to the ever increasing amount of paperwork etc., emanating from Twickenham, which is falling, in particular on to County and Club Secretaries.

Current Officers of E.R.C.A. are as follows:-

Chairman	Vic Hall	Staffordshire
Hon Secretary	Jim Bambrick	Warwickshire
Hon Treasurer	Ernie Neely	Lancashire

Howard Cross.

Saracens Academy Liaison Group

Peter Howard and Ivor Smith are our representatives on the Saracens Academy Liaison Group which aims to improve the relationship between Saracens and Essex County RFU. Saracens are 1 of only 14 clubs nation-wide to be granted a licence to operate as an England Rugby Regional Academy. This initiative is supported by Sport England with Lottery funding and is intended to allow talented young rugby players (aged 16-21) to reach their full potential.

The "Saracens England Rugby Academy" is not a team; it has been designed to sit alongside the playing structure, providing the additional support needed to prepare players for today's professional game.

The Saracens England Rugby Academy will service the areas of Hertfordshire, Essex and Kent. Large amounts of this region are very rural whilst others are contained within Metropolitan London. Rugby in the region holds a favourable position in the culture of the population and it is vital that all its young athletes are afforded the opportunity to gain access to the England Rugby Academy process.

The area has over a long period of time produced a large number of high quality rugby players. This has been achieved through very good schools and clubs systems. This programme builds on the current model of player development and seeks to assist all young players to progress as far as their talent can take them.

Selection

Players will be identified through established CB Development Squads and RFU Rugby Development Officer identification. Talented players will then be selected to progress into the Saracens England Rugby Development Programme. Opportunities will be created for entry by late developers and talented athletes from other disciplines. There are 3 levels to the programme, namely Academy, Fast-Track and Elite Player Development Centre. As players' improve their performance and potential they will progress through the programme into the academy where the programme becomes much more concentrated and detailed. This will include sport science and sport medicine back up, player mentoring, conditioning programmes, performance analysis and individual specialist coaching. The academy will be player centred, with each individual receiving a tailor made service.

Elite Player Development Centre (EPDC)

Feeding into the fast track group will be the Elite Player Development Centres (EPDC's). These centres will cover the areas of Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent and North London. The EPDC's will cater for the younger player and players that have not quite reached Fast-Track status (aged 14-17). As a rule of thumb, these players would be considered the best 4 or 5 in their county for their age group. This is an ideal programme for late developers and athletes from other sports that are new to the game. Players will meet a minimum of 12 times a year and will receive input from the Academy Staff, professional players and the RFU Development Staff.

Fast-Track

These players are on the fringe of the academy and receive a very similar programme. These players are aged 16-18 and would demonstrate the potential to play premierships rugby, however they may not be as consistent in their performance as the academy scholars. These players will work alongside the academy scholars with the aim of getting into the academy. These players will also benefit from a number of residential camps throughout the season.

As a result of this season's work in the County 15 boys from the U15s development squad have been invited to attend the Saracens Summer Camp. Eight other members of our youth squads have already been invited to attend the EPDC and Fast Track programmes.

Active Sport

Active sport activity is guided by our RDO and ARDO Chris Green. This season has seen more and more children being introduced to the game through Coaching and Festival programmes held at schools and clubs throughout the County. Active sport continues to provide vital funding for these initiatives. The following report outlines the activity

ESSEX ARDO REPORT 2003-2004 - Chris Green

LONDON BOROUGHES - Newham, Waltham Forest, Havering, Barking & Dagenham and Redbridge.

TOURNAMENT PARTICIPATION

All five boroughs had primary school tournaments leading towards the London Heathrow Youth Games competition 2003. These events were co-ordinated by the RFU (CG) and in Newham alone 18 teams competed involving over 180 participants. This event was also attended by Jason Leonard.

Newham – 180 (participants)
Waltham Forest- 50
Redbridge- 100
Havering- 40
Barking- 80
(450 participants)

During the World Cup Tag rugby competitions were held across all of the five boroughs for years five and six. These events were hosted at local rugby clubs with there being over 500 participants. All of these events were publicised as “World Cup” events and are now planned to be run annually. All five boroughs participated in these events. Prior to RFU involvement there was no rugby at all during this part of the curricular year. (500 Participants)

In years 7 & 8 secondary schools competed in a 10 a side tournament at their local clubs to coincide with the World Cup. In two of these boroughs prior to RFU involvement there was no rugby during this part of the curricular year. (550 Participants)

March 2004 saw a regional Emerging Schools tournament take place within the five boroughs for the first time. Years 7 & 8 competed. (200 participants)

EDUCATION

At Secondary School level just over 40 schools are directly involved in the Specialist Sport College network. Within the Sports College network 160 primary schools are directly involved in the SSC network. Education courses for teachers have been run in the five boroughs of Newham (2), Waltham Forest (1), Redbridge (1), Barking (1) and Havering (1). This has qualified over 80 teachers to teach Tag rugby within their schools. Prior to the end of the summer term three more tag courses are planned with approximately another 40 teachers being qualified by the end of July. Leaving a figure of 120 new teachers qualified to teach the game. A refresher session for teachers was also run at Selwyn Primary School in Redbridge. (15 Teachers participated)

Funding has been raised to enable coaches to teach rugby not only within curriculum time but also as an extra curricular activity. This has seen ten schools within Newham alone set up their own Tag Clubs as a result of RFU initiatives. These developments have been funded by local borough councils and Specialist Sport Colleges (SSC).

During the World Cup time period the demand for coaching within primary schools reached new heights .This led to qualified RFU coach Darrell Edwards being employed for two days a week to teach exclusively within primary schools along with other coaching staff linked to local clubs and myself. This continued for a six week block and ten schools benefited from this coaching every week for this period. All of these schools participated in RFU led World Cup Tournaments in November. (Please see competition section for figures)

In addition to the World Cup coaching programme each borough will receive four weeks of free coaching for a minimum of five schools that are new to the game. This program started in late March and is due to run until the end of the Summer Term 2004. By the end of this period a minimum of twenty five “new” schools will have received RFU qualified coaching.

Coaching was provided for primary schools as part of the “Sports Master Class Scheme”. Ten Schools were targeted within Newham over a ten day period. Coaching was provided for 1500 children of both sexes. 2003 SAW TAG RUGBY AS AN ACTIVITY FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME!!

Coaching was provided for primary schools as part of the “Gifted and talented” initiative. Selected talented children participated at Langdon School with 90 children participating. 2003 SAW TAG RUGBY AS AN ACTIVITY FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME!!

CLUBS:

As a result of coaching within primary schools a "Tag" club is now run at East London Rugby Club on a Sunday afternoon. All these players are new to the game with 25 children training every week. This has been operational for eight weeks.

Langdon School hosts a Tag club on a Monday evening over a ten week period. This has been funded by Newham Borough Council. This commenced in the first week of March. Transport is provided for children across the borough with 20 children participating on a weekly basis. Again all of these players are new comers to the game.

Within the Langdon (SSC) Partnership secondary schools are organising cluster tag rugby tournaments involving four to six primary schools,(38 primary schools in total), the winner of each cluster will go through to the grand final held at East London Rugby Club in May 2004. (380 participants). Within the Forest Gate Partnership primary schools train together forming their own club at Forest Gate every Wednesday.

Rugby was introduced as an activity in 2003 at Newham Leisure Centre as part of a sports open day in conjunction with Martin White of East London Rugby Club. Over One hundred children took part in this event "Tag" was introduced as an activity at the Newham girl's convention. One hundred children took part in this event.

Four girls' schools will receive RFU coaching in conjunction with East London Rugby and Newham borough council in early Feb. They aim to start their own tag club with the aid of East London RFC. 80 participants.

10 clubs within the area were receptive to the SOA document in principal. Regular contact is made with a club representative and the SOA document is updated on a regular basis. Three clubs are now reaching final stages of the SOA document.

There are now definite links between schools and clubs. East London and Eton Manor in particular are heavily involved in community work providing six coaches between them. A series of refereeing courses are being planned in conjunction with Wanstead Rugby Club. The first one took place on the 16th May with fifteen candidates taking part. Club members within the boroughs have attended coaching courses at Coopers Coborn School and East London Rugby Club

UNDER 15 DEVELOPMENT

32 children represented the Essex Inner City U15s at Twickenham for the England v Italy curtain raiser in 2003. Sixty boys from all five boroughs were registered as a result of 6 development sessions prior to the event.

16 of the 32 represented the Essex Inner City at the RSA National 10 a side competition at Rugby in May 2003. Again in 2004 the inner city will be represented and funded partly by active sports, RSA and local borough councils. Development sessions will be run prior to the event. Eight of the boys who represented Essex Inner City in 2003 are now regular players for East London RFC U16 team.

One player (Bradley Schofield) who represented the inner city has been selected for the 2003 Essex and Eastern Counties U16 squad.

An RSA day was held at East London Rugby Club. This day involved two development sessions in the morning led by RDO Matt Davies and RFU level 3 coach Darrell Edwards. During the afternoon the U15 squad were treated to a question and answer session with England player Lewis Moody. (40 Children Participated)

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

In February 2003 the first Holiday Camp for inner city children was run in one day at East London Rugby Club. Participants = 10.

Subsequent Holiday Camps have produced the following figures

Summer Camp 2003- East London Rugby Club- 25 children attended each day.

Christmas 2003- East London Rugby Club- 35 children attended each day.

Easter 2004 - Day One- East London. Day Two- Harlequins Stadium Tour and coaching session, Afternoon, Twickenham Stadium Tour- 53 children attended each day.

CONCLUSION

The continued improvement in each holiday camp seems to be a reflection upon time and money invested raising the profile of the game within both secondary and primary schools in East London. In a relatively short space of time I believe the figures collated within this document are positive evidence of the effect Community Rugby is having upon the area.

League Rugby – 2003 – 2004

This was not a particularly good season for Essex clubs in terms of promotion. However, many clubs have managed to consolidate their positions in their leagues notably Barking and Southend in National 3S. Harlow and Romford suffered relegation this season but Campion and Chelmsford gained promotion to London 3 North East.

In the Essex Leagues Westcliff earned their chance of promotion to London 4NE whilst Wanstead missed out in the playoff against Stowmarket.

National 3 S	P	W	D	L	For	A	Pts
Blackheath	26	22	0	4	839	350	44
Launceston	26	22	0	4	832	371	44
North Walsham	26	19	0	7	674	435	38
Redruth	26	16	0	10	581	473	32
Barking	26	15	0	11	648	522	30
Southend	26	13	0	13	702	703	26
Old Patesians	26	13	0	13	614	659	26
Weston-S-Mare	26	12	0	14	555	570	24
Westcombe Park	26	11	1	14	639	584	23
Haywards Heath	26	10	0	16	491	578	20
Tabard	26	10	0	16	537	676	20
Dings Crusaders	26	8	1	17	386	624	17
Basingstoke	26	6	0	20	456	940	12
Old Colfeians	26	4	0	22	469	938	8

London One	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Havant	22	18	0	4	876	269	36
Hertford	22	18	0	4	625	276	36
Sutton & Epsom	22	16	0	6	462	401	32
Canterbury	22	14	1	7	604	277	29
Bishop's Stortford	22	12	1	9	389	342	25
Worthing	22	12	0	10	523	404	24
Thanet Wanderers	22	10	0	12	379	592	20
Old Albanians	22	9	1	12	382	417	19
London Nigerian	22	8	0	14	460	465	16
Staines	22	7	0	15	375	644	14
Camberley	22	5	1	16	385	679	11
Harlow	22	1	0	21	227	921	2

London 2 North	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
London Scottish	22	20	1	1	752	277	41
Cambridge	22	17	0	5	710	259	34
Ealing	22	16	0	6	754	285	32
Letchworth Garden City	22	13	1	8	478	270	27
Thurrock	22	12	2	8	465	384	26
Norwich	22	12	1	9	469	420	25
Twickenham	22	11	2	9	458	469	24
Woodford	22	8	1	13	351	452	17
Diss	22	5	1	16	228	693	11
Bank Of England	22	8	0	14	398	489	10
Romford & Gidea Park	22	4	1	17	339	566	9
Cheshunt	22	1	0	21	142	980	2

London 3 NE	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Shelford	18	14	1	3	474	221	29
Hadleigh	18	14	0	4	461	263	28
Bury St. Edmunds	18	10	0	8	319	337	20
Brentwood	18	10	0	8	345	379	20
Saffron Walden	18	9	0	9	315	285	18
Ipswich	18	8	0	10	265	383	16
Sudbury	18	7	0	11	277	354	14
Braintree	18	7	0	11	255	370	14
Chingford	18	5	1	12	264	310	11
Eton Manor	18	5	0	13	280	353	10

London 4 NE	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Campion	18	14	0	4	512	347	28
Chelmsford	18	13	0	5	410	220	26
Colchester	18	12	0	6	516	319	24
Wymondham	18	11	1	6	355	243	23
Basildon	17	10	0	7	512	285	20
Rochford Hundred	18	10	0	8	278	336	20
West Norfolk	18	8	1	9	446	441	17
Mersea Island	18	5	0	13	366	429	10
Beccles	17	4	0	13	260	338	8
Ely	18	1	0	17	125	822	2

Essex 1	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Westcliff	18	15	1	2	572	210	31
Wanstead	18	14	0	4	408	203	28
Upper Clapton	18	12	0	6	362	261	24
Maldon	18	11	0	7	300	253	22
Billericay	18	10	0	8	322	280	20
Upminster	18	9	1	8	357	293	19
Ilford Wanderers	18	6	0	12	255	277	12
East London	18	5	0	13	219	391	10
Stanford Le Hope	18	4	0	14	190	507	8
Canvey Island	18	3	0	15	203	513	6

Essex 2	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Thames	18	15	0	3	484	129	30
South Woodham F	18	15	0	3	556	230	30
Burnham-On-Crouch	18	13	1	4	480	254	27
Old Brentwoods	17	13	0	4	561	221	26
Dagenham	18	9	1	8	433	268	19
Bancroft	18	7	2	9	327	320	16
Ravens	17	5	0	12	118	383	10
Loughton	17	4	1	12	295	395	9
Rayleigh Wyverns	17	4	0	13	179	456	8
Old Edwardians	18	0	1	17	105	882	1

Essex 3	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Millwall	12	11	0	1	314	97	22
May & Baker	12	10	0	2	329	83	20
Pegasus Palmerians	12	8	0	4	209	120	16
Old Cooperians	12	6	0	6	170	120	12
Ongar	12	3	0	9	138	291	6
Witham	12	2	0	10	112	288	4
Kings Cross Steelers	12	2	0	10	85	358	4

Roll of Honour 2003-2004

Ruddles County Essex Senior Cup

Winners Southend - Runners up Thurrock

Ruddles County Essex Intermediate Cup

Winners Chelmsford - Runners up Chingford

Ruddles County Essex Presidents Shield

Winners Dagenham - Runners up South Woodham Ferrers

Essex Youth Cup (Colts)

Winners Old Cooperians — Runners up Westcliff

Buff Cup (U17)

Winners Romford & Gidea Park — Runners up South Woodham Ferrers

Essex Under 16 Trophy

Winners Romford & Gidea Park — Runners up Brentwood

Essex Under 15 Trophy

Winners Westcliff — Runners up Brentwood

Essex Under 14 Trophy (Dennis Russell Cup)

Winners Chingford — Runners up Thurrock

Essex Under 13 Festival Trophy

Winners Barking

Essex Senior 2nd XV Cup

Winners Thurrock —Runners up Romford & Gidea Park

Essex Junior 2nd XV Cup (John Adler Cup)

Winners Westcliff —Runners up East London

RFU PowerGen leagues 2003 - 2004

PowerGen London 4 NE	Winners - Champion RFC	Runners Up - Chelmsford
Winners Essex 1	Winners – Westcliff	Runners Up - Wanstead
Winners Essex 2	Winners – Thames	Runners Up – South Woodham Ferrers
Winners Essex 3	Winners – Millwall	Runners Up - May & Baker

BL Essex Clubs Merit Table 2003 – 4

Division 1	Winners - Romford & GP II
Division 2	Winners - Romford & GP III
Division 3	Winners - Writtle Wanderers
Division 4	Winners - Old Bealonians
Division 5	Winners - Bancroft II