

Hampshire RFU Annual Report 2024-2025

Welcome to the Hampshire RFU Annual Report for 2024-2025. This comprehensive document provides an overview of our activities, achievements, and financial performance over the past year. Inside you'll find detailed information about our governance structure, game development initiatives, age grade rugby programmes, safeguarding measures, and much more.



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- www.hampshirerfu.com



Executive Director's Message

As we reflect on the 2024/25 season, I want to begin by thanking each and every one of you — our volunteers, club leaders, coaches, referees, and players — for your commitment to rugby across Hampshire. This year has been a powerful reminder of what our community can achieve when we work with purpose, clarity, and collaboration.

Despite the scale of internal change, we kept the game going at every level. Fixtures were played, festivals were run, regulations were monitored, CPD was delivered, representative teams took to the field, and clubs continued to serve their communities — all thanks to your efforts.

Behind the scenes, Hampshire RFU undertook one of its most significant periods of transformation in recent years.

We led a comprehensive digital overhaul, improving how we communicate, manage information, and support clubs. This included developing the new Hampshire RFU website (www.hampshirerfu.com), designed to increase visibility and access to key information and reduce volunteer workload. This was undertaken alongside improving internal systems with the introduction of Microsoft 365.

At the same time, we delivered a full governance review and restructure, modernising how we operate and ensuring we are better aligned to future challenges and opportunities. This included the recruitment of a new Board, bringing in new expertise, broader representation, and a strong foundation for long-term sustainability. My thanks go to those who stood down with distinction and those stepping forward to lead the next chapter.

We now move forward with renewed momentum. The foundations are stronger, the systems are smarter, and the leadership is in place to help Hampshire RFU not just manage the game — but grow it.

Thank you for your support and trust this season. I look forward to what we can achieve together in 2025/26.

Tim Dancer

Executive Director, Hampshire RFU



Facts and Figures

Hampshire Player Registrations

854

Women

3,222

Men

4,076

Adult Total

1,076

Girls

+55 (2024 to 2025)

6,761

Boys

+197 (2024 to 2025)

7,837

Age Grade Total

+252 (2024 to 2025)

11,913

TOTAL

Website and Social Media

7,921

Website Sessions

4,077

Unique Visitors

269

Form Submissions

+232

New Followers

On Facebook page

2,890

Social Media

Facebook page followers



Hampshire RFU: Building a Modern, Fit-for-Purpose Governance Structure

Over the past year, Hampshire RFU has completed a fundamental restructure of its Board and operating model to ensure stronger governance, greater clarity of roles, and more effective support for the rugby community across the county.

Following a full organisational review in mid-2024, it was clear that change was needed to align with best practice and to better reflect the needs of our member clubs and volunteers. As a result, a new Board structure was approved and implemented, comprising a mix of elected and appointed members, with clear portfolios and strategic responsibilities.

The new Board is driven by our Values:



Teamwork

Collaborative decision-making:
Encourage open discussions and consensus-building across the board to make well-rounded decisions.



Respect

Stakeholder engagement: Listen to and value the opinions of clubs, players, and supporters in the decision-making process.



Enjoyment

Positive leadership: Create a motivating environment that encourages enthusiasm for the growth of rugby at all levels.



Discipline

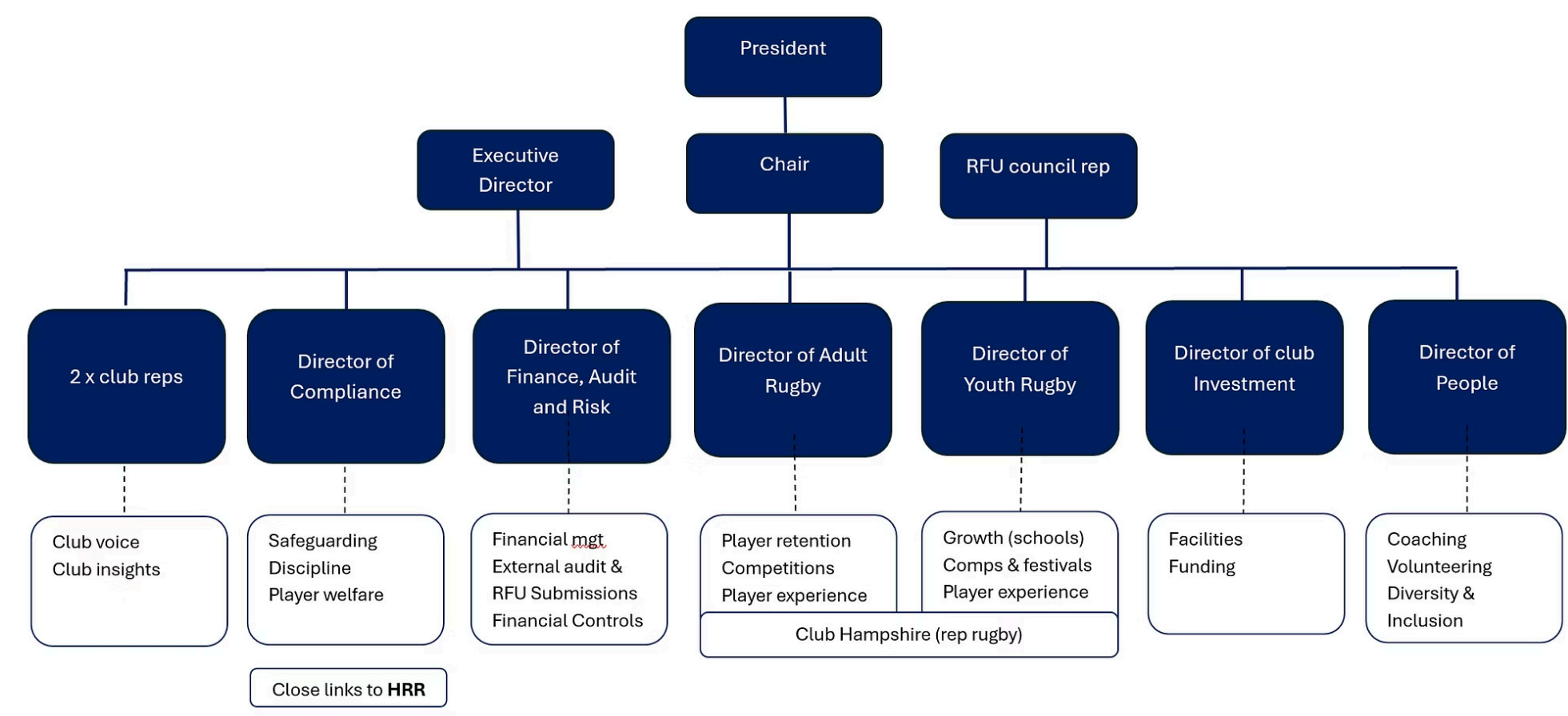
Accountability: Hold all board members accountable for their roles, ensuring tasks are completed on time and with high standards.



Sportsmanship

Ethical governance: Ensure decisions are made with integrity and fairness, upholding the values of rugby both on and off the field.

Each director now leads a small operational group aligned to their area of responsibility, creating clearer accountability and more effective coordination across the game. The role of the Executive Director has also brought dedicated day-to-day leadership, helping not only shape strategy, but ensure effective delivery.



This new model has enabled Hampshire RFU to be more agile, responsive, and transparent, laying the foundations for long-term success and a stronger voice for rugby across the region.

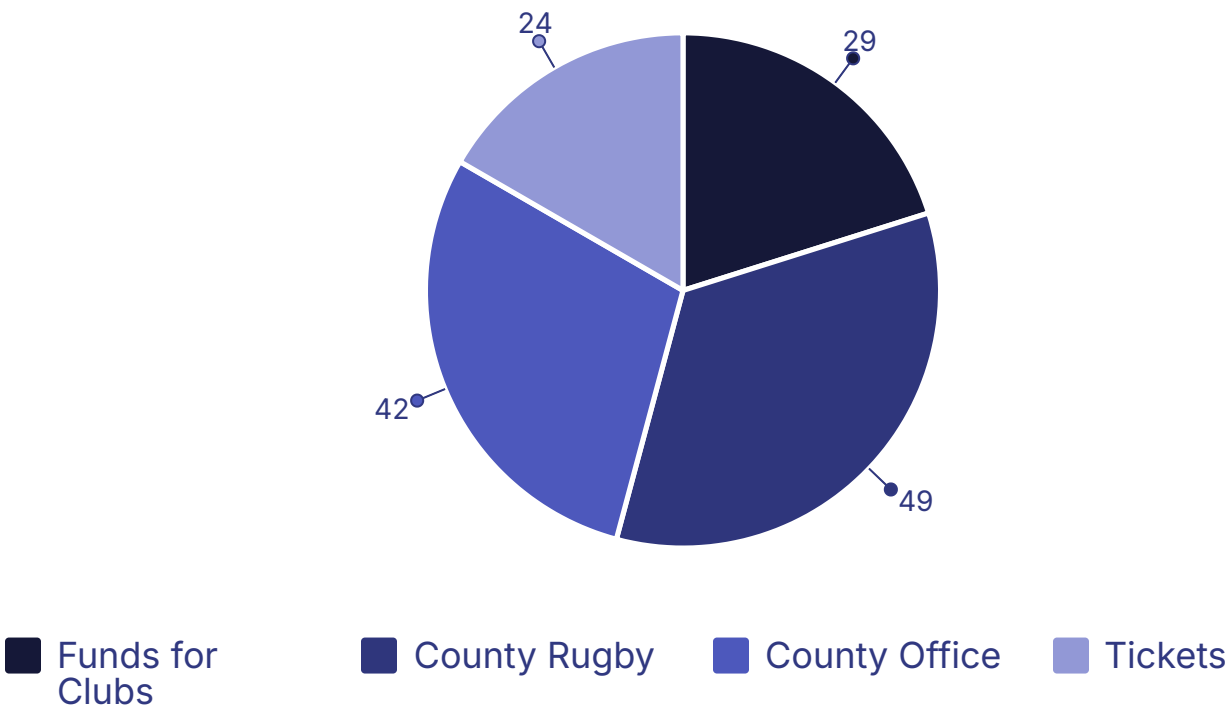
The next phase will focus on embedding this structure, supporting our clubs through targeted initiatives, and continuing to modernise how we operate and communicate in service of the game.



Finance Report

Summary Accounts: Year ended 30th June 2024

	£'000
Total Income	141
Expenditure:	
Funds for Clubs etc	29
County Rugby	49
County Office	42
Tickets	24
Total costs	144
DEFICIT	-3



The final June 2024 Accounts showed a deficit of £3,315 which was as expected, and the loss was due mostly to financing a very successful County Championship season. This compared to a deficit of £9,857 for the previous year. As a result, our reserves decreased from £89,282 to £85,967. For the 2024-25 season we have budgeted for a break-even situation, bearing in mind the huge reduction in funding from The RFU following the pandemic. However, the financial outcome for the current year to June 2025 is difficult to predict, as the final costs, particularly those relating to Club Hampshire are unknown at the time of writing.

I currently estimate this year's result will be close to break even, or a small deficit depending on the costs of our County Championship campaign. It is a fact of life that success at County level can be expensive, given that we receive less than £3,000 each from The RFU for the Senior Men's, Women's and Men's Under 20's campaigns. We have been very fortunate to receive donations from benefactors to aid our County campaigns, at both senior and junior level, without which, there would clearly be a more serious depletion of our reserves.

A word of thanks to our Clubs, particularly their Treasurers, who have generally managed the Clubs' finances extremely well, although I continue to be concerned that the problems in financing the game at grass roots level are far from over.

Richard Showan
Finance Chair



Game Development

It has been a relatively quiet year for Game Development, after the changes in Competition and Tackle Height that have been implemented in the past few years. The positive news is that the changes to tackle height have not altered the fabric of our game but have had a clear, positive impact on head injuries. All of the committee have participated in the recent transformation of the Board and it is pleasing to see that a number of Game Development attendees have gone on to lead Directorships in the new Board.

As with all things, change is a constant and we wait for the outcome of the RFU governance consultation and set up of the Regional Development Boards, but we have already grasped, and driven, some of the benefits through the T1 Schools programme where we ensured there was engagement with local clubs, embedding any benefit from the U11 and below girls programme. The schools committee continues to thrive and it was great to see a number of festivals and cups take place over the season to ensure that the next generation of players is developed. There is a great opportunity with the Women's World Cup to drive this further.



Refereeing

It is safe to say that games would not happen without referees and Hampshire refs have a great reputation across the South, with all senior and majority of junior games covered. Once again, there has been significant focus on the next generation of refs and the Young Match Official (YMO) programme.



Rugby Safe

The same can be said for the Rugby Safe programme, where all senior matches had first aid provision, and it was great to see clubs collaborating to ensure Reg 9 provisions were met. We have now started looking at Universities, with several training sessions held to ensure appropriately trained individuals support these games.



Coaching

It is important to recognise that "fun and inclusive" training sessions are the cornerstone of recruitment and retention of players. The Coaching Committee work hard to ensure that there are a number of training courses and CPD available and the upcoming coaching conference is critical to this.



Finally, I just wanted to thank all the volunteers that lead, and take part in, these committees. Without them, we simply would not function and their dedication is second to none. Thank you.

Rob Matthews
Game Development Chair



Age Grade Rugby

Club Engagement

- Youth forum continues to be a valuable platform for clubs to have their say however last year attendance was variable. This is an area to improve for next season.
- Junior competitions ran smoothly and were a success, with thanks to Stu, Lynne and Shaun for all their hard work. The U18 competitions completion rate was recognised by the RFU and awarded a performance grant payment of £1,230.

Some issues did arise as a result of a number of different converging factors such as:

1. Clashes in age grade calendar with school competitions encroaching on weekends post Christmas. Highlighted as an issue for 25/26 the rules and regulations will be reviewed/tightened.
2. Rules for Out of county players not being tight enough.
3. Lines of communication which need to be better defined.

Girls' Rugby

Girls rugby across Hampshire continues to grow both in the traditional clubs but also with clubs coming together to form joint teams. The Love Rugby festivals from U12-U18 have been delivered by the clubs with some big successes in player numbers and enjoyment. From a PDG perspective the U16 Hampshire PDG group went well with a completed season of sessions and 3 matches and the Hampshire U18 girls also completed their season well.

Finally as we go into next season we would like to thank Sandra Coffin (Hampshire Girls Lead), Paul Croft (U16 PDG lead) and Amie Boyes (U16 PDG manager) for their efforts in the girls game and everyone else involved.

As we move into next season we have reinvigorated the U16 PDG coaching team, have more Hampshire teams entered into the Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire league and are looking at the feasibility of starting a girls Hampshire cup at U14/16 and 18. We are also faced with the RFU's decision to row back on U11 girls being able to automatically play up. This presents some issues for 25/26 season so we continue to work with the RFU to move forward to a more practical solution.

Mini Festivals

1,900+

Mini Players

Participating in our festivals

500+

Volunteers

Supporting our mini festivals

6

Host Clubs

Providing venues and support

Thanks to all the host clubs for helping to run 6 very successful mini festivals. These festivals provide playing opportunities for 1900+ minis and can only exist with the help of over 500+ volunteers and the 6 host clubs. The feedback was very positive with many volunteers finding the occasion a good chance to chat to other clubs and share best practice.

Laura Self

Hampshire Youth Chair



Safeguarding

As with every season the small HRFU Safeguarding Team has worked hard to complete the expected RFU safeguarding visits, to meet the RFU's 10% target. This season we completed visits to 20% of our clubs. Thanks go to those clubs for their cooperation and hospitality; we hope the visits were helpful.

This year, we have set a standard by which no playing out of age grade applications were approved until key adults had up to date e-Learning courses; a policy that will continue into next season. Players who played out of age grade, including 17-year-olds in adult rugby, are also expected to complete a review of their experience of playing out of age grade, so that Hampshire RFU processes and support for them continue to remain player centred.

The RFU Safeguarding Team has continued to support clubs and Club Safeguarding Officers (CSOs) this season. All new referrals to the team must now be made using the online RFU Referral form, which can be found on the England Rugby our Hampshire RFU websites.



CSO Conference

The CSO conference was a success, despite clashing with an England Six Nations match! Attendees heard from key speakers, including Christian Lang (**STAR* Scheme**), Sue Forbes (**Sport Welfare Officer**) and Viv Rimmer (RFU Head of Safeguarding).



Play it Safe Courses

Play it Safe courses have been popular, with over 16 courses delivered this season. There have been over 200 attendees since August 2024, demonstrating the emphasis that our clubs continue to put on safeguarding their players. Thank you for your promotion of this.



CSO Support Network

Our fabulous CSOs continue to support each other in our WhatsApp Group. Watch out for the migration to a new Hampshire RFU Social Media Community shortly!

Finally, the new website has a range of safeguarding advice and information, which provides club volunteers with everything that they need. If you think that there is anything missing, then please get in touch using the new safeguarding email address: **safeguarding@hampshirerfu.com**

Thanks for your continued support in keeping safeguarding a priority!

Sarah Whatmore
CB Safeguarding Manager



Player Welfare



Reg 9 Compliance

Proud to still be the only CB in England which is fully Reg 9 Compliant – that is entirely due to our Club RSLs' extraordinary hard work to contribute to the best playing environment and experiences for all of Hampshire's youth and adult players.



RSL Conference

RSL Conference on 20th May 2025 - many thanks to HRFU for allowing a budget for this special event.



University Partnership

RFU has recognised our significant work with Winchester University who have been the first successful further Education setting to form a fully functional First Aid Society comprised of students to provide effective Pitchside first aid for University BUCS and intra-mural teams.



Rugby Safe Audit

ALL Hampshire's clubs returned their formal RFU Rugbysafe Audit covering Pitchside Care and Provision by the deadline of 30th November 2024. The feedback from this has been collated and allowed us to identify areas for development and to streamline effective working with individual clubs on solutions to specific needs.



First Aid CPD

Three online First Aid CPDs for all qualified Club First Aiders - Managing Pitchside First Aid, Managing Post-Injury Return to Play and Injury, Pain and Fear - available free of charge to all club first aiders on request - delivered to over 500 volunteers last season.



Digital Resources

Revised Rugbysafe content on the new HRFU website along with Smartform reporting for concussions.



National Recognition

Invited to be a Key Speaker at the CB RSL National Conference at Warwick University in June 2025.

Michele Amos

Player Welfare Lead



Coaching

Hampshire Rugby continues to offer 'free' coach development opportunities to clubs and education settings across the county. In 2024/2025, three sessions were delivered in response to requests/feedback from club coach coordinators and previous CPD attendees.

2024/2025 Hampshire Rugby Coaching CPD Offer

Dan Cottrell <u>Rugby Coach Weekly</u>	Alex Ware & Mia Stares Winchester University	Jon Bates <u>Coach Centred</u>
Contact Rugby Made Simple	Strength & Conditioning	Cue recognition and intuitive design making

Uptake & Breadth of CPD

150+

Coaches

Participated in our CPD programmes

28

Clubs & Schools

Represented across our coaching initiatives

Hampshire Rugby Coaching Conference 2025

The Hampshire Rugby Coaching Conference 2025 held in July was a thrilling moment for the sport, coinciding with the excitement surrounding the Women's Rugby World Cup later this year.

We were especially excited to welcome Simon Middleton—former head coach of the Red Roses and a pivotal figure in the growth of women's rugby—as our headline facilitator. His insights, shaped by years at the top of the international game, were invaluable as we look to inspire the next generation of coaches and players.

Adding to the momentum, coaches who deliver on the Bath Rugby's Player Development Group (PDG) led a dynamic session on conditioned games, offering practical tools to elevate coaching across age groups. Their presence highlights the strong pathway links between grassroots and professional rugby.

England Rugby's partnership with Neurodiverse Sport to launch inclusive coaching resources marks a vital step toward making rugby accessible for everyone, regardless of cognitive or sensory differences. At the Hampshire Rugby Coaching Conference 2025, we were proud to spotlight this initiative, emphasising inclusive coaching practices that empower coaches to better support neurodiverse players and foster truly welcoming environments across all levels of the game.

Hannah Avoth
Coaching Committee Secretary



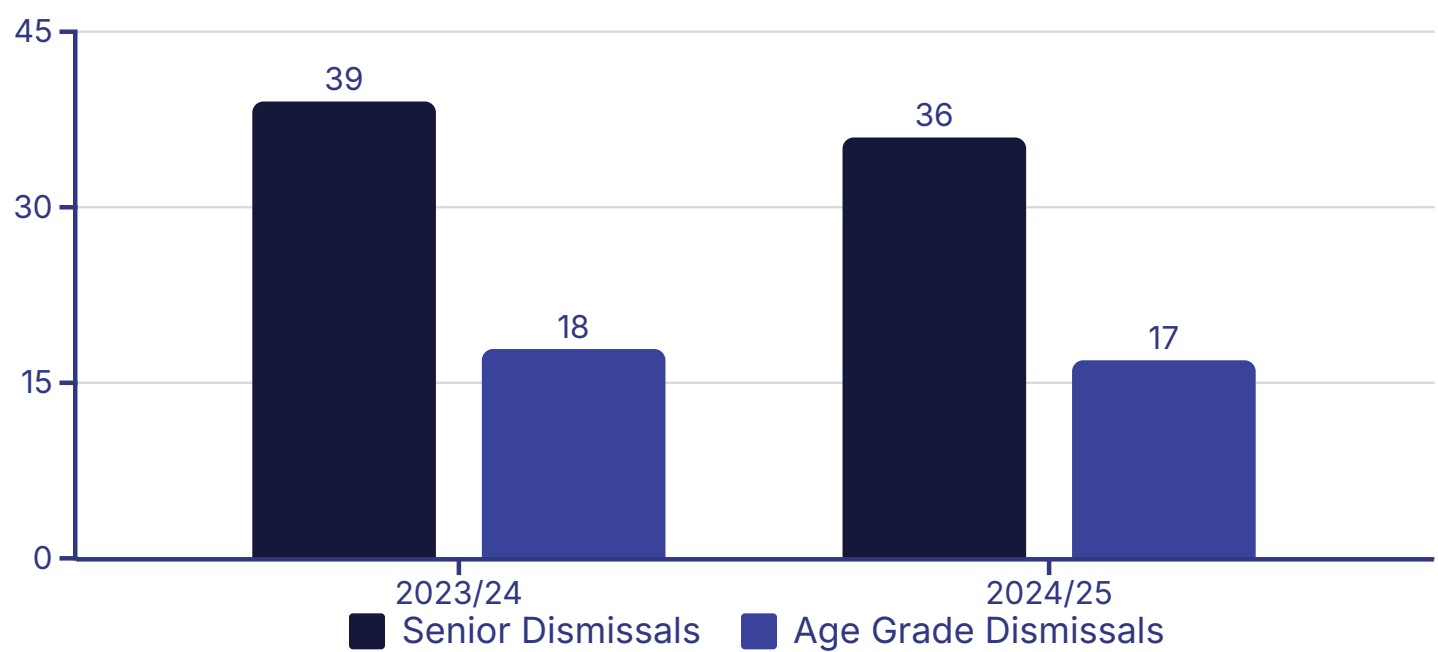
Discipline

There were 36 dismissals at senior level compared with 39 in 2023/24, a minor improvement. However, it was disappointing that there were 7 cases of Abuse, Dissent or Disrespect of the Match Official, only 2 down on last season.

There were 17 dismissals at age grade level compared with 18 in 2023/24. There were 3 cases of Abuse or Disrespect.

With regard to cases of Match Official Abuse or Dissent (Regulation 9.28), RFU Regulation 19.4.55(b) states in order to provide an additional deterrent any offence contrary to 9.28 will be aggravated as follows:

- Low-end by 2 weeks
- Mid-range by 3 weeks
- Top-end (whatever starting point is determined) by 4 weeks



If a player wishes to plead not guilty, a reminder that he cannot play until the matter has been ratified by a County Disciplinary Panel. We will endeavour to hear not guilty pleas within 7 days providing the Plea Form and statements are returned immediately.

Yet again, I must remind Club Disciplinary Chairmen that any offence that involves contact with the head/neck area of the victim the entry point is Mid-Range. In all cases, please check RFU Regulation 19 Appendix 2 to get the correct entry point.

A reminder to all coaches, substitutes and spectators: you should not enter the field of play.

Regulation 19.4.9

A club shall be responsible for ensuring that all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that its players, coaches, members and spectators themselves act appropriately and do not behave in a way that is improper, offensive, abusive, threatening, indecent or insulting or enter the pitch without the authority of the referee.

From the start of the 2025/26 season the reporting of red cards can be reported directly on the Hampshire RFU website.

It is our intention to place certain information in respect of offences committed, and sanctions imposed, on the Hampshire RFU website as from the start of the 2025/26 season.

Remember we are also here to help and you can always ring Nigel Morgan or myself and Richard Wood for Age Grade queries.

David Creal
Disciplinary Secretary



Volunteering

The objectives we set were to...

- 1. Support volunteer growth in Hampshire clubs.
- 2. Reward volunteers through CB recognition and online promotion.
- 3. Coordinate with RFU for the Honda Volunteer of the Year Award.



Supporting Volunteer Growth

- Promoted the Volunteer Officer role in club committees to get more visibility by also advertising on the new website.
- Worked with Alex Roe (Club Developer Hampshire/Sussex) to run volunteer workshops at four club sites in 2024. Workshops focused on Recruiting, Retaining, and Rewarding volunteers, attended by 28 participants.



Rewarding Volunteers

The "Conker Spirit of Rugby Volunteer of the Month Award" was launched Nov 2024, for 18+.

Sponsored by Conker Distillery, awarding two bottles of gin monthly for the following categories:

- Unsung Hero: Recognizing those who go above and beyond.
- Challenging Spirit: Highlighting inclusivity and innovation.

Successfully run for four months this season Nov-Feb; planned relaunch in August 2025.



Honda Volunteer Awards

Celebrates grassroots rugby volunteers.

100 nominations received, slightly fewer than last year's 115.

Nominees attended a recognition dinner at Havant RFC in June.

Finalists were judged by an independent panel at Rugby HQ Twickenham, where the winners were:

- Unsung Hero: Hannah Avoth (Ellingham & Ringwood RFC)
- Game for All: Jordon Coffin & Alan Day (Millbrook RFC)
- Connecting the Community: Joshua Williamson (Farnborough RFC)



Meet Our Winners

This page celebrates the nominees and winners of the annual Honda Volunteer Awards and the recipients of the monthly Conker Spirit of Rugby Awards, recognising individuals whose commitment and passion keep our clubs thriving. Each month...

The benefits we have seen are clubs increasingly rewarding volunteers monthly using data they are collecting.

Hampshire Awards: Recognizing outstanding administrators, volunteers, and young volunteers.

RFU President Lifetime Achievement Award: Selected by the Hampshire Executive Committee, offering VIP treatment at an England match at Twickenham.

Jordon and Alan plus Joshua have also progressed to the national gala held at Twickenham in August. This is a first for Hampshire to have 2 winners in each category.

George Winch
Volunteer Lead

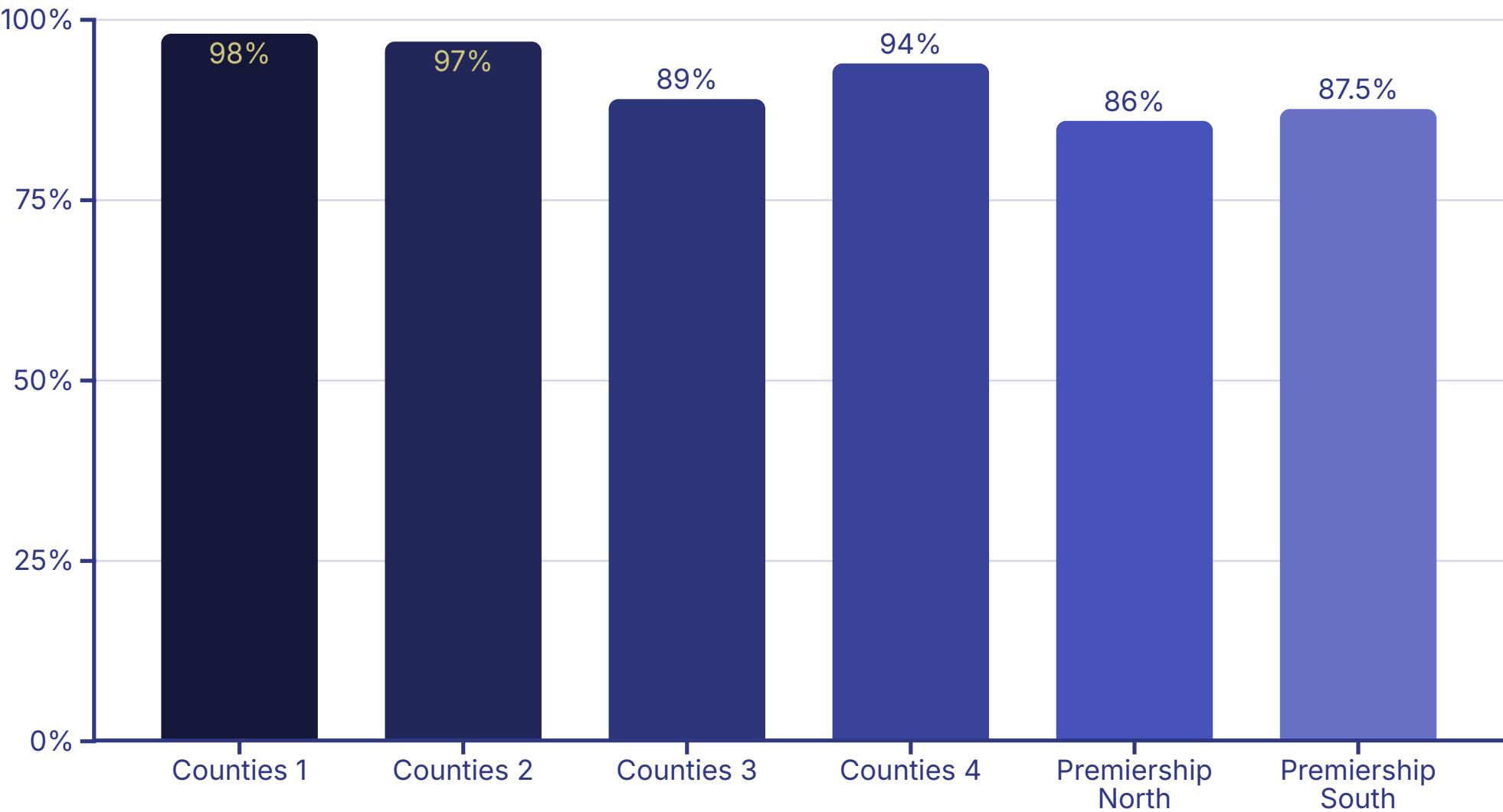


Adult Male Competitions

The merit leagues have grown again this season with the fantastic amount of rugby being played last year in Hampshire! Well done to all the clubs, volunteers and players!

We sadly had two teams withdraw from the leagues during the season but both have re-entered into our Hampshire Premiership for 25-26.

Our League completion rates were high compared to elsewhere in the country and where a Walkover was recorded a high number of games happened as friendlies;



These rates in our merit leagues secured Hampshire RFU £820 in performance grants.

We have recruited two new volunteers and persuaded a highly respected former competitions chair to assist us for the coming year. I would like to thank our amazing team of competitions volunteers for their extraordinary efforts.

Looking ahead to season 2025-2026, the Merit Leagues will be structured into three geographic divisions of eight teams each, designed to minimise travel—a key factor in last season’s number of walkovers. In addition, a playoff series will take place in weeks 15 to 18 of the standard 10-team structured season.

As of this season, two promotion places to Counties 4 will be available.

We also plan to run a full programme of County Cup competitions. Final details will be confirmed once the RFU releases its schedule for the National Cup and Regional League Playoffs.

Chris Budden
Adult Male Competition Lead



Facilities

A good year for Hampshire Clubs, with many obtaining small financial awards for facility improvement either from the RFU or HRFU. Below is a brief list of the awards and the programme funding them:



RWC 2025 Impact Programme

Impact 25 Changing Rooms future concept

Trojans - have been selected for the Regional Award, as part of a larger club rebuild programme. Work is to start over the summer. £100k matched funding

Impact 25 Social Spaces/Changing Rooms

Gosport and Fareham, and Eastleigh complete.

Year 3 awards to Portsmouth (changing rooms), Ellingham and Ringwood (social spaces) and Alton (social spaces).

£10k matched funding



Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund

The following clubs have been accepted on to the programme in the year:

- Ellingham & Ringwood
- Kingsclere
- Portsmouth
- Havant
- Eastleigh
- Jersey



HRFU Rugby Force

10 Clubs shared £2,570 for volunteer projects to be completed in June.

Exceptional award of £500 to Southsea Nomads for upgrade to changing rooms at their new home.



Hampshire RFU
Facility Needs Capture

Completed in January and priority listing agreed with RFU for 2025-26 projects that hopefully will include some funding for Floodlights, as well as ongoing Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund.

Terry Foreman
Facilities Lead



Club Hampshire

All seven Club Hampshire programmes ran very successfully again this season and in excess of three hundred male and female players were involved in both development and playing opportunities at representative level.

Men's XV

The Men's XV acquitted themselves extremely well in their two Division One matches against Kent and Cornwall who both featured players from National League One in their squads. The home game against Cornwall at Havant was an excellent spectacle for the large crowd although the outcome was a narrow 32 – 41 defeat.

Women's XV

The Women's XV had an excellent victory over Cornwall and scored a 72 – 0 win against Gloucestershire. However, defeat to Devon meant they did not progress to the semifinals.

Men's Under 20

A similar outcome for the Under 20 squad was the result of defeat by both Hertfordshire (48 – 26) and Kent (21 -24) although this year's squad was young and all but three players will be eligible again next season.



Age Grade

Hampshire age group squads continue to go from strength to strength with Under 18 boys being undefeated in their three games with wins against Middlesex (29 – 12), Hertfordshire (36 – 17) and a Barbarians team who replaced Sussex who scratched. Twelve players were invited for Regional development and three players were chosen to represent London and South East. After 60 players benefitted from monthly development sessions, the reduced Under 17 playing squad suffered a narrow defeat to Surrey (39 – 40) after comfortable victories over Middlesex (33 – 15) and Hertfordshire (19 – 10). Similarly, the Under 18 Girls squad enjoyed success against Sussex (37 – 0) and then a 5 – 15 defeat to Surrey whilst the RFU funded Under 16 Girls PDG met regularly before their three playing opportunities. Again in excess of sixty girls were involved.

Club Hampshire is very grateful to Havant, Petersfield Trojans and Romsey clubs for their generosity in hosting our activities throughout a busy season and also to our sponsors Billy Owton and Stuart Barden.

David Dunn
Club Hampshire Manager



www.hampshirerfu.com



 Hampshire RFU



Welcome to Hampshire RFU

We are proud to be the governing body for rugby union in Hampshire and the Channel Islands, dedicated to supporting our clubs in the governance,...

Visit Hampshire RFU's new website for news, results, events, approvals and much more!