

# DEVON RUGBY

## Tamar Cup Returns This Easter

Devon face Cornwall at Brickfields on Easter Saturday in one of the South West's biggest fixtures. Gates open 12:30pm, kick-off 2:30pm. Full preview on page 3.

## Youth Council Applications Open

A chance for young people aged 18-24 to influence the future of rugby. Applications close 8 April. Find out more on page 2.

## Devon Rugby Celebrates Cup Finals Weekend

Devon rugby has once again delivered a standout weekend of competition, community, and celebration. From packed crowds at Astley Park to a high-scoring encounter at Newton Abbot, the county's cup finals showcased the very best of our clubs. With more exciting fixtures and opportunities ahead, including the Tamar Cup and national youth initiatives, there is plenty to look forward to across Devon RFU.



## Inside This Issue...

Devon rugby is celebrating a fantastic weekend of cup finals, with two competitive fixtures showcasing the strength, depth, and community spirit across the county. Attention now turns to the upcoming Tamar Cup clash with Cornwall this Easter Saturday, set to bring supporters together once again. Alongside the action on the pitch, we highlight opportunities for young people through the RFU National Youth Council and share updates from across the Devon game.



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**APPLICATIONS OPEN: JOIN THE RFU NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL AND HELP GROW THE GAME**

**APPLICATIONS CLOSE WEDNESDAY 8 APRIL**

**Have Your Voice Heard: Apply for the RFU National Youth Council**

Young people are the future of our game, and this is your opportunity to help shape it.

The RFU National Youth Council is now open for applications, with a deadline of **Wednesday 8th April**. This is a fantastic chance for young rugby enthusiasts to represent their peers, influence decision-making, and play an active role in the development of the game across England.

The Youth Council brings together a diverse group of individuals aged 18-24 from across the country, all passionate about

rugby and committed to making a positive impact. Members work closely with the RFU to provide insight, share ideas, and ensure that the voices of young people are heard at every level of the game.

Whether your interests lie in growing participation, improving inclusivity, enhancing player experience, or shaping the future of competitions, this is your platform to contribute. It is also an excellent opportunity to develop valuable skills, gain experience in leadership and governance, and connect with like-minded individuals from across the rugby community.

We strongly encourage anyone within the eligible age group who has a passion for rugby and a desire to make a difference to apply.

You can find out more about the role and how to apply via the RFU website. [Make a difference by joining the RFU's National Youth Council | Rugby Football Union](#)

Don't miss this chance to represent your generation and help shape the future of rugby.

Please pass this information to any young person you think would be interested in the role.

### A Celebration of Devon Rugby!

Across both finals, the weekend highlighted everything that makes Devon rugby special – passionate support, competitive spirit, and a strong sense of community. From Astley Park to Newton Abbot, players, coaches, volunteers, and supporters all played their part in delivering two

memorable finals. Devon RFU would like to congratulate all four clubs for their efforts and thank everyone involved in making the weekend such a success.

## Tamar Cup Returns! Devon v Cornwall

One of the most anticipated fixtures in the Devon rugby calendar is fast approaching, as Devon RFU take on our long-standing rivals Cornwall RFU in the annual Tamar Cup clash.

This year's encounter takes place on Easter Saturday at Brickfields, the home of Plymouth Albion, with gates opening at 12:30pm ahead of a 2:30pm kick-off.

The Tamar Cup is always more than just a match, it's a celebration of South West rugby, bringing together players, supporters, and communities from both sides of the Tamar. With pride, history, and local bragging rights on the line, you can

expect a fiercely competitive contest and a fantastic atmosphere throughout the day. With the fixture falling over the Easter weekend, it is the perfect opportunity to make a day of it. Whether you are an enthusiastic rugby supporter, a family keen to soak up the atmosphere, we encourage everyone to come along and support Devon.

Entry is just £10 for adults, making it an accessible and enjoyable day out for all. Let us pack out Brickfields in green and show our support for the Devon squad as they look to reclaim the Tamar Cup. We look forward to seeing you there!



### Devon Cup Finals Deliver a Weekend to Remember!

Devon rugby was treated to a fantastic celebration of the game this weekend, as two highly competitive cup finals showcased the very best of the county's clubs, players, and supporters.

## Exmouth Crowned Devon Cup Champions in Electric Astley Park Atmosphere

A packed Astley Park in Brixham provided the perfect backdrop for the Devon Cup Final, as Exmouth overcame Brixham 36-26 in a match full of intensity, quality, and occasion.

With the famous trophy – first contested in 1888 – on the line, the hosts rallied impressive home support under their 'Park the Park' banner. However, it was Exmouth who made the early statement, racing into a 14-0 lead inside the opening ten minutes and setting the tone for the contest.

Despite Brixham's resilience, closing the gap to within five points on two occasions, Exmouth maintained control throughout key moments of the game. A strong

attacking performance, combined with composure under pressure, ensured they stayed ahead on the scoreboard.

Exmouth coach Stuart Lowe praised both the occasion and his side's performance:

"It was a great occasion for Devon rugby and Brixham put on a show. The atmosphere added to the motivation, and the squad delivered."

The win marks Exmouth's first Devon Cup triumph since 2016, with many players lifting the trophy for the first time – a significant milestone for the club.

Brixham, gracious in defeat, played their

part in an outstanding final. Coach Adam Thomas acknowledged the challenge:

"We were up against a very strong side, but I'm proud of the effort. It was a great game and a great occasion."

The match was a fitting showcase of Devon rugby, with both teams contributing to a final worthy of the competition's rich history.

# Cullompton Lift Intermediate Shield After Strong Second-Half Display

The Devon Intermediate Shield Final delivered another entertaining encounter, with Cullompton defeating Newton Abbot 47-30 in a high-scoring contest.

The first half was closely fought, with both sides trading scores in an open and attacking game. Cullompton edged the half 28-20, but the match remained finely balanced heading into the break. Cullompton's strength and depth came to the fore in the second half, as they took control of the game with a series of well-worked tries. A powerful bench impact and strong running saw them extend their lead and secure the victory.

Head coach Steve Luxon highlighted the importance of the win: "This was a big boost for the squad. It's been a challenging season, but this shows the character and quality we have."

Newton Abbot were competitive throughout and continued to push until the final whistle, with standout performances across the park. Their efforts, combined with excellent match-day organisation and hospitality, contributed to a fantastic cup-final occasion. Luxon was quick to recognise this: "Newton Abbot were excellent hosts, and the atmosphere really made it feel like a proper final."

## DEVON SUPER VETS OFF TO A FLIER!



On Saturday 14 March Exmouth RFC hosted the first Devon Super Vets (over 50's) match against Sussex. The visitors had already played two warm up matches compared to Devon who had only one training session. Prior to the match it was agreed to play four twenty-minute sessions.

The match was played in almost ideal conditions and Devon quickly got into their stride and scored two converted tries in the first ten minutes. After the initial flurry of scores and the pace of the game began to take its toll, the scores came at regular intervals. Devon pulled ahead and as the first half ended Sussex started their scoring. At half time there was a collection for the Wooden Spoon Charity that raised nearly £300 for projects in Devon for disadvantaged children. The players generously donated as well.

After half time and with some injuries to Sussex players an Assistant Referee, from Devon Rugby Referees, joined the Sussex ranks along with a few Devon players. In the second half it was more of an even affair, but Devon gradually pulled away again and at the final whistle they were worthy winners at 67 - 24 points. This first ever game in this age bracket was a remarkable success. The after-match hospitality

away again and at the final whistle they were worthy winners at 67 - 24 points.

This first ever game in this age bracket was a remarkable success. The after-match hospitality from Exmouth was second to none. All the players relaxed although a little sore and watched the internationals. There were the usual player of the match and the best players from both sides and Sussex presented county ties to their newest players. The evening was rounded off by a bagpipe solo from Kevin McDonald, Chair of Sussex RFU. Sussex have offered a return match next season at Haywards Heath RFC. Everyone enjoyed the experience and are keen to develop this Super Veterans side.

### The team were:

Phil Sluman (Withycombe)  
Chris Thomas (Teignmouth)  
Kevin Ellis (Crediton)  
Rocker Sheppard (Sidmouth)

Steve Sycamore (Exeter Saracens)  
Dave Mountain (Topsham)  
Paul Jelley (Teignmouth)  
Sam Dave (Honiton)  
Marcus Webb (Teignmouth)  
Barney Bell (Tiverton)  
Chris Crow (Topsham)  
Oli Murch (Westcountry Wasps)  
Karel Kuran (Teignmouth) and  
Geoff Davey (Topsham).

### Devon Replacements:

Olly Sinar (Paignton)  
Tim Edbrooke (Topsham)  
Mark Annal (Teignmouth)  
Perry Belcher (Exeter Saracens)  
Mike Oliver (Exmouth) and  
Graham Sage (Okehampton).

## Spotlight on Devon Inclusion and Diversity Lead, Ant Cole

I grew up from a young age playing competitive sports. This initially involved me playing Hockey for my school, college and University. I then played in a floor ball league, which is indoor hockey in rink, think ice hockey without the ice. I lost my love of sport as it did not feel inclusive to me as a gay male. I luckily discovered the amazing sport of rugby through Plymouth Dolphins RFC, who were very welcoming and had a sense of family and support, which was not one I had experienced before. I have continued playing for four seasons. The club I play for is an inclusive club as is known and regarded worldwide. The club has two Organisational Bodies, one being England RFU and the other is the IGR. The IGR are a global body for inclusive rugby; through this we play international teams as well as in a national league. I have represented rugby from the UK, Devon and Plymouth internationally. The club I play for is an inclusive club as is known and regarded worldwide.

I am the Inclusion and Diversity lead for Devon CB and have held this role for 2 years. I am part of the RFU national Inclusion and Diversity group. Including everyone is important to me and my favourite quote about what Inclusion and diversity is "inclusion isn't being invited to the party, it's feeling safe enough to get up and dance."

## Safeguarding in Devon

Introducing the newly appointed Devon Safeguarding Team.

This season we are pleased to announce Jo Tracey as CB Safeguarding Manager (CBSM) with active support from Zoe Stratford and Jo Arnold as Assistant Safeguarding.

Your Safeguarding Team is responsible for promoting and maintaining the highest standards of Safeguarding across Devon and within our affiliated Clubs, creating safe environments and ensuring National and Local Safeguarding policies are adhered to. In turn, we actively support our Devon Club Safeguarding Officers (CSOs) and the RFU to ensure that we continue to strive to provide the best Grass Roots Age Grade Rugby experience for all our young players. But it is not just policy, our Safeguarding Team also support with Welfare, Tours, Volunteer Recruitment, Training and non-playing Disciplinarys. It is a challenging and rewarding role and we seek to support each other and our Clubs to the best of

our ability. In times of crisis or concern the Safeguarding Team are there to collaborate with the Clubs, RFU and other agencies quickly and effectively maintaining the child at the centre of all considerations. We are also known to support with Adult Mental Health issues, SEN training, signposting to additional services and supporting Clubs in Governance actions where needed.

As with every Ruby Team, we strive to look after each other and have a few giggles at our latest nicknames "Fun Police" and "Resident Rottweiler" being our current favourites!

In reality, like you, we volunteer for the Love of the Game. We thrive off those goosebump moments where players achieve their own personal bests and turn to you with that massive "I did it!" grin. There is nothing better than that noisy, sweaty, muddy group of kids with massive grins celebrating with Team and opponents in our Devon Clubhouses. Rugby - it is truly the best day of the week!



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