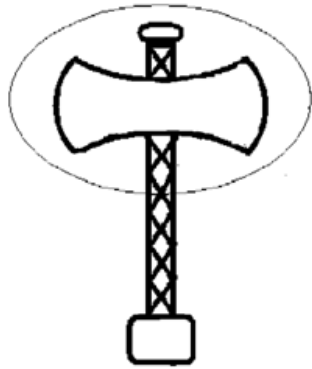


# Happy New Year! .....



*Mike Munro, the North Regional League Representative on the Scottish Rugby Council and Chair of the North Forum writes .....*

Firstly, on behalf of Caley and Scottish Rugby, may I wish you and your club a Happy New Year and hope that North and North East Rugby can flourish.

The end of 2012 was clouded by the tragic death of Dave Mackay, a 1<sup>st</sup> XV player at Ross Sutherland. Dave died as a result of a road accident after he had been attending his club's Christmas function. Any death of a young person is deeply felt but in a smaller community such as the Black Isle and within the rugby community itself such tragedy is felt even more keenly.

### Leagues

Onto happier matters; whilst Caley Division I appears to be done and dusted as to promotion with Aberdeenshire 19 points ahead (despite a surprising defeat away to Strathmore), the same cannot be said about Division II North. Due to postponements before the Christmas break the North Forum Committee had to reallocate the diarising of fixtures so we can get to the split, certainly by the end of January. Garioch, Aberdeen

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University and Aberdeenshire 2nds are guaranteed top 6 places but as this is being written before the matches on Saturday, 12 January the other three places all appear to be up for grabs. Clubs are all doing their best to ensure that games are played. If any matches from the pre-split games are outstanding by the time of the split, those games will still need to be played before the end of the season. This applies to all leagues. This is to ensure that we can show to the sponsors that at least in Caley North all games are fulfilled. It also ensures that all clubs are adhering to their participation agreement. However, provided the weather is favourable, the five outstanding matches will be played by 26 January. Let's just hope that clubs do not suffer points deduction for non-fulfilment, etc.

Caley I is of course subject to what happens above in the Championship as to how many clubs need to be relegated. That in turn will have an effect on relegation from Caley II so all games are important which does the leagues no harm at all. In Caley III North there have been a disappointing number of games postponed. It has resulted in matches having to be rearranged for international weekends but again as there is promotion from this league and participation money at stake for 1<sup>st</sup> XV clubs we must do what we can to get all games played. In other words the mantra is to get the games played! After all that is why we are involved in rugby anyway.

### Cup/Bowl/Shield Competitions

In the Regional Cup competition the Caley North area is still represented by Aberdeen Grammar. At the time of writing they have only [played](#) one game

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in their mini league. I do not really know how that competition is to progress but the Cup Finals day is in April so they will need to get a move on. Incidentally, whilst I have no direct involvement with Aberdeen Grammar, we must all wish them well in their bid to stay in Premier I. Rugby in the area needs clubs representing us at the highest level possible and it would be unfortunate were we to lose our Premier League I representatives.

In the Regional Shield Aberdeenshire and Ellon have avoided facing each other in the semi-finals. Hopefully it will be a North East final next month with a club going forward to the national draw.

The Regional Bowl has also reached its semi-finals stage with those matches to be played on 26 January. Fortunately, our Midlands counterparts have also got as far as the semi-finals. The draw for the North is shown elsewhere in this Newsletter. The semi-finals for the Midlands is Fife Southern against Panmuir and Grangemouth Stags against Harris Academy.

I have also been asked about our own local cup competitions. The Brin Cup and the Referees' Cup will, I am sure, be played for but the Referees' Cup in the North East is particularly dependent upon the 1st XV clubs in Caley Divisions II and III North concluding their league commitments in time for their participating in the Cup. I can assure you that the North Forum Committee is keeping a keen eye on this.

### **President's Roadshow and Tonga Match in Aberdeen**

The Chairman, the President and the CEO and the other senior representatives from Murrayfield who attended the Roadshow in Aberdeen in November were delighted with the attendance of the clubs and wish to thank those for attending for a very interesting evening. I would make it clear now that if any points that were raised, or indeed any other points that were thought by clubs of not being properly considered or responded to by the Union, please let me know. There is little point in my attending Council meetings and not raising

matters causing constituent clubs concern if they have not been brought to my attention by that club or their Forum representative. Your club has a note as to who its direct contact is. Please use this facility if necessary.

The Tonga game, whilst a disaster on the pitch, was a great success off it! I know that all within the SRU were delighted with the support given by clubs and its members. Peter Young has written an interesting article, which is included elsewhere in this Newsletter, indicating the benefits of "Tongan week". I know also that the Tongan players and their management team had a great time in the North East. It will be difficult for the SRU not to take a full international match back to Aberdeen sooner rather than later given the level of support and interest.

### **Scotland**

We all wish Scott Johnson and his coaching staff the very best as the 6 Nations fast approach. I know from speaking to Colin Douglas at the ticket office at Murrayfield, as recently as last Thursday, that tickets are still available for all the Murrayfield matches. A full house at Murrayfield (like the one against the All Blacks) creates a great atmosphere. Let's hope it will help us to at least get the three home wins this season.

Please note that our under 20's will be playing Wales under 20's at the Caley Stadium Inverness on Friday, 8 March with a 7.35 pm kick off. Entry is free and if you can make it please go along. There is also a Scotland Womens International against their Italian counterparts on Sunday, 10 February at Mayfield, Dundee with a 2 pm kick off. Again support there would be greatly appreciated.

### **Finally.....**

thanks to those who represented the Aberdeen Select on Boxing Day in the annual match against Aberdeen Exiles. Although the Select were beaten it was good that so many clubs in the Aberdeen area had players in the squad (of 34) and everyone got some game time. Thanks also go to Colin Bell of Aberdeenshire and Kev Wyness of Aberdeen Grammar for their help.

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Those of us who attended the lunch afterwards can vouch for it being a great occasion. I got a lot of free advertising for my daytime job during the speeches but fortunately no-one finished up having to see me in my professional capacity the following day at Aberdeen Sheriff Court!

Please could the person to whom Gordon sends this Newsletter send it on to all your other members for whom you have an email address? Quite a lot of people in clubs I have visited during the course of the season have told me that they have heard of this Newsletter but have not

seen it. A lot of work goes into it, particularly by Gordon Cox, and it would be a shame if it is not available more widely.

Very finally ... you may have heard that I have been appointed as a director of the Scottish Rugby Board. One of our directors, Jim Greenwood who was a Council representative on the Board had to retire due to ill health. In December I was elected to be the Council representative on the Board replacing him. Whether I or the Board or the SRU will live to regret my appointment only time will tell!

**Mike Monro**

## Scotland v Tonga : Community Events .....

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*Pete Young, Grampian RDM, provides an insight into the community events leading up to the Scotland v Tonga match at Pittodrie last November .....*

### **Scotland v Tonga Community Activities**

As with previous internationals at Pittodrie, the week leading up to the Scotland v Tonga game saw a packed programme of community activities which provided opportunities for coaches and players of all ages to see the international players and coaches in their schools and clubs. Thanks must go to the National management team for working with us to get so many players and coaches available. The opportunity for young players to come into contact with their rugby heroes is invaluable for developing and promoting the sport locally and really does make a huge impact.

Here is a quick run down of the events...

### **Community Tuesday**

Tuesday was the main day for the Scotland squad to get out and about making community visits. 23 different players were involved during the day. In the afternoon three groups of players went out to visit local schools. Matt Scott, Stuart Hogg and Tommy Seymour were at Harlaw Academy along with BBC Alba who recorded a piece for the half time of their Pro 12 coverage that Friday. The players were presented with a large cake baked by one of the parents, which went down very well with the whole squad that evening! Nick De Luca and Peter Horne were at Robert Gordon's College

watching the S1's go through their paces. Max Evans and Peter Murchie went out to Ellon to see players from Ellon and Meldrum Academies. At the same time around 120 children from local primary and secondary schools came to Aberdeen Sports Village where they had a question and answer session, followed by skills coaching with local development staff and a group of Scotland players. Kelly Brown (who took on the role of MC during the Q+A), Dave Denton, John Barclay, Stuart McNally, Rory Lawson, Henry Pyrgos, Greig Laidlaw and Tom Heathcote all ended up with writers cramp after signing autographs for all the children (and most of the teachers/and helpers!).

In the evening a third group of players went out on club visits. Al Kellock and Kyle Traynor were at Garioch where they fielded some interesting questions from the ladies team! Grant Gilchrist, Geoff Cross and Dougie Hall were at Aberdeen Grammar and Richie Gray, Ryan Grant and Ross Ford were at Aberdeenshire. Unfortunately due to the bad weather the session at Ellon had to be postponed.

### **Coaching Update**

On Wednesday evening while other club members were at the Presidents Roadshow, over 30 local coaches had the opportunity to see coaching sessions from Matt Taylor, Duncan Hodge, Eddie Pollock and Alex Duncan at Aberdeen Sports

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Village.

### **Primary Festival**

On Thursday morning nearly 300 pupils in 25 teams from 15 different Primary schools throughout Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire came together for a touch rugby festival at Aberdeen Sports Village run by the Grampian Development Staff. 3 groups of children, one selected from each team, also had the opportunity to be part of the chorus for a charity song with a group of Scottish players. Kelly Brown, Euan Murray, Matt Scott and Henry Pyrgos then took the time to pop into the indoor pitch and have a quick chat to all the young players.

### **Team Run**

Around 30 school pupils took the opportunity to watch the Scotland team run at Pittodrie on Friday morning.

### **Skills Coaching**

The final event of the week was a skills coaching

morning for U14- U16 players from throughout the region, including a group from Orkney who had travelled across on the overnight ferry to get to the game. Around 80 players were there and we were lucky enough at the start of the event to have a visit from Chris Cusiter and Chris Paterson. Both had to disappear off due to media and other commitments.

However, we will look forward to welcoming the team back again to the North East, as the packed stands at Pittodrie showed the appetite for such games here.

Unfortunately the end result on Saturday did not manage to provide the fitting climax to the week. However, we will look forward to welcoming the team back again to the North East, as the packed stands at Pittodrie showed the appetite for such games here.

**Pete Young, Grampian RDM**

## Appointed to the Board of Scottish Rugby ....

As reported in his leading article, Mike Munro has been elected by members of the Council to the Board of Scottish Rugby and all in North Rugby will congratulate him on his appointment as well as wishing him all the best.

The Scottish Rugby Board is responsible for the ongoing management of Scottish Rugby. It comprises four non-executive (and non-voting) directors, four representatives of the Scottish Rugby Council (and

currently includes President Alan Lawson) and up to four executive directors (comprising the Chairman, CEO, Director of Finance and Director of Rugby).

The intention is for the voices of Scottish Rugby, ie the elected Council members, to have a considerable sway, in terms of voting rights, on decisions made by the Board which impact on Scottish Rugby.

## Caley 3 North .....

Changes to the administration of the Caledonia Regional Leagues has seen responsibility for the running of Division 3 (North) pass to the North Regional Forum Committee.

The contact point for clubs, including advice of non-fulfilment, request to change date of fixture, etc is now the Forum Committee Secretary, to whom all queries should be addressed (details on page 7).

Matters relating to sanctions/penalties will be addressed at meetings of the Forum Committee, under the chairmanship of Mike Monro.

In the synopsis of the last Forum Committee meeting minute it was advised that the policy towards Division 3 (North) clubs would be sympathetic with a first offence only warranting a warning.

# Development Dates for 2013 .....

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Dates of development courses, etc, for North rugby are:

<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>16- Jan</b>	<b>Rugby Ready Practical Mop-up course – Elgin 7-9pm</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>19- Jan</b>	<b>Rugby Ready Practical Mop-up course – Garioch RFC 8.30-10.30am</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>23- Jan</b>	<b>Referee Level 1 course – Elgin 6-9pm</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>30- Jan</b>	<b>Referee Level 1 course – Elgin 6-9pm</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>30-Jan</b>	<b>Rugby Ready Mop-up course – Invergordon 7-9pm</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>04- Feb</b>	<b>Are You Ready To Play Rugby Consultation ( Aberdeen) 7-9pm</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>11-Feb</b>	<b>Are You Ready To Play Rugby Consultation (Inverness) 7-9pm</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>25-Feb</b>	<b>LTPD STAGE 3 – Invergordon</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>08-Mar</b>	<b>U20 Scotland v Wales (Inverness)</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>20- Mar</b>	<b>LTPD STAGE 3 – Aberdeen Sports Village 6.30-9.30pm</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>27-Apr</b>	<b>UKCC L2 – Ellon</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>28-Apr</b>	<b>UKCC L2 – Ellon</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>17-May</b>	<b>UKCC L1 – Aviemore</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>18-May</b>	<b>UKCC L1 – Aviemore</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>19-May</b>	<b>UKCC L1 – Aviemore</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>26-May</b>	<b>UKCC L2 – Ellon</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>31-May</b>	<b>UKCC L1 – Mackie</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>01-Jun</b>	<b>UKCC L1 – Mackie</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>02-Jun</b>	<b>UKCC L1 – Mackie</b>

There will also be some other Rugby Ready mop up courses in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire before the end of January. Dates as yet TBC.

## North Conference

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Plans are progressing regarding the Conference on the North Game to be held in Elgin on Sunday 12 May.

There will be three sets of three forum/discussion groups, the topics including Club Development Plans , Modern Apprentice Programme, Referees with Coaches, Youth Rugby (including Pathway), Caledonia Leagues, Volunteering, Club Participation Agreements, Communication/Marketing. Two parallel sessions on Women’s Rugby and Golden Oldies Rugby will follow. After lunch there will be

an Open Forum which will address Funding before the main discussion topic—North Rugby : Challenges, Solutions and Aims. Syndicates from Grampian and H&I will have separate discussion groups. It is hoped that the President of the SRU, Alan Lawson will wind up the Conference with an address.

Clubs will be invited to send up to three representatives to the Conference.

Ideas for other topics for discussion/debate should be advised to Gordon Cox (contact details on page 7 of this Newsletter).

# Caledonia/North Leagues & Cups .....

Results, draws and layout for Caley 1, Caley 2 (North) and Caley 3 (North) Leagues, as well as Shield and Bowl Competitions, 2012 - 13, following games played on January 12:

## Caledonia Division 1

	p	w	d	l	f	a	bp	pts
Aberdeenshire	13	12	0	1	586	156	11	59
Caithness	11	8	0	3	308	181	8	40
Gordonians	12	6	0	6	328	229	7	31
Strathmore	13	6	1	6	203	289	3	29
St Andrews Uni	9	4	1	4	235	289	8	26
Hillfoots	12	4	2	6	248	334	6	26
Orkney	13	5	0	8	220	342	6	26
Highland	11	5	0	6	182	301	6	22
Ellon	11	4	0	7	228	254	5	21
Mackie Acad FP	11	2	0	9	198	361	5	13

## Caledonia Division 2 North

	p	w	d	l	f	a	bp	pts
Garioch	10	10	0	0	290	89	6	46
Aberdeen Uni	9	7	0	2	278	157	6	32
Abdn Wanderers	9	6	0	3	209	158	4	28
Aberdeenshire 2	10	5	0	5	260	199	5	25
Moray	10	4	0	6	225	227	9	25
RAF Lossiemouth	10	6	0	4	201	165	5	24
Lochaber	9	5	0	4	164	232	3	23
Banff	10	4	0	6	239	242	5	21
Abdn Uni Medics	9	2	0	7	202	311	6	14
Ross Sutherland	10	2	0	8	182	302	5	14
Stornoway	10	2	0	8	122	290	0	8
Highland Reds	w/d							

## Caledonia Division 3 North

	p	w	d	l	f	a	bp	pts
Deeside	8	7	0	1	302	68	6	34
Gordonians 2	8	5	0	3	176	118	6	26
Mackie Acad FP 2	5	3	0	2	140	127	3	15
Shetland	7	5	0	2	198	82	4	24
Dyce	6	5	0	1	148	53	3	23
Kinloss Eagles	4	4	0	0	290	15	275	20
Aberdeenshire 3	4	3	0	1	119	86	3	15
Garioch 2	7	3	0	4	121	259	2	14
Huntly	6	2	0	4	98	143	2	10
Grampian Police	4	1	0	3	78	131	1	5
Peterhead	5	1	0	4	32	125	1	5
Strathspey	5	1	0	4	18	205	0	4
Abdn Wanderers 2	6	1	0	5	45	238	0	4
Inv Craig Dunain	8	0	0	8	82	287	3	3

## RBS North Regional Bowl

**Preliminary Round** Ross Sutherland 35 Dyce 12

Aberdeen Uni wo RAF Lossiemouth scr

Kinloss Eagles wo Deeside conc

## 1st Round

Garioch 10, Kinloss Eagles 36

Grampian Police 7, Moray 66

Stornoway wo, Abdn Wanderers conc

Peterhead wo, Craig Dunain conc

Shetland 39, Banff 14

Huntly conc, Ross Sutherland wo

Aberdeen Uni 53, Lochaber 7

Strathspey 8, Abdn Uni Medics 26

## RBS Caledonia Regional Shield

### Preliminary Round

Orkney 23, Gordonians 19

Ellon 24, Mackie 10

### Quarterfinals

Strathmore 25, Caithness 15

Ellon 12, Highland 27

St Andrews U 32, Hillfoots 5

Aberdeenshire 56, Orkney 0

### Semi-Finals - 26 January

Highland v Strathmore

Aberdeenshire v St Andrews Uni

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**RBS North Regional Bowl (continued)**

**Quarterfinals - 8 December**

Ross-Sutherland 5, Kinloss Eagles 38

Aberdeen Uni 20, Moray 28

Stornoway 10, Abdn Uni Medics 38

Peterhead 3, Shetland 39

**Semi-Finals - 26 January**

Abdn Uni Medics v Kinloss Eagles

Shetland v Moray

## Volunteer of the Month .....

Belated congratulations to Caithness stalwart Shona Kirk who picked up the RBS Volunteer of the Month award in October for her services at Millbank.

She has served as Chair of the Junior Committee, under-15 and under-16 Fixture Secretary, Secretary for the Senior Committee and is apparently even known to pull on the boots to run coaching sessions from time to time!

Apparently, she expressed her embarrassment at having won the award, wanting to know who had nominated her so that (quote) "I can give them a piece of my mind!"

Most volunteers will agree that they do not do the job for any form of thanks or recognition - and, generally, this marvelous game of rugby does not let them down by giving either!

So, it is doubly satisfying to have that recognition. Well done, Shona, and to those at Caithness who recognized her contribution to the game.

May Shona be an inspiration to others in North Rugby.

## Forthcoming Events .....

Consultation on U-18 Law Changes	Aberdeen Grammar Clubhouse	Monday 4 February, 7pm - 9pm
Consultation on U-18 Law Changes	Highland Council Chambers, Inverness	Monday 11 February, 7pm - 9pm
Scotland U-20 v Wales	Caley Stadium, Inverness	Friday 8 March, 7.35 pm
North Conference	Elgin	Sunday 12 May, 9.30am for 10.00am

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All articles and correspondence should be addressed to the Forum Secretary at the contact points advised above