Colts Report

Date – 27.05.2026

Report compiled by (complied) Alan Gardiner

Key events, issues, and achievements since the last report.

17th Sept – 7's County Cup held at Alnwick RFC. An excellent evening which say 9 teams compete for the Cup, Tynedale took the cup in an exciting final v Alnwick 1, which saw enthusiastic crowd support.

Teams entered:
Alnwick x2
Berwickshire (Berwick & Duns)
Blyton (Blyth & Ashington)
Gosforth
Novos
Whitley Bay Rockcliff
Tynedale
Barbarians team (Volunteer players on the night)

Northern and Morpeth had to withdraw before the event due to a lack of players.

Good level of enthusiasm to continue with this cup event next season. I wonder if there is some scope to develop a 7's league?

County Cup (15's) 10 teams entered.

Cup Final – Tynedale (Winner) v Alnwick – held at Percy Park

Plate Final – Percy Park (Winner) v Gosforth – held at Ashington.

I would like to thank both host clubs who were excellent venues and hosts on the evenings. Wednesday evening events were well received with good support crowds and the plan is to continue with Wednesdays.

Club Colts Autumn Festivals – these have not proceeded as clubs feel that there have been sufficient playing opportunities so far in consideration of varied player availability.

National Cup – 4 Northumberland Teams entered, Alnwick, Tynedale, Percy Park & Novos. – Good representation as have to be accepted.

Teams have struggled to commit to this along with league and county cup matches.

ACE Player management - A positive development following a meeting between Steve Turnbull and Lawrence Patton has been Lawrence joining our Northumberland Colts Committee and providing a weekly update on minutes played by each player in the ACE scheme. This allows for clubs to know when these players are available and for how long and so maintaining that crucial club relationship whilst not risking over playing.

In discussion with TL as to further improved working between academy and clubs with it being felt that maintaining the club relationship is vital to player retention in the sport.

Colts Futures Festival (U16's / U17's) – Still being prevented from holding this by RFU despite overwhelming positive responses from everyone that I speak to about this. Aim to ease transition to colts, to be held around Easter before players head off to study for GCSE's. Player retention initiative.

I know that Penny Stewart and others are pushing this forward. I look forward to an update on progress and timescales. Penny has advised that she is hoping that this will be accepted as an RFU national trial event. Despite huge effort from Penny and positive feedback, we did not manage to make this happen, again.

Where can we go from here to make happen when is without exception received as a positive initiative?

Current and impending issues, events, and work streams

As above. All in hand except Colts Futures Festival which I need help with! A safeguarding risk assessment proposal needs to be written to deliver to RFU to obtain consent. This could be a great test event for RFU with over 200 players taking part.

Budget for all events has been submitted.

AG to review County Cup Rules with TL – issue to provide clarity and fairness in the use of academy players within the competition.

Issues requiring Decision, Discussion or Dissemination

As above. All in hand except Colts Futures Festival which I need help with! A safeguarding risk assessment proposal needs to be written to deliver to RFU to obtain consent. This could be a great test event for RFU with over 200 players taking part.

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