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## Mini and Youth Section 2021/2022 Season Report.

### Overview

After two seasons of uncertainty and intermittent rugby with the back drop of COVID it was great to have a full season without needing RFU playing restrictions in place. The coaches and volunteers worked extremely hard to maintain contact with all players during the broken connectivity and off seasons. This has resulted in Salisbury RFC minis and juniors returning to rugby in a very strong positions with little, if any, drop off in numbers at the start of this season compared to 2019-2020. Comparing our situation to some other clubs in the area which have struggled to retain and rebuild some of their age groups is testament to the strength and standing the club has in the community and rugby sphere. In fact in all age groups we have increased our numbers over the season with new starters still wanting to join in the final two months of the season, and, with more requesting to join during this initial off period.

We are in a strong position but we must not rest on our laurels as Amesbury RFC are pushing hard to form their mini and junior section. Although we wish them well and look forward to playing them in a few seasons time, we need to ensure that Salisbury RFC continues to be the first choice rugby club for all of our mini and junior age groups. We must provide rugby opportunity along with engaging and fun training sessions and a fair and balanced game time and experience for all. To this end, we continue to manage all our teams along the RFU guidance of not streaming our teams and ensuring development sides are selected for all games and that all squads implement the half game rule.

We have introduced and created the Salisbury RFC Rugby Community Scheme. The aim of this is to ensure that there are no financial limitations on local children experiencing rugby. Our first sponsor was Pizza Venti and via their community support scheme they donated £1000. So far this money has been used to provide 15 free rugby camp sessions, provided by JK Rugby Coaching and Mentoring, for those who may otherwise have not been able to attend them.

We have trialed a schools engagement programme with secondary schools and for the first time created an U16 Salisbury Schools Barbarians team formed from; Wyvern St Eds, Stonehenge

As a club we have also supported the Ugandan RFU to use rugby to support local communities and grow the game by donating several pallets of equipment that will be used to give Ugandan children the opportunity to play rugby. Thank you for your support with this venture. We are looking to host 30-40 Ugandan children (U14-U16) in Autumn 2023 so that they can experience the UK, UK rugby and Sunday grassroots rugby coaching and community.



# SALISBURY RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

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## **Mini Section (U6-U11)**

The Salisbury RFC minis have had another successful season - with attendance regularly reaching nearly 200 across the age groups, the spirit of rugby could not be better. The U6s had a great season with lots of new members joining in the fun on the match pitch. The older ones really looked after the littler ones. The biggest ones are excited to start playing some 'real' rugby! Our U7s and U8s have grasped the basics of rugby amazingly well; tag rugby is a rewarding game, and the two age groups have competed in games between other clubs at home and away. U9s have had a good, strong squad. 45 registered players on the books. The U9s, despite only having half a season for Contact rugby, they have taken to it very well and displayed some great knowledge and skills in the two Festival's we attended last season. The U10s have had a really good season despite split training focus due to RFU direction as part of COVID restrictions. We averaged 24 children per training session and took part in 10+ fixtures home and away where we lost only a couple of matches. Since Dec the focus was on U10s specific training although we found due the backlog of fixtures we had limited time to develop the skills although we managed pretty well. Our U11s ended their mini journey with a 6 match winning streak (in a non-competitive game) at the U11s Land Rover cup in North Dorset, narrowly missing out on a trip to Twickenham for the Premiership Final to Andover RFC U11s.

Although this season has been great, Season 22/23 will be awesome - we aim to grow rugby to feed the boys and girls Junior sections, and have a fantastic festival with (fingers crossed) eight clubs from south Wiltshire and North Dorset bring teams from the U7s to U11s to Salisbury RFC - hopefully up to 2000 people total. It will be awesome to see so many players and their parents on Hudson's Field and the Paddock for some quality rugby from all ages.

## **Junior Section (U12-Colts)**

The junior section has gone from strength to strength building on the strong pre-COVID foundations. In the boys section all teams have had great seasons. Having watched several of the games the brand of rugby our boys play is top class and there is lots of potential for the future. In the majority of age groups Salisbury teams either won or came very close to winning their respective Dorset and Wiltshire League competitions. We have had many new starters across the age groups and it is testament to the coaches, admins and established team members that these new players have been integrated so well.

In the girls section we have also gone from strength to strength. At the start of the year we had approximately 4-6 girls turning up regularly but due to some had work and school engagement sessions we ended the season with approximately 25 girls regularly turning up to train. Unfortunately, we are short of numbers to generate a team in any age group, however we are very close in our U16 age groups, so, fingers crossed for next season. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Lead Coach, Jonny and Team manager, Gemma, for their persistence and commitment to the girls section.



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At the start of the season we only had a single coach but we have ended with two regular coaches and a part-time coach and we are very excited that we will have two new coaches starting next season.

This season we have used the Rory Walworth Memorial fund to support a player in attending the Bath DPP sessions. The fund can be used, amongst other things, to financially support families whose child has potential at rugby but funding may mean that opportunities may be missed.

Jason Yarwood

Youth Director Salisbury RFC