

Season 2019/20

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## Grammar Rugby



### Home Fixtures

### Tennent's Premiership

**7th Sep 19**

Edinburgh Accies

**9th Nov 19**

Hawick

**11th Jan 20**

Musselburgh

**28th Sep 19**

Jed-Forest

**30th Nov 19**

Glasgow Hawks

**15th Feb 20**

Currie Chieftains

**12th Oct 19**

GHA

**7th Dec 19**

Selkirk

**7th Mar 20**

Marr



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highlights and interviews



**ABDNRugby**

Visit our Instagram for game photos and match day stories



# Welcome to Rubislaw

Welcome to Rubislaw, the home of Aberdeen Grammar Rugby, an historic venue established early last century, which over the years has hosted ties at all levels of the game, from International touring parties to “minis”.

In recent years significant efforts have been made by all associated with the Club to enhance the opportunities for the game within Aberdeen and the North-East – with a broad range of volunteers, including coaches, players, officials, parents and committee members, investing considerable personal time, effort and finance promoting and supporting rugby in and around the City.

These efforts continue with our latest collaboration with the SRU to promote the game within the educational establishments in our immediate catchment area with a bold new coaching scheme to give individual youngsters the opportunity to participate and begin to develop skills that could take them all the way through the Club structure to senior level and perhaps beyond. By nurturing this interest we hope to help sustain the game and its ethos within the area for many years to come.

Fortunately, last season provided us with a memorable and positive springboard for the newly introduced national structure. Securing our place in the top league through promotion and winning the National League Cup not only boosted morale but indicated the potential created by hard work and combined commitment, not just on the field but throughout the Club.

This is a time for everyone to pull together as a “team” to maximise support of Aberdeen Grammar Rugby and the visibility of our sport to a wider audience. We are fortunate to have retained the services of Ali O’ Connor to lead our enthusiastic coaching team and also welcome back a number of our campaign-experienced senior players as the backbone of the team, as well as greeting some enthusiastic new faces.

Behind the scenes, Chairman, Gordon Thomson, and his equally committed and hardworking Committee members continue to make an essential contribution. Without their dedication, the prospect of attaining goals at both senior and junior levels would not be possible. Notably, Gordon has been elected by his peers at other clubs to be the new Premiership League Representative on the SRU Council governing body. A clear indication of the value they place on his contribution to administering the game at national and district level and his informed contribution to the ongoing debate over several seasons.

Essential to all our efforts are our sponsors, members and match-day supporters. Without your continued backing, we could not sustain our competitiveness and place in Scottish Club Rugby.

We continually have to enhance our fundraising at both corporate and individual levels. Whether structured sponsorship opportunities or “one-offs”, we need your support. Full details are available elsewhere in this programme and online. Plus, keep-up with all our news and activities through our social media feeds (including the fantastic live match day coverage on Twitter) and posts on our website.

Finally, thank you to all who participate in making this community-based Club the success that it is. I look forward to seeing you at Rubislaw throughout the season and perhaps shouting your support

at away games too.

Enjoy your season with us.

Jim Rae, Honorary President







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# Chairman's Message

Welcome to Season 2019/20 of the inaugural premiership league post the creation of the Super 6 Franchise League which commences in November.

As always Scottish Rugby continues to evolve and re-organise. On the home front the FP club centre remains open and I have been assured we will enjoy the facility for the season to come. Last season saw the club achieve its target of achieving promotion to the Premiership.

Our second XV achieved fourth position in Caledonia North 2. Numbers are extremely strong in our mini section and we work with Aberdeen Wanderers in forming Granite City Colts in the youth conference leagues.

To round off an excellent season a large travelling support attended Bridgehaugh, Stirling to see Aberdeen Grammar Rugby secure the National League Cup by defeating our fellow National League counterparts Highland 26-10 in a thrilling final.

This season the club re-launches its schools rugby programme in the Aberdeen Grammar and Harlaw Academy School catchment areas. A number of players have qualified as coaches and the club is proud to commit finance and resource into developing the game within the community. The programme was previously suspended due to the local authority, and the SRU removing financial support. Recent discussions between club and SRU here allowed us to re-commence our long-term practice of coaching in schools.

The squad remains relatively intact from last season with the noticeable losses of Ewan Stewart (Super 6 contract at Boroughmuir) and Alec Dravitski (returning to New Zealand). Both have been sterling servants to the club. A number of new faces will be joining the squad during the season and details will be posted on Social Media/Website.

Ali O'Connor leads the coaching team supported by Bailey Walsh, Greig Ryan, Iain Stanger



and Duncan Massey. Our club doctor Louise McCulloch continues to provide great service as does Keith Raymond and his team of physios.

The committee has been strengthened by the election of Malcolm Gauld and Duncan Seller.

Our immediate past president Graham Barron passed away after a long illness earlier this year. His ongoing passion, support and personality will be sadly missed.

At the time of writing it appears that private equity money totalling £100 million may be arriving in SRU coffers. As the newly appointed SRU Council Member, representing all the Premiership Clubs I will be striving to ensure grass roots club rugby will benefit from this injection of capital.

As always I look forward to meeting old and new friends at the club from all over Scotland who follow this great game. Anyone wishing to discuss the club or support our activities can contact me on [g.thomson.t21@btinternet.com](mailto:g.thomson.t21@btinternet.com) or 07718905003.

Gordon Thomson  
Chairman & Director of Rugby



# Club Captain's Report

On behalf of all the players, I would like to welcome you to Rubislaw and thank you for coming to support Aberdeen Grammar Rugby. After five seasons in National 1, it's good to finally be back in the Premiership!

The 2018/19 season culminated in some long overdue silverware for the club, when we beat Highland to lift the National League Cup at Bridgehaugh. We had a fantastic support with us that day and I would like to thank everyone who came down and made it such a memorable day for Aberdeen Rugby.

In addition to our cup victory, we managed to achieve 4th place in the league, our highest position since being relegated from the Premiership in 2014. I believe our success last season was a combination of the fantastic commitment of our players, the dedication of the coaching staff and the continuous support that we had at Rubislaw (even when it was snowing). This year will be a huge step up for the Club and it's important that we don't rest on our laurels, and instead build on the standards we set ourselves in the 2018/19 season.

This season we have been fortunate in the sense that we haven't had our typical exodus over the summer. Although, there will be a couple of noticeable absentees, most notably Alec Dravitski and Ewan Stewart. Both players were excellent ambassadors for the Club (on and off the pitch) and will be hugely missed. I wish them both the very best for the future.

I am delighted that Ali O'Connor has agreed to continue as first XV coach for the 2019/20 campaign. I would be surprised if there is a coach in domestic amateur rugby who dedicates more time to rugby than Ali; his obsession with the sport was key in our success last season. I have no doubt that Ali is the right man to lead the Club into our new chapter in the Premiership.

This year, Ali's coaching staff includes Bailey Walsh (backs), Duncan Massey (2nd XV), former Club Captain Iain Stanger (forwards). The coaches will be assisted by Lewis Thomson (S&C), who has done a fantastic job in creating a summer strength programme for the players. Each member of the



coaching team plays an integral role for the Club; the players are hugely grateful for the effort and time they dedicate on a weekly basis.

The players and coaching staff have been working tirelessly over the preseason to ensure we can continue to play our exciting brand of rugby in the 2019/20 campaign. Our supporters (home and away) have a huge role to play in the new chapter in the Club's history, I look forward to seeing you all at Rubislaw. Please make your voices heard!

Doug Russell, Club Captain

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# Coach's Report

Good afternoon everyone and a very warm welcome from the coaches, players and committee of Aberdeen Grammar Rugby.

Welcome back everyone to the new season. Last year was a really positive step in the right direction for the club finishing fourth in the National One and the 2nd XV putting in a really creditable performance in Caly 2 North.

The good news is the vast majority of the squad has been retained for the new season and a number of new signings will add to the depth of our talented squad. Moving on from the club last year will be Alec Dravitski and Ewan Stewart who leave us with best wishes having both had amazing seasons last year. Alec returns to New Zealand whilst Ewan Stewart moves back to Edinburgh to pick up a super six contract with Boroughmuir. We wish them both good luck in the future..

The coaching team remains settled from last year with Iain Stanger looking after the forwards, Bailey Walsh leading the backs, and Duncan Massey working with the 2nd XV to bring players through for the future.

All the players and coaches are excited about the new season particularly with the 1st XV stepping up into the newly created Premiership. We know the standard of rugby will be higher than previously with teams looking to recruit and strengthen their squads ahead of what will be a fiercely contested league and cup campaign.

One of the highlights from last year for me and for a lot of the players was the GHA game at home where the Aberdeen supporters turned out in force to cheer on their team. A number of the players remarked how good the atmosphere was on that day and it definitely spurred them on to what was a very important victory. The crowd at Rubislaw really does play its part and the players really appreciate it when they get right behind the team.



Our backroom support has never been stronger. Keith Raymond returns for a 5th season to head up our dedicated physio team. New for this season is the appointment of Results Gym to oversee the Strength and Conditioning of our squads. The modern game is extremely physical and without their knowledge and expertise we would not be able to field two teams on a weekly basis. Finally, former team manager John Stewart will return to Aberdeen and to the Club as 1stXV Team Manager.

I know we can count on your support over the coming season and we look forward to playing in front of you and giving you something to shout about.

Ali O'Connor, Head Coach

# About the Club

Aberdeen Grammar Rugby (originally Aberdeen Grammar School FP RFC) was founded in 1893 and is the North of Scotland's premier rugby club.

The Club has been based at Rubislaw since the 16 acre facility was jointly purchased in 1914 by the Aberdeen Grammar Former Pupils Club and the then Aberdeen City Corporation.



The facilities have been upgraded over the years with the FP Club constructing the Fine Pavilion and then the Stand in 1993 which marked the centenary of the Club. More recently, new floodlighting and changing rooms were both completed in 2009 with funding from Aberdeen City Council.

The Club currently has around 60 registered players across its 2 senior sides. For Season 2019/2020, the First XV is competing in Tennent's Premiership while the Second XV are playing in Tennent's Caledonia North 2.

There are also currently around 250 players across the Club's successful Juniors (S1-Under18's) and Mini/Micro sections (P1 - P7) which are open to both boys and girls.

The Club has a long history of producing Scottish internationalists, with the late Dr Donny Innes and Dally Allardice being our most capped players during the 1940's (8 caps), until Robbie Russell was awarded 27 caps from 1999 until he retired in 2007.

More recently Johnny Beattie, Moray Low, Murray McCallum and Ruaridh Jackson have all been capped by Scotland after playing for Aberdeen Grammar Rugby.

The current club squad also contains a number of Scotland age-grade international players, as well as players who have represented Scotland on the senior international 7's circuit. Our squads have also included internationally capped players, like Rod Seib (Australia) and currently Matthias Schosser (Germany).

Aberdeen Grammar Rugby's success on the pitch and its commercial viability off it relies on the generous on-going sponsorship of local businesses and individuals. New sponsors are always welcome and opportunities/packages are offered across various levels.

For further information on all Aberdeen Grammar Rugby activities, including sponsorship opportunities and the benefits of sponsorship, go to [www.aberdeenrugby.org.uk](http://www.aberdeenrugby.org.uk)





# Player Sponsorship

Our Player Sponsorship scheme is open to any business or individual who wishes to associate their name with a particular player. The cost goes towards the players kit and fees, depending on the package selected. Your name as a sponsor will be linked on the players profile on the website, in the match programme, on all social media content featuring the player (video team sheets, try photos etc.) and you will be entertained at a sponsor's lunch during the season.

Please see the match day programme for a list of currently sponsored players. If you do not have a particular player in mind, someone from the committee will be happy to recommend a suitable candidate.

If you are interested in sponsoring a player, please either complete the form below or download one from our website. Should you want to explore other sponsorship opportunities, please contact Duncan Seller or Gordon Thomson.

Sponsor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact details:  
(email preferred) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I agree to sponsor the following player for season 2019/20. I understand that this will be credited by the Club towards the player's provision of team kit (pre/post matches) – Cost £150

There is an additional option to assist the sponsored player to cover annual subscription for the season - £250 (£175 for students or U21s)

SPONSORED PLAYER: \_\_\_\_\_

In return for this sponsorship the Club will entertain me to a specific sponsor/player evening during the Season and credit me in the match day team sheet.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete form with cash or cheque (made payable to Aberdeen Rugby Ltd), or by BACS to sort code 80-22-60, account 1620 5069, indicating (tick as required).

Send form and remittance to: Treasurer, Aberdeen Rugby Limited: 8 Wyness Place, Kintore, Inverurie, AB51 0SU

1: £150 - Player Kit only ☐ 2: £325 - Player Kit & Annual Student Subscription ☐

3: £400 - Player Kit & Annual Subscription ☐





# Membership

**Country Member – (Only available to members living over 100 miles from Aberdeen) £60**

- Eligibility to apply for Home International tickets (home and away matches)
- Access to club centre on match days and rugby events

**Aberdeen Rugby Club Member**

**£125 / Over 65 £75**

- Entry to all home games
- All above benefits

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	Junior S1 to Under 18*	£125		
Non-playing	Club Member	£125		
	Concession Season Ticket	£75		
	Gold Supporter	£190		
	Concession Gold Supporter	£150		
	Country Member	£60		

\*2<sup>nd</sup> Child £10 Discount/3<sup>rd</sup> Child £20 Discount

Total Payable:	
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**Declaration:**

I agree to photos appearing on the club website and 'private' Aberdeen Grammar Rugby Mini's Facebook. I agree to the AGRC Minis Facebook page being regulated by The Minis Committee.

**Privacy Notice:** Please refer to the Club website for details of the Club's Privacy Policy.

Agreed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send your completed form to: Aberdeen Rugby Treasurer, 8 Wyness place, Kintore, Inverurie, AB51 0SU**

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# Contacts

## Useful Contacts

<b>Honorary President</b>	Jim Rae	07557 413175
<b>Chairman &amp; Director of Rugby</b>	Gordon Thomson	07718 905003 / 01224 636002 (w)
<b>Honorary Secretary</b>	Colin Neilson	07817 215895
<b>Head Coach</b>	Ali O'Connor	07876 767073
<b>Treasurer</b>	Howard Moles	07976 134593
<b>Playing Administration Fixtures &amp; Playing Convenor</b>	Alan McDonald	07918 190102 amcd42@btinternet.com
<b>Match Day Corporate Entertainment</b>	Duncan Seller	business@aberdeenrugby.org.uk

## Interested in Sponsoring Aberdeen Rugby

Duncan Seller	business@aberdeenrugby.org.uk
Gordon Thomson	07718 905003 / 01224 636002 (w)

## Interested in Joining the Club

<b>Playing &amp; Non-playing Membership</b>	Mike Cox	07734 114729
<b>Granite City Colts</b>	Kevin Burnett	07841 098545
<b>Minis &amp; Micros</b>	Ben Connell	minis@aberdeenrugby.org.uk





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## Grammar Rugby



### Bears (2XV) Fixtures

### Tennent's Caledonia North 2

#### Home Fixtures

**14th Sept 19**  
North Police

**12th Oct 19**  
Banff

**19th Oct 19**  
Ross Sutherland

**23rd Nov 19**  
Moray

**30th Nov 19**  
Highland 2XV

**11th Jan 20**  
Mackie

**15th Feb 20**  
Aberdeenshire

#### Away Fixtures

**21st Sept 19**  
Mackie

**9th Nov 19**  
Aberdeenshire

**14th Dec 19**  
North Police

**18th Jan 20**  
Banff

**25th Jan 20**  
Ross Sutherland

**22nd Feb 20**  
Moray

**29th Feb 20**  
Highland 2XV





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# Minis

## Looking Ahead to 2019-2020

We train at Rubislaw Pitches (between Queens Road and Cromwell park every Sunday during term time (weather permitting).

The Micros: P1 - P2 train from 10am - 11:15am

The Minis: P3 - P7 train from 10am - 11:30am

P1-P3 provides coordination, fitness and the essential building blocks of non-contact rugby.

P4 introduces and develops good contact and tackling technique.

P5-P7 builds on these skills and introduces further key aspects of the game like line-out and scrummaging.

No experience necessary! We will support any new children throughout the first few sessions to enable a smooth transition to existing groups. There is no obligation to sign up to membership until the children know they want to continue.

Training sessions per year group are run by PVG certified, Rugby Right qualified coaches.

Rugby teaches children teamwork, responsibility and communication. It offers an opportunity to get outdoors, get muddy, meet kids from local schools, play in competitions and, most of all, be active and have fun!

For further information email: [minis@aberdeenrugby.org.uk](mailto:minis@aberdeenrugby.org.uk)

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# Granite City Colts

This coming season 2019/2020 Aberdeen Grammar youth will be continuing their successful collaboration into a 4th season with Aberdeen Wanderers to facilitate a single representative playing structure for youth rugby in Aberdeen under the banner of Granite City. Granite City is administered jointly through a Partnership Agreement between the clubs and the SRU.

A full complement of teams at u13, u14s, u15, u16 and u18 drawing on players affiliated to a number of clubs will represent Granite City in the Mitsubishi Lancer Conference League starting on the last Saturday in August and finishing by December. After the Christmas break the teams will be entered into the Caledonian Cup competitions.

Last season there was success in the Cup competition where the u15 and u18 sides reached the Shield finals of their respective competitions and, due to the performance of the u18 team in their league, the u18 side were progressed to the National Cup where they reached the quarter finals, losing to eventual winners Borroughmuir in Edinburgh.

This is the final season of the current Granite City agreement and there is an ongoing discussion with the SRU and our club partners in Aberdeen as we look to make key decisions now for the future of youth rugby in the city to determine how it can best be developed in season 2020/2021 and beyond.

We have a number of club-affiliated coaches working at various age groups within the Granite City set-up. If anyone is keen to assist with any of the teams in any way in the coming season then please contact Kevin Burnett.

Kevin Burnett, Granite City Colts





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# Golden Oldies

For our supporters and those of you who have travelled some distance to be with us at Rubislaw today, or just moved to the area, you may not be aware of being willing, or able, to continue playing rugby with the over 35's in Golden Oldie Rugby! Whilst abiding by the normal Rugby Union Laws, there are several variations to assist more senior players. Games have shorter playing times, there is unlimited substitution, over aggressive play is not condoned and a player's age is shown by the colour of shorts he wears. Tackling the over 60's is forbidden and you play in a Festival not a Tournament, playing in the ethos of fun, friendship and fraternity!



Some will be aware that, for several reasons, the Scottish Golden Oldies Rugby Festival has not taken place over the last two years but it is hoped that a club will wish to host this prestigious Festival in 2020. If any club has a special anniversary during the year or has already planned some form of celebrations, the Golden Oldies Festival would be an ideal item to include in your programme of events. Full information and guidelines on organising an SGOR Festival can be found on the Scottish Golden Oldies Rugby website or by contacting me by phone or email.



In 2015, Scottish Golden Oldies Rugby, in conjunction with three media students from Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, produced a DVD covering the whole history of Golden Oldies Rugby. It is called "Golden Oldies Rugby, an Introduction" and may be viewed on YouTube. Have a look, you will enjoy it.

In June, our 15th European Golden Oldies Rugby Festival was successfully held in Split, Croatia, with 5,000 participants from all over the world and in two years time, in 2021, the next EGOR Festival shall be held in beautiful Verone, north east Italy, and it is hoped that we will be able to send an Aberdeen/Scotland team to the Festival. If interested in participating, or supporting, please contact me.

Dave McDonald






President, Scottish and European Golden Oldies Rugby  
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Glasgow Hawks

**21st Sep 19**

Selkirk

**5th Oct 19**

Musselburgh

**19th Oct 19**

Currie Chieftains

**16th Nov 19**

Marr

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**18th Jan 20**

GHA

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