

Tonbridge Sports Association

Annual Report 2011/2012

Once again the Tonbridge Sports Association is able to present a positive and enthusiastic report in respect of the 2011/2012 year. As we come to the end of one of the driest and mildest winter seasons for many years we look forward to an Olympic summer full of extra events.

Even though the winter season has been kind to football and rugby, with only two weekends being missed, there is still demand for play into late April. The number of games to be played, and the success of many clubs in competitions, mean the extent of the winter season may need review again. We should not merely continue with past years formats but we should be able to review and take on board the current requirements of the successful clubs in and around Tonbridge.

Mentioning the success of clubs is quite often merely repeating the reports we continually see, each week, in the local newspapers. Many will agree that success has partly stemmed from the work of predecessors who, with their forethought, created many of the facilities that are now enjoyed. Tonbridge, and the surrounding areas, under the remit of the Tonbridge Sports Association, have facilities that many other areas in England could only wish for.

Those who were involved in creating the Tonbridge Sports Association, in May 1920, would now be so pleased with how the embryo has evolved. We should also mention the previous Chairman, Secretaries and other officers of the Association who all worked for many hours improving and expanding the facilities. This could not have been possible without the similar thinking, and enthusiasm, of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council who still contribute a great amount of time to the working partnership with the Association. Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council also continues to contribute financially, to a number of clubs, by the establishment of the Communities Enhancement Fund.

Everyone who worked on achieving all-weather facilities can now see the result of their endeavours. The Tonbridge School facility that commenced in September 2009 now has a full timetable of junior football five nights a week. This was joined in April 2011 by the Hayesbrook School facility, which by September its timetable included both rugby and football clubs from Tonbridge. We still have the smaller facility, at Tonbridge Farm sportsground, so now the demand has been satisfied. The opening of the facility at Wrotham School has broadened the availability to other areas.

Each of these facilities has a Community Use Agreement which gives the local sports users the comfort of knowing that training facilities will be continually available. We now look to using the established Community Use Agreement as a base for the commencement of a new agreement for the use of the Tonbridge School athletics track. This will establish Tonbridge Athletics Club, as the priority user.

Through the use of facilities, in Tonbridge, by Olympic competitors, local sports users will be able to enjoy the Olympic legacy. Our facilities will see some upgrading and the publicity will perhaps encourage others to join our clubs and become part of the existing sporting and social framework that thousands in Tonbridge enjoy each week. Many local schools are taking part in Olympic events, in June and July, and this also will send out the idea that everyone can take part in a sporting activity, of their choice, each week on a recurring basis.

Away from the idea of the Olympics other sports, particularly our summer sports, continue to flourish in their own way. The indoor cricket coaching programme has, once again, had a good winter schedule under the efficient leadership of Peter Robinson. The established cricket clubs are planning a full season, hopefully with some irrigation to the cricket squares. Our golfers are also thinking about the lack of water. Tonbridge is a town surrounded by water, and therefore having successful sailing, canoe and angling clubs, all wondering when rain will make a small change to the environment.

Each of these clubs provides open days and competitions where many come from outside the borough to participate in the events in Tonbridge. Many travel surprising distances, into the town, in order to take part in our much larger events such as the Kent Mini Rugby Finals, The Tonbridge Lions Triathlon, The Tonbridge Football Fiesta and now the Tonbridge Half Marathon.

Many of those involved in our member clubs do not seek recognition but just continue week on week to assist with the coaching in the club or the administration of the club. Without these dedicated people our clubs would not be so successful and well organised as they are. Since 2004 there has been a Tonbridge & Malling sports coach of the year award. In 2011 this was presented to Mark Hookway of Tonbridge Athletics Club. A most appropriate and well deserved award, knowing that the first award went to Dave Arnold, a well liked member of our Sports Association committee and a successful coach to Kelly Holmes.

The members of the Tonbridge Sports Association are very pleased to note that in 2012 Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council will also be presenting a Lifetime Achievement in Sports award to recognise someone who, behind the scenes, has kept their club, and sport, moving and growing. These people really make a difference and it is expected that quite a number of nominations will be received.

The Tonbridge Sports Association continues to work with the clubs, and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, to maintain the good facilities and upgrade them where possible. We also discuss a continuing programme of sports development for a number of clubs and those within the clubs who want to improve their contribution. 2012 is going to be a very active year and we should take full advantage of the opportunities this will bring, and give greater enthusiasm to our clubs to move forward and upwards to the years ahead.

April 2012