

When Joe asked me to pull together an update on the Rugby for the AGM, I went back and had a look at the updates I've provided over the course of this year and it was sobering reading. I wonder how we would have felt back in late March to be told we'd still be here in December. If looking back is difficult, it's no clearer looking forward. What do we know ?

The RFU have stated that we're back to Stage D regardless of Tiering, although this as subject to change as much as everything else this year. This puts us back to where we were before Lockdown 2, we can train - to an extent and with a number of restrictions - but it's still well short of playing anything more than touch rugby.

There will be no league rugby this year in the way we've come to understand it. There are proposals for 'cluster leagues' and inter-club fixtures with restricted rules starting in January, but in fact there have been new sets of proposals every few weeks since this all started. The truth is we will do what we are able to do, when we are able to do it and we are being led by government advice. We're all watching the same news reports and trying to understand what it means for our game. For now, say it quietly, there may be more important things at stake.

Whilst things have been difficult on the pitch, we have taken huge strides off of it. The Senior Management Committee has been engaged and busy and it's been good personally to have had a number of conversations with and listen to our Sages group. The relationships we're building and strengthening up and down the Club have already had huge benefits and are helping to ensure we're building the bridge between the youth and senior teams the is such a leading indicator of success.

I know all the coaches, from Tom and Simon with the senior men and Ali, Ross and Vicki with the senior women, down through the age groups and to Lucy with the Grizzlies have had a difficult job on their hands organising training under the changing circumstances, adhering to guidelines and keeping their squads coordinated and motivated. We all owe them a huge debt of gratitude for helping to keep the Club moving forward during these difficult times. I'd also like to thank those members of the SMC who have stepped forward this year not just to help shape the Club but also its position in our Community and finally to First Team Captain Matt Poole and Club Captains Chris Beer and Sarah Sanderson for their leadership. I do believe that our foundations are strong and the future of our Club is bright. I look forward to being able to have a pint on the balcony and hear that first whistle blow.

Skippy