



# **ECCLES RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB**

Founded 1897

Ground and Clubhouse: Gorton Street, Peel Green, Eccles, Manchester, M30 7LY  
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## **2019/20 Season AGM Colts Report**

### **League Campaign.**

The 2019/20 season in NW Colts Senior Division D, was challenging and competitive with many fixtures close contests. The pool was won by Birkenhead Park who beat us at the start of the season 16 – 12, close enough to gain a bonus point.

The most spirited performance was 28-28 away at Bury, fighting back from 0-28 down at HT. A 22-29 victory in November with a late try away at Preston Grasshoppers was memorable. A narrow 17-22 defeat to Makos (who beat Eccles in last year's Lancs trophy final) was also a highlight performance, with 14 man Eccles ahead 12-0 at HT but ultimately tiring and losing their grip after 60 minutes, despite fighting back to 17-17 with a late try, a frailty at restarts cost us the game. Kendal dished out a heavy defeat for us at home but we gave a better account of ourselves up in Lakeland with the score tied at 12-12 approaching the break before the hosts big squad overcame our 14 men in the second half.

Despite the hard defeats, inconsistent line up and a decline in committed numbers the core of the team was resilient and kept going. Although the Colts began the season with a registered combined squad of 28 (10 x U18s 18 x U17s) we found ourselves unable to field a full front row in all but a handful of games and struggled in many fixtures to field 15! The reasons for these availability issues being consistent with previous colts seasons (education, employment, loss of enthusiasm, conflict with Rugby League).

Played 12 W3 D1 L8.

### **Cup Campaign.**

The Colts once again reached the Semi Final of the Lancashire U18 Colts Trophy but were defeated 14-41 by Aldwinians, who secured the victory with four successive first half tries (again a failure to deal with successive restarts). Eccles fought back to dominate the second half but alas too late to change the outcome.

The best performance of the season was an emphatic seven try 43-7 home victory over Rossendale in February's first round of the Senior Colts Plate, illustrating the benefits of a full team, a pair of replacements and a decent pitch in bad weather! The Colts went on to reach the Quarter Final of the Senior Plate which was unplayed due to the RFU curtailment of the season. As we were the Plate winners last season, perhaps this means we retain the Silverware?!

### **Development.**

The continuing aim of Colts at Eccles is to provide an enjoyable experience, that encourages, develops and prepares youth players for adult rugby, retaining as many as possible to play attacking rugby in a Senior Eccles shirt.

Chairman: P. Thorpe 07766 512552  
Hon. Secretary: M. Greenhalgh 07525 434790  
Hon. Treasurer: M. Bateman 07843 756160  
Fixtures Secretary: D. Edmondson 0161 7476697  
Director of Rugby: S. Simpson 07935 403171

Communications Officer: C. Gaffey 07971 817375  
Safeguarding Officer: H. Thorpe 0161 7902622  
M & J section Chair: P. Fleming 07889 601558  
D of E Award Chair: M. Baines 07850 082122



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Training for the colts this season has continued to be combined with the Seniors. The U17s adjusted well to the physicality of a competitive U18s division, where many opponents also had mixed age squads. Belief in what we could achieve with a bare 15 (or less) players grew as our games (and season) progressed. The last 15 minutes of many contests saw the team applying tremendous pressure and, although fitness could have been better, we often finished stronger than our opponents.

Team discipline was excellent with just 1 yellow and 1 red awarded (the Captain leading by example in a friendly!)

No concussions were encountered, although shoulder and knee injuries were again common. Several players were introduced to unfamiliar positions broadening their understanding of the game as they progress their transition into adult rugby.

Winger/Fullback Tallis Keeler was selected to represent Lancashire U17s and four senior colts made their Eccles RFC senior debuts this season.

Overall, the team displayed great spirit, character and determination to the end. All credit to the lads for sticking together and sticking at it through a tough season.

Chris Gaffey, John Christie, Brendan Cullen, Coaches.

President: M. Dutton 07802345380  
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