

# **MIDLETON RFC AGM**

## **2021/22 SEASON RUGBY**

### **REPORT**

This report has been prepared by Ken Murphy, Head Coach for the 2021'22 season.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The 2021-22 season saw the first full season completed since the COVID-19 pandemic. There were contingencies built into the AIL season to allow for cancellations of some matches due to COVID.

At the outset of the season it was agreed with the club that this season was the first year of a three to four season development cycle with the ultimate aim of gaining promotion from Mens Division 2C of the AIL. With this in mind, the club set a number of objectives for the season. They were as follows

1. Maintain and consolidate the club's position in Division 2c with a mid-table finish (between 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>)
2. Develop a new game plan that plays to the strength of the squad and builds on the traditions of the club
3. Integrate players coming up from the youths section of the club into the senior squad.
4. Strengthen and develop the ties between the youths and adult sections of the club to improve retention of youths players to the senior team, especially those players who would otherwise look to play u20 or adult rugby elsewhere

# RESULTS

Two mens adult teams were fielded for the season. The Second XV participated in the 2C Munster 2nds League and the Munster Junior Cup competitions.

- Finished 5<sup>th</sup> in the AIL Div. 2C.
- Played 18 games, Won 8 and lost 10
- In the first half of the AIL season from Sept to Xmas, played 9 games and won 5 AIL games
- In the second half of the season from Jan to May, played 9 games and won 3
- Used 35 players across the 18 games of the AIL

	P	W	Pts
Enniscorthy	18	16	78
Skerries	18	13	63
Bangor	18	13	61
Tullamore	18	11	49
Midleton	18	8	38
Bruff	18	6	35
Omagh	18	5	33
Sunday's Well	18	6	32
City of Derry	18	6	31
Clonmel	18	2	22

- 2<sup>nd</sup> XV performed well in their 2C Senior 2nds League and won this league by a considerable margin.
- Only club in this league to fulfil every fixture
- Several players who played well in this league had that performance rewarded with selection for the Senior team with several AIL debuts across the season.

# **REVIEW**

While on the surface the objectives set out at the start the season have been broadly achieved, nonetheless the season overall has to be seen as slightly disappointing, especially given the position the Senior team was in at the Amas break where we were within 5 points of a play-off place.

Unfortunately that challenge fell off after Xmas for a variety of reasons, mainly around underperformance as opposed to significant improvement of other competitors.

That said, there have also been some encouraging signs for the future which will be noted in the final section of this report.

# **LOOKING FORWARD**

The most significant challenge for next season is the fact that we have lost several key players through emigration. As such recruitment of new players and retention of existing squad members is hugely significant.

So, on the back of what has to be looked at as a season where we could have done better on the field, and where we are losing several players, there are nonetheless many reasons to be optimistic and look forward to the coming season

- Recruitment is very active and going well, with several new players already signed for next year
- Youths players who came through from last year have become established in the squad and most are committed to remaining with the club for the season
- Our game plan had developed significantly through the season and this coming season will our starting point much further along than it was at the start of this season with the players having a better skillset and a greater understanding of what it is we are trying to achieve.
- More robust management team in place, and better pre-season preparation underway (hampered last year by COVID restrictions)

# **CLOSING REMARKS**

Finally, on a personal level I would like to thank the many individuals who have made me feel most welcome at the club in what has been my first full season here. I look forward to the coming season ahead and with the calibre of people the club has steering the ship, I am excited about the possibilities that lay ahead !

Yours in rugby,

*Ken Murphy*