

The Bulletin

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From the Headmaster

Failure and its impact upon self-esteem are themes which continue to attract profile in educational circles. From an early age, there is a danger of excessive focus by schools on end goals, on final performance, on summative assessment. Individuals are judged by achievement rather than by progress. In this light, to celebrate failure would seem a surprising message to be broadcasting publicly and yet last weekend's rugby block fixture against St Paul's School proved to be a challenging test – to say the least! – for all our teams. Despite competing admirably in each of the fixtures and, in nearly every case, reducing the deficit from the previous year through the high levels of commitment and teamwork on display, there was no disguising the fact that the RGS suffered a number of losses.

In each of our sports it would be all too easy to manufacture a school fixture list which guarantees victories and provides the opportunity for metaphorical back-slapping by all concerned. Schools are quick to market exceptional sporting results and clearly success is something of which we should all be proud. Our fixture list in all sports is truly competitive and allows our students to pit themselves some of the strongest schools in the country. The reputation of RGS sport continues to grow and we are proud of the very many victories which our students secure.

I would argue, however, that the defeats and the set-backs are as important as – if not more important than – these victories and are at the heart of so much of what we are trying to nurture at the RGS: sportsmanship and humility; striving for continuous improvement; and the motivation of setting an ambitious bar of aspiration. Often our students have rarely tasted disappointment in their lives and that is why occasional failure in both the classroom and the co-curricular spheres is so healthy and positive. If we are to prepare our students for a rapidly-changing world where things will not always go their way, where failure is the result of taking risks and going beyond what is viewed as possible and achievable, learning to cope with defeat and having the resilience to come back all the stronger are qualities which we must nurture in each and every individual. That is why tenacity, this ability to be resilient, is one of our core school values at the heart of our ethos. Although it is clichéd, it is undoubtedly true that if you can learn from defeat you haven't really lost; as Samuel Beckett famously said *"Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better."*

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Drama: Political uncertainty; controversial proclamations from a stubborn leader; tensions between personal beliefs and those of the city: far from contemporary theatre these resonant and contemporary themes were those which pervaded Sophocles' play *Antigone*. A talented cast from students of every year group captured the complexities of the various characters and succeeded in making the play accessible to a modern-day audience, none more so than **Oliver Taylor** (L6) as the strong-willed, defiant Antigone, the intransigent Creon played by **Jack Feakes** (L6), and a deliciously eccentric, idiosyncratic portrayal of Teiresias by **Patrick Merritt** (L6). Particular credit was reserved for all-round motivator, director and actor Old Guildfordian Matthew Sargent who single-handedly made the play a reality.

Badminton: **Christopher Chong** (5P) won the Surrey County Schools Under 17 Boys Singles Championship held at Epsom College. At team level, the RGS Under 16A team won 10 – 2 against Hampton School.

Chess: The RGS A team won the Eton College Team Rapidplay Chess Tournament. A total of 48 teams entered and among these were some of the strongest schools in the UK and Ireland. The victory for the RGS resulted in back-to-back successes in this prestigious competition.

Fencing: At the Leon Paul Junior Series Under 13 Foil held in Cardiff, **Freddie Cheng** (3S) emerged as Silver medalist and **Zed Law** (3R) as Bronze medalist. Zed is now 8th out of 106 fencers in the LPJS rankings.

Tennis: In the semi-final playoff of the junior Aegon School Tennis Championship against St John's School, Leatherhead, the RGS narrowly lost by 4 rubbers to 2. Particular credit went to **Adethya Srinivasan** (3E) who won both his singles and also doubles rubber where he teamed up with **Harry Caulton** (1C).

Karting: **Arvid Lindblad** (1E) won the British Championship in karting at PF International in Lincolnshire.

Kickboxing: **Ilhan Mosobbir** (U6) competed in his first international tournament at the Flanders International Kickboxing Cup 2018 in Sint-Niklaas in Belgium. He was placed third in the under 79kg category and then stepped up to a higher weight category of under 84 kg where he achieved silver.

Rugby: The 1st XV progressed through to the last 16 after defeating former Champions, Tonbridge School, in the Champions Trophy; the game finished 33 – 22 to the RGS. A competitive block fixture against Wimbledon College saw RGS teams producing a number of excellent results. The 1st XV continued their impressive start to the term with a tight 19 – 19 draw; other highlights included a clean sweep of wins for the four Under 12 teams and a close 14 – 10 victory for the Under 15A team. The RGS then faced the traditionally challenge block fixture against St Paul's School. Despite suffering a succession of losses; the boys emerged with real credit, none more so than the Under 14 teams. The Under 14As won with a dramatic drop-kick in the final seconds to secure a 20 – 19 victory; the Under 14B team finished honours even, 19 – 19.

Shooting: Lower Sixth Formers **Sherwin Balloo**, **Will Kemsley** and **James Riley** represented the School for the first time against St John's School, Leatherhead. The RGS won 778 to 768 with a maximum 100 from **Miles Horton-Baker** (U6) and 99/100 from **Lawrence Castle** (L6).

Skiing: The RGS ski teams, captained by **Marcus Hinton** (L6), gained Bronze medals in both the Under 18 and Under 16 age groups in the Surrey Schools' Race. In the scratch dual slalom, **Ben Tabberner** (2R) secured Gold medal as part of the winning team with **Ollie Burne** (2P) gaining Bronze to complete a successful day.

Swimming: Our Under 13A swimming team won both their events at the Surrey Team Championships; in addition, the Under 15As claimed silver in the freestyle relay event.

Forthcoming Events

[View the School Calendar](#)

Saturday 6 October	RGS Open Day
Tuesday 9 October	Class of 2020: Welcome to the Sixth Form Reception in Big School
Wednesday 10 October	Guildford Book Festival Event in the Auditorium
Thursday 11 October	Charity Stand-Up Comedy Evening in the Auditorium
Tuesday 16 October	Independent Learning Assignment Presentation Evening in the Auditorium
Thursday 18 October	Upper Sixth Form Parents' Evening in Great Hall and John Brown Building