



# BSRFC

OFFICIAL MATCH PROGRAMME

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

SEKO KALOU

## MATCH REPORT

BISHOP'S STORTFORD 1ST XV  
VS ESHER

## A BLUES SUPPORTER FROM DOWN UNDER

MIRANDA DREW

NATIONAL LEAGUE 1

PLYMOUTH ALBION RFC V CHINNOR RFC

9th February 2019



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# PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

## MICK COLEMAN



Since my last programme notes, our season has really gained some momentum with two excellent wins. Firstly over our old rivals from Chinnor, (oh, how we enjoyed that one) which saw us back to our best, as we completely took them apart with some exhilarating rugby, followed by another fine win away at Esher last week, where the team enjoyed some great touchline support! As a result of four straight wins, we have jumped up the league, and are now equal 10th, alongside Cambridge, but before we all get a little too excited it's still far too tight to call with some very tough games still to come.

Beginning of course with today's opposition..... Plymouth Albion, to whom I extend a very warm welcome to all their players, officials and supporters. Those of us that made the long trip to the South West back in October, left the match hugely frustrated (a feeling we unfortunately became used to!) as we narrowly lost in the dying stages of a very competitive game. Hopefully we'll manage to reverse that result today.

With a few injured players at long last beginning to trickle back, the Blues have also benefited,

with some excellent recent performances seeing them climb to second in their league. Look to give them a cheer today as they take on Richmond Vikings.

Very welcome are Price Bailey, today's Man of the Match sponsors, as are the Russell Partnership, who generously support us with an array of sponsorships. Also here are corporate sponsors Nockolds, 3 Willows/Ace of Lanes and Ratcliff and Burridge, and we hope you all enjoy your afternoon.

Next week the Firsts and The Blues are away at our friends from Amptill, so plenty of support (and hiking boots for a walk through the woods) will be required. Whilst on Sunday, the Colts take centre stage as they take on Hitchin in round 3 of the National Cup, which will be preceded by the U18's and U17's in league action, so come along and watch the Stortford stars of tomorrow! And just to complete the rugby weekend at Silver Leys, you might as well hang around to watch the England/France match on the telly which, if last Saturday is a good indicator, should be a cracker.



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# DIRECTOR OF RUGBY

## ANDY LONG



Good afternoon everyone and welcome to Silver Leys

Firstly a big thank you to all who travelled to Esher last weekend, your reward was two decent performances resulting in two good wins.

It's pleasing to see the confidence back in the group and also personally to have very difficult selection decisions to make. The last two Blues squads have included no less than 12 home grown players and a similar amount that have played National 1 rugby. In my experience being able to field a strong Blues team goes a long way to a successful 1XV.

Unfortunately one player that will be on the sidelines for a few weeks is Charlie Kingham, Charlie sustained a knee injury last week and albeit not as serious as first thought it will mean a spell with the physios.

Our visitors Plymouth will arrive confident after a strong result against an in-form Cinderford. We know they will be a physical and combative side, so our ability to match this and stay disciplined will be crucial.

Enjoy the game everyone

Longy



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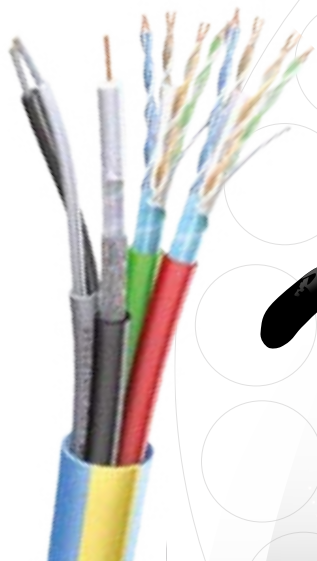
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PHIL RILEY AND MATTHEW DAY

In a season where our fellow clubs have struggled with numbers, the U15's have defied the odds yet again to successfully field two strong and developing teams.

In a unique position within the Youth section, for the last 3 years our age group has trailblazed the seemingly every-changing refinements to age-grade rules and definitions that our competitors across the county divide in Essex were slow to adopt. The lads always stepped up to the challenge though – one week no line-outs vs Hertford, the next facing a line-out maul from some angry Essex boys. Even in difficult positions... and when offered the opportunity to stop the game under RFU score-difference rules though, the lads wanted to play on.

We may not have been the best in the country at adapting but what we lacked in wins in these games, we gained in heart.

And heart is the core of our club, when we are down, we are never out, we fight on.

This fighting spirit has created a comradery and friendship throughout our teams as our developing young men support each other now both on and off the field.

Now, more than ever, as we embark our first season in the league structure, this 'heart' has paid out in spades. Our young men NEVER give up. On numerous occasions this year we have come from behind to win games with penalty goals becoming an ever more important aspect as the games get closer.

Through grit and determination, we're riding high in both our league divisions. Our first squad leading the current division 2 – just one win away (in two games) from promotion. And our second squad in division 6 just one point behind Ruislip B, the current league leaders. Bonus points are playing a crucial role in a tight league and an exciting decider for the second squad comes up at the end of the season. Any single league point in that match against Watford will see the squad in a promotion slot. No league points will see us in a relegation slot.

Time for that fighting spirit and heart to shine again.

Both our age group teams are also representing the club in the shield and cup county quarter finals at the beginning of March.

No coach likes to count their chickens, but there's every opportunity for both teams to secure league promotion at the end of this season – and we wish the lads every success.

I'd like to say that all the success we have had is down to the coaches – and thank you to all our age-group volunteers, from coaches to first aiders to shirt-washers to fund-raisers and more besides – but there is only one place to heap praise and that's the boys.

I took my son into rugby the words of another coach ringing in my ears 'I want my child to go anywhere in the world and find friends, people who work hard, play hard and laugh hard. And Rugby is it.'

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# THE PLAYERS

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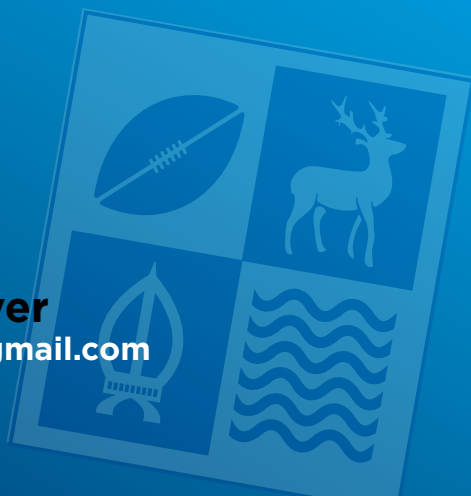
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# A Blues Supporter from Down Under

## MIRANDA DREW

When I first moved here from Australia I started coming to BSRFC to play touch. But I got more than I bargained for when, pretty quickly, it turned into a home away from home.

I've ended up with a whole family in Stortford. There's my boyfriend Tommy Cattell who plays hooker, my child Ben Law, my second mum Juliet Scants and about seventeen dads and countless friends (they know who they are).

I grew up watching my dad, and then my brother, play rugby league in our home town near Sydney - it's one of the things I miss most about home. So nothing makes me feel more at home than cheering on the Blues from the touch line of the second team pitch.

Stortford's #OneClub offers a truly welcoming, community vibe whatever game you're watching. But standing by the first team pitch, you're just one face in a sea of a thousand or more, one voice in a chorus of "Oh Stort are we". And while that is undeniably exhilarating, I personally prefer to cheer on the twos. Sometimes you're one of only a handful of parents and girlfriends. It's far more intimate (and easier to heckle... I mean cheer them on!)

You get to know all the players and fellow supporters by name. As the seasons go on, you see lads come up through the threes or get their first senior start after Colts. You feel proud when one of the boys gets the

call up to the First XV or when somebody else is named in the starting side for the Twos for the first time after a season of warming the bench.

The second team offers an entertainment value that you just don't get from a chocabloc first team pitch. Whether it's Scants' infamous one-shoe try, touchline scuffles or the Richmond coach pacing up and down saying "great rugby Richmond" for the entire game.

But ultimately the very best thing about being the girlfriend of a Blues player is when the boys let me carry the industrial-sized bag of Haribo sweets back to the sheds. There's usually none left by the time we've crossed the pitch. Sorry to all the parents whose children I've plied with the sweets...!





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# TODAY'S OPPOSITION

## PLYMOUTH ALBION RFC



The present club was founded in 1920 from a merger between Plymouth RFC and Devonport Albion RFC (both founded in 1876). Since 2003 they have played their home games at The Brickfields stadium.

After thirteen seasons in the Championship, in 2015 they were relegated to National One.

Albion were a major force in English rugby union in the 1920s having five internationals on their books at one time. Around this time they attracted a crowd of 18,000 to a midweek game against Oxford University which established a record crowd for a club match in England which was not exceeded until the 1980s.

On their way to promotion to Nat One in 2002, the team went on a two season unbeaten streak of over 50 games, starting when the club was in Division Three South.

Albion have experienced financial problems of late and only avoided entering administration early in 2015 following a cash injection of £250,000 by local businesses. That though did not save them from formally entering administration in April 2016 at which point two former players, Bruce Friday and David Venables came to their rescue. However by going into administration they incurred a RFU penalty of a 30 point deduction. This resulted in them finishing 5th at the end of the 2016/17 season instead of clear Runners up to Hartpury.

Last season they finished 3rd winning 20 of the 30 games including twice against us, 36-17 on their first ever visit here to Silver Leys & then 17-10 on a snowy day back at Brickfields. Hence they started the season as one of many people's favourites for promotion. It hasn't quite panned out that way though as they've had a bit of an 'up & down' campaign to date. They currently sit in 7th position having won 11 of their 21 games which includes a last gasp 23-19 win over us in Devon in October.

Our goal today therefore is to record our first ever victory over them. We live in hope!





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# RESULTS GRID, TABLE & FIXTURES

## NATIONAL LEAGUE 1

FIXTURE SCHEDULE & RESULTS GRID 2018-19

	Ampt	Bkth	BirM	BSRFC	Caldy	Camb	Chin	Cind	DMP	Esher	L'boro	OE's	Plym A	Ross Pk	Roth	Sale
Ampt		33-22	25-17	16.02	23.02	6-13	38-27	54-10	40-29	35-20	43-34	9.03	48-15	30.03	22-8	13.04
Bkth	26-31		30-26	30.03	16.02	22-27	22-14	9.03	15-0	27.04	39-32	10-21	27-32	23-15	13.04	41-24
Bir M	6.04	9.02		41-31	27.04	15-06	33-40	23-24	36-41	23.03	2.03	10-14	48-26	23.02	28-22	31-22
BSRFC	10-29	15-16	52-8		3-13	2.03	47-10	23.03	23-26	26-29	57-25	13.04	9.02	25-27	20-22	29-15
Caldy	19-18	17-25	30-27	9.03		9.02	17-20	31-38	14-08	31-29	43-19	30.03	3-27	13.04	29-33	20-23
Camb	11-22	24-43	13.04	23-22	22-27		20-22	16.02	30.03	28-20	25-22	17-20	32-26	8-17	9.03	36-36
Chin	38-33	6.04	9.03	6-13	24-27	27-26		27-29	16.02	24-18	30.03	20-20	27.04	33-33	23.02	28-21
Cind	9.02	22-22	38-14	0-11	2.03	14-9	21-26		13.04	26-0	45-36	12-32	15-12	29-36	30.03	40-31
DMP	23.03	24-29	17-17	27.04	6.04	3-22	21-23	10-07		2.03	9.02	41-26	21-24	9.03	42-19	29-31
Esher	49-48	7-36	21-38	14-27	17-14	17-10	13.04	10-7	24-25		17-14	16.02	21-24	9.03	15-45	30.03
L'boro	27.04	23.03	35-25	26-41	53-19	14-20	48-46	8-39	39-27	6.04		26-69	06-34	16.02	5-38	9.03
OE's	13-13	11-12	38-27	17-03	34-07	23.03	9.02	6.04	31-22	22-10	48-24		2.03	28-22	27.04	32-14
Plym A	17-5	20-21	30.03	23-19	24-14	29-17	11-26	21-10	9.03	19-16	13.04	15-19		21-35	16.02	14-7
Ross Pk	10-06	28-22	27-22	25-17	26-10	6.04	2.03	27.04	31-32	17-25	39-31	37-24	23.03		46-24	9.02
Roth	2.03	10-07	21-20	6.04	23.03	14-25	32-26	20-03	25-13	9.02	23-29	33-34	25-14	29-12		32-27
Sale	10-27	2.03	16.02	22-8	26-24	27.04	23.03	31-17	23.02	38-44	38-31	42-38	6.04	23-31	13-12	
												ROUND 21 POSTPONED				
												ROUNDS 22 to 30				

## Season 2018/2019 NATIONAL 1

## Results From 2nd February

Home Team		Away Team
Plymouth Albion	21-10	Cinderford
Esher	14-27	Bishop's Stortford
Blackheath	22-27	Cambridge
Loughborough Students	26-69	Old Elthamians
Amphill	P-P	Caldy
Birmingham Moseley	P-P	Rosslyn Park
Sale FC	P-P	Darlington Mowden Park
Chinnor	P-P	Rotherham

## Season 2018/2019 NATIONAL 1

## Fixtures for 9th February

Home Team		Away Team
Caldy	vs	Cambridge
Rosslyn Park	vs	Sale FC
Birmingham Moseley	vs	Blackheath
Old Elthamians	vs	Chinnor
Rotherham	vs	Esher
Cinderford	vs	Amphill
Bishop's Stortford	vs	Plymouth Albion
Darlington Mowden Park	vs	Loughborough Students

## National League 1 - 2018/19

Team	P	W	D	L	PF	PA	PD	TBP	LBP	Points
Old Elthamians	21	15	2	4	591	417	174	10	2	76
Amphill	20	13	1	6	576	398	178	12	5	71
Blackheath	21	13	1	7	510	433	77	9	5	68
Rosslyn Park	20	13	1	6	547	466	81	10	3	67
Rotherham Titans	20	12	0	8	487	430	57	7	4	59
Chinnor	20	10	2	8	507	530	-23	10	5	59
Plymouth Albion	21	11	0	10	443	436	7	7	5	56
Cinderford	21	10	1	10	446	464	-18	8	4	54
Darlington Mowden Park	20	9	1	10	466	504	-38	9	4	51
Cambridge	21	9	1	11	421	438	-17	3	6	47
Bishop's Stortford	21	8	0	13	499	417	82	8	7	47
Sale FC	20	8	1	11	494	564	-70	6	4	44
Caldy	20	8	0	12	409	496	-87	6	6	44
Esher	21	8	0	13	423	554	-131	4	5	41
Birmingham Moseley	20	6	1	13	506	560	-54	7	8	41
Loughborough Students	21	5	0	16	557	775	-218	13	5	38

# THE TEAMS



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## BISHOP'S STORTFORD 1<sup>ST</sup> XV

### BLUE AND WHITE

1	Seb Brownhill
2	Declan Caulfield
3	Tom McCrone
4	Jon George
5	Matt Tomlinson ©
6	James Apperley
7	Dan Elsom
8	Steve Ball
9	Tom Banks
10	George Cullen
11	Joss Linney
12	Jack Scantlebury
13	George Keen
14	Rob Duff
15	Nick Hankin

### REPLACEMENTS

16	Harrison King
17	Ben Harrison-Price
18	Baxter Wilson
19	Sam Winter
20	Tom Coleman

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**Director of Rugby** Andy Long | **Team Manager** Darren Orbart |  
**Lead Physio** Kathy Hills | **Assistant Physio** Adam Mufti | **Assistant Physio** Tom Phillips  
**Defence Coach** Marcus Cattell | **Attack and Backs Coach** Tom Coleman | **Blues Head Coach** Danny Johnston  
**Backs Transition Coach** Ash Boyle | **Forwards Transition Coach** Rob Faiers  
**Head of Strength and Conditioning** Ben Sheath | **Assistant strength and conditioning coach** - Adam Vine

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GREY, RED AND GREEN

	James Kenny	1
	Jamie Salter	2
	Will Norton	3
	Lewis Pearson	4
	Kieran Westlake	5
	John Kelly	6
	George Mills	7
	Herbie Stupples	8
	Cam Setter	9
	Connor Eastgate	10
	Josh Skelcey	11
	Dean Squire	12
	Seta Raumakita	13
	Jordan Gott	14
	Matt Shepherd	15

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## REPLACEMENTS

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	Dan Swain	17
	Dan Powell	18
	Chris Robinson	19
	Joe Snow	20



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# MATCH REPORT

## ESHER 14 - 27 BISHOP'S STORTFORD 1ST XV



A hugely important fourth win in a row for a Stortford side benefitting from the return over the last few weeks of a number of injured players and a clearly growing air of confidence across the whole squad, evidenced by the rush of tries being scored.

Stortford, playing into the breeze, had to withstand some early Esher pressure but their proud defence was up to the task and they were soon on the attack, immediately finding a chink in the home side's own defences. This came after 9 minutes, when Stortford forced their way into the Esher 22 and a perfectly judged grubber kick from George Cullen across the line allowed Joss Linney to dash in and touch down for a vital try. Tom Banks stepped up with a very good conversion into the breeze from out wide to establish an early 7 point lead.

The visitors steadily took control of the game and despite a nasty-looking leg injury to Charlie Kingham, kept the pressure on. After 26 minutes, Stortford won a 5 metre scrum, as a forward drive was held up over the line and a quick break off the back of the set piece from replacement No 8, Steve Ball and a simple pass to Nick Hankin was enough to allow the fullback to dummy his way over for a try. The conversion attempt went wide, as it did some eight minutes later, when Dec Caulfield touched down, driven over from a 5 metre lineout, after a tremendous run by Linney had made inroads deep into Esher's half.

Within 5 minutes, though, the home side had registered their own converted try, taking advantage of some uncharacteristically weak Stortford tackling to burst up the middle and allow Kariym Irving on the wing to break two tackles and touch down out wide.

The visitors bounced straight back from this setback and, within a couple of minutes had

registered their bonus point try - again through Linney, who this time put in his own long grubber kick, after being given space by Hankin and had just enough pace to win the extremely close race for the touchdown. The conversion again went wide and there was enough time left in the half for Esher to exert some considerable pressure on the Stortford defence. The home side managed to find some real rhythm and ran through many phases to test the visitors' tackling commitment and ability to the full. Reverting to type, though, the defence proved up to the task and the half finished with Stortford 22-7 in the lead.

The visitors started the second period strongly, but a few errors, occasionally unforced crept into their game and prevented them from running away with the game. Nevertheless, the next score did go to Stortford, with Linney completing his hat-trick of tries after 20 minutes, with another chip and chase, after he had been given a one on one chance by a deft, first-time pass from George Keen, following a crucial turnover on halfway from Caulfield. This time, the winger won the race for the touchdown comfortably, but the conversion attempt, once again, went wide.

Esher refused to give in and, cutting out earlier handling errors, enjoyed much more of the ball and gained visibly in confidence, as their back play started to click. They repeatedly threatened with some elusive running and sharp interplay, especially down their right flank and eventually scored a deserved try after 30 minutes through replacement scrumhalf, Jack Walsh. Owen Waters made a great conversion from the touchline and briefly his side seemed to be lifted by this success, Stortford managed to weather the storm, though and might well have added to their tally, had they been able to show a little more composure at the end of a couple of threatening moves. They were able, though to see the game out without any further alarms and send their many travelling supporters away with broad smiles on their faces.

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# IN THE SPOTLIGHT:

FIRST XV flanker Dan Elsom spoke with new recruit Seko Kalou to find out how he ended up in Bishop's Stortford, and how he's been finding things since arriving at Silver Leys:

**DE:** Seko, we already love having you at Stortford. How have you found your time at the club so far?

**SK:** I've really enjoyed my first two months here. I had already heard a lot about the club from a few mates, and everything I have witnessed has been really positive.

**DE:** Tell us, how did you end up in Stortford in the first place?

**SK:** I first got in touch with the club through Dan Leo. We used to play against each other a bit when he was playing for Samoa. I was here on holiday and had been in touch with Dan, who asked me if I was keen to play while I was over here. I was, but it was a bit of a struggle to play in National One with my visa.

Dan had a yarn with Longy and got me involved with Stortford. I'm very thankful to the club for giving me the opportunity and for working with Dan and Longy to help get my visa sorted.

**DE:** So, what were you doing before you arrived in Stortford?

**SK:** Before I came here, I hadn't played for about six months. I was in New Zealand in 2017, and that was the last time I played rugby. I was over here with my wife. We live in north west London, and we are expecting our first born at the end of April – a baby boy.



Above: Dan Elsom | Right: Seko Kalou

**DE:** Can you give us a bit of an overview of your career so far?

**SK:** I've been around a bit. I started off in Fiji, before moving to New Zealand to play club rugby there. I managed to climb up the ladder to provincial level with Otago and then moved on to the Highlanders squad. I've also played in the Heartland championship for North Otago and Wanganui. From there, I got my first Fiji cap in 2009.

The following year, I moved to France for a few seasons, followed by a season in Italy, then back to New Zealand, which was where I last played club rugby.

**DE:** And what about your international career?

**SK:** For Fiji, I played a couple of IRB sevens series, and played 16 caps in the 15s. I also went to the 2011 World Cup. I got to play against England at Twickenham in 2012 and scored a try, which was one of my career highlights. I played lock with my younger brother in that game, which was very special. He now plays for Northampton and is aiming to make the next World Cup in Japan with Fiji.

# SEKO KALOU

**DE:** Okay, so what are your plans for the next few years?

**SK:** I'm coming to the end of my career, and will probably look to call it a day after another two seasons. After rugby, I'd love to do something with coaching or study personal training.

I've been doing my level one coaching course with World Rugby, but I'll still need to refresh and progress up on to level two and further. The club has kindly offered to help guide me through that. I'm looking forward to staying with the club for the next two or three years until I hang up my boots.

**DE:** How do you see the rest of the season unfolding for the first XV?

**SK:** We've been so unlucky the last few months, we have just been missing out by a few points. We managed to improve on a few areas and we got the reward against Sale. If we can continue to do that, then we should pave a good path onto the rest of the season. The energy level at training is great; the boys are really keen which is impressive. Our preparation is very important, but if we can continue to have that attitude towards training then we will go on a run.

I'm very happy to be at the club, and I've seen great things since I arrived. It's very impressive to find out that around 60 or 70 per cent of the first team has been playing here since they were kids, and that should be a factor that pushes us on to succeed.

**Fun Fact:** Along with playing both 7s and 15s rugby for Fiji, Seko has also represented his country in Archery and men's netball, and was even named Fiji's male netballer of the year in 2016.



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Working in conjunction with the 1stXV coaching team, CS provides funding for various expenditure beyond the financial resources of the main club.

Director of Rugby, Andy Long, has reiterated on a number of occasions the importance he attaches to the financial support given by Club Stortford. Quite simply, without it's support, the team would not be able to perform at such currently high levels.

We continue to look for new members, to allow us to broaden and deepen the extent of our support.

We would urge you to consider joining Club Stortford. If you are interested and would like further information, please contact our secretary,

Russell Cattell 07778 101988



# THE OVAL CLUB



The Oval Club was formed in 1998 by some Bishop's Stortford Rugby Football Club members who wanted to find a way of raising funds to improve the playing facilities of the Club with the mission statement:

'To contribute towards promoting the highest possible standard of rugby throughout Bishop's Stortford Rugby Football Club'

The Oval Club is an autonomous body and entirely independent of the Rugby Club's operations. None of the Committee members hold a position or appointment in the Rugby Club's infrastructure. The Oval Club does not seek to influence decisions of the Rugby Club. It responds to requests for financial assistance for projects which have been approved by the Rugby Club's Executive Committee and which fall within its mission statement.

Funds are raised by monthly contributions from the Members two thirds of which are set aside for Rugby Club projects with the other third reserved for social events for Members.

To date The Oval Club has raised over a quarter of a million pounds with the Rugby Club receiving more than £150,000.

The Oval Club makes contributions to the Rugby Club for one off projects which are of long term value and not part of on-going budget requirements. Often these contributions have been made to the Club to enable it to secure grants from the Rugby Football Union and other sources.

So far, major contributions have been made towards the cost of:

- Flood lighting the main pitch,
- Floodlighting the back field pitches,
- Pitch repair and maintenance,
- Improvement of the playing surfaces, including the purchase of a verti-drainer,
- Drainage of the back field pitches,

- Rabbit fencing,
- Replacement of goal posts,
- Refurbishing the changing room showers,
- Purchase of physiotherapy equipment,
- Playing equipment and travel costs for all teams,
- Supporting youth and mini through tours, kit and additional playing facilities,
- Junior coaching courses.

On the social side there are annual Members' events. Currently these are:

- A self-supporting golf day at one of the local golf clubs,
- An Annual Dinner and Forum,
- A First Team Home lunch,
- A First Team Away coach trip and lunch.

Through its contributions The Oval Club plays a considerable part in helping the Rugby Club enhance its playing related facilities for the use and benefit of all members of the Club.

Anyone who is interested in joining The Oval Club should contact a member of the Committee below.

## The Oval Club Committee:

Robbie Kerr - Chairman  
John Robinson - Secretary  
John Power- Treasurer  
Mark Caulfield  
Mike Howatson

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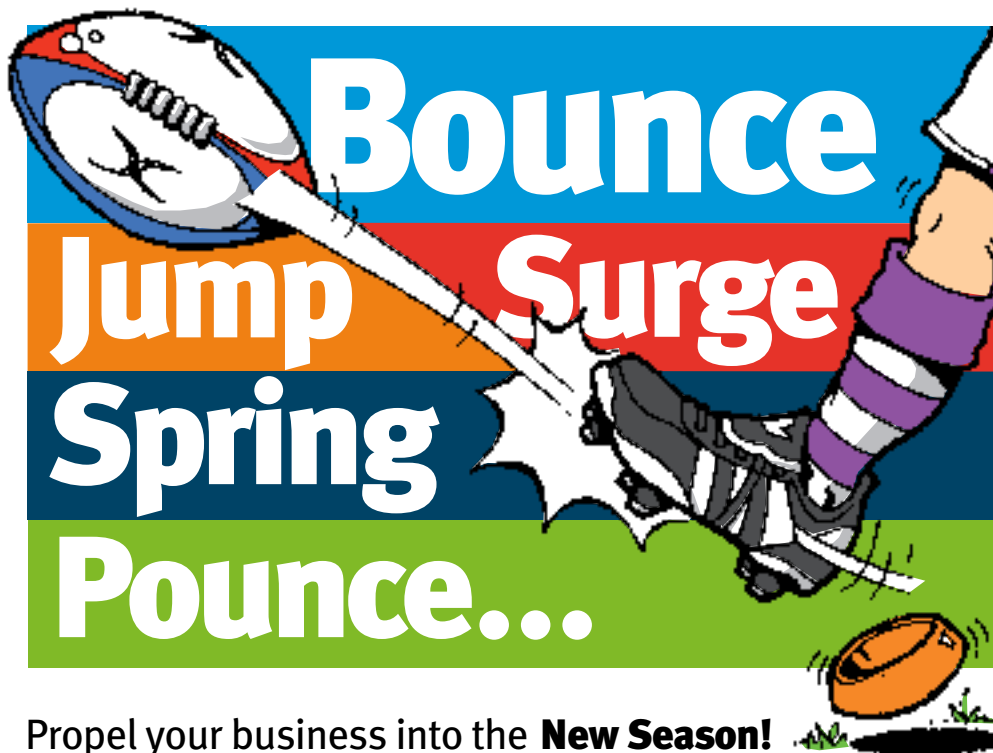
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# Match Report: Biggleswade v BSRFC Ladies

By Paddy Dean (photography by Stort Images)

On Sunday 3rd February, a fiercely competitive game for BSRFC Ladies against Biggleswade ended with their opponents claiming the victory with a nail biting score of 14-12.

Two very strong sides went head-to-head to play their part in a physical and evenly matched encounter. Playing with the slight wind in the first half, Biggleswade started the game only to see the ball run back at them with meaningful purpose right from the whistle.

Many of the opening blows played out in the middle third of the pitch, with each team matching the other for sheer force, strength and physicality. The home side eventually used the slight slope to their advantage and relentlessly counter-attacked time and again, taking them deep into the Stortford 22.

Following an attacking onslaught for almost 10 minutes by Biggleswade, Stortford eventually stole the ball, turning over possession, clearing lines and gaining a huge psychological victory. However, the tides were soon to turn and Biggleswade broke through to score their first try which was converted.

The second half started the way the first had finished, neither side allowing the attacking players to break the lines – until a turnover, following an

isolated Biggleswade player, led Raquel Obama Frades to sprint down the pitch taking the visitors deep into the opposition's territory.

From the ensuing lineout, and after several passages of play, Stortford ladies had a chance to level the score, when fittingly, Obama Frades was again on hand to finish a move that she had done so much to instigate.

Momentum was now swaying in Stortford's favour, and following some more great rugby, the ladies again found themselves adding to the scoreboard when Georgia Read carried strongly to touch down for the second try, which was then converted by Gemma Goddard.

With the physical nature of this contest starting to take its toll, several changes of positions to accommodate injuries were now starting to have an effect. The home side attacked with purpose, and with only five minutes left until the final whistle, the hosts stretched the defence left, then right, then left again to score a levelling try with the conversion to come.

Fired up, and eager to regain the lead, Stortford Ladies again started probing the opposition's line, but to no avail. Revenge was not to come, so it will have to wait until the return leg at Silver Leys on Sunday 7th April.



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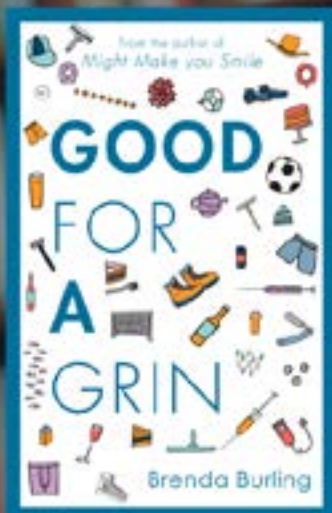
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# FINANCIAL FUTURE FAR FROM BRIGHT FOR COMMUNITY GAME

JOHN ALLANSON

Those of you who read the Rugby Paper will be aware that in recent months I have been a regular contributor to the letters section on the topic of what I believe is the unfair distribution of RFU funds between the “professional game” (Levels 1 and 2) and the rest.

Partly as a result of this, three of us from the Club recently met Graeme Cattermole, former RFU Chairman at his request to give him an insight into the funding that a club like ours, with our Firsts playing at Level 3 can expect from the RFU. It may surprise some of you to know that Twickenham’s contribution towards the Club’s running expenses this season has been less than £9,000. This comprises a contribution towards team travelling costs (related to the distances to be travelled by our Firsts), less a deduction for the cost of First XV match officials. To put this figure into context, our travel budget for the season is almost £22,000. We have, of course benefited from RFU support for many of our facilities investment projects over the years and, thanks, especially to Peter Scarlett’s expertise in such things, we have done well out of the limited funding available. Over the last 16 years we have received grants from Twickenham totalling some £200,000 towards total investment expenditures of some £1,000,000 – an average of some £13,000 p.a.

Many of you will be aware that Mr Cattermole has recently found severe disfavour with the current regime at Twickenham over publicity that he and Francis Baron (CBE) have given to aspects of the organisation’s published financial figures, which they feel have not been given sufficient prominence in the published reports. Francis is the former RFU CEO generally credited with having put the RFU’s finances onto a business-like footing back in the early 2000s.

No effort was made to enlist the Club’s support for their campaign for greater transparency in financial reporting, but he did talk us through some summary-level figures, including the following:-

- Cumulative net profits for the years 1999 to 2010 of £18.6m compared with forecast cumulative losses for the period 2011 to 2020 of £44.7m.
- The RFU is forecasting an Operating Loss of £7m for the years 2018/9 (budget) and 2019/20 (Strategic Plan). N.B. Figures are better compared in 2 year pairs to eliminate the distortions to income of having only 2 home 6 Nations matches every other season.
- When Messrs Baron and Cattermole were in office, the target distribution of expenditure was 50:50 between the professional game and the “development” game – i.e. community rugby. In 2017/8 this had fallen to 66:34 in favour of the professional game, a ratio repeated in the 2018/9 budget.

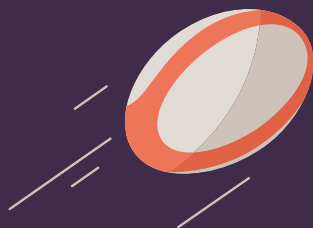
Evidence is that the pressures on RFU finances, which led last season to the need for more than 60 redundancies at Twickenham, the bulk of them from club support areas, are unlikely to abate in the foreseeable future and, with expenditures on the professional game being effectively ring-fenced through contractual commitments, should any further expenditure cuts be needed, they will have to fall on either more staff cuts or directly on the contributions to community clubs.

Against the above background, you can perhaps understand the concerns underlying my periodic, “Mr Angry of Bishop’s Stortford” letters to the Rugby Paper!

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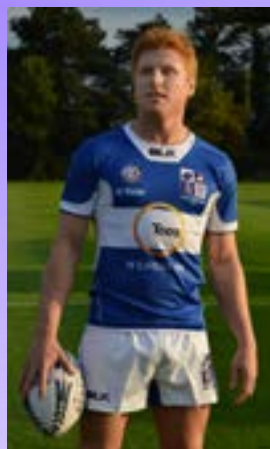
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1 Match. The day kicks off with a Q&A in the 1st XV Changing Room, followed by Training, Games & Warm up Sessions with the Coaches and Players. They then form the "Players Tunnel" alongside the "Blazers" to welcome both the opposition and the 1st XV onto the pitch before the game. Their experience culminates with Post Match Photos alongside the Players.



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