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#7 OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME **£15** (Members £7)

STORTFORD

RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

**FROM MINIS
TO COACHES
MEET TOM
& MARCUS**

**TODAY WE
WELCOME THE
PRESIDENT
OF THE RFU
NIGEL GILLINGHAM**



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VERSUS
ESHER RFC

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From the President

By Len Lindop



Today's home game against Esher together with the pre-match luncheon is our last before Christmas. We expect a close match, particularly as Esher have seen to change their fortunes of late, winning their last couple of games.

We have over 300 at the lunch and are delighted to welcome the President of the RFU, Nigel Gillingham, who represented the RAF on the Committee of the Rugby Union until his retirement in 2008. He is now Gloucester's RFU Council representative and became President in 2022.

We are pleased to see many of our sponsors attending today with Group 1 BMW and Simon Hewson our Match Day Sponsor and Jonathon Hey of Westbury Garden Rooms selecting the Man of the Match. We have long-term sponsors Tees hosted by Ashton Hunt and the finance team, HAM hosted by Darryl Clarke, Russell Property with Dominic, Jack and Josh, Belcom hosted by Mike Hayton, Simon Craven with Price Bailey, and Darren Haywood with regular attendees, Nockolds. Three Willows/ Ace of Lanes, hosted by Brian and David. It is also good to see new sponsors, Mulberry Homes with Will Almond, as well as the team from KMD, Little Acre Homes, Kris Bayford and Fosters Coldstores with Brian McDermott. We really do appreciate all the support and assistance we get from our sponsors; it is a privilege to welcome them all at our lunches.

During the past weeks, I have been wandering around the pitches on Sunday mornings, it is great to see the enthusiasm in the early age groups. Watching the under 6's, normally under the supervision of Al Jones. Al has been looking after this age group, usually, 50-60 five and six-year-olds, for the past 10 years. He is now in the position to pass the responsibility to the contingent of parents whose children are now Under 5 and will still be around next year when their children will be still in the Under 6 group. We are indebted to Al and his longevity in this role of introducing children to rugby. It is good to note that a considerable proportion of them are

still playing as they advance through the Youth age groups. No doubt we will continue to see Al more involved in the other roles he conducts on behalf of the club

Watching the Youth Groups play their matches we need to take note of the many volunteers we have helping with the organisation of their teams, many of whom are ex-club players. It is particularly good to see the volunteer referees, John Lewis and Peter Brady officiating each week. Without referees, we could not survive and help develop the players we do to continue to play adult rugby whether it be at the representative level, our 1st team squad or our senior social teams



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Head Coaches

Marcus Cattell & Tom Coleman



It's certainly been a case of 'so close, yet so far' in our two previous outings vs Sale FC & Cinderford. The team have put in a huge effort in both games and were unlucky not to at least take a draw from the Sale game, and then losing last play against Cinderford made the long trip back from Gloucestershire, a little harder to take. Rest assured confidence is still high within the squad and we will go into this week's game with a positive mindset. We could potentially have a few bodies back in the selection mix this week for the 'double header' against Esher. The Blues have had a frustrating period of 3 weeks without a game, and they are raring to get back on the field and continue what has been a superb season thus far.

Esher visit Silver Leys on the back of two excellent wins and they will no doubt be looking for a third win on the spin. We haven't met them since the 2018/19 season in which we took a win each against each other. We wish Esher and all their players, coaching staff and supporters an enjoyable day here at Silver Leys.

As this is the last home game before the turn of the year, we would like to say a huge thanks to all our loyal supporters, sponsors and members who spend their valuable time and hard-earned money to follow us each Saturday, we as a squad don't take that for granted. We look forward to sharing a beer after the game.

Come on you blues!

Marcus & Tom

THE COACHING STAFF:



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Success breeds confidence

Jon Skelton



As this is our last home game before the Christmas break, I just wanted to highlight an issue which is unavoidable but manageable at this time of year. Whether you're hosting or travelling don't let stress ruin your well-earned break.

As Christmas approaches, it is important to pay attention to your stress levels and make sure that you take time for yourself during the holidays. Make time for activities that bring joy and meaning into your life, such as spending quality time with family or friends, taking a relaxing walk outdoors, or reading a book that brings you comfort. Taking care of your physical and mental well-being will help you stay healthy during this holiday season.

Stress has been linked to many physical and psychological health issues, such as depression, anxiety, headaches, and impaired sleep to name a few. It can also lead to unhealthy habits like smoking or drinking too much. Stress can even affect your immune system, making it harder for you to fight off illnesses.

Fortunately, there are a few things you can do to help manage stress in your life. Exercise is one of the most effective ways to reduce stress levels. Regular exercise helps release endorphins that make you feel better and more relaxed. Mindfulness meditation is another helpful tool for managing stress; by focusing on your breathing and being aware of your feelings in the present moment without judgement, you can develop healthier coping skills when faced with difficult situations.

By understanding how stress can affect our health, we can find ways to manage it so that

we are able to enjoy Christmas without compromising our wellbeing. So, take a few moments to reflect on what you need to do to keep your stress levels under control this Christmas season. Being mindful of how you're feeling, engaging in positive activities, and seeking help when needed are all possible ways to ensure that Christmas is an enjoyable time for you and your loved ones. By doing so, we can all have a happy and healthy Christmas!

Happy Christmas!



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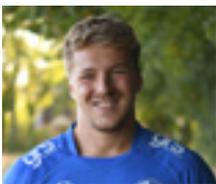


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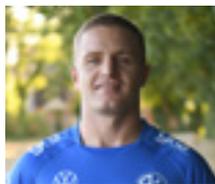


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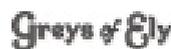


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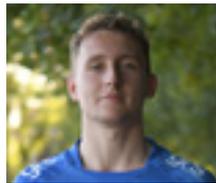


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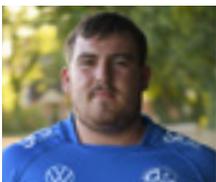


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Today's Opposition

Esher RFC



The club was formed in 1923 when four rugby enthusiasts agreed to start a club. One of the founders was Welsh, a Newport Rugby Club fan, Esher's club colours of yellow and black hoops were selected being the same colours as Newport.

When the league system was introduced in 1987, Esher were placed in London One, they were relegated in the first season and did not win promotion back to that league until 1993.

They were first promoted to the national leagues system for the 1997/1998 season and finished fourth in the then tier 4 National League Two South. They led the league for most of the season the following year however, they finished second.

Promotion was won to National Division Two in the following 1999/2000 season, National Division Two was the tier 3 level the equivalent of the National One in those days.

The club set a new points record winning National Division Two in 2006/2007 and were thus promoted into the second tier, National Division One.

National Division One was reorganised into the Championship and National One after the 2008/2009 season. Esher did not finish high enough in the National Division One table to make the cut for the new Championship league and were effectively relegated into National One for the 2009/2010 season. They were then playing in tier 3 in the reformed National One. During this season they broke the then world record for a competitive match score when they beat Manchester 148 - 0 and they won promotion to the Championship, getting back into tier 2 rugby that same season.

They played in the Championship for two seasons before being relegated back into National One for the 2012/2013 season.

Stortford have only played Esher during two seasons in National One, doing the double on Esher in the 2017/2018 season but Esher staged at late rally at Stortford in 2018/2019 to win 26-29, Stortford again won the return fixture at Esher that season.

They were relegated from National One in the 2018/2019 season being promoted back to National One when they won the National Two South last season.

In 2020, the club announced a 2-year agreement to share their ground with RFU Championship side, London Scottish beginning in 2021/2022. It was later confirmed that Scottish would remain at Richmond Athletic Ground, hence no ground sharing.



Adam Bullet (Captain)



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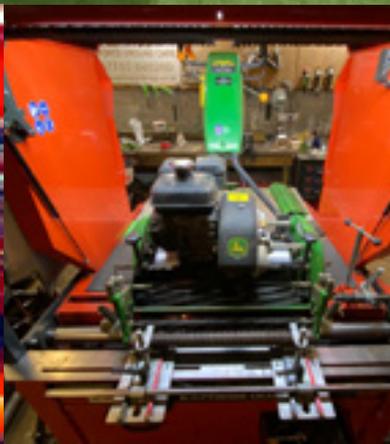
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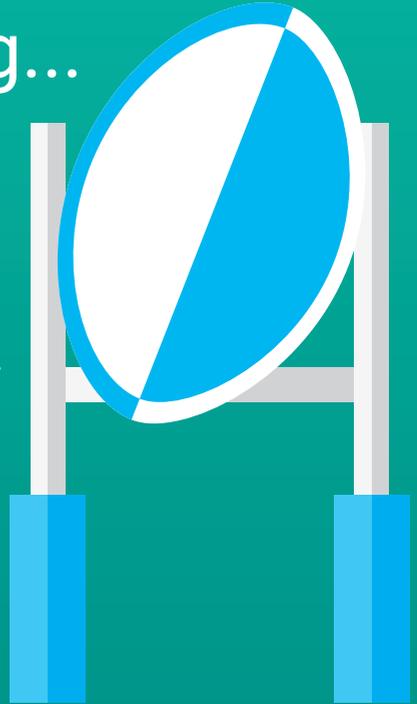
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Results, fixtures and table

National League 1

Season 2022/2023 National 1

Results from 26 November

HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM
Cambridge	31 - 27	Chinnor
Cinderford	24 - 22	Bishop's Stortford
Esher	34 - 0	Hull
Leeds Tykes	21 - 21	Birmingham Moseley
Plymouth Albion	13 - 10	Rosslyn Park
Sale FC	34 - 31	Darlington Mowden Park
Taunton Titans	24 - 27	Rams

Season 2022/2023 National 1

Fixtures for 3 December

HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM
Birmingham Moseley	vs	Plymouth Albion
Bishop's Stortford	vs	Esher
Darlington Mowden Park	vs	Cinderford
Hull	vs	Chinnor
Leeds Tykes	vs	Cambridge
Rams	vs	Sale FC
Rosslyn Park	vs	Taunton Titans

National League 1 - 2022/2023											
Team	P	W	D	L	PF	PA	PD	TBP	LBP	Points	Adj.
Rams	11	11	0	0	420	222	198	11	0	55	0
Cambridge	11	9	0	2	358	282	76	10	2	48	0
Sale FC	11	9	0	2	360	227	133	10	1	47	0
Rosslyn Park	11	8	0	3	392	257	135	9	2	43	0
Cinderford	11	7	2	2	313	276	37	9	0	41	0
Bishop's Stortford	11	6	0	5	300	285	15	8	4	36	0
Plymouth Albion	11	6	0	5	318	275	43	8	2	34	0
Darlington Mowden Park	11	4	0	7	304	303	1	8	5	29	0
Birmingham Moseley	11	4	1	6	303	360	-57	5	1	24	0
Taunton	11	3	0	8	253	328	-75	6	4	22	0
Chinnor	11	2	1	8	263	329	-66	5	3	18	0
Leeds Tykes	11	3	1	7	200	331	-131	2	1	17	0
Esher	11	2	0	9	291	353	-62	7	2	17	0
Hull	11	0	1	10	205	452	-247	4	2	8	0

The Teams



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Bishop's Stortford 1st XV

BLUE AND WHITE

- 1 Tim Matthews
- 2 Alex Rayment
- 3 Tom McCrone*
- 4 Obinna Nkwocha
- 5 Luis Ball
- 6 Jacob Wrafter
- 7 Ollie Jones*
- 8 Will Rogers
- 9 Connor Lloyd
- 10 Matt Riddington
- 11 Jake Morris
- 12 Austin Pope*
- 13 James Ayrton(c)*
- 14 Josh Stannard
- 15 Dan Powell

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Group 1 Stansted BMW & Mini

REPLACEMENTS

- 16 Ryan Jackson
- 17 Will Roberts*
- 18 Toby Tierney
- 19 Chris Bolton
- 20 Chris Smith

*Homegrown player

Head Coaches [Marcus Cattell](#) | [Tom Coleman](#) |

Lead Physio [Ryan Clarke](#) | **Team Manager** [Darren Orbart](#) | **Lead Forwards Coach** [Ian Simpson](#) |

Forwards Transition Coach [Rob Faiers](#) | **Head of Strength and Conditioning** [Ben Sheath](#) |

Assistant Strength and Conditioning Coach [Adam Vine](#) | **Mental Health Coach** [Jon Skelton](#) |

The Teams

REFEREE: **Matt Sharpe**
ASSISTANT REFEREE 1: **James Cornell**
ASSISTANT REFEREE 2: **Simon Bourne**

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ESHER
RUGBY

Esher RFC

BLACK AND GOLD

Matt Lowes **1**

Andy Hamilton **2**

Theo Skoumbourdis **3**

Josh Jordan **4**

Adam Bullett **5**

Ben Atkins **6**

Harvey Scott **7**

Lorcan Dow **8**

Sam Bullock **9**

Sam Morley **10**

Harri Lang **11**

Myles Rawstron Rudd **12**

Jack Walsh **13**

Ben Fitzgerald **14**

Owen Waters **15**

REPLACEMENTS

Paddy Calvert **16**

Rhys Litterick **17**

James Gulliver **18**

James Botterill **19**

20. Pierre Thompson **20**

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Colts News

By Dave McFie



The Colts have begun their season with a mixed bag of results. Having had only a few warm up games they enjoyed a strong performance against Colchester in the opening round of the national cup. Travelling to Bury St Edmunds in round 2 proved a little too much with one or two decisions going against us. Bury started well but Bishops were denied a penalty try only minutes before the end, which would have put them out of sight. All round out it was a cracking game of rugby and the team in Blue should be proud of the fighting spirit they showed as they came back into contention right at the end.

Despite this early season set back the Colts can now concentrate on the Herts/Middlesex league and the Herts county cup where there are two teams aiming to go one better than last year. It has been really pleasing to see so many lads step up from last years u16's into colts rugby this



season. Some have proved their worth already and command A team positions but there is quite a number who will develop well in the B team this year and make the step up next season. It has

also been very pleasing to have **Matt Woodford** (above) step forward into the colts coaching group bringing these young players through, who will undoubtedly be the core of next years team. With over 50 boys registered to play colts rugby the conveyor belt of home grown talent is, hopefully, providing the future base for all senior teams of the future.

A particular highlight for all the colts this year has been the success of two of their own players in Henry Walker and Oscar Wilson. Both have played colts rugby for club last season but were selected for higher honours early this season.

Henry has gone on to gain his first international cap with Ireland u18's against Italy and Oscar has made the step up to be involved in the Saracens 1st XV alongside a number of other current and ex Bishop's Stortford players. It is a fantastic achievement for both of these young men and we are immensely proud of what they have achieved already and the dizzy heights they may both reach in the future. Good luck and go well boys!!

Colts rugby between September and Christmas continues to be a congested affair. With so many playing rugby at school and club it is a continued battle to find the right balance in the amount of playing time. Whilst we would like to have lots of build up games to the season and the early rounds of the national cup it just isn't fair on these young men to have so much rugby. There seems to be a real disconnect between the higher end organisers of club and school seasons to the extent we see some boys having to play 3 games over a week. Whilst this many have been acceptable 20+ Years ago, when the speed and amount of collisions just weren't there to the extent they are now, it just isn't acceptable anymore. I am not sure I would have any answers to all these problems but I know how much I enjoyed both club and school rugby and this should continue to this day and in the future. We are lucky to see so much rugby going ahead week on week but we really want all these young men to carry on into senior rugby and continue to enjoy it and not just end up burnt out or injured from being over played.

Well, good luck to our 1st XV today against Esher. We wish you continued success and look forward to as many colts as possible being able to make the squads in seasons to come!

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In the spotlight

Tom Coleman & Marcus Cattell



I think this difference in emphasis of their coaching roles and personalities has been an important reason for Tom and Marcus success as joint coaches. It has also greatly helped that they have been playing together at the club for a long time and know each other very well. Tom having also successfully captaining Stortford from outside half on their way up the leagues with Marcus often playing alongside him at centre in this time. The successful Stortford tradition of fast open attacking rugby revolves around strong mid-field tackling and fast slick passing. This fits in with their past playing experience and their skills in the centre and outside half positions. This has been further backed up recently by the successful Stortford centre three-quarter captains of Sam Winter and James Ayrtton who are both players that perform well and understand how to play in this area of the field.

In addition, the recognition by both Tom and Marcus on the importance of playing recruitment this pre-season with the emphasis on recruiting the right type of player that will fit into a Stortford approach to rugby and style of play. This has led to a successful start to the season for the whole squad with a consistent style of play for both the first team and the Blues. However it came about, the Tom and Marcus coaching double act so far this season has certainly proved to have been an excellent decision. Tom and Marcus

In American Football each side has effectively two separate teams. The offensive team and the defensive team who are on the field at separate times. There is one overall head coach for the whole team and under this coach a separate coach for the offence and the defence. In modern day rugby this set-up of a head coach, an attacking coach and a defence coach is being copied but unlike American football there is not the advantage of two completely separate squads of players with separate sets



of skills. A problem for the selection of a head coach is that in both American football and now rugby is that he has to come from either an offensive background or a defensive background which could result in an unbalanced coaching approach. Stortford has solved this problem by not replacing Andy Long when he retired as head coach but by appointing his attack and defence deputies, Tom and Marcus, to act as joint head coaches. They also happen to be two outstanding young coaches who both began their playing careers in the Stortford mini section.



Tom was the attacking coach under Andy Long and Marcus the defensive coach. I am not sure if these two separate coaching roles were formally recognised at Stortford but I well remember an incident in the Plymouth home game in February

2019 that highlighted Marcus defence coaching responsibilities. Tom made a cameo appearance off the bench (he had had to be used a number of times that season by Andy despite his officially announced retirement at the start of the 2017/2018 season) and he came on for an injured Scants on 65 minutes. Tom threw out a long pass (Tom's long, flat passes had been a key successful attacking play in his pomp) but this time the pass was intercepted and led to Plymouth scoring a fourth bonus point try. Stortford were leading 45-17 at the time and it was only Marcus who was really very upset as it ruined his defensive stats. John Allanson's match report of the try was also slightly critical: "A moment of carelessness among the home team's backs allowed Plymouth to score their bonus



point try after 69 minutes, when a loose, long pass in midfield was easily intercepted by an alert forward, who was able to gallop over and give his fullback an easy conversion". Stortford went on to win the match very comfortably 57-24.

It is also noticeable that during home matches that Tom will frequently calmly observe the game from the coaching tower or from behind the posts, assessing patterns of play and Marcus will be fully involved offering (sometimes too much!) vocal encouragement in the hurly burly of the technical area. This is another good example of Tom and Marcus complimenting each other's coaching responsibilities. Coaching a National One side is also a very full-on, time-consuming role, and with both of them still in full time employment elsewhere, having a job share arrangement lets them commit enough time to the role to keep things running smoothly.





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Club Stortford



Now in its tenth season, **Club Stortford** was set up by a small working party to support the 1st XV squad after promotion to National League Rugby in 2013/14. Our aim is “to ensure Bishop’s Stortford RFC has a sustainable future in National League Rugby and continues to nurture home grown talent.”

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

Our Joint head coaches Tom and Marcus have stressed on a number of occasions how important the financial support given to them by Club Stortford is. 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 101 988



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,
- First team home and away lunches.

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
Steven Wasley
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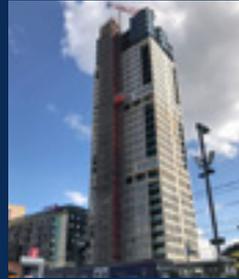
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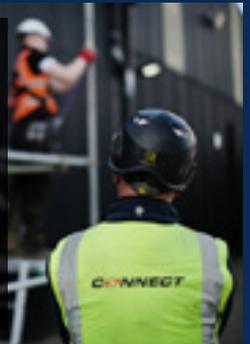


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Party time for our community heroes

PAGES 16-21



Entrepreneur

Fish'n'Chick'n chief bringing
Pret a Manger to Stortford

Left, Chesterford Group chief executive James Lipcombe; right, Jackson Square manager Michael Smith; above, the Potter Street premises where Pret a Manger is set to open

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sinead.corr@stortfordindie.co.uk

He is the man behind Joy Brands, a subsidiary of the Start Hill based Chesterford Group, one of the largest independently-owned fish and chip shop chains in the country, with branches including Fish'n'Chick'n in Stansted.

In June, Joy Brands became one of only three franchise launch partners for Pret a Manger in the UK, winning Essex and Cambridgeshire.

James, chief executive of the Chesterford Group, said: "I'm incredibly excited to open our first Pret shop of 2023 in Bishop's Stortford."

"In my role as chairman of players

and vice president at Bishop's Stortford rugby club, as well as managing my son's football team at Bishop's Stortford Community Football Club, I've tried to be involved in the local community and give something back to the town I've lived in for many years.

"We currently operate four shops and we have a number of openings in the pipeline. We look forward to opening many more Pret shops in the coming years."

The new outlet will open in a 222 sq m (2,200 sq ft) unit created as part of the Jackson Square shopping centre's most recent £2.6m revamp.

Manager Michael Smith said: "We're always excited to welcome a

new name to the town and to the retail line-up at the centre. It's great to hear that Bishop's Stortford is being recognised by such a great brand as this will only continue to improve the offering we have available in the community."

Guy Meakin, interim managing director UK & Ireland for Pret a Manger, said: "We're delighted to be opening a new shop in Bishop's Stortford with our franchisee partner, The Chesterford Group."

James Lipcombe is a local entrepreneur who has grown up in Bishop's Stortford and continues to be very much part of the community, which is why opening here is incredibly important to him and us.

"We're looking to provide up to 25 jobs in the local community to help deliver the ultimate Pret experience, and we're excited to welcome our first customers early next year."

"As part of our ongoing work to help alleviate homelessness and poverty, where possible surplus freshly made food from the new shop will be donated to local charities at the end of each day via the Pret Foundation."

The Chesterford Group has over 40 locations employing more than 700 people.

The first Pret a Manger opened in 1986 and, as of 2021, the chain had over 600 shops in the UK, 317 of them in London.

"We're always excited to welcome a new name to the town and to the retail line-up at the centre. It's great to hear that Bishop's Stortford is being recognised by such a great brand as this will only continue to improve the offering we have available in the community."

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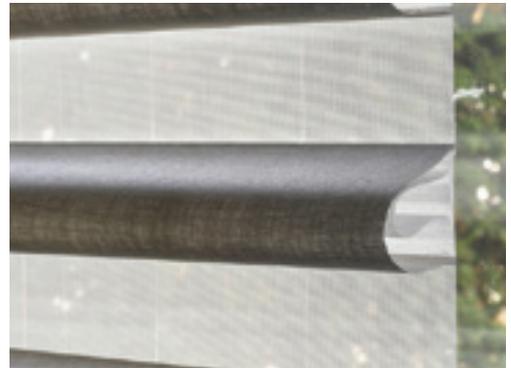
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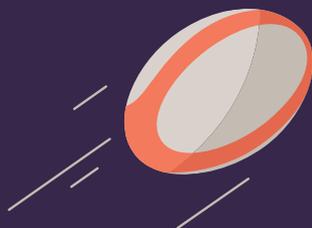


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Around The Club

Richard Evans



Westbury

The very impressive adverts for Westbury Garden Rooms and Westbury Windows and Joinery have been a feature of the Bishop's Stortford Match Day programme for many seasons. Not many supporters know however, that the man running Westbury, Johnny Hey, played hooker for the club during the 80's. This included the 'Clubhouse Opening' game in '85 and also playing at Twickenham in the Middlesex 7's team in '87. In his playing days, it's fair to say that there was a lot more skulduggery going on than there is now, and Mick Coleman fondly remembers his great friend intercepting a punch that was heading Mick's way, with his own chin! Johnny was a hard, skilful hooker and it was only club captains Sid Sidey and Steve Jones playing in the same position that somewhat restricted the number of first team starts that he made.

At Westbury, there is a lot of technology behind making classical wooden window frames, doors, and his stunning garden rooms, and back in the good old rugby days the hooking position also required a lot of technical knowledge and experience when the hooker's number one job was striking for the ball at the scrum to win possession for his side.

In the modern game the scrum half is allowed to put the ball into his own second-row's feet at the scrum so the art of front row hooking for the ball has died out but the hooker has now become the key man at the line out with the responsibility of throwing the ball into the lineout. In the typical lopsided rules of rugby whereas the scrum half (a back) does not now have to put the ball into the scrum straight the hooker (a forward) does have to throw the ball into the lineout straight. The adaptability and intelligence of the hooker however, has been able to develop his role further because by throwing the ball into the lineout he becomes the last man to join a driving maul from a lineout and controls the direction

and progress of the driving maul. This has led to hookers getting lots of tries off the back of mauls and it is not unusual for hookers these days to score more tries in a season than wingers

Jonathan Hey's Westbury Companies have been long and generous sponsors of Bishop's Stortford which has included donating the clubhouse front entrance structure and the clubhouse windows alongside his regular financial sponsorship. He has recently sponsored wing forwards Dan Elsom and Jacob Wrafter while they have been playing for Stortford in National Division One and has supplied employment for many others, but just as importantly, Johnny remains a super keen, and knowledgeable supporter of the club, including travelling to many away games. He's also someone who remains very positive when watching the team and woe betide anyone who's unduly critical of the boys or the coaches (especially his Godson Tom!).

While preparing this article Jonathan was on a serious fishing trip to Oman, so it provided me with the excuse to relate a story about another rugby playing angler, one Gareth Edwards. Gareth was interviewed in his 70s playing days by Cliff Morgan about his fishing and rugby and both of them were in waders in mid-river as Gareth fly fished for salmon in the river Wye. Cliff asked Gareth if he would rather score a try for Wales or catch a big salmon to which Gareth famously replied that he had scored lots of tries for Wales but had caught very few big salmon.



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Match Day Experience

Bishop's Stortford RFC



Behind the scenes with the 1st XV...

As part of the Club's ethos 'to be a strong and successful rugby club united from Senior to Minis', trusted and valued by our community BSRFC Joint Head Coaches Tom Coleman and Marcus Cattell along with Club captain Sam Winter and the rest of the 1st XV Squad, provide an insight for our "Mini and Junior" Members into what goes on behind the scenes as the Players prepare for a National League 1 Match.



The day kicks off with a QandA in the 1st XV Changing Room, followed by Training, Games and 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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Match Report

Cinderford 24-22 Bishop's Stortford 1st XV



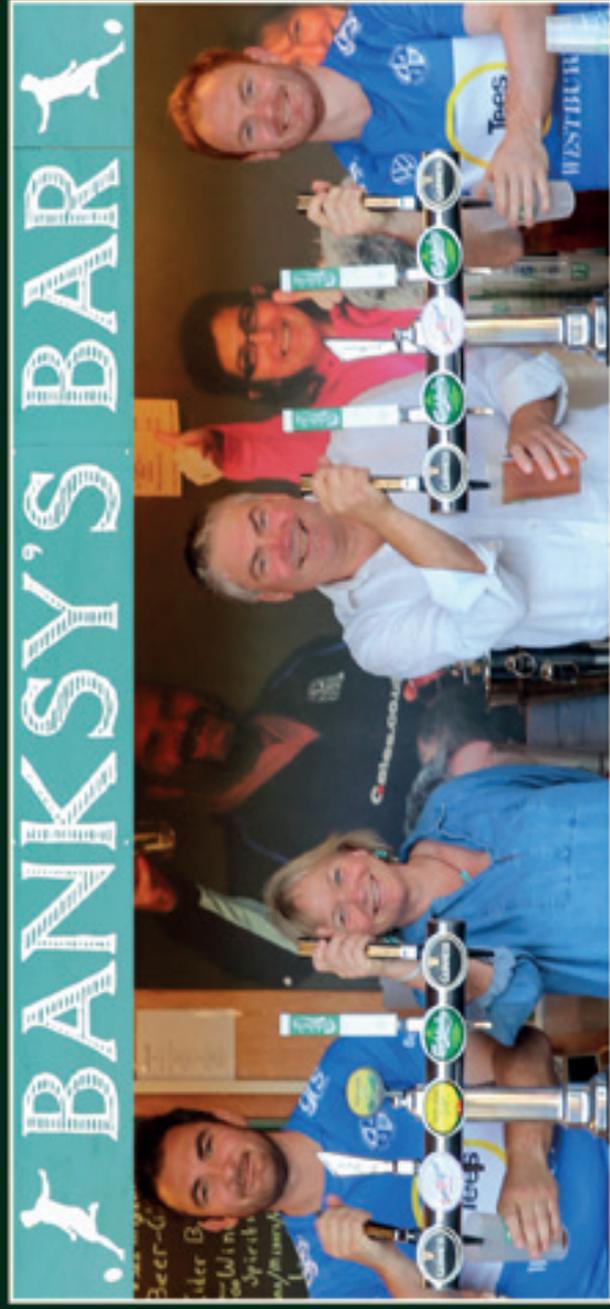
Playing with the wind in the first half, Cinderford controlled play through their powerful pack, winning penalty after penalty at scrums and dominating the resultant stream of lineouts. This brought a hat-trick of tries to home hooker, Nathan Taylor, camping at the back of well-controlled driving mauls. Stortford were able to counter one or two such drives, but sometimes at the expense of further penalties, resulting in a yellow card for Alex Rayment after 23 minutes, the fall guy for cumulative team offences. They never stopped fighting, though and were rewarded with 3 points from the boot of Connor Lloyd, when he converted a penalty conceded by Cinderford at a breakdown, after a ball dropped by their backs in midfield had been hacked on to put pressure on the home defence. Better was to come for the visitors after half an hour, when Stortford stole a Cinderford lineout and a clever grubber kick by Matt Riddington and good chase by Josh Stannard took them into the home 22. The home side knocked on and, although Stortford's ball from the scrum was scrappy, they set up a decent second phase from which a long pass from Austin Pope gave Stannard the yard of space he needed to hand off his opposite number and dive in for a try in the corner. The conversion fell inches short but the resultant halftime scoreline of 19-8 was far tighter than the overall balance of play might have warranted.

Stortford started the second half brightly with the wind at their backs, but Cinderford repelled early attacks. The visitors eventually opted to go for goal from a penalty just inside the opposition half but Lloyd's shot flew narrowly wide. It was now Stortford's turn to dominate territory and possession, with Dan Powell and Riddington using the wind well to pin the home side back. They were almost rewarded with a try after 15 minutes, but the ball was dislodged

from Jake Morris's hands, as he dived over in the corner. Cinderford's relief was only short-lived, though, as Stortford swept back and some excellent handling by the threequarters, with Stannard stepping in from the opposite wing and Powell linking to give the scoring pass. Morris made no mistake with the finish this time, running round closer to the posts to give Lloyd a less difficult conversion. More pressure from the visitors followed and a clever tactical kick from Riddington once more set up position inside the home 22. This time the forwards battered it up through several phases and eventually Rayment was able to crash over under the posts, giving Powell an easy conversion and his side a 3 point lead with some 20 minutes to go. Cue a massive fightback by Cinderford, running back a number of attempted Stortford clearance kicks with purpose and setting up platforms for their forwards to grind out more yards. This was met by some immense defence from Stortford, but the home side was not to be denied, going through dozens and dozens of phases in the windy and greasy conditions to steadily wind up the pressure. They were repelled from the try line a number of times, but fought their way back and were eventually rewarded with a penalty right on the line and a yellow card to Chris Bolton for going offside at a ruck. Predictably, the penalty went to touch and yet another driving maul was set up. With 13 men swarming in behind the ball, there was no way that Stortford could prevent the winning try with the clock in the red. A frustrating finish after such a strong second half fightback by Stortford, but credit has to go to Cinderford for the way that they held on to the ball through phase after phase in those closing minutes, despite some magnificent tackling by the visitors.

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