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

STORTFORD

RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

**TOM McCRONE,
RUNS OUT FOR HIS
200TH 1ST XV
APPEARANCE TODAY**

**BLUES END OF
SEASON ROUND-UP**

**A FOND FAREWELL
FROM OUR LADIES
MANAGER CARLY POYSER**



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VERSUS
CHINNOR RFC

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From the President

By Len Lindop



For the last time this season, it gives me great pleasure to welcome everyone to Silver Leys this afternoon, especially today's first-team opposition Chinnor. Chinnor has had a good second half of the season since they appointed Nick Easter as their coach. We had a close game at Thame and narrowly lost but gained two bonus points.

We also have the Mayor of Bishop's Stortford, Dave Anderson present at lunch and hopefully will mention his many journeys to Kyiv to help the people of Ukraine.

Today we have Johnny Hey's Westbury Garden Rooms, as the Match Day sponsor and Tees hosted by Ashton Hunt as Man of the Match Sponsor. In our final lunch of the season we have a full house of tables which are hosted by many of our sponsors including Russell Property, our Matchday Experience and Minis Sponsor, Connect Scaffolding, GRS Group, Garson's, Nockolds, HAM, Mantle Space, Walden Capital, Hanbury Wealth, Price Bailey, Shield Batteries, (their first time at a lunch). Regulars Three Willow/Ace of Lanes, and Belcom Cables who are hosting Will Rogers's mum over from Australia, and his girlfriend.

There are many other people who contribute to getting our home match lunches off the ground. These include our brilliant chef, Lisa from Chives, Rob Walker who organises the lunches, Julie North who organises the sponsors and

for counselling and from my perspective, Mick Coleman who has stepped into the breach with after-lunch entertainment. I would like to thank all my guests who graced the President's table and provided good repartee to our guests from other clubs. However, A special thanks to John Allanson and his regular gang who come up on a Thursday to prepare the marquee for Saturday's match. Without these volunteers, these lunches would not go ahead. Thank you too all.

Hopefully, we can do sufficiently well to improve our current seventh position, two points behind Plymouth who are in fifth position. Either way, we should finish in our highest position in the RFU league structure. We must thank James Ayton and his team and all the coaches for a great performance this year.

I have written about relegation but to date it is not yet official that we will lose three teams relegated to level 4 rugby, to be replaced by three clubs in each of the three regional level leagues below. Esher and Taunton are fighting it out to see who should survive. The three clubs to be promoted should be Blackheath, Leicester Lions, and Sedgely Park, two of which will be new opponents for us. Rams, Sale, and Cambridge are fighting it out to see who may be promoted to the Championship.

We still await confirmation from the RFU of LL of this.





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Head Coaches

Marcus Cattell & Tom Coleman



And just like that we come to our last home game of the 2022/23 season. It only seems like yesterday that we welcomed Hull to Silver Leys for the opening game of the season, fast forward 8 months and here we are.

I'd like to extend a warm welcome to our good friends from Chinnor, who I believe are the team we have played the most over the past decade since we began our National League journey in 2013/14. This will be the 16th clash between the sides, with the record firmly in our favour at 10-5, however we will be looking to reverse the result from February, from which our visitors took the spoils.

At the start of the season, we set out to improve on our performances last season where we ended up finishing 9th with 62 points from 28 games (10 Wins, 2 Draws & 16 Loses). We currently sit 7th with 71 points from 24 games (12 wins, 1 Draw & 10 loses) so statistically we have improved, that has been pleasing, but we maintain focused to finish with two more wins, which will require two top performances to achieve.

Today we celebrate a special land mark for one of the ever-present members of the squad, Tom McCrone, who runs out for his 200th 1stXV appearance today. An unbelievable achievement for the BSRFC junior, who since finishing his university degree up in Newcastle has been an integral part of the squad, both on and off the field. It will also, unfortunately, be Tom's final 1stXV home appearance as he has decided to hang up his playing boots at the end of the season. Along with Tom, Will Roberts another BSRFC Junior will also play his final 1stXV home game today as he too, has decided to retire from 1stXV rugby. Will having

made his debut way back in the 2011/12 season under Peter Engledow, has turned out 146 times for the club, including every match this season, which for a front row forward is some going. I'm sure you will all join us in congratulating both these top performers on their fine 1stXV careers, good on you lads!!

Today is also a special day for the club. It marks the 10- & 20-year anniversary of the 2012/13 National 3 London & SE Champions and the 2002/03 London 2 North Champions. Both teams have used today as an opportunity to get back together and it's great to see some of the old faces of both teams. These groups have certainly played their part in the journey the 1stXV has been on since the leagues formed in 1987.

Finally, we would like to send a huge thank you to all our fantastic supporters and sponsors who have got behind us all year, and cheered us on no matter the weather. They've ridden the emotions with us, from the lows of Cambridge home and away, to the highs of Plymouth & Darlington away and of course the always memorable Ladies Day back in March. You are without doubt the 16th player each and every time we go out there and your generosity to allow us to compete at level 3 is greatly appreciated. We all look forward to staying around after the game and having a beer or two and remember what has ultimately been the most successful season we have had in National One.

So for one last time at Silver Leys this season, as Grandad Tony would say;

'Come on you Bishops!'

Marcus & Tom

THE COACHING STAFF:



RYAN CLARKE



ROB FAIERS



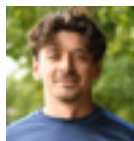
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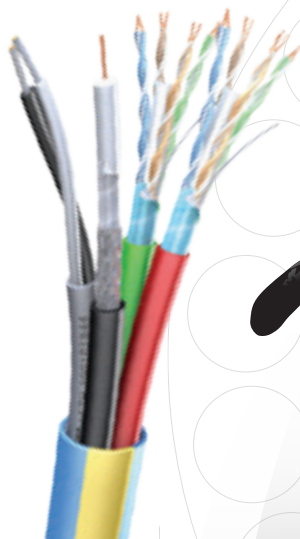
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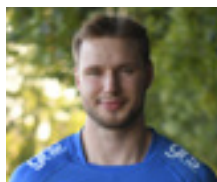


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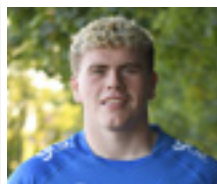
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Today's Opposition

Chinnor RFC



Our opponents today are Chinnor RFC who were founded as recently as 1962 by a group of regulars at 'The Bird in Hand' pub in Chinnor making them the 'youngest' club in the National leagues. The pub was their unofficial HQ and 'clubhouse' for many years whilst they played matches on a field next door.

In 1971 the club moved to Towersey Playing Fields in Thame, building their very first clubhouse on the site, entirely through volunteer labour. The club quickly grew, adding Mini & Youth Rugby in 1973 and winning the Oxfordshire County Cup in 1976. Not bad for a club, that was at that point, only 14 years old!

Within a few years though the village decided they wanted their playing fields back forcing the club to look elsewhere for a permanent home. In 1987 they moved to their site of ten acres at Kingsley Road which many of our supporters will be familiar through visiting it for away fixtures.

They won a play-off to secure their promotion to National league 2S (Level 4) in 2012 and many of you will remember our first encounter with them which was at this level on 26th October 2013. That match at Kingsley Road was a close fought encounter with the hosts running out winners on that occasion 29-27.

That was the first of several memorable matches which we contested in the three seasons we were together in National 2 South. Chinnor were of course along with Old Elthamians and ourselves involved in a 3-way dog fight for promotion during the 2016-17 season, a fight that thankfully resulted in us gaining the automatic promotion with OE's just pipping Chinnor to the play-off spot.

They themselves were promoted to level 3 the season afterwards via the playoff. Happily, we emerged victorious from both our meetings with them in the 2018-2019 season. We won 6-13 in Thame in

October and again more comprehensively 47-10 here in January. These two results contributed to us finishing one place above them in the final league table with us 9th and Chinnor 10th. We were level on points at 72 each but we had won 13 games to their 11 games.

In the truncated 2019-2020 season we were able to play them twice and lost at home 17-30 and narrowly losing in the last minutes 32-29 at Chinnor. The final truncated table placed Chinnor 4th and Stortford 11th.

Last season we did the double against Chinnor winning 19-23 at Chinnor and 39-26 at Stortford. However, Chinnor finished 7th and we finished 9th in the league.

CHINNOR RFC



Ben Manning (Captain)



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
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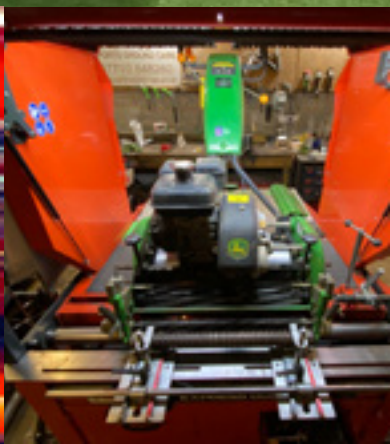
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Girls and Ladies

By Carly Poyser



This season has been one of the hardest since our inception in 2016 but we have not lost our fighting spirit! We have lost players for various reasons, and coaches too, leaving the ladies from having to turn away players for match days to struggling to get 15 out. Our girls' teams have also suffered in a similar manner, but had some excellent wins along the way too!

When I reflect I am thankful to our coaches and players across the girls and ladies for their support, drive and commitment to the club and game. It has not been easy but at the core, we know it's a bump in the road and we will continue to grow and thrive.

A fond farewell...

From one (tipsy!) idea back in September 2016, to our first training in November 2016, I have been passionate about giving women and girls the opportunity to play rugby. I had never planned to play myself, but seeing everyone out there, how could I not? I loved every minute of my time on the pitch, the teamwork, the passion, and even the pain!

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It is with a heavy heart; I retire from my position at the club. With a recent Multiple Sclerosis diagnosis, I do not have the energy, drive and commitment this role needs and more importantly, deserves. I do feel it is time for fresh feet on the ground!

I am delighted to be passing on the torch to the amazing **Charlie Field**. We played against each other briefly in 2018/19 and now she is taking on the role of Chair and I know she will be amazing.



The ideas she has in place and the experience she brings are second to none and I cannot wait to see her make this role her own and make the Women and Girls sections shine! I will be around to support and we are looking forward to a busy offseason and coming back in 2023/24 even stronger!

I am sure I will see many of you around the club and I will certainly be involved in some capacity again, but I know you are in safe hands with Charlie and all the team around her.

So A huge thanks to you all, especially Colin Tilley as the then Chair for embarking on this journey and believing in me from the start!

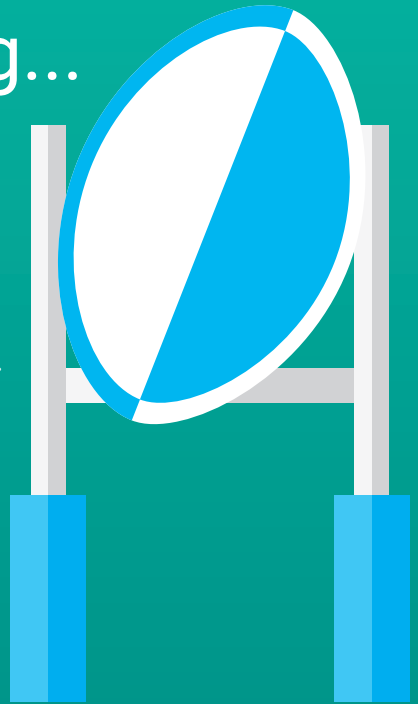
See you all around

Carly x

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Results, fixtures and table

National League 1

Season 2022/2023 National 1

Results from 01 April

HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM
Cambridge	75 - 10	Leeds Tykes
Chinnor	41 - 15	Hull
Cinderford	43 - 34	Darlington Mowden Park
Esher	31 - 13	Bishop's Stortford
Plymouth Albion	33 - 24	Birmingham Moseley
Sale FC	35 - 12	Rams
Taunton Titans	57 - 26	Rosslyn Park

Season 2022/2023 National 1

Fixtures for 15 April

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

National League 1 - 2022/2023											
Team	P	W	D	L	PF	PA	PD	TBP	LBP	Points	Adj.
Rams	24	20	0	4	851	536	315	22	2	104	0
Sale FC	24	21	0	3	739	467	272	18	1	103	0
Cambridge	23	19	1	3	830	511	319	18	3	99	0
Rosslyn Park	23	15	0	8	727	621	106	16	2	78	0
Plymouth Albion	24	13	0	11	684	595	89	18	3	73	0
Cinderford	24	12	2	10	661	602	59	15	5	72	0
Bishop's Stortford	24	12	1	11	594	584	10	14	7	71	0
Chinnor	24	10	1	13	648	664	-16	15	4	61	0
Birmingham Moseley	23	9	2	12	629	656	-27	13	4	57	0
Darlington Mowden Park	24	9	0	15	626	657	-31	13	7	56	0
Esher	24	9	0	15	653	753	-100	13	3	52	0
Taunton	24	8	0	16	616	739	-123	11	7	50	0
Leeds Tykes	23	4	2	17	432	726	-294	5	6	31	0
Hull	24	0	1	23	405	984	-579	5	5	12	0

The Teams



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Bishop's Stortford 1st XV

BLUE AND WHITE

- 1 Will Roberts*
- 2 Alex Rayment
- 3 Tom McCrone*
- 4 Harry Charter
- 5 Harrison Langworthy
- 6 Will Rogers
- 7 Ollie Jones*
- 8 Jacob Wrafter
- 9 Chris Bolton
- 10 Matt Riddington
- 11 Josh Stannard
- 12 James Ayrton(c)*
- 13 Francis Moore*
- 14 Jake Morris
- 15 Nick Hankin

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REPLACEMENTS

- 16 Ryan Jackson
- 17 Ben Harrison-Price*
- 18 Obinna Nkwocha
- 19 Connor Lloyd
- 20 Charlie Parkhouse

*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: **Jamie Parr**

ASSISTANT REFEREE 1: **Andrew MacNeaney**

ASSISTANT REFEREE 2: **Brendan Fitzmaurice**

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Chinnor RFC

BLACK AND WHITE

	Keston Lines	1
	Reece Marshall	2
	Josh McNulty	3
	James Down	4
	Willie Ryan(c)	5
	Will Cave	6
	Max Heathman	7
	Finn Theobald-Thomas	8
	Luke Carter	9
	Tom Price	10
	Kieran Goss	11
	Will Blakemore	12
	Jason Worrall	13
	Nick Smith	14
	Will Feeney	15
	REPLACEMENTS	
	Mark Darlington	16
	Bradley Harewood	17
	Andy Berry	18
	George Grose	19
	Jack Walsh	20

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Match Report

Esher 31 Bishop's Stortford 1st XV 13



Playing in the last chance saloon, Esher were always going to come out with guns blazing, but Stortford withstood the early onslaught to enjoy slightly the better of the first 10 minutes, culminating in a penalty goal to Connor Lloyd. The next twenty minutes belonged largely to Esher, though, as Stortford became increasingly accident-prone, with a number of handling errors at crucial times, compounded by a number of missed tackles. The home side took advantage to score an unconverted try after 13 minutes, going to touch after a penalty on Stortford's 22 for a high tackle and, although being held up at two driving mauls, sucked in the visitors' defence to create an overlap out wide, exploited with a long, speculative pass, which bounced kindly into the left wing's hands. Commanding flyhalf, Sam Morley added 3 easy points six minutes later with a wind-assisted goal, after a knock-on in midfield gave his side a scrum, at which his side was awarded a penalty. Stortford threatened occasionally, notably through a good break from the base of a ruck by Alex Rayment and a charge-down of a defensive kick by Obinna Nkwocha, but nothing came of either and it was Morley again who added another 3 points to his tally with 30 minutes gone. At this stage, Stortford seemed to suddenly come to life and dominated the final 10 minutes of the half. This eventually brought a penalty for not releasing a tackled player inside the Esher 22 and, spurning an easy three points, skipper Ollie Jones opted to go for touch. A strongly driven lineout maul took the pack to the try line and Rayment broke off the back to plunge over for an unconverted try. As half-time beckoned, Lloyd sliced through a huge gap in Esher's midfield to break through and dash twenty metres to draw

the last defender and give Matt Riddington a clear view of the line some 25 metres out. The flyhalf might well have made the line himself, but made sure of the try by finding wing, Chris Smith out wide to cruise in for the try and a halftime lead for his team.

Stortford squandered the momentum gained at the end of the first half and were caught cold by a newly fired-up Esher side. Within 3 minutes, Morley had added another penalty to take his side into the lead again and, as his side found even greater aggression and cohesion, the visitors seemed to fade, slipping back into their error prone ways of the first half. To their credit, the home side took full advantage, managing to exert far more pressure on the opposition on both sides of the ball and fully deserved the two further tries and two penalties added to their tally without further reply from Stortford. The first try came after 10 minutes and was run in out wide by player of the match, Ben Atkins from some 30 metres out after some ambitious handling across the field, albeit, it has to be said, aided by some loose defending. Morley added a great conversion and shortly afterwards slotted a penalty, after Stortford were caught offside under their posts under considerable further attacking pressure from an increasingly confident Esher. Stortford tried to fight back but were, once again let down by suspect handling under immense pressure from Esher's swarming tacklers, leaving the home side to round of the scoring through their forwards, crashing over after three drives off the back of a 5 metre attacking scrum for a comprehensive, well-deserved and desperately needed win.

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Colts News

By Dave McFie



The Colts begin their final club game phase of the season. The next game will be the B team in the county plate final on the 23rd of April before moving onto the final HML league game of the season. This will give the B team a shot at retaining the trophy they won last season under the Captaincy of Will Marriott. They have been a fairly consistent team all season and have had a lot of games to fulfil since school rugby finished before Christmas. It has been hard when the numbers have been thin on the ground as some players have had to step up into the A team but the character remains strong and will hopefully show through in the remaining games. The style can be a little loose for the nerves to take at times but the free-flowing spirit guides them through some bumpy patches and their belief in themselves more often than not makes the difference.

With a successful result at the final hopefully secured, the team play their last league game against Old Verulaniams and a maximum points haul would see them on the same points as leaders Ealing, (who they beat at home earlier this season) which if Hertford loose to Twickenham, would see them crowned as league champions.

This would be an amazing feat for what has been quite a difficult season. With so much school and representative rugby prior to Christmas the clubs

get left juggling the squads to fulfil fixtures. It is quite a disjointed structure all through the leagues and cups for the colts. The RFU stipulate 90 mins of play in 48hrs for young players but allow cup and leagues from both schools and clubs to be played on the same weeks. We try where possible to rearrange to suit but this creates many different problems where you end up with so many meaningful fixtures to be played around the same time. Hopefully some sense will prevail and a better organised system can be found as ultimately, we just want to see young players playing for both schools and club.

The Colts A team have finished their games for the season and it's been great to see so many make the transition into senior rugby. At present there is 15 u18's who have played Blues or Mitres and Simmo along with Paddy are looking to keep this going strong when they take both those sides down to Richmond on the last game of the senior season to play their 2nds and 3rds. The integration for the colts is hopefully going to see many more asterisks on the program of the home 1sts XV games some time soon.

Lastly, I'd like to wish 7 of the u17's good luck as they step forward to represent the county u17's through May. As a coaching team we hope you do well and are better for the experience!





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In the spotlight

Jacob Wrafter



Jacob hails from the Birmingham area, whilst this is not a particularly famous rugby area there are a number of good rugby sides. Jacob first played for Malvern, then Stourbridge and the Worcester Junior Academy before attending Nottingham Trent University.

He played for Nottingham Trent University and Nottingham-prior to moving down South to play for Stortford at the start of the 2021/22 season. He has scored six tries in his two seasons at Stortford, impressively despite his robust style, he has not been yellow carded whilst appearing for Stortford.

Last season Jacob was voted both the Supporters' Player of the Year and the Players' Player of the year. He was also "Man of the Match" and NCA National One "Player of the Week" for his standout "non-stop" performance against Moseley, ironically a Birmingham side, in November 2021. In recognition of his playing contribution and leadership during last season, he has taken on the vice-captain role during the present season.

Back in September 2021 in his brief "Welcome to the Club" article in our Taunton program he listed the Wellington and New Zealand back row player Ardie Savea as his rugby/sporting inspiration. This a very understandable choice as Ardie like Jacob can play as a both a flanker and no 8 in the back row. They both delight in carrying the ball forward into contact and make sure the opposition know they can only be stopped by very strong tackling. They both have leadership roles in their respective sides and lead by example, with both giving 100% effort on the field.

In his "Welcome to the Club" profile he also said that one of his personal goals for the season was "to bring physicality in all parts of my game" and there can be no argument he achieved that goal last season.

Jacob is sponsored by Westbury Garden Rooms; I am pretty sure Jonathon Hay approves of his all-action style of play.





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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





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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
Mark Smith
October 2022

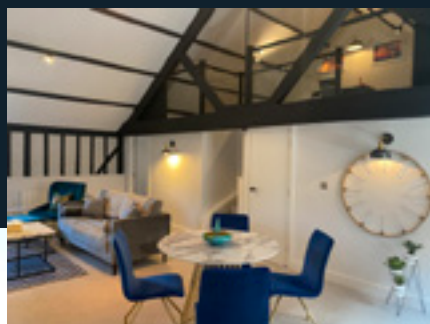
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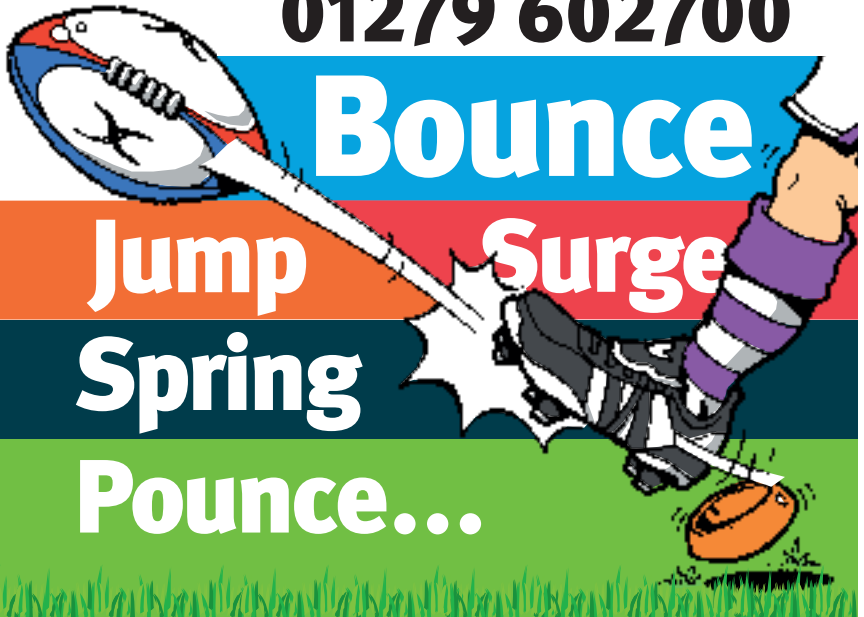


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Blues News

By Reece Lane



Blues end of season

With this season rapidly coming to an end, Bishop's Stortford Blues have a lot of positives to reflect on. Under the supervision of Ian Simpson the Blues have developed a free flowing style of rugby which both players and spectators have thoroughly enjoyed. Opposition defences have been on the receiving end of some excellently

Division 1						
#	Team	P	W	D	L	Pts
1	Amptill 1881 XV	19	17	1	1	88
2	Rams 2	19	13	0	6	71
3	Bishop's Stortford Blues	18	12	0	6	70
4	Welshpool Vikings (2nd XV)	16	13	0	3	66
5	Blackheath Heathens (2nd XV)	18	10	0	8	54
6	Royston Park 2nd XI	17	9	0	8	48
7	Barnes 2nd XV	18	7	0	11	48
8	Welshpool Seagulls (2nd XV)	16	5	0	11	37
9	Essex Cardinals (2nd XV)	15	3	0	12	31
10	Gloucester 2nd XV	15	3	0	12	30
11	Hemel St	17	1	1	15	17

worked tries. Highlights of the season have been our first ever victory over Richmond 2's away plus notable victories against Rams, Cambridge University and Barnes.

At the start of the season the team set themselves a target to finish within the top four in the Halbro Raging Bull Shield Division One. With two games to go we are looking at finishing a minimum of third. On behalf of the team, I would like to say a big thank you to all the coaches and support staff for all their hard work, with a special mention to Simmo for his dedication and commitment to the Blues this season.

Looking ahead, the younger Blues are growing and developing from colts into adult rugby and

the future is positive. Sadly a few senior players are retiring. Jack Scantlebury has been at the club since the age of nine and has captained both the Blues and the First team on a number of occasions. He has contributed a great deal of leadership both on and off the pitch organising some memorable (and some not so memorable!) socials and Court sessions. He will be massively missed and we wish him all the best for the future and his wedding in June.

Another well known player retiring is George Cullen, who like Jack, Tom Banks and Cronie, has come through the club from minis to First X1 rugby and has played some Blues games this season before he fully retires. A Rolls Royce player and a key component of joue joue rugby. We wish him every success for the future.

A huge thank you to our shirt sponsors, scoreboard sponsor, player sponsors and our supporters on the touchline this season. We value your enormous enthusiasm and support for the Blues.

Reece Lane, Blues Captain

Supporters

As committed supporters of the Blues for the last ten years, Richard and I would like to thank everyone for the enjoyment we've had following them home and away (especially the away games to Jersey!).

Our son Jack (Scants to many) started under Captain Luke Webber and Rob Faiers as coach and is retiring with Captain Reece Lane. Results have varied over the years but the passion and enthusiasm has never waned and the players have always given 110 percent! It's been an absolute joy to watch. The standard of rugby in their



league has been high, often beating second teams of much bigger clubs. Strong friendships have been forged and talented young players have come through.

Their success this year has been due to the commitment of Reece as Captain and the superb technical coaching and dedication of Ian Simpson who's made a significant difference to the team.

And maybe a bit of shouting on the side-lines from ourselves and Mark Radley!

We are going to miss our Saturdays supporting but will still venture to the club of course to socialise with the friends we've made over the years and cheer on the teams. We wish the Blues every success #bluesdontlose in the future.

Juliet & Richard Scantlebury

Coach

The Blues have gone from strength to strength over the last year and a half, the team now has identity and ethos. The team now has a simple philosophy of playing and enjoying your rugby, and it is something that players buy into, whether that is a 1st XV player being dropped or an U18 colt being moved up for the game. It is very very simple really - play what you see, joue, joue, joue and enjoy yourselves. This has seen players smiling whilst playing, playing some outstanding



attacking rugby from all parts of the pitch and scoring some outrageous tries during the season against some of the best teams in the league.

Through a strong core of players. Reece lane, Tom Charter, Joe Tracey, Ioan Parry, Benji Furrer, Joe Radley have been ever present, new weekly recruits have quickly bought into the expectations and loved the style of play. This year, as I write this article, we have reached an incredible 50 players representing the Blues team.

Part of this success must go down to Dave Macfie and Paddy who have regularly answered the emergency 'I need a player' phone call and provided the Blues with the ammunition and style of player that we need.

To Reece, thank you for all your hard work with the team, your inspirational team talks will be talked about in years to come and will be written into BSRFC folklore!

Lastly, the thank yous. To the hardened soles who regularly come to support the Blues, the Cullens, Radleys, Scantleburys, Parrys, Charters, Coynes.

To Gareth for the carpet of a 2nd XV pitch (better than most 1st XV pitches) to the scoreboard sponsor Karl Fisher of Mr Barber, who have saved the never-ending question 'whats the score Simmo'?

And lastly a massive thank you to the other coaches for allowing me free reign to do what I want with the BLUES.



Bishop's Stortford Independent

Est 2017
Issue 289

April 12-April 18, 2023 | bishopsstortfordindependent.co.uk

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OUT OF THE BLUE

Stortford MP Julie Marson pleads with local Conservative party members to be their next General Election candidate after shock deselection vote by executive

Storied City

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Conservative MP Julie Marson has triggered an electronic ballot of rank-and-file members after her Tory executive rejected her.

Conservative Campaign Headquarters (CCHQ) is tight-lipped about a ballot to reelect Hertford and Stortford MP Julie Marson amid fears about the vote's legitimacy.

The poll of every constituency Conservative member was triggered by Mrs Marson when a committee of local Tory top brass voted 8/7 to reject her request to be reelected as the party's next General Election candidate.

Rather than stepping down after losing the confidence of the local party's executive, she wants the rank and file to save her with a virtual vote. They have been emailed an electronic ballot which includes a link to a statement from Mrs Marson. Members will not have the chance to meet in person to quiz her, she says.

A source said that CCHQ would try to push the process through as quickly as possible as an exercise in damage limitation.

The *Indie* asked CCHQ how many members had the right to vote, when voting would begin and end, when and how the result would be announced and how the electronic ballot would be monitored to ensure it was accurate.

We also asked the party if it was fair to conduct such a vote by email over Easter when members may be away or not monitoring their inboxes.

A CCHQ spokesman said: "The Conservative Party does not comment on internal processes. A members' ballot will occur in due course."

A good number of those members

may still be unaware the committee has voted against Mrs Marson and the reasons why – or that her fate now rests in their hands.

The *Indie* has seen a message to the rank and file from Mrs Marson, 58, who held the safe seat for the Tories in December 2019's General Election.

In it, she described the "devastating shock" she felt at being rejected by the local party members with whom she works most closely.

She made a number of assertions about her record, insisting she has always "focused on my role as your

constituency MP, raising important local issues on behalf of Hertford and Stortford residents, businesses and community organisations".

When first elected, she was keen to debate, but more recently her focus is on keeping fellow Conservative MPs in line as an assistant whip.

Since joining the backbenches at Westminster, she has progressed to role as a party member, ensuring she was first appointed an assistant whip by Boris Johnson last July, along

with a position as a junior minister at the Department for Work and Pensions, after a ministerial exodus forced his resignation as Prime Minister. She lost both roles when Liz Truss moved into 10 Downing Street in October when Rishi Sunak took charge.

As she fights for her political life, Mrs Marson has made a series of claims in support of her reelection bid that Bishop's Stortford residents might struggle to recognise.

She says she "ensured that

developers' plans for a 24/7 distribution at St James' Park were abandoned in favour of small commercial units" and claims credit for improvements to Greater Anglia train services, including the Stansted Express to the airport.

She adds: "I lobbied very hard in Parliament to get a new community and Essex Hospital in Bishop's Stortford."

In fact, the CDC hub is at St Margaret's Hospital in Epping, while the Haymads Lane site will act as a services including cardiology, ultrasound and X-rays.

Mrs Marson also cites donating a tile from Parliament to the Memorial of her work and mentions she has a home in the town.

The *Indie* understood she owns a one-bedroom flat there, but the former magistrate and Thurst district councillor's main residence remains the Elm plus house she shares with her husband, sons and blond cockapoo Boris in Broadstairs, Kent, 100 miles from Stortford.

As part of her appeal to members for votes to win reelection, Mrs Marson has added testimonials from her neighbouring MPs, Robert Halfon in Harlow and Seffron Walden's Kemal Rodonch.

But one source said Mrs Marson's effective vote of no confidence from constituency houses was "a gift of opposition" and showed a lack of integrity.

There has been no comment from Hertford and Stortford Conservative Association.



THIS WEEK

NEWS

Teenage boy stabbed

A 15-year-old boy is in hospital with what are believed to be "serious" injuries after he was stabbed in Bishop's Stortford

page 3

NEWS

Surgery plans on the rocks

Church Street surgery has abandoned plans to develop new facilities while South Street doctor's move bid has stalled

page 5

NEWS

Raw sewage in the Stort

The River Stort was hit by 52 discharges of raw sewage for a combined 862 hours – 23 days – at three spots around town last year

page 7

NEWS

Meet election candidates

Get the lowdown on the people wanting to be elected to represent Bishop's Stortford on East Herts Council next month

pages 11-13

SPORT

Blues on the brink of title

Bishop's Stortford could claim the Isthmian Premier crown at the weekend if they beat Enfield Town and other results go their way

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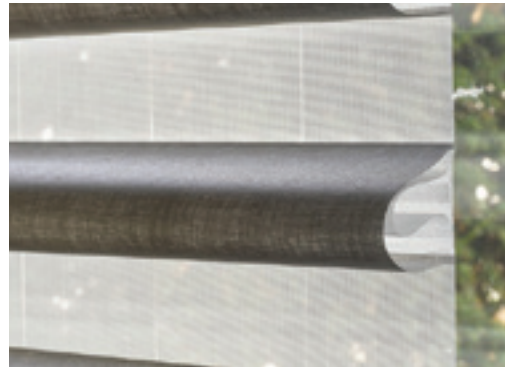
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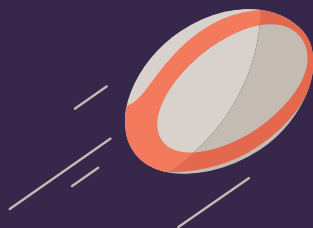


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Around The Club

Past Winning Teams



The BSRFC Centenary Book rightly covered each of the two Stortford league promotions of 2003 and 2013 in great detail. These two promotions were important and significant events for the club. The 2003 promotion from the London 2 North league to the London 1 League (later renamed National 3 London & South East) and the 2013 promotion from National 3 London & South East to National 2 South, were achieved in the usual, exciting Stortford style. Both promotions went down to the wire and both were claimed by Stortford winning the last match of their respective seasons. In 2003 Cambridge were beaten by 22-14 at Cambridge and ten years later Old Elthamians were beaten 41-13 at Silver Leys. To celebrate the 10th and 20th anniversaries of those famous promotions, both squads have been invited back to Stortford for the pre-match lunch before the last home fixture of the season.



So, having achieved promotion, the trick is to kick on and make sure you don't get relegated which happens all too often. The players, the coaches and the Stortford club itself managed the following seasons after these two promotions very well. The playing and coaching efforts that went into the 2003 and the 2013 promotions meant the foundations were in place for the following seasons, for Stortford to be able to play competitively at the higher standard required in the higher leagues. Stortford were able to stay true to the same open and fast playing style and the team spirit of those promotion sides has been maintained and is undoubtedly a major factor in our continued success.



In 2003 it was the Old Albanians that were our chief challengers for promotion and although Old Albanians did the double on Stortford, it was Stortford's consistency throughout the season that finally allowed Stortford to top the table by just the one league point. If you look to your right when in front of the serving hatch in the clubhouse you will see a photo plaque commemorating that side and its promotion. The most infamous match that season was the defeat at Old Albanians who reputedly forked out £500 to hire Paul Turner to play for them at outside half to mastermind their 44-15 home win. However, Stortford took this match as an inspiration for the rest of the season, and ultimately edged out Old Albanians for the top spot in the league. When you study the players' names in the photo plaque you will note how most of them are now coaching at minis and colts' level at the club. Again, a fantastic tribute to our continuing success!

The 2003 side was captained by Rob Faiers and coached by Phil Corbin with Charlie Dunsford as team manager ensuring the team not only played well but also enjoyed the season.



In 2013 Stortford's main challenger for promotion was Dorking and this time it was the extra four try bonus point against O E's that clinched the promotion again by one league point. The four try bonus point and seven point losing margin bonus point had been introduced in the 2009/2010 season. The scorer of the fourth try for the bonus point in the O E's match was an Australian import, John Stocker, and the recruitment of overseas players is another innovation that has since helped Stortford maintain its success as it has climbed up the leagues. Stortford has also been successful in the integration of Saracen's academy players at Stortford but it is arguable only through the efforts of the 2003 and 2013 sides earning promotion that has made Stortford an attractive proposition to join and be a team that such players want to play for. During that season a 20-7 home defeat to Westcombe Park in early January was the turning point with Stortford going unbeaten in the next eleven games and with this winning run culminating in the OE's win and promotion.

Many players of the 2013 side went on to achieve "legendary" player status at the club such as Mark McCraith, Tom Coleman, Marcus Cattell, Declan Caulfield, Sam Winter, Shaun Edwards, Steve Bull and Richard Gill and on the coaching side Steve Pope, Andy Long, Ian Simpson, Mick Coleman and



Charlie Dunsford providing the rugby knowhow during this promotion season.

Yet another sign of continuity at Stortford is that this season Tom Coleman, Marcus Cattell and Rob Frier are the present coaching team and are striving to achieve Stortford's highest ever league position.



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.



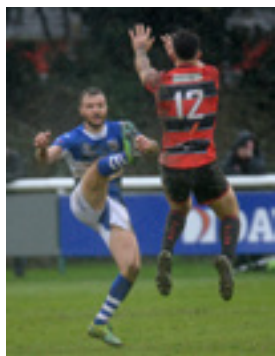
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