BISHOP'S OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME

VS CINDERFORD RFC NATIONAL LEAGUE 1

COME ON YOU BLUES





Saturday 2nd September 2023 Kick-off 3pm

ISSUE: 01 | PRICE: £15 MEMBERS: £7







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We welcome Cinderford to Silver Leys for the start of the 2023/24 season, a team with which we have always had a close rivalry, managing to finish one place above them last season after two very close matches.

Today, we are especially pleased to welcome Tees and Ashton Hunt as the Match Day Sponsor and BIT Solutions with Sam Prior who will nominate and present the Man of The Match after the game.

This season we welcome new opponents, Leicester Lions and Sedgeley Park to Stortford. I am sure that they will both be a little more successful than those promoted from National 2 in recent seasons. Whilst we congratulate Cambridge on their promotion to the Championship, we are sorry to lose our usual pre-Christmas opposition but welcome back Blackheath to take their place after their brief stay in National 2. Taking the place of Cambridge is Richmond who I am sure will be a strong force in National One.

Our close season has seen much movement in our players with not only new players coming in but many of last season's Colts players running out successfully



with the Blues in pre-season friendlies. We have been busy in the summer under John Allanson's organisation, cleaning the marquee, redecorating the clubhouse, and cleaning up the advertising boards. This year we resumed our Annual Dinner Dance and were grateful to Stuart Haslam and his team for providing an excellent evening as well as all those involved in the Three Peaks Challenge, raising over £4000 for JOCA and our Youth bursary fund.







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Welcome back to Silver Leys for the start of the 2023/24 season as our friends from Gloucestershire arrive for what promises to be an exciting opener. I'd like to extend a warm welcome to PM, his coaching staff, players and supporters, we hope you enjoy our hospitality today.

Over the years our games against Cinderford are always physical encounters, and often decided by the smallest of margins. Last year both teams won their home games, but could quite easily have gone the other way with both games being decided by 1 and 2 points. From early reports, like us, Cinderford have lost a few keys names to their squad but will have no doubt recruited well and will arrive today with the confidence to take the points back to the Forest of Dean.

It's again been a busy off season with a number of changes in the coaching group and in the playing squad. No fewer than 12 players departing and some 11 players joining us this season. Not all 11 will be on show today, but they will soon get their chance to shine and pull on the 1stXV jersey. There will be others joining throughout the season as well, with our links with Saracens continuing, but with the new Premiership/Championship Cup, this will have to wait until mid/late October when we will likely see the dual-registered boys arrive.

Pre-season has been tough physically for the players, but we feel as a coaching group that the players are in a great position to start the season well. The attitude to want to improve

from the whole group has made our job that much easier, the new lads have seamlessly transitioned into the group, and it'll be great to see how much



we can continue to grow and adapt as a squad. We have tweaked a few things tactically, but mainly focussed on what we do best. The three games against Worthing, Old Albanians and Shelford, allowed the lads to put into practice what we have been working on in training as well as identify areas which we need to spend some more time on. One area being the new tackle height and getting to grips with the new laws and how the officials will be controlling this area.

The Blues today take on Ipswich 1stXV in a friendly as part of their pre-season programme, as their league campaign doesn't start until next week. A strong side with plenty of National 1 experience mixed with some youthfulness, so hoping for a strong performance from them.

We look forward to running out once more in front of our loyal supporters, sponsors and members today. We are so grateful for the generosity you all show which enables us to compete at this level. We all feel your support home and away so please get behind the boys as you always do, and hopefully we can put in a top performance to kick start the season.

Yours in Rugby,

Marcus

















# THE COACHING

Top, left to right: Cameron Boone, Conrad McKenzie, lan Simpson, Darren Orbart.

Bottom, left to right: Manu Vunipola, Rob Faiers, Ryan Hughes, Jon Skelton.





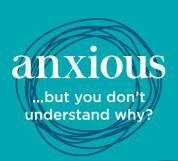
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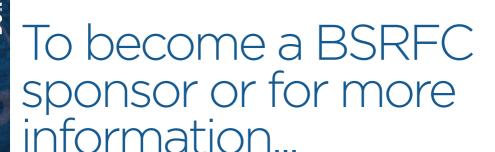


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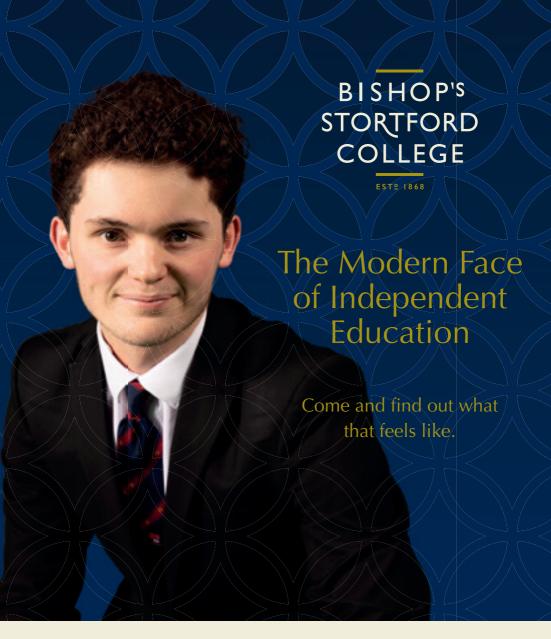


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Cinderford RFC was formed in 1886 in the Forest of Dean, a mining area in West Gloucestershire, situated between the Rivers Severn and Wye. The area, a source of iron ore and coal since pre-Roman times also provided timber for Nelson's navy and was seen as remote, the inhabitants as wild and unpredictable.

By the turn of the twentieth century the Cinderford rugby club were playing leading teams from England and South Wales but after the Great War the club's fortunes and the local coal mining industry declined, many good players 'went North' to seek employment in the coalfields and rugby in the 'Northern Union'. Nevertheless A. D 'Bumps' Carpenter, gained an England Cap against South Africa in 1931.

The club's re-emergence after WW2 owes much to the efforts of the late Bob and Mary Beavis. 'Cinderford White Rose' a club mainly of miners, had kept rugby going over the war years. When they decided to re-form as Cinderford RFC, Mary became Honorary Secretary and remained so for the next fifty years!

The club started league life at level 6 and by 2001 was at level 4. Relegated after just one season Cinderford were back by 2004 and made it to Level 3 in 2007-08 after a nailbiting North/South play-off with Darlington Mowden Park. After eight seasons in National One they were relegated at the end of 2015-16. During that time budding internationalists Freddie Burns, Sam Underhill, Harry Williams and Josh Adams, all gained valuable experience as dual-registered players.

Our first encounter with them was at the beginning of our promotion winning 2016/17 season in National Two South, when in September we travelled to their Dockham Road ground and emerged with a hard fought 22-15 victory. We then lost the return fixture in January 2017 by a single point (29-30). A result which at the time we thought might scupper our promotion hopes that season.

At the end of following season Cinderford

regained their place in National One by becoming National Two South Champions themselves and we would now play each



other again in National One. In season 2018/2019 we were victorious in both our encounters with them. We won 11-0 at Dockham Road in November 2018 and won again 37-17 here in the March 2019, but they finished just one place above us in the league. Stortford were ninth, Cinderford eighth.

There was just one encounter with them in the 2019/2020 season at Dockham Road which finished 18-13 in Cinderford's favour. In season 2021/2022 we lost 55-39 in a free scoring match in November 2021, Cinderford did the double on us winning 15-20 at Stortford in March 2022. Cinderford finished the season in fifth position in Division One that season and we finished ninth. Last season Cinderford won 24-22 at home in November 2022 and Stortford won 19-18 in the return fixture in March 2023. Stortford finished sixth in the table with 77 points and Cinderford seventh with 75 points.

All the Stortford supporters who travel to the Forest of Dean for a match against Cinderford consider the trip to be a visit to a unique rugby area and almost a foreign land, but the visit is always enjoyed.





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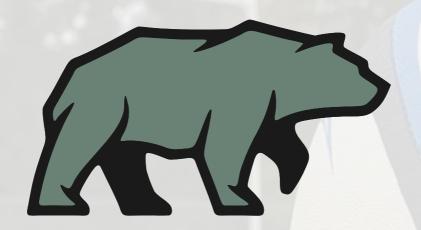
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## BSRFC Women & Girls: New seasons and new beginnings

A lot has changed since we last wrote for you; perhaps the most noticeable being the retirement of Carly Poyser as Women & Girls' (W&G) Chair.

For those of you who don't know, Carly has been the force behind both our W&G teams since 2016 – proving that it is possible for amazing things to happen after one too many glasses of wine.

We're incredibly thankful to Carly for her support and advocacy over the last seven years and can't wait to see her in her new role of 'Chief Cheerleader' for our teams (along with dogs and pompoms). Which brings us into the capable hands of Charlie Field – who joined the club and Women's XV towards the end of last season.

Additionally, Kate Hawkins has taken on the role of Women's Manager and Lianna Kearns takes the reins for our Girl's section (@ bsrfcgirls) as manager.

In terms of pre-season, we've all been busy recruiting for all teams at the Bishop's Stortford Carnival (did you hear that we won best float?!) and Stortford Pride.

We've certainly hit the ground running and have welcomed several new women to training on Tuesdays from these events, as well as our free fitness bootcamps throughout the Summer. For our girls, season kicks off again on Sunday 3 September,

and we have a big event coming soon as well – make sure you save the date!

There's so much more on the horizon for our section of the club under our new management, along with all our amazing volunteer coaches – and we're looking forward to keeping you updated throughout the season with a fresh start and a fresh mindset.

#### Save the dates:

Sunday 3 September: The Girls are back in town! Training, 12.30pm-2.00pm

Saturday 9 September: Inner Warrior girl's event, including special guest, Emily Scott (Olympian, Red Rose & Harlequins), 12.00pm-4.00pm

Sunday 24 September: BSRFC Women v Aylesbury Women

#### Fancy joining us?

Each of our teams welcomes girls and women of every shape, size and fitness level. If you - or anyone you know - would like to join, drop us a message on one of our social media channels or email ladiesmanager@bsrfc.co.uk or girlsmanager@bsrfc.co.uk.

By Jasmin Bice (Women's XV Captain) and Charlie Field (Women & Girls' Chair)





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# **Results, fixtures and table**

# National League 1

## Season 2023/2024 National 1

## Fixtures for 02 August 2023

HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM
Bishop's Stortford	VS	Cinderford
Chinnor	VS	Darlington Mowden Park
Leicester Lions	VS	Sale FC
Rams	VS	Birmingham Moseley
Rosslyn Park	VS	Plymouth Albion
Sedgley Park	VS	Richmond
Taunton	VS	Blackheath

National League 1 - 2023/2024												
Team	Р	W	D	L	PF	PA	PD	TBP	LBP	Points	Adj.	
Blackheath	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Birmingham Moseley	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Bishop's Stortford	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Chinnor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Cinderford	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Darlington Mowden Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Leicester Lions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Plymouth Albion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Rams	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Richmond	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Rosslyn Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Sale FC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Sedgley Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Taunton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

# **BISHOP'S STORTFORD**

**BLUE AND WHITE** 



- 1 Toby Hill
- 2 Ryan Jackson
- 3 Henry Peck
- 4 Ben Harrison
- 5 Harry Charter
- 6 Harrison Langworthy
- 7 Toby Tierney
- 8 Will Rogers
- 9 Connor Lloyd
- 10 Dan Cole
- 11 Chris Smith
- 12 Austin Pope
- 13 James Ayrton(c)
- 14 Jake Morris
- 15 Tom Walker

## **REPLACEMENTS**

- 16 Alex Rayment
- 17 Ben Harrison-Price
- 18 Ollie Jones
- 19 Chris Bolton
- 20 Nick Hankin

#### **Head Coach:**

Marcus Cattell

#### **Forwards Coaches:**

Rob Faiers Cameron Boon

## Blues Lead Coach & Forwards Coach:

lan Simpson

#### **Attack & Backs Coach:**

Manu Vunipola

## Head Strength & Conditioning:

Konrad McKenzie

#### Lead Medical:

Rvan Clarke

#### **-**---- **M**----

**Team Manager:**Darren Orbart

### Performance Coach:

Jon Skelton

#### RFFFRFF:

Owen Taylor

ASSISTANT REFEREE 1:

**Nick Borkett** 

ASSISTANT REFEREE 2:

**Matthew Shepherd** 

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- 1 George Porter
- 2 Nathan Taylor
- 3 Shaun Knight
- 4 Tyler Jerrum(c)
- 5 Callum Thompson
- 6 George Angell
- 7 Joe Mullis
- **8** Jack Shields
- 9 Tom Knight
- 10 Joe Winfield
- 11 Mason Tonks
- **12** Jamie Forrester
- 13 Will Baldwin
- 14 Will Hendy
- 15 Mike Wilcox

## REPLACEMENTS

- **16** James Elliot
- 17 Tom Anderson
- 18 Danny Hodge
- **19** Dec Fissenden
- 20 Stan Norman

### **Director of Rugby:**

Paul Morris

#### Head Coach/Attack Coach:

Clive Stuart-Smith

## Forwards / Defence Coach:

Tim Brockett

#### **Assistant Coach:**

Matt Teague

#### **Medical Services:**

Adam Farr Izzy Byron

#### Kit Manager:

Julian Kibble (1st XV)

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Having finished last season on a high the blues begun the 2023-24 pre-training full of confidence and enthusiasm. Their first test was an away fixture to OAs.

The team was a mixture of core players from last season's successful blues Combined with a number of younger lads from our talented colts team together with a number of new summer signings. This new looked blues team were keen to deliver an entertaining match which did not disappoint.

The blues side under the captaincy of Tom charter made an impressive start with a number of good attacks and dominance upfront, this became a common theme throughout the match.

Final score 26-7 win for the blues, with standout performance by Tommy Walker, Tom Charter and Benji Furrer.

The blues kick off there ranging bull shield campaign against Ipswich, and hope to build on their 4th place finish last season!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the sponsors for their continued support, and another thank you to the coaches and medical team for all the hard work that goes on behind the scenes. Finally, to all the supporters that come and watch our matches, your support very much appreciated.

#### Reece Lane, Blues captain









Stortford's highest ever league finish of sixth in National Division One last season is testament to the success of James Ayrton in taking over Sam Winter's role as club captain. In fact, James' good playing form at centre and his calm assurance as captain made it a seamless transition from Sam.

James played in all Stortford games last season except the away games at Plymouth and Esher. He was recorded as being substituted at the Rosslyn Park away game but that was only to cover for a ten minutes yellow card that allowed a front row replacement. However, it is very likely to have been a fourth official reporting mistake by the Rosslyn Park official as it is very unlikely the Stortford coaches would have chosen James to be the sacrificial back substitution.

James scored the two following tries in the season: a very early try against Plymouth (home) and a wide out try against Cinderford (home).

There are going to be a number of new challenges this season. There will be the need to support the integration into the side of the newly recruited players to replace a number

of key player retirements at the end of last season. Obviously, the coaching retirement of Tom Coleman will leave a big hole in the side's attacking experience and knowledge, James will have to work closely with head-coach, Marcus Cattell, and the new attacking coach, Manu Vunipola to make sure there is no drop off in Stortford's style of attacking rugby in the new season.

The introduction and implementation of the new tackling laws will also be a challenge, especially in James' exposed tackling position in the centre but James has always had no issues with his tackling technique unlike some other

Stortford centres last season. However, one of the claimed benefits of the new tackling laws is the improvement in safe tackling technique in the



game so the new emphasis on a low tackling technique could well see defensive benefits for the club in the centre area.

James will also miss next season the help of Messrs McCrone and Roberts in dealing with the referees. These two retired Stortford props were always vociferously but politely pointing out to the referee what he was getting wrong at the scrums and no doubt James will need to brush up on the subtleties scrummage laws in their absence. Mind you, last season James did manage to maintain good relations with the match referee despite the assistance of these now retired front rows.

James will also have the help at vice-captain this year from two experienced lieutenants form last season in Will Rodgers and Matt Riddington, Stortford's on-field leadership for the coming season is in good hands.

#### Richard Evans





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## Did you know



Club Stortford works closely with the 1st XV coaching team to provide funding for expenditure beyond the resources of the main club. Head coach Marcus Cattell says "We could not remain as competitive as we are in National League Rugby without the help of Club Stortford. The group

League Rugby in 2013/14.

has helped us with everything from match analysis equipment, scrum machine repair and even funding of players' medical expenses to get them back on the pitch sooner. This allows us to develop our entire squad, improve our performance and nature our homegrown talent."

We are always on the hunt for new members which help us broaden the extent of our support for the squad. Both individual and corporate membership options are available. and come with exclusive Club Stortford jacket and ties, pre-match lunches and other perks like access to Six Nations and Autumn Internationals tickets. Alongside this, you'll get discounts to local restaurants like Zara.

Get in touch with our secretary Russell Cattell on 07778 101 988 for more information or to join.



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 ongoing 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

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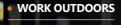




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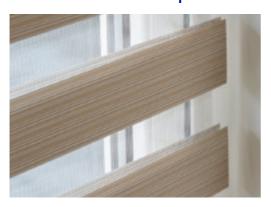
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#### **New Tackle Laws**

It is to be hoped that the application of the new tackle laws starting this season in community rugby will work out and the introduction will be handled in a much better way than the original RFU announcement in January 2023 on the new tackle laws being applied for this season.

They will apply to the English First Division and below but not at the International, Premiership and Championship level. Arguably it was the start of a class legal action by amateur players in January that forced the RFU and World Rugby to introduce the new tackle laws for this season. The amateur players class action is being handled by the same law firm that is handling the separate professional players class action.

World Rugby has been aware for some time of the increased incidents of long-term brain damage in rugby through concussions and has been looking at how to address the problem. Trials have already been held on lowering the tackle height and there is evidence of it helping reduce the number of concussions. There are also vastly improved protocols for handling concussions in rugby, in play and in training but it is obvious to me the amateur players legal class action and its financial implications had forced the authorities into a rushed announcement of introducing the new tackle laws in the community game.

There can be no doubt it will cause complications and confusion in the game this season. It also has to be admitted that the main reason it has not been introduced into the professional game this season is to avoid any impact on the Rugby World Cup which is rugby's show case event.

Following the very negative reaction to the rushed announcement this January there has now been a lot more clarification and explanation from the rugby authorities. The clear aim is to reduce head-to-head collisions by lowering the allowed tackle height to the sternum which is slightly higher from the original waist height stipulation. There is also emphasis on the responsibilities for the ball carrier's height into a tackle as well as the tackler new

responsibilities. The new guidelines refer only to "sanctions" and not penalties, yellow cards and red cards. This



allows a lot more discretion for the referees as the laws are applied at the start of the season. However, the concept of "mitigations" for a high tackle will obviously no longer apply. If Owen Farrell continues to play rugby after the future introduction of the new tackling laws to elite rugby, then he will finally have to totally change his usual tackling technique.

The spin on these new tackling laws also suggests that head-to-head collisions will be reduced, that low tackling techniques will be improved, and that there will be more passing and off-loads in game play. There should still be concern over an increase in head-to-knee concussions because with an increase in lower tackling the evidence suggests only head-to-head concussions will be less frequent. This evidence may of course now be influenced by the new need to tackle lower so there could be more knee to head concussions.

When the scrum engagement laws changed to the more controlled three step scrum setup this greatly reduced the number of neck injuries in scrums and probably saved the scrum from being removed from the game. Coaches stopped stressing the importance of the first hit at the scrums and moved to a sustained pressure strategy at the scrums after engagement. It is going to be interesting to see if the new tackle laws will now remove the coaching emphasis on "winning the collisions" and the emphasis will change to avoiding the tackle not looking for impact. If referees also do start penalising "low" ball carrying near the try line which hampers low tackling then crashing into the defence could become riskier for the attacking side than passing the ball along the line. However, the real test for the new laws after their introduction will be if they can reduce the incidents of concussions from head-to-head collisions in play and practice.

**Richard Evans** 

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## 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.







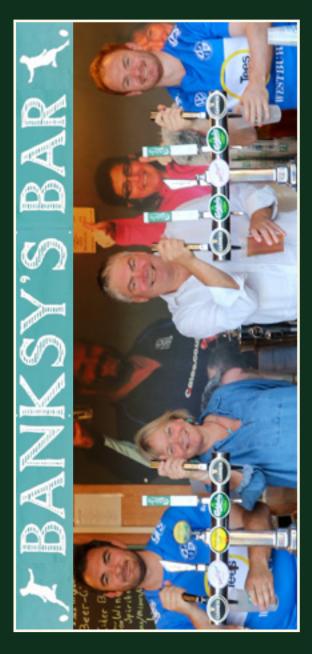




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