BISHOP'S

OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME

vs LEICESTER LIONS

NATIONAL LEAGUE 1

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Saturday 23rd March 2024 Kick-off 3pm

ISSUE: 12

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We welcome Leicester Lions to Silver Leys for the first time. We look forward to greeting their Directors at the President's table. They will be joined by Vice President Steve Young who will speak today Ben and Rosie Hewer who give us sterling service producing our programmes each home game and for that we are extreamly grateful. Darren Hayward from Nockolds and Steve Wasley are my other guests.

The Man of the Match sponsor is Forward Corporate Finance, and the Match Day sponsor is Mulberry Homes. It is a great pleasure to welcome all our other sponsors to our prematch lunch today we have Nockolds, hosted by Michael Talbot, Seneca Reid, hosted by Andrew Smith, Russell Property, hosted by Josh and Doug, Recruitability, hosted by Wendy and Lucy, Steel Builders, hosted by Max, GR8 hosted by Josh & Nick, RJ Arable hosted by Jonathon Lukies, Mr Barber, hosted by Karl Foster, Quantus Gallery, hosted by James and Peter, and our usual attendees Three Willows and Ace Of Lanes hosted by Daye and Brian.

Our Network Meeting was hosted at the Quantus Gallery in London on Thursday 21st March. There was much excitement from our members and sponsors for our first meeting outside of the club.

I have deliberately focussed on our lunch today for we all know it is a key fixture for both Leicester Lions and ourselves and we hope that we can rise to the standards we did at the away game earlier in the season. We are assuming that only two sides will be relegated at the end of the season but as ever this has not been confirmed by the RFU as they struggle to identify the number of clubs that will be in the championship next season. We wait for the decision, probably at the end of March.

Revering to the Social scene on our last home game, we were at lunch in the Clubhouse whilst the 260 ladies took over the Hilton Marquee and raised over £4,000 for Hummingbird Cancer Support Group, which goes a long way in helping them support the cancer patients and their families. We

also managed to raise £5,000 for our own Charity, BSRFC. Many thanks to Dee and her team of volunteers for making this an extremely successful day.



Please note that we also presented a cheque this week for the RBL Poppy Appeal following the Armistice Day commemorations we had earlier in the season. A day to remember for all those who attended the lunch and commemorations we had before the Match against Taunton. Whilst I was down at Taunton a couple of weeks ago, I was shown the special shirt we had presented to them which they had mounted in their clubhouse. The cheque we presented was for £3100 and adding the collections around pitch side we raised over £4000 for the Poppy Appeal.



Please remember we have the **Annual Club Dinner** on **17th May** where we have **Tom Wood**speaking and presenting the prizes awarded
on the evening. This is open to the whole
club and we hope that as many non-players,
sponsors and players will attend.



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Good afternoon and welcome everyone to Silver Leys for a decisive game in the race for National 1 survival... our opponents Leicester Lions arrive today on the back of an excellent bonus point win against relegation threatened Taunton Titans, who we ourselves had a win on the road against some two weeks ago. I think the less said about our trip to Chinnor the better, however the feeling post-game we all felt is something we have used for motivation this week and the reaction from the group is on point, we can't wait to get out on the pitch to right the wrongs and put that performance to bed.

Rewind two weeks ago, we travelled down to Taunton in search of a much-needed win to strengthen our survival hopes and the boys certainly delivered. A rounded performance from all 20 of the match day squad, cheered on by some 50+ Stortford supporters, was just what the doctor ordered and certainly signs of further confidence returning to the group as we reach a pivotal point in the season.

game today. A fantastic achievement for one of our homegrown players, having played through the Mini & Youth sections of the club. A hugely



popular member of the squad, and a player who has certainly earned his stripes having been named Blues Player's Player of the year twice, and Blues player of the Year in 2021/22 season. Austin encapsulates everything it means to pull on the Blue & White shirt and is certainly an inspiration, a leader and selfless, as described by his fellow teammates. Congratulations Popey and here's to another 50 caps.

Lastly, I would like to once again thank all our fantastic supporters, sponsors and members who have supported us through this tough season, and come rain or shine, cheer the lads on. We are so proud to represent the club in National 1 and will continue to work hard to improve our performances week in week out.

Marcus

### THE COACHING STAFF

Today we also celebrate a milestone for

Austin Pope who plays in his 50th 1st XV

Below, left to right: Cameron Boon, Konrad McKenzie, Ian Simpson, Darren Orbart.









Below, left to right: Manu Vunipola, Rob Faiers, Ryan Clarke, Jon Skelton.













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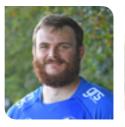
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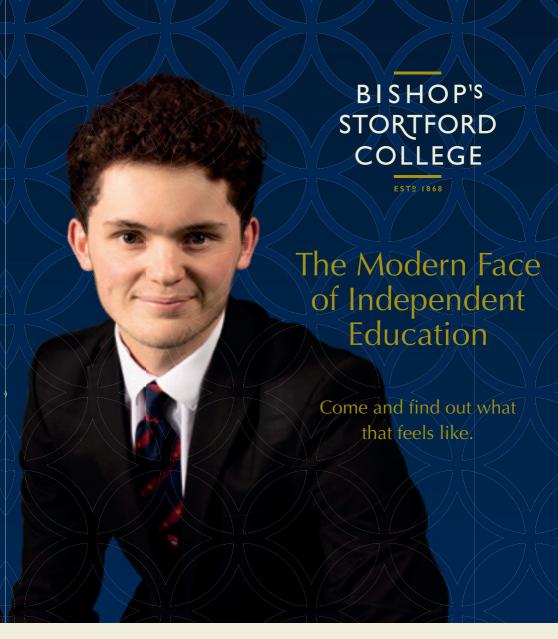


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#### From the Youth Chairman

If you'd been for 35 years, you'd be forgiven for thinking you'd woken up on a different planet, for rugby has changed almost beyond recognition in that time.

Change, in this instance, is very positive. Firstly, the huge numbers of minis flooding the club on a Sunday has probably trebled since the mid-90s. This is an incredible success story for the sport. Next is the proliferation of women's and girls' teams throughout the country; sure, in terms of numbers they may struggle to match the men, but the enthusiasm and love of the game is palpable and hints at an exciting future. Youth rugby has grown too of course, although not every club in the county can boast BSRFC player numbers, it is undoubtedly on its way back - the new tackle laws will have gone a long way to ensuring player safety and therefore parental confidence.

But it's not just a numbers game, the real success of youth rugby in my opinion, is accessibility. What I mean by this is not a physical barrier that's been lifted, but a societal and cultural one. Young people from all walks of life, from families of hugely diverse financial means are now interested in playing - undoubtedly the professional era has created a more attractive sport for many, but

state schools especially in the South - have taken on the challenge of making their rugby offering as strong as their football. Rugby was a sport renowned for its middleand upper-class participants, a preserve of the privately educated, but mercifully that has changed.

This does of course set the sport another challenge - how to ensure youth players of lower

income households firstly have the means to begin their rugby journey and then to continue it without it becoming a serious financial burden. It is for this reason that BSRFC has created the MINI AND YOUTH BURSARY FUND of which I am chair.

We will be identifying those who require help through our schools and community outreach programme, funding a 'starter asleep pack' of sorts to get them going, boots, kit, travel expenses, tour funding and the like. It will also be a resource for existing players and their parents or quardians to tap into in the harder times. We have been rolling this out throughout the season 'in-house', but from this summer we will be identifying those most in need from in and around the Bishop's Stortford area. Please keep your eyes out for our fundraising efforts or simply donate by getting in touch with Youthchair@BSRFC. co.uk If you know of anyone who could make use of this resource, please also use that email. So, let's raise a glass (and some money) for a wonderfully inclusive sport.





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The Leicester Lions club was formed because of an amalgamation between two local clubs in 1998, these being Westleigh RFC (established in 1904) and Wigston RFC (established in 1946).

They gained promotion to the National League structure from the Midlands Division in 2005 and survived their first season in National Two North finishing twelfth.

They played another ten seasons in National Two North before moving to National Two South in the 2021-22 season. Their highest league finish in National Two North had been third on three occasions.

At the end of the 2021-2022 season, they were re-allocated from National Two South to the new National Division Two West. The Lions

were then promoted to National Division One last season from the newly formed National Division Two West. They won twenty-five of the league games in the season with their only defeat being 15-19 at home to Dings Crusaders who finished second to the Lions in the league. They made a lot of trips that season from the English East Midlands down to the West Country.

Leicester Lions benefited from the RFU messing about with the league structure by gaining promotion. To be fair the changes to the National Two structure which were implemented by the RFU were designed following feedback from clubs and players responding to their needs and changes in society. These changes were intended to reboot and re-energise community rugby, improving player

retention and attracting new players to the adult men's game.

Notable former Lions and former Westleigh and Wigston players include

England World Cup winning Captain Martin Johnson, England lock Louis Deacon, Tigers back-rower Brett Deacon and Gloucester and England centre Billy Twelvetrees.

LIONS

The Lions have the full compliment of senior, colts, juniors and minis plus of course a Ladies side.

Their home ground is at Westerleigh Park in Blaby south of the city of Leicester.





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#### **MATCH REPORT:** BSRFC Women 61 - 7 Datchworth Women

After a weather-enforced hiatus, BSRFC were back on the pitches of Silver Leys for their last home game of this season. With captain. Jasmin Bice, and scrum-half, Maja Wabich, returning from injury, Carleigh LaLonge and Nikky Wilkins making a comeback and a debut from Elsie Devereux, it was set to be an afternoon to remember.

Despite a slow start for Stortford, with the score remaining at 0-0 for the first 10 minutes. it was Number 8, Charlotte Wheeler, who took first blood to put the women in blue on the scoreboard.

With all the lessons of the season coming together, Stortford utilised their strong pack to dominate at the breakdowns and steal the ball for further tries from full-back. Harriet Creasv. and tight-head prop, Eva Radukic, which were both converted by Amy Vernon.

Strong defensive play from Lorell Jordan and Holly Knight allowed Stortford to keep possession of the ball for a majority of the half, bringing in more tries from Yasmin Knott, Elise Sauvary and Creasy to raise the score to 34-0.

Fresh from the half-time break. Stortford were relentless in their attack once again. Seamless teamwork and smart thinking along the back line enabled Creasy to break through the opposition's defensive line, finding the space out wide to earn herself a hat trick, which was converted by second-row. Knott (and celebrated with a St. Patrick's Day jig).

As the fatique of the game set in, some quick thinking and skilled

play from Datchworth saw them able to break through a gap in Stortford's defence - giving them a well-earned, converted try to put them on the scoreboard at 41-7.

The game continued at full pace, and both teams remained determined to gain advantage through competitive rucks, strong scrums and impressive tackling. More points were obtained by Stortford, with Wheeler, Wilkins and Grace Johnson all edging over the line.

Just to add the icing on the cake, Devereux was able to weave through the Datchworth defence on the wing to score a try on her debut game in a Stortford jersey.

After a gloomy morning, the sun started to shine on the supporters of Silver Leys for an afternoon of great rugby from BSRFC Women - who demonstrated strength, resilience and teamwork to obtain a win in the penultimate game of the season.

BSRFC Women take to the pitch for the final game of the season on 28 April, in an away derby at Cambridge - all support is welcomed and appreciated.

Players' player: Harriet Creasy (15) Coaches' player: Charlotte Wheeler (8)





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#### **Steve Dunkley BSRFC Chair**



If you read Steve Dunkley's AGM Chair report of 6th July which is available on the club website it will show what the job of the Club Chairman for BSRFC must cover. On reading the report the Chairman's job responsibilities could perhaps be concisely summed up in one word "everything".

BSRFC exists of course for its club members to enjoy playing and watching rugby in a safe environment however, these days it is very far from just being responsible for senior men's rugby. The AGM Chair report covers the following rugby sections within the club:

Minis, Youth, Girls, Women, Touch Rugby, Senior Men's Rugby and the coaching set-ups required to support the players.

The Chairman is also responsible for the upkeep and operation of all Club facilities and to supervise the functioning of the many Club volunteer groups carrying out the day to day running of the Club. It would be impossible for all this to be coordinated by one person, there are numerous sub-committees and groups within the Club to oversee and carry out the day-to-day activities. However, the Chairman does have to have an extensive working knowledge of how all these volunteer groups are functioning, he tries to attend as many of their meetings as possible and assist their operations.

There is an ongoing need for more volunteers for new roles in the Club and to replace the aging existing volunteers who will eventually need to step back, another job for the Chairman to focus on. Volunteering is in the DNA of

BSRFC, the volunteers make big contributions to the running of the Club. Each of the previous Club's Chairmen have



followed this approach and incoming Chairmen have also looked to sponsor and promote new areas of activity within the Club. This ensures that the Club does not stand still and can handle the many new social changes and playing trends that are coming into the game. Every season brings something new, with the RFU at this time actively introducing new initiatives to the game. Steve makes sure he is up to speed with the RFU thinking with regular contact with RFU officials and other rugby Club officials.

This season some of Steve's tasks have been with the new tackle height restrictions, overseeing the upgrade to the IT and telephone systems and the use of social media to improve communications within the Club. Stortford this season have also made a point of upgrading pitch 2 with a new fence and new sponsored scoreboard, this has been well received by the Blues players and their followers. There are also special working groups for specific on-going major projects such as the building of the new changing rooms, the Chairman must be up to date with the progress of all such projects. The Club's executive committee meet regularly throughout the year to support and advise the Chairman.

Steve and his wife have a long association with the Club that started 25 years ago when their two sons started playing at the Club. He has been a qualified junior coach for 13 years, been on the Executive committee before becoming a Club trustee and taking the Chair's role.

Steve comes from the Leicester area; he considers it is a pleasure and honour to do this job at Stortford. It is also therefore very appropriate that he features in this home match programme with the Club welcoming the Leicester Lions for the first time to Silver Leys.

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#### Results from 16th March 2024

HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM
Blackheath	36 - 12	Birmingham Moseley
Chinnor	80 - 10	Bishop's Stortford
Cinderford	14 - 38	Rams
Darlington Mowden Park	30 - 36	Rosslyn Park
Leicester Lions	29 - 21	Taunton Titans
Plymouth Albion	18 - 10	Richmond
Sale FC	35 - 24	Sedgley Park

#### Fixtures for 23rd March 2024

HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM
Sedgley park	VS	Cinderford
Birmingham Moseley	VS	Plytmouth Albion
Bishop's Stortford	vs	Leicester Lions
Rams	VS	Blackheath
Richmond	VS	Chinnor
Taunton Titans	VS	Darlington Mowden Park

NATIONAL LEAGUE 1 TABLE											
Team	Р	W	D	L	PF	PA	PD	TBP	LBP	Points	Adj.
Chinnor	22	18	0	4	862	335	527	17	3	92	0
Rams	22	17	0	5	682	480	202	17	2	87	0
Rosslyn Park	22	13	1	8	639	546	93	13	3	70	0
Birmingham Moseley	22	13	0	9	590	547	43	11	6	69	0
Plymouth Albion	22	12	0	10	521	471	50	10	4	62	0
Darlington Mowden Park	22	11	0	11	548	562	-14	11	5	60	0
Richmond	22	10	0	12	593	586	7	13	7	60	0
Blackheath	22	11	0	11	530	489	41	7	4	55	0
Sale FC	22	11	0	11	488	501	-13	7	3	54	0
Sedgley Park	22	9	1	12	547	655	-108	10	4	52	0
Leicester Lions	22	9	0	13	435	592	-157	6	3	45	0
Bishop's Stortford	22	7	0	15	491	676	-185	8	5	41	0
Cinderford	22	8	0	14	421	653	-232	3	3	38	0
Taunton	22	4	0	18	566	820	-254	13	4	33	0

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- 1 Toby Hill
- 2 Samson Adejimi
- 3 Henry Peck
- 4 Fraizer Kiff
- 5 Harry Charter
- 6 Harrison Langworthy
- 7 Ollie Jones
- 8 Will Rogers
- 9 Chris Bolton
- 10 Tom Walker
- 11 Tom Mills
- 12 James Ayrton (c)
- 13 Francis Moore
- 14 Chris Smith
- 15 Nick Hankin

#### REPLACEMENTS

- 16 Alex Rayment
- 17 Matt Ramzan
- 18 Austin Pope
- 19 Connor Lloyd
- 20 Jake Morris

#### Head Coach:

Marcus Cattell

#### **Forwards Coaches:**

Rob Faiers
Cameron Boon

## Blues Lead Coach & Forwards Coach:

Ian Simpson

#### Attack & Backs Coach:

Manu Vunipola

### Head Strength & Conditioning:

Konrad McKenzie

#### **Lead Medical:**

Ryan Clarke

#### **Team Manager:**

**Darren Orbart** 

#### **Performance Coach:**

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ASSISTANT REFEREE 2: Matthew Shepherd

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17	Thompson		
18	Roberts		
19	Koroiyadi		

20 Ogden

#### Director of Rugby / Head Coach:

**Gareth Collins** 

#### **Forwards Coach:**

Dale Ager

#### **Assistant Coaches:**

Lloyd Warner, Chris McAuley, George Richardson

#### **Lead Therapist:**

Megan Seagrave

#### **Assistant Therapist:**

Max Molyneaux

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#### Chinnor 80 Bishop's Stortford 1st XV 10

Facing the league leaders with skipper, James Avrton unavailable. Alex Rayment failing a fitness test on the day and Francis Moore and Harrison Langworthy injured in the first half, Stortford were up against it but, more importantly, from the off, the side seemed to lack the edge and the aggression of recent weeks. Defensive line speed was off and much of the tackling was passive, allowing a strong, aggressive and very well organised Chinnor side to run riot. Much of the damage was done by forwards charging up the middle, often breaking tackles but, if not, offloading to the constant flow of support players, so that they were able to tot up a raft of tries without needing to deploy great feats of individual brilliance. They were remorseless in possession, as demonstrated by their first try after only 3 minutes, when they went through multiple phases after gathering the opening kick, pulling the defence left and right until ruthlessly exploiting a mismatch in midfield. In what proved to have been a very rare turning of the tide. Stortford did manage to mount some pressure and after 10 minutes a good chase, tackle and jackle by Tom Mills after a Tom Walker chip kick won a penalty on the opposition 22, from which the latter took 3 points. From then on, though the floodgates opened, with Chinnor adding 6 more tries before the break. They were ruthless against the visitors' largely passive defence. surrounding ball carriers with offloading

options, and keeping the ball moving, so that they repeatedly stretched the defence to breaking point. Allied to pretty flawless handling and a decisive edge at both scrum and lineout this made the league leaders impossible to resist for large portions of the half.

Any hopes that Stortford's supporters might have cherished of a resurgence after halftime were quickly dashed, when Chinnor added yet another converted try after only

2 minutes of the half, clinically exploiting a turnover, as the visitors tried to run back the restart kick. Three more 7 pointers were added in the next 20 minutes, as the remorseless Chinnor machine ground on, overwhelming a brave, but outgunned defensive effort from Stortford. In contrast, on the rare occasions when the visitors had possession, the home side's line speed was high and their tackling very strong throughout, making it difficult for Stortford to gain any momentum. To their credit, though, they stuck to the task and from the 74th minute managed to mount a series of attacks on the Chinnor 22, winning a series of penalties, resulting in a yellow card and a 5 metre lineout. A penalty awarded to the home side, as Stortford's forwards drove towards the line from the lineout temporarily snuffed out the danger, but the visitors were soon back on the front foot and some swift handling down the line, with the defence drawn in, as Mills threatened up the middle, saw Chris Smith dash round the outside for a try under the posts for a consolation try. Ruthless to the end, though, the home side drove back up the field and from their own 5 metre lineout after a Stortford infringement, they were awarded a penalty try, as the maul collapsed some way short of the line.





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#### **Jack Biard**

Jack joined Bishop's Stortford at the start of this season from Shelford. In the previous season. 2022-2023 Shelford finished second in London 1 South East to Westcombe Park, missed out on promotion to National Two East.

Jack joined Stortford as an outside centre he was the only new three-quarter that Stortford signed for the season. Jack was 22 when signed for Stortford, he had a reputation as a strong, hard running centre at Shelford.



His is first appearance for Stortford was in the home win against Taunton when he replaced Matt Riddington, Austin Pope having made the move to openside flanker. Jack then kept his place for the next two games against Chinnor and Leicester Lions until having to come off in the second half at Leicester Lions with a concussion. He broke a wrist in the pre-season game at Worthing which delayed his debut until the Taunton home game in November.

This season the Stortford backs have not been as effective as last season with several disruptive injuries meaning there has not been the opportunity to establish settled patterns of back play.

In recent games, Jack has been on the bench as the utility back coming on towards the end of games.



Jack started his rugby career at Saffron Walden County High School and began his career at Shelford in their U7s in 2007. He's always played centre but had played some games at outside half in his early days. He made his first team debut for Shelford in the 2018-2019 season. Jack was a key player for Shelford when they easily won promotion in 2021-2022 from London 1 North to the level above. London 1 South East. The Shelford record that season was played 26 and won 24 with just the one defeat and the one draw. Jack played in all the 26 league games that season and was also the Shelford top try scorer with 19 tries in the season. In all Jack won sixty first team league caps for Shelford.

Jack has very much enjoyed his first season at Stortford and the challenges of Division One rugby.

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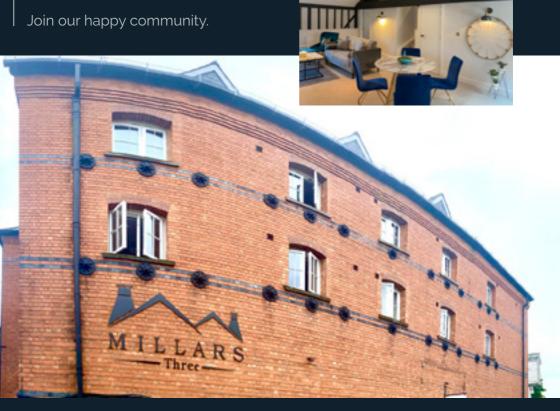
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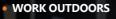




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The Oval Club was formed in 1998 by some Bishop's Stortford Rugby Football Club members who wanted to find a way of raising funds to improve the playing facilities of the Club with the mission statement:



#### '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 £200,000.

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 of all sections and members of the Club, including Senior Sides, Ladies & Girls, Colts, Youth, Mini and Touch Rugby

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 Mark Smith

Steven Wasley

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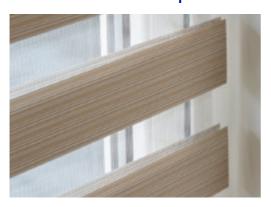
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## Did you know



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.









Austin Pope makes his 50th First XV appearance today against Leicester Lions







Chris Smith will make his 100th First XV appearance at Darlington next week







Jake Morris will play his 50th First XV game against Sale on the last day of the season





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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 Head Coach Marcus Cattell along with Club captain James Ayrton 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 Q&A in the 1st XV changing room, followed by training, games and warm-up sessions with the minis coaches and injured 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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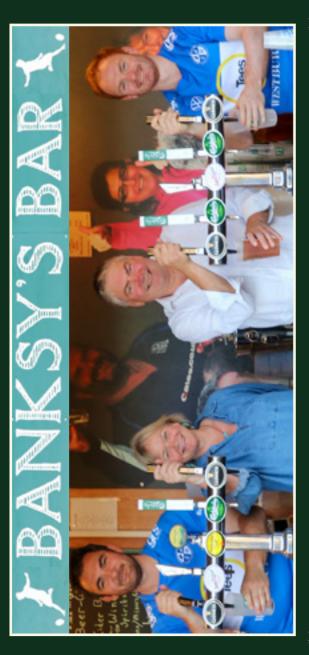




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