

BISHOP'S

OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME

# STORTFORD

vs SALE FC

NATIONAL LEAGUE 1

*COME ON  
YOU BLUES*



Saturday 13th April 2024  
Kick-off 3pm

ISSUE: 13 | PRICE: £15  
MEMBERS: £7



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Welcome to all our regulars and sponsors to today's lunch, which is our last of the season and my last as President. I welcome Al Jones who will take over as President after the AGM in July. Al is already arranging the **Players Dinner on 17th May** where we welcome **Tom Wood** as our guest speaker with Dave Walker

speaking on behalf of the club. We trust that we can win our last two matches and safely retain our position in National One for the eighth season, the destiny is in our hands. We

also hope that as many of the supporters and sponsors can come along to an event that is for the whole club. It will surely be an entreaty end-of-season event.

Today we welcome Sale FC to Silver Leys, and they surprisingly have been in the lower reaches of the division up till recently but have improved their results and they have moved up the league just above us but are safe from relegation. After our narrow loss in the away game at Sale, 8-7 we hope we can improve on that result and claim victory.

Today we have Tees hosted by Ashton Hunt as Man of Match sponsor's and Match Day Sponsors are Westbury Garden Rooms with former 1st teamer, Tom McCraith awarding the trophy.

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 Coaching Coordinator Sponsor as well as the Minis hosted by Dominic Russell, GRS Group hosted by another ex-1st teamer, Ross Rolfe, Nockolds

hosted by James Griffiths, HAM where Darrell has two tables, Mantle Space hosted by Guy and Jamie Baker, Hanbury Wealth hosted by Mandy Dale, Price Bailey hosted by Tom Meeks, Hilton group newly installed as Marquee Sponsor hosted by Peter Hilton, BIT Solutions hosted by another ex 1st teamer, Sam Prior, MJ Warner hosted by Steve and Paul, Little Acre Homes hosted by Kris Bayford, Smart Merchants hosted by Mark Watts, and Group 1 BMW hosted by David Green. Regulars Three Willow/Ace of Lanes will also be present hosted by Dave and Brian.



Many other people contribute to getting our home match lunches off the ground. These include our brilliant chef, Lisa from Chives, Rob Walker who organises the lunches and is doing so for the last time having started for what was a couple of seasons in 2017, Julie North who continues to organise the sponsors and the counselling she gives me before home matches. Mick Coleman has regularly arranged the speakers during my time as President. He must have run out of guests this week, but I am delighted he will be speaking today. I would like to thank all my guests who have graced the President's table and provided good repartee to our guests from other clubs as well as today's guest Paul Winspear who continues to give us good coverage support in the Independent Newspaper and David Ellis, an ever-present at both home and away games for the past few seasons.

However, A special thanks to Steven Wasley 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 to all those who have attended lunches and continued to give the club their full support not only on match days but throughout the season.





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Hello and welcome to our last home game of the season where we welcome Sale FC to Silver Leys, for what is a match with a huge amount riding on, as we fight to maintain our National One status. It's been a season of massive ups and downs, and last week's disappointing result probably adds to the roller coaster ride we have all been on. It was a great opportunity to keep the points buffer we had over Cinderford, Taunton and Leicester Lions, but our inability to take the chances we created in the game, coupled with both Cinderford & Taunton picking up bonus point wins, means it's still all to play for.

Our opponents today arrive having secured their safety with a try bonus point at home to Taunton last weekend. Always a hugely physical and confrontational side, I have no doubt that the game today will come down to fine margins and we have been working hard this week to right the wrongs from the DMP game and give ourselves the best chance of winning the game.

Unfortunately, last weekend Will Rogers picked up an ankle injury which could potentially rule him out for the last game,

but there have been some improvements this week so fingers crossed the medical team can work their magic. Ryan Jackson's shoulder has once again caused him to miss out, with Ollie Jones returning after being unavailable last weekend, and Murray Davidson, fresh off a strong performance for the Blues, stepping in for both of those players. Toby Tierney returns for the Blues today, after an 8 week lay-off for a thumb injury.

For one last time this year, I would like to thank all of our amazing supporters, sponsors and members who have continually backed us and got behind the team even when the chips were down. I ask you, for one last time this season at home, to bring the noise, create that buzz which the players can feed off and make it a special occasion. Let's get the job done and enjoy each other's company after the game.

Come on the Bishop's.

**Marcus**



## THE COACHING STAFF

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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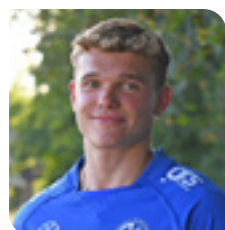
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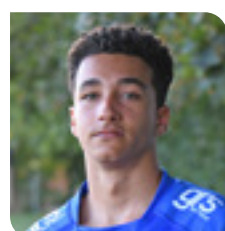
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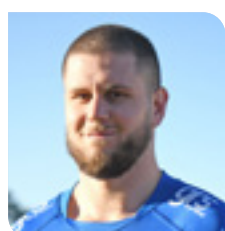
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A young man with dark, curly hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie, is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a dark blue with a repeating pattern of light blue circles.

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Our Mini section is also attracting more girls to try rugby, playing alongside boys from U6s to U11s. This is helped by our Community Coach (Harrison Langworthy) working in schools with both boys and girls attending his sessions.

What makes BSRFC stand out from other clubs, many of whom struggle to field teams at all age grades?

There are four major factors: -

The number and quality coaches that are hard at work every Sunday (and for Youth often during the week) ensuring the players develop as players and as people, with the RFU 5 pillars of Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline and Sportsmanship at the heart of their coaching plans.

Our One club ethos. It is a pleasure to see Mini players turning out to enjoy their match day experience with the First XV and then work hard as ball boys on pitch one. Equally it is rewarding to see First XV and Blues players coaching on a Sunday.

Our volunteer Referees.

Someone at our club once said "there is no match without the men in black". Often now women

of course. We do call on society referees when appropriate but many matches are officiated by our own referees. They turn out week after week, often with more criticism than thanks. I would like here to publicly thank them all.

Progression is the final factor. Through hard work and lots of communication our Colts team and the Senior Captains (Big shout out to Paddy Dean for leading) have been able to ensure good quality meaningful rugby for our Colts as they mature. They keep in contact with those away at university, and whenever possible get them a game.

I have focused here on playing rather than results. We do have teams who have progressed to County finals, and we have won festivals this season, but I think the real winner at BSRFC is rugby.

Our game may be under pressure at the top levels with some high-profile clubs going bust, but at the grass roots, and I include in that National league rugby right back through to Under 6s just starting their rugby journey, BSRFC can be proud to say we are strong, united and through our army of volunteers, pulling together to ensure we keep a great club thriving.





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Sale Football Club was founded in 1861 by a team of enthusiastic sportsmen drawn mainly from Sale Cricket Club and is the fifth oldest surviving rugby club. The club's most treasured possession is a Minute Book from 1865 which included for the first time the ten laws to be followed by all players and it is believed to be the world's oldest existing rugby law book.

The club's famous Heywood Road ground has been home for them since 1903.

Over the years, Sale FC have featured many prominent international and county players including Fran Cotton, Steve Smith, Dewi Morris, Richard Trickey and Jason Robinson.

Sale Sharks, the professional premiership team are an offshoot of Sale RFC who moved out of Heywood Road to plough their own furrow in 2003. This meant Sale RFC had to restart their league rugby in 2003/4 season from scratch at the bottom of the Northern league structure in South Lancs/Cheshire 4, they progressed steadily through the leagues eventually winning National 3 North in 2014/15, gaining promotion to National 2 North in 2015/2016 season.

Sale RFC were National 2 North champions in 2017/2018 to gain promotion to National 1, this is their 5th season in National 1. We have just beaten Sale twice at home in National 1 but have not yet won in Manchester.

Last season we lost 31-7 at Sale in March and we were beaten 22-29

at our home fixture in November. In this game Sale managed to hold onto their seven point lead in the last ten minutes achieving the win despite conceding three yellow cards in extra time.

We finished just above Sale in Division 1 in 2018/2019 and also in the truncated 2019/2020 season, but well below them in 2021/2022 when they finished in second place to promoted Caldy. Last season they finished third, Stortford finished sixth.



**Andy Hughes**  
(Captain)





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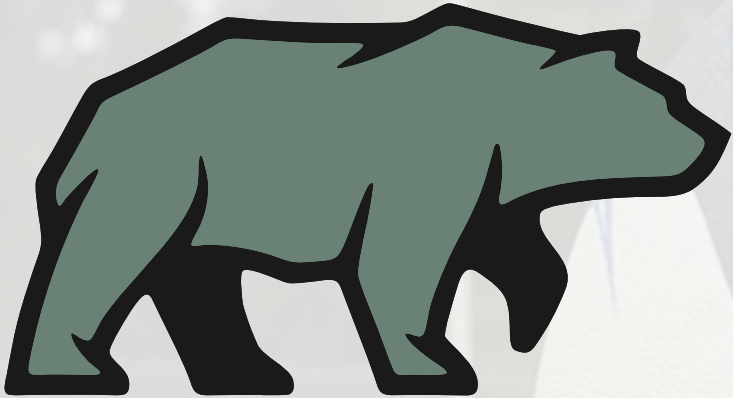
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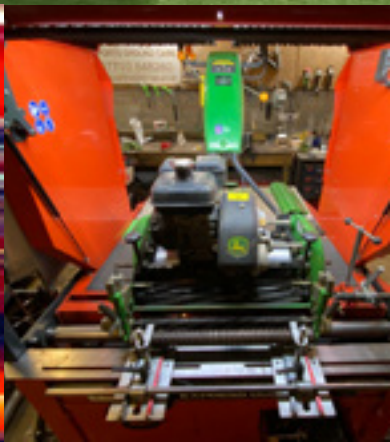
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## Over and out: A recap of the 2023-24 season

It's safe to say that the 2023-24 season has been a bit of a wild ride.

After struggling for numbers for most of last year and eventually being relegated from our league, none of us were really sure what was going to happen. But, while we're not at the end of our season quite yet (thank you, rain), we couldn't be happier about how our year has gone.

Everything has been about change this season. We've got a new manager and Women's & Girl's Chair in Kate Hawkins – who has been integral to our team since our very first session in 2016. We've had 24 new players, who have brought some new life and energy to the team; and we're battling for the second-place position in our league.

This couldn't have been done without the support and dedication of so many people.

### A whole load of thanks

To our team sponsors, Nockolds and Charterhouse. Since 2016 you've been an important factor in our growth and success – thank you for sticking with us. To James at Bear Physio – we mean this so sincerely when we say that we're not sure many of us could have finished the season without you (by this point, we're not sure that there's a player of ours you haven't glued back together).

To our player sponsors – a new initiative for us this year. There's too many of you to name in this word count but thank you for your support on and off the pitch. We're incredibly appreciative of each of you.

To the club and all of our supporters (including our photographers, videographers and match-reporters) - we haven't been to an away game this season where there's been as much support on the sidelines. Your energy and enthusiasm has been unmatched. Hearing your screams and cheers has kept us going – thank you for choosing to



stand and shout in all weather.

To Kate, for taking on a role from someone who could have been an impossible act to follow. For being a sounding board for players and coaches, representing our team and always making sure that we have everything we need. It's not an easy juggling act, but you're always doing it with a smile and beer in hand.

To our incredible coaches: Tom Brady, Rebekah Coppen, Dave Walker and Phil Poyser. We know that you don't always get the appreciation you deserve. You've seen tears, triumphs and tantrums this season, and you still choose to stand on a muddy pitch shouting at us on a Tuesday/Sunday. We're so grateful for everything you've done and continue to do.

And lastly, to our players. This team wouldn't be what it is without you. Thank you for always bringing your A-game, for supporting us and for supporting each other. Throughout the highs of a win, to the lows of a loss, you make this team such a special thing to be part of – we can't wait for more Irish dancing in the changing rooms, drunken Ladies Day shenanigans and a little bit of rugby next season.

We take to the pitch for our last game of the season on 28 April, in an away derby at Cambridge - all support is welcomed and appreciated!





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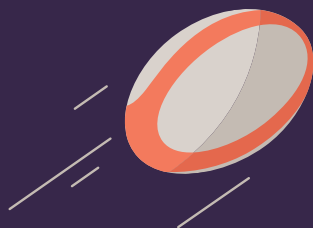
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## BSRFC Trading Company

The regular commercial activities for Bishop's Stortford RFC revolve around the home match days in the season. These commercial areas are as follows: Bar Sales, Matchday Income, Sponsorship, the Club Shop and hiring out the club. The latter two are ongoing activities and not dependent just on match day activity.

Lisa Richards is the person behind Chives Catering, our contract caterer who oversees the preparation of pre-match lunches and other club catering requirements, this was covered in the "Around the Club" article in the Rams programme of 24 September 2022. The Club Bar operation managed by Sian Wilde was the subject of the "Around the Club" article in the Darlington programme on 7 January 2023. The team of ladies now responsible for running the club shop were in this season's programme for the Plymouth match on 16 September 2023.

This leaves two main areas still to be covered and now included in this article, sponsorship and matchday income. Given the earlier mentioned articles, it should come as no surprise that the club's sponsorship operation is also run by another extremely capable woman, Julie North.

Julie's role predominantly comes under the umbrella of the 'Trading Subsidiary', working closely with Brian Moore and James Andrews. Sponsorship raises more than £300,000 for the club each year, which is generated through advertising and promotional opportunities across the whole of the club, from Minis to Ladies to Seniors. Basically, if it can have club branding on it whether it moves or is static Julie will broker the deal! Julie manages the relationships of around 80 sponsors and advertisers including Player Sponsors for the 1st XV Squad. This involves preparing bespoke sponsorship packages according to the differing budgets of our generous sponsors.

Julie also compiles and edits our match day programme, working closely with Ben Hewer of HD Print, one of our fabulous sponsors. A

lot of unseen work goes into the programme than most people appreciate, when they're flicking through the highly polished final production on a matchday.

Julie also manages our social platform X (formerly known as Twitter), she supports Ben Mishan with the club's Instagram accounts. In addition, she organises corporate bookings for the home game lunches, working closely with Rob Walker, moving forward next season Gemma Menzies replaces Rob.

Julie arranges our BSRFC Sponsors Networking event and encourages sponsor to sponsor business wherever possible, these events are held once a month during the season. 'Players Sponsors Evening' also falls to Julie which is quite an event and a huge challenge to get all the players and sponsors together for photos, food, and an opportunity for individual sponsors to get to meet their players and fellow sponsors. Most of our sponsors can be found on the business page of our website [www.bsrfc.club/](http://www.bsrfc.club/)

Julie is never one to miss a plug for a sponsorship opportunity, should anyone be considering sponsorship at the club across any of the sections, please feel free to contact Julie via email [sponsorship@bsrfc.co.uk](mailto:sponsorship@bsrfc.co.uk).

The last area to cover is the pre-match lunches, at this time it is presently run by Rob Walker who has done a sterling job, Rob took over from Anna Smith in 2018 and will be standing down to be replaced by Gemma Menzies as mentioned above in this article. Rob joined the club in 1993, he has fulfilled numerous roles within the club, one being the important setting up of BSRFC Trading Ltd to enable restructuring for the club to work as a charitable company. The restructuring required detailed legal drafting, something everyone in the club who has attended an AGM knows is the perfect



area for Rob's expertise. Brian Moore and James Andrews, with assistance from other individuals are the management team for the trading subsidiary.

We would also like to take this opportunity in thanking Rob for all his hard work organising

the lunches for the last few years. Next season with Rob being replaced by Gemma, all the people doing the "real" commercial work will be a "matchday" team of ladies which is arguably the right way in these modern times to run a rugby club.



For more information contact **Julie North** at [sponsorship@bsrfc.co.uk](mailto:sponsorship@bsrfc.co.uk)



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## Results from 6th April 2024

HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM	
Blackheath	25 - 15	Sedgley Park	
Chinnor	42 - 12	Leicester Lions	
Cinderford	29 - 28	Rosslyn Park	
<b>Darlington Mowden Park</b>	<b>17 - 13</b>	<b>Bishop's Stortford</b>	
Plymouth Albion	28 - 22	Rams	
Richmond	17 - 17	Birmingham Moseley	
Sale FC	27 - 41	Taunton	

## Fixtures for 13th April 2024

HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM	
Birmingham Moseley	vs	Chinnor	
<b>Bishop's Stortford</b>	<b>vs</b>	<b>Sale FC</b>	
Leicester Lions	vs	Darlington Mowden Park	
Rams	vs	Richmond	
Sedgley Park	vs	Plymouth Albion	
Taunton	vs	Cinderford	

NATIONAL LEAGUE 1 TABLE											
Team	P	W	D	L	PF	PA	PD	TBP	LBP	Points	Adj.
Chinnor	24	20	0	4	945	363	582	19	3	102	0
Rams	24	18	0	6	737	533	204	19	3	94	0
Rosslyn Park	24	14	1	9	708	594	114	15	4	77	0
Plymouth Albion	24	14	0	10	569	496	73	11	4	71	0
Birmingham Moseley	24	13	1	10	610	584	26	11	6	71	0
Darlington Mowden Park	24	12	0	12	585	597	-12	11	6	65	0
Richmond	24	10	1	13	626	644	-18	13	7	62	0
Blackheath	24	12	0	12	580	537	43	8	4	60	0
Sedgley Park	24	10	1	13	592	705	-113	10	4	56	0
<b>Sale FC</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>534</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>-49</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Bishop's Stortford</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>-162</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>0</b>
Leicester Lions	24	9	0	15	459	673	-214	6	3	45	0
Cinderford	24	9	0	15	475	711	-236	4	4	44	0
Taunton	24	6	0	18	629	867	-238	15	4	43	0

# BISHOP'S STORTFORD

BLUE AND WHITE



- 1 Toby Hill
- 2 Alex Rayment
- 3 Henry Peck
- 4 Fraizer Kiff
- 5 Harry Charter
- 6 Harrison Langworthy
- 7 Austin Pope
- 8 Ollie Jones
- 9 Chris Bolton
- 10 Tom Walker
- 11 Chris Smith
- 12 **James Ayrton (c)**
- 13 Tom Mills
- 14 Jake Morris
- 15 Nick Hankin
- ST REPLACEMENTS
- 16 Murray Davidson
- 17 Jevaughn Warren
- 18 Mason Nicholls
- 19 Connor Lloyd
- 20 Jack Biard

**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:**

Jon Skelton

REFEREE:

**Alan Chandrachud**

ASSISTANT REFEREE 1:

**Owen Taylor**

ASSISTANT REFEREE 2:

**Stephen Tatum**

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# SALE FC

## BLACK



- 1 Ben Carlile
  - 2 Nathan Langdon
  - 3 Cal Ford
  - 4 Nick Gray
  - 5 Tom Burrow
  - 6 Will Riley
  - 7 **Andrew Hughes (c)**
  - 8 Stone Priestly-Nangle
  - 9 Matt Bradley
  - 10 James Robins
  - 11 Tom Walsh
  - 12 Oskar Hirskyj Douglas
  - 13 Connor Doherty
  - 14 Will Hitchen
  - 15 Fergus Mulchrone
- REPLACEMENTS
- 16 Josh Brown
  - 17 Richard Stout
  - 18 Jake Barron
  - 19 Tom Parkin
  - 20 Sean Street

### Director of Rugby:

Jonathan Keep

### Coaches:

Tony 'Tote' Howcroft

Gareth Harris

Neil Briggs

### Medical Team:

Charlie Boulton

Chimi Chukwudire

Simon Buckley

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## Darlington MP 17-13 Bishop's Stortford 1st XV 13



Stortford had a decisive advantage in both possession and territory during the first half, but failed to achieve anything like the scoreboard lead that this dominance should have produced. This could be put down in part to gritty Darlington defence, but the visitors' error count, once again was high. Despite this, numerous try-scoring opportunities were created, but only one was taken. This came after 20 minutes and it was Chris Smith, celebrating his 100th game for the visitors, who did well to touch down, after Tom Walker had seized on a loose DMP ball near halfway and in one movement deftly offloaded to set Nick Hankin slicing through the home defence. Walker made an excellent conversion and 6 minutes later added three points from a penalty, when a crucial Chris Bolton tackle forced a breakdown penalty, as the home side tried to run out of defence. Two golden opportunities for further Stortford tries went begging when, firstly, some slick back play, with Hankin again making telling inroads, ended with Jake Morris being tackled into touch in the process of crossing the line and then Harrison Langworthy had the ball dislodged from his grasp, as he dived across the try line close to the posts, as the first half ended. In the meantime, the home side had dragged themselves back into contention, when, with 33 minutes gone, one of a number of speculative long passes from their threequarters finally found its target, giving their right wing a clear run to the line for an unconverted try.

A 5-10 halftime lead looked tenuous and an early injury to Will Rogers did nothing to calm Stortford nerves, as Darlington came increasingly into the game after the break. The home side were also, doubtless, relieved to see Alex Rayment substituted, with the hooker having been prominent in the visitors' pack effort and a number of subsequent lineout losses stifled Stortford's increasingly sporadic sorties into opposition territory. The visitors, nevertheless, extended their lead to 8 points with another Walker goal after 10 minutes, when Smith forced a breakdown penalty,

running a quickly-taken lineout from a long Darlington kick. A crucial turning point followed 5 minutes later, when the home side finally found a gap in Stortford's midfield defence to send their fullback running at his opposite number. Indecision in this one on one situation resulted in the two players crashing into each other in an upright position and the defender was rightly penalised and yellow-carded. With momentum increasingly in their favour, the home side soon took advantage of the extra man, going over for a second unconverted try from a secondary forward drive from a 5 metre lineout after two successive Stortford penalties. The decisive score followed only 4 minutes later, after Stortford had lost an attacking lineout and Darlington poured salt in the wound by exploiting a tackle off the ball to clear the way for their No 8 to burst from the base of a ruck well outside the opposition 22 and dash over untouched for a try under the posts. The visitors battled back, but their lineout travails prevented them from capitalising on further chances in the red zone - one notable one having been won by a tremendous counter-ruck by Austin Pope and a 50-22 kick from Bolton. The home side were very pleased to end the game shortly afterwards, having somehow contrived to win a scrum for a knock-on, after a Stortford maul advancing steadily on the home line from an attacking lineout collapsed.



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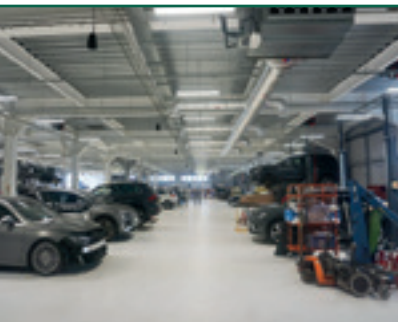
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## Alex Rayment

Tom Coleman told the Bishop's Stortford Independent in May 2020 when the club signed Alex, the following:

"We feel he's a good acquisition, and we have added him to the squad because he's an aggressive ball-carrying hooker and he's versatile and can play in a couple of positions."



The only thing Tom got wrong, there was no rugby played in National One in the 2020-21 season. However, from Alex's first game for Stortford at Tonbridge in the 2021-22 season he lived up to Tom's description. That season Alex was sharing the hooker role with the club legend, Declan Caulfield who was in his last season for Stortford throughout Alex's three seasons at the club there can be no greater compliment paid to Alex "Razor" Rayment in that he is now achieving the same legendary hooker status as Declan. Alex has scored 18 tries in those three seasons playing as a hooker, although admittedly most come from driving mauls, you need to know what you're doing at the back of the maul to be able to score so frequently. On 22 April 2023 away to Hull at the end of last season, Alex gained his 50th cap for Stortford. He has shared the hooking role during the last two seasons rotating mainly with

Ryan Jackson. On several occasions having been substituted off as hooker, he has been back on the field towards the end of matches making a further contribution as an energetic back row replacement.

Alex first played rugby for his school, The Royal Hospital School, Ipswich, he won England U18 caps against Ireland and Wales. He toured Georgia with the England U20's Counties side during 2018 winning two caps and scoring a try after coming on as a substitute in the second match against a Georgia Development squad. Alex played for Northampton Saints Academy prior to joining Cambridge in 2019-20. It was Northampton that transitioned Alex from the back row to hooker and it has proved to be a very successful move. Alex

always makes an impact wherever he plays and won The Bury St Edmunds Man of the Match Award whilst playing for Bury against Rams on loan from the Saints Academy.

It was Marcus who gave him the nickname of Razor and it is a name that has stuck with both his teammates and supporters.

Alex is sponsored by Bit Solutions who specialise these days in sponsoring front row forwards.





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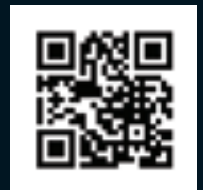
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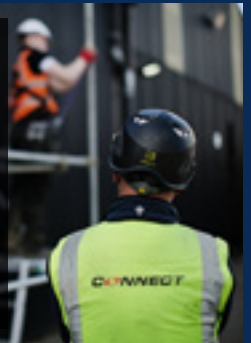


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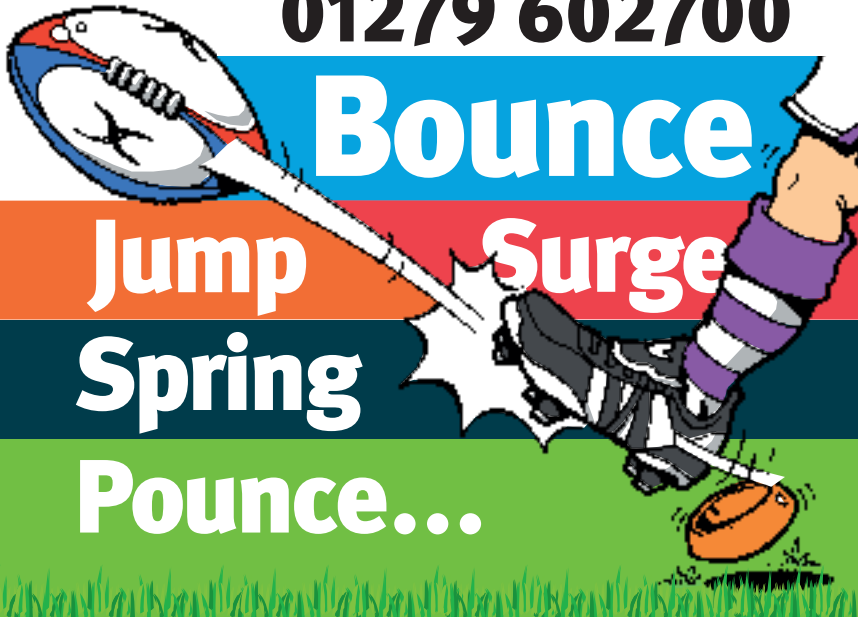
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The Oval Club was formed in 1998 by some Bishop's Stortford Rugby Football Club members who wanted to find a way of raising funds to improve the playing facilities of the Club with the mission statement:

***'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 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 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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# Bishop's Stortford Independent

Est 2017  
Issue 341

April 10 - April 16, 2024

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## Bishop's Stortford Independent

Includes coverage of Sawbridgeworth & Stansfeld Mountfitchet

### Still time to engage with our readers, Mrs Marson

#### FRONT PAGE COMMENT

Sheard Orr

sheard.orr@stortfordindie.co.uk

The *Indie* has once again invited Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth's Conservative MP Julie Marson to engage with our readers - and we believe there are finally signs that she might do so.

In the run-up to the General Election, we are committed to ensuring Hertford and Stortford constituents can learn as much as possible about all the candidates vying for their votes so that they can make an informed choice.

Last week, we published the first of a regular series of contributions from those who have already thrown their name in the ring - but Mrs Marson was not among them.

When she was elected in 2019, she acknowledged that despite securing an impressive majority, almost 40% of eligible electors did not give her their vote.

She said: "I don't want to be the Conservative MP for Hertford and Stortford. I want to be the MP who represents all of you and gives you a voice and champions this constituency

in Parliament and beyond."

The *Indie* took her at her word and she agreed to write a fortnightly column. We were prepared to withstand accusations of pro-Tory bias because we believed - and still do - that a democratically elected MP should have the opportunity to inform our readers and their constituents about their activities at Westminster and elsewhere.

That relationship ended abruptly at the start of 2022 when she refused to address nationwide anger over Partygate - the shocking breaches of Covid-19 rules under Prime Minister Boris Johnson's watch at 10 Downing Street - in her column and we declined to publish her thoughts on trains and hair courting instead.

Mrs Marson was given the chance to resume her regular contribution in the aftermath, but for two years she has been silent, allowing our questions on the issues that matter to her constituents.

We hope that, as a General Election nighly approaches, she will think again about the message this sends to offer her the same platform as other candidates.

But we have not changed our stance

Continues on page 3

### Baby Myla helps photographer strike gold



This picture of two-week-old Myla asleep in a nest, to capture the spirit of spring, has earned Hatfield Heath's Rachel Sloan the Society of Wedding and Portrait Photographers' Gold Award - full story, see page 7

#### THIS WEEK

##### NEWS

#### Objections to pasture plans

Bishop's Stortford residents are raising red over plans to build on Green Belt land at Pine Street, with more than 100 objections lodged

page 3

##### NEWS

#### Art firm's roaring success

A Little Hallingbury based outdoor art firm gained the backing of two business grants on the BBC TV show *Dragons' Den*

page 5

##### NEWS

#### Housing scheme 'called in'

East Herts Council is set to approve plans for nine new homes at Thorley Street - despite objections from the ward member and the parish council

page 11

##### CULTURE

#### Drama group's TV tie-up

Members of Much Hadham Drama Group are focused on their spring stage production following appearances on two TV dramas

page 24

##### SPORT

#### Blues looking for new boss

Bishop's Stortford FC have begun searching for a new manager after Steve Smith announced his exit to Step down at the end of the season

back page

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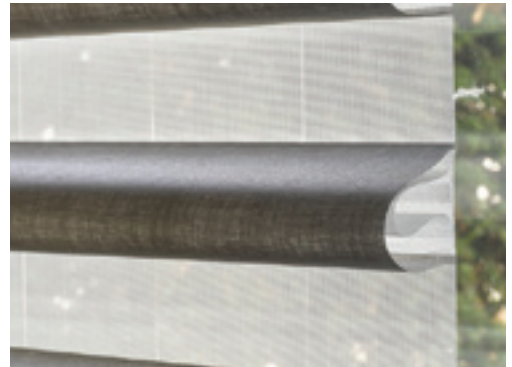
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Did you know

**Club Stortford** has raised over £430,000 to help the 1st XV team over the last ten seasons? Now in our 11th season, it's hard to believe we started as a small working party to support the squad after our promotion to National League Rugby in 2013/14.



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 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 nurture 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.



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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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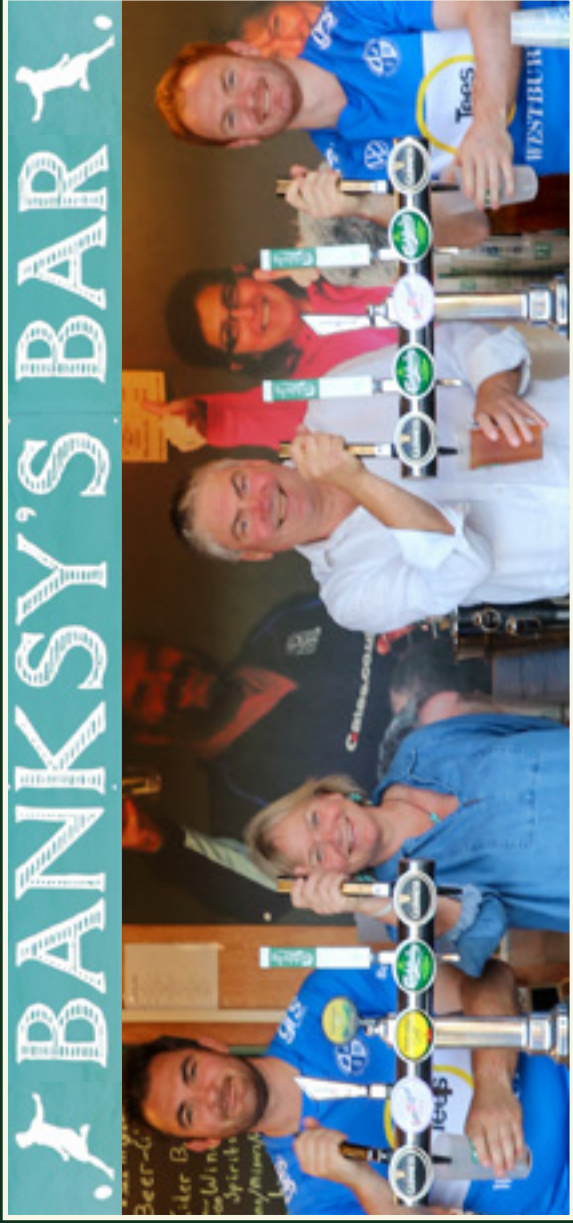
**Saturday** when there is a  
1st XV Home match **12pm - 3pm**

**Sunday 9am - 1pm**

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