

OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME OF BISHOP'S STORTFORD RFC

STORTFORD



A TRIBUTE TO:
**MAX
OLIVER**

INSIDE: MEET
THE NEW SKIPPER
WILL ROGERS
PAGE 44



V BLACKHEATH
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FROM THE PRESIDENT: AL JONES



When Len Lindop approached me 18 months ago, saying he'd like to ask me something, I assumed he wanted a game of golf. It didn't occur to me he was going to ask if I would consider succeeding him as President. Following him is going to be a challenge.

It is an honour to take on the Presidency of the Club, although I confess to an element of imposter syndrome. My own playing career was frankly non-existent, hampered by a complete lack of ability, strength or pace. As soon as my kids were of 'mini rugby' age however, I brought them along to Silver Leys and have been here ever since.

So far, it's gone pretty well. The 1st XV were tremendous in pre-season and had a great win last week against Leicester Lions.

Today, we welcome Blackheath. We shared the spoils with them last season, both winning away from home. Hopefully we can break that pattern. Today promises to be a good game.

We're delighted to welcome Tees, today's Match Day Sponsor and Price Bailey, our Man of the Match sponsors. Additionally, we are joined by Westbury Garden Rooms, with Jonny Hey hosting skipper Will Roger's parents, Nockolds, Seneca Reid, Koru Gym, Mr Barber, and of course the ever present Three Willows & Ace of Lanes. And I'm joined on my table by Paul Underdown and Nigel Ellis from the Hilton Group who, among other things, sponsor our marquee. As ever, thank you all for your support.

The Oval Club also join us today. There is a page explaining the history and workings of the Oval Club later in the programme, but they have supported the Club for over 25 years, and it is always great to see them out in force.

Our Club family experienced a heartbreaking loss last week. Max Oliver suffered a cardiac arrest and passed away on 5th September. Max joined the Club as a junior and played through into senior Rugby, becoming captain of the Chindits. He was the perfect Club man. Our Friend. Our Teammate.

Our Brother. Those of us who were present for the minute's applause in his honour last week will never forget it.

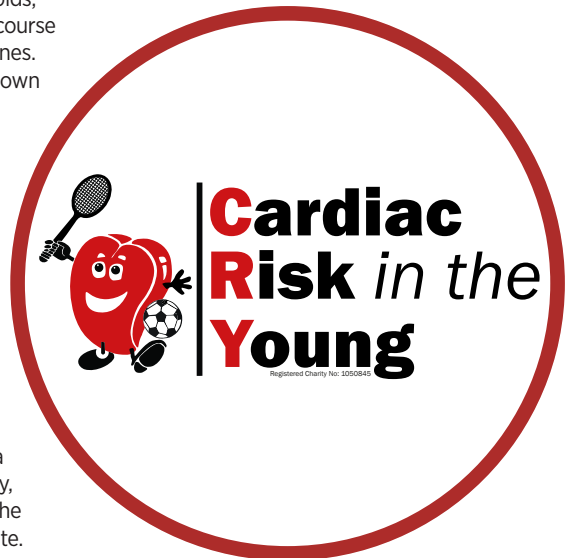
Max's family have been raising funds for 'Cardiac Risk in the Young', who provide support for bereaved families, and subsidised cardiac screening for young people between the ages of 14 and 35. At time of writing they raised over £22,000, enough to provide cardiac screening for 300 young people.

I also lost my Brother-in-Law, Matt, to a Sudden Cardiac Death in 2022, so this is a charity close to my family's - well - heart.

With Perry's agreement, and in Max's and Matt's memory, I would like to announce 'Cardiac Risk in the Young' as my President's Charity for the 2024-25 season. My aim is to raise sufficient funds to run a cardiac screening programme here in at the Club, to be open to our members in the age range, and the wider community.

Last week, we stood together with the Oliver family to support each other. I know the team will be looking for our support once more today. Let's have a great afternoon, and I'll see you pitch side.

Al





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TOM COLEMAN: HEAD COACH



Good afternoon everyone and welcome back to Silver Ley's for another big National league fixture. Welcoming a club like Blackheath is always

exciting and we're certainly looking forward to the challenge in front of us today.

We were very pleased with large parts of our game against Leicester Lions where I thought we looked very positive and clear in what we wanted to achieve. Everyone expects so much from the first game of the season and it was important for the players to deliver what we asked of them. Arguably a few decisions went against us and our level dropped off in the last quarter which was frustrating but probably understandable. We've looked at how we can be better this week and I'm sure it will be rectified for today's game.

Obviously, Blackheath didn't get the start they were probably looking for but that's National One rugby all over. Nothing surprised me in terms of results last week and you have to make sure you are ready to compete at your best level week in week out, or you can lose to any team in this league. I think the level this year has gone up

significantly to last year and we have to make sure we're ready for a battle in every game. We are a dangerous side and can beat any team at this level, but I also want us to be a consistent side. That's what we're searching.

It's pleasing to see both clubs have a 2nd XV available and I'm looking forward to seeing lots of our young players pull on the jersey for the blues squad today who will be led by Reece Lane.

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone for the minutes applause that we gave Max Oliver last Saturday. It was a difficult week for all who knew Max and it's still very hard to come to terms with now. He was a charming, funny, charismatic person who was well respected and loved by so many. Our thoughts and prayers remain with all of Max's family at this very difficult time.

Thank you to all our sponsors attending the game today, we look forward to sharing a drink with you after.

COYB.

Tom

THE COACHING STAFF

Left to right: Ryan Clarke, Cameron Boon, Tom Coleman, Rob Faiers, Jon Skelton, Ben Sheath.





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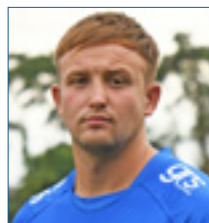
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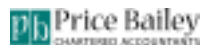
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MAX OLIVER: A TRIBUTE



On 5th September we lost a great man from this world. At the age of 31, club legend Max Oliver suffered a fatal cardiac arrest on his way to work and medical staff were unable to revive him. Our thoughts and prayers are with parents Perry and Lizzie, brother Teddy and fiancée Molly at this time as they try to work through the most difficult time in their lives and come to terms with what has happened.

Max was the true definition of what a great son, brother, fiancé, friend, colleague, captain and Chindit should be. Max was a regular at the club from the age of six. In the days Perry was playing, Max would often be seen on the side lines helping with ball boy duties and when Max was old enough to take the field with Perry, they did play a few games together. It was during these games that Max would quite often display more skill and fitness in one minute than Perry could manage in the full 80 and we knew Max was something special.

His leadership qualities started to shine through both on and off the field as he grew in match experience until he found his calling as leader and captain of BSRFC's Chindits. Season after season he would lead a group of players through the ups and downs of rugby life in the Merit leagues against some tough teams, and no matter the result, win, lose, or draw he was there after the game having a beer with his team and cracking jokes at every opportunity, bringing the team back together as one. Max had a special ability to make everyone feel welcome at the club whether it was to the team or as a club visitor and always made it an important part of who he was to look out for others through sport and through Rugby's core values.

Max's popularity was clear to see, and he had a positive impact on everyone he ever interacted with through his 31 years on this planet. He was starting to move impressively through the ranks working at HYVE Group and in his most recent role as Head of Growth he was trusted to lead on one of the company's most important revenue-generating products. He regularly presented in person and on their various media channels and

his confidence shone through. It was impossible not to be engaged by him. Max also loved nothing more than to be the UK's number one rugby "nause", able to drop statistics, facts, scores and general rugby banter at the drop of a hat. His Twitter battles with other rugby clubs over their team selections and putting ringers in to win cup games will also go down in legend as some of the funniest exchanges ever read.

Max, you will never be forgotten. You were an amazing, talented, fun-loving, kind-hearted, hilarious, positive, thoughtful warrior of a man and everyone at the club, at work, and that has ever met you will miss you forever. The one, the only true leader of the Chindits.

See you again one day, my friend.

Spencer Kersey



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Under 14s pre-season

Following a largely successful first season at under 13's in the youth section, the now under 14s started twice a week pre-season at the beginning of August and have seen up to 40 boys attending regularly. The first few sessions who is just about getting the boys moving and running again, whilst working a lot on our skills. A few sessions in the intensity definitely rose and the boys responded superbly boy giving it 100% and the weather as times was pretty hot which made it even harder for the boys.

In the last few weeks, we've got the boys used to contact again culminating in some inter squad games last weekend which to some was a bit of a shock to the system.

The majority of the squad has stayed the same from last year and the couple have moved on and decided to defect to the dark side and play football. We are constantly taking on enquiries for players to join the squad and have been lucky that 4 new players have joined us, and I am sure they will add to the quality of the squad. The squad currently sits at 50 players and have a packed fixture schedule to cater for all abilities. Both teams will be playing in the Herts and Middlesex league, and for the first year will both be playing in the Herts Cup.

This weekend we have our A team away at Brentwood and our B team will be hosting Hitchin.

Like most Stortford sides we certainly are not the biggest, but fairly confident that our style of play and fitness will cause plenty of team's problems. We are lucky that we have some great coaches in the group, and we all agree how we want to play rugby. Clearly some of the boys have shot up over the summer and some are waiting for this to happen!

We have fixtures against the usual suspects in Herts and Essex but looking forward to some fixtures against new opposition naming Battersea, Brighton Hove and London Welsh as some examples. It's a shame that we don't have the opportunity to play Blackheath at under 14s but would be fairly confident that we would be on the right side of the score line, as hopefully today's 1st XV will be. It will be great to see some old Blackheath playing colleagues today!

If you are at a loose end on a Sunday morning and want to watch some future 1st XV players, you will be entertained and a good excuse to get out of the house have a coffee and bacon sarnie.

Picture was taken winning a local 7's tournament in the off season in usual British weather!

Chris and Stuey





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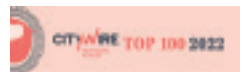
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TODAY'S OPPONENTS



Blackheath Football Club was founded in 1858 by old boys of Blackheath Propriety School who played a “carrying” game

of football made popular by Rugby School. When the old boys played against the current pupils, supporters would shout for either “Club” or “School” accordingly, to this day supporters of Blackheath shout for “Club” and not “Blackheath”.

In 1863 the club developed the tactic of passing the ball from player to player as an alternative to the solo break and the “kick and follow-up”. Also in 1863 Blackheath was a founder member of the Football Association, which was formed at the Freemasons’ Tavern, Lincoln Inn Fields. This association was formed with the intention to frame a code of laws that would embrace the best and most acceptable points of all the various methods of play under the one heading of “football”. At the sixth meeting of the association on 8th December 1863 the elected treasurer from Blackheath, Mr Francis Maule Campbell, withdrew Blackheath from the association explaining that the rules the FA intended to adopt would destroy the game and all interest in it. A few other “rugby” clubs followed this lead and did not then join the FA. This was how the great divide between soccer and rugby started.

In 2016 after 158 years at Rectory Field, Blackheath moved to their training ground at Well Hall where Stortford have been playing them since our promotion to National League One in the 2017/2018 season. That season we won our first ever game against Blackheath 19-21 at Well Hall with a last minute try by our Australian winger, Robert Duff and a splendid touch line conversion by George Cullen to give Stortford a very memorable win.

The eight league results since that first season in National One have always been close with Stortford winning four and Blackheath winning three and one drawn game. However, Stortford have only finished once above Blackheath

in the table, Blackheath’s relegation season in 2021/2022. Blackheath convincingly won promotion from National Two East in 2022/2023 back to National League One with Cambridge moving up to the Championship that season, Blackheath now provide our local Christmas Derby game opponents.

Last season Stortford won at Blackheath 27-31 in September with Stortford coming back in the closing minutes of the game in an exciting finish. However, Stortford supporters at the game are more likely to remember that from what could have been for the club, a game played in the hottest temperature ever. The return Xmas holiday local Derby fixture at Stortford on 16 December was won by Blackheath 14-18 with Stortford’s performance nowhere near as good as their Xmas lunch, perhaps Stortford perform better against Blackheath in hotter weather!

Blackheath finished 8th last season in National One with 64 points, 12 wins and above Stortford in 11th with 56 points and 10 wins.

Tom Baldwin
(Captain)





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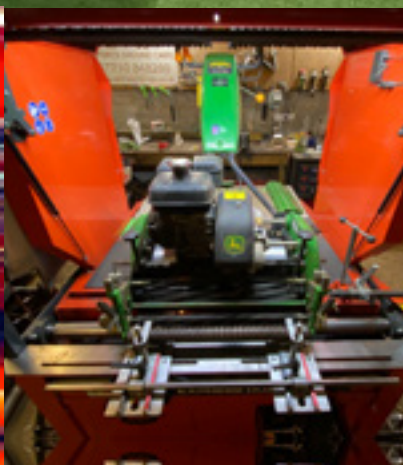
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WOMEN & GIRLS: KATE HAWKINS



What's new with the girls teams this season?

So what's new with our girls section for the 24/25 season?

We have recruited Bruce Penrice as our new under 18's coach, he has joined us after formerly coaching at Saffron Walden and is a great addition to the coaching team.

He certainly has his work cut out for him as we are still building numbers for the squad meaning that we are still working within cluster teams combined of other local clubs to ensure plenty of game time, the girls having had their first game on Sunday 8th and walking away with a 26-24 win!



Well done girls, and of course Bruce who had to unexpectedly step in to referee at half time!

Our under 16s are in a similar situation and still work within the cluster scheme and have their first home game on Sunday 22nd which will be a merge of Harpenden, Watford and Stockwood Park.

Having seen the girls coaching, I'm sure we will see great things from them this season with the support of coaches Fred Chate and Phil Poyser.



Our under 14s had a fantastic 23/24 season under the coaching of Joe Smith and Rich Cartman and this is looking set to continue for the coming season, keep it going girls!

We continue with our sponsors White Trees Group, NFU Mutual, Marriott Civils and Debbie Innes Safeguarding to whom we are extremely grateful.

So, if you're searching for more than just a sport, consider BSRFC's girls' rugby.

Just remember, all you need is a willingness to learn, laugh, and redefine the game, one ruck at a time.

Kate Hawkins Chair of Women and Girls



Fancy giving the game a go?

Thinking of trying something new and joining the women's team? We welcome women of all abilities and fitness levels! If you'd like a three-session trial period, get in touch with team manager, **Kate Hawkins**, or drop us a message on Instagram @bsrfcwomen.

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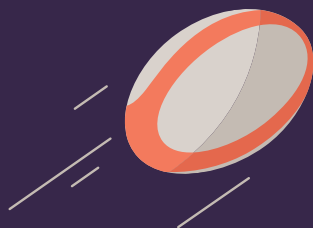
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NATIONAL 1: RESULTS, FIXTURES, TABLE

Fixtures for 14th September 2024

HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM
Rosslyn Park	vs	Richmond
Leicester Lions	vs	Birmingham Moseley
Dings Crusaders	vs	Plymouth Albion
Sale FC	vs	Sedgley Park
Esher	vs	Rams
Darlington Mowden Park	vs	Rotherham
Bishop's Stortford	vs	Blackheath

Results from 7th September 2024

HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM
Blackheath	20 - 31	Richmond
Rotherham	31 - 21	Rosslyn Park
Sedgley Park	65 - 24	Esher
Plymouth albion	24 - 28	Sale FC
Birmingham Moseley	40 - 20	Dings Crusaders
Bishop's Stortford	36 - 12	Leicester Lions
Rams	41 - 12	Darlington Mowden Park

NATIONAL LEAGUE 1 TABLE											
Team	P	W	D	L	PF	PA	PD	TBP	LBP	Points	Adj.
Sedgley Park	1	1	0	0	65	24	41	1	0	5	0
Rams	1	1	0	0	41	12	29	1	0	5	0
Bishop's Stortford	1	1	0	0	36	12	24	1	0	5	0
Birmingham Moseley	1	1	0	0	40	20	20	1	0	5	0
Sale FC	1	1	0	0	28	24	4	1	0	5	0
Richmond	1	1	0	0	31	20	11	0	0	4	0
Rotherham	1	1	0	0	31	21	10	0	0	4	0
Plymouth Albion	1	0	0	1	24	28	-4	1	1	2	0
Rosslyn Park	1	0	0	1	21	31	-10	0	0	0	0
Blackheath	1	0	0	1	20	31	-11	0	0	0	0
Dings	1	0	0	1	20	40	-20	0	0	0	0
Leicester Lions	1	0	0	1	12	36	-24	0	0	0	0
Darlington Mowden Park	1	0	0	1	12	41	-29	0	0	0	0
Esher	1	0	0	1	24	65	-41	0	0	0	0



BISHOP'S STORTFORD

BLUE AND WHITE

- 1 Toby Hill
- 2 Alex Rayment
- 3 Henry Peck
- 4 Hamish Ferguson
- 5 Fraizer Kiff
- 6 Ollie Jones
- 7 Barney Merritt
- 8 Will Rogers (c)
- 9 Chris Bolton
- 10 Mike Cooke
- 11 Chris Smith
- 12 Austin Pope
- 13 Jack Biard
- 14 Josh Stannard
- 15 Dan Powell

REPLACEMENTS

- 16 Isaac Bell
- 17 Tristan Smith
- 18 Harry Charter
- 19 Charlie Briers
- 20 Tom Mills

Head Coach:

Tom Coleman

Forwards Coaches:

Cameron Boon

Defence Coach & Blues Head Coach

Ian Simpson

Scrum & Throwing Coach:

Rob Faiers

Head Strength & Conditioning:

Ben Sheath

Lead Medical:

Ryan Clarke

Head Physio:

Ryan Clark

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- 5 Tevita Cavubati
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- 7 Noah Sloom
- 8 Tom Baldwin (c)
- 9 Jordan Burns
- 10 Tom Ffitch
- 11 Matt Armstrong
- 12 Oskar Hirskyj-Douglas
- 13 Leo Fielding
- 14 Jake Lloyd
- 15 Jake Hennessey

REPLACEMENTS

- 16 Alex Withell
- 17 Archie Holland
- 18 Josh Smart
- 19 Jack Daly
- 20 Oli Burgess

Director of Rugby

James Shanahan

Assistant Coach

Vinnie Berrington

Medical

Dr Guy Slater

Physio

Trevor Keys

REFEREE:

Mike Lamb

ASSISTANT REFEREE 1:

Henry Lewis

ASSISTANT REFEREE 2:

Iain Mitchell

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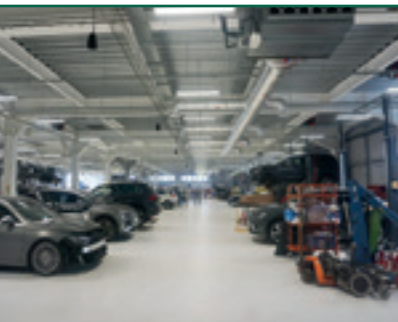
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MATCH REPORT: JOHN ALLINSON



Bishop's Stortford 1st XV 36 Leicester Lions 12

Stortford started strongly and pretty much dominated the first half, though met by some stern defence from the visitors. With only 3 minutes gone, Alex Rayment capitalised on an extended period of team pressure on the Lions' 22 to seize on a loose ball at the base of a ruck and dash in for a try under the posts, duly converted by Mike Cooke. It was the hooker again that touched down 4 minutes later, this time at the back of a driving maul from a 5 meter lineout after the visitors were penalised at a breakdown. Cooke again added the much more difficult conversion to maintain his 100% record off the tee through the pre-season games. The home side might well have scored sooner but Lions managed through more determined defending to force an error or two and it took until the 27th minute for Harrison Langworthy to crash over from the base of a try-line ruck. Cooke again converted and that was the end of the scoring for the first period, with Stortford finishing the half by holding up a Lions' maul over the line after they had won a 5 metre lineout from a penalty - a very rare sortie into Stortford's 22.

The home side started the second half on the front foot and were rewarded within a minute with a try to Cooke, who wriggled his way over in the corner, after a clean break up the middle by Will Rogers. Ironically, it was the flyhalf's own try out wide that broke his long run of successful conversions, leaving the score at 26-0. He made no mistake 16 minutes later, though, when he added the extras to Rayment's hat-trick try

from another driving maul, when an outstanding Ollie Jones tackle, as the opposition threatened to break out of their half, brought a breakdown penalty, leading to a 5 metre lineout. Despite the 33-0 scoreline, Lions had never given up and, when Harrison Langworthy was shown a red card for a high tackle after 65 minutes, they took full advantage, systematically sucking in the home defence and twice creating space outside, where clever chip kicks put each of the wingers in for tries. The first went to replacement, Jack Edwards and the second, just before the final whistle, to Jake Sterland, with Luke Bouchier converting the first.

Special thanks today go to Matchday sponsors, Recruitability and to Man of the Match sponsor, Russell Property. This week's award went to prop, Toby Hill for an outstanding effort both in tight and the loose.

The final mention, though, must go to Max Oliver, to whom this victory was dedicated by the team. He was a great Club member and a great man, who will be sadly missed.



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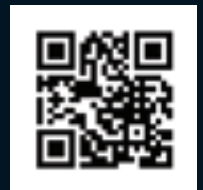
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IN THE SPOTLIGHT: WILL ROGERS



Will Rogers, the Club Captain for this season will be the first Antipodean to Captain Bishop's Stortford Rugby Football Club. Will plays No 8 and most definitely has the aura and presence of a Captain in that position.

Will joined Stortford in the 2022/2023 season joining from a North Brisbane side in the Queensland Premier League competition. Will was originally born in New Zealand, moving with his family to Queensland, Australia when he was eleven.

Will played for the Noosa Dolphins (Noosa is a very Australian name for a coastal seaside town in Queensland) on the Sunshine Coast before moving up the grades via Queensland County rugby to North Brisbane. During the 2021/2022 season he played No 8, captaining North Brisbane before coming over to play for Stortford.

Will's first start for Stortford was in a 24-25 away win at Darlington which of course is not at all like the Queensland's sunshine coast area. He had appeared the previous Saturday off the bench in the Cambridge home game. Will's break out game for Stortford was the 24-31 away win at Taunton in October 2022 when he came on the field from the bench after 15 minutes scoring three tries in the game before also managing a yellow card to miss the last ten minutes of the game. Will claims it was a team yellow card for repeat offences.

The Plymouth away win in February 2023 was Will's first outing as the Stortford Captain having been selected in the starting side as Captain to replace an injured James Ayrton. Stortford won the match 12-24 and moved to fifth position in the National One league table with that win.

During last season Will did not have a three try match, he did however manage two tries in a game for the matches against Sedgley Park at home and Leicester Lions away. Will also had a prolonged run of tough matches as Captain for Stortford at the start of 2024 deputising for the injured James Ayrton. Will was also Captain for the win at Cinderford, the game making a certainty of National One league status for Stortford the next season, it also earned Will a National One Player of the Week award. Will typically also got the bonus point try from the back of a driving maul in the first half of that game. The most significance recognition last season for Will was the Supporters Player of the Year award, the Stortford supporters really know their rugby.

Will has recently announced his planned marriage to Georgie, they met each other both working at Felsted school.

Will is sponsored this season by Steel Build Masters.



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Did you know **Club Stortford** has raised over **£467,000** to help the 1st XV team over the last twelve seasons? Now in our 13th 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. It was the brainchild of Charlie Dunsford, Russell Cattell and others from the club. Many members have worked tirelessly both at the forefront and behind the scenes throughout the last 13 years and we want that to continue. At our recent AGM **Charlie Dunsford** and **Jamie Baker** were duly elected to take up the ongoing challenge as the New President and New Secretary.



Club Stortford works closely with the 1st XV coaching team to provide funding for expenditure beyond the resources of the main club and our Mission Statement remains a simple one;

- **To ensure BSRFC continues our journey in National 1s League Rugby – this includes the 1st & Blues as one squad**
- **To cultivate new homegrown talent throughout the club drawing from the - minis - youth - colts - development squad.**

We continue to be on the hunt for new members who can help us to broaden the extent of our support for the squad. Both individual and corporate membership options are available, and come with exclusive Club Stortford ties, 2 x Club Stortford pre-match lunches, match reports after each league game and other perks like access to Six Nations and Autumn Internationals tickets. There will also be regular updates for Club Stortford Members from Tom Coleman, our new head coach. Alongside this, you'll get discounts to local restaurants like Zara. Get in touch with our secretary **Jamie Baker** on **07922 422 489** for more information or to join.

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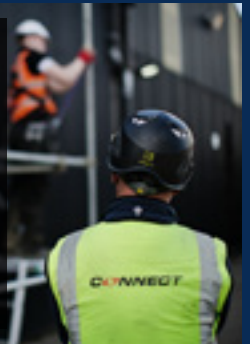


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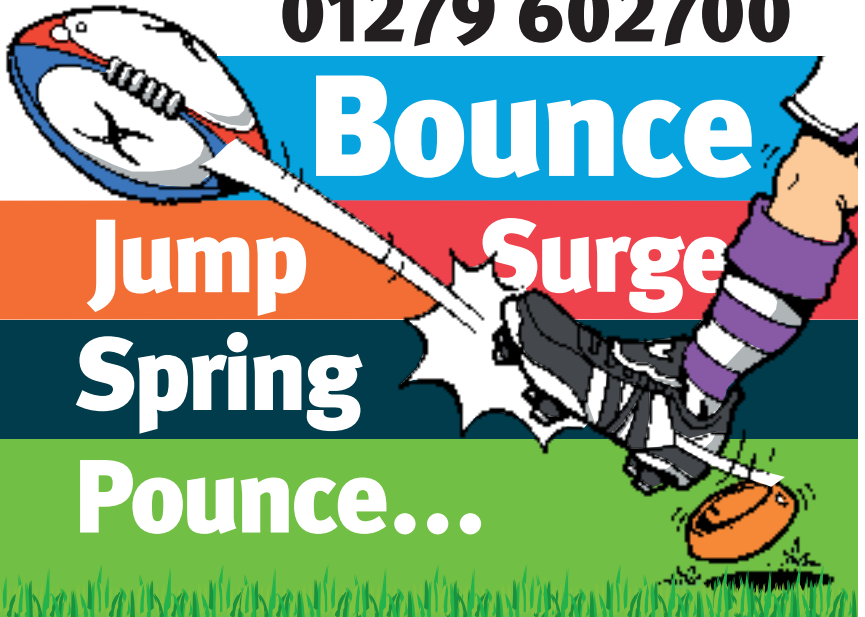
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The Oval Club was formed in 1998 by some Bishop's Stortford Rugby Football Club members who wanted to find a way of raising funds to improve the playing facilities of the Club with the mission statement:

'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
Steven Wasley - Secretary
John Power - Treasurer
John Robinson
Mark Caulfield
Mark Smith

NOVEMBER 2023

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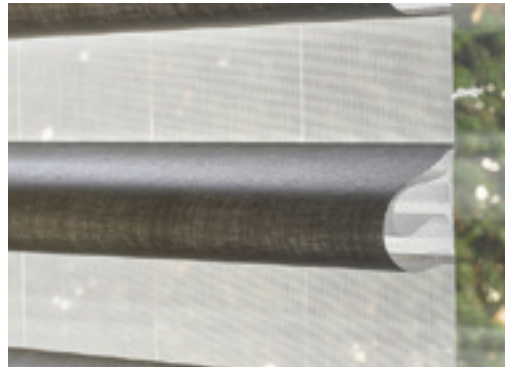


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Bishop's Stortford Independent

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Father's fundraising plea after rugby son, 31, collapses and dies

Max Oliver suffered a suspected cardiac arrest on his train to work

Chris Carter
chris.carter@stortfordindependent.co.uk

The devastated father of a Bishop's Stortford rugby player who died suddenly from a suspected cardiac arrest is appealing for help to raise money for a local heart screening programme.

Max Oliver collapsed on a train between Newbury and Reading on his way to work last Thursday (Sept 5). Despite efforts by an off-duty police officer and paramedics, he was pronounced dead when they got him to hospital. He was 31.

An online appeal for charity CRY (Cardiac Risk in the Young) has raised almost £25,000 in four days.

Max, a former pupil of Bentfield Primary School in Stansfeld and Bishop's Stortford High School, moved to Berkhamstead around two years ago to set up home with fiancée Molly. He worked in sales for international events and conferences company The Hive Group near Puddington.

His father Perry revealed that while Max had described how his heart sometimes "thitters" and he had had "episodes" after moving to Newbury.

"While we were away on holiday in month ago he took himself to A&E and they had him on an ECG (electrocardiogram) but said there was nothing seriously wrong," Perry told the *Index* on Monday. "A specialist checked him out and said 'Max may be it was stress related'."

A post-mortem to determine the

cause of Max's death will be held on Friday.

Perry described his son as a "go large and go home" character who loved a drink. He also loved dogs; he and Molly had just taken on a rescue pug called Gigi.

On leaving school "shy and retiring" Max started working in Bishop's Stortford and found his niche in the job and was successful at it.

"Whether you were a lord or a lady he could find a way of making you feel comfortable," said Perry. "Max lit up a room when he entered."

Sports mad Max made a huge impression at Bishop's Stortford rugby club after joining at 12.

Perry, a former president and chairman of the club at Silver Leys, said: "He played football, cricket and rugby and he was pretty useless really. But one thing I will say for him players took a shine to Max and loved him for what he was."

Eventually Max was made captain of the club's fourth XV, the Chalfents, which was a tribute to his leadership qualities, Perry said. "He knew how to build a team - he proved that at work and on the rugby field."

A minute's applause for Max was held before Stortford's National League 1 season-opening match against Leicestershire Lions on Saturday, which they won 26-12. Perry, Max's mother Liz and younger brother Ted, 27, were among the crowd of 400.

Perry used all his experience as a Met police officer for 30 years to help



Max Oliver, centre, with his family - from left, younger brother Ted with his girlfriend Kezia, mum Liz, dad Perry and fiancée Molly, holding their rescue pug Gigi. "A very happy day!" said Perry.

on Friday by Max's friend Spencer Kersey in aid of the charity CRY (Cardiac Risk in the Young).

to face them," he said. The love and support from everyone at the rugby club and beyond is illustrated by a flood of comments on a Just Giving page set up

▶ continued on page 3

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AROUND THE CLUB: DEE COMPTON



Dee Compton **BSRFC Honorary Club** **Secretary**

The RFU provides guidance on a rugby club's Honorary Secretary role. The RFU list the following:

1. Manage and maintain record keeping
2. Lead meeting organisation
3. Maintain communication between other bodies

Dee does all these roles at the club and lots more. Dee has just commenced her fourth year as club Honorary Secretary and if the latest club AGM voting was anything to go by Dee will be doing the role for a lot more years.

Dee put herself forward for Honorary Secretary when the role was advertised due to the sad passing of our previous Honorary Secretary, Janice Brook. Dee was voted into the role at the 2021 AGM despite being absent herself receiving stem cell treatment in Mexico. It was obviously not an arduous interview process and Dee has proved she was a good choice for the role.

Dee says she really enjoys the role working alongside the many "characters" at the club, who create one big happy rugby family. Dee has established a reputation for getting things done and can generally keep everybody in line at the club. Nobody wants to get in Dee's "little black book"!

Dee considers that the day to day running of the club has started to get more efficient. Something she believes is needed with its continuing growth to include the 1st XV playing in the third tier of English rugby, its many different age-groups, senior men and of course the ever-increasing popularity of our women/girls' teams.

Dee has been assisting Geoff

Pedersen improve the club's admin and IT systems, between them "dragging" the club into the 21st century. A process not whole heartedly accepted by the some of the older club members but Dee is confident that the changes will be seen as necessary improvements eventually by all members.

Dee was recently awarded the RFU and Honda Volunteer of the year "Unsung Hero" award, now it was only a plaque and not a new Honda car, but Dee's recognition was well deserved. You may have seen a photo of a smiling Dee receiving the award on the club's social media accounts.

Dee is pleased to be going into the new rugby season, work in the "out of season" months and during the pre-season build-up is extremely busy, the secretary role is generally not quite as busy once the season starts. Dee hopes that a reformed Austin Pope who has recently managed to avoid any on-the-field disciplinary issues will continue behaving well and greatly reduce Dee's correspondence with the RFU about him.... Austin, she loves you really!





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MATCH DAY EXPERIENCE

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 **Tom Coleman** along with Club captain **Will Rodgers** 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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(when there is a 1st XV home match)
12pm - 3pm

Sundays 9am - 1pm

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