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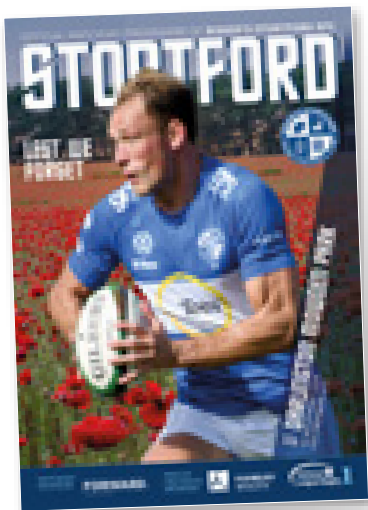
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# FROM THE PRESIDENT: AL JONES



Our Armed Forces lunch returns for a second year. Last year's inaugural edition was a tremendous day, both on and off the park, and it is great to see what will hopefully become a tradition at the Club continue.

Geoff Pedersen and Dee Compton have worked tirelessly to arrange today's festivities and I, and the Club, are extremely grateful for all they have done.

Geoff joins me for lunch today, along with Dave Walker, who as Club disciplinary officer will keep us all in check in the Hilton Marquee – assuming he is forgiven for forgetting today is his lovely wife Rachel's birthday! JBR will also be delivering today's pre-lunch grace.

I am also delighted to welcome Doug Littlejohns to speak at lunch. Doug was a Commodore in the British Royal Navy, with a distinguished 30-year career that included four command tours.

We welcome all our veteran guests to the Club this afternoon and hope you have a wonderful day.

Darlington Mowden Park are our opponents this afternoon. DMP have not had the start to their season that they would have wanted, or that we would have expected, but they had a good win over Leicester Lions last week and have always been a challenging opponent for us. Despite our recent strong performances which have seen us perform well and take points from the top four teams in the league, we will need to be at our best this afternoon.

As ever, we are delighted to welcome our sponsors to Silver Leys today.

Nockolds joins us once again, Seneca Reid and Harlow Agricultural Merchants are also

joining us for the day. Their support is greatly appreciated.

Forward Finance are today's Match Day Sponsors, and our 1st XV have had a particularly strong record when Rob and co are in attendance - I hope today is no exception.

Hanbury Wealth are our Man of the Match sponsors, and I would like to especially thank them, along with Ace of Lanes/Three Willows for donating a couple of places on their tables to host some of our veteran guests today. Finally, Belcom have very generously donated their entire lunch table today to our veterans.

Last weekend, on Remembrance Sunday, it was the opportunity for our Mini and Youth players to pay their respects. It has long been a tradition of the Club to bring all the mini and youth players, and any visiting Clubs who we are playing, together to observe the two minutes silence in unison. This was observed in exemplary fashion, and I would like to thank one of our former Colts, JP Dunphy, who returned from university to play 'The Last Post' for us once again.

Have a great day everyone, and I will see you pitch side.

*Al*





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# TOM COLEMAN: HEAD COACH



Good afternoon everyone and welcome back to Silver Leys for today's game with Darlington Mowden Park.

Reviewing the first block of fixtures, I think it's fair to say we have very mixed emotions with what we've done so far. I have no doubt that we have improved many aspects of our game and I can only thank my coaches for the time and effort they have put in to making that happen. It's been clear to see that we can compete with the best teams in this league however, we don't want to just compete and it's time we delivered the wins that we are all hoping for. I don't accept people telling me that we were 'unlucky' and I look at it differently to that. The players understand that isn't an excuse to fall back on and we have ourselves to blame due to the amount of individual errors we have made. I'm absolutely positive that we aren't far away from clicking and I have no doubt the ability is there within the group.

Friday night was a new experience for most of us at Rosslyn Park and something that is becoming more and more popular within the game. I'd like to thank all the players and staff for their commitment to making that happen, but especially the faithful supporters who braved the city traffic to come and support the team. It was

a proper game of rugby which was played at a ferocious tempo and physicality. The players put a lot of effort into that game and I was pleased with many aspects of our play. But again we paid the price for some silly mistakes and had to settle for a losing bonus point.

Today sees us welcome Darlington who will be disappointed with how they have started the season. It just shows how unforgiving this league can be as we know they have a good team who are well coached by Gary and his staff. I was not surprised at all to see them beat Leicester Lions last weekend and it will mean they arrive here with a lot more confidence! We take every team incredibly seriously and will pay them respect, but ultimately it will come down to us and how well we can execute our game plan.

It's also great to see the Blues back in action with a trip to St Albans to face our old foes Old Albanians.

Lastly, I would like to thank all of our sponsors and supporters for sticking by the team and making each match day a positive experience. Let's hear you all today give the players that extra boost to hopefully secure victory.

Enjoy the game.

*Tom*



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



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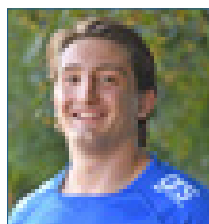
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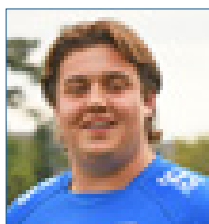
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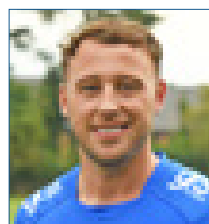
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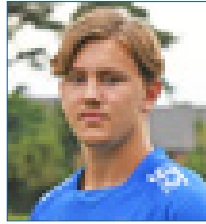




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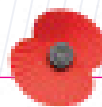
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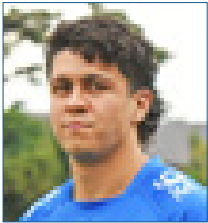
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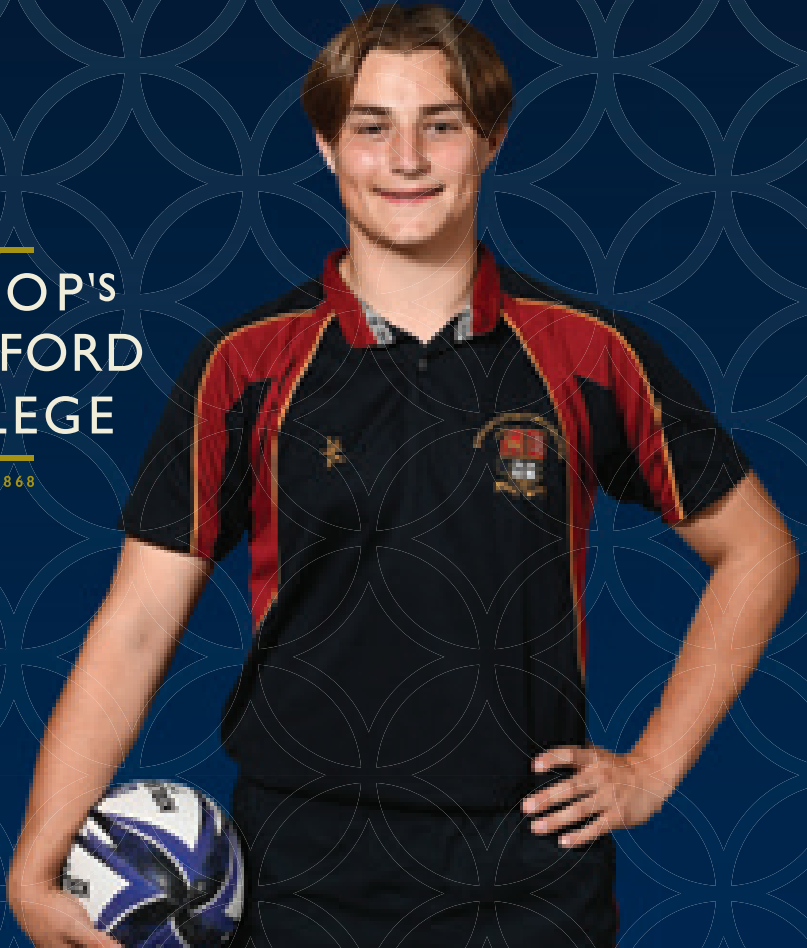
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## CONCUSSIONS

Despite the amazing results of the RFU's new laws to reduce head injuries in the sport through tackle height initiatives, there has inevitably already been some head knocks this season among our younger players. In light of this, BSRFC youth and mini sections are proud to be early adopters of the Return2Play concussion service for sports clubs and schools. Although this innovative product has been around helping schools for some time, it is still relatively new within the grass roots club rugby scene.

For a very small fee absorbed by membership fees, anyone getting a head knock can access a medical professional for an online video assessment. The player and parent will be advised whether or not the player has sustained a concussion and advise next steps in line with the RFU's Return to Play protocol. Even if the knock happened elsewhere - at school, at home, or even playing a different sport - this service can be accessed by players.

The results of the assessment are recorded and put on a database for other clubs and institutions to access and follow the protocols to ensure that player does not return too early or does not unnecessarily miss out on playing. The seriousness of getting a second head knock soon after a concussion can be devastating, so anything that can help reduce injury and issues in later life is more than welcome and will save our wonderful game. We have our amazing first aid team to thank for helping us set this up.

## RESPECT BARRIERS

Well what a difference the pitch 2 barriers have made! You know the drill, every Sunday the assistant referees spend most the time telling spectators to stand back from the touchline, ad nauseum in fact, but now thanks to the new barriers, they can concentrate on officiating.

One of my first objectives among the youth section was to help our amazing refereeing team keep control of matches, discipline was waning and there was a definite lack of respect bubbling under the surface. A lot of this I believe was the proximity of spectators to the pitch, it creates an environment which inevitably leads to people encroaching onto the playing area, for which we have zero tolerance. We've heard horror stories, some very local to BS, of parents and coaches running onto the pitch to involve themselves in a bust-up between two youngsters, a substantial pitch side barrier makes people think twice about encroaching and has worked beautifully so far.

Another question I asked many of our coaching teams was about selecting the right captains in order to help maintain a respectful attitude. Non captains talking to the ref and questioning their decisions is a part of the modern game I really don't enjoy, so a calm captain (old head on young shoulders type) can really boost a team's discipline on match day. Refs are human, and as much as they would never admit it I'm sure, a 50:50 decision will always go against the 'gobby' team.

Thank you again to our sponsors and coaching, refs and first aid teams, the club is a model of community sports that we should all be rightly proud of.





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# TODAY'S OPPONENTS

## DARLINGTON MOWDEN PARK RFC



Today's opponents began life in 1950 when they were founded as Darlington

Grammar School Old Boys. In 1970/1971 the Old Boys, with growing numbers of players and supporters, decided to buy land and build their own clubhouse and pitches in Mowden. It therefore seemed appropriate, not least because the club was no longer an 'Old Boys Club', to change its name to Mowden Park RFC. In more recent years they were given permission to restore the 'Darlington'.

In late 2012 they sold that ground at Yiewley Drive to a housing developer and with the proceeds opportunely bought the empty Darlington Arena. The Club played its first game at the Arena in March 2013. They achieved promotion from National Two North to National One in 2013/2014.

The Darlington Arena had originally been built and opened for Darlington FC in 2003 by the Darlington FC's chairman and late local colourful business personality, George Reynolds, who eventually went to jail for money laundering.

Our record against them in National One does not make happy reading for us! After drawing (22-22) in our first ever meeting here in November 2017 we then lost the other seven times we met them in National One. However, we did manage to finish higher in the league table than them last season and in the curtailed 2019/2020 season. In 2022/2023 we narrowly managed to do the double against Darlington for the first time. Stortford won 24-25 at Darlington in September and 12-10 at home in January. Stortford once again finished higher in the league with Stortford sixth and Darlington tenth.

Last season we won against them 13-6 in December at home but lost 17-13 at Darlington in April. Darlington finished seventh in National One with twelve wins and 67 league points, Stortford were eleventh with ten wins and 56 league points.

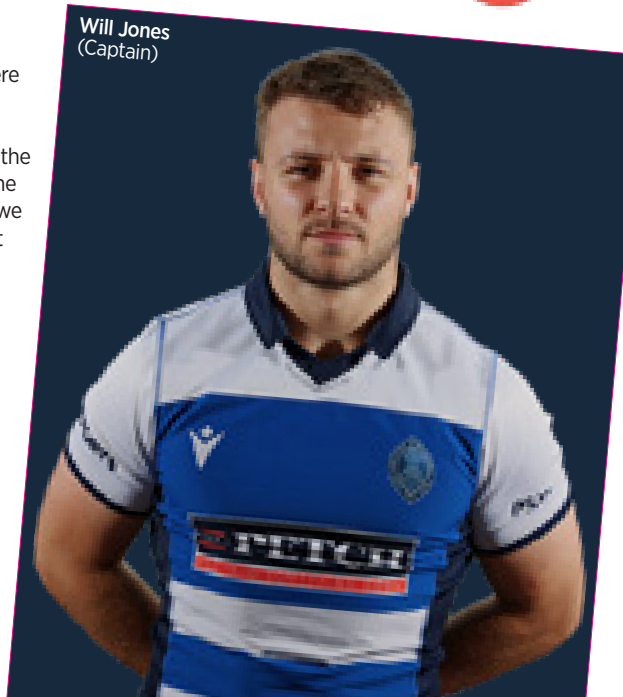
Famous rugby names to have worn the DMP shirt include Toby Flood, Alex Tait, Craig Newby, Phil Dowson and Tim Visser.

They have two regular Senior Men's XV's (1sts) and the Elizabethans (2nds) plus an 'occasional' Vets team. Their Women's XV, The Sharks, play in the Tyrrells Premier 15's aka the Women's Premiership. They also have a successful Mini & Youth section including three girl's rugby sides named the Stingrays U18, the Barracudas U16 and the Piranhas U14, an apt player growth path to the Sharks.

A note for any railway enthusiasts is that next year will the bicentenary of the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway which had been opened in 1825 to take coal from the mines in Darlington to the docks in Stockton. It was built by George Stephenson, arguably the most famous "Geordie" who went on to build the Liverpool and Manchester Railway which opened in 1830 and was the first general purpose railway in the world (passengers and goods), the forerunner of all future railways.



Will Jones  
(Captain)





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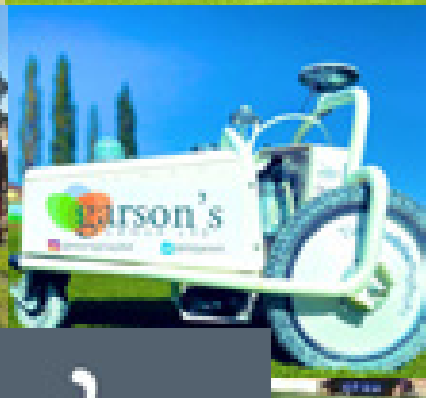
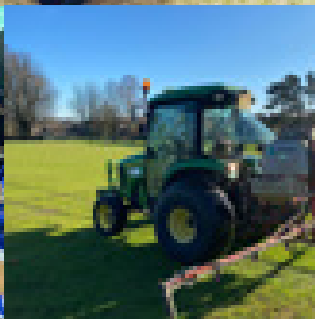
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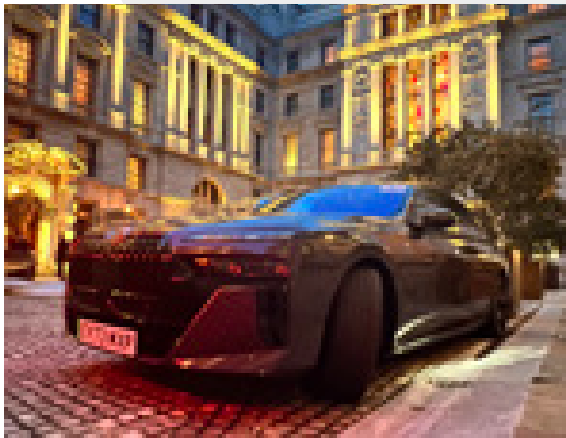
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# WOMEN & GIRLS: CHLOE CAPP



## BSRFC Women 49 Datchworth Ferns 7

This week, Bishop's Stortford Women's XV welcomed

Datchworth Ferns to Silver Leys for their second played fixture in the Women's NC3 Midlands (East) league. Before kick-off, both the host and visitors paid their respects and lined up for a minute's silence for Remembrance Sunday.

The game started off strong, with a great catch by the Stortford side, who ran the ball down with quick hands straight into Datchworth territory. A pass from the back of a breakdown landed into the hands of captain Jasmin Bice, who touched the ball down under the posts. This was followed by the first conversion of the game by fly-half Rebekah Coppen.

Shortly after the restart, a gap in the Blues' defence allowed Datchworth's fullback to break through, running the full length of the pitch and scoring their first and only try of the match to equalise the score.

Handling errors from both sides saw both teams' packs enter into countless scrums. Datchworth were able to gain possession once again and seemed poised for another try, but full-back Harriet Creasy made an exceptional tackle into touch, resulting in a Stortford lineout.

With strong passes and big hits from players including Lorell Jordan and Sally Howell, the Stortford side dominated and were able to get within the opposition's 22m. Quick thinking from number 8, Keira Chadburn - who picked the ball from the back of the scrum - resulted in the home team's second try. Converted by Coppen, the scoreboard read 14-7.

At the restart, the Datchworth kick landed straight into the hands of scrum-half Donna McDonald, who was able to break through multiple players before popping a pass to flanker Sarah Harvey, for another converted Stortford try.

Unfortunately for Datchworth, the next restart went much the same way - allowing the blue back line to show off their handling skills and push the ball wide to winger Georgia Butler. Her speed and footwork put the opposition's defence under pressure as she ran down the pitch to score under the posts. Converted by Coppen once again, the score was 28-7.

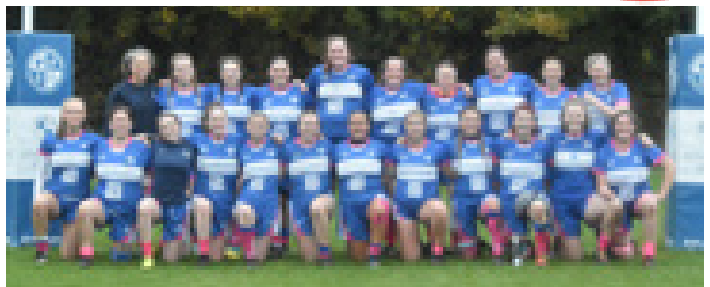
Both teams made substitutions at halftime, bringing fresh energy to the field. This was evident with a quick try from the hosting team, with Coppen converting her own try. A Datchworth scrum within their own 22m resulted in a turnover ball into blue possession, leading McDonald to score the sixth converted try of the match.

Showing no signs of slowing down, Bishop's Stortford utilised their strong forwards in a series of physical challenges. Eventually, the ball made its way down the line into the steady hands and fast feet of Chadburn, who was able to hop through Datchworth's tiring defensive line to make several metres. With her eyes on another Datchworth gap, Harvey received the ball from McDonald to score the final try of the game, once again converted by Coppen, before the fulltime whistle.

A shoutout to Carley Day and Lorell Jordan who returned to the pitch following long-term injuries, and to Ria Lee who donned a Stortford jersey for the first time.

Forward of the match: Sally Howell.

If you wish to become involved or for any further information. Please contact **Kate Hawkins** at **[ladieschair@bsrfc.co.uk](mailto:ladieschair@bsrfc.co.uk)**



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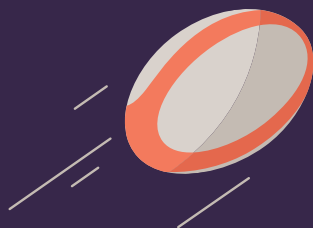
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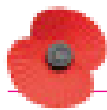


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# NATIONAL 1: RESULTS, FIXTURES, TABLE

## Results from 9th November 2024

HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM
Richmond	42 - 14	Birmingham Moseley
<b>Rosslyn Park</b>	<b>18 - 15</b>	<b>Bishop's Stortford</b>
Blackheath	31 - 27	Sale FC
Darlington Mowden Park	36 - 29	Leicester Lions
Esher	51 - 32	Ding Crusaders
Rams	40 - 22	Sedgley Park
Rotherham	18 - 27	Plymouth Albion

## Fixtures for 16th November 2024

HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM
Birmingham Moseley	vs	Rosslyn Park
<b>Bishop's Stortford</b>	<b>vs</b>	<b>Darlington Mowden Park</b>
Ding Crusaders	vs	Sale FC
Leicester Lion	vs	Esher
Plymouth Albion	vs	Richmond
Rams	vs	Blackheath
Sedgley Park	vs	Rotherham

NATIONAL LEAGUE 1 TABLE											
Team	P	W	D	L	PF	PA	PD	TBP	LBP	Points	Adj.
Rams	9	9	0	0	310	152	158	7	0	43	0
Richmond	9	8	1	0	342	178	164	7	0	41	0
Rotherham	9	7	0	2	302	206	96	5	1	34	0
Blackheath	9	6	0	3	284	212	72	6	1	31	0
Rosslyn Park	9	6	0	3	315	201	114	5	1	30	0
Sale FC	9	5	0	4	213	244	-31	4	2	26	0
Plymouth Albion	9	4	0	5	242	234	8	6	3	25	0
Birmingham Moseley	9	5	0	4	207	211	-4	4	0	24	0
Dings	9	3	1	5	274	332	-58	6	0	20	0
<b>Bishop's Stortford</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>-31</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>
Sedgley Park	9	2	0	7	242	254	-12	3	3	14	0
Esher	9	2	0	7	241	388	-147	5	0	13	0
Leicester Lions	9	1	0	8	181	322	-141	4	2	10	0
<b>Darlington Mowden Park</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>-188</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>



# BISHOP'S STORTFORD

BLUE AND WHITE



- 1 Tristan Smith
  - 2 Isaac Bell
  - 3 Toby Hill
  - 4 Hamish Ferguson
  - 5 Frazier Kiff
  - 6 Harrison Langworthy
  - 7 Ollie Jones
  - 8 Will Rogers (c)
  - 9 Chris Bolton
  - 10 Dan Powell
  - 11 Alex Gilham
  - 12 Austin Pope
  - 13 Jack Biard
  - 14 Tom Mills
  - 15 David Hayes
- REPLACEMENTS
- 16 Josh Olver
  - 17 Josh Cilia
  - 18 Sam Johnson
  - 19 Charlie Reynolds-West
  - 20 Josh Stannard

**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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**2** Max Fraine

**3** Eoin Harrison

**4** Louie Peacock

**5** Oscar Usher

**6** Marcus Tiffin

**7** Joe Craggs (c)

**8** Yaree Fantini

**9** Ben Douglas

**10** Junior Newton

**11** Liam Checksfield

**12** Callum Mackenzie

**13** Olly Walker

**14** Orisi Katalau

**15** Josh Ree

## REPLACEMENTS

**16** Sam Kyle-Clay

**17** Sam Turnill

**18** Ruben Parsons

**19** Will Jones

**20** Harry Read

### Head Coach:

Garry Law

### Forwards Coach:

Joe Cain

### Team Manager:

Gus Miller

### Assistant Team Manager:

Rowan Willans

### Physio:

Amy Coleman

### REFEREE:

**Matt Sharpe**

### ASSISTANT REFEREE 1:

**Steven Randall**

### ASSISTANT REFEREE 2:

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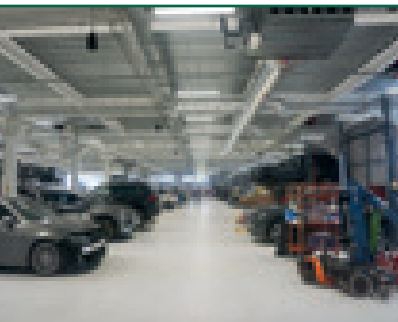
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# MATCH REPORT: JOHN ALLANSON



## Rosslyn Park 18 Bishop's Stortford 1st XV 15

Stortford started aggressively and soon had Rosslyn Park on the back foot, swinging the ball around at high speed to great effect. Strong Park defence and crucial Stortford errors, however, combined to keep the scoreboard blank until the 11th minute, when the visitors stretched the opposition with a number of phases of quick ball, creating a two on one that allowed Jack Biard to throw a dummy and crash over in the corner for an unconverted try. Park got straight onto the front foot from the restart and took 3 points from a breakdown penalty under the posts and Stortford proceeded to get on the wrong side of the referee, conceding a number of penalties, as the home side exerted a period of pressure. This culminated in a tackle from Will Rogers in the red zone deemed to have been high and resulting in a yellow card for the skipper after 20 minutes. Stout defence from Stortford allowed them to see out the sin-bin period without conceding and, aided by a couple of Park handling errors, almost got to the break in the lead. This was despite having lost flyhalf, Dan Powell to a foot injury, necessitating a reshuffle of the whole backline. However, another penalty awarded against the visitors at a breakdown, as they drove out of defence brought a 5m lineout to the home side. Although the resultant maul was initially well-defended, winger, Benji Marfo, who had added his weight to the drive, broke off the back, as it crossed the line to score a try to give his side a 3 point lead at halftime.

Whether shaken by this late change of fortune, or simply cold out of the changing room, Stortford started the second period meekly, conceding a soft early penalty for a lazy, rather than dangerous high tackle on halfway, which took the opposition into their 22. This led to a torrid 25 minutes for the visitors, as a combination of loose kicking and a series of further penalties gave the opposition chance after chance to attack. Superb as the

visitors' defence was, if you give a running side like Rosslyn Park so many opportunities, they will eventually make one count and, in this case, the one turned into two, as they took full advantage of two 5 metre lineouts from penalties to add two more mauled tries after 59 and 63 minutes. These came, despite more ferocious Stortford defence, as Park threw wave after wave of hard-running attacks at them. At this stage, it looked as if the inevitably tiring Stortford defence might be overrun, but, in typical Stortford fashion, they fought back and, on 70 minutes registered their second try through Chris Bolton, after an initial break by Charlie Briers had been taken on powerfully almost to the line by Tom Mills. David Hayes' conversion attempt from out wide fell just short. The momentum was now, suddenly, with Stortford and they put together another incisive handling move, with Pope and Biard making telling inroads to set Mills free to score Stortford's 3rd try with 4 minutes left. The conversion attempt, which would have narrowed the deficit to 1 point, unfortunately went wide in the haste to get the game restarted. The pressure was now very much on the home side, but they managed to resist some frantic attacking play and their relief at holding on to the ball for the last minute to end the game by hoofing it into touch was palpable.

Overall, another fighting Stortford performance against a top side, bringing home another bonus point but the overriding feeling at the end was of another win that slipped through the hands.



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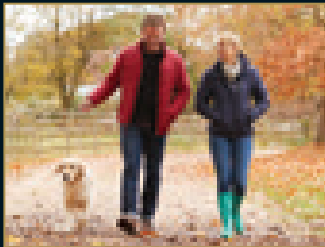
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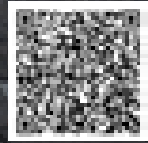
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# IN THE SPOTLIGHT: CHRIS SMITH



At six foot five inches tall, it is hard to miss Chris Smith playing on the wing for Stortford. He has played games in all the Club's

National One seasons since joining Stortford when they were promoted in the 2017/18 season. Andy Long decided Chris was a winger whereas Chris thought he was a centre, Chris' career at Stortford of course proves that Andy Long was right!

Chris is now well past the 100 appearances mark for the club, he has played both left wing (number 11) and right wing (number 14). Chris' preference is left wing, other players prefer right-wing because it's easier to pass back inside to support after taking box kicks on the right-hand side of the field. Chris has no problem with left wing however, he has no "kicking licence" from Tom Coleman, therefore he's not normally trusted to make return kicks. The accepted tactic is to find a supporting player, get in a position to support a counterattack move where Chris' open field running ability is an advantage for the side. The typical older Stortford supporter has no appreciation of the subtleties of modern wing three-quarter play where the winger these days is far more likely to get the ball from an opposition box kick than a pass from his own centre three-quarter.

Chris gets extra defensive work when a front row is yellow carded, a winger usually must go off for the replacement front row to come on, it's usually Chris who stays on as he can also do a reasonable job helping in the back row of Stortford scrum feeds, the yellow carded front row gets a rest whilst Chris runs around a lot more. This extra running has been conclusively proved by match GPS stats.

Effectively Chris has had two rugby careers, one playing 15 aside for Stortford and one playing international Sevens for Ireland and Wales. He's made more Sevens appearances for Wales than Ireland and attended tournaments for Wales in Singapore, Los Angeles, Vancouver, and Cape Town. He finished his Sevens career by representing Wales in the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham during 2022.

International Sevens tournaments are not the only international connections Chris has made through rugby at Stortford. He was "adopted" by the two Australian players Dan Elsom and Rob Duff while they were playing and staying in Stortford. The Australian version of the "adoption" was that Dan and Rob had to take him under their wing, Chris doubts that two "Wild Colonial Boys" would have been able to find such great accommodation without his help. He has great memories of his time sharing the apartment with them. Chris flew to Australia as an honoured guest at Dan's wedding in Sydney in August 2024 when the flat mates plus Baxter Wilson were all reunited.

It is always reassuring for the Stortford supporter to see Chris striding out with ball in hand and powering down the field to the opposition tryline. His style is much more George North than Keith Fielding or Rory Underwood who of course has played Sevens for Wales.

Together with over 100 1st team appearances for Stortford, he has scored 51 tries. Chris is sponsored again this season by Forward Corporate Finance and very much appreciates their ongoing support.



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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;

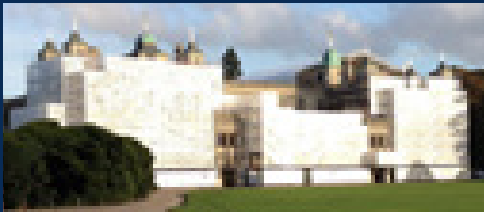
- **To ensure BSRFC continues our journey in National 1s League Rugby – this includes the 1st & Blues as one squad**
- **To cultivate new homegrown talent throughout the club drawing from the - minis - youth - colts - development squad.**



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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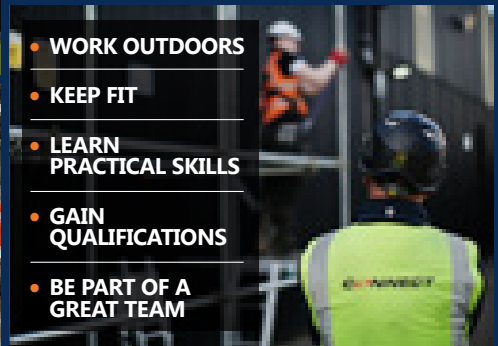


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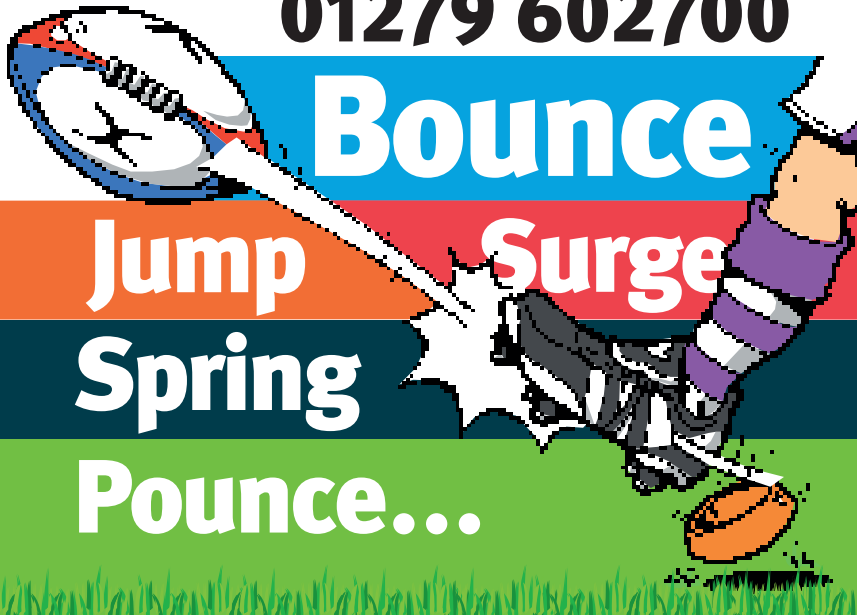
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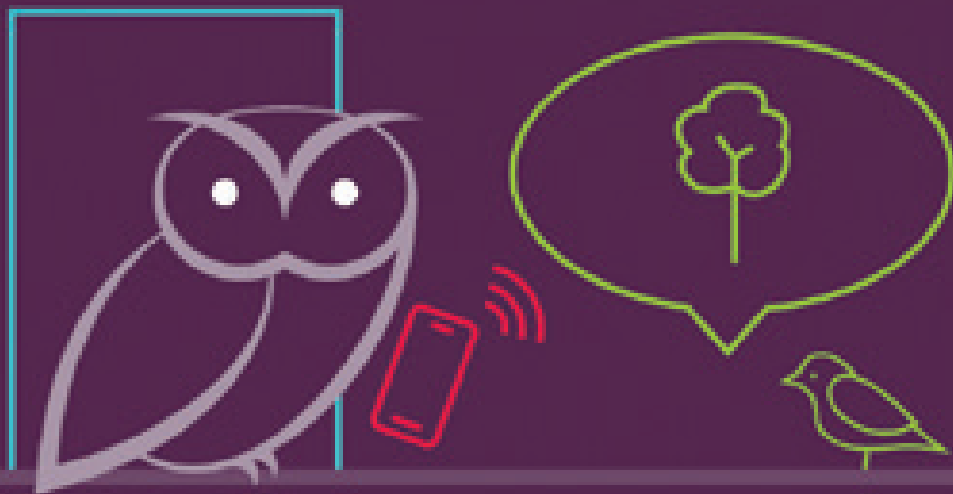
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**'To contribute towards promoting the highest possible standard of rugby throughout Bishop's Stortford Rugby Football Club'**

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**



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# CARDIAC RISK IN THE YOUNG



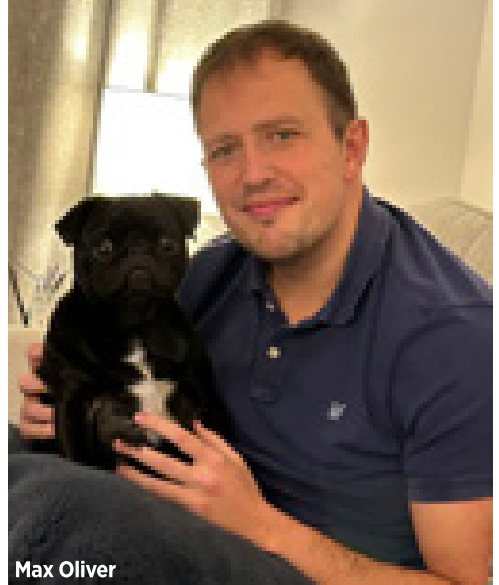
18 months ago, my family suffered a terrible loss when my brother-in-law died as a result of a Sudden Cardiac Arrest. He was 49 years old.

At the start of this season, our Rugby Club family lost our friend and teammate **Max Oliver**, again to a Sudden Cardiac Arrest, at just 31 years of age.



The Oliver family wanted to try and make something positive happen from their unimaginable loss and, with the help of Max's friend Spencer Kersey, set up a JustGiving page to raise money for **Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY)**.

Every week in the UK at least 12 young people die of undiagnosed heart conditions. Since its formation in 1995, CRY has been working to reduce the frequency of young sudden cardiac death (YSCD). CRY supports young people diagnosed with potentially life-threatening cardiac conditions and offers bereavement support to families affected by YSCD.



Max Oliver

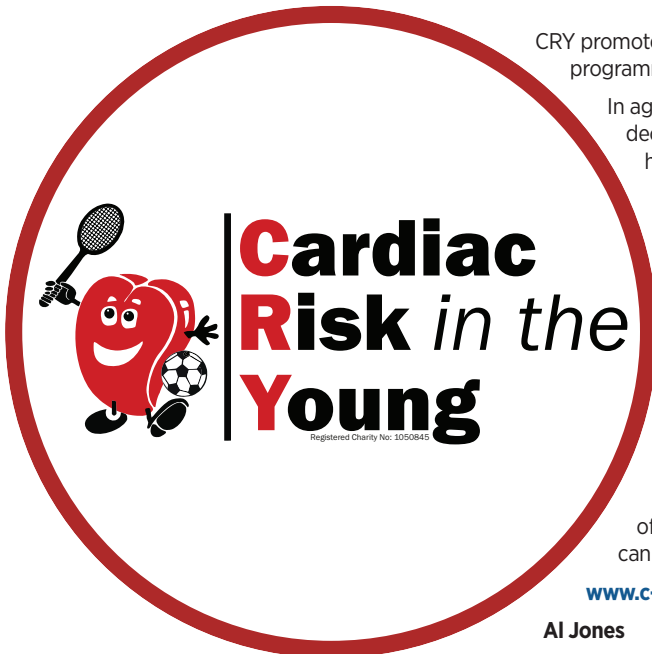
CRY promotes and develops heart screening programmes and funds medical research.

In agreement with the family, I decided to join with them and have the Memorial Fund for Max with Cardiac Risk in the Young as my President's Charity for 2024-25.

Within 2 months, £41,000 has been raised in Max's memory. If we can achieve £70,000, this would be sufficient to fund cardiac screening for 1000 young people. We hope that a number of the screenings would take place here at Silver Leys and as many of our young members as possible can benefit from the screening.

[www.c-r-y.org.uk](http://www.c-r-y.org.uk)

Al Jones



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# OFF THE PITCH: RICHARD EVANS



## Thoughts on Rugby and Remembrance

The UK's Armed Forces have a long connection with rugby football. The Army

Rugby Union was founded way back in 1906 and was followed a year later by the Royal Navy – although the first official game between the two sides was even further back in 1878! The Royal Airforce joined the fold after its formation in 1918 (Dave Walker has suggested the RAF is always late to the party!)

It is not simply the participation of military personnel in rugby that connects the sport and Remembrance Day. I would argue it is the element of ritual and tradition at the start of a rugby game that further supports this connection. A sporting event is a communal activity and the start of many such events is used to commemorate and pay respect to past players and show support for the victims of any number of natural or man-made catastrophes, including wars and conflict.

This particularly applies in rugby where the rituals at the start of international rugby matches are so widely known. Nobody would dream of starting an International Six Nations rugby match without the national anthems of the participating sides, with the players lining up on the pitch before the kick-off. (Perhaps after last weekend there are a few English supporters who are less enthused by the haka but it does further add to the pre-match rituals for NZ – England games).

These traditional pre-match formats provide the basis for the Remembrance rituals to be held before the start of a rugby match. In the case of a club rugby game for Remembrance the anthems are replaced by “The Last Post”

played by a trumpeter, itself followed by the two-minute’s silence in which we all – players, officials and spectators – reflect on the sacrifices made in the name of freedom by generations of service personnel, and consider the struggles of those who live on, injured in body or mind.

It is also interesting now how pitches can now be prepared with red poppies “painted” on the field and the digital advertising displays at major grounds can also show simulations of falling poppies to enhance the occasion.

The start of a rugby game is also really the only suitable time to hold the ceremony with spectators and players having time to pause and think before the action starts. It is also likely to be the only time everybody is universally in agreement with the ref blowing his whistle, as he uses it to start and stop the two-minute’s silence.

In certain areas of the country the following of rugby is regarded as a religion, so adding a short remembrance ceremony fits the ritualistic nature of the game. Of course, people can attend their own town’s Remembrance services but adding the service to a rugby match helps to increase attendance numbers around the country and combines attending a sporting event with the act of remembrance itself.

Today’s game will be the second formal Remembrance match at Bishop’s Stortford RFC, and long may this tradition now continue.



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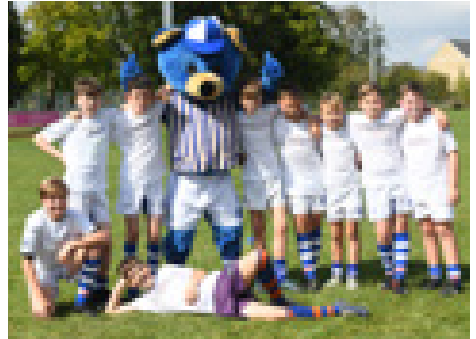
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# MATCH DAY EXPERIENCE

## 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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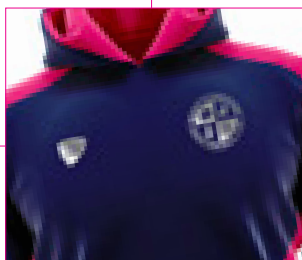
Wednesdays 7pm - 9pm

Saturdays  
(when there is a 1st XV home match)  
12pm - 3pm

Sundays 9am - 1pm

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