

OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME OF BISHOP'S STORTFORD RFC

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT: AL JONES



Without trying to sound too much like Shakin' Stevens, Merry Christmas everyone.

Today marks the halfway point in the season for our home fixtures, and after a good performance against DMP at home 3 weeks ago, and what Tom described as our "best performance of the season" on the road at Esher last time out, hopefully the guys will give us an early Christmas treat today.

We welcome Sale FC to Silver Leys again this afternoon. We currently sit a couple of places above Sale in the table, but with only a single point between us. They were, perhaps surprisingly, beaten at home a fortnight ago by Leicester Lions in a very tight game, and will be keen to bounce back today. It's certain to be another tough encounter.

The last home game of the year seems an ideal time to thank all of our sponsors for their support throughout 2024 and, as ever, we are delighted to welcome our sponsors to the Hilton Marquee for lunch today.

Our Match Day Sponsors are Tees, our principal sponsor of the Club, and today's Man of the Match sponsors are long time sponsors and supporters of the Club, BIT Solutions.

We are also joined by the ever-present Ace of Lanes & Three Willows and the almost ever-present Nockolds, along with Steel Builders/Uplands Landscaping.

Finally, we welcome Russell Property, who have once again very kindly donated a bottle of fizz to each table for today's pre match lunch - thank you Dominic and the Russell Property Team.

Although this is the last 1st XV home match before Christmas, there's plenty more Rugby and activity at the Club between now and the end 2024.

Our Women's team have their first ever Saturday match next week and

are holding a pre-match lunch of their own. It is a wonderful moment for our Women's team and it's great to see the support they are receiving from across the Club, and how far the squad has progressed in the last 8 years. If you are not making the trip down to Dings next week, I would encourage you to come along and watch.

The evening before the 1st XV and Blues travel to Blackheath on 21st December, we once again host Santa to Silver Leys as the end of the 'Barringtons Jingle Bells Sleigh Ride' which raises money annually for St Clare and Isabel Hospice. Do come along with your little ones.

I hope you all have a great day today. Post match our very own Disco Dave will be in the bar providing the music for a bit of a Christmas party.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, and look forward to welcoming you back for the match against Birmingham Moseley, 11th January 2025.

*Al*





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# TOM COLEMAN: HEAD COACH



Good afternoon everyone and welcome back to Silver Leys for our last home game of the calendar year.

Since my last notes, we've had a couple of victories back-to-back - something we hadn't managed to do this season - and whilst there is still plenty to work on, I was extremely proud of the players in the way they dealt with those games. To be ready to compete with the top teams is not difficult, but with respect to Darlington and Esher, we are the favourites for those games and that can change a player's mindset quite easily. Our job is to ensure the players maintain their focus and I was particularly delighted with the way we beat Esher in very difficult conditions.

Today's opponents Sale FC are always tough and physically difficult to deal with. History will tell you we are in for a really tough battle and the players have prepared really well all week. Having started the campaign in similar fashion, the importance of a victory for either side will

be huge today and we hope it can act as a catalyst for us to continue our upward trajectory until the end of the year. We are searching for a big improvement to our home form and it's something the players speak about often. Let's hope today is the day we see a full 80-minute performance.

I would like to this opportunity to thank all my coaches and physios for their hard work and dedication to date. I see the hours they put in every week to try and make the team successful and I'm very grateful to them and can only see us improving.

Lastly, the support we receive from so many of you as sponsors is incredibly humbling. The money, time and effort that goes into the first XV squad is incredible, and we simply could not function without you, so thank you very much from all of us involved within the squad.

Enjoy the game today.

*Tom*



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



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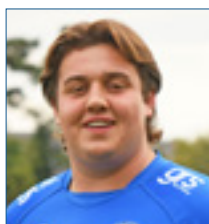
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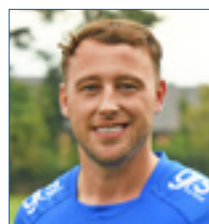
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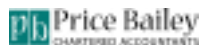
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# THROWBACK 13.04.24: BGRFC 22 SALE FC 19







## Introducing the Club Rugby Committee

'Oh what splendid news',  
I hear you cry, 'another  
committee!' - well this one is  
different, trust me.

From the proper littluns at the start of their rugby journey in the U6s right through to the gnarly, cauliflower ears of the Chindits, one thing is certain - coaches matter. What's more, brilliant coaches are the heartbeat of the club, fundamental to the club's wealth of players by helping create an enjoyable yet competitive culture which promotes progression from junior to senior squads. This helps BSRFC stand out as one of the few clubs able to send out five senior teams on a Saturday and two teams from every age group from youth on a Sunday, not to mention the few hundred minis enjoying their sport here.

But we can't rest on our laurels and the club needs to be progressive. Our sport seems to be on the wane in some local schools too, which have historically been important in bringing in players from Year 7 onwards, so a doubling-down in efforts to avoid future player number issues needed addressing now.

We have, also, in recent seasons (big shout out to Covid) relied on our coaching teams to upskill themselves; no thanks also to the dearth of official RFU coaching sessions available locally. This has in turn meant they have almost been forced into age group and squad silos, looking inwards.

Fortunately the club now has plans in place to help these coaches look outwards, to take on new ideas and practices which will in turn lead to more varied training programmes helping increase player retention all the way through



to seniors. The new Club Rugby Committee has been created by bringing together all our senior coaches alongside former 1st XV captains, to turbo-charge our coaching development offering. By sharing coaching skills and experience to all coaches will increase focus and enjoyment for all ages and breathe new life into coaching teams who have potentially been getting a bit too routine dependent.

We will be asking all of our coaches to support and take advantage of the sessions available and to tap into the wealth of experience the club can provide - never stop learning.

Player support will also form another important aspect of this offering, with a focus on retention of players and recruitment of homegrown talent into the top senior squads at the club.

By securing apprenticeships, jobs and training from local partners, players keen to stay local can also tap into this resource and continue their rugby journey at BSRFC.

### Bursary latest

Thank you to everyone who has supported the mini and youth bursary fund in its first full season.

We have players in the youth section who have greatly benefited from the fund already.

For those unfamiliar with the project, the fund helps young players whose families are struggling with the current cost of living get into the sport at BSRFC.

The bursary is also actively reaching out and helping youngsters within the care system.

We supply them with membership, kit, pocket money & travel costs for festivals and costs for away games and tours.

We are sharing today's collection money with Grove Cottage, so thank you for any donations and merry Christmas.





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# TODAY'S OPPONENTS

## SALE FC



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 rules to be followed by all players and it is believed to be the world's oldest existing rugby rule book.

The club's famous Heywood Road ground has been home to 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 and moved out of Heywood Road to plough their own furrow in 2003.

This meant Sale RFC had to restart their season of league rugby in 2003/4 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 thus being promoted into National 2 North in 2015/2016 season.

Sale RFC were National 2 North champions in 2017/2018 gaining promotion to National 1, this will be their 6th season in National 1. We have only beaten Sale three times in National 1, all at home, having not yet won in Manchester.

We have finished above them twice in National 1, 2018/2019 which was their first season in National 1 and in 2019/2020 the Covid curtailed season.

Last season we lost narrowly 8-7 at Sale in December 2023. We won even more narrowly 22-19 in the home fixture in April 2024 with a penalty in the last minutes of the game that "clearly" either went between the posts or maybe over the posts.

In the 2021/2022 season Sale won at Stortford 35-33 when the Sale kicker managed to make a freak conversion from wide out with a drop goal when the ball had fallen off the tee as he attempted the conversion kick. Those two points for the conversion ended up being the winning margin. Admittedly this was not in the last minute of the game like last season however, the rugby "kicking gods" do find ways of evening these things out in the end.

Sale finished last season tenth position in the league with eleven wins, 56 points. We eventually finished just below them in eleventh position with ten wins and the same number of points after both sides had relegation concerns at the end of the season.

Andy Hughes  
(Captain)





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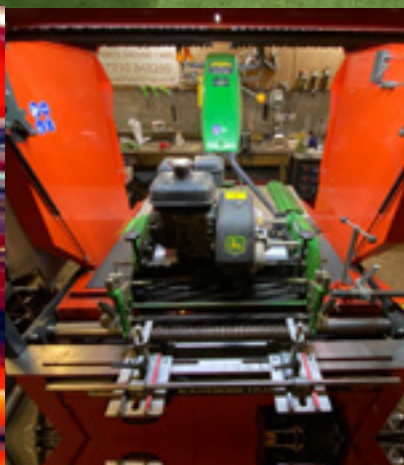
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# WOMEN & GIRLS: KATE HAWKINS



With England's Red Roses currently positioned as the number one ranked side in the world, and with a home World Cup being hosted in

this country next year, there has been a huge excitement and increased interest around women and girls' rugby. BSRFC capitalised on the momentum and played host to Red Rose (and Stortford born), LIZ CRAKE on Sunday 17TH November.



The women's game in England is already flourishing from the grassroots level through to the elite; the Red Roses are currently ranked the number one team in the world, while the participation number for women and girls have risen to over 40,000. With England hosting Rugby World Cup 2025, the aim is to reach 100k registered female players by 2027.

Noting that Liz is one of our own and with such a great opportunity to promote female only rugby, we thought why just keep the session open to just our rapidly growing womens squad so we opened the gates to any girl from mini's age to our senior squad and managed to get the message out to local primary and secondary schools along with an article in The Bishop's Stortford Independent with the help of Andy Lines, who came along on the day to cover the story. Women and girls of all abilities were encouraged to attend and gain from the benefits of some coaching from our amazing mini, youth and senior coaches along with the added benefit of Liz Crake stepping in with each section!

Luckily the weather held (albeit a tad chilly once the sun had gone down) and we welcomed over 75 girls from 6 to 17 and women of any age to discover the joys of rugby with quite a few brand-new faces to the club!

Liz was absolutely amazing on the day and impressed with how many girls there were for the "Big Event" and how the club had grown in terms of women and girls rugby and of course reminisced in the club house checking her name out on the board!



A big thank you must go out to all who made the day happen, from our youth coaches Ed Barber, Rich Cartman, Fred Chate and Bruce Penrice along with our team admins Vicky Seel & Emma Bayliss, Nikki Wilkins - Chair of Mini's who stepped in to Coach along with George Knight who arranged a session for the U7-U9 girls, Kyle McDonald and Dave Walker our senior coaches and our volunteers, Gaz Tracey - Chair of Touch who finished the girls session with a game of Touch so that all could get involved, Cristy Hawkins, Donna McDonald and Maddie Ellwood who helped set up with various much appreciated tasks. This event couldn't have happened without the support of our fabulous Club!

Let's keep the momentum going!

Kate Hawkins

If you are interested in playing, volunteering or just supporting please contact **Kate Hawkins** - Chair of Women and Girls - [ladieschair@bsrfc.co.uk](mailto:ladieschair@bsrfc.co.uk)



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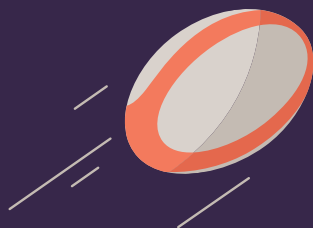
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# NATIONAL 1: RESULTS, FIXTURES, TABLE

## Results from 23rd November 2024

HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM
Blackheath	16 - 7	Ding Crusaders
<b>Esher</b>	<b>14 - 31</b>	<b>Bishop's Stortford</b>
Richmond	21 - 6	Sedgley Park
Rosslyn Park	33 - 29	Plymouth Albion
Rotherham	21 - 14	Rams
Sale FC	12 - 15	Leicester Lions
Darlington Mowden Park		Birmingham Moseley

## Fixtures for 7th December 2024

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

## NATIONAL LEAGUE 1 TABLE

Team	P	W	D	L	PF	PA	PD	TBP	LBP	Points	Adj.
Richmond	11	10	1	0	383	199	184	7	0	49	0
Rams	11	10	0	1	357	187	170	8	1	49	0
Rotherham	11	9	0	2	358	250	108	6	1	43	0
Rosslyn Park	11	7	0	4	374	257	117	7	2	37	0
Blackheath	11	7	0	4	314	252	62	6	1	35	0
Birmingham Moseley	11	7	0	4	258	244	14	5	0	33	0
<b>Bishop's Stortford</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>0</b>
Plymouth Albion	11	4	0	7	286	287	-1	7	5	28	0
<b>Sale FC</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>-50</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>
Dings	11	4	1	6	312	363	-51	7	0	25	0
Esher	11	3	0	8	291	450	-159	6	0	18	0
Sedgley Park	11	2	0	9	278	310	-32	4	4	16	0
Leicester Lions	11	2	0	9	227	370	-143	5	3	16	0
Darlington Mowden Park	11	1	0	10	202	421	-219	3	1	8	0



# BISHOP'S STORTFORD

BLUE AND WHITE

- 1 Toby Hill

---

- 2 Alex Rayment

---

- 3 Henry Peck

---

- 4 Hamish Ferguson

---

- 5 Frazier Kiff

---

- 6 Ollie Jones

---

- 7 Sam Johnson

---

- 8 Will Rogers (c)

---

- 9 Chris Bolton

---

- 10 Dan Powell

---

- 11 Alex Gilham

---

- 12 Austin Pope

---

- 13 Tom Mills

---

- 14 Josh Stannard

---

- 15 Charlie Reynolds-West

---

- REPLACEMENTS

---

- 16 Josh Oliver

---

- 17 Curtis Reynolds

---

- 18 Tom Charter

---

- 19 Charlie Briers

---

- 20 David Hayes

**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:**

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# SALE FC

## BLACK

- 1 Ben Carlile
- 2 Josh Brown
- 3 Ciaran Parker
- 4 Nick Gray
- 5 Peter Vickers
- 6 Andy Hughes (c)
- 7 Jos Gilmore
- 8 Stone Priestley-Nangle
- 9 Sean Street
- 10 Will Hunt
- 11 Tom Walsh
- 12 James Robins
- 13 Kieran Dunne
- 14 Obi Ene
- 15 Mark Dixon

### REPLACEMENTS

- 16 Alfie Longstaff
- 17 Cal Ford
- 18 Dan Birchill
- 19 Ciaran Booth
- 20 Ollie Davies

**Director of Rugby:**

Jonathan Keep

**Head Coach:**

Anthony (Tote) Howcroft

**Coaches:**

Gareth Harris, Neil Briggs

**Physiotherapist:**

Charlie Boulton

**REFEREE:**

**Tim Allatt**

**ASSISTANT REFEREE 1:**

**Nick Borkett**

**ASSISTANT REFEREE 2:**

**Brendan Fitzmaurice**

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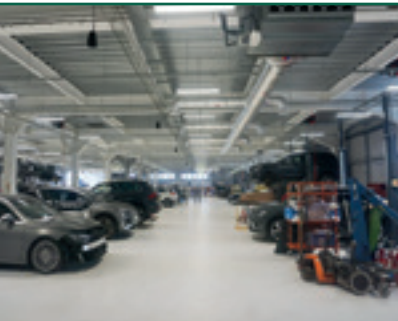
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# MATCH REPORT: JOHN ALLANSON



## Esher 14 Bishop's Stortford 1st XV 31

Starting with the strong wind at their backs, Stortford exerted early pressure and, despite the first thrust at the line being held up for a defending dropout, they were quickly back on the front foot and, recovering a partially-blocked grubber kick from Dan Powell, Tom Mills and Jack Biard combined to beat a number of defenders for the latter to crash over for an unconverted try with only 4 minutes gone. Five minutes later and it was Sam Johnson who touched down, after more direct, multi-phase rugby in the very testing conditions broke down the home defence. Tristan Smith had been injured in the build-up, but his replacement by Henry Peck did nothing to reduce his side's dominance at scrum time. With 17 minutes gone, more Stortford pressure resulted in a 3rd try, with Alex Rayment touching down at the back of a driving maul after a lineout 10 metres out. This time, Chris Bolton was able to add the conversion for a 0-17 led. Not surprisingly, in the hostile weather conditions, both sides made numerous handling errors and, with hard tackling from both, scoring opportunities were limited. Stortford continued to have the better of the exchanges, but it was only as first half time was running out, that a further converted try was scored, with David Hayes reacting first to take a quick tapped penalty from another scrum penalty 5 metres out to dodge his way over and register the four-try bonus point.

Playing into the elements in the second period – with driving rain now added to the wind in their faces – the priority for Stortford was to try and control possession. They managed to achieve this goal in an encouraging first few minutes, but a loose

defensive kick after 6 minutes, compounded when a good return kick from Esher was played on its way into touch, resulted in an attacking home lineout, which they exploited to the full to touch down close to Stortford's posts to narrow the deficit to 14 points. The visitors bounced back, though and a crucial try was scored by Chris Bolton after 52 minutes, breaking off the back of a driving maul, after Austin Pope had come close from an attacking position created by a clever grubber kick from the same player. With Johnson in particular making a real nuisance of himself at breakdowns, Stortford more than held their own for an extended period, despite the hostile elements, but, ironically, it was from a particularly threatening run by Tom Mills, taking him close to the Esher line, that a loose offload allowed the ball to be hoofed far downfield, where a knock-on put the home side in possession inside the red zone. Concerted pressure led to a 5m lineout and the defence was caught on the hop by a quick break off the back of the resultant driving maul, with an Esher forward crashing over for the final try, converted by Tom Walker, on as replacement flyhalf against his former club. The visitors, though, had no real difficulty in seeing out the remaining 6 minutes without further threat to their line to seal another important win on a day when Rotherham beat leaders, Rams thus putting Stortford's win up there earlier in the season in an even better light.



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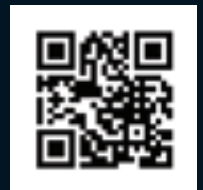
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# IN THE SPOTLIGHT: JOSH STANNARD



Josh Stannard first played for Stortford when he was selected on the bench away at Hull Ionians on 19 October 2019. He came on after 50 minutes for Tom Walker and scored a converted try after 58 minutes which reduced a Hull Ionians lead of eleven points to just four points. Stortford then took the lead with a Chris Smith try before Josh then helped set-up another converted try which with another Stortford penalty had given Stortford a lead of ten points however, Hull came back with another penalty. The final score was 39-32 to Stortford with Stortford taking five points and Hull two points with a losing bonus point and a four try bonus point. It was therefore a great high scoring open match for Josh to make his debut. Josh then went on to make thirteen more appearances for Stortford before the season was curtailed in March 2020 by Covid with Josh getting three more tries.

When league rugby restarted in the 2021/22 season Josh made twenty appearances mainly on the wing but with two appearances in the centre. He scored fourteen tries which included a hat-trick against Chinnor at home in April 2022. In the 2022/2023 season he made 21 appearances and scored seven tries, this time all on the wing. His appearances in 2023/2024 were curtailed to eight through injury in December at home against Darlington. This season Josh has again been affected by injury but it is expected he will be fit again and back to his try scoring ways in the second half of the season as Stortford's form continues to improve.



Josh joined Stortford as a centre from Brentwood, his running style with ball in hand on the wing is the "old" classic attacking three-quarter style. He will be recognised more as a David Duckham than a Keith Fielding by the older generation Stortford English rugby fan. Most of Josh tries are scored from medium to long distances where through his pace he can exploit open field running opportunities. Once Josh has made a break he is rarely caught from behind and he scores tries that are always easy on the eye. There are very rarely any "who got that try questions" for a typical Josh score. In the modern game with well organised defences the days of the ball been passed along the whole three-quarter line from set pieces looking for openings are long gone but chances still arise from broken play. In the game there will still be chances manufactured by quick thinking and skilful handling and it is then that fast and strong running players like Josh are needed to exploit such openings.

It is the efficient hard worked tries by forwards from close range that win the majority of games today but it is still the type of long range tries that Josh scores that live in the memory and win the "try of the season" awards.

Josh thanks his sponsors, Menor, this season and it could be said that many of Josh's tries are worthy of being framed.



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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.



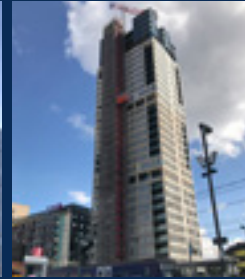
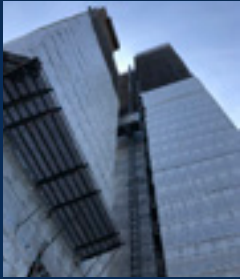
Club Stortford works closely with the 1st XV coaching team to provide funding for expenditure beyond the resources of the main club and our Mission Statement remains a simple one;

- **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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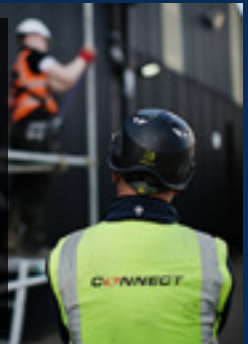


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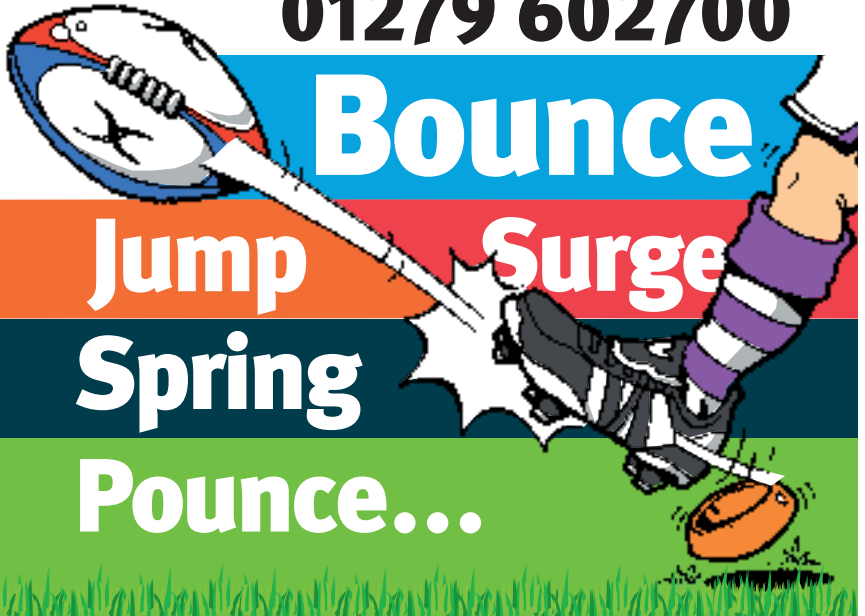
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The Oval Club was formed in 1998 by some Bishop's Stortford Rugby Football Club members who wanted to find a way of raising funds to improve the playing facilities of the Club with the mission statement:

**'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**  
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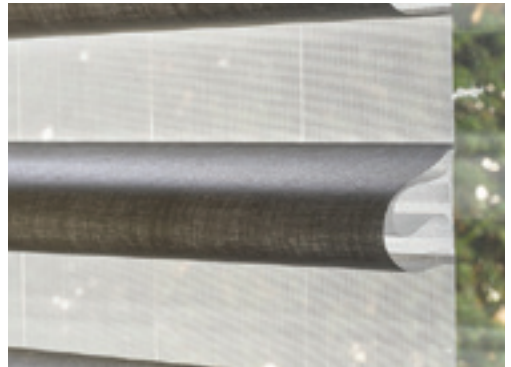


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# CARDIAC RISK IN THE YOUNG



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

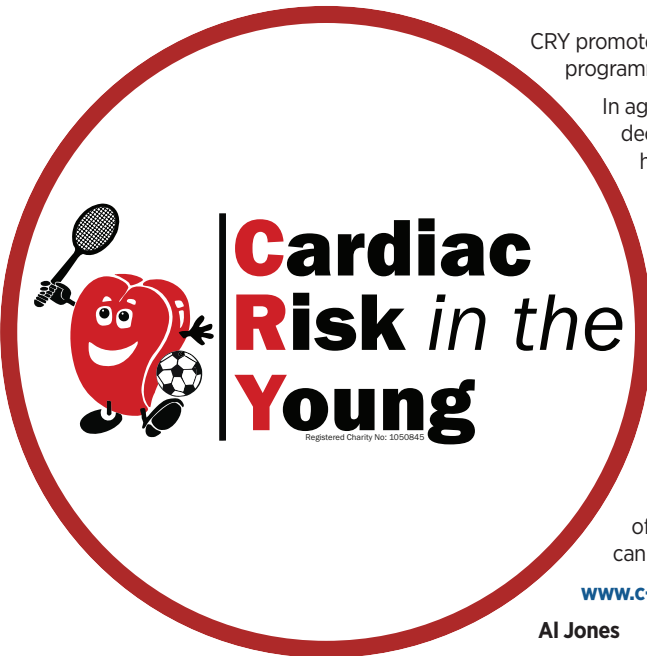
CRY promotes and develops heart screening programmes and funds medical research.

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



## Gemma Menzies

Gemma Menzies answered a club callout for a volunteer to take over the organisation of the match day lunches.

Gemma had been a member of the club and then joined Sian's team behind the bar, from there she joined the ladies team which she played for two seasons. Covid hit and a move out of the area made attending training difficult, so she hung up her boots!

After realising the networking opportunities at the club, Gemma persuaded her husband that his company should have a presence there. Gemma is part of the twitter team that run live game updates, and is a lunch and Oval club member.

The organisation of the pre-match lunches at Stortford is a key role at the club and with a smooth hand over from Rob Walker, Gemma has already proved very capable in this role. The lunches are an ongoing tradition and since the club's promotion to the National Leagues the lunches have increased in importance and size. The Hilton Marquee can now house up to 320 for lunch and with thirteen home games in a league season it is a big undertaking to carry out all the preparation work that makes sure everything goes to plan.

Gemma was apprehensive when she had to start with back-to-back home games, however the numbers for Leicester Lions and Blackheath were not too high being on the tail end of the summer holidays. The easier start helped to ease her into the role before the Remembrance Day lunch, the most complex some would say, and saw 300 plus diners fill the Hilton Marquee, with the Christmas lunch set to be just as popular.

The match day lunches can be compared to arranging thirteen wedding receptions a season. There needs to be a seating plan, special dietary requirements to handle, and the equivalent of sending out the invitations to confirm all the attendees. The one difference from a wedding is that lunch attendees do have to pay but there is no wedding present list to worry about.

In addition, many of the lunches have "themes" with the Christmas lunch, Remembrance Day,

ex-players, Vice-presidents, "Oval" and "Club Stortford" lunches.

There is also no "mother of the bride" or groom's family involved but the club President and his top table requirements will have to be taken into consideration. The wedding's VIP guests are the corporate sponsors, all in the very capable hands of Julie North. It is essential that when they attend, they are well looked after and have a good lunch experience.

Gemma will have no worries about the food and catering with Lisa Richards now having chalked many successful seasons at Stortford, with fresh food always piping hot and attentive staff. Also thanks to Sian and her team who make sure the drink demands are met. Finally, this couldn't all work without a team of amazing volunteers that help with the logistics of setting up the tables, laying out the programmes, the guess the score and much more that goes into the day.

Gemma can only really relax once everyone is seated and has a lunch in front of them, this relief is tempered with the knowledge that in two weeks there will be another home match and another lunch to organise.

At least Gemma unlike Anna Smith and Al Jones is no longer required to get up on a stool in the bar and announce the start of lunch, that task is now in the hands of Liam Love.



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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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# CLUB SHOP

## OPENING HOURS:

Wednesdays 7pm - 9pm

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

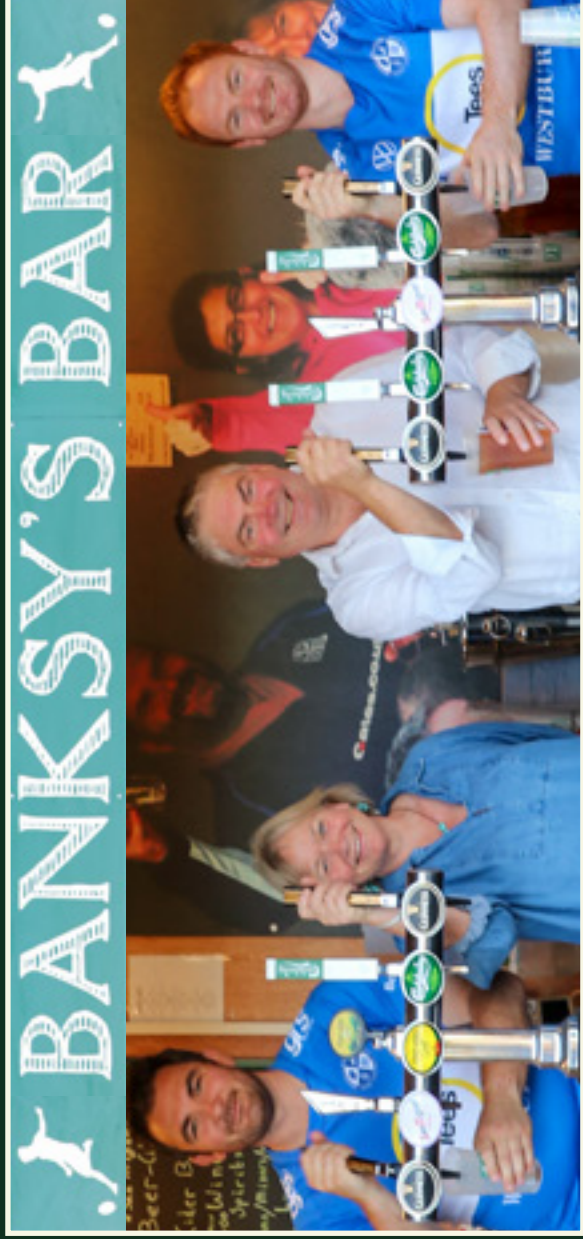
Sundays 9am - 1pm

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