

OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME OF BISHOP'S STORTFORD RFC

# STORTFORD

IN THE SPOTLIGHT  
**HENRY PECK**  
PAGE 43



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# FROM THE PRESIDENT: AL JONES



Well, that season has flown by. It's astonishing to find myself writing my final programme notes of the season already. All I can really

say is thank you. Thank you all for your support of the team, the Club, and me personally this season. I've thoroughly enjoyed the first year of my term as President, and hope my final year is just the same.

I would also like to thank all of the Club volunteers, far too many to mention individually, who contribute so much time and effort to our Rugby community.

Finally, our Saturday Match Days could not occur without Lisa and her team, Sian and the Bar team, and Gemma Menzies, our match day lunch coordinator. Thank you all.

Today we welcome Dings Crusaders back to Silver Leys for the first time since 2015. We had a comprehensive win that day, but this is a very different Dings side from a decade ago. They beat us in a high scoring encounter at their new Shaftesbury Park ground in December, and have had a good first season at level 3. Like us, they are comfortably safe in the league for next year. We will need to play well today if we are to maintain our challenge to finish in the top half this season.

As ever, I would like to thank all of our Club sponsors for their support across the season. They are well represented at our pre match lunch today.

Today's **Match Day Sponsors** are **Westbury Garden Rooms** and our **Man of the Match Sponsors** are **BIT Solutions**.

We are also joined today by **Nockolds, Hanbury Wealth, Mantle Space, Menor Services, Harlow Agricultural Merchants, MJ Warner, Smart Merchants, Recruitability, Mr Barber, Price Bailey, Russell Partnership, KMD Wealth, Steel Build Masters**, the ever present **Three Willows & Ace of Lanes** and, of course, our principal Club sponsor, **Tees**.

The 1st XV are away on the final weekend of the National One season at Leicester Lions, and I know we have a sizeable travelling contingent

going. There is plenty of Rugby that weekend however for those not making the trip to the midlands.

We are hosting the men's county finals here at Silver Leys and our Chindits have made it to their cup final. Additionally, our U14s, U15s and Colts have all made it through to the County Cup Finals being held at Hertford on Sunday 27th. Good luck to you all.

Although our playing season is drawing to an end, there's plenty going on at the Club this summer with the Annual Club Dinner on 9th May, the Summer Ball on 7th June, and of course the Lions Test series in Australia to enjoy, which will be televised at the Club. Hopefully we will see many of you between now and when we return for National One Rugby in September.

Enjoy your summer, and we will see you in 2025/26!

Al

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## TOM COLEMAN: HEAD COACH



Welcome one and all to our final home game of the season. Whilst we appreciate our home form needs to improve moving forward, I

hope you have all enjoyed watching the team perform throughout the season and can see that there is plenty of growth. We have taken some big steps forward on and off the pitch and we know that next season can be even better.

There have been some excellent individual and team performances throughout the season, but I don't think we can look much further than victories at Rotherham, Rams and Sale FC. To beat any team in National One is difficult, but to win at tough away grounds shows you have a huge amount of character within the group, and once you have that instilled you have a chance to win any game. That being said, those victories I mentioned were no fluke. We outperformed the opposition on every occasion, fully deserved those results and made some great memories as a team.

We currently find ourselves in the middle of a great run of form and we're desperate to see that continue today against Dings Crusaders. We weren't at our best in the reverse fixture and they fully deserved their victory, but we'll be looking to avenge that result today. This will be the last time we are all together as a group at Silver Leys so it's important we send people off in the right way. Managing the emotion and the occasion is crucial.

I would like to say a huge thank you to all of our brilliant sponsors. Your generosity allows us to perform to the levels we do and for that we are extremely grateful. Lastly, to the supporters who turn up here week in week out and travel up and down the country - thank you. You're there when we need you and it would be amazing to create a huge atmosphere today for the players.

Enjoy the summer break and we look forward to seeing you again next season.

*Tom*

## THE COACHING STAFF



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



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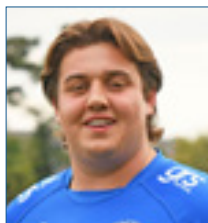
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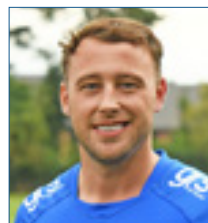
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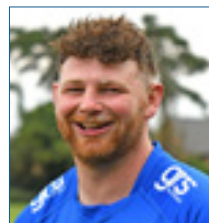
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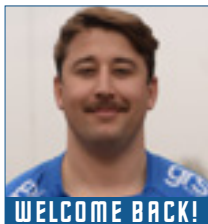
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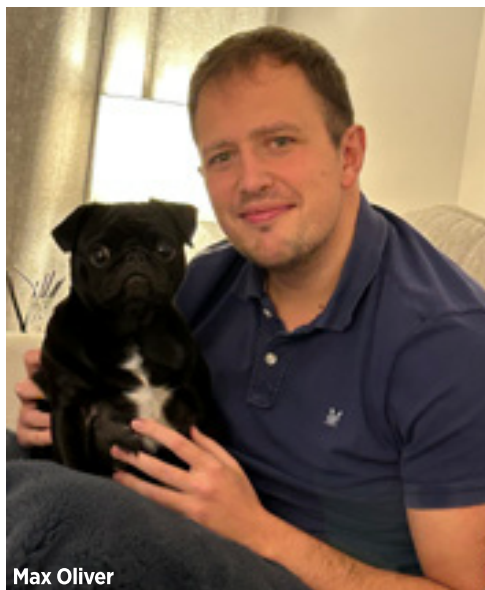
18 months ago, my family suffered a terrible loss when my brother-in-law died as a result of a Sudden Cardiac Arrest. He was 49 years old.

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



## Cardiac Risk in the Young

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## THE MINIS SEASON: NIKKY WILKINS

As we near the end of the rugby season, it is a great opportunity to take a look back at what the minis section has been up to.

With over 300 players registered from U6-U12s it's a great showcase for how amazing the club and especially our age group coaches are to encouraging and maintaining players. WE have 2 age groups with waiting lists and 2 more on the verge. A great testament to the love of rugby and environment being created. If anyone hasn't seen the volume of minis players, pop down on a Sunday morning training session and see what an incredible section we have.

Since the cold snap at the beginning of 2025, we have managed to get a fair bit of rugby squished in the last part of the season. We have entered multiple squads into the County Festivals age groups. As well as attending many other festivals across the Country.

We saw 40 minis enter the field as the Guard of Honor for the Saracens Showdown game vs Harlequins. They got a close up of some of their idols. Watching Maro Itoje wearing their club badge on his shirt. A money can't buy experience that will live in their memory bank for years to come. A big Thank you to Jimma for all the background graft to make this happen.

We also love to tour in the minis. Whether that is a whole section or as an older age group.

Our U12's went off to take part in The Leicester Tigers Challenge at Butlins in Bognor Regis. 22 Boys are taking part in the tournament and representing the club, with a packed tournament schedule format seeing us play 4 matches on Saturday in a League setup and the heading into a knockout competition on Sunday with various trophies to play for.

Huge thanks to Kayleigh Pimblett at NFU Mutual, Jack Millard from Millard Property Development and Mark Perring from MRP for sponsoring the tour. The weather looks perfect for running rugby, and the boys are extremely excited to test their metal against teams from all over the country. With plenty of activities planned for the weekend it will be a great bonding experience for the boys and parents as they finish their last season in the

minis rugby structure.

We wish the 1st XV the best of luck this weekend and one day as coaches, we hope to see many of our boys pulling on the famous 1st team shirt and running out at Silver Leys!! From James Lipscombe.

Then its 'Lights, Camera & Action' for 250 of the Minis and their families as we head off to Ashford, Kent at the end of April to enjoy a weekend of outdoor activities, bonding as team mates and friends. Then donning their best fancy dress 'Movie' theme outfits to learn some songs. Before being fueled by Haribo to light it up on the pitches at Westcombe Park to play some Tour Festival Rugby.

On our last day of the rugby season, we enjoy our annual Fun Day. The age groups have some fun games during training, with end of season trophies for all. We say goodbye to the U11 girls' players, who switch over to Girls Only rugby. WE hope to build the U12s section in the next season, if there are any current year 6, going into year7 girls who fancy giving girls rugby a try we would love to hear from you. (minischair@bsrfc.co.uk) We also enjoy some beers and ice cream at the clubhouse in sunshine and wonder what we will fill our Sunday mornings up with for the next few months!

As another year has gone by, I would like to say a Thank you to the players, for turning up, putting their efforts in each week, to the parents and family members who stand on the side ines cheering and encouraging them to do their best and get stuck in, but my biggest thanks goes to the our coaches and admins who give up their Sunday mornings to create great training sessions and show all their enthusiasm and love for our sport, without you all we would have this amazing section in the club! Thank you!





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# TODAY'S OPPONENTS



Stortford first played Dings Crusaders in the 2013-14 season when Stortford was promoted to National League 2 South. Stortford

beat Dings home and away that season, winning 33-14 at Dings in November 2013 and 35-14 at Stortford in March 2014. In the following season (2014-15) Stortford again won both games, winning 34-8 in November at Dings and 50-0 in February 2015 at Stortford.

After twelve seasons in National Two South Dings were relegated to the South-West Premium at the end of that season. However, they were soon back in Tier 4 after promotion to National 2 South in 2018 (after dominating the South West Premium league in their promotion season).

Last season Dings convincingly won the National 2 West league to gain promotion for the first time to National 1 and Tier 3 level of English rugby. They also moved to their impressive new ground and facilities on the outskirts of Bristol in 2018 and so now have the league status to match their upgraded facilities.

Dings have come a long way from their start as a rugby club. They were founded in 1897 in a very rundown area of Bristol to provide sporting aspirations for the local deprived community around Bristol docks and the local gas works in the Dings area. The club was founded by Christian missionaries, hence the "Crusaders" in their name. The club had gained a reputation in the Bristol area as an

uncompromising rugby outfit, not a status that could be considered rare among typical West Country rugby sides.

The club worked its way into the new league and professional eras, and the revenue from the sale of their old ground (in its central area location of Bristol) has helped solidify their league status. The value of their ground has been greatly helped with the new gentrification of the old Bristol Docks area. Dings has wisely invested these funds in new playing facilities and although it may have taken some time, the club's lowly origins in the Dings has proved to be beneficial in the long term.

There have been questions asked in our league about their close association with the Bristol Bears and the Bears' academy set-up but it is probably sensible to invest in playing facilities first and then build a strong playing grass roots community from these facilities. It will be interesting to see how Dings progress in future and how they can establish themselves for the long term in National One.





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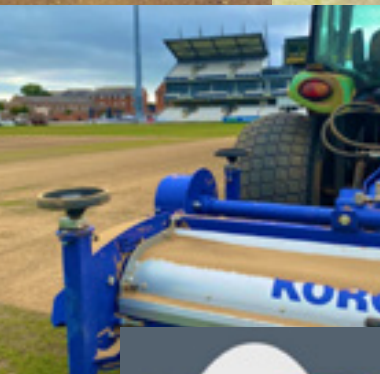
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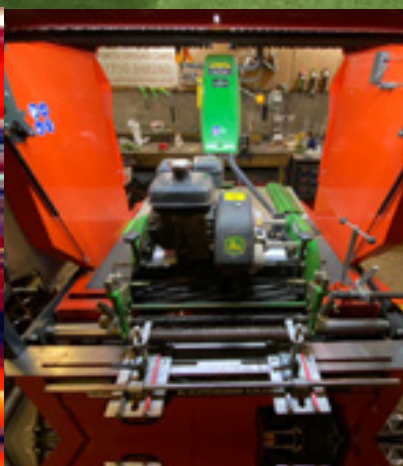
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# WOMEN & GIRLS: KATE HAWKINS



## Well, what can I say... What a season it has been for the Womens XV!

The squad still have one game to play against Clacton on April 27th, however they have already secured the league win and are still so far undefeated, let's hope that they can make it through with no losses ahead of promotion next season to NC2.

With an influx of amazing players this season, we have also had 7 (yes 7!) selected to represent BSRFC at County!

The squad themselves have worked their backsides off this season, bonding as a team, putting their bodies on the line for each other and have just been generally fabulous, it (almost) makes me want to put my boots back on!

None of the above would have been possible without the fabulous support of the coaches, Kyle McDonald, Tom Brady, Dave Walker along with a couple of guest coach appearances from Fred Chate and ex Saracens player Sarah Bebbington-Crombie to whom I am extremely grateful for all of the time and hard work that they put in.

A big thankyou goes out to our sponsors Nockolds and Charterhouse to whom we are extremely grateful along with all individual player, kit and tour sponsors.

As you can imagine the cost to support the team relies on funding so if you're interested in sponsoring us for the 25/26 season, please email

myself at [ladieschari@bsrfc.co.uk](mailto:ladieschari@bsrfc.co.uk) for further information.

If you wish to become involved or for any further information. Please get in touch.

### Kate Hawkins

Chair of Women and Girls



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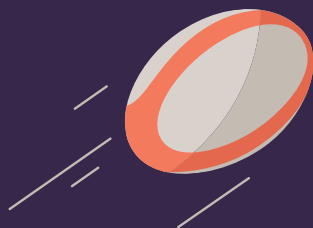
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# NATIONAL 1: RESULTS, FIXTURES, TABLE

## Results from 5th April 2025

HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM
Blackheath	31 - 24	Rotherham
Darlington Mowden Park	26 - 39	Plymouth Albion
Ding Crusaders	41 - 39	Leicester Lions
Esher	19 - 59	Birmingham Moseley
Rosslyn Park	45 - 24	Sedgley Park
<b>Sale FC</b>	<b>26 - 34</b>	<b>Bishop's Stortford</b>
Richmond	47 - 24	Rams

## Fixtures for 12th April 2025

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

NATIONAL LEAGUE 1 TABLE											
Team	P	W	D	L	PF	PA	PD	TBP	LBP	Points	Adj.
Richmond	24	20	2	2	810	459	351	17	0	101	0
Rosslyn Park	24	18	0	6	810	600	210	17	2	91	0
Rotherham	24	18	0	6	737	542	195	12	4	88	0
Blackheath	24	16	0	8	766	548	218	14	5	83	0
Plymouth Albion	24	15	0	9	645	622	23	15	6	81	0
Rams	24	14	0	10	681	524	157	18	6	80	0
Birmingham Moseley	24	12	1	11	665	567	98	13	5	68	0
Sale FC	24	12	0	12	594	607	-13	12	6	66	0
<b>Bishop's Stortford</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Dings</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>797</b>	<b>-134</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>0</b>
Sedgley Park	24	8	1	15	600	677	-77	10	5	49	0
Esher	24	6	0	18	635	996	-361	13	1	38	0
Leicester Lions	24	5	0	19	531	679	-148	9	8	37	0
Darlington Mowden Park	24	1	1	22	420	962	-542	7	3	16	0



# 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 Sam Johnson
- 8 Will Rogers (c)
- 9 Chris Bolton
- 10 Mike Cooke
- 11 Tom Mills
- 12 Austin Pope
- 13 Jack Biard
- 14 Chris Smith
- 15 Declan Murphy

### REPLACEMENTS

- 16 Alex Rayment
- 17 Henry Peck
- 18 Seb Brownhill
- 19 Ollie Jones
- 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:**

Ryan Clark

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BLUE AND BLACK

- 1 Tom Sims
- 2 Thomas Gwilliam
- 3 Brian Ncube
- 4 Will Thompson
- 5 Alex Ashton
- 6 Matt Bennett
- 7 Kofi Cripps
- 8 Aaron Tull
- 9 Matt Jones
- 10 George Boulton (c)
- 11 Max Rivers
- 12 Harry Tarling
- 13 Joe Jenkins
- 14 Deago Bailey
- 15 Tom Foot

## REPLACEMENTS

- 16 Tom Gollop
- 17 Nick English
- 18 Matt Lane
- 19 Tom Knight
- 20 Jamie Elsworth

### Director of Rugby:

Stean Williams

### Coaches:

Luke Arscott, Simon Knight,  
Andy May

### Physio:

Henry Radcliffe

### Captain:

George Boulton

### REFEREE:

**Ben Raynor**

### ASSISTANT REFEREE 1:

**Diogo Pedro**

### ASSISTANT REFEREE 2:

**Brendan Fitzmaurice**

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Due to printing deadlines, the Ding Crusaders team shown is the team from last week's game and is subject to change.

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# MATCH REPORT: JOHN ALLANSON



## Sale FC 26 Bishop's Stortford 1st XV 44

Early pressure from Sale took them into Stortford's 22, but typically strong defence kept them out and one of a number of ambitious attempts at grubber kicks by the home side produced a turnover. Unfortunately, an immediate Stortford handling error provided loose ball to the opposition, allowing their number 8 to crash over for a converted try with barely 2 minutes gone. The scores were level 4 minutes later, when Alex Rayment seized on a loose ball, as Sale attacked again, put in a long, raking kick, which stood up nicely just short of the home try line for Declan Murphy to gather and touch down out wide, calling for a tremendous conversion from Mike Cooke. It was then the home side's turn to make a crucial error in their own 22, allowing Rayment again to scoop up the ball, drive forward and set up good ball, which was moved quickly wide, where a double-pump short pass to Austin Pope put the centre into a gap, through which he crashed over the line for an unconverted try. Stortford moved 12 points ahead with 20 minutes gone, when two Sale offences produced a 5m lineout, from which Rayment (again!) was driven over for the try, well-converted by Cooke. The home side were stung into aggressive response and it took some more resolute defence to hold them out, including strong defence of a couple of 5m lineout drives. Stortford countered and ended the half with the best try of the match to bring up the 4-try bonus point. Good hands inside drew in the defence, creating space for Jack Biard to break outside his opposite number and two accurate passes gave Murphy enough room to dash over in the corner for an unconverted try. This took the score at the break to 7-24.

Not surprisingly, the home side came out aggressively in the second half. But were again met with stern resistance, with another attacking lineout maul driven into touch. Unfortunately, Stortford were unable to clear their lines and some smart handling by Sale's backs created an opening for their flyhalf who took advantage of a couple of uncharacteristically loose tackles to step his way through for a try close to the

posts. The conversion attempt, nevertheless, went wide. Stortford were now making a few errors in possession and the opposition took advantage to exert a period of pressure, but this was met with more resolute defence and it was the visitors that scored next – albeit only 3 points from a Cooke penalty. This came after Tom Mills had been stopped only inches short of the try line, following a break by Murphy, cutting a great line close to a ruck. Stortford piled in behind the recycled ball and the penalty came from a cynical tackle on the halfback waiting to move the ball from another quick ruck, resulting in a yellow card to a Sale backrow. Stortford moved into a 22 points lead within 5 minutes, when Murphy again showed his pace – and his dancing feet – to step his way on the outside of two Sale players chasing a defensive kick close to touch. Having made some 40 metres, he drew the last defender and found Cooke with a long inside pass to send him in unopposed under the posts – giving himself the easiest conversion of the day. Stortford looked to be seeing out the remaining 10 minutes reasonably comfortably, with some more strong tackling to counter the battling home side. Eventually, though, Sale were able to make a 5m lineout count, after successive penalties against Stortford, driving over for a converted try, with barely a minute left. Not content with this consolation score, though, the home side's backs countered with some very ambitious handling under pressure in their own 22 and were rewarded with their bonus point try, as time ran out, with their left wing running in from distance after Stortford's outside defence had been sucked in.



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# IN THE SPOTLIGHT: HENRY PECK



This is Henry Peck's second season at Stortford. Last season he played in all games and was recognised on the BSRFC website (along with Toby Hill and Chris Bolton) for

appearing in all of the season's twenty-six games. Henry has missed only five games this season, with a concussion in the Rams home game responsible for four of these.

Stortford operate a rotation with the first team props. There are always three props selected: the two starting props and the bench prop selection. Henry plays the number 3 tight-head prop position, which in the modern game is one of the most exacting positions in the scrum. Henry will be "rested" at the end of the first half or early in the second half and the bench prop comes on. However, it is not unusual for Henry to come back on the field at the end of the second half to give the other starting prop a shortened second half and keep the scrum strong for the whole game.

An important role for Henry in the first half is to "profile" how the ref is handling scrums and note what the ref tends to penalise. This ensures Stortford avoids any unnecessary scrum penalties due to any peculiarities in the ref's interpretation of the scrum rules. Arguably, this is a more subtle approach than previously, with Tom McCrone directly telling the ref what he was getting wrong.

The more observant Stortford supporter will have noted that when Henry is substituted by Toby Hill and Tristian Smith comes on from the bench, Toby moves to Henry's tight-head position and Tristian takes over Toby's loose-head role. Generally, the tight-head in the modern game is the tougher role, having to absorb the opposition scrum pressure on two sides in the front row from their loose-head prop and hooker. This tactic allows the loose-head prop more licence to move about the field in loose play.

In a First Division league match, there are usually only three forwards on the bench of the five substitutes allowed. These are a hooker, a prop and a utility forward. The recognition of the more strenuous forward role in modern international rugby is reflected in six of the eight

subs available being forwards, so the Springboks and French sides are able to field almost two packs of forwards in a game. The First Division League rules allow for a total of ten substitutions in a match, which also provides scope for forward rotations.



Andy Long, who has to be considered an expert on coaching front row play, selected four props many times during the 2016–2017 promotion season with Shawn Edwards, Tom McCrone, Will Roberts and Seb Brownhill all featuring in some crucial games.

Before Cambridge gained promotion to the Championship and Henry was playing for them, Cambridge scored a lot of tries against Stortford with a scrummaging penalty kick into the Stortford 22. The resulting Cambridge throw-ins produced tries from line-out driving mauls. These days Stortford very rarely allow the opposition such tries and Henry has been an important factor in preventing this.

It was a pleasure to talk with Henry about all the intricacies of modern forward play and how the Stortford players and coaches are trying to improve Stortford's play in this area.

In his two seasons so far at Stortford, Henry has been sponsored by Westbury Gardens and has provided great value for money for their sponsorship



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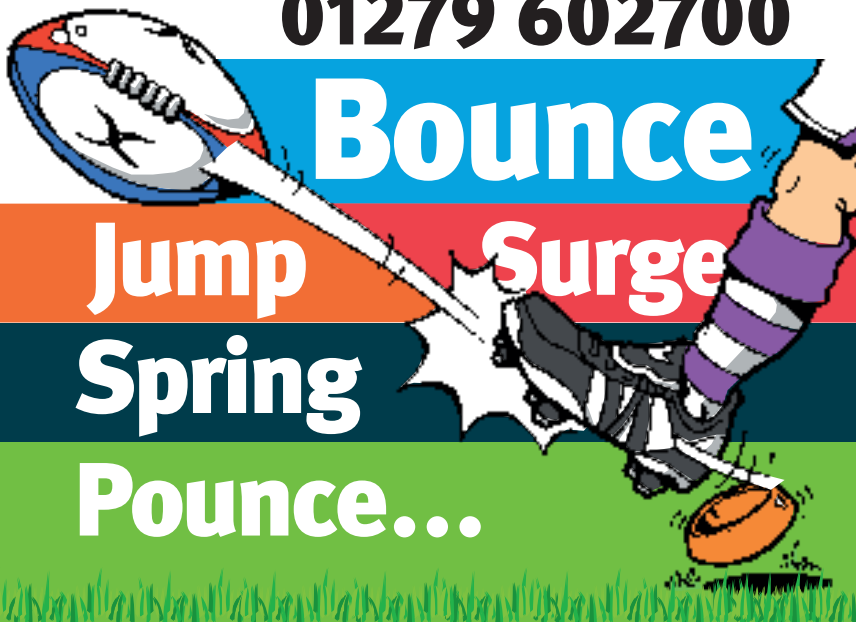
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The Oval Club was formed in 1998 by some Bishop's Stortford Rugby Football Club members who wanted to find a way of raising funds to improve the playing facilities of the Club with the mission statement:

**'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**

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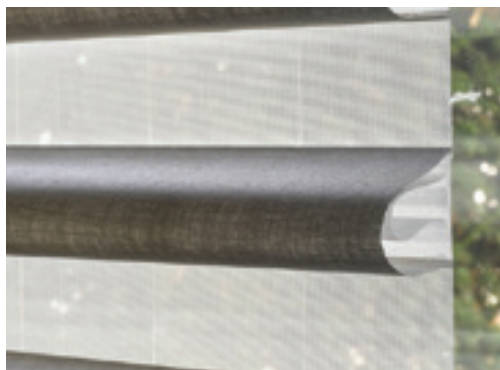


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# Bishop's Stortford Independent

Est 2017  
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FULL DETAILS INSIDE

### Police are still stumped by identity of body in river

Detectives reveal details of man's  
corpse and clothes in hope public  
can help them trace his next of kin

**Paul Wansper**  
[paul.wansper@stortfordindependent.co.uk](mailto:paul.wansper@stortfordindependent.co.uk)

Police still seeking to identify a young man who was found dead in the River Stort at Bishop's Stortford by two teenage canoeists have revealed details in the hope the public can help them.

The deceased was in his mid 20s, 5ft 9in to 5ft 11in tall, of medium build and had dark hair on his chin.

He was wearing a black Adidas hoodie, dark grey Nike Air track suit bottoms and black Adidas trainers.

Det Sgt Thomas Nash, from the East Herts local crime unit, said on Monday (April 7): "This is a very sad case because we still don't know who this man is or what his story was. There is no suggestion there was any third-party involvement in his death."

The body was found on March 23, shortly after 11.45am, by Bishop's Stortford canoe club members Oliver Klumpler, 15, and his 14 partner Jamie Winstanley, 14, while they were taking part in a regular Sunday morning training session.

The pair were navigating a familiar stretch of water between the club's headquarters in Stylemans Lane and Rusby Mead nature reserve when they encountered what they believed was an abandoned mannequin case down.

Oliver, a Birchwood High School student, and Jamie, who attends The Bishop's Stortford High School, could see the top of a head and the hood of a jacket floating in the murky water.

When they returned to the clubhouse after around an hour on the river, they reported their concerns. It was decided they would take a more serious look at the water to see if they could retrieve what everyone still believed was a mannequin.

Jamie grabbed the hood and, at that point, both boys and the adults on the bank recognised other clothing and

**Spellbrook car wash  
owner being sentenced**  
Bishop's Stortford man and three others jailed for a total of 47 years  
see page 2 for full story

realised the body was "horribly lifeless".

The boys abandoned their mission and an adult club member, a former police officer, got into the water and confirmed their worst fear. She estimated the body had been in the water for four to eight weeks.

Emergency services were called and retrieved the body.

The man's death is being treated as non-suspicious but unexplained.

However, despite extensive enquiries, officers have been unable to identify him or notify his next of kin.



The man, believed to be in his mid 20s, was wearing a black Adidas hoodie like the one pictured, top police, as well as dark grey Nike Air track suit bottoms and black Adidas trainers

Detectives have now released an image of clothing similar to that the man was wearing in the hope it will jog someone's memory.

Det Sgt Nash said: "We believe his body may have been in the undergrowth in the river for a considerable period of time.

"Our main priority is to trace this

man's family so they can lay him to rest."

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## Why do props whisper line-out play messages to the hooker?

There are some older rugby supporters at Stortford who will tell you that they can remember wing three-quarters throwing the ball in at line-outs. The right winger would throw the ball into the line-out on the right side of the field and the left winger would do the same on the left side. Imagine trusting two different wingers with such responsibility in a match! I guess back in the good old days there was much less emphasis on the importance of accurate throws and the objective was really to get the game restarted quickly.

I think the French were the first to take this line-out responsibility from the wingers, and had scrum halves throwing into the line-outs, as scrum halves were used to playing closely with the forwards at scrum time and in theory had good ball handling skills. It also made sense to use the same player on both sides of the field

for consistent line-out throws and as the time for both training and practicing increased, it made sense to keep the forwards together for set piece drills and not involve backs.

The use of the hooker for all line-out throws started somewhere in the 1970s. If you watch old videos of the famous Barbarians v New Zealand game in 1973, you see John Pullin the hooker throwing into the line-outs for the Baa-Baas and the wingers throwing in for the All Blacks. Mind you, in those days, it didn't matter who threw in as there was no lifting and hardly any forwards jumped for the ball. The line-outs in that match look a total shambles but by the end of the 90s, the lifting of jumpers became legal and the accuracy of line-out throws became more important. The hooker - who is generally the shortest forward - was now the obvious choice as the forward's line-out thrower.



At the same time, with scrum halves no longer having to put the ball into the scrums straight (and referees no longer penalising hookers for striking early at scrums), hookers needed something else to keep them usefully employed. The answer became line-out throwing, which at the moment still has to be straight but now apparently only if the opposition challenge the jumper. So, hookers now can pride themselves on their “line-outs won” statistics and not their “strikes against the head” count. These statistics can be achieved without having to rely on referees understanding what is going on in the front row of scrums.

Notoriously, in a video of a game available on the internet you can hear Nigel Owen, the famous gay Welsh referee, penalising a hooker’s blatant not straight throw with the comment “even I am straighter than that”.

There is a lot more that has also evolved in rugby line-out play over the years and now, with hookers throwing in at line-outs (and therefore being the last to join driving mauls from the line-out) they are in the prime position to control the resulting forward drive. This means they have started to be in a key position to score a record number of tries from the back of mauls. Something that would have not been predicted years ago and resulting directly from the hooker being used to throw into the line-out.

However, one thing about the modern rugby line-out still puzzles me. Why has it become necessary for one of the props to whisper the line-out call into the hooker’s ear before the line-out? I can perhaps understand the hooker taking up position on the touchline alone with the ball to compose himself for his throw before the rest of the forwards arrive at the line-out (and therefore the hooker would not have been involved in the forwards’ committee meeting decision on the line-out play). It then makes sense that someone should tell him the play without the opposition hearing but it is usually one of the props that whispers the call into his ear. This means that the line-out play decision is made without the hooker being involved, with the responsibility of passing on the play



down to the prop - the hooker has no input to the process and cannot challenge the call. At least there is now little chance of the opposition guessing the call and knowing where the ball is going in the line-out, although it appears a little over complicated. I also wonder how many types of throw the hooker has to produce for specific line-out calls?

Mind you, if you watch professional baseball, the catcher suggests a pitch to the pitcher with a complex finger code signal between his legs that the batter cannot see. The pitcher then has the option to reject the pitch by shaking his head if he is not happy with the catcher’s selection - the catcher then has to select another option. There has to be a limited number of possible pitches but again, it looks complicated. The catcher has to know the type of pitch so that he will not be surprised by the pitch but like the hooker’s line-out throw, a lot will depend on the execution of the pitch.

At least in watching Stortford, I have not seen Razor tell the prop he doesn’t fancy the choice of line-out throw!

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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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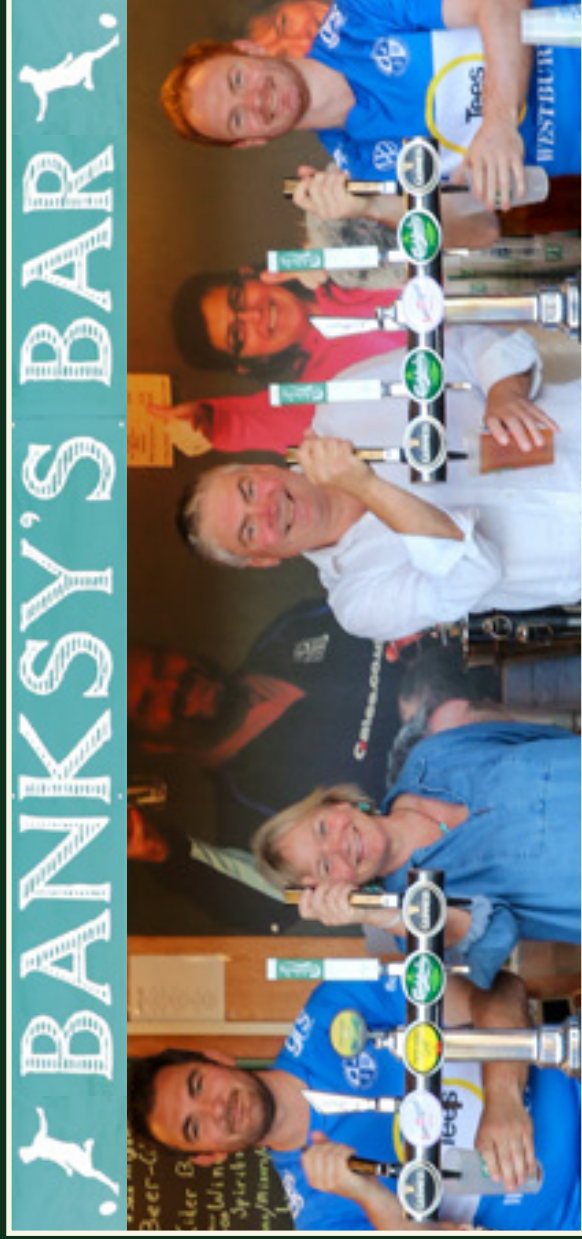
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