

OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME

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# Bishop's **Stortford**

RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

Versus

**Tonbridge  
Juddians**

18th April 2026  
3pm

Our cover star...

**Damien  
Ducci**

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MATCHDAY  
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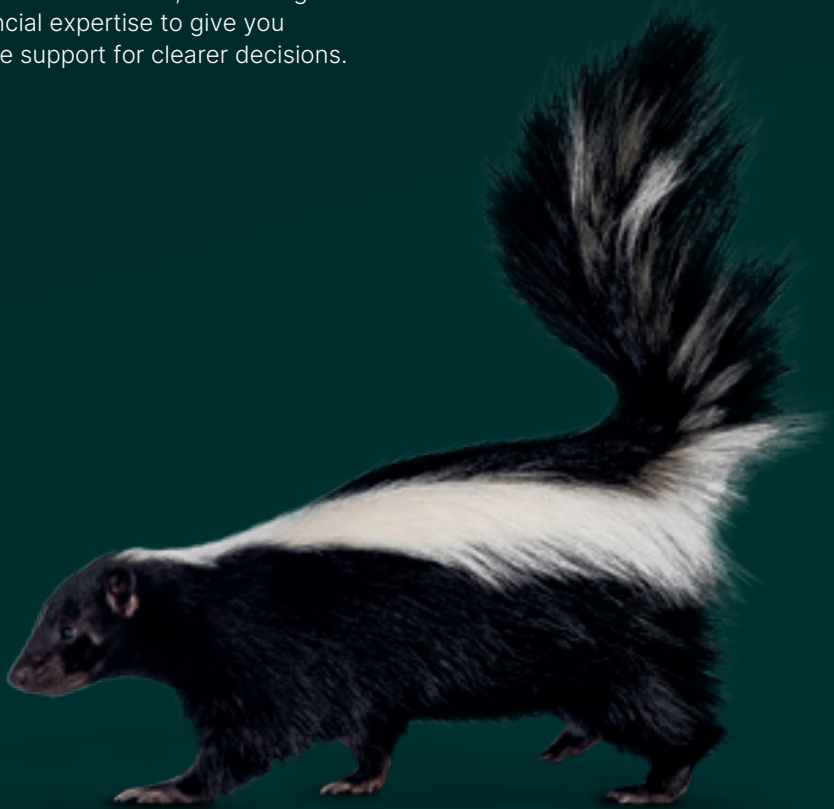
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## FROM THE PRESIDENT: AL JONES



A year ago, I started my programme notes reflecting on the end of my first season in this role with the phrase “Well, that has flown by”. What was true at the end of my first season as President remains true as my term comes to an end. I find myself, in what those who know me is very unusual, a little lost for words. What seems most appropriate is simply ‘Thank You’.

Thank you all for your support of the team, the Club, and me personally. I’ve thoroughly enjoyed my term as President, and remain as proud to have been given this incredible honour as when Len first asked me if I would consider taking on the role three years ago.

Thanks to all of the Club volunteers, far too many to mention individually, who contribute so much time and effort to our Rugby community. Our Saturday Match Days could obviously not take place without Lisa and her team, Sian and the Bar team, and Gemma Menzies, our match day lunch coordinator. Thank you all.

And finally, if you will forgive me the indulgence, I would like to thank my long-suffering wife, Sara, who may get to see me a little more often next season.

Back to my usual fair, and if we cast our minds back to the beginning of November, everything looked a wee bit of a worry as we sat bottom of the table with 10 points on the board. Fast forward 6 months and we have a chance to record our joint highest ever league position, and statistically our best ever season at Level 3, even though our 6-game winning run came to an end last Saturday.

Today we welcome Tonbridge Juddians back to Silver Leys. They have had a fine return to National One this season and sit 4 points, and one place, below us in 8th spot. We had a cracking game with them back in December where our former scrum half, Connor Lloyd, came up just short with a penalty that would have won it for TJs at the death. Hopefully, today’s match will be equally competitive.

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 our Principal Club Sponsor, Tees, and our Man of the Match sponsors this afternoon are Westbury Garden Rooms.

We are also joined today by, Russell Property, Mullucks, Price Bailey, Hanbury Wealth, Nockolds, Mantle Space, Little Acre Homes, Smart Merchants, KMD Wealth, Palmer & Martin, Mr. Barber, Recruitability, Marshall Fire, Harlow Agricultural Merchants and the ever present Three Willows & Ace of Lanes.

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 – with Neil Back as guest speaker – and the Summer Ball on 13th June. Hopefully we will see many of you between now and when we return for National One Rugby in September.

Finally, I would like to wish my successor, Dave Walker, the best of luck for his term as President of our Club. I hope you enjoy it as much as I have my friend!

*Al*



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## FROM THE HEAD COACH: TOM COLEMAN



To many, it may seem like the season has come and gone very quickly. I'm not sure I feel the same, and I imagine the players and staff would agree.

Our journey began back in June, with countless hours of blood, sweat, and (some!) tears. Now here we are in April, with an opportunity to achieve the club's highest-ever points tally in a National One campaign. Given the circumstances we found ourselves in after eight games, it would take a harsh critic to devalue this achievement. It's something we'll be going all out to deliver over the next two games.

I'm incredibly proud of my players, coaches, physios, and management team, all of whom have contributed significantly throughout the season. What stood out most to me was how we responded during difficult periods. When we were under pressure and struggling, that's when true character was revealed and everyone came back determined to improve and be better. You can't ask for much more than that. The time and effort required to compete at this level is immense, and it makes me very proud to lead this group.

Onto today's game against Tonbridge Juddians. They've had an excellent season with some outstanding results. They play an attractive brand of rugby, and there's no doubt we'll need to be far better defensively today than we were at Dings Crusaders on Saturday. I'm just glad Martin Mills wasn't there to see us 26-0 down after 20 minutes! From that point on, we were the better team and arguably should have gone on to win, if not for some poor decision-making. We've found a strong rhythm in attack, but we've also placed a big emphasis this week on getting things right defensively. Hopefully, you will see a big improvement in us today.

Finally, I'd like to say a huge thank you to all of our sponsors. Your support for the club is incredible, and we're extremely grateful. We hope to see you all again next season.

Enjoy today's game, please be vocal and get behind the team, it really does make a difference.

Have a great summer.

*Tom*



The coaching team sponsored by **Forward Corporate Finance** are (left to right): First Team Coach: **Tom Coleman**, Team Manager: **Darren Orbart**, Assistant Forwards Coach: **Rob Faiers**, Defence/Forwards Coach: **Tom Woolstencroft**



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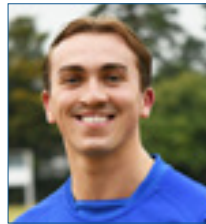
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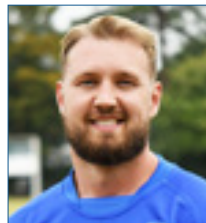
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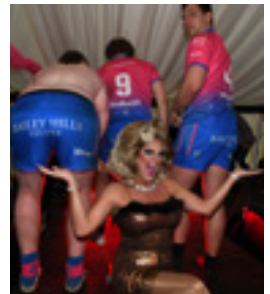


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## End of Minis Season Summary

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 multiple 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 session and see what an incredible section we have.

Since the cold and very wet snap at the beginning of 2026, 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 also love to tour in the minis. Whether that is a whole section or as an older age group.

Our U12s will be travelling to Butlins in Bognor Regis to take part in the Leicester Tigers Challenge tournament and represent the club, with a packed tournament schedule format seeing over 30 players competing in multiple matches of two days.

The touring squad have been generously sponsored by Tower Research Capital, The Bridge House and BIT solutions.

From all the U12 players, parents and coaches a big thank you to our sponsors for this tour!

This year, we have sold out the Minis Tour to Overstrand, Norfolk. With 250 players and families having a jam-packed weekend of outdoor activities, bonding as team mates and friends. Then donning their best fancy dress 'Music Genre' outfits to learn some songs. Before





being fueled by Haribo to light it up on the pitches at Holt RFC to play some Tour Festival Rugby. A thank you must go to the Volunteer U10s Tour Organising committee – Without them this weekend would not be possible. To the Sponsors, Prime Facilities Management, Stortford Interiors, Walfinch Home Care, Romans Recruitment Group, SB Civils, Marshall Fire, Hardsoft Computers, Inspection & Consultancy Services Ltd, LB Projects, Tenon Construction, Lazer Lamps Thank you for helping to make this happen with some amazing tour kit and goodie bags!

On our last day of the rugby season, we enjoy our annual Fun Day. The age groups have some fun games during training, awarding end of season trophies for all. We also enjoy some beers and ice cream at the clubhouse in the sunshine (fingers crossed) and wonder what we will fill our Sunday mornings up with for the next few months!

A big 'Thank You' to Menor for sponsoring our Mini Section Age group flags – these are

invaluable, every Sunday, you will see them flying. They are also sponsoring something special for our coaches too! Keep an eye out!

Thank you to our main kit sponsors Nockolds, Hanbury Wealth, and Russell Property who also sponsor our MDE. Thank you to the Oval Club who has sponsored minis equipment, we are all very grateful for your generosity.

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 lines in all weathers cheering and encouraging them to do their best and get stuck in, but my biggest thanks goes to the our volunteer coaches and admins who give up their free time during the week to create great training sessions and Sunday mornings to show all their enthusiasm and love for our sport, without you all we would not have this amazing section in the club! Thank you!

See you all next season!



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## TODAY'S OPPONENTS: TONBRIDGE JUDDIANS



The Tonbridge Juddians club was formed in 1999 by a merger between Tonbridge RFC and Old Juddians RFC. Tonbridge RFC was formed in 1904 and Juddians in 1928. The unusual “Judd” name comes from a school founded in the sixteenth century in Tonbridge by Sir Andrew Judd, a former Lord Mayor of London who made his fortune in the Muscovy fur trade.

Stortford first played Tonbridge Juddians in National One when they were promoted from National Two South after the Covid curtailed season of 2019/2020. There was, of course, no 2020/2021 season and playing Stortford at home was their first game in National One in the 2021/22 season. The game was drawn 18-18 at Tonbridge; any Stortford supporters who attended the game would remember that at the end, Tonbridge appeared to be happy to settle for the draw after such a long wait to play in National One.

Unfortunately, they were relegated along with Blackheath after their first season in National One, although they managed to beat Stortford 20-23 at Stortford in the last game of the season. Stortford also recruited their hooker Ryan Jackson for the following season, with Ryan and Razor (Alex Rayment) sharing the hooking and front row try scoring honours between them for the next two seasons. Tonbridge have returned the compliment by recruiting Connor Lloyd, who shared the scrum half position with Chris Bolt for the 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 seasons.

After relegation in 2021/2022 it took just three seasons in National Two East for

Tonbridge to get back into National One and start playing Stortford again. Stortford will be playing Tonbridge in the last home match of this season, though this season we played away at Tonbridge in December and not at the start of the season. Also, this season Tonbridge are just one place below us in the league so it is safe to assume (with both sides in mid-table), we will be playing them again next season.

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## What a season it has been for Women's Rugby!

Following last year's historic, undefeated promotion campaign, the aim this season was not simply to repeat success, but to raise the bar again. The team has done exactly that.

With two league games still to play, promotion has already been secured for the second consecutive year. Alongside this, the squad has delivered a dominant league campaign, scoring over 600 points. High scoring performances have been a regular feature, with multiple matches passing the 50 and 60 point mark. More importantly, the season has been defined by consistency, high standards, and a collective drive to keep improving week after week.

This year also marked the team's first entry into a cup competition, bringing fresh challenges against unfamiliar opposition and higher level rugby. Reaching the quarterfinals was a significant milestone and a reflection of the progress made so far. It is an achievement the group can take pride in and one that has helped build confidence as the programme continues to develop.

The most impressive part of the journey has been the growth of Women's Rugby within the club. The season began still building momentum and welcoming new players, many were new to rugby. Those players have quickly become part of a supportive and competitive environment. Introduction of U18 players into senior rugby during the second half of the season has further strengthened the pathway from youth to adult rugby and highlighted an exciting future.

Now, the section is on the verge of fielding a second team, with plans to enter the Inner Warrior competition creating even more playing opportunities. While growth may appear rapid from the outside, it has been built steadily through commitment, hard work, and a group of players who continue to show up for each other.

None of this happens without the people guiding it. Under Head Coach Kyle McDonald, alongside

backs coach Alex Watson, forwards coaches Alex Barclay Dave Walker, and Tom Brady, the squad has been challenged and supported to improve every week. Working closely with Head of Women's and Girls Rugby Kate Hawkins, they have helped create an environment built on enjoyment, accountability, and belief.

The wider club, sponsors, and supporters have also played a vital role. Support from the Oval Club with kit early in the season was invaluable, while backing from Bailey Hills has helped us celebrate key moments.

We are also grateful to a group of long standing supporters who have consistently supported the team, contributing towards coaches and the occasional well earned post match pint. Growing support on the sidelines has made Women's Rugby an increasingly visible and valued part of the club.

Promotion to NC1 brings both a step up in standards and an exciting opportunity for continued growth. Alongside this, the development of a second team through Inner Warrior represents another key milestone in widening participation and strengthening the programme.

Our final game of the season takes place on Sunday 26th April, with the focus firmly on finishing strong and producing a performance that reflects everything this group has built. After the final whistle, we will be celebrating another hugely successful season. We would love to see as many people there as possible to support the team and join us afterwards as we mark the end of another special season together.

See you on the sidelines.



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## Under 15 – Tour of Holland 2026

The under 15s embarked on a Tour of Holland over the Easter weekend. 38 boys, 7 coaches and 13 parents meet at 530am at the club on Good Friday for a day of travelling and refreshment via Harwich port, the Hook of Holland and onwards to Summio Parc which was our accommodation for the next 3 days. The boys were let loose on the ferry and having left all phones at home they had a great time with several unsolicited reports from passengers that they were well behaved!

We had a free day on the Saturday, so had a day out at Walibi Holland, which is a large theme park, and this sorted out the thrill seekers from the lame, with a number of coaches refusing to entertain getting on any rides.

The main event of the tour was on Sunday where we entered 2 teams into the long-established Hilversum International Youth Rugby Festival which has been going for 27 years. The team names of Spartans and Samurai were resurrected from our under 12 Butlins tour. The teams played opposition from Scotland, England and the

Netherlands. The Spartan team won their group progressing to the play off final and the Samurai played some great rugby to make the play-off round as well. Interesting in our first game that in the Netherlands you can still play mixed rugby to under 18s, so the boys were met with the challenge of playing some girls who hit hard and one tourist who will remain anonymous as “being scared”!

Spartans played Bromley in the final winning 29-0 and played some great running rugby which sets them up for the Herts County Cup final which is now being played on 1st XV pitch on Friday 24th April at 7.30pm given OAs decided to go on tour on Finals Day! Please come along and support.

Arriving back at the holiday park, the Most Honourable Judge Jon Hall conducted a lengthy court session correcting many misdemeanours on tour and the boys were grateful for some raw vegetables given there was plenty of brown food eaten on tour.



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- 2 Isaac Bell
- 3 Toby Hill
- 4 Hamish Ferguson
- 5 James Apperley
- 6 Harrison Langworthy
- 7 Ollie Jones
- 8 Will Rogers (c)
- 9 Asa Stewart-Harris
- 10 David Hayes
- 11 Seva Kava
- 12 Tom Hitchcock
- 13 Alex Gilham
- 14 Tom Mills
- 15 Jake Morris

### REPLACEMENTS

- 16 Damien Ducci
- 17 Mason Ford
- 18 Austin Pope
- 19 Chris Bolton
- 20 Dan Cole

**Head Coach:**

Tom Coleman

**Defence/Forwards Coach:**

Tom Woolstencroft

**Assistant Forwards Coach:**

Rob Faiers

**Lead Strength & Conditioning:**

Ben Sheath

**Head Physio:**

Ryan Clarke

**Team Manager:**

Darren Orbart

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- 10** Lewis Gjaltema

---

- 11** Curtis Barnes

---

- 12** Harrison Sims

---

- 13** Duncan Tout

---

- 14** Tom Kendrick

---

- 15** Tom Mannix

---

### REPLACEMENTS

---

- 16** Ashley Graham

---

- 17** Luke Boon

---

- 18** Ben Harrison

---

- 19** Tom Nicol

---

- 20** Harvey Fernaux

**Team Manager:**

Pete Dankert

**DoR:**

Jordan Turner Hall

**Coaches:**

Luke Wallace

Tom White

**Strength & Conditioning**

Nick Rees

**Physios:**

Jess R Rugg

Suzie Brook

**Management**

Pete Dankert

Steve Farr

Due to printing deadlines, the opposition team shown is the team from last week's game and may be subject to change.

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# NATIONAL ONE: RESULTS, FIXTURES, LEAGUE TABLE

## RESULTS FROM 11TH APRIL 2026

HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM
Birmingham Moseley	24 - 25	Leeds Tykes
Blackheath	40 - 19	Sale FC
<b>Dings Crusaders</b>	<b>40 - 34</b>	<b>Bishop's Stortford</b>
Plymouth Albion	68 - 24	Sedgley Park
Rosslyn Park	88 - 7	Leicester Lions
Rotherham	80 - 7	Rams
Tonbridge Juddians	33 - 24	Clifton

## FIXTURES FOR 25TH APRIL 2026

HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM
<b>Birmingham Moseley</b>	<b>vs</b>	<b>Bishop's Stortford</b>
Blackheath	vs	Clifton
Dings Crusaders	vs	Rosslyn Park
Plymouth Albion	vs	Leeds Tykes
Rams	vs	Sedgley Park
Rotherham	vs	Sale FC
Tonbridge Juddians	vs	Leicester Lions

NATIONAL LEAGUE 1 TABLE											
Team	P	W	D	L	PF	PA	PD	TBP	LBP	Points	Adj.
Rotherham	24	20	0	4	950	482	468	18	3	101	0
Plymouth Albion	24	19	0	5	920	496	424	20	1	97	0
Blackheath	24	19	0	5	816	483	333	18	3	97	0
Sale FC	24	16	0	8	771	530	241	17	5	86	0
Rosslyn Park	24	15	0	9	856	650	206	21	4	85	0
Rams	24	12	0	12	700	722	-22	16	6	70	0
<b>Bishop's Stortford</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>711</b>	<b>777</b>	<b>-66</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Tonbridge Juddians</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>698</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>0</b>
Leeds Tykes	24	11	0	13	615	776	-161	11	2	57	0
Dings Crusaders	24	8	0	16	616	869	-253	14	5	51	0
Birmingham Moseley	24	7	1	16	589	682	-93	12	7	49	0
Clifton	24	8	0	16	551	821	-270	11	4	47	0
Sedgley Park	24	8	0	16	500	794	-294	10	3	45	0
Leicester Lions	24	2	0	22	564	1093	-529	13	2	23	0

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### Dings Crusaders 40 Bishop's Stortford 1st XV 34

Stortford's quest for a 7th win on the bounce was thwarted by a side clearly determined to fight their way out of the relegation battle - with that determination apparently undiminished by the presence in the squad of 6 Bristol Bears academy players. Both sides looked to play expansive rugby from the start, but it was the home side, with their Bears centres outstanding, that took early control. Individually strong and, clearly used to playing together they were at the centre of some cracking running rugby - at times irresistible - that took them out to a 19 points' lead after only 13 minutes and extended this to 26 after just over half an hour. Moving the ball at high speed between numerous players that were individually very illusive often left Stortford clutching at air, though it has to be said that the visitors could have made their task rather less hard, had they missed fewer of their first-up tackles. Dings' 4th try followed hard on the heels of a yellow card shown to Tom Hitchcock for repeated team offences, partly reflecting the referee's enthusiasm for blowing the whistle at the slightest and, sometimes, confusing pretexts. Despite the one man handicap, Stortford fought back in the final quarter of the first half, with Chris Bolton touching down after 35 minutes from the base of one of a number of tryline rucks, following a 5m lineout, after successive penalties against Dings. He also added the tricky conversion, but was unable to repeat the feat 5 minutes later, though it was his pinpoint kick pass in the swirling wind that set up the try. The scorer was loan Parry, showing great composure in only his second first team appearance, by cutting in from the wing and sidestepping two covering defenders.

Stortford failed signally to retain the momentum after the restart, when Dings' opening kick was allowed to bounce into touch on the visitors' 22 and the resultant lineout was lost. These errors were compounded by some uncharacteristically loose tackling and Dings were in for a converted try under the posts with less than 42 minutes gone. Within a minute, though, Stortford

responded with an unconverted try to Jake Morris, after the home defence was caught on the hop, when Bolton switched play to the blindside, having run open from a midfield scrum and Tom Hitchcock used the space created to burst through and feed the fullback. The visitors narrowed the points gap to 9 points 10 minutes later, after David Hayes took the second of two successive penalties quickly, but was tackled just short. The pack, though kept the pressure on and Fraizer Kiff dived over for a try converted by Hayes. The deficit was soon further reduced to just 4 points, following a scrum on halfway, after Dings' restart kick flew straight into touch. Asa Stewart-Harris, now on for Bolton, repeated his predecessor's feat of running right, but passing back behind the scrum to the left and once again Hitchcock took full advantage of the space created to put Morris in for his second try. Stortford were now managing to pressurise a few errors out of the opposition backs and looked for a while as if they might pull off a remarkable comeback victory. With 65 minutes gone, however, Dings were attacking the Stortford line, after successive penalties produced two 5m lineouts. The visitors defended driving mauls from both very well, but two further penalties, the second for a no-arms tackle by Harrison Langworthy, saw the flanker receive a yellow card, which was shortly followed by a try to the home side under the posts. The resultant 11 points gap was soon narrowed to 6 from an incisive counter-attack from a long kick from Dings, which Parry ran back strongly and Hitchcock took on decisively to slice through and deliver a scoring pass to Tom Mills. Play swung to and fro and it took a great cover tackle from Kiff and jackal from Morris to foil a threatening Dings move well inside Stortford's 22. With time running out, Stortford looked to run out of defence, in search of a potentially winning try, but the game was ended, when the ball was knocked on out wide, as the home side again showed considerable defensive determination.

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## Damien Ducci



Damien made his first appearance for the Stortford First XV coming on as a back row replacement for Will Rogers, in the heavy defeat to Rotherham back in September 2025. Damien's normal position is as a prop and this first Stortford appearance can very much be considered a baptism of fire.

Damien had played as a prop for the BSRFC U18's colts in the cup competitions in the 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 seasons. Damien also made a number of appearances for the Blues in 2024/2025.

During this season Damien has had four starts in the front row to date and as the season has progressed, has become a regular player in the club's prop rotation set-up with Toby Hill, Tristian Smith and Henry Peck.

He scored his first "official" try for the Firsts at the very end of the Rosslyn Park game last month but his first try (which had been scored at the end of the Leicester Lions away match) was accredited by the Lions club fourth officials to Mason Bartley-Ford. As Stortford had won well and scored 59 points in both these matches, these may not have been crucial tries. Hopefully Damien will not have to wait for Stortford to score 59 points again before getting another try!

Perhaps more significantly, Damien has yet to be yellow carded this season and could go a whole season without a yellow card, which is considered a very rare achievement for a Stortford prop.

Damien comes from South Africa where props are rightly venerated but he only started playing club rugby after his family moved to the UK. Playing in

the front row with a South African accent could prove to be a distinct advantage in National One rugby.

At twenty years old Damien is still very much a youngster as a prop in National One but he has made very good progress this season. He appreciates all the help and coaching he has received at Stortford that has helped establish him in the First XV.

Damien has moved up from the U18 colts to the First XV but having not played minis rugby at Stortford, could not have qualified him with home grown \* status. However, more importantly, despite his age he has already started to look like an experienced prop.

Damien's older brother Fabian Ducci has also played rugby at Stortford. Fabian played at centre where, being from South Africa, is definitely not as much of an advantage as being a prop.

The Ducci surname has Italian origins and so on the team sheet it disguises his South African roots; you only have to talk with Damien to quickly get the impression he is indeed, a real South African prop.

Damien is at present living in Takeley so it is very appropriate that he is sponsored this season by Coleman's Farm.



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**Club Stortford** continues to grow and we are increasing our membership.

Now in our 14th 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 14 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 and Colts development squads.**

We continue to be on the hunt for new members who can help us to broaden the extent of our support for the squad. Individual and corporate membership options are available and both 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 head coach Tom Coleman. 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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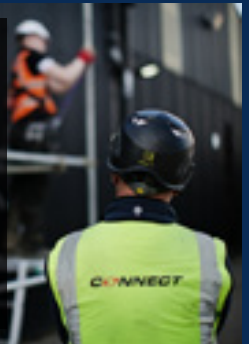


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The Oval Club was formed in 1998 by some Bishop's Stortford Rugby Football Club members who wanted to find a way of raising funds to improve the playing facilities of the Club with the mission statement:

**'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

If you are interested in joining **The Oval Club** please contact a member of the Committee, below:

- Robbie Kerr** - Chairman
- Steven Wasley** - Secretary
- John Power** - Treasurer
- John Robinson**
- Mark Caulfield**
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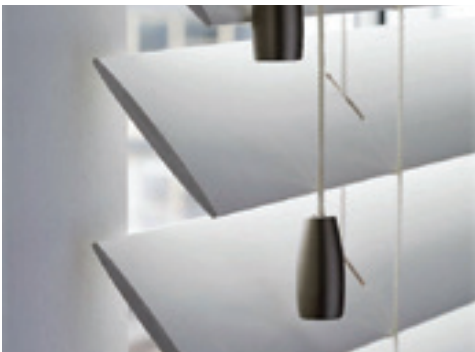


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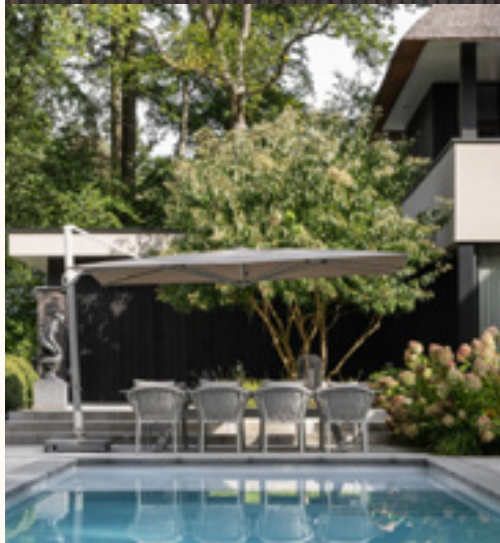
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### BSRFC President

Traditionally it is the first match programme of the season that contains either the introduction of the new Club President, or the announcement of the start of their second and final season in office. Our Club President only serves for a fixed term of two seasons before handing over to their successor. This match will be Al Jones' last home match as President and he will be handing over to Dave Walker for next season at the Club AGM in the summer.

Al took over from Len Lindop at the start of the 2024/2025 season and in his two seasons, our 1st XV has avoided any relegation scares achieving respectable mid-table finishes in both seasons, even if the start of this season did not go well until results turned around in November. Now Al will not claim any credit for the successes on the pitch but, with the marquee refurbishment finishing on time before the start of this season, all the pre-match home lunches have been successful once again. Al is quick to recognise all the Club members that have helped him throughout his presidency, although he is claiming credit for the fine weather on Ladies Day a few weeks ago!

Our Club Chairman, Steve Dunkley, succinctly summed up the Club President role as follows: "It is a primarily an honorary position within the Club and acts as the Club's representative at all internal and external functions". Of course, the centre piece of the President's role at Stortford is the hosting of the top table during the pre-match lunches at home matches with the objective to warmly welcome the opposition team's dignitaries, acknowledge and thank the Club's sponsors in attendance, and ensure everybody enjoys their lunch, a role that Al has fulfilled splendidly.

Al's jokes and pre-lunch graces are perhaps not quite as famous (or should that be infamous) in National League One as those of Mick Coleman, but he has been a very popular President with the visitors and is generally one of the last to leave the clubhouse on home match days. One

innovation on match days this season has been the post-match video interview with Head Coach Tom Coleman, which has been added to Al's role. For home games, these take place in front of a full "Match of the Day" club sponsors' background. The videos appear on the Club's social media channels and in the last three home games' videos, it has been great to see Tom Coleman deservedly smiling through the interviews.

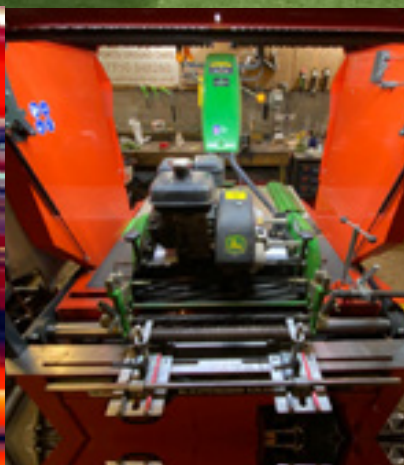
Al's commitment to the role has meant he missed out on the opportunity to be at Murrayfield for two famous Scotland Six Nations results this season; Scotland 31 England 21 and Scotland 50 France 40. Al is always keen to remind us of his Scottish heritage, especially when the Calcutta Cup is north of the border and even if Ireland managed to ruin things for Scotland at Dublin.

Well done again on a successful presidential term, and perhaps unlike with another President across the Atlantic, we are sure the Club will be looking back on Al's term with many happy memories.





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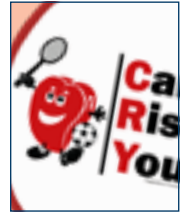


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## BSRFC PRESIDENT'S CHARITY CARDIAC RISK IN THE YOUNG



Max Oliver

At the start of last season, our Rugby Club family lost our friend and teammate **Max Oliver**, 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.

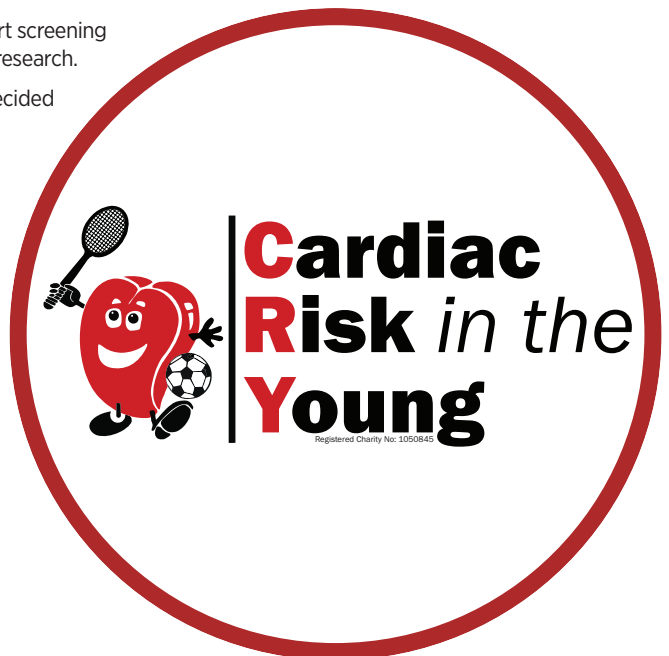
CRY promotes and develops heart screening programmes and funds medical research.

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.

So far over, £51,000 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**, BSFRFC President



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# Behind the scenes with the 1st XV...

As part of the Club's ethos 'to be a strong and successful rugby club united from Senior to Minis', trusted and valued by our community BSRFC Head Coach **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

6:30pm – 8:30pm

Sundays

9am – 1pm

Saturdays

12pm – 3pm

(When there is a  
1st XV home match)



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