

PARKNEWS



The E-magazine for Rosslyn Park supporters Wednesday 27th January 2010 - Issue 138

THE CRUNCH BECKONS

Welcome to Parknews. Matches do not come more important than Saturday's home match with Barking. In the match at Goresbrook earlier in the season Park looked the better side for the first 20 minutes, after which they were - to be honest - given something of a thrashing. It is not by happenstance that the East London side are top of the League: they have a formidable pack and some extremely fast backs. The only match they have lost all season was away to Clifton - and that was a very close one.

National 2 South

	P	Home			Away			F	A	Bonus			Pts
		W	D	L	W	D	L			Diff	Try	Loss	
<i>Barking</i>	15	9	0	0	5	0	1	483	169	314	9	1	64*
<i>Rosslyn Park</i>	16	9	0	0	4	1	2	512	239	273	9	1	64
Ealing	15	8	0	0	5	0	2	507	276	231	11	1	64
Clifton	15	6	1	0	4	0	4	303	277	26	4	2	48
Southend	16	6	0	2	3	1	4	426	343	83	6	3	47
Canterbury	16	5	0	4	3	1	3	374	415	-41	6	1	41
Shelford	15	5	1	1	2	0	6	341	344	-3	3	2	35
Dings Crusaders	16	4	1	4	1	1	5	298	335	-37	3	3	30
Worthing	14	4	1	2	2	0	5	236	270	-35	0	3	29
Lydney	15	2	0	4	3	0	6	301	354	-53	3	6	29
Richmond	16	3	0	4	2	0	7	371	461	-90	6	2	28
Henley	14	5	0	3	1	0	5	289	311	-22	3	0	25*
Westcombe Park	14	3	0	2	2	0	7	214	288	-74	0	2	22
Barnes	16	0	0	5	2	0	8	225	487	-262	1	3	10*
Bridgwater & Albion	15	2	0	7	0	0	6	161	472	-311	1	0	9

* Barnes, Henley and Barking have each been deducted 2 points

However, Park will feel they let themselves down with the performance at Barking and will doubtless wish to show that they are a far better team than they showed on that day. It should be a fantastic match between two good sides. We hope every true supporter will be there with vocal chords appropriately lubricated. Your support for the team could make all the difference.

At the time of writing there are still a small number of seats left for the pre-match lunch: ring Tyron or Will on 020 8876 1879 if you are interested.

Feisty

London sides always get a feisty welcome in the Forest of Dean, and Park's visit to Lydney last Saturday was no exception (report next page). It is never easy to secure a victory at Regentsholme; taken over the whole 80 minutes, Park probably deserved to win by more and certainly should have done so. There was a distinctly "hairy" few minutes in the second half when Lydney took the lead, but the Park players held their collective nerve admirably to achieve the result they came for. It would not be helpful to dwell here on the punch-up and subsequent early re-carding of a Lydney lock, but if the video of the match confirms what your reporter - and indeed the touch judge - thought they saw, then any admiration for the way the home side fought with 14 men needs to be tempered with consideration of what reduced them to 14 in the first place.

You will notice the name Steve Pape as a replacement for Park at Lydney last Saturday. Steve is a new signing from Newbury Blues. It seems likely that he may well be called upon to start against Barking on Saturday as Howard Quigley looks unlikely to be available. However, despite a number of injuries, the selectors do have other options open to them so we must wait and see. Those options do not, however, include Russ Forster, who is due to see a specialist about his ankle injury. Russ has had some wretched luck with injuries in recent months and we wish him well.

2nd XV

The 2s had a close encounter with Esher 2nd at the Rock last weekend (report page 3) losing narrowly to /Continued back page...

Forthcoming Fixtures

Saturday 30th January

1st XV v Barking

National 2 South

Home KO 2:15 PM

Ealing 2nd v 2nd XV

RugbyTech Shield Div 1

Home KO 2:00PM

Hatters v Ruislip 2

RugbyTech Shield Div 4

Richmond Park KO 2:00

4's v L.Scots 4's

Middlesex Merit Table 1

Richmond Park KO 2:00

B's v Imperial Medics 2

Middlesex Merit Table 2

Richmond Park KO 2:00

Nomads v Old Hamptonians 2

Middlesex Merit Table 3

Away KO TBA

Sunday 31st January

Newbury v Slingbacks

Friendly

Away KO 2:00PM

The Clubhouse bar is open on Tuesday & Thursday evenings. Come along and enjoy a sociable drink

Park forced to battle for it



Ollie Lyndsey-Hague has plenty of support as he launches another run at the Lydney defence [all match photos by David Whittam]

Lydney 23 Rosslyn Park 29 National 2 South

From the kick off Park were all over Lydney like a rash. They soon had the ball within 5 metres of the home line but knocked on when trying to spread it. Ollie Lyndsey-Hague made a great run at the heart of the home defence but, again, a handling error stopped the move. Trapped in their own half Lydney conceded a kickable penalty but, sensing blood, Ross Laidlaw booted to touch.

From the resulting throw a massive punch up ensued. It was not clear what started it, but the referee's whistle was impotent to stop it. Every potential peacemaker who intervened seemed only to get embroiled himself. Just as it looked as if things had finally settled down, home lock James Bashford appeared to deliver a sickening head butt on Park skipper Rob Jewell, spotted by the touch judge. After long deliberation by the three match officials, both skippers were spoken to and Bashford received a red card, leaving his side to play the rest of the match with 14 men.

Laidlaw converted the resultant penalty, but the dynamic of the match seemed to change. Park, who had begun with such urgency, appeared to regard patience as a virtue and Lydney became fired-up but appeared to value ball retention above actually doing something with it. It became a less than compelling spectacle.

There was soon a further punch-up, but on a smaller scale, as a result of which Park's Jonny Barrett was obliged to spend 10 minutes in the

sin bin. The deadlock was broken after 18 minutes when full-back Richard Davies, supporting a move, received the ball and outpaced the defence to score in the left corner for 8-0. Laidlaw's conversion attempt bisected the posts, but below the crossbar.

Park had a clear edge at this stage in terms of pace and skill but could not finish their moves, Lydney tackling and spoiling for all they were worth. The first time Lydney got into the Park half they caught the visitors offside and fly half Tony Wicks reduced the arrears to 8-3. However, within two minutes Laidlaw had a similar penalty and restored the lead.



Somewhere under this pile-up, Chris Ritchie has touched down to finish off some fine work by the Park pack.

On the half hour, Park conceded another penalty and the reliable boot of Wicks made it 11-6. Almost immediately, Park full back Davies received a good pass from Graham Barr and enlivened proceedings by selling a glorious dummy, bought wholesale by the entire Lydney defence, to scamper through and score unchallenged for 16-6. A further Park attack saw Lydney forced to touch down behind their own line, but they could not press home their advantage.

The second half started with a massive, strength-sapping maul into the home 22. An attacking scrum followed but when the ball was spread Lydney scrambled it to safety. However Park would not be denied, won back possession and rolled over the line, Chris Ritchie claiming the score for 21-6.

Straight from kick off the match took a dramatic turn. Lydney attacked more in hope than conviction, / *continued next page.....*



Marc Sweeney leads another Park attack at Regent-sholme.

From previous page....

but a clearance kick was charged down by home centre Dougie Freeman, who followed up to score and Wicks added a conversion for 21-13. Roared on by a partisan crowd, Lydney started to believe.

Park could, and should, have put them back in their box when a drive to the home line resulted in a penalty on 5 metres. Park opted to scrummage and forced another penalty. They reset the scrum with the same result. Resetting it again, a try or penalty try seemed inevitable but Park contrived to concede a free kick.

Lydney sensed that Park were rattled, pressed and gained a penalty, converted by Wicks for 21-16. Park had another attack, were thwarted and conceded a penalty, and then 10 metres for indiscipline. Lydney kicked for the corner, won the line-out and a fine angled run from replacement Mark Davies leveled the scores. Wicks' conversion put the home side ahead for the first time.

It would have been easy for Park to panic as Lydney pushed forward. But Park kept their heads, defended well and then hit them with a devastating counter-attack through an astonishing piece of work from Ollie Lyndsey-Hague as the young winger jinked past defender after defender from his own 22 to well inside Lydney's. With only a single defender left to beat, he selflessly off-loaded and replacement Adam Gates touched down for the bonus point, restoring Park's lead at 26-23.

After that, the result was never in serious doubt. Lyndsey-Hague followed up his own grubber kick and was blatantly obstructed. The penalty was kicked to the corner, but Lydney scrambled clear from the line-out. Back came Park and gained a penalty in front of the posts for Laidlaw to make it 29-23. As time ran out, Park had another kickable penalty but Laidlaw took no chances and hoofed it out of the ground to bring the final whistle.

It was not a vintage Park performance by any means, but if we're going to start quibbling about returning from Regentsholme with a bonus-point win then they really must be getting somewhere!

Park: Davies; Lyndsey-Hague, Sweeney (O'Driscoll), Jewell, Unsel; Laidlaw; Barr; Huggett (Lahiff), Ritchie, Collier; Quigley (Pape), Slade; M Jones (Gates), Barrett, Lock.

Sub not used: Pugh

Park scorers: Davies (2T), Ritchie (T), Gates (T), Laidlaw (3C)



Adam Slade dominates the line-out



Adam Gates bags the bonus point with Park's fourth try

ESHER 2s ARE JUST TOO STRONG

Park 2nd 5

Esher 2nd 14

RugbyTech Shield Div 1

The 2s lost no caste in defeat by a very strong Esher second string, that put a cricket score on us earlier in the season. Jim Ryan was selected, and so has played Senior Rugby for the Club in each of the three separate decades he has been at Park. He is now off to Trinidad on a 2-year contract. It was a pity that we couldn't send him on his way with a win but make no mistake, this Esher side would beat most 1st XV's in National 2.

Coach Gareth Jordan said, "This was a good opportunity to beat a side that in theory should beat us. (National 1 second team against a National 2-second team). It was a good display and the boys were up for it, but we made some crucial errors at times when we should have scored



The scrums square up (Photo: John Weatherall)

points. Our defence was solid again, although they scored two tries, one being a penalty try from a recurring scrum offence and the other an intercept from their 22m. They never managed to break our line.

"Our defence inside our 22m is pretty solid, but outside that area, we seem reluctant to push aggressively and we give the opposition too much space to play in. We scored from putting them under pressure close to our line, their fly half passed a shocking pass which was kicked through by Chris Simmons, Nick Canty chased, kicked ahead, we regathered 5 metres out and scored to go 5-0 up.

We scrambled well on defence. Esher had two decent centres, which was probably the difference. Stand out performances for us were: Martin Anayi, Dougie Rodman and Rhodri Needham".



Jim Ryan leaves the pitch, possibly for the last time for a couple of years at least. [Photo: John Weatherall]



Adam Gates soars to win line-out ball on Saturday

From front page.... a side that most observers reckon would be near the top of 2 South were they able to play in the Leagues. There were some terrific players in our side as well: if promotion comes down to who has the greatest strength in depth then we must surely be in with a shout!

Sling-backs

The Slingbacks had a tough time of it on Sunday, losing 27-0 at Blackheath and are currently flirting dangerously with relegation. They have some matches coming up which should help them pull clear, and your support - particularly at home matches - would make the job a lot easier. This Sunday the Slingbacks can enjoy their rugby, free from the cares of Leagues, when they play a friendly at Newbury.

Clubsides

Will Thorogood reports, "In a closely contested match, which could have gone either way, the Hatters were on the attack against Cornish 2's in the dying moments of the game, to take the lead, when Cornish intercepted and secure victory for them, 21-12! Damn..."

"The 4's went to Duke's Meadows to play Civil Service 2's. I only know the score, 27-24 to Service, but it sounds like an exciting encounter!"

"The B's misfortune continues...stricken by injuries, particularly, in the front row, and they had drop-outs on Saturday morning, and as a result, had to play Grasshoppers 2's with 14 men for the whole game. The B's did credit themselves for most of the game, holding G'hoppers to 21-8, but three late tries by the Isleworth side meant a 38-8 loss for the B's. Hopefully, some of those on the injury list will be returning in the near future, so there is still an optimistic hope of qualifying for the play-offs...keep at it lads!"

"The Nomads continue on their unbeaten run...this time defeating Quins 2's 46-6! Always nice!"

"Battle of the Giants in Richmond Park, Bench v Richmond Heavies. No prisoners taken, but a good spectacle! A game of contrasting styles. Richmond Heavies were heavy, surprise, surprise, but the Bench were fleet of foot and try to launch attacks from all corners of the field. The Heavies scored three, if not four rumbling, "up your jumper" tries, and the lead changed hands several times. Highlight of the Benches' tries was Chris Dunn's intercept from half way (I expect he'll be saying from his own 22), but for a 2nd rower, he shifted it...the "silver streak", well his hair

is going silver! Anyway, Bench led 21-20 with 10 minutes to go, and about the only time the Heavies spun it out wide, they managed to squeeze in the corner. A further penalty by Richmond confirmed their victory, 28-21. I think our guys are chomping at the bit for the return at the RAG in March. Good football!"

Record?

We think that Chris Ritchie set a unique record in the second half at Lydney last Saturday. The original front row line-up was Will Collier, Chris Ritchie and Nick Huggett. When Chris first played for Park's 1st XV, Will's father was still playing for the club. It is probably easy to check whether Collier (snr) and Chris ever played together - if so to have played with both father and son would be pretty unusual. However, when Huggy had to be replaced with Max Lahiff, like Will Collier still a teenager, then it meant that 39-year old Chris was more than the combined age of his two props! The only person who might also have done that at National League level would be Graham Dawe at Plymouth Albion, but we don't think they ever played two such young props in the same match. Is there an anorak out there who can settle this one?

National 2 South

While Park v Barking is the stand-out fixture this weekend, there are plenty of other interesting matches: Brisdgwater & Albion v Canterbury Clifton v Shelford Ealing v Dings Crusaders Henley v Lydney Rosslyn Park v Barking Westcombe Park v Barnes Worthing v Richmond.

Missing items

Alas the Editor's e-mail went on the blink on Monday, and so it was impossible to mail out reminders to some of our correspondents. Apologies for the gaps that arise from this.

Support

There were an impressive number of Park supporters at Lydney on Saturday: plenty of familiar faces in the clubhouse and familiar voices (plus one bark) from the terraces. The players and coaches really do appreciate the people who take the time and expense to support the team in away matches - it really does make a big difference.

The Scrum

Don't forget to tune in to The Scrum on BBC Radio London 94.9FM at 9:00PM on Thursdays for all the latest on London rugby. Park's match with Barking is very likely to be featured this week.



Ollie Lyndsey-Hague fires up the after-burners for another tilt at the Lydney defence at Regentsholm last Saturday.