

PARKNEWS



The E-magazine for Rosslyn Park supporters Wednesday 1 June 2010 - Issue 154

ANDY RIPLEY HONoured

Welcome to Parknews. On 22 May Rosslyn Park legend Andy Ripley received his OBE, for services to sport, from HRH Prince Charles at an investiture in the Ballroom at Buckingham Palace. It is not intended as *lese majeste* to observe that His Royal Highness should also perhaps have felt honoured to make the presentation to such a remarkable individual. Then last week, Andy was honoured by the rugby writers at Grosvenor House, where he received probably rugby's longest standing ovation and reduced around a thousand hard-bitten hacks to tears.

We have not kept up a running commentary on Andy's illness in Parknews, regarding it as essentially a private matter. But he is now very ill indeed, the cancer having taken away his eyesight a few weeks back. He was wheeled onto stage by son Marcus, where he said, "I can't see you.. which is a bit crappy." But he added defiantly before finishing, "No, I will not turn my head to the wall yet and die." Words really cannot describe this most amazing human being.

There was a moving article in the Sunday Times about Andy which you can read at http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/sport/rugby_union/article7133833.ece

Andy has reached the stage where - barring a sudden breakthrough - medical science has done all it can except for relieving the physical pain. Whatever God you believe in, remember the great man in your prayers. He'll appreciate that.

HQ Heroes

Life goes on, and the Club's youngsters had the fantastic experience with the U-14s playing the final of the Gullivers National tournament in front of a packed Twickenham last weekend. They played heroically in a narrow 5-0 defeat against Warrington, who were unbeaten all season and also won the Lancashire Championship. Tom Blake's report on the match is on the next page.

1st XV Fixtures

The 1st XV fixtures for next season have now been published in draft form, for clubs to comment. In reality, it is very unlikely that these will change as - whilst they never suit anyone entirely - the chain of events that even a small change triggers usually raises at least as many objections as the list itself! The only time there have been substantive changes in recent years have been where a club ground-shares with a non-NCA club, and that does not apply to anyone in our Division.

The fixture list is at page 3, and it is in the form of a poster that you can print out and stick up in your local pub, restaurant, gym or whatever.



Andy Ripley receives his OBE from HRH Prince Charles [Photo: Daily Telegraph]

er. It says on the "poster" that the fixtures are provisional (clearly the Club cannot go to the expense of having professionally printed posters produced until all the dates are set in concrete). So please make a note to replace any you do put up with "official" ones when they become available.

We have something of a baptism of fire, because our first fixture on 4th September is at home to the Cornish All-Blacks of Launceston who finished third in National One last season, we then travel to play a local derby at Blackheath before a home London Derby against last season's runners-up London Scottish, then a third local derby against Two South Champions Barking. If we don't travel outside London during the first month, then October makes up for it, with trips to Redruth, Tynedale and Sedgley Park!

Away support

There was some amazing away support at many matches last season, and it would be great to maintain and build upon it next year. The editor wonders whether there would be support for getting together an informal grouping of people who intend to go away reasonably regularly to try to ensure that we achieve the maximum discount for group travel. Whilst some people will have access to travelcards which may on occasion be cheaper, there are still places like Wharfedale where a cab from the nearest station will be a small fortune and it would be sensible to club together for a minibus. The thought is for something organised among the supporters themselves rather than another task for the club's administration. If anyone is interested, send an e-mail to news@rosslynpark.co.uk and we'll try to institute a meeting on licenced premises before the season starts.

Next Parknews

Parknews will now be in hibernation mode, but will be published occasionally throughout the summer whenever there is something to report, so do keep an eye on the website. However, we shall not be carrying a running commentary on every rumour of moves and signings until things are absolutely signed and settled. Hopefully we'll soon have details of pre-season friendly matches.

PARK EDGED OUT IN TWICKENHAM THRILLER



Warrington 5 Rosslyn Park 0

Gulliver's Final

By Tom Blake

Both Warrington and Rosslyn Park were unbeaten at the Gulliver's Festival in Nottingham and looked the best sides by some margin. Warrington had been unbeaten all season and were convincing winners of the Lancashire Cup in April. This was a fine contest between two high quality teams.

Park dominated the first 5 minutes of the game, the platform set by the pack. Every scrum was won by Park – two against the head – and the backs were able to send the ball down the line with first Max Allison on the right and then Charlie Williams on the left making threatening breaks. However, the Warrington defence held firm; from a throw in 5 metres from their own line they won the line out and their fly half made an excellent clearance kick. It was from another strong kick upfield that Warrington first threatened, Edward Meltzer having to track back, pick up and then deal with two marauding opponents. Just enough support arrived and George Austin made a brave run to clear the danger.

This attack seemed to give heart to Warrington and the game then ebbed and flowed in midfield for the rest of the half. The tackling on both sides was terrific, two from Ollie Addison and Alfie Dudman-Jones being memorable. The Park pick and drive looked good once, but the ball was spilled in the greasy conditions (the game was played throughout in "mizzle") and when James McRae took an inside pass from fly half Elliot Manley he was gobbled up by Warrington's loose forwards – we never saw another forward 'pick and go' all game. Just before half time another kick on by Warrington in front of the Park faithful looked dangerous but Thorben Heidrich showed great cool in booting the loose ball into touch with his left foot. There was nothing in it at half time. Park had dominated with ball in hand and at the scrum but Warrington clearly had pace in their backs and a very well organised defence.

The second half was equally close. This time Park had no ball to win off the Warrington scrum, the Warrington scrum half having obviously been instructed to feed the ball directly to his second row. Both sides began to run laterally and there seemed no way through. However, Warrington's backs were aligned very deep at their own set piece.

This created enough space for their full back to have time to pick up speed. From just outside his own 22 he found a gap and surged through. The Park cover did not have enough gas to stop him and he scored an excellent try wide right.

Naturally this spurred on Park who had several "if only" moments. First James McRae burst through down the left, his support struggling to keep up. When James was held up the ball fell to ground and the danger passed. Then from loose ball in midfield, Alfie Dudman-Jones collected and ran through wide on the right. He was held up close to the Warrington 22 and did not see support charging down the centre and the play broke down. With time running out a deep kick from Warrington was collected in the 22. Manley cross kicked wide to Tom Whiteley who caught well on the left wing close to his 22. He surged upfield, breaking two tackles but looked for the offload down the middle when Harry Blake and Kiran Patel were clear on the left. And then at the very end another promising move down the line ended when the ball was dropped.

The boys gave their all and in many ways dominated the game. But Warrington were worthy winners, outstanding in defence and with one game-changing player at full back. Park left the field devastated, mainly because they knew they could have won the game. But it had been a wonderful match. The watching Guinness Premiership Final officials applauded the boys at the end and the Park fans gave them the ovation they deserved.

Here let us pay tribute to the coaching staff who have created a squad of real depth. All I have reported happened while 23 players were rotated on and off the pitch – and never did the team lose momentum, always it kept up the pressure. Every one of the 23 boys had worked hard to be there, indeed the squad was obviously fitter than it had been at Nottingham, and they can be proud of everything they did.

And well done too to all the Park fans and to the many non-playing age group members who cheered their mates. It was a thrill to see the whole group come together for a day we will never forget.

Squad: George Austin; Theo Brader Tan; Max Hayes; James McRae; Thorben Heidrich; Ollie Addison; Michael Johnson; Hugo Harris; Ben Wallace; Elliot Manley; Charlie Williams; Kiran Patel; Alfie Dudman-Jones; Max Allison; Edward Meltzer; Toby Russell; Will Isaac; Ed Fernyhough; Josh Howey; Guy Hazell; Gabriel Vantaggiato; Tom Whiteley; Harry Blake.



ROSSLYN PARK



Rugby at Priory Lane, Roehampton

NATIONAL LEAGUE 1

Fixtures for season 2010-11

September

4 H Cornish All Blacks
 11 A Blackheath
 18 H London Scottish
 25 H Barking

October

2 A Redruth
 9 H Otley
 16 A Tynedale
 23 H Stourbridge
 30 A Sedgley Park

November

6 H Cinderford
 13 A Cambridge
 20 H Macclesfield
 27 A Coventry

December

4 H Blaydon
 11 A Wharfedale
 18 H Blackheath

January

8 A London Scottish
 15 A Barking
 22 H Redruth
 29 A Otley

February

12 H Tynedale
 19 A Stourbridge

March

5 H Sedgley Park
 12 A Cinderford
 26 H Cambridge

April

2 A Macclesfield
 9 H Coventry
 16 A Blaydon
 23 H Wharfedale
 30 A Cornish All Blacks

These are provisional fixtures subject to confirmation

Buses 33, 72, 265, 337, 485 and 493 stop outside the ground. 400 metres from Barnes station with frequent services from Waterloo, Vauxhall, Clapham Junction and Richmond. Nearest tube station East Putney.

New Members always welcome. Rosslyn Park runs the full-range of social, women's, youth and mini-rugby teams. Non-playing members enjoy use of the Club's facilities plus free or discounted admission to home matches. The Club's facilities are available for private hire, including a large modern clubhouse. Call the club office on 020 8876 6044.

www.rosslynpark.co.uk