

# PARKNEWS



The E-magazine for Rosslyn Park supporters Tuesday 13 July 2010 - Issue 156

## NEW SIGNINGS REVEALED

Welcome to another Parknews . The Club has today issued a Press Statement detailing the exciting new signings we have made to further strengthen the squad for next season. Parknews is out today, rather than later in the week, to ensure that you - our loyal supporters - get the news directly from the Club first.

The statement issued says:

*Rosslyn Park commenced serious pre-season training for the coming season in National League One on Monday 28 July. Managing Director, Shaun Justice, revealed an impressive list of signings, to add to the squad that took Park to promotion last season. He said, "We pride ourselves on our ability to retain players, and yet again this proves to be so, with very few of the 44 players who played National league 1<sup>st</sup> XV rugby last year leaving the club or retiring. This is particularly impressive given the increased demands at the higher level we shall be playing at.*

*"On top of this great news we welcome some new faces to the club. Our aim was not to swamp our successful squad with new recruits but to add players of the right character and talent that can really make a difference to the squad in National 1 next season.*

*"We are really pleased with how the recruitment has gone and the new boys are already fitting in extremely well at pre-season training". Shaun was keen to emphasise, though, that once players join the Park squad then previous pedigree counts for nothing, and everyone has to work to earn his place in the 1<sup>st</sup> XV on a Saturday.*

*Park have also signed Dual Registration arrangements for some players with premiership clubs. Shaun explained, "These players will be joining us a few weeks later into our pre-season campaign as they are currently in intensive training at their respective Premiership clubs".*

### Players Joining-

#### Ben Gotting

Age 29

Hooker

Representative Honours: England U21; England Students; English Universities

*Ben joins from London Welsh and his playing CV includes London Wasps 2003- 2006. His honours at Wasps include Parker Pen Challenge Cup Winner (2003), Heineken Cup Winner (2004), 3 time Guinness Premiership Winner (2003, 2004, 2005). Ben played also for Worcester Warriors from 2006-2008.*

#### Sam Mcdonald

Age 23

Tight Head Prop.

Representative Honours: England Under 20's; England Under 19's; England Under 18's

*Sam joins from Leicester Tigers, whom he represented in the 'A' League competition. He has also played 30 games for Nottingham (2008-09) in the English Championship and British & Irish Cup competition. From 2007-08 he was with Ulster Rugby: Ulster Rugby Development and A League competition and previously (2004-07) played for Worcester Warriors in Academy, A League and the Guinness Premiership.*

#### Charlie Gower

Age 22

Centre

Representative Honours: England U20; England U18

*Charlie joins from London Irish where he has made 14 1<sup>st</sup> XV appearances since 2006, and had a spell in the Championship on loan to London Welsh last season.*



Shaun Justice: "... Really pleased...new boys are already fitting in extreley well".

**Saturday 21st August**

**1st XV**

v

**Bedford Blues**

Pre-season match

KO 2:30PM

**Saturday 4 September**

**The Big Kick Off**

**Rosslyn Park**

v

**Cornish All Blacks**

**National League One**

Kick off 2:30PM

*Whilst Pre-season training is at the ground on Mondays and Wednesdays , Members and supporters are cordially welcome to come along for a drink and to catch up with the close season gossip.*

/Continued back page.....

# The RUGBY Paper

THE BEST COVERAGE FROM ALL THE WEEKEND'S RUGBY

Buy it every Sunday from your local newsagent

## National 3 South "Dream Team" unveiled

Each season the Rugby Paper names its "dream team" for each Division. Players and coaches throughout the Division are canvassed as to their toughest opponents. Let The Rugby Paper take up the story:

BARKING, Rosslyn Park and Ealing dominated the National Two South last season – and there's no change in our dream team. Champions Barking put their Christmas money problems behind them to claim the title and four of Alex Codling's side have been included. Flankers James Ngan and James Kellard link-up again with livewire scrum-half Jack Gash and centre Harry Owens also impressing reporters across the division. Rosslyn Park have three representatives while Ealing, including their try machine Phillip Chesters, Worthing, and Clifton have two each, with the latter proving investing in youth from clubs higher in the pyramid shouldn't be overlooked.

On-loan Bristol youngster's Mako Vunipola and Darren Barry both make it after impressing, while Southend's Simon Hoult beat off stiff competition for the full-back jersey and Bridgwater No.8 Greg Charlton, who has already joined promoted Taunton, shone despite playing in the relegation doomed Albion side.

### 1. Mako Vunipola – Clifton

A powerful ball-carryer, the on-loan Bristol youngster had a fantastic time at Clifton. He has already been described as 'something special' by his coaches and tipped for future England success – he's already an under-18 and under-20 international. Following Bristol's failure to secure promotion, expect Paul Hull to let him off the leash next season.

### 2. Chris Ritchie – Rosslyn Park



Has announced his retirement for the fifth consecutive season but this time it might be for good with him turning 40 next year! His aggression and all action displays were the focal point of a front row that helped Rosslyn Park to a second-place finish, while his nine tries earned the players' player of the season award.

### 3. Dinos Alexopoulos – Ealing

Southend's James Armitage and Lydney's Paul Price had glowing recommendations but Dinos gets the nod. Ever present in the Ealing pack this term, the former Wasps and London Irish youngster had a superb season getting through a ton of work in the loose and always solid at the set piece.

### 4. Joe Launchbury – Worthing

A big presence in an intimidating Worthing pack and a key figure in head coach Will Green's much vaunted defence. Players' and Supporters' Player of the Season, he has been a star player throughout the campaign and was influential in leading them to a top-half finish.

### 5. Darren Barry – Clifton

A close call but Barry took the position from tenacious Clifton teammate Tim Collier and Lydney's Paul Kelly. His athleticism and ball-winning ability marks him out a truly modern lock and will be pushing for first-team rugby at Bristol this campaign.

### 6. James Ngan – Barking

Matt Salter's proven class from his Premiership days impressed at Clifton but Ngan was a key figure in Barking's title charge. He weighed in with ten tries, was a constant threat to opposition defences and wasn't afraid to muck in with the dirty work.

### 7. James Kellard – Barking

Probably more comfortable in the No.8 shirt but was a dynamic presence at openside and his link-up with Ngan in this team would work a treat. Another key member of the Barking pack who scored more tries than any other forward line in the division (57), Kellard contributed 24 tries of his own.

### 8. Greg Charlton – Bridgwater

A man mountain at 6ft 6ins he was the stand-out forward of the season given his young age. He has managed to impress in a side that was relegated and was a prominent figure in their two wins playing well beyond his years in a poor season and has been snapped-up by Taunton.

### 9. Jack Gash – Barking

Clifton's Matt Britton and Ross Blake from Barnes deserve plaudits but Gash's performances for the champions swung it for our reporters. His quick-thinking and marshalling of the scrum was impressive throughout and he laid the platform for their attacking prowess.

### 10. Ross Laidlaw – Rosslyn Park



It's says something for the form of Laidlaw that he scored 318 points – 44 more than Barking's league winning fly-half Craig Ratford. Laidlaw carried Park at times with fantastic kicking from hand and all-round game management won him selection as our ten. One to watch again next season.

### 11. James Strong – Rosslyn Park

Clifton's Rob Viol had his suitors but Strong obtained the majority with his 24-try haul in a promotion winning season proving to be the difference. Strong's try-scoring prowess this year owed much to his exceptional speed and eye for space. A real dangerman and Henley bore the brunt of that as he bagged four in an hour against the Hawks.



### 12. Harry Owens – Barking

Looks and plays like a young Stuart Abbott and runs lines that would be at home in any league in the country. The 21-year-old's versatility is a valuable attribute enabling him to play at fly half if required. He was central to Barking's title charge. His mobility and power helped Barking rack up the most amount of points in the league.

### 13. Greg Sullivan – Worthing

Tipped by a number of our correspondents after a super season for Worthing despite picking an injury-hit campaign. But when he was fit, he formed arguably the division's most potent centre partnership alongside Joe Dunkley. His step and turn of pace helped him bag eight tries, and set-up plenty more, to help the Sussex side into sixth place.

### 14. Phillip Chesters – Ealing

Not a difficult decision – Chesters finished the season at the top of the try scoring charts and we simply couldn't overlook him. With pace to burn, the Ealing flyer was deadly within sight of the try line and bagged 28 in just 25 starts.

### 15 Simon Hoult – Southend

Pushed hard by Worthing's Matt McLean and Richmond talisman Matt Hart, Hoult was a big factor in Southend's top-four finish, especially towards the end of the season. Rock solid at the back and very difficult to bring down, his dancing feet and vision singled him out as Southend's key man behind the scrum, scoring 138 points including 12 tries.

# READERS' LETTERS

## Andy Ripley

The "Special Edition" devoted to Andy Ripley brought quite a few comments and some important corrections. It was inevitable with something that was put together very quickly that things were not double checked so the Editor is grateful for the corrections received.

*Former 1st XV hooker David "Grub" Barnett wrote to say:*  
Charlie,

As usual your work is fantastic, keeps me in touch with the world of my past. You will probably get similar e-mails for many of my contemporaries but there are a number of inaccuracies. Rips is not the second from the left in the photo, that's Tony Rodgers, Crampo Starling is last on the right. I will get back to you within the week with the name of all the rest. Roachy (Phil D'a Keith-Roach) was captain of the 2 cup final teams. Jim Siddall, who I played against a number of times was a second row, hard man( questionable) dirty cheap shot merchant, definitely.

Toby's memory is letting him down, the match was indeed televised, score Wasps 9, Rosslyn Park 9. The kick in question was a drop goal, that is why the decision was the referees, Huw Davies from about 40 yds, initially not given by the ref but on Rips confirmation the kick was given. I remember it well, it was my first full season in the first team. The game was played December 3rd 1983. In those days Victoria wine used to give a prize for Team of the week, which we were made for that week, I still have the empty Magnum as a memento of the match. Not bad really seeing as it was 25-30 years ago. Keep up the good work. - **Grub**

*Peter Smith added:*

Hi Charlie,

Just to put the record straight I ran the touch for Rosslyn Park 2nd Seven and Jeremy ran it for the first seven, but please do not make an issue of it. If anybody is interested I recorded the BBC coverage and being it was also Rad Montgomery's final 7's appearance gave him a copy. Also in that event was James Agar!

I also ran the touch for Andy's last fifteen a-side game at Cardiff, when John Scott turned out for Cardiff. After the match I understand Andy was presented with a couple of bottles of champagne and typically he saw a new young Park player and gave him one bottle saying "it's my last game for the Park but we should also celebrate your first". ( I wish I could remember that lad's name). Most probably David Whit-tam will know. Cheers, **Peter M. Smith**

*Former 1st XV Secretary Roddy Golightly supports the idea of a memorial to Andy Ripley*

Dear Charlie

Rarely can there have been a "Parknews" with less of your own writing in it but you have nevertheless excelled yourself! Congratulations for producing an edition of "Parknews" which has indeed done justice to the great man. A labour of love indeed !

I believe that although not expressed by everyone the idea of a permanent memorial would meet with universal acclaim. The rugby calendar is already overcrowded so that an annual Andy Ripley Memorial match is almost certainly out of the question. A statue a la those at Lords (the batsman and bowler) would be appropriate as long as future generations accept that it must be preserved wherever Park play. It would be paid for by public subscription. Lets see what happens.

It would be great to think that Rugby Legends from Andy's era could attend the Memorial Service eg Colin Meads, Graham Mourie and other greats from the Southern Hemisphere as well as Willie Joe McBride.

Colin Gibson, Andy Irvine, Ian McLaughlin and some of the great French players. I am sure many people want to attend - Twickenham might be a more appropriate venue !

I know I am 300 miles away but if there is anything I can do to help organise anything SUBJECT TO THE RIPLEY FAMILY APPROVAL OF COURSE. Next time you have a beer with John Adair/David Whit-tam give them my best wishes and see what they think.  
Best wishes **Roddy**

*Park's man in Ontario, Keith Daniels, on an omission from his tribute in the publication:*

Charlie,

forgot to mention: I met Andy again at the 1989 Bermuda Classics Rugby Tournament, had a long chat with him and came away thinking what a thoroughly nice person. Then recently I was diagnosed with Prostate Cancer, albeit a much milder version than Andy's but my first reaction was one of self pity: "Why Me?". Then I read of exactly how Andy had dealt with it and now life is not so bad after all. It seems that Andy Ripley has touched us all. - **Keith Daniels**

*Ken Munn suggests a fund-raising match*

Having read the tribute edition of Park News, a thought occurred about a possible fund raiser for the prostate cancer charity, at the Rock. An exhibition match, each team composed entirely of past and present Number 8s from international and top-level club sides. Probably impossible/very difficult to organise, but if it could be done - fitting, entertaining and a sure-fire fundraiser. And probably something which Andy would approve of, if he were only still with us. - **Ken Munn**

*Rose Tanner recalls another tale of Rips:*

A sort of rugby / Rosslyn Park memory...

It was the the 125th anniversary of the club and David Whittam and I were i/c the auction at the venue. A few weeks before, I had gone to have lunch with Andy so he could endorse the raffle/auction tickets. When I arrived, he was rather rattled! He had been given the task of looking after David Foulds' chickens, while DF was on a mission to New Zealand to pick up some players.

Rips had a chicken pen organised but slowly but slowly Foulds' chickens had been stolen and eaten, so when Foulds got back there would be no more. When I arrived there was only one called Jennifer! Rips just said to me: "Wwhere do I get chickens?" - **Rose Tanner**

*A further tribute from Jane Bateman:*

Charlie

Just to let you know I thought the 10 page tribute to Andy Ripley was brilliant - what a man! It's essentially due to him that I myself ended up joining Rosslyn Park when I first came to London in 1979.

Regards - **Jane**

## Duncan Traynor

*In the previous Parknews it was reported that Duncan Traynor would not be able to turn out for Park next season, due to taking a teaching job in Oxford. The man himself got in touch with a very welcome correction:*

Hi Charlie,

Its Duncan Traynor. Hope all is well. Just to let you know after reading Park news, I saw you said I was leaving. I am actually staying now. I have got out of the job in Oxord and am staying put in London and Rosslyn Park. Looking forward to the up and coming season. See you soon. Cheers, - **Duncan.**

## Can you help?

*From Bebecca Moore, seeking raffle prizes for a good cause*

Please allow me to introduce myself, my name is Rebecca Moore and on 10th July 2009 my then 8 week old son Mitchell was diagnosed with Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) Type 1, it is an inherited neuromuscular condition that affects nerve cells in the spinal cord, it is a rare disease that affects approximately 1 in 6500 babies, subsequently he passed away on 31st August 2009 aged just 16 weeks 2 days. There are four main types of SMA. Types 1,2, and 3 appear in childhood. The fourth type affects adults. Type 1 is the most severe type and most babies do not reach their 1st birthday.

We are currently planning a charity event to be held on 28th August 2010 at Chiswick Rugby Club and are hoping to raise awareness to this awful disease and also money for the charity we have found support in, they are "The Jennifer Trust".

More information can be found on their websites -

[www.itsma.org.uk](http://www.itsma.org.uk)

We are hoping that your company/club may be interested in donating a prize that we would be able to use to raffle in order to raise as much money as possible. If you would like to help then please do not hesitate to contact me on 07971 142632 or by reply to the address above. All gifts will be greatly received. Kindest regards - **Rebecca Moore**

From front page...

### **John Rudd**

Age 29

Winger

Representative Honours: England Saxons; England Sevens; England U 21's; England U19's; England U16's

John joins from London Irish; his previous clubs include Newcastle, Northampton and London Wasps, with whom he won 2 Premiership titles and, in Europe, the Parker Pen Trophy and Heineken Cup. He has 130 Guinness Premiership appearances and 42 Heineken Cup Appearances.

### **Chris Lewis**

Age 23

Centre

Representative Honours England Students

Chris joins from Coventry, where he made 28 Championship appearances and 4 in the British and Irish Cup. Chris is a Cambridge Blue who played in the 2006, 2007 and 2008 Varsity Matches and was awarded the 2008-2009 'Back of the Season' and 'Player of the Season' accolades.

### **Ed Lewis-Pratt**

Age:-22

Full Back/Fly Half

Representative Honours England U 16, England U 19

Ed will need no introduction to Park supporters, being a product of Park's youth set up. He turned professional with London Irish, where he was with the Academy (2006-08) and made 20 A-League appearances. He played for London Welsh (2008-10) making 40 1<sup>st</sup> XV appearances and now returns to his original club.

### **Dual Registration Players so far confirmed-**

#### **Will Collier, Tight Head Prop, Harlequins-**

Will needs no introduction, this will be his second season with Park having played for the club's minis and juniors. Will will be pushing for England U20's honours this season and a good season with Park in National 1 will significantly help that prospect.

#### **Ollie Lindsay-Hague, Winger / Full-Back, Harlequins-**

Again, needs little introduction for his second season with Park on loan. Last year he gained selection into the England Sevens Squad playing in the IRB tournaments in Adelaide, Hong Kong, Las Vegas London and Edinburgh.

The Club is close to coming to an arrangement with London Wasps in respect of other dual-registration players, who will be announced shortly

As always, there are some players retiring or leaving for other reasons. These are:

**Chris Ritchie** The veteran hooker is retiring, but not leaving Park. He will be bringing his vast knowledge and experience to bear in assisting Rob Holt with Forwards coaching, in particular focusing on the front row.

**Chris Simmons** The full back, is not leaving the Club as such, but is taking a season out from Rugby Union to travel the world.

**Dylan Pugh** The Fly half has moved to Richmond.

**Max Lahiff**- the popular Prop - another product of Park's own youth system - was on loan at Park last season from London Irish, but will unfortunately not be with us next season. Max will be placed on loan at London Welsh as part of a senior squad agreement between those two clubs.

**Adam Blemings** The long-serving hooker has moved to Barnes, where he joins former Park Head Coach, Carson Russell.

**Tony Paul**- The inside centre has moved to Ealing.

**Nick Canty**- Winger is leaving but his registration has not yet transferred to another Club

Shaun Justice said, "We wish these players every success and thank them for their efforts. All leave us as the best of friends, and we hope to see all of them back at the club from time to time".

Among the Coaching staff, under Head Coach Florent Rossigneux, backs' coach Stuart Abbott returned to his native South Africa after getting married at the end of last season and Park are delighted to announce as his replacement Wasps and England fly half Dave Waldler. Rob Holt continues as forwards' coach and will be joined by Chris Ritchie.

One further piece of good news for Park supporters is that lock Russ Forster, who missed practically all of last season through injury after being named "Player of the Year" previously, is back training with the senior squad.

Park supporters will be able to see their team in action at Priory Lane on Saturday 2<sup>1st</sup> August when they play a pre-season friendly against Championship side Bedford Blues.

### STATEMENT ENDS

On the question of dual-registered players, there are some exciting prospects in the pipeline. The slight delay is that Shaun needs to check in fine detail how the regulations work and will be interpreted for the coming season. Clearly we don't want to find ourselves in breach of any regulation having made the effort of signing the players concerned.

It would be wrong not to pay tribute to those leaving us. Tony Paul has been a real club stalwart, once going through more than two seasons without missing a League match. His opportunities have been somewhat limited in the last couple of seasons but he has uncomplainingly got on with things. A great guy and a terrific player, we wish him every success at Ealing.

Adam Blemings has also been a stalwart of the club for some seasons, a skilled footballer whose knack of turning up in the right place has seen him score a lot of tries. Despite limited opportunities in recent seasons he has never let the side down. Adam is moving just up the road to join Carson Russell at Barnes, and we wish him every success.

Dylan Pugh is a more recent recruit and a top notch fly half whose misfortune it was to be around when Ross Laidlaw was having a vintage run of form. Clearly a player of Dylan's ability would prefer to be playing 1st XV rugby on a more regular basis, so his move to neighbours Richmond is understandable and we wish him well.

Nick Canty originally joined us on loan, but liked it so much that he became Park player. He missed a lot of last term through injury, and we're unsure what he'll be doing, but we wish him well doing it and hope to see him - along with the others - at the Club some time.

As is said in the Press Statement, the players are now back in training at the ground on Monday and Wednesdays evenings, and Will is opening the bar so that you can come along, watch the lads sweat and catch up on the gossip if you so wish. There are also Saturday morning track sessions - like 08:00 Saturday morning! No one said that competing at National One level would be easy, but clearly the lads are up for it and leaving nothing to chance fitness wise!

The "big" pre-Season match will be home to Bedford Blues (where our old friend Nick Walshe is now a coach) on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> August, so make a note of that in your diary. I believe there are plans to take two teams to Henley Hawks the weekend prior to that, and that there may be a Friday night home pre-season friendly. We'll check those out for the next Parknews..

The other piece of news is that Fixture Secretary, David Booth, says that it is likely that all Saturday home games will kick off at 2:30 next season to end the business of kick off depending upon which month we're in. An exception to that may be the home fixture with Tynedale who have requested a 1:00PM kick off.

## CLUB AGM

**Please don't forget if you're a Member that the AGM is on Thursday 22nd July in the Clubhouse at 7:00PM. There are a number of developments and constitutional changes to be decided. If you are a Member and have not received the documentation then please contact the Club Office. It's YOUR club, so come along and have your say and cast your vote.**