

PARKNEWS

Season
2010-11

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The e-magazine for all Rosslyn Park supporters

PARK MAKE A GOOD START

Welcome to Parknews. Pre-season friendlies are rarely much of a guide to what will happen when the Leagues start. Think back a few seasons to a diabolical performance at Luton, which was followed by a successful season. And there have been other seasons when we've impressed pre-season only to struggle later. Having made that caveat, there were far more positives than negatives at Henley last Saturday but the truth is that we shall not really know where we stand until the serious stuff starts. However, we shall see the lads severely tested on Saturday when Bedford Blues come visiting. Blues lost narrowly to Northampton Saints by 19 - 26 on Friday evening, after leading at half time, in front of a crowd of 3500.

There are brief reports on the Henley matches on the following page. Park played some sparkling rugby against a Henley side who looked a lot sharper than the one they fielded last season. But what really impressed was Park's strength in depth. Consider a three-quarter line comprising James Strong, Billy O'Driscoll, Rob Jewell and Paul Unseld – pretty good, but none of them was available! Nor, in the backs, were John Swords, Ollie Lyndsey-Hague or new signings Charlie Gower and Christian Wade. We were also without props Steve Millard and new signing Sam McDonald and among the other forwards unavailable were Morgan Jones, Jon Underwood and Russ Forster. Yet Park were able to field two extremely competitive sides.

Comfortable

Park comfortably won the first match against Henley 2nd, who were flattered if anything by the closeness of the 38-10 score. The home 1st XV ran Park much closer at 35-24, having said which, had it been a competitive match, in which Park had chosen to kick their penalties, they would probably have been out of sight before any suggestion of a home comeback. Indeed, when Henley did mount a comeback to take the lead, the ease with which Park re-asserted themselves whilst still spurning kickable penalties was quite encouraging.

In the first match – against the Henley 2nd XV – it was great to see Park fielding our former Colts centre partnership of James Pedder and Richard Coskie, players of immense talent and promise, who looked well capable of stepping into the 1st XV without letting anyone down. It was also great to see a strong performance at full-back from Nomad, Guy House. It has always been true that there are immensely talented players in the Club sides whose priorities in life have meant that they cannot make the immense sacrifices necessary to play rugby at National Level. Guy showed that the ability is there if he can afford to make the time commitment to training.

Stiff challenge

The 1st XV squad face a really stiff challenge this Saturday when Bedford Blues come visiting. Taking on a Championship side at any time is a tall order, but to face them at the beginning of the season when the superior cohesion that full-time training brings is also a factor and means Park will be stretched to contain them. Bedford will have come off two matches against Premiership opposition in the forms of Northampton and Saracens. Even if during the match they give a run out to some of their younger players it doesn't get any easier. They have an arrangement with Saracens that means no fewer than seven English Academy players will be joining the Goldington Road club on dual registration for the coming 2010/11 Championship season.

The connection they have with Saracens means the Blues will be welcoming back the likes of James Short, Owen Farrell, Jake Sharp, George Krus and Will Fraser, while also welcoming promising youngsters Luke Baldwin and Jackson Wray. Baldwin is a highly rated 19 year old scrum half who will provide plenty of competition for



Ross Laidlaw on the attack at Henley, supported by Ed Lewis-Pratt [photo: David Whittam]

Club Diary

Saturday 21 August

1st XV

v

Bedford Blues

Home, Friendly, KO 2:30

Butcher & Grill Barbecue

Main bar open till late

Players' bbq & social afterwards

Admission £5 towards cost of Obolensky bar refurbishment

The Big Kick Off

Saturday 4 September

1st XV

v

Cornish All-Blacks

National 1

Home

KO 2:30

Plus the formal opening of Ripley's Bar

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Send all letters, articles, reports, photos etc to news@rosslynpark.co.uk

TWO WINS FOR SHARP PARK

Henley Hawks 2nd 10

Rosslyn Park XV 38

Pre-Season practice match

Park starting line up: *House; Morris, Pedder, Coskie, Traynor; Davies; Lapidus; Daw, Gotting, Williams; Quigley, Launchbury; Mitchell, Anayi, Rowland.*

Park started well, an early run by Martin Anayi going close to the line, then a long kick saw Duncan Traynor smash the receiver into touch on his own 5 metre line for an attacking line-out. Park drove over but were ruled to be held up. The pressure continued with good work from Rhys Lapidus and Howard Quigley to send Traynor over in the corner, but the angle was too fine for Richard Davies' conversion attempt.

Henley were rarely in the game as Park wove patterns around the pitch and tackled excellently. Joe Launchbury impressed, making a great charge before some super handling, eventually stopped for a 5 metre scrum. Good play by Traynor and Lapidus saw Ben Gotting dive over for a debut try. Park nearly scored again when Traynor was bundled into touch.

As they continued to attack, the visitors, awarded an easy penalty, elected to kick it to touch and a good move saw Richard Coskie come onto the ball at pace to crash over, Davies' conversion made it 19-0 at the interval.

Half time substitutions: *Corradi for Gotting; Burton for Rowland; Shimuzu for Morris; Gonzales for Launchbury.*

Henley started the second half with their first real attack, dealt with comfortably by the visiting defence. Almost immediately Park withdrew Dan Mitchell for Doug Rodman, and then had to juggle the backs division when full-back Guy House went off. Davies moved to full-back, Lapidus moved to fly half and Lewis-Pratt in turn replaced him. It took a while for Park to regain their cohesion after the interval,



Will Collier splashes down for a terrific try at Henley on Saturday [Photo David Whittam]

but then a great move swept to the Henley line for Ed Lewis-Pratt to touch down with almost his first feel of the ball.

Park went further ahead with a superb try, fashioned by a great run from James Pedder who almost made it to the line himself but managed to pass in the tackle for Lapidus to claim the score. Lewis-Pratt converted for 31-0.

Park tackled superbly but the first time they missed one Henley ran in what was then a simple try, but Park were soon back on the attack for Coskie to score through the middle, converted by Lewis-Pratt for 38-5. Henley grabbed a late try, skinning Joe Shimuzu on his outside for a good try in the corner to make the final score 38-10.

Henley Hawks 1st XV 24

Rosslyn Park XV 35

Pre-Season practice match

Park starting line-up: *Davies; Lewis-Pratt, Sweeney, Lewis, Rudd; Laidlaw; Chliten; Huggett, Tauialo, Collier; Pape, A Jones; Gates, Barrett, Lock.*

Whilst the final score may be closer than Park would have wished, it must be said that while the visitors took this match seriously as a pre-season game, Hawks played it with the intensity of a cup final and were clearly "up" to take a scalp. Had Park elected to kick their penalties they would have been out of sight of any comeback. The home side made a terrific start, kicking off to force Park to throw in from their own 5 metre line. They defended well, built a good attack out of defence and exerted pressure at the other end and were rewarded when John Rudd went over for a debut try, converted by Ross Laidlaw after 5 minutes.

Twice, indiscipline saw Park ceding possession from good positions, but they continued to dominate, some tenacious midfield tackling making life difficult for the home side, and a good move up the right saw the ball shipped inside for Will Collier to come on to it at speed and dive in for a great try.

Back on the attack, Park spurned a penalty that would have been meat and drink for Laidlaw, opting instead to scrummage. Unfortunately for Park, this enterprise ended with the home number 8 Matt Payne scampering away up the right to score out wide and a great conversion bringing the scores back to 14-7.

This did not stop Park from again opting to scrummage in a similar position, but with a score on the cards they lost control of the ball. But the same tactic at another penalty – with home scrum half Gaunt sin-binned - saw the ball spread quickly to provide a try for Steve Pape, / continued top of back page..



Joe Launchbury, who made an impressive debut, secures line-out ball .

LONDON TO BARCELONA...BY BIKE!

Slingback cyclists back home

Inspired by the trip from John O'Groats to Land's End last year, and having learnt from their mistakes (mainly the weather and camping), 4 Slingbacks set off on their bicycles from sunny London at the end of July, and arrived 12 days later on the gorgeous shores of Barcelona. The route saw them cycle close to 1000 miles, cross three countries and 2 mountain ranges.

This year the crew included Slingbacks Alice, Julia, Danielle and G, and two lucky chaps, Guy and Gav, who tagged along for the ride.

Navigational issues aside (their sat nav renamed 'Shat nav' after it insisted on attempting to direct them back to Putney at all times [do you think it was trying to send them back to preseason training?]) they made good progress, and after a day off in Bergerac wine tasting, the riders faced their first real mountain test. They rode over 65 miles before lunch to climb Montagne Noire before descending into Carcassonne. The crossing from France to Spain was one of the most challenging days, having opted for the coast road in the hope it would be flatter as they clambered over the Pyrenees – more fool them apparently...

After 12 days on the road, the cycling crew enjoyed 3 well-earned days just south of Barcelona, where they evened up the tan lines and rested tired muscles.

After another successful trip they are already planning next year's challenge – to Rome and over the Alps.

Made it! from left to right:
Gav, Alice Watchorn, Guy,
Danielle Williams, Julia
Daffy, G



Any takers?

For the full blog of their trip please follow the link below:

<http://rosslynparkslingbacks01.sports.officelive.com/default.aspx>

The Solution

By Nosey Parker

"Solutions" has become an 'in-word' among the entrepreneurial classes. Think of all the vans going around, prominently emblazoned on the side with "So-and-so Solutions". The basic business model seems to be: take a basic necessity that everyone must buy, add to it something or things superfluous to any normal requirement, but which are highly profitable, and market the package as a Total Solution.

The outcome of the Club's AGM was that Park has come up with a great and novel "Solution", and Nosey Parker wishes to offer advice as to its commercial exploitation before the moment is lost.

If you look at the elections for the Committee, you will find that we now have a Management Board. Step One successfully negotiated: give your concept a dynamic new name. But the really clever bit is the way the candidates were identified. Clearly the top cadre at the Club had nurtured a concept of where we should be going, cast around and found some pretty clever guys with a very good chance of getting us there. They presented resulting slate to the Membership at the AGM, which was elected *nem con*.

Juxtapose this with the tired old formula at most other Members' Clubs, where the Members themselves propose and elect a Committee, who in turn appoint any full-time people they deem necessary. What we have produced is nothing less than the Basic Upside-down Management System, and all we now need is a name for it that produces a memorable acronym.

It is here, however, that Nosey Parker feels weight upon him to pass on some considered advice, honed in the furnace of a hundred organisational cock-ups. Organisational Solutions are very different from Commodity Solutions. Never implement them yourself first. They cannot be laboratory tested, so there is always the possibility of becoming mired in some completely unforeseeable disaster, and your concept is then substantially devalued before you have properly exploited it.

No – what we should have done is to have found some amiable time-serving old buffers who would upset no one. Have them keep things ticking over for a season, keeping a sumptuous Moroccan-bound minute book to record the masterly lack of progress in any meaningful direction. Meanwhile we should have found some smart young 'suits', armed them with i-Pads loaded with Power Point presentations, called them Organisational Consultants and dispatched them to go round flogging the Big Idea to the gullible for a negotiable management fee.

If it all works – great. A win / win situation and you can implement it yourself with full confidence. If instead it causes utter chaos, or is less than completely successful, you then either tweak it or abandon it, but either way you first trouser a fat 'Management' fee. Simple.

There is just one additional hurdle to consider. Just because you conceived the idea doesn't mean someone else didn't have the same idea earlier, and Breach of Copyright litigation can eliminate your profits. Nosey Parker would counsel checking that there are no patents held by descendants of the great Georgian social reformer, philanthropist and democrat, Josef Stalin.

Stalin, remember, decided for himself who should comprise his Politburo, they in turn were presented to a grateful public for endorsement and produced a 5 Year Plan for the populace to implement. The one point we seem, *prima facie*, to have overlooked is the apparatus for coercion that Stalin had at his disposal to ensure that people voted the correct way. It is still technically possible, as things stand, that our own scheme could thereby be undone by the forces of reaction.

Should that happen, I commend the strategy suggested by the great German writer Bertolt Brecht on the occasion of the anti-Stalin uprising of June 1953. His short poem is appropriately entitled "The Solution"

*After the uprising of the 17th June
The Secretary of the Writers' Union
Had leaflets distributed in the Stalinalee
Stating that the people
Had forfeited the confidence of the government
And could win it back only
By redoubled efforts. Would it not be easier
In that case for the government
To dissolve the people*

Two wins for sharp Park

Continued from page 2...

converted by Laidlaw for 21-7. On the debit side, Ed Lewis-Pratt impeded off injured, to be replaced by James Pedder.

Just before half time some confusion in the Park midfield allowed Henley to break away again through winger Neil Baggett and stage a reprise of their first try to bring the home side within a score at 21-14. During the interval Park substituted Ben Gotting for Amo Tauialo, who had received a dead leg.

If Park thought the closeness of the score at the interval was a travesty, then they were in for a bigger shock. Park were soon back on the attack, only for indiscipline to see a good penalty chance reversed and Henley reacted quickly to break and punish Park with a superb try again fashioned by Baggett who offloaded for his fly half Tom Allen to score to tie up the scores at 21-21, before the scrum half returned!

Park were soon back, winning another kickable penalty but opting to kick to touch, won the lineout only to knock on with the line at their mercy. Park replaced Allen Chiltern with Mike Baxter, and then Jonny Barrett came off for Harry Rowlands, but it was Henley who took the lead. Awarded a penalty, they were having none of this 'Barbarian' stuff and hoofed it between the uprights for a 24-21 lead.

Park went on all out attack. Receiving a similar penalty they again ran it, and enterprise was eventually rewarded with a superb try. Collier broke every rule in the prop's union with a super run to finally offload to Rudd who took it close to the line before unleashing a super pass inside to Gotting who dived over. Laidlaw's conversion made it 28-24.

It was now all Park, and just before the final whistle Adam Gates plunged over for a try against his former club. Laidlaw's conversion was the final kick of the match, making it 35-24.

From front page.....

the number nine shirt.. Number Eight Wray, also 19, recently featured in the Junior World Cup and has already featured in the Saracens first team. Second row forward Kruis made two appearances in England's U20 RBS 6 Nations campaign and also featured in the recent World Championships. Farrell, 18, who can play in the centre or at fly half, made a debut for the Blues in the British and Irish Cup against London Welsh last season coming off the bench and converting a penalty. Also debuting in the same game was pacey winger Short who showed an explosive turn off pace that cut the Exiles defence to shreds. Fly half Sharp, 19, is another player who played for the Blues last season and he will provide competition at 10 while 6ft 2ins tall Fraser offers even more fire power in the back row. Add that little lot to their base of experienced players and you can see why Blues are among the favourites for promotion to the Premiership. One of the more experienced players who surely won't be able to resist turning out against his old club is Nick Walshe, who still commands a place in the side and helps out director of rugby, Mike Rayer, with the coaching.

Whilst on paper this match looks a bit like mission impossible, a really stiff task like this really helps the coaches to identify the areas that we still need to work on. Last season, in terms of the score anyway, we took a good thumping at Goldington Road, but went on to gain promotion. Whatever the final result, there is bound to be some great rugby to watch and - it gets better - admission is only a fiver, which is to help defray the cost of refurbishing the Obolensky Bar. Tell your mates - and come down early.

Reporter wanted

We're still looking for a budding reporter out there who fancies reporting 1st XV matches for Parknews. The Editor will miss two of the early season matches, but in the general scheme of things it's a burden I'd be delighted to share. If you'd be willing to have a crack at it, just contact news@rosslynpark.co.uk and we'll arrange to chat it over.

Jacko moves

Club Secretary, Bob Evans, reports that this week long serving favourite Richard Jackson registered with Cobham. Probably one of the great last ditch tacklers, he joined us in 2001 having previously played for Bedford and Northampton. He made his debut in our opening game of the season in September 2001, an 18-15 win at Wharfedale. Altogether he made 154 appearances for 1st XV, scoring 30 tries and also kicking 41 points. His last game was in the 28-17 win at home to Lydney on 14th March 2009. Many felt that Richard ceased to be first choice full back while he was still the best in the club, but let's not go there and simply wish him every success and happiness with his new club. Hopefully we'll see him back at the Park from time to time as his Cobham commitments allow.

Ton up club

Does anyone fancy becoming club bookmaker and quoting some odds for us as to who will be the next current player to chalk up 100 appearances for the club? Bob Evans has come up with the stats, and the nearest to the mark of the current squad is Russ Forster on 85 appearances, but having missed pretty well a whole season it would be amazing if Russ could force his way straight back into the 1st XV. But injuries to others could see him back earlier than expected, so he has to be on the short list. Adam Gates is only one match behind on 84, and the fact that he can play either number 8, flanker or emergency lock probably makes

him hot favourite. Jon Underwood is on 81, but his commitments as a doctor tend to stop him putting together long runs of appearances. Only an appearance behind on 80 is the indestructible Chas Daw, who has never let the side down but one doubts whether even Chas himself expects to be first choice at prop, at least while the hard grounds are here. The closest outsider is "Huggy". Nick Huggett is currently on 74 and - even if there is a degree of rotation in the front row - if Huggy is on his form then his ability to also play hooker could see him benching even when being rested. Possibly worth a punt if the odds are right?

Rugby score

Parknews is generally happy to promote things for the good of the game, so a free plug here for something that may be of interest to those who (unlike the editor) have some sort of idea what you do with an i-pad or i-phone. The developer, one Gordon Brown (No relation) says, "Hi, as the new European season approaches, I would like to introduce you to RugbyScorer - the world's first - and free - Iphone/ipod app for rugby scoring. This is aimed towards the thousands of spectators /coaches / officials who watch grassroots, junior / youth matches and tournaments and do not have the benefit of a scoreboard! It also helps match reporters / coaches and officials put together a real-time report ready for immediate emailing, and keeps track of the team.

"It's available now for free download from iTunes: <http://itunes.apple.com/app/rugby-scorer/id371066263?mt=8> works with Iphones, Ipad and Ipod touch - and rated 5 Stars by coaches around the world. There is no catch, it's free and fun - developed by myself - a Community rugby manager in England

I would be very grateful of your downloading - if you are an "I-device" user - and also forwarding the link to your rugby contacts who use iphones/ipods - I am sure you are very familiar with the spectators who ask the coaches "what's the score?" "who scored that try?" and "how long to half-time?" This provides the answers and helps those not so familiar with the sport keep track of the score! Press Release: <http://www.pressdispensary.co.uk/releases/c992698.php> Thanks, Gordon "

You can contact Gordon at gordon@rugbyscorer.com or the website is <http://www.rugbyscorer.com>

Away matches

Park have some very long distance away matches this season, which could end up costing a fortune to supporters who pay the full train fare on the day. However, a check on the Internet suggests that a Network Card giving a third off and buying advance tickets can save you quite a lot of money. The catch is, of course, if the match is postponed you don't get your money back. But the check reveals that, suitably armed with a card, you can currently get to Redruth and back (out on the 07:30 returning on the 18:11) for less than £30, and the trip to Tynedale (to Corbridge station which is 200 yards from the ground) weighs in at £40 if you book on the internet.

Big kick off

Please don't forget that our first League home match against Cornish All-Blacks on Saturday 4 September will see the opening of Ripley's Bar and an opportunity to pay tribute to probably the greatest player to grace the red and white hoops. Please pass the word around, as so many have asked when there might be an opportunity to show their respects to the late Andy Ripley.