

PARKNEWS

Season
2011-12

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The e-magazine for all Rosslyn Park supporters

PARK GO TOP OF THE TABLE



Nev Edwards dives over for a try at the start of a sensational second half against Cambridge that brought 4 further tries [Photo: David Whittam]

Welcome to Parknews, What a superb 40 minutes of rugby we saw in Saturday's second half. If you are going to go to the top of the League, then you may as well do it in style and Park certainly did that. Of course, it is who tops the League at the end of the season that counts, not who is number 1 in January. It may be hard to get to the top of the League, but it's a lot more difficult to stay there. Everyone has that extra incentive to knock you off your pedestal, and we face the toughest possible challenge next week with a visit to Jersey – who have the best playing record in the League, but had the misfortune to be deducted 5 points for what was really an administrative slip, to which they owned up immediately and took their punishment on the chin.

A match report on last weekend appears on the following page, but after a disappointing first half, Park played some superb attacking in the second to which Cambridge - a good side - really had no answer. However, it seems safe to assume that Mr Bonney will be actively stopping it going to anyone's head and keeping people focussed on this coming weekend's match.

From talking to people at last Saturday's match there appears to be a good chance that 100+ supporters will be crossing the channel, from Thursday onwards, for Saturday's match, so we have tried to provide some more comprehensive information on Jersey, whom we have not visited before. First some detail on the club themselves.

Jersey

Jersey had a mixed start to 2011/12, their first season at Level Three. This could arguably be put *Continued back page.....*

Club Diary

Saturday 14 January

Jersey

v

1st XV

National 1

Away KO 3:00

2nd XV v Shelford

Zoo Sports Shield Div 1

Home KO 2:30

Hatters v Haywards Heath II

Zoo Sports Shield Div 3

Richmond Park KO TBA

4th XV TBA

Old Priorians II v B XV

Middlesex Merit 2

Away KO TBA

Nomads v Twickenham II

Surrey Premier League

Richmond Park KO TBA

Sunday 15 January

Slingbacks

v

Richmond III

Championship 2

Home KO 2:00PM

**Following 1st XV home match is
against Tynedale on Saturday 21
January, KO 2:30**

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

PARK ADMINISTER SIX OF THE BEST

Rosslyn Park 43

Cambridge 17

National 1

Rosslyn Park swept to the top of National One with an imperious second half performance in which they produced five unanswered tries. That did not look a likely outcome when Cambridge – with the wind at their backs – were the better side in the first half and deservedly held a 17-10 lead at the interval.

Cambridge could not have got off to a better start, kicking off, they won the ball and ran at Park, who were caught flat footed, and when centre Toby Berridge received the ball he bounced off a defender before touching down by the posts with only seconds on the clock. Fly half Elliott Bale added a conversion for 7-0.

Stung, Park came straight back and soon levelled the scores with a good try. Scrum half Graham Barr picked out centre Dom Shabbo, who made a great run and released winger Steve Parsons to plunge over. Ross Laidlaw's kick levelled the scores.

If Park's moves looked marginally sharper than did their opponents, then it was Cambridge who enjoyed an edge in territory and possession and when Park conceded a penalty on 15 minutes Bale was on hand to kick his side to a 10-7 lead.

Park were forced to do more defending than they had bargained for, but did it well. Whenever they broke out they looked dangerous and Cambridge conceded a penalty inside their own 22. Laidlaw kicked to touch to set up the catch and drive, which the visitors could only stop illegally to set up a similar situation. This time the normally dependable Park lineout failed to secure their own ball and, instead of taking the lead, were again forced to defend.

Park's defence was again first rate, but when Nev Edwards tried to set up a counter-attack with a neat chip the ball was held up on the wind and very nearly set up an interception try. This time Cambridge refused to give up their position on the Park line and eventually prop Tom Fidler was bundled over for a try, Bale converting for 17-7 on 23 minutes.

Just as it looked as if Cambridge would take a 10-point lead into the second half, Park had an attacking line-out in the visitors' 22. Cambridge pulled down the catcher to concede a penalty out wide which,



into a strong wind, would have taxed any kicker. Laidlaw made it look routine.

Park emerged from the dressing room after the interval to play 40 minutes of sublime attacking rugby to which the visitors, hard as they tried, had no real reply. In the second minute of the half Edwards was in a great position to receive the ball and dive in full length under the posts to allow Laidlaw to convert and equalise.



Six minutes later another super passing movement saw Steve Parsons on the receiving end to sprint around the outside of the defence for Laidlaw to add a conversion to put his side ahead for the first time.

Only three minutes to wait for a sensational individual try by Miles Mantella, who picked the ball up in midfield, saw an angle and simply flew to touch down under the posts to bring the 4-try bonus and give Laidlaw an easy kick to stretch the lead. With the forwards now providing a seemingly endless supply of quality ball, Park really turned on the style with great movement and invention in the backs – even the odd flip-behind-the-back pass came off. This was worth a tenner of anyone's money, and they hadn't finished yet.

Steve Parsons was released again for a super gallop up the right. He could not quite make it over, but Park retained possession moving the ball along the line for skipper Mark Lock to almost force his way in. The visiting defence was very good indeed, but they had no answer left when again the ball was recycled and quickly returned along the line to the right where centre Dom Shabbo went over.

Probably the best "try" was a superb move that sent in Mantella, but the referee brought play back for an earlier forward pass to earn some good-natured booing from the crowd.

It was only reasonable that the forwards should try to get in on the act, driving towards the line. Cambridge did well to hold them up, but when the ball was released replacement hooker Ben Gotting was on hand to force himself over to bring a deserved one for the "fat boys" and a final score of 43-17.

What was most impressive was that Cambridge showed in the first period that they were a very good side. However, Park cannot rest on their laurels as next week they fly to the Channel Islands to face second-placed Jersey, where they have only been defeated once since March 2009, and whose win over Ealing was their 12th in succession. It's tough at the top.

Park: Edwards; Parsons (Gower), Shabbo, Robinson, Mantella; Laidlaw; Barr (Baxter); Ovens, Richmond (Gotting), Ward (Huggett); Lloyd-Jones, Anderson; Trayfoot, Barrett (Campbell), Lock.

Park scorers: Parsons (2T), Edwards (T), Mantella (T), Shabbo (T), Gotting (T), Laidlaw (P, 5C)

RUNNING RUGBY PAYS OFF FOR Bs

B XV 57

Chiswick II 24

Friendly

By Nick Jones

This Saturday saw the B XV take on their vanquished opposition from the final of last season's Middlesex Merit Table II final and a side that had been promoted to division one due to the IVs being above the B's.

Chiswick's warm up was their usual organised bag work and screaming contest, which they transferred to the pitch and quickly put two fine tries past the B's touch rugby defence. This stirred the slumbering leviathan, that is the mighty Bs and a response was quick to be posted. Some solid scrummaging whilst under pressure from a rotund and miserable opposition pack, provided quick ball for our excellent three quarters to run riot. Utility forward, "Austin Healey" Watney scored a fine winger's try from about forty yards (you did read that correctly) and set the tone for the rest of the day.

Guy House brought considerable polish to our attack, allowing his centre partnership to make huge gains at times, and a well finished try followed. Pantomime villain, Graham Lloyd was then dispatched to the sin bin after finding out that the callow referee would indeed produce cards for shoe pie, thank you for asking him before you delivered it old chap. The first half finished with a good contest, but with Chiswick now playing with their propesque fly half tugging the strings of an

unimaginative backline, it looked like the B's might prevail, if they could overcome a drilled pack and the setting sun.

The second half allowed some lithe running from Pringle, Humming and Irish who by no side had all managed a pair and avoided Damocles' jug yet again. Chiswick scored via a mistake from Curtis, chipping directly into the defence's hands from a ruck (next time it will work and young Curtis will be the star.) Our defence was again tested when Chiswick were held up over the line, and from the resulting scrum the B's managed to avert disaster. Chiswick played pattern rugby, with runners off their lynchpins, but ultimately failed to progress once disrupted. Park often seized on loose ball, ran away from trouble and coped well with their driving maul and strong scrummage.

Once Park had gained a 15 point lead, Chiswick started to bicker amongst themselves, with the referee, the ball, us and anyone else in earshot and summarily lost a footballer to the bin. Park closed the game off in style with some fine running rugby and showed the potential of the socialite subclass at the club. Encore!

Team: 1. Hippo 2. Dan Pett 3. Arthur 4. Graham Lloyd 5. Pete Snow 6. Fermin 7. Leo 8. Yeomans 9. Jamie Curtis 10. Guy House 11. Chavros 12. Si Hemming 13. Irish 14. Alex Watney 15. Pringle 16. Edmund 17. Will Ferrand 18. Bob Coultts

Scorers: Tries: Pringle 2, Irish 2, Hemming 2, Watney **Conversions:** Curtis and House

Sin bin: young Mr Lloyd

2s AT EALING



Last weekend the 2nd XV match scheduled at Cambridge was called off, so the coaches arranged at short notice a further fixture with Ealing 2s. Park lost, despite being competitive well into the second half, but at least the players got a much needed run out after the festive break. One key absentee was the ever-popular Chas Daw, due to the birth of his daughter Mia at 3.30pm on Friday 6th weighing in at a healthy 8lbs. Everyone at the Club will want to be associated with wishing him and his wife all the best, even though - as John Weatherall pointed out - it was not well timed as Sunday to Wednesday would have been better. It was John who submitted these photos, for which many thanks. And, John, you didn't have to take the trouble to appear in the top one (see shadow at bottom).



Reader's Letter

Brown-nosing

From Phil Peace

Charlie

I am writing this whilst on holiday in South America and am still in a daze over the events last Saturday which place us narrowly top of the league in fierce competition with several other quality teams. A fabulous effort by all the players, coaches and all the medical and supporting management, admin and technical support staff.

Relating to the considerable off pitch efforts I think it is high time that a certain "unsung hero" got a mention in Parknews. This is of course you, the editor.

Parknews readers should be aware that several Park supporters/members who hold no official roles at the club frequently contribute to an informative internet based rugby forum called "Rolling Maul". This includes a dedicated section for all National One clubs. All bloggers have tongue in cheek names such as "hands in the ruck" and "barking dog" to name but a few but essentially masking our true identity. The usual forum rules relating to fair comments and decency of course apply and the forum moderator hardly ever has to intervene. There are a few players from other clubs who sometimes contribute to provide a more rounded view of events viewed entirely from the touchline. The forum predicts the outcome of matches, provides live scores every Saturday together with post match analysis and much more.

Just before Christmas I started a thread called National One websites. This started as a suggestion that if anyone knew a more comprehensive weekly publication than our own Parknews then I had yet to see it.

Since that time, many forum members and other website editors who are also forum members have stated that Parknews is gold standard and has consistently reached a standard that other sites aspire to achieve.

Well done Charlie. I got to the point in the end penning this in 35 degrees of heat on my i pod in a beach bar surrounded by nubile bikini clad beauties with "The girl from Ipanema" playing in the background.

SLINGBACKS TRY OUT NEWCOMERS

Supermarines 34

Slingbacks 0

Friendly

By Camilla Brueton

The Slingbacks travelled west for friendly against Supermarine to welcome the New Year in. A tough but friendly game ensued, with the Slingbacks using the opportunity to give game time to new players, some of whom have never played before. Although the scoreline was quite one sided, a try fest it was not, with the Slingbacks demonstrating good tackling and communication in defence. Forward of the match went to prop Gemma Headley- for going from never having played a game before, to becoming a driving machine in just 80minutes! Back of the match went to another relative newcomer Kika Haland for her great lines of running, coming from depth on the wing. Apart from the scoreline, it was an all round good game and good preparation for the league match against Richmond III's at home

Looking forward to seeing you and our small army of supporters in Jersey on Saturday. Whatever the result, this game is worth flying half way round the world to watch. Heady times for us all.

Well done again Charlie on behalf of all Parknews readers, thanks and keep up the great work.

Phil

Ps can you please publish the link to your plaudits by other editors.

ED: *Firstly, I can't publish the link as Phil didn't attach it. Secondly, if Phil thinks he can stay out of Nosey Parker simply by brown-nosing then he is sadly mistaken - only hard cash achieves that. Indeed, should evidence arise that the "nubile bikini clad beauties" did not include the long-suffering Mrs Peace, then it may become Nosey Parker's duty to ensure that she is aware of her beloved's role in an away trip to Redruth a few seasons back.*

HATTERS FIND THEIR FORM

Hatters 38

Guildford 2nd XV 5

Zoo Sports Shield Div 3

By Joe Wigley

The Hatters arrived at the clubhouse for their first home league fixture since October with probably the strongest squad this season. Perhaps it was the two wins on the trot before Christmas or, more likely, the promise of new stash that lured a full bench out from festive lethargy. Either way, the desire to avenge a rather lacklustre defeat on the away fixture was evident from the outset.

With the formalities of photos out of the way and sponsors ushered from the field, Guildford opened proceedings. From the kick-off, Park played with a level of intensity that Guildford were unable to match. With the forwards, notably Reilly and Jawich, running hard and the backs using the ball to good effect, it was only a matter of time before Guildford gave way under the pressure. The Hatters first try came from some excellent opportunism from Wilson, who, seeing a mismatch ahead, straightened and made directly for the line, crossing to the right of the posts. Sonenfield's conversion went astray, leaving the scores at 5-0.

Having dealt more effectively with their second kick-off, the Hatters won a lineout inside the Guildford 22 on the lefthand side of the field. The lineout was secured and valuable yards gained before soft hands in the midfield sped the ball wide to the Wiseman, who, from 15 yards out, finished off perhaps the best score of the day to the right of the posts. With the conversion added, the score stood at 12-0 after barely ten minutes. However, the Hatters, with good ball retention at both the set-piece and in open play, managed to

build several phases together. Having kept the ball tight in the pack, Sonenfield's injection of pace from short-range in the midfield and ambitious dive eluded the grasping Guildford defence to bring the Hatters' tally to 19 including the conversion.

While the first half was in no way one way traffic, the red and white defence held firm with good organisation perhaps coinciding with the return of Beale to the midfield. The teams turned round with the Hatters 24 points to nil up after Snell ran in a good try before the break.

It was perhaps inevitable, although nevertheless disappointing, that Park fell off the pace a little in the second half. Defensively the Hatters kept their shape but were indecisive with the ball in hand. Guildford exploited this weakness well, winning several penalties from a referee who had lost his patience with Park for one reason or another and sending Davies to the bin. England on arriving on the field, however, took matters into his own hands powering through to the line from a scrappy lineout. Sonenfield duly converted to put Park out of sight 31 points ahead.

Guildford now entered their best passage of play playing through the middle. The Hatters defended well although, it could perhaps be said that fatigue was beginning to show as Guildford were let in for a consolation try. Park, however, had the final say with Beale running an excellent line on Wilson's shoulder off a lineout to bring the final score to 38-5. By general acknowledgement, Riley stood out as Man of the Match with several huge hits and hard yards made. All in all an excellent team performance which built on the victories at Hove and Wimbledon. On this form, there are few opponents in the league that can't be turned over and one gets the sense that the Hatters are beginning to realise this.

WATCH OUT FOR WHARTON

By the Editor

Faced with the question, "What is the RFU? What is it for?" a cynic described it as 'A conspiracy between the Premiership representatives and the County Blazers from Old Rubberduckians to screw everyone in between'. Cynical, but one could allude to much circumstantial evidence that could be used to support such a theory.

One thing which came to light over the festive break brought this to mind. Regular Parknews readers will be aware that a short while back the RFU came up with a proposal that would abolish the National Leagues structure and introduce only local regional leagues below the existing Championship level. This was firmly kicked into touch when voted upon. Cue for everyone involved in the upper reaches of the semi-professional game to breathe easily again.

Or not. Like all ruling bodies, the RFU knows best. Rather than accept defeat and forget the idea, it has hired a Consultancy, in this case Wharton Consulting, to look into the league structure below the Championship and come back with proposals. Anyone with business experience will be well aware that you bring in consultants, not for a fresh insight, but to provide an intellectual argument and quasi-independent support for what you wanted to do in the first place.

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The word is that Wharton is likely to come back with recommendations for complete regionalisation and the withdrawal of central funding below the two professional divisions. To be fair, Wharton consulting should be pretty expert in this field, being run by former Rugby League CEO, Neil Tunnicliffe, who should by that experience know something about running small local leagues.

Doubtless this time the RFU will take greater care to get its ducks in a row before things are presented for a vote, and it could be touch-and-go whether the existing pyramid structure will survive.

However, before simply pulling up the drawbridge and asserting the status quo, it needs to be admitted that the existing situation is rapidly becoming economically untenable. In his Daily Telegraph column last week Brian Moore described a dynamic that will be all too familiar to many. Alluding to the lot of clubs below National Two, Moore described, "a collection of disparate clubs in the several leagues do not pay players enough to be properly classed semi-professional but the money they do pay has a greater effect than that spent in the top flight".

He went on, "One club wanting to attract the best local talent pay their squad £50 per week. This is not life changing, but ...the extra income is enough to attract players from other local clubs. Though individually the sum seems small, when you multiply it by 30 for the squad and then 24 weeks you have £36,000 to find before any of the club's other operating costs...What this does is create pressure on other clubs to match this spending or lose players.... These have to also spend to gain parity and would never have done so had they not been effectively coerced. Once a club start paying they are set on a course that often ends badly. At first they may be the only club in their league who pay but as they get promoted the number of paying clubs rises as do the

amounts paid. At £150 per week per player, they now need more than £100,000 per season before any other outgoings.

Moore goes on to assert that, "Clubs rise according to the level of payment they make but at some point they get promoted to a league which is too high. That season they lose most of their games and see their best players poached by other clubs. Meanwhile a lot of their infrastructure, that used to be amateur, has left because they do not see why they should work for nothing. Subsequent demotion can spiral out of control and end up threatening the club's existence".

Moore's solution is that the RFU should decide in what leagues payment can be made and ban payment of players otherwise. He says, "A club's membership of the Union should require disclosure of their books to the Inland Revenue. This way the RFU can ensure the game has a home for those players who want and deserve to be paid and the rest play for enjoyment".

HOW IT WAS

When League rugby was introduced in 1987 it announced a new competitive era where a Club's position would be determined solely on its playing record. It was essential to the whole structure that there were national leagues at the top, and that the leagues below fed into that structure, allowing the more ambitious clubs a rapid rise up the tables.

Previously there were a combination of Merit Tables ("league" being a dirty word) and traditional fixtures. For a junior club to progress into the Merit Tables, and access fixtures against the top clubs, was a drawn out process and could depend on who you knew as much as how good you were. Many – but far from all – of us were glad to see the back of the old system with the promise of real competition based genuinely on playing ability. But if only regional structures are brought in below the two fully-professional leagues then that is surely a step backwards.

Park competed in Merit Table B and the London Merit Table in their last season before the Leagues, 1986-87.

Opponents in Merit Table B were: Gosforth (now Newcastle), London Irish, Headingley (now Leeds), Waterloo, Richmond, Liverpool St Helens, Bedford, Blackheath, Saracens, Northampton and London Welsh. Matches against London clubs counted as being in the London Merit Table as well, but that competition gave additional fixtures against Metropolitan Police, London Scottish, Wasps and Harlequins. Additionally there were 'friendlies' away to Esher, Vale of Lune, Moseley, Abertillery, Nottingham, Coventry and Glamorgan Wanderers. Home friendlies included Orrell, Gloucester, Cambridge U, Exeter U, Loughborough U, Durham U, Selkirk, Bath, Pontypridd, Bristol and Bridgend. There was also a cup match against Leicester.

If the RFU are now going to argue that the game can no longer afford for clubs at our level to play on a National basis, then what on earth has happened to the vast sums of new money that have come into the game? How effective has been the RFU's stewardship? Where are their priorities? How fair their distribution?

I'm not sure you can put the genie back into the bottle quite that easily. It would be easy, for instance, for a sponsor to make payments to players that do not go through the Club's books. There are myriad ways of cheating – as everyone knew when the whole game was supposedly amateur. I

know of a Park player, who did not appear in the 1st XV last season, who was offered a match fee of £250 plus regular training expenses to join a club two levels below ourselves. This is just madness.

If Wharton comes to the expected conclusion, then promotion and relegation between the regional leagues and the Championship would be nigh on impossible. The existing status of clubs would be more or less set in stone, to the exclusion of – say – Jersey, who are already able to sustain full-time professionalism and have a strong balance sheet. But the argument surely goes beyond crude financial considerations: surely a key function of the RFU has to be to facilitate players and teams playing at the highest level they can aspire to. That demands a pyramid structure that allows the very best teams across the country to play each other. As the RFU has effectively made the Premiership and Championship the prerogative of the full-time professional, then there will always be a need for something like the existing National League structure as the pinnacle of the semi-professional game.

In pleading the case for only local leagues below Championship level, its supporters have made much of Tynedale having to set off at 4:00AM to play Jersey. Individual cases make bad law. If you made a pie chart of the outgoings of the average semi-pro club you would find the slice for payments to players far bigger than the slice devoted to travel costs. Moreover, it is an element that is within the clubs' ability to do something about were they to act collectively. The whole dynamic is driven by silly sums being paid by junior clubs.

So when the RFU come to publish the Wharton Report, by all means let us throw stones at it. When it comes to the real problem of excessive payments, well – as the good book says, "Let he that is without sin cast the first stone".

Note: Please refer to the 'disclaimer' on the back page

From front page... down to a pre-season schedule that began late, after the previous campaign had stretched to the end of May, and featured just one friendly game. The first month featured a narrow defeat to Fylde, and a more comprehensive loss to Ealing, Jersey's first home defeat since March 2009. But it also brought impressive away wins at Blackheath and Rosslyn Park that showed the Islanders would be easily able to compete in National One.

The low point of the season to date was definitely the start of October. Disappointment at a last-gasp 19-16 defeat at Cinderford was put into perspective by news of potentially career-threatening injuries suffered in a car accident by prop James Ellershaw, and within a few days the club were docked five points for fielding a registered overseas player at Cinderford as an 11th-hour replacement and thereby exceeding the permitted maximum of two.

But since this point Jersey have embarked on an impressive run of 12 straight wins. This included 33 unanswered second-half points in a 54-13 win at Cambridge, and an aptitude for gaining bonus points in the last few minutes of games. The final victims were Blackheath, defeated 32-5 on a windy day at St Peter. Last weekend they had a 24-16 win at Ealing, all the more impressive as they lost the League's top scorer, Michael le Bourgeois, early on with a hamstring injury. They are sweating to get him fit to face Park on Saturday.

The squad has been developed by Director of Rugby Ben Harvey over his three-and-a-half years in charge, including a mix of native Jersey talent and imported players. Numerically this has tilted in favour of the imports as the club has risen up the leagues, but the contracted squad includes around one third of Jersey-born players. There are also long-term 'immigrants' who moved to Jersey with their 'day-jobs' and have now settled on the island, such as Steve O'Brien, older brother of Irish flanker Sean, who is the longest-serving player along with prop Jon Brennan – both have spent around 10 years in the Jersey squad. Brennan is out for the season with a knee injury, as is captain and second row Paul Rodgers. However the pack remains a formidable unit with powerful props Myles Landick, former Coventry man Dai Maddocks and the summer's 'headline' signing Ben Evans, capped 27 times for Wales. Jim Brownrigg, ex Bristol and Cardiff second row, brings experience and lineout nous while the back row features dynamic open-side Guy Thompson, who has scored tries since being recruited from Richmond in the summer, replacement captain Graham Bell and Number 8 Nick Trower, who often makes an impact from the bench.

Arguably this season's first-choice half-back pairing would have been Wales sevens' scrum-half Nicky Griffiths and another recruit from Richmond, Ross Broadfoot. But both have suffered with injuries and only recently returned to the fold, with Dave McCormack, the Island's Rugby Development Officer, deputising ably in the '9' shirt while Mike Le Bourgeois has moved forward from full-back to play fly-half and perform the place-kicking duties. The South African/Welsh duo of Donovan Sanders and Dai Bishop have developed into a reliable centre partnership, while back three options include ex-Esher flyer James Copsey, the Bristolian Ashley Maggs and local talents Ed Dawson and Chris Levesley. Levesley is one of two 17-year-olds to appear this season, the other being forward James Voss.

On match day

So if you are going, the first thing to note is that kick off will be 3:00PM: Jersey have new floodlights so there are no daylight concerns. There is a lunch on the day for members and sponsors in the clubhouse before the game. RP officials will be invited through the official channels. The lunch was sold out long ago, but Jersey will try to fit in some of our supporters as well. ***If interested you must contact David Booth in our own office (020 8876 6044) before Wednesday lunchtime***, and David will liaise with Jersey. Otherwise your options are as follows.

The Pavilion Bar at JRFC will be open from 12noon, this offers full bar, including locally-brewed Liberation Ale on handpump, plus food such as soup, 'posh dogs', pasties, burgers etc. It can get quite busy in the hour leading up to kick-off. There are various other 'off-site' options, the first of which is actually the neighbouring Jersey Bowl which backs onto the club and does a good trade in pre-match rugby lunches (and Liberation Ale!) and tables can be booked there. The only pubs within walking distance of the ground are in St Peter's Village: the Star & Topsy Toad and the St Peter's Inn, tho' they're not particularly 'rugby pubs' as such and are probably 15 minutes walk away. Other options might be some of the restaurants in St Aubin which is a 5-minute taxi ride away. The Boathouse is one venue that apparently offers transport up to the club, and the Salty

Dog has a rugby lunch as well, while in nearby St Brelade the Oyster Box has a similar pre-match option. But a booking at any restaurant and a 2.30 taxi would work fine

For the match itself Ground Admission is £10, and it's a good idea to arrive at least 20 minutes before the off. The small stand is fully subscribed, with the exception of seats for the invited officials as above. If there is anyone who has particularly severe mobility issues then Jersey will try and help out with vacant stand seats, but these are at a premium and can't be guaranteed.

Weather advice: it is usually windy, and there's limited shelter if it rains, so suitable attire is worth having...The clubhouse bar upstairs is open to all after the match, although regrettably there's no Liberation Ale up there, while the Pavilion usually stays open until about 7pm. For those flying there and back on the day, the ground is less than 10 minutes walk from the airport.

If you can't get to Jersey

We hope that loads of you will be able to make the trip to Jersey, so suitable attire is worth having...The clubhouse bar upstairs is open to all after the match, although regrettably there's no Liberation Ale up there, while the Pavilion usually stays open until about 7pm. For those flying there and back on the day, the ground is less than 10 minutes walk from the airport.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/jersey>

and at the top right hand corner of the screen from about 14:00 you should see a photo of the programme's three presenters. Click on this photo and you should start hearing the programme. Obviously this is accessible to the many Parknews readers around the world who keep in touch via this magazine - you have a rare opportunity to at least hear your team live in what could be the most important match of the season. BBC Radio Jersey is also broadcasting a live match preview from the Jersey Clubhouse between 6-7PM on Friday, so anyone already over there may wish to go along. You might be interviewed!

2nd XV

The 2s scheduled match with Cambridge was cancelled as Cambridge had too many players with County commitments to be able to field a side. Although we did not know this when the players trained on Thursday, well done to the coaches for arranging a last minute match with (yet again) Ealing. We don't have a report on the match (which we lost by 41-19, but held them to 9-6 at the interval) but John Weatherall has contributed some photos which appear inside along with a team list.

Clubsides

Will Thorogood reports that we had two home games in Richmond Park on Saturday. Both games were successfully played, tThe Hatters appear to be on a roll...three good wins on the trot! Hatters 38 Guildford 5. A slow start to their game, but the B's got rid of the last of the Christmas pud, and then quickly showed their paces. Well played, against old adversaries who are in the League above! For the 4s, skipper Anthony Leatham reported "Fours lost their game against H&F2s, reports suggest that the first half was strongly contested but not enough try-scoring opportunities were converted by Park – some injuries and a lack of post-Christmas match fitness resulted in some tries being scored against us. Broken fingers and a torn hamstring later – the result went against us 32-7 (Chi scoring for the Fours)."

Slingbacks

The Slingbacks used last Sunday's friendly at Supermarine, in Swindon, to 'blood' some new players, so a defeat was always on the cards (there's a short report on the previous page). This Sunday the girls return to serious League action with a local derby against Richmond III at home kicking off at 2:00PM. What better way to shake off a Jersey hangover than an afternoon in the fresh air supporting them? As always, admission is free and the Clubhouse open.

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