

PARKNEWS

Season
2010-11

Issue No: 3

25 August 2010

The e-magazine for all Rosslyn Park supporters

IMPRESSIVE START FOR PARK

Welcome to another Parknews. It has been said before that it is very hazardous to relate form in 'friendlies' to what might happen in League matches. However, a truism familiar to horse racing punters is surely apposite here: whilst a good horse may record a bad time if you run it in a poor race, a bad horse is still incapable of recording a good time if you put it in a strong race. Park faced some really strong opposition last Saturday when Bedford – among the favourites for the Championship – sent a proper 1st XV squad to contest Saturday's match, and it would be difficult to resist being impressed by the way Park coped with the task.

Bedford showed early on that they are a class outfit, but Park dug in, defended well and eventually lost by only a solitary point. It's also worth remembering that half a dozen players didn't turn out, for fear of exacerbating small niggling injuries, who might have done so had it been a League match. There is a report on page 2, and apologies to any players who got onto the field and whom your fearless reporter failed to spot. I think the substitutions are correct, but I haven't bothered to indicate where a player came back on in his original position.

Next opponents

The caveat about not reading too much into pre-season friendlies applies equally to looking at the results of other sides. We don't know whether they fielded or faced full-strength sides, or how many substitutions they made how soon. But it's still interesting. **Cornish All Blacks** (of whom more later) are our first opponents on 4 September, kicking off at 2:30. Please note that this match will also see the formal opening of Ripley's Bar and there will be a minute's silence for the great man immediately prior to kick off. Last Saturday the Cornishmen lost by only 15-22 to Newport, reportedly a scrappy encounter which featured a mass punch up in the second half, following mass substitutions. Still, to get within a score of the Welsh Premier side suggests that we shall be facing stern opposition.

Our second opponents, **Blackheath**, will not have enjoyed losing 27-33 at home to Richmond, who reputedly have money to spend. Club were losing 21-7 at half time and made something of a comeback before the visitors pulled away again towards the end. A Richmond contact suggested that Blackheath sported a very useful centre pairing.

Third up we face odds-on favourites to win the league, **London Scottish**. They might not have been expected to beat London Welsh any more than we were expected to beat Bedford, but they were smashed out of sight by 12-67, eleven tries to two (and one of those came when Welsh were down to 14 men!). Of one thing you may be sure: they will have taken steps to sort things out before they come to visit us. On paper they have by far the strongest squad in the division.

Our final opponents next month are **Barking**, who were promoted as worthy champions. There was even (completely false) rumour that they were reluctant to accept promotion because of their financial plight. They look to be a side to be reckoned with if you take a 31-17 win over Esher at face value. Reportedly Esher enjoyed most of the possession and wove patterns around the pitch while Barking got on with scoring points from the possession they did have. I've been unable to estab-



Amo Tauialo makes some hard yards against Bedford on Saturday, with Howard Quigley and Russ Forster in support [photo: David Whittam]

Club Diary

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

Shelford v 2nd XV

RugbyTech Shield Div 1

Away KO TBA

Hatters v Esher Academy

RugbyTech Shield Div 3

Richmond Park KO TBA

*Clubhouse open for training evenings,
with full bar service available to Mem-
bers and supporters*

Continued back page.....

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

PARK HAVE STYLE AND SUBSTANCE

Rosslyn Park 25
Bedford Blues 26
Pre-season match

Championship side Bedford Blues came with a strong reputation and showed they deserved it, but Park tackled brilliantly, showed great determination and played some scintillating rugby that augurs well for their prospects in National One. If this match is anything to go by, the crowds will soon be back at Roehampton.



Harry Rowlands flies at the Bedford defence [all match photos by David Whittam]

Bedford heaped on the pressure from the kick off, establishing field position in Park's right hand corner. Two quickly taken penalties kept the home side on the back foot, the second of which looked likely to score but for a forward movement. Eventually the try line was breached when the ball was whipped across and centre Tom Bedford went

past two tackles, full back Pritchard converting for 7-0.

The Championship side maintained the upper hand, securing the lion's share of possession at the breakdown and the speed and cohesion of their attacks had Park constantly stretched. Park tackled like demons, trying to counter-attack but at this stage they were under the cosh. A penalty from half way was booted to the corner, where Park were again pinned down until it was smartly worked to the line for Schmidt to score, Pritchard adding the extras for 14-0 after only 15 minutes.

Park produced a good attack from kick off but lost the ball in contact. They worked hard, tackled everything that moved and if to a certain extent they were still feeding off scraps then they were beginning to cook a tasty dish with them. But Bedford were still quick on the counter and Park had some more serious defending to do before a chink of light presented itself.

On the half hour Park managed a good concerted attack, getting close to the line but meeting with resolute defence. Wholesale substitutions were made on 33 minutes, and for the first time Park decided to drive at the visiting defence and it was Joe Burton, on for Mark Lock, who appeared to get the ball down as they marauded over the line. Ed Lewis-Pratt's conversion attempt from out wide narrowly missed, but Park were able to get into the interval only 9 points adrift at 14-5.



Park defend in numbers

The home side really went for it after the interval. It looked as if they might be undone when Bedford stole the ball whilst under pressure but, when they shipped it along the line to counter-attack, some great

anticipation saw centre Charlie Gower intercept a pass and make a searing run through the middle to touch down by the posts. Ed Lewis-Pratt converted for 14-12 after 47 minutes.

Park were now looking really good and further forays saw them awarded a penalty, gratefully accepted by Lewis-Pratt to put his team ahead for the first time.

Bedford reacted smartly and Park's defensive skills were seen to good effect as the Championship side sought to wrest back control. Despite some spirited tackling, visiting centre Burke got over in the corner and a superb conversion from Pritchard saw his team regain the lead at 21-15.

Park were not ready to touch the forelock, however, and after Bedford were penalised for "crossing" the home side fashioned a superb attack through several hands but were resisted by stout defending.



Joe Launchbury on the attack

However, Bedford were eventually penalised and Lewis-Pratt's kick reduced the margin to 21-18.

Park still looked lively, but when they were penalised on half way the ball was again hoofed to the corner and, following the throw, Farrell eventually got over to make it 26-18 with 12 minutes remaining.

ing.

When Park centre Chris Lewis, who had tackled brilliantly all afternoon, was sent to the bin for an accidental high one it looked as if their day was done. But this team is clearly made of sterner stuff and, a man short, decided that attack was the best means of defence. Lewis-Pratt had a great run ended close to the line and eventually Burton got over, Lewis-Pratt's conversion putting his team within a point.

There was to be no "giant killing". When the referee signalled that it was the last play of the match, as soon as Bedford secured possession they hoofed the ball over the stand to claim the win. Over the 80 minutes Bedford deserved their win. But as a newly-promoted National One side taking on a club expected to prosper in the Championship, there was a lot for Park to be delighted with both in style and in substance.

Park: Davies; Lyndsey Hague (Edwards), Lewis (Sweeney), Gower (Lewis), Rudd (Lyndsey-Hague); Lewis-Pratt; Baxter (Holmes); Huggett (Millard / Collier), Gotting (Tauialo), Collier (Mines / Daw); Pape (Quigley), Launchbury (Forster / A Jones); Rowland, Barratt (Rodman), Lock (Burton).

Park scorers: Burton (2T), Gower (T), Lewis-Pratt (2P,2C).



Good line-out work

NEW SHOP IS SERIOUS STUFF



Something has happened to the Portakabin in the close season. If you were at the Bedford match, you may have seen the outside but why not take a look inside the next time you are at the club? Because now it's....

SHOP OPEN!

Our new club playing kit sponsors Serious Stuff have opened their new shop at the club. The shop is stocking replicas of the new 1st XV shirts that carry the tribute to Andy Ripley alongside a range of other Rosslyn Park merchandise.

**Shop hours: The shop is now open every weekday
Monday to Friday - 9am to 5pm
Saturdays (11.30am – 5.30pm)
Sunday mornings (9.30am to 2pm)**



From front page....

lish how strong an Esher side it was, but you can do no more than beat them.

So it looks like a tough opening month for Park. But Saturday showed that there is much substance to our side, which is matched by a style and flair that should be richly entertaining. Spread the word that the Park is the place to come for the best value rugby entertainment in London!

All-Blacks go into liquidation

Park's first League opponents, Cornish All blacks (aka Launceston) have gone into voluntary liquidation. They had to make wage cuts last season (but still finished third). They had already committed to substantially reducing their playing budget ahead of the forthcoming season, so their playing strength should not be affected by the situation, **and there is no reason our match will not go ahead as planned.**

Summer recruits have included back Richard Bright from the Cornish Pirates, ex-Mounts Bay star Pale Nonu, Ed Lewsey and Exeter academy forwards Jack Andrew and Addison Lockley. Chairman Tim Fox said: "I think it's fair to say the players that are playing here are playing because they love the club and the atmosphere, they are certainly not here playing for the money that could be paid. Without exception, all of our players could easily earn substantially more money at other clubs."

The Chairman, Tim Fox, was quoted in the local press as saying that the club expect to continue playing at Polson Bridge this season in League One with the team's current players after forming a new company to honour their existing contracts. "Launceston Rugby Football Club Limited, which was the trading company trading out of Polson Bridge, has gone into liquidation. We've gone down this route of a voluntary liquidation because if we don't then we would have a hostile liquidation forced upon us by HMRC. That would be very destructive, it's far better from our point of view if we do it as a voluntary liquidation. Creditors have been written to and a creditors' meeting has been called. We have formed a new company called Launceston Rugby Club Limited and under the protocol as designated by the RFU and we have submitted to them that we wish to take over the league position of the old club. We have put together a business plan, cash-flow forecast, profit and loss for the next three seasons and that will submitted to them very shortly".

The All Blacks' Polson Bridge home is not under threat, being held by trustees and not tied to the club in any way, shape or form. The Chairman pointed out, "What we're talking about today is Launceston Rugby Club Limited, we're running ten mini-junior teams, colts and ladies' teams as well as social teams and these are nothing to do with the limited company."

They will be able to allude to the precedents of London Welsh, Birmingham-Solihull and Coventry who all went into administration or liquidation before re-emerging as new companies, and will surely have all true rugby people on their side. They are a long-standing club with great traditions in a real rugby area. They were due to present their 3-year-plan to the RFU on Tuesday (after these notes were written, but if the result is known there will be a stop press item at the bottom of this page). We wish them every success (apart from on the field on Saturday week!) – if a great club like Launceston goes under then the whole sport is the poorer for it.

Give him a break!

If ever there was a player who deserves a break it has to be Steve Millard - but not one of the broken bone variety. Steve was unlucky enough to break his lower forearm at the beginning of last season, and then it broke again just as he was preparing for a comeback. Still Steve



hardly missed a match, carrying water on or doing anything he could to help his mates. Last Saturday provided Steve's parents (pictured by John 'Papparazzo' Weatherall) a rare opportunity to see their son in action. Alas it ended with a familiar



sight, but let us hope that it is not as serious this time.

Taste the difference

Supporters at the Cornish All-Blacks match will have the opportunity to sample the fare on offer from our new caterers, The Butcher & Grill. If you are taking lunch you might like to know that they source all their beef and lamb from an environmental award-winning farm raising stock traditionally in the Kent and Sussex Weald.

Tact and diplomacy



Most professional portrait photographers will tell you that a significant part of their skill set is to communicate with their subjects in a way that strikes an instant rapport. This advice was clearly lost of ace lens man Weatherall who chanced upon Shaun with some of the coaches before Saturday's match. "Hey guys", he said by way of introduction, "can I get a photo of you while you're still speaking to each other?"

Bar service

The box on the front page containing Club Diary mentions that the bar is open on training nights, but doesn't say which they are. This is to avoid rather than to create confusion. Pre-season (including this week) training is on Mondays and Wednesdays, but from September it reverts to Tuesdays and Thursdays. You can usually get a pint off of Will from around 5:00PM, and the clubhouse stays open until all the players have been fed and watered after training. It would be great to see a few more people along to chew the fat over the great issues of the day - much better than giving your beer money to a rich pub chain!

Practice match

In a previous Parknews we alluded to an internal practice match taking place this coming Saturday. That is no longer the case. Although the team will be training over bank holiday, including no doubt some competitive play, there is no formal practice match on Saturday afternoon and the Clubhouse will not be open. However, if you are looking for some good local rugby action this Saturday, why not pop down to the Surrey Sports Park in Guildford, where there's a whole day's rugby with the crucial England v USA clash at 6:30PM. Did you see former Slingback Amy Turner score England's third try last week? If you can't make it to Guildford it's live on Sky Sports. From 6:00PM.



Amy touches down for England

Man Friday

Park's former Head Coach, Mike 'Geezer' Friday has taken a coaching role at London Welsh for the coming season. He clearly didn't make a bad start with the demolition job at the Athletic Ground last Saturday! We wish him every success.

As this Parknews went to press there was no further news of Launceston's hearing at the RFU, so - touch wood - no news is probably good news.