



Season 2017-18

Issue 22

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PARK WIN THRILLING LOCAL DERBY

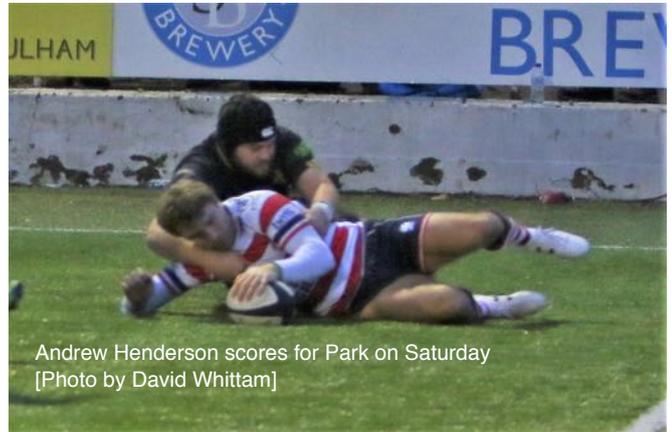
Welcome to Parknews Apologies if this week's Newsletter is a bit sparse and disjointed: the Editor is off on hols and it is being slung together at the last moment. Anyway, what a match that was on Saturday! Some of it may have had the coaches on both sides pulling their hair out, but a thirteen try local Derby, decided by the last play of the match, was surely a really exciting afternoon from a spectator's point of view. Park may have been slow getting into their stride, 25-12 down at half time, but that only made the comeback more spectacular!

The win moves Park up one place in the table, but we remain a point behind Esher, due to their gaining two points from the game: the 4-try bonus and a losing bonus point, but few would begrudge them that much after such a thrilling match.

Park seem to specialize in putting together some 40-minute spells that would challenge anyone: the second half against Plymouth Albion, the first against Coventry, the second against Esher, etc. If we could just put together 80 minutes at that intensity then we really would be in business. Something they will be called upon to do this coming Saturday.

Saturday's opponents, Bishops Stortford have been nothing if not inconsistent this season, having won away at Blackheath and Moseley, done the double over Old Elthamians and held Coventry to within 3 points at the Butts Arena, only to lose to Fylde and Cambridge. They also won at the Rock, by 31-24, earlier in the season, which is the result that matters to us. It is clearly going to take a big effort to come back with a satisfactory result, but it is the sort of match we need to be winning if we are to climb the table. It would be a great boost to our chances to take some good vocal support for our first match at Stortford at Senior level. Travel details appear later in this newsletter – please do get along if you can.

Coming up we have a whole weekend of Rugby action at the Rock starting on Friday night



Andrew Henderson scores for Park on Saturday
[Photo by David Whittam]



STOP PRESS: we understand there is a bus replacement service on the train journey from Liverpool Street to Bishops Stortford on Saturday, extending the journey time to around two hours. Please check before setting off

Friday 12 January

Hatters v Sutton & Epsom 2

Zoo Sports Shield
Home 4G KO 7:45PM

Saturday 13 January

Bishops Stortford v 1st XV

National 1
Away KO 3:00

B XV v Hamm & Fulham 3

Middlesex Merit 1
Home (4G) KO TBA

O Streetonians v Fours

Middlesex Merit 2
Away KO: TBA

Esher Abbots v Nomads

Surrey Championship
Away: KO TBA

Sunday 14 January

Slingbacks v Witney

League
Home (4G) KO: 2:00PM

**Next 1st XV Home Match
Saturday 20 January**

1st XV v Fylde

National 1
Home KO 3:00

To book for the pre-match lunch please call David Booth in the Club Office on 020 8876 6044



Park's sensational last second winning try is scored by Hugo Ellis [all match photos are by David Whittam]

with the Hatters playing Sutton & Epsom 2 in the Zoo Sports Shield. The Hatters are pressing for promotion and, if successful, will have the chance to play some pretty senior clubs' second XVs next term. This is a good standard of Rugby, so please do come down and give the lads your support. The Clubhouse will be open and admission is free (as is the case for all the home games this weekend). If you can't make it to Bishops Stortford then the B XV, who sit atop Middlesex Merit 1, will be in pursuit of the title with a local Derby against old rivals Hammersmith & Fulham. Last but not least, on Sunday the Slingbacks entertain Witney in a League match kicking off at 2:00PM. The two sides played out a thrilling draw in Oxfordshire earlier in the season, so please come down and encourage our girls to go one better.

The following weekend the First XV are at home to Fylde in a "must win" league match against a young team fighting against relegation. Earlier in the season, up on the Lancashire coast, we effectively threw away a winning position to hand Fylde their first 5-point win of the season, something our lads will surely be keen to avenge. Despite their lowly position Fylde still play a game based on running rugby from anywhere on the pitch, so it should be a really entertaining match, so please do come along and add your vocal support.

Rosslyn Park 44

Esher 37

National 1

The large crowd who braved the icy weather were treated to a red-hot, thirteen-try, local Derby that was decided in the last play of the match.

Esher started the stronger against a strangely subdued Park and took the lead on only five minutes when a good move sent in winger Joseph Beckett for 5-0.

Some inspired work by Park scrum half Jack Gash saw him set up hooker Carl Gibson to provide a chance that centre Andrew Henderson took with aplomb, centre Harry Leonard converting for 7-5 to the home side on 9 minutes.

However, Park were struggling to retain possession against a fired up and sleek Esher side, who soon scored two more tries of their own. Hooker Billy Harding got one from a catch-and-drive following a poor clearance, soon to be followed by centre Dan Rowland after scrum half Andrew Garner was allowed a long run from a quick tap penalty, converted by fly half Paul

Roberts to make the score 7-17.

Park looked set for a drubbing but came back on 19 minutes with a super cross-field kick from Leonard to change the direction of attack, met by winger Rhys Crane in full flight to score for 12-17.

Esher soon came back when Roberts slotted over a penalty, and Beckett put the icing on the Esher cake five minutes before the interval, gaining the visitors what looked like an unassailable lead at 12-25, especially when Gash was shown the yellow card just before the whistle.

With 14 men starting the second half Park transformed themselves, taking the fight to Esher. As Park pressed, Leonard opted to go for goal with a penalty to reduce the deficit to ten points. Then fly half Ollie Grove put in a peach of a grubber kick that sent Crane roaring up the right wing for his second try, converted by Leonard, and six minutes into the second period Park were only three points adrift despite being a man short

Esher were now the ones on the rack as Park returned to full complement, but as Park pressed a stray pass saw visiting centre Caden Murley intercept and sprint the length of the field unchallenged to give Roberts an easy conversion to restore a ten point advantage for his side on 56 minutes.

Park replied with a purpose, and from a fierce driving maul replacement scrum half Rory Brand whipped the ball wide for Henderson to score his second try.

Five minutes later Grove and Leonard combined to send in replacement winger Benji Marfo to tie the scores at 32-32, with thirteen minutes remaining.

It was now all Park, and the home side came up with what will surely be the try of the season. Some super work in confined space out on the left by Henderson saw him defy attempted tackles before Marfo appeared at full tilt in the narrowest of channels outside him, received the ball and flung himself horizontally past the last two defenders to put Park ahead at 37-32.

But there was still another twist. Esher, by now completely outplayed, had a final trick up their sleeve putting together a really good move for Murley to grab his second try and to tie up the scores at 37-37 with five minutes remaining.

Park's now dominant pack took it upon themselves to lay siege to the Esher line. The visitors put up a superb defensive wall, and with the referee indicating the last play of the match Park had only to lose control of the ball for it to end in a draw. After several thrusts at the line, skipper Hugo Ellis managed to dive over. Not the prettiest try he will ever score, but in Park's position one of the most crucial. Leonard completed the formality of the conversion to bring the final whistle at 44-37.

Park Head Coach, Kieran Power, said, "Talk about a game of two halves! For the first half our mentality and attitude to the game wasn't good enough.

"You could see the change in attitude after the interval, and if we can get 80 minutes of that we have got a hell of a team who could face anyone.

"It's really all down to the players and their mental approach"

Park: Robinson; Crane, Henderson, Leonard, Hassel-Collins; Grove; Gash; Nwakor, Gibson, Maguire; Macfarlane, Spivey; Barnard, Hudson, Ellis.

Bench: Hughes, Lovell, Ovens, Brand, Marfo.

Park scorers: Henderson (2T), Marfo (2T), Crane (2T), Ellis (T) Leonard (P, 3C)

Club sides

Will Thorogood texted through the scores from the Clubsides matches last Saturday. The **Hatters** kept up their title challenge in the Zoo Sports Shield with an impressive 40-0 win over Chobham 2s in an entertaining game played on the 4G as a curtain raiser to the Esher match.

The **Bs** also consolidated their position with a 31-14 win at Hampstead in Middlesex Merit 1, and managed to get in a report by Sunday, which appears below.

The **Fours** were exiled to Richmond Park for their Middlesex Merit 2 match as their opponents, Grasshoppers, were unable to be flexible enough over the kick off time, due to players' other commitments, to allow the match to take place on the 4G. The Fours extracted their own price for this 'indignity' with a 24-17 win to consolidate their own title hopes.

The **Nomads** had a Saturday off.

Hampstead 14

Park B 31

Middlesex Merit 1

By Patrick Fedora

On Saturday, the B's started the new year by trekking up to Finchley (due to the Hampstead pitches being waterlogged) to take on play-off chasing Hampstead. The B's arrived with a big squad to compensate for a combination of a heavy pitch and extra helpings of turkey over the Christmas break.

Hampstead came out of the blocks firing, clearly keen to make amends for a heavy defeat at the Rock earlier in the season. The first five minutes saw a huge level of physicality, with the B's losing winger Tambara, who had been their best player in the opening exchanges to a dislocated shoulder and fly-half Rossiter to a knee injury while making a try saving tackle. The break in play allowed the B's to gather themselves and some fine defending on the line was followed by a turnover and the B's working their way slowly up the pitch. Eventually the B's got into the Hampstead 22 and the mercurial Rumley who had moved into the fly-half position threw the Hampstead defence with a great dummy and followed it up with power to score between the posts.

The B's pack continued in the same vein with Adam Strong in particular carrying well and Hunter showing up all over the park and seeming more like an extra flanker than a prop in the loose. The forwards at last gave the backs a platform on which to play and the backline executed again with Rumley turning from scorer to provider in the most selfless of manners, as he passed for Lace to score having already crossed the line with the thoughts of a fine for a hat trick potentially on his mind.

Hampstead however were not going to keel over and came back at the B's again. Following a clearance by the Bs, Hampstead put together some excellent phases and quick ball moving from one side of the pitch to the other until they eventually created an overlap and scored their first of the game.

The B's however were quick to hit back with some good work sucking in the Hampstead defence and the B's backline, as ever being on point in their execution when the 3 on 2 came up, as Rumley and Taylor linked together to give to Stevens who finished well in the corner.

Hampstead were not going to lie down and came back again. A couple of missed tackles and Hampstead winning the contact a little too often led to another try, as a forward dived from a metre and questionably placed the ball against the post.

This highlighted yet again that the B's could not win this by coasting and the evergreen Wall caught Olly Taylor's excellent kick-off, before offloading to Thompson who drove into the Hampstead 22, the tight five, led by the returning Gerald picked and drove to within 5 metres, before Weller spotted a chance. A missed pass went through for Lace to score his second try.

Half time saw the B's lose two more players in Adam Strong (head injury) and Thompson (grandmother's ninetieth birthday). At 26-14 and playing uphill, there was a mighty task to see the game out. However, the B's executed their game plan to perfection in the first 20 minutes. Weller corralled his pack to pick and drive effectively, led by man of the match Nick Jones, who carried incessantly and effectively. This not only ate up the clock, but also ate up the energy of the Hampstead pack and most



SAVE THE DATE
SATURDAY MAY 5TH, 2018

MASQUERADE
Ball

BLACK TIE CHARITY BALL IN AID OF
ROSSLYN PARK INJURY TRUST AND CANCER RESEARCH

DINNER, DANCING AND AUCTION

LOCATION: ROSSLYN PARK RUGBY CLUB

PUT THE DATE IN THE DIARY AND WE'LL BE IN TOUCH
WITH MORE INFORMATION VERY SOON.

importantly their resolve. On the few occasions that the ball was allowed to the backs or that Hampstead tried to run at the B's, the strength of Beau Strong at inside centre would secure the ball for the B's. As the Grindathon continued, the B's forwards eventually were rewarded for their hard work with a try in the corner scored by Wolf, who had come straight to the game from the airport following a 37 hour journey from Australia.

This try finally killed the Hampstead resolve and as both the pitch and players' fitness deteriorated in the last 15 minutes, the game turned into a bit of a scrap, occasionally threatening to boil over into a fight. The B's stay top of the league and take on Hammersmith and Fulham next week at the Rock.

Slingbacks Reading 15 Slingbacks 25 Plate

A really impressive performance by the Slingbacks, who for once were almost at full strength, to progress to the next round of the Plate competition at the expense of a side several places above them in the league.

The first half hour was played almost exclusively in Reading territory, but Park simply could not find a way through an impressive home defence. Almost the first time Reading got seriously into Park territory a couple of defensive errors allowed them to put pressure on the line and they got over for 5-0.

That served only to spur Park on and Alice Lovatt, appearing at centre, scored a superb individual try to tie up proceedings at 5-5.

A great run from scrum half Rachel Collins prompted a good move that saw full-back Anja Grant plunge over to give the Slingbacks the lead they deserved at 10-5.

Park ratcheted up the pressure, gained a penalty and some quick thinking saw Alice plunge over for 15-5 just before half-time when, as player-coach, she took herself off to allow the equally experienced Chrissie Ovendon on to direct operations along with skipper Hannah Boardman.

Reading were clearly shell-shocked at meeting such a response from Park and started the second period really fired up. They scored an early try, to close matters to 15-10 and began to force the Slingbacks to deploy all their defensive skills.

The Park girls were really up against it when scrum half Rachel Collins and tough-tackling flanker Amanda Burton had to leave the field in quick succession. When Reading finally bulldozed over for the equalizer the Slingbacks prospects looked bleak indeed.

The team responded magnificently and managed to force play back into Reading territory. It is invidious to single out individuals in a superb team performance, but it was very encouraging to see Katie Parkinson, after a long spell out injured, back to her combative best.

The very promising Shanice Williams was given a run out in the fly-half position and repaid the faith in her with some quick thinking when Reading offended under pressure. She took a quick tap and found a gap in the defence by the posts to plunge over and put Park back in the lead at 20-15.

Although Park were tackling superbly and keeping Reading generally bottled up, they are such a good side on the break that the last few minutes were very nervous ones for Slingbacks supporters, but that changed when a surge by Park saw Chrissie Ovendon plunge over and put the game beyond doubt at 25-15.

This was a match the heavily underlined the real potential of the Park side if they can steer clear of injury and availability problems.

*Park: Anja G Sam E, Alice L, Danielle W, Sophie; Shanice W; Rachel C; Helen P, Becca B, Fi w; Hannah B, Katie G; Maria C, Amanda B, Katie P
Bench: Billie B, Marta, Elice, Chrissie O, Diz*

Record

Veteran member of the front row, Liz Delves, maintained a unique 100% record when playing at Reading. She has now played for the Slingbacks in every single season since our ladies' team was founded – and this is their

twenty-first season!

Away travel

Our next away match is at **Bishops Stortford**, the first time we shall have played there in a League match. They play at Silver Leys, Hadham Road, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 2QE (Hadham Road is the A1250). If you are driving, it looks as if it's Junction 8 on the M11, then the A120 towards Puckeridge until what locals refer to as the Tesco roundabout and, with Tesco on the right, then the ground is about 400m on the left. But do check. At the risk of stating the obvious, by public transport Bishops Stortford, from London Liverpool Street, is the station to book to and there looks to be no financial advantage in booking an advance ticket compared with a cheap day return. Remember that the match kicks off at 2:00PM. If you are looking to whet your whistle before or after the match, the Bricklayers Arms opens at noon and is about half way between the station and the ground at 61 Hadham Road. It's a former Benskins boozer, now owned by the couple who run it, and they like to support independent local brewers with a revolving range of ales.

For the following away matches at **Loughborough** (27 January), **Caldy** (19 February) and **Plymouth Albion** (03 March) there is a considerable advantage in booking an advance ticket, and they are all now on sale. For Caldly, the nearest station is West Kirby. The normal routing from London is via Chester, but it is worth checking at the time you book whether it might be cheaper and quicker to get an Advance return ticket to Liverpool Lime Street and pick up a local train from there on a cheap day return. It's about 20 minutes on the local rattler, with a fairly regular service. The Caldly match will be a 14:00 kick off. Although previously Loughborough matches have kicked off early, we understand that this season it will be a 3:00PM kick off.

Kit for Kenya



In February 2018, we will be going to Kenya to work for a week in a school. We will be teaching sport to the children and thought that it would be a nice idea if we were able to take out a team kit to leave behind. So we are looking for about 15 red and white Rosslyn Park shirts and any boots with moulded or short studs that you might have grown out of.

If you have anything that you can donate we would be very grateful. Ideally we are looking for contributions from those aged around 10 to 13.

Please contact p.webster.123@btinternet.com and we will arrange to collect from you.

Thanks, Finn and Jack, RPFU Under 15s

400 Club

If you would like to help your club while having the chance to win monthly cash prizes (and an end-of-season 'Jackpot') then the 400 Club could be just what you are looking for. Contact Boothy in the Club Office on 020 8876 6044 for full details.

Next Parknews

The Editor is off and out of the country for two weeks. There will not be a Parknews during that time, but all reports etc will be held until the following week. After that things should revert to normal. If you would like to receive a 'tweet' immediately it appears then subscribe to the @RPNoseyParker twitterfeed. Letters and other contributions from readers are always welcome: the usual deadline is around noon on Tuesdays.

ROSSLYN PARK RUGBY CAMPS

MON 12TH FEB TO
FRI 16TH FEB 2018

LIMITED PLACES AVAILABLE

ELITE SCHEDULE

START 9.30am

Registration and screening

Athletic development

Rugby skills/games

Lunch 12.15pm

Workshop/video analysis

Rugby skills/games

FINISH 4.00pm



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