



Season 2017-18

Issue 27

28 February 2018

PARK DOMINATE - BUT STILL LOSE OUT

Welcome to Parknews The two points gained at Hull Ionians (a four-try bonus plus a losing bonus point) saw Park climb above Esher and Cambridge into tenth position in National 1, but that cannot avoid the disappointment of another loss in a match that Park could and definitely should have won. All credit to Hull Ionians for dogging it out and taking their chance in the form of a drop goal two minutes from time, but Park had so much more of the attacking possession that they really should have been home and hosed by then.

Conceding two tries in the first five minutes of the second half – the second of them a real soft one – was a hammer blow. But Park recovered from that well, scoring two in two minutes to regain the lead just five minutes later. There was every expectation that we would kick on from there and win – and we certainly had enough attacking possession to have done so, but didn't rack up the points. Having said that, scoring four tries away from home against any National 1 side is not a bad return – it's the points we conceded that really cost us.

While we have risen two places in the league, we are only ten points ahead of the third-from-bottom club, Loughborough who have a game in hand, and eight above Ionians. While that sounds like a reasonable cushion, our next four matches are against the four top sides in the division: Plymouth Albion (away), Darlington Mowden Park (home), Amptill (home) and Coventry (away). We shall have to fight hard for every point we get from those four matches!

That battle (weather permitting!) starts at Brickfields, Plymouth, next Saturday. The Plymouth pitch has taken in an awful lot of rain this season, and it must be doubtful whether even the best groundsman in the world could produce anything but a muddy field of play for that one! We showed earlier in the season that we could match Plymouth on the 4G in an exciting 36-36 draw. Now we need to do the same or better at Brickfields where Albion are unbeaten this season. We know that quite a few supporters have already booked up for the trip, so please join them if you can. The Brickfields ground really requires a cab ride from the station unless you are a keen walker. Our regular away supporters have a pub crawl that starts at the Dolphin in the Barbican area as close to 11:00 as transport permits. Look out for staggering red and white hoops in the Barbican area if you fancy sharing a cab. There's a beer tent at the ground that sells some decent ales before, throughout and after the match.

At the Rock this weekend

The B XV will continue their bid to top Middlesex Merit 1 this weekend with an attractive home fixture against keen rivals Millfield Badgers. The Clubhouse will be open from midday until well after the match, with all the afternoon's sport on TV as well. If the weather really closes in then it's quite possible that another match will be scheduled for the 3:00PM slot.

Hull Ionians 27

Park 26

National 1

Park were left wondering how they lost a match that they dominated for long periods. From the start Park had most of the attacking possession but, to show for it, had only a speculative long-range penalty that narrowly missed from fly half and skipper Oli Grove

From pretty much the first scent Hull Ionians had of the ball right-wing Sam Wilson broke, won a penalty and fly half Chris Bell chipped it over for 3-0 on 6 minutes.

Park were soon back at their hosts and eventually got the score they had been threatening when Grove kicked a penalty touch on 17 minutes and the forwards drove over, prop Nick Lovell claiming the try and Grove nailing a difficult conversion for 7-3 to the visitors.

Park continued to have the lion's share of attacking possession but could not get the ball



Ali Wade fends off a tackle at Hull
[Photo by David Whittam]

Saturday 03 March
At the Rock

B XV v Millfield Badgers

Middlesex Merit 1

Home KO 1:00PM

Clubhouse open - free admission

Plymouth Albion v 1st XV

National 1

Away KO 3:00PM

Dorking 2 v Hatters

Zoo Sports Shield

Away KOTBA

Kilburn v Fours

Middlesex Merit 2

Away KO TBA

Nomads v Wimbledon 3

Surrey Championship

Away KO TBA

Next 1st XV home match
Saturday 10 March

1st XV v Darlington M P

League

Home (4G) KO: 3:00PM

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

wide to their speedy wingers. Even when reduced to 14 men, after full-back Henry Robinson was yellow-carded for allegedly lying on the ball, Park did not look in any real trouble.

However, the visitors failed to turn their attacking superiority into points. A rare Hull incursion into Park territory five minutes before the interval saw them gain a five-metre scrum, and when Park went backwards the referee signaled a penalty try for 10-7 to the home side.



Oliver Hassell-Collins on the attack for Rosslyn Park [all 1st XV match photos by David Whittam]

24-12.

Park soon avenged that with a sweeping move that saw Robinson get on the end of it to scamper in for a good try to send his team into the dressing room with a 12-10 lead.

If anyone thought the second half would be a stroll for the visitors, Hull had other ideas and started the second period with clear indications that they were not going to roll over. Only two minutes from the whistle left-wing Andy Humberstone broke away and set up flanker James Sanderson to score, replacement fly half Greg Lound converting for a 17-12 lead.



Three minutes later some questionable defending allowed home centre Lewis Minikin to break up the left and score, Lound adding the extras for



If that stunned Park, then it did not take them long to come back. On 50 minutes a concerted attack saw flanker Arthur Ellis get over, Grove converting for 24-19.



Within a minute of the conversion Park were back with another good move, finished off with a determined run by centre Andrew Henderson for the fourth try bonus point. Grove's conversion restored the lead to Park at 26-24.

Park continued to have more of the attacking play but for all their huffing and puffing they could not blow down Hull's defensive wall. Possibly the decisive moment came when a rare period of Hull pressure saw Lovell rather harshly sin-binned to reduce Park's numbers to fourteen for the last five minutes.

Hull took the ball to Park's short-handed defence. They could not find a way through but with barely a minute left they worked the ball back to Lound who hit a peach of a drop goal to steal the lead at 27-26.

The home side captured the ball from the restart and played "up-yer-



jumper” rugby until it was time to kick the ball out of play and claim victory.

Park Head Coach, Kieran Power, said “We played some really positive rugby for the majority of the game, but at certain points we lapsed in concentration and Hull were clinical to take their points.

“We came back well in the second half after a lapse at the start but unfortunately two yellow cards cost us and inevitably was the telling point of the game”.



Park: Robinson; Marfo, Henderson, Barnes, Hassell-Collins; Grove; Crow; Wade, Hughes, Lovell; Spivey, Frampton; Macfarlane, A. Ellis, H Ellis. Bench: Nwakor, Grey, Ovens, Booth, Morgan Park scorers: Lovell (T), Robinson (T), A Ellis (T), Henderson (T), Grove (3C)

Club sides

Will Thorogood reports a busy another 6 Nations weekend at the Club, which was thronging, after a couple of home games on the 4G, as a prelude to the games in Dublin and Edinburgh. Disappointment for some and elation for others, depending on national allegiances!

In brief, the **Nomads**, in their efforts to get more game time, played a quickly arranged friendly against Surrey Championship rivals, Battersea Ironsides 2's. It started off disjointedly for the Nomads, who were 15-nil down at half time. However, the Nomad machine began to gel in the second half, and showed some of their old form, skills and continuity and showed a lot of team understanding as the game progressed. Well, they won the second half 10-7, but leaving a final score of 10-22 to Ironsides.

The **Fours** in their MMT Cup Semi Final faced up to MMT1 high-flyers, HAC 2's. Competing well throughout, the 4's showed that they could survive well in MMT 1 if this game is anything to go by. Anyway, the 4's struck early, with a well worked try. 5-nil, but HAC responded quickly and

took the lead, 5-7, at half time. HAC added a couple more tries in the second half, but the 4's threatened often, but couldn't quite finish off many well worked moves. Final score Fours 5 HAC 19.

At the moment the B XV versus Millfield Badgers is the only match scheduled on the 4G this week, but if the weather does its worst then it's quite possible that one of the three scheduled Clubside 'away' matches (see fixtures on front page) might be transferred to the Rock for the 3:00PM slot.

Slingbacks Slingbacks 17 Streatham – Croydon 33 Plate



Maria Castellina gives a pass from the back of the scrum against Streatham-Croydon on Sunday

The Slingbacks started strongly, and had most of the early play. They were the more cohesive team but were eventually undone by some fine individual breaks where opponents sprinted away.

Some shrewd kicking from fly-half Alice Lovett set up a position for winger Sam Emery to go over for the Slingbacks. At that stage Streatham had hardly seen the ball, but when they managed to get it into the hands of their fast and feisty right-winger, she just streaked through potential tacklers to score a try that was converted for a 7-5 lead to the visitors.

Park seized back the initiative when the excellent Chrissie Ovendon received the ball out wide on halfway and simply sprinted round the opposition defence to touch down close to the posts. Centre Shanice Williams converted for 12-7 to the Slingbacks.

The Park girls went back on the attack and got close to the Streatham line but were undone by conceding a string of penalties, combined with not retreating quickly enough, which saw their opponents advance up the field, far enough to put their winger in with another chance, which she took with both hands to equalize at 12-12.

There was still no reason for Park to be sending up distress flares, but



Anja Grant



when the same player again got away to score a first half hat-trick under the posts there was clearly a problem to solve. The conversion brought the score to 19-12.



Alice Lovatt

Park came back before the interval with a super try out wide through full-back Anja Grant, who has progressed very quickly from rookie to being as good a full-back as any at this level.

But at 19-17 that was as good as it got for Park. They still played some good rugby, and caused the visiting defence some trouble but were undone by individual breaks from a lock and the number 8.

There were a lot of positives to take from the match, however. The scrum held up, though outweighed, and the forwards made some hard yards, the two Hannahs at lock really getting stuck in. The back row showed a lot of commitment to winning the ball. In terms of teamwork the Slingbacks were the better combination. The biggest problem was sheer inexperience in terms of speed of formation of the defensive line that gave fast opponents too much time to build up momentum before the first tackle.

There are a lot of very promising young and inexperienced players being developed. It is invidious to single out individuals, but recent recruit Emma on the right wing looks an absolute natural at the sport, and her height and athleticism jumping at the lineout is a major bonus.



Hannah Murphy does her 'one woman wrecking ball' impression for Park

*Park: Anja G; Emma A, Chris O, Shanice W, Sam E; Alice L; Maria C; Elice R, Becca B, Helen P; Hannah B, Hannah M; Amanda B, Dani W, Katie P
Replacements: Cat, Billie, Linn, Zara, Sarah, Marta, Ellie
Park scorers: Sam E (T), Chris O (T), Anja G (T), Shanice W (C)*

The Slingbacks now have a week off before their next outing, a local Derby with the league leaders London Welsh at the Rock on Sunday 11 March, kicking off at 2:30PM.

The Rosslyn Park HSBC National Schools 7s Tournament



The Rosslyn Park HSBC National Schools 7s Tournament, the biggest Rugby Tournament in the world, will take place held over 5 days between 19 – 23 March, with continuous play from about 10:00-16:30 on 23 pitches adjacent to the Robin Hood Roundabout on the A3. Organised by Dom Shabbo, the statistics of the tournament are both daunting and impressive:

- 9,000 Participants
- 1,781 matches
- 24,934 Minutes of Rugby
- 755 Teams
- 360 Balls
- 130 Referees
- The 9,000 participants approx. aged from 13 to 18 with boys and girls taking part
- Approx. 7000-8000 spectators come to watch each year
- 750 teams of all levels from across the UK as well international visiting teams
- The tournament has an unrivalled roll-call of former participants including Ex England Coach Martin Johnson, Gareth Edwards, Lawrence Dallaglio, Ugo Monye, Chris Robshaw Jonathan Joseph and former England Sevens captain Ben Gollings.
- It's the 79th year of the competition in 2018

The precise timetable for this year will be:

Monday 19 March: Juniors tournament commence
 Tues 20 March: Colts Tournament commences
 Wed 21 March: Vase Tournament commences (U18 Boys) and Colts Finals
 Thursday 22 March: Cup (U18 Boys) & Under 14 Boys commences and Vase Tournament Finals

Friday 23 March: Girls (U18s), Girls ASSE (U18s), & Prep commences and Cup & Under 14 Finals.

This will be the tournament's eighth year as the main sponsors of the event. Other Key Sponsors are - AKUMA (Sporting Apparel), SKINS, Wattbike, Karma Resorts, Edwin Doran(Sports Tours), Ipro Nutrition Drinks, Perform Better, Playertek.

We hope as many as possible of our own members and supporters will come along to support the event. If you can't get the time off then matches from the main pitch are screened live on the Internet.



PutneySW15.com for match reports

If you can't wait for Parknews to appear to read match reports and browse the match photos then they normally appear first on the excellent local community website, www.putneysw15.com on the Monday after the match, along with other interesting up-to-date local news. Chgeck it out.

Away travel

After Saturday's game at Hull Inonians, the next weekend it's **Plymouth Albion** (03 March) with Plymouth obviously the station to book to. After Plymouth we have no 'away' matches until we face the runaway League leaders, **Coventry** (who could be Champions by then) on 07 April and – finally – **Birmingham Moseley** on 21 April. Cheap advance rail tickets for both of those matches are now on sale. We'll give fuller details nearer the time, but the Coventry ground is near enough to the station to walk, while Mosely needs a bus or cab, or a local commuter train.

Masquerade Ball

For the first time in a while the Club is holding what used to be the Annual End-of-Season Ball, and it will be a very special event. The Masquerade Ball will take place at the Rock on Saturday 05 May. It will be a Black Tie dinner, dance and auction, with several other attractions. We are hoping the event will bring together the whole Rosslyn Park family – mini parents, coaches, club sides, ladies teams, players and admin staff. It will also contribute to two worthwhile causes: the Rosslyn Park Injury Trust and Cancer Research. You can find out more and book your tickets through the following link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/end-of-season-masquerade-ball-tickets-42625758792?aff=eac2>

We will also be running an end of season BBQ on the 29th April and details will follow shortly.

National 1 Focus

It looks as if **Coventry** are going to win the title with five weeks to spare! With only seven matches remaining they are now 26 points clear of the second club, **Darlington Mowden Park**, after a resounding 42-0 away win against them on Saturday. Mowden's treasurer will be happy, though, with 1,879 paying spectators to swell the coffers. Our next opponents, **Plymouth Albion** are third after a 20-16 away win at **Birmingham Moseley** and have two home games in hand over Mowden.

Hull Ionians' win over ourselves sees them leapfrog over **Loughborough** to be a place above the relegation zone, while **Cambridge's** 6-15 home defeat by **Caldy** means that **Park** overtake them (and Esher) to go tenth, courtesy of the two bonus points we obtained.

Next weekend's matches:

Darlington Mowden Park v Esher
Old Elthamians v Amphil
Bishops Stortford v Blackheath
Caldy v Coventry
Cambridge v Hull Ionians
Fylde v Old Albanian
Loughborough v Birmingham Moseley
Plymouth Albion v Rosslyn Park

Next Parknews

Parknews appears on the Club website weekly, usually between Tuesday lunchtime / Wednesday afternoon. Contributions are always welcome and the deadline is normally at noon on the Tuesday of publication. 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.

