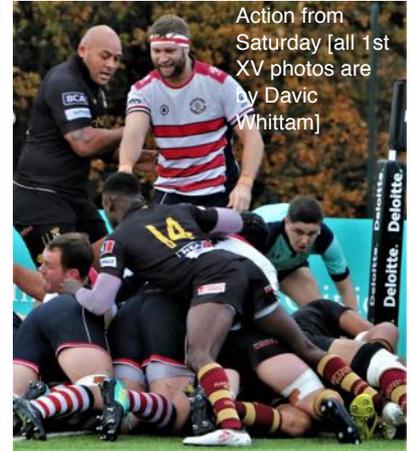


## PARK PASS STERN TEST TO GO THIRD

**Welcome to Parknews.** It is difficult to remember a better defensive display from a Park team than that against Amphill on Saturday. Here was a team containing four Tongan full-internationals, who had put forty points on Darlington Mowden Park the previous Saturday, and they were not allowed a reasonable chance of a try. Amphill are no slouches themselves in the noble art of defence, having conceded fewer points than any other team in the league. It produced a dour midfield battle that was never less than compelling even if it was not the feast of open rugby that many matches have been. If one wanted to be critical (and our coaches usually are!!) then it could be argued that we made mistakes when in potential try-scoring positions that cost us the chance of winning by a larger margin, but at least we created those chances against the best defence in the League without conceding a realistic chance ourselves.



Action from Saturday [all 1st XV photos are by David Whittam]

That hard-fought win takes us to third position, four points behind the joint leaders, Blackheath and Old Elthamians, in this season in which it seems anyone can beat anyone else! Three of the bottom four clubs won last Saturday, plunging one of the pre-season joint favourites for the title, Plymouth Albion, into the relegation zone. This Saturday's opponents – Cambridge – also delivered a stunner of a result by winning 22-3 away to Darlington Mowden Park, the other pre-season joint favourites along with Amphill. Add into the equation that Cambridge's Grantchester Road ground has rarely been a happy hunting ground for Park teams and the players are going to have to dig deep again this coming weekend if we are to get the points we need.

Cambridge is only a 48 minute journey from Kings Cross, so it would be a real fillip to the team to have a large contingent of Park supporters at the match. The 'Blood and Sand' as Cambridge are known to their supporters always get noisy backing at their home games, so a few friendly voices would be much appreciated. The match kicks off at 2:00PM. The ground is just about walkable from the station, but not if you want to go into town as well. There is a quite delightful walk through the fens if it's a pleasant afternoon, which you can find at [www.Walkit.com](http://www.Walkit.com) if you enter Cambridge station as your start point and the ground

address, Grantchester Road, Cambridge, CB3 9ED as the destination (and, yes, there are a couple of pubs en route!). Otherwise a cab from the station is not an arm and a leg, but most of our regulars stroll into town and get a cab from there. The service from Kings Cross is faster than that from Liverpool Street to Cambridge, but if you are convenient to the tube you might want to look at getting a Victoria Line and changing to pick up the Liverpool Street service at Tottenham Hale. If you are driving there is ample parking at the ground, though it can get a wee bit muddy.

### This weekend at the Rock

If you cannot make it to Cambridge to support the Firsts this weekend, then there is a full weekend of rugby at the Rock, kicking off at noon on Saturday with **B's v Hampstead 2's**, followed at 2:00PM by **4's v Old Haberdashers**. Both of those matches are in Middlesex Merit 1. Then at 4:00PM the **Nomads** play **Exiles 2** in the Surrey Championship. The Clubhouse will be open throughout and beyond those matches, so you can pop in and catch up with the televised matches as well. There's no charge so it's three matches for the price of none! It's also free on Sunday when the **Slingbacks** play probably the toughest home match of the season against the



Saturday 08 December

### Cambridge v 1st XV

National 1  
Away KO 2:00PM

### Hampstead 2 v B XV

Middlesex Merit 1  
Home KO 12:00PM

### Fours v Haberdashers 2

Middlesex Merit 1  
Home KO TBA 2:00PM

### Exiles v Nomads

Surrey Championship  
Home KO TBA

### Guildford 2 v Hatters

Surrey Premiership  
Away KO TBA

Sunday 09 December

### Slingbacks v Portsmouth

League  
Home KO 2:00 PM

Next 1st XV Home Matc  
Saturday 15 December

### 1st XV v Caldy

National 1  
Home KO 3:00PM

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

unbeaten **Portsmouth Valkyries**. All vocal support much appreciated.

## Rosslyn Park 10 Ampthill 6 National 1

Park thoroughly deserved their win in this crucial clash to go third in the table, climbing above their opponents, but had to survive a hairy last few minutes as a result of not being able to turning a clear superiority into



points. It was predominantly a dour but exciting midfield struggle as two superb defences tackled themselves to a standstill.

Ampthill had more possession in the opening moments but simply ran into a defensive brick wall before nearing the home 22.

When Park launched their first real attack they made it tell. They set up a maul close to the line on the left, sucking in defenders, and winger Benji Marfo found space to go in on 8 minutes. Fly half Greg Lound stroked over a difficult conversion for 7-0.

Park always looked more likely to score but it was a superb interception by lock Adam Frampton that set up the move

to draw a penalty on 18 minutes that allowed Lound to increase the lead to 10-0.

Frampton very nearly made another interception at full stretch but the ball bounced forward off his fingertips.

The home side had a near monopoly of the attacking play before the interval but some half chances went begging with errors creeping in as a score looked likely, though much credit for that must accrue to some fine defensive work by the visitors.

A 10-0 lead at the interval looked a poor reward for Park's dominance, and it looked even smaller when Amps started the second half with full back James Pritchard slotting over a penalty for 10-3.

Although Ampthill were increasingly coming into the game, what chances there were fell to Park. A good move ended with a handling error just as a score looked 'on'. A superb move up the left was halted by a forward pass. A terrific break up the left by winger Nev Edwards ended when he lost control of the ball.

Park gained a penalty on the left, deep into Amps territory. Surprisingly instead of kicking to the corner to set up the catch-and-drive that has served his side so well recently, Lound was asked to kick for goal only for

his effort to graze the outside of the far post.

Ampthill were now having a last throw and putting pressure on the home defence, but again it was a Park attack that drew a yellow card to reduce the visitors to 14.

The visitors dealt with the situation very well with superb ball retention and even won a penalty in front of the posts with four minutes to go. Surprisingly they kicked for three points rather than scrummage and go for the win. Centre Mickey Wilson added the points and Amps set up another extended period of possession as the clock ran down. But they could get nowhere against Park's superbly



drilled defence and when the inevitable error came, so did the final whistle.

Although Park could, and probably should, have won by more they can take great strength from the fact that a top team that ran up 40 points against Darlington the previous week was unable to set up a realistic chance to cross their line.

**Park:** Robinson; Edwards, Hayhow, Munro, Marfo; Lound; Gash; Wade, Bellamy, Maguire; Frampton, Gillanders; Spencer, A Ellis, Macfarlane.  
**Bench:** Nwakor,

Doran-Jones, H Ellis, Weir, Leonard  
**Park scorers:** Marfo (T), Lound (P, C)

### Away travel

For **Bishops Stortford** on Saturday 22 December, our last match of 2018, there is a frequent service from London Liverpool Street, with the faster trains at 10 and 40 past the hour with a journey time of less than 40 minutes. If you are convenient for the tube it is worth considering taking a Victoria Line to Tottenham Hale and picking up the Bishops Stortford train there. The ground is walkable from the station, and there is a decent hostelry about half way. The address of the ground is Silver Leys, Hadham Road, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 2QE. Kick off is at 3:00PM. A standard Cheap Day Return is as cheap as an advance purchase ticket, so with the danger of water-logged pitches around that time of the year you



## Rosslyn Park Football Club Half-Season Memberships available for just £100



### Special benefits include:

Entry to all remaining home games

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Don't miss a game contact the club office  
on 020 8876 1879 email:

[dom.shabbo@rosslynpark.co.uk](mailto:dom.shabbo@rosslynpark.co.uk) or visit the  
website

[rosslynpark.co.uk](http://rosslynpark.co.uk)

might think it sensible to pay on the day.

The same applies to our only away match in January, against **Old Elthamians**. So the matches at **Birmingham Moseley** and **Loughborough** on 02 and 16 February respectively are the next ones for which advance booking is sensible. More of that nearer the time. After that **Caldy** in April is the only long distance trip. Having said that, the Firsts have no match scheduled for Saturday 16 March but that afternoon it is **Guernsey v Slingbacks**, so you might fancy a weekend break in the Channel Islands. More information later.

### Clubsides

Will Thorogood reports the scores for the Clubsides from the weekend:

On Friday evening the **B's** played **Hammersmith & Fulham 2's** on the 4G. The score was 11-5 after 59 mins, when the match had to be abandoned due to a serious-looking due to neck injury to Bs' James Thompson. Fortunately he is ok, as far as I understand, but probably a bit sore. Thanks to Jess, duty physio, for her care and attention. We are waiting for a decision from Middlesex RFU as to whether the game will have to be re-played, as it was a minute short of the 60 that would have meant the result stood.

### Park Bs 11 Hammersmith & Fulham II 5 Middlesex Merit 1

(match abandoned after 60 mins)

By Daniel Bimson

Sometime, like Phil Collins, you can feel it coming in the air tonight. The

energy. The crackle of electricity. The return of Friday night lights to the Rock. The Bs welcomed the auld enemy, second placed Hammersmith & Fulham 2<sup>nd</sup> XV, looking to complete their very own November clean sweep and with a strong, gloriously moustachioed, squad in place the opportunity was there for the taking.

The Bs lost Walshy to a toe injury in the warm up (not to worry – lizards can re-grow limbs), but otherwise looked up for the fight with a solid warm up. The match started at a frantic pace with the Bs almost reclaiming their own kick off before Hammers set about getting into the game with some powerful one up runs. They moved down the field pretty swiftly and put the ball through hands to score an unconverted try to the left of the posts. In previous times, conceding an early try against a high-flying team might have seen heads drop. But not tonight. Not this time. The Bs immediately stepped up the pace, power and intensity to pressure Hammers into mistakes. It was end to end stuff which included a brilliant try-saving covering tackle from Weller into touch from a Hammers counter attack. At the other end the Bs were competing ferociously at the breakdown and won a penalty which Olly Taylor slotted to put the Bs on the board. The Bs continued to play all the rugby with only the bounce of the ball denying Dean a certain try from a clever grubber kick through. At this point the Bs pack were beginning to dominate in the scrums and the loose, not giving Hammers any room to breathe and almost forcing a first try only to knock on with the line begging. Another penalty was won only to slide just past the posts before Hammers indiscipline was punished by the referee, sending a man to the sin bin. This gave the Bs another penalty on the stroke of halftime which was knocked over to give the Bs a 6-5 lead.

The second half was played at just as intense a pace as the first, with the replacements not missing a beat upon joining the fray. Hammers had a rare foray into Bs territory and looked like they might get the score only for an even rarer James Thompson turnover to stop them in their tracks and allow the Bs to relieve the pressure. The Bs counter attacked at pace and it was during one of these moves that Tom Hardy suffered a nasty looking ankle injury (must have been the spectator's curse as we had just been saying how well he was playing). The physio, who was about to be a lot busier, allowed Tom to move off the pitch and the game continued, with Sean replacing Tom. Another kick over the top was knocked on by Dean when a try looked inevitable and on the sideline we began to wonder whether the missed opportunities would come back to bite us. It was a hugely physical contest with the Hammers losing a player to a jaw injury and the physio advising Reincke to come off for a head knock, but the game continued unabated. After coming close with the tactic of chipping and chasing earlier in the game, the Bs tried once more and this time Caines reclaimed the ball and ran a lovely line to open up the space outside him before passing to Sean to score in the corner. Absolutely nothing less than the Bs deserved after dominating the game for the previous 50 minutes. The conversion was narrowly missed but left the Bs with an 11-5 lead that scarcely summed up how well they had played.

Unfortunately what happened next is what can happen at any time during a game of rugby, from a tackle and breakdown, Thompson remained down with a neck injury. The physio examined him and determined that he should not be moved, and after some lengthy discussion between the referee, Weller and Hammers' captain, it was determined that the game would have to be abandoned with 59:19 played and the Bs still leading 11-5. What happens next is unfortunately out of our hands, but early noises from the league organisers are that the game will need to be replayed given that it was only a one score game with a quarter of the match to play. What is absolutely certain though, is that the Bs outplayed Hammers and I believe with absolute certainty would have finished the job on Friday. This was a performance full of power, intensity and ambition from the Bs, a genuine all-round performance that demonstrated what we all already knew, which is that the Bs are ready to compete with the best in this league and it bodes well for the rest of the season. Man of the (truncated) match was Jonny Bowden for his all action display at hooker, but picking one player was incredibly difficult given the quality of performance from 1-20. A special thanks must go to the physio, who looked after Hardy, and then spent a couple of hours caressing Thompson's giant bonce in the freezing cold. Sadly Hardy's injury is a fracture which will keep him out for some time, but fortunately Thompson escaped without any serious injury.

The Bs have another home game this Saturday against Hampstead and will be looking to continue where they left off and continue their winning run.

On Saturday it was **Nomads 19 Old Haileyburians 10** and **4's 7 Belsize Park 25**. The **Hatters** did not play due to Dave Beale's wedding!

## Slingbacks

On Sunday the Slingbacks have a really tough home match against the unbeaten **Portsmouth Valkyries**, who have put all opposition well and truly to the sword this season with an array of County players. The Slingbacks will, of course, go flat out to end their run and your vocal support would greatly help. The match kicks off at 2:00PM. The following Sunday (16 September) the Park girls will be looking to extend their cup run at the expense of **Old Elthamian** ladies. The OEs are a bit of an unknown quantity as they are a newly formed team in their first season and have been playing mostly friendly matches. However, having decided to form a women's team they are throwing plenty of resource at it. Former England skipper Catherine Spencer has been hired to run it and her contacts book alone would be worth having!

## National 1 focus

**Blackheath** remain top on 47 points after the narrowest of away wins (16-15) at **Bishops Stortford**, who are now a couple of points below safety, second from bottom in the table. That a team of Stortford's quality can be struggling shows how strong this league is! Now on level points at the top are **Old Elthamians**, who picked up a valuable bonus point in their 34-7 win over **Caldy**, who slip to seventh. Despite the money being poured into the club it must surely be of concern to OES that for a top-of-the table match between two good attacking sides only 131 spectators turned out.

**Park's** 10-6 win takes us to 43 points and third position, above our opponents **Amphill**, who drop to sixth on 41, and above **Chinnor** who are fourth but on the same points after losing 48-46 to the bottom club **Loughborough**, who are now only four points below the safety zone. Below them on 41 points are **Rotherham** (20-3 winners over **Cinderford**, who go down to ninth) and **Amphill**.

There are three sides on 33 points. **Caldy**, **Cambridge** in eighth after a superb 22-3 away win at **Darlington Mowden Park**, who drop to tenth, a place below **Cinderford**. **Sale**, on 31 points, slip to eleventh after a disappointing 38-44 home defeat at the hands of **Esher**, who pull clear of the relegation zone on 26 points. Also pulling clear 28, are **Birmingham Moseley** who recorded a 48-26 win over **Plymouth Albion**.

Next weekend's matches

Amphill v Birmingham Moseley  
Bishops Stortford v Rotherham  
Blackheath v Chinnor  
Caldy v Darlington Mowden Park  
Cambridge v Rosslyn Park  
Cinderford v Old Elthamians  
Esher v Loughborough  
Plymouth Albion v Sale

## Peter Smith

The many friends of the late Peter Smith, Honorary Vice President Emeritus, may like to note that the official opening of the splendid new dressing room facility that bears his name will be at noon on the day of the **Caldy** match on 15 December, which is also the day of the Christmas Lunch. We have no details beyond that at the moment, but more will be announced shortly. Please make a note in your diary to come along early and honour a man who gave so much to the club (in every sense of the word).

## Ripley Membership.

In an effort to increase our playing budget Rosslyn Park have introduced a new tier of membership, with increased benefits and a commitment to fund playing. It was considered entirely appropriate to link this with another loyal and significant Park Member - Andy Ripley, whose birthday it would have been last Saturday. Full details from Dom Shabbo in the club office ay 020 8876 6044.

## 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.

## Player Sponsorship

If there's a Park player you would really like to sponsor for the forthcoming season, now is the time to get in as most of the lads are - figuratively speaking - up for grabs. You'll your (or your Company's) name read out over the tannoy each time your player scores among a list of other benefits.

## How are the mighty fallen

Park members of a certain vintage will hold fond memories of the mighty Neath. Martin Offiah made his debut there, plucked out of one of the social teams, when we ended their long unbeaten run by the mightiest of the Welsh sides. Last Saturday Neath could not raise a team for their Premiership match at Bedwas and this Thursday a Cardiff court will hear a petition to wind up this great club. Let us hope that this great club survives its present troubles to rise again.

## Brad the Scarlet

Talking of Welsh clubs, congratulations to Brad Moorar, our former fly-half who has been announced as the new Head Coach at Scarlets. A man of many talents, he is also a fully-qualified solicitor and barrister in his native New Zealand. It's difficult to believe he's 44 nowadays - it feels like only a very few seasons ago that he was pulling on the red & white hoops. We might even be able to persuade him to send a team for a pre-season match next year!

ED: *Note to Scarlets players: He's a decent bloke and a top coach - but take no notice of his horse racing tips.*

## Next Parknews

Parknews usually appears on the Club website weekly, between Tuesday lunchtime / Wednesday afternoon each week. Contributions are always welcome and the deadline is normally at noon on the Tuesday of the week of publication. If you would like to receive a 'tweet' immediately it appears then subscribe to the @RPNoseyParker twitterfeed. Alternatively, if you wish to receive the weekly email notifications that ParkNews has been published (and are not already receiving them) please just email: [parklife@rosslynpark.co.uk](mailto:parklife@rosslynpark.co.uk) with "Send Me ParkNews" in the subject line. Every year the Club carries out a major update of the mailing lists. As part of this process it is possible that some people on the ParkNews notification list may have been removed. If you have please just email to re-subscribe.



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