



# Rosslyn Park Football Club Limited

*Founded 1879, Affiliated to the Rugby Football Union*

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7 April 2020

Dear Rosslyn Park member,

## **The 2019-20 Season and Covid-19**

As you will have witnessed in your own lives, all of our worlds have been turned upside down in these last few weeks. We have been deeply saddened to hear of two long-standing club members who tragically have lost their lives due to Covid-19. All of our thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends of John Moylan and Roger Stevens along with all others in our community who are suffering. It creates further anguish that due to the current restrictions it is difficult to mourn our friends but we will do so as soon as we are able to.

All of our foci has rightly been on our immediate families and circumstances but I want to communicate to you on how your Club has been reacting, what the impact of the virus has been to rugby at our level and specifically the impact on your Club, our finances, and our plans for the future.

Even though we began to anticipate the cancellation of rugby, the speed with which it hit us was still a shock. We, perhaps more than most, had been watching it, as our flagship tournament, the Rosslyn Park HSBC National School 7s tournament was due to run from 23 to 27 March. On 11 March we had received an email from Wandsworth and Putney Commons Conservators telling us that we would not be able to use our normal pitches due to adverse weather over the winter and the team then worked incredibly hard to keep the tournament on, and by 12 March we had secured alternate venues to still hold the tournament. We had almost daily Board calls from then on as the Covid-19 crisis developed to discuss cancelling the tournament and made the decision to do that on 16 March following the Prime Minister's announcement that we should all be socially distancing. Later that night the RFU announced the suspension of all rugby activity.

Following that announcement, we have been in close contact with the RFU, the NCA and Sport England as we have worked to ensure all we could do to ensure the safety, health, financial wellbeing, and fitness for our players, coaching staff, clubhouse staff and members. Clearly our facilities are now closed and our players and members are not training (including our gym facility) and our office team are all working from home.

Our season has been ended by the RFU's decision to stop all rugby in England. With five games to go Park were lying second in National One, seven points behind Richmond. Our feeling was that they were catchable, and we were left in a tantalising situation.

Unfortunately on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April the RFU announced they have decided apply a best playing record formula to the league standings when the season was stopped on the 20<sup>th</sup> March. This has seen

Richmond now promoted to the championship and to rub salt into the wound we have dropped to 3<sup>rd</sup> behind RAMs. We all are enormously frustrated with this outcome and it's safe to say at least a 2nd place finish would have been a fair result and personally I have every confidence that we would have overhauled Richmond (with confidence they would have slipped up at least once) but that is now not to be. The coaching team and squad are in good spirits despite this outcome, and we will be looking to use this frustration to improve once again next season.

As well as the cancellation of our remaining league fixtures (and associated revenue for our home games) and activity across the club, two further direct consequences of the cessation of rugby (and netball) have been the cancellation of the School Sevens and the Floodlit Sevens tournaments, which will have a significant unfortunate impact on our surplus and our cashflow. The Board and the management team are going through a process of rigorous financial modelling so that we fully understand what this means for our year-end numbers and how we can ensure the club has a viable future. We will update you once we have a robust set of forecasts.

What is certain is that we have taken a large financial hit and in particular our cashflow at this time of year is very vulnerable. Therefore we want to ask you to pay your membership fees for next season early and we will open our membership registration process on the **1<sup>st</sup> May 2020** with a new way of conducting this via the new website. Details of this will follow in due course. We will still take membership registration via standing order and paper forms as well. The membership fees will be incredibly important for the club's cash flow this year and we do hope you will register your membership as you have in previous years.

Every additional pound we generate goes towards strengthening the club, and ensuring its survival through these challenging times. Anything you can do to help us build our membership and sponsorship base makes a huge difference especially in these uncertain times. Please contact Dom (dom.shabbo@rosslynpark.co.uk) if you have any suggestions, including perhaps a desire to upgrade to a season Ripley membership next season.

We know next season will be a massive challenge with so many of our supporters and sponsors being hit by this crisis so anything you can do to help is massively appreciated. At some point, I look forward to welcoming you all back to The Rock and to enjoying some rugby with you. I am hopeful restrictions will be lifted in the summer which will allow us to hold the Floodlit 7s with a possible guarantee of good weather and hopefully also the club ball that we were looking to hold this year.

If you would like to discuss any of this, please do not hesitate to contact Dom Shabbo or myself.

With the kindest regards,



Adam Tyrer  
Chairman  
Rosslyn Park FC.