



ISSUE 02

Season 2020-21

09 September 2020

RUGBY AT THE ROCK THIS SATURDAY!

Welcome to Parknews, Rugby returns to the Rock this weekend! Ok, it's not full-on 15-a-side but it's certainly a start with a 10-a-side tournament starting at noon – and admission is free. This Parknews is going to press shortly before the deadline for entries closed on Tuesday, so we can't yet say how many teams will be involved or exactly what the format will be. The emphasis, though, is on a fun, social afternoon for people to come together, albeit in a socially distanced environment, so please do come along and catch up with all your old Park mates. The clubhouse will be open, with street food available and there's a DJ booked to add to the fun.



The start of their journey? Mini rugby got under way - with suitable social distancing - at the Rock last weekend

The Clubhouse has been arranged to enable social distancing and hand sanitiser will be readily available. Please do observe all precautions: however invulnerable you may personally feel to the virus there may well be some supporters and members who are more at risk. It's important that everyone feels safe and comfortable.

Players

We published the list of new players and staff in the previous Parknews. As some may have missed it, the article is repeated at the end of this newsletter. But if you read it last time – there's nothing new.

League Rugby

As to when the competitive season itself will start, the nearer it gets the further away it seems to get! The RFU has a Return to Rugby Roadmap, to which we have now moved into Stage D, which allows clubs to reintroduce tackling and rucking into their training sessions for 15 minutes, but full-contact, competitive club rugby will not return until we reach the final phase of the roadmap, which is Stage F. The situation is due to be reviewed on 02 October, which realistically means that the earliest our season could possibly start is 07 November, which is currently a blank Saturday. However, this is not within the RFU's control: it depends upon Government policy and the prevalence of Covid in the community.

The Scottish Government has given the go-ahead for grassroots rugby to resume from October 31, so we must hope there are no teething problems there that might cause alarm. There are the three main areas of our game which are perceived to carry too much of a risk. The scrum, and particularly the setting of the scrum, and the interactions between the front-rows; the tackle and particularly the upright tackle where you have got someone hitting someone at pace; the third area is in the lineout - and it is not the lineout per se, it tends to be the maul that ensues.

If the season is able to start in November, then the likely scenario is that our first match would actually be the away fixture at Rams on the second Saturday. We would then be likely to play each other team once, either home or away (ie the first 15 fixtures of the season) and then divide the league between the top 8 clubs and the bottom 8. Clubs in each half would play the other 7 once, either home or away to determine the final table, giving a total of 22 matches instead of the present 30. The season would be extended to the end of May. There is some

Future events
Saturday 12 September
Rosslyn Park Social
10s Competition

Home KO 12:00
 Clubhouse open DJ and Street Food

Saturday 26 September
Club AGM

The meeting will take place at 10:30 via Zoom.
 Details will be circulated to Members shortly

Pitch Picnic

Reserve your area and/or picnic table at the Rock now via the Park website. All tables will be planned and located at a suitable distance from each other under social distance guidelines.

Tickets can include picnic table or simply 10m square area for picnic blankets, deck chairs and rugs. The bar will be open and there will be food stalls selling BBQ food. Limited number of picnic tables.

The usual conditions apply: No glass bottles or cups; No smoking on the pitch, No live fires or BBQ's and please place all rubbish in the bin provided.

Details of pre-season matches and League fixtures will appear here once we have a start date for the 2020-21 season.

support for playing the full 30 matches and extending the season into June, but the Editor understands that this would potentially leave clubs having to insure their own players for the extended period and extend players' contracts, which would be too much for many to afford.

If we cannot start in November, then there is every likelihood that the season might comprise only the first 15 matches (ie playing each other club once, either home or away). There is far from unanimity among the clubs as to whether this would be a fair way to determine promotion and relegation – especially in the light of proposals to reduce the number of clubs in the division by one at the end of the season. The NCA has consulted clubs and it is clear that there is no solution that appeals to everyone. In the event of play not starting until January, 55 per cent of clubs do not want a 15-match season to be a validated competition with promotion and relegation at the end. The same percentage also wish the proposed changes to the league structure to be postponed for a season. A clear majority of clubs thought it unacceptable that promotion and relegation should be based on 19/20 league positions in the event of no rugby being played.

There is, though, almost uniform agreement that a 22-game season would be acceptable as an 'authentic' competition. The NCA has asked clubs to consider the possibility of – in the event of no play until 2021- the NCA season continuing into June to enable fixtures to be completed. There would be issues surrounding player contracts and insurance, which would be the responsibility of individual clubs. Equally, if the go-ahead was given for play in December, clubs would like to be able to stage matches over the Christmas and New Year period.

There is considerable difference between attitudes over a potentially 'void' season. Many clubs disagree with the notion whilst some see it as an opportunity for consolidation, and to play friendlies against local rivals. Another suggestion is an NCA-styled 'Bob Willis Cup' with six/eight regional sections playing 10/11 fixtures, and then four knock-out weekends culminating in a final at a landmark venue. There was general agreement that if the season was declared void, the NCA clubs should be left to organise their own fixtures, potentially as in the format outlined, rather than be part of a national policy.

For the Clubside and Slingbacks there is a similar rearrangement of fixtures for a later start. It appears possible that those leagues may start earlier with slightly amended laws, though that may not be attractive to players to whom the physical side of the sport is all-important. Will Thorogood did kindly supply a spreadsheet he had received detailing the changes to Clubside fixtures, but to publish it here would probably only add to confusion, and the situation will probably change again anyway.

For those who missed the previous edition of Parknews, the following is our fixture list for the First XV:

Sep 05	A	Sale
12	H	Blackheath
19	A	Darlington Mowden Park
26	H	Leeds Tykes
Oct 03	A	Old Elthamians
10	H	Caldy
17	A	Taunton
24	A	Cambridge
31	H	Cinderford
Nov 07		



14	A	Rams
21	H	Plymouth Albion
28	A	Chinnor
Dec 05	H	Birmingham Moseley
12	A	Bishops Stortford
19	H	Tonbridge Juddians

The above dates apply regardless of when clubs have the go-ahead to play, so if we can start from – say – 14 November, then our first match would be away to Rams. The fixtures due before that would then be re-scheduled for later dates, after 19. It would be interesting to hear (and publish) the views of supporters on these matters.

AGM

The Club's AGM will be held on Saturday 26 September at 10:30 online via Zoom, however there will be a limited number of spaces to attend in person if remote access is difficult. If a member thinks they will want to attend in person they should contact Boothy or Dom in the office. We will publicise the details for remote access closer to the time for members. Due to Covid restrictions, we have to limit the Clubhouse capacity 25, hence the change. Apologies for the inconvenience this may cause.

Slingbacks

A small reorganization of the Women's Leagues gives a major headache for the Slingbacks in terms of their travel commitments. Along with Barnes and London Welsh we have been placed in a regional League that includes Southampton, Havant, Ellingham & Ringwood and Amesbury. Reading – our farthest trip last year – looks like being a local Derby this season. All these trips will necessitate more expense for the club while trying to recover from the epidemic's effects. What is particularly frustrating is that other local clubs at exactly the same level – Battersea Ironsides, Streatham-Croydon, Blackheath II and Beccehamians – have been placed in a different regional league that sees them travel to





Canterbury, Tonbridge and Guernsey. Mind you, one other London club – Hampstead – has been placed in a league based on the Midlands. The club is in touch with the RFU to try to resolve this.

The Slingbacks are holding an Inner Warrior event on Sunday September 27th to promote the club, and will be having a social in the clubhouse afterwards for new players and putting on some food. If you know of any sporting women who might want to try out at Rugby Union in a friendly supportive atmosphere – send them along.

The Slingbacks are still looking for a new forwards coach with a Level 2 RFU coaching qualification. The position is paid. Anyone interested can email slingbacks@rosslynpark.co.uk to find out more.

As part of our inclusion commitment, we selected Southall Black Sisters as our charity to support for the year and are in the preliminary stages of putting on a charity fundraiser for them in October alongside the other Rosslyn Park clubsides.

Congratulations



Congratulations to Slingbacks Esther and Helen on the birth of baby Lochlan. As you can see from the smart outfit (knitted by scrum half Maria) his future as a rugby player is already mapped out. Well, almost...we hear there may be some domestic tension over whether – if he's as good as his pedigree – he should declare for England or Scotland.

Picnic on the Pitch

On Saturday 26 September we shall be hosting another popular Picnic on the Pitch from noon until 10:00PM. Reserve your area and/or picnic table at the Rock now via the Park website. All tables will be planned and located at a suitable distance from each other

under social distance guidelines. Tickets can include picnic table or simply 10m square area for picnic blankets, deck chairs and rugs. The bar will be open and there will be food stalls selling BBQ food. Limited number of picnic tables. The usual conditions apply: No glass bottles or cups; No smoking on the pitch, No live fires or BBQ's. and please place all rubbish in the bin provided.

Sponsorship Opportunities

A very wide range of sponsorship advertising, marketing and promotional opportunities are available throughout the season with prices suitable for all budgets. These provide a very powerful and cost effective opportunity to promote your business. Sponsorship proposal for 2020/21 Season

During the lock-down, Jodie Rockett, our Commercial and Sponsorship Manager, has been working on some exciting sponsorship opportunities for the new season. We will be promoting these over the coming weeks as more is known about how the season will be structured and run. The first of these packages is featured below. We understand that we are currently living through uncertain times, but if individuals or their businesses feel able to commit to the package at this time – your support would be significant to the Club and very much appreciated.

- Email marketing & campaigns to club database throughout the year. Database of over 3,000 members and players
 - Feature on RPF website & full company description
 - Social media support across all channels throughout the season. Twitter, Instagram, Facebook & YouTube
 - Branded pitch board located around the venue 6m x 2m board designed and produced by club for the full year
 - Table of 8 guests including 3-course meal for one home game of the season. Home game of choice, including 3-course meal & car parking spaces
 - Hire of the club/venue free of charge. This can include both pitch and clubhouse for one full day
- Cost: £2,000 + VAT per season*

For an additional £1,000 + VAT

- Company branding on Men's 1st XV playing kit
- National exposure throughout the year

Player Sponsorship

A great opportunity to be linked with a Rosslyn Park player and to follow his progress throughout the season. PA announcement when your player scores a try. Company logo/name against player profile in match-day programme. 10 tickets for a 1st XV home game of your choice. *Cost: £400 + VAT per player*

Digital Marketing

The Rosslyn Park website, database, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram all represent a large and fast growing audience with targeted engagements. These platforms allow opportunities for companies to build bespoke and extremely cost effective packages and are a great way to interact with our supporters and social media followers instantly. Our social media not only provides the latest Rosslyn Park tries and score lines but also highlight your companies involvement at the club. Please contact Jodie Rockett, our Sponsorship Manager, via email: jodie.rockett@rosslynpark.co.uk or phone: **0208 876 1879** to discuss how sponsorship at Rosslyn Park may fit with your own promotional plans.

MATCH DAY SPONSORSHIP

Get in on the Action

As the official Match Sponsor of a Rosslyn Park First XV game, you will host your guests in our newly refurbished Clubhouse. Before the game you will sample our excellent hospitality with a VIP lunch courtesy of our in-house caterers. Afterwards you and your guests will have the chance to meet Rosslyn Park players and present the Man of the Match award, the photo of this presentation will feature in the following Match Day Programme.

Meet the Players

Your company will be featured on the cover of the programme, and you will have a full page advert inside. You will also receive PA

announcements throughout the game.

Finally, you have the opportunity to distribute promotional flyers in the Clubhouse and around the ground to advertise your business to all of our spectators and members on the day.

Full Package Includes:

- Front Cover Programme Branding as the Official Match Day Sponsor
- PA Announcements throughout the afternoon
- VIP Lunch for 10 for guests prior to the game
- Man of the Match Presentation after the game.
- Photo of the Man of Match Presentation to appear in following Match Day Programme
- Opportunity to distribute Promotional Flyers on the day
- 2 Car Parking Spaces
- Post Match Visit for you and your guests from two Rosslyn Park players or coaches of your choice.

Cost: £1500.00 + VAT

To find out more please contact Jodie Rockett, our Sponsorship Manager, via email: jodie.rockett@rosslynpark.co.uk or phone: 0208 876 1879

We have some additional sponsors already on board:

New Biltong Sponsor

<https://rosslynpark.co.uk/biltong-factory-sponsors-the-park-introductory-discount-offer/>

New Supplements Sponsor

Vita Sports

<https://rosslynpark.co.uk/sponsors/our-sponsors/>

New Property Services Sponsor

Zest Property Services

<https://rosslynpark.co.uk/sponsors/our-sponsors/>

Dick Tooth 1929-2020

Sadly, we have to report the passing of a distinguished former Park player, Australian full-back Dr Richard Murray Tooth, two weeks short of his ninety-first birthday. Dick was a former Wallabies

captain but did not take up Rugby until undertaking his studies at the University of Sydney in 1948, where he was coached by former All Black lock, Harold Masters. He was controversially omitted from the Australian tour to the UK in 1957, but came to these shores anyway - to further his medical career and to play Rugby for Rosslyn Park, occasionally captaining the club. He also played for Middlesex.



He later returned to Australia in a coaching capacity, while also becoming a pioneer in the medical field, assisting in the development of arthroscopic surgery and performing the first full knee reconstruction in that country. It must have been successful because his patient went on to captain the Socceroos in the 1974 World Cup.

Dick married Marianne Stenstrom in 1956, with whom he had four children, Robyn, Chris, Kate and the double Olympic hockey Gold Medallist, Liane Tooth. The Australian Sevens Coach and Leeds Carnegie player, Tim Walsh, is Dick's great nephew. We extend our deepest sympathies to Dick's family and many friends.

**ROSSLYN PARK
SOCIAL 10'S
COMPETITION**

**SATURDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER
12PM ONWARDS
BAR, DJ & STREET FOOD**

**TO ENTER YOUR TEAM EMAIL:
JODIE.ROCKETT@ROSSLYNPARK.CO.UK**

Plymouth woe

Plymouth Albion will start the new season on -5 points after making the same clerical error that cost Rams a similar deduction last season. In addition to the 20 point deduction (15 points of which are suspended) they also lose RFU benefits which, in their case, means around £20,000 because their extreme location playing in a national league attracts a large travel subsidy.

Albion's owner, former player Dave Venables, accused the RFU of displaying "Dickensian authoritarian arrogance". Venables rescued the club with £400k of his own money. With Rams swallowing a similar punishment last season, rather than incurring the legal costs of fighting it, there is a clear precedent for the sanctions involved. Nevertheless, it is difficult not to sympathise with Albion's predicament.

Having taken over the club, Venables' son did the admin, of which he had no experience, on an unpaid basis to get things up and running. He ticked the wrong 'Yes-No' box in relation to 'material benefits' being paid to players during the truncated 2019/20 campaign. However, he sought clarification that he'd completed it correctly three days before the RFU's deadline for submission. Albion were told that it could not be amended as disciplinary proceedings had already been opened.

The RFU themselves accepted that there was no attempt to mislead, no dishonesty, no financial benefit to the club and that it was a genuine administrative error on Plymouth's behalf.

Stay in touch with your club

The best way to stay in touch is via the new Rosslyn Park website - check it out at <https://rosslynpark.co.uk/>

Do you want to receive an email notification when ParkNews is published? 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 with "Send Me ParkNews" in the subject line

Park also has a strong social media presence, just follow these links:

Twitter: <http://bit.ly/2PqDIQy>
Facebook: <http://bit.ly/2NG7bxV>
Instagram: <http://bit.ly/34d652t>
YouTube: <http://bit.ly/2PQSpqC>

Rosslyn Park New Player & Coaches

We are delighted to announce that **Kieran Power & John Mills** will lead the group as DOR & Head coach respectively for the 2020/21 season. **Andy Houston** will sadly not be with us this season due to a combination of his new role as Director of sport at Cranleigh School and the desire to spend more time with his young family. We would like to thank Andy for his enormous contribution to the club over the last three seasons.

Alex Davies will take over the attack coaching duties alongside as a playing role for the 2020/21 season. Alex joins us from Bath Rugby and some of you might remember him from his time at London Welsh in the Premiership and with Ealing Trailfinders in the Championship.

Steve Walsh, Ryan Keates and **Leigh Groombridge** will all be returning to continue their very successful the S&C program which has been a cornerstone for the first team's success over the last 2 years.

Joe Cokely & Sam Nash continue as lead physios for the 1st team with **Pippa Rollitt** continuing as the head of medical for the club.

The legendary **Kojo Jecty** and **Fergus Farrell** will return as our team managers.

New Players

Austin Hay – Prop signed from Old Elthamians and previously Jersey Reds in the Championship.

Seb Stegmann – Wing / Fullback signed from Ealing Trailfinders – Seb has previously played for London Welsh in the Premiership

and most recently with Ealing in the Championship

Alex Davies (Player /Coach) – Fly half / Scrum Half – Alex has 35 + Premiership appearances for L Welsh and Bath.

Lewis Jones– Centre signed from Ealing Trailfinders – Lewis has made 50 + appearances for Ealing in Championship.

Tom Stephenson – Centre from London Irish – Previously at Northampton Tom has Made 30 + appearances in the Premiership.

Charlie Piper – Hooker. Ex England schoolboy signed from Harlequins – Some of you will remember the very popular young man from when he was on loan to us from Harlequins. Charlie returns to park after a recent spell in New Zealand.

Dylan Flashman – 2nd Row signed from Old Elthamians

Owen Waters – Fly Half from Loughborough students who was one of the stand out performers in National 2 last season.

Josh Poole – Back row from Blackheath

It is always sad to say goodbye but we would like to thank all of our departing players for their wonderful service to the club and we hope to see you all pitch side.

Oli Grove - Retiring

Rusty Weir - Retiring

Joe Munro - Retiring due to work Commitments

Owen Hughes - Retiring due to work Commitments

Neville Edwards - Re-locating to Manchester for work (fortunately for Sale FC)

We are delighted to announce that all other current squad members have re-signed and will be returning for the 2020/21 season.

The editor would add that Kieran Power and Dom Shabbo have done a quite remarkable job in assembling such a strong squad with a limited budget. The club is also immensely grateful to the coaches and players who have shown the great spirit within the squad and remarkable loyalty to the club in understanding our financial position in these difficult times. Everyone has made sacrifices.!



OUR ETHOS IS DEFINED BY THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE CLOTHING WE WEAR HAS A DIRECT IMPACT ON OUR LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE IN SPORT

OUR REMIT IS TO DELIVER THE BEST POSSIBLE PRODUCT



OUR INTENT IS FUNDAMENTALLY ENGRAINED IN OUR PROCESS

LET'S PLAY!



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