



Issue 32

26 April 2023

Season 2022-23

PARK WIN AT CINDERFORD TO FINISH FOURTH

Welcome to Parknews This is the last newsletter of this season - because next week's match at Leeds is cancelled – (see later) and is also the last one completely. With the comprehensive coverage of the club's social media output nowadays, there is little material in Parknews that cannot be gleaned elsewhere. But also, the Editor has been producing Parknews for more than 20 years now, and it will be good to regain my Sundays and Mondays after all this time and more than 600 issues. Many thanks to all of you who have sent in match reports, news, photos and articles, or just read them, over the years - it really would have been impossible without you. Personally, the editor is NOT retiring from supporting the club's teams both home and away - I can just do so without my digital voice recorder, and perhaps enjoy the odd half-time beer! Of course, if there's anyone out there who would like to start an independent magazine for Park fans, then by all means...

On more important matters, Saturday's match at Cinderford was a real cracker. An end of season match in the best sense: with little depending upon it in terms of league position both sides threw off the shackles and produced a match of super running rugby with eleven tries. It was a credit to National One. Compared with watching the robots of the Premiership crashing into each other it was refreshing to watch the sport as it should be played. It was a pity in one way that either side had to lose, but taken over the whole eighty minutes Park deserved to edge it. After some recent disappointments it was good to end the season on a positive note.

Recent retirees Jack Gash, Henry Robinson and Nick Lovell did not take part in the match, but it speaks volumes for the spirit in the team that they all turned up to vocally support their mates. Thanks also to the group of Park juniors (and their parents) who also make the journey, along with Rosslyn Park flags. When they changed ends at half time, marching in front of the stands, they were loudly (but entirely good-naturedly) booed by the Cinderford fans – so they did it twice more!



It's not the end of the season at the Rock because we have the London Floodlit 7s coming up on Thursday 25 May (see adjacent box). Before then we have a match on Friday 12 May kicking off at 18:30 which is a curtain raiser for the Inter-Services match the following day. It's Army Masters v Royal Navy Mariners - should be a good bar take that night!

There is just a bit more clarity on promotion and relegation. The RFU Council has decreed that whatever happens elsewhere three teams will be relegated from National One. That means we shall lose a local Derby next season because **Esher's** home defeat by Rams last Saturday, while **Taunton** were beating Leeds Tykes, means that our neighbours will be relegated along with **Hull** and **Leeds Tykes**. In terms of coming down, assuming all clubs in the Championship stand their ground, we shall gain a local Derby: at the bottom **London Scottish** lead **Richmond** by a single point going into the last Saturday, having beaten their landlords



The last team hug of the season after Saturday's win at Cinderford

Upcoming events

Friday 12 May
Inter-services match

Army Masters v Royal Navy Mariners

The Rock KO 6:00PM

Thursday 25 May
London's biggest and best
Rugby party

London Floodlit 7s

Gates open 4:00PM

Final at 10:20PM

Admission £12.50

Advance tickets £10.00 from

WWW.LONDONFLOODLIT7S.COM

Under 16s go FREE

Mens and Womens tournaments
Bars, catering and music

comprehensively at the weekend. Scottish are away to Nottingham this coming Saturday while Richmond are home to Cornish Pirates. In terms of promotion from our division, if **Cambridge** beat Birmingham Moseley this Saturday and gain a bonus point then they will be Champions, having lost one match fewer than Rams: any other result and **Rams** are champions. Already promoted to National One are **Sedgeley Park**, **Leicester Lions** and **Blackheath**.

Cinderford 31 Rosslyn Park 38 National 1

With both teams committed to attack this was a really entertaining end to the season. Park struck the first real blow when flanker Arthur Ellis aggressively won the ball for his side. Seb Strang, standing in as fly half, hoofed it to touch and it was eventually a pick-and-drive from prop Jake Buckingham that got it across the line for 5-0 on four minutes. Strang's conversion went in off the right-hand post.

Benji Marfo went close to scoring, attacking up the left wing and was close to the line when what looked like a scoring pass was snatched by a defender. It was end-to-end stuff, Park having an edge in open play but Cinderford superior in the scrums. It was a penalty at a set piece that saw Cinderford kick to touch and trundle over, flanker Danny Hodge claiming the try on 14 minutes with a pick-and-go after Park had defended well. Scrum half Mark Austin's conversion tied the scores at 7-7.

Cinderford gained a line out and looked dangerous, edging towards the line, but were penalised. Park hit back to regain the lead through an excellent barging run from centre Matt Gordon, who passed to Josh Addams and the winger's pinpoint pass saw flanker Arthur Ellis gallop in to restore their lead. Strang's successful conversion this time grazed the left post for 14-7 on 19 minutes.

The home side came back when the referee ruled that Park had illegally blocked a Cinderford attack up their left flank, which led to the home side setting up a maul and eventually driving over. For prop Shaun Knight to claim the score. Austin converted for 14-14.

It was Park who had the last word in an entertaining first half. Strang made an impressive break, getting deep into the home 22 but the ball spilled forward in the tackle. However Park regained the ball and pressed at the line, Buckingham getting over for his second try and a half-time lead of 14-9.



It looked very much as if Park would increase their lead after 6 minutes of the second period, applying immense pressure following a line-out. But what looked like a scoring pass close to the line was snatched by Austin who hared the length of the field and scored under the posts, converting his own effort to snatch the lead at 21-19.

Park nearly replied almost immediately when prop Austin Hay showed a turn of foot to charge down a clearance kick but the bounce was unkind. Cinderford were now incurring penalties in trying to stifle Park's control of the midfield and flanker Matt Lane took one for the team when shown a yellow card on 50 minutes. But

it was the 14 men who scored next when a good move saw winger Mason Tonks score in the corner to extend the lead to 26-19 on 53 minutes.

It took less than 5 minutes to respond with a move that started with a clever box kick under pressure from scrum half Luke Baldwin. Park won a turnover, leading to prop Austin Hay scoring a neat try to close the deficit at 26-26.

Park regained the lead on 62 minutes after a good attack was stopped for a forward pass. Cinderford conceded a lineout and some meat interplay saw full back Max Trimble restore the lead, Strang's conversion extending the lead to 26-33. The visitors nearly scored again when Strang was stopped while making a sniping run. Cinderford eventually gained a penalty to clear and attacked up the left where Park were pinged for blocking. The penalty was propelled to the corner where Knight again got over for 31-33, setting up a grandstand finish with less than 10 minutes to go.

Park nearly grabbed the winning score when Baldwin sent a neat grubber kick but the ball went out in the corner. Park gained a penalty, hoofed to the corner for the pack to maul over, Hay credited with the try for the final score of 38-31. A great end to the season for Park, but in this match Rugby Union was the real winner.

Park: Trimble; Addams, Luca Smith, Gordon, Marfo; Strang; Baldwin; Buckingham Piper, Hay; Spencer, Gillanders; Ledger, Ellis, Laventure.

Bench: Burns, Bolwell, Flashman, Glover, Walker..

Leeds match off

Just before the Cinderford match, we were told that the following Saturday's match was cancelled, which was a big disappointment to our regular away supporters, who had paid a minimum of £59.80 for "cheap" non-refundable rail tickets, with no prospect of getting their money back. One can understand Leeds' position; their home matches this season have been poorly attended and probably don't cover the match expenses and whatever the result they were relegated anyway. From Park's perspective it's understandable as assuming the transport arrangements can be cancelled it avoids much of the cost of one of the more expensive away matches (the RFU no longer make any contribution to travel expenses). However, had Park left Cinderford without a point and Plymouth Albion had a bonus point win over Rams – admittedly neither very likely – we would have finished fifth rather than fourth. If that doesn't matter then it does seem to slightly devalue the league competition.

Not quite so retiring

When we mentioned last week that Jack Gash and Henry Robinson were retiring at the end of this season, we didn't include Nick Lovell in the item. Nick (holding the number 3 jersey) joined the club as a Mini in 2000, and later rejoined straight from University in 2015 to represent the 1st XV and so - as a Park man through and through -



he will be staying with the club in a player liaison capacity.

Serious Stuff

To celebrate the end of the season, Serious Stuff are offering 30% off all items! Offer available in-store on Friday 21st April, Sunday 23rd April and Sunday 30th April. Your chance to pick up that piece of kit you've always wanted.



City Lunch takes place on Thursday 11 May (see below). This is an important fund-raiser for the club so please do support it if you possibly can.

Can you help?

The club is really grateful to our sponsors, and would urge everyone

A poster for 'ROSSLYN PARK FC CITY LUNCH'. It features a cityscape background with the London skyline. The text includes 'Book NOW!', 'Thursday 11 May 2023, 12pm - 5pm', and the location 'Smith & Wollensky, The Adelphi Building, Covent Garden Riverside, 1-11 John Adam Street, London WC2N 6HT. Dress: Smart/casual.' It also lists the 'Guest Speaker: David Flatman' and 'Auctioneer: Jonny Gould'. Ticket prices are '£120 per person with half a bottle of wine' or '£1,200 for a table of 10 with five bottles of wine'. It includes 'complimentary drinks reception and three course lunch'. Contact information is 'events@greyunicorn.com'. The Grey Unicorn logo is at the bottom right.

to support them as they have supported us. If you, your business or anyone you know might be interested in joining in with sponsoring Rosslyn Park, then Kenny Moore would be delighted to talk with you. Kenny can be contacted at the Club Office (020 8876 1879) or e-mail kenneth.moore@rosslynpark.co.uk

PITCH BOARDS

Great for a local business to promote awareness and been seen throughout the year by all that use the club, and exposure through our live streaming of select games.

£1,500.00 + VAT

1 x Branded pitch board located on the 1st XV pitch (6m x 0.9m) for one year

MATCHDAY BALL SPONSORSHIP

£150.00 + VAT

- Company name and logo on Club website
- Company name mentioned as official game Match Ball Sponsor for the day on PA announcements.

MATCH DAY SPONSORSHIP

£1,500.00 + VAT

- 10 x Tickets to a 1st XV home game of your choice
- Lunch for 10 people at a 1st XV home game of choice
- Company name and logo against player profile on Club website
- Presentation of Man of the Match
- A5 full-page advert to be featured in match day programme
- Company name and logo on the main scoreboard
- PA announcements through the day and at lunch

MATCHDAY PROGRAMME ADVERT

£650.00 + VAT

- Company name and logo on Club website
- A5 full-page advert to be featured in a total of 13 Men's 1st XV programmes at home game

Keep in touch

There is always something going on at Rosslyn Park - keep in touch check regularly for Parknews on the website and subscribe to the club's social media channels, which include news, reports and match video highlights:

Twitter: <http://bit.ly/2PqDIQy>

Facebook: <http://bit.ly/2NG7bxV>

Instagram: <http://bit.ly/34d652t>

YouTube: <http://bit.ly/2PQSpqC>



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ROYAL NAVY MARINERS

ARMY NAVY

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ED - Anyway that ends the season and ends Parknews. In the 20-odd years we've been chronicling things in this newsletter the club has had many ups and downs, fortunately more of the former, but it has never been less than a great club. The First XV are it's shop window, but there is so much more to Rosslyn Park than that, from the smallest mini to the most wizened clubside player (not really thinking of you Lloyd!) and certainly not forgetting the women's team and our amazingly successful netballers. We are all one club, and much the better for it. Thanks for your support over the years and see you on the terraces next season.