

Club points



News for Hitchin Rugby Club members

Issue 38 • January 2019

League leadership battle

Finding themselves in Herts/Middlesex1 league for the first time for a number of years, the 1XV have reacted well by finishing the first half of the season at the top of the table, having won eight of their 11 league games with a try bonus point.

The one loss, away to St Albans in September was reversed when the teams met again at Old Hale Way in December, for the opening game of the return fixtures.

At the time of going to press, having lost narrowly to Hendon, the Hedgehogs returned to winning ways, with a try bonus point victory against Saracens, and lie in second place, 13 points ahead of nearest rivals, St Albans, and skipper Tom Tidey is rallying his troops in an effort to bounce straight back to the London 3 (North West) league for the 2019/20 season.

Last year's captain James Bolter leads the try scoring with 13, while fly half Ben Wiggins leads the overall point scoring with 138 points (tries, conversions and penalties).

Championship rugby players Mark Flanagan and Camilo Parilli-Ocampo from Bedford Blues have joined the coaching team, and together with head coach Adam Shaw, have offered a high level of personal development and professional insight into the sport.

The clubs 2XV have won eight of their 15 games, and the 3XV have won five and drawn one of their 11 games.

At a time when many of our opponents struggle to get two sides out regularly, we are fielding three sides most weeks, and the club continues to operate a strong recruitment programme.



Skipper Tom Tidey makes an impression v. Wasps



Ali Southward scores v. Barnet



Centre Jon Whitby scored v. Wasps



Number 8 Armel Bauforme in action v. Finsbury Park

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Chris Kelly**

A busy 2019 planned for M&Y

M&Y at Hitchin RC will be busy in 2019 with the organisation of our second Herts County Tag festival (27-28 April 2019). This festival puts HRC firmly on the Hertfordshire map. Feedback from two years ago was fantastic, so we count on all club members to help and support again this year.

It is also our second highest M&Y year ever – with 625 players registered from U5 to U18, boys and girls. This makes us one of the most successful clubs in Herts at M&Y.

We are now hosting regular girls fixtures on Sunday afternoons, so you can be entertained for the whole week-end with superb rugby.

The academy (Boys U16 to U18) is truly back on with several training sessions a month (some linked with the seniors' sessions) and a number of matches have been played against other academies (Harpenden, Amersham, Shelford among others).



U12s at Saracens' clinic



New to M&Y at Hitchin: the Half Game Rule

The RFU is introducing a new rule. Any player selected for a game is guaranteed to play at least half a game. It will become compulsory next season.

This rule has been introduced to ensure the development of all players for the long term of the game. How many age groups over the years have we seen focusing on the best 17-18 players, only to find themselves with fewer than 10 at U17 or 18 and not being able to field a team? The Half Game rule intends to change this and keep more players in the game for longer.

Hitchin Ladies stay on top

Half way through the season finds Hitchin Ladies maintaining their position at the top of the league.

They kicked off 2019 with a 39-12 win against Harlow to continue their unbeaten record in the league.

Recruitment continues to go well with numbers of players growing and an ever increasing social media following. In addition to fielding a 1XV the progress toward a 2XV goes well with the team taking part in a development tournament, with another planned for February.

The annual naked calendar has sold well again this year and is supporting Target Ovarian Cancer. Copies can still be purchased on the website or behind the bar!

A sold out quiz in December also helped to raise money for the same charity.

The team is recruiting for a head coach for the 2019/2020 season, contact us with expression of interest.

Off pitch camaraderie is good as always with regular socials and opportunity for team bonding.



New players are always welcome to Tuesday training 7.15pm

Emily Coleman on the charge v. Harringey



Kate Alleton runs in a try v. Bishop's Stortford

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Hitchin Rugby Club Ladies



VP'S CORNER

It's that time when Jonesy pesters me to write a few words to you again, so let me start by thanking you for all your help and support over the last year. Your constant support and generosity really does make my job so much easier, and more importantly makes a huge difference to the club.

It has been a sad couple of months for us, unexpectedly losing both Tony Walker and Brian Chapman – club stalwarts who will be sorely missed.

Our VP lunches continue to be well supported and it is good to see so many "old" friends reunited, and so many of you travelling sometimes huge distances to be with us.

Your support for the First XV this year has been fantastic, and I'm sure has helped towards that the excellent results on the pitch.

Peter Oates was presented with the VP of the Year award at the last lunch – a popular and very well deserved winner.

It is great to have a means to recognise formally the time and effort you put into our club, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for everything you bring to the club – history, camaraderie, time, effort, atmosphere, money (usually over the bar), but most of all, yourselves!

Enjoy the rest of the season and I look forward to seeing you on 30 March.

Martin Howard



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

20 March
Sponsors' dinner

30 March
VP's lunch

10 May
End of season
M&Y dinner

11 May
End of season
Senior dinner

6-8 June
Hitchin Beer Festival

Brian (BAJ) Chapman

14 November 1936 to 4 December 2018

As a stalwart of our club and a true gentleman of Rugby, Brian did much to lay the foundations (almost literally) for the successful club we have today.

Brian joined Hitchin at a very low ebb in the late 1960's. During this difficult period through great effort, cajoling and sheer determination he did much to save Hitchin from folding. He went on to lead the drive for the many structural and facility improvements that we take for granted today.

He grew the club membership, actively recruiting and always encouraging others to get involved, not only with the playing sides but also with club administration. He filled most if not all roles on the committee at one time or another, raised funds and lent hands-on expertise to the planning and construction of successive extensions.

Brian was responsible for driving to a successful conclusion our negotiations with NHDC for our original facility management

agreement. This gave us responsibility for pavilion and field management and greatly improved our flexibility to operate at King George's.

Brian worked alongside many of us on the committee and his single-minded approach, although not always without friction, was a testament to his drive and dedication.

In the wider rugby world he was always very active, being president of Hertfordshire from 1990-1992 and a contributor to many RFU initiatives.

Although moving in these rarefied circles, Brian never forgot grass roots rugby, starting a youth academy at Hitchin at a time when most professional clubs had not even considered the idea, forming an alliance with Hitchin College to provide rugby coaching and later taking rugby to the villages by starting a mini rugby club in Codicote (after helping get funding for and building the new sports pavilion!).

His influence and contribution to the club from the 1960's into



the new millennium is difficult to overstate. He was a great lobbyist for the club and grass roots rugby as a whole.

Somehow, while doing all this he also found time to compile and publish a 50th anniversary commemorative book to celebrate the history of the club and more, so much more beside.

BAJ never stopped supporting Hitchin, he was always well informed and constructive about new initiatives. His love and interest in the club never diminished. He was one of our very special band of life members who regardless of fortune gave decades of unwavering support. He was truly a Hitchin great; he will be sadly missed but fondly remembered.



Hitchin Rugby Club members at Brian Chapman's memorial service

Tony Walker

October 1944 to November 2018

Tony Walker passed away suddenly on 14 November 2018.

He leaves behind his wife Diane, two sons Ashley and Adam and his extended family.

He was a tremendous supporter of Hitchin Rugby Club over many years and always supported his sons in their sporting endeavours. Adam played consistently for

Hitchin Rugby Club over many years.

Having been around the club for many years and been on several tours, including USA, he was well known and well liked.

Having spent a number of years as a publican, first at the Green Man in Shepreth and then at the Silver Ball in Lilley he had many stories to tell and was always



good company. He was a trencherman and a bit of a toper.

He will be sadly missed by those who knew him.

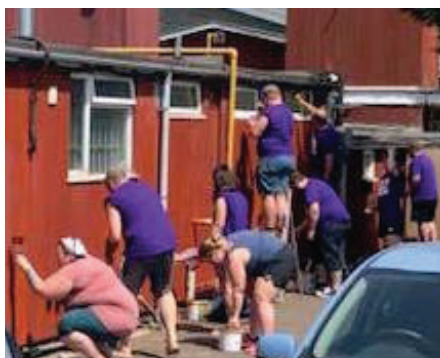
NatWest RugbyForce 2018

"At our recent executive meeting, I reported on the NatWest RugbyForce programme and mentioned two clubs who impressed me with their event. Hitchin was one of those. They asked me to pass on their appreciation, so on behalf of Hertfordshire RFU executive, congratulations to you and your volunteers who turned out to get the club house ready to face the new season. Please pass on our thanks to all your volunteers involved."

"I enjoyed meeting you and the volunteers who were from all sections of the club. From the start when I met you, every place I walked, (and I went all around every part of the ground), you had a different group of people painting, cleaning mending and tidying. I did not count the numbers there, but it was impressive and a fantastic turnout. I do not think much of the club got missed."

"This was a perfect example of having a focused day and true teamwork to achieve the outcome. It is exactly what the NatWest programme is about. Please pass on our thanks to the club on this excellent day. Well done and good luck for the coming season."

Colin M Ashwood, Director of Club Development, Hertfordshire RFU



HRC joins JOCA

Following the tragic loss of two young playing members at Welwyn Rugby Club through suicide, a few like-minded club members felt they had a social responsibility to offer support, guidance, a friendly ear in a time of need, and that steps should be taken to help destigmatise mental health amongst young men and women. Helped by some other like-minded club members JOCA (Just One Click Away) was born.



Hitchin Rugby Club has joined forces with this initiative.

JOCA MISSION STATEMENT: To create a better understanding of and to de-stigmatise mental health and mental wellbeing amongst the players and members of our rugby club.



Justin Burgess (Welwyn JOCA) hands over cheque to kick start Hitchin JOCA

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Life Member: Chris Kelly

At the 2018 AGM, Chris Kelly and Tim Jeffries were awarded Life Memberships. In the second of two articles we talk with Chris Kelly.



When did you first join the club?

1974 – I visited the club on a Saturday afternoon in September 1974, having moved to Hertfordshire to teach P.E., and met a gentleman called Brian Chapman. We talked about our love of rugby and our rugby histories. He told me about Hitchin Rugby Club, I became a member and the rest, as they say, is history.

Which teams have you played for?

1st, 2nd and 3rd teams over about 10 years from 1974 to about 1984. I played Hooker. Back row and Scrum Half.

What club-roles have you done?

1976-77 Club Captain
1979-80 Assistant Publicity Officer
1982-83 Club Captain
1984-94 Club Referee
1987-89 Bar Manager
1988-97 Cricket Captain,
Chairman of the Cricket Committee
2003 Chairman of the Playing Committee
2006-12 Club President

What do you like most about the club?

The club has a great Community atmosphere, which has been developed successfully over many years. We welcome all ages, male and female, which is great for the club's future.

What were your proudest moments?

From a personal point of view it was being asked to be Club Captain only two years after joining the club. But from a club perspective, it was watching the 1st XV playing at Twickenham in the Provincial Insurance Cup 1993 Final against Fleetwood.

And your hopes for the club?

That the club continues to promote the game and is successful with its ideas for future development.

Don't forget our website!

www.hitchinrugby.com