

# Club points



News for Hitchin Rugby Club members

Issue 43 • October 2023

## Pre-season action

### NHRN 2023 Festival

The North Herts Rugby and Netball festival returned for it's third year at Hitchin RFC on Saturday 12 August. With lead sponsors Mason Navarro Pledge once again in tow, this year's event saw a fallow year for the netball but another cracking iteration for both the men's and women's rugby tournament.



Hitchin men: Cawsburger Cup winners v Letchworth



Dartford ladies: Raymond James Cup winners

In the women's competition, again playing half pitch 7's, Hitchin were joined by Peterborough, Dartford, Fullerians and TabWood, a combo of Tabard and Stockwood Park. Another wonderful display of rugby from all teams was enjoyed by all, and a large crowd gathered on Pitch 1 to witness the final between Hitchin and Dartford. There were plenty of big hits and some brilliant try in an end to end game which was eventually won by Dartford, who were crowned as this years Raymond James Cup winners.

Running in tandem was the men's 10's tournament which saw Hitchin joined by both Bedford Queens and a Letchworth development team for their 3rd appearance at NHRN, alongside Bedford Swifts and Finsbury Park making their tournament debut. Some more wonderful, flowing rugby was on display as well as an introduction to the new community tackle laws that are being introduced this year and a first meeting between Hitchin and Letchworth in the group. It led to a final, again on Pitch 1, which saw Hitchin take on Letchworth with a huge crowd watching on. Both teams played some brilliant rugby mixed with an incredible level of physicality. It was so tight that only one score separated the two teams come the final whistle, with Hitchin running out winners and adding their name to the Cawsburger Cup.

Away from the rugby, the club also hosted the Hitchin Street Food monthly team for delicious food and drink throughout the day and with England playing Wales in a world cup warm up match on the big screen, the club bar also did a healthy trade. All while raising almost £500 for the Alzheimers society, this years charity of choice for NHRN.



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**NHRN will return in 2024 on Saturday 10 August. If you would like to be involved or have any questions, you can contact Adam on [hello@nhrn.co.uk](mailto:hello@nhrn.co.uk)**



# Men's 1XV

**The 1XV produced a remarkable 2022-23 season, exceeding all expectations to finish in 5th place out of 12 teams in the league, qualifying for the Herts President's Cup Final and reaching the Quarter Finals of the Papa John's Plate.**

The section experienced a reduction in playing numbers and the quantity of matches played suffered as a result. Rugby for all abilities and experience is fundamental to our club.

A successful recruitment and retention campaign over the summer will be central to the return of regular rugby at development and social levels in the 23/24 season and beyond. Pre-season started in July under new Head Coach Gavin McLeod, and our season has started successfully with the winners trophy at North Herts 10s and a friendly win versus Bishops Stortford Mitres.

League results this new season at the time of writing have brought us a narrow loss v Chiswick (away), a home victory v Datchworth, a loss away at Finchley and a resounding home win v Enfield Ignatians by 78-7, leaving us in 5th place in the league.



James Bolter celebrates his 200th cap with a try v Finchley



Armel Baufume scores v Hampstead



Frazer McGown scores v Datchworth

## Women's rugby

**The ladies had a strong preseason over the summer, welcoming both new faces and home-grown talent from the youth section into the squad.**

The ladies have been working on introducing a new style of play for this season, implementing a faster, 'heads up' rugby approach. The squad have already started putting this new style of rugby to the test, reaching the final of the North Herts 2023 7s tournament in August, and winning their first friendly against South London team Barnes FC, 45-17.

The 2023-24 league season kicked off last weekend, which saw the 1XV



Ladies at the NHRN festival

welcome league newcomers Long Eaton to Old Hale Way for their first match in Championship 2 Midlands. The ladies displayed some great running rugby to come out on top 40-17.

An away match against local rivals Shelford resulted in a second league victory, a hard fought 15-12 win.

## Touch rugby

Another good year at Hitchin Touch with steady numbers, quite a few additions and more interest from the younger age groups which is encouraging.

It has turned out very much a social Touch group with little interest in entering competitions, rather Monday evenings predominantly for parents and younger players and Wednesday evenings more competitive with ages ranging from 16 to 60.

However we have had some recent enquiries about introducing a more competitive group so watch this space.

We do lack somewhat with female members which is another focus for the next year to try and encourage more women to join.

Some great success with two of the group representing England in the recent Atlantic Cup, winning their respective group competitions.

**Mondays 7-8.30pm  
Wednesdays 7.30-9pm  
All year round!**



## Hitchin RFC Colts season 2022/2023 summary

**After winning their division undefeated in the 2021/2022 season, the Colts did the same again, winning every league game with flair and a first-rate team spirit.**

Most of the lads had been together since U7s and this success was well-deserved.

There was strength in all areas of the squad, with players showing positional adaptability when necessary.

It was great to see them welcoming the U17s into the team.

Highlights included thrashing Letchworth and winning the final league game 17-0 against closest competitors, Datchworth.

All support from the M&Y section and Seniors was much appreciated.

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## VP'S CORNER

Can I begin this missive by saying a big "thanks" to our VPs! Last season, you turned out in greater numbers to support our teams, you supported the VP lunches vigorously, you made donations and you helped the bar tremendously with its barrelage. Between us we contributed many £000s to the HRFC coffers for rugby for all and it was a lot of fun along the way.

We go into the new season with the exciting news that we will have the first VP Lunch before a Ladies match. This has taken two years for us to sort out – finding a date and finding opposition that will swap to a Saturday while the Men's 1XV are away.

November 4 is the date when our Ladies 1XV take on OAs 2XV in Championship 2 – Midlands and a full house of VPs would show the support for the squad and the fantastic contribution they have made to the success of our club.

In addition, we will have four other VP Lunches for Men's 1XV games. The first is 7 October (Enfield Igantions) followed by 9 December (London Scottish Lions), 3 February (Cheshunt) and 6 April (Chiswick).

Although not just for VPs, we will also have our Club Lunches on every other home Men's 1XV league game and it's a great way to have an informal beer and spot of food while meeting people from all sections of our grand old club.

We have had several new, younger, VPs joining the ranks over the past 12 months and I look forward to welcoming them to our events and letting them buy me a beer which is a tradition I have just made up.

Let's make sure we VPs continue do our bit in supporting the club financially and supporting our men's, women's and mini & youth teams from pitchside.

**Tim Jeffries**



**A sweltering June provided perfect conditions for the annual Hitchin Beer and Cider festival. A team of Hitchin Rugby Club VPs and senior players along with CAMRA volunteers built the festival site between Friday 9 and Wednesday 14 June.**

The early start this year allowed us to include the club dinner and a boxing event in a single build, something the team were grateful for despite the hot weather making it a task more arduous than usual.

The festival itself running from 15-17 June attracted some 2,500 visitors, enjoying cask, craft and international beers as well as a fine selection of cider perry and mead. Three commercial food vendors were complimented by our own BBQ team lead by Tom Bartiromo and the Thursday Club VP team. Their successful weekend adding additional income to an already successful weekend. It was an excellent festival much enjoyed by the public and club members alike.

As I look forward to next year, thanks are extended to all the club and CAMRA volunteers who helped in making this a very successful and enjoyable event, without your hard work and dedication, there would be no festival.

**Peter Tasko, Club Chair**



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## END OF SEASON AWARDS



Simon Taylor, player of the season

- **Team of the season (President's Trophy)**  
Men's 1XV
- **Players' player of the season (Wally Hazard trophy)**  
Simon Taylor
- **Most improved player (Tony Else trophy)**  
Jon Welsford
- **Women's coaches' player of the season**  
Claire Crompton and Jade Cooper, joint
- **Women's players' player of the season**  
Mel Ruffell
- **Women's most improved player**  
Claire Watson
- **Women's unsung hero award**  
Carly Jones



Nick Panton with tie, celebrating 250 1XV caps, presented by Club Captain James Bolter



## Vandalism at KGV

AS a result of an increase in vandalism in the area, the club has spent around £7,000 on improved security, including shutters for the club house windows and state-of-the-art CCTV cameras.

We have been successful in providing the police with videos of vandalism taking place, with clear evidence of the perpetrators, sadly, we still await news of any prosecutions.

## BRADSHAW JOHNSON

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## AGM

The following Officers were nominated and were uncontested:

- **President**  
David Marshall
- **Chair**  
Peter Tasko
- **Vice Chair and VP Liaison**  
Tim Jeffries
- **Secretary**  
Tony Russell
- **Treasurer**  
Chris Jones
- **1XV Captain**  
James Bolter
- **Chair of Mens' Rugby**  
James Akrill
- **Chair Of Womens' Rugby**  
Claire Crompton
- **Chair of Business Committee**  
Craig Henshaw-Allcock
- **Chair of Bar Committee**  
Rachel Horne
- **Chair of M&Y Section**  
Mark Scott
- **Herts RFU Representative**  
John Humphries

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