



TALKING BALLS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF BOLTON RUGBY UNION F.C. FEBRUARY 2006

NEWS

LANCASHIRE PLATE

Bolton are pleased to announce they have been drawn at home to Sefton in the semi-final of the Lancashire Plate.

The game will take place on Sunday February 26th 2006 kick off 2.30pm. As with any semi-final draw, Sefton will prove difficult opponents, they are currently top of South Lancs 3.

PLEASE COME DOWN AND SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

SPORTSMAN'S DINNER

Fri 24 Mar 2006
Bolton School Arts & Conference Centre

Speaker: Graham Gooch
Comedian: Josh Daniels

Tickets £35
Tables of 10 available

Contact:
Dave Shuttleworth
01204 363530 or
07949 228823 or
tickets@boltonrugby.co.uk

Uncle Les says ...

"Xmas bottle draw raised over £1000, thanks to all who bought and sold tickets"



Over 40's not over the hill - yet!

BOLTON OVER 40'S 19 EGOR 5

On Sunday 5th February the club was packed as the over 40's took on EGOR, the evergreens of rugby, an invitation vets side from the North West area. The game was a fund raiser for East Lancs Hospice in memory of former Bolton player Gary Mathieson who passed away last year. With cobwebs brushed off many a boot, the mood was set for a thrilling day of running rugby!

Bolton scored the first try as prop Paul Barnes crashed over to open the scoring. EGOR then replied with a try from a mistake at a Bolton line out, to bring things level. EGOR secretary, Bill Gregory, defied his 81 years as he rallied his troops at every scrum. The game was played at twenty minute intervals to allow the players time to catch their breath. Indeed many of the players were worn out by the exhausting photo shoot demanded by the enthusiastic Bolton Evening News photographer, Karen Hope, who had many an old physique twisting for a perfect picture!

Bolton captain Paul Fernside then jumped ship to play for EGOR, as tired legs took their toll. John Eady guesting for Bolton at number 10, showed his eye for a gap as he made break after break, before he was replaced by Dave Mann and his half back partner Pete Kenyon. The years may have moved on, but the deadly duo proved they can still pull the strings as they passed, grunted and as usual cheated, their way round the rugby field.

Bolton stretched their lead when Pete Hackin although old enough to play, proved he was too quick and probably too big to stop! The final try was to fall to evergreen prop Shaun Crimmins, who must have saved energy through not tackling, scrummaging, rucking etc, to join a loose attack where he was given the last pass to score.

Bolton won the game but East Lancs Hospice were the winners with a healthy donation of nearly £800 which was raised in memory of Gary Mathieson, one of life's top blokes. Thanks to all involved, far too many to mention.

A few words from your Club Captain

Welcome to the 'revived' Talking Balls club newsletter. The purpose of the newsletter is to let you know what's happening and what's happened at the Bolton Rugby Club. We're hoping to produce 3 or 4 of these per season, so keep the stories coming.

The club is on a bit of a high at the moment. The first XV are playing some great rugby, scoring over 240 points in the last 7 games. Most of our talent is home-grown, last weekend 11 of the first XV players had come through the ranks of our junior section. Later this month they play in the semi-final of the Lancs Plate, so please come down and support them.

The Junior section is running teams at ALL age groups with some real upturns in results. The Under 14's have won their first games ever and have scored over 200 points in 6 games! Other good results are being recorded every week.

The Womens Section are highly placed in their league and are still putting out a full team (plus subs) when Preston Grasshoppers can only manage a 10-a-side team!

Many thanks to all those involved and the volunteers who make it happen.

Les Towler

RFU raffle has raised money for sections as follows:

SENIOR £750, JUNIOR £300 WOMENS £70

MANY THANKS TO THOSE WHO SOLD THEIR TICKETS.

6 NATIONS AT THE CLUB

Saturday 4th February
Ireland vs Italy
England vs Wales
Sunday 5th February
Scotland vs France

Saturday 11th February
France vs Ireland
Italy vs England
Sunday 12th February
Wales vs Scotland

Saturday 25th February
France vs Italy
Scotland vs England
Sunday 26th February
Ireland vs Wales

Saturday 11th March
Wales vs Italy
Ireland vs Scotland
Sunday 12th March
France vs England

Saturday 18th March
Italy vs Scotland
Wales vs France
England vs Ireland

COME DOWN, HAVE A BEER AND WATCH THE GAME - WHOEVER YOU SUPPORT!

1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th XV Half-Term report

Imagine if you will, a tranquil setting. A rare oasis of calm within the urban sprawl, this oasis friends, has a name...a name which this season has seen many an epic battle...where is this mythical expanse of unspoilt beauty? Am I writing about Bannockburn, Ypres or the Somme...no we are talking about Avenue Street. Yes avid readers, it's the halfway point in the season and what a season! As in the words of the great songster Ronan Keating 'Life is a Rollercoaster' and Bolton has had its ups...downs...but is rocketing back up the 'big steep bit' again.

The season started with a lot of promise as the new three rugby tenors took the coaching reins. Mark Bolton Head Coach, Liam Mitchell Forwards Coach and Neil Brooks Backs Coach plotted an all-out assault on the league. The first team dreamed of great things to come, however, lack of consistency plagued them as they struggled early in the season and went down to three straight losses...but like a mighty phoenix from the flames of a potential relegation struggle, their fortunes soon improved. Chris Turner, the Keech Bros (Tom and John), the Singleton's (Mike and JP), Greg Abbott and El Capitan James Brodie were providing the enthusiasm, edge and will to win, mixed with the seasoned vets of Steve Knibb, Sam Hilton, Pete Marriott and Mark Bolton. Steve Kriel and Hartwig Dreimeyer, Bolton's very own Springboks, have again had positive impacts. The blend was perfect as the lads embarked on a whirlwind of fantastic results starting with an epic win over Manchester Wanderers in the Lancs Plate quarter final. Unbeaten in their last five outings, the firsts have now the platform to push on for possibly their best finish in the league for many years.

The seconds following a successful period last year were guided this time by captain Dave Hulme. With hopes high after three opening league wins, key injuries and the promotion of players to deserved first team status caused a rather staccato (get out your dictionaries lads) season. Stunning performances against LSH twice, Fleetwood twice and notably Eccles have been punctuated with losses against Altrincham Kersal, Leigh and Bowden. The emergence of Leigh McDermott, Dave Evans, Ash Cooper and Will Swift has been encouraging. The old warhorses of Mark Turner, Nick Griffiths and JP Hardman have provided stability. What of the impending second half of the season? In the words of Woody Allen...'80% of success is showing up'...so confirm early boys!

Charlie's boys have graced the third team to great effect to date with stirring performances against very strong opposition. The nature of the intermediate league means many mismatches occur until...as we are told...the leagues sort themselves out. However the thirds have bucked this theory by being competitive in every aspect. Wins against Fleetwood and Carrington have shown real promise and never have the thirds taken a real pasting...so onward and upward!

The fourths have really been the success story. Often plopped upon from teams above when captains nab players late on, Dave Wilson and Mark Robinson have always organized and led their team with great aplomb. New players have been given their first taste of rugby in the gritty world of the fourths...and progressed through the ranks. Is there another Pete Brogan or Simon Beswick lying in wait in the fourths ready to march up the teams? The team have displayed courage against adversity...playing some big name teams...Preston Grasshoppers, Fylde and Wigan. Wins against Carnforth and Ashton under Lyne have been welcoming.

So all in all its been a successful season...four teams a week, positive results and the club getting stronger and stronger!

DAVE HULME
2nd XV Captain



WOMENS RUGBY

With Marc Simon

Bolton Womens RFC Mid season report.

The 2005/6 season has seen the ladies side carry on where they left off, with the performances continuing to entertain their ever growing sideline "fan club".

After a shaky start in their pre-season friendly down in Birmingham, a trip marred by last minute absences, the side have come together to play some quite beautiful rugby.

The side is being led again by consistent performer Adele Ryan, deputised this year by try machine Catherine Higgins, revelling in her new outside centre role.

Noticeable improvements have shown in the forward play, with the formidable trio of Claire Stott, Jen Goosen and new signing Nina Martyn causing damage to all teams faced so far (breaking a few on the way!!) Other quality performances have come from the ever consistent Helen Vincent and Bernie Higgins, and youngsters Fiona Catherall, Natalie York and Theresa Wright (in her first ever season). However the standout performer this season so far has been at full back, where Kelly Amphlett has proved to be a defensive marvel, and a useful counter-attacking runner.

At the Christmas break, Bolton are a very respectable third in the table behind Fleetwood and Preston Grasshoppers and are only 4 points off the top of the table. Significant results so far have been the great away win at old rivals Manchester, and the very dubious 1 point loss at Ormskirk, a result to be avenged back at Avenue Street. Grumbling from the sidelines regarding other teams turning up with "specialist" tens sides highlight the fact that if the league insisted on playing 15's every week, Bolton would be in a higher position than they are now.

In all, it has been a great start to the season, and only the loss of utility back Cecilia Gamble to Vale of Lune has blighted what can only be seen as a leap from last year's performances.

Training has resumed Wednesday evenings, any wives/girlfriends etc are more than welcome to join in.

MARC SIMON
Womens Coach

SPONSORS FOR NEXT SEASON

1st XV is looking for sponsors for new warm-up tops for next season - interested? Contact Les Towler (captain@boltonrugby.co.uk) or Paul Fernside (rugbychairman@boltonrugby.co.uk). Main sponsor and subsidiary sponsors welcome.

MATCH SPONSORSHIP

We have all sorts of Match Sponsorship opportunities:
SATURDAYS - Normally 2 senior matches at home. Packages to suit all wallets and expense accounts! Catering can be arranged.
SUNDAYS - There can be over 200 junior players plus parents at the club on Sunday mornings.

U11's End of 1st Term Review

The under 11s have had an enjoyable 4 months of rugby up to the Winter break

Several new faces were welcomed along with the "regulars".

Tom, myself and Catherine decided to teach basics in September, especially defence. The reward was seen in matches with all the team tackling well and some crunching tackles from Joe Howarth (his judo training evident) and Matthew Robinson. Handling was good with very few dropped balls.

Our previously lightweight side has now got some very useful driving forwards. Rebecca Trist, James Clare, Paul Wardle and especially John Kirkham are all learning to combine their natural strength with driving technique.

The matches have gone well with narrow wins over Sedgley Park (in a match of high standard), Stockport and Glossop. We were edged out by a Fleetwood side who showed us how to recycle and keep the ball.

Our big test each year is Broughton Park and before injuries and the cold took effect our defence was holding them out very well.

So all in all the team continues to enjoy their rugby and improve. In January we will focus on set pieces and recycling while the backs will work on their alignment. Highlight of the season so far: Ciaran Broxton being driven over the Sedgely line by seemingly the whole Bolton team.

MARK ROBINSON

U12's End of 1st Term Review

Starting the year with in theory 20+ U12 players on the books in mid August, early training sessions should have been about reforming the bonds and shaking the dust off seasoned drills.

However, as the 2005/06 U12's had spent most of the previous season in a joint team with the next age group up due to the lack of consistent numbers it was never going to be that easy. With David Wilson installed as the coach and soon to be assisted by Richard Timms and John Kelly there was a support team for the players in place. Unfortunately it was looking bleak until mid October when for the first time 12 players turned up at the same time! Numbers have gradually increased as the season has progressed with a squad that now has 19 players registered and turned out 17 for the last match before Christmas. This includes 9 new club members welcomed into the fold and there's still room for more! Also, Richard Sanders has been elected by the players as this year's Captain.

Fixture results have been good considering the lack of experience of a number of squad members giving stats so far of: Played 7, Win 2, Draw 1, Lost 4.

But with an overall point difference of only 25 reflecting how closely most matches have been contested.

Four matches in four weeks in the run up to the Christmas break and then losing the last training session to the weather haven't help consolidate the emerging skills being developed. But with the New Year bringing the opportunity for mid week and Sunday training and no games until February, the squad and its coaching support are looking forward to working hard on developing further and reaching the potential it has within it with the blend of experienced and new players.

JOHN KELLY

U14's End of 1st Term Review

Steve Knibb took over this team 4 years ago as a combined u10's/u11's and u12's with 4 players. A lot of hard work later, especially from Alan Holmes recruiting in school, and every year the numbers increased. Half the team was passed on to a new coach and during that time not a single win was recorded, even though some games were very close.

Last year the coaching staff increased, with Dave Moss becoming involved. This year, with several new players, the u14's felt optimistic with an opening win against Broughton Park 51-0. The rest of the season so far has seen only one defeat in 6 games, the results being Blackburn 0 Bolton 24, Blackburn 21 Bolton 17 (we won with Blackburn having 5 unregistered players and no front row), Glossop 20 Bolton 27, Ormskirk 52 Bolton 0, Broughton Park 5 Bolton 62 and Blackpool 0 Bolton 50.

So, with half the season gone already, the team can't wait for the season to restart. Many thanks go out to Yvonne Greer who has taken the role of team manager.

STEVE KNIBB



Bolton Colts

In a season of mixed fortune and injury, Bolton Colts have been unfortunate to not hold a higher position in the league this season.

Bolton starting the season strong, defeating Blackburn 35-5 and Vale of Lune 28-8, in two fantastic displays of running rugby.

With confidence running high Bolton then faced Dukinfield away, in a brutal encounter Bolton went down 29-17. Bolton then faced Eagle in a scrappy game Bolton were unable to take hold of the game and Eagle were able to counter attack from Bolton's mistakes winning 31-17.

Bolton then got the season back on track beating Eccles 24-3 and drawing with top of the league Liverpool Collegiate 17-17.

Hit hard with injury the Colts then struggled through tough games against Trafford and Warrington losing both games.

The wounded colts then went out against Warrington in the second leg seeking revenge and were able to pull out a 21-10 victory, followed by a 24-12 the following week against Vale of Lune.

In a mixed season Bolton Colts have consistently dominated teams throughout, with an outstanding pack. The backs have been mixed and moved around as a result of injury, however the level of commitment from individuals within the squad has been second to none. This bears well for Bolton future and I am confident that some of those names will feature in first team line-ups in years to come.

ALAN HOLMES

RUGBY SHIRT SPONSORS 2005/6

1ST XV - BURLINGTON REFURBISHMENT
COLTS - GVA GRIMLEY
U10 - BSS CONSTRUCTION
U8 - MICHAEL WOOD HOMES



JUNIOR TRACKSUIT SPONSORS 2005/6

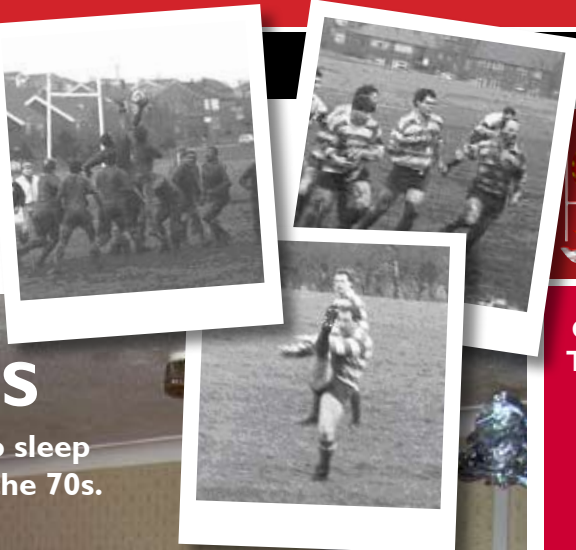
MAIN SPONSOR - GEORGE MAXWELL.COM
Chesterfield Suite Manufacturer. Tracksuits
(pictured) issued to over 150 junior players this year. A big thanks to all our kit sponsors.

YOUR NEWSLETTER NEEDS YOU!

Fancy yourself as a budding Dave Hulme? Or have you any funny pictures or stories you want to share with the club? If you have, don't keep it to yourself - email it to: talkingballs@boltonrugby.co.uk

When I were a lad ...

Pictures from 1988 when we won the league in its inaugural season. Now that's real mud for you!



GOLDEN OLDIES

Dave Mann bores Pete Kenyon to sleep with tales of half back play from the 70s.



Congratulations to Jess Tonge who won the 200 Club Christmas Draw of £250 and to Derek Keogh who won the £180 accumulator.

Full details of all draw winners are published in the club and on www.boltonrugby.co.uk

**CONTACT
DUNCAN
TRENCH AND
JOIN THE
BRUFC 200
CLUB NOW!**

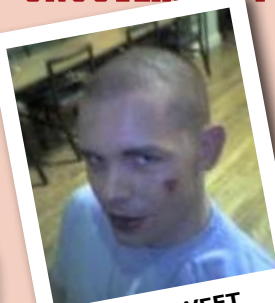
**SUPPORT YOUR
CLUB - AND
REMEMBER ... IT
COULD BE YOU!**

WANTED COMMERCIAL MANAGER

Bolton RUFC are keen to appoint a commercial manager asap. The club is growing very quickly and we require a keen fundraiser to raise our profile, within the local business community. There is a large amount of potential sponsors out in the Bolton area, this money could help the club, raise much needed funds to further our expansion. The job would consist of a commission only based salary, with hours to suit the candidate.

Interested? ring 01204 480533 for further details or email: rugbychairman@boltonrugby.co.uk

CLUB MEMBERS UNCOVERED #1



**MIKE 'SWEET
CHEEKS' SINGLETON**

Uncle Les says ...

Well played Danny "he hasn't paid his annual subs and he's not playing again until he does" Barlow

MORE NEWS

WEBSITE

Lots of activity on the website with Senior section updates now being done by Paul Fernside (seniorweb@boltonrugby) and junior section Mark Turner (juniorweb@boltonrugby.co.uk). Have you had a look recently?

**Is there anyone out there that can design some web pages for us?
Speak to Les Towler.**

FLOODLIGHTS

Plans are well advanced to put full floodlighting on pitch 3 to allow this to be used as an additional training facility and match practice. Also on the cards are replacement floodlights for the training area to provide better and more reliable illumination.