

NEWS



Jason Satchwell, Craig Grote, Daniel Holmes, Harry Fayers and Adam Watts at the end of their 45-mile run

Runners and rugby clubs pay fitting tribute to friend Scott

Old Cooperians and Upminster Rugby Clubs joined forces to pay a fond and fitting tribute to former player Scott Sarson at the weekend.

A large crowd turned up at the Coopers Company & Coborn School in St Mary's Lane on a beautiful sunny February day to remember Sarson, who passed away in Australia in April 2021.

And five of his former friends completed a herculean 45-mile run from the barracks in Colchester, where he served as a paratrooper, to deliver the match ball and help raise awareness of the Rock2Recover charity that helps servicemen and women and their families who are affected by stress.

Organiser Craig Grote, clubmates Harry Fayers and Adam Watts and paras Jason Satchwell and Daniel Holmes set off in the early hours of Saturday morning and arrived shortly before the scheduled 2.30pm kick-off, accompanied by others who had joined them in the later stages of the run.

And there was a mixture of emotions for the ultra runners.

"It was challenging in places, mainly the last five. The last mile, with the support of everyone here, was just overwhelming," said Satchwell. "We all had ups and downs at certain points, but got each other through it."

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Grote added: "It was worse than I ever imagined. Parts of it were just horrendous really. "We stopped about halfway and I think we stopped too long. My knee seized up and we really struggled from about 20 to 30-mile mark, it was rough. It was hard."

Fayers said: "Kudos to Craig for starting it. We had the conversation, we wanted to do something and really glad we've raised so much money for such a worthy cause."

Old Cooperians club president Niall Kelly addressed the large crowd before all took part in a minutes applause for Sarson, who was described as 'the best player to have graced an Old Cooperians shirt' and possibly an Upminster one too.

Kelly thanked long-standing rivals Upminster for their support in helping to launch the Scott Sarson Memorial Trophy – as the sides also battled for London Three Essex points and Essex Intermediate Cup honours.

And he revealed how he was planning on joining the run at one stage, thinking it was a relay event.

"The fact you've done the whole thing together is

exceptional, an incredible effort. I'm truly speechless, it's fantastic," he said to the runners, while also admitting to being 'overwhelmed' by the numbers who had shown up on the day.

Kelly added: "I would like to extend our love and support to Scott's family for whom we cannot imagine the pain and anguish that they have endured at his sad loss."

"The Sarson family have been involved with Old Cooperians for many years, and I like so many others have known Scott all his life, having seen him grow and develop into a very special rugby player but more importantly a very special person."

"I'm overwhelmed by the turnout today, that is evident by the people here supporting this event, and there are many others around the world who aren't here but will be feeling Scott's loss as we are."

"We will all have our personal memories of Scott, playing memories, to have socialised with a charismatic, funny, cheeky and charming person, whose personality was infectious."

The gathered crowd were then told of a new foundation being established by Keith Sarson, in memory of his son, and endorsed and supported by Waverley Rugby Club in Sydney, Australia, where Scott was player-coach at the time of his sad passing.



Craig Grote arrives with the match ball for the Old Cooperians v Upminster match



Old Cooperians club president Niall Kelly addresses the teams and crowd

The intention is to place two players each year from the UK to Australia and vice versa, to give those individuals a once in a lifetime experience of playing rugby, meeting like-minded people and enjoying another country's culture in their own development.

Kelly concluded: "Scott managed to cram into his all too short life some amazing experiences, some good and some, like his service in Afghanistan, not so great, but nevertheless whatever Scott did, he did with passion and enthusiasm."



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Old Cooperians and Upminster players compete for a high ball during their derby encounter



Old Cooperians score their first try against Upminster



Old Cooperians score their second try against Upminster



Old Cooperians celebrate with the Scott Sarson Memorial Trophy after beating Upminster at St Mary's Lane on Saturday

"He will be missed forever, but with the charities and the Scott Sarson Memorial Trophy, his memory will go on and on."

Old Cooperians went on to win the derby by a 40-10 scoreline to go down as the first-ever winners of the Scott Sarson Memorial Trophy.

And speaking of that – and the foundation in his name – Grote said: "I know that was something Scott wanted to do before he passed away, so for that to happen now, he would be absolutely over the moon with that. It's excellent. "And the Scott Sarson Trophy,

like the Calcutta Cup, just adds that extra bit now to this game whenever we play them."

Go to <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/scottsultra> to donate or visit <https://rock2recovery.co.uk/> for more details on the charity.



Old Cooperians score their third try against Upminster as the two clubs remembered former player Scott Sarson
Pictures: GAVIN ELLIS/TGS PHOTO



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