

# ACADEMY DIRECTOR OF RUGBY, REPORT. CAMELOT COLTS 2021/22

It seems like a different lifetime ago that we welcomed OAs and Bedford to Chaulden Lane in March 2020 beating them both in bruising but exhilarating encounters. Two hastily arranged games against High Wycombe and Chess Valley brought us 2 wins against much bigger squads, to leave the 2020/21 Camelot Colts unbeaten. A strange season but one where both age groups bonded and bought into our shared vision and values.



In September I was delighted that we returned to training, and once again started to gel the 2 age groups together through training sessions, the traditional pizza night and the odd shandy, which set us up nicely for our first away day to Welwyn. A scrappy affair, where it was evident that the fellas hadn't played rugby for a while, but a 28 to nil win nonetheless. I must say, the relief and excitement from across the coaching, playing and parent groups showed just how important our wonderful game and Club is to so many people.

October saw us host Hertford in our first competitive game for 18 months, in division 1 in the Herts Middlesex Junior league. A very competitive game saw Camelot Colts win 21-3, it was great to be back, a much needed boost for us all. Two more friendlies followed, an away day to Aylesbury brought us a hard fought 7-38 victory followed by a 43-7 win against a young and flamboyant Reading side.



November saw a couple of close encounters, a 5-17 win against Chess Valley away, followed by another 5-17 away win at Tring. Both games made much closer due to the erratic and inconsistent reffing. The last game of the year was a home win 21-7 against our old rivals and county champions Woodford. A bonus point win of 27-7 against Saracens in division one, saw the team really start to purr, followed by another win in the cup over Tring away 7-40. Tries were a plenty, and the defence really strong. #bluewall.

Winning 9 games on the trot in division 1 against larger rugby clubs was very special, WOW. So much the coaching team were expecting a call up from the RFU as Eddie was struggling in the 6 Nations. It was an unbelievable start, fast flowing rugby. 'Daves' forwards start to dominate games, we never lost a scrum, mauls were amazing and our lineout was something else. You never knew what was going to happen. All 8 would come out with the blocks on! Except the jumper who'd come out with one on!! Half the forwards needed glasses as we couldn't catch it, never a dull moment. The forwards were used to playing with super

players of top pedigree, as one forward captained the lambs this season, another played at Sarries and one former team mate got 2 caps this season playing for England Under 20s.



Everything was going to plan until the New Year, when the team discovered booze!! The only clubs that really beat us was Pryzm, a night club in Watford, and our own rugby club who started to raid our players, with 8 of the team playing senior rugby. Proud moments were watching the Colts play for the firsts and seconds, but not the day before our games, which didn't really help our quest for league and cup double.

We narrowly lost to Bishops' Stortford 12-5 in the league, in what turned out to be the key game of the season. The fellas picked themselves up dusted themselves down after their first loss of the season with a great victory in the league. An epic game against OAs saw us go 10 nil up only to be behind 12-10 with minutes to go. A last minute try gave us another away win 12-15, our best performance of the season, followed quickly by a 15-5 home win against Old Grammarians saw Camelot move to top of the table, league division one!

OAs unfortunately got their revenge in the cup, scoring 2 quick early tries and then holding on till the bitter end for a hard fought 17-13 win. The final game of the season saw the boys play Wasps at their prestigious home ground, with all to play for and still a chance of winning the league. Camelot scored 3 great tries to take a 19 nil lead, but were pegged back in the final 10 minutes when the hangovers really hurt our boys. Camelot running out the winners 12-19.

Joking aside the team played fantastic rugby, underpinned by our blue wall, conceding the fewest points in the league, playing great rugby in the correct spirit of the game, and only missing out on the title by the odd bonus point!! We played 14, won 12, scored **317 points, 52 tries** and conceded very little. Averaged 4 tries a game v one against. Had the best defence in the league and finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in division 1 out of 41 teams in Herts, Beds and Middlesex.

Season 2021 22

Colts Division 1

POS		P	W	D	L	BP	PTS
1	Bishop's Stortford RFC	6	5	0	1	4	24
2	Hemel Hempstead (Camelot) RUFC	6	5	0	1	2	22
3	Old Albanians JRFC	6	4	0	2	5	21
4	Old Grammarians RFC	6	2	0	4	2	10
5	Wasps FC	6	2	0	4	2	10
6	Hertford RFC	6	2	0	4	1	9
7	Saracens Amateur RFC	6	1	0	5	1	5

IVISION MATCHES RESULTS STANDINGS MORE

Thanks to each and every one of you for your continued support and hard work, the players, the coaches and the parents – I am so incredibly proud of the camaraderie, the pride, the passion, the team bond and the hard work from the players and the coaches. One thing 2020 has taught me and no doubt all of us, is that we should savour each and every moment. Quite simply, rugby is more than just a game, it's a way of life, it's about creating great relationships with local clubs, upholding the traditions of the club and the game of rugby union as well as teamwork, enjoyment, respect, discipline, sportsmanship and the odd beer or two. Camelot Colts 2022 you were incredible, here's to life long memories and life long friendships. #3amigos.

## **A 15 Point Blueprint for success in Academy Rugby at Camelot**

After 13 really enjoyable seasons coaching at Camelot please indulge me with a few reflections for a way forward in 2022 and beyond.

- The 'Culture' is the most important aspect going forward, bond the lads, get camaraderie going with pizza nights, socials, paintballing etc, make it fun.
- Play everyone as much as you can, continuity breaks down but player numbers won't.
- 4 coaches maximum, with one from the younger age group to keep continuity at Colts.
- Coaching has to be fun, make as much of it as you can games, no fitness, the fitness comes from playing rugby games and drills at game pace.
- Bond teams earlier, they start together at the age of 5 and 6 and then don't play with each other for 10 years! Start mixing teams and coaches in the summer and pre season.
- Introduce the Colts to the First team in October/November, get them training once a month together and the odd social.
- Once the Colts have turned 18, introduce them to First team rugby when they are ready, but not the day before a Colts game!!!!
- Adults should train once a week on a Thursday, put some food on afterwards and get the numbers up, make Tuesday a set piece or gym session.
- Let more teams train on the 'First team' pitch. One of the saddest sights was seeing 12 adults train on the first team pitch, while 70 lads trained in the dark the night before, as no one is allowed on the hallowed turf.
- Arrange more Friday night floodlit games.
- Get the First team more involved in coaching the youth teams, draw up a rota, they would only have to do one or two sessions a season.
- Spend more meeting time and money on rugby, get the flood lights done. Stash for all!!
- Our supporters at recent games have been poor, yobish, almost football like (Enfield away firsts, seconds at home to Hitchin), shouting and jeering at the ref, time to get behind the team in the correct rugby way.
- Use social media more, keep supporters updated on scores, and when the club house is open during the off season. Get club members down to watch the Premiership semis and finals
- Find a role for Les and Tom, they are exceptional servants, club men and human beings.