



BRIDPORT RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB NEWSLETTER NO. 16 – DECEMBER 2019

The Season so far

What a difference a year makes! Following the departure of last season's coach, Ayo Fraser took responsibility for overall coaching of the 1st XV. He is superbly supported by Tom Gamwell and Harry Richardson for the forwards, Mitch Waters for the backs and Rich Layzell for overall fitness training. Together they have injected a positivity into the players, creating an atmosphere where they are committed to the cause and want to play for the club. This is amply borne out by the numbers at training and the size of our match day squads. In addition, the team have encouraged the Colts to train with the Seniors, resulting in a number of them stepping up to the 1st XV with regular appearances and making their presence felt on match days.

At Xmas we are top of the league by 1 point, despite a 5 points deduction, carried over from last season, narrowly losing our unbeaten record in the last game of the year to Wheatsheaf Cabin Crew who are in second place. Sadly, apart from our 7 wins we have had 2 walkovers as some teams struggle.

The season kicked off in September with a strong 45-10 win at home to North Dorset, followed by an excellent bonus point 26-14 away win at Dorchester (always very pleasing). We then had a walkover against East Dorset followed by 2 excellent bonus point away wins against Ellingham & Ringwood, 34-19 and Poole, 27-10. In between we thrashed Wimborne 79-0 at home and then hosted Oakmedians at home in what then was first v second. The team put on a superb display coming back from 14-7 down, culminating in a length of the field try involving 5 players to win 38-19.

A difficult away trip to Salisbury was easily negotiated 57-19 and then the frustration at Swanage & Wareham conceding our home game before the disappointment of losing to a last minute try at Wheatsheaf, 12-19.

With Dinton sadly withdrawing from the league after their first game of the season, our first game of the New Year is on the 11th January at home to Dorchester when we shall be holding a Sponsors Lunch. The team is looking forward with confidence to the second half of the season with the sole objective of going unbeaten and winning the league.



Scrum drive against North Dorset



Mitch Waters breaks against Dorchester



George Hussey starts an attack against Ellingham



Ayo Fraser in action against Wheatsheaf Cabin Crew

Because of the distances involved the club have been putting on a coach for selected games which has engendered a great team spirit and attracted a number of away supporters. Hopefully more of you will partake when the opportunity arises after Xmas.

Colts by Tim Farrell

The 2019/2020 season started for Bridport Colts much as it finished last season with a hardcore of players who always do their best to attend. This caused difficulties through the first part of the season with this lack of regular attenders and injuries to a number of players meaning that we never had a full 15 for the away fixtures.

The home fixtures were better supported but these injuries, many of which were long-term, meant that the team was changing its constituent parts every week. The loss of Captain Seamus Fitzgerald with a long-term injury had a major impact. In his absence Sam Webb stepped up to the mark and credit must go to all the players for never letting their heads go down and always scoring tries. There is still a shortage of players in the under 17 age group at Bridport Colts, for reasons which are not obvious, but the lads who have played this season have been a vital part of the team.

Close games against Oakmeadians, North Dorset, Yeovil and a very tough 5-12 loss to Weymouth to finish off the halfway point in the season will hopefully encourage the players for the 2020 matches.

Juniors by Noel Gregory

Fielding sides from Under 7 to Colts (ages 6 years old to 17) Bridport RFC Junior Section has had an eventful year. Bridport Rugby Club now being 'Twinned' with the French side Lège-Cap Ferret, at the end of May the U16 and U15 visited France to participate in matches and savour the outstanding hospitality of our hosts. We welcome our French friends to Bridport in May 2020. During the season to Christmas, the Junior section has played in over seventy matches, (thirty at home), served over six hundred meals from the newly equipped kitchen, and in matches claimed such notable big scalps as Salisbury, Weymouth, Swans, North Dorset, and Wimborne. Along the way there has been much fun, but also the poignancy of juniors (including tots with shorts bigger than themselves) standing to attention on Armistice Sunday. Our aim is to allow young players, girls and boys, to develop their skills in Teamwork, maintain Discipline, show Sportsmanship, but above all Enjoy their time in Rugby. Any young player, whether experienced in



Under 16's in action against Lege-Cap Ferret



Clean line out take against Lege-Cap Ferret



Solid U16's scrum against Sidmouth

Rugby or not, will be made welcome at Bridport. It is never too late to join.

The U16's continue to show promise with several players hopefully going on to make the transition to the Senior side in the next couple of years.

The Junior section as a whole welcomed a former Bridport Junior Ethan Staddon, currently with the Bath Academy and who gained his England U18 cap this summer playing in South Africa, to the Brewery Ground on Sunday 7th December to pass on some useful tips and encouragement to all of those present.

The Junior Section is also very grateful to Alasdair Warren of the Electric Palace for his generous Sponsorship of the new Juniors Training Tops, proudly worn by Theo Dunn, Will Evans and Noah Pittard on Sunday 15th December.

100 Club

A big thank you to all of you who have joined. In our first year we raised £2400 for the club which was allocated towards the costs of the new kitchen and our two excellent sports therapists Sam and Hannah who have given invaluable support to the 1st XV. We still have numbers left and membership is open to all irrespective of their affiliation to the club and we would welcome any new members. For just £5 per month we have 3 monthly prizes, currently £85, £72 and £55 depending on membership numbers. Full details on how to join are available from Stuart Briggs, stuart.briggs48@yahoo.co.uk

The Club

We have had 2 major capital projects this year which have been funded from our reserves, one unexpected and one planned. The floodlights on the roadside pitch were deemed unsafe for both the club and the general public and had to be repaired. The major refurbishment of the kitchen has now been completed and all involved are very pleased with the new facilities, enabling us to cope in a much more efficient way with feeding up to 200 Juniors on Sundays and also giving us the ability to cater for other outside functions.

Plans for an improved income stream from advertising hoardings on the East side of the pitch are on hold until next season due to planning delays but we will certainly be seeking potential new sponsors in the close season to provide for two team shelters and a scoreboard.

Thanks are due to Tom Gamwell for his excellent efforts in getting the new club website www.bridportrugby.co.uk up and running. The site contains lots of excellent team news, details of social events, 100 Club winners and 1st XV Match reports and much more.



Ethan Staddon with some of the Juniors



The new training tops



The new kitchen

Social Events

A feature of the autumn months was the excellent attendances at the club for the World Cup matches. All the England games and some key pool games were shown and despite the early starts the numbers were good and with the bar open and bacon butties and sausage rolls being served a healthy profit was made by the club. For England's semi-final and the final there were well over 100 people for both matches with standing room only. Thanks to Karen and Julian Hussey who put in a sterling effort serving all with hot food both before and during the final.

With the French Juniors coming here in May and the Seniors planning a trip to France in August various fund-raising Social events are planned in the coming months and details will be on the website. We have already successfully held a bingo night with the next one in January. Mitch Waters organised a very successful Tapas and Karaoke night on December 21st and this format could be repeated in the coming months.

Finally, our President Peter Brook would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Vice Presidents for their continued support and he hopes to see as many of you as possible at the home games. For those of you who have not yet committed, he will be sending out reminders after Xmas!! The Vice Presidents lunch will be held on March 21st (Using our new kitchen!!) with details to follow in due course.

Season's Greetings

Stuart and Kathy Briggs