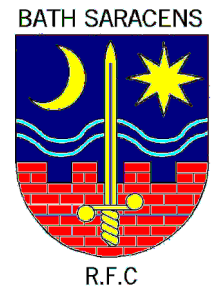


Bath Saracens RFC

Established 1947 as Bath Civil Service RFC

Affiliated to the RFU, Bath Combination RFU and Civil Service Sports Association

The Sulis Club, Claverton Down Road, Bath, BA2 7AU <http://www.bathsaracens.co.uk>



Dear Vice President,

Thus begins another exciting season with the Bath Saracens. It gives us great pleasure to introduce the new captain of the team Alistair Bradley and vice captain Edward Bell who strive to lead this year's Sarries to a winning season.



The previous season saw the Sarries secure 9 league wins, with key victories coming from the double performed over local rivals Combe Down 2nds. One of which saw a club record win of 92-5. The annual "Toor" to Weymouth rounded out a fantastic end of the season alongside a superb end of season dinner arranged by outgoing social secretary Mark Penny, to whom we give our thanks.

Preseason preparations began early, with many returning players making an appearance for intense fitness sessions ran by coach Tom Wildsmith with the expert guidance of newbie Paul Lewis. After a solid month of sprints, shuttle runs and circuit training, ball handling and skills training became precedent with team numbers posting at 20+. After a further 2 weeks of hard work the Bath Saracens took to the field in their first preseason game against a mixed side of the Old Edwardians. A large turn out of players gave the Sarries plenty of chance to mix up their squad throughout the game; this enabled them to secure a confident 47-17 win. 4 tries coming from newcomer Harry Horner, a try a piece for new captain Alistair Bradley, Liam Emmett and the master himself, Robbie

Lawrence. Positives taken from the game include a strong set piece built upon from last season and good defensive work throughout the back line. The second preseason game saw the Sarries take the long journey to Combe Down to face a much improved (in age and in physical stature) squad, which was apparently comparable to the team beaten 92-5 last season. A hard fought game ensued with neither team giving up any points throughout the first half. Pushing into the last 10 minutes of the game, with some key changes made by Combe Down, saw 3 tries conceded in quick succession for the Sarries. This ended the game with a 22-7 loss but with many positives to be taken after well structured play and good fitness around the park shown against a strong Combe Down side.

With these promising preseason games behind them, the Bath Saracens looked to push on to a vastly improved season, hoping to start things off strong against newly promoted Colerne. The Sarries hit the score sheet quickly with simple passing allowing Dominic Van Der Waals to finish in the corner. This however was the only visit the Sarries would make to the opposition try line, as the ensuing defensive battle kept the game low scoring. Colerne eventually ground down the Saracens defense, with a short drive under the posts leaving the first half 5-5. The second half began more promisingly, with a strong catch and drive from the Saracens giving them excellent field position. This allowed Andy Boyce to slot a superb drop goal from 30m out. This small lead seemed to be enough to secure the game, however a late Colerne surge saw their inside centre complete a delightful individual move which took Colerne 16-11 ahead. With 5 minutes left, the Saracens threw everything they had left at Colerne to try secure the win. However, this unfortunately led to a further Colerne try, with a loose pass in midfield being scooped up and returned under the posts. The game ended 20-11 to Colerne, a disappointing home loss for the Saracens who would have been 3 scores up at half time if not for some lose passes.



The second game of the season began with a quick trip down the M4 to neighboring Sutton Benger. This had proven a difficult fixture for the Sarries in the previous season, losing on both occasions. Bath again started quickly with a superb back move being completed by James Roper in the corner. Benger responded rapidly, with a simple run in after confusion amongst the Sarries defence. It took until the second half for the scores to begin to flow, with Andy Boyce finishing a Bath lineout which was followed shortly by Nick Williams completing a back line move and eventually Liam Emmett finishing yet another Bath lineout with some clever misdirection. That all but sealed the game for the Sarries with a late try from Benger leaving them short. End score 32-20 for Bath's first victory of the season.

With great sadness: Andy Blackburn



By now most of you will have heard the incredibly sad news of the passing of one of the most loved members of our club. We are sorry if you are reading for the first time, that Andy Blackburn passed away peacefully on Tuesday 10th September. Andy had returned from a cycle trek that he had been on for several days and Jo tells us that he spent his last evening chatting and being his usual lovely self before retiring to bed. He died shortly afterwards.

On your behalf we would like to express our heartfelt condolences to Jo and Sam and the girls. Andy will be missed so much by all who knew him.

This terrible news arrived just days before our first home game of the new season. Many of his friends and team mates gathered at the Sulis Club to remember Andy at a place where there are so many great memories. His son Sam, now a regular in the Sarries team, played that day and had an excellent game. A fine tribute to his dad.

Andy - We won't forget you. A true gentle giant loved by all...

Off the field:

With training off to an early start so has the social scene, with the first of many team outings resulting in the visit to local curry house Panahars. After a large turnout and cracking meal this will most definitely be repeated on a bi-monthly basis. The first major event on the Bath Saracens social calendar is the Paintballing day arranged for 19th October. Events will be kept up to date on the club's website and all are welcome. Contact social secretary Liam Emmett for further details on emmett.liam@gmail.com.

Congratulations and welcome goes out to our 2 new Vice Presidents, Paul Blankley and John Catchpole.



Victoria House, 5 Lower Borough Wall, BATH, BA1 1QR

Tel. 01225 422051

<http://www.geometrypr.co.uk>

email: linda@geometrypr.co.uk