



# FOLLOW THE BLUES

November 2007  
Number 37

## News from the Blues Followers

### Thanks!

**There is a lot of unseen and unsung work at the Club and rarely have the results of this been more obvious than in the last couple of months, with preparations for the big game against Northampton, screening of the World Cup matches, and then last Friday the annual fireworks display.**

All these activities have resulted in many extra hours work for the staff, supported by volunteers. Those who turned up at on Saturday morning for Nos's breakfast, before setting off for London Welsh, realised what an effort had been put in, already that morning' to prepare the ground for a Colt's game in the afternoon and a wedding reception in the evening. Staff and volunteers had been there from just after 6 am and by 9 am it was impossible to see that several thousand people had been in the ground the night before. Thanks to you all.

There has been much publicity about the Rights Issue and the need to strengthen the finances of the Club. On Tuesday November 20<sup>th</sup> there will be a meeting to inform and answer questions about the Issue to both existing shareholders, but, equally important, those non-shareholders hoping to invest after the end of the month. **BUT LET THE CLUB KNOW IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO ATTEND!**  
Ring 0871 871 1886 (Ext 0)

**Adrian Randall**

### Better Rugby Refereeing

A great title for a book, and if truth be told, it is the title of an excellent book by top referee Ed Morrison and Derek Robinson. I have been reading this to try and improve my understanding of the game from a referee's viewpoint.

Recently collapsing scrums have become an area that many supporters have concerns over. Quite often people are wondering why there are so few free kicks or penalties given by the referee. However to paraphrase from Ed's book, "a couple of time a season every referee gets a game where the front rows decide to have their little private battle..." and "Obviously it's up to the referee to do all he can to correct it – but the players have a big responsibility too". Couple this with a posting on HYS about the Leicester v Cardiff game where the referee threatened to sin bin a prop from each side to see if they could avoid collapsing the scrum. Was the referee right in this instance to make that statement? Should he know what is going on? Well unless he has played at the top level in the front row, I very much doubt he will always know. But I believe he was correct in making that statement as it is showing intent to do something to manage the situation when the players are relinquishing their responsibility to manage themselves. It's a good trick if you get away with it.

The front row is a black art, which again on a comment by Brian Moore in The Telegraph during the World Cup about the France v England game "only I could see what was going on because I have done it myself".

A referee has to look at several areas of a scrum, do they line out straight, do they hit straight,

are shoulders above the hips, did they bind correctly and quickly, are they boring in, are they actually driving or deliberately allowing themselves to be overpowered, and many many more. Slipping your bindings, dropping the shoulder just a fraction, are other little tricks of the trade. Then a scrum can collapse through exhaustion or even slipping. However to take a recent example, down at Old Dear Park I believe the scrum was collapsing because Bedford were so strong and dominant, and not through London Welsh doing anything deliberately wrong. At this point the referee can't give a penalty against a team because they are being overpowered. He also can't give a penalty by guessing what has caused the collapse.

But to get back to the book, there are so many areas in this section that I could quote about how a referee can manage the scrum, but also how to make the front row manage the scrum. And that is what you need, the players to manage themselves. So take a moment to see if you can actually tell why a scrum has collapsed. Sometimes you can, but many times you cant but don't think the referee isn't also trying to figure out. I'll leave you with one last thought from this section of the book. "He (the ref) has a responsibility under civil law... he's been given power to control the game and if he fails, and someone's hurt because of that, he could be in trouble". And don't think it hasn't happened, as it has. Who'd be a ref eh?

**Robin Dewson**

### A Real Rugby Club

There is no doubt that for most followers the most popular away fixture is that against London Welsh; not just because we have done

rather well there in recent years, but mainly on account of the hospitality, shown by the London Welsh supporters. Margaret organised three coaches last Saturday and many other supporters found their own way to Old Deer Park.

The setting is idyllic with the Kew Garden pagoda and trees in the background. The food is excellent, some enjoyed a first-class 2-course meal for £10, and there is ample bar space.

London Welsh are going through a bad patch at the moment, but I am sure that all who travelled there last Saturday will wish them well.

**Adrian Randall**

## Kirsty gets close

**Name:** Sacha Harding

**Date and place of Birth.** 3/2/83 – Hammersmith

**Height:** 6ft 3in

**Weight:** 100kg

**Position:** Backrow

**Occupation:** (are you a full time rugby player?) yes but I also do a bit of personal training

**Marital Status:** A lovely girlfriend called Ruth

**Representative Honours:** Queensland U19's, England Universities, England Students

**Biggest Influence on your rugby career?** My family

**Most difficult opponent?** Budge Poutney

**Favourite Rugby ground?** Twickenham

**What is the best piece of advice anyone has given you?** The harder you work the luckier you get

**Who is your sporting hero?** Richard Hill/Richie McCaw

**What match would you most like to play in and where?** World Cup final at Twickenham

**What is your first Rugby memory?** Getting knocked out at Datchworth Under 8's

**What is your view on video referees?** Great idea!

**What are your thoughts on women's rugby?** I hope my girlfriend doesn't join a team

**What are your interests outside of rugby?** Golf, snowboarding, surfing, travelling, hanging out with friends and poker

**What three words sum up your character?** Positive, hard working, happy

**What attracts you to the sport?** Being around your mates all the time, scoring tries and making big hits

**Your best memory whilst being at Bedford Blues?** Smashing Pirates at home in 05 and scoring my first try for the first team and then scoring another one!

**Which away team do you most like visiting and why?** Northampton is always a great place to play rugby

**What do you like/dislike about Goldington Road and why?** Love the crazy supporters, Nos's nosh. And the noise the stand makes when we're winning

**How old were you when you first played rugby?** 7-8 I think?

**Where would you like to see 'The Blues' in three years time?** In the premiership

**What brought you Goldington Road?** My head of PE from Hitchin Boys School when I was 17

**Best thing about being a rugby player?** All the people you meet and the friends you make. And making a living from doing something I love.

## AWAY TRIPS

**Rotherham Sat. 24<sup>th</sup> Nov. Dep 9.00 Cost £16 & £9**

**Pertemps Bees 8<sup>th</sup> Dec. Dep 10.30 Cost £13 & £8**

**Esher 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec. Dep 10.00 Cost £13 & £8**

## REMEMBER

## RIGHTS ISSUE MEETING

**TUESDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER**

If you are not sure whether to add to your holding or are a non-shareholder, keen to join the active band of those who support the Blues, then come along to this meeting to hear the reasons for the new rights issue and put your questions.

It is important though, that you let the Club know that you are coming, so that the appropriate space is organised.

Ring 0871 871 1886 (Ext 0)

## Social Events

**Friday 16<sup>th</sup> November 7.30 RACE NIGHT in aid of Keech Cottage in Jack Pope Bar Tickets from Jackie Markham at £8 (includes fish & chip supper).**

**Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> December Carols Evening with Christmas Draw (tickets will soon be on sale!!)**

**Monday 31<sup>st</sup> December New Year's Eve Party**

**Next Issue:-**

**December 15<sup>th</sup> v Newbury.**

Please let me have your views either via the committee or [arandall69@btinternet.com](mailto:arandall69@btinternet.com) by Friday 7<sup>th</sup> December.

The views expressed in this Newsletter are the authors and do not represent the views either of the Followers Association or Bedford Rugby