

The Wire

WARRINGTON



R.U.F.C.

Warrington RUFC's Newsletter

A Welcome from the President
A very warm welcome to this the first issue of the club's very own newsletter.



Roy Potts, President of Warrington RUFC

In today's climate of multi-media communication, it might seem a backward step to resort to the old printed word. However, we, the club committee, are aware that some of our older members are probably not enthusiastic users of the internet and we are also aware that a lot of our younger members are still asking questions on things like the future of the club, the future of the old Bridge Lane Ground and a number of other topics.

Consequently, we decided to produce this hard copy newsheet to try to answer a lot of those questions and also to keep you informed of many of the other activities going on in the club. Inside, you'll find short articles from people such as Peter Riley and Steve Riley on future developments at Walton Lea Road, together with thoughts for the coming season. You'll also find details of new ventures such as Ladies Rugby and Tag Rugby. And there's a piece on the current financial situation at the club.

As you will see, we are still in need of support from all members and sponsors. We need to build on what we have and in order to grow, we need funds. This means that we need to ensure that all playing members

pay their annual subs and match subs; that vice-presidents are as generous as they can be; and that we continue to attract sponsors to sponsor matches and balls and to place advertisements in the programmes

On that begging note I shall close. I hope that you enjoy reading the newsheet and that you find it informative. If you have any questions on anything in it, please do not hesitate to contact me or any member of the committee.

Looking Forward To A Successful Season

Following a highly intensive, but enjoyable, conditioning and training programme over the summer months, Warrington RUFC is very confident of the success of all its sides in the coming season.

Warrington's first team is now better equipped to face the challenges ahead in South Lancs/Cheshire Division 2, with many of its young players sporting an extra few pounds of muscle, thanks to the superb physical preparation work of conditioning coach and ex-Leigh, Huddersfield, Halifax and London Super League player, Richard Marshall.

All players have benefited from the enthusiastic coaching of Stew Coleman and Dave Rockey and the junior sides are looking forward to enhancing their status in the Millers Homes leagues.

As head coach, Stew Coleman comments, "Summer training this year has been the best ever, with upwards of 35 players turning up for every session. It's nice to see a number of new players down at the club, who will definitely be competing for 1st team places, and hopefully, we can see more new players here as the season goes on. It's also nice to see a lot of older players, such as Dave Hartill and Andy Walker, who help to share the coaching load and have got the enthusiasm to pass on some of their experience to the younger lads."

Among the newcomers to the club are Andy Allen, a winger who had spells with Northwich and Chester, Brian Olsen, an uncompromising New Zealand second row, Ben Hart and Jason Tarry, who move over from Rugby League and Jonny Farrell, back from University. Also returning to the club, are Gez Loudon, following his triathlon successes, John Callender, following his sabbatical and Peter Holce, who is hoping to spearhead a Polish influx.

The Move To WSC – What it Means

By Peter Riley, Hon Secretary, WRUFC



On Tuesday 3rd July 2002 the clubhouse of Warrington RUFC was destroyed in an arson attack. At the time the Club had just opened negotiations with Warrington Sports Club to investigate the possibilities of the two clubs joining forces. Many obstacles stood in the way but WSC quickly moved into action after the fire to ensure that a pitch was made available on the top field and the first game was played on Saturday 28th September when Vagabonds from the Isle of Man were the visitors.

The arrangement at that time was a temporary one whilst the Rugby Union Club looked at getting back up and running at the Bridge Lane site. At the forefront of the minds of both committees was the thought that this 'trial period' was an ideal way of testing whether the two clubs could live together side-by-side. Warrington RUFC was still at that time looking at other sites for a potential move but, as each week went by, the benefits of a permanent move to Walton Lea Road were clear for all to see and far outweighed any move to another site.

Over the next couple of years or so, the Executive Committees of both clubs worked closely together to 'pull the deal' together. On October 5th 2004 the members of Warrington RUFC voted unanimously to become 'full and equal members' of Warrington Sports Club. Fifteen months later and by an overwhelming majority the members of Warrington Sports Club voted to accept Warrington RUFC within their fold and the real work was only just beginning.

There are a number of tasks that the new club need to address to ensure the financial stability and the thriving success of the sports at the club. It will not be a short term fix as longer term sustainability is what is required.

WSC's precarious financial position of a number of years ago has been addressed and the club has traded around break-even over the last few years. However, making in-roads into bank loans and overdrafts remain a priority as does the need for continued reduction in costs and a steady improvement in revenue streams.

Warrington RUFC still retain the lease on Bridge Lane which runs until 2059. Discussions with Warrington Borough Council, the Primary Care Trust and private developers continue apace but as yet no deal has been concluded. Warrington RUFC have committed to investing the proceeds of any financial benefits deriving from the disposal of the Bridge Lane site at Walton Lea Road for the benefit of all members of Warrington Sports Club.

With regard to how all this affects the current membership of Warrington RUFC, then it is business as usual for all our members. Membership will continue to be paid at the agreed rates and these will then be 'subsidised' by WRUFC to match the amount current sports members playing at WSC pay. In return, the cost of supplying after match meals will be met by WSC rather than this being a cost borne by Warrington RUFC. Broadly speaking there will be no significant impact on the finances of Warrington RUFC.

So there is plenty of work ahead of us all. Players can play their part by paying their membership and match fees and supporters, alickadoos and sponsors can contribute with their support of matches on a Saturday and frequenting the club during the week.

Life In Division 2 – What to Expect

By Peter Riley

As we prepare for life in CLS2 following last year's relegation it is interesting to note that we have met all but three of the teams previously in League action.

OSWESTRY is the least familiar name to us but the ground is easy enough to find...just look to the left as you pass through Oswestry off the A49.

OSWESTRY had something of a fall out with the Midlands Division a few years back, hence their defection to the North. I think it may have been something to do with allegedly playing an already banned Welsh player in League fixtures knowing that was the case. Also wasn't Princess Diana's bodyguard a player at the OSWESTRY club?

ORRELL ANVILS and MANCHESTER WANDERERS are both off-shoots of the once mighty ORRELL and the nearly mighty MANCHESTER clubs. There has, of course, been much debate that these clubs should play in the Miller Homes Leagues as they are 'a fudge' brought about simply to provide competitive rugby at the highest level. Both sides have played at Level 8 for a few years now.

Of the other teams we face then WIGAN are clearly the side we know most about and they have found life at Level 8 none too easy after their relegation the previous season. We need to heed a lesson from that. Interestingly, Dave Clarke the Secretary for this League is a stalwart Wigan member. I wonder if they will face any points deductions this year!

ORMSKIRK fell from CLS1 two years ago and have found their new division a struggle. However, they have an outstanding Mini and Junior section so it will be just a matter of time before they come good again.

SEFTON were for many years our traditional opening fixture in the days when friendlies were still played. They gave us a big stuffing the lasttime they visited Bridge Lane. (Continued on Page 3)

Life In Division 2 (Continued from Page 2)

WALLASEY were in the same League as us when Leagues were originated in the 1985/86 season. For many years their ground was the most easily identifiable in the country with a Tesco shopping basket stuck at the top of the goalposts. They were at one time coached by Clive Hunter the ex-Warrington Rugby League forward.

We've had many ups and downs with ST EDWARDS OLD BOYS over the last fifteen years and, like other clubs, they have struggled to get back up the League structure.

ASHTON ON MERSEY with their newly raised ground and refurbished clubhouse are another side that we have played many times but not recently. It will be nice to meet up with old acquaintances again on the banks of the Mersey.

We played CREWE AND NANTWICH in a pre-season friendly which referee Alex Simpson (father of ex-coach Ross) and Steve Williams will remember. They have a side that always threatens to deliver top class rugby.

Finally, and by no means least, as they are my tip to win the league, are RUSKIN PARK. Any side from St Helens is going to be high on skill and aggression and this outfit will be no different.

Development Grants and Loans – and Sponsorship

Now the Club has security of tenure at WSC, it is possible to start looking for development grants and loans. Mike Cornelia and Terry Critchley have undertaken this task now their respective Presidencies of Lancashire and Warrington have ended. Key to gaining monies is 'inclusivity' of all sections of the community in our activities. We have a strong case for financial support as we have a thriving mini/junior section, an emerging ladies team and the distinct possibility of tag rugby at WSC next summer. This support is, however, for medium and long-term capital development and there is still an urgent need for short-term revenue support from sponsors, individual and company, in advertising and ball/match sponsorship.

Your sponsorship contact is Terry Critchley on 01925 754894.



Terry Critchley, Immediate Past President

Extra Land At WSC - What's Happening

We are still very actively pursuing extra land at WSC. It has long been recognised that extra pitches are vital to the long-term development of rugby at WSC and the club's committee is engaged with Warrington BC in trying to obtain more land. We hope to have further news on this before the turn of the year.

Warrington's Tourists Show How It's Done

A superb mixture of players, crooked players and geriatric non-players ensured that Warrington ended last season in great style and showed strong teams at Brixham and Newton Abbot (pronounced Ahhbet) that Northern sides still lack nothing in grit, flair and tackling ability, even when hand-capped by generous libations before matches. Warrington's first game was against Brixham, (known as the Fishermen), on the Saturday. Jayesh Kerai particularly caught the eye in this fixture but was probably outshone by the flickering eyelashes of Tom Darbyshire. Warrington however put in a superb performance, with some awesome tackling in the centre from Dave Hartill, assisted by Zog until he was injured, with a non-stop display from Richard Park up front. Just thirteen months after being at death's door, Stewart Coleman decided to stop feeling sorry for himself and to play for five minutes. The fact that he stayed on for most of the match, and played well, is a tribute to his positive mental attitude and to the quality of the red wine he had before the game.

Warrington were unlucky to lose this match by the odd try and, indeed, could easily have won if, first, Gareth Wheatley had not insisted on knocking on over the line after taking a superb lay-off from Kevin Jones and sprinting through the gap like an overweight gazelle and then, in the second half, when Coombes's dad, in an excellent two minute cameo appearance, was launched into touch with the try line at his mercy.

Warrington's second fixture was against Newton Abbot (pronounced Ahhbet) and once again Matt Rockey's extended Devon family turned up in droves to witness the return of the prodigal son. Warrington arrived for this fixture at 1.00pm for a 2.30 kick off. Unfortunately, a sevens tournament was in progress and the game eventually kicked off at quarter to five, by which time the average intake of the players had risen to four pints and three burgers.

However, such was the performance from every single player that it has been decided by the coaching staff that this season, teams will meet at 11.00am for a 2.30 kick off and consume at least four pints and eat three burgers before taking the field. Once again Dave Hartill was awesome in the tackle, only just shading pestmeister Paul Gill when he came on to do his well know impression of a whirling Dervish. But Warrington were also superb in attack. Before the game, it had been decided that they would perform four items of celebration theatre whenever they scored. By the time Richard Park scuttled over like a yacht in a bay for the sixth try, there were no more celebration ideas left, although Steve Tickle's imaginary try when he took an imaginary ball and broke through six imaginary tackles did merit a reprise of "The Beach".

Although winning is not the prime purpose of a Warrington touring side, it is nice to win now and again.

What's Going On In Our Other Sections

From Strength to Strength



Warrington RUFC Mini & Junior section continues to move from strength to strength and are looking forward to another successful season.

This season will see the club fielding teams from U7s through to U16s with only one age group, U15s, not being represented. This is a huge step forward for the club since we started seriously building the section just 7 years ago.

Throughout the age groups there is some very exciting talent and one squad, this years U11s, have won every game that they have played over the last two seasons. Hopefully in few years time, some of the boys will go on to play rugby at a high level and some might even end up playing in our senior sides!!

Following our very successful tour to France last season, the section is planning to take the WRUFC M&J bandwagon on the road once again. The U11s will be competing at the Nottingham festival with the chance to represent the club in the national finals at Twickenham. The rest of the section is considering options to build a tour around the Notts festival or to go further afield.

Peter Allen, our community coach continues to do a fine job of promoting both the sport and our club in schools and community groups across the borough. Peter's main focus is to assist us in developing the game of rugby union in Warrington and so attract young players to the club. He will be working closely with Bridgewater High School and its feeder primaries as well as other senior schools in the area.

As ever, special mention should be given to the coaches and admin volunteers, whose selfless dedication ensures that we are able to deliver the excellent standards of coaching, equipment, safety and facilities that we do.

Volunteers for coaching, refereeing, administration and organisation are always needed and if anyone reading this feels that they could help, then please get in contact with us.

The M&J section also receives vital and very generous support from a range of sponsors, for which we are extremely grateful. Special mention should be given to Spar and Alfred Jones and in particular to our main sponsor, Carrier Transcold, who will be sponsoring us for a second season. Finally, please take some time this season to visit some of the M&J games which take place every Sunday at the club. We are sure that you will be as excited as we are at the prospect of some of this young talent swelling the ranks of the senior section in the years to come.

Ladies' Rugby Comes To Warrington

There will shortly be a new team taking the field at Walton Lea Rd. And it will be a team composed entirely of ladies!

Driving force behind this exciting new development is Natasha Corns, who is currently leading a recruitment drive to attract new members. Natasha, who lives in Great Sankey, is a Sports Management graduate from the University of Central Lancashire, where she first began playing rugby. She has since played for the successful Preston Grasshoppers side and has recently returned from Australia where she regularly turned out for Eastern Suburbs.

Training takes place on a regular basis and anyone interested should contact Natasha on 07955428861.

Look Out For The Tag Line

Tag rugby is a variety of rugby where tackles are made by attaching a Velcro tag to an opposing player to signify a tackle instead of flooring him/her. This is already used in very junior mini rugby to ensure safety. The senior game is very popular in Ireland with over 700 teams there and is open to almost anyone who can trot about the 70 x 50 m pitch. It is also very popular with companies as a corporate team building exercise, where teams can be mixed age and sex. The Club sees tag rugby as a social occasion, a money spinner and an opportunity to develop 'inclusivity' in our community outlook. It is a summer sport and the Club will be promoting it in Spring 2007, both locally and in other rugby Clubs.

Where The Money Goes – Can You Help Bridge The Gap?

In the season just ended, we spent over £50,000 on things such as floodlights for training (£8000), kit for senior junior and mini teams (£11000), laundry (£1000) meals for the opposition teams (£2500), coach travel (£2000), and our investment in the future through developing young players (the Community Development Officer - our share to match that from the RFU is £12,000)

To meet that we raised £15,000 from subs and match fees, £6000 from Council and other grants, £5000 from gate money and raffles, and £3000 from the Annual Dinner. The shortfall in the main has to be found from sponsors and donations.

So, can you assist?. You might not be able to sponsor a match (£300) but what about a match ball (£60). Or perhaps a number can get together to sponsor a match. Alternatively you may have contacts with a business which might be able to sponsor kit or travel costs or whatever.

If you can help (and obviously every little helps), contact Terry Critchley, on 01925 754894

If you want to know more about any of the topics covered in the newssheet, why not go to the club's website on www.warringtonruffc.com. You can read match reports, keep up with the news and have your own say on the Forum.