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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT – Keith Brierley

Hello, welcome to Preston Grasshoppers to today's opponents Huddersfield and to visitors, guests, sponsors, coaches, players, ex-players, supporters and spectators for our fourth home game of the season.

It gives me immense pride to be President of Preston Grasshoppers in our Sesquicentenary year and it seems only yesterday that I was celebrating our Centenary year as a 1st XV player, which has provided me with life long friendships and happy memories.

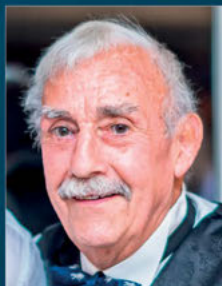
We have always had competitive games against Huddersfield and I am sure that today, Hoppers will be doing all in their power to take the home advantage in our fourth home league game of the season particularly after a strong comeback against Wharfedale last week where we only lost by a single point. Hopefully, today's game should offer some entertaining and competitive rugby, each team looking for the win to set down a marker for the rest of the season.

This is my second year as President and I have been to some new destinations and met lots of new and interesting people from the various clubs that we visited last season. Our success after promotion to League 2 North last season left us in a creditable 7th position in the league but this year we are looking to improve on that.

I feel I must thank Paul (Arnie) Arnold and his excellent coaching staff and not least the players who are all playing their part this season.

It has been a great honour and privilege to have served as your President and I am looking forward to carrying on in the same vein through this and next season. I would also like to thank all the army of staff and volunteers for their great work during the forthcoming season.

Keith



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Front cover photo. Always good value for an action shot, here we see Adam Howard (an ex Wharfedale player) handing off a Wharfedale player, dreadlocks flowing in the following wind.

Front Cover Photo: Photo courtesy Mick Craig.

To see more 'Hoppers photos visit www.flickr.com/photos/mickcraig

CLUB BLAZERS

You may have noticed that there are plenty of club blazers on show at Hoppers matches. We are putting together requirements for a new order to the blazer manufacturers. The price of the first batch came in at £165 but there may be a slight increase in the cost. We'll need at least 10-12 orders before they will commence manufacture as all the original cloth was used up. If you are interested in purchasing a blazer please contact the club.

Tel: 01772 863546 or email: info@pgrfc.co.uk for further instructions.



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WHO'S WHO AT PRESTON GRASSHOPPERS ON MATCH DAYS

President: Keith Brierley
Chairman: George Erdozain
General Manager: Ben Hedley
Operations Manager: Sam Hutchinson
Matchday Coordinator: Ken Moore
Fixture/Match Secretary: John Powell

PRESTON GRASSHOPPERS WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME ALL VISITORS TO THE CLUB AND TRUST THAT YOU WILL ENJOY OUR FACILITIES AND THE GAME TODAY.
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TODAY'S VISITORS - HUDDERSFIELD RUFC

Preston Grasshoppers will be looking to get back to winning ways after last weekend's disappointment when they face Yorkshire side Huddersfield today at Lightfoot Green.

Our visitors haven't had the best of starts this season, recording just one win which came in a narrow victory over current bottom side Scunthorpe last week at Lockwood Park, where although ending up on the losing side, the visitors outscored Huddersfield by four tries to three.

Hoppers on the other hand suffered single point defeat over at Grassington where the home side Wharfedale hung on to their narrow lead throughout the final half hour with Hoppers unable to convert their many visits to the home 22 into points.

Tyler Spence celebrated his fiftieth appearance for Hoppers running over half the length of the pitch to record his twentieth try and in turn clocking up one hundred points. Tyler's next *League* appearance will also be his fiftieth. James Fitzpatrick reached a similar milestone in league games coming on as a replacement.

The first meeting between Huddersfield and Hoppers in Preston was at the Lea ground on the 28th of March 1959 after Preston Grasshoppers had made the initial journey over the Pennines to play Huddersfield twelve months earlier at The Waterloo Ground, which is now occupied by a Morrisons Supermarket.

It turned out to be a narrow home victory which avenged the heavy defeat from their first meeting when Huddersfield ran out comprehensive victors.

The playing record between this week's opponents sits in favour of Huddersfield by thirty three victories against twenty six to Hoppers with two matches ending all square and one being cancelled. Our visitors did the double over Hoppers last season and have now won nine league games to Hoppers seven.

There's been a reoccurring sequence in meetings between the two sides over the last five seasons the two have met, each team taking it in turns to win both games per season. Let's hope the sequence continues!

There have been four other meeting between the two teams, all of which were pre-season practice games. The first three of these being played at Lockwood Park with the last at Lightfoot Green. Preston Grasshoppers won all three in Yorkshire whilst Huddersfield won the one in Preston.



Digger (Mike Forshaw)

MILESTONES

Jordan Dorrington, Nick Gregson and Toby Harrison all scored their debut tries for Hoppers 1st XV against Scunthorpe and Ally Murray's 200th game will be in his next appearance with Tyler Spence due to do the same in his 50th.

BROTHERS IN ARMS

Not a good fortnight for the Murray brothers. First XV superstar Ally not only split his head open in the game against Scunthorpe requiring five stitches to his forehead the week before, he turned out heavily bandaged for the game against Sheffield Tigers last week but one and was unlucky to receive another injury early on in the game resulting in a broken hand!

Second XV Player/Coach Mark also received an injury in his game against Rossendale on the same day resulting in a dislocated shoulder.

Attending Royal Preston Hospital on the same afternoon this must have thrown the Medical Records Department into meltdown.

Get well soon and we hope you both recover quickly.

Photo courtesy of Mum, Ruth Murray.





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MATCH DAY, THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Wake up, the butterflies are stirring. First thing to do, check kit bag, clean boots (a must for me), a sock in each boot rolled up, shorts check, pet jelly, check, 17 rolls of electrical tape, shit only found 16 but I will get by.

5 hours until kick off, they don't fly by, final bag check, as on occasion, my kids thought it would be hilarious if I pulled a cuddly toy out my bag in front of a changing room full of sweaty bare arsed blokes (that's before the match). Drive to the ground, it's a home game so my good lady who has never in 20 years watched or wanted to watch what I got up to on a Saturday afternoon is with me and drives the car home so I can get a few beers in après match.

In the early years the team talk was simple. Captain "Smash your first tackle lads", followed by a big slug of sherry. I always tried to say "Afternoon Sir" to the referee.

So, after a half hearted warm up, sherry and a pint of Guinness swilling around in my belly the whistle goes, the ball goes up, their winger knocks on, we scrum down. I was hooker, the scrum formed, and it was at this moment not 30 seconds into the game that I knew 99 times out of 100 if today was going to be a good day in the office. It usually was, even when we lost.

How my Saturdays went. Mostly.

Report from an ex Hooker and semi enthusiastic tackler.

GOODBYE GILL



Hoppers Administrator Gill Parkinson left the club yesterday after working here for 16 years. The club would like to thank Gill for all her hard work and dedication to Hoppers organising events both small and large over the past 16 years and the Management, Committees and members would like to thank Gill and wish her all the best in her new venture in the future. She will be missed.

WHO'S DINING TODAY

President **Keith Brierley** is entertaining our friends from Huddersfield RUFC today.

Hoppers Rollers have taken 4 tables and are enjoying their regular get togethers.

Ex 1st XV Captain **Bob Thompson** (a regular diner) is entertaining his guests today.

Long time member and player **Lee Caruthers** is entertaining his guests on another table today.

SDB Jones have booked a table and are entertaining their guests today.

Other diners include **Martyn Chatburn, Jason Beard, Zoe West KSDL, Les Harrison** and **Rebecca Harvey**.

RAFFLE PRIZES

1st Prize will be Bed & Breakfast for two people in an executive room at The Mercure Chester Abbots Well Hotel (Subject to Availability).

2nd Prize will be a hospitality for 2 guests at the Stourbridge match on the 26th October.

3rd Prize will be Hoppers scarf and 150th anniversary pint pot.

4th Prize will be a bottle of wine and 3 Hoppers 150th anniversary sticks of rock.

CLUB MEMORABILIA/EPHEMERA

If members have any unwanted memorabilia/ephemera relating to the Hoppers, please do not hesitate to hand them in to the club, or hand to Mike Forshaw who will also collect if necessary. We have the facility of the Lancashire Archives at our disposal where our current collection is kept for the general public along with our members to browse. Any new material will be added to our existing pieces. The Archives Office are also interested in any administration documents which we are looking to throw out to make space. Thank you.



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THE TEAM BEHIND THE TEAMS

Head of Rugby Operations	1st XV Head Coach	1st XV Assistant Coach	1st XV Coaching Support
			
Gareth Dyer	Paul Arnold	Donny Sutherland	Craig Steel

1st XV Kicking Coach	1st XV Conditioning Coach	1st XV Manager & 4th Official	Player Registrar & 4th Official
			
Steve Kerry	Alex Hurst	Ade Jebb	Ian McFarlane

Head Physiotherapist	2nd XV Manager	2nd XV Coach	2nd XV Coach	2nd XV Sports Rehabilitator
				
Mark Taylor	Bill Kin	Steve Tiernan	Mark Murray	Kathryn Stevens

3rd – 5th Team Coordinator

Mick Mortimer

TODAY'S OTHER LEAGUE GAMES

FYLDE V STOURBRIDGE
 HULL V CALDY
 LUCTONIANS V LOUGHBOROUGH STUDENTS
 OTLEY V CHESTER
 SCUNTHORPE V TYNEDALE
 SEDGLEY PARK V HINCKLEY
 WHARFEDALE V SHEFFIELD TIGERS



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**Head of Rugby Operations,
Gareth Dyer**

HEAD OF RUGBY OPERATIONS Gareth Dyer welcomed our visitors this week and said

"Welcome to our guests from over the Pennines today in the shape of a good Huddersfield team. Although in the relegation zone, Huddersfield have drawn two of their five games this season and won one, which implies they are on the cusp of success in some of their remaining fixtures. We have won only one more game than Huddersfield this season so far, so today's encounter should be a testing time and perhaps will set down a marker for our season ahead.

After our defeat at Wharfedale last week, a game which we could have, should have won, demonstrates the competitiveness of National League 2 North and despite our current mid table position we must not underestimate any of the teams below us.

Unfortunately, our injury list is mounting with three further short term injuries occurring in last week's game against Wharfedale, but with our pre-season planning and a shrewd recruitment plan we have the strength in depth in the squad to cope with these injuries with a very competitive group of boys looking to make their mark in the annals of Hoppers history, enabling us to field another first class team today."



**Head Coach,
Paul Arnold**

HEAD COACH Paul 'Arnie' Arnold had this to say this week

"Firstly welcome to Gaz Lewis and his Huddersfield boys. They have had two fantastic seasons back in this league and we know today will be a real battle.

After last week's defeat at Wharfedale I watched the video back and wondered how on earth we lost the game, but that's rugby, at times it's very frustrating.

We shot ourselves in the foot numerous times last week and have worked hard all week to make sure we learn from our mistakes. Frustrating again to lose even more players to injury with Tyler Sloane and Joe Prior leaving the field with concussion and Chris Taylor with his hamstring. Add Ally Murray to the list who broke his hand against Sheffield Tigers but, we've added strength in depth this season and considering the amount of injuries we have today's side is still very strong."



**Captain,
Paul "PJ" Millea**

CAPTAIN Paul 'PJ' Millea said this week

"Last week's defeat was tough to take, we had enough chances to win the game and missed out by the finest of margins. If we score in the corner in the last ten minutes we probably leave with 5 points but not to be and we only get a solitary point at the final whistle. Some positives to take from the game and we have worked hard on some of our decision making especially at crucial moments in training this week. The whole squad is still in a buoyant mood and numbers are good at training, it is a great help to have the facilities here at Hoppers as the weather does not become a factor. There is a lot of competition for places and there are plenty of opportunities for people to step up due to injuries and unavailability. It is however, great to see those injured players getting very close to a return, in particular Goughy and Oga who have both kept pushing hard through their rehab.

Today provides another roses derby against a side that also did the 'double' over us last year, something that we are eager not to repeat this year having failed last week at Wharfedale. If we are to get the result today we will need to perform at our best, Huddersfield like Wharfedale are a side that will not 'roll-over' and will provide a stern test from 1 to 15 for the full 80.

Hope to see you in the bar for a celebratory pint after the game!"

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HOPPERS MOVE A HUNDRED AND FIFTY YARDS IN 150 YEARS



Club Members and distinguished guests gathered in the Harris Museum on "Sesquicentenary Eve" to mark the founding of the club on 28 September 1869. The founding meeting was held at the Bull and Royal Hotel just 150 yards away. Not a bad rate of progress! The distinguished guests included two great grandchildren of original Hoppers present at the Bull and Royal and a granddaughter of Sir William Fawell Ascroft M.A., D.L., J.P long time President of the club who oversaw the move to Lea in 1935 and continued on until well after the Second World War. The evening commenced with drinks and canapes during which time a slideshow was presented of Hoppers teams throughout the Sesquicentenary and a number of candid shots of

current members! There then followed a speech of welcome by President Keith Brierley who talked about the setting or surroundings of what Preston would have been like 150 years ago. He then handed over to the Hoppers Artistic Director, Harvey "Darling" Hardman. Harvey, along with Mike Forshaw, whose idea the evening had been, had devised a re-enactment of the scene in the Bull and Royal Hotel all those years ago. Four students of Cardinal Newman College played the parts of the founder members who would have all been around that age while Harvey convincingly took the chair as the 28 year old Frederick Campbell Hulton. The re-enactment amusingly took us through the debate about whether "hacking" should be allowed (it wasn't, but many members present had to confess to having breached that part of the club's rules) and how the club came to be called Preston Grasshoppers rather than a variety of other names suggested.

The evening at the Harris concluded with the President presenting the actors with Sesquicentenary Hoppers caps and the distinguished guests with Sesquicentenary ties. Members then adjourned to various local hostleries including, appropriately, the Bull and Royal.



Photos above and right featuring the re-enactment of the meeting of the founders of Preston Grasshoppers and below an aerial view from the first floor.



The Club would like to record its thanks to:

- Mike Forshaw and Richard Ellis for their vision in planning the event.
- The Harris Museum for their generous loan of their facility.
- Cardinal Newman College for providing the actors.
- John Potter for filming the event.
- The Lancashire Evening Post both for its publicity about the Club preceding the event <https://www.lep.co.uk/retro/150-year-history-of-preston-grasshoppers-rugby-club-1-10021332> and the photographer on the night.
- Simon Seekings, our Chef, for rising to the challenge of providing such excellent canapes.
- All the Hoppers staff who attended the event and helped make it a great success.



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14 Tyler Spence



Helen Schofield - Hempworx

13 Sam Stott



Lloyd South Lakes BMW

12 James Fitzpatrick



Jacques Joinery

11 Scott Jordan



Barton Grange

10 Ben Dorrington



Hosokawa

9 Jake Squirrell



Horsfield Bldg. Serv's Engs.

1 John Blanchard



Hady'n Gigg

2 Paul Millea



Peter Carter

3 Noah Miller



George Erdozain

4 Adam Howard



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GRASSHOPPERS

(White with narrow navy hoops)

'Hoppers Players

- 15 Jordan Dorrington
- 14 Tyler Spence
- 13 Sam Stott
- 12 James Fitzpatrick
- 11 Scott Jordan
- 10 Ben Dorrington
- 9 Jake Squirrel
- 1 John Blanchard
- 2 Paul Millea (C)
- 3 Noah Miller
- 4 Adam Howard
- 5 Sam Wallbank
- 6 Ryan Carlson
- 7 Toby Harrison
- 8 Matt Lamprey

- 16 Ryan Purcell
- 17 Dan Madden
- 18 Luke Procter
- 19 Jacob Browne
- 20 Matt Crow

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Ass't Referee 1:

Ass't Referee 2:

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Ball Boys:

Carl Adams

Mark Rose

TBA

Ade Jebb

Mr George McLauchlan

Shay Holden, Fin Mills, Reece Bishop, Zac Noad, Addison Hunter,
Jonathan Stanley



HUDDERSFIELD

(Maroon and Gold)

- Tom Hodson 15
- Kian Stewart 14
- Lewis Workman 13
- Will Milner 12
- Elliot Knight 11
- Cail Cookland 10
- Jack Maplesden 9
- Callum Thompson 1
- Liam Stapley 2
- Alex Battye 3
- Guy Borrowdale 4
- Nick Sharpe 5
- Liam Parfitt 6
- Lewis Bradley 7
- Dickie Piper © 8

- Reuben Pollard 16
- Augustin Defellito 17
- Harvey Keighley Payne 18
- Joel Hinchcliffe 19
- Tom Owen 20

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OTHER SPORTS AT PRESTON GRASSHOPPERS

CRICKET

Hoppers has its own cricket team which take part in the Boddington's Village Cricket League every summer. For more information please contact Ken Moore 01772 863546 or email the Hoppers office: info@pgrfc.co.uk

SQUASH

Members can book courts from 9.00am to 10.00pm seven days a week. Coaching is available from junior level to expert level by Mike Farrington, one of the top coaches around. For more squash information please contact Gary Jackson 07775 753968.

ARCHERY

There are two archery sections at the club; conventional shooting and long bow via the Samlesbury Longbow Archers. For further information please contact David Howard 01772 744009 or Alan Cowie 01772 743916.

RIFLE SHOOTING

Preston and District Rifle and Pistol Club currently use the Hoppers facilities for small calibre shooting disciplines. For more information visit www.prestonshooters.org

HOPPERS ROLLERS

Hoppers Rollers provide a platform for cyclists to participate and/or compete in road cycling to a level that suits their aspirations. This varies from social cycling in club runs through to elite racing. Throughout the summer the club runs social rides on a Wednesday evening. To keep up to date with departure times and routes visit @HoppersRollers on Twitter, through the Hoppers website, or contact Ben Hedley 01772 863546.

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MINI JUNIOR AND COLTS RUGBY AT LIGHTFOOT GREEN



Hugh Duckworth

Welcome back to players and parents alike to the forty sixth season of Mini Junior Rugby at Lightfoot Green. A particularly warm welcome to those registering for the first time.

In terms of registered players, 2018/19 saw 400 plus youngsters enjoy the rugby experience at Hoppers. Not only did the number of volunteer coaches and managers increase by 20%, but also there was a planned and effective focus on achieving the England Rugby Coaching Award. This in itself is a tremendous platform for future growth. Two Junior age groups with high numbers played double fixtures throughout the season, thereby ensuring all youngsters enjoyed game time.

The Artificial Grass Pitch, entering its fourth year, has proved to be an invaluable asset, not only allowing more rugby to be played by an increasing number of youngsters but also leading to improved management of the grass pitches. The RFU now appreciates the challenge of providing mid-week training for over two hundred youngsters and has arranged for the club to pre-book two hours on the AGP every Wednesday evening. This represents a tremendous concession and can only lead to an improved standard of Junior Rugby here at Preston Grasshoppers.



Charlotte Kenny Mcinally

The Colts demonstrated tremendous team spirit throughout the season, which culminated in a successful end of season tour to Bristol. Several of the ex-Colts are currently enjoying pre-season training with the first and second team squad. Phill Mills will be lead coach for 2019/20, supported by First XV player Ryan Carlson and Ollie Hoban, a former Colt.

The local Land Rover retailer has sponsored Mini Junior Rugby at Preston Grasshoppers since 1997 and last season saw the fourth name change - to Inchcape. In celebration, our sponsor funded the purchase of brand new kit for the Under 7s to 16s inclusively and for the first time the playing shirts reflected the dual brands of Jaguar and Land Rover. These were not only a great source of pride to the youngsters but also the envy of the opposition!



Ryan Carlson

The club is particularly indebted to UCLAN (University of Central Lancashire) for providing First Aid cover on a Sunday throughout the season. The students have achieved an extremely comprehensive and professional standard, and generated favourable feedback from visiting teams.



Simon Seekings and the catering team deserve a special thank you for serving approaching three thousand portions of sausage and chips to visiting teams. This fact alone reflects the scale of Mini Junior Rugby at Hoppers.

Finally a big thank you to Dave Preston and Derrick Cray for their outstanding commitment to preparing and maintaining the pitches to such a high standard.



In terms of representative honours in 2018/19, fourteen players from the Under 15s and Under 16s were selected for Lancashire, and four for the Sales Sharks Junior Academy. Four ex Preston Grasshoppers players were selected for the Sale Sharks Senior Academy and all played for Sale Sharks during last season. Arron Reed played for England in the Under 20s World Cup in Argentina, and Kieran Wilkinson in the Under 20s Six Nations.

New milestones were achieved with the Hoppers Festivals, the long-standing and successful one day events for the Under 7, Under 8 and Under 9s and separately for the Under 10, Under 11 and 12s were repeated. For the very first time these were supplemented by an Under 13s Festival, the success of which providing the platform for a much bigger event in 2019/20. The club is indebted to Vivienne Davenport of Westholme School for confirming the continued sponsorship of the Hoppers Festivals in 2019/20.

The Sportsman's Dinner, with Jason Leonard as Principal Speaker, was a sell out. The monies raised contributing to the ongoing pitch improvement programme.

The Presentation Dinners at the end of the season were successful events and achieved record attendances. The Masters of Ceremonies, Ian Gaskell and Daniel Weed deserve a particular vote of thanks. Alex Carson, captain of the Under 16s, presented the awards at the Junior Dinner, he himself receiving the Founders Cup for 2018/19 towards the close of the event.

Oga Mabaya from the First XV proved a popular choice at the Minis Dinner.

The Hoppers Tours go from strength to strength and reflect the scale of Mini Junior Rugby here at Lightfoot Green, with approaching five hundred departing on six separate tours.

Looking forward, the plans for 2019/20 will be threefold.

- Firstly, aim to achieve an improvement in skill levels in the Junior age groups, based on the increased availability of the AGP for midweek training.
- Secondly, retain the focus among the volunteer coaches on achieving the England Rugby Coaching Award.
- Finally, improve the availability of professional coaches to the Junior age groups.

Commitment to these three areas will not only assist in the management of our numbers but also improve the standard of Mini Junior and Colts Rugby offered by Preston Grasshoppers.

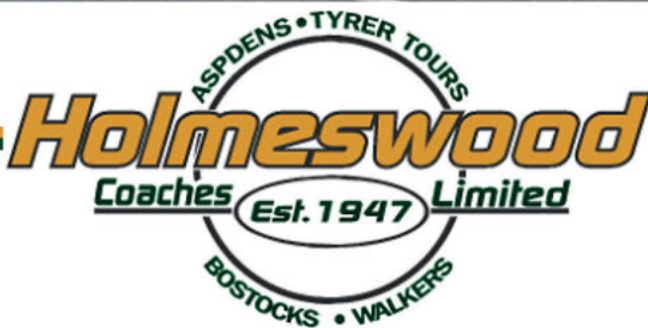
HUGH DUCKWORTH

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England's relentless pursuit for improvement



Eddie Jones' side sealed a 39-10 victory over Argentina, a third-successive bonus-point win in Pool C, as they secured a quarter-final spot with a game to spare.

England take on France today in their final pool fixture and Jones insists his side will get better. (At the time of reading you will probably now know the result already.)

"We are building, we want to get better next week so we will pick the best 23 to get better against France," said Jones. "We don't want to look too far ahead, we'll take it one day at a time."

It's going to get tougher but that is what this competition is about. Every day we want to get better and we are motivated by that. It's a dynamic process. We have to be relentless about chasing areas we can improve and we will do that. Our preparation for France is going to have to be spot on."

England scored six tries against an Argentina side that were reduced to 14 men after just 17 minutes and Jones was impressed with how the team adapted to playing against Los Pumas.

"I liked our psychological adaption to the game today," he added. "We didn't get seduced by the game, it was a difficult game and the breakdown was difficult. It was hard to get quick ball and hard to play a lot of phase rugby and when you get 15 v 14 the seduction is to play some phase rugby. We did that a little in the first half, but we got back to playing good solid rugby in the second half." England led 15-3 at the break through tries from Jonny May, Elliot Daly and Ben Youngs while a second-half score from George Ford sealed the bonus point.

Argentina crossed via Matias Moroni but late tries from Jack Nowell and Luke Cowan-Dickie settled a comfortable victory.

"I'm just happy with how we stuck at the game, we didn't get carried away," added Jones. "That was a banana skin game for us. You have to be careful, I was really pleased with the leadership team. Owen (Farrell) and his lieutenants did a really good job in keeping us focused and our bench was outstanding. Mako (Vunipola) and Jack got a bit of a gallop so there are some real plusses for us today."



England captain Owen Farrell said "It was scrappy at times, I thought there was a decent amount of control, but we let the game get a little frantic, however, we took back control got some territory and it told in the end."

England fly-half George Ford said "We are really happy with the result. Argentina were playing for their lives so that presents challenges as they play with pride and passion. We feel there are areas we can improve, but that's the exciting thing, we can play even better."





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Background Photo courtesy Mike Craig. To see more 'Hoppers photos visit www.flickr.com/photos/mickcraig

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SESQUICENTENARY EVENTS



Hoppers' 150th year has seen its players, staff, members and supporters take part in a number of celebratory events which will live long in the memory. Recently, saw another chapter of the sesquicentenary unfold as Craig Steel and Ade Jebb travelled down to The Woollam Playing Fields in St Albans to spend some time observing and interacting with the staff and players at Saracens, the current English and European Champions.

The trip was facilitated by ex-Hopper and current Saracens Head Coach, Alex Sanderson, after the three of us spent a couple of hours chewing the fat and talking rugby at our recent Sesquicentenary Dinner at Lightfoot Green. A near four-hour journey meant for an early start, but we were

greeted by fine weather in Hertfordshire and an extremely warm and accommodating host.

A tour of the facility (which Sarries rent from Old Abanians RFC) followed, before a hearty breakfast and a more than decent cup of coffee! The playing squad (minus 15 on RWC duty) were on site, preparing for their morning training session and some of them immediately introduced themselves. It was notable how welcoming and friendly everybody was, and it gave the first real insight into the famous Sarries culture which has been one of the bedrocks to their success over the last decade. Whilst outlining the day, Alex was genuinely interested to find out what we were hoping to learn and encouraged us to ask as many questions as we saw fit. As "Backroom Boys" at a Level 4, Semi-Professional club, we felt extremely privileged for the experience, as it isn't every day that an elite, world class sporting institution opens the doors to its inner-sanctum.

Following breakfast, we observed the players indulging in a weights session, some skills and some fine tuning of their set pieces, including some lung busting scrummaging drills. It was apparent that although the squad were there for hard work, they really enjoyed being there and being in one another's company. Sarries presented themselves as a very happy and selfless squad, boasting exceptional rugby players and a real hunger for making memories.

After lunch the Director of Rugby, Mark McCall, introduced himself to us both and we spent an enjoyable and interesting ten minutes in his company. Once more we were both struck by how personable and welcoming he had been, and we made a point of telling him how impressed we were by everything and everybody that we had seen.

The aspect of the visit proved invaluable to us both, as it gave a fascinating insight into how Sarries coach and motivate their players, analyse their performances and maintain that all important culture. In line with the start of our next 150 years. We're committed to rebooting the culture and values of the Hoppers 1st XV Squad in order to give ourselves a more contemporary feel.

The final part of the day saw the Sarries squad back outside on the impressive Woollam Playing Fields and we observed them going through a range of drills, skills and systems. It was apparent how sharp everything was and how few errors there were. All of this was completed under the watchful eye of Mark McCall and a couple of drones which now play an essential part in performance analysis at elite rugby clubs.

Sadly, once the afternoon session had finished, it was time for Ade and Craig to depart, but they both remarked "We would happily observe Alex and the players all week!" There was time for the obligatory photographs and there is even a prospect of them returning in the Spring, as they hope to share their learning and demonstrate what they have managed to implement at Hoppers. As they made their way back to the car, the day was capped off by a chat with Brad Barritt who asked us how our season had started and wished us luck for the forthcoming games.

With thanks to Mark McCall, Alex Sanderson, Ian Peel, Kelly Brown, all the coaching and support staff at Saracens and of course all the players for giving us this fabulous opportunity and making them so welcome on the day. We hope to see them all again soon and good luck for the rest of the season from all at Hoppers!

Report by Ade Jebb and Craig Steel.

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HOPPERS WOMEN'S RUGBY

Report and Photos by Victoria Kenyon

Preston Grasshoppers women travelled away to Southport on Sunday 6th October with hopes of coming away with a win but unfortunately left with 5-17 loss. Although the score is not as hoped. The effort and team spirit demonstrated by the women was evident throughout the entire game with every girl giving 100% up until the last minute.

Starting strongly, Hoppers excellent defence resulted in a turnover for us in the first 5 minutes which ultimately led into what can be described as a ping pong first half. Coming up to near half time no tries had been scored yet both sides spent significant time at each other's try lines. Southport scored a try just before half time despite Hoppers defending well but they were unable to stop their play who crashed over the line. Southport failed to get the conversion leaving the half time score 5-0.

The second half of the match consisted of Hoppers gaining a try but failing to convert, and Southport scoring two more tries. The final score was 17-5.

Overall the Grasshoppers Women defended excellently at times alongside had some solid attack but unfortunately the score didn't go our way.



**A SELECTION OF PHOTOS TAKEN BY MIKE CRAIG AT LAST WEEK'S 20-19
DEFEAT AGAINST WHARFEDALE.**

To see more Hoppers photos visit www.flickr.com/photos/mickcraig



FIXTURES/RESULTS 2019/20

1st XV					2nd XV			
2019	OPPONENTS	H/A	RES	WLD	OPPONENTS	H/A	RES	WLD
7 Sept	SEDGLEY PARK	H	20-30	L	Chester 2	A	78-14	L
14 Sept	Fylde	A	24-24	D	CALDY 2	H	31-38	L
21 Sept	SCUNTHORPE	H	48-24	W	Fylde 2	A	33-27	L
28 Sept	SHEFFIELD TIG'S	H	10-9	W	ROSSENDALE 2	H	12-31	L
5 Oct	Wharfedale	A	20-19	L	Sedgley Park 2	A	53-7	L
12 Oct	HUDDERSFIELD	H			Lymm 2	A		
19 Oct	Tynedale	A						
26 Oct	STOURBRIDGE	H			Macclesfield 2	A		
2 Nov	Hinckley	A						
9 Nov	CHESTER	H			BLACKBURN 2	H		
16 Nov	Caldy	A			Caldy 2			
23 Nov	LOUGHBOROUGH	H			FYLDE 2	H		
30 Nov	Luctonians	A			Rossendale 2	A		
7 Dec	HULL	H			SEDGLEY PARK 2	H		
14 Dec	Otley	A			LYMM 2	H		
21 Dec	FYLDE	H						
2020								
4 Jan	Scunthorpe	A			MACCLESFIELD 2	H		
11 Jan	Sheffield Tigers	A			Blackburn 2	A		
18 Jan	WHARFEDALE	H			CHESTER 2	H		
25 Jan	Huddersfield	A						
1 Feb	TYNEDALE	H						
8 Feb	Stourbridge	A						
15 Feb	HINCKLEY	H						
22 Feb	Weather Weekend							
29 Feb	Chester	A						
7 Mar	CALDY	H						
14 Mar	Weather Weekend							
21 Mar	Loughborough	A						
28 Mar	LUCTONIANS	H						
4 Apr	Hull	A						
11 Apr	Weather Weekend							
18 Apr	OTLEY	H						
25 Apr	Sedgley Park	A						

NATIONAL LEAGUE 2 NORTH

Green background is the promotion place. Blue background is the play-off place. Pink background are relegation places.

		P	W	D	L	F	A	PD	TBP	LB	PTS	ADJ
1	CALDY	5	5	0	0	179	68	111	3	0	23	
2	FYLDE	5	4	1	0	182	112	70	4	0	22	
3	SEDGLEY PARK	5	4	0	1	109	81	28	1	1	18	
4	STOURBRIDGE	5	3	0	2	146	113	33	3	2	17	
5	CHESTER	5	3	0	2	96	91	5	2	1	15	
6	WHARFEDALE	5	3	0	2	92	81	11	0	1	13	
7	HOPPERS	5	2	1	2	121	107	14	1	1	12	
8	LOUGHBOROUGH	5	2	0	3	152	137	15	2	2	12	
9	SHEFFIELD TIG'S	5	2	0	3	109	133	-24	2	2	12	
10	TYNEDALE	5	1	1	3	135	147	-12	3	3	12	
11	HULL	5	2	1	2	100	115	-15	1	0	11	
12	HINCKLEY	5	2	0	3	93	122	-29	2	1	11	
13	OTLEY	5	1	2	2	101	109	-8	1	2	11	
14	HUDDERSFIELD	5	1	2	2	82	128	-48	0	0	8	
15	LUCTONIANS	5	1	0	4	102	187	-85	1	2	7	
16	SCUNTHORPE	5	0	0	5	112	180	-68	3	2	5	

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