



NATIONAL LEAGUE 2 NORTH

Saturday 15th February 2020 - Kick Off 2.30pm

official programme £2

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT – Keith Brierley

Hello, welcome to Preston Grasshoppers to today's opponents Hinckley and to visitors, guests, sponsors, coaches, players, ex-players, supporters and spectators for our third home game of 2020.

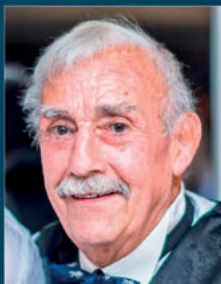
It gives me immense pride to be President of Preston Grasshoppers in our Sesquicentenary year and it seems only yesterday that I was celebrating our Centenary year as a 1st XV player, which has provided me with life long friendships and many happy memories.

We have always had competitive games against Hinckley and I am sure that today, Hoppers will be doing all in their power to take advantage of the home fixture with a win to help take us out of the relegation zone. Hopefully, today's game should offer some entertaining and competitive rugby, each team looking for the win to improve their position in the table for the rest of the season ahead.

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 although we were looking to improve on that position, we appear to be struggling to find our form of last season at the moment which has plunged us into the relegation zone.

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 the rest of this and next season. I would also like to thank all the army of staff and volunteers for their great work during the current season.

Keith



IN TODAY'S PROGRAMME

Message from the President.....	Page 3
Knee High Awards.....	Page 5
Today's Visitors and Club News.....	Page 7
The Team behind The Teams.....	Page 11
A View from the Top.....	Page 13
Club News.....	Page 19
Today's team sheet.....	Page 22 & 23
Other Sports at the Hoppers.....	Page 25
Mini & Juniors.....	Page 26 & 27
Songs for Steve Charity Event.....	Page 30
Player Sponsors.....	Page 34
Womens Rugby.....	Page 40
Fixtures and results.....	Page 42



Front cover photo features prop John Blanchard in a tussle with a couple of Tynedale players in our recent match at Lightfoot Green.

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

1869 CLUB (HOPPERS SUPPORTERS) TRIP TO CHESTER

Our next away game to which we are looking to run a bus is Chester

Date : Saturday 29th February 2020. Time : 11.00 am from the club car park. Cost : £20 (accompanied juniors £5). A lunch stop will be taken at a suitable hostelry en route. The coach will depart Chester Clubhouse approximately 1 hour after the final whistle.

Any one wishing to travel should put their names on the notice in the Clubhouse foyer or email dawn.lh@btinternet.com.

TODAY'S RAFFLE PRIZES

Prizes in today's raffle include Bed & Breakfast at the Pullman London St Pancras. (This is a top prize). The Pullman London St Pancras hotel is ideally located just a few minutes' walk from three of the city's major railway stations: King's Cross, Euston and St Pancras International. The hotel is one of Accor's premier brand & the city's premier upscale destination, with a host of luxury amenities. Other prizes include a table of 4 at our Ladies Day event. A Hoppers scarf. A bottle of Prosecco .



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PRESTON GRASSHOPPERS KNEE HIGH AWARDS 6YRS -16YRS



Receiving their Knee High to a Grasshopper Awards from special guest Lewis Moody are left to right Sammy Townsend, William Stanley, Will Porter, Ben Evans and Lewis Jackson.

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TODAY'S VISITORS - HINCKLEY RFC

Hoppers visitors today are Midlands side Hinckley who are currently lying in fourth place and not far from the play off position in National 2 North.

Hinckley have climbed the table in recent weeks thanks to a six match unbeaten run and have only lost on three occasions in thirteen outings since the two teams met back in early November, the same day as the World Cup Final incidentally.

Hoppers on the other hand have won just once in the same period, that against the only team lower than themselves in the table, Scunthorpe.

Hinckley returned to Level 4 rugby after securing promotion to National 2 North with a play-off victory over Cheshire side Wirral at the end of the 2015/16 season. Our hosts had led Midlands 1 for the major part of that season only losing top spot after the final league fixture at Scunthorpe who took the spoils together with the title on the day.



Before that promotion, Hinckley last graced this level of the rugby pyramid during 1999 and whilst Hoppers gained promotion at the end of that season our visitors fell back into the Midlands Leagues where they resided until their return a couple of seasons ago.

The Midlands Club played Level 4 rugby in what was then named National 3 North for just two seasons and added to their two previous defeats at Lightfoot Green with Hoppers gathering a rare victory during their 2017/18 relegation season.

All told there have been nine games between the two clubs, all league matches with the first being played at Lightfoot Green on the 20th of December 1997 when on that occasion Hoppers ran out winners by fifteen points to eight.

Hinckley haven't succeeded in tasting victory in their previous four visits to Lightfoot Green, whilst Hoppers have won just one of the five encounters at Leicester Road.

Digger (Mike Forshaw)

ROOM 101

Hinckley made the Rugby Paper last week when Dan Rundle, the Stourbridge winger and League 2 North leading try scorer (27) featured in a Room 101 Feature. He listed his pet hates and at No 1 was terrible post-match showers. He said "There's nothing worse than when you've come in from a game in mid winter and the water is freezing cold and amounts to nothing more than a trickle. You don't feel like you are properly clean afterwards. Hinckley's are particularly bad, which isn't ideal because their pitch is always a bog and you come off caked in mud."

ON OTHER TABLES TODAY

President **Keith Brierley** is entertaining our guests from **Hinckley RFC** today.

There are a lot of **Vice Presidents** dining today in that it is Vice Presidents Luncheon Day.

Ian Clarke is entertaining his guests on two tables whilst **Roy Freeman** and guests take another table.

David Smith is entertaining his guests on another table, as do **The Hoppers Ladies** hosted by **Becky Brown**.

Geoff Tomlinson, an ex Stroller takes a table entertaining his friends and club volunteer **Phil Watmough** also joins us for lunch today.

Ex President **Hadyn Gigg** joins us today and **The Strollers** take another two tables headed up by **Martin Hothersall**.

Mike Forshaw, **Martin Butterworth** are also dining today, as is **Andrew Hawkins** and his guests.

Eric Hughes heads up a table of **Preston Guild Rotary** members and some of the **Club** volunteers are treated as a reward for their services to a free lunch today.

HARRIS MUSEUM EXHIBITION

The end date for the display at the Harris will be Sunday 19 April 2020. If you have not had chance to visit the Museum and look at the display please do, as it is a great collection of pieces that give an insight into our 150 year history.



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Today's match sponsor is A&N Business Computer Systems Ltd. This isn't the first time they've sponsored Hoppers but this time it's a rather special event for them because this year the company has been trading for 25 years. In fact, they're treating today as the company's 25th birthday party so they've got a large proportion of their staff here today to celebrate!



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If you're looking for some technology tips today, be sure to seek the A&N team out, but remember, they'll be in party mode so it might cost you a pint!

If you don't manage to catch up with any of the A&N team today, Andy Procter would welcome contact from any Lancashire SME looking for support with their IT systems. So, if you run a Lancashire SME, why not give him a ring? He'd be delighted to see if they could assist you and your business with anything from troubleshooting network problems to desktops in the cloud or devising a security strategy.

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As a key business supporting Hoppers, we strongly believe in establishing local professional connections. Our Director Michael Bailey is also Chairman of Rugby at the club after many years spent playing here."



MATCH BALL SPONSOR



Noblett's Fish & Chips are sponsoring the match ball today. As many supporters will know, Jonathan Noblett is an ex player but now enjoys coaching in the Mini Juniors section.



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THE TEAM BEHIND THE TEAMS

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Gareth Dyer	Paul Arnold	Donny Sutherland	Craig Steel

1st XV Backs Coach	1st XV Manager & 4th Official	Player Registrar & 4th Official	Head Physiotherapist
			
Steve Kerry	Ade Jebb	Ian McFarlane	Mark Taylor

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

3rd – 5th Team Coordinator

Mick Mortimer

TODAY'S OTHER LEAGUE GAMES

FYLDE	V	CALDY
HUDDERSFIELD	V	TYNEDALE
HULL	V	SHEFFIELD TIGERS
OTLEY	V	LUCTIONIANS
SCUNTHORPE	V	CHESTER
SEDGLEY PARK	V	LOUGHBOROUGH
WHARFEDALE	V	STOURBRIDGE

"Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." Confucius



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KUKRI



**Head of Rugby Operations,
Gareth Dyer**

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

"Good Afternoon and a warm welcome to Hinckley for today's National Two North fixture.

After the defeat against Tynedale two weeks ago and following meetings with the coaching staff and the rugby management, we have agreed to make some initial changes that will see us through to the end of the season.

Firstly, we said goodbye to Tom Davidson and Alex Hurst who have left us to join Wharfedale and Sedgley Park respectively. Tom had been player coach looking after the backs whilst Alex had been looking after our Strength & Conditioning requirements.

It was felt that it was in both the individuals and the clubs interests to go our separate ways and allow both guys to take up opportunities closer to where they live. They were two very hard working individuals and I want to place on record our thanks for their commitment to Hoppers during their time at Lightfoot Green.

To assist Paul and Donny for the rest of the season, I am delighted that Steve Kerry has taken up our offer to look after the back division coaching for the remaining games. Steve needs no introduction to the Hoppers faithful so I am not going to provide one!

We have decided to give a number of younger and fringe players opportunities during the remaining games. Hence, at times over the coming weeks you will see some new faces getting a taste of 1st XV rugby with one eye very much on the future.

I have asked our Head Physio Mark Taylor to provide me with an in depth injury audit for the season to date. The sustained volume of injuries we have experienced this season has wrecked our season and we need to understand what had been behind this.

At the end of last season, we felt we had been lucky with the number of injuries we sustained and took action to increase the squad's depth.

Accepted practice is that you should plan to have at least 25% of your squad unavailable due to injury at any time.

In basic numbers that mean around 7 to 8 players not being available to us for selection each week. Our average this season has generally been 35-40% unavailable whilst at its worst we had over half of the squad unavailable when we travelled to Hinckley earlier in the season.

Some may say this is an excuse for poor performances and results. That is fine, I hear you but I'll get on with dealing with the reality rather than the conjecture."

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



**Head Coach,
Paul Arnold**

"Good afternoon to everyone especially the Hinckley supporters, team and coaches.

Hinckley are having a great season and we know as every game in this league we have got to play at our best for 80 minutes if we want to get the win.

In patches in our last two games we have shown some good attacking intent but our decision making has let us down. This is something we have been working on in training.

These last 8 games will give us a chance to look at some new faces as part of the rebuilding process for next season and although this has already started we will be giving 100% until the end of the season.

I'd like to also thank Tom Davidson and Alex Hurst for their contribution over the last two seasons and wish them well at their new clubs.

As always, thank you for your support in what's been a difficult season to say the least. But let's make some noise today and get behind these young lads and I'll see you in the bar afterwards."

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CLUB NEWS

Quote of the week from Ellis Genge after England beat Scotland in the Six Nations:



"We had a bump in the road last week [against France] and everyone was writing us off, saying we weren't good enough, saying that our coach should be sacked and that the boys were a different team from the World Cup. It doesn't sting but it's classic isn't it? You've got a lot of sausages saying things that just come to their head and what are they on about? We go out and win in Scotland away in the rain and now everyone's singing our praises."

Guest speaker at the Mini Junior Sportsman's Dinner last week was England World Cup winner Lewis Moody. The following day he tweeted:
@LewisMoody7 Wonderful evening with a fantastic crowd @RugbyHoppers rfc last night. the home of England #some great names @WillGreenwood, #wadedooley #steveborthwick to name but a few. Raising money for their mini junior section. Thank you for the kindness and hospitality #grassroots #rugbyfamily



A heartfelt thank you from Steve and Cheryl Nicholls following the Boxing Day charity match in support of Steve's rehabilitation and recovery following a major stroke.

Dear Friends,

Steve and I have been overwhelmed by the kindness, generosity and positive words of support from all of you at the club. The last 7 months have been extremely difficult and challenging following Steve's stroke, but we have moved into 2020 with positivity and determination. The Boxing Day charity match was just wonderful, Steve enjoyed himself immensely. With everyone's kind generosity we have been fortunate to buy Steve his electric wheelchair giving him that all important independence Lewis Hamilton watch out !!

*With heartfelt gratitude, Peace and Love,
Cheryl and Steve Nicholls x*



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Saturday 15th February Kick Off : 2.30pm NATIONAL LEAGUE 2 NORTH



GRASSHOPPERS

STARTING XV

- 15 Tyler Spence
- 14 Conor Trueman
- 13 Will Davidson
- 12 Sam Stott (C)
- 11 Jacob Browne
- 10 Joe Prior
- 9 Jake Squirrel
- 1 Oga Mabaya
- 2 Olly Trippier
- 3 John Blanchard
- 4 Adam Howard
- 5 Ally Murray
- 6 Ryan Carlson
- 7 Toby Harrison
- 8 Ben Dorrington

GAME CHANGERS

- 16 Noah Miller
- 17 Tyler Sloane
- 18 Ewan Naylor
- 19 Rob Meadows
- 20 Will Clapham

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HINCKLEY RFC

STARTING XV

- 15 Callum Rowe
- 14 Joe Wilson
- 13 Mitch Lamb
- 12 Josh Smith
- 11 Callum Dacey
- 10 Tom Wheatcroft
- 9 Ben Pointon
- 1 Steve Harvey
- 2 Adam Johnson
- 3 Dave Peck
- 4 Matt Fearn (C)
- 5 Andrew Weaver
- 6 Henry Povoas
- 7 Ollie Povoas
- 8 Ollie Ashworth

GAME CHANGERS

- 16 Luke Colman
- 17 Oscar Harper
- 18 James Moreton
- 19 Joe Glover
- 20 Sam Smith

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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.

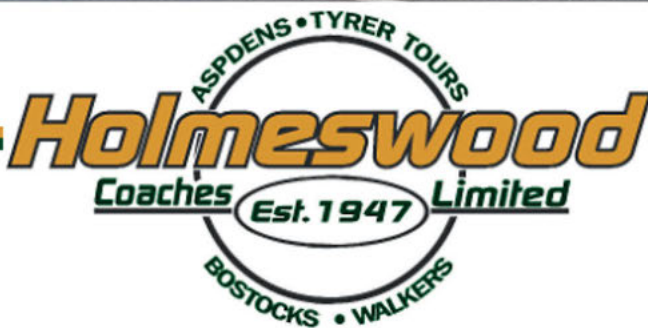
HUGH DUCKWORTH

Chairman– Mini, Junior and Colts Rugby



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HOPPERS WOMEN'S RUGBY

VAGABONDS 38 - HOPPERS WOMEN 10

Probably one of the most looked forward to fixtures of the Ladies Season is a trip across the Irish Sea to the Isle of Man to play Vagabonds RFC. Always a pleasure to play and with such a long distance travelled a great excuse to have a weekend with the whole team.

Unfortunately an early start is the punishment for such an experience.

However we did manage to get the whole squad at the airport and on the plane in one piece. Landing in the Isle of Man was an interesting experience with the wind already beginning to pick up. We think Ciara had sent her little sister to the Isle of Man to join us.

During the warm up, the whole team had to train in tough conditions with the wind making it almost impossible to hear even the person standing next to us let alone someone further down the line, but knowing that the opposition faced the same conditions the Hoppers Ladies put on a brave face (and as many under layers as they could find).

What ensued was a tough but great game of Rugby. The wind provided a change in style for Hoppers and used the conditions to their advantage. The team work showed by Hoppers does not do the score line justice with numerous injuries affecting an already injury filled squad. Some great passages of play resulted in the first Hoppers Try with Fly Half Sinead going over the whitewash after already being held up once. Hoppers second try came from pure determination and teamwork to ensure they were the last team to get on the score board. With the ball being dotted down by Lucy and Vicki. Final score 38 - 10 to Vagabonds.

What followed was a great day and evening of Rugby fun before an early flight back to Liverpool to finish a great weekend.



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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	22-27	L	Lymm 2	A	39-17	L
19 Oct	Tynedale	A	34-5	L				
26 Oct	STOURBRIDGE	H	20-17	W	Macclesfield 2	A	Postponed	
2 Nov	Hinckley	A	27-17	L				
9 Nov	CHESTER	H	10-27	L	BLACKBURN 2	H	24-28	L
16 Nov	Caldy	A	49-21	L	Caldy 2	A	57-17	L
23 Nov	LOUGHBOROUGH	H	21-34	L	FYLDE 2	H	17-11	W
30 Nov	Luctonians	A	29-3	L	Rossendale 2	A	Postponed	
7 Dec	HULL	H	13-18	L	SEDGLEY PARK 2	H	32-5	W
14 Dec	Otley	A	0-0	D	LYMM 2	H	52-31	W
21 Dec	FYLDE	H	3-28	L				
2020								
4 Jan	Scunthorpe	A	7-30	W	MACCLESFIELD 2	H	14-18	L
11 Jan	Sheffield Tigers	A	11-10	L	Blackburn 2	A	28-10	L
18 Jan	WHARFEDALE	H	26-26	D	CHESTER 2	H	24-8	W
25 Jan	Huddersfield	A	25-15	L	Rossendale 2	A	24-10	L
1 Feb	TYNEDALE	H	14-29	L				
8 Feb	Stourbridge	A	52-12	L	ROSSENDALE 2	H	21-26	L
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	21	21	0	0	808	257	551	16	0	100	
2	FYLDE	22	16	1	5	705	390	315	14	3	83	
3	SEDGLEY PARK	21	15	0	6	559	476	83	10	4	74	
4	HINCKLEY	22	14	0	8	560	436	124	11	5	72	
5	LOUGHBOROUGH	22	12	0	10	649	536	113	11	5	64	
6	STOURBRIDGE	22	10	0	12	621	556	65	12	8	60	
7	TYNEDALE	22	9	2	11	541	532	9	9	6	55	
8	WHARFEDALE	22	10	2	10	488	488	0	5	5	54	
9	HULL	22	10	2	10	415	424	-9	4	5	53	
10	SHEFFIELD TIG'S	22	11	0	11	463	507	-44	5	3	52	
11	CHESTER	22	9	1	11	471	560	-89	9	4	51	
12	HUDDERSFIELD	22	8	3	11	468	539	-71	8	4	50	
13	LUCTONIANS	22	8	1	13	440	512	-72	7	8	49	
14	OTLEY	22	8	3	11	429	552	-123	3	3	44	
15	HOPPERS	22	4	3	15	363	547	-184	3	4	29	
16	SCUNTHORPE	21	0	0	21	304	972	-668	4	2	6	

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