

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- End of Season
- All team's review of the season

End of season

With the end of the season now upon us the thoughts turn to a few months off from rugby and in some cases a summer of other sports. Over this season our teams have suffered at the hands of our weather and have played on surfaces which have varied from rock hard (due to frost in the early part of the season to baked ground of the last couple of weeks) to swamps (due to rain and snow). We have seen the most snow at the club in a number of years and this together with a very wet winter has had a negative impact on our pitches.

The committee is working on a funding application to secure a maintenance programme for both of our pitches which will be actioned over the closed season to ensure that the pitches are in excellent condition and are as robust as possible for the matches in the 2010—2011 season.



No more mud for a few months

The club also will have a number of other maintenance jobs scheduled from guttering clearance to general tidying up.

Sadly there is a growing amount of litter and general rubbish appearing at the club in the surrounding bushes and trees as well as on the playing surfaces at times which will need to be tidied up.

There will be some 'working days' planned and it would be great to see as many people there as possible.

Colts win West Norfolk 7s

One of the last events of the season for the youth age groups is the West Norfolk 7s which happened at the weekend. The club is very happy to report that our Colts squad won this.

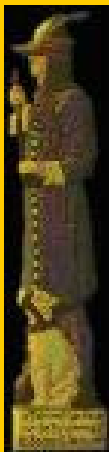
This is a fantastic result for this squad given that this was the first year that

we have had a Colts squad at the club.

There results during the season have equally been very pleasing and this forms a strong "production line" of talent for our senior teams in the coming year.

Special mention needs to go to Des for setting the

Colts team up and coaching them during the season.



First Team

The First team have had another successful season and consolidated their position as the best of the Norfolk sides in Eastern Counties Two. This has been done at the same time as many of the old stalwarts have retired, and it is a reflection of the Clubs policy, that over half of the regular squad has been made up of home grown players. The season began with victory in the

Cambridge 10's tournament and the team has maintained their league position by beating all our local rivals in league, cup and friendly fixtures. Skippered by Louis Gunnell, in his first year as Captain, the attitude and commitment of the players has strengthened to a point where it will surely not be too long before promotion to Division One can be se-

cured. The players have responded to the faithful support they receive on a Saturday and at times there have been almost 100 people on the touchline cheering them on. Lets hope the influx of young players continues to provide future sides with the building blocks needed to develop a team which will push Swaffham further up the ladder within Norfolk rugby.

Second Team

It has been a mixed season for the Swaffham seconds; it started off with a win and a loss against Watton, the team being mainly the one from last season, captained by the Vice Skipper Chris Upton.

After my return from the Falklands, the merit table started in earnest with some hard fought games against some very good teams, with mixed results, the injury and retirement of a few of the old stalwarts of Swaffham rugby also gave a chance for the new guys to shine.

A special mention should be made at this time to the up and coming younger members of the team, without these new additions to Swaffham's adult teams there would have been weeks where we would have had to cancel fixtures through lack of players. In particular Dean, Marlow, Liam, Ollie, Craig, Q, Josh, Lee, Chris Holland, Stu, and Shaun who are all still teenagers and have all joined the team this season and made a massive contribution.

80 different players have been used for at least one game this season, with 10 new recruits, on top of the colts mentioned earlier. Special mention needs to go to some of the players who have been there all season though, Des Lloyd has been one of the best players on the team along with everything else he does for the club, leading from the flank by example as well as making sure that any of his 'Colts' are looked after and prepared. He has been instrumental in bringing the young guys from the colts to the adults. Hammy has also been a massive part of the team, in more ways than one! Playing, leading, encouraging and motivating the team, even when injury stopped him playing for part of the season. Chris Upton has been a rock behind the scenes, sorting out a lot of the pre and post match stuff as well as being an excellent example on the pitch. I could go on about all the players as I am proud to be associated with all of them.

As far as the final results go in the Merit table we won 8, lost 12, and drew 1 (a weird 0-0 against Broadland) meaning that we finished in 7th place, but only by points difference, we are on 43 points, the same as 5th place!!

As I am standing down as Captain now that the season is over I would like to pass on my regards to a few people who have helped me in my time who haven't been mentioned above. Micky James for his fixtures and advice, JC and Louis for there 'assistance' from the 1st team captain role!! Ned for supplying the beer, Monica for supplying the food and Eric for being the leader!!

Whoever takes on this demanding and rewarding role next season has my admiration and sympathy at the same time, I have loved most of my time as captain and look forward to playing rugby next year with a bit more freedom. Stretch

Under 16s

The under 16s started the season with the normal squad of about 20 but within weeks through injuries had been depleted. This didn't stop the squad from enjoying their rugby. Winning results were hard to come by, but good patches of rugby were played. With the forwards working hard and being competitive in most matches. Mid season and with players returning and addition of new recruited players, a new sense of optimism was returning to the side. The squad then enjoyed a formal dinner with the president and chairman

and watched the first team followed by the six nations rugby, which gave them an insight of the way rugby club members conduct themselves. With the first time since the minis, the squad had a full back line. With this the backs coach Andy Hudson was able to do more concentrated training. This led to a good end of season run in, with the team then putting in some gelled performances between the forwards and backs culminating in their best game of the sea-



son, which also happened to be their last.

The U16s wish to thank referees monsieurs Jean Bissel, Jme Bisle, Marquis mulligan and Le Stretch for their invaluable time, and the back room staff of Lorraine and David Whitehead.

Finally best wishes go to forwards coach Thingy Bartholomew and family who are of to sunnier climes (lucky b*+"-") that also includes those of welsh descent.

Under 15s

This season has seen a few players coming and going from the Under 15 squad. Those taking a break from rugby have been missed and as a squad we look forward to seeing them return when other commitments allow.

However, we have welcomed Max E, Rob and Luke L into the team this season and all three players have quickly found their feet in the squad and in positions and have all contributed brilliantly to the squad.

As for the squad it has been a mixed bag of results with some large losses most notably against Wymondham in the cup. However, even in those games the opposition was made to work for every single point they scored and not once did the boys let their heads drop.

On the flip side they have

romped to some storming results. This has been put down to a level of physically across the whole squad both in the tackle and in the contest for the ball which often causes opposition teams to make mistakes. Some players have had some very nasty injuries during the season but have then turned out to support their mates from the sidelines. This is something as coach I am very proud of, this squad has a genuine team-spirit but more over play the game in the spirit it should be played. This has been evidenced by numerous comments from other teams and coaches.

As coach this season has been a total delight, the boys are willing to learn but also are pushing to

take control of their game, at this age this is how it should be. I am looking forward to next season.

In finishing I need to thank Phil who has helped with every training session, Mike & Nicky for patching up the many injuries we have had this year, all those who have refereed without whom etc, etc, Sharon for a brilliant job sorting the fixtures, Ned and his team and Monica and her team and all the parents for bringing the lads week in week out. Finally to the boys, thanks for a great season – you have made me very proud to be your coach this year.

Spike



Under 14s

We started the season with 15 players and Gary and I were worried about being able to field a team and how we would cope if we picked up any injuries. However we soon started to pick up new players, some from the Swaffham school, a few from Dereham but mainly from Methwold. As a result we finished the season with 24 players on our books. Most of the new recruits had only played a few games at school and took varying

amounts of time to settle in and become part of the team but by the end of the season everyone was gelling well. The quality of rugby being played improved week by week throughout the season both individually and as a team. The guys worked really hard at training all through the year even when the weather was far from ideal. As the numbers grew Mickey started to help with training and sharpened up our forward play.

Karl continued to train with the EDPG squad and Jasper, Ben R, Ben A, Steve and Cameron played for the county.

Gary and I are already looking forward to next season and I firmly believe it will be our best so far.

Many thanks to Sharon for all her hard working arranging fixtures, getting everyone to turn up on time and washing the shirts.
Woody

Under 13s

This has been a hugely challenging year for this age group. At the start of the season they had moved up from the mini section, lost their coach and a large proportion of their team mates from the Under 12s and in the first few weeks of the season it looked like this age group would not survive. However, a new coach stepped up in the form of Paul Marshall and with help from Des reinstated the idea of rugby should be fun into training sessions and matches.

Slowly numbers of players came to the team and at the end of season awards a squad numbering 18 players came together. Some of them were playing rugby for the first time, all of them were playing on a full sized pitch for the first time. This has been a year of rebuilding but the thing which stands out for me, as an observer, is the spirit these young players have. The joy they have in playing our game, as a team, for our club is very special and they have some real talent in the squad.

There has been a massive amount of activity put in from Paul, Des and Paula (who manages the age group) but it is the resilience and belief from the parents and players sticking together during this challenging year which I truly believe will see this side grow into a force to be reckoned with next season.
spike



Under 12s

The two members of the U11 squad received their own squad trophies at this season's end of season awards having contributed hugely to the success of the squad. With the club recruiting two additional players over the last couple of weeks and continued liaison with the High School in relation to potential players, we remain hopeful of re-establishing an U12 squad next season. The experience that Dan and James have gained over this season will stand them in good stead for 2010-11 and they should be in no doubt that the club will provide them with suitable rugby next season.

The combined squad has gelled really well this season, especially so considering that we had so many more new players joining us, with good performances over the season culmi-

nating in some excellent rugby being played, particularly towards the end of the season. All of the players have improved throughout the season leaving the coaches with some difficult decisions both in regard to who was nominated to trial for School of Rugby and Norfolk and who their 'Coaches Player of the Year' would be.

Of the six players that trialed all have been put forward for County training and we have no doubt that they will now push on at this level as they represent the rest of the club within the county framework. The other players in the squad whilst not quite reaching the criteria standard for trial are not too far away and we expect to be able to nominate more as we progress through next season. None more so than Jason Stratton, the 'Coaches Player of the Year', who, as well as being an ever-present at all training sessions, has worked on his fitness

and skills throughout the year leading to an almost meteoric rise in his playing standards over the last couple of months (it's almost a shame that the season came to an end so soon).

The Players' Player of the Year resulted in one of the closest votes yet, with most players receiving at least one vote. However, the squad decided that Declan Davis deserved the honour, being one of the most influential players in the squad. He has at various points in the season played at Lock, No8, Fly-half and Inside centre scoring a massive 52 tries over the season.

Hopefully the momentum of the last few weeks won't be lost over the summer and we look forward to hitting the ground running next season as we move into the Youth age groups.

Under 10s

Overall the Under 10's have exceeded expectations, which is a credit to them all.

They have all trained hard, listened and learned as the season has gone on. All of the boys have PLAYED TO THE SPIRIT OF THE GAME. Probably the most important factor of all

Early in the season we won games much to the surprise of our opponents. To finish the season with the opportunity to take at least the plate for our pool (but unfortunately not having players due to a slight mix up still at the ground is both encouraging and disappointing.) We have had our best results against Stowmarket and the boys played well both times against this seasoned side.

It is always difficult to say which player has improved the most, which player has played

the best and so on. I think the most significant factor is how well they have bounded.

Mason and Adam have joined the club late on and have contributed well for the last few turn outs. Mason played his socks off for us; he communicates well and could be a star next year. We look forward to getting to know them better next season

Henry is worth a special mention; again he has been consistent and scored tries. Johnny the ankle grabber! Hardly misses a tackle. Johnny received the parents player award.

Dave and Charlie have been solid throughout, hence Charlie getting coaches most improved player. Ryan is getting with his confidence and again next year should improve.

Dave received the player's player and also top try scorer for the season, no small feat!!

Louis had been strong and consistent in his tackles and powerful runs often smashing through the opposing defence.

What has really stood out is the attitude of the boys, when heads could be down and we have had to form another Babas team just to put a side out, this doesn't faze them. They put on the club shirt and play their socks off.

A promising outlook is on the horizon. With two new players joining us next season already we are getting closer to achieving a full squad.

We are all looking forward to next season and the challenges it will bring

Have a good summer break every one

See you on the 22nd May for our end of season party.

Under 9

Having started off with a small squad after losing several notable players and Simon our coach we have progressed well with new players joining the squad. The team has had a mixed season but surpassed all expectations by coming runners up in the Holt festival, only just losing to Holt by 1 try in the final.

The team has gelled very well over the season. All players are now

understanding all aspects of the game and will hopefully continue this next season.

Thanks goes to all parents for giving their time and support to the coaches, the team and the club. Special thanks goes to Keith, Dee and the Fredster who will be a sad loss for the team and club. A personal thank you to Keith for his coaching support from all the under 9 team.

All the team are now looking forward to this coming season.

Under 7/8

The U7's season has been a great success and established another group of players into the rugby family. They have really enjoyed getting to know the game, each other and bonded well both on and off the pitch.

Success was gained at 3 of the 4 festivals attended, with the team

finishing 3rd, 3rd and 2nd place to establish themselves as one of the strongest U7 squads in the county. Only a hand full of losses all season was testament to their dedication and hard work in training. In what was a challenging season it was a great effort by all of boys - well done!

Squad
Eddie Collins, Archie Liston, Max Payne, Archie Dennis, Mackenzie Pilkington, Samuel Roberts, Matthew Beardmore, Frank Freeman, Alex Cousins, Dair Moss, Hamish Russell, William Smith, Harrison Engledow, Joel Streets, William Morrisey, Rory Gagen



Girls Rugby

Over the last couple of seasons our club has been the centre of just about all the girls rugby activity in the region. However this has not been the easiest aspect of the game to deal with. As a club we have been close to being able to field a team a one or two points during this time.

However the main drive has been to get those girls playing in the region game time. This has meant trying to work as a cluster with other clubs. This has sadly proved almost impossible with some clubs reporting hundreds of girls playing but they either never turned up or didn't exist in the first place. Equally the support from county and CB has been less than brilliant and its fair to say that the Eastern Counties squads have only succeeded over the last season thanks to the hard work and effort from Malcolm and Jackie.

However, all isn't lost and there is still much to celebrate as a large number of the girls who started at Swaffham are still very much in the picture at representative level. These girls are playing club rugby in some cases well outside the region, which is testament to their

drive and commitment to the game.

Emily who started in our Under 12s helped a barbarian team to a win at the Worthing Tens on the Bank Holiday weekend. She played in a team containing players from Letchworth, Saracens and Berkshire.

She captained the team who lost narrowly (5-0) to Welwyn and Aylesford Bulls before winning their last pool match against Ellingham and Ringwood 27-5.

This was enough for them to pip Welwyn, one of the pre-tournament favourites, for second place in the pool and claim a Plate Semi Final place against hosts Worthing.

Worthing were unlucky to have to play against the Barbarians squad in full flow and were swept aside 25-0. Emily scoring and converting her own try on the way to the final against Penguins.

The Penguins, a three club cluster from Hampshire, started strongly. However, strong defence by the Barbarians resulted in a turnover and quick movement from the forwards to the backs saw the first points on the board. This lead was extended with a second try

before Penguins opened their account just before half time. Letchworth winger Sydney Gregson flew in for the only score of the second half during which the forwards totally dominated their opposition. Final score 17 – 7.

Emily speaking after the final said "This has been a great weekend, we came down yesterday and camped overnight, enjoying the company of the players from Berks that we hadn't played with before, as well as that of the U18's squad (who also won their Plate competition) at a barbecue last night and I'm sure that has helped with the great team spirit that we have enjoyed today. To come away with a trophy has really been the icing on the cake, and we'd like to dedicate this to our parents who ferry us around the country so that we can play the game we love."

The club would echo Emily's sentiments. We remain committed to developing girls rugby and this level of support and dedication from players and parents might be needed in the short term to provide playing opportunities.

"a large number of the girls who started at Swaffham are still very much in the picture at representative level"

Swaffham RUFC

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Providing RUGBY for all

COACHING OPPORTUNITIES

There is a combined RugbyReady / Level One coaching course and a Referee's qualification course being held in the region shortly. If you are 16+ and in full time employment these courses are FREE. Yes FREE, that's at no cost!!!!!!

Details can be obtained from the club coaching coordinator Rod Davis at rodathome13@tiscali.com

PLEASE consider doing one of these courses if you can as it would very much help our club.

Level One—29th May (am), 6th and 13th June
Venue TBC

Ref's course—29th and 30th May at Crusaders RUFC.



CLUB AGM

**The Club AGM will be held at the Clubhouse on
Thursday 10 June 2010 at 7:00pm.**

This meeting will see the election of key roles at the club together with agreeing and setting the fees for membership for the coming season.

**The AGM is open to all members. This is your opportunity to have an input into the decisions which will effect your club for the next 12 months and beyond.
Please do your best to attend.**