



• BATH FOOTBALL CLUB (R.F.U.) •

HONOURS

JOHN PLAYER SPECIAL CUP WINNERS 1983/84, 1984/85, 1985/96, 1986/87

PILKINGTON CUP WINNERS

1988/89, 1989/90, 1991/92, 1993/94, 1994/95 COURAGE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE CHAMPIONS 1988/89, 1990/91, 1991/92, 1992/93, 1993/94

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K. Johnstone

Magazine Editor:

nuguzine Lunor.

J. M. Clipson

Headquarters

CLUBHOUSE, RECREATION GROUND, BATH. Telephone BATH (01225) 425192. Fax (01225) 443253

Grounds

Recreation Ground, Pulteney St, and Lambridge, London Road, Bath

Telephone for Lambridge is BATH (01225) 330116

Editor's Comment

It seems that everyday brings a different twist to the rugby revolution; Gosforth merging with a Football and Ice Hockey consortium, the Courage League format likely to change next season, bonus points for tries in the Heineken League. It's nice to know that some things never change and a visit by traditional West Country rivals Gloucester guarantees that commercialism will take a distant place to fair but tough on-field sport, thank goodness. Doughty campaigners such as Mike Teague and John Hall might be exercising a more cerebral influence this year but the conflict will be no less intense for that.

We also welcome today the rugby team of HMS ILLUSTRIOUS who have been our guests for the last three days. The team managed a few games around the Mediterranean during their time off from their Adriatic deployment. Forging of friendships is the one aspect of rugby we must not lose as we go into the professional world.

A good opening win at Brierton Lane last week, never an easy one. I watched the United play Cardiff Athletic and was tremendously impressed by a dynamic all round performance led by Richard Butland, who says that England are lacking strength in depth at No 10?

Welcome





WELL IT'S A START

The season had hardly put one toe out of bed when I received a fax from Jim Clipson, asking me for my "usual pithy contribution." Don't know quite how to take that, Jim – I haven't been pithed for ages. Of course, there are those who maintain that I write better when in a state of pithdom, but there you go.

Last March, I was able to warn the assembled multitude that, unless Bath were very careful, Gloucester would beat them. They very nearly did, too. This time round, I can't be quite so positive, because one pipe-opener against Wakefield, plus a Courage game versus Sale, doesn't really give me any basis for reasoned judgement. What I can say is that the atmosphere at Kingsholm has changed out of all recognition since we visited you last.

The arrival of former RFU Marketing Director, Mike Coley, as Chief Executive, and the appointment of Mike Teague to the new post of Team Manager, has wafted a breath of fresh air through the old place, and there is a, quite tangible, sense

of purpose and resolve which I have rarely encountered before. How that will translate into results on the field remains to be seen, but we do, as the Chinese say, live in interesting times at Kingsholm, nowadays.

The other interesting new appointment is that of Dave Sims as Captain for 1995/6. He's no stranger to Bath, of course, and you'll no doubt recall that he was the undoubted success of the England 'A' Australian tour last summer. It will also be intriguing to see how his lock partner, Richard West, has benefited from his inclusion in the England World Cup squad.

Less familiar faces you might like to keep an eye on include No. 6, Rob Fidler, son of the mighty John, and a new young No. 8, Chris Raymond. He's no Mike Teague yet – but watch this space.

Anyway, best wishes for a good season, even by Bath standards. Since when did Bath and Gloucester need either Leagues or professionalism to provide a thrilling encounter?

PETER ARNOLD

Club Call

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN by Richard Mawditt

Not a week has gone by over the close season without a major issue or event affecting the game or our club. Our World Cup players returned wiser for the experience and knowing that to achieve the very highest standards we have to play the likes of Auckland, Natal and Queensland. We in Bath should aspire to such fixtures sooner rather than later for the benefit of the players and supporters alike.

Over the summer I have endeavoured to progress development of The Rec and the implications if we move to Bathampton in exchange for Lambridge. It has been frustrating not have the same urgency from the City Council and for them not to share in the opportunities for a new West Stand development with cafés, boutiques and the like which would fit in with the grandeur that is Bath (and Bath FC). It is disappointing that planning permission has been denied for a new permanent shop, state of the art lighting and East side seating to match the splendid Youth Olympics arrangements where some 3000 were seated. We will not give up the negotiations and with the prospect of a club shop in the adjacent High Street we are committed to expanding our marketing (under the ubiquitous Mr Chilcott) and other facilities for the benefit of all.

It is the surprising and welcome news of the total abandonment of the amateur status of the game that has exercised our players and committee and no doubt the majority of our members. The First Division clubs have met on numerous occasions in recent weeks and have "persuaded" the RFU of the merit of working partnership and harmony to bring about the vital changes now before us.

At Bath we have no magic pot of gold to

realise the needs of the new world and must not only recognise the need to "reward" our players but to set the example and standards to other clubs to maximise revenues. We have to ensure that we can match the offers of predators to the satisfaction of our players. I have no easy or simple answer as to how we raise the additional cash but we as a club must not sit around pondering the issue. Quick positive action is needed to ensure that at the very least player's contracts are in place before or at the same time as the international contracts and that sponsorship and media deals and European competition arrangements are put in place without delay. I am committed to these issues, our players have been an example to us all for a decade or more in their professional approach and we look to the City Council to work with us to take the Rugby Club to its place in the brave new world of Rugby Union where the opportunities are considerable and any lack of action unthinkable.

We had a good win at West last week albeit having lost it a bit in he second half. We wish Phil, his team and our new team manager big John a very successful and enjoyable season. Congratulations to Dave Hilton and Co. who won the Stockholm Tens – the first of this season's trophies.

Today we welcome our friends and rivals from Gloucester and also Captain Jonathan Band RN and the rugby players from HMS ILLUSTRIOUS. It was a great privilege to spend 24 hours in the Illustrious as she came home to Portsmouth last month, as well as witnessing the club flag flying from the masthead: – a rare honour.

Clipson's Clipboard

Saturday 16 September 1995

Week two and wins last week for Bath, Leicester and Wasps so no surprises so far, but Sale are continuing to emphasise they are no nine day wonders. Quins also had a good away win; today is the day for sides who lost last week to level things out or begin a long cold winter. European places as well as two down are going to make life interesting, let's hope the spectator gets some entertainment as well.

BATH v GLOUCESTER

No quarter expected in a red meat encounter which was a thriller last year and one where the Cherries went oh, so close. A disappointing performance at Kingsholm last week should see Gloucester intent on upsetting The Rec faithful. Bath have their eyes firmly focused on getting back that League title and it's difficult to see today as an impediment unless they respond badly to derby fever. Bath by 8-12pts.

BRISTOL V WEST HARTLEPOOL

Bristol's aspirations were severely rocked at Sudbury and West were not quite good enough at home last time out, someone should go home happy today. Bristol have some young recruits and might find a streetwise West team quite a handful, but West travelled badly last year and if Bristol want to catch next season's Eurostar they must win this one. Bristol by 5-9pts.

HARLEQUINS v WASPS

This game last year was the high water mark of the Wasps running game, it also consigned Quins to a season close to relegation. Forget home advantage, Wasps will try to run away with this one but expect Quins to show some steel before eroding in the second half. Wasps could put their try count into double figures and top the table in week two. Wasps by 16-20pts.

SALE V LEICESTER

Sale will focus on last year's cup match when they were desperately unlucky and Leicester will probably revert to plan A, could be a long rolling maul! The Cheshire team had an excellent away win at Kingsholm and with home advantage will have serious expectations, but The Tigers are unlikely to take their eye off the ball this early in the season. Leicester by 4-8pts.

SARACENS V ORRELL

A gentler game for Saracens than The Tigers; Orrell lost at home to Quins and it is difficult to see much change from a trip to Cockfosters. Both teams a little lightweight for this League and although Saracens should win, it may only stave off the inevitable. Saracens by 9-13pts.

League Two: Wins for Bedford, Wakefield, Scottish, Newcastle, Northampton.