



TALKING BALLS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF BOLTON RUGBY UNION F.C. MARCH 2009



Chairman, **Mark Brocklehurst**, (centre) pictured at the recent BRUFC sportsman's dinner alongside speaker **Geoff Miller** (left) and **MC Chris Giblin** (right)



SUGGERS PLAYS WEMBLEY

Congratulations to "Suggers" who has been nominated as Britain's Bravest Firefighter in the Fire Service National "Spirit of Fire" Awards. When Alex discovered that the ladders they had did not reach the upstairs windows, he balanced one on his thigh to allow two firefighters to climb out of the window to safety. The finalists will be announced at a prestigious ceremony at Wembley Stadium in May.



Firefighting hero, **Alex Sugden**, pictured collecting his train fare to London!

Through the wind and rain

By **Andy Leigh**,
Chairman Senior Section

It is rare for full blooded English men to moan about the weather but I think we do have reasons to whinge this season!

Having experienced one of the wettest summers of all times we knew that the pitches might be a tad soggy to start the season off, but to have to abandon training sessions in September and postpone a fixture against Ashton-under-Lyne in mid October due to waterlogged pitches is unheard of. Forget a club extension we thought about building an ark! Our prayers were eventually answered, and as the weather began to improve so did the form of the teams with victories coming in thick and fast at every level of play. The first team in particular needed to get some points on the board and wins against Garstang and Old Bedians followed by a draw against Birchfield set the confidence flowing and the atmosphere within the club was becoming electric; the perfect build up to Christmas was on the cards. However a higher authority even than Les decided to put paid to any forward thinking (is that an oxymoron?) and the heaviest and most prolonged period of frost for many a year decimated the Christmas program making playing

and training impossible. Even the astro turf pitch became unusable! What a terrible blow ... Christmas spent with the family instead of at the rugby club; surely God couldn't have thought that one through! It took 42 days before most of the club returned to the field of combat. Lack of match fitness combined with limited training, Christmas celebrations and unavailability of players had created a pit that the club was going to have to fight out of! We asked for fighting and that's exactly what we got and we've got CCTV evidence to prove it, haven't we Mark! Who would have thought that our feisty spirit would yet again be dampened by snow. The country ground to a halt, as did a further two weeks of fixtures! It's easy to blame the weather for our lack lustre season but what it has done is highlight some essential areas for development. We are victims of our own success which means that our pitches are being massively over used through senior and junior training and fixtures and the Bolton Schools Emerging League fixtures. We must invest some money into pitch drainage and the committee are looking at all forms of fund raising to facilitate this. The RFU have pledged to match fund effective pitch draining schemes and we are going all out to tap into this program. We have a fantastic set up at the club with an amazing junior section, and a senior section that can turn out four teams each week making us one of the most successful clubs in the area in terms of playing capacity. The idea

of senior players moving to junior coaches and junior players moving into the senior section is beginning to pay dividends and we must support this as much as possible ,our junior colts are going to massively strengthen our senior teams. Even though the management of the club is in three sections, juniors, women and seniors, it is essential that we work together as one, with a shared passion and above all else, joined up thinking. We need as much help as possible in making this happen and I know life is busy but if we can spread the workload amongst the many instead of focussing on a few trustworthy volunteers it would make the running of the club so much easier and more effective. With this in mind, I call upon ALL club members to consider how much fun, pride and satisfaction you get from playing for Bolton Rugby Union Football Club and now is the time to work together to make it even better. Little things like confirming your availability for the games, training to improve, volunteering your services as a coach, referee, spectator, team secretary, DIY man, committee member ... the list goes on! Let's make our club a club full of "Energisers" and not "Sappers" anyone who has read my emails will know what I mean by that! Let's have a fantastic end to the season and thank you to everyone for making Bolton Rugby Club what it is. like you, I am proud to be associated with it and look forward to seeing it develop over the next few years.

Pie Girls take on the upper crust

Congratulations to Charlotte and Emily who are members of the Runshaw College hockey team that has recently won the North West Region Championship. They now look forward to April

when they will be playing at Loughborough University in the National finals and hopefully be proclaimed National Champions. Well done girls and good luck at Loughborough.



SEE YOUR CLUB ONLINE AT: www.boltonrugby.co.uk

Some of our greatest supporters...

Once again our thanks go to Club sponsors for 2008/9 season: **Keystone Distribution UK Ltd, VINCI Construction UK Ltd, Phoenix Commercial Collections & William Hare Group.**



Thanks to our new kit Sponsors

1st team playing shirts
Toshiba
1st team warm-up tops
Toshiba
4th team
OKI Printing Solutions
Under 9's
Beach Insurance Services
Under 17's
Union of the Rose
Junior players warm-up tops
Brabners Chaffe Street Highfield Dental Practice Admiral Leasing

Lowdown on the 1st & 2nds

1st XV by **Danny Joseph**
2nd XV by **Chris Turner**

Bolton's 1st XV have endured a tough season both on and off the pitch this season.

With over a dozen key players leaving in the close season, Bolton's recruitment drive unearthed some good talent, but unfortunately injury and work commitments have meant that Bolton have been working with a threadbare squad for the majority of the season. This has meant that Bolton's 1st XV have had to rely on inexperienced players to get them through the season, which has been a steep learning curve for many of the side. With the other sides on the league having clearly strengthened and recruited in the summer, Bolton have found themselves near the bottom of the table for much of the

season. This is not to say Bolton have been outclassed very often, but more a combination of mistakes and the inability to take chances have made Bolton their own worst enemy.

Despite the trials and tribulations on and off the field, Bolton as a club still field four senior teams, which is a huge achievement, and despite the losses this year, this season will undoubtedly give the 1st team squad valuable experience and make them more battle hardened for the seasons ahead.

The 2nd XV season has seen the squad transform from an everchanging list of players each week to a solid unit both on and off the field of play.

A tough start to the season saw a struggle to create any pace, and with the 1st XV regularly calling up players, the 2nds had failed to

generate any consistently until after Xmas when an influx of young players boosted the team..

It has become a main target for the 2nd XV Captain to maintain a strong bond within the squad by mixing young players with the older experienced ones. The season has seen Bolton lose matches in what is a strong league with big clubs fielding mix-match teams on different weeks. The 2nd XV currently sit mid-table and are looking to finish the season on a high, this high started only last weekend as they beat Eccles 2nd XV at Avenue Street...Bolton's 15 players beat an Eccles Squad of 22 on the day....an achievement that proves Bolton's 2nd XV have improved as a team, a squad, and as a unit.

The intention now is to continue the good form up until the end of the season, throughout the summer and have a running start to next season.



£10k dinner money

At this year's BRUFC Sportsman's dinner, 180 guests were treated to a terrific evening. Guest speaker Geoff Miller was in fine form and had the black-tie clad audience rolling in the aisles. MC Chris Giblin kept the evening going and found his calling with an impressive stint as our auctioneer, he helped raise over £10,000 for club funds and charity.

The charity items auctioned raised £1200 which will be donated to Malignant Melanoma Research Fund - Factor 50 at The Christie Hospital, a charity close to our hearts in memory of **Paul Tonge**.

A big thanks goes out to all those who donated a fantastic array of auction and raffle prizes, especially **Kev Spencer** and to Bolton School for hosting the event.



2009 British & Irish Lions
The Lions are on tour this year and the Club will be open to show all the Saturday games live on the big screen. Kick off for all games is 3pm and the bar will be open for refreshments.

30 May
LIONS v Highveld
6 Jun
LIONS v Cheetahs
13 Jun
LIONS v Western Province
20 June
LIONS v South Africa - 1st Test
27 June
LIONS v South Africa - 2nd Test
4 July
LIONS v South Africa - 3rd Test
Everyone welcome.

« Juniors grab David Campese

Here's a little gem - two of our Juniors in Australia meeting David Campese. Pictured left to right Alex Marr U16's, David Campese, George Marr U14's, Dad Nick Marr

SEE YOUR CLUB ONLINE AT: www.boltonrugby.co.uk



Club's Andy Leigh takes first place

Our very own Andy Leigh was awarded first place for 'Contribution to School Sports' at Bolton Sport and Physical Activity Awards.

He was awarded for commitment to school sport and development over the past 25 years.

"Andy's commitment to Physical Education at St. James CE School and Sports College, and for the Bolton PE Association over the past 25 years, has surely been second to none. His drive, dedication and determination are still as fresh today as they have always been, and he has the upmost regard of all his colleagues within Bolton who recognise him as the ideal person to lead the Association. This

is because of his vast knowledge and understanding in this area but also because he still recognises that all his work is done for the development of pupils in sport. He is someone who we all should aspire to be."

Also worth noting that Conor McGrath was short listed for Sports Achiever for his outstanding achievements in the areas of County Rugby, and National and International Wrestling. The competition in this category was immense and it was a real achievement to be shortlisted. Bolton Rugby Club recognise his successes and are proud to have him as an active member of the U16's side.

'Safe-hands' McGrath double act saves the day

Bolton Under 16's own dynamic duo, father and son team Connor and Shaun McGrath, recently made front page news and appeared on TV after they were hailed as heroes for saving a mother and her two children from a fire. Modest Connor said after catching the two children, when passed by their mother from a first floor window "I am a Rugby player so I've got quite good hands" Dad Shaun said "Connor did a wonderful job and I'm very proud of him"

Congratulations to you both we at the Rugby club are very proud of you both.



For a full report on this story please visit - <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/England/7947241.stm>



Gareth's over the Hill

Congratulations to Gareth Liles from the Under 16's, who won a competition at the recent Lexus tournament to visit St Albans RUFC for a training session with World Cup Winner Richard Hill the former England and Saracens player.

Full story on the Club Website: www.boltonrugby.co.uk



Girls elite go undefeated

Rebecca Trist (NW Vice-Captain) and Daisy Greaves

The Bolton girls selected for the elite NW squad - undefeated in Regional Matches and placed 3rd in National Regional Tournament at Litchfield.

YOUR NEWSLETTER NEEDS YOU!

Forget Facebook and MySpace - We want your funny pictures and club gossip, don't keep it to yourself, email it to: talkingballs@boltonrugby.co.uk

EMAIL YOUR PHOTOS, NEWS, STORIES - ANYTHING! ALL CONTRIBUTIONS GRATEFULLY RECEIVED



New members are required to help boost Club Fundraising. It's only £1 per week and there are 68 annual prizes drawn regularly throughout the year.
52 x £25.00,
12 x £50.00 and
4 x £250.00.

Contact Duncan Trench, ask at the bar or the Sunday morning desk for a standing order mandate.

If we can increase the membership by 70 that's the £18,000 RFF loan paid for without any impact on Club expenditure.



Email groups

The Club's email groups are a great way to keep in touch with what's happening at the club. BRUFC for Senior players, JuniorRugby for Junior players and WomensBRUFC for Womens players. Make sure you are 'on the groups'.

If you want to join send an email to groups@boltonrugby.co.uk stating which one you want to join.



A RECORD number of competitors from across the globe flocked to Ramsbottom on Sunday for the famous World Black Pudding Throwing Championships.

The annual competition attracted over seven-hundred throwers to the Royal Oak pub, Bridge Street, to see who could knock the most Yorkshire puddings off a 20 foot platform with three throws of a black pudding. In the junior contest 11-year-old Leon Taylor, repre-

senting Bolton RUFC's Under 11's, beat three rivals to take home the title in another head-to-head clincher. It was the second year for young Leon, who knocked off four Yorkshire puddings to go into a sudden death decider with three other under-16s. He said: "It's good fun throwing them. You've not got to throw them too hard and you've got to throw them up in the air. I'm really chuffed." The black pudding throwing contest has become a hugely popular event and put Ramsbottom on the global map.

BRUFC in the community

by **Scott Watson**
Bolton Rugby
Development Officer

Over the last 12 months I have been working with a number of schools, colleges, community centres and Bolton University delivering rugby union coaching.

The Bolton Emerging Schools League is up and running again this week after it's Winter break and is now the biggest in the North West. Last season saw over 20 new players from the schools joining the clubs junior section with many more joining the mini/midi teams. Bolton RUFC is now renewing its Seal Of Approval status which ensures a sound environment for young players to develop with all junior coaches being qualified and encouraged to attend CPD

workshops throughout the season. Bolton RUFC has been nominated to the RFU Presidents XV awards for the work its volunteers carry out on a regular basis across the whole club both on and off the field. Results will be announced in April. Bolton RUFC will be holding an Easter rugby camp on the 14th, 15th, 16th of April costing £30 per player open to players aged 8 to 15 (or any member of the junior section) and will also be holding a 2 day CPD workshop for older players on the 7th & 8th of April. Girls rugby is now picking up after joining forces with Eccles RUFC and the huge efforts of Richard Trist and Martin McCoy. There's now weekly training sessions between Eccles and Bolton RUFC with matches every 3rd week. A special mention must go to Daisy Greeves and Rebecca Trist who have both been selected for the North West U15 squad.

Club full of good cheer

The Bolton Beer Festival was hosted by the Rugby Club for the first time last October and proved an even bigger hit with drinkers than in previous years with over 6,000 people entering the tent generating a record breaking £40,000 for the Lads and Girls Club. So pleased were the organisers with the venue and help given by the Rugby Club that they have already booked the facilities for next year. The 2009 festival will be held at the Rugby Club from Wed 7th to Sunday 11th of October so put the dates in your diary. Anyone interested in Barrel Sponsorship at the event should contact Club Chairman Mark Brocklehurst for full details. The Club receives £75 for each Barrel Sponsor recommended by Mark, so you would be helping two great Community Clubs with your Sponsorship



Dates for your diary

**Junior Presentation
Sunday 26th April**

1pm Mini Section

2pm Midi Section

**Senior Presentation
Saturday 9th May**

(Inc Colts)

Live band and food.

Tickets £5 available soon.

Everybody welcome.

SEE YOUR CLUB ONLINE AT: www.boltonrugby.co.uk