



# Message from the Chairman of Playing



**Saturday 17th December 2011**

Good afternoon and welcome to Down Grange for the final league game of 2011. Today we welcome Cobham RFC who have had a mixed first half of the season. I had the pleasure of visiting Cobham for the away game, they have an excellent new clubhouse. In particular the changing rooms were exactly how we want ours to be. On the pitch it was a tight game that we edged and I expect today's game to be another close encounter. Cobham last week gained an excellent draw against our league leaders, Chichester, and it shows how tight the league is.

After a fantastic day on the 3rd December when the 1st XV drew, and the other two sides won, last weekend's results bought us back to earth. The 1st XV had a long trip to Guernsey, a 7.30am start for a 12.30pm kick off and we were comprehensively beaten. We are suffering a major injury crisis in the backs, at last count we had eleven out injured, which became twelve when Ceri Cummings was injured playing for the army on Wednesday evening. With players playing out of position to fill holes we struggled to get any fluency and Guernsey were deserved winners. Despite the loss we are only 7 points off the top of the table, hopefully with a number of the backs due back in the New Year we will be able to push on in the second half of the season

The Dragons secured a fantastic win against Chichester a fortnight ago, it was a great game and a well deserved victory. Last Saturday they travelled to Bournemouth, as with the 1sts they were short in the backs but were unlucky to lose. They played really well again and it shows how far the Dragons have improved over the last 6 months. Today they are home to Newbury 2's and will be looking for a victory to secure second place in the table, just behind Bournemouth.

The Griffins are at home as well today against Overton 2's, for what will be a very tough game. Last week they travelled away to Gosport and Fareham 3's and were edged out 17-10. They had more than enough chances to win the game and it is a sign of how far the team has progressed that the boys were very frustrated with the result. They are playing some great rugby at the moment and I would recommend watching what should be a great game today.

Our duty team today are BRFC U14's. They are coached by Mark Rushworth, who graced the 1st XV pitch on many occasions, and his excellent coaching team. They are currently leading Hampshire U14's Division 2 and three of their players have just been selected for Hampshire. They are going on tour this season and would appreciate your support for their fundraising today.

Finally, many congratulations to Emma and James Croker on the birth of Lucy Ann Margaret Croker. Both Mum and Daughter are well and I look forward to welcoming Lucy to BRFC U6's in 2017!

Merry Christmas to all and best wishes for 2012.

Richard Fitzpatrick, Chairman of Playing, Basingstoke RFC