



Chairman's Message



Saturday 17th December 2011

I would like to welcome Cobham Rugby Club to Down Grange for this afternoon's final league game prior to Christmas. We had a narrow victory against them at the beginning of the season and they had a very good result against Chichester, one of the two teams to beat us at home this year. We have two other home games here today, the second XV play Newbury and our third XV play Overton seconds. It will be a very busy day at the club.

We have three referees visiting today. Chris Whalen, of the Oxfordshire Society, referees our first XV, Doug Neagle referees our second XV and Peter Westley referees our third XV. They are very welcome to Down Grange.

The subject of referees continues to be a very important part of our game as Hampshire Referee Society have been advised by the Hampshire Rugby Union that only level 9 referees or above, can be in charge of under 19 games and I understand that Hampshire only have five such referees. This is significantly affecting the ability of academy rugby to fulfil their fixtures and I am uncertain as to how this can be changed. Quite clearly more referees are required and the importance of supporting and encouraging referees is of paramount significance.

We have no match sponsor today in view of it being our Christmas lunch, although I know Mark Flower will be in attendance as one of his sons Luke, plays for Cobham. Mark's opinions may shortly be of great value to the club, as we are expecting, prior to Christmas, to hear from the Council regarding our pre-application planning consent for our planned new clubhouse. The vibes appear to be good, but until we have heard from the actual planners, I am uncertain as to where we are.

I am sure that all of Basingstoke Rugby Club would like to congratulate Emma Croker, who hopefully will be at the lunch today, on the birth of her daughter, Lucy. I know everyone wishes both James and Emma the very best for the future. On this subject I think we would all like to congratulate James on his first few months at Basingstoke Rugby Club, not only has he brought us success but he has instilled a fantastic atmosphere amongst the players and the highest numbers at training that I remember seeing for years. Well done to James and his Team.

I would like to wish everyone at Basingstoke Rugby Club a very Happy Christmas, a prosperous New Year and I look forward to seeing everyone back at our next league game on 14 January 2012, when we entertain Portsmouth. Finally a reminder that on 27 January 2012 it is the club's Burns Supper, I do require everyone's support.

Enjoy your afternoon at Down Grange.

Steve Tristram, Chairman, Basingstoke RFC