



Touchline

June 2015

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Planning for next Season

Having beaten GHA in the play-off at the end of April, County's 1st XV retained their place in next season's BT Premiership. Playing in the top-tier of club rugby in Scotland is hugely important to our Club both on and off the field, and planning for next season's campaign is already well underway.

It was particularly pleasing to see our Under-18s and Under-15s enjoying end of season success, winning their respective Caledonia Cup competitions, which following on from our Under-16s National Youth League Cup success, further demonstrates that County remain at the fore-front of rugby development in Scotland.

With forthcoming changes by the Scottish Rugby Union to Schools and Club Youth rugby from 2015/16, our Midi / Youth teams (S1 to Under-18s), will be playing against their counterparts from top club sides across the country in a new tiered playing structure. To address this, and to build on our highly-regarded and successful Junior section, we will take forward an 'academy of rugby' approach, from P3 to Under-18, to ensure our young rugby players continue to enjoy the highest level of skills development through the age-grades. We have also produced an on-line 'prospectus' showcasing County's junior rugby development opportunities and programme.

Infrastructure Investments at Bridgehaugh

To support our rugby development programmes, I am delighted to announce that the Club has been awarded a grant of £46,000 from Sportscotland as match funding towards the cost of our new strength and conditioning gym facility at Bridgehaugh. The Club will fund the other 50% of this key infrastructure project, with building and equipment costs totalling £92,000. This is another significant investment by the Club in our facilities, and an important element in further supporting the development of our players, to enable them to compete at the highest levels of the sport. It is expected that the purpose-built strength and conditioning facility will be operational in the Autumn (further details in this Newsletter).

We have recently completed the upgrading of our functions 'Marquee' at Bridgehaugh, with provision of a new entrance, permanent bar, upgraded toilets and additional storage. Refurbishment of the Lounge Bar area will be undertaken next. The hire of our facilities is a vital year-round income source to our Club, and we are undertaking a targeted marketing campaign to increase the level of bookings. Please promote our facilities to your families, friends and work colleagues as an accessible and affordable venue to host celebrations, parties, receptions and a range of other events. We have also invested £15,000 in essential upgrading of the electrical circuits within the older part of our Clubhouse, to ensure this is fit-for-purpose for the future. The floor of the players' shower room will also be replaced, and going forward we are embarking on a phased-programme of upgrading the players' and referees' changing facilities.

Sponsorship Opportunities

Sponsorship is a vitally important income stream to your Club, and we are extremely grateful to the companies who have and continue to provide valuable financial support to Stirling County RFC.

We would welcome other businesses and individuals to join us and become part of our successful Stirling County brand, thereby helping us to further develop rugby. If you are aware of any companies or individuals who may wish to support the Club in this way, please let me know and I will be delighted to discuss the range of sponsorship opportunities that we can offer. My contact details are:

Kevin.robertson78@btinternet.com

Dates for Your Diary

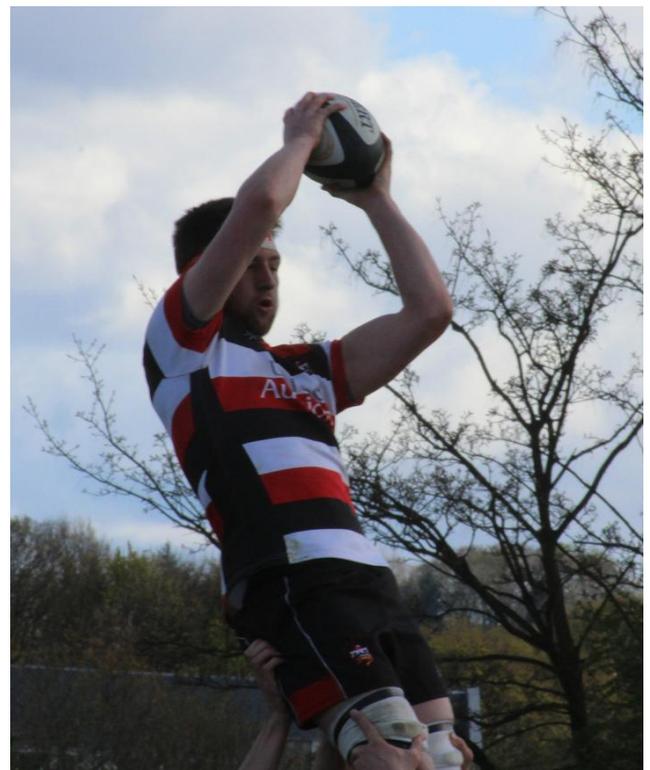
We are holding our **Captain's XV v President's XV match**, along with the resurrected 'goal-kicking' competition and other entertaining at our end-of-season finale – an afternoon of fun in the sun for all the family at Bridgehaugh on **Saturday 30th May**. Please come along and witness a spectacle – all welcome (further details in this Newsletter).

Stirling County RFC's **Annual General Meeting** will be held on **Thursday 11th June** at 7:00pm in the Clubrooms at Bridgehaugh Park, when new Office-Bearers and Board of Directors will be elected for 2015/16. All Club Members are invited to attend the AGM, and an agenda has been posted on the Club's website.

As your retiring President, I would like to thank you for your support over the past three years.

Finally, on behalf of the Committee of Stirling County RFC, we would like to express our appreciation for your continued commitment to our Club, and hope you have an enjoyable and relaxing summer.

Kevin Robertson
President



New Strength & Conditioning Facility at Bridgehaugh

Stirling County RFC is building a new purpose-built Strength & Conditioning facility at Bridgehaugh Park. This £92,000 infrastructure investment will provide an on-site facility to aid the physical development of the Club's youth and senior players, and will support County's Rugby Academy and player development programmes.

This project is being part-funded by a £46,000 grant by **sportscotland**, with the Club meeting the remaining 50% of the cost.

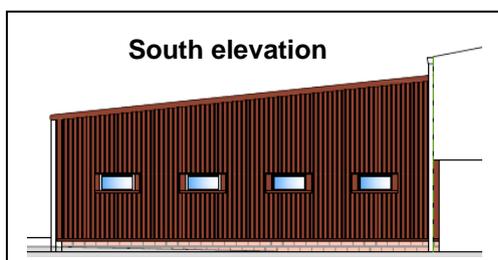
Construction is due to commence in June and is scheduled to take four months to complete and fit-out, with the facility expected to be operational by early Autumn.

President Kevin Robertson, in welcoming the funding contribution from **sportscotland**, said "the new strength and conditioning facility is an essential component of Stirling County RFC's Rugby Development Plan, and a key infrastructure investment which will benefit players at all levels across our Club, improving their fitness and physical condition required to play the sport at the highest level of competition. County is rightly recognised as leading the development of age grade players, and our new gym will also play a central role in taking forward our recently established Rugby Academy, which aims to further develop our youth players. This project, which will replace our out-dated and restrictive gym room, will also benefit the wider development of the sport, linking in with Scottish Rugby's new regional academies."

Commenting on the investment from the **sportscotland** Sport Facilities Fund, Louise Martin, Chair of **sportscotland**, said: "We are delighted to be supporting Stirling County RFC as they strive to provide improved facilities for their senior and youth players. **sportscotland** is committed to maximising the opportunities for children, young people, and communities to be involved in sport and this investment shows our commitment to help build a world-class sporting system for everyone in Scotland, which will inspire future generations to be the best they can be."

This new purpose built facility will provide over 150 sq. metres of additional space, which will house a range of strength and conditioning equipment, including multiple conditioning platforms for specific individual player development.

The new Strength & Condition Facility will be built adjoining the existing Sports Hall at Bridgehaugh, with a separate controlled entrance. Elevations of the new building are illustrated below:



Sponsorship Opportunities

Sponsorship is also a very important income stream to your Club, and we are extremely grateful to the companies who have and continue to provide valuable financial support to Stirling County RFC.

We would welcome other businesses and individuals to join us and become part of our successful Stirling County brand, thereby helping us to further develop rugby both at the Club and across our local communities. If you know of any companies or individuals who may wish to support the Club in this way, please contact Kevin Robertson at: Kevin.robertson78@btinternet.com, who will be pleased to discuss the range of sponsorship opportunities that we offer.

Under-18s and Under-15s Caledonia Cup Success

Stirling County's Under-18s beat Perthshire/Blairgowrie 22-20, with a last minute penalty, to lift the Caledonia Under-18 Cup in a closely contested final at Madras RFC.

County's Under-15s made it a double with an impressive 36 - 0 victory over Highland to win the Caledonia Under-15 Cup in St. Andrews.

Great performances by County's young players - a superb way to end the season.

Archie & Lewis at World Rugby Under-20 Championships



Good luck to **Archie Russell** and **Lewis Wynne** who are in the Scotland Under-20 squad competing in World Rugby's Under-20 Championships in Italy. Scotland's pool matches schedule as follows:

Scotland Under-20s World Rugby Under 20 Championship Pool Fixtures (all times GMT)

- Tuesday 2 June: **New Zealand v Scotland** -
Stadio XXV Aprile, Parma (KO 7.30pm)
- Saturday 6 June: **Ireland v Scotland** -
Stadio San Michele, Calvisano (KO 3.30pm)
- Wednesday 10 June: **Argentina v Scotland** - Stadio
San Michele, Calvisano (KO 3.30pm)

The tournament will be covered by BT Sport television.

Stirling County 200 Club

Latest winners

£200 Alan Cheatham
£100 Andrew McAllister
£50 Tommy Wright
£50 John Mitchell
£50 Pete Cooley

200 Club prize draws are made at rugby club events or home matches each month, with winners receiving cash prizes of £200, £100 and three £50 winners.. There is also a Christmas Bonus prize of £1,000 and a Summer prize of £500. All proceeds from the 200 Club go directly into supporting the development of rugby at all levels within your club, thereby continuing to ensure that through developing our own rugby talent, Stirling County remains at the forefront of the game in Scotland.

We are keen to increase participation in this key fundraising initiative, and encourage all members, players, supporters and parents of junior members to join the 200 Club, which costs only £5 per month paid by bank standing order. **To join the 200 Club**, please e-mail or phone **Derek Young** at derekyoung54@hotmail.com or 01324-822513.

Captain's XV v President's XV Saturday 30th May

STIRLING COUNTY THIRDS are hosting a Captain's XV v President's XV Match on Saturday 30th 2015 at Bridgehaugh Park – Kick-off 1:30pm

This promises to be a Rugby Bonanza featuring Stars from the Past, Present and Future....

- Faces from the County Title-Winning 1995 squad
- "Caley Cup" winning under 18's Young Bucks
- Ally and Henny dust off their boots
- Representatives from the Local Caledonian Clubs
-and special guest appearances!

Entertainment includes.... **BBQ / LIVE MUSIC / BOUNCY CASTLE / KICKING COMPETION / BEER PONG** for the brave!

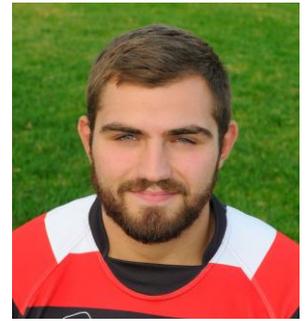
County President Kevin Robertson said "this promises to be a great afternoon's entertainment for all, with plenty of action on and off the pitch, and is a fantastic way to end the season, meet up with old friends and raise funds for a most worthwhile cause. We will see 'stars' of the past, present and future play their part in the main event, with the goal-kicking contest a challenge for all. Everyone is welcome and admission is free, so come along and spend a few enjoyable hours in the sunshine at Bridgehaugh Park".

All funds raised on the day will be donated to Strathcarron Hospice.

Come on down and have some family fun in the sun

Jamie is Player of the Year

Congratulations to loose-head prop **Jamie Bhatti**, who has won Stirling County's Player of the Season Award for 2014/15. Runner-up was forward **Shuan McDonald**, with centre / stand-off **Fraser Lyle** in third place.



County's Player of the Season, sponsored by John Graham (Metals) Limited, is a summation of the Man of the Match votes awarded for all BT Premiership matches throughout the season.

The Player of the Year final standings were:

Jamie Bhatti	17	Alex Black	5
Shaun McDonald	11	Cammy Fenton	3
Fraser Lyle	9	Rory Hughes	3
Lewis Wynne	8	Garry Mountford	2
Stevie Neil	7	Aubrey Mncube	2
Ruaridh Leishman	7	John Brogan	2
Jonny Hope	5	Struan Robertson	2
Ali Price	5	Reyner Kennedy	1
Danny Gilmour	5	Euan Dewar	1

Thanks to **John Graham (Metals) Limited** for again sponsoring the Stirling County Man of the Match / Player of the Season Awards.



Club Shop

The Club Shop is now closed for the summer period. Thank you to all parents and club members who have patronised the shop during the season. Shop takings were in excess of £10,000 with all profits going to club funds. Looking ahead to next season, volunteers are sought to help staff the shop on Saturday mornings and selected Wednesday evenings. If you could help in any way, please contact Alastair Cunningham at alandishbel2@btinternet.com.

Midi Rugby Awards 2015



Stirling County celebrated their junior rugby achievements of the past season, at their Annual Midi Rugby Awards Dinner held at Bridgehaugh on Friday 22 May.

Players, coaches and officials from S1, S2, Under-15s and Under-16s attended their end-of-season event, along with the P7 players who will move up from the Club's mini rugby section next season.

This was another highly-successful season for the Club at Midi age-grade level, with County's Under-16s finishing Joint National Youth League Cup holders and runner's up in the Under-16 National Youth League, while the Under-15s won a Caledonia League and Cup double. County's S1 and S2 teams competed against teams from across Scotland and beyond with many notable victories.

Each age-grade team's Head Coach reviewed their squad's season achievements and made the awards for the 'Most Improved Player' (as selected by the coaches) and the Player of the Year (as voted for by the players), as follows:

S1: Most Improved Player – **Andrew Richmond.**

Player of the Year – **Euan Cunningham.**

S2: Most Improved Player – **Sam Dickson.**

Player of the Year – **Brian Tean.**

U15: Most Improved Player – **Derek Sneddon.**

Player of the Year – **Euan Clark.**

U16: Most Improved Player – **Fraser Gallagher.**

Player of the Year – **Connor Clarke.**

County's Under-15s gave a presentation on their Easter tour to south-west France where they competed in the prestigious Orthez Tournament. The Ian McNeillage Memorial Trophy was presented to Morgan Bown (Under-15).

Club President Kevin Robertson who hosted the awards evening, reflected on the youngsters' success, saying "the future of rugby at Stirling County looks very bright with so many talented young rugby players developing their skills through all the junior age groups at Bridgehaugh. County are rightly recognised as having one of the finest junior rugby development set-ups in the country, demonstrated by the high standard of play and success of our age-grade teams, and the number of players who go on to play at the highest level in club rugby, with the opportunity to progress to professional and international teams. Stirling County will continue to build on our successful 'Rugby Academy' approach, as we invest in the future of our sport. I would particularly thank all the junior coaches, team managers, volunteers, parents and sponsors for their support and efforts, and to the players for their enthusiasm and commitment - I am sure all are looking forward to next season."

Mini Rugby Success for County at Home Tournament

Stirling County's annual Mini Rugby Tournament 2015 proved a great success, with the home teams winning three out of the four age group competitions. Teams from all over Scotland took part at Primary 4 to 7 age groups. Medal winners were as follows:-



P4:

Winners: Stirling County – Monument

Runners-up: Marr.



P5:

Winners: Stirling County – Monument

Runners-up: West of Scotland.



P6:

Winners: Perthshire

Runners-up: Stirling County – Castle.



P7:

Winners: Stirling County – Castle

Runners-up: Stirling County – Monument.

Thanks to all Mini rugby coaches, team managers, volunteers, parents and sponsors, for making Mini Rugby at Bridgehaugh Park a continuing success.

County's Mini Rugby End-of-Season Player Awards will be held next Saturday morning (30th May) at Bridgehaugh.

International Tickets

As the International Season starts early this year we have to have applications in for the Season Pass by 17th August. As usual it is great value and allows you an opportunity to go to a Scotland training session. There are no Autumn Internationals but there is a friendly game against Italy on the 29th August.

Prices for the pass are as follows:

East/West Stand (Gold Area)	£195
North/South Stands/East/West Corners (Silver)	£135
North/South Rear/West Upper & Lower (Bronze) Corners	£100

For further information and to order passes/tickets, please contact Bob Buchanan at bobbbuch51@yahoo.co.uk.

**Midnight Sparkle Walk in Aid of
Strathcarron Hospice – starting
from Bridgehaugh Park**

Strathcarron Hospice
**Midnight Sparkle
Walk**
featuring a Pre-Walk
Midsummer Shindig
with live entertainment
Saturday, 20th June, 2015
Midsummer Shindig 9.30 p.m.
Walk commences Midnight



***Come on Ladies, join in this 5km or 10km
charity walk, have a great time, and raise
valuable funds for Strathcarron Hospice.
This mid-summer night walk starts and
finishes at Bridgehaugh Park.***



**County Under-15s
Tour to France – 2016**

In early April 2016 Stirling County's Under-15 squad (circa 35 players and 5 coaches) will be travelling to the South of France to play against some of the best French opposition in the Aquitaine Region.

Our Under-15s are seeking sponsorship to help with the costs of the trip and are offering a range of sponsorship opportunities for supporting businesses to advertise not only in France but also in Scotland, as the team will continue to use their branded merchandise after the tour.

If you are interested in this sponsorship opportunity to support our Under-15 Tour, please contact Peter Withington at pjwrugby@btinternet.com or on 07901 515918.

**Opportunity to 'Tackle Rugby' –
13th to 16th July**

Stirling County RFC are holding their annual 'Tackle Rugby' week when young players from the ages of 6 – 15, regardless of ability, will be able to try their hand at the sport or further develop their rugby skills, in a combination of indoor and outdoor events, with an emphasis on enjoyment, under the supervision of qualified coaches.

'Tackle Rugby' will be held from Monday 13th to Thursday 16th July at Bridgehaugh Park, with four full-day sessions.

For full details of this popular event and booking form, please visit Stirling County RFC's website at: <http://www.stirlingcounty-rfc.co.uk/> or contact Stewart Milne, County's Rugby Development Officer, at stewart.milne@outlook.com or phone 07940 559883.

**Stirling County RFC AGM –
Thursday 11th June 2015**

Stirling County Rugby Football Club's Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 11 June at 7pm in the Clubhouse at Bridgehaugh Park.

AGM notifications, with details of motions and nominations for election of Club Office Bearers and Directors, can be viewed on the Club's website at: <http://www.stirlingcounty-rfc.co.uk/> .

All Club Members invited to attend the AGM.

**Thank you to all volunteers who have
helped with the running of the Club in
Season 2014-15 – your assistance is
very much appreciated.**