

Match Programme:

Saturday 23 February 2013 : Stirling County v Gala (RBS Premiership)

President's Message

A very good afternoon and welcome to Bridgehaugh.

I extend a warm welcome to Gala President George Marshall, his committee, coaches, players and travelling supporters, and to our match officials. I hope you will enjoy our Bridgehaugh hospitality.

Gala have had a successful season, playing an open style of running rugby under the leadership of their Head Coach George Graham, a former Bridgehaugh stalwart and key part of County's championship winning squad in the early nineties. George's sons Garry and George (Jnr) are keeping up the family tradition, and have been pivotal in Gala's rise over the past few seasons. Gala are vying with Ayr in what has been for sometime a two-horse race for the RBS Premiership title, and the Netherdale side gave a very good account of themselves in their British & Irish Cup debut with notable victories over English Championship sides London Scottish and Moseley.

Today's Premiership match promises to be another exciting encounter, with a win vital to both sides' ambitions. In what has been the most competitive top flight for years, there are currently only eight points separating third to ninth position. With British & Irish Cup qualification and relegation places to be decided over the next month, I have no doubt the drama will go right down to the final matches.

Last Saturday, in an amazing finale, County recorded a vital bonus-point win at Currie, and we will be looking to carry this form forward into today's match and the forthcoming league fixtures in March. Next week we focus our attention on the Scottish Cup, with County drawn away to Ayr in the quarter-final. Why not come down to Millbrae and support the lads in their efforts to win the national cup competition for the first time.

This afternoon our 2nd XV are away to Dundee, looking to build on last week's resounding five-try win at Currie in National Reserve League One. Our 3rd XV / Bridgehaugh entertain Panmure in Midland League Four. Having won their opening three matches in Premier 2, our Women's team are looking to continue their 100% record at home to Broughton tomorrow (Sunday) – kick-off 2pm.

I am pleased to report that our Under-18s, current holders of the Youth League Cup, have reached the semi-final of the national competition with wins over Hamilton and Highland, and entertain Ayr (date to be confirmed) in the play-off for a place in the final at Murrayfield. After defeating Gala Red Triangle, our Under-16s travel to Melrose for their National U-16 Youth League Cup quarter-final on Sunday 3 March. Our Under 15s have also reached the quarter-final stage of the Caledonia U-15 Cup. We wish all our youngsters every success in their forthcoming cup matches.

It's great to see County continue to be well represented on the international front. I congratulate four of our young players who played in the successful Scotland Under-20 Six-Nations side – Adam Ashe, Jamie Bhatti, Rory Hughes and Ruaridh Leishman, along with Adam Sinclair who is on sabbatical to Perpignan and Glasgow Warriors centre Mark Bennett, who has played for County this season. Also congratulations to Sean Kennedy who starred at scrum-half for Scotland 'A' in their recent win over England Saxons, and along with Grant Gilchrist are in the senior Six Nations training squad. The form of Stuart Edwards, Danny Gilmour and Mike McDonald has also been recognised with their involvement in the Club International training squad. If you are not going to Murrayfield or further afield, come down to the Club and watch the Six Nations matches live on TV and enjoy the banter.

Thanks to our main sponsor Ondeo Industrial Solutions and to today's table sponsors – your valuable support of County at all levels is greatly appreciated.

I hope you all enjoy your rugby and your afternoon at Bridgehaugh.

Kevin Robertson
President