

Match Programme:

Saturday 20 September 2014 : Stirling County v Ayr (BT Premiership)

President's Message

Good afternoon and welcome to our latest BT Premiership encounter against our old friends from Ayr.

I extend a warm welcome to Ayr President Billy McHarg and his travelling committee, coaches, players and supporters. I hope you enjoy our hospitality at Bridgehaugh.

Ayr, like County, have won two out of three matches in this season's league campaign, and both sides will be looking to regain the winning habit after last weekend's respective defeats. Although it is early days, the BT Premiership is again proving to be highly competitive, with all of the sides having lost at least one match.

This season Ayr are under the guidance of former player and new Head Coach Calum Forrester, and I expect the men from Millbrae to again be amongst the front-runners with a breadth of talent and experience across their squad.

After a solid start to the campaign, our boys will be looking to put the result at Goldenacre behind them, and will be keen to get on to the Bridgehaugh pitch and make amends with a strong performance.

It's not just BT Premiership points that are at stake this afternoon. There is an added incentive for both teams as today's match also sees the two clubs play for the 'Càirdeas Quaich' for the first time - a trophy generously introduced by local company **United Auctions**, Stirling County RFC's new main sponsor who also have a long association with Ayr RFC. 'Càirdeas' means 'friendly relation' in Gaelic, and the aptly named trophy will be contested in all future 1st XV meetings between the sides at either Millbrae or Bridgehaugh.

I also welcome today's match officials, and ask that you treat them with good humour and most importantly respect.

My thanks to this afternoon's match sponsor **Ondeo Industrial Solutions** and to our table sponsors, your valuable support of Stirling County RFC is greatly appreciated.

It is pleasing to see our 2nd XV, under the direction of Alan Blair, starting the season well and leading the National Reserve League One. Today the Seconds put their 100% record to the test at home to Ayr, while our Thirds, with a few weel kent faces in the team, are away to Crieff & Strathearn in Caledonia Midland Division 3 West.

It's also great to see our Under-18s and Under-16s continue their winning starts in their respective National Youth Leagues last weekend, and our junior sides having the opportunity to play Merchiston School at Bridgehaugh. With our established Rugby Academy starting its second year, the development of our young players continues to progress well. Our Women's team put in an improved showing against RHC Cougars in their latest Premier League match, and I am sure they will soon get on their winning ways.

This Monday evening (22 September), Glasgow Warriors play Edinburgh Rugby in a back-up squad match at Bridgehaugh, providing an opportunity to see many of the professional and elite development players in action - kick-off is 5pm.

Many of you will already have paid your membership subscription for the coming season – thank you. If you have still to do so please can you return your membership form and remittance as soon as possible. Membership fees are an important source of income to your club. Full members gain free admission to all home BT Premiership matches and can access discounted bar prices and other Club promotions – great value!

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

Kevin Robertson
President