



Newcastle University RFC



**Newcastle University RFC
Vice-Presidents' Association Newsletter**

In Touch

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Farewell to John Fenn, Director of Rugby

Welcome to a new rugby season, which has seen certain changes.

John Fenn, our Director of Rugby for the past 7 years, decided to retire in July, due to increased family commitments. The University have now appointed Tom Wilkinson as new Director of Rugby, but on a full-time basis, rather than John's part-time role.

In his final year, John managed to see the 1st XV maintain their Premiership status. The 4th XV had an impressive season, losing only two games in total, achieving promotion into North Conference 2B. Special thanks to coach Steve Combe, who led the team well all season. The 3rd XV also maintained their league status however, despite their best efforts, the 2nd XV were relegated. This has resulted in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th teams all playing in North Conference 2B this season, a unique situation I think!

The season was once again hampered by long-term injury to many key players. In addition, the lure of easy money from local clubs such as Blaydon and Tynedale deprived the University of a number of quality players.

John wanted to leave on a high, and addressed all teams in preparation for the Stan Calvert games. A demand of no less than a clean sweep was asked for and this was duly delivered. All 4 men's teams and the women's team won their respective matches, a 5-0 whitewash, to the delight of everyone!

The rugby girls, always full of enthusiasm, fielded 2 teams in BUCS leagues. Thanks to John's negotiated deal with the WRFU, Northumberland RFU and the RFU, a full-time girl's coach has now been appointed, Scott Powell. This should secure the development of Women's rugby at the University for the foreseeable future.

John now hopes to act as Chairman of the VP's Association, endeavouring to raise funds to assist the continued progress of rugby at Newcastle. Any help, advice or indeed donations would be gratefully accepted.

Our deepest thanks to John, for his many years service as Director of rugby. Enjoy your retirement!

Words from Incoming Director of Rugby Tom Wilkinson

We have one win from four games in the BUCS Championship. So it is vital for team morale that we beat Northumbria at Kingston Park on Wednesday evening (16.11.11).

However, there is keen competition for selection with everyone in the squad fit and raring to go for what is always a fiercely contested encounter.

The reluctance of National Division One clubs Blaydon and Tynedale to release students for some of our matches is a problem but the lads themselves are willing to turn out whenever they can.

Fortunately the likes of Sam Northcote-Green, who is on Wasps books, Ben Morris who plays for Leeds Carnegie and Rory Bell, who has been brought into the Scotland Under 20's training squad, are available this Wednesday. New coaches Tim Swinson, Ed Williams and Gavin Beasley will be there to assess our performance.

We beat Northumbria in the league last year and whitewashed all four of their male sides – and their women's – in the Stan Calvert Cup, so they will be bent on revenge.

Since becoming Director of Rugby this season I have been impressed by the time, effort and commitment of captain Richard Walker Taylor and his squad. They are enthusiastic about developing their rugby skills – not only towards helping Newcastle do well but also to develop their ability to go on enjoying the sport when they leave us. Meanwhile their priority (and mine too) is to boost us up the BUCS league and the coaches will do their best to help them at every level of the club.

As far as Wednesday goes I hope it is a cold night so that I can wear tracksuit bottoms to avoid parading in the new tight, white, buttocks-hugging shorts the lads have given me!

Stewart Evans Memorial Trophy

It was decided that a fitting way to honour and remember our late President, Professor Stewart Evans, was to award annually the Stewart Evans Memorial Trophy to the winners of the home BUCS match against Durham University.

This was initiated on March 16th 2011 at Cochrane Park. VP members, regular supporters of our 1st XV and Durham officials were invited to a pre-match buffet. The trophy was presented by Stewart's wife Pat to the winning captain. On this occasion, unfortunately, it was the Durham captain who stepped up to accept the lovely glass trophy, which was bought with funds from our VP's Association.

The fixture this season will be held on November 23rd, probably at the ground at Heaton (Medicals) where our 1st XV fixtures are currently being scheduled. It would be great and fitting to see a good crowd for the occasion.

Stewart Evans Bursary Award

The University will award a bursary annually to a rugby-playing student, chosen by the Sport Performance Manager and the Director of Rugby. The amount awarded is £1,250. It is known as the Stewart Evans Bursary Award and was presented last October by Pat Evans to the first recipient, Sam Shires.

You can keep up to date with all rugby news by visiting our club website at www.nurfc.co.uk.

Support our teams!!

For all fixtures see attached document.