

ISSUE
#39

- The -
ROSE

MARCH 2024

YOUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER KEEPING YOU UPDATED
WITH ALL THAT'S HAPPENING ON AND OFF THE
PITCH AT THE GREENYARDS



INSIDE... SEVENS PREVIEW • YOUTH SURVEY RESULTS • SRU LEAGUE RE-STRUCTURE • DOUG CRAWFORD • STEVIE HOLISZ

EXCITEMENT BUILDS FOR

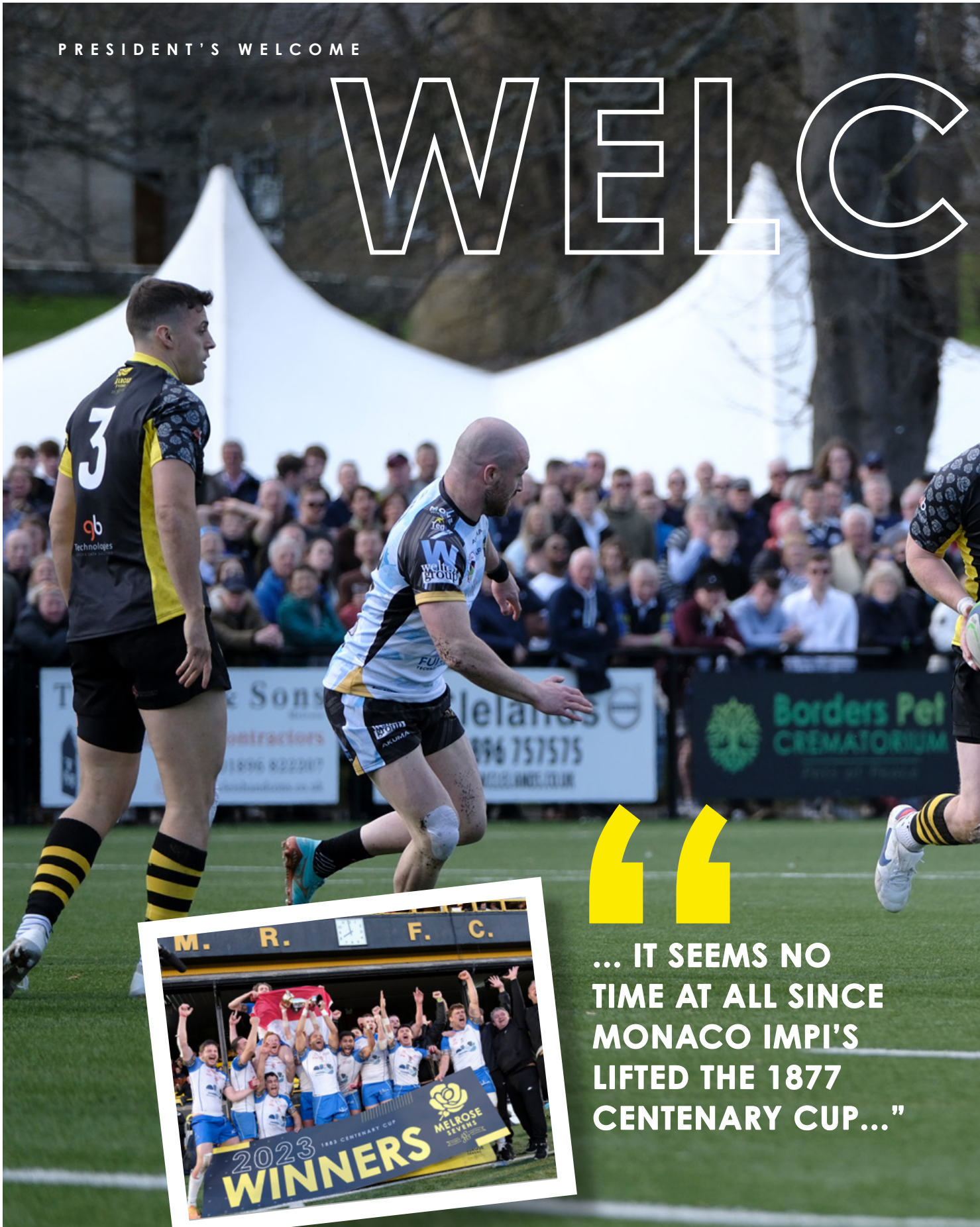
MELROSE SEVENS

2024



PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

WELC



“

... IT SEEMS NO TIME AT ALL SINCE MONACO IMPI'S LIFTED THE 1877 CENTENARY CUP...”





WELCOME!



WELCOME to the March edition of The Rose. Results over the last few weeks have summed up the season really. Defeat in the final seconds of the match at Glasgow Accies in our last National league game, a draw at Peebles, with the opposition scoring in the closing minute, and a great win at the Greenyards against Kelso. Melrose have been playing some very entertaining rugby and when we put together 80 minutes we are a match for anyone. We just need to be more consistent. Saying that, we are still in the running for the Border League, with fixtures against Hawick at Mansfield and against Jed at Riverside on the 4th April still to come.

The Kelso game was postponed at the start of the month but we still went ahead with the Farmer's Dinner. A huge thanks to Doug Runciman for organising the tables and auction lots. Over £6,400 was raised for MND. Thanks to everyone who donated and bid for lots and to auctioneer Dave McGahey for squeezing every penny out of those present. Thanks also to those who donated raffle prizes which raised over £1,000.

Now that the SRU have decided the fate of the Super Series we can all look to the future with some certainty. Melrose will be back in the Premiership next season and competing for top honours. I think it will be an interesting season as things settle down and players find their feet in the new set up. Time will tell. Read Rob Moffat's thoughts inside.

Talking of time, it seems no time at all since Monaco Impi's lifted the 1877 Centenary Cup on that beautiful evening back in April 2023. It's only a few days now until the 2024 Melrose Sevens weekend kicks off with the Jackson Distillers Sevens Hall of Fame Dinner hosted by Happiness is Egg Shaped Bruce Aitchison. Inductees this year are Gala's Arthur 'Hovis' Brown, and Carl Hogg and Ross McCann from Melrose. It promises to be a great Egg Shaped night. Friday 12th will be another busy day starting with the Merchiston Castle coaching clinic at 10am followed by the Drummond Cup at 2pm and the Wasps U18 tournament for the Jim Telfer Cup at 5.30pm. If the rugby is half as good as last year's, we are in for a great day. Friday closes with the Celebration of Women in Sport awards dinner starting at 6pm. Gates open on the Sevens Saturday at 10am with the first tie kicking off at 11.04. The women's tournament for the Mike Bleasdale trophy kicks off at 3.36pm. TV coverage will be on the BBC iPlayer from 4:30pm, with the entire day's proceedings available for viewing on the Melrose Sevens YouTube channel.

Rugby at the Greenyards continues after the Sevens weekend with the Knights starting the final Sprint series on Friday 19th April against Boroughmuir Bears. A good young squad are looking to go out with a bang.

That's all for now, enjoy this month's Rose, and hopefully see you at The Sevens.

GRANT HOGG
PRESIDENT, MELROSE RUGBY



STEVIE HOLISZ

STEVIE HOLISZ

BRENDAN MOLLOY CHATS TO THE SENIOR SQUAD TEAM MANAGER, STEVIE HOLISZ

I RECENTLY caught up with Steve Holisz to find out about his life in rugby and how he fits in the busy senior squad team manager role with a demanding career.

'I'm a St Boswell's boy. I started playing rugby at the age of 8... Crichton Cup and all that. I played in all sorts of positions... winger, scrum half, even flanker. Then at 22 I moved to Leicestershire with work, and played for Hinkley - I had to drive past 3 other clubs to get there but they wore black and yellow! Some years back, we moved the family back up to Scotland where I qualified as a Chartered Surveyor now working in Edinburgh for the world's largest property consultancy. I live just outside Lauder, so I'm in the car a lot between home, Edinburgh and the club.'

And how did you get into the Team Manager role?

"When my son Joe started playing, I was helping out with the mini coaching...with Scott Wight, Kev Brown and other parents. Then, during Covid, I had a conversation with Moff which led to me coming on board as a Team Manager. There were four of us to start with (Robbie Brown, Gus Redburn, Iain Lindsay and myself), eventually looking after the whole Senior Squad, but over time this has settled down to myself and Iain sharing the role."

And, forgive me for asking, but what does a Team Manager do?

"We make sure the coaches, players, physios and medical staff have everything they need in order to deliver to the best of their abilities. This could be anything from clean kit, correct kit (Steve is already thinking about shirt logos for next season!), pre- and post-match food, transport to away games etc. But to be honest it's more than this. It's about being there, particularly for the young lads coming through. It's not just about getting rugby results, it's about helping the squad become better people. I believe we're good at providing a 'safe place' to lads at the club who need to open up, to get support and to not be afraid to ask for help."

You have a demanding career, and I know you commit a lot of your spare time to Melrose Rugby. So why do you do it?

"I suppose I missed rugby after I stopped playing. I enjoy being around the squad and the coaching team - there's a sense of camaraderie and togetherness on a Tuesday and Thursday evening at training, and on a Saturday of a match, that I love. Helping people achieve their potential - that's very rewarding, and the lads are extremely grateful - they acknowledge how much effort we put into the finer detail of things. And there are some great days on the pitch....I loved last year's success in the King of the Sevens - that was special."





...IT'S ABOUT BEING THERE, PARTICULARLY FOR THE YOUNG LADS COMING THROUGH..."

Something I always ask: what are your thoughts on the future direction of the club?

"Things are uncertain at the moment, especially with the changes to the Super Six. Until things are clear, it will naturally be unsettling, and challenging. But with change comes opportunity, and I believe we are in a good place to adapt and overcome these challenges."

Finally, what three words would you use to describe yourself?

"1. Organised - I'm always thinking ahead, I think it's the Project Management side of my day job - what's coming up next week, next month, next year?"

"2. Positive - I like to present a positive attitude to the lads, even when things are a bit mayhem - the boys don't need to know what's going on behind the scenes!"

"3. Fun - Have the craic, if you're not enjoying yourself, there's no point in doing it!"

Thanks Steve, it was a pleasure to meet up.

To take the 'three word' theme further, I asked a random selection of Senior Squad players what three words they would use to describe Steve...



SAM DERRICK

**Committed;
(Very) Sociable;
Hard-working**



STRUAN HUTCHISON

**Integral;
Dedicated;
Professional**



DOUG CRAWFORD

**Committed;
Comedian;
Clubman**



RUAIRIDH LINDSAY

**Passionate;
Organised;
Humorous**



DONALD CRAWFORD

**Hungry;
Selfless;
GOAT**



TAM BROWN

**Devoted;
Enthusiastic;
Selfless**

So, as you see Steve, I think it's safe to say you are really appreciated by the lads!



MELROSE SEVENS

ANNA CHANGLING

SATURDAY
13
APRIL

THE MELROSE SEVENS weekend kicks off with the Jackson Distillers Hall of Fame Dinner on Thursday 11th April at 7pm. This event will witness the induction of three rugby luminaries – Carl Hogg, Arthur 'Hovis' Brown, and Ross McCann – into the Melrose Sevens Hall of Fame. It's an evening of reflection, reminiscence, and homage to those who have left a mark on the sport.

Youth development and the celebration of women in sports take precedence on Friday 12th. The day starts with the Merchiston Junior Coaching Clinic at 10am, which aims to nurture budding talent and instill a passion for rugby from a young age. As the afternoon unfolds, youth matches and the Melrose Wasps U-16s Drummond Cup provide a platform for emerging stars to show off their skills. Friday evening will see the Melrose Wasps U-18s Tournament take place from 5:30pm, where eight local Borders sides vying for the coveted silverware, the Jim Telfer Cup and the Melrose Shield.

Concurrently, the Celebration of Women in Sport event kicks off at 6pm, honouring over 30 nominees and championing gender equality in sports. Sponsored by GoFibre, Friday's rugby events will be complemented by the GoFibre Food Village, offering an array of culinary delights including tapas, Greek street food, and artisanal pizza, open throughout the weekend to fuel spectators.

On Saturday 13th April, the climax of the tournament unfolds with the highly anticipated 1883 Centenary Cup, commencing at 11:04 am with a clash between Hawick and Currie.

Among the teams set to dazzle spectators are the South of Scotland Barbarians, brimming with local talent including Finn Douglas, and defending champions Monaco Impis, bolstered by the presence of former Springbok Sevens star Dylan Sage. The opening fixtures promise enthralling local derbies including Gala vs Peebles and Jed-Forest vs Kelso, with hosts Melrose eagerly anticipating a showdown against the victor of Selkirk vs Edinburgh Accies.

Later in the afternoon, the women's Mike Bleasdale Cup, proudly sponsored by Breadalbane Finance, kicks off just after 3:30pm, promising adrenaline-fueled encounters and moments of sheer brilliance on the field.

The Fanzone, a vibrant hub of activity in The Triangle, will be filled with excitement throughout the day, offering entertainment options for spectators of all ages. As dusk descends, the Fanzone transforms into a party zone, with local DJs Callum Gallagher and Dougie Telfer leading revelers on a musical journey through the decades.

For easy travel to and from the event, ScotRail and Borders Buses have collaborated to provide a great shuttle service. An additional train service departs Tweedbank at 19:52 to provide an easy commute post-final, while the 777 shuttle bus service will shuttle spectators between Tweedbank train station and Melrose.

For those unable to partake in person, the excitement of Saturday's rugby action will be broadcasted on the BBC iPlayer from 4:30 pm, with the entire day's proceedings available for viewing on the Melrose Sevens YouTube channel.



NS 2024



APRIL 2024

THURSDAY
11



JACKSON
DISTILLERS LIMITED
**HALL of FAME
DINNER**
7PM



FRIDAY
12

MERCHISTON COACHING CLINIC
10AM

**YOUTH MATCHES &
WASPS U16s DRUMMOND CUP**
2PM

WASPS U18s TOURNAMENT
JIM TELFER CUP
5:30PM (FIRST TIE)

**CELEBRATION OF
WOMEN IN SPORT**
6PM

SATURDAY
13

GATES OPEN: 10AM
HOSPITALITY: 10:30AM
BARS: 11AM

1883 CENTENARY CUP
MENS TOURNAMENT
11:04AM (FIRST TIE)

MIKE BLEASDALE CUP
WOMENS TOURNAMENT
3:36PM (FIRST TIE)

PARTY IN THE FANZONE
8:30PM



TICKETS: www.melrose7s.co.uk



MINIS & YOUTH RUGBY

YOUTH UPDATE

YOUTH SURVEY RESULTS

PAUL WHEATLEY

MELROSE Rugby Youth Section ran the 2024 Youth Survey among parents and guardians over the last month.

The purpose of this survey is to understand the key issues and challenges facing the parents and our youth players. We are specifically looking at what parts of the youth section are working well, what bits need a bit of spit and polish, and what bits need a complete rethink.

The survey closed on the 15th of March and the results are in!

There was a ton of great feedback (thank you!) and in the main, the responses fell into 4 sections. We will be reporting back on how we are trying to improve based on this feedback (as well as reaching out to ask for volunteers to help in some of these areas) in future issues of The Rose - but for this and next month's edition, here is a little more detail on each section and what we are doing immediately from your feedback.

1. COMMUNICATION

YOU SAID:

You don't know what's going on with the wider club, the board, at the Youth Committee.

SO WE ARE:

Sharing The Rose to everyone on Teamo to read about everything that's going on in the club, with the board and the wider youth sections. We are also planning to regularly update you on improvements from the Youth Survey feedback in future issues of The Rose. We are also looking at improvements in the Youth Committee to help with information sharing.

YOU SAID:

Coaches want to be more involved with decisions that directly affect them.

SO WE ARE:

Looking at the role of the parent rep as part of the wider Youth Committee structure review, does this do what we need it to? Is this one role or multiple? Should we loop in coaches into key decisions or leave it to the year groups to disseminate information/gain feedback/agreement? We will feedback on this in a later issue of The Rose.





2. THE YOUTH COMMITTEE

YOU SAID:

You don't know who is on the Youth Committee

SO WE ARE:

Planning to dedicate this section in a future issue of The Rose to tell you who is on the committee and what their role is, how you can contact them and (importantly) how you can get involved!

YOU SAID:

You don't know who your parent reps are (or what their role is)

SO WE ARE:

We are going to detail who the parent representatives are for each year group, what they do and how you can contact them in the Youth Committee update (mentioned above)

YOU SAID:

Much of what is covered at the Youth Committee is not relevant to your child's age group

SO WE ARE:

Looking at the overall structure of the Youth Committee to try and make it more efficient and answer a lot of your feedback, we will cover that in the dedicated Youth Committee section in a future issue of The Rose

YOU SAID:

You would like more info and communication from the Youth Committee and the Board.

SO WE ARE:

Looking at how more parents can be involved and receive communication from the Youth Committee and the Board as well as ask questions and make suggestions, again, we will cover that in the future dedicated section in The Rose.

If you would like to chat about any of the above or want to volunteer to help with anything around the club, you can reach out to me over Teamo; Paul Wheatley (you will have had a ton of messages from me, so just reply to one of those) or you can email me on paul@melroserugby.org

3. TEAMO

YOU SAID:

Different year groups use Teamo in different ways (some don't use it at all)

SO WE ARE:

Going to engage with all year groups to understand how they use it and (where applicable) why they don't use it to try and find a solution that suits everyone. The main thing to remember here is that Teamo was primarily brought into Melrose Rugby youth section to protect you and your children's personal data (name, age, address, telephone numbers, date of birth, etc...). If any of this information is stored on personal devices or bits of paper there is a risk of loss of data where a coach or volunteer phone is lost or otherwise compromised (e.g. Google or Apple account is hacked into) or the paper is lost or blows away at the side of the pitch. So, it's important that as much information as possible is stored in Teamo. That said - we do understand and share some of the frustrations around the ease of use of the platform.

YOU SAID:

You get too many messages from Teamo

SO WE ARE:

Speaking to Teamo to see what can be done about this. We understand this is generally where a parent has more than 1 child or where the parent or child is in multiple Teamo groups that all get the same message (and therefore you get the same message multiple times). Unfortunately, this is a problem with the Teamo platform and we need to rely on them to resolve. The Teamo support team are very helpful and engaged so we hope we can find a solution soon.

4. MAKING EVENTS & MATCHES MORE FAMILY FRIENDLY

YOU SAID:

You would like to bring your children to club events and senior matches but there isn't enough to keep them engaged

SO WE ARE:

Going to look at ways to make events and match days more engaging for the youth section and try and look at ways to get the youth more involved with senior match days. One idea is creating a rota to allow all year groups to be part of a guard of honour at home games in the coming season!



YOUTH RUGBY

U18s

OUR VALIANT U18s played their last 15 a-side games of their season with two friendlies against Merchiston and North Berwick. Both games were played on The Greenyards and unfortunately resulted in resounding defeats.

What was remarkable was how the squad galvanised through the season. They showed resilience and determination despite going down to some heavy defeats. "Credit to the boys" said forwards coach Kev Brown.

"Many other teams would have folded in such adversity, but these boys had eachothers' backs and grew together as a team as the season went on".

The U18's focus now turns to Sevens' tournaments across the Borders.



MELROSE WASPS

U16s

MELROSE WASPS U16s came up short in the East Youth Cup Final at the DAM Health Stadium on Saturday 23rd March. The boys came from 17-0 down to give themselves the chance to win the game, eventually losing out to a strong Currie side 37-33.

The character of this group is epitomised in how they play, they never give up. In 2021, this age group had 6 players. That core group have been influential in growing the playing group and ensuring that new players are welcome and always encouraged to be able to fulfil our fixture's in the Borders Conference. The future is exciting for these players both individually and as a group as they move into U18 Rugby next season.



SRU ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE NEW LEAGUE STRUCTURE FOR 2024/25

ROB MOFFAT

THE SRU made the recent announcement of the league reconstruction for next season. This has happened as Super 6 will finish after the Sprint Series.

The Southern Knights has been a difficult chapter the club's journey. The concept was a good one but was not widely supported. Everyone has their view, but the idea was to give players (mainly younger players) the opportunity to play at a higher level of rugby to bridge the gap between club and pro rugby. The rugby at this level was undoubtedly of a higher standard than club rugby. Our squad for this upcoming Sprint Series is an exciting one with many good local players involved and a local coaching team. Please give them your total support over this last Sprint Series - the players deserve it.

Regarding the leagues for next season, the SRU did a good job in a very short time of putting a focus group together, involving discussions with all clubs in National 1,2,3 & 4 as well as the present Super 6 clubs. Seven options were put on the table and other options welcomed. There was never going to be a solution that would suit everyone but, in my opinion, there were good rugby discussions by most involved. Unfortunately, there were some with only self-interest, but they were in the minority. The recommendation

“

**...OURSELVES
AND WATSONIANS
WILL PLAY IN THE
PREMIERSHIP NEXT
SEASON, WITH
STIRLING AND
BOROUGHMUIR
PLAYING IN
NATIONAL 1...”**

from the focus group was for Option 2, which means that ourselves and Watsonians will play in the Premiership next season, with Stirling and Boroughmuir playing in National 1. The Premiership will consist of twelve teams next season, and at the end (of next season only) three clubs will be relegated and one promoted to get to a ten-team league as soon as possible.

Our planning for next season is well underway and we will have as strong a squad as we can to represent Melrose Rugby in the Premiership. Our young squad will need the support of our community to perform well in the premiership. As always, as a club we aim to be the very best we can be and to make the community proud. There has been division in the past but we need everyone passionate about Melrose getting behind the players and the club moving forward.

As I said earlier, please support the Knights in this last series. Their first three matches will be at home - Edinburgh "A" on Friday 19th April, Boroughmuir on Saturday 26th April and Watsonians on Saturday 4th May. Let's get behind these young players.



SUPER SERIES RUGBY

KNIGHTS NEW GENERAL MANAGER



DOUGIE CRAWFORD

I NEVER thought I would get the chance to work full-time here at the Greenyards, so I am incredibly grateful to the club for this opportunity.

I also feel very fortunate to take over the Southern Knights General Manager role from Kieran Cooney, who did a brilliant job establishing the position within the club. My first month in post has not been without its challenges. Starting the job on the Monday to then find out by the Wednesday that the Super Six was being disbanded wasn't exactly how I imagined my first week going. Nonetheless, after a somewhat bumpy start, my feet are now firmly under the table. Big credit must go to the players and coaches for their resilience during this period and determination to remain focused despite all the uncertainty. Preparations for the upcoming Sprint Season are well underway to ensure the team are ready to hit the ground running when Edinburgh 'A' come to the Greenyards on the 19th April.

We have assembled a great coaching group of Wighty, Cheg and James Head and the squad is in a very good place with only two or three spots remaining to be filled. I think both members of the club and others within the region will be uplifted by the make-up of the squad when it is announced on the 15th April. The coaches have done an excellent job of recruiting a balanced squad of youth and experience that features a strong core of Borderers. Pleasingly we have retained a number of key players from last season's Knights squad, including:

- **Jack Dobie**
- **Allan Ferrie**
- **Craig Greer**
- **Sam Derrick**
- **Dan Gamble**
- **Monroe Job**
- **Gregor McNeish**
- **Adam Hall**
- **Garry Young**

There will also be a number of familiar faces from the Club 1XV making the step-up. The chance for these guys to test themselves at a higher level will only aid preparation for next year's Premiership season.

While I appreciate the Southern Knights has been a point of contention within the club since its inception, I am hoping now we have clarity regarding the future of rugby at the Greenyards, and that the whole club will get behind and support this exciting group of players and coaches over the course of the Sprint Season. Although this may be the 'last dance' for the Southern Knights, trust me when I say we'll be going out with a bang!



... THIS MAY BE THE 'LAST DANCE' FOR THE SOUTHERN KNIGHTS, TRUST ME WHEN I SAY WE'LL BE GOING OUT WITH A BANG!"

SPONSORSHIP

There are a number of ways you can support the Knights this season! These include:

Player Sponsorship | Match Sponsorship | Programme Advertisement | Pitchside Board

Please contact skgm@meloserrugby.org for more info.

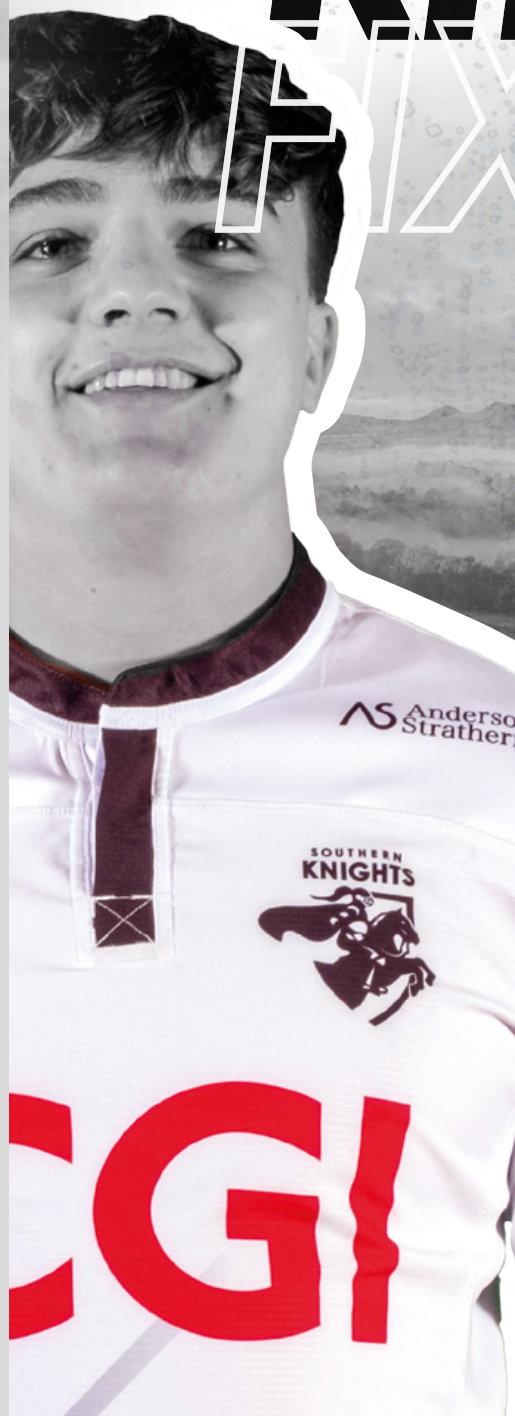
JOIN THE TEAM!

We are always looking for committed people to join our off-pitch team at the Southern Knights! Whether you're looking to volunteer or gain some applied experience in a semi-professional sporting environment, and to add this experience to your CV, we would love to have you on board! Roles include:

Kit Manager | Social Media Coordinator | Match Day Support | Videographer | Event Team Assistant



2024 SPRINT



FIXTURES

 EDINBURGH EST-1872 A	FRIDAY 19 APRIL 7:35PM GREENYARDS
SATURDAY 27 APRIL 3:00PM GREENYARDS	 BOROUGHMUIR BEARS EST. 1977
 EX CORDE CARITAS WATSONIANS RUGBY EST. 1875	SATURDAY 4 MAY 5:00PM GREENYARDS
SATURDAY 18 MAY 3:00PM MILLBRAE	 BOROUGHMUIR BULLS EST. 1977
 HERIOT'S RUGBY	SATURDAY 25 MAY 3:00PM GOLDENACRE
FRIDAY 31 MAY 7:35PM GREENYARDS	 STIRLING WOLVES



PLAY-OFFS (TBC): 7 & 8 JUNE



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MEMBERS CORNER

DATES

for the **DIARY**

MON/TUE/WED
1/2/3
APRIL

**APRIL 2024
SEVENS RUGBY
CAMPS**

FRIDAY
19
APRIL

**SUPER SERIES SPRINT
SOUTHERN KNIGHTS
V EDINBURGH 'A'
7:35PM**



HONORARY PRESIDENT

His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch

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- G.J. Bunyan
- G. Chisholm
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- J. Lauder
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- I.G. Houston

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ON GAME DAYS SERVING
FOOD & DRINK!**



WASPS YOUTH RUGBY

TRAINING
S1, S2, S3 MONDAY
4-5PM EARLSTON HIGH SCHOOL
S1, S2, S3 WEDNESDAY
4-5PM EARLSTON HIGH SCHOOL
U16 & U18 TUES & THURS
5:30 - 7PM MELROSE RUGBY

**S1-U18
COME
& TRY!**



HORNETS MINIS RUGBY

**TRAINING 9:30AM
SUNDAY MORNINGS**
NURSERY-P1 • P2
P3 • P4 • P5 • P6 • P7
THE GREENYARDS

**NURSERY
& P1 - P7
BOYS &
GIRLS**



QUEEN BEES GIRLS RUGBY

TRAINING
SUNDAY 9:30 - 10:30AM
THE GREENYARDS
WEDNESDAY 6-7PM
EARLSTON RUGBY CLUB

**U12, U14,
U16 GIRLS
COME
& TRY!**





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PAUL WHEATLEY

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With a passion for great food and 5 star service, the George and Abbotsford Hotel aims to provide the ideal setting for every occasion whether you are looking for a short break away, a chilled drink and tasty meal or the perfect place to host your next big event.

Under new management since November 2018, the former coaching inn in the heart of Melrose is now home to a bustling listed building which plays a key part in the local community as an avid supporter of the historic Melrose Sevens. Eye-catching rugby memorabilia is proudly displayed in the bar area.

So whether you are a local to Melrose, a passing visitor or traveler from afar, all are welcome to pop in and see the range of facilities we have to offer and we look forward to seeing you soon.

10% DISCOUNT ON FOOD FOR BORDER RUGBY CLUB MEMBERS*

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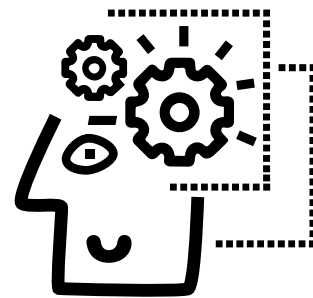




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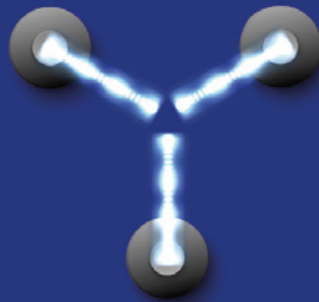
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