



Followers' News

Editorial Comment

At the end of the season we reflect on what was good what might have been. The arrangement with Northampton Saints certainly seems to be working well giving us a welcome addition to the number of players we could otherwise afford and giving opportunities for their players to develop with increased competitive match time. The Saints also seem to be playing an exciting brand of rugby which matches the Blues match ethos.

Please remember that the Followers AGM is on Thursday the 7th July. We will be sending out invitation and the details in the latter half of June. As always, we make the appeal for new committee members. We look likely to lose at least two members of the committee so please consider carefully if you could help run the Followers. The committee meet every month and if possible help sell the jackpot tickets at home games. New members also help to inject ideas into the discussions. Please give it a try if even for a year.

Lastly I would like to thank Solveig who always manages to somehow persuade our contributors to submit their articles.

Mel Grover

I am assured that no person or player was harmed or injured in the production of this newsletter!

A Map of our Website

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Players Announced so far for 2022/23 season

Jordan Onojaife	Second row
Will Maisey	Fly half
Louis Grimaldi	Fly half
Dean Adamson	Winger
Luke Frost	Second row
Jac Arthur	Back row
Robin Williams	Second row
Charles Rylands	Back row
Alex Woolford	Second row
Joey Conway	Prop
Jack Hughes	Hooker
Osman Dimen	Prop

Followers' Player of the Season is Rich Lane and award to Dean Adamson to mark his 100 Tries for the Blues.



Rich Lane gets the Followers' Player of the Season award from Margaret Appleton and Jane Roberts. The joint runners up were Dean Adamson, Joe Atkinson and Will Maisey.



Margaret and Geoff Appleton present Dean Adamson with a plaque to commemorate his 100th try for Bedford Blues.

Bedford Junior Blues Girls Rugby

Women's rugby is on the up. Whether it be numbers of girls playing at grass roots level, or the ladies getting more TV time - you are likely to see them playing, more than ever before.

My small journey with girls rugby started in the first months of 2016 when, after getting a Scotland Six Nations jumper for Christmas, my six year old daughter asked if she could play rugby. As somewhat of a distant rugby fan myself, not playing since my own school days it was not something I expected to hear. But inspired by the jumper and a classmate who played in the Bedford Junior Blues Minis team, she had no perception of it being a 'boys sport'. So with a pair of football boots in hand, we ventured over to Wentworth Drive on a cold Sunday morning to see what was what.

Well, after just an hour of finding her way around the pitch and being supported by the excellent Head Coach, Andy Bennett, she was determined she would return; to the extent that we even picked her up a match shirt and other kit items from the club shop as we departed! That was day one.

The season continued through the Spring of 2016 as she got to know more about the game and to find a place amongst her new friends' group. With a small handful of other girls in the team, she was not alone, she happily teamed up with the boys when 1-on-1 training exercises were required. I too also found some like minded parents to be sociable with on the touch lines. With my camera in hand, I took sporting shots for the annual family album and to send to the proud grandparents.



By the time the 2018 season kicked off, she was a competitive equal to many of the boys and I was the de facto squad photographer! Noticing that the Head Coach had a very busy time getting bibs handed out, speaking to parents with questions and all manner of other administrative matters, I decided to offer some help. I concede, my heart wanted to be asked to put my boots back on and help out with coaching, but the call to be our Team Manager seemed a better fit. It probably also stopped me going down a dangerous path

that might have seen me believe I could even play in a veterans team, more than 20 years after I last grasped a ball! Understandably, there is quite a bit of admin and organisation when it comes to kids clubs. I felt by taking this away from the Head Coach, I could allow him to focus on his real value; teaching the kids and coaching the coaches.

The two following seasons were perfect. Our squad number grew. Our kids all enjoyed their Sunday morning outing and we were able to pick up a few more coaches from the onlooking parents. What could possibly go wrong! Well, when the 2019 season rolled over into March 2020, as with many others, our fun was stopped by COVID. After a few weeks of wondering 'how long will this last' the Blues put in place a great Sunday alternative of Zoom training



sessions with guest coaches from the Blues. Our kids quickly adapted to joining in from their living rooms and remaining involved with the club and their friends. We had a few start-stop attempts to return to Sunday training at Wentworth Drive. Lots of extra health & safety protocol, but this considered well worth it to get the kids back out on the pitch.

The 2021/22 season allowed us to get back more regularly to training and competitive matches with neighbouring clubs. Our girls numbers even blossomed with a couple more taking an interest during the Six Nations period. We ended the season in recent weeks with our U11s squad at around 45 kids, of which six of our regular attendees were our girls. I also became slightly busier, during the last couple of seasons. My elder daughter, 13 at the time, felt she was missing out on the fun and asked to join the Girls squad too. So now with two daughters playing in different age groups, I would regularly spend my entire morning (and some of the afternoon) at Wentworth Drive on a Sunday. It was, however, a great way to get involved with the Junior Girls squad and start to make the relationships with the coaches and other volunteers. before my youngest and her team mates joins them next season. I wonder if I will get my boots, my camera, or my laptop out then. Probably all three!

Looking forwards to the 2022/23 season, our U12s girls are required by RFU rules, to split from the boys and 'go it alone'. So, we will embark on a new season with the BJB Girls squad. With girls from U12s up to U18s, the Junior Girls team has quietly over the last eight years become established under the guidance and care provided by Head Coach Mark Stapley. With good numbers in all the age groups pre-COVID, Mark even embarked on establishing a Womens team. I think we could say he started well, with the Blues Women having a very impressive first season in the league and taking the title with an unbeaten scorecard. This inspiring performance acts as a motivation for some of the girls that play in Bedford Junior Blues today. I am delighted that a few of the Blues Women even manage to find the time in their own schedules to come along and support the coaches with our girls training. It gives our club a great community and support feeling.

With small numbers, the Blues Junior Girls face a challenge just to exist for the coming years. Collaborating with some local clubs, we will continue to give our girls an opportunity to play competitive matches and to train with a wider group of friends. Let there be no doubt about the passion our girls have for rugby. At the recent end of season awards for the Bedford Junior Blues, they certainly made themselves known with great cheering for their teammates and bringing joyful support to the proceedings. With continued support from the club and the volunteers, I look forward to seeing our girls inspiring others to take up rugby. Seeing is believing.

Simon

U11s Team Manager, Girls Parent Helper, photographer & proud dad of two rugby girls.

Editor - Our thanks go to Simon for taking the time out to produce this article for us.

I would suggest that it would be an encouragement to other girls if we could get the article reproduced as article on the Blues website to reach a wider audience!



Captain's End Of Season Report 21/22

After the first full season with our wonderful fans back since Covid, I think we can say it's been a good year.

Finishing 5th in the table, with only the full time teams ahead of us cements our position for another year as the best "pub side" in the country. Although this is something we really ought to have the open top bus out for to celebrate, I guess the season finishes with a slight feeling of frustration. Coming so close to a cup final and losing some games that we really should have won (Richmond twice, Coventry twice), has me feeling like we left something out there.

I don't think it's ridiculous to say that having beaten all of the top four teams except pirates at least once, that we could and perhaps should have finished second. However, that said, with most of the squad staying together next year, I'm hopeful that the boys will be able to hit the ground running and mount a top 2 charge.

Some of my highlights from the season include our away victory at Ampthill in October. Any time you put 50 points on the neighbours is a great day. One of our most complete performances has to be away at Hartpury, where the terrible pitch meant we had to adjust our playing style early on in the game. With Alex Day and Will Maisey controlling things as they do, we pulled off a 42-19 win in front of many travelling fans! Lastly, and obviously, we cannot not mention the Ealing Fanfinders thumping that we gave them down on their awful pitch. Mike said it at the end of season dinner and I would agree that it is my greatest away win during my time at Bedford without doubt.

I think the Championship Cup showed off everything that is great about the club. The weather was good throughout, and the boys were able to truly show off what the "Blues way" is all about. Although we came up just short in what was an amazing game of rugby and a great advert for the league, I was really proud of what the boys did. Although I hated not playing, it was one of the few times I have been able to watch and just enjoy Bedford doing what they do, as a fan (the multiple beers on the balcony definitely added to that).

Lastly, on a personal note, I just want to take this opportunity to say thank you to every single one of you. I've said before, but I can't put into words how much it has meant to me to be able to represent this amazing club over the last 5 years. Being asked to captain the team for this season just gone was something I absolutely loved and will cherish forever. I was gutted not to be able to play the last few games of the season due to injury but I've been lucky with injuries during my 5 years, so can't complain too much.

I want to say a huge thanks to Mike for signing me and for selecting me so often; it's been an absolute pleasure to play for him.



Once again, thank you so much to all of you. You've been so welcoming from day one and have made this journey really special. Keep supporting the boys as well as you always do, as I truly believe next year could be something special.

For now, I hope you all have a wonderful summer and I will definitely see you at some games next year, to support the lads and enjoy some beers as usual!

Take care, it's been a pleasure.... 97 not out.

Rich



The season from a parents perspective

When Solveig asked me to provide her with a view of the season from a parents perspective I wondered where to start; we are just fans following the Blues, home and away hoping the boys excel. We'd say for 90% of our feelings are just that but perhaps the other 10% is a little different.

Pre - season you hope they get to fitness without injury. 2021-22, Dean picked up an injury that saw him miss the first 4 matches of the season. We still enjoyed the start of the season and in particular the first game - away to Jersey with Jill and Simon Lane. It was a great trip; weather, the hotel and the boys put in a good performance, despite the loss even a Jersey fan we sat near, said the result could have gone either way.

We remember the Ampthill game fondly, away after a home Donny win. The sun shone and the boys excelled with running rugby and a hat full of tries. The only negative was the lack of drink which ran out before the match started!

Hartpury away was another stand out game, Deans first game back after injury. A tough first half in very wet conditions and the home team were edging the game. But the half time talk must have been special the Blues came out in the second half and with tries aplenty and a change in the game management, ran away with the match 42-19 win away to a good team - COYB's.

Pre-match at home with Dean, follows a similar route. Dean has been back with us since returning from France. We see his morning ritual; a strong coffee to start the day and a bowl of porridge and banana. This will be followed by a game of FIFA or catching up on a rugby game from down under. He'll usually continue to relax before getting his kit together. Mum still asks if he has got everything; got a towel got your gum shield. That ritual hasn't changed since he was 5. He's shortly moving out but I am sure his mum will still be thinking about his kit!!!

The run in to Christmas was good with 3 wins in 4, culminating in the home win against Jersey, when we won that boxing day fixture. The Boxing Day fixture is always one of our favourites and a game we look out for when the fixtures are announced. We try to plan a bit of Christmas around the fixture home or away we try to get there if we can. Over 4000 turned out to see the Blues win 28-19; a close fought game but one which saw the Blues rise to the top as they often do on Boxing Day in front of the festive home crowd. Lunch in the marquee is one of our favourite ways to enjoy the day with a few beers / Proseccos pre and post match.

We had a tough start to 2022, with back to back losses. When the Blues lose the catch up with Dean is usually fairly short. We run through the highlights and areas that didn't go too well but you can't win them all and just sometimes all the effort doesn't bring the desired result. The first few losses all seemed to be by narrow margins and thus we remained optimistic. That said the Donny result was a bit of a low point to "nil" the Blues was difficult to take and the journey home wasn't great but we put it down to one of those games.

The next game was away to Ealing and like many of the games we travelled with Jill and Simon, whilst we travelled with hope we also had a feeling that it may be a tough day for the boys, after 4 consecutive losses. The plastic pitch would suit Ealing and the past had seen the boys get nasty burns and on a sunny afternoon, we saw 4 of the backs come out in skins/leggings to protect themselves. They should do that every week, based on what followed. One of the best performances of the year. With great intensity, determination and management of the game, the Blues began

to dominate and you could see Ealing begin to worry, as the game progressed. Bedford didn't crack under pressure and grew into the game. The travelling crowd got noisier and cheered the team on to the final whistle with jubilant celebrations when it did finally go. A beer afterwards to celebrate and a very enjoyable car journey home. That game showed us, that we could beat any championship team on our day.

After that the results yo-yoed a bit. The Coventry game at home was particularly disappointing; the weather wasn't pleasant and we didn't get the rub of the green on the day. Coventry slowed the game down any way they could to stop us playing our high tempo game and it paid dividends as they won by 2 points - another narrow loss.

The final league game of the season saw an away trip to London Scottish it also happened to be Mike Rayer's 500th game as Director of Rugby. So we travelled with plenty of hope for another "Blues" game; entertaining the crowd with tries and flowing rugby and of course a win to celebrate Mike's 500th game. That record is very special and the boys were going to ensure the celebrations could be on and off the pitch. The first half wasn't quite going to plan and Scottish were winning but the half time talk led to a turn around and a "barn storming" second half, which led to the Blues winning 62-21. The boys threw the ball around and kept up a high tempo which left the opposition chasing shadows. After the game the players did their usual thanks to the travelling fans and then for the special moment - approached Mike and thanked him in the usual way. The followers then presented Mike with a glass plaque, a thank you to a man who has seen the club entertain for the last 16-17 years. A special day to end the league season and see the team take 5th spot in the league.

Next to the cup 2 legs v Nottingham with an away leg first on a Friday night under lights. Nottingham started well, but Bedford began to take control of the game and built the score through great kicking and a flurry of tries to take a 47-22 win back to Goldington Rd. The away leg saw Dean picked up a hat-trick which took him to 100 tries for the Blues. An emotional moment for him and us; we were both proud of his achievement, but he always tells us as a winger, his success is often dependent on the team. Rugby, more than many sports, is very much a "team" game. Looking back to when he was a 5 year old, running around the pitch, like a bee around a honey pot, who'd have thought he'd have achieved that milestone.

On to the 2nd leg home advantage and we went to Goldington Rd with confidence, hoping the game wouldn't be our last of the season. The team scored 8 tries in a flowing game which we won 52-17. On to the Quarter final and keeping our fingers crossed we progress further but that was not to be. Two cracking games v Pirates and luck wasn't on our side and we were edged out of the tournament.

It's been a great season being a parent of a player, isn't very different. We love to travel with the team and see them win away and at home, but most of all, see them entertain the fans! Thank you to Mike and the coaching staff, and of course the boys.

Mike Adamson



Some facts and Figures - 21/22

1. We played 24 games in the Championship and Cup.
2. No player managed to play every game but Conway and Stedman played in 23 (including substitutions)
3. Day, Elliott, Frost, Hughes, Uru and Worley all managed to play in 22 games.
4. The 2 Players who made the most starts were Adamson and Elliott.
5. Conway, Day and Hughes played in all of our 11 wins.
6. We had 45 different players in 21/22.
7. Only two players did not have a win and they only played in one game each.



Some more Dingbats for you.
Answers on page 11

1 BISHOP	2 Surbmwance	3 e y e s
4 Where Frilly	5 T	6 H E HENRY R Y
7 SOIL St. Pancras	8 F I R E Candle F L A M E	9 Q 1st.
10 Ton 4 Head Arms Legs	11 Thames d o w n	12 £3:50
13 → Colt ← Beretta Derringer Smith & Wesson	14 RSPCA	15 EARS EARS
16 Saucer u p	17 GOOD DECENT MORAL Virtuous Honest	18 ON RO AD

Followers' Quiz Answers

You missed your chance of a bottle of wine as we had no answers submitted.

Collective Nouns Miscellaneous

1	bishops	bench
2	cobblers	drunkship
3	eggs	clutch
4	pedlars	malapertness
5	priests	pontification
6	runners	field
7	sails	suit
8	servants	staff
9	taverners	glozing
10	witches	coven

Collective Nouns Birds

11	teals	spring
12	choughs	chattering
13	crows	murder
14	snipe	walk
15	peacocks	muster
16	woodcock	fall
17	herons	sege
18	curlews	herd
19	starlings	murmuration
20	owls	parliament

Collective Nouns Animals

21	elk	gang
22	monkeys	wilderness
23	badgers	cete
24	mules	barren
25	colts	rag
26	mares	stud
27	ferrets	business
28	swine	drift
29	wild boar	sounder
30	hyenas	cackle
American food slang		
31	Adam and Eve	two poached eggs
32	murphy	potatoes
33	splash of red	tomato soup
34	wreck'em	scrambled eggs
35	moo juicemilk	
36	on wheels	takeaway
37	gravel train	sugar bowl
38	in the alley	side dish
39	life preserver	doughnut
40	mike and 'ike	salt and pepper



Followers Association Constitution.

At the AGM of the Followers on July 7th, a new constitution will be proposed, and I wanted to take this opportunity to let members know this and explain a little of the process we have gone through in drawing up the new one.

At the start of this season, the Followers Committee started a project to review and update where necessary the constitution of the Followers Association. This was carried out by me, the President, reporting at each committee meeting on progress.

The existing constitution was a single A4 page which was last updated in 2005, so reviewing it did not take long!. It was striking when looking at the existing constitution how much was missing and far too much weight was put on conventions that had no written record.

An example of a convention that was un-recorded was that the President having no vote at a committee meeting. This made perfect sense to me, but it needed recording so that all members of the Association knew that was the way we operated.

More importantly, there was little information as to how votes were conducted and decisions affecting all members and deciding to spend Association funds were handled. I believe that the way the committee operates and how decisions are made should be available to all Association members.

In conducting the review, I looked at other rugby clubs, football clubs and a range of other sports but always at their supporters' clubs. Thankfully, a lot of these clubs have their supporter's clubs' constitutions online. It was also good to see that there were only minor variations between most of them.

After looking at a range of documents from other sports and clubs, I wrote a new Constitution for the Bedford Rugby Followers Association, taking the best bits from those other clubs and merging them with the various conventions already followed within the Followers.

After a number of versions, we held a formal vote at the Followers Association Committee meeting in May and the version that will be proposed at the AGM on July 7th was agreed unanimously.

The proposed constitution has been examined by a solicitor who specialises in contract law and has a significant amount of experience with sports contracts. He found no fault with it.

A version of the proposed constitution, and a copy of the old one, will be distributed with other AGM documents a few weeks before the AGM. We will have a free vote of all Association members at the AGM on whether to formally adopt the new constitution or not. If the members vote to adopt it.

Phil Novis

President

A Fans review of the season

The last game of the season encapsulated my view of the Blues performance through this strange season. That is one of 'could have, should have'. Losing matches to inferior opposition and losing matches at the death has been our team's trade mark. Most of the time we play the scintillating rugby that keeps crowds turning up at home and away, in itself a great achievement and long may it continue. However, at times we need to be able to shut a game down and hold out for the win.

Being a long time fan, the most disappointing were the twin defeats against Coventry, a team we love to beat. This season the away match was so frustrating, when faced with a depleted opposition (13) we lost the ball in attacking positions and butchered the chance to score and win the match, we lost by one point. Also losses to Richmond (home and away) and at home to Ampthill, after demolishing them away in the early season.

There have been some great performances this season and we have watched players grow, which is vastly satisfying for them and us fans. Some special mentions for Rich Lane and a well deserved crack at the prem with Bristol, Dean Adamson and his consistent threat as an ace try scorer, Matt Worley improving all the time. Also in the forwards, Luke Frost, Joey Conway, Alex Woolford, always a solid influence in the pack.

So in summary; always a pleasure to support a team with a playing ethic that resonates with the fans and keeps them coming back for more. A step up in 'final quarter' game management will take care of the blips.

COYB

Members Forum

We would like to include articles submitted by members on this page. Please send any contributions by email to:-
bedfordrugbyfollowers@gmail.com

We reserve the right to edit any contribution to make it suitable for publication.

Answers to Quiz on page 9

- 1) Archbishop
- 2) Car Insurance
- 3) Eyes wide open
- 4) Frilly underwear
- 5) High Tea
- 6) Kings Cross
- 7) Underground Train station
- 8) Burn the candle at both ends
- 9) First in the queue
- 10) Wait for nobody
- 11) Down by the riverside
- 12) The price is right
- 13) Top Gun
- 14) High society
- 15) Wet behind the ears
- 16) 'T' Junction
- 17) See no evil
- 18) On the open road

Bedford Blues fixture list

Jersey Reds	40	v	Bedford Blues	28	25th	Sep	2021
Bedford Blues	31	v	Doncaster Knights	23	1st	Oct	2021
Ampt Hill	34	v	Bedford Blues	43	9th	Oct	2021
Bedford Blues	32	v	Richmond	37	23rd	Oct	2021
Hartpury University	19	v	Bedford Blues	42	30th	Oct	2021
Bedford Blues	14	v	Ealing Trailfinders	50	6th	Nov	2021
Cornish Pirates	39	v	Bedford Blues	24	20th	Nov	2021
Bedford Blues	40	v	Nottingham	9	27th	Nov	2021
Coventry	15	v	Bedford Blues	14	4th	Dec	2021
Bedford Blues	24	v	London Scottish	19	11th	Dec	2021
Bedford Blues	28	v	Jersey Reds	19	26th	Dec	2021
Bedford Blues	10	v	Ampt Hill	20	15th	Jan	2022
Richmond	22	v	Bedford Blues	19	22nd	Jan	2022
Bedford Blues	10	v	Hartpury	34	29th	Feb	2022
Doncaster Knights	24	v	Bedford Blues	☹	6th	Feb	2022
Ealing	19	v	Bedford Blues	31	12th	Feb	2022
Bedford Blues	12	v	Cornish Pirates	20	19th	Feb	2022
Nottingham	22	v	Bedford Blues	47	27th	Feb	2022
Bedford Blues	15	v	Coventry	17	11th	Mar	2022
London Scottish	21	v	Bedford Blues	62	2nd	Apr	2022
Nottingham	14	v	Bedford Blues	38	8th	Apr	2022
Bedford Blues	52	v	Nottingham	19	23rd	Apr	2022
Cornish Pirates	38	v	Bedford Blues	37	14th	May	2022
Bedford Blues	32	v	Cornish Pirates	33	21st	May	2022

The Followers aim to support and assist Bedford Rugby in various ways as determined by the Committee and by proposals carried at an AGM.

- We run coaches to mainland away games to provide support unequalled in our division.
- We run a Jackpot at home games to provide funds for the club and as cash prizes.
- We assist with ground maintenance each summer and support when necessary to clear snow and the debris left behind after our fireworks displays.
- We organise social events and help promote events held by the club.

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