

OFFICIAL DIGITAL MATCH DAY PROGRAMME

DONCASTER KNIGHTS

DONCASTER KNIGHTS V COVENTRY | 12.03.21 | ISSUE 01 | 18:00



KNIGHTS

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WELCOME MESSAGE

STEVE BODEN

REBUILDING A RUGBY TEAM DOES NOT HAPPEN OVERNIGHT BUT THIS YOUNG SIDE HAS SHOWN ME THEY HAVE THE DESIRE TO BE COACHED AND TO IMPROVE AS INDIVIDUALS. THE PERFORMANCE SO FAR GIVE ME THE CONFIDENCE TO BELIEVE THAT IF WE CAN GET IT RIGHT THERE IS PLENTY TO BE POSITIVE ABOUT THIS SEASON.



STEVE BODEN

Welcome back...sort of.

Today we welcome competitive rugby back to Castle Park, almost a year to the day it was stopped due to Covid-19.

Given the challenges of the past 12 months it is significant that we have Championship rugby in 2021 and testament to a lot of hard work that has gone on behind the scenes.

A big focus for me this season is to build relationships. I want players and staff that care about what they do at Castle Park, on the field and in our environment. Restrictions have meant plans to integrate the squad with the wider community off the field have not been possible but on it we aim to play with the level of commitment and ambition your support deserves.

We take on Coventry Rugby today in what will be an extremely tough and physical game.

Coventry have had a solid pre-season campaign against Jersey & Saracens before opening the league season with a win over good Bedford side. As coaches we have made it very clear that we need to raise our levels from last weekend to compete this evening and we expect to see improvement in certain areas.

Winning away at Amphil on the opening day of the season is no mean feat and to leave with the four points is an achievement we don't take lightly but overall the performance left us with questions to answer. I was pleased with the character shown in the closing stages to claim the win but we should not have had to rely on a late kick after being on top for so much of the game.

Rebuilding a rugby team does not happen overnight but this young side has shown me they have the desire to be coached and to improve as individuals. The performances so far give me the confidence to believe that if we can get it right there is plenty to be positive about this season.

We are all disappointed to be playing in front of an empty stand and terrace tonight but we know you are behind us watching the live stream from home. The task we have set the team now is to go out there and produce a display that they are proud of so you don't switch over to Coenation Street!

Thank you for your support over this most testing year, hopefully it won't be too long before we can enjoy a game together in person.

Boden

DONCASTER KNIGHTS



Row 5 (back) L-R Conor Joyce, Reiss Cullen, Jack Davies, Joe Jones, James Newey, Jerry Sexton, John Kelly, James Mitchell

Row 4 Sam Oliver, Will Britton, Matt Smith, Tom Bacon, Jack Spittle, Will Hoillog, Bill McBryde

Row 3 Conrad Cade, Guido Volpi, Connor Edwards, Sam Graham, Jack Rouse, Howard Packman, Andrew Foster

Row 2 Charlie Foley, Josh Pietrse, Kyle Evans, Guss War, Sam Pocklington, George Roberts

Row 1 (front) Gareth Derman, Mark Best, Matt Challinor, Bomber Hislop, James Kane



SQUAD



KNIGHTS NEWS

2021 DIGITAL PROGRAMME

Welcome to the Knights digital programme!

For 2021 Doncaster Knights are pleased to announce our match day programme will be available to supporters digitally having teamed up with MatchDayInfo. With supporters currently not allowed entry to Castle Park on a match day, we will be producing a digital match day programme for fans to enjoy from the comfort of their home.

Programmes will be available to view through MatchDayInfo's interactive mobile app for each of our home games this season. Fans can still get their bi-weekly fix of a match day programme, but they can now download it digitally rather than purchasing one in-person from Castle Park.

For more information about how you can advertise in our programme, please email mcasey@castle-park.co.uk



KEV CLIFTON | REST IN PEACE.

It is with regret that we have to advise that Kevin Clifton passed away on February 25th. Kev had been part of the rugby family at Castle Park for many years, initially as a player with Doncaster Phoenix but more so in recent years as a key member of the support team assisting on match days and at training sessions.

He gave up many weekends home and away – preparing changing rooms, kit and equipment ready for kick-off and then would stay behind to help clear-up after the final whistle.

He will be greatly missed and we send our best wishes and condolences to Keely & his family at this difficult time.

CHALL CONFIRMS THIS SEASON WILL BE HIS LAST.

Club legend Matt Challinor has confirmed that the 2021 campaign will be his last as a Knight as the 37 year-old begins preparation for life after professional rugby.

Chall's legend status at Castle Park has been cemented for some time but with every season the passes his unrelenting professionalism and impeccably high standards ascend him further among the greatest to have ever played for the Club pre & post professional era.

Chall will retire as the only professional player to make 250 competitive appearances for the Knights, during a period in which the Club enjoyed their most successful period to date. Here's hoping he finishes on a high!





TODAY'S OPPONENTS

The scene of Coventry Rugby's first away game of the 2021 Greene King IPA Championship campaign is the same as that which brought the 2019/20 season to its premature end.

It is almost 12 months to the day since that clash, but while the weather forecast is somewhat different to that balmy spring afternoon the core of the Coventry squad which will travel to Castle Park will be similar.

There have nevertheless been some permanent signings who have had an immediate impact, not least hooker Nic Dolly, who followed up his three tries in pre-season with the only score of the league opener last Saturday. Director of Rugby Rowland Winter has already brought in a number of exciting dual registered players, with Sam Lewis (Leicester), Kieran Wilkinson (Sale) and James Harper (prop) all having promising first matches in blue and white.

The pre-season certainly posed a challenge for today's visitors, with a home match against Jersey (won) followed by away-and-home games against Saracens, and while both were lost Cov led on the hour at the StoneX Stadium and were competitive until the final 10 minutes at home.

There was also plenty of anticipation heading into the Round 1 home game against Bedford, not least because the teams had served up plenty of classics over the past two-and-a-half years.

However, the match failed to live up to expectations, with both teams disrupted by lengthy injury breaks in the first half. The second flowed a bit more, with Dolly's try converted by Wilkinson, and late pressure from the forwards creating a penalty for Tony Fenner to kick and seal a win.



NIC DOLLY

Nic Dolly made an immediate impact in his first action in blue and white, scoring a pair of first half tries in the pre-season match against Jersey Reds. When this was followed by a similar effort against Saracens, Dolly had marked himself out as a player to watch.

Australian by birth, Dolly spent time with the New South Wales age group teams before a short trip to see family in the north west turned into a great overseas experience which hasn't ended yet. Then 16 years old, Dolly caught the eye of the Sale Sharks Academy staff, then the England Under-20 selectors, and impressed while dual registered at Jersey last season.

And needless to say, he started the full season with a try last week, too.



ROB STEVENSON

Rob Stevenson is a prime example of the role that BUCS Super Rugby can play in developing professional rugby players. The winger spent three years at Durham, combining his playing and degree studies, and earned himself a selection for both Wales Students and the G8 Students Sevens team which won the silver medal in the 2016 World University Games.

Stevenson then signed for London Scottish in 2017, where he spent three years before moving up to the Midlands last summer.



Knights

Coventry

BILLY MCBRYDE 15
KYLE EVANS 14
CHARLIE FOLEY 13
CONNOR EDWARDS 12
JACK SPITTLE 11
SAM OLVER 10
JAMES MITCHELL 9

BOMBER HISLOP (C) 1
BEN HUNTER 2
JOE JONES 3
MATT CHALLINOR 4
JERRY SEXTON 5
WILL BRITTON 6
SAM GRAHAM 7
JOHN KELLY 8

WILL HOLLING 16
CONRAD CADE 17
GAZ DENMAN 18
CONOR JOYCE 19
JACK DAVIES 20
NEISS CULLEN 21
MARK BEST 22
BOWARD PACKMAN 23

15 LOUIS BROWN
14 ROB STEVENSON
13 ANDY FORSYTH
12 WILL OWEN
11 ROB KNOX
10 TONY FERRER
9 PETE WHITE

1 LUC JEANNOT
2 NIC DOLLY
3 JAMES HARPER
4 NILE DACRES
5 CAMERON JORDAN
6 SAM LEWIS
7 BEN HUTLEY
8 RYAN BURROWS (C)

16 SUVA MA'ASI
17 TOBY TRINDER
18 PHIL BOULTON
19 KAILUS HUTCHINSON
20 SENTINI NATALD
21 JOE SNOW
22 NIERRA WILKINSON
23 LOUIS JAMES

REFEREE: HAMISH SMAILES

ASSISTANT REFEREE: STEVE LEE & GREGG DAWSON

FOURTH OFFICIAL: ANDREW JACKSON

#COVK