

2020
2021



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THE TEAMS



COVENTRY RUGBY



AMPTHILL RUGBY

POSITION
SPONSOR

STARTING XV

Louis Brown	15	Tom Hudson
Rob Knox	14	Will Brown
Andy Forsyth	13	Joe Roberts
Will Owen	12	Jeremy Toa
James Martin	11	Will Foster
Tony Fenner	10	Louis Grimoldby (c)
Joe Snow	9	Matt Marsh
Luc Jeannot	1	Jack James
Jordon Poole	2	Dave Ward
Phil Boulton	3	Sam Wainwright
Nile Dacres	4	Charlie Beckett
Cameron Jordan	5	Llewelyn Jones
Senitiki Nayalo	6	Alex Humfrey
Adam Peters	7	Joe Bercis
(c) Ryan Burrows	8	Devante Onojaife



REPLACEMENTS

Tom Doughty	16	Syd Blackmore
Toby Trinder	17	Sam Crean
Alex Gibson	18	Aleki Lutui
Sam Lewis	19	Billy Johnson
Tom Ball	20	Oliver Stonham
Josh Barton	21	Sam Bryan
Evan Mitchell	22	Russell Bennett
Will Butt	23	Josh Hallett

MATCH OFFICIALS

REFEREE Simon Harding
ASSISTANT REFEREES James Clarke and Ian Bibey

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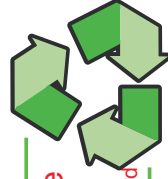
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HYDRO

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Firstly, I trust you all had a happy Easter and were able to catch up with at least some friends and family outdoors for some much-needed social interaction. Unfortunately we are continuing to play our games in front of virtual crowds with Greene King IPA Championship streaming being the only way of supporting our team.

Viewing figures have been disappointing across the league with the one big draw inevitably being Saracens; by the time we play them on May 22nd we hope to be hosting at least a limited crowd here at Butts Park following the proposed further easing of the rules on May 17th. However we will have to wait and see how far restrictions actually will be eased – it being rumoured that only 4,000 people being allowed into Wembley Stadium for the FA Cup semi-finals on May 17th and 18th doesn't bode well for what should be a sell-out. We will keep you posted.

The Supporters' Forum was another virtual event which was well attended on Wednesday night and thanks to everyone involved for making it a lively evening. I hope that it was informative and showed just how much work is going on behind the scenes while we prepare for a return to the real world.

Amphill will provide us with an interesting challenge today, having posted very similar results to ourselves against Doncaster (lost narrowly), Ealing (another 50 pointer for the promotion chasers) and Nottingham (30 odd points scored but several leaked). I do hope that you choose to watch from the comfort of your sofa having enjoyed a pleasant Sunday lunch.

At least the pubs will be starting a limited return to business tomorrow and I will certainly be enjoying a pint or two in the Royal Oak's garden tomorrow evening. It would be good to see some of you there and to have a good rugby chat.

C'mon Cov!



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FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF RUGBY

We welcome Ampthill to Butts Park Arena today for our sixth league game against them during my time at Coventry.

We have had some great battles with them, and in the league alone we have only beaten them twice in that period, with a last minute loss away from home last January sticking in our memory.

They are one of a few sides that have significantly strengthened for this season, with some experienced Greene King IPA Championship players joining them and adding quality to their squad. They are also now settled into the league after ending last season with a top half finish, so they are no mugs and today will be another huge battle.

We have had an interesting couple of weeks. After losing Nic Dolly to Tigers and Suva Ma'asi to a shoulder injury within the same 24 hours we were pleased to get the five points away from home against a tough and talented Nottingham side. Unfortunately since then we have picked up a couple of injuries (most of them short term), and that combined with James Harper and Kieran Wilkinson being involved more with Sale has meant that we have added Tom Doughty (hooker) and Will Butt (centre/wing) to our squad, joining from Bath until the end of the season initially.

The positive out of this situation is the opportunity to build relationships with Bath, now the sixth club in the Premiership to actively push their players to Coventry, but also the chance to give an opportunity to two of our own Academy graduates in Tom Ball and Evan Mitchell.

Tom had a great pre-season. He worked hard to accelerate his development and, on merit, was selected to start against Jersey in our first pre-season game. He then picked up an injury and has been back fit for a few weeks and trained well, stayed patient and again worked hard for a chance, so it is great to be able to reward him this week. Evan has really impressed us with his attitude to work and learn. He is a gifted athlete and very skilful so we are excited to see what he can do with his opportunity this weekend.

Over the next few weeks we are launching our Under-18 and Under-23 squads for the 2021/22 season with a series of talent ID days (more details on the website). We will also be announcing another great opportunity alongside Moulton College to add a great option for our Academy players going forward, so watch this space - but hugely exciting times!

I hope you enjoy the game and hopefully it won't be long before we can welcome you all back to the Butts.



COVENTRY RUGBY

SENIOR SQUAD



JOSH BARTON

05/12/1997



PHIL BOULTON

17/01/1986



LOUIS BROWN

17/02/1998



JOE BUCKLE

13/05/1993



ANDY BULUMAKAU

28/08/1992



RYAN BURROWS

25/04/1988



WILL BUTT

15/01/2000



NILE DACRES

09/10/1991



TOM DOUGHTY

22/11/1996



TOM EMMERY

02/07/1998



TONY FENNER

12/12/1989



ANDREW FORSYTH

28/08/1992



ALEX GIBSON



JAMES HARPER

16/10/2000



KAILUS HUTCHINSON

16/10/1997



LUC JEANNOT

16/09/1996



CAMERON JORDAN

17/11/1999



ROB KNOX

04/02/1992



DAN LEWIS

12/12/1989



SAM LEWIS

27/03/1998





KESTON LINES

08/11/1999



SUVA MA'ASI

08/11/1997



JAMES MARTIN



SAM MCNULTY

17/01/1996



SENITIKI NAYALO

12/05/1991



BEN NUTLEY

07/04/1992



WILL OWEN

06/07/1993



ADAM PETERS

17/08/1994



MARIO PICHARDIE

31/01/2001



JORDON POOLE

02/04/1997



CALLUM SIRKER

04/05/1998



JOE SNOW

11/12/1998



ROB STEVENSON

10/02/1995



TOBY TRINDER

05/05/1998



PETE WHITE

24/07/1991



KIERAN WILKINSON

03/10/1999



ALEX WOOLFORD

08/12/1992



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COVENTRY RUGBY DEVELOPMENT SQUAD



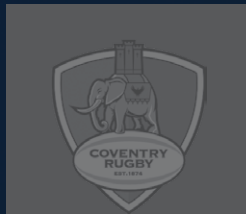
TOM BALL

07/02/2002



LOUIS BEER

27/11/2000

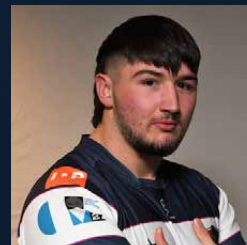


FREDDIE BETTERIDGE

17/06/2000

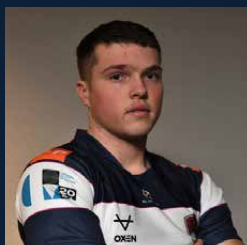


OLLIE BETTERIDGE



JAKE BRIDGES

29/01/2002



JOE BROCK

04/10/2001



HARRY CHARTER

11/11/2000



LOUIS JAMES

29/09/2001



EVAN MITCHELL

18/01/2002



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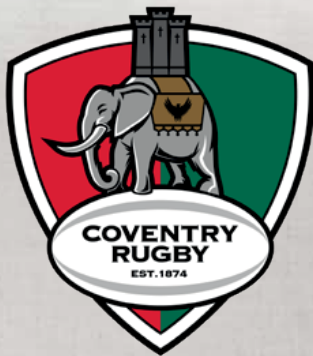
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PLAYER SEASON STATS

PLAYERS	STARTS	AS SUB	TOTAL APPS	TIRES	CONS	PENS	D GOALS	POINTS
JOSH BARTON		1	1					
PHIL BOULTON	2	2	4					
LOUIS BROWN	4		4					
RYAN BURROWS	4		4					
NILE DACRES	4		4					
NIC DOLLY	3		3	3				15
TONY FENNER	3	1	4		6	2		18
ANDY FORSYTH	4		4					
ALEX GIBSON		1	1					
JAMES HARPER	2	1	3					
LOUIS JAMES	1	2	3					
LUC JEANNOT	2	2	4					
CAMERON JORDAN	3	1	4	1				5
ROB KNOX	3	1	4					
SAM LEWIS	3	1	4					
JAMES MARTIN		1	1	1				5
SUVA MA'ASI		1	1					
SAM MCNULTY		1	1					
SENITIKI NAYALO	1	2	3	2				10
BEN NUTLEY	3	1	4	1				5
WILL OWEN	4		4					
JORDON POOLE	1		1	1				10
ADAM PETERS	2	1	3					
JOE SNOW	1	2	3					
ROB STEVENSON	4		4	2				10
TOBY TRINDER	2	2	4					
PETE WHITE	3	1	4					
KIERAN WILKINSON	1	3	4		3			6
ALEX WOOLFORD		1	1					



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FIXTURES LIST



ROUND	DATE	OPPO	VENUE	RESULT / KO
1	06/03/2021	Bedford Blues	Butts Park Arena	W 10 - 9
2	12/03/2021	Doncaster Knights	Castle Park	L 20 - 19
3	19/03/2021	Ealing Trailfinders	Butts Park Arena	L 19 - 55
4	27/03/2021	Nottingham	Lady Bay	W 24 - 36
5	11/04/2021	Amphill	Butts Park Arena	2.30 PM
6	BYE			
7	24/04/2021	Hartpury	Alpas Arena	1.00 PM
8	01/05./2021	Cornish Pirates	Butts Park Arena	3.00 PM
9	15/05/2021	Jersey Reds	Stade Santander	3.00 PM
10	22/05/2021	Saracens	Butts Park Arena	5.00 PM
11	29/05/2021	Richmond	Richmond Athletic Ground	TBC

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CHAMPIONSHIP LEAGUE TABLE



POSITION	TEAM	PLAYED	WON	DRAW	LOST	FOR	AGAINST	PTS DIFF	BONUS	POINTS
1	Ealing Trailfinders	4	4	0	0	236	47	189	4	20
2	Doncaster	4	3	0	1	88	72	16	1	17
3	Cornish Pirates	4	3	0	1	94	53	41	3	15
4	Saracens	3	2	0	1	94	41	53	2	10
5	Coventry	4	2	0	2	84	108	-24	2	10
6	Bedford Blues	4	1	0	3	74	87	-13	2	6
7	Amphill	3	1	0	2	54	88	-34	2	6
8	Hartpury RFC	4	1	0	3	103	155	-52	1	5
9	Jersey Reds	3	1	0	2	53	88	-35	0	4
10	Richmond	4	1	0	3	48	112	-64	0	4
11	Nottingham	3	0	0	3	42	119	-77	1	1



TOP TRY SCORERS

PLAYER	TEAM	TRIES
Benjamin Foley	Hartpury RFC	5
Rayn Smid	Ealing Trailfinders	5
Alex Lewington	Saracens	3
Rich Lane	Bedford Blues	3
Thomas Duncan	Cornish Pirates	3
Simon Uzokwe	Ealing Trailfinders	3
Jordan Burns	Ealing Trailfinders	3
Fraser Strachan	Ealing Trailfinders	3
Will Davis	Ealing Trailfinders	3
Nic Dolly	Coventry	3

TOP POINTS SCORERS

PLAYER	TEAM	POINTS
Sam Olver	Doncaster Knights	38
Joshua Bragman	Hartpury RFC	38
Craig Willis	Ealing Trailfinders	38
Brendan Cope	Jersey Reds	28
Will Maisey	Bedford Blues	26
Benjamin Foley	Hartpury RFC	25
Rayn Smid	Ealing Trailfinders	25
Steven Shingler	Ealing Trailfinders	21
Tony Fenner	Coventry	20
Manu Vunipola	Saracens	19

KEY STATS

KEY STATS	
20 Matches	121 Tries
91 Conversions	42 Penalties
26 Yellow cards	970 Points

FACTOID
There were more yellow cards shown in Round 4 (11) than in Rounds 1 and 2 combined

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TODAY'S OPPO

AMPTHILL

By John Butler



Our visitors to the Butts Park Arena today are Amphill and District, and we extend to them, as always, a warm Coventry welcome.

Having won promotion to the Greene King IPA Championship for the first time in 2019/20, Amphill have deservedly earned themselves a reputation of being difficult to defeat.

While Cov have been at the top end of English rugby for decades, Amphill's rise to the second tier has come largely in the past few years. Indeed, as recently as 2008/09 they were playing in Midlands Division 2 (East), so the whole management of the club deserves plenty of credit for the ambition and then putting their plans in place.

The history of rugby being played in the Amphill area can be traced back to 1881, while the club re-formed in 1950 after World War Two. The first acres were acquired at Dillingham Park in 1958, the current club, Amphill & District Community Rugby Football Club being incorporated in 1959.

The Mini/Junior section at Amphill is well known to have thrived in a big way since its initial formation back in 1971 and continues in that vein as one of the largest clubs in Bedfordshire and a provider of plenty of talented players into Premiership Academies.

Our league meetings began in 2015/16 when they won promotion to National League One, whereas last season we met for the first time in the Championship, once again after Amphill had won promotion. Overall, the record books show that our two clubs have only been meeting for some six seasons.

In terms of league clashes, there have been seven prior to today. Currently, Amphill lead 4-3 in victories, all three of our successes having come here at Butts Park Arena.

All-bar-two of the previous league encounters have been relatively close. One exception is a 12-point winning margin secured by Amphill in their 2017/18 home win.

But the other exception referred to here came at Butts Park Arena, also in 2017/18, when Cov triumphed 63-14, running up nine tries overall. Scrum-half Tom Kessell claimed a hat trick, with flanker Brett Daynes securing a brace.

With COVID-19 bringing last season to its premature close, we met just the once, Amphill winning a close encounter, 17-19 at Dillingham Park. However Cov won both the Championship Cup meetings, which was the first time we had succeeded at Dillingham Park.

Mark Lavery has remained as Director of Rugby, while the vastly experienced former Welsh international fly half Paul Turner continues to head up the coaching team.

In common with most Championship sides, the Amphill squad is much changed from last season. A name very well known to us from previous meetings though is open side flanker Joe Bercis, the side being captained from fly half by Louis Grimoldby, who is also the main goal kicker in the squad. Another familiar name we will probably come up against is Gloucester's dual registered full back Tom Hudson, who briefly trained here during the recent pre-season.

Amphill were last in action on March 21st, when they defeated Nottingham 31-15 at home. Prior to that, the opening two games were both lost against the Championship's top two teams, 6-54 at Ealing Trailfinders and 17-19 at home to Doncaster Knights.

PLAYERS TO WATCH



New face MATT MARSH

Matt Marsh was Club and first team captain at Cardiff Met RFC, making 65 appearances in BUCS Super Rugby and scoring “more points than he can remember”.

The 22-year-old joined Exeter Chiefs Academy while at school and spent a year in South Africa at the Stellenbosch Academy of Sport before going to University.

Matt made his Ampthill debut in the second preseason friendly and win against Bedford Blues and was a contender for Man of the Match in Ampthill’s first Championship victory this year in the recent fixture with Nottingham.



Club stalwart JOE BERCIS

Twenty-six year-old flanker Joe Bercis rejoined Ampthill from Moseley in 2016 and has been an almost ever-present in the starting XV since.

Bercis has 161 first team appearances and 64 tries to-date, including five in the Greene King IPA Championship last season which earned him a place in the GKIPA Team of the Season!

Bercis is a Mob supporters’ favourite and is the club ambassador for mental health partners bIOKes!

TODAY'S OPPO FORM GUIDE



Director of Rugby, Mark Lavery described Amphill's initial block of games as "an incredibly tough hand" with opening fixtures against two of the Greene King IPA Championship favourites, Doncaster at home and Ealing away, on the back of only five weeks training in Phase 3.

Round 1 saw Doncaster visit Dillingham Park, but with the two clubs "months apart" in their preparations nobody expected a repeat of last season's home win. However, despite outscoring the visitors by three tries to one, Amphill undid themselves with an excessive error count and played long periods of the second half with only 13 players on the pitch! An in-form Sam Olver kicked four from four to inspire a 19-17 victory for the Knights.

When you are five weeks into Phase 3 training, it doesn't come much tougher than Ealing Trailfinders away. Amphill were keen to avoid a repeat of last season's 77-26, 11 try defeat and for the first 30 minutes went almost toe to toe with their hosts. A mature team may not have forced the phases so hard and gained more from prolonged periods of pressure in the Ealing 22. An exceptional Trailfinders side punished every mistake but with the half-time score at 19-6 it was still a contest. Amphill lost their composure in the second half, and as the error count grew so did Ealing's score. Ealing eventually went over for eight tries and a 54-6 victory.



"For periods of the first half we showed we can compete with the very best in this level," Lavery commented afterwards. "However, we demonstrated our naivety by forcing plays and some poor decision-making was capitalised upon by a very efficient side.

"Our set-piece was working well, we competed in the scrum but again our failure to convert scoring opportunities and be clinical at the right moment has resulted in an 8-0 try result. We'll learn from it and there are plenty of positives to take"

Round 3 saw the visit of Nottingham in a repeat of Amphill's first ever Championship fixture back in October 2019. Both teams were at similar stages in their training, both had played Ealing and lost by 50 points, and both were looking for their first victory of the season!

Nottingham struck first with a breakaway try from Luke Mehson but braces from James Flynn and Dave Ward, plus a fine individual try from Will Brown, saw Amphill claim their first victory and a bonus point with a 31-15 win.





All pictures by Prime Media Images