

**BETFRED**  
 **LEAGUE 1**

**PROGRAMME £2.00**



# **MATCH PROGRAMME**

**COVENTRY BEARS v DONCASTER RLFC**

**SUNDAY 5TH AUGUST KO 3PM BUTTS PARK ARENA**

20TH ANNIVERSARY

COVENTRY BEARS

# BETFRED

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# BETFRED LEAGUE 1



# PASSIONATE ABOUT RUGBY LEAGUE

# Welcome



Welcome to today's match and to all players, staff and supporters from Doncaster.

So we travelled to high flying York City Knights last week and it proved to be a game too far on our winning run after defeating London, Hemel, Keighley and West Wales.

York are up there and after defeating Bradford Bulls on the Saturday it was always going to be tough for us. That, and the fact that 10 of our players had been involved in the student 4 nations meant that we had some tired bodies out there. Some of the guys had played 6 games in 14 days and that really is a massive undertaking.

Looking ahead to today it will be another big task against a club who is pushing the top 3. The Dons have a strong Dual Registration agreement with Hull Fc and are coached by Hull legend Richard Horne. They are a club who is a solid top of the table team and if

they don't get promoted this year they will be pushing next year. Owner Carl Hall is a man I have a lot of respect for in the game. The former Kiwi professional is a man with a vision and that is something that is critical these days both in business and in professional sport. They have recently submitted a bid to host RLWC 2021 games at the Keep Moat stadium and I have no doubt they will be successful in their endeavours.

That leads me onto revealing that I have also been involved in a bid to host RLWC 2021 games in Coventry. Along with the City Council and Wasps we have supported a new bid to bring international rugby league to the city and after the success of the 4 nations in 2016 it would be another huge boost to the game not only in Coventry but the Midlands region as a whole. With the demise of Sky Try funding and the Midlands Academy in Loughborough it could

be an opportunity to re-ignite the fire in the region and bring back some momentum to clubs which have either folded or struggled to get games in the past few years. The RFL is undergoing an overhaul and the RLWC in 2021 could be just what the sport needs.

Hopefully both Doncaster and Coventry will be successful in their bids and both our hard work gets rewarded.

Please don't miss my own review on the season later in the programme it will be a first installment on how the year has gone from a behind the scenes personal perspective and I hope it gives you an insight into the club that you haven't seen before.

See you next time.  
**Alan Robinson**  
Bears Owner and CEO



# VISITORS



# LEAGUE TABLE



I have a theory....  
The main thing that moves clubs up from being at the bottom of the ladder is new clubs coming in and taking their place.

Skolars, Gateshead/Newcastle, N.Wales ( in all their guises) and Hemel were all the whipping boys when they joined the league. They at least clung on unlike Nottingham, Chorley, Mansfield, Kent, Oxford and the All Golds. This isn't a new phenomenon.

Doncaster had more years at the bottom of the pyramid than most.

They joined the league in 1951 and always struggled. They finished bottom every year from 1956-1961 and were in the bottom 3 every year between 1963-1968. In fact between 1970 and 1985 they only managed to miss out on a bottom 3 place on two occasions!

Famously in the 1980 season they were in the spotlight as Yorkshire TV featured their fight to avoid going a season without a win in the documentary "Another Bloody Sunday" They too almost foundered and in fact did in 1995 only to be rescued and almost go under again in 2001.

I highlight these travails only because there is again a questioning about expansionist clubs being admitted. The lesson seems to be persistence Will eventually pay off. Hopefully those dark days are now behind them and under the stewardship of Carl Hall the "Dons" are on the up. They suffered a bit of a setback a couple of years ago when they were relegated from the Championship.

With the form Bradford and York are showing they might not make it this year but, they are still in the mix and they will be fighting to cause an upset.

They still have time to do so. In the programme last week I asked the question "What two unique firsts did David B Davies from Llanelli achieve"?

I promised a pint to anyone who could come up with the answer. I am very pleased to say I didn't have to fork out as no one did. So as promised here is the answer. He was the first player to play for Wales at both rugby union AND rugby league.

His second achievement has still has never been repeated by anyone else. He is the only player to have played in a Challenge Cup Final AND an FA Cup Final!

Pretty impressive hey?



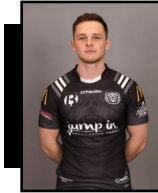
			P	W	L	D	PF	PA	DIFF	PTS
1		Bradford Bulls	19	17	2	0	851	231	620	34
2		York City Knights	19	17	2	0	806	262	544	34
3		Workington Town	19	13	6	0	629	353	276	26
4		Whitehaven RLFC	19	13	6	0	554	365	189	26
5		Oldham RLFC	19	12	7	0	678	235	443	24
6		Doncaster RLFC	19	12	7	0	681	400	281	24
7		Hunslet RLFC	19	12	7	0	517	418	99	24
8		Keighley Cougars	19	10	9	0	651	455	196	20
9		Newcastle Thunder	19	9	10	0	540	388	152	18
10		North Wales Crusaders	19	6	12	1	403	510	-107	13
11		Coventry Bears	19	5	14	0	306	832	-526	10
12		London Skolars	19	4	14	1	474	659	-185	9
13		Hemel Stags	19	2	17	0	248	888	-640	4
14		West Wales Raiders RL	19	0	19	0	140	1482	-1342	0

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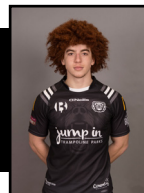
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CONTINUED OVERLEAF

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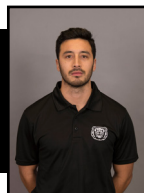
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[alan.robinson@coventrybears.co.uk](mailto:alan.robinson@coventrybears.co.uk) or call 07974 517519



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14. Jack Miller
15. Jason Tali
16. Kyle Kesik
17. Jordie Hedges
18. Charlie Martin
19.



## HEAD COACH

RICHARD HORNE

## MATCH OFFICIALS

Referee: S RACE

Touch Judges: I ARNOLD, S HOUGHTON

Reserve Refere: N WOODWARD

# THE FRONTLINE



## A YEAR IN REVIEW WITH BEARS OWNER ALAN ROBINSON

So the season began for us in the depths of November with the plan for one of the longest pre seasons ever. A gruelling 12 weeks ending in February with a preseason match versus the Super League Champions Leeds Rhinos.

Tom and the coaching staff were keen to get an extra session in the week so after some discussion with Bears assistant coach Alex Brown I went to see Leyton Brady at Toe2Toe gym in Canley. Leyton the BKB British middleweight Bare Knuckle boxing champion was an absolute gentleman and agreed to a sponsorship deal which allowed the Bears to train in the gym every Wednesday night as a group and be put through their paces. It fit us perfectly, a local no frills venue with a true Coventry feel! Those sessions are something that have given us a togetherness and mental toughness that we have not had before and I would like to thank Leyton

for that.

So preseason came and went and excitement built towards our match versus Leeds Rhinos. It was actually a match 3 years in the making as Leeds owner Gary Hetherington agreed to support us granting the opportunity for a preseason match. 12 months before I'd met Gary with a delegation from Coventry, City of Rugby and he paid me a great compliment saying I reminded him of when he first developed Sheffield Eagles into a professional Club. Considering the journey he has had in the game this was something I will never forget and galvanised me into driving the club forward. We spoke then of the I'll fated Coventry Rugby League Club from 1913 who had a record score defeat versus Leeds and never returned after WW1 hit in 1914. I believe this was the catalyst for Gary to say yes to a 100 year rematch, that

and of course the influence of Bears Vice President Mike Shires whose support in the past few years has been invaluable in making these big things happen!

After we played Leeds that night I made my way into the pitch and shared a moment with Gary H. He said "has tonight gone well for you" and I replied by simply looking into the stand of over 1200 supporters and nodding! I was pretty speechless to be honest. That night I'd seen former players and fans from the past 25 years and quite frankly it had been amazing. It had allowed us to sell out hospitality and have a record crowd in attendance at the start of the year. This was something that had never happened before and also gave us some income at the start of the year which was very welcome.

Moving on we then hit the Challenge Cup and another first as we hosted

Distington a club from Cumbria in our first BBC LIVE TV game. We came out convincing winners against the amateurs and I was confident we had more in the tank but it still remained to be seen as the league then started with a heavy defeat away at Doncaster. Carl Hall the Doncaster owner was very complimentary and supportive saying "stick at it you are doing it the right way". Again this coming from a man who has achieved a huge amount in the game was very encouraging.

As we got back on the coach myself and the coaching team had a chat as we always do after the match and on reflection a Dual Registration Super League player Hakim Miloudi from Hull FC had made a huge impact in the game scoring over 30 points himself. This was hard to swallow but we had made a big decision in the off season to stick with our

locally based young squad and to grow from within so we had to trust that and back ourselves. The next match we got our first win of the season versus Hemel Stags which was another welcome boost although what followed was very challenging. We defeated another amateur club Pilk Recs in round 4 of the Cup and booked a 5th round place away to Super League club Widnes Vikings. Although this was fantastic for the club it was a tough match at a time of the season in which we were about to play some of the toughest teams in League One. We went down to a heavy defeat but also won over some new fans from Widnes who followed our story and build up and now send good luck messages regularly. It was also fantastic to meet some fans from Widnes who now travel down to watch us regularly. Its something that has given me another real boost to see and reassure me that

we are doing things the right way.

So defeat after defeat followed but we stuck to our values and the boys kept working hard, we had another huge game away at Bradford Bulls and gave a good show scoring a good try and defending well for large parts of the match. Next up we had London Skolars at home, it was a game I feel we could have won but Skolars size and game management got the better of us and we lost it in the last 20 minutes. Next came probably the biggest low in the clubs history, a record defeat away at Keighley Cougars who posted over 90 points against us.

We had pretty much lost two props in the first 10 minutes with James Geurtjens getting a bang on the head and Dan Gover picking up a knock after playing for England Universities in the week and having to hobble off

# FRONTLINE YEAR IN REVIEW



the pitch. This meant that our middle was considerably weakened. The Cougars were ruthless and put us to the sword. We also had 5 other players who had played for England Universities that Wednesday and it was a worry that these guys were playing a lot of rugby. Rugby League really is tough not just on the body but on the mind and you must be both mentally and physically tough to play. The confrontation in rugby league is like no other sport and something that a lot of people don't realise unless you have played yourself. It takes a lot of courage to continually keep tackling big bodies running flat out at you, it's not a tackle where you have a chance of gaining possession like in rugby union, possession is guaranteed so you have to be at your best to stop that attacking player every single time. One miss or bit of weakness and it's an offload, a line break, or a try. It really is like holding the line in a battle!

After we played Keighley I spoke to Tom Tsang after the match and he was very dispondent. I think

it was a good thing that I wasn't at the game as I probably would have been even more down about the defeat. All we could say to each other was that we had to keep fighting.

After Keighley we played York and Workington at home. We showed some great game play versus York in the first half but their class shone through in the second half. Workington was another big challenge but the highlight of the day has to go to young Irishman Peter Ryan who made a tackle against Fui Fui Moi Moi that we are still hearing about now! Peter who came over from Ireland to study at Coventry University had earned himself a scholarship and contract with us and had been working hard all pre-season. He had made his debut versus York with a solid performance and a try and went about his business in a quiet manner but there was nothing quiet about his big hit on Fui Fui, even friends in Australia had seen it featured on tv! It was very pleasing to see him do so well being from Northern Ireland myself and being known for the

odd big hit in my playing days. Was it actually proving that our system of trusting in locally based project players and investing time and effort in good coaching and culture working?

So after defeat to Workington two more defeats followed at Crusaders and versus Oldham who came to the BPA with a fearsome reputation and posted 60 points against us. More defeats followed against Hunslet and Newcastle and we looked to be staring down a freight train as our much publicised match versus Bradford Bulls which I had nicknamed the battle of the Beasts was on the horizon.

I wont lie to you, I was worried as the last thing we needed was another tonking at home with a large crowd in attendance.

This was not to be however as the coaches and players did us all proud that day with a fantastic first half performance. Sure Bradford ran away winners in the second half but everyone felt happy



and proud we had done a good job both on and off the field and made the match a real event with the club record crowd versus Leeds broken with over 1400 in attendance. Could we be turning the tide and starting to prove the naysayers wrong?

Off the field there were other interesting things going on. In the rugby league press, Whitehaven had posted financial difficulties and a cry for help to the public with a reported 90k needed to see out the season. This raised a lot of eyebrows and personally it made me feel a bit upset after we had been defeated by a strong Whitehaven side earlier in the year meaning that they had clearly being spending

above their means on their squad. I am proud of the fact that we spend within our means and to a realistic and sustainable budget but for clubs to overspend then ask the public to bail them out I found pretty unbelievable. I respect that clubs have been around for many years and that everyone has problems but are just giving pages and public donations really going to make everything right or is there still a risk of further mismanagement?

Only time will tell and I wish those clubs finding themselves in difficult financial positions but I believe its very embarrassing for the sport and that clubs should be alot more careful and held alot more accountable.

After Bradford Bulls and the battle of the Beasts we had London Skolars this time the match was away and it turned out to be a turning point in the year!

Buy next matches programme as the story continues including...

The winning run...

Development highs and lows...

Media challenges...

Special thanks to special people...

and what you can do to help the Bears in 2019...



# Presidents Corner

## WITH RON BANKS BEARS PRESIDENT

All good things must come to an end and last week's game at York was, for many of our players 1 game too many. Our student players have not only played out a full tournament but some of them have backed that up with playing for us too.

The lads have really put their bodies in the line and have shown tremendous spirit in doing so. Any way on with this week's roundup.

Yesterday BRADFORD BULLS [1st] v WHITEHAVEN [4th] both clubs have strengthened considerably in the last few days. The BULLS have drafted in loan signings Tuoyo Egodo and Jy Hitchens from Cas and Johnny Pownal from Toronto. Haven have been shopping much closer to home with Craig Calvert and Carl Side to "unhang" their boots! They have recruited two local amateurs from Hensingham and Steve Roper from Cru.

WEST WALES RAIDERS [14th] v HUNSLET [7th] Steve Parry the WWR stand in coach thinks he must have run over a black cat as injuries continue to mount for the beleaguered Welshmen. No such problems for Hunslets Gary Thornton he was able to

welcome back Daley Williams, Liam Mackey and Nyle Flynn to help defeat KEIGHLEY 16-24 last week.

In today's games HEMEL STAGS [13th] v OLDHAM [5] Hemel completed a double last week against WWR whilst Oldham slipped up at Newcastle. Hemel have brought back their former junior Alfie Edwards from The Broncos. Meanwhile the big news out of Oldham is the 9 month ban imposed on Danny Bridge who was found guilty of physically assaulting a match official. The player apologised for his "moment of madness"

NEWCASTLE THUNDER [9th] v LONDON SKOLARS [12th] THUNDER are reported as chasing Ireland international Liam Finn from Wakey for next season. Jason Payne has already secured Frenchman Remy Marginet in the other half back berth. Skolars have resigned former player Judd Greenhalgh who once again teams up with brother Matt at the New River Stadium.

WORKINGTON [3rd] v KEIGHLEY COUGARS [8th] Leon Price has been busy with the pen. He has signed Tyler Dickinson [prop] and

winger Tyler Mellor. They have also recruited Barrow Islands BARLA international Ben Garner. With Austria Holdings taking control at Cougar Park they have lost no time in recruiting former Cas CEO Steve Hill to act as General Manager who moved swiftly to secure Harry Aaronson and Benn Hardcastle on two year deals.

YORK CITY KNIGHTS [2nd] v NORTH WALES CRUSADERS [10th] York's former Bears player Joe Batchelor has signed for Saint Helens next term. He scored 4 against us last week so he is certainly in good form. Cru meanwhile have signed former GB international Steven Wilde. Steve is 37 now but has been working as strength and conditioning coach so fitness should not be a problem.

I hope you enjoy the fare on offer here today. See you in the bar after the game?



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**COVENTRY BEARS**  
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SUNDAY	18TH FEBRUARY	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 1	DONCASTER	AWAY
SUNDAY	11TH MARCH	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 3	HEMEL STAGS	AWAY
GFRIIDAY	30TH MARCH	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 5	NEWCASTLE THUNDER	HOME
SUNDAY	8TH APRIL	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 6	WHITEHAVEN	HOME
SUNDAY	15TH APRIL	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 7	BRADFORD BULLS	AWAY
SATURDAY	29TH APRIL	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 8	LONDON SKOLARS	HOME
SUNDAY	6TH MAY	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 9	KEIGHLEY COUGARS	AWAY
SUNDAY	12TH MAY	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 2	YORK CITY KNIGHTS	HOME
SUNDAY	20TH MAY	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 10	WORKINGTON TOWN	HOME
SUNDAY	27TH MAY	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 11	NWALES CRUSADERS	AWAY
SUNDAY	10TH JUNE	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 12	OLDHAM	HOME
SUNDAY	17TH JUNE	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 13	HUNSLET	AWAY
SUNDAY	24TH JUNE	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 14	NEWCASTLE	AWAY
SATURDAY	30TH JUNE	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 15	BRADFORD BULLS	HOME
SATURDAY	7TH JULY	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 16	LONDON SKOLARS	AWAY
SUNDAY	15TH JULY 2PM KO	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 17	HEMEL STAGS	HOME
SATURDAY	21ST JULY 2PM KO	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 18	KEIGHLEY COUGARS	HOME
WEDNESDAY	25TH JULY 7.45PM KO	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 4	WEST WALES RAIDERS	HOME
SUNDAY	29TH JULY	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 19	YORK CITY KNIGHTS	AWAY
SUNDAY	5TH AUGUST	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 20	DONCASTER	HOME
SUNDAY	12TH AUGUST	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 21	WORKINGTON TOWN	AWAY
SUNDAY	19TH AUGUST	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 22	WEST WALES RAIDERS	AWAY
SUNDAY	2ND SEPTEMBER	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 23	OLDHAM	AWAY
SUNDAY	9TH SEPTEMBER	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 24	NWALES CRUSADERS	HOME
SUNDAY	16TH SEPTEMBER	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 25	WHITEHAVEN	AWAY
SATURDAY	22ND SEPTEMBER	LEAGUE ONE ROUND 26	HUNSLET	HOME

## BUTTS PARK ARENA RUGBY LEAGUE GENERAL ADMISSION

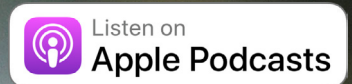
ADULTS £12.00 CONCESSIONS £10.00 CHILDREN 12-16 £5.00 U12'S FREE  
ALL HOME KICK OFFS 3.00 PM

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ADULTS £100 CONCESSIONS £90 CHILDREN 12-16 £30.00



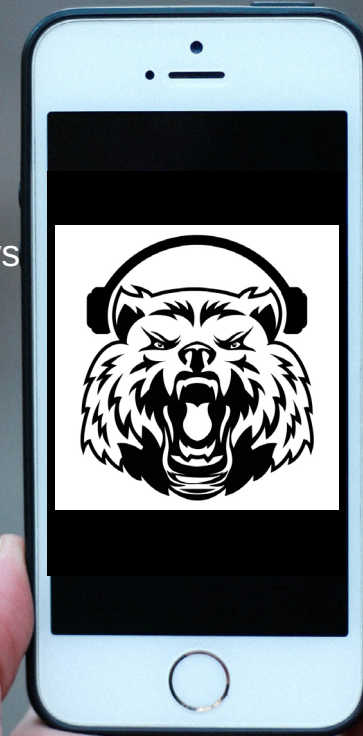
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