

OWRFC Season 2012 / 2013

The 2012/2013 season was far removed from the record breaking promotional battles of the season before. After several retirements over the summer, the beginning half of the season was marred with injuries. Several key players also moved abroad to follow work commitments. Amongst notable absentees were Christopher Ibru and Andrew Digweed. The squad had to dig deep through this period, scrapping for bonus points and tense victories. The first big win came with a bonus point victory away on the Isle of Wight in late October and the club tried to pick up from here through the depths of winter.

Over Christmas we recruited some new OW talent including the versatile Dan Cervino who added to the core of regular players including Ed Caesar, who had a particularly strong season, Nick Kertesz, Jonathan Carey, Matt Hunter, Billy Price, Pete Byre and James Simpson. Vice Captain Sean Starling continued to lead admirably, a fine example being in early February when his goose step, outside ark outpaced the winger giving us a try to gain us victory against mid-table Eastleigh, decent work from the prop.

As March approached the stark reality of a relegation battle was clear for everyone. In the end it came down to 2 remaining games and 2 victories needed to avoid the drop. The first was a convincing 8-27 away victory against Old Paulines, however, just missing out on a crucial bonus point. The final match was against promoted Weybridge to whom we had lost by 40 points in the opening match of the season. In the driving spring rain it took a huge collective effort. The experience and guile of Doug Harrison and Pete Byre found some openings, combined with the youth and energy of Mark Douglas and Richard Gower who turned them into try scoring opportunities. A dominant first half was backed up by a resilient second and the game finished 24-22 to the OWRFC in front of a generous home crowd. We stayed up by one point, a bonus point earned in that final game.

Our fabled 'no training' policy continues to allow us to compete in London 3 with semi-pro opposition but it is clear that like every team we need to rebuild, recruit and encourage some more Old Wellingtonians to come and enjoy their rugby at the club. Retirements, injuries and departures will continue to happen and it is the youth of the club that is the future. There is still a strong core of players and a tremendously enjoyable atmosphere at the club, and I am very excited when I look forward to next season. Please may I encourage any aspiring players to get in touch, we continue to want to add to a squad that includes players who have made a significant mark at College, University and more accomplished levels. If you have any interest in getting involved with the OWRFC please go to our website <http://www.owsociety.co.uk/sports-arts/rugby/> to find out more.

The club are as ever in debt to our continued association with sponsors Canmoor and Jules Benkert, and the thankless work, as well as another fine season on the field, put in by Andrew Robertson and his father 'JR' in fixtures/player admin. We are also indebted to Player/Chairman Dougie Harrison, Treasurer Chris Crawford and President Hugh Salmon.

- Elliott Freer (Captain)