



In Touch

I'd give a lot to have heard coach Tom Tench's half time talk to our squad at Stratford upon Avon because it must have been inspirational. Despite the inclusion of several debutants through injury and non-availability the Ludlow team had looked confident as they scored the opening try with a fine backs move but Stratford were quick to counter, and Ludlow became jittery giving away unnecessary penalties. But half time they were 13-5 down to a try in the corner and two penalty kicks and showing every sign that they might struggle to level in the second half. In truth the Ludlow defence had been stalwart despite having little chance to practise together, the scrum had pushed Stratford backwards providing a strong platform and the lineout, while still not perfect, had improved beyond all measure.

As several spectators remarked, all they need is confidence. Step forward Tom Tench, for that is surely what he supplied with his talk. Suitably boosted, Ludlow scored first in the second half, another lovely backs move, and they kept on scoring. Final score 34-18. The back row were immense so no surprise that Ludlow Brewery man of the match award went to Raife Hughes but it could have gone to any of them. For the record Josh Jukes got two tries, Luke Murrell two, Jack Davies and AJ Rocke, one each. But the accolades go to the team as a whole. Debutantes Harry Moran (prop), Sam Brooks (centre) Bailey Bache (flyhalf), Gwyn Pierce all had good games and some of those who weren't available might find themselves fighting to get their places back.



Stratford-upon-Avon vs. Ludlow



Photos courtesy of Trevor Patchett

Talking of inspiration, committee members who were invited to lunch before the game, were lucky enough to meet Stratford committee member Gareth Rees. Gareth lost the use of his limbs from neck down after suffering a broken neck in a ruck while playing for Stratford Firsts in 2011. Since then, he has faced a long rehab battle via Birmingham QE, Stoke Mandeville etc but leads a full life with the help of a carer and an amazing wheelchair which he controls via Bluetooth with his chin. The club has pulled out the stops to make their building more accessible for him via a lift etc, but Gareth is on the committee, supports from the touch line and even goes on tour with them. Four of his mates pushed him in a specially adapted wheelchair on



the London marathon to raise money for the RFU injured players fund which supported him in the early days after his devastating injury.

Inevitably all the above meant Ludlow's second team were unable to take the field through lack of players. Fortunately, it had been arranged as a friendly so no league repercussions will ensue. So, this coming weekend the firsts entertain Shipston-on-Stour at home while the seconds take on Bournville thirds at The Linney. It's our first sponsors lunch of the season and we are hoping for a big crowd to watch both games. Kick off 3pm. Shipston are currently second in the table, courtesy only of a lesser points score than league leaders Newent. Sadly, I can't be there due to a break in the city, Lyons, which is the home of one of our main sponsors, the Bosi family. I am taking with me several dining recommendations and you can expect my profile to be slightly inflated when I return though I shall of course be thinking of the team on Saturday afternoon as I watch Sam Matevesi play for Lyons v. Castres Olympique. I'm rather hoping the weather will be warm enough for at shirt and shorts too!

Off the pitch we now have a Ludlow Rugby Club Netball team (The Linney Ladies) featuring several wives and partners of our players. They obviously can't play at the Linney but they have their meetings at the club and help to define Linney as a multi sports club, perhaps opening the door to more grants in the future. The ladies have had an early setback with Stu Lewis' wife, Suzi, dislocating her knee in a match this week. We wish her a speedy recovery.

Our Minis and Juniors have had a successful start to their new season with over 100 children being registered to play and over 30 new players across different age groups. Welcome to all the new families who have joined us this season and welcome back to everyone who has returned for another season. This might be a good time to point out that many of our current senior players developed their love of rugby by playing and training with Ludlow Minis and Juniors and/or our Wednesday night Touch rugby teams. One of those players is Josh Jukes – see below some reflections and advice from him for our younger players.



Ludlow Younger Legacy Legends – Josh Jukes

Q: At what age were you first involved in playing or training with Ludlow RFC?

A: I started at Ludlow playing tag rugby when I was 7

Q: What did you enjoy most about training and playing when you were younger?

A: Having a good bunch of friends and sausage and chips after a game

Q: What motivated you to keep playing when you became an adult?

A: I liked the tougher contact and getting more involved in team bonding and socials

Q: What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given by a coach during your rugby career as a child or an adult?

A: Get up and carry on, but that was just my dad. But from the coaches, earn the right to go wide. Play hard through the middle to create space out wide

Many of the players as well as VP's and mini and junior parents were involved in organising the caravanning, camping and parking recently at the club. These activities form the hardcore of our fundraising activities for the club. The caravans and campers brought in over £5,000 and a further £3,000 plus from parking during the food festival while the Castle concerts earlier in the year contributed almost £14k. All will be reinvested in the club in the near future.

See you soon,

Andy Wright

President Ludlow Rugby Club