

BARNSTAPLE ATHLETIC



21st February 2026

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Josh Sluman



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Good afternoon, everyone, and a very warm welcome back to Pottington Road for what promises to be an absolutely enthralling Counties 1 Western West fixture. Today, we see Barnstaple Athletic prepare to host St. Ives (SW) in a crunch clash with huge implications for the league standings.

We are absolutely delighted to extend a special and hearty welcome to the visiting players, their dedicated coaching staff, committee members, and, of course, all the travelling supporters who have made the journey down to North Devon. Thank you for your support and for adding to the occasion. We truly hope you enjoy your time with us here in Barnstaple and wish you a safe and pleasant trip home later this evening.

What's On the Horizon

Before we dive into today's team sheets and tactics, here are a few important dates and events coming up over the next few months here at Barnstaple RFC:

We are still awaiting a date for Barnstaple Athletics Devon Intermediate cup final against Okehampton. All we do know currently is that it will still be held here at Pottington Road, when we get a date you will be the first to know.

Six Nations in the Clubhouse

We'll be showing every single one of England's matches live in the clubhouse, alongside the best of the remaining Six Nations fixtures on Saturdays. Full details are on the poster below, come down, bring friends, and enjoy the rugby on the big screen, supplied kindly by HBH Woolacotts, visit their new store at Brannams Retail Park, Roundswell for all your entertainment and appliance needs. Visit their website at:-

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Ladies' Day – Friday 21st March

One of the standout dates in our social calendar returns as the Chiefs take on current league leaders Camborne. Tickets are almost completely sold out, but there are very limited number still available. Tickets are priced at £28. For any enquiries regarding availability, please email Rhiane Easton directly at

rhiane.easton@gmail.com

The evening will feature live music from the brilliant Barely Legal, and is open to everyone for an exciting night of music.

End of Season Dinner – Friday 9th May

Our popular End of Season Dinner returns, following the same successful format as last year. Further details will be released closer to the time,

County Championship – Saturday 23rd May 2026

We are absolutely delighted to confirm that Barnstaple will host Devon Senior Men as they take on Gloucestershire in the County Championship. Kick-off is at 2:30pm. Further details to follow.

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ITALY V ENGLAND 4:40PM

MARCH 14TH

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A February to Remember for Some

What a turnaround February has been for Barnstaple Rugby Club—though sadly, not for everyone. It remains a frustrating period for the Buccaneers and the Colts, who are still waiting to play their first competitive game of 2026. Their fixtures have fallen victim either to adverse weather and pitch conditions, or to opposition clubs pulling out at short notice. It's a difficult situation, and they'll be eager to finally get some rugby under their belts.

For the Chiefs and, most notably, for Athletic, however, this month has brought a seismic shift in fortunes. The Chiefs recorded their first victory since Christmas with an impressive scalp, beating the highly regarded Luctonians last Saturday. More on that later in the programme.

But it's Athletic who have truly transformed their trajectory. After enduring a frustrating run of narrow defeats in recent months, agonisingly close results that just didn't go their way, they've finally rediscovered how to win, and more importantly, how to control a game from the very first whistle to the last.

A fortnight ago, they hosted Newton Abbot and produced a solid, composed display that earned them a bonus-point victory, their first in over two months. Then came last weekend's trip to Redruth, where Barnstaple Athletic utterly demolished the home side 25-45 in a clinical, ruthless performance that harked back to the form that powered them through last season. The momentum is building, and it couldn't have come at a better time as we enter the final third of the campaign.

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The Visitors: St. Ives

As for today's opponents, St. Ives, a lot has changed since they were originally scheduled to visit Pottington Road a fortnight ago. Back then, they sat fifth in the league, holding a narrow seven-point advantage over Athletic. But since that postponement, they've been unable to add to their tally of seven wins this season, suffering a defeat at the hands of Wiveliscombe last weekend. Still, they remain a dangerous outfit—well-coached, organised, and with plenty to play for.

The League Picture: All to Play For

Let's take a closer look at the standings. Athletic have now leapfrogged St. Ives into fifth place, sitting just three points ahead of today's visitors. But more tantalisingly, they're now only four points adrift of third-placed Kingsbridge—a side that will visit Pottington Road in April for what could be the fixture of the season. The prospect of a strong finish is very much alive.

That said, St. Ives hold two significant advantages. Firstly, they have a game in hand. Secondly, Athletic still have to travel to Cornwall at the end of March for the rearranged fixture at St. Ives. If the season remains as tight as it is now, those could prove decisive.

However, there's a glaring concern for the Cornish side: they've managed just one away victory all season. That's a statistic Barnstaple will be keenly aware of, and one they'll look to exploit.

These two sides have yet to meet this season, but last year, Athletic completed a commanding double over St. Ives,

winning 56–3 here at Pottington Road and following it up with a 38–12 triumph away from home. History, then, favours the home side. But history won't win today's battle.

The Stakes

Athletic have rediscovered their mojo. They're playing with the confidence, cohesion, and attacking flair that defined their best rugby last season. In a tightly congested mid-table, just nine points separate third from eighth. Every try, every conversion, every losing bonus point could prove vital come the end of April, and both sides realise this.

Athletic's next outing after today is back here at Pottington Road on February 28th, when they'll face Truro on the second pitch. For now come on you Mighty Barum.

Feel the Barum Spirit



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CHIEFS STUN LUCTONIANS IN POTTINGTON ROAD THRILLER TO END 2026 WINLESS RUN



What a game, as Barum supporters, you were privileged to witness on Saturday at Pottington Road. Barnstaple Chiefs, winless in 2026 so far, prepared to host second-placed Luctonians, a side that hadn't tasted defeat this calendar year and, as many will remember, proved far too powerful for the Chiefs on their own patch earlier in the season.

With several key players returning to the fold, there was a quiet optimism around the ground. But let's be honest, the task ahead could not have been more daunting. Luctonians arrived in North Devon as a powerful, well-drilled, and ruthlessly efficient outfit. They were in ominous form, brimming with momentum, oozing confidence, and driven by an immovable ambition as they continued their relentless pursuit of league leaders Camborne.

A Rollercoaster First Half

And within moments of kick-off, the visitors made their intentions clear. In just the second minute, they breached the Chiefs' defence to score an early try, silencing the home crowd and serving notice of the challenge ahead.

But Barnstaple refused to fold. It wasn't long before they hit back in style. Ben Parsons sliced through the Luctonians defence at pace, weaving his way to the five-yard line. A powerful pick-and-go edged the Chiefs to within a foot of the line, and then, spotting a gap, Brendan Darley pounced—grabbing the ball to

tap down for the Chiefs' first try. Jake Murphy, impeccable from the tee all afternoon, added the conversion—the first of a flawless display that would ultimately earn him the Man of the Match accolade.

Luctonians responded with two penalties to regain the lead, as the Chiefs' defence was tested to its limits. They held firm, then, with a lineout on the visitors' five-metre line, the home pack summoned something special. A dominant driving maul rumbled towards the line, and Bertie Stretch, showing awareness and strength, peeled off the back and spun over to score the Chiefs' second try. At the break, the scoreboard read 14–11. A glimmer of hope had become a real belief.

The Turning Point

The second half began, and within five minutes, Head Coach Winston James played his ace. On came three of the returning players—Callum Davies, Arthur Marks, and Connor Swan—injecting fresh energy and steel into the side. The belief that a win was possible began to surge through the team.

For nearly fifteen minutes, a titanic arm-wrestle ensued. Then Jake Murphy, ever reliable, slotted a penalty to extend Barnstaple's lead to 17–11. But Luctonians, as quality sides do, responded immediately. A converted try swung the momentum back their way, edging them ahead 17–18.

Yet the Chiefs had an answer. Once again, the driving maul proved unstoppable, surging towards the line. Domonic Robson picked from the base and smashed his way low through a sea of tacklers to dot down. 24–18.

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developing our services so that patient care and support can be provided closer to home, meaning your support has never been more important.

The hospice is here for you, and because of you. As such we are thrilled to be the chosen charity of Barnstaple RFC for this season. Both Barum and North Devon Hospice are close to the hearts of many in our community, and as such it is very fitting that we are working in partnership.

From all the hospice team - here's to a fantastic season

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A Nerve-Shredding Finale

With just nine minutes remaining, Luctonians crossed for their third try. But the conversion drifted wide, leaving the Chiefs clinging to a slender 24–23 lead. What followed was eight breathtaking minutes of pure, unfiltered rugby theatre.

Both sides went to war in the trenches. Every scrap of possession was contested. Every tackle carried the weight of the match. With the clock deep in the red, the Chiefs found themselves with a lineout on their own five-metre line. One mistake, one slip, and the game was gone.

But composure reigned. A perfect throw, a clean catch, and the ball was safely kicked into touch. The whistle blew. Barnstaple Chiefs had done it—a mammoth 24–23 victory against all odds.

The Verdict from the Top

Not being at the game myself, it would be unfair for me to try and capture the full scale of that performance. Instead, let me hand you over to Director of Rugby Phil Gordon-Oke, who shared his thoughts on the supporters' WhatsApp group after the final whistle. By the way, that group is run by Jim Hudson, and any supporter can join—just ask for him at the ground and he'll get you sorted.

Here's what Phil had to say:

"Barum dug deep to secure a hard-fought 24–23 victory over a physically imposing Luctonians in a contest that demanded heart, grit and courage.

Up against a side with clear size and power advantages, Barum

refused to be bullied. From the opening exchanges the lads stood up to the challenge, matching Luctonians hit for hit and fronting up when it mattered most. Every carry was contested, every tackle driven, and every inch earned the hard way.

The game swung back and forth, momentum shifting with each score, but Barum's resolve never wavered. Defensive sets were fierce and disciplined, while in attack the team showed composure to take their chances and keep the scoreboard ticking.

As the clock wound down and the pressure peaked, Barum held their nerve to protect a slender lead, seeing out the final moments with controlled aggression and collective belief.

A statement win against bigger opposition.

They don't like it up them, Barum. 🦵🏈"

The Road Ahead

So there you have it, folks. It doesn't get much better than that. But this train doesn't stop. This weekend, the Chiefs are on their travels once again—this time all the way up north, just 25 miles shy of Liverpool, as they head to Chester for another massive battle.

Earlier this season, Chester visited Pottington Road in a tightly contested affair that saw the Chiefs edge it 28–21, thanks in large part to a blistering start that brought two tries in the first ten minutes. This time, the setting is reversed, and the challenge will

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be no less formidable.

Chester may have lost their last four games—two of them at home to Old Redcliffians and Hornets—but they remain a dangerous outfit. They've claimed several notable scalps this season, including Taunton in October, Cinderford in November, and Redruth before Christmas. They are a solid, well-coached side, and they'll pose the Chiefs plenty of problems on Saturday.

For Barnstaple, it will require 100% focus, relentless effort, and the same grit and belief that carried them past Luctonians.

Looking Further Ahead

Then, next weekend, the Chiefs return home to welcome Redruth to Pottington Road. And that, without exaggeration, will be a huge game on so many levels. None more significant than the narrative of revenge. The last time these two met at the Recreation Ground, the Chiefs produced a famous finish—snatching victory from the jaws of defeat with two superb tries in the final two minutes.

Next Saturday promises fireworks. An explosive encounter awaits, and you will not want to miss it.

But first, all focus is on Chester. Let's get behind the boys. Up the Barum!

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Barnstaple Athletic Produce Stunning Display to Overpower Redruth in Cornwall



Barnstaple Athletic made the long journey west into Cornish territory last weekend with two clear objectives in mind – and returned home having emphatically achieved both.

The trip to Redruth represented far more than just another fixture on the calendar. First and foremost, Athletic were seeking redemption for that agonising home defeat earlier in the season, when a last-minute try had cruelly denied them victory on their own Pottington Road patch. The parallels were almost poetic – this time it would be Redruth who experienced the heartbreak of being denied, though the circumstances could hardly have been more different.

But the second, and arguably more significant, objective was to build upon the momentum shift that had begun the previous week. Athletic's 27-12 triumph over a quality Newton Abbot side had broken a five-match winless streak and, more importantly, signalled a change in mentality. No longer would they accept falling short in those crucial final minutes. That victory posed a single, tantalising question: could they transform a good performance into something truly great by scoring tries in both halves?

Last Saturday in Cornwall, Barnstaple Athletic delivered their answer in thunderous fashion.

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Athletic exploded from the opening whistle with breathtaking intensity, leaving Redruth shell-shocked as they crossed for two tries inside the opening twenty minutes. Luke Knight opened the account before Alex Rowe added the second, with Kyran McManus adding the extras to establish a 3-12 advantage with barely a quarter of the game gone.

The visitors refused to relent. Sam Vickery powered over for his first try in Barnstaple colours, McManus slotting his second conversion of the afternoon. It was a score that would hold particular significance for Vickery, marking his maiden touchdown for the club in emphatic fashion.

Redruth, to their credit, mounted a response in the latter stages of the half, accumulating ten points in a ten-minute purple patch. Yet despite this home resurgence, Athletic maintained their composure to reach the interval with a healthy 13-19 lead, fully aware that the job remained far from complete.

Second Half Masterclass Despite Numerical Disadvantage

Any concerns about a second-half collapse were dispelled within five minutes of the restart. Ryan Smale crashed over to extend the advantage to 13-26, and suddenly Athletic were purring.

Then came the moment that could have derailed a lesser side. A technical red card reduced Barnstaple to fourteen men for the remainder of the contest, and Redruth immediately capitalised on their numerical advantage with a converted try.

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Yet far from diminishing Athletic, the setback appeared to ignite something special. What followed was nothing short of a masterclass in how to dismantle an opponent when your back is against the wall.

Over the final twenty minutes, Barnstaple produced a devastating attacking display, running in three tries to seize complete control. Youngster Jack Barrow announced himself with a well-taken brace, demonstrating why the coaching staff hold such faith in the club's emerging talent. Ben Jago added another to push the lead to an insurmountable 18-45 before Redruth grabbed a last-minute consolation.

McManus enjoyed a near flawless afternoon with the boot, adding two further conversions in that second-half blitzkrieg to complete a personal haul that underpinned the visitors' dominance.

When the final whistle sounded, the scoreboard read 23-45, a margin that reflected not just Barnstaple's attacking firepower but the character, grit and sheer determination they displayed, particularly during that period with fourteen men. This was a performance that announced Athletic are returning to their best.

Momentum Building Ahead of Crucial St Ives Clash

Today, attentions turn to a crunch encounter with St Ives (SW), and Barnstaple will be desperate to maintain the irresistible momentum generated by back-to-back victories. There is a growing sense around the club that the postponed Devon Intermediate Cup final may, in a curious twist of fate, have worked to their advantage. The additional time has allowed Athletic to find their rhythm while integrating the exceptional

young talents that the coaching staff have at their disposal. The blend of seasoned performers and emerging stars is beginning to bear fruit, and with eight league fixtures remaining throughout March and April, plus that rearranged cup final to look forward to, the Tics face a busy but hugely promising conclusion to the season.

Home Fixture Next Weekend

Athletic will look to continue their upward trajectory when they welcome Truro to Pottington Road next Saturday for a 2pm kick-off on the second pitch. Having demonstrated what they can achieve on their travels, Barnstaple will be determined to make home advantage count as they bid to climb the table in this final third of the campaign.

Things, it seems, are looking decidedly up for the Tics.



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Buccaneers and Colts hope to get some playing time after another frustrating week of cancellations



This Saturday sees both the Buccaneers and the Colts hopefully return to action, each with a valuable opportunity to build momentum as the season progresses.

For the Colts, their campaign resumes with a friendly fixture at home against Ivybridge. Eager to shake off the rust, the squad will be raring to go. This match provides a perfect chance to get crucial playing time against a familiar and historically difficult opponent in Ivybridge, whose teams have always proven to be tough and competitive. This friendly is a key stepping stone to restart their season with positive intent and solid foundations.

Meanwhile, it has been a story of ongoing frustration for the Buccaneers, who were once again left kicking their heels last Saturday as their eagerly anticipated return to competitive Devon Merit Table action fell victim to the elements. Their scheduled fixture against Exeter Engineers fell foul of a waterlogged pitch, marking yet another false start in what has become a deeply stop-start campaign for the Buccs.

This weekend, the Buccaneers will make the journey down the coast to Exmouth, where they are scheduled to take on the Exmouth Nomads. Barring any last-minute meteorological disasters, we should, at long last, see the Buccaneers run out for some long-overdue competitive action.

BARNSTAPLE COLTS



TEAM ANNOUNCEMENT

- 1 RHYS HADLEY**
ANTECH DIAGNOSTICS
- 2 NOAH BAZLEY**
SLEE BLACKWELL SOLICITORS
- 3 ZAC TURTON**
THE COMBES GOLF PARK LTD
- 4 SAM HARE**
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- 5 IEUAN JAGO (C)**
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- 6 HENRY HAYNES**
WEBBERS ESTATE AGENTS
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- 8 SAM GOVER**
CYTIVA (ILFRACOMBE)
- 9 JAMES HARE**
A4 APPAREL
- 10 ISAAC SQUIRE**
BLUE ELEPHANT CHILDCARE TTD
- 11 JACOB ASKEW**
A GIFT FOR GAV - STAND UP TO BRAIN CANCER
- 12 JONSON TUHAKARAINA**
LONGCROSS SCAFFOLDING SOUTH WEST
- 13 JAC DAVIES (C)**
SEA
- 14 ASHLEY DOWN**
BLIGHTS MOTORS
- 15 JAMES FYERS**
STACEY & FYERS RESIN

**RILEY
SHORT**

BARUM SQUAD

- EVAN RAY**
COSY DEVON
- NOAH DUERDEN**
M D CARPENTRY
- RORY BRYNE**
JMC CONSTRUCTION SERVICES
- SAM MILNE**
JOLLY TALES BOARDING & DAYCARE
- ARTHUR REDDEN**
- RILEY SHORT**
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- JONNY TAYLOR**
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IVYBRIDGE COLTS V BARNSTAPLE COLTS

CROSS-IN-HAND, 21ST FEB 2026 | KO 2PM

BARNSTAPLE BUCCANEERS



TEAM ANNOUNCEMENT

1 ADDY TURNER (VC)

2 CALLUM HUXTABLE
JULIE WILLIAMS HAIR AND BROWS

3 KIERON SHORT

4 EWAN DAVIES

**CALLUM
JOSSELYN**

5 ROSS EBBAGE

6 SAM YOUNG

7 MARK PHILLIPS
D&G PHILLIPS AGRICULTURAL CONTRACTORS

8 HARRY CLARK

9 SAM GRANT
GRANT HOUSE KEEPING

10 KEYAN MCINERNEY (C)
KEYS FLOORING

11 TOM YEO

12 CHARLIE FISHER
WILLIAM C. HOCKIN TRANSPORT LTD.

13 SAM PALMER
RD CONSTRUCTION

14 PATRICK HENRY
MOUNT SANDFORD HOUSE

15 LEWIS PURCHASE
CAWTHORNES FOOD MARKET

EXMOUTH NOMADS V BARNSTAPLE BUCCANEERS

DEVON MERIT TABLE

IMPERIAL RECREATION GROUND 21ST FEB 2026 | KO 2.15

BUCC'S SQUAD

ZAC EASTON

EVAN CAMPBELL

TOM CROKER
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OLD VAULT

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BARNSTAPLE RUGBY BACKROOM STAFF

TEAM MANAGERS

VERITY WHITE
LYNTON PACK

DARREL GILL
RGP ARCHITECTS

DEAN DAVIES
LYNTON PACK

JENNY BEER
WINDSOR ARMS

EMMA SMITH
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JAMES HUDSON

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RICHARD FLEMMING

JESS ROGERS

ESME RAISTRICK
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TARKA CLINIC

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STAFF**

CALLUM JOSSLYN
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TOM CROKER
BARBERS 32

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BARNSTAPLE RUGBY 2025/26



FEB 28TH - 2PM

NATIONAL 2 WEST

**BARNSTAPLE CHIEFS
VS REDRUTH**

MARCH 7TH 2PM

FRIENDLY

**BARNSTAPLE COLTS
VS BIDEFORD COLTS**

MARCH 14TH - 2PM

NATIONAL 2 WEST

**BARNSTAPLE BUCCANEERS
VS TOPSHAM II**

MAR 21ST - 2PM

NATIONAL 2 WEST

**BARNSTAPLE CHIEFS
VS CAMBORNE**

MAR 28TH 2PM

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**BARNSTAPLE VETS
VS OKEHAMPTON VETS**

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The background of the advertisement features the crest of Barnstaple RFC. The crest is a shield with a red and white design, topped with a crown and surrounded by ornate scrollwork. A banner at the bottom of the crest contains the text 'ESTD 1875'.

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Stats definitions

#	TEAM	P	W	D	L	PF	PA	+/-	TB	LB	Pts
1	 Wiveliscombe	12	11	0	1	402	243	159	8	1	53
2	 Paignton	13	9	0	4	485	338	147	11	1	48
3	 Kingsbridge	12	8	0	4	297	286	11	7	1	40
4	 Truro	13	7	1	5	308	324	-16	9	0	39
5	 St Ives (SW)	12	7	0	5	339	251	88	9	1	38
6	 Redruth II	12	7	0	5	338	397	-59	9	1	38
7	 Newton Abbot	13	6	0	7	343	415	-72	8	2	34
8	 Barnstaple II	12	4	2	6	301	302	-1	7	4	31
9	 Torquay Athletic	13	5	1	7	310	318	-8	5	2	29
10	 Plymstock Oaks	14	5	0	9	349	485	-136	7	1	28
11	 Saltash	12	2	0	10	280	329	-49	6	7	21
12	 Penryn	12	2	0	10	273	337	-64	5	6	19



BARNSTAPLE CHIEFS

VS

REDRUTH

**NATIONAL 2 WEST
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