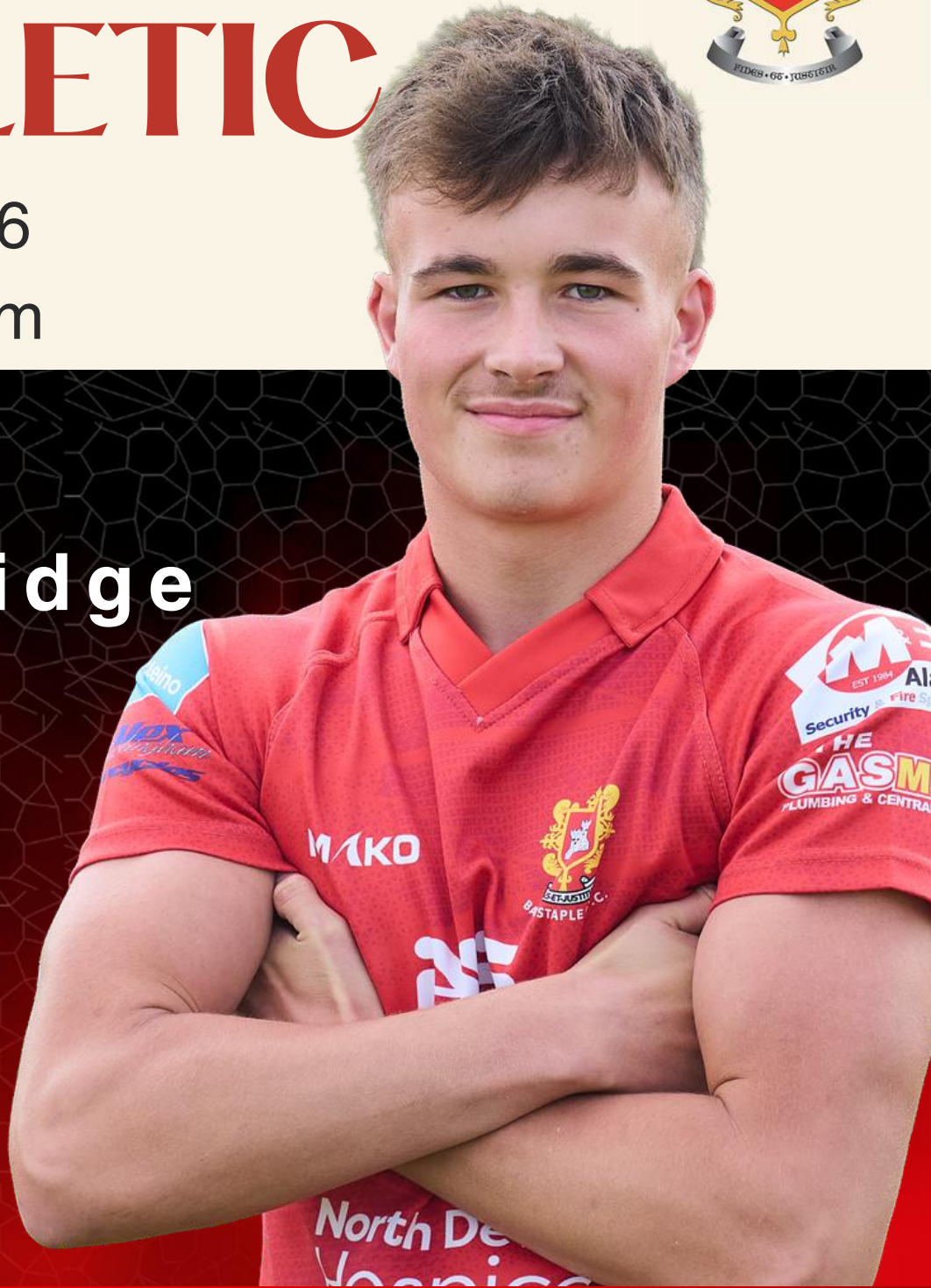


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Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and a very warm welcome back to Pottington Road! It's great to have your company as we embark on the first of our final three league matches of the 2025/26 season – a run that will define the character of this Barnstaple Athletic side.

Today, our attention turns to the main pitch as Athletic take on the first of three monumental challenges in Counties 1 Western West. We welcome 7th-placed Kingsbridge to North Devon for what promises to be a fascinating collision of form and desire. A sincere welcome to the Kingsbridge players, coaches, and supporters – especially those who have made the trip from the South Hams. We hope you enjoy your visit to North Devon and the famous hospitality here at Pottington Road.

Looking Ahead: Finals, Dinners & Devon Glory.

There's still no word as to when the final of the Devon Intermediate Cup between Barnstaple Athletic and Okehampton will take place although there are two options on the table, Saturday 16th May or to have it as a Pre-season fixture in August. We are pushing for the 16th May option but it all depends on what Okehampton agree to, so watch this space.

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Russell 07918009945 or

Dave at 07926044870 or email Daveburf@btinternet.com

End of Season Dinner – Friday 9th May

Our popular End of Season Dinner returns once again, following the same successful format as last year. Further details will be released closer to the time, so please keep an eye out—it promises to be a fantastic evening.

Final home games for our teams

Next Saturday April 18th Barnstaple Chiefs play thier final home match of the current season as they welcome first time visitors to Pottington Road, Syston. It looks like being a fabulous day and there will be all the usual celebrations after the final whistle including drinks with the players and of course your chance to vote for your player of the season. It all kicks off at 2.30pm and it is a finale you will not want to miss.

Then the following weekend Saturday 25th April Barnstaple Athletic play their final league game of the season at home against current 2nd place Paignton. This will be a massive game with huge implications for the league standing as Athletic will look to end the season as they did last season in third place, a fantastic achievement and one that will be well rewarded the more of you attand this final game so let's make it a big day for the Tic's, kick off is 2.30pm

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Athletic's Rollercoaster Ride to Third Place

Let's talk form. Athletic arrive for this clash off the back of a gruelling but ultimately satisfying run against Cornish opposition. Their last six games have been nothing short of a rugby odyssey. It all began back in February with one of the performances of the season – a stunning demolition of a shell-shocked Redruth on their own turf at the Recreation Ground, winning 25-45. That was quickly followed by two back-to-back home victories: a 50-12 rout of St Ives (SW) and a commanding 38-17 win over Truro.

Then came a juddering halt. Having built a four-game winning streak, Athletic travelled to Penryn only to be roundly beaten 43-24. But true to their resilient nature, they bounced back immediately, grinding out a 29-17 win against Saltash before capping the run with a hard-fought 10-14 victory away at St Ives.

Over their last eight games, Athletic have been exceptional: six wins, a draw, and the only blot on the copybook being that loss at Penryn. That rich vein of form has propelled them into a very comfortable third place in the league table – seven points clear of Truro – with three genuinely difficult games still to play. The finish line is in sight, and there's every possibility of securing a second consecutive third-place finish in Counties 1 Western West.

The Road Ahead: Wiveliscombe & Paignton Loom

Looking beyond today, next weekend Athletic travel to league leaders Wiveliscombe, before returning to Pottington Road for the final home game of the season against 2nd-placed Paignton. Make no mistake: a win here against Kingsbridge would go a

long way to easing their path and solidifying that coveted third spot. But as they say, one game at a time. And Kingsbridge are a dangerous opponent – wounded, hungry, and unpredictable.

The Rematch: December Heartbreak & Kingsbridge's Slump

When these two sides last met back in December, it was a massive, tension-filled encounter. Kingsbridge dominated large parts of the game and looked set for a comfortable victory, but Barnstaple refused to lie down. A last-minute rally culminated in a try from Luke Knight in the final play of the half, securing both a try bonus point and a losing bonus point in a narrow 27-24 defeat.

Since that December thriller, Kingsbridge went on to win three more games during a purple patch – but then their season hit the buffers. Five consecutive losses have followed, dropping them to 7th in the league table. They will be ravenous to turn their fortunes around, and that desperation makes them a very different, even more dangerous foe this afternoon.

Easter Reset vs. Finishing Strong

Both teams have enjoyed a week off for Easter, and you can be sure both will be eager to reset their seasons. Kingsbridge will want to banish the memory of that losing streak to the wastebin of history with a convincing win here at Pottington Road. For Barnstaple, this is a golden opportunity to continue their own winning streak, keep pushing right through to the end of April, and finish as strongly as they did last season. A full five-point haul today would be massive, especially with nearest rivals Truro facing what looks like an easier run-in on paper.

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Chiefs, Cup Finals & One Final Push

Before we send you out to enjoy the rugby, a note on next weekend. Barnstaple Chiefs play their final home league match of the season against Syston again its a 2.30 kick off, a vital game for the Chiefs, who will want to finish in style at home before their last away fixture at Old Redcliffians on the 25th. Let's make that the biggest attendance ever and send the Chiefs off in the manner they deserve.

And finally, while we may still have Athletic's cup game to look forward to (fingers crossed), Athletic return to Pottington Road on the 25th to face Paignton in their league finale. Plenty of rugby still to be played.

Enjoy your rugby wherever you are watching today. I'll catch up with you next weekend. COME ON, BARUM!

Feel the Barum Spirit

BARNSTAPLE ATHLETIC



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Guts, Graft, and Glimmers of Glory: Barnstaple Chiefs Stand Tall Despite Camborne's Title Charge



It was always going to be a hard day's unforgiving graft. Several weeks ago, Barnstaple Chiefs faced their toughest opponent of the season—a test not just of skill, but of character. And while the scoreboard ultimately told a painful story, the occasion itself was anything but a defeat for club rugby in North Devon.

On a fantastic day at Barnstaple Rugby, somewhere in the region of 1,000 passionate supporters packed into the ground—a turnout that underlined just how much this fixture meant. Those faithful fans were treated to some fabulous rugby, albeit served with a harsh lesson in what a well-financed, professionally prepared outfit looks like.

That outfit was Camborne: champions-elect in all but name, now needing just six points from their remaining three games to seal automatic promotion to National 1. With a squad boasting four former Cornish Pirates, three ex-Plymouth Albion players, a Newcastle Falcon, and two Fijian internationals who have played at the highest level of English rugby, Camborne arrived as a rugby machine. And they played like one.

First-half blitz leaves Chiefs chasing shadows

Right from the kick-off, Camborne hit the Chiefs hard. Some sublime handling and clinical running saw them work their way downfield to score a cracking opening try, quickly establishing a seven-point lead. To their immense credit, Barnstaple hit back

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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.

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within ten minutes. Their driving maul—a genuine weapon all season—rumbled forward, and Bertie Stretch peeled off to dive over in the corner.

But that brief moment of parity was short-lived. A yellow card for Barnstaple handed the initiative back to the visitors, who wasted no time whatsoever—two tries in two minutes suddenly stretched the lead to 5–21. Worse was to follow. On the last play of the first half, Camborne secured their bonus-point try, and the teams went into the break with a commanding 5–26 lead. The Chiefs were bruised, but not broken.

Second-half fightback shows real heart

If the first half was a lesson in power and precision, the second half began as more of the same. Two further Camborne tries within ten minutes left a shell-shocked home side reeling. But then, something shifted. As the final quarter approached, the Chiefs began to apply pressure of their own. A series of gritty pick-and-goes right on Camborne's try line saw Bryn-Lee Jago burrow his way through a mass of defenders to score Barnstaple's second.

Three minutes later, with Camborne pressing again, Ben Parsons produced a moment of magic—a fabulous intercept on the Chiefs' own 22, followed by an 80-metre sprint to the line for their third try. Suddenly, the scoreboard read 17–40-something, and the mood in the ground lifted. Now the Chiefs had heart. Now they had hope.

Camborne, however, are champions-elect for a reason. Their flying wing Alex Ducker added two more tries to extinguish any

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serious comeback hopes. But Barnstaple refused to fade. With five minutes left, their own “Billy Whizz”—Cameron Grizzle-Johnson—produced the try of the day for the home side. First stepping inside his defender, then accelerating past him to go in at the corner, he secured Barnstaple’s bonus-point try. The game ended 24–54 to Camborne, but the Chiefs walked off with their heads high.

No shame in losing to the best—but form is a concern

Given the talent Camborne had on show, there was no real surprise in the result. But credit where it’s due: Barnstaple never let their heads drop. To score four tries and claim a bonus point against a side of that quality speaks volumes about character.

More worrying, however, is the broader run of form. With just three games left this season, the Chiefs have secured only one win since Christmas. They have just one remaining home fixture, against Syston on April 18th. That said, they still sit seventh in the table, with a 13-point cushion above the relegation playoff position. If they continue picking up bonus points and manage that home win, they should finish comfortably mid-table and in doing so, complete the most successful season they have ever achieved in English rugby.

Eyes turn north: a 250-mile test in Rugby League heartland

Attention now shifts to today’s fixture, a 250-mile trip to the furthest northern town the Chiefs will visit all season: Lymm RFC. Situated midway between Liverpool and Manchester, Lymm represents a cultural shock in more ways than one, this is the heart of English Rugby League territory, just five miles from Warrington.

Lymm's season has followed a strangely similar arc to Barnstaple's. Before Christmas, they boasted a 100% home record and sat comfortably in fourth place when they visited Pottington Road. That match was a tense, tight affair: Lymm opened the scoring after 20 minutes, and despite the Chiefs crossing for three tries, the visitors fought hard to avoid going home empty-handed, snatching a losing bonus point in the final five minutes as Barnstaple held on to win 19–14.

Since then, however, Lymm have found the going much tougher. They've won four matches but also lost their perfect home record—suffering five defeats on their own patch. They now sit three points behind the Chiefs in eighth place.

A warning and an opportunity

For the Chiefs, there is genuine heart to be taken from the trip north. Lymm have won only one of their last four home games. But there is also a flashing warning light: last time out, Lymm travelled to Taunton and won decisively, leading 7–29 with six minutes to go before the home side saved some pride with three converted tries in a frantic finale.

That means Barnstaple will need 110% today—for a full 80 minutes—if they are to get anything from this game. A win would be absolutely awesome, allowing the Chiefs to relax for their final two fixtures. But even a losing bonus point—or, ideally, two—must now be regarded as the very minimum requirement. In a season already full of pride and progress, this is the kind of away day that defines a team.



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No Let-Up for Athletic: a Glorious Run-In as Barnstaple Chase Third Place



It has been a month since the sting of defeat to Penryn, and Barnstaple Athletic have responded exactly as their coaches would have hoped—with steel, resolve, and an unshakable determination to secure third place in the table. That is the position they have worked so hard for over recent months, and if the last two performances are anything to go by, they have no intention of letting it slip.

Dominant display against Saltash restores normal service

The revival began in style at Pottington Road with a dominant bonus-point win over Saltash. Normal service was very much resumed as Athletic ran out comfortable 29–17 winners, controlling large swathes of the game and looking every bit like a side with unfinished business.

First-half tries told the story of a team firing on all cylinders. Charlie Hill—playing only his third game for Barnstaple—opened his account for the club with a fine finish to get the Tics rolling. Within the first ten minutes, a second try followed, and Athletic were flying. By the interval, two more tries had been added to the tally, with Harvey Rostock converting three of them and crossing for a try of his own. That not only secured the try bonus point but also gave Athletic a commanding 26–10 half-time lead.

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The second half, however, proved trickier. Playing up the slope at Pottington Road brought its own challenges, and Athletic failed to quite recapture the rhythm of the opening forty minutes. Saltash capitalised, pulling back a converted try to narrow the gap to 26–17. With just nine points now separating the sides, the game was very much alive. But Athletic held firm. Their defence stood tall under mounting pressure, and in the dying moments, Hayden Gosling produced a moment of rare class—a beautiful drop goal, the first I’ve seen at Pottington Road in a long time (indeed, who can remember the last one). It sealed a well-fought 29–17 victory and kept the momentum firmly alive.

Grit on the road: Athletic grind out a win at St Ives

If the Saltash win was about flair and finishing, the following week’s trip to St Ives was about something else entirely: grit, character, and defensive resolve. This was a hard-fought, attritional battle in which neither side gave an inch. For long periods, both defences dominated, and tries were at a premium.

It wasn’t until the second quarter that St Ives got off the mark with the first score of the game. But Athletic hit back quickly, earning a penalty try to level matters. However, with five minutes left in the half, St Ives struck again to take a slender 14–7 lead into the break.

The message in the dressing room was clear: Athletic had a big task ahead to get something from this game. And the defence delivered magnificently. For the entire second half, Barnstaple shut out the home side completely—no points conceded, no breaks given. Then, in the 60th minute, the moment arrived. Euan Kent crashed over for the winning try, and Kyran

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McManus added the extras. St Ives threw everything they had at the visitors in the final quarter, but Barnstaple's defence was rock solid. A tough, well-fought, and thoroughly deserved win.

The biggest sequence of the season begins today

Now comes the true test. Today marks the start of the biggest sequence of games Athletic will face all season. To end the campaign in third place—a position they have fought tooth and nail to occupy—Barnstaple are going to have to play some of their very best rugby. The good news? Momentum is on their side. The weapons are there. The belief is real.

But the maths is tight. Very tight. Just six points now separate Barnstaple Athletic from Redruth, and seven points from Truro. Yes, it is that close. And with all three of those sides at home this weekend, a win today is not just important—it is absolutely crucial.

The run-in: Kingsbridge, then a titanic test at Wivvy

First up today: Kingsbridge. The visitors sit in seventh place and crucially have a game in hand over Athletic. They are dangerous, motivated, and will arrive at Pottington Road knowing that a win could drag them right back into the conversation. Athletic cannot afford to slip.

Then comes a massive test of character and desire. Next weekend, Barnstaple travel to league leaders Wiveliscombe—a side that can almost taste promotion and will be burning with desire to get over the line in style. That will be a ferocious away fixture against the division's best.

And finally, on April 25th, the grand finale: a home match against the number two team in the league, Paignton. They will no doubt be just as fired up, especially if they still have any sniff of snatching the title from Wiveliscombe's grasp. It could be winner-takes-all for second place, or a desperate battle for the runners-up spot. Either way, it will be explosive.

A spectacular finish in store and it all starts today

It simply couldn't be a tougher run-in to the season. Three massive opponents. Two at home, one on the road. Everything to play for. But what a spectacle of rugby we are heading for in these final weeks. This is what club rugby is all about: pressure, passion, and the chance to make history.

So here is the call to every Barnstaple supporter: let's get everyone out for this one. Pack Pottington Road. Be loud. Be proud. Be ready to make some noise. This will be a thunderous, entertaining match—the kind that sticks in the memory for years.

Five points for the Tics today would go a massive, massive way towards securing that third-place finish. But even one or two would keep the dream alive. Either way, this team has earned your support. Now is the time to give it.

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Buccaneers Battle to the Bitter End

It has been a troubling time for the Buccaneers. As they prepared to play their final match of the season a couple of weeks ago, the mood around Pottington Road was one of weary resignation rather than roaring anticipation. And as for the friendly last weekend against Ilfracombe? The less said about that, the better. Some afternoons are best filed under "learning experiences" and quietly forgotten.

But before that friendly, the Buccs had one last piece of genuine business to attend to. They travelled to Teignmouth for only their second Merit Table fixture of 2026—and, as it turned out, their last of the season. The squad arrived ready to get something from the game, determined not to let a difficult campaign end with a whimper.

Teignmouth, however, proved to be solid at home. While they never quite dominated the game in a spectacular fashion, they controlled the tempo and kept a healthy lead throughout the first period. By the break, the home side had built a commanding 19–5 advantage.

In the second half, the Buccs rallied. Whatever was said in the dressing room at halftime clearly struck a chord, because they emerged a different side. They outscored the hosts after the interval, playing with pride, passion, and a freedom that had been so often denied them by cancellations and circumstances. They went ever so close to pulling off an unlikely comeback.

When the final whistle blew, the scoreboard read 36–27 to Teignmouth—but the Buccaneers walked off with their heads

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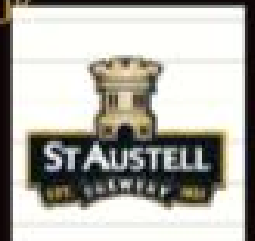
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high, having secured a valuable bonus point in the process.

A season stolen by weather and withdrawals

Make no mistake: this has been a deeply disappointing end to what was, quite frankly, a frustrating season for the Buccs. The statistics tell only half the story. So many games were cancelled that it became almost routine to check the forecast rather than the fixture list. The club has suffered through the wettest opening to any year in recent memory, with pitch after pitch deemed unplayable and weekends that should have been filled with rugby instead lost to endless rain.

But the weather was not the only culprit. A couple of opposition teams simply did not want to play at Pottington Road—for whatever reason—leaving the Buccaneers frustrated at every corner. Fixtures that should have been hard-fought battles became blank weekends. Momentum that should have been built evaporated before it could take hold. For the Buccs' staff, it has been an exercise in patience, improvisation, and sheer bloody-mindedness just to keep the season alive.

Looking ahead: a fresh start for a newly formed side

And yet. There is hope. There is always hope. The fact that this Buccaneers side kept turning up, kept travelling, and kept fighting—even in a season that seemed determined to drown them in rain and red tape—says everything about the character within the squad.

Now, attention turns to the new season. With this newly formed Buccs side, there is genuine belief that the experience will be

different. The foundations have been laid, often in mud and frustration, but they are solid. The lessons have been learned, often the hard way, but they have been absorbed.

What the Buccaneers need now is consistency: consistent fixtures, consistent opposition, and a little more luck with the weather. What they have already is commitment. And that, more than any bonus point or final score, is what will carry them into next season with genuine optimism.

So farewell to a frustrating campaign. The rain eventually stops. The cancellations eventually end. And when the new season kicks off, a leaner, hungrier, more resilient Buccaneers side will be ready. Watch this space.



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Colts Turn Weather Woes into Cup Final Ambition: How Barnstaple's Young Stars Overcame Disruption to Chase Devon Title.

The same story played out for the Colts as it had for so many other teams: matches called off due to relentless weather and a host of other unavoidable circumstances. But rather than let frustration or disappointment creep in, the Colts turned adversity into opportunity. Not only did they manage to arrange a couple of friendly fixtures to keep the cogs turning, but a number of the squad, including seven players who turned out for Barnstaple Athletic in their home match against Truro gave some much needed senior rugby experience and ensured no one was sitting on their hands. Instead, they picked up valuable playing time and stayed match-sharp.

That proactive approach proved extremely important, in March marked the start of the Devon RFU Colts Cup competition. The campaign began in earnest with a home quarter-final against Paignton on the 6th, a game where the Colts showed exactly how good they are. As anyone who read the match report in the last program will know, I felt I had watched the best half of any Colts team I have witnessed here at Barnstaple Rugby Club in a very long time. After a tight opening, they delivered a fantastic second-half performance to run away with the game against a very good Paignton side, winning 56–17.

That emphatic victory set up a huge date on March 21st: a trip to face Crediton, the undefeated top team in the Colts merit table, in the semi-final. After such a dominant performance against



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Paignton, the big question was whether that display had been a flash in the pan or something far more concrete. The Colts answered in emphatic style, crushing the home side 25–55 on their own turf. This side was now on a roll, building serious momentum as they prepare for next weekend's Devon RFU Colts Cup final.

Waiting for them is a familiar cup final foe: Ivybridge. This promises to be a massive game between two sides who have a habit of producing thrilling, high-quality contests whenever they meet.

Good luck to Barnstaple Colts as they travel to Sidmouth for the final. For anyone planning to travel and cheer on the lads, kick-off is at 3:00 PM.

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Stats definitions

#	TEAM	P	W	D	L	PF	PA	+/-	TB	LB	Pts
1	 Wiveliscombe	19	17	0	2	651	377	274	14	1	83
2	 Paignton	19	14	0	5	738	505	233	17	1	74
3	 Barnstaple II	19	10	2	7	528	438	90	13	4	61
4	 Redruth II	19	10	0	9	516	588	-72	13	2	55
5	 Truro	19	10	1	8	451	486	-35	12	0	54
6	 Torquay Athletic	18	9	1	8	459	429	30	9	2	49
7	 Kingsbridge	18	9	0	9	426	477	-51	9	3	48
8	 St Ives (SW)	18	8	0	10	436	463	-27	11	2	45
9	 Newton Abbot	19	7	0	12	511	618	-107	12	4	44
10	 Plymstock Oaks	19	7	0	12	432	632	-200	7	2	37
11	 Penryn	18	5	0	13	423	490	-67	9	6	35
12	 Saltash	19	4	0	15	456	524	-68	9	10	35



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