

BARNSTAPLE CHIEFS



20th December 2025
Kick off 2pm

Vs
Exeter Uni

**Brendan
Darley**



Barnstaple Athletic v Wiveliscombe
KO | 1.30pm



A Christmas Message



As Christmas approaches, I just wanted to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas.

Whilst we enjoy the Christmas celebrations with friends, family and those close to us our thoughts must go out to those who have sadly lost someone close to them and for whom Christmas is likely not to be the same this year.

I would like to again thank the helpers at every level, together with our sponsors. I will not list the various groups, firms or individuals as I am sure to forget one but you know who you are and I am enormously thankful for your effort and support.

Christmas also marks the half way stage in the season with the Chiefs holding third position in their league with the Tics at 7th, Bucc's at 4th and the Colts 2nd in their respective leagues/merit tables. which puts us in good stead going into 2026. We are very fortunate that the Club continues to develop our own players as can be seen by the number now playing Senior rugby.

This year sees a change in our Boxing Day fixture. Bideford did not wish to play us in traditional Senior fixtures so the local derby will be limited to the Colts who play Bideford at Pottington Road with a 12pm kick off. However, that is just a curtain raiser to a full day at the club.

At 2pm we host a charity match between North Devon Hospice and Everything Ellie where a number of familiar faces will be locking horns.

There will be live music in the Clubhouse following the game with drink offers on throughout the day. Entrance will be on an all pay basis of £5.00, with under 18's free, the proceeds being shared with North Devon Hospice and Everything Ellie.

I feel proud and honoured to be President of this fantastic rugby Club and be you a player, a coach, a member, a parent, a visitor or indeed just someone who loves coming to support Barnstaple Rugby Club be assured I would like to think you will always receive a warm welcome. As our Past Patron and a good friend, Keith Abraham would say 'We are Barum and we do it the Barum way'

My very best wishes to you all for a very merry Christmas and a healthy and prosperous 2026.

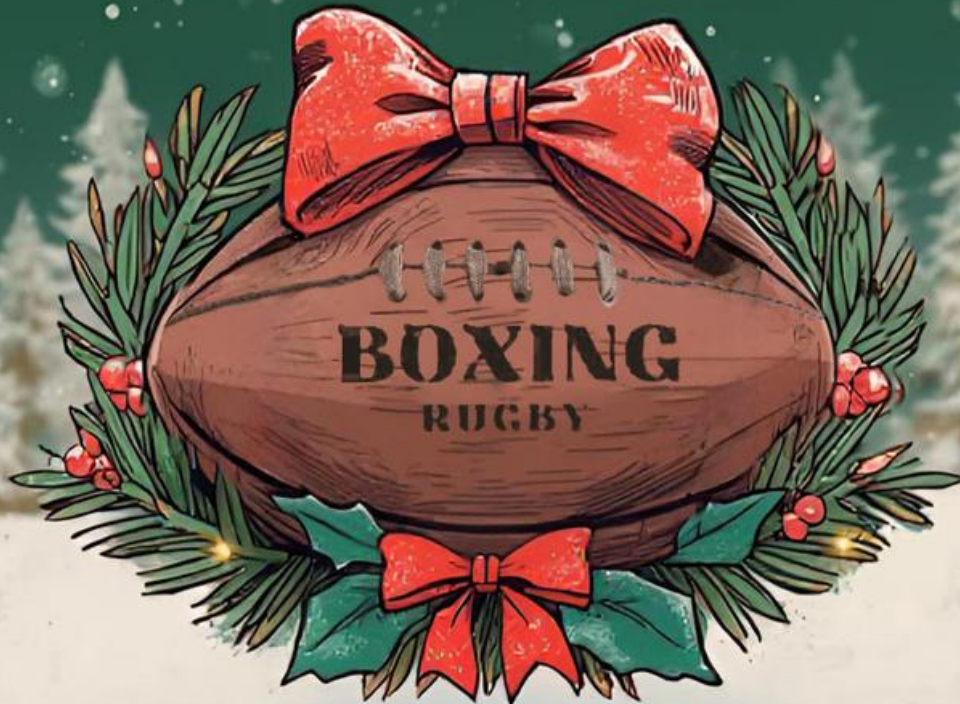
Trevor
President Barnstaple RFC



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 Barnstaple Rugby Club

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A Festive Derby Clash: Chiefs Host Exeter Uni in Pivotal Season Finale

Merry Christmas to all, and may the coming New Year be filled with happiness, health, and fortune! As 2025 draws to a close, what better way to cap off the year than with a massive National 2 West local derby here at Pottington Road? Barnstaple Chiefs are thrilled to welcome Exeter University for a fixture brimming with rivalry, pride, and significance. We extend a warm welcome to Exeter's players, coaches, committee, and supporters, and hope you enjoy your visit to North Devon.

Membership Half Price Sale

As we hit the halfway mark in the season we have a fantastic offer with club memberships now on sale at half price.

Full details on page 42 & 43

Festive Charity Match:

Mark your diaries for a fantastic festive event! On Boxing Day Barnstaple Rugby Club will be hosting a charity match right here between the North Devon Hospice Select XV and the Everything Ellie Select XV.

It promises to be a brilliant occasion for two wonderful causes. Entry is just £5 with under 18's free. Full details on tickets, hospitality, and fundraising are on pages 4 & 5

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Across the Club Today:

On the second pitch, Barnstaple Athletic are preparing for their own crucial Counties 1 Tribute Western West match against top of the table Wiveliscombe. Following last weekends narrow loss at Kingsbridge, Athletic will be looking to end the year on a high.

More Athletic News:

We now know their Devon Intermediate Cup Final opponents will be Okehampton, after a nail-biting semi-final. Even bigger news—the final will be played here at Pottington Road! Save the date and come out in force to support them.

Both the Bucc's and Colts are rested until the New Year and that about wraps up whats happening in Barnstaple as we now take a look at today's game.

Chiefs' Form: Resilience in the Hunt for History

It has been a testing period for the Chiefs. A hard-fought home victory against Lymm was followed by a crushing, long-haul defeat at Syston—a four-hour journey that takes its toll before kick-off. Yet, the spirit and quality within the squad have shone through. Bolstered by a perfect 100% home record this season, the Chiefs remain firmly in third place. As we head into the Christmas break, they hold a crucial five-point cushion over fourth-placed Hornets. Today's result could cement their position in what is rapidly evolving into one of the most promising campaigns in the club's history.

Exeter Uni: A Dangerous and Familiar Foe

Exeter University arrives in 12th position, with four victories to their name this season—one of which was their triumph over the Chiefs in the second week. Their current standing mirrors their finish last season, but this only tells part of the story. In derby matches, league positions often become irrelevant, and Exeter have proven to be a persistent thorn in Barnstaple's side.

The Derby Dynamic: History vs. Current Form

When these two teams collide, conventional logic is tossed aside. The historical record leans decisively towards Exeter; in the last seven meetings, the Chiefs have won only twice, suffering a double defeat in the 2022/23 season. However, current form paints a different picture. Barnstaple comes in with three wins from their last five outings, while Exeter has managed just one. This sets the stage for a compelling clash of narratives.

Today's Stakes: Revenge, Records, and Rivalry

So, which path will this derby take? Can the Chiefs defend their fortress at Pottington Road, maintain their flawless home record, and exact revenge for their early-season defeat? Or will Exeter summon the spirit of past performances to upset the odds and derail Barnstaple's charge? One thing is certain: both sides will need to produce their absolute best. For us supporters, that promises the potential thriller—a fitting contender for game of the season.

Grab your scarf, raise your voice, and let's roar the Chiefs home in this festive finale!



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POTTINGTON ROAD, DEC 20TH 2025 | KO 2PM



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11 Josh Golden Clarke
12 Nic Allison
13 Israel Akinrowo
14 Dewi Thomas
15 Jed Findlay

Replacements

16. Josh MacAndrew
17. Tupeni Ralogaivau
18. Keita Ando
19. James Howard
20. Dave Fisilau



Match Officials

REF: Dan Parrott

AR 1: Ewan Leadbeater

AR 2: Ian Pengelly

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This year, we're thrilled to welcome England rugby star Ellis Genge as our guest speaker. Known for his powerful performances in the Six Nations Championship and Rugby World Cup, as well as captaining Leicester Tigers to Premiership glory.



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Battling Fortnight Tests Chiefs' Reserves: Gritty Win Followed by Road Setback

The past two weeks have been a stern examination of the Barnstaple Chiefs' squad depth and resilience, as they faced a pair of bruising encounters against determined opposition. With injuries and demands taking their toll, the Chiefs have been forced to dig deep into their reserves, revealing both the character and the challenges within the camp.

A Gritty Arm-Wrestle Sees Off Lymm

A fortnight ago, the Chiefs hosted a quality Lymm side in a classic top-four clash that lived up to its billing. The opening quarter was a tense, error-strewn arm-wrestle, with penalties stifling any momentum for either side. Lymm broke the deadlock just after 20 minutes, converting to take a 0-7 lead.

That score seemed to spark Barnstaple into life. Building consistency through multiple phases, they drove deep into Lymm territory. From a ruck on the 22, the explosive Viliame Kotobalavu seized the moment, picking up and powering straight through the heart of the Lymm defence for a superb individual try. Jake Murphy's conversion levelled the scores.

A yellow card for the Chiefs a minute later could have derailed them, but instead it galvanised the home side. On the stroke of half-time, sustained pressure from a series of pick-and-goes

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was capped by Matt Gohl, who burrowed over from short range. Murphy's conversion sent Barnstaple in 14-7 ahead.

The second half pattern repeated: another Chiefs yellow card sparked a defiant response. From a menacing 5-metre lineout, the maul rumbled forward with purpose, Bertie Stretch emerging as the try-scorer. At 19-7 up, the Chiefs defended their line with immense resolve. Even when Lymm finally breached it in the 76th minute, the anxious tension that has accompanied recent narrow leads was notably absent—a testament to the side's growing defensive fortitude. While there was disappointment at not securing a four-try bonus point, this was a significant and 'ugly' win against direct rivals, proving the Chiefs can grind out results when not at their fluid best.

A Long Road Trip Proves a Bridge Too Far

Buoyed by that win, the Chiefs then faced a four-hour journey to face bottom-side Syston, targeting a statement victory on the road. However, the National League 2 West has shown time and again there are no easy fixtures. Warning signs were evident: Syston had registered their first win of the season just three weeks prior, beating fourth-placed Hornets.

Despite a bright start from Barnstaple, with Brandon Moore scoring a converted try after ten minutes, the rest of the half belonged to a revitalised Syston. They ran in three converted tries in a punishing thirty-minute spell to lead 21-7 at the break.

Barnstaple again started the second half sharply, Moore crossing for his second just five minutes in. The teams then

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exchanged tries within three minutes of each other, Brendon Darley scoring for the Chiefs. Yet, trailing by two scores with 20 minutes to go, the mountain proved too steep to climb. Syston, growing in confidence, added a further converted try and two penalties to seal a comprehensive 38-17 victory.

It was a day where the Chiefs never truly clicked in Leicester, missing key influencers like Jake Murphy and Callum Davies. A notable concern from the last two outings is the lack of try-scoring involvement from the backs, with all touchdowns coming from the pack. This suggests an area for tactical evolution in the new year.

Despite this frustrating hiccup, the Chiefs have the chance to end 2025 in a historic third place, the highest ranking in the club's history. It provides a firm foundation for the second half of the season. The quest to reignite their momentum starts immediately, as the Chiefs welcome Exeter University to Pottington Road today, eager to close the year on a positive note and recharge during the Christmas break.





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Athletic Fall Just Short in Thrilling Comeback, Now Face League Leaders in Season's Biggest Test

Barnstaple Athletic travelled to Kingsbridge last weekend.



For a tense and tough battle against a side level on points with them in the table. The challenge was always daunting, and it was made even more so with several key regulars missing from the Tics' lineup.

The home side struck first after a quarter of an hour, crossing for a converted try. Athletic's response was swift and superb. Five minutes later, some excellent expansive play found Reuben Faulkner on the wing, who dotted down in the corner. Harvey Rostock added the extras with the first of his two conversions.

However, a lapse in concentration immediately handed the initiative back to Kingsbridge, as they pounced on a dropped ball to retake the lead. A third try for the hosts soon after made the outlook look ominous for the visitors.

True to their character, Athletic fought back. Sustained pressure earned them a series of penalties, driving them deep into the Kingsbridge 22. From a well-worked move, Kyran McManus delivered an inside pass to Max Campbell, who was stopped just short. Jacob Mascall was on hand to follow up and crash over from close range, sending the teams into the break with Kingsbridge leading 17-12.



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The second half began poorly for Athletic as Kingsbridge extended their lead with another try just 15 minutes in, followed by a penalty to make it 27-12.

Facing a 15-point deficit, the Tics mounted a courageous fightback. Their persistent pressure was finally rewarded midway through the half when Josh Davie powered over following a quick-tap penalty and a series of pick-and-go drives.

Athletic continued to hammer away, but a combination of handling errors and resolute home defence held them at bay until the dying moments. In the final minute, after repeated infringements by Kingsbridge, another quick tap led to several forward surges before the ball was spread wide to Luke Knight. The fly half raced in at the corner to secure a vital try bonus point and bring the score to 27-24. A last-gasp effort to snatch victory was thwarted, but Athletic headed home with two well-earned bonus points from a ferociously contested match.

The Tics can be immensely proud of their second-half performance, coming within a whisker of an incredible victory after being down by 15 points. Arguably, a more disciplined first half would have secured the win, given how they dominated the final quarter. While the coaches will dissect the 'what-ifs', returning with two league points from such a tough away fixture represents a solid return. Although they slipped two places to 7th, they retain a game in hand to propel themselves back into the top-six chase.

Attention now turns to a monumental challenge. Today, Athletic welcome runaway league leaders Wiveliscombe to Pottington Road. The visitors already boast an eight-point cushion at the summit, having lost only once this season.

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This match represents the biggest test of the Tics' campaign so far.

Yet, greater challenges bring greater rewards. A victory today would provide a massive boost to Athletic's ambitions. History offers a glimmer of hope: the Tics did the double over Wiveliscombe last season, though it is acknowledged this year's opposition squad is significantly strengthened. The stage is set for a classic encounter.

Kick-off for this crucial fixture is at the slightly earlier time of 1:30pm.



BARNSTAPLE ATHLETIC



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COUNTIES 1 TRIBUTE WESTERN WEST
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BARNSTAPLE ATHLETIC

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Bucc's and Colts Bow Out for Holidays with Pride After Narrow Defeats



Both Barnstaple's Colts and Buccaneers can look forward to a well-earned rest this weekend, with neither side in competitive action until late January as they enjoy the festive break. However, the Colts will be back in action at Pottington Road on Boxing Day, where they will kick off a fantastic day of events by taking on Bideford in a special charity day. The festivities begin with a 12:00pm kick-off, promising a great start to the holiday celebrations.

Last weekend, mirroring the Athletics' fortunes, both the Bucc's and Colts suffered narrow, heart-breaking losses on the road.

The Buccaneers, who have brilliantly turned their season around with three consecutive wins, made the short trip to Ilfracombe. They started with clear intent, as captain Keyan McInerney slotted two early penalties and then converted his own try to give the visitors a commanding 5-13 lead after thirty minutes. Ilfracombe hit back with a converted try just before halftime, sending the teams into the break with Barnstaple leading narrowly, 12-13.

The second half saw the hosts seize the initiative, crossing for two tries to lead 24-16, despite another pinpoint penalty from the reliable boot of McInerney. In a dramatic final flurry, a fourth

Barnstaple Rugby Club is supporting North Devon Hospice



When someone is diagnosed with a life-limiting illness, life for that person and for those around them is never the same again.

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The care provided throughout North Devon is because of the amazing generosity of our community. Together, we work towards raising over £4.9 million from scratch each year to provide this essential care to thousands of people. At North Devon Hospice, we are focusing on

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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successful penalty from the captain brought the Buccs within striking distance. With just three minutes remaining, 'Big H' crashed over for a try, seemingly securing a hard-fought draw. However, Ilfracombe had the final say, snatching a late penalty to claim a 27-24 victory, leaving the Buccs with a well earned losing bonus point and with their heads held high after a tremendous contest.

The Colts, too, succumbed to their opponents but only after mounting a furious and courageous fightback. Finding themselves 20-7 down at halftime, they launched a relentless second-half assault on the home side, scoring wave after wave of attacks to eventually come within a whisker of a stunning victory. Unfortunately, the first-half deficit proved just too great to overcome fully, and the Barnstaple Colts fell to a narrow 32-28 defeat.

Yet, in that valiant effort, they secured two vital bonus points. That determined second-half performance, fought for until the final whistle, has earned the young lads a superb second place in the Colts Merit Table. They now sit just a single point ahead of a chasing pack and only three points behind the undefeated table leaders, Crediton Colts. This position is just reward for their refusal to give up and highlights the incredible opportunity they have forged for themselves heading into the new year. The stage is set for a thrilling title chase in 2026.

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Last-Chance Christmas Season Ticket Offer

As the Barnstaple Chiefs forge ahead in what could be their most successful season in history, you won't want to miss a moment of the 2026 action. For those who haven't yet secured their season ticket, membership secretary Harry Harrison has arranged a special seasonal offer.

With the season reaching the half-way stage, Barnstaple RFC is pleased to offer half price membership for the remainder of the season.

This represents fantastic value with members gaining free entry to the remaining 6 home games for the Chiefs competing in National League 2 West, and a further 7 home games for the Athletic competing in the Counties 1 Tribute West league.

Please complete the membership form at www.barnstaplerugby.co.uk/membership

and transfer 50% of the full season fee.

Alternatively, you can complete a membership form and pay at the bar.

Harry Harrison

Barnstaple RFC Membership Secretary

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**We finish with the festivities this yule tide season
with an Ode to the Lynton Pack written by Di
Mitchell of Lynton as a tribute to the pack
although it could quite easily be dedicated to any
of the Barmy Barum supporters. Enjoy**

Ode to The Lynton Pack - by Di Mitchell of Lynton
(Dedicated followers of scrums, stripes, snacks - and Santa!)

They call them The Lynton Pack - a sight to behold, With
flat caps striped and badges bold. They travel the miles
through rain and gales, With tales of scrums and rugby
ales.

From Barnstaple's pitch to far-off ground, Their laughter's the
loudest, their cheers resound. No weather too wild, no journey
too far, They've followed the Chiefs by coach and by car.

There's Mat and Dave - the banter kings, Sam and Steve with
voices that ring. Chris and Jacquie keep spirits bright, Phil brings
the pasties - oh what a sight!

Now Stix is aboard, calm and steady and true, Though he's
thinking of Bracken - what's that dog up to!
That bundle of mischief is home on his own, So heaven help
anything chewed or overthrown!

Now feed them you must, or beware the wrath, They'll scrum for
a snack or block your path. A Cornish pastie, a pint in hand,
That's the diet of rugby's travelling band.

They've seen drop goals and dodgy refs, Worn out more scarves than you'd ever guess. They'll brave the mud and stand in sleet, Just for the joy of a forward's feat.

But now it's Christmas - the Pack's in cheer, With mince pies added to a match-day beer. They'll toast dear friends and raise a glass, To memories made and tries gone past.

Their kit...Not Gucci or sleek in black, But festive icons - that Lynton Pack! Tinsel on flat caps, lights that flash, They're ready for laughter, songs, and bash!

So here's to The Pack - the loyal few, Whose friendship shines the whole year through. May your days be merry, your scrums stay tight, Merry Christmas to all - and to all a good night!



Feel the Barum Spirit



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BARNSTAPLE RUGBY 2025/26



DEC 26TH - 2PM
BOXING DAY CHARITY MATCH
NORTH DEVON HOSPICE XV
VS EVERYTHING ELLIE XV

JAN 17TH - 2PM
NATIONAL 2 WEST
BARNSTAPLE CHIEFS
VS TAUNTON

JAN 24TH - 2PM
COUNTIES 1 WESTERN WEST
BARNSTAPLE ATHLETIC
VS NEWTON ABBOT














JANUARY 31ST - 2PM
BARNSTAPLE COLTS
VS WADEBRIDGE CAMELS

FEB 7TH - 2PM
NATIONAL 2 WEST
BARNSTAPLE BUCCANEERS
VS HONITON 2ND XV

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email - info.barnstaplerugby@gmail.com
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NATIONAL LEAGUE TWO WEST - 2025-26

Club	Pld	W	D	L	F	A	PD	TBP	LBP	Points	Adj
 Camborne	13	12	0	1	510	288	222	11	1	60	0
 Luctonians	13	10	0	3	425	248	177	11	1	52	0
 Barnstaple	13	9	0	4	367	356	11	10	0	46	0
 Hornets	13	8	0	5	385	348	37	8	1	41	0
 Hinckley	13	7	0	6	402	374	28	10	2	40	0
 Cinderford	13	7	0	6	392	364	28	9	2	39	0
 Lymm	13	7	0	6	410	404	6	7	2	37	0
 Taunton	13	5	0	8	431	419	12	10	7	37	0
 Redruth	13	6	0	7	346	374	-28	8	2	34	0
 Chester	13	5	1	7	376	449	-73	8	2	32	0
 Old Redcliffians	13	5	0	8	318	339	-21	7	4	31	0
 Exeter University	13	4	0	9	431	511	-80	7	1	24	0
 Loughborough Students	13	3	1	9	347	456	-109	8	2	24	0
 System	13	2	0	11	346	556	-210	8	0	16	0