



30th October 2023



In Touch

My apologies for misdirecting you to Cleobury Mortimer last week. The extremely late cancellation of the Seconds game there was totally beyond our control. Hopefully most of you learnt of it via social media or word of mouth. There are some strange things happening in rugby these days and I'm not just talking about apparently identical incidents in the World Cup which can be interpreted in one instance as a red card and another as a yellow and a third as just a foul. We have become used to the shenanigans of Rassie Erasmus, seven forwards on the bench, filling the pitch with water carriers bearing instructions, traffic lights to instruct players but I hadn't realised that the community game had fallen foul of the trend. When did it become possible for the home team to dictate who the opposition could send to play them?

Throughout my experience in rugby it has been commonplace to try to expose young and promising players to the occasional first team game, similarly for first team players who have been injured or who need game time to play in the seconds. Look at any Premiership or Championship side and you will see both the above done constantly. It's good practice and when you play as a squad, as Ludlow have for several seasons, it's vital. So at the beginning of the season, before the farmers return from harvest, and at the end of the season when they are lambing etc., our first team will be peppered with young and promising players. Later in the year they are the mainstay of the seconds, propped up by some senior players returning from injury, operations etc.

However, it appears that if you have ever been on the team sheet for the firsts, then you cannot appear for the seconds for the rest of the season according to some teams and apparently supported by the league! Those same leagues are very skeptical when you try to call a game off because the Linney is flooded. I recall having to send pictures of our flooded ground and overseeing pitch inspections before a postponement was agreed. Double standard? It would appear so and in the case of both World Rugby and the community game it's the players and spectators that are the losers.

Community rugby has done some great things, tip up and play where you turn up even if short of a player or two, the opposition loan you a couple of players and the game goes on. The important thing is that everyone gets a game. Sadly, that spirit wasn't present last weekend.

Anyway, this weekend the Firsts travel to Cheltenham while the seconds entertain Trentham at The Linney. Both teams chosen as usual by our coach Mikey Jones from our squad of players. Kick offs 2pm.

There are places available for lunches on Nov 11, Presidents Day, November 18, volunteers Day and Dec 9 Christmas lunch. Please let Iain Braggins know if you wish to attend 07986407985.

See you soon,

Andy Wright

President Ludlow Rugby Club