

The Swan

Welcome back

September 2019

September is an exciting month for us with pre-season friendlies completed and the challenges of a new season, in a new league already embraced.

The squad has expanded with a few new players who have fitted in straight away and added to the squad's talent pool.

And to cap it all we have a minor tournament taking place in Japan to ensure a complete overload of rugby entertainment.

This month's newsletter is a tad long but I expect our roving reporter (fat boy Hately's) enthusiasm for writing match reports will wain and thereby reduce the length of future editions.

Match Centre

Met Police 24 – Swanley 31

The Swans had their 2nd and final friendly away at the well-appointed Met Police ground "The Warren". Impressed by the excellent facilities, with their own changing rooms, en-suite showers that included running water, "his and his" parallel vanity units, topped off with velvet comfort toilet roll and lavender hand wash. Luxuries many of the Swanley boys have only experienced on their annual pilgrimage to Butlins.

The Swans originally posted a 21 strong squad, but due to a rare break in the clouds contributing towards a 24 degree high, the "Ginger Clan" started to act gingerly, pretty soon mysterious injuries saw numbers fall to a measly 15. Coach **George Morris** had no choice but to dust off his boots and slip into his step son's scrum-cap whilst he was away enjoying the melons in Crete.

1st Half

Met Police started off strong, applying pressure through their pack, delivering a quick ball out to their 12 who was abruptly stopped in his tracks by mummy's boy **Fred Roberts** (out of interest, does your Mum know you were playing on Saturday Fred?). The pressure through the Met backs continued and saw Met Police draw first blood. The following conversion added the extras.

The Swans turned up the intensity causing The Met to be on the back foot, however too many handling errors saw the swans lose several opportunities to draw even...eventually though **Hayden "The Hulk" Cooke** adopted the "point" position, cutting a diagonal line to bring the score level.

The Met retaliated with relentless pods off the back of the ruck utilising their back row and then eventually getting the ball out to the backs to score their 2nd try.

In response, fatboy **Paul Hately** sent the ball deep, Swan's charging forward pack applied enough pressure to cause a knock on; the ball then found its way to Fred for him to tip toe over the line.

George Oliver, the young aspiring accountant gained profitable yards deep into The Met's 22 to help balance the books. The Swans had the advantage of the line out and the eagle eye of **Coach Morris** caught **Guy Cooke's** bald bounce shining resplendently in the Indian Summer Sun, throwing an outrageous pass to the back of the line out, which in turn fired up the Cookie Monster and saw him bully his way over the line. The Swans took the lead for the first time in the game.

The Met didn't like that and thought they would get one back by putting a cheeky up and under into The Swan's 10m, it fell to fatboy Hately to take one for the team and get completely flattened by the Met 5 and 6. This was just the start of Hately getting put on his backside (a special thanks to his 22 year partnership with no.9 **James Yates** who was more than happy to provide hospital pass after hospital pass for the rotund 10). With the young, slimline version of Hately a distant memory, he now displays a physique more akin to that of a prop, meaning he is unable dance his way out of contact like he once used to.

The Met used their downhill advantage and The Swans found themselves on their own 5m. **Coach Morris** wanted to relive his earlier glory, thinking he spotted the powerhouse Guy unmarked and decided to throw the ball with none of the Swan's forwards looking let alone ready to catch...Met couldn't believe their luck, caught the ball and scored.

2nd Half

The Met kicked off, **Coach Morris** found the ball, spectacularly offloading to **Hayden Cooke** who then cut the sort of line that left **Chris Wallis** salivating; eventually the ever reliable **Phil Butler** dusted the Met backs for Swanley's 3rd try.

Soon to be a Dad **Conor Gladdish** picked off the back of the ruck, evading the police not for the first time in his life, embarking on a 40m solo effort and scoring in spectacular fashion. **Stuart Tate** (hereby



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known as Uncle Fester) was back on kicking duties and finally slotted one over.

Debutant **Dan Eade** started on the wing and then had a firm shift at 12 cutting his opposite number in half. **Bradley Robinson** also saw in his first game for The Swans with style, playing in the forwards and earning his shirt by dumping the big ball carrier for the Met. Welcome to the club lads!

As the minutes closed in, **George Oliver** added one final try to the score sheet which left things at the final whistle as Swanley 31 to the Met's 24.

Special mentions go to Uncle Fester being a pest as usual, causing havoc at the breakdowns and boosting the score; also the ever unswerving **Owen Connelly** controlled the backs beautifully and executed a cross-field kick with precision... well it made it across anyway. **Chris Wallis** put in his best performance to date and showed off by downing 4 pints. Captain **Antony Sumbler** displayed a rare cool head and led the team well throughout the game (either he chose to follow the ref's advice or was scared those minor charges might come back to bite him). We also saw the return of Swanley's oldest player "Cheesecake" **David Coombes**, who dazzled the boys with his fresh dentures, clearly struggling in the heat like an old dog that's lost his water bowl, but unable to stop smiling!

Swanley 22 – Westcombe Park 3s 5

With the Rugby World Cup in full flow, there was an air of anticipation among the Swanley boys to truly get the season started with a bang! Anybody following the Rugby would have seen an action packed morning with the Aussies taking a win over a tough Fijian side, as well as the All Blacks beating the Saffas.....something that the boys were only too keen to point out to the South African ref before the first whistle had even blown (perhaps not the wisest move they would make that day!)

1st Half

Another hot sunny day saw the sun beaming down on the pitch with an intensity that could only be matched by **George Oliver**'s gleaming smile! The Swans were set to receive but had the advantage of the hill for the first half.

The Swans showed their dominance in the first 5 minutes keeping the visitors deep in their own half. A defensive scrum was formed on the visitor's 5m and The Swans beast of a pack smashed through, driving Westcombe Park back onto their try line. The ball was quickly cleared, then dropped by The Swans only to be gathered by the young gun **George Oliver** who snake-hipped his way past two tackles to score in the corner. **Stuart Tate** lined up

the tricky conversion but failed to make the distance (he clearly missed out on his Weetabix).

Westcombe Park kicked off sending the ball about 8ft off the floor straight to **Hayden Cook**'s reliable hands, who in turn drew the defence and released Jack Nash. After several phases The Swans found themselves in an attacking line-out inside the visitor's 22. A good catch and drive allowed **Hayden Cook** to peel off the back with a signature diagonal run straight between Westcombe Park's 10 and 12, smashing through to score The Swan's 2nd try. **Stuart Tate** stepped up for the conversion to redeem his earlier miss but swiped it left of the posts.

Westcombe Park stayed positive with strong plays through their backs, however, the line speed of The Swans quickly shot them down. Sporting a brand new scrum-cap, **James Yates** put in a fantastic shift all game, constantly keeping his opposite number out of the game, all whilst looking like the fatter, uglier, and shorter offspring of **Ant Sumbler** and **James Whitlock**. To his right, squad newcomer Welsh Dan (**Dan Eade**) was playing 13, he completed Swanley's most vertically challenged centre partnership since records began. Whilst only being able to amass an average height of 5.6ft between them, their combined defence was impregnable (a trait not often seen in Swanley).

A late tackle on **Paul Hately** made The Swanley Flock gasp from the sides, but the ref let it slide, insisting he didn't see anything wrong.

2nd Half

Coach **George Morris** has some strong words with the team, causing The Swans to come out flapping like a flock of protective Cobs safeguarding the river banks, epitomised by some enormous hits from **Jack Nash** and **Guy Cooke**. The blistering pace of **James Davies** (aka Wesley Snipes) allowed him to spin the ball out to the backs, **Paul Hately** kicked for territory, resulting in The Swans position deep inside the visitor's 22. The lineout was lost but excellent pressure from Swan's captain **Ant Sumbler** caused the visitor's 10 to drop the ball, which the newly reformed **James Yates** was only too eager to Hoover up, he then drew the centres causing an overlap which enabled Welsh Dan (**Dan Eades**) to score his debut league try! **Stuart Tate** lined up for a near certain conversion but clearly was wearing two left boots and wagon'd it wide of the posts!

Westcombe Park soon found themselves in The Swans half with wave after wave of attack, **Shane Odell** and **George Oliver** battled tirelessly with relentless try saving tackles. Eventually however, the usually fail-safe George Oliver was bumped over and the visitors scored in the corner.



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Spurred on by their recent try, Westcombe Park then took it upon themselves to call for back up in the shape of their 2nd Team who had finished their game early and were now arriving en masse.

Phantom pregnancy sufferer **Paul Hately** hobbled off the field with a jealous glint in his eye whilst commending his best chum **James Yates'** performance. The backs all stepped in one and **James Yates** was now in charge of the back-line.

Westcombe Park had the majority of the pressure in the last 15 minutes, keeping The Swans boxed in but the eagle eye of the Swanley blind side **Sam Haslam** swiped the ball and saved The Swans from conceding a near certain try. In a rare turn of events **James Whitlock** came off his wing frequently to bully the visitors at the rucks; but it's fair to say his throwing in wasn't up to his usual high standard.

With minutes left, The Swans put one last bit of pressure on Westcombe Park with **Stuart Tate** bursting through the defence, riding two tackles, and passing majestically to **James Yates**, allowing him to trundle over the line! **Jamies Davies** (aka Wesley snipes) had enough of **Stuart Tate's** two left feet and stepped up to slot the conversion.

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Swanley 33 – Beckenham IVs 19

Saturday kicked off with the World Cup hosts once again shocking the world with an immense win over the Irish! The Swans faced Beckenham IVs at home for their second league game. Fresh off the back of a win last week, and buoyed by England's performance in the World Cup, anything less than a

win would be bitterly disappointing for the plucky Swans.

1st Half

The first half was under way with The Swans battling uphill (and against the ref for the majority of the game!). Scrum after scrum The Swans struggled against Becks' 1000kg pack. Becks' porky pack dominated the set pieces and used their considerable heft to smash the fringes. Stampede followed by stampede were consistently unable to penetrate The Swans' mighty defence.

Newcomer **Simon Rushworth** was playing open side, proving to be a menace throughout the game with turnovers, cheeky steps, and an excellent work rate causing havoc to the visitors. The Swanley backs' line speed shut down Becks and they had no other choice but to use their lumpy forwards to carry. The Cook brothers returned the favour utilising their substantial power and breaking Becks' defensive line on several occasions.

The Swans' pods were frequently used and succeeded in gaining momentum. Soon the 46inch inside leg of **Jack Nash** was unleashed, during his solo 40m dash he did his best impression of a baby giraffe galloping across the Savannah plains being hunted by hungry hippos, offloading beautifully in the tackle to debut No.9 Bradley, who in turn shrugged off two defenders to score The Swans' first try. Eager not to break his missing streak **Stuart Tate** lined up the conversion and pulled it wide, job done.

The Becks restart found its way to Coach **George Morris**, under immense pressure he managed to offload but in the process took a huge hit from a Frank Bruno lookalike, retiring the sage hooker early. Harry knew exactly what he meant!

Resident tubby funster **Paul Hately** sent the ball deep into the visitors half but failed to make touch, which allowed the visitors to retaliate through the backs, forcing **George Oliver** to charge down the defence, followed by an excellent steal from **Jack Nash**. The ball then found its way to **Anthony Pittock** who had come charging off his wing straight into a WWE sized prop who suplexed him into next week.

The ref decided to penalise Ant for holding onto the ball, blowing his whistle in anger not for the first or the last time of the game.

One last highlight of the first half came in the form of **Ali Hulls** showing the crowd his pace whilst dusting the visitor's backs and cutting his opposite number in half. Great smash Ali!

2nd Half

The Swans now had the downhill to their advantage and started to utilise the backs and keep the visitors pinned in their own 22. The Swans were awarded a



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penalty, bronzed bomber Ben Bates (he's just got back from Benidorm don't you know) shattered Becks' defence, but with no support the ball got turned over and recycled out to Becks, backing themselves they decided to run straight into the arms of **Phil Butler** who was more than happy to obliterate his opposite number by way of thanks. In a rare turn of events, the ref awarded something in favour of The Swans, and a scrum ensued. Go blind was the cry but **Paul Hately** had other plans; an outrageous dummy was sold to The Visitor's 10 & 12, only for the same dummy to work on their unsuspecting 13 (I mean, nobody would have the audacity to throw a dummy like that twice would they?!), successfully splitting Becks' backs in half, all that was left was for him to waddle over the try line and stick the ball down straight between the posts.

Going completely against character, Stuart Tate decided to slot this one and add the extras.

The Becks restart was knocked on. Scrum-down and the Becks 8 carried from the back, but was quickly stopped in his tracks, **Simon Rushworth** turned the ball over, which found its way to **Stuart Tate**'s feet, never one to look a gift horse in the mouth, he picked up the ball and ran a fantastic 60m solo effort, scoring a top contender for try of the season (only two games in!). **Phil Butler** stepped up for the conversion while Tate attempted to catch his breath, adding another 2 points to the Swans.

The Becks' restart found Kieran, who bumped the first tackle and offloaded to **James Yates**, a text book draw and pass was executed, with Yates delivering a signature **crisp** pass, creating an overlap to release gorgeous **George Oliver** to run his very own solo effort and score. Breath recovered, **Stuart Tate** was back on kicking duties and converted the try.

Becks finally got the ball and a well worked try was awarded after several forward pods. Becks developed a taste for points and came back with a vengeance as they applied pressure using all of their big ball carriers. **Owen Connelly** took down a big forward with a try saving tackle on The Swan's 5m line. **Paul Hately** dumped his opposite number much to the ref's disliking, meaning Becks were awarded with a 5m penalty. A fired up Becks capitalised from the advantage and scored another forward try.

The ref clearly had a new whistle he wanted to give a test run considering the amount of times he blew it during the last 20 minutes of the game. Swans found themselves constantly defending their tryline for the last 10 minutes until **James Yates** had had enough and went headfirst with his magic scrum hat into the ruck, committing daylight robbery and stealing the ball, allowing Bradley to box kick it,

followed by a superb chase from **George Oliver** to catch and pass to flanker **Bradley Robinson**, who in turn unselfishly used resident speedster **Phil Butler** to score The Swan's final try. He then slotted the conversion to rub salt into the wound.

At some point a contentious penalty try was awarded to the visitors due to some sideline backchat not being taken very kindly by the ref.

By the final blow of the whistle the score stood at Swanley 1XV **33 - 19** Beckenham IV.

Once again a massive thanks to the Swanley Flock for coming out to support us. One final special mention to **Pete Bresser** for his excellent photography!

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Man of the Match; Stuart Tate

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Fixtures

Sat 12 Oct, 1.30pm: Away to Footscray (Cup)

Sat 19 October, 2.30pm: Away to Park House 2s

Sat 26 October, 2.30pm: Home to Old Colfeians 3s

League Table

Early days yet so a league table is not really meaningful. However lying second to Bromley 2s on points difference.

Ladies



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No self respecting rugby club would be without its ladies team and we are proud to announce our latest venture, the launch of a ladies section to club. Training kicked off 2 months ago and numbers are gradually rising.

They train once a week on Wednesday nights at 7.00pm. and have been participating in joint events with other ladies teams.



Sunday the 22nd September was a day full of firsts for the Black Swans. This is the first match report to be written for them. The match was held at Brocks but involved 5 clubs and 28 women. Almost half of the players had never played before or had very little experience playing, so this was a good opportunity for some of our players to gain some valuable experience.

Jane, Emma, Jo and Vonnie turned up at Brocks ready to go. For Emma and Jane it was their first game of rugby. Unfortunately for Emma she never made it to the game after a very aggressive blade of grass ruptured her achilles during the warm up. We all wish her a speedy recovery and look forward to her return to training.

After a long warm up the teams were picked and the "Swanley" team were lining up for the kick off. I'm not sure of the method of picking the teams but the Swans team were definitely the least experienced but other than a few bits of good skill from the opposition they held their own for most of the game and as the game went on they grew in confidence scoring a try in the second half. Jo, captain of the day, had the privilege of going over for the first ever Black Swans try.

Jane looked like she was enjoying her time on the pitch. She was getting herself into some great defensive and attacking positions and as her confidence grew she was making stronger and stronger runs in attack. This led to her saying at the end "it's easier to run into them than around them" - proper forward rugby talk!

Vonnie had a great game with strong tackling and some of her anecdotal scrum cap runs. Her experience and skill shone through and was a strong contender for forward of the match. While the "Swanley" team lost the game, they held their heads high at the end and gained a lot of experience along the way.

Jane got Forward of the Match for the "Swanley" team. Very well deserved and I'm sure it won't be her last.



The Black Swans would like to thank Brockeians Ladies for arranging the match, for being great hosts and all the teams and players involved. We look forward to doing it all again soon.

Youth



Our Youth section continues to grow in numbers and skills thanks to our exceptional youth coaches.

Training is on Sunday mornings from 10.00am to 11.00am. Meet at Swanley Park cafe at 9.45am. The pitch is a short walk down the Avenue of Limes opposite.



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Club News & Events



Contact Wendy/John Aitkenhead for tickets

On 6th October we will be participating in Sevenoaks District Councils Silver Sunday with Walking Rugby. Suits all levels of fitness and ability.



Its fun, easy and no contact! Come and join us:

2pm to 3pm

Swanley Park (lower car park)

New Barn Road, Swanley BR8 7PW



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