



BLACKTHORN



# BATH RUGBY VS SALE SHARKS



Saturday  
15 April 2000  
Kick-Off 2.15pm



OFFICIAL  
MATCH DAY  
MAGAZINE

£2.50



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# Bath Rugby

# Sale Sharks



No	Player	Position	Player	No
15	Matt Perry	Full Back	Jim Mallinder	15
14	Iain Balshaw	Right Wing	Matt Moore	14
13	Kevin Maggs	Centre	Jos Baxendell	13
12	Mike Tindall	Centre	Barrie Jon Maher	12
11	Adeyayo Adebayo	Left Wing	Stephen Hanley	11
10	Mike Catt	Fly Half	Nik Little	10
9	Jon Preston	Scrum Half	Craig Turvey	9
1	Victor Ubogu	Prop	Paul Smith	1
2	Mark Regan	Hooker	Joe Clark	2
3	John Mallett	Prop	Dawie Theron	3
4	Martin Haag	Lock	Guy Manson-Bishop	4
5	Steve Borthwick	Lock	Mark Tinnock	5
6	Gavin Thomas	Flanker	Alex Sanderson	6
7	Ben Clarke (Capt)	Flanker	Pete Anglesea	7
8	Dan Lyle	No 8	Rob Appleyard	8
<b>R e p l a c e m e n t s</b>				
16	Gareth Cooper		Phil Winsanley	16
17	Andy Long		Steve Diamond	17
18	Chris Horsman		Duncan Bell	18
19	Phil de Glanville		Paul Knight	19
20	Shaun Berne		Jo Shaw	20
21	Nathan Thomas		Steve Davidson	21
22	Ben Sturnham		Andy Whittle	22

**Referee: Geraint Ashton Jones    Touch Judges: Ashley Reay and Stuart Terheege**

If you would like to become a referee please call 0800 834 551

# Sharks

By Dick Tugwell



SALE, the last bastion of Premiership One rugby in the north west, added the word Sharks to their name this season in a bid to instil more bite into their marketing appeal. But, sadly for the homely Manchester-based club their impact has been more that of a basking shark in playing terms, as director of rugby, Adrian Hadley, has struggled to keep their cause afloat, confronted by a playing budget of under £1 million and enough injuries to fill a casualty ward.

A total of nine points from four wins in 16 starts has left Sale marooned one place off the foot of the table with only luckless Bedford below them, but, in the circumstances, the battle has been one of survival rather than chasing honours this term and it is a credit to Hadley and his coaches Jim Mallinder and Steve Diamond that they have brought their threadbare squad through something of a nightmare winter.

Not off on the wrong foot when their major new signing, Springbok fly half Jannie de Beer, to join the club last summer following the demise of London Scottish, was called into South of Scotland squad as cover for the injured Henry Honiball and suddenly decided that playing at Sale had lost its appeal. De Beer refused to fulfil his commitment to Sale and then, to rub salt into the wound, he kicked England out of the World Cup – literally!

They fell well into the new season without a recognised fly-half, but although they managed to get off to a good start with a win over Niki Little, their problems merely multiplied as a spate of injuries ravaged Hadley's squad. Chris Murphy broke his leg in the 28 – 22 home win over Bath last October and two locks Andy Whittle (collarbone) and New Zealander Mark Tinnock (hand) both suffered injuries that kept them out of action for lengthy periods.

Setbacks, powerful, 20-year-old wing Steve Hanley, who had the best try-scoring record in the club in 1998/99 and made his England debut against Wales at Twickenham last April, was kept out of the entire first half of the season to undergo operations on both shoulders. However, the bad news was that, as injuries continued to plague the side, although they were thankful for early wins over Bath and Harlequins during the World Cup which provided a cushion for later on when the going got tough.

Intensified last month when England A centre, Andy Blyth, suffered a serious spinal injury and remains in hospital without the full use of his limbs and although his condition shows signs of improvement his playing career is sadly at an end.

Not to have enough problems, they then lost England hooker Phil Greening to Wasps after a dispute which led to him being fined and banned from training following comments he made about the club in a newspaper on the morning of the game against his former club, Bath.

Added to losing Greening whose contract was up at the end of the season, but the wrangle did not end there. In the morale and then to cap their problems it was revealed that the club's current backers, who had been in the club for many years, had indicated that they wanted to terminate their association. At the time the original Sale members club were in the process of attempting to take over the club.

On the positive side there is a growing belief that the future may yet be bright for a club that is used to bouncing back from adversity. A few years ago Sale were languishing in Division 2, until Welsh wizard, Paul Turner, arrived as player-coach to revive their fortunes and lead the club to the second division title and promotion, and although many pundits thought they would drop straight down again, they actually finished fourth and repeated that feat the following season.

New Zealander John Mitchell continued that success when Turner departed in 1996, coaching Sale to their first Pilkington Cup final at Twickenham the following year when they lost 9-3 a dour battle in dismal, wet conditions against Leicester, but since that high point it has been something of a struggle. Mitchell left under a cloud last season, leaving Hadley in the hot seat and although the former Wales wing has coped well in the circumstances, budget cuts have seen many of the club's leading players depart including players of the calibre of David Rees, Tom Beim, Chris Yates, Shane Howarth, Dion O'Cuinneagain, Richard Smith, Kevin Ellis and Somin Raiwalui.

That left the club with a squad that could muster just 18 caps between them at the start of the season, and half of those belonged to Greening, but that total was boosted by the arrival of Little, who has 24 caps for Fiji and South African, Dawie Theron, capped ten times by his country.

Renowned as a club, who produced players of the calibre of Wilf Wooller, Hal Sever, Joe Mycock, Eric Evans, Peter Stagg and Bill Patterson who all played with distinction at Heywood Road, Sale also boasted England captains Bill Beaumont, Fran Cotton and Steve Smith in more recent times and hopefully they will rise again to be a force in English rugby.

They still retain players of the quality of Mallinder, Jos Baxendell, Alex Sanderson and Barrie-Jon Mather and on their day remain a threat to the best of their rivals. They have an enviable record against Bath, who never relish a visit to Heywood Road, and have done well at the Rec in the past, so today's contest is far from a formality. The Sharks teeth may have been blunted this season, but they can never be disregarded.

