

THE  
CRANLEIGH  
RUGBY  
STORY

“ VICTORY IN THE FINAL LED TO BACK TO BACK ROSSLYN PARK HSBC NATIONAL SCHOOL 7S TITLES, AND WITH IT A PLACE IN THE HISTORY BOOKS ALONGSIDE THE GREAT SCHOOLBOY RUGBY TEAMS

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# INTRODUCTION

ANDREW HOUSTON, DIRECTOR OF RUGBY



The last two seasons have been an amazing time for the School's rugby teams and players. I have been so very proud, not just at senior level but throughout the whole 'club'. Every pupil has the opportunity to play competitive fixtures with us because we put out as many teams as possible and put some of our best coaches to work with the bottom end sides.

Although winning national titles has been the icing on the cake, what I have enjoyed so much is seeing the development of players from the junior levels progress all the way up to the senior side. This was highlighted with seven out of the 1<sup>st</sup> XV this year progressing from the U14B & C team five years earlier. Alongside that is watching our recent leavers now bursting into professional rugby and achieving their goals of international caps.

I feel privileged to have been there to watch these young men achieve such amazing success, but what matters the most to me is that we have done it the hard and right way. Fourteen of the fifteen who finished the season started in our Fourth Form and this success has not been overnight. It has been a continual challenge to keep getting better with our mantra being that we are the hardest working school squad in the country. Although winning is important it really is a by-product of the hard work they, and the coaches at various levels, all put in. Conditioning and skill sessions at 6.30am throughout the year has meant that the boys are incredibly aspirational but also they never lose sight that sport, most importantly, is meant to be fun.



## RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS

The 1st XV had a hugely impressive 2016/17 season and were ranked as one of the top rugby sides in the country. The School was nominated as Rugby School of the year 2015/16 and won the 1st XV of the season award in the following year. In 2017 the School retained the national HSBC Rosslyn Park title in sevens. They became the first School to do so in the Cup era, competing against the top schools across England and Wales. The squad was made up of only four

players who won the tournament the year before, two of the side had played 4th XV rugby the season before and 11 out of the 12 players started in the Fourth Form (Year 9).

Over the last 12 months the 1st XV and Sevens squad combined played 41 matches, losing just four matches! They won the HSBC National Seven's Rosslyn Park cup twice in a row alongside St Joseph's International Rugby Festival.

“ In the 2016-17 season Cranleigh's 1st XV rugby team were nominated for, and won, Fifteen Rugby's National 1st XV Team of the Season award for the first time. The season came to a close in front of 52,000 spectators at Twickenham stadium at the HSBC London 7's series where they replayed the national final and won for the second time 22 points to 12. ”



## OUR ALUMNI



“ Rugby at Cranleigh balanced two very important aspects of the game. You make life long memories with your friends, whilst having the facilities and coaching to take your game to the next level.

**HENRY TAYLOR**  
(ENGLAND U20, SARACENS  
AND 1ST XV 2012)



What I loved most about Cranleigh rugby was the balance between pushing myself to be the best I could be on the pitch without having to sacrifice my other interests at School. I will never forget the hard working culture within the rugby set up and how much we all loved that time in our lives.

**SAM ARNOLD**  
(IRELAND U20, MUNSTER  
AND 1ST XV 2014)



The set up for Cranleigh rugby was a nurturing ground where I could challenge my limits as a player whilst getting involved in all parts of School life.

**DINO LAMB-CONA**  
(ENGLAND U20, HARLEQUINS  
AND 1ST XV 2016)

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# 100 YEAR HISTORY

In the summer of 1915 a decision was made at Cranleigh School to play rugby in the Lent term. Boys were given rudimentary training in the basics of the game and it proved hugely popular; although the authorities insisted "it is merely being given a trial", by the summer it had been decided to abandon football altogether.

"Such was its immediate popularity, at least among those boys old enough to have a say in the matter, that the change was proposed at a Games Committee meeting and loudly acclaimed," wrote journalist and broadcaster Jim Swanton. The school's annual magazine, The Cranleighan, even offered tips to aspiring players. "Training is essential," it stated, "and visits to the Tuck Shop before a match are not advised."

Within a fortnight of the start of the Michaelmas term the 1st XV played and won their opening match against a side raised by John Fawcus, a master at the Junior School who was one of the driving forces behind the switch of codes. On Saturday, October 21st the first representative school match took place on St Andrew's against Epsom. Cranleigh won 27-8.

Since that day, there have been 33 international rugby players at various age groups, two British and Irish Lions and 15 professional rugby players coming from within the School.



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Cranleigh.

R.H. Corfield. G.A.B. Walters. H.P. Stevens. J. Roberts. J.H. Holford. G.A. Saunders.  
J.R. Dunn. P.K. Holford. D.D.G. White. L. Porter (Capt). A.B. Baker. A.E. Cross. R.F. Baynes.  
E.G. Budd. M.H. Short.



## OUR PHILOSOPHY

The development of rugby at Cranleigh is not a story of overnight success but a gradual development of the coaching and culture within the club. During the 1990s there was only one school-boy international; since the turn of the century Cranleigh has produced 17 Internationals, 15 professional contracts and 7 Oxbridge Blues. That group includes players from: Saracens; Harlequins; Ulster; Munster; London Irish; Leicester Tigers; Worcester Warriors; England sevens; and Auckland Blues. It also boasts U20 world cup winners, full internationals including the likes of Will Collier (England 2017) and an Oxford University Captain.

The School has also continued to increase participation levels each year. There are rugby games for all pupils and a huge focus goes

into designing a fixture list and an environment that develops the junior lower ability sides. This includes some of the most experienced rugby coaches being involved at the bottom junior sides.

Testament to this inclusive philosophy is that seven out of the 1st XV in 2016 started five years previously at U14B or C team level with fourteen out of the 1st XV in the final game of the season being pupils who started the school in our Fourth Form (year 9). The U16, U15 and U14 age groups were able to put out four teams at each level (even with a year group of only 80 pupils) meaning that all pupils were involved in competitive rugby games with six senior rugby sides at U18 level – the highest ever number of pupils participating in competitive rugby.



Although Cranleigh has a number of elite players who are representing their country or academies, no pupil is allowed to drop out of other sports or lower their academic expectations. The rugby club believes in the benefits of participating in a variety of sports and extra-curricular activities. The skills that can be developed from it are priceless in helping to develop rounded and aspirational individuals. A number of our top-end players have combined a University degree with their professional rugby contracts. This was highlighted in 2016 when one of the U18 schoolboy rugby players was: playing for the 5th XI in the football season, involved in a House play and performed on stage during a musical evening. In fact, out of the 2017 HSBC Rosslyn Park national winning rugby squad, all twelve players were also playing for the School's football teams. The training they did for the Sevens was an added extra - from early morning conditioning sessions at 6:30am to team sessions in their free time. Not only this but several of the squad were also involved in theatre productions, choral groups or music concerts.



# CRANLEIGH RUGBY

# PROFESSIONALS SINCE 2001



“Playing rugby with your best friends in a hardworking but enjoyable environment was truly amazing and something I still miss to this day”

**HARRY ELRINGTON** (LONDON IRISH AND 1ST XV 2012)

**BEN SMITH** (2001)  
New Zealand U18, U20,  
Otago Highlanders

**LUKE BRAID** (2005)  
Junior All Black and IRB Young Player  
of the Year 2008

**GREG BATEMAN** (2007)  
England U18, Harlequins,  
Exeter and Leicester Tigers

**SEB STEGMANN** (2007)  
England U16, U18, U20,  
Harlequins and Ealing Trail finders

**WILL COLLIER** (2008)  
Harlequins and England

**SAM SMITH** (2009)  
England U16, U18, U20,  
Harlequins and Worcester warriors

**JAMES CORDY-REDDEN** (2011)  
Bristol University,  
Welsh Students and England Sevens

**HENRY TAYLOR** (2012)  
Loughborough University,  
England U18, U20, Harlequins  
and Saracens

**CHARLIE PIPER** (2014)  
England U17, U18, U20 and  
Harlequins

**SAM ARNOLD** (2014)  
Ireland U18, U20, Ulster and Munster

**DINO LAMB-CONA** (2016)  
England U17, U18, U20, Harlequins

**HARRY ELRINGTON** (2012)  
Loughborough University  
and London Irish



