

After a hefty 18-month layoff, competitive rugby finally got back up and running at the start of September. Pre-season was far better than most of us hoped for with up to 50 players attending training. Fitness levels were good and the level of enthusiasm was extremely impressive.

The players did not quite hit the ground running and the first four games were a bit scrappy with the 1<sup>st</sup> XV winning two and losing two. However, in the past two weeks we have achieved excellent results against Newton Stewart away and then GHK at home. GHK were top of the league and unbeaten when they arrived at Inverleith. There is obviously a long way to go this season and we should not get ahead of ourselves but the past two performances show we can compete against anyone in the division.

The Development Team have had a tough start to the season with one win from five (and that win due to the opposition being unable to raise a full team). However, three of the four losses have been away from home and I am sure once we get a few home games under our belts there will be more 'W's on the board.

It is worth pointing out that around 11 FPs regularly turn out to play for the two squads and I am delighted they have settled into senior rugby so smoothly. They are a credit to the rugby coaches at the school.

A nod to the coaching set up headed by Alex Hagart. An already excellent team of coaches was strengthened by the arrival of John Hardie as forwards coach and Jamie Hodgson (FP, and just selected for the Scotland squad) as lineout coach. Both have settled in quickly and are hugely respected by everyone at the club. Unfortunately, Gavin McLeod and Rhys Morgan headed off to new lives elsewhere in the UK but we wish them all the best and thank them for their service.

The junior sections of the club (Lions, Lionesses and Vikings) are continuing to flourish with unprecedented numbers down at training. The sheer enjoyment on the faces of these kids on a Sunday is something to behold and I give my sincere gratitude to the committee, particularly Ali Stewart and Stuart Riddell, and all the coaches who put in a huge amount of work.

A few other briefs thank yous:

- To the medical team headed up by Dr Andy Stevenson. All our doctors and physios do a simply marvellous job.

- To the committee – you all know how important you are to the club!
- To Denise and the catering staff.
- To Lindsey Geddes for dealing with the things I would never get to, and for running Inverleith on a Saturday.
- To Laura McIntosh
- To Willie Purdie and the groundskeeping team
- To all our sponsors
- To Director of Rugby Nick McCashin

And a final big thank you to all the supporters who get down to cheer on the players no matter the weather. Our captain, Fraser Morrison, tells me regularly how much the vocal support from the touchlines helps the players on the pitch. Keep up the good work!

Simon Breeze

President