



**SARACENS**

Club Partnership Programme 2004/5

## **CLUBS UPDATE**

20<sup>th</sup> August 2004

**\*\*\* BREAKING NEWS.....Saracens first Home game of the season will be a friendly against Harlequins at Vicarage Road Stadium Next FRIDAY (27 Sept). See further details below..... \*\*\***

### **NEWS FROM THE TRAINING GROUND**

#### **Rod's Response to Wednesday's Game against the Golden Lions in South Africa**

Saracens Head Coach Rod Kafer was left pleased with his side's performance against the Golden Lions in their opening warm-up match of the 2004/05 season.

Last night's match at Ellis Park saw Saracens fall to a 43-27 defeat, but it was only after a late flurry of tries in the closing few minutes that saw the home side seal the win.

Saracens were enjoying a 27-22 lead going into the final 10 minutes after tries from Robbie Kydd, captain Hugh Vyvyan, Dan Scarbrough and Paul Bailey. Thomas Castaignede added two conversions and a penalty. However, the effects of playing at altitude, coupled with the fact that the home side are in the middle of their Currie Cup campaign, saw them take control in the closing stages.

"I'm reasonably happy with the outcome in terms of getting what we need from a pre-season fixture," Kafer told Saracens.com from the club's training camp outside Johannesburg this morning (Thursday). "It doesn't get much tougher for your first warm-up game than to play at altitude and against a team in the middle of a domestic campaign.

"We can take a big positive from the fact that we had the lead until the 70th minute. We played some good rugby but then just ran out of gas and let them in with an interception and turnover try. We had expected to tire - it's often the case with playing at altitude if you are not used to the conditions.

"We wanted to keep the players on as long as possible to help with their match fitness and I'm pleased to say that a lot of them lasted for the 80 minutes. It was a good run out.

"Another pleasing aspect is that we haven't picked up any serious injuries. The squad have the usual bumps and bruises you would expect after playing a competitive match, but they should settle over the next few days as we continue our preparations for the new season in South Africa before flying home on Saturday."

### **CLUB PARTNERSHIP NEWS**

Over the last week or so our partner clubs have been finalising their ticket orders for the London Double Header at Twickenham, with over 10 partner clubs bringing large groups to this season's launch match. They are also busy picking which Saracens home games they want to target for the 2004-5 season which will allow them to be involved in some of the Pre-match activities. These include the matchday challenge on the Vicarage Road Pitch, being the guard of honour tunnel, and new to this season pre-match coaching sessions.

We'll let you know soon when your club is attending Saracens games in 2004-5, so watch this space.

## **FORTHCOMING MATCHES**

### **NEXT MATCH:**

Saracens vs Harlequins:

Saracens continue their pre-season campaign with a friendly against NEC Harlequins at Vicarage Road on Friday 27th August - kick off 7.45pm. This is the first time in many years that we Saracens have held a pre-season friendly at Vicarage Road Stadium. This will be your first opportunity to see the Men in Black in their new kit and see the new exciting squad in action. Tickets for unreserved seating in the East and West Stands (the sides) will ALL be sold at ONLY £10 for adults and £5 for concessions. Don't miss this opportunity to sit in the best seats in the stadium for a great discounted price.

The following day, the Men In Black travel to Bedford - kick off 3pm - with Kafer planning to utilise the entire squad across both matches. All tickets available at

### **NEXT HOME GAME:**

The 2004/2005 Zurich Premiership is set to get underway on September 4<sup>th</sup> in front of a record breaking premiership crowd at Twickenham. Ticket sales to date exceed 36,000 ensuring that the London Double Header will smash the previous Zurich Premiership record crowd of 20,840 set by London Irish (vs. Bath) on March 21<sup>st</sup> 2004.

The first game of the new season sees London Irish taking on NEC Harlequins at 2pm with Saracens facing Champions London Wasps at 4.15pm. It will be the first regular season Premiership matches to be played at Twickenham and the first time Premiership matches have been played back to back at the same venue.

Arrangements have now been completed for an extensive array of entertainment outside the stadium too - there will be a party in the West Car Park for supporters with live music before and after the matches. At 12:00pm popular rugby band "The Melody Fakers" will be on stage having previously played at Quins and Saracens matchdays; after the second game at 5:45pm fans can enjoy ' the Craic at Twickenham' with Irish band "Le Cheile" entertaining the crowd. Other activities around the main stage include player signings, giveaways, club merchandise outlets and even a fourway mascot dance off at 12:30pm!

Fans get to watch both matches with their ticket and with ticket prices for kids at just £5 it is expected that there will be a real family atmosphere at Twickenham.

Prior to the main matches the London clubs have organized a full morning of rugby coaching and mini rugby for junior clubs across the A316 at the Stoop. Over 1,000 kids from 50 London clubs at Under 7s through to Under 16s will participate in the London Double Header Festival before heading over to Twickenham for the afternoon to watch the professionals in action.

With nine members of England's victorious Rugby World Cup squad expected to play (Mike Catt [London Irish], Will Greenwood [NEC Harlequins], Kyran Bracken, Richard Hill [Saracens] Lawrence Dallaglio, Josh Lewsey, Simon Shaw, Joe Worsley, Matt Dawson [London Wasps]) and in action on the day it is a great opportunity to watch world class rugby at the home of England rugby at club rugby prices.

An array of international talent could be making their debuts for their new clubs at Twickenham (Catt, Scott Staniforth, Robbie Russell [London Irish], Dafydd James, Jeremy Staunton [NEC Harlequins], Alex Sanderson, Kevin Yates, Hugh Vyvan, Dan Scarbrough [Saracens], Dawson [London Wasps]).

"I think it's a fantastic idea," said Saracens Head Coach Rod Kafer "It creates a real show piece event for the start of the season for the London clubs and will be something that I'm sure that all four teams will be looking forward to. I think it will add a bit more spice to the London Derby matches and that can only be a positive thing.

"It also gives us a big occasion to work towards to kick start the season and I think it's a really good initiative for the game."

Simon Hoskins, Marketing Manager of Premier Rugby added: "Early ticket sales for the London Double Header have far exceeded our expectations and it is now conceivable that there may be as many as 50,000 people at Twickenham on September 4<sup>th</sup>, it should be a great event and really shows the growing popularity of Premiership Rugby."

## PLAYER NEWS

### Kafer signs Tongan battering ram...

Saracens Head Coach Rod Kafer has today announced that Tongan winger **Pila Fifita** has completed a move to Saracens.

The 29-year-old 16st 7lb winger represented Tonga in the 2003 Rugby World Cup and currently plays for North Otago where he had scored 155 points in 33 games for the NPC side. However, the 5ft 11in powerhouse won't be joining the Men In Black until October because of existing club commitments.

*Kafer said: "We have been looking to get the correct balance and variety in our backline and we feel Pila will provide that. He's a very powerful player who can break the gain line and carry the ball in an uncompromising way. He won't be joining us until October when he finishes his NPC commitments, but we're delighted his is on board.*

*"We've cast the net far and wide in order to get the balance in our squad and there is still the possibility that we are looking for another player of his type."*

*Speaking about his move to Saracens, Fifita said: "It's really exciting for me and my family to be able to come over to the UK to play rugby and especially to a team like Saracens. I am looking forward to playing with guys like Taine Randell and Robbie Kydd who I know from New Zealand. I'm really looking forward to experiencing a new country as well as showing everyone what I can do on a rugby pitch."*

### Rauluni ready and raring to go...

Another recent arrival to the Saracen training ground was Fijian **Mosese Rauluni**, who has had a busy summer captaining his country and then playing in three tests for the Pacific Islands. However he didn't find it hard to settle into his new team and showed no signs of fatigue from his 20 hour journey on his first day of training, or at least he wasn't showing it.

It's not surprising that he wanted to get straight to work, especially bearing in mind the players he has to compete with for the No. 9 jersey, with incumbents Kyran Bracken and Morgan Williams standing between him and a place in the starting line up he will need all the time he can get his hands on to impress the coaches ahead of the first game of the season which is just over two weeks away!