

Skolars finish pre-season cup with defeat

RUGBY LEAGUE
LONDON SKOLARS 14
DEWSBURY 42

SKOLARS warmed up for the start of their Championship 1 season with another defeat in the Northern Rail Cup on Sunday, in a dress rehearsal for their third league fixture of the campaign.

Dewsbury will host Callum Irving's side on Friday April 10, and will go into that game full of confidence after extending their unbeaten run in the cup and overcoming their north London opponents by 28 points at the weekend.

The opening minutes of the game suggested that Dewsbury might run riot, and a quick move across the line allowed Liam Crawley to score wide on the right hand side.

However, Skolars managed to level after Chad Isles gathered Paul Thorman's high kick and passed to Olu Iwenofu, who completed the move.

Dewsbury replied as more swift passing across the line found Gary North in space on the left, and after his try the visitors began to pull away.



Andy Tillotson's pass found Simon Cook for his first try, followed soon afterwards by a second for North, while Cook also completed his brace after Austen Aggrey couldn't hold onto a high ball under extreme pressure.

The visitors failed to put the hammer down in the second half and squandered possession cheaply, and Iwenofu reduced the deficit to 28-10 with his second try of the game for Skolars.

The home side almost had another try soon after when Jawoslaw Obuchowski made an interception deep in his own half and raced 60 metres before being pulled down.

Polish-born Obuchowski moved to London two years ago and an assured debut at this level follows his progress from the under-18s.

Dewsbury showed why they will be one of the sides to watch in this season's Championship 1 by immediately counter-attacking and Andy Bostock touched down after breaking through the centre.

At the other end Iwenofu completed a hat-trick when he took a Thorman kick out on the right wing and crossed the line to score.

But careless play meant that the visitors edged the second half, and the influential Patch Walker pounced on a loose pass to score, before converting his sixth kick from seven attempts.

Skolars kick off their league campaign at home this Sunday when they take on Swinton Lions at New River Stadium, kicking off at 3pm.



■ **FRESH FACES...** New boy Olu Iwenofu (right) completes his hat-trick for Skolars in their defeat on Sunday, while (left) Phill Browne has been appointed the club's new Chief Executive. Pic: Max Flego

The match is preceded by a series of events as part of the first London Rugby League Heritage Day, which is due to become an annual event.

Skolars' under-18 team, North London Stags, take on Keighley Cougar Cubs in the Gillette National Youth League, while a Skolars' Old Boys side also take on their counterparts from Harlequins in a Master's game.

London Skolars: Simms, Iwenofu, Isles, Obuchowski, Aggrey, Honor, Thorman, Ellison, Nissen, Wallis, Thomas, Williams, Joyce. Used Subs: Spencer, Osborn, Burke, Reid.

■ **SKOLARS** have also announced that 28-year-old Phill Browne has taken up the post of Chief Executive Officer at the club.

Browne has previously worked at the New South Wales Rugby League Academy and has been a long-term stalwart with the Fiji National Rugby League.

He is the youngest CEO in British professional

rugby league and, alongside 28-year-old head coach Callum Irving, Skolars also have the youngest administration.

"I'm extremely proud and honored to be a part of the London Skolars," said Browne. "Rugby League has so much potential in the capital and it's a challenge that I'm really looking forward to. It's an exciting time to be involved with the club as we look to build on the foundations put in place."

And Irving said: "We are really happy that Phill has joined the club. The fact that we've spent two months waiting on a visa speaks volumes for how keen we are for him to join our team."

"Phill joins one of the youngest management staffs in British professional sport and the enthusiasm among the team is very high. There is a general buzz about the club and I'm sure Phill will do a great job for us."

Boxergirl's back – with title in her sights

BOXING

TOTTENHAM fighter Laura Saperstein returns to action at York Hall on Sunday, hoping to get wins under her belt before her title fight later in the year.

Aussie-born "Boxergirl", who quit her £75,000 a year job as a lawyer to become a boxer, is unbeaten in her six professional fights and in her brief amateur spell.

The 37-year-old will fight Larna Cooper from Wales in the lightweight division over six two-minute rounds.

But she is already looking ahead to a showdown with Lindsay Scragg – who has already boxed for the world title – later in the year, for either the English or inter-continental title.

"I was offered a title fight at the end of last year but turned it down because I didn't think I

had earned it," Saperstein told the *Journal*.

"I didn't have an extended amateur career like the guys get, and I thought it had come a bit early.

"There's no date set yet for the fight, but I definitely want to get at least three more bouts in before then.

"I might go to America or Germany to get some really good quality fights in, and I want at least three months to prepare properly."

Saperstein (pictured, right) may have learned that lesson in the last month, and she admits her preparation for this Sunday's bout has been far from ideal since she returned from a 10-month spell in Thailand.

"I went over there to train but, typical me, ended up setting up a business out there selling customised boxing clothing," she said.

"I was working seven days a week, and I couldn't leave until the business could carry on without me being there.

"I only got back four weeks ago and since then I've been jetlagged, had a cold and a sore throat.

"It's been a concern and I thought about pulling out, but that's not something I like to do unless I'm at death's door.

"My coach has told me to stop being so silly. He says I could fight six rounds blindfold if I need to."

And Saperstein believes she has what it takes to defeat her next opponent and maintain her unbeaten record.

"This will be Larna's fourth pro fight and I watched her third," she said. "She's very fit and she has a strong defence, but I'm confident – as confident as you can be in a fight anyway."



Hounds are down and out

ICE HOCKEY
INVICTA DYNAMOS 8
HARINGEY GREYHOUNDS 3

GREYHOUNDS were relegated from the second tier of the national pyramid on Sunday as they suffered a predictable defeat against the league leaders.

Lee Mercer's side finished bottom of the eight-team league, having won just five of their 25 fixtures and

finishing with a goal difference of -72.

The Alexandra Palace side now drop into National League Two, but player/owner Jan Bestic believes that the club may benefit from a spell in a lower division.

"The league chairman told me that it would do us good to spend a year at a lower level, and I think I agree" he told the *Journal*.

"It gives us a chance to regroup, build our fanbase and come back stronger.

"We're expecting to keep what we've got and we'll bolster that in the close season, and obviously we'll win a lot more games next season because the standard isn't anywhere near as good as the league we're leaving."

The Greyhounds will be back in action in their new division in August.

Lordship Lane are borough champs

JUNIOR FOOTBALL

LORDSHIP Lane are the undisputed champions of Haringey after winning the Primary Schools Play-Off Final against St Mary's in a dramatic penalty shoot-out.

The victorious Wood Green school were trailing 1-0 with only a few minutes of the 30 remaining, but they levelled to force extra-time. The additional time elapsed without either team scoring, and Lordship Lane edged the decisive spot-kick contest.

Call-up for Collins

ATHLETICS

ENFIELD & Haringey's Shaun Collins was selected for the England Junior team following his fine performance in the recent under-20 national cross-country championships.

Collins will represent his country in the home countries cross-country international at Bangor on March 28. His selection completed a busy weekend for Enfield's athletes.

Aaron Trim and David Telfer-James impressed in the 400m at the British Universities indoor-championships, while Ben Nagy took second place in the 1500m semi-final before eventually finishing seventh in the final.

Sean Safo-Antwi snatched the 60m title in 7.02 seconds at the inter-county match at the Lee Valley Athletic Centre, where Denis Healy took a one second victory in the 800m.

In the under-17 events, Jordan Arthur won the 60m, while Tom Fallon ran a personal best in the 800m to finish second.

Junior does the job

JUNIOR FOOTBALL

RURAL FRIENDLY LEAGUE
Park View Rangers 3
West Essex Colts 2

JUNIOR Bennett scored twice to help Park View Rangers under-11s edge to a narrow win over West Essex Colts.

After WEC took an early lead, Kai Ithia converted a Salah Abdullahi corner to deservedly bring PVR level after 15 minutes.

Cee-Jay O'Kane was introduced in the second half, and Bennett stole the show with a well-taken brace to secure the points for PVR, despite a late consolation for WEC.

Park View Rangers: Abdullahi, Agbotro, Bacchus, J Bennett, S Bennett, Butt, Cassule, Coogan, Cunningham, Gesey, Ithia, Jones, Mohidden, O'Kane, Stevens.