



R B F & R S

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Berkshire Firefighters are Rugby Champions

Congratulations to the members of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Rugby team who are now the English Fire Brigades National Rugby Union Champions!

Their 16-10 triumph over Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service in the National Cup final game, played at Taunton RFC's ground on 2 April, was well-deserved compensation after a series of frustrations in last season's competition. Steve Leonard, the team manager (Caversham Road fire station, Reading), paid tribute to Captain Ian Angell (Whitley Wood fire station, Reading) and the members of the squad.

"This is a brilliant result, absolutely fantastic. Everyone has worked really hard, from pre-season training and right through the games before Christmas and have given 110% in the Cup games.

"We have played consistently good rugby, learned from our mistakes and built up effective set pieces and improved our focus. We are lucky in having players with some outstanding individual skills but what matters most is commitment and sheer determination to win and that is what has got us through to the final. It is a great feeling to be bringing the National Cup back with us to Berkshire. I would also like to thank our kit sponsors, Oysters Fish and Chips in Lightwater and also the Woodside Day Nursery in Caversham, who gave us a very generous donation for winning the competition."

In taking the trophy, the RBFRS XV didn't have things all their own way. With the strong wind in their favour, Hertfordshire burst from the starting blocks with a vengeance, putting the Berkshire team under severe pressure for the first 10 minutes. They then conceded a penalty, an opportunity for Lee Bodenham (Caversham road fire station) to notch up three points and giving RBFRS a chance to regroup. However, Hertfordshire fought back and a penalty against RBFRS followed by a converted try just before half-time left Berkshire with plenty to do.

As usual, the Captain's half-time team talk worked its magic and Scott Taylor (Whitley Wood fire station) obliged with a cracking try, converted by Lee Bodenham, 10 minutes into the second half. As Hertfordshire's game began to show some cracks, RBFRS upped the pressure and Lee kicked a further two penalties in the final quarter of the match. Hertfordshire nearly scored in the final five minutes but the Berkshire defence held firm and they were denied a touch down.
ENDS.

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