

## SPORTING LIFE

## CLUB OF THE WEEK



● The men's first team



● The ladies' team line up for a tournament



● The ladies' team... after a muddy encounter



● The men's second team

# Hammer time at Hurlingham Park

**CLUB NAME:** Hammersmith & Fulham Rugby Football Club

**NICKNAME:** The Hammers

**HOME GROUND:** Hurlingham Park, Fulham

**WHAT LEAGUES DO YOU PLAY IN?**

1sts: London 3 North West  
2nds: Middlesex Merit Table Division 1  
3rds: Middlesex Merit Table Division 2  
4ths: Middlesex Merit Table Division 3  
Ladies: RFUW NC South East West 2

**DESCRIBE YOUR CLUB:** The Hammers have a team for everyone. In addition to the five men's teams, there the ladies' team, a veterans team and the minis. The club benefits from a newly appointed head coach and a team physio provided by Six Physio.

The club also has a very active social side based around the Wheatsheaf in Parsons Green and culminating in an end of season tour. We are currently looking for new players. We train on Tuesday and Thursday nights from 7.30pm at Hurlingham Park. Check out our website for more details.

**WHEN WAS THE CLUB FORMED AND WHY?** Extract from <http://www.hfrfc.co.uk/History.htm>: The club was the brainchild of a group of teachers from Henry Compton school, who identified that there was a need for a rugby club in the locality to cater for the rugby needs of the residents and children in the local schools.

During a trip to Lancashire in 1977, the teachers decided to make their idea a reality and so it was that the Hammersmith Rugby Football Club came into existence at the Park Hotel (now demolished) Wigan over the Easter

weekend of that year. On their return to London the committee approached the London Borough of Hammersmith (as it was then) about the provision of a rugby pitch. In March 1978 the Leisure & Recreation Committee granted the club the use of the central pitch at Hurlingham Park.

On July 12, 1978 the club held its first training session at Hurlingham Park in preparation for the trials match which took place against Old Wimbledonians on September 2, 1978.

Such was the success of the trial that two sides were fielded away against UCS Old Boys; unfortunately both games were lost; the First XV lost 6-3 and the Second XV lost 14-4. The first home game at Hurlingham Park was against Wasps on September 24, 1978.

**HOW ARE YOU DOING THIS SEASON?** Season starts beginning of September.

**WHAT ARE THE CLUB'S BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENTS?** In 2008 the men's and ladies teams both achieved their highest posi-

tion in the club's history: Men – 3rd in London 3 North West. Ladies: Runners-up RFUW South East West 2.

**WHO ARE THE UNSUNG HEROES AT YOUR CLUB AND WHY?**

Terry Alleyne (club chairman) puts up with the ladies and actually gets us to do what he wants.

Bhombat Mahraj (vice chairman) has been part of the club since it began and it currently the number one supporter.

Jamie Manuel (director youth rugby) devotes a huge amount of time to the minis.

**WHAT MAKES YOUR CLUB STAND OUT?**

The Hammers team is the friendliest in London and we look forward to welcoming new players to the team.

**ANY PLAYERS GONE ON TO PLAY PROFESSIONALLY?**

Former ladies' captain Colette McCarthy has gone on to play in the premiership for Wasps.

**ANYTHING COMING UP WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?**

Hammers Hog Roast on August 30 – including a pre-season three way men's tournament and ladies' match. **Jessica Meldrum**

**CLICK ON**

[www.hfrfc.co.uk](http://www.hfrfc.co.uk)

## BEIJING BLOG



● Our man in China  
Graham Morrison reports exclusively for h&f news on the world's biggest sporting event, the 2008 Olympic Games

IT HARDLY seems four years since the Athens Olympics; but here we are with just 10 days to go to the opening ceremony in Beijing on August 8.

The Olympic Games is the world's biggest, most prestigious sporting event and the hottest ticket for athletes, spectators and sports administrators alike.

But more importantly, the Games also sees the quadrennial blossoming of numerous smaller sports that are usually squeezed out of public view by football, tennis, Formula One, et al. For these sports – table tennis, archery, fencing and many of the 'track and field' events like discus – it is their one chance to win a slice of the cake.

To understand just how big the Olympics is, consider this: 10,500 athletes chasing 302 gold medals across 28 sports. Besides Beijing with 31 venues, two other cities will host respectively sailing and equestrian events, while football is spread over another four cities. Covering all this will be 5,600 written and photographic accredited journalists (about 220 from Britain) with another 12,000 working for rights-holding broadcast media outlets like the BBC. And 70,000 international volunteers will assist the Chinese organisers.

Beijing bid for the 2000 Games but lost out to Sydney. But in 2001 Beijing was elected to host the 29<sup>th</sup> Games over Istanbul, Osaka, Paris and Toronto. To date, controversy has dogged Beijing. But that is nothing new; Los Angeles was going to have poisonous air, Athens would not be ready on time (and have poisonous air), Moscow suffered a boycott, and to a lesser extent Sydney would struggle. For Beijing there are dire warnings of air pollution stopping events... and then there is the cost of London 2012!

But then the Games begin and the protestations of the prophets of doom are drowned out in the euphoria of the events.

Britain's 2008 team of 313 athletes and 236 officials is one of the largest in recent Olympiads and clearly the British Olympic Association is hoping to improve on the 2004 medals haul as it gears up to achieving the national goal of fourth in the pecking order in London 2012.

But Britain's best ever Olympics was right here in Hammersmith & Fulham 100 years ago in 1908 at White City. Lord Desborough, who was president of both the BOA and the (then) Amateur Fencing Association ran the event on a shoestring and made a small profit.

For most athletes, the fact of qualifying is a prize in itself. Large as the games are, there exists strict quotas on the number of athletes per event and this gives the various international governing bodies headaches as to how to share out the places. Often, an athlete will not be confirmed until a few weeks before the start.

But the journalists have a harder job still. With Beijing seven hours ahead and news stations running a 24-hour service, every day becomes two days. As you would expect, the events take place during the day in China, but the home newsdesks start work in the UK during the Chinese early evening... might sound like fun, but as sure as hell will be exhausting!



Britain's best ever Olympics was right here in H&F