

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Marie Davies

CAMILO PARILLI-OCAMPO

Prop. 2014-19. 96 appearances. 6 tries.



To complete a record of our close connection with Bury St. Edmunds R.U.F.C. we 'catch up' with another of our recent former players who now plays for them. Camilo, wife Jess and baby son Teddy live in Leighton Buzzard, but Camilo is currently propping alongside his Blues front row partner Ben Cooper for Bury St. Edmunds.

Camilo writes:

I was born in the Royal Free Hospital in London in 1989 to my Venezuelan/Italian father and my Colombian/Spanish mother. We moved back to South America after my brother, one year, one day younger than me, was born. We were in Venezuela for four years, where my father had a large farm and my mother was an English teacher. We then moved to Santa Marta in Colombia, a very popular place for backpackers in those days! Our parents wanted us to grow up in our own culture, but made sure we continued to practise our English. We returned to England when I was ten, as our parents knew we would have better opportunities to succeed here.

My parents have always been a big influence, driving my siblings and me to wherever we needed to be. They made sure we went to good schools and worked long hours to enable us to take extra lessons, which would help our educational development. My first rugby club was Ealing Trailfinders - not close to where we lived but my mother knew they were a good team, so my father would drive me for an hour every Sunday so I could train and play with another Bedford former player, wing James Stephenson.

In South America, rugby is not a popular sport. I was first introduced to rugby at the London Oratory, my secondary school. Before this I'd never heard of it! I began in the U12 D team. Keith Moran, a teacher at the London Oratory was instrumental in my introduction to and development in rugby. No surprise that I was chosen as prop and the front row was where I would spend my adolescence and senior rugby. I soon progressed and started to get pretty good. Early rugby honours in school were getting in the Middlesex County team, winning the Middlesex Schools U18 competition and being selected to join the London Irish Academy. I went on to further education at Richmond-upon-Thames College, where I was in the rugby programme studying Sports and Exercise training. This was my first taste of professionalism. We had a Weights Programme and Skills and Speed sessions. The highlight was reaching the Daily Mail Vase semi-final with myself and Joe Marler as props! I continued my education at Loughborough University.

At Loughborough, it was Dave Morris who taught me what it takes to reach the next level in rugby. Tony Askew was a great rugby skills coach and I am grateful for the help he gave me to 'get my foot in the door' at Leicester Tigers. It was at Loughborough that I had my first Senior team experience, playing British Universities and Colleges Sport on Wednesdays and doubling up playing National 2 North on Saturdays. Best memories from Loughborough were winning B.U.C.S. rugby at Twickenham and playing against England U20s. I was also selected to play for the England Universities' team v France and Portugal. It was an honour to wear the English Rose and sing the National Anthem. My proud Dad was crying in the stand.



SQUAD PHOTO CAMILO, MIDDLE ROW, 5TH FROM LEFT.



BABY TEDDY

I was scouted by Leicester Tigers where I played for three seasons alongside Charlie Clare and Tom Armes. Unfortunately, I had two serious injuries, a fibula and tibia fracture/dislocation and in my first game back I tore my ACL.

After Leicester, I joined recently promoted Ealing Trailfinders. I started in the away game at Goldington Road which was on Sky Sports. We lost the game, but the atmosphere was immense. It was hard not to appreciate the fans, even though they were cheering our opponents. When the opportunity came to join Bedford and after speaking to Mike Rayer it was a done deal. Mike allows his players to express themselves and play what is in front of them, which I feel many teams have lost.

I have very fond memories of my five seasons at Bedford and the support is like no other. I met some wonderful people from teammates who have become friends for life and great backroom staff. My parents loved Goldington Road (and we loved Bernardo and Gloria). I am sure people were more upset to see them leave than they were me!

Stand-out games for me were the Boxing Day last minute win v Jersey Reds and the first league game of the 2015-16 season v Bristol at Ashton Gate, when we won 23-29 and Jake Sharp was 'unreal'. Also scoring against Leeds at Goldington Road and winning 21-20 with the final kick, being involved in the semi-final play-off and finally the 50-50 draw in the last game of the season at Pirates in 2017. The party afterwards was great - even a seagull attended.

The Blues pre-season away camps were always memorable. The trip to Bruges was my favourite. To experience such a significant ceremony with teammates was really humbling.

On leaving Bedford I joined Chinnor in National 1 where we had a surge of Championship players. Due

to the pandemic my time there was cut short. It has been a tough time for many of us, but one special event came out of the darkness for Jess, my wife and me. We welcomed our baby son - Teddy Kenneth Parilli-Ocampo (good Scrabble score).

After constant pestering from Ben Cooper to join him, I gave in. Bury St. Edmunds offered me a great opportunity to become their Sponsorship Manager whilst playing in National 2 South. I have been having a lot of fun at Bury, not only playing with one of my best friends, but also advising young aspiring players.

My plan for the future is to hopefully join the Metropolitan Police. Leaving the rugby world will be tough, but I imagine joining the police will be like joining another club and training alongside my friends to achieve great things?

BURY ST. EDMUNDS R.U.F.C. CLUB DINNER DECEMBER 2021

