

FORMER BLUES PLAYERS

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

by Marie Davies



JACK HUGHES

Hooker

2021- 2023. 55 appearances. 13 tries.

It was great to welcome former player Jack Hughes to Goldington Road last Saturday to reunite with his Bedford teammates and to enjoy our win vs Ampthill.

Jack had converted to hooker at Northampton Saints and first arrived at Goldington Road on dual-registration for the truncated 2021 campaign. That 'mini-season' he made five appearances, scoring one try. His game time increased considerably in the 2021-22 season, and he finished the season as our highest-scoring forward. His versatility to also play in the back row was a bonus.

Director of Rugby, Mike Rayer on signing Jack for the 2022/2023 season made the following comments.

'Since joining us Jack has been so consistent and durable. That's what I like about Jack and he's an incredible character in the changing room. I've said many times before that I can sign rugby players all day long, but I can't sign characters, they just happen, and Jack is definitely one of them!'

Jack writes:

'I was born in London where my father was Chairman of the London Broncos Rugby League Club for twenty-seven years, stepping back at the end of the 2024 Super League season. He was a big influence on me getting into rugby in the first place, as I went to the Broncos' every week when I was a child.

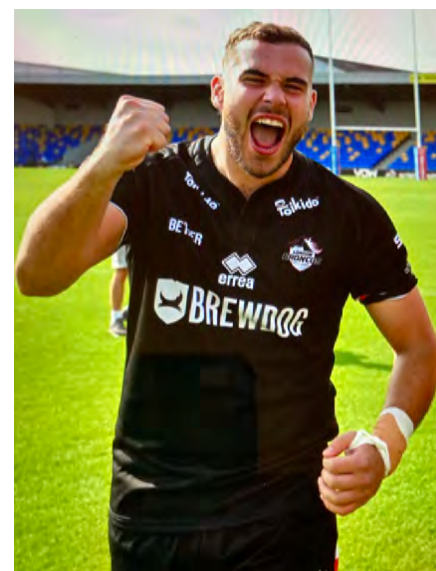
When I was thirteen, I went to Uppingham School, where I played my first serious rugby. Nick de Luca, the ex-Scottish centre, David Beggs and Robin Hardman were my very influential coaches. At the end of my Uppingham school days, I was selected to play for England's U18s and went on tour with them to South Africa, where I played against Wales, France, and South Africa.

After leaving school, my first club was Northampton Saints. I spent two years there, and in the middle of my second season, I joined Bedford on loan. At the end of the 2021 season, I joined Bedford full-time, but only on a six-month contract - lasting two great years until the summer of 2023.



2021-22 TEAM PHOTO

I made so many friends. There are too many teammates from 2021-23 to name personally. I would end up listing most of the team! That was our strength in those two years, finishing in the Top 4 in both seasons. We had an unbelievable team spirit on and off the field - probably the best I've experienced! The three stand-out games for me were the two Boxing Day games I played. 2021 v Jersey and 2022 v Ampthill. Both brought in 4,000-plus crowds and both resulted in great wins. The third stand-out game was v Ealing Trailfinders away in the 2021/22 season. We had been on a patchy run and then went to Ealing and beat them convincingly - great day! I always liked the challenge of playing at Cov and enjoyed our visits to the London grounds.



Off-field - I'll certainly struggle to mention everything. Joey Conway has to get a special mention here as we organised and had some great laughs! For example, the coach trip back from a Cornish Pirates win in 2022 went down in history (the less said the better). We had a party bus from St. Albans to London after our end-of-season social in 2023 and the 2022 squad trip to the Brecon Beacons was a 'ripper'. I mustn't forget the atmosphere in the marquee after 'big wins' and beers on the bus after away wins were the stand-outs from my time at Bedford. Credit must go to Mikey Rayer for his organisational skills!

It was a tough call to leave Bedford, but I had always wanted to give Rugby League a 'go' and, of course, especially the Broncos. I joined on trial for the end of the 2023 season, where we went on an unbelievable run against all the odds and won promotion in Toulouse to gain promotion back to the Super League for 2024. I made my Broncos debut that year against Warrington Wolves in the Challenge Cup and a week later my Super League debut against Hull KR. I went on to play more games that season, but unfortunately, the Broncos finished bottom on points difference, and were due to be relegated regardless, at the end of 2024. It was a brilliant experience playing for the club I had supported since birth. Up next for me - I'm still assessing my rugby options for 2025...

The only other thing I'd like to add is that Bedford is a truly special club. It's unique and run exceptionally well by the Board, the staff and, of course, Mike and his coaching team.

I had a great return visit to Goldington Road last Saturday to watch the Blues' terrific 45-24 win vs. Ampthill in front of a great 3,000-plus crowd! It was great to meet up with former teammates and experience the exceptional hospitality provided by Joey Conway! Good luck for the rest of the season!

