

FORMER BLUES PLAYERS

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

by Marie Davies



LEE DICKSON

Scrum-half

2017-19. 47 appearances. 6 tries.

Previous clubs

2004-2008

Newcastle Falcons - 49 appearances

2008-2017

Northampton Saints - 256 appearances

International Career

2007-2008

England Saxons

2012-2014

England - 18 appearances

Lee was born in Verden, Germany into a military family. When they were growing up Lee and his older brother, Karl, moved home regularly to wherever their father was posted, before eventually returning to England.

Lee writes:

'My father was a military man, so we moved around quite a bit when we were children, finally settling in Manchester. My older brother Karl and I went to boarding school, which was Barnard Castle School, and it was there I was introduced to rugby. At school, I played full back and a highlight for me was when we reached The Daily Mail Cup Final at Twickenham. I loved all sports at school, but my favourite was squash. My influential rugby coach at 'Barney' was Martin Pepper.

Martin Pepper played one season at Goldington Road making 17 appearances in 1996-97. Those who travelled to watch our Cup game at Newcastle last season may have seen Martin sitting in the stand watching his son Guy play for the Falcons. Guy has now joined Bath.

At 'Barney' we had a strong connection with Newcastle, so it was no surprise that it became my first rugby club after school. By then I was a scrum half and played for them for four seasons before moving to join Northampton Saints, where I played for nine years. Obviously the highlights during my time there were winning the Premiership in 2014 and the Challenge Cup in 2008 and 2014.'

It was while playing for Northampton Saints that Lee's international career began. He made 18 appearances for England and the win in France in 2012 is his stand-out international memory. There was already a family connection with Bedford as Lee's older brother Karl, also a scrum half, made over 100 appearances for the Blues from 2004-2009. Karl left Goldington Road to play for Harlequins and so the brothers played against each other for opposing teams in the Premiership, but apparently Lee never played in a game when Karl was the referee!



END OF SEASON TEAM PHOTO



ENGLAND



FAMILY NO. 9, JOSH AND LEE

Lee continues his rugby story:

'At the end of my rugby career with the Saints I was very pleased to be offered a chance to play for Bedford. I knew Karl had five very happy seasons at Bedford, so I didn't need much persuasion. I had an amazing two seasons playing for the Blues and made some really good friends. Goldington Road will always be a special place for me.

My first season of 2017-18 was absolutely amazing. We finished 3rd in the Championship and reached the semi-final of the British and Irish Cup (Lee made 26 appearances and scored 5 tries). I was made captain for my second season and we again finished 3rd in the Championship. My favourite away games have to be our trips to Jersey.



IN ACTION FOR BEDFORD

I met some great people at Bedford. Obviously, too many to name, but I still keep in touch with a lot of my Bedford teammates, Rich Lane and Ed Coulson are two of the lads that I do see quite a bit. I haven't been back to Bedford for a while, but I am certainly due a visit.

I also have many 'off-the-field memories' and social highlights. All social functions and team-bonding occasions were unreal! We had some amazing mid-season trips with the squad which have given us some lifelong memories! Our trip to Dunkirk and Ypres in my first season was so memorable and moving, reminding us of the close connection between the Saints and the Blues through the Mobbs Memorial games. My second season's trip was much further south when we travelled to Bordeaux, which is about a thirty minute drive from Salles, another place which has a close connection with Bedford.

When it was time for me to retire from playing, I was very lucky to be offered the post of Master in Charge of Rugby at my old school, Barnard Castle. Of course, I jumped at the chance. The influential coach of my schooldays - Martin Pepper - is still there, but is now Second Master.

'Barney' School is in Durham so, of course, we, as a family, had to move. Myself, my wife Becky and our three sons Josh, Oscar and Charlie now live in Darlington. The boys are all pupils at 'Barney', which is great, and I am enjoying my coaching career.

Hopefully, I will be able to visit Goldington Road before long and I wish Mike and the Blues a very successful season'.



JOSH, OSCAR & CHARLIE - BARNARD CASTLE SCHOOL