

SPORT

Reading must not Selles fans short with trip to Spain

READING FC are a club in turmoil.

The Royals were relegated from the Championship last season following a six-point deduction for breaching the EFL's profit and sustainability limits.

That was the second successive season the club had received such a sanction and last month Reading were charged with another round of regulatory breaches, including failing to pay their players on time and in full on three separate occasions – in October, November and April.

So, that begs the question – what on earth are the Royals doing on a pre-season trip to Spain?

Reading have some 20-odd players combining work on their skills with work on their suntans in Alicante,

despite the fact that the club faces a deeply uncertain future.

The Royals will play one game while out in Spain, a clash with League Two side AFC Wimbledon on Saturday.

With that in mind, it seems it would have been far more logical – and much less expensive – to fulfill the fixture at either the Select Car Leasing Stadium or Wimbledon's Cherry Red Records ground, even if the names don't quite evoke the same notions of Latino flair as the Estadio Olimpico Camilo Cano.

Two hours up the coast from Alicante lies the picturesque city of Valencia, birthplace of new manager Ruben Selles.

The 40-year-old's first job in management was to oversee Los Che's under-18 team while his

second was to lead Southampton to relegation from the Premier League.

Admittedly, Selles took over with the Saints in deep trouble, but the former fitness coach and data analyst managed just two wins from 18 games in charge.

In Selles' favour is the fact that he has an interesting and varied background in the game – having never played professionally, he's had experience coaching in Greece, Russia, Denmark and Norway – but he's inexperienced in the hot seat.

Even younger than Selles is his squad, with six scholars signing professional terms with the club as well as three members of the under-21s stepping up to the first team.

Experience therefore will be essential, with 34-year-old striker

Andy Carroll – who once commanded a fee of £35m from Liverpool – one of a few older heads in the squad with a vital role to play in the dressing room.

Another could well be Theo Walcott, who was a regular in Selles' Saints team last term.

Walcott attended the Downs School and scored 100 goals in his single season with Newbury, which led to him being signed by Swindon and then Southampton, before he went to the World Cup as a 17-year-old in 2006.

A rumoured homecoming of sorts for Walcott is just about all Royals supporters have to get excited about – unless the prospect of spending £5 to watch Reading vs Wimbledon at nine in the morning really is what fans want.

Sport down the years

SPORT has always been covered in the NWN down the years. We look at the unforgettable moments from 50, 25 and 10 years ago

Rower dedicates victory to former cycling coach

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EIGHT weeks after stepping into a single scull boat for the first time, 17-year-old Katie Metalli claimed her first regatta win with success at the Thames Valley Park event in Reading – and dedicated her win to a former cycling coach.

The Woolton Hill girl only took up rowing at the end of last year after quitting cycling at the beginning of 2012.

The seven-time National Schools Cycling champion walked away from the sport after eight years of intensive competition became too much for her.

Katie said: "I was feeling a lot of pressure from both inside and outside cycling as it was GCSE year for me as well.

"I dreaded the thought of getting back on a bike, and so decided to call it a day completely."

The teenager did no sport at all for most of last year, but decided to try out at Wallingford Rowing Club at the end of the year.

Katie said: "I was very unfit, and it was extremely hard at first, but the moment I stepped into a boat, I fell in love with sport again."

Five years ago, Katie smashed the world record for the indoor rowing half-marathon, as well as the 10k, and the long-term plan was always to give rowing a try, but former GB Olympic medallist Douglas Carpenter at her cycling club in Hillingdon advised her not to start too young on the water.

"Douglas was the dad of one of my team-mates and after I broke the records, he was very concerned about me starting too soon," she said.

"I took his advice to heart."

Sadly, Carpenter died in 2011, but Katie remembered his words of advice and always vowed that her first race win would be dedicated to him.

Sam's the man as Clague clinches title

Terrific tennis on show at Ramsbury finals day

By CHRIS SNELLING

THERE was no love lost when Ramsbury Tennis Club held its finals day on Sunday, June 25.

This year's matches were played under scorching sun on the hottest day of the year so far.

It proved to be one of the most competitive and entertaining finals days the club has ever had, attracting a large number of spectators.

Matt Fretwell took on not one, not two, but three finals matches in one day.

As the reigning men's singles champion, Fretwell faced the formidable junior prodigy Sam Clague, who had effortlessly demolished all his opponents in previous rounds.

This was an eagerly anticipated match that didn't disappoint.

Despite a valiant effort from Fretwell, Clague secured a 6-0, 6-4 victory.

However, Fretwell had threatened to turn the tide when he temporarily seized the lead in the second set.

It was a gripping encounter that reminded everyone just how talented these two Ramsbury tennis titans are.

There was a gutsy performance between Annabel Mackay and junior Anya Holdsworth in the ladies' singles.

Holdsworth set a new record for the youngest ladies' singles finalist in the club's 50-year history.

Ultimately, it was Mackay who emerged triumphant with a remarkable turnaround after losing the first set 6-2.

Mackay hardly put a foot



Matt Fretwell

All pictures by Chris Snelling

wrong to clinch the second set 6-4, eventually sealing the championship tie-break 10-4.

The ladies doubles event saw mother and daughter duo Annabel and Olivia Wade take on sisters Clare Allman and Jane McGovern.

After losing the second set, the Wades held their nerve to win 6-4, 2-6 (10-6) in a spellbinding display with plenty of groundstrokes finding the lines.

Notably, Olivia Wade became the youngest-ever player to triumph in a Ramsbury finals day tournament at 11 years old.

Matt Fretwell and Raleigh Addington squared off against Chris Procter and Karl Stacey in the men's doubles.

In a relentless back-and-forth battle, Procter and Stacey claimed the victory 7-5, 2-6 (10-6) in an exciting tussle that could easily have gone either way.

Fretwell – refusing to let fatigue dampen his spirit – then teamed up with Stephanie Hart against Lee Cowen and Lissa Muncer in the mixed doubles.

Fretwell and Hart secured a

commanding 6-2 victory in the first set.

Cowen and Muncer, refusing to yield, launched a stunning comeback in the second set to claim it 7-5.

At crunch time Fretwell and Hart displayed their resilience with a 10-6 tie-break win.

In a round-up of plate competition matches: Jacqy McQue beat Clare Allman 6-2, retired in the ladies' singles plate.

Joy Wilson and Majella Burkin beat Amelia Tester and Gill Devey 6-4, 7-6 in the ladies' doubles plate.

Kevin Jauncey and Chris Clark beat Ian Cresswell and Tom McCrae 6-1, 6-3 in the men's doubles plate.

Lionel Barnes and Gill Devey beat Simon Benney and Amelia Tester 6-4, 6-7 (10-7) in the mixed doubles plate.

All the plate matches delivered equally thrilling performances, serving as a testament to the depth of talent within Ramsbury Tennis Club, whose website is <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/ramsburytennisclub>



New singles champion Sam Clague



Ladies' singles champion Annabel Mackay



All the winners at Ramsbury Tennis Club's finals day

