

Backroom staff lauded as H&F wrap up league title

Coach eyes perfect season with four games to play

HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM FC

by **Jon Batham**
sport@trinitysouth.co.uk

LONDON TWO NORTH WEST

Hammersmith & Fulham 50
Chiswick 19

JOHN PORTER-GRIFFITHS hailed his coaching staff as well as his on-field heroes after Hammersmith & Fulham were crowned champions on Saturday.

The west Londoners did it in style with a seven-try romp over near-neighbours Chiswick to maintain a perfect 18-0 record with four matches to play.

But Porter-Griffiths was quick to praise the unsung heroes behind the scenes, such as fitness coach Ian Burbidge, a club stalwart for some 10 years, despite not being a rugby man at heart.

He said: "Boxing is really Ian's thing so he's had nothing to do with

the rugby itself, even though we've tried to get him to do rugby coaching courses.

"But he's been our fitness coach for many years. The lads really enjoy his sessions and the fitness levels are a tribute to Ian.

"I'm delighted for our other coaches, Dave Manion, Thomas Leelock and Andrew Neale because we are just so fortunate to have these guys in our coaching team."

Victory was never in doubt as, led by Neil McClure's try, six conversions and a penalty, H&F were 38-0 up before their rivals registered a point.

Porter-Griffiths heaped praise on his full back and insisted that, regardless of the try scorers, every man in the squad played a full part in the triumph.

He said: "Neil is a very good kicker and I'm just surprised we didn't find him sooner.

"We have played total rugby in winning this league with the forwards securing the amount of ball which allows the backs to run.

"And tries have not been about one man just picking up a ball and running.

"There are nearly always a number of offloads and the ball has gone through seven or eight pairs of hands before the line is crossed."

The coach stressed the season was not over and there are still targets to aim for.

But while others talk about raising 100 points – the team currently has 82 – Porter-Griffiths just wants to finish the season 22-0.

He added: "The bottom line is the boys have all been sent congratulations, but they have also been



TIME TO CELEBRATE: Hammersmith & Fulham are all smiles after victory while (left) Alex Scarrett and Ed Godsall (right) combine against Chiswick

Photos by Matt Grayson HOU260211mgh&fch09/07

reminded the season isn't finished.

"I think the boys would like 100 points, but I would settle for finish-

ing with a 100 per cent record and I see no reason why that can't be achieved."

