

## FRORGS Speech

I'd like to start by saying welcome to all the lads, for many of you this is the first FRORGS event you will have experienced, and to all the parents, thank you for your continued support of RGS rugby and your boys.

I believe that rugby at RGS is unique. From my very first days at school, now nearly seven years ago, rugby has provided me with so many special memories and friendships that I'm sure will outlast my time here. Whether it was fitness training in the snow, or travelling up and down the country to compete with top private schools, I was happy to do anything for my mates. This team spirit is something that, even as recently as last weekend up in Sedbergh, has been evident throughout my time here and is what makes RGS rugby truly special. Rugby has been my respite from long days of school, and Saturdays were usually the only day all week I looked forward to. Amongst the games that stand out from my time here is a 5-0 win against John Fisher, our biggest rivals whilst we were in years 7,8 and 9, in which parents were sent off by the referee for hurling abuse, and Mr Pettifer was told he was out of order for his 'foot on throat' speech at half time. Whilst this was an emotional victory that left us battered and bruised, and some of us in tears of joy, the game that stands out from my time at RGS, and still haunts me to this day much like the Under-15s this year, was the game that knocked us out of the NatWest Cup. A heart-breaking 15-8 loss to Cheltenham, in genuine monsoon weather, put the dreams of playing at Twickenham to bed before they even got going. We were outdone by two genuine bits of class from one player, now capped at the England age-group level, and it was impossible to fight back in that weather. However, the commitment from boys and parents alike to brave those conditions for an hour and a half speaks volumes to the RGS way, and what is most important was the bounce back that season to beat Berkhamsted (recently crowned Daily Mail champions) weeks later. This showed us that the losing feeling could be harnessed to our advantage, and that the worst thing you can do is give up, lessons which will stand anyone in good stead throughout their lives.

It is important for every single one of you to cherish all the moments, all the highs and lows that you inevitably will face in an RGS shirt, and to come through them a better person and a better teammate. You will do this through hard work mostly, but you must be spurred on by passion, and a desire to get better is only worth having if you carry with it a good attitude. Remember: your coaches, parents, and teammates only want the best for all of you going forward and know that their advice comes from a good place. To anyone who fancies themselves as a leader, know that it is the team that you are a part of that makes you great, and never ask anything of anyone that you would not be willing to do yourself. Leading by example does not mean being the best at everything, but being the most coachable, the most willing and the most passionate player you can be. It is your friends who can bring you back down to earth when you are cocky, and it is your coaches who can drop you for showing petulance or arrogance, so make sure to make humility a habit. Many of you will have talent in spades but bringing a positive attitude seven days a week and playing for the team trumps any innate ability. This season, it has been the effort of the whole squad, one through 23, that has brought us through adversity, not the contributions of individuals. So, on behalf of the Friends of Rugby at RGS, I would like to congratulate all of you in this hall for being an instrumental part to school life here at the RGS and encourage you to keep giving it your all and strive for greatness, because before you know it you will be stood where I am standing with no more to give. Thank you for listening.