

Sport

Spotlight falls on Dallaglio's men



Wasps captain Lawrence Dallaglio leads out his team for their first 'home' game at Adams Park against Bristol

Jury out on two counts as Wasps face up to mistakes

By Chris Jones

LONDON WASPS will attempt to avoid embarrassing problems on and off the pitch when they face Saracens in front of an expected 10,000 crowd at Adams Park, High Wycombe, on Sunday.

Traffic chaos marred their league debut at Adams Park three weeks ago and the club have instigated a new travel system designed to get more fans on to buses rather than sitting in long jams trying to park near the Wycombe Wanderers ground.

On the pitch, captain Lawrence Dallaglio is aiming to show the fans, who make it into the ground on time, that Wasps can learn from their mistakes and become serious title contenders.

Dallaglio, whose team have played three, recording a win, a draw and a defeat, said: "It's been infuriating because all three games should have been wins and we are yet to hit top form in an entire match."

"We haven't been making life easy for ourselves by the mistakes we have been committing and everyone can hold their hands up."

"However, we have collected eight points from those games and now face a great home match with Sarries in front of a big crowd at Adams Park."

"The points you get now dictate what kind of post-Christmas campaign you are going to have; either pushing for the top and Heineken Cup qualification, mid-table mediocrity or relegation worries."

"With Warren Gatland in charge of us and Wayne Shelford coaching Sarries you are not going to see over complicated rugby!"

However, the problems off the pitch are still worrying Wasps fans.

Many on the club's chatroom this week thought Adams Park was a better venue than Wasps' previous home at Loftus Road and claimed the atmosphere was greater.

But all condemned the traffic delays, the long wait for refreshments in the ground and the "poor" organisation over the collection of tickets.

Sarries, meanwhile, have dissected their loss to London Irish last weekend when coach Shelford opted to change a winning formation in a bid

to keep everyone fresh. Kevin Sorrell, the Sarries centre said: "We just lost our shape early against the Irish and we needed to be a little more street-wise and not play into their hands."

"It's not a bad thing, no one's going to get through the season unbeaten and it's taught us a valuable lesson early on — we have to play our game."

Sarries' trio of injured internationals, Craig Quinnett, Christian Califano and Tim Horan, are expected to be back in action within the next three weeks and England prop David Flatman has overcome a shoulder injury and will play against Wasps, with Thomas Castaignede at full-back.

Meanwhile, London Irish have switched captain Ryan Strudwick to the back row for tomorrow's visit to The Stoop to face bottom club Harlequins.

The enforced move comes after No 8 Chris Sheasby suffered knee ligament damage during the win over Saracens.

Strudwick's place in the second row goes to Kevin Burke, who makes his first start of the campaign.

Rotation changes allow prop Mike Worsley and hooker Richard Kirke to return while centre Nick Burrows faces his former club as Justin Bishop is on World Cup duty with Ireland in Russia.

With Keith Wood also in Russia, Tani Fuga returns from a hand injury to take his place in the front row alongside Jason Leonard and Laurent Gomez. In the second row, Alex Codling returns after missing the games against Leicester and Leeds with a hamstring injury and takes the place of Karl Rudzki, who drops to the bench.

"After the disappointment of our performance last Saturday, we are looking forward to the opportunity to get back on to the pitch at The Stoop," said chief executive Mark Evans.

"We know that we face a difficult challenge against a strong London Irish team, but we can perform much better than we did last week and it is time that we did so in front of our loyal supporters."

Join the Adams family

■ A free bus shuttle service will operate on Sunday from: Railway Station Car Park adjacent to the Town Centre on the A404 at Amersham Hill (pick up from front of station). And outside the Bus Station in Union Street.

■ You will be dropped off at either the Hourglass Pub roundabout or the Lane End/Hillbottom Road roundabout depending on traffic congestion. You will have a 3-5min walk to Adams Park.

■ After the match, buses will be parked in Hillbottom Road from 4.40pm. The last pick-up is 6.30pm.

■ Wasps and Chiltern Railways are offering specially priced rail tickets to High Wycombe for match-day ticket holders. Prices are approximately 20 per cent off a normal Cheap Day Return. Children aged five-15 will pay half the special rate adult fare.

■ A park-and-walk facility has been arranged from Cressex Business Park.