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SPORT

RUGBY

Relegation appeals thrown out

Old Albanian will play in National Two South next season after an appeal against a point deduction was dismissed.

OAs were docked five points for fielding two ineligible players in a win over Fylde on January 31.

It proved to be pivotal as they were relegated on the final day of the season after finishing a single point behind Cinderford in the National League one standings.

While the club didn't appeal the decision at the time, it launched one last week, but it was quickly dismissed by the National Clubs Association. A further appeal to the RFU, the sport's governing body, was similarly thrown out.

An Old Albanian spokesman said: "We received a peremptory email from the NCA stating that after 'discussions' and 'due deliberations' with the RFU's competitions and discipline sections, our appeal has been summarily dismissed and the club will play in National Two South next year."

Late tries knock the wind out of Cents



■ Crusaders' Adam Booth is tackled to the ground by St Albans. Tim Raihuna, right, looks for a pass. Pictures: DANNY LOO

RUGBY LEAGUE

North Herts Crusaders 46
 St Albans Centurions 22

North Herts Crusaders gave St Albans Centurions a rude welcome to the East Rugby League with a 46-22 win at Hitchin.

Cents, depleted by injury and unavailability, held their own for 65 minutes before Crusaders scored three unanswered tries to run out comfortable winners.

St Albans coach Andy Lake said: "The availability of players cost us this match. Whilst all the boys did very well against last year's cup winners, we just did not have enough in the tank to hang on for those last few minutes. It is really disappointing.

"In that kind of game, I expected and could have accepted one of the teams losing by a few points, but to lose a game as close as this one by 22 points is really rubbing our noses in it. Rugby league is an 80 minute game and you have to play for the full 80 to get the results."

Crusaders got off to the better start with two tries, one of which was converted, but Cents showed their credentials when new-signing Dan Hartley went over.

On the last tackle of a set of six,

Hartley didn't kick the ball downfield as expected, but changed up a gear and raced in to score. He converted his own try.

A North Herts converted try in the last minute of the half made the score 16-6 at the break.

The second half started with a great try from St Albans centre Nick Woolley, who intercepted a long pass and outpaced the defence to go in at the corner for an unconverted try.

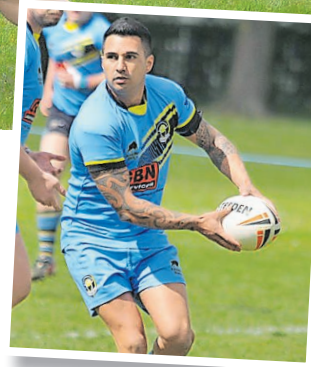
Cents forward Chris Davies got on the scoreboard with a powerhouse charge down the middle, crashing through several defenders to score. Hartley converted, taking the score 16-16.

A lapse in concentration allowed Crusaders to score as two defenders left the ball for one another and North Herts took advantage.

Looking to swing the game back in their favour, Lake send on ex-Cents junior Jack Cornthwaite, who started and ended the next scoring move.

From a Cents kick off, he outpaced and out jumped the Crusaders and recovered the ball. Five tackles later, it was Cornthwaite who received the ball 20 yards out, and burst through three tacklers, taking two defenders over the line with him to score. Hartley again converted to level the score at 22-22.

Five minutes later, Crusaders



scored again when the referee gave a controversial try to the home team. Captain Rob Holbrook made a tackle in front of his own posts. The tackled player got up, played the ball and then moved forward and pushed Holbrook over, allowing the dummy half to step over the line to score. To the Cents amazement the try was allowed.

With 20 minutes left, it was all to play for, and the Cents looked like the team in the ascendancy when Holbrook, Hartley and Josh Lawrence all crossed the North Herts try line only to be held up.

The disappointment of failing to profit from their industry took its toll as Crusaders ran in three tries to add gloss to the scoreline.

Centurions fixtures this Saturday

- 11am - U13s vs Brentwood
 - 12pm - A team vs Brentwood
 - 2.30pm - Cents 1st XIII vs Breckland
 - 4.30pm - Masters vs Southampton
- All the games are at Toulmin Drive

IN BRIEF

Great British tennis weekend

TENNIS: Tennis clubs from across St Albans and Harpenden are offering free opportunities as part of a nationwide initiative to get people into the sport.

The first of three 'Great British Tennis Weekends' is taking place this Saturday and Sunday.

Batchwood, Harpenden Sports Centre, Abbey View, Greenwood Park, Harpenden LTC and Redbourn tennis clubs are all offering free opportunities to anyone who wants to learn about the game.

The other two weekends will take place on June 13-14 and August 1-2.

Leo Tutt, the Lawn Tennis Association's regional tennis participation manager, said:

"We are really excited that the Great British Tennis Weekend is hitting St Albans this summer. With so many park sites and clubs right across St Albans running their own Great British Tennis Weekend events, there really is something for everyone.

"I hope families take the opportunity to take part in these fantastic events and ready themselves for what is set to be St Albans' biggest ever summer of tennis, as we get behind Andy Murray and the British tennis stars."

District swimmers pipped by Watford

SWIMMING: St Albans District pushed Watford to the wire at the Herts Primary Schools Inter-District Swimming Championships.

After a nail-biting finish, St Albans came a close second.

The team, consisting the top 32 Year 5 and 6 swimmers in the district, and led by captain Nathaniel Olayomi from Mount Pleasant Lane School, were looking for a back-to-back wins this year. However, Watford managed to steal the championships in the relays stage of the competition.

Manager Andrew Ellis said: "The team really came together well and gave their all in a determined effort to retain the winners Rosebowl trophy."

Doolan voted top Blueboy

Sam Doolan was voted as the players' player of the year at London Colney's end of season awards presentation.

The summer signing made 53 appearances this season, including 51 starts, and scored one goal, as the Blueboys finished second in the SSML Premier Division.



■ Sam Doolan was London Colney's players' player of the year.

Picture: JIM WHITTMORE

He was also an integral member of a defence which kept 20 clean sheets in an incredible 25-game unbeaten streak.

The other awards went to James Ewington (top goalscorer), Jack Woods (most improved), Jack Smith (manager's player) and Greg Shaw (supporters' player).

Steve Brock won clubman of the year and Cheryl Rees and Donna Lambe were each presented with a bouquet of flowers.

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