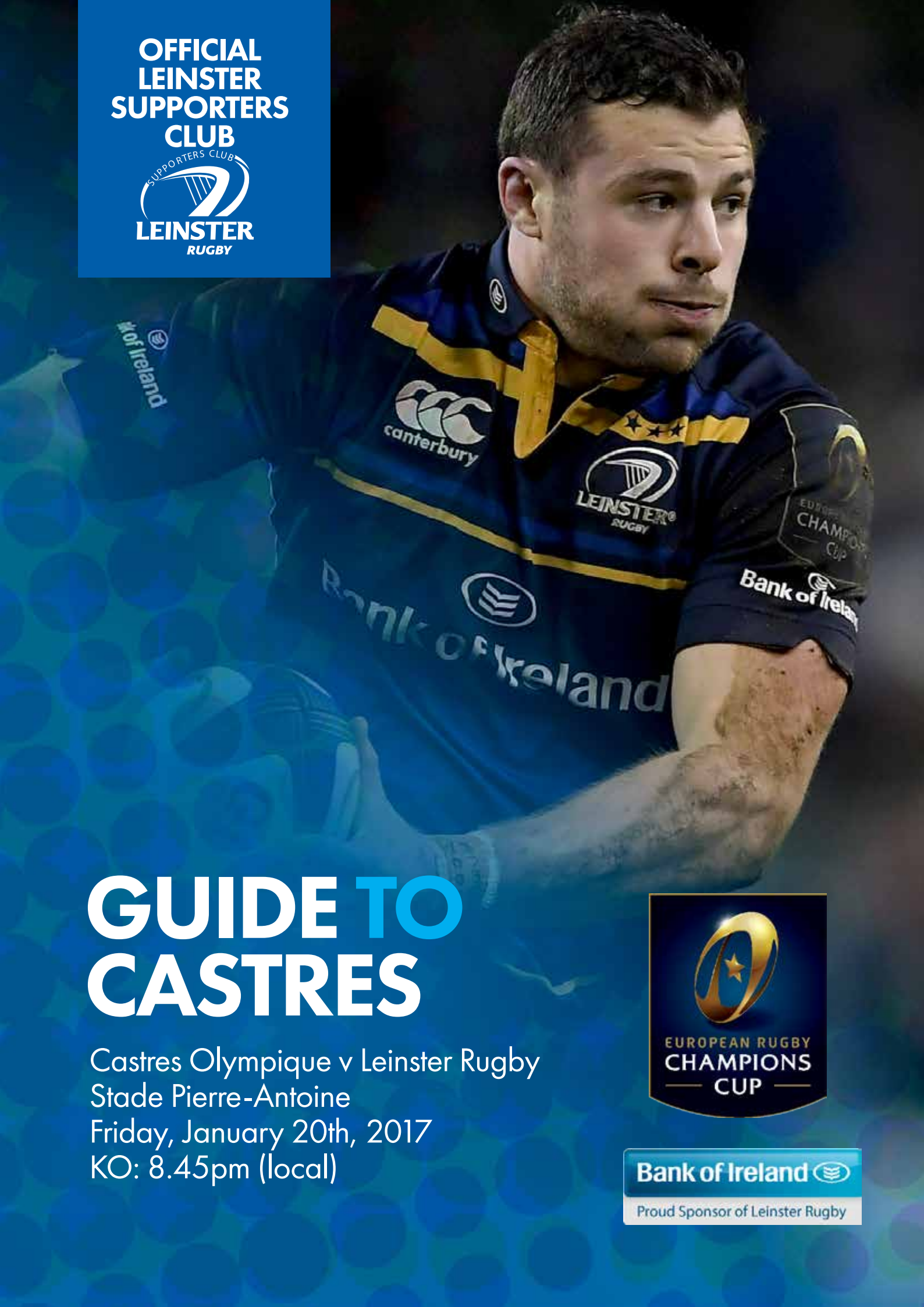


OFFICIAL
LEINSTER
SUPPORTERS
CLUB



GUIDE TO CASTRES

Castres Olympique v Leinster Rugby
Stade Pierre-Antoine
Friday, January 20th, 2017
KO: 8.45pm (local)



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Introduction



Castres will be familiar to some Leinster supporters after a number of recent visits, the last being in October 2014. The reasonably small town of 43,000 people is located in the Midi-Pyrenees region of Southern France.

The cobbled streets in the old town allow you wander around the historical centre seeing the many shops and cafés as well as tourist sights such as the Church of Saint Benoit. The Agout river splits this small city so if you have time check out one of the river cruises, you'll see things from a different vantage point.

Castres Olympique was formed by a group of local college students in 1898. Originally part of a multi-sport club, the rugby team left and

formed a club of their own in 1906. It was at this time that the team's colours changed from black and yellow to the current blue, white and grey.

Industry has always played an important economic role in this part of France, a good example being that ownership of the rugby club moved to Pierre Fabre, founder of the pharmaceutical giant Laboratories Pierre Fabre in the 1960s. He sadly passed away in the middle of 2013.

At the time of writing, Castres Olympique were in fifth place, just below rugby powerhouse Toulouse, in the French Top 14 league.



Getting to Dublin Airport

Get to/from Dublin airport the easy way with Aircoach, official coach supplier to both the team and the OLSC for our inter-provincial away trips. Full time table information and their cheapest fares can be found at www.aircoach.ie

Those driving and who need car parking at Dublin Airport can get 10% off any non promotional rates in the red zone (note this is not

short term block C) by using 'OLSC6HF0J4' at www.dublinairport.com or via their app.

If you need a taxi, try www.irelandbytaxi.com to pre book and lock in your taxi fare to/from the airport – there will be no unexpected surprises!

Arriving in France

Unfortunately in January, options in getting to Castres are limited and unfortunately there was no supporter charter available from Joe Walsh Tours for this trip. We know that many supporters will be using Carcassonne airport from Ireland or the UK with some using nearby Toulouse (seasonal flights from Dublin do not operate at this time of the year).

OLSC Special airport bus for those using Carcassonne airport

The OLSC is operating a special direct airport transfer bus for those using the Ryanair Friday and/or Sunday flights from Dublin. The service will leave outside arrivals and drive direct to the centre of Castres where supporters will be able to check in to their hotel and drop off bags.

On Sunday, the coach will drive from the centre of Castres back to Carcassonne airport to meet flight FR1985 to Dublin.

This is the only direct option available for those not wanting to hire a car. Seats must be purchased in advance by sending €30pp to olsc@leinsterrugby.ie via Paypal with a contact mobile number for the weekend. Full details will then be emailed to passengers the week of the game.

Other options for getting to Castres from within France are the train (www.sncf.com) or rental car. Airlines normally have specials with an airline partner, check your flight confirmation email for details..

Accommodation

Accommodation in the city is limited, although at the time of writing Hotel Renaissance and Hotel IBIS Styles both still had availability. See www.laterooms.com for other options across various price points. If you need accommodation at nearby Toulouse, there's an IBIS opposite Gare Matabiau, the central train station (www.accorhotels.com)

OLSC Supporter HQ



As on previous trips to Castres The Quays Bar at 23 Rue Frederic Thomas will act as our supporters base this weekend for the blue army. Open from 10am Saturday and until 2am on Friday and Saturday night, Mark and the team welcome supporters with a range of beers and bar snacks, which are served throughout the day. Pints of Kronenbourg will be €5 and other pints €6. A special meal of confit of duck, chips, salad and a coffee will be available for €13. Nestled in the cobbled streets of Castres, there's also a smokers area and the bar has free wifi and

multiple screens to play other rugby games over the weekend.

Eating & Drinking

If you are looking for something more than a bar snack, there are many places to eat and drink in the old town. We recommend taking a stroll to see the many menus on the street, a wide range depending on style, price and of course appetite!

Boutique of Castres Olympique

Right beside our supporters base at 19 Rue Frederic Thomas is the official retail shop of our opponents. French clubs are normally great for their retail offering and here is no exception with a good range of mens, ladies, kids and general merchandise on offer. Have a look in advance online at boutique.castres-olympique.com

Top 5 things to see and do this week-end

1. Castres Olympique v Leinster Rugby – KO Friday, January 20th, KO: 8.45pm local time
2. Local Markets at Place Jean Jaures – Open Friday and Saturdays only
3. Cruise the Argout River on a traditional boat from the town centre
4. Stroll along the river to see an impressive array of houses which are lit up at night.
5. The Goya Museum – featuring three pieces from the renowned Spanish artist himself

Flags



A very limited number of flags with white poles as given away in the RDS, Aviva Stadium and on the road will be available at the ground from the OLSC volunteers. These are cleared as hand luggage so please bring what you can from home.

Samsung Galaxy Note 7 users

Supporters are reminded that most airlines now no longer allow these devices to be carried on board in either carry on or checked luggage given the recent issues identified.



Getting to Stade Pierre-Antoine

Completed in 1957, the ground is named after a famous former player Jean Pierre-Antoine who died suddenly in 1956 at the age of only 35.

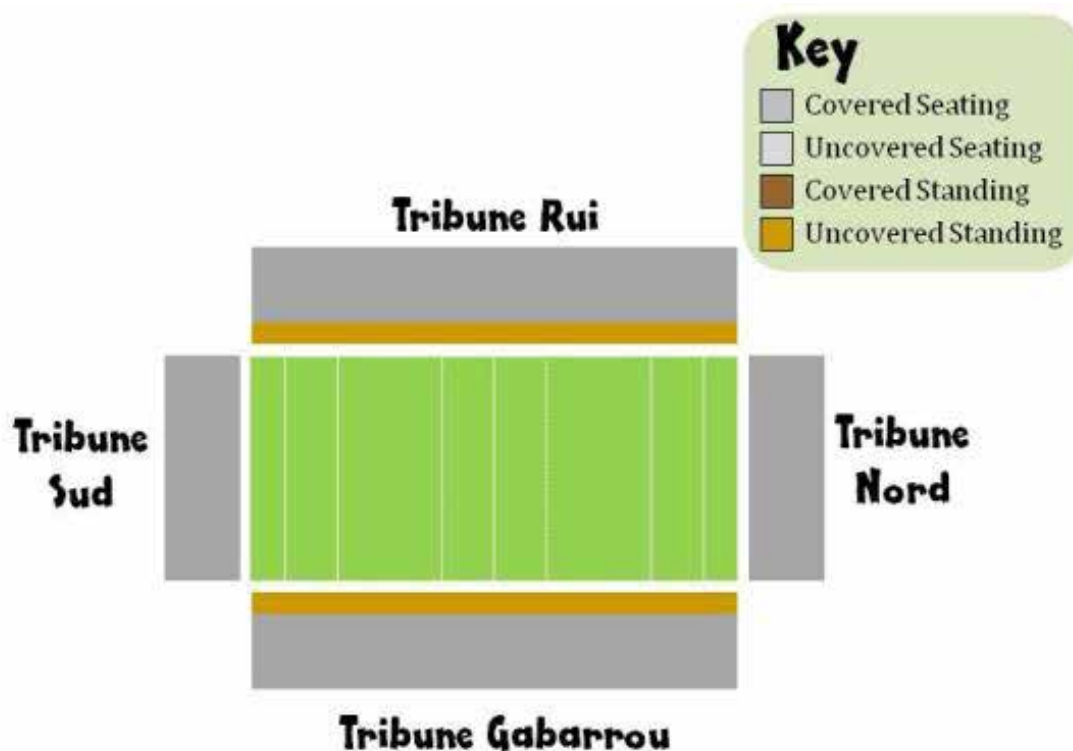
Located 1.5km north east of the city it is easily accessible on foot, specially as it is located in a residential area. A taxi is another option (f you can get one!), Expect to pay approximately €15. Given the shortage of cabs why not share with other supporters if possible.

A note for those driving (a rental car or via a taxi) that due to local traffic restrictions you may not be able to get too close to the actual ground – just something to be aware of.

The stadium will open at 6.45pm on match day and we encourage supporters to mingle with the locals. There will be food and beverage options available.

The recommended ticket area for our supporters was Tribune Gabarou (Blocks V and Z),

Rue de Bisseous,
81100 Castres, France
Tel: + +33 5 63 51 45 00
Castres Rugby on Social Media
Facebook: www.facebook.com/CastresOlympiqueOfficiel
Twitter: @castresrugby
Instagram: @castresrugby



OLSC Offers

Season ticket holders can avail of the following discounts throughout the season – not just this weekend.

Life Style Sports

OLSC members receive 10% off all full priced stock storewide, by showing their plastic card in store. If shopping online quote 'OLSC1617'.

CityJet

Season ticket holders receive free security fast track access at Terminal one Dublin airport when flying on any Cityjet flight. Simply show your plastic season ticket card at the entrance to the security lane with your boarding pass.

The Bridge 1859

Season ticket holders receive 20% off all food 7 days a week. In addition to this, food and drinks will have 20% off 2 hours before and after any Leinster AWAY game.

The Exchequer

Gordon D'Arcy's Exchequer bar on Exchequer Street, Dublin 2 offers €4.50 pints on selected beers before and after a home game. The Exchequer Wine bar in Ranelagh offers a complimentary glass of wine with any main meal purchased on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday before or after a game. Both deals require presentation of your plastic season ticket card.

Sportsfile

Sportsfile capture both players and supporters home and away. Purchase any image from their website and quote 'OLSC1617' to receive a 15% discount.

Horse Show House

OLSC members can show their card at the Horse Show House for pints of Guinness for €4.50 on match days

Zambrero

Ex Leinster player Darragh Fanning offers season ticket holders a 15% discount on all food and drinks when you show your plastic season ticket holder card.

Oslo Beauty

Rob Kearney is offering season ticket holders a 10% discount on treatments on Monday and Tuesdays. To avail of the discount quote 'Leinster Rugby' or simply say 'Rob sent you!'.

Windsor Motor Group

Season ticket holders who show their plastic card will receive 15% off any car service including labour, parts or bodyshop work. Windsor are also offering €500 off any new or used car.

Mao

Season ticket holders who show their card will receive 10% off the A La Carte menu in Mao restaurants. This offer does not apply to Mao at Home.

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Lending criteria, terms and conditions apply. Interest is charged on cash advances and outstanding balances. Purchase Interest is charged if you don't pay your credit card in full by your due date. Credit cards are subject to annual Government stamp duty of 630. Over 18s only. Bank of Ireland is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

Keep in touch with the OLSC

You can keep up to date with all the latest news and information from the OLSC on our website, by liking us on Facebook and following us on Twitter. You can also view all our video content on our YouTube channel. Just search for us or simply scan the QR codes below to find us.



Official Leinster Supporters Club



www.olsc.ie



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OLSCRugby



Message from the Coach



Welcome back to Castres!

As a player and as a coach this is a team and a venue that I have become very used to in the past few seasons and indeed this is the third visit in four seasons for me.

For you, the supporters, a trip to France is something that I am sure appeals to all of you and the fact that the regulars amongst you will have a few favourite spots in Castres from those regular visits, lends itself to a good trip.

Our last time in France in Round 2 in October against Montpellier did not result in a favourable outcome overall but

I think the team showed superb character to come away with the losing bonus point. Our next away trip in Round 3 against Northampton was more favourable with a win and a try bonus point, and again I was delighted to see some of the younger players in our squad really stepping up and being counted on the biggest stage.

Joey Carbery obviously started that game and it was unfortunate that he went off injured so early but credit Ross Byrne who came on to such telling effect. His cross field kick to Rory O'Loughlin, another young man playing very well at present, showed the type of composure that these young players are playing with this season.

As we face into the final round of games, there is much yet to be decided and plenty still up in the air in most of the pools.

But the one consistent is our reliance on you, the supporters, to drive us over the line. The RDS has been a source of huge energy for us but equally the loud clusters of support we have heard in Montpellier, Northampton and now on Friday in Castres, drive us as a group.

We are very proud of the people we represent and we appreciate the efforts and the resources it takes to support us away from home in the Guinness PRO12 and in the Champions Cup.

Thank you once again for all the support on the road this season in Pool 4 and here's to finishing out the pool stages as strongly as possible.

Safe travels.

Leo Cullen
Head Coach

Message from the Committee



Our last pool game in Europe this season awaits this weekend with a visit to Southern France and the small town of Castres.

With a beautiful location along the River Agout, there's lots of quaint shops and cafés in the old town that is made up of narrow streets all leading to the centre around Place Jean Jaures. There you'll find a local market on Fridays and Saturdays, it's also very close to The Quays Pub, which will again be our Supporter HQ for the blue army traveling.

With just a few hundred Leinster supporters expected at Stade Pierre-Antoine on Friday evening, those who have made the journey face a noisy reception, as is the norm for any French home game. Full voice is needed from the time the boys in blue run on to the pitch until the final whistle. Be sure to wear your blue, especially important if you plan on wearing a jacket for the late kick-off - likely to be a bit on the colder side!

Our past three away visits have seen three wins, including two in the 2014 calendar year. In January of that year Leinster came back from a 14 point deficit to secure a 22-29 win while later in October, an all penalty scorecard (seven in all) saw a 16-21 win over the locals.

We are in a good position, table wise, heading into this game but a win is important to help ensure a much coveted home quarter final, making all the difference in the knockout stages in Europe. It also makes it a little lighter on the wallet from a supporter's point of view!

With the Friday kick night kick-off, many supporters will have a day or two to explore Castres outside of the match. Fortunately, a lot can be done on foot so there's really no excuse not to take in some of the culture on offer at the likes of the Goya Museum etc.

Mark and the team at the Quays bar will once again be looking after our supporters. We hope to see you there at some point over the weekend for a drink and/or a bite to eat. Beside the base you can also visit the shop of Castres Olympique, to perhaps pick up a souvenir of your visit.

Finally, details of the quarter finals are expected to be announced by the tournament organisers after consultation with broadcasters next week. Fingers crossed that will be at home but if travel is involved, the OLSC will provide information as soon as possible after the announcement. Home or away, season ticket holders will be given preferential access to match tickets, so keep an eye out for an email from the ticket office.

Enjoy the weekend.

C'MON LEINSTER!