Wasps v Leinster Rugby
Sunday, 20th January 2019
KO: 3:15pm

GUIDE TO
COVENTRY

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Introduction

Leinster and Wasps have quite a back catalogue when it comes to our shared European competition history. Including a Challenge Cup quarter final win at High Wycombe in 2013. Our more recent history is at the Ricoh Arena, Coventry. In 2015/16, much like our current season, we played Wasps in round one and six of the pool stages. That season on Matt O’Connor’s watch Leinster won the round one game at the RDS. Leinster then went on to qualify for the European Champions Cup quarter-finals as Pool 2 winners after surviving a nail-biting finish at the Ricoh Arena to come away with a draw. A year later in the season of 2016/17 the story was a little different with Leinster returning to the Ricoh Arena with nothing but pride to play for and a steep learning curve for Leo Cullen’s young guns.

This weekend sees us return to the Ricoh Arena nearly two years since our last European Champions Cup encounter with Wasps. This time we travel with four stars on our jersey, a convincing round one bonus point win over today’s opposition at the RDS under our belts and everything to play for as Pool-1 comes down to the final straight, its us or Toulouse to take pool winner status into the knock-outs of this season’s champions cup. It doesn’t get any bigger than this.

Getting to Dublin Airport

Get to/from Dublin airport the easy way with Aircoach, official coach supplier to Leinster Rugby and the OLSC for our inter-provincial away trips. Full time table information and their cheapest fares can be found at www.aircoach.ie (you can also buy on board). Those driving and who may need car parking at Dublin Airport can get 10% off any non-promotional rates in the red zone by using ‘OLSCJAN19’ at www.dublinairport.com or via their app. If you need a taxi, try www.irelandbytaxi.com to pre-book and lock in your fare to/from the airport – there will be no unexpected surprises!

Getting to Coventry

Many supporters are expected to take the option of flying into Birmingham International Airport (BHX), and then completing the journey to Coventry by train. When arriving in Birmingham airport take a 2mins shuttle to the train station where you can take trains to Birmingham New Street every few minutes and Coventry City every 10mins. Journey time by train to Coventry is about 15mins and to Birmingham about 10mins.

There’s no need to buy train tickets in advance although it may save queuing at the station on arrival. Typically, trains operated by Virgin are ‘fast’ and those operated by London Midland are ‘slow’, taking just a few minutes longer, just something to bear in mind. Train tickets for both operators can be purchased from www.virgintrains.co.uk

If you are arriving into Coventry by train, the station is located 5 minutes’ walk from the city centre and about 10 minutes’ walk from our supporter’s HQ (see below). The last train back to Birmingham on Sunday night is 11:31pm, but please double check on the day.

If you are taking the car rental option, there are many car rental options at the airport but its best to book ahead. Car journey time from Birmingham to Coventry is about 20 minutes.
Accommodation Tip

At the time of writing, accommodation was already almost full in Coventry, try www.laterooms.com or stay in nearby Birmingham. Accommodation options are plentiful in Birmingham if you cannot find accommodation in Coventry. Last train home times can be confirmed on www.thetrainline.com.

Supporters HQ

This weekend Martin and the team at The Gatehouse Tavern welcome the blue army. Our base will be showing other games from across the weekend so it’s a perfect place to meet before and after the game whether you are traveling alone or in a group.

Open from 8.30am on Saturday morning, for those on the early flights to Birmingham they are just a 10-minute walk from the train station and will have a breakfast roll and pint for just £5. Pick up one of their cards at the bar and get a free pint with 10 stamps.

The Gatehouse is a traditional rugby pub located in central Coventry on Hill Street, beside the Premier Inn and they also have car-parking beside Les Mills Gym if required. They serve food throughout the day and have a variety of beverages on offer including a rotating list of guest Ales, they also have free Wi-Fi.

www.gatehousetavern.com / @TheGatehouseTav

Flags and being blue!

The OLSC team will have a limited number of Bank of Ireland sponsored flags that will be distributed at the ground on match day. Please bring what you can from home, those with the white plastic pole have been cleared as hand luggage by the Dublin Airport Authority.

If you need a new scarf, beanie, jacket or jersey, head to Lifestyle Sports and avail of a 10% discount with your season ticket card. Online you can avail of the discount at www.lifestylesports.com by using the code sent to you with your season ticket card.

Keep an eye out on OLSC social media for fan details on team bus arrival at Ricoh Arena and Sea of Blue.

Top 5 things to see and do during your stay

1. Wasps v Leinster at Ricoh Arena, KO 3.15pm on Sunday
2. Arena Centre – take in some shopping before kick-off, located beside the stadium
3. Coventry Cathedral – in the city centre www.coventrycathedral.org.uk
Getting to the Ground

The easiest way to get there is to take the frequent, free shuttle buses from the Coventry train station to the stadium. These will be operating every 15 minutes from 12noon up until kick-off and then after the game.

In addition to the free shuttle buses there are several buses that drop off at the Retail Park opposite the Ricoh Arena (approx. 10 min walk).

Service 4 provides a link to the Retail Park from Holbrooks and Walsgrave (University Hospital) via the City Centre and Stoke Hill with buses running all day, every day.

Service 5 links the Retail Park with Holbrooks and Coundon continuing to Earlsdon and Torrington Avenue via the City Centre with buses running every day

Services 20, 20A and 20E all serve the Retail Park via Foleshill Road from the City Centre with frequent buses throughout the day.

Coventry Arena Train Station - Arena Park Shopping Centre is also an option. This station is located within 5 minutes walking distance from the Ricoh Arena. On Wasps match days the service is one train per hour in either direction with double carriage capacity.

By Taxi; Allens Taxis, a Coventry based taxi company with over 200 vehicles is also an option but be aware traffic around the Arena is regularly quite heavy. Allen’s Taxis https://www.allenstaxis.com/ or call 02476 55 55 55. Beside the ground there is a 24-hour casino, Tesco Extra, M&S and Next (as part of a retail park). A taxi should be circa 10 pounds each way from the city centre (for up to 4 people). Away from the ground, taxis can normally be hauled in the normal way, if you need to call a taxi Central Taxis of Coventry at + 44 24 7677 7777, www.centraltaxiscoventry.co.uk are also a good option.

CAR PARK C at the Ricoh Arena is for pre-paid booking only. There will be no cash parking on matchday. Please be aware that there is strictly NO parking available in side streets near to the Ricoh Arena. A strict residents’ parking scheme is enforced on event days as part of the Ricoh Arena’s green travel plan. This enforcement lies within 2km of the venue. Traffic around the ground on match days is known to be very heavy. If you do drive you must pre-book your car parking at www.richoarenaparking.co.uk, alternatively you could park in the city centre and avail of the free shuttle buses on offer. If pre-booking your space and you are using a rental car, you won’t know your car registration number yet, in this case use ‘A1’ online.

Match Day Stadium Information

Ricoh Arena (often referred to as the City of Coventry Stadium or the Ricoh) is a complex which includes a 32,609-seater stadium, a 6,000 square metres exhibition hall, a hotel and a casino. The site is also home to Arena Park Shopping Centre. The stadium is now home to Wasps in addition to Coventry City (football) and the Coventry City Ladies.

There will be bag restrictions on match day. Ricoh Arena have advised the OLSC that ladies handbag size only or bags of a similar size will be allowed into the arena on match day.

The Ricoh Arena is located at Phoenix Way, Foleshill, Coventry CV6 6GE. Telephone: + 44 844 873 6500, Email: info@ricoharena.com Twitter: @richoarena
The fan village at the arena is normally open two to three hours before kick-off, check out https://www.wasps.co.uk/at-the-game/the-fan-village/, for confirmation of times and events.

Our away ticket allocation is not specific. The OLSC recommend that supporters purchase in the Category 3 (Block 17, 23 and 24) price tickets in order to keep the blue supporters together. Check the area number on your ticket and you’ll see on the map above what turnstile to use at the stadium.

**Last trains from Coventry**

For those not staying in Coventry, be aware of the last trains on Sunday night to avoid a potentially expensive taxi ride or unexpected overnight stay.

Stratford upon Avon – 6.55pm Leamington Spa – 9.24pm London Euston – 11.21pm

Birmingham International Airport – 11.58pm Birmingham New Street (City Centre) – 11.58pm, Rugby- 11.21pm

Train tickets can be booked at www.virgintrains.co.uk regardless of the train company you are using. A taxi between the stadium and the train station is about a 15-20-minute journey each way (note it will take longer immediately before or after the game).
Message from the Coach

A final away trip in the pool stages of Europe is upon us and it feels like it was only yesterday that we were in the Aviva Stadium launching the season properly and the road to Newcastle was laid out in front of everyone.

At the time of writing this note, we have still to play our game against Toulouse in a sold out RDS Arena but if the last few seasons are anything to go by, we usually arrive into the last fixture with something at stake.

The unique nature of the seeding for the Heineken Champions Cup also means this will most likely be the case again this season with all clubs still in the hunt keeping as much an eye on other pools as their own.

Top seeding, runners-up spots, the home draw in the Quarter-Finals and the same in a potential Semi-Final, the plot has some way to thicken yet, but this final fixture of the regular season will provide clarity to all.

What we can be absolutely sure of regardless of the outcome of the Toulouse game is that we will again need your support and encouragement at the Ricoh Arena.

The Ricoh Arena, like the Rec before, has been a tricky away trip for most sides in the Premiership and in Europe and it’s a huge task facing us. We have the utmost respect for Dai Young and his squad and obviously they would have excellent knowledge of Leinster Rugby having had players like Marty Moore and Brendan Macken in their ranks and of course they still have Jimmy Gopperth on their books working his way back from a serious knee injury.

Generally speaking these trips abroad are seamless affairs thanks to the great work of the OLSC and the team in JWT, but few, if any, could have predicted the travails that would befall your efforts at the Rec. It was amazing despite all of that, to see so many of you as the bus turned the corner into the Rec and then again, a week later at the Aviva, this time with flags and blue restored.

Those moments before a game provide a real lift to the team and let them know that they’re not there alone. This is a team effort and without that unwavering support our success over the years wouldn’t be possible.

Hopefully there will be a few more trips to look forward to this season but for now, again, a sincere thanks to you the supporters, to the OLSC and the platform they provide for that voice to be heard and for the colour to be seen and finally to Bank of Ireland, and indeed all our sponsors, for the support over the six games to date.

Safe trip and here’s to another great European rugby occasion.

Leo
Head Coach
For dreams big or small

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*The repayments on a personal loan of €1,000 over 12 months are €87.26 per month based on a variable rate of 8.9% APR. The total cost of credit is €47.12.
**APR stands for annual percentage rate. Rates are dependent on loan amount and may differ from the advertised rate. Variable rates are correct as at 18 October 2017 and are subject to change.

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Message from the Committee

Hello from the OLSC Committee...

We hope you enjoy the trip to Coventry this weekend for Round 6 of the 2018/19 Heineken Champions Cup. As we mentioned at the start of the guide, Leinster have tasted victory and defeat at this ground. It is essential that we win here today. Our battle today is also with Toulouse who kick off at the same time against Bath at Stade Ernest Wallon. Needless to say, we need to have our noses in front in the pool standings at the final whistle of both matches. There are five points at stake in both games, five huge points that have the potential to send us into the knock out stages in an advantageous position or not.

It’s likely, that both teams will progress to the knock-out stages, one as a runner up. That would most certainly mean an away quarter final.

Sunday matches, although not great for supporters, have their advantages in that both Toulouse and Leinster will know exactly what’s needed. Over Friday and especially Saturday the results and permutations will have poured in. Teams who were still in the mix at the end of Saturday will not be certain of progression or their position until the end of both games on Sunday. One team will emerge as group winners. For the other team, assuming they qualify as one of the best three runners-up, the story of their Heineken European Champions cup is not over, but the route forward is a lot harder to negotiate.

If this is your first away trip, ENJOY IT, you probably couldn’t have picked a more interesting one.

The RDS was a cauldron against Wasps in round one. Today we get to do it all again away from home. We were blue, loud and proud away in Toulouse with a large traveling contingent, picking up a precious bonus point. Then came the back to backs against Bath, a dig deep, physical victory which was followed by a bonus point win with Leinster in full flow at the Aviva Stadium. Then round five and Toulouse at the RDS where we took control of our own destiny with a marvelous bonus point win. Which brings us to today, the final pool game of this season’s European cup where we must win or at the very least keep our noses in front of Toulouse.

Today, we need to join with our team, to be the 24th man. YOUR team needs YOU. Make sure the support is both seen and heard for every one of those 80 minutes in The Ricoh Arena today. It is crucial we let the players know that we are there for them. That we are supporting them EVERY STEP of the way.

Let’s look to take the victory and set ourselves up for the knock-out stages in the best possible position. Be seen, be heard, be loud, be proud and most importantly BE BLUE!

C’MON LEINSTER!
The OLSC Committee