GUIDE TO NORTHAMPTON

Northampton Saints v Leinster Rugby
Heineken Champions Cup Round 3
Saturday 7 Dec 2019

Bank of Ireland
INTRODUCTION

Northampton is a large traditional market town and the county town of Northamptonshire in the East Midlands region of England. Lying on the River Nene, it is one of the largest towns in England with a population of roughly 223,000.

Speaking of tradition there’s plenty of it with a number of libraries, museums, galleries and churches and a city centre that can easily be covered on foot. Coincidentally this region is known for its shoe manufacturing industry with famous names such as Church’s, Crockett & Jones and Doc Martens to name but a few. Many have factory shops generally open to the public on weekends so this could be a welcome opportunity to pick up an early Christmas present or two! Given that it’s the start of December the good news is that the German market will return again this year and will line Abington Street with a dozen stalls selling food, drinks as well as traditional Christmas gifts & decorations. The market will be open every day from 9.30am until 7pm until the 20th December.

GETTING TO DUBLIN AIRPORT

Aircoach the official sponsor to Leinster Rugby operate frequent services to/from Dublin and the airport and timetables and fares can be found online at aircoach.ie

Supporters driving to Dublin Airport can avail of a 10% discount on any non-promotional rates in the Red Zone by using the code OLSC2020 at dublinairport.com
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WARNING: You may have to pay charges if you pay off a fixed-rate loan early.

WARNING: If you do not meet the repayments on your loan, your account will go into arrears. This may affect your credit rating, which may limit your ability to access credit in the future.
GETTING TO NORTHAMPTON

Northampton is serviced by a number of airports within reasonable travelling distance, Luton (39.4 mi / 58mins by road), East Midlands (52.2 mi / 61mins by road) and Birmingham (53.9mi / 73mins by road) and there are multiple options to transfer to/from Northampton for the game.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

We expect a large majority of those flying to arrive into Birmingham International where from the airport station you can take a direct train (journey time is under 1 hour) or a bus (journey time is around 75mins). Ticket information and train timetables can be found at thetrainline.com

**PLEASE TAKE NOTE**

If you’re travelling to the game please take note of proposed rail strike action in order to plan accordingly.

The OLSC is not running transfer buses to Northampton from any of the airports so we would advise you to check out options by train thetrainline.com, bus nationalexpress.com or alternatively check with your airline for discounted car rental hire. Route planners are available at aaroadwatch.co.uk
TOP 5 THINGS TO SEE AND DO THIS WEEKEND

1. Northampton Saints v Leinster, KO 1pm Saturday
2. Northampton’s Market Square in the city centre
3. 78 Derrgate, designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh. (Pictured above)
4. Virtual Aerospace – try a 737 flight simulator
5. Northampton Museum & Art Gallery

OLSC SANTA HATS & FLAGS

We’re delighted to announce that in association with our friends at Bank of Ireland, as it’s the run up to the festive period we’ll once again have a limited number of our shiny blue Santa hats to give to those attending! We’ll also have a limited supply of flags so if you have any at home please do bring these along with you in order to show the team how much blue is in Northampton to support them for the first of a crunch double header. Look out for the committee members and other volunteers at Franklin’s Gardens where we’ll be distributing these. If you do get a hat please bring it to the Aviva on the 14th for the return fixture.
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SUPPORTERS

The Swan & Helmet

As the only traditional Irish pub in Northampton, the Irish community there is gearing up for the big match this weekend and where better to soak up the pre & post-match atmosphere than in The Swan & Helmet. Teresa & Anthony are from Kerry & Mayo respectively and they have friendly staff from everywhere else in between and have a jam packed weekend of entertainment in store for the travelling Leinster fans.

On Friday 6th, there’s live music from 8pm to late
On Saturday 7th, doors open at 11am and the match will be shown live on the two big screens for those of you not going to the game in person. Saturday evening there are 2 bands lined up to keep you entertained until the early hours.

We’re delighted to announce that the Swan & Helmet will also be running shuttle buses from Franklins Gardens direct to the pub after the game.

The Wig & Pen

As was the case for our last visit, The Wig and Pen at 19 Giles Street in the stylish theatre district of central Northampton will also be welcoming supporters for the weekend. This is a traditional British pub with a focus on fantastic food and a wonderfully extensive choice from their fully stocked bar. Offering thirteen rotating guest ales and ciders, plenty of rare spirits and over forty global beers and lots of draught lagers with an extensive food menu also.
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GETTING TO THE STADIUM

Home to the Saints, Franklin’s Gardens is located in the St James district of Northampton, approximately one mile from the town centre. Seating up to 15,249 people, the ground has hosted the Club since the late 1880’s and while the stadium has changed shape many times over the years, it is now made up of the Carlsberg, South, Church’s & Barwell Stands.

By Car - M1 Motorway

Franklin’s Gardens has over 1,500 spaces available across six car parks, all within walking distance of the stadium itself. Given that Franklin’s Gardens is in a residential area of the town, Saints strongly urge all supporters to use the club’s car parks. Should they choose not to do so, supporters must park with due care and respect to the needs of local residents and businesses.

Exit the M1 at junction 15a or 16 and follow the signs to Northampton and Sixfields, or alternatively follow the brown rugby ball signs. At third roundabout after leaving the motorway, turn right onto A5076 (next to the Sixfields football stadium).

Go straight over the mini roundabout onto Edgar Mobbs Way where the stadium car parks are clearly signposted. Media access parking is located in Car Park D, on the left hand side, opposite the pay and display car park.

Please use the postcode NN5 5JT for satellite navigation devices, as most systems will take you to the main entrance of the ground not the car parks.

Public Transport

On leaving Northampton Train Station there is a taxi rank available, or alternatively you can catch the Number 9 bus from the other side of the main road.

If you are able, walking to the ground from the train station takes just 10 minutes. Simply turn right out of the station onto Weedon Road and follow that round to the stadium.

Be sure to cross over to the left-hand side of the road (where the Thomas A Beckett pub is situated) to avoid confusion. Franklin’s Gardens can then be clearly seen on the left hand side of this road.
NORTHAMPTON SAINTS SUPPORTER CHARTER

Northampton Saints is committed to ensuring that Franklin’s Gardens is a place of enjoyment for all rugby supporters, regardless of the result on the pitch, where the traditions and values of the sport are upheld proudly to help make the Club one of the best in Europe.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US

RESPECT for all supporters, customers and visitors and their individual needs and requirements; for the values of the game – enjoyment, sportsmanship and community; and for our opponents.

MODERN AND SAFE FACILITIES, PROCEDURES AND OPERATIONS that help everyone to enjoy their time at Franklin’s Gardens, win or lose. Your safety is paramount.

NO DISCRIMINATION on grounds of gender, age, race, disability or religion. Everyone is equal in our eyes.

HOW YOU CAN HELP US

GIVE POSITIVE SUPPORT FOR THE TEAM at all times

SHOW RESPECT for your club, all players, match officials and other visitors to our stadium.

BEHAVE APPROPRIATELY at all times before, during and after the match, in the bars and at non-match day events. You create the match day atmosphere, which reflects on the club as a whole.

LET A STEWARD KNOW should you see any behaviour untoward or not in keeping with the supporter charter so that we can address any issues.
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Level of security required and rate applicable, will be determined by the amount, purpose & term of facility, in conjunction with the nature and value of the security being offered. Lending criteria and terms and conditions apply. Over 18’s only. Maximum credit of €120k available for online applications.

* Provided we are in receipt of all relevant information and documentation. Applications for non-Bank of Ireland customers and applications referred to underwriting may take longer. Excludes weekends and bank holidays.

WARNING: If you do not meet the repayments on your credit facility agreement, your account will go into arrears. This may affect your credit rating, which may limit your ability to access credit in the future.

Bank of Ireland is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.
MESSAGE FROM THE COACH

To another away trip in Europe and to a ground we know well in Franklin’s Gardens. Hopefully those of you that braved the icy conditions in Scotstoun last weekend have sufficiently thawed by the time you start reading this Away Guide?! It was a bitterly cold evening but it was a hugely pleasing performance from the squad against a Glasgow Warriors team desperate for points.

At key moments, again similar to the Lyon game we had to battle through a ten minute period down to 14 men, the Leinster supporters in the ground could be heard. Roaring and encouraging the team on and it is always heartening to hear those roars and that excitement when a try is scored and the rest of the ground is silent. That will be the challenge again this weekend. Us as a team giving you the supporters something to get behind and to support. Hopefully we will do just that but it won’t be easy.

Northampton have been rejuvenated under a relatively new coaching set-up and with new imports and local players now fully integrated into the new systems and it’s showing. They are top of the Premiership and the top try scorers at that. They really have backed up their end of season results last year when they made it to the Play-Offs. Like us, they too are unbeaten in Europe this year so it’s all about who can wrestle control of this pool on Saturday. It would be a massive boost for us to bring a win back to the Aviva Stadium for next week where I believe over 35,000 tickets have been sold and no doubt a few more will be added to that between now and then.

But before then we have to look after the task in hand and we fully appreciate the size of that task. A third weekend in a row on the road is difficult for you our supporters and those efforts are very much appreciated as always. As is the support from Bank of Ireland who are again tremendously supportive of the OLSC and your activities as have BearingPoint in making sure the Sea of Blue as we enter the stadium is as blue as possible.

Safe travels and thanks again for all your support over the last three weekends on the road.

Leo Cullen
Well as predicted in our last away guide for Lyon in Round 2 it was certainly a tough day at the office in the Stade Matmut de Gerland as we took the spoils at the end of a pulsating clash of heads between european heavyweights and the runaway leaders of the Top14. We came out of the blocks all guns blazing and quickly took a 10-0 lead but thanks to Lyon’s grit and determination this was the halftime score as we were unable to build on it, nor were Lyon able to capitalise on us being reduced to 14 men for a 10min period. The second half started in much the same fashion and after a gusty & herculean effort in both attack for the hosts and defence for ourselves, it was the Boys in Blue who left the rain soaked pitch in the end with a 13-6 victory.

We now face into the first of a festive double header against this weekend’s hosts Northampton with the first leg here in Franklin’s Gardens quickly followed next week with the return fixture in the Aviva Stadium. Our hosts came out the right side of a fabulously hectic game in their away fixture to Benetton as they snatched a 35-32 victory in dramatic scenes deep into injury time. With the scores level at the end of a pulsating contest, it was left to Northampton fly-half Dan Biggar to slot over an 85th minute penalty after a deliberate knock-on from the Italians and he made no mistake and coolly ensured the victory and all 4 points.

What now faces us in Round 3 of Pool 1 is a clash of 1st v 2nd with the only difference being points For and Against as it’s two wins and one try bonus point apiece leaving us both on 9pts with Leinster sitting top going into this game. This is sure to be one of the mouth-watering fixtures of the weekend given both will want to take the 4 points, continue the momentum and then look to the return fixture and leave themselves sitting pretty top of Pool 1 before the Christmas break and Round 5 in January 2020.

Northampton, like Lyon are backed every minute of the game by loud and passionate supporters no dissimilar to ourselves so there’ll no doubt be plenty of back and forth action both on and off the pitch so this will have all the ingredients of a classic December game. To those making the trip this weekend make sure your singing voices are in fine fettle as you’ll once again be needed for the 80+ mins on Saturday afternoon. Be sure to look out for the OLSC committee members who’ll be handing out a limited supply of flags and shiny blue Santa hats at the Sea of Blue to welcome Leinster into the stadium (we’ll announce full details on our social media channels closer to the day).

For now though, on behalf of the committee we’d like to again thank you for making the journey here today for the game and we hope you enjoy it and Northampton also as we’re always guaranteed a warm welcome whenever we visit Franklin’s Gardens.

Allez Les Blues!
The OLSC Committee