

DEVIZES RUGBY CLUB

Affiliated member of
Dorset & Wilts. RFU



Member of the RFU
& England Rugby

Chairman
Mark Sheppard

President
Ross Paget

Secretary
Keith Butler

Ladies Chair
Eleanor Harvey

LADIES SECTION REVIEW – MAY 2026

#	TEAM	P	W	D	L	PF	PA	+/-	TB	LB	Pts
1	 Trojans Women II	12	11	0	1	326	143	183	0	0	57
2	 Wiveliscombe Women	12	9	0	3	338	201	137	0	0	51
3	 Chew Valley Cats Ladies	12	8	1	3	304	112	192	0	0	49
4	 Devizes Ladies	12	7	1	4	351	121	230	0	0	31
5	 Swanage & Wareham Ladies	12	2	0	10	53	585	-532	0	0	30
6	 North Dorset Women	12	4	0	8	319	270	49	0	0	29
7	 Bridgwater & Albion Ladies	12	0	0	12	56	315	-259	0	0	-2

Reflecting on the 2025-2026 season, Devizes Ladies finished in 4th place in the NC2 South West (South) league. At the pre-season meeting, the squad set a target of a top three finish, and with a strong team heading into the campaign, this felt well within reach. Throughout the season, however, the team faced a number of challenges. Work deployments and injuries made it difficult to maintain consistency and for the squad to gel week in, week out. Despite these obstacles, the ladies continued to show great commitment, turning up to training and matches, giving their best effort, which ultimately secured a respectable 4th-place finish. Over the course of the season, the team achieved seven wins, including three impressive clean sheets (two at home and one away) where no points were conceded. Of the four losses recorded, two were home walkovers, where we were unfortunately unable to field a travelling side.

Across the season, the team scored a total of 351 points while conceding 146. Our home performances remained largely consistent with the previous season, with similar figures for both points scored and points conceded. Away from home, however, there was a noticeable improvement compared to the 2024–2025 season, with only 34 points conceded, down from 56 the year before. This progress is likely a reflection of the players' growing confidence and experience, with many now completing their second or third season of competitive rugby. At the start of the season, Devizes Ladies RFC welcomed 16 new players into the squad, some of

whom were entirely new to competitive rugby. These players joined with great enthusiasm to learn and enjoy the game, bringing a fresh energy and spark to the team. As new faces integrated into the squad, strong relationships were built, leading to a better understanding of team calls and improved communication on the pitch. The continued and growing support from Devizes Ladies RFC supporters - particularly on home match days - played a key role in boosting team morale and performance, which was evident in our dominant displays on the pitch.

Devizes Ladies showed their fighting spirit throughout the season, producing strong performances against top-three sides Trojans, Wiveliscombe and Chew Valley. The standout moment came at home against Wiveliscombe, where a dominant first half, featuring tries from Vik and Captain Denny Jones, was followed by a relentless second-half battle. Trailing by a narrow margin in the final minutes, Devizes refused to give in. From a crucial lineout, the forwards drove through multiple phases to force the ball over the line and seal a dramatic late victory, perfectly capturing the team's determination to fight until the final whistle.

Finishing fourth in the league, has provided us with the determination and drive to reclaim our top three position in the 2026-2027 league. Considering the challenges we faced, including losing several experienced players to injury, this provided the opportunity for newer players to step up. These players trained hard, adapted quickly, and delivered strong performances on game day. The team has continued to foster a welcoming and supportive environment, which has been key in integrating new and dual-registered players. A focus on positional development and skill progression has contributed positively to player confidence and retention. Overall, this season has been a true testament to the team's resilience and growth, and we are excited and motivated by what the next season has in store.

Although the league has finished, I am proud to announce that six of our Devizes Ladies have been selected for the 2025-2026 Dorset & Wilts County Squad! A huge congratulations are in order for Tash Arnold, Mollie Earnshaw, Charli Wheatley, Chelsea Butler, Denny Jones & Sophie Spillane! WE are looking forward to cheering you all on in this years tournament!

As we look ahead to the new season, the Devizes Ladies Committee will be undergoing a period of restructuring, with new individuals stepping into key roles to ensure the smooth running of the team. Our Team Managers have worked tirelessly throughout the season to organise fixtures and manage match day logistics; without their dedication, our rugby season simply would not be possible. Georgia Walker and Amy Williams will both be moving into new roles within the revised committee structure, and the team and committee would like to extend their sincere thanks for their commitment, hard work, and dedication to the Ladies' section over the years. Additionally, Eleanor Harvey will be stepping down from the role of Ladies Chair at the end of the season.

We will also be saying goodbye to Gareth Wheatley. We thank him for his contribution throughout the season and wish him every success in his future rugby endeavours. Devizes Ladies RFC are, however, delighted to confirm that Coach Abi Ayling will remain as Head Coach for the 2026-2027 season. Over the past two years, Abi has done an exceptional job, committing significant time and effort both on and off the pitch to guide the team to numerous successes.

Looking ahead to the off-season, members of the squad will be organising social events and working alongside the Men's team to plan 'One Club' socials. Pre-season preparations will officially begin with a players' meeting during the summer months, followed by the first training

session in July. We will also be contacting clubs to arrange pre-season friendlies, with Supermarine Ladies among those likely to be approached.

The 2026-2027 season promises continued growth and strength, with experienced players returning from injury and a clear, positive trajectory towards a top-three finish in the NC2 South West (South) league. Ongoing support from the club and the local community will be vital in helping us achieve our goals and is always greatly appreciated.