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MATCH GUIDE

2024/25 SEASON

ROUND ONE

ASHTON GATE, BRISTOL

8 DECEMBER

KICK-OFF AT 17:30



INTRODUCTION

Bristol is a city straddling the River Avon in the southwest of England with a prosperous maritime history. It's former city-centre port is now a cultural hub, the Harbourside, where the M Shed museum explores local social and industrial heritage. The harbour's 19th century warehouses now contain restaurants, shops and cultural institutions such as contemporary art gallery The Amolfini.

Be sure though to bring warm clothing and comfortable shoes for your trip however as rugby aside there is so much going on in Bristol given we're now into the festive time of the year. Bristol Christmas Market is back in the city from 4 November – 23 December and features 35 stalls of crafts, food and gifts, plus the Jäger barn bar, The Candy Factory escape room, Christmas Express kids' train ride and Ski Gondolas for private hire.

If you're also thinking about some shopping then you're in luck as you can shop at over 180 businesses – from independents to well-known brands with the [Love Bristol Gift Card](#).

With so much to see and do though you might just lose sight of the reason you're visiting – Investec Champions Cup Rugby!! Sunday 8th December 5.30pm KO (local).

Bristol Tourism Website



GETTING TO DUBLIN AIRPORT

If you're looking to travel to Dublin Airport and leave the car, you can look to make your way there with Aircoach (Leinster Rugby's Official Coach Supplier). Routes, Fares and Timetables are available at the link below.

[Aircoach Website](#)

GETTING TO BRISTOL

No doubt by now the Blue army has determined it's route and plan of attack and action for getting to Bristol no matter where you might be landing in the UK be it by air or by sea – north or south of the country.

Supporters will no doubt be making their way from the airport of Bristol into the city itself and for those of you still making travel plans, the below links might be of some benefit to you.

[Bristol Airport Website](#)

Upon arriving into the airport, the Airport Flyer bus services make it quick and easy to travel between the airport and Bristol or Weston-super-Mare. The Bristol service runs 24 hours daily, up to every 12 minutes and the route takes you through Bedminster to Bristol Temple Meads and Bristol Bus & Coach Station. Single fares are from just £5 with an Adult Return (to Bristol) priced at £15.

There are a number of ways to book and pay – either online, paying the Airport Flyer driver when you board the bus or else you can download the First Bus app to get your ticket straight to your phone.

First Bus App Website

**Please note that the service runs daily except Christmas Day, with timetable variations in place throughout the festive period and you can view the timetable information [here](#).*



For all other information in relation to the Flyer Service and any other FAQs you might need answered, you can check out the link below.

Bristol Airport Bus Services



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SUPPORTERS BASE

At the centre of Bristol's old town, The Old Fish Market provides a seasonal menu and perfectly poured pints as well as a wide range of whiskies and gins so for this weekend for our visit to Bristol, we thought it a good spot for the Leinster Blue to meet up in. Whether you drop by for a quick drink, something to eat, live sport or for the regular live music, we're confident you won't regret it.



[Old Fish Market Website](#)

FLAGS

The flags issued in the RDS (with a white plastic pole) have been cleared by the Dublin Airport Authority for hand luggage and should also be acceptable to pass through UK airports. The OLSC team plan to have flags to distribute outside the stadium so keep an eye on your socials and we ask that you also look around at home and please (please) bring flags from home if you can.



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SEA OF BLUE

We'll also be organising a Sea of Blue to welcome Leinster Rugby to the stadium on Sunday and we ask that you keep an eye on all our of Social Media Channels for up-to-date information.



OLSC ON TOUR

We know the sheer number of Leinster fans travelling to this game and more importantly what it means to all in Leinster Rugby to once have the support as we go back on the road in search of an illustrious 5th star and so we're asking as many of you as possible to be at the stadium when the team arrive to roar them in. With your support, we can do this!!

GETTING TO THE GROUND

This weekend's fixture will be played at the home of Bristol Bears, Ashton Gate Stadium. It is the home of both Bristol Bears as well as Bristol City FC and is located in the south-west of the city, just south of the River Avon and currently has a seating capacity of 26,462.



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Accessing the stadium can be done on foot, by bus, train or cycling. Whilst supporters can also travel by car it is worth noting that you are strongly advised to use Park & Ride as many local streets are covered by a Residents Parking Scheme. If you choose to walk then the stadium is less than 30 minutes walk from most of south, central and west Bristol and fans can use the postcode BS3 2EJ to plan their route.

Ashton Gate Stadium Map



There is so much to see and do around the stadium on match days that we strongly encourage you to check out the link to the Bears website as well as downloading the App to your phone.

[Website](#)

[App](#)



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MESSAGE FROM THE COMMITTEE

Hello and welcome to this, our first Investec Champions Cup Fixture for the new season and a fixture we're all looking forward! Plenty more games (and comms) to come before that specific festive time of the year so we'll hold off on the greetings for now but we're delighted to be on the road and rocking up in Bristol where we take on our hosts Bristol Bears this Sunday. We've done a lot of research into previous fixtures between us and we've finally found two previous fixtures – albeit back over 20yrs ago (so we're open to correction) and on those occasions it appears we were victors both times both at home and away;

19/01/2003 Bristol Bears 12 – 25 Leinster

11/10/2002 Leinster 29 – 23 Bristol Bears

Whether you're just over and back same day or plan to spend a little longer, there's plenty to see, do and experience during your time and all we ask is it's not around 5:30 – 7:30pm on Sunday 8th December as we could really do with your voices and flags in another part of the city!

If you do get the chance make sure to drop into The Old Fish Market as it's always great to meet up with faces old and new when we're away and the team here are looking forward to welcoming the travelling blue who are over for this fixture. A word of warning not to get too cosy there before the game though as we want to see you all outside the stadium for another #SeaOfBlue when the team arrive! Details of this will be posted on our social media channels so make sure you're following them for all the up-to-date information on comings and goings over the weekend.

With a busy few weeks of fixtures coming up – both Away and Home, we know that Leo, Jacques, Caelan and all the team in front of and behind the scenes, will want to ensure our campaign kicks off in the best possible way. After this weekend we're back to the Aviva for 3 fixtures in 3 weeks so momentum is key before the end of the year when we once again find ourselves on the road to France.



MESSAGE FROM THE COMMITTEE

Therefore both teams may be apprehensive for the 1st quarter or so as they look to feel each other out and so we can predict that this is sure to be edge-of-your-seats, end to end and non-stop for 80+ minutes and well once again, we need you and the team need the blue! We've seen time and time again that with the support behind them, Leinster can turn a disadvantage into an advantage and suddenly backs against the wall lead to an attacking blitz. We as a committee travelling over will be inundated with blue – especially flags, and we've seen from social media that a famous #SeaOfBlue is planned on the stadium by supporters from all corners of the globe! This is a big big test and we need to stand firm and stand behind the team.

As always we're thankful of the support we as a committee get from Leinster Rugby and Bank of Ireland for these away guides, and for those of you not travelling we encourage you to show your support through our social media channels.

Be loud, be true, be blue
Yours in rugby,

OLSC COMMITTEE



MESSAGE FROM THE COACH

Hello,

Another season and another trip across the Irish Sea to kick-start our European adventure.

Bristol Bears are one of the form clubs in England at the moment, playing brilliant rugby and scoring tries for fun. Seven try bonus points in seven games tells you all you need to know about this team and what they are capable of.

Of course, they also have someone in their corner that knows us in Leinster and indeed in Irish rugby, very well. It will be good to catch up again with Pat Lam but always a tricky assignment when coming up against someone that knows you, your club, and what makes you tick like he does.

For the supporters though it's a great game no doubt to start the European season.

The team at the top of the URC against the team that are level on points at the top of the Premiership. Plenty of talking points before, during and after the game no doubt. Although being played on a Sunday evening it will bring the curtain down on the first weekend of action and who knows who will have grabbed the headlines by then.

And then it will be about a quick six-day turnaround into the Aviva Stadium for the visit of Clermont. It's a busy two weekends!

The season so far has been very positive and I'd like to thank you for your role in that. Four games on the road in seven, and nearly 120,000 fans in attendance across our three home games in Aviva Stadium and Croke Park. It has been brilliant to see the numbers once again especially in the context of the move away from the RDS Arena.

MESSAGE FROM THE COACH

It has also been a season full of promise with Stephen Smyth, Hugh Cooney, Rabah Slimani and RG Snyman making Leinster debuts and Thomas Clarkson, Sam Prendergast and Gus McCarthy making Ireland debuts. And we may even get a debut or two this weekend in Bristol. Who knows?!

Finally, thank you to all our sponsors and partners, and Bank of Ireland in particular who sponsor these Away Guides with the OLSC, and as ever, a huge thanks to all the volunteers on the OLSC and the Committee who do huge work behind the scenes to make sure the Sea of Blue is as brilliant as ever when we arrive to the stadium.

And whether that stadium is at home, or away, you never let us down.

Safe trip, enjoy the game and hopefully see some of you in and around the airport and the stadium over the weekend,

Leo Cullen

HEAD COACH





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