

OKU MEMORIAL TROPHY

奥 記念杯

RUGBY MATCH

SATURDAY 20TH DECEMBER 2025



日英両国の絆が、
ラグビーを通じて強めてくれた
奥 克彦君のご遺志とともに、
未来に継承されることを祈ります。

May Japan and United Kingdom,
with the bonds through the Game of Rugby
and the will of Mr. Katsuhiko Oku,
forge a finely-woven relationship toward the future.

奥 克彦

KICK OFF 12PM
RICHMOND ATHLETIC GROUND



V



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Japan
in the UK



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OKU TROPHY PAST RESULTS

20/09/2004
Waseda University 25 Oxford University 9
Chichibunomiya Stadium, Tokyo

26/11/2005
Kew Occasionals 31 London Japanese 28
Richmond Athletic Ground

25/11/2006
New York Japanese 7 London Japanese 0
Kew Occasionals 30 New York Japanese 5
Kew Occasionals 25 London Japanese 7
Richmond Athletic Ground

24/11/2007
Kew Occasionals 31 London Japanese 19
Richmond Athletic Ground

10/12/2008
Kew Occasionals/OURFC 1988 XV
48 London Japanese 26
Richmond Athletic Ground

28/11/2009
Kew Occasionals 44 London Japanese 31
Richmond Athletic Ground

04/12/2010
Hertford College 31 London Japanese 15
Vincent's Club 21 Kew Occasionals 7
London Japanese 15 Kew Occasionals 5
Vincent's Club 5 Hertford College 0
Ifley Road, Oxford

03/12/2011
Hertford College 19 London Japanese 5
Kew Occasionals 50 Vincent's Club 5
Vincent's Club 39 London Japanese 10
Kew Occasionals 50 Hertford College 7
Ifley Road, Oxford

08/12/2012
Kew Occasionals 35 London Japanese 12
Vincent's/Hertford 29 London Japanese 24
Kew Occasionals 31 Vincent's/Hertford 7
Ifley Road, Oxford

07/12/2013
Vincent's/Hertford 57 London Japanese 0
Kew Occasionals 48 Vincent's/Hertford 22
Kew Occasionals 31 London Japanese 7
Ifley Road, Oxford

13/12/2014
Vincent's/Hertford 24 London Japanese 10
Kew Occasionals 47 Vincent's/Hertford 10
Kew Occasionals 42 London Japanese 10
Ifley Road, Oxford

13/09/2015
*Oxford University 26 Waseda University 7
Kew Occasionals 63 London Japanese 7
Ifley Road, Oxford

15/05/2016
Waseda University ROB 31 Kew Occasionals 32
Kami-igusa, Tokyo

03/12/2016
Kew Occasionals 48 London Japanese 21
Richmond Athletic Ground

02/12/2017
Hertford College 24 London Japanese 12
Kew Occasionals 21 Hertford College 7
Kew Occasionals 29 London Japanese 7
Richmond Athletic Ground

11/03/2018
Oxford University 27 Waseda University 19
Ifley Road, Oxford.

17/11/2018
London Japanese Veterans 23 Commons & Lords 19
Kew Occasionals 33 London Japanese 10
Richmond Athletic Ground

18/09/2019
*Waseda University 0 Oxford University 3
Kami-igusa, Tokyo

07/12/2019
Kew Occasionals 43 London Japanese 24
Richmond Athletic Ground

17/04/2021
Touch Rugby Tournament
1 Hertford College 2 OURFC Old Boys
3 Kew Occasionals 4 London Japanese
5 Commons & Lords
Richmond Athletic Ground

17/11/2021
Hertford College 7 OU Whippets 5
Kew Occasionals 31 London Japanese 28
OU Whippets 17 London Japanese 7
Kew Occasionals 12 Hertford College 7
Ifley Road, Oxford

12/11/2022
London Japanese 50 Kew Occasionals 22
Commons & Lords 28 London Japanese Veterans 23
Richmond Athletic Ground

25/11/2023
(1) London Japanese 15 HCBC 5; Kew Occasionals 37
HCBC 7; London Japanese 10 Kew Occasionals 5
(2) London Japanese Vets 49 Commons & Lords 5; Kew Occasionals
Vets 27 Commons & Lords 7; Kew Occasionals
Vets 12 London Japanese Vets 0
Richmond Athletic Ground

24/11/2024
(1) London Japanese 48 HCBC 0; Kew Occasionals 58
HCBC 7; London Japanese 5 Kew Occasionals 5
(2) Kew Occasionals Vets 27 Commons & Lords 7; Kew Occasionals
Vets 29 London Japanese Vets 7; Commons & Lords 22 London
Japanese Vets 12
Richmond Athletic Ground

LONDON JAPANESE RFC

President: John Lee **Captain:** Tetsuo Furukawa **Vice-Captains:** Tatsuya Fujitani and Joe Hocking
Treasurer: Yohei Omori **Secretary:** Max Potter

KEW OCCASIONALS RFC

President: Chris Stone **Chairman:** Tom Clark **Captain:** Jack Henchy **Vice-Captains:** Ben Voase
Secretary & Treasurer: Ed White

Today's Referee: Cyril Renaud (LSRFUR)

MESSAGE FROM H.E. MR. HIROSHI SUZUKI, AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN



I am truly grateful that the Oku Memorial Trophy is being held again this year.

Ambassador Oku was Counsellor for Public Diplomacy at the Japanese Embassy in London when he volunteered to be dispatched to Baghdad to support the reconstruction of Iraq. At that time I was working at the Japanese embassy in Iran, and I remember exchanging emails with Ambassador Oku until the day before he was tragically assassinated.

Ambassador Oku and I had numerous opportunities to work together outside the Middle East as well. There is no doubt that the passion he devoted to rugby, the discipline he acquired through the sport and the friendship with the UK he sought to promote through it all formed one of the foundations of his career as a diplomat.

Today, we still have plenty of players both from Japan and the UK prepared to display his passion and discipline on the rugby field as we remember him every year. May I express my deepest appreciation to all of you for your participation in the Oku Memorial Trophy. Last but not least, let me express my utmost gratitude and respect to Mr Reg Clark, who has made invaluable contribution to this event, based on his cherished friendship with Ambassador Oku.

I look forward to meeting everyone on the day. 鈴木 浩



MESSAGE FROM REG CLARK



On behalf of Kew Occasionals RFC, London Japanese RFC and today's sponsors I would like to extend a warm welcome to all players and supporters of this year's Oku Memorial Trophy. Three times in recent years, including last year, we coincided this event with an England vs Japan game, with six participating teams. This year we are playing later due to various scheduling issues and we revert to a more traditional one game format between the original participating clubs.

We are grateful to the Embassy of Japan for their continuing support and we are particularly delighted to welcome once more His Excellency Hiroshi Suzuki, the current Ambassador who has made such an impact in the UK with his energy and media skills in his time in post to date. Thanks also to our regular sponsors Harrington Cooper and Rhino Rugby and we are delighted to welcome a new one in Hayakoma, a company from Hyogo Prefecture, where Ambassador Katsuhiko Oku was born and raised. It was founded in 1885 and is run by the Watanabe family, whom we are delighted to welcome to today's game. The family is a strong supporter of rugby in Kobe, and were particularly close to the great Seiji Hirao (see page 7). They founded

and sponsor the Fast Gyro womens rugby team and also have a joint venture with the famous Fukuju sake brewery to produce the Zui sake brand, samples of which they have kindly donated to the after-party today.

We are sorry that due to the lateness of the event this year regular participants Hertford & Balliol Colleges RFC and the Lords & Commons RFC are unable to join us but we hope to welcome them back next year. It was a particular honour that Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner attended last year's event to support the parliamentary team.

Katsu Oku was the first Japanese national to play for the Blues XV at Oxford University RFC and become a member of Vincent's Club. Both institutions have also been strong supporters of this event and it was a particular pleasure and honour for everyone involved to welcome the Emperor and Empress of Japan to Vincent's Club during their state visit in June last year, when they were able to view the photograph there of Ambassador Oku presented by the participants of these annual rugby matches. The Emperor was also elected to membership of Vincent's during his time at Merton College and the Empress received an Honorary Membership during the visit.

In March this year Ambassador Suzuki was a guest of OURFC in presenting the trophy after the Greyhounds vs LX Club reserve rugby Varsity Match at Ilfray Road, and he also visited Vincent's where he was able to meet several current Oxford Kobe Scholars, including recipients of the the Ambassador Oku Memorial Scholarship now awarded annually to the highest-ranking scholar. He also in typical style found time for a quick pint in the Turf Tavern – Katsu Oku would have approved!

Katsu was a truly great man – energetic, charismatic and talented. His tragic death on diplomatic duty with the UN postwar reconstruction programme in Iraq in November 2003 was a terrible event which still reverberates amongst us to this day. It is however a privilege for us all to gather once more today to celebrate his life and honour his memory.

Reg Clark



ENGLAND VS JAPAN, NOVEMBER 2024



OKU MEMORIAL CUP, ITAMI HIGH SCHOOL, DECEMBER 13TH 2025.

In addition to the event staged each year in the UK, the alumni of Itami High School in Hyogo Prefecture in Japan, Ambassador Oku's alma mater, also stage their own memorial event, which this year took place on December 13th.



Nobuta Tsunemi RIP

We are very sad to learn of the recent passing of Tsunemi san (Tokyo University, JAL and JRFU) who was a regular supporter of and participant in this event during his time in London.

RICHMOND RUGBY - TOUR TO JAPAN - MAY 2025

As the past results shown on page 2 of this programme show the Richmond Athletic Ground are hosting the Oku Memorial Trophy event today for the 14th time since 2005 for which the organisers are extremely grateful. It was therefore with great pleasure that the clubs and individuals involved in the Oku Trophy were able to support to Richmond's groundbreaking tour to Japan in May this year, when they celebrated winning National League 1 by playing games in Kyoto against Doshisha University and the ambitious Maruwa Logistar'z club and in Tokyo against All Mitsubishi and Mitsubishi Steel. London Japanese old boys in Tokyo hosted a welcome drinks reception for Richmond and many former Richmond players, most notably current Japanese Sevens international Takamasa Maruo, were able to link up with the tour and show their support. Richmond's history of links with Japan is of course dominated by Japan's greatest ever player, Seiji Hirao, having played for the club in the 1985-86 season in between leaving Doshisha University and joining Kobe Steel. Seiji went on to lead the Steelers to 7 consecutive National Championships and play in three Rugby World Cups (1987, 1991 and 1995) and was coach at the 1999 tournament before passing away far too early in 2015. The tour's opening game between Richmond's 'Open XV' and Doshisha was attended by Seiji's son, daughter and grandsons and was a very emotional occasion attracting considerable media interest. Richmond's 'Performance XV' recorded two excellent victories against strong opposition and the more social side also acquitted themselves well into two testing games. As an end of season celebration no quarter was given on the social front and in addition to the delights of Kyoto and Tokyo the party had a very memorable stay in the Fujikawaguchiko area and visit to the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries factory in Sagami-hara and HQ of the DynaBours professional side.

SATURDAY MAY 11TH, KYOTO UNIVERSITY KYOTONABE CAMPUS

Doshisha University 42
Richmond Open XV 19

Maruwa Logistar'z Kyoto 28
Richmond Performance XV 38

SATURDAY MAY 18TH, MEIJI YASUDA GREEN LAND, HACHIOJI

All Mitsubishi 10
Richmond Performance XV 34

Mitsubishi Steel 31
Richmond Open XV 12





Remembering Katsu



