

Eagles on Challenge Cup trail this weekend

Edinburgh Eagles venture into the venerable Betfred Rugby League Challenge Cup on Saturday with a first round tie at Whitehaven-based Lowca.

And the capital outfit will set out on the road to Wembley reinforced not only by a customary influx of Fijians, many of whom are military personnel, but centre/wing Mark Robertson who is flying in from Malta where he recently added a rugby union cap to previous rugby league honours.

Eagles skipper Lewis Clarke said: "Mark has a strong attachment to our club and wants to be involved in Saturday's game. To travel that distance for a game is quite a commitment.

"We have progressed past Round One previously and once again that will be the initial target."

Last year Eagles welcomed Saddleworth Rangers to their base at Royal High School playing fields, Barnton, for a match broadcast on BBC Television.

There is no such promotion this time round but Clarke, who also plays rugby union for Lasswade, says there are lessons that can be learned from a 20-30 defeat in 2023.

"For the first half we seemed to catch our opponents out with a different style of rugby before they figured us out.

“Not a lot is known about Lowca but we’ll again attempt to play our own off-the-cuff game and hope that will be enough to take us all the way through this year.”

Under the new coaching team of Ash Carroll and Mikey Mair the Eagles will also aim to exploit the hard-hitting approach of “battering ram” forwards Terry Logan and Tom Murray.

Also, Eagles have a few secret weapons concerning players who are now travelling from across Scotland to experience the 13-a-side code with the country’s premier club side.

Clarke added: “We’ve had players join from Kirkcaldy, Dumfries, Kilmarnock and Kelso while Jordan Duncan is a Scottish students cap who has been playing union at Ayr and we have particularly high hopes for him.”

One problem for Eagles, who qualified by beating Forth Valley 48-24 in last year’s Scottish Grand Final is the fact that their domestic season doesn’t get underway until the Union campaign is in its final throes and finishes by Autumn.

Several months have elapsed since their last game and Clarke admitted: “Lowca will be experienced like all the English teams we come up against and we won’t have played as much. But we will be giving it our best shot.”



Edinburgh Eagles v York Acorn, Betfred Challenge Cup, RHS
Barnton, Edinburgh, 15th Jan 2022

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Eagles 24, Acorn 38