

# Var Village Voice

Circulating by Subscription to English speaking readers all over the Var –  
All the Var News & Events

**THE RUGBY COLUMN**

sponsored  
by

**Siddalls**



## **AN EXCELLENT START TO THE EUROPEAN CAMPAIGN**

**BY SIMON EVELEIGH**

### **FROM THE NOVEMBER ISSUE OF VAR VILLAGE VOICE 2009**

Only three matches to report on this month, as the Top 14 took a break to make way for European action.

Castres were Toulon's first opponents of the month and a fairly uninspiring performance saw Philippe Saint-André's men go down 21-20, the third away trip where the margin of defeat has been less than a score and where Toulon were left with regrets. It was not only the defeat itself that hurt but the manner in which Toulon played and the realisation that they missed a great opportunity to wound one of their direct rivals for one of the coveted top six places.

Some harsh words were obviously said after the loss at Castres, because in a repeat fixture the following week in the European Challenge Cup, Toulon turned the tables and returned home with a convincing victory.

It could certainly have been argued that Castres were not taking the European match as seriously as they had taken the Top 14 clash, resting several regular first team players. That, however, could not really be said about Toulon's opponents



the following week in the same competition. Saracens arrived at Toulon sitting on top of the Guinness Premiership with five wins from five and having seen off Rovigo fairly

They brought more or less a full strength side, including England captain Steve Borthwick, but, as others will doubtless find out, Mayol is turning into a real fortress (and quite an intimidating one at



easily in their opening European match.

that).

**Yearly Subscription rates: 20€ -- Internet 35€ French address, 42€ euros European address  
1142 route des Miquelets, 83510 Lorgues. Tel: 04 94 04 49 60**

**Email: [anita@varvillagevoice.com](mailto:anita@varvillagevoice.com) Web: [www.varvillagevoice.com](http://www.varvillagevoice.com)**

# Var Village Voice

Circulating by Subscription to English speaking readers all over the Var –  
All the Var News & Events

This was arguably Toulon's best performance of the season so far. With Jonny Wilkinson pulling the strings and kicking sixteen points, they ran out 31-23 victors in an excellent game of rugby.



Toulon had scored three tries to none within 50 minutes and the only regret will be that they failed to score one more to secure a valuable bonus point against their main rivals for top place in this pool. Indeed, a late Saracens fight back almost saw them salvage a losing bonus point. Rugby administrators often get a bad press and sometimes it is fully deserved! I am not particularly complaining that this match was played on a Thursday evening because that is what television dictates and he who pays the piper..... However, every season we have

two European fixtures in mid-October and just as we are all getting excited about it, we return to domestic action for seven weeks before another two European matches. Then Christmas gets in the way

and the final two European pool matches take place at the end of January. Surely, more interest and excitement would build if the fixtures were played in a block. By the time you read this Toulon will have played at home to Bourgoin, a match that they will hopefully have taken maximum points from to ensure that they stay in



touch with the top six. This is vital as the following two weekends Toulon have very tough away fixtures at Bayonne and Perpignan.

The next home game is against Brive, who have a number of English internationals on their books, on 20 November. This and the European Challenge match against Rovigo on Friday 11 December are the only two home matches before Christmas.

The Brive match also marks the end of the "phase aller" for the Top 14. With half the programme completed, we will have a better idea of whether Toulon are realistic contenders for the end of season play-offs. The evidence so far, though, is that they continue to make progress, but they could do with turning a few of those narrow away defeats into victories.

*Simon Eveleigh is Regional Representative for Siddalls Financial Services.*

\*\*

## From "THE TIMES" Oct 23 Will Wilkinson be picked for the England team to play Australia November 7?

Quote: "Who, then, are the three core backs to take England forward against Australia at Twickenham on November 7? Self-evidently, Wilkinson is at the heart of it at fly half; Johnson places huge trust in international rugby's record points-scorer, the man whose dropped goal beat Australia in Sydney in 2003 and, at last, Wilkinson has put together the run of games for his new club, Toulon, which justifies his return to England colours for the first time since March 2008."

And yes indeed, Jonny Wilkinson has been selected for the England team to play Australia November 7 - a great return!

Yearly Subscription rates: 20€ -- Internet 35€ French address, 42€ euros European address  
1142 route des Miquelets, 83510 Lorgues. Tel: 04 94 04 49 60

Email: [anita@varvillagevoice.com](mailto:anita@varvillagevoice.com) Web: [www.varvillagevoice.com](http://www.varvillagevoice.com)