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■ Ben and Tom Youngs in the thick of the action at a Holt training session last week. Inset, the brothers with captains Joe Buxton (second left) and Bruce van Poortvliet. Pictures: GUY ROPER

Lions pair give Holt a hand

RUGBY UNION

A surprise visit from British Lions heroes Tom and Ben Youngs has added a touch of spice to pre-season preparations at Holt Rugby Club.

The Norfolk brothers have strong links with the club and after returning home from the triumphant summer tour to Australia they were quick to accept an invitation to pay a visit to their High Kelling base.

Last week's session was kept under wraps by the club beforehand, and the first time most players were aware of it was when they arrived at the club.

"We wanted to get the maximum impact from this session," said coach Ed Stead. "The players have worked really hard so far and have upped their game and intensity levels. This was definitely true of this session. It's not very often that you can say

“All the players worked really hard and were very receptive

Tom Youngs

you have trained alongside and been coached by two British Lions players and our players really bought in to what Tom and Ben were trying to achieve.”

Tom enjoyed his trip down memory lane, saying: "Ben and I always enjoy coming back to Holt, it's where we grew up and it was great to give something back in this way. All the players worked really hard and were very receptive. Obviously we know many of them, having grown up with them so we had some fun to, which is what rugby and training should be about."

Ben added: "Pre-season can be pretty hard going sometimes, regardless of the level you play at, so we wanted to demonstrate some of the conditioned games and exercises we enjoy and have fun doing because that makes it so much easier."

Holt's forwards coach, Penny Chapman, who is a coach educator for the RFU, said of the session: "I can't praise Ben and Tom enough.

"Professionals often get frustrated when players who are not of their standard don't understand what they want them to do or are not capable of doing it to their level but the boys were bang on, coming up with a great session plan and targeting this to where the players currently are."

Holt have a variety of sessions still planned, which will see a British and Commonwealth judo champion and coach and Team GB Paralympic sprint coach visit the High Kelling

over the next few weeks and a training camp with National League Two side Shelford planned for this weekend before the first pre-season fixture next Saturday.

This will see Holt make the short journey to North Walsham to play a triangular fixture against Walsham, newly promoted to London 1 NE, and Twickenham, who have themselves just been promoted to London 2NW.

Off the field Guy Roper has replaced Richard Seaman as Holt chairman, after the most successful period in the club's history, while the Youngs' cousin Bruce Van Poortvliet and Joe Buxton have been confirmed as first and second team captains, with Ashley Woods and Jamie Seaman taking on the respective vice-captain roles.

Bruce follows in the footsteps of older brother Jake, who previously captained the club.

SAILING

Award adds gloss to great day at regatta

Alan Mallett

A splendid day's sailing at Wroxham Open Regatta yesterday was crowned by the news that Martin Broom MBE had been awarded the prestigious RYA volunteer award for the Eastern Region, and will receive it from RYA president The Princess Royal later this year.

Martin has been associated with local sailing for over 60 years, and served in a leading capacity on the Broads Authority and Great Yarmouth Port Authority for over 30 years. His knowledge and understanding of the Broads and its navigation is unique and his input to those bodies is now sadly missed.

Sunshine and 80 degree-plus heat ruled throughout yesterday, and the Force 2-3 SE which started the day remained, strengthening in mid afternoon to Force 4-5 prompting compulsory reefs in the YBODs and BODs Ladies series at 5pm.

Most races were for specific trophies. Early events saw Patrick Richardson (Watermans), Zoe Eastwood (Oppis), Ian Tims (Norfolks), Stu Rix (BODs) and Nick



■ Competitors in the Wroxham Regatta enjoyed almost unbroken sunshine yesterday.

Eastwood (Stars) all earn silverware and subsequent races followed a like pattern with the Yeomans (Martin Frary) and Cruisers (Antony Landamore, Stu Rix and Tim Frary) starring.

In the YBODs a 41-strong start in crowded water with a gusting Force 4-5 saw a couple of collisions and retirements, and other infringements, leading to a 20pc place penalty of which more anon.

Competitors' crews included Regatta president Amanda Agnew and Broadland District Council chairman Stuart Dunn, both of whom emerged unscathed from the experience. Initially Ian Tims, Stu Rix, and Sue Funnell led, but soon Tims was out front with Matthew Thwaites the only other near him, and that was how they crossed the line, with Sue Funnell next. But, Tims was one of four who incurred the 20pc penalty moving him eight

CRICKET FIXTURES

Saturday
Gibbs Denley East Anglian Premier League
11am: Cambridge Granta v Bury St Edmunds, Clacton On Sea v Vauxhall Mallards, Great Witchingham v Woolpit, Horsford v Swardston, Saffron Walden v Burwell, Sudbury v Copdock & Old Ipswichian

Ashmanhaugh & Barton Wanderers A v Swardston CEYMS, Cromer A v Brooke A, Mattishall A v Thelford A
Division Six: Bradenham A v Dereham A, Bradfield A v Saxlingham A, Old Catton v Diss A, Topcroft A v Becles A

Division Six: Bacton v Old Catton B, Hethersett & Tas Valley B v Blundston A, Horsford C v Gillingham, Rocklands A v Brisley
Division Seven: Acle B v Garboldisham C, Gt Witchingham B v Happisburgh A, Old Buckenham C v Ketteringham Hall A, Swanton Morley A v

Sunday
Minor Counties Championship (Day 1 of 3)
11am: Norfolk v Lincolnshire (Manor Park)
Mid Norfolk Sunday League 2pm
Shield Premier Division: Angliam v Sprowston, Old Buckenham v Norwich, Swardston v Great