

OPMs in 'winner takes all' decider

26/04/04

DEVON AND CORNWALL ONE PLAY-OFF

by **BILL RICHARDS**
and **GLENN BRYANT**
Sports Reporters

OPMs' immediate future will be decided tomorrow when the city side meet Perranporth in a 'winner takes all' play-off final at King George V Playing Fields (3pm).

The eagerly-awaited tie will decide who will join Tavistock and Liskeard-Looe, respectively in the Cornwall/Devon League next season.

Both OPMs and Perranporth finished as runners-up in their respective leagues, with the Old Boys gaining home advantage by the narrowest of percentage margins, by virtue of having a marginal superior results sequence.

The north Cornwall coast side concluded their campaign in Cornwall One, just a point behind Liskeard, who topped the table with 24 points.

Although OPMs should start as favourites to gain promotion, Perranporth will clearly be dangerous opponents, as they lost only twice all season.

The Old Boys ended their Devon One season, also in impressive fashion, four points adrift of champions Tavistock (42 points), but with 19 victories against only three losses from their 22 matches.

OPMs' points tally is also impressive, as they amassed 722 points for and 250 against, while Perranporth come to Elburton boasting a 317-139 record, albeit from eight fewer fixtures.

Spokesman for Old Plymouthian and Mannemeadians, Simon Adams, says his side will go into the crunch clash in a positive frame of mind, but agrees both sides have it all to lose.

"It's a winner takes all game



BACK IN ACTION: OPMs Simon Crawford, here against Perranporth, is back in the first-team squad, joining Carl Thomas (below)

if ever there was one," said Adams.

"Both sides will be going all out for promotion, and although we like to think we play in a more competitive league than the Cornish side's, we will be taking nothing for granted."

OPMs are boosted in the forwards by the return of loose-head prop Simon Parker, after a long-term injury, and tight-header Jason Cane, who has been unavailable for two weeks.

Second-rower Simon Crawford is recalled after a lengthy period out, in a bid to add more solidity and creativity in the forwards.

"We will be hoping that Simon's tackling and ball carrying strengths on the blind-side to give us an advantage," said Adams.

"We're expecting a front-five battle, particularly in the first half, but are hoping that our superior fitness will carry us through in the latter stages.

"But, it will be a great day I'm certain and with a big crowd behind us, we're going into the match in a strong frame of mind," added Adams.

On adjoining pitches OPMs' other clubs are in action, with the second string, the Jesters, playing Harwell, the thirds against Salcombe II and the fourths up against Bodmin II.

The games are set to kick-off at 2.30pm.

OPMs: N Bellamy; C Thomas, L Thomas, G Pascoe, D Clark, H Turner, S Matts; S Parker, T Heard, J Cane, J Halton, D Law, S Crawford, M Glasonbury, G Rule. Reps: B Walters, R Phillips, P Gregg.

Jesters: (from) P Jefford; L Marquand, P Hague, N Crump, S Luffman, D Ewers, T Smale; J Melville, J Evers, S Porthor, M Portas, A Moorman (c), S Cane, D Inman, P Roberts, L Nozkay, T Rutherford, M Pickover, M Thomas.

OPM III: (from) D Yeldon, T Joyce, L Small, D Ewers, S Bull, M Thomas, S Potipher, M Raeburn, A Bridges, T Hibbert, S Mulville, P Dupreez, T Dupreez, D Davison, M Bryant (c), T Clarke, E Lester.

