

To whom it may concern,

I have known James for approximately ten years, both as a rugby player and as a friend.

James, as a player is hard working, diligent, and a team player. He has leadership skills and isn't afraid to take the reigns when asked. He can acquit himself at most levels and whilst I was at Harlequins, narrowly missed out on international honours. That extra step, albeit to Saxons level would have challenged him again, which is what James needs.

His skill set as a lock forward is very good. He can scrummage both sides of the scrum, he is comfortable calling the lineouts and can jump anywhere within the lineout. He has worked hard on his handling and is comfortable delivering the ball from the lineout in all ways and likewise in open play is comfortable putting tips in or making the try scoring pass if and when required! His tackle technique is such that he wants to not just make the tackle but to bury him. His understanding of shapes in attack and defence is very good and will adhere to them and enforce them, if required. He is also comfortable on kickoff receipts. As an aside, I also think James could play at 6 in the right environment.

All in all, James is someone I would recommend as a player with a great skill set. However, what invariably you don't see on the videos and field is his no nonsense, hard nosed approach to the task in hand. He never backs down and confronts every situation with a mentality of gaining the advantage every time. Tough, competitive and incredibly loyal and has over the years become a very good friend.

Dean Richards

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