

NEW BEGINNINGS

2011 will be the end of an era for St Helens with the club moving from their Knowsley Road home ground to a new state of the art stadium.

Built in 1890 the stadium had been home to the Saints for over 100 years and, after a fire in 2006, hosted international rugby league fixtures.

While the 17,500 capacity stadium holds many memories for one of the oldest clubs in the Super League, it has long been felt that the venue did not meet the standards of the club and the players due to its dilapidated state.

In 2008 St Helens decided that Knowsley Road was no longer up to the professional standards expected of a Super League club and with the continued development of the high performance element in the game, the upgrade was agreed upon and the plans for the new stadium were born.

St Helens Stadium will be a multi-million pound, state-of-the-art facility that will see the club play in a stunning 18,000 capacity venue.

Once constructed it will be the centrepiece of the regeneration of the entire site which was previously home to United Glass and will ultimately deliver 1,400 new employment opportunities.

The project also includes a 140,000 sq ft Tesco Extra store which will form part of the stadium

construction contract, new public realm and new pedestrian links into St Helens town centre.

"For all of this great Club's past rich history and traditions, nothing will compare with next season for excitement as we look forward to moving into our new home in Autumn 2011," said Saints Chief Executive Tony Colquitt.

"After many years of planning, the stadium will be the envy of all League clubs and will deliver match day experiences unrivalled in the sport.

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While demolition of the United Glass site commenced in January 2009, construction of the new stadium on the 46 acre block did not commence until July 2010. With a completion date of 2012, the Saints were forced to find a new home for the 2011 season.

"Whilst we await the completion of our new home, we will play at the Stobart Stadium Halton, said Colquitt.

"Situated only a couple of miles outside of the St Helens Borough, I am sure the team and the fans will claim it as our own for the games that we play there."

The hold up has not dented the hope of fans and players alike that the new facility will see the Club go to a new level both on and off the field in 2012.

"2011 will not only see the Saints play at Halton Stadium, but we will also see a new coach, new world class players, and a new centre of excellence," Colquitt said.

"Saints are delighted to join forces with ISC to deliver a exciting new kit and an extended range of training wear and accessories."

For one of Super League's founder members and most successful teams, 2011 signifies the dawning of a new chapter in their history ▶



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