

RUGBY FOOTBALL

AUSTRALIANS BEATEN AT CARDIFF

FROM OUR RUGBY FOOTBALL
CORRESPONDENT

The Australians encountered defeat for the first time when they met Cardiff on Saturday. The fast, hard going had promised to favour the touring side, but, as it proved, it contributed towards their downfall. Both teams suffered from injuries, but it was the early loss of the Australian hooker, Dawson, which mattered most. Even so, Cardiff were the sounder and cleverer side and deserved their victory by one goal, one penalty goal, and one try (11 points) to one penalty goal (3 points).

A crowd of 44,000—all ticket-holders—filled the Cardiff Arms Park, a ground which has been the scene of many a famous trial of strength and skill between the Rugby men of Wales and the Dominions. The record of the Cardiff club itself reminded one that it was no miracle that an Australian touring team still in the making was beaten on this occasion. After 10 matches, from 1905 onwards, in good times and bad, Cardiff have emerged virtually level on the total of points—101 for and 110 against.

It was a desperately hard and exciting, rather than brilliant, game. Cardiff had not failed to note the lessons of Abertillery, and they added to the vigour of the Valley forwards their own all-round skill and long experience. The Wallabies, for their part, still lacked the finesse in midfield to exploit under intense pressure their undoubted scoring power on the wings. The forwards, too—though one sympathized with them on this occasion—were unable to break loose in the way expected of them. They had the power and the pace, but it was the Cardiff veterans who accomplished most in the loose. Of the midfield backs, only Howell bore comparison with men like Tanner, B. L. Williams, and Matthews. The Cardiff passing under the influence of Cleaver mostly went across field, but none the less the Australians would have been glad of a Cleaver to extricate them from all manner of difficulties. Cleaver's kicking was superbly judged and his defensive play generally was invaluable to Cardiff.

It was Cleaver, incidentally, who saved the Cardiff line, very early in the game, when Eastes took a pass well inside his own half of the field, easily raced past D. H. Jones and the full-back Trott, and seemed set for a great try when Cleaver cut across and tackled him. Eastes had just one more chance, early in the second half, when he got within a few strides of the corner flag. These two incidents alone reminded Cardiff what to expect if this mighty runner fairly got into a stride. Eastes's heavy tackling also did not ease matters for his immediate opponent, Jones, who soon was nursing an injured shoulder.

The injuries, in fact, began early on in the game, though only Dawson left the field for good. Shehadie came and went and came again, though no more as a scrummager. The Australians' advantage in heeling did not go entirely, even after the loss of Dawson, but it was very seldom that their backs achieved more than a sporadic breakaway. Above all, they lacked the Tanner touch at the heels of his forwards. It was a brilliantly clever reverse pass by Tanner that, with the aid of a punt ahead by Cleaver, nearly brought a try by L. Williams in the twentieth minute. As it was, Cardiff took the lead ten minutes from half-time when Tamplin took a penalty kick at 30 yards in front of goal and was not the man to miss a chance like that. Though the Australians also had a clear chance to score penalty points and for a while began to break loose in the open, Cardiff still led by three points at half-time.

The second half started at a great pace, which, to the infinite relief of the crowd, the older Cardiff team maintained to the end. A magnificent counter-run by Howell, who bravely refused to find touch on his own "25" line, led up to Eastes's second go for the line. But Cardiff replied with something better—a try by the wounded D. H. Jones, following a strong forward effort and a punt across by B. L. Williams. Jones had to pick up in order to score wide out. Tamplin was unable to convert this try, and a few minutes later a long penalty kick at goal by Allan just landed over the Cardiff cross-bar and the score became 6—3.

This, of course, meant that the match was entirely open again, and it was here that the Cardiff veteran forwards excelled themselves. Windsor, the Australian full-back, several times joined in his side's passing, but without avail. B. L. Williams and Matthews in vain intensified their attempts to break through for Cardiff. More and more depended upon the battle in front, where the casualties were still mounting on both sides. Eventually, with the game all but over, a breakaway by the Cardiff forward, R. Roberts, was magnificently supported by the stockily built C. Davies, who dived over on the left wing for a try that Tamplin converted into a goal. When the final whistle blew the Cardiff players hoisted their captain, Tanner, on their shoulders and carried him in triumph.

The teams were:—

CARDIFF.—F. Trott; D. H. Jones, B. L. Williams, J. Matthews, L. Williams; W. B. Cleaver, H. Tanner (captain); G. Evans, L. J. Manfield, E. Jones, W. E. Tamplin, R. Roberts, W. G. Jones, M. James, C. Davies.

AUSTRALIANS.—C. J. Windsor; J. W. T. MacBride, M. L. Howell, T. Allan, C. C. Eastes; N. A. Emery, R. M. Cawsey; A. J. Buchan, C. J. Windon, N. Shehadie, G. M. Cooke, W. M. McLean (captain), R. E. McMaster, W. L. Dawson, E. Tweedale.

REFEREE.—G. Goldsworthy (Penarth).