

SCHWEPPE'S W.R.U. CHALLENGE CUP
SEMI FINAL 1986/87



CARDIFF

v

NEATH

40p

**ST. HELEN'S GROUND,
SWANSEA**

**SATURDAY, 28th MARCH, 1987
Kick Off 3.00 pm**

Published by Swansea Rugby Supporters' Club
Secretary: Mr. ARTHUR DAVIES, 27 Queen's Road, Sketty, Swansea. Tel: 203851
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WELCOME TO ST. HELEN'S

The venue for this afternoon's semi-final for the W.R.U. Schweppes Challenge Cup is St. Helen's Ground, Swansea. The Swansea Rugby Club extend a warm welcome to the players, officials and supporters of both Cardiff and Neath. You are all invited to make full use of the facilities of the Sports Club in Bryn Road where refreshments are available before and after the match.

The draw for the semi-finals of the cup are similar to the draw for the quarter-finals when there were four teams from East Wales and four from West Wales. This afternoon the situation is two from the East - Cardiff and Newbridge and two from the West - Neath and Swansea.

The glittering prize for the winners of this afternoon's games is of course a place in the Cup Final at the Cardiff Arms Park National Ground on May 2nd. In 1972 Neath were the first winners of the cup when they beat Llanelli 15-9 in the final. In 1984 they were losing finalists in a thrilling match against Cardiff by 24-19.

Cardiff have won the cup on four previous occasions - 1981-1982-1984 and of course are the present holders beating Newport in 1986.

Both teams are great rugby clubs well versed in the pressure, pitfalls, and also the joys of cup rugby. We wish Neath and Cardiff good luck and may the best team win.

GLAN LEWIS



A happy John Scott receiving the Cup after Cardiff's cup victory in 1981.

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THIS SEASON'S CUP RECORD - CARDIFF

1st ROUND - Cardiff's 1986/87 cup aspirations began in the Rhondda Valley when we had to make the awkward trip to a very confident Treorchy side. Their well published pre-match optimism and confidence however couldn't quite match up to their performance on the day and we came home with a victory by 14 pts to 7.

2nd ROUND - Another away draw this time to centenary celebrating Cross Keys. Things looked rather black for the Keys at half time during this match as we were leading by 19 pts to nil. They pulled their socks up during the second half however and we appeared to go off the boil with the final score being 19-6.

3rd ROUND - As it turned out, this game could have caused the biggest upset ever in the history of the tournament. We were drawn against Llanharan at the Arms Park and the final score resulted in a 18-14 win for us. The Vale of Glamorgan side however won everything but the game itself. The glory, the honours, the memories and the sheer exuberance of nearly bringing it off all belonged to the Llanharan boys. Thank goodness it wasn't at Llanharan because as it was they outscored us 3 tries to 2 on our own ground. We could have had no complaints on the day had we lost.

4th ROUND - At home to Newport and another heart stopper. The Black and Ambers were disappointed in the extreme not to have pulled it off on the day. They were smack in the middle of an excellent run of results so it gave us plenty of satisfaction to win by outscoring them in the try count by 2 to 1. A thriller however to the very last seconds.

An interesting feature of the cup competition concerns Cardiff's captain Alan Phillips who is now in his 14th season with the club. He has already made 6 previous final appearances which is a record held only by him. No doubt he will be more than anxious to be able to extend that to 7 after today but Neath will have vastly different thoughts on that matter. During his long and very distinguished career with Cardiff, Alan has become the fourth highest all time try scorer with 142 to his name. Another 9 will take him to second place and only bettered by the great Bleddyn Williams with 185.

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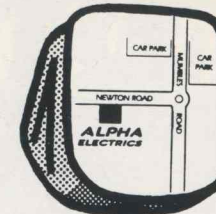
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- 2 ALAN PHILLIPS* (Capt.)
- 3 STEVE BLACKMORE
- 4 HOWARD STONE
- 5 ROBERT NORSTER*
- 6 ROBERT LAKIN
- 8 JOHN SCOTT*
- 7 GARETH ROBERTS*

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Touch Judge: Mr. F. R. Staddon

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- Canolwr Chwith Left Centre
- Asgell Chwith Left Wing
- Maswr Outside Half
- Mewnwr Inside Half
- Y Rheng Flaen Prop
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- Y Rheng Flaen Prop
- Cl Lock
- Co Lock
- Blaenasgell Flanker
- Wythwr No. 8
- Blaenasgell Flanker

Referee:

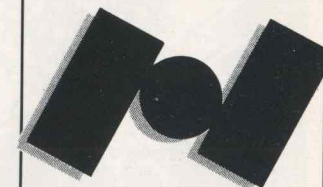
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NEATH 6

Colours: Black with Maltese Cross

- 15 STEVE POWELL
- 14 ELGAN REES*
- 13 COLIN LAITY P
- 12 RICHARD GRIFFITHS
- 11 GRAHAM DAVIES
- 10 JONATHAN DAVIES* (Capt.) P
- 9 CARL GNOJEK
- 1 DAVID JOSEPH
- 2 MIKE RICHARDS
- 3 JEREMY PUGH
- 4 HUW RICHARDS*
- 5 ROBERT CHEVAL
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STATISTICAL CARDIFF

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	Season				Career			
	App.	Tr.	Goals	Pts.	App.	Tr.	Goals	Pts.
G. JOHN	26	3	74	193	45	5	102	272
M. RING	25	15	5	73	132	64	74	435
G. CORDLE	27	17	—	68	100(1)	73	—	292
A. HADLEY	30	15	—	60	164	100	—	400
M. RAYER	32	4	17	59	63(1)	12	17	103
D. EVANS	10	1	19	48	35(1)	6	55	145
G. ROBERTS	28	13	—	52	79	27	—	108
R. CARDUS	20	9	—	36	20	9	—	36
C. NORMAN	7(1)	9	—	36	7(1)	9	—	36
G. DAVIES	10	7	—	28	10	7	—	28
T. CROTHERS	18	5	—	20	90(1)	23	—	92
A. DONOVAN	27	4	—	16	122	17	—	68
R. LAKIN	26(1)	4	—	16	248(3)	59	—	236
N. O'BRIEN	11(3)	4	—	16	37(12)	13	—	52
A. PHILLIPS	23	4	—	16	383	141	—	564
C. WEBBER	6	1	4	13	90(7)	17	103	334
P. RING	5	3	—	12	5	3	—	12
J. SCOTT	16	2	—	8	233(2)	35	—	140
G. PRITCHARD	8(6)	2	—	8	8(6)	2	—	8
H. STONE	12	2	—	8	90(1)	12	—	48
S. BLACKMORE	21	2	—	8	58	3	—	12
R. NORSTER	20	1	—	4	231	13	—	52
M. PARRY	23	1	—	4	23	1	—	4
J. SOUTO	11(3)	1	—	4	41(11)	4	—	16
I. EIDMAN	9	1	—	4	199	3	—	12
K. EDWARDS	11	1	—	4	150	13	—	52
D. WRIGHT	4	1	—	4	5(1)	1	—	4
N. HUMPHREYS	2	1	—	4	7(1)	4	—	16
J. BURNELL	2	1	—	4	2	1	—	4
P. CRANE	10	1	—	4	15	1	—	4
J. HOWELLS	1	—	2	4	4(2)	3	2	16
J. WHITEFOOT	24	—	—	—	232	7	—	28
C. COLLINS	18	—	—	—	65(2)	1	—	4
O. GOLDING	8	—	—	—	145(2)	47	—	188
D. GIBBON	5(2)	—	—	—	6(3)	—	—	—

Also played: 6 - C. Hutchings; 4 - T. Charles, I. Greenslade; 3 - M. Rowley, C. Jones.; 2 - S. Cannon, R. Bilton, M. Hadley(+1); 1 - D. Conway, A. Mogridge, R. Rees, D. Williams, R. Ringwood.

P 38 W 24 D 2 L 12 F 834 A 633 Tries 135 Cons 69 Pens 50 Drops 2
(only including matches played in the United Kingdom)

This statement does not include the game played against Penarth on 18th March 1987.

NEATH - THE FIRST CUP WINNERS

Neath were the first winners of the Welsh Cup when it was relaunched in 1972, beating Llanelli 15-9 in the final. They have only been in the final once since then, losing a thrilling match 24-19 to Cardiff, their opponents today.

This season Neath has proved the most consistent of the Welsh clubs and are currently leading all the championship tables. Their progress in the cup has also been impressive.

They beat New Dock Stars and Haverfordwest in the first two rounds before coming face-to-face with Llanelli in a match that attracted one of the biggest crowds at the Gnoll.

Thanks to the brilliance of their captain, Jonathan Davies, who dropped three goals, and the goal-kicking of Paul Thorburn — two penalty goals — Neath emerged 15-3 winners.

Then came an equally stiff assignment in the quarter-final — a trip to Pontypool who, though their forward power has waned, gave the All Blacks a tough time before a remarkable late try by flanker Phil Pugh swung the match Neath's way.

Neath have been badly hit by injuries and go into today's semi-final without three Welsh caps, Paul Thorburn, Kevin Phillips and Stuart Evans.

To lose three such talented players is a major blow but the All Blacks believe their squad is strong enough to cope.

NEATH'S CUP RECORD

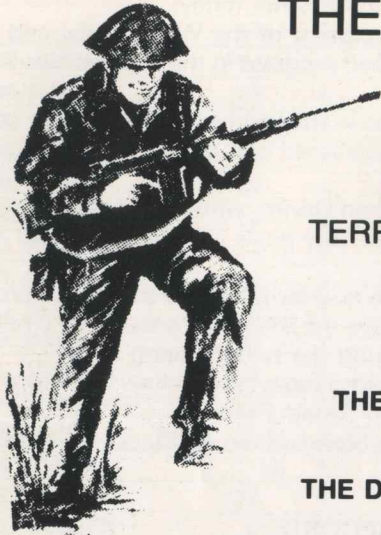
November 15	1st round:	New Dock Stars	3	Neath	29
December 20	2nd round:	Neath	41	Haverfordwest	3
January 24	3rd round:	Neath	15	Llanelli	3
February 28	4th round:	Pontypool	9	Neath	15

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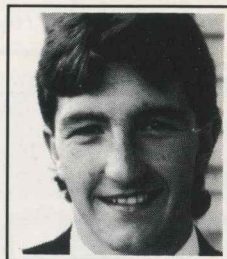
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CARDIFF'S CUP HISTORY

Today sees a total of 95 rounds proper of the Schweppes Cup since its inception in 1972. Of that number the Cardiff Club have featured in 78 with the 79th coming up this afternoon. Of those 78 we have won 67 and lost 11. Today's game also sees Cardiff embark into its 11th semi-final out of a possible 16. Of the 15 previous finals the Blue & Blacks have featured in 7, winning 4 of them.

Indeed the current decade has been something of a golden era period for the Cardiff Club because of the 7 finals already played in the 1980's it has appeared in 5 of them. Only one defeat ensued against Llanelli in the 1985 final with the last minute drop goal by Gary Pearce carrying the day for the Scarlets by 15 points to 14.

Ironically enough our semi-final history began in the inaugural season 1971/72 when we played Neath, today's opponents, at Bridgend. The All Blacks took the spoils that day by 16-9 and subsequently went on to win the final against Llanelli to celebrate their centenary year in grand style.

Since then Cardiff-Neath encounters have been restricted to just 3 including today. After that 1972 semi-final, we were not destined to meet again until 12 years later in the 1984 final. That was a tremendous final played on a real summer's day and we managed to win by the narrow margin of 24 pts to 19. A feature of that game was the fact that the man of the match award went to Neath scrum half Gareth Jones. He became the only

recipient from the losing side in the finals. This was indeed a tribute to the whole Neath side on the day because they very nearly upset the applecart that day. With John Scott in his 4th years of his captaincy and Terry Holmes and Gareth Davies at their peak we were firm favourites to win. The All Blacks had different ideas however, and came within an ace of causing a real upset.

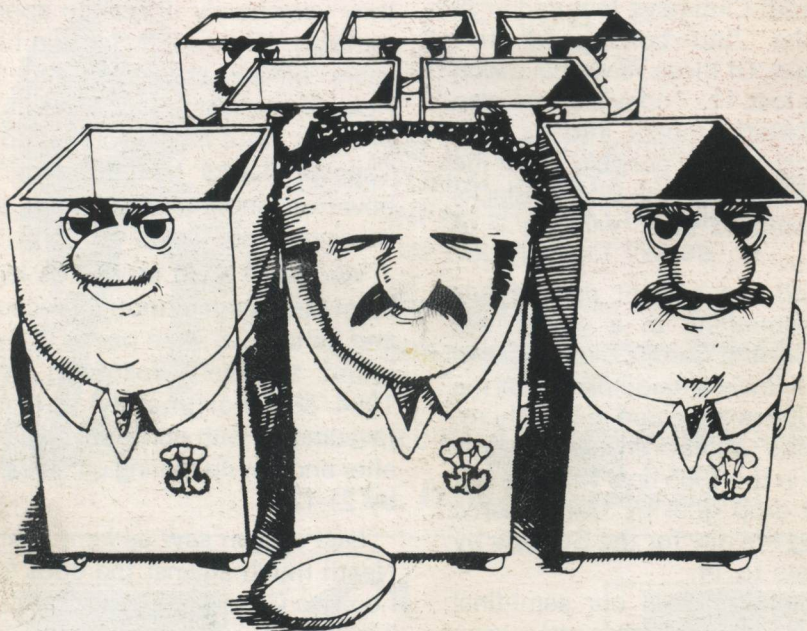
We didn't have to wait as long to meet Neath again though because lo and behold we were paired in the 4th round the very following season 1984/85. Fortunately the draw favoured us with home advantage and after another rip roaring game we won by 21-12.

Last season saw us kept apart but Neath much against the odds lost at home to Glamorgan Wanderers. As it happened we then played the Wanderers in the next round which we won by 21-12.

That now brings us to today's clash. Unlike any of the previous encounters, Neath must be considered favourites for today's tie to get that one spot in the final. Alan Phillips and his side are not too worried about that however. In the last round, Newport were considered to be well and truly in the driving seat for the Arms Park encounter. On the day however Cardiff's tremendous cup experience and quality to rise to the occasion shone through the previous gloom and victory was ours after a titanic struggle by 15-12.

And so to today, let battle commence.

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