



**Konic Minolta Cup**  
Semi-finals  
Price £2.00



**Cardiff v Pontypridd**

7.10pm, Friday 21st April 2006  
Rodney Parade, Newport



**Maesteg v Neath**

5.10pm, Sunday 23rd April 2006  
Talbot Athletic Ground, Aberavon

Glory awaits ... at the  
**Millennium Stadium**





KONICA MINOLTA

Digital Copiers  
and Printers

Direct from your  
Local Manufacturer

Supporting  
the Welsh  
Rugby Union



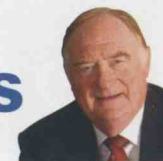
Konica Minolta Business Solutions (UK) Limited

Tenby House, Oaktree Court, Mulberry Drive, Cardiff Gate Business Park, Cardiff CF23 8RS

Tel: 02920 733873 • Fax: 02920 733854 • Email: cardiffsales@bs.konicaminolta.co.uk

www.konicaminolta.co.uk

## President's message



Playing with your clubmates at the Millennium Stadium is a huge honour and that's the prize on offer to all four teams in these two eagerly anticipated Konica Minolta Cup semi-finals.

The winners of each match will be going to the Millennium Stadium on Saturday, 6 May to challenge for the coveted Konica Minolta silverware, and the title of Welsh knock-out kings.

This tournament – albeit in a number of different guises since its launch as the WRU Challenge Cup – is now in its 35th season and remains the premier knock-out competition for our clubs. And although the semi-finalists are all Premiership clubs, the smaller sides cherish the chance to cause an upset.

Between them the semi-finalists have won the tournament 11 times in total; Cardiff the most successful of the four with seven wins, followed by two each for Neath and Pontypridd, while Maesteg have so far never appeared in the final.

To all the supporters I say "enjoy the occasion", and I would like to take the opportunity to give my sincere thanks Konica Minolta, who have supported the tournament for the last three seasons.

Finally, by best wishes to all the teams in their quest to book a place at the Millennium Stadium next month.

**Keith Rowlands**  
President of the Welsh Rugby Union

## Konica Minolta Welcome



Hasn't time flown since the 2005/06 Konica Minolta Cup kicked off last August? Now we are down to the last four, cup fever is spreading and the ultimate prize of a place in the Konica Minolta Cup final at the Millennium Stadium is within touching distance of Maesteg, Pontypridd, Cardiff and Neath.

These four great clubs have battled their way through four highly competitive rounds to reach the semi-finals and there will be two very happy sets of players and fans at the end of this weekend. Konica Minolta are delighted to be involved in this great tournament and our representatives have received fantastic welcomes at clubs across Wales in each round. What we've learned along the way is that the magic of the cup is still very much alive and kicking.

Our best wishes go to the players and supporters of all four clubs this weekend and I'm sure we are in for two great games. There is a great day out in Cardiff on Saturday, 6 May awaiting the successful teams and I look forward to meeting them there on the big day.

**Alan Hiatt**  
Konica Minolta Sales Manager

## Contents

- 03. Semi-finals previewed
- 05. Coach's view: Simon King
- 06. Pontypridd squad
- 09. Player profile: Dai Flanagan
- 11. Coach's view: Howard Stone
- 12. Cardiff squad
- 14. Player profile: Elgan Jones
- 16. Team line-ups
- 19. Coach's view: Rowland Phillips
- 20. Neath squad
- 23. Player profile: Paul Jones
- 25. Coach's view: Gareth Brown
- 26. Maesteg squad
- 28. Player profile: John Devereux

**Editor** Owain Jones  
**Art director** Richard Lee  
**Designer** Janine Singh  
**Chief sub-editor** Stephen Mitchell  
**Sub-editor** Gordon Beveridge  
**Picture editor** Osha Mason  
**Production manager** Liam Curry

To advertise in this programme, call Managing Director Kevin McCarthy on +44 (0)20 7332 2000



Printed in Wales by:  
Stephens and George  
www.stephensandgeorge.co.uk

**Published by:**  
Profile Sports Media  
5th Floor, Mermaid House  
2 Puddle Dock  
London EC4V 3DS

**T:** +44 (0)20 7332 2000  
**F:** +44 (0)20 7332 2001  
**ISDN:** +44 (0)20 7236 2467  
www.profilesportsmedia.com

Copyright Profile Pursuit Limited. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced by any means without the written permission of the copyright owners. Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this publication, the publishers cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions. In the interest of independence and impartiality, many features in the WRU programme have been written on behalf of the publishers by third-party experts. It should be noted that any opinions and recommendations expressed therein are the views of the writers themselves and not necessarily those of the WRU. Terms and conditions for all competitions appearing in this programme are available on request.

It wouldn't be Wales  
without S.A

Welcome to  
**WALES**  
  
Croeso i  
**GYMRU**



more positive  
thinking from



Welsh Rugby Union 2005/06 Patron  
Her Majesty The Queen

Honorary Life Vice-Patron The Rt. Hon.  
Sir Tasker Watkins VC, GBE, DL

President Keith Rowlands

Chairman David Pickering

Vice Chairman Ken Hewitt

Chief Executive, WRU Steven Lewis

Chief Executive, Millennium Stadium  
Paul Sergeant

National Representatives  
David Pickering, Martin Davies,  
Gerald Davies CBE, DL

District Representatives  
Mal Beynon, Geraint Edwards,  
Humphrey Evans, Brian Fowler, Roy  
Giddings, Ken Hewitt, Russell Howell,  
Peredur Jenkins, Alan Jones, John  
Jones, Anthony John, Ray Wilton,  
Arwel Morgan

Regional Representative  
Gethin Jenkins

Group General Manager, Finance  
and Administration Alan Hamer

Head of Group Commercial and  
Development Rupert Moon

Head of Group Corporate Compliance  
Julie Paterson

Head of Group Services and Strategy  
Tim Burton

WRU High Performance Manager  
Mostyn Richards

WRU Community Rugby Manager  
Phil John

Manager, Match Officials  
Robert Yeman

Millennium Stadium Board of Directors  
David Pickering (Chairman), Paul  
Sergeant Lord Faulkner of Worcester,  
Byron Davies, Cardiff Council, Ken  
Hewitt, Martin Davies, Cllr Nigel  
Howells, Stella Mair Thomas, Helen  
Conway, Mal Beynon, Geraint Edwards

Grand Slams (9)  
1908, 1909, 1911, 1950, 1952, 1971,  
1976, 1978, 2005

Championship Winners (23)  
1893, 1900, 1902, 1905, 1908, 1909,  
1911, 1922, 1931, 1936, 1950, 1952,  
1956, 1965, 1966, 1969, 1971, 1975,  
1976, 1978, 1979, 1994, 2005

PREVIEW

# Up for the **cup**

The Konica Minolta Cup is a showcase for the finest talents plying their trade with the semi-pro clubs.  
By Richard Thomas

**T**he Konica Minolta Cup is a key part of Welsh rugby's development.

Like the Principality Premiership, the cup fulfils a vital role.

The likes of Dale McIntosh (Pontypridd), John Devereux (Maesteg) and Arwel Thomas (Neath) – all Wales internationals – will testify that this weekend's cup semi-finals matter. All three will be doing their utmost to earn their side a day out at the Millennium Stadium on May 6.

And while the big crowds in Welsh rugby now belong to the regional game, to keep the Blues, Dragons, Ospreys and Scarlets buoyant all four teams need a strong club game around them.

Neath, who are still on course for a league and cup double, have been a force to be reckoned with since the move to regions. The Gnoll club have been able to field a balanced side that has contained a blend of experience and youth. Just look at the half-back partnerships they have used – Arwel Thomas and Martin

Roberts epitomise what league rugby is all about. Thomas, with 23 Wales caps, partnering Roberts, who turns 20 in June. Roberts has broken into the Ospreys team this season and has also been an integral part of the Wales Under 21s side.

And when Thomas is not playing, Neath have James Hook at outside-half. He, too, is a Wales Under 21 cap and figured in Wales' Sevens team at the Commonwealth Games.

Neath's opponents in their semi-final contain both John Devereux and the hugely experienced brothers Ian and Roddy Boobyer. Exactly the type of player with the necessary experience to pass on to the youngsters around them.

The presence and influence of McIntosh on the young Pontypridd squad at Sardis Road cannot be underestimated. And to think it is ten years since the New Zealander helped Ponty to their first cup title win against a Neath side that, incidentally, contained Ian Boobyer.

Ponty's arch rivals Cardiff are the only one of the last four who have not regularly relied on "old boy" influences.

They may be struggling in the league but again they have produced the likes of wing Chris

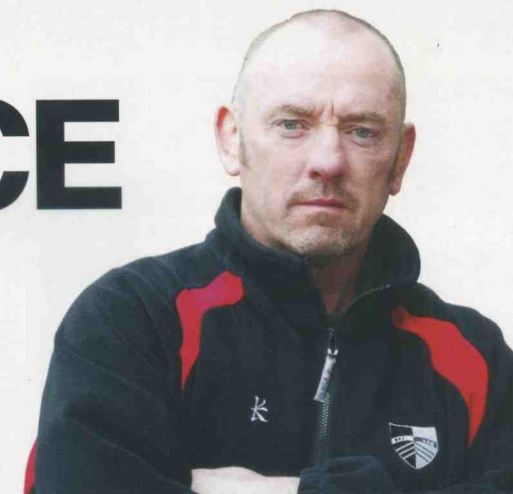
Czekaj, himself now a Wales international.

It all goes to show that the semi-pro game has much going for it, not least two intriguing semi-finals over this weekend.



# VALLEY SERVICE

Pontypridd's head coach Simon King is looking forward to another classic in the fierce and long-lasting rivalry



Anyone looking to take a punt on Pontypridd's match with Cardiff might like to have a brief glance at the eight places that separate the sides in the Principality Premiership. Offer that form guide to Ponty's head coach Simon King, however, and you will receive short shrift. "League tables can be deceptive. Cardiff have started to show some real form over the last month or two. We have been a little bit inconsistent. So I would say we're the slight underdogs."

For King, league positions mean nothing when it comes to the outcome of a tense Cup semi-final. "When you're down to the last four, it doesn't make any difference who is pulled out of the hat, it's down to who wants it most. The build up to the game has been fantastic. It's good to see so much interest in both sides. It should be a cracker."

Now in his second season as head coach, the former non-sense Pontypridd back rower has a fair idea what to expect of Friday's opposition, having previously packed down against Blue and Black legends Bob Lakin and John Scott, and firmly

believes that as kick-off approaches, Rodney Parade will match the cauldron-like intensity of Sardis Road and Cardiff Arms Park in his heyday. "Matches were always packed to the rafters. It's a special type of rivalry. The boys from the valley taking on the boys from the big city. I'm sure the crowd will be very vocal."

As a former captain and player, King is proud to have donned the famous black and white jersey. "It doesn't matter

King has been impressed with the development of such talents as Tom Riley, Dai Flanagan and Wayne Evans. "They have matured physically and mentally. We've won games this year that could have gone against us last season. Last year's tough experiences [including their loss in the 2005 Konica Minolta Cup Final] have made them tighter."

And while Ponty's head honcho is keen to extol the benefits of the Premiership, he realises that the more successful

**"THERE'S A REAL SENSE OF TRADITION THAT GOES WITH PLAYING FOR THE CLUB. MOTIVATION HAS NEVER BEEN AN ISSUE"**

if you play once, or if you play 800 times. There's a real sense of tradition that goes with playing for the club and in that respect, motivation has never really been an issue. It makes my job a lot easier."

A fact borne out by Ponty's current third-place spot in the Premiership. "We've progressed well. We have continued to play some very exciting running rugby and we're still looking to sneak second place off Bridgend."

his club is, the more likely it is he'll lose his most promising youngsters to the Cardiff Blues. "For any coach, your job is to improve your players. They're highly motivated, but it's even more important that they believe in their own ability. It's my job to encourage them along the way. I'll do whatever I can to help them realise their ambitions."

Just don't ask him to tip his team as favourites in Friday's mouthwatering semi-final.

PICTURES: HUW EVANS

"If you put

all the worst things

out there yourself,

all they can do is

repeat what you said."

-Mike Skinner

rbk.com

Rbk 

## PONTYPRIDD'S ROUTE TO THE SEMI-FINALS



### ROUND 3, DECEMBER 3, 2005 PONTYBEREM 0-20 PONTYPRIDD

A hard-fought victory over a spirited Pontyberem side who put the visitors under some early pressure. After the hosts missed a penalty Ponty snatched a penalty and converted try to go in 10-0 up at the break. Ponty took charge in the second half, had two tries disallowed, and ultimately deserved the win. *Pontypridd scorers: Tries – Hitchings, Nuthall, Rose; Cons – Langmead; Pens – Langmead*

### ROUND 4, JANUARY 14, 2006 PONTYPRIDD 50-0 NARBERTH

An emphatic display by Ponty, who never allowed the visitors into the game. A solid first-half performance that included a hat-trick of tries for Chris Clayton saw the hosts 31-0 up at the break, while a spate of substitutions late in the second half failed to upset their rhythm and they cruised to victory. *Tries – Clayton (3), Stoddart, Hitchings (2), Cox, Strong; Cons – Flanagan (5)*

### ROUND 5, FEBRUARY 18, 2006 CROSS KEYS 5-44 PONTYPRIDD

Ponty dominated a competitive first half with their policy of all-out attack and aggressive defending to lead 20-0 at the turn. Cross Keys put Ponty under pressure in the second half but a counter-attack gave the visitors a converted try and the hosts had no answer. A thrilling, frenetic match. *Tries – Pocock, Evans, Nuthall (2), Flanagan, Strong, Penalty try; Cons – Flanagan (3); DG – Flanagan*

### QUARTER-FINAL, APRIL 1, 2006 PONTYPRIDD 28-20 BUILT H WELLS

A bruising encounter that saw the Bulls ask serious questions of the home defence. At half-time it was close at 12-10 to Ponty. The action intensified in the second period and a Bulls try saw the teams tied at 15-all with 12 minutes remaining. A converted try and penalty eased the pressure on Ponty but a late Bulls score gave the visitors the last word. *Tries – Powell, Clayton, Roberts; Cons – Flanagan (2); Pens – Flanagan (2); DG – Flanagan*

	<b>JASON POCOCK</b>
POSITION: Fullback	
HEIGHT: 1.85m	
WEIGHT: 83kg	
DOB: 21.2.79	

	<b>CHRIS CLAYTON</b>
POSITION: Wing	
HEIGHT: 1.83m	
WEIGHT: 89kg	
DOB: 5.2.86	

	<b>TOM RILEY</b>
POSITION: Centre	
HEIGHT: 1.85m	
WEIGHT: 79kg	
DOB: 4.5.85	

	<b>DAFYDD LOCKYER</b>
POSITION: Centre/Wing	
HEIGHT: 1.91m	
WEIGHT: 103kg	
DOB: 5.6.85	

	<b>MATTHEW NUTHALL</b>
POSITION: Wing	
HEIGHT: 1.85m	
WEIGHT: 95kg	
DOB: 6.7.83	

	<b>DAI FLANAGAN</b>
POSITION: Outside-half	
HEIGHT: 1.83m	
WEIGHT: 84kg	
DOB: 24.9.85	

	<b>GARETH JONES</b>
POSITION: Scrum-half	
HEIGHT: 1.70m	
WEIGHT: 74kg	
DOB: 14.12.79	

	<b>NATHAN STRONG</b>
POSITION: No 8	
HEIGHT: 1.88m	
WEIGHT: 109kg	
DOB: 21.1.76	

	<b>RHYS SHELLARD</b>
POSITION: Flanker	
HEIGHT: 1.83m	
WEIGHT: 97kg	
DOB: 26.6.85	

	<b>LEE EVANS</b>
POSITION: Flanker/No 8	
HEIGHT: 1.91m	
WEIGHT: 105kg	
DOB: 25.5.82	

	<b>GRANT HARRINGTON</b>
POSITION: Lock	
HEIGHT: 1.96m	
WEIGHT: 105kg	
DOB: 5.12.79	

	<b>DALE MCINTOSH (CAPTAIN)</b>
POSITION: Lock/Flanker	
HEIGHT: 1.91m	
WEIGHT: 108kg	
DOB: 23.11.69	

	<b>SCOTT ROBERTS</b>
POSITION: Prop	
HEIGHT: 1.83m	
WEIGHT: 118kg	
DOB: 5.9.84	

	<b>LEIGHTON DAVIES</b>
POSITION: Hooker	
DOB: 15.6.74	
HEIGHT: 1.75m	
WEIGHT: 108kg	

	<b>STUART WILLIAMS</b>
POSITION: Prop	
DOB: 18.2.80	
HEIGHT: 1.83m	
WEIGHT: 112kg	

	<b>TOM DICKENS</b>
POSITION: Scrum-half	
DOB: 16.6.86	
HEIGHT: 1.73m	
WEIGHT: 78kg	

	<b>PAUL MATTHEWS</b>
POSITION: Centre	
HEIGHT: 1.80m	
WEIGHT: 86kg	
DOB: 18.9.77	

	<b>DARREN BERRY</b>
POSITION: Wing	
HEIGHT: 1.80m	
WEIGHT: 78kg	
DOB: 13.12.76	

	<b>BEN PHILLIPS</b>
POSITION: Hooker	
HEIGHT: 1.75m	
WEIGHT: 94kg	
DOB: 5.9.81	

	<b>RYAN HARFORD</b>
POSITION: Prop	
HEIGHT: 1.83m	
WEIGHT: 123kg	
DOB: 24.9.82	

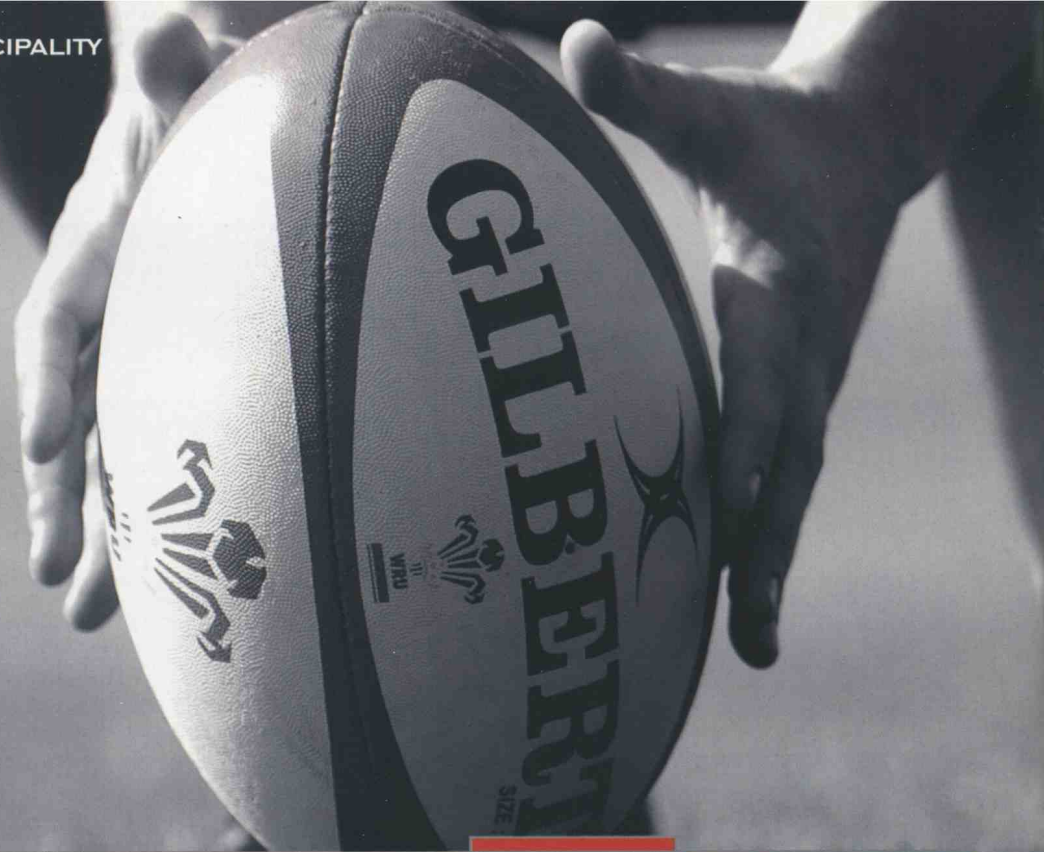
	<b>CHRIS DICOMIDIS</b>
POSITION: Lock/Flanker	
HEIGHT: 1.98m	
WEIGHT: 114kg	
DOB: 14.9.85	

	<b>ADAM POWELL</b>
POSITION: Flanker/No 8	
HEIGHT: 1.93m	
WEIGHT: 108kg	
DOB: 28.5.86	

<b>COACHES</b>	
Senior Coach Simon King	
Backs Coach Paul John	
Conditioning Coach Steve Richards	
Scrummaging Coach Mike Griffiths	

<b>TOP POINTS SCORERS THIS SEASON</b>	
Dai Flanagan: 1 Try; 42 Cons; 34 Pens, 4 DG. Total 203	
Jason Pocock: 4 Tries; 4 Cons; 14 Pens. Total 70	
Richard Langmead: 1 Try; 15 Cons; 9 Pens, 2 DG. Total 113	
Matthew Nuthall: 12 Tries; 1 Con. Total 62	





CHWARAEON **S4C** SPORT

## Rygbi Rugby

Yn dangos y cyfan Showing it all

Cwpan Heineken • The Heineken Cup

Taith yr Ariannin • Argentina Tour

Y Cynghraiir Celtaidd • The Celtic League

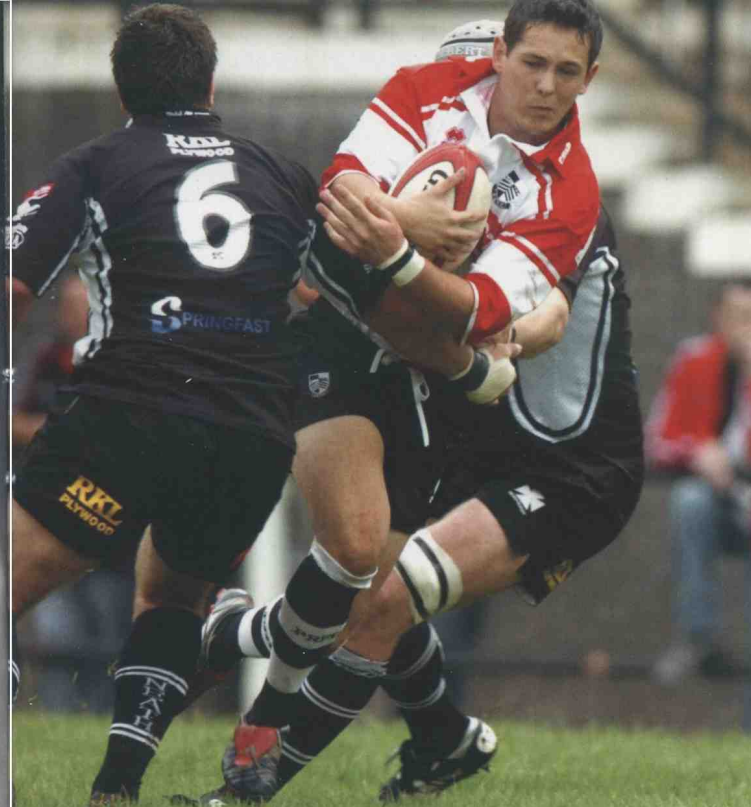
Championnat de France • Championnat de France

Rygbi'r Byd • World Rugby

Pencampwriaeth 7 bob-ochr IRB • IRB 7 a-side Championship

[s4c.co.uk/chwaraeon](http://s4c.co.uk/chwaraeon)

S4C digidol: (Cymru/Wales) Sky - 104, Freeview - 004, ntl - 752. (DU/UK) Sky - 135



## Derring-Dai

After narrowly losing out to Llanelli in last year's Cup Final, Ponty's Dai Flanagan is determined to get another crack at glory

**F**or Ponty's Dai Flanagan, last year's Konica Minolta Cup Final proved a bittersweet experience. From a personal point of view it was an undoubted success; a masterful performance belying his 19 years brought 14 points and a man-of-the-match award. However, any individual satisfaction was tarnished by the disappointment of squandering a 24-8 lead, with Llanelli snatching the game 25-24. It is still the biggest blow of Flanagan's fledgling career.

And he isn't afraid to admit that last year's loss serves as a huge motivator for the semi-final. "We have a chance to exorcise our demons. Fair play to Llanelli last year, but we really felt we'd thrown the game away."

Hailing from Cefn Hengoed in the Rhymney Valley, Flanagan, a product of Lewis School Pengam, feels there is no need for the Ponty old-boys to explain the significance of Friday's fixture. The irony for Flanagan, however, is that the two sides come under the same regional umbrella and he'll be facing players he knows well. "I know plenty of the Cardiff squad after sharing training at the Blues Academy and at Wales Under 21s. I'm looking forward to facing boys like Dafydd Hewitt and Jamie Roberts this weekend. I'm looking to expose their weaknesses," he laughs.

Flanagan has been a shining light in Ponty circles ever since making his senior debut just days after his 18th birthday, and his

continued excellence has seen him capped at Under 16, Under 19 and Under 21 level.

Flanagan has been happy with his progress this season, which has seen him add 206 points to his Ponty tally. With regards to his prodigious kicking, like many other aspiring points machines, he is keen to praise the input of Pontypridd legend Neil Jenkins, who has acted as his mentor: "He's built up my belief and has instilled in me the importance of sticking to the basics."

Unlike many stand-offs – Ceri Sweeney and Gavin Henson come to mind – who have drifted out into midfield, Flanagan sees himself as an out-and-out No 10. "I like controlling the line and varying the tempo of the game. Nowadays you need to be more of a threat taking the ball up to the line, like Stephen Jones since he went to France."

Flanagan's aim is to secure a regional contract with the Blues, and he is the first to admit that Wales has an abundance of youthful talent at No 10 in James Hook and Nick McLeod. Despite the stiff competition, Flanagan is happy to let his performances do the talking. "Friday's high-profile game is a chance to showcase my talents, and I want to do well."

Whatever the result at the final whistle, you can be sure the Ponty boys will have given their all. "We have a tremendous team spirit. I've come through the ranks with players like Tom Riley, Rhys Shellard and Wayne Evans, and we want to do Ponty proud. Last year's final has only made us stronger."

Cardiff, you've been warned.

# STONE SOLID

His team may be having something of a testing season, but Cardiff's coach is Blue and Black all over



**W**hen Cardiff pulled Pontypridd out of the hat in the semi-final draw, few neutrals would have blamed head coach Howard Stone for cursing his luck.

In a difficult season, which has seen his team languishing in the lower reaches of the Welsh Premiership, a semi-final against fierce rivals Ponty was probably the last fixture he wanted. But Stone is having none of it. "When I saw the draw, I did think 'what a game' but, to coin an old adage, you have to beat all the best teams to win the cup."

Like many a former Cardiff stalwart, Stone had his fair share of battles against Ponty in his 300-plus games for the club he loves, and he is full of praise for the Sardis Road club's passionate supporters. "Sure, they give you loads of stick and abuse during the game, but afterwards they're good as gold."

Interestingly, he feels the club has a great deal to thank the Konica Minolta Cup for. In February, Cardiff travelled to Division 1 league leaders Bonymaen for their fifth round clash. "A lot of people expected an upset but we held on to win

23-16. That was possibly the season's turning point. We gained that little bit of confidence from the game and started to play some decent rugby."

And, as for Cardiff's flirtation with relegation, Stone is unflinching. "We lost head coach Mike Rayer to Bedford weeks before the start of the season, and soon after saw three key players – Dan McShane, Johnny Edwards and Liam Roberts – head out of the club, but even so, I didn't expect us to be fighting for Premiership survival."

Some old rivals have been quick to relish the club's

In the face of adversity, however, Stone believes that his young squad has shown real character and grit. He singles out 18-year-old loose head Rhys Gill for some special praise. "He's been exceptional. He's packed down against some grizzled old tight heads and held his own. We've also seen our fullback Jamie Roberts and Dafydd Hewitt on Under 21s duty, while second row Bradley Davies has been on Under 19s duty."

Stone admits that his first season as head coach has been all-consuming. "It's been a testing season. Mike Rayer was

**"WE'VE BEEN GETTING PLENTY OF STICK AROUND THE GROUNDS, BUT YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE IT ON THE CHIN AND GRIND OUT RESULTS"**

predicament, says the Cardiff coach. "We've been having plenty of stick around the grounds, with old sparring partners Bridgend and Newport chanting 'going down, going down', but you've got to take it on the chin and grind out results. Clubs have always been desperate to beat Cardiff. It's never been any different."

full-time last year, but because of financial constraints, I'm still running my own electrical business. There's a vast amount of organisational work to be done and I have had a great deal of help from Keith Morgan, our team manager. Together, we're finding our feet and I expect us to be a very different proposition next season."

PICTURES: HUW EVANS

Closer to you  
Yn agos atoch

official partners of the WRU  
partneriaid swyddogol URC

principality.co.uk

PRINCIPALITY

# CARDIFF'S ROUTE TO THE SEMI-FINALS



## ROUND 3, DECEMBER 3, 2005 LAUGHARNE 12-39 CARDIFF

A comfortable away day for Cardiff as they blitzed their hosts in a devastating early display that saw them race to a 34-point lead after just 26 minutes. Captain Owen Ruttley led by example, bagging the first try from a five-metre scrum, while Chris Anderson hit a perfect six out of six with the boot. *Cardiff scorers: Tries – Lewis (2), Ruttley, Brillante, Purcell; Cons – Anderson (4); Pens – Anderson (2)*

## ROUND 4, JANUARY 14, 2006 TONMAWR 6-12 CARDIFF

Cardiff's hosts have a proud cup record in recent seasons and it was easy to see why in this testing clash. Tonmawr opened the scoring with a penalty goal after 15 minutes and kept the pressure on to lead 6-3 after 54 minutes. The Blue & Blacks finally took the lead with five minutes to go and a last penalty in the dying moments sealed the win. *Pens – Anderson (4)*

## ROUND 5, FEBRUARY 18, 2006 BONYMAEN 16-23 CARDIFF

A fourth-minute penalty gave Cardiff a lead they never lost against high-flying Bonymaen and an outstanding forwards display ensured their progression in the Cup. The hosts were hampered by three sin-binnings in a fiercely competitive match that brought two yellow cards for Bonymaen and 12 minutes of injury time. *Tries – Gravell, Jones, Leaman; Cons – Anderson; Pens – Anderson, Williams-Davies*

## QUARTER-FINAL, APRIL 1, 2006 CARDIFF 10-0 LLANDOVERY

No points extravaganza. Cardiff frustrated their opponents with some solid defence work as they weathered a first-half onslaught to reach the break without conceding. With the wind at their backs in the second half the Blue & Blacks attacked and won penalties, converting their third to open their account after over an hour of rugby. A 75th-minute converted try ensured a memorable Cup victory. *Tries – Jones; Cons – Macleod; Pens – Macleod*

	<b>JAMIE ROBERTS</b>
	POSITION: Fullback
	HEIGHT: 1.96m
	WEIGHT: 97kg
	DOB: 8.11.86

	<b>ELGAN JONES</b>
	POSITION: Wing
	HEIGHT: 1.83m
	WEIGHT: 93kg
	DOB: 20.2.82

	<b>DAFYDD HEWITT</b>
	POSITION: Centre
	HEIGHT: 1.80m
	WEIGHT: 86kg
	DOB: 21.8.85

	<b>RICHARD DAVIES</b>
	POSITION: Fly-half/Centre
	HEIGHT: 1.80m
	WEIGHT: 84kg
	DOB: 2.10.78

	<b>JONATHAN HILL</b>
	POSITION: Centre
	HEIGHT: 1.85m
	WEIGHT: 93kg
	DOB: 22.6.83

	<b>LEON ANDREWS</b>
	POSITION: Fullback
	HEIGHT: 1.78m
	WEIGHT: 89kg
	DOB: 6.6.84

	<b>TOM ISAACS</b>
	POSITION: Scrum-half
	HEIGHT: 1.80m
	WEIGHT: 83kg
	DOB: 18.2.87

	<b>JAMES MALPAS</b>
	POSITION: No 8
	HEIGHT: 1.96m
	WEIGHT: 112kg
	DOB: 1.1.83

	<b>GARETH GRAVELL (CAPTAIN)</b>
	POSITION: Flanker
	HEIGHT: 1.83m
	WEIGHT: 102kg
	DOB: 29.10.80

	<b>NEIL COLES</b>
	POSITION: Flanker
	HEIGHT: 1.85m
	WEIGHT: 102kg
	DOB: 3.4.81

	<b>CHRIS STAMATAKIS</b>
	POSITION: Second row
	HEIGHT: 1.96m
	WEIGHT: 106kg
	DOB: 21.1.82

	<b>ROBERT MEREDITH</b>
	POSITION: Second row
	HEIGHT: 1.98m
	WEIGHT: 111kg
	DOB: 23.1.82

	<b>NATHAN TREVETT</b>
	POSITION: Prop
	HEIGHT: 1.78m
	WEIGHT: 112kg
	DOB: 23.3.85

	<b>MICHAEL LEAMAN</b>
	POSITION: Hooker
	HEIGHT: 1.80m
	WEIGHT: 94kg
	DOB: 9.6.81

	<b>GERAINT MORRIS</b>
	POSITION: Prop
	HEIGHT: 1.91m
	WEIGHT: 108kg
	DOB: 30.10.82

<b>COACHES</b>	
Coach	Howard Stone
Coach	Colin Laity
Fitness Coach	Gerrit Bantjes
Team Manager	Keith Morgan

	<b>KHALID JAMA</b>
	POSITION: Hooker
	HEIGHT: 1.75m
	WEIGHT: 95kg
	DOB: 10.9.81

	<b>RICHARD JONES</b>
	POSITION: Centre
	HEIGHT: 1.88m
	WEIGHT: 98kg
	DOB: 1.9.82

	<b>CHRIS JONES</b>
	POSITION: Flanker
	HEIGHT: 1.91m
	WEIGHT: 102kg
	DOB: 3.11.82

	<b>RHYS GILL</b>
	POSITION: Prop
	HEIGHT: 1.85m
	WEIGHT: 109kg
	DOB: 30.10.86

	<b>CHRIS ANDERSON</b>
	POSITION: Outside-half
	HEIGHT: 1.80m
	WEIGHT: 87kg
	DOB: 22.1.81

	<b>GARETH WILLIAMS-DAVIES</b>
	POSITION: Prop
	HEIGHT: 1.91m
	WEIGHT: 108kg
	DOB: 30.10.82

	<b>NICK GILL</b>
	POSITION: Wing/Centre
	HEIGHT: 1.80m
	WEIGHT: 92kg
	DOB: 7.1.86

<b>TOP POINTS SCORERS THIS SEASON</b>	
Chris Anderson:	2 Tries; 24 Cons; 43 Pens. Total 187
Nick Macleod:	1 Try; 11 Cons; 13 Pens. Total 66
Elgan Jones:	7 Tries. Total 35





# Wing man

Cardiff's right wing has a habit of scoring tries and Elgan Jones, the player who has helped them climb the Premiership, has no intention of stopping now

The Arms Park has played host to many prolific wingers in its long history, from the wizardry of Gerald Davies to the blistering pace of Chris Czekaj. However, not all of its try-hounds have such a high profile. Delve a little deeper into the Principality Premiership and loyal fans of Cardiff RFC will tell you that they have a flyer who bears the Blue and Blacks' impeccable try-scoring heritage week in, week out.

Elgan Jones has scored no less than 40 tries in little over 100 appearances since the Premiership's inception three years ago. The 24-year-old, a former Cardiff Youth and Under 21 representative, has been integral to Cardiff's recent improved form, which has seen them register seven victories from their last nine games to lift them out of the basement of the Premiership.

Jones is modest about his input, pointing to other players as reason for their upturn. "We lost a bit of confidence earlier in the season but Howard Stone brought in Richard Davies and Gareth Gravell from Coventry and they added a bit of steel to our play. We have a talented core of young players, where the average age is 22 or 23, and that's definitely the way it should be, but some added nous can go a long way."

Jones is under no illusions about the toughness of Friday's assignment. "Pontypridd are a quality side and even though we went down 28-16 earlier in



the season, it was one of our better performances."

So where does Jones see the difference between the sides? "The game will be won up front. Ponty have a terrific engine room with old heads like Dale McIntosh and Nathan Strong looking to give them a platform, but if we can compete, we have a chance."

Pressed to pinpoint his strengths, Jones admits to loving the ball in hand, continually looking for work, and a sound reading of the game. "Oh, and I think I've got a good nose for the try line," he laughs.

A former Wales Under 18 and Under 19 cap, where his contemporaries included Nicky Robinson (a former classmate at Glantaf), Gavin Henson and Robin Sowden-Taylor, Jones is

pragmatic about his chances of winning a regional contract: "If anything came up, great, but I'm not holding out for one. With the Academy structure we have in place, the older you are, the harder it is to get the break. Players like Lee Byrne are becoming exceptions to the rule. I'm just concentrating on doing my best for Cardiff. I just hope some of the younger guys like Jamie Roberts and Dafydd Hewitt are given a chance."

Like many who have missed out on contracts, Jones is now in full-time employment, as a land buyer – a fact that makes him appreciate the game even more. "I just love my rugby, and long may it continue. Wouldn't it be great to play next door."

Ponty's defence take heed.

PICTURES: HUW EVANS

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A PILOT TO FLY IN THE RAF.

You could be an engineer, a medic, a gunner or choose from a wide range of challenging careers. To be a part of the crew you'll need an appetite for adventure, ambition, and of course, team spirit. Then fly. The sky's the limit.

0845 605 5555

raf.mod.uk/careers

ROYAL AIR FORCE

Rise above the rest

The RAF values every individual's unique contribution, irrespective of race, ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation or social background. However, for reasons of combat effectiveness, the RAF Regiment is open to two uses of the word.



# CARDIFF v PONTYPRIDD

RODNEY PARADE, NEWPORT, APRIL 21, 2006, 7.10PM



15 JAMIE ROBERTS

14 ELGAN JONES

13 DAFYDD HEWITT

12 RICHARD DAVIES

11 JONATHAN HILL

10 LEON ANDREWS

9 TOM ISAACS

8 JAMES MALPAS

7 GARETH GRAVELL (C)

6 NEIL COLES

5 CHRIS STAMATAKIS

4 ROBERT MEREDITH

3 NATHAN TREVETT

2 MICHAEL LEAMAN

1 GERAINT MORRIS

15 JASON POCOCK

14 CHRIS CLAYTON

13 TOM RILEY

12 DAFYDD LOCKYER

11 MATTHEW NUTHALL

10 DAI FLANAGAN

9 GARETH JONES

8 NATHAN STRONG

7 RHYS SHELLARD

6 LEE EVANS

5 GRANT HARRINGTON

4 DALE MCINTOSH (C)

3 SCOTT ROBERTS

2 LEIGHTON DAVIES

1 STUART WILLIAMS

## REPLACEMENTS

16 TOM DICKENS

17 PAUL MATTHEWS

18 DARREN BERRY

19 BEN PHILLIPS

20 RYAN HARFORD

21 CHRIS DICOMIDIS

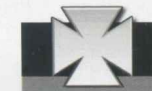
22 ADAM POWELL

### In the event of a tie the winners will be determined by the following criteria:

1. The club which has scored the greater number of tries.
2. The club which has scored the greater number of converted tries.
3. If after 1 and 2 have been applied no clear winner has emerged, extra-time of 20 minutes (10 minutes each way) will be played. If the scores are still level at the end of extra-time then points 1 and 2 will be applied again.
4. If the result is still a tie then a replay shall be arranged and played within 14 days.
5. If the result is still a tie after that then the winners will be decided by the toss of a coin.

# MAESTEG v NEATH

TALBOT ATHLETIC GROUND, ABERAVON, APRIL 23, 2006, 5.10PM



15 LLOYD WARNER

14 GRANT EPTON

13 RODDY BOOBYER

12 JOHN DEVEREUX

11 GARETH JOHN

10 STUART MORRIS

9 KEVIN ELLIS

8 MATTHEW WAREHAM

7 IAN BOOBYER (C)

6 MARCUS SAINSBURY

5 MICHAEL COLLINS

4 GAVIN RONAN

3 STEVE TREMLETT

2 GARETH THOMAS

1 GARETH EDWARDS

## BACKS

ALED BEVAN

ALED BREW

NEIL CLAPHAM

JAMES HOOK

PATRICK HORGAN

GARETH JAMES

RICHARD JOHNSTON

GARETH MORRIS

WAYNE MITCHELL

MARTIN ROBERTS

JONATHAN SPRATT

ARWEL THOMAS

STEPHEN THOMAS

## FORWARDS

BEN DAVIES

JAMES DAVIES

CAI GRIFFITHS

ANDREW HOWELL

HWYEL JENKINS

PAUL JONES

ANDREW LITTLEHALES

ANDREW LLEWELLYN

JOHN MCPHAIL

DAN MCSHANE

STEVE MARTIN (C)

MARTIN MORGAN

CRAIG MITCHELL

SIMON PENGELLY

GERWYN PRICE

ED SHERRINGTON

ALUN WYN DAVIES

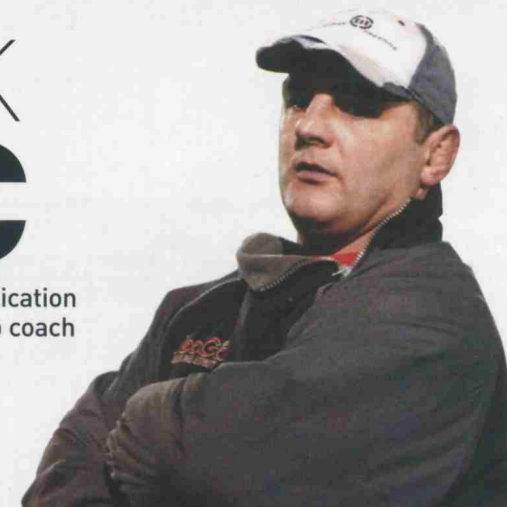
Teams accurate as of April 19, 2006

### MATCH OFFICIALS - Cardiff v Pontypridd

REFEREE Hugh Watkins  
TOUCH JUDGE 1 James Jones  
TOUCH JUDGE 2 Matthew Aplin  
TOUCH JUDGE 3 Robert Mota

### MATCH OFFICIALS - Maesteg v Neath

REFEREE Phil Fear  
TOUCH JUDGE 1 Howard Hopkins  
TOUCH JUDGE 2 Gary Davis  
TOUCH JUDGE 3 Lyndon Young



# ALL BLACK MAGIC

Neath's enviable record is the result of dedication both on and off the field of play claims club coach Rowland Phillips

**A** budding TV career has provided rugby fans with an insight into Rowland Phillips' light-hearted side, but one thing he is deadly serious about is Neath RFC. The former Neath and Wales back row man has turned the Welsh All Blacks into a formidable unit, beaten only once in this season's Principality Premiership campaign.

What his two decades in the game have taught him, however, is not to take anything for granted. So, although Maesteg lie 14 places below Neath in the Premiership, he will be affording last season's Division 1 champions the ultimate respect. "We came away 25-9 winners the other day but there wasn't much between the sides. They have bags of experience and a tremendous competitive spirit. Whichever side takes their opportunities this weekend will be lining up at the Millennium Stadium on May 6."

Of Phillips' many club battles against Maesteg, what sticks in his mind is their tenacity. "They never know when they're beaten. You may beat them on the scoreboard but they'll make you fight for everything."

Three veterans who embody Maesteg's never-say-die attitude are Kevin Ellis and Allan Bateman and John Devereux, and Phillips is quick to doff his cap to their longevity. "I played with the boys in league and their experience will be telling on the big stage." Ever the joker, he adds that they're only still going because they've had an easy life in the backs. "I've been dogging it out up front where the real game is. I've taken the knocks for these boys long enough," he laughs.

Even though the majority of players taking to the field this weekend are in their early 20s, Phillips refuses to believe that they will be overawed by the occasion. "The youngsters coming through at the moment don't bear any semblance to the players of my youth. They are amazingly dedicated and confident."

As coach of Wales Under 18s, Phillips is aware that promising youngsters will one day leave Neath for the lure of regional rugby. "All we can do is give ourselves a pat on the back. You want to keep the quality players but we understand the process. If we are producing regional

players then the system is working and we feel part of that."

Phillips believes that the club's success lies in its strength in depth; typified at fly-half, where former Welsh international Arwel Thomas has shepherded Neath to win after win during the absences of Wales Under 21 star James Hook. And when both have been unavailable, the club has even been able to call on the Ospreys' Matthew Jones.

If other teams in the Premiership have cast covetous glances in the Gnoll's direction, Phillips makes it perfectly clear that success has been earned on and off the field. "Myself, Patrick Horgan and Jonathan Bowen have put a lot of hard work in, but at the end of the day it's the players who take that unique Neath ethos onto the field."

As a former Welsh All Black, Phillips also acknowledges the essential part played by the passionate Neath crowd. "When I played for Neath in the '80s there were sell-outs every game. These days, they are a little older and greyer but they are still there and appreciate what we're trying to do." For Phillips and Neath, it seems, the good times lie ahead.

PICTURES: HUW EVANS



## Train a Grand Slam Team



Building Excellence on any Field of Play

Proud sponsors of Wales U18 & U19 squads



\*Modern Apprenticeships / Foundation Apprenticeships are part financed by the European Union Structural Funds Objective 1 and Objective 3, provided through the Welsh Assembly Government through the European Social Fund

High performing staff and managers are crucial to the success of your business

With 80 well qualified staff and a ten-year track record in delivering training excellence, TALK·training can help fulfil all your business' skills needs through:

- T**op quality, tailor-made training and assessment across many vital skills
- A**pprenticeships spanning a wide range of key occupations
- L**evels of training which cater for all junior through to senior staff
- K**nowledge of a variety of fields including IT, customer care and manufacturing



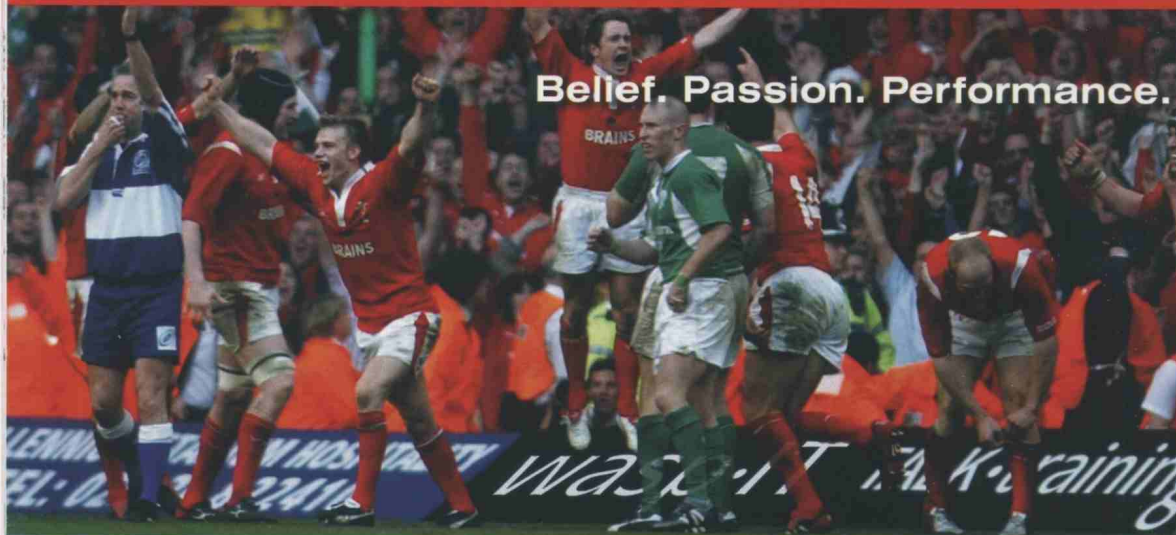
t: 01443 848 306

e: tjones@talktraining.co.uk



## "Wasp IT. Powering Welsh Business"

50 Firms rely on Wales largest IT solutions provider to run their business systems  
60 Professionals supporting you around the clock



**Belief. Passion. Performance.**

Proud sponsors of Wales U18 & U19 squads



Telephone 01443 657 100  
or email pdavenport@wasp-it.co.uk  
www.wasp-it.co.uk

## NEATH'S ROUTE TO THE SEMI-FINALS



### ROUND 3, DECEMBER 3, 2005 TAFFS WELLS 3-86 NEATH

The hosts began brightly but Neath took the lead through a Steve Thomas try and never looked back, scoring 43 points in each half. Both wings scored four tries apiece and it was the highest score ever recorded by Neath in a Cup match as well as a record-winning margin. A good day's work.

*Neath scorers: Tries – S Thomas (4), Llewellyn, Johnston (4), James, Morgan, Morris, penalty try; Cons – A Thomas (7), Spratt, Bevan; Pens – A Thomas*

### ROUND 4, JANUARY 14, 2006 NEATH 11-3 BRIDGEND

A tough encounter that saw just one try in a match played without the benefit of touch judges, an addition that might have led to two crucial Neath "tries" being awarded. Some huge tackles were made in this very physical tie that saw the Blacks' Tom Smith sin-binned just before half-time. A solid Neath defence in the second-half repelled all attacks and the boot of James Hook assured a place in the next round. Bridgend used all their wits but were unable to lay their Gnoll hoodoo to rest.

*Tries – Clapham; Pens – Hook (2)*

### ROUND 5, FEBRUARY 18, 2006 NEATH 51-7 LLANGENNECH

A comfortable eight-try victory for Neath over a gallant Llangennech side that never caved in and probably deserved a couple more tries themselves. The Blacks started as they meant to go on with a Neil Clapham try inside two minutes. A penalty and two more tries quickly followed, with the visitors finding it hard to retain possession. However, they battled on and grabbed a converted try before half-time to make it 32-7 at the break. Encouraged by their score, Llan started brightly and had the upper hand territorially, but the Neath defence held firm and when they turned the screw, began to accrue points once more.

*Tries – Clapham (3), Johnston, S Thomas (2), penalty try, Bevan; Cons – Bevan (4); Pens – Bevan*

### QUARTER-FINAL, APRIL 1, 2006 SWANSEA 13-33 NEATH

A strong wind suggested that this would be a "game of two halves" and the Blacks had a terrible start when Swansea scored a converted try then a penalty without reply to go in 10-0 to the good. After the restart Neath got on the board with a Jonathan Spratt touchdown, which Arwel Thomas converted and two more tries ten minutes from time set the score at 19-13. The stronger side now, the Blacks added two more converted tries to clinch the win. A classic Cup encounter.

*Tries – Spratt, A Thomas, Bevan, Horgan, Mitchell; Cons – A Thomas (4)*

	<b>ALED BEVAN</b>
POSITION: Utility Back	
HEIGHT: 1.85m	
WEIGHT: 89kg	
DOB: 20.9.84	

	<b>ALED BREW</b>
POSITION: Wing	
HEIGHT: 1.83m	
WEIGHT: 95kg	
DOB: 9.8.86	

	<b>NEIL CLAPHAM</b>
POSITION: Outside-half	
HEIGHT: 1.75m	
WEIGHT: 76kg	
DOB: 28.4.78	

	<b>BEN DAVIES</b>
POSITION: Back row	
HEIGHT: 1.91m	
WEIGHT: 117kg	
DOB: 5.9.83	

	<b>JAMES DAVIES</b>
POSITION: Back row	
HEIGHT: 1.93m	
WEIGHT: 96kg	
DOB: 3.9.84	

	<b>CAI GRIFFITHS</b>
POSITION: Prop	
HEIGHT: 1.88m	
WEIGHT: 117kg	
DOB: 5.1.84	

	<b>JAMES HOOK</b>
POSITION: Outside-half	
HEIGHT: 1.83m	
WEIGHT: 81kg	
DOB: 27.6.85	

	<b>PATRICK HORGAN</b>
POSITION: Scrum-half	
HEIGHT: 1.75m	
WEIGHT: 80kg	
DOB: 8.11.73	

	<b>ANDREW HOWELL</b>
POSITION: Prop	
HEIGHT: 1.88m	
WEIGHT: 116kg	
DOB: 5.6.65	

	<b>GARETH JAMES</b>
POSITION: Scrum-half	
HEIGHT: 1.80m	
WEIGHT: 88kg	
DOB: N/A	

	<b>HYWEL JENKINS</b>
POSITION: Back row	
HEIGHT: 1.93m	
WEIGHT: 112kg	
DOB: 7.3.76	

	<b>RICHARD JOHNSTON</b>
POSITION: Wing	
HEIGHT: 1.78m	
WEIGHT: 80kg	
DOB: 26.2.80	

	<b>PAUL JONES</b>
POSITION: Prop	
HEIGHT: 1.85m	
WEIGHT: 112kg	
DOB: 24.3.67	

	<b>ANDREW LITTLEHALES</b>
POSITION: Hooker	
HEIGHT: 1.78m	
WEIGHT: 105kg	
DOB: 7.10.83	

	<b>ANDREW LLEWELLYN</b>
POSITION: Back row	
HEIGHT: 1.83m	
WEIGHT: 108kg	
DOB: 31.8.80	

	<b>JOHN MCPHAIL</b>
POSITION: Back row	
HEIGHT: 1.91m	
WEIGHT: 108kg	
DOB: 27.1.76	

	<b>DAN MCSHANE</b>
POSITION: Back row	
HEIGHT: 1.91m	
WEIGHT: 107kg	
DOB: 16.10.79	

	<b>STEVE MARTIN (CAPT)</b>
POSITION: Second row	
HEIGHT: 1.96m	
WEIGHT: 114kg	
DOB: 23.8.74	

	<b>MARTIN MORGAN</b>
POSITION: Second row	
HEIGHT: 1.98m	
WEIGHT: 114kg	
DOB: 22.2.79	

	<b>GARETH MORRIS</b>
POSITION: Fullback	
HEIGHT: 1.78m	
WEIGHT: 93kg	
DOB: 10.8.77	

	<b>CRAIG MITCHELL</b>
POSITION: Prop	
HEIGHT: 1.85m	
WEIGHT: 110kg	
DOB: 3.5.86	

	<b>WAYNE MITCHELL</b>
POSITION: Centre	
HEIGHT: 1.80m	
WEIGHT: 93kg	
DOB: 18.10.83	

	<b>SIMON PENGELLY</b>
POSITION: Flanker	
HEIGHT: 1.88m	
WEIGHT: 102kg	
DOB: 11.2.83	

	<b>GERWYN PRICE</b>
POSITION: Hooker	
HEIGHT: 1.78m	
WEIGHT: 97kg	
DOB: 7.3.85	

	<b>MARTIN ROBERTS</b>
POSITION: Scrum-half	
HEIGHT: 1.75m	
WEIGHT: 76kg	
DOB: 6.6.86	

	<b>ED SHERVINGTON</b>
POSITION: Hooker	
HEIGHT: 1.80m	
WEIGHT: 105kg	
DOB: 11.3.85	

	<b>JONATHAN SPRATT</b>
POSITION: Centre	
HEIGHT: 1.88m	
WEIGHT: 93kg	
DOB: 28.4.86	

	<b>ARWEL THOMAS</b>
POSITION: Outside-half	
HEIGHT: 1.73m	
WEIGHT: 76kg	
DOB: 8.11.74	

	<b>STEPHEN THOMAS</b>
POSITION: Centre	
HEIGHT: 1.80m	
WEIGHT: 103kg	
DOB: 26.9.80	

	<b>ALUN WYN DAVIES</b>
POSITION: Hooker/Prop	
HEIGHT: 1.80m	
WEIGHT: 106kg	
DOB: 14.9.84	

#### TOP POINTS SCORERS THIS SEASON

James Hook Tries 9; Cons 46; Pens 48; DGs 2. Total 287  
Arwel Thomas Tries 9; Cons 26; Pens 9. Total 123  
Stephen Thomas Tries 23. Total 115

#### COACHES

Senior Coach Rowland Phillips  
Assistant Coach Patrick Horgan  
Fitness Coach John Bowen  
Physiotherapist Nichole Pickrell



# ASDA

Proud Community Partners  
of The Welsh Rugby Union



## Vintage point

Neath's veteran prop Paul Jones knows it'll be no easy task to overcome Maesteg but will bring all of his experience to bear to do just that

**T**hey say props mature with age, and at 39, Paul Jones seems to be in the form of his life. To appreciate just how long he's been packing down, you have to consider the fact that his front row partner Craig Mitchell was yet to be born when Jones ran on for his first-class debut.

It seems that after 20 years at the coalface, Jones is still playing the game for one simple reason. "The sheer enjoyment. Once you hang your boots up, you're a long time retired."

A spectator at last week's 25-9 victory over Maesteg,

Jones knows that title leaders Neath won't get an easy passage to the Millennium Stadium. "You can never underestimate Maesteg. They are dangerous up front and take the ball on. They have a never-say-die attitude. Just look how close they ran Bridgend last weekend."

So does Jones feel like a spring chicken when facing two 40-year-olds in the form of Kevin Ellis and John Devereux? "Ask me after the game," he smiles. "Those boys have been there and done that." And he'll miss his injured former-club colleague Allan Bateman. "I last played

with him in Bermuda a few years ago for the Barbarians. I can't praise him highly enough."

Jones believes the way to keep fresh is to constantly seek new challenges. "I know my strengths but you have got to keep moving with the game. Rowland [Phillips] is always trying to bring something new to training to keep one step ahead of the opposition."

His unrivalled playing experience has led to Jones becoming team manager this season and it's a role that gives him the chance to cast an eye over the club's young tyros. "Cai Griffiths has shown real promise but on the other side of the scrum Craig Mitchell has been exceptional. He's had some experienced boys against him and held his own. There are not many special tight heads around so give him a couple of years and he could name his price."

Paul acknowledges that the aches and pains are catching up with him – "Sometimes the last thing you want to do is be at the bottom of a maul on a wet, wintry Monday evening" – but will he be hanging up his boots at the end of the season? "I've been asked by Neath to stay on for another year. I've really enjoyed my rugby this season, especially considering the fact that I nearly quit at the end of last season after a disappointing campaign, but I didn't want to finish my career on a low and I'm really glad I stuck with it. This season is shaping up to be a little bit special."

Neath will keep their fingers crossed that Jones bows out having reached the big 40.

PICTURES: HUW EVANS

THE GREAT BALANCE OF TASTE  
AND ICE COLD REFRESHMENT

SPOT  
ON

CARLING  
EXTRA COLD

COACH'S VIEW

## DOUBLE TROUBLE

Their club may be seen as underdogs, but coaches Gareth Brown and Leighton O'Connor believe an upset is on the cards



Once a Maesteg boy, always a Maesteg boy", is a maxim easily applied to the club's coaching duo of Gareth Brown and Leighton O'Connor. Both former players at the Old Parish, they are now in their fourth year at Maesteg, after coaching stints at Blaengarw and Tondy.

It will be their tenth season together – as the unassuming Leighton chuckles, "It's a bit like a marriage. We first met at Tondy when I was the coach and he was the club captain and we just seemed to work well together." As for Brown, the more ebullient character, he feels a semi-final is no more than the club deserves. "It's a real boost to the club to be in the spotlight, there's been a real buzz in Maesteg."

The onset of professionalism has seen tough times for the Llynfi Valley outfit, but under the guidance of joint coaches Brown and O'Connor, they have progressed from the bottom of Division 2 to their first season in the Principality Premiership. Despite a battle with relegation, O'Connor is proud of their campaign. "Whatever happens at the end of the season," he says, "we've loved the experience."

And the match against Neath represents another barometer of

just how far back up the rugby pyramid they have progressed. "I think 100 per cent of the Welsh public will think Neath are in the final, a formality," says Brown. "But it's all on the day. We are desperate to make it to the Cup Final; the chance doesn't come along every year." O'Connor concurs with his partner, "They are a quality side, as their record shows, but are beatable. I'm convinced of that."

Pressed on Neath's strengths, Brown admits that on paper, they are formidable opponents. "They've only lost one game all season. James Hook is a quality player and on the wing Aled Brew has real pace. Allly this to

### "MAESTEG CAN OFFER MORE THAN JUST STERN RESISTANCE"

the experience of Paul Jones and Steve Martin and you can see what we're up against." However, Brown feels that last week's game in the Premiership gave them hope. "We missed a simple penalty to go in 9-10 at half-time, and were always in the game. 25-9 didn't tell the whole story."

Brown also knows that his own side has some talent to worry the bigger names in the game, many of whom have come

through the rapidly improving youth and development set-up. "If they perform for 80 minutes, Maesteg could well offer more than just stern resistance. Loose head Gareth Edwards is one of the best props in the league, Mike Collins is pushing for an Ospreys contract, and Matthew Wareham at No 8 is a former Wales Youth cap. Our team has come from within a 15-mile radius, it's brought the club back together. I'm proud of them all."

At the other end of the age range, O'Connor extols the virtues of the Boobyer brothers, Roddy and Ian, "they've been immense," and the celebrated trio of Ellis, Bateman and

Devereux. "They are the first to training and the last to leave. They have a super work ethic and are happy to pass on their experience. It makes our job a little easier."

While a slot in the Cup Final would be a dream for the coaches, almost in tandem, they outline their number one priority. "To stay in the Premiership, pure and simple. We have the facilities and the squad to go forward – and that is our main goal."

## MAESTEG'S ROUTE TO THE SEMI-FINALS



### ROUND 3, DECEMBER 3, 2005 MAESTEG 62-10 KENFIG HILL

An emphatic win for Maesteg with nine tries sealing a stirring performance. A disjointed first half saw the hosts leading 17-3 at the turn, but they turned up the pressure in the second period to overwhelm a dogged Kenfig Hill side.

*Maesteg scorers: Tries – I Boobyer, Megraw, R Boobyer, Williams, Hutchings, Epton, Davies, N Dixon, J Dixon; Cons – J Dixon (3), Smithson (4); Pens – Smithson*

### ROUND 4, JANUARY 14, 2006 MAESTEG 34-16 CARMARTHEN QUINS

First blood to Carmarthen with a penalty on seven minutes but cracking Gareth John try put Maesteg on the front foot and two more tries without reply saw them 17-3 up at half-time. Hosts in control at the restart and two further tries put them away. Visitors fought on with two late tries, too late.

*Tries – Epton, John, Ellis, Hocking, penalty try; Cons – J Dixon (3); Pens – J Dixon*

### ROUND 5, FEBRUARY 18, 2006 DUNVANT 24-39 MAESTEG

A dream start for the visitors with two converted tries and a penalty inside 13 minutes. Dunvant hit back with a magnificent 70-yard Owen Price try but Maesteg replied quickly – 22-5 at the break. Second period more productive for the hosts, but Maesteg dominated the final moments to cap a fine win.

*Tries – Williams, Edwards, Warner, R Boobyer, I Boobyer; Cons – Smithson (3), Morris; Pens – Smithson, Morris*

### QUARTER-FINAL, APRIL 1, 2006 MAESTEG 27-8 NEWPORT

Newport came out fighting with two penalties in three minutes leading to a try from a five-metre lineout. A penalty made it 8-0 after 16 minutes. Home side rallied and two converted tries before the break pleased the crowd. Second half better for the hosts with Morris's boot making the game safe.

*Tries – Devereux (2), Jones; Cons – Morris (3); Pens – Morris (2)*

	<b>LLOYD WARNER</b>
POSITION: Fullback	
HEIGHT: 1.78m	
WEIGHT: 89kg	
DOB: 28.4.82	

	<b>GRANT EPTON</b>
POSITION: Wing	
HEIGHT: 1.83m	
WEIGHT: 83kg	
DOB: 5.1.82	

	<b>RODDY BOOBYER</b>
POSITION: Centre	
HEIGHT: 1.83m	
WEIGHT: 93kg	
DOB: 11.6.72	

	<b>JOHN DEVEREUX</b>
POSITION: Centre	
HEIGHT: 1.85m	
WEIGHT: 100kg	
DOB: 30.3.66	

	<b>GARETH JOHN</b>
POSITION: Wing	
HEIGHT: 1.73m	
WEIGHT: 80kg	
DOB: 20.4.83	

	<b>STUART MORRIS</b>
POSITION: Fly-half	
HEIGHT: 1.91m	
WEIGHT: 86kg	
DOB: 24.11.71	

	<b>KEVIN ELLIS</b>
POSITION: Scrum-half	
HEIGHT: 1.75m	
WEIGHT: 86kg	
DOB: 29.5.65	

	<b>MATTHEW WAREHAM</b>
POSITION: No 8	
HEIGHT: 1.91m	
WEIGHT: 108kg	
DOB: 10.4.75	

	<b>IAN BOOBYER (CAPTAIN)</b>
POSITION: Flanker	
HEIGHT: 1.80m	
WEIGHT: 92kg	
DOB: 14.7.71	

	<b>MARCUS SAINSBURY</b>
POSITION: Back row	
HEIGHT: 1.78m	
WEIGHT: 90kg	
DOB: 25.1.78	

	<b>MICHAEL COLLINS</b>
POSITION: Second row	
HEIGHT: 2.01m	
WEIGHT: 102kg	
DOB: 21.7.86	

	<b>GAVIN ROMAN</b>
POSITION: Second row	
HEIGHT: 2.01m	
WEIGHT: 112kg	
DOB: 26.1.82	

	<b>STEVE TREMLETT</b>
POSITION: Prop	
HEIGHT: 1.80m	
WEIGHT: 108kg	
DOB: 15.3.81	

	<b>GARETH THOMAS</b>
POSITION: Hooker	
HEIGHT: 1.83m	
WEIGHT: 103kg	
DOB: 13.9.76	

	<b>GARETH EDWARDS</b>
POSITION: Prop	
HEIGHT: 1.78m	
WEIGHT: 106kg	
DOB: 6.5.78	

<b>COACHES</b>	
Coach	Leighton O'Connor
Coach	Gareth Brown
Team Manager	Christian Thomas
Director of Rugby	Colin Hopkins

	<b>CRAIG HOPKINS</b>
POSITION: Prop	
HEIGHT: 1.83m	
WEIGHT: 118kg	
DOB: 16.11.81	

	<b>LEE WILLIAMS</b>
POSITION: Hooker	
HEIGHT: 1.78m	
WEIGHT: 99kg	
DOB: 29.9.77	

	<b>ALEX PEEVER</b>
POSITION: Second row	
HEIGHT: 1.96m	
WEIGHT: 112kg	
DOB: 14.9.75	

	<b>GARETH BARTLETT</b>
POSITION: Back row	
HEIGHT: 1.88m	
WEIGHT: 102kg	
DOB: 26.8.80	

	<b>RICHARD MORGAN</b>
POSITION: Scrum-half	
HEIGHT: 1.75m	
WEIGHT: 83kg	
DOB: 23.3.73	

	<b>JAMES DIXON</b>
POSITION: Fly-half	
HEIGHT: 1.85m	
WEIGHT: 83kg	
DOB: 03.10.85	

	<b>ALUN BROWN</b>
POSITION: Centre	
HEIGHT: 1.78m	
WEIGHT: 95kg	
DOB: 26.6.73	

<b>TOP POINTS SCORERS THIS SEASON</b>	
James Dixon:	2 Tries; 17 Cons; 23 Pens. Total 113
Paul Smithson:	1 Try; 11 Cons; 14 Pens. Total 78
Grant Epton:	14 Tries; 1 DG. Total 73



# Big game hunter

For Maesteg's John Devereux, this weekend's game comes as a very welcome shot at Cup Final glory

At the turn of the year, John Devereux was coming to terms with the realisation that his glittering career had come to a premature end. A routine cartilage operation back in August had "opened a can of worms" that wouldn't go away and the former dual code Welsh international centre was facing a life on the touchline. Luckily for John, a self-confessed "terrible spectator", rest and no little rehabilitation brought an improvement and a return to his natural arena.

Devereux's first game of the season came days after his 40th birthday last month and will be talked about for a long time yet in the pubs of Maesteg. A power-packed performance brought him two tries and led Maesteg to a 27-8 win over Newport, and to within touching distance of the Konica Minolta Cup Final.

But first comes Sunday's tie with Neath. Devereux, perhaps unsurprisingly, is unfazed by the challenge. Having faced them in the recent 25-9 loss, he firmly believes the Welsh All Blacks are not invincible. "They have an excellent squad, but the game the other day was probably closer than the scoreline suggested. The difference was Arwel Thomas. He still has a sharp football brain and closed the game down. But you could never say we were given the runaround."

Devereux, for one, is more than happy not to be facing a bonecrunching tackle from his former Wales colleague Rowland Phillips and is sure the Neath man



could still cut it at this level. "He's the same age as me, but fair play to him, he has decided to let the younger players have a run."

Devereux has two decades of experience against the All Blacks with mixed results, his first game against them coming in 1985 while at UWIC. "I was only 18 and put in a man-of-the-match performance but ended up on the losing side, 13-12. They have a habit of doing that to you," he laughs.

Now a full-time medical rep, Devereux, is in his third year with Maesteg having answered a speculative call to arms from his old friend Allan Bateman. "After I came back from league, I had stints at Bridgend and Pontypool, which didn't work out. Allan asked me to play with Maesteg and I thought, 'Why not?'" In his

first season, they narrowly missed out on promotion before they finally made it back into the big time last spring.

He admits to finding this season particularly hard from the touchline. "I'd been looking forward to the Premiership, and it's been tough seeing games slipping by that we should have won. Only minor tweaks are needed here and there and we wouldn't be scrapping for Premiership survival."

And if Devereux and co. do pull it off on Sunday, few spectators could begrudge such a stalwart a final bow at the Millennium Stadium. "I was there for the Rob Howley, Scott Quinnell testimonial last summer, but I wasn't in my best shape," he admits. "It would be a dream to reach the big stage one final time."

PICTURES: HUW EVANS



THE OSPREYS WOULD LIKE TO WISH  
THEIR PREMIER FEEDER CLUBS



**MAESTEG & NEATH**  
THE BEST OF LUCK IN  
TODAYS KONICA  
MINOLTA CUP SEMI FINAL



**PLAY HARD AND PLAY FAIR.**

TO THE VICTORS COME THE  
SPOILS  
THE BEST OF LUCK TO  
WHOEVER MAY MAKE THE FINAL  
FROM ALL AT THE OSPREYS





# Cardiff Blues news



Craig Quinnell puts some kids through their paces

Cardiff Blues have taken great strides this season within the region, whether developing players in the Academy, advising coaches at the 56 clubs, or helping youngsters who simply want to play rugby.

## ADOPT A PLAYER

The Adopt a Player scheme allows each club within the Blues region to adopt a Blues player for their mini and junior sections. Adopted players are available to attend mini or junior section events such as presentation evenings, coaching sessions or other club events involving the mini or junior section. With 56 clubs in the Cardiff Blues region taking part in the Principality Premiership and the WRU ASDA Leagues there are a lot of clubs to cover, stretching from Builth Wells in Powys to Barry in the Vale of Glamorgan.

## COACHING CLINIC

Cardiff Blues have already held three community coaching clinics this season at Pontypridd RFC, Beddau RFC and Glamorgan Wanderers RFC. David Young, Rob Howley and Richard Webster held the sessions that were open to anyone interested in developing their coaching skills. All the coaching nights were extremely well attended and well received, and their success is growing with every event.

## ACADEMY

The WRU's Blues Academy is based at the University of Glamorgan Playing Fields, Treforest and offers individually based programmes for the 17 players aged between 17 and 21 within the Blues region. Each player receives expert advice and tuition on becoming a professional rugby player and some of the

Academy players such as Duane Goodfiled and Wayne Evans have already taken the step up to regional rugby. There are a number of talented players in the Academy to look out for in the future such as Wales Under 19's Grand Slam-winning captain Bradley Davies, centres Tom Riley and Dafydd Hewitt, and hooker Ross Johnston.

## COMMUNITY DAYS

The Blues have held Community Days for all Blues North Year 8 pupils at Rhydycar Leisure Centre in Merthyr Tydfil and Blues South Year 8 pupils at Sully Sports RFC in the Vale of Glamorgan. We've already done some great work in the community with visits to three hospitals (Royal Glamorgan Hospital in Llantrisant, Prince Charles Hospital in Merthyr and the University of Wales Hospital in Cardiff) and the Winter Wonderland Fair outside Cardiff City Hall. We're planning more events during the summer in the five local authorities within the Blues region.

## FUTURE BLUES

The Future Blues (the development scheme for the Cardiff Blues) was launched in November 2005 at Cardiff Arms Park and replaced the old Capital Rugby scheme. Working jointly with the WRU and the six Unitary Authorities the new scheme comprises 13 development officers working in Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan, South Powys, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Merthyr Tydfil local authorities that make up the Cardiff Blues region.

# Ospreys update

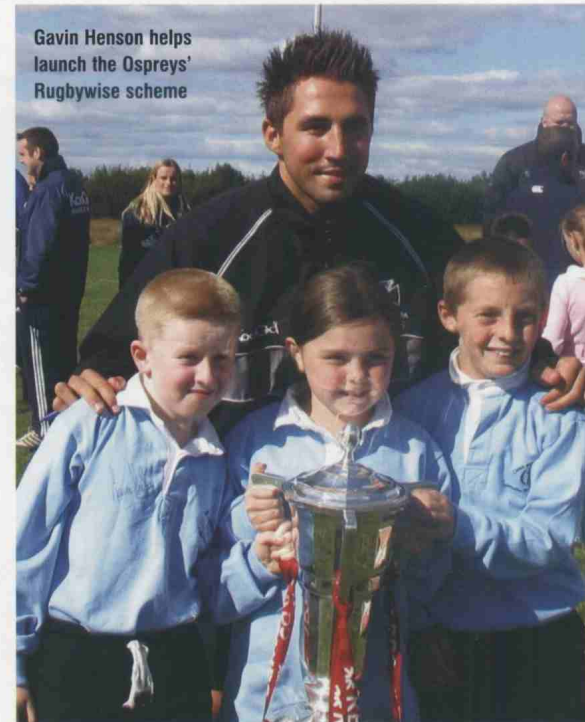


## EASTER TRAINING CAMPS

The Ospreys and their main sponsor, Npower renewables, are leading the way in grass roots rugby development with the launch of their first ever Easter camps for 350-plus 8 to 11-year-olds. The camps, which were held in Neath, Swansea and Bridgend, provided Ospreys Juniors from across the region with the opportunity to develop their rugby skills under the expert guidance of highly trained coaching staff. The children also had the chance to meet some of their Ospreys heroes during the week.

The camps ran from Monday, 17 until Friday, 21 April at Pencoed Comprehensive School in Bridgend, St Helen's Ground in Swansea, and Cwrt Herbert in Neath and confirmed the Ospreys' commitment to regional rugby.

Each camp consisted of five half day coaching sessions concentrating on both individual and team skills, as well as educational diet and lifestyle theory sessions, visits from Ospreys players, a complimentary ticket for the Scarlets match at the Liberty Stadium on Tuesday, 18 April, along with other Ospreys goodies, an attendance certificate and refreshments. Npower renewables in association with the Ospreys also offered three children the chance to be mascots for the day at the match.



Gavin Henson helps launch the Ospreys' Rugbywise scheme

## YOUNG OSPREYS

The Ospreys age-grade sides have had a very successful year. The Under 18s have already won their regional age group final with the Under 16s and Under 20s hoping to complete a WRU regional Reebok championships treble.

Age group rugby is booming within "Osprey-land" and the future is looking bright, with a number of Academy players making the grade at age group international level this season and numerous players breaking through to play for the regional team. With ex-Welsh legend Garin Jenkins as part of the coaching team, the Ospreys future is in the right hands for many years to come.

## RUGBYWISE

Gavin Henson and Ospreys manager Derwyn Jones helped launch Wales' first Rugbywise project at Penlan Rugby Club. A social inclusion project, Rugbywise aims to encourage participation in the sport, ensuring equal opportunities for all children to participate, regardless of age, gender, or social background. It is also an chance to get people back into work through the provision of sport and coach education opportunities.

The Osprey's regional community manager John Schroffer said "The Penlan Rugby Club has two fantastic pitches and a club house, as well as an extremely keen committee. By introducing the sport of rugby into the community, it is hoped that more people will take an interest in volunteering to coach."

## FORTHCOMING FIXTURES

Don't forget our upcoming fixture against Munster at the Liberty Stadium, Friday, 5 May kick off 7.10pm. Make sure you book your tickets early as we are expecting a bumper crowd.

For tickets call the ticket office on 08700 400004, visit the ticket office at the stadium or go to [www.ospreysrugby.com](http://www.ospreysrugby.com).

Everyone here at the Ospreys would like to wish our Premier Feeder teams Maesteg and Neath the best of luck in today's semi-final. It will be a fantastic occasion for players and supporters of both sides and whoever should make the final; our best wishes go to them in the showpiece of the Welsh semi-professional season.

PICTURES: HUW EVANS





# SPONSORS

THE WELSH RUGBY UNION AND MILLENNIUM STADIUM GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE OUR PRINCIPAL SPONSORS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND SUPPLIERS, WHOSE CONTINUED SUPPORT ALLOWS US TO INVEST FURTHER INTO BOTH ELITE AND COMMUNITY RUGBY. **THANK YOU.**

## TITLE SPONSOR



## BROADCAST PARTNERS



## PRINCIPAL PARTNERS



## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

### PRINCIPALITY



KONICA MINOLTA



## SPONSORS/SUPPLIERS



The best coverage of Welsh rugby on TV, radio and online.

Rygbi Cymru ar ei orau ar deledu, radio ac ar-lein.



[bbc.co.uk/wales](http://bbc.co.uk/wales)

[bbc.co.uk/cymru](http://bbc.co.uk/cymru)



KONICA MINOLTA

**Digital Copiers  
and Printers**

**Direct from your  
Local Manufacturer**

**Supporting  
the Welsh  
Rugby Union**



Konica Minolta Business Solutions (UK) Limited

Tenby House, Oaktree Court, Mulberry Drive, Cardiff Gate Business Park, Cardiff CF23 8RS

Tel: 02920 733873 • Fax: 02920 733854 • Email: [cardiffsales@bs.konicaminolta.co.uk](mailto:cardiffsales@bs.konicaminolta.co.uk)

[www.konicaminolta.co.uk](http://www.konicaminolta.co.uk)