



SWALEC CUP SEMI-FINALS 2010



Carmarthen Quins v Pontypridd

The Brewery Field, Bridgend. Saturday 17 April, 2.30pm

Llanelli v Cardiff

St Helens, Swansea. Sunday 18 April, 2.30pm

MATCHDAY
PROGRAMME £2

SWALEC CUP

SWALEC FINALS DAY 2010

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UP FOR THE CUP

BY GRAHAM CLUTTON

It would take a brave man to bet against any one of today's semi finalists and an even braver man to pick out an eventual winner of this season's SWALEC Cup.

Of course, a quick glance at the current Principality Premiership table and a five minute perusal of the history of this most prestigious of domestic competitions and you would, no doubt, predict a Pontypridd v Llanelli final on May 8.

Don't be fooled. Since the inception of the Welsh Cup back in 1971 when Neath beat Llanelli 15-9 at the National Stadium, the unpredictability of this wonderful competition has only added to its flavour.

So, forget the formbook, forget the current Premiership standings of this semi-final quartet and pay no attention whatsoever to the history of Welsh rugby's most colourful competition. It's all about what unfolds on the day and considering what the respective clubs have gone

through in reaching the last four, nothing will be taken for granted.

Whilst Pontypridd, who last lifted the trophy in 2006, have scored 152 points in beating Felinfoel, Swansea and Aberavon, it has been an altogether different story for Cardiff who needed an injury time penalty try to see off Bedlinog, a late, late show at Rodney Parade to deny Newport and a concerted effort to ease past Bedwas in a thrilling quarter-final at the Bridge Field.

The Blue and Blacks, who have yet to win the competition in the Millennium Years, come up against a Llanelli side hoping to lift the coveted silverware for the third time in seven years.

The Scarlets had two tries from youngster Dale Ford to thank for their second round victory over Ebbw Vale and a 70th minute try from Chris Keenan to thank for their 26-16 quarter final victory over Tonmawr. What's more, it was far



from straightforward in Round Three as Bargoed threatened to spring the season's biggest upset when leading comfortably at half time at Parc y Scarlets.

However, two Nick Reynolds tries and 17 points from the boot of Wales Under 20 squad member Steve Shingler secured their safe passage into the last eight. It's one apiece in the league this year, so keep your money safe and enjoy the

ride as arguably the two clubs with the greatest Cup pedigree go head to head.

If anyone does wish to take league form into account, it's neck and neck between Pontypridd and Carmarthen too. The Quins were 17-13 winners when the sides met at Carmarthen Park back in September, but Pontypridd reaped revenge at Sardis Road 10 days ago, winning 42-27 thanks to 20 points from Wales under 20 outside half Dean Gunter.

The Quins scored five consolation tries on that occasion and will need to show the same level of ambition in today's semi final.

It promises to be a veritable feast of rugby for all concerned. Let battle commence.



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QUINS HOPE TO MAKE IT FIRST TIME LUCKY

This afternoon is uncharted waters for the Quins, who have never before reached the semi-finals of the Welsh Cup competition. But now they are here they are determined to navigate their way to their first ever showpiece final.

The route to the last four by the club's own admission has not been an easy one, especially as all three ties they have played have been on the road. But they are proud of their achievement considering it is only their first year back in the top flight.

Drawn against their fiercest rivals Carmarthen Athletic in the second round was always going to be a difficult brief for the Quins.

"It was a tough derby," confirmed team manager Steff Thomas. "It took us a couple of late tries to seal a comprehensive win in the end.

But their next cup date could have easily seen the end of their cup run – a tricky trip to Gwent Valley outfit Blackwood from Division One East.

They were staring defeat directly in the face until a conversion from Gareth Cull sealed the win in the final couple of minutes following a try for Jason Harris.

"We could have easily been knocked out at Blackwood. We were trailing right down to the last few minutes. The match was played on a heavy pitch which was a bit of a leveller, and because of a lot of cancelled matches we didn't really have much momentum going into the Blackwood tie," explained Thomas.

"But that gave us the chance of a quarter-final shot at Glamorgan Wanderers and to be fair we turned out one of our better performances of the campaign.



BY RICHARD THOMAS

PLAYERS TO WATCH

JAMIE DAVIES

He might have only played the latter part of the season but three-quarter Jamie Davies has made an impact to the Carmarthen Quins' campaign.

"Unfortunately a shoulder injury has kept Jamie out for much of the season, but in his eight games for us recently he has scored six tries," said Quins team manager Steff Thomas.

"He has shown us what he is capable of in recent weeks and why he played for Wales Under-20s in last year's World Cup in Japan.

"The thing with Jamie is that he knows his way



to the try line and is definitely one to watch against Pontypridd."

ELLIS LLOYD

The teenage openside flanker is everything that is good about Carmarthen Quins this season.

"Ellis is a 19-year-old local lad who has made it onto the Wales Under-20 radar this season and has been involved in our match day squad throughout the campaign," said Thomas.

"He hasn't quite broken his way into the Under-20 reckoning but the match against Pontypridd gives him a big chance to show



what is capable of on a bigger stage.

"The way Ellis has performed this year he will be a major candidate for our player of the year award."



It's not just about enjoying our day in the semi-final. We are setting our sights on beating Ponty and getting to our first final



"We scored four good tries to go 31-12 up with about 10 minutes left. I think our players thought the match was wrapped up by then. But to be fair to the Wanderers they came back at us to cut the score to 31-26.

"Much to our relief we managed to hang on but it was a lesson in thinking you have won before you actually have." But now the Quins are in the last four they are

determined to at least go one stage further and reach a maiden final.

"It's not just about enjoying our day in the semi-final. We are setting our sights on beating Ponty and getting to our first final," insisted Thomas.

"When you get relegated like we did to Division One it is tough to get back. Not only have we managed that and got ourselves up to ninth place

in the Premiership but to do so well in the cup is a testament to the spirit in the squad.

"It will be hard to beat a side of the quality of Ponty, but if we could reach the final it could give us a chance to test ourselves against the cup kings – Llanelli. But even if we get to the final and it's Cardiff – last year's league champions – it would be a memorable day for everyone at the club."

BEEN THERE, DONE IT AND STILL LOVING IT

Paul John has been more fortunate than most. His playing career included 10 caps for his country and his coaching career has brought domestic and international success with Pontypridd and Wales Sevens.

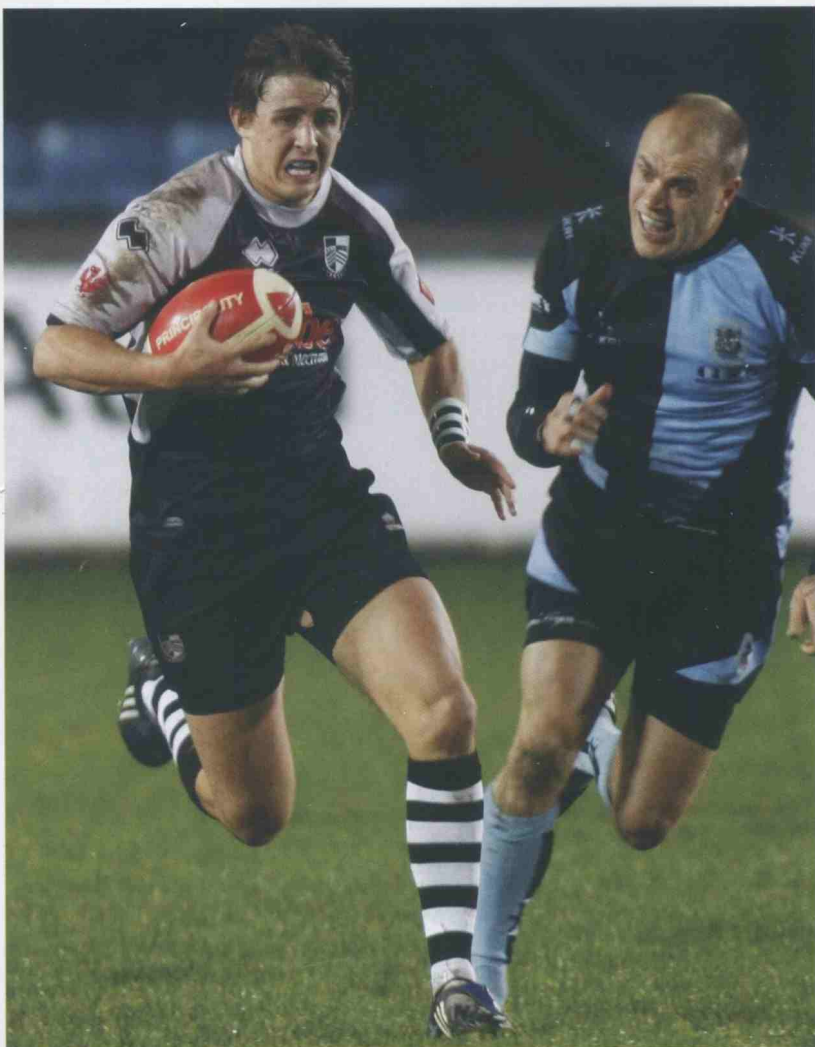
However, when the former Pontypridd and Wales scrum half sits down to pen his memoirs, the Welsh Cup will feature with great prominence. After all, when you've enjoyed and endured to the extent that Paul John did during his playing career at Sardis Road, it's a chapter in your life worth talking about.

"It's been a bit like that," said John as he put the finishing touches to his side's preparation ahead of this weekend's semi final game against Carmarthen Quins.

"People ask me about my memories of the competition and I don't lie, I tell them the truth.

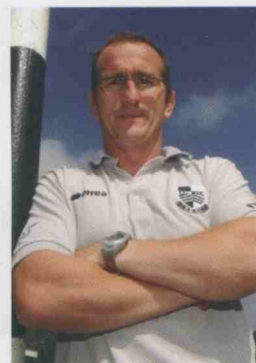
"Of course, the final victory in 1996 was the real high point for me. It was a success story for a bunch of players who had been through a great deal. We were friends on and off the field and we celebrated the victory together. We celebrated with the fans who have always been the lifeblood of this great club.

"However, the level of enjoyment on that day was made all the better because of what we had been through in previous years.



Of course, the final victory in 1996 was the real high point for me. It was a success story for a bunch of players who had been through a great deal

BY GRAHAM CLUTTON



"I remember going to Newport in a semi-final game and losing to Cardiff. I can't recall too much of the match itself, but my abiding memory was sitting in the dressing room after the game and looking around me at a group of players who were utterly shattered by what had just happened.

"It was probably one of the worst feelings of my life. That was what the cup meant to all of us. We had missed out on another day out at the national stadium.

"I can recall the 1992 semi final defeat by Llanelli when Neil Jenkins was sent off. Those bad days make the good days even more special and it's no different today.

"Yes, the game in Wales has changed and club rugby is obviously a level down from the regional game. However, don't tell that to the players who are playing this weekend, because they don't want to know.

"This is the level at which they play and this is their day. If they win, the club

will celebrate long into the night. If they lose, it will be a difficult pill to swallow."

John has enjoyed great success with Pontypridd just as his father did when coaching at the House of Pain during the nineties.

However, as bashful as ever, John junior is at pains to point out that the club's continued push towards the top of the club ladder is down to a team effort from those on and off the field.

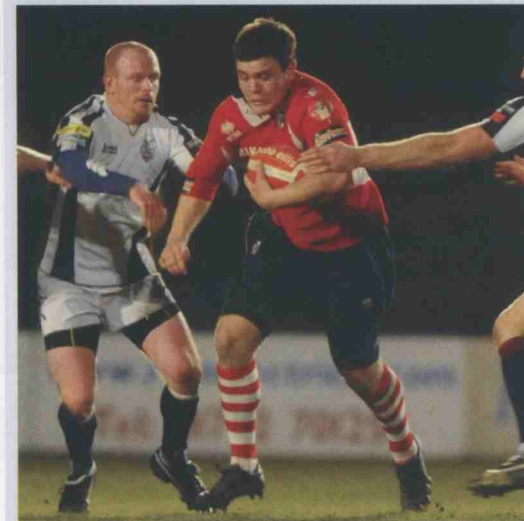
Whilst a decent squad has been assembled in recent seasons, the club boasts arguably the most exciting and ambitious young coaching team.

John and former playing mate Dale McIntosh are at the helm whilst team manager Richard Langmead is a Level 3 coach as is conditioning expert Darren Bool.

"For me, it's a difficult job combining my work with my role as Wales Sevens coach. However, it's very much a shared responsibility in terms of the club coaching. Dale is a fantastic coach and in Richard and Darren we have two guys who make a significant contribution whether I'm there or not.

"I'm pleased with the way things have worked out and delighted that we are here in the semi final. I only hope that come Monday morning we are preparing for the final."

PLAYER TO WATCH ADAM THOMAS



Pontypridd can boast a real depth in talent with the likes of Aaron Bramwell, Dean Gunter and Rhys Downes amongst this season's leading contributors. However, for coach Paul John, the development of Ynysybwl-born centre Adam Thomas has given him the greatest joy this season.

Thomas is one of Welsh rugby's late developers and was, in fact, almost lost to the Welsh game last year when he was offered an NPC contract by Southland in New Zealand.

However, Thomas returned from his season Down Under to battle his way into the Pontypridd side. And John is delighted that he followed that path. "He has been a near ever present this season and I've

been really impressed with him.

"He's a young lad with terrific talent and when I've asked him to fill in at full-back he has done that too.

"We have high hopes for him and I'm looking forward to seeing how far he can go.

"To be offered a contract in the NPC is no mean achievement, so he must have done well during his season down there.

"He is not long out of club rugby with Ynysybwl, but he has certainly stepped up to the plate. I also think he thrives on the contribution of those around him. We try to play rugby the right way and for a centre with so much talent, that's a real boost."

CUP KINGS AIM TO EXTEND TRADITION

Talk about the SWALEC Cup and it will not be long before Llanelli get a mention, renowned as they are as cup kings of the national game.

With 13 cup titles to their name during the amateur, professional and now semi-pro eras there is no club to match their knockout credentials.

Today Llanelli will be hoping to reach another showpiece final against Cardiff, who have won the cup seven times themselves but haven't lifted it since 1997.

"For us, the cup has always been about getting to the final," said Llanelli's director of rugby Anthony Buchanan.

"What we showed in the first three rounds was that we still possess that we have still got that desire to reach cup finals.

"But Cardiff stand in our way and we will give that all the respect it deserves.

"To continue that cup tradition is important for Llanelli. Personally I've played in three cup finals and as a player, coach and manager I've probably been involved in 17 cup finals.

"The cup's been a huge part of my life. It's hugely important, not for me so much, but for the boys and the club.

Llanelli opened up their cup campaign this season with a 23-7 victory over Ebbw Vale, who they have never lost to in the knockout event in seven meetings.

But it was a long-awaited encounter because of snow and ice. The game was twice postponed before the tie was switched to Tredegar Park.

After a forgettable first half Llanelli flew out of



To continue that cup tradition is important for Llanelli



the blocks with three tries within 10 minutes from wings Jason Howells and two for Dale Ford, which was enough to see them into the next round.

That saw Division One East outfit Bargoed visit Parc y Scarlets and stun Llanelli early on with three well taken tries.

"Fair play, Bargoed were a tough nut to crack. They played some great rugby and are very well coached," said Buchanan.



"In the end the winning scoreline flattered us rather."

After being given a wake-up call Llanelli recovered their composure with centre Nick Reynolds providing two of Llanelli's five tries and 19-year-old Steve Shingler kicking 17 points as they ran out 42-20 winners.

The quarter-final saw Llanelli handed a tricky tie at Tonmawr, who will be playing in the Premiership

BY RICHARD THOMAS

next season. It took a try from wing Chris Keenan late on to separate the sides with Llanelli winning 26-16.

"Tonmawr was potentially one of the most difficult games we could have had," admitted Buchanan.

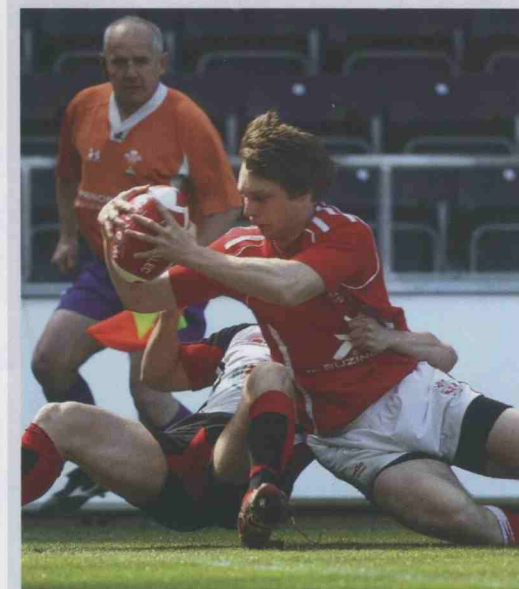
"We realised we had to be at our best. Tonmawr are going to be playing in the Premiership next year and they showed they deserve to be there. We were just

delighted to come away with the victory."

Only last week Llanelli beat Cardiff 42-24 at the Arms Park in a Principality Premiership game but Buchanan refused to read anything into that five tries to three win.

"We are not foolish enough to think that that was any more than a game of rugby and Sunday is going to be a different animal entirely."

PLAYER TO WATCH NICK REYNOLDS



The 21-year-old young centre is everything that is good about the development side of the Principality Premiership and is on the brink of getting his chance with the Scarlets.

opportunity he has to take it with both hands.

"He needs a bit of luck, but there is no doubt that week in, week out with us that he has qualities. He understands the game. He has got pace, size, he tackles, he has the skills and vision. So he is the complete package in many ways.

"With the likes of Regan King and Jonathan Davies in the centre positions at the Scarlets it means that Nick might have to bide his time for consistent opportunities at regional level.

"But I don't think that will do him any harm. He's still young but he's maturing nicely.

And Anthony Buchanan, the Llanelli director of rugby, predicts a bright future for Reynolds, who has been one of Llanelli's best performers over the last two years.

"There is no doubt whatsoever that Nick Reynolds possesses all the skills to play in the professional game and top end rugby," said Buchanan.

"If he gets the

CALM BEFORE THE STORM

There is a quiet sense of satisfaction in Cardiff head coach Paul Moriarty's voice when discussing today's SWALEC Cup semi-final. It's been seven months since the former Wales backrow man took the reins at the Arms Park, after long-term associations with Swansea as a player and latterly the Scarlets as a coach, and although their Principality Premiership title will be held aloft by either Swansea or Neath at the end of the season, Moriarty is happy the season is still alive: "The season hasn't gone too badly. We still have a British and Irish Cup place up for grabs and a final at the Millennium Stadium is within reach."



“We're 80 minutes away from running out at the Millennium Stadium and that's all the incentive our boys need**”**

Speaking to Moriarty, he is quick to praise a Llanelli outfit he knows so well after six years with the Scarlets: "I saw a lot of Academy players graduating to senior rugby in my time down there and as a region they've got it spot on. I've known guys like Anthony 'Buchs' Buchanan and Paul Fish for years and they're good

guys. They know how to develop youngsters to play at a highest level."

Even though Llanelli ran out 42-24 winners at the Arms Park in last weekend's dress rehearsal, Moriarty believes the result will have no bearing on today's result: "Neither side was at full strength last week. We're all coming to the

end of a long season and getting our best side on the pitch is not easy, but Llanelli are in the same boat as us. We all know that in a Cup game anything can happen on the day."

Moriarty does believe both sets fans are in for a nerve-jangling 80 minutes: "Both sides are very evenly matched and that's been

shown in the Premiership Table where we've jockeyed each other all season. We had a slight edge when we went down there and won 16-10 for aut obviously they turned us over last week, so picking a winner will be tough."

While having every confidence in his squad, Moriarty is under no illusions of the talent that will be facing the Blues and Blacks at St Helens today: "They have some great individuals. Scott Williams is one to watch in the midfield and he's been showing up well for the Wales Under 20s, while their scrum-half Gareth Davies is a lively customer. Aaron Schingler, their lock is also a very

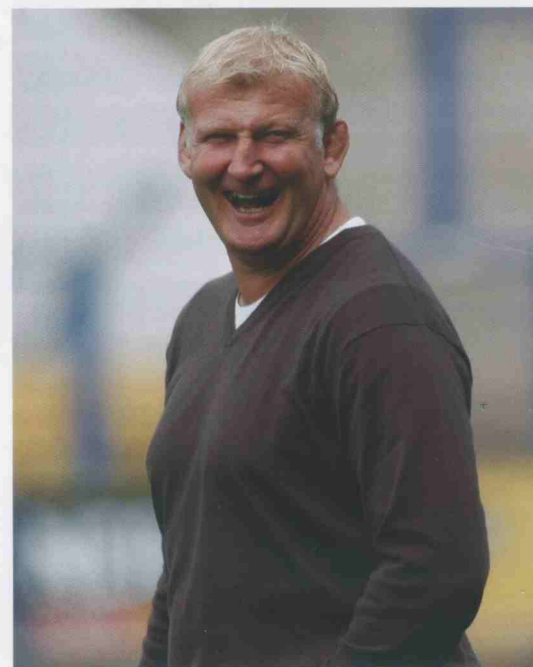
talented athlete who is progressing well."

Turning to his own squad, Moriarty says that he has enjoyed working with a great bunch of lads: "We've seen lots of new faces this year and they all want to better themselves. They dig in, week-in, week-out trying to get a result."

Cardiff's route to the semi-final has been anything but straightforward as they have battled past Division 1 East's Bedlinog and Premiership rivals Newport and Bedwas: "It's been a nerve-wracking run to the semis. Against Newport, we were 20-3 down and came back to win 22-20 which was some escape and against Bedwas

our 34-24 win was another rip-roaring cup tie which could have gone either way. Our biggest scare, however, came against Bedlinog. We were 3-0 down with a couple of minutes to go and going out but we forced a penalty try from a collapsed scrum to make it 7-3. That was the defining moment of this cup run for me."

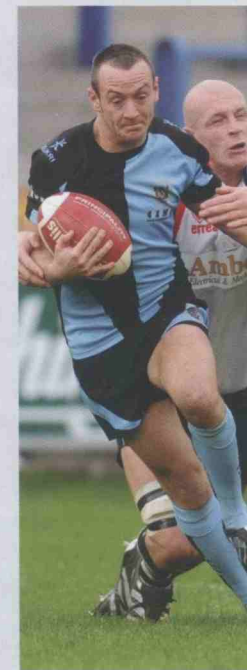
After coming through so much, Moriarty doesn't think motivation will be a problem this afternoon: "We've had to fight to get to where we are, but we're 80 minutes away from running out at the Millennium Stadium and that's all the incentive our boys need. It should be a cracker."



PLAYERS TO WATCH

GARETH DAVIES

The namesake of another famous great Cardiff fly-half, Gareth has been absolutely fantastic for us this season. I think if he had the opportunity he could take a step up to the next level. He's a fine distributor, has a good kicking game and reads situations well. He's also not afraid to take contact and take it on his own. Hopefully he can show up well today.



RHYS SHELLARD

Club captain Rhys Shellard has a lot of pedigree. He's a former Cardiff Blue and has been playing to a high standard throughout the season. He's been with the club for a while now and I'm glad he's had some recognition with the Wales Sevens this year. He's a natural leader does a lot of work around the field. Where he leads, the players follow and you can't ask for more than that."



PONTYPRIDD vs CAMARTHEN QUINS

15	AARON BRAMWELL	FULL BACK	ANTHONY REES	15
14	OWEN WILLIAMS	WING	RICHARD CARTER	14
13	GAVIN DACEY (CAPT)	CENTRE	ANDREW BANFIELD	13
12	ADAM THOMAS	CENTRE	TRISTAN DAVIES (CAPT)	12
11	CHRIS CLAYTON	WING	JAMIE DAVIES	11
10	DEAN GUNTER	OUTSIDE HALF	GARETH CULL	10
9	RHYS DOWNES	SCRUM HALF	SILILO MARTENS	9
1	KEN KNAGGS	PROP	ANDREW BEAUJEAN	1
2	RHYS WILLIAMS	HOOKER	RICHARD WILKES	2
3	RYAN HARFORD	PROP	KEVIN JONES	3
4	GRANT HARRINGTON	LOCK	GAVIN EVANS	4
5	CHRIS MARTENKO	LOCK	MARTIN MORGAN	5
6	RHYS LLOYD	FLANKER	ANDREW THOMAS	6
7	WAYNE O'CONNOR	FLANKER	ELLIS LLOYD	7
8	CHRIS DICOMIDIS	NO 8	CHRIS JONES	8
16	KRISTIAN BALLER	REPLACEMENT	MATH MONAGHAN	16
17	LEWIS WILLIAMS	REPLACEMENT	CRAIG KELLY	17
18	MATTHEW NUTHALL	REPLACEMENT	SIMON GARDINER	18
19	TOM HETHERINGTON	REPLACEMENT	WAYNE WILLIAMS	19
20	DARREN WATERS	REPLACEMENT	GARETH WILLIAMS	20
21	RYAN SAVAGE	REPLACEMENT	RICKY RICHARDS	21
22	JON WILLIAMS	REPLACEMENT	JAMES GARLAND	22

REFEREE: GWYN MORRIS ASSISTANT REF1: SEAN BRICKELL
 ASSISTANT REF2: GREG MORGAN ASSISTANT REF3: NIGEL JONES

WE REMIND ALL SUPPORTERS TO REMAIN SILENT AS AN ACT OF COURTESY WHILE GOAL KICKS ARE BEING TAKEN

CARDIFF RFC vs LLANELLI RFC

15	CRAIG MORGAN	FULL BACK	DANIEL NEWTON	15
14	JAMES LOXTON	WING	JONNY LEWIS	14
13	GARETH CHAPMAN	CENTRE	NICK REYNOLDS	13
12	DARREN RYAN	CENTRE	SCOTT WILLIAMS	12
11	NATHAN REES	WING	CHRIS KEENAN	11
10	GARETH DAVIES	OUTSIDE HALF	STEVEN SHINGLER	10
9	TOM SLATER	SCRUM HALF	GARETH DAVIES	9
1	DAN PREECE	PROP	SHAUN HOPKINS	1
2	GARY HORRIGAN	HOOKER	CRAIG HAWKINS (CAPT)	2
3	DANIEL MATTHEWS	PROP	JAMIE CORSI	3
4	ADAM POWELL	LOCK	ADAM POWELL	4
5	ASHLEY SWEET	LOCK	NATHAN WHITE	5
6	JAMIE RINGER	FLANKER	AARON SHINGLER	6
7	RHYS SHELLARD (CAPT)	FLANKER	DUANE EAGER	7
8	DAN GODFREY	NO 8	BEN MORGAN	8
16	RHYS JAMES	REPLACEMENT	CERI JONES	16
17	PHIL OSBOURNE	REPLACEMENT	RHYS LAWRENCE	17
18	MATTHEW VEATER	REPLACEMENT	JOEL GALLEY	18
19	CRAIG EVERETT	REPLACEMENT	STEFF PHILLIPS	19
20	LEE JARVIS	REPLACEMENT	JUSTIN JAMES	20
21	OWEN WILLIAMS	REPLACEMENT	STEVE MARTIN	21
22	OWEN RUTTLEY	REPLACEMENT	DORIAN THOMAS	22

REFEREE: JAMES JONES ASSISTANT REF1: JONATHAN MASON
 ASSISTANT REF2: CHRIS WILLIAMS ASSISTANT REF3: ERIC GRIFFITHS

WE REMIND ALL SUPPORTERS TO REMAIN SILENT AS AN ACT OF COURTESY WHILE GOAL KICKS ARE BEING TAKEN

SWALEC CUP FINALS 2010



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