



The Konica Minolta Cup Final
Rownd Derfynol Cwpan Konica Minolta
Price / Pris: £2.00



Cardiff v Llandovery

Caerdydd v Llanymddyfri

5.30pm, Saturday 28th April 2007

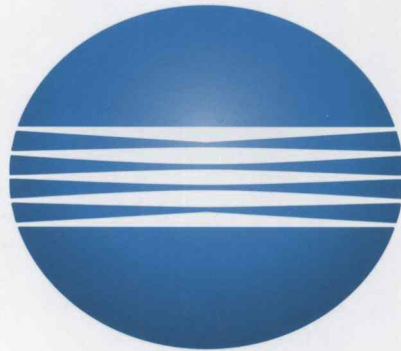
Millennium Stadium

Dydd Sadwrn, Ebrill 28, 2007, 17.30yh

Stadium y Mileniwm

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Millennium Stadium





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WRU MESSAGE

Welcome to the Konica Minolta Cup Final, and congratulations to Cardiff and Llandoverly who have made it through to this final leg of our domestic Cup competition.

A cup final is always a great way to end a season and I'm sure that both sets of players, coaches and supporters here today will echo that sentiment in this West versus East encounter.

It is extremely encouraging for Welsh rugby to see so very many talented, young players on display. This is a real reflection of the dynamism of the Principality Premiership, which is more vibrant and competitive than ever before. It is most definitely proving to be a showcase for our future Wales international players.

Only a year ago, the likes of James Hook, Alun Wyn Jones and Aled Brew played their regular rugby in such competitions; James Hook played a full part in last year's Konica Minolta Cup Final for Neath against Pontypridd.

The Principality Premiership is vital in our strategy for creating a "Winning Wales" and the relationships we are continuing to build between the Premiership clubs and the four Welsh rugby Regions is proving to be most effective. We all feel there is more to be achieved by working even closer together and this bodes well for rugby in Wales.

Special thanks to Konica Minolta, Principality and our broadcasters S4C and BBC for their continued support in raising the profile of semi-professional rugby in Wales.

Good luck to both teams – pob hwyl!

Roger Lewis

WRU Group Chief Executive

NEGES YR UNDEB

Croeso i Rownd Derfynol Cwpan Konica Minolta, a llongyfarchiadau i Gaerdydd a Llanymddyfri sydd wedi ennill eu lle yn rownd derfynol cystadleuaeth cwpan Cymru.

Mae rownd derfynol cwpan wastad yn ffordd dda o orffen tymor ac rwy'n siwr y bydd y ddau set o chwaraewyr, hyfforddwyr a chefnogwyr sydd yma heddiw yn cytuno â hynny.

Mae'n wych gweld cymaint o chwaraewyr ifanc, talentog ar y cae yma heddiw. Mae hynny'n adlewyrchiad o Uwch Gynghrair Principality, sydd erbyn hyn yn fwy bywiog a chystadleuol nac erioed o'r blaen. Mae'n profi bod yn ffenestr siop i ddarpar chwaraewyr rhyngwladol Cymru.

Gwta flwyddyn yn ôl, roedd bechgyn fel James Hook, Alun Wyn Jones ac Aled Brew yn chwarae eu rygbi rheolaidd yn y cystadlaethau lled-broffesiynol, ac fe chwaraeodd James Hook ran lawn yn rownd derfynol Cwpan Konica Minolta y llynedd i Gastell-nedd yn erbyn Pontypridd.

Mae Uwch Gynghrair y Principality yn hollbwysig yn ein strategaeth ar gyfer creu "Cymru'n Ennill" ac mae'r perthnasau rydym yn parhau i'w hadeiladu rhwng clybiau'r Uwch Gynghrair a'r pedair rhanbarth rygbi yng Nghymru yn profi i fod yn effeithiol iawn. Rydym oll yn teimlo fod mwy i'w ennill trwy weithio yn agosach fyth gyda'n gilydd ac mae hyn yn argoeli'n dda i rygbi yng Nghymru.

Diolchiadau arbennig i Konica Minolta, y Principality a'n darlledwyr S4C a'r BBC am barhau i'n cefnogi i godi proffil rygbi lled-broffesiynol yng Nghymru.

Dymuniadau gorau i'r ddau dîm – pob hwyl!

Roger Lewis

Prif Weithredwr Grwp URC

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KONICA MINOLTA MESSAGE



On behalf of Konica Minolta, I would like to welcome you all to the Millennium Stadium for this final match in the 2007 Konica Minolta Cup. We are delighted to be supporting the cup for what has been our fourth year as title sponsors.

As these past eight months of highly competitive games draw to a close, we would like to highlight how we have thoroughly enjoyed all of the eight rounds and how we look forward to this afternoon, with what will no doubt be a thrilling final between Cardiff and Llandovery, who have shown great spirit to reach the last two of the competition.

Both teams have produced some impressive performances in the four games they have won to reach this afternoon's final, and I'm sure you will join me in wishing them both the very best of luck this afternoon as they battle it out to lift the Konica Minolta Cup at the end of this afternoon's game.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all an extremely enjoyable spectacle with us here this afternoon at the Millennium Stadium.

Alan Hiatt

Konica Minolta Sales Manager

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Special thanks to WRU Communications Manager Liz Jones, WRU Programme
Co-ordinator Natalie Mock and Howard Evans.

DC Thomas Cup

WSRU Junior Group DC Thomas/Western Mail XV-a-side Cup Final 2007
Cardiff Schools v Swansea Schools

The Welsh Schools Rugby Union Junior Group wish to thank the WRU and the Millennium Stadium Committee for allowing the DC Thomas/Western Mail XV-a-side Cup Final to be the curtain-raiser to the Konica Minolta Cup Final.

Today's teams are worthy finalists. Both have played exciting, attacking rugby involving forwards and backs with excellent tries from some of the best wings we have seen in recent years.

Cardiff, who have been one of the most successful teams in recent years, defeated Blaenau, Gwent, Pontypool and a strong Pontypridd side to reach today's final.

Swansea have not been in the final since 1994, when they shared the cup with Pontypridd. Last year they had a good side and won the plate final at Dunvant RFC. This year they've played excellent rugby to defeat Aberavon, Swansea Valley, Llanelli and the Vale of Glamorgan in the semi-final.

Michael Rein, Cardiff, and Adrian Byrne, Swansea, together with the coaches are to be congratulated on the high standard achieved by their teams.

The Junior Group would also like to thank the *Western Mail* for their valued support again this season and for hosting the after-match function.

John D Rees MBE
Hon Secretary WSRU
Junior Group

CARDIFF SCHOOLS

- 15 **Lewis Kirk** Trowbridge
- 14 **Tyler Mahoney** St Cadoc's
- 13 **Richard Singer** Rhiwbina
- 12 **Callum Sheedy** St Peter's
- 11 **Ben Crabbe** Llanishen Fach
- 10 **William Hayward** Pentrych
- 9 **Michael Hale** Ysgol Bro Eirw
- 8 **Lewis Marshall** Coed Glas
- 7 **Matthew Marley (C)** Creigiau
- 6 **Jordan Viggers** Rumney
- 5 **Kieran Trotman** Danescourt
- 4 **Bradley Mais** Pentrebane
- 3 **Jack Marshall** Rhiwbina
- 2 **Adam Champ** Rhiwbina
- 1 **Dylan Atkins** Gwaloed-y-Garth

REPLACEMENTS

- 16 **Shane Williams** Willowbrook
- 17 **Muntasser Al Habsi** Coed Glas
- 18 **Matthew Jones** Bryn Hafod
- 19 **Ryan Farrah** St Peter's
- 20 **Matthew Edwards** Lisvane
- 21 **Tyler Williams** St Alban's
- 22 **Joseph Williams** Lisvane

REFEREE

KERI EVANS

SWANSEA SCHOOLS

- 15 **Niall Richards** Waunarlwydd
- 14 **James Jones** Cwmrhydyceirw
- 13 **Sam Pritchard** Oystermouth
- 12 **Chay Smith (C)** Grange
- 11 **Rory Howard** Cwmrhydyceirw
- 10 **Joseph Thomas** Cwmrhydyceirw
- 9 **Luke Ford** Cwmglas
- 8 **Jonathan Fox** Whitestone
- 7 **Callum Bowden** YGG Brynymor
- 6 **Michael Evans** YGG Brynymor
- 5 **Shaun Crosby** Brynmill
- 4 **Adam Beard** Birchgrove
- 3 **Harrison Walsh** Oystermouth
- 2 **James Lewis** Gwyrosydd
- 1 **Mitchell Bird** YGG Lonlas

REPLACEMENTS

- 16 **Elliot Clement** YGG Llwynderw
- 17 **Jacob Clement** YGG Llwynderw
- 18 **Kieran Mansell** Cwm
- 19 **Joe Festa** YGG Gellionnen
- 20 **Robert Mogridge** Newton
- 21 **Jacob Sciascia** St Illtyd's
- 22 **Zak Bevan** Waunarlwydd

TOUCH JUDGES

CERI BOWEN, LEIGHTON DAVIES



Above: The Cardiff Schools
squad. Below: Swansea
Schools skipper Chay Smith



Tony Poole of the South Wales Evening Post looks forward to a clash of cultures in this year's Konica Minolta Cup Final

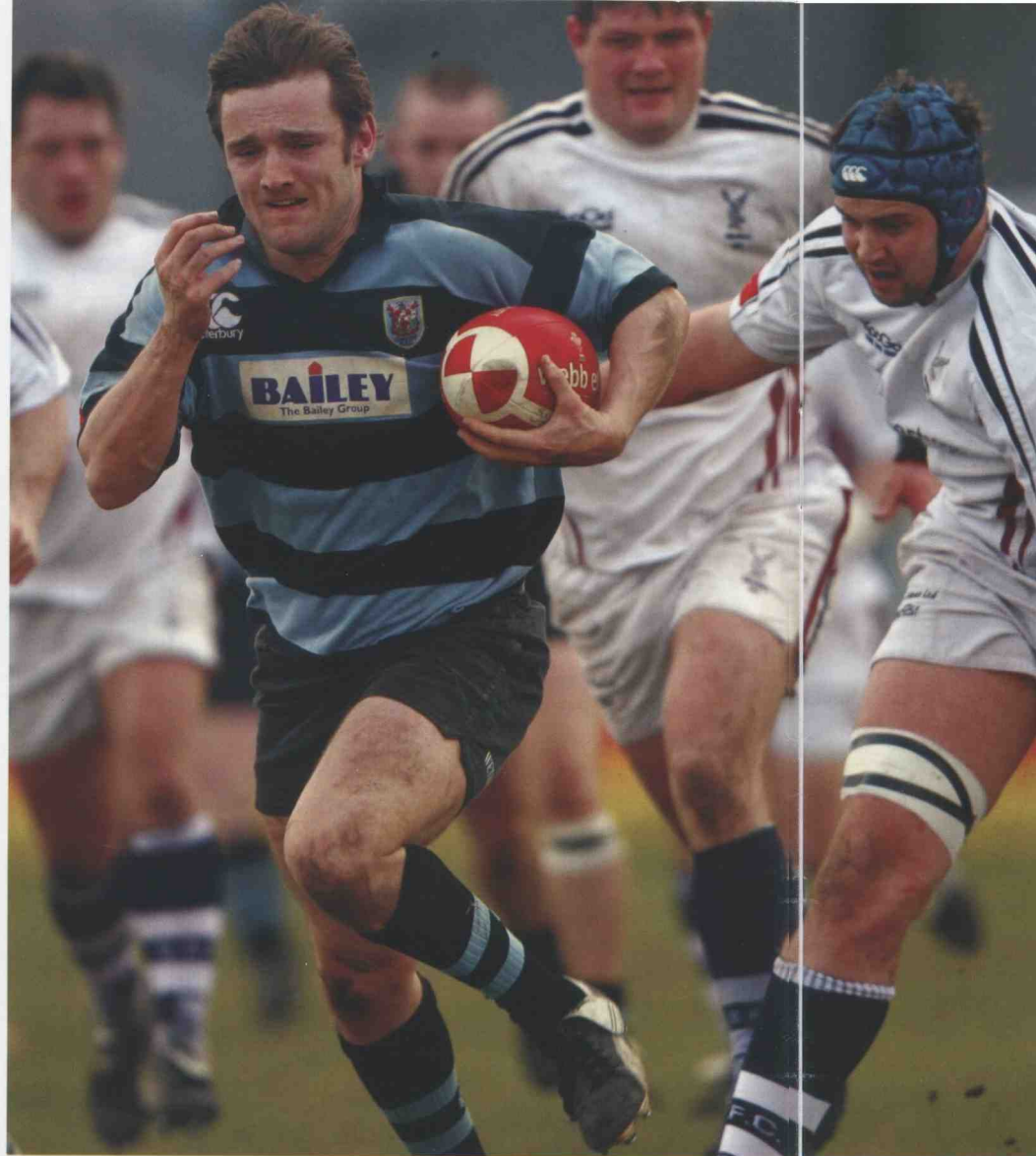
Llandovery has hit the headlines twice of late and on both occasions there's been a link with royalty.

Last year, news broke that Prince Charles was setting up a country retreat in neighbouring Myddfai. That gained the West Wales market town five minutes of fame, but then along came the Drovers with their sensational semi-final victory over cup kings Llanelli RFC.

In preventing the 13-times winners from making a 19th appearance in the final, the Tywi Valley side pulled off the surprise result in this season's tournament. That means a fleet of Land Rovers, tractors and combine harvesters will today converge on the capital in the hope that the "Tractor Boys" can beat the "City Slickers".

The final, of course, has the classic east v west ingredient, but the gulf between the clubs is stark. Cardiff, before regional days in 2003, carried a self-proclaimed tag of the "greatest club side in the world". They've been there and done the lot, while for Llandovery – who were founder members of the WRU in 1881 – this is the greatest day in their 129-year history.

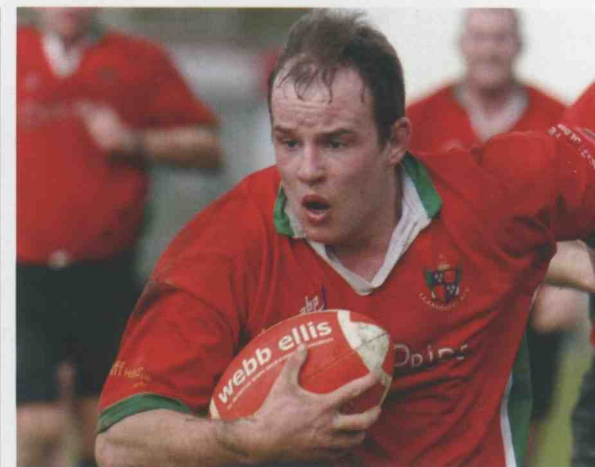
While the Drovers are in the lower reaches of this season's Principality Premiership, their full focus is on lifting the Konica Minolta cup for the first time this weekend. Llandovery, on similar lines to the likes of Neath, Bridgend, Pontypridd and Ebbw Vale, remains a town side, and results still mean a lot to fans.



Roberts looks a fine prospect, and his name is now not only being linked with the Blues but also the Welsh summer tour to Australia. His try allowed Cardiff to inch past Neath in the last-16 stage at The Gnoll, but his strong-running powers posed a threat throughout.

Wing Elgan Jones is the joint-top try scorer in the four seasons of the Premiership with 42 tries – the same number as Gareth Chapman (Newport) and former Neath wing Richard Johnston, who is now with Celtic Crusaders. Hooker Ross Johnston has a fair turn of speed – as he displayed with an exceptional try at Neath – while Carmarthen Quins product Craig Evans has become an accurate goal-kicking fly-half, scoring 220 points in the league this season. Prop Gareth Gunter has come on leaps and bounds this year, and the never-say-die attitude of back-row man Gavin Lucas has pulled Cardiff out of many a hole.

Earlier in the season, Merthyr-based wing Tom James used the Principality Premiership as a springboard, scoring 11 league tries before being snapped up by the Blues. In the Llandovery



Others well thought of in the Tywi Valley include hooker Emyr Phillips, lock Tom Walker, and flankers Gareth Williams and Jonathan Mills (son of ex-Neath prop Doug), along with powerhouse centre Jonny Lewis.

And one Llandovery player deserving of a cup-winning medal more than most is tight-head prop Andrew B Jones, who has given the club a quarter of a century of service on top of captaining the club six seasons on the trot.

Finally, the crunch question, who is going to win? The odds are stacked in Cardiff's favour, but just as the Principality Premiership has

TOWN & COUNTRY

With Cardiff, Newport, Llanelli and, to a degree, Swansea, the main area of support is now centred on Regional teams. Just a year ago, when fly-half James Hook played for Neath in the final against Pontypridd, even some eminent rugby writers had never heard of him. Now he is a household name,

and it gives credence to the claim that the semi-professional Principality Premiership is supplying both Regions and country with quality players.

So who are the names in this year's final who could go on to better things? In the Blue and Blacks camp, fullback Jamie

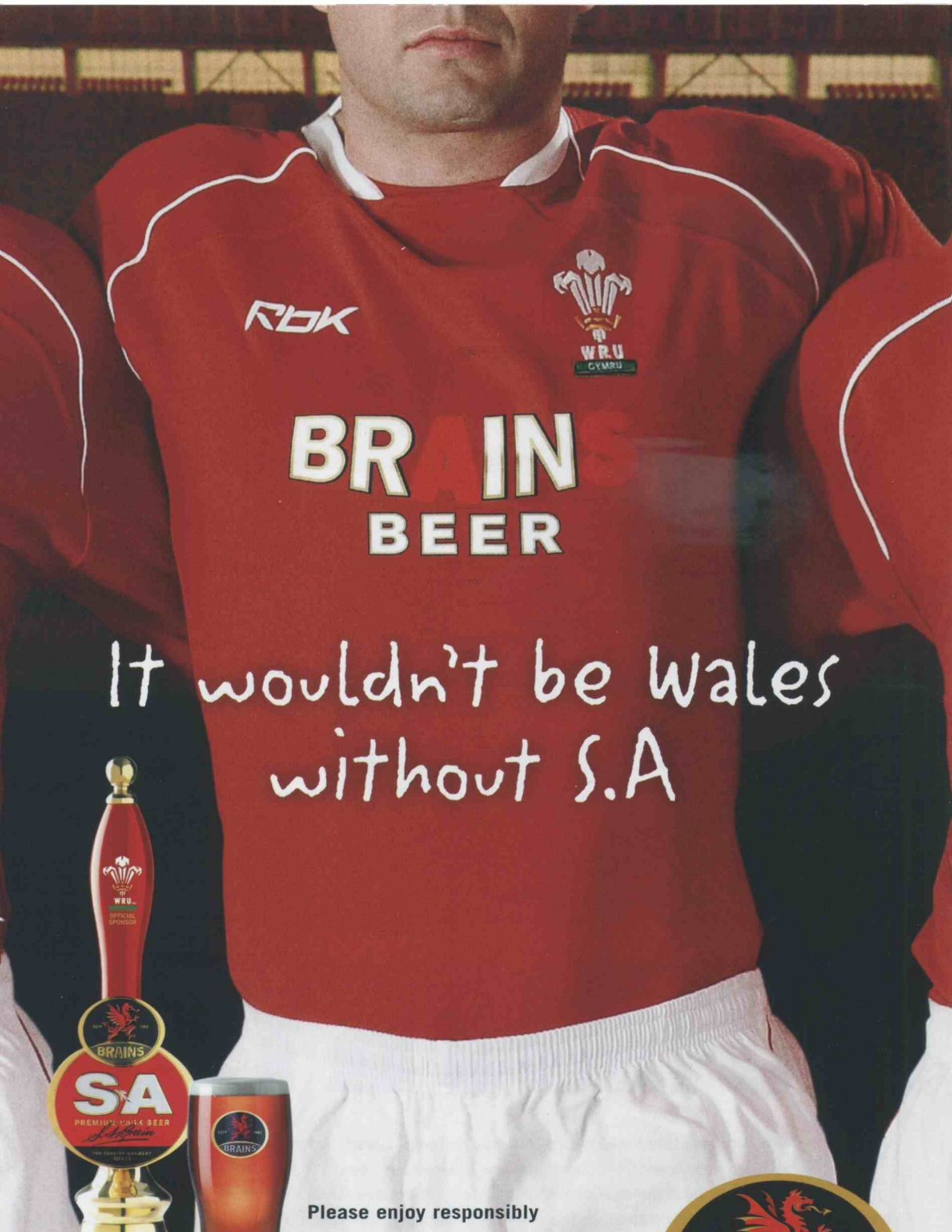
Above left: Cardiff's Elgan Jones. **Above right:** Llandovery flanker Gareth Williams

corner, utility-back Howard Thomas from Llandeilo (he's played in every position in the back division this term except scrum-half) is a name worth noting. Thomas, whose brother Martyn switched from the Scarlets to Dragons in midwinter, has recently scored classy tries against Ebbw Vale and Llanelli.

proved unpredictable this season, never say never.

With strong West Wales links through my parents (Saundersfoot and Ystalyfera aren't a million miles from Llandeilo) and having recently resided in Llandeilo, if my arm were twisted it'd have to plump for the Tractor Boys.

PICTURE: RILEYSPORTSPHOTO.COM



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For club and country

Having guided Wales Under 19s to World Cup success, **Justin Burnell** is firmly focussed on Cardiff's big game

Only a week on from his achievements with Wales's Under 19s, where the team finished fourth in the World Cup – their best finish since 2001 – Cardiff head coach Justin Burnell has turned his sights on matters closer to home, namely guiding his club to a first domestic cup title in ten years.

The clash has been dubbed the "Tractor Boys" taking on the "City Slickers", but Burnell is keen to point out that the clash will not be the one-sided affair many pundits are predicting. "Llandovery are an underrated unit," he says. "Like us, they have made the final the hard way. Let's not forget they had to go to Bedwas and win, they also beat their local rivals Llanelli away from home, so we are certainly not taking them lightly."

Warming to his subject, Burnell continues: "Forget their Premiership position, this is the cup, not the league, and they have the same amount of wins as us. We will prepare for the game as if we were playing Neath or Pontypridd."

LIKE US, LLANDOVERY HAVE MADE THE FINAL THE HARD WAY, SO WE'RE CERTAINLY NOT TAKING THEM LIGHTLY

Motivating my players for the cup will not be a problem."

Even though Cardiff beat their cup opponents at home and away in the Principality Premiership this season, Burnell believes there's no lack of talent emanating from the small West Walian town. "They have several exciting players," he points out. "Howard Thomas is a tidy prospect who can play in

several positions, while their scrum-half, Rob Walters, can also cause problems. He's a big lad who can take some stopping around the fringes."

Burnell navigated his team's way to the Millennium Stadium with a hard-fought 23-16 win against Bridgend in the semis – a tricky game he's relieved to have come through. "Bridgend made it tricky for us," admits Burnell. "They broke up our play with a well focussed defence that was very organised and they were kicking for field possession. They were looking to capitalise on our mistakes."

While Burnell believes today's game is a red-letter day for his players, he feels that it is equally gratifying for those behind the scenes. "It's a big day for the club," says the head coach. "It establishes that, although we are playing under a regional umbrella, we are also gaining recognition for our achievements as a club."

He continues: "Keith Morgan, our team manager, treasurer and occasional programme seller, is absolutely tireless, while our chairman Malcolm Childs has also been tremendous. They deserve a pat on the back."

The final, says Burnell, presents an ideal opportunity for players from both sides to shine on the big stage. "There will be players who have been overlooked at age group and Academy level who can put their hands up and move on to bigger things," he observes. "That's what makes this competition so special."

PICTURE: HUW EVANS



CARDIFF SQUAD

TOP POINT SCORERS 2006/07

Craig Evans: 3 tries; 44 cons;
54 pens; 2 DGs. Total 271
Chris Anderson: 20 cons; 12 pens;
1 DG. Total 79
Tom James: 12 tries. Total 60
Jamie Roberts: 8 tries. Total 40

LAST FIVE GAMES

WWLWL

Konica Minolta Cup quarter-final
March 25, 2007

Swansea 8-39 Cardiff

Premiership March 31, 2007
Cardiff 25-21 Neath

Premiership April 7, 2007
Cardiff 30-32 Bedwas

Konica Minolta semi-final
April 15, 2007
Cardiff 23-16 Bridgend

Premiership April 18, 2007
Cardiff 16-23 Maesteg

COACHES

Head coach: Justin Burnell
Coaches: Howard Stone,
Matthew Silva, Daniel Wilson
Team managers: Gafyn Cooper,
Keith Morgan
Conditioning coach: Gerrit Bantjes

	15 JAMIE ROBERTS
POSITION: Fullback	
HEIGHT: 1.98m	
WEIGHT: 105kg	
DOB: 8.11.86	

	14 ELGAN JONES
POSITION: Wing	
HEIGHT: 1.82m	
WEIGHT: 94kg	
DOB: 20.2.82	

	13 RICHARD DAVIES
POSITION: Centre	
HEIGHT: 1.78m	
WEIGHT: 91kg	
DOB: 2.10.78	

	12 RICHARD JONES
POSITION: Centre	
HEIGHT: 1.89m	
WEIGHT: 99kg	
DOB: 1.9.82	

	11 LEON ANDREWS
POSITION: Wing	
HEIGHT: 1.80m	
WEIGHT: 89kg	
DOB: 6.6.84	

	10 CRAIG EVANS
POSITION: Fly-half	
HEIGHT: 1.88m	
WEIGHT: 90kg	
DOB: 21.3.85	

	9 TOM ISAACS
POSITION: Scrum-half	
HEIGHT: 1.80m	
WEIGHT: 85kg	
DOB: 5.5.80	

	8 ADAM POWELL
POSITION: No 8	
HEIGHT: 1.95m	
WEIGHT: 108kg	
DOB: 28.5.86	

	7 GARETH GRAVELL
POSITION: Flanker	
HEIGHT: 1.82m	
WEIGHT: 102kg	
DOB: 29.10.80	

	6 GAVIN LUCAS
POSITION: Flanker	
HEIGHT: 1.98m	
WEIGHT: 108kg	
DOB: 14.4.78	

	5 JAMES DOWN
POSITION: Lock	
HEIGHT: 2.04m	
WEIGHT: 109kg	
DOB: 29.8.87	

	4 CHRIS STAMATAKIS
POSITION: Lock	
HEIGHT: 1.98m	
WEIGHT: 102kg	
DOB: 21.1.82	

	3 SCOTT ROBERTS
POSITION: Prop	
HEIGHT: 1.85m	
WEIGHT: 120kg	
DOB: 5.9.84	

	2 ROSS JOHNSTON
POSITION: Hooker	
HEIGHT: 1.85m	
WEIGHT: 105kg	
DOB: 26.3.86	

	1 RHYSGILL
POSITION: Prop	
HEIGHT: 1.86m	
WEIGHT: 114kg	
DOB: 30.10.86	

REPLACEMENTS

	16 RYAN PRICE
POSITION: Hooker	
HEIGHT: 1.85m	
WEIGHT: 114kg	
DOB: 4.11.83	

	17 GARETH GUNTER
POSITION: Prop	
HEIGHT: 1.85m	
WEIGHT: 114kg	
DOB: 26.3.79	

	18 ALEX MURPHY
POSITION: Prop	
HEIGHT: 1.88m	
WEIGHT: 118kg	
DOB: 10.5.86	

	19 MATTHEW AMOS
POSITION: Lock	
HEIGHT: 1.98m	
WEIGHT: 108kg	
DOB: 6.2.83	

	20 NICK HAMPSON
POSITION: Flanker	
HEIGHT: 1.92m	
WEIGHT: 102kg	
DOB: 3.11.82	

	21 DARREN ALLINSON
POSITION: Scrum-half	
HEIGHT: 1.79m	
WEIGHT: 83kg	
DOB: 13.11.87	

	22 LEIGH HALFPENNY
POSITION: Wing	
HEIGHT: 1.78m	
WEIGHT: 78kg	
DOB: 22.12.88	



Jamie Roberts
ran the Swansea
defence ragged in
the quarter-final

MAKING THE GRADE

A testing year has seen Cardiff's **Jamie Roberts** come through with flying colours

The similarities between Cardiff fullback Jamie Roberts and Ospreys and Wales star James Hook may not be immediately apparent, but on closer inspection the pair's career paths seem to be intrinsically linked. Like Hook, Roberts was recently a star on the Wales Sevens circuit and like Hook, Roberts lines up in the Konica Minolta Final tipped for senior honours.

There are even rumours that, after a spell with the senior Six Nations training squad, there's the outside chance of a call-up to the squad on Monday for the Australia tour. After all, Hook had never

played a Regional game for the Ospreys before he was donning the red shirt in Puerto Madryn, Argentina last summer.

On paper, the former Glantaf pupil has all the qualifications for a tilt at the national squad, having played for Wales Under 18s, Under 19s and Under 21s in 2004, before 2005 threw up Under 19 and Under 21 World Cup competitions in South Africa and Argentina. Last season must have seemed a doddle in comparison with only an Under 21s Six Nations campaign to tackle.

It's been an industrious last few months for Roberts, who picked up his first Principality Premiership

Player of the Month award in March. However, Roberts's rapid trajectory hasn't been entirely without its hurdles. In the last game of the 2006 Under 21s Six Nations, he incurred a serious shoulder injury that laid him up for seven months. "I had an operation and was back playing last November," he comments. "The only upside was that I was able to concentrate on my medical studies, it kept my mind off worrying about rugby."

Since his return, Roberts has been making up for lost time, touching down ten times in 15 games for the Blue and Blacks and starring in their march to today's final. En route to the Millennium Stadium, Roberts believes Cardiff's crucial fixture was that against Neath. "No Cardiff team has won

however, remains self-effacing. "You can take the plaudits, but you have to keep working to raise your standards because if you don't, that's when you'll fall on your backside," he explains. "You have to aim higher every time."

At 6ft 5in and 16st 5lb, Roberts is built more like a back-row forward, but he insists he was

“YOU HAVE TO KEEP RAISING YOUR STANDARDS. IF YOU DON'T, THAT'S WHEN YOU'LL FALL ON YOUR BACKSIDE”

always set for a career behind the scrum. "I've always been fairly swift," he says. "I used to play at inside-centre and have never been too heavy. I've had to work hard with the conditioning staff to keep my weight on. I'm not your conventional fullback, but hopefully I'm setting a new trend."

The next year looks to be crucial for Roberts, who's burgeoning rugby career coincides with his medical studies. "At the moment I'm working out to what extent I'm going to be in University. I'll be in my third year and it's the toughest one yet. I'll have to work doubly hard to make training and prove myself. The WRU's performance and lifestyle orchestrator, Alun Davies, has been great in helping arrange my studies."

But for the time being his main concern is this afternoon's final. "I'm hoping we can give our fans something to shout about," says Jamie. "The atmosphere and venue are sure to lift us. We'll approach it as just another game of rugby. We may be favourites but we have to put that out of our minds. Llandovery fully deserve to be in the final and we have to give them due respect. Anything can happen."



at the Gnoll in the cup for a very long time," says the youngster. "It was a huge lift to get a result."

In the quarters, Jamie showcased his running abilities, bounding in from 40 metres against Swansea, and he was better still in the semis against Bridgend where he put in a man-of-the-match performance with a series of counter-attacking bursts and assured line-kicking. Roberts,

PICTURES: HUW EVANS

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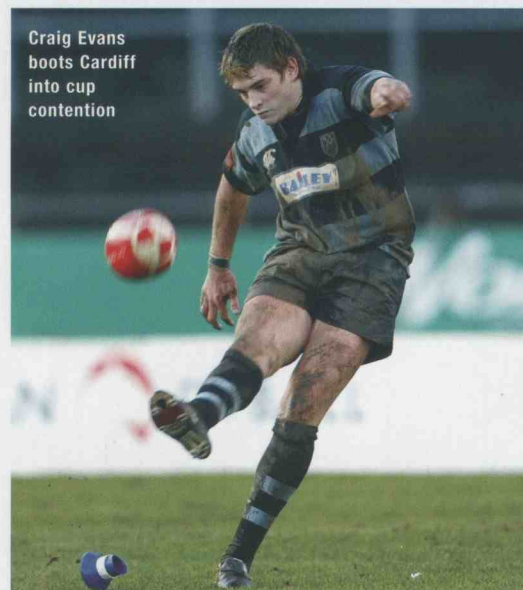
Passionate about Rugby. Angerddol am Rygbi.

CELTIC LEAGUE ANGLO WELSH CUP SIX NATIONS SCRUM V
Y GYNGHRAIR GELTAIDD CWPAN EINGL-GYMREIG Y CHWE GWLAD



CARDIFF'S ROUTE TO THE MILLENNIUM STADIUM

Craig Evans boots Cardiff into cup contention



ROUND 5, JANUARY 27, 2007 CARDIFF 69-14 NARBERTH

An entertaining afternoon's rugby began as many might have predicted, with the Blue and Blacks taking early control thanks to tries from Richard Jones, Shaun James and Jamie Roberts inside the first 25 minutes. To their credit, however, Narbeth refused to stick to the script and countered with two tries of their own to bring the score to 19-14. But if the ghost of St Peters past was hovering, it was soon exorcised by tries from back-rowers Adam Powell and Gareth Gravell. A six-try haul in the second half ensured victory for the home side, despite plucky resistance from the Otters.

Tries: Richard Jones (3), Shaun James, Jamie Roberts, Adam Powell, Gareth Gravell, Gareth Gunter, Chris Stamatakis, Elgan Jones, Michael Leaman; Cons: Chris Anderson (4), Craig Evans (3)

ROUND 6, FEBRUARY 17, 2007 NEATH 10-12 CARDIFF

Victory for Cardiff at the seemingly unassailable Gnoll was always going to take something special, and that's just what Ross Johnston produced as, in the 16th minute, the hooker ran onto a flat pass and kept on going for 40 metres to open the visitors' account. Superb in the line-out and fierce in defence, the

visitors extended their lead to 12 points as Jamie Roberts squeezed over at the corner flag in the second half and, despite a subsequent penalty goal, try and conversion by last year's beaten finalists, the Blue and Blacks held onto their two-point margin to secure a famous victory – their first at the Welsh All Blacks' stronghold in the club's cup history.

Tries: Ross Johnston, Jamie Roberts;

Cons: Craig Evans

QUARTER-FINAL, MARCH 25, 2007 SWANSEA 8-39 CARDIFF

A lacklustre first 40 minutes at St Helen's seemed to spell disaster for Cardiff as, despite a strong wind at their backs, Gareth Gravell's men slid to an 8-6 deficit in the first half. A transformed side took to the field after the interval, and the visitors broke through on the 55th minute with Jamie Roberts taking on the Whites' defence to sprint for the line. In a scintillating, seven-minute spell, the Blue and Blacks notched a 17-point lead, and they kept their momentum to the last, with Craig Evans surging over the line in the final minute to clock a 19-point tally and seal a blistering comeback.

Tries: Jamie Roberts, Ross Johnston, Nick Gill, Elgan Jones, Craig Evans; Cons: Craig Evans (4); Pens: Craig Evans (2)

SEMI-FINAL, APRIL 15, 2007 CARDIFF 23-16 BRIDGEND

Fullback Jamie Roberts put in a barnstorming display and Craig Evans's boot proved invaluable as the outside-half chalked up a tally of 18 points, but this was a victory forged in the Blue and Blacks' engine room, with the pack putting in a disciplined and committed performance. The lead see-sawed in the first half until, at 10-9 to the Ravens, the capital side kicked ahead in the 30th minute and furthered their advantage two minutes later as, following a fine run by Tom Isaacs and support from Leon Andrews and Richard Jones, Adam Powell touched down. Cardiff's youngsters failed to convert territorial advantage into tries in the second half, but held onto the lead to book a place in the club's first final in the competition for ten years.

Try: Adam Powell; Pens: Craig Evans (5);

DG: Craig Evans

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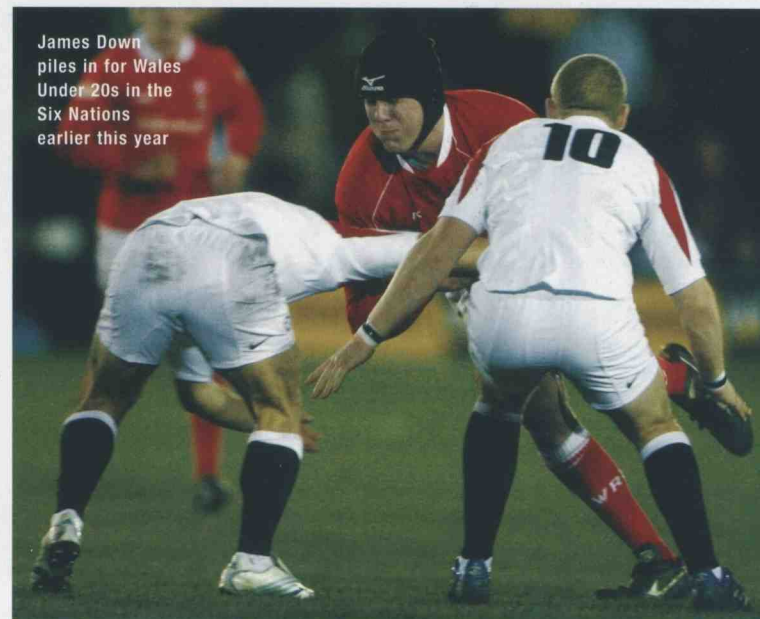
PRINCIPALITY

PLAYER PROFILE

New-look lock

Things are looking up for Cardiff's James Down

James Down
piles in for Wales
Under 20s in the
Six Nations
earlier this year



If you're searching for the identikit of the modern second-row forward, you needn't look any further than Cardiff's James Down. The 6ft 7in lock has been a shining light in the Blue and Blacks' march to today's final.

In Round 5, 19-year-old Down was outstanding in the hard-fought 12-10 win over likely Premiership champions Neath, winning ball after ball against the more experienced Welsh All Blacks' second-row. He was also at the heart of the Cardiff engine room that blew Swansea away with the "performance of the season" in the club's 39-8 win.

In the semi-final, Down faced veteran opposition in the shape of former Wales lock, and Bridgend coach, Chris Stephens. "They were a tough team to crack and Chris is a hugely experienced player," he says. "I had to be at the top of my game to keep him in check."

Though he's now entirely dedicated to the oval ball, the former Cardiff High pupil admits that cricket was his first love. After two years at the Blues Academy, however, rugby is firmly number one. "I've been at the Academy for two years, while studying at Glamorgan University and my game has come on in leaps and bounds," he enthuses.



PICTURES: HUW EVANS

Now capped at Under 18, Under 19 and Under 20 levels, this season Down has also tasted the rigours of Regional rugby. "I played for the Blues against the Border Reivers, and at Welford Road I played against Heineken Cup finalists Leicester," he says. "The game was a huge learning curve. To be facing a World Cup winner in Ben Kay was where you want to be as a young lock."

Down is clearly thriving at the Arms Park. "I've been lucky," comments the youngster. "There is very strong competition at No 4 and No 5. Chris Stamakatis and Dafydd Rosser are quality players who will push you every single game and that's how it should be."

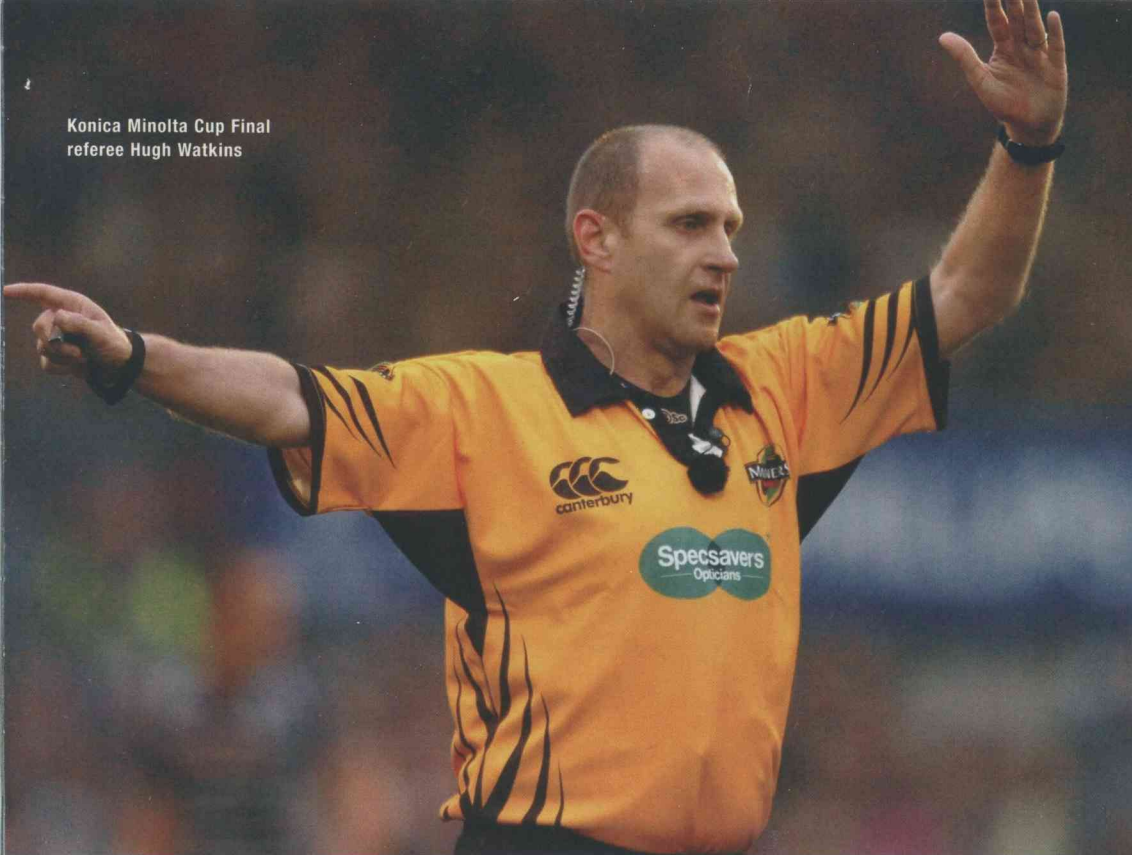
It's a role that, in James's view, extends far beyond the bread-and-butter work of the set-piece. "I like getting round the field and making a contribution in the loose," he

says. "Making your presence felt around the park is what a modern lock is all about. Look at Alun Wyn Jones during the Six Nations."

As for the players he aspires to emulate, he sees All Black duo Ali Williams and the Saracens-bound Chris Jack as the benchmark. "Time and time again they make a real mark in a game, both in the set-piece and in the loose," observes Down. "They are superb."

Back to today's challenge, and Down is unconcerned by Cardiff's tag as favourites. "I haven't played Llandovery in the Premiership, but despite their league position, on the day, anyone can win it," he speculates. "It's all down to who wants it most. Llandovery will be desperate to strike a blow for the West and claim the scalp of Cardiff. We have to keep our focus and grind out a result at the Millennium Stadium. I can't wait."

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Today's referee

HUGH WATKINS

This is Hugh's first cup final, having been on the WRU list of referees for 13 years. A highly regarded official with many years of European and Celtic League experience, he has been on the IRB Referee Panel for the past 4 years. Hugh is a native of Maesteg who lists cricket and golf as his other hobbies.

TOUCH JUDGES

The touch judges for today's game are Tony Rowlands and Dave Davies. Both referees have given outstanding service to the game not only in Wales but also on the international scene and it is fitting that their final appearance is today at the Millennium Stadium. The WRU would like to take the opportunity to thank them both for their services to rugby and refereeing in particular.

LLANDOVERY MASCOT

Name: Ella Davies
Age: 2 years old

Ella is the daughter of Llandovery team captain Arwel Davies and, obviously, her favourite player is her dad!



CARDIFF MASCOTS

Names: Benjamin and Ella Burnell
Age: 4 and 2 years old

Benjamin lists Scott Roberts as his favourite player, while Ella is a big fan of Ross Johnston.



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.

PICTURE: HUW EVANS

CARDIFF v LLANDOVERY

KONICA MINOLTA CUP FINAL MILLENNIUM STADIUM, April 28, 2007, 5.30PM



15 JAMIE ROBERTS

14 ELGAN JONES

13 RICHARD DAVIES

12 RICHARD JONES

11 LEON ANDREWS

10 CRAIG EVANS

9 TOM ISAACS

8 ADAM POWELL

7 GARETH GRAVELL (C)

6 GAVIN LUCAS

5 JAMES DOWN

4 CHRIS STAMATAKIS

3 SCOTT ROBERTS

2 ROSS JOHNSTON

1 RHYD GILL

15 IOAN DAVIES

14 OWAIN GWYN ROWLANDS

13 MIKE JONES

12 JONNY LEWIS

11 VIV JENKINS

10 HOWARD THOMAS

9 ROB WALTERS

8 JON MILLS

7 GARETH WILLIAMS

6 EIFION GWYNNE

5 ARWEL DAVIES (C)

4 TOM WALKER

3 ANDREW B JONES

2 EMYR PHILLIPS

1 PHIL JOHN



REPLACEMENTS

16 RYAN PRICE

17 GARETH GUNTER

18 ALEX MURPHY

19 MATTHEW AMOS

20 NICK HAMPSON

21 DARREN ALLINSON

22 LEIGH HALFPENNY

REPLACEMENTS

16 ENDAF HOWELLS

17 ANDREW R JONES

18 STEVE COVINGTON

19 GARETH BENNETT

20 ADRIAN WILLIAMS

21 GRUFF JONES

22 EMYR EVANS

Teams accurate as of April 25, 2007

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COACH'S VIEW 

Final frontier

As his club steps into the unknown territory of a Konica Minolta Cup Final, head coach **Iestyn Thomas** charts the team's progress to today's historic showdown



Iestyn Thomas (centre) enjoys some team spirit at his beloved Llandovery

Iestyn Thomas has every right to revel in Llandovery's first Konica Minolta Cup Final, having been part of the club set-up for over two decades. "It's the culmination of a quarter of a century of hard work from everyone involved," enthuses the head coach. "Where many clubs have been and gone, with dreams turned to nightmares, we've ploughed on. We're honest in what we do and that permeates through the club."

Having put his heart and soul into the team for so long, the former London Welsh and Harlequins star sees today's big game at the Millennium Stadium as a victory for the Llandovery way. "We're a Premiership and a community club, and not too many other sides can say that," he believes. "We run

11 junior teams, a youth team and a second team, and our work ethic goes right through, so this is a great day for both club and community."

This is the furthest Llandovery have ever got in the competition, yet Thomas remains clear on how he'll guide his team over the final hurdle of this cup chase. "My job

gone unnoticed by the coach.

"When we were down at Aberavon for the semis, I expected us to be dominated in terms of support, given we're only a town of 2,000," he recalls. "But it struck me that the majority of people there were Drovers fans. Their support has been wonderful."

“WE’RE USED TO TAKING BIG STEPS TOWARDS THE FUTURE. THIS IS JUST ANOTHER STEP”

is to make sure we don't freeze on the day," he confides. "I'm sure we won't, because we're used to doing new things and taking big steps towards the future. This is just another step."

One factor that has helped the Drovers on their historic cup run has been their fanatical support – a morale-boosting bonus that hasn't

Thomas is more than aware, however, that there's a match to be played, a cup to be won, and a quality side to be beaten. "They're a very talented, well run team," he says of the Blue and Blacks. "But come kick-off, we'll be crashing into them and making sure they earn their keep. We're certainly not here to make up the numbers."

PICTURE: MARK DAVIES

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LLANDOVERY SQUAD

TOP POINT SCORERS 2006/07

Jon Elrick: 3 tries; 9 cons; 30 pens.
Total 123

Simon Daniel: 13 cons; 28 pens;
2 DGs. Total 116

Howard Thomas: 3 tries; 2 cons;
8 pens. Total 43

Vivian Jenkins: 6 tries. Total 30

LAST FIVE GAMES

WWLWL

Premiership March 16, 2007

Bridgend 8-14 Llandovery

Konica Minolta Cup quarter-final
March 24, 2007

Bedwas 14-21 Llandovery

Premiership March 31, 2007

Llandovery 16-19 Swansea

Konica Minolta Cup semi-final
April 14, 2007

Llandovery 20-19 Llanelli

Premiership April 20, 2007

Llanelli 38-17 Llandovery

COACHES

Head coach: Iestyn Thomas
Assistant coach: Lyndon Lewis
Team manager: Mark Vince
Conditioning coach: Roy James



15 IOAN DAVIES

POSITION: Fullback
HEIGHT: 1.80m
WEIGHT: 83kg
DOB: 15.11.78



14 OWAIN GWYN ROWLANDS

POSITION: Wing
HEIGHT: 1.88m
WEIGHT: 89kg
DOB: 9.9.82



13 MIKE JONES

POSITION: Centre
HEIGHT: 1.83m
WEIGHT: 87kg
DOB: 22.4.81



12 JONATHAN LEWIS

POSITION: Centre
HEIGHT: 1.85m
WEIGHT: 94 kg
DOB: 31.3.82



11 VIV JENKINS

POSITION: Wing
HEIGHT: 1.79m
WEIGHT: 87kg
DOB: 22.2.84



10 HOWARD THOMAS

POSITION: Fly-half
HEIGHT: 1.80m
WEIGHT: 84kg
DOB: 7.9.85



9 ROB WALTERS

POSITION: Scrum-half
HEIGHT: 1.81m
WEIGHT: 90kg
DOB: 1.3.77



8 JON MILLS

POSITION: No 8
HEIGHT: 1.98m
WEIGHT: 115kg
DOB: 12.2.84



7 GARETH WILLIAMS

POSITION: Flanker
HEIGHT: 1.82m
WEIGHT: 90kg
DOB: 5.9.81



6 EIFION GWYNNE

POSITION: Flanker
HEIGHT: 1.80m
WEIGHT: 90kg
DOB: 24.10.74



5 ARWEL DAVIES

POSITION: Lock
HEIGHT: 1.92m
WEIGHT: 99kg
DOB: 16.6.79



4 TOM WALKER

POSITION: Lock
HEIGHT: 1.98m
WEIGHT: 119kg
DOB: 12.6.80



3 ANDREW B JONES

POSITION: Prop
HEIGHT: 1.80m
WEIGHT: 108kg
DOB: 17.11.73



2 EMYR PHILLIPS

POSITION: Hooker
HEIGHT: 1.82m
WEIGHT: 95kg
DOB: 22.2.87



1 PHIL JOHN

POSITION: Prop
HEIGHT: 1.89m
WEIGHT: 122kg
DOB: 25.4.81

REPLACEMENTS



16 ENDAF HOWELLS

POSITION: Prop
HEIGHT: 1.80m
WEIGHT: 114kg
DOB: 1.3.78



17 ANDREW R JONES

POSITION: Hooker
HEIGHT: 1.83m
WEIGHT: 95kg
DOB: 31.7.78



18 STEVE COVINGTON

POSITION: Lock
HEIGHT: 2.00m
WEIGHT: 108kg
DOB: 20.10.77



19 GARETH BENNETT

POSITION: No 8
HEIGHT: 1.95m
WEIGHT: 119kg
DOB: 14.2.78



20 ADRIAN WILLIAMS

POSITION: Scrum-half
HEIGHT: 1.75m
WEIGHT: 70kg
DOB: 19.5.73



21 GRUFF JONES

POSITION: Wing
HEIGHT: 1.76m
WEIGHT: 70kg
DOB: 23.1.88



22 EMYRS EVANS

POSITION: Centre
HEIGHT: 1.80m
WEIGHT: 83kg
DOB: 11.2.76



LOCAL HERO

Having grown up within shouting distance of Church Bank, **Emyr Phillips** can expect plenty of vocal support at the Millennium Stadium today

Come kick-off time this afternoon, there will be no one more proud than Emyr Phillips.

It's fair to say that the hooker is a Llandovery lad, born and bred. "My dad played for the club and I can see it from my house," says the 20-year-old. "He used to take me to games and I got involved with the junior Drovers and have worked my way up into the first

team, so it's extra special to reach the Cup Final today."

Phillips started his career as a centre but as he moved through the age grades, he found himself at the coalface. "I love the physicality of playing hooker," he admits. "I try and get stuck in as much as I can and I'm a mobile player as well."

His hard-hitting style of play has cemented his place in the Drovers' formidable front row this season –

a trio bolstered by Andrew B Jones and Endaf Howells. "They are both hard-working men who love the physical challenge," comments Phillips. "They live to scrummage and I don't think any pack fancies coming up against Llandovery."

The experience of his front-row colleagues has also helped him find his feet. "I was talking to Andrew the other day," he laughs, "and we worked out that he made

his Llandovery debut when I was two. That's the sort of experience you need alongside you!"

His coach, Iestyn Thomas, firmly believes in Phillips's abilities. "He's in the right environment to continue his development into a very fine player," says Thomas. "He's also a Llandovery lad, so it's great for him to reach the final."

A place in today's cup showdown has, unsurprisingly, caused great excitement in the Phillips household. "My dad booked a bus about a day or two after the semis," explains Phillips. "I'm at university in Cardiff at the moment, so my house is going to be pretty packed. I don't know how many people are staying!"

The prospect of running out at Cardiff's most famous landmark, the Millennium Stadium, is one he's relishing. "I've played there before for the Scarlets in the Under 18s and 20s Reebok Regional cup finals", he says, "but this will be even more special because my family and friends will all be there. It's such a small town I know almost everyone and they're all coming down, so it should be brilliant."

Aside from the pageantry of the occasion, Phillips is looking forward to facing a Cardiff outfit on the rise. "I know a couple of the lads and they're quite a good team," he admits. "They work hard and play some good rugby and they've also got some big lumps in the pack."

One of those "lumps" is his opposite number Ross Johnston, another promising young hooker. "He's a tough player who likes to get around the park," says Phillips. "I'm really looking forward to facing him."

Indeed, like the rest of his teammates, Phillips isn't phased by the prospect of taking on Cardiff at the

Millennium Stadium. Not surprising, given his club's form in this year's Konica Minolta Cup. "All the boys are very close and there's always some good banter and a good team spirit," he observes. "Our cup run has certainly added to the buoyant mood in the changing room."

"There were a few funny stories on our first day back at training after the semis," he continues. "It's safe to say a few of the boys celebrated harder than others, so there were a few sore heads on the Monday."

The hooker points to inspiration from the top as another reason behind the team's cup success.

"I LOVE THE PHYSICALITY OF PLAYING HOOKER. I GET STUCK IN AS MUCH AS I CAN"

"Iestyn doesn't put any pressure on us," he says. "He just wants us to play for each other and play hard rugby. It's not pressure to win but pressure to perform that he emphasises before every game."

And the Drovers have performed each step of the way towards today's final, showing rock-solid resolve with a couple of last-gasp victories. "We beat Bedwas with an injury-time try and Llanelli in the last couple of minutes, so it's been quite tense," admits Phillips. "Hopefully we can sneak another late win today."

He realises that the task at hand will require something special from a club making its debut in the final phase of the Konica Minolta Cup but, like the rest of his team, Phillips doesn't mind being cast as the competition's surprise package. "I don't think any team takes us lightly, but being the underdog suits us. We're not too cocky or full of ourselves, we just work hard and plug away."

Emyr Phillips is looking forward to getting to grips with Cardiff's "big lumps" this afternoon

PICTURE: MARK DAVIES



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LLANDOVERY'S ROUTE TO THE MILLENNIUM STADIUM

ROUND 5, JANUARY 27, 2007 LLANDOVERY 50-10 NANTYFFYLLON

A comfortable, seven-try victory to the Drovers. Nantyffyllon's forwards gave a good account of themselves, especially early on in the game, but their backs were outgunned by sheer pace. Jon Elrick got the scoreboard ticking over with a penalty, followed by a try and conversion on the 20-minute mark, and a fine move from the home side's own 22 saw fullback Howard Thomas touch down to widen the gap. The ASDA Division Three South West side did themselves few favours in the second half, picking up two yellow cards, and Llandoverly's superior fitness levels took their toll as the hosts went on to seal the win.

Tries: Jon Elrick, Howard Thomas, Steve Covington, Ioan Davies (2), Dafydd Jones, Iwan Davies; Cons: Jon Elrick (6); Pen: Jon Elrick

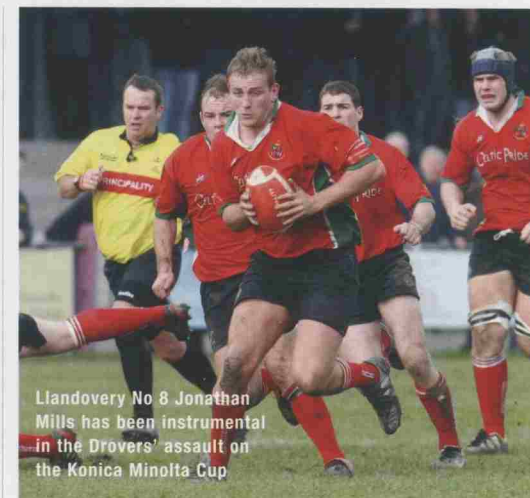
ROUND 6, FEBRUARY 17, 2007 LLANDOVERY 37-13 CAERPHILLY

A tale of two halves, with the Premiership club rocked by the Cheesemen in the first 40 minutes, only to stamp their authority on the game in the second. Caerphilly took advantage of a fair wind and some sloppy opposition play to take a 6-5 lead into the interval. But Jon Elrick, playing in his last game for the club, kicked Llandoverly into the lead after the break and forward momentum turned the tide for the Drovers. The home side ruled the line-out in the second half and were dynamic in the scrum, pushing over for tries to Arwel Davies and Adam Yelland. Jenkins found the line once more in injury time to cap a fine comeback.

Tries: Viv Jenkins (2), Arwel Davies, Adam Yelland, Ricky Davies; Cons: Jon Elrick, Simon Daniel (2); Pens: Jon Elrick (2)

QUARTER-FINAL, MARCH 24, 2007 BEDWAS 14-21 LLLANDOVERY

Two evenly matched sides both looking to make it to the semis for the first time, and it was the Bridge Field outfit that took the early initiative, building up a 14-6 lead. On the 56th minute, however, Bedwas hooker Ben Flower picked up a second yellow and the visitors made the most of their numerical advantage. Despite stern resolve from the opposition, the Drovers' pack



Llandoverly No 8 Jonathan Mills has been instrumental in the Drovers' assault on the Konica Minolta Cup

piled on the pressure and, with one minute remaining on the clock and the scoreline tied, Mike Jones, Ioan Davies and Rob Walters combined to send lock Steve Covington over the line, and Llandoverly into the last four of the competition.

Tries: Jonathan Mills, Steve Covington; Con: Simon Daniel; Pens: Simon Daniel (3)

SEMI-FINAL, APRIL 14, 2007 LLANDOVERY 20-19 LLANELLI

The form book was shredded at Talbot Athletic Ground in a searing West Wales derby. Despite building an early ten-point lead thanks to a try by No 8 Jonathan Mills and a conversion and penalty from fly-half Simon Daniels, the Drovers went into the interval 16-10 down. The game's talking point came in the second half as Llanelli, with their opponents shaping up for a five-metre scrum, pulled off prop Peter Edwards and called for uncontested scrums with the arrival of back-rower Ioan Cunningham, but a minute later the Stradey Park outfit conceded a rolling maul for a try to skipper Arwel Davies. Craig Jones retorted with a penalty kick to bring Llanelli within one point but, to the collective sighs of the Llandoverly faithful, with two minutes left on the clock the fly-half pulled a last-ditch effort to the right of the posts.

Tries: Jonathan Mills, Arwel Davies; Cons: Simon Daniel, Howard Thomas; Pens: Simon Daniel, Howard Thomas



BELONG

PICTURE: RILEYSPORTSPHOTO.COM

For most players, competing in a major semi-final in their regular position is daunting enough. But not so Llandovery back Howard Thomas, who began his side's victory against local rivals Llanelli at fullback, but finished at outside-half. "I didn't have time to think about it," he says. "It was a quick decision, because sadly Simon Daniel broke his hand, so I just got on with it, which is for the best sometimes."

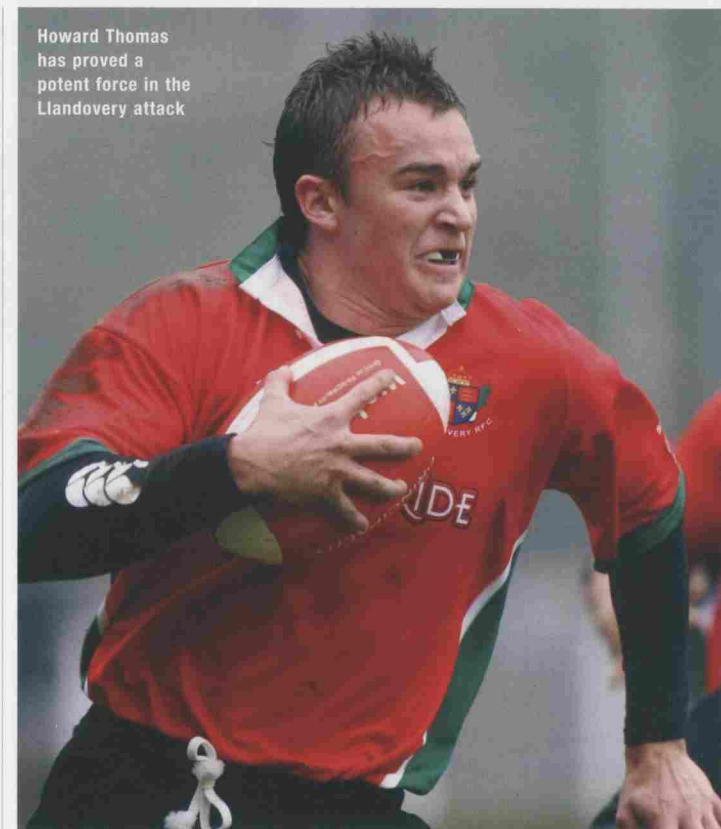
Not that Thomas isn't used to switching positions. His versatility has seen him play at fly-half, fullback and outside-centre this term, which is no bad thing given that he's not exactly sure which is his favourite berth. "A bit of variety is good I suppose," he comments. "On balance, I probably prefer outside-half as I enjoy the responsibility and being able to dictate the back-line."

A product of what he describes as a "sporting family", Thomas started his career at his father's club, Llandeilo, before making the move to the Drovers at the age of 18. His fullback brother, Martyn, is also an exciting young player at the Dragons, having moved from the Scarlets Academy. "He's as much of an inspiration to me as anyone," confides Thomas. "Seeing the scale of his development has inspired me to take my rugby more seriously."

And when the brothers get together, they certainly don't mind talking shop. "He gives me lots of tips he picked up at his Academy," says Thomas. "We don't only talk about rugby, but exchanging training advice is always good."

So what does the 21-year-old make of his club's fellow finalists this afternoon? "They're a very good side," he muses. "We've played them twice this season.

Howard Thomas has proved a potent force in the Llandovery attack



Howard's way

A versatile presence in the Llandovery backline, **Howard Thomas** is just happy to be running out at the Millennium Stadium today, wherever he ends up on the field...

In the first match, Tom James was the difference, and at the Arms Park we let the game slip away with 20 minutes to go."

Thomas cites opposition skipper Gareth Gravell as one of the players that Llandovery will have to neutralise today. "He's a hard hitter and a big talisman for them," he says. "If we want to pick up the cup, he's the type of guy we need to stop."

Win or lose, the Carmarthen-born lad is understandably thrilled to be involved in today's final. "It's superb to be part of the first

Llandovery side to reach the final," says Thomas. "It's a momentous day for the club and the town, so hopefully everyone will get behind us and it'll be a great occasion for all concerned."

It will certainly be a big day for Thomas who, as a final-year business administration student at Cardiff University, studies in the shadow of the Millennium Stadium. "I think for any rugby player this is a dream come true," he comments. "I'm just looking forward to getting on with it and enjoying the game."



Swansea coach Tony Clement collects Alun Wyn Jones's award

WINNERS' DINNER

MAY, 2007, MILLENNIUM STADIUM

At the end of May, the Millennium Stadium will host the second Principality Premiership Awards Dinner.

Last year saw Alun Wyn Jones named as Principality Premiership Best Newcomer, demonstrating the importance of the Premiership in providing a competitive system through which players can progress to the Regions and beyond.

Categories include the Player of the Year, Coach of the Year, and

Fair Play and Services to Rugby Awards, whereby each of the clubs is asked to nominate a member of staff or volunteer who doesn't always receive the recognition they deserve. After all, their efforts can often be as vital as those of the try-scorers and goal-kickers.

Last year's winner was Barrie Little of Maesteg, who gave his time voluntarily and is sorely missed at the club following his retirement at the end of last year.

Young flyers

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supporting junior rugby

Thousands of young Welsh rugby players will have plenty to get excited about when the Royal Air Force and the WRU host a series of RAF Junior Rugby Festivals in May.

Junior teams from the Blues and Dragons Regions will take to the pitch at New Panteg RFC on May 5 and 6. The festival continues with teams from the Ospreys, Scarlets and North Wales Regions at Swansea's Duntant RFC on May 12, Llandovery RFC on May 13, and Bangor RFC on May 20.

Working in partnership with the WRU, the RAF provides essential support for over 12,000 rugby players, aged 12 to 15, at junior level each year.



A fizzing final

Last Wednesday, Aberavon witnessed an exciting afternoon of rugby in the Coca-Cola Schools Cup Final with Brynteg defeating Ystalyfera in the Under 14s competition and Whitchurch beating Brynteg in the Under 16s.

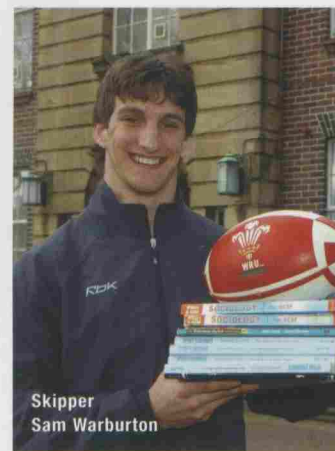
The four finalists were handed medals and trophies by Welsh internationals Rhys Thomas and Gethin Jenkins, who also provided words of encouragement in the dressing rooms before kick-off.

This year, the Under 14s competition, now in its 16th year, saw 170 schools take part from across Wales, while the Under 16s competition, in its ninth year, included 135 schools. All four finalists played to a roaring crowd as Coca-Cola provided buses from each school to the ground.

These competitions have continued to grow from strength to strength, thanks in no small part to the their sponsor Coca-Cola.



Whitchurch celebrate their cup victory



Skipper Sam Warburton

Going fourth

Wales's youngsters did themselves and their country proud in the Under 19 World Championships in Belfast this month

If the Rugby World Cup in September goes as well as this month's Under 19 equivalent, 2007 will be a stellar year for Welsh rugby. The youngsters, led by head coach Justin Burnell, finished

fourth, their best placing since the 2001 tournament in Chile.

Captain Sam Warburton is thrilled with the squads success. "It feels brilliant to be part of the team that has come fourth in the world, and to be captain is just awesome," says the No 8.

"Although we were disappointed not to get third place in the end it's still a fantastic achievement."

Although pipped 25-21 by defending champions Australia in the third place play-off, following their semi-final loss to this year's victors New Zealand, Wales beat top southern hemisphere sides Argentina and Samoa along the way. According to the captain, the experience will stand them in excellent stead for the future.

"Those sides bring a lot of physicality so you have to raise your game to match that," says Warburton. "You see the benefit when you go back to playing northern hemisphere teams who often aren't as physical."

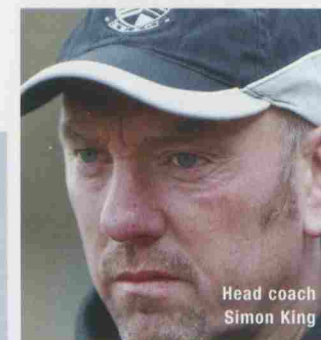
The experience of playing in such a prestigious tournament is clearly going to pay dividends for

these young men in the future, "It's great being part of such a professional environment," says Wales's jet-heeled skipper. "We have played in front of some big crowds and we've learned how

WE'VE PLAYED IN FRONT OF SOME BIG CROWDS AND WE'VE LEARNED HOW TO HANDLE OURSELVES BOTH ON AND OFF THE PITCH

to handle ourselves both on and off the pitch."

With fine displays from young guns Leigh Halfpenny, Josh Turnbull and Ryan Bevington among others, it can't be long before some of the class of 2007 graduate to the professional stage. Most crucially, however, Wales's Under 19s have savoured their trip to the Emerald Isle. "Everyone bonded really well and it was a fantastic experience for all the lads," says Warburton. "This was a great environment to be involved in."



Head coach Simon King

Coming of age

Not to be denied their spot in the limelight, the Wales Under 18s travelled to Glasgow earlier this month for the inaugural Under 18 Six Nations festival, recording two wins in three.

Head coach Simon King was well satisfied with how the youngsters conducted themselves. "To notch wins against France and England is especially pleasing," he comments. "We overcame a physical French side 30-16, with 20 points for Ospreys fly-half Dan Biggar, and England were beaten 21-9 in a punishing game."

Last up was a game against the hosts, Scotland. With bagpipes blaring, the home side won 20-13. "We came up just short, but the boys were not downhearted,"

reflects King.

"Sometimes you learn more when you lose. Wales travelled with a strong coaching set-up with assistant coaches Gethin Watts and Nicky Lloyd, Byron Haward as conditioning coach and Terry Cobner as team manager.

"What pleased me was that all 26 guys were capped," he continues, "and ten of those are there for next year. I'm hoping one or two of those guys will step up for Wales in later years. Several players did their reputations no harm, like Dan Biggar, Ashley Beck, Jason Tovey and James Loxton, while young Ricky Guest captained the side magnificently."

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Rise above the rest

Your safety is our concern

The expertise and experience of safety stewards, police, doctors, paramedics and members of the St John's Ambulance Service are important ingredients in the safety management plan of the stadium. The successful implementation of this plan, however, depends to a very large extent on the cooperation of you the spectator and all other stadium users.

Please contact a steward if you have any worries over a matter of safety, any concerns about the behaviour of other spectators or if you need help with ticketing or with finding your way in the stadium. Stewards in green jackets hold formal qualifications in first aid and life saving and stewards in orange and yellow jackets are supervisors who are in constant contact with the stadium control room.

As operations manager for the Millennium Stadium I would like to draw to your attention a number of key issues in order that you may enjoy your visit in the safest possible way.

First Aid

There are 12 first aid posts and one first aid centre at the Millennium Stadium. A first aid post can be found at each corner of the ground on levels 3, 4 and 6. The large first aid centre is on level 1 and caters for major injuries. This facility has a direct access route for the ambulance service.

Persistent Standing

The Millennium Stadium is an "all-seater" stadium and standing during matches or other events is not permitted. Spectators should remain seated at all times and not obstruct the view of others during exciting passages of play.

Lost Property

Stewards will ensure that any lost property is taken to a secure storage location and the details entered into a register. If you wish to

claim property that you believe to be lost within the confines of the stadium then please call the Millennium Stadium lost property line on 02920 667 943.

Please note that this line will not be in operation on the day of an event.

Facilities for Disabled Spectators

Wheelchair users and other disabled spectators enter the stadium via the same turnstiles and through the same entrances as all other spectators: from the north along the Riverwalk to gate 1, from the east across Westgate Plaza to gate 3, from the south across Millennium Plaza to gate 6 and 7.

Viewing areas for wheelchair users and dedicated toilet facilities are available throughout the ground on all levels. Toilets are fitted with the "Radar" key lock system. Facilities on the upper levels are reached via lifts and a step-free level access.

A number of stewards have voluntarily undertaken specific disability awareness training. These stewards will be pleased to offer assistance to our disabled visitors. This help includes providing a refreshment ordering service for those spectators who request it.

Prohibited Items

Millennium Stadium plc has a legal obligation to deny entry to the stadium to anyone carrying cans, bottles, glasses or containers of any description. Klaxon horns and larger flag sticks are also not permitted.

Spectators bringing such items to the ground will be asked to deposit them in a refuse skip provided for the purpose. Confiscated items cannot be returned – they are given up as a condition of entry.

Parenting Rooms

Designated feeding and nappy changing facilities are located in each corner of the stadium on every level. Their precise locations are well signposted.

Please do not Smoke

The Millennium Stadium is a non-smoking venue. Spectators are requested not to smoke at any time in any public area. Our safety stewards are authorised to ask persons found smoking to leave the stadium.

Use of Escalators

With about 50,000 spectators accommodated above ground level it is simply not possible for everyone to leave the stadium via the four sets of escalators. The escalators are intended primarily for the use of those spectators at levels 5 and 6 who are unable to use the staircases. In order to prevent the build up of potentially dangerous congestion at the end of an event, egress via the escalators is restricted to those spectators departing from level 6. Again, your cooperation in this regard is greatly appreciated.

Toilets

Toilets are situated on every level of the stadium and can be found by following the concourse signs. There are 82 sets of toilet facilities available for public use.

Licensed Bars/Food & Beverage Outlets

There are many bars and food and beverage facilities open to the public at the Millennium Stadium for today's event.

For these outlets to operate safely and effectively it is critical that all persons making use of them move away from bar and counter areas immediately after purchases have been made and not obstruct the access of others. Your help to keep the concourses clear in an attempt to reduce congestion is much appreciated.

Many thanks for your cooperation. I hope you enjoy your visit to the Millennium Stadium.

Gerald Toms, Millennium Stadium Manager

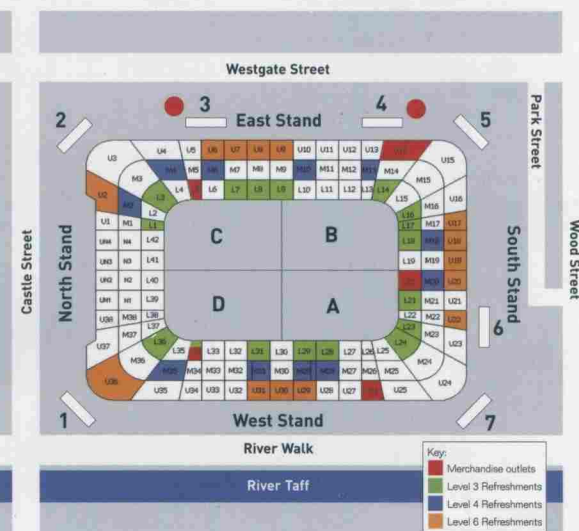


St John
Cymru - Wales

Millennium Stadium plc and the Welsh Rugby Union wish to thank the volunteers of St John Cymru Ambulance who are providing first aid and medical cover today's event.

St John Cymru Wales is Wales' leading first aid charity and has more than 5,500 members in over 220 community groups across Wales. The volunteers give over 200,000 hours of their time each year and treat more than 10,000 people annually. Every major Millennium Stadium event requires a team of volunteers consisting of 70 first aiders, four doctors and four nurses. St John Cymru Wales is a national charity in its own right and receives no core government funding.

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Cardiff CF24 5PB
Tel: 02920 449 600
Fax: 02920 449 601





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

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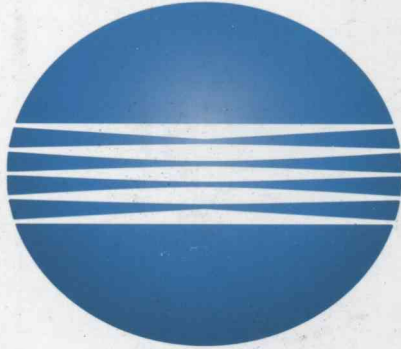
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