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LLANELLI

Llanelli v Cardiff

Saturday, 24th November, 1979.

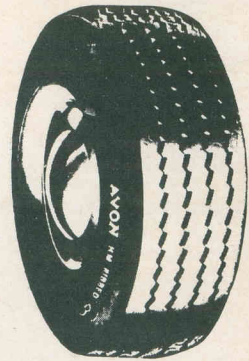
Kick-off 3.00p.m.



OFFICIAL PROGRAMME 15p

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A Game of Great Expectations

It has been said that competence, like truth, beauty and contact lenses, is in the eye of the beholder. If that is so, the eyes of some thousands of beholders will be looking for competence in generous measure in this 194th meeting of historic rugby rivals from east to west.

From a Stradey devotee's standpoint, there is a certain amount of leeway to be made up, Llanelli having won 70 of the 193 matches played, Cardiff having won 107 games, with sixteen drawn.

A survey of the last decade shows that the Scarlets have been rather more in the ascendancy, having won ten matches to Cardiff's seven, with three games drawn.

Merely to measure this occasion in terms of statistics and records, however, is to be insensitive to the traditions of two famous clubs.

Spectators come to this game with their expectancies highly tuned. There is something about a visit to Stradey by Cardiff that almost guarantees the spectator an afternoon of enrichment as well as enjoyment, and we are certain that there is a similar vein of great expectations at Cardiff Arms Park whenever the great rivals meet.

In the modern era of the game in Wales, we acknowledge with respect the contribution of Cardiff players of such immense international reputation as Gareth Edwards, Gerald Davies, Cliff Morgan, Barry John, Haydn Tanner, Bleddyn Williams and Rex Willis.

In the same period, we look back with pride to the achievements of many great Llanelli players, including Phil Bennett, J.J. Williams, Norman Gale, Delme Thomas, R.H. Williams, Derek Quinnell and Terry Davies.

The link between these fourteen great names is that each player was capped by Wales on more than twenty occasions — and if Cardiff supporters care to point to the fact that two of their heroes, Gareth Edwards and Gerald Davies, gained between them an incomparable ninety-nine caps, the reply is sure to come swiftly that the only serious errors of tactical judgement ever made by these (and other) great players was to "defect" to the east.

A lot has been said about the proficiency of the Welsh fly-half factory. There has even been conjecture about where it is based. We will do no more than point out that the last three holders of the fly-half position in the Welsh team have been Barry John, Phil Bennett and Gareth Davies, and that a certain Peter Morgan, too, has been shown to have a certain talent in the position.

We are perhaps being unduly modest about our two clubs if we look simply for competence, however highly rated, in today's game. There will be craft. And class. And that uniqueness of atmosphere which makes every contest between Scarlets and Blues-and-Blacks something to savour.

GARETH HUGHES

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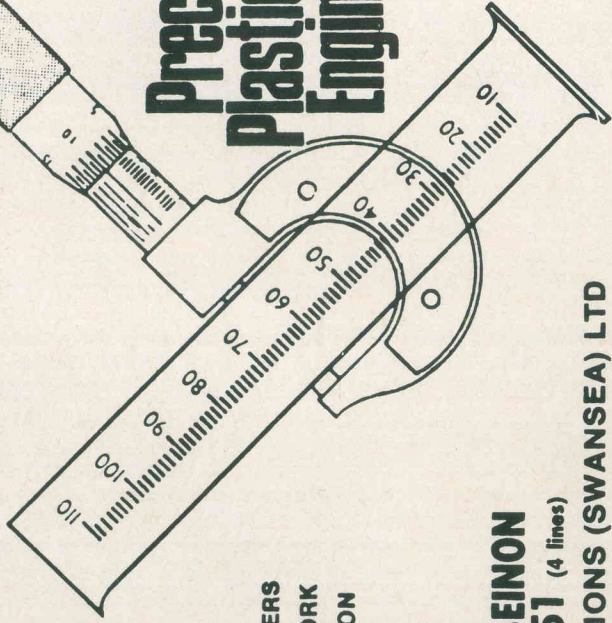
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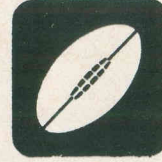
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The rules of the Schweppes W.R.U. cup competition state that if, after 30 minutes, the referee abandons play, then the score at that time stands. However, the decision whether to play, or not, lies with the captains in the first instance and then, finally, and solely, with the referee.

Now, as is well-known around the West Wales circuit, the Tumble field is not exactly renowned for its drainage properties and the arrival of some 28 tonnes (or so rumour hath it) of sand on Friday was, to say the least, ominous.

On our arrival we noted that not only did the field look to be in reasonable condition but that the rain was being driven up the slope by a strong wind — thus making the decision of the captain winning the toss an intriguing one.

However, on the way into the changing room, Derek Quinnell had, very astutely, been on the field and suggested to me that I go and inspect it as "it is much worse than it looks." On my way down, I met the chairman and asked him to come with me and we both found that, indeed, the field was very much worse than it looked.

The chairman then went to get the referee (who was changing in the Tumble

dressing room!) By this time I had been joined by our match secretary, Alan James, and, as we were standing discussing the position with the chairman, we were approached by a character dressed as if he were about to take the Mumbles life-boat out into a force 10 gale.

"Not much wrong with the field, boys," said Alan John, that former Scarlet stalwart and now coach to Tumble. 'Don't tell me you're thinking of calling it off. Come on, Alan, Marlston, we've played in much worse in our days with Llanelli.'

'You must be joking,' countered Alan James, and then some good natured bantering took over but, of course, it was not up to any of us at the end of the day. The referee then went off to get both captains and they decided, quite rightly, that the pitch was unplayable.

However, I spoke to the referee, Mr. D. O. Hughes, from Newbridge, a little later and he told me that if the captains had decided to play, he might have let the game go for ten minutes but would, in all probability, have blown up after one if he thought anyone was in danger of drowning!

All in all, a great pity both for Tumble supporters and our own. Nevertheless, the warmth and generosity of our welcome, in spite of the disappointment, was typically Tumble and from that point of view I, for one, am looking forward to going back.

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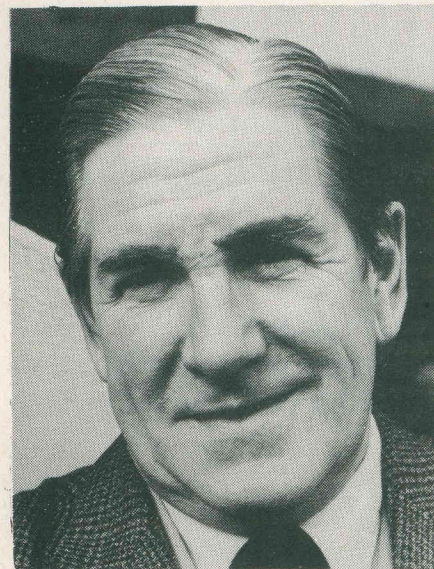


Photo: John Harris

Whenever I meet the greatest loose forward ever to play for Llanelli, the remarkable Ivor Jones, my mind flashes back to boyhood and the happy days of the 'twenties, when one could not realise to the full the hardships of adults in the days of economic depression. For small boys here was always an escape.

Especially when I went on holidays down West, to Loughor. Great days, as Dai John used to introduce me to the Llanelli side of the "twenties"; tall, lean men, comprised of muscle and bone, plus shrewd rugby brains and a sense of humour.

The old Grovesend rolling mills; that is where many of them worked, and walking through there as a boy amid the noise and steam, it was easy to see why Llanelli could field a great side. How sad it was that the Waratahs raced to victory in the last quarter in 1927-28, when Llanelli lost their fullback. There were no replacements, alas, in those far off days! Yet the match made friendships that have lasted.

Two tall, hard, strong, swiftly-moving flankers, Ivor Jones and Wylie Breckenridge, opposed each other for Llanelli and Wales against the tourists. They still talk of each other to me, when they recall the matches with the light of the battle in their eyes! Ivor at Gorseinon and Breck at his home in St. Ives, Sydney. Both became selectors and administrators in the game, and honoured as presidents of their Unions. They have been world figures in the game.

Albert Jenkins was a quiet man off the field but when he put on the scarlet jersey of Llanelli, he was a magnificent player who dominated match after match. A centre with all the natural gifts; beautifully proportioned, sharp on the burst, a perfect timer of the scoring pass, and a tackle that really crunched. In addition he could place and drop kick for points and punt with accuracy.

A complete footballer who suffered more through poor Welsh selection than his own occasional off day which, indeed, is suffered by every great player. Before the recent galaxy of stars at Stradey; Bennett, Williams, Gravell, Bergiers, Quinnell and Delme. Albert Jenkins was the most loved. The ground is his true memorial.

The third member of the memorable trio is Dai John, an outside half of strength who was an excellent match reader, even if he was a little before his time. I remember him as the Welsh Bennie Osler, as he was a supreme tactical kicker behind Llanelli's fast-moving pack who, when on the rampage, could be covered by a blanket.

John could punt and drop goals with ease; and was extremely dangerous from 25 yards out with his corkscrew running. Defensively, he was strong and covered well but yet, again, Wales never used him wisely. With Ivor Jones leading the pack and Albert Jenkins at Dai John's elbow, plotting and planning, Llanelli were indeed formidable. These three then are the favourite Sospans of my young days!

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- 12 ROY BERGIERS
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 - Lock
 - Flanker
 - No. 8
 - Flanker
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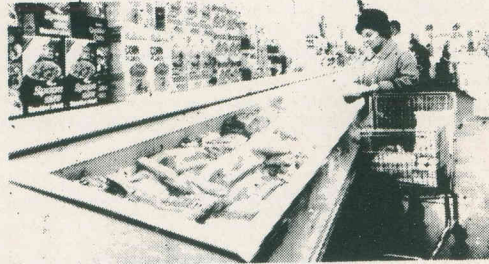
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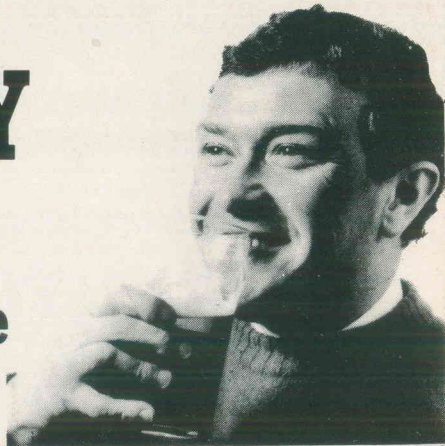
How many times have Llanelli won the Snelling Sevens,
and in what years?

(Answer inside back cover)



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YMLAEN CAERDYDD!

By Carwyn James

"Watch out for Cardiff.....They are going to sink you and your precious Llanelli." A long, well written letter from two young Cardiff supporters, fifteen year old in fact, taking me to task for criticising "in our view the best team in the world."

"If you think Cardiff are a dull, kicking team, then you are wrong....." I may have thought it once or twice, I certainly never wrote it. The occasional player may have kicked a little too much, now and again, but I can't see any man west of Llŵchwr Bridge writing Cardiff off as a dull side. There is far too much mutual respect.

My memories of Cardiff are post-war. I shall never forget the fantastic deeds of that brilliant side of the late forties and early fifties, a period when it was virtually impossible to make the Welsh side if you didn't play for Cardiff.

I could name every member of those illustrious sides and at school we used to talk with reverence about the deeds of Cliff Davies and Bill Tamplin, Les Manfield and Gwyn Evans, Tanner and Cleaver, Jack Matthews and Bleddyn Williams.

And there is no doubt about it, when I came to play for Llanelli we had inherited an inferiority complex as far as Cardiff were

concerned, so vital was the influence that the Cardiff side had exercised in Welsh rugby. Power play up front, controlled and disciplined, and an attacking flair behind, incomparable.

My personal hero was Bleddyn. I would go miles to see him play and then I would practice side-stepping for hours trying to emulate the master.

And there was Cliff Morgan, whose shadow I chased on many a day, too often in vain, I'm afraid, but I certainly learnt much from the lad from the Rhondda.

The Rhondda is a natural breeding ground of the extrovert, usually the kindly, sympathetic, generous extrovert who wears his heart lavishly on his sleeve.

Such a man was Cliff Morgan, one of the finest fly-halves of all time, who dominated the centre of the field, a dynamic, mercurial figure, a typical Welsh migrant from the Mediterranean, dark, small, stocky, his smallish legs strengthened and quickened by climbing all those friendly hills in the narrow valley where each street is on a steep incline and where you need strength and breath to go from one room to another.

There have been others. Including those delightful defectors from the West, four of them from my old school, Gwendraeth Grammar : D. Ken Jones, Robert Morgan, Barry John and Gareth Davies. "Go East young man....." Whatever brings them, it doesn't matter. Not any more it matters.

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FIRST XV FIXTURES

September

1 - Pontypridd	12 - 3	H
5 - Moseley	9 - 15	A
8 - Aberavon	6 - 16	A
12 - Cross Keys	18 - 10	H
15 - Harlequins	21 - 25	A
22 - Bath	14 - 6	H
26 - Bridgend	13 - 0	H
29 - Newport	10 - 6	A

October

6 - Neath	16 - 21	H
10 - Ebbw Vale	29 - 3	H
13 - Swansea	17 - 18	A
17 - Abertillery	14 - 0	H
20 - London Welsh	22 - 28	A
24 - South African Barbarians	6 - 15	H
27 - Bedford	36 - 13	H

November

3 - Leinster	0 - 21	A
10 - Swansea	6 - 7	H
24 - Cardiff		H
27 - Tumble (W.R.U. Cup)		A

December

1 - Northampton		A
8 - Coventry		H
15 - 2nd Round W.R.U. Cup		
22 - Ebbw Vale		A
26 - London Welsh		H
29 - Bristol		A

January

1 - Penarth		H
5 - Exeter		H
12 - 3rd Round W.R.U. Cup		
19 - Glamorgan Wanderers Wales v. France		A
26 - Newport		H
30 - Bridgend		A

February

2 - Cross Keys		A
9 - Harlequins		H
15 - Army		A
16 - England v. Wales		
23 - 4th Round W.R.U. Cup		
27 - South Wales Police		H

March

1 - Wales v. Scotland		
8 - Maesteg		H
12 - Glamorgan Wanderers		H
15 - Ireland v. Wales		
22 - Neath		A
29 - Cardiff		A

April

5 - Northampton		H
7 - Exeter University		H
12 - Aberavon		H
19 - Pontypridd		A
19 - Bath		A

ATHLETIC XV FIXTURES

September

1 - Skewen	29 - 0	A
5 - Waunarlwydd	15 - 38	A
8 - Pembroke Dock Quins	7 - 6	H
15 - Porthcawl	9 - 9	H
22 - Old Illydians	8 - 12	A
29 - Hollybush (Gwent)	14 - 3	H

October

13 - Bath United	12 - 10	H
20 - Pyle	19 - 27	H
27 - Bath United	10 - 17	A

November

3 - Bridgend Athletic	22 - 7	H
10 - Swansea Athletic	6 - 15	A
24 - South Wales Police		A

December

1 - Neath Athletic		H
8 - Pembroke Dock Quins		A
15 - Trinity College, Carmarthen		H
22 - Lampeter		H
29 - Narberth		

January

5 -		
12 - Bargoed		A
26 - Trinity College, Carmarthen		A

February

2 - Skewen		H
9 - Lampeter		A
23 - South Wales Police		H

March

8 - Swansea Uplands		A
12 - Porthcawl		A
15 - Waunarlwydd		H
22 - Mumbles		H
29 - Swansea Uplands		H

April

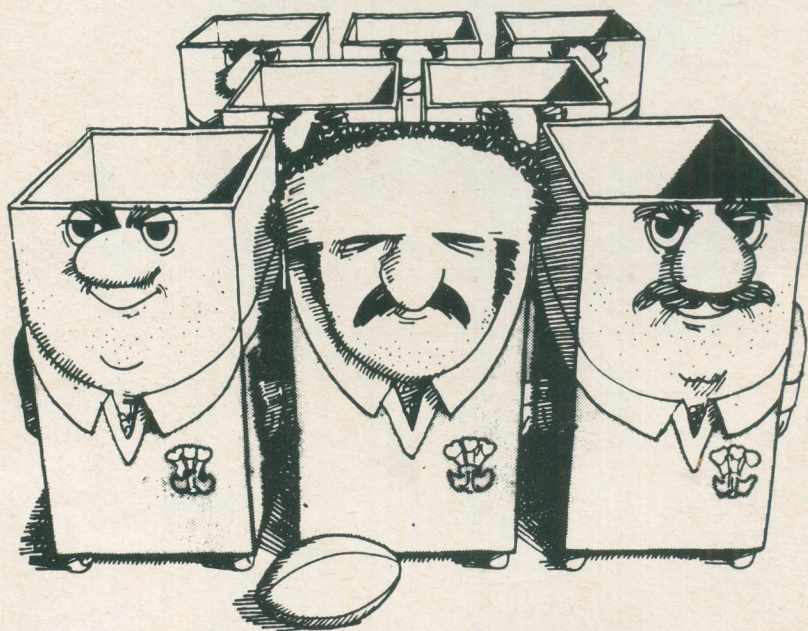
5 - Old Penarthians		H
12 - Cwmgwrach		A
19 - Neath Athletic		A
23 - Mumbles		A

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