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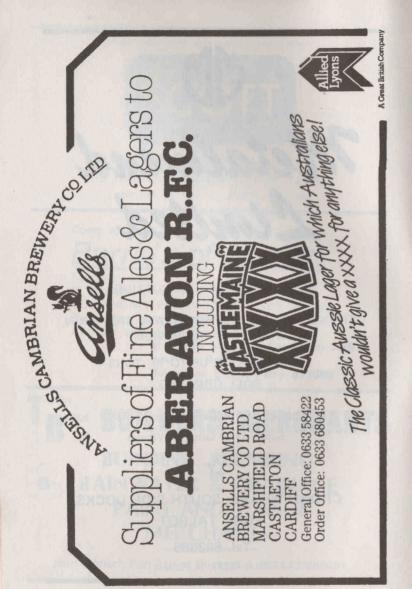
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This afternoon's match is being sponsored by our own Team Manager, MR. JOHN RICHARDSON, to whom the club wish to express their sincere thanks.

Our thanks also go to today's match ball sponsor, Mr. Tony Dobbin (yet again !) of Ye Olde Wine House, Pyle.

Right, its time to blow away all of those cobwebs that have gathered during Christmas and the New Year, and move boldly ahead into 1988. The only decision that remains to be made is whether to use a snorkel or an aqualung. Last Saturday's match here, took place largely due to the efforts of some committee members who, with the aid of a mechanical pump, removed a couple of thousand gallons of water from the pitch. Since then it would seem that someone scooped up that two thousand gallons and has been hurling it back at us with an unnecessary degree of violence.

Whatever the weather, it is always a pleasure to welcome Cardiff to the Talbot Athletic Ground. Ties between the two clubs are traditionally strong, not least of which being the fact that both were founded in the same year, 1876. Rarely nowadays do we see a poor match between the two, although last September's encounter at the Arms Park was not really of the standard one has come to expect in terms of quality rugby. The result of that match leaves Cardiff in need of a win today to avoid conceding their first 'double' to the Wizards in many years. That last match at Cardiff must have caused their supporters to have nightmares for weeks afterwards. How often do we see a side score twelve points in four minutes of injury time to turn a nine point deficit into a three point win. It was a rare win at the Arms Park for us, our first there since 1981, and the Cardiff contingent here today are asked to forgive those among the home crowd who still treasure that memory of Gary Matthews creating the winning try out of thin air. Last season ended with things all square, with a second half resurgence bringing the Wizards a 26-22 victory here in September, and Cardiff gaining revenge by 20 points to 12 at the Arms Park a year ago. That match in the September, incidentally, was the first appearance for Aberavon against major opposition of Mark Watts, who went on to make 36 appearances for the club in his first season.

Cardiff, as befits a club of their status, are always well represented at international level, with the Welsh team trial being no exception, although the injury to Robert Norster has doubtless had its effect on that. The player who appears to be hitting the headlines most, however, is Gerald Cordle. The wing's scoring power appears to know no limits. He has been a thorn in the collective flesh of Aberavon teams on numerous occasions, and looks to have a very real prospect of overtaking Bleddyn Williams' record of 41 tries in a season, a record which has stood since 1948. Gerald Cordle is also to be congratulated upon scoring his 100th try for the Cardiff club in their recent fine win over Bath. Also a regular in Cardiff colours these days, of course, is Ray Giles, who remains a favourite with many of the Aberavon faithful. Two years ago, he went out on the field against Cardiff with a point to prove, and inspired Aberavon to a 24-3 win. One wonders what he might do today.

Aberavon's holiday fixtures brought with them a thoroughly mixed bag of results. The Boxing Day defeat at Neath proved that the All Blacks, as well as being a fine rugby side, are better at adapting to water polo than the Wizards, although Richard Diplock's try was arguably the best of the game. The match with Maesteg provided some good rugby, but only one score, but it did provide us with a much needed win. At Pontypridd on New Year's Eve, the wisdom of playing a side containing so many newcomers was shown as doubtful, and we must hope for a major improvement when we visit Sardis Road for that cup tie in two weeks. Last Saturday's match with Swansea turned out to be quite entertaining, bearing in mind that parts of the pitch were under three or four inches of water during the morning, with a draw game probably doing justice to both sides, neither of which deserved to lose. Of equal importance was the spirit in which all of these matches were played. With rugby in general and the Aberavon club having hit the headlines for all the wrong reasons in recent months, the lack of violence on the field over the holiday period was pleasing.

NOTE TO MEMBERS. The allocation of tickets to our club for the England - Wales international is very small, hence the few tickets available for the draw.

The following members have drawn tickets: VP22 VP46 VP47 34 76 82 123 170 184 255 312 395 404 778 918.

Tickets will be issued on TUESDAY, JANUARY 26th, 1988, between 7 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

Next Home Game - BRISTOL - Next Saturday, Jan. 16th, 3 p.m.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 9th, 1988. Kick-off 3 p.m.

ABERAVON

CARDIFF

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14 RICHARD DIPLOCKT

13 GARY MATTHEWS

12 GARETH THOMAS

11 PETER JONES

10 MIKE LEWIS D

9 ANTHONY JONES

1 STEVE FOSTER

2 BILLY JAMES (Capt.)

3 GARY RICHARDSON

4 NIGEL SPENDER

5 MARK WATTS

6 JOHN O'CALLAGHAN

8 TIM FAUVEL

7 GERALD WILLIAMS

Replacements — Chris O'Callaghan Lyndon Lewis 15 MIKE RAYERCO

IN 14 GERALD CORDLE

13 ALUN DONOVAN

12 STEVE CRANDON

14 RICHARD CARDUS

10 DAVID EVANS

9 RAY GILES

1 JEFF WHITEFOOT

2 ALAN PHILLIPS

3 STEVE BLACKMORE

4 MARK ROWLEY

5 ROBERT NORSTER (Capt.)

6 ROBERT LAKIN

8 HOWARD STONE T

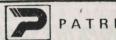
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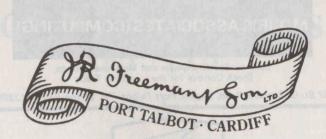
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