

CARDIFF RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR SEASON 1990-91

The debating finished, the long hours of discussion over and whether we wanted them or not, Season 1990-91 was to be the commencement of league rugby in Wales. For our Club, it was never going to be easy. The Welsh approach to the Amateur game was being changed, the tradition of 'Cardiff type' rugby was to be tempered with a steel determination to win. In preparation, the Committee had appointed the Club's first Manager, Mr. John Scott and he, together with the Club's coach, Mr. Alan Phillips and the Club's new Captain, David Evans started their preparations as soon as last year's Annual General Meeting was over. A pre-season training trip to Holland was planned and this resulted in the side competing in an international competition which included the Romanian National Squad, playing under the guise of a Club side, we managed to beat them in the Final.

The domestic season commenced with friendly home fixtures against English opposition and good wins were recorded over Bristol and Leicester before our first away game and our first real test, the English Champions, Bath. What a rude awakening we had, to simply state that we were beaten is something of an understatement, we were played off the park and it was obvious to all — the Committee, Coaches and Players that we lacked strength in certain vital positions and that in the coming league fixtures we were going to struggle against good solid scrummaging sides and it is a known fact that without good possession, a team cannot win its matches.

Our league programme before Christmas presented us with six home games and four away and it was thought that if we could win 5 of the home fixtures, and hopefully one of the away, by the turn of the year, we would be in a comfortable position. However, things have a habit of not going to plan and whilst we won two away games at Pontypridd, in a thriller and at Pontypool, where we won with style, we lost at home on 3 occasions to Bridgend, Neath and Newbridge. What we feared after the game at Bath had become reality, it was very evident that we needed to attract some newcomers to the Club to strengthen our Forwards, thus giving the talented Backs the opportunity to play with 'good' ball.

We had not been helped in the first half of the Season by the suspensions of Ian McKim, Mike Griffiths and newcomer, Paul Edwards and here I must mention that these suspensions on excuses 'cobbled' up by the Welsh Rugby Union Disciplinary Sub Committee did Cardiff and Welsh Rugby in my mind a disservice.

It was apparent that our fixture list had become one of 'competitive' and 'friendly' fixtures and that the latter were going to be used by all clubs as games where newcomers and promising players were to be introduced to gain experience and to rest other players, these games were losing their significance. If one considers the 2 fixtures against Newport, neither Club in either game fielded their best side, who ever would have thought that this would be the case in games between these famous old rivals?

With the coming of the New Year, it was apparent that to achieve our target of a comfortable league position, a tremendous amount of hard work by players and coaching staff, not to mention the Team Management Committee had to be embarked upon and much to their credit, all three units buckled down and we saw a marked improvement in our play. We achieved a very creditable draw at Bridgend and recorded victories at home over Pontypridd, Llanelli and Pontypool. In the Away fixtures, we beat Abertillery, Glamorgan Wanderers and finally Neath. This last result needs a special mention because of the significance of the achievement. What we had lacked in recent seasons going to the Gnoll was changed, the side went on to the field with a grim determination to win and to reverse the poor results of Cardiff sides in recent years. After losing there in the Schweppes Quarter Final by a narrow margin, the Players felt that with some luck they could win and they applied themselves both physically and mentally to the task, all credit must go to them and to the Coaches for the result. Thus we almost achieved the target we set for ourselves at the start of the League campaign and for this we must thank the Players, Coaches and Team Management for their dedication and hard work over a long and hard season. The target they have already set themselves for next season is to certainly improve on fourth position, hoping to win both League and Cup and I am sure we all wish them well in their endeavours.

Whilst our league programme ended satisfactorily, we again did not reach the final stages of the Welsh Rugby Union Schweppes Cup, although we registered victories over South Wales Police and Blackwood at home, we had the misfortune to be drawn at Neath in the Quarter Final and even the gods seemed to be against us, as it rained heavily before the game turning the Gnoll into a quagmire. Our pack turned in a magnificent display and despite outscoring Neath on the try count, it was the boot of Paul Thorburn that eventually beat us and we lost 16-13.

As with any club, the 'Shop window' is the 1st XV but you must have a good back up and how grateful we are that we have the Athletic team. This year we had a very good side, containing many players who in a very short while, providing they continue to

progress, will be pushing for regular 1st XV positions. The results and the manner in which they were achieved were very good and it was something of a disappointment that the side lost in the Silverball Competition 'play offs' to Tondy. However, because of the high number of tries the side scored in the Silverball Competition, they shared a trophy with Abercynon, some consolation for the players and Coaches, who all put in a lot of hard work throughout the Season. Of course, one player who needs special mention is the Athletic Team Captain for the year, Robert Lakin, although through 1st XV calls, Robert did not play all that many games for the Rags, when he did, he was an outstanding leader and set a magnificent example to the young Athletic Team Players, what a superb Clubman Robert has proved to be over many years. Praise and thanks must go to the Athletic Team Coaches, Malcolm Childs and Dennis John for all their efforts. The one side in the Club that really did well and all that was asked of it was our Youth XV. Under the Captaincy of Martin Walsh, they achieved great success by winning not only the Cardiff & District Youth Cup, but also the Esso sponsored Youth Cup, beating Abertillery Youth on the National Stadium by a very large margin. We congratulate the Players, the Youth Committee and the very hard working Coaches, Jack Lewis and Gareth Jones on their outstanding success.

Summing up on the playing field, the 1st XV had a mixed Season, almost achieving what they had set out to do, the Athletic did particularly well and the Youth had magnificent results. Looking to the future, if we can continue to attract the odd player and develop our own youngsters right from their school days, we should be able to maintain our standing in the Rugby World and just as importantly in the top Division of the League. The Committee of the Club is very aware of the need to look after our existing players but it is also aware of the need to assist in the development of the youngsters of Cardiff and the surrounding area.

Off the field of play, a tremendous amount of work has been undertaken to ensure that the Club maintains its high standing in the Rugby World. This can be seen by the new development at the Westgate Street end of the Ground, where hopefully by the middle of September we will have completed Stage 2 of the Ground development scheme. The new structure will include seating accommodation, divided into 3 sections. The central section will be a glass enclosed area with more comfortable seating accommodation that is presently available in our 2 stands, this will be flanked on the one side by a seated area for family viewing and on the other by a seated area sponsored by local businesses to encourage the young of the City to come and watch rugby football. This last venture will be

carried out in close affiliation with local schools. Above the seated accommodation will be more hospitality suites and these together with the River End development should ensure the future financial stability of both the Athletic Club and of course, its Rugby Section. The Arms Park is already a superb Club Ground but with these developments, it will be, if it is not already, the best Rugby Club Ground in the World. The planning for all of this has taken place over a number of years, and it is only right and proper that I should thank all who have contributed many hours of their time on the Development and Lottery Sub Committee, especially Mr. Stan Thomas who was a co-opted Member and without whose help, Stage 2 would not be under construction — thanking one brother, makes me think of the other, and I would thank Peter for his sponsorship of the away fixture at Ayr on the eve of the Scottish International at Murrayfield. The Secretary of this Sub Committee is that inimitable genius, our own Ground and Commercial Manager, Albert Francis. Albert's contribution has been immense and the whole of Cardiff Rugby Club and indeed the Cardiff Athletic Club, both Committees and Members owe him a great deal, I do not know where we would be without Albert and his very able Assistant, Miss Tina Nash. My thanks are also due to the contributions made by Kath and Ken Jones, Lorna and Ken Jarrett and Brian Bennett for their help, not only on the Lottery, but also in the Club Shop. Mentioning the Club Shop brings sadness to my report because, who could forget the contribution over many years made by the late Ted John and his wife, Nancy. How we all will miss dear old Ted, indeed we miss them both.

Cardiff Rugby Football Club is now big business and it takes a great amount of time and effort to run it, much of this time is given freely but where would we be without our professional staff and I must thank the office staff, under the leadership of Alf Heffell, General Secretary for their invaluable contribution, to the Ground Staff who keep our pitches in such good condition, we owe our gratitude and to those who attend to our inner needs, we thank Conrad Bartlett and his Clubhouse Staff for their attention to our comfort. I thank the Supporters Club and all Club Members for their support throughout the Season.

It is with regret that we read in the Press of the misfortune that has befallen Mr. George Walker of Brent Walker, our main sponsor. We wish him and his wife, Jean well and we hope that the Brent Walker Organisation will soon overcome its present difficulties, we thank them for their sponsorship, especially Mr. John Lord, the Managing Director of Brent Walker Cardiff Division, indeed we thank all our sponsors for their support.

I thank our Stewards and Turnstile Operators for their work and also the South Glamorgan Youth Brass Band for their contribution to our match day entertainment.

I must thank the players for their efforts right throughout the Season, league rugby has required an added dedication, it has put extra pressure on them, it has made more demands on their time – whether league rugby will put right the ills of Welsh Rugby, only time will tell but certainly Club Rugby will never again be the ‘go out – enjoy it and express yourselves’ game that we knew in the past. Whether or not this will be good for Cardiff Rugby Club in the long run remains to be seen but I know that the Players, Coaches, Committee Members will be endeavouring to maintain the high standards expected of Cardiff Rugby Football Club. I thank, of course, the Coaches under the leadership of Alan Phillips for their efforts right throughout the Season. Appreciation must also be shown to those who attend to the Players injuries and here I thank our Club Doctors, Surgeons, Dentist and Trainers for their work.

In conclusion, I would thank my Committee for its support throughout the Season, I know to some the many meetings seemed endless but a lot of work has been done and I congratulate them on this and thank them for the patience shown. Some Committee Members have a heavier burden than others and none more than my Vice Chairman, Brian Mark, whose contribution to the well being of the Club is second to none, for his loyalty, help and guidance I thank him. John Nelson is another who has assisted me greatly, I thank John for accepting the position of Honorary Secretary, only he and I know what a responsibility it is and he has contributed greatly to my enjoyment of the Chairmanship.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it has been an honour and a privilege to have been your Chairman. I never dreamt when I first entered the Ground in 1945 or when I first played in a Blue and Black jersey in 1949 for the Youth XV that I would have achieved the position. I will always look back on the last twelve months with pride.

Finally, I would leave you with my own adaptation of a part of John F. Kennedy's inauguration speech for your consideration:

“Not what can my Club do for me? Rather, what can I do for my Club”

Thank you.

ALUN J. PRIDAY, Chairman
Cardiff Rugby Football Club,
June 1991

CARDIFF RUGBY CLUB (FIRST XV)



Back Row: P. Nihan, P. Manning (Coach), G. Griffiths, J. P. Scott, B. Mark, A. D. Williams, M. John, T. J. Charles, I. Robinson, C. J. Webber, P. T. Goodfellow, C. I. Howe, J. Evans, J. D. O'Donnell, I. Watkins, A. J. Phillips (Coach)
Middle Row: R. J. Newman, C. Thomas, S. Blackmore, A. M. Bennett, R. Collins, S. Crothers, M. Edwards, S. Roy, R. Lakin, H. Stone, A. Donovan, M. Ring, M. Griffiths, P. Edwards, R. Ayres (Trainer)
Front Row: M. Hall, G. W. John, S. Ford, A. J. Priday (Chairman), D. W. Evans (Captain), J. D. Nelson (Hon. Secretary), M. Rayer, I. Greenslade, A. H. Booth
Seated in Front: S. Hill, P. John

RECORD OF RESULTS - SEASON 1990/91

CARDIFF FIRST FIFTEEN

Date	Opponents	H. or A.	Result	Score for					Score against						
				G.	T.	DG	PG	MG	Pts.	G.	T.	DG	PG	MG	Pts.
1990															
May 20	Eastern Districts R.U.	A	Won	1	1		3		19	-	1		3		13
23	Potomac Club ..	A	Won	2		3	3	1	21	1			2		12
26	Boston	A	Won	8	3				60				2		6
28	Washington ..	A	Won	2	2		1		23		1			2	12
30	New York Mets ..	A	Won	3	1				22	1					6
Aug. 17	Leidse (D.I.O.K.) ..	A	Won	11	1				73				1		3
19	Steava Bucharest ..	A	Won		2		3		17		2		2		14
Sept. 1	Bristol	H	Won	2	1		4		28	2			1		15
8	Leicester	H	Won	3	2	1	2		35	1			1		9
15	Bath	A	Lost	2	2		1		23	5	3		1		45
22	Swansea (HL) ..	H	Won	2	1		4		28	1	1		1		13
29	Newbridge (HL) ..	A	Lost						0		2		1		11
Oct. 2	Penarth	H	Won	4	6				48	3			1		21
5	Newport	A	Lost	1	1				9	3	1		4		34
13	Bridgend (HL) ..	H	Lost				3		9		1		2		10
20	Pontypridd (HL) ..	A	Won	1			5		21		2	1	3		20
27	Abertillery (HL) ..	H	Won	4	7		1		55	2					12
Nov. 3	Llanelli (HL) ..	A	Lost	1	1		2		16	2	1	1	1		22
7	Oxford Univ. ..	H	Won	2	1				16		2		1		11
10	Glam. Wands. (HL) ..	H	Won	2	3		1		27	1	1		1		13
16	Newport	H	Won		2		3		17				1		3
24	Pontypool (HL) ..	A	Won	2	1		2		22	2					12
Dec. 1	Aberavon	H	Won	1	6				30	1			2		12
8	Neath (HL) ..	H	Lost				1		3	3			2		24
15	Swansea (HL) ..	A	Lost	1			3		15	2	2		1		23
22	Newbridge (HL) ..	H	Lost			1	2		9		1		3		18
26	Pontypridd ..	H	Won		2		2		14	1					6
29	Harlequins	H	Won				3		9						0
1991															
Jan. 5	Ebbw Vale	A	Won	1	1		3		19		1		1		7
12	Bridgend (HL) ..	A	Draw	1			2		15	1			2		15
19	London Welsh ..	H	Won	4	3				36				1		3
26	*S. W. Police (W.R.U. Cup)	H	Won	2	5		1		35						0
Feb 1	Ayr	A	Won	5	5				50	1			1		9
9	Pontypridd Postponed	H													
15	Bective Rangers Cancelled	H													
23	*Blackwood (W.R.U. Cup)	H	Won	5	7				58				1		3
March 9	Abertillery (HL) ..	A	Won	5	1				34				2		6
16	*Neath (W.R.U. Cup)	A	Lost	1	1		1		13		1		4		16
23	Llanelli (HL) ..	H	Won	1	7		3		43						0

Cardiff First Fifteen — (continued)

Date	Opponents	H. or A.	Result	Score for					Score against						
				G.	T.	DG	PG	MG	Pts.	G.	T.	DG	PG	MG	Pts.
March															
26	Pontypridd (HL) ..	H	Won	1	4		1		25	-	1	-	1	-	7
30	Barbarians ..	H	Lost	1	4		1		25	5	3				42
6	Wasps ..	A	Lost		1		2		10	1	3		1		21
13	Glam. Wanderers (HL)	A	Won	5	3				42	2			1		15
20	Pontypool (HL) ..	H	Lost		2	1	1		14	5			2		36
27	Neath (HL)	A	Won	2		1	1		18	-	1				4

Captain: David Evans

P 43 W 30 L 12 D 1 FOR 1106 AGAINST 573

Heineken League

P 18 W 10 L 7 D 1 FOR 396 AGAINST 261

W.R.U. Cup

P 3 W 2 L 1 FOR 106 AGAINST 19

Tours — USA

P 5 W 5 FOR 145 AGAINST 49

Holland

P 2 L 2 FOR 90 AGAINST 17