

CARDIFF ATHLETIC CLUB RUGBY SECTION CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2008/09

Cardiff RFC winners of the Principality Premiership League 2008/09, what a fantastic way to start this year's Chairman's Report. The quality of rugby we were treated to particularly after Christmas was exceptional and one of Cardiff RFC legendary players, Bleddyn Williams, has been lavish in his praise for the skill and panache of the Cardiff team.

On the way to claiming the title several notable landmarks were achieved. Firstly we equalled the Premiership record of 93 league points, there were fifteen consecutive league wins in the Premiership between November and May. Seven home and away doubles were achieved and the team has only lost 13 of 52 Premiership fixtures in the last two seasons.

Yet it was only four seasons ago that we were languishing at the lower end of the Premiership with the spectre of relegation hanging over us. This massive improvement in the fortunes of the Cardiff team has not come about by chance. I said in my report for 2005/06 that things could not remain the same and that changes had to be made. Things have changed over the past few seasons at Cardiff RFC and we have progressed from relegation candidates to League winners in four seasons.

The club has become more professional, with players, coaches and committee far more accountable than in the early days of the Premier League. For all associated with Cardiff RFC the expectancy of success has now well and truly taken over from an acceptance of mediocrity. The challenge for us all is not only to maintain this standard but to strive to improve in all the facets that make up Cardiff RFC both on and off the playing field.

The season itself started disappointingly, with no Head Coach in place, Howard Stone and Lee Jarvis led the coaching and team selection and I only have admiration for the way in which they approached these tasks. However, despite glimpses of what was to come after Christmas it was felt that Howard and Lee would benefit by having a Head Coach to enable them to get on with their specific roles as forwards and backs coaches respectively. Alex Codling was appointed Head Coach and lasted a month in the position, so we were back to square one, and although it did not seem it at the time this turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Phil Davies was approached and appointed Head Coach. Phil proved to be the catalyst we needed to bring the best out of the players and coaches. We immediately started on the run that was to see the team play and win 15 consecutive league games. A run that stretched from November 15th to May 2nd and one that saw us climbing the table to clinch the title against Pontypridd at the Arms Park. The rugby played by the Cardiff team was at times sensational with some fabulous tries scored and a never say die attitude amongst the players on the field. Apart from the tries and the wins it was wonderful to see the players playing with a smile on their faces,

thoroughly enjoying their rugby.

Phil has now unfortunately left us to take up a position as Head of the Welsh Academies and we wish him every success in his new position and I hope that much of what Phil brought to the club in terms of ethos and professionalism will remain for a very long time, forming the basis for the future success of Cardiff RFC.

Phil had a great back up team in Howard Stone and Lee Jarvis and I am sure that they learned a great deal last season that will help them both as they pursue their coaching careers. In addition to Howard and Lee, Richard Hughes our conditioning coach did a tremendous job in getting the players fit and prepared for the rigours of the season. His enthusiasm is infectious and the players enjoy working with Richard. It would be interesting to see how many tries we scored in the last quarter when our level of fitness really told on our opponents.

Dyfri Owen our physiotherapist, Chantelle Thomas our masseur and Nadia Hodge our stand in physiotherapist really worked hard throughout the season to keep the players fit and ready to play especially in the latter part of the season when injuries really started to take their toll. We are all extremely grateful, none more so than the players themselves, for their efforts throughout the season.

Captain Owen Ruttley again led the side with tremendous enthusiasm until his season was curtailed after breaking a bone in his foot whilst making his debut for the Barbarians. Rhys Shellard then took up the mantle of captaincy and led the team from the front for the remainder of the season.

On the playing front a number of notable landmarks were achieved. Lee Jarvis and Chris Czekaj both made their 100th appearance for the club during the course of the season. Gareth Davies was top points scorer with 256 points. He also played in every one of the clubs last 45 fixtures stretching back to January 2008. Ryan Howells was top try scorer for the second successive season with 16 in 32 games. After six seasons of Premiership rugby Ryan is the top try scorer in Wales; Gareth Chapman is second with 55 tries.

Ten players qualified for First XV caps: Gareth Chapman, Ian George, Phil Osborne, Kristian Gay, Matthew Veater, Rhys Shellard, Craig Everett, Shaun James, Darren Ryan and Kieran Crawford.

Owen Ruttley and Chris Czekaj were both honoured with invitations to play for the Barbarians. Chris was also selected for the Welsh tour to North America.

Damian Welch played for Wales 7's in Dubai, Chris Czekaj in San Diego and Rhys Shellard in Hong Kong, Adelaide, London and Edinburgh.

Rhys was also voted Principality Premiership player of the month in March.

Behind the scenes Gafyn Cooper our Team Manager and Keith Morgan have both put in

a tremendous amount of hard work for the benefit of Cardiff RFC and it is due to their efforts that the every day running of the team goes so smoothly. It is not often appreciated how much time and effort goes into running the side and without dedicated people like Gavin and Keith the pieces of the jigsaw would not fit, causing problems to surface.

My thanks to Simon Down for attending the Principality League meeting in Aberavon and also for being our statistician throughout the season. Steve Davies for attending East District meetings and the rest of the rugby committee for their efforts over the last year. Our new members on committee Jill Parker and Ian Tabor have settled in well, Jill is a very willing worker and Ian is to be congratulated on his work on the web site and on taking over the microphone on match days. Ian's son Matthew has provided us with many fine photographs over the course of the season. Vice Chairman John Huw Williams work in distributing tickets to local schools has been a great success.

The Supporters Club continues to be a vital and integral part of the club. The Supporters Club take on many roles on behalf of the RFC from selling programmes to organizing coaches for away fixtures and picking 'Man of the Match' at home games. This level of involvement is priceless and our gratitude to the Supporters Club cannot be overstated. I feel that over the past few seasons the RFC and the Supporters Club have come much closer together and this can only be of benefit to both organizations and long may it continue.

The ground staff under Brian Walker has yet again produced a playing service to be proud of, indeed the surface this season has been the best I can remember. Brian and his staff are again to be complimented on yet another season with a high quality pitch that helps bring the best out of the team. Unfortunately Roy Evans will be leaving the Arms Park to go to the new stadium at Leckwith, Roy has been at the Arms Park for nearly 20 years and has always been extremely supportive of the RFC, Roy will be sorely missed here but we wish him well for his future and hope we see him back here on his days off from his Leckwith duties.

Karl Kruger and his staff provide us with high quality fare throughout the year. I would also like to thank Karl for the support and the interest he takes in the Cardiff team. In addition I would like to thank Mike Salt and his staff for the high quality meals he provides for our home games and functions. Peter the doorman who carries out a difficult job with a smile on his face.

My congratulations to Dai Young and the Blues on a tremendous season that easily surpassed previous years. Winners of the EDF Cup with a resounding win over Gloucester in the final at Twickenham, semi finalists in the Heineken Cup when the Blues lost in the cruelest and somewhat bizarre fashion. The Blues played an exciting brand of rugby in all competitions and at last the Blues are receiving their just rewards

after years of hard work. No one has worked harder than Dai to bring this success to the Blues and he richly deserves all the accolades that come his way. I would like to wish the Blues every success in their move to Leckwith next season both on and off the field.

Peter Thomas and the Board of Directors have again been very supportive of the Cardiff RFC side and they have enjoyed the successes of both the Blues and the RFC. Bob Norster and Alun Doull are both enthusiastic in their support, always ready to offer advice and guidance on any issue.

It has been a pleasure and an honour to be associated with Cardiff RFC over the past year and I am sure that we are all looking forward to next season especially with inaugural British and Irish Cup competition taking place.

Malcom Childs
Chairman Cardiff RFC

CARDIFF BLUES PLAYING RECORD 2008 – 2009

DATE	OPPONENTS	H/A	Res	SCORES FOR					SCORES AGAINST				
				G	T	PG	DG	Pts	G	T	PG	DG	Pts
14/08/2008	REGIONAL CLUB XV (F)	A	WON	3	6			51			1		3
29/08/2008	NORTHAMPTON (F)	H	WON	4	3			43		2	1		13
06/09/2008	LEINSTER	H	DREW	1		1	2	16	1		3		16
09/09/2008	OSPREYS	A	LOST	1		1		10	3	1	2		32
12/09/2008	ULSTER	H	WON	1		3		16	1	1	1		15
20/09/2008	MUNSTER	A	LOST	2		2		20	4				28
26/09/2008	CONNACHT	H	WON	5	4	1		58					0
04/10/2008	SALE (EDF)	A	WON	1	1	2		18		1	4		17
11/10/2008	CALVISANO (HC)	A	WON	5	3	2		56	2		2		20
19/10/2008	GLOUCESTER (HC)	H	WON	4		3		37	3		1		24
25/10/2008	LEICESTER (EDF)	H	WON	2		3		23			3		9
31/10/2008	BATH (EDF)	H	WON	1	1	4		24	1	1	2		18
18/11/2008	GLAMORGAN WDS (F)	A	WON	6	3			57					0
28/11/2008	GLASGOW	A	LOST					0	1	3	2		28
05/12/2008	BIARRITZ (HC)	H	WON			5	2	21	2		1		17
13/12/2008	BIARRITZ (HC)	A	WON	1		1		10			2		6
20/12/2008	LLANELLI SCARLETS	A	LOST	1		2		13	1	1	5		27
26/12/2008	NG DRAGONS	A	WON	1	1	3		21	1		4		19
31/12/2008	OSPREYS	H	LOST			3	1	12		2	2		16
10/01/2009	LEINSTER	A	LOST		1	4	1	20			7		21
18/01/2009	GLOUCESTER (HC)	A	WON	1		3		16			4		12
23/01/2009	CALVISANO (HC)	H	WON	7	2	1		62	2		2		20
20/02/2009	GLASGOW	H	WON	4		2		34	3		3		30
06/03/2009	CONNACHT	A	WON	1		4		19		1	3		14
28/03/2009	NORTHAMPTON (EDF)	NT	WON		1	2		11		1			5
03/04/2009	EDINBURGH	A	LOST			1		3			2		16
11/04/2009	TOULOUSE (HC)	H	WON			3		9			2		6
18/04/2009	GLOUCESTER (EDF)	NT	WON	6	1	1		50	1	1			12
24/04/2009	ULSTER	A	WON		1	2		11			2	1	9
03/05/2009	LEICESTER (HC)	NT	DREW	2		4		26	2		4		26
06/05/2009	NG DRAGONS	H	WON	2		4		26			3	1	12
10/05/2009	MUNSTER	H	WON	1	2	1		20	1	1			12
13/05/2009	LLANELLI SCARLETS	H	LOST			3		9	2	2	2		30
17/05/2009	EDINBURGH	H	LOST	2				14	4	1	1		36

	PL	W	D	L	GL	TR	PG	DG	PTS	GL	TR	PG	DG	PTS
LEAGUE	18	8	1	9	22	9	37	4	322	23	13	41	4	361
(HC) HEINEKEN CUP	8	7	0	1	20	5	22	2	237	11		18		131
(EDF) EDF ENERGY CUP	5	5	0	0	10	4	12	-	126	2	4	9	-	61
(F) FRIENDLY	3	3	0	0	13	12	-	-	151		2	2	-	16
TOTAL	34	23	1	10	65	30	71	6	836	36	19	70	4	569

CARDIFF BLUES POINTS 2008 - 2009

	PTS	TR	PG	CON	DG
Ben Blair	281	5	54	47	
Leigh Halfpenny	87	11	10	1	
Ceri Sweeney	81	8	5	13	
Nick Robinson	52	4	2	4	6
Gareth Thomas	45	9			
Ma'ama Molitika	30	6			
Richard Mustoe	30	6			
Tom James	25	5			
Jamie Robinson	25	5			
Tom Shanklin	25	5			
Aled Brew	15	3			
Jamie Roberts	15	3			
Jason Spice	15	3			
Rhys Thomas	15	3			
Chris Czekaj	10	2			
Taufa'ao Filise	10	2			
Richie Rees	10	2			
Bradley Davies	5	1			
Dafydd Hewitt	5	1			
Mark Lewis	5	1			
James Loxton	5	1			
Penalty Try	5	1			
Andy Powell	5	1			
Gary Powell	5	1			
Xavier Rush	5	1			
Robin Sowden-Taylor	5	1			
Paul Tito	5	1			
Gareth Williams	5	1			
Martyn Williams	5	1			
Rhys Williams	5	1			
	836	95	71	65	6

**CARDIFF BLUES APPEARANCES
2008-2009**

	TOTAL	START	SUBS
Ma'ama Molitika	29	27	2
Nick Robinson	29	22	7
Rhys Thomas	29	18	11
Taufa'ao Filise	28	19	9
Ben Blair	27	26	1
Jamie Robinson	27	25	2
Deiniol Jones	26	18	8
Gareth Williams	26	16	10
Scott Morgan	26	11	15
Paul Tito	25	22	3
Robin Sowden-Taylor	24	18	6
Ceri Sweeney	24	14	10
Jason Spice	23	21	2
Gareth Thomas	23	21	2
Andy Powell	23	18	5
Gary Powell	23	15	8
Tom Shanklin	21	16	5
Bradley Davies	21	15	6
Richard Mustoe	21	15	6
John Yapp	21	13	7
Leigh Halfpenny	19	18	1
Jamie Roberts	19	15	4
Tom James	18	15	3
Gethin Jenkins	18	15	3
Martyn Williams	17	14	3
Richard Rees	17	8	9
Darren Allinson	14	5	9
Chris Czekaj	11	9	2
Xavier Rush	11	6	5
Ben White	11	6	5
Mark Lewis	8	7	1
Rhys Gill	5		
Sam Warburton	5		
Dafydd Hewitt	5	3	2
Ross Johnston	5		5
James Down	4	2	2
Scott Roberts	4	1	3
Dai Flanagan	4		4
Aled Brew	3	2	1
Roger Davies	2	1	1
Damian Welch	2	1	1
James Loxton	1		
Rhys Williams	1		
S Andrews	1		1
R Downes	1		1
S Hobbs	1		1
R Howells	1		1
R Shellard	1		1
R Williams (Hooker)	1		1

CARDIFF RFC PLAYING RECORD 2008 – 2009

		OPPONENTS	H/A	Result	GL	TR	PG	DG	Pts	GL	TR	PG	DG	Pts
16/08/2008	FALMOUTH (F)	A	WON	10	2				80		1	1		8
22/08/2008	COVENTRY (F)	A	WON	2					14	1				7
30/08/2008	MERTHYR (F)	A	WON	3	3				36	2				14
13/09/2008	NEWPORT	A	LOST			1			3	2	2	1	1	30
20/09/2008	BRIDGEND	H	WON	2	2	2			30	2		3		23
27/09/2008	PONTYPRIDD	A	LOST	2	1	3			28	3	1	1	1	32
04/10/2008	LLANDOVERY	A	WON			5			15			3		9
11/10/2008	EBBW VALE	H	LOST	2	1	2			25	2		4		26
18/10/2008	NEATH	A	WON	2		5			29	1	1	5		27
25/10/2008	SWANSEA	A	WON	2	1	3			28	2		4		26
01/11/2008	GLAMORGAN WDS	H	WON		1	6	1		26	1	1	2	1	21
15/11/2008	LLANELLI	A	LOST			1			3	2		5	1	32
28/11/2008	BEDDAU (F)	H	WON	6	2				52		1	2		11
06/12/2008	PONTYPOOL	A	WON	2	2	4			36			2		6
13/12/2008	CROSS KEYS	H	WON		2	4			22	1	1	1		15
20/12/2008	BETHESDA (CUP)	A	WON	5	4				55	1	2			17
27/12/2008	BEDWAS	A	WON	5	1	1			43					0
17/01/2009	NEWPORT	H	WON	4	1	1			36	2		3	1	26
24/01/2009	NARBERTH (CUP)	A	WON	5	3	1			53	1	1	1		15
31/01/2009	LLANDOVERY	H	WON	2	1	1			22		2	1		13
13/02/2009	ABERAVON	H	WON	3	1	1			29			1		3
22/02/2009	LLANELLI (CUP)	A	LOST	2	1	2			25	3	1	1		29
28/02/2009	EBBW VALE	A	WON	1	1		1		15	1		2		13
07/03/2009	NEATH	H	WON		2	5			25		2	3		19
17/03/2009	CROSS KEYS	A	WON	3		2			27	1	1	2		18
28/03/2009	BRIDGEND	A	WON	2		2			20		2	1		13
04/04/2009	SWANSEA	H	WON	4	1				33	2	1	1		22
10/04/2009	BEDWAS	H	WON	3	3	1			39	1	1	2		18
17/04/2009	GLAMORGAN WDS	A	WON	3	1	1			29	1		2		13
25/04/2009	LLANELLI	H	WON	4	1	1			36			3		9
28/04/2009	PONTYPRIDD	H	WON	3		2			27	2	1	1		22
02/05/2009	PONTYPOOL	H	LOST	1	1	1			15	3	1	2		32
08/05/2009	ABERAVON	A	LOST	5	1				40	3	1	5		41

	PL	W	D	L	GL	TR	PG	DG	Pts	GL	TR	PG	DG	Pts
FRIENDLY (F)	4	4	0	0	21	7	-	-	182	3	2	3	-	40
CUP (C)	3	2	0	1	12	8	3	-	133	5	4	2	-	61
LEAGUE	26	20	0	6	55	25	55	2	681	32	18	60	5	509
TOTAL	33	26	0	7	88	40	58	2	996	40	24	65	5	610

PLAYED 33 WON 26 DREW 0 LOST 7 PTS FOR 996 PTS AGST 610
 TRIES 128 PG 58 CONV 88 DG 2

CARDIFF RFC APPEARANCES 2008-2009

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