

## CARDIFF AND NEWPORT SAGA

### FOUR CARDIFF THREEQUARTERS IN WELSH TEAM

1909-10. P36, W22, L7, D7. Points 470—144.

J. L. Williams our experienced wing was captain, and Police Sgt. Fred Smith—for the second time, was nominated vice-captain. "Johnny" Williams already had twelve Welsh caps and an Australasian tour behind him. On his seventeenth appearance for Wales, against France in 1911 he was captain, suitably so as he spoke French. He gave his life

for his country as an army captain in World War I. W. Neill and Jack Powell had dropped out from the forwards, but newcomers W. J. Jenkins and "Boyo" Brookman, former Canton players came in, but playing results were poor compared with the last half dozen seasons. By contrast we received a good international recognition with seven of our players being chosen for Wales, namely R. A. Gibbs, L. M. Dyke, W. Spiller, J. L. Williams, Percy Bush, W. L. Morgan and Joe Pugsley.

The most remarkable feature of the international scene was the fact that Cardiff's four threequarters, R. A. Gibbs, L. M. Dyke, W. Spiller and J. L. Williams, represented Wales against Ireland in Dublin, and with Percy Bush at outside half, scored all the nineteen Welsh points with three outstanding tries from J. L. Williams, a try each by R. A. Gibbs and L. M. Dyke, and a dropped goal from Percy Bush. Joe Pugsley was in the Welsh pack. Of our seven defeats, two were from Newport, two from Neath who became the Welsh champions, and from the United Services, Swansea, and the Barbarians on 26th March.

At the time of our third encounter with Newport on 12th February, the visitors were unbeaten, and in fact, Newport had not beaten us since March 1905. They were now led by T. H. Vile a most astute scrum half and leader, who captained his club three seasons, 1909/10-1911/12, and in addition to good backs, Stanley Williams, Fred Birt, Reg Plummer, M. Baker and Walter Martin, he was supported by quite a powerful pack, five already capped for Wales, C. M. Pritchard, E. Thomas, P. D. Waller, H. Jarman and E. Jenkins. In addition were A. P. Coldrick and H. Uzzell later to be honoured, as well as Reg Edwards who was capped by England. A record crowd of more than 20,000 was at the Cardiff Arms Park, but unfortunately, the match turned out to be the roughest of the 113 matches between the clubs, of which Newport had won 50, Cardiff 47, and the rest drawn. Cardiff's victory by three splendid tries by Spiller to one goal, one penalty goal was tarnished by the other less pleasing events in the game.

There were many fouls, there was kicking, punching, throttling on the ground, late tackling and so on which involved many injuries and stoppages, every time the forwards got together someone was hurt. Just before half time, Reg Edwards was "sent off" by referee E. Roberts of Llanelli for pushing and striking Percy Bush after he had got rid of the ball, and in the second half during a mauling mêlée and throttling on the ground, Cardiff's Dai Westacott was given "marching orders", although it appears, he may not have been the real culprit. Press reporters "Old Stager" and "Pendragon" were most scathing in their condemnation of the rough play, "In a game that has not been equalled for ferocity and fouling since the Rugby game was introduced into Wales". From my own knowledge and personal experience, I have no doubt that this dirty game was responsible for engendering bad feeling and intense rivalry between these two great clubs which lasted into the "twenties". Tommy Vile became a top administrator for the W.R.U. and the International Board, a coach and international referee, I was a colleague of his on the W.R.U. for sixteen years and learned much from his wisdom on the game; at all appropriate occasions he was forthright in his condemnation of the foul player. "They must be put out of the game", that was his dictum, and it should have applied to many incidents in the Rugby world in 1972-73.

Reverting back to 1909-10; we achieved doubles over Bristol and Blackheath. The away fixture with Bristol coincided with their carnival week, and at the end of the game (we won 16 points to nil) foot races were run—the length of the pitch. Reggie Gibbs won the race for the backs, Spiller was second and Bristol's W. Bodie third. Frank Gaccon won the forwards race with "Boyo" Brookman second, and F. Feltham of Bristol third. Gibbs was presented with a Gladstone bag, and Gaccon received a handsome cup. On 27th December we caned the Barbarians by ten tries to nil, R. A. Gibbs scored four, but the goal kicking was lamentable, Bush, Gibbs, J. L. Williams and W. L. Morgan all failing even with kicks in front of the posts! Bulky forward "Big John" Brown was tried—and missed.

R. A. Gibbs 21, Spiller 14, J. L. Williams and L. M. Dyke 13 were the top try scorers. Johnny Thomas and Charley Culverwell the half backs qualified for caps, as did Joe Brookman, W. Groves, R. C. Jellings, W. J. Jenkins, Dai Pike and the popular and plucky full-back Bobby Williams. It was not generally known that Williams overcame the handi-



cap of playing minus three fingers on one hand and partly paralysed ones on the other. What we do for Rugby!

The Reserve Team was captained by D. Duncan and the playing record was : P30, W26, L4, with 383 points against 62, quite a good record. Against Moseley 2nds on 8th January, they ran up a total of four goals, eight tries and one dropped goal to nil, Tom Parker on the wing notching himself five tries; this same player got four tries in the match between the Seniors and Llwynypia (formerly Glamorgan League champions) played on the Park on the same day as Wales played England; Lord Ninian Stuart was an interested spectator. Edgar Thomas and Ewan Davies, who was later to play for Wales, were top scorers with 15 and 12 tries each respectively. In February 1910, Percy Bush left the club with all good wishes to take up his appointment in the Consulate at Nantes, France. On 28th March 1910, Clem Lewis of Bridgend made his début for Cardiff against Leicestershire, he was to make a great name for himself before and after World War I for his club, varsity, and Wales. At the A.G.M. in August it was reported that the gross profit for 1909-10 was £697.