

CARDIFF'S M.P. (LORD NINIAN) KICKS OFF

1912-13. P37, W22, L10, D5. Points 439-124.

The popular Glamorgan County police sergeant W. "Billy" Spiller succeeded to the captaincy, supported by W. J. Jenkins the forward as his deputy. This fine threequarter was to gain ten Welsh caps, he had gained much experience, and shared in Triple Crown glory for his country. Spiller was a cricketer of no mean repute, for his club St. Fagans, and for Glamorgan. He scored the first century for his county in first class cricket. On the Rugby field he expected neatness in the players' attire, he had scored many first class tries for his club, and it is recorded of him, that, after having scored the three tries to defeat Newport away on 12th February 1910, a Cardiff 'fan' went to a tattooist to have indelibly engraved on his arm: "Feb. 12. 1910 Cardiff broke Newport's record 9-8. Spiller scored 3 tries".

Unfortunately for Spiller in 1912-13, he could no longer have with him former international colleagues in the threequarter line, and Ewan Davies, J. A. B. Carson and Charley Bryant had also gone, and his team were to suffer ten defeats, but with small margins as the following results show:—

Penarth (H) 7 points to 5, Newport (A) 4-0, Swansea (A) 3-0, Neath (A) 9-5, Swansea (H) 6-0, Llanelly (A) 5-0, Swansea (A) 3-0, Newport (A) 23-10 (Spiller hurt), Devonport Albion (A) 7-5 and to South Africa (H) by 7 points to 6.

The visit of the Second Springboks was the rugby highlight of the season. The result being in favour of the visitors by one dropped goal by J. Morkel and one penalty goal from Douglas Morkel, to one penalty goal by Johnny Rogers and one try from Billy Spiller. The try was an excellent one after a pass from Arthur Green a forward, following a splendid break by Clem Lewis who was playing scrum half. Thus the Springboks avenged their defeat of 1907. Our pack did well against a beefier South African one, but the backs, except for Spiller, Clem Lewis and Bobby Williams at full-back were not good enough. Our biggest wins were over the Cardiff & District Union by 55 points to nil, and Bristol by 49 points to five, in each of these matches Johnny Rogers kicked eight converted goals. We secured double victories over the Barbarians, Blackheath and the United Services, Portsmouth.

Spiller with 18 was top try scorer, Tom Evans got 13, and seven each came from Johnny Rogers and Clem Lewis. First team cap awards were gained by W. S. Goff, a former Swansea player, Tom Evans, Arthur Green, P.C. Jim Birch of the Glamorgan Police, W. Morrish, Tommy Reardon, W. H. Thomas and Fred Rogers. Billy Spiller with 18 was top scorer, Tom Evans got 13, and seven each came from Clem Lewis and Johnny Rogers; the following made the most match appearances: Tom Evans 34, Jim Birch, Mog Griffiths and W. J. Jenkins 30, Arthur Green, Billy Spiller and Bobby Williams 28, Ted Mithan and Johnny Rogers each 27. Cardiff had six players in the Glamorgan County team against South Africa, namely Tom Evans, Gerald Heslop, who later served on the Rugby committee, Clem Lewis and Johnny Rogers at half back, and E. Mithan and W. J. Jenkins in the forwards. Clem Lewis, Spiller, Bobby Williams and W. J. Jenkins were each honoured by Wales.

W. L. Ferrier as captain and R. H. Gunn as vice, were appointed to lead the Reserves who played 28 matches, won 15, lost 6 and drew 7 with 209 points to 95, not a very impressive record owing to many changes. There were 29 try scorers the top being Johnny Rogers with seven and the forward Dan Callan with five. The Reserves took a three years' ground record from Swansea Reserves, and the players who gained caps were C. M. Newbury, E. D. Thomas, G. K. Davies, P. Gottwaltz, F. A. Christian, F. W. Gransmore, —, George, T. Weaver, D. J. Evans, Con Scanlon and H. A. Llewellyn.

New Stands. At the end of 1911-12, the former south grand stands and the temporary stands erected in 1900, were dismantled to make way for a new south grand stand, and temporary stands on the north, east and west terraces, to accommodate 3,000 seated in the former and 40,000 in the latter. The cost, £8,019.8.3, was wholly paid for from £2,150 on deposit with Lloyds Bank, receipts from the 1911-12 season, £2,500 from the Welsh Rugby Union and by the committee guaranteeing the overdraft to the Bank of Lloyds.

The new stands were officially opened by Lord Ninian Chrichton Stuart, M.P. for Cardiff on the occasion of the match between Cardiff and Newport on 5th October 1912, in the presence of the Lord Mayor, Alderman Sir J. W. Curtis, J.P. and a crowd of almost 25,000. Lord Ninian duly kicked off, but alas for his Rugby constituents, Newport won the match by one dropped goal to nil which was kicked by Fred Birt. The Cardiff Arms Park was now regarded as the finest Rugby football ground in the country.