THE "WARATAHS"—NEW SOUTH WALES—ARRIVE ONE OF THEIR PLAYERS "SENT OFF". BROADCASTING TURNED DOWN

1927–28.

B. R. Turnbull was elected club captain and B. O. Male our full-back vice-captain, but no permanent captain was appointed for "the other side"—the Second (1st) Fifteen. The First (1st) Fifteen record as segregated by me was P43, W21, L20, D2, points 459—343. "Lou" Turnbull, educated at Downside, was a very popular captain, and one of six brothers who played for Cardiff. A straight running centre who passed the ball well, he "made" many tries and coupled the basic Rugby traits with an impeccable defence. He gained a "Blue" at Cambridge and played six times for Wales.

Turnbull's season was not overblessed with successes. The burden of meeting two first class clubs on the same day was proving that Cardiff's experiment in operating two first class teams was rather unlikely to succeed. In late March and April of the season we lost eight matches in a row, Penarth (A), Llanelly and Maesteg on the same day, Swansea (A), Barbarians (H) and Tredegar on the same day, Harlequins (H) and Torquay (A) on the same day. A drawn match at home with Pill Harriers was followed by three more defeats at the hands of Neath (A), Northampton (A) and to Weston (A). It was very chastening to lose all four matches with Llanelly, a feat never to be performed by Cardiff with this club, but we were very successful with our greatest rivals Newport over whom we triumphed with three wins and a draw, we held our own against Swansea, honours being even with two victories each. Surprisingly we lost to the Watsonians (H) in December, and to our popular friends the Barbarians in April. One of our good performances was the scoring of a double over Coventry. Eight matches were cancelled owing to bad weather conditions—perhaps a statistical blessing.

But the tit-bit of the season was the visit of the Waratahs on 3rd December. They came with the splendid record of but one defeat—to Oxford University by three points to nil—in 20 games, beating Ireland and Wales in the process. The tourists had some splendid Rugby players in their party. Their captain, A. C. Wallace, was a world class wing, a Rhodes Scholar who was an Oxford Blue and Scottish international: Tommy Lawton a brilliant stand-off half, another Rhodes Scholar who, in England, had played for Blackheath; Dr. W. B. J. Sheehan a centre of wide experience for the Waratahs, particularly against New Zealand: Most of the forwards were top New South Wales players of experience, including K. Tarleton, Edwin Thorn, A. N. Finlay and E. N. Greatorex. Their manager was E. Gordon Shaw who had played against a British team in 1908. The Waratahs proved to be much the better team and ran out winners by 15 points to nine from two penalty goals by Ossie Male our full-back and a try from Roy Gabe-Jones, out-half. It was regrettable that one of the visitors was "sent off" the field, he was one of their forwards J. Ford; the incident was perhaps forgotten on the following Monday evening when the club held a Ball at the City Hall—dancing 8 till 2—in honour of the tourists. But how remarkable is the fact that on the only other visit by Australia, in 1908–09, the forward A. B. Burge was sent off in the Cardiff game. Two visits, two sensations.

E. Gwyn Davies our wing, R. A. Cornish and B. R. Turnbull were the top try scorers and our full-back Ossie Male kicked the most goals. The following played in more than fifteen matches with the First (1st) XV and would have qualified for a cap unless granted one for 1926–27 for playing a requisite number with both teams: Tom Burns, Norman Fender, Graham Jones, Howard Poole, Roy Gabe Jones and T. M. Williams. The Second (1st) XV under floating captains Played 29, Won 13, Lost 12 and Drew 4 with 236 points scored to 196. Their best successes were the wins over U.C.S. Old Boys (Hendon), Weston, Skewen, Cheltenham, Cross Keys, Exeter, Penarth and Edgware, eight in succession up to the 29th October. The end of the season showed up some weaknesses as we lost in succession to Maesteg and Torquay, drew with Pill Harriers, losing also to Tredegar, Neath and Weston. Amongst the low scorers Dai Davies, a former supporters youth player was top with eight tries, and four came from Roy Gabe-Jones. Our Supporters XV was beginning to supply some good talent to the premier teams.

Items of interest from minutes traced were: the BBC's application to broadcast club

matches turned down; so was also an application from Storey Evans & Co to issue a book on the club's history. The club's home expenses for the Bridgend fixture totalled £2.13.10. Marshalls the caterers supplied our after-match teas of grills and chips and sweets at 2/- per head, with 2d per cup for teas, bread and butter included. The club applied for 1,250 Wales v. Ireland international tickets, the W.R.U. granted 700. At the Cardiff v. Swansea match on 29th October 1927, one of the club's most able administrators, Mr. W. J. Spiller, collapsed in the committee box and died. I remember him well as a most excellent chairman of committee, including those of the Athletic Club. At the annual general meeting, the club's M.O., Dr. W. G. Williams, proposed that a permanent captain be appointed for the Other Team. This was later adopted by the committee with effect from 1928–29.

CARDIFF'S TWO FIRST FIFTEENS EXPERIMENT, 1926/7—1930/31

In September 1925, the late L. C. Watters, General Secretary of Cardiff Athletic Club at a meeting of the Rugby committee made a suggestion that they should run two First Fifteens instead of one First Team and one Reserve Team. His views were prompted by the needs of finance resulting from the purchase of the Cardiff Arms Park, and the likelihood of first class players being available, particularly amongst the backs.

Committee opinion was very much divided, but after several meetings it was finally decided by a bare majority of seven votes to six to adopt his suggestion with effect from season 1926–27. The experiment was to last for five seasons.

To help the committee make up their minds, the opinion of clubs was obtained and some of those in the top flight had misgivings, but most of those in the lower bracket regarded the scheme as a good one, as, in their case, it meant having *Cardiff* on their fixture lists instead of *Cardiff Reserves.*

Fixture cards printed showed the matches for each team, for the given Saturdays in one consecutive form. 78 matches were arranged for the season 1926–27. Actually 81 were played.

For each season of the experiment a captain and vice-captain were appointed in the accustomed manner, the former by the members and the latter by the committee following the recommendations of the captain, but the experiment caused much administrative confusion with selections of the teams, match records including those players, and for cap purposes, and even the description of the teams selected.

When some experience had been gained with running two First Fifteens, the committee found it necessary to have a player to specifically captain Cardiff's " Other Team ", consequently captains were appointed, namely Syd Cravos, Dr. T. J. Pittard and Goff Retter for the seasons 1928–29, 1929–30 and 1930–31 respectively.

The term " Other Side " had come into regular use both inside the committee, and with clubs and the public. There was much ire in selection from time to time as to the " best team " to play against any given opposition, and top class clubs complained at receiving Cardiff's second team, or its " Other Team ", according to mood, thereby deceiving their members and supporters. The Leicester, Aberavon and Northampton clubs were cases in point.

Leicester complained that Cardiff sent its " Other team " to play them on 10th November 1928, when, on the same Saturday date Cardiff played Newport at the Cardiff Arms Park, including in that side both the captain B. O. Male and the vice-captain Kevin Turnbull. The Leicester v. Cardiff match was rather unfortunate as both the Cardiff captain, Syd Cravos and Donald Macarthur another forward were ordered off the field for what was described in Cardiff circles as " trivial complaints ".

Leicester's complaint may have been tinged with a measure of ' sour grapes '. They won the home match by only 8 points to 5, whilst at Cardiff Arms Park, Newport were beaten by 12 points to 6. On the return fixture at Cardiff Arms Park on 16th March 1929 Leicester were beaten by 8 points to 5 (the same score they had inflicted on Cardiff in November 1928) and Cardiff beat Gloucester at Kingsholm by 10 points to 5 on the same Saturday. Regrettably however, fixtures were broken off between the Leicester and Cardiff clubs and not resumed until 1945–46.

Northampton complained that for our match on their ground 12th January 1929, Cardiff had " fielded a weak, inexperienced, and unrepresentative side " and they would have to cancel the 1929–30 fixture. Cardiff had suffered defeat, heavily, by 29 points to nil, but on the Arms Park on the same day Cardiff succeeded in beating Swansea by five points to three. Happily in this case, Northampton apologised to Cardiff and fixtures were not broken off.

Aberavon's complaint was that for their match with us on 24th November 1928 " Cardiff's

best side was not being sent to Aberavon ", and in this case the Cardiff committee hurriedly decided " that B. O. Male's side should be sent to Aberavon instead of playing Guys Hospital on the Cardiff Arms Park."

Cardiff's second First Fifteen (the " Other Side ") fared disastrously in the 1929–30 season winning only five matches out of 27, with three drawn. It had now become evident to the Rugby committee that the two First Fifteens experiment was not a success, and it was decided that with effect from season 1931–32 the club would revert to running one First Fifteen and one Reserves Fifteen the latter to be called Cardiff Athletic Fifteen which Syd Cravos dubbed as " The Rags ".

In the last season of the experiment, Cardiff's " Other Team " won only 12 out of 29 matches.

SOME EXAMPLES OF FIXTURE CLASHES

DURING SEASONS1926/27—1930/31

1926–27

Oct.	23—Blackheath	(A)	L	3—5	Maesteg	(H)	L	0–14
Dec.	11—Abertillery	(H)	L	6—8	Llanelly	(A)	L	3—6
Mar.	12—Llanelly	(H)	L	7—8	Maesteg	(A)	L	7–22
Apr.	20—Northampton	(H)	L	6–18	Ebbw Vale	(A)	L	13–22
Apr.	23—Swansea	(H)	L	10–13	Pill Harriers	(A)	L	5—8

1927–28

Oct.	22.—Penarth	(H)	W	6—3	Blackheath	(A)	L	7–16
Nov.	19—Utd. Services	(A)	D	0—0	Neath	(H)	D	3—3
Feb.	11—London Welsh	(H)	L	3–12	Llanelly	(A)	L	9–15
Mar.	31—Llanelly	(H)	L	3—6	Maesteg	(A)	L	3—8
Apr.	9—Harlequins	(H)	L	11–19	Torquay	(A)	L	3–16

1928–29

Oct.	20—Blackheath	(A)	L	10–14	Pontypool	(H)	L	4—5
Dec.	8—Llanelly	(A)	L	13–14	London Welsh	(H)	L	10–14
Feb.	9—Llanelly	(H)	W	19—3	Cross Keys	(H)	L	3—9
Mar.	9—Plymouth Alb.	(A)	L	6–12	Northampton	(H)	L	8–11
Apr.	20—Skewen	(H)	W	25—8	Maesteg	(A)	L	5–23

1929–30. The Second First Fifteen (the " Other Side ") had the most disastrous record in the club's history winning only five matches out of 27 with three drawn. From January 1930 until the end of the season not one solitary match was won, and losses were sustained successively against Bristol United, Cinderford, Edgware, Briton Ferry, Pontypridd, Skewen, Maesteg, Abertillery, Pill Harriers, Stroud, Treorchy, Bedford and Cheltenham, most of these against second class opposition.

1930–31

Sep.	13—Bristol	(H)	L	14–28	Maesteg	(A)	L	0–11
Oct.	18—Gloucester	(A)	L	10–17	Abertillery	(H)	L	3–11
Feb.	14—Gloucester	(H)	L	4—6	Abertillery	(A)	L	0–14
Mar.	28—Llanelly	(A)	L	6–10	Cross Keys	(H)	L	6–12
Apr.	11—Swansea	(A)	L	5—8	Blaina	(H)	L	3—6