

TOMMY STONE'S CAPTAINCY

1935-36. P44, W23, L18, D3. Points 375-275.

Tommy Stone was the members' choice of captain, he was a most popular player on any Rugby ground; he nominated L. M. Spence to be his vice-captain. Amongst our newcomers were Jack and Arthur Bassett, the former was the ex-Penarth full-back Welsh international and British Lion of 1950 who was content 'to serve out his time' with our "Rags". His brother Arthur had also transferred to the club from Aberavon, also too of the Glamorgan Police—a fine strong wing, and already capped for Wales. Others were J. J. Davies and H. O. Edwards, centres, Gwyn Porter the wing, and Ray Bale a grand prop who played for the club before and after the war. In terms of results it was not one of our best seasons as we lacked a strong personality in mid field and penetration in attack and consequently, scoring power.

But there were a few notable achievements, particularly our victory over the Barbarians on Easter Monday by one dropped goal and one try to one try. This was the first defeat of the "Baa-baas" after their winning sequence of twenty-two matches during their South Wales tours of the past six years. Their backs included V. G. J. Jenkins at full-back, Wooller and Peter Cranmer in the centre and the great Scottish pair of half backs W. R. Logan and Wilson Shaw. To the delight of the crowd, Tommy Stone our captain was carried off the field shoulder high. This great win had followed a successful run of five winning games, three on the Cornish tour against Plymouth Albion, Falmouth and Penzance—the latter re-arranged as a West Cornwall XV, then Llanelly away and Richmond at home on the Saturday before the Barbarian match. But on Easter Tuesday we fell from grace and succumbed to the Harlequins by no less than 17 points to three.

The first of the four matches with Newport was at home on 5th October, it was the 200th of the series between the two rival clubs. The kick-off was made by Colonel Clifford Phillips who captained the Newport team in the first match between the clubs in 1876. The match was drawn, a proper result in the historical circumstances perhaps; Jack Bassett was at full-back for us, and Tommy Stone went to outside half with Jackie Bowcott his scrum half. But the real highlight of the season was Cardiff's match with New Zealand on 26th October, and we went down by 20 points to five. We were able to get Ronnie Boon available, from Dunfermline, and Harry and Jackie Bowcott at half-back but were outplayed but by no means disgraced. The match was really lost in the first half when New Zealand profited well to score fifteen points as the result of some bad mistakes by our backs. Cardiff had some brilliant spells in the second half in which each side scored a converted goal and we contributed to what critics described as the most thrilling match in which the "All Blacks" had so far played on their tour. V. R. Osmond the forward scored Cardiff's try which was converted by R. W. Boon. On 8th January Cardiff opposed New Zealanders again, as Bridgend, in their match against us, included three of Jack Manchester's All Blacks, namely F. Vorrath and W. R. Collins in the pack, and D. Solomon in the centre. We won the match by one converted goal to one try.

Our match with Swansea at home for 25th January was cancelled owing to the death of King George Vth. Our King was now Edward VIII, who, as Prince of Wales on 11th May previously, had appeared at the Cardiff Arms Park in connection with the Welsh celebrations of his father's Jubilee. Following incidents at Aberavon in our away match in 1932-33, fixtures were broken off, but on the 20th April 1936 Cardiff sent a team down in charge of the late committee man D. L. Evans, a "peace mission" match, and fixtures were officially resumed in 1936-37 with an away match with "The Wizards" as Aberavon are often referred to.

Arthur Bassett was the club's top try scorer with 27, A. H. Jones was next highest with only nine, then came Horace Edwards with seven. First XV caps were awarded to Jackie Bowcott, J. J. Davies, H. O. Edwards, Gwyn Porter and Gwyn Williams. In the Welsh sensational victory over the All Blacks on 21st December by 13 points to 12, Eddie Watkins was Cardiff's sole representative. Wilfred Wooller and Cliff Jones also played but Wooller had not then joined the club, and Cliff Jones had helped in few matches because of study commitments for the law. Cardiff joined in the many congratulations sent to Swansea on its great victory over New Zealand.

The record of the Athletic XV was P30, W21, L6, D3, with points 249 to 136. Although not a high scoring one, the season was nevertheless one of the best since the war 1914-18, and not since the great era of D. E. Jones who captained Cardiff 2nd XV six times in succession, 1885-91 had any Reserves captain been appointed for three seasons in succession, as Hubert Johnson was for the last three, 1933/34-1935/36. In honour of this achievement he was awarded a club blazer, and his efforts presaged even better results for the "Rags". His top scorers were Trevor Ransome (an ex-Llandaff wing) who obtained 17 tries; four others each scored five, namely himself, Charley Cross, G. V. Wynne Jones and Des Kelly. The goal kicking was shared mainly between Jack Bassett and Duncan Brown. Athletic XV caps were awarded to Jack Bassett—to add to his collection, Jack Cason, Charley Cross, Selby Davies—who was also to assist the club after the war, H. S. Garland, Percy Plain, Trevor Ransome, Don Roberts, T. R. "Tommy" Turnbull, E. T. C. Williams and the hooker Ieuan Wright, also T. J. Roberts who with Don of the same name occupied the half back berths. One of the interesting matches played by "The Rags" was that with the Cardiff & District R.U. (Wednesday section) whom they met—on a Wednesday, and won by 12 points to six. We also sent a Cardiff XV to play the 1st Battalion of the Welch Regiment at the Barracks Field on 3rd January 1936.