

BUT "THE RAGS" AND YOUTH FIFTEENS STEAL THE HONOURS

1959-60. P44, W26, L10, D8. Points 428-285.

Another Rhondda boy, Gordon Wells was a fine all round athlete at St. Luke's, Exeter, an ideal college for Rugby football grounding. He was a splendid wing, fast, and with a sharp side step, a fine "sevens" player. Gordon joined the club in 1952-53 and his Rugby career with us brought him seven Welsh caps and Barbarian honours, touring South Africa and Rhodesia in 1958. In ten seasons he made no less than 254 first team appearances and well merited the honour of captaincy. It was my habit, jocularly, to address Gordon as "my artesian friend". Sensibly, he nominated J. D. Evans, one of the strongest props of his time, another Rhondda product from Mountain Ash, as his vice-captain.

The season's record was an improvement on that of 1958-59, but not an impressive one. Our half back position, apart from Lloyd Williams, did not really stabilise, Graham Buck, Colin Hewitt, Ian James (from Abertillery, a good prospect), Leo Karseras and Tom McCarthy, competing for first team places without really establishing themselves, except perhaps Tommy McCarthy who played in 28 matches. Cen Williams took part in only eight games and Gareth Griffiths in only seven before retiring; Ken Richards left the club for Bridgend after playing in only four matches at the beginning of the season. D. E. J. "Danny" Harris a grand second row forward, formerly of St. Luke's and Pontypridd joined us and in the two seasons he remained he gained six of his Welsh caps before deciding to turn professional.

Our scoring power was not high, there were many close games—eight of them drawn, yet we had lost only six up to 19th March, including three in a row from 31st October to Neath, Oxford University and Newport. The Usksiders secured three wins and a draw with us, the four wins in a season still eluding them. Surprisingly we lost to Rosslyn Park and Penzance-Newlyn on the Cornish tour where we beat Camborne and could only draw with Penryn. Our main successes were doubles over Harlequins (plus a floodlight win), Pontypool, Llanelli and London Welsh, we drew with the Barbarians at ten points each. Our Irish friends the Bective Rangers held us to a draw at Donnybrook, Dublin, their match programme welcomed Cardiff, with a challenge to combat—in Welsh.

Of our 29 scorers, the captain with 16 scored most tries, and only Meirion Roberts with eleven scored double figures. Alan Friday with 48 goals and a try scored 116 points. Our new First Team caps were Graham Davies (he was a participant on the Welsh Secondary Schools—The Dragons—tour to South Africa), Ray Glastonbury, Danny Harris, Tommy McCarthy, W. J. "Billy" Thomas our hooker, Elwyn Williams and the tricky wing Glyn Williams. In match attendances Dai Hayward played in 43 of the 44 fixtures, the captain and vice-captain each played 42 times.

The honours of the season however deservedly went to the Athletic and Youth Fifteens, both of whom registered their most successful season. Now a veteran, Peter Goodfellow who captained the Premiers in 1956-57, undertook the captaincy of the former whom he led to a record season, surpassing that of Haydn Tanner's 1st XV of 1947-48, the details being:—

First XV 1947-48.	Played 41	Won 39	Lost 2.	Points 803 to 161
Ath. XV 1959-60.	Played 41	Won 39	Lost 2.	Points 853 to 175

In Tanner's season 182 tries were scored and in Goodfellow's 210. Had the new four points value of a try from 1971-72 applied to 1959-60 the Athletic XV points would have been 1,063 in 41 matches. Even on this assumption this splendid achievement was to be surpassed in seasons 1972-73 and 1973-74.

Peter Goodfellow called upon 54 players, quite a number of whom played in the 1st XV from time to time, notably Terry Donovan the hooker, Ray Glastonbury, Gareth and his brother Ritchie Griffiths, Colin Hewitt, Dennis Hickey, Colin Howe, Steve Hughes, Leo Karseras, Tommy McCarthy, Harry Morgan, Keith Miller and Elwyn Williams. He had some excellent newcomers who gained Athletic XV caps, forwards Chris Davies, Dennis Hickey, Keith Millar and Alan Groves: a splendid outside half in the Old Howardian Mike Evans, John Hartstill the young full-back and Harry Morgan, the former Oxford and Newport centre, he also had the experienced centre Peter Nyhan. Such then was some of the personnel who Peter led to attain such a successful record which the Committee honoured by the presentation of a special blazer badge to the successful players. In 1959-60 there were many fine performances, the modern coaching methods of today had not been adapted at this time and there were wins of 46-3 over Llandaff (H), 48-0 over Wrexham (A). There was a glut of high scoring in the last four matches, namely Totnes (A) 54-3, Cardiff H.S.O.B. (H) 24-3, Newport H.S.O.B. (H) 42-14 and finally Barry (A) 39-0.

Peter Goodfellow played in 38 of "The Rags" matches, Dennis Hickey in 34, Alan Groves 32, and Peter Nyhan 30. Mike Evans with 35 goals and 13 tries scored most points; 33 tries were scored by Steve Hughes, 23 by Ray Glastonbury, John Hitchens 11 and Dennis Hickey 10. There were some 40 scorers in all, proof I think that running Rugby was paramount.

On Easter Monday morning, Ray Glastonbury played for the Athletic against Cardiff H.S.O.B. and in the afternoon for the First XV against the Harlequins.

The Youth Fifteen also had its best season since it was founded in 1949-50. They played 26 matches, won 23, lost but one and drew two. Tony Canham was the captain, a very good half back who went on to assist the Athletic and Extras Fifteens for quite a number of seasons until a severe knee injury forced him to retire. Tony led his team with the right spirit, that of open Rugby which led to a number of the season's successes. Two of these were in "Sevens", and they won both the Llandaff and Bridgend Tournaments. Gareth Protheroe one of the forwards was awarded his youth international cap. During the season no fewer than eleven former youth players assisted the premier fifteens.

The Ground. Subsequent to the relaying of the turf—in wet conditions, after the ending of the Empire & Commonwealth Games in 1958 the south stand side of the playing pitch was seriously affected. It held water near the touch line and had caused a muddy slick from end to end of the field where the running track of the games had been laid. Remedial measures had to be undertaken and the Sophia Gardens was called upon for much use. A scheme for ground heating was considered, as was that of the installation of floodlights. Both projects which then involved the cost of £10,000 and £11,000 respectively but were considered too prohibitive for the time being.

Sevens. In the second round of the Welsh "Snelling" Tournament we were knocked out in the second round by Penarth by eight points to three, the Seasiders' points being scored by their captain Bernard "Slogger" Templeman. "Slogger" just about dominated the tournament and led his club into the final. Apart from his craftiness, he gave the large crowd an exhibition of most simple and effective goal kicking, taking only one bare pace backwards in doing so, to the delight and praise of all who saw the spectacle.

It was a sign of the times that the committee reluctantly discontinued the players' annual Sunday outing owing to the lack of support of the players themselves. These former pleasurable interludes were instituted well before World War I. Across the water to Weston or Minehead, Cheddar Caves or Porlock and so on were very popular, British Camps and Malvern and other places, country houses and the like had been visited prior to and subsequent to World War II. Many of the diversions, competitions, swimming—handicapping for the elderly ones, committee included, invoke some nostalgia, many singing choruses were born. Sadly these outings lost their appeal to the many amenities of the modern days, undiscovered in by-gone days.

Obituary. It is with some sadness that I write of the demise of two of my former colleagues, Syd Cravos in December and Brice Jenkins in March of 1960, their sudden deaths stunned our Rugby world. Much has been written of these two men whose main desire was to serve 'the greatest club', which they did in their respective capacities for many years. Their worth has often been praised by club and public alike, both were vice-presidents of the Cardiff Athletic Club.

To end on a brighter note I can record that the BBC quiz "Make your mark" was won by our team of Haydn Wilkins, Alan Friday, A. D. Croster and Walter Brinkworth, one of the club's longest serving members.