

W.R.U. PROPOSE NEW NATIONAL GROUND AT BRIDGEND

1962-63. P43, W26, L12, D5. Points 467-227.

D. J. Hayward was appointed captain and he nominated C. Howard Norris, another forward, as his vice-captain. A former under 15, and secondary school cap, ex-Newbridge and Loughborough College, 'Dai' Hayward joined Cardiff in 1957-58. He was one of the best flank forwards, quick to the break-down and link up play, an intelligent forward who drove his team hard; he gained six Welsh caps and a place in the Welsh international touring team to South Africa in 1964. In all, he made 325 1st XV appearances.

Most of last season's players were available, although two of our pack, Kingsley Jones and Keith Rowlands, after the British Lions South Africa tour of 1962, played in only 10 and 17 1st Team games respectively. Cyril Evans a fine attacking wing/centre joined us from Llanelli, but we still lacked scoring potential as the points for indicate. All clubs experienced an arctic winter with many cancellations of matches owing to frost and snow, from late December until March. In actual fact our Athletic XV suffered no fewer than ten successive cancellations from 26th December to 2nd March. Although the 1st XV did not play a match in January, the cancellations were restricted to only four owing to the commendable efforts of Frank Trott in organising straw protecting work. As the result of the work of his ground staff and committee, the club was enabled to play its three Christmas time matches, and Wales its international match with England.

Three defeats were suffered in September at the hands and feet of Ebbw Vale (first match of the season), Neath and Bridgend, but some form was recovered, and only one match was lost up to the end of February, but from March until the end we were beaten eight times, three successively at Easter time by Barbarians, Harlequins and Bridgend, and two on the 1st and 3rd of May in the extended season, to Cross Keys, home, and Neath away.

Our Cornish tour was most successful however, three wins over Penzance-Newlyn, Camborne and Penryn. The Penryn match was highlighted by the record of Alan Priday who was able to beat Wilfred Wooller's existing record of 163 points in 1938-39. Alan's total points for the season was 176 made up of nine tries, 43 converted and 21 penalty goals. Meirion Roberts scored 12 tries, Glyn Williams 11, D. J. Hayward and Steve Hughes nine and Cyril Evans eight. Dai Hayward scored three of his tries in the Penryn match.

Club caps were awarded to Cyril Evans, Cliff Howe, Steve Hughes and John Price who joined the club from Penarth and of whose club he was captain in the previous season. Alan Priday played in 41 matches and was closely followed by C. Howard Norris and Elwyn Williams with 39 each, and Meirion Roberts 37. The captain and vice-captain, David Hayward and Howard Norris gained their first international caps; Kingsley Jones, Keith Rowlands also played for their country.

The chairman's report on the Rugby club for the season said: "So ended a strange season—a season badly affected by arctic conditions for nearly three months, a season when Cardiff, inspired by precept and example by the skipper Dai Hayward, played open attacking football, trying always to make the games attractive for the spectators and enjoyable for the players. It is difficult to explain the falling off in form at certain periods."

The Athletic XV captained by Colin Howe, our veteran prop forward, had a most disappointing season which was much affected by arctic weather cancellations. Out of 32, only 19 matches were won, 10 were lost and 3 drawn. The scores for and those against were relatively low, and high respectively, being only 342 to 193. The absence of matches for "The Rags" between Christmas and 2nd March might be said to have interfered in the continuity of sustained effort. The top scorer was the full-back Alan Drew with 78 points from four tries and 29 goals. Joe Smith with seven, Dennis McCarthy with seven and Ritchie Wills six were those who scored most tries. Only three players qualified for Athletic XV caps, A. Glavin, Hadyn Thomas and a new tricky scrum half from Pontypridd, T. B. "Shrimp" Williams. Colin Howe the captain with 34 games including five with the 1st XV made most appearances.

As with the premier teams, the fixtures of our Youth XV were seriously curtailed, 16 being played of which 12 were won with four drawn, and the points scored 303 to 36. Islwyn Matthews the Juniors captain and Jim Mills the well built forward gained Welsh Youth international caps. In addition David Ivens a very neat half-back and Geoff Jones played for the Welsh Youth against the Midlands Youth fifteen. Jim Mills and a most promising full-back, Ron Hill, played in the Athletic XV late in the season.

The club again lost in the first round of the Snelling 'Sevens' going down to our Newport rivals. An 'extra' club match was played at Newbridge on 4th October to celebrate the opening of that club's new clubhouse. The popular Canadian Tourists for whom I was the Welsh Rugby Union Liaison Officer arrived in Wales to play a series of eight matches. Under their President R. C. 'Dick' Ellis they were very well received; they were very good amateurs and ambassadors. During their stay they were afforded the club's hospitality and they presented us with a splendid Canadian plaque. It was tragic that 'Dick' Ellis who was to lead another successful tour, and receive a Welsh one—all in the furtherance of Rugby football in Canada should collapse and die suddenly in 1974 at a most early age. Canadian Rugby circles and indeed all our home unions were shocked by the tragedy.

Our hon. secretary Frank Trott and the general secretary of the Cardiff Athletic Club were now busily engaged in running a successful sweepstake lottery which had made £5,037 in 36 weeks of the C.A.C.'s financial year. To assist, I undertook to take over the fixture making for the Rugby club in addition to being the club's programme editor.

The Cardiff Arms Park. In May 1963 the W.R.U. informed the club that the limitation of the number of matches on the Cardiff Arms Park was not satisfactory, and that eighty acres of land near Bridgend were available for a national ground. A contract had been signed with the Dunraven Estate. The subject became one of national interest, and particularly to the city of Cardiff, where international matches had been played since 1884. The management committee and all relevant bodies including our city council made it clear that every endeavour would be made to retain the Welsh international matches in Cardiff. A plan suggested by Hubert Johnson with Mr. John Webb the C.A.C. architect was mooted to provide a national ground for the W.R.U., and a club ground for our Rugby club on the Cardiff Arms Park, involving the withdrawal of the Cardiff Cricket Club to the Sophia Gardens, was put forward. Details as to the setting up of the new grounds have been written elsewhere, see "The Story of the Cardiff Arms Park".

Obituary. The death was announced of Idris Richards one of our most popular forwards and captains of the 'twenties', he had also served on our Rugby football committee.

The Cardiff Athletic Club also announced that three public men of the city, vice-presidents of the Cardiff Athletic Club and supporters of the Rugby club from their very early days, had passed away. They were Sir Robert Webber, O.B.E., J.P.; his brother Frank Webber, O.B.E., J.P.; and Mr. E. Ewart Pearce, M.B.E., J.P., who, only last season had served the city as its Lord Mayor.