

## **CARDIFF ATHLETIC CLUB RUGBY SECTION**

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: SEASON 2005/2006**

To say that last season was disappointing would be a huge understatement. For many months we all despaired at being bottom or close to the bottom of the Premiership, with only three league wins up to March 10<sup>th</sup>. There were several factors that contributed to our lowly position, but it is not my intention to offer excuses in this report. Sufficient to say that the position that we found ourselves in last season is one that is totally unacceptable to all connected with Cardiff RFC and can never be allowed to happen again.

Hard lessons have been learnt and difficult decisions have to be made. The whole structure surrounding the Premiership side both on and off the field has to become more professional and dynamic to successfully meet the demands of the modern game. Time of course is no friend in these matters and measures need to be put in place now to ensure our future success.

Despite our poor league run we were experiencing success in the Welsh Cup defeating the Laugharne (A) and Tonmawr (A) before meeting Bonymaen (A) who were top of division one, while we were close to the bottom of the Premiership and despite many predictions of an "upset" we won the encounter 23 – 16. The following week we played Llanelli at home and despite being 21 points down at half time came back to win 27 – 26 thanks to a Nick Macleod penalty in injury time. These two games were undoubtedly a watershed for the side went on to win 7 of the next 11 games, which saw the team move out of the relegation zone to finish 9<sup>th</sup> in the league and also reach the semi-final of the Welsh Cup.

Special mention must be made of Elgan Jones who not only took part in every game last season but also reached a very important milestone in making 100 appearances for the Cardiff RFC team, a terrific achievement deserving our congratulations. Other players whose contribution last season deserve special mention are Chris Stamatakis who played in 34 of the 35 games and was third highest try scorer with 9 tries, Chris Anderson top scorer with 192 points and Michael Leaman top try scorer with 10 tries in only 16 appearances.

Many congratulations to Nick Macleod who has been called up to tour Argentina with the senior Welsh squad. Nick played 7 times for the Premiership side last season, scoring 69 points, to finish as second highest point scorer ever.

Our coaches Howard Stone and Colin Laity did everything they could to turn the side around and the team responded with a great deal of effort and heart. Indeed the team spirit that prevailed throughout the season was excellent even when everything seemed to be going against them.

Our fitness and conditioning coach Gerrit Bantjes was again this year tireless in his efforts with the players. The all round fitness demands on players in this day and age are extremely high and preparation for the rigors of the modern game are paramount. Gerrit certainly brings the players to the required levels; his enthusiasm is infectious and spurs the players on even in the most trying of times.



Dyfri Owen, the team physiotherapist, is a most valued member of our off field team, who makes a tremendous contribution to the well being of the players. We are fortunate to have someone of Dyfri's knowledge and ability; his contribution to the side cannot be overstated.

I would like to thank the Rugby Committee for their work most of which is unseen and at times can be very demanding. My thanks in particular go to Keith Morgan who again this year has worked tirelessly for the benefit of Cardiff RFC in his position as Team Manager, a most demanding position in terms of time and effort. John Huw Williams in his role of secretary is both dedicated and enthusiastic and Billy Woods for his organization of dinners and fund raising activities. While our two newcomers on the Rugby Committee, Simon Down and John Harding have both impressed with their energy and commitment. Unfortunately my Vice chairman for the past year Bob Newman has resigned from Committee to pursue his ambitions as a coach with another club. I would like to wish Bob every success in his new post and to thank him for all his hard work on behalf of Cardiff RFC over the years.

The Supporters Club has again this year been hugely important to the club with their many activities that help to underpin the team. We are all extremely grateful for their efforts; they are, and long may they continue to be, a very committed and vital facet of the club.

Brian Walker and his staff continue to provide us with an excellent playing surface and must be congratulated on this. A great deal of effort goes into preparing and maintaining the pitch, which I am sure, is the envy of many clubs.

Karl Williams and his staff continue to provide us with excellent service in the clubhouse. Karl is an avid supporter of the Premiership side and his contributions to the morale of the side have been gratefully received.

Everyone concerned with the Premiership side are hugely supportive of Dai Young's Blues and were delighted to see them finish fourth in the Celtic League as the top Welsh Region. This was a tremendous step forward from the previous season and we are all looking forward with great excitement and anticipation to the forthcoming season.

Bob Norster and Alun Doull have worked extremely hard behind the scenes not only for the Blues and Premiership side but also for the benefit of Welsh Rugby in European and Celtic competitions.

Peter Thomas and his Board of Directors as ever strive to develop and strengthen the Blues. It is to their credit that they were able to bring a player of the calibre of Jonah Lomu to the Arms Park – a rugby superstar and a great box office attraction. I would like to wish everyone concerned with the Blues a very successful season for 2006/07.

To conclude I would like to thank you, the members, for your support throughout a difficult season. It was very heart warming to hear the chant of Cardiff, Cardiff, which grew louder game by game after Christmas. We know that our supporters are 100% behind the team and that they stayed with the side through thick and thin last



season, it is now up to us, as players and committee to deliver next season. I am optimistic that we shall do so and I look forward to your continued support at the Arms Park next season.

Many thanks,

MALCOLM CHILDS  
CHAIRMAN