



PONTYPRIDD RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB



PONTYPRIDD v GLOUCESTER

AT SARDIS ROAD, PONTYPRIDD KICK OFF 3.00p.m.
ON SATURDAY 6th DECEMBER 1980

Official Programme 15p

Nº 191

CLUB NOTES

This afternoon we welcome Gloucester R.F.C. to the Sardis Road Ground for the first of what we hope will be many other visits.

Last year, our journey to Gloucester was the first in 76 years. The game turned out to be a thriller, when Pontypridd were somewhat fortunate to come away with a 22 points to 14 victory. Good work by the Gloucester pack appeared to have set the foundation for a home win, with tries by Paul Wood, Austin Brooks and Steve Mills, one of which was converted by Peter Butler. However, Tommy David played a Captain's part, and paved the way for a victory. He peeled away from a maul just inside the 25 yard line, and Tim Harrison showed a clean pair of heels on a 60 yard dash to the line to score. On the other flank Karl Swain dashed in for two tries, and Jeff Hazzard's two conversions did the rest.

Already our visitors have accounted for Pontypool on their own ground, and there is no doubt they are confident that what they can do for Pontypool, they can do for us. As we know, from our own experience, not many teams win at Pontypool Park, so Tommy David and his team will again be called on to show the character they have shown in recent matches, to stave off this afternoon's challenge.

Last Saturday, Pontypridd again overcame a stiff hurdle by defeating Sale away. The pack turned in a devastating performance during the second half to turn a 12 points to 6 deficit into a final 23 points to 15 victory. Again Carl Smith and Mike Shellard gave outstanding performances, with skipper Tommy David giving signs of last season's form.

An interesting comparison to our present playing record compared to the same time last year makes pleasant reading. Of the 22 games played we had lost 6 games, 4 more than at present, though 28 points more had been scored. However, our current defensive record is far more superior, where only 171 points have been conceded to date as compared to last season's 278. In addition we can still boast of an intact Ground record, whereas Romania, Cardiff and Pontypool had beaten us last year to the same period.

Our visitors present us with the first of four very difficult games during December. After today, away games have to be played against Aberavon next Tuesday 9th December, followed by Maesteg a week today, and of course our annual pilgrimage to the Arms Park, where we will be seeking the "double" over our illustrious neighbours. In between we will be able to enjoy our home "Cup" tie against Tondy on 20th December, but in all, a very demanding schedule for any Club.

Congratulations are also due to our referee for this afternoon, Mr. Alun Richards of Caldicot. Alun has been a top flight "whistler" for many years, and he has been justly rewarded this season by his elevation to the International Panel of Referees. We wish him every success and trust that he will be allocated an International game before the season ends.

Sponsorship is fast becoming a part of Welsh Rugby these days, and Pontypridd R.F.C. are no exception. Already we have been grateful to individuals and Companies, and the Students Union of the Polytechnic of Wales. Today we have a group of schoolboy and girl supporters, who wish to be anonymous, and have not only sponsored the match ball for the game, but also the £5.00 prize for the programme "Lucky Number" draw. They have their own reasons for remaining anonymous, but we thank them all for their generous gesture in supporting the Club financially at such a young age.

Finally news of the Grandstand tickets for the Tondy game. The Treasurer Mr. P. Hendy, and Mr. M. D. Jones will be present at the Clubhouse at 7.00p.m. on Monday 8th December to distribute these tickets (these tickets are available to Stand and Ground Members). Members will be able to obtain up to 3 tickets for Members on shift-work provided season tickets are produced. It is regretted that Vice Patrons and Debenture Holders will not be allocated their own seats in any game such as this, which comes under the jurisdiction of the W.R.U.

The playing record to date reads:

P 22 W 20 L 2 D 0 Pts. for 508 Agst. 171

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Rod's Chit Chat

Cocks of the West!

In welcoming Gloucester to Sardis Road, we are welcoming the Pride of the West, and in many respects, the pride of English rugby too. They know how the game is played in the West Country all right, and no-where more so than at Kingsholme, the home of the famous 'Cherry-and-Whites'. Our first ever visit there last season was a salutary experience, to say the least. Our welcome there, both before and after the game, was warm and genuine, but during the actual eighty minutes of play we thought at times that we were at Strady Park or the Gnoll, so fierce was the commitment of the Gloucester players, and so fervent their support from the terraces. They are nearer to the Welsh clubs in appreciation and style, than any other club you could name. You get the impression, as you do in a Welsh local derby, that the game is a serious matter, there to be fought for and won, if possible, rather than a charming social exercise. It so happened that I did not join our official party in the Grandstand during our game last season - I had gone in search of a cup of tea before the game in company with Mr. Colin Evans, whose sad and untimely death we have recently mourned. Cheered by our tea, Colin and I scorning the niceties, elected to stand among a vast concourse of Gloucester supporters, bent on cheering their team to their echo whatever happened. A group of Ponty supporters took their stance a short distance away, their Black and White favours contrasting bravely and sharply with the massed Cherry and White about us. Immediately there broke out a badinage of cheerful insults between the groups, interspersed with much laughter and good humour, but with no holds barred and with each side rejoicing greatly in the mishaps of their opponents. It was like being back home at Sardis Road or at Pontypool Park. It was a far cry from some of the genteel sportsmanship that pervades many of the English grounds. At the end of the match - which incidentally, we won - rather fortunately, let it be added - Colin and I streamed away feeling we had shared in a real afternoon's blood-and-thunder experience. We had entered a hot-bed of rugby enthusiasm, we had held our own in the verbal cut-and-thrust and we could savour the heady taste of victory over a worthy and honourable antagonist. No wonder we called to mind that old adage that is often spoken in Wales - that if the

English selectors, in the last decade, had looked more often, and more consistently, in the direction of Gloucester and the West, their record on the International field would have been ten times stronger.

Defeat - and Applause!

There is an ending to this story that points a moral. The Pontypridd side, having showered and eaten wandered across to the main Gloucester club-house to enjoy a pint or two before their journey home. As they walked through the door, into a packed bar, those same Gloucester folk who had just spent one and a half hours shouting joyful abuse at them, and issuing thinly veiled queries about their antecedents, all broke out into voluntary applause. I don't know if this is a regular occurrence at Gloucester, but it affected our team and our supporters powerfully. It was the first time the Clubs had met but I and many others from our camp suddenly felt very much at home and among friends. It was a living illustration of the weird and complex paradox that is rugby football - a hard, merciless, almost vicious game that nurtures both immediate and long-term friendships in the very white-heat of its intensity. The strongest chains are forged in the hottest furnaces.

Nice To Have You

So today we have a chance to welcome this ancient and famous Club to Sardis Road, and let us seize this opportunity to let their players, officials and supporters know that they have come among friends. They are having a good season, though as usual with the English clubs, they can hardly ever put out their best side, due to the insistent calls of the county competition and, in Gloucester's case, representative calls. Still, Gloucester could play the tea-boy and the programme-sellers and still come out with a team to beat the best. Their win last Saturday at Iffley Road over the fancied Oxford University side has made us sit up and think a little bit. May they enjoy their game with us today, and may this be the first of a long series of games between us. We are made of the same metal, and we can enjoy each others company for a hundred years to come.

R.T.

Mike Alexander

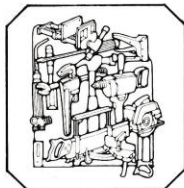
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3 SEAN O'SULLIVAN
4 BOB PENBERTHY
5 BOB COOKSLEY
6 DON JONES
7 TOMMY DAVID (Capt.)
8 CARL SMITH

FULL BACK
RIGHT WING
RIGHT CENTRE
LEFT CENTRE
LEFT WING
OUTSIDE HALF
SCRUM HALF
PROP
HOOKER
PROP
LOCK
LOCK
FLANKER
FLANKER
No.8

Gloucester

PETER FORD 15
PENRAIG CONWAY 14
PAUL HOWELL 13
PAUL TAYLOR 12
BOB CLEWES 11
COLIN PRYCE 10
STEVE BAKER 9
PHIL BLAKEWAY 1
KEVIN WHITE 2
STEVE ASHMEAD 3
JOHN ORWIN 4
ADRIAN TURTON 5
MIKE LONGSTAFF 6
PAUL WOOD 7
MIKE TEAGUE 8

Referee: Mr. Alun Richards (Caldicot)

Subs: Robin Morgan, Paul Elley

Subs: Paul Williams, Malcolm Preedy



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