

Ebbw Vale Rugby Football Club

Season '78/79

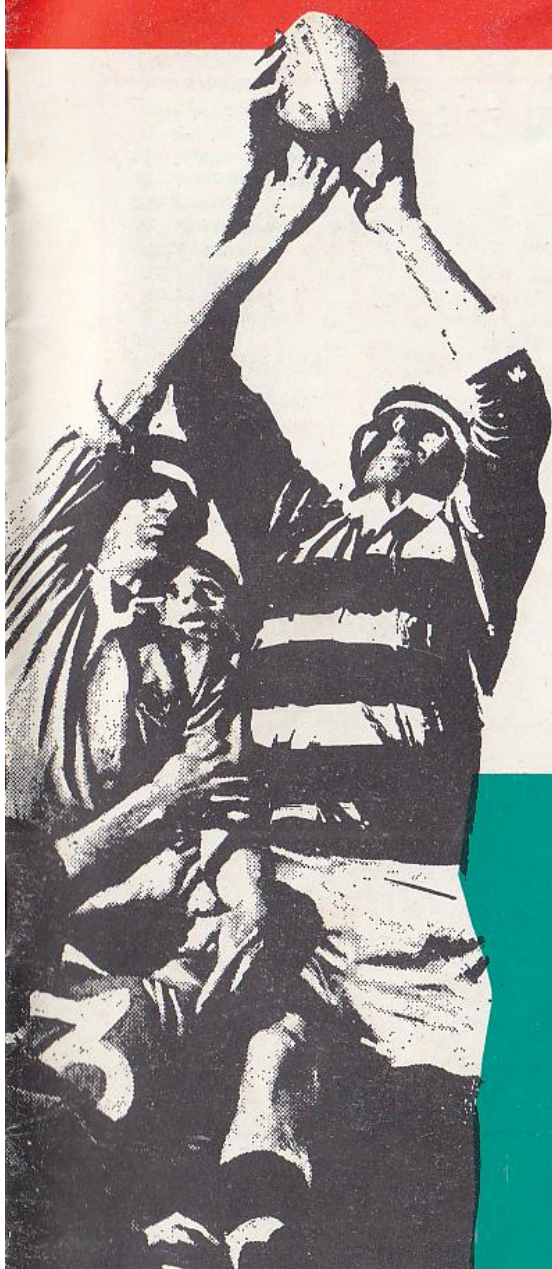
Anglo v Welsh Merit Table Game

Ebbw Vale v. Gloucester

Wednesday
20th September
1978

K.O.—7.00 p.m.

Official Programme **10p**



Ebbw Vale

Gloucester

Full Back

Colin Court

15

P. Butler

Threequarters

Chris Edwards

14

R. Clewes

Gary Lawrence

13

E. Rooney

Ian Goslin

12

R. Jardine

Russel Cole

11

R. Mogg

Half Backs

Alan Rainbow

10

C. Williams

Nighel Osborne

9

P. Kingston

Forwards

Colin Williams

1

G. Sargent

Jon Williams

2

S. Mills

John Short

3

M. Curran

Elwyn Jones

4

J. Orwin

David Fryer

5

S. Boyle

Phil Gardner

6

J. Watkins

Clive Burgess

8

J. Simonett

Paul Ringer

7

P. Wood

Replacements: David Hussey

Replacements: S. Baker

Peter Jones

K. White

Referee: Mr. D. E. Brooks (Cardiff)

CLUB NOTES . . .

Our first visitors from the other side of Offa's Dyke this season are old friends, and rivals, Gloucester. For sheer consistency, season in, season out, their record speaks for itself. Fresh from their victory at Waterloo by 22pts. to 10pts. they will be keen to restore the somewhat tarnished image that English clubs have at the moment. Games between the clubs have, like most scrums, gone with the head (ground advantage). For the past few seasons encounters have been very close and sooner or later this sequence of events will be broken. We hope it's next season.

Talking of tarnished images—two Vale players were sent off at Exeter last Saturday which certainly knocked the enjoyment out of winning. Diligent searching of records have failed to find such a happening in the past and it is hoped that the future will also fail to record such an occurrence. The one incident happened in a ruck/maul situation and was not seen from the one side of the ground. The other was in open play when a player with the ball stepped inside a defender and the defender instinctively put out an arm, in an attempt to tackle, and caught the player around the head area. Such events happen in nearly every game of rugby whenever an attacker side-steps or steps inside a defender who is coming across the field is caught off balance. Invariably the defender makes a grab with one arm in an attempt to tackle. This action is as instinctive as blinking with no malicious intent. Still, in the notes on the Laws, Law 26 paragraph 5 it states that "It is for the referee to decide what constitutes a dangerous tackle, having regard to the circumstances, e.g. the apparent intentions of the tackler, or the nature of the tackle, or the defenceless position of the player being tackled or knocked over which may be the cause of serious injury. The referee must always treat a 'stiff armtackle' as foul play."

What of our performances during the past week? Both games were won v. Glamorgan Wanderers by 22pts. to nil; and v. Exeter by 16pts. to 10pts. but it is apparent that the team are not playing with their usual efficiency. The front five are not going with their usual zest and a couple of forwards in this department do not yet look to be match fit. The back row are now playing as a unit though a thigh injury to Clive Burgess on Saturday did slow him down. The link between forwards and backs is not as swift as it should be. The rest of the young threequarters are still finding their feet in the greater pace of top class rugby, but are improving with every game. Gary Lawrence has held the threequarter line together all season and with his enforced absence for a few weeks an even greater responsibility will rest on the shoulders of the young players in the Club. It will be a testing time for them. They will be thrust into the crucible of Welsh rugby and those who emerge will be of a finer, sharper metal.

Finally, on a very pleasant note, nine of our players have been chosen in the Monmouthshire Squad from which the team to play New Zealand on 29th November will be chosen. These players are—Russell Cole, Gary Lawrence, Ian Goslin, Alan Rainbow, Elwyn Jones and Clive Burgess. Congratulations to them (and Steve Lewis who is also in the Squad). We hope that they all make final selection.

Tickets for this game are certain to be in short supply. If any are required please give your name to any member of the Ticket Sub-Committee. Their names can be found in the Season Ticket.

BOMBARDIER BUTLER

If Gloucester rugby men have been smoking themselves to death lately it's not surprising after winning the John Player Cup last April. Their win over Leicester by 6 - 3 came a week after we lost at Kingsholm 13 - 16, a case of the Cherry and Whites playing teams on successive Saturdays wearing Red, Green and White.

Gloucestershire still contains stately homes where old traditions survive with the butler opening the door and maids who offer crumpet and tea. Gloucester Rugby Club have their own butler who has opened the door to many Cup and County triumphs with lethal place kicking.

Peter Butler is a phenomenon of the Western World and a ballistic missile who will be welcomed tonight—particularly if he has misplaced his boots. In Nashville, Tennessee—slightly different sort of place to Ebbw or Gloucester—they have a museum dedicated to cowboy singers and movie stars. There you see Roy Roger's stetson hat, Gene Autry's spurs, Tex Ritter's holster and Trigger also left some odds and ends around the place. In Gloucester's museum should surely rest Peter Butler's kicking boots in recognition of points scored and anxiety created for enemy opponents.

He follows a long line of excellent Gloucester full backs like Rutherford and Stephens and we have a connection there also. When in our Centenary we may be asked to select the "best ever" Ebbw Vale side since the War one who will be considered for full back will be Ieuan Sheen who first played for us against Exeter in April 1953. He was years ahead of his time and joined Gloucester midway through the 54-55 season. In December 1957 he was in the winning Western Counties side that beat the Australians 9 - 8 at Bristol and we had one last pleasure of his company when he guested against Tredegar on Boxing Day 1959 as an outside half. With him in the side we naturally won and he finished off that season as fullback for Gloucestershire in the County Championship Final.

Our first visit to Kingsholm on December 4th, 1965 started badly when traffic held up the charabanc which only contained fourteen regular players anyway. Wilf Hunt was Secretary at the time and as if he didn't have enough on his mind he had to turn out after a layoff of about two years. Wilf was a Barbarian and a Welsh reserve and as an outside half was tricky enough to design dodgem' cars but at Gloucester he made his brief comeback as fullback. He couldn't have done badly for we only lost 6 - 9 and also had another burden to bear—Gareth Howls was No. 8.

Among our favourites who have won the Cherry and White are Mike Nicholls a marvellous hooker, scrum half Mickey Booth, that young veteran flanker Peter Ford who got his first England cap in 1964 aged 30 against Wales, and of course Mike Burton.

Nowadays we see Mike only in advertisements for a travel firm and after his long career he certainly "knows" a few places around the world. Pensioner's Clubs should Book with Burton for conducted tours, it might finish some off but they'll go with a smile. Mike must have said "I told you so" when he heard of the goings-on in Australia lately, for he suffered on that England trip Down Under, a country famous for surfing, cricket, kangaroos and sheep, but not rugby referees.

A Gloucester side without Burton is like the Forest of Dean without trees but the club's continued success in England indicates their strength in depth and genuine love of the game in what is certainly the only true rugby stronghold in that country.

Earlier on we mentioned club colours and there seems to be conflicting explanations why Ebbw Vale changed pre-war from black and amber to red, green and white. Some say it was because several other Gwent Clubs favoured black and amber in the fashion of Newport, in those days the top club in the county. Others recall a great Ebbw Valian, Dai Regan Jones, who was a regular soldier who played for Leicester whose colours he fancied for his home team. The military minded point out that Dai Regan was a South Wales Borderer and the 24th of Foot's colours are those of Wales itself, red white and green.

There the case rests for the moment awaiting more witnesses with more evidence or confirmation of one or other of the views given. Perhaps we wanted to be different from Newport, perhaps Leicester influenced the design or PERHAPS we now wear colours in honour of the defenders of Rorke's Drift. Perhaps someone will have the true story. Thirteen years ago Wilf Hunt must have thought himself at Rorke's Drift when he was the last line of defence against Gloucester. Tonight we look for more adventure and certainly a better result than 6 - 9, more like the Charge of the Light Brigade perhaps only with a happier ending. In this month we will have opposed last season's Whitbread Welsh Merit Table winners (Maesteg) and Welsh Champions (Pontypridd) and tonight the 1977-78 John Player Cup holders Gloucester. Whatever happens we won't be short of cigarettes.

R.E.L.

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