

SWALEC Finals Preview

By Chris Kirwan



SWALEC Bowl Holders Senghennydd RFC

THE WAIT is almost over for six teams that are 80 minutes away from Millennium Stadium glory.

Last night would have been a restless one for the players of Pontypridd, Cross Keys, Penallta, Nant Conwy, New Tredegar and Glyncoch.

This evening three of them will be toasting the most magnificent of days at the home of Welsh rugby; three of them will be drowning their sorrows.

The SWALEC Cup pits two of the country's top performers against each other – Pontypridd finished first in the Premiership while Cross Keys made it to the final of the British & Irish Cup.

Ponty are looking to keep the trophy that they won against Aberavon a year ago while Keys have never made it to this stage before. In fact, the Gwent side had never made it to ANY final in their 127-year history before the British & Irish Cup showdown with Munster A that they lost last weekend.

It promises to be a feisty encounter between two notoriously tough packs and there are plenty of strike runners in both sets of three-quarters.

It is a battle that is tough to call – a statement that is equally appropriate for the two encounters before it.

Penallta's disappointment at being pipped to the Division Two East title would be swiftly forgotten if they can overcome Nant Conwy in the Plate final.

The Pitmen ended hopes of an all-north Wales final when they added Bethesda to the scalps of Rhydyfelin, Ynysybwl, Senghennydd and Maesteg Quins.

But they will know how tough the final will be given that the side that edged them out of the title race, Ystrad Rhondda was knocked out by Nant in the last four.

The Division One North side caused an upset thanks to a magnificent defensive display in a nervy 9-3 win against Ystrad Rhondda.

If they can repeat that mixture of tenacity and discipline once more then they will fancy their chances of providing a northern home for the Plate.

Normally a side from Division Four East would be overwhelming favourites against a club from Six Central but Glyncoch's remarkable season means that New Tredegar will be anxious ahead of the Bowl final.

They have yet to taste defeat this season on their way to the title and were impressive victors against Four East high-flyers Talywain in the semi-finals.

That performance that leaves New Tredegar, who have not played on their own patch on their way to the final, knowing they will have to be at their best.

There is little danger of either side leaving anything in the tank as they get a fascinating afternoon of rugby up and running.



SWALEC Plate Final 2012

Millennium Stadium, Kick-Off 14:45



Nant Conwy RFC v Penallta RFC



Carwyn ap Myrddin	15	Seb Toms
Aeron Jones	14	Steven Davies
Euros Jones	13	Andrew Jenkins
Emrys Evans	12	Joe Merriman
Gethin Ilan Jones	11	Aaron Humphries
Owain Jones	10	Jon Wright
Ifan Jones	9	Chris Thomas
Elgan Davies (C)	1	Martyn Dunne
Wyn Roberts	2	Greg Haines
James Jones	3	Kieron Mahoney (C)
Iolo Hughes	4	Lee Rowlands
Carwyn Roberts	5	Rhys Clarke
Rhys Jones	6	Ross Morgan
Eryl Jones	7	Rhys Silcox
Carwyn Ellis	8	Gavin Jones

Replacements

Robin Glyn	16	Lloyd Bridges
Gareth Jones	17	Luke Purnell
Elgan Metcalfe	18	Lucas Edwards
Sion Jones	19	Gavin Spiller
Robin Davies	20	Andre Soroko
Osian Roberts	21	Lee Thomas
Iolan Davies	22	Gareth Edwards

Referee: Greg Morgan

AR1: Simon Rees AR2: Jason Langdon AR3: Mike Davies

We remind supporters to remain silent as an act of courtesy while all goal kicks are taking place.

(iii) If after (i) and (ii) have been applied there is no winner, 20 minutes extra time (10 minutes each way) will be played and the winners declared as in (a) or (b) (i) and (ii)

(iv) If the Clubs are still level after extra time and (i) and (ii) have been applied the trophy will be shared



Nant Conwy RFC

Amersau da

Gan Ifor Glyn



Sefydlwyd Clwb Rygbi Nant Conwy bron i dri deg mlynedd yn ôl a dathlwyd y chwarter canrif mewn llyfryn a olygwyd gan un o chwaraewyr cyntaf y Clwb, sef Eryl Owain. O ystyried y dechrau hwnnw mewn ardal wledig oedd heb unrhyw fath o draddodiad mewn rygbi – pêl droed oedd yn cael ei addysgu yn ysgolion y cylch, mae'n syndod gweld fel y bu i'r Clwb ddatblygu tros y blynyddoedd.

Yn Medi 2011, agorwyd y Clwb Cymdeithasol newydd gan y Prifardd Myrddin ap Dafydd, sgoriwr cais cyntaf erioed Nant Conwy!

O fod yn Glwb gyda'r chwaraewyr yn newid mewn ceir neu siediau ffermydd yn y dechreuad erbyn hyn, rhedir y Clwb gan Gwmni Cyfyngedig trwy warant gyda'r cwmni yn eiddo ar y safle cymunedol hwn sy'n gwasanaethu ardal wledig o gwmpas 740 milltir sgwâr! Erbyn hyn, mae'r cyfleusterau'n werth i'w gweld diolch o gymorthdaliadau gan asiantaethau megis URC, Cyngor BS Conwy a ' Moelogan 2'.

Pleser oedd cael chwarae yn Stadiwm y Mileniwm yn y flwyddyn 2000 pan ymddangoswyd yn rownd derfynol Cwpan y Rhanbarthau fel y gellid y gwstadleuath y nvd hwnnw. Bvdd dau o'r

Bu'r blynyddoedd diwethaf yn rhai llwyddiannus iawn i'r Clwb – eithriad yn wir yw cael tymor heb dlws o gwbl a llwyddwyd i gwblhau'r dwbl (Cynghrair a Chwpan y Gogledd) deirgwaith tros y blynyddoedd.

Gorffennwyd yn ail yn Adran 1 y Gogledd eleni fel y llynedd ond enillwyd Cwpan y Gogledd am y chweched tro'r flwyddyn ddiwethaf. Eleni ym Mhlât SWALEC y daeth y llwyddiant mwyaf. Amser a ddengys ai eleni fydd y tymor y bydd tîm o'r Gogledd yn ennill y tlws arbennig hwn am y tro cyntaf erioed.

Yng ngeiriau'r capten Elgan Davies – *"Diddorol fydd gweld yr ornest rhwng TEIRW DUON Nant Conwy yn erbyn TEIRW'R GLODDFA o Benallta."*

Hoffai'r hyfforddwr, Elwyn Williams fynegi: *"Rydym yn gwerthfawrogi cyfraniad llu mawr o bobl o'r gynuned am gefnogaeth a'r gwaith caled gwirfodol dros y clwb. Boed i bawb fwynhau'r diwrnod hanesyddol hwn yng Nghaerdydd".*



Penallta RFC

Unfinished business

by Jon Owen



Penallta RFC have some unfinished business in this year's SWALEC Plate Final. Back in 2001, their opponents this afternoon, Nant Conwy, defeated them in the semi-finals of the Welsh Districts Cup to deprive them of a Millennium Stadium place. The pain from that loss drove them on the following year to lift the Cup, overpowering Beaufort RFC, but the memories of the day persist.

Wayne Jones, the club's secretary for the last 22 years and a former scrum-half at the club, was present 11 years ago, however he says he is now motivated by a new generation of players more interested in creating their own legacy, namely to bring silverware home to Ystrad Fawr. *"What is most pleasing this year is that we have such a young squad and most of them have come up through the mini and junior ranks. We're a family club based on a community spirit and that's an achievement to be proud of."*

According to Jones, there will be tumbleweed on the streets of Ystrad Mynach during the final, who reckons the village is emptying en masse. *"The fans are getting very excited. We'll be travelling down*

proper family day out before heading back to the club for a big party in the evening."

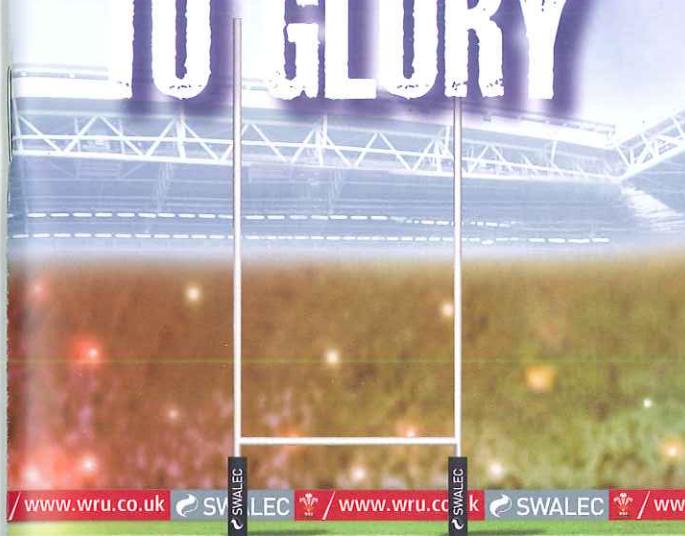
Penallta's route to the final was impressive. After beating three local teams in Rhydyfelin (25-28), Ynysybwl (32-9), and Senghenydd (22-3), they faced Maesteg Quins in the quarter-finals.

"Beating a Quins side 18-8 gave us a huge lift because they'd been in such an exceptional run. Mind you, we saved our best till last in the semi-final against Bethesda overcoming them 30-3 in our finest performance of the season."

Jones believes the Pitmen will have to step up another gear to defeat Nant Conwy today. *"We'll need to be at our best. Nant beat Plate favourites Ystrad Rhondda in the semi-final, so we'll have to be on our mettle to come away with a result. I'm expecting them to push us all they way."*

Penallta, who have already been promoted from SWALEC Division 2 East, are currently celebrating their 60th anniversary but Jones says a final win would represent a seasonal highlight. *"So far, we have exceeded expectations so to be primed for an appearance at the Millennium Stadium is just the*

FROM GRASSROOTS TO GLORY



 **SWALEC BOWL FINAL**
GLYNCOCH v NEW TREDEGAR RFC
KICK-OFF 12:30

 **SWALEC PLATE FINAL**
NANT CONVY RFC v PENALLTA RFC
KICK-OFF 14:45

 **SWALEC CUP FINAL**
PONTYPRIDD RFC v CROSS KEYS RFC
KICK-OFF 5:00

Monday 7th May, 2012

Official Programme: £2

