

# The Oval Zone

The rugby magazine for North and Mid Wales - Issue 41, 24 December, 2014



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## Comment

A Merry Christmas to all readers and I hope you have a happy and successful 2015.

A big thank you to all of you who have kindly sent in news, reports and pictures throughout the first half of this season, I couldn't do this without you.

If you've not contributed in the past and you're thinking of making some New Year's resolutions, please include on your list 'sending some news from my club during 2015'! All contributions will be gratefully received.

Here's to 2015! Best wishes

*Gary*

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# The trials and tribulations of being a junior rugby coach



**Junior/Mini coach, Barry Williams, highlights some of the problems that are faced when coaching youngsters**

Here are two scenarios that will likely resonate with anyone who has coached mini rugby.

First, the Under 8 who is bored of tag, who is bigger or quicker than his or her peers, and frustrated by not being able to move on to contact. You sympathise, but what can you do? They're an Under 8, therefore they play tag. You hope they'll stick at it and still be around the following season, but you worry that they'll drift away, lost to the game before they've even had a chance to really get into it.

And second, the Under 9 who just isn't ready for contact yet. There's all sorts of reason why that might be the case – maybe they're small for their age and worried about getting hurt. Maybe they have developmental or emotional issues that mean they just can't handle contact rugby yet. You sympathise, but what can you do? They're an Under 9, therefore they play contact rugby.

You hope they'll persevere, you encourage them, pay special attention to them in training, and don't rush them into games. They

miss training one week, and then another, and you worry that the lack of suitable game time has begun to frustrate them, that you won't see them again, and they too will be lost to the game before they've had a chance to get into it.

It's widely accepted that children develop at different rates, yet rugby insists on a 'one size fits all' approach that costs the game participants every season, and not just in the Under 8/9 transition. All the way through the Pathway, players are lost through an approach that focuses on when someone is born above their level of development.

But perhaps there is a better way, one that can help ensure the development and enjoyment of every young player at a level they are comfortable with.

One often mentioned example is the New Zealand model of grouping players based upon weight, rather than age.

Whilst this is primarily used to ensure that young Polynesian players, who are often much larger than other children their age, are

not allowed to dominate games, it is not without its flaws.

There is plenty of anecdotal evidence of players starving themselves to drop weight to allow them to play alongside their friends, and physical size is not necessarily matched by emotional development or skill levels - an 11 year old who is taller than his peers and may have weight issues could end up playing alongside players two or three years older than himself, and would find himself outmatched in terms of skill, experience and speed, which would be hugely dispiriting.

Even within New Zealand, this system is not in force throughout the country, suggesting that whilst it may work for specific situations, it is not an ideal situation.

In my opinion, our current system could easily be modified to better meet the needs of young players by giving coaches more say on what level their players are capable, or not capable, of playing at.

Take the first of the two scenarios I outlined at the beginning of this article. In this case, a coach would be able to apply for that player to be allowed to participate in Under 9s fixtures. They would have to justify the request, citing why the player's needs would be better met by being allowed to play contact rugby, and the player would be assessed by a WRU Development Officer, who would need to

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***I feel like I've failed this child, that there must have been something else I could have done, but what more could I have done?***

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## FEATURE: JUNIOR RUGBY COACHING

be satisfied that the request was in the best interests of the player, and not just a case of a club trying to rush a player up to help get out a team at the older age group.

At every other age group, players are allowed to play for the age above, and this shouldn't change – one year up is quite enough for any player, regardless of their size or ability.

The same process would take place in regards to the second scenario, and should the Development Officer be satisfied that the request was justified, a licence would be granted to allow that player to continue playing tag rugby for an additional season, and this licence would need to be shown to the opposition before any fixture the player took part in. The player would still be permitted to play Under 9s rugby if they wanted, but would be able to make that jump when they felt ready.

These licences would have to be renewed each season, and any repeat requests would have to show what steps the club had taken to try and bring the player up

to the 'correct' level, and what they were planning to do in the future to continue this process.

Here are a few examples from my own coaching experience that I feel highlight why this more flexible approach would be beneficial across the board.

I'll start with an Under 10s player. He doesn't lack for skill or courage, but is very small for his age, and often finds himself being physically outmatched even at his own age group. He's always keen to play for the Under 11s too, but both his coach and his parents worry that he'll get hurt. For him, being able to play for the Under 9s instead would be far more beneficial, as he would be able to develop his skills in a more suitable physical environment.

Next, an Under 11s player who lacks the confidence to play at his own age group. He trains every week, but always gravitates towards the Under 10s when it's time to work on contact skills. He gets invited to every Under 11s fixture, but the response from mum is always the same – he



enjoys the training, but doesn't feel confident playing in matches. If he could play for the Under 10s, he'd be much happier, and surely enjoyment is what it's all about?

And finally, the player who inspired me to write this article. He was an Under 8 last season, and loved playing tag rugby. In the back of my mind, I felt that he would struggle in the early part of the season with the step up to contact rugby, and was worried that he wouldn't come back at all this season knowing that he would have to play contact.

He did come back, but it was obvious from the off that he felt ill at ease – he would avoid making tackles, or being in a position to be tackled, whenever possible. Like any coach would do, I factored this into my sessions, hoping to gradually build his confidence with activities that would allow him to develop at his own pace. Then, one week, he wasn't at training. One week became two, which became three, then came a text from his parents – he's not enjoying it any more, thanks for all you've done, bye.

I feel like I've failed this child, that there must have been something else I could have done, but what more could I have done?

So, how can I make sure that I don't have to fail another child somewhere along the line?

If you have a view please email [gwcymru1@aol.com](mailto:gwcymru1@aol.com) - many thanks

Barry Williams is Junior Academy Director at Welshpool RFC and a guest writer for The Oval Zone





# New RGC interim head coach Phil Davies impressed by North Wales potential

Following report kindly supplied by Rob Griffiths, Daily Post

Potential was a key word for Phil Davies as he spoke about his new role as RGC interim head coach, while he also heaped praise on a 'committed' group of players.

Davies will be in charge of his first RGC match this Saturday after taking over from Chris Horsman, who has left for a new role as one of three international skills coaches with the WRU.

With a long and impressive CV as a player and coach, Davies will bring a vast array of skills and experience to the role in North Wales as he looks to help out at the region until the end of the season.

Davies insists he is not here to rip up the coaching manual with RGC but instead simply tweek a number of areas which he feels can help the players to continue in their development.

Having played a role in helping to establish the blueprint for rugby in the region, Davies has an affinity with North Wales, and is relishing the chance to play even a small role in their history.

"They have progressed exceptionally well, I remember coming up at the end of last season and speaking to Chris and Josh (Leach – assistant coach) on what had gone on and doing a bit of a review with them," said Davies yesterday on his first official day in the role.

"In 2008 I came here, and I have always spoken to Peredur Jenkins (former District J chairman) about North Wales rugby and always believed there was a huge potential.

"To see what has happened since then is fantastic. Obviously Rupert (Moon – RGC general manager) and I go back a long way, we have played most of our rugby together, and it was an opportunity to help him and help the players and support them until the end of the season.

"There are some times I can make games and other games I can't and there are times I will be here in the week coaching and supporting Josh and the players, I think we have got all bases covered.

"It is a great opportunity, I love coaching and I love being involved with teams and hopefully I can make a positive impact and help them develop on what has been here with Clive Griffiths and Damian McGrath and the great work that Chris has done. It



is about carrying on that philosophy and trying to develop bits and pieces which will help the team move forward while maintaining the RGC philosophy."

Davies' first game in the hot seat will come on Saturday as RGC travel to take on bottom of the Championship Newbridge.

The former Leeds boss was mindful not to set any targets for his side, but simply for them to live up to the huge potential he sees.

He added: "I came up here earlier in the season and I watched them in training on the Tuesday and Wednesday and did a session with them on the Thursday when Chris was away on game management.

"But there are some good players here, some good young players and also some good experienced players as well, but also some players who have been imported like Tallis (Karaitiana). So there is a good balance to the team. It is a case of keep developing and keep supporting the team and trying to develop the balance and getting the best of them.

"It will be interesting, it is a good opportunity for everybody, there is a bit of freshness there as well for the last part of the season, the last 16 games of the season and we want to do as best as we can to create momentum to have a strong second half of the season and build into next season.

"I know RGC are looking to get as high as

they can as a side, whether that is as a regional side or in the Premiership, they are looking to climb the ladder, but that is pipedreams for the longer term. What we want to do at the moment is be the best we can be week in week out.

"At the moment our task is to climb above Cardiff Met who are above us by a point, to try and get above them and then whoever is above us after that and get above them and trying to keep building and developing, not putting pressure on the players, we just want to get them to be the best they can be.

"They are a very skillful team and we want to keep working on those skills and manage the game effectively, and also try to get them as fit as we can, along with getting them to enjoy it, because at the end of the day they are semi-professional or amateur and they work and they want to come here and enjoy themselves, and that is the important thing.

"I have worked at this level with Leeds many moons ago and more recently with Cardiff RFC, and it is about the boys having a bit of fun, but there is a serious element to it as well.

"I don't think there is a more committed team in the Championship than these players, because some of them travel more than two hours to training and then they travel four to five hours every other week down to South Wales to play matches so this is the most committed bunch of players in the league."



Following report kindly supplied by Scott Lawson, RGC News

### Tough One To Take

The only word to describe the 1 point defeat to Cardiff Met would be "Gutted" as RGC outscored the students on the try count 4 to 2.

Head Coach Chris Horsman was once again left feeling disappointed in the close loss "It was pleasing to outscore Cardiff Met 4 tries to 2, and also to pick up 2 bonus points. The game was played under difficult conditions with the officiating and the interpretation of the offside line on the breakdown"

As expected the game was played at a frantic pace with the home side starting more brightly and went 5 nil up with a try from full-back Chris Leversley. The try came from a turnover in the breakdown and RGC looked slow on occasions in the breakdown area.

The students were looking pretty dangerous with the ball in hand and the pace of Leversley and centre Emerson Bessel were causing the Gogs defence problems.

RGC were not really in the game, but they were brought to life with a great try from Alex Schwarz. The scrum half exchanged passes with Carwyn Ap Myrddin and sprinted over the line for the score.

From the kick off the Gogs put themselves under pressure again when a wayward pass from Tom Blackwell ended up behind the in-goal area. From the resulting scrum Cardiff Met were awarded a penalty which was hit by Owen Thomas. The boot of Thomas nailed another penalty.

Kelvin Davies was making some big tackles, as the Cardiff Met side pushed on for a second try, but the RGC captain was doing everything to stop them.

The Gogs answered back with a penalty from the boot of Rhodri Carlton Jones to keep the board ticking over.

RGC were struggling to gain any momentum as time and time again they were finding the referees whistle going against them. It was difficult to see why they were being punished from the touchline and the frustration was building both on and off the pitch.

Fly-half Thomas kicked his 3rd penalty as once again the referees whistle went with the homeside during the breakdown area.

Matters were made worse when Captain Kelvin Davies was sin-binned for persistent infringements, which looked pretty unlucky considering the homeside were going unpunished for being offside on a number of occasions.

RGC dug deep with the 14 men and James Lang made great run to chase

## Saturday, 18th October

# Cardiff Met 28 v RGC 27

down his own kick, and the Gogs took some inspiration from that play. Hooker Andy Baston made a big break through the Met defence and after the ball was recycled it fell to Harri Evans to run in at the corner. Carlton-Jones hit the conversation for a 15-14 half time lead.

As the second half went on RGC were feeling more aggrieved in the breakdown area when they were being punished yet the home side were looking offside on a number of occasions. It wasn't a surprise when the students took the lead from another penalty. It was clear that Cardiff Met were using the pick and go as a tactic, and hoping the referees whistle would then go in their favour.

RGC on the other hand were still looking for the try and it came after some patient phase play before Carlton-Jones spotted a gap to zip through for the touchdown.

Even after 60 minutes the game was being played at a high tempo and Cardiff Met got their 2nd try in the corner to retake the lead. That lead was extended by another 2 penalties from Thomas as the referees decisions at the breakdown area continued to go against the Gogs. To make matters worse Kelvin Davies was given his second yellow after he was adjudged to put in a high tackle, and RGC faced being 28-20 down, with 14 men, and 10 mins to go.

As in the 1st half they didn't let the man disadvantage hamper them, and replacement scrum-half Cam Davies worked the ball to Carwyn Ap Myrddin who ran in behind the posts for a bonus point try. Carlton-Jones converted to make it 28-27 to the homeside. The momentum was with RGC and from the restart when it looked as though Cardiff Met knocked on but it wasn't given, and with that the game was lost.





Following report kindly supplied by Rob Griffiths, Daily Post

### Chris Horsman: RGC weren't good enough in first half against Swansea

RGC chief bemoans first half and claims his side weren't clinical enough as RGC crash to 39-17 defeat at the weekend

'We weren't at the races in the opening 40 minutes' was the honest answer from RGC head coach Chris Horsman when asked to sum up his side's disappointing defeat at the hands of Swansea on Saturday.

RGC went down to a 39-17 loss at Parc Eirias as Swansea claimed a bonus point victory to stay in second place in the standings, while the home side – who failed to claim a solitary point from a game for the first time this term – dropped to fifth place.

Swansea ran in first half tries from Nicky Thomas, Scott Maynard, Mike Sully and Marc Bennett-Jones to lead 26-10 at the interval, a try from Kelvin Davies, converted by Rhodri Carlton-Jones, who also slotted a penalty RGC's only reward for a difficult half.

Carlton-Jones converted Afon Bagshaw's try after the interval but a Jedd Evans try and two penalties from Thomas, who also kicked four conversions settled the win.

RGC v Swansea, Swalec Championship Rugby, Eirias Park, Colwyn Bay: RGC centre Danny Cross is tackled short of the Swansea try line. RGC v Swansea, Swalec Championship Rugby, Eirias Park, Colwyn Bay: RGC centre Danny Cross is tackled short of the Swansea try line.

And while RGC put in a vastly improved performance after the break, it was their opening contribution that put paid to any hopes of claiming victory over a side who came down from the Premiership last season.

"It was a difficult one to take," said Horsman. "I think they deserved the win, it was disappointing, particularly the first half performance.

"We stood off them a little bit which is the disappointing thing, I think the second half performance was a lot better. We spoke about a couple of areas we needed to address at half time and I think the boys played well, but I think the first half we just weren't at the races.

"Sometimes I think it is difficult to put your finger on why, but to be fair to them (Swansea), they were clinical and they took their tries well. They got their opportunities and they did well, we did create a few in the first half but we weren't clinical

## Saturday, 25th October

# RGC 17 v Swansea 39

enough to take those opportunities, second half was better but realistically with that wind it was always going to be a difficult to get the result."

Horsman has been a difficult coach to please during his tenure, constantly setting high standards for the players to follow.

Win or lose Horsman has always focused on the performance of his charges and whether they can improve their game by even the smallest of margins as he continues to help develop the game within the region.

And that is why he was especially deflated by the manner of the loss, adding it was tough to find too many positives from the loss.

RGC v Swansea, Swalec Championship Rugby, Eirias Park, Colwyn Bay: RGC's forward James Jones in action against Swansea. RGC v Swansea, Swalec Championship Rugby, Eirias Park, Colwyn Bay: RGC's forward James Jones in action against Swansea.

The former Wales international added: "It is difficult, because it is the first game you can say we were beaten, we didn't lose it, and that is credit to Swansea.

"The boys have got to learn the lessons from it. You can see they (Swansea) have got some Premiership quality there, they are organised and street-wise and perhaps we lacked that bit of intensity and edge that we normally have especially in the first half but I thought the second half, the response was good and even in the second half we blew a couple of opportu-

nities again, and just a very disappointing performance.

"I don't think they are that much better than us, I think we showed in patches we are as good as them and the second half it was predominantly all us.

"I can put my finger on a few areas where we let ourselves down, the contact area we weren't quick enough, the first half we were breaking them getting down to their 22 and they were turning us over. We highlighted it in the week, we said it was an area where we needed to be on the top of our game, but instead of being pro-active in that area we had to wait until half time and be reactive, but that was disappointing.

"But I can't fault these guys for effort, and how they came back for commitment and came back in the second half, but ultimately the game of rugby is 80 minutes it's not 40 minutes and the quality sides if we give them a lead it is going to be difficult to claw them back."

RGC will look to hit back in next Saturday's game at Tata Steel.

Horsman added: "It is easy to pick them up, they are learning as a group, we are all learning as a group, so you don't need to give them the hair dryer as such, this group of players you have to direct them and show them the mistakes or the areas we weren't efficient in and we have to improve on them and learn from them and that is what we will do in the week.

"We go down to Tata Steel and we are confident we will go down there and put in the performance and get the result."







Following report kindly supplied by Will Morecombe, RGC Team Mabager

Saturday, 1st November

### Tata Too Much

RGC suffered yet another narrow loss, their 4th by 7 points or less this season, and again as in the previous losses it was a case of what might have been.

Tata started the brighter and were rewarded with the first points of the afternoon from a penalty kick. However it was RGC who looked to have crossed the whitewash first when following a break from scrum-half Cameron Davies, swift recycling of the ball gave Richard Hopkins the chance to dive over in the corner. Unfortunately the referee ruled the score out, adjudging Hopkins to have dropped the ball as he crossed the line and the opening try when it did come, came from the home side.

A scrum 40 metres out wheeled slightly to the left and allowing the Tata NO 8 to break to the right and he put into space his right wing who sprinted in from 30 metres. With the extras being added the hosts lead was extended to 10 points to nil and

although shortly before half-time Rhodri Carlton-Jones put RGC on the scoreboard with a well-taken penalty, a half-time deficit of 10 points to 3 meant that there was plenty for the players and coaches to discuss during the break.

Early in the second half a 7 point deficit turned into a 14 point one when dropped ball in midfield fell into the arms of the fastest player on the pitch, the Tata right-wing and he gobbled up the opportunity to score his second try of the game. To their credit rather than drop their heads this spurred on the RGC side to up their game and a second Rhodri Carlton-Jones penalty made the score 17-6 in the home sides favour.

With the RGC pack beginning to get on top, further scoring opportunities began to be created but dogged defence from the home side meant that it was not until

5 minutes from the end that this pressure was turned into points. A break from the ever dangerous Andy Baston gave Richard Hopkins the try scoring opportunity and he beat the last defender to score to the right of the posts. Rhodri Carlton-Jones adding the extras.

Almost straight from the restart as RGC sought to run the ball from deep they were penalised slightly controversially and from the resulting penalty Tata extended their lead to 7 points. With 2 minutes left RGC knew they had to gain the ball from the restart and although they were successful in so doing they again lost possession in the home sides half allowing the ball to be cleared from the Dangerzone. The game ended in frustration for the visitors as they were penalised at a lineout on the final play of the day.

## Barbarians cap is pinnacle of my career says RGC lock Bryn Williams

Still beaming with pride, Bryn Williams does not believe he will be able to top running out in Barbarians colours as the pinnacle of his rugby career.

At 32 Williams is one of the elder statesmen in the RGC ranks, the big second-row along with winger Richard Hopkins the only members of the squad over 30.

So Tuesday night's run out in the Baa-baas' 31-15 win over the Combined Services at Bath's Memorial Ground is rightly his proudest moment on a rugby field so far. And at his age Williams admits it might be difficult to top the experience of such a privilege.

"Absolutely, I don't think I will top that," said the former Colwyn Bay lock. "It was a massive honour and I am immensely proud to be asked or invited to play for the Barbarians because some of the best players in world rugby have worn that shirt in the past and it is a massive privilege."

One of a few who bought into RGC as a concept from its inception many years ago, Williams is being rewarded for his efforts and enjoying the fruits of his labour with the North Wales outfit.

Williams, along with hooker Andy Baston and centre Harri Evans, were all invited to play in the Remembrance Match at the home of Premiership outfit Bath. He added: "I think it (RGC) has put us in the shop window a bit more, especially North Wales players.



Report and picture by North Wales Daily Post

"You only have to look at Harri (Evans) playing for the Wales under-20s and he's about to go off with Wales Sevens and it just massively has put us on the map in North Wales.

"Something like this is just huge for us in North Wales.

"I never imagined I'd get to play for the Barbarians. When I came home last week and told my family and my partner it was amazing. I was absolutely gob smacked, just so shocked when I found out, and it took a while to sink in. It was just a brilliant few days and something I will always cherish."



Following report kindly supplied by Scott Lawson, RGC News

Saturday, 6th December

# RGC 38 v Bridgend Ath 18

## Back To Winning Ways

RGC gave departing Head Coach Chris Horsman a performance to be proud of with a 38 – 8 victory against Bridgend Athletic.

The homeside started brightly as they looked for that early score at Eirias. Afon Bagshaw burst through the defence to go over. The visitors hit back with a penalty soon after to get them back in the game.

It was James Lang who next got the crowd on their feet with a barnstorming run crashing through some Bridgend tackles to get the score with a Carlton-Jones conversion adding the extras.

RGC were playing some good rugby spreading the ball around with Grundy and Loots looking to run with the ball.

It was the Bridgend winger Rhys Ward Jones who looked dangerous with a kick and chase that tested the RGC backline.

When it comes to wingers scoring tries, it was no surprise to the Eirias crowd when Carwyn Ap Myrddin ran over in the corner with some quick feet outrunning the defence.

As the half-time whistle approached the away side got a vital score with Dan Howells claiming the try and the score at 17-8.

The momentum was with Bridgend for big spells of the 2nd half as they pressed on the RGC line. The Gogs defence worked hard time and time again as Bridgend came up short. It was a breakaway try by

Tom Seddon that claimed the bonus point as the centre ran through. Carlton-Jones converted.

More pressure was piled on RGC but once again the defence had all the answers, with RGC putting bodies on the line. After soaking up the attacks RGC hit Bridgend with 2 late tries from Afon Bagshaw who picked up a hatrick today.

To run in 6 tries and put in a strong defensive effort for the 80 minutes sets RGC up for the next stage of the season



*Pictures by Alan Skeates*



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Following report kindly supplied by Scott Lawson, RGC News

RGC gave the Eirias crowd an early Christmas present with a 25-18 victory against Merthyr in a tough encounter.

#### Big Win at Ho Ho Home for RGC

The Gogs started brightly with Tian Loots and Andy Baston both making some good breaks to the delight of the home crowd. Cameron Davies was next to make a dart through some tackles before the back got involved with a driving maul.

The first score went on the board after 18 minutes when Rhodri Carlton-Jones kicked a penalty. The visitors went down to 14 men when Matthew Rhys was yellow carded but they managed to get some points on the board with a penalty from Steve Lang.

RGC then capitalised on a mistake on the Merthyr lineout when Mei Parry picked up the ball and charged from the half-way line breaking through the tackles before offloading to Andy Baston for the try. Parry was soon to leave the field injured, but he made the difference for the first try.

The boot of Lang got the Merthyr back in the game with a big penalty from distance, but they weren't offering anything attack wise in the first half.

RGC were the team looking to run the ball and after another break from Cameron

Saturday, 20th December

# RGC 25 v Merthyr 18

Davies they went close with Maredydd Francis being held up on the line. It wasn't long before the line was broken when Harri Evans ran in for the score just before half time. The fact RGC went for the tap penalty showed the intent of the players to go for the try and it was fully deserved based on the play in the first half.

The second half started with an impressive barnstorming run from Shaun O'Rourke who couldn't be stopped as he went over the line. O'Rourke was one of many players who carried the ball well today, and the gain-line break stats should make good reading.

The referee made it a 14 man game when he yellow carded Evan Yardley and Martin Luckwell.

It looked like RGC had scored the best try of the game when Loots and Huw Grundy combined to blast through but to the surprise of the crowd the referee hauled them back for a penalty.

It was another try made out of nothing that gave the Gogs the bonus point when Afon Bagshaw kicked on a loose ball and chased it down to go over to the delight of the Eirias crowd. Carlton-Jones added the extra. The RGC fullback showed pace, re-

silience and good hands to get the score.

The referees whistle was playing a major part in the game for the last 60 minutes as the penalty count racked up. The home side were being penalised at the break-down on a number of occasions which hampered the flow of the side. Andrew Williams was given a yellow and the visitors picked up some momentum with 2 tries in the last 10 minutes of the game but RGC had done more than enough for the win over the 80 minutes.

RGC News caught up with Assistant Coach Josh Leach

"We have worked on a couple of things over the past few weeks and we looked to tidy up on a few areas. It was good to see that preparation pay off on the field today. We were solid in defence for 60 minutes but after being 25-6 up it was disappointing not to close out the game. We have to build on this win and tidy up a few more things for the Pontypool game including what we do with the ball in attack. That said it was a big win for us today and even more pleasing to pick up 5 points."



# RYGBI GOGLEDD CYMRU



# SWALEC/WRU CHAMPIONSHIP FIXTURES 2014-15

06/09/2014

Cardiff Met v Swansea  
Bargoed v Pontypool  
Glynneath v Tata Steel  
Llanharan v Merthyr  
Narberth v Bridgend Ath  
Tondy v Newbridge  
Blackwood v RGC 1404

13/09/2014

RGC 1404 v Bargoed  
Tata Steel v Cardiff Met  
Pontypool v Llanharan  
Bridgend Ath v Glynneath  
Merthyr v Tondy  
Newbridge v Narberth  
Swansea v Blackwood

20/09/2014

Llanharan v RGC 1404  
Swansea v Tata Steel  
Cardiff Met v Bridgend Ath  
Tondy v Pontypool  
Glynneath v Newbridge  
Narberth v Merthyr  
Blackwood v Bargoed

27/09/2014

RGC 1404 v Tondy  
Bridgend Ath v Swansea  
Bargoed v Llanharan  
Newbridge v Cardiff Met  
Pontypool v Narberth  
Merthyr v Glynneath  
Tata Steel v Blackwood

04/10/2014

Narberth v RGC 1404  
Swansea v Newbridge  
Tondy v Bargoed  
Tata Steel v Bridgend Ath  
Cardiff Met v Merthyr  
Glynneath v Pontypool  
Blackwood v Llanharan

11/10/2014

RGC 1404 v Glynneath  
Merthyr v Swansea  
Bargoed v Narberth  
Newbridge v Tata Steel  
Llanharan v Tondy  
Pontypool v Cardiff Met  
Bridgend Ath v Blackwood

18/10/2014

Cardiff Met v RGC 1404  
Swansea v Pontypool  
Tata Steel v Merthyr  
Narberth v Llanharan  
Bridgend Ath v Newbridge  
Glynneath v Bargoed  
Blackwood v Tondy

25/10/2014

RGC 1404 v Swansea  
Bargoed v Cardiff Met  
Pontypool v Tata Steel  
Llanharan v Glynneath  
Merthyr v Bridgend Ath  
Tondy v Narberth  
Newbridge v Blackwood

01/11/2014

Tata Steel v RGC 1404  
Swansea v Bargoed  
Cardiff Met v Llanharan  
Bridgend Ath v Pontypool  
Newbridge v Merthyr  
Glynneath v Tondy  
Blackwood v Narberth

06/12/2014

RGC 1404 v Bridgend Ath  
Llanharan v Swansea  
Bargoed v Tata Steel  
Tondy v Cardiff Met  
Pontypool v Newbridge  
Narberth v Glynneath  
Merthyr v Blackwood

13/12/2014

Newbridge v RGC 1404  
Swansea v Tondy  
Bridgend Ath v Bargoed  
Tata Steel v Llanharan  
Cardiff Met v Narberth  
Merthyr v Pontypool  
Blackwood v Glynneath

20/12/2014

RGC 1404 v Merthyr  
Narberth v Swansea  
Bargoed v Newbridge  
Tondy v Tata Steel  
Glynneath v Cardiff Met  
Llanharan v Bridgend Ath  
Blackwood v Pontypool

27/12/2014

Pontypool v RGC 1404  
Swansea v Glynneath  
Merthyr v Bargoed  
Tata Steel v Narberth  
Newbridge v Llanharan  
Bridgend Ath v Tondy  
Cardiff Met v Blackwood

03/01/2015

Swansea v Cardiff Met  
Pontypool v Bargoed  
Tata Steel v Glynneath  
Merthyr v Llanharan  
Bridgend Ath v Narberth  
Newbridge v Tondy  
RGC 1404 v Blackwood

17/01/2015

Bargoed v RGC 1404  
Cardiff Met v Tata Steel  
Llanharan v Pontypool  
Glynneath v Bridgend Ath  
Tondy v Merthyr  
Narberth v Newbridge  
Blackwood v Swansea

24/01/2015

RGC 1404 v Llanharan  
Tata Steel v Swansea  
Bridgend Ath v Cardiff Met  
Pontypool v Tondy  
Newbridge v Glynneath  
Merthyr v Narberth  
Bargoed v Blackwood

31/01/2015

Tondy v RGC 1404  
Swansea v Bridgend Ath  
Llanharan v Bargoed  
Cardiff Met v Newbridge  
Narberth v Pontypool  
Glynneath v Merthyr  
Blackwood v Tata Steel

07/02/2015

RGC 1404 v Narberth  
Newbridge v Swansea  
Bargoed v Tondy  
Bridgend Ath v Tata Steel  
Merthyr v Cardiff Met  
Pontypool v Glynneath  
Llanharan v Blackwood

14/02/2015

Glynneath v RGC 1404  
Swansea v Merthyr  
Narberth v Bargoed  
Tata Steel v Newbridge  
Tondy v Llanharan  
Cardiff Met v Pontypool  
Blackwood v Bridgend Ath

28/02/2015

RGC 1404 v Cardiff Met  
Pontypool v Swansea  
Merthyr v Tata Steel  
Llanharan v Narberth  
Newbridge v Bridgend Ath  
Bargoed v Glynneath  
Tondy v Blackwood

07/03/2015

Swansea v RGC 1404  
Cardiff Met v Bargoed  
Tata Steel v Pontypool  
Glynneath v Llanharan  
Bridgend Ath v Merthyr  
Narberth v Tondy  
Blackwood v Newbridge

28/03/2015 (SW Cup QF)

RGC 1404 v Tata Steel  
Bargoed v Swansea  
Llanharan v Cardiff Met  
Pontypool v Bridgend Ath  
Merthyr v Newbridge  
Tondy v Glynneath  
Narberth v Blackwood

04/04/2015

Bridgend Ath v RGC 1404  
Swansea v Llanharan  
Tata Steel v Bargoed  
Cardiff Met v Tondy  
Newbridge v Pontypool  
Glynneath v Narberth  
Blackwood v Merthyr

11/04/2015 (SW Cup SF)

RGC 1404 v Newbridge  
Tondy v Swansea  
Bargoed v Bridgend Ath  
Llanharan v Tata Steel  
Narberth v Cardiff Met  
Pontypool v Merthyr  
Glynneath v Blackwood

18/04/2015

Merthyr v RGC 1404  
Swansea v Narberth  
Newbridge v Bargoed  
Tata Steel v Tondy  
Cardiff Met v Glynneath  
Bridgend Ath v Llanharan  
Pontypool v Blackwood

25/04/2015

RGC 1404 v Pontypool  
Glynneath v Swansea  
Bargoed v Merthyr  
Narberth v Tata Steel  
Llanharan v Newbridge  
Tondy v Bridgend Ath  
Blackwood v Cardiff Met





**RGC v Merthyr**  
Photos by Alan Skeates







# NORTH/MID WALES RUGBY NEWS

All the latest news from around the region - please send your club news to [midwalesrugby@aol.com](mailto:midwalesrugby@aol.com)



## North Wales Intermediate Plate Draws

### Quarter and Semi Finals Matches

Intermediate Plate Quarter Final  
Preliminary Round losers and 1st Round Losers  
TO BE COMPLETED BY 17th JANUARY 2015

Q1 Bangor v Llanidloes - TBA  
Q2 Welshpool v Rhos - 14.01.15 7.30pm  
Q3 Newtown v Llangollen - 27.12.14 2.00pm  
Q4 Menai Bridge v Bye

Intermediate Plate Semi Finals  
Games to be played on Saturday, 14th February 2015, unless another date, prior to 14th February can be agreed upon by both Clubs.

Winner of Q2 (Welshpool or Rhos) v Menai Bridge  
Winner of Q1 (Bangor or Llanidloes) v Winner of Q3 (Newtown or Llangollen)

## North Wales Cup Competition Draws Made

Mouth watering matches to reach the Finals at Parc Eirias on Extravaganza Week End 2/3rd May.

The draw for the semi finals of the:

North Wales Senior Cup  
Rhuthin v Dolgellau or Bala  
Bethesda v Nant Conwy

North Wales Senior Plate  
Llangefni or Pwllheli v Mold  
Bro Ffestiniog v Colwyn Bay or Rhyl

North Wales Intermediate Cup  
Abergele v Wrexham or Menai Bridge  
Flint v Bangor or Harlech

NB

1. The above games to be played on Saturday, 14th February 2015, unless another date, prior to 14th February, can be agreed upon by both Clubs involved in that game.

2. The draw for the semi finals of North Wales Intermediate Plate will be distributed after 20th December.

@LlanidloesRFC  
**creative 7s**  
RUGBY  
**TOURNAMENT**  
SATURDAY 18th JULY 2015 | 10AM - 1AM

**WHAT'S ON?**  
U18s & SENIORS RUGBY 7s TOURNAMENT  
TUG OF WAR COMPETITION  
FORWARDS | WOMEN | JUNIORS  
'BATTLE OF THE BANDS'  
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LLANIDLOES RUGBY CLUB  
Coo Hafren | Newtown Rd | Llanidloes | Powys | SY18 6LQ

For more information contact  
Jordan at [creative7rugby@gmail.com](mailto:creative7rugby@gmail.com)

## RGC UNDER-16 FIXTURES

Check out the RGC Under-16 upcoming fixtures in the WRU Regional Age Grade Championship.

POOL A :  
BLUES SOUTH  
DRAGONS SOUTH...  
OSPREYS EAST  
SCARLETS EAST  
RGC CALON



Sunday 25th January - RGC Calon v Ospreys East  
Sunday 1st February - RGC Calon v Scarlets East  
Sunday 8th February - Blues South v RGC Calon  
Sunday 15th February - Dragons South v RGC Calon

POOL B :  
BLUES NORTH  
DRAGONS NORTH  
OSPREYS WEST  
SCARLETS WEST  
RGC BALCH

Sunday 18th January - RGC Balch v Dragons North  
Sunday 25th January - Scarlets West v RGC Balch  
Sunday 1st February - Ospreys West v RGC Balch  
Sunday 15th February - RGC Balch v Blues North



# NORTH/MID WALES RUGBY NEWS

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## RGC 1404 embrace wheelchair rugby team



The Rygi Gogledd Cymru wheelchair rugby team - formally the North Wales Dragons - celebrated their new name with a friendly against able-bodied rugby union namesake RGC 1404 tomorrow.

Since their move to Glyndwr University, which became their training ground earlier this year, the team have forged strong bonds with RGC 1404 and, following discussions with the Welsh Rugby Union's Rupert Moon and Marc Roberts - RGC General Manager and Performance Programme Manager respectively, decided to change their name and become GBWR's newest registered club.

The match celebrated the launch of the new team and took place at Colwyn Bay Leisure Centre ahead of RGC's SWALEC Championship match against Merthyr.

Moon said: "We are thrilled with this new partnership because it brings another team under the umbrella of RGC, growing our rugby family across North Wales and providing another opportunity for more people to play rugby in the area."

David Pond, GBWR Chief Executive, added: "This is great news for the growth and development of wheelchair rugby in North Wales. With ongoing support from RGC and Glyndwr University the team has been able to focus on expansion and on encouraging more people to participate in the sport."

"We're grateful to the Welsh Rugby Charitable Trust which has funded regional development work with the club and look forward to seeing the new RGC side competing at the highest level in the UK Wheelchair Rugby Super Series league in 2015."

An exciting fusion of ice hockey, handball and rugby,

wheelchair rugby was originally founded in Canada in 1977 and has been growing popularity around the world. It's not only based on physical speed and chair contact, but is also a highly tactical intelligent game to be involved in.

"With eight rolling substitutes making up squads of 12, with four players on court per team at any time, all with the aim of driving the ball across the opponents' goal line. Contact between wheelchairs is permitted, as players use their chairs to block and hold opponents. The emphasis of the sport is on fun, excitement and inclusion, particularly for players with higher levels of impairment."

Anyone that would like to find out more about the club, or to join as a member, can check out the GBWR website at: [www.gbwr.org.uk](http://www.gbwr.org.uk). Or contact Amanda Thomas at [Amanda.thomas@gbwr.org.uk](mailto:Amanda.thomas@gbwr.org.uk) (07950 545014) or Tony Stackhouse on 0770 1045576.

Picture includes WRU's Rupert Moon and Marc Roberts







## WRU launch anti-doping awareness campaign

The Welsh Rugby Union has launched a nationwide anti-doping information and awareness programme.

The campaign includes comprehensive online information ([wru.co.uk/antidoping](http://wru.co.uk/antidoping)) with clear advice to help inform players and support staff of the rules and regulations with regards to doping, including a new World Anti-Doping Code which comes into force on January 1. The web page includes links to help players check any medication and supplements they may be thinking of taking to ensure they are not on the prohibited substances list.

Wales captain Sam Warburton has produced a video message as part of the campaign, calling on everyone involved in the game in Wales to protect our sport so that every player has the right to compete with and against other clean players.

In the video he says, "As a Rugby Player you set goals to get to the highest levels, from turning out for your club to representing your Region and pulling on the Wales jersey at the Rugby World Cup.

"I know that every time I go on that field I have trained to my potential to reach these goals and that I have taken nothing I shouldn't have that has enhanced my performance. I

know my hard work in the gym and on the training field has made me the player I am."

All clubs, players and support personnel have been written to, to highlight the changes in the World Anti-Doping Code which come into effect on January 1 and include two additional Anti-Doping Rule Violations (ADRVs) along with greatly increased sanctions for breaching the Code.

There will be four year bans for cheating involving serious doping substances (eg steroids, growth hormone, EPO) and refusal or evading sample collection. The new ADRVs cover Complicity - helping another person to cover up an ADRV or avoid detection - and Prohibited Association - associating with a person such as a coach, doctor or physio who has been found guilty of a doping violation such as providing banned substances.

It is stressed in the letters issued this week that there is no room in the Code for carelessness or not knowing, and players are encouraged to check the prohibited lists, found via [wru.co.uk/antidoping](http://wru.co.uk/antidoping) which include over-the-shelf medication and supplements.

WRU Group Chief Executive Roger Lewis said, "The Welsh Rugby Union

takes anti-doping offences very seriously and condemns any violation of anti-doping rules. The WRU works closely with UK Anti-Doping (UKAD) and this important information campaign comes as a revised World Anti-Doping Code comes into effect as of January 1."

A key element of the campaign is to ask members of the Welsh rugby family and members of the public to help keep our strong rugby values in tact by reporting anyone who they suspect is involved in doping.

Warburton added, "Please speak out, protect our sport and help keep it clean by reporting it to the WRU or UK Anti-Doping."

The WRU advises all its National Squads on anti-doping and ensures the professional regions and semi-professional clubs fully educate their players of the UK anti-doping rules and regulations. Players who are on the international pathway also have to complete World Rugby's e-learning course.

As part of a wider campaign to increase awareness of anti-doping rules and regulations, the national governing body is also training its coach development officers and school-club hub officers to become advisors and educators so they can deliver the Anti-Doping education and setting up training for volunteers in clubs to become anti-doping advisors.

Testing is carried out at international, professional and semi-professional matches and training. Out of Competition Testing occurs at amateur level if UKAD receive intelligence of a player committing an Anti-Doping Rule Violation.

Roger Lewis added, "We encourage anyone who has any intelligence of doping taking place to speak out and call the UKAD Report Doping in Sport number - tel 0800 032 2332, go to [www.reportdoping.com](http://www.reportdoping.com) or email [anti-doping@wru.co.uk](mailto:anti-doping@wru.co.uk) "

This report and picture kindly supplied by The Welsh Rugby Union



The Welsh Rugby Union has launched the recruitment process to find two new non-executive directors to join the main Board of the governing body with one of them ideally being a woman.

Applications are being requested from individuals with the integrity, independence and broad experience to operate in a high profile sector at board level.

The application process will close on 31 January 2015 when a shortlist of candidates will be drawn up for consideration.

The new Board appointments are taking place after the Annual General Meeting of the WRU in October 2014 approved a series of changes to the governance of the Union.

This followed a two year review of the existing governance structures headed by the eminent High Court Judge Sir Robert Owen.

In a further radical change to the WRU's governance the Annual General Meeting of members voted to limit the overall tenure of any non-executive Board member to 12 years.

The new appointees will be added to

## WRU seeks new non-executive director roles

the existing Board which comprises 18 directors with 17 of those directly appointed by member clubs.

The Board of Directors of the WRU have appointed the Odgers Berndston management recruitment company to oversee the application process.

The brief for the new roles states the WRU is seeking candidates with proven experience at a senior executive level within a complex and substantial commercial organisation.

They state that business leadership is at the heart of the WRU requirements although senior experience in a core commercial function such as legal or financial management will also be considered an asset.

The application document also says: "The WRU board is highly mindful of the value that diversity can bring to the board. While gender diversity is a critical consideration, the company is also interested in individuals whose age and experience can bring a different perspective and outlook to board discussions."

WRU Group Chief Executive, Roger Lewis, said: "This represents an important development in the governance of Welsh rugby which will make the governing body more effective

in the complex and dynamic global rugby landscape.

"We have carried out a detailed and forensic review of our existing structures and we can now move forward into a new era for Welsh rugby with confidence.

"Our remit covers all of rugby from the grassroots to the pinnacle of the professional game and we also own and operate our own Millennium Stadium so the decisions we make at Board level are vitally important.

"We have declared openly that we want at least one of the new non-executive directors to be a woman and that appointment will send out a clear and dynamic message about the direction we will take in future."

WRU Chairman Gareth Davies said: "The addition of this extra expertise and knowledge will improve the corporate strength of our governance at a time of great change within rugby.

"The Board of the WRU is, quite rightly, dominated by rugby expertise but in the professional era we have to make sure that all our decisions and strategies are monitored and tested through a lens of experience and expertise."

## Cofis at home and 'Dudno away in WRU National Youth Competitions

All ties to be played on Saturday, 14th February, 2015

### WRU Youth Cup

Cowbridge I v Bridgend Athletic  
Crymych v Penallta  
Pontypridd v Nantyllyon  
Ystrad Rhondda v Aberavon Quins

### WRU Youth Plate

Rhydyfelin v Furnace United  
RTB Ebbw Vale v South Gower  
Caernarfon v Pontarddulais  
Narberth v Pontypool United

### WRU Youth Bowl

Wattstown v Llandudno  
Cardiff Quins v Ystalyfera  
Penygraig v Porthcawl  
Ystradgynlais v Cowbridge II



### SWALEC PLATE 2014-2015 ROUND 4

To be played the weekend of 17th January 2015

Ystrad Rhondda v Glamorgan Wanderers  
Ynysybwll v Penlan  
Skewen v Pwllheli  
Pontypool United v Nant Conwy  
Aberystwyth v Talywain  
Newcastle Emlyn v Pencoed  
Penallta v Heol y Cyw  
Loughor v Ystalyfera

### SWALEC BOWL 2014-2015 ROUND 4

To be played the weekend of 17th January 2015

Harlech v Colwyn Bay  
Llangefni v Shotton Steel  
Aberaeron v Pembroke  
Fishguard & Goodwick v Lampeter Town  
Swansea Uplands v Penybanc  
Burry Port v Ystradgynlais  
Nantyllyon v Briton Ferry  
Cwmavon v Bridgend Sports  
Dinas Powys v Cambrian Welfare  
Nantymoel v Bryncethin  
Old Illydians / Ynysowen v Aberdare  
Tonyrefail v Treharris  
Oakdal v Aberbargoed  
Cefn Coed v Abercarn  
Hartridge v Caerleon  
Caldicot V Ynysddu

## Penallta Minerbirds 5 v Abergele Ladies 44

it was a cold, gloomy day down in South Wales, however the sun was shining down on the the "green army" girls where they continued their stream of good results as Penallta played host to the in form ladies.

The game was filled with action from the very first whistle with big hits and strong running from both teams.

Gele drew first blood with some characteristic running from Sophie Edwards. This was quickly answered by the hosts as the Gele defence was caught napping.

After some strong words from captain Laura Taylor the green army rallied and got two tries in quick succession with both Lucy Edwards and Sophie Edward crossing the whitewash.

Abergele then dropped down to 14 players after an injury to the Gele full-back. Injuries have been somewhat of

a curse this season and with a couple of girls carrying them from previous games the inevitable happened 30 minutes into the first half.

However as soon as one of the girls departed vice captain Nikki Weldon-Jones gave the girls all the proof they needed that they were more than capable of carrying on as they were with Gele's fourth try of the game.

Second half started much the as the first with the big tackles coming from both teams throughout.

Some great movement from Abergele's back line and with the mobile forward joining in at the backs, some nimble footwork and some slight of hand saw returning Lauranna Mcgee down the ball for the green army girls.

Gele's powerful forwards drove the ball up the pitch time after time so it was just deserved as prop forward

**PLEASE HELP US TO  
SPREAD THE NEWS  
ABOUT WOMEN'S  
RUGBY**

Please send news,  
match reports and  
pictures to  
[gwcymru1@aol.com](mailto:gwcymru1@aol.com)  
for inclusion in future  
issues

Gail Banks powered her way through the relentless Penallta defence.

The game came to a close as Lucy Edwards, unwilling to be out done by her sister, polished off what was a hard fought battle against a very strong and physical team.

Thanks to Abergele RFC for the report and Tracey Lintern for the pictures.





## Penallta Minerbirds v Abergele Ladies by Tracey Lintern



## History made as Welshpool Rugby Club field a girls side for the first time eve



### Nant Conwy Girls U16 20 v Welshpool Girls U16 35

Welshpool travelled up to Nant Conwy who have also recently started playing the game.

Women's rugby may be one of the fastest growing sports nationally but this is largely due to girls taking the game up at university.

"To field a girls' team is the culmination of much good work by the Club, our Development Officer Dai Higgs and Welshpool, Llanfyllin and Llanfair High Schools, we are determined to continue to grow the girls game." said a Club spokesman.

Nant Conwy dominated early possession and scored two tries in the first five minutes.

Welshpool attempted to reply with two solo runs down the wing but Nant's determined tackling cut them short just before the line. The game started to settle into a close contest with very good tackling from both sides.

Eventually, some determined work by the Welshpool forwards enabled Libby Jones to crash over from five metres out.

This encouraged the Welshpool girls who grew in confidence as the game progressed and the reward came from the first of several tries by Sophie Hazlehurst. The first half ended even but the second half saw an increasingly fluent Welshpool stamp their authority on the game and draw clear.

Coach Jess Andrews said: "I'm delighted with every single one of my players. This was a team performance and a standard of play that we can all be justifiably proud of, onwards and upwards from here".

Team: Libby Jones, Sophie Hazlehurst, Ceri Glover, Ceri Griffiths, Mazie Evans, Lucy Morgan, Mabli Johnson, Eleri Roberts, Ffion Johns and Romanna Parkes.

# RYGBI MERCHED GIRLS RUGBY



**TIMAU / TEAMS:**  
Under 18 & Under 15



**Hyfforddi yn Nant Conwy  
Bob nos Fercher 7-8:30pm  
Agored i bawb o bob safon &  
Croeso i bawb!**

**Training at Nant Conwy  
Every Wednesday 7-8:30pm  
Open to everyone of all standards and  
All welcome!**

Am fwy o fanylion cysylltwch â/for further details  
contact: Nia Roberts ar 07765886110  
neu/or nia.ardda@yahoo.co.uk



**@ovalzonerugby**



## Abergele Ladies Rugby Team

**Want to get FIT and have FUN?**

**Abergele Ladies Rugby Team  
are looking for new members!**



**Open for ANYONE over the age of 18,  
ANY level of fitness and ANY skill level  
from complete beginner to experienced players.**

**Come down, give it a go and  
meet the rugby loving Green Army Girls!!**

**Wednesdays 7pm - 9pm  
Pentre Mawr Park Rugby Pitch, Abergele, LL22 7PL  
facebook.com/ClwbRygbiAbergeleLadiesTeam**

