

GORDON BULLOCH
WARRIOR #2



NOMADS TO LEGENDS

THE STORY OF GLASGOW CALEDONIANS





WHEN GLASGOW WARRIORS REVEALED IMAGES OF THEIR 2020/21 TRAINING TOP ON SOCIAL MEDIA, TO SAY THAT THE WARRIOR NATION WAS IN RAPTURE WOULD BE AN UNDERSTATEMENT.

For this was no ordinary training top; this was a 2020/21 homage to one of the most fabled eras in the club's history. To this day, Glasgow Caledonians – formed by a merger between Glasgow and the Caledonian Reds in 1998 – retain a special place in the hearts of many supporters, their popularity enduring almost 20 years after the merger came to an end.

It's a period that still holds great sway in the memories of those involved at the time, too, as the then-club captain explains.

"I'm hugely proud to have been a part of the club's history, said Andy Nicol.



ANDY NICOL & TOMMY HAYES





“Dave Jordan was the boss at Glasgow at the time, and we met and discussed that this merger was going to be happening. It sounded great – what Dave didn’t tell me though was that every second week we’d be on an eight-hour bus journey down to Wales every other week in the new Scottish-Welsh league! It’s definitely not the ideal way to prepare for a match, stopping off at a service station to stretch off – it wasn’t quite the slick professional outfit you see these days!

It wasn’t just the new league system that took some getting used to for the Caledonians; with rugby having turned professional just two and a half years before the merger, there was still a significant element of adapting to the new sporting landscape that surrounded the club in its infancy.

“It was an era of mass change, to be honest,” said Gordon Bulloch.

“At that time we were leading a pretty nomadic existence – we didn’t have a permanent home, we didn’t have a permanent training base, and we were pulling together players who weren’t necessarily representing their region.”

Nomadic would be putting it mildly, as Nicol explains.

“Because we were playing as Glasgow Caledonians, most of our matches were at Hughenden but we took games to Perth and Aberdeen amongst other places.

“We trained in Motherwell at Dalziel, we did our weights sessions at Grangemouth, half the squad lived in Edinburgh and half the coaches lived in the Borders.

“We didn’t have a permanent base until much later on, and there was a lot of moving around. We got off to a slow start in professional rugby, I’d say – it was very much learning on the hoof.”

Yet the Glasgow Caledonian travelling circus had their eyes set on entertaining the masses, as they embarked on their odyssey across the newly-formed Scottish-Welsh league. Even the mere discussion of the talent boasted by the squad brings a smile to both Bulloch and Nicol as they recall their fellow Reds.

“It was a squad packed with characters and talent” grinned Bulloch.

“Glenn [Metcalfe] had come across to play for Glasgow Accies, and then suddenly found himself representing the district and what would become Glasgow Warriors. You had guys like Gordy McIlwham, Jason White and Donnie Macfadyen involved – all quality players...

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