



Secretary's Report on the 2021 league season

Despite the background of the Covid pandemic, and after an absence of over 18 months, the BIG League successfully launched its 2021 season in May. 33 teams competed in 4 divisions, covering 244 matches during the season, with at least 128 players a week, and equating to almost 1000 points.

The end of season summary is attached. In the meantime, I would like to thank pub landlords/proprietors for their continuing support as host venues, although players have missed post-match refreshments! Thanks also to the players for complying with the Covid regulations and ensuring that matches were played in a competitive, enjoyable, and fair spirit. I was also pleased that team captains reported results in a very prompt manner and allowed weekly publication the next day. You will have noticed changes to our website which have significantly improved efficient online reporting, with also the introduction of an archive system. For this, I am very grateful to Wilf Hall who, as web manager, has implemented the changes.

On the playing front, congratulations to Caerleon A who retained their Division 1 title, with a winning margin of 9 points. Such has been their dominance that this year is the 4th consecutive year they have been Division 1 champions. One defeat in each of the last two seasons is testimony to their unrivalled consistency.

In 4th place in 2019, runner-up in Division 1 is ROF Nomads who are rarely out of the frame at the top of the table. Picking up points in every game, with the exception of the last game of the season against Caerleon A, ROF could not quite maintain a challenge to Caerleon A, losing 4 games throughout the season.

Third place in 2019, Caerleon Blues picked up points in every game and were undefeated in their last 6 games. This enabled the Blues to finish strongly in retaining 3rd place.

Wheatsheaf Eagles, with a pedigree of runner up in 2019, sprang out of the blocks with 5 straight wins, leaving defending champions Caerleon A behind by 4 points. However, the Eagles promptly lost 4 of their next 5 games. They continued to have other rocky patches, with no wins in the last 6 matches, but finished a creditable 4th place.

Ffrwd Fighters continue to improve, following promotion to Division 1 in 2019. They consolidated their top half 5th finish with an impressive 5 wins out of the last 7.

Pilcs are another side who have consolidated in Division 1, building from 6th position in 2019. Only

one game without scoring points, 7 games unbeaten in mid-season ensured relative safety from relegation.

Wheatsheaf Falcons, 9th in 2019, continued in the bottom half of the table in 7th but will be pleased with a finish of 1 defeat in their last 7 matches which moved them away from a relegation place.

Caerleon Greens secured 8th place in the lower half of the table, having just avoided relegation in 2019. With 3 defeats in the last 4 games, the season finished on a low note.

Following a solid 5th place in 2019, Machen Mountaineers failed to win a single match and slumped to 9th. A run of 9 draws in 11 games indicated a good level of consistency but failed to move Machen out of a relegation place.

Promoted from Division 2 in 2019, Monmouth PC won only two games during the season, but this included a morale-boosting win over Wheatsheaf Eagles. Monmouth were unable to build on this, and finished at the bottom of the table.

Congratulations to Division 2 champions, Greenlawn A, who are promoted to Division 1 following back to back successful promotion campaigns. Greenlawn mounted another impressive showing, picking up points in all games. With only one defeat, to runner up Wheatsheaf Harriers, and an unbeaten away record, Greenlawn finished top by a 4-point winning margin. Greenlawn and Harriers finished in the same 1-2 position for the second consecutive season.

Despite 5 defeats during the season, Wheatsheaf Harriers maintained a high win ratio and only one draw which was enough to edge out Upper Cock from a promotion place by one point.

Upper Cock occupied third place in Division 3 in 2019 and were promoted alongside Greenlawn and Harriers. For the second successive season, they followed Greenlawn and Harriers in an identical 1-2-3 finish. League leaders in mid-August, one win in their last 4 games proved costly for the Upper Cock's automatic promotion chances.

Appearing in Division 2 for the first time, Ffrwd B secured an encouraging 4th place, remaining unbeaten in their last 7 games.

8th place in 2019, Clytha A improved its position to 5th, largely by picking up points in all games with the exception of a loss to Greenlawn A.

4th in 2019, Abergavenny Reds reached second place in the first half of the season. A poor run of one win in the last 7 games of the season pushed them down to finishing 6th, four points above the relegation zone.

In a potential relegation place in 2019, Halfway Allstars continued to struggle and finished again in a relegation place, alongside Caerleon Cohort.

3rd in 2019, Caerleon Cohort suffered a reversal of fortune and will finish in a relegation place.

Congratulations to Greenlawn B as champions in Division 3, being unbeaten in the process. Continuing their club success, they pipped runner-up Greenlawn C by 2 points who were unbeaten

at home, and losing only 1 game to Caerleon Centurions. This reversed a one-two by the promoted Greenlawn C and B teams in 2019.

With 1 defeat in their last 8 games, including an unbeaten home record, Clytha B showed good form to finish 3rd, compared to 7th the previous season.

Abergavenny Golds occupied a mid-table position for much of the season, but improved from 5th to 4th with just 3 defeats.

Second in mid-August, and looking like promotion candidates, Caerleon Centurions experienced mixed fortunes in 5th place, with one win in their last 8 games but drawing their last game with champions Greenlawn B.

With the experience of 3rd place in their inaugural season in Division 4 in 2019, the Greyhound were disappointed not to build on this foundation, and found Division 3 a more difficult proposition. The season ended with a run of 4 defeats in the last 4 games.

ROF Exiles and Abergavenny Blues occupy the bottom two positions. Relegated from Division 3 in 2019, ROF had another difficult season, winning only 2 games.

From 7th place in 2019, Abergavenny Blues also had another testing season, ending it without a win.

Congratulations to The Pottery in Blaenavon, champions of Division 4 in their first season by a runaway margin of 14 points. With a run of 11 successive wins, they narrowly failed to have a 100% record by drawing their last game to a determined Ponthir Sharks.

In a race for the runner-up spot, newcomers Ponthir Sports B launched their season with 5 straight wins, but only just pipped Ponthir Sharks for the runner-up slot, being level on points but separated by the number of wins.

4th place goes to White Hart Stags, a steady season in mid-table, but improving on the previous season with 4 defeats.

In 5th place, newcomers Ponthir Sports A won two games and will be better for the experience of competition.

From 5th place in 2019, Halfway Allstars Others endured a winless season alongside a rejoined Red Lion. Both teams tried hard but finished in joint last place, with equal playing records including head-to-head matches.