



Llandovery RFC Programme 28-04-2007

Courtesy Bryan Weaver





The Konic Minolta Cup Final
Rownd Derfynol Cwpan Konic Minolta
Price / Pris: £2.00



Cardiff v Llandovery

Caerdydd v Llanymddyfri

5.30pm, Saturday 28th April 2007

Millennium Stadium

Dydd Sadwrn, Ebrill 28, 2007, 17.30yh

Stadium y Mileniwm

www.wru.co.uk

Glory awaits ... at the
Millennium Stadium





Llandoverly RFC Programme 28-04-2007

Courtesy Bryan Weaver

WELCOME/CROESO



WRU MESSAGE

Welcome to the Konica Minolta Cup Final, and congratulations to Cardiff and Llandoverly who have made it through to this final leg of our domestic Cup competition.

A cup final is always a great way to end a season and I'm sure that both sets of players, coaches and supporters here today will echo that sentiment in this West versus East encounter.

It is extremely encouraging for Welsh rugby to see so very many talented, young players on display. This is a real reflection of the dynamism of the Principality Premiership, which is more vibrant and competitive than ever before. It is most definitely proving to be a showcase for our future Wales international players.

Only a year ago, the likes of James Hook, Alun Wyn Jones and Aled Brew played their regular rugby in such competitions; James Hook played a full part in last year's Konica Minolta Cup Final for Neath against Pontypridd.

The Principality Premiership is vital in our strategy for creating a "Winning Wales" and the relationships we are continuing to build between the Premiership clubs and the four Welsh rugby Regions is proving to be most effective. We all feel there is more to be achieved by working even closer together and this bodes well for rugby in Wales.

Special thanks to Konica Minolta, Principality and our broadcasters S4C and BBC for their continued support in raising the profile of semi-professional rugby in Wales.

Good luck to both teams – pob hwyl!

Roger Lewis

WRU Group Chief Executive

NEGES YR UNDEB

Croeso i Rownd Derfynol Cwpan Konica Minolta, a llongyfarchiadau i Gaerdydd a Llanymddyfri sydd wedi ennill eu lle yn rownd derfynol cystadleuaeth cwpan Cymru.

Mae rownd derfynol cwpan wastad yn ffordd dda o orffen tymor ac rwy'n siwr y bydd y ddau set o chwaraewyr, hyfforddwyr a chefnogwyr sydd yma heddiw yn cytuno â hynny.

Mae'n wych gweld cymaint o chwaraewyr ifanc, talentog ar y cae yma heddiw. Mae hynny'n adlewyrchiad o Uwch Gyngghair Principality, sydd erbyn hyn yn fwy bywiog a chystadleuol nac erioed o'r blaen. Mae'n profi bod yn ffenestr siop i ddarpar chwaraewyr rhyngwladol Cymru.

Gwta flwyddyn yn ôl, roedd bechgyn fel James Hook, Alun Wyn Jones ac Aled Brew yn chwarae eu rygbi rheolaidd yn y cystadlaethau lled-broffesiynol, ac fe chwaraeodd James Hook ran lawn yn rownd derfynol Cwpan Konica Minolta y llynedd i Gastell-nedd yn erbyn Pontypridd.

Mae Uwch Gyngghair y Principality yn hollbwysig yn ein strategaeth ar gyfer creu "Cymru'n Ennill" ac mae'r perthnasau rydym yn parhau i'w hadeiladu rhwng clybiau'r Uwch Gyngghair a'r pedair rhanbarth rygbi yng Nghymru yn profi i fod yn effeithiol iawn. Rydym oll yn teimlo fod mwy i'w ennill trwy weithio yn agosach fyth gyda'n gilydd ac mae hyn yn argoeli'n dda i rygbi yng Nghymru.

Diolchiadau arbennig i Konica Minolta, y Principality a'n darlledwyr S4C a'r BBC am barhau i'n cefnogi i godi proffil rygbi lled-broffesiynol yng Nghymru.

Dymuniadau gorau i'r ddau dîm – pob hwyl!

Roger Lewis

Prif Weithredwr Grwp URC

PICTURE: HUW EVANS



Contents

04 Cup Final preview

07 Coach's view

Justin Burnell

08 Cardiff squad

10 Player profile

Jamie Roberts

13 Cardiff's cup run

15 Player profile

James Down

16 Team line-ups

19 Coach's view

Iestyn Thomas

20 Llandoverly squad

22 Player profile

Emyr Phillips

25 Llandoverly's cup run

27 Player profile

Howard Thomas



Llandovery RFC Programme 28-04-2007

Courtesy Bryan Weaver

Tony Poole of the *South Wales Evening Post* looks forward to a clash of cultures in this year's Konica Minolta Cup Final

Llandovery has hit the headlines twice of late and on both occasions there's been a link with royalty.

Last year, news broke that Prince Charles was setting up a country retreat in neighbouring Myddfai. That gained the West Wales market town five minutes of fame, but then along came the Drovers with their sensational semi-final victory over cup kings Llanelli RFC.

In preventing the 13-times winners from making a 19th appearance in the final, the Tywi Valley side pulled off the surprise result in this season's tournament. That means a fleet of Land Rovers, tractors and combine harvesters will today converge on the capital in the hope that the "Tractor Boys" can beat the "City Slickers".

The final, of course, has the classic east v west ingredient, but the gulf between the clubs is stark. Cardiff, before regional days in 2003, carried a self-proclaimed tag of the "greatest club side in the world". They've been there and done the lot, while for Llandovery – who were founder members of the WRU in 1881 – this is the greatest day in their 129-year history.

While the Drovers are in the lower reaches of this season's Principality Premiership, their full focus is on lifting the Konica Minolta cup for the first time this weekend. Llandovery, on similar lines to the likes of Neath, Bridgend, Pontypridd and Ebbw Vale, remains a town side, and results still mean a lot to fans.



TOWN &

With Cardiff, Newport, Llanelli and, to a degree, Swansea, the main area of support is now centred on Regional teams. Just a year ago, when fly-half James Hook played for Neath in the final against Pontypridd, even some eminent rugby writers had never heard of him. Now he is a household name,

and it gives credence to the claim that the semi-professional Principality Premiership is supplying both Regions and country with quality players.

So who are the names in this year's final who could go on to better things? In the Blue and Blacks camp, fullback Jamie

PICTURE: RILEYSPORTSPHOTO.COM



Llandovery RFC Programme 28-04-2007

Courtesy Bryan Weaver



Roberts looks a fine prospect, and his name is now not only being linked with the Blues but also the Welsh summer tour to Australia. His try allowed Cardiff to inch past Neath in the last-16 stage at The Gnoll, but his strong-running powers posed a threat throughout.

Wing Elgan Jones is the joint-top try scorer in the four seasons of the Premiership with 42 tries – the same number as Gareth Chapman (Newport) and former Neath wing Richard Johnston, who is now with Celtic Crusaders. Hooker Ross Johnston has a fair turn of speed – as he displayed with an exceptional try at Neath – while Carmarthen Quins product Craig Evans has become an accurate goal-kicking fly-half, scoring 220 points in the league this season. Prop Gareth Gunter has come on leaps and bounds this year, and the never-say-die attitude of back-row man Gavin Lucas has pulled Cardiff out of many a hole.

Earlier in the season, Merthyr-based wing Tom James used the Principality Premiership as a springboard, scoring 11 league tries before being snapped up by the Blues. In the Llandovery

PREVIEW 



Others well thought of in the Tywi Valley include hooker Emyr Phillips, lock Tom Walker, and flankers Gareth Williams and Jonathan Mills (son of ex-Neath prop Doug), along with powerhouse centre Jonny Lewis.

And one Llandovery player deserving of a cup-winning medal more than most is tight-head prop Andrew B Jones, who has given the club a quarter of a century of service on top of captaining the club six seasons on the trot.

Finally, the crunch question, who is going to win? The odds are stacked in Cardiff's favour, but just as the Principality Premiership has

COUNTRY

Above left:
Cardiff's Elgan Jones. **Above right:** Llandovery flanker Gareth Williams

corner, utility-back Howard Thomas from Llandeilo (he's played in every position in the back division this term except scrum-half) is a name worth noting. Thomas, whose brother Martyn switched from the Scarlets to Dragons in midwinter, has recently scored classy tries against Ebbw Vale and Llanelli.

proved unpredictable this season, never say never.

With strong West Wales links through my parents (Saundersfoot and Ystalyfera aren't a million miles from Llandeilo) and having recently resided in Llandeilo, if my arm were twisted it'd have to plump for the Tractor Boys.

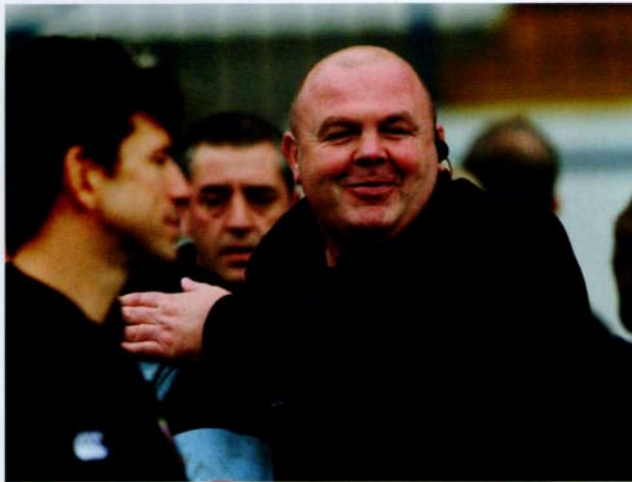
TO JOIN THE WRU SUPPORTERS CLUB CALL 08453 303 241 | 05



Llandover RFC Programme 28-04-2007

Courtesy Bryan Weaver

COACH'S VIEW



several positions, while their scrum-half, Rob Walters, can also cause problems. He's a big lad who can take some stopping around the fringes."

Burnell navigated his team's way to the Millennium Stadium with a hard-fought 23-16 win against Bridgend in the semis – a tricky game he's relieved to have come through. "Bridgend made it tricky for us," admits Burnell. "They broke up our play with a well focussed defence that was very organised and they were kicking for field possession. They were looking to capitalise on our mistakes."

For club and country

Having guided Wales Under 19s to World Cup success, **Justin Burnell** is firmly focussed on Cardiff's big game

Only a week on from his achievements with Wales's Under 19s, where the team finished fourth in the World Cup – their best finish since 2001 – Cardiff head coach Justin Burnell has turned his sights on matters closer to home, namely guiding his club to a first domestic cup title in ten years.

The clash has been dubbed the "Tractor Boys" taking on the "City Slickers", but Burnell is keen to point out that the clash will not be the one-sided affair many pundits are predicting. "Llandover are an underrated unit," he says. "Like us, they have made the final the hard way. Let's not forget they had to go to Bedwas and win, they also beat their local rivals Llanelli away from home, so we are certainly not taking them lightly."

Warming to his subject, Burnell continues: "Forget their Premiership position, this is the cup, not the league, and they have the same amount of wins as us. We will prepare for the game as if we were playing Neath or Pontypridd."

LIKE US, LLANDOVER HAVE MADE THE FINAL THE HARD WAY, SO WE'RE CERTAINLY NOT TAKING THEM LIGHTLY

Motivating my players for the cup will not be a problem."

Even though Cardiff beat their cup opponents at home and away in the Principality Premiership this season, Burnell believes there's no lack of talent emanating from the small West Walian town. "They have several exciting players," he points out. "Howard Thomas is a tidy prospect who can play in

While Burnell believes today's game is a red-letter day for his players, he feels that it is equally gratifying for those behind the scenes. "It's a big day for the club," says the head coach. "It establishes that, although we are playing under a regional umbrella, we are also gaining recognition for our achievements as a club."

He continues: "Keith Morgan, our team manager, treasurer and occasional programme seller, is absolutely tireless, while our chairman Malcolm Childs has also been tremendous. They deserve a pat on the back."

The final, says Burnell, presents an ideal opportunity for players from both sides to shine on the big stage. "There will be players who have been overlooked at age group and Academy level who can put their hands up and move on to bigger things," he observes. "That's what makes this competition so special."

PICTURE: HUW EVANS

TO JOIN THE WRU SUPPORTERS CLUB CALL 08453 303 241 | 07



Llandover RFC Programme 28-04-2007

Courtesy Bryan Weaver



CARDIFF SQUAD

TOP POINT SCORERS 2006/07

Craig Evans: 3 tries, 44 cons; 54 pens; 2 DGS. Total 271

Chris Anderson: 20 cons; 12 pens; 1 DG. Total 79

Tom James: 12 tries. Total 60

Jamie Roberts: 8 tries. Total 40

LAST FIVE GAMES

WWLWL
Konika Minolta Cup quarter-final
March 25, 2007

Swansea 8-39 Cardiff
Premiership March 31, 2007
Cardiff 25-21 Neath

Premiership April 7, 2007
Cardiff 30-32 Bedwas
Konika Minolta semi-final
April 15, 2007
Cardiff 23-16 Bridgend

Premiership April 18, 2007
Cardiff 16-23 Maesteg

COACHES

Head coach: Justin Burnell
Coaches: Howard Stone, Matthew Silva, Daniel Wilson
Team managers: Gafyn Cooper, Keith Morgan
Conditioning coach: Gerrit Bantjes

REPLACEMENTS

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|-------------------|---|--------------------|---|-----------------------|---|--------------------|---|-------------------|--|------------------------|---|----------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1 |  | NAVY GILL |  | TOM ISAACS |  | ADAM POWELL |  | GARETH GRAVELL |  | GAVIN LUCAS |  | JAMES DOWN |  | CHRIS SYMAYAKIS |  | SCOTT ROBERTS |  | ROSS JOHNSTON |
| | | POSITION: Prop HEIGHT: 1.86m WEIGHT: 114kg DOB: 30.10.86 | | | POSITION: No 8 HEIGHT: 1.95m WEIGHT: 108kg DOB: 28.5.86 | | POSITION: Flanker HEIGHT: 1.82m WEIGHT: 102kg DOB: 29.10.80 | | POSITION: Flanker HEIGHT: 1.98m WEIGHT: 108kg DOB: 14.4.78 | | POSITION: Lock HEIGHT: 2.04m WEIGHT: 109kg DOB: 29.8.87 | | POSITION: Lock HEIGHT: 1.98m WEIGHT: 102kg DOB: 21.1.82 | | POSITION: Prop HEIGHT: 1.85m WEIGHT: 120kg DOB: 5.9.84 | | POSITION: Hooker HEIGHT: 1.85m WEIGHT: 105kg DOB: 26.3.86 | |

REPLACEMENTS

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|--|---|----------------------|---|--------------------|---|---------------------|--|---------------------|---|------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 16 |  | RYAN PRICE |  | GARETH GUNTER |  | ALEX MURPHY |  | MATTHEW ANOS |  | NICK HAMPSON |  | DARREN ALLINSON |  | LEIGH HALAPPENNY |
| | | POSITION: Hooker HEIGHT: 1.85m WEIGHT: 114kg DOB: 4.11.83 | POSITION: Prop HEIGHT: 1.85m WEIGHT: 114kg DOB: 26.3.79 | | POSITION: Prop HEIGHT: 1.88m WEIGHT: 118kg DOB: 10.5.86 | | POSITION: Lock HEIGHT: 1.98m WEIGHT: 108kg DOB: 6.2.83 | | POSITION: Flanker HEIGHT: 1.92m WEIGHT: 102kg DOB: 3.11.82 | | POSITION: Scrum-half HEIGHT: 1.79m WEIGHT: 83kg DOB: 13.11.87 | | POSITION: Wing HEIGHT: 1.78m WEIGHT: 78kg DOB: 22.12.88 | |

TO JOIN THE WRU SUPPORTERS CLUB CALL 08453 303 241 | 09



Llandoverly RFC Programme 28-04-2007

Courtesy Bryan Weaver

Konica Minolta Cup Final
referee Hugh Watkins



Today's referee

HUGH WATKINS

This is Hugh's first cup final, having been on the WRU list of referees for 13 years. A highly regarded official with many years of European and Celtic League experience, he has been on the IRB Referee Panel for the past 4 years. Hugh is a native of Maesteg who lists cricket and golf as his other hobbies.

TOUCH JUDGES

The touch judges for today's game are Tony Rowlands and Dave Davies. Both referees have given outstanding service to the game not only in Wales but also on the international scene and it is fitting that their final appearance is today at the Millennium Stadium. The WRU would like to take the opportunity to thank them both for their services to rugby and refereeing in particular.

LLANDOVERLY MASCOT

Name: Ella Davies

Age: 2 years old

Ella is the daughter of Llandoverly team captain Arwel Davies and, obviously, her favourite player is her dad!



CARDIFF MASCOTS

Names: Benjamin and Ella Burnell

Age: 4 and 2 years old

Benjamin lists Scott Roberts as his favourite player, while Ella is a big fan of Ross Johnston.



In the event of a tie the winners will be determined by the following criteria:

1. The club which has scored the greater number of tries.
2. The club which has scored the greater number of converted tries.
3. If after 1 and 2 have been applied no clear winner has emerged, extra-time of 20 minutes (10 minutes each way) will be played. If the scores are still level at the end of extra-time then points 1 and 2 will be applied again.
4. If the result is still a tie then a replay shall be arranged and played within 14 days.
5. If the result is still a tie after that then the winners will be decided by the toss of a coin.

PICTURE: HUW EVANS



Llandovery RFC Programme 28-04-2007

Courtesy Bryan Weaver

CARDIFF v LLANDOVERY

KONICA MINOLTA CUP FINAL MILLENNIUM STADIUM, April 28, 2007, 5.30PM



15 JAMIE
ROBERTS

14 ELGAN
JONES

13 RICHARD
DAVIES

12 RICHARD
JONES

11 LEON
ANDREWS

10 CRAIG
EVANS

9 TOM
ISAACS

8 ADAM
POWELL

7 GARETH
GRAVELL (C)

6 GAVIN
LUCAS

5 JAMES
DOWN

4 CHRIS
STAMATAKIS

3 SCOTT
ROBERTS

2 ROSS
JOHNSTON

1 RHYS
GILL



15 IOAN
DAVIES

14 OWAIN GWYN
ROWLANDS

13 MIKE
JONES

12 JONNY
LEWIS

11 VIV
JENKINS

10 HOWARD
THOMAS

9 ROB
WALTERS

8 JON
MILLS

7 GARETH
WILLIAMS

6 EIFION
GWYNNE

5 ARWEL
DAVIES (C)

4 TOM
WALKER

3 ANDREW B
JONES

2 EMYR
PHILLIPS

1 PHIL
JOHN



REPLACEMENTS

16 RYAN
PRICE

17 GARETH
GUNTER

18 ALEX
MURPHY

19 MATTHEW
AMOS

20 NICK
HAMPSON

21 DARREN
ALLINSON

22 LEIGH
HALFPENNY



REPLACEMENTS

16 ENDAF
HOWELLS

17 ANDREW R
JONES

18 STEVE
COVINGTON

19 GARETH
BENNETT

20 ADRIAN
WILLIAMS

21 GRUFF
JONES

22 EMYR
EVANS

Teams accurate as of April 25, 2007

TO JOIN THE WRU SUPPORTERS CLUB CALL 08453 303 241 | 17



COACH'S VIEW

Final frontier

As his club steps into the unknown territory of a Konica Minolta Cup Final, head coach **Iestyn Thomas** charts the team's progress to today's historic showdown



Iestyn Thomas (centre) enjoys some team spirit at his beloved Llandoverly

Iestyn Thomas has every right to revel in Llandoverly's first Konica Minolta Cup Final, having been part of the club set-up for over two decades. "It's the culmination of a quarter of a century of hard work from everyone involved," enthuses the head coach. "Where many clubs have been and gone, with dreams turned to nightmares, we've ploughed on. We're honest in what we do and that permeates through the club."

Having put his heart and soul into the team for so long, the former London Welsh and Harlequins star sees today's big game at the Millennium Stadium as a victory for the Llandoverly way. "We're a Premiership and a community club, and not too many other sides can say that," he believes. "We run

11 junior teams, a youth team and a second team, and our work ethic goes right through, so this is a great day for both club and community."

This is the furthest Llandoverly have ever got in the competition, yet Thomas remains clear on how he'll guide his team over the final hurdle of this cup chase. "My job

gone unnoticed by the coach.

"When we were down at Aberavon for the semis, I expected us to be dominated in terms of support, given we're only a town of 2,000," he recalls. "But it struck me that the majority of people there were Drovers fans. Their support has been wonderful."

“WE’RE USED TO TAKING BIG STEPS TOWARDS THE FUTURE. THIS IS JUST ANOTHER STEP”

is to make sure we don't freeze on the day," he confides. "I'm sure we won't, because we're used to doing new things and taking big steps towards the future. This is just another step."

One factor that has helped the Drovers on their historic cup run has been their fanatical support – a morale-boosting bonus that hasn't

Thomas is more than aware, however, that there's a match to be played, a cup to be won, and a quality side to be beaten. "They're a very talented, well run team," he says of the Blue and Blacks. "But come kick-off, we'll be crashing into them and making sure they earn their keep. We're certainly not here to make up the numbers."

PICTURE: MARK DAVIES

TO JOIN THE WRU SUPPORTERS CLUB CALL 08453 303 241 | 19



Llandovery RFC Programme 28-04-2007

Courtesy Bryan Weaver



LLANDOVERY SQUAD

TOP POINT SCORERS 2006/07

Jon Elrick: 3 tries; 9 cons; 30 pens.
Total 123

Simon Daniel: 13 cons; 28 pens;
2 DGs. Total 116

Howard Thomas: 3 tries; 2 cons;
8 pens. Total 43

Vivian Jenkins: 6 tries. Total 30

LAST FIVE GAMES

WWLWL

Premiership March 16, 2007

Bridgend 8-14 Llandovery

Konica Minolta Cup quarter-final
March 24, 2007

Bedwas 14-21 Llandovery

Premiership March 31, 2007

Llandovery 16-19 Swansea

Konica Minolta Cup semi-final
April 14, 2007

Llandovery 20-19 Llanelli

Premiership April 20, 2007

Llanelli 38-17 Llandovery

COACHES

Head coach: Iestyn Thomas

Assistant coach: Lyndon Lewis

Team manager: Mark Vince

Conditioning coach: Roy James



15 IOAN DAVIES

POSITION: Fullback

HEIGHT: 1.80m

WEIGHT: 83kg

DOB: 15.11.78



14 OWAIN GWYN ROWLANDS

POSITION: Wing

HEIGHT: 1.88m

WEIGHT: 89kg

DOB: 9.9.82



13 MIKE JONES

POSITION: Centre

HEIGHT: 1.83m

WEIGHT: 87kg

DOB: 22.4.81



12 JONATHAN LEWIS

POSITION: Centre

HEIGHT: 1.85m

WEIGHT: 94 kg

DOB: 31.3.82



11 VIV JENKINS

POSITION: Wing

HEIGHT: 1.79m

WEIGHT: 87kg

DOB: 22.2.84



10 HOWARD THOMAS

POSITION: Fly-half

HEIGHT: 1.80m

WEIGHT: 84kg


DOB: 7.9.85




Llandovery RFC Programme 28-04-2007


Courtesy Bryan Weaver


BIOGRAPHIES


| | |
|---|--|
|  | 9 ROB WALTERS POSITION: Scrum-half HEIGHT: 1.81m WEIGHT: 90kg DOB: 1.3.77 |
|---|--|


| | |
|---|--|
|  | 1 PHIL JOHN POSITION: Prop HEIGHT: 1.89m WEIGHT: 122kg DOB: 25.4.81 |
|---|--|


REPLACEMENTS


| | |
|---|--|
|  | 8 JON MILLS POSITION: No 8 HEIGHT: 1.98m WEIGHT: 115kg DOB: 12.2.84 |
|---|--|


| | |
|---|--|
|  | 16 ENDAF HOWELLS POSITION: Prop HEIGHT: 1.80m WEIGHT: 114kg DOB: 1.3.78 |
|---|--|


| | |
|--|---|
|  | 7 GARETH WILLIAMS POSITION: Flanker HEIGHT: 1.82m WEIGHT: 90kg DOB: 5.9.81 |
|--|---|


| | |
|--|---|
|  | 17 ANDREW R JONES POSITION: Hooker HEIGHT: 1.83m WEIGHT: 95kg DOB: 31.7.78 |
|--|---|


| | |
|---|---|
|  | 6 EIFION GWYNNE POSITION: Flanker HEIGHT: 1.80m WEIGHT: 90kg DOB: 24.10.74 |
|---|---|


| | |
|---|--|
|  | 18 STEVE COVINGTON POSITION: Lock HEIGHT: 2.00m WEIGHT: 108kg DOB: 20.10.77 |
|---|--|


| | |
|---|--|
|  | 5 ARWEL DAVIES POSITION: Lock HEIGHT: 1.92m WEIGHT: 99kg DOB: 16.6.79 |
|---|--|


| | |
|---|--|
|  | 19 GARETH BENNETT POSITION: No 8 HEIGHT: 1.95m WEIGHT: 119kg DOB: 14.2.78 |
|---|--|


| | |
|---|---|
|  | 4 TOM WALKER POSITION: Lock HEIGHT: 1.98m WEIGHT: 119kg DOB: 12.6.80 |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|--|
|  | 20 ADRIAN WILLIAMS POSITION: Scrum-half HEIGHT: 1.75m WEIGHT: 70kg DOB: 19.5.73 |
|---|--|

| | |
|---|--|
|  | 3 ANDREW B JONES POSITION: Prop HEIGHT: 1.80m WEIGHT: 108kg DOB: 17.11.73 |
|---|--|

| | |
|---|--|
|  | 21 GRUFF JONES POSITION: Wing HEIGHT: 1.76m WEIGHT: 70kg DOB: 23.1.88 |
|---|--|

| | |
|---|---|
|  | 2 EMYR PHILLIPS POSITION: Hooker HEIGHT: 1.82m WEIGHT: 95kg DOB: 22.2.87 |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|--|
|  | 22 EMYRS EVANS POSITION: Centre HEIGHT: 1.80m WEIGHT: 83kg DOB: 11.2.76 |
|---|--|

TO JOIN THE WRU SUPPORTERS CLUB CALL 08453 303 241 | 21



Llandovery RFC Programme 28-04-2007

Courtesy Bryan Weaver



Having grown up within shouting distance of Church Bank, **Emyr Phillips** can expect plenty of vocal support at the Millennium Stadium today

Come kick-off time this afternoon, there will be no one more proud than Emyr Phillips.

It's fair to say that the hooker is a Llandovery lad, born and bred. "My dad played for the club and I can see it from my house," says the 20-year-old. "He used to take me to games and I got involved with the junior Drovers and have worked my way up into the first

team, so it's extra special to reach the Cup Final today."

Phillips started his career as a centre but as he moved through the age grades, he found himself at the coalface. "I love the physicality of playing hooker," he admits. "I try and get stuck in as much as I can and I'm a mobile player as well."

His hard-hitting style of play has cemented his place in the Drovers' formidable front row this season –

a trio bolstered by Andrew B Jones and Endaf Howells. "They are both hard-working men who love the physical challenge," comments Phillips. "They live to scrummage and I don't think any pack fancies coming up against Llandovery."

The experience of his front-row colleagues has also helped him find his feet. "I was talking to Andrew the other day," he laughs, "and we worked out that he made



Llandovery RFC Programme 28-04-2007

Courtesy Bryan Weaver



Emyr Phillips is looking forward to getting to grips with Cardiff's "big lumps" this afternoon

PICTURE: MARK DAVIES

his Llandovery debut when I was two. That's the sort of experience you need alongside you!"

His coach, Iestyn Thomas, firmly believes in Phillips's abilities. "He's in the right environment to continue his development into a very fine player," says Thomas. "He's also a Llandovery lad, so it's great for him to reach the final."

A place in today's cup showdown has, unsurprisingly, caused great excitement in the Phillips household. "My dad booked a bus about a day or two after the semis," explains Phillips. "I'm at university in Cardiff at the moment, so my house is going to be pretty packed. I don't know how many people are staying!"

The prospect of running out at Cardiff's most famous landmark, the Millennium Stadium, is one he's relishing. "I've played there before for the Scarlets in the Under 18s and 20s Reebok Regional cup finals", he says, "but this will be even more special because my family and friends will all be there. It's such a small town I know almost everyone and they're all coming down, so it should be brilliant."

Aside from the pageantry of the occasion, Phillips is looking forward to facing a Cardiff outfit on the rise. "I know a couple of the lads and they're quite a good team," he admits. "They work hard and play some good rugby and they've also got some big lumps in the pack."

One of those "lumps" is his opposite number Ross Johnston, another promising young hooker. "He's a tough player who likes to get around the park," says Phillips. "I'm really looking forward to facing him."

Indeed, like the rest of his teammates, Phillips isn't phased by the prospect of taking on Cardiff at the

Millennium Stadium. Not surprising, given his club's form in this year's Konica Minolta Cup. "All the boys are very close and there's always some good banter and a good team spirit," he observes. "Our cup run has certainly added to the buoyant mood in the changing room."

"There were a few funny stories on our first day back at training after the semis," he continues. "It's safe to say a few of the boys celebrated harder than others, so there were a few sore heads on the Monday."

The hooker points to inspiration from the top as another reason behind the team's cup success.

"I LOVE THE PHYSICALITY OF PLAYING HOOKER. I GET STUCK IN AS MUCH AS I CAN"

"Iestyn doesn't put any pressure on us," he says. "He just wants us to play for each other and play hard rugby. It's not pressure to win but pressure to perform that he emphasises before every game."

And the Drovers have performed each step of the way towards today's final, showing rock-solid resolve with a couple of last-gasp victories. "We beat Bedwas with an injury-time try and Llanelli in the last couple of minutes, so it's been quite tense," admits Phillips. "Hopefully we can sneak another late win today."

He realises that the task at hand will require something special from a club making its debut in the final phase of the Konica Minolta Cup but, like the rest of his team, Phillips doesn't mind being cast as the competition's surprise package. "I don't think any team takes us lightly, but being the underdog suits us. We're not too cocky or full of ourselves, we just work hard and plug away."

TO JOIN THE WRU SUPPORTERS CLUB CALL 08453 303 241 | 23



Llandovery RFC Programme 28-04-2007

Courtesy Bryan Weaver

FINAL COUNTDOWN



LLANDOVERY'S ROUTE TO THE MILLENNIUM STADIUM

ROUND 5, JANUARY 27, 2007 LLANDOVERY 50-10 NANTYFFYLLON

A comfortable, seven-try victory to the Drovers. Nantyffyllon's forwards gave a good account of themselves, especially early on in the game, but their backs were outgunned by sheer pace. Jon Elrick got the scoreboard ticking over with a penalty, followed by a try and conversion on the 20-minute mark, and a fine move from the home side's own 22 saw fullback Howard Thomas touch down to widen the gap. The ASDA Division Three South West side did themselves few favours in the second half, picking up two yellow cards, and Llandovery's superior fitness levels took their toll as the hosts went on to seal the win.

Tries: Jon Elrick, Howard Thomas, Steve Covington, Ioan Davies (2), Dafydd Jones, Iwan Davies; Cons: Jon Elrick (6); Pen: Jon Elrick

ROUND 6, FEBRUARY 17, 2007 LLANDOVERY 37-13 CAERPHILLY

A tale of two halves, with the Premiership club rocked by the Cheesemen in the first 40 minutes, only to stamp their authority on the game in the second. Caerphilly took advantage of a fair wind and some sloppy opposition play to take a 6-5 lead into the interval. But Jon Elrick, playing in his last game for the club, kicked Llandovery into the lead after the break and forward momentum turned the tide for the Drovers. The home side ruled the line-out in the second half and were dynamic in the scrum, pushing over for tries to Arwel Davies and Adam Yelland. Jenkins found the line once more in injury time to cap a fine comeback.

Tries: Viv Jenkins (2), Arwel Davies, Adam Yelland, Ricky Davies; Cons: Jon Elrick, Simon Daniel (2); Pens: Jon Elrick (2)

QUARTER-FINAL, MARCH 24, 2007 BEDWAS 14-21 LLANDOVERY

Two evenly matched sides both looking to make it to the semis for the first time, and it was the Bridge Field outfit that took the early initiative, building up a 14-6 lead. On the 56th minute, however, Bedwas hooker Ben Flower picked up a second yellow and the visitors made the most of their numerical advantage. Despite stern resolve from the opposition, the Drovers' pack



Llandovery No 8 Jonathan Mills has been instrumental in the Drovers' assault on the Konica Minolta Cup

piled on the pressure and, with one minute remaining on the clock and the scoreline tied, Mike Jones, Ioan Davies and Rob Walters combined to send lock Steve Covington over the line, and Llandovery into the last four of the competition.

Tries: Jonathan Mills, Steve Covington; Con: Simon Daniel; Pens: Simon Daniel (3)

SEMI-FINAL, APRIL 14, 2007 LLANDOVERY 20-19 LLANELLI

The form book was shredded at Talbot Athletic Ground in a searing West Wales derby. Despite building an early ten-point lead thanks to a try by No 8 Jonathan Mills and a conversion and penalty from fly-half Simon Daniels, the Drovers went into the interval 16-10 down. The game's talking point came in the second half as Llanelli, with their opponents shaping up for a five-metre scrum, pulled off prop Peter Edwards and called for uncontested scrums with the arrival of back-rower Ioan Cunningham, but a minute later the Stradey Park outfit conceded a rolling maul for a try to skipper Arwel Davies. Craig Jones retorted with a penalty kick to bring Llanelli within one point but, to the collective sighs of the Llandovery faithful, with two minutes left on the clock the fly-half pulled a last-ditch effort to the right of the posts.

Tries: Jonathan Mills, Arwel Davies; Cons: Simon Daniel, Howard Thomas; Pens: Simon Daniel, Howard Thomas

PICTURE: RILEYSPORTSPHOTO.COM

TO JOIN THE WRU SUPPORTERS CLUB CALL 08453 303 241 | 25



PLAYER PROFILE

For most players, competing in a major semi-final in their regular position is daunting enough. But not so Llandovery back Howard Thomas, who began his side's victory against local rivals Llanelli at fullback, but finished at outside-half. "I didn't have time to think about it," he says. "It was a quick decision, because sadly Simon Daniel broke his hand, so I just got on with it, which is for the best sometimes."

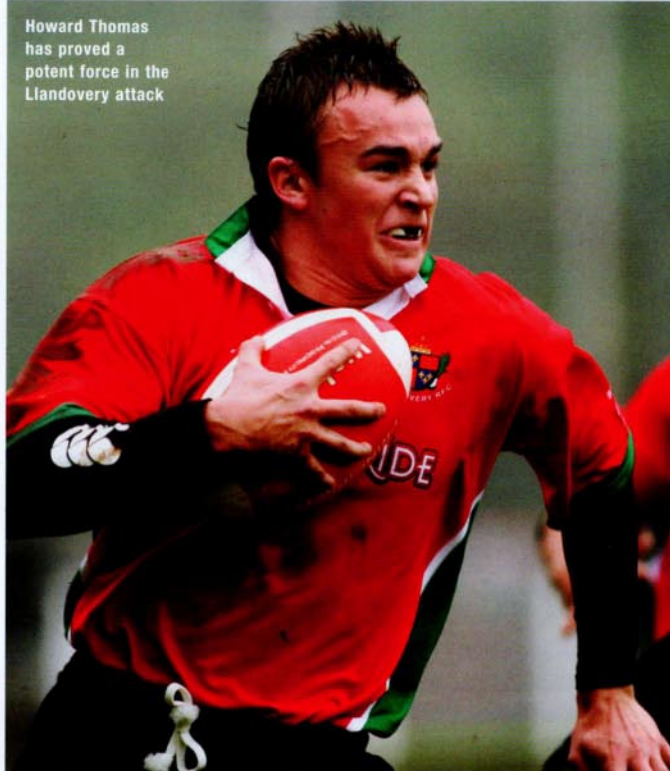
Not that Thomas isn't used to switching positions. His versatility has seen him play at fly-half, fullback and outside-centre this term, which is no bad thing given that he's not exactly sure which is his favourite berth. "A bit of variety is good I suppose," he comments. "On balance, I probably prefer outside-half as I enjoy the responsibility and being able to dictate the back-line."

A product of what he describes as a "sporting family", Thomas started his career at his father's club, Llandeilo, before making the move to the Drovers at the age of 18. His fullback brother, Martyn, is also an exciting young player at the Dragons, having moved from the Scarlets Academy. "He's as much of an inspiration to me as anyone," confides Thomas. "Seeing the scale of his development has inspired me to take my rugby more seriously."

And when the brothers get together, they certainly don't mind talking shop. "He gives me lots of tips he picked up at his Academy," says Thomas. "We don't only talk about rugby, but exchanging training advice is always good."

So what does the 21-year-old make of his club's fellow finalists this afternoon? "They're a very good side," he muses. "We've played them twice this season."

Howard Thomas has proved a potent force in the Llandovery attack



Howard's way

A versatile presence in the Llandovery backline, **Howard Thomas** is just happy to be running out at the Millennium Stadium today, wherever he ends up on the field...

In the first match, Tom James was the difference, and at the Arms Park we let the game slip away with 20 minutes to go."

Thomas cites opposition skipper Gareth Gravell as one of the players that Llandovery will have to neutralise today. "He's a hard hitter and a big talisman for them," he says. "If we want to pick up the cup, he's the type of guy we need to stop."

Win or lose, the Carmarthen-born lad is understandably thrilled to be involved in today's final. "It's superb to be part of the first

Llandovery side to reach the final," says Thomas. "It's a momentous day for the club and the town, so hopefully everyone will get behind us and it'll be a great occasion for all concerned."

It will certainly be a big day for Thomas who, as a final-year business administration student at Cardiff University, studies in the shadow of the Millennium Stadium. "I think for any rugby player this is a dream come true," he comments. "I'm just looking forward to getting on with it and enjoying the game."