

“I’ll be *there*”

THE CARDIFF CITY SUPPORTERS CLUB NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2005

£1.00

Delivered free to members



Highlights in this issue:

History of the 1927 club

Interview with Keith Cooper

Cyprus v. Wales - possibly the worst International of all time

The Valley Rams

Fixtures and results



All we want for Christmas is nine points!

SUPPORTERS CLUB DIRECTORY



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ROLL OF HONOUR

CCSC Player of the Year

2004/2005	Chris Barker
2003/2004	Tony Vidmar
2002/2003	Robert Earnshaw
2001/2002	Graham Kavanagh
2000/2001	Andy Legg
1999/2000	Andy Legg
1998/1999	Kevin Nugent
1997/1998	Jon Hallworth

CCSC Most Improved Player of the Year

2004/2005	Chris Barker
2003/2004	James Collins
2002/2003	Rhys Weston
2001/2002	Rhys Weston
2000/2001	Josh Low
1999/2000	Mark Bonner
1998/1999	Graham Mitchell
1997/1998	Craig Middleton

CCSC Young Player of the Year

2004/2005	Joe Ledley
2003/2004	James Collins
2002/2003	James Collins
2001/2002	Daniel Gabbidon
2000/2001	Robert Earnshaw
1999/2000	Robert Earnshaw
1998/1999	Robert Earnshaw
1997/1998	Christian Roberts

CCSC Hall of Fame

2004/2005	Ronnie Bird
2003/2004	Dave Bennett
2002/2003	Phil Suarez
2001/2002	Jason Perry
2000/2001	Fred Keenor
1999/2000	Carl Dale
1998/1999	Brian Clark
1997/1998	Phil Dwyer

CARDIFF CITY 1927 CLUB
LONDON & S. EAST SUPPORTERS CLUB



INTRODUCTION BY GWILYM REES



Who would have believed it. Over the last few weeks I've been reading letters to the newspapers and comments on the various websites berating those who mention the Play-Offs.

Well here we are, exactly half way through the League Season and we find ourselves in 5th, a Play-Off position, albeit on goal difference. When you consider we only took 5 points from the first 6 games, during a period when the new team was settling down as a unit, compared to 29 points from 17 subsequent games. The facts are we only have to repeat what we have already done in those latter games, over the remainder of the season, to secure a Play-Off.

Along with the awesome victory at Leeds, I have seen enough at the two Sheffield away games and the Ipswich home game, where the players bounced back, to grab a dramatic winner. To realise that there is an undoubted self belief amongst the players, as yet not shared by the supporters, that they can achieve what everyone thought would have been impossible at the start of the season, a Play-Off spot.

To our advantage, its probably a poor division this season, based on the fact that the bottom seven clubs are going to have to have a better second half of the season if they are going to reach the 50 point safety marker – perhaps that will be considerably lower this year.

At the top, Reading and Sheff.Utd, barring absolute disaster, look home and hosed and there is another gap developing in the Play-Off zone where Watford and Leeds look well placed. That leaves the rest of us to fight it out.

Instrumental to the Mighty Bluebirds achieving this is a number of factors, avoidance of unnecessary suspensions and good fortune on the injury front are two. With the transfer window about to open a couple of squad strengtheners would be good as well, but probably the single most influencing factor is Jason Koumas, his continuance in a City shirt is vital. Nervy times, me thinks.

Tell anyone who has an interest in Cardiff City that this is the best City side since the early 70's and if Koumas leaves before they have seen him in the blue shirt they have missed something special.

On to the FA Cup and our glamour tie at Arsenal. This will probably see the biggest movement of City fans since the 'lock out' at Brentford in 1998. Arsenal recently put top of the Championship Reading to the sword in the Carling Cup, so lets just enjoy the day out and make some noise in the library, which is Highbury.

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I wonder what the ticket arrangements are for the replay!!

With a massive few weeks of football coming up, that just leaves me, on behalf of all on the Committee at CCSC, to wish you the loyal supporters a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Carmarthen anyone!

THE POINTS CHASE

BY GWILYM REES

I read recently that, Manager, Dave Jones divides the season up into blocks of fixtures and sets a points target from each group. So I've tried to second-guess him here.

At the half way stage of the season I thought it would be interesting to try and calculate how many points would be

required to get 6th place (the final play off position) or for the pessimistic ones amongst us, what would be needed to avoid relegation.

Over the last 5 seasons the team finishing 7th in the Championship has done so with the following points totals: 70, 71, 70, 75, 72.

Based on the League table at the half way stage, low seventies should be enough to secure a play off spot this season and 50 points should be enough to avoid the drop.

Gut feeling – 8th or 9th finish

C'mon you Bluebirds!

GROUP 1 - 17 December to 2 January

H v Derby
H v Plymouth
A v QPR
H v Southampton
A v Reading

Weakest looking group, except for Reading. But four games in eight days over the holiday period will be difficult.

Points required for play-off challenge **43**

Points required to avoid relegation **38**

What's your prediction? _____

GROUP 2 - 14 January to 11 February

H v Burnley
A v Leicester
H v Millwall
A v Crystal Palace
H v Stoke

Three home games and a chance to take points off teams in the top half

Points required for play-off challenge **52**

Points required to avoid relegation **42**

What's your prediction? _____

GROUP 3 - 14 February to 11 March

A v Luton
H v Hull
A v Watford
H v Sheff Wed
A v Wolves

Three teams with play-off aspirations here

Points required for play-off challenge **61**

Points required to avoid relegation **46**

What's your prediction? _____

GROUP 4 - 18 March to 15 April

A v Plymouth
H v QPR
A v Southampton
H v Reading
H v Sheff Utd

Tough group from which to gain ten points

Points required for play-off challenge **70**

Points required to avoid relegation **50**

What's your prediction? _____

GROUP 5 - 17 April to 30 April

A v Crewe
H v Norwich
A v Coventry

Three games to get whatever's required



1. From which club did City sign Jeff Eckhardt in August 1996?
2. Phil Dwyer holds the record number of first team appearances for City, how many games did he play?
151, 573 or 591
3. Cardiff won the Welsh Cup in 1992/93 defeating Rhyl 5-0, who scored a hat trick for City that day?
4. City won promotion from Division 3 in 1975/76. Who was top scorer for us in the league that year with 21 goals?
5. City qualified for the play offs for the first time in 1996/97, losing in the Third Division semi finals to which team?
6. Who are the missing City managers?

Ritchie Morgan	Nov 78- Mar 81
_____	Nov 81- Feb 82
_____	Mar 82 – Mar 84
_____	Mar 84 – Sept 84
Alan Durban	Sept 84 – May 86
7. Who scored City's first home league goal of the 2000/01 season in a 1-0 win over Wycombe Wanderers ?
8. In sept 1982 City paid a then club record £180,000 (allegedly) to San Jose Earthquakes for which player?
9. What squad number did Joe Ledley wear in the 2004/05 season?
10. On 2 Aug 04, City lost a pre-season friendly 2-3 to Italian side Lazio, who scored City's goals that day?
11. Who scored City's first league goal of the 2004/05 season in the 2-2 draw at Crewe?
12. What was significant about City's game against Millwall at Ninian Park on 4 Nov 1967?
13. Which squad number did Cameron Jerome wear in the 2004/05 season?
14. City finished 13th in 2003/04 their first season back in Championship. Which 3 teams were relegated that season?
15. The club recorded record receipts for the FA Cup 3rd Rd match against Leeds Utd on 3 Jan 2002. What was the figure.
£234,000
£236,000
£238,000
16. Against which club did Cameron Jerome score his first, first team, goal against?

Answers on page 21.

MAGGIE OUT - ADRIAN PARK IN

Despite coming just two days after Margaret Thatcher's resignation as Prime Minister, 24th November 1990 wasn't, on the face of it, a great day to be a Cardiff City fan.

Four days earlier the team had produced one of the most inept displays in the club's history to be knocked out of the FA Cup by Hayes, while on the 24th itself they went down 0-4 to Gillingham (in the days before they were good) in the old Division Four. Lee Baddeley made his debut that day and was one of our better players - yes, we really were that bad!

A committee was elected, including our inaugural chairman, Adrian Park, who won the vote despite doing his best to alienate those present by being resplendent in a replica Merthyr shirt. Little else is remembered about this meeting, which quickly degenerated into a drunken shambles, thus establishing a tradition that is fastidiously observed to this day at every 1927 gathering.

CARDIFF CITY 1927 CLUB LONDON & S. EAST SUPPORTERS CLUB

However, for many of the City fans at Gillingham that day 24th November 1990 was a momentous day, one that will forever be celebrated by followers of the Bluebirds who, since that date, have found themselves exiled in the remote and inhospitable corner of the UK commonly known as 'London and the South-East'. Prior to then, this region was a cultural desert where young Welshmen stumbled around blindly, vainly seeking the civilising influence of their like-minded compatriots.

All that changed when, a couple of hours before the match kicked off, in the Britannia public house (the nearest to Gillingham train station) the decision was made to form a London branch of the Cardiff City Supporters Club.

For a couple of years we bumbled along with a handful of members, meeting monthly at London's up-market Savoy Hotel (OK, the tacky Coal Hole pub next door to the Savoy) and organising the occasional minibus to the likes of Peterborough or Halifax. At this time too the 1927 Club football team was established, playing friendly matches against London based supporters of other teams and even Saturday morning matches against fans of City's opponents.

The spirit of this formative period is probably best summed up by the infamous 'Doncaster Incident' of April 1991. It all started well enough, our small group all turning up bright and early to board the minibus that

was to transport us up to South Yorkshire. There was just one absentee - the bus!

The company we were hiring from had mislaid our booking, leaving us without transport. We legged it to Kings Cross, bought extortionately expensive return tickets and just made it to Doncaster in time for our morning appointment with the Rovers Supporters Club XI. After being thrashed on the pitch and enjoying some welcome sustenance in the member's bar at Belle Vue, we witnessed a pretty dire 1-1 draw, notable only for the merciless abuse by certain members of a rather rotund home fan unwise enough to turn up for the match in a bright pink jumper, and the jocular City fans provoking Donny's Billy Whitehurst into using some quite obscene and, to give him his due, highly original hand gestures.

After the game more drinks were consumed in the member's bar, where we overheard the aforesaid Mr Whitehurst loudly voicing his opinions on the subject of Cardiff's followers, few of who, apparently, could expect to receive Christmas cards from him.

Then it was into town to sample the delights that Doncaster's hostelry had to offer. It was around 9 o'clock when someone remembered that we had to get a train back to London and no one had bothered to check anything as mundane as a timetable.



On arriving at the station we were told that we had missed the last train to London by a good half-hour. Once this information had sunk in our group responded with an impromptu 'Ayatollah' then headed back into town to resume festivities. Amazingly we found a B&B happy to accept (a) a dozen drunken Welshmen at short notice and (b) my Visa card (some of you swine still owe me for that by the way). Our accommodation for the night sorted off we headed again to paint the town blue.

The next morning we were not a pretty sight and the combination of hangovers and, for those members with partners, the thought of the recriminations to come on finally getting home, meant that the train journey south was somewhat subdued. But it had been a memorable weekend that, to this day, is spoken of with reverential awe whenever two or more members from that era are gathered together.

The 1992/93 season was a momentous one for Cardiff City AFC and the 1927 Club alike. The Bluebirds, of course, lifted the Third Division Championship in some style and the progress on the pitch was matched by that of our Club off it. A membership drive, culminating in a mass leafleting of City's away following at Barnet in November of that season, saw our numbers rise dramatically.

Our football team was now sufficiently organised to be playing in the APFSCIL league every Sunday morning. Perhaps most significant, however, was the appointment of Ray Lewis as the club's travel officer. Ray had an almost evangelical approach to the role and soon a sizeable hardcore of members were travelling to watch the City week after week by train, car, mini-bus, coach or whatever other form of transport Ray had laid on for that particular match.

Anyone showing indecision as to whether to attend a

particular game would find themselves brutally cajoled into making up their minds by Ray, who would regard failure to join his merry band of travellers as a personal insult.

Despite these advances, when it came down to it, what we were really good at was, as ever, downright foolishness. Most City fans remember the long trip to Carlisle in January 1993 as the match that started the run of good form that eventually led to the title. In the 1927 Club, however, it is celebrated as the only occasion when one of our number managed to get arrested.





Now I hasten to add that the individual concerned (who shall remain nameless) is no hooligan or vandal, but, just occasionally, he has been known to have one or two drinks to many. Which frankly was the case for virtually all of us who took the train up from Euston that day. Four hours in an enclosed space with a bar was only ever going to lead to one outcome. So when Kevin Ratcliffe, making his Cardiff debut, headed the winner with only his third ever league goal, it was perhaps inevitable that one of us would express his gratitude and exhilaration by running on the pitch to give Kev a big bear hug. Sadly, the local constabulary were in super-officious mode that afternoon and reacted by carting the gentleman concerned off to the back of their van.

There he stayed, in the less than convivial company of a few lads who had been arrested for, frankly, more reprehensible, not to say violent, behaviour until one of the said lads decided to try the van door. It turned out to be unlocked and the occupants of the van made their bid for freedom.

Now our representative would have been well advised to get the hell out of Carlisle pronto and indeed made his way to the station where the train for London was waiting. However, on discovering that none of the rest of the party were on it (we were at the police station, demanding the release of the 1927 Club "One", which is ironic given that he wasn't in custody at the time), he, rather touchingly I feel, retired to the pub opposite the station to await our arrival. Not a clever move as, shortly thereafter, the van from which he had earlier made his escape pulled up outside and a rather irate looking arresting officer ushered him into the back for a trip to the police station from where he was only released long after the last train had departed.

Since those heady days the Club had changed it's focus slightly. We still run organised travel to many matches each season, thanks to the efforts of our Jesus Christ look-alike travel officer Rob Hughes. However, in recent years we have arranged a number of social events and hosted talks by the likes of Radio 5 Lives Ron Jones, Frank Burrows, Steve Borley, the late

lamented Phil Suarez and, of course, Sam Hammam himself. For Jason Perry's testimonial year in 1997 we arranged a highly successful evening at Terry Neill's Sports Bar in Central London, which not only raised a substantial sum for Jason's fund but, perhaps more importantly, was thoroughly enjoyed by all those who attended, including Jason, Carl Dale and Jeff Eckhardt. The committee continue to produce a highly entertaining, if sometimes incomprehensible, news-letter for Club members several times a season and, on the first Thursday of each month, the Club's long-standing traditions are respected at our monthly meetings where we invariably prove that though we may have got older, we certainly haven't got any wiser.

Finally, I'd like to dedicate this article to those whose hard work and good humour over the years has made the 1927 Club such a success. In addition to those mentioned above the following, in particular, have generously given of their time and energy to ensure that the Club has provided an invaluable service to Bluebirds fans in London for the last 15 years:

Chris Howells, Mike Bruford, Sue Ball, Richard Davies, Rob Thomas, Alun Morris, Marc Thomas, Andy Evans, Huw Thomas, Mike Slocombe, Matt Gabb, Mark Watkins, Steve Borley and, last but by no means least our founder (despite never having lived any nearer to London than Bournemouth) Richard Lewis.

PROGRAMMES BY CLIVE FRANCIS



PROGRAMMES

The Supporters Club shop has a large selection of Cardiff City home and away programmes from last season back to the early sixties.

Need to find those missing programmes?

Either send your wants list to:

CCSC, P.O Box 1927,
Cardiff CF11 8YH.

Or alternatively e-mail
Clive Francis at:

clive.f@ccsc.co.uk

PIN BADGES

Very limited number of high quality Welsh badges available, commemorating competitive and friendly matches.

All badges are finished to a high standard and display national emblems, date of fixture and, if a competitive match, the competition.

Qatar v Wales

23/02/00

Red

Croatia v Wales

21/08/02

Purple or red

Finland v Wales

07/09/02

White

Wales v Bosnia Herzegovina

12/02/03

White

Norway v Wales

27/05/04

Red

Wales v Canada

30/05/04

Red or white

Latvia v Wales

18/08/04

Black

England v Wales

09/10/04

White

Wales v Hungary

09/02/05

White

Wales v Austria

26/03/05

White or red

Austria v Wales

30/03/05

White or red

Wales v Slovenia

17/08/05

White or red

Wales v England

03/09/05

White or red

Poland v Wales

07/09/05

Red

All badges are priced at £2.50 each. Please add 30p for the first badge and then 20p per badge or send S.A.E to cover postage costs.

Please send payment to:

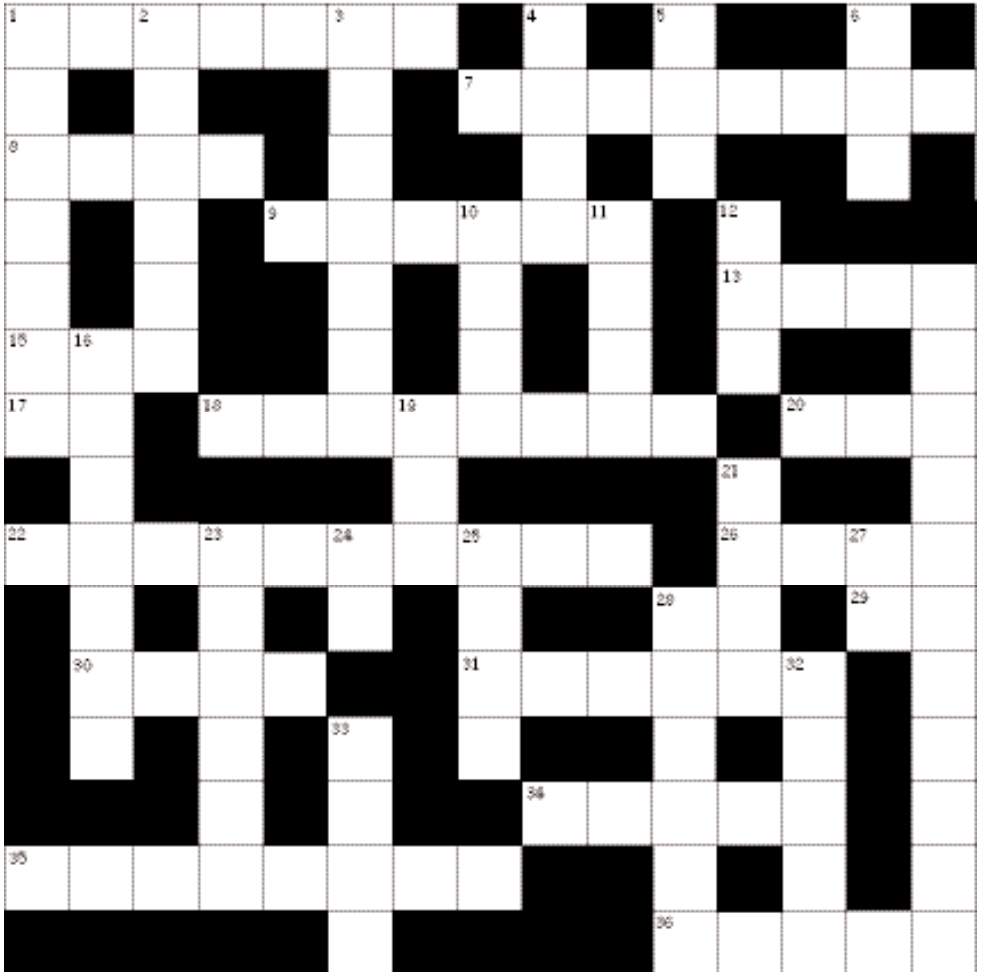
CCSC, PO BOX 1927,
Cardiff CF11 8YH.

All cheques should be made payable to: CCSC.

The Supporters Club have an extensive selection of Cardiff badges available, these can be viewed and purchased either on match days at the club shop or by visiting the club website: www.ccsc.co.uk.



CROSSWORD BY MARTIN, NIA AND LUCY STOCKWELL





Across

1. Striker – popular in April (7)
7. Right-half with a seasonal surname (8)
8. _ _ _ _ Saville – Ex striker (4)
9. Boot maker (6)
13. Ex-player with a bit of a bite
Goal-a-game! (4)
15. _ _ _ Park, Readings old ground (3)
17. Artificial intelligence (2)
18. Scottish club-sounds a bit Welsh (8)
20. Where Ainsworth plays now (3)
22. They play at Glanford park (10)
26. Nickname of 22 across (4)
28. Initials of our neighbours down the road (2)
29. _ _ Stadium, Hull's ground (2)
30. Plough _ _ _ _ (4)
31. We stand together (6)
34. Scottish Minnows (5)
35. See 6 down (8)
36. My daughter's favourite pop group! (5)

Down

1. Our cousins down the road (7)
2. They play at Boundary Park (6)
3. Our financial wizard! (7)
4. Not Lazio but_ _ _ _ (4)
5. _ _ _ ! as they say at the Bernabeu (3)
6. (&35 across) Irish goalie (3,8)
10. King of the "Diddy-men" (4)
11. Off/On (4)
12. The number of FA cup finals we
have contested (3)
14. ECWC opponents (11)
16. The Imps (7)
19. _ _ _ Ferdinand (3)
21. Pat _ _ _ _ , Arsenal defender (4)
23. Our Patch (6)
24. Twickers (2)
25. _ _ _ _ Gullitt (4)
27. _ _ D'Accord (2)
28. Man United World cup winner (6)
32. He defeated the Armada (5)
33. Ex-Wales centre (4)

Answers on page 21.

CYPRUS v. WALES POSSIBLY THE WORST INTERNATIONAL OF ALL

Five of us, myself along with, Allyson, Reg, Mike and Steve left Cardiff at 4am on a frosty Monday morning for an uneventful journey over to Heathrow, to support the 'Land of our Fathers' in Cyprus the following Wednesday.

With the exception of Mike, who had jumped straight into the car after the previous evenings socializing, the rest of us had been up since about 3am. So the first pint in the airport lounge at 7am felt reasonably normal (body thought it was mid day), apart from the fact the other passengers dotted around were tucking into tea and toast.

We flew with BA on a comfortable aircraft, with plenty of knee room and the crew offered a friendly service - more drinks, arriving in Cyprus late afternoon. A few blazers from the Welsh FA and various media reporters along with Red Arrow tours had been on our flight. As they all milled around outside, a Taxi, pre booked by tour organizer Allyson, was waiting and moments later we were heading to Limassol - speed fast.

A quick change of clothes into shorts and t-shirts and it wasn't long before we were consuming the local beer, Keo, in Cyprus' very own Welsh Bar. The beer was quite gassy; Reg was heard to comment that he wouldn't be able to drink more than 10 pints of it, hic.

The bar wasn't particularly Welsh, with Arsenal, Liverpool and Chelsea memorabilia evident on the walls. Perhaps Rhys Weston had supplied all the Arsenal gear from his days with the Gooners!

We eventually moved on to some of the Irish bars, where the beer was more agreeable, but more expensive than in UK. Accuracy of events is a bit vague after this, but at some stage later, when Reg's hollow legs were full, we made our way back to the hotel.

The Welsh FA had arranged for the traveling fans to pick up their match tickets from the 'Step Inn' Irish bar in Limassol on Tuesday and leading up to the game on the Wednesday, handy for us, but not if you were one of the ones staying down the other end of the Island, however, at £5.00 per ticket there weren't many complaints. I suspect the Republic of Ireland's fans would have experienced better arrangements when 14,000 traveled to the recent World Cup game in Cyprus.

I don't normally do the under-21 games when I'm away with Wales, but this seemed a good

opportunity to see some of the island as we were only here for 3 days. The fixture was in Paphos, about 45 minutes down the road. There isn't public transport as such in Cyprus, however service taxis can be arranged through the hotel, these are much cheaper than normal taxis, a people carrier turns up, picks other passengers up from local business's or hotels and takes you to your required location in the next town - so we saw a bit of the back streets before we were dropped at the ground and arrangements were made for another 'service taxi' to pick us up after the game, which right on time, it did.

Around 150 Welsh fans took up positions on a steep terracing on a very warm November afternoon, although the pitch was surrounded by a running track a decent view was had by all. Manager, John Toshack sat amongst us trying to sus out if there were any super stars emerging from a very young under- 21 side. A crystal ball might have been more use in the circumstances, the Welsh players had the right attitude and played reasonably well as a team but no individual stood out head and shoulders above the others, the City boy, Joe Jacobson did well down the left and Bryon Anthony got a run out in the second half.



Each time Cyprus scored Wales struck back quickly, that said, the game certainly livened up in the 2nd half, where if my memory serves me correctly, 12 bookings and a red card (to a Welsh substitute who had been on the pitch for 60 seconds) were dished out, as the local referee completely lost the plot. Some of the play-acting from the Cypriots was beyond belief. There must have been a sniper on top of the stand with orders to pick off any Cypriot player that was approached by a Welsh defender. Cypriot players were going off at regular intervals on a motorized 'Golf Buggy' in agony, only to sprint back on moments later when a Welsh player had been booked for been in his vicinity.

With all this going on, the result of the match suddenly meant a lot more to the assembled fans, and the disappointment was quite apparent when Cyprus nicked a third goal as the injury time board was put up.

However, if ever justice was done at a football match, this was it, as Cyprus' main oscar contender, when not under pressure, scored a 40 yard own goal over his goalkeeper's head who he caught loitering near the penalty spot. A quick juggle by him and Wales had secured a 3-3 draw, which they thoroughly deserved. At last I can wipe away the memory of that Jason Bowen effort against Mark Walton from in front of the Bob Bank.

The final whistle went and the large figure of Toshack went down onto the pitch to de-brief



Two retired prop forwards discuss the finer arts of their trade in downtown Limassol.

the team. Allyson said "why does the mascot go to the team de-briefings?" Referring to a small figure stood next to Tosh. "That's Brian Flynn dear.

Wednesday dawned and by mid day we had departed the hotel for the main event itself, KO 9pm local time. Many beers were consumed as the Welsh fans gathered at the 'Step Inn', Reg was finally persuaded to eat at least one meal whilst in Cyprus, then it was off to the match.

The ground holds 15,000, with a stand running down either side of the pitch, Welsh fans on one side, Cypriots on the other. I reckon about 300 Welsh had flown out from the UK but this figure was boosted by the British Forces serving on the island and British holiday makers who needed a football fix. Probably 500 - 600 in all. It certainly wasn't the usual Welsh crowd, hardly any singing and very little passion.

What I did witness was the biggest 1-0 hiding I'd seen since I saw the City get beat at West Ham a couple of seasons ago.

Toshack summed it up saying it was the worst International performance he'd ever seen - I have to agree. Hartson gave the most inept display by a Centre Forward at any level, and when I saw the local papers match marks a few days later I thought 1/10 was another case of over marking. Ironically, I noted he scored against Rangers on the Saturday!

The one positive was, the debut of the new Welsh Goalkeeper, Lewis Price of Ipswich, he looks a good prospect.

We traveled home on the Thursday having had a thoroughly enjoyable stay in Cyprus, apart from the match that is. I would certainly return in the future, but would probably avoid high season.



THE MAN IN BLACK

Referees are probably the most vilified and hated figures in football – no one likes them, but do they care? Are they really human anyway?

Abused by supporters, usually from both sides. Be fair, hands up anyone who at some time has not abused or shouted at a referee. Blamed and accused of all sorts, by managers of both teams, and in the era of Sky's mass coverage of the game, analysed, criticised and ridiculed by dozens of soccer pundits, usually ex-players who are there to dissect the performance of the man in the middle, from many angles and with the aid of all the high tech wizardry they can muster.

So the Ref gets it from all sides – but do think they deserve it? Well there are occasions I can recall when you think that they do. When we see certain referees trot out to Referee the City we break out into mass panic and cold sweats.

My particular favourite to hate is Mr Barry Knight, of Orpington, who can ever forget his performance at Ninian Park against Cambridge United, I can't and that was probably 6 or 7 years ago. In that game he sent off Mike Ford for a shoulder charge, leading to a penalty, which was saved, added on 4 minutes of injury time from God knows where in which Cambridge scored a winner, which looked offside, with the last kick of the game.

To cap it all, earlier, he denied us a penalty with one of the most blatant handballs you will ever see. Nobody could say he was a homer that day – was he illegitimate – probably! Blind – Definitely! But a homer – not on your life!

Mr Knight haunted us in later seasons at Exeter and Swindon (who remembers Leo getting sieved down in the box in front of the City supporters, only to be booked for diving)

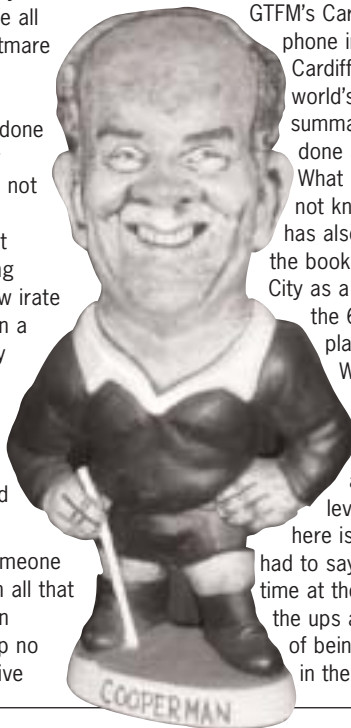
But he's not the only one who we love to hate. We all have our own nightmare Referees. But ask yourself would you fancy the job. I've done a bit at local junior parks level and it's not that easy and sometimes not that enjoyable, but being shouted at by a few irate parents and dog on a miserable Saturday morning doesn't compare with being crucified by 60,000 at somewhere like Old Trafford I guess.

So what makes someone want to go through all that in the first place? In today's Premiership no doubt it is a lucrative

living, the new breed of celebrity Referees rightly or wrongly are as well known and recognised as some of the players. Alan Wiley, Uriah Rennie, Howard Webb, Phil Dowd, Mike Riley, and Mark Clattenburg – we all know them. But what is it like at the other end of the ladder – refereeing at Hartlepool on a wet and windy Tuesday night in January.

I recently had the chance to find out first hand from someone who has done that and gone on to referee in the Premiership and also in a Cup Final at Wembley.

Keith Cooper, the presenter of GTFM's Cardiff City phone in and Cardiff City world's match summariser has done all that. What some might not know is he has also been on the books of Cardiff City as a player in the 60's and played for Wales on 11 occasions at Youth, Boys clubs and YMCA levels. So here is what he had to say about his time at the City and the ups and downs of being the man in the middle.





GL: Keith can you tell me how you became involved at Cardiff City?

KC: Well I was playing for Pontypridd YMCA at the time and was asked to go along for a trial at the City. There were about 200 boys in the same boat and we played in about four trial games matches over a period of time until we got down to about 22 of us.

We then played a final trial at Coronation Park (that's the ground by the Cardiff Bus depot on Sloper Road where Grange Albion now play). That game was against the Cardiff City youth team.

GL: Who was in the Cardiff City Youth that you can remember and how did you get on?

KC: Well we lost 6-3, but I was lucky enough to score our three. Toshack was there, Steve Derrett, Leighton Phillips

GL: You must have thought you had done enough to get asked back then?

KC: Well I was very hopeful. I remember Jimmy Scoular coming into the dressing Room after the game pointing at a few of the boys in out team and asking them if they wanted to sign as amateurs. He didn't pick me out – I was pretty down – then he turned to me and said 'do you want to join the ground staff son' – well I was pleased as anything.

GL: What was the difference between being taken on as an amateur as opposed to ground staff and did you get paid?

KC: Well if you are asked back as an amateur they wanted you to turn out on a non-contract basis for playing in the youth and welsh league sides - if they liked the look of you later they could sign you then. Being on the ground staff meant you signed for the club, trained with them everyday, and got paid. I got £5 a week pay and another £5 a week for my food and train fare from Treforest to Grangetown.

GL: So what do you remember of your time down there, what was Scoular like and Don Murray?

KC: Oh Jimmy Scoular was a real hard man, he hated to lose, he'd kick anybody to win a practice match, but all the players respected him. Don Murray, well he was one of the nicest blokes you could meet off the field, but on it, he'd kick you from pillar to post.

I dreaded Monday's if the first team had lost on Saturday because it was usually a practice match, first against the reserves, we played a lot on Ninian Park itself and the boss would really get the first team at it, he really took it out of them. So Donald would be well annoyed and I can't remember the number of times he kicked me over the Bob Bank wall, and I mean literally over the wall.

GL: Who was, in your opinion, the best player down there at the time?

KC: Oh without doubt on his day, when he wanted to be, Greg Farrell, fantastic ability but obviously he was a bit of a rebel, but he could play. He used to play against Peter Rodrigues in training, who played for Wales, and he used to take the mickey, nut megs, all sorts.

Then he would stand there and say 'you are crap, I thought you where an International', they would end up fighting, Scoular loved it, and let them get on with it.

GL: So how did your time end with City and what happened then?

KC: Well I was there for two years until I was 18, I'd had a few injuries, but at the end of the day I wasn't good enough, so obviously they released me, I was pretty down for a while, but I played for a short time with Merthyr.

GL: So you took up refereeing then after that!

KC: Yeah, I started in the local Ponty League in 1969: by 1974 I got on to the Football league line.

GL: Can you remember your first match running the line and your first match in the Football League as a referee?

KC: Yes, my first match on the line was Hereford v Port Vale at Edgar Street, the first thing I did was run up the line and drop the flag, I got some right stick for that.

My first game in charge was at Ashton Gate, Bristol City v Hull in the old 3rd Division.

GL: Did everything go smoothly after that?

KC: Well not really, in fact there came a period when I had a bit of a rough time, it happens to us all I suppose, but I had basically two matches to save my bacon. What really did me a great favour was the Oxford v Spurs game in 1983. By chance, Graham Kelly and a few of the other FA top brass had been to a funeral of one of the other FA reps that day and had taken the opportunity to watch the match in the evening. Spurs had Waddle, Hoddle and Ardiles in their side then and it was a really easy game to ref, you just let it flow. Waddle scored a gem of a goal from nearly half way with a half volley; it was that sort of game.

Anyway, I was told Kelly had been impressed and I got my name known. I got a favourable report from the match observer and things picked up from then on: it was my lucky break at the time.

GL: The Premiership started in 1992, you were on the Premiership list for that season, what was your first game?

KC: Yes, it started in 1992; my first game was at Christmas, Villa v Middlesborough, Villa won 5-2. Lennie Lawrence was the Boro manager at the time. I was caught on camera at the end of the game giving Nigel Spink, the Villa Keeper, a big kiss on the cheek.

GL: The pinnacle of your career must have been the League Cup Final, that was in 1994 wasn't it?

KC: Yes, Man U v Villa at Wembley.

GL: Who played that day and what are your memories of the occasion?

KC: Oh United had Giggs, Cantona, Ince, Kanchelskis, Hughes, Bruce, and Pallister. Villa had Teale, Dalian Atkinson, Andy Townsend and Dean Saunders (Keith may have forgotten, but our own Neil Cox came on as a sub for Villa that day). Villa won 3-1, I send Kanchelskis off for a deliberate hand ball, which stopped the ball going in and Saunders scored to make it 3-1 from the penalty.

After the match Les Sealey, who was in goal for United that day, had a right old go at me, because it was virtually the end of the game, he was saying you didn't need to send him off.

But it was the only thing I could do, it was deliberate, and he had to go.

What happens if Saunders misses the penalty, United go down the other end and Kanchelskis scores to make it 2-2 – when he shouldn't be on the pitch.

GL: What do you remember about the rest of the match and the presentation. Was Fergie going bonkers?

KC: Well unlike the Cup Final, in the League Cup the referee and linesman go out in front of the players and going out of the tunnel was loud. After the game we went up for our medals, Fergie no problems, Pat Crerand was there, Denis Law and a few of the other United old boys all shook my hand, they were as good as gold, Bobby Charlton turned his back and blanked me completely.

GL: You must have refereed United a few times over the years. How was Ferguson to you – any hairdryer treatment?

KC: Oh, he would have a go, but you have to stand up to him and have a go back. I remember a game against Villa in the league, it finished 1-1, he came running up the tunnel and shouted at me 'is that a Welsh watch you are wearing' he didn't say it that politely though 'Why, what's the problem' I said. 'Well it doesn't tell the same !#!*! time as our watches, does it'. So I gave him some back and he calmed down in the end.



But he always knocked on our door and wished us all the best after that, so you had to be just as strong as he was and not be intimidated.

GL: Regarding intimidation, who's the worst team you have referees for that?

KC: Well Wimbledon were a right hand full, Vinnie Jones, Fashanu, Lawrie Sanchez, Winterburn before he went to Arsenal, Dennis Wise. The quietest of the lot was Alan Cork, he never said much. Alan was not the same sort of character.

I remember a game at Selhurst Park when they were ground sharing. Sam Hamman had this bloody elephant parading around the pitch; there were piles of elephant droppings all over the touchline – typical Sam. They were playing Bolton, Jason McAteer and Alan Stubbs were playing for Bolton then, and the Wimbledon boss had the dressing room door open, the music was up full volume and as Bolton came out from their dressing room, Vinnie stood by the door and shouted at the top of his voice what he was going to do to McAteer and Fash was saying the same about Stubbs. First two minutes of the game, Vinnie puts McAteer six feet up into the air with a tackle, I book him and he is standing over McAteer telling him he didn't even touch him.

GL: What about at International level?

KC: Well I remember Northern Ireland v Uruguay at Windsor Park. Danny Wilson was playing for Ireland along with Norman Whiteside. In the tunnel before the game Danny tapped me on the shoulder and asked me if I had ever refereed Uruguay before. I said 'No'. After five minutes, he came up to me and pointed at his face, it was covered in spit, all over his neck, shirt everywhere. 'See, I told you' he said. Players hate that, but that's the way the South Americans can be.

GL: What is the toughest game you can recall?

KC: Well, City v Swansea in the FA Cup at the Vetch was something else, we must have used nine balls that day, they were going into the crowd and coming out flat, frightening, punctured every one.

I always remember a fellow called Viv Read who ran the line for me that day, he's passed away now, God bless him, but he was a gem, the nicest bloke you could ever meet and a real character, I loved the bloke to bits.

I asked him to run the line in front of the North Bank, because I knew he had the bottle. It was going off in the corner.

The City fans were behind the goal: a fight broke out in the main stand behind the dugouts.

At half time, Viv came running across the pitch to meet me and he was running as if he had a limp. I asked him what was up, in the dressing room he empties his shorts pockets and they are full of coins, which the Swansea lot had chucked at him. He's laughing like hell, didn't worry him one bit, 'I'm going to have a good drink with this lot tonight' he says. He goes back out for the second half and didn't bat an eyelid.

We did another game in the UEFA Cup in Italy, Cagliari v Trabanspor. We used to fly Club Class on those trips, so Viv, who likes a drink, did okay on the way over with the whisky, when we got to the hotel we had a meal and went off to our rooms fairly early.

The next thing, about 10pm, there is a knock at the door. 'Have you got anything in your mini bar' he says, well as I don't drink I told him 'Yeah, its full, why!' 'Well give me your lot, I've drunk all mine' so he empties all the spirits from my fridge and takes them to his room. He had drunk the lot by the following morning.

He ran the line that day, never put a foot wrong, he was a top man.

GL: Any other game spring to mind?

KC: Yes Millwall v West Ham at the Old den. Alvin Martin was captaining West Ham and Terry Hurlock, who was a right wild man, was Millwall captain. There was a virtual riot going on outside so at the kick off I appealed to Alvin Martin to keep things in order on the field, have a word with his team, he knew the score and was fine, 'no problem' he said. I turned to Hurlock and said the same; he looked at me and told me to '#!*! OFF'. He was nuts!

Things have changed a lot, I remember the first game I did at the Old Den, I arrived by car and was told to park at the side of the ground between some JCB's and Bulldozers. Apparently all the refs did that: it was to make sure they didn't throw bricks and stuff at the cars.

GL: What about players Keith, who are the best you have refereed for skill?

KC: Oh, Cantona was outstanding and Gascoigne at his peak was a great player. I Refereed, Spurs v Hartlepool, in the League Cup, at White Hart Lane. Steve Tuplin was at Hartlepool and he was going on about giving Gascoigne a hard time in the press. Spurs won 5-0, Gascoigne scored 4 I think, and I remember him having the ball right in front of the Hartlepool fans late on in the game.

Tuplin charges at him, launches himself at Gascoigne, who turns full circle, drags the ball back with the sole of his boot and lets Tuplin go flying past him straight into the advertising hoardings. He could play, its sad the way he is now, he looks very ill doesn't he.

Cantona had that aura about him, he was so confident. He once played a one two off my legs and ran around the back of me, past two defenders and picked up the rebound. He was so quick, I hardly realised what he had done. In another game United won 5-0, I think against Man City, he took a long clearance from the back out of the air with the outside of his foot and without breaking stride volleyed the ball in from about 40 yards. To see things like that close up is fantastic. I also refereed Ronaldo who was playing for PSV then, in a friendly at Everton.

GL: Mark Hughes is your favourite player though, why is that?

KC: Yes he was, well he was a great all round player, great first touch, strong as an ox, tough, gave it but took it as well, he never moaned or complained, not to me anyway – so I like Mark, a top player.

GL: Favourite Ground

KC: Highbury is nice, the marble halls, a lot of history (good Cup draw then Keith), but probably Everton is my favourite, I always enjoyed it there and Neville was

usually in goal and he's a great character. I always had an enjoyable game when I went there so I liked Goodison Park.

GL: We've often talked about the big relegation and play off games, have you ever refereed any of them, what are they like with so much at stake?

KC: Yes, I have done a few, they are without doubt the biggest games you can have, and there are a few that spring to mind.

Coventry v QPR, whoever lost was relegated from the Premiership, Coventry won 1-0. Ray Wilkins came to my room after and thanked me, which took a lot of bottle; I couldn't have done that if I'd just been relegated.

The other game was Chelsea v Sheff Utd. It was the same day that Everton played Wimbledon and won 3-2 to stay up. Sheff Utd were drawing 2-2 and if it had stayed that way would have stayed up. Nathan Blake was playing for Sheffield and he has been injured. In time added on for the injury and some other stoppages Chelsea scored to make it 3-2 and Sheffield were relegated. They were devastated at the final whistle, grown men crying in the crowd.

I also did Tranmere v Leicester in the Play-offs, David Speedie was playing for Leicester, they were winning 1-0 in the 2nd half and Speedie was winding down the clock, holding the ball on the touch line.



I could see the Tranmere full back was going to give him one, and he did, straight through him. A fight broke out and they all piled in, Eric Nixon who was in goal for Tranmere ran about 50 yards and smacked Speedie on the head and then ran all the way back to his goal. I sent the full back and Speedie off. Eric thought he had got away with it by running away, I called him back and told him I had to send him off 'Yeah, I know, fair enough Keith, I should have hit him harder though, the little Scottish !#!*!

GL: How do you rate today's referees and are you in favour of using technology for major decisions?

KC: I think Phil Dowd is decent, he's got a good feel for the game and handles the players well from what I've seen. Mark Clattenburg is also a good man manager and refs the game well.

Technology yes, it must come in particularly for the goal line decisions, the referee needs help and technology must be available to do this.

Those play-off games are worth millions, you can imagine the pressure the referee is under to get it right – you must give him an option.

GL: Keith thank you very much for your time, I've really enjoyed our chat.

KC: No problem, its been a pleasure.

Don't forget Keith presents the GTFM Cardiff City phone in on FM 109.9 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 6-7pm. Phone in on 01443 654654 and give your views on all things related to the mighty Bluebirds.



'MARVELLOUS MAYHEM' (VALLEY RAMS)

Many moons ago when I started supporting the Mighty Blues, football hooliganism was in its early shoots as I wrote in the last News Letter. The main reason for the mass improvement in muting hooliganism in recent years was the emergence and setting up of the Valley Rams and the main person who managed to merge all the different factions together was Gwyn Davies.

The idea came about towards the end of Sam Hamman's first season in 2000 – 2001, when Gwyn got together with other City supporters from Rhondda, Aberdare and Merthyr areas who were organising mini buses to away games themselves and decided to merge and follow city on coaches.

The first match they organised coaches for was Peterborough away 2001 they took 8 coaches with many fans migrating from their motors to travel with the Rams.

They quickly grew from strength to strength and many area reps were appointed to help maintain the medium. One of these Reps was Paul Corkery (Corky) from Nelson he's Cardiff through and through, one of the nicest people I have ever met. Due to his hard work, enthusiasm and willingness to want to help other Cardiff fans he soon became one of the main organisers of the Rams, working around the clock on behalf of the organisation and Football Club.

So it has come as a major shock that both Gwyn and Corky are thinking of resigning from the Rams due to pressure from within their organisation, from the football club and outside bodies.

If they are allowed to leave this will have a major affect on our Football Club and Supporters Club for the following reasons:

Remember the 'Marvellous Mayhem' at our away matches prior to the Rams being formed? Police not sure how many would turn up, what transport they would come in, when we might arrive? People complain to me sometimes about the behaviour of the Rams, but like any walk of life you have good and bad everywhere.

The majority of the Rams are from a similar working class background to myself and as a result many of them have become my friends who I socialise outside of football, so I am in a good position to judge them.

Prior to 2001 due to the lack of organised travel the Police would overreact and Police for worst case scenarios, here are some examples: Leyton Orient, every public house within a 5 mile radius of the ground closed. 1998, Exeter, exactly the same, in fact most football grounds were the same. Also made to wait on motorway bridges for hours on end.

Police at Luton searching buses with riot gear on with their faces covered with balaclavas, Police stopping independent coaches from leaving South Wales, searched 3 or 4 times before entering grounds e.g. Stoke 2000, escorted from Wrexham to Newport, met at grounds with truncheon wielding Police who appeared to be bigger thugs than the hooligans they were meant to deal with.

These are just a couple of examples prior to the Rams being formed of how City fans were treated, but now after many years of hard work things have changed out of all sight.

There is a blue-print that we follow which is now being recommended as the way forward for Police to use at potentially volatile games and this is from the Home Office who have sent a representative to follow City during the last couple of seasons.



Here it is and it's quite simple really:

- I. We turn up in coaches.
- II. They organise an area for us to take in refreshments, i.e. pubs or club.
- III. We are then taken straight to the ground, no messing around.
- IV. Not met by riot Police, but Police in normal uniform who keep a low profile.
- V. We watch the game.
- VI. Board our coaches (Police still keeping low profile), escorted out a reasonable distance (not hundreds of miles) from ground and left to go home.

Here are some examples of this blue print in action in recent years:

Rotherham, Norwich, Sheffield United, Wigan, Preston, Blackburn, Gillingham, Crewe, where the above was successful and there are many more examples.

In fact some of the above a couple of seasons ago we were treated very poorly i.e. Sheffield and Wigan big turnarounds in a short space of time because we complied to the blue print and have been rewarded for our improved behaviour.

I don't agree when some supporters say that we are still treated badly, yes we have the occasional set back but overall things have come forward leaps and bounds.

- I. Pubs organised.
- II. Supporters input into how matches are Policed.
- III. Tickets better controlled.
- IV. No waiting on motorway bridges.
- V. Less kick off times changed (except for Sky and Rugby).
- VI. Not in running battles with Police anymore.

These are just a couple of observations of areas which have improved.

Yes there appears to have been a blip at Hull, but in all honesty I didn't see a lot due to the fact I was at the other end of the stand, but this seems to have brought a lot of things to a head within the organisation, which I hope they can resolve amongst themselves or else things will deteriorate quite quickly, to where we came from.

I believe the forming of the Cardiff and Valley Rams has been the main reason that disorder is now a rarity whenever Cardiff play and all parties including the football club, South Wales Police and C.C.S.C. should work together to make sure they stay together.

If Gwyn and Corky do resign, I wish them all the best in the future, but it's crucial that the Rams continue.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ ON PAGE 5.

- 1 - Stockport County. 2 - 573. 3 - Phil Stant. 4 - Tony Evans.
 5 - Northampton Town. 6 - Graham Williams Nov 81- Feb 82,
 Len Ashurst Mar 82-Mar 84, Jimmy Goodfellow Mar 84- Sep 84.
 7 - Danny Gabbidon. 8 - Godfrey Ingram. 9 - 36.
 10 - Alan Lee, Robert Earnshaw. 11 - John Robinson.
 12 - It is the only first team game at Ninian Park not to go
 the full 90 minutes, being abandoned after 31 minutes due to
 waterlogging. 13 - 35. 14 - Walsall, Bradford, Wimbledon.
 15 - £234,000. 16 - Bournemouth in the Carling Cup, Oct 2004.

ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD ON PAGE 10.

Across: 1, Showers. 7, Hollyman. 8, Andy. 9, Adidas.
 13, Woof. 15, Elm. 17, Al. 18, Aberdeen. 20, QPR.

22, Scunthorpe. 26, Iron. 28, SC. 29, KC. 30, Lane,
 31, United. 34, Alloa. 35, Jennings. 36, Steps.

Down: 1, Swansea. 2, Oldham. 3, Risdale (apologies for
 mis-spelling – too late to change!). 4, Roma. 5, Ole. 6, Pat.
 10, Dodd, 11, Side. 12, Two. 14, Ferencvaros. 16, Lincoln.
 19, Rio. 21, Rice. 23, Ninian. 24, HQ. 25, Ruud. 27, OK.
 28, Stiles. 32, Drake. 33, Ring.

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CARDIFF CITY FIXTURES SEASON 2005/6



JULY 2005

Sat 16	Accrington	A	F	W 3-1	
Mon 18	Hamilton	A	F	W 2-1	100
Wed 20	Kilmarnock	A	F	W 2-1	100
Sat 23	Falkirk	A	F	D 1-1	
Wed 27	Udinese	H	F	L 1-3	
Sun 31	West Brom	H	F	L 0-2	

AUGUST

Sat 6	Ipswich Town	A	FLC	L 0-1	1,100
Tue 9	Leeds Utd	H	FLC	W 2-1	900
Fri 12	Watford	H	FLC	L 1-3	145
Sat 20	Derby County	A	FLC	L 1-2	1,115
Wed 24	Colchester Utd	A	CC1	W 2-0	250
Sat 27	Wolverhampton	H	FLC	D 2-2	1,500

SEPTEMBER

Sat 10	Burnley	A	FLC	D 3-3	650
Tue 13	Leicester City	H	FLC	W 1-0	450
Sat 17	Crystal Palace	H	FLC	W 1-0	750
Tue 20	Macclesfield	H	CC2	W 2-1	24
Sat 24	Millwall	A	FLC	D 0-0	600
Tue 27	Stoke City	A	FLC	W 3-0	439

OCTOBER

Sat 1	Luton Town	H	FLC	L 1-2	586
Sat 15	Brighton & HA	A	FLC	W 2-1	714
Tue 18	Preston NE	H	FLC	D 2-2	140
Sat 22	Crewe	H	FLC	W 6-1	215
Wed 26	Leicester City	H	CC3	L 0-1	430
Sat 29	Sheffield Utd	A	FLC	D 0-0	1,136

NOVEMBER

Tues 1	Norwich	A	FLC	L 0-1	421
Sun 6	Coventry	H	FLC	D 0-0	431
Wed 9	Sheffield Wed	A	FLC	W 3-1	590
Sat 19	Preston	A	FLC	L 1-2	850
Tue 22	Brighton & Hove	H	FLC	D 1-1	125
Sun 27	Ipswich Town	H	FLC	W 2-1	180

DECEMBER

Sat 3	Hull City	A	FLC	L 0-2	1,200
Sat 10	Leeds Utd	A	FLC	W 1-0	170
Sat 17	Derby County	H	FLC		
Mon 26	Plymouth Argyle	H	FLC	KO 1pm	
Wed 28	QPR	A	FLC	KO 7.45pm	
Sat 31	Southampton	H	FLC	KO 1pm	

AS

JANUARY 2005

Mon 2	Reading	A	FLC	KO 3pm
Sat 7	Arsenal	A	FAC3	KO 1pm
Tue 10	Carmarthen	A	FAWQF	KO 7pm
Sat 14	Burnley	H	FLC	
Sat 21	Leicester City	A	FLC	
Sat 28			FAC4	
Tue 31	Millwall	H	FLC	

FEBRUARY

Sat 4	Crystal Palace	A	FLC	
Sat 11	Stoke City	H	FLC	
Tue 14	Luton Town	A	FLC	
Sat 18	Hull City	H	FLC	
Sat 18			FAC5	
Sat 25	Watford	A	FLC	

MARCH

Sat 4	Sheffield W	H	FLC	
Sat 11	Wolverhampton	A	FLC	
Sat 18	Plymouth Argyle	A	FLC	
Sat 25	QPR	H	FLC	

APRIL

Sat 1	Southampton	A	FLC	
Sat 8	Reading	H	FLC	
Sat 15	Sheffield United	H	FLC	
Mon 17	Crewe Alexandra	A	FLC	
Sat 22	Norwich City	H	FLC	
Sun 30	Coventry City	A	FLC	

MAY

Sat 6	Play-Off Semi			
	Final 1st leg		FLC	
Wed 10	Play-off Semi			
	Final 2nd leg		FLC	
Sun 21	Play-off Final		FLC	

AS: Away support

