

BATH FOOTBALL CLUB

(Rugby Football Union)



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BATH v. PONTYPOOL

SATURDAY, 7th SEPTEMBER, 1991

Price £1

Programme No. 166



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Bath Football Club Sponsored by **SWEB**

BATH v. PONTYPOOL

SATURDAY, 7th SEPTEMBER, 1991

BATH

Colours: Blue, White & Black

Full Back 16 AUDLEY LUMSDEN

Right Wing 15 TONY SWIFT*

Right Centre 14 IESTYN LEWIS

Left Centre 12 PHILIP DE GLANVILLE

Left Wing 11 JIM FALLON

Outside Half 10 DUNCAN WILLETT

Scrum Half 9 IAN SANDERS

Forwards 1 GARETH CHILCOTT*

2 COLIN ATKINS

3 VICTOR UBOGU

4 MARTIN HAAG

5 ANDY REED

6 ANDY ROBINSON* (Capt.)

7 NICK MASLEN

8 BEN CLARKE

Replacements 17 CRAIG DALBY

18 MARK CRANE

19 GARETH ADAMS

Referee: MIKE EDWARDS (RFU)

PONTYPOOL

Colours: Red, White & Black

Full Back 15 ARWEL PARRY

Right Wing 14 SEAN HANSON

Right Centre 13 BOB LEWIS

Left Centre 12 SHAUN McGAUCHIE

Left Wing 11 JOHN PAULSON

Outside Half 10 DAVID PHILIPS

Scrum Half 9 CERI JONATHAN

Forwards 1 ANDREW DIBBLE

2 NIGEL MEEKS

3 LINDON MUSTOE

4 NEIL JONES

5 MARK SPILLER

6 CHRIS HUSH (Capt.)

7 VINCE DAVIES

8 RICHARD GOODEY

Replacements 17

18 To be named

19

Kick-off 3.00 p.m.

The Sponsors for today's GILBERT Match Ball are BARCLAYS BANK PLC.

Grateful thanks also to Barclays Bank PLC, for the bottle of Scotch Whisky for today's Lucky Programme Prize.

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BATH v. PONTYPOOL

EARLIER DAYS — BATH AND 'POOL

(and the Valley stronghold)

BATH links with the rugby stronghold of the Valleys reaches back to the 1890's, and even then the familiar names of Neath, Penarth and London Welsh were appearing on the fixture list.

So, how would our Welsh counterparts have found things at Bath? Well, at this period the West Countrymen were noted for tough, no-nonsense forwards who formed the bedrock around which Bath based their strategy and most of their tactics.

And Welsh opposition, like all opponents, would know of Bath's feared 'footrush'. This ploy (to the accompaniment of "FEET BATH, FEET" echoing around the Rec) could sometimes lead to a charge covering almost the length of the park, with the entire Bath pack surging upfield, the ball at their feet.

However, Bath were able to take advantage of a rather less obvious piece of good fortune, namely the presence of the City's main-line railway link. Hence a journey to destinations in Wales, London or the far South West could be made in barely more time than a journey of today, where a century onwards we know only too well the meaning of a snarl-up along the M4 corridor.

But good forwards and travel arrangements notwithstanding, it was no time for complacency at Bath, because down at the Memorial Ground the rugby style and success of Bristol was signalling another message. It was this: "If Bath were really serious in their quest for full senior status, then somehow, somewhere, they must find a senior level back-division!" Good forwards were of course essential, but as the Bristolians and their Welsh neighbours were clearly demonstrating, rugby was now developing into a fifteen-man running game.



R. A. Gerrard (Bath & England)
(Courtesy of
Bath Evening Chronicle)

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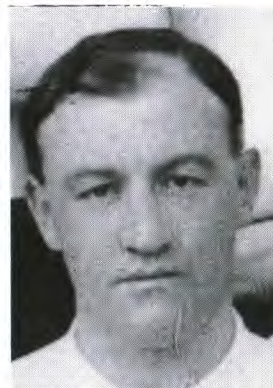
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James Timmings—"Inspiration"

Enter now one James Timmings! He of Bath, the Barbarians and England Trialist. Now James WAS a back player, a centre in fact who was to be seen in Bath colours from the late 1890's to 1910. He was Anglo-Welsh, he enjoyed a two year interim spell in the capital with the London Welsh and Middlesex, and above all he was the inspiration behind Bath's first great back-division, which by the season of 1907-8 was beginning to cause a lot of problems to opposing defences. In support of the superb Timmings were the likes of the brilliant Coates brothers, with Cambridge Blue Norman at centre and brother Vincent a devastating winger for Bath and England. Then there was Alfred Kitching, a Monkton Combe Schoolmaster and among the fastest wingmen ever seen in Bath Colours.

Bath results suddenly improved, and with this improvement came the recognition of senior status. This led to a further strengthening of fixtures, which among others was now to include the name of Pontypool.

Now 'Pool, like many Clubs from the rugby-mad Valleys, were themselves looking in pretty good shape during this fast changing era of the game. Highly organised at both player and supporter level, reports quote that on some visits to Bath some one thousand plus 'Pool followers would be in town for the day.

So, how did Welsh observers rate Bath at this period? Well, the South Wales News gives us some idea, acclaiming Bath "as among the most improved sides in England." Bath observations of Pontypool could be equally flattering, one local spokesman writing of 'those friendly, sporting occasions when 'Pool are on The Rec.'

By now some eighty years of rugby rivalry between Bath and 'Pool have passed beneath the proverbial bridge. Crucial lessons have been absorbed and learned.

Of these, one stands out from Bath's point of view. You see, we originally met 'Pool at that very time when James Timmings was moulding Bath's first quality back division. Another such back-line came in the early 1920's, then much later we saw the running backs of Peter Sibley's side of the late 1960's, while now we witness the Bath back divisions of today. And whenever one glances at Bath's great periods of success, one notices that such success was achieved with a combination of those traditionally strong Bath forwards, plus a back division of thrust and skill in support.

This all started with James Timmings, and at that same moment when the Bath-Pontypool story began.

HARRY W. BARSTOW