

Crusaders sign six Welsh internationals

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NEWLY-PROMOTED Celtic Crusaders have thrown down the gauntlet to their new National League One rivals by signing a host of internationals and Super League players.

The only professional rugby league side in Wales have signed six Welsh internationals to boost their squad for their 2008 campaign.

The Crusaders were promoted as National League Two champions last month and will be applying for a Super League place for 2009.

To help them in that bid, they have signed a total of eight players. Welsh internationals Mark Lennon and Luke Dyer have both signed from Super League side Hull Kingston Rovers while prop David Tangata-Toa joins the Welsh side from the same club.

Welsh Internationals Jordan James and Ian Webster, as well as team-mate Aaron Summers, all join from the 2007 National League One play-off finalists, Widnes Vikings.

There is a welcome return to rugby league for Welsh international Steve Thomas.

The 27-year old Neath centre previously turned out for London Broncos in Super League before signing for the Welsh All-Blacks.

Ben Flower will make his rugby league debut after signing from Welsh Rugby Union Premiership side, Bedwas.

Flower, who turns 20 this month, has also turned out for the Newport Gwent-Dragons and is a Wales under-20 international.

Crusaders' chief executive David Thompson said: "The signing of these top quality players is a real statement of intent by the club.

"We are not simply going into National League One to make up the numbers. The intention is to make a genuine impact on the competition. This season we had some success against League One opposition in the cup and next year we'll be even stronger.

"It's important to the club that six of these new signings are Welsh internationals. We have always strived to keep the bulk of our squad Welsh qualified and these signings reinforce our intentions.

"The future of the club lies with Welsh players and to that end we are also launching an academy side in 2008 which will help to develop young Welsh talent."

Lennon, Dyer, James, Thomas and Webster are all expected to join their new Crusader team mates Gareth Dean and Anthony Blackwood in the Welsh international rugby league squad ahead of the game against Papua New Guinea at the Brewery Field on October 28.

Tickets for that game cost £5 for adults and £3 concessions, and are available on-line at www.crusadersrfl.com.

NEW PLAYERS AT A GLANCE

Mark Lennon (Hull Kingston Rovers)

Luke Dyer (Hull Kingston Rovers)

David Tangata-Toa (Hull Kingston Rovers)

Jordan James (Widnes Vikings)

Ian Webster (Widnes Vikings)
Aaron Summers (Widnes Vikings)
Steve Thomas (Neath RU)
Ben Flower (Bedwas RU)

Crusaders' new sponsorship deal

Nov 27, 2007, 5:36pm

PROMOTION-WINNING Rugby League club Celtic Crusaders has secured a new shirt sponsorship deal with national housebuilder Redrow Homes.

The Crusaders – newly-promoted to the Co-operative National League One after last season's League Two championship-winning triumph – will feature the Wales-based housebuilder across the front of its playing strip for the whole of the next campaign.

It will be Redrow's second season as the club's major shirt sponsor during a year that will see the Crusaders make its application to the Rugby Football League for Super League status.

Redrow Homes, which builds new homes across South Wales including close to the Crusaders' base in Bridgend, is no stranger to sports sponsorship, teaming up with the Crusaders after enjoying a successful three-year shirt sponsorship with Cardiff City Football Club.

Celtic Crusaders' chief executive David Thompson said: "The club is grateful for the support Redrow gave us in putting rugby league well and truly on the Welsh sporting map last season and are looking forward to another successful year with them in 2008.

"Next season will be very important to the club and all those who support it. We have already shown our intent on making a genuine impact on National League One by making a number of top-quality new signings. It will also be a very important time for us off the field as we capitalise on the impact we made with the Welsh public last season, and continue to grow the number of rugby league fans here in Wales."

The ambitious Crusaders, who intend to apply for a Super League licence for 2009, have already signed a number of internationals and Super League players to kick-start their new season which starts next February.

The club's off-field signings include sponsorship support from business across Wales, including Darwin Gray, Speedsafe, Nathaniel Car Sales. Effective Communication, Marketsafe and Dekor plc.

Rachael Davies, Area Sales Manager of Redrow Homes (South Wales), said: "We have always been willing to explore innovative and new ideas, both within our own product range and the initiatives we choose to support.

"With the media exposure and public support the Crusaders enjoyed last season, being their main shirt sponsor proved to be very successful and we are delighted to be able to continue that support for another campaign. We wish the Crusaders every success in their bid for Super League status."