

### **22.03.2005 - Welsh club could win pro call-up**

A club from south Wales is among the frontrunners to join rugby league's professional ranks next season.

A restructuring of the LHF National Leagues means a new club will be invited to join the second division.

Coventry and Bramley are thought to be two other clubs interested in joining League Two at the start of next season.

But a Wales club, based in Bridgend and with the backing of ex-Warrington and Wales international Mike Nicholas, is one of the favourites to be admitted.

"There is a lot of talent out there," said Nicholas.

"We were already reaching the stage where people are choosing to play rugby league rather than rugby union."

If admitted, the club would target promotion to Super League and aim to recruit the majority of their players from the eight-team Welsh Conference.

### **19.05.2005 - Super League set for 2009 changes**

The Rugby Football League is set to scrap promotion and relegation in time for the 2009 Super League season.

The RFL also confirmed plans to expand Super League from 12 to 14 clubs.

Promotion and relegation will remain in place for the next four seasons but then potential new clubs are likely to come from London, Wales or France.

Thereafter, the RFL will only consider admitting new teams on a three-yearly franchise system based on clubs' infrastructure, finance and results.

Toulouse have expressed their desire to join Perpignan, who will join the elite division next February, and an application from a Welsh club to be based in Bridgend will be considered by the RFL Council in July.

But executive chairman Richard Lewis insists ambitious non-Super League clubs will still be able to reach the top and says the National League clubs have given their backing to the blueprint.

"We've been talking to them for many months and they agree there is a better way of getting into Super League," said Lewis, highlighting the problems of Leigh, who have struggled to make the transition from part-timers.

"They fully understand that, to have a realistic chance of not just getting into Super League but actually staying there on a sustainable basis, this is a better option in the long term."

Lewis also stressed that plans for expansion were unlikely to take place until the current television deal with BSkyB expires at the end of 2008.

He added that all 12 Super League clubs will undergo an assessment in 2006 and it was hoped that the six clubs who currently fail to achieve a turnover of £3m would soon hit the target.

"If we don't believe it is sustainable and we don't believe that enough players will come through to give us 14 clubs, we won't do it," he added.

"There is further room for development and we believe we can grow central income and provide revenue for 14 clubs."

Also in the blueprint are plans to have six referees employed by the RFL, although not necessarily full-time, by 2007 and to integrate overseas match officials, particularly Frenchmen, into Super League.

The League also hopes to introduce central contracts for Great Britain players, although this could be five or six years away, but in the meantime, aims to relieve the workload on the game's leading players.

The increase in the number of teams will lead to a reduction in Super League fixtures, since it will remove the need for additional games and enable clubs to play each other home and away.

"The elite players are involved in too many matches which impacts on playing standards at international level and career longevity," said Lewis.

#### **14.06.2005 - Rugby League On Its Way**

THE Rugby Football League is almost certain to admit a new Welsh professional club to play in the LHF Healthplan National League Two next season. The new club will be based in Bridgend, at the Brewery Field ground, and will be called the Celtic Crusaders.

Its application for membership of National League Two is expected to be accepted by the RFL Council when it meets on Wednesday 22 June.

The major shareholder is expected to be Leighton Samuel, who was previously the owner of the Celtic Warriors rugby union club based at the same venue. The Warriors were originally one of five major regional rugby union teams based in Wales, but Samuel was angered by their exclusion from the Celtic League a year ago, as the WRU rationalised the number of regional clubs it could support.

As an indication of the infrastructure that will support the new club, the local Brynteg School has recently won through to the final of the Powergen Schools competition at Under-12 level, and will play this season's Powergen Challenge Cup Final curtain raiser at the Millennium Stadium on 27 August.

#### **20.06.2005 - Website Launched!**

The Celtic Crusaders are proud to show off the newest part of the club - the Official Website, <http://www.celtic-crusaders.com> . The content will be added to once the fixture list arrives and so forth for the new season. Stay tuned to the Website for details of new signings, press releases from the club, match reports, ticket information and general banter on the forum with other Crusader fans.

#### **22.06.2005 - RFL admits new Welsh club**

Following a meeting of the Rugby League Council at Salford today (Wednesday) it can be confirmed that Welsh club Celtic Crusaders will be admitted to LHF Healthplan National League Two for the 2006 season.

The club, which is to be based at the Brewery Field, Bridgend, had its application for membership approved following an extensive evaluation process and they become the British game's 34th professional club.

The Crusaders' admission completes the Rugby Football League's re-structuring of the LHF National Leagues One and Two to allow for the relegation of two teams from the engage Super League at the end of the 2005 season.

In 2006 LHF National League One will have ten member clubs while League Two will comprise of 12 member clubs including the Celtic Crusaders.

Richard Lewis, the RFL's Executive Chairman, said: "The admission of the Celtic Crusaders is recognition of the progress that the sport is making in Wales.

"We now have a strong grass roots presence in Wales with Rugby League being played in schools as well as the formation of junior teams.

"The impressive progress delivered by the seven Welsh clubs playing in the TotalRL.Com Conference has given Rugby League a solid base of adult players and Wales has a worldwide reputation as a rugby-playing nation.

"The Crusaders come into professional Rugby League playing out of the excellent Brewery Field Stadium in Bridgend and having lodged a robust business plan with the RFL".

Chris O'Callaghan, the Celtic Crusaders Chief Executive, said: "We're elated by our admission to Rugby League.

"We feel that the time is right for professional Rugby League in South Wales. For the first time an infrastructure is in place with so much junior development of the sport taking place as well as the successful TotalRL.Com Conference division.

"Our aim is to reach Super League and we realise that the hard work has just started for us.

"We shall also be representing South Wales in Rugby League and we take that seriously".

It was also decided in principle that the Welsh Rugby League should be offered a place on the Rugby League Council and this development will be confirmed at a future Council meeting.

### **22.06.2005 - The Story of the Badge & Motto**

The Badge - The club badge is a fusion of the modern and traditional. Unashamedly Welsh the badge depicts the Cross of St David with the Crusaders logo emblazed thereon. The club colours are Black and Gold and the change strip Blue and White.

The Motto - The motto comes from Lucius Accius a Roman tragic Poet. 'Oderint dum metuant' - 'Let them hate, so long as they fear' later became a famous motto of the Emperor Caligula.

### **24.06.2005 - Name the Ground & Sign Up for Newsletters**

The Celtic Crusaders plan to hold an online vote in the near future to give a nickname to the ground. Suggestions so far include "Heaven on Earth", "Holy Grail" or "The Theatre of Scream". If you have

your own suggestion, please email it to [nametheground@celtic-crusaders.com](mailto:nametheground@celtic-crusaders.com) or even post it on the forum.

Also in the near future, the Crusaders plan to produce weekly newsletters. If you'd like to register for these, please send an email to [newsletter@celtic-crusaders.com](mailto:newsletter@celtic-crusaders.com) giving your name.

### **08.07.2005 - The Crusaders 3000 Lottery is Here!**

The Crusaders 3000 Lottery has arrived – and it is a great opportunity for you to win big money! For just a small sum per week, you will be entered into the regular draw for big jackpot prizes!

Details are shown below and also on The Crusaders 3000 Lottery web page.

What is The Crusaders 3000 Lottery Scheme?

An exclusive scheme where membership is restricted to a maximum of 3,000 fully paid members and which offers the biggest jackpot in Wales.

How to join?

You can pick up a lottery membership application form from The Crusaders 3000 Lottery at The Brewery Field Offices, Bridgend or you can telephone us on (01656) 651515 and we will ensure that a member of staff is available to help you join. Alternatively you can email [lottery@celtic-crusaders.com](mailto:lottery@celtic-crusaders.com) for further information.

How much does it cost?

The Crusaders 3000 lottery costs just 28p a day (£2 per week). The easiest and most popular method is to pay £8.66 per month by Bank Standing order.

How does it work?

Each exclusive member is allocated numbers in return for a £2 subscription. You receive a membership card allowing you to keep the same numbers for a 52- week period. As long as your subscription remains paid up and valid, you will be entered into the draw to win £100 each weekday (Monday to Friday) for 52 weeks of the year.

How do I win the jackpot?

A £25,000 jackpot (the biggest in Wales) will be drawn every 52nd week. Each member will receive one entry per week for the period that they have kept their membership current i.e. if you pay for 52 weeks, you get 52 entries. For the chance of winning, keep your membership up to date.

How do I know if I have won?

All winners of The Crusaders 3000 are notified immediately. Weekly result sheets are available from the Lottery office and are published in the Glamorgan Gazette. Daily results are announced on Bridge FM and are available by logging on to <http://www.celtic-crusaders.com> and clicking the Crusaders 3000 Lottery logo. Winners need not claim, you will be paid automatically.

Where does my money go?

The Crusaders 3000 Lottery will make regular contributions to The Joshua Trust, which is our chosen charity. Every other penny is used to ensure the successful development of The Celtic Crusaders, the only professional Rugby League Team in Wales.

### **03.08.2005 - Warriors Signs Being Sold!**

The Celtic Warriors signs from around the Brewery Field have been put up for sale

Having been folded several seasons ago, the Celtic Warriors signs are being auctioned off and if you are interested in making a bid for these extremely rare items, then please do so here.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to own one of these signs, as once they're gone, they're gone!

### **08.08.2005 - Gold Membership Scheme Launched**

The Celtic Crusaders are launching a Gold Membership Scheme.

For £5 a week (paid by Bank Standing Order) the Crusaders Gold Member is entitled to all of the following benefits whilst their subscription remains valid and up to date.

#### 1) Grandstand Season Ticket - worth £110

The Grandstand season ticket is valid for all LHF home league games (11) and the Northern Trains Cup Qualifying Matches (3). It is not valid for pre season friendlies, Powergen Challenge Cup, Northern Trains Cup Quarter Finals and beyond and any LHF League play offs.

#### 2) Lottery membership - worth £104

The Crusader Gold member is automatically entered into the Crusader 3000 lottery which pays out £100 prize each weekday and the largest jackpot in Wales of £25,000 every 52 weeks.

#### 3) Replica Shirts - worth £79.90

Both home and away Replica shirts are issued to all Crusader Gold Members. These shirts will be available in a variety of styles and come in adult male, ladies and children's sizes. Gold members are entitled to request shirts of any style, size or type to suit their requirements - e.g. two home shirts adult male and children's size or 1 ladies home shirt and 1 children's away shirt etc.

#### 4) VIP Hospitality - worth £90

Every Crusader Gold Member and a guest will be treated to VIP Hospitality in either the President's room or in one of our superb hospitality boxes for one of the Crusaders home games. Match programmes, private car parking, a 3 course lunch with tea, coffee and light refreshments at half time will be provided for each Gold member and their guest. In addition, to complete the day a framed photograph of the Gold member, their guest, the Crusaders Coach and the Man of the Match will be sent to them as a memento of their day.

#### 5) Discounts - worth £00's

As Gold members are automatically lottery members and season ticket holders, they are entitled to a 10% discount on any item at the club shop or on our online shopping site. However, gold members are entitled to further discounts on any Gold offers at the club - e.g. Gold shop promotions - any item in a Gold promotion (clothing, gifts etc) which is already discounted, will be further discounted for a Gold member. Any Gold bar promotions (mostly on Coors or Guinness sales) will attract further price reductions to a Gold member on receipt of proof of a current Gold membership (i.e. Season Tickets). To apply for membership click here to download your application form. On receipt of your completed application, you will receive a signed receipt acknowledging your membership and a further acknowledgement that your shirts have been ordered, and confirmation of the date they will be delivered to you. Lottery membership is only valid and prizes will only be issued to fully paid-up

members where subscription is current and valid. If you wish to make a one off annual subscription, please make your cheque of 260 payable to the Celtic Crusaders RLC. Credit card payments can be made by calling 01656 651515 during normal office hours Monday-Friday. All correspondence should be addressed to Gold Membership, The Celtic Crusaders RLC, The Brewery Field, Tondu Road, Bridgend, CF31 4JE.

### **15.08.2005 - Crusaders Vice Presidents Club**

The Crusaders Vice Presidents Club is an exclusive membership scheme for the Individual or Corporate Sponsor, to enjoy top quality hospitality within a unique matchday members lounge. Providing excellent corporate networking opportunities or just the chance to enjoy the game with friends, the Vice Presidents Club is the ideal venue to watch the Crusaders ascent into Super League.

Your V.P. membership entitles you to all the following, for every LHF National League and Northern Trains Cup games.

V.P. Membership Includes:

Reserved Car Park Space

Drinks Reception

A Superb 3 course carvery meal

Matchday programme for each guest

Half time Tea, Coffee and Welsh Cakes

Post Match Light Refreshments

Hostess Service Throughout

Enjoy the game from the comfort of The Presidents Suite or take your place in one of the VIP reserved Grandstand seats

Guess the Score Competition and Prizes

Company/Individual branding in Crusaders Match Day Programme

Match Preview by Crusaders personality

### **15.09.2005 - Replica Shirts Available**

Replica Shirts are available from the club now. You may order online via the Online Shop [Click here](#) for the Shop or by phoning the club on 01656 658535 and ordering using your card.

200 Limited Edition Shirts will be released in approximately 4 weeks time - and if you pre order now online you will receive £10 off the price of an away shirt when purchased at the same time as a home shirt.

### **19.09.2005 - St Helens to come to the Brewery Field!**

Super League's table topping St Helens have been announced as the first ever opponents of the Crusaders. The fixture date and kick off time are to be confirmed, as they are subject to St Helens' involvement in the World Club Challenge. This match will be a perfect way for the Crusaders to begin life in the world of Rugby League.

Please note that this fixture date and kick off time are to be confirmed, due to St Helens' involvement in the World Club Challenge.

Please stay tuned to [www.celtic-crusaders.com](http://www.celtic-crusaders.com) for more information on this exciting opening fixture.

### **09.11.2005 - John Dixon Nears Squad Completion**

The Crusaders Head Coach John Dixon is currently in Bridgend, completing his signings for the 2006 season. He states that 90percent of his playing squad are signed ready for the Crusade into Super League. The players will be unveiled to the public in the middle of November, proving a very exciting time for the Crusaders.

### **11.11.2005 - Season Ticket Launch**

Season ticket applications have been launched. If supporters download a form and apply before the 31.12.2005, they receive an Early Bird Season Ticket which entitles them to 10% discount.

### **13.11.2005 - Assistant Coach**

Kevin Ellis has been named as Assistant Coach to the Crusaders. He joins John Dixon on the journey into Super League.

### **16.11.2005 - Fitness & Conditioning Coach**

Anthony Seibold joins the Crusade next Friday when he arrives at the Brewery Field. We look forward to welcoming him at the club.

### **18.11.2005 - John Dixon Flies Back to the land of Oz**

John Dixon flies back to Australia on Monday 28th November to secure a final star signing. He will return to the club for pre season training.

### **22.11.2005 - Players join together**

John Dixon welcomes his players to The Brewery Field and leads them on his Crusade this Sunday. The players meet from 10am onwards. All supporters welcome.

## **29.11.2005 - Celtic Crusaders Squad Announced**

By Zippy - November 29 2005

The Crusaders are pleased to announce the following provisional training squad for 2006. Drawn heavily from the successful Bridgend Blue Bulls side, the initial squad contains four players recently capped at Full International by Wales in their highly successful European Nations Championship Campaign. In addition, Great Britain BARLA U'18 stars Daniel Phillips, Lee Williams, and Oliver Hughes are added in the Academy alongside St Helens trialist Gareth Moore. The Celtic tradition is further upheld by Carl De Chenu (Ex Sheffield Eagles and Ireland) and David Sims (Bristol University and Scotland).

Chief Executive Chris O'Callaghan said 'Coach John Dixon has, with the assistance of Kevin Ellis, assembled a strong training squad. Under new fitness and conditioning coach Anthony Seibold (ex Hull KR, London Broncos) pre season training promises to be a very rigorous campaign.

Over the next few month the squad will develop and grow, with the addition of further Welsh Conference and overseas signings. The structure of the Club is still fluent and the final squad has yet to take shape. However, to misquote the League of Gentleman this is a Welsh based club for Welsh players.'

Squad:

David Owen Bridgend Blue Bulls

Paul Morgan Bridgend Blue Bulls, Wales RL (ENC)

Grant Epton Bridgend Blue Bulls, Wales A

Lenny Woodard Bridgend Blue Bulls, Wales RL (ENC)

Karl Hockin Bridgend Blue Bulls, Wales RL (ENC)

Carl Ellis Bridgend Blue Bulls, Wales A

Lloyd O'Connor Bridgend Blue Bulls, Wales A

Marcus Sainsbury Bridgend Blue Bulls, Wales A

Hywel Davies Bridgend Blue Bulls

Carl De Chenu Sheffield Eagles, Ireland RL (ENC)

Mark Burke Aberavon Fighting Irish, Wales A

Scott O'Kelly Aberavon Fighting Irish, Wales A

Dean Scully Aberavon Fighting Irish, Wales A

Lee Jones Aberavon Fighting Irish

Phil Cushion Ex Swinton, Aberavon Fighting Irish

David Sim Bristol Univ, Scotland RL (ENC)

Neil Davies Aberavon Fighting Irish, Wales RL (ENC)

Geraint Davies Aberavon Fighting Irish, Wales Students

Gareth Lewis Aberavon Fighting Irish

Academy:

Daniel Phillips Aberavon Fighting Irish, GB Amateur U'18's

Oliver Hughes Cardiff Demons, GB Amateur U'18's

Lee Williams Aberavon Fighting Irish, GB Amateur U'18's

Gareth Moore Aberavon Fighting Irish

### **01.12.2005 - New Crusaders**

Anthony Seibold, Tony Duggan and Jace Van Dijk arrive at the Brewery Field in preparation for training which commences next week.

### **05.12.2005 - Training Commences**

Anthony Seibold starts his Crusade at the Powergym in Neath College this afternoon. Fitness Testing takes place at Llandarcy Sports Centre from 6pm

### **08.12.2005 - Group Bookings**

The Crusaders have launched a 'buy four get one free' for schools and groups to take advantage of such discounts. Please click [here](#) and make sure you fill the forms in at least a week before the match.

### **08.12.2005 - Player Sponsorship Unveiled**

Crusader fans can now sponsor their very own player for the season for just £200 + VAT.

### **19.12.2005 - Crusaders 100th**

Crusaders 3000 signs up its 100th member after just five days of being launched. For the biggest jackpot of £25,000, sign up via standing order (please click [here](#) to download the standing order). The first draw takes place March 1st. 100 per day, 5 days a week.

### **20.12.2005 - Senior/Junior Academy**

Crusaders announce plans for Senior/Junior Academy 2006. 'We're attempting to put together a 16 game fixture list at U'21's & U'18's. I hope that I will shortly be able to release 8 home fixtures for each of these sides' said Chief Executive Chris O'Callaghan.