

## **Crusaders come a creditable second**

Jan 2, 2007, 6:11pm

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Celtic Crusaders' Jace Van Dijk and John Dixon both finished a creditable second in National League Two Player and Coach of the Year awards respectively that were voted for by rugby league fans on internet site [www.totalrl.com](http://www.totalrl.com) and by readers of Rugby Leaguer and League Express newspaper.

Van Dijk, the official National League Two Player of the Year, was a very close second to Dewsbury Rams' Richard Chapman. Chapman gained 26% of the votes with Van Dijk on 25% and team-mate Tony Duggan, the UK's top try scorer in 2006, in third place with 23%.

Dixon was second only to Dewsbury's Andy Kelly in his poll, with the coach of last year's National League Two champions receiving 31% of the votes with Dixon gaining 27%. Gary Wilkinson, who coached Sheffield Eagles to a play-off final win, was a long way behind on 16%.

Crusaders' Operations Manager, Gerald McCarthy said: "This is further proof of the good work we did in our inaugural year. John did an incredible job in building a side that finished third in National League Two and this poll shows that rugby league fans from all round the world recognise this. Jace and Tony also deserve their positions in the poll and we're all looking forward to seeing them back in action when we open our season against Widnes at the Brewery Field on Friday February 9th."

## **Crusaders sign three Wales internationals**

Jan 23, 2007, 1:35pm

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Celtic Crusaders have signed three Wales under-19 internationals to boost their squad before their opening match of the season at home to Widnes Vikings on Friday February 9th (kick-off 7.30pm).

Tom Burnell joins the Crusaders from last year's Welsh Grand Finalists, Cardiff Demons, Owen Lewis comes from Pontypridd-based Valley Cougars, while Chris Vitalini hails from Newport Titans. All three played for the Wales under-19 side against Australia in Blackwood last year.

The club have also announced that Lee Williams, who scored two tries in three appearances for the Crusaders last season, has also been retained for the 2007 season. Lee was captain of both the Wales and Great Britain under-19 squads last year and has also played rugby union for the Wales Sevens side this season.

Crusaders' Operations Manager Gerald McCarthy said: "This week's new signings are further proof that we are looking to develop rugby league in Wales and to develop the local talent. These four players all did well for their Conference clubs last season and I'm sure that they'll all be valuable assets to the squad. We have a tough start to the season with three home games in eight days starting with Widnes on February 9th. We then play Brisbane on February 15th and then London Skolars 48 hours later. We'll need a lot of strength in depth for these tough matches."

Commenting on Tom Burnell's move, Demons' director Simon Davies said: "This is excellent news for Cardiff Demons, Celtic Crusaders and Tom. We're always delighted when our junior programme produces players of a calibre to move up to the professional ranks."