

# (C) R(O) HS(O) NOT WELCOME HOME

Cyfres Yr Hâf 2021

Summer Internationals 2021

CYMRU v CANADA

WALES v CANADA

Stadiwm Principality | Principality Stadium 03.07.2021 | **KO 15.00** 





# PROUDLY SUPPORTING WELSH RUGBY







#### ORDER OF EVENTS

## WALES v CANADA

#### SUMMER INTERNATIONAL

#### NATIONAL **ANTHEMS**



Mae hen wlad fy nhadau, yn annwyl i mi, Gwlad beirdd a chantorion, enwogion o fri; Ei gwrol ryfelwyr, gwlad garwyr tra mad, Tros ryddid collasant eu gwaed

Gwlad, gwlad, Pleidiol wyf i'm gwlad, Tra mor yn fur I'r bur hoff bau. O bydded i'r hen iaith barhau



O Canada! Our home and native land! True patriot love in all of us command. With glowing hearts we see thee rise, The True North, strong and free! From far and wide. O Canada, we stand on guard for thee. God keep our land glorious and free! O Canada, we stand on guard for thee. O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.



## TODAY'S VIRTUAL MASCOT



#### **Nathan Tuff**

Age: 11

School: Bedwas Junior School

Rugby Club: Bedwas RFC

Favourite Welsh Player: Alun Wyn Jones

How do you feel about being official virtual match day mascot? I am ecstatic to be the mascot for Wales against Canada! I have played rugby since I was 18 months old at my first training session, and I still love playing with my team at Bedwas RFC. I hope as virtual mascot I can bring Wales luck and a big win!



HRH Duke of Cambridge

**Gerald Davies CBE** 

Robert Butcher, Liza Burgess, Amanda Blanc, Catherine Read, Henry Engelhardt, Steve Phillips, Ieuan Evans MBE,

Dave Young, Chris Morgan, Phil Thomas, Gordon Eynon, Hywel Roberts

Robert Butcher, Liza Burgess, John Manders, Ieuan Evans MBE, Colin Charvis, Jon Morgan OBE, Dave Young, Chris Morgan, Phil Thomas, Gordon Eynon, Hywel Roberts, Bryn Parker, Colin Wilks, Gwyn Bowden, Ray Wilton, Alan Jones, Jeff Davies, Brian Fowler, Chris Jones

Steve Phillips, Dave Young, Hywel Roberts, Rhodri Lewis, Councillor Huw Thomas, Paul Orders, Sameer Rahman

> Steve Phillips Tim Moss

Mark Williams Principality Stadium Geraint John

Mark Killingley Rhodri Lewis

Group General Counsel and Company Secretary

# <u>IN THIS ISSUE</u>



President's Welcome / Neges y Llywydd Gerald Davies

**11** From the CEO

It's good to have you back!

12 Scenesetter

Almost 500 days since the last time it happened, Principality Stadium welcomes fans once more

**17** Head-to-Head

> The statistical tale-ofthe-tape from the dozen international meetings between Wales and Canada



#### 20 Wayne Pivac

The Head Coach is already making plans for the next Rugby World Cup, and this summer's matches play a crucial part

#### 22 Meet The **New Boys**

With the established stars called up by the Lions this summer, the door has been opened to a new batch of talent. Meet the new faces in the Wales squad

#### 28 Halfpenny's Hundred

With 99 international caps under his belt, full-back Leigh Halfpenny is looking forward to celebrating an excellent century this

#### 35 History Files

Rob Cole recalls Canada's greatest day - 10 November 1993 and their historic win in Cardiff

#### 30 Wales

Meet the coaching team and playing squad







#### **51** Canada

Introducing the visitors' players and coaching team

# **62** Howley's Homecoming

Proud Welshman Rob Howley has a foot in the other camp today as an assistant coach within Canada's management team

#### 66 Cennydd Davies

Mae Taine Basham yn gobeithio rhoi ei droed orau ymlaen i gymru yr haf yma er mwyn ceisio ennill lle parhaol yn sgwad Wayne Pivac

#### 71 Up Next

A double-header with Argentina completes Wales' summer plans with back-toback games against the Pumas over the next two Saturdays

#### 73 Meet the Ref

Profiling today's referee from Georgia, Nika Amashukeli

#### **74** The Line-ups

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# WELCOME

It is wonderful to be able to welcome fans back to Principality Stadium for the first time in 15 months and everyone connected with the Welsh Rugby Union, and particularly the Welsh team, will be so happy to see you over the three games in our summer series. We may not be back to complete normality as yet, but being allowed to have fans at these three matches is a step in the right direction.

Our games against Canada and Argentina are a reminder of the strong relationship Welsh rugby has always had with what used to be termed 'emerging nations'. The Canadians first came to Wales to play four matches in 1903, returned in 1962 and 1971 and welcomed Wales in 1973. Just as with the Fijians in 1964, the Japanese in 1973, the Tongans in 1974 and the Western Samoans in 1988, Wales led the way in opening up the international game. It is a record of which we should rightly feel proud and which means we are on the right side of history.

In addition, we were the first nation to undertake a full-cap tour of the South Seas in 1986 and first sent a team to Argentina in 1968. The Pumas first came to Wales in 1976 and have been regular visitors this century. These early bonds,

initially frowned upon by the International Rugby Board and fostered by great WRU committee men like Ken Harris and Hermas Evans, have created lasting friendships and some fantastic memories.

One memory with which the Canadians will arrive will undoubtedly be the day when they beat Wales in Cardiff back in 1993. With former Welsh internationals Kingsley Jones and Rob Howley currently heading up their coaching they will no doubt be hoping to cause another major upset today.

While Kingsley and Rob are coming home, I would also like to congratulate another Welsh-Canadian who would be forgiven for feeling a little conflicted this afternoon. Earlier this year Sally Dennis, a Vancouver-based law partner

who was born in the Rhondda and grew up in Bridgend, became the first female chair of the Canadian Rugby Union.

Her historic appointment follows many others that have been made in recent years in bringing into the governance of the game so many women administrators. Here in Wales, our vice-chair is the World Rugby Hall of Famer Liza Burgess, while the chair of the Professional Rugby Board is Amanda Blanc while Catherine Read joined the WRU Board earlier this year.

It's great to be back and I hope everyone who attends the summer series matches in the Welsh capital both enjoys and stays safe.

Enjoy the game.

Gerald Davies

PRESIDENT | WRU



# CROESO

Mae'n wych gallu croesawu cefnogwyr yn ôl i Stadiwm Principality am y tro cyntaf ers 15 mis, a bydd pawb sy'n gysylltiedig ag Undeb Rygbi Cymru, ac yn enwedig tîm Cymru, mor hapus i'ch gweld chi dros y tair gêm yng nghyfres yr haf. Er nad ydym wedi dychwelyd yn llwyr at sefyllfa normal eto, mae cael cefnogwyr yn y tair gêm hyn yn gam i'r cyfeiriad iawn.

Mae ein gemau yn erbyn Canada a'r Ariannin yn ein hatgoffa o'r berthynas gref mae rygbi Cymru wedi ei chael erioed â'r gwledydd a arferai gael eu galw'n 'genhedloedd sy'n datblygu'. Daeth y chwaraewyr cyntaf o Ganada i Gymru i chwarae pedair gêm yn 1903, gan ddychwelyd yn 1962 a 1971, a chafodd Cymru groeso yno yn 1973. Yn vr un modd â thimau Fiii yn 1964, Japan yn 1973, Tonga yn 1974 a Gorllewin Samoa yn 1988, arweiniodd Cymru'r ffordd o ran ehangu gorwelion y gêm ryngwladol. Mae'n hanes y dylem fod yn falch ohono ac mae hynny'n golygu ein bod ar yr ochr iawn yn hanes y gêm.

Ar ben hynny, ni oedd y wlad gyntaf i fynd ar daith lawn o gwmpas Môr y De ym 1986 ac fe anfonon ni dîm i'r Ariannin am y tro cyntaf yn 1968. Daeth y Pumas i Gymru am y tro cyntaf yn 1976 ac maen nhw wedi bod yn ymwelwyr rheolaidd yn ystod y ganrif hon. Mae'r cysylltiadau cynnar hyn, yr oedd y Bwrdd Rygbi Rhyngwladol yn gwgu arnynt i ddechrau, ond a oedd yn cael eu meithrin gan gewri pwyllgor Undeb Rygbi Cymru fel Ken Harris a Hermas Evans, wedi creu cyfeillgarwch parhaol ac atgofion gwych.

Yn ddiau, un atgof melys gan bobl Canada yw'r diwrnod hwnnw pan wnaethant guro Cymru yng Nghaerdydd yn ôl yn 1993. Gyda dau o gyn chwaraewyr rhyngwladol Cymru, Kingsley Jones a Rob Howley, yn arwain eu tîm hyfforddi ar hyn o bryd, mae'n siŵr y byddant yn gobeithio achosi sioc fawr arall heddiw.

Tra bydd Kingsley a Rob yn dod adref, hoffwn hefyd longyfarch un arall o Ganada â chysylltiadau â Chymru, a fydd o bosibl mewn ychydig o gyfyng-gyngor ynghylch pwy i'w gefnogi brynhawn heddiw. Yn gynharach eleni, daeth Sally Dennis, partner ym myd y gyfraith yn Vancouver, a aned yn y Rhondda ac a fagwyd ym Mhen-y-bont ar Ogwr, yn gadeirydd benywaidd cyntaf Undeb Rygbi Canada.

Mae ei phenodiad hanesyddol yn dilyn llawer o rai eraill sydd wedi cael eu gwneud yn ystod y blynyddoedd diwethaf o ran dod â chymaint o weinyddwyr benywaidd yn rhan o lywodraethu'r gêm. Yma yng Nghymru, ein his-gadeirydd yw Liza Burgess, aelod o Oriel Anfarwolion y Byd Rygbi, a chadeirydd y Bwrdd Rygbi Proffesiynol yw Amanda Blanc, ac ymunodd Catherine Read â Bwrdd Undeb Rygbi Cymru yn gynharach eleni.

Mae'n wych bod yn ôl, ac rwy'n gobeithio y bydd pawb sy'n dod i gemau cyfres yr haf ym mhrifddinas Cymru yn mwynhau eu hunain ac yn cadw'n ddiogel.

Mwynhewch y gêm.

Gerald Davies



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#WhereHomeMatters



# Principality Building Society is proud sponsor of Principality Stadium and partner to Welsh Rugby.

"We're delighted to be supporting the boys for the summer matches. Although the tour to Argentina isn't possible, we're looking forward to seeing the Wales squad play back at the home of Welsh rugby after a difficult year, as well as starting to welcome fans back safely into the Stadium to watch the game we all love. We also look positively to the grassroots clubs in Wales who can resume playing the game and seeing their team mates. From everyone at Principality Building Society, we'd like to wish a warm welcome to the Canucks, Pumas, and of course, to our fans. Good luck to Wayne and the team during the summer test fixtures."

Julie-Ann Haines

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AT PRINCIPALITY STADIUM



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SOUTH AFRICA



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FIJI



SAT 20 NOV

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MORE INFORMATION AT WRU.WALES/AUTUMN2021





# CEO WELCOME

The legendary Canadian singer song writer Joni Mitchel once observed you 'Don't know what you've got 'til it's gone'.

I don't often quote song lyrics in match programmes.

I don't recall ever doing it before and I'm not sure I'll ever do it again.

But, to say we have missed fans at international rugby over the last year and three months is beyond understatement.

Of course we've always talked about Wales' fans being the best the world over. We know that crowds create atmosphere and enhance even those occasions that only the rugby purists can love.

But did we really realise that, without supporters, the very essence of an international matchday experience would be so curtailed?

It's good to have you back. Even if you haven't been able to attend in the usual numbers. Those of you who can say you were here, today, when Wales faced Canada in front of around 8,000 at Principality Stadium, are true pioneers.

You are leading the way as we seek to return to normality in time for the Autumn International Series in October and November

I must extend the sincere gratitude of us all to the events team at Principality Stadium who have worked so hard to ensure that supporters can return safely. To our ticket operations team who have introduced a new digital ticket system in record time and pulled out all of the stops in order to ensure fairness of allocations and to our rugby department. To Wayne Pivac and his players in particular, who continue to sacrifice any semblance of normality in their home lives to stay healthy and bring rugby back to us.

Around Wales, in the community game, junior players are returning to clubhouses in their droves, with recorded registrations significantly up on this time last year. Club houses are open and the senior game will be returning in the coming weeks – once again safely due to the hard work of both clubs themselves and the WRU rugby department. We are getting there, we are doing it together and we will, first, survive and, then, continue to thrive.

This is an unusual day, but one that will remind us acutely of what we have been missing and we are all looking forward to hearing the crowd roar at Principality Stadium once again.

A warm welcome to our friends from Canada.

It's good to be back.

Yours in rugby,

Steve Phillips

SCENESETTER

# TALES VALUE OF THE STATE OF THE

Can you believe it, the last time Wales played in front of fans at Principality Stadium was 497 days ago on 22 February, 2020. There were 73,931 crammed in for the Six Nations clash with France and Wayne Pivac's side were pipped 27-23.

Two weeks later, at Twickenham on 7 March, Wales went down 33-30 in a game remembered for the superb try by Justin Tipuric at the start of the second half. There were 82,000 fans at the home of English rugby for that great occasion.

And so we return to the Principality Stadium with fans once again today. There may only be a privileged few - 8,200 in fact – but it is a step in the right direction. The players can't wait to hear the roar once again, and head coach Wayne Pivac believes it will give his players a real edge in three match summer series.

"We are all looking forward to getting back to the Principality Stadium with fans in attendance and the game against Canada promises to be a great occasion. I think 820 would have been good - it's just nice to have fans back," said Pivac

"I was lucky enough to go to Bristol against Gloucester and they had 3,500 at Ashton Gate and it sounded like 35,000 because they were passionate fans who have been starved of rugby. They got behind their team and it was great.

"It was exciting for Stephen Jones and I just sitting in the grandstand. We're looking forward to it and I know a lot of the families and fans are looking forward to coming along."

A lot has happened since fans were last allowed to congregate at the spiritual home of Welsh rugby.





Wales won the 2021 Six Nations, Jasmine Joyce got selected for her second Olympic Games with the Team GB Sevens squad – Welsh referees Craig Evans and Adam Jones are also going to Tokyo to officiate – and Nigel Owens finally hung up his whistle on the international stage after a record breaking career.

The British & Irish lions have just headed off to South Africa to face the reigning world champions, albeit with their fingers firmly crossed that nothing will stop the tour from going ahead. They warmed-up with an impressive win over Japan at Murrayfield last weekend in a game that saw them lose their captain, Alun Wyn Jones, and his fellow Osprey, Justin Tipuric.

If it was hard on them, their misfortune opened the door for two other Welsh players to make the plane for the first Lions tours, Ospreys lock Adam Beard and Cardiff back row row Josh Navidi. It means there are still 10 Welshmen in the squad with a further three in Warren Gatland's coaching group, Robin McBryde, Steve Tandy and Neil Jenkins.

But the summer isn't going to be all about the Lions, as important as the three Test series against the Springboks will be. Wales face Canada today and then meet Argentina in two successive matches here in Cardiff in a sequence that Pivac will be using to further strengthen the depth in his squad ahead of an almighty challenge in the autumn.

If you want to be the best, you have to play the best and that is exactly what this Welsh team will be



doing in the Welsh capital in October and November. They may be semi-finalists from the 2019 World Cup, and top dogs in Europe in 2021, but on the road to the 2023 World Cup the way they negotiate their four games this autumn will be revealing.

First up will be three-time World Cup winners New Zealand on 30 October (kick-off 17:15) for their first visit to Cardiff since 2017. The current World Cup holders, South Africa, follow on 6 November kick-off 17:30) and then two-time global champions Australia arrive on 20 November (kick-off 17:30). The Wallabies will be in Pool C with Wales in the 2023 tournament in France, as will the final opponents this autumn, Fiji. They come to Cardiff on Remembrance Sunday, 14 November (kickoff at 15:15).

"This summer is an important block as we build towards Rugby World Cup 2023, and it is great to give five uncapped players an opportunity against Canada," said Pivac.





(Above) Wales v France in the last full capacity match at Principality Stadium

"We don't know a lot about the Canadians. They are a Tier 2 nation and they haven't played any rugby because of COVID. We've only really got old World Cup footage to look at.

"They've had a lot of changes in coaching personnel and we know they'll have an experienced coaching group who will know a lot about Wales and how we want to play the game. We've got a lot of changes and a lot of new boys, so that means we're just focusing on what we can bring to the game without worrying too much about the opposition."

If 2020 was a tough first year in charge for Pivac, 2021 turned into something completely different something to celebrate results wise and style wise. Having blooded 11 new players last year, he has seven uncapped players in this summer's squad

"That's 18 players coming through in about 18

months. We have to build more depth at some stage and this is the obvious window," he added.

So, it will be Tomos Williams and Callun Sheedy steering the ship against the Cannucks while Gareth Davies and Dan Biggar are away with the Lions, Will Rowlands and new boy Ben Carter calling the shots at line-out time instead of Alun Wyn and Adam Beard, Elliot Dee gets the job of locking the front row instead of Ken Owens, James Botham will be doing the dirty work on the flank in place of Justin Tipuric and Tommy Rogers takes over the young guns role on the wing while Louis Rees-Zammit is on Lions duty.

So, plenty to get your teeth into this summer and even more to look forward to in the autumn. Big time rugby is back at Principality Stadium, hopefully with a bang on the pitch and a roar off it!



# POWERFUL PROTECTION

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# HEAD-TO-HEAD

Canada have only visited Wales on five previous occasions for international show downs, and the two countries have only faced each other a dozen times in total. Wales hold the upper hand in the statistical tale of the tape but they haven't had it all their own way...





**MEETINGS** 

**WALES WINS** 

**ITALY** WINS

FIRST GAME

#### Canada 9 - 40 Wales

Rugby World Cup, Invercargill NZ, 03.06.1987

LAST GAME

#### Canada 23 – 32 Wales

Test Match, York Stadium, 30.05.2009



TOTAL POINTS



TOTAL TRIES



**TOTAL PENALTIES** 



**TOTAL DROP GOALS** 



MOST CONSECUTIVE **WINS** 





**TOTAL POINTS** 



TOTAL TRIES



**TOTAL PENALTIES** 



**TOTAL DROP GOALS** 



MOST CONSECUTIVE WINS





14 November 2009

Wales 34 - 13 Canada

17 November 2006

Wales 61 - 26 Canada

16 November 2002

Wales 32 - 21 Canada

21 August 1999

Wales 33 - 19 Canada 10 November 1993

Wales 24 - 26 Canada

**BIGGEST WALES WIN** 



**BIGGEST ITALY WIN** 











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WORDS: MIKE BROWN

# WAYNE PIVAC

With less than 800 days until Rugby World Cup, this summer presents Wayne Pivac with a unique opportunity to blood young talent and further develop his squad in preparation for the global showpiece.

That may sound like a long time but with just six further campaigns until the tournament in France, and the magnitude of opponents to come, it is the last real chance to look at a wider group of players.

Summers that coincide with British & Irish Lions tours always afford such opportunities and with 10 Welsh internationals currently in South Africa and other key personnel sidelined, this one is no different.

"Three wins would be fantastic but if we develop more players that can play Test match rugby and build our depth, that would be great because you saw at the last World Cup you do get injuries," said the Wales head coach Wayne Pivac.

"We need to make sure we're as close to five deep as we can in each position and we're building towards that. If we take a step backwards results-wise to take two steps forward in terms of building depth and then win the big tournaments we're chasing then I'd be very happy.

"We've got seven new caps in this squad so we're looking at 18 players coming through in about 18 months. It's serving a purpose for further down the track."

Of course, one man's misfortune often leads to that all important opportunity and last weekend demonstrated the brutal nature of professional sport.

Alun Wyn Jones and Justin Tipuric suffered shoulder injuries against Japan, which

prevented them travelling with the Lions, Adam Beard and Josh Navidi were called up by the famous tourists and in turn Seb Davies and Rhys Davies to Wales.

"Seeing Adam and Josh called up is fantastic but we're absolutely gutted for Alun Wyn Jones. He's worked so hard to come back from the last injury, played so well in the Six Nations and earned the right to captain the Lions.

"From our whole squad, our hearts go out to Al and Justin. They're two big guys in our side and they've worked so hard to get there. So that's really disappointing.

"But it is an opportunity for others and thankfully, from our point of view, that experience is going to go to two Welshmen.

"We were busy on the weekend thinking about who we bring in and it's an opportunity for us to have a look at another couple of players."

One player Pivac knows more than enough about is Leigh Halfpenny, who makes his 100th Test appearance today - 96 for Wales and four for the Lions.

"It's huge for any player. In the modern game, with the brutality of the sport and for a guy his size. He's not the biggest bloke but he looks after himself well." said Pivac.

"It speaks volumes of his professionalism, the way he recovers after each effort, the way he prepares himself mentally and physically for the next challenge. It will be a great occasion for Leigh and his family."







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Wales – the 2021 Guinness Six Nations winners – have 11 of their best players on the British & Irish Lions tour of South Africa.

Tour captain Alun Wyn
Jones and flanker Justin
Tipuric might have been
ruled out of taking on the
Springboks due to cruel
shoulder injury blows, but
they have been replaced in
Warren Gatland's Lions party
by fellow Welshmen Adam
Beard and Josh Navidi.

A late reshuffle for the Lions meant a change for Wales too with Seb Davies, Rhys Davies, Samson Lee and Lloyd Williams all added to Pivac's squad on Monday.

Ospreys youngster Rhys Davies is another uncapped player joining Taine Basham, Ben Carter, Gareth Thomas, Tom Rogers and Ben Thomas who were part of the original squad.

It means that with the long-term goal of the 2023 Rugby World Cup in mind, Pivac has a chance in the weeks to come to take a look into the future.

Today's Test with Canada and back-to-back meetings with Argentina all at Cardiff's Principality Stadium represent a priceless opportunity for Wales' younger players to make an impression.

Dragons back-row Basham has previously trained with the senior Wales squad after coming through the Under-20 ranks. He is also a regular for the Dragons in regional rugby.

Basham hopes to go to the next level my making his Wales debut in the weeks to come

"Training has gone really well so far," he said. "I've been up here a couple of times in the past with the Under-20's so it's good to come up and see things again here.

"I'd been in training camps before. I thoroughly enjoyed Ben Thomas (middle) during his endurance training with his Wales teammates those camps and felt like I improved. They helped me a lot, but this time I feel like I can put my best foot forward and put my hand up for some game time. That's what I'm working towards at the moment."

Basham continued: "All four regions in Wales have very strong back-rows and it's very competitive. "We've got a very strong back-row at the Dragons. I want to get my hands on the ball a lot so I can carry and get over the gain line for the team and put my best foot forward for the boys.

"It's about making an impact whether I'm starting or on the bench.

"For me it's been about focusing on the fundamentals of the game like the set-piece, defence, and contact area. It's been about improving those areas which may differentiate me from other people. "It's about having a

good all-round game which allows you to play well.

"Most of my time during age grade rugby was at No 8 which I think improved my game, but I think seven is the position for me moving forward.

"I've always enjoyed playing seven for the Dragons – it is my position of choice."

Pivac might have lost the heart of his first-choice Wales side to the Lions, but his team's strength in depth is growing and growing quickly.

It is summed up by a player like Basham who is now recovered from an arm injury setback.

Pivac cast his eye over Wales' fresh faces at a training camp in Colwyn Bay last week which was a priceless opportunity for the team to work together.

Preparations for facing a Canada side – led by Welsh coaches Kingsley Jones and Rob Howley – today have ramped up in Cardiff this week.

"If a cap comes, I'll be delighted with it. Whether I'm starting or coming off the bench I need to make an impact, put my best foot forward, and put my hand up," said Basham.

"Argentina have had some very good results. They beat the All Blacks which was amazing and it was good for world rugby. It's hard to judge Canada because they haven't played in a while.

"We are just focusing on ourselves and what we do. We'll then deal with what comes at us, but I think we'll



be fine. Everything is about building towards the 2023 Rugby World Cup in France.

"Wayne mentioned he's used over 50 odd players so far so he can have a look at them. It's all about putting my hand up and trying my best to get on the trip in 2023."

What is helpful for Wales' younger players like Basham is the ability for them to learn from the senior figures in the squad.

Even without the men away with the Lions, Pivac can call on the likes of the experienced Jonathan Davies, Leigh Halfpenny, Ross Moriarty and Josh Turnbull. Centre Davies captains the team.

"The arm injury was a bit of a setback and then the boys at the Dragons, who also have a very competitive back-row, played well. It was tough," said Basham.

"I had to find a way to get back to form and hit top gear. The Rainbow Cup was a great opportunity for me to get some game time and get back into it. Gareth Thomas during a weight training session with Wales. "It was a setback, but I'm feeling good now. In training with the Dragons you can't take your foot off the gas because a coach could find a way to find a fault in your training or performances.

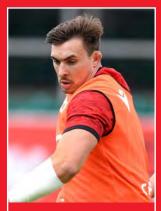
"At the Dragons we've got plenty of back-rowers. Once we are all fit it's very competitive.

"I know Ross and Aaron Wainwright from the Dragons. I've learned a lot from being around them every day in training and they are good blokes off the pitch as well.

"It's the same with Josh – he's a really good bloke as well. Simon Cross, the Dragons defence coach, has also really helped me a with the breakdown and how to analyse a game.

"With Dean Ryan at the Dragons it's all about the fundamentals of rugby, defence and attack, and collisions. He's kept it simple for us and I think we benefited from that this season."

#### **5 DEBUTANTS TO WATCH OUT FOR**



#### TAINE BASHAM

**Age:** 21

Position: Flanker Region: Dragons Height: 1.83m (6'0") Weight: 95kg (14st 11lbs)



## BEN CARTER

**Age:** 20

Position: Lock Region: Dragons Height: 1.98m (6'6") Weight: 117kg (18st 4lbs)



## TOM ROGERS

**Age:** 22

Position: Wing/full-back Region: Scarlets Height: 1.85m (6'07") Weight: 87kg (13st 7lbs)



## BEN THOMAS

**Age:** 22

Position: Fly-half/centre Region: Cardiff Rugby Height: 1.83m (6'0") Weight: 91kg (14st 4lbs)



#### GARETH THOMAS

**Age:** 27

Position: Prop Region: Ospreys Height: 1.88m (6'17") Weight: 109kg (17st 2lbs)



# HUNDRED UP FOR HALFPENNY

ASK ANY WELSH SUPPORTER WHO THEY'D WANT TO KICK A GOAL FOR THEIR LIFE AND MANY WOULD RESPOND WITH THE NAME OF METRONOMIC FORMER FLY-HALF NEIL JENKINS.

WORDS: ALEX BYWATER

But not far behind the current Wales and British & Irish Lions kicking and skills coach would be Leigh Halfpenny, the relentlessly accurate full-back who stands on the verge of a remarkable achievement.

The 32-year-old is currently on 99 Test caps which includes 95 for Wales and four for the Lions – not bad for a player who was deemed not good enough to make it at the Ospreys.

How Halfpenny has shown those who doubted him at an early age wrong.

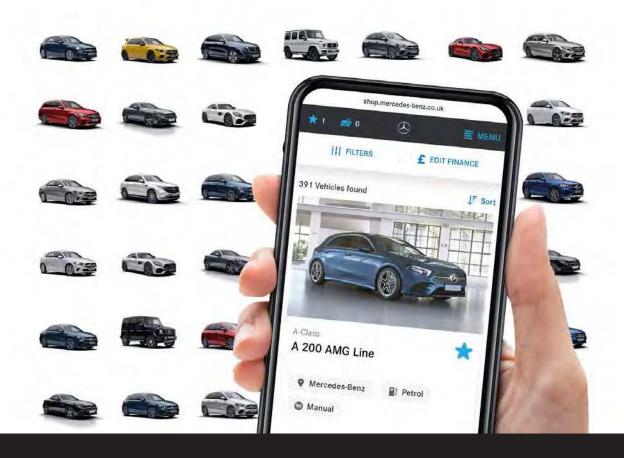
His list of successes is already hugely impressive and he will add another milestone to his superb CV this summer when he moves to a total of 100 caps in this summer's Test matches with Canada and Argentina. Halfpenny fully deserves to reach three figures. His longevity has been superb.

"It's an absolute honour and privilege to play my 100th Test match and I'm really looking forward to what should be a great occasion against Canada," Halfpenny said.

"I never could have dreamed in a million years I'd be playing my 100th Test for Wales and including the Lions in that as well. I'm speechless to be honest with you.

"To win my first cap with Wales and play for the Lions was an absolute dream come true. My first Test was back in the autumn of 2008 against South Africa. When I got called up for that campaign, Wales had just won the Grand Slam. I remember watching that on the TV so for me then to be amongst all those players a couple of months later was pretty surreal.

"I never expected to then get selected against South Africa. I remember being pretty nervous going into that game and it was an incredible day to put the Welsh jersey on and have my family there supporting me. To run out in front of a full crowd and that first



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bus ride into the stadium bought tears to my eyes to be honest. The hairs on the back of my neck stand up when I talk about it.

"It was absolutely incredible, very special, and I remember the game just went so quickly. It was incredible how fast it went. It was a tough game and coming off the pitch we were disappointed we hadn't won. I was opposite Bryan Habana for my first Test so I don't think it comes much tougher than that! He was a world-class player, but I really enjoyed the whole day, the buildup, and I got to take a penalty. It was in front of the sticks on the 22, but I've never been so nervous taking a kick in all my life. As a kid practicing down the field with my grandad we'd put scenarios in and say things like 'This is a kick to win the game for Wales." I always dreamed of playing and kicking for Wales and

to do it in my first Test was incredible. It was a dream come true to kick my first points and my grandad was in the crowd that day. He took me kicking down the field and all the way through to the academy where I started working with Neil who took me to another level."

Today's milestone game for Halfpenny will come against Canada, the team he scored his first Welsh try against on his second cap. It will also come with the presence of fans – the first time Wales supporters will be back in Principality Stadium since February 22, 2020.

"It's going to be extremely special to win my 100th cap in front of a crowd and to have fans back in the stadium again," said Halfpenny. "Although it's going to be a smaller crowd than normal, I'm sure it's going to feel loud with our fans back. To have them

Leigh Halfpenny congratulates Louis Rees-Zammit on his try in the Six Nations

against

Ireland

back after the pandemic and my family there too is going to be amazing."

Halfpenny's current total of 778 points for Wales puts him third in the list of the country's top scorers behind current attack coach Stephen Jones and Jenkins.

Since scoring seven tries in his first six starts with Cardiff Blues he has played more than a decade at rugby's highest level and excelled to boot.

Halfpenny still has plenty left to give, but it is likely he will be remembered when his career finishes for his remarkable kicking ability. It is a testament to the fullback's astonishing accuracy that it is a huge surprise when he doesn't bisect the posts from the tee, wherever it is positioned on the field.

Still, Halfpenny is more than just a kicker. In this writer's view he is the best defensive full-back in world rugby. His positioning is first class. He is also rock





## FACT FILE

AGE:

TEST DEBUT: 08/11/2008

TOTAL CAPS:



WALES CAPS:



BRITISH & IRISH LIONS CAPS:

WALES POINTS

827

TOTAL CAREER POINTS:

7/7/8

RUGBY WORLD CUP APPEARANCES:



INTERNATIONAL HONOURS:
ONE SIX NATIONS
GRAND SLAM, TWO
SIX NATIONS TITLES,
ONE SIX NATIONS
PLAYER OF THE
CHAMPIONSHIP,
ONE BRITISH & IRISH
LIONS SERIES WIN,
ONE BRITISH & IRISH
LIONS PLAYER OF
THE SERIES



solid in the tackle and under the high ball.

Off the field Halfpenny is quiet and reserved, but he does his talking on the pitch and is a man who thrives under the highest pressure.

Halfpenny made his Wales debut against South Africa aged just 19 in November 2008. He started his international career on the wing, but would soon establish himself at full-back.

He was a star man as Wales won the 2012 Six Nations Grand Slam and was player of the Championship the following year when his team claimed the title with a 30-3 win over England.

Halfpenny has been on three Lions tours. In 2009 he came home from South Africa early due to injury, but four years later he was man of the series in a 2-1 series win in Australia.

He also won a Test cap against New Zealand in 2017.

Halfpenny has also won the EDF Energy Cup and European Challenge Cup with Cardiff Blues and the Heineken Champions Cup with Toulon at club level.

More recently, he was in Wales' 2019 Grand Slam-winning squad although he did not play and was part of the team which won this year's Six Nations under new head coach Wayne Pivac.

It is a list of achievements most players can only dream of.

"It all just goes so quickly. There are times in your career where you go through highs and lows, but it only seems like yesterday that I made my debut. It's absolutely flown by," Halfpenny said.

"I'm extremely grateful for the support I've had throughout my career. I've been very lucky. The coaches, back-room staff and team-mates I've had have all been incredible. My family have also been a huge support and have picked me up when I've been low and encouraged me.

Leigh Halfpenny takes on the Scottish defence in the Six Nations





"More recently I've just been so grateful to my partner Jess and my little daughter Lily. We have another daughter on the way. I've got such amazing people around me and I wouldn't be where I am today without the people who have supported me."

So, what are Halfpenny's career highlights in his view?

"It's got to be winning my first cap for Wales," he said. "It was a boyhood dream to play for Wales and I scored my first try against Canada in my second Test playing on the right wing.

"Winning the 2012 Grand Slam was pretty special and then we backed it up in 2013. It wasn't a Grand Slam, but to win the title and go back-to-back was amazing. My first game for the Lions was in South Africa in 2009 against the Cheetahs in Bloemfontein. I started with Cardiff Blues that season, got called up to the senior team, played a few games and then had the call-up for Wales

which was unbelievable. To then be selected for the Lions at the end of that season was something I could never have dreamed of at the start of that year. Unfortunately, I got injured just before going.

"I pulled my quad playing for the Blues so had to rehab it home and flew out late. I re-tore it against the Cheetahs so flew home early from that tour, but it gave me a taste of the Lions and what it's all about. It's extremely special with the people you meet and the relationships and bonds you make with the players and staff. It motivated me more to achieve it again so to go on the 2013 tour to Australia, play three Tests, and win the series was unbelievable. It was a special tour and we made lifelong friendships. To go on three Lions tours with 2017 as well is something I couldn't have dreamed of. It's something I still have to pinch myself about and I'm just so



#### ALUN WYN **JONES**

(2006-present)

#### **157** CAPS

(148 Wales, 9 British & Irish Lions)

#### GETHIN **JENKINS**

(2002-2018)

#### **134** CAPS

(129 Wales, 5 British & Irish Lions)

## STEPHEN **JONES**

(1998-2011)

#### **110** CAPS

(104 Wales, 6 British & Irish Lions)

#### GEORGE **NORTH**

(2010-present)

#### **105** CAPS

(102 Wales, 3 British &

#### MARTYN WILLIAMS

(1996-2012)

#### **104** CAPS

(100 Wales, 4 British &

#### GARETH **THOMAS**

L995-2007)

#### 103 CAPS

(100 Wales, 3 British &

#### ADAM JONES

2002-201

#### **100** CAPS

(95 Wales, 5 British & Irish Lions)





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# CANADA'S GREATEST DAY

# CARDIFF 1993

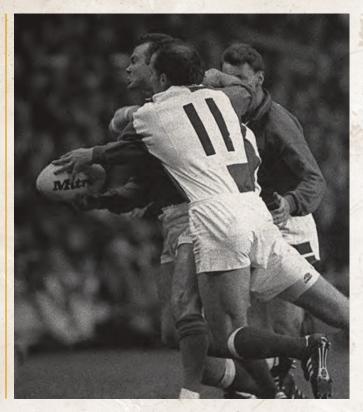
It was the day that Gareth Rees had dreamed of, being given the chance to kick for goal to beat one of the Tier 1 nations in world rugby. Quite what his father, Alun, made of it is a different story. Nevertheless, the Canadian outside half duly added the conversion to Al Charron's last-gasp try at the National Ground, Cardiff Arms Park, on 10 November, 1993, and the visitors had stolen a 26-24 victory.

WORDS: ROB COLE

Wow! The shock waves reverberated around Welsh rugby and it meant Canada had beaten an England XV and Wales in the same year. They had surely arrived at the top table of the world game after recording the biggest win in their history.

Twenty-eight years on, those results posted by the Canadians' 'golden generation' have not been built on in a way everyone thought they might have been. Within a few years the game had turned professional, there was an exodus of players overseas and things became even harder for the aspiring nations in the battle to bridge the gap with the leading teams.

Even so, the Canadian side that will return to the Welsh capital today will be as competitive and nationalistic as their forebears. Take them lightly at your peril! The 'Class of 93' were a rough, tough, hard-to-bluff team who wore their hearts on their



sleeves and bled for their nation. But they also included some top quality players. Both Rees and Charron would go on to be rightly included in the World Rugby Hall of Fame. Rees, the son of a Welsh father born in Llantrisant who played rugby for Cross Keys, London Welsh and Maesteg, also became the first rugby player to be inducted into the Canadian national Sports Hall of Fame.

Glenn Ennis and Norm
Hadley may not have been
around, but they were a team
who knew how to play. They
were given a sniff by a below par
Welsh performance and took
their chance.

"Our objective is to show we're competitive with the top eight in the world. We're on a par with some of the home unions," said the Canadian coach, lan Birtwell, after the game. "It wasn't the highest quality of game, but we won by doing what we had set out to do."

That was hardly the case on the other side of the fence. Wales dominated the line-outs through Gareth Llewellyn and Tony Copsey, were the dominant scrum, yet couldn't find a way to score. Neil Jenkins kicked a then record eight penalties to notch all the home side's points, whereas the Canadians conjured up two tries.

"We've got to put the pieces back together and we haven't much time. The game wasted so much of the effort the coaches' put in because the players failed to carry out what they had planned to do," explained a bitterly disappointed Wales team manager, Rob Norster, in his post-match reaction.

Having been the surprise package at the 1991 World Cup, this Canadian side had built a rugged forward base and had some backs who could exploit





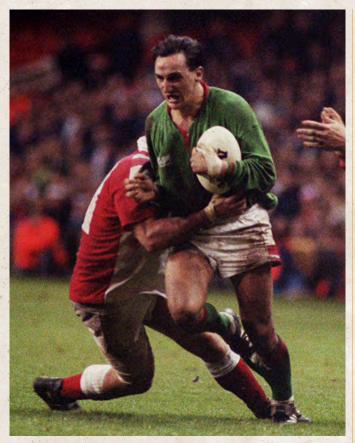
the possession they were provided. And in Rees, they had an outside half who had a prodigious and precise boot when kicking both out of hand and off the tee.

Wales should have known what was coming. The skipper leuan Evans had witnessed first-hand at the 1987 World Cup just how tough the Canadians could be and lock Gareth Llewellyn had gone head-to-head with their forwards on the Wales B tour in 1989. A broken jaw suffered in one of the biggest fights you've ever seen at a rugby game in the game against

British Columbia meant he knew exactly what to expect.

"I knew a number of their players pretty well – Gareth, Al and Scott Stewart – and they had developed into a very competitive side. We were hopeless on the night in Cardiff, but you have to give credit to Canada for the way in which they took the chance and picked up a big win," said Llewellyn.

"They had been building a strong base from the first World Cup in 1987 and proved just how good they could be. They beat Argentina twice in 1990, overcame Fiji and Romania at



the 1991 World Cup and scored two tries against the All Blacks in a creditable 29-13 quarter-final defeat.

"They beat the French on home soil in 1994 just before we went there and beat them 33-15 to gain a little bit of revenge. They were tough competitors who always rose to the occasion when they put on a Canadian jersey."

While the boot of Jenkins kept Wales in touch in Cardiff, a try by the centre Ian Stuart after Chris Tynan had charged down an Adrian Davies clearance gave the Canadians a 19-15 lead. Three more Jenkins penalties edged Wales past their visitors to make it 24-19, but then came the final push for glory.

It was perhaps appropriate that one of the greatest moments in

Canadian rugby history should have fallen to one of their alltime great players, Charron. He was in the early days of a record breaking 76 cap career that saw him play professionally at Moseley, Bristol, Pau and Dax, as well as playing for the Barbarians and featuring in four World Cups.

"We came over with not as strong a team as we would have liked, we had some injuries and some guys pull out on the eve of our departure. I know Wales weren't at their best at the time, but we just strung it together at the end and I was fortunate enough to score the try that Gareth Rees converted," recalled Charron in an interview with World Rugby.

"For us, coming to that game we weren't meant to win and

#### WALES 24 CANADA 26

10 November, 1993

#### WALES

A Clement (Swansea); I Evans (Llanelli, captain), S Gibbs (Swansea), N Jenkins (Pontypridd), W Proctor (Llanelli); A Davies (Cardiff), R Moon (Llanelli); M Griffiths (Cardiff), G Jenkins (Swansea), J Davies (Neath), A Copsey (Llanelli), G Llewellyn (Neath), S Quinnell (Llanelli), L Jones (Llanelli), E Lewis (Llanelli)

Scorers: Pens: N Jenkins 8.

#### CANADA

M Williams (Meratomas); R Toews (Meralomas), S Grav (Kats), I Stuart (Vancouver RC, captain), S Stewart (UBCOB); G Rees (Oxford University), C Tynan (Cambridge University); P Szabo (Pocomo), I Kennedy (Meralomas), D Jackart (UBCO8), I Gordon (James Bay), A Charron (Ottawa Irish), J Knauer (Meratomas), J Hutchinson (York Yeomen), C McKenzie (UBCOB) Reps: I Cooper (Vancouver RC) for Knauer 47; I MacKay (Kats) temp rep for Tynan

Scorers: Tries: I Stuart, A Charron; Cons: G Rees 2;

Pens: G Rees 4

Referee: O E Doyle (Ireland)

to get our first victory over an established rugby nation like Wales in Wales, it certainly put rugby a little bit more on the map for Canada and one that Canadians take great pride in."

It was another low point for Wales, yet within four months they were celebrating their first Triple Crown in six years and their first outright Five Nations title since 1979.

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GARETH WILLIAMS
Assistant Coach Contact Area



JONATHAN HUMPHREYS Assistant Coach -Forwards



GETHIN JENKINS Assistant Coach -Defence

Dai Flanagan Assistant Coach Martyn Williams

Chris Berry
Head of Performance

Tom Shepherd Todd Taylor Performance Analysts

John Ashby Head of Physical Performance

Ryan Chambers Sports Scientist

Josh robinson Eifion Roberts

Chris Edwards

Mark Davies

Dan Jones

Senior Physiotheranis

Julian Widdowson

National Team Doc

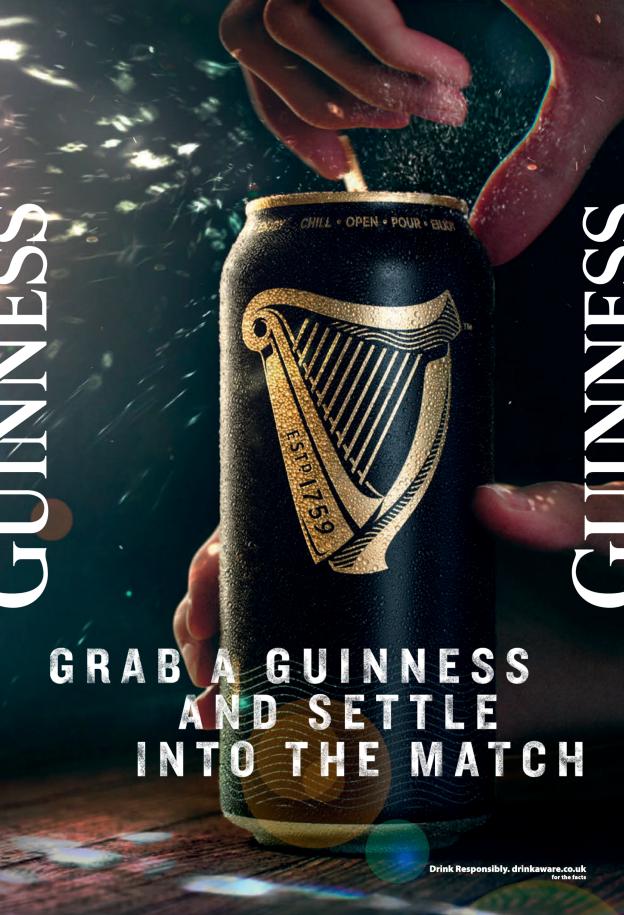
Carys Moggridge Rebecca Higham

John Rowlands

Mike Brown

Communications
Caroline Morgan
PA to National Squad





#### TAINE **BASHAM**

02.11.1999 **BACK ROW/ DRAGONS** 95KG/183CM

FIRST CLUB: **ABERSYCHAN TALYWAIN** 

TEST CAPS: 0 INTERNATIONAL POINTS: 0



#### **JAMES BOTHAM**

22.02.1998 FLANKER/BLAENASGELLWR CARDIFF RUGBY 103KG/188CM

FIRST CLUB: **CARDIFF BLUES** SEDBERGH SCHOOL

TEST CAPS: 4 INTERNATIONAL POINTS: 0



#### **I FON BROWN**

26.10.1996 PROP/Y RHENG FLAEN **DRAGONS** 126KG/188CM

FIRST CLUB: ST JOSEPH'S ST JOSEPH'S

TEST CAPS: 14 POINTS: 0



#### BEN CARTER

23.01.2001 SECOND ROW/ **DRAGONS** 116.82KG/198CM

FIRST CLUB: CALDICOTT **CALDICOT SCHOOL** 

TEST CAPS: 0 INTERNATIONAL POINTS: 0



#### RHYS **DAVIES**

09.11.1998 SECOND ROW/ **OPSREYS** 114.09KG/198CM

FIRST CLUB: **PENCLAWDD BISHOPSTON SCHOOL** 

TEST CAPS: 0

INTERNATIONAL POINTS: 0



#### SEB DAVIES

17.05.1996 LOCK/YR AIL RENG **CARDIFF RUGBY** 119.09KG/203CM

**PENTYRCH MELIN GRUFFYDD** 

TEST CAPS: 9 POINTS: 0



#### ELLIOT DEE

07.03.1994 HOOKER/BACHWR **DRAGONS** 106KG/185CM

FIRST CLUB: **NEWBRIDGE** NEWBRIDGE

TEST CAPS: 34 INTERNATIONAL POINTS: 0



#### **RYAN ELIAS**

07.01.1995 HOOKER/BACHWR **SCARLETS** 110KG/188CM

**CARMARTHEN ATHLETIC** SCHOOL: YSGOL GYFUN **BRO MYRDDIN** 

TEST CAPS: 17 INTERNATIONAL POINTS: 5





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#### CORY HILL

10.02.1992 LOCK/YR AIL RENG CARDIFF RUGBY 117KG/196CM

FIRST CLUB:
PONTYPRIDD
SCHOOL:
PONTYPRIDD HIGH

TEST CAPS: 29 INTERNATIONAL POINTS: 15



#### RHODRI JONES

23.12.1991 PROP/Y RHENG FLAEN OSPREYS 111KG/191M

FIRST CLUB:

SCHO

TEST CAPS: **19** INTERNATIONAL POINTS: **0** 



#### SAMSON LEE

30.11.1992 PROP/Y RHENG FLAEN SCARLETS 116.82KG/180CM

FIRST CLUB: FELINFOEL SCHOOL: COEDCAE

TEST CAPS: **45**INTERNATIONAL
POINTS: **5** 



#### DILLON LEWIS

04.01.1996 PROP/Y RHENG FLAEN CARDIFF RUGBY 120KG/183CM

FIRST CLUB:
PONTYPRIDD
SCHOOL: YSGOL
GYFUN GARTH OLWG

TEST CAPS: 28
INTERNATIONAL
POINTS: 5



#### ROSS MORIARTY

18.04.1994 BACK ROW/ DRAGONS 103.18KG/188CM

FIRST CLUB: GORSEINON SCHOOL:

MORRISTON
TEST CAPS: 45
INTERNATIONAL

POINTS: 15



#### SAM PARRY

17.12.1991 HOOKER/BACHWR OSPREYS 108.18KG/185CM

FIRST CLUB:
HAVERFORDWEST
SCHOOL:
SIR THOMAS PICTON

TEST CAPS: 4
INTERNATIONAL
POINTS: 5



#### WILL ROWLANDS

19.09.1991 LOCK/YR AIL RENG WASPS 117KG/1.98M

FIRST CLUB: **DRAGON SCHOOL** SCHOOL: **DRAGON SCHOOL** 

TEST CAPS: **7**INTERNATIONAL
POINTS: **0** 



#### NICKY SMITH

07.04.1994 PROP/Y RHENG FLAEN OSPREYS 113.18KG/183CM

FIRST CLUB: WAUNARLWYDD SCHOOL: PENTREHAFOD

TEST CAPS: **39** INTERNATIONAL POINTS: **10** 





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#### **GARETH THOMAS**

02.08.1993 PROP/Y RHENG FLAEN **OSPREYS** 101.82KG/188CM

FIRST CLUB:

**NEWCASTLE EMLYN** YSGOL DYFFRIN TEIFI

TEST CAPS: 0 INTERNATIONAL POINTS: 0



#### JOSH **TURNBULL**

12.05.1988 **BACK ROW/ CARDIFF RUGBY** 116.82KG/198CM

FIRST CLUB: **NEWCASTLE EMLYN** YSGOL GYFUN EMLYN

TEST CAPS: 10 INTERNATIONAL POINTS: 0



#### **AARON** WAINWRIGHT

25.09.1997 FLANKER/BLAENASGELLWR **DRAGONS** 107KG/188CM

FIRST CLUB: WHITEHEADS RFC

**BASSALEG SCHOOL** TEST CAPS: 28

POINTS: 5



#### HALLAM **AMOS**

24.09.1994 WING/ASGELLWR **CARDIFF RUGBY** 97KG/185CM

FIRST CLUB: MONMOUTH MONMOUTH SCHOOL

TEST CAPS 23 INTERNATIONAL POINTS: 30



#### **JONATHAN DAVIES**

05.04.1988 CENTRE/CANOLWR **SCARLETS** 101KG/185CM FIRST CLUB:

WHITLAND **DYFFRYN TAF** 

TEST CAPS: 85 INTERNATIONAL POINTS: 80



#### **JARROD EVANS**

25.07.1996 **OUTSIDE HALF/MASWR CARDIFF RUGBY** 86KG/178CM

PONTYPRIDD RFC PONTYPRIDD HIGH

TEST CAPS 6 POINTS: 3



#### UILISI **HALAHOLO**

06.07.1990 CENTRE/CANOLWR **CARDIFF RUGBY** 105KG/180CM

FIRST CLUB: **SUBURBS GLENAVON SCHOOL** 

TEST CAPS: 1 POINTS: 0





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#### LEIGH HALFPENNY

22.12.1988 FULLBACK/CEFNWR SCARLETS 88KG/178CM

FIRST CLUB: GORSEINON SCHOOL: PENYRHEOL

TEST CAPS: **95**INTERNATIONAL
POINTS: **778** 



#### KIERAN HARDY

30.11.1995 SCRUM HALF/MEWNWR SCARLETS 92KG/183CM

FIRST CLUB: YSGOL GYNRADD SCHOOL: PONTYBEREM

TEST CAPS: **3**INTERNATIONAL POINTS: **5** 



#### JONAH HOLMES

24.07.1992 WING/ASGELLWR DRAGONS 98.18KG/185CM

FIRST CLUB: LONDON SCOTTISH SCHOOL: ST BENEDICT'S, EALING

TEST CAPS: **5**INTERNATIONAL
POINTS: **0** 



#### OWEN LANE

20.12.1997 WING/ASGELLWR CARDIFF RUGBY 95.91KG/183CM

FIRST CLUB: RHIWBINA SCHOOL: WHITCHURCH

TEST CAPS: 2 INTERNATIONAL POINTS: 0



#### IOAN LLOYD

05.04.2001 FULLBACK/CEFNWR BRISTOL BEARS 83.18KG/183CM

FIRST CLUB: GLANTAF SCHOOL: ST PETER'S RFC

TEST CAPS: 2
INTERNATIONAL
POINTS: 0



#### TOM ROGERS

17.12.1998 WING/ASGELLWR SCARLETS

FIRST CLUB: YSGOL MAES Y GWENDRAETH SCHOOL: CEFNEITHIN

TEST CAPS: **0**INTERNATIONAL
POINTS: **0** 



#### CALLUM SHEEDY

28.10.1995 FLY HALF BRISTOL RUGBY 83KG/175CM

FIRST CLUB: CORPUS CHRISTI SCHOOL: ST PETER'S RFC

TEST CAPS: 6
INTERNATIONAL
POINTS: 23



#### BEN THOMAS

25.11.1998 CENTRE/CANOLWR CARDIFF RUGBY

FIRST CLUB: ST PETER'S SCHOOL: CORPUS CHRISTIE

TEST CAPS: 0
INTERNATIONAL
POINTS: 0



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#### NICK TOMPKINS

16.02.1995 CENTRE/CANOLWR DRAGONS 93KG/1.83M

FIRST CLUB: OLD ELTHAMIANS SCHOOL: ST NICOLAS C OF E

TEST CAPS: 10 INTERNATIONAL POINTS: 5



#### LLOYD WILLIAMS

30.11.1989 SCRUM HALF/MEWNWR CARDIFF RUGBY 91KG/183CM

FIRST CLUB: COWBRIDGE RFC SCHOOL: BRO MORGANNWG

TEST CAPS: **31** INTERNATIONAL POINTS: **10** 



#### RHODRI WILLIAMS

05.05.1993 SCRUM HALF/MEWNWR SCARLETS 80.91KG/175CM

FIRST CLUB:

SCHOOL

TEST CAPS: **3**INTERNATIONAL POINTS: **5** 



#### TOMOS WILLIAMS

01.01.1995 SCRUM HALF/MEWNWR CARDIFF RUGBY 77KG/178CM

FIRST CLUB: TREORCHY SCHOOL: TREORCHY

TEST CAPS: **21** INTERNATIONAL POINTS: **30** 











#### MANAGEMENT

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#### LUCAS ALBORNOZ

HOMETOWN: BURNABY, BC AGE: 30 CAPS: 1 PRO CLUB: HOUSTON SABERCATS HOME CLUB: BURNABY LAKE RC HEIGHT: 193CM WEIGHT: 113KG



#### KYLE BAILLIE

HOMETOWN: SUMMERSIDE, PEI AGE: 30 CAPS: 29 PRO CLUB: NOLA GOLD HOME CLUB: CASTAWAY WANDERERS RFC HEIGHT: 193CM WEIGHT: 110KG



#### ROSS BRAUDE

HOMETOWN: PRETORIA, SA AGE: 21 CAPS: 0 PRO CLUB: TORONTO ARROWS HOME CLUB: GREY COLLEGE HEIGHT: 168CM WEIGHT: 82KG



#### COOPER COATS

HOMETOWN: HALIFAX, NS AGE: 24 CAPS: 0 PRO CLUB: CANADA 75 HOME CLUB: HALIFAX TARS RFC HEIGHT: 183CM WEIGHT: 87KG



#### COLE

HOMETOWN: CALGARY, AB AGE: 23 CAPS: 5 PRO CLUB: AUSTIN GILGRONIS HOME CLUB: CALGARY SAINTS RC HEIGHT: 188CM WEIGHT: 102KG



#### FOSTER DEWITT

HOMETOWN:
COURTENAY, BC
AGE: 25
CAPS: 0
PRO CLUB: RC NATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY
HOME CLUB:
WESTSHORE RFC
HEIGHT: 185CM
WEIGHT: 107KG



#### DOUG FRASER

HOMETOWN: LADYSMITH, BC AGE: 29 CAPS: 4 PRO CLUB: OLD GLORY DC HOME CLUB: CASTAWAY WANDERERS RFC HEIGHT: 173CM WEIGHT: 93KG



#### ERIC HOWARD

HOMETOWN: OTTAWA, ON AGE: 27 CAPS: 25 PRO CLUB: NOLA GOLD HOME CLUB: BRANTFORD HARLEGUINS RFC HEIGHT: 175CM WEIGHT: 102KG





# OFFICIAL PARTNER OF WELSH RUGBY





#### FRASER HURST

HOMETOWN: VANCOUVER, BC AGE: 23 CAPS: 0 PRO CLUB: UTAH WARRIORS HOME CLUB: UBC THUNDERBIRDS HEIGHT: 178CM WEIGHT: 84KG



#### JAKE ILNICKI

HOMETOWN: WILLIAMS LAKE, BC AGE: 29 CAPS: 38 PRO CLUB: SEATTLE SEAWOLVES HOME CLUB: CASTAWAY WANDERERS RFC HEIGHT: 175CM WEIGHT: 117KG



#### SPENCER JONES

HOMETOWN: CAMBRIDGE, NEW ZEALAND AGE: 23 CAPS: 0 PRO CLUB: TORONTO ARROWS HOME CLUB: WESTSHORE RFC HEIGHT: 185CM WEIGHT: 100KG



#### COLE

HOMETOWN: SUSSEX, NB AGE: 24 CAPS: 16 PRO CLUB: TORONTO ARROWS HOME CLUB: BELLEISLE ROVERS RC HEIGHT: 180CM WEIGHT: 109KG



#### WILL KELLY

HOMETOWN:
ANCASTER, ON
AGE: 23
CAPS: 1
PRO CLUB:
TORONTO ARROWS
HOME CLUB: BRANTFORD
HARLEQUINS RFC
HEIGHT: 190CM
WEIGHT: 98KG



#### CONNOR KEYS

HOMETOWN: STITTSVILLE, ON AGE: 24 CAPS: 18 PRO CLUB: RUGBY ATL HOME CLUB: BARRHAVEN SCOTTISH RFC HEIGHT: 198CM WEIGHT: 118KG



#### LACHLAN KRAT7

HOMETOWN: VICTORIA, BC AGE: 21 CAPS: 0 PRO CLUB: NOLA GOLD HOME CLUB: CASTAWAY WANDERERS RFC HEIGHT: 183CM WEIGHT: 93KG



#### JOSH LARSEN

HOMETOWN:
PARKSVILLE, BC
AGE: 27
CAPS: 15
PRO CLUB: NEW
ENGLAND FEEJACKS
HOME CLUB: JAMES BAY
ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
HEIGHT: 196CM
WEIGHT: 107KG









#### BEN LESAGE

HOMETOWN: CALGARY, AB AGE: 25 CAPS: 16 PRO CLUB: TORONTO ARROWS HOME CLUB: UBC THUNDERBIRDS HEIGHT: 183CM WEIGHT: 98KG



#### KAINOA LLOYD

HOMETOWN: MISSISSAUGA, ON AGE: 27 CAPS: 11 PRO CLUB: RC NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY HOME CLUB: MISSISSAUGA BLUES RFC HEIGHT: 180CM WEIGHT: 96KG



#### LIAM MURRAY

HOMETOWN: LANGLEY, BC AGE: 23 CAPS: 0 PRO CLUB: HOUSTON SABERCATS HOME CLUB: JAMES BAY ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION HEIGHT: 185CM WEIGHT: 113KG



#### PETER NELSON

HOMETOWN: DUNGANNON, UNITED KINGDOM AGE: 28 CAPS: 7 PRO CLUB: MONT DE MASON HOME CLUB: ROYAL SCHOOL DUNGANNON HEIGHT: 183CM WEIGHT: 98KG



#### QUINN NGAWATI

HOMETOWN: VICTORIA, BC AGE: 22 CAPS: 0 PRO CLUB: RUGBY UNITED NEW YORK HOME CLUB: WESTSHORE RFC HEIGHT: 193CM WEIGHT: 100KG



#### REEGAN O'GORMAN

HOMETOWN: VANCOUVER, BC AGE: 24 CAPS: 4 PRO CLUB: AUSTIN GILGRONIS HOME CLUB: MARIST ALBION FFC HEIGHT: 198CM WEIGHT: 120KG



#### ISAAC OLSON

HOMETOWN: VICTORIA, BC AGE: 21 CAPS: 0 PRO CLUB: RC NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY HOME CLUB: CASTAWAY WANDERERS RFC HEIGHT: 190CM WEIGHT: 102KG



#### PAT PARFREY

HOMETOWN: ST. JOHN'S, NL AGE: 29 CAPS: 32 PRO CLUB: TORONTO ARROWS HOME CLUB: SWILERS RFC HEIGHT: 185CM WEIGHT: 91KG







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#### WILL PERCILLIER

HOMETOWN: VICTORIA, BC AGE: 22 CAPS: 2 PRO CLUB: STADE FRANCAIS HOME CLUB: COWICHAN RFC HEIGHT: 180CM WEIGHT: 83KG



#### ROBBIE POVEY

HOMETOWN: CALGARY, AB AGE: 24 CAPS: 4 PRO CLUB: HOUSTON SABERCATS HOME CLUB: LONG BUCKBY RFC HEIGHT: 183CM WEIGHT: 91KG



#### ANDREW QUATTRIN

HOMETOWN: HOLLAND LANDING, ON AGE: 24 CAPS: 5 PRO CLUB: TORONTO ARROWS HOME CLUB: AURORA BARBARIANS RFC HEIGHT: 183CM WEIGHT: 111KG



#### TYLER ROWLAND

HOMETOWN: MISSISSAUGA, ON AGE: 21 CAPS: 0 PRO CLUB: TORONTO ARROWS HOME CLUB: TORONTO NOMADS RFC HEIGHT: 188CM WEIGHT: 116KG



#### LUCAS RUMBALL

HOMETOWN: SCARBOROUGH, ON AGE: 25 CAPS: 35 PRO CLUB: TORONTO ARROWS HOME CLUB: BALMY BEACH RFC HEIGHT: 188 WEIGHT: 104KG



#### DJUSTICE SEARS-DURU

HOMETOWN:
OAKVILLE, ON
AGE: 27
CAPS: 52
PRO CLUB: SEATTLE
SEAWOLVES
HOME CLUB: OAKVILLE
CRUSADERS RC
HEIGHT: 185CM
WEIGHT: 122KG



#### MICHAEL SMITH

HOMETOWN: WHITE ROCK, BC AGE: 23 CAPS: 0 PRO CLUB: SAN DIEGO LEGION HOME CLUB: UBC THUNDERBIRDS HEIGHT: 188CM WEIGHT: 100KG



#### COREY THOMAS

HOMETOWN: BROOME, AUSTRALIA AGE: 27 CAPS: 0 PRO CLUB: LA GILTINIS HOME CLUB: UWA RUGBY CLUB HEIGHT: 193CM WEIGHT: 115KG





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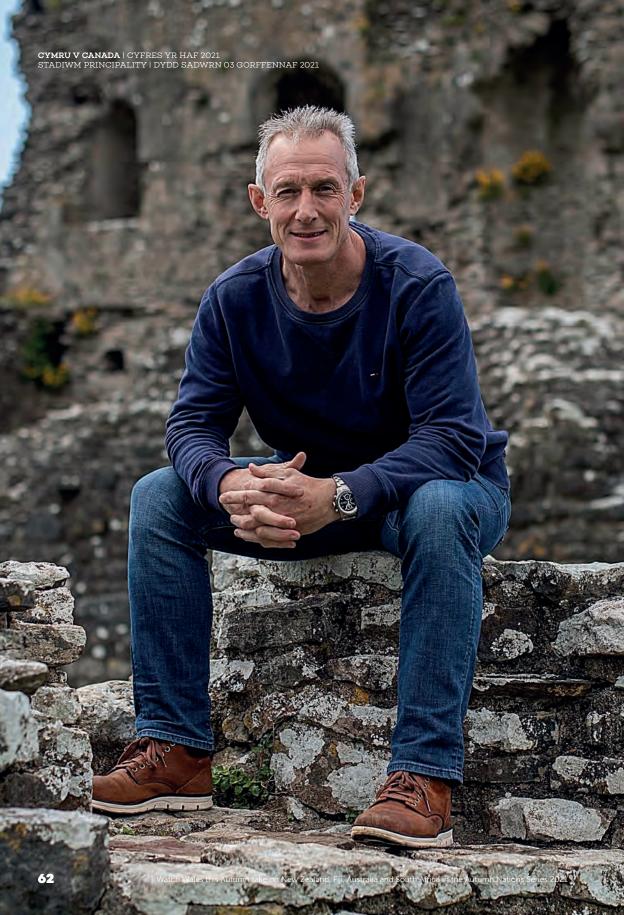
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# ROB HOWLEY ON COMING HOME TO WALES

WORDS: STEFF THOMAS

RUGBY HAS ALWAYS DEFINED ROB HOWLEY'S LIFE. EVEN FROM HIS EARLY DAYS IN BRIDGEND AND AT BRYNTEG COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HE WAS MARKED OUT AS A PLAYER OF REAL PROMISE.

Such a long time away from the game has been tough for him to deal with, but the summer of 2021 represents the start of a new chapter. In the last six months he has been back and forth to North America despite the ongoing pandemic in his role as an assistant coach with Canada. He has also worked regularly with the Toronto Arrows — Canada's sole team in Major League Rugby.

It has allowed Howley to get back to what he loves doing. And as fate would have it Canada are Wales' opponents at the Principality Stadium today.

Wales may be without 10 players who are busy helping Warren Gatland win a British  $\vartheta$  Irish Lions test series against the Springboks, but it is still a side packed full of talent and experience.

"I love being a part of rugby – I've a huge passion for it," Howley says. "I started coaching Canada via Zoom and meeting some of the players on there. There was a little bit of nervousness from me. I'm a proud and passionate Welshman who just wants Wales to win.

"I don't know any different and that's a challenge for me because I'm the other side of the fence now with Canada for the first time in 12 years. It will be a different experience for me and from a work perspective, I'll want Wales to lose. It's mixed emotions, of course.

"Along with others, I'll have helped to develop the players I'm coaching against. I'll try to outfox them in some ways. Wales have a lot of world-class players and they're in a really good place.

"I suppose over the last four months we have seen the true Wales. I built a lot of friendships through my time with Wales and I felt sorry for the players against France in the Six Nations. It was just desperate. Wayne Pivac has to take a lot of credit.



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It was a shame they couldn't get the Grand Slam."

After nearly two years of turmoil in which the former Wales attack coach was banned from rugby for breaching the sport's betting rules, sent home from the 2019 World Cup, and received psychological support to help him finally deal with the death of his sister Karen, Howley can look forward to the resumption of his career in North America.

"I wish I'd spoken out earlier. I didn't. I suppressed my feelings," says Howley, now 50. "I put my hand up and went through the investigation. Thankfully, I've come out the other side now where I'm at peace with myself and my sister. I'm able to talk about what I've gone through."

As a player Howley won 59 caps for Wales and two for the Lions captaining his country 22 times. He was also an integral part of Warren Gatland's coaching team helping Wales to Six Nations Grand Slams in 2008, 2012, and 2019, while he also led his country to the Six Nations title in 2013 as caretaker head coach. There was also a World Cup semifinal in 2011. And Howley insists one day he would love to return to Wales to coach at regional level.

"The intellectual property I've gained from being part of a coaching team which I believe was one of the best in the world has been huge for me," he said. "I'm grateful to be back in the game, but of course I'd like to coach in Wales with one of the regions. Welsh rugby is close to my heart and I'm very passionate about it having come through the system."

But for now Howley's focus is purely on Canada, who are currently 23rd in the world rankings, where he works alongside former Wales international Kingsley Jones. He believes more test matches against Tier 1 nations is crucial for the development of Canadian rugby.

"This is 100 per cent a great opportunity for Canadian rugby," said Howley. "There is a difference



in terms of tier one, tier two, and tier three. It's been a long time since the Canada players have put on the jersey. The last time was at the 2019 Rugby World Cup where they had a number of injuries which didn't help their chances.

"Being in a pool with South Africa, New Zealand and to an extent Italy didn't help. They were well beaten by Italy. Kingsley has looked upon the next couple of years as a chance to look at the succession plan in a similar way to Italy at this moment in time. They want to give youngsters an opportunity.

"In previous years they've looked at players who have been playing in New Zealand or France and bringing them in for a week or two. It was good for me to meet and work with the players for a threeweek camp in February time.

"We worked on the culture and some understanding about what makes a good environment. From the experiences I've had with working with coaching teams under Warren Gatland, thankfully I am able to help on that."





# BASHAM YN GOBEITHIO CAEL EFFAITH AR GYMRU

MAE **TAINE BASHAM** YN GOBEITHIO RHOI EI DROED ORAU YMLAEN I GYMRU YR HAF YMA ER MWYN CEISIO ENNILL LLE PARHAOL YN SGWAD WAYNE PIVAC.

Mae'r chwaraewr ochr agored 21 oed gyda'r Dreigiau wedi hyfforddi gyda Chymru mewn carfanau blaenorol ac mae'n ymgeisydd cryf i ennill ei gap cyntaf o'r diwedd yn erbyn Canada neu'r Ariannin yn Stadiwm Principality fis nesaf. Mae wedi cael ei ystyried yn un o obeithion mwyaf disglair rygbi Cymru ers tro, ond torrodd ei fraich ym mis Ionawr a rhwystrodd hynny ei gynnydd.

Ond gwnaeth argraff yng Nghwpan yr Enfys gyda chyfres o berfformiadau eithriadol, ac mae'n benderfynol o wthio ei ffordd i gynlluniau Pivac ar gyfer Cwpan Rygbi'r Byd yn 2023. "Mae popeth yn ymwneud ag adeiladu tuag at Gwpan Rygbi'r Byd yn Ffrainc yn 2023," meddai Basham.

"Dywedodd Wayne ei fod wedi defnyddio dros



50 o chwaraewyr hyd yma er mwyn iddo allu edrych arnyn nhw. Mae'n ymwneud â rhoi fy llaw i fyny a gwneud fy ngorau i geisio mynd ar y daith yn 2023.

"Os bydda i'n dechrau neu'n dod oddi ar y fainc, bydd angen i mi gael dylanwad, rhoi fy nhroed orau ymlaen, a rhoi fy llaw i fyny. Roedd yr anaf i'r fraich yn dipyn o rwystr ac yna chwaraeodd bechgyn y Dreigiau, sydd hefyd â rheng ôl gystadleuol iawn, yn dda.

"Roedd yn rhaid i mi geisio dod yn ôl i gyflwr chwarae, a tharo'r gêr uchaf pan oeddwn i'n ôl. Tua diwedd y tymor gyda Chwpan yr Enfys, cefais gyfle gwych i chwarae gemau a dod yn ôl i'r arfer."

Mae Basham yn chwaraewr sydd wedi dal y llygad o



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amgylch y parc erioed, gyda'i ffordd ddawnus a medrus o gario a thrin y bêl. Ond yn ddiweddar mae wedi dod yn feistr ar fwy o sgiliau gyda'i effaith yn y dadansoddiad yn creu argraff ar gyfarwyddwr rygbi'r Dreigiau, Dean Ryan, yn ystod y misoedd diwethaf.

"Rydw i eisiau cael fy nwylo ar y bêl yn aml er mwyn i mi allu cario a mynd dros y llinell ennill i'r tîm a rhoi fy nhroed orau ymlaen i'r bechgyn," meddai Basham. "Mae wedi bod yn fater o ganolbwyntio ar hanfodion y gêm fel y safle gosod, fy amddiffyniad a'r ardal gyswllt.

"Mae hefyd wedi bod yn fater o wella'r meysydd hynny i mi ac mae'r rheini'n feysydd a allai eich gwneud yn wahanol i bobl eraill. Mae'n fater o gael gêm gyffredinol dda sy'n eich galluogi i chwarae'n dda.

"Mae hyfforddwr amddiffyn y Dreigiau Simon Cross hefyd wedi fy helpu'n fawr drwy gydol y tymor gyda'r dadansoddiadau a sut i ddadansoddi gêm. I Dean yn y Dreigiau, hanfodion rygbi, amddiffyniad ac ymosodiad, a gwrthdrawiadau ydy popeth. Mae wedi cadw pethau'n syml, ac rydw i wedi elwa'n fawr o hynny."



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#### COMING NEXT...

After today's meeting with Canada, Wales know they will have to raise their game further for two back-to-back games against Argentina in Cardiff.

Mario Ledesma's Pumas haven't played since December 5, but their performances last season showed just how dangerous a side they can be.

Their impressive displays at the end of 2020 peaked with a remarkable 25-15 win over New Zealand on November 14.

In the Tri-Nations series – renamed from the Rugby Championship after South Africa's withdrawal because of Covid-19 – Argentina also drew with Australia on two separate occasions.

Argentina's rivalling of the best teams from the southern hemisphere, including the mighty All Blacks, means Wayne Pivac's Wales know all too well the threat coming their way.

"We have a bit of everything in our squad; experienced players and others we prefer to continue developing," said Argentina head coach Ledesma.

"The 2023 World Cup in France is in the distance, but in a pandemic, it looks far away. We have a few days to prepare for the matches and to try to play our best rugby, but with players coming from all hemispheres and having had different preparations, it isn't going to be easy. We will have to take that into consideration and see how we can prepare for the Rugby Championship.

"Wales showed at the 2019 World Cup they have a large squad and their performance doesn't suffer when you take two or three players out of their team."

Wales were due to travel to South America to meet Argentina on foreign soil this summer, but that trip has not been possible due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Instead, the Pumas will play Pivac's side at Cardiff's Principality Stadium on the following two Saturdays; July 10 and July 17.

It will be the first time the two sides have met since the summer of 2018 when Wales won a two-Test series 2-0 thanks to consecutive victories in San Juan and Santa Fe.

That 2018 trip took place with Wales without a number of their first-choice players – a situation which will be similar this month.

Ledesma has picked 29 players in his 32-man squad who are currently playing their rugby in Europe and Australia. It means there will be only three players in the tour party who will have to join Ledesma and his fellow coaches, Juan Fernández Lobbe and the brothers Nicolás and Juan Fernández Miranda, in quarantining for 10 days on arrival in the United Kingdom.

Dragons scrum-half Gonzalo Bertranou is the only Welsh-based player in the squad and back-row Federico Wegrzyn is the sole uncapped member of the party.

Leicester Tigers hooker Julián Montoya has been named as captain. "It was with joy and pride I gave the captaincy to Julián," said I edesma

"I've witnessed his growth as a player and as a leader and he has forged a strong bond with our former skipper Pablo Matera."

Argentine rugby has gone through significant change in the last year and a half in which Covid-19 has dominated. Their main domestic side the Jaguares – who reached the 2019 Super Rugby final – are not competing at club level which is a severe problem.

That is why almost all of Ledesma's squad are playing in foreign climes.

There are 10 of the Jaquares squad who played in the 19-3 2019 final defeat by the Crusaders in the current Argentina squad. All the Pumas' points in their never-to-beforgotten 25-15 win over the All Blacks came from veteran outside-half Nicolas Sanchez. He is one of two survivors from the last time Argentina beat Wales. That was in Cardiff in 2012, when Sanchez kicked 13 points and the other survivor in the 2021 squad, the Racing 92 wing Juan Imhoff, scored one of his side's two tries

Wales vs Argentina first Test: July 10, Principality Stadium (kick-off 1pm)

Wales vs Argentina second Test: July 17, Principality Stadium (kick-off 3pm)

Tickets for Wales' two Tests with Argentina remain on public sale. Go to https://www.wru.wales/ tickets/ for more information.

# Whata Nelsh line-up!





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#### **WALES**

- 15 LEIGH HALFPENNY
- 14 JONAH HOLMES
- **13** UILISI HALAHOLO
- **12** JONATHAN DAVIES
- **11** TOM ROGERS
- **10** CALLUM SHEEDY
- TOMOS WILLIAMS
- 1 NICKY SMITH
- 2 ELLIOT DEE
- **3** DILLON LEWIS
- 4 BEN CARTER
  - LOCK/YR AIL RENG
- 5 WILL ROWLANDS

LOCK/YR AIL RENG

- **6** ROSS MORIARTY
- **7** JAMES BOTHAM
- FLANKER/BLAENASGELLWF
- 8 AARON WAINWRIGHT

REPLACEMENTS



WALES V CANADA

KICK-OFF 15.00PM

SATURDAY

STADIUM

3 JULY 2021 PRINCIPALITY

REFEREE:
NIKA AMASHUKELI GEO

AR1: CHRISTOPHE RIDLEY ENG

AR:

TOM FOLEY ENG

TMO: STUART TERHEEGE ENG

- **16** RYAN ELIAS
- **17** GARETH THOMAS
- **18** LEON BROWN
- **19** JOSH TURNBULL
- 20 TAINE BASHAM
- 21 KIERAN HARDY
- 22 BEN THOMAS
- 23 NICK TOMPKINS

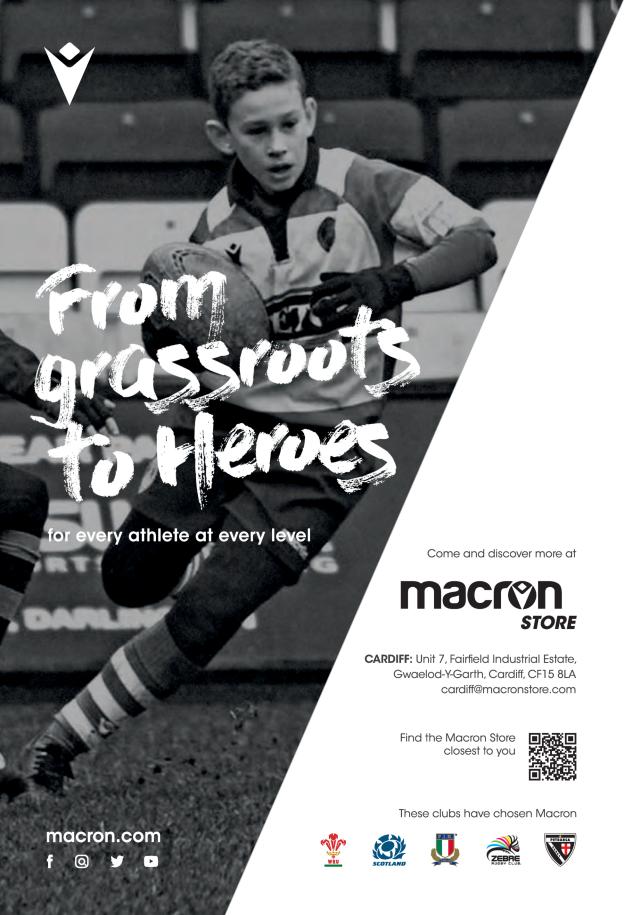


#### CANADA

- **15** COOPER COATS
- **14** COLE DAVIS
- 13 BEN LE SAGE
- **12** QUINN NGAWATI
- 11 KAINOA LLOYD
- **10** PETER NELSON
- PROSS BRAUDE
- 1 DJUSTICE SEARS-DURU
- 2 ANDREW QUATTRIN
- **3** JAKE ILLNICK
- 4 CONOR KEYS
- LOCK/YR AIL RENG
- 5 JOSH LARSEN
- **6** REEGAN O'GORMAN
- 7 LUCAS RUMBALL
- 8 SIAKI VIKILANI

REPLACEMENTS

- **16** ERIC HOWARD
- 17 COLE KEITH
- **18** TYLER ROWLAND
- 19 DONALD CARSON
- **20** MICHAEL SMITH
- **21** LUCAS ALBORNOZ
- **22** WILLIAM PERCILLIER
- **23** ROBBIE POVEY









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