

Big week for our European campaigners



Four Welsh Premier League clubs take to the European stage this week looking for a chance to impress and proceed to the next round

The New Saints warmed up for their trip to the Faroe Islands with a draw against Glenavon in Belfast on Tuesday and a 3-1 win against Glentoran.

Meanwhile opponents B36 Tórshavn go into the match top, seventeen matches into their season having lost only one match. They won 3-1 at AB Argir on Saturday.

Airbus host Croat side NK Lokomotiva Zagreb who, like the WPL club are out of playing season.

The Wing-makers warmed up with victories over Ynys Môn Island Games squad, Newtown AFC and Flint Town United before going down 2-3 to Northern Ireland champions Crusaders in Belfast.

In their warm-up the Croats have drawn with Romanian top division side AFC Astra who face Inverness CT in the Europa League.

Newtown take on Maltese side Valletta FC, having lost 2-1 to Airbus UK, beaten the Ynys Môn squad 4-1 and edged Flint Town United 2-1. On Saturday they lost their final warm-up at home by 2-4 with Jason Oswell and Matty Owen on the scoresheet.

Finally, Bala Town travel to Luxembourg to face opponents FC'03 of Differdange. The Lakesiders have warmed-up by drawing 0-0 with Ynys Môn, and beat the Manchester International Football Academy 6-1. Another win this time at Newtown sets them up for the away leg. Mike Hayes, Mark Connolly, Connal Murtagh and Kenny Lunt got the goals putting the Lakesiders in a great frame of mind for Thursday night.

Brothers face to face in Tórshavn

The UEFA Champions League First Qualifying Round pitted The New Saints with Faroese Champions B36 which had a special link for the Cieslewicz brothers.

Adrian and Lukasz are brothers and will on Wednesday, be playing against each other for the first ever time. The pair, 24 and 27, were born in Poland but grew up in the Faroes.

The Saints' rapid winger is delighted with the draw and is relishing taking on his brother, 'I've never played against my brother previously, so I was excited about that, but we want to go as far as possible and obviously I want the best for my brother and unfortunately one of the teams are going to be knocked out. I played together with him last year but I haven't played against him, so it will be interesting.'

The former Wrexham forward, played for Torshavn last season after leaving Kidderminster Harriers and will revisit his old club when TNS travel to the Faroes, 'It's a Champions League game, so it doesn't matter what level you play at – it's a big occasion for everyone. I spent eight years over there before I moved to Britain, so I've got good memories.'

The winners of the first qualifying round will face Hungarian side Videoton FC in the next round – a match that the Polish Cieslewicz family were not hoping for, 'We wanted Lech Poznan in the second round so someone would have played our home team. That didn't happen, but it's a big dilemma for my family now who they are going to support – my mum says she doesn't even want to come to the game because she doesn't know who to cheer on.'

The second leg on July 7th at Park Hall will kick off at 19:00pm and tickets can now be purchased. Please call The Venue on 101691 684840.

FIXTURES 2015-16

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Wednesday July 1st

B36 TØRSHAVN v THE NEW SAINTS

At Gundadalur Stadium, Tørshavn

Kick-off 19:00

EUROPA LEAGUE

Thursday July 2nd

Airbus UK Broughton v NK Lokomotiva Zagreb

At Nantporth Stadium, Bangor

Kick-off 18:45

FC Differdange'03 v Bala Town

At Parc des Sports, Differdange

Kick-off 19:00

Newtown AFC v Valletta FC

At Pavaways Latham Park, Newtown

Kick-off 19:00

NEWS

ABERYSTWYTH TOWN

Ian Hughes will go into the next campaign knowing that he has an excellent squad at his disposal and one of the best in the league, writes Matthew Wallace.

With the majority of the players that came within minutes of qualifying for European football last year resigning including top goalscorer Chris Venables and players' player Luke Sherborn, Town last week added the reputable names of Rhys Griffiths and Lee Surman who between them have made over 600 appearances in the Welsh top flight.

Neither need much introduction to supporters of the Welsh Premier League. Rhys Griffiths is a goal scoring legend who has found the net 262 times in 368 appearances. He has won the Welsh Golden Boot in seven consecutive seasons and is a six time member of the Welsh Premier League team of the season.

Discussing the move, he stated. "There are plenty of things that made me want to sign. It's a club that I've had a lot of respect for over the years. It's a well run club run by good honest people. I've got history with some of the players and some good friends here. As a group of players even the ones I don't know come across as a good set of lads."

Griffiths' move sees him team up once again with Venables which looks set to become a partnership that has the potential to terrorise defences up and down the country. But speaking of any potential golden boot rivalry, Griffiths is certain there won't be anything on that score.

"If I didn't know him so well, I'd be a bit worried that I'd have to take over but I don't feel like that at all. I just hope that between us we can get to the 45/50 goals a season mark. I don't care if he gets 25 of them and I get 20, my main focus is on contributing to the team.

The last thing I want to do is to stop Chris doing what he's been doing but hopefully I can add to it and lay a couple on from him."

The second of Town's signings is defender Lee Surman. Having started his career at Swansea City, Surman has become one of the most established defenders in the league, amassing over 300 hundred appearances for both Llanelli and Port Talbot over the years. At 29 years old, he offers the club experience in an area of the field that Hughes looked to strengthen in order to improve on last year's promise.

"I had a look at the squad and it wasn't too far off last season so we're looking to kick on this season and get some silverware." Surman stated to ATFC.org.uk "I like to think that I've got plenty of experience and that can be a positive for the squad. I'm not one to rant and rave on the pitch and prefer to lead by example in a playing sense. If we tighten up a little at the back and keep the attacking philosophy that you had going forward last season, we could turn those draws and losses into wins. "

Both men join the club having played together at Port Talbot Town and previous to that Llanelli alongside a number of the club's senior players including skipper Stuart Jones, Venables, Antonio Corbisiero and assistant manager Wyn Thomas. This previous experience was a big draw for both men in signing for the Seaside.

"They are winners. They've got a winning mentality. They've won so much. I've played with Stuart in my early days with Swansea and at Llanelli so I'm hoping that'll be a transition made with relative ease. Wyn has been involved in the league for a long time. I've enjoyed being around someone and a character like that as he's always honest with his opinions. It doesn't matter if he's talking to a senior player or a youngster which is something I'm keen to pick up." was Surman's response when quizzed on his new teammates.

Both players join Town with the same burning ambition as all around the club. After the bitter disappointment of final day heartbreak in consecutive seasons, the aim for both players this year is to propel Aber back to where they belong.

"I want to add some trophies and Aberystwyth is a good place to do it. Without sounding big headed but I've won enough individual but I'd like to add more team awards and team merits. I see no reason why we can't get second place this year" Griffiths stated

Surman added, "We've got a great opportunity to get some silverware. I've been in two cup finals in this league and lost both of them so ultimately I haven't won anything yet so I want to change that. I'm really looking forward to get going."

AIRBUS UK BROUGHTON

RYAN Wade was a surprise inclusion in a 17-man Airbus squad submitted to Uefa for the upcoming Europa League ties with NK Lokomotiva.

The 27-yr-old wingman left the Wingmakers at the end of the season but has now had a change of heart over a proposed move to Stalybridge Celtic and featured in Tuesday night's friendly against Flint Town United.

Wade has been with the club for three seasons after previous experience with Skelmersdale United, Vauxhall Motors, Burscough, Runcorn Town, Prescott Cables and Northwich.

He has started 64 WPL games, scoring 17 goals with his volley against Port Talbot last season one of the nominations for goal of the season.

The European squad is: Jordan Barrow, Chris Budrys, James Coates, Ricky Evans, Tom Field, Tony Gray, Ellis Healing, Andy Jones, Keighan Jones, Matty McGinn, Jay Owen, Lee Owens, Mike Pearson, Wayne Riley, Jonny Spittle, Ryan Wade and Ryan Wignall.

A BRACE from Wayne Riley gave the Wingmakers another pre-Europe friendly victory, this time against Chris Herbert's new-look Flint Town United side.

ANDY Preece admits his side will face a tough task to overcome their Croatian opponents in the Europa League first qualifying round.

The Wingmakers' director of football Preece believes Airbus will need 'a miracle' to make Europa League history after a daunting draw against full-time outfit NK Lokomotiva.

Preece flew back from the qualifying-round draw in Switzerland cursing his luck after the other three Welsh sides in Europe were handed ties against opposition from Luxembourg, Malta and the Faroe Islands.



"We'd swap with any of them, and we'd certainly fancy our chances!" Preece told the Chronicle.

"Of course we will give it our best shot, like we always do. We'll be as organised and as prepared as we possibly can but, realistically, we're probably going to need a miracle."

Although Airbus have never won a game in Europe, they managed to match professional outfits in their first two campaigns, losing out on away goals to FK Ventspils of Latvia in 2013 and 3-2 on aggregate to Norwegian club Haugesund last summer.

"You'd expect Lokomotiva to be at least as good as Haugesund, so it's going to be incredibly difficult." Preece added.

"We played way above where we are to compete with them, but if we can do that and we get a bit of luck then you just never know.

"There'll be no pressure on us. Zagreb's a nice play to go, so I'm sure we'll have a good time!"

With Jordan Barrow suspended from the first leg, Preece is sweating on the fitness of midfield playmaker and free-kick specialist Tom Field.

This article is courtesy of www.airbusfc.com the Airbus UK Broughton FC website.

BALA TOWN

Town supporters were treated to a 7 goal thriller at Airbus on Wednesday night as Town took on the Manchester International Football Academy, managed by ex Lake-sider Chris Mason.

Leftback Thompson makes Maes Tegid move.

David Thompson has today become the latest recruit signing from Rhyl.

The 24 year old Liverpoolian began his career as a youth at Everton and Oldham before signing for Bury. David made three first team appearances for Bury but was released at the end of the season.

A leftback who can also play on the wing, he has since had stints at Droylsden, Northwich Victoria, Marine, Vauxhall Motors and Colwyn Bay prior to playing at Rhyl last season.

He made 21 (+5) appearances for the Lilywhites in 2014/15.

Hannah Gwenllian

BANGOR CITY

No news this week.

CARMARTHEN TOWN

Carmarthen Town manager, Mark Aizlewood, feels that his side's first two matches of the 2015-16 season will be quite difficult.

"To get Airbus away in our first fixture is going to be quite a test for my team," he said. "I am of the firm opinion that they will be pushing The New Saints hard this coming season and will finish at least as runners-up in the Welsh Premier League."

"Our first home game is against Connah's Quay who, I believe, will be the surprise package of the year. "The same could be said for Port Talbot Town and Aberystwyth Town."

Aizlewood added: "Although Carmarthen have had to cut their playing budget again for this coming season I feel that we have enough expertise and know-how to be able to finish in a comfortable mid-table position."

"For me, the two relegation positions are between four sides. The promoted pair of Llandudno and Haverfordwest County will struggle to adapt to the pressures of the WPL, while Rhyl and Bangor City may well find life somewhat difficult once again."



CARMARTHEN Town boss Mark Aizlewood has boosted his rear-guard with the capture of Carl Evans...

Central defender Evans is making his return to Richmond Park after a spell with Welsh Premier League rivals Port Talbot Town, writes the Carmarthen Journal.

The move has delighted Aizlewood, who is hoping to add a couple more names to his squad as he looks to complete his squad for next season.

The Old Gold boss has re-signed most of last year's squad but has seen long-serving midfielder Paul Fowler make the move to Port Talbot

Town, while goalkeeper Scott James - who spent last season on loan at Caerau Ely - has made the move to promoted Haverfordwest.

Cortez Belle is expected to leave Richmond Park, having spent the end of last season on loan at Connah's Quay. Aizlewood said: "Cortez has had his time with us and I would like to place on record my thanks to him for the effort he put in when with the Old Gold.

"He is an excellent central defender and on occasions last season proved to be a more than adequate emergency centre-forward."

The 32-year-old joined Carmarthen from the Steelmen in June 2013.

"I hope that Tez will continue playing top-grade football as he still has much to offer whichever club he joins," added Aizlewood.

Meanwhile, Carmarthen will play Cardiff City in one of their pre-season encounters.

The game against Russell Slade's side, who finished mid-table in the Skybet Championship last term, is the standout fixture in Town's pre-season schedule.

It will take place at Richmond Park on Saturday, July 18.

It is one of three home games Town will play ahead of the start of the new season. Walkington Town of the East Riding League in Yorkshire are the visitors on July 31, with Port Talbot Town the opposition on Saturday, August 15.

The pre-season games start on July 4 when Town visit Welsh League Division One outfit Briton Ferry Llansawel, with a trip to Chepstow Town (July 7) and STM Sports Llanrunney following. Other games see Town visit Merthyr Town on July 25, Goytre on August 4 and Cardiff Met on August 8.

Old Gold are pleased to announce a new home kit sponsor.

The deal will see Jeff White Motors, one of South Wales' biggest car dealerships, as the principal sponsor of the first team with the company's logo appearing on the front and back of the home strip.

The contract is reported to be a record sponsorship deal for the Old Gold.



gap CONNAH'S QUAY

Saturday morning saw The Nomads return as pre-season training started ahead of the new Dafabet Welsh Premier League season.

Manager, Allan Bickerstaff and Assistant Jay Catton led the session as the first team squad, including the U19/reserves trained at local neighbours Airbus' ground.

The session included the distribution of a raft of new technical equipment and kit courtesy of Macron Store Wrexham, before the players undertook a three hour session which included a selection of activities including a warm up, some basic ball work, a speed endurance session and some 11 vs 11 work.

The session saw a number of new faces join up with the squad for the first time as new signings John Danby, Michael Wilson, Callum Morris, Ashley Ruane and Nick Rushton all took part in the session.

Following the conclusion of the session, Manager Allan Bickerstaff said "Everything's fantastic, good training session, great weather which helps and good to see all of the new boys in - they seem to have fitted in quite well... another two or three to come in, so all is looking good.".

NEWTOWN AFC

Fans, supporters and players alike have all been going mad on social media all day since it was announced Newtown would face Valletta in the Qualifying Round One of the Europa League.

Here is what a few of the players had to say.

Matty Hearsey: "Malta looks a nice place and although we won't be favourites we will give it our best shot.

"Having the home leg first will be a bonus and we can have the home advantage and I am sure the Newtown fans will give us a big backing."

Striker Jason Oswell said: "Great draw for us. I just had a look at the ground and it looks very good.

"I am praying for good weather and a sell out and it will be an amazing experience. Can't wait."

Stopper Dave Jones commented: "I can't wait to get going. It is going to be a great experience and the biggest game I have ever played in and the same for most of the lads.

"I still can't believe it."

IMPRESSIVE youngster Craig Harris has described his rise from the youth team to the first team squad as an 'unreal feeling.'

Harris (second from left in photo) was on the fringes of the first team last season, but has shot out of the blocks in pre-season with three goals so far, including a brace to beat Flint Town United on Saturday.

And the midfielder is delighted with the start he has made.

He said: "I am happy with the way I have begun, getting a few goals to my name is even better for myself, especially with one coming against a side like Airbus.

"It has been a big turnaround for me taking a leap from youth football to senior football, and also to be able to train and play alongside experienced Welsh Premier League players."

"It is a great feeling being a part of the squad and knowing that I have come a fair way from first joining team is an unreal feeling.

"Also with it being with such a good bunch of lads makes it even better."

Newtown fell behind at the weekend to an early Kyle Smith goal, but Harris grabbed two impressive second half strikes and he believes his goals are making him more comfortable in the squad.

He added: "I was happy with my performance, especially with the second half to get two more goals for me and team. I definitely feel at home in the squad.

"Now that I know all the lads I feel more comfortable than when I first started, with a lot of them helping me out it has made it easier to bond."

Like the rest of the players the midfielder was watching intently at the Europa League draw yesterday, and he wants to push himself all the way to see if he can grab a starting place against Valletta.

Harris added: "It is a great draw.

"Any draw was going to be good no matter what. Just being able to play in the Europa League will be a great feeling.

"If I keep up this form and carry on putting in performance after performance the gaffer might just give me a chance to prove myself on the big stage."

HE WROTE his name into Newtown folklore on one famous summer's night in 1996.

And despite the final scoreline **Romilly Brown** is still a very historic name at Newtown Football Club.

Brown is the only and only player to score for Newtown in Europe, as the midfielder scored in the 4-1 home defeat to Skonto Riga in 1996.

The former Robin now lives in France, but he has been recalling his rise from Newtown youngster, to European goalscoring hero.

"On leaving school I went to Shrewsbury Town for two years where I met up with the likes of Jason Evans, Barts (Mike Barton), Mark Williams and Jason Yates.

"But I left there to come back to Newtown, and I was 19 or 20 when the European games came around."

Brown specifically recalls his strike in front of a packed out Latham Park crowd.

He added: "Walking out to my home crowd was amazing considering there was not many real Newtown lads playing at the time. All I can remember for the goal was running back to help out Jason Evans who was defending most of the time.

"We had a few good moves but for the goal Richard Pike worked his magic, like he always says, and me and Colin finished off the move, it was an easy goal really."

"But all I thought is that at least we have scored one. Following that I went to play for the second team then and then off the Rhayader Town."

Brown returned to Newtown, before moving to France where he played for Angouleme.



The midfielder is yet to see the current crop play, but he urged players that records are there to be broken, and anything is possible.

He said: "I haven't seen the town play but friends and family said they did very well to get in to Europe.

"It is a great experience travelling and playing abroad, it is different football.

"But records are there to be broken and I was so proud to have scored on the big stage for my home town.

"Valletta won't be an easy game, but anything can happen. I wish the lads the best of luck and urge them to enjoy it."

PORT TALBOT TOWN

We are making this statement to clarify the position in response to recent rumours and uncertainties. On the 29th June the FAW will be deciding whether we have satisfied the conditions made at the time of the provisional offer of £350,000 grant aid they made to us in January towards the cost of installing a 3G pitch at the GenQuip.

If we have satisfied those conditions it is the wish of the Board to go ahead with the installation of the 3G pitch as soon as possible after the important pre-season friendly and hospitality event at the match against Newport County on 11th July.

Everyone is frustrated that it has seemed to be such a long process, in part due to delays beyond the Board's control, however we hope you will agree that a positive outcome will be a tremendous benefit for all our playing groups and for a far more secure future for the club as a whole. Our aspirations are to use the 3G as the first stage of a project to improve all the ancillary facilities at the GenQuip to create a top quality sporting and community facility.

These proposals were outlined by the Chairman at the meeting at the club in December 2014 and will offer both a variety of opportunities for local residents and underpin the financial future of the club and stadium.

We appreciate that for many of you pre-season arrangements are in hand so we are mindful of the need to seek alternative plans if we are to go ahead with the installation, which, dependent on the surveyors and contractors, would hopefully be finished by the end of September.

This makes life difficult we know, and we do share everybody's frustration but there is not long to go now. However, we are acutely aware of the need for you to know with certainty what will be happening, particularly in terms of both pre and early season matches and training and will be holding a meeting chaired by Dr. Hancock as soon as possible after 29th June, and certainly in that week.

We will advise everybody of the date and time of that meeting both by direct email and through the website. In the meantime, Dr. Hancock invites constructive input and if any one wishes to contact us please do email colin.hancock@yahoo.co.uk or timgdbull@gmail.com or leave a message on the club website response section...

RHYL FC

Rhyl FC's summer feast of football announcements continues as the club have confirmed a pre-season friendly against Everton FC on July 22nd. (7:30pm)

This proved to be a very popular game last summer with a sell out crowd of 3,000 viewing a promising performance by the Lilywhites against a very well organised set of youngsters.

Elsewhere the club have also announced a friendly against non-league Telford United to be played on Friday 31st July at 7:30pm

Tickets for all games will be available to buy from the website soon.

THE NEW SAINTS

See front page

LLANDUDNO FC

'Delighted' was the word used by Morgan when he today announced the re-signing of 12 of his team from last year as they all signed on the dotted line.

"I am absolutely delighted with the re-signing of my boys. I brought them here with the knowledge that they can all play at a higher level. Just look at last year's results against WPL teams, we beat Connah's Quay and Cefn in pre -season friendlies and we also managed to squeeze past Rhyl on penalties in the Word Cup so we have that quality in our group.

"Some of the lads have got previous experience of playing at a higher level and along with the new signings that have come in, that stands us in good stead ahead of this season."

Morgan has managed to capture his club captain Tom Dix on fresh terms, a move that has gone down well with the fans. "Top player and a top man, he is definitely a fan favourite and a player that can be admired not only by the home support but by the away support as well," said Iain Dyer, Chair of the Llandudno FC Supporters Club when he spoke to us today.

As well as Tom Dix, the signings of Danny Hughes, Gareth Evans, Lee Thomas, Danny Shaw and Lewis Buckley to the midfield area will add steel to an already formidable part of the Town team. Morgan spoke about his midfield earlier today, "Danny (Hughes) has been there done that and got the T-Shirt ten times over with Rhyl, he was their captain and rightly so, his quality from midfield is frightening.

"Gaz (Gareth Evans) has high level experience as well, plying his trade with Colwyn Bay up in the conference north, he's always a threat from any position as he proved with his goals from the middle last year.

"Lee (Thomas) is another player I rate highly, his work ethic for me is second to none, although he hasn't got that experience of playing at the top tier, his attitude and will to win will help him no end.

"Danny (Shaw) is one of the two ex-Tranmere lads who I brought in midway through last year and he has been brilliant for me, he's stepped up when needed and also featured for the 19's on a few occasions last year.

"Lewis (Buckley) is another I brought in quite late on in the season but without his goals towards the back end, especially when Toby (Jones, now with Caernarfon) suffered ankle ligament damage, we might not of closed games out like we did.

As well as the midfield, Morgan has moved to significantly strengthen his water tight back line from last year, Richard Hinds, Jake Phillips, James Joyce, Corey Jones and Conn Tierney all signing on.

"Hindsy (Richard Hinds) will continue to be my number 2 next year but he's also signed up to play as well which is a huge boost to our squad" said Alan, speaking about his backline for next year.

"Jake (Phillips) is another that I wanted to get tied down as soon as I could, as there was a few clubs sniffing round for him after his form last year for me.

"James (Joyce) has been top class form me since he came in a few years back, he's up there with some of the best full back's I have personally ever seen in my time and I am glad he has signed with us for next season.

"Conn (Tierney) and Corey (Jones) are another two players that I wanted to get tied down, Conn maybe didn't play as much as he would of liked last year but I have no doubts he will be important for us this year, he has pace and ability which is what the WPL demands. Corey has been in the WPL with Bangor last year, he excelled for me towards the end of last year and I want him to continue that form into the new season."

The last of Morgan's re-signings was striker Leo Riley, "Leo came in with Danny (Shaw) as I mentioned before, him and Danny have stepped up when needed stepped into the 19's when required (under then manager and now first team coach, Sean Eardley) Leo has a love for the game, he was at Tranmere and he has now got a point to prove with this opportunity he has been given in the Welsh Prem."

The re-signings of last year's league winning team takes Alan Morgan's squad size to 16, but with his team working hard behind the scenes there is a definite chance that will increase in good time.

HAVERFORDWEST COUNTY

No news this week..



Welsh Football issue 182 (June 2015) has been published and is available to order

This is our end-of-season review edition and contents include:

- Complete final tables and honours supplement section
- Photo gallery of over 30 of the season's winners - all regions and levels of Welsh football
- Annual Welsh Football Programme Awards
- Spotlight on HOLYWELL TOWN, treble winners
- Looking back 10 years - to a memorable European night for Carmarthen Town,
- Looking back 25 years to the end of season 1989-90
- News, action photos and round ups from all main competitions.

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