

= Wales national rugby union team =

The Wales national rugby union team (Welsh : Tîm rygbi 'r undeb cenedlaethol Cymru) represent Wales in international rugby union . They compete annually in the Six Nations Championship with England , France , Ireland , Italy and Scotland . Wales have won the Six Nations and its predecessors 26 times outright , one less than England . Wales ' most recent championship win came in 2013 .

The governing body , the Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) , was established in 1881 , the same year that Wales played their first international against England . Wales ' performances in the Home Nations Championship (now the Six Nations) continued to improve , experiencing their first ' golden age ' between 1900 and 1911 . They first played New Zealand , known as the All Blacks , in 1905 , when they defeated them 3 ? 0 in a famous match at Cardiff Arms Park . Welsh rugby struggled between the two World Wars , but experienced a second ' golden age ' between 1969 and 1980 when they won eight Five Nations Championships .

Wales played in the inaugural Rugby World Cup in 1987 where they achieved their best ever result of third . Following the sport allowing professionalism in 1995 , Wales hosted the 1999 World Cup and , in 2005 , won their first @-@ ever Six Nations Grand Slam . That was the first Grand Slam won by a team playing most of the matches away from home . Wales won two more Grand Slams in 2008 and in 2012 , and in 2011 came fourth in the Rugby World Cup .

Their home ground is the Millennium Stadium , currently known for sponsorship reasons as Principality Stadium , completed in 1999 to replace the National Stadium at Cardiff Arms Park . Eight former Welsh players have been inducted into the World Rugby Hall of Fame ; ten were inducted into the International Rugby Hall of Fame prior to its 2014 merger into the World Rugby Hall .

= = History = =

= = = Early years (1881 ? 1892) = = =

Rugby union took root in Wales in 1850 , when Reverend Rowland Williams became Vice @-@ Principal at St David 's College , Lampeter , where he introduced the sport . Wales played their first international on 19 February 1881 ; organised by Newport 's Richard Mullock , Wales played against England , losing by seven goals , one drop goal and six tries to nil (8 ? 0) . On 12 March 1881 , the Welsh Rugby Union was formed at The Castle Hotel , Neath . Two years later , the Home Nation Championship ? now the Six Nations Championship ? was first played and Wales did not register a win . However , rugby in Wales developed and , by the 1890s , the Welsh had developed the four three @-@ quarters formation . This formation ? with seven backs and eight forwards , instead of six backs and nine forwards ? revolutionised the sport and was eventually adopted almost universally at international and club level .

= = = First ' golden age ' (1893 ? 1913) = = =

With the " four three @-@ quarter " formation Wales became Home International Champions for the first time in 1893 ; in the process winning the Triple Crown . Wales next won the Championship in 1900 , heralding the first " golden age " of Welsh rugby which was to last until 1911 . They won two more Triple Crowns in 1902 and 1905 , and were runners up in 1901 , 1903 and 1904 .

When Wales faced New Zealand 's All Blacks at Cardiff Arms Park in late 1905 they had not lost at home since 1899 . This New Zealand team ? now referred to as the Original All Blacks ? was the first of the southern hemisphere national teams to visit the British Isles , and were undefeated on their tour up until that point ; their victories included prior defeats of England , Ireland and Scotland . Before the match , the All Blacks performed a haka (a M?ori posture dance) ; the 47 @,@ 000 @-@ strong crowd responded with the Welsh national anthem ? Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau (" Land of Our Fathers ") ? the first time a national anthem had been sung before a sporting fixture . Wales '

wing Teddy Morgan scored a try to give Wales a 3 ? 0 lead , but later in the match All Black Bob Deans claimed to have scored a try , only to be dragged behind the try @-@ line before the referee arrived . The referee ruled a scrum to Wales and the score did not change ; Wales winning 3 ? 0 . The loss was the All Blacks ' only loss on their 35 @-@ match tour .

In 1906 , Wales again won the Home Championship , and later that year played the South African national side , the Springboks for the first time . Wales were favourites to win the match , but instead South Africa dominated in the forwards and eventually won 11 ? 0 . Two years later , on 12 December 1908 , Wales played the touring Australians , the Wallabies , who they defeated 9 ? 6 .

In 1909 , Wales won the Home Championship and then , in 1910 ? with the inclusion of France ? the first @-@ ever Five Nations . In 1911 , Wales took the first Five Nations Grand Slam by winning all their matches in the Five Nations ; France were heavily defeated by Wales at St Helens in 1910 (49 ? 14) and Ivor Morgan scored two tries in the match . It would be nearly forty years before they achieved a Grand Slam again . England 's defeat of Wales at Cardiff in 1913 was Wales ' first home loss to one of the Home Nations since 1899 , and their first home loss to England since 1895 . The Great War came in 1914 and rugby was suspended for the duration .

= = = Post @-@ war years (1920 ? 1968) = = =

The post @-@ First World War years marked a decline in Welsh rugby . An industrial recession struck the principality , and hurt South Wales in particular . Welsh international results in the 1920s mirrored the performance of the economy : of their 42 matches they won only 17 , with three drawn . Half @-@ a @-@ million people emigrated from Wales to find work elsewhere during the depression ; this included many Welsh rugby union internationals who moved to the professional code of rugby league . Between 1923 and 1928 , Wales managed only seven victories ? five of them against France . However , even France managed to defeat Wales that decade ; achieving their first victory over Wales in 1928 . Welsh selection policy reflected the upheavals of the mid @-@ 1920s . In 1924 , 35 different players were selected for Wales ' four matches , with a different captain for each ; and only Edward Watkins in the backs and Charlie Pugh in the forwards , playing in all four matches .

A resurgence of both economy and rugby union followed in the 1930s and , in 1931 , Wales won their first championship for nine years . That year , for the first time since the First World War , Wales retained the same side for two consecutive Tests when they faced England and Scotland . Then , in 1933 , captained by Watcyn Thomas , Wales defeated England at Twickenham . In 1935 , Wales beat the touring All Blacks by 13 ? 12 , with Haydn Tanner making his first appearance . Although the Five Nations Championship was suspended during the Second World War Wales did play a Red Cross charity match against England at Cardiff in 1940 , which Wales lost 18 ? 9 .

Following the Second World War , Wales played a New Zealand Army team (the Kiwis) in 1946 , which Wales lost 11 ? 3 . The Five Nations (suspended during the war) resumed in 1947 when Wales shared the title with England . Although Wales suffered their first home defeat to France in 1948 , they won their first Five Nations Grand Slam since 1911 in 1950 . The next year , they lost to the touring South Africans 6 ? 3 despite dominating in the line @-@ outs . They achieved another Grand Slam in 1952 , followed by a 13 ? 8 win over the All Blacks in 1953 . In 1954 , St Helens in Swansea (a Welsh international venue since 1882) hosted its last international and Cardiff Arms Park officially became the home of the Welsh team . In 1956 , Wales again won the Five Nations , but they did not regain the title until 1964 and did not win it outright until 1965 .

Wales conducted their first overseas tour in 1964 , playing several games and one Test in South Africa . They lost the Test against South Africa in Durban 24 ? 3 , their biggest defeat in 40 years . At the WRU annual general meeting that year , the outgoing WRU President D. Ewart Davies declared that " it was evident from the experience of the South African Tour that a much more positive attitude to the game was required in Wales ... Players must be prepared to learn , and indeed re @-@ learn , to the absolute point of mastery , the basic principles of Rugby Union football " . This started the coaching revolution . The WRU Coaching Committee ? set up in the late 1950s ? was given the task of improving the quality of coaching and , in January 1967 , Ray Williams was

appointed Coaching Organiser . The first national coach , David Nash , was appointed in 1967 to coach Wales for the season , but resigned when the WRU refused to allow him to accompany Wales on their 1968 tour of Argentina . Eventually , the WRU reversed their decision , appointing Clive Rowlands to tour as coach . Of the six matches , Wales won three , drew two and lost one .

= = = Second ' golden age ' (1969 ? 1979) = = =

Wales enjoyed a second " golden age " in the 1970s , with world @-@ class players such as Gareth Edwards , J. P. R. Williams , Gerald Davies , Barry John , and Mervyn Davies , in their side . Wales dominated Northern Hemisphere rugby between 1969 and 1979 , and attained an incredible winning record , losing only seven times during that period . Wales toured New Zealand for the first time in 1969 , but were defeated in both Tests . As well as losing the first Test 19 ? 0 , and the second 33 ? 12 , they also conceded 24 points to the All Blacks ' fullback Fergie McCormick in the second Test ; a record at the time .

In 1970 , Wales shared the Five Nations with France , and recorded a 6 ? 6 draw against South Africa in Cardiff . The following year Wales recorded their first Five Nations Grand Slam since 1952 . Using only 16 players in four games , the 1971 side achieved their most notable win of the tournament in their victory over Scotland ; after a last minute try by Gerald Davies that reduced Scotland 's lead to 18 ? 17 , flanker John Taylor kicked a conversion from the sideline described as " the greatest conversion since St Paul " to give Wales a 19 ? 18 win . Wales contributed more players than any other team to the British and Irish Lions that toured New Zealand that year . Those Lions became the only to win a series over the All Blacks .

In the 1972 Five Nations Championship , Wales and Scotland refused to travel to Ireland at the height of the Troubles after receiving threats , purportedly from the Irish Republican Army . The Championship remained unresolved with Wales and Ireland unbeaten . Although the Five Nations was a five way tie in 1973 , the Welsh did defeat Australia 24 ? 0 in Cardiff .

Wales next won the Five Nations outright in 1975 , and in 1976 , Wales won their second Grand slam of the decade . Just like the first in 1971 , they only used 16 players over their four matches . They repeated the feat in 1978 and , in the process , became the first team to win three consecutive Triple Crowns . Following their final Five Nations match of 1978 , both Phil Bennett and Gareth Edwards retired from rugby .

Wales hosted the All Blacks at Cardiff Arms Park in November 1979 , losing 13 ? 12 after a late penalty goal by the replacement All Black fullback , Brian McKechnie . The penalty was controversial because All Black lock Andy Haden had dived out of a line @-@ out in an attempt to earn a penalty . Haden later admitted that he and Frank Oliver had pre @-@ agreed this tactic should the All Blacks find themselves in difficulties . Referee Roger Quittenton was roasted by the press for failing to notice the dive , but he later stated he had the penalty was in for Welsh lock Geoff Wheel for jumping off the shoulder of Frank Oliver . Quittenton later said , " Haden 's perception is that his dive secured the penalty . That is a load of rubbish " . The All Blacks went on to secure their first Home Nations Grand Slam . Wales then went on to win the 1979 Five Nations with a Triple Crown .

= = = Barren years (1980 ? 2003) = = =

In 1980 , the WRU 's centenary year , Wales lost to the All Blacks in Cardiff by 23 ? 3 after the All Blacks scored four tries to nil . Wales won two matches in each Five Nations of 1980 and 1981 , and in 1983 were nearly upset by Japan ; winning 29 ? 24 at Cardiff . In 1984 , Australia defeated Wales 28 ? 9 at Cardiff Arms Park and in the process scored a push @-@ over try . Australia went on to win their first Home Nations Grand Slam .

Wales achieved only one win in 1987 's Five Nations before contesting the inaugural Rugby World Cup . Wales defeated Ireland in their crucial pool fixture , before defeating England in the quarter @-@ finals . They then faced hosts the All Blacks who won 49 ? 6 , but beat Australia in the third place play @-@ off game to claim third . The next year Wales won the Triple Crown for the first time since 1979 , but heavy defeats on tour to New Zealand later that year saw the end of a number of

Welsh players' careers, as several converted to rugby league.

Welsh rugby reached a nadir when Wales suffered their first Five Nations championship whitewash; they had upset England in 1989 to avoid losing all their Championship matches that season, but in 1990 Wales were defeated in all four Five Nations' matches for the first time. The 1991 World Cup saw further frustration when Wales were upset by Manu Samoa in their opening match. A second group stage loss, by 38-3 to Australia, eliminated Wales from the tournament.

After winning two Five Nations games in 1992, and one in 1993, Wales won the Championship in 1994 on points difference. But without defeating one of Australia, New Zealand, or South Africa, during the inter World Cup period, Wales was not considered a major tournament contender. At the 1995 World Cup, after comprehensively beating Japan, Wales lost to New Zealand; this meant that they needed to defeat Ireland to qualify for the quarter finals. Wales lost 24-23 and so failed to progress beyond the pool stage for the second time, and later that year Kevin Bowring replaced Alex Evans to become Wales' first full time coach.

Record defeats, 51-0 to France, and 96-13 to South Africa, prompted the WRU to appoint New Zealander Graham Henry as coach in 1998. Henry had early success as coach, leading Wales to a ten match winning streak; this included Wales' first ever victory over South Africa, by 29-19. Henry was consequently nicknamed "the great redeemer" by the Welsh media and fans. Hosting the 1999 World Cup, Wales qualified for the quarter finals for the first time since 1987, but lost 9-24 to eventual champions Australia. A lack of success in the Five and Six Nations (Italy joined the tournament in 2000), and especially a number of heavy losses to Ireland, led to Henry's resignation in February 2002; his assistant Steve Hansen took over.

During Hansen's tenure, the WRU implemented a significant change in the structure of the game domestically. Regional teams were introduced as a tier above the traditional club based structures in 2003, and the five (then four) regional sides became the top level of domestic professional rugby in the principality. At the 2003 World Cup, Wales scored four tries in their 53-37 loss to New Zealand, and also lost to the eventual tournament winners, England, in their quarter final, despite outscoring them by three tries to one.

== Revival (2004-present) ==

Coached by Mike Ruddock, Wales won their first Grand Slam since 1978 and their first ever Six Nations Grand Slam in 2005. A late long range penalty from Gavin Henson gave them a victory over England at Cardiff for the first time in 12 years, and after victories over Italy, France, Scotland, they faced Ireland in front of a capacity crowd at the Millennium Stadium where Wales' 32-20 victory gave them their first Championship since 1994. Later that year they suffered a record home loss, 41-3 to New Zealand.

Mike Ruddock resigned as the head coach of Wales mid way through the 2006 Six Nations, where Wales finished fifth, and Gareth Jenkins was eventually appointed as his replacement. Jenkins led Wales through the 2007 World Cup, where they failed to advance beyond the pool stage following a loss to Fiji. Jenkins subsequently lost his job, and Warren Gatland, a New Zealander, was appointed as his successor.

Wales faced England at Twickenham for Gatland's inaugural match as coach and their first match of the 2008 Six Nations. They had not defeated England there since 1988, and went on to win 26-19. They eventually won all their Championship matches, conceding only two tries in the process, to claim another Grand Slam. Later that year Wales defeated Australia 21-18 in Cardiff, but then started a six year, twenty three game win less streak against the southern hemisphere nations of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

At the 2011 World Cup, Wales reached the tournament semi finals for the first time since 1987 where they lost 9-8 to France after a red card for captain Sam Warburton. The two teams met again in March 2012, where Wales needed a win to claim their third Six Nations Grand Slam in eight years, which they did with a 16-9 victory. This was followed immediately by an eight match losing streak, which was eventually broken during the 2013 Six Nations, where Wales retained the Championship for the first time since 1979 wins. Wales reached the quarter finals

of the 2015 World Cup at the expense of hosts England , then lost 23 ? 19 to South Africa .

= = Strip = =

Wales play in red jerseys , white shorts and red socks . For the 2015 ? 16 season , the design of the Jersey incorporated gold for the first time . The jerseys are embroidered with the Prince of Wales 's feathers , which were chosen in the 19th century by the WRU over another Welsh symbol , the leek , to demonstrate the nation 's loyalty to Britain . In 1991 , to enable the device to be trademarked , the original generic motif was replaced with a more stylised version . The original motto beneath the feathers was Ich dien (German for " I serve ") but was replaced with " WRU " in the new version .

Wales change strip ? also known as the alternative strip ? is black jerseys , shorts and socks. although there have been various different coloured strips in the past Former change strips worn by Wales have included a green , navy , white or grey jersey . Wales previously wore black jerseys as part of celebrations for the WRU 's 125th anniversary in 2005 . The jersey was worn against Fiji and then Australia that year ; the Australia match was the first time Wales had not played in their red jersey against one of their traditional rivals . Since the 2008 end @-@ of @-@ year Tests , the strip is made by Under Armour . They replaced Reebok who supplied the Wales strip between late 1996 and the 2008 mid @-@ year @-@ Tests . The shirt sponsor is Cardiff based Insurance firm , Admiral .

= = Support = =

Rugby union and Wales ' national team hold an important place in Welsh culture and society . Sport historian John Bale has stated that " rugby is characteristically Welsh " , and David Andrew said that " To the popular consciousness , rugby is as Welsh as coal mining , male voice choirs , How Green Was My Valley , Dylan Thomas , and Tom Jones " . Welsh rugby 's first ' golden age ' (1900 ? 1911) coincided with the country 's zenith during the 20th century , and rugby was important in building Wales ' modern identity . There is a long tradition of Welsh supporters singing before and during matches . The choral tradition developed in Wales during the nineteenth @-@ century alongside the rise of nonconformity , and has extended to singing at rugby matches . Commonly sung songs include the hymn Bread of Heaven , Tom Jones ' Delilah , and Max Boyce 's Hymns and Arias .

= = Grounds = =

Wales ' first home international was played at St Helen 's ground , Swansea in 1882 . In the 1880s and 1890s , home Welsh internationals were played at Cardiff , Swansea , Newport and Llanelli . Swansea continued to be used as an international venue until 1954 , when Cardiff Arms Park became Wales ' primary home venue . Cardiff Arms Park first had a stand erected in 1881 , and continued to expand its seating that decade . Crowds continued to grow and in 1902 in Wales ' match against Scotland a world record 40 @,@ 000 spectators paid to see the match . In 1911 , the owners of the Arms Park , the Marquess of Bute 's family , confirmed Wales ' tenure and the 1920s and 1930s , Wales gradually gained increasing control . A new stand was built at the park in the 1933 ? 34 season , which increased the grounds capacity to 56 @,@ 000 .

By 1958 , the WRU had concluded that a new national ground was needed due to flooding that often plagued Arms Park . After debate and disputes between the WRU and various other parties , including Cardiff RFC , in the 1960s , it was decided that a new national stadium would be built with a new ground for the Cardiff club backing onto it . The National Stadium , as it was known , was officially opened in 1970 .

Currently , Wales play all their home matches at the 74 @,@ 500 capacity Millennium Stadium , Cardiff , which is also Wales ' national stadium . The Millennium Stadium was first conceived in 1994 , when a group redevelopment committee was set up . It was decided to replace the National Stadium at Cardiff Arms Park after a review found it was out of date ; new legislation also required

stadia to be all seated . Construction began in September 1997 , and was completed by June 1999 , in time for the Rugby World Cup . The construction cost the WRU £ 126 million , which was funded by private investment , £ 46 million of public funds from the National Lottery , the sale of debentures to supporters (which offered guaranteed tickets in exchange for an interest @-@ free loan) , and loans . While the new ground was being built , Wales used the old Wembley Stadium for their home matches ? a deal reciprocated during construction of the new Wembley , when FA Cup finals were held at the Millennium Stadium .

= = Record = =

= = = Six Nations = = =

Wales compete annually in the Six Nations Championship , which is played against five other European nations : England , France , Ireland , Italy , and Scotland . The Six Nations started as the Home Nations Championship in 1883 , as a contest between the four component nations of the United Kingdom . Wales first won it in 1893 , when they achieved a Triple Crown . Wales have won the tournament outright 26 times , and shared eleven other victories . Their longest wait between championships was 11 years (1994 ? 2005) . Wales first won a Grand Slam in 1908 ? although France did not officially join the Five Nations until 1910 ? and their first Six Nations Grand Slam in 2005 . Their latest Grand Slam was won against France on 17 March 2012 , and they claimed their most recent Triple Crown on 25 February 2012 against England .

= = = World Cup = = =

Wales have contested every Rugby World Cup since the inaugural tournament in 1987 . The 1987 tournament was Wales ' most successful ; they won all three pool matches and their quarter @-@ final , before losing to the All Blacks in the semi @-@ finals . They then faced Australia in the third place play @-@ off match , which they won 22 ? 21 . In the next two tournaments in 1991 and 1995 , Wales failed to progress beyond the pool stage , winning just one match in each tournament . Both the 1999 and 2003 tournaments were more successful , with Wales qualifying for the quarter @-@ finals both times . Wales hosted the event in 1999 and topped their pool only to lose to eventual winners Australia in the quarter @-@ finals . In 2003 , they finished second in their pool behind the All Blacks , and faced England in their quarter @-@ final . They lost to England , the eventual champions , 28 ? 17 . Wales conceded 17 penalties , and their lack of discipline proved costly . In the 2007 World Cup , Wales again failed to progress from the pool stage . After a loss to Australia , and two wins against Japan and Canada , they faced Fiji for a place in the quarter @-@ finals . The game started poorly for Wales who were behind 25 ? 3 at half @-@ time . They fought back to lead by three points with six minutes remaining , but Fiji then scored a try to win 38 ? 34 and eliminated Wales from the tournament . At the 2011 World Cup , Wales reached the semi @-@ finals for the first time since 1987 . Playing the semi @-@ finals against France , Wales lost 9 ? 8 , in a game overshadowed by the 18th @-@ minute sending off of Wales ' captain Sam Warburton for a dangerous tackle against Vincent Clerc .

= = = Overall = = =

When the World Rugby Rankings were introduced in October 2003 , Wales were ranked 8th . They rose to 7th in June 2004 , before falling back to 8th in November that year . Following a Grand Slam win in the 2005 Six Nations , they rose to a ranking position of 5th . They fell to 9th by June 2006 , and , after rising back to 8th by September , fell to 10th after the 2007 World Cup . A second Six Nations ' Grand Slam in 2008 propelled them to 6th in the rankings , but following losses to South Africa in the mid @-@ year and end @-@ of @-@ year internationals Wales slipped to 7th . Wales climbed to 4th after a win over Scotland in their first match of the 2009 Six Nations . They slumped

to 9th in 2010 but rose back to 4th after their fourth place in the 2011 World Cup . Since then ? notwithstanding a nine @-@ game slump in 2012 ? 13 where they fell to 9th ? Wales have ranked consistently in the top six teams . They reached their highest ranking of 2nd during the 2015 Rugby World Cup .

Wales have won 355 of their 690 Test matches for a 51 @.@ 45 % winning record . Their biggest Test defeat was 96 ? 13 loss to South Africa in 1998 , and their largest victory a 98 ? 0 defeat of Japan in 2004 . Their record for most tries in a match is 16 , scored against Portugal in 1994 ? they also scored 102 points in this match , more than in any other Test . Wales ' record for consecutive Test wins is eleven , and for consecutive losses is ten .

Below is table summary of Wales Test matches up until 25 June 2016 .

= = Players = =

= = = Current squad = = =

On 10 May , Warren Gatland named a 35 @-@ man squad for their June 3 @-@ test series against New Zealand , pre @-@ tour test against England and the mid week match against the Chiefs .

On 29 May , after injury to Dan Lydiate in the England warm @-@ up match , Ellis Jenkins was called up to the squad to replace Lydiate .

On 7 June , Aaron Jarvis was called up to the squad as injury cover for Paul James . Jarvis later became a permanent replacement after James failed to recover from his injury .

On 11 June , Aled Davies joined the squad as an injury replacement for Lloyd Williams .

Following the first test , Keelan Giles and Rhys Patchell were called up to the squad as injury cover .

? ? Denotes dual contracted players .

Caps and clubs updated 25 June 2016