

= Norman Biggs =

Norman Witchell Biggs (3 November 1870 ? 27 February 1908) was a Welsh international rugby union wing who played club rugby for Cardiff and county rugby for Glamorgan . Both Biggs and his brother Selwyn played international rugby for Wales , though they never played together in the same match for Wales . Biggs also played cricket for Glamorgan and in 1893 was part of a team that took on Cardiff in a two @-@ day match ; he faced his brother Selwyn , who was a member of the Cardiff team .

Biggs is notable for being a member of the 1893 Triple Crown winning Wales team , being the youngest capped player to represent the Wales international team , a record he held for over a century , and the unusual circumstances of his death by poison arrow .

= = Early history = =

Norman Biggs was born in Cardiff to John and Emily Biggs . His father , who lived at Park Place in the centre of the city , was a brewer by trade who owned businesses in Cardiff and Bristol . Biggs was privately educated at several proprietary schools including Lewinsdale School in Weston @-@ super @-@ Mare , before matriculating to University College Cardiff and later Trinity Hall , Cambridge , playing rugby for both university teams . It was reported that Biggs should have won a sporting ' Blue ' while at Cambridge , but an injury to his ribs ruled him out . As well as playing rugby , Biggs was a keen sprinter and he was able to run 100 yards in even time , and was able to beat world sprint champion Charlton Monypenny at this distance . On returning to Cardiff he joined his father 's brewing business . In 1887 , Biggs played his first senior game for Cardiff RFC , in a match against Penarth . Biggs came from a large sporting family and was one of six brothers to play rugby for Cardiff . His most notable brothers were Selwyn , who also played for Wales , and Cecil , who captained Cardiff during their 1904 / 05 season .

= = Rugby career = =

= = = International debut = = =

Biggs gained his first cap for Wales when he was selected to play against the touring New Zealand Natives in 1888 at St. Helen 's Ground . At the time Biggs was 18 years and 49 days old , making him the youngest Wales international , a record that would last for more than a century before being broken by Tom Prydie in 2010 . The New Zealanders were the first touring team from the Southern Hemisphere and brought with them a reputation for over @-@ vigorous play . Biggs himself was described by the press as " palpably nervous " before the kick @-@ off , though many of the backs appeared withdrawn , apart from William Stadden and James Webb appearing calm . Not only did Biggs have the M?ori opposition to contend with , the Swansea crowd were also hostile towards their own team , as they felt the Swansea backs should have been selected instead . Biggs , as an inexperienced new cap from rivals Cardiff , was picked out by the crowd as one of those players unworthy of his place and was heckled . Nonetheless , the Welsh team were victorious , with tries from Thomas , Towers and Hannan and a single conversion from Webb . A week later on 29 December , Biggs faced the same tourists , this time as part of the Cardiff team . Biggs had been disappointing in his international debut , but regained his form on the pitch at the Cardiff Arms Park . Within 90 seconds of the start of the match , Biggs scored a " sparkling try " . Biggs should have scored again , but dropped the ball after crossing the line in the slippery conditions . Cardiff won by a goal and a try to one try .

= = = Home Nations Championship matches = = =

Later in the 1888 ? 89 season , Biggs was reselected for the Welsh team as part of the 1889 Home

Nations Championship . He was not chosen for the first game of the season against Scotland , but was accepted for the second and final game to Ireland . Under the captaincy of Arthur Gould , Biggs was partnered on the wing by Abel Davies of London Welsh . Wales lost to Ireland by two tries to nil , the first time the Irish had won on Welsh soil . Biggs and Davies were both dropped for the next season .

It took Biggs until the 1892 Home Nations Championship to regain his place in the national team , again he was chosen for the final game of the tournament against Ireland . Although the Welsh backs contained the talents of Billy Bancroft , brothers Evan and David James and Arthur and Bert Gould , the Welsh team were outclassed by Victor Le Fanu 's Ireland . It was the first time Wales had lost all three games in the Championship . Despite the loss Biggs was reselected for all three games of the 1893 tournament , all under the captaincy of " Monkey " Gould . In a reversal of fortunes from the previous season , Wales managed to win all three matches , lifting the Triple Crown for the first time in the country 's history . Biggs played an important role during the Triple Crown winning season , scoring two tries , one each in the games against England and Scotland . The 1893 away game against Scotland is described as Biggs ' best international match and ' his speed and general play were the main factors in securing the first victory of the Principality over Scotland ' .

Biggs played in two more internationals for Wales , both in the 1894 Championship and both resulted in losses . The first game of the 1894 Championship was against England , and Wales suffered a heavy defeat , losing 24 ? 3 . In an after match interview Biggs was asked why he had failed to tackle Harry Bradshaw , who scored the first try ; Biggs responded " Tackle him ? It was as much as I could do to get out of his way ! " . In his final game against Ireland , Biggs was part of an all Cardiff three @-@ quarters , along with Tom Pearson , Dai Fitzgerald and Jack Elliott . The very next international saw Biggs ' younger brother Selwyn selected for the first time , the brothers missing each other by just one match .

= = = International matches played = = =

Wales

England 1893 , 1894

Ireland 1889 , 1892 , 1893 , 1894

M?ori 1888

Scotland 1893

= = = Club and county = = =

Biggs played for Cardiff from the 1886 ? 87 season through to 1898 ? 99 , though not continuously , spending some time in the early 1890s in London . He played in 166 matches for Cardiff , was one of the highest scoring players the club had produced . He scored five or more try conversions in a single match on seven occasions , six in the same season (1893 ? 94) , against Gloucester , Bristol , London Welsh , Penygraig , Exeter and Cardiff & D.R.U. The 1893 ? 94 season saw Biggs score 58 conversions , 25 tries and two dropped goals bringing his points tally to 199 points . This remained a club record until the 1972 ? 73 season when it was surpassed by John Davies . Biggs ended his Cardiff career with 107 tries , four less than his brother Cecil .

Biggs played for several club teams throughout his career , including England 's Richmond and Welsh exile club London Welsh . On 24 December 1890 , Biggs played for London Welsh in a match against his longterm club Cardiff . The London Welsh team produced a ' devastating display ' to beat Cardiff by a single try . At county level he represented Glamorgan where he played alongside his brother , and later turned out for Somerset . During the 1893 / 94 season Biggs was made club captain of Cardiff , and in the same season he led Cardiff against the invitational team the Barbarians , not only winning the game but also scoring two tries and kicking a successful conversion . The same season as he faced the Barbarians with Cardiff , Biggs was invited to join the tourists ; one of four of the Biggs brothers to play for the team . The last notable club Biggs

represented was Bath , captaining the senior team during the 1899 ? 1900 season .

In 1894 Biggs was invited to play for the Barbarians , and on 2 April , he faced Rockcliff , playing alongside his brother Selwyn , who was also making his Barbarian 's debut . Biggs played twice more for the Barbarians , both matches against Bath Rugby . In the 1894 encounter Biggs converted a try in a 14 @-@ 0 victory , while the 1896 match saw Biggs score a try and two conversions in a 13 @-@ 13 draw .

= = Later life and military career = =

After the outbreak of the Second Boer War , Biggs volunteered for active service and was posted as a private to the Glamorgan Yeomanry , which formed 4 Company , 1st Battalion Imperial Yeomanry for service in South Africa . Biggs later reflected how life in the Yeomanry was a constant struggle , and he engaged in 57 skirmishes with his unit coming under daily sniper fire . He was wounded near Vrede on 11 October 1900 , when he was shot through the thigh whilst patrolling . He was returned to England on the hospital ship Simla which left Cape Town 26 November and arrived at Southampton on 18 December . He was then commissioned as a second lieutenant on 16 February 1901 . On 17 April he was promoted lieutenant and attached to 4th Battalion Imperial Yeomanry . Later in the year he either received a further wound , or fell ill , since The Times reported on 26 September that he had been discharged from hospital and returned to duty in the week ending 8 September . He returned home on the steamship Goorkha , which left Cape Town on 19 July . He relinquished his commission on 12 September , and was granted the honorary rank of lieutenant , and permission to continue wearing his uniform .

Biggs was then commissioned as a lieutenant in the 3rd Battalion Welsh Regiment on 13 June 1903 . He was appointed an Instructor of Musketry on 10 May 1905 , He was then seconded to the Colonial Office and posted to Northern Nigeria as a superintendent of police in a military area on 10 February 1906 , by that time he had also been promoted captain . He was killed in 1908 when he was struck by a poison arrow , while on patrol in Kebbi State , Nigeria .