

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE STRATEGY-CREATION
PROCESS IN SMALL NONPROFIT ORGANISATIONS
(SENIOR WELSH RUGBY CLUBS), 1990 – 2000.**

A thesis submitted in candidature for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy of Cardiff University

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late Mum and Dad, whose love, devotion and self-sacrifice encouraged and taught me to appreciate the gifts of life; knowledge, understanding and honesty.

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Clive Norling,

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FOOTPRINTS

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the **LORD**. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand; one belonged to him and the other to the **LORD**.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned the **LORD** about it. "**LORD**, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why when I needed you most you would leave me".

The **LORD** replied, "My precious, precious child. I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that **I** carried you".

ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this thesis is to investigate, describe, and thus understand, the phenomenon of the strategy-creation process, the process, content, and context in senior Welsh rugby clubs, 1990 - 2000. The inspiration for the research arose during a monumental decade of transformation to the Game of Rugby Union Football. The research questions concern evaluating the clubs' strategy-creation process, and the reactions to the introduction of National Leagues and Professionalism.

The *process* pursued was centred on a purposive sample of three nonprofit rugby clubs. In addition to an in-depth analysis of the general strategy management literature, reviews were conducted within the themes of small business, nonprofits and sporting organizations. A lack of prior research in the strategy action-outcomes in the nonprofits, sporting sector, particularly the rugby union environment, was a cause for concern. The general literature revealed clear differences of opinion between researchers about the relationship between organizational strategy, strategy-creation and outcomes. An interpretive approach was adopted, employing the validated theoretical framework by Bailey et al (2000), to collect, and analyse, 'insider' data from different levels of club respondents, and also from various club stakeholders.

The *content (outcomes)* found that rugby clubs employed operational planning regularly during the playing season. Strategic planning had been used, but only on a few necessary occasions. The decision-making processes were found to have strong political and enforced choice dimensions, both pre- and post- 1995. The Introduction of Professionalism had caused the need for clubs to manage conflicting rugby and business objectives, and to re-appraise the influence of culture on decisions. However, it did not change the clubs' long established priority of placing playing performance before financial performance. The *context* of the clubs' turbulent external environment, coupled with the uncertainty and unpredictability of the Game, ensured an annual, seasonal struggle for survival for clubs operating in a niche market. These distinctive operating conditions strongly influence a rugby club's strategy-creation. This thesis concludes by considering the theoretical and managerial implications of the findings arising from the study of non-profit rugby clubs.

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Abbreviations within this Thesis

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIT	Critical Incident Technique
ERC	European Rugby Cup
IRB	International Rugby Board
IoP	Introduction of Professionalism
PEST	Political, Economic, Social, Technological
SM	Strategic Management
SME	Small, Medium- size Enterprise
SMF	Senior Management Figures
SP	Strategic Planning
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TMT	Top Management Team
WRU	Welsh Rugby Union

Glossary of Terms

"Behind the many terms are, of course, different purposes. Definitions are neither true nor false, and they are ultimately judged by their usefulness in describing a part of reality of interest to us. Specifically, a definition must be simpler than the reality it seeks to describe."

(Anheier, 2005, p.39).

Acceptability of Strategy

is an evaluation of the stakeholders likely approval of the strategic proposal
(Jeffs, 2008).

Axiology

a philosophical assumption about the role of values
(Punch, 2009)

Case Study

a research strategy that involves the empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence.
(Saunders et al, 2009)

Community

Communities primarily characterized by *geography* represent people residing within the same geographic region but with no reference to the interaction among them. Communities primarily identified by regular *interaction* represent a set of social relationships that may or may not be place based. Communities characterized primarily by *identity* represent a group who share a sense of belonging, generally built upon a shared set of beliefs, values, or experiences. In this case, the individuals need not live within the same physical locality.

Competitive Rivalry

are organizations that compete in the same sector (product/service) and for the same potential customers.
(Jeffs, 2008).

Co-operative Enterprise

is owned and democratically controlled by its worker-owners. This control may be exercised in a number of ways. In "pure" forms of worker co-operative, all shares are held by the workforce with no outside or consumer owners, and each member has one voting share. In practice, control by worker-owners may be exercised through individual, collective or majority ownership by the workforce, or the retention of individual, collective or majority voting rights (exercised on a one-member one-vote basis).
(Wikipedia, 2010)

Co-ompetition

is simply Competition + Co-operation.

<i>Criterion Sampling</i>	Where cases are selected on the basis of meeting a pre-determined criterion of importance. (Punch, 2009)
<i>Critical Incident Technique</i>	‘.....is a qualitative interview procedure, which facilitates the investigation of significant occurrences (events, incidents, processes or issues) identified by the respondent, the way they are managed, and the outcome in terms of perceived effects. The objective is to gain an understanding of the incident from the perspective of the individual taking into account cognitive, affective and behavioural elements’. (Chell, 2006).
<i>Deduction</i>	a study in which a conceptual and theoretical structure is developed which is then tested by empirical observations; thus particular instances are deducted from general inferences (Collis and Hussey, 2009).
<i>Empiricism</i>	philosophical term which holds that the only knowledge humans have can come from our observations, and that humans have no innate ideas which are not from experience (Lee and Lings, 2008)
<i>Epistemology</i>	a philosophical assumption about what constitutes valid knowledge in the context of the relationship of the researcher to what is being researched (Collis and Hussey, 2009)
<i>Feasibility of Strategy</i>	is an assessment of the likely success of the strategy in particular with regards to the availability of resources, skills and finance (Jeffs, 2008).
<i>Firm</i>	a group of people who form a commercial organization selling goods or services
<i>Formal Planning</i>	an activity associated with a method that is scheduled, orderly, written, recorded and disseminated. It often involves a prescribed meeting with at least one company employee in attendance (Allred et al, 2007)
<i>Homogeneous Sampling</i>	cases are all the same; small samples used for detailed understanding to emerge from their in-depth study. (Punch, 2009).
<i>Idiographic</i>	an approach to social science that emphasizes that explanation of human behaviour is possible only through gaining access to actors’ subjectivity or culture (Gill and Johnson, 2010)

<i>Induction</i>	a study in which theory is developed from the observation of empirical reality; thus general inferences are induced from particular instances (Collis and Hussey, 2009).
<i>Informal Planning</i>	is not associated with fixed rules and schedules. It is flexible and may be conducted anytime, anywhere, inside or outside the organisation. The informal plan may be disseminated via verbal or written communication (Allred et al, 2007)
<i>Interpretivism</i>	is concerned with an understanding of the way in which the individual creates, modifies and interprets the world (Burrell and Morgan, 1979)
<i>Judgment Sampling</i>	is a survey method, where the principle of selection of the participants is based on their experience of the phenomenon under study. The researcher makes his judgment decision prior to the start of the survey (Collis and Hussey, 2009).
<i>Methodology</i>	the study of the methods or procedures used in a discipline so as to gain warranted knowledge (Gill and Johnson, 2010)
<i>Nomothetic</i>	approaches to social science that seek to construct a deductively tested set of theories that explain and predict human behavior (Gill and Johnson, 2010)
<i>Non-profit Organisation</i>	(abbreviated as NPO, and also known as a ‘not-for-profit’ organization) is an organization, e.g. an <u>association</u> , <u>charity</u> , <u>co-operative</u> , or any other voluntary organization, that exists solely to provide programs and services that are of self-benefit. Their <u>startup funding</u> is provided by their <u>members</u> , <u>trustees</u> , or others who do not expect repayment, and it does not distribute its surplus funds to owners or shareholders, but instead uses them to help pursue its goals (Wikipedia, 2010)
<i>Ontology</i>	a philosophical assumption about the nature of reality (Collis and Hussey, 2009)
<i>Operational Planning</i>	Operational planning refers to the process of engaging in detailed planning activities that lead to the development of short range goals, action plans and procedures to guide the handling of day to day operations. It focuses on tactical initiatives, issues and problems in the functional area of the business. It involved the relative allocation of small amounts of resources, was often repetitive in nature and covered a short time span i.e. one year or less (Robinson et al, 1986, p.7-8)

Organization	is a group of people working together to achieve a common purpose. Organizations exist to achieve goals that individuals can't achieve on their own (Covell et al, 2003).
Paradigm	is a set of assumptions about the social world, and about what constitutes proper techniques and topics for inquiring into the world: a set of basic beliefs, a world-view, a view of how science should be done (ontology, epistemology, methodology) (Punch, 2009)
Phenomenology	a study of how things appear to people – how people experience the world (Gill and Johnson, 2010)
Philanthropist	is a person who has a desire to improve the material, social, and spiritual welfare of humanity, especially through charitable activities
Planning	a <u>long-term</u> plan is aimed at <u>meeting</u> estimated future needs a <u>short-term</u> plan at meeting <u>current</u> or immediate needs, and a <u>tactical</u> plan at realizing interim objectives that lead to the goal(s) of a <u>strategy</u> .
Positivism	held that all genuine knowledge is based on sense experience and can be advanced only by means of observation and experiment. An acceptance of natural science as the paradigm of human knowledge (Cohen et al, 2007).
Quantitative Data	data in a numerical form (Collis and Hussey, 2009)
Random Sample	a sample that is representative of the population because every member has a chance of being selected (Collis and Hussey, 2009)
Reliability	the absence of differences in the results if the research were repeated (Collis and Hussey, 2009)
Small Business Owner-Manager(s)	individual(s) who own or part-own a small business, and manage it in a personalized way (Curran and Blackburn, 2001)
Small Business	there is no established, widely accepted definition, official or otherwise, of the small business (Curran and Blackburn, 2001). For the purpose of this study, 'small business' is defined as an independent business with fewer than 50 employees and for which the owner-manager(s) is/are in charge of organizational decisions concerning business's activities.

<i>Social Enterprise</i>	There's no universally accepted definition of social enterprise, their key distinguishing features are their social aims and social ownership, combined with trading viability (Smallbone, 2001) Social Enterprise is a business with primarily social objectives and whose surpluses are principally re-invested for that purpose in the business or the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximize profit for shareholders and owners. (DTI, 2003).
<i>Sport</i>	is best understood as a socially constructed phenomenon, situated within a social context and shaped by social processes creating that context and comes to mean different things within different settings over time (Trenberth, 2003).
<i>Stakeholder</i>	any person, group, or organization that can place a claim on an organization's attention, resources or outputs or is affected by that output. (Bryson, 2005).
<i>Strategy</i>	is the direction and scope of an organization over the long term which achieves advantage in a changing environment through its configuration of resources and competences with the aim of fulfilling stakeholder expectations (Johnson et al, 2008).
<i>Strategic Management</i>	deals with the major intended and emergent initiatives taken by general managers on behalf of owners, involving utilization of resources, to enhance the performance of firms in their external environments (Nag et al's, 2007)
<i>Strategic Planning</i>	is the devising and formulation of organisational level plans which set the broad and flexible objectives, strategies and policies of a business, driving the organisation towards its vision of the future (Stonehouse and Pemberton, 2004, p.854).
<i>Strategy Process</i>	a sequence of individual and collective events, actions, and activities unfolding over time in context (Pettigrew, 1997, p.338).
<i>Suitability of Strategy</i>	is an evaluation of the proposed strategy to ensure that key organizational issues have been addressed (Jeffs, 2008).
<i>Theory</i>	a set of interrelated variables, definitions and propositions that specifies relationships among the variables (Collis and Hussey, 2009).

***Thick
Description***

the emphasis in qualitative research on capturing and conveying the full picture of behaviour being studied – holistically, comprehensively and in context (Punch, 2009).

Triangulation

using several kinds of methods, data or researchers to study a topic; the most common type is data triangulation, where a study uses data collected at different times or from different sources (Collis and Hussey, 2009)

Validity

a complex term with many meanings, both technical and general; three important technical means are: the validity of a measuring instrument; the validity of a research design; the truth status of a research report (Punch, 2009).

Voluntary

(also sometimes called a *voluntary organization*, *A Association or Union*, *unincorporated association*, or just an *association*) is where two or more persons are bound together in a public, formally constituted, and non-commercial organisation, for one or more common purposes by mutual undertakings, each having mutual duties and obligations, in an organisation which has rules identifying in whom control of the organization and its funds are vested, and which can be joined or left at will within a particular society." Examples include leisure associations or clubs.

CHAPTER ONE: THE INCEPTION

“An understanding of strategy process as (rational) decision-making is largely inadequate because it does little justice to the complicated nature of actually doing strategic management”.

(Sminia, 2009, p.11)

1.1 Overview of this chapter

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to present a rationale for the research subject, highlighting the need for the study, before detailing the aim and objectives of the thesis and considering the research approach adopted. The chapter is structured along the lines of the recognised three dimensions of strategy, the process, content, and context, and affords the reader an overview of the thesis by providing a framework of the study's chapters.

1.2 Rationale for the Study

This thesis is an investigation into the strategy-making process in small, nonprofit, sport organisations. The key aim of the study is to examine the degree to which contemporary hypothetical perspectives and interpretations of strategy-making found in the existing literature are applicable within the context of the Welsh rugby industry. With a long-standing involvement with both the theory of strategic management and the practicality of rugby union football, thus combining the researcher's work and hobby (Appendix 1.1), the motivation to undertake such doctoral research into strategy was provided by a desire to understand 'how' and 'why' Welsh rugby clubs reacted to the major transformations to rugby, both globally, with the introduction of professionalism (IoP), and within the Principality, the establishing of National Leagues, during the 1990s. The challenges, and difficulties, of embracing theory with practicality is acknowledged by Chia (2004, p33),

“On the one hand, legitimacy and respectability of management studies as an academic discipline is still governed by the ideals of science that defines rigor in terms of a surveying consciousness: a spectator theory of knowledge. On the other hand, as an applied discipline, management studies is under pressure to respond to the pragmatic concerns of the practitioner world who seek answers in terms of 'how to' rather than 'what' and 'why'. Therein lies the essential tension”.

To achieve the key aim of the study, therefore, it was necessary to explore and understand the dynamics and complexities within non-profit rugby clubs, in order to acquire knowledge about, the decisions made, the actions taken, and the resultant outcomes.

1.3 The Research Subject

Strategies and strategy formation have existed since before the birth of Christ (Bracker 1981; Cummings 1993) both in the West and in the East. Some five hundred years B.C. a Chinese warrior-philosopher, Sun Tzu, was writing about a ‘strategy’ to achieve military objectives (Mintzberg et al, 1998). The word ‘strategy’ was actually derived from the Greek ‘*strategos*’, or ‘*the art of the general*’ (Ohmae, 1982). Such a military approach, ‘*Where tactics are concerned with the manoeuvres necessary to win battles, strategy is concerned with winning the war*’ (Grant, 2010, p.14), still exists in the business environment in the 21st century. An alternative view to the military version, that strategy, is biologically driven, is offered via Darwin's natural selection theory based on the survival of the fittest species and its adaptation to a changing environment (Henderson 1989).

Yet, despite its growth within the management field and decades of research on the subject, there is no agreed, singular, universal definition of strategy (Markides, 2004) mainly because, it is argued, strategy is multi-dimensional and situational (Hart, 1992). Research covering ninety-one definitions of strategy formulated since 1962 undertaken by Ronda-Pupo and Guerras-Martin (2012, p182), employing content and co-word analysis, identified the terms ‘firm,’ ‘environment,’ ‘actions,’ and ‘resources’ as making up the core of the definitions of strategy. In addition, the focus had shifted over the period from achieving the firm’s goals to improving the firm’s performance. Resulting from the research, they proposed a consensual definition about the essence of the strategy concept as,

“the dynamics of the firm’s relation with its environment for which the necessary actions are taken to achieve its goals and/or to increase performance by means of the rational use of resources”.

In this study, strategy is viewed as the *decisions* and *actions* taken to achieve a specific *outcome*. Previously, prominent authors, such as Chaffee (1985), Pettigrew (1988), Mintzberg (1990) and Pettigrew and Whipp (1993), had identified three dimensions within strategy-making; the *process* (generation, evaluation and implementation of strategies), the *content* (the outcomes) and the *context* (unique environment). Based on the three dimensions, therefore, the grounds for the research was threefold; first, to obtain

evidence to understand and describe the process involved in Welsh clubs' actions, 1990 – 2000; second, to evaluate the outcomes resulting from the clubs' decisions and actions, and finally, to explore and describe *if, how, and why* the strategy dimensions were affected by the Game's transition in Wales, that from amateur to professional clubs.

1.3.1 Research Objectives

The core aim of this research is to provide an empirical investigation into the strategy-making process in Welsh rugby clubs during a turbulent decade, 1990-2000, and is reinforced through two key objectives:

- To explore and described the strategy-making process in Welsh rugby clubs within the broader NPO and small business sectors within the UK, and to compare, contrast and evaluate the amassed empirical evidence with the mainly prescriptive literature.
- To identify and understand the influence of a strategic 'shock event', the IoP, on the decisions and actions taken by clubs, and the resultant outcomes of any strategy pursued.

The study period incorporates the termination of the amateur era, when rugby clubs were non-profit making, and the start of the professional era, when many clubs became small businesses.

1.3.2 Research Questions

The research questions were developed after undertaking a review of existent literature on the strategy-making process. The two main questions explored in this research are as follows;

RQ1. Was there a presence, or an absence, of a strategy-making process in Welsh rugby clubs during the decade, 1990-2000?

The first question arose from the questions posed by the research of Kearns and Scarpino (1996, p.435) who inspired further research by claiming that, "*... a variety of questions concerning the context and process of planning in nonprofit organisations remain unresolved*". This study builds on the research of Bailey et al (2000, p159), who advocated that '*one area of research may seek to understand the relationship of strategy development processes to differing contexts*'. The research was accomplished mainly through employing Bailey et al's (2000) six dimensional instrument (4.5.7.1). The

instrument's questionnaire was distributed amongst diverse levels of respondents, who were within, and outside, the homogeneous rugby clubs. The rich data collected, and analysed, justified the employment of this particular framework.

RQ2. How did clubs react to the IoP to Welsh Rugby in August 1995, and what were the resultant outcomes?

The recommendations that emerged from the research of Bailey and Johnson (1991, p37) formed the basis of the second question. To develop further knowledge on strategy making processes, they encouraged researchers *“to examine whether particular strategic issues are dealt with in similar or dissimilar manners across organisations....whether managers within the same organization agree or disagree on the patterns of processes at work within their organization and whether this perception differs across managerial groups”*. In addition, Pearson and Clair (1998), called for further empirical research regarding organizational crises, and so the research examined how clubs reacted to this unexpected, critical event by adopting distinctive approaches to ‘crisis’ management to achieve individual survival. Understanding of *‘a particular strategic issue’* (IoP) was achieved through using Pettigrew’s (1988) model, in combination with three qualitative research approaches, ‘insider accounts’, shock-event planning and the critical incident technique, that permitted an in-depth investigation in to the momentous IoP.

1.4 The Research Process

This investigation follows two clear pathways in order to fulfil the rationale of the research. First, a review of the secondary literature, abstract and applied theoretical works, to ascertain both the conceptual framework concerning the process of strategy-making and the historical, and current, contextual setting of the study. This review of literature is comprised of writings in strategy and strategic management coupled with the sociology and history of rugby, the memoirs of significant Welsh rugby participants and the annals of clubs. The research commenced with a broad review of the subjects then narrowed down to focus on small firms and nonprofit organisations. In the nonprofit sector, Stone et al (1999), noted gaps in major areas such as strategy formulation, content, implementation and performance. In the small firm sector, Curran and Blackburn (2001) called for more research into how small firms in particular industries have coped with change generally and historically. Therefore both the nonprofit and small business sectors

contributed to defining the research objectives.

Secondly, within the social constructivist ontology, a subjective, interpretive approach, rather than an objective, positivist approach, was considered appropriate. *“It is the goal of all interpretive traditions to understand these processes of subjective reality construction in all walks of social life”* (Prasad, 2005, p14). The investigation adopted the stance that knowledge was constructed by those individuals who were part of social situations reflecting upon their experiences (Lee and Lings, 2008). In this longitudinal study, therefore, an understanding of the strategy-making process in nonprofit rugby clubs could be obtained from various individuals within each of the clubs. The required knowledge, the individual’s ‘reality’ of events, was to be found within the minds of rugby club ‘insiders’ which included their stated beliefs, intentions, motives, and values. There was solid support for employing, then entering, a case study process with specific research questions, ‘*how*’ and ‘*why*’ (Yin, 1994) with a planned case study design (Eisenhardt, 1989). A comparative case study was adopted, being viewed as the best suited method to pursue the research subject, the strategy-making process, within the context of the Welsh rugby industry.

1.5 The Research Content (Outcomes).

Strategy content is defined as ‘*the output of the strategy process-the intended or realized course of action selected to achieve long-term objectives*’ (De Wit and Meyer, 2004, p212). The longitudinal exploratory study looked to obtain an in-depth understanding on if/how clubs ‘created strategy’ for managing expected, and unexpected, events whilst achieving their performance goals during the ten years from August 1990, to May 2000, a time-frame that embraced a very significant period in Welsh Rugby history when key ‘turning points’ took place. Hence the importance of documenting, evaluating and understanding the impact of the unique major events that occurred, and the strategic responses (*outcomes) of clubs operating within that environment. In order to accomplish the aim of the study, and therefore to produce an outcome, two main research questions (2.14) are established to direct the selection of research methodology for data collection and data analysis.

*Clubs had measured outcomes (‘successes’) by their performance on the field in the domestic league and cup competition (Szymanski, 2003).

1.6 The Research Context

The research intends to explore, and understand, if the strategy-making process is to be found in a sport context, because it has been established that strategies can be developed to suit varying organisational and environmental contexts (Johnson et al, 2008). Sport has now emerged as an industrial sector in its own right, *“with a number of studies and estimates that it makes a major contribution to economic and commercial activity both within and across national boundaries. At the same time, sport continues to have a profound influence on the social, cultural, health and psychological spheres of human existence”* (Chadwick, 2009, p202). However, the researcher is aware that the audience for this study, academics and rugby practitioners, do not necessarily all have the same awareness, knowledge and command of the contextual background (Brewer, 2007).

The context for the research was the environment encompassing the national game of Wales, Rugby Union Football, chosen for study during a decade when three major, novel events took place; the formation of the first National League in the Principality (1990), the IoP globally (1995), and the organisation of a club cup competition in Europe (1996). These events were instigated by the centralised governing body of international rugby, the International Rugby Board (IRB), and the national rugby unions, including the Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) (Smith and Williams, 1999).

The change to the playing structure in 1990, with the formation of the National League, brought a meritocracy to all Welsh clubs for the first time. The study intends not only to describe but to present, via club respondents, a ‘coalface’ insight into the decisions and actions taken by senior first class clubs in coping with the unprecedented demands of being in a League structure, faced with relegation threats and promotion opportunities. Within that National League, prior to 1995, the Game of Rugby Union Football operated on an amateur basis, with participants not permitted to receive payment for being involved, so rugby clubs displayed not-for-profit characteristics (Table 2.12). However, ‘shamateurism’ (illegal monetary payments) did prevail within the sport, particularly in Wales where clubs sought, and paid for, success (Williams, 1991). The study describes and examines the impact of the transformation in 1995, from the context of being an ‘amateur’ game to that of a professional sport, on Welsh clubs, including the emergence of small business traits exhibited by rugby clubs post 1995 (2.14).

1.7 Contribution and Justification

The lack of empirical research into strategy-making in nonprofit, small sporting organizations in Wales, which are socially and economically significant, is noticeable when compared with the large amount of literature about strategy-making in large, for-profit business organizations in the United Kingdom. The research findings, therefore, contribute to the body of academic literature on strategic management, strategy – making in both the not-for-profit and small business context, and the study broadens knowledge on the management of sports organisations, including ‘crisis’ decision-making. The principal contributions are explained below.

1.7.1 Fills a research gap in strategy-making in nonprofit organizations in general, and in sport clubs in particular.

Recently, Ghobadian and O'Regan (2011, p.423) asserted that *‘there are very few cases that examine strategy, strategic decisions, and strategic management in not-for-profit organisations’*. This study adds, via Research Question 1, to the understanding and knowledge of strategy-making in NPOs, by shedding light on a group of sport NPOs in a new and interesting way. It supplements, and advances, academic knowledge on strategy theory in a previously little researched context, nonprofit Welsh rugby clubs, and offers additional evidence, and insight, to the on-going strategy – performance debate.

1.7.2 Makes a contribution to knowledge, and understanding of the strategy development process, and decision-making, made prior to, during, and following, a crisis in a NPO.

The knowledge and theoretical insight acquired via the important ‘coal face’ accounts of the strategy development process, and decision-making, during an industry ‘crisis’, (Research Question 2), adds to, and provides a fresh understanding of, crisis management in NPOs. In addition, by focusing on the interactions between actors and context, strategy as practice, the ‘micro’ study contributes to the understanding of individuals decision-making, and actions, during the performance of strategic work in a unique NPO context.

1.7.3 Contributes through findings that situate historically the clubs' actions and outcomes during a turbulent period, and key 'turning points', for the Welsh rugby industry.

The research time-frame embraces a very significant, unique period in Welsh rugby history, the proclaimed 'national' game of Wales. The introduction of the first National League, followed by the unprecedented transition of the Game's core value, from that of amateur to being 'open', professional, can never happen again; hence the importance of evaluating, and documenting, the reactions to, and the impact of, both key events.

This original research generates new knowledge, and understanding, of the strategy-making process in a unique sport context.

1.8 Overview of the Thesis.

The thesis is divided into nine chapters, and Table 1.1 presents the structure of the thesis. This chapter introduced the thesis.

Table 1.1. Structure of the Strategy-Creation Process Thesis

The Three Dimensional View of Strategy	Chapter Contents	Objectives
PROCESS	Chapter 1- Introduces the research context, process and content, and the research questions to be investigated. Chapter 2 - The review of literature concerning the concept of strategy-making process, the dimensions, levels, components, in SMEs & NPOs Chapter 4 – Explains and espouses the research strategy and methodology adopted for data collection and analysis within the study.	Initial organizing framework depicting strategy components and influencing factors Establish relevant gaps in the literature. To verify a framework evaluating the degree of strategy-making in NPOs. To determine the components of any process
CONTENT	Chapters 5, 6 & 7 – In order to answer the research questions, these chapters detail the findings from the cross-sectional case studies stage via cross-case comparative analysis. Chapter 8 – Incorporates the key findings from the three case studies and examines them in connection with the existing literature/ theories and concepts; proposes the theoretical and practical implications of findings, the contributions, limitations and future research.	To examine the clubs' actions and outcomes Compare theory with findings Implications for theory, clubs, and the governing body (WRU).
CONTEXT	Chapter 3 – The background to the context, rugby clubs, of the subject being investigated. Outlines the environment of the decade being researched. It introduces the three rugby clubs, and the respondents, who assisted with the study.	Presents a foundation to the context of the research.

1.9 Summary

The purpose, and contribution, of this introductory chapter was twofold. Firstly, the chapter aimed to offer a rationale for the topic of study; this was accomplished by describing the research problem and emphasizing the requirement for the research. The aim and objectives of the thesis were specified and the adopted research approach was considered. The second objective of this chapter was to provide the reader with an outline of the thesis by providing a summary of each chapter's contents.

In consideration of the broad readership, Sutton (2004) had cautioned as to academic debate focusing on issues that "*are of no practical value to anyone*" (p.29), and the use of academic jargon, "*so much of it is incomprehensible to anyone but a fellow overtrained academic*" (p.28). The researcher is not only an academic but has also experienced being a management practitioner in the world of rugby. Therefore the research is communicated in plain language within the thesis in an attempt to make the text plausible not only to other academics, but also accessible to the management practitioner, the lay rugby reader, and other interested parties.

In addition, supplementary information, necessary for the diverse readership to understand the strategy content and the rugby context, is included in the appendix. To offer a fuller appreciation of the subject that is at the heart of the research, strategy-making, the following chapter reviews the literature on strategy.

CHAPTER TWO: A GUIDE TO STRATEGY-MAKING

“Strategy-making does not always involve the necessary formulation of goals, mental maps or plans...For the most part strategy-making on an everyday basis takes place unreflectively, on-the-spot and in the twinkle-of-an-eye”
(Chia and McKay, 2007, p238)

2.1 Setting the Scene

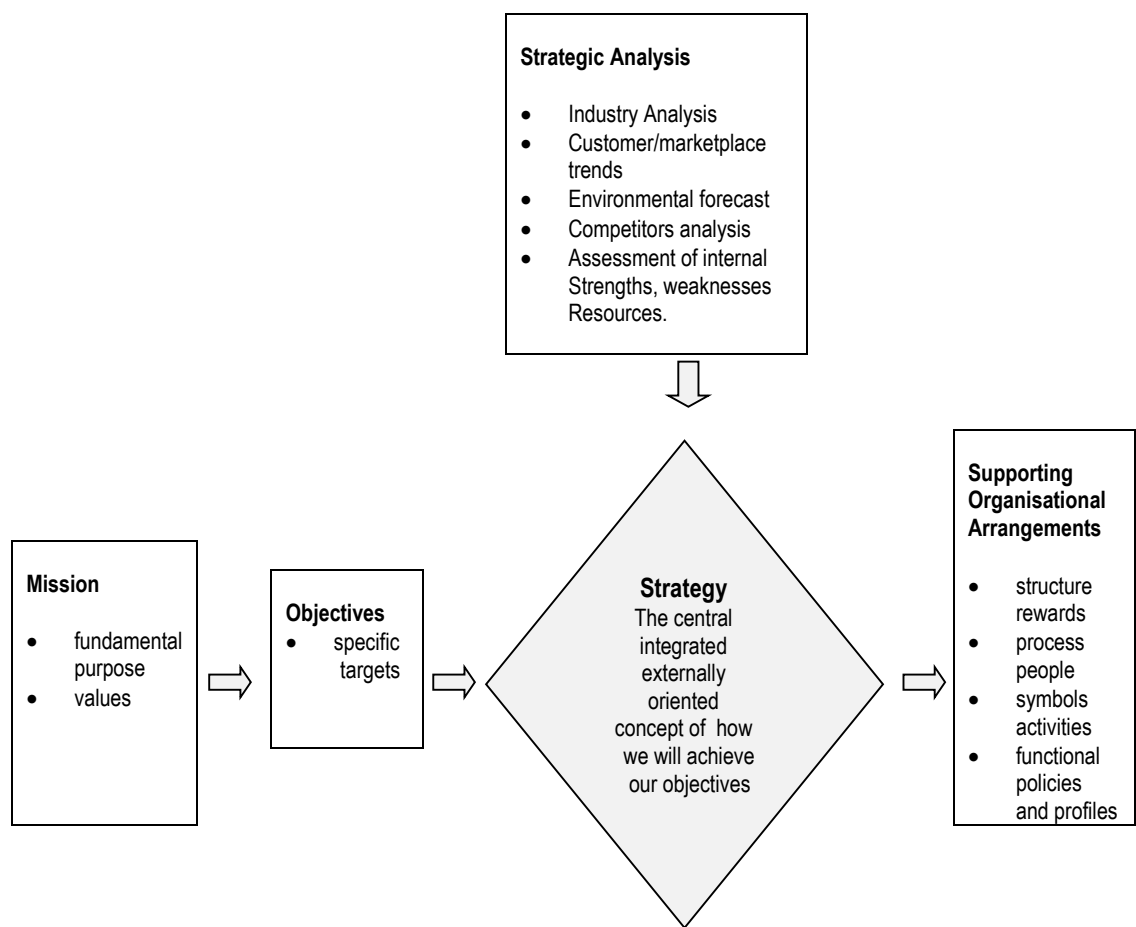
The aim of this chapter is to examine the existing literature related to the strategy-making process which is incorporated in the objective of the research. The review of literature underpins the presentation and analysis of the empirical case studies, presented in Chapters, 5, 6, and 7, and provides the foundation for the discussion, and conclusions, in Chapter 8. With the potential diverse readership of this thesis, from academics on the one side to rugby personnel on the other side, and the large volume of literature concerned with the phenomenon of strategy-making over the past fifty years, containing a bewildering array of conceptual models, dimensions and typologies (Hart, 1992), this chapter considers a number of basic issues concerned with strategy-making. Therefore, a brief resume is presented at the start of this chapter covering strategy and strategic management (SM), in order to accommodate those who have little or no knowledge of either subject. The difficulty of a lack of consensus in developing a singular definition of the term strategy will be a common thread throughout this chapter.

Various dimensions and levels of strategy were considered as was the development of the various ‘strategy’ schools since the 1960s. The three dimensions of strategy-making that have been identified by some prominent authors, Chaffee (1985), Pettigrew (1988), Mintzberg (1990) and Pettigrew and Whipp (1993); the process (generation, evaluation and implementation of strategies), the content (the outcomes), and the context (unique environment), were evaluated within sections in that order. The *Strategy Process* examines the evolution of strategy, its dimensions and levels, and the two major approaches, prescriptive and emergent, to strategy-making. This is followed by a review of some of the main strategic typologies that have been developed over the past two decades, in particular the chosen framework of Bailey et al (2000). The conditions under which decision-making takes place is also evaluated. Next the *Contents* section appraises the performance and outcomes arising as a result of strategy implementation, and finally, the *Context* section, strategy was considered within small businesses and nonprofit organisations, and that completes this chapter.

2.2 Defining Strategy

Like many concepts in the area of management, there is no universal, singular definition of strategy or SM (O'Regan and Ghobadian, 2007; Chaharbaghi and Willis, 1998), (Appendix 2.1). One of the difficulties with this concept is that “*Strategy has become a catchball term used to mean whatever one wants it to mean*” (Hambrick and Frederickson, 2005, p.52). Their approach to strategy can be found in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Putting Strategy in its Place
(Hambrick and Frederickson, 2006).



By returning to the origin of strategy proposed by Sun Tzu (500BC), a strategy within this study is considered to be ‘a course of action on how to achieve a specific goal.’ This basic ‘definition’ of strategy surfaced in the business environment of the 1960s, where the development of plans or programs for achieving long-term goals were seen as fundamental elements in the strategy concept (Andrews 1971, Learned et al, 1965). Since that period, strategy has emerged as the central concept within SM.

2.3 Strategy Dimensions and Strategic Levels

Several notable authors, Chaffee (1985), Pettigrew (1988), Mintzberg (1990) and Pettigrew and Whipp (1993), identified and distinguished between the three dimensions of strategic management. The *Process* concentrated on the method of strategy formation, how organisations generate, evaluate, and implement their strategies over time, and was the link between content and context (i.e. “how” the main actions interact together through a series of steps prior to it arriving at a strategy); next, the *Content* was the “what”, not the “how”, that included the main decisions, actions and the output of the intended or realized strategy chosen to achieve a firm’s long-term objectives (Pettigrew and Whipp, 1993). Finally, the *Context* was the ‘unique’ environment within which the organisation’s strategy developed and operated (the “who, when, where and why”). Strategy-making involved consideration of all three dimensions, both separately and together (Pettigrew, 1987). However, the fact that researchers had suggested there being several dimensions (Appendix 2.2) was one reason why so many frameworks existed for strategy-making (Feurer and Chaharbaghi, 1995).

It was also generally accepted that strategies existed at a number of levels in an organisation (Hax, 1990; Bowman, 1990; Johnson et al, 2008). The idea of levels in a firm was first proposed by Ansoff (1988) who wrote about strategic decisions, administrative decisions, and then operating decisions. It was considered that there were three main levels of strategy – *corporate*, for the company as a whole, which could adopt growth, stability, retrenchment or combination strategies; *business level* strategies of cost leadership, differentiation or focus aimed to gain a competitive advantage, by outperforming competitors for the primary performance goal, for each separate business that was under the company’s umbrella (Porter, 1980), and *functional*, for each specific function within a business (Grant, 2010). Even though the levels of strategy were distinct, they were inter-related, fitting together to form a coherent and consistent whole for any particular organisation, if that organisation was to be successful over the long run (Hofer and Schendel, 1978). Therefore, corporate strategy constrained business strategy, which in turn constrained functional area strategy. In reality, however, it was difficult to isolate the three levels due to their strong interdependence and the lack of clear borderlines between them (De Wit & Meyer, 2004).

2.4 Strategy Management Evolution.

“The history of strategic management is a story of promiscuous borrowing from other disciplines and sub-fields of management” (Pettigrew et al, 2006, p6). The emergence of strategy in the business environment occurred during the early 1960s. It was acknowledged by many writers (Bowman, 1990; Schendel, 1992) that the three key figures concerned with developing the concept of strategy in terms of concepts, definitions and methodologies were Alfred D. Chandler, Kenneth R. Andrews and H. Igor Ansoff. There were apparent differences between the three authors over whether strategy was a broad or narrow concept. Since then, there have been many approaches that categorised SM into schools or typologies, in terms of processes and outcomes (Appendix 2.3). In order to comprehend the evolution of SM, McKiernan’s (1996) excellent historical review, divided the various approaches into four main branches: the planning and practice school, the learning school, the positioning school and the resource base school.

2.4.1 The Planning and Practice School

The dominant view during **the 1960s and early 1970s** was the idea that strategy could be planned. The Planning school viewed strategy as a rational process that could be formulated in a deliberate manner through systematic long term planning. By integrating the organisation, resources and its environment in a rational and deliberate manner, strategies could be formulated, and then implemented thus achieving organisation objectives. Planning encouraged analysis and thinking about complex problems facing the organisation. It was considered useful in encouraging a long-term view of strategy within the organisation and, by involving staff, helped create ownership. Managerial tasks such as control, communication, and co-ordination were enhanced by the planning process. In a review of the literature of planning practices of small firms, Bracker and Pearson (1986) identified eight components, which were subsequently adopted by nonprofit (Bryson, 2005) and sporting organisations (Hoyle et al, 2009). The eight components were,

Objective setting	Environmental analysis (PEST)
SWOT analysis	Strategy formulation
Financial projections	Functional budgets
Operating performance measures	Control and corrective procedures.

Based on these eight components, Bracker and Pearson (1986) identified four distinct levels of sophistication in the SP process; unstructured plans, intuitive operational plans and structured strategic plans (Appendix 2.4). From their study they concluded that the *process*, not the *plan* itself, was a key component in performance. Critics of the *Planning School*, particularly Mintzberg (1994), argued that strategies were implemented through people, not inflexible plans. He challenged the view that plans were owned by staff, individual contributions being seen as merely an intellectual exercise and not viewed as part of a bigger picture. In addition, Mintzberg and Waters (1985) claimed that the intended strategy did not necessarily result from ‘the plan’; rather, an unintended strategy might have emerged. Nevertheless, Rue and Ibrahim (1998, p.24) maintained ‘*the literature strongly supports the argument that, in small business, planning is key*’.

2.4.2 The Learning School

It became clear during **the 1970s** that not all intended strategies were realised and that other strategies emerged informally. The traditional view that the *Planning School* was the only approach to strategy development was now strongly challenged (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985). There were five views of the *Learning School*. The Natural Selection View (McKelvey and Aldrich, 1983); the Incremental View (Lindblom, 1959, Quinn, 1980); the Cultural View (Schein, 2004); the Political View (Pettigrew, 1977) and the Visionary View (Hurst et al, 1989). The five views of the Learning school, along with the Planning school, became incorporated in the Six Dimensions framework of Bailey et al (2000). The emergent process critics saw it as an organisation ‘muddling through’, with strategy being formulated as a compromise to cultural and internal political pressures (Ansoff, 1991).

2.4.3 The Positioning School

During **the 1980s** within this School, the firm was removed as the focal point of analysis and replaced by the industry within which it operated and the central focus was upon the link between strategy and the external environment (so-called ‘outside-in’ approach by De Wit and Meyer, 2004). The premises of the *Positioning School*, in the context of a competitive environment, were that strategies were generic and based on analytical calculations (Porter, 1979). Porter’s (2004) assessment of each industry by his ‘Five

Forces' model enabled a firm to identify the forces which affected the level of competition within its industry and thus position itself where it could either influence, or defend, against these forces. The contending forces were the threat of new entrants, the threat of substitute products/services, the bargaining power of customers, the bargaining power of suppliers and finally the Industry itself. Criticisms of the positioning school concerned the belief that industries structures are ambiguous and difficult to define, the static nature of 'positioning', and that competition drives rather than destroys value (Jarzabkowski and Wilson, 2006).

2.4.4 The Resource Based School

In the **early 1990s**, the firm was once again placed at the centre of analysis for SM thinking through the writings of Prahalad and Hamel (1990), Barney (1991) and Grant (1991). The premise of this approach, that each organisations' performance differs because of a unique cluster of resources and capabilities, '*was probably incapable of falsification*' (Lockett et al, 2009, p10). The 'inside-out' approach regarded core resources as the key to competitive advantage by providing flows of 'rents' not available to other firms. Core competencies were regarded as the organisation's 'collective learning' that did not diminish with use, provided potential access to a wide variety of markets, made a significant contribution to the perceived customer benefits of the end product and should be difficult for competitors to imitate (Barney, 1991). Therefore, it was reasoned that firms, in the short run, could sustain profitability by building their strategies by ensuring that their resources have at least one of the following four characteristics, physical uniqueness, durability, appropriability, or substitutability (Collis and Montgomery, 1995). In formulating strategy, Grant (1991) advocated that each firm's unique characteristics, in the shape of its tangible resources, assets such as finance, equipment, patents and brand name, and its intangible capabilities, such as leadership, managerial skills, teamwork and culture, offering a source of competitive advantage, should be exploited to maximum effect (Appendix 2.5). Individuals with experience, skill and capabilities, particularly managers, were considered as rare resources for an organisation (Lockett et al, 2009). Therefore, in the rugby industry, the most strategically important resource was considered to be the tangible human resource, the players, and coaches, who brought with them their intangible, unique individual capabilities and skills.

The Resource Based view (RBV), as an alternative theory of strategy, was not without its critics. They highlighted the difficulties in establishing ‘what makes a resource unique or valuable’ and argued that competitive advantage was gained from a collection of all sources, not just resources. It was contended by Porter (1991, p.108) that,

“Resources were only meaningful in the context of performing certain activities to achieve certain competitive advantages”.

Other researchers warned of core competences becoming, in practice, a ‘feel good’ exercise that no one fails (Collis and Montgomery (1995), and voiced concerns over the difficulty of identifying explicitly what were the organisation’s core competences actually were (Johnson et al, 2008). If the competences were ‘taken for granted’ then they could become rigidities preventing organisational change. In addition, adopting the RBV could affect the ability of the organisation to create its own future. A conclusion offered by Connor (2002, p.313) was that *‘the RBV literature seems to raise more questions about competitiveness and strategic success than it answers’*.

2.4.5 View of the Schools*

With regard to the four schools contained in his historical review, it was maintained by McKiernan (1996 p.xv) that they

“...should not be seen as mutually exclusive avenues down which to travel. A better analogy was to see them as strands interwoven to form a strong rope”.

Having critically reviewed each one of the schools, the conclusion reached was that, individually, they simply presented another point of view by means of which managers could obtain an appreciation of the strategic condition of their organisation (Stonehouse and Pemberton, 2002). Following research on the history of strategy, the next step was to examine the existent literature on the research topic, the strategy-making process.

2.5 The Strategy Process

The origin of strategy offered two routes, military (Bracker, 1981; Cummings, 1993) and biological (Henderson, 1989). In the same vein, the approaches to strategy-making

* More recently, the latter two schools were joined with the high velocity school and the complex ecosystem school of strategy, and were examined in an attempt to answer growing criticisms that strategy knowledge was not actionable in practice (Jarzabkowski and Wilson, 2006).

offered two different processes – the *prescriptive* approach, (formulation) likened to the military origin because of a strategy's desire to achieve a stated objective, and the *emergent or biological* approach (formation), where survival by the organisation was achieved through continually adapting to an ever-changing environment (Sminia, 2009). Some organisations, usually large ones, needed to plan for change over a long period of time, whereas other organisations, usually small, were unable to plan ahead for more than a few months because of operating in a turbulent environment and thus needed to be reactive and flexible with planning (Risseuw and Masurel, 1994). The small rugby club, operated in a seasonal niche market, restricted by the laws and regulations put down by a governing body, plus other factors, indicated the need for caution in managing the strategy of such an organisation (Bowman, 1990). A precautionary note, offered by Whitehill (1996, p.250), suggested that '*there was no single right answer in strategic management*'.

2.5.1 The Prescriptive Approach (Formulation)

The *prescriptive* approach involved a structured SP system that involved analysis, choice and implementation (Appendix 2.6). The foundation stones were the mission, the purpose of the organisation; the vision of the future state of the organisation; the goal(s) which were general aims tied to the mission and an objective, which was a precise aim in line with a goal (Johnson et al, 2008). Once agreed, the starting point was the setting of objectives, then an analysis of the internal (SWOT) and external (PEST) environment of the organisation. This was followed by generating strategic alternatives (growth, stability or retrenchment) and selection (via a feasibility, suitability acceptability evaluation), then implementing the optimum option. Strategy formulation, therefore, was a consequence of the process that arose from the analysis, and resulted in a formal plan (Ansoff, 1988). The major advantage of the prescriptive process was that it gave a complete overview of an organisation. By defining its objectives, an organisation was able to analyse the demands on the resources required to meet its stated goals, and was able to monitor and compare its progress towards reaching its objective at each stage. Supporters concluded that the rational deduction process saved valuable time through the generation of strategic alternatives, reducing strategic errors and costs by removing improbable options from its strategic choices. (Ansoff 1991).

One of the major critics of the *prescriptive* approach, Mintzberg (1990), challenged the

assumptions on which the prescriptive process was based. He argued that the environment was too volatile to predict the long-term future direction of an organisation, that the cultural and political aspects of an organisation could have affected the selection of the optimum strategy for the CEO/leader, and that this approach could contribute to a false sense of control and perhaps, an inability to learn from past strategic missteps. Mintzberg (1994, p.110) also contended that formal planning assumed that *“the world was supposed to hold still while a plan was being developed and then stay on course while that plan was being implemented”*.

2.5.2 The Emergent Approach (Formation)

The *emergent* approach did not involve a structured SP system but strategies emerged during a process of crafting and testing (Lindblom, 1959; Quinn, 1980; Mintzberg and Waters, 1985). There was no clear final objective and, whilst analysis of the internal and external environment might take place, there was no distinction between strategic choice and implementation. Strategies could have formed without being formulated, although strategies did not have to be purely emergent; so the term strategy formation was preferred over strategy formulation (Mintzberg, 1994). Emergent strategies came about, were ‘realised’, *“including bottom-up initiatives, rapid responses to unanticipated opportunities or threats, and sheer chance”* (Johnson et al, 2008, p.15). Therefore, strategic decision-making, which was more of a bottom-up’ rather than a ‘top down’ activity, was greatly affected by unanticipated key incidents (Quinn, 1980). So, unlike the rigid prescriptive process, the emergent approach offered the advantage of flexibility to an organisation to respond swiftly, by adapting and ‘change course’, to a changing environment. The strategy formation process reflected experimentation, learning, investigation, and intuition, and included the impact of an organisation’s culture and politics, in addition to people issues, in this course of action. Champions of the emergent process advocated that it accorded with real life in many organisations (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985).

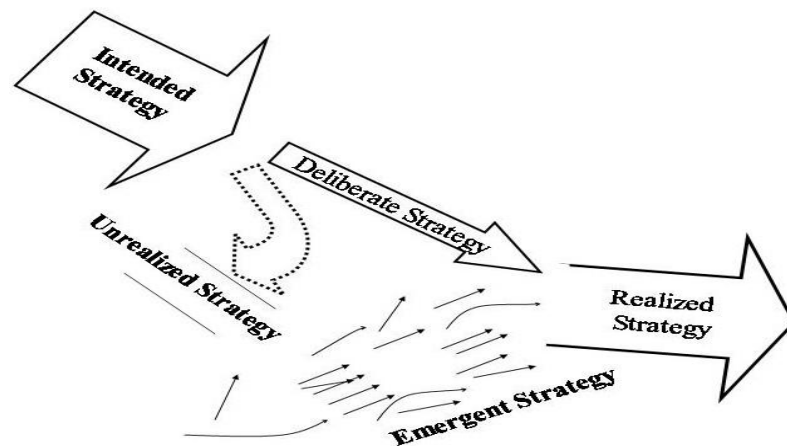
Nevertheless, and in spite of that view, critics of the emergent process saw it as an organisation ‘muddling through’, with strategy being formulated as a compromise to cultural and internal political pressures (Ansoff, 1991), which could lead to reactive, overly ad-hoc and non-purposeful strategies (Titus et al, 2011).

2.5.3 Formulation or Formation?

The formulation phase of the strategy process, emanated from a rational analysis of the organisation and its environment, and the resultant plans for the future were depicted as intended strategy. With regard to emergent strategy, the term formulation had to be substituted by formation because here strategies could have formed without any rational analysis (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2 Deliberate and Emergent Strategies

(Mintzberg, 1987)



2.5.4 A Dual Approach

It was suggested, (for such a long-running debate) that there was still no ‘silver bullet’ for a firm who tried to resolve SM problems (Meers and Robertson, 2007). It was the adoption of a mixed, rather than an individual, approach that was neither prescriptive nor emergent but instead, as Mintzberg and Waters (1985, p272) advocated,

“strategy formation walks on two feet, one deliberate, the other emergent...the relative emphasis might shift from time to time, but not the requirement to attend to both sides of the phenomenon”.

Both approaches were, in effect, concerned with the same coin (process) but approached it from different sides, and as such could be viewed as complimentary paradigms rather than conflicting paradigms as “all viable strategies have emergent and deliberate (planned) qualities” (Mintzberg, 1994, p.111). Deliberate or emergent strategies can, and should, be used by firms, as dictated by environmental dynamism (Harrington et al, 2004), and it was argued that both formal and informal practices were required for optimum success (Allred et al, 2007), and that researchers needed to recognise the centrality to a firm’s success of employing both approaches (Titus et al, 2011).

2.6 An Alternative Approach to Strategy

Whenever an organisation, such as a rugby club, competed only in one industry, its corporate and business strategy were the same (Slack, 1997). A relevant quotation about business strategy measurement, that could apply equally to a sporting organisation, was written by Ohmae (1982, p37/38).

“In the real world of business, “perfect” strategies are not called for. What counts...is not perfect performance in absolute terms but performance relative to competitors. A good business strategy, then, is one by which a company can gain significant ground on its competitors at an acceptable cost to itself”.

The object of the resultant strategy was to attain a relative competitive advantage through avoiding (differentiating) doing the same thing as competitors through attempting to bring about the conditions most favourable to them (Ohmae,1982). Nonetheless, finding an innovative, sustainable, competitive advantage was an exceedingly difficult undertaking for most organisations. Therefore, a ‘copycat’ strategy might be employed; which was basically observing what other organisations were doing in the same operating environment and copying the successful strategy. However, it was argued that successful strategies are rarely copycat strategies (Kay, 1993).

The basic difficulty with a copycat strategy was that there was no guarantee that successful activities within one specific environment could be transferred to other unique environments with the same result. Changes in strategic activities to a ‘copycat’ approach could also encounter difficulties integrating with the new club’s culture, politics and other aspects of its infrastructure, such as necessary resources, and went against the belief that successful strategies were uniquely individual to the actual firm which adopted them (Kay 1993). Researchers maintained that only a small number of organisations have competed successfully, on the basis of operational effectiveness, over a prolonged period of time (Porter, 1996); equally, it was evident that preserving a ‘competitive advantage’ over competitor clubs became more difficult daily caused by the rapid dispersal of best practices from benchmark clubs which were generic. Rival rugby clubs could quickly imitate operational techniques, organisation effectiveness techniques and improved ways of meeting stakeholder needs. Despite the warning that a ‘copycat’ approach, based on operational effectiveness, could be unproductive (Herman and Renz, 2008), there are

examples of rugby clubs in Wales (and other countries) following such a strategy during certain periods in their history. Many have been successful at one time or another and, despite barren periods of success, in some instances decades, the clubs were still in existence.

2.7 Absent Strategy

Whilst some researchers have argued that every firm has a strategy (Hofer and Schendel, 1978), others have been more cautious when offering a perspective, in that strategy might have been absent from firms because of various reasons (Inkpen and Choudhury, 1995). They asserted that it could be absent as a failure on the part of management or it could be absent as a result of conscious decisions and actions by management. Strategy could also be missing as a result of the firm being in a transitional phase of its life cycle. Interestingly, and particularly relevant for NPOs was Porter's (1996) assertion that strategy is not only what the organization intends to do, but also what it decides not to do. As established in section 2.12.1, it was maintained that NPOs only plan when they have to plan (Stone et al, 1999), and that formal planning processes were rare (Sharp and Brock, 2010). In order to investigate, and understand, the strategy-making process further, the literature was searched and uncovered various frameworks that could assist the study.

2.8 Strategic Decision-Making

An essential part of any strategy development process was the strategic decision, which came about '*as a stream of actions*' (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985) although the sequence of decisions and the actions was questioned (Chakravarthy and White, 2002). A single, universal definition of strategic decision-making has yet to be acknowledged. However, it was proposed by Johnson et al (2008, p6) that,

"strategic decisions are about the long-term direction of an organisation; the scope of an organisation's activities; gaining advantage over competitors; addressing changes in the business environment; building on resources and competencies (capability) and the values and expectations of stakeholder".

In a similar vein, it was suggested that 'there were five criteria for use in identifying and making a strategic decision' (Harrison, 1996, p.49),

- the decision must be directed towards defining the organisation's relationship to its environment;

- it must take the organisation as a whole for the unit of analysis;
- it must encompass all of the major functions performed in the organisation;
- it must be critically important - term success of the organisation',
- It must provide constrained guidance for all of the administrative and operational activities of the organisation

The following section examined such strategic decisions, including the conditions in which they were made (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Three Conditions under which Decisions are made.
(Parent and O'Brien, 2003)

Condition	Knowledge
Certainty:	All of the alternatives and their ramifications were known.
Risk:	Some of the alternatives and their ramifications were known.
Uncertainty:	Very little or nothing was known about potential decision alternatives and their ramifications.

Strategic decision-making was regarded as one of the central aspects in the strategy process, but not all researchers saw strategic decision-making as being simple and straightforward. Researchers warned that '*there was general agreement on the complexity and uncertainty associated with strategic decision-making*' (Bowman, 1990, p.30), and, as they were '*characteristically ill-structured and non-routine, they could not be solved through the application of a standard formula*' (Bailey and Johnson 1991, p1).

It had been originally proposed that strategic decision-making (SDM) was a rational process made up of three phases, the identification phase, the development phase and the selection phase (Mintzberg et al, 1976). Rationality, the degree to which decision makers collect and analyse information relevant to the decision, characterized behavior that was logical in pursuing goals (Dean and Sharfman, 1993). Subsequently, SDM has been understood as a rational, boundedly-rational, or intuitive process (Appendix 2.7). In their review of SDM processes, Rajagopalan et al (1993, p351) identified '*contextual antecedent factors namely, environmental, organizational and decision-specific factors*

significantly influence strategic decision process characteristics', in developing an integrative model of strategic making rationality. However, the rationality of the SDM process was subsequently questioned (Mintzberg, 1985), with critics contending that empirical research specified that rational decision-making was not only unrealistic but nearly '*impossible to put into practice*' (Sminia, 2009, p99). In supporting those views, following their study of small Dutch firms, Brouthers et al (1998), concluded that,

- 1) small firms did not appear to be extremely rational or extremely rational in their decision-making process. At best, moderately rational strategic decisions,
- 2) that politics and power did not appear to significantly influence decision-making in the small firm, and
- 3) small firm managers relied on their intuition, ignoring any information gathered. They did not necessarily select the optimum strategy based on rational analysis.

Researchers also supported the view that decisions were driven by intuition and emotion (Chakravarthy and White, 2002). Intuition was seen as central to all decisions, even those based on the most concrete, hard facts, and considered more appropriate for strategic, rather than operational, decisions, effectively in an unstable environment (Khatri and Ng, 2000). Rational decision-making might be influenced by several factors including power and politics (Eisenhardt and Bourgeois, 1988), external control (Porter, 2004), or managerial characteristics (Hambrick and Mason, 1984). A review of the dominant paradigms on strategic decision-making, which were rationality and bounded rationality, politics and power, and the 'garbage can' paradigm, concluded that strategic decision makers were boundedly rational, that power won battles of choice and that chance mattered (Eisenhardt and Zbaracki, 1992). In a sport organization, such as a rugby club, the sources of power could vary, and included legitimate, reward, coercive, referent and expert power (Trenberth, 2003).

In an earlier appraisal of an organisation's strategic decision, Rice (1983, p.62) had identified that it was made by an individual,

*"The fact that a decision has a long-term impact on the company is not so definitive as is the fact that **a manager** made the decision deliberately in order to achieve a long-term goal, or to build and shape the company to meet anticipated future demands to be made on it"*.

The manager could, in order to improve decision-making, employ any of four separate procedures (Yukl, 1998). He could initiate strategy himself, *autocratic decision-making*; the manager could consult with senior colleagues before making the final decision, *consultation*; all the relevant managers met to make the final decision, *joint decision making*; and, where final approval, within certain boundaries, was passed on to others, *delegation*. The advantages to an organisation with one autocratic decision-making leader were that, as ‘*only one person need act*’, the organisation’s speed of response to changes in the environment was much quicker, and if the leader was devoted to the organisation’s “mission”, showing the drive and determination to achieve its goals, it could have generated a positive togetherness amongst members in moving forward (Mintzberg, 1991), and, in addition, could defuse any politics (Eisenhardt, 1999).

It was maintained that within an organization, its structure could facilitate, constrain or simply shape the strategic decision process and its outcomes (Rhodes and Keogan, 2005), and that a change in structure could enhance performance (Harris and Ruefi, 2005). Within a sports organization, Hoye et al (2009) identified four structures; i) the *simple structure* (centralisation), ii) the *bureaucracy* (formalization), iii) the *matrix structure* (specialisms), and iv) the *team structure* (decentralized). Previously, it had been argued that, ‘*Organisations that differ in their dominant structure were likely to make strategic decisions using a very different process*’ (Fredrickson, 1986, p.294). However, as rugby clubs tended to be similar simple structures, governed by a members committee with short communication channels from top to bottom, meaning few people involved would be decision-makers, therefore ensuring that decisions were made and communicated quickly (Hoye et al, 2009).

In fast changing environments, such as surrounding the IoP, decisions that were flexible enough to permit adaption had to be made (Eisenhardt, 1997), as it was unlikely that a firm’s competitive advantage would be sustainable over a long period (Eisenhardt and Sull, 2001). Where the environment was uncertain, strategic decisions were likely to be complex, affected operational decisions, required an integrated approach and involved considerable change (Johnson et al, 2008). Within NPOs managers had to be able to cope with uncertainty and ambiguity, and such dynamic environments impacted on the decision-making process (Paton and Cornforth, 1992). Therefore, of relevance to this

study were the findings that threatening environments, high uncertainty and external control, decreased rationality in decision-making (Dean and Sharfman, 1993). In such environments, if the mission and vision were understood and accepted by an organisation's managers and members, this enabled consistent decisions to be made quickly (Bourgeois and Eisenhardt, 1988).

In August 1995, rugby clubs were faced with an external decision that was completely outside their control and culpability. The IRB's transformation pronouncement, allowing the Game to move from an amateur to professional environment, threatened clubs with an unanticipated, unique event that could have caused a major financial reversal and which required an immediate response. Decision-makers were faced with taking unprecedented, practical actions in an uncertain, dynamic environment (Smith and Williams, 1999). The 'shock event' (Ansoff, 1988), or 'organisational crisis' (Coombs, 2007), as revealed within the literature, was, by description, an infrequent happening. A frequently cited definition of organizational crisis, offered by Pearson and Clair (1998, p60), is "*a high impact event that threatens the viability of the organization and is characterized by ambiguity of cause, effect and means of resolution, as well as by a belief that decisions must be made swiftly*". Their review discovered that '*there is a lack of common, explicit agreement about the nature and meaning of crisis*' (p.61) and also '*to date presents no crisis decision process models*' (Hale et al, 2006, p304). Other researchers contended that more research was needed to improve organizations' capacity to respond in a crisis (Lalonde, 2007), and that a new proactive prevention approach was needed to reshape crisis management (Jaques, 2010).

In any crisis situation, the challenge facing an organization, especially its decision-makers, was to make a decision quickly and accurately, but to balance "gut feeling" (Kharti and Ng, 2000) – acting without thinking – with "analysis paralysis" (Lenz and Lyles, 1985)" – thinking instead of actions (Clark and Harmon, 2004). An exploratory investigation, undertaken by Hale et al (2006), into the decision processes during crisis response, had found that,

- The wrong action taken quickly was often better than the best action taken even a minute too late,
- Delays were common in organisational decision – making,

- The presence of a crisis management plan improved the decision process,
- To cope with complexity, decision-makers imitated or mimic past practices judged to be successful – equivalent to adopting a ready-made solution in a new context
- Judgment on alternative choices was overwhelmingly based on the decision-maker's individual intuition,
- The crisis management and organisational decision-making literatures had developed largely in isolation of each other.

Due to the contention that situational contingencies strongly influenced the decision-making process (Nutt, 1992), the findings by Hale et al (2006) could serve as a template for comparison against the decisions taken within the researched rugby clubs on the IoP.

2.8.1 Decision Making Constraints

Small firm's owner/managers were constrained in their decision making by internal and external pressures that were unique to the small firm sector (Byers and Slack, 2001); therefore the SM process was individual and tended to be practiced instinctively (Jennings and Beaver, 1997). Some of the reasons given by owner-managers for the lack of SM were not having enough time, unfamiliar with SM techniques and process, a lack of skills for SM, and a lack of trust and openness (Beaver, 2002), and in addition, small business managers confused SM with operational management (Harland and Kent, 2007). Whilst it was contended that accurate decision-making was important to small businesses because of the greater levels of background uncertainty they faced, with more limited resources and markets compared to large firms (Atherton, 2003), research showed that the small firm owner's tendency to practice strategic decision-making was somewhat limited or even non-existent (Schrader et al, 1989).

Research found that owing to uncertainty, small firm owner/managers tended to be concerned with short-term issues, (Westhead and Storey, 1996) and were therefore orientated towards short-term planning and decision-making (Mathews and Scott, 1995). Small firms, it was suggested, needed to make flexible strategic decisions otherwise they might have severe implications, including failure for the firm (Dean and Sharfman, 1993). Research found the decision-making process within small firms was primarily of an adaptive nature (Byers and Slack, 2001). Decisions were not strategically orientated nor long-term, but rather, they tended to be routine, operational, day-to-day decisions or

immediate response decisions made because of the firm's rapidly changing circumstances (Mintzberg, 1973); and where the event was not anticipated or expected, the response was reactive (Atherton, 2003). Perhaps a strategic decision made in small firms was best summed up by Beaver (2003, p.65), in that;

"For many small firms, management decisions are made in the context of survival and operational necessity, rather than growth and business development".

2.9 Patterns of Strategy Development: Strategy Frameworks

Since the early writings of Andrews, Ansoff and Chandler, researchers had been eager to propose different approaches to strategy development. There have been many frameworks held up as being the correct approach (Feurer and Chaharbaghi, 1995), and as Hart and Banbury (1994, p252) suggested, that

"Despite the limited efforts at empirical classification of strategy processes, the literature contains a bewildering array of conceptual models, dimensions and typologies"

Over the past two decades it has been suggested (2.3) that the optimum methodology for the research considered, was a multi-dimensional procedure. After evaluating the various methods, it was considered that such a multi-dimensional approach would be the best method of studying the strategy development process.

2.9.1 Hart's Framework (1992)

An in-depth argument for a multi-dimensional approach was made by Hart (1992), who examined eleven key process typologies drawn from the literature during the 1980's and categorized them into three broad themes: rationality (comprehensive and bounded), vision and involvement. He reasoned that none of the competing or overlapping typologies captured the full range of content associated with the strategy-making process. Building on the typologies, Hart proposed an integrative framework that consisted of five modes, command, symbolic, rational, transactive and generative, and the five modes were not seen as mutually exclusive; rather they represented process types that could be mixed by combining two or more modes into different groupings in organisations. Within the framework, (which Hart acknowledged required validation) he contrasted the roles that top managers and organisational members played in the process of strategy-making.

Hart (1992) was clear when he stated that,

“...strategy-making could no longer be limited conceptually to the chief executive or the top-management team. Rather, strategy-making must be conceptualized as an organisation - wide phenomenon. Specifying the complementary roles played by top managers and organisational members serves to clarify how strategy actually gets made in organisations”

2.9.2 Strategy, Top Down, Bottom Up or a Combination?

The view that strategy started at the top was supported by research that found agreement amongst members of the top management team (TMT) was positively related to organisational performance (Iaquinto and Fredrickson, 1997). It depended on senior management because ‘*strategy-making was a process interwoven with all that it takes to manage an organisation*’ (Mintzberg, 1994, p113). Researchers argued that because of the complex and creative nature of strategy making, it could not be an isolated process and that strategy should not just be the prerogative of top management because the involvement of middle managers in the formation of strategy was associated with improved organisational performance (Floyd and Wooldridge, 1997). An extended viewpoint, that strategy development could be both top-down and bottom-up, was acknowledged both by Bourgeois and Brodwin (1983), and also Nonaka (1988).

The 'postures' that organisational members assumed in strategy-making were viewed by Nonaka (1988) in his typology as three modes. First, *deductive management* was driven by strong leadership from the top down; by contrast, *inductive management*, supported by an influential leader, was driven from bottom-up. *Compressive management* saw the leader as a catalyst with a vision, which then involved contributions from both top managers and organisational members who created and implemented the vision, in effect a combination of the deductive and inductive modes. Furthering that view, an alternative approach to strategy assumed everybody within an organisation was responsible for its performance (Hart, 1992). Whilst Hart's theoretical framework lacked confirmation, a similar instrument produced by Bailey et al (2000), consolidating the earlier research of Bailey and Johnson (1991), into the development of strategies in organisations had been endorsed by practicing managers, and senior academics.

2.10 A Multi-Dimensional Approach to Strategy Development

Bailey et al's (2000) strategy formulation needed to be understood in terms of a mix of processes, similar to the five modes proposed by Hart (1992). They identified an instrument that had acceptability, reliability and validity, using the six dimensions of the process of strategic decision-making (see Appendix 2.8). Whilst the framework had been validated in large organisations, its individual dimensions had been raised and discussed as topics by club stakeholders during conversations (4.8.5). Therefore it was believed that the framework could be applied to a small nonprofit organisation context. The six dimensions of strategy development processes were:

2.10.1 Command Dimension,

Here, strategy was formulated under the direction of a central, powerful leader (Bennie & Nanus, 1996) or a small group of senior individuals within the TMT (Chaffee, 1985). The vision or strategic aspirations of the individual or group provided the future strategic direction of the organisation (Shrivastava and Nachman, 1989) and might have been developed through intuition, inspiration or experience (Westley and Mintzberg, 1989). An individual with a strong leadership style, had a greater impact on performance than a weak leadership style (O'Regan et al, 2005). In NPO's, leadership was associated with successful SP (Bryson, 2005), and the administration style was identified as strongly influencing strategy formulation (Crittenden and Crittenden, 1997). However, leaders might have had no experience of business management (Paton and Cornforth, 1992) but charismatic, transformational leaders possibly had a 'gut feeling' (Westley and Mintzberg, 1998) for the direction the organisation should follow, especially in turbulent environments, where trying to plan or predict for the future was considered to be of no purpose (Risseuw and Masurel, 1994). Within such a situation, a strong leader, therefore, was prepared to take bold, risky actions on behalf of the organisation (Yukl, 1998). If decision-making lay with one single leader, then two advantages were enjoyed by organizations (Mintzberg, 1991). First, there was the ability to respond quickly to changes in the environment, as "only one person need act". Second, a business run by a strongly magnetic personality could have led to a feeling of 'belonging' felt amongst firm employees knowing that it had a leader with the drive and determination to realise its goals successfully. In dynamic environments the traditional planning approach of 'ends-ways-means' should change its approach to a more effective 'means-ways-ends'

(Hayes, 1985). This gave organisation members a common vision to follow. The role of organisational members, who accepted and 'bought-in' to the vision (Rowe et al, 1989), was to obey the orders from the top individual or group and to "make it happen". (Hart, 1992), but such an approach might have caused motivational problems amongst organisational members. The organisation members were needed because on his own the leader/ visionary, despite the position, power, and authority endowed upon him by the organisation's structure and history, could not turn the vision into strategy (Bennis and Nanus, 1996).

2.10.2 Planning Dimension

SP attempts to systematise the process that enable organisations to achieve goals and objectives (Crittenden, 1999). This dimension follows a strict sequential approach that involved analytical techniques and systematic procedures concerning the organisation and its environment (Chaffee, 1985). Various options, capable of attaining the goal or strategic issue, were generated, evaluated and the optimum strategy was adopted (Aldrich, 1979). The selected strategy developed by senior individuals/ executives, not organisation members (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985), was made explicit by precise plans and programmes (Ansoff, 1988), with strategy formulation preceding strategy implementation. Implementation was the responsibility of those operating below within the organisation (Mintzberg, 1978). It was found that formal planning proved to be superior to informal planning (Armstrong, 1982), and that a higher degree of formalization is related to a higher degree of performance (Kraus et al, 2006). However, the results of studies concerned with the linkage of planning with improved performance in NPOs (Crittenden et al, 2004), and in small businesses (Jennings, 1997) are mixed and overall inclusive. Interestingly, it was found that planning conducted by small businesses was limited in its scope and activities, and tended to be operational (Carsons and Cromie (1990).

The formal approach to SP has been subjected to long standing criticism (Fletcher and Harris, 2002). Strategy, it was argued, was not primarily about planning but rather about intentional, informed and integrated choices (Hambrick and Fredrickson, 2005). Planning did not consider the decision-makers personal and cognitive limitations allowing subjectivity to enter the process (Bailey and Johnson 1991), neither did it take into

account the less ‘objective’ aspects of the organisation such as the social, cultural and political environments of an organisation (Chaffee, 1985). With regard to performance, it was argued that the question was no longer ‘*does SP affect small firm performance*’ but rather was ‘*under what conditions was performance enhanced by small firm strategic planning*’? (Schwenk and Shrader, 1993). SP and performance was a part of management but, ‘*the linkage between planning and success or failure has been difficult to establish and even more difficult to quantify*’ (Perry, 2001, p.202).

Disagreement existed between researchers who contended that planning was important in a dynamic, unstable or turbulent environment (Anderson, 2000; Slevin and Covin, 1997; McKiernan and Morris, 1994; Hart and Banbury, 1994) and those who submitted that planning was counter-productive in an environment perceived as highly dynamic (Mintzberg et al, 1998; Richardson, 1995; Risseuw and Masurel, 1994). In a dynamic environment, innovation, flexibility and responsiveness were the make-up requirements of strategy (Mintzberg, 1979). Conversely, other studies argued the case that formal SP was best within stable environments (Fredrickson and Mitchell, 1989; Fredrickson and Iaquinto, 1989), and that incrementalism was recommended for the more uncertain and rapidly changing environments (Quinn, 1980). Whatever the environment, critics of SP believed that there was no ‘magic’ tool or technique which ensured profitability for small firms (Meers and Robertson, 2007). Various conclusions emerged from different studies concerning structuring planning processes in small firms (Brews and Hunt, 1999; Capon et al, 1994; Miller and Cardinal, 1994). Nonetheless, whilst there was no clear evidence that the planning dimension was appropriate, neither was there clear evidence to argue that it was not (Fletcher and Harris, 2002).

2.10.3 Incremental Dimension

Due to ‘learning through doing’, constant readjustment and limited commitment, this led to a deliberate development of strategy (Quinn, 1980). The complexity and uncertainty of organisational environments prevented boundedly rational managers from considering all possible strategic options against pre-set, explicit objectives (Lindblom, 1959). In this situation, strategic decision-making was instinctive, fragmented and gradual; commitment to strategy was kept tentative, subjected to review, and offered neither distinct strategic direction nor specific plans for implementation (Idenburg, 1993). The

objective was not to identify the best or optimum solution (Mintzberg et al, 1976), rather the challenge was for changes in procedure in the organisation to have matched with changes in the environment (Bailey and Johnson, 1991). In response to a difficult, complex environment, the organisation adapted in small, disjointed steps (Mintzberg, 1978) where the TMT acted as facilitators who empowered and enabled other members to participate through learning and improving (Quinn, 1982).

2.10.4 Political Dimension

Strategy-making is an inherently political process (Chakravarthy and White, 2002) where powerful groups of stakeholders, internal and external, through negotiation, bargaining and compromise (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003), could influence strategy (Hickson et al, 1986). Information, which was not politically neutral, but which might be distorted, could also influence strategic decisions (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003). The level of power of a wide range of stakeholders was often provisional upon the organisation's reliance upon them for resources (Freeman, 2000). A stakeholder's influence could vary from strategic decision to strategic decision because of different concerns (Feldman, 1986) and degrees of power (Hickson et al, 1986); such as, the influence of top level decision-makers decreases as a strategy enters the implementation stage (Bailey and Johnson, 1991). Through compromise amongst stakeholders requiring different outcomes, an acceptable strategy emerged by mutual adjustment (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985), where consensus rather than the optimum solution, allowed those vested stakeholders to produce an acceptable strategic decision (Johnson, 1987). Therefore the final plan resulted from a concession by stakeholders. The strategy adopted was not objective criterion based, but rather it was reached through fulfilling the interests of powerful stakeholders/groups who could influence the decision-making process (Johnson, 1987). However, strategy could also be driven by the initiatives of organisational members (Peattie, 1993). Previous research had found that NPO's had a variety of different stakeholders setting different goals (Paton and Cornforth, 1992). In sport organisations, basic centres of power for individuals or groups included legitimate, reward, coercive, referent and expert power. The implementation of this power, to defend or enlarge existing power bases, obviously involved political activity (Parent and O'Brien, 2003), and in turbulent times, when an organisation faces uncertainty, the process of decision-making became more prone to power (Bailey and Johnson, 1991).

2.10.5 Cultural Dimension

This dimension viewed strategies as outcomes resulting from the organisations routines and the way ‘we do things around here’ (Schein, 2004). Managers sought solutions to new strategic issues through a framework developed over years within the organisation, and by its members, through familiarity; new situations were not perceived as unique (Schon, 1991). By also involving people, with their experience and expectations, at middle and lower levels in the organisation, the development of an intangible corporate culture could help the implementation of strategy. Shared beliefs and assumptions were considered to exist, not just to the individual organisation (Huff, 1982), but on an industry wide basis (Spender, 1989) in the form of acceptable ‘recipes’. However, organisations faced with the same ‘objective’ environment might have viewed it, then reacted differently. Strategies were reflected by adjustments rather than major change, but if not appropriate for the solution could lead to strategic drift (Johnson, 1992). The role of the TMT was like a team coach, to motivate and inspire the ‘players’ who should in turn respond to the challenges (Hart, 1992).

Researchers warned that if the future direction of the organisation was based upon routines, beliefs, attitudes, values, rituals, stories, perceptions and other symbolic artefacts, the organisational paradigm was, in turn, likely to provide resistance to change. Strong cultures would suppress deviance, avoid change and tended to foster inbreeding through decisions made in line with the organisation’s paradigm (Johnson, 1987). Nevertheless, *‘the culture of the firm could be changed through information, experience or sanctions’* (Kono, 1994, p.88).

2.10.6 Enforced Choice Dimension

With this dimension the firm had little or no choice over the strategies they followed as outside factors external to the organisation impose strategy on the firm which best fitted the environment (Hannah and Freeman, 1989). Within an industrial sector, pressures, such as from the governing body, the WRU, meant that the strategies an organisation could follow were severely limited (Harris and Jenkins, 2001), and tended to be common to all organisations within that sector (Di Maggio and Powell, 1983). Considering that rugby clubs were small in size, would it align them with Bailey and Johnson’s (1991, p.34) contention that, *‘The smaller organisations which make up the majority in most*

industries, are relatively unable to influence their environment? Equally, if the clubs were NPOs, would findings agree that *“strategic processes are typically forced on the nonprofit organizations”*? (Sharp and Brock, 2010, p323). The role organisational members’ played in choosing a strategy was limited but change could still occur in such circumstances (Aldrich, 1979). In ‘hostile’, unpredictable and uncontrollable external environments associated with high levels of uncertainty, small firm managers favoured short-term planning (Covin and Slevin, 1989), because they were mainly concerned with short-term problems and issues (Westhead and Storey, 1996). The firm’s ability to cope, understand, and respond to, with environmental uncertainty was critical to its continued viability (Grant, 2008).

The consideration of environment was important because, it was argued, SP was a highly contextual activity (Goll and Rasheed, 1997), and when a firm’s strategic behaviour was aligned with its environment, its profitability was optimised (Ansoff and Sullivan, 1993). The characteristics of a region could have a significant impact on relative performance, with firms based in an unattractive location facing large challenges in achieving competitive success (Porter, 1991). It could be argued that as the research clubs had existed for well over a hundred years, the detailed knowledge about their environment, gained over such a long period, would have reduced environmental uncertainty and the need to plan (Gibson and Cassar, 2002). However, such a view, proposing that knowledge is uniform and universal within discrete groups of small businesses, has been challenged (Atherton, 2003).

The research by Bailey et al (2000), built upon the earlier work of Bailey and Johnson (1991) and Hart (1992), suggested that, in every situation and at any point in time, because of the complexity of strategic decision-making within organisations, the dimensions were not mutually exclusive but rather occurred in combination. The multi- dimensional view of strategy formulation was supported by Mintzberg et al (1998, p.372) who agreed that,

“Strategy formulation is judgemental designing, intuitive visioning, and emergent learning: it is about transformation as well as perpetuation; it must involve individual cognition and social interaction, cooperation as well as conflict; it has to include analyzing before and programming after as well as negotiating during; and all of this must be in response to what could be a demanding environment. Just try to leave any of this out and watch what happens!”

The Bailey et al's (2000) strategy development process six dimensional instrument, along with Pettigrew's (1988) model, of process, content and context, was considered to have the necessary trustworthiness (see 4.3.3) to offer the depth of investigation required by this study. While the Bailey et al's (2000) instrument contributed to the main focus of the research, the strategy-making *process* within an organisation (a rugby club), it could also contribute to developing an understanding of the role of individual managers in the *practice* of strategy within the clubs (Chia and MacKay, 2007).

2.11 Strategy Evaluation and Selection

In the prescriptive approach, strategies were constructed based on the results of the strategic analysis, which was carried out on an organisation's environments, both internal and external. Therefore, the uniqueness of each rugby club impacted on the selection of a 'correct' strategy, but as Thompson (2001, p.531), pointed out,

“When assessing current strategies, and evaluating possible changes, it is important to emphasize that there is no such thing as a right or wrong strategy choice in absolute terms”.

The evaluation of strategies was based on a small number of particular criteria (Appendix 2.9), such as feasibility, suitability, and acceptability (Johnson et al, 2008). Another framework, based upon 'intentional, informed and integrated choices', using key evaluation criteria, was designed by Hambrick and Fredrickson, (2005, p63), for testing the quality of a strategy (Appendix 2.10). The choice of strategies emanating from the prescriptive approach was as a result of a rational process where the organisation's objectives, frequently stated in financial terms, were used to evaluate options. The assessment techniques defined above, then proved helpful in particular circumstances by singling out, what the organization believed to be, the 'correct' strategies by providing calculated information concerning all the options. As such, individual subjectivity and judgment was also involved in the strategic decision-making. With a strategy being selected completing the process dimension, the researcher's attention then turned to the understanding of outcomes, and sought to establish the content of strategy, 'how' the rugby clubs measured performance.

2.12 The Content (Measuring Performance)

Following research undertaken on performance in large firms, researchers into small firms questioned the similar assumptions that were being made about the sector; that small firms were profit maximisers, growth orientated or even highly competitive (Curran and Blackburn, 2001). Either through design, or by virtue of barriers to further development, small firms might not wish to optimise profits or follow a growth strategy (Mount et al, 1993). It was established that merely a minority of around 10 per cent wanted to grow significantly and even then only a slight percentage of them grew considerably (Hakim, 1989). In small firms *“success is no longer regarded as synonymous with optimal performance since this represents an extremely elusive concept”* (Jennings and Beaver, 1997, p.68). Common to both large and small firms was that to outperform its rivals, and improve performance, a *‘firm must establish a competitive difference that it could defend and preserve’* (Porter, 1996, p 62), since *“the foundations of corporate success are unique to each successful company”* because *“there are no recipes and generic strategies for corporate success”* (Kay, 1993, p19).

The need to establish small, nonprofit, sporting organisations performance measures was reflected in the statement by Pettigrew et al, (2001, p.701), that *“Management scholars seem to have been curiously uncurious about why and how certain organisations consistently “outperform” their competitors.* NPOs exist to achieve a social mission, so measuring and comparing performance for them is a more subjective and values-driven exercise than that aimed at for-profit organisations (Moore, 2000). An important consideration for rugby clubs, facing promotion and relegation every season, was that time horizon assumptions should be very situation specific, because due to the industry involved, performance implications could be outdated in weeks or months (Shrader et al, 1989). In a seasonal game, therefore, *“Performance is related to the firm and to industry and to the yearly interaction of the firm with the industry”* (Schwartz and Teach, 2000, p81), suggesting that a rugby club’s template could follow that of small businesses which were inclined to focus on OP that had short term goals, action plans and day-to-day operations (Robinson et al, 1986). Planning was limited in its scope and activities in small businesses, where a greater emphasis tended to be placed on OP (Shrader et al, 1989). In addition to being short-term orientated, planning in small firms tended to be

adaptive in nature and concerned with managing scarce and limited resources (Gibson and Cassar, 2002). Survival was then achieved by adopting a 'status quo' strategy, with the firm's performance dependant on the relationship between the firm's resources and its decision-making. Given the paucity of empirical assessment of small firm performance measures, deciding how to measure the achievements of a particular firm was problematical and complex (Cameron, 1986). Rugby clubs were a compilation of different stakeholders, and as such, Jennings and Beaver (1997, p.68) argued that,

"Success can be viewed as the attainment of certain pre-defined objectives which satisfy stakeholder aspirations and which might have culminate in performance which falls substantially below the optimum level attainable."

Rugby clubs being considered as NPOs, stakeholder satisfaction, it was argued, was the best and most accurate way of judging performance (Beaver and Prince, 2004). So rugby clubs needed to ascertain the criteria used by the multiple stakeholders to measure the organisation's performance (Appendix 3.2), because *'the key to success for...NPOs (and communities) is the satisfaction of key stakeholders'* (Bryson, 2005, p27).

Of much relevance to this study were the findings on small firm management that politics within the TMT (the committee) was associated with poor firm performance (Eisenhardt and Bourgeois, 1988), and that equally, the level of TMT agreement was positively related to a firm's performance (Jaquinto and Fredrickson, 1997). In small firms, the power which accompanied majority ownership could not be challenged by other stakeholders and had a significant impact upon the performance of the firm and clearly impacted on the firm's objectives (Jennings and Beaver, 1997), especially as owner managers, *'define success in much narrower terms than external stakeholder groupings and the public in general'* (Beaver and Jennings, 2000, p398). Consequently, the performance of small firms was very much dependent on the quality of strategic decisions made by the owner/manager. (Robinson and Pearce, 1984). It was also established that managerial competence and expertise, especially in cash management, was important for success (Jennings and Beaver, 1997), and a lack of SM skills and abilities were considered the underlying causes for small business failure (Beaver, 2002). In linking strategy to action, Sharman (1998, p.26) suggested that, *"When created, most organisational goals are realistic and achievable but without a mechanism to convert them into concrete action*

items, it is pure luck if those goals are realized.” (The Oxford dictionary defined ‘luck’ as “success due to chance”). Researchers, in particular, have been criticised because of their fixation to employ uni-dimension constructs particularly accounting figures, such as Return on Investment (ROI) Profit, Sales growth, only to measure a firm's performance; *‘This masks the very complex nature of organisational performance and leads us to oversimplify not only what it is but how it is achieved’* (Daft and Buenger (1990, p.92).

Small organisations, such as rugby clubs, were reluctant to impart objective financial data and such information was not always publicly available (Bracker and Pearson, 1986), and for that reason, subjective measures were more adaptable and thus beneficial (Covin and Slevin, 1989). In acknowledging the complexity of evaluating a small organisation’s performance, it was recommended that the researcher employed multiple measures of performance (Birley and Westhead, 1990). A single measure, particularly financial such as profit, merely reflected the small organisation’s performance in the short term, but did not reflect its ability to survive and grow in the long term. Unlike for-profits organisations, where the financial bottom line was the primary key indicator, there was no universally accepted measure of performance in NPOs (Stone, 1999), as outputs *‘are typically intangible, bundled and difficult to measure’* (Speckbacher, 2003, p269). Therefore, end-of-year financial results were not necessarily an indicator of the NPO’s effectiveness (Akingbola, 2006). It was further asserted that *“unlike financial management, there is no common currency for monitoring performance”* (Hudson, 1999, p171).

Performance in NPOs had been defined as *“the ability to acquire resources necessary for organizational survival”* (Stone et al, 1999), because so many were resource dependent in comparison to other types of organisations (Stone and Brush, 1996). When they were required to deal with key resource deficiencies strong evidence revealed that planning techniques were employed (Stone, 1989). It was contended that performance measures needed to be tailored to the missions and goals of individual NPOs (Sawhill and Williamson, 2001). Consensus among many researchers, and practitioners, revealed that performance was multidimensional and social in nature (Kaplan, 2001), which in itself generated a difficult challenge for NPOs’ on how to measure the effectiveness of strategy or to ascertain any strategy content–performance linkage (Crittenden, 2000). Supporting

the difficulty with measuring nonprofit performance, Kendall and Knapp, (2000, p.129) proposed that,

“There is no single criterion of performance upon which to rely, particularly in view of the multiple-stakeholder context within which most voluntary (nonprofit) organisations find themselves, nor is there any simple or uncontroversial way to aggregate indicators across domains”

Similarly, it could be argued that the performance of NPOs was influenced by social, cultural, political, economic and historical factors that could not be explained simply in terms of matching the organisations strengths with the environment’s opportunities to ensure the effectiveness of any strategy (Akingbola, 2006). Kaplan and Norton (1992) argued that their ‘balanced scorecard’ facilitated the formulation of strategy and provided a vital technique for the translation and communication of strategy throughout an organization.

The character of sporting (rugby) organisations was extremely competitive and the single most influential performance benchmark was victory over rival competitors, a point well made by Szymanski (2003, p.468).

“In sport competitions, relative performance measures are typically all that matters and they are well defined. Rankings are allocated according to points scored, matches won,...and while the losers frequently argue the toss, such arguments carry little weight – winning is everything.”

Within the rugby industry, playing performance (utility maximization) was considered to be more important than financial results (profit maximization) (Hoye et al, 2009). It was found that NPOs had more luck in setting a measureable, mission orientated goal and then assessing progress against that goal (Sawhill and Williamson, 2001).

2.12.1 A Multi-Dimensional Construct.

The often cited critique that “...the treatment of performance in research settings is perhaps one of the thorniest issues confronting the academic researcher today” led to the contention that measurement of an organisation’s performance should be a multi-dimension construct (Venkatraman and Ramanujam, 1986, p801). They proposed three general levels of measurement of performance i.e. financial performance, operational

performance and organisation effectiveness. The recommendations put forward by the various researchers suggested that non-financial criteria should be used in addition to financial criteria when measuring performance (Rue and Ibrahim, 1998). To allow comparisons of criterion, objective and subjective data should be used, and where possible short and long term measures. Nonetheless, in spite of these recommendations, it was established that qualitative measures of performance seemed to have been largely ignored (Greenley, 1993). A potential performance measure matrix is Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3 Performance Measures Matrix

(Adapted from Haber and Reichel, 2006).

Long-Term	Growth in Revenues	Development and Growth Playing Strength
	Revenues Number of wins and trophies in a season	Stakeholder Satisfaction Players Welfare
Short-Term	Objective	Subjective

One approach which was widely used was the goal attainment approach that measures effectiveness (doing the right thing) based on the achievement of an organisation's goals, the ends not means, and which often reflects the owner-manager point of view in determining the direction and performance of the firm (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003). The quantity of resources used to achieve the required goals, normally measured in economic terms, reflected the efficiency (doing things right) of the organisation (Slack, 1997).

In the context of this research into rugby clubs, it was worth recalling again that Storey (1994), posed critical and searching questions concerned with the assumptions regarding performance made about small firms, concerning profit, growth and competitiveness. Many small firms adopted the status quo because the product-market niche did not allow growth (Churchill and Lewis, 1983), as was the case in many small village communities or towns where rugby clubs existed. Rugby clubs, like the majority of small organisations (Mount et al, 1993), were content to remain the same size over the years. The club's very identity, based on a geographical area, meant that its *raison d'être* held back any growth in a different locality, and that those clubs based in an 'unattractive' location faced huge challenges in achieving competitive success (Porter, 1991). Previous research concluded

that the characteristics of an area had a significant impact on relative performance (Mason and Harrison, 1985), and in the ‘amateur’ days the perceived glory for the village or town was achieved through the winning of a local cup or championship title, a view confirmed by Frisby (1986, p.95).

“The goals most often measured in a sport context reflect an emphasis on performance outcomes and have been operationalised in terms of win/ loss records or performance rankings in comparison to other teams”.

Whilst few studies have attempted to examine relationships between strategic processes and performance in NPOs (Crittenden, 2000), a problem exists in that it is difficult to dissect the highly complex NPO performance variable (Forbes, 1998). Nonetheless, in order to measure performance from various sector levels within the clubs, the multi - dimension construct devised by Venkatraman and Ramanujam, (1986) multi-dimension was adopted. The research then turned to examine the context of the study.

2.13 The Context (The Strategic Environment).

The majority of studies located in the SM literature involved large firms in a business environment (Shanley and Peteraf, 2006). Over the last decade, researchers, such as Jarzabkowski (2003), Whittington (2006) and Chia and Mackay (2007), have challenged the treatment of strategy as being the property of large organisations by viewing strategy as ‘something that people do’. The ‘strategy-as-practice’ emphasised a ‘micro-activities based’ to understanding strategy and how managers strategise (Jarzabkowski, 2003) rather than viewing strategy-making as a whole process, focusing on where, how and who does the work of strategising and organising (Whittington, 2006). Therefore, this research into strategy operated within the broad parameters of, *practitioners* (those people who do the work of strategy); *practices* (the social, symbolic and material tools through which strategy is done); and *praxis* (the flow of activity in which strategy is accomplished) (Jarzabkowski and Spee, 2009). The ‘strategy wheel’ was turning full circle because such a ‘micro based activity’ was the approach the Athenians adopted under a tribal head, Kleisthenes (508 BC), the ‘*strategos*’.

Recommending such an approach, Cummings (1993, p134) stated,

“A great deal of insight could be gained from examining those from whom we inherited the term (historically and culturally). The first strategists- the Greek strategoi, (leaders) perhaps practiced strategy in its purest sense.”

However, some 2,500 years later, the literature on SM in the small firms, nonprofit and sporting organisations area was still lagging well behind that written on large organisations (McCarthy and Leavy, 2000). It was contended that much of the empirical evidence regarding the use of SM tools and techniques were based mainly upon large organisations (Rigby and Gillies, 2000), and that such tools and techniques could not be applied directly either to small firms (Beaver and Jennings, 2000) or to nonprofit organisations (Beck et al, 2008). However, for any organisation, large or small it was argued, techniques do not make, or implement, strategy (Hussey, 1997). Researchers called for further investigation on how strategies were actually formed in small firms (Beaver 2003, O'Regan and Ghobadian, 2005), nonprofit (Kearns and Scapino, 1996; Ghobadian and O'Regan, 2011) and sporting organisations (Slack, 1997). In examining the private, public and third (nonprofit) sectors, Hudson (1999) warned researchers that the boundaries between the three sectors were not clear cut. It was important, therefore, to clarify into what sector a rugby club actually should be placed.

Consideration was given as to whether rugby clubs should be regarded as 'social enterprises'. An original description was '*an enterprise that is owned by those who work in it and/or reside in a given locality, is governed by registered social as well as commercial aims and objectives and run co-operatively may be termed a social enterprise...with the emphasis on social, environmental and financial benefit*' (Spreckley, 1978). Examining that definition within the rugby context, no-one '*worked in it*' and clubs did not have '*commercial aims and objectives*' nor an '*emphasis on environmental and financial benefits*', therefore it was concluded that rugby clubs, pre-1995, better matched the various characteristics of volunteer run NPOs.

2.13.1 Nonprofit Organisations

Most strategic research had focused on 'for-profit' organisations (Bryson, 2005). The literature on SM in the nonprofit sector did not start to appear until the late 1970's, when factors which limited the progress of rational planning in NPOs were identified (Newman and Wallender, 1978). It was proposed by various researchers that non-profit

organizations had unique characteristics (Table 2.2), that differed from those of ‘for-profit’ organizations (Crittenden and Crittenden 1997), and the differences mattered enough to suggest that NPOs may need their own concept of strategy formulation (Moore, 2000) and strategic choices (Appendix 2.11).

Table 2.2 The Nonprofit Organization

(Adapted from Paton and Cornforth (1992) Osbourne (1996) and Hudson, 1999)

- Existed primarily for social purpose
- Small, informal structured organisation
- Independent of the State
- Nonprofit, all financial surpluses re-invested
- Possible vague objectives
- Impact difficult to measure
- Accountable to a variety of stakeholders
- Self-governing and are able to control their own activities
- Voluntarism is essential; helpers, management
- Purpose influences management
- Cherished Organizational Values/Culture
- Social Goals - financial ‘bottom-line’ is not a priority

Almost twenty years later Kearns and Scarpino (1996, p.435) were claiming that, “*Clearly we still do not have an adequate understanding of the internal and external factors that combine to provide the catalysis for strategic planning in NPOs, ... a variety of questions concerning the context and process of planning in nonprofit organisations remain unresolved*”. More recently, Sharp and Brock (2010, p.323) asserted that,

‘the focus of existing research, and the weight of empirical evidence, suggests that the behaviour of VNPOs in strategic processes was characterized by the avoidance of strategic process, the application of defensive and protective measures, and the partial or selective execution of planning and implementation’

In spite of the increase in studies into aspects of SM in NPOs over the last two decades, and a major review and analysis of empirically based research on SM in non-profit organizations from 1977, the field remained fragmented (Stone et al, 1999). The over-reliance on the private sector’s dated approaches to researching strategy, with the majority being USA studies (Courtney, 2005), needed to be addressed via further research into process, outcome and context in UK NPOs (Rhodes and Keogan, 2005). With regard to planning processes, it was maintained that NPOs exhibited a significant level of resistance

to SP, only planned when they had to plan (Stone et al,1999), and that formal planning processes were rare, typically forced on the NPO, and the use of associated techniques was limited (Sharp and Brock, 2010). The need for a strong body of empirical evidence was demanded by Kearns and Scrapino (1996), and were supported by the contention that *‘there are very few cases that examine strategy, strategic decisions, and strategic management in not-for-profit organisations’* (Ghobadian and O’Regan, 2011, p.423). Comparing the characteristics of nonprofit organisations against rugby clubs, particularly pre-1995, it was found that rugby clubs displayed nonprofit characteristics. However, with the advent of professionalism within the Game, did rugby clubs then moved towards operating as ‘for-profit’ small businesses.

2.13.2 Small Business

No single, uniformly acceptable definition, either operational or numerical, of a small firm had been agreed (Storey, 1994), and as such *‘Small firms remain much easier to describe than to define’* (Beaver and Jennings, 2000, p397). In the UK the Department of Trade and Industry (1995) defined a small business as one with less than fifty employees. On a broader front, the European Commission (2003) disaggregated small and medium enterprise (SME) sector into three components (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3 European Company Categories (2003)

Company category	Employees	Turnover	Balance sheet total
Medium-sized	< 250	≤ € 50 m	≤ € 43 m
Small	< 50	≤ € 10 m	≤ € 10 m
Micro	< 10	≤ € 2 m	≤ € 2 m

SM could be seen as a valuable option available to both large and small firms, though the scope of the operation within small firms was likely to be less of a strategic issue than it was with larger firms (Pekar and Abraham, 1995). The leading standpoint, in relation to strategy in smaller firms, has been the *prescriptive approach* (Hanlon and Scott, 1993), but other researchers have challenged the benefit of the prescriptive approach to small firms (Bhide, 1994). Recent literature indicated that small firms might be distinguished from larger firms by a number of key characteristics; unlike large organisations, which tended to be mechanistic and highly formalised, the small business organisation was

likely to be organic and loosely structured (Beaver and Jennings, 1996). In addition, contrasting the small firm owner/manager with his large firm counterpart, it was easier for the small businessman, with superior knowledge of his local environment, to gather and evaluate information than for the big businessman (Curran and Blackburn, 2001). So, *'by their very nature, small firms are different and have special characteristics, operating contexts, objectives and qualities'* (Beaver, 2003, p.115). Research into strategy-making in small firms found the following characteristics concerning planning (Table 2.4),

Table 2.4 The Small Business Planning Perspective

- Informal, flexible, incremental, irregular process (Scott & Gibb, 1985)
- Lack of formal analysis, use of strategic tools (Woods and Joyce, 2003)
- Limited objectives (Beaver, 2003)
- Importance of improving financial management (Gorton, 1999).
- Planning concerned with limited/scarce resources (Hamel and Prahalad 1989).
- Strategic knowledge acquired outside of owner/manager (Aram and Cowen, 1990)
- Judgement, experience and intuition more important (Yusuff and Saffu, 2005)
- Short-term, functionally focus (Matthews and Scott, 1995)
- Focus on operational planning (Shrader et al, 1989)
- Inability to cope with external pressures (Byers and Slack, 2001)
- Lack of time for planning (Risseeuw and Masurel, 1994)
- Time horizon should be short (Stonehouse and Pemberton, 2002)
- Planning adaptive in nature (Gibson and Cassar, 2002)
- Success was due to luck rather than planning (Sharman, 1998)

The characteristics of small firms, and NPOs, as established within the literature, (Appendix 2.12), were compared against the characteristics found in the three research clubs both pre- and post-1995. Characteristics in the amateur era, pre-1995, matched those of nonprofit organisations, whilst in the new professional era the traits of the rugby clubs were similar to those representative of small businesses. The context of the study over the research decade was therefore established.

2.14 The Research Questions.

Whilst studies of strategy in nonprofit organisations have increased over the past decade, the discipline continued to be disjointed (Stone et al, 1999). Nonetheless, there were relatively few studies on strategy in UK nonprofit organisations with a turnover of under £1 million (Rhodes and Keogan, 2005). This might have been due to the over-reliance on dated approaches from the private sector based mainly on research studies in the USA

(Courtney, 2005). The demands for more research into NPOs were made by Kearns and Scarpino (1996), and more recently, Ghobadian and O'Regan (2011). With regard to the strategy making processes, Bailey and Johnson (1991, p37) had encouraged researchers “*to examine particular strategic issues*”, and to establish how managers at different levels dealt with the issues. The research questions revolved around the assertion that a strategy ‘was the *decisions* and *actions* taken to achieve a specific *outcome*’.

In the preceding chapter, the research topic was presented, the originality of the theses was established, the unit of analysis and its context were evaluated, and the concepts under analysis were critically appraised. As a result of evaluating and understanding the explicit knowledge, the existent literature reviewed in this chapter, including the unanswered issues posed by previous researchers, the following research questions were constructed.

- 1 **Was there a presence, or an absence, of a strategy-making process in Welsh rugby clubs during the decade, 1990-2000?**
 - i) What were the patterns of process in each club?
 - ii) The Role of Managers and Club Members in the Strategy- Making Process. Who were the critical personalities?
 - iii) Did Managers within the same club agree/disagree on the pattern of process at work within the club?
 - iv) Consideration of all alternative explanations of the process that resulted in strategic action. What features of context and action drove process?
 - v) How did clubs measure performance? What were the intended and unintended consequences of the revealed pattern of continuity and change?
2. **How did clubs react to the IoP in Welsh Rugby in 1995?**
 - a) What was the role of goals in the decision-making process?
 - b) Were the strategic decisions taken on the IoP, planned or emergent?
 - c) Were the findings comparable in each club?

This empirical research intended to produce an understanding of the answers to the questions.

2.15 Conclusions.

This chapter aimed to present a detailed insight into the central theme of this research, the concept of strategy. Therefore, via the review of literature on organisational strategy over the past fifty years, the chapter contributed to the study by identifying gaps in the literature concerning this research. The conclusion drawn from the review was that the sizeable majority of the literature was based around large organisations, and a minority had focused on small or nonprofit organisations; only over the past decade had research turn its attention to the people who did the work of strategy within organizations. It was deduced that frameworks on strategy and SM had tended to be prescriptive, and that the lack of consensus of a singular definition of various terms such as strategy, SM, small business, non-profit organizations and strategic decisions, was a concern for researchers.

It was established that the strategy development *Process* had progressed since the singular Planning School approach of the early 1960s (Ansoff, 1965), but that the existent literature did not provide clarity on the use of formalized SP. The two major approaches to strategy-making, prescriptive and emergent, were evaluated and a review was undertaken of SM's evolution covering McKiernan's (1996) four schools. An evaluation was undertaken of some of the main multi-dimensional strategy development process frameworks (Appendix 2.2) that have been developed over the past two decades. Following this assessment, it was concluded that the Bailey et al's (2000) six dimensional instrument, used in conjunction with Pettigrew's (1988) model, had the ability to provide the means required by this study, in order to acquire understanding and knowledge, in responding to the research questions. The conditions under which decision-making was made was evaluated, and it was ascertained that small business owners/managers were constrained in their decision making by internal and external pressures that were unique to the small firm sector (Byers and Slack, 2001). It was deduced that decisions appeared to be made mainly in the context of survival and operational necessity (Beaver, 2003). However, further research was needed that explored the broader context of strategic decision-making such as the role of the strategist (Hutzschenreuter and Kleindienst, 2006).

The *Contents* section contained a synopsis of measuring performance in both small businesses and nonprofit organisations. In sport organisations, including rugby clubs,

playing performance (utility maximisation) was established to be the main measurement of success (Chadwick, 2009), but it was concluded that a multi-dimensional approach to performance, including playing performance, would develop a greater understanding of this research. The chapter moved toward closure with a *Context* section that deliberated the frameworks of NPOs and small businesses, but, as previously stated, definitions in each area were not consistent. It was concluded that rugby clubs over the research period, matched the characteristics displayed in the literature concerning NPOs and small businesses.

The following chapter examines, and provides an insight into, the context of the research into the strategy-making process.

CHAPTER THREE: BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

“Sport has, and can be used as a context for management research”

(Adcroft and Teckman, 2008, p.601).

3.1: Setting the Scene

The aim of this chapter is to present, and outline, the context of the study. The researcher was *“always mindful that those who play, watch, referee or administer have never existed in a vacuum but are the products of their time and place, acting within and upon a wider social context”* (Richards, 2007, p.22). So the research examines, via current literature and historical data, the social, economic, cultural and political influences on the development of the Game of Rugby Football. Due to the need to understand the changing context in which Rugby operates, it was necessary to examine, and comprehend, not only the history of the individual clubs in the study, but also to chronicle the development of the Game in Wales since its conception. The reader may appreciate that the history of the first one hundred years of Welsh Rugby researched by Smith and Williams (1980) covers 461 pages, so it was necessary, therefore, to condense the findings and to place them in the appendices section of this research. This chapter therefore, concentrates on the rugby period from the formation of the National League in 1990, through the establishment of the Professional Game in 1995 and up to the position of the Game in Wales and Europe as at 2000. Throughout, a defining question was asked, ‘Is Rugby a Sport or a Business?’

To obtain a deep and full understanding of each club, key stakeholders were identified in order to acquire their knowledge, and interpretation, of events over the research period. Backing such an approach, Beaver (2003, p63), stated that,

“Management in small firms cannot be separated from the motivation and actions of the key actors. They are the fundamental component in understanding the fashioning of the relationships between owners and decision-making, managerial styles, organisational structures and cultures, and patterns of business development”

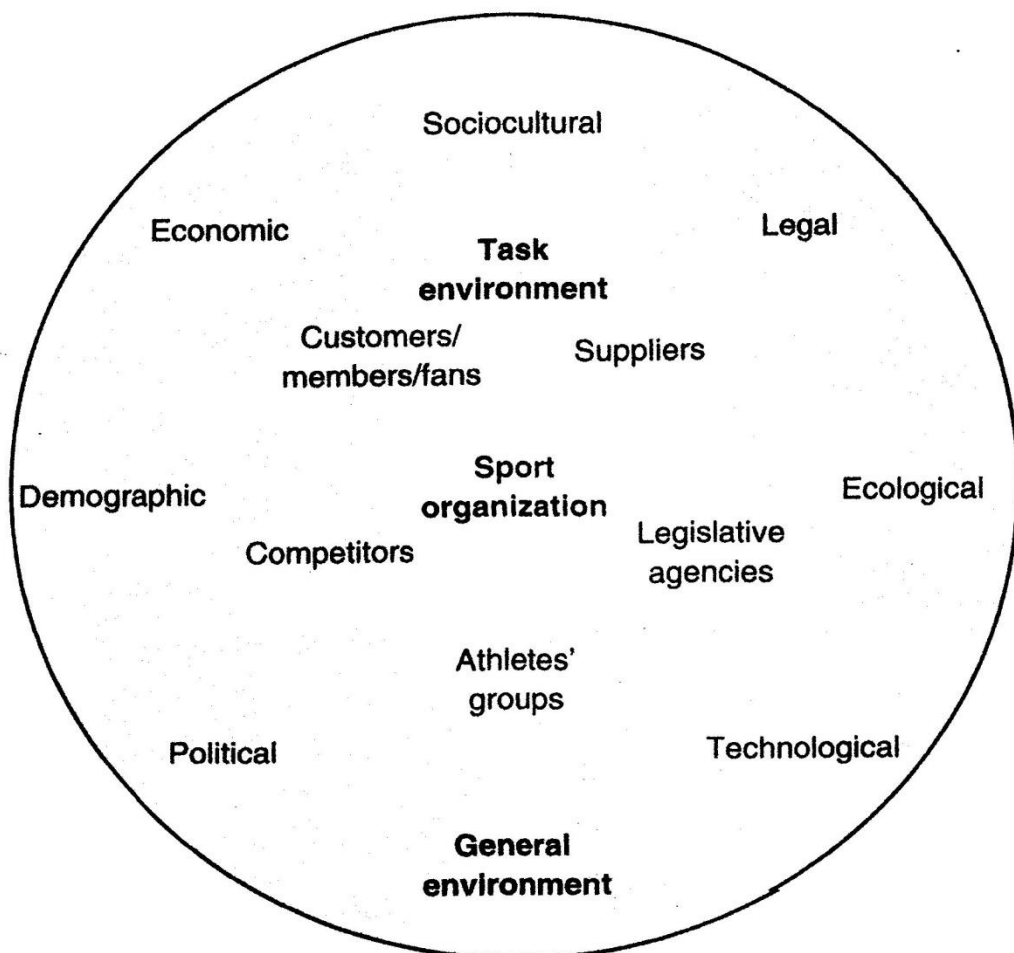
As an additional aid to assist the understanding of the reader, the chapter closes with an introduction to the individual research clubs and respondents.

3.2 The Sporting Environment in Context.

To be effective, any organisation, including a rugby club, must adapt to the demands of those key factors in its external environment that have a direct, or indirect, influence on it (Johnson et al, 2008). The *Political* influences include legislation, taxation, local and national government policies; *Economic* factors covering unemployment, disposable income, interest rates, inflation and resource cost; *Socio-cultural* such as income distribution, population demographics, social mobility, attitudes to work and leisure and consumerism; *Technology* change such as new discoveries and developments, new materials and cheaper methods of production. Those PEST factors influencing sporting organisations can be seen in Figure 3.1

Fig 3.1: The Sport Organisation's General and Task Environment

(Slack, 1997, p134)



3.3 What is Sport?

Sport, both past and present, could be considered as an activity that offered people of all ages, and all classes, a basis for physical, emotional and social satisfaction (Johnes, 2005). Actions are generated that act not only to bring individuals together, in participation or spectating, but equally propel them apart (Adcock and Teckman, 2009). With sport there is an immediate acceptance of a need for opposition, individuals or teams, to compete against, and to co-operate with, in avenues such as leagues. *‘Sports organisations actively need to engage with one another in order to fulfil their central purpose....the heritage of sport in this regard was established long ago’* (Chadwick, 2009, p.194). The game itself was the actual ‘product’ consumed by the public, but it was also intangible (Adcroft and Teckman, 2008). In any sporting contest the result is unpredictable and uncertain between the opposing participants. Nonetheless, the upshot of any sporting match-up offers clear, tangible and measureable outcomes of performance; for rugby matches the team either win, draw or lose, a result that all present witness and understand (Adcroft and Teckman, 2008). Unlike business organisations, the nonprofit, sport club’s objective is usually to achieve playing success through winning league titles and cups (utility maximisation), rather than to benefit from earning money (profit maximisation) (Downward et al, 2009). Again, unlike businesses, teams are dependent on not only the survival of other clubs (competitors) in order to play, but also their standard of performance to ensure the maximisation of spectators’ interest, both in an amateur era as well as a professional era.

3.3.1 A Sport Organisation or a Business?

In any organisation, there are different variables to weigh up when considering its future direction, but in the case of a sport organisation, the first question that should be asked was, ‘Is a sport organisation actually a business?’ As Trenberth (2003, p.24) contended,

“While it is clear that sport organisations, in order to remain viable, should to a greater extent be run along sound business principles and perform financially, the debate continues as to whether sport is in fact a business like any other”

Due to sport’s special characteristics, such as teams competing against and also co-operating with each other (Stewart and Smith, 1999), denote that sport is not merely an alternative type of commercial activity (Appendix 3.1). Nonetheless, it was argued that there is a critical need to further understanding of management practices set in diverse

contexts because, “*All management contexts offer different outlooks, which pave the way to different perceptions of what is going on*” (Gummerson, 2006, p.171). In support of that contention, four reasons were offered as to why a serious investigation into management theory’s role in the sport phenomena was warranted. First, there were many common issues to both the study of sport and of management. Second, the allocating of scarce and finite resources to achieve best possible outcomes was associated with both subjects; third, sport offered clear, tangible, measurable outcomes and fourth, sport, like business strategy, was about contests. In contending that ‘*Sport and business are the same but different and also different but the same*’ (Adcroft and Techman, 2009, p12) it was noted that concepts like strategy and organisational behaviour would manifest themselves differently in the dissimilar contexts. In addition, there were differences in the nature of competition, and how business and sport organisations dealt with that competition.

The universal appeal of all major sports, including Rugby Union Football, encompassed most elements of society and generated a unique, emotional attachment and expectation amongst stakeholders who frequently maintained to be ‘experts’ on the sport, but with different expectations (Appendix 3.2). With Rugby Union Football being one of the last global sporting bastions of ‘amateurism’, topics of interest that arose within this study,

- i) Would a comparison of how rugby clubs were run, prior to and following the IoP in August 1995, highlight similarities or differences? and
- ii) With the Game offering legitimate monetary rewards to all participants, had clubs been forced into adopting the characteristics and practices of business enterprises? (Hoye et al, 2009).

To gain a full understanding of those topics, it was necessary to examine the context and characteristics of the Game since its founding since, as Polley (1998, p161) pointed out,

“It is impossible to understand sport (rugby union football) without looking to history. Such intrinsic and extrinsic features of organised sports as their rules and rituals, the time and place at which they were played, and the social, ethnic, and gender profile of the players, spectators, administrators, and patrons were not recreated on a daily basis: they are inherited from the past, including the immediate past”

It was within such intrinsic, and extrinsic, features that the next section examined the context of rugby in Wales.

3.4 Understanding the Rugby Context, Pre-1995.

Rugby Football was first introduced in to Wales in 1850, at Lampeter College, by the newly appointed Vice-Chancellor, Rowland Williams (Richards, 2007). From that simple beginning, Rugby Football became established as the Principality's National Sport (Smith and Williams, 1980). The importance of Rugby to Wales was that it was not only a generator for the Welsh economy, but it had given people in the Principality a sense of national identity (Morgan, 1981). As Andrews and Howell (1993, p.78) wrote,

“In Wales rugby commands the national gaze, and it is the rugby arena where Welsh ‘hwyl’ is most evident. To the popular imagination rugby is as Welsh as coal mining, male voice choirs, How Green Was My Valley, Dylan Thomas, and Tom Jones...”

A concise history of rugby in Wales can be found in Appendix 3.3. It covers the establishment of rugby football, its spread to Wales, the forming of the WFU (WRU) in 1881, the split in the amateur rugby ranks that led to rugby league's formation, the two golden eras of Welsh rugby, the fight with the religious revival, the impact of the Great Depression of the 1920's and 1930 on clubs and players, the post war growth of the Game and the impact of IRB, WRU and Government policies since the birth of rugby. The impact of those events were examined via the writings of researchers Andrews and Howell (1993); Birley (1993), Cains (1999); Dunning and Shread (2005); Harris (2007); Holt (1989); Hoyer (2009); Johnes (2005); John (1985); Macrory (1991); Morgan (1981); Norridge (2008); Polley 1998); Reason and James (1979); Richards (2007); Smith (1999); Smith and Williams (1980); Royds (1949); Tranter (1998); Vamplew (1988), Williams (1983,1985), and Zimbalist, (2003). The histories of the clubs, Ebbw Vale (Boucher, 2000), Newbridge (Powell, 1988), and Llanelli (Hughes 1986) can also be found in Appendices 3.4.to 3.6.

Rugby clubs were spread throughout Wales, but found mainly in the South. The small community-based club provided a range of participation opportunities for the local population to be involved in sport, and were categorised by stakeholders as either 'First Class' or 'Second Class', with the category depending upon the standing of a club's on-field opponents. The recognised eighteen 'First Class' clubs were in reality, a cartel because it was virtually impossible for a 'Second Class' class to obtain fixtures against the so-called 'Merit Table' teams (Appendix 3.8). Although fixtures were considered as

‘friendly games’ the rivalry between teams, and the desire to win, meant that games were highly competitive, and on occasions violent (Smith & Williams, 1980).

In 1990, at the third attempt spread over a century, the governing body of the sport in Wales, the Welsh Rugby Union (WRU), were authorised to make a major change to the structure of the Game by introducing a National League for all clubs in Wales. Unfortunately, whilst still acclimatising to the formation of leagues which offered parity, through promotion and relegation, to all participants, clubs were then faced, after 145 years of amateurism, with an unprecedented change to the very core value of the Game. The global governing body, the International Rugby Board (IRB), made the seismic decision in August 1995, to make the Game ‘open’ through the IoP. This transformation immediately raised widespread concern within and outside the Game; for most followers, it led to an intriguing, and critical, question – ‘How would clubs survive?’ From an academic standing that question translated into ‘How did clubs create a strategy to deal successfully with the new professional era?’ Whilst many researchers and writers have contributed to the knowledge on Rugby Union Football and the Game in Wales, little was known, or had been written, about SM in rugby clubs, particularly on how clubs managed in the context of a ‘shock event’ such as the IoP.

3.5 The WRU National League Formation, 1990.

Originally, it was in October 1908 that the then Welsh Football Union (WFU) proposed a league system, with a first Division of 10 clubs, a second Division and two district Divisions, East and West. There would have been promotion and relegation (two up, two down) but no club would have been promoted to the first Division if their grounds were considered unsuitable. Alas, the senior clubs, Cardiff, Newport and Swansea refused to take part and the proposal collapsed, as it did again in 1975. Finally, in 1990, agreement was reached with all 204 clubs (Appendix 3.7) and the WRU National League was established. The initial National League comprised of four Divisions. The eighteen First Class (Merit Table) clubs were divided into two Divisions of ten clubs and eight clubs respectively, based on their performances over the previous two seasons. However, in becoming a member of the National League, each club had agreed to abide by the league’s constitution, bye-laws, policies and decisions thus sacrificing some of their independence in decision-making. The National League had thus been embraced, but very reluctantly

by some senior clubs. Divisions 3 and 4 were each made up of ten so called ‘second class’ clubs ranging from Narberth RFC in the West, Blaina RFC in the East and Ruthin RFC in the North. By season 1993/94 all WRU clubs were playing in an enlarged National League. Despite the formation of the league, the former merit table clubs hung on to their positions until season 1992/93 when Tredegar RFC became the first member of the old ‘Top18’ to be regulated, based purely on playing ability and performance, from Division Two to Division Three. Clubs inevitably found their playing ‘level’ within the League. With positions in the National League now based on playing performance, Dunvant RFC based in West Wales became the champion of the non-merit table clubs by gaining promotion to the top Division in season 1993/94. Rugby in the Principality was now considered to be truly competitive with a club’s standing in the Game based on performance rather than the previous socially-based determinants of status (Appendix 3.8).

However, despite this constructed competitive environment, the formation, structure and administration of clubs did not change; most were member owned clubs run by an elected committee. Subsequently all WRU clubs, with the exception of some University teams, part-take in the National Leagues that embrace annual promotion and relegation. Some people were cynical about the true meritocratic basis of the National Leagues because of the manipulation of competition rules by the governing body.

3.5.1 National League Title Performances, 1990-1995.

Just as they had succeeded in the first year of the WRU Challenge Cup in 1972, Neath won the inaugural National League title. They were joined by Swansea 1992 and 1994, along with *Llanelli* in 1993. The West Wales clubs dominance was interrupted in 1995, by Cardiff. However, the very stability, and existence, of rugby itself was to be challenged and threatened by an IRB ruling, made in August 1995, concerning the core value of the global Game.

3.6 The Watershed: The Open Game, 1995.

Since the establishment of the Game, the amateur principles and standards had become institutionalised in clubs through customary, historical and time-honoured pressures (O’Brien and Slack, 1999). Nevertheless, there was little doubt, that over the years, some

so-called 'amateur' clubs had resorted to illegally paying players to represent their team. This practice was confirmed by Swansea's International threequarter, Scott Gibbs (quoted in Johnes, 2005, p.87), who on leaving the club for St. Helens RLC in April 1994, said,

"It grates me that I am called a prostitute while players and officials keep on covering up what's going on in (rugby) union. Every player in Wales knows that when you play on a Saturday, if you win you could get a few quid. Players get the cash after the game"

Following the first Rugby World Cup in 1987 in New Zealand, money and payments for so called 'non rugby related' acts had been accepted by the IRB. In July 1995, the Welsh Rugby Union sensed the global mood for change and issued a twenty-three point report warning of the consequences if the Game embraced full professionalism. Foremost amongst its points was that payment for playing would fund individuals rather than improve ground facilities, clubhouses or player development. It feared that only the wealthiest clubs would survive, eventually leading to an exodus of talented players from Wales (Owens, 1996). By their clear lack of preparation, Welsh clubs evidently did not take the report seriously, confirming the findings of Aram and Cowen, (1990, p65) that *"in smaller organisations the motivation to think and act strategically often follows a crisis, at which time it is too late"*.

However, despite that warning, on Sunday 27th August 1995, following an IRB interim meeting in Paris, the chairman of the International Rugby Board, Welshman, Vernon Pugh, announced the decision that the Game would go 'Open' immediately and removed all restrictions on payments or benefits to those associated with the game (as no guidelines or boundaries were issued on the word 'Open', national rugby unions were left to interpret the term independently). Faced with the very serious threat of professionalism from the powerful tri-nation Southern Hemisphere countries, the IRB, in the words of many experienced rugby administrators, made a politically reactive choice to the monetary threat. In changing the core value of the Game overnight, from amateur to professional, the IRB's pronouncement, forced through by 'politics and power' (Eisenhardt and Zbaracki, 1992), impacted on teams, clubs and countries throughout the world. The IRB saw this strategic decision as the only way to end the hypocrisy of 'shamateurism' and to keep control of Rugby Union.

The ‘Paris Declaration’ was then ratified on 28th September 1995 at the full IRB meeting in Tokyo (Skinner et al, 1999). The IRB could have considered staggering the introduction in both the Southern and Northern Hemispheres as the new season ‘down under’ did not start until February 1996, with an August 1996 start in the North. Such a delay would have allowed all countries, and clubs, to properly prepare for such a major change to the Game; but no. The IRB was willing to finally open Pandora’s Box in spite of the potential negative global consequences. Clubs, at all levels in the Northern Hemisphere, who previously were defined as strictly ‘amateur’, (including those deceitful clubs who had already been paying players via permitted generous ‘travelling expenses’), then found themselves in late August faced with squads of thirty plus players all demanding payment for playing rugby union. It was a nightmare scenario for which the clubs were totally unprepared, either in business skills or resources, especially as the new season was due to commence on the 1st September. As the highly respected editor of the Rugby Annual for Wales, Arwyn Owen, stated in his editorial for season 1995/96,

“ Money, money, money is now the official name of the Rugby Union game...many clubs will be unable to compete in the financial rat race and will either fold completely or revert to playing ‘social rugby’ just for the fun of it. Our Rugby Union game has been hijacked by TV big money. Professionalism could have a lot to answer for in the years ahead with the paymasters responsible for drastic changes in the name of entertainment”.

In England, the governing body, the Rugby Football Union, imposed a moratorium on the changes to the Game, brought about by the IRB’s Paris declaration, until the end of the 1995/96 English season. However, a number of senior clubs in England chose to implement professionalism immediately, both on and off the field. One result was that the formerly amateur, volunteer led rugby clubs attempted to transform themselves into professionally led business entities which, in itself, posed new challenges (Table 3.1). Crucially, private investors were allowed to inject finance into clubs which resulted in market forces establishing the cost and movement of players, but the return on the large financial investments yielded only short-term on-field success, not profit. The new owner of Newcastle RFC, businessman Sir John Hall, set the precedent for player payment by offering former International, Rob Andrews, £750,000 for a four year contract (Richards, 2007). Players throughout the UK thought that utopia had arrived at even the local club!

Table 3.1 Comparison of Voluntary and Emergent Professional Sports

(Adapted from Downward et al, 2009).

	Members	Private Investors
Ownership Governance	Clubs: Members Sport: Governing body	Team Owners and Governing Body
Club Objectives	Non-Profit Playing Success	Success and Financial Survival
Consumption	Consumer-Producer Members Free to air TV	Gate Paying Spectators TV Subscribers
Production	Amateur Players/Coaches Amateur Committee Members	Professional Athletes Professional Management Non-Remunerated Directors
Form of Competition	National Cup Competitions Traditional Fixtures Ad-hoc Tournaments	European Cup Competitions League Fixtures.

In Wales, clubs in all divisions now faced the stark truth that, because of the changed environment, continuing to be run as an amateur organisation did not guarantee survival (Appendix 3.9). Being ‘open’ meant that clubs were not being forced by the IRB, or WRU, to pay money to participants, but Welsh players, having seen the salaries offered by English clubs, had other ideas. Playing rugby equated with monetary rewards. Rugby clubs, particularly those top eighteen Merit Table clubs, had to face the hard realisation that they no longer could consider themselves as merely NPOs, who, for well over a hundred years, had operated with a committee structure consisting of volunteer officers, including the authoritative chairman or secretary, making decisions and organising the club’s activities. Clubs were moving towards becoming small business enterprises that needed to function efficiently, and effectively, in order to exist and survive (Table 3.4).

On the IoP, five hundred Welsh companies were approached regarding rugby sponsorship but not one company took up the offer (Smith and Williams, 1999). With such high stakes now being played for, the study sought to ascertain,

- a) How did clubs go about ensuring that their performances lead to a top five Team finish in the Premier Division so as to gain European qualification?
- b) How did the clubs take strategic decisions, and devise a strategy? and
- c) How did that strategy contribute to a club’s performances?

The context of the clubs and the descriptions of the respondents were obtained as the data was gathered. A fuller history of each of the three clubs can be found in Appendices 3.4 to 3.6, including a breakdown of the club's strategic decisions and winning performances.

3.7 The Research Clubs

3.7.1 Ebbw Vale RFC



Ebbw Vale RFC, a valley club situated in North Gwent, was founded in 1880. The ground at Eugene Cross Park was leased from the local Blaenau Gwent Council and shared with other sports, football, cricket, bowls and tennis (Appendix 3.4). The club had been regarded as one of the top sixteen in Wales since the 1950s. However, on the formation of the National Leagues, due to its poor playing records, it was not placed in the top division. In seasons 1992/93 and 1993/94 the club only just avoided relegation to a lower division. However, at the end of the 1994/95 season, it gained promotion to Division One.

3.7.2 Newbridge RFC



A valley club situated some twelve miles north of Newport, established in 1888, Newbridge RFC leased its Welfare playing ground from the local council. It owned the grandstand and clubhouse that were on site (Appendix 3.5). Newbridge started life in the National Leagues in the Top Division. Its finishing positions were 7th, 5th, 10th, 8th, 9th, then 9th and 12th. After that successful 1991/92 season the club spent the next four seasons fighting against relegation but remained in the top division as at the IoP.

3.7.3 Llanelli RFC



Situated in an urban/rural area, Llanelli RFC was founded in 1872. The world renowned Stradey Park ground was leased with grandstands on either side of the pitch and a clubhouse on site (Appendix 3.6). Llanelli has a rich history of famous games against touring teams, particularly their win over the 1973 New Zealand All Blacks team. For the first three seasons of the National League, Llanelli finished either as champions or runners-up; then finished 5th and 7th. Llanelli were widely regarded as the 'Cup Kings' in Wales, having won five out of the first six finals during the 1970's and twelve times in all. The club won the cup on three consecutive occasions, 1990-1992.



Table. 3.2 Ebbw Vale - The Actors

Paul Russell <i>Owner/Financial backer)</i>	Born in Ebbw Vale and has followed the club since a child back in the 1950s. He was invited in 1994 to become club president. On the formation of a limited company in 1997, Paul became a director with responsibility for executive operations. He is responsible for his brother Marcus involvement with the club.
Ray Harris <i>(Company secretary / DoR)</i>	He joined the club in 1997 at the invitation of Marcus Russell, whom he had known for several years, and is responsible for the overall day-to-day running of the club.
Terri Morgan <i>(Accountant)</i>	Undertakes the task of controlling the day-to-day financial operations. She joined the club in 1996 to help for two weeks to install a new computer system. The club kept her on producing the payroll and other financial aspects.
Doug Taylor <i>(Team Manager)</i>	His first involvement with the club was as an 18 year old, selling match programmes, nearly forty years ago. He had previously sat on the old committee and had acted as secretary for a short period. He has been the team manager since 1997.
Mike Ruddock, <i>(Head Coach)</i>	Joined the club in July 2000 from Leinster, taking over from former coach, Leigh Jones. Mike had previously been coach at Swansea RFC during the 1990s and the Wales 'A' coach. In 2004 he was appointed National Team coach and guided Wales to their first Grand Slam for twenty-seven years in 2005. He resigned in controversial circumstances in 2006.
Chay Billen, <i>(Senior player)</i>	Team captain during season 2001/2002. He joined the club from Gwernyfed RFC in 1995/96. He was one of the longest serving players at Ebbw Vale.
Alun Evans, <i>(former committee member)</i>	Represented shareholders and members on the Board of Directors. He joined the Board in 2000. His association with the club started in 1958 when he purchased his first season ticket.
Roy Lewis <i>(Press Officer)</i>	Followed Ebbw Vale for over sixty years and, since 1980, was regarded as the press officer for the club. When he left full time work, Roy started to work for the local paper and wrote articles for the Western Mail and other papers. He is a member of the Rugby Writers Association.
Ivor George <i>(Supporter)</i>	He has served as a player, chairman, vice-chairman and secretary. To honour his fifty years of service, Ivor was made a life member in 1993. An ex-WRU top referee, he takes responsibility for looking after the visiting match officials.

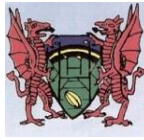


Table 3.3 Newbridge - The Actors

<i>Idris McCarthy</i> (Owner/ Financial Backer)	A former player with Newbridge and is a successful local businessman. He joined the club as Vice-Chairman in 1997, taking over as chairman the following season.
<i>Graham Paterson</i> (Club Secretary)	Has been associated with the club for over 40 years. He took over the role as Club Secretary in 1996, following the retirement of Brian Wellington. He was Secretary of the mini rugby section for 10 years from 1979. He then became Secretary of the Supporters Club for 10 years from 1980 to 1990.
<i>Paul Tedstone</i> (Accountant)	A local businessman, he is the club Accountant. He had been in that position for a short period, having joined the club in 2001.
<i>Keith Westwood,</i> (Team Manager)	He joined the club as an 18 year old player in 1957. Following a period as a player with Ebbw Vale RFC he rejoined the club in 1969. He became coach in 1979 and served in that capacity for nine years. In 1988 he became team manager but finished in 1990. He was invited back as team manager in 2000.
<i>Jon Westwood</i> (Senior Coach)	One of Newbridge's senior coaches. He is the son of the team manager. He played one season for Newbridge 1990/91 before moving on to play for Newport, Neath and Cardiff. He was previously coach at Abercarn and Cross Keys before rejoining Newbridge in 2000.
<i>Damion Cooper,</i> (Club Captain)	Joined the club at the start of 1996. Unfortunately he broke his leg in 1998 and then left the club for a period to regain his confidence. He rejoined the club at the start of the 2001/2002 season.
<i>Brian Wellington</i> (former Secretary)	He played for Newbridge before joining the committee in 1964. In 1966 he became Club Secretary, a role that he occupied for thirty years until he retired in 1996.
<i>Geoff Champion</i> (Reporter)	Reported for the local Argus paper. He has been a rugby writer for 36 years. He has supported Newbridge RFC for the past 45 years.
<i>Brian Jones</i> (Supporter)	He has followed the club since 1954. He played for the Club in the late '50s. He was on the Committee during the late '60s and was actively involved with the Club until 1999.



Table 3.4 Llanelli - The Actors

Huw Evans (Owner/Financial backer)	The majority shareholder and chairman of Llanelli RFC Ltd. A Swansea born man, Huw only joined the club in 1997 during its financial crisis. Mr Evans is chairman and CEO of Marlborough Stirling PLC based in Cheltenham.
Stuart Gallacher, (CEO)	First played for the club as a 19 year old in 1965. He left the club in 1970, turning professional with rugby league. He returned to the town in 1980 and became a season ticket holder for the next thirteen years. In 1993 he joined the committee becoming chairman of the club in 1995. He was appointed CEO in 1997.
Colin Stroud (Co Sec. & Account)	He joined the club from Swansea Sound in November 1997.
Anthony Buchanan (Team Manager)	Had been team manager since 1994. Previously, he had held the position of team administration for 3 years. He joined the club as a player in 1982 and finished playing in 1990. He represented Wales at the inaugural Rugby World Cup in 1987, winning five International caps during his playing career.
Gareth Jenkins, (Head coach),	First joined the club to play for the youth team in 1966. He played for the 1 st XV on his 18 th birthday and due to injury finished his playing career at 28 years. He was assistant coach at the club from 1980-1985 and became head coach in 1985, holding that position until 1992. Gareth joined the Welsh National Team coaching staff for 1992-1994, and returned to Llanelli as head coach in 1995. In 2006 he was appointed the Welsh National Team coach but was sacked by the WRU following the Welsh National Team failure to reach the quarter-finals of the 2007 Rugby World Cup.
Rupert Moon (Former Captain)	A long-serving player and a former Welsh International with twenty-four caps as a scrum half. He played for Llanelli for twelve seasons from 1991 to 2003. He was captain of the club for three seasons from 1992 to 1995.
Hefin Jenkins, (Former Committeeman)	Former player, (1968-1980) and committeeman (1980 –1997) at Llanelli. He was chairman of the club during 1989/1990. Since 1997 he was one of the two ‘heritage’ directors serving on the Board of Directors of Llanelli RFC Ltd.
Norman Lewis (Press)	The local Evening Post newspaper rugby reporter for Llanelli for many years.
Marlston Morgan (Supporter)	The current president of Llanelli RFC Players Association, a post he has held since 1998. He played for the club from 1959 to 1968. He was elected to the committee in 1971 and served on that committee until 1998. During that period he was chairman of the club for three years.

3.8 Conclusions.

“Was there ever a time when sport (rugby football) was all about Corinthian amateur spirit? Was playing the game ever the most important thing, more important than winning or losing and certainly more important than the rewards, individually and corporately, that ever came from winning? The answer to this is clearly “yes” and, in some sports, it might have still survived”

(Adcock and Teckman, 2009, p.9).

The chapter’s contribution to the study was placing the research in its context, via a detailed examination of the Game of rugby football union played within Wales not only during the research decade but throughout the past one hundred and thirty years (Appendix 3.3). The conclusion reached was that the Game has survived mainly through the determination displayed by the people involved, and in spite of the many social, economic, political and cultural constraints encountered throughout that period. The unique nature of rugby had led men from varying backgrounds to combine together ensuring that the Game stayed alive within their villages, towns and cities. It was established that from the founding days of the Game, that was based on uncertainty and unpredictability, where the main objective was sporting success, there was a competitive, but not destructive, rivalry between clubs. Crucially there was also co-operation between clubs. It was deduced that not only did the eleven original founders of the Welsh (Rugby) Football Union survive, but, as a result of this adopted ‘co-ompetition’ approach, they have been joined by over two hundred and thirty other clubs in membership, as at 2000.

It was concluded that the first National League was established by the WRU, in 1990, in spite of the reluctance of the eighteen First Class (Merit Table) clubs to change over a century’s approach of self-determination regarding who to play, when and where the game would take place. In addition, the study determined that the unprecedented, seismic transformation of the global Game through the IoP in August 1995, did cause enormous problems to, and threatened the very survival of, the Welsh clubs. In addition, it was determined that the inception of two European Rugby Club competitions at virtually the same time, had posed new challenges, both on and off the field, as the club game at senior level moved outside its comfortable, ‘traditional’ operating UK environment.

In light of these changes, the methodology adopted to explore and understand the decisions and actions taken by clubs and their subsequent outcomes, is the content of the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

“The irreducible purpose of a processual analysis remains to account for and explain the what, why, and how of links between context, process and outcomes”.

(Pettigrew 1997, Vol.13, p.340)

4.1 Setting the Scene

When writing the opening paragraphs of this chapter, a smile arose when thinking of the diverse audience who might read this thesis, academics and rugby personnel, and the requirement to communicate in ‘double speak’ (Brannen, 2005); what would the latter group of ‘research users’ make of the philosophical arguments contained in this section? Would they understand the difference between subjectivist and objectivist, positivist and phenomenologist, or determinism and voluntarism? Whilst acknowledging that the average rugby stakeholder might possibly not be endowed with an in-depth understanding of philosophy and social science, or the SM academic’s grasping of the sport of rugby union football, attempts were made to accommodate them both by keeping my writing as clear and succinct as possible. The challenge was how to proceed; *“the choice of methodology is contingent on the problems and questions under study and the state of development of any body of knowledge”* (Pettigrew, 1990, p285). The aim of the chapter was to select and design the most appropriate research method, based on the nature of the inquiry, the research questions and contextual setting within the social sciences, after reviewing the literature on strategy, small enterprises and nonprofit organisations.

This chapter outlines the research strategies considered for this particular social inquiry to satisfy the research objectives and to collect empirical data to answer the research questions. It makes clear the rationale behind the choices made. To begin with the philosophical assumptions concerning the research are outlined and then discussed. Research strategies are considered along with the criteria used to establish the quality of such research. The rest of the chapter describes the research method chosen, the research parameters, how the study was put into operation via the clubs and the stakeholders, the data collection process and the resultant data analysis that was undertaken. The chapter ends with a conclusion and with a table outlining the methodological approach.

4.2 Characteristics of Research

There is no consensus in the literature on how ‘research’ should be defined (Collis and Hussey, 2009). However there is general agreement that research is

- A process of enquiry and investigation
- A systematic and methodical approach, which results in,
- An increase in knowledge.

Knowledge can be acquired through various research concepts. Induction, which is the creation of ‘new knowledge’ via moving from specific observations to a more general theory; alternatively deduction, moving from the general to the particular, through analysing and interpreting existing knowledge in an attempt to create ‘new knowledge’. *“In most real-world research contexts, induction and deduction tend to be linked together, almost sequentially in some cases”* (Lee and Lings, 2008, p.7). The two concepts are suitable to the methodology of this study, a combination of explicit knowledge (the literature review) and implicit knowledge (the experiences of the respondents). In the context of the proposed research it was re-assuring to establish that *“Strategy process research was capable of generating sound knowledge of ...why and how outcomes were differently shaped by processes”* (Pettigrew, 1992, p.11). It was also noted whilst reviewing the literature, that *“In the end, all research is interpretive, and all interpretation is a combination of the systematic and objective as well as the intuitive, emotional and subjective”* (Gummerson, 2006, p.174).

4.2.1 Research Objectives

The core aim of this research was to provide an empirical investigation into the strategy-making process in Welsh rugby clubs during the turbulent decade, 1990-2000, and was reinforced through two key objectives:

- To explore and described the strategy-making process in Welsh rugby clubs within the broader NPO and small business sectors within the UK, and to compare, contrast and evaluate the amassed empirical evidence with the mainly prescriptive literature.
- To identify and understand the influence of a strategic ‘shock event’, the IoP, on the decisions and actions taken by clubs, and the resultant outcomes of any strategy pursued.

4.3 Philosophical Assumptions

It is argued that the methodological preferences of a management researcher would be a reflection of his or her perceptions of the world and how it operates (Adcroft et al, 2007). In constructing the research methodology to be adopted in a social science study it is suggested that the researcher, prior to the selection of a research approach, be mindful of his/her 'paradigm'; that is the assumptions about, and the way of looking at, the world (Cassell and Symon, 2004). Considering myself as a 'down-to-earth' person, I had never given much thought to philosophical arguments. Instead any question on the subject was usually greeted with "I'm a practical man, not a theorist" who employed simple, functional methods to resolve problems. The study into research methods therefore started with an examination of my personal 'paradigm' assumptions. My belief concerning reality (ontology) is that each person has his/her own sense of reality, which is subjective due to it being socially constructed. Personal knowledge (epistemology) is acquired via reliable evidence specific to a particular event, and my values (axiology) determine how that event is understood and interpreted.

The events being researched concerned the relationship between human beings and the environment, so the researcher was facing a choice of approaches to the study, that of being a subjectivist or being an objectivist (Table 4.1).

Table 4:1. The Subjectivist – Objectivist dimension
(Burrell and Morgan, 1979)

A scheme for analyzing assumptions about the nature of social sciences				
The subjectivist approach to social science			The objectivist approach to social science	
Nominalism	←	ontology	→	Realism
Anti-positivism	←	epistemology	→	Positivism
Voluntarism	←	human nature	→	Determinism
Idiographic	←	methodology	→	Nomothetic

To distinguish between these approaches to the social world it was necessary to explore

the philosophical issues within the two main paradigms (Appendix 4.1). Guidance to those researchers eager to examine management themes within a sport context, the Welsh Rugby industry, was offered by Trenberth (2003, p.19), who cautioned at the outset that,

“there is no ‘pure essence’ or ‘pure nature’ of sport. Rather sport is best understood as a socially constructed phenomenon, situated within a social context and shaped by social processes creating that context, and comes to mean different things within different settings over time”.

The view of sport being ‘*situated within a social context*’ was supported by historians such as Vamplew (1988), Holt (1989), Jones (1988) and others, who did ‘*assume that there were links between the sport practised in a given society and the social, political, economic and cultural conditions of that society*’ (Polley, 1998, p.4). It was also contended that ‘*there is a curious absence of human actors and their actions in most strategic theories*’ (Jarzabkowski and Spee, 2009, p69). Therefore the research into Welsh rugby clubs (NPOs) involved the study of human behaviour and action, and therefore required ‘*direct contact and involvement with the phenomena under study*’ (Mackenzie, 2000, p124), an approach that permitted the researcher to get close to stakeholders. This was in order to examine clubs in their entirety through stakeholders’ eyes, which allowed access to their internal logic and understanding of their opinions regarding reality. The focus of conducting process research was ‘*to provide narrative accounts of the continuously developing and complex dynamic of people in organisations*’ (Dawson, 1997, p.404). Following due consideration of the philosophical dimensions, it was felt that the study, and the initial research questions could be better answered, and understood, by adopting the subjective interpretive dimension. A supporting view, offered by Huff and Reger (1987, p.227), was that,

“...there was danger in believing that statistically rigorous, narrowly focused studies were superior to the rich, complicated understanding that results from careful study of a few organisations”.

Nevertheless, the belief that social reality was shaped by an individual’s perceptions, pointed towards hermeneutics, the basis of interpretive approaches, as a method of research (Lee and Lings, 2008).

4.3.1 Why Select Interpretivism?

The notion that social reality was the subjective experience of the individual in creating the social world indicated that the research approach would be primarily qualitative. The interpretivist rejected the ways of the natural scientist, maintaining that there is no objective social reality, as all knowledge is ‘constructed’ by social observations and therefore *‘the task of the researcher is to understand the multiple social constructions of meaning and knowledge’* (Robson, 2002, p27). Reality is humanly created, and based on participants’ perceptions of situations and events (the subjective world of human experience), which needed to be ‘understood’ rather than trying to generate an objective singular ‘truth’ (Willis, 2007). Knowledge is seen as *‘personal, subjective and unique ...and required a (researcher’s) involvement with the subjects’* (Cohen et al, 2009, p7). Human beings see the world through individual ‘conceptual glasses’, so the study was attempting to acquire knowledge and understanding from event(s) and/or object(s), based upon the world as seen through the eyes of club’s respondents and stakeholders.

So in order to *‘understand the subjective experience of individuals’* (Burrell and Morgan 1979, p253), the interpretive approach explored the feelings, emotions and values of respondents. Therefore, with the main objective of the research being to understand the strategy-making process in clubs, it required getting into the minds of club committeemen, backers and stakeholders in order to glean a rich knowledge of the process as they perceived it from their own personal experiences (Robson, 2002). Such an approach, in that, *“strategy is not to be lamented or escaped or venerated, but to be lived and understood, as a habitat in which we discover and communicate human experience,”* was proposed by Powell (2003, p190). The data collected were pluralist, obtained through interviews, conversations and observations, from actors and stakeholders who had lived through the events that could provide answers to the research questions. Adopting an interpretive approach aligned the research with the values of the researcher.

4.3.2 Positivism

The positivist approach is regarded as foremost in both management and small business research (Grant and Perren, 2002). Therefore it is important to clarify why this research approach was not selected to accomplish the aims of this study. The positivist, a supporter of methods of natural science, takes the view of phenomena that knowledge is hard,

objective and tangible, and requires an observer role, with the capability to generate impartial and quantifiable explanations. However, personal disagreement arose with the view that researchers are objective; rather they are part of what they observe, bringing their own values and interests to the research. Positivism views the human being as a product of the environment, programmed like robots (determinism) rather than the individual producing their own environment through creativity, free will and being the architects of their own future (voluntarism). Positivists, the traditionalists of the social sciences, believed that there was only one ‘reality’ which was external to the individual, and that its discovery was part of the researcher’s remit (Collis and Hussey, 2009). However, this view has come under considerable criticism in recent decades (Popper 1959, Kuhn, 1970; Feyerabend, 1985). The highly structured positivism research design placed limitations on the outcomes, and discounted other significant findings, because acquiring an intricate occurrence with a specific measure was unreliable (Collis and Hussey, 2009). Critics, such as Gill and Johnson, (1997, p.7), argued that,

“what may be an appropriate method in the natural and physical world may be inappropriate in the social world given the inherent meaningfulness of management action and its contextual nature”

Positivism in qualitative research was challenged because *“there is no single methodology that is invariably more powerful for assessing the validity of causal inferences in social science”* (Hall, 2006, p.26). Other researchers argued that *“mainstream quantitative techniques...are too shallow as they can harbour too few variables, do not study phenomena in their proper context, and sweep persona under the carpet”* (Gummerson, 2006, p.167). Detractors contended that it is difficult to comprehend people without investigating the opinions they have of their own behaviour and, therefore, it is unrealistic to detach individuals from the social environment which they inhabit (Collis and Hussey, 2009). Researchers argued that research was heavily influenced by a person’s world-view or perception, beliefs and values which a detached researcher is not able to rationally explain in a ‘cause and effect’ way (Perry and Rao, 2007).

Nonetheless, with regards to the domain of small organization research, the positivist approaches, with a strong concentration on quantitative measurement, remained prevalent. However, researchers into the social science world pointed not only to the complex causal structure that could not be tested effectively by positivist methods, but

were also critical of the positivist approaches to small business research (Blackburn and Kovalainen, 2009), arguing for the use of other research methods, such as interpretivism, to enlarge present opinions in this discipline (Grant and Perren, 2002). The significance of applying an interpretive method to management and small business research has strengthened in recent years due to the increasing acknowledgement that this method tackles many of the weaknesses of positivism research (Prasad and Prasad, 2002). In attempting to appreciate the relationships between organisations, and how these are observed and operated by the individuals and groups involved in them, it was essential to use methods and approaches derived from the domain of the social sciences, to examine how those people think, feel and act functioning within a sport context. Understanding processes and behaviours was vital. The research, therefore, required a human face because, as Hall (2006, p29) contended,

“When the decisions or actions of key participants are crucial to the outcome, by comparing the statements and actions of those participants, the process analyst can often establish the relative influence various factors had over them with more precision than can be secured by statistical analysis”

Therefore, after considered deliberation (Appendix 4.2), an interpretive approach was deemed to be the most appropriate way forward to resolve the research questions.

4.3.3 Trustworthiness

It was appreciated that all research designs had inherent flaws and that the quality of research designs had previously been judged by using four positivist tests, construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability. However, the on-going debate over quantitative criteria being used in qualitative research questions, *“whether one should be concerned with issues of validity, reliability or generalisability within case study research”* (Lee and Lings, 2008, p201). Instead, researchers suggested that terms such as ‘credibility’, ‘consistency’, and in particular ‘dependability’ should be used to evaluate an interpretive study (Collis and Hussey, 2009). Validity, in qualitative data, could be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the ‘understanding’ of the various participants approached and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher (Winter, 2000). Once the appropriate strategy was ascertained it was necessary to ensure that the measuring instrument(s) to be employed

met the qualitative criteria of trustworthiness (Appendix 4.3). In order to reinforce the trustworthiness of the study, some twenty-seven semi-structured interviews took place that involved financial backers (owners), chairmen, managers, team participants, supporters and pressmen. In addition, prior to and during the research, data was gleaned from countless conversations with stakeholders. As Yin (2008) advised researchers to act like an auditor, leaving audit trails to tackle the issue of authenticity of findings, in terms of method and outcome (Cohen et al, 2009), the case study research procedures that were followed were clearly documented and are covered later within this chapter.

4.4 Research Strategy

A methodological approach that is characterised by qualitative methods, usually adopts an open position to the data, is receptive to the possibility of adjustment in the work and follows a more repetitive, spontaneous succession of activities. The research strategy adopted in this study is described in the following sequence:

Role of the Researcher

Research Process

Research Method

Research Parameters

Data Collection

Data Analysis

4.4.1 The Role of the Researcher

The researcher's role in this qualitative study was one of seeking to understand the motives, actions and intentions of all those rugby club stakeholders who had found themselves' operating within a complex and unique environment (Saunders et al, 2009). Support for such a role came from Shaw (1999, p64);

“The subjective epistemology of the qualitative research paradigm views social reality as constructed by humans and maintains that if it is to be understood, the researcher...must adopt a role, such as ‘researcher as instrument for data collection’, which allows them to get close enough to social subjects to be able to discover, interpret and understand participants’ perspectives of social reality”.

Nonetheless, this approach was not without its philosophical opponents. Positivism had generated a fundamental assumption that the researcher was an unconnected observer of

the phenomenon being researched with the capability to put together unbiased and quantifiable observations. This belief suggested that the researcher had the capability to set aside pre-conceived notions, to isolate themselves from the phenomena under research and allowed the researcher to monitor, investigate and explain it in impartial terms (Collis and Hussey, 2009). However, the researcher, having spent long periods in both SM and in the sporting environment of rugby union football, found the ability to truly 'bracket' assumptions of academic and sporting life experiences, virtually impossible. The perspective that the researcher should be *tabula rasa*, a blank slate, before entering the field of study, was challenged by Lee and Lings (2008, p214) who, maintained that;

"It was a little naïve to imagine that a researcher was ever able to completely cut himself or herself off from theory about their subject for all kind of practical reasons. I mean, it's not as if researchers start off on research projects without first being interested in them and looking around for information".

Critics of the 'blank slate' assumption claimed that it '*failed to take into account the significance of the organisational environment's dynamic nature, where "unobservable realities" including beliefs and values could not be rationally justified in a 'cause and effect' way by an isolated observer*' (Perry and Rao, 2007: p.129). Adding some light relief to the debate, it was felt that '*value neutral' research could only be undertaken by a 'catatonic schizophrenic' or the only possible 'value free' person, one who was actually dead*'! (Dunning and Sheard, 2005, p.282).

The decision to act as the 'instrument for data collection' regarding the strategy-making process was swayed by the qualitative research approach adopted and the exploratory nature of the research (Chakravarthy and Doz, 1992). The investigation was conducted by an academic researcher who benefitted from having gained practical experience managing both in the business, and rugby, sectors (Adcroft and Willis, 2008). The researcher was also a living archive, a life-long rugby man, being aware that, having intrinsic values and beliefs which could not be entirely isolated, and being involved with the social world that was being studied, absolute neutrality or true objectivity was impossible to achieve (Pettigrew, 1997). These values and experiences could influence the research process from conception, throughout the research, via analysis and interpretation, to completion. The challenge was to remain conscious of these pressures and to ensure that they did not make the study meaningless, untrustworthy or irrelevant.

In addition, to aid this investigation into a social phenomenon it was recommended that researchers placed themselves into an owner/manager's temporal and contextual frame of reference (Van de Ven, 1992). Throughout the research the words of wisdom concerned with research, particularly within the 'political' context of Welsh Rugby, that, "*Researchers are on the side of understanding and knowledge, not of this or that group of people*" (Curran and Blackburn, 2001, p25), were never forgotten.

4.4.2 The Research Process

The research process had been defined as "*one of linking together the theoretical world and the 'real' world*" (Lee and Lings, 2008, p.13). Previous researchers had established that no approach was considered to be 'better' than another (Gill and Johnson, 2010), and that it was possible, and advantageous, if ideographic and nomothetic methodologies were combined within the same piece of research (Saunders et al, 2009). In considering which research methodology to implement, *ideographic* or *nomothetic* (Gill & Johnson, 2010), the desire to explore and describe how, and if, the clubs formulated strategy pointed towards an *ideographic* methodology. A qualitative methodology was adopted because it provided insights that were difficult to produce using quantitative research, such as 'what do individuals experience' and 'how?'. However, strategy-making in this particular context had been scantily researched, so the study was also open to generating theory (induction). This approach was supported because in actual research the process of deduction has an element of induction and vice versa (Collis and Hussey, 2009).

4.4.3 Research Method

The primary purpose of this research was to investigate, and comprehend, if the strategy-making process applied to small, nonprofit, sporting organisations, and by adopting this approach, "*will be more successful in extending our understanding of where theory can and cannot be applied*" (Adcroft and Willis, 2008, p321). It was not surprising to find that, as with the definition of SM, there was no universal agreement on the best method for undertaking research (Gill and Johnson, 2010; Saunders et al, 2009; Lee and Lings, 2008). The choice of the most appropriate research method should be dictated by the research questions and its context (Hoskisson et al, 1999). Consideration of the objectives of this research, coupled with the limitations of previous process research, and that it was deemed that SM was complex, meant that researchers in this field were encouraged to

adopt a diversity of research methods (Draft and Buenger, 1990); but not all researchers were convinced by that argument. Nevertheless, as far back as 1977, Bell and Newby (p.10) had contended that,

"No longer could there be only one style of social research with one method that is to be the method. Rather there are many (methodological pluralism)...at the very least there are a variety of methods".

In light of the research objectives, it was considered beneficial to the study to employ a multi-method approach as part of the research strategy (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Some associated methods of the main paradigms

(adapted from Collis and Hussey, 2009, Chp.5)

Positivistic	Interpretivism
Structured questionnaire surveys	Case studies
Structured interview surveys	Ethnography
Cross-sectional studies	Unstructured interviews
Longitudinal studies	Hermeneutics

Consideration was given to the advantages and disadvantages of each research method (Appendix 4.4). Using more than one method or source in investigation can have substantial benefits. Robson (2002, p.370) points to the following advantages:

- Reduction of inappropriate certainty – using additional methods may point to differing answers, which remove specious certainty.
- The ability to look at the issue from different angles (but not to establish a ‘truth’).
- Complementary purposes – use of different methods for alternative tasks (good for initial exploratory research).
- Enhance Interpretability – multiple methods used in a complementary fashion.
- Assess the plausibility of threats to validity (a particular pattern of findings and context from one method can leave interpretation open to particular ‘threat’).

The purpose of the research was to comprehend each respondent’s version of events, so in order to obtain a rich and full understanding of the strategy process, case study was adopted as the primary method of research. Support for using case studies into NPOs was offered by Kearns and Scarpino (1996), and Ghobadian and O’Regan (2011),

who highlighted the paucity of such case studies in that context. However, Shanley and Peteraf (2006, p16) warned that *‘the richer the picture of a firm, the less possible it is to compare it to other firms – each is arguably unique’*.

Nonetheless, a comparative case study method was selected because it was considered appropriate for the topics under investigation (Pettigrew, 1990), and permitted a researcher to undertake a more in-depth examination of organisations within their context, over a period of time, and investigate a broader range of issues than was possible with a quantitative approach (Hartley, 2004). This approach would provide the basis for the acquisition of in-depth knowledge via the collection and analysis of large quantities of detailed data. Case study combined multiple forms of data collection including archival records, documentation, direct observation, questionnaires, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, conversations and physical artefacts (Eisenhardt, 1989). These were employed not only to extract data over the period of the study from the clubs involved, but also had been used for some sixteen years prior to 1990 throughout my visits to all Welsh rugby clubs.

Through the adoption of the case study method, the research aimed to gather information in a specific contextual situation, and then analyse the obtained data against the background of the literature presented in Chapter 2. Therefore, the research was conducted using multiple methods such as, case study, insider accounts, questionnaire, in-depth semi-structured interviews, observation and the critical incident technique, from sources within various club environments. In addition, a literature review was conducted in parallel with the research. An appropriate plan that collected, analysed and interpreted the data concerning the study was then designed, for implementation.

4.4.4 Research Parameters

The research was undertaken within the following parameters.

4.4.4.1 Sector Choice

This investigation concerned strategy-making in a little researched sporting context.

Interpretive research *“often studies phenomena in the environments in which they naturally occur and uses social actors’ meanings to understand the phenomena”* (Denzil and Lincoln, 1994, p.2); therefore in this instance the ‘environments’ were the surroundings in which the research clubs operated. The period of study, 1990 – 2000,

was, arguably, the most momentous decade during the long history of rugby in Wales. The researcher had lived and worked in the Principality throughout these years; so the decisions made, actions taken and outcomes concerned with the formation of the National League (1990) and, subsequently, professionalism (1995) were observed, and recorded, as they unfolded in real time. However, the formal research commenced in January 1997.

4.4.4.2 Unit of Analysis

‘The unit of analysis is the phenomenon under study, about which data are collected and analysed, and is closely linked to the research problem and research question’ (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p115). As this research was interested in understanding how, and if, strategy arose in the nonprofit, Welsh rugby clubs, the ‘strategy-making process’ was selected as the unit of analysis to be studied and measured. Having made that choice, decisions about the choice of club to be involved in this study were taken after the commencement of the research.

4.4.4.3 Research Sites: Case Selection Criteria

Once the decision was adopted to employ a case study approach, the choice faced was between a single, (intrinsic or instrumental) case study and a multiple (comparative) case study approach (Hartley, 2004). Since 1990 the major impact of the National League and professionalism, particularly in financial terms, had been on the former Merit clubs. The decision was made, therefore, to examine a small number of clubs which allowed for in-depth interviewing of a large number of selected respondents from different positions, and levels, within each club. Such a choice permitted acquisition of a greater range of informed opinions on strategy within the environment of a single rugby club (Eisenhardt, 1991). It was important that the sample plan, and parameters, fitted in with the other components, the purpose and research questions, of the study. Selection of homogeneous clubs to include in the study meant choosing those ‘rich’ in data which were pertinent to the phenomenon under analysis (Punch, 2009); and, in the context in which they naturally occurred, provided the opportunity to gain a relevant understanding of the research question (Collis and Hussey, 2009). In such a case, it was determined that purposive sampling, which promotes the quality of data as being the major significance, would be appropriate (Lee and Lings, 2008).

The playing performances of the Merit Table clubs were considered for a term of five years prior to end of season 1994/95, and for five years from the beginning of season 1995/96 to 1999/2000 (Appendix 4.5). Positions in the new National League were based on performances/ standing for the final two seasons of the Merit Table. A position in the top two divisions for a minimum of five seasons was set as a condition for a club to be included in the study, simply because the League had been running for five seasons before the Game went professional in 1995.

Hence, based on performances in the National League over the two specified periods, 1990/1995 and 1995/2000, a comparative approach (Pettigrew et al's, 2001) was adopted highlighting similarities and differences.

4.4.4.4 Sample Number, Polar Types

“There are no simple summaries of sampling in qualitative research, because of the great variety of research approaches, purposes and settings” (Punch, 2009, p162). Research had revealed that with a comparative approach there was no ideal number of cases (Eisenhardt, 1989), but that a small number allowed a more in-depth study of each club (Eisenhardt, 1991). If a larger number of clubs were involved, whilst the volume of data was less in-depth, it was more difficult to cope with (Hall, 2006). Several procedures were recommended in order to analyse case study data. (1) Forced comparison involved listing similarities and differences between each selected pairs of cases. (2) A theme (findings) or dimension was selected in order to ascertain similarities or differences with the group (Eisenhardt, 1989). Comparison of a small number of cases (Table 4.3) selected via criterion sampling (Punch, 2009), offered the opportunity to explore holistic understanding and explanations, within and between the cases, and was supported by Pettigrew (1992).

By using an interpretive approach, (4.3.1), the ontology, that reality is constructed by those who experience it, and that epistemology, is knowledge specific to a specific time and place, is acknowledged by the researcher, as is the uniqueness of each club. However, it was proposed in-depth, comparative case studies of matched pairs of contrasting organisations, high and low performers, in terms of their similarities and differences, were necessary to understand, and provide knowledge of, individual club's actions and outcomes (Pettigrew, et al, 2001).

Table 4.3 Selection of Research Clubs for Comparison-Sample Criteria

(Pettigrew et al, 2001)

Sample Criteria Club	Establish	Five Years in National League	Comparable Playing Performance (High/Low)	Location	Access	Travel Time to Club
Ebbw Vale	1880	Yes	+69% High	Gwent Valley	Yes	40 mins
Newbridge	1888	Yes	-92% Low	Gwent Valley	Yes	45 mins
Llanelli	1872	Yes	Most Consistent	S.Wales City	Yes	20 mins

Such an approach was recommended by Daft and Buenger (1990, p100), in that,

"If successful firms are the topic, also study failures. Contrasting objects and concepts helps one grasp the material and sort out key dimensions for comparison. Similarly, compare cross-sectional findings with the passage of time. People, ideas, and organisations are not isolated fragments".

The performances of the eighteen Merit Table clubs over the two periods in the National League and SWALEC Cup can be found in Appendix 4.5. Within that elite group Ebbw Vale RFC had achieved the highest positive change of National League playing performance of +68% during the professional era. Lowest of the Merit Table clubs was Newbridge RFC, co-incidentally another Gwent valley club, with a negative change in performance of -92%. Hence, based on playing performances in the National League over the two specified periods, a comparative approach (Pettigrew et al, 2001) was adopted, involving two clubs, Ebbw Vale (high performer), and Newbridge (low performer). Llanelli RFC were included in the study as the benchmark club due to its consistency in finishing as the most successful Premier club over the two periods involved. The aim of the comparative approach was to describe findings and to identify any patterns in the process, based on a multi-cross-case analysis (Pettigrew, 1992).

4.4.4.5 Access

Access to a firm, the ability to get close to the individuals' involved (the unit of information), and to uncover what is really occurring in the study, is considered as the researcher's major difficulty (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). However, being a former, long serving International referee, then a club coach, director of rugby, and administrator, gave the researcher the distinct advantage of being known to, and 'getting on' with the senior contacts in each of the selected clubs (Easterby-Smith et al, 2004). Personal relationships and 'professional' links with many of the key stakeholders within the clubs clearly did help with the researcher being accepted. It is not certain whether an 'unknown' researcher would have been granted the same depth of insight by the clubs, the respondents or the club stakeholders (Chakravarthy and White, 2002), especially over the IoP, as *"gaining insider information about crisis management activities seems to require a history of interaction between the afflicted organization and the researcher and a track record of trustworthiness"* (Pearson and Clair, 1998, p74).

In the first instance, the 'gatekeeper' to each club was contacted, either the owner or the CEO, and then the proposed research was outlined (Cohen et al, 2009); access to the personnel operating within the club was requested. All the 'gatekeepers' approached granted the request without hesitation, and gave permission to undertake the research in full into their club; the only 'pre-condition' placed on the research was a request for a copy of my findings to be given to their club when the study was completed. This was readily agreed.

4.5 Data Collection

A comparative processual case study, through involving the different strengths of various data collection methods (Punch, 2009), aimed to look beyond chronological accounts of historical and contextual realities and develop analytical themes (Pettigrew, 1990). When to start, and when to end, the process of data collection did not prove to be too difficult a decision. A time period commencing with the Introduction of the National Leagues in 1990, up to the IoP in 1995, offered a contextual period of the last five years of 'amateurism'; a decision was made to study an equal period, for the first five years, of 'professionalism, up to 2000. The qualitative method combined multiple forms of data collection, primary and secondary, including documentary and historical data,

questionnaires, semi-structured and unstructured in-depth interviews, conversations, direct and indirect observational data and physical artefacts (Eisenhardt, 1989). These real time, and retrospective, methods were used to extract ‘rich’ data over the period of the longitudinal study from the clubs involved; information had also been harvested from stakeholders for some sixteen years prior to 1990, through visits to all Welsh rugby clubs (Appendix 3.4). Data collection proved to be an iterative process. The significant pluralist approach involving in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the selected club respondents took place between December 2002 and July 2003.

4.5.1 Process

The research, sought to gain an understanding of the strategy-making process surrounding ‘*a sequence of events that described how things change over time*’ (Van de Ven, 1992, p169). As this study “*recognises the need to identify and explain processes which go on within organizations*” (Chell, 2004, p.58), the researcher was aware that problems could arise in investigating the stated objectives. So the difficulties or problems previously encountered by researchers examining the strategy-making process theory were established. One difficulty was the meaning of ‘process’, because the word had taken on such a variety of meanings (Langley, 2007). A process had been defined as, “*how effective strategies are shaped within a firm and then validated and implemented effectively*” (Chakravarthy and Doz, 1992, p.5), but a subsequent definition was proposed as ‘*a sequence of individual and collective events, actions, and activities unfolding over time in context*’ (Pettigrew, 1997, p.337).

Having established that strategy-making was a process (Van de Ven, 1992), it was confirmed that organisations were entities capable of developing resources and skills in multiple strategy-making process modes (Hart and Banbury, 1994). Their study of 285 top managers revealed that organisations which used multiple strategy-making modes outperformed those who employed single modes. The selected process viewed an organisation as constructing ‘*an envisioned end state and selects from... several equally effective ways to achieve a given goal*’ (Hart and Banbury, 1994, p178). Rugby clubs were goal (results) orientated, therefore focusing on a process was beneficial because “*Processes are inherently causal because their outcomes are the result of the process*” (Mackenzie, 2000, p110), and this theory allowed observation of the movement within a

club towards an end goal or state. Further guidance for process researchers was offered by Pettigrew (1992, p.9), who suggested to focus on *‘real times, people and places as referents’* and that process analysis should be linked to the location and the outcomes. Encouragement for such a study was given by Shanley and Peteraf (2006), who contended that *‘process issues to date had been under-researched’*. Potential difficulties were highlighted by Chakravarthy and White (2002, p183), who, whilst acknowledging the vast body of research on strategy process, contended that,

“the research suffers from the following limitations; lack of explicit links to strategy outcomes; focus on discrete decisions rather than in patterns of decisions and actions that accumulate into a strategy over time; failure to view the process from multiple levels (and perspectives); and lack of insights on how the process could be managed better to produce the desired strategy outcomes”.

If the research was to be trustworthy, it would be necessary for the proposed research method to take into consideration the above limitations, whilst also taking into account the findings by researchers that context, process and outcomes (performance) were all linked (Pettigrew, 1997). To obtain this knowledge the clubs had to be studied mainly from within, and a multi-dimensional approach to strategy-making was advocated (Hart and Banbury, 1994).

4.5.2 Content (Outcomes)

As evaluated in chapter two (2.13), the appreciation of a firm’s performance needed to be undertaken with a multi-dimension rather than a uni-dimensional construct. So the three general levels of comprehending a firm’s performance i.e. financial performance, business performance and organisation effectiveness (Venkatraman and Ramanujam, 1986), were adopted. However, additional specific factors were required to give a better understanding of the influences on a firm’s performance. After due review and consideration, the elements considered by Storey (1994) to influence a SME’s performance, survival or failure, were included. These eight elements were management, planning, environment, age, firm type/legal form, size, location and finance; the first three elements were also found in the dimensions identified by Bailey et al (2000). The remaining five elements were also established in discussions with respondents when obtaining a background to the clubs.

When measuring performance, the characteristics of the industry in which the organisation operated also needed to be taken into consideration (Bracker et al, 1988). Sport organisations were involved with fellow competitors in a contest and, for that reason, the most natural form of performance measurement was the result of on-field games against other teams (Chadwick, 2009). From the early days, rugby clubs tended to measure their performance based on results on the field-of-play (utility maximisation) rather than off the field financial performance (profit maximisation) (Sandy et al. 2004). With the establishment of the National Leagues in season 1990/91 measurement became easier and more consistent to monitor; for example, entry into the new National League formed in 1990, had been based on performances in the Whitbread 'Merit Table' for the previous two seasons. The performances of all the 'Merit' clubs were considered for a term of five seasons up to the end of 1994/95, and for five seasons from the beginning of 1995/96 to 1999/2000 (Appendix 4.5). Secondary data (general information) was collected from major daily newspapers, club history books and records, Rugby Annuals such as Rothmans and Welsh Brewers, and investigative televised programmes.

4.5.3 Context.

The influence of context on the strategy-making process was given particular consideration because "*It makes every sense to study strategy process and strategy practice by longitudinally tracking the actual visible activities agents engage in organisational settings*" (Chia and McKay, 2007, p227). Contextualism analysis takes into account the history and future when exploring an organisation as a continuing system, and relates them to the present (Pettigrew, 1985). For the eighteen Welsh Merit Table clubs the introduction of an official National League in August 1990 was a highly significant occurrence, as was the IoP, which was momentous in the history of rugby union football. In both instances, it was recognised that "*Events and individuals are unique and largely ungeneralizable*" (Cohen et al, 2009). One of this study's contributions to knowledge is aimed at acquiring an in-depth understanding of the strategy-making process, in a new context (Adcroft and Willis, 2008).

To help researchers focus on specific issues and events, a procedural technique, the Critical Incident Technique (CIT), was introduced by Flanagan (1954). This method was employed for collecting data about a defined activity, or event, based on an individual

participant's recollections of key details (Collis and Hussey, 2009). Through interviewing three or more respondents involved in a particular critical incident, possibly with different perspectives of the event, this offered a broader understanding of the event. CIT provided rich, in-depth insights into the occurrence, how the individual and others acted, and how the actions affected the outcome of the event (Chell and Pittaway, 1998).

Consideration was given to the criticism of CIT, such as the misunderstanding of a story (Chell, 2006), whilst the retrospective, historical nature of the technique meant that the reporting of an event might have been flawed due to an individual's slanted recall or memory lapse. In addition, post-rationalization might have occurred because of any time length. Nonetheless, in the 1990s, CIT was developed within a qualitative, social construction framework (Chell and Pittaway, 1998), even permitting a degree of replication (Chell, 2004, p.58),

“While the individual firm's circumstances might have be unique, the type of incident, the context, the strategy and outcomes as a pattern of related activities might have in general terms be apparent in other businesses”

In this study, the introduction in to Welsh rugby of national leagues and professionalism were momentous, critical incidents entailing high individual involvement. The events were initiated in the external environment by the sport's governing bodies, and in the wider sporting context such activities might be replicated.

4.5.4 Stakeholder Respondents Selection

Having accepted that the constraints of time and cost prevented interviewing or observing everyone connected with the clubs, the aim was to seek out informants who could offer 'rich' information and shed light into the natural setting and exact phenomena being studied (Pettigrew, 1990). Therefore, purposive sampling was employed to select informants who could contribute, and were relevant, to the research questions. The intention was to recognise important 'knowledgeable informants' whose contextual knowledge and in-depth understanding of the issues pertinent to the research were vital and data-rich (Lee and Lings, 2008).

It became apparent that, to obtain a fuller representation and deeper understanding of each club concerning the strategy-making process, the views of different stakeholders from

multiple levels and perspectives needed to be sought (Shanley and Peteraf, 2006). Therefore, internal perspectives were obtained from individual stakeholders at different organisation levels (Skinner et al, 1999); that is, the very *top level*, the owner/financial benefactor; next the *management level*, senior managers such as the CEO, company secretary and finance director; followed by stakeholders at the *functional level*, the ‘production team’ consisting of the team manager, coaching staff and a senior player who had captained the team (Hart, 1992). In order to obtain a broader insight into the club outside of the committee and playing staff, the opinions of a former member of the pre-1995 committee plus those of a long-standing supporter of the club were also collected. An external stakeholder perspective was achieved by interviewing a local press rugby reporter.

The prime objective, from this group of stakeholders, was to understand, and describe, the universe of interpretations, viewpoints and meanings given to events (Curran and Blackburn, 2001). A benefit to the study was that the diversity of respondents would help increase the trustworthiness of the research (King, 2004). It was appreciated that “*Stakeholders will have different perceptions and create their own myth about what they see or experience*” (Adcroft et al, 2008, p44), but it was anticipated that by using ‘knowledgeable informants’ in each club, a richer, more in-depth understanding of events would be obtained. An interpretive approach, which was highly contextual and subjective, had been adopted, and involved an interactive relationship between researcher and respondents from every level within an organisation, to uncover deeper meaning of particular events, actions and outcomes.

The various multiple levels respondents had ‘shared’ experiences during a significant period in the life of each club (Chakravarthy and White, 2002), and so the study needed to examine their perceptions. To that end, the proposed research was outlined, and an explanation given, to them as to why they had been selected. It was necessary to ensure that the respondents in each club understood the relevance of the study (that this was *not* a WRU governing body instigated research agenda), so that they were encouraged to provide access and information (Van de Ven, et al, 1989). All respondents who were selected agreed, without hesitation, to assist with the research. A focus group method within each club was considered but respondents made it clear that they were not happy,

or comfortable, with this 'collective' approach. In order to obtain in-depth data from each individual it was decided to employ the structured questionnaire previously used by Bailey et al (2000). After making initial contact with the respondent, a letter was sent to the selected personnel involved with each of the clubs, clarifying the research and enclosing a questionnaire for them to complete along with a sae. (Appendix 4.8 & 4.9). This involved the distribution of some twenty seven questionnaires amongst the three clubs. All the questionnaires were completed and returned promptly by respondents.

4.5.5 Conversations

Using the considerable freedom afforded by the researcher's position as an International referee, valuable information was gleaned on how the clubs were managed via conversations with various stakeholders at each club during every visit. The benefit of talking with stakeholders, as highlighted by Jankowicz (1991, p.179) was,

"Some of it will be gossip, some will be storytelling and some will involve conversations: all of it was valuable, often in a rather vague and unspecified way, in providing you (the researcher) with background about the personalities, procedures, cultures and values of your organisation"

An advantage of making 'irregular' visits was that the researcher did not turn 'native' (Glauser and Straus, 1967), and allowed the researcher to remain detached, to take a dispassionate view, whilst gathering 'rich', in-depth data within each club. Those informal conversations, and observations, covered many different aspects and issues, internal and external, to each club and became more frequent with the commencement of the PhD research in 1997 (Appendix 4.6). Topics raised by stakeholders over the long period of visits included pressure from external forces (WRU, IRB, local council), rugby politics, club culture, governance, competitors, and occasionally, planning. Notes of the conversations held after 1997 were written within twenty-four hours of returning home (Bourgeois and Eisenhardt, 1988). The information obtained via these complementary techniques, proved critical to the processual analysis (Dawson, 1997). Using the major events of 1990, and 1995, as datum, a retrospective case history of the context, actions and outcomes of chronological events at each club was produced.

4.5.6 Insider Accounts

The respondents, drawn from the small number of cases in this study, were able to provide intimate accounts of actions and outcomes concerning the exploration of their ‘social reality’ surrounding the National League and the IoP phenomena. A hermeneutic (understanding) approach that obtained the clubs’ stakeholders explicit interpretations via in-depth, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, was employed (McAuley, 2004). The work of Hammersley and Atkinson (1997) on ‘Insider Accounts’, a very simple user friendly and supportive approach used in the small organisation context as opposed to the complex features of ethnography and grounded theory, had been advanced by Ekanem (2007) who combined, in-depth, semi-structured interviews, direct observations with a longitudinal study. Being a person who was in full-time employment working irregular hours, the study had, by necessity, to be undertaken within the time constraints linked with part-time research status. The researcher, whilst not being an ‘insider’ (a supporter, member or employee), at any of the research clubs, was a participant within the broader boundaries of the rugby social world, but attendance at research clubs’ games tended to be on an irregular, rather than on a regular, basis.

4.5.7 The Collection Tools

In order to account for, and incorporate, the various approaches to strategy-making within the three selected clubs, a research framework, or ‘instrument’, was required that could extract and collect the data.

4.5.7.1: The Six Dimensional Instrument (Bailey et al, 2000).

Following a review of strategy development frameworks (Appendix 2.2), it was decided that the main theoretical framework employed for the investigation into the strategy-making making process during the longitudinal research period would be the Bailey et al (2000), Six Dimensional Instrument, and questionnaire (Appendix 4.9). The instrument, supported via 5332 managers from 937 organizations, along with the content of its questionnaire, that had been endorsed by ten strategy academics, had been built on dimensions concerning strategy development that were prominent within the diverse social science literature (2.4.2), they had identified six discrete dimensions of strategy development; *command* (cf. Bourgeois and Brodwin, 1984); *planning* (cf. Ansoff, 1965); *incrementalism* (cf. Lindblom, 1959); *political* (cf. Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003); *cultural*

(cf. Johnson, 1987) and *enforced choice* (cf. Hannan and Freeman, 1989). Importantly for the research, the topics on which the instrument was based, had been raised, and discussed, by stakeholders with the researcher within the three clubs since 1974 (4.8.5). The questionnaire not only formed the theoretical framework for initiating the investigation into the strategy-making process within each club, but also produced important data for the subsequent semi - structured interviews with participants.

As strategy-making is viewed as an organization wide phenomenon (Hart, 1992), the Six Dimensional Instrument also permitted an examination, and a more in-depth understanding, of the varying roles undertaken by various management, and other club stakeholders, in any strategy-making process. In addition, as the research was longitudinal over a ten year period,

“Importantly, the instrument also allows researchers to track changes in strategy development processes over time, both within organizations and within defined populations of organizations and to examine whether any such changes are related to changes in related to changes in other organizational processes, performance or in economic and institutional environments.” (Bailey et al, 2000, p160).

The instrument, therefore, provided a way of ascertaining, and evaluating, not only the internal, but importantly the external, limitations under which the stakeholders within the three case studies were functioning during the course of the research decade.

4.5.7.2 Pettigrew’s Model

Pettigrew’s (1988) model’s three dimensional view of obtaining “depth” of understanding how strategies are conceived, via process, content and context, was similar in approach to Bailey et al (2000). The *Process* concerned who championed and managed new strategies; the *Content*, related to four groups of issues; the dominating frames of thought within the organisation; the strategy’s central objectives; the source of the strategy; and the extent to which the strategy anticipates the means of implementation. The *Context* referred to the inner and outer contexts of the firm. The inner consisted of the structure, politics and culture of the organisation whereas the outer context was the external operating environment, which conveniently, was divided into four areas, the economic, business, political and societal formations.

Although, Pettigrew’s (1988) model was comparable to Bailey et al’s (2000) instrument,

it was selected specifically to examine, and concentrate upon, the research clubs' management of the singular, unique 'overnight' strategic change to the global Rugby Union Game's core value, amateurism to professionalism on 27th August 1995. For such a momentous development in the context of the sport within the research period, Pettigrew's (1988) model provided a more detailed, and incisive, means of evaluating the internal strategy-making processes, in which the clubs were occupied, whilst they tried to adjust, with contrasting levels of achievement, to the essential needs that the unprecedented external change the IoP, had, without warning, imposed on them.

"The contexts in which management operate are not inert or objective entities. Just as managers perceive and construct their own versions of those contexts, so they subjectively select their own versions of the competitive environment together with their personal visions of how to re-order their business to meet those perceived challenges (Pettigrew, 1988, p19).

As the strategy-making process was being fully explored within an exceedingly sudden transformation of a sport context (Slack, 1997), the long established rugby union game/industry, the researcher was attentive to the principles that underpinned such a contextualist approach (Pettigrew, 1990); (1) the importance of embeddedness, implying a need to study change in the context of interconnected levels of analysis; (2) the importance of temporal interconnectedness, with the need to locate change in the past, present and future time; (3) the need to explore context and action, and how one is connected to the other is vital; (4) the central assumption about causation in this kind of holistic analysis is that causation of change is neither linear nor singular. Finally (5) there has been an explicit attempt to link process analysis to the location and explanation of outcomes.

Therefore, the study aimed, by using Pettigrew's (1988) three dimensional model in a specific sport context, to acquire detailed data and to understand the holistic and multifaceted explanations offered on the strategy-making process within the research clubs regarding a specific strategic issue. The probing questions for respondents, associated with this model, can be found in section 6.1 (p125).

The decision was made that the study would use the two strategy frameworks. The Bailey

et al (2000) Instrument was selected to explore the various dimensions raised by stakeholders during the two distinct times, amateur and professional, over the ten year research period; the Pettigrew (1988) model was chosen specifically to examine the unprecedented changed *context*, the impact of the IoP, on the strategy-making *process*, action and outcomes (*content*), within the three clubs.

To aid understanding, and extend more in-depth knowledge, data were also recorded via the strategic management frameworks reviewed in Chapter Two, and used, by Bracker and Pearson (1986), Venkatraman and Ramanujam, (1986), Stone and Crittenden (1993) and Storey (1994). Each framework was utilised to make a positive, comprehensive contribution to the invaluable knowledge, and full understanding, of the strategy-making process in the three research clubs through, arguably, the most turbulent decade ever in the history of Welsh rugby.

4.5.8 The In-Depth Interviews

Obtaining the views of the key actors on whether or not the objectives of the firm had been achieved was, perhaps, the optimum and most appropriate way of judging performance (Beaver and Prince, 2004). “*The interview process prime purpose is to integrate information about the what, why and how of the process under investigation*” (Pettigrew, 1997, p344). Such an approach, personal interviews with respondents, would provide richer data for analysis (Berman et al, 1997). After receiving the completed questionnaires, each respondent was contacted to arrange a meeting and it was confirmed that the interview would be based around the statements they had completed in the questionnaire. A flexible interview plan was designed with the choice of date, time and venue left to the respondent. Most interviews were conducted at the individual clubs offices which afforded undisturbed privacy and were appropriate for a venue where “*the participants feel relaxed and unfrequented*” (Easterby-Smith, 2004, p.93).

The literature revealed that self-reported data could be the result of a desire to please the interviewer or to make a favourable image of oneself (King, 2004). Having known most of the respondents for some considerable period of time, via my visits as a neutral rugby referee, the researcher was treated, and spoken to, as a trusted, personal friend rather than a stranger (Cohen et al, 2009). This was made clear by the respondents observed (and recorded) non-verbal language such as relaxed postures, 'open' gestures and friendly

facial expressions (King, 2004). Their body language was considered important in offering additional insights, as people's views or attitudes are not judged solely on what they say (Walshaw, 2006). The enthusiasm and sincerity of respondents' participation within the research, and the interest they displayed during the interviews, offered additional reasons to believe in the face validity of their responses.

The interview was in two parts: semi-structured, providing the opportunity to delve deeper into the statements contained in the previously issued questionnaire; and unstructured, allowing flexibility in establishing their perception of issues surrounding the topics to be covered. A face-to-face interview approach, using open ended and probing questions, allowed the respondents to explain fully their views, in a coherent way, on the statements contained within the questionnaire, and permitted the researcher to 'listen' to different voices. The aim of the interview process was to understand the respondent's perspectives and actions, rather than try to establish a 'single truth'; so posing the same questions covering context, process and content, to all the respondents from multiple levels added to the trustworthiness of the study. Having conducted management interviews for many years, in addition to academic research interviews for an MSc dissertation, the potential dangers of prejudice, from both researcher and respondent, were known.

Before the commencement of the interview, each individual was thanked for assisting with the research, for completing the questionnaire and for agreeing to the meeting, along with a brief outline of the purpose of the research and what their contribution offered to the final thesis. A photocopy of their completed questionnaire was then presented to the respondent that enabled them to recall the marks they had awarded each statement. Time was then allowed for the respondent to familiarise themselves with their answers. For ease of understanding, the questionnaire was broken down into the six modes of command (questions 1-5), planning (Q6-13), incremental (Q14-19), political (Q20-25), cultural (Q26-32) and enforced choice (Q33-39).

Permission had been sought from respondents at the beginning of each interview to record, for authenticity and trustworthiness (Gubba and Lincoln, 1994), the discussions 'word for word'. Aware that the use of a tape recorder could generate a sense of formality, might have made respondents feel ill at ease, inhibited and less likely to talk openly if

they were aware that their interview was being recorded verbatim, respondents were reassured that a confidential transcript of the recording would be made and sent to them. It was also made clear that the tape could be stopped at any time during the interview if the participant so wished (this happened with five respondents). To that end the tape recorder was always placed within an arms distance of the respondent. Finally, clarification was given of the period of time the meeting would last, approximately sixty minutes.

Semi-structured interviews were first employed, based around the themes and statements contained in the questionnaire, with the unstructured interview then introduced concerning the critical events surrounding 1990 and 1995. Most respondents were relaxed and giving free-flowing narratives, especially about their version of the two crucial events. Interviews actually ranged from forty-five to over one hundred minutes, with open-ended questions employed in an attempt to acquire a deeper, and greater, understanding. When requested, specific terminology was clarified, to ensure that the respondent understood the question. The researcher's voice and body language were, as far as possible, projected as being neutral during the period of the interview in an attempt to avoid influencing the respondent's responses. A further precaution, making notes of responses in the event of tape recorder failure, was taken. One benefit that emerged from the interview process was that some respondents, reflecting on the clarification given, adjusted the 'views' given to certain statements. This 're-appraisal' was beneficial to the study in that it offered the researcher a clearer understanding of the events, the 'views', as perceived by the respondent. Once the interview was completed, the respondent was again politely thanked for their assistance, and the tape recorded interviews transcribed and subjected to content analysis (Cohen et al, 2009). The Ebbw Vale RFC respondents were interviewed first, and the interview process was then replicated within the other two clubs.

4.5.9 The Club Story

An important requirement, using individual clubs to research, was that the case studies were as descriptive as possible so as to gain a full understanding surrounding of what had happened (Mintzberg, 1979). Once all the respondents from each club had been interviewed a 'club story', representing the researcher's understanding acquired from the respondents' perspective, was composed from the data content collected, with the aim of providing an answer to the research questions (Langley, 1999). The story was composed,

after comparing and cross-checking the data i) within respondents' accounts ii) between respondents' accounts iii) between respondents' accounts, and stakeholders' conversations, and iv) the researcher's personal knowledge of events. The story not only described the process, or sequence of events, but also attempted to understand any connection between actions and outcomes (Pentland, 1999).

Despite the time and cost involved, a copy of the story, along with the transcript of the individual's own interview, was sent to each respondent to verify both their recorded comments and my understanding of the club. It was made clear in an accompanying letter (Appendix 4.10) that if they wished to correct any part of either the transcript of their interview or the club 'story' they could do so. This was intended to prevent any unconscious malfeasance on my part. The letter was then followed-up with a telephone call to each respondent to ascertain if they were comfortable with the transcription and the club story. Some respondents did make minor changes to their transcription; for instance, several indicated that they had not realised the extent to which they swore or that they repeated a particular phrase such as 'you know'. Where requested by the respondent, bad language was removed and repeated phrases were deleted from their transcript without altering the version. The subsequent agreed club stories confirmed my interpretation of the data and the events.

4.5.10 Manual or Computerized Data Recording

The use of a computer package, QSR, NUDIST, for storing the qualitative data was considered. The main advantage of this method was that even for such a large volume of data, none was ever forgotten or mislaid if the code and retrieval procedures were correctly followed. However, the main disadvantage was the amount of time and resources needed to transcribe all the interviews onto this computer package. Also coding categories or tagging was required for effective retrieval, particularly where not all of the transcription was needed for successful analysis. After due consideration, a manual approach was adopted to obtain a richer and fuller 'feel' for the data. With this approach, an additional benefit was that the time spent cutting and pasting, via Microsoft Word, allowed the researcher to get to know, and understand, the data 'inside out'.

4.5.11 Ethical Considerations

At the outset, it was the intention neither to identify the clubs nor the respondents and to that end the clubs were disguised by giving them fictitious names such as ‘the Warriors, Gladiators, Spartans, and Trojans’. However, a difficulty arose when my partner was asked to read my initial description of each club; unfortunately, she correctly identified the ‘Warriors’ as Newbridge RFC. Ebbw Vale RFC, under the pseudonym of ‘the Gladiators’, was also recognised, as was the real name of the remaining ‘fictitious’ club, Llanelli. As a result of this inability to protect their identity, it was decided to use the actual names of the clubs, and thus the respondents involved, and a three year restraining order on public access to the thesis was obtained. When the interviews were completed, and the transcripts available, all the respondents were contacted and informed of the difficulty in trying to protect them by concealing their identities (Appendix 4.11). The financial backers/CEOs readily gave permission to produce the club’s genuine name, and thankfully, all respondents appreciated the difficulty of the situation, and gave verbal permission for their name and identity to be used in the thesis, agreeing that their comments were ‘on the record’. This enforced change resulted in enhancing the authenticity, credibility and integrity of the research. An unexpected benefit of this apparent problem was, as proposed by Bowman (1990, p.24),

“I am not a strong advocate of case studies and case presentations per se, but I would like to see some good studies on strategy that are ‘peopled’, that is, studies that have people with names, who are doing things, studies that help you think about why they are doing those things”!

The respondents’ ready agreement had been crucial to the continuation, and production, of the research dissertation, and the overall research had profited.

4.6 Data Analysis

Qualitative data, unlike quantitative data, was collected data in the form of meaningful series of words which generated value for interpretation (Lee and Lings, 2008). Data analysis consisted of ‘*examining, categorizing, tabulating or otherwise recombining the evidence to address the initial proposition of a study*’ (Yin, 2008, p102). The twenty-seven interviews produced over 200,000 words on the stakeholders’ perceptions of the club’s dimensions of strategy formulation. Whilst acknowledging that there was no single

or 'right' way to analyse and present qualitative data, it was contended that it must abide by the principle of 'fitness for purpose', that is '*The researcher must be clear what he/she wants the data analysis to do*' (Cohen et al, 2009, Chap. 22). For this study the data were required in order to explore, describe and interpret actions and outcomes; to understand the perceptions of individuals and idiographic features; and through comparisons to discover patterns and to clarify 'influences'.

4.6.1 The Analytic Process

The literature search on methodology revealed that there was a relative absence of well established, widely used techniques for qualitative analysis, thus creating difficulties for researchers (Curran and Blackburn, 2001). One approach for undertaking case study analysis, pattern-matching, identified patterns and produced compelling analytical conclusions (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p.210), so,

"one looks to see whether any interesting patterns could be identified; whether anything stands out as surprising or puzzling; how the data relate to what one might have expected on the basis of common-sense knowledge, official accounts, or previous theory; and whether there were any apparent inconsistencies or contradictions among the views of different group or individuals, or between people's expressed beliefs or attitudes and what they do"

Individual respondent's perceptions and explanations of the club's actions and outcomes were thus collected and arranged, with the aim being not only to compare and relate mutual attributes, differences and processes in homogeneous rugby clubs but also to recognise constant traits. By adopting a disciplined approach, paying careful attention to the data, including the ability to cope with differing versions, the study intended to produce under thematic headings, interpretations based on the findings from the research. In the first instance, data collected from individual stakeholders in each club via conversations, and recorded in notes, were tabulated and coded under one of the above three perspectives which were closely related to the research questions.

The process of analysing data began immediately when it was collected; the data were first analysed on an individual basis, and then grouped within each club under the same headings of process, content and context. Within each case, and cross case, analysis was carried out along the lines recommended by Eisenhardt (1989). Data gathered on the

various steps taken by the clubs before arriving at a strategy process, were analysed within the six themes (headings) already established from the Bailey et al (2000) questionnaire, that was, command, planning, incremental, political, cultural and enforced choice. The research themes were clear and precise, so the dimensional approach was adopted for each interview and assisted in both the collection, and analysis, of the data. Findings from each club were placed in additional sub-headings covering the different levels of financial backer, management, team management and external stakeholders.

These sub-headings were used to compare, and triangulate, the findings of the club's respondents from within each particular level (section) of the research clubs. The findings on each club's outcomes in order to try to meet objectives were recorded via a multi-dimensional approach (Venkatraman and Ramanujam, 1986) employed for measuring financial performance, operational performance and organisational effectiveness and placed within content analysis. Inside that section, the reasons offered for the increase or decrease in performance, were logged under the respective headings. Under context analysis, data were sub-divided into either internal or external environment within each club. The questions, answered via Pettigrew's (1988) model, were also regarded as sub-headings within this category to analyse data. Through an arduous process of re-reading and re-listening, to the findings, and employing data reduction techniques, such as cutting and pasting, a clear and detailed description of actions and outcomes was produced, that allowed for an in-depth understanding of the phenomena to be gained (Pettigrew, 1992).

4.6.2 Data Interpretation: Whose Account Matters?

With the eventual purpose of the research being to consider the concept of strategy creation in the light of the research results, the theoretical context of the study, fully summarised in chapter two, provided the frameworks for interpretation of the findings. An issue that has a direct relevance to analysis in qualitative research was whose, the researcher's or the respondents', account mattered? (Curran and Blackburn, 2001). Regarding respondent support of the research they stated, "*Who better to assess whether the researcher has captured the definitions, world views and their logics of action than those studied?*" (p120). However, as a warning to researchers of this approach, they also pointed out that all interpretations were provisional and that,

"making respondents final arbiters of the interpretations of their motivations and actions ...contradicts a key epistemological principle of qualitative research that no account has an automatic claim over all others".

In addition, criticism of qualitative research has questioned the use and intention of quotations from respondents to justify the findings. Critics argued that, rather than the interpretation emerging from the respondents' accounts, quotations have the reverse effect; of being selected to match the interpretation. However, in this study, the respondents, some who were not only informants but also actors in the strategy-making process, expressed strong perceptions and opinions in their own words that described situations and actions raised by the questionnaire within the semi-structured interviews. So using representative, illustrated quotations from respondents were used to demonstrate the consistency of views found and to emphasise vividly the points the research was attempting to make (Walsham, 2006). The respondents' stated 'situations and actions' had been identified not only by the researcher, but also confirmed by other stakeholders both *prior* to the distribution of the questionnaire and once again *following* the interviews with the respondents, a threefold approach. Data collected from respondents were assessed against data from other participants within the club, which were the owner, management level and team management level (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). The collected basic data afforded the researcher, to '*enter the world of the respondents and see it from their point of view*' (Curran and Blackburn, 2001, p.104). Nonetheless, in acquiring the data, care was taken in the thesis of making ethical pronouncements on the opinions and actions of the respondents.

To overcome the potential difficulties associated with interviewing a single respondent (Bowman and Ambrosini 1997), it was advocated that the views of the respondents were confirmed by other stakeholders within the club's overall environment, without the respondents being identified (Chakravarthy and White, 2002). The respondents' opinions were more than just a simple, literary account but rather the kind of qualitative research termed '*thick description*' (Gill and Johnson, 1997), aimed at establishing the underlying pattern of events. The respondents' interpretations of the context, process and outcomes of their clubs, represented by appropriate quotes, were chosen from the interview transcripts and included in order to clearly illustrate the findings, and

understanding, from each distinct part of the analysis. Qualitative research is based on narrative rather than statistical evidence, so researchers were encouraged to present their findings in a visual manner that makes an immediate impact on the readers of a thesis (Pettigrew, 1990; Stiles, 2004). This form of communication, including both the emblem and colour of the club, was employed to give instant recognition to the reader in identifying which club's results are being reported on each page of the three findings chapters.

4.7 Justification and Limitations

The research was carried out on a part-time basis and, as such, the key justification for adopting this methodology was time and access. The clubs involved were very receptive to the research despite my employers, the Welsh Rugby Union, being not interested either in the research or in meeting any of the costs involved; and they would not allow me time for research purposes despite the fact that the Game was going through the most dramatic change that it had ever encountered. During the initial period that the research was being undertaken on a part-time basis, employment with the WRU as the full-time Director of Referees, limited the time that could be devoted to the research.

Support for the study itself were confirmed by the comments that '*the premises of natural studies include the uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of situations, such that the study cannot be replicated – that is their strength rather than their weakness*' (Cohen et al, 2009, p. 148). In addition, the research does cover the emergence of themes amongst the rugby clubs that took part in this study, that Chell (2004) indicated might possibly be found elsewhere.

Although the clubs and the respondents were helpful with the provision of data, the committees/backers were reluctant to grant me access to what they considered, 'sensitive' financial data. The accountants in each club were happy to provide 'general' and 'non-specific' rather than any precise financial information. Twenty-seven individuals were contacted in the initial stage, and all of them completed the questionnaire and the follow-up interview. Informal conversations also took place with the respondents throughout the period of the research. Importantly, all three financial backers were happy to co-operate and pleased to be involved in this study. A final point worth noting was raised by Curran and Blackburn (2001, p.118) that,

‘the researcher (referee) cannot force any audience to accept an interpretation. All the researcher can do is influence how an audience is likely to receive an interpretation by how it is presented... by whatever measures, indicators, data and form of presentation are deemed to strengthen the persuasiveness of the interpretation’

The data, which were obtained through a narrative based on the analysis and syntheses of respondents interviews rather than purely statistical data, can be found in chapters, 5, 6 and 7. They included information gleaned under the headings of the context, process and content. In these findings chapters, the danger of interviewer, and interviewee, prejudice must be recognised. A summary of the findings employing the Bailey et al (2000) model, and a summary of the findings using Storey’s (1994) Elements of Performance can be found at the end of Chapter Eight.

4.8 Conclusions.

The contribution to the study of this chapter was, resulting from the literature review chapter and the context chapter, identifying and ensuring that the methods adopted were suitable and feasible to meet the aims of the research. This chapter established, after addressing the issues, ‘what was knowledge’ and ‘what truth was’, that the selection of research methodology depended on the adoption of either an objectivist or subjectivist approach to the social world. In order to reach a decision, alternative methods of research, nomothetic and idiographic, were analysed along with the research based approach to problem solving, and some associated methods of the main paradigms, positivistic and interpretive, were considered. It was concluded that the selection of an interpretive approach was appropriate both to the ontological beliefs of the researcher, and to the exploratory investigation aim of the research.

The research methods were dictated by the research questions and its context, the Welsh rugby industry. Therefore, the definition of ‘strategy process’ was further examined, and the assumptions and potential difficulties surrounding a process research were highlighted. An examination of the advantages and disadvantages of the research strategies, led to the adoption of case studies as the method of research. It was deduced that the case study approach was the preferred strategy due to the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions being put forward, and it provided the means of collecting quality, in-depth, rich data, thus making available a greater knowledge and deeper understanding of the unit

of analysis. After consideration, a judgement was reached concerning the selection of the case studies; it was based on high- and low- performing clubs over a ten year period, 1990-2000, in the National Leagues in Wales. The matching pair of clubs, Ebbw Vale (high) and Newbridge (low) from the Gwent valleys, and Llanelli (the consistent benchmark club) from the South Wales coast, were selected based on stipulated criterion. It was decided to employ purposive sampling, selecting respondents from different levels within each chosen club in order to shed light into the exact phenomena being studied in its natural setting.

Respondents were contacted, firstly via a questionnaire (Appendix 4.9), and then by semi-structured and unstructured interviews based on the replies contained within the questionnaires. The taped interviews were conducted over an eight month period from December 2002 to July 2003, and provided data for content analysis (Cohen et al, 2009). The twenty-seven interviews generated over 200,000 words on the respondents perceptions of the clubs' process of strategy formulation and the reaction to the IoP. This main source of data was complemented by additional data which were provided by stakeholders from within the rugby industry, including the media. The rich data collected were then initially labelled under the three main themes of process, content and context. A transcript of their own interview was then sent to the individual respondent, with a constructed 'story' of the club, for consideration and confirmation.

The strategy-making process involved analysis of the data gathered by the six dimensional instrument (Bailey et al, 2000), using the headings command, planning/incremental, political, cultural and enforced choice, and Pettigrew's (1988) three dimensional model. Gathered outcomes regarding performance was analysed under the headings financial performance, operational performance and organisational effectiveness. In addition Storey's (1994) elements of performance were also utilised to give a greater insight into their impact on outcomes. The context was concerned with the National League and the IoP, the utilised actions (who, when, why) and outcomes (what, why, how, when). Whilst the research was limited by having to be undertaken on a part-time basis, the conclusion reached was, considering that the purpose of the thesis was to acquire a 'rich' understanding of the strategy-making process and its outcomes in the context of nonprofit, Welsh rugby clubs, the appropriate methodology had been selected,

and the outlined research methods utilized for the purpose of this analysis were considered to be successful in achieving the research aims (Table 4.1).

The data from the research clubs, obtained through the selected methodology, can be found in the following chapters five, six and seven, where the findings have been delineated through '*the universe of meanings, attitudes and values*' (Curran and Blackburn, 2001, p.104) of the twenty-seven club respondents and many stakeholders.

TABLE 4.4 THE APPROACH FOR RESEARCHING NPO, RUGBY CLUBS

Philosophical Assumption	Subjective, Phenomenology
Qualitative Approach	Interpretative
Research Method	Comparative Case Study-
Sector Choice	Welsh Rugby
Unit of Analysis	Strategy-Making Process
Research Sites	Premier Rugby Clubs
Sample Number	Three (Criterion sample) High-Low Performers
Data Collection	Literature Review Case Studies Insider Accounts Critical Incident Technique Questionnaire Semi-Structured Taped Interviews Unstructured Taped Interviews Conversations Observation
Data Supply	Primary Data – 27 Selected Club Respondents Various Club Stakeholders Secondary Data – The Game’s History WRU History Club Histories Players’ Autobiographies Rugby Annuals Rugby Magazines Welsh Newspapers Investigative TV Programmes
Data Analysis	Manual Recorded Data Use of Selected Theme Frameworks Intra-Respondent Data
Data Presentation	Written Presentation Diagrams Tables Figures CD of Appendices

CHAPTER FIVE: THE STRATEGY PROCESS, PRE-1995

".. it is important to understand the reality of strategy-making in organisations, not least because those who seek to influence the strategy of organisations must do so within that reality"
(Bailey & Johnson, 1992, p175).

5.1 Setting the Scene

Since the 1960's, the strategy-making process has been tackled by researchers from a number of different perspectives (Appendix 2.2). Following the publication of Bailey and Johnson's (1991) working paper 'Perspectives on the process of strategic decision-making', their six dimension instrument was found to be comparable to the topic areas discussed with club stakeholders over previous years, and had in effect, formed the basis for gathering informal data on visits by the author to rugby clubs. The aim of the chapter was to present the findings concerning strategy making in each of the three clubs pre-1995, the last five years of an amateur era extending from 1881.

Rugby clubs in Wales, up to the IoP, were simple structures (Hoye et al, 2009), run and organised by an elected members committee, who operated the club as a NOP organisation. All positions of authority within the clubs were of an honorary nature, as such there were no full-time administrative, or playing, staff. Individual actors, not the clubs, were the people who cement events in a 'story' because each actor has a unique narrative voice, relating and explaining the events, actions and outcomes from his/her own particular standpoint. *"Data concerning the identities and relationships of the characters in the story (participants in a process) are required, if one is to understand role structure and social networks in which the process is embedded"* (Pentland, 1999, p715). Within each club, due to the number of respondents recounting the same events, it+ was possible that similar versions of events, actions and outcomes could emerge from the various club stakeholders; however, it was also possible that differing narratives could arise. The quotes displayed in the three findings chapters were selected by the researcher as being representative of the majority of replies to the questions and statements posed. A comparison between the clubs would highlight the findings, and factors, that would be classified either as similar or dissimilar. The end results offered an in-depth understanding to the strategy-making process in Welsh rugby clubs. The interpretation, and significance, of findings in relation to the literature are discussed in Chapter Eight.

5.2 The Visionary Perspective (Command)

The traditional management structure within rugby clubs was based on a members committee that was endowed with the power and authority to give strategic direction to the club. The aim of this section was to establish if, inside or outside the committee structure, a club was dominated by a leader (Bennis and Nanus, 1996), or by a small group of individuals (Chaffee, 1985), who had a vision regarding its future and who was responsible for initiating any strategy process.

5.2.1 Ebbw Vale RFC

An analysis of the committee structure over a five year period from season 1990/91 revealed an unsettled body charged with running the club. The club, which was a members club, was run by an elected committee of some twenty-two members. There were changes in composition per year of nine, five, and none, twelve and seven members (Appendix 3.4e). Roy Lewis described the make-up of the committee.

“There were influential figures on the old committee of 22-24. However, there was no dictator there. Meet on a Monday night, every night in the summer, then every fortnight. When I was on the committee the main thing was manning the gates. It was voluntary work see. They were strong committees, particularly the 60s and 70s”.

Former club secretary, Ivor George, was authoritative in his view about who were the senior figures at Ebbw Vale before professionalism.

“There were three or four senior figures in those days, the chairman, secretary, treasurer and one or two others. There were never more than about half a dozen who were... you had to go to committee and justify everything you did but still you made decisions and stood or fell by them. Sometimes you went to committee and had a right royal rollicking. I worked with three or four chairmen, and it really was only a small number of people that drove the committee forward. The others were there and they made sort of their contributions and they made criticisms and the criticisms were taken on board; but it was only the chairman, myself, treasurer, perhaps chairman of selectors, and they were the people who drove the club forward”.

There was common agreement amongst all stakeholders that the senior figures at Ebbw Vale were the elected officers who provided the future direction of the club. However, due to politics (5.5.1) amongst the committee, it was acknowledged that there had been disagreement between management members, and that action was based on consensual decisions.

5.2.2 Newbridge RFC

For many years, Newbridge had been run by a twenty-four strong committee (Appendix 3.5e). The respected former long serving club secretary, Brian Wellington explained;

“I’ve been fifty years with the club and the strength of the club under the old structure terms, was its senior figures. I benefited from it; Mike Croad, who came on as chairman later, also benefited from it. The chairman, secretary, treasurer and fixture secretary had driven the club with a good committee coming behind them and it was a team, a strong team. That structure continued until about 1994 when it started to dissemble as it were. However, the truth of the matter is the thrust and the general complexion of it hasn’t changed over thirty years except for the last three years where Newbridge went askew at that stage. We’ve always had a strong team of about three or four people with complete trust in one another and in other workers, who were fluent enough to bring the committee with them. More importantly, fluent enough when the chips were down, for example, once a year at the AGM or what have you, to put the case and to drive the club forward with the support of its supporters at that time. The figures I’m talking about it was part of their duty, most certainly it was their routine, to walk the big rooms after games so if the supporters wanted to stop and talk to them they could. We tried to do the same with the players, communication and contact after each match you know. However, the last thing we were trying to do was to get a guy in who could provide this figurehead, like Id McCarthy, who in effect, became the CEO with his management team about him”.

Unlike the disunity between the committee at Ebbw Vale, there was harmony and agreement found within the Newbridge committee during the research period until 1994.

5.2.3 Ebbw Vale RFC v Newbridge RFC; Comparison of Findings

A common factor at both of the Gwent clubs, was that the elected members committee was recognised as the ultimate decision-makers. However, within that structure there were a small band of ‘senior figures’ (Chaffee, 1985), officers of the club, the chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer, who did determine the future direction of each club (Shrivastava and Nachman, 1989). Comparing the club committees, the difference between the two clubs was that whilst politics arose within the committee at Ebbw Vale, (Eisenhardt and Bourgeois, 1988), the committee at Newbridge were in harmony. At both clubs, the committee members had previously either supported, or played for, the club, and had, therefore, been nurtured within the club’s cultural paradigm. As a result, ‘decision makers’ who emerged from amongst a club’s membership had to overcome the established traditions, values and attitudes that had been learnt in order to attempt to change the direction of the club. Another noteworthy finding, mutual to the two clubs, was that none of the current playing staff sat on either clubs’ committee.

5.2.4 Llanelli RFC

The committee at Llanelli was unusually small in number in relation to other Welsh clubs, (Appendix 3.6e), but they did meet on a regular basis. As Marlston Morgan pointed out,

“Nine members who were making decisions every Monday night; the committee were very strong men with their own opinions. Alan James, he wouldn’t let us spend money!”

Former club chairman, Hefin Jenkins gave a deeper insight into why the committee membership was reduced.

“It was a visionary thing, I think years ago, when we had the centenary, 1972. They redid the constitution and they went back to a committee of nine from something like eighteen or twenty; and it was easier, but it meant more work for people. Unfortunately in the old system, I don’t think people were prepared to take on the responsibility which they probably do now because they weren’t paid and didn’t want to take the flak for it. It was easier to make decisions, I think, rather than a committee of twenty. The chairman obviously had a fair amount of autonomy in our club, although because it was a small committee there were a lot of people chasing a bit of power as well. So you couldn’t step too far out of line, but having said, the chairman would have a vision or something and provided he had the agreement of the committee then OK he could go ahead with it”.

Llanelli had a small committee of nine members dating from 1972, and members within that group looked towards the chairman to give them direction and vision. However, committee approval was still required for any action proposed by the chairman.

5.2.5 Comparison with the Benchmark Club.

During the last five years of amateurism, all three clubs, in common, had continued to be run as a members club by an elected management committee. The study revealed that the committees at both **Newbridge** and **Llanelli** were unified (Iaquinto and Fredrickson, 1997), but at **Ebbw Vale** it was a divided committee. However, the major difference had been that whilst the two Gwent valley neighbours were controlled by officers within a large volunteer committee, **Llanelli** had, some decades earlier, been reduced to a small committee of only nine members. In all three clubs, playing, not financial performance, was the priority (Szymanski 2003). From 1974 to 1995, **Llanelli** had won fifteen trophies, including four championships, and nine cups. **Ebbw Vale** started in a lower division and could only point to being runner-up in the First Division in 1994/95 but, as a result, did gain promotion. Local rivals **Newbridge** won the Snelling Sevens Trophy in 1990/91 and in 1992/93, their first trophy for three decades.

5.3 Planning Perspective

Through deliberate, sequential, planned procedures, organisations were able to develop strategies to achieve clear and well defined strategic goals and objectives that were set by senior figures within the organisation (Ansoff, 1988). The aim of this section was to understand if clubs employed SP to generate strategies capable of attaining set goals

5.3.1 Ebbw Vale RFC

The Planning perspective at the club was mainly operational. Ivor George recalled,

“We used to meet at one time once a week and then we decided we would have a sub-committee meeting on the one Monday and the following Monday we would have a full committee meeting where all the sub-committees would report. And so it became fortnightly. There was an athletic sub-committee, finance sub-committee, and others and they would meet on the one Monday for an hour or so. The following week they would come and the chairman of the sub-committee would give his report and it would be discussed, then action would be taken. We did meet regularly, I was out every Monday night. Where to tour each year was a big decision, because they were financial decisions; can we afford a tour this year and how will we finance it, you know. That sort of thing had to be arranged. I was lucky I was in school. I was a head, and I could sort of spare the time to do things and organise things. My secretary was very good and did all my typing for me, and so I gave her International tickets and a box of chocolates at Christmas”!

The research found that SP had been employed at the club, but only reactively rather than proactively, when the committee felt it was actually needed, such as in 1986 when the clubhouse burnt down and a replacement building was required. OP tended to be the norm

5.3.2 Newbridge RFC

Similarly, down the valley at Newbridge there had previously been SP at the club, as Brian Wellington explained,

“There was one underlying objective and that was to maintain the position within the top 16 as it stood then, the Merit Table clubs, and ensure that we performed there. If it wasn’t right on the field, forget about putting it right elsewhere because that’s where it’s got to happen first. Planning was season to season because it was very difficult to have written formal plans. The only time we went into written planning mode as it were, strategic plans.... don’t forget we’ve had two instances of clubhouses either blow-up (early 1970’s) or burnt down (early 1980’s), and on that basis then we did have to sit down. But we were meticulous, planning purely one strand, one thread of it, to get a clubhouse back here so that we could function because it was an integral part of our set-up obviously. We sat

down, the treasurer, chairman and myself, and we did actually extrapolate over a period. We were going into the money there to in effect put a new clubhouse up. To do that meant investing and we had to protect that and we did it. I must admit that worked, as we talk about it now. However, that was one, single project and on that basis we planned; but to say that it was a strategy, that the club planned with stated objectives, priorities and what have you, we were no different from any other rugby club; other than where are we going to tour at the end of the season. Quite apart from that you are at the beacon and call as it were of the economic situation and the playing strength. In terms of you had a plan that you're not meeting and you've got to take action and change direction, I'm not saying we didn't do that; but understand, we didn't do it against the base of having had a plan. Rather we did it on the base that it was hitting you in the face and you had to act but you didn't have the response time that some of these management jargons things and techniques talk about. I mean, I think this is true in the whole management game as well mind".

The formal planning at Newbridge was only undertaken, by the senior officers of the club, when action was necessary, as in the cases of destroyed clubhouses as described by Mr Wellington. Conversations with long-time stakeholders confirmed that view.

5.3.3 Ebbw Vale RFC v Newbridge RFC; Comparison of Findings

Common in each of the two Gwent clubs was that SP was infrequent and necessity 'event' driven (Stone et al, 1999). There were regular meetings for the purpose of OP and organising, and strategic issues were occasionally discussed throughout the season. A similarity found at both valley clubs was that planning was informal, not a logical, rational process, and was recorded in the minutes of committee meetings.

5.3.4 Llanelli RFC

The approach to planning at Llanelli was explained by former player and committeeman, Hefin Jenkins.

"Our plans were in the minutes of meetings. They did try to develop something by 10-year plans but it's so far down the line isn't it? There again you go from year to year. You have a bad season. All of a sudden you have no money, so all your plans are gone and you did not have someone like a benefactor who'd say, 'don't worry I'll put another million in'. We didn't have that in those days. We were lucky in Llanelli at that time in so much that we knew from the sale of season tickets that the costs of the season were covered beforehand. Then any improvements to the ground would come out of the surplus profits. So from that point of view we were very lucky we didn't really have to scratch our heads and think where's the money going to come from? It was there always for us, you know, strong support. No nothing written.

When I was chairman we came up with the problem of having to redevelop the old terrace and the far side of thing. The fire brigade had given us five years to do it; of course nobody did anything until the ...what do you do? At that time I think Neath had developed behind the goalposts and it had cost them £150 grand just putting terracing in; and then some report came out saying that the ground had to be all seating by the year 2000 or something like that, the Taylor report, I think. But the decision that had to be made then was do we spend £150,000. Well we had a bigger bank than Neath had, so did we spend £200 grand to just put terracing in or did we spend £350 grand and put the stand there? And that's what we did in the end. Unfortunately it came at the wrong time because we did go into debt over it, but it was an asset in actual fact. However, professionalism came in then soon afterwards and that debt we had was compounded with the wage thing. I think we probably could have financed it a bit better than we did at the time, and most clubs didn't own their own grounds but we took pride in Stradey you know. When you think about what we've spent since the Bradford fire in 1984. We had to renew parts of the original stand which was timber; then we built hospitality, there's the Carwyn James room and things like that. The museum was altered. We spent a lot of money on improvements there and they were big decisions at the end of the day, for an amateur club. I think we probably spent the best part of £1million in ten years just developing there and upgrading it you know. Which the other clubs didn't have to do but then they suffered consequently. St Helens (Swansea) and the Gnoll (Neath), they had to do that bank and Port Talbot (Aberavon). We all had to do it".

The research found, via interviews and conversations, that at Llanelli planning was considered to be informal but strategic decisions were made when conditions and events demanded, such as making ground improvements. The plans developed by the committee, were recorded in the minutes of committee meetings.

5.3.5 Comparison with the Benchmark Club.

Prior to 1990, it had been established that SP had been undertaken by officers' at all three clubs, but merely infrequent, and only when special circumstances demanded (Stone et al, 1999). Within the three research clubs, only **Llanelli** had employed formal SP when developing its ground in 1990/91, but not since that time. The findings at the two Gwent clubs were similar in that neither had undertaken SP over the five years prior to 1995. Other than at **Llanelli**, no evidence was found, or produced, of any formal planning that had been undertaken. Respondents, and stakeholders, at the three clubs often confused SP with OP, and the findings revealed that clubs were in deed occupied more with OP, rather than SP (Hodges and Kent, 2007).

5.4 Logical Incremental Perspective

Unlike the formal planning process, the incrementalist view does not see strategy-making in terms of a tidy sequential version considering all possible options in terms of all possible futures. Rather, through ongoing analysis and assessment, it includes feedback loops to earlier stages where the problem and solution may be redefined or reoriginated. The process does not function to ascertain the most favourable or optimal solution (Quinn, 1980). The aim of the section was to comprehend if clubs used incremental planning to develop strategies that emerged through continual small scale changes and steps.

5.4.1 Ebbw Vale RFC

As the study established in 5.3.1, planning was mainly operational. This was confirmed by Ivor George.

“I firmly believed, as did the committee, that you couldn’t plan ahead too far in rugby, but you sort of gradually... you adjust as you go along. Small changes to strategy, that’s it”.

At Ebbw Vale, like most other clubs, planning was found to be short term, usually over a season. They did not practice SP but tended to adopt an incremental planning approach. Nonetheless, OP was undertaken weekly and focused on all aspects surrounding the games played by the club’s teams.

5.4.2 Newbridge RFC

At Newbridge planning tended to be more emergent rather than formal, a point confirmed by long serving, Brian Wellington.

“A lot of it was opportunism and having a good leader who can see at the moment this is the way we should be going. ‘Come on, follow me’ and people good enough to follow. My mind goes back to one situation in particular, where we were talking sponsorship and providing for the club, what have you. The first club in Wales to have had a financial sponsorship was Newbridge. In 1987, a Japanese company AIWA gave £6/7,000 per year. Pure chance. Again it was opportunist, driving together, chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, treasurer. In this instance, it was our vice-chairman who got us the sponsorship that was of mutual benefit. AIWA had a social conscious, they wanted a focal point within the community that we could provide and give them other advantages as well. We had the sponsorship. Now that wasn’t planning, that was people being in the right place to be able to pick it up and run with others to say ‘this is good for us’.

The initial comments on planning from Mr Wellington, were echoed at other clubs. Formal planning had been undertaken but was rare, with informal planning being the order of the day. In addition, it was acknowledged that luck, chance and opportunism had played a part in the development of the Newbridge rugby club.

5.4.3 Ebbw Vale RFC v Newbridge RFC; Comparison of Findings

Both clubs employed an incremental approach to planning. OP was undertaken on a weekly basis, in contrast to the less frequent SP. Newbridge acknowledged that uncontrollable factors, such as luck, chance and opportunism, had influenced the planning process. By comparison, at Ebbw Vale, committeemen appeared to ignore the effect of disharmony amongst the committee influencing any form of planning.

5.4.4 Llanelli RFC

In West Wales, at Llanelli, most stakeholders felt that the club only planned from season to season, a point confirmed by Marston Morgan.

“I would feel that we looked at it as an annual business. We wanted to make profit at the end of the year. If we didn’t make money, well we’d be very (smiles), you wouldn’t be down a lot of money. I think we were running it with a good treasurer there, Roland Hughes, who was keen. He wouldn’t let us spend money unless it was wisely spent. So although we did spend money sometimes, on things we shouldn’t have, it was mainly trips, tours and such things on the playing side. In Llanelli the committee were very strong with their own opinions. I had mine, Hefin was on it. You had people like Alan James, who wouldn’t let us spend money unless something urgent or unexpected arose within the club. So nobody was afraid to react to any unforeseen situation when action was required”.

Incremental planning was more likely to be employed before SP because respondents considered a planning period to be only for the length of each rugby season. Stakeholders felt confident that the club committee could successfully cope with any unexpected event.

5.4.5 Comparison with the Benchmark Club

Stakeholders’ opinions at the three clubs were united around the contention that trying to formally plan through a logical, sequential approach, SP, was unrealistic in the novel environment in which Welsh rugby clubs operated (Risseuw and Masurel, 1994). During conversations they also questioned whether or not the ‘shopfloor workers’ who had been elected as amateur committee members had the necessary business analytical skills, and

abilities, to undertake SP. Unsuspectingly, many stakeholders used Quinn's (1980) terminology of trying to '*muddle*' through as describing the way that the clubs attempted to move forward. The common environment being encountered by senior clubs within the new, National League, having to face possible relegation as well as promotion, produced uncertainty and therefore, it was argued, made any planning longer than a season more difficult (Covin and Slevin, 1989). The influence on any form of planning by uncontrollable variables such as luck, chance or opportunism (Sharman, 1998) was mentioned, and readily acknowledged, by stakeholders in each of the clubs. When questioned about the 'planning approach', stakeholders were of the opinion that the emergent approach was more associated with the clubs' development as opposed to the prescriptive approach (Sharp and Brock, 2010).

5.5 Political Perspective

The formulation of strategy can be explained in political terms because organisations are political entities (Chakravarthy and White, 2002), due to different stakeholders having diverse concerns and interests regarding strategy. Through compromise and mutual modification between powerful individuals, or groups of influential stakeholders, a generally acceptable strategy will materialise rather than through analytical appraisal and choice (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003). The intention in this section was to appreciate the role of political in the generation of strategy within rugby clubs.

5.5.1 Ebbw Vale RFC

The study ascertained that politics and disagreement were rife, not only in the club, but amongst the committee, findings that were confirmed, and explained, by Alan Evans.

“What I found with politics in the pre-professional days was that you would have two definite camps or even three definite camps. OK. You would have, let’s say, the chairman there, and over here you’d have the wanabe chairman and then you’d have the ones over here who sat on the fence. And they’d be trying to influence that one all the time, like both ends to stay in power, if you like, because it’s a power game. I came back from working abroad, working twelve years, rejoined the club as a committee member and within three days people were calling me to secret meetings. Seriously. You’d be in a little room, you’ve probably seen and heard it all before anyway, but it went on”.

The political in-fighting found within the committee was corroborated by Roy Lewis.

“There were political groups on the committee, yes there were. There was an athletic (2nds) attitude, not allowing players to come through to the first XV, and during the late ‘80’s, early 90s, there were virtually two clubs within a club. The first XV is the flagship without any doubt, but the athletic appeared to get pushed more within the committee”.

The study also uncovered an interesting external angle concerning politics at Ebbw Vale. Alan Evans revealed the impact of external politics that,

“With the closure of the steelworks, I think we lost a bit of political influence. To look at it a little deeper than financial support, the club could go to the steelworks manager, who had a lot of clout politically, and the local MP was always with the steelworks, with the unions within the steelworks whatever, and there was a fair bit of political clout going around. When the steelworks closed, we lost that bit of clout because the people who had clout have also gone with it, you know”.

Whilst the internal politics rumbled on, the external political environment became more difficult for the club with the closure of the steelworks affecting its political influence.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE STRATEGY PROCESS; PRE-1995

5.5.2 Newbridge RFC

There was little internal or external political influence on strategy at nearby Newbridge. An insight into the reason behind that finding was offered by Brian Wellington.

“If you have conviction in what you’re doing and the way you’re going and you can communicate and talk on your feet, your job is to take it with you. So you try in that situation to take any political group or feeling with you. Now I’m not saying that you don’t have splinter groups, but if you’re so solid at the centre and so united and combined it’s very difficult in that situation for political groups. Now that’s what happened circa 94, at the beginning of professionalism, I would say the structure in the centre broke down”.

Seeking to enlarge on why politics took hold after the long serving chairman, Mike Croad, resigned in 1994, Graham Paterson offered the following explanation.

“The period that I was on the committee, before Id (McCarthy) came, there were weak chairmen and they could be manipulated by particularly the playing strength for instance, particularly when certain individuals, like the then coach, were here. So I would say then politics were here. There wasn’t a group that was trying to upset the club, but, for example, the chairman’s wife was the treasurer of the Supporters Club, and I’ve said it once or twice, that’s the only time we’ve had a female chairman of the club!! There were factions then that were trying to pull the club apart, yes there were”.

After a long period, when a united, strong committee managed to keep politics out of the club, the opinion of respondents was that the break-up of the old committee (Appendix 3.5e) saw politics raise its head and become more prominent at Newbridge.

5.5.3 Ebbw Vale RFC v Newbridge RFC; Comparison of Findings

It was established that Ebbw Vale was more of an active political arena, both internally and externally, than at Newbridge. The Vale committee were representative of different groups of stakeholders with their own objectives and with differing views on which of the club’s teams should have priority. This divergence of opinion within the committee meant that any strategies were achieved via consensus. Externally, the closure of the local steelworks led to the loss of political ‘clout’. Meanwhile, internally at Newbridge, the club had relied on the strength of the senior figures within a united committee to neutralise the political factions. This worked well until 1994 when, following the resignation of the strong club chairman, Mike Croad, along with several experienced committeemen, politics re-emerged. There was little external politics impacting the club.

5.5.4 Llanelli RFC

Llanelli was considered by its rugby followers to be the same as all Welsh rugby clubs with regard to politics. The well-travelled reporter, Norman Lewis, was vocal, and adamant, in recalling that,

“There was politics in the old amateur game, where every club from top to bottom was riddled with it”.

In supporting that broad view, Hefin Jenkins recalled that at Llanelli,

“There were political factions and there were a lot of people here at that time who wanted to show their authority. People who were benefactors of the club in small ways, quids in those days, and they liked to think that they were important you know. They did try and really rock the boat, but at the end of the day, someone has got to run the club, you know. You take on board what they say but you still make the decisions through my mind anyway. If I thought a decision was right it was right regardless of what anybody else thought you know. Through experience and OK you agree to disagree at the end of the day as long as it’s not tragic”.

Stakeholders agreed with the research findings that there were politics alive and operating within Llanelli, but that the small committee stood united in not allowing politics preventing the club moving forward. External politics did not influence strategy.

5.5.5 Comparison with the Benchmark Club

Politics had a varying influence at the three clubs. There was little or no politics within the small committee at **Llanelli**, nor the larger committee at **Newbridge** (prior to 1994). The decision-making committee at each club were united, and proved to be strong, in trying to exclude politics when reaching decisions for the club’s benefit. In comparison, at **Ebbw Vale** there were internal groups with political differences within the committee which clearly influenced the decision-making process (Hickson et al, 1986). Respondents and stakeholders at **Llanelli**, felt that continuing on-field successes at the club had limited politics raising its head. A similar view was put forward at **Newbridge**, where stakeholders were happy that the club was still in the top division of Welsh rugby. Conversely, members and supporters at **Ebbw Vale** were politically divided, like the committee, over the priorities at the club and the fact that the club were seen as being ‘outside’ the elite top division. The discontent at the club was considered to have forced the hand of the ‘Athletic XV’ supporters on the committee, leading to the election of new Committeemen in 1994.

5.6 Interpretive Perspective (Cultural)

Organisation culture is concerned with the influence of attitudes, values and perceptions which are common amongst the members and stakeholders of an organisation which have been gained over many years and form the 'organisational paradigm'. The dominant paradigm is built up from different influences such as history and past experience and can be applied to a given situation to assist managers in reaching a strategy (Schein, 1992). With all three clubs being in existence since the 19th century, the research sought to be aware of the level influence on strategy that culture had in each club.

5.6.1 Ebbw Vale RFC

The club reflected the culture of the close, tight knit community, as long-time resident Ivor George explained.

"I used to know our players' maternal grandmother's maiden bloody name, you know what I mean. You were involved with them, every captain, every player, and every group of players. You were part of them. You knew all your boys in those days".

Another locally born and educated club official, the president, gave an insight of the club's culture and how it had been shaped by life in the valley.

"Ebbw Vale has always been a rough, tough place you know um, I mean I grew up there. The rugby team has reflected that in its 'back-to-the-wall' attitude and so, no one's ever looked forward to coming up to Eugene Cross Park; and this wasn't just now it's from when I first started watching in 1959. We couldn't get fixtures with people like Llanelli and Swansea because they wouldn't come up to play us".

It was very apparent from the attitudes and beliefs expressed by the club stakeholders that they considered the club to be representative of a repressed community. The club's culture had influenced strategy, as confirmed by Alan Evans.

"So it was obviously run prior to 1995 as the old social club/rugby club. Politics within it, everything that goes with a rugby club, right. It was run basically on an historical basis... we did this in '66 or we did this in '77 whatever, and it carried on like that".

Ebbw Vale had an open split on its committee, and stakeholders, over its culture, where some committeemen supported the 'play for enjoyment' Athletic XV rather the club's competitive League's team, its first XV. Stakeholders considered that strong pressure had been put on the club's rugby traditions and culture via the new external environment of the National League, with promotion and relegation, and it had divided the club.

5.6.2 Newbridge RFC

The study found that Newbridge had also adopted a valley community culture, and as a result readily contributed back to the community. Brian Wellington explained that,

“In the amateur days, yes, the club made inputs here because we had ties with the schools and what have you and to encourage there. But there’s a bigger contribution than that Clive, that’s difficult to measure. Valley community, valley culture, valley thoughts. If you have something within a small valley area like this that was going successfully, the whole village tended to focus on it, and become part of it. This warmth came from a degree of success, and that was our contribution”.

Graham Paterson’s thoughts on the club’s culture to visiting clubs and spectators was,

“We’ve thought that we’ve been a very hospitable club. Whoever it is we like to make people welcome. I used to have a saying ‘There’s always a welcome at the Welfare’. I probably think that’s our strongest point. Clive Davies (player) said ‘I don’t know what Newbridge’s got, but if they could bottle it and give it to others they would be better off’.

Geoff Champion also spoke on the contribution the rugby club made to the village.

“The best thing you can say about Newbridge RFC is that it has given Newbridge an identity. You talk to people about Newbridge, ‘Oh you’ve got a rugby team haven’t you’? They wouldn’t know it if it wasn’t for that. Trecelyn, they know it because that’s the name of the rugby club. So they give the village an identity, and the community really ought to be pleased about that, otherwise they would be a total anonymous village between Newport and Ebbw Vale. So I think it’s part of this social cement. The club gives us identity, it give us something we can be proud of from a local point of view and they give the opportunity to create community spirit and pride by helping community youngsters in a game that we all love and do it in the correct way, setting a good example. Because the little ones will always look at the big ones as role models, local heroes if you like”.

Despite offering praise, Mr. Champion readily acknowledged the club’s survival attitude, he was also critical about Newbridge’s strong tradition preventing any change.

“I think during the amateur era the club was definitely high bound by tradition with one of the big failures to me being the club not building on that success in the 1960’s. For if you and I walked around the Welfare ground today and looked at the facilities, and consider the structure and approach of the club, there wouldn’t be a hell of a lot different to when you were reffing here in the ‘70s and ‘80s”.

The history and past experiences of Newbridge, revealed a ‘fighting against adversary spirit’ that had existed in the valley club since its formation (Appendix 3.5). The research established that stakeholders believed the club’s culture had influenced strategy.

5.6.3 Ebbw Vale RFC v Newbridge RFC; Comparison of Findings

Faced with a similar environment, a common culture perspective was uncovered at the Gwent valley rivals, Ebbw Vale and Newbridge, which emanated from the local community; it was the typical close-knit valley village approach. In both instances, the ‘back to the wall’ culture had influenced strategy, and had been a constraint to change.

5.6.4 Llanelli RFC

Llanelli is one of the Welsh clubs with a long tradition and a very rich history (Appendix 3.6). Continuing his recollection of the pre-1995 period, Hefin Jenkins, remembered that,

“We’ve had the experience, (Reads) ‘the strategy we’ve followed developed from the way we do things’. Well perhaps yes. I think probably we’re always looking to improve ourselves then. And you can’t shut yourself off if you think someone else is doing something differently and that’s quite successful. The fact that you’ve done it before doesn’t mean that is the right way. And I think you’ve got to look at things and say, ‘well that’s not a bad idea let’s follow it’. Yes you know, we’d be discussing about other clubs and obviously over the years, being rivals of Neath and Swansea, if they were doing something we’d look to see if it could benefit our club. If there was a way of improving the club yes, we wouldn’t be hard and fast, it was not tablets of stone, you know”.

Whilst agreeing that the culture has influenced the direction of the club, respondents and stakeholders stated that it had not prevented the club from either learning from other clubs or from changing direction.

5.6.5 Comparison with the Benchmark Club

Llanelli’s success on the field of play, and its ‘First Class’ status since its formation in 1872, had been ingrained in to all its stakeholders. Its impressive fixture list highlighted its standing in UK rugby. Failure in any game was never considered as an acceptable option. However, the location of the two Gwent valley community clubs, had left an indelible impression on everyone associated with them. **Ebbw Vale** and **Newbridge** had battled up to 1945 to gain acceptance as ‘First Class’ clubs. Both had previously failed to attract fixtures with the bigger named Welsh and English clubs, and coupled with their lack of championship titles and cup trophies had seen the two clubs adopt, and integrate into the local community’s ‘back to the wall’ culture and ‘them and us’ attitude. Nonetheless, despite the different location, background and culture, at all three clubs, customs and tradition had clearly influenced the direction of each club.

5.7 Ecological Perspective (Enforced Choice)

For some organizations the impact of the environment is significant, constraining the influence of managers in developing strategies (Hannah and Freeman, 1989). Factors in the external environment produce strategies via natural selection rather than through any rational and intentional process. Such strategies tend to be common to all organizations within the industrial sector or market (Sharp and Brock, 2010). The study sought to examine if the influence of the external environment was recognized as influential in the strategy-making process of Welsh rugby clubs?

5.7.1 Ebbw Vale RFC

The local environment had been beneficial to Ebbw Vale. The club's ground was owned by the welfare association and shared by other organisations, cricket, bowls, tennis and football; therefore the club didn't need to spend any money on the ground. Then, when the Bradford disaster occurred in the 1980's, the council took over the ground and facilities. When the WRU formed the National League, one of its advantages was removing difficulties in clubs finding fixtures, as recollected by Ivor George.

"You know, the week by week fixtures was structured by the WRU. You knew in July/August that next March you were going to be playing so and so at such and such".

Due to its location, Ebbw Vale didn't have to look for sponsorship because it benefited from the scheme operated by the local steelworks and the local authority, as Ivor George proudly remembered,

"At one time it really didn't matter how many people stood on the bank because everybody who went to the steelworks paid 6p per week to the rugby club. So you had 10,000 people in the works paying 6p per week to Ebbw Vale rugby club off their ticket, and the same thing happened in the local authority. After they went out of the personnel office I don't know whether they knew that they were members of EVRFC except that they did get a season ticket every year. Remarkably, on the front of our season ticket were three or four pages of membership. We didn't really rely on gates because we had that guaranteed income".

The club's dependence on such a singular, unique income meant that any change to the steelwork's *status quo* would hugely affect not only the club's income but also the local population's disposal income in supporting the team. So the closure of the major industries in the area, including the steelworks, influenced the club's direction, particularly its financial strategy. The external environment had impacted the club.

5.7.2 Newbridge RFC

Being within a twelve mile radius of Ebbw Vale, Newbridge also suffered with the turbulent local, external environment. The local council were not considered as helpful. Living in the area, Brian Wellington was philosophic about the club's environment.

“Although we were the first club to have sponsorship, with AIWA (Japanese Company), within our environment if you like, the business environment, the number of sizeable concerns that you had that could underwrite you, just weren't here. We had one man in the area, and we got kicked and kicked and kicked by supporters, because, ‘why didn't we use this man to full advantage, Terry Matthews’? There was no mutuality in terms of tying up with Terry Matthews. We couldn't give him anything except a certain amount of glory to his name, but he didn't need it with owning the likes of Celtic Manor, and we suffered accordingly”.

Being in a village where there were no large businesses or industry, Newbridge operated in a limited financial environment. The one individual with financial clout, billionaire Terry Matthews, was not interested in supporting rugby and so the club lost a potential large benefactor. The external environment did influence the club's direction.

5.7.3 Ebbw Vale RFC v Newbridge RFC; Comparison of Findings

Ebbw Vale benefited from the presence of the steelworks and the financial donations made by those workers. Newbridge were not in the same fortunate position of having a 'supporting' major employer within the village, and its business environment was perceived to be poor, despite the fact that they considered themselves 'lucky' in becoming the first club in Wales to gain sponsorship in the late 1980's. Both clubs felt that the WRU had added a structure to the season by the formation of the National Leagues. However, the clubs had opposing views on their local councils; Ebbw Vale felt supported by its local council, whilst Newbridge viewed their council as a restraining influence.

5.7.4 Llanelli RFC

The environment in which Llanelli operated was perceived to be harsh and difficult. Former player and committeeman, Marlston Morgan explained that,

“We haven't got a lot of companies or businesses in Llanelli that will sponsor us. We're not a big area for sponsorship and the money has always been scarce, always”.

Club stakeholders were proud of their town and team, but agreed with Mr Morgan's view.

Similarly to other clubs, it was felt that the local council had been negative rather than positive, in its approach to the club. Mr Morgan continued,

“The council has been very ‘anti’ sometimes. There were certain councillors in Llanelli that didn’t support Llanelli and if they were seen to vote to give money to Llanelli RFC they would not be elected. I know, it was very strong but they would not. There were always certain elements of them having a knock at Llanelli, and they wouldn’t help financially, no. We got money for ourselves, from generating our money. The WRU were giving grants but you had to pay it back, but the town never give us funding. They give us a set of gates as you go into Stradey, and that was for the centenary year, 1972. That was given by four councils, Burry Port, Kidwelly, Llanelli rural and Llanelli borough, who then gave those gates. That’s it, there’s no real support or other money at all”.

Llanelli stakeholders bemoaned the lack of business or corporate support but praised the actions of individual supporters, such as local farmers with tractors, who regularly volunteered to help the club. The business environment was considered by stakeholders to be poor, and that it did influence the club’s goals and strategy.

5.7.5 Comparison with the Benchmark Club

The study findings indicated that the three clubs had difficulties in coping with external pressures, and that decisions taken over courses of action had been influenced by external environment factors (Hannah and Freeman, 1989). There was common agreement that the local business environment had impacted on each club’s strategy (Di Maggio and Powell, 1983). In two instances, **Llanelli** and **Newbridge**, the opinions gauged revealed that the local councils had not been supportive of the clubs, whilst **Ebbw Vale**, by contrast, had benefitted from a supportive local council at that time.

The respondents and stakeholders at the three clubs were united in agreeing that the formation of the National League by the WRU had turned out to be positive, and supportive, in that it had assisted with the planning and organization of the playing season. The research concluded from the findings, that the external environment, the WRU, local councils and businesses, had influenced strategy at each of the three clubs.

5.8 Conclusions

The chapter's contribution to the study was to provide an understanding of the closing five years of the amateur era in Welsh rugby. The conclusion reached was that the three research clubs had been influenced by a combination of perspectives (Bailey and Johnson, 1991), but that within the enforced choice perspective, the introduction of a National League had minimal effect, or influence, on how the clubs continued to approach the strategy-making process (Table 5.3).

It was established that rugby clubs in Wales had been governed through an elected committee, on which the chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer were seen as the senior figures by stakeholders (Chaffee, 1985). Whilst **Ebbw Vale** and **Newbridge** continued to be run by the senior figures, in contrast, **Llanelli**, since 1973, had placed the organisation and control of the club in the hands of a small committee. **Llanelli** had employed SP for a single project (new grandstand, 1990), whereas at the other two clubs planning was found to be informal (Stone et al, 1999). The three clubs had adopted Incremental planning when necessary, but OP (for each game) was employed on a regular basis. The study concluded that, despite the playing changes imposed on the clubs with the formation of the National League, politics (Chakravarthy and White, 2002) and culture (Schein, 1992) continued to be influential within the three clubs, and that the external environment had impacted on clubs' decision-making (Tables 5.2 and 5.3).

With regard to clubs' performances (Table 5.4), being a NPO (Table 5.1), finance was not considered a priority by any of the clubs (Paton and Cornforth, 1992) although each had made a profit over the period. Playing performance was the priority (Szymanski, 2003) for **Llanelli** and **Newbridge** in the Premier Division clubs, but for **Ebbw Vale** in the lower Division, due to politics within the committee, the first XV playing aspect was not considered a priority (Iaquinto and Fredrickson, 1997). The research determined that over the five seasons, 1990-1995, whilst the two Gwent clubs did not win any League title (or WRU Cup competition), **Llanelli**, were successful in winning League titles and WRU cup (Appendix 4.5 & 4.5e).

In line with the chronological approach of the study, the following chapter investigates the decisions made, the actions taken and the outcomes resulting from the IoP in 1995. An in-depth discussion of the findings, and comparison, with existent theory is performed in Chapter Eight.

Table 5.1**Characteristics of Nonprofit Organisations**

(Adapted from Paton and Cornforth (1992) Osborne (1998) and Hudson, 1999)

Characteristics	Ebbw Vale	Newbridge	Llanelli
Existed primarily for social purpose	Yes	Yes	Yes
Small, informal structured organisation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Independent of the State	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nonprofit, all financial surpluses re-invested	Yes	Yes	Yes
Possible vague objectives	Yes	Yes	Yes
Impact difficult to measure	Yes	Yes	Yes
Accountable to a variety of stakeholders	Yes	Yes	Yes
Self-governing and are able to control their own activities	Yes	Yes	Yes
Voluntarism is essential; helpers, management	Yes	Yes	Yes
Purpose influences management	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cherished Organizational Values/Culture	Yes	Yes	Yes
Social Goals - financial 'bottom-line' is not a priority	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 5.2 Cross-Case Analysis; Comparison of Components of Planning Practices & Sophistication, 1990– 1995.
(Bracker and Pearson, 1986)

Club	Ebbw Vale	Newbridge	Llanelli
Component			
Objective Setting	No	Yes	Yes
Environment Analysis (PEST)	No	Yes	Yes
Internal Analysis (SWOT)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Strategy Formulation	No	No	Yes
Financial Projections	No	No	Yes
Functional Budgets	Yes	Yes	Yes
Operating Performance Measures	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control Corrective Procedures	No	No	Yes
Unstructured Plans	No	No	No
Intuitive Plans	Yes	Yes	No
Structured Operational Plans	No	No	No
Structured Strategic Plans	No	No	Yes

TABLE 5.3

Cross-Case Analysis; Comparison of Strategy Process by Club, 1990-1995.

(Summary of data based on conceptual framework of Bailey et al, 2000)

Dimension Club	Visionary Perspective (Command)	Planning Perspective	Logical Incremental Perspective	Political Perspective	Interpretive Perspective (Cultural)	Ecological Perspective (Enforced Choice)	Strategy Followed
EBBW VALE (1880)	Chairman, Vice, Secretary & Treasurer	Informal plans recorded in minutes of meetings	Approach adopted when necessary	Politics divided committee & influenced strategy	Culture influenced Strategy	Decline of local major industries	Niche. Strategy was influenced by politics to 1994.
NEWBRIDGE (1888)	Chairman, Vice, Secretary & Treasurer	Informal plans recorded in minutes of meetings	Approach adopted when necessary	Little politics. Strong commit defeated other factions	Culture influenced Strategy	Decline of local major industries	Niche Maintain
LLANELLI (1872)	Chairman, & Small 9 man Committee	SP in 1990 Informal plans recorded in minutes of meetings	Approach adopted when necessary	Little politics. Small commit defeated other factions	Culture influenced Strategy	Decline of major industries and farming	Niche Growth

KEY = Variance of data from other clubs.

TABLE 5.4

Cross-Case Analysis; Comparison of Measures of Performance, 1990 – 1995

(Venkatraman and Ramanujam, 1986)

Measure Club	Financial Performance	Operational Performance	Organisational Effectiveness
EBBW VALE (1880)	Finance was not the priority but a profit made each season. No financial planning other than basic income v expenditure.	Playing performance of 1st XV not the priority. Second Division club for 5 years Politics within committee seriously affected playing performances. League Positions: 16; 14; 22; 21; & 14;	No full-time staff for community work. Rugby club gave town an identity. Club looked after players' welfare.
NEWBRIDGE (1888)	Finance was not the priority but a profit made each season. No financial planning other than basic income v expenditure. Sponsorship from AIWA plus National League prize money	Playing Performance was priority. First Division club for 5 years. Club finished in lower part of Division each season. League Positions: 7; 5; 10; 8; & 9;	No full-time staff for community work. Rugby club gave village an identity. Club looked after players' welfare.
LLANELLI (1872)	Finance was not the priority but a profit made each season. Financial Planning National League prize money Large debt due to building grandstand.	Playing Performance was priority. First Division club for 5 years. Club won Division once. League: 2; 2; 1 ; 5; 7; Cup Winners, 3 times, 1990-92.	No full-time staff for community work. Rugby club gave town an identity. Club looked after players' welfare.

KEY

Variance of data from other clubs.

CHAPTER 6.0: HOW CLUBS REACTED TO THE INTRODUCTION OF PROFESSIONALISM, AUGUST 1995.

"It is desirable to examine whether particular strategic issues are dealt with in a similar or dissimilar manner across organisations."

(Bailey and Johnson, 1991, p.37)

6.1 Setting the Scene

The IoP in 1995 was a watershed for the Game, a singular, unprecedented decision made by the governing body, the IRB, which affected all clubs and countries throughout the rugby world. As stated earlier in the methodology chapter, it was contended that research should focus on patterns of decisions and actions that accumulate into strategy over time rather than discrete decisions (Chakravarthy and White, 2002). However, this unparalleled decision by the IRB meant that for the first time participants in the Game were officially permitted to be financially rewarded for being a player, coach or administrator. The clubs had no previous, similar exemplar to learn or prepare from, and so they faced a crisis in finding the necessary finance to fund their team. Welsh Rugby (and World Rugby) thus became an authorised market place where a rugby player could be bought and sold. To compound the difficulties facing the clubs, the IRB made the announcement near the end of August, just days before the start of the new season. In such a situation, Chakravarthy and Doz, (1992, p.5) argued that,

"The strategies of a firm must change in keeping with both new opportunities and threats in the environment and changes in its own competencies and strategic intent"

The respondents' comments to the dramatic overnight change in environment, from amateur to professional, indicated the disbelief in the unexpected speed of the transformation to rugby's core value. Prior to interviewing the clubs' respondents, conversations with stakeholders in various Welsh clubs had unearthed negative descriptions of the advent of professionalism such as 'a major shock,' 'critical,' 'decisive', 'disastrous', 'extraordinary,' 'extreme,' 'momentous,' 'serious,' 'significant,' 'terrible,' 'unique,' and 'unprecedented.' A large proportion of older club members actually used the term 'catastrophic' to describe the alteration to the core value of the Game, possibly because, "When sudden change does come, it is frequently contested by various agencies and individuals precisely because it goes against tradition" (Polley 1998, p.161).

The IRB's decision was that the Game was now 'open' so that participants could be paid if a club chose to do so. The IRB was not forcing clubs to pay players. However, in reality, players in Wales had long been receiving 'boot money' (Smith and Williams, 1981), but even those clubs who were paying 'generous expenses' were not prepared for the dramatic increase in players' demands for payment that was to follow. Clearly, whilst the event was 'critical' in terms of financial and playing resources, it also proved to be a major 'shock event' to the unprepared clubs. So would the IoP support Pearson and Clair's (1998, p69) assertion, that *"In organizations where executives believe that their company is relatively immune from crises, there will be fewer plans and procedures for crisis preparation and prevention"*.

Coupling the 'shock event' approach with the CIT, the following open ended questions were introduced during the interviews with respondents to establish how their club reacted to the IoP.

The Club's Process

"What action did the Club take?"

The Outcomes as a result of Club's Actions?

"How was the club's performance affected by the action taken?"

"What was the intended/unintended outcomes for the Club?"

The Club's Internal Context

"What was the club structure regarding governance at that time?"

"Who decided what to do?"

The aim of the chapter was not only to present the sequence of decisions and actions taken by the clubs but also to provide an understanding and insight into how the choices that were made influenced the clubs' future directions.

The findings from the respondents at each club are documented below and include quoted opinions covering the respective five questions via the process, outcomes and context. The views of respondents were coupled with those gleaned from stakeholder conversations in the summary of each club; so the narrative described, and explained, the key sequences of actions taken by critical personalities as perceived by respondents (Brannen, 2005). A comparison of findings was then undertaken between the high and

low performers, Gwent clubs Ebbw Vale and Newbridge; and on the West Wales coast, the benchmark club, Llanelli. (A discussion concerning the evidence presented in this chapter can be found in Chapter 8).

Therefore, building on the contents of Chapter Four, this chapter examines in-depth, the sparsely researched transformational event in Welsh Rugby in 1995, especially how the clubs reacted to such a ‘defining episode’, a dramatic period of transition, and the effect it had on each rugby organisation. The influence of other variable performance components (Storey, 1994) at that unique time, the ensuing decisions and actions taken by each club, and the resultant outcomes, are analysed, interpreted and compared. The chapter is, as a result, structured in accordance with the process, content and context dimensions of strategy.



6.2 Ebbw Vale RFC

6.2.1 Process

The decision-makers at Ebbw Vale at the time of the IoP were the committee, as established in 5.2.1. The previous year, 1994, the president, John Powell, manager of the steelworks, had decided to retire from the figurehead position, and the chairman, secretary, treasurer and match secretary, along with five committeemen, resigned (Appendix 3.4e). The newly appointed club president, Paul Russell, had accepted the influential role after due consideration, and after his concerns had been answered. In his own words,

“I joined half way through our last season in the second Division (1994/95). I was still very heavily involved with Glamorgan (cricket) at that time and when they asked me to become president I said, “What is it you want from me?” And they said, ‘we want four things. Number one, we want you to help us with your experience in sports management and sports performance etc. Secondly, we need you to be there as a figure-head and you know, chum up the vice-presidents and all this kind of stuff. Thirdly, to help us bring the glad hand of sponsors what have you, and fourthly to put some money into the club’. In those days our income and expenditure, either side of the balance sheet was round about £60,000. (Laughs), and so you putting in £5,000 made a big difference”.

With his commercial background, at the global Anderson Consultancy, Russell quickly realized that if the club was to survive in the First (Premier) Division in the changing rugby environment, then it needed a successful strategy. From the outset, he set the club what he felt were SMART goals

“To maintain a reasonably successful top class rugby club in the Heads of the Valley. To granulate that further, top class would mean the top league in Wales, whatever that was, the first division, premier league; and then reasonable successful because we didn’t want to be a Cinderella club or a yo-yo club. We wanted to be finishing mid-table consistently, with the odd Cup Final appearance, and with the odd appearance at the top of the table. One top three finish in five type of thing”.

He did not want the club to follow previously promoted clubs who had quickly returned to the lower Division after just one season. Therefore, he set in motion a stratagem to keep Ebbw Vale in the Top Division. His abiding memory of that period was that,

“My first involvement in the club was, after we got into what was then the First Division, (August 1995), to lay down a strategy if I was going to stay there, and our strategy in the



first year was simply based around survival. We developed a strategy, which was called the three 8's. We were going to win 8 games, to earn an income of £80,000 and finish 8th. Because it was still a members club, I was dealing with a committee of twenty-four people and, with due respect to them, most of them were butchers, bakers and candle stick makers. They'd turn up at committee meetings and say, you know, 'the boiler broken down or there's no sugar for tea in the committee room again last week, and didn't John have a shit game on Saturday?' (Laughs). We had to transform them into a decision-making body that was going to agree that we were going to act in a unified fashion, that we weren't going to be political, in-fighting, we were all going to contribute and work towards a common goal. So it was important we give it a tag line, which was the three 8's, and then we granulated that strategy. 'How do we raise the £80,000 income? How were we going to do this and that?' Our treasurer at the time was Steve Lewis (future WRU General Manager) and he was tasked with coming back with a plan to say, 'this was how we get to £80,000'. There was no money from the WRU in those days, you had to generate it all yourself. The coach, who was Phil Gardner, was told come back and tell us which eight games he was going to win, and which one he had in reserve, to ensure we finished 8th in the Division; and it worked".

To attain the on-field objectives, Russell employed a resource based strategy whereby the club recruited only North Gwent players with previous First Division playing experience. Off the field, he had talked local businessman, Malcolm Sheppard, not only in to joining the club but also to become its chairman. Importantly, to develop and implement the strategy, he needed the support of stakeholders within the club. Agreement, and explanations on the success of the resource based strategy, came from within the Management section, via Ray Harris.

"Put them (Russell and Sheppard) together and all of a sudden there was an immense amount of energy for different reasons but wanting the club to go somewhere. And they did it. They set out a strategy where they were going to find every disaffected North Gwent player they could find in any club who was good but was not getting a shot. They made some mistakes where they brought some people in, weren't good enough, but then they made really good signings as well. And that was exactly how they succeeded".

Examining the reasons given by Mr. Harris for the club's success, support was found from within the Team Management, via club captain Chay Billen.

"I think that Paul (Russell) and the people who were here then were very shrewd in the type of person they recruited. They were very clever in the way they did that and, you know, the way that I see it, we were never going to be a side full of internationals but we



were a side that would always be as near to 100% together as possible. Alright, maybe, geographically they were not exactly North Gwent, you know on the map, but they were that sort of mentality of players, and that was very evident. You know, I was born in Brecon but this is the nearest club for me and it has been a massive feeder club for the area up in mid-Wales. I think it was the fact that they recruited local people, the business side and I think the development of Leigh as a coach, and that everybody developed from the supporters, the coaching staff and the players. The ground hasn't changed an awful lot but I think that it was just a pull in the right direction from all quarters".

In conversations with stakeholders, Paul Russell was put forward as the individual who, as a result of his resource based strategy, his open communication within the club, and the acceptance of the committee and members to implement his plan, saw the club survive the transitional period from amateur to professionalism (Conversations, 8.2.97: 26.9.98: 29.10.03).

6.2.2 Outcome

One of the major outcomes was the key change to the mission statement of the club. In the amateur days the mission was rugby orientated; but due to professionalism, members voted to relinquish ownership of the club by changing from a members club into a Limited Company (20th February 1997), under the chairmanship of Paul's brother, Marcus. The new organisation's Memorandum of Association stated 'The Company's objects are: - (A) *to carry on the business of a rugby club...*' (Appendix 3.4f). Research found that financially, like other Top Division clubs, Ebbw Vale did not make a profit during this period. On the field, the club's playing performance increased dramatically by **+68%** over the period 1995-2000 compared to a similar five year amateur period, 1990-1995. The League positions were 7th, 7th, 4th, 4th, and 6th; Swalec Cup finalist (once) and semi-finalist (twice). Stakeholders felt that the strategy, initiated by Russell and implemented by the club, had resulted not only in them surviving in the Top Division but also provided them with the experience of playing in their first Swalec Cup final and also playing in Europe (Conversations 8.2.97: 26.9.98: 29.10.03). Mr Russell's confident body language throughout the interview was consistent with his upbeat responses, and his conviction that his business approach had paid dividends.

"Our strategy, as I said, depended on realism and was remarkably successful. It worked almost like clockwork".



The positive response of the Russell brothers was seen as a case, as Ivor George related, of ‘local boys having done good’, of using their career experiences to help their home rugby club rather than for them to make money. Reflecting on that view of the brothers, long serving Roy Lewis had his suspicions that,

“If someone is putting money into the game, I shouldn’t think that they’ve got any sense if they expect to have anything back. I don’t think our owners expect a return on their investment. I can’t see a time when anyone of them will ever get a return”.

Mr. Lewis’s views were supported by findings that showed the club, even after the IoP, still placed playing performance above financial return as its main priority.

6.2.3 Context

The following interview statement from Ivor George, reflected the lack of planning process for the onset of professionalism, not only within Ebbw Vale, but in most clubs.

“Nobody was ready for the sudden change from amateur to professionalism. I don’t think the IRB or the WRU put enough thought in to what they were doing nor enough thought into what was going to happen, the outcomes and the effect on clubs”.

It is worth recording that in the amateur era, prior to 1995, the club did not have to worry about finance. In the words of Ray Harris,

“Well, go out of your time scale this club was probably at one stage in the Wally Talbot, John Powell time was one of the richest clubs in Wales. However many people worked down there (the steelworks) 11,000 all paid sixpence to come into this club. That’s a lot of sixpences; at that stage it had a huge income. Ebbw Vale in the 70’s & late 80’s, were not the poor relations, they had money then. When they hit rock bottom, which was when they were put in Division Two, and the period just before that when the steelworks started to drop off, things went bad. Yet in the amateur time I don’t think this club ever had an overdraft, and very few clubs did”.

Due to its poor playing performance prior to the formation of the National League, Ebbw Vale found itself outside the Top Division in Welsh rugby. A contributing factor to this position was the politics that existed amongst the committee, which was split between giving priority to the First XV or the Athletic XV. When the Athletic XV was replaced by a Development XV at the end of season 1993/94, co-incidentally at the same time the club had to look for several replacement officers. The president, John Powell, manager of the steelworks, had decided to retire from the figurehead position, and the chairman,



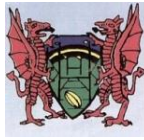
secretary, treasurer and match secretary, along with five committeemen, resigned (Appendix 3.4e). Due to the rundown of the local steelworks, the presidency of the club was no longer an automatic selection, i.e. the manager of the steelworks, as it had previously been (Conversations, 8.3.97: 8.9.98: 19.3.99). Probing into how they recruited Paul Russell, Ray Harris recollected,

“Couldn’t remember who it was but someone approached Paul Russell in Cardiff at Glamorgan Cricket Club, and said, ‘you are a local boy we’re in trouble, get involved’. Because it was still a committee-run club, he was given the Presidency of the club and he also had the most power out of everyone on that committee. He is an incredible driving force because that’s the way he is in business”.

So Paul Russell’s recruitment should be viewed in the context of being one of simple chance, pure luck that a rugby member was going to watch the cricket in Cardiff. The new president was installed at a time when the club’s operating environment had changed dramatically.

6.2.4 Summary

All respondents, and the vast majority of stakeholders, agreed with the above interpretations of the events surrounding the IoP at Ebbw Vale. They concurred with the dimensions of the ‘shock event’, the fact that in new president, Paul Russell, the club had been fortunate to recruit an individual with precious business and accounting knowledge and experience. They believed that the decisions and actions taken by Paul Russell, supported by the committee and members, had contributed significantly to Ebbw Vale still existing and fulfilling its prime objective of being a Premier Division club in 2000 (Conversations, 8.9.98; 1.11.00: 21.10.03).



6.3 Newbridge RFC

6.3.1 Process

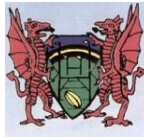
Similar to the situation at near neighbours, Ebbw Vale, Newbridge had a large committee of over twenty committeemen (Appendix 3.5e). Unfortunately, prior to the IoP, the long serving chairman and several experienced committeemen resigned their posts. In researching this particular avenue, it was apparent that one of the first decisions taken during this period of transition by the new chairman was to bring fresh players into the club. Newbridge previously had pursued a policy of recruiting players from the locality, but then decided for financial reasons to recruit from far and wide, and crucially, acquired less experienced players from the lower divisions. The failure to acquire a main financial backer signified that the financial resources were initially limited to just the WRU grant, and contributed to the subsequent recruitment action. The respondents' views on this issue concurred with the view of Brian Jones.

"We didn't have the money. We couldn't dictate from the point of view that we couldn't get any player we wanted. We started off as I already said by paying people differently that's a fact. Some were big differences but I don't think that approach worked in actual fact, for a club like us. I think it was the quality of player because we couldn't get the real quality players. (Laughs). I mean any club with money was going to get the best players. So our players, who were left, weren't of the same standard as the other teams. I think it was as simple as that".

The lack of funding therefore clearly impacted on the recruitment of quality playing resources. Findings showed, as at other clubs, paying different salaries to new squad players caused problems. Newbridge found themselves in a dilemma; closing the door to recruiting higher quality players due to financial constraints, thus being left with players of lesser ability. From within Management, Secretary, Graham Patterson's reflections of that period,

"This club certainly wasn't ready for it (professionalism) because we, I don't want to be critical of this because I wouldn't have done the job myself, but we certainly didn't have anybody to grab the nettle at that time. I know I'm talking about him (Idris McCarthey), but if we'd had our present chairman in position, and I'm sure if we had our coaches in position, we would have not run up a huge bill where we needed a loan off the WRU".

Pursuing further information about the club's situation and the actions taken at that time, the Team Manager, when asked, expressed his deep frustrations.



*“I think for me, as soon as it went professional the stakes went up and we just couldn’t match it. We were outbid if you like and that happened to quite a few of our players. As a result we didn’t have time to recover because we were never able to match them financially right. So we had to look for players out of lower Divisions clubs if you like, not being unkind, your Abercarns, Crumlins, Riscas, and try then to improve them as players and generally as a team; but while you are doing that the period is f***** you up in the League. And you were losing status every year because you could not get guys out of that Division, throw them in at the deep end, and straight away they’re good enough! You know you couldn’t. It’s impossible. Unless you could bid and you’ve got good bucks to throw at these boys so that they could play for you, because they want to play for you just for the money, you’ve had it”!*

In conversations with stakeholders regarding the recruitment of players and coaches at Newbridge, findings revealed that the decision-making by the two chairmen and their committees was considered to be, at the very least, questionable (Conversations 18.2.98; 8.9.01; 6.9.03).

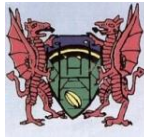
6.3.2 Outcome

Discussions with stakeholders unearthed a common view that because of the shortages of finance (no profit after 1995), and lack of quality players and coaches, plus little time to improve the shortage factors, the club struggled just to survive in the top Division. In addition, following relegation the lack of appropriate resources stifled a promotion drive to return to the First (Premier) Division (24.1.98, 18.2.98; 12.5.98). It also emerged that stakeholders were unsure about what the mission statement of the club should be, a view enlarged by Geoff Champion,

“You go back to why is a rugby club a rugby club? What are you trying to do as a rugby club? This is the problem area about professionalism. Is a professional rugby club there to play rugby or is it existing to be a business?”

The priority within the club regarding playing performance has not changed as a result of professionalism. Brian Wellington’s views of pre 95 performance were,

“We were basically a rugby club and if you were to talk about measures of performance, our first measure of performance was the team, the team. We had to be there within the upper echelons as long as we possibly could be. Even good management would have been hard pressed then. Performance on the field was the prime measurement. The rugby clubhouse looked after its self and what we were basically looking for there was that the rugby clubhouse covered its costs and wasn’t a burden. Newbridge was always run as a rugby club”.



The research found that following professionalism, the club's view on playing performance being the priority had not changed, as stated by Idris McCarthey.

"The major performance measurement would be the playing performance, winning or loosing at the end of the season. I think what we try to do is get a club in a way that the players that we've got are happy playing; they get on with the coaches they get on with the people. I'm still a bit old fashioned like that I don't believe in this that they shouldn't have a pint after the game and have a laugh and a joke. For me if you can't do that what's the point in playing like? I mean by Monday, you've got to enjoy your weekend and you've got to get ready to get down to it again. I really don't agree with all that not partaking".

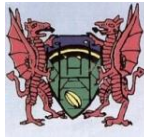
The evidence revealed that the club's decline, relegation from the top Division, plus a fall of **-98%** in playing performance over 1995-2000, compared with that of 1990-1995, in the on-field performances was due to a combination of factors. Utilising his long association with the club, the former secretary, Brian Wellington, accounted for the negative change,

"The downturn in performance was down to a combination of no financial Godfather, the locality and the lack of leadership from the Union. We made not a conscious decision because the decisions were forced on us. We lost players. We lost the spine of the team at that time, in effect. We were relegated at the wrong time just as professionalism was coming in and the funding went down; other clubs had benefactors coming in but we didn't have one. Since the game went professional no rugby club has made a profit and never will do Clive. It is impossible in the modern marketplace not only for Newbridge to prosper but also the vast majority of rugby clubs".

In contrast, Idris McCarthey disagreed with that view and offered an alternative opinion:

"I think that Newbridge and all the other clubs in Wales were never ever geared to run a professional side and giving Newbridge, or any other club £400,000 like the WRU did, was like giving a mad man the money, you know. I think, that might have been the same for us because all of a sudden we had £400,000, everybody was giving it out like a man with no arms. If you didn't give it out you haven't got a team since you had players going because they were offered large lump sums elsewhere. I just think that they had the wrong people coaching, wrong people playing; they just didn't have the mix right. We had this money from the WRU, paid it out to players that weren't good enough and put up with a lot of nonsense. They just didn't realise what was going to happen if they didn't win games and get the right people around them. I don't think it's possible to make a profit, and I can't ever see any money being in rugby union like".

Mr Wellington and Mr McCarthey did agree that the club's playing resources were not up to standard and players were paid 'silly money'; coaches were appointed who had no



idea of how to prepare teams in the top Division One. However, disagreement arose between the two locally bred rugby stalwarts over financial resources. Whilst Brian Wellington blamed the lack of a financial ‘godfather’, Idris McCarthy pointed the finger at committees who did not have experience of managing the finances of a professional team. The club’s accountant, Paul Tedstone was quick to point out that paying players should not be allowed to threaten the financial future of the club.

“(Pause) I would say that the playing side has got to take precedent because we shouldn’t be in a scenario of ‘do we pay the players at the expense of the financial position of the club’. So I don’t want that to be the case. But at the end of the day this is a rugby club and we’re here to play rugby to the best ability that we can and that’s what it’s all orientated around. But what I’m saying is you’ve got to play the best rugby you can but within our means. Since the game went professional Newbridge has not made any profit. A strong balance sheet but no profit”.

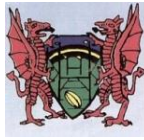
One of the reasons put forward by Brian Jones for a lack of profit since IoP was the *raison d’etre* of the club.

“A rugby club. I don’t think you can look on, it can be run as a business but I don’t think it’s ever going to make any profit. I think it’s going to be run purely to provide a team out here, as a rugby club. Our gates wouldn’t cover the team. It’s got to rely on income from other sources to run it. It would be nice mind if it switched around but I can’t quite see it”.

The club captain’s reflections on IoP were,

“When I was at the club, you know going back to ’96, it was all over the place, financially. Even on the pitch, they did have a turnover of players and coaches in my first time here and the club was going really nowhere you know”.

This downward ‘strategic drift’ was also attributed to the retirement of long serving, high quality administrators from their posts in the club, who were not replaced by people having the same knowledge, experience or feel for the Game (Conversations 24.1.98; 18.2.98; 12.5.98). The club had been members of the Premier Division since the formation of the National League in 1990. Despite the instability within the club caused by limitations on the playing and financial fronts, and the loss of experienced administrators, the club survived the first two seasons of professionalism, the team finished 9th and then 12th in the Premier Division. However, as a result of the latter position, the club was relegated from the Top Division in 1997. As an ‘outsider’ Geoff



Champion expounded his view,

“They were relegated at the wrong time after they’d had a good run in the Premier Division. I think the emphasis after relegation was on survival in Division One rather than promotion but in terms of why they declined might have been that’s got something to do with the club, not having a longer-term strategy and if that’s the case you have got to blame the club, haven’t you?”

Subsequently, Newbridge struggled to survive in the First Division finishing 18th, 20th, and 16th. The widely held view by the majority at the club was that not enough was done to find a financial backer, and reliance on the grant from the WRU was not enough to recruit the high priced quality players needed to remain in the Premier Division. The financial decisions and the decisions to recruit lower quality playing resources were strongly criticised by stakeholders. Whilst accepting that a club was only a collection of people, and that a committee was elected to represent members and make decisions on their behalf, stakeholders were quick to point the finger of blame at the then committee, especially the two ‘inexperienced’ chairmen (Conversations 18.2.98: 8.9.01: 29.10.03). As at 2000, Newbridge had failed to recover its treasured playing position in the Top Division in Wales.

6.3.3 Context

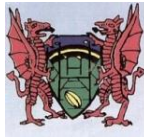
The long serving pressman, Geoff Champion, recalled the unexpected IoP,

“I don’t think anybody was ready, not even the biggest clubs were ready. I think the WRU took the brakes off overnight and I don’t think there was preparation and Newbridge and other clubs like them suffered badly because of that. Everybody was a professional, wonderful! You know you had the nonsensical situation where very small valley clubs were paying significant amounts of money to people for sitting on their bottoms! So I don’t think any club was ready, certainly not Newbridge.”

In the amateur days, the club had always managed to cover its costs, so finance had not been a major issue. Former secretary Brian Wellington observed that,

“We were always looking to plough any profit back into the team. We were looking to be in the black rather than the red, but never in the position where we were really quids in”.

The structure and legal status remained the same at Newbridge after the Game went professional. The club, like Ebbw Vale, had to replace established committeemen, prior to and just after the watershed in the Game. The break-up of the previous committee took



place at the end of season 1992/93 when the president and chairman stood down along with nine other committee members simply because of their long length of service (Appendix 3.5e). In the view of the former secretary, there was no member who had developed the capabilities to replace long-serving chairman, Mike Croad. However, over the next five seasons two members of the committee were elected to lead the club. Enquiring into the backgrounds of the two replacement chairmen, it was contended by Idris McCarthy that,

“The one guy was a baseball player who didn’t know a lot about rugby, and the other guy was an insurance bloke who didn’t know the game; nice enough people but just didn’t have any vision on how the game was. Somebody would tell them there was a good player, they didn’t know what a good player was, and they’d pay him a lot of money. Players came here with injuries and other things. No bloody good at all”!

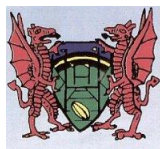
Stakeholder conversations (18.2.98; 8.9.01; 6.9.03) confirmed Mr McCarthy’s critical view of the two chairmen.

6.3.4 Summary

The preceding interpretations of the events surrounding the IoP at Newbridge, were confirmed and agreed by respondents and the majority of stakeholders. They concurred with the dimensions of the ‘shock event’, and the fact that it was unfortunate that, prior to the IoP, the club lost its long-serving, high respected chairman, Mike Croad, along with several experienced committeemen. Whilst appreciating the financial difficulties at the club, the decisions and actions taken by the chairmen and committee were strongly criticised by the stakeholders. Long serving Newbridge members were ‘saddened’ at the demise of the club and the outcome that had resulted from the unexpected IoP that of being relegated from the elite division of senior Welsh rugby clubs (Conversations 18.2.98; 8.9.01; 29.10.03).



v



6.4 Ebbw Vale RFC v Newbridge RFC; Comparison of Findings

6.4.1 Process

The abilities of the decision-makers, senior figures, differed at the two Gwent clubs. At **Ebbw Vale**, it was experienced businessman, Paul Russell, who immediately set the club a clear objective, and that was to survive in the First (Premier) Division. To achieve that target, the 'three 8's' goals were set and met in the first season, with all the stakeholders being aware of, and accepting the goals and 'buying in' to the proposed strategy (Bailey et al, 2000). Through employing a resource based strategy of recruiting North Gwent players with Premier Division experience and a local 'back to the wall' attitude, the club achieved a competitive advantage and survival (Porter, 1991). The president did not rely just on his intuition but also chose a survival strategy based on his personal rugby knowledge and experienced business background (Sharman, 1998).

Judged against local rival **Newbridge's** actions, who also encountered financial constraints, where any stated strategy or goals were noticeable by their absence (Inkpen and Choudhury, 1995). The action arising from the two chairmen at **Newbridge** was to replace those quality players who left the club with players, not only from outside Gwent, but crucially, from lower Divisions in an attempt to create a worthy team through 'bricolage' (Langley, 2007). Nevertheless, the differential payments offered to new outside players caused discontentment amongst its local players in the squad and its recruitment actions contributed to the club being relegated from the top Division after just two seasons of professionalism in 1997 (Conversations, 24.1.98: 18.2.98: 8.9.01).

Whereas various stakeholders at **Newbridge** questioned as to whether or not the two chairmen had the required rugby and, more importantly, managerial experience and competence (Jennings and Beaver, 1997), stakeholders at **Ebbw Vale** were delighted that the club had fortunately recruited such an experienced accountant as president (Lockett et al, 2009). At **Newbridge**, it was felt that the two chairman had displayed their inexperience through the recruitment of poor quality players and coaches, and also they lacked the necessary expertise needed in financial management (Gorton, 1999), especially cash, that had become such a major priority following the IoP. A common factor was that the two clubs had retained the committee structure; but under the new leadership of individuals (Bennis and Nanus, 1996), who had vastly different business experience.



6.4.2 Content (Outcomes)

In contrasting the subsequent performances of the two clubs, both depended on respective individual decision-makers and the quality of their pronouncements (Paton and Cornforth, 1992). In order for the rugby clubs to survive, the ability to set goals and achieve them was considered important, but setting goals required strategic awareness, which was evident at **Ebbw Vale** but not at **Newbridge**. The method employed by **Ebbw Vale**, the ‘goal approach’, measured progress towards the achievement of a firm’s goals, and reflected the principal’s role in determining the direction and performance of the firm (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003). Placed side by side, with **Ebbw Vale** surviving in the First Division and **Newbridge** being relegated, it is contended that the survivor, through its president, had showed evidence of rugby and managerial competence and expertise in financial management in contrast to the relegated club that struggled badly in both areas (Beaver, 2002).

The evidence also showed that **Ebbw Vale**, due to improved performance over the first five years of professionalism, increased its on-field results by **+68%**, whereas at **Newbridge** the on-field results fell **-92%**. The findings in playing performance supported the selection of comparing case studies of a ‘high performer’ against a ‘low performer’. Another of the outcomes was the change in the clubs’ governance structure, the legal format. **Ebbw Vale**, although achieving success in its first two years in the Top Division, in 1997 turned its members committee into a limited company in order to access more financial resources from the Russell brothers (Appendix 3.4f). **Newbridge**, even though lacking financial streams, kept the same structure as the amateur years with a twenty-one member management committee until 1998.

6.4.3 Context

In comparing the actions of **Ebbw Vale** and **Newbridge**, the evidence indicates that the common major concern, the ‘shock’ IoP, had pushed both clubs towards immediate, short-term planning and decision-making (Matthews and Scott, 1995). Equally, both clubs had to replace established committeemen pre-professionalism; and in **Newbridge** again after the first season of the new era (Appendix 3.5e). Whilst Paul Russell at **Ebbw Vale** was recruited more by luck than judgment, a ‘garbage can’ decision (Eisenhardt and Zbaracki, 1992), he brought both a rugby and business background to the role of president.



CHAPTER SIX: REACTION TO INTRODUCTION OF PROFESSIONALISM

Stakeholders at **Newbridge**, questioned the decision making of the committee in appointing two relatively inexperienced chairmen to lead the club. Decision-making in the two Gwent clubs was strongly influenced by the experience of those individuals who were put in positions of authority surrounding the IoP.



6.5 Llanelli RFC

6.5.1 Process

The investigation into Llanelli found that structurally, when the Game went open, the club initially kept its nine man decision-making management committee (Appendix 3.6e). However, going into a new era the club had to make an unexpected change at the helm, as explained by Marlston Morgan.

“Stuart (Gallacher) became chairman after Roy Bergiers (both former players). Roy wasn’t well at the time and he stood down and Stuart took over. We were lucky to have him; he’s not everybody’s cup of tea, but I think he’s done a tremendous job at Llanelli”.

On visits to the club, many stakeholders put forward that one avenue the club was considering was to recruit a financial backer to make up the shortfall of funding from the WRU (Conversations 7.11.95: 3.5.97: 18.10.97). One potential backer had been pinpointed by Stuart Gallacher and the committee, as elaborated by Rupert Moon.

“A money man by the name of Mel Davies came here. I sat on the bus with him (Mel Davies) and his accountant, when he said he was pumping in all this money from an offshore trust, £3 million over five years, for all these players. Even Steve McDowall, the NZ prop was going to come here; but then he (Mel Davies) decided overnight, ‘I’m not joining’, and he left us with all that huge debt because the club had spent large amounts of money on players that it didn’t have. It was by no means the lack of planning because the fact was that the club had done a lot of research on this guy, from Tenby, checked he’d got the money, and checked what he was all about. They did real stringent tests on him, being very aware of what could happen, but he was, you know, underwriting a lot, Frano Botica and that entire incident. In fairness to the club, they could have left certain individuals go, you know, saying, ‘we’re not honouring you’, someone like Frano, but then they didn’t. They were true to their word.”

The club had already decided to contract its players, with competitive high salaries, to ensure that it didn’t lose those quality players but it did so prior to actually having the funding in the bank to pay the players’ salaries. Faced with a very difficult situation, the loss of their major backer, the club claimed it had no choice but to ask all squad members to reconsider their contracts (downward) and eight players actually left the club (Parry, 1997). At the end of the 1996/97 season even club captain, International and British Lion, Ieuan Evans, left the club for more lucrative rewards at top English club, Bath Rugby. Fortunately, unlike the other two research clubs, Llanelli had capital assets, its ground



(field and large car park) and stands that it could utilise to raise funds. Taking those factors into account, former committeeman, Hefin Jenkins, acknowledged that,

“Professionalism came in; and the grandstand debt we had was compounded with the wages issue. We probably should have financed it a bit better than we did at the time”.

Elsewhere during the interviews, long-standing local reporter, Norman Lewis, critically questioned the club’s financial decisions directly following the Game going open.

“Llanelli made shocking financial decisions in the first year of professionalism. They misused professionalism in an appalling way. If any club needed to change immediately it was Llanelli. The business sense was lacking before Huw Evans arrived. Llanelli had to do something quickly and I think that they’ve done it quicker than most”.

The committee appreciated that it was crucial to hold onto its quality players if it was to maintain the club’s standing in the Game in Wales, but they appeared blinkered to the huge cost and the consequences of its pre-emptive actions with players.

6.5.2 Outcome

By 1997 the club’s perilous financial position forced the sale of its beloved Stradey Park ground to the WRU. Having been close to the action, Anthony Buchanon explained that,

“The market place dictated everything and we sold our ground to purely stay in business, because if you couldn’t pay your players they were going to go and play somewhere else. That would mean that we’d have less quality players, we’d achieve less, we’d have less support and then that would be a knock-on effect. So we had to take the gamble. We knew we had the ground, we knew we had assets. The sale of it wasn’t ideal but at least it still kept us afloat and at the top and trying to achieve. There have been mistakes there’s no doubt about it. It’s obviously somebody’s fault but those people shouldn’t have put us into this hole and we had to dig ourselves out”.

Exploring the situation at the time led to uncovering a remarkable co-incidental state of affairs. Research into the club’s history (Appendix 3.6a), had uncovered the fact that in 1898 Llanelli were in a perilous financial condition and so the club’s committee appealed to Swansea RFC to provide monetary assistance, which the ‘All Whites’ duly supplied. By a twist of fate, in 1997, almost one hundred years later, it was a Swansea rugby supporter, international businessman, Huw Evans, who offered to become its financial backer; once accepted, he promptly changed the members club into a Limited Company. However his arrival, along with a new Board of Directors, did not alter the priority of



those people running the club, as the CEO made clear.

“To be quite honest the board were more interested in the rugby, that’s why they were involved; they love the game, they love this club, the whole meeting was about two hours and it’s all armchair rugby critics. I’d be in the minority of one if I said commercial success (was the club’s priority). I think the rest of them (the Board) would rather win the Heineken Cup and lose £1million to win it but I would rather have a solid profitable business than win the Heineken Cup at all costs. Now that’s is the complete opposite view to the chairman, I can tell you. He said, you know, ‘I make the money from my own business’, but he doesn’t treat this as a business. He expects me to, but he doesn’t. He indulges himself a bit for all the right reasons, it’s not for ego or anything like that”.

The club’s mission had always been rugby orientated. The Memorandum of Association of the new company revealed Huw Evans’s intention by stating its objects as ‘to promote, encourage and foster the game of Rugby Union Football at all levels...’ (Appendix 3.6f) In effect, there had been no change to the philosophy or purpose at Llanelli RFC. The united view within Llanelli RFC seems to be performance on the field before performance off it. Huw Evans spelled out the club’s priority.

“We see it (the club) as both a rugby club and a business but the predominant culture must be the rugby, and true rugby ethics and ethos; the business is a way of supporting that. So we see them as two distinctly different things”.

Perhaps not unexpectedly from the playing side, the chairman’s view is supported by the head coach.

“When you’re talking like the rugby club, to me probably 90% of the effect of the club is about winning performances, results. So I think rugby, the rugby mentality, has to drive the rugby club. If you get your performances on the field right, other aspects of the club develop and grow, but the most important focus has to be the rugby environment”.

The club’s priority, playing performance, saw it finish 4th, 3rd, 6th, 1st, and 5th in the League from 1995, and, in addition, it maintained its record as the ‘Welsh Cup Kings’ by winning the SWALEC cup in 1997/98 and again in 1999/2000. During his interview the CEO sat back in his chair, exuding confidence with his hands behind his head, and critically defended the decisions and actions that he had instigated.

“When the game went professional we were at our weakest, the clubs. I’ll give you an example. I offered a 21 year old Welsh player £5 grand, and he went to an English club for £50 grand a year. We didn’t have any money. That was the time for the Union to



centrally contract the players and there would have been none of what we're doing now. I definitely think in 1995 none of us had the experience. The only way I had experience was because I'd been a professional rugby player. So what I'm saying is we all mismanaged, and we all over inflated the market, including Llanelli, but by our actions the club survived and is still playing in the Premier Division and in Europe. However, I think there is no question in my mind that rugby, as its present structured, cannot survive financially. It is unsustainable".

The CEO was forthright in his justification of the decisions and actions taken on the IoP. He acknowledged his, and the committee's, lack of experience in dealing with such a 'shock event' but was very direct in pointing out that, through the decisions taken, the club had achieved its goals of survival and maintaining its Premier Division status.

6.5.3 Context

As with other clubs at that time the IoP was neither expected nor planned for, as Marlon Morgan described.

"Wherever I was I just heard it on the radio, 'we're going professional'. It was never discussed or talked about, or even planned, just like 'we're going to go in a year's time at Llanelli, get prepared'. It was hard, you know, because we took a lot of stick about it. I did personally, and all the committee at Llanelli, because you know what happened, we just lost all our money because we had to buy players because if we didn't buy them then they would have gone somewhere else. We would have gone down".

Reflecting upon the question of 'luck', the club had benefitted by replacing a chairman who was a teacher and was absent due to illness, with another chairman who had a business background. Questioning the club captain, who had first-hand knowledge of that change-over event, he confirmed that,

"Stuart Gallacher came in when the world went bad in 1995, when we had to plead to the public to help us and a few players left because there was more money down the road. Stuart had come from a small business background, some success, but what he was, he was a strong character, very vocal who didn't stand for any shenanigans"

Widespread press coverage at that time stated that clubs believed that much of the uncertainty that existed in the Game in Wales was generated by the WRU, mainly because the governing body could not decide on the amount of funding to be given to support the Premier Division clubs. The press reports were corroborated by Hefin Jenkins,

"I remember Stuart Gallacher going to meetings with Vernon Pugh (WRU Chairman),



and Glanmor (Griffiths, WRU Treasurer) there as well. I recall he came back after the meetings and said 'we're going to have £400,000 each', and all our players were leaving. Phil Davies was going, Tony Copsey and other players were going, so we didn't have a team. So we went out to spend based on this £400,000, and we'd agreed contracts at these prices, when all of a sudden the WRU said 'you're only having £200,000 now'. So we're £200,000 down to start with plus we had the problem with the debt of the stand. Suddenly you're up to half a million before bloody starting you know. Oh, it was a shock because we didn't think it would come in overnight. I thought we'd have had a year, or two years, to plan it, you know. Treasurers everywhere were shitting themselves''!

The club, like all others, found itself operating in an uncertain, turbulent environment, trying to manage a unique event, the IoP, without having any previous experience of such a change in the core value of the Game. It was in this novel context that decisions about the future direction of the club were made.

6.5.4 Summary

Stakeholders at Llanelli were critical of the committee spending money which the club did not have and felt decisions were made on a last resort basis, that was, selling the ground to raise the necessary players' recruitment and retention' money (Conversations 18.10.97: 1.3.98: 9.1.99). The result of the decisions made at the club during the IoP, was that it had lost ownership of its treasured Stradey Park ground to the WRU, but it had achieved its primary objective of survival in the top Division.

6.6 Comparisons with Benchmark Club.

None of the research clubs were prepared for the advent of professionalism which, respondents all agreed, displayed the characteristics of Ansoff's (1988) 'Shock Event'. The findings provided the opportunity to analyse and understand 'how' the decisions and actions taken by individuals, and clubs, contributed to 'what' outcome occurred.

6.6.1 Process

Whilst the clubs' committees were seen as the decision-makers, behind the scene, due mainly to a lack of any crisis management team or crisis plan (Hale et al, 2006) at each club, it was an individual who was responsible for guiding the club through the minefield of professionalism. It was intuitive for Paul Russell at **Ebbw Vale**, being an experienced businessman, to adopt a SP approach, and he produced a survival strategy for the first year of professionalism, in order to meet the '3 x 8' goals (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003), he had set for the club to remain in the Premier Division; this the club successfully achieved. By contrast, the two chairmen at **Newbridge** decided that to survive as a rugby club, and unable to find a financial backer, they decided to initially operate within the bounds of the WRU grant, but through choosing this strategy the team lost quality players. Not being able to compete financially with the other premier teams, their less talented replacement players, recruited from lower Division teams, could not challenge either on, or off, the field. **Llanelli**, with chairman, Stuart Gallacher at the helm, was set a goal by its stakeholders of maintaining its position as a Premier Division club (Freeman, 2010). This pressure contributed to the committee meeting the fresh financial demands of the players they wanted to represent their club.

The governing body might have been expected to give a definitive lead with financial matters but instead they misled the senior clubs over the amount they intended to give to them. This unexpected reduction in funding had a dramatic, and negative effect on clubs' cashflows. **Ebbw Vale** raised the necessary funds to recruit elite North Gwent players; **Newbridge** saw its survival as spending money only from within the WRU grant, limiting the quality of player at the club's squad. **Llanelli** had already signed players, and the huge increase in players costs, coupled with the six figure debt outstanding on the grandstand led stakeholders to believe that the club was in dire financial difficulties and in danger of going out of business (Conversations, 7.2.98: 1.3.98; 15.5.99).

Despite its 'external' control over clubs, the lack of leadership and guidance from the WRU, combined with the threatening environment and the high level of uncertainty it could be argued, led to decreased rationality in decision-making in such a context (Dean and Sharfman, 1993). Short-term decisions were taken without considering the long term implications (Mathews and Scott, 1995, Westhead and Storey, 1996).

Nonetheless, in the unprecedented circumstances facing the new 'professional' rugby clubs at that unique time, what in all honesty could committees and decision-makers consider a 'rational' decision (Mintzberg, 1985)? As such the study's finding of the clubs' lack of any previous, frequent formal planning merely supported previous literature in this area, that strategic decision-making in small firms was limited or non-existent (Schrader et al, 1989). The clubs' decision-making was made for survival out of operational necessity (Beaver, 2003). The outcomes that arose from the resultant different decisions are examined in the next section.

6.6.2 Outcomes

It had been contended by Aram and Cowen, (1990, p65) that strategic action in small organisations only occurred belatedly following a crisis, by which time it was too late. Equally, where an event was not anticipated or expected, the response was reactive (Atherton, 2003). Previous research by Eisenhardt (1989) had found that fast decision-making was positively related to performance in a dynamic environment. The intended and unintended consequences of the clubs' decisions and actions revealed patterns of both continuity and change (Pettigrew, 1997). The prime intended consequence demanded by stakeholders was the prolonged survival of the club (All clubs' conversations post-2000). The three clubs were still existence at 2000, albeit with **Ebbw Vale** and **Llanelli** still in the Top Division, but with **Newbridge** demoted to playing in a lower division. Inside each club, only **Ebbw Vale** escaped the wrath of stakeholders concerning the 'unintended' outcomes of decisions and actions taken within the clubs around 1995. Critics within the other two clubs angrily pointed out that as a result of the choices made by their management, **Newbridge** (6.3.2) were relegated and still played in a lower Division, whilst **Llanelli** (6.5.2) had to sell its treasured Stradey Park ground to the WRU. Further club transformations are covered overleaf in the context section.

6.6.3 Context

All three clubs were united in conceding that within the external environment, the IoP was neither expected nor planned for by club committees. In addition, there was no previous similar event for the clubs to have learned from, and thus there was no ready-made solution for adoption (Schon, 1991). The research also unearthed another common factor in that none of the clubs had established a crisis management team, nor produced a crisis management plan (Hale et al, 2006). Comparing the clubs internal environment, initially when the Game went open in 1995, not one changed their structure, legal format or the size of their management committee. At **Llanelli** the management and decision-making of the club had been entrusted to a small committee of nine members since 1974, and the size and unity of the committee was put forward as one reason why the club had been so successful over the years (Iaquinto and Fredrickson, 1997). By contrast, **Ebbw Vale** and **Newbridge** had retained their committees composed of over twenty members; but unlike the **Newbridge** committee who were united, the committee at **Ebbw Vale** were not always united in their decisions (Eisenhardt and Bourgeois, 1988). Irrespective of the size of the committee, the clubs, excluding **Ebbw Vale**, appreciated that they lacked personnel with the necessary financial experience of such a critical event to overcome the difficulties thrust upon them by the IoP (Gorton, 1999).

An important issue that was common to the research clubs was that, within the committee structure, they all underwent a change of decision-makers. In their search for a new president, **Ebbw Vale** had, through luck and by chance, recruited a very successful accountant and businessman, Paul Russell. In comparable circumstances, **Newbridge** lost not only established committeemen, but also a long serving chairman, Mike Croad, who was then replaced by a less experience committee member. At **Llanelli**, the club's chairman resigned through ill health and was replaced by a self-employed businessman and former player. All the new leaders at the three clubs influenced the decisions made, and actions taken, regarding the future direction of their club (Jennings and Beaver, 1997). Within the changed environment, the decision-makers at the nonprofit clubs, where the mission was still rugby orientated, immediately realized that players would orientate themselves towards the highest payer. Nonetheless, the decision-makers at each club decided that instant action was better than any delayed decisions (Hale et al, 2006).

The committees at **Ebbw Vale** and **Llanelli** were clear on their immediate goal; survival, yes, but in the Premier Division. **Newbridge** committee's attitude was concerned only with one objective, the club's survival (Beaver, 2003). **Ebbw Vale**, and the benchmark club, **Llanelli**, knew if they wished to maintain their goal of playing at the top end of the Game, they would be faced with having to compete for individual players (resources) who possessed the 'magical' rugby flair and ability. In the short term, clubs would have to pay the new market's 'panic' high salaries for the human resource, both for their registered players and to secure high quality new recruits (Collis and Montgomery, 1995). **Ebbw Vale** and **Llanelli** were, unlike **Newbridge**, prepared to take the high risk of signing contracts before accumulating cash. These adaptive and immediate response decisions and actions, were taken because of the rapidly changing environmental circumstances (Byers and Slack, 2001).

6.7 Conclusions

The quotation at the head of the chapter, from Bailey and Johnson (1991), reinforced the decision to investigate how the IoP was handled by homogeneous Welsh rugby clubs. As a result of the findings, it was deduced that, in spite of the clubs being similar 'simple' structures, the means adopted to achieve the 'end' objective of survival were divergent at each club (Hoye et al, 2009).

Despite having the committee structure, it was individuals at the research clubs who made the important decisions (Jennings and Beaver, 1997). At **Ebbw Vale**, Paul Russell 'planned' a resource based strategy, founded on local players who gave the club a competitive advantage (Porter, 1991), and survival, which resulted in an increased on-field performance of **+68%**, over the comparative periods. In contrast, respective chairmen at **Newbridge** elected to be ultra-conservative with finances, and as a result, lost their place in the Premier Division, and the club dropped **-92%** in performance. At the benchmark club, **Llanelli** the chairman, Stuart Gallacher, exploited their capital assets to keep themselves afloat, and they proved the most consistent performer over the research decade. Nonetheless, in comparing the three clubs' alternative decisions, it was ascertained that because professionalism was unanticipated, novel, and a critical event (Ansoff, 1988), it had propelled the clubs towards immediate, short-term planning and

decision-making (Matthews and Scott, 1995). Interestingly for the study, the decisions and actions taken within the clubs were dissimilar, and had resulted in differing outcomes.

Based on the evidence that all three research clubs survived, and were still in existence, and with the exception of **Newbridge**, still playing in the Premier Division in 1999/ 2000, (the intended outcomes), it was difficult to disagree with the conclusions maintained by the decision-makers in each club; they subsequently argued that the quick response ‘survival’ decisions taken were the appropriate ones for each club, and in their eyes at least, the ‘*ends had justified the means*’ (Hale et al, 2006).

The course of action taken by each club in this study in response to the IoP (Research Theme 1) has been interpreted, analysed, and compared in this chapter, and makes an important contribution to the study. Summaries of the comparative findings can be seen overleaf, displayed in Tables 6.1, and 6.2, and an in-depth discussion, and comparison, with existent theory is performed in Chapter Eight. A closer examination of the strategy-making process employed by clubs post-professionalism is undertaken in the following chapter.

Table 6.1 Cross-Case Analysis: Comparison of the Summary of Findings from Clubs regarding Professionalism.

Club	Ebbw Vale	Newbridge	Llanelli
Findings			
Was the Club prepared for the IoP?	No	No	No
Did professionalism prove a major 'shock event'?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Club Objectives/Goals (Short-term)	Survival in Top Division	Survival	Survival in Top Division
Did Club have a 'crisis team'?	No	No	No
Who made the strategic decisions?	Individual Paul Russell	Chairman, with Committee	Individual Stuart Gallacher
Were the strategic decisions planned?	Planned	No – emergent	No – emergent
Did the Club have the required Financial Expertise?	Yes	No	No
Did Club operate only within the WRU Grant?	No	Yes	No
Did Club have Capital Assets to help Finance?	No	No	Yes
Did Club Recruit a Financial Backer?	Yes (1995) Paul Russell	No	Yes (1997) Huw Evans
What was the Club's Strategy regarding players?	Keep quality and recruit. High cost.	Let quality players go to a higher payer	Keep quality and recruit. High cost.
What was the Club's Recruiting Player Strategy?	Recruited players from North Gwent with Top Division Experience	Forced to recruit inexperienced players from outside area, and lower divisions.	Paid high salaries to recruit quality players.
Outcome of Actions Taken.	Survival in Top Division	Survival	Survival in Top Division

Key = Differentiation with evidence from other clubs.

Table 6.2

**Cross-Case Analysis: Comparison of Research Theme.
The Clubs Reactions to the Introduction of Professionalism, 1995**

Action Club	Who decided what to do?	What action did the Club take?	How was the club's performance affected by the Action taken?	What was the outcome for the club?
EBBW VALE (1880)	Paul Russell (President)	President set goals (The '3 x 8s') strategy. Members got behind it. Recruited North Gwent players. Formed Limited Company in Feb. 1997.	No profits Top Division; 7 th , 7 th , 4 th , 4 th , 6 th	Achieved prime objective of club of surviving in Top Division.
NEWBRIDGE (1888)	Two Chairmen	Stayed within budget. Recruited lower quality players and coaches. +Remained a members club.	No profits Top Division. 9 th 12th Relegation to First Division. 18 th 20 th 16 th	Actions unsuccessful. Relegation to lower Division end of season 1996/97.
LLANELLI (1872)	Stuart Gallacher (Chairman)	Tried to recruit a financial backer. Failed. Overspent on players. Paid high salaries to recruit and hold on to players. Formed Limited Company in June 1997.	No profits Top Division 4 th 3 rd 6 th 1st 5 th Won League 1998/99 Won Cup 1997/98, & 1999/00	Financial Crisis Club survived in Top Division. In 1997 club had to sell its ground to WRU to meet its debts.

Key Variance with other comparative clubs

CHAPTER 7: THE STRATEGY PROCESS, POST-1995

“The relationship between enterprise performance and management actions (or inaction) and the value and contribution of strategy is extremely tenuous and very difficult, if not impossible, to demonstrate conclusively. Only those persons immediately affected by organisational events have sufficient knowledge of the precise circumstances to be able to suggest cause and affect relationships”.

(Beaver and Jennings, 2000, Vol, 9. Iss.7).

7.1 The Sequence of Events

This chapter aimed to examine the presence or absence of strategy-making processes in sport organisations (Welsh rugby clubs) following the IoP in 1995. Within the clubs, stakeholders viewed strategy as ‘a course of action to achieve a goal’. Being a sporting organisation, operating in a new, uncertain environment, each of the research club’s primary goals was to survive the IoP, but Ebbw Vale, and Llanelli also strove to survive in the Premier Division. The benchmark West Wales club in particular, with a long traditions of success, saw the ultimate achievement as winning the League title and/or the WRU Swalec cup. In order to attain those goals, successful performances needed to be produced over a ten month season, not only within the numerous competitive games, where individual ‘battles’ had to be fought and won, but also off the field with financial performances. The competitive games required different ‘tactics’ to be employed against diverse opponents, with the capture of the trophy, and the subsequent financial reward, an indication of success for the successful team.

The Bailey et al’s (2000) six dimensional instrument was employed to determine the establishing of ‘who’ determines the strategic direction, the approach to strategy formulation, planning or incremental; the influence of any political and cultural aspects on strategy and finally the factors in the environment that limit the choice of strategy (Enforced Choice). In investigating the reactions of the clubs, it was highlighted that ‘*At its core, the strategy process involves decisions and actions, although not necessarily in that sequence*’ (Chakravarthy and White, 2002, p187). Data were extracted from the purposive sample of respondents at each club by means of a thirty-nine statements questionnaire, and subsequent interviews. Each of the six dimensions included relevant constructed statements that were pertinent to the individual dimension.

Delivery of the findings, under each heading of the six dimensions, was not only presented in words but also visually via tables because, as Pettigrew (1997, p346) stated,

“visualisation of the evidence not only cuts down on word length but also acts as an important attention director in what are often qualitative arguments. With visualisation can also come verification, the amassing of evidence to consolidate an argument and establish an analytical theme”

In addition, questions of interest to this study arising from the literature review for consideration within this Chapter are:

- What were the Roles of Managers and Club Members in the Strategy-making Process?
- Did Managers within same club agree/disagree on the patterns of process at work within the club?
- Did the perception of the patterns of process differ across managerial groups?

Whilst appreciating that *‘Respondents’ accounts are the key resource of the qualitative researcher and need to be treated as central to any interpretation’* (Curran and Blackburn, 2001, p127), it was the purpose of the qualitative investigation to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, rather than attempt to uncover a quantitative ‘singular truth’. Therefore, the findings are first contrasted by each respondent, then compared within levels (management, team management and external), then cross-analysed between clubs. The findings at each club, based on the Six Dimensional Framework (Bailey et al, 2000), are described, interpreted and compared in the following sections.

7.2 Command Dimension

In a small organisation, such as a rugby club, it might be expected that the committee would be regarded as the dominant decision-making body within each club (Chaffee, 1985). Prior to 1995 that was generally the case, but within each committee the senior figures tended to be the chairman, secretary, treasurer and fixture secretary (5.2.1; 5.2.2; 5.2.4). Such a structure was to be found in nearly every Welsh rugby club since the establishment of the sport in the 1870's (Smith and Williams, 1981). However, the investigation aimed to gain an understanding about whether or not the introduction of National Leagues and/or professionalism had changed the decision-making structure within each club. Had those major changes led to any alteration in the legal format of the club that contributed to the rise of new senior figures? To answer those questions, and to achieve the aim of this section, the following statements were put to each club respondent to seek, and determine, their opinions via agreement/disagreement levels.

1. *A senior figure's vision is our strategy.*
2. *The chief executive determines our strategic direction.*
3. *The strategy we follow is directed by a vision of the future associated with the chief executive (or another senior figure).*
4. *Our strategy is closely associated with a particular individual.*
5. *Our chief executive tends to impose strategic decisions (rather than consulting the TMT)*

The findings from each club are presented overleaf.



7.2.1 Ebbw Vale RFC

The views held by the respondents regarding Command statements were divided, and are found below in Table 7.2.1. Interestingly, whilst all respondents disagreed with statement 5, ‘CEO imposes strategic decisions’ possibly because there was no CEO in place, only the owner and captain disagreed with all the statements in this section.

Table 7.2.1 Ebbw Vale Command Responses

Position	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Owner						
Financial Backer						
Management						
Company Secretary						
Accountant						
Team Management						
Team Manager						
Coach						
Captain						
External Stakeholders						
Former Committeeman						
Press Reporter						
Long Serving Supporter						

KEY Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

It was acknowledged by stakeholders (Conversations 8.2.97: 26.9.98: 29.10.03) that when Paul Russell took over the role of Ebbw Vale RFC club president in 1995 he was considered as the senior figure on the Committee, who initiated and drove strategy forward until 1997. However, Paul Russell, in disagreeing with all command statements, played down the role of being the only senior figure, (Table 7.2.1)

“Senior figures? Myself, Marcus and Mike Ruddock. Mike is the guy who keeps us honest; he tells us what is possible. You can set a strategy that says we’re going to spend £100,000 a year on players and we’re going to top the League, but Mike says that’s strategy is unobtainable and not implementable on that kind of money”.

Other respondents (management, team management and external) clearly had no doubt about who were the club’s leader(s) as the following quotes indicate. From within the



external group, Ivor George recalled,

“The strong figure initially was obviously Paul Russell”.

Nonetheless, not every respondent agreed with that view, as Ray Harris revealed,

“Paul plays an important part, but Marcus is the strategist, the senior figure”.

Since the limited company was established in 1997, Paul, and subsequently his brother Marcus, have been seen by stakeholders as the senior figures holding the purse strings and initiating strategy (Conversations 2.5.98; 19.3.99; 1.11.00). The following quotes were representative of that view. First, long serving Alan Evans clarified his disagreement with the statements.

“A particular individual I would say ‘no’, but if you put three people, the executive, I would agree with it. Paul, Marcus and Ray Harris... were an executive directorship if you like, obviously decide some sort of strategy between the three of them. They would then come back to the board very quickly; they usually have that meeting just prior to a board meeting anyway.”

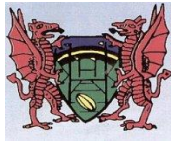
In Mr. Evans’s opinion, the ultimate decision on strategy was the responsibility of the six-member Board of Directors (Table 12a). Club Captain, Chay Billen, explained his reasoning for his disagreement with his fellow Team Management colleagues.

“If it was on the playing side I wouldn’t agree with the statements but if it was on the business side I would agree that obviously since (CEO) Tony’s left, it’s Marcus and Paul. You know as players, we’ve sat down in years gone by and we decided our vision, come up with mission statements and that sort of side of it”.

It was rather surprising therefore, that nobody from the playing staff was a Board member. Nevertheless, Mike Ruddock confirmed that he, as coach, was consulted by the Board on whether or not a strategy was viable and feasible in playing terms.

“So, basically, they were looking to implement the strategy, and then they called you in. ‘How can you help us to deliver that strategy?’

Paul and Marcus Russell saw the involvement, and empowerment, of all full-time staff having complete day-to-day responsibility for the operations, as essential for any strategy to succeed. Conversations with stakeholders (2.5.98; 19.3.99; 1.11.00), confirmed the findings that the two Russell’s provided the direction, via the Board, and that other organisational members were expected to follow.



7.2.2 Newbridge RFC

The club, not having a CEO, meant majority disagreements against statements two and five, whilst there was majority agreement with statements one, three and four. The external respondents were united in naming Idris McCarthy as the senior figure.

Table 7.2.2 Newbridge Command Responses

Position	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Owner						
Financial Backer		Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree
Management						
Company Secretary		Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree
Accountant		Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Team Management						
Team Manager		Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree
Coach		Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Captain		Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Agree
External						
Former Committeeman		Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
Press Reporter		Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Long Serving Supporter		Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Disagree

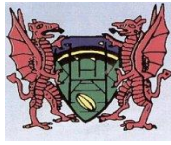
KEY **Strongly Disagree** **Disagree** **Agree** **Strongly Agree**

Stakeholders perceived problems at the helm with the committee, and the club struggled to remain in the top Division for the first two seasons of the professional era (Appendix 3.5a). Since the club was relegated, there was agreement on who has been the senior figure since 1998 (Table 7.2.2). Idris McCarthy's view on the 'senior figures' were,

"Well I'd say myself, Paul Tedstone, and Graham Paterson. The majority... would say that it's me. I know where we're going and what we want to do but I do discuss it; I even talk to supporters about things".

Within the Management section, disagreement arose between the club accountant and general secretary on there being just one senior figure. Paul Tedstone pointed out that,

"I think that the three main people here are the chairman, secretary and myself, and we all come up with ideas. We'll discuss them between ourselves and put them forward to the Board. When I was looking at 'a senior figures vision', it's not the case because



we'll talk it around the table and agree the best route forward. Then we've got like three or four different opinions or we'll all agree on the same opinion, but at least we'll look at all the options and then think which one is the best way forward".

Graham Paterson, one of the 'trio' of senior figures, viewed it slightly different.

"Our chairman Idris McCarthy, is the senior figure without doubt. Why do I think Idris? Idris came into the club six years ago. He's been chairman five seasons, and it's his know how, his contacts, he's got the time, because he's running a business that allows him the time to do things. I couldn't put it strong enough that HE'S our driving force. He's got a management board of six people who assist him and there's an additional ten people who form the General Committee. Idris is not over powering but he is a strong character and we get on like a house on fire".

Externally, long serving supporter, Brian Jones, did see one leader but then took a pluralistic view of the command statements,

"There are senior figures. I'd say, the executive, the management committee; they are the lead body but they do certainly speak to others. They don't sort of take anything on, as I see it, purely on their own say so, they do discuss things; so it was a Board sort of approach to it. I'd see Idris as the leader, but he'll make decisions based on discussions though mind. So it's not like a one-man thing".

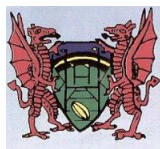
Within the Team Management, coach Jonathan Westwood disagreed with the statements but his explanation was somewhat contradictory,

"Really in terms of one senior figure, no one's very, very powerful in as much that they drive the club single handed. It seems to be done very much in conjunction with the team management as much as the club, if you know what I mean. You've obviously got the guy who makes all the decisions in terms of bringing order to the club, for a better word, and that is Idris".

Whilst Idris McCarthy was acknowledged as the senior figure by most respondents, not everyone saw strategy as solely his vision or choice (Table 7.2.2); equally, stakeholders (Conversations, 8.9.01: 22.10.02: 29.10.03) felt that the decision-making process was still the responsibility of the management committee and that was why the chairman appreciated the need to get the management committee on board with him. However, there was no-one from the playing staff on the management committee. The TMT at Newbridge saw their role as providing direction for the club, with organisational members then implementing the actions required.



V



7.2.3 Ebbw Vale RFC v Newbridge RFC; Comparison of Findings

Arising out of both the questionnaire and interviews was that the two financial backers, Paul Russell at Ebbw Vale and Idris McCarthy, Newbridge, had opposing views on the Command statements. Whilst the management and team managements at Ebbw Vale disagreed over the command statements, respondents within the management and team management were united in disagreeing not only with the statements but also with the views of the owner.

Table 7.2.3 Comparison of Command Responses

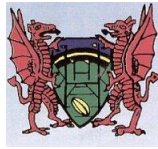
Position	Ebbw Vale	Newbridge
Owner		
Management		
Team Management		
External Stakeholders		

KEY Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Prior to the IoP, at **Ebbw Vale** and **Newbridge**, the committees were similar, made up of over twenty+ members (Appendix 3.4e & 3.5e). Post 1995, strategy-making at **Ebbw Vale** continued to be top down (Bourgeois and Brodwin, 1984), but from an individual rather than a committee. Paul Russell possessed both legitimate and expert power (Trenberth, 2003) through his appointment as the autocratic decision-making president (Yukl, 1998), but interestingly, from 1997, he did not see himself as the one single leader when his brother joined the club (Table 7.2.1). The various levels of management within the club were divided over the command statements. The club accountant and company secretary were in agreement with each other, but disagreed with the owner. The team management were divided amongst themselves but overall were narrowly in agreement with the owner. The group of external stakeholders were also divided over their responses.



V



There was no united response to the command statements.

By comparison at **Newbridge**, up to 1998, the deductive management ‘top down’ approach to strategy (Nonaka, 1988) was still found at the club. The club’s officers were responsible for making strategy with the management committee giving its support (Bourgeois and Brodwin, 1984). However, since 1998, the new chairman (and financial backer), had assumed responsibility of driving the club forward along with a reduced management committee of six members. By comparison to the financial backer at **Ebbw Vale**, Idris McCarthy did not play down the fact that he considered himself the leader at the club (Bennis and Nanus, 1996), but consulting with senior colleagues before reaching a final decision. Strategy was initiated by the small committee, with some members feeling it was reached through a joint decision-making process, and then with other organisation club members implementing the policy. The management level at **Newbridge** disagreed with the statements and with the view of the owner. Whilst disagreement with the owners’ views was common to both clubs, there were opposing reasons for the disagreement. Similar to **Ebbw Vale**, the **Newbridge** team management disagreed with the command statements; but they also disagreed with the owner’s views. Idris McCarthy’s views did find agreement from the external stakeholders. Findings revealed disagreement amongst the various levels at both clubs over the command statements.



7.2.4 Llanelli RFC

At Llanelli there were considered to be ‘senior figures’ at each level of management i.e. financial backer, CEO and head coach. Nevertheless, the chairman and backer, Huw Evans was viewed by stakeholders as the senior figure (Conversations, 9.1.99: 23.12.00: 20.9.03).

Table 7.2.4 Llanelli Command Responses

Position	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Owner						
	Financial Backer					
Management						
	CEO					
	Accountant					
Team Management						
	Team Manager					
	Coach					
	Captain					
External						
	Former Committeeman					
	Press Reporter					
	Long Serving Supporter					

KEY:  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

Illness had forced club chairman, ex-teacher Roy Bergiers, to resign and he was replaced by self-employed businessman Stuart Gallacher, who took over the mantle of guiding the future of the club. After two seasons of financial difficulties, a member of the club, Peter Jones, saw the opportunity of bringing in a sound financial backer but one who was a rugby supporter from local rivals Swansea. The backer, Huw Evans explained,

“I thought they (Llanelli) were sorted. I had no idea that this was not the case. I was fed up at watching the demise of Welsh rugby, wanting to do something and here was an opportunity to go in and help. I went in very, very hands off but I found myself drawn in more and more to the survival strategy for the club, and that initially meant having some very hard conversations with all the players, lowering their salaries, voluntary reductions, and helping the club on their business planning; but again only in survival mode. So the strategy has been to survive. We’ve all got a vision of the club, it’s



everyone's vision that we would be the leading European rugby club, and that was deep, so deeply rooted in each of the individuals involved; it's actually been our biggest component for survival. People believe in the club in a way that I find is unique. The reason I personally got involved was because I sensed that these people were fighting for something that they felt was very special".

The chairman's strong disagreement that 'strategy is closely associated with a particular individual' or 'a senior figure's vision was our strategy' was not supported by responses gathered at interview from any other club respondent except the CEO, Stuart Gallacher.

"The strategy is actually developed by the Board and I certainly wouldn't say that the strategy is implemented by one individual. I think it's more of a team effort".

When Llanelli RFC Ltd was formed in 1997 (Appendix 3.6a), the WRU had put a 'golden share' of £500,000, into the company on its formation. On the Board of Directors, stakeholders acknowledged there were three senior figures; the chairman, who was the major shareholder, the CEO and the head coach; but, as Norman Lewis pointed out,

"Huw Evans is obviously the major figure by a long, long way because without him there would be no Llanelli. An all-powerful figure who actually pulls all the strings particularly the purse strings. He's the man who actually keeps Llanelli afloat."

This view of the major figure in the club was put to stakeholders in conversations. There was little doubt that they considered Huw Evans as THE main man at Llanelli, whose power came from having that most essential resource – money (Llanelli Conversations 18.10.97: 1.3.98: 9.1.99) During discussions, Hefin Jenkins offered an interesting insight into the early involvement of Huw Evans.

"I think probably the broad decision is made by the board. Obviously more now by the chairman than the chief executive, but it's obviously the chief executive that follows it through then. Huw is a rugby man but probably hasn't had the experience of running a club as such, as most businessmen who came in when it went professional; and a lot of them learned by mistakes. So, as in Huw's case, he listened to advice probably from Stuart (CEO) and other people who had been associated with the club over a period, and he's learned that you know".

Probing deeper around this subject uncovered a comparative view to that of Hefin Jenkin's. The captain, Rupert Moon, appeared happy to explain that,

"Huw Evans is very much the silent partner, but through Stuart his voice can be heard."



He is a very shrewd businessman, and recognises there has to be accountability and responsibility, but recognises that we didn't have any of that before. It was very much shouldered, prior to professionalism, on Gareth Jenkins, to manoeuvre and sort everything out. Then, when Stuart came in earnest, it started with Stuart trying to do a bit of everything, but he was the real guy that stepped up to the plate when needed, really”.

Questioning of the captain revealed that he considered Stuart Gallacher as the leader of the club when Huw Evans rescued them. In addition, Rupert Moon also disclosed the investment that the chairman had put into his CEO.

“Huw Evans wanted to see what Stuart was like, what he was capable of. Definitely. Huw had guided him and pointed him in the direction and what he did, he very wisely trained Stuart up. He sent Stuart off on a CEO course. Not many people know that he actually went on a chief executive course for football clubs, and with CEOs from other sports, and he came in some ridiculously high percentage of all the chief executives. Behind the scenes without the publicity, Stuart was getting additional skills, to improve his own skills but that was through Huw you know, who built a steady team around him. Nonetheless, it was basically Stuart who was having to make some hard decisions”

The findings from the interviews and from stakeholders (Conversations 1.3.98: 9.1.99: 20.9.03) revealed that whilst there were deemed to be leaders at Management level, CEO Stuart Gallacher, and at Team Management level, coach Gareth Jenkins, the collective view at Llanelli clearly placed Huw Evans as the dominant powerhouse, THE ‘senior figure’ since he joined the club.

7.2.5 Comparisons with the Benchmark Club.

The contrast between the management level in each club, and between the three clubs, on their perceptions of senior figures is clearly highlighted below in Table 7.2.5.

Table 7.2.5 Comparison of Command Responses by Levels

Position	Club	Ebbw Vale	Newbridge	Llanelli
Owner				
Management				
Team Management				
External Stakeholders				
Overall Acceptance of Dimension				

KEY  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

The overall reply from respondents was agreement that there was a senior figure(s) who was closely associated with a ‘vision’ at each club (Shrivastava and Nachman, 1989). **Llanelli**, were the only club who had a CEO at the time the questionnaire was issued; respondents from the other clubs at their interviews pointed to the lack of a CEO being the reason for the low agreement with some statements from different levels of respondent amongst the clubs (Table 7.2.6 overleaf). The financial backers, the chairmen, at **Llanelli**, **Ebbw Vale** and **Newbridge**, were considered to be the ‘power brokers’ by stakeholders (Hickson et al, 1986). At **Ebbw Vale** and **Newbridge** Team Management felt they were involved with strategic decisions, those affecting the team rather than the entire club. Whilst views differed on the Command statements at the various levels at the two Gwent clubs, all the levels at **Llanelli** were in agreement on a senior figure (Table 7.2.5).

Table 7.2.6 Cross-Case Analysis: Comparison by Club of Command Statements

Club	Ebbw Vale (n=9)	Newbridge (n=9)	Llanelli (n=9)
Statements			
1. A senior figure's vision is our strategy.			
2. The CEO determines our strategic direction.			
3. The strategy we follow is directed by a vision of the future associated with CEO (or other senior fig.)			
4. Our strategy is closely associated with a particular individual.			
5. Our CEO tends to impose strategic decisions (rather than consulting the TMT).			

KEY:  **Strongly Disagree**  **Disagree**  **Agree**  **Strongly Agree**

As is evident from Table 7.2.6 above, the overall responses from those interviewed at **Llanelli** were in agreement with the statements on the Command dimension, whilst there was disagreement at the Gwent clubs concerning some statements. The disagreement with statements 2 and 5 found at **Ebbw Vale** and **Newbridge** was due, as stated by respondents, to there being no CEO at either club.

7.3 Planning

Planning is an intentional process involving a logical, sequential, analytic and deliberate set of procedures where the internal and external environments are systematically analysed. The organisation evaluates many alternative strategic options before selecting the strategy that maximizes the value of outcomes in relation to the organisation's objectives. The selected strategy is then detailed in the form of precise implementation plans and is subsequently monitored and controlled (Chaffee, 1985). It is assumed that the TMT develop the strategy and those lower down the organization implement it (Hart, 1992). However, in a small rugby club, is there a need for such formal planning? Does the club have the necessary time, resources and 'visionary' leader(s) to plan? As such, could it be expected that operational (day-to-day) planning takes priority? To comprehend the degree of planning in the research clubs, the following statements were put to each respondent to determine their agreement or disagreement.

6. *Our strategy is made explicit in the form of precise plans*
7. *When we formulate a strategy it is planned in detail.*
8. *We have precise procedures for achieving strategic objectives.*
9. *We have well-defined planning procedures to search for solutions to strategic problems.*
10. *We meticulously assess many alternatives when deciding on a strategy.*
11. *We evaluate potential strategic options against explicit strategic objectives.*
12. *We have definite and precise strategic objectives.*
13. *We make strategic decisions based on a systematic analysis of our business environment.*



7.3.1 Ebbw Vale RFC

As seen in Table 7.3.1, out of the nine respondents' replies there was just one disagreement with any statement. Otherwise all the respondents completed questionnaires showed agreement regarding formal planning within the club. Nonetheless, the interviews did reveal some differences in respondents' perceptions of planning.

Table 7.3.1 Ebbw Vale Planning Responses

Position	Statement	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Owner									
Financial Backer									
Management									
Company Secretary									
Accountant									
Team Management									
Team Manager									
Coach									
Captain									
External									
Former Committeeman									
Press Reporter									
Long Serving Supporter									

KEY: Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Appreciating the dynamic changes and uncertainty that existed in Welsh rugby following professionalism, the new president directed the club along a business path that led to the production of a strategic plan. He strongly agreed with the statements in this section.

"We produce a strategic plan each year, which is discussed by the Board and, formally adopted is too strong a word, but we decide to go with them. We say 'right, this is the strategy we're going to follow,"

Interviewing the Club's full-time company secretary, and the club's accountant, established that they agreed with the president but had somewhat different views on the formulation. Ray Harris recalled that,

"The plans would be in the minutes of the Board meeting. Again, are plans formulated? Yes, we are all realists, striving for the same thing, making it very easy".



The club accountant, Terri Morgan, offered her interpretation of the planning period.

“To a certain level I think they do plan although they don’t formalise it. Plans are made and, depending on what is happening within that particular season, then we try to implement them as fast as possible. We do look at a longer term but that’s not always feasible as things change from season to season, so annual was probably correct”.

Looking at the responses to the formal Planning section of the questionnaire found strong agreement from the club respondents on nearly all the statements. Answers obtained clearly revealed that detailed, precise plans were formulated for meeting explicit strategic objectives (Table 7.3.1). Pursuing the talk of a Strategic Plan with Alan Evans, he confirmed the presence of a Five Year Plan to meet objectives.

“There was a five year plan to get us a deal on the Heineken Cup level, to get us as far up the Premier Division as we could. We got to fourth a couple of years ago, but were piped because Swansea and Cardiff came back one year. So the five year plan actually did go a bit astray because we ended up in the Heineken Cup once one year and we failed on the other two occasions. To go up the table I think we really succeed for a few years because we were getting about an average of fourth, somewhere around that like, which suited us; but because of cash flow problems things changed dramatically the five year plan. Basically it came to an end I suppose, and it went out of the window by just not achieving what we set out to do. So instead of having a five year plan, all of a sudden, ‘God we’ve got to do a one-year plan and survive’, and that’s been the case ever since”.

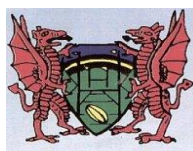
When considering the players perspective, the captain, Chay Billen, explained that,

“As club captain I was involved with the Board of Directors meeting up, myself and Mike were involved with them. Wouldn’t say I had a lot of input into it but I obviously saw what was going on and listened intently to what was being said. So it was evident from the meetings that it was a pretty professional planning set-up”.

Whilst all respondents believed the club did plan (Table 7.3.1) some questioned the depth of the planning. Working at the coal-face, the team manager offered a critical alternative view that had not been reflected in his questionnaire.

“We spend a lot of time firefighting. Whether you call that adjusting, on-going adjustments or anything, it’s firefighting in reality”.

Stakeholders spoke of the ‘Russell strategy’ (the 3 x 8’s goals) but none recalled seeing a written plan (Conversations, 8.3.97: 2.5.98: 29.10.03). Transmission of ‘the plan’ was through verbal, rather than written, communication. No evidence of any detailed written plans was produced, or seen during, throughout the research.



7.3.2 Newbridge RFC

Whilst most internal respondents mainly agreed with the statements, (Table 7.3.2), two of the external respondents clearly disagreed with the statements on planning. However, during interviews some respondents appeared to contradict the marks awarded to the various statements.

Table 7.3.2 Newbridge Planning Responses

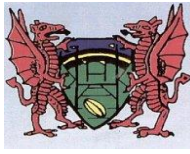
Position	Statement	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Owner									
Financial Backer									
Management									
Company Secretary									
Accountant									
Team Management									
Team Manager									
Coach									
Captain									
External									
Former Committeeman									
Press Reporter									
Long Serving Supporter									

KEY: **Strongly Disagree** **Disagree** **Agree** **Strongly Agree**

It was established that there was no planning at Newbridge for the IoP, and neither had relegation influenced or changed the planning process. The opinion of Idris McCarthy, club chairman, regarding planning was,

“In minutes of meetings, yer, you know. We know generally where we want to go but we know what’s going on with all the plans. We have meetings and we minute it, as and when we need to have them meetings really; there’s a plan but not in writing. That is a change from the old committee who’d talk about anything and take all night to do it. There’s no point was there”?

During questioning of the club accountant, he confirmed the chairman’s view of the informal approach.



“With regards to strict precise plans, there’s a plan but not in writing. There’s a plan of what we’ve discussed and a budget in terms of ‘we couldn’t achieve that and we couldn’t achieve this, etc’”.

In contrasting the views of club respondents, disagreement with the statements came from different levels. The Team Management’s views, including captain Damion Cooper, on recording a plan, agreed with those of the club’s Management,

“We don’t have written plans as such”.

As evident from Table 7.3.2, two of the external respondents disagreed with the majority of statements on planning. Reporter, Geoff Champion questioned if, throughout his long forty-five years of association, the club ever had a ‘planned’ strategy.

“I’m not convinced. I haven’t seen it personally, and I don’t think the people of Newbridge have seen a clear strategy. If it’s there it’s not visible; and if they want to have a much clearer focus, in my view they’ve got to make it visible”.

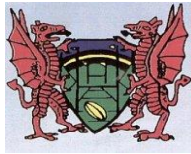
Without knowing what any plan aimed to achieve and not understanding the strategy to attain any goals set, people might decide not to support the club. Former secretary and committeeman, Brian Wellington, was of the same opinion, casting doubts as to whether or not the club practiced formal planning.

“You’ve got to take action and change direction. I’m not saying we didn’t do that, but we didn’t do it against the base of having had a plan”.

Following relegation from the Premier Division in 1997, the club did set itself a new objective, that of returning to the Top Division (Graham Paterson Interview). Nevertheless, the situation at Newbridge was found to be that, due to the changing and uncertain environment, they did not have formal, written plans but relied on the minutes of weekly committee meetings. Stakeholders confirmed that formal planning had only previously taken place when necessity demanded, as in the case of having to replace, and rebuild, two destroyed clubhouses (Conversations, 3.5.97: 24.11.01: 29.10.03). No written evidence of SP was produced.



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7.3.3 Ebbw Vale RFC v Newbridge RFC; Comparison of Findings

Both the financial backers at ‘high performing’ **Ebbw Vale**, and ‘low performing’ **Newbridge**, agreed with all of the statements on planning. However, when interviewed, all respondents indicated that neither club had a ‘crisis management committee’ that had planned for any unexpected event such as IoP (Hale et al, 2006).

Table 7.3.3 Comparison of Planning Responses

Position	Ebbw Vale	Newbridge
Owner		
Management		
Team Management		
External Stakeholders		

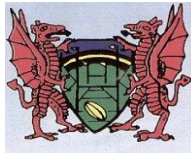
KEY  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

Planning at **Ebbw Vale** came from the top down in the shape of new president Paul Russell. It was his fresh vision and strategy, employing a (3 x 8’s) goal approach (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003), that members believed contributed to the club’s survival in the Top Division by adopting a structured development plan (Bracker and Pearson, 1986). On the other hand, **Newbridge** continued to look to the committee, including the chairman, to move the club forward. There was no clear survival strategy planned due, it was said by stakeholders, to the lack of financial resources and poor decision-making (Conversations 3.5.97: 24.11.01: 29.10.03).

Following the club becoming a limited company, **Ebbw Vale** did produce a five year, written strategic plan in 1998 but owing to the dynamic environment the plan was



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scrapped and a shorter, annual plan took its place. As shown in Table 7.3.3, most of **Ebbw Vale** responses were in agreement with the Planning statements. (At **Newbridge** less responses were in agreement with the same statements). The plans were not formalised, rather they were intuitive plans of a short duration but were part of the minutes of Board meetings.

At **Ebbw Vale** and **Newbridge**, there was no evidence produced or found regarding any formal, written plans; in fact, several respondents confirmed that formal, written plans were absent, not produced, within the clubs (Inkpen and Choudhury, 1995). Rather what little planning was undertaken at each club was recorded in the minutes of committee meetings. Paul Russell at **Ebbw Vale** did plan amidst the turbulent environment and achieved the objectives set by the club (Hart and Banbury, 1994). At **Newbridge**, the chairman contended that it was impossible to plan in such a dynamic environment (Risseuw and Marsuel, 1994) but not supporting that view with any facts or figures. Whilst stakeholders had difficulty in seeing a clear, visible strategy (Conversations, 18.9.96: 3.5.97: 29.10.03), members of the club's executive management committee confirmed, during interviews, that there was a strategy based on an emergent approach (Idenburg, 1993).

Ebbw Vale had experienced difficulties in implementing operational plans. Interviews uncovered that poor fixture planning by the WRU had seriously affected the club's bank overdraft and there were occasions when revenue streams were badly hit due to the fact that the club had only one home League fixture in sixteen weeks. The Board of Directors reaction had to be quick and decisive to resolve this critical financial problem (Matthews and Scott, 1995). Whilst the club did plan, it was not formal or written, and due to a dynamic environment the club adopted more of an emergent approach to strategy (Richardson, 1995). At **Newbridge**, it was appreciated that OP was important to the survival of the club.



7.3.4 Llanelli RFC

With the odd exception, particularly the views of the captain, respondents were in agreement with the statements regarding formal planning (Table 7.3.4). However, the benchmark club did not have a ‘crisis management plan’ (Hale et al, 2006).

Table 7.3.4 Llanelli Planning Responses

Position	Statement	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Owner									
Financial Backer									
Management									
Company Secretary									
Accountant									
Team Management									
Team Manager									
Coach									
Captain									
External									
Former Committeeman									
Press Reporter									
Long Serving Supporter									

KEY:  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

The belated entrance in 1997 of Huw Evans as financial backer, brought an experienced businessman into the club with strategic thinking and vision; he revealed that,

“There were plans which support our current budgets, and tactics around how we create or control those revenue and cost lines. That’s on an annual basis. And our survival plans have been reviewed on a regular basis and modified on a regular basis. But now we’re getting into true ‘how to survive’, with true SP and we were developing written strategies to support the delivery of our objectives and so forth. So that’s the phase we’re now going into. There are real strategic objectives now, and a vision. We have lots of strategies about our survival”.

It was evident from interviews and conversations that, since the arrival of Huw Evans, the club had followed a survival strategy. The CEO, coach and team manager in particular, strongly agreed that the club had moved into planning mode since 1997,



because previously the club had no formal, written plans. The Board intended to move towards developing written strategic plans to achieve the club's objectives, which undermined those respondents who said that the plans were currently visited on a regular basis and modified where necessary. Nonetheless, when interviewed the club captain Rupert Moon, disagreed with comments of the Owner, Management and Coach, openly stating,

"From a business plan point of view only, I've not seen a business plan for the future but I understand they do have one. You know they're talking about moving stadium but they are thinking about five years down the line and what benefit it could be further on"

However, his view point was similar to that of most respondents from within the Team Management section at each club. The emphasis of this particular group of individuals was on OP and not SP. The captain's thoughts on planning once again,

"Yea, when I first started here, Phil Davies (Coach) was meticulous in keeping detailed information, forward planning and his thinking about rugby. Gareth (Jenkins) didn't translate well, because he's not particularly good at the old writing and everything like that, but he articulated well, and he's always had a second in command like Buc (Team Manager) to write it down. He always thought further down the line. What he (GJ) was always very good at, he was strong in his opinion but would listen and make people know that he would listen to what they had to say. He'd like to have generals around him that would help in guiding him but he is very visionary in what he thought was needed to succeed on the field".

During his interview, the CEO gave a unique insight into the priorities of Directors at their Board meetings.

"We have had to put a business plan together, for two reasons; firstly, so the Chairman knows how big his bond has got to be for another year. Secondly, we do it for the bank. I present it to the board and it's a break-even position for next season if all the cards turn over the right way. Then I do another business plan, worse scenario which was a £1million loss. So what I'm trying to say is that we do definitely have a strategy in writing which is in place from 1st July, and I put in that things like increases in prices and what I think we're going to get from these, going forward. Sometimes it's a load of bollocks, it's not achievable. We have a quarterly board meeting. To be quite honest the board are more interested in the rugby, that's why they are involved. They love the game, they love this club; the whole meeting is about two hours and it's all armchair critics. They go through my chief executive commercial report in about ten minutes. "Well done Stuart, good fine, that's it. Now Gareth, about the rugby side..."



The CEO's description of the Board meeting was confirmed by Hefin Jenkins.

"The objective of the current board is to be successful on the field, there's no two ways about that. The people that came aboard were rugby people then and that was a good thing. Obviously the heritage directors, were put there to ensure that whoever did come in as directors didn't just come in, strip the club of assets, and walk away. I think coming back again to the point of view of being a rugby club, the people in charge of the side have got goals; the rugby this year where we more or less threw the league away for the sake of concentrating on Europe. We saw that as a goal. We had a strong side and you know that the side was going to develop to a certain point and then it will disappear. So I think they aimed for Europe this year, but unfortunately they didn't achieve it. The cost is we could have lost out in the placement for Europe next year because the WRU hadn't decided on the league strategy, position, sorry. So there is a plan from that point of view".

Since the arrival of Huw Evans, stakeholders stated that they had heard of 'a plan' but had not seen any evidence (Conversations, 22.4.00: 28.4.02: 20.9.03). For whatever reason, no solid evidence of a formal, written plan was produced.

7.3.5 Comparison with the Benchmark Club

Both the high, and low, performers from Gwent were in agreement with the Planning statements (Table 7.3.5).

Table 7.3.5 Comparison of Planning Responses by Club Levels

Position	Ebbw Vale	Newbridge	Llanelli
Owner			
Management			
Team Management			
External Stakeholders			
Overall Acceptance of Dimension			

KEY  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

Ebbw Vale planned a survival strategy to remain in the top division, whereas at **Newbridge**, despite the united responses, neither planned nor adjusted following the IoP. The undeniable outcomes were that **Ebbw Vale** achieved their goal of top division survival, but that **Newbridge** were relegated to the lower division. As at **Ebbw Vale**, management respondents at **Llanelli** were in strong agreement with the planning statements, yet described reactions to events through intuition and ‘gut feeling’ (Chakravarthy and White, 2002) rather than through a formal planning process. Nonetheless, the club survived in the Premier division. Within each club, the statements on formal planning were either agreed or strongly agreed (Table 7.3.6) although no evidence was produced of any written SP. Stakeholders agreed with respondents that the standard timeframe for strategy-making was determined by the seasonal nature of rugby.

Table 7.3.6 Cross-Case Analysis: Comparison by Club of Planning Statements

Club	Ebbw Vale (n=9)	Newbridge (n=9)	Llanelli (n=9)
Statements			
6. Our strategy is made explicit in the form of precise plans	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree
7. When we formulate a strategy it is planned in detail.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree
8. We have precise procedures for achieving strategic objectives.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree
9. We have well-defined planning procedures to search for solutions to strategic problems.	Agree	Agree	Agree
10. We meticulously assess many alternatives when deciding on a strategy.	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
11. We evaluate potential strategic options against explicit strategic objectives.	Agree	Agree	Agree
12. We have definite and precise strategic objectives.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
13. We make strategic decisions based on a systematic analysis of our business environment.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

KEY:  **Strongly Disagree**  **Disagree**  **Agree**  **Strongly Agree**

The comparison of the overall responses from the respondents at each club revealed general agreement with the statements on planning. However, the written and verbal evidence did not always match up with the actual research findings.

7.4 Incremental Planning

Planning can be either intended or emergent. This section sought to examine the findings concerning the incremental perspective. Previous research had found that planning could adopt various characteristics i.e. written/unwritten, formal/informal, flexible/inflexible, complex/simple, and structured/unstructured. With limited resources, skills and time available, it could be argued that the small organisation was constrained from engaging in the rational, intended mode of formal planning (Table 2.14). Hence the rugby club should engage in the incremental, emergent approach to planning as it responded to the need to change. Strategy develops through continual small-scale adjustments and experimenting, responding to the need to change and subject to review.

The study aimed to search for, identify, then describe and evaluate, incremental planning characteristics found in rugby clubs. The statements for consideration, and subsequent discussion, in this section were,

14. *Our strategy develops through a process of ongoing adjustment.*
15. *Our strategy is continually adjusted as changes occur in the market place.*
16. *To keep in line with our business environment we make continual small-scale changes to strategy.*
17. *Our strategies emerge gradually as we respond to the need to change.*
18. *We keep early commitment to a strategy tentative and subject to review.*
19. *We tend to develop strategy by experimenting and trying new approaches in the market place.*



7.4.1 Ebbw Vale RFC

The view, the body language and vocal tone of the financial backer, Paul Russell, on disagreeing with the incremental planning statements, was strong and unmistakable.

“I’m a great believer in having a plan and sticking to it. So the small incremental changes we tend to make at Ebbw Vale are a very tiny number”.

The president’s view was not fully supported by other respondents, especially those in Team Management and External (Table 7.4.1). The exception was statement 19, on developing strategy by experimenting and using new approaches.

Table 7.4 1 Ebbw Vale Incremental Responses

Position	Statement	14	15	16	17	18	19
Owner							
	Financial Backer						
Management							
	Company Secretary						
	Accountant						
Team Management							
	Team Manager						
	Coach						
	Captain						
External							
	Former Committeeman						
	Press Reporter						
	Long Serving Supporter						

KEY: Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

At the coalface, the reality of the problems faced by the club in trying to approach planning rationally, were explained, with some animated feeling, by Ray Harris.

“When I first started, within three months we really had to grasp and alter the way the club was running. We then put forward a three-year plan, which was a good plan. It relied on certain things; it relied on the Union delivering their bit, and it relied on the Premier Clubs realising that to take Welsh rugby forward that we had to be looking to strengthen the whole base of the league. That has not gone ahead; the environment out there has made it impossible to follow through any plan. (Reads), ‘to keep in line with our



business environment we might have continue small-scale changes of strategy', we have to. 'Our strategies emerge gradually'; we don't have time, for example, there you were, planning a year ahead and suddenly you end up with one home fixture in four months. So this time you look at your cash flow situation which was what we did. At one point within that period we were £250,000 overdrawn with a £5,000 facility with the bank. Marcus and Paul don't have the money to put in to get us through that. We had three days to come up with a strategy to solve that. That is just one example. I could think of loads such as losing players, losing coaches, the council taking the lease off us. When that happens you again have the ability within the Board of Directors to be able to respond very, very quickly and whilst we still have the ultimate aim we have got to take these steps, but we don't have time for them to emerge gradually. We couldn't wait a month for a meeting, its people on the phone straight away. 'This was happening. How do we do this? What do we do'? It might have involved a Board meeting it might have not, and, (reads) 'we keep early commitment tentative, subject to review', we don't have time. When you got to react in that situation, once you decide you have to have a confidence in the ability of the people that have been involved to come up with the right strategy''.

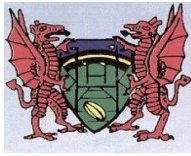
Despite the quoted situations seriously affecting the cash flow and bank overdraft, the Board of Directors had the ability to react very quickly and resolve the resulting threatening financial situation. Whilst interviewing Alan Evans, he expressed reasons for the lack of formal planning, and also to some extent incremental planning.

"There were two basic aims; keeping professional rugby and keeping a Premiership team in Ebbw Vale, but of course things come in your way and I wouldn't say its panic management, it was certainly (pause)... 'stop the rot' management for want of a better word. Yer, you have to change small things, which could have been mountains if they'd been allowed to grow and that's the way it was done otherwise we would have been out of business the next day. It was that close. You've got no time to bloody experiment; you had to do it, literally. Then it was down to creating a strategy whereby we were, at one stage it was bad enough, we were surviving month by month, if not week by week. And I certainly know... Novemberish... of the first year we were going from day to day, the basic walk was from day to day. You know that if you had x amount of cash in you could pay x amount of cash out and if you didn't have it, boy you didn't pay out; and you literally went for about a month, we went from day to day, where plans were restructured every morning. First thing that Ray Harris, not Ray, Tony Dillaway (then CEO) and Terry (accountant) did was go through what they actually had to play with at 9:00 o'clock in the morning and that went on for quite some time, but we had to be honest''.

Equally, from within the Team Management, Doug Taylor was quick to point out that, *"The Club just has not had the time to experiment; it's firefighting in reality"*



In spite of the views held by Paul Russell, stakeholders at Ebbw Vale believed that rapidly changing circumstances had pushed the club into adopting more of an emergency, rather than an emergent, approach to strategy (Conversations, 15.4.00: 24.3.01: 29.10.03). Whilst there were verbal examples of planning presented by the club respondents, no written documentation was produced. Rather it was said to be found, recorded, in the minutes of meetings, which were not seen by the researcher.



7.4.2 Newbridge RFC

Overall there was strong agreement from respondents for statements 14 to 17, and whilst agreement was reached on 18, there was disagreement, as at Ebbw Vale, regarding statement 19 (Table 7.4.2).

Table 7.4.2 Newbridge Incremental Responses

Position	Statement	14	15	16	17	18	19
Owner							
Financial Backer							
Management							
Company Secretary							
Accountant							
Team Management							
Team Manager							
Coach							
Captain							
External							
Former Committeeman							
Press Reporter							
Long Serving Supporter							

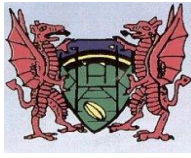
KEY: Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

There was general agreement from respondents for the club to develop strategy through small, continuing adjustments to respond to the changing rugby environment. The chairman, Idris McCarthy, during his interview, explained that the club had a strategy and that it followed the emergent approach rather than the planned approach.

“The strategies tend to emerge. It’s like trying to plan games isn’t it? Things change as you go along and you have to catch on to it as you’re going like. I couldn’t see how you can plan for the long-term”.

Pursuing the view that long-term planning was difficult in a rugby environment, an explanation was offered by club accountant, Paul Tedstone;

“I think cash flow in a club like ours dictates strategy and dictates lots of issues because for example, members say could afford to give us £3000 from the member’s charities. So



we say great £3,000, right it's going towards painting the roof, but it went to propping up the salaries because we couldn't pay the boys on time. So there all of a sudden, where you've said this year we're going to paint the roof, it didn't happen, change of strategy, change of a priority in the list of maintenance towards the club. So we said 'we need a new physio area and we need to improve facilities for the referees' and we spent £5-6,000 on doing that. However, that's the night we listed down items of importance and items 3, 4, 5 didn't occur because we had to put the money towards the cost of the players. So I wouldn't say strategy, but planning, the same thing I know. In terms of planning it's very...what we tend to do is firefight, for example, because the club was in arrears to the tune of £70-80,000 owed to the Inland Revenue we've brought that down to probably £5 – 6,000. That's great".

When researching the view from the supporters' terrace via Brian Jones, he believed that the arrival of the chairman and accountant had helped the Club with making incremental changes.

"Yes, I think that the people who are there at the moment can cope with change. I think the introduction of Idris and Paul, as businessmen, has helped a great deal with that. Certainly with young Paul, who's also the marketing guy, he's a good lad, got his own business and he's a good catch to come on the committee".

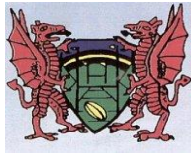
Whilst agreeing with that view, the Team Manager's vocal tone was despondent when he offered up reasons for the club adopting an Incremental approach,

*"I think from my days, the interest in rugby football in Wales has been dying and dying. As a result the financial stability of the club, if you like, has been put under pressure because we don't get anyone in here. The gates are down, not just in Newbridge, this is general isn't it, the bar takings are also down. Not that I'm saying the club is broke because we're not. I mean the club is just about keeping its head above water in terms of, Idris could tell you far more about this than I can. They are working hard to keep the ship f*****g stable, know what I mean; to keep us in business so that we are able to continue playing as Newbridge rugby club".*

Stakeholders at Newbridge maintained that formal SP was not appropriate in the uncertain, dynamic environment that existed in Welsh rugby and there was more support for the incremental approach rather than the formal planning approach (Conversations, 19.4.97: 19.12.98: 29.10.03).



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7.4.3 Ebbw Vale RFC v Newbridge RFC; Comparison of Findings

As can be seen in Table 7.4.3, the two owners, Paul Russell at **Ebbw Vale** and Idris McCarthy at **Newbridge** took opposite stances on Incremental Planning. Mr. Russell preferred having a plan and sticking to it, as shown by his low agreement with statements on incremental planning; whereas Mr. McCarthy, with his strong agreement, confirmed his belief that strategies at **Newbridge** emerged incrementally.

Table 7.4.3 Comparison of Incremental Responses

Position	Ebbw Vale	Newbridge
Owner		
Management		
Team Management		
External Stakeholders		

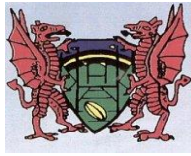
KEY Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

A closer examination of the **Ebbw Vale** owner's views saw Management, the Team Management and the External stakeholders out of line with the owner's views. These findings revealed that the full-time staff, who are fully empowered by the Board, saw Incremental Planning as a necessity because of the external environment impacting on the club. However, the situations described by staff revealed that decisions were based on the event requiring emergency, rather than emergent, action. Respondents believed that reaction had to be instant if survival was to be the order of the day.

By comparison, at **Newbridge** agreement with the chairman's views were consistent with the Management, the Team Management and the External stakeholders concurring with



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the financial backer. So whilst there was a very noticeable difference between the two financial backers' contrasting views regarding Incrementalism, there was agreement by the management and team management respondents at each club for the statements on Incrementalism reflecting the empowered 'hands-on' approach at both clubs.



7.4.4 Llanelli RFC

At Llanelli it was found (Table 7.4.4), that with the odd exception, there was overall strong agreement reached on the statements.

Table 7.4.4 Llanelli Incremental Responses

Position	Statement	14	15	16	17	18	19
Owner							
	Financial Backer						
Management							
	Company Secretary						
	Accountant						
Team Management							
	Team Manager						
	Coach						
	Captain						
External							
	Former Committeeman						
	Press Reporter						
	Long Serving Supporter						

KEY:  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

Asked about this dimension, Huw Evans confidently revealed his broad business knowledge in talking about incremental planning since his arrival at the club.

“I think we respond very well to incremental change, both on and off the field. I think we’re very responsive. We’re very much attuned to what is happening around us and what we need to do. We work very hard on relationships with everyone around the club and if there is a change in that relationship we move very quickly, with our sponsors or suppliers, to mend whatever is wrong. So I think incrementally we are very, very responsive and I think that’s a lot to do with the characters of the people involved”.

The chairman felt that the club had the ability to react to changes in difficult circumstances and that the club was able to meet any necessary unforeseen events. Comparisons of his views were made with those of the club accountant, the local press and the supporter. Accountant, Colin Stroud offered an internal perception of this topic,

“We haven’t got the time to experiment. If we change something the inevitably was we need to change fairly quickly rather than experiment over a period of months...I mean



we were not against change – obviously, we were always looking to improve things. We do try and change things”.

Quick change was sometimes needed at the club and the accountant believed that the club was able to meet any such changes. Local reporter, Norman Lewis, was not sure,

“Firefighting If it’s not one thing it’s another... it’s a constant battle. How good they were was very difficult to quantify but I think they were good as most, both on the playing side and on the business side there was a willingness there to respond to events. The appearance was that they responded as well as anybody else”.

Having been involved with the club for over forty-four years, Marlston Morgan stated,

“You’re on about changing something in mid-stream which often happens in rugby; something can happen and you’ve got to change it as you go along”.

The CEO, Stuart Gallacher agreed with the importance of the impact of results.

“I look back at last year’s business plan. If you actually look at the plan, I’ve failed, we’ve failed, because we haven’t delivered what we said we would to the Board. The business is as fallible as the weekly results”

It was pointed out by stakeholders that rugby was a sport, and therefore was subject to uncertainty and unpredictability on the field (Conversations, 21.9.96: 2.5.01: 8.11.03). As full-time staff, who were responsible for implementing operational plans and achieving results, the Team Management were united in supporting all the statements. Questioning the coach, Gareth Jenkins, he revealed the incremental approach to ‘pro-active’ OP.

“So it’s no longer like the old philosophy said, ‘you’ll have a great team if your players could go on the field and don’t need the coach to talk to them’. We’ve realised that the game is about people in the stand; making sure the people on the field realise and recognise ‘are they on course’ and are ‘they reacting the way we’ve agreed they should be reacting’? It might sound bullshit, and it all goes on, but I’ve got Mark Davies (computer statistician) who sits next to me and every minute of the game I know exactly if we are on course or aren’t we on course”.

Operationally, plans to win the game re-emerged throughout the eighty minutes of play with the players receiving factual information during a game on which to base their decisions and resultant actions. Both on, and off the field, it was the belief of stakeholders that the club had the ability to make incremental changes (Conversations, 3.5.97: 8.9.98: 20.9.03).

7.4.5 Comparison with the Benchmark Club

As can be found below in Table 7.4.5, Llanelli had the highest percentage of respondent agreement with the Incremental statements.

Table 7.4.5 Comparison of Incremental Responses by Club Levels

Position	Ebbw Vale	Newbridge	Llanelli
Owner			
Management			
Team Management			
External Stakeholders			
Overall Acceptance of Dimension			

KEY  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

The overall position at each club saw respondents agree with the statements concerning Incrementalism. The exception within the findings was the **Ebbw Vale** president and financial backer, Paul Russell, who strongly believed in formal planning, unlike the other owners who appreciated the need to have the ability to react to events outside formal planning. The Team Management at all three clubs argued that being reactive, and having the ability to change a plan, was essential for an effective operational performance on the field-of-play. Planning in the clubs was found to be on a short-term, ‘muddling through’ basis. The response to the statements on incrementalism by each club can be found in Table 7.4.6 overleaf.

Table 7.4.6 Cross-Case Analysis: Comparison by Incremental Planning Statements

Club	Ebbw Vale (n=9)	Newbridge (n=9)	Llanelli (n=9)
Statements			
14. Our strategy develops through a process of ongoing adjustment.			
15. Our strategy is continually adjusted as changes occur in the market.			
16. To keep in line with our business environment we make continual small-scale changes to strategy.			
17. Our strategies emerge gradually as we respond to the need to change.			
18. We keep commitment to a strategy tentative and subject to review.			
19. We tend to develop strategy by experimenting and trying new approaches in the market place.			

KEY:  **Strongly Disagree**  **Disagree**  **Agree**  **Strongly Agree**

As the findings show, the clubs' were in agreement with most of the statements except statement 19, where the two Gwent clubs overall, disagreed with that statement. A common approach that was more incremental, an emergent approach to planning, was found at all three clubs.

7.5 Political Dimension

It was established from the literature, that organisations were political arenas where strategic decision-making was a political matter. As such strategy formulation could be susceptible to both internal and external influences by powerful stakeholders. Strategies might have emerged as a result of bargaining, negotiation and compromise amongst the stakeholders. However, it could be expected that within the context of a small organisation, the owner/manager usually exerted total control over decision-making. As a result, was there little or no disagreement from the organisation members?

This section sought to identify and appreciate the level of political influence within the clubs by asking respondents their views on the following statements.

20. *Our strategy is a compromise which accommodates the conflicting interests of powerful groups and individuals.*
21. *The vested interests of particular internal groups colour our strategy.*
22. *Our strategies often have to be changed because certain groups block their implementation.*
23. *Our strategy develops through a process of bargaining and negotiation between groups or individuals.*
24. *The information on which our strategy is developed often reflects the interests of certain groups.*
25. *The decision to adopt a strategy is influenced by the power of the group sponsoring it.*

7.5.1 Ebbw Vale RFC

The results of the questionnaires showed that the backer strongly disagreed with most statements (Table 7.5.1). Other respondents were divided in their views regarding the statements with overall disagreement from Management and External stakeholders but Team Management in agreement with the statements.

Table 7.5.1 Ebbw Vale Political Responses

Position	Statement	20	21	22	23	24	25
Owner							
Financial Backer							
Management							
Company Secretary							
Accountant							
Team Management							
Team Manager							
Coach							
Captain							
External							
Former Committeeman							
Press Reporter							
Long Serving Supporter							

KEY  **Strongly Disagree**  **Disagree**  **Agree**  **Strongly Agree**

The new president, having a local background, was well aware of the politics within the club. He spelt out his, and the club's, approach to tackling rugby politics.

“There’s a difference between disagreeing with someone and using the unofficial organisation to undermine what’s going on. Politics is the shorthand, the unofficial organisation. They could say ‘Members are very upset because you’ve put the admission prices up from £8 to £10 per week’ and we can say ‘tough’. We’ve decided to do it and that’s it”, but, politically that’s unacceptable. So whilst we encourage debate at meetings to discuss both strategy and operations, we seek not to stifle opposition and we say ‘yes we heard you and we’ve changed our mind’ or ‘we heard you but we’re still going to go ahead’. The people feel that they’ve had an opportunity to put their case and that tends to nip in the bud anything, ‘he doesn’t listen to us enough’ because that’s when you get the political stuff and we don’t set our strategy to keep people happy. We have just been in the bottom of the success zone for a large majority of the time. And that was the most



political place to be. It's when you're in trouble and people think things should be changed that the politics happen, but when you're at the top you've got time to indulge in it".

Since the arrival of Marcus Russell, and the formation of Ebbw Vale limited company in 1997, it was established that there was very little political influence either within the club or on strategy. Contrasting the two periods, pre- and post-1995, Alan Evans explained,

"There were probably still factions within the club, I would go that far, but since Marcus arrived there's been a distinct lack of politics, definitely. I mean he's been so open that he doesn't give people room for bloody politics. You get your gossip, and you get your little factions saying 'oh, we do this and we do that' but what I found with politics, say in the pre-professional days, was that you would have two definite camps or even three definite camps because it's a power game. That doesn't exist. THAT DOES NOT EXIST! Certainly pre-Marcus Russell, yes it did, but it just does not happen now. People seem to have taken on board that they have a route into the Board of Directors, and that's the key, that's the bloody secret. They know they've got a way in, and they know they are getting answers as well because Ruth (Director) and I go back, we give the members the answers. Brilliant. It works a treat".

Roy Lewis confirmed that view of politics within the club, stating that,

"It's much better nowadays, post 1995, with a smaller board of directors. There's no politics and that's all you need because in a way it's simpler now".

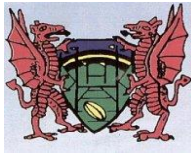
The majority of respondents had indicated that there were now no internal, powerful groups that influenced strategy. The Company Secretary explained the split in his responses to the politics statements based upon where the threat came from.

"Within the club, politics never happens; outside the club it does happen".

The unity within the Board, and an acceptance by stakeholders of the new regime's approach, was cautiously confirmed by the Team Manager.

"The main decisions are made at board level. Decisions are not always imposed, people do have the opportunity to air their views; but the reality of the situation is if it doesn't suit what the club wants to do then..." (Shrugs with arms out wide).

As the major shareholders and main financial backers, the two Russell brothers were the power brokers in the club. That has been recognized by other stakeholders in that if the brothers were to walk away then the club would be in serious financial difficulties, threatening its survival; hence no politics (Conversations, 7.5.99: 24.03.01: 29.10.03).



7.5.2 Newbridge RFC

Respondents were split on their views over political influences at Newbridge (Table 7.5.2). The backer, and the long serving supporter, were definite in their responses - no politics. Nevertheless, other respondents varied with their replies; Management and Team Management agreed with the statements, but the External stakeholders disagreed.

Table 7.5.2 Newbridge Political Responses

Position	Statement	20	21	22	23	24	25
Owner							
	Financial Backer						
Management							
	Company Secretary						
	Accountant						
Team Management							
	Team Manager						
	Coach						
	Captain						
External							
	Former Committeeman						
	Press Reporter						
	Long Serving Supporter						

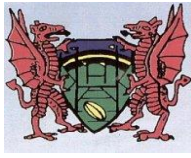
KEY  **Strongly Disagree**  **Disagree**  **Agree**  **Strongly Agree**

Research showed since Idris McCarthy took over as chairman, there was less political activity within the club. Explaining the differences from the previous committee:

“We haven’t got any politics where one lot fights another lot. They (the previous committee) all were hanging onto their bit of power. The old committee used to deliberately fall out with each other”.

When asked about club politics prior to the chairman’s arrival, the secretary described the political situation as,

“In a period prior to Id, there were two weak chairmen. The chairman’s wife was the treasurer of the Supporters Club, and I’ve said it once or twice, that’s the only time we’ve had a female chairman of the club! There were factions then that were trying to pull apart, yes there were. Now there’s not. THERE DEFINITELY WAS NOT (strong voice and



with feeling)! *I think at the moment we're probably happier than we've been for many years. I couldn't stress the fact that this was down to our chairman*".

The coach agreed with the view of a lack of political interference and suggested a reason why supporters backed the reduced executive committee. Jonathan Westwood explained,

"No, our strategies never get changed or blocked. There's a supporters club but they've got no influence on things. It's a very slim line operation really, so we get very few influences outside of the people who make the decisions to change plans really".

Probing the contrasting responses that arose from within the Team Management, the club captain saw 'political interference' from a different angle.

"I mean, what I read into that was, we've had meetings with supporters. I'm not saying that they had an impact on strategy but they kicked up enough fuss to drag Id, some of the committee, myself, and the coaches in because they were concerned about the performance of our three-quarters at that time. And I could understand why they wanted to do it, to improve the club because at the end of the day we play for the supporters and the club. Nonetheless, it wasn't great for team spirit because some of the three-quarters were saying 'why were they having a go at us for'? That did have a bit of an impact on performance anyway. There was a certain cliché there".

Paul Tedstone exposed feelings on 'politics' concerning previous committee members.

"I'd be there watching the game, for example, you hear former committee members who think they walked on water, and they'd get my back up. I'd say that if they were so good in 'the great old days' how did they leave the club in such a bloody awful state"?

Seeking an explanation for his strong disagreement with the statements on politics, Brian Jones revealed his perceptions of the executive committee.

"If there was politics within the club nowadays, it's not really apparent because the relations between people are very good. I mean in the past there's been politics, and recently it was quite strong, but I think this executive runs very well because they meet with the supporters and they talk to the supporters. Therefore, although the executive makes the decisions, I don't think they've got those political factions".

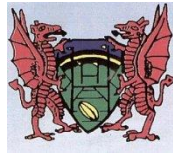
Mr Jones observations were supported by the local press, Geoff Champion.

"People within the club are saying 'If it wasn't for that little group (executive) we'd be stuffed'. Therefore we swallow our pride and give them our support".

Stakeholders agreed that as a result of Idris McCarthey's arrival at the club, politics had taken a backseat at Newbridge (Conversations 20.3.02; 28.9.02; 29.10.03).



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7.5.3 Ebbw Vale RFC v Newbridge RFC; Comparison of Findings

As is evident from Table 7.5.3, the respondents at the high performing club, **Ebbw Vale**, did not agree that politics influenced strategy, and only a narrow majority of respondents at **Newbridge** thought that politics played a part in strategy-making (Hickson et al, 1986).

Table 7.5.3 Comparison of Political Responses

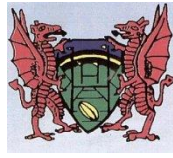
Position	Ebbw Vale	Newbridge
Owner	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Management	Disagree	Strongly Agree
Team Management	Agree	Agree
External Stakeholders	Disagree	Disagree

KEY
 Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree

Unlike the period prior to the formation of the limited company in 1998, when there were two or three political factions, the arrival of Marcus Russell at **Ebbw Vale** as the financial backer, and the club's dependency on him, had seen a marked decrease in politics within the club (Freeman, 2000). Stakeholders also realized, and appreciated, that they had been provided with a direct route into the Board of Directors (Peattie, 1993), having received regular feedback from the two supporters' directors, and that the Russell brothers had been very open in their dealings. Externally, the club had lost political clout with the closure of the steelworks (5.5.1). The club president, who had always been the manager of the steelworks, had a large amount of political clout when it came to matters affecting the rugby club. The club found itself having to turn to local councillors who did not have the same level of political clout to battle on the club's behalf (Parent and O'Brian, 2003).



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The arrival of Idris McCarthy in 1998 as chairman also produced a dramatic decrease in politics at **Newbridge**, because, as at **Ebbw Vale**, there were political factions at the club before his arrival, creating in-fighting on the committee. The establishment of a six man committee in 1998 helped to reduce the disagreements within the club, and it also shortened the chain of command. There was a supporters association within the club who had met with the small management committee on a few occasions. Their views were listened to by the committee, but they did not really influenced strategies (Freeman, 2000). Equally in conversations held at both clubs, stakeholders at **Newbridge**, just like **Ebbw Vale**, appreciated that if the powerful financial backer walks away then the very survival of the club would have been at severe risk (Hickson et al, 1986).

In comparing the two clubs, there did not appear to be any political influences impacting on strategy in the professional era following the arrival of, and the dependency on, a financial backer(s) (Freeman, 2000). At **Ebbw Vale** there was an avenue for supporters, via the two member's directors, to get their view presented to the Board. In a similar approach at **Newbridge**, the supporters met direct with the management committee to present their views. Whilst acknowledging the views of stakeholders, it was made clear to me by the owner/ managers at each club that such views were heard, but did not necessarily influence strategy.



7.5.4 Llanelli RFC

In comparing the responses to the statements on the influence of politics (Table 7.5.4), the backer, team manager, the pressman and the CEO saw politics dictating strategy; other respondents at the club, the coach, captain, former committeeman and supporter disagreed with the statements.

Table 7.5.4 Llanelli Political Responses

Position	Statement	20	21	22	23	24	25
Owner							
Financial Backer							
Management							
CEO							
Accountant							
Team Management							
Team Manager							
Coach							
Captain							
External							
Former Committeeman							
Press Reporter							
Long Serving Supporter							

KEY		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree

There was common agreement at Llanelli that since Huw Evans joined the club and the limited company was formed, everyone was pulling in the same direction. Nonetheless, as could be seen above, even the chairman indicated in his questionnaire replies that there was politics. However, at his interview these matters were clarified.

“I’m not saying that there wasn’t some dissent but internally a political compromise wasn’t a problem. Externally, we do have the influence of the WRU and other club owners”.

The lack of politics within the club, and the influence of Huw Evans, was presented by the well-respected, and widely connected, Norman Lewis;

“Llanelli are very open. There’s not as much politics as there was in the old amateur



game, where every club from top to bottom was riddled with it. Outwardly, the front is united because supporters know that if Huw Evans ever walks away, the gates of Stradey Park will close”.

Unlike the amateur era, when the club saw a lot of politics, stakeholders have realised that with professionalism the person who provided the money acquired the power to decide how it should be spent. There was considered to be no political groups within the club because of the strength of the financial backer and his authoritative power (his financial resource). A relaxed Hefin Jenkins spelt out the internal political situation,

“It’s a case of individual people trying to pull a bit of power. I know some of the old committee, association, like to think they’ve got authority and they’re nothings, you know. I know that, I think they know that really (Laughs) but they try to throw their weight around and that’s about it. The rest of it was, yes we all want Llanelli rugby club to do well. There might have been some negotiating, yes everybody has his view, but I mean.no real politics”.

The experienced coach, supported by the captain, offered a reason as to why there were few politics following the chairman’s arrival.

“The best thing we ever had is Huw Evans. There were people who were in the club who could have been politically active had Huw Evans not come along; he stopped all the little bickering. Also, because we’ve been so successful, I don’t think anybody has the courage to really have an opinion about something that is quite successful anyway, and I think that keeps the politics out.”

The coach’s view was that by giving stakeholders success where it really mattered, on the field, had resulted in politics within the club being kept to a minimum. Discussing politics with the CEO, in agreeing with the two respondents above, he spelt out, in his usual forthright manner, the main reason for the lack of any politics within the club.

*“It (politics) is non-existent. The shareholders if they want to, get ten shareholders together and force an EGM for anything they wish to do. They all vote together and if 1000 shareholders voted together they’ve got 500,000 shares. Huw’s got two f***ing million. End of story. Politics: What politics?”*

As a result of the share imbalance, the chairman had no need to fear any pressure, politics or challenge, from any other shareholder on how the club was being led and managed. Stakeholders (Conversations, 9.1.99: 23.12.00: 20.9.03) agreed that, because of the importance to the club of retaining Huw Evans, there was no internal politics.

7.5.5 Comparison with the Benchmark Club

In the amateur era, it was acknowledged that most rugby clubs were riddled with politics (Smith and Williams, 1980). However, following the IoP and with the appearance of the all-powerful financial backer, the influence of politics in clubs appears to be on the wane (Table 7.5.5).

Table 7.5.5 Comparison of Political Responses by Club Levels

Position	Ebbw Vale	Newbridge	Llanelli
Owner			
Management			
Team Management			
External Stakeholders			
Overall Acceptance of Dimension			

KEY  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

Ebbw Vale (high performer) was confident enough about politics not influencing strategy. By contrast, **Newbridge** (low performer) indicated that there was politics within the club that could possibly influence strategy. However, at **Llanelli**, the influence of external politics was acknowledged, but due to the recognition by stakeholders of the importance, and power, of the club's financial backer, Huw Evans, there was no internal politics. The breakdown by statement and club can be found overleaf in Table 7.5.6.

Table 7.5.6 Cross-Case Analysis: Comparison by Club of Political Statements

Club	Ebbw Vale (n=9)	Newbridge (n=9)	Llanelli (n=9)
Statements			
20. Our strategy is a compromise which accommodates the conflicting interests of powerful groups and individuals.			
21. The vested interests of particular internal groups colour our strategy.			
22. Our strategies often have to be changed because certain groups block their implementation.			
23. Our strategy develops through a process of bargaining & negotiation between groups or individuals.			
24. The information on which our strategy is developed often reflects the interests of certain groups.			
25. The decision to adopt a strategy is influenced by the power of the group sponsoring it.			

KEY  **Strongly Disagree**  **Disagree**  **Agree**  **Strongly Agree**

There was a mixed result from clubs concerning politics. Respondents at **Ebbw Vale** and **Newbridge** were divided on their responses, whilst at **Llanelli** most were in agreement with the statements on politics. However, conversations with all clubs stakeholders following the arrival of the clubs' financial backers revealed little enthusiasm for politics.

7.6 Cultural Dimension

An organisation's paradigm was underpinned by the routines, rituals, attitudes, beliefs, stories and other symbolic artifacts and could influence strategy (Schein, 1992). Adherence to these cultural influences could lead to an organisation being resistant to change (Johnson, 1987). With the three clubs all being founded over one hundred and twenty-five years ago, did the culture that had been established over that period, help or hinder progress?

The following statements were aimed at recognizing and understanding the influence of a club's culture on its strategy.

26. *There is a way of doing things in this organisation which has developed over the years.*
27. *Our strategy is based on past experience.*
28. *The strategy we follow is dictated by our culture.*
29. *The attitudes, behaviours, rituals, and stories of the organisation reflect the direction we wish to take it in.*
30. *Our organisation's history directs our search for solutions to strategic issues.*
31. *There is resistance to any strategic change which does not sit well with our culture.*
32. *The strategies we follow develop from 'the way we do things around here'.*

7.6.1 Ebbw Vale RFC

The interviews revealed (Table 7.6.1), that whilst the respondents respected the history and traditions of the club, culture would not prevent the club moving forward in the professional era.

Table 7.6.1 Ebbw Vale Cultural Responses

Position	Statement	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
Owner								
Financial Backer								
Management								
Company Secretary								
Accountant								
Team Management								
Team Manager								
Coach								
Captain								
External								
Former Committeeman								
Press Reporter								
Long Serving Supporter								

KEY  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

Born and bred in Ebbw Vale, the president expressed his opinion on the club's culture.

*"We've maintained the old traditions. When the Gang of Six (clubs**) formed there was no question of inviting Ebbw Vale, 'bloody Ebbw Vale', to join the Gang and we rather liked the image. In our first season in the top Division, we were the second most written about rugby club after Cardiff; and so, you might have not liked us but you knew about us, you knew about us. People would say 'Who've you got on Saturday? Bloody Ebbw Vale', (Laugh), because they weren't looking forward to it".*

Local boy, Mike Ruddock acknowledged the strength of this 'back to the wall' culture and a repressed community mentality.

"I'm from the area originally ...having played rugby in that area there was always a lot of pride about the area and local community. Yea, definitely..definitely".

**Gang of Six were Premier teams who joined together to confront the WRU.



However, the thoughtful coach offered a futuristic view on the club culture,

“I think that we have got to be prepared to change our culture as and when we are in a position to actually move it on. I would like, in four or five years, to start thinking about our culture changing from like the underdog nuisance value of tripping up a few people to becoming a bigger player and adopting that ‘big player’ mentality”.

Stakeholders agreed that the culture and traditions had previously influenced the strategy process (Conversations, 8.2.97: 11.9.99: 29.10.03), but the change to a limited company had changed their views of the club’s culture. The company secretary made known that,

“It’s the way we are; so we do things within the culture we are from, but, every one of us, and again we have shown it, we have the guts to say ‘This is what we are. We will try and do it this way, but if it needs a strategy which is totally alien, if we have to join with Newport, if it is the right thing to do for the survival of this club, we will do it’. I know, Ivor (George) has a different slant on this”.

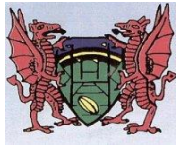
Ivor George did indeed take the opposite view on culture, and defended the club’s traditional view;

“I still think we try to keep the sort of old Ebbw Vale flag flying. Professionalism has changed the social culture within rugby, absolutely. It’s gone from some clubs. Some of us here are trying desperately to keep it afloat. We’re a close community but that sort of thing is going out of rugby now”.

Taking into account the old and new approach on culture, Alan Evans explained the transition between past and present opinions.

“When Marcus came on board it became a limited company, which was the first change; and people became shareholders, that was the second change. So it took people a bit of time to get used to it but OK they didn’t have any choice anyway so they accepted it eventually. So what was happening there...the old ways were basically turfed out, the old culture was basically going. The management style changed totally, but the Ebbw Vale amateur rugby style remained the same; that’s still in vogue”.

The strength of the valley’s culture was such that it united people in Ebbw Vale and surrounding districts. This helped ensure that the rugby club played in the Premier Division but continued to keep pace with the changing rugby world. The vast majority of stakeholders (Conversations, 7.5.99: 29.10.02: 29.10.03) held the view that culture and tradition would no longer stand in the way of progress, but a very small minority of older supporters still longed for the traditions and history of the club to be upheld.



7.6.2 Newbridge RFC

The findings in Table 7.6.2 showed that whilst the owner disagreed with the statements, others, the management, team management, and the external respondents, perceived the club's culture somewhat differently.

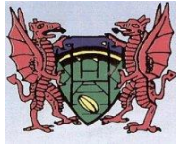
Table 7.6.2 Newbridge Cultural Responses

Position	Statement	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
Owner								
Financial Backer								
Management								
Company Secretary								
Accountant								
Team Management								
Team Manager								
Coach								
Captain								
External								
Former Committeeman								
Press Reporter								
Long Serving Supporter								

KEY **Strongly Disagree** **Disagree** **Agree** **Strongly Agree**

The collected data revealed that, whilst acknowledging its history and traditions, the club was not restrained by its culture. The main disagreement with the culture statements, Table 7.6.2, came from the financial backer.

"I don't know what it is with people in rugby clubs, they have their likes and dislikes, 'we've always done things this way' 'there's no need to change'. I'm not interested in all that. I disagree with that because I think you've got to change if it doesn't suit you. I mean you couldn't say 'because I've done that and I've done it wrong for twenty years we'll keep doing it'. I don't see the point of doing anything like that. If somebody has got a better idea let's use it. When I came in here as vice-chairman, it was already professional. I knew at one stage, we were fourth off the bottom, and I thought... I could see that we would have gone down a league if we didn't change. I said to them, 'This is what I want to do' and if they hadn't accepted it, well that would have been that. There was no problem, and then we started to go forward".



Supporting the chairman's view of a change of culture was the coach, Jon Westwood.

"We've changed here without a doubt; there's a huge change in Newbridge itself".

The stakeholders view (Conversations 8.9.01; 22.10.02; 18.1.03) in the professional era was that the club's culture, whilst respected, would not prevent the club moving forward. The club members' current thinking on culture was spelt out by the Club Accountant,

"What we're saying is this 'Let's learn from the past what was right, and learn from the past what was wrong, take the benefit of both and take it forward'. So we're acknowledging what's gone on but taking the best bits to set our plan for the future".

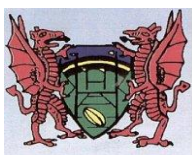
Having experienced a long association with the club's culture, local reporter, Geoff Champion, argued its case;

"Believe it or not, tradition is highly thought of (laugh); it's not always a negative term. It can be a constraint but it can also be cement, which holds the club together. I'm very positive in one sense about Newbridge because they are survivors and they've proven it through some of the hardest times. Their rugby club has blown up twice and for a club to survive like that then there's something there that's worth hanging on to. I think Newbridge has got that sort of, if you like, a line of steel in them; they're survivors. Even through the really bad times they seem to hang on in there, they know how to fight with their back against the wall and they come through".

Newbridge's culture has been adopted from its locality; the club has demonstrated its 'back to the wall' culture, and therefore, this common culture should have been the mainstay to get the whole community behind them, keeping the villagers on their side (Conversations: 18.2.98; 24.11.01; 29.10.03). Like other clubs post-1995, the culture would not be allowed to hold back the club.



V



7.6.3 Ebbw Vale RFC v Newbridge RFC; Comparison of Findings

Whilst overall both clubs showed agreement with the statements on Culture, different levels of respondents within each clubs did disagree (Table 7.6.3).

Table 7.6.3 Comparison of Cultural Responses by Levels

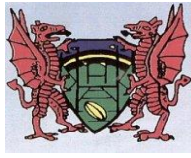
Position	Ebbw Vale	Newbridge
Owner		
Management		
Team Management		
External Stakeholders		

KEY Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Despite the agreement by the owner, team management and external stakeholders with the statements on culture shown above in Table 7.6.3, since the IoP, all stakeholders at Ebbw **Vale** had indicated that it would not let club culture interfere with progress or strategy (Johnson, 1987). All stakeholders were agreed on moving the club forward and to keeping the club in the top Division (Conversations, 7.5.99: 24.3.01: 29.10.03). The arrival of the Russell brothers had ensured that nothing, not even the club's culture, stood in the way of progress. Being a Gwent valleys club, **Newbridge** too had developed a 'back to the wall' attitude and culture. With the loss of major industries within the area, the club similar to **Ebbw Vale** saw itself as the flag bearer of the local community and with the same attitude and culture. The owner at **Newbridge** clearly disagreed with the statements but the management, team management and external stakeholders took the opposite view and agreed with the statements. But, similar to **Ebbw Vale**, all stakeholders in conversations stated that the club's culture would not hold back progress



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in the future (Johnson, 1987).

In comparing both clubs it could be seen that **Newbridge** and **Ebbw Vale** had a common Gwent valleys culture. The two clubs had to battle to break into, and be accepted by, the elite clubs at the top of Welsh Rugby. However, whilst being aware of their history and traditions, and the previous influence of culture on strategy, neither club would allow culture to stand in the way of its future strategic direction. The research findings also discovered that the clubs 'paradigms had proved resistant to change (Johnson, 1987), and that shared beliefs and assumptions did exist on a 'rugby industry' wide basis (Spender, 1989).

Following the arrival of the financial backers, stakeholders at both clubs recognized that club culture should not be allowed to influence future progress.



7.6.4 Llanelli RFC

Llanelli RFC's history was rich in success (Llanelli Conversations, 9.3.99). Whilst most respondents did agree with the statements on culture, the accountant and coach did not agree with most statements (Table 7.6.4). The interview with the coach unearthed an interesting, alternative perception of how club culture should be viewed.

Table 7.6.4 Llanelli Cultural Responses

Position	Statement	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
Owner								
Financial Backer								
Management								
Company Secretary								
Accountant								
Team Management								
Team Manager								
Coach								
Captain								
External								
Former Committeeman								
Press Reporter								
Long Serving Supporter								

KEY  **Strongly Disagree**  **Disagree**  **Agree**  **Strongly Agree**

Having played for Llanelli, Team manager Anthony Buchanon believes "... *tradition and what has gone before has laid the platform for the future of the club*". However, two differing views on culture and strategy were offered by club chairman, Huw Evans and head coach, Gareth Jenkins. The chairman interpretation of the club's culture and tradition;

"One of the key things has been the continuity of the ethos of the club through the people involved with the club. If you look at the main players, the main people in the rugby business of Llanelli, they've all had long-term playing careers, coaching careers, international careers, based from Llanelli. There is something about the way in which the ethos of the old rugby club and the view of all aspects of performance has been unaffected by commercialism and so it's as though the rugby club itself has passed through this period of professionalism largely untainted. The performance requirement, and the way



that was asked for from Gareth Jenkins and the coaching staff, was exactly the same now as it was when we were amateurs. They've been, because of the way Stuart and I run the club, largely insulated from the financial, professional pressures; so the ethos of the club, its huge tradition, has been the dominant factor throughout the professional era and it hasn't changed or it's changed very marginally. I think the core to our strategy was largely based on our culture but there were elements of our culture which we would have to put to one side in favour of progress. So the supporters had a huge say in which the club was run. Some old players had a huge say and continued to want to have a say and we couldn't regard them all in terms of some of the changes that we've got to make. We see fairly big changes ahead. Based on our culture it will be new, it will be different; but based on our culture and carrying that strong core through what we do".

Despite coming from Swansea, Huw Evans stoutly defended the culture and tradition of the club, stating that it had not changed despite the arrival of the professional era. Nonetheless, he stated that the club would not be bound by its culture in order to move forward. The CEO, whose body and verbal language got very animated when talking about the club's culture, clarified his perception of the club's values and beliefs.

*"What upsets me more than anything here – and I understand why they do it – I think I'd have been just as bad as them when I left here... I'm sick of hearing about New Zealand and Llanelli 1972 – over thirty years ago. I mean Phil Bennett's still talks about it every time we're speaking and I understand how proud they are. I've never had that approach – I never talk about rugby whatever I've done or not done in the game. I think we get too – like I said to Huw (Evans) when we were doing this strategy – for the AGM, I said 'don't ram down people's throats we've beaten all the touring sides; don't ram down we've had fifteen cups, that's f*****g history'. We're proud of it. It has got nothing to do with what we're trying to achieve. What we are trying to achieve is for the company to break even, in a professional sport with players at the highest level".*

The club had big changes planned for the future, such as moving ground, but it would respect the club's culture in any decision. Interestingly, the coach offered an alternative view, in that the current stakeholders influenced the culture rather than the reverse role.

"Well probably, and it's an awful thing to say, we probably influence the culture as oppose to culture influencing us, because at the end of the day our rugby performance here is a positive performance. I've always said it quite clearly, I think the difference is when you've got the right dynamics, the right focus, the history and tradition and the core in your club has got a constant that have been involved along an inherited route. For example, Wayne Proctor, Nigel Davies, Anthony Buchanon and Gareth Jenkins (team management) all were here right through the route. Now we understand what we've



done and we understand what it means. We're very responsible really to our region and its identity, but we keep that constant we don't leave people move from that. So the strong influences in there again are us, right? Then we could actually say then that we're successful. People attach themselves and are associated then with the success. Now it's not by accident we've got a Welsh anthem. You know on the television when we score a try right, we've got a Welsh anthem. It's not by accident we are Welsh speaking. North Wales appreciate that; we're successful now; we're playing well now. We say, 'boys, Llanelli is Welsh; we're regional for God's sake'.

History, tradition and culture, has all been ingrained into the team management, who all represented the club as players. The coach had a wider, and imaginative, vision of the team as representing not just the town of Llanelli but also a very large West, Mid and North Wales region. So when visiting teams came to Stradey Park, the patriotism of the venue, the tradition and the culture, were proudly displayed and employed to unnerve opponents. The coach's animated, and passionately expressed, explanation was,

"I've said when we played Leicester here right, we had Dafydd Iwan (Welsh folk singer) here, and we had a male voice choir here. It was an attractive game, of course it was. We took Leicester on the 2nd field; we didn't even train out here, so by the time Leicester came out onto the pitch we had a full stadium. We sang Welsh bloody songs. It was England against bloody Wales. Now all that was staged, so when people on Grandstand TV saw it they said, 'Jesus Christ, look at those down there'. I said then the difference was on big occasions, when Llanelli in particular as far as I am concerned, I don't worry too much about others, we're no different to Munster right. The game is bigger than the Game. When you play in these places, in these regions, in these environments with the mentality that we've been able to create down here – you play against a cause that's bigger than the Game. It's bigger than the club, yes, but it's manufactured as well – because which came first; the culture doesn't drive us WE drive the culture".

Since the IoP, and in 1996 the Heineken European Cup, the games that Llanelli played became bigger and more important, both in status and financially. This led to the coach firmly believing that in a new era, the club drove the culture, and in the process created tradition and history. Within the club, a more traditionalist's view of culture was presented by the former captain/committeeman,

"We build on the heritage of the club, that's what Llanelli RFC is, you know, 130 years. We want to keep that... I think the culture is the area, its different types of people. We got the best players because they wanted to come down here because the culture at Llanelli was always open rugby at that time. I don't say it is now, but we're still trying



to play open rugby and that's the way it's always been".

However Mr. Morgan's 'cultural' reasons for why players from outside Llanelli joined the club was completely opposite to the CEO's 'monetary' opinion. Colin Stroud had the strongest disagreement against the statements on culture.

"I mean we were not against change – obviously, we were always looking to improve things. That's why I strongly disagree with those statements. We do try and change things. I've got a proposal here for new catering arrangements for next season, catering in all the bars, decent caterer, because it has got to become more than the old way of going to the game, as we said earlier, arriving ten minutes before kick-off and then walking away from the ground at the end of it. Rugby's got to be more attractive, it's got to make more of a day out of it for our customers."

The club accountant introduced a business and financial perspective to the club's long held view of match day. Professionalism had forced the club to examine all their long held views and traditions, and to realize that the new playing environment required new approaches and solutions. Stakeholders (Conversations, 1.3.98: 9.1.99: 20.9.03) agreed that despite the enormity of the influence of culture on the club, it should not be allowed to hold back future progress.

7.6.5 Comparison with the Benchmark Club

Shared beliefs existed on an industry wide basis (Spender, 1989), ‘this is a rugby club not a business’. Nonetheless, the IoP had changed stakeholders’ views on culture.

Table 7.6.5 Comparison of Cultural Responses by Club Levels

Position	Ebbw Vale	Newbridge	Llanelli
Owner			
Management			
Team Management			
External Stakeholders			
Overall Acceptance of Dimension			

KEY  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

As can be seen in Table 7.6.5, the overall response from each club was agreement with the statements on culture. Comparing the responses from the various levels in each club reveals disagreement from at least one level; the financial backer at **Newbridge**, and from within the management at **Ebbw Vale** and **Llanelli**. The team management and external stakeholders in the three clubs had a common level of agreement concerning the influence of culture. A broader examination of overall clubs’ responses to the statement on culture is found overleaf in Table 7.6.6.

Table 7.6.6 Cross-Case Analysis: Comparison by Club of Cultural Statements

Club	Ebbw Vale (n=9)	Newbridge (n=9)	Llanelli (n=9)
Statements (N=27)			
26. There is a way of doing things in this organisation which has developed over the years			
27. Our strategy is based on past experience.			
28. The strategy we follow is dictated by our culture.			
29. The attitudes, behaviours, rituals and stories of the organisation reflect the direction we wish to take it in.			
30. Our organisation's history directs our search for solutions to strategic issues.			
31. There is resistance to any strategic change which does not sit well with our culture.			
32. The strategies we follow develop from "the way we do things around here".			

KEY:  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

Whilst there was common agreement on most of the statements, it was evident from the responses of respondents (and stakeholders) to statement 32, that the three clubs were united in their disagreement with the view on statement 32, that the *strategies they developed came from "the way we do things around here"*. This was a major transformation to the influence of the club's culture on its strategies and future direction.

7.7 Enforced Choice

It was argued that due to factors in the environment those organisations had little or no control over their strategic options (Bailey et al, 1990). Organisations operating within the same sector, therefore, tended to follow a common strategy. The impact of the environment was such that strategy was forced on the organisation rather than arrived at through any rational and intentional choice. Organisations were encouraged to adopt structures and strategies that best fit that environment (Hannah and Freeman, 1989). The aim of this section was to ascertain, and appreciate, if the external pressures limited the role that organisational members played in the selection of strategy and restricted the strategic alternatives available to clubs. The study investigated how the environment impacted on the clubs, located in close proximity to each other, in first, a valley context and then an urban context.

In order to achieve the aim, the following statements were put to respondents to indicate whether or not they agreed/disagreed with them.

- 33. *Our freedom of strategic choice is severely restricted by our business environment.*
- 34. *Forces outside this organisation determine our strategic direction.*
- 35. *Barriers exist in our business environment which significantly restricts the strategies we could follow.*
- 36. *We have strategy imposed on us by those external to this organisation, for example the government.*
- 37. *We were not able to influence our business environment; we can only buffer ourselves from it.*
- 38. *Many of the strategic changes which have taken place have been forced on us by those outside the rugby club.*
- 39. *We are severely limited in our ability to influence the business environment in which we operate.*

7.7.1 Ebbw Vale RFC

What Table 7.7.1 is unable to show was that this dimension, Enforced Choice, within the club provided more ‘strength of feeling’ responses than any of the other dimensions. Throughout this section of the interviews, the intensity of respondents’ body language and verbal replies revealed the deep, emotive feelings they held on those ‘outside influences’ that were not under the club’s control.

Table 7.7.1 Ebbw Vale Enforced Choice Responses

Position	Statement	33	34	35	36	37	38	39
Owner								
Financial Backer								
Management								
Company Secretary								
Accountant								
Team Management								
Team Manager								
Coach								
Captain								
External								
Former Committeeman								
Press Reporter								
Long Serving Supporter								

KEY:  **Strongly Disagree**  **Disagree**  **Agree**  **Strongly Agree**

Following the IoP, the external environment severely impacted on the Ebbw Vale club’s strategy. Having assumed control in 1995, Paul Russell explained, demonstrating strong feelings, how the club had been adversely affected by several external factors;

“Well you see we’ve had three quite serious readjustments of strategy forced upon us by external bodies that we could exert no control over, we have no blocks over. The first of these was the Blaenau Gwent Council. Now it was always our strategy that we were going to improve Eugene Cross and Tony Dillaway (former CEO) came up with a...we spent a long time piloting... came up with a plan which extended the stand, put the clubhouse as a wrap around so that you came in under an archway with restaurants and stuff on top. And we had £400,000 worth of business enterprise money. So that was the execution of the strategy to make this a top class stadium, multi-use, but we needed



a twenty-one year lease on it. We pay £5 to rent Eugene Cross each Saturday. So we put a plan together and we went to see the council, both councillors and paid employees, and we put this plan to them. We talked for a while and then the Head of Leisure or whatever said 'No'. He said 'We couldn't do this'. I said 'Why ever not'. He said, 'Well if we do this for you we'll have to do it for Nantyglo, Brynmawr, Tredegar....' I mean our reaction was incredulity. So my brother, (Marcus) we said 'thank you very much', he ripped the presentation in half, threw it in the bin and we walked out. That meant we were unable to spend money on the ground ourselves because you need permission. Constantly we'd have trouble with the council. They would send people down on a Wednesday to say you couldn't play in the evening because the pitch wasn't fit despite the referee passing it as playable. So the council are a tremendous influence on us from that area".

This was a clear example of strategic vision and planning from the two business-orientated Russell brothers who wanted to spend £1.7 million on developing the ground and its facilities. Unfortunately the council refused the detailed plan. Their rejection was based on the fear of attracting similar requests from other clubs in the region; there were twenty-nine WRU clubs, including four former Merit Table clubs, within a twelve mile radius of Ebbw Vale. So a powerful external stakeholder, the council, had prevented the implementation of the club's plan to develop and grow. Paul Russell continued explaining in a thoughtful, but still agitated, manner;

"Secondly, the closure of the steelworks was a body blow to us. We didn't know it was coming and it immediately... and it happened just before season tickets went on sale. And it just knocked a hole in our budget. So we had to re-evaluate our financial strategy for the whole of that year and not sign players that we had lined up and not do a pre-season tour that we were going to do and also not improve the toilets upstairs that you couldn't go into without risking berri. So that again was an external factor.

*Thirdly, the WRU, who have never had any sympathy with the Premier League club who they see as fat cats, and worked against us. So you've got the position where your governing body was working against you. The WRU showed no leadership at all. We were the first club to give players contracts and I was the first ever benefactor of a first Division club in Wales. We had no direction, no leadership at all and everything that came out from the WRU said 'This was what you couldn't do'; and even now there's some WRU committeemen who have said 'F**k them, leave them go to the wall'. Well, we're the shop window of Welsh rugby and club rugby is televised, and watched by people, more often than internationals".*

In addition to the above perceived faults of the governing body listed by Paul Russell above, the WRU also had a major impact on the club's development by affecting its



ability to play in Europe. A reflective Ray Harris clarified exactly what happened;

“We qualified for Europe back in 1998 but then had the place taken away by the WRU because Cardiff and Swansea were rushed back into the equation. In recruitment terms it was a huge blow; financially it wasn’t because we got compensated. To be honest that was the end of us as a force for a while. We had to change our strategy then because the income just...because again by that time the gap between (European) Shield and Cup had grown so big that once you fell, and unless you had a really big investor like Tony Brown (Newport RFC), to get back it was impossible, and it has been impossible for us. The whole thing was a total mess and the WRU would have to hold its hands up and say as much as anyone else, ‘we were to blame’”.

The large part played by the WRU in not offering leadership and, ‘robbing’ the club of a European place had caused great anger and animosity at the ‘Steelers’ club. Ebbw Vale’s members rage with the Union resulted in the club taking the WRU to court on two occasions during the late 1990s. Roy Lewis was not as critical as Ray Harris, but he pointed out the power of the governing body.

“The main thing was the structure of the leagues. The WRU controls everything when it comes down to the structure. Financially, I’m not sure of what they contribute... but they do control us in a way. I think the Union has been unfairly criticised in some ways, but the whole professional thing has been too much for them”.

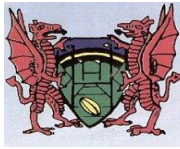
One of the few disagreements within the club to the statements on Enforced Choice came from Terri Morgan,

“Well I think that EVRFC could influence its business environment. The people who are running things here are quite sort of forceful characters and have an insight into the ways things should be going and I think they could be quite influential and persuasive”.

Nonetheless, the actual strength of feeling displayed by members and supporters throughout the club was summed up by Doug Taylor,

“Yes, feelings were very strong. I could have marked four 7s on statements 33 to 36. Actually if there was a 10 on the questionnaire, I would have marked 10 because it was far worse than even a 7”!

Stakeholders (Conversations, 8.3.97: 15.4.00: 29.10.03), confirmed the views of the majority of respondents, that the external environment had influenced the club’s strategy.



7.7.2 Newbridge RFC

There was strong agreement from management, team management and external stakeholders on the influence of external forces (Table 7.7.2); but in contrast, equally strong disagreement from the backer on statements 37 and 38.

Table 7.7.2 Newbridge Enforced Choice Responses

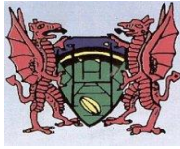
Position	Statement	33	34	35	36	37	38	39
Owner								
Financial Backer								
Management								
Company Secretary								
Accountant								
Team Management								
Team Manager								
Coach								
Captain								
External								
Former Committeeman								
Press Reporter								
Long Serving Supporter								

KEY:  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

The investigation sought to establish if the Gwent Valley's external environment had also impacted further down the A4046 at Newbridge. The team manager, who lived locally, expressed strong feelings regarding the local environment,

"The committee all worked in the mining industry. That was the valleys environment right throughout Wales unless you played in the towns. The valleys environment was industry and coal, now that's gone. The steelworks has gone, mining industry has gone and you look at it; it hit the area and people stopped watching rugby, which then filtered through to what we're talking about now and on top of that then they (WRU) throw this 'we're going to play rugby for money' caper".

Newbridge was hit by the demise of all the major industries. Unemployment in the valley rose and the lack of a regular wage meant that people did not go to support the rugby team (Conversations, 18.2.98: 22.10.02: 29.10.03). The difficulties of operating from within a



village environment were pointedly interpreted by Geoff Champion.

“I think that’s where the sponsorship issue comes in as well, because it’s only a small village. We know that Welsh Rugby generally is not able to draw upon the same financial resources as clubs in England can, for example, so if the cake is very small and you come from a relative small village as well, if you’re not in the centres of population such as Cardiff, Newport, Swansea to a certain extent, then you’re always going to struggle”.

The inability of the club to find a financial backer in the area meant that it had to rely on the WRU grant to pay players. Brian Jones agreed, referring to the club’s location.

“I would say our financial support basically isn’t local, it comes from a bit further afield than Newbridge. Here you’ve got limited businesses; I mean our main business at one time IWOA was pretty good to us and we were getting decent sort of money from them, but that faded away. Now we’ve got nothing really big here and of course you’ve got other smaller clubs around here as well. You know there are too many people drinking at the same well”.

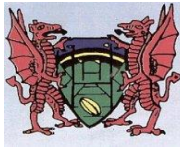
Situated amongst a small population, the club couldn’t match the big money being offered by those town/city clubs who also had a financial backer. Newbridge, therefore, had to rely on lower quality players in its team. In addition, the impact of professionalism and the state of Welsh Rugby was reflected in the size of the crowd at games which badly affected gate revenue. Reflecting on past crowd attendances, Brian Wellington contrasted them against current support;

“It was about 3-5,000 on average, and could be up to 10,000 against local rivals Pontypool and Newport, but membership is now only 350. Today’s crowd reflects the quality of our team, the club’s charges and the quality of the lesser teams that you are playing against”.

Searching questions about the local council unearthed the fact that outside of maintaining the playing enclosure, the local council had not supported the club. In confirming that data, Idris McCarthy was disappointed and adamant that,

“The local authority does hold you back. I don’t think they realise the importance, if you like, of a good class rugby side in the village that’s of the size of Newbridge”.

However, the relationship with the governing body, the WRU, was perceived differently by Graham Patterson, who explained his positive opinion of the WRU,



“Well I’d say that when we had a spot of trouble with the taxman a couple of years ago they lent us £40,000 and we were very appreciative of that especially as we had a good rate of interest. So I think the only way the WRU have affected us was restricting the number of teams in the Premier Division, but other than that, no real problems”.

The secretary’s view of the WRU was, he admitted, influenced by the financial assistance that the WRU had given to Newbridge. A contrasting view of the WRU was offered by Idris McCarthy, whose critical voice and body language revealed his frustration with the Union’s initial financial actions when the Game went professional.

“I think that Newbridge and all the other clubs in Wales were never ever geared to run a professional side. I think giving Newbridge, or any other club, £400,000 like they (WRU) did, was like giving a mad man the money you know because, and I think, that might have been the same for us, because we all of a sudden had £400,000 everybody was giving it out like a man with no arms and if you don’t give it out you haven’t got a team. I think that was a huge mistake to give that amount of money to anybody”.

A common theme, concerning the negative view of the WRU, which arose amongst all the clubs was offered by local businessman Paul Tedstone, the club’s accountant,

“In order for member clubs to function they’ve got to have answers and guidance from above and that hasn’t been happening to the extent that it needed to. I also couldn’t see how the WRU could ask the clubs to have a three year plan in place when it didn’t have a strategy in place itself. The WRU haven’t given leadership or governed”.

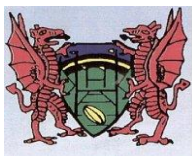
Somewhat surprisingly for the Welsh Rugby press, the local reporter was found to be a supporter of the governing body.

“.. the WRU were always going to influence that overall climate. Believe it or not I am a supporter of the WRU; I think they make lots of mistakes but I do believe in the structure you see. I believe you need a body like the WRU”

Geoff Champion acknowledged the need for a structure to rugby in Wales which the WRU provided. He accepted that the clubs WERE the Union and therefore WRU funding should be used to keep clubs, like Newbridge, in existence. As with most clubs, discussion regarding the WRU brought out strongly held, heated feelings and opinions from stakeholders; some supported the Union but the majority strongly criticised the governing body. Nonetheless, stakeholders (Conversations 18.2.98: 22.10.02: 29.10.03), were united in agreeing on the negative impact of the external environment on the club.



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7.7.3 Ebbw Vale RFC v Newbridge RFC; Comparison of Findings

The nearness of the two Gwent Valley clubs indicated that they operated virtually within the same external environment that influenced their strategy (Harris and Jenkins, 2001).

Table 7.7.3 Comparison of Enforced Choice Responses

Position	Ebbw Vale	Newbridge
Owner		
Management		
Team Management		
External Stakeholders		

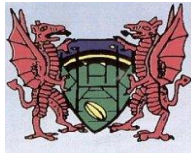
KEY Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

As is evident from Table 7.7.3, **Ebbw Vale** respondents were united in their criticism of the WRU over several key issues. The Union's lack of leadership; not placing a pay cap on players; no modernization of the structure for player's registration, affected the club's ability to cope. The two Russell's believed that WRU committeemen were even prepared to leave the club go to the wall. Perhaps the governing body's biggest impact was in 1998 when the club had qualified for the European Heineken Cup and then had its place in Europe taken away by the WRU to accommodate 'rebel clubs', Swansea and Cardiff, instead. This had a devastating effect on player recruitment, and although the club was financially compensated, it did lose money from lost income, sponsorship, TV revenue and other sources. Stakeholders felt that the club did not recover from this decision by the governing body for several seasons (Smith and Williams, 1999).

By comparison, the **Newbridge** secretary's view of the governing body, WRU, was very positive due to the fact that the club had been rescued by a £40,000 loan when it was in



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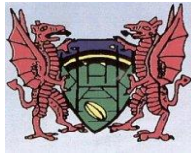
financial trouble with the Inland Revenue. The only criticism he offered against the WRU was on the low number of teams allocated to the Premier Division. However, the club chairman had an opposite, less supportive opinion and lambasted the WRU for giving a grant of £400,000 per year to ‘amateur committeemen’ to spend. He was joined by the club’s accountant, who sided with **Ebbw Vale’s** comments in being highly critical over the lack of leadership or guidance from the WRU when the game turned Professional.

Ebbw Vale also experienced a greater impact of local council decisions on its future plans. The council rejected the Russell’s business plan to re-develop Eugene Cross Park at a cost of £1.7 million, and in a ‘catch twenty-two’ scenario, the brothers could not even spend money on ground improvements because they needed council permission. In contrast, the impact of the same Blaenau Gwent council was not as great at **Newbridge**, because the club was content to continue using the same ground and facilities that it had for decades. Nevertheless, stakeholders did feel that the local council had held back the club’s progress over the years and had effectively done nothing, but help pressurize the club’s strategy.

Both **Ebbw Vale** and **Newbridge** suffered body blows with the closure of major industries within the same area, such as the steel and coal industries. This meant that local unemployment was high and disposable income was at a premium which affected crowd attendances at home games. At first, **Ebbw Vale** was hit harder by the closures with the loss of a guaranteed annual revenue stream from the steelworks dramatically affecting player recruitment and the pre-season tour. The fact that both **Ebbw Vale**, and **Newbridge** were not situated in a major population centre, such as Cardiff or Newport, had impacted on obtaining sponsorship and financial backing (Porter, 1991). However, ‘Lady Luck’ had stepped in but with opposing results for both Gwent clubs (Eisenhardt and Zbaracki, 1992); **Ebbw Vale** acquired the financial support of the Russell brothers, whereas **Newbridge** could only rely on the reduced grant from the WRU and were relegated. The lack of acquiring funding meant that the club could only afford players from lower Divisions (Gorton, 1999), and thus the poor quality of the team meant lower crowds watching their games. The business environment in both places was considered to have influenced strategy and was perceived by stakeholders to have negatively



V



impacted on the two clubs. Being ‘niche’ clubs, their ability to influence their environment was limited (Byers and Slack, 2001).

The evidence showed that external forces had influenced the strategic approach within the two valley clubs (Harris and Jenkins, 2001). **Ebbw Vale**, in spite of the external influence of the WRU, the local council and the major loss of the local steelworks, did plan (the 3 x 8’s), and survived in the Premier Division, thus achieved its goal. On the other hand, **Newbridge** failed to capture and convert its local billionaire, Terry Matthews, and accordingly decided to operate in a dynamic environment within the financial constraints imposed by the WRU grant. They did not survive in the Premier Division.



7.7.4 Llanelli RFC

Whilst the majority of respondents at Llanelli agreed with the statements (Table 7.7.4), the exception was the coach who disagreed with over half the statements concerning outside influences.

Table 7.7.4 Llanelli Enforced Choice Responses

Position	Statement	33	34	35	36	37	38	39
Owner								
Financial Backer								
Management								
Company Secretary								
Accountant								
Team Management								
Team Manager								
Coach								
Captain								
External								
Former Committeeman								
Press Reporter								
Long Serving Supporter								

Key:  **Strongly Disagree**  **Disagree**  **Agree**  **Strongly Agree**

The interview with the chairman, on the factors in the external environment that had impacted on the club, saw Huw Evans, in a calm, thoughtful voice, recalling that,

“Sponsorship, I mean generally the demise of farming in particular and the removal of a lot of the industry that supported Llanelli over the years has had an impact on our ability to create revenue. That inability to create revenue comes from two areas, one was just the lack of sponsorship, the lack of big businesses on the one hand and people not having a lot of money in their pocket in the other. It’s a very small town, as you know and the outlying districts, where a huge number of our fans come from, our supporters come from, have been hit very badly. The farming community, which it was predominantly, has been hit very badly. So it’s a massive area that we serve but it’s not one that’s the wealthiest in the UK. However, it is one of the most loyal, and there’s a big trade off there, and they undoubtedly see, the sponsors and the supporters, probably go to greater lengths to support Llanelli because it is their flagship for West and Mid-Wales. So it’s not all doom and gloom but it has had a very serious impact on our ability to drive revenue to the



extent we'd like. We've also had two sets of people who have been very problematic. One was the WRU and I don't think I need to say much more about that as they haven't adjusted to the pace, as everyone knows, of professionalism in any sense. They have been reticent in moving to the changes that we as a nation need and that has been a very big controlling influence over any strategy that we could put in place. They've controlled and stifled revenue streams as well. Our position is that we are a factory and we pay our employees; those employees make a product for us but they also make it for the WRU. A lot of them will go and play for the WRU and there are not many factories where you could manufacture a product for £100 (that's what we're paying these players). A franchise sells that product for £200 and gives you £75 back. So we're actually funding internationals and the WRU who have free access to our assets, are not paying adequate funds for those assets when they use them. So that's been a massive controlling influence on our strategy".

The chairman clarified why there was a major disagreement with the WRU; from revenue streams generated by International games, to who actually controls the club's International players. The latter disagreement was the focus of much debate amongst Premier Division clubs. Interestingly, Huw Evans also offered a unique insight into the difficulties he encountered with other professional clubs financial backers.

"The other one's been the owners. My personal view is, and this is what was very different about Llanelli as well, is that you can't own a rugby club. A rugby club is owned by the community in which it serves and by the ex-players, by the supporters, the sponsors. It is a community based ownership scheme, and anyone who thinks that they own a rugby club is making a huge mistake because they own nothing. So we've been trying to bring about change with the WRU, which is one of the slowest moving unions, but we've had a lot of people, who are owning clubs and like to see themselves as owners, who have been equally as difficult as the union. Therefore the development of Llanelli's strategy has been bugged up on two sides; one by a limited number of egotistical owners who haven't got rugby at heart and the development of rugby in Wales at heart and two, the union, who are not responding in the way that they could have. So we've been heavily compromised".

These were critical words about fellow financial backers. Mr Evans made it very clear that some owners were as difficult as the WRU in bringing about, and implementing, change. Regarding uncontrollable external factors the CEO, Stuart Gallacher, displayed rising vocal emotions, and got quite animated, in offering an example of how just one incident could affect a club's financial strategy.

"To be honest, I know it sounds dramatic, to put it into context, when the Leicester full back, Stimpson,...when he kicked that penalty against us, (two minutes from the end of



the semi-final of the European Cup game from over fifty metres to win the game) *that cost this club half a million pounds. The business is as fallible as the results. Very often during the season things happen which impact on your business plan and you've absolutely f***ing no control over it*”!

The fact that rugby is an uncertain, unpredictable game, subject to so many variables such as the weather, the opposition, the match officials, and many other influences, makes planning the outcome very difficult and nearly impossible. The CEO acknowledged that decision-makers within the clubs are sitting in the grandstand when the result of the game is determined on the field. Team performance was the crucial success factor, but the Board had no control whatsoever on how the team performed during the eighty minutes, or the end result. Nonetheless, a professional rugby club was results driven in order to obtain the necessary cashflow via supporters watching games, sponsorship, TV revenues and WRU grant. In trying to obtain that funding from within the local business environment, Hefin Jenkins was critical about Llanelli's actual location.

“It's difficult for us because when you compare with the likes of Cardiff and Newport, where there's a lot of industry, we're out on a limb really. Industry has gone from the area. So it's a difficult area to get business into, you know”.

Off-the-field activities might have been difficult for which the Board might have attempted to plan, but they could only react to the circumstances they found themselves operating in. Nonetheless, when interviewed, the coach's perception was that the business environment had not affected the team, as opposed to the club.

“My strategic choice, if I decided now - rugby strategy I'm talking about here now – that I'm going to change my game plan, I'm able to make a case to do that but the business environment doesn't have a bearing on that. The way that the team wants to play is not affected. Llanelli is probably not a dynamic area as far as sponsorship and business is concerned any longer. If we had to be dependent on local business we wouldn't be in existence”.

In spite of Gareth Jenkin's OP views, both management and stakeholders agreed that the external environment had influenced, and had a pronounced impact on, the club's strategy (Conversations, 18.10.97: 9.3.99: 20.9.03).

7.7.5 Comparison with the Benchmark Club

It was evident that the turbulent external environment, especially the IoP, had affected all three research clubs (Hannah and Freeman, 1989). Major environmental influences identified were the governing bodies (IRB & WRU), the local councils, other club owners and the local business environment.

Table 7.7.5 Comparison of Enforced Choice Responses by Club Levels

Position	Ebbw Vale	Newbridge	Llanelli
Owner	Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Management	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
Team Management	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree
External Stakeholders	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Overall Acceptance of Dimension	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree

KEY  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

Almost all respondents in the three clubs showed more strength of feeling, both in voice and in body language, over this section than the previous five dimensions. The results of the questionnaire responses to the Enforced Choice dimension statements (Table 7.7.5) showed strong overall agreement in each club with the statements stating that the external environment, factors outside the club over which they had little control or no sway, did have a major impact and influenced strategy. Within this dimension, the governing body (WRU), the local authorities, other financial backers, coupled with the uncertainty surrounding the future of rugby union proved to be key influences to planning, and implementing, any course of action.

Table 7.7.6 Cross Case Analysis: Comparison by Club of Enforced Choice Statements

Club	Ebbw Vale (n=9)	Newbridge (n=9)	Llanelli (n=9)
Statements (N=27)			
33. Our freedom of choice is severely restricted by our business environment			
34. Forces outside this organisation determine our strategic direction.			
35. Barriers exist in our business environment which significantly restricts the strategies we can follow.			
36. We have strategy imposed on us by those external to this organisation, e.g. WRU			
37. We are not able to influence our business environment; we can only buffer ourselves from it.			
38. Many of the strategic changes which have taken place have been forced on us by those outside the rugby club.			
39. We are severely limited in our ability to influence the business environment in which we operate.			

KEY:  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

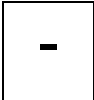
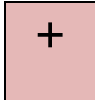
The respondents at the three clubs, with a few individual exceptions, all expressed the view that the external environment had impacted on strategy.

7.8 Conclusions

The chapter examined the process of strategy formation by using the Bailey et al (2000), six dimensions framework of command, planning, incremental, political, cultural and enforced choice. The findings within each club were then compared, Ebbw Vale v Newbridge, and then against the benchmark club, Llanelli. Tables 7.8.1 and 7.8.2 provide a summary of the findings for each of the six process dimensions. An in-depth discussion, and comparison, with existent theory is performed in Chapter Eight.

Table 7.8.1 Cross Case Analysis: Comparison by Club of Evidence of the Six Dimensions

Club	Ebbw Vale	Newbridge	Llanelli
Dimension	High Performer	Low Performer	Consistent
COMMAND SENIOR FIGURE(S)	+	+	+
FORMAL PLANNING		-	
INCREMENTAL PLANNING	+	-	
POLITICAL INFLUENCE	-		
CULTURAL INFLUENCE	+		+
ENFORCED CHOICE INFLUENCE	+		+

KEY:  Little Evidence  Some Evidence  Strong Evidence

The chapter's contribution to the study is that of describing, examining and interpreting the first five years of the new professional era in Welsh rugby. Having first established that the characteristics of Welsh Rugby Clubs matched those of nonprofit organisations, pre -1995 (Table 3.2), the strategy-creation behaviour of the three Clubs were then evaluated against the characteristics of the planning processes in small businesses (Table 7.9).

The strategy process, post-1995, related club opinions and behaviour to the six dimensions of the strategy-creation process. Evidence from the three case studies was displayed within the chapter under the six main dimensions (themes), and the method adopted, analytical comparison, allowed an in-depth examination of each dimension. First, findings from the intra-case analysis were generated via multiple club levels, data triangulation. Second, findings from the cross-case analysis were displayed for the purpose of extracting similarities and differences between the high, and low, performing clubs employing both data and methodological triangulation.

The conclusions arising from the study's findings, were that the strategy process in Welsh rugby clubs post-1995 was one strongly influenced by enforced choice (Hannah and Freeman, 1989), but that political (Hickson et al, 1986) and cultural (Schein, 1992), influences were no longer the dominant characteristics that they had once been prior to the IoP. The demise of the two dimensions had been the outcome of a new dominant participant (Freeman, 2000) in Rugby Union Football, the owner/financial backer (THE senior figure). There was little physical written evidence to support the formal planning dimension (Rue and Ibrahim, 1998), although verbal evidence was strong regarding the use of some strategic tools and techniques such as SWOT, PEST, and Competitor Analysis. Incremental planning was indicated as the preferred approach (Quinn, 1980), although OP was employed on a weekly basis throughout the rugby season by the personnel within the Team Management level in the three clubs (Shrader et al, 1989). The deduction drawn from the findings was that the 'rugby' game was still very much the main reason (mission) for a club's existence. In spite of the transformation of the Game, from amateur to profession, "*This is a rugby club, not a business*" remained the mantra from many stakeholders in all clubs to my management enquiries throughout the research period (Hoye et al, 2009).

Table 7.8.2 Cross Case Analysis: Comparison by Club of the Respondents Views of the Six Dimensions: Rank Order

Club	Ebbw Vale (n=9)	Newbridge (n=9)	Llanelli (n=9)
Dimension	High Performer	Low Performer	Consistent
COMMAND SENIOR FIGURE(S)	5 th	5 th	2 nd
FORMAL PLANNING	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
INCREMENTAL PLANNING	3 rd	2 nd	3 rd
POLITICAL INFLUENCE	6 th	6 th	6 th
CULTURAL INFLUENCE	4 th	4 th	5 th
ENFORCED CHOICE INFLUENCE	1 st	1 st	1 st

KEY:  Strong Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strong Agree

The composition of the table was based on the questionnaire findings, where statements had been marked 1 – 7 by the respondents. However, what the table cannot convey is the strength of feeling expressed by respondents commenting on each dimension. The strongest agreement within the clubs, and the greatest display of emotion, were the statements concerning the Enforced Choice dimension, which proved to be the top ranked dimension in each club. Of interest for the research that the political dimension, post-1995, was considered the dimension to be the lowest concern within the clubs.

Table 7.9 The Small Business Planning Perspective

Characteristics	EBBW VALE	NEWBRIDGE	LLANELLI
Informal, flexible, incremental, irregular process	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lack of formal analysis	Yes	Yes	Yes
Limited objectives	Yes	Yes	Yes
Importance of improving financial management	Yes	Yes	Yes
Planning concerned with limited/scarce resources	Yes	Yes	Yes
Participants outside of owner/manager	Yes	Yes	Yes
Judgement, experience and intuition more important	Yes	Yes	Yes
Short-term, functionally focus	Yes	Yes	Yes
Focus on OP	Yes	Yes	Yes
Inability to cope with external pressures	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lack of time for planning	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time horizon should be short	Yes	Yes	Yes
Planning adaptive in nature	Yes	Yes	Yes
Success was due to luck rather than planning	Yes	Yes	Yes

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION OF KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

“All research is incomplete. No project ever provides a definitive answer to the problems it seeks to understand. What sound research achieves is more understanding not complete understanding. Those who expect research to always provide conclusive answers are asking for the impossible”.

(Curran and Blackburn, 2001, p.25)

8.1 Introduction

The final chapter's input to the study is to consider the comprehension acquired from the study, and the conclusions reached. This includes a discussion, and comparison, of the key research findings with the existent literature, thus examining practice with theory, within the unique context of the investigation. The process by which strategies are developed is important, particularly as an organisation attempts to produce strategies which match the organisation with its operating environment (Bailey et al, 2000; Pettigrew, 1988).

The research was designed to provide insights, and understanding into two main areas. First, this thesis aimed to explore, during a decade of turbulence, the process of strategy-making in Welsh rugby clubs. Second, this study was aimed at developing an insight into, and be cognizant of, how rugby clubs reacted to a 'shock event', the IoP, the decisions made, the actions taken, and the resultant outcomes.

The chapter commences with a synopsis of the completed thesis via its research objectives. In the introduction to this thesis, specific research questions were identified, and it is these that will be used to generate a discussion of the main findings of the study with the existent literature. These are followed by the conclusions, the major contributions and the implications of this study. Completing the chapter, is a self-critique of the limitations of the research, and suggestions for future research arising from the subject of strategy-making in nonprofit, rugby clubs.

8.2 Research Objectives

The core aim of this research was reinforced through two key objectives:

- To explore and describe the strategy-making process in Welsh rugby clubs within the broader NPO and small business sectors within the UK, and to compare, contrast and evaluate the amassed empirical evidence with the mainly prescriptive literature.
- To identify and understand the influence of a strategic ‘shock event’, the IoP, on the decisions and actions taken by clubs, and the resultant outcomes of any strategy pursued.

8.3 Understanding Acquired of the Research Topic.

This investigation followed two clear pathways in order to fulfil the rationale of the research. First, a review of the secondary literature, abstract and applied theoretical works, to ascertain both the conceptual framework concerning the process of strategy-making (Chapter Two) and the historical, and current, contextual setting of the study (Chapter Three). Secondly, within the social constructivist ontology, a subjective, interpretive approach, adopted the stance that knowledge was constructed by those individuals who were part of social situations reflecting upon their experiences (Chapter Four). In this longitudinal study, therefore, an understanding of the strategy-making process in nonprofit rugby clubs was obtained from various individuals within each of the three research clubs (Chapters Five, Six and Seven).

8.3.1 Research Question One: 1990 - 2000

Was there a presence, or an absence, of a strategy-making process in Welsh rugby clubs during the decade, 1990-2000?

As stated in Chapter One, this question, arose from the recommendations for future research posed by the research of Bailey and Johnson (1991), Hart (1992), Kearns and Scarpino (1996), Slack (1997), Bailey et al (2000), and supported by the views of Ghobadian and O'Regan (2011). The discussion regarding this question compares, and contrasts, the key findings from the amateur period in Chapter Five, and the professional period in Chapter Seven, along with the existent literature in Chapter Two. The findings are structured employing the headings of Bailey et al (2000) six dimensions of strategy.

8.3.1.1 Command Dimension (Visionary Perspective)

Emerging from the review of literature, Chapter Two, was the argument put forward by Bennis and Nanus (1996) that strategy was formulated under the direction of a central, powerful leader; however, Chaffee (1985) contended that strategy arose from within a small group of senior individuals within the TMT.

The study established that, pre-1995, the management of the three ‘members clubs’ lay in the hands of individuals elected from within the membership. These volunteers then formed the management committee, and in line with Shrivastava and Nachman (1989), provided the future direction of the club. However, within the management committee of the three clubs, it was the small group of officers on each committee who were the decision-makers, as put forward by Chaffee (1985). The composition of the elected committee sometimes meant that individuals, who had emerged to achieve the senior positions and were empowered with authority, may not have possessed the required decision-making qualities and abilities. The research findings were consistent with those of Paton and Cornforth (1992) in that at NPOs, leaders might have no experience of business management.

The elected committees at Newbridge (5.2.2) and Llanelli (5.2.4) were united in representing the collective values and beliefs of the club, which was positively reflected in the clubs’ performance, as proposed by Iaquinto and Fredrickson (1997). On the other hand, at Ebbw Vale, (5.5.1) disagreement amongst the senior figures on the committee impacted on the First XV’s difficult struggle in the second division of the newly formed National League, thus supporting the findings on the negative impact of divided views on performance by Eisenhardt and Bourgeois (1988). Organisational members were responsible, as suggested by Hart (1992), for ‘making it happen’ by implementing any functional or operational aspect of the plan.

During the IoP, and post 1995, the findings offered support to Bennis and Nanus’s (1996), contention that it was an individual who assumed control within each club, making the decisions to ensure the clubs’ survival. However, the enormous financial impact of the IoP had led to the arrival, and emergence, of a new influential actor, the financial backer, who possessed the necessary scarce resource – money (7.2.1; 7.2.2; 7.2.4). These experienced businessmen took control, and then oversaw a change to the management

and the structure at each of the three clubs. These actions aligned with the findings of Eisenhardt and Bourgeois (1988), that decision making is influenced by power, in this case a senior figure who the club is reliant upon for a strategic resource, money; but the actions also challenged the findings of Schrader et al (1989), that the small firm owner tendency to practice strategic decision-making was somewhat limited, or even non-existent, through the decisions taken by the new financial backers.

A comparison of the two periods, 1990-95 and 1995-2000, revealed that there were clear changes in 'who' were acknowledged as the senior figures, those involved in the leadership position(s) responsible for the decision-making process.

8.3.1.2 Planning Dimension (Perspective)

The writings concerning planning (2.7.2) covered the influence of its context, one that within the rugby industry had been both a stable, and then, a turbulent environment. The external environment was deemed by the clubs' stakeholders to be reasonably stable during this first period, a factor that Risseuw and Masurel (1994) and Fredrickson and Iaquinto (1989), considered appropriate for SP. The case studies (5.3), during the last five years of amateurism, did reveal variations in the degree of planning undertaken but common to all the research clubs was a paucity of formal SP. The planning tended to be informal, and no club could produce evidence of any business plan. Some confirmation of SP, as suggested by Argenti (1992), was found but only at certain times following, and reacting to, specific events. These actions by rugby clubs sided with the findings of Sharp and Brock (2010) that formal planning processes were rare in NPOs, and also the findings of Stone et al (1999), that nonprofit organisations only plan when they have to plan.

Those writers who had advocated a formal planning process in a dynamic, turbulent environment, McKiernan and Morris (1994), Hart and Banbury (1994), and Slevin and Covin (1997), would not have found any solace with the decision-makers' responses to the unforeseen changes in the IoP environment at either Newbridge or Llanelli. The exception was found at Ebbw Vale (7.3.1), where the club had adopted a SP approach as proposed by Rue and Ibrahim, 1998. In a sport context, data revealed that the clubs did employ OP (game/competitor analysis) prior to each match played. Contrary to Perry's (2001) assertion about the difficulty in linking planning and success, respondents (5.3.5) pointed to the part weekly planning played as a contribution to the team winning, and its

role in ensuring the club performed successfully (Shrader et al, 1989).

Employing Bracker and Pearson's (1986) framework (Tables 8.3.1 and 8.3.2), the clubs' planning practices and sophistication, 1990-2000, were compared. The clear inference from the data collected on the Planning dimension was that the clubs only employed SP when necessary (5.3; 7.3). SP was reactive, not planned or structured in advance. However, strategic goals were identified in situations where immediate action was required, such as 'survival' following the IoP. The academic debate, over whether or not formal SP influenced performance, had, as Perry (2001) contended, proved inconclusive, and proved to be the situation found within this study.

8.3.1.3 Incremental Dimension (Logical Incremental Perspective)

As with the previous section on the Planning Dimension, the writings on the Incremental Dimension (2.7.3) covered the influence of its context, both a stable and turbulent environment. The results from this section are equated with, and judged against, the conclusions of previous investigations.

Evidence found, thus aligning with Mathews and Scott's (1995) contention, that the clubs' planning horizon was short-term (seasonal) rather than long-term in nature. SP only took place when unforeseen events in the environment compelled the committees within clubs to plan (5.3), so the process was imposed on the nonprofit clubs, thus supporting the findings of Stone et al (1999). In stable environments, as stakeholders perceived the period 1990 – 1995, Bailey and Johnson (1990) contended that strategies did not need to change, and therefore strategy formulation in the clubs was not an established, regular, and sequential process. Clubs adopted the view that 'this is the way things have always been done at this club' and saw no reason to change that approach. Any changes were small in nature and infrequent, benefitting, it was claimed by stakeholders, from Quinn's (1980) "learning through doing" approach. Various stakeholders also confused SM with operational management, as revealed by Hodges and Kent (2007). Some basic SM tools and techniques operated within the clubs, but there was little structured SP employed.

The in-depth interviews with respondents from within each of the management and team management levels, (Section 7.4), had revealed a subtle, but important difference of

stakeholder perceptions pre-1995 as opposed to post-1995. The view that ‘the Team is the Club’ was prevalent throughout all clubs in the amateur era, and planning revolved around that belief, as described by Smith and Williams (1980). However, following the IoP, whilst those associated directly with the team still held that view, the management staff appreciated that without the necessary finance raised through the club’s business activities, the existence of the team would be seriously threatened. Quinn (1980) had recommended incrementalism for the more uncertain and rapidly changing environments. However, rather than a slow incremental process, action taken had emerged in response to urgent demands, and problems, facing the clubs, on a day-to-day operational basis, as asserted by Carsons and Cromie (1990). Management stated that it was “learning through doing”.

8.3.1.4 Political Dimension (Perspective)

The review of literature (2.7.4) established that strategy-making is an inherently political process (Chakravarthy and White, 2002) where powerful groups of stakeholders, internal and external, influenced strategy (Hickson et al, 1986) through negotiation, bargaining and compromise (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003).

No common agreement emerged, pre – 1995, from the research clubs on Chakravarthy and White’s (2002) contention that strategy making is an inherently political process, and whether or not politics influenced strategy (5.5.1; 5.5.2; 5.5.4). During the period from 1990 to 1995, because of the nature of the ‘amateur’ Game, most of the required resources were available. So there was no demand for any single, dominant stakeholder who had, as argued by Hickson et al (1986), the precious scarce resources that the clubs desired, and who could therefore influence strategy.

Following the events of August 1995, with the clubs facing turbulent times and uncertainty, the process of decision-making did become more prone to power, in line with the findings of Bailey and Johnson (1991). It was uncovered (7.5) that, with the clubs now desperately seeking scarce resources (quality players and finance) to survive, the influence and power of any stakeholder possessing those unique resources inevitably grew, supporting the proposition by Pfeffer and Salancik (2003). These findings (7.2.1; 7.4.1; 7.2.2), were consistent with those of Eisenhardt and Bourgeois (1988), and Eisenhardt and Zbaracki (1992), that power and politics influenced decision-making

within organisations. As a result of these controlling new actors entering the sector, internal politics at the three clubs became virtually non-existent, and accordingly supporting Eisenhardt's (1999) findings. The consensus amongst supporters and members concerning the political dimension was that it did NOT influence strategy post-1995, as much as it had done previously, during the amateur era. It was also evident that external politics (IRB and WRU) beyond the control of the club had strongly influenced the internal demand, at each club, for specific resources, concurring with the findings of Harris and Jenkins (2001). The longitudinal study supported the findings of Eisenhardt and Bourgeois (1988), that strategic decision making is influence by power.

8.3.1.5 Cultural Dimension (Interpretive Perspective)

'The strategies an organisation follows can be seen as more attributable to culture and cognition than to any objective planned response to the environment' (Bailey and Johnson, 1991, p.18). The discussion in this section concerns the influence of culture on the strategy-making process.

The different cultures found in the research clubs, had been established via a lengthy historical research undertaken on each club (Appendix 3.4 - 3.6), and through many visits to the clubs (Appendix 4.6). The study provided invaluable data, especially in understanding the basis of the cultural dimension. In line with the research of Schein (2004), Spender (1989), and Johnson (1987), the findings (5.6) did reveal that up to 1995, the strong culture within each club had established norms such as rituals, routines and symbols, and that club expectations based on ideology, values and beliefs (the paradigm) had acted as guides for action, suppressed deviance and had greatly influenced how events were perceived and the strategy adopted. The study concurred with Bailey and Johnson (1991, p20) that *"the culture and dominant paradigm of an organisation can only direct strategy through the individuals who take decisions and implement the strategy"*. At each club, former players and long-time supporters who had been subject to the club's culture had, in time, become members of the decision-making management committee.

Of interest to this research were the notions that if the comparable clubs were located in the same area, operated in an almost exact external environment, and their ages were similar that the clubs would exhibit an analogous rugby club culture. The fact that the two Gwent clubs (5.6.3) were located near to each other did lead to a similar culture

developing, as proposed by Spender (1989). However, there was, no common shared industry wide ‘image’ of on-field play in Wales despite the closeness of the clubs’ or the fact they all played the same game, rugby union football (5.6). Nevertheless, common to all clubs, culture was a respected, cherished, individual characteristic that was revealed in a club’s holistic approach to the Game. Thus, the influence of attitudes, values, ideas, and perceptions, was shared by the stakeholders and members, as advocated by Freeman (2000), and did contribute to the production of a club’s strategy. The strategies followed, therefore, were more attributable, as Bailey and Johnson (1991) argued, to culture and collective shared assumptions of the clubs’ than to any objective planned response to the environment, typified by adjustments over a period rather than by major change. The differences between the research clubs’ strategies resulted from a diverse view held on, and interpretation of, the external environment.

However, following the IoP, within the clubs’ it was not only the decision-makers who understood and appreciated that, unlike the pre-1995 era, culture should not be allowed to hold back the future progress and development within the clubs (Kono, 1994), but stakeholders had also accepted and adopted that view (7.6). Culture, developed within each club for over a century, would no longer be permitted to influence strategy.

8.3.1.6 Enforced Choice Dimension (Ecological Perspective)

The literature concerning the influence of the external environment upon the strategy-making process was examined in Chapter Two (2.7.6). The majority of Welsh clubs, pre-1995, being small, niche structures, were unable to influence their environments (5.7), thus supporting the proposition of Bailey and Johnson (1991). Since all member clubs of the WRU were treated as equal, the senior, first class clubs, being a minority, were relatively powerless, individually, to affect the strategy environment selection process; so they reacted through a “collective response” via a cartel in a form known as the ‘Merit Table’ clubs, as found by Smith and Williams (1980). A realised strategy was more likely brought about by the possibilities and limitations that were posed by the (competitive) environment, as opposed to what happened within the boundary of the clubs. Freedom of choice existed, but only within limits determined by the external environment, as purported by Bailey et al (2000). Whilst the actual playing environment was considered stable, individual clubs were found (5.7) to be restricted in their capacity to make strategic

decisions within the Welsh Rugby sector. Club respondents acknowledged that they perceived the environment, post-1995, as turbulent and unpredictable (Section 6.7) with the IRB, introducing professionalism, the WRU being indecisive and not showing leadership, and local councils being unsupportive, being external forces influencing and restricting strategic choice. So in line with the findings of Hannah and Freeman (1989), outside factors external to the organisations, imposed strategy on clubs which best fitted the transformed environment.

In the literature, it has been claimed by Minzberg and Lampel (2001) that in turbulent and unpredictable environments, such as the IoP, organic rather than rational processes should be employed. In such environments, it was advocated by Westhead and Storey (1996) that small firm managers favoured short-term planning because of concerns with short term problems and issues. The study's findings were mixed on this subject. Planned decisions, as advocated by Hart and Banbury (1992), were employed at one club (6.2). Conversely, strategic decisions were made (6.5) which, were not based on either formal or emergent planning, proved to be high risk, reactionary decisions, corresponding to the findings of Dean and Sharfman (1993). Nonetheless, strategic decisions were made, as suggested by Beaver (2003), in order to endure the pressures from the external environment, but the clubs had employed different approaches to implement and achieve a common strategy, survival. Despite the arrival of financial backers (7.2.1; 7.2.2; 7.2.4), the external environment continued to make an impact at each of the clubs. The research established that, the strategies that the clubs could follow were severely limited, and were indeed, an enforced choice, as contended by Harris and Jenkins (2001).

The employment of the Six Dimension instrument (Bailey et al, 2000), matched the topics previously raised by stakeholders (4.5.5) and proved ideal for extracting and collecting the necessary data required to respond to this research question. A summary of the findings within the six dimensions of strategy development, 1990 – 2000, at each club can be found in Tables 8.3.3, 8.3.4 and 8.3.5.

8.3.2 Research Question Two

How did clubs react to the IoP to Welsh Rugby in August 1995, and what were the resultant outcomes?

The section is structured as per Chapter Six, employing the headings of Pettigrew's (1988) model, the three dimensions of strategy, the process, content and context. The study focused, as advised by Sminia (2009), on the unique and extremely contextual situation of rugby clubs at a specific moment in time. Research was considered desirable, by Bailey et al (1990), in to examining whether such a particular strategic issue (in this study, professionalism) was dealt with in a similar or dissimilar manner within the industry (rugby). The research questions (6.1) were focused on understanding and attempting to explain the club's actions and outcomes emanating from external pressure. This section, evaluates, and concentrates on, the findings – literature association specifically surrounding the IoP.

8.3.2.1 Process

It had been contended by Aram and Cowen, (1990, p65) that strategic action in small organisations only occurred belatedly following a crisis, by which time it was too late. Equally, Atherton (2003) reasoned that where an event was not anticipated or expected, the response was reactive. It was found that the IoP did match the frequently cited definition of organizational crisis, offered by Pearson and Clair (1998, p60). In addition, the study found that there was no comparable prior event, as recommended by Schon (1991), for the clubs on which to base decisions. However, the unforeseen crisis that the IoP had caused within each club had the effect of challenging, and changing, stakeholders' perceptions of the club's culture. This was not a routine, operational, day-to-day decision that clubs had grown accustomed to making (Table 5.4). Rather it was one that, because of the clubs' rapidly changing circumstance, and the uncertainty, made rational decision-making unrealistic, as argued by Sminia (2009) but, one that still required an immediate response, as contended by Mintzberg (1973). There was little time, as put forward by Bailey and Johnson (1991), for pursuing a strategy of adjustments or incremental change. With no history of dealing with such an uncertain, threatening environment, as found by Dean and Shaftman, (1993), clubs, in line with Eisenhardt's (1997) recommendations, had to make speedy decisions flexible enough to permit

adaption. A closer examination of the claims found that senior figures were in a ‘no-win’ situation: damned by stakeholders if they were perceived as taking no action, as at Newbridge (6.3), and damned if they were perceived as taking the ‘wrong’ action, as at Llanelli (6.5). Conversations with stakeholders at that time found that members, in particular, were more than content not to be involved with the decision-making, contrary to their involvement that was recommended by Freeman (2000), and adopted the ‘nothing to do with me, guv’ attitude. Nonetheless, they were quick to point out, subsequently, that the officers of the club had been elected to make the ‘right’ decisions, even though, as proposed by Schrader et al (1989), their skill of strategic decision-making was limited or even non-existent. It was established that the decision-makers, who were in contrasting positions of power at each club (6.2.1;6.3.1;6.5.1) had no previous experience of dealing with such a crisis, and not one of the clubs had implemented Hale et al’s (2006) recommendation of having a crisis management team. It had been maintained by Paton and Cornforth (1992), that in NPOs, leaders might not have business experience, and in two out of the three research clubs that was found to be the case on the IoP (6.6).

It was highlighted by respondents that luck and timing, as contended by Eisenhardt and Zbracki (1992), had played its part in the selection of each decision-maker. The conclusion reached was that, whether or not it was considered ‘good’ luck, at Ebbw Vale (6.2.3), and at Llanelli (6.5.1), or ‘bad’ luck at Newbridge (6.3.1), circumstances, fortune, had inadvertently played a major part in influencing clubs’ strategy and the subsequent outcomes. Facing an unprecedented event, some of the senior figures, were still expected by stakeholders to make the ‘right’ decision for the survival and future of their clubs. The decision-makers’ actions were in line with the findings of Byers and Slack (2001) who found that, because of rapidly changing circumstances, the actions taken were via immediate response decisions. However, at variance with their findings that decisions were ‘adaptive but not strategically oriented’, was that Ebbw Vale (6.2.1) had made decisions placing their strategic goal of continuing in Premier Division Rugby, as their top priority, as recommended by Pfeffer and Slack (2003).

Remarkably, there was no individual within two of the three clubs, Ebbw Vale being the exception, with the necessary critical financial experience to overcome these unique difficulties as proposed by Gorton(1999). With limited financial resources in an uncertain

changing environment, decision-makers were stuck between following the considered 'sensible' course of waiting until they acquired the necessary funding, or alternatively, securing their players immediately through signing contracts by gambling on finding a financial backer in the near future (Hoye et al, 2009). Clubs were really between a rock and a hard place, and decision makers were faced with taking unprecedented, practical, and financial, decisions in an uncertain, dynamic environment, as established by Smith and Williams (1999).

Desperate to raise the vital life providing funds, the clubs did seek backers with financial clout (6.2.1; 6.3.2; 6.5.3); however, on such an important and delicate issue, and contrary to Freeman's (2000) contention, stakeholders said they were not consulted. Nevertheless, when the question of alternative action to survive in the Premier Division was raised, very few stakeholders at the three clubs had been prepared to offer any other solutions.

The decisions made, and the actions taken, by all the clubs were intended to meet, as Beaver (2003) argued, the most basic of organisational goals, that of ensuring survival. A significant inference, from the research surrounding the IoP, was that the approach to the strategy process, pursued and directed by individuals, varied in each of the research clubs.

8.3.2.2 Outcome

Previous research by Eisenhardt (1989) had found that fast decision-making was positively related to performance in a dynamic environment. In this study, the playing outcome for each club 1995-2000 is 'a matter of record' (Appendix 4.5), following each club's speedy decisions taken (6.2.3; 6.3.3; 6.5.3), as recommended by Hale et al (2006). The alternative courses of action open to the clubs were limited, as contended by Harris and Jenkins (2001). Their decisions revolved around resource availability; it was a chicken and egg scenario, choosing the financial resource before playing resources, or simply acquiring players before the necessary finance. All clubs were chasing the same scarce resources, high finance and quality players.

The 'shock' of the IoP, had affected the three comparable Welsh rugby clubs in different ways. None of them subsequently made a profit. Two clubs did survive in the Premier Division, and those two did change their legal status; so the outcomes at Ebbw Vale

(Table 8.3.6) and Llanelli (Table 8.3.8), supported Pearson and Clair's (1998) assertion that the social-political perspective suggests that crisis management is unlikely to be successful without a reformation of organizational leadership and culture.

So in answering the question did the 'ends justify the means', one could always debate an alternative 'what if' scenario. However, there is little concrete evidence to support the view that pursuing a different path would have ensured the same outcome, that of survival. Nevertheless, in resolving the crisis, and achieving their main goal outcome of survival, the clubs created conditions that resulted in further constraint to their overall degree of strategic freedom, as contended by McCarthy and Leavy (2000).

8.3.2.3 Context

The IoP, initiated by the iRB, and its aftermath was consistent with Ansoff's (1988) dimensions of a 'shock' event, and was a critical strategic event both for the Game and the clubs. The three research clubs (6.1) agreed that the IoP was a major 'shock', basically because of the speed of change. The findings (6.1) established that no club in Wales was prepared for such a sudden change to the core value of the Game in spite of the warning from the WRU to the IRB in July 1995, coupled with the earlier changes to the amateur regulations (Appendix 2.23). It was argued by Covin (1991), that employing greater strategic vision could possibly prepare firms for any future changes, in this case the transformation to the core value of the rugby union Game. Throughout the rugby 'industry', the warning issued by Kallenberg and Leicht (1991), concerning the adoption of a single measure of performance (playing results each season, especially winning outcomes), was ignored. Such a single measurement would not reflect a club's ability to either cope with any 'shock' event, or even to survive its impact in the long term.

Within the internal context, the clubs' committee structures and decision-making processes, aligned with Fredrickson's (1986) view that organisations with similar dominant structures were likely to make strategic decisions using a similar process. These processes did not change until after the first full season of professionalism (6.2). Contrary to the findings of Brouthers et al (1998), but supporting the results of Eisenhardt and Zbracki (1992), politics and power did influence decision-making in Welsh rugby clubs surrounding the IoP. Although the IRB had pronounced the Game 'Open' meaning that financial payment was allowed '*but not compulsory*', the future performances, and

existence, of the clubs were now very dependent on the quality of decisions made by the senior figure, as claimed by Atherton (2003). Clubs, like small firms, were, due to the IoP, now faced with managing limited and scarce resources as maintained by Gibson and Cassar (2002). To acquire the scarce resources, the study findings supported those of Matthews and Scott (1995), that the IoP did push the clubs towards immediate, short term decision-making. It was evident from the study that the context, professionalism, in which clubs operated had strongly influenced the way in which their strategies had developed, thus concurring with Pettigrew's (1985) research on a firm's environment.

8.3.2.4 The Influences on Performance

A timeline for each club from 1988 to 2000 can be found in figures 8.3.1, 8.3.2, and 8.3.3. Whilst the clubs' characteristics, pre-1995, were confirmed as those of a nonprofit organisation (Table 2.2), following the IoP, clubs showed planning characteristics similar to those of small businesses (Table 2.3). Rugby clubs tended to focus on operational planning that had short term goals, similar to small organisations (Tables 8.3.1; 8.3.2). A comparison of SM within each club was conducted via Stone and Crittenden's (1993) framework (Tables 8.3.9, 8.3.10). In common with the findings of Mount et al (1993), the clubs had not wished to optimise profits or follow a growth strategy, but all wished, as Porter (1996) contended, to outperform rivals and to improve performance.

As proposed by Szymanski (2003), the single most influential benchmark was found to be victory over rival competitors. Within the rugby industry, it was acknowledged that playing performance (utility maximization) was considered more important than financial results (profit maximization) (Hoye et al, 2009), and that performance implications could be outdated within weeks or months, as contended by Schrader et al (1989). Regarding the goals set by clubs post-1995, significantly playing performance was still a priority, despite the IoP. The goals displayed respectively by the three clubs revealed a marked difference in each club's 'confidence' that extended throughout the first five years of professionalism. The elements considered by Storey (1994) that affected small business performance produced a mixed bag of findings (Tables 8.3.6, 8.3.7, and 8.3.8). No association was found between age, size, and legal form, influencing club performance; but, importantly, location, management, environment, finance and planning were found to have influenced decisions taken at each of the clubs that had impacted on performance.

8.4 Conclusions

The investigation into the strategy-making in Welsh rugby clubs, 1990-2000, via three distinct periods, provided rich data, an in-depth insight and detailed understanding of the process. It was established, via research into the history of each club (Appendix 3.4a; 3.5a; 3.6a), that the decision-making officers of the clubs had been responsible for making strategy, that was influenced by politics, culture and the external environment. Through examining the first period, the last five years of amateurism (Chapter 5) it was concluded that the six dimensions of strategy development, proposed by Bailey et al (2000), had remained unaffected by the introduction of the first National League in 1990.

It was also determined that the unexpected, and transformational IoP (Chapter 6), an enforced choice, was THE most influential dimension concerning decision-making and actions at the three research clubs for well over a century. The clubs had previously tried to pursue, and defend, a ‘maintain niche’ strategy but the IoP had coerced the clubs to pursue a ‘survival’ strategy essential for their continued existence. However, each club employed different approaches to making, implementing, and achieving that strategy.

The conclusions arising out of research into the post-1995 period (Chapter 7), was that the change in the Game’s core value, from amateur to professional, had generated the need for vital increased funding. This requirement lead to the introduction of a powerful individual, the financial backer, who immediately became the senior figure. It was established that the new decision-maker’s arrival was responsible for the dramatic decline in the influence of politics and culture on strategy-making within each of the clubs.

It was concluded that the strategy-making process, involving decisions, actions and outcomes, had been influenced by various dimensions, in different periods, throughout the research decade. (Tables 8.3.3; 8.3.4; 8.3.5).

A considered opinion, from a very respected New Zealand captain, and Rhodes scholar, Chris Laidlaw (1973, p.126), offered a reason as to why the research clubs had been in existence for in excess of a hundred years, and had withstood the demands and problems posed by the unique, transformational decade; *‘In the Welsh environment the activities of the Rugby enthusiasts were interwoven with most other aspects of local life, and thus the club helps rugby to survive in Wales.’*

8.5 Contribution to Knowledge

The contribution to knowledge is made within the field of strategy development. The recent assertion by Ghobadian and O'Regan (2011, p.423), that '*there are very few cases that examine strategy, strategic decisions, and strategic management in not-for-profit organisations*', promotes the need for such a study. This research concerning the strategy-making process, in the specific context of non-profit Welsh rugby clubs, involved the application of Bailey et al's (2000) Six Dimensional model, Pettigrew's (1988) model, and the acquisition of empirical evidence from a purposive sample of three rugby clubs. The major contributions are as follows;

8.5.1 Fills a research gap in strategy-making in nonprofit organizations in general, and in sport clubs in particular.

This study sheds light on a group of sport NPOs in a new and interesting way, thus adding to the understanding and knowledge of strategy-making in NPOs. This study builds on the research undertaken by Bailey et al (2000, p159), who advocated that '*one area of research may seek to understand the relationship of strategy development processes to differing contexts*'. The major review and analysis of empirically based research on SM in NPOs, carried out by Stone et al (1999, p416), highlighted '*major research questions raised by the analysis*'. Those questions were concerned with strategy formulation, strategy content, strategy implement and performance in NPOs. It would be impossible for one study to tackle such an exhaustive list, but this research's contribution was to concentrate on examining, and advance understanding, theoretical and practical, in the following areas,

- i) The patterns of process in each club.
- ii) The role of managers and club members in the strategy- making process, and revealing the critical personalities.
- iii) Establishing if managers within same club agree/disagree on the pattern of process at work within the club?
- iv) Considering all alternative explanations of the process that resulted in strategic action, and the features of context and action drove the process.
- v) How clubs measured performance, and the intended and unintended consequences of any revealed pattern of continuity and change?

The study supplements, and advances, academic knowledge on strategy theory in a previously little researched context, nonprofit Welsh rugby clubs, and offers additional evidence to the strategy – performance debate in a novel context.

8.5.2 Makes a contribution to knowledge, and understanding of the strategy development process, and decision-making, made prior to, during, and following, a crisis in a NPO.

To develop further knowledge on strategy making processes, Bailey and Johnson (1991, p37) encouraged researchers “*to examine whether particular strategic issues are dealt with in similar or dissimilar manners across organisations*”. The study took advantage of such a unique event to make a contribution to the research gaps that existed, by providing a conceptual clarification (8.3) on,

- The roles of goals in the decision-making process in NPOs surrounding a crisis (6.2.2; 6.3.2; 6.5.2).
- The type of strategic decisions taken during a crisis, planned or emergent (6.2.1; 6.3.1; 6.5.1),
- The comparability of the strategy-making process in each club during a crisis (6.6.1).

The knowledge and theoretical insight acquired via the important ‘coal face’ accounts of the strategy development process, and decision-making, during a common sector ‘crisis’, adds to, and provides a fresh understanding of, crisis management in NPOs. In addition, by focusing on the interactions between actors and context, strategy as practice, the ‘micro’ study contributes to the understanding of the performance of strategic work by individuals in a unique context.

8.5.3 Contribute through findings that situate historically the clubs’ actions and outcomes during a turbulent period, and key ‘turning points’, for the Welsh rugby industry.

The research time-frame embraces a very significant, unique transformation period in Welsh rugby history (Smith and Williams, 1999). The introduction of the first ever National League structure in 1990, and the unprecedented transition of the Game’s core value, from that of amateur to being ‘open’, professional, in 1995, can never happen again, hence the importance of evaluating, and documenting, its impact.

8.5.4 Methodological Contribution

The study makes the following methodological contributions to knowledge.

Firstly, the research provided empirical support for Bailey et al's (2000) theoretical instrument on strategy development, whose noteworthy contribution to the literature on strategy-making was extended in to the field of non-profit, sport organisations, especially rugby union. The dimensions of the instrument aligned themselves with the issues raised by stakeholders in conversations (Section 4.5.5). The instrument permitted examination into the questions posed of whether or not strategic issues/events were dealt with in a similar or dissimilar manner within the clubs, whether managers within the same club agreed or disagreed on the patterns of processes at work within their club, and whether this perception differed across managerial groups. Secondly, no previous longitudinal study using this qualitative methodology, 'insider accounts' from multiple club levels, linking in-depth, semi-structured interviews, conversations, and direct observation, within a case study approach, had been found in this research context. The privileged access granted to the researcher because of my history and biography was significant, and a real strength in enhancing the trustworthiness of the study, in acquiring the in-depth, detailed data given by the respondents, and stakeholders, which permitted the actions and outcomes of each club to be enumerated.

Secondly, employing a multi-method approach, Pettigrew's (1988) model, combining multiple 'insider accounts', 'shock event', and the 'CIT', the study contributes to methodological development for examining a crisis in small, sport NPOs. This combination facilitated the recording for posterity, of the monumental change to the core value of the Game, from amateurism to professionalism. The respondents and stakeholders interviewed and spoken to, had experienced the spontaneous change and thus offered the research the benefit of their individual perceptions of the unexpected, critical event.

Lastly, the study takes account of the perceptions, and behaviour, of different managerial levels of internal respondents, along with the views of external respondents, within the distinctive nature of the small, nonprofit organisation's context, process and content. The study therefore contributes to knowledge by employing a data collection process from multiple levels within an organisation to enable the adoption of a comparative approach

on performance related case studies (high and low), that has been previously unused in the context of understanding strategy-making in small, nonprofit, rugby organisations.

8.6 Implications

In light of the discussion initiated in the previous chapter, a number of interesting implications can be extracted for the findings summarised above, particularly for practising managers; *“the main reason managers should pay attention to scholarly research is that actions based on sound evidence trump those based on intuition”* (Sutton, 2004 p.27).

8.6.1 Research.

This study has identified both theory and research gaps in the strategy-making process in the nonprofit management literature. In addition, the researcher acknowledges the encouragement for future research given via the recommendations within the studies of Bailey and Johnson (1991), Bailey et al (2000), Kearns and Scarpino (1996), and Ghobadian and O'Regan (2011). The findings of this study have contributed in a small way by unearthing some of the missing knowledge. The emphasis of nonprofit amateur rugby clubs was on OP, rather than SP, findings which adds fuel to those critics of 'fits-all' SP. A planning approach, identified and understood by decision-makers in clubs to be 'SP', was only employed when necessary, not continually. The rugby clubs' unique mission, goals, values, strong culture, politics and their accountability to a wide range of stakeholders, revealed a theoretical difference from those business organisations seeking profit. Such differences, therefore, undermined the advocated use in the literature of established strategic tools and techniques in nonprofit organisations; and even during the first five years of professionalism, where clubs were considered to be small businesses, few actually employed acknowledged business tools and techniques. Thus caution and deeper understanding is required by researchers, of the specific internal and external context of dissimilar organisations, when attempting to develop feasible theoretical SM models and conceptual frameworks aimed at encompassing all organisations.

8.6.2 Rugby Clubs

Rugby union football has a predetermined annual cycle, which has influenced clubs towards a short-term focus that has been based upon a playing performance (utility

maximization) that was considered to be more important than financial results (profit maximization). However, since the IoP, clubs have been faced with a realisation that short-term seasonal sporting success, and long term survival, both require considerable financial investment. Clubs have to balance conflicting on-field and off-field goals and objectives. Whilst the lack of formal approaches to strategy-making does not represent a major difficulty, the requirement that club decision-makers have the necessary business experience, commercial skills and strategic vision has become paramount in the professional era. The days of the club members electing volunteer amateur committeemen, and officers, being totally responsible for the inputs and outputs of a rugby club are seriously threatened.

Due to a more competitive environment, both on- and off- the field of play, rugby clubs need to closely examine, and understand, the potential influence of culture and politics on future developments and direction. Professionalism has affected not only the senior clubs, but clubs at all levels within Welsh rugby. The stark choice facing many smaller clubs is to continue struggling to meet the financial demands of mercenary players, or to return to the amateur fold as a community club. The inability to attract a large financial backer, means clubs will have to consider acquiring finance by diversifying into social, commercial, and other community activities. In order to survive, clubs' decision-makers should be aware not only of the military approach to strategy, but also the biological version, Darwin's natural selection theory, where only the fittest species adapt, and survive, the changing environment.

8.6.3 Governing Bodies.

The narratives of the respondents highlighted the general critical view of the governing bodies held by club stakeholders. Both the IRB and the WRU had not strategically planned for the change to the core value of amateurism, and it could be argued that the lack of any strategy by the governing bodies not only had major implications for all clubs, but also weakened rugby union's position in the competitive global sports arena. In Wales, as in most other countries, rugby clubs are not cash rich. Expecting players (or their new agent) not to put a high value on their heads sounded as if the IRB were harping back to the 19th century self-funded 'gentleman' players with their amateur standards. Emerging countries like Argentina, Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, Namibia and Romania have lost

their role-models, their top players, to high paying countries like England, France, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. There is still disagreement in those cash poor rugby countries as to whether or not the Game in those nations have actually benefitted from the IoP.

Rugby's governing bodies, especially the WRU, failed to ensure that all member clubs had the necessary resources, skills and abilities to implement the changes that they instigated and inflicted on clubs. Even in 1997, the WRU did not have a strategic plan, which spoke volumes of the governance by Welsh rugby's ruling body. The governing bodies in other sports should learn the lessons from rugby union football, of introducing such fundamental structural change to a game without discussion, by forewarning, and offering appropriate, specific preparatory training programmes to all its members.

8.7 Limitations of Research and the Need for Further Investigation.

Whilst this study achieved its research objectives, there are several limitations within the research design and method. For instance, the study was undertaken on small, nonprofit, sporting organisations within a single sport industry. The sample of organisations was considered as undersized to perform a statistical analysis, whilst the data collected was restricted to three 'First Class' clubs, out of a possible eighteen, at the senior end of Welsh rugby. The number of respondents, twenty-seven, might be criticised for being too small for such an in-depth study. Had findings established widely differing views amongst respondents, it is accepted that the selected number would have proved problematic and would have been a cause for concern. It is acknowledged that, whilst the achievement from the clubs and respondents is in-depth, the study is lacking in the breadth required for comparability with other organisations in different sectors. Nonetheless, the study was designed to discover, and then present, rich and deep findings rather than to claim universal application, and so qualitative accounts and unconfirmed relationships have been described.

The specific methodology, because of the small sample, resulted in the research passing up the generalisation offered by large quantitative studies. These in-depth findings from Welsh clubs are informative and need to be tested, via further investigations, within other Six Nations countries, and possibly Southern Hemisphere countries, to consider if any

important disparities occur, to ascertain an explanation for the disparities, and the implications for research in this subject area. Due to the subjective nature of the interpretive research method employed, caution should be used when considering the findings of this study. Therefore, decisive conclusions on the nature of the strategy-making process in rugby clubs are not possible to be applied to all nonprofit, sporting organisations. With respect to research into small enterprises, Curran and Blackburn (2001, p.7), stated that,

“there are no perfect, unchallengeable outcomes from research on SMEs (or any other business phenomena).....but the findings from any research are never more than provisional if only because the real world is constantly changing”.

This study’s contribution, focusing on a small sample of three sporting NPOs, should also be located within the framework of the *“real world constantly changing”*.

It was in the recognised background of larger (for profit) business organisations that many existing theories and research had originated, and as pointed out in the summary to Chapter Two, the literature centred on strategy and SM was enormous. When this research into this specific sporting sector originated, knowledge concerning strategy-making in this particular non-profit environment was limited. However, the paucity of empirical research undertaken indicates that any study that can contribute to producing "hard" evidence about strategy-making should be of benefit to both the non-profit and sporting sector literature. This would support the recent observations by Ghobadian and O’Regan (2011), that there is a need for case studies in NPOs to examine all aspects surrounding strategy.

From the start of the investigation through to its completion, academic journals and university websites were regularly searched for any newly published work linked to the research questions. In spite of a regular search pattern, no fresh academic research in the area in which this study was concentrated, was found. Although Adcroft and Teckman (2008, p.622) had highlighted that, *“Most management research is context-specific”*, as far as could be determined, this particular sector in Wales had not benefitted from further empirical examination throughout the duration of the study. It is appreciated, therefore, that the research study, and the findings put forward in this thesis, are not wide- ranging, but actually are intended to offer an informative insight into the nature of this complex

subject in a non-profit, sporting context. Nonetheless, owing to its holistic, contextual approach, and comparative case study method, this research can make assertions about the veracity of its findings that might be considered to provide the groundwork for additional research.

Emerging from the thesis, consideration could be given to pursuing a number of different research directions such as decision-making, strategy-making, strategy implementation and crisis management in nonprofit and sporting organisations. However, the potential topic areas summarized above represent direct challenges. This on-going research could offer empirical data that might ultimately lead to the progression of a theory on strategy-making processes that particularly tackles the requirements of sporting organisations, both non-profit and for-profit.

8.8 Final Remarks

As a researcher (and especially as a referee), it is to be expected that other individuals will review, and then either support, or challenge, the findings and interpretations of this study. Nonetheless, as Adcroft et al (2007, p4) stated,

“At the end of the day, management research is about the search for some kind of truth... Whether it is our or someone else’s truth, whether that truth is real or imagined, if it raises debate it will always have some value”

It now seems a lifetime ago, back in 1995, that many passionate Welsh rugby supporters, including myself, had serious concerns relating to “How would amateur clubs approach, and cope with, the demands of the new professional era?’ The evidence presented in this thesis has attempted to offer an answer to that question and, in doing so, has provided the foundation, and themes, for fellow researchers to develop.



v



TABLE 8.3.1 Cross Case Analysis: Comparison of Components of Planning Practices and Sophistication in Small Firms, 1990– 2000.

(Bracker and Pearson, 1986)

Club Component	Ebbw Vale 1990/95	Ebbw Vale 1995/97	Ebbw Vale 1997/00	Newbridge 1990/95	Newbridge 1995/98	Newbridge 1998/00
Objective Setting	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Environment Analysis	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SWOT Analysis	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Strategy Formulation	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Financial Projections	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Functional Budgets	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Operating Performance Measures	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Control (FSA) Corrective Procedures	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Unstructured Plans	No	No	No	No	No	No
Intuitive Plans	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Structured Operational Plans	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Structured Strategic Plans	No	No	Yes	No	No	No

KEY Changes to Components of Planning Practices and Sophistication



**TABLE 8.3.2 Components of Planning Practices
& Sophistication 1990 - 2000**

(Bracker and Pearson, 1986)

Club Component	Llanelli 1990/95	Llanelli 1995/97	Llanelli 1997/2000
Objective Setting	Yes	Yes	Yes
Environment Analysis	Yes	Yes	Yes
SWOT Analysis	Yes	Yes	Yes
Strategy Formulation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Financial Projections	Yes	Yes	Yes
Functional Budgets	Yes	Yes	Yes
Operating Performance Measures	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control (FSA) Corrective Procedures	No	Yes	Yes
Unstructured Plans	No	No	No
Intuitive Plans	No	Yes	No
Structured Operation Plans	No	No	No
Structured Strategic Plans	Yes	No	Yes

Key



Changes to Components of Planning Practices
and Sophistication



TABLE 8.3.3 Comparison of Ebbw Vale's Six Dimensions of Strategy Development, 1990 – 2000.

(Bailey et al. 2000)

Years Dimension	1990 to 1995	1995 to 1997	1997 to 2000
Command (Senior Figure(s)).	Chairman, Vice, Secretary, Treasurer	President Paul Russell plus committee	Financial Backers Paul & Marcus Russell
Planning (Formal)	Informal Plans recorded in minutes of meeting	Informal Plans recorded in minutes of meeting	Minutes of Board meetings. Budgets produced.
Incremental (Emergent Planning)	Approach adopted when necessary	Approach adopted when necessary	Approach adopted when necessary
Political Influences	Politics divided committee and influenced strategy	Little Politics	None that influenced strategy.
Cultural Influences	Culture influenced strategy	Culture influenced strategy	Some influence on strategy but does not hold back club.
Enforced Choice (External Influences)	Stable Playing Environment, Loss of major industries influenced strategy	Turbulent Playing Environment WRU; Council; Location, influenced strategy	Turbulent Playing Environment WRU; Council; Location, influenced strategy
Strategy	Niche Do Nothing	Niche Survival. Resource Based Strategy.	Niche Survival. Consolidation. Resource Based Strategy

KEY



Change to Element or Performance Measurement

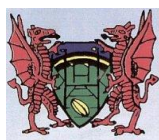


TABLE 8.3.4 Comparison of Newbridge Six Dimensions of Strategy Development, 1990 -2000.

(Bailey et al. 2000)

Years Dimension	1990 to 1995	1995 to 1998	1998 to 2000
Command (Senior Figure(s)).	Chairman, Vice, Secretary, Treasurer	Chairman, Vice, Secretary, Treasurer	Financial Backer and Chairman; Idris McCarthy
Planning (Formal)	Informal Plans recorded in minutes of meeting	Informal Plans recorded in minutes of meeting	Informal Plans recorded in minutes of six man committee meeting Budgets produced
Incremental (Emergent Planning)	Approach adopted when necessary	Approach adopted when necessary	Approach adopted when necessary
Political Influences	Little Politics Strong committee defeated other factions.	Politics within club and committee during this period	None that influenced strategy
Cultural Influences	Culture influenced strategy	Culture influenced strategy	Culture did NOT influence strategy
Enforced Choice (External Influences)	Stable Playing Environment, Loss of major industries Influenced strategy	Turbulent Playing Environment WRU, Council, Location Influenced Strategy	Turbulent Playing Environment WRU, Council, Location Influenced Strategy
Strategy	Niche Stability/ Do Nothing/ Consolidate	Niche Survival/ Consolidation.	Niche Do Nothing/ Consolidation.

KEY Change Over Study Period to the Six Dimensions.



TABLE 8.3.5 Comparison of Llanelli's Six Dimensions of Strategy Development, 1990-2000

(Bailey et al, 2000)

Years Dimension	1990 to 1995	1995 to 1997	1997 to 2000
Command (senior Figure(s))	Chairman then Committee	Chairman then Committee	Huw Evans, Backer. Stuart Gallacher, CEO Gareth Jenkins, Coach The Board
Planning (Formal)	Informal Plans recorded in minutes of meeting	Informal Plans recorded in minutes of meeting	Minutes of Board meetings. Budgets produced.
Incremental (Emergent)	Approach adopted when necessary	Approach adopted when necessary	Approach adopted when necessary
Political Influences	Small Committee kept politics at bay	Small Committee kept politics at bay. Some politics within Club	No politics due to HE. No influence on strategy.
Cultural Influences	Club's Culture & History influenced strategy	Club's Culture & History influenced strategy	Culture did not hold back change.
Enforced Choice (External Factors)	Stable Playing Environment, Planned Season Loss of major industries influenced strategy	Turbulent Operating Environment WRU, Other Club Owners influenced strategy	Turbulent Operating Environment. WRU, Other Club Owners influenced strategy
Strategy	Niche Growth/ Consolidation	Niche Survival	Niche Survival/ Consolidation

KEY Change Over Study Period to the Six Dimensions.



TABLE 8.3.6 Comparison of Ebbw Vale's Elements and Measurements of Performance, 1990 – 2000

(Storey, 1994: Venkatraman and Ramanujam, 1986)

Years Elements	1990 to 1995	1995 to 1997	1997 to 2000
Age	1880	1880	1997
Size	Council owned ground	Council owned ground	Council owned ground.
Location	North Gwent Valley	North Gwent Valley	North Gwent Valley
Legal Form	Members Club	Members Club	Limited Company
Management	Officers of Club with Committee	Paul Russell with Committee	Paul+Marcus Russell with Board of Directors
Planning	Informal Plans recorded in minutes of meetings	Informal Plans recorded in minutes of meetings	Informal Plans in minutes of meetings. Financial Plans
Environment	Stable Playing Environment. Loss of major industries	Turbulent Playing Environment. Loss of major industries	Turbulent Playing Environment. No major industries in area
Finance / Financial Performance	Profitable Funding from Supporters.	Non Profitable. Funding from National League.	Non profitable Funding from WRU, backers, sponsors
Playing Performance	2 nd Div, club for 5 yrs Playing perform NOT a priority. Affected by politics	Club 1 st Div for 2 yrs Playing perform a priority. North Gwent recruits	Club 1 st Div for 3 yrs Playing perform a priority. North Gwent recruits
Organisation Effectiveness	No F/T staff to do community work. Club gave town an identity. Club looked after players welfare	No F/T staff to do community work. Club gave town an identity. Club looked after players welfare	F/T staff did community work. Club gave town an identity. Club looked after players welfare

KEY Change Over Study Period to Element or Performance Measurement

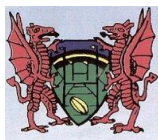


TABLE 8.3.7 Comparison of Newbridge's Elements and Measurements of Performance, 1990 – 2000

(Storey, 1994: Venkatraman and Ramanujam, 1986)

Years Elements	1990 to 1995	1995 to 1998	1998 to 2000
Age	1888	1888	1888
Size	Council owned ground	Council owned ground	Council owned ground
Location	North Gwent Valley	North Gwent Valley	North Gwent Valley
Legal Form	Members Club	Members Club	Members Club
Management	Officers of club with Committee	Officers of club with Committee	Idris McCathey, plus committee six membs
Planning	Informal plans recorded in minutes of meeting	Informal plans recorded in minutes of meeting	Informal plans recorded in minutes of meeting
Environment	Stable playing environment. Decline of major industries.	Turbulent playing environment. Decline of major industries.	Turbulent playing environment. Decline of major industries.
Finance / Financial Performance	Finance not priority Profits for 5 years No Fin. Planning Rec'd Sponsorship	Finance not priority No Profits over 2 yrs No Fin. Budgets	Finance not priority No Profits over 3 yrs Financial Budgets Limited funding
Playing Performance	Playing Performance was priority. 1 st Div Club for 5 yrs Local players	Playing Performance was priority. 1 st Div Club for 2 yrs Lower Div. players from far & wide.	Playing Performance was priority. 2 nd Div Club for 3 yrs Players who wanted to play for club.
Organisation Effectiveness	No F/T staff to do community work. Club gave town an identity. Club looked after players welfare	No F/T staff to do community work. Club gave town an identity. Club looked after players welfare	No F/T staff to do community work. Club gave town an identity. Club looked after players welfare

KEY Change to Element or Performance Measurement



TABLE 8.3.8 Comparison of Llanelli's Elements and Measurements of Performance, 1990 – 2000

(Storey, 1994: Venkatraman and Ramanujam, 1986)

Years Element	1990 to 1995	1995 to 1998	1998 to 2000
Age	1872	1872	1998
Size	Club Owned Ground	Club Owned Ground	WRU Owned Ground
Location	Urban Town	Urban Town	Urban Town
Legal Form	Members Club	Members Club	Limited Company
Management	Chairman with Small Committee	Chairman with Small Committee	Board of Directors
Planning	Informal plans recorded in minutes of committee meetings	Informal plans recorded in minutes of committee meetings	Informal plans recorded in minutes of Board meetings
Environment	Stable playing environment. Decline of major industries.	Turbulent playing environment. Decline of major industries.	Turbulent playing environment. Decline of major industries.
Finance / Financial Performance	Profits made 5 yrs. No financial budgets. Finance was not priority	No profit made 3 yrs. Financial budgets. Finance was not priority	No profit made 2 yrs. Financial plans but financial difficulties. Finance 2 nd priority
Playing Performance	Playing was priority. 1 st Div. club for 5 yrs. League title once. Cup winners 3 times	Playing was priority. 1 st Div. club for 3 yrs. Club mid table. Cup winners once.	Playing still priority. 1 st Div. club for 2 yrs. League title once. Cup Winners once
Organisation Effectiveness	No F/T staff to do community work. Other orgs in area used facilities. Club looked after players welfare	F/T players did community work. Club gave global identity to town. Club looked after players' welfare.	F/T players did community work. Club gave global identity to town. Club looked after players welfare.

KEY Change to Element or Performance Measurement

**Table 8.3.9 Cross-Case Comparison within the Framework for the Analysis of Strategic Management
as at September 1990**
(Stone and Crittenden, 1993)

Research Category	Club	Ebbw Vale	Newbridge	Llanelli
Strategy Formulation				
Mission		Rugby Orientated	Rugby Orientated	Rugby Orientated
Goals		Not Clear	Remain in Top Division	Win National League and Cup
Strategy Initiators		Divided Committee	Committee	Coach with Committee
Information		Use Competitor Analysis	Use Competitor Analysis	Use Competitor Analysis
Contingencies		Environment influences planning	Environment influences planning	Environment influences planning
Process Formalization		Informal and sporadic	Informal and sporadic	Informal and sporadic
Strategy Content				
Typologies		Competitive and Co-operative	Competitive and Co-operative	Competitive and Co-operative
Contingencies		Resource Availability	Resource Availability	Resource Availability
Strategy Implementation				
Communication		Goals not understood by all stakeholders	Goals not understood by all stakeholders	Goals not understood by all stakeholders
Structure		Structure determines strategy	Structure determines strategy	Structure determines strategy
Contingencies		Steelworks/WRU influence	WRU influence	Council/WRU Influence
Club Performance		Playing Results	Playing Results	Playing Results
Governance		President, chairman and committee influences strategy	Chairman and committee influences strategy	Committee looks to coach to determine strategy

**Table 8.3.10 Cross-Case Comparison within the Framework for the Analysis of Strategic Management
as at September 1995**
(Stone and Crittenden, 1993)

Research Category	Club	Ebbw Vale	Newbridge	Llanelli
Strategy Formulation				
Mission		Rugby Orientated	Rugby Orientated	Rugby Orientated
Goals		Remain in Top Division	Remain in Top Division	Win National League and Cup
Strategy Initiators		Paul Russell, President	Committee	Coach with Committee
Information		Use SWOT, PEST and Competitor Analysis	Use Competitor Analysis	Use Competitor Analysis
Contingencies		Environment influences planning	Environment influences planning	Environment influences planning
Process Formalization		Rational	Informal and sporadic	Informal and sporadic
Strategy Content				
Typologies		Competitive and Co-operative	Competitive and Co-operative	Competitive and Co-operative
Contingencies		Resource Availability	Resource Availability	Resource Availability
Strategy Implementation				
Communication		Goals understood by all stakeholders	Goals not understood by all stakeholders	Goals not understood by all stakeholders
Structure		Structure determines strategy	Structure determines strategy	Structure determines strategy
Contingencies		WRU influence	WRU influence	Council/WRU Influence
Club Performance		Playing Results	Playing Results	Playing Results
Governance		President's business training influences strategy	Chairman and committee influences strategy	Committee looks to coach to determine strategy

**Table 8.3.11 Cross-Case Comparison within the Framework for the Analysis of Strategic Management
as at May 2000**

(Stone and Crittenden, 1993)

Club	Ebbw Vale	Newbridge	Llanelli
Research Category			
Strategy Formulation			
Mission	Rugby Business	Rugby Orientated	Rugby Business
Goals	Remain in Top Division Get into Europe	Promotion to Top Division	Win ERC Heineken Cup
Strategy Initiators	Board of Directors	Executive Committee	Board of Directors with coach
Information	Use SWOT, PEST and Competitor Analysis	Use SWOT, PEST and Competitor Analysis	Use SWOT, PEST and Competitor Analysis
Contingencies	Owners Business Knowledge: WRU	Owners Business Knowledge: WRU	Owners Business Knowledge: WRU
Process Formalization	Rational	Informal and sporadic	Informal and sporadic
Strategy Content			
Typologies	Competitive and Co-operative	Competitive and Co-operative	Competitive and Co-operative
Contingencies	Resource Availability	Resource Availability	Resource Availability
Strategy Implementation			
Communication	Goals understood by all stakeholders	Goals understood by all stakeholders	Goals understood by all stakeholders
Structure	Structure determines strategy	Structure determines strategy	Structure determines strategy
Contingencies	Council/WRU influence	WRU influence	Club Owners/WRU Influence
Club Performance	Playing Results	Playing Results	Playing Results
Governance	Owners business training influences strategy	Owner's business training and culture influences strategy	Board looks to coach to guide/ determine strategy



Figure 8.3.1 EBBW VALE RFC TIMELINE 1988 – 2000

FINANCIAL	Profit							No Profit					
	Profit	Profit	Profit	Profit	Profit	Profit	Profit	No Profit	No Profit	No Profit	No Profit	No Profit	
OPERATIONAL (On-Field)			Worse Playing Record in Club's History (20%)				Club Finished 2 nd in First Division. Promoted			Cup Finalist for First Time.		European Shield Quarter Finalists	
STRATEGIC		Poor Finish in Merit Table affected National League Position	NOT included in the National League Premier Division				End of 94/95 Club Promoted to Premier Division	New President Paul Russell With Strategic Vision	Club became a Ltd Co. Club took WRU to Court				
SEASON	'88	'89	'90	'91	'92	'93	'94	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	2000

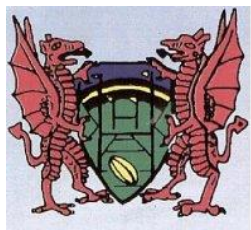


Figure 8.3.2 NEWBRIDGE RFC TIMELINE 1988 – 2000

FINANCIAL	Profit							No Profit	No Profit	No Profit	No Profit	No Profit	
OPERATIONAL (On-Field)			Snelling 7s Winner		Snelling 7s Winner								
STRATEGIC	Club's Centenary Season		National Leagues Placed in Premier Division						End of 96/97 Club Relegated from Premier Division				
SEASON	'88	'89	'90	'91	'92	'93	'94	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	2000



Figure 8.3.3 LLANELLI RFC TIMELINE 1988 – 2000

FINANCIAL	Profit							No Profit	No Profit	No Profit	No Profit	No Profit	
OPERATIONAL (On-Field)	Snelling 7s Winner				Premier League Champs						Premier League Champs		
	Merit Table Winners		Swalec Cup Winners	Swalec Cup Winners	Swalec Cup Winners					Swalec Cup Winners	Swalec Cup Runner- Up	Swalec Cup Winners	
	82.9% Wins	81.4% Wins			Best Team in Britain 87.0% Wins							WRU Challenge Trophy Winners	
STRATEGIC			National Leagues Placed in Premier Division					New PRO GAME		Sold Ground to WRU			
			New G.stand Built							Club became Ltd. Co.			
SEASON	'88	'89	'90	'91	'92	'93	'94	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	2000

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APPENDICES TO CHAPTER ONE

Curriculum Vitae

Name	Clive Norling	
Age	63 years	Date of Birth: 5 th April 1950
Address	50, Smiths Road Birchgrove Swansea	
Post Code	SA7 9DY	
Tel & Fax	01792-815983 (home)	E-mail: big_refcn@yahoo.co.uk

QUALIFICATIONS**Academic**

1974	B.A. Business Studies (CNAA) Portsmouth Polytechnic
1993	P.G.C.E. (University of Wales)
1995	MSc. in Entrepreneurial Studies, Stirling University
1996	TDLB 32, 33, 34 & 36. Swansea Institute of HE.
1997 to date	PhD Research; Cardiff Business School, Cardiff University

Professional

1979	Diploma of Finance Houses	(FHD)
1983(Ass) 1993(F) Up to 2008	Fellow of Institute of Financial Accountants.	(FFA)
1984 up to 2008	Member of British Institute of Management	(MBIM)
1985 up to 2008	Member of Chartered Institute of Marketing	(MCIM)
1987	Associate of Chartered Building Societies Institute*	(ACBSI)
1992 up to 2008	Associate of Chartered Institute of Bankers* (Merged)	(ACIB)
1994 to date	Member of Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (MCIPD)	

EMPLOYMENT

1998 – 2003	Director of Referees, Welsh Rugby Union, Cardiff
1993 – 1998	Principal Lecturer in Business, Swansea Institute of H.E.
1986 – 1993	Senior Lecturer in Business Policy & Marketing, S.I.H.E.
1983 – 1986	District Manager, Gateway Building Society, Swansea
1982 – 1983	Senior New Business Executive, NWS Ltd, Swansea
1976 – 1982	New Business Executive, UDT Ltd, Swansea
1975 – 1976	Assistant Cost Accountant, BSC, Port Talbot
1974 – 1975	Credit Controller, TRW Ltd, Resolven, Neath
1986 to date	Small Business consultant

Curriculum Vitae

Work Experience

1973	Finance Department, TRW Ltd, Resolven, Neath
1972	Finance Department, Parkinson Cowan Ltd, Blackburn
1971	Finance Department, British Petroleum Ltd, Kent
1970	Stores Department, British Petroleum, Llandarcy, Neath

(Six month placement as requirement of BA Degree)

Rugby Career

Clubs/Organisations

Since 1968	Neath Athletic RFC:	Life Member
1987 -2012	Birchgrove RFC;	Vice-President
Since 2012	Birchgrove RFC	President
Since 1993	West District Referees Society:	Life Member
Since 2010	Glamorgan County RFC;	Honorary Vice-President
Since 2011	Ospreys Referees Society	President.
Since 2012	Welsh Society R. U. Referees	Life Member

Playing Career

1959 – 1961	Alderman Davies Primary School 1 st XV, Neath
1961 – 1969	Neath Grammar School 1 st XV
1968 – 1969	Neath Athletic Colts XV
1969 – 1972	Portsmouth Polytechnic RFC 1 st XV
1972 – 1974	Neath Athletic 2 nd XV

Refereeing Career

1967 - 1992	Refereed over 1,050 games, including 35 Internationals
1967 – 1969	Neath & District Refs Society/ West District Refs Society
1969	Qualified as a WRU Referee
1969 – 1974	Hampshire Referees Society. Left on RFU A1 List (Top 9).
1974 – 1992	WRU Listed Referee
1977 – 1992	WRU International Referee (35 Tests)
1987	Referee at 1 st Rugby World Cup in New Zealand.

Coaching Career

1973	Assistant Coach, Havant RFC, Hampshire
1975	Qualified as WRU Coach
1977 – 1978	Coach, Neath Athletic RFC
1992 – 1994	Director of Rugby, Bridgend RFC
1975 to date	Assisted many schools, youth, clubs in Wales & globally

Rugby Administration

1972 – 1974	Hon. Secretary, Portsmouth Polytechnic RFC
1975 – 1986	Committee Member, Neath Athletic RFC
1982 – 1986	Hon. Treasurer, Neath Athletic RFC
1992 – 1994	Director of Rugby, Bridgend RFC
1996 - 199	Member of the WRU Forum
1997 – 1998	National Representative on WRU General Committee
1997 – 1998	Vice-Chairman, WRU Referee Affairs Sub-Committee
1998 – 2003	Director of Referees, WRU

Referee

Administration

1976 – 1996	Member of WSRUR Laws Committee
1985 – 1990	Hon. Secretary, WSRUR Laws Committee
1990 – 1993	Chairman, WSRUR Laws Committee
1996 – 1998	Chairman, WSRUR Laws & Technical Committee
1977 to date	Committee Member West District Referees Society
1984 – 1997	Hon. Treasurer, West District Referees Society
1994 – 2003	WRU Referee Advisor
1975 – 2003	Referee Coach on WRU Referees Beginner Course
2010 to date	M.O. Trainer to Neath & District Referees Society
2009 to date	Referee consultant to individual Welsh Referees

Other Rugby Aspects

The Press

1980 to date	Various newspaper articles e.g. The Times, Western Mail, etc.
1995 – 1997	Weekly Rugby Columnist for South Wales Evening Post, (Saturday Sports Edition).

Journals/Magazines

1978 to date	Contributor to Rugby World Magazine
1978 – 1984	Contributor to Rugby Wales Magazine
1984-1986	Contributor to Welsh Rugby Magazine
1981	Contributor to American Rugby Magazine
1990	Contributor to WRU Dragons Annual
1991	Contributor to ITV Rugby World Cup Magazine
1995	Contributor to South African Airways RWC In-Flight Magazine.

Books

1983	Contributor to The Principles of Rugby Football; ISBN 0047960671
1985	Co-author of Rugby Union Laws; ISBN 0720716225
1986	Contributor to Rugby Wales '87: ISBN 0715406817
1989	Contributor to Rugby Union Yearbook: ISBN 1852270128
1990	Contributor to Giants of Post War Welsh Rugby: ISBN 0951657003
1991	Contributor to Rugby World Cup 1991. ISBN 009174882X
2009	Contributor to Best of the Best: ISBN 09781848511033

Television

1975 – 1992	Appearing as Referee for Games throughout the world
1978 to date	Contributions to various rugby programmes, BBC, HTV & NZ.
1978	Wore microphone for Japanese TV, (Japan v England)
1988	Wore microphone for HTV; (Llandovery v Abertillery)
1989	Wore microphone for BBC; (Bath v Toulon)
1989 – 1990	BBC Rugby Special; Weekly section on Laws
1989	Wore 1 st microphone for New Zealand TV; (NZ v Argentina)
1991	Commentator for ITV coverage of Rugby World Cup
1994/95	Commentator for Chrysalis TV coverage of Welsh Premiership
1995	Commentator for ITV coverage of Rugby World Cup

Radio

1978 to date	Various broadcast with BBC Wales, BBC,
1990	Autobiography on Radio Auckland, NZ
2009	Programme with BBC Radio Wales on Depression (Finalist in Best Radio Programme, 2009).

Conference Talks

1975 – 2003	Lecturer at WRU Referees Beginner Course, Aberavon/Cardiff
1976	Speaker, Staffordshire Coaching Conference
1978	Keynote Speaker, RFU International Congress, Twickenham
1979	Keynote Speaker, JRFU Referees Conference, Japan
1980	Keynote Speaker WRU Centenary International Conference for Coaches/Referees in Cardiff
1980	Keynote Speaker. IRFU Coaching Conference, Dublin
1980	Contributor, FFR Senior Referees Conference, Paris
1981	Speaker, Wellington Referees Course, New Zealand

Researcher's Rugby Background

History and biography are essentially connected to the lenses through which individuals' view the world, and due to the fact that I am a living archive of the decade which the research covers, it is important at the outset of the study for the reader to understand my biographical background. Although the research project commenced in January 1997, my 'unofficial' analyse of rugby clubs in Wales extends back well before that start date. Since 1959 my participation in Welsh rugby has been as a player, referee, coach and administrator (Appendix 1.1). My working connection with strategic management has been for over thirty years.

From September 1967 to September 1992 my involvement with rugby was mainly as a referee. Due to a back injury, I had to give up all refereeing in September 1992 after fifteen years at International level, and some twenty five years with the whistle in total. During that quarter of a century, I was visiting clubs every Saturday, and sometimes mid-week, during the rugby season. Through pre- and post-match informal conversations, I got to know players and committees exceptionally well, not only throughout Wales but beyond. My opening question was mostly "Is this a rugby club or a business"? Stakeholders were always eager to engage with conversations around this topic out of which arose rich data on the *raison d'être*, of the club; decision-making on and off the field and internal and external influences on the club that included politics, culture, WRU, local councils. Club performances it seemed, depended upon many variables; quality of playing resources, skills, abilities and attitude; the opposition's related strengths and weaknesses; the style of play of both teams, running or kicking, fifteen-man or nine- man orientated; the importance of game, league, cup, local derby, friendly; the referee; ground conditions, firm; muddy, even if the field had long or short grass; weather conditions, dry, raining, windy; the list of factors influencing the result of a game was long. But the information collected from stakeholders enhanced my knowledge of both the playing and management side of each club. Therefore my long, active experience with rugby plus all the knowledge I had gained about the sport, the clubs and the individuals involved, could be seen as an advantage to my research (Robson, 2002). This is discussed further in Chapter Four.

Premier Club Experience

At the time I stopped refereeing in 1992, I was offered the part-time position of Director of Rugby at Premier Division club, Bridgend RFC. The club were second from bottom of the Premier Division and were facing the real prospect of relegation from the top tier of Welsh Rugby. Before accepting the position, I asked a senior committeeman, who is an experienced businessman, and who had once been captain of the club, his views on the decision-making process within the committee.

"The committee consists of 38 people" he said. "some are elected annually, and others are life members. All decisions are made by the committee. But let me give you an example of their priorities in decision-making".

Rugby Background

“Last season at one meeting, item 5 concerned dogs getting onto the playing area and fouling the pitch. The dogs were getting into the ground via an entrance that had no gate on it. The answer appeared simple. Just put a gate on the entrance to prevent the dogs from entering the ground. It was eventually agreed to put a gate on the entrance but this item was discussed for well over an hour because every committeeman knew and wanted to speak about dog shit!

Item 6 concerned finance, spending £600,000 on a clubhouse extension. This was agreed in about thirty seconds flat! Does that give you an in-sight into the customary level of decision-making by the committee?”

As my full-time occupation remained as Principal Lecturer in Business at Swansea Institute of Higher Education, one of my first courses of action as Director of Rugby was to get the 80 final year BA Business Studies students taking the strategic management module to undertake a strategic audit on the club. It was not surprising when reading their reports that the weaknesses of the organization far outweighed the strengths (See Appendix). The strategic audit identified poor decision-making, no formal planning, weak financial management, too large a committee, poor use of resources, plus other concerns. Using this information I was one of a small management working party that succeeded in reducing the committee from thirty-eight people to only seven (with much opposition) by the time I made my post redundant and left the club in 1994. This foray with a Premier club, playing in a National League with promotion and relegation had, unexpectedly, afforded me an invaluable insight into all aspects of a senior club in Wales. With the knowledge gained in rugby, and management, from my limited experience as Director of Rugby, I stated correctly, in national newspapers in 1993, that within three years the IRB would have made the Game ‘open’ and also that there would be established a European Competition involving the top 4/5 Clubs from all the Five Nations. In July 1997, I was elected as a National Representative to the General Committee of the Welsh Rugby Union, the governing body of rugby in Wales. My first request was to obtain a copy of the WRU’s Strategic Plan and Organization Chart but I was informed that, despite being in existence since 1881, the Union had never produced a strategic plan! Although I was only on the Committee for nine months (due to taking up the paid position of Director of Referees with the same organisation) it afforded me invaluable experience into the way the Game was governed in Wales.

In March 1998, I accepted the full-time position of Director of Referees at the WRU. For just over five years, until June 2003, I was responsible for all match officials throughout Wales. The job allowed me to visit clubs throughout the Principality on a regular basis. Sadly, the stress and conflict of the position, caused me to have a nervous breakdown and severe clinical depression in January 2004, which lasted for nearly seven years.

13, 1992



Sharon Williams (left) and Maria Tyrrell show off their awards while Clive Norling, HND course leader David Evans and the institute's dean of faculty Peter Jackson look on.

Pair's great idea scoops an award

A PAIR of enterprising Swansea students may have scooped a top business prize, but they are still keeping their lips sealed about it even though it could bring new jobs to South Wales.

Maria Tyrrell and Sharon Williams are planning to put their very own product into production and must keep mum until it has been corrected.

By Kathy Griffiths

tly patented.

The pair, students at Swansea Institute of Higher Education, put together a 300-page joint business plan tracing the development of the mystery product from its design to marketing as part of their Higher National Diploma.

Impressed

The project impressed their course tutors so much it was chosen as the institute's entry in the British Coal Enterprise/Midland Bank student business competition.

And it won the pair a cheque for £250 and a trophy each, plus a trophy for the institute.

At the moment mum of four Maria, from Oxwich, Gower, and Sharon, of Pontyberem, will only say the product is "a household item with environmental benefits."

But British Coal were so impressed by it they have come forward with funding as well as commercial advice and promises of support for the future.

Sharon and Maria, who both gave up secretarial jobs to study for the HND in business and finance, now hope to go on to complete a

degree before going into business for real.

"We thought we could do better in life, but needed the qualifications. It's not just a man's world any more and we are confident of succeeding in business on our own merits," said Maria.

Confident

Senior business policy lecturer Clive Norling is confident of their abilities after seeing the project which, he said, could lead to much needed manufacturing jobs.

"We hear a lot about women returners, but in Maria and Sharon we have something much more than that. They are coming up with the ideas, too, and they look set to have a significant say in the future of the local economy," he said.

by's

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1993

Tackling rugby

by Tony Poole



BUSINESS students at Swansea Institute of Higher Education are working on a tactical masterplan for

one of South Wales' most successful rugby clubs.

All 86 second year students on the college's

Business Studies Honours Degree course are putting Bridgend Rugby Football Club through its paces to

achieve as much off-the-field success as Clive Norling has managed on the field.

● **RUGBY LESSONS:** Bridgend RFC Chairman Huw Ceredig (centre) is interviewed by the first group of students from Swansea Institute of higher education watched by their course tutor Clive Norling (left), who is director of coaching at the club. Pictured left to right are students Hannah Walters, Leanne Williams, Dean Marengi, Errol Gursoy and Rachel Cross.

Mr Norling, Business Policy lecturer on the course and an international referee, was appointed as director of rugby at the Brewery Field in November.

The team at the time was struggling second from the bottom of Heineken League division one and since losing 12-6 at Neath in mid November they have peeled off a club record five consecutive league victories, including an impressive 18-8 win

over championship challengers Llanelli.

Unique

Mr Norling and the rest of the club committee have now turned to the administrative side of the club and spotted a unique opportunity for the Swansea Institute students to work on a real-life case study.

The 86 students travelled to Bridgend aboard two coaches to interview the committee and tour the Brewery Field headquarters. The visit included interviews with club chairman Huw Ceredig, vice-chairman Lyndon Thomas, treasurer Colin Jones and commercial manager Henley Jenkins.

They will now follow up the visit with personal approaches to gather sufficient information for the preparation of business marketing projects.

The students will be divided into more than 20 separate groups, each of which will provide the club with a unique report on how the club should progress over the next three to five years.

Mr Norling said the exercise would prove valuable to both the club and students.

"Bridgend will benefit from the views of a detached, commercially minded group of students who may well come up with some ideas no-one has thought of so far," said Mr Norling.

"The students will get to work on a real life challenge, with the results counting towards their degrees," he added.

APPENDICES TO CHAPTER TWO

Selected Definitions of Strategic Management.

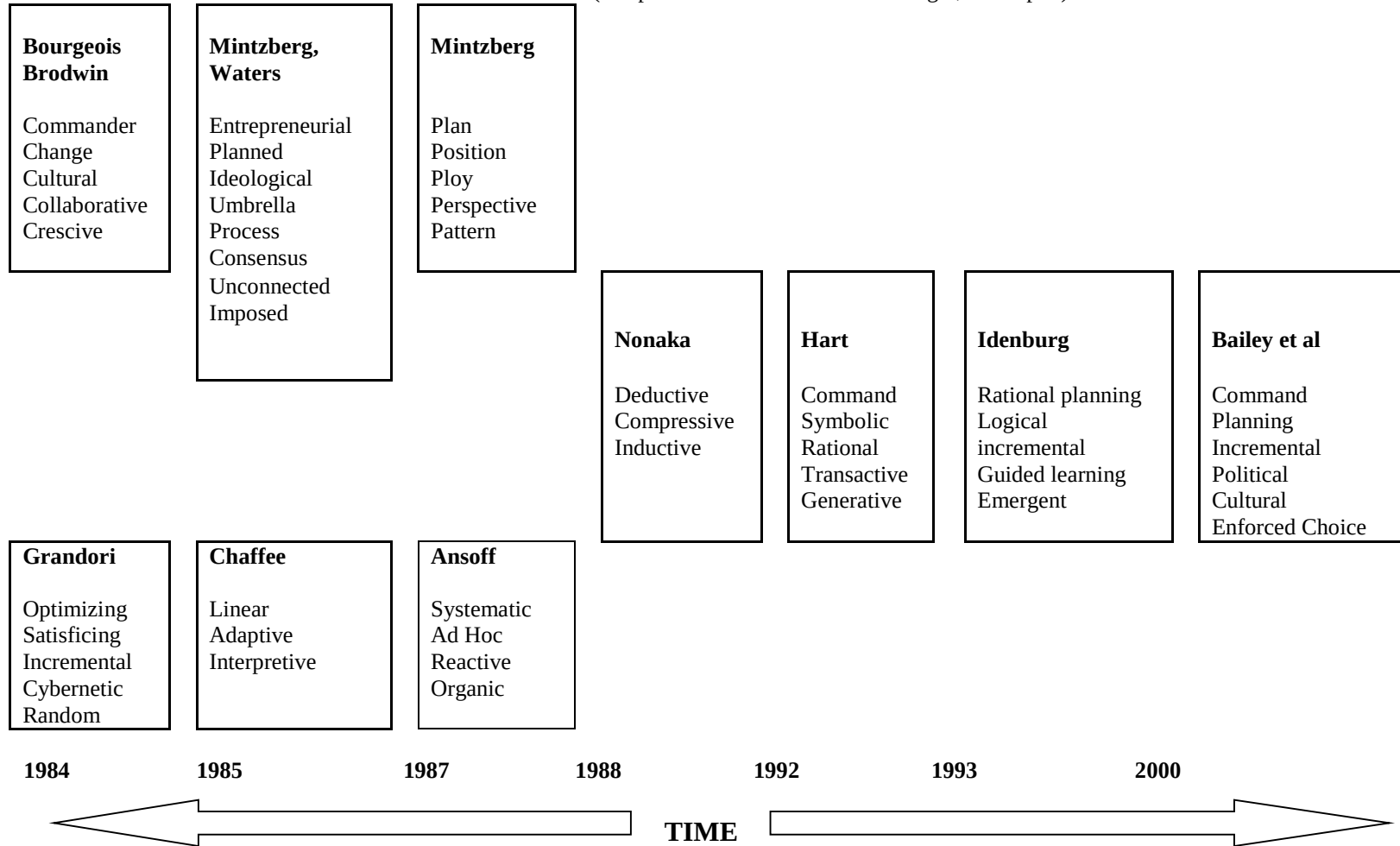
(Adapted from Nag et al, 2007)

Author	Definition
Learned <i>et al.</i> (1965)	<i>[This definition is of business policy, the precursor of strategic management.] 'Policy is the study of the functions and responsibilities of general management and the problems which affect the character and success of the total enterprise'</i>
Schendel and Hofer (1979)	<i>'Strategic management is a process that deals with the entrepreneurial work of the organization, with organizational renewal and growth, and, more particularly, with developing and utilizing the strategy which is to guide the organization's operations'</i>
Bracker (1980)	<i>'Strategic management entails the analysis of internal and external environments of firms to maximize the utilization of resources in relation to objectives'</i>
Van Cauwenbergh and Cool (1982)	<i>'Strategic management deals with the formulation and aspect (policy) and the implementation aspects (organization) of calculated behavior in new situations and is the basis for future administration when repetition of circumstances occur'</i>
Teece (1990)	<i>'Strategic management can be defined as the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of managerial actions that enhance the value of a business enterprise'</i>
Rumelt, Schendel, and Teece (1994)	<i>'Strategic management is about the direction of organizations, most often, business firms. It includes those subjects of primary concern to senior management, or to anyone seeking reasons for success and failure among organizations'</i>
Bowman, Singh, and Thomas (2002)	<i>'The strategic management field can be conceptualized as one centered on problems relating to the creation and sustainability of competitive advantage, or the pursuit of rents'.</i>
Hoye, Smith, Nicholson Stewart and Westerbeek (2009)	<i>'Strategic management involves the analysis of an organization's position in the competitive environment, the determination of its direction and goals, the selection of an appropriate strategy and the leveraging of its distinctive assets'.</i>
Ghobadian and Regan (2011)	<i>'Strategy is not something we have, it is something we do and have to keep doing in order to support and grow a successful business or organization. Strategy is a continuous evolutionary process rather than an outcome or end point'.</i>

Appendix 2.2

Selected Strategy Development Process Frameworks

(Adapted from Feurer and Chaharbaghi, 1995: p18).



Categorizing the Strategy-Making Process Typologies Themes from the Literature

Hart (1992, p.331).

Rationality

Citation	Comprehensive	Bounded	Vision	Involvement
Allison (1971)	Rational	Organizational Bureaucratic		
Mintzberg (1973, 1978)	Entrepreneurial; Planning	Adaptive		
Nutt (1981, 1984)	Normative: Bureaucratic	Behavioural; Group; Adaptive		
Bourgeois & Brodwin (1984)	Commander; Change	Collaborative	Cultural	Crescive
Grandori (1984)	Optimizing	Satisficing; Incremental	Cybernetic	Random
Chaffee (1985)	Linear	Adaptive	Interpretive	
Shrivastava & Grant (1985)	Managerial autocracy; Systematic bureaucracy	Adaptive planning		Political expediency
Mintzberg & Waters (1985)	Entrepreneurial; Planned	Process; Consensus	Ideological; Umbrella	Unconnected; Imposed
Ansoff (1987)	Systematic	Ad Hoc; Reactive		Organic
Mintzberg (1987a)	Plan; Ploy; Position	Pattern	Perspective	
Nonaka (1988)	Deductive			Inductive; Compressive

Strategic Planning Levels.

(Bracker and Pearson, 1986, p.507)

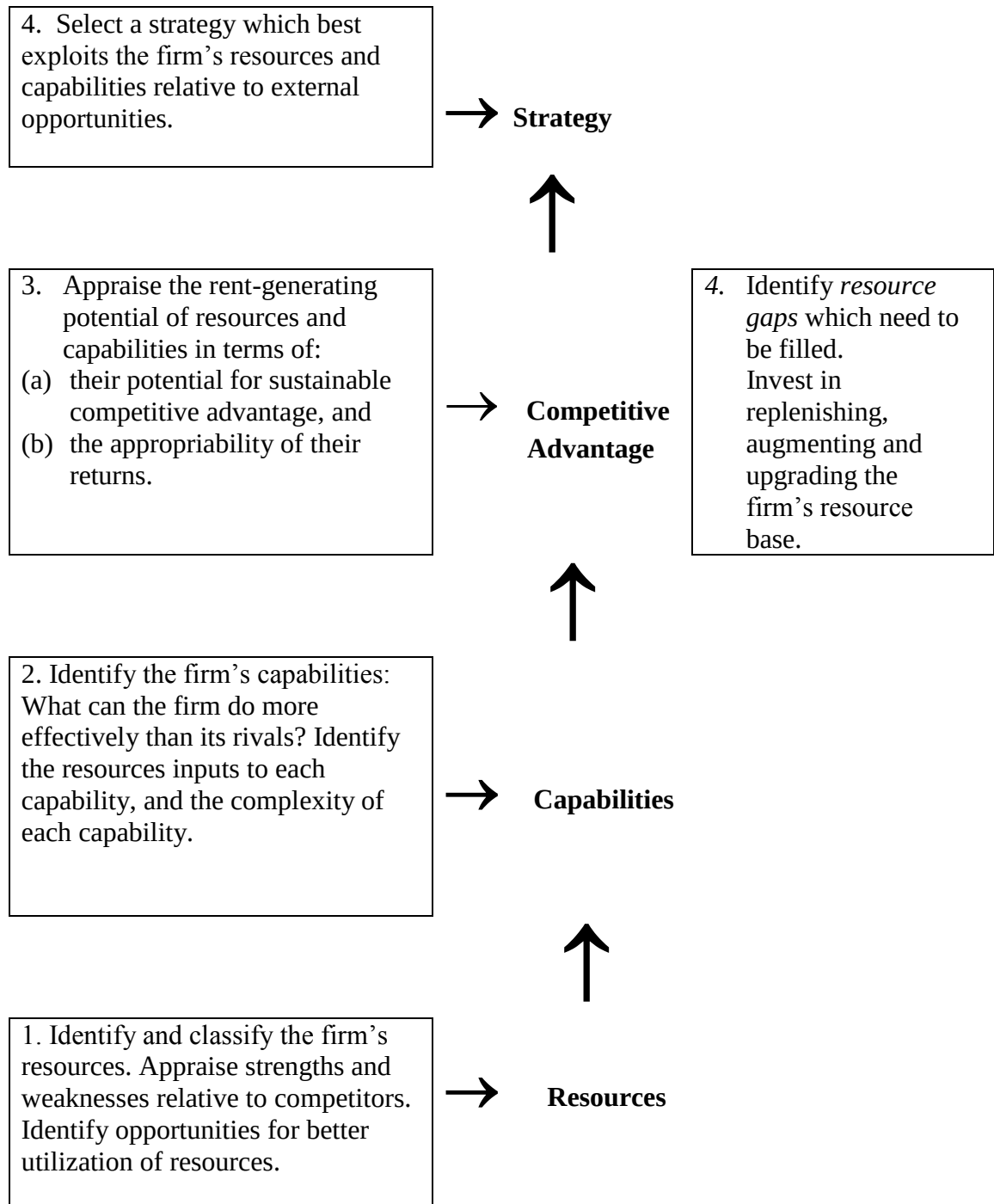
Types of Planning:

Please indicate which of the following type of planning can be attributed presently to your club.

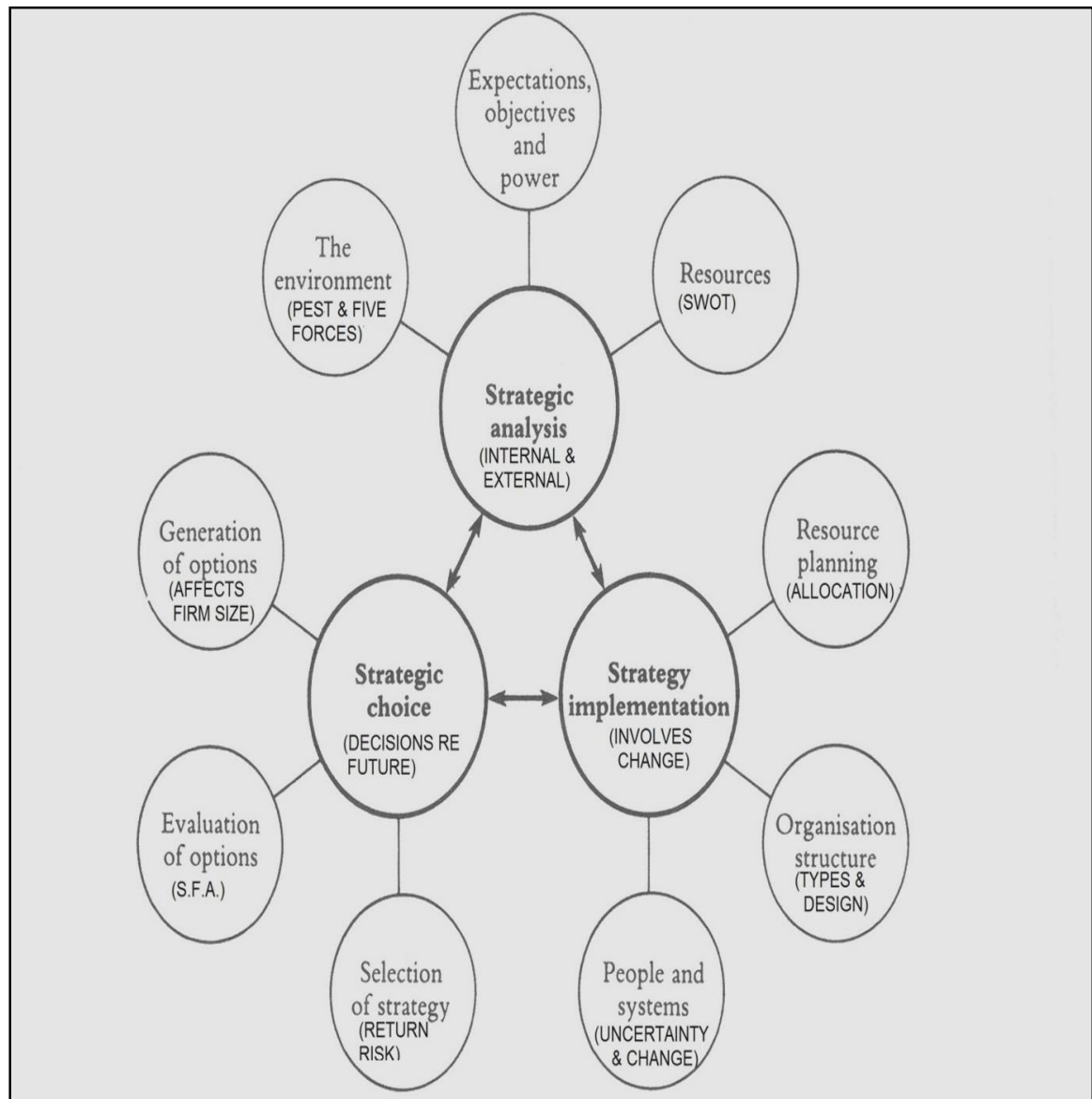
Structured Strategic Plans (SSP)	Formalized, written, long-term plans covering the process of determining major outside interests focused on the club; expectations of dominant inside interests; information about past, current and future performance; environmental analysis; determination of strengths and weaknesses of the club and feedback; typically the plan is 3-15 years in nature.
Structured Operational Plans (SOP)	Written short-term operation budgets and plans of action for a financial period. The typical plan of action would include basic output controls such as cost constraints, production quotas and personnel requirements.
Intuitive Plans (IP)	These informal plans are developed and implemented based on the intuition and experience of the owner of the club. They are not written and are stored in the memory of the club's owner. They are of a short-term duration, no longer than one year in nature. They depend on objectives of the owner and the firm's present environment.
Unstructured Plans (UP)	No measurable structured planning in the firm.

A Resource-Based Approach to Strategy Analysis: A Practical Framework.

(Grant, 1991)



A Summary Model of the Elements of Strategic Management.
(Johnson and Scholes, 1988)



Summary of Strategic Decision-Making Patterns

(Collated by Liberman-Yaconi et al, 2010)

Rational	Bounded Rational	Intuitive
• Comprehensive • Perfect information • Systematic • Step-by-step • Logical, analytical • Linear • Phasic • Utility maximization • One optimal solution	• Bounded by time and resources • Limited ability to be comprehensive • Incomplete information • Incremental • Non-linear and iterative • Complex, inter-related combination of steps • Utility maximization not always ultimate goal • Accept an alternative that is “good enough,” “satisficing”	• Sudden, ready insight • “Gut feeling” • Seemingly independent of empirical knowledge • Absence of analysis or formulae • No conscious deliberation • Automatic • Random guessing • Thoughts, conclusions, or choices produced by subconscious mental processes

Characteristics of Six Dimensions of Strategy Development

(Bailey, Johnson and Daniels (2000))

Command	A particular individual is seen to have a high degree of control over the strategy followed: for example the chief executive or a similar figure with institutionalised authority. Less commonly, such influence may relate to the power of a small group of individuals at the top of the organisation. Control and influence may be exercised in different ways for example through personality, the rigid enactment of rules or through expertise. Alternatively, strategic aspirations and strategy may emerge from a vision associated with the powerful individual(s), which represents the desired future state of the organisation	Bennis and Nanus (1985) Shrivastava and Nachman (1989) Westley and Mintzberg (1989) Kotter (1990) Hayward and Hambrick (1997)
Planning	An intentional process involving a logical, sequential, analytic and deliberate set of procedures. The organisation and its environment are systematically analysed. Strategic options are generated and systematically evaluated. Based on this assessment, the option is chosen that is judged to maximise the value of outcomes in relation to organisation goals. The selected plan option is subsequently detailed in the form of precise implementation plans, and systems for monitoring and controlling the strategy are determined. There is an assumption here that strategy is developed by top executives and implemented by those below.	Ansoff (1965) Mintzberg (1978) Steiner (1969) Argenti (1980) Rowe, Dickel, Mason and Snyder (1994)
Incremental	Strategic choice takes place through 'successive limited operations'. Strategic goals and objectives of the organisation are not likely to be precise but general in nature. The uncertainty of the environment is accepted and as such managers are not able to know how it will change: rather they attempt to be sensitive to it through constant scanning and evaluation. Commitment to a strategic option may be tentative and subject to review in the early stages of development.	Lindblom (1959) Mintzberg et al (1976) Quinn (1980) Quinn (1982) Johnson (1988)
Political	Organisations are political arenas in which decision-making and strategy development is a political matter. Differences amongst stakeholders are resolved through bargaining, negotiation and compromise. Coalitions may form to pursue shared objectives and to sponsor different strategic options. The level of influence these stakeholders are able to exercise is conditional upon the organisation's dependency upon such groups for resources. Further information is not politically neutral, but rather is a source of power for those who control it.	Cyert & March (1963) Hinings et al (1974) Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) Feldman (1986) Hickson et al (1986)
Cultural	Strategy is influenced by taken for granted frames of reference shared amongst organisational members. These frames of reference help to simplify the complexity of situations, provide a ready-made interpretation of new situations, enable decisions to be made in a way which makes contextual sense and provides a guide to appropriate behaviour. Their usefulness increases as situations become more ambiguous and the efficiency of formal decision-making processes decreases. These frames of references are underpinned by routines, rituals, stories and other symbolic artefacts which represent and reinforce the organisational activities and provide a repertoire for action: but are in turn likely to be resistant to change.	Weick (1979) Deal and Kennedy (1982) Schon (1983) Gioia and Poole (1984) Trice and Beyer (1985) Johnson (1987) Spender (1989)
Enforced Choice	Factors in the environment encourage the adoption of organisational structures and activities which best fit that environment. These external constraints may take the form of regulative coercion, competitive or economic pressures or normative pressures as to what constitutes legitimate organisational action. These pressures limit the role organisational members' play in the choice of strategy. So the strategies an organisation can follow tend to be common to organisations within their industrial sector or organisational field; with changes coming about through variations in organisations' processes and systems which may occur unintentionally or through imperfect imitation of successful structures, systems or processes.	Aldrich (1979) DiMaggio and Powell (1983) Hannan and Freeman (1989) Deephhouse (1996)

Criteria for Effective Strategies.

(Thompson, 2001, p532)



Testing the Quality of Your Strategy.

(Hambrick and Fredrickson, 2005)

Key Evaluation Criteria

1. **Does your strategy fit with what's going on in the environment?**

Is there healthy profit potential where you're headed?

Does your strategy align with the key success factors of your chosen environment?

2. **Does your strategy exploit your key resources?**

With your particular mix of resources, does this strategy give you a good head start on competitors?

Can you pursue this strategy more economically than competitors?

3. **Will your envisioned differentiators be sustainable?**

Will competitors have difficulty matching you?

If not, does your strategy explicitly include a ceaseless regimen of innovation and opportunity creation?

4. **Are the elements of your strategy internally consistent?**

Have you made choices of arenas, vehicles, differentiators, and staging and economic logic?

Do they all fit and mutually reinforce each other?

5. **Do you have enough resources to pursue this strategy?**

Do you have the money, managerial time and talent, and other capabilities to do all you envision?

Are you sure you're not spreading your resources too thinly, only to be left with a collection of feeble positions?

6. **Is your strategy implementable?**

Will your key constituencies allow you to pursue this strategy?

Can your organization make it through the transition?

Are you and your management able and willing to lead the required change?

Strategic Choices Matrix for Voluntary Nonprofit Organizations

(Courtney, 2002, p.207/8)

Strategy	Client Group	Services	Geography
Retrench	Reduce, divest or close services to particular client group(s)	Reduce, divest or close particular services/activities	Reduce, divest or close services in a particular geographical area
Reduce Costs	Reduce costs of services to particular client group(s)	Reduce costs of particular service(s)	Reduce costs of services in a particular area
Maintain	Continue services to existing client groups	Continue existing services	Continue services in existing areas
Improve Quality	Improve the quality of services to particular client group(s)	Improve the quality of particular service(s)	Improve the quality of services in particular area(s)
Experiment	Pilot service(s) to a new client	Pilot new kind of service(s)	Pilot service(s) in a new geographic area.
Quantitative Expansion	Increase the number of clients served	Increase the extent of provision of particular service(s)	Increase the provision of services in a particular area.
Expand Boundary	Extend the boundary of particular client group(s)	Extend the amount of particular service(s) that is provided	Extend the boundary of the geographical area covered.
Change Strategy - switch to new related	Switch services to a related client group	Switch to delivering a related type of service/activity.	Switch to delivering services in a related geographical area.
Radical Change Strategy- switch to new unrelated	Switch services to an unrelated client group	Switch to delivering an unrelated type of service/activity.	Switch to providing services in an unrelated area.
Piggybacking	Develop fee-earning service(s) to a particular customer group to earn income to subsidize other programmes	Develop particular fee-earning services to subsidize other activities.	Develop fee-earning service(s) in a particular geographical area to subsidize other activities.
Partnering	Develop a closer partnership with another agency in relation to particular client group(s)	Develop a closer partnership with another agency in relation to particular service(s)	Develop a closer partnership with another agency in particular geographical area.
Unrelated Expansion	Expand to provide services to an unrelated client group	Expand to provide unrelated types of services/activity	Expand to provide services in unrelated area(s).

APPENDICES TO CHAPTER THREE

The Unique Features of Sport

(Adapted from Paton and Cornforth, (1992) Stewart and Smith, 1999).

Characteristics	Nonprofit Organization	For-Profit Organization
Service/ Product	Irrational Passions	Rational Passions
Judging Performance/ Goals	Social Goals Winning Leagues/Cups. Stakeholders measure success by number of trophies at end-of- season.	Optimise Profits. Increasing wealth of owner(s) / shareholders.
Interdependent Relationship	Dependent upon competition.	Defeat all competitors; aim for a monopoly.
Competitive Behaviour	Co-operation with rivals. Unpredictable outcomes best.	Largest Market Share Predictable outcomes.
Quality of Product/ Resources	Uncertain outcomes Resource acquisition issues	Guaranteed quality, reliability and consistency Regular Resource Supply
Brand Loyalty	Hard to substitute. Emotional and personal energy attachment	Substitutes available
Vicarious Identification	Influences sports consumers.	Businesses recognises the power of sporting identification by marketing their productions via sporting heroes
Optimism	High Degree despite team/ individual losses	Consumer expects satisfaction at every purchase.
New Technology	Reluctant to accept. Resist change.	Readily accepted. Gain USP in marketplace.
Supply of Service/ Product	Limited due to length of playing season.	Readily available. Can increase production to meet demand anytime.

Stakeholder Expectations of Sport Organizations

(Hoye et al, 2009)

Stakeholder Type	Expectations of Sport Organization
Members	Services and benefits Overall Satisfaction
Fans	Game Quality and Excitement High Win-Loss Ratio
Players	On Field Success Low Injury Rates Appropriate Pay and Benefits
Community/Society	Civic Pride Provides Role Model for Young Adults
Competitors	Fulfil Fixtures Provide Quality Team as Opposition
Media	Mass Market High Level of Public Interest
Owners/ Shareholders	Return on Investment Public Recognition of Club
Employees	Appropriate Pay and Benefits Job Security Professional Development
Players Agents	High Player Morale Payment of Market Rates
Sponsors	Positive Reputation of Club Brand Awareness and Recognition
Equipment Suppliers	Reliability of Demand Player Endorsement Brand Awareness

Background to Rugby

The Early Days of Rugby

The origin of the game of Rugby Football Union is shrouded in mystery. Various arguments had been put forward that rugby football evolved from the early Romans and their handling game of *harpastum* (derived from a Greek word meaning ‘to snatch’). The game was played between two teams who contested possession of a large ball in order to carry it forward to the opposition’s line similar to rugby football (Reason and James, 1979). Nearer to home it was suggested that the Irish, with their native game of *caid* or the Welsh, playing *cnapan*, were the founders (Smith, 1999). *Cnapan* was originally founded over 2,000 years ago in Pembrokeshire and consisted of handling and passing a ball, contested by two teams, sometimes made up of over a 1,000 players on each side. Local village rivalry ensured that winning the game was the overriding objective (John, 1985). Researchers, such as Tranter (1998), Birley (1993), and Vamplew (1988), acknowledge that,

‘For 2,000 years men in Britain, as well as in Brittany in northern France, had been playing a robust, free-for-all form of football, which involved kicking, running, hacking, mauling, wrestling, tackling, carrying, passing and doing whatever else was needed to get an inflated pig’s bladder from one designated goal to another, very often in different villages’
(Cain, 1999, p.6).

Any game played between two teams where a ball was central to the game, and whether or not it was kicked or handled, was commonly known as ‘Football’ (Morgan, 2003). Whilst ‘football’ was popular, and various forms of ‘folk football’ had been played throughout Britain, monarchs from the days of Edward II (1314) had tried to outlaw each form of the ‘football’ game, because it was disorganised, very unruly and extremely violent. The Shrove Tuesday game in Derby was an example of a mass participation carrying game where two neighbouring teams (villages) took part in a hard fought contest in which neither quarter was given nor expected in an often violent, hard fought game (hence the modern expression a ‘local derby’). The game still exists today.

The rules of ‘football’ were unwritten, highly localised, varied in every town, and most likely every village, and was based on customs and informal agreements (Johnes, 2005). In some places, kicking (the ball) was seen as central to the game, in others it was carrying the ball. The one thing they had in common was the resemblance to a mass scrimmage which included extreme violence where everything was considered fair bar murder and manslaughter (Norridge, 2008). However, “there was no uniformity in football played before the second half of the nineteenth century” (Macrory, 1991, p.14). The elements of these games shaped the widespread tradition for every one of the current codes of football.

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that were moulded as a result of the shifting social, economic and political conditions caused by an ever more urbanised, organised and industrialized population (Macrory, 1991). Many followers of the handling code of football promote the colourful idea that the Rugby Football Game started at Rugby School in 1823 with a magical, mythical moment when it was alleged that a schoolboy, Williams Webb Ellis, ‘with a fine disregard for the rules of football as played in his time, first took the ball in his arms and ran with it.’ (Royds, 1949, pii).

Over time there arose a disagreement between football participants who wanted a ‘kicking’ or ‘dribbling’ game as opposed to those who preferred a ‘handling’ game. This inevitable, but natural, dispute came to a head on 26th October 1863 at the Freemasons Tavern, Lincoln’s Inn Fields, London. Those eleven London clubs that wanted a ‘dribbling only’ game, no handling and definitely no ‘hacking’, formed the Football Association (Dunning and Shread, 2005). In due course, in 1871, their opponents preferring to play under the ‘handling’ rules, established the Rugby Football Union. This division, concerning the approach to the old ‘folk football’ sport, determined the future of how the two global sports of association football and rugby union football should be played (Cain, 1999).

The Development of Rugby Football in Wales.

Rugby football was a predominantly middle class game almost unknown in Wales before 1850 (Boucher, 2000). It was the public schools in England that championed the new sport of ‘handling rugby’. And it was their former pupils, sons of rich and prosperous men, ingrained with the concept that playing was for fun and not material reward, who brought rugby in to Wales as teachers at Welsh schools. It was the Cambridge educated Rev. Rowland Williams who, on his appointment as Vice-Principal of St. David’s College, Lampeter in 1850, introduced rugby into the Principality. During the 1850’s and 1860’s, the grammar schools from Cardigan to Chepstow, along with the public schools at Llandovery, Brecon, and Monmouth, ensured the rapid expansion of the still haphazard game (Birley, 1993). On leaving school, these so called ‘middle-class old boys’ tended to comprise the core of the founder players of many Welsh clubs, so that by the mid- 1870s the handling game of rugby was already being embraced by the wider community as an important part of life.

During the 1880s, Welsh rugby, and industrial towns, expanded rapidly as a result of the growth of the Welsh economy via the migration of people from rural areas to the iron and coal industries. Many of the over one million migrants between 1871 and 1911, came from the dominant rugby playing West Country (Williams, 1983). It was no surprise, therefore, that there was an upsurge in the popularity of rugby, particularly amongst the strong and tough working classes located in the mining and new industrial areas. In spite of playing on rough pitches built on parks, scrubland and mountainsides, rugby was fast becoming the sport of the people and the basis of substantial physical and emotional reward for the

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rough, but proud and highly localized male population (Johnes, 2005, p.1). A new Wales was ready to embrace a new pastime, rugby football. Once established the game, which had been the privileged domain of public schoolboys, would become the communal winter, sporting obsession of most of South Wales, and eventually an esteemed source of national pride (Holt, 1989). Kenneth O. Morgan, in his celebrated masterpiece, ‘Rebirth of a Nation’ (1981, p.25), observed that,

“The eighties in Wales proved to be, more than any other region of Britain, a major turning-point in a special sense. They provided the springboard for an age of national growth, dynamism and prosperity unknown since the union with England under the Tudors – and certainly without parallel since. This industrial watershed brought enormous changes to the Welsh economic, social and environmental landscape”.

The growing demands of industrialisation placed enormous time constraints on the conditions of employment of the working classes. At first, there was little time for sport, but by the late nineteenth century, the working week averaged fifty-four hours including the half day working on Saturday permitted leisure time to be extended (Vamplew, 1988). Coupled with the rise in disposable income, these changes allowed the urban working class to turn to sport and, in Wales, rugby in particular (Holt 1989). Sport became a part of urban working class life, along with pubs, chapels, and working-men’s institutions. In addition, due to the generosity and philanthropic approach of the local owners of these Welsh industries, many clubs were formed to provide sporting and social facilities for their workers. ‘Caring’ owners had a self-interest and practical purpose in establishing rugby. It kept their workforce happy, loyal and fit for work, and give them something legal to keep their hands busy (Vamplew, 1988). This emergence of a distinct philanthropic organisation form reflected the owner’s dedication to a social principle. It could be argued that these benefactors of the newly formed rugby clubs, these increasingly mobile English gentlemen from the public schools, seeking their fortunes especially in Welsh mining and coal, proved to be the forerunners of the modern day entrepreneurial owner. Oxford educated, William Neville, inherited the directorship of the Wern Engineering Works and founded the Llanelli club in 1875. At the same time, the proprietors of the Mansel Tinsplate Works in Port Talbot, Col. D. R. David and Sir Sydney H Byass, encouraged the formation of Aberavon RFC (Johnes, 2005).

Clubs also emerged as a result of the working classes founding teams from streets, churches, villages and industrial works. In Pontypool and district in the 1890s there were over fourteen neighbourhood teams formed by local miners and metalworkers. Larger areas like Swansea, Llanelli, and Newport also had many works and street teams.

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The Rugby Club

The number of clubs in membership with the WFU* were twenty-three in 1895, and more than doubled to fifty by 1900. Many of the new community rugby clubs were established in the thriving industrial areas (Smith and Williams, 1980). They had become the centre of many village and parish environments, built around a strong sense of community and local identity by people who shared a passion for rugby, particularly those situated in the Welsh valleys (Harris, 2007).

Nevertheless, the majority of newly established rugby clubs, existed in name only through a team of players representing the club. Clubs did not even own the necessary basic facilities. The ground was often a hired farmer's field, with changing facilities and after-match hospitality being provided by the local public house. Newbridge RFC, established in 1888, found that "the difficulty of obtaining a suitable ground and acceptable playing facilities, prevented the admission of the club to the Welsh Rugby Union until 1911" (Powell, 1988). Facilities for most valley clubs' supporters were also very poor with only the principal clubs having enclosed grounds with grandstands and pavilions which allowed them to charge spectators watching their games. For example, at Llanelli in 1881, admission was 6p, working-class 3p, and ladies allowed in free. Season tickets were 5s to ground, 10s 6d to ground and pavilion (Smith and Williams, 1980, p.9).

The 'intangible' rugby club became a powerful focal point of community life in many towns and villages offering a sense of civic pride, self-esteem and identity to all its members and supporters. The club's small, volunteer committee, made up of local people, had responsibilities which were mainly restricted to organising fixtures against other teams, ensuring that the match day organisation was undertaken without problems including marking the pitch and pumping up the match ball and importantly raising finance to fund the various club teams (Hoye, 2009). The main objective of the club was to achieve playing success (utility maximising) rather than profit maximising, and having enough money to achieve that objective and cover their running costs each season (Zimbalist, 2003). This committee structure, President, Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer plus elected members, and its 'not-for-profits' approach and remained the same in most clubs for well over 100 years. As such, it is questionable, with its nonprofit making approach, whether or not the rugby club could ever be seen as a 'small business' prior to 1995. Rather the club, which was based in a given locality, had probably been established by local workers and residents, and inevitably it was run and 'owned' co-operatively by its members who either played for, or supported the team. These days, such an organisation would be classified as a 'social enterprise' (Spreckley, 1981). It took the introduction of professionalism to change 'historical' attitudes in the majority of clubs, but still not all.

*The Welsh Football Union was formed in 1881. The name changed in 1934 to the Welsh Rugby Union.

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The clubs in Wales, unlike the socially exclusive English clubs, attracted its playing and non-playing members mainly from within the working class population in its locality. The team was made up of macho, competitive young men, eager to display their power, courage, stamina and fortitude, from the village or town who ‘had to pay club membership subscriptions if they wanted to play the sport’ (South Wales Daily News, 1880). Due to the numbers of spectators following the principal clubs by the mid-1880s, the clubs’ found themselves in a position to defray players’ expenses despite the amateur rules on such payments. At this time, rugby football was considered to be a sport for players rather than spectators, reflected by the Laws and its amendments. Within each locality, competition was intense and winning against rivals was important and moreover, demanded by the community (Johnes, 2005). The public’s expectations of its team are summed up by the *Llanelli County Guardian* newspaper quote, telling players that their task was;

“not one of merely beating 15 picked men from each of the other teams in the Western District of South Wales. It means much more. It means vindicating the honour of Llanelli against her many detractors...It means raising her name and her fame amongst the towns. It tends to bring more trade, a more vigorous public spirit and a healthier social life.
(Quoted in Richards, 2006, p.73).

But whilst the village club aspired to win its local league and cup, the perceived glory was found in its players moving on to play for one of the recognised senior teams such as Llanelli, Swansea, Cardiff or Newport. The ultimate honour was the village player being selected to play for his country and to appear on the International field wearing the red shirt of Wales. Former Welsh International and British Lion wing, Gerald Davies (1999, p.x) who was born in the small village of Llansaint, Carmarthenshire and went to University under the local coal miners scholarship scheme, describes perfectly the unique feeling of a player’s first International cap*.

“He’s playing for Wales’. The words, as evocative now as they ever have been, first uttered as a modest whisper, grow into an almighty roar of back-slapping acknowledgement of the great deed. And the village and the whole surrounding countryside echoes in glorious salute to the boy. The longing is made good. He will feel as one with the stars....the sport needs no mention at all. In Wales, it could be soccer. But it isn’t....To play for Wales, whatever the aficionados of the other games might think, can only mean Rugby Football”

The demands and pressures on so-called ‘amateur’ players in the late 19th century, were further highlighted by William Wilkins, chairman of Llanelli (and future WRU Treasurer), at the club’s 1893/94 AGM.

*The quote expresses exactly what I experienced on being appointed to my First International game as a Welsh referee

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“Those (players) unwilling to devote the necessary time for training and preparing for a match are not required. Players should be prepared to go in for strict training and remember that total abstinence is absolutely necessary. The good of training is all thrown away if a player got drunk after a match. Players need to attend the weekly players’ meeting on a Friday night so that the club would be better able to cope with their opponents”

(Hughes, 1986, p.49).

The players were competing, not individually but collectively, for a team identified by a geographical location, which thus evoked passion, emotional and vocal expression, communal pride and loyalty, and a sense of belonging and camaraderie not only amongst the players but also the local populace who supported and followed the team (Johnes, 2005). Being a team sport, supporters were attracted by the quality of the game (contest) and the uncertainty of the outcome. However, rugby clubs concentrated on the ‘niche’ market, its locality, because,

“While demand for quality and uncertainty of outcome may play a role, fans tend to form attachments to particular teams, typically on the basis of geographic proximity, and to follow ‘their team’ almost regardless of the quality of the team or uncertainty of the outcome”

(Szymanski, 2003,p.471).

Players tended to spend their entire playing career with one club, with loyalty to the team, the club and the community, being an attribute taken for granted by most clubs and its steadfast supporters. However, players did sometimes move clubs because of incentives such as jobs being offered to attract those talented individuals to switch their ‘loyalties’. What was regarded as a ‘heinous crime’ created such animosity that the player not only moved clubs but also had to inevitably move villages and often valleys (Harris, 2007). This switching to rival clubs by players because of ‘incentives’, showed up the falsity of, and questioned, the entire ethos of amateurism. The English ‘gentleman’, in particular, prided themselves on the manner in which the new rugby game should be played i.e. fair play, abiding by the ‘Corinthian’ spirit of the Game and that partaking was more important than winning. The mere thought of financial reward for playing and winning was anathema to a Gentleman. Money in sport was considered to be a corrupting influence (Vamplew,1988). The Welsh working class, on the other hand, had a lengthy custom of approaching any game as a contest, where winning was everything, gambling was encouraged and material rewards given to the victors. This highlights the difficulty of the amateur ethos; the middle class philosophy of ‘playing for its own sake’, in stark contrast to the working class emphasis on ‘winning at all costs’ (Williams, 1985).

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Club Competition

Remarkably even before the establishing of a governing body, the South Wales Challenge Cup was introduced in 1877 to promote the growth of the game in South Wales, with a 50 guineas prize and trophy for the winners, with a 2 guineas entrance fee per team. Eighteen teams entered the first competition organized by the South Wales Football Club. This was the earliest example of clubs 'pot hunting', entering competitions beyond their immediate locality, searching for success and glory. By 1885 local challenge cups had been established in Cardiff, Swansea, Llanelli and Monmouthshire resulting in developing competitive district club rivalries even deeper (Boucher, 2000). Similar to the cup competitions amongst the working class North of England clubs, the Welsh cup games,

"...attracted large, partisan crowds which identified strongly with their representatives on the field, seeing matches not just as exciting spectacles but as tests of virility between their community and another. The depth of identification of town with team meant that players were constrained to play, less for their own enjoyment and more for the glory which victory would bring to the community as a whole"
(Dunning and Shread, 2005, p.124).

A Game for All - 'Welshness'

The new game of rugby football had become an expression of a unique kind of 'Welshness', an integral part of Welsh communities along with the chapel, its choirs and socialism. Thus the resultant 'modern' Welshman worked, played socially inclusive rugby, attended chapel, was able to sing and inevitably had been educated by the mining union (Holt, 1989). This was in marked comparison to the class hostility towards the working class experienced in England, Scotland and Ireland, where the game tended to be restricted to the 'amateur' gentlemen of the middle and upper classes (Hargreaves, 1986). In Wales rugby quickly became a 'democratic' sport for all classes, especially a growing working class participation, who were easily absorbed into the Game with little difficulty (Cain, 1999). There was, initially, a composition difference within teams. With a smaller band of individuals to select from, middle class teams were based on ties of education, status and occupation rather than location. Valley communities were quick to establish local clubs made up of close-knit groups of working class men eager to play this new popular team sport (Holt, 1989). Rugby clubs established in the valleys of South Wales inevitably had ready-made local competition with other village teams within a few miles. In these localities, the recent improvements to transport meant that travel to fixtures was not a problem. With the rapid growth of the Game, moves were put in place for rugby to have a common code of play centrally organised, managed and controlled by a responsible governing body that itself was acceptable and accountable to all clubs.

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The Governing Body

With the South Wales Football Club (founded 1875) being superseded by the South Wales Football Union in 1878, the demands for an organised body to represent the increasing number of clubs in South Wales and regulate competition and representative sides had increased. On 12th March 1881, at the Castle Hotel, Neath, the Welsh Football Union was formed by eleven clubs, Llanelli, Swansea, Cardiff, Newport, Pontypool, Bangor, Brecon, Lampeter, Llandeilo, Llandovery and Merthyr, to provide rugby with a wider ambition and more business like footing (Birley, 1993). The growth, and annals, of the organised version of the sport of rugby football in Wales can be traced from this meeting. It is ironic that, what is regarded as the ‘birthplace’ of Welsh rugby, its oldest senior club, Neath, was not represented at the meeting. The members of the WFU governing body were drawn from amongst the young men who were players and committeemen of those clubs affiliated to the Union. The first secretary and treasurer was Richard Mullock, club secretary of Newport RFC, only thirty years old, whose family ran a printing company and published the local paper, *The Newport Advertiser*. Mullock selected the first team to play England and all selected players were ‘educated’, not working class.

The ‘players game’ in the Principality showed that, unlike other home Unions’ governing bodies, Welsh rugby attempted to be egalitarian not only in its participants but also its governance. Researchers Andrews and Howell (1993), Tranter (1998) and Harris (2007), have contended that the WFU was run solely by the social elite alone. However, others investigating the formation of the Welsh Football Union committee were not convinced by the ‘elitist’ findings (Dunning and Sheard, 2005). If the governing body was ‘elitist’ in composition, why did it then adopt such a lax approach to the (illegal) actions of its member clubs in being overgenerous with so-called ‘working class players’ expenses? Adopting this attitude put its association with England, Ireland and Scotland in serious peril. Therefore, could this approach be interpreted as a committee empathetic with the needs of working players and the pressures and demands on its constituent clubs’ to survive? This view of a classless, governing WRU committee was confirmed some fifty years later by Swansea and Wales player, Rowe Harding, who wrote in 1929;

“An organization with an income of over £10,000 a year, and which is responsible for the prestige of a national sport, should attract men of social standing and business ability, and unfortunately the number of such men on the Union is too small. Of course, every member of the Union does his best; but some members are not fitted either by education or experience to guide the destiny of Welsh Rugby and they should be supplanted by men of better social standing and with a better grasp of affairs.....”

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The International Board (IRB)

Within the Four Home Unions games took place under each country's established laws. Scotland saw no difficulty with this, but constant pressure for change by the other three Unions saw the Scots agree to the establishment of an International Board (IB) only if its functions were limited to "the settlement of any dispute which may arise in future International Matches on the Construction of the Laws of the Game." This was agreed to by the powerful and dominating RFU and a board was formed consisting of the four Home Nations in March 1886. However within a year there was a fall-out over the method and points awarded for scoring and the RFU dropped out of the IB. In March 1887 at Manchester, the old International Board was dissolved and a new one formally established with representatives from the three Celtic Unions (England re-joined in 1890). It was agreed that no financial gain or reward be obtained by those who participated in the Game Rugby football was deemed a *pastime* involving unpaid players and was therefore strictly amateur. Amateurism, based on the middle class principle adopted by the RFU, indeed appeared to be a means of social exclusion and enclosure. The English Northern clubs felt that the RFU were preventing working class players having the opportunity to compete on the same basis as the sons of the liberal professions and the landed gentry (Holt, 1989). The IB's stance on amateurism eventually caused a schism with the Northern Clubs, who demanded 'bona fide broken time payments' for players who inevitably had to forfeit part of their wages. And so it was on 29th August 1895, that twenty-two dissenting Yorkshire and Lancashire clubs met at the George hotel, Huddersfield and broke away to form what became known as the Rugby League. The split opened the door for mass defections from Wales, e.g. in 1896 six Llanelli players joined Rochdale RLC all at once (Johnes, 2005).

The Welsh Approach to Amateurism

The Welsh attitude and approach towards rugby was different from the other Home Unions. The Game's development in the mining communities had a social impact on the requirement for expenses to be paid (Polley, 1998). In many clubs there is little doubt that the permitted 'reasonable' expenses were interpreted very liberally because of the fear of losing their players and the resultant downfall of the club. Rumours abounded that working class players received 'broken time' compensation in order to play, claims that the WRFU were not eager to investigate, and suspicions that the other three Unions could not prove (Johnes, 2005). If working men were not being paid, how did clubs such as Swansea and Llanelli tour the North of England, Ireland and France with working class players taking 'unpaid time' off from their jobs? The question was answered by former Welsh International, W. M. McCutcheon, who wrote in 1905 confirming that this practice regarding 'broken-time' expenses had existed in his old club, Swansea, since the early 1880s. The leading pre-war senior club was accused of paying expenses equivalent to wages, so that players only went North because of the large lump sums offered to them for

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signing. The WFU took no action regarding this allegation (Williams, 1983). In addition, and despite the IB agreement on amateurism, in 1897 the WFU sanctioned a testimonial game (and donated £50) that raised £600 for the Welsh captain, Arthur Gould, enabling him to purchase the deeds of his rented house. Gould was suspended by the IB as a ‘professional’ and banded from the game. The WFU promptly withdrew from the IB saying that the IB had no laws about amateurism (Vamplew, 1988). This pressurised action by the WFU forced the IB to rescind the ban but also led to the IB bringing in strict amateur laws in 1900/01,

“Any player will become a professional who receives from or is given money or other valuable consideration by any person or persons as an inducement towards playing football.....any player will become a professional who signs any form of the Northern Football Union”
(Richards, 2006).

Religion and Rugby

Since its establishment rugby had an uneasy association with religion. The nonconformist chapels, in particular, fearing the sport’s popularity, bitterly condemned the game. Rugby was perceived as a clear threat to the chapels, with the residual religious community shifting to a more secular Welsh society created by the new capitalist economy (Andrews and Howell, 1993). The WFU, gauging the mood of the people, promptly banned Sunday football (Farmer, 1996). If the Game had been officially permitted to be played on a Sunday, then the difficulties of the working class player getting time off work on a Saturday might have been avoided and as such the need for ‘broken-time payments’ to be paid to working class players (Smith and Williams, 1980). The great religious revival of 1904-05 led by the collier-blacksmith turned lay preacher, Evan Roberts, identified rugby as an enemy warranting denunciation. In West Wales, particularly, clubs came under enormous pressure to discontinue playing. Several clubs, including Loughor, Ammanford, Morriston, Crynant and others, did succumb to the Revival and closed. But the new order of Welsh rugby withstood the criticism from the old religious order and within a decade all of the clubs had reformed (Smith and Williams, 1980). The Welsh, now obtained their spiritual sustenance not only from religion but also from a sport (Morgan, 1981).

The First Golden Era

In spite of the various setbacks, both on and off the field, Wales’s National team enjoyed its first ‘Golden Era’. Between 1900 – 1911 Wales won thirty-five out of forty-three games including seven championships and six triple crowns. They were the only team to beat the 1905 New Zealand ‘All Blacks’ at Cardiff (3pts – 0pts) in front of a packed, nationalistic, record crowd of 47,000 Welshmen, which produced gate receipts of £2,600 (Andrews and Howell, 1993). What winning, and rugby, meant to Wales was best summed up, not by a

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Welshman, but rather by the reporter from the Lyttleton Times, the paper with the largest circulation in New Zealand;

“The scene at the ground was unique in New Zealanders’ experience....It was a wonderful revelation of the serious spirit in which the Welsh take their football”.

(Smith and Williams, 1980, p.159).

Following that dramatic victory, the National Team became the standard bearer for all the growing number of clubs, players and supporters in Wales. Rugby was, and still continues to be, a charismatic, integral part of the national character of Wales (Morgan, 1981). The victory over New Zealand enhanced the growing authority and power of the WFU. If any threat to the Game arose, such as violence at games, swift action was taken. Even senior clubs like Aberavon, Llanelli, Neath, in the West and Abertillery, Cardiff in the East saw their grounds temporarily closed (Andrews and Howell, 1993). Unlikely as it may seem amateur rugby was saved by Wales, where the game was seeing huge growth. At this time the native population of Wales was unable to meet demand for workers in the south Wales coal fields. This led to high wages in the mines as mine owners tried to attract workers. Massive immigration into Wales followed. Between 1871 and 1911 the population of Wales increased by one million. This was a young, tough industrial population used to working in teams. Rugby flourished, with many clubs based around pubs. The game was violent, both on and off the pitch. In 1897 a game between Dowlais and Merthyr was so violent that according to a local paper "most of the Merthyr players were maimed" (quoted in *Sport In Britain, A Social History*, ed; Tony Mason). Wales was booming economically, and was also seeking a clear national identity within Britain. This cause was served by rugby. But it could only be served by sticking to the amateur code, since the Welsh wanted to play widely against other national teams within Britain. This could only be done by amateur players. So in the interests of Welsh nationalistic feeling Welsh rugby remained an amateur game. The rewards of this position were not slow in coming.

By the turn of the century the Welsh team was a major force. A great Welsh national moment came in 1905 during a tour of Britain by the New Zealand All Blacks team. The All Blacks had destroyed all opposition in England, Scotland and Ireland, amassing eight hundred points to twenty seven for the combined opposition. Then on 16th December 1905 the All Blacks came up against Wales at Cardiff Arms Park. The match was a closely fought battle, won with a single Welsh try, scored by Dr Edward Morgan. This was a significant event in the cultural history of Wales, and Edward Morgan is commemorated by that great medal for figures deemed historical, a blue plaque, placed near his birthplace in Agents Row, Abernant. In this sense the history of rugby is not confined to quirky interest in sport. That day in December 1905 is a date in Welsh as well as rugby history.

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Alas, there was not only violence, but much death and destruction to be encountered by those many courageous Welsh players who readily enlisted to fight for ‘King and Country’ in the Great War. Rugby in the Principality ground to a halt. The village and valley clubs’ playing resources had become brave soldiers, stuck in the unyielding mud in France and Belgium, and facing a new, very competitive opponent. However this confrontation was too far exceed eighty minutes. Sadly, this struggle sometimes called for the mere grassroots rugby player to make the ultimate sacrifice in representing his country.

The Unofficial Championship Pre-War, 1894-1914.

The first twenty years of an Unofficial Welsh Club Championship, 1894-1914, had seen just six clubs share the title. *Swansea* was by far the most successful club with eight championships, six in seven seasons. But the giants of East Wales, Cardiff (4) and Newport (5) were not far behind. *Llanelli*, *Neath* and Pontypool all claimed one title each. The titles revealed that the strength of Welsh rugby clearly lay in the South Wales coastal belt. Membership of the WFU had grown to sixty-five clubs. Up to 1914, rugby clubs had benefitted from the external environment and the newly found social interest in rugby. However, the financial and social environment was soon to change dramatically, and not for the better.

The Inter-War Seasons, 1919-1939

The 1920s and 1930s were difficult times for Welsh rugby. The war could not be blamed for the downturn in Welsh fortunes as all the home nations lost their young talent in equal numbers. Wales lost eleven International players and many more club players. But the main reason for Welsh failure on the rugby pitch, and the resulting difficulty for Welsh clubs off it, can be mapped to an economic failure of Wales as a country. The First World War had created an unrealistic demand for coal. In the 1920s the collapse in the need for coal resulted, because of the reliance on one industry, in a massive level of unemployment (from 265,000 miners in 1920, down to 138,000 miners by 1933) throughout the South Wales valleys. With over 56% of the population employed in the mining and metallurgical industries, Wales was hit more severely than other areas in comparison and was literally brought to its knees and crippled (Morgan 1981).

In the Rhondda, a heartland for rugby, the number of miners fell by 50% from 39,177 in 1927 down to 19,873 by 1936. Prolonged unemployment in the valleys was over 40% in 1935, which in turn lead to mass emigration, well over 430,000, as nearly a fifth of the entire population left Wales for work in England and beyond between 1921 and 1940 (Morgan, 1981). The population of the Rhondda fell by 13% in the twenties, and possibly higher in the thirties. The knock-on effect was felt in the port cities of Newport and Cardiff, that relied on the transportation of coal with the result that railwaymen were forced to take a ‘cut’ in wages of 4s per week (Johnes, 2005). Suddenly, the call of the professional league was a

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very strong draw to men, (particularly unemployed miners from the valleys) who could not claim money for playing union. With a miner's weekly wage only £2. 3s, 9d, the offer of a new job, a lump sum of £250 and even £1.15s for a defeat was too much to resist for many players (Johnes, 2005). Between 1919 and 1939, the ranks of the Northern clubs were filled with some 392 Welsh rugby union players, including seventy Internationals, who joined league rugby. In the 1939 Rugby League Cup Final, half the players were Welsh (Richards, 2006 p.124).

The economic circumstances even affected those Welsh Internationals who remained loyal to the Game and stayed at home, preventing them from accepting invitations to join Lions rugby tours abroad (Smith and Williams, 1980). The Depression resulted in economic, social and cultural destruction to Wales. Another side of the downturn affected those players that stayed behind in homes where men were the only earners but on reduced wages or shortened hours. In 1929, an unemployed man received 23s a week for himself and his family, plus 2s per child (Morgan, 1981, p.231). The decline in heavy labour areas resulted in very stark choices in where the household money could be spent. It was difficult to justify paying to play or watch rugby when there was little money for priorities such as food and rent. With crowds dwindling, and no club being able to rely wholly upon gate receipts for financial stability, clubs were forced to drastic measures in the hope of survival. In season 1926-27, many clubs, particularly those in East Wales, were in danger of actual extinction. Blaenavon, Cross Keys, Ebbw Vale, and Pontypridd all sought financial assistance from a struggling WFU. In the case of Cross Keys, the WFU refused an appeal for a cash loan, but instead agreed to send the Welsh national team to play in an exhibition match at Pandy Park. The sell-out crowd assured Cross Keys future and resulted in an historic win for the home team by thirteen points to eight.

The governing body's income had halved during the 1920's due to smaller crowds and clubs defaulting. Falling attendances at Internationals posed major problems. Only 15,000 watched the Wales v France game at Swansea partly due to the consideration that the 2s admission charge was too high in the existing economic environment (Williams, 1983). In West Wales, Skewen also sought financial support; Loughor, which had produced five internationals in the 1920s, were, by 1929, begging door to door for old kit to keep rugby going. Due to work at the local dockyards stopping, Haverfordwest disbanded from 1926-29, and Pembroke Dock Quins were reduced to five members by 1927. In October 1927, Aberavon could only attract a crowd of less than two hundred due to price admission being raised to one shilling. In the valleys the Treherbert, Llwynypia, Nantffyllon, Senghenydd, Treherbert, Tredegar and Cwmbran clubs had vanished before 1930. In 1927 due to falling gate receipts, caused by the increasing attraction of rival sports such as football, Ebbw Vale staged a rugby league game on their pitch, the Welfare Ground. The WRU reacted strongly and threatened Ebbw Vale RFC with expulsion from the Union.

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This was seen by many as an overly aggressive stance to a club that was desperate for aid not sanctions. In 1929 steel-making in the town stopped resulting in 10,000 workers being put out of a job. By 1932 the gate at Ebbw Vale rarely reached twenty shillings, despite admission reduced to 4d, and a catchment area population of 40,000. The club was forced to resort to public subscriptions to survive (Williams, 1983). Clubs throughout Wales, even those of the size of Pontypool were not spared; in 1927 they were playing and beating the touring Waratahs and the Maoris; by 1930 they were £2,000 in debt, facing bankruptcy and forced to appeal to the WRU for financial assistance (Smith and Williams, 1980, p.259). A further East Wales valley club, Abertillery, with 85% unemployment in the locality, had difficulty paying its £3 ground rent and faced closure in 1931. Yet in West Wales, where anthracite and tinsplate dominated, unemployment was only 8.3% allowing Llanelli to make a profit of £300 per season (Williams, 1983, p.343). An alternative reason for the fall in the Welsh union game can be placed on the improvement of football in Wales. Traditionally, seen as a game more associated with North Wales, the success of Cardiff Football Club in the 1920s proved a strong draw for many supporters. With two F.A. Cup Finals in 1925 and 1927, Cardiff were making the once unpopular sport of 'soccer' very fashionable, for fans and sportsmen alike (Johnes, 2005). But despite the on-field successes of soccer, and regardless of the lack of International rugby victories throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, rugby continued to secure much more support amongst the sporting of South Wales (Morgan, 1981).

The one team that appeared to be unaffected by the double threat of soccer and financial debt was Llanelli, who appeared to be the only club capable of turning a deficit into a profit. The Scarlets benefitted from a generally buoyant steel industry along the coastline from Port Talbot to Llanelli, and an unswerving loyalty shown by their home supporters, who were repaid by exciting, high scoring matches (Williams, 1985). The level of support was unusual as most clubs in South Wales realised the challenge facing them to uphold a realistic amount of local spectator backing. Because even with reduced admission charges, unemployed men relying on Poor Relief, were unable to pay. During the 1925/26 season the club was unbeaten. During that season, Llanelli, whilst playing Penygraig, encountered over 1,000 unemployed miners taking matters into their own hands by forcing their way into the ground to watch the game, peaceably, from the 'tanner' bank. Penygraig took no action against the 'non-paying' miners. Nonetheless, by 1930, even the Penygraig club found itself in dire financial straits (Williams, 1983, p. 350). Apart from a few sporadic victories from the national team, there appeared little to cheer about in the 1920s for Welsh rugby at club or country level.

The start of the 1930s opened with the formation of the West Wales Rugby Union, an event that initially appeared to be a positive indication of growth; but in fact the WWRU was formed in Swansea by Western clubs to wrestle control away from the WRU. More than

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fifty West Wales clubs had become disenchanted in decisions made by their parent body and believed the Union had no interest in the lower tier clubs, allowing them to become 'mere feeders for the bigger clubs' (Smith and Williams, 1980, p.261). During the 1930's, the mass unemployment and poverty demonstrated that the same problems that dogged Welsh Rugby throughout the 1920s still remained. Wales was still suffering the tragic effects of the economic depression upon the working, social and cultural life of entire communities (Morgan, 1981). An action which reflected the harsh fiscal situation facing people in Wales, occurred in Neath in January 1933, and resulted in, cultural life of entire communities (Morgan, 1981).

'the gates were rushed at Neath's Gnoll ground by some 3/400 spectators protesting against the shilling admission charge for the 'local derby' game against Aberavon. The club duly took note of the concerns of spectators, and for the next home game, against Bath, admission was thereby reduced to seven pence'
(Williams, 1983, p.346).

Club rugby was desperately struggling to survive in an hostile, economic environment. Unfortunately, being unable to retain the services and commitment of local young men, some clubs failed, including Abercynon, Abercarn, Cwmtwrch, Nelson and Taibach, between 1934 and 1937 (Williams, 1983). But despite those failures many more clubs fought hard to ensure their survival.

As pre-war, the national team was considered to be the role model for clubs both on and off the field throughout the 1920s'. During this decade, the Welsh XV was mainly made up of working class men. Sadly, the team's playing record was abysmal. An (unintended) change of selection saw more college students brought into the Welsh team. This resulted in a Championship title in 1931, a first ever victory at Twickenham in 1933 and remarkably in 1935, when the WFU became officially the Welsh Rugby Union, the National team emulated its victorious predecessors of 1905 by beating the mighty New Zealand 'All Blacks' at Cardiff in front of a passionate crowd of over 50,000 spectators. In a game of high emotions and tragedy, Welsh hooker Don Tarr was carried off with a broken neck, Wales, with fourteen players, snatched victory by 13-12pts. The consequences of this achievement moved well outside the touchlines of the Arms Park. 'Old Stager' wrote in the Western Mail,

'Wales is proud of this victory: she is particularly proud of the fact that Welsh peers and Welsh labourers – with all the intervening stratas of society- were united in acclaiming and cheering the Welsh team. It was.....a victory for Wales in a sense that probably is impossible in any other sphere'
(Quoted in Smith and Williams, 1980, p.292).

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Evidently, the game of rugby football was a means of ensuring public harmony and social cohesion, whereby people could come into contact and create personal and social attachments that rose above the restrictions of class (Williams, 1983).

The Unofficial Club Championship 1919-1939

The Championship title was wider spread from 1918-1939, with nine clubs winning the title. Cardiff (3) Newport (2) and Pontypool (3) dominated from East Wales; the emergence of Aberavon in the mid-1920s with four consecutive titles kept the flag waving for West Wales, along with *Neath (3) and Llanelli (2)*. However, *Swansea* had to be content with only the runners-up spot on three separate occasions.

By the beginning of the 1939 season, and despite the two decades of depression, membership of the WRU had grown to 89 clubs. But all local and senior club rivalry was to be halted in 1939 by a greater global conflict. The War period actually produced a vision of the future for Rugby. Amateur rugby union and professional rugby league players were allowed to play together in charity games, service matches and friendlies (Johnes, 2005). Rugby league players even represented Wales in its victories gained in Internationals played during this desperate period, showing how much rugby union had lost to rugby league. Quite remarkably, even games played on a Sunday were allowed. (After 1995, all of the characteristics of the 'War games' had been incorporated not only into the Game in Wales, but to all the major rugby playing countries).

The Post War Playing Context

Following the Second World War, many clubs were found to be struggling financially. Carmarthen had 15s.8p in the bank; Cefneithin with 5s.6p and Machen had a membership of eight and shorts made out of black-out material (Smith and Williams, 1980, p.330). Like the rest of the country, rugby suffered austerity but then the subsequent economic boom brought prosperity. By 1950, membership of the WRU had grown to 120 clubs, a 35% increase since 1939. Rugby teams now built their own clubhouse, purchased/leased their ground and became the social centre of village and town life. With improved facilities and amenities providing a range of activities, women and children were attracted to the clubs in greater numbers (Johnes, 2005). In order to raise the necessary finance (unofficially to meet players' demands), clubs resorted to developing a social membership by opening their facilities in the evenings outside the normal two training nights and match days, for special social events such as dances, quiz's, bingo etc, run to attract non-rugby visitors into the club. All monies raised, including any surplus, were ploughed back into the club.

Attendances at both club and International games revealed that public interest in the sport was still high. In February 1951, a game between Cardiff and Newport attracted a world

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record club attendance of 48,500 spectators. At National level, Wales won the Triple Crown and Championship, both in 1950 and again in 1952, to continue the post-war momentum in Welsh rugby (Williams, 1983). In current terms, it is strange to learn that Wales and British Lion legend, Cliff Morgan, caught the bus from his home in Trebanog, Rhondda on a Saturday morning to travel down to Cardiff to play for Wales in the afternoon. His reward was re-imbursement of his bus fare before returning home the same day!

Despite the success of the National Team, rugby in Wales was even more divided between the so-called top eight 'first class' clubs, such as Llanelli, Swansea, Cardiff, Newport, Neath, etc, and the remaining vast majority of the 112 WRU clubs, who were dubbed by supporters the dubious title of 'second-class' or 'feeder clubs'. The self-esteem of the first class clubs was further boosted by the National newspaper, the *Western Mail*, establishing in 1946 its unofficial club championship but with only the senior clubs partaking. This was regardless of the fact that the WRU told clubs that membership of the Union was the only status they recognised and that one of the Union's bye-laws was "to encourage and maintain sociability and good fellowship among the clubs and organisations in the Union". In spite of the protestations of the WRU, and the 'second-class' clubs, the first class clubs organised fixtures between themselves on a home and away basis as well as playing against the first class clubs in England such as Leicester, Northampton, Harlequins, Bath, Gloucester, Bristol and others. By the 1960s South Wales had become less dependent on its traditional industries with the exception of the growing steel industry. Wales had been opened up by new roads and an expanding ownership of cars. Saturday afternoon televised sports and higher earnings now offered alternatives to rugby supporters than standing in the cold, wind and rain at rugby grounds. Attendances at games dropped. It took the Aberfan tragedy of 1966, and the demonstration riddled South African rugby tour of 1969, to move Wales, and its rugby, out of the comfort zone (Johnes, 2005).

The Unofficial Club Championship, 1946-1970.

Cardiff proved to be the leading Welsh club after the war winning five titles between 1946-1970. *Ebbw Vale* won four titles through the 1950's. *Newbridge*, who had become a 'first-class' team only after the war, won the title for the first time (1965) as did Pontypridd (1963) and Bridgend (1964). The long established clubs like *Llanelli*, *Neath* and Newport also tasted championship success, but this was a barren time for *Swansea*.

The Second Golden Era; the 1970s.

The number of miners fell from 91,000 in to 41,000 by 1971 and the number of working pits fell to a low of fifty-four. Fossil fuel was considered outdated as were the previous occupations of rugby players. Miners, steelworkers and policemen were replaced by the university and college graduate. The blue-collar worker was replaced by the white-collar

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employee. This opened doors, not only for players to further their business opportunities but to herald the introduction of business sponsorship into all levels of rugby (Smith and Williams, 1980). The success of the British Lions in New Zealand (1971) and South Africa (1974) did much to revive interest in the UK Game. In Wales, the magnificent spectacle that occurred in Cardiff between the Barbarians and New Zealand in 1973, proved to be the forerunner of great Welsh success in the Five Nations Championship with three Grand Slams, five Triple Crowns and six Championship titles won during the decade. Welsh rugby was buoyant at all levels of the Game. Nonetheless, the pressure for change, to allow all 181 WRU clubs the opportunity to rise to the top level, had grown since the early 1970s. It was no surprise then that, in 1975, Ray Williams, WRU Coaching Organiser, proposed a league scheme that was supported by 72% of clubs, but the senior clubs again saw no justifiable reason to accept change. Support for the status quo then came in the unexpected shape of brewers, Whitbread, whose newly formed Merit Table only recorded played between the first class sides in the Principality.

Outside the top end of the Game, the only change in organisation saw 'the Welsh Junior Rugby Union become the Welsh Districts Rugby Union in 1976 with thirteen districts and 343 clubs under its aegis' (Smith and Williams, 1980, p.435). An outside view of Welsh Rugby at that time was given by Chris Laidlaw, former New Zealand captain who wrote (1973, p155),

"Back home in the valleys little has changed in fifty years. In Pontypool or Cross Keys, and in a large number of smaller communities, the Rugby Club has played a deep and highly significant sociological role. It was, and still is, the social focus of the community. A man's standing in the town or village is directly related to his position in the club...Rugby, then is the very cornerstone of Welsh Society".

The Unofficial Club Championship, 1971-1980

Success on the first class fields during the '70s was spread across South Wales from Pontypridd (3) in the Rhondda valley, Pontypool (2) in the Eastern valleys, through Bridgend (1) and Swansea (1) to the Llanelli (2) West Walsians. Even London Welsh, with their team of victorious British Lions, captured a first ever title.

The Centenary Year 1980, and its Decade.

The WRU Centenary in 1980 saw further pressure for changes to the club structure. Nevertheless, the many traditionalists and romantics were content to reminisce that Welsh rugby was about the person who,

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'is the youth team coach, the ex-referee, the man who runs the line for the Athletic XV, the unsung, dedicated enthusiasts who turn up to offer their skills and knowledge, in any weathers, so that the game is never neglected at any level. It is men like Rhys E. Williams, still serving Crynant as club secretary after more than fifty years'
(Smith and Williams, 1980, p.461).

The 1980's contrasted with the 1920s' in Wales. Economic depression, large scale unemployment and industrial conflict, especially the miners' strike in 1984, had the same effect on Welsh rugby i.e. thinning crowds, players turning to rugby league and clubs desperately looking to the Union for financial assistance. All these factors added to the mood for change, which was gaining momentum. The poor performances of the National Team during the 1980s finally forced the Merit Table clubs to accept that change was required. During the late 1970s and 1980s major changes took place in the occupational backgrounds of Welsh players.

"The last two decades of the twentieth century saw Wales undergo a dramatic transformation, and no part of society – politics, culture, education or sport - was unaffected by it"
(Smith and Williams, 1999, p. 215).

The Unofficial Club Championship 1981-1990.

During this decade two clubs dominated the club championship. The mighty Pontypool club in East Wales, under the direction of the legendary forward, Ray Prosser, won four Championship titles in five seasons between 1983-1988. They were replaced by *Neath*, in West Wales, who won three titles in four seasons towards the end of the decade. Bridgend, Cardiff and Swansea won one title each.

"The sport has retained both a genuine community spirit at the local level, and a national flavour that is more populist than that of Wales regular opponents in the Five Nations"
(Polley, 1998, p.57).

Creeping Professionalism

Following the National Miners' Strike in 1984, Rugby players were no longer the miners or steelworkers, because of the reduction in the workforce of the declining traditional core industries, but now into their place emerged the newer commercial, financial services and educational sectors; they produced the new breed of business executives, financial advisors, managers and teachers. Recognisable players, seen via the BBC and HTV's weekly televised rugby programmes, became marketable rugby personalities, which now opened previously closed doors in the business world. As a result, British Lions Derek Quinnell (Llanelli), Tommy David (Pontypridd), Steve Fenwick (Bridgend) and J.J. Williams (Llanelli) all opened their own businesses with great success. In spite of the business opportunities, there

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were still some high profile defections to Rugby League. The first International to go North for over a decade in 1985, Terry Holmes (Cardiff), was followed in 1987 by the brilliant Jonathan Davies (Llanelli), who joined Widnes RLC for £200,000. Over one third of the successful 1988 Triple Crown team crossed the border, disillusioned at the running of the Game in Wales. The quality players who stayed in Wales then demanded material factors such as cars, cash and jobs to remain at a club. Some club administrators called it ‘a ransom’, others saw it as a necessity to keep their best players, but now material benefit came into the player retention equation (Johnes, 2005).

Globally, at the first Rugby World Cup held in New Zealand in 1987, visiting Northern Hemisphere players, and I, saw the host country’s captain, hooker Andy Dalton, on a paid TV advertisement endorsing a farm tractor. This was clearly contrary to the century old edit from the IRB that ‘no player should profit materially from participation in the Game’. In 1988 in South Africa a player won a court judgement for not receiving payments promised. By 1990 the IRB had revised some of the amateurism regulations; *‘players could now receive material benefits from any form of communication, written, oral or visual, provided that the reward does not derive from the game’* and also *‘participate in advertising or product endorsement provided it has no rugby connection’* (Richards, 2007, p.225). Unlike the other Home Unions, Wales supported the IRB amendment. The 1991 RWC was held in England with rumours and hearsay about Professionalism. The highly respected rugby journalist, Stephen Jones, wrote in The Times in 1993, *“There is no longer a major test team which does not, for the right rate and on a rota basis, farm itself out to a range of sponsors’ functions, club dinners and company lunches and photo opportunities; not a team which does not add to the communal pot by flogging off its allocation of tickets... The All Blacks are particularly clued up”*. By 1995, with the third RWC looming in South Africa, pressure on the IRB’s stance on amateurism rose to unprecedented levels (O’Brien and Slack, 1999). The last decade of the Millennium saw a transformation unprecedented, in not only Welsh Rugby, but in World Rugby.

It is worth noting that it was a Rhodes scholar, and former New Zealand captain, scrum-half Chris Laidlaw (1973, p126) who wrote that *“In Welsh valleys Rugby was more than amusement, it was a whole social order...The Welsh rugby club was perhaps the most graphic example of a sporting institution providing the central focus of community life anywhere in the world”*. Because of this, he argued, Welsh passion for the Game was deeper and would last longer than New Zealand’s!

WELSH UNOFFICIAL CLUB CHAMPIONS BY DECADES: 1890s to 1999.

Merit Clubs	1890s	1900-09	1910-19	1920-29	1930-38	1940s	1950-59	1960-69	1970-79	1980-89	1990/94	1995/99	Total
Aberavon	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	5
Abertillery	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Bridgend	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	1	-	-	5
Cardiff	1	3	-	-	3	2	3	-	-	1	1	1	15
Cross Keys	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Ebbw Vale	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	4
Glam Wdrs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Llanelli	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	2	-	1	1	8
Maesteg	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Neath	-	-	1	1	2	1	-	1	-	3	1	1	11
Newbridge	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Newport	2	2	2	1	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	11
Penarth	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Pill Harriers			1										1
Pontypool	-	-	1	1	2	-	1	-	2	4	-	-	11
Pontypridd	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	1	5
SW Police							-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Swansea	2	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	1	13
Tredegar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0

**THE HISTORY
OF
EACH RESEARCH CLUB**



EBBW VALE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

(Source: Rugby in Ebbw Vale & The Valleys; 1870-1952.
David Boucher 2000)

SEASON	EVENT
1880/81 (p.27) STRATEGIC	Ebbw Vale RFC Formed: Captained by L. Williams, early games played at Dobbs Field, then the Bridge End Field. First game v Tredegar Working Men's Football Club on 2 nd December 1880.
1881/82	Club used Bridge End Field as its home venue. County Hotel was considered as club's headquarters.
1882-1890	Limited number of games per season (9-12). Little press coverage of club prior to 1890.
1894/95	Second Team record better than firsts.
1895/96 (p.9) STRATEGIC	Club accepted into membership of WFU, 30th August 1895.
1895-1907	Club involved in 'broken time payments' disputes.
1896/97 (p.35)	Record; P33, W20, D5, L8. (65.8%) Monmouthshire District of Rugby Football Union formed.
1897/98	Club withdrew from Monmouthshire League.
1898/99 (p.36)	Club vacated the Bridge End Field (rent £2 per game) for cheaper option of playing on the Beaufort Fields. Club had financial difficulties due to opponents not fulfilling the home fixtures due to inability to raise a team. Two captains suspended by WFU for Foul Play.
1899/00 (p.37) STRATEGIC	Club defaulted on payment of its dues to the WRFU. Struck off Union list but readmitted later in year.



EBBW VALE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1900/01 (p.37)	League Record; P18, W3, D3, L12. (28.7%) Club complained to WRFU that Pontymister, Treorchy and Blaina had failed to fulfil fixtures.
1901/02 (p.37)	Readmitted to Monmouthshire League, finished 3 rd in table.
1902/03 (p.37) STRATEGIC	Season proved a disaster. Record; P18, W3, D3, L12, Pts For; 26; Pts Agst; 147 pts. (28.6%) Last in table. Team folded at end of season, owing to ground difficulty.
1905/06 (p.37) STRATEGIC	Club reapplied to join WRFU. Rejected. Told they must play a full season before re-consideration. Not readmitted into Monmouthshire League. Returned to play at Bridge End Field.
1906/07 (p.38/39)	Unbeaten at home for season. Beat most of the strongest teams in Monmouthshire League. Club made a profit but fined £10 for failure to fulfil a fixture. Club not re-admitted to WRU. AGM: Income from season £820. Surplus £206. 2s. 3d.
1907-1912 (p.52) STRATEGIC	Club joined the Northern Rugby League along with Merthyr.
1914/18	The Great War.
1919/1920 (p.84)	Club re-accepted into membership by WFU. Secretary, N.J.Turner, wrote to WFU denying any plans to return the club to Rugby League.
1924/25 (p.128)	Record; P41, W19, D9, L13 (56%) Opposition now included Neath, Bridgend, Pontypool, Abertillery plus Bedford & Northampton.



EBBW VALE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1925/26 (p.129)	Undefeated home record. Severe financial difficulties.
1926/27 (p.130)	Cutback on English opponents due to heavy cost of travelling. Cardiff on fixture list for first time but Athletic XV not firsts.
1928/29	Closure of steelworks.
1932/33 (p.133)	Won Ben Francis Cup for first time. Defeated favourites Blaina. Otherwise club had an abysmal record.
Mid 1930's	Financial record of club worsened. Other valley's clubs joined together to raise funds for Ebbw Vale. A disappointing crowd saw the club lose 14 pts – 9 pts.
1933/34 (p.134)	Club finished third from bottom of League with 17 pts.
1936/37 (p.134)	Press reports of games claimed 'brilliant play', great improvement' and 'splendid advance' concerning Ebbw Vale's play.
1937/38 (p.135)	Club continued to advance on the field with some great victories.
1938/39	Former 'All Whites' player, Dudley Folland, banned by WRU from assisting the club because of his association with Swansea Town FC.
1940/41 (p.138/140) STRATEGIC	THE WAR YEARS Committee agreed to keep playing as long as there were fixtures. Large number of young men employed in vital industries locally. Record: P30, W30, D0, L0, Pts For: 629. Agst: 103 (100%) Club, captained by Wally Talbot, defeated the RAF, Army XV, South Wales Borders, Cardiff (twice), and Llanelli.



EBBW VALE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1941/42 (p.139/141)	Club was again undefeated until last game of season against Percy Jones XV in a benefit match for Red Cross.
1945/46	Record: P42, W25, D2, L15. Pts For; 402; Pts Agst; 300. (61.2%)
1946/47 (p.144) STRATEGIC	Record: P34, W23, D3, L8. Pts For; 404; Pts Agst; 210. (70.3%) Committee adopted adventurous policy in attracting English opponents because southern Welsh clubs remained 'aloof'.
1947/48	Record: P35, W24, D3, L8. Pts For; 409; Pts Agst; 208. (71.1%)
1948/49 (p.143/144) STRATEGIC	Record: P36, W25, D2, L9. Pts For; 347; Pts Agst; 220. (71.1%) Welfare Ground deemed unplayable by Welfare Committee. Club had to rely on goodwill of local clubs to play. Loss of revenue. National Coal Board refused to follow other local employers for workers to have 6d per week deducted from wages to be paid to club.
1949/50 (p.145/147) STRATEGIC	Recognised as a 'First Class' club. Included in Western Mail Unofficial Welsh Club Championship, finished 4 th . Record: P44, W28, D7, L9. Pts For; 472, Pts Agst; 191. (68.6%). Newly laid ground and refurbished dressing rooms.
1950/51 (p.149)	Record: P41, W31, D4, L6. (77.8%). WMUWCC 3 rd Finished behind Newport & Cardiff in table.
1951/52 (p.148/150) TROPHY & STRATEGIC	Record: P39, W31, D2, L6. Pts For; 644, Pts Agst; 140. (80.5%). Western Mail Unofficial Welsh Club Champions. Captained by George Gwyn. Club undefeated for last twenty five games Only one home defeat.



EBBW VALE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1952/53	Record: P WMUWCC 4th. First fixture with Llanelli RFC, 29 th September.
1953/54 TROPHY & STRATEGIC	Record: P39, W29, D4, L6. (76.7%). Western Mail Unofficial Welsh Club Champions. Snelling Sevens Finalists.
1954/55	Record: P44, W27, D11, L6, (69.1%). WMUWCC 5th.
1955/56	Record: P41, W23, D5, L13, (60.9%) WMUWCC 8th
1956/57 TROPHY & STRATEGIC	Record: P40, W29, D2, L9, (73.8%). Western Mail Unofficial Welsh Club Champions
1957/58	Snelling Sevens Winners.
1958/59	Record: P35, W24, D5, L6, (72.5%). Snelling Sevens Semi-Finalists.
1959/60 TROPHY & STRATEGIC	Record: P41, W32, D2, L7, (79.1%) Western Mail Unofficial Welsh Club Champions.
1960/61	Record: P40, W28, D1, L11, (70.7%). WMUWCC 4th.
1961/62	Record: P41, W28, D3, L8, (70.5%). WMUWCC 2nd.
1962/63	Record: P39, W26, D4, L9, (69.8%). WMUWCC 4th.



EBBW VALE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1963/64	Record: P45, W27, D5, L13. (64.0%).
1964/65	Record: P40, W17, D4, L19, (47.7%). WMUWCC 13 th .
1965/66	Record: P50, W18, D4, L28, (40.7%)
1966/67	Record: P48, W29, D4, L15, (63.5%) WMUWCC 8 th .
1967/68	Record: P48, W29, D7, L12, (65.5%) WMUWCC 5 th . Ebbw Vale forward, David Nash became first Welsh National Coach.
1968/69	Record: P44, W30, D3, L11, (70.2%) WMUWCC 6 th .
1969/70	Record: P46, W30, D2, L14, (66.7%). WMUWCC 6 th . Welsh Floodlight Alliance Finalists.
1970/71	Record: P40, W24, D1, L15, (61.0%). WMUWCC 8 th , Welsh Floodlight Alliance Finalists
1971/72 New WRU Cup Compete	Record: P41, W26, D0, L15, (63.4%). WMUWCC 6 th . Welsh Floodlight Alliance Finalists. Club record win, 64 – 6 pts v Penarth. New club season record points total of 960.
1972/73	Record: P42. W21, D3, L18. (53.3%) WMUWCC 11 th . Tour to California, USA.
1973/74 WMT 10 Clubs	Record: P39, W19, D3, L17 (52.56%). WMUWCC 9 th . WMT 7 th , (40.0%) Record win of 84 – 4 pts v San Francisco in October. Coach Denzil Williams resigned to concentrate on playing in final season.



EBBW VALE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1974/75	Record: P41, W27, D1, L13, (66.7%). WMUWCC 4th. WMT.5 th . (52.9%)
1975/76 WMT 15 Clubs	Record: P39, W24, D1, L14, (62.5%). WMUWCC 6th. WMT. 4 th . (66.7%) Schweppes Cup Semi-Finalists. Scrumhalf Steve Lewis scored record 294pts.
1976/77	Record. P38, W30, D1, L7, (80.3%). WMUWCC 3rd. WMT. 3rd. (72.7%) Best season for 15 years. Club lead table until loss of last game v Coventry.
1977/78	Record: P40, W23, D3, L14, (60,5%). WMUWCC 8th. WMT. 4 th . (61.5%) Record post-war home defeat 6 – 32 pts v Llanelli.
1978/79	Record: P44, W30, D1, L13 (69.3%). WMUWCC 6th. WMT. 8 th . (53.8%) Snelling Sevens Finalists.
1979/80 STRATEGIC	Centenary season. Record: P 43, W19, D2, L22. (46.5%). WMUWCC 13th. WMT.10 th . (38.5%) Game v Romania, Lost; 0 – 12 pts. Game v WRU Presidents XV, Won. 19 – 7 pts. Won Centenary Sevens. Tour to California, USA. Four played, four won.
1980/81	Record: P46, W24, D1, L21, (53.2%). WMUWCC 10th. WMT. 11 th . (36.0%) Gareth Howls reached 608 games for club. Charity match v Deri, wing Ian Evans passed overall club try record with 147 tries. Allan Lewis replaced as coach by Chris Padfield. Flanker Clive Burgess voted Welsh Player of Year.



EBBW VALE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1981/82	Record: P41, W18, D2, L21, (48.8%). WMUWCC 12th. WMT. 9 th . (51.7%) Tour to Canada, four played & won.
1982/83	Record: P44, W25, D1, L18, (57.8%). WMUWCC 8th WMT. 10 th . (46.2%) Snelling Sevens Finalists. Tour to Italy, three played but only one won. Coach Chris Padfield finished at end of season.
1983/84 STRATEGIC	Record: P46, W14, D1, L31, (31.9%). Lowest ever position, Club finished 17th (out of 19 teams) in Western Mail Unofficial Welsh Club Championship. WMT. 11 th . (32.1%)
1984/85	Record: P40, W17, D0, L23, (42.5%). WMUWCC 14th. WMT.12 th . (34.6%) Secretary Ivor George reigned before start of season.
1985/86 WMT 16 Clubs	Record: P38, W16, D2, L20, (45.0%). WMUWCC 14th. WMT 11 th . (43.5%)
1986/87 STRATEGIC	Record: P40, W19, D0, L21, (47.5%). WMUWCC 15th. WMT 12 th (40.7%) Tour to Florida, USA, three played & won. Clive Burgess made over 300 appearances for club. Clubhouse badly damaged by fire.
1987/88 WMT 1 Clubs STRATEGIC	Record: P39, W21, D2, L16, (56.1%). WMUWCC 9th. WMT. 9 th . (54.8%) Game v USA, Won. 16 – 14 pts. Full Back Arwel Parry scored a club record 339 pts. New clubhouse opened. Old stand condemned under 1987 Safety of Sports Ground Act.



EBBW VALE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1988/89 WMT 18 Clubs	Record: P43, W20, D1, L22, (47.7%). WMUWCC 11th. WMT.12 th . (43.8%)
1989/90 Last of the WMT,	Record: P43, W15, D1, L27, (36.4%). WMUWCC 13th. Final Whitbread Welsh Merit Table finished 14 th (out of 18 teams). (32.4%). New grandstand opened.
1990/91 STRATEGIC	<u>Worst playing season in club history.</u> Not included in the Top Division of new National League Record: P29, W5, D1, L23. (20.0%) Heineken National League Division One 6 th . (28.6%). (16 th) Club suspended for first two weeks of season for having five players sent off the previous season.
1991/92	Record: P18, W11, D1, L6 (61.1%) National League Division Two 4 th . (14 th) Snelling Sevens Semi-Finalists.
1992/93	Record: P22, W7, D0, L15, (31.8%). NLDT 10th. (22nd)
1993/94	Record: P22, W8, D2, L12, (41.7%) NLDT 9th (21st)
1994/95 STRATEGIC	Record: P22, W16, D1, L5. (73.9%) NLDT 2nd (14th) Promoted to Division One.
1995/96 STRATEGIC	PROFESSIONALISM Record: P22, W11, D0, L11, (50.0%) NLPD 7th Byron Hayword scored record 342 pts for season, 29 pts in one match. Snelling Sevens Semi-Finalists.



EBBW VALE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1996/97	Record: P22, W12, D2, L8, (58.3%) NLPD 7th Swalec Cup Semi-Finalists. Mark Jones, Number 8, took WRU to court over suspension of four weeks for fighting. EVRFC chairman, Malcolm Shepherd called for WRU Chairman, Vernon Pugh, to resign because of continuing confrontation between the Union and clubs.
1997/98	Record: P14, W8, D0, L6, (57.1%) NLPD 4th Swalec Cup Finalists. Court of Appeal decision overturned High Court of previous year so that Mark Jones had to serve 28 days suspension.
1998/99	Record: P20, W12, D1, L7, (61.9%). NLPD 4th Swalec Cup Quarter-Finalists.
1999/00	Record: P22, W12, D0, L10, (54.5%). Welsh/Scottish League 6th. Swalec Cup Semi-Finalists. European Shield Quarter-Finalists.

KEY



Strategic



70%+ Success

Below 50%
Win



EBBW VALE: THE TROPHY YEARS

Season	Win %	Strategic Issues
1932/33		Winner of Ben Francis Cup
1951/52	80.5	Western Mail Unofficial Club Champions
1953/54	76.7	Western Mail Unofficial Club Champions
1956/57	73.8	Western Mail Unofficial Club Champions
1957/58		Winner of Snelling Sevens
1959/60	79.1	Western Mail Unofficial Club Champions
1969/70	66.7	Finalists Welsh Floodlight Alliance Competition
1970/71	61.0	Finalists Welsh Floodlight Alliance Competition
1971/72	63.4	Finalists Welsh Floodlight Alliance Competition
1978/79	69.3	Finalists Snelling Sevens
1982/83	57.8	Finalists Snelling Sevens
1994/95	73.9	Promotion to Premier Division
1997/98	57.1	Finalists Swalec Cup



EBBW VALE: STRATEGIC SEASONS

Season	Win %	Strategic Issues
1880/81		Founding of Club
1895/96		Accepted into membership of WFU
1899/00		Struck off WFU because of defaulting on payments
1902/03		Team Folded
1905/06		Re-applied to join WFU, Refused.
1907/08		Joined Northern Union Rugby League
1919/20		Accepted back into membership of WFU.
1932/33		Won first trophy: Ben Francis Cup.
1940/41	100.0	Undefeated in 30 games. 100% Record
1946/47	70.3	Attracted top English Clubs as opposition. Welsh Clubs were too 'aloof' to play Ebbw Vale.
1948/49	71.1	Welfare Ground was unplayable. Home games played at other local clubs grounds.
1949/50	68.6	Recognised as a First Class Club.
1951/52	80.5	Western Mail Unofficial Club Champions of Wales for the First Time
1953/54	76.7	WMUCC Champions
1956/57	73.8	WMUCC Champions
1959/60	79.1	WMUCC Champions
1979/80	46.5	Centenary Season. Game v Romania
1983/84	31.9	Lowest Position in WMUCC; 17 th out of 19 clubs.
1986/87	47.5	Clubhouse badly damaged through fire.
1987/88	56.1	New clubhouse opened. But old stand condemned.
1989/90	36.4	New grandstand opened.
1990/91	20.0	Worse ever club playing record, 20%. Placed in Division Two of new National Leagues.
1994/95	73.9	Promoted to Top Division of National Leagues.
1995/96	50.0	Professionalism
1997/98	57.1	Change of legal entity to Limited Company.



EBBW VALE: MATCH PERFORMANCES HIGH & LOW PERCENTAGES

Season Over 70% Win	Win %	Season Below 50% Win	Win %
1941/42 (Wartime)	100.0		
1946/47	70.3		
1947/48	71.1		
1948/49	71.1		
1950/51	70.8		
1951/52	80.5		
1953/54	76.7		
1956/57	73.8		
1958/59	72.5		
1959/60	79.1		
1960/61	70.7	1964/65	47.7
1961/62	70.5	1965/66	40.7
1968/69	70.2		
1976/77	80.3	1979/80	46.5
		1981/82	48.8
		1983/84	31.9
		1984/85	42.5
		1985/86	45.0
		1986/87	47.5
		1988/89	47.7
		1989/90	36.4
1994/95	73.9	1990/91	20.0
		1992/93	31.8
		1993/94	41.7

Appendix 3.4e

EBBW VALE RFC COMMITTEE:

EV RFC LTD: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	Ltd Co.	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00
President	Powell J.H	Powell J.H	Powell J.H	<i>Powell J.H</i>		Russell P	Russell P	President	Russell P	Russell P	Russell P
Chairman	<i>Westwood P</i>	Treanor M.	Treanor M	<i>Treanor M</i>	Gardner P	Shepherd M	<i>Shepherd M</i>	Chairman	Russell M	Russell M	Russell M
Vice Chair	<i>Johns D</i>	<i>Morgan A</i>	Lapham C.	Lapham C.	Lapham C.	<i>Johns D</i>	<i>Brennan C</i>	CEO			
Secretary	Jones E	<i>Jones E.</i>	Shorthse J	<i>Shorthse J</i>	George I.	Jones E	<i>Jones E</i>				
Treasurer	<i>Everett J</i>	Hamilton J.	Hamilton J.	<i>Hamilton J.</i>	Lewis S	<i>Lewis S</i>	<i>Harrington P</i>	Fin Direct	Morgan T	Morgan T	Morgan T
Match Sec	<i>Shepherd M</i>	Moseley P.	Moseley P.	<i>Moseley P.</i>	Evans C	<i>Evans C</i>	Taylor D				
Fix Sec	Lapham C	Lapham. C	Lapham. C	Lapham. C	Brennan C	Brennan C	<i>Brennan C</i>	Dir Rugby	Jones L	Jones L	Jones L
As Fix Sec				Brennan C.				Team Man.	Taylor D	Taylor D	Taylor D
Changes	4	2	0	5	0	3	5		0	0	0
Committee	Elect to 92	Elect to 92	Elect to 94	Elect to 94	Elect to 96	Elect to 96	Exec Com				
	Graydon J	Bowker G	Bowker G	Bowker G	Bowker G	<i>Bowker G</i>	<i>Jones E</i>	Directors	Russell M	Russell M	Russell M
	Howell R	Graydon J	Dallimore J	Dallimore J	Dallimore J	<i>Dallimore J</i>	<i>Shepherd M</i>		Hancock S	Hancock S	Hancock S
	Jones J	Howell R	Evans C	Evans C	Evans C	<i>Evans C</i>	<i>Harrington P</i>		Harris R	Harris R	Harris R
	Marshall N	<i>Jones J</i>	Graydon J	<i>Graydon J</i>	Gardner P	<i>Gardner P</i>	<i>Brennan C</i>				Brennan C
	<i>Morgan I</i>	Marshall N	Howell R	Howell R	Haycock K.	Haycock K.	<i>Webber N</i>				Jude B
	Moseley P	Moseley P	Marshall N	<i>Marshall N</i>	Howells R	<i>Morgan T.</i>					
	Newcombe J	<i>Newcombe J</i>	Moseley P	<i>Moseley P</i>	Morgan T.	<i>Rose J</i>	General	Committee			
	Rose J	Rose J	Rose J	Rose J	Rose J	Taylor D					
	<i>Scully B</i>	<i>Wharton S</i>			Taylor D	Williams J	<i>Brennan C</i>	<i>Porter C</i>			
	Westwood P	<i>Westwood P</i>			Williams J		<i>Dentus J</i>	<i>Shepherd M</i>			
Committee	Elect to 91	Elect to 93	Elect to 93	Elect to 95	Elect to 95	Elect to 97	<i>Dix A</i>	<i>Snllgrove D</i>			
	Brennan C	Brennan C	Brennan C	Brennan C	Brennan C	Brennan C	<i>Edwards A</i>	<i>Taylor D</i>			
	Cameron T	Cameron T	Cameron T	Cameron T	Cameron T	Cameron T	<i>Evans A</i>	<i>Taylor R</i>			
	Dentus J	Dentus J	Dentus J	Dentus J	Dentus J	Dentus J	<i>Haycock K</i>	<i>Webber C</i>			
	Johns D	Edwards A	Edwards A	Edwards A	Edwards A	Edwards A	<i>James I</i>	<i>Webber N</i>			
	Lapham C	Johns D	Johns D	<i>Harse K</i>	Johns D	James I	<i>Johns D</i>	<i>Williams J</i>			
	<i>Mitchum P</i>	Jukes R	Jukes R	Johns D	<i>Lapham C</i>	<i>Johns D</i>	<i>Michael I</i>				
	Morgan A	Lapham C	Lapham C	<i>Jukes R</i>	Morgan A	Morgan A	<i>Morgan A</i>				
	Porter C	Morgan A	Morgan A	Lapham C	<i>Rose K</i>	<i>Taylor R</i>	<i>Morgan T</i>				
	<i>Shepherd M</i>	Porter C	<i>Porter C</i>	Morgan A	<i>Treanor M</i>	<i>Webber N</i>	<i>Phillips A</i>				
	Treanor M	Treanor M	Treanor M	Treanor M							
Total Com	20	20	18	18	19	18		20			
Change	4	4	1	5	4	9	All	Change	0	0	0

FILE COPY



**CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION
OF A PRIVATE LIMITED COMPANY**

Company No. 3324272

The Registrar of Companies for England and Wales hereby certifies that

EBBW VALE RUGBY CLUB LIMITED

is this day incorporated under the Companies Act 1985 as a private company and that the company is limited.

Given at Companies House, London, the 20th February 1997



3324272A*

S. Bashar

MISS S. BASHAR

For The Registrar Of Companies



C O M P A N I E S H O U S E

The Companies Acts 1985 and 1989

COMPANY LIMITED BY SHARES

MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION

of

EBBW VALE RUGBY CLUB LIMITED



1. The Company's name is "EBBW VALE RUGBY CLUB LIMITED".
2. The Company's registered office is to be situated in England and Wales.
3. The Company's objects are:-

(A) To carry on the business of proprietors of a rugby club, developers, promoters and managers of clubs, sports arenas or arenas and associated facilities, to promote, practise, play, hold or arrange rugby, football and other athletic sports, games and exercises in all branches thereof, and to promote the practice and play of rugby, football and other games, exercises and athletic sports of every description, and of all other pastimes, recreations, amusements or entertainments, and to buy, sell, exchange or hire all articles, implements, fixtures, apparatus and things used in the playing or practise of such games or pursuits or required therefor, or for the promotion of the objects of the Company, including prizes to be given in any competition or competitions promoted by the Company, and to provide a sports injury clinic or clinics and other associated health and fitness promoting facilities and for these purposes to establish, engage and maintain teams of players, whether composed of amateur or professional players, or partly of one and partly of the other, and to engage all such other persons which may be necessary to carry out the objects, interests and promotions of the Company.

(B) To carry on any other trade or business whatsoever which can, in the opinion of the Board of Directors, be advantageously carried on by the Company in connection with or as ancillary to any of the above businesses or the general business of the Company, or further any of its objects.

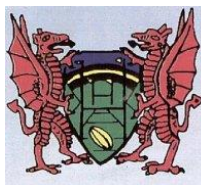
(C) To purchase, take on lease or in exchange, hire or otherwise acquire and hold for any estate or interest any lands, buildings, easements, rights, privileges, concessions, patents, patent rights, licences, secret processes, machinery, plant, stock in trade, and any real or personal property of any kind for such consideration and on such terms as may be considered expedient.

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NEWBRIDGE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

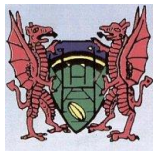
HISTORY



NEWBRIDGE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

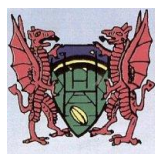
(Source: An Illustrated History of Newbridge R.F.C.
Terry Powell, 1988)

SEASON	EVENT
1888/89 (p.16) STRATEGIC	Newbridge RFC Formed: Due to difficulty of obtaining a suitable ground and acceptable playing facilities the club did not obtain admission to the Welsh Rugby Union until 1911.
1889/90 (p.16)	Club now running 3 teams. Ground move from Dr Richards's field to Ty Hir Farm, then to 'Top Flats.'
1898/99 (p.18)	Club joined Monmouthshire Junior League. Team called Newbridge White Stars. Other teams involved were Newbridge Reserves and Newbridge Harlequins. Tom Banfield "went North" for £30 down and £2 per week.
1901/02 (p.19) STRATEGIC	Newbridge United team formed to play on Wednesdays only. Club moved to 'Showfield' then on to 'Waun Bwdr'.
1903/04 (p.19)	Charity Match played for Mr David Evans raised £22.
1904/05 (p.20)	Monmouthshire County Football Club established. Newbridge & Abercarn supporters brought before magistrates for causing an affray after game. Heavy fines were handed out. AGM of club held at Beaufort Arms Hotel.
1906/07 (p.21)	Record: P8, W2 D2, L4. Pts For, 36, Agst: 40. (40.0%). Newbridge finished season well down Monmouthshire Junior League Table: Charity match held between Morgan's XV and George Bennett's XV.



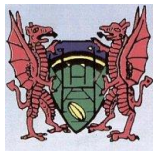
NEWBRIDGE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1911/12 (p.22)	Elected to membership of WRFU. Club AGM elected, President, Vice Presidents (8), Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, 9 Committeemen and team captain.
1912/13 (p.23)	Deputation from club attended monthly meeting of Abercarn District Council. Point made that club had held ground for 12 years and had undertaken all repairs themselves. It was impossible to get gate money from spectators. Council promised to look at acquiring ground and letting it to club.
1913/14 STRATEGIC	Club accepted into Monmouthshire League.
1914/18	The Great War.
1919/20 (p.26)	Record: P24, W2, D5, L17, Pts For: 28, Agst, 130. (24.1%) Newbridge played Newport 1 st XV for first time. Lost 0 – 17 pts.
1922/23 (p.29/30)	At May AGM, at Beaufort Arms, Harry Hoare, Secretary, reported Receipts £129. Expenditure £128, Balance at bank of £1/6/11d. Club Tour at Easter to Cornwall.
1923/24 (p.30) STRATEGIC	Monmouthshire League Runners-Up. Official opening of new ground, Newbridge Welfare Ground with 7,000 capacity, costing £1,500 to date. Intension was to spend a further £7,000 on bowling greens and tennis courts. The game against Newport ended in 3-3pts draw. Newbridge RFC Supporters Club formed at Beaufort Arms.
1924/25 (p.33)	Monmouthshire League 3rd. Miners Betterment Fund allocated £1,500 to the Newbridge Welfare Club for lay out purposes. “The spacious pavilion which had been erected on the Welfare Ground at the cost of several hundred pounds was opened” prior to game v Cross Keys on 28 th February 1925. Newport-Abercarn Company had leased the land for the pitch and pavilion to the Welfare Fund for 99 years at an annual rental of 1s per year. H.S. Coleman, former Newbridge player was killed in a mining accident.



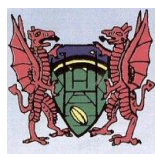
NEWBRIDGE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1925/26 (p.34) TROPHY	Monmouthshire League Champions. At AGM Secretary announced a profit of £22. Income was £139 with best gate v Crumlin of £15.
1926/27 (p. 38/39)	Monmouthshire League Runners-Up. Fire in club in visitors' dressing room. Quickly extinguished. AGM Financial Report; Receipts were £73/3/5d with admission fee of 4d.
1928/29 (p.38/39) STRATEGIC	League Record: P18, W1, D5, L12. (31.6%) AGM Financial Report; Receipts down to £68/14/9d with an admission fee of 6d. Newbridge 2nd XV was formed.
1929/30 (p.41)	Celynen Collieries closed for six months with 1,600 men idle. "Children were crying with cold at Newbridge".
1920-1930 (p.41)	"The success on the field must have helped in no small measure to dispel the gloom and despondency that the depression had brought to the valleys"
1930/31 (p.43) STRATEGIC	Record: P36, W16, D6, L14. (52.4%). Coal Owners brought in new working practice. Men had to work until 2:30pm on Saturdays. This led to decrease in attendances. Game v Ebbw Vale expected to attract £10 gate, only took £1/4s. If maintained Club will have great difficulty in carrying on. At AGM Receipts were announced as £60/9s.
1931/32 (p.45)	Record: P15, W6, D2, L7. (47.1%). Monmouthshire League 4th. Ben Francis Cup Finalists. Former club captain, W. Shipp, (27 years old) died from injuries received as a result of roof fall at South Celynen mine.
1932/33 STRATEGIC	New Boys Club Pavilion opened at cost of £2,500.
1938/39 (p.51)	Record: P42, W15, D7, L20. (52.4%). AGM reported financial deficit of £49/9/3d. Old English Ball was held in aid of Newbridge RFC to raise funds.



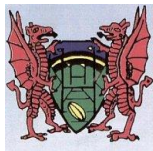
NEWBRIDGE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1940-1945 (p.57) THE WAR YEARS	Season 1943/44, Record: P28, W26, D1, L1 Pts For: 543 Agst: 95. (93.1%) Miners allowed to play for club during war. In March 1945 first win over Cardiff, 16 – 6 pts. Average gates were 4-5000 spectators paying between £60-£70. First regular fixture v Newport RFC. Games organised to raise money for organisations like the Red Cross and YMCA. At its peak there were 1000 members of Supporters Club.
1946/47 (p.68)	Ladies Committee reformed. Two games played on tour to France. Both won.
1947/48 (p.60/63)	<u>Arguably Newbridges best ever season to date.</u> Record: P45, W34, D4, L7. (77.6%). Western Mail Welsh Unofficial Club Championship Runners-Up. (12 ‘First’ class Welsh Clubs). 53 players represented club. First fixture with Llanelli RFC, 7 th February. Three games played on tour to France. Two won. First full Welsh International player, Billy Gore.
1948/49	Record: P41, W34, D3, L4, (84.1%) Western Mail Unofficial Welsh Club Championship Runners-up.
1949/50 (p.64) STRATEGIC	Record: P49, W29, D7, L13, (64.3%) WMUWCC 7th. Fixture list was now full of the best Welsh & English Rugby Clubs with the exception of Cardiff RFC. Newbridge Welfare Committee erected a 1000 sitter stand in front of the Boys Club at cost of £5,000. Ron Coles scored record 28 tries in season.
1950/51	Record: P37, W21, D9, L7. (65.2%) WMUWCC 9th.
1951/52 (p.71) STRATEGIC	Record: P41, W22, D3, L16, (56.8%) WMUWCC 9th. During 50’s ground improvements, changing rooms and stand brought up to first class standard.



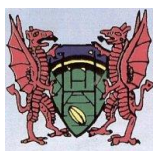
NEWBRIDGE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1953/54 (p.75)	Record: P42, W17, D6, L18. (47.9%) WMUWCC 15th Lowest ebb since attaining 'First' class status.
1954/55 (p.77)	Record: P41, W14, D6, L21 (42.6%) WMUWCC 15th. Club finished bottom but one in Unofficial Welsh Championship. Won only 14 games from 41 matches. Over sixty players turned out for club. Snelling Sevens Semi-Finalists.
1956/57 (p.78)	Record: P42, W23, D4 L15, (58.7%). WMUWCC 11th.
1959/60 (p.83)	Record: P42, W22, D4, L16, (56.5%) WMUWCC 10th. Tour to Cornwall. Two games played and won. First full English International player, Derek Morgan.
1960/61 (p.87) STRATEGIC	Record: P44, W15, D7, L22. (43.1%) WMUWCC 16th. New £11,000 Clubhouse opened.
1961/62 (p.89) STRATEGIC	Record: P43, W20, D2, L21, (48.9%) WMUWCC 15th. Club signed lease for Welfare Ground for 21 years rental of £250 p.a. Game v Derek Morgan International XV, Lost 10 – 54 pts. Tour to Ireland to play two games. One won, one lost.
1962/63 (p.91) STRATEGIC	Record: P40, W24, D2, L14, (61.9%) WMUWCC 9th. Played special fixture against Cardiff RFC to open Sportsman's Club. Won, 6 – 0 pts. Establishment of Newbridge Youth team after Newbridge Boys Club become extinct.
1963/64 (p.95)	Record: P43, W28, D3, L12. (68.9%) Snelling Sevens Semi-Finalists. Tour to West Country, Two played one won. Benefit game Newbridge v International XV to raise funds for former player, Dickie Rossiter, confined to a wheelchair due to mining accident.



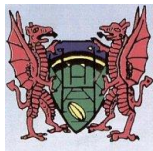
NEWBRIDGE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1964/65 (p.97, & 116/124) TROPHY	<u>NEWBRIDGE'S BEST EVER SEASON.</u> Record: P37, W26, D8, L3, Pts For: 645, Agst: 234. (75.6%). Western Mail Unofficial Welsh Club Champions. National Sevens Finalists.
1965/66 (p.97/105) STRATEGIC	75th Anniversary. Record: P40, W23, D3, L14, (60.5%) Snelling Sevens Semi-Finalists. Clubhouse damaged by fire. Tours to Somerset and France.
1966/67 (p.103)	Record: P38, W28, D4, L6. (76.2%) Western Mail Unofficial Welsh Club Championship Runners-Up. Fixtures against champions Neath cancelled over alleged 'biting' incident. Tour to North of England. Three games played and won.
1967/68 (p.107)	Record: P46, W30, D3, L13. (67.3%) WMUWCC 4th. Teams from Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and France (W1, L1) played during season.
1968/69	Record: P37, W18, D4, L15, (53.6%) WMUWCC 12th.
1969/70 (p.111) STRATEGIC	Record: P43, W21, D1, L21, (50.0%) WMUWCC 12th. National Sevens Finalists. Due to drop in gate receipts and increased expenses, Newbridge 2nd XV was dispensed with. But Newbridge United still continued to exist as independent club. End of season tour to Northern Ireland. Two played both lost.
1971/72 (p.126) New WRU Cup Competetion	Record: P42, W17, D1, L24. (41.9%) WMUWCC 15th. Financial position of the club was not very good. Drive for fund raising. First season of WRU Challenge Cup. Lost in 2 nd Round to Cardiff College of Education. Former player, Brian 'Bomber' Wellington took over as secretary (retired after 25 years service in 1997). Mini Rugby section started.



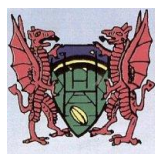
NEWBRIDGE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1972/73 (p.129/131)	Record: P43, W21, D2, L20. (51.1%). WMUWCC 12th. Club getting on to a firmer financial footing through many fund raising events. Club fielded two 1 st XV's v Bath & St. Josephs (cup) on same day. Snelling Sevens Semi-Finalists. Club tour to Cyprus, Three games played and won.
1973/74 (p.134) WMT started 10 Clubs	Record: P40, W13, D2, L25. (35.7%). Finished 17th (out of 18 teams) in WMUWCC. First season of Merit Table (10 teams including Newbridge). Club finished bottom of table. Tour to Cornwall, Three games played, two won. Derek Morgan took over from Arthur Hughes as coach. Bar in clubhouse was being run without a steward but by players on rota.
1974/75 (p.135)	Record: P39, W15, D2, L22, (41.5%). WMUWCC. 14th. WMT. 10th (14.3%) out of 10 clubs. First club to have a manager (sole coach & selector, Dai Harris). Tour to North of England. Two games, 1 won, 1 lost. Tour to Belgium One game, won.
1975/76 (p.138) STRATEGIC	Record: P42, W23, D1, L18. (55.8%). WMUWCC 8th, WMT.11th (45.8%) WMT now 15 Clubs Clubhouse destroyed by explosion.
1976/77 (p.143) STRATEGIC	Record: P41, W15, D0, L26. (36.6%). WMUWCC 15th. WMT 12 th (25.0%) Club facilities were very poor. Llanelli stopped fixtures as a result. Offers from other clubs of help, particularly from Ebbw Vale. Tony Browning scored club record 28 pts in a game. Ken Braddock completed 300 games for club (after 8 years retired). Dai Harris resigned as coach. Tour to Czechoslovakia. Five games played, four won.
1977/78 (p.144)	Record: P41, W17, D2, L22. (44.2%). WMUWCC 13th. WMT12th.(32.0%) New coach appointed, Keith Westwood. Steve Diamond turned professional with Wakefield RLC for £8,000. Tour to Cornwall. Three games all won.



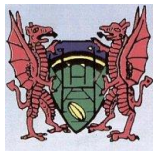
NEWBRIDGE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1978/79 (145/146) STRATEGIC	Record: P32, W16, D0, L16. (50.0%). WMUWCC 12th. WMT 10 th .(50.0%) Decision taken to make the Boys Club the HQ of Newbridge RFC. Training taking place at local comprehensive school and on pitch under car headlights!
1979/80 (p.147)	Record: P37, W23, D1, L13, (63.2%). WMUWCC 8th. WMT. 6 th . (59.3%). National Sevens Semi-Finalists. Tour to Florida, USA, three played & won. Mike Croad took over as chairman (position held until 1993). Work on replacement clubhouse started.
1980/81 (p.150/156)	Record: P40, W21, D2, L17, (54.8%). WMUWCC 9th. WMT. 8 th . (52.0%). Llanelli & Cardiff back on fixture list. Supporters Club re-kindled. Tour to Miami, USA. Three games played all won.
1981/82 (p.174) STRATEGIC	Record: P38, W21, D2, L15, (57.5%) WMUWCC 7th. WMT. 7 th . (56.0%). Schweppes Cup Semi-Finalists. New floodlights completed with game v Crawshays Welsh RFC, Won, 32 – 14 pts. Father, Dennis Hughes, and son, Wyn, played together v Maesteg. First occasion ever for a father & son to play together in first class fixture in Wales. Tour to California, USA. Three games played, all won.
1982/83 (p.178)	Record, P41, W31, D1, L9 (76.82%). Western Mail Unofficial Welsh Club Championship 3rd. WMT. 4 th . (69.2%). Schweppes Cup Semi-Finalists. Tour to West Germany, two played & won
1983/84 (p.180/5) STRATEGIC	Record: P45, W32, D2, L11, (72.3%) WMUWCC 4th. WMT 3rd. (71.4%). Snelling Sevens Semi-Finalists. Newbridge v Japan: Lost. 14 – 19 pts. First time the club had played a touring country on its own. Paul Turner scored record 405 pts. Club scored record 1,129 pts. Club played Public School Wanderers RFC in a 100pt spectacular, (Ref: CN) fund raising game (£2000+) for a young local soldier, Andrew Bull, blinded in a Northern Ireland bomb blast. Tour to Spain. One game played and won.



NEWBRIDGE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1984/85 (p.187)	Record: P42, W26, D0, L16, (61.9%). WMUWCC 7th. WMT. 5 th . (62.5%). Double recorded over Newport plus a win over Cardiff. Snelling Sevens Semi-Finalists. Collections made at matches in aid of local miners' families strike fund. Tour to Spain, two games cancelled.
1985/86 (p.194) STRATEGIC	Record: P41, W16, D5, L20, (45.7%). WMUWCC 13th. WMT. 9 th . (50.0%). WMT now 16 clubs. £25,000 Sponsorship deal with local company AIWA. Tour to Switzerland. Three games played and won. Local rivals, Pontypool, cancelled fixtures with Newbridge over "The Bishop Punching Affair".
1986/87 (p.194)	Record: P41, W20, D1, L20. (50.0%). WMUWCC 13th. WMT. 10 th . (48.0%). Schweppes Cup Semi-Finalists. Chris Padfield now senior coach and Keith Westwood as team manager.
1987/88 WMT 17 Clubs	Record: P39, W21, D0, L18. (53.8%) WMUWCC 11th. WMT. 7 th . (64.0%). Clive Davis took over as coach. Tour to West Country, Two played, one won.
1988/89 STRATEGIC	<u>Centenary Season.</u> Record: P39, W31, D2, L8, (80.5%) Western Mail Unofficial Club Championship 3rd, Whitbread Merit Table 3rd (82.8%). Now 18 clubs. Schweppes Cup Semi-Finalists: Game v Western Samoa, Lost 15 – 16pts. Tour to Canada, three played & won.
1989/90 Final WMUWCC Final WMT.	Record: P38, W24, D0, L14, (63.2%) WMUWCC 7th. Whitbread Merit Table. 4th (72.4%). Full back, David Rees scored record 30 pts in a game. Newbridge v Wales. Lost 4 -25 pts (Ref: CN). Tour to Cyprus, two played & won.



NEWBRIDGE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1990/91 New National Leagues STRATEGIC	Team Placed in Top Division (10 clubs) of new National League. Record: P18, W9, D0, L9, (50.0%) Heineken Premier Division. 7th. Club scored a record 1211 points and record 208 tries in season. Snelling Sevens Winners. Swalec Cup Quarter-Finalists.
1991/92	Record: P18, W10, D0, L8. (55.6%) NLDO 5th
1992/93	Record: P22, W6, D0, L16. (27.3%) NLDO 10th Snelling Sevens Winners Paul Evans quit as coach mid-season.
1993/94	Record: P22, W7, D1, L14, (34.8%) NLDO 8th Swalec Cup Quarter-Finalists.
1994/95	Record: P22, W8, D0, L14, (36.4%) NLDO 9th Heineken National League Division One, 9th. Swalec Cup Quarter Finalists.
1995/96 STRATEGIC	PROFESSIONALISM Record: P22, W9, D0, L13. (40.9%) NLDO 9th Heaviest League Defeat, Lost 7 – 78 pts to Cardiff. Swalec Cup Quarter-Finalists.
1996/97 STRATEGIC	Record: P22, W4, D0, L22. (18.2%). Relegated from National League Division One (12th).
1997/98	Record: P30, W14, D0, L16, (46.7%) NLDO 10th
1998/99	Record: P30, W14, D0, L16. (46.7%). NLDO 10th
1999/00	Record: P30, W14, D2, L14. (50.0%). NLDO 6th

KEY

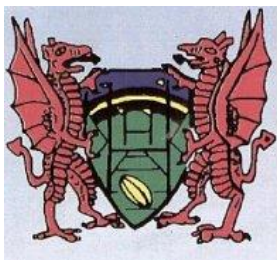


Strategic



70%+ Success

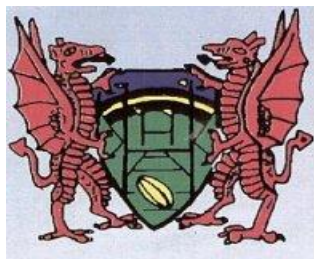

Below 50%
win



NEWBRIDGE RFC

THE TROPHY SEASONS

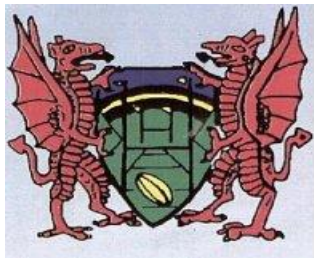
Season	Win %	Trophy
1925/26	-	Monmouthshire League Champions.
1964/65	75.6	Western Mail Unofficial Welsh Club Champions
1990/91	50.0	<i>Snelling 7s Winners</i>
1992/93	27.3	<i>Sne9lling 7s Winners</i>
4 Trophies in 108 seasons.		



NEWBRIDGE RFC

THE STRATEGIC SEASONS

Season	Win %	Strategic Issues
1888/89	-	Club Founded.
1901/02	-	Newbridge United formed to play only on Wednesdays
1911/12	-	Elected to membership of WRFU
1913/14	-	Club accepted into Monmouthshire League
1923/24	-	Official opening of new Welfare ground, cost £1,500.
1924/25	-	New pavilion opened on ground
1928/29	31.6	Newbridge 2 nd XV formed. Total Receipts £68,14s.9d.
1930/31	52.4	Coal Owners new working practices. Receipts £60.9s.
1940/45		War Years but club still played.
1949/50	64.3	1000 seater stand erected costing £5,000.
1951/52	56.8	Ground improvements up to first class standard.
1954/55	42.6	Club finished bottom but one of WMUWCC.
1960/61	43.1	New £11,000 clubhouse opened.
1961/62	48.9	Club signed 21 year lease for ground, rent £250 p.a.
1965/66	60.5	75 th Anniversary. Clubhouse damaged by fire.
1969/70	50.0	Newbridge 2 nd XV abolished due to costs.
1971/72	41.9	Financial position perilous.
1975/76	55.8	Clubhouse destroyed by explosion.
1976/77	36.6	Fixtures affected by lack of clubhouse.
1978/79	50.0	Boys Club made HQ of Newbridge RFC.
1981/82	57.5	New floodlights installed.
1983/84	72.3	Game v Japan. First time to play a touring country.
1985/86	45.7	AIWA £25,000 sponsorship deal.
1988/89	80.5	Centenary Season.
1990/91	50.0	Club placed in Premier Division of new National League.
1996/97	18.2	Club relegated from Top Division.
28 Seasons out of 108 seasons.		



NEWBRIDGE RFC

MATCH PERFORMANCES

HIGH & LOW PERCENTAGES

Season Over 70% Win	Win %	Season Below 50% Win	Win %
1943/44	93.1	1905/06	40.0
		1919/20	24.1
		1928/29	31.6
		1931/32	47.1
		1937/38	37.8
<u>First Class Status</u>		<u>First Class Status</u>	
1947/48	77.6		
1948/49	84.1		
		1953/54	47.9
		1954/55	42.6
1964/65	75.6	1960/61	43.1
1966/67	76.2	1961/62	48.9
		1971/72	41.9
		1973/74	35.7
		1974/75	41.5
		1976/77	36.6
		1977/78	44.2
1982/83	76.8	1985/86	45.7
1983/84	72.3		
1988/89	80.5		
		1992/93	27.3
		1993/94	34.8
		1994/95	36.4
		1995/96	40.9
		1996/97	18.2
7 seasons out of 55 played		1997/98	46.7
		1998/99	46.7
31 seasons with win % between 50.0% & 69.9%		17 seasons out of 55 played (30.9%)	

Appendix 3.5e

NEWBRIDGE RFC COMMITTEE 1990 - 2000

Officers	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000
President	<i>Walker L</i>	Herring J	<i>Herring J</i>	Gregory N	Gregory N	Gregory N	Gregory N	<i>Gregory N</i>	Hughes A	Hughes A
Chairman	Croad M	Croad M	<i>Croad M</i>	Roberts H	Roberts H	<i>Roberts H</i>	Merton P	<i>Merton P</i>	McCarthy I	McCarthy I
Secretary	Wellington B	Wellington B	Wellington B	Wellington B	Wellington B	<i>Wellington B</i>	Patterson G	Patterson G	Patterson G	Patterson G
Treasurer	Hiscott M	Hiscott M	Hiscott M	Hiscott M	Hiscott M	<i>Hiscott M</i>	Gibby D	<i>Gibby D</i>	<i>Gregory N</i>	Jones G
Fix. Sec	Morgan R	Morgan R	Morgan R	Morgan R	Morgan R	<i>Morgan R</i>	Bartley P	Bartley P	Bartley P	Bartley P
Dir of Rugby									Powell A	Powell A
Com Dir									Bartley P	Bartley P
PR/Com Sec									<i>Merton P</i>	Thomas R
Changes	1	0	2	0	0	4	0	3	2	
Committee	Bartley B	Bartley B	Bartley B	Asbridge B	Asbridge B	<i>Ashbridge B</i>	Bartley B	Bartley B	<i>Bartley B</i>	Gregory N
	Burland L	Burland L	Bennett G	Bartley B	Bartley B	Bartley B	Bradford D	<i>Bradford D</i>	Harris B	Griffiths G
	Edwards K	Edwards K	<i>Burland L</i>	Bartley P	Bartley P	<i>Bartley P</i>	Brooks K	<i>Brooks K</i>	Matthews D	Harris B
	Gregory W	Gregory W	<i>Edwards K</i>	<i>Bennett G</i>	Britten P	Bradford D	Harris B	Harris B	Morris B	Matthews D
	Harries B	Harries B	<i>Gregory W</i>	Britten P	Gibby D	<i>Britten P</i>	Isaac J	<i>Isaac J</i>	Pike N	Morris B
	Hughes C	Hughes C	Harries B	<i>Davies R</i>	Griffiths J	<i>Gibby D</i>	Jones B	<i>Jones B</i>	Pugh V	Pike N
	Isaac J	Isaac J	Harries H	Griffiths J	Harries B	Griffiths J	Jones G	<i>Jones G</i>	Way H	Pugh V
	McQuillam R	Jones B	Hughes C	Harries B	<i>Harries B</i>	Matthews D	Matthews D		Way H	
	Morgan P	McQuillam R	Isaac J	Harries H	Harris B	<i>Morgan S</i>	<i>McCarthy I</i>			
	Morris B	Morgan P	Jones B	<i>Harris B</i>	<i>Hughes C</i>	<i>Morham D</i>	Pike N			
	Powell P	Morris B	<i>McQuillam R</i>	Hughes C	Isaac J	Pike N	<i>Powell P</i>			
	Powell T	Powell P	Morgan P	Isaac J	Jones B	Powell P	Pugh V			
	Roberts H	<i>Powell T</i>	<i>Morris B</i>	Jones B	Jones G	Pugh V	Way H			
	Shimwell N	Roberts H	Powell P	Jones G	Matthews D	Way H	<i>Wellington J</i>			
	Taylor R	Shimwell N	<i>Roberts H</i>	Merton P	<i>Merton P</i>	Wellington J				
	Thomas G	Smith B	<i>Shimwell N</i>	<i>Morgan P</i>	<i>Morgan P</i>					
	Thomas R	Taylor R	<i>Smith B</i>	Patterson G	<i>Paterson G</i>					
	<i>Way G</i>	Thomas G	Taylor R	Powell P	Powell P					
	Way H	Thomas R	<i>Thomas G</i>	Pugh P	Pugh V					
	Williams G	Way H	Way H	Taylor R	<i>Taylor R</i>					
		Williams G	<i>Williams G</i>	Way H	Way H					
					Wellington J					
Changes	1	1	10	4	10	6	3	5	1	

KEY Left Position

LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

(Source: The Scarlets: A History of Llanelli RFC. Gareth Hughes 1986)

SEASON	EVENT
1875/76 (p.7) STRATEGIC	Llanelli FC was formed in 1872 as an association football club. Some three years later at a meeting on 11th November 1875, at the Athenaeum, it was decided to form a rugby club. Mr John Rogers of Morewood & Rogers took the chair. with Mr W.Y. Nevill as secretary and Mr Rogers, an old Rugbeian, as captain. First recorded match v Cambrian Club (Swansea) at People's Park. In first season. Record: P5, W0, D4, L1. (44.4%)
1876/77 (p.10)	Record: P3, W1, D1, L1, (50.0%) Game of 18 players per side v Swansea. Death of club captain Arthur Buchanon (24 years old) in gunshot accident.
1877/78 (p.12)	Record: P8, W2, D3, L3. (45.5%) Institution of South Wales Challenge Cup Competition.
1878/79 (p.14) STRATEGIC	Llanelly club had virtually collapsed. Only one game played, & lost, at end of season v Felinfoel.
1879/80 (p.15) STRATEGIC	Record: P7, W4, D0, L3. (57.1%) Stradey cricket ground acquire for practices and matches. Club 'uniform' was blue and white.
1880/81 (p.17) STRATEGIC	Record: P12, W7, D4, L1. (68.8%) In March, 1881, the club was one of the eleven founder members of the WRFU at the Castle Hotel, Neath. Club 'uniform' was now black guernseys and trousers'. Following a cup win over Swansea, the team were drawn through town by a procession of thousands to the Thomas Arms Hotel. First ever game v Cardiff in South Wales Challenge Cup Final. Lost.
1881/82 (p.19)	Record: P12, W8, D2, L2. (71.4%) South Wales Challenge Cup Finalist. (Lost to Newport). Club colours now rose and primrose.



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1882/83 (p.21)	Record: P12, W7, D2, L3 (64.3%). Due to heavy expenses admission charge of 6d 'for all classes'. Previously working men charged 3d and ladies 'free'. First International players, Harry Bowen and Alfred Cattell.
1883/84 (p.23/25) TROPHY	Record: P20, W13, D2, L5. (68.2%) First occasion v Irish XV for Scarlet colours to be worn by team. Crowd of between 2-3,000 watched game v Newport. Winners of South Wales Challenge Cup. 'Never was there a more enthusiastic or more general demonstration at Llanelli'. AGM, duties of captain and chairman separated for first time.
1884/85 (p.26/27)	Record P23, W11, D3, L9. (53.8%). Club membership was 156. First time for Llanelli to entertain an English team (Hull). Game at home v Dewsbury drew 4,000 crowd and gate money of approx. £40. Tour to North of England. Four played & lost.
1885/86 (p.29/30) TROPHY	Record: P28, W14, D8, L6 (64.3%). Winners South Wales Challenge Cup. Town band met team at station and a large touch light parade accompanied players to Thomas Arms Hotel. At AGM membership was given as 259
1886/87 (p.31/32)	Record: P31, W16, D4, L11, (57.1%). South Wales Challenge Cup Finalists. (Lost to Swansea). Financial position of the club was such as called for frequent subscription from players towards buying balls. Six Llanelli players joined Rochdale RLC for £50 each and work. First International played at Stradey, Wales v England, crowd of 8,000.
1887/88 (p.34/35)	Record: P27, W13, D3, L11, (53.3%). End of season tour to North of England. Four played, one won. Captain Harry Bowen said at AGM " <i>Something ought to be done to keep the men in good condition on tour. All ought to be made to sign the pledge, which they ought to keep until all the matches are played</i> ". Withdrawal of South Wales Challenge Cup.



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1888/89 (p.36/38)	Record: P 37, W, 28, D4, L5. (78.0%). Game v New Zealand Maoris, Won 3 – 0pts. . Ground Record, players were presented with a gold medal in recognition. Scrumhalf Gitto Griffiths scored 24 tries.
1889/90 (p.39/40)	Record: P29, W16, D5, L8. (61.8%). Team took two tours to London and to Devon. At AGM, treasurer, William Wilkins said the season would have been more successful “ <i>if the players had stuck together better and quibbled less</i> ”. Plead for players to return to Friday evening meetings to discuss opponents strengths & weaknesses. Chairman pointed out that majority of rivals Swansea’s forwards were abstainers.
1890/91 (p.41/43)	Record: P29, W11, D4, L14 (45.5%). Season described as ‘the gloomiest ever’. No arranged fixtures with either Cardiff or Newport. At AGM treasurer warned of practice of ‘cheating the gate’ where membership cards were thrown over wall to admit other persons. New chairman, Gavin Henry, was elected. Previously he was the first treasurer of the club, and now a member of WRU.
1891/92 (p.44/45)	Record: P34, W19, D6, L9. (62.5%). Fixtures with Cardiff & Newport restored. At AGM secretary commented on improved fixture list and that Blackheath might play at Stradey but hotel costs would be high at £40 or £50. Seven junior teams now playing in Llanelli & District.
1892/93 (p.46/47)	Record: P31, W16, D5, L10 (58.3%). March 1893 formation of Llanelli Association Football Club. Played two home matches at Stradey. Several games played with North of England teams. Tour planned to Ireland cancelled due to financial position of club. Last International played at Stradey v Ireland, crowd of 20,000. Death of businessman and former chairman, Isaiah Bevan, 1884-87, aged 40, due to fatal accident on dock-side at Briton Ferry.



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1893/94 (p.48/49)	Record: P34, W19, D5, L10, (61.5%). Season started with concerns over whether or not club would survive or go to the wall. Distinction of ‘class’ was said to have entered team. D.J. Daniel became first player from club to be sent off. Three match Christmas tour to Devon, all won. At AGM chairman, William Wilkins, was highly critical of players who did not train nor abstain from drink. Such players were not required at Stradey.
1894/95 (p.50/51)	Record: P33, W23, D6, L4, (74.4%). Club was heavily in debt at start of season. But by end of successful season a debt of £400 had been cleared. In January, Cardiff broke off fixtures after ‘roughness’ in first two games played. It was six seasons before fixtures were resumed.
1895/96 (p.52/53)	Record: P32, W23, D4, L5, (75.0%). Sign of the times; Badger & Lloyd, two star three-quarter admitted going to look for ‘honest employment’ in Neath but not to play rugby for that club. Tour to London, two played and won. Seven players selected for Wales revealed strength of club.
1896/97 (p.54/56)	Record: P31, W26, D4, L1, (85.7%). Llanelli’s Most Successful Season to date. Ground Record. Captain Badger put it down to ‘<i>regular training, three nights of the week; Prior to each game, every man was in the pink of condition, and after it we were all as fresh as paint</i>’. The Northern Clubs split meant that new fixtures had to be arranged with Bath & Leicester, the first.
1897/98 (p.57/58)	Record: P36, W22, D6, L8, (66.7%). Ground Record. Owen Badger joined Swinton RLC for £75 down and £2.10s a week. Joined up North by Morgan Bevan, David Davies and International Jack Evans. Tour to Devon, end of season. Two played, one won, one lost.



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1898/99 (p.59/60)	Record: P37, W21, D5, L11, (61.9%) Now a professional, Dai Davies, refused re-instatement by WRU in order to play again for Llanelli. Lost all four games to local rivals, Swansea. Two Llanelli forwards sent off in home fixture in March. Referee needed police protection at end of game. At AGM reported financial position was causing much anxiety, after making loss of £50 over season. No-one stood for post of treasurer. Because of the parlous financial position, the Swansea committee <i>'offered an extra, end-of-season game at St. Helens with Llanelli taking half the gate money'</i>. Gratefully accepted. Steelworks had been idle for year and other works in town idle for nearly two months. This had impacted on club's financial position. R.T. Gabe rejected 'handsome inducements' to go North.
1899/00 (p.61/62)	Record: P33, W21, D2, L10, (65.7%). Resumption of fixtures with Cardiff after six seasons. Tour to Devon in January, both games lost. No player chosen for Wales. Now only two junior teams in Llanelli & District. The Mercury wrote <i>'Some of the committee have lost interest in the game, and it is hoped that the more lethargic members will give way to those who are more enthusiastic'</i>.
1900/01 (p.63/64)	Record: P31, W14, D2, L15 (48.5%). Ground closed by WRU for one month after referee was abused by crowd following loss against Newport. This had a negative effect on the entire season. Two games played in January on Devon Tour. Both lost. Apathy shown by players to training. Crowd attendances had dwindled considerably.
1901/02 (p.65/66)	Record: P31, W21, D3, L7, (70.6%). Crowd of 12,000 for home game v Swansea. Rev. S.B. Williams elected chairman. He condemned the attitude of 'so called Christians' who objected to going to a rugby match. Lack of playing fields in the Llanelli area. Children playing rugby on fields to which they had no right were charged with trespass and fined 1s.



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1902/03 (p.67/68)	Record: P35, W24, D2, L9, (70.3%). Game v Canada, Won 11 - 9pts. Beat Bridgend by record score of 53-0 pts. Willie Arnold scored 32 tries in season. Tom Samuel and Ned Jenkins went North.
1903/04 (p.69/70)	Record: P34, W20, D4, L10, (63.2%). Crowd of 8,000 to see home game v Swansea. Biggest loss to Swansea at St. Helens by 45-3pts. Former players Tom Samuel and White were among the spectators for home game v Pontypridd. <i>Guardian</i> wrote, “Both of them have now returned to Llanelli, and they were the most forlorn pair on the field. Today both of them have ended their football careers. I hope this will act as a warning to all local footballers who may be offered northern gold to leave their native land”.
1904/05 (p.71/72) STRATEGIC	Record: P34, W,21, D4, L9, (65.8%). New Ground opened 15th October with game v Swansea. New Grandstand erected on Pembrey side. Despite this public support was waning. Blame placed on Northern Union taking players from Llanelli. Tour to Ireland in March, Two played, One won, one lost.
1905/06 (p.73/74)	Record: P34, W17, D5, L12, (56.4%). Lost away to Cardiff by 40-0pts. Team did not win away from home until last game of season.
1906/07 (p.75/76)	Record: P34, W25, D2, L7, (75.0%). Unofficial Club Championship Runners-up. Game v South Africa Lost 3 – 16pts in front of a 20,000 crowd. Beat Maesteg by 47-0pts. At the AGM, the club’s patron and former president, Squire of Stradey, C. W. Mansel Lewis ruled ineligible for office as not being an ordinary or honorary member. Re-instated the following year.
1907/08 (p.77/78)	Record: P35, W21, D6, L8, (65.9%). Ground closed for two weeks after spectator abuse against the referee in game v Neath (lost) in October. At the return match in Neath which Llanelli won, players abused by Neath crowd. November Tour to Midlands. Two played, one won, one drawn.



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1908/09 (p.79/80)	Record: P31, W20, D5, L6, (69.4%). Game v Australia Won 8 – 3pts in front of 10,000 crowd. Complaint by second team members about local players being ignored for preferred outsiders. Local club Hospital Rangers approved as Llanelly Seconds.
1909/10 (p.81/82)	Record: P34, W20, D6, L8, (65.0%) Ground Record for Season. Beat Aberavon four times. Neath cancelled fixtures with Llanelly due to bad feeling from previous seasons. Newport also requested to break off fixtures. After game v Newport in November, Llanelly sued South Wales Argus for libel (“<i>Llanelly were the roughest and foulest players in Wales</i>”) and were awarded damages of one farthing. Both sides had to pay costs. Llanelly players who attended courts as witnesses were paid 15s by the club for ‘loss of time’. First game in France v Racing Club, Won,13-3pts. Cost £119.12s 7d. Gate receipts v Bridgend, £17.12s.3d; v Cardiff, £109,14s. and against Newport, £137,15s.
1910/11 (p.83/84)	Record: P34, W17, D4, L13, (55.3%) Last fixture with Newport until 1925, visitors refused to play at Stradey. Two games played by team on same day. AM v Northampton, won, 6-5pts and PM v Leicester, Won, 6-3pts. It was a confused and difficult season with 2nd XV players complaining that outsiders were being preferred to them in the first team. Financial position was precarious; WRU and local breweries asked for financial aid.
1911/12 (p.85/86)	Record: P35, W22, D3, L10, (65.8%) Wings Evan Davies and T.J. Williams signed for Oldham RLC. Northern Union ‘poachers’ were in town looking for other players. New set of jerseys ordered at 28s 6d a dozen. At AGM a debt of £550 was reported.
1912/13 (p.87/88)	Record: P35, W17, D5, L13, (55.0%) Game v South Africa, Lost, 7 – 8pts. New fixtures arranged against Bath, Coventry, Cheltenham and London Welsh. No fixtures with Rhondda clubs. <i>Guardian</i> said, ‘<i>Many have turned their affections to their new love, soccer</i>’. Reported that club debt had grown to over £600.



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1913/14 (p.89/90)	Record: P35, W16, D2, L17, (48.6%). Debt of over £700 prevented club making donation to the war effort. Over 30 players from this season had joined up in the forces. No rent would be charged on ground during duration of war.
<u>1914/18</u>	<u>The Great War.</u> Over 400 players from the Llanelli League, seven teams, joined the colours.
1918/19 (p.96/98)	Record: P17, W13, D1, L3, (77.8%). Fixtures re-commenced in January 1919. Beat New Zealand Army 3-0pts. Beat New Zealand Maoris, 6-0pts in front of 7,000 crowd. Last match against a NZA team raised money for local War Memorial Fund. Inside half, Ike Fowler joined Batley RLC. Albert Jenkins offered £300 to join Wigan RLC, rejected. Capt. S. Clarke who brought colonial teams to Stradey, wiping out debt of over £1,000, made a life member. Credit balance now of £213.
1919/20 (p.99/100) STRATEGIC	Record: P40, W29, D4, L7, (76.7%) Grandstand enlarged by three sections at cost of £310. Crowd of 10,000 watched game at home v Swansea, Won 10-5 pts. Gained double over 'All Whites' with first win at St. Helens for 23 years. Albert Jenkins refused biggest offer ever made to a Welsh player of £375 to go North and join Wigan RLC.
1920/21 (p.101/103)	Record: P46, W31, D4, L11, (70.0%). Formation of Supporters Club for 2s membership. International wing, Bryn Williams joined Batley RLC for £400 and two outside halves, Stan Williams and W.H. Charles joined Huddersfield (£500) and Hull RLC respectively. Albert Jenkins offered a record £1,000 to join Batley RLC, rejected. Inauguration of the 'Rag Doll' tradition with Bath in March. Club's bank manager approached for £800 overdraft. Chairman explained that unemployment in town had left club in difficulties.



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1921/22 (p.104/106)	Record: P48, W28, D4, L16, (61.5%) Wing Frank Evans and scrumhalf, Billo Rees joined Swinton RLC. Star forward, Edgar Morgan, joined Hull RLC because he had been out of work for so many months that he succumbed to the tempting offer. <i>Guardian</i> put team's games lost down to a 'lack of training'. At AGM current secretary, E.E. Bailey, who had been in post since 1905 was defeated by W.G. Edmunds for the office. Committee proposed to WRU that Welsh rugby be re-structured in to three divisions, with promotion and relegation each season. St. John's Ambulance invited for first time to attend games at Stradey.
1922/23 (p.107/109)	Record: P45, W31, D5, L9, (72.0%%). Record win v Coventry, 47-0pts. Star International, Albert Jenkins, applied to join Swansea. The 'All Whites' committee, after careful consideration, regretted they were unable to accept Jenkins's offer. Swansea said they did not wish to disturb good feelings that existed between the two clubs. Opening of soccer ground in town, Stebonheath Park. Death of one of club founders, W. Y.Neville. New Dock Stars agreed to take over Llanelli Seconds fixtures.
1923/24 (p.110/111)	Record: P50, W33, D6, L11, (69.6%%) Team amassed a record total of 573 points. Leicester team had to borrow players from Swansea, Neath & Aberavon after arriving at Stradey with only 7 players. Forward Claude Ellery joined Hull RLC. Death of founder chairman, J.H. Rogers, aged 76years old. Tour to Midlands in October. Two played, two won.
1924/25 (p.112/114)	Record: P49, W33, D2, L14, (68.6%%) Game v New Zealand Lost 3 – 8pts before crowd of 22,000 with two temporary stands erected. WRU wanted to move fixture to Swansea but the club refused. Extra game played away to Cardiff to raise funds for both clubs. W.J. Davies joined Hull RLC for £400 in January. Appeal made to patrons, vice-presidents and local tradesmen for funds to pay for ground improvements. <i>Guardian</i> commented that "Soccer clubs are certainly more business-like than rugby organisations".



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1925/26 (p. 115/117)	Record: P46, W35, D1, L10, (76.6%%) Ground Record first time since 1890s. Blazers presented to all players. Renewal of fixtures with Newport after 14 years. First game away in September saw 3,000 Llanelli supporters travel to Rodney Parade. The Mayor of Newport reported that there had not been one incident of trouble surrounding the game. Club beat Swansea four times during the season for first time. Wing Elwyn Evans joined Broughton Rangers RLC. First press telephone installed at Stradey. William Wilkins, former chairman, secretary, treasurer, died.
1926/27 (p.118/119)	Record: P46, W34, D1, L11, (74.5%) Game v New Zealand Maoris Won 3 – 0pts. Club beat Neath four times, Cardiff and Swansea three times during the season First visit to Stradey by Newport since 1911. Drawn game. Club had been pressing Stradey Estate to find cost of buying ground.
1927/28 (p.120/121) TROPHY	Record: P43, W34, D2, L7, (80.0%) Unofficial Welsh Club Champions. Game v New South Wales Lost 14 – 24pts. Club beat Cardiff four times during season. Seven players in same Welsh team v Ireland. Wing W.J. Davies signed for Batley RLC in May.
1928/29 (p.122/124)	Record: P44, W21, D6, L17, (54.0%). Heaviest defeat since First World War, away to Neath, Lost 0-29pts. Tour to Ireland, Two played, one won, one drawn. Star International, Albert Jenkins retired. Part of grandstand at Stradey blown away in gale in November.
1929/30 (p.125/126)	Record: P41, W27, D3, L11, (68.2%). Coventry broke off fixtures after home game v Llanelli alleging rough play. Wing-forward, Ivor Jones, toured with British Lions to Australia and NZ. Death of Ben Jones, International, committeeman and former secretary aged 57 years.



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1930/31 (p.127/128) TROPHY	Record: P44, W30, D7, L7 (72.5%) Unofficial Welsh Club Champions. Ground Record. First 'double' over Newport since 1904. Deaths of C.W. Mansel-Lewis, Squire of Stradey, club's first president, aged 86 years. Another president, David John, aged 71 yrs passed away. Also former secretary, E.E. Bailey, 57 yrs. At AGM, chairman, Dick Edmunds, said " <i>I do not glory in the fact at all because championship competition is not conducive to the best type of rugby, but we certainly have the best team in Wales</i> ".
1931/32 (p.129/130) STRATEGIC	Record: P49, W32, D5, L12, (68.5%). Game v South Africa Lost 0 – 9pts in front of 19,000 crowd. Club paid £1,000 for new stand, borrowing £600 from WRU. Two games v International XVs. First, to raise funds for Llanelli General Hospital and second, to help cost of new grandstand.
1932/33 (p.131/132) TROPHY	Record: P42, W32, D2, L8 (77.3%). Unofficial Welsh Club Champions. Club beat Swansea & Neath four times each during the season. Oxford University arrived by plane landed behind grandstand! AGM. President Frank J Rees, said to make a profit of over £500 in such difficult economic times was phenomenal.
1933/34 (p.133/134)	Record: P45, W35, D3, L7, (79.2%). Ground Record. Club beat Cardiff four times during the season. Home game v Neath attracted 9,000 crowd. Home game v Newport in May to raise funds for Llanelli Cricket Club. President Frank Rees died aged 55 years. Proposed move to Stebonheath Park hit setback when WRU said unable to offer any financial assistance.
1934/35 (p.135/136)	Record: P46, W28, D3, L15, (63.3%). Installation of electric lights for training. Fixtures with Leicester resumed after nine seasons absence. Club experimented with 19 different combinations at half back. Scrumhalf, Ben Jones, signed for St. Helens RLC. Record win v Bath, 42-0pts. Concerns at reports that Stradey Park may become housing development. Committee met landlord, the Squire of Stradey who dismissed concerns



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1935/36 (p.137/138) STRATEGIC	Record: P46, W31, D2, L13, (68.8%). Diamond Jubilee Celebrations including a dinner held in May at the Stepney Hotel. Game v New Zealand Lost 8 – 16pts. Covering of Supporters Stand at Pwll End completed at cost of £400. Swansea asked Llanelli to cancel last two fixtures of season. Declined but both fixtures were ill-tempered affairs. Former treasurer, John G Lewis, died aged 75 years.
1936/37 (p.139/140)	Record: P50, W37, D4, L9, (75.9%). Unofficial Welsh Club Championship Runners-up. Fixtures with Swansea were cancelled for remainder of this and following season after game at St. Helens in which ‘ <i>many discreditable happenings took place</i> ’. The mayors of both towns tried to resolve the matter, but unsuccessfully. <i>Guardian</i> declared that “ <i>The rugby code cannot afford to have two of Wales’s most famous clubs at loggerheads in this way</i> ”. Young outside half, Melville de Lloyd joined Warrington RLC and scrumhalf Ray Smith joined Oldham RLC. At the end of the season the <i>Mercury</i> commented that “ <i>The Scarlets enjoyed the distinction of commanding a bigger following in their away matches than any other team in the Principality</i> ”.
1937/38 (p.141/142)	Record: P43, W29, D2, L12, (68.9%). Club recorded ‘double’ over Newport including best ever away win by 19-6 pts. Fielded five teenagers in three-quarter line-up. Centre Glyn Elias lost to Halifax RLC; Centre Ted Ward and wing-forward, Jackie Bowen joined Wigan RLC. W.H. Clement and Elvet Jones selected for Lions tour to SA. BBC proposed broadcasting 2 nd half of game v Cardiff. Rejected.
1938/39 (p.143/145)	Record: P45, W24, D7, L14, (59.6%). Fixtures resumed with Swansea. Crowd of 15,000 at Llanelli AFC ground to watch R.L. International. <i>Guardian</i> complained that ‘ <i>few players were turning up for training</i> ’. Deaths occurred of Owain Badger, 67; Gethin Thomas, 41; Rev. C. B. Nicholl, 69. Fullback, Glyn Thomas joined Oldham RLC for £550. Centre Gareth Price also went North. Negotiations between Llanelli Borough Council and Squire of Stradey to purchase ground for £20,000 stalled.



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1939/45	The War
1945/46 (p.155/156)	Record: P38, W17, D2, L19, (47.5 %) Game v New Zealand Army Lost 8 – 16pts. Crowd of 14,000+. Club appealed to supporters for any spare clothing coupons to buy kit. Wing-forward Hagen Evans first Llanelli player to be sent off post war. <i>Mercury</i> wrote “the committee should take the bold line of inviting a man they know to possess the desired qualities of ability and personality to undertake the instruction of the team in a methodical and progressive way”. Former captain, F.L. Margrave, died aged 87 yrs. And former chairman, T.R. Mills died aged 73 yrs.
1946/47 (p.157/158)	Record: P41, W32, D4, L5 (80.0%). Western Mail Unofficial Welsh Club Championship Runners-up. Five players, including four forwards, went North during season. Took Swansea’s unbeaten record at Stradey before crowd of 15,000. Took Cardiff’s ground record in April before crowd of 20,000. Six Llanelli players represented Wales.
1947/48 (p.159/160)	Record: P44, W21, D4, L19, (52.1%) WMUWCC. 12th Game v Australia Lost 4 – 6pts. Llanelli played Newbridge for first time. Club only scored double figures in 9 out of 44 games. Reduced charge for admission for the unemployed. Complaints from spectators about unclean condition of stand. Club had 700 members.
1948/49 (p.161/162)	Record: P43, W18, D1, L24, (43.2%) WMUWCC. 11th Lowest success percentage of club to date. New scrumhalf, Joe Silva, joined Oldham RLC for £750. Shortage of funds; committee considered whether or not to provide hospitality for visiting teams. Current players club ties 5s. Past players club ties 9s. Fee of £5 received from BBC for commentary of game v Bridgend.



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1949/50 (p.163/164)	Record: P41, W18, D7, L16, (52.1%) WMUWCC. 12th Benefit match for Llanelli legend, Albert Jenkins who was unable to work because of illness. Crowd of 9,000 turned out in tribute. Club decided to meet WWRU over difficulties in recruiting players from second-class clubs. Club blazer badge designed by local artist. Thirty games needed to qualify. The need for economies in club was still paramount.
1950/51 (p.165/166)	Record: P37, W16, D6, L15, (51.2%) WMUWCC. 13th Club took Neath's unbeaten ground record in March. First win at the Gnoll since the war. Supporters baffled by inconsistency of the team over the season. British Lion, Lewis Jones turned down £5,000 offer to go North.
1951/52 (p.167/168) STRATEGIC	Record: P42, W24, D3, L15, (60.0%) WMUWCC. 8th Game v South Africa Lost 11 – 20pts. Club purchased Stradey Park for a 'bargain' £6,500. Club established a Development Appeal to raise £15,000. Future club President, Joseph Rolfe, lead way with £2,000 donation.
1952/53 (p.169/170)	Record: P45, W27, D5, L13, (64.0%) Star player, Lewis Jones, signed for Leeds RLC for £6,000. Later in season young forward, Roy Williams, signed for Wigan RLC. Ebbw Vale played at Stradey for first time. Squire of Stradey, C.R. Mansel Lewis retired as President.
1953/54 (p.171/172)	Record: P45, W32, D2, L11, (72.3%) WMUWCC 3rd. Game v New Zealand. Lost 3 – 17pts. Llanelli's greatest-ever rugby hero, Albert Jenkins, died. Death also, at 78 yrs, of only clergyman to hold office at club, S. B. Williams, Vicar of Laugharne. New terracing opened at cost of £5,000. Best season for years.
1954/55 (p.173/174)	Record: P38, W26, D2, L10, (70.0%) WMUWCC 3rd. Lost only one home game v Cardiff but it generated a club record receipts of £604,12s.6d. Two games v International XVs to raise funds for Development Programme. Of 97 tries scored, 82 were gained by three quarters.



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1955/56 (p.175/176)	Record: P47, W31, D2, L14, (67.3%) WMUWCC 4th. Game v International XV to raise funds for Development Programme. First game v Leicester at Stradey for 30 years. Start of new £15,000 grandstand made in June. WRU had given interest free loan of £3,000 with a further £2,000 to follow.
1956/57 (p.177/179) STRATEGIC	Record: P46, W32, D2, L12, (70.8%) WMUWCC 5th New grandstand opened with match v Combined Oxford/Cambridge Universities in April. Game v South African Universities ended 11-11 draw. Young centre Wynford Phillips signed for Halifax RLC for £3,000. Record club profit of £4,166.
1957/58 (p.180/181) STRATEGIC	Record: P50, W31, D2, L17, (63.5%) Game v Australia. Lost. 5 – 9pts. Club first British team to play in Russia. Three games, W1, D1.L1. Six Llanelli players in Welsh Team v Australia. Club's first taste of floodlight rugby at Newport. Club treasurer, Ron Harries retired after ten years. Reported that membership was now a record 1,783 members. Work started on new £4,500 clubhouse. International Terry Davies offered £8,000 from Leeds RLC and £9,000 from Huddersfield RLC to go North. Both rejected.
1958/59 (p.182/183) STRATEGIC	Record: P45, W25, D5, L15, (60.0%) Official opening of club-house and dining room at Stradey in March with game by first time visitors, Harlequins. W 6-0 pts. Captain Howard Davies suspended for six weeks by WRU for abuse made to referee in game v Northampton.
1959/60 (p.184/185)	Record: P46, W23, D4, L19 (54.0%) Snelling Sevens Winners for first time at Cardiff. Club President, Joseph Rolfe, died in December and was replaced by W. John Thomas, a local businessman. New floodlights, costing £4,000, would be installed before start of next season. Club withdrew from agreed trip to Canada over £6,000 costs. R.H. Williams retired after gaining a club record 23 International caps.



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1960/61 (p.186/188) STRATEGIC	Record: P50, W22, D6, L22, (50.0%) WMUWCC 13th. Game v South Africa. Lost. 0 – 21pts. Record, 22,000 crowd. New floodlights in use against Pontypool in October allowing club to play a record number of games in a season. Fylde flew from Blackpool to Swansea for their fixture in Dec. Ray Williams, 1946-61, became the first player to be made a life member immediately on his retirement. Club Patron & former President C.R. Mansel Lewis died, 80 yrs.
1961/62 (p.189/190)	Record: P51, W28, D5, L18, (58.9%) WMUWCC 10th. Opening of the Supporters Club stand at Pwll end of ground with game v International XV, in September, lost 14 – 22 pts. Club Chairman, Elvet Jones, said <i>“the Scarlets had played attractive rugby at a time when there were so many complaints of the ‘dour’ game being played throughout the country”</i> .
1962/63 (p.191/192)	Record: P50, W23, D4, L23, (50.0%) WMUWCC 14th. Snelling Sevens Semi-Finalists. Moseley visited Stradey for first time since 1895 but lost 0 - 13 pts. No home games played in January because of frost. Club launched development appeal for £10,000 for new dressing rooms. The Star commented that <i>“The Scarlets lack of reserve strength has been forcibly emphasised this season. Unless something is done they are going to be the chopping-blocks for most Welsh clubs for some time to come”</i> .
1963/64 (p.193/194)	Record: P46, W19, D7, L20, (49.1%) Game v New Zealand. Lost. 8 – 22pts. Prop John Warlow joined St. Helens RLC. Terry Price turned down £4,000 offer from Wigan RLC. Future Internationals and British Lions, Barry John made debut against Moseley, and Gerald Davies debuted against Bristol Club toured West Germany, three played and all won.
1964/65 (p.195/196)	Record: P55, W27, D6, L22, (54.1%) WMUWCC 7th. Biggest loss in club history, 8 – 50 pts to Harlequins away. Inaugural Floodlight Alliance Trophy Finalists. Best performance was in October, taking Neath’s 34 game ground record. Elvet Jones said at AGM that he would urge the committee to form a second XV to bridge the gap between youth and senior rugby.



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1965/66 (p.197/198) STRATEGIC	Record: P46, W28, D2, L16, (62.5%) Opening of new dressing-rooms and dining hall, costing £21,000. First visit of Barbarians to mark opening, they won 28 – 15 pts. Future committeeman and chairman, Stuart Gallacher, sent off against Neath at Stradey. Club gained four victories over Swansea. Delme Thomas selected for Lions tour to Australasia. Chairman Elvet Jones said at AGM that TV was becoming a ‘scourge’ and if coverage of club games was extended then ‘one armed bandits’ would have to subsidise the game. Membership was dropping year after year, and the drift from the club was very discouraging.
1966/67 (p.199/200)	Record: P49, W24, D6, L19, (54.5%) WMUWCC 11th. Game v Australia. Won. 11 – 0pts. Phil Bennett played first game for club v Swansea, away, in November. Introduction of coaching and squad training was a major innovation. Ieuan Evans appointed coach; Tom Hudson, Olympian, appointed fitness trainer; Club toured Italy in May. Three games played and all won. International Terry Price joined Bradford Northern RLC for £10,000. Death of Dr Noel Rees, former chairman when Stradey was bought.
1967/68 (p.201/202) TROPHY	Record: P46, W34, D1, L11, (74.5%) Western Mail Unofficial Welsh Club Champions. (1st since 1932/33) Floodlight Alliance Trophy Winners. (beating Bridgend in replay) National Sevens Winners. Stuart Gallacher appointed as youngest ever club captain. Derek Quinnell’s first game against UAU. Delme Thomas chosen to tour South Africa with British Lions. Phil Bennett and Brian Butler turned down offers to join Halifax RLC Death of former International R.T. Gabe at age of 87 years.



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1968/69 (p.203/204) TROPHY	Record: P45, W33, D2, L10, (74.5%) WMUWCC 3rd. Floodlight Alliance Trophy Winners (2nd year) Snelling Sevens Finalists; National Sevens Finalists Club gained four victories over Neath. Biggest win over Swansea 34 – 3 pts. Handel Rogers resigned as secretary, replaced by Ken Jones. In May, club undertook a ‘missionary’ tour to North Wales. Ivor Jones elected President of the WRU.
1969/70 (p.205/206) TROPHY	Record: P43, W30, D2, L11, (71.1%) WMUWCC 4th. Game v South Africa. Lost. 9 – 10pts. Floodlight Alliance Trophy Winners (3rd year) Twickenham Sevens Winners. Snelling Sevens Finalists; Gala Sevens Finalists. Carwyn James succeeded Ieuan Evans as coach. First victory at Newport since 1954. New scoreboard presented to club by President, W. John Thomas. Tom Hudson resigned after three seasons as fitness coach. In June both Stuart Gallacher and Brian Butler joined Bradford Northern RLC for £7,000 and £5,000 respectively.
1970/71 (p.207/208) TROPHY & STRATEGIC	Record: P41, W24, D5, L12, (63.0%) WMUWCC 6th. Snelling Sevens Winners Floodlight Alliance Trophy Winners (4th year) A £10,000 extension to grandstand and enclosure increased seating to 2,650. Charity match for local player, Ken Jones, who had died playing in match; funds raised from game v Welsh XV. Coach, Carwyn James, blamed the decline of team performances on too many games. <i>“We are expecting more from our amateur players than Manchester United or Leeds expect from their professionals”</i> .
1971/72 (p.209/210) TROPHY	Record. P41, W32, D1, L8 (78.6%). Western Mail Unofficial Championship Runners-Up. Whitbread Merit Table Runners-up. National Sevens Winners. (Crowd of only 6,000). Floodlight Alliance Trophy Winners (5th year) Schweppes Cup Finalists. . First season of Merit Table (10 teams including Llanelli). Tour to South Africa in June six played, three won and lost. Wing Roy Mathias scored record 36 tries then joined St. Helens for £8,000.



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1972/73 (p.211/213) TROPHY	<u>Centenary Season.</u> Record: P38, W24, D0, L14, (63.2%) WMUWCC 5th. Schweppes Cup Winners. Last Floodlight Alliance Trophy Winners (for 6th year running) Snelling Sevens Winners. Game v New Zealand. Won. 9 – 3pts. Second visit of Barbarians to Stradey. Club won 33 – 17 pts. Club scored 1000pts for first time. Wing Andy Hill scored a record 39 tries in a season. Ray Hopkins, scrumhalf, joined Swinton RLC for £7,000 but Tommy David turned down £8,000 from same club. Phil Bennett turned down £10,000 offer from Leigh RLC. Banquet for 600 guests in marquee on Stradey park. Tour to Canada, seven played & won.
1973/74 (p.214/216) TROPHY	Record: P41, W32, D1, L8, (78.6%). Western Mail Unofficial Welsh Club Champions. Boxing day game v London Welsh crowd 16,000, receipts £2,500. Whitbread Merit Table Runner-Up. (68.8%) Schweppes Cup Winners. Tour to Canada, seven played and won. Norman Gale replaced Carwyn James as coach for a season. First of Phil Bennett's six consecutive seasons as captain. Delme Thomas awarded MBE.
1974/75 (p.217/218) TROPHY & STRATEGIC	Record: P50, W36, D4, L10, (74.1%). WMUWCC 3rd. WMT. 6th. (46.7%) Schweppes Cup Winners. Game v Tonga. Won. 24 – 15pts. Centenary Gates officially opened at Stradey. (costing £9,000) and presented by four local authorities. Phil Bennett made redundant at Dupont Steelworks reported to be emigrating to South Africa to play. Tom David returned to Pontypridd. Carwyn James returned as coach. Wing J.J. Williams turned down £15,000 offer from Widnes RLC. No.8 Phil Davies died in a car crash after moving to Swansea.
1975/76 (p.219/220) TROPHY	Record: P39, W27, D1, L11, (70.0%) WMUWCC 4th. WMT. 5th. (63.2%) Game v Australia. Draw. 28 – 28pts. Schweppes Cup Winners (4th Successive Win). Handel Rogers elected President of WRU. Carwyn James left as coach leaving Norman Gale in control.



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1976/77 (p.221/222) TROPHY & STRATEGIC	Record, P37, W30, D0, L7, (81.1%). Western Mail Unofficial Welsh Club Champions. WMT. 4th. (68.4%) Phil Bennett captained Wales & British Lions. Also voted Welsh Player of Year. First time loss outside a cup final; to Cardiff by 15-25 pts (Ref: CN) Sponsorship brand on jersey for first time. Many supporters dismayed by this action. Tour in June to West Germany, two played and won.
1977/78 (p.223/224) STRATEGIC	Record: P37, W23, D1, L13, (63.2%) WMUWCC 6th. WMT. 5 th . (59.1%) Phil Bennett awarded OBE. He retired from International rugby after 29 caps for Wales and eight appearances for the British Lions. New floodlights installed at Stradey at a cost of £42,000. Norman Gale resigned as coach.
1978/79 (p.225/227)	Record: P39, W25, D2, L12, (65.9%) WMUWCC 7th. WMT. 6 th . (57.1%) Snelling Sevens Winners. Schweppes Cup Semi-Finalists. National Sevens Runners-Up. New coach John Maclean replaced Norman Gale. Games v Rovigo (Italy), B.A.T.S. (USA), Taranaki (NZ). All won. Richmond broke off fixtures with Llanelli over 'Ralston' stamping affair. Long serving wing, Andy Hill, retired after 454 games, 310 tries and 2,577 points.
1979/80 (p.228/229) STRATEGIC	Record: P44, W27, D0, L17 (61.36%). WMUWCC 7th. WMT. 5 th . (68.2%) Game v South African Barbarians, Lost 6 – 15 pts. (ref: CN). Biggest ever club victory 106-6 against South Wales Police. Pre-season club tour to South Africa, six played, four won. Clive Griffiths joined St. Helens RLC for reported £30,000. Club disbanded Athletic XV because of difficulties in raising side. Secretary, Ken Jones, bemoaned the worst season since the 1960s, <i>"If we are to remain a force in Welsh rugby, then dedication, application and discipline are required from all concerned"</i> . Treasurer announced a club record income of £103,000.



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1980/81 (p.230/231)	Record: P41, W26, D1, L14, (64.3%) WMUWCC 6th. WMT, 5th. (63.6%) Game v New Zealand. Lost. 10 – 16pts. Schweppes Cup Semi-Finalists. Snelling Sevens Semi-Finalists. International wing, JJ Williams, retired after 205 games & 159 tries. Phil Bennett retired after 412 games, 132 tries and 2,532 pts. He had captained club, country and British Lions. Carwyn James elected new club President.
1981/82 (p.232/233)	Record: P38, W26, D3, L9, (70.7%) WMUWCC 5th. Whitbread Welsh Merit Table Runners-Up. (77.3%). Benefit for Roger Thomas of Tenby seriously injured in schoolboy match. British Lion, Wales & Llanelli great, Derek Quinnell, retired after 366 appearances, twenty-three Welsh caps and three Lions tours. Long serving physiotherapist collapsed and died at Christmas game v London Welsh (Ref: CN). Biggest scores ever against Newport and Bath. End of season tour to Spain, two played, one won, one lost. Both coaches resigned at end of season. John Maclean joined committee. New captain was second row, Phil May.
1982/83 (p.234/235)	Record: P40, 28, D3, L9. (73.8%). WMUWCC 4th. WMT, 6th. (59.1%) Game v New Zealand Maoris. Won. 16 – 9pts. (TJ:CN) Gareth Jenkins and Allan Lewis took over as club coaches. Sudden death of club President, Carwyn James, aged 53 yrs. Legendary former captain in '20s & '30s, Ivor Jones, died Tour to Canada, four played, three won. Resignation, after ten years, of treasurer Rowland Hughes, in August after disagreement with the committee over club's financial policy. New treasurer was former International referee, Gwynne Walters.
1983/84 (p.236/237)	Record: P43, W25, D1, L17, (59.1%) WMUWCC 7th. WMT, 6th. (55.0%) Schweppes Cup Semi-Finalists. Crowd and atmosphere of 'touring side' in cup game v Pontypool. Death of '20s legendary wing, Ernie Finch, aged 84 yrs. Club Chairman, Gareth Thomas, said wheels were in motion to recruit new players. <i>"We have been also rans and bridesmaids since the 1970s and haven't had a say in any honours"</i>.



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1984/85 (p.238/239) TROPHY	Record: P38, W25, D0, L13, (65.8%) WMUWCC 6th. WMT, 4 th . (66.7%) Game v Australia. Won. 19 – 16pts. Schweppes Cup Winners. Ray Gravell's career ended after 485 games for Llanelli. Alun Thomas became President of the WRU.
1985/86 (p.240/242)	Record: P42, W23, D3, L16, (57.8%) WMUWCC 9th WMT, 8 th . (50.0%) Game v Fiji. Won. 31 – 28pts. (after being 0-25pts down). Lost first Carwyn James Memorial game v Queensland, 12-13 pts. Crowd of over 15,000 saw cup game v Pontpool. Won 27-6 pts. Biggest win over Bristol 58-10, including 11 tries. Gary Pearce scored a club record 420 pts.
1986/87	Record: P41, W24, D2, L15, (60.1%) WMUWCC 7th. WMT, 5 th . (60.0%) Club toured Queensland & Fiji. Four played, three won. Gary Pearce joined Hull RLC for £80,000.
1987/88 TROPHY	Record: P44, W29, D1, L14, (66.7%) WMUWCC 4th WMT, 8 th . (57.1%) Schweppes Cup Winners. Snelling Sevens Semi-Finalists. Club record 1434 pts in season and record 239 tries. Wing Carwyn Davies scored record 45 tries.
988/89 TROPHY	Record: P41, W34, D0, L7 (82.9%). Runners-Up in Western Mail Unofficial Welsh Club Championship. Whitbread Welsh Merit Table Winners. (92.0%) Snelling Sevens Winners. Schweppes Cup Finalists. Phil Davies voted Welsh Player of the Year.
1989/90 Final WMUWCC Last of the WMT	Record: P43, W35, D0, L8, (81.4%) Western Mail Unofficial Welsh Club Championship Runner-Up. Team scored a club record 1,666 pts. Whitbread Welsh Merit Table Runners-Up. (82.6%) Snelling Sevens Semi-Finalists. Game v New Zealand, Lost 0 – 11pts. Tour to California, USA. Three played, two won. drew one.



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1990/91 New National Leagues. TROPHY & STRATEGIC	Team Placed in Top Division (10 clubs) of new National League. Record: P18, W12, D1, L5, (68.4%) Heineken WRU National League Premier Division Runner-Up. Schweppes Cup Winners, Club spent £350,000 on new grandstand.
1991/92 TROPHY	Record: P18, W11, D1, L6, (63.2%) Heineken WRU National League Division One Runners Up. Schweppes Cup Winners. Snelling Sevens Semi-Finalists.
1992/93 TROPHY	<u>A fantastic season winning:</u> Record: P22, W19, D1, L2, (87.0%) Heineken WRU National League Division One Champions, Schweppes WRU Cup Winners, Defeating the World Champions, Australia 13 – 9 pts. Awarded the “Best Team in Britain” Trophy, and Best Match programme in Britain. Wing, Ieuan Evans, voted Welsh Player of the Year.
1993/94	Record: P22, W13, D1, L8, (60.9%) NLDO 5th Swalec Cup Finalists.
1994/95	Record: P22, W10, D0, L12, (45.5%) NLDO 7 th . Swalec Cup Semi-Finalists. Scott Quinnell, aged 22, joined Wigan RLC for £400,000.
1995/96 STRATEGIC	PROFESSIONALISM Record: P22, W15, D0, L7, (68.2%) Nat. League Prem. Div. 4 th . Crowd of 12000 watched game v Cardiff. Game v Fiji, Lost, 12 – 38 pts. Swalec Cup Semi-Finalists. Snelling Sevens Semi-Finalists. Ieuan Evans Testimonial game raised £100,000. Ieuan Evans awarded MBE for services to rugby.
1996/97	Record: P22, W16, D2, L4, (75.0%) NLPD 3 rd . Swalec Cup Semi-Finalists. Captain Ieuan Evans left club to join Bath.



LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB HISTORY

SEASON	EVENT
1997/98 TROPHY & STRATEGIC	Record: P14, W5, D2, L7, (43.8%) NLPD 5th. Swalec Cup Winners. WRU Challenge Trophy Semi-Finalists. Club became a Limited Company in June '97.
1998/99 TROPHY	Record: P20, W15, D1, L4. (76.2%) National League Premier Division Champions Heineken Cup Quarter-Finalists, Swalec Cup Finalists Scott Quinnell re-joined club from Richmond. Lock Chris Wyatt, voted Welsh Player of the Year.
1999/00 TROPHY	Record: P22, W13, D0, L9, (59.1%) Welsh/Scottish League 5th. Crowd of 10,500 watched W/S League game v Swansea. Record all-time victory over Cardiff, 60-18 pts at Stradey. WRU Challenge Trophy Winners. Swalec Cup Winners. Heineken Cup Semi-Finalists

KEY



Strategic/Trophy



70%+ Success



Below 50% win



LLANELLI: THE TROPHY SEASONS

Season	Win %	Trophy
1883/84	68.2	Winners of South Wales Challenge Cup
1885/86	64.3	Winners of South Wales Challenge Cup.
1927/28	80.0	Unofficial Welsh Club Champions
1930/31	72.5	Unofficial Welsh Club Champions
1932/33	77.3	Unofficial Welsh Club Champions
1967/68	74.5	Western Mail Unofficial Welsh Club Champions Floodlight Alliance Trophy Winners: National 7s Winners
1968/69	74.5	Floodlight Alliance Trophy Winners.
1969/70	71.1	Floodlight Alliance Trophy Winners. Twickenham 7s Winners
1970/71	63.0	Floodlight Alliance Trophy Winners. Snelling 7s Winners.
1971/72	78.6	Floodlight Alliance Trophy Winners; National 7s Winners
1972/73	63.2	Floodlight Alliance Trophy Winners; <i>Schweppes Cup Winners</i>
1973/74	78.6	Western Mail Unofficial Welsh Club Champions; <i>Schweppes Cup Winners</i>
1974/75	74.1	<i>Schweppes Cup Winners</i>
1975/76	70.0	<i>Schweppes Cup Winners</i>
1976/77	81.1	Western Mail Unofficial Welsh Club Champions.
1984/85	65.8	<i>Schweppes Cup Winners</i>
1987/88	66.7	<i>Schweppes Cup Winners</i>
1988/89	82.9	Whitbread Merit Table Winners: Snelling 7s Winners
1990/91	68.4	<i>Schweppes Cup Winners</i>
1991/92	63.2	<i>Schweppes Cup Winners</i>
1992/93	87.0	Heineken National League Champions: <i>Swalec Cup Winners</i> ; Best Team in Britain Trophy.
1997/98	43.8	<i>Swalec Cup Winners</i>
1998/99	76.2	National League Premier Division Champions
1999/00	59.1	<i>Swalec Cup Winners</i> : WRU Challenge Trophy Winners.
24 Seasons		



LLANELLI: STRATEGIC SEASONS

SEASON	Win %	Strategic Issues
1875/76	44.4	Founding of Club.
1878/79	-	Club had virtually collapsed.
1879/80	57.1	Stradey cricket ground acquired for matches
1880/81	68.8	Llanelli one of eleven Founder Members of WRFU.
1904/05	65.8	New Grandstand opened.
1919/20	76.7	Enlargement to Grandstand
1931/32	68.5	New Stand costing £1,000.
1935/36	68.8	Covering of Supporters Stand at Pwll end costing £400.
1951/52	60.0	Stradey Park ground purchased for £6,500
1956/57	70.8	New Grandstand opened
1957/58	63.5	First British Team to play in Russia.
1958/59	60.0	New Club House & Dining Room at Stradey
1960/61	50.0	New Floodlights erected.
1965/66	62.5	New Dressing Rooms and Dining Hall costing £21,000.
1970/71	63.0	Extension costing £10,000 to Grandstand & Enclosure
1974/75	74.1	Centenary Gates Opened .
1977/78	63.2	New Floodlights Installed at cost of £42,000.
1990/91	68.4	Club spent £350,000 on new Grandstand.
1997/98	43.8	Club became a Limited Company under Huw Evans.
19 Seasons		



LLANELLI MATCH PERFORMANCES HIGH & LOW PERCENTAGES

Season Over 70% Win	Win %	Season Below 50% Win	Win %
1881/82	71.4	1875/76	44.4
d1888/89	78.0	1877/78	45.5
1894/95	74.4	1878/79	-
1895/96	75.0	1890/91	45.5
1896/97	85.7		
1901/02	70.6	1900/01	48.5
1902/03	70.3	1913/14	48.6
1906/07	75.0		
1918/19	77.8		
1919/20	76.7		
1920/21	70.0		
1922/23	72.0		
1925/26	76.6		
1926/27	74.5		
1927/28	80.0		
1930/31	72.5		
1931/32	68.5		
1932/33	77.3		
1933/34	79.2		
1936/37	75.9		
1946/47	80.0	1945/46	47.5
		1948/49	43.2
1953/54	72.3		
1954/55	70.0		
1956/57	70.8		
1967/68	74.5	1963/64	49.1
1968/69	74.5		
1969/70	71.1		
1971/72	78.6		
1973/74	78.6		
1974/75	74.1		
1975/76	70.0		
1976/77	81.1		
1981/82	70.7		
1982/83	73.8		
1988/89	82.9		
1989/90	81.4		
1992/93	87.0	1994/95	45.5
1996/97	75.0	1997/98	43.8
1998/99	76.2		
38 Seasons out of 116		11 Seasons out of 116	

Appendix 3.6e

LLANELLI RFC COMMITTEE 1990 – 1997:

LRFC LTD: BOARD OF DIRECTORS 1997-2000

Officers	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	Ltd Co.	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00
President	Thomas A	<i>Thomas A</i>	Jones K	<i>Jones K</i>	James E	James E	<i>James E</i>				
Chairman	<i>Jenkins H</i>	McClellan J	McClellan J	<i>McClellan J</i>	Bergiers R	<i>Bergiers R</i>	<i>Gallacher S</i>	Chairman	Evans H	Evans H	Evans H
Vice Chair	McClellan J	Powell R	Thomas W	<i>Thomas W</i>	Gallacher S	<i>Gallacher S</i>	<i>Thomas W</i>	CEO	Gallacher S	Gallacher S	Gallacher S
Secretary	Jones K	Jones K	<i>Jones K</i>	Parfitt K	Parfitt K	Parfitt K	<i>Parfitt K</i>				
Treasurer	Jones M	Jones M	Jones M	Jones M	Jones M	Jones M	<i>Jones M</i>	Fin Direct	Jones P S	Jones P S	Jones P S
Changes	1	1	1	3	0	2	5		0	0	0
Committee	Bergiers R	Bergiers R	Bergiers R	Bergiers R	Jenkins H	Delaney L	<i>Bergiers R</i>	Directors	Evans H	Evans H	Evans H
	James A	James A	<i>James A</i>	Galacher S	Lewis A	Jenkins H	<i>Delaney L</i>		Gallacher S	Gallacher S	Gallacher S
	Morgan M	Morgan M	Jenkins H	Jenkins H	Morgan M	Lewis A	Jenkins H		Gravell R	Gravell R	Gravell R
	Powell R	<i>Powell R</i>	Morgan M	Morgan M	<i>Roberts G</i>	Morgan M	<i>Lewis A</i>		Griffiths P	Griffiths P	Griffiths P
	Thomas G	Thomas G	Thomas G	Powell R	Thomas G	Thomas G	<i>Morgan M</i>		Jenkins G	Jenkins G	Jenkins G
	Thomas H	Thomas H	<i>Thomas H</i>	Roberts G	Thomas W	<i>Thomas W</i>	<i>Rees D</i>		Jenkins H	Jenkins H	Jenkins H
	Thomas W	Thomas W	Thomas W	Thomas G	Tucker G	<i>Tucker G</i>	<i>Thomas G</i>		Jones P S	Jones P S	Jones P S
									Jones R	Jones R	Jones R
Changes	0	1	2	0	1	2	6		0	0	0
Coach	Jenkins G	Jenkins G	<i>Jenkins G</i>	Lewis A	Lewis A	Jenkins G	Jenkins G	Dir.Rugby	Jenkins G	Jenkins G	Jenkins G
As. Coach	Lewis A	Lewis A	Lewis A	Cooper J	<i>Cooper J</i>	Lewis A	Lewis A				
Team Mg					Buchanon A	Buchanon A	Buchanon A	Team Mg	Buchanon A	Buchanon A	Buchanon A
Changes	0	0	1	0	1	0	0		0	0	0

KEY Left Position

Company Number : 3389199

Companies Act 1985-1989

PRIVATE COMPANY LIMITED BY SHARES

**MEMORANDUM
AND ARTICLES
OF ASSOCIATION**

LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB LIMITED

INCORPORATED the 19th day of June 1997

SED/LLA110/2



COMPANIES ACTS 1985–1989

PRIVATE COMPANY LIMITED BY SHARES

MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION
of
LLANELLI RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB LIMITED

*** Amended by Written Resolutions dated 4th August 1997**

1. The name of the Company is Llanelli Rugby Football Club Limited
2. The registered office of the Company will be situated in England and Wales
3. The objects for which the Company is established are:–
 - 3.1.1 to promote, encourage and foster the game of Rugby Union Football ("the Game") at all levels and in accordance with the laws according to which the Game is played throughout the world and promulgated by the world governing body of the Game from time to time; to ensure that the Game is administered in accordance with any relevant rules and regulations; to operate a club or clubs with the aim of promoting, fostering and encouraging the Game for the benefit of its or their members and third parties; to promote and undertake matches, fixtures, tournaments, meetings, coaching and any other activities connected with, or incidental or ancillary to, the Game, and to strengthen the bonds between any such club and its local community;
 - 3.1.2 to acquire by conveyance, transfer, conversion or amalgamation all or any of the property, assets and liabilities and to accept the transfer and undertake the engagements of Llanelli Rugby Football Club;
 - 3.1.3 to carry on the business or businesses whether together or separately of proprietors, operators, promoters and organisers of all kinds of sports, entertainments, competitions, recreations, amusements, games, pastimes and leisure and health activities whether indoor or outdoor and of facilities, services, clubs and products relating thereto;
 - 3.1.4 to carry on business as proprietors or managers of restaurants, hotels, bars, refreshment and tea rooms, cafes and snack bars, public houses and wine, beer and spirit merchants, and as caterers;

- 3.1.5 to carry on the business of travel agents, tourist agents and contractors, banking, insurance, forwarding and general agents and brokers, and charters, agents for operators or air, sea, land or inland waterway carriage undertakings and for road transport, owners and hirers, hotel, apartment and lodging-house keepers, caterers and storekeepers, promoters, and managers of clubs and societies (sporting, travelling, social, health, educational or otherwise) and publishers and sellers of books, periodicals and newspapers and generally to facilitate travelling and to provide for tourists and travellers and promote the provision of facilities for such persons of every description and in particular by means of the booking of travel tickets and accommodation and hotel and lodging accommodation, providing guides, safe deposits, inquiry bureaux and baggage transport, and arranging and operating tours;
- 3.1.6 to start, acquire, print, publish, circulate or otherwise deal with any newspaper or newspapers, magazines, books or other publications, and generally to carry on the business of newspaper proprietors and general publishers;
- 3.1.7 to hold or promote competitions of any description authorised by law, which may be calculated to increase or promote the business or activities of the Company or any of its subsidiaries or any charities or worthy causes or to advertise or promote the sale of any publication issued by it, products sold or distributed by it or service provided by it or in which it is interested and to give prizes in connection with such competitions or otherwise, consisting of cash, scholarships or other payments, shares or other choses in action, gifts in kind, or any other description of bonus or reward, or any rights, privileges or advantages which it is in the power of the Company to confer;
- 3.1.8 to carry on all or any of the businesses of general merchants and traders, cash and credit traders, providers of hospitality, conference and exhibition facilities, manufacturers' agents and representatives, insurance brokers and consultants, estate and advertising agents, mortgage brokers, financial agents, advisers, managers and administrators, hire purchase and general financiers, brokers and agents, commission agents, importers and exporters, manufacturers, retailers, wholesalers, buyers, sellers, distributors and shippers of, and dealers in all products, goods, wares, merchandise and produce of every description and to participate in, undertake, perform and carry on all kinds of commercial, industrial, trading and financial operations and enterprises;
- 3.1.9 to carry on the business of a holding company and in all its branches and for that purpose to acquire and hold either in the name of the Company or in that of any nominee or trustee, shares, stocks, debentures, debenture stock, bonds, notes, obligations and securities issued or guaranteed by any company, corporation or undertaking wherever incorporated or carrying on business and to co-ordinate, finance, manage and administer any companies,

LIST OF CLUBS BY DISTRICT

Dis	CLUBS (42)	Est.	WRU	Dis	CLUBS (29)	Est.	WRU
A	Abercarn	1895		B	Barry		
A	Abergavenny	1877		B	Canton	1876	
A	Abertillery	1883		B	Cardiff	1876	1881F
A	Bedwas	1889	1910	B	Cardiff HSOB	1928	
A	Blackwood	1889	1918	B	Cardiff Meds		
A	Blaenau Gwent	1869		B	Cardiff Univ		
A	Blaenavon	1877		B	Cowbridge		
A	Blaina	1875	1895	B	Dinas Powys	1882	
A	Brynithel	1974	1998	B	Glamorgan Wdrs	1893	
A	Brynmawr			B	Heol y Cyw	1906	
A	Caldicot	1959		B	Llandaff	1876	1948
A	Chepstow	1878		B	Llandaff North	1898	1963
A	Croesyceiliog	1881	1876	B	Llanharan	1891	1919
A	Cross Keys	1885		B	Llanishen	1962	
A	Crumlin	1887		B	Llantwit Major	1889	1962
A	Cwmbran	1880		B	Old Iltydians	1928	1967
A	Ebbw Vale	1879	1893	B	Old Penarthians	1923	1964
A	Garndiffaith	1922		B	Penarth	1879	
A	Llanhilleth	1894		B	Pencoed	1888	
A	Machen	1880		B	Pentyrch	1882	
A	Monmouth	1873		B	Pontyclun	1887	1887
A	Nantyglo	1887?		B	Rhiwbina	1962	1975
A	New Tredegar	1977	1994	B	Rumney		
A	Newbridge	1888	1911	B	St. Albans		
A	Newport	1874	1881F	B	St. Josephs	1979	1984
A	Newport HSOB	1923	1957	B	St. Peters	1886	
A	Newport Scars	1912		B	Taffs Well	1887	1900
A	Oakdale	1947		B	UWIC	1950	
A	Pill Harriers	1882					
A	Pontllanfraith		1998				
A	Pontypool	1901	1881F				
A	Pontypool Utd						
A	Rhymney	1882	1910				
A	Risca	1875					
A	RTB Ebbw Vale	1953	1989				
A	Talywain	1898					
A	Tredegar	1893					
A	Trinant	1956					
A	Usk	1874					
A	UWIN						
A	Ynysddu	1894					



Founder Members of WRU 1881



Clubs Founded Before 1881

LIST OF CLUBS BY DISTRICT

Dis	CLUBS (29)	Est.	WRU	Dis	CLUBS (32)	Est.	WRU
C	Abercwmboi	1980		D	Aberavon	1876	1887
C	Abercynon	1886		D	Aberavon GS	1887	
C	Aberdare	1892		D	Aberavon Quinn	1891	1955
C	Bargoed	1882		D	Baglan	1963	
C	Beddau	1951		D	Blaengarw		
C	Bedlinog	1971		D	BP Llandarcy		
C	Brecon	1879	1881F	D	Bridgend	1878	
C	Builth Wells	1888		D	Bridgend Ath	1939	
C	Caerphilly	1887		D	Bridgend Sports	1938	
C	Cefn Coed			D	British Steel PT		
C	Cilfynydd			D	Briton Ferry	1888	
C	Gilfach Goch	1889		D	Bryncoch	1898	
C	Gwernyfed	1965	1996	D	Cefn Cribbwr		
C	Hirwaun			D	Cwmavon		
C	Llantrisant	1888		D	Kenfig Hill	1897	
C	Llantwit Fadre	1946		D	Maesteg	1877	
C	Merthyr	1876	1881F	D	Maesteg Celtic		
C	Mountain Ash	1946		D	Maesteg Quinn	1936	
C	Nelson	1934		D	Nantyffyllon		
C	Penygraig	1877		D	Nantymoel	1885	
C	Pontypridd	1876		D	Neath	1871	1882
C	Rhyderfelin	1905		D	Neath Ath	1947	1972
C	Senghenydd	1898		D	Ogmore Vale		
C	Treherbert	1875		D	Pontycymmer	1887	
C	Treorchy Rhon	1886		D	Porthcawl	1880	
C	Tylorstown	1903		D	Pyle		
C	Ynysybwl	1898		D	Skewen	1883	1897
C	Ystrad Rhondda	1884		D	S.W. Police	1969	1971
				D	Taibach	1886?	
				D	Tondu	1880	
				D	Tonmawr	1897	
				D	Tonna	1888	

KEY



Founder Members of WRU 1881



Clubs Founded Before 1881

LIST OF WRU CLUBS BY DISTRICT

Dis	CLUBS (21)	Est.	WRU	Dis	CLUBS (21)	Est.	WRU
E	Abercrave	1894		F	Amman Utd	1903	
E	Alltwen			F	Ammanford	1887	
E	Banwen	1947		F	Betws		
E	Birchgrove	1953?		F	Brynamman	1892	
E	Bonymaen	1914		F	Cefneithin	1922	
E	Crynant	1898		F	Cwngors	1927	1938
E	Cwmgwrrach	1906	1949	F	Gorseinon	1884	1895
E	Cwmllynfell	1904		F	Gowerton	1884	
E	Cwmtwrch	1890		F	Hendy	1893	
E	Dunvant	1888		F	Llandeilo	1871	1881F
E	Glais			F	Llandovery	1878	1881F
E	Glynneath	1889	1909	F	Llandybie	1901	
E	Morrison	1876		F	Llangennech	1885	
E	Mumbles	1887		F	Loughor	1882	
E	Pontardawe	1882		F	Penclawdd	1888	1927
E	Resolven	1885		F	Penygroes		
E	Rhigos	1930		F	Pontarddulais	1881	
E	Seven Sisters	1897		F	Pontyberem	1895	
E	Swansea	1874	1881F	F	Tumble	1897	
E	Swansea Univ			F	Tycroes	1911	
E	Swansea Upland	1919	1928	F	Waunarlwydd	1900	
E	Trebanos	1897					
E	Vadre						
E	Ystalyfera	1884					
E	Ystradgynlais	1890					

KEY



Founder Members of WRU 1881



Clubs Founded Before 1881

LIST OF WRU CLUBS BY DISTRICT

Dis	CLUBS (19)	Est.	WRU	Dis	CLUBS (18)	Est.	WRU
G	Burry Port	1880		J	Bangor	1876	1881F
G	Bynea	1883		J	Bangor Norm Col		
G	Carmarthen Qs	1875		J	Bangor Univ		
G	Carmarthen Ath	1944		J	Bethesda		
G	Carmarthen Coll			J	Caernarfon	1973	
G	Felinfoel	1876	1935	J	Colwyn Bay	1923	
G	Furnace Utd	1888		J	Denbigh	1977	1991
G	Kidwelly	1880		J	Dolgellau		
G	Lampeter Town	1875	1881F	J	Llandudno	1952	1959
G	Lampeter Coll	1850		J	Llanidloes	1975	2001
G	Laugharne	1893		J	Mold	1935	
G	Llanelli	1875	1881F	J	Nant Conwy	1980	
G	Llanelli Wdrs	1951		J	Newtown	1925	
G	Llandybydder			J	Pwllhelli	1972	
G	New Dock Stars			J	Rhyl & District		
G	Newcastle Emlyn	1977		J	Ruthin (Est24/31)	1960	1969
G	Pontyates			J	Welshpool	1926	1990
G	St. Clears	1985	2001	J	Wrexham	1931	
G	Trimsaran	1927					
Dis	CLUBS (16)	Est.	WRU				
H	Aberaeron						
H	Aberystwyth	1949					
H	Aberystwyth Uni						
H	Cardigan	1876	1956				
H	Crymych	1984	1995				
H	Fishguard & Good	1907					
H	Haverfordwest	1875					
H	Llangwm	1885					
H	Milford Haven	1951	1959				
H	Neyland	1885					
H	Narberth	1882					
H	Pembroke	1896					
H	Pembroke Dock Qs	1880					
H	St. Davids	1953					
H	Tenby Utd	1876	1898				
H	Whitland	1910					

KEY



Oldest Club Founded Before 1881

WRU NATIONAL LEAGUE TABLES 1990 - 2000

Premier Division 1990-1991	Division One 1991-1992	Division One 1992-1993	Division One 1993-1994	Division One 1994-1995
Neath	Swansea	Llanelli	Swansea	Cardiff
Llanelli	Llanelli	Cardiff	Neath	Pontypridd
Bridgend	Pontypridd	Swansea	Pontypridd	Treorchy
Cardiff	Neath	Neath	Cardiff	Neath
Pontypridd	Newbridge	Pontypridd	Llanelli	Bridgend
Pontypool	Bridgend	Bridgend	Bridgend	Swansea
Newbridge	Pontypool	Newport	Newport	Llanelli
Swansea	Newport	Pontypool	Newbridge	Newport
<i>Glam Wdrs</i>	Cardiff	Aberavon	Pontypool	Newbridge
<i>Abertillery</i>	Maesteg	Newbridge	Dunvant	Abertillery
		<i>Maesteg</i>	<i>Aberavon</i>	<i>Dunvant</i>
		<i>SW Police</i>	<i>Cross Keys</i>	<i>Pontypool</i>

Division One 1995-1996	Division One 1996-1997	Premier Division 1997-1998	Premier Division 1998-1999	Premier Division 1999-2000
Neath	Pontypridd	Swansea	Llanelli	Cardiff
Cardiff	Swansea	Cardiff	Pontypridd	Newport
Pontypridd	Llanelli	Pontypridd	Neath	Swansea
Llanelli	Cardiff	Ebbw Vale	Ebbw Vale	Pontypridd
Bridgend	Bridgend	Neath	Caerphilly	Llanelli
Swansea	Newport	Llanelli	Bridgend	Ebbw Vale
Ebbw Vale	Ebbw Vale	Bridgend	Newport	Neath
Newport	Neath	<i>Newport</i>	<i>Aberavon</i>	Edinburgh
Newbridge	<i>Dunvant</i>			Bridgend
Treorchy	<i>Caerphilly</i>		Cardiff DNE	Glasgow
<i>Aberavon</i>	<i>Treorchy</i>		Swan DNE	Caerphilly
<i>Abertillery</i>	Newbridge			<i>Dunvant</i>

Division One 1990-1991	Division Two 1991-1992	Division Two 1992-1993	Division Two 1993-1994	Division Two 1994-1995
<i>Newport</i>	<i>SW Police</i>	<i>Dunvant</i>	<i>Treorchy</i>	<i>Aberavon</i>
<i>Maesteg</i>	<i>Aberavon</i>	<i>Cross Keys</i>	<i>Abertillery</i>	Ebbw Vale
SW Police	Cross Keys	Llanharan	Maesteg	Abercynon
Aberavon	Ebbw Vale	Narberth	SW Police	SW Police
Cross Keys	Dunvant	Tenby Utd	Tenby Utd	Bonymaen
Ebbw Vale	Llanharan	Glam Wdrs	Llanharan	Maesteg
Tredeggar	Abertillery	Abertillery	Narberth	Tenby Utd
Penarth	Glam Wdrs	Llandovery	Penarth	Llandovery
	Tredeggar	Penarth	Ebbw Vale	Llanharan
	Penarth	Ebbw Vale	Llandovery	Cross Keys
		<i>Tredeggar</i>	<i>Mountain Ah</i>	<i>Narberth</i>
		<i>Blaina</i>	<i>Glam Wdrs</i>	<i>Penarth</i>

KEY

COLOURED

Research Clubs**Relegated****Promoted**

Division Two 1995-1996	Division Two 1996-1997	Division One 1997-1998	Division One 1998-1999	Division One 1999-2000
<i>Dunvant</i>	Aberavon	<i>Caerphilly</i>	<i>Dunvant</i>	<i>Cross Keys</i>
<i>Caerphilly</i>	Llandovery	<i>Aberavon</i>	Bonymaen	Pontypool
Cross Keys	Cross Keys	Treorchy	Pontypool	Blackwood
Pontypool	SW Police	Bonymaen	Treorchy	Bonymaen
Bonymaen	Pontypool	Dunvant	Cross Keys	Tondu
Llandovery	UWIC	Merthyr	Merthyr	Newbridge
Maesteg	Abertillery	Llandovery	Llandovery	Treorchy
Abercynon	Bonymaen	Rumney	Tredeggar	Aberavon
Ystradgynlai	Maesteg	Abertillery	Rumney	Rumney
SW Police	Blackwood	Newbridge	Newbridge	Abertillery
<i>Llanharan</i>	<i>Abercynon</i>	Cross Keys	Abertillery	Llandovery
<i>Tenby Utd</i>	<i>Ystradgynlai</i>	SW Police	UWIC	Llanharan
		Blackwood	Blackwood	Abercynon
		Pontypool	Tondu	Merthyr
		<i>UWIC</i>	<i>SW Police</i>	<i>Tredeggar</i>
		<i>Maesteg</i>	<i>Maesteg</i>	

Changes in WRU National League Rugby Clubs

Aspects	Situation at 1990	Situation at 2000
Club Goals	Local & National Trophies	National & European Trophies
Playing Resources	Local players, Permit players	Local, National & International players
Club Form	Members club Nonprofit, sporting organization	Limited Company. Profit seeking to fund players.
Club Governance	Members Committee	Board of Directors
Financial Position	Amateur (Shamamateur)	Professional
Product	The game of rugby 80 minutes play	The Game/ Merchandising 80 minutes play. Pre & Post match entertainment.
Producers	Two teams required	Two teams required plus additional entertainment
Pricing	Membership Fee	Hospitality/Executive/Family Packages/Membership
Consumption	A season (Sept-Apr)	A season (Aug-May)
Distribution Channels	Local Venue (s)	Local Fixed Venue. Modern stadia (TBC).
Fixtures	Unofficial Games Friendly Matches	Welsh/Scottish League Games European Cup Games
Market (Supporters)	Local + Visiting Supporters TV Viewers (Wales).	Local + Visiting Supporters TV viewers (European)
Opponents	Mainly Welsh/English Competition + Co-operation	Mainly Welsh/European Competition + Co-operation
Players	15 Players	15 Players on field + 8 Replacements.

Sport as a Business: Evolutionary Phases and Features
(Hoye et al, 2009)

Stages	Values	Revenue Focus	Structural Focus	Management Focus
Stage 1. Kitchen Table	Sport is Recreational/ Cultural Practice Amateurism Volunteerism	Small Revenue Streams Member Funds Social Club Income	Management Committee Unqualified Treasurer usually	Providing Strong, Local, Community Club Focus Sustaining Operations
Stage 2. Commercial	Sport still Recreational / Cultural Practice Elite Player Development Viability of Sport Member Service	More Revenue Streams Utilized Gate Receipts Sponsorship	Management Portfolios	Marketing the Club Commercial Value of Club used to attract Corporate & other Sponsors
Stage 3 Bureaucratic	Sport as a Business Efficient use of sport resources Accountability	Corporate Income Merchandising	Board of Directors Divisions and Departments	Improving Club Efficiency
Stage 4 Corporate	Sport embraces Business Model include Regulations Professional Players Delivering the Outputs Building the Brand	Revenue Streams from: Brand Value Broadcasting Rights Sponsors = Corporate Partners	Board Policymaking Staff Operations	Members/Fans = Customer Increasing Club Value Regulating Constituents Performance Measurement

APPENDICES TO CHAPTER FOUR

Assumptions of the Main Paradigms

(Adapted from Creswell, 1994, 1998, and Lee and Lings 2008)

Philosophical Assumption	Positivism	Phenomenology
Ontological Assumption (the nature of reality)	Reality is <i>objective</i> and singular, separate from the researcher	Reality is <i>subjective</i> , complex and multilayered as interpreted by participants
Epistemological Assumption (what constitutes valid knowledge)	<i>Singular</i> body of knowledge Agreed upon by scientists; generalisable Researcher is <i>independent</i> of that being researched	<i>Multiple</i> types and bodies exist, collaboratively, constructed. Researcher <i>interacts</i> with that being researched
Human Nature (the relationship between human beings and the environment)	Mechanical products of the environment, controlled like puppets. (<i>determinism</i>)	Producing their own environment, initiators of their own actions with free will and creativity. (<i>voluntarism</i>)
Axiological Assumption (the role of values)	Research is <i>value-free</i> and <i>unbiased</i>	Researcher acknowledges that research is <i>value-laden</i> and <i>biases are present</i>
Rhetorical Assumption (the language of research)	Researcher writes in a <i>formal style and uses the passive voice, accepted quantitative words and set definitions.</i>	Researcher writes in an <i>informal style and uses the personal voice, accepted qualitative terms and limited definitions</i>
Methodological Assumption (process of research)	Process is <i>deductive</i> Study of <i>cause and effect</i> with a static design (categories are isolated beforehand) Large Quantitative Research is <i>context free</i> <i>Generalizations</i> lead to prediction, explanation and understanding. Results are accurate and reliable through <i>validity /reliability</i>	Process is <i>inductive</i> Study of <i>mutual simultaneous</i> shaping of factors with an emerging design (categories are identified during process) Small Qualitative Research is <i>context specific</i> <i>Patterns and/or theories</i> are developed for understanding Findings are accurate and reliable through <i>verification / trustworthiness</i>

Quantitative versus Qualitative Research

(Adapted from Rudestam and Newton, 2007; Cohen et al, 2009; Lee and Lings, 2009)

	Quantitative Research	Qualitative Research
Researcher	Researcher directs, manipulates, controls.	Researcher participates and collaborates.
Research Objective:	To quantify data and generalise results from a sample to the population of interest. To measure the incidence of various views and opinions in a chosen sample.	To provide insights into the setting of a problem, generating ideas and/or hypotheses for later quantitative research. To uncover prevalent trends in thought and opinion.
What is reality?	Seeks objectivity, measurable, knowable, and separate from those looking at it.	Interested in subjectivity, interpreted by participants. An understanding of underlying reasons and motivations.
What is knowledge?	Singular body of knowledge, agreed upon by scientists, generalisable.	Multiple types and bodies exist, collaboratively constructed, context-specific.
Research Site	Controlled research situations.	Naturally occurring and contextual.
Sample focus on	Deductive, explanation, prediction, creating general laws. Usually a large number of participants representing the population of interest. Randomly selected participants. Isolation of operationally defined variables	Inductive, description, understanding, generating local understanding. Usually a small number of non-representative participants. Participants selected to fulfil a given quota. Holistic view of phenomena
Data Collection	Structured techniques such as interviews, questionnaires. Data expressed in numbers	Unstructured or semi-structured techniques e.g. individual depth interviews or group discussions. Data expressed in words.
Data Analysis	Manipulation and recording of previously identified variables. Statistical data is usually in the form of tabulations. Findings are conclusive and usually descriptive in nature. Describes reality as it is, but is independent of what it describes.	Provides rich, in-depth data. Non-statistical. Text Analysis. Actively constructs reality, and is itself part of what it signifies.
Outcome	Emphasis on prediction and explanation. Used to recommend a final course of action	Emphasis on description, exploration, search for meaning. Findings are not conclusive, cannot be used to make generalisations about the population studied.

Trustworthiness of the Study and Findings

(Gubba and Lincoln, 1994).

Trustworthiness Criteria	Method of Addressing in this Study
Credibility Extent to which the results appear to be acceptable representations of the data	• Eight months conducting interviews/ conversations with all forty-five respondents and many stakeholders. • Thirty years visiting clubs observing/researching • Transcripts of interviews/club story provided to respondents for feedback and validation. • Result: Respondents bought into interpretations.
Transferability Extent to which findings from one study in one context will apply to other contexts	• Clear, detailed and in-depth description provided so that others can decide the extent to which findings from one piece of research are generalizable to another situation. • Result. Replication logic.
Dependability Extent to which the findings are unique to time and place: the stability or consistency of explanations	• Respondents reflected on many experiences covering 1990-2000 events, as well as long ago events • Chain of evidence was established from the initial research questions through to the conclusions in each case study • Results: Found consistency across participant stories (Triangulation).
Confirmability Extent to which interpretations are the result of the participants and the phenomenon as opposed to researcher biases	• Transcripts of interviews/club story provided to all respondents for feedback and validation. • Observation and conversation with other stakeholders confirmed respondents stories (Triangulation). • Result: Interpretations were expanded and refined.
Integrity Extent to which interpretations are influenced by misinformation or evasions by participants	• Interviews were professional, of a non-threatening nature and (initially) anonymous • Result: Never believed that respondents were trying to evade/embellish issues being discussed
Understanding Extent to which participants buy into results as possible representatives of their worlds	• Executive summary of findings sent to participants; asked if their fairly reflected their stories • Result: Respondents bought into the findings.

Data Collection Techniques; Advantages and Disadvantages.

(Adapted using Cohen et al, 2009; Westat, 2002)

Data Collection Instrument	Advantages	Disadvantages
Action Research	Links practice and research Participants can be researchers Interventionist-leading to solution of 'real' problems and meeting 'real' needs Benefit of stakeholder research Promotes collaborative research	How to carry out an interpretive analysis of data which can make no claim to be generally representative Practitioner-Researcher workload over a limited timescale Not anyone can undertake action research, competencies are required by practitioners. Overdependence on experts/seniors to the extent that independent thought and expression are stifled. A preoccupation with operational rather than strategic thinking and practice. Internal validation.
Case Studies	Holistic treatment of phenomena Provide a rich picture of what is happening, as seen through the eyes of many individuals To present and represent reality-to give a sense of 'being there'. Allow a thorough exploration of interactions between treatment and contextual data Can help explain changes or facilitating factors that might otherwise not emerge from the data	Can be costly in terms of the demands on time and resources Individual cases may be over interpreted or overgeneralised Require a sophisticated and well-trained data collection and reporting team.
Computer Simulations	They are cheaper to run than the real life situation They can make a phenomenon more accessible and clearer to researcher The research has more control over simulation than real life situation Simulation allows work on dangerous, sensitive, ethically questionable or dangerous real life situations.	They mimic life rather than being the real thing Cost of purchase of computer simulations Training of participants to use simulations Software may require programming expertise.
Experiments	Objective measurement of treatment Establishes cause/ effect relationships Control and experimental group Simplistic Internal validity/Reliability	Limitations due to practical and ethical limitations in social science research. Ecological validity Inclusiveness

Data Collection Instrument	Advantages	Disadvantages
Ethnography	Provide direct information about behaviour of individuals and groups Permit researcher to enter into and understand situation/context Permits tests of reliability of responses to questionnaires Provide good opportunities for identifying unanticipated outcomes Exist in natural, unstructured and flexible setting.	Can be expensive and time-consuming Need well-qualified, highly trained observers; may need to be content experts May affect behaviour of participants Selective perception of observer may distort data Behaviour or set of behaviours observed may be atypical, low representativeness. Low reliability
Interviews	Usually yield richest data, details, new insights Insightful by providing perceived causal inferences Permits face-to-face contact with respondents Provide opportunity to explore case study topics in depth Allow interviewer to explain or help clarify questions, increasing the likelihood of useful responses Allow interviewer to be flexible in administering interview to particular individuals or in particular circumstances.	Can be expensive and time-consuming Ethical issues regarding confidentiality or privacy may arise Need well-qualified, highly trained interviewers Interviewee may distort information through recall error, selective perceptions, desire to please interviewer Flexibility can result in inconsistencies across interviews Volume of information very large, may be difficult to transcribe and reduce data.
Surveys	Good for gathering Descriptive Data Can cover a wide range of topics Relatively inexpensive to use Can be utilised using a variety of existing software Eliminates bias due to phrasing questions differently with different respondents Permits anonymity and may result in more honest responses.	Self-report may lead to biased reporting Data may provide a general picture but lack depth May not provide adequate information on context. There is often a low rate of response Questions may be misunderstood. Inconclusiveness
Tests	Provide objective information on what the test taker knows and can do Can be constructed to match a given curriculum or set of skills Can be scored in a straightforward manner Are accepted by the public as a credible indicator of learning.	May be oversimplified and superficial May be very time consuming May be biased against some groups of test takers May be subject to corruption via coaching or cheating.

NATIONAL LEAGUE POSITIONS, 1990/91 - 1999/2000

Merit Clubs	90/91	91/92	92/93	93/94	94/95	Sub Tot	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	Sub Tot.	% Incr/dec
Aberavon	14	12	9	11	13	57	11	13	10	8	18	60	-5.0
Abertillery	10	17	19	14	10	70	12	19	17	21	20	89	-21.3
Bridgend	3	6	6	6	5	26	5	5	7	6	8	31	-19.2
Cardiff	4	9	2	4	1	20	2	4	2	2	1	11	+45.0
Cross Keys	15	13	14	12	22	76	15	15	19	15	11	75	+1.3
Ebbw Vale	16	14	22	21	14	87	7	7	4	4	6	28	+67.8
Glam Wdrs	9	17	18	24	33	101	36	44	42	41	26	189	-87.1
Llanelli	2	2	1	5	7	17	4	3	6	1	5	19	-11.8
Maesteg	12	10	11	15	18	66	19	21	24	26	35	125	-89.4
Neath	1	4	4	2	4	15	1	8	5	3	7	24	-60.0
Newbridge	7	5	10	8	9	39	9	12	18	20	16	75	-92.3
Newport	11	8	7	7	8	41	8	6	8	7	2	31	+24.4
Penarth	18	20	21	20	24	103	29	36	48	54	55	222	-115.5
Pontypool	6	7	8	9	12	42	16	17	22	13	12	80	-90.5
Pontypridd	5	3	5	3	2	18	3	1	3	2	4	13	+27.8
SW Police	13	11	12	16	16	68	22	16	20	25	30	113	-66.2
Swansea	8	1	3	1	6	19	6	2	1	2	3	14	+26.3
Tredegar	17	19	23	30	27	116	30	33	25	18	25	131	-12.9

Key: Number indicates finishing position in National League. Lowest number counts

SWALEC CUP POSITIONS, 1990/91 – 1999/2000

Merit Clubs	90/91	91/92	92/93	93/94	94/95	Sub Tot	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	Sub Tot.	% Incr/dec
Aberavon	6	6	7	6	4	29	7	6	5	5	5	28	+3.4
Abertillery	6	5	7	7	7	32	6	5	5	6	6	28	+12.5
Bridgend	4	4	3	7	4	22	5	4	7	5	6	27	-22.7
Cardiff	4	5	6	1	3	19	4	1	5	3	5	18	+5.3
Cross Keys	5	5	4	7	7	28	6	6	6	3	6	27	+3.6
Ebbw Vale	5	7	7	7	6	32	7	3	2	4	3	19	+40.6
Glam Wdrs	6	6	7	6	7	32	6	7	7	7	5	32	0
Llanelli	1	1	1	2	3	8	3	3	1	2	1	10	-25.0
Maesteg	5	6	7	3	7	28	5	7	6	6	7	31	-10.7
Neath	3	5	2	4	5	19	2	4	4	5	4	19	0
Newbridge	4	5	5	4	4	22	4	6	6	7	7	30	-36.4
Newport	6	3	4	6	7	26	3	6	6	7	7	29	-11.5
Penarth	7	7	7	7	7	35	6	7	7	7	7	34	+2.9
Pontypool	2	4	5	7	6	24	7	4	7	4	5	27	-12.5
Pontypridd	5	3	4	3	2	17	1	5	4	4	3	17	0
SW Police	6	5	5	4	6	26	5	4	6	7	7	29	-11.5
Swansea	3	2	3	5	1	14	5	2	4	1	2	14	0
Tredegar	7	7	6	7	7	34	7	7	5	4	7	30	-11.8

KEY: Winners 1 Point Runner Up 2 Points; Semi Finalist 3 Points;
Qtr Finalist 4 Points (Lowest Points Counts for Highest Order).

CLUB VISITS AND VIEWINGS: 1974 – 1990.

EBBW VALE			NEWBRIDGE		LLANELLI	
Season	Date	Opponents	Date	Opponents	Date	Opponents
1974/75	Sat 8/2	Maesteg a			Sat 21/9	Moseley h
	Wed 30/4	Llanelli h			Tue 25/3	Pontypridd a
					Wed 30/4	Ebbw Vale a
Visits	2		0		3	
1975/76	Sat 13/9	Swansea a			Sat 27/12	Bristol a
	Wed 28/4	Abertillery a			Wed 10/3	British Col h
Visits	2		0		2	
1976/77	Fri 24/9	Pontypridd h	Sat 4/12	Cross Keys h	Tue 30/11	Bath h
	Sat 11/12	Swansea a	Thur 7/4	Neath h	Sat 8/1	Cardiff (Cp) a
	Sat 12/3	Pontypridd a	Sat 16/4	London Wh h		
Visits	4		3		2	
1977/78	Wed 8/3	Llanelli h			Wed 7/9	Aberavon a
	Sat 11/3	Moseley h			Sat 26/11	Cardiff h
					Wed 8/3	Ebbw Vale a
Visits	2		0		3	
1978/79	Sat 23/12	Hendy (Cp) a	Wed 18/10	Newport a	Sat 23/9	Moseley h
	Tue 27/2	Pontypridd a			Tue 14/11	Swansea a
Visits	2		1		2	
1979/80	Wed 21/11	Newbridge h	Sat 8/9	Bridgend h	Wed 24/10	SA Barbars h
			Wed 21/11	Ebbw Vale a	Sat 22/12	Pontypl Utd h
			Sat 8/12	Risca (Cup) a	Wed 30/1	Bridgend a
					Sat 8/3	Maesteg h
					Sat 29/3	Bridgend S/F
Visits	1		3		5	
1980/81	Sat 11/10	Pontypridd a	Mon 13/4	Newport h	Wed 17/9	Penclawdd a
	Fri 26/12	Abertillery a			Wed 5/11	Leinster h
					Sat 31/1	Cardiff h
					Sat 14/3	Bridgend S/F
Visits	2		1		4	
1981/82	Sat 24/10	Cross Keys a	Mon 9/11	Crawshays h	Sat 26/12	London Wel h
	Tue 2/2	Pontypridd a	Fri 21/1	Swansea a		
Visits	2		2		1	
1982/83	Sat 4/9	Newbridge a	Sat 4/9	Ebbw Vale h	Sat 27/11	Cardiff a
	Sat 3/10	Cross Keys a	Fri 4/3	Abertillery h	Sat 27/12	London Wel h
	Wed 1/12	Swansea h	Sat 26/3	Swansea S/F		
	Sat 29/1	Swansea a	Wed 20/4	S W Police a		
Visits	4		4		2	
1983/84	Mon 4/10	Pontypool h	Sat 10/12	Swansea a	Mon 12/9	Gorseinon a
			Mon 26/3	P.S. Wdrs h	Sat 11/2	Harlequins h
			Mon 16/4	Pontypool a	Sat 8/3	Bridgend a
Visits	1		3		3	

CLUB VISITS AND VIEWINGS: 1974 – 1990.

EBBW VALE			NEWBRIDGE			LLANELLI	
Season	Date	Opponents	Date	Opponents		Date	Opponents
1984/85							
	Wed 30/1	Llanelli a	Wed 31/10	Cardiff h		Sat 29/12	Bristol h
						Wed 30/1	Ebbw Vale h
Visits	2		2			3	
1985/86	Sat 7/9	Newbridge h	Sat 7/9	Ebbw Vale a		Sat 13/11	Cardiff h
	Sat 8/2	Llanelli a	Sat 14/12	Swansea a		Sat 11/1	Wasps h
	Sat 8/3	Pontypridd h				Sat 8/2	Ebbw Vale h
						Wed 12/3	P.S.Wdrs h
Visits	3		2			4	
1986/87	Sat 25/10	Cross Keys h	Sat 10/1	S.W. Police h		Sat 1/11	Fiji BBs h
			Sat 28/3	Swansea S/F		Sat 27/12	Bristol h
						Sat 24/1	Neath a
						Sat 14/2	Pontypool h
						Sat 28/2	Aberavon a
						Wed 25/3	Ystradgynls a
Visits	1		2			6	
1987/88	Sat 5/12	Maesteg h	Wed 2/9	Moseley h		Wed 7/10	Mumbles a
	Sat 16/1	Cardiff h	Mon 2/4	Abertillery a		Sat 31/10	Leicester h
						Sat 14/11	Swansea h
						Sat 13/2	Pontypool h
						Sat 26/3	Aberavon S/F
						Sat 23/4	Gloucester h
Visits	2		2			6	
1988/89	Sat 12/10	Cross Keys h	Sat 28/1	Newport Cp a		Sat 5/11	Bath h
			Sat 8/4	Llanelli S/F		Sat 17/12	Pontypl Utd a
			Sat 22/4	Cardiff h		Mon 2/1	Swansea a
						Sat 8/4	Newbridg S/F
Visits	1		3			4	
1989/90	Sat 31/3	Pontypridd a	Sat 23/9	Wales h			
Visits	1		1			0	



EBBW VALE

CLUB VISITS, VIEWINGS & CONVERSATIONS

Date	Home Team		Away Team	Talking To:	Comments On:
1990/91	(2)				<i>Rugby Club or Business?</i>
20.11.90	Neath	v	Ebbw Vale	Supporters	Impact of Leagues on club
18.01.91	Ebbw Vale	v	Pontypridd	Committee	Impact of Leagues on club
13.04.91	Ebbw Vale	v	Tredegar	Stakeholders	Impact of Leagues on club
1991/92	(1)				
14.09.91	Pontypool	v	Ebbw Vale	Supporters	Impact of Leagues on club
1992/93	(1)				
02.02.93	Swansea	v	Ebbw Vale	Committee	What about a Promotion Drive?
1993/94	(1)				
21.12.93	Newbridge	v	Ebbw Vale	Supporters	Impact of Leagues on clubs
1994/95	(2)				
05.11.94	Bonymaen	v	Ebbw Vale	Supporters	Impact of Leagues on players
07.02.95	Aberavon	v	Ebbw Vale	Players	Impact of Leagues on them
1995/96	(4)				
09.09.95	Ebbw Vale	v	Neath	Stakeholders	Impact of Professionalism
04.11.95	Ebbw Vale	v	Newbridge	Stakeholders	Impact of Professionalism
23.12.95	Ebbw Vale	v	Swansea	Stakeholders	Impact of Professionalism
27.04.96	Bridgend	v	Ebbw Vale	Coach/ Plays	Impact of Professionalism
1996/97	(6)				
03.09.96	Ebbw Vale	v	Newbridge	Committees	How club coping with Profess
28.12.96	Newbridge	v	Ebbw Vale	Coaches	How club coping with Profess
08.02.97	Neath	v	Ebbw Vale	Supporters	How club coping with Profess
01.03.97	Ebbw Vale	v	Cardiff	Players:	How club coping with Profess
08.03.97	Newport	v	Ebbw Vale	Supporters	How club coping with Profess
05.04.97	Swansea	v	Ebbw Vale	Coaches	How club coping with Profess
1997/98	(7)				
28.02.98	Ebbw Vale	v	Cardiff (Cup)	Directors	How club coping with Profess
28.03.98	Ebbw Vale	v	Swansea (Q)	Supporters	How Important is Cup Comp
25.04.98	Ebbw Vale	v	Newport (SF)	CEO	How club coping with Profess
28.04.98	Ben Francs		Cup Final		Observing Organization
02.05.98	Ebbw Vale	v	Llanelli	Stakeholders	Strategic Management
10.05.98	Neath	v	Ebbw Vale	Supporters	Context/Process/Context Ques
16.05.98	Llanelli (CF)	v	Ebbw Vale	Stakeholders	Goals 1998/99
1998/99	(7)				
08.09.98	Aberavon	v	Ebbw Vale	Supporters	Is it a rugby club or a business?
26.09.98	Ebbw Vale	v	Pontypridd	Team Mangt	Is it a rugby club or a business?
23.01.99	Ebbw Vale	v	Romania	Directors	Is it a rugby club or a business?
23.02.99	Caerphilly	v	Ebbw Vale	Players	Is it a rugby club or a business?



EBBW VALE

CLUB VISITS, VIEWINGS & CONVERSATIONS

Date	Home Team		Away Team	Talking To:	Topic/Comments On:
19.03.99	Swansea	V	Ebbw Vale	Stakeholders	Is it a rugby club or a business?
28.03.99	Neath	V	Ebbw Vale	Management	Is it a rugby club or a business?
07.05.99	Ebbw Vale	V	Neath	Stakeholders	Clubs Goal Priorities 1999/00
1999/00	(5)				
11.09.99	Ebbw Vale	V	Caerphilly	Directors	Use of Strategic Management
10.12.99	Ebbw Vale	v	Steau	Staff	Empowered/Freedom of action
12.02.00	Ebbw Vale	v	Newport	Team Mangt	ERCC & League Standards
15.04.00	Ebbw Vale	v	London Irish	Supporters	Re WRU Actions on ERC
22.04.00	Llanelli (SF)	v	Ebbw Vale	Stakeholders	Cup/League/ERC Title ?
00/01	(2)				
01.11.00	Ebbw Val 21	v	Caerphilly 21	Stakeholders	Reasons for increased perform.
24.03.01	Caerphilly	v	Ebbw Vale	Supporters	Reasons for increased perform.
2001/02	(2)				
18.09.01	Llanelli	v	Ebbw Vale	Directors	Reasons for increased perform.
17.04.02	Swansea	v	Ebbw Vale	Team Mangt	Reasons for increased perform.
2002/03	(24)				
07.09.02	Ebbw Vale	v	Caerphilly	Management	Reasons for increased perform.
05.10.02	Ebbw Vale	v	Edinburgh	Staff	Empowered/Freedom of action
26.10.02	Swansea	v	Ebbw Vale	Committees	Context/Process/Content Ques
29.10.02	Ebbw Vale	v	Swansea	Supporters	Context/Process/Content Ques
15.11.02	Neath	v	Ebbw Vale	Supporters	Context/Process/Content Ques
30.11.02	Ebbw Vale	v	Llanelli	Supporters	Context/Process/Content Ques
01.03.03	Swansea	v	Ebbw Vale	Stakeholders	Context/Process/Content Ques
25.01.03	Ebbw Vale	v	Neath	Team Mgt	Context/Process/Content Ques
15.03.03	Bridgend	v	Ebbw Vale	Players	Verify Respondents Answers
22.03.03	Llanelli	v	Ebbw Vale	Supporters	Context/Process/Content Ques
2003/04	(5)				
21.10.03	Llanelli	v	Ebbw Vale	Supporters	Verify Respondents Answers
29.10.03	Newbridge	v	Ebbw Vale	Stakeholders	Verify Respondents Answers
01.11.03	Swansea	v	Ebbw Vale	Supporters	Verify Respondents Answers
08.11.03	Ebbw Vale	v	Llanelli	Stakeholders	Verify Respondents Answers
29.11.03	Ebbw Vale	v	Cross Keys	Players	Verify Respondents Answers

2002/03	Interviews (9)	Name	Position
05.12.02	Interview at Ebbw Vale Club	Ray Harris	Company Secretary
05.12.02	Interview at Ebbw Vale Club	Terri Morgan	Accountant
05.12.02	Interview at Ebbw Vale Club	Doug Taylor	Team Manager
02.01.03	Interview at home, Swansea	Mike Ruddock	Coach
03.01.03	Interview at Ebbw Vale Club	Roy Lewis	Press
03.01.03	Interview at Ebbw Vale Club	Ivor George	Long Standing Supporter
30.01.03	Interview at home, Ebbw Vale	Alan Evans	Former Committeeman
30.01.03	Interview at Ebbw Vale Club	Chay Billen	Club Captain
21.03.03	Interview in Cardiff	Paul Russell	President & Fin Backer



NEWBRIDGE

VISITS, VIEWINGS & CONVERSATIONS

Date	Home Team		Away Team	Talking To:	Topic/Comments On:
1990/91	(2)				<i>Rugby Club or Business?</i>
22.12.90	Cardiff	V	Newbridge	Committee	Impact of Leagues on club
30.3.91	Newbridge	V	Pontypridd	Stakeholders	Impact of Leagues on club
1991/92	(2)				
07.12.91	Bridgend	v	Newbridge	Coaches	Impact of Leagues on players
21.12.91	Maesteg	v	Newbridge	Players	Impact of Leagues on players
1992/93	(2)				
28.11.92	Bridgend	v	Newbridge	Supporters	Impact of Leagues on club
24.04.93	Newbridge	v	Bridgend	Committee	Impact of Leagues on club
1993/94	(3)				
13.11.93	Newbridge	V	Bridgend	Coaches	Impact of Leagues on club
21.12.93	Newbridge	V	Ebbw Vale	Supporters	Impact of Leagues on clubs
23.04.94	Bridgend	V	Newbridge	Committee	View of Strategic Management
1994/95	(2)				
15.10.94	Swansea	V	Newbridge	Players	Impact of Leagues on them
04.02.95	Neath	V	Newbridge	Players	Impact of Leagues on players
1995/96	(3)				
29.09.95	Bridgend	v	Newbridge	Stakeholders	Impact of Professionalism
04.11.95	Ebbw Vale	v	Newbridge	Stakeholders	Impact of Professionalism
30.03.96	Neath	v	Newbridge	Committees	Impact of Professionalism
1996/97	(7)				
03.09.96	Ebbw Vale	V	Newbridge	Committees	How club coping with Profess
18.09.96	Neath	v	Newbridge	Supporters	How club coping with Profess
07.12.96	Llanelli	v	Newbridge	Players	How club coping with Profess
28.12.96	Newbridge	v	Ebbw Vale	Coaches	How club coping with Profess
01.03.97	Newbridge	v	Neath	Committees	How club coping with Profess
19.04.97	Newbridge	v	Swansea	Supporters	How club coping with Profess
03.05.97	Newbridge	v	Llanelli	Stakeholders	How club coping with Profess
1997/98	(4)				
20.12.97	Newbridge	v	Abercwmboi	Committee	Reasons for Relegation
24.01.98	Newbridge	v	Cardiff (Cup)	Supporters	Reasons for Relegation
18.02.98	Newbridge	v	Bonymaen	Stakeholders	Reasons for Relegation
12.05.98	Pontypool	v	Newbridge	Coach/Plyrs	Reasons for Relegation
1998/99	(1)				
19.12.98	Bonymaen C	v	Newbridge	Committee	Is it a rugby club or a business?
1999/00	(1)				
22.01.00	Rumney cup	v	Newbridge	Committee	Future Goals & Management



NEWBRIDGE

VISITS, VIEWINGS & CONVERSATIONS

Date	Home Team	v	Away Team	Talking To:	Topic/Comments On:
2001.02	(5)				
08.09.01	Newbridge	v	Pontypool	Stakeholders	Reasons for decreased perform.
24.11.01	Newbridge	v	Blackwood	Supporters	Reasons for decreased perform.
09.01.02	Newbridge	v	Llandovery	Committee	Reasons for decreased perform.
20.03.02	Newbridge	v	Merthyr	Players	Reasons for decreased perform.
04.05.02	Newbridge	v	Bedwas	Coaches	Reasons for decreased perform.
2002/03	(8)				
07.09.02	Newbridge	v	Beddau	Committee	Context/Process/Content Ques.
28.09.02	Newbridge	v	Treorchy	Supporters	Context/Process/Content Ques.
22.10.02	Newbridge	v	Tredegar	Stakeholders	Context/Process/Content Ques.
04.01.03	Carmarthen	v	Newbridge	Players	Context/Process/Content Ques.
18.01.03	Newbridge	v	Blackwood	Stakeholders	Context/Process/Content Ques.
08.02.03	Newbridge	v	Bridgend	Committee	Context/Process/Content Ques.
05.03.03	Tredegar	v	Newbridge	Supporters	Context/Process/Content Ques.
26.04.03	Newbridge	v	Glam Wdrs	Stakeholders	Verify Respondents Answers

2003/04 (5)

06.09.03	Newbridge	v	Caerphilly	Supporters	Verify Respondents Answers
04.10.03	Neath	v	Newbridge	Supporters	Verify Respondents Answers
29.10.03	Newbridge	v	Ebbw Vale	Stakeholders	Verify Respondents Answers
15.11.03	Llanelli	v	Newbridge	Supporters	Verify Respondents Answers
22.11.03	Newbridge	v	Swansea	Stakeholders	Verify Respondents Answers

2003

Interviews (9)

Name

Position

06.03.03	Interview at Newbridge Club	Keith Westwood,	Team Manager
06.03.03	Interview at Newbridge Club	Idris McCarthy	Chairman & Fin Backer
07.03.03	Interview WRU Office, Cardiff	Geoff Champion	Press
13.03.03	Interview at work, Newbridge	Paul Tedstone,	Accountant
13.03.03	Interview at home Newbridge	Brian Wellington	Former Committeeman
13.03.03	Interview at Newbridge Club	Graham Patterson	Club Secretary
17.03.03	Interview at Newbridge Club	Jon Westwood	Club Coach
18.03.03	Interview at Newbridge Club	Damion Cooper	Club Captain
03.04.03	Interview at Newbridge Club	Brian Jones	Long Stand Supporter



LLANELLI:

VISITS, VIEWINGS & CONVERSATIONS

Date	Home Team		Away Team	Talking To:	Topic/ Comments On:
1990/91 (2)					
28.11.90	Llanelli	v	Newport	Committee	Impact of Leagues on club
30.03.91	Llanelli	v	Northamptn	Players	Impact of Leagues on them
1991/92 (2)					
09.11.91	Pontypridd	v	Llanelli	Committee	Reason for Cup success?
26.12.91	Llanelli	v	Lon Welsh	Supporters	Impact of Leagues on club
1992/93 (1)					
08.09.92	Pontypool	v	Llanelli	Supporters	Reason for Cup success?
02.01.93	Bridgend	v	Llanelli	Coach	Impact of Leagues on club
1993/94 (2)					
27.10.93	Llanelli	v	SA Barbars	Supporters	Reasons for successes last year
30.11.93	Llanelli	v	Bridgend	Committee	Reasons for successes last year
1994/95 (4)					
27.08.94	Llanelli	v	Swansea	Coaches	Impact of Leagues on players
29.10.94	Llanelli	v	South Africa	Supporters	Impact of Leagues on players
10.12.94	Swansea	v	Llanelli	Players	Impact of Leagues on them
01.04.95	Llanelli	v	Bridgend	Committee	Use of Strategic Management
1995/96 (4)					
30.09.95	Llanelli	v	Cardiff	Committee	Impact of Professionalism
07.11.95	Llanelli	v	Fiji	Stakeholders	Impact of Professionalism
26.12.95	Llanelli	v	London Welsh	Players	Impact of Professionalism
06.04.96	Bridgend	v	Llanelli	Team Mngt	Impact of Professionalism
1996/97 (5)					
31.08.96	Bridgend	v	Llanelli	Players	How Club coping with Profess
21.09.96	Llanelli	v	Swansea	Committees	How Club coping with Profess
07.12.96	Llanelli	v	Newbridge	Playes	How Club coping with Profess
08.03.97	Swansea	v	Llanelli	Team Mngts	How Club coping with Profess
03.05.97	Newbridge	v	Llanelli	Supporters	How Club coping with Profess
1997/98 (11)					
18.10.97	Pontypridd	v	Llanelli	Stakeholders	Reasons behind WRU Rescue
08.11.97	Llanelli	v	New Zealand	Coach	Welsh v NZ style of game
07.02.98	Wales	v	Italy	Staff	Empowered/Freedom of action
14.02.98	Swansea	v	Llanelli	Team Mngts	Context/Process/Content Ques
01.03.98	Llanelli	v	Caerphilly	Supporters	View on WRU buying Stradey
09.03.98	Wales 16	v	Portugal 16s	Staff	Observing Organization



LLANELLI

VISITS, VIEWINGS & CONVERSATIONS

Date	Home Team		Away Team	Talking To:	Topic/Comments On:
1997/98					
12.03.98	Llanelli	v	Neath (CQF)	Players	Context/Process/Content Ques
26.04.98	Llanelli (SF)	v	Seven Sisters	At Neath	Observing Organization
02.05.98	Ebbw Vale	v	Llanelli	Stakeholders	Use of Strategic Management
06.05.98	W Wales		Cup Final		Observing Organization
16.05.98	Llanelli (CF)	V	Ebbw Vale	Stakeholders	Goals Priorities for 1998/99

1998/99 (9)

08.98.98	Llanelli	v	Saracens	Supporters	Can club win pro title?
05.09.98	Pontypridd	v	Llanelli	Team Mgt	Is Club now rugby or business
21.11.98	Wales	v	Argentina	CEO	Is Club now rugby or business
05.12.98	Llanelli	v	Pontypridd	Players	Is Club now rugby or business
09.01.99	Llanelli	v	Blue Bulls	Stakeholders	Is Club now rugby or business
17.01.99	Llanelli	v	Gauteng Fal	Directors	Is Club now rugby or business
09.03.99	Llanelli	v	Bridgend	Management	Is Club now rugby or business
01.05.99	Llanelli	v	Neath	Staff	Empowered/Freedom of action
15.05.99	Swansea	v	Llanelli (CF)	Stakeholders	Cup/ League/ ERC Title?

1999/00 (6)

18.09.99	Llanelli	v	Bridgend	Team Mangt	Reasons for winning title?
11.10.99	Argentina	v	Samoa	RWC Game	Observing Organization
27.12.99	Llanelli	v	Swansea	Directors	Did Clubs take right pro action?
26.02.00	Llanelli (Cup)	v	Bridgend	Stakeholders	Did Clubs take right pro action?
15.04.00	Llanelli (ERC)	v	Cardiff	CEO/Coach	Cup/League/ ERC Title?
22.04.00	Llanelli (SF)	v	Ebbw Vale	Stakeholders	Cup/ League/ ERC Title?
20.05.00	Llanelli (CF)	v	Swansea	Stakeholders	Cup/ League/ ERC Title?

2000/01 (10)

02.12.00	Cardiff	v	Llanelli	Coaches	Reasons for consistent performs
05.12.00	Newport	v	Llanelli	Team Mangt	Reasons for consistent performs
23.12.00	Llanelli	v	Swansea	Supporters	Reasons for performances
06.01.01	Llanelli	v	Glasgow	CEO/Mangt	Reasons for consistent performs
19.01.01	Llanelli	v	Colomiers	Directors	Context/Process/Content Ques
01.02.01	Wales 19s	v	England 19s		Observing Organization
17.04.01	Wales 16s	v	Italy 16s		Observing Organization:
02.05.01	W. Wales	v	Cup Final	Supporters	Reasons for consistent performs
05.05.01	Llanelli	v	Cardiff	Directors	Context/Process/Content Ques
12.05.01	Pontypridd	v	Llanelli (CF)	Stakeholders	Goal Priorities for 2001/02.



LLANELLI

VISITS, VIEWINGS & CONVERSATIONS

Date	Home Team		Away Team	Talking To:	Topic/Comments On:

2001/02 (3)

18.09.01	Llanelli	v	Ebbw Vale	Directors	Reasons for performances
28.04.02	Leicester	v	Llanelli (SF)	Supporters	Is priority goal ERC Title?
18.05.02	Pontypridd	v	Llanelli	Coaches	Empowered by Board?

2002/03 (13)

31.08.02	Llanelli	v	Munster	Directors	Context/Process/Content Ques
14.09.02	Neath	v	Llanelli	Coaches x 2	Context/Process/Content Ques
30.11.02	Ebbw Vale	v	Llanelli	Supportersx 2	Context/Process/Content Ques
03.01.03	Llanelli	v	Swansea	Players x 2	Context/Process/Content Ques
04.02.03	Llanelli	v	Cardiff	Management	Context/Process/Content Ques
14.02.03	Neath	v	Llanelli	Players x 2	Context/Process/Content Ques

2002/03 (7)

22.03.03	Llanelli	v	Ebbw Vale	Supporters	Context/Process/Content Ques
28.03.03	Llanelli	v	Pontypridd	Staff	Empowered/Freedom of action
05.04.03	Llanelli	v	Neath	Directors	Context/Process/Content Ques
19.04.03	Cardiff	v	Llanelli (SF)	Supporters	Context/Process/Content Ques
03.05.03	Newport	v	Llanelli (CF)	Players	Is goal League or ERC Title?
06.05.03	Llanelli	v	Bridgend	Stakeholders	Verify Respondents Answers
10.05.03	Swansea	v	Llanelli	Team Mgt	Context/Process/Content Ques

2003/04 (5)

20.09.03	Swansea	v	Llanelli	Stakeholders	Verify Respondents Answers
21.10.03	Llanelli	v	Ebbw Vale	Supporters	Verify Respondents Answers
08.11.03	Ebbw Vale	v	Llanelli	Stakeholders	Verify Respondents Answers
15.11.03	Llanelli	v	Newbridge	Supporters	Verify Respondents Answers
20.12.03	Llanelli	v	Swansea	Stakeholders	Verify Respondents Answers

2003

Interviews (9)

Name

Position

20.02.03	Interview at Llanelli Club	Colin Stroud	Accountant
20.02.03	Interview at home Llanelli	Gareth Jenkins	Coach
14.03.03	Interview at Llanelli Club	Stuart Gallacher	CEO
14.03.03	Interview at home Llanelli	Norman Lewis	Press
24.04.03	Interview at Work, Skewen	Anthony Buchannon	Team Manager
03.06.03	Interview at Work, Cheltenham	Huw Evans,	Financial Backer
05.06.03	Interview at home, Pembrey	Marlston Morgan	Long Stand Supporter
12.06.03	Interview at CN Home	Hefin Jenkins	Former Committeeman
28.07.03	Interview at Vale of Glamorgan	Rupert Moon	Captain

**CLUB RESPONDENTS INTERVIEWED FOR RESEARCH:
DATES OF INTERVIEW**

Club	Ebbw Vale RFC	Newbridge RFC	Llanelli RFC
Respondent.			
Owner/Finance Backer	Paul Russell Friday 21 st March 2003.	Idris McCarthey Thurs 6 th March 2003.	Huw Evans Tuesday 3 rd June 2003.
CEO/General Manager/ Company Sec.	Ray Harris Thursday 5 th Dec 2002	Graham Paterson Thurs 13 th March 2003	Stuart Gallacher Friday 14 th March 2003
Accountant	Terri Morgan Thursday 5 th Dec 2002	Paul Tedstone Thurs 13 th March 2003	Colin Stroud Thursday 20 th Feb 2003
Team Manager	Doug Taylor Thursday 5 th Dec 2002	Keith Westwood Thurs 6 th March 2003	Anthony Buchanon Thursday 24 th April 2003
Coaching Staff	Mike Ruddock Thursday 2 nd Jan 2002	Jon Westwood Mon 17 th March 2003	Gareth Jenkins Thursday 20 th Feb 2003
Senior Player/ Captain	Chay Billen Thursday 13 th Feb 2003	Damion Cooper Tues 18 th March 2003	Rupert Moon Monday 28 th July 2003.
Ex- Committee Member	Alan Evans Thursday 30 th Jan 2003	Brian Wellington Thurs 13 th March 2003	Hefin Jenkins Thurs 12 th June 2003.
Local Press	Roy Lewis Friday 3 rd Jan 2003	Geoff Champion Friday 7 th March 2003	Norman Lewis Friday 14 th March 2003
Long Standing Supporter	Ivor George Friday 3 rd Jan 2003	Brian Jones Thursday 3 rd April 2003	Marlston Morgan Thursday 5 th June 2003.

Appendix 4.8

50 Smiths Road,
Birchgrove
Swansea
SA7 9DY

Tel /Fax: 01792-414862

14th September 2002

Dear

You may be aware that I am undertaking research for a PhD with Cardiff Business School, University of Wales, into the process of strategic management in small businesses. The small organizations chosen are selected Welsh rugby clubs. Llanelli RFC is one of the clubs that I am researching and to that end I would be most grateful for your assistance in your role as Team Manager. Mr Huw Evans, major shareholder in Llanelli RFC, has given his blessing to the club being researched.

May I at the outset say that no club or individual is being identified by name in my thesis. Each club and individual involved in the research is assured of the utmost confidentiality.

If you are able to help with my research I would be grateful if you would complete the enclosed questionnaire at your earliest convenience. The questionnaire seeks your opinion on the process of formulating a strategy for Llanelli RFC.

There are 39 questions. Against each question is a scale from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7). You need to give a mark to each question based on your own views of how the question relates to Llanelli RFC.

If you have any queries regarding the questions please do not hesitate to contact me via my home telephone number.

Please find a stamped addressed envelope that you can use to return the completed questionnaire to me. Once I have had the opportunity to analyse your questionnaire I would appreciate about 50-60 minutes of your time to 'talk through' your replies face-to-face.

Before completing my thesis, all individuals may have the opportunity to review their contribution to the case study on Llanelli RFC.

May I thank you in anticipation of your assistance.

Kind regards,

Clive

Clive Norling.

How Strategic Decisions are made in your Rugby Club.

'Strategic decisions are characterised by a large commitment of resources and deals with issues of substantial importance to the rugby club usually with longer rather than just short-term impact; they usually involve more than one function and involve significant change'.

Please circle the number you feel is most appropriate between August 1995 – May 2000.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree		
1. A senior figure's vision is our strategy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. The chief executive determines our strategic direction.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. The strategy we follow is directed by a vision of the future associated with the chief executive (or another senior figure)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Our strategy is closely associated with a particular individual.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Our chief executive tends to impose strategic decisions (rather than consulting the top management team)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Our strategy is made explicit in the form of precise plans	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. When we formulate a strategy it is planned in detail.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. We have precise procedures for achieving strategic objectives.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. We have well-defined planning procedures to search for solutions to strategic problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. We meticulously assess many alternatives when deciding on a strategy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. We evaluate potential strategic options against explicit strategic objectives.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. We have definite and precise strategic objectives.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. We make strategic decisions based on a systematic analysis of our business environment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Our strategy develops through a process of ongoing adjustment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Our strategy is continually adjusted as changes occur in the market place.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. To keep in line with our business environment we make continual small-scale changes to strategy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Our strategies emerge gradually as we respond to the need to change.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. We keep early commitment to a strategy tentative and subject to review.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. We tend to develop strategy by experimenting and trying new approaches in the market place.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

20. Our strategy is a compromise which accommodates the conflicting interests of powerful groups and individuals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. The vested interests of particular internal groups colour our strategy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Our strategies often have to be changed because certain groups block their implementation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. Our strategy develops through a process of bargaining and negotiation between groups or individuals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. The information on which our strategy is developed often reflects the interests of certain groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. The decision to adopt a strategy is influenced by the power of the group sponsoring it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. There is a way of doing things in this organisation which has developed over the years.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. Our strategy is based on past experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. The strategy we follow is dictated by our culture.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. The attitudes, behaviours, rituals, and stories of the organisation reflect the direction we wish to take it in.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. Our organisation's history directs our search for solutions to strategic issues.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. There is resistance to any strategic change which does not sit well with our culture.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. The strategies we follow develop from 'the way we do things around here'.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. Our freedom of strategic choice is severely restricted by our business environment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. Forces outside this organisation determine our strategic direction.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. Barriers exist in our business environment which significantly restrict the strategies we can follow.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. We have strategy imposed on us by those external to this organisation, for example the government.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. We are not able to influence our business environment; we can only buffer ourselves from it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. Many of the strategic changes which have taken place have been forced on us by those outside the rugby club.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39. We are severely limited in our ability to influence the business environment in which we operate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

KEY
0-1
Strongly Disagree
2-3
Disagree
4-5
Agree
6-7
Strongly Agree



THE EBBW VALE RFC STORY

Context

Internal Environment

Prior to 1995, the Club was run by a General Committee, consisting of some twenty-two elected members. The senior figures were the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and one or two other members. The Committee met fortnightly during the season, alternating with sub-committee meetings every other Monday. From 1995, this continued under the Presidency of Paul Russell

The Club was promoted to the Premier Division in season 1995/96, following the game going Open. It has remained in the top division since that time and remains the only club to be promoted and not subsequently relegated from the top flight.

External Environment

The local economic situation is not good and has impacted on sponsorship and crowd attendance. The closure of the local steelworks was a body blow to the club both in terms of guaranteed regular income and also 'political clout'.

Blaenau Gwent Council have been a tremendous negative influence on the Club. A business plan to develop Eugene Cross Park put forward by the Club was rejected by the council.

FIFA have imposed a crowd restriction of 4,500 on the ground that the council adopted for rugby and it still applies.

The Welsh Rugby Union did not show leadership or give direction when the Game went professional. Their intervention last summer, forced the Club to impose an £100 season ticket. Also the introduction of a meritocracy system for payment within the Premier Division has affected cashflow.

Process

The senior figures in the Club are considered to be Paul and Marcus Russell. The Club is under the control of a six man Board of Directors. However, the full-time staff are empowered to run the club on a day-by-day basis.

The Club does prepare a written strategic plan each year, setting itself goals for the season (in minutes of Board). However, it is not afraid to change course at short notice if/when required. Strategy appears, on occasions, to be more 'emergent' (incremental) rather than 'intended' (planned).



THE EBBW VALE RFC STORY

Due to the 'open communication' approach adopted by the Board of Directors (plus their funding), ensures that there is very little politics within the club nowadays. Supporters have clear channels of communication to express their views and opinions to the Board.

The Club has a North Gwent valley town culture and attitude. Club has a close knit approach. The history and traditions of the club will not hold back its future progress.

External influences, the local environment, the council and the WRU, have impacted in their own way on the strategic direction of the club.

The club was not prepared for the advent of professionalism.

Content

Strategic decisions are taken by the Board, who do not appear to be influenced by either the political or culture aspects of the club. The Board is very open and honest with the club's stakeholders.

The Club does have a strategy. Over recent seasons it has been one of survival and consolidation.

Key decisions taken have been

- to form a Ltd Company in 1997;
- to allow Swansea/Cardiff to take its place in the 1998 European Heineken Cup; and
- to declare major financial problems in August 2002.

Performance Measures.

The dream/vision is to keep top class rugby in Ebbw Vale. To keep Ebbw Vale in the Premier Division.

Financial Performance

Success is not necessarily measured by profit. Rather the Club takes the approach of 'Is our financial position at the end of the year what we said it was going to be at the beginning'. Unlike the amateur era, the club has not made a financial profit in any season during the professional era.

Operational Performance

Performance on the field is very important and the main priority of the Club.



THE EBBW VALE RFC STORY

Organisational Effectiveness

The Club is also involved to some extent within the community. It gives the community a team to be proud of and it also looks after the welfare of its players.

Reasons for Operating Improvement

The improvement in playing performance in the League post 1995 is attributed to the management of the Club by Paul Russell, the recruitment of North Gwent players in the team and the coaching of Leigh Jones and Richard Hill.

Clive Norling
Tuesday 12th August 2003.

Respondent's Amendments:

Clive Norling, 50 Smiths Road, Birchgrove, Swansea. SA7 9DY.

Tel & Fax: 01792-414862

July 2003

Dear *Ivor*,

Re: PhD Research on Ebbw Vale RFC

First, may I thank you for your assistance with my PhD research and for your patience!

As promised a while back now, please find enclosed a copy of the transcript of our interview and also my understanding of the Ebbw Vale RFC 'story'. I would be grateful if you would read through both the transcript and the 'story' to verify their accuracy. If there are any changes that you would like to make please feel free to do so.

With regard to the use of the content of our interview, I regret to say that I have experienced great difficulty in trying to 'disguise' Ebbw Vale RFC. My better half, Mair, who has visited EVRFC, immediately recognized my description of the club despite my giving it the pseudonym of 'The Warriors'! I have explained my difficulties in trying to disguise the club to my research supervisors at Cardiff Business School.

After due consideration it has been agreed by the University of Wales that, on successful completion of my PhD, a three year embargo will be placed on public access to my thesis. This means that nobody, outside my examiners, may access or read my PhD research thesis until 2007 at the earliest. There is also provision to extend the embargo further, until 2010, if I felt after three years that it was still necessary. If you disagree with this please contact me asap.

The chapters on my findings from the club will not be 'rugby based'. Therefore, there will not be any chapters in the thesis entitled, 'The Ebbw Vale RFC Story'. Rather the findings may be spread over three academic chapters, 'Context', 'Process' and 'Content'. Your views may, or may not, be quoted in one or more of those chapters. However, on completing the writing of my thesis, I may inform those participants of selected areas of their interview that have been included. Therefore if any of your interview is used, you may then have the opportunity to agree to its inclusion or not. To date, there appears to be nothing controversial in the contents of the completed interviews.

I would like to telephone you within the next 10-12 days to confirm that you have received the scripts and to discuss with you any changes that you wish to make.

Many thanks once again for your invaluable assistance with my PhD research.

Kind regards,

Clive

Clive Norling.