



## Cann agrees long term deal with Old Gold

Mark Aizlewood the manager of Carmarthen has announced that Stephen Cann has committed to a long term contract at Carmarthen Town FC. Aizlewood commented that

“When we signed Stephen in the summer I did not fully appreciate how good he actually was, of course I knew he was a good goalkeeper having worked with him since he was an U16 international but soon realised that we have potentially the very best goalkeeper in Wales”. “The management team decided very quickly that we needed to secure his services on contract and this decision was endorsed and supported by the club directors.

Ironically whilst contract negotiations were ongoing and whilst Stephen was actually signed for Carmarthen Town on a non contract basis another club made him an incredible financial offer to re-sign him.

It speaks volumes for the boy’s character that his head was not turned by this and he kept his word to the club chairman and duly signed.

“We at Carmarthen are unable to match the paying power of a club like his former side Aberystwyth Town but Stephen has decided to stay for footballing reasons and be part of what we are trying to build at Carmarthen after three long years in the doldrums.

“I believe that Stephen will be the next player from the league to go onto bigger and better things and the way he has conducted himself during this episode only confirms what a top guy he is and he has already become a very popular member of the dressing room”

## Phillips signs for Lido

Former Port Talbot Town stalwart Gareth Phillips has signed for rivals Afan Lido FC.

It is believed that Phillips will also take up the role of Assistant Manager alongside new boss Paul Reid.

During his spell at the GenQuip stadium, Reid was on the coaching staff so a coaching link-up is a natural step for Phillips.

## End of confusion over Griffiths Pilgrims deal

Rhys Griffiths officially became a Plymouth Argyle player on Monday. He signed a 12 month deal with the Pilgrims who are managed by former Welsh international Carl Fletcher.

Griffiths told the WPL website that "It's a good feeling that's been a long time coming".

He added that "It dawned on me during the summer months that it was a shame that I hadn't played in the Football League so now I'm doing it".

The 32 year old striker also explained how grateful he was to Port Talbot Town for their support during his short stay at the Genquip:

"The club have been great to me and I wish Port Talbot all the best for the coming season. Mark Jones has been superb and has told me that he fully understands my decision".

However Rhys Griffiths emphasised in the interview with the WPL website that the league which he has graced for so many years is still very close to his heart:

"The standard is really improving in the WPL. I've trained with Plymouth for the past week and there are plenty of WPL players who could step up to this standard of football.

I'm going to do all that I can to enjoy my time at Home Park - but one thing's for certain the Welsh Premier League hasn't seen the last of me !"

Griffiths was hailed as a major signing for the Steelmen in June, after returning to the GenQuip stadium following six hugely successful years at Llanelli – but the 32-year-old was offered the chance of a professional contract after a successful trial with the League Two outfit.

“We’re extremely disappointed to lose Rhys so soon after bringing him to the club but we wish him well for the future,” explained chairman Andrew Edwards.

## Long serving midfielder departs Port Talbot

Port Talbot Town have confirmed the departure of popular midfielder Gareth Phillips ahead of the new season, ending a seven-year association with the club. The club statement read;

The 32-year-old first joined the Blues in 2004 and manager Mark Jones was quick to praise the former Swansea City player.

"He's been brilliant for us - he's taken us into Europe and to a Welsh Cup final and has been a great servant to the club."

"He's an ex-professional having been at Swansea City and he carried that through to the Welsh Premier League, conducting himself like a pro in a semi-pro game."

Having broken into the Swansea first-team, Phillips later moved to the GenQuip stadium via spells at Newport County, Merthyr and Carmarthen, with a second one-year spell at Merthyr being sandwiched by his seven seasons at Port Talbot, where he became captain, making 181 league appearances.

Jones added that he has no doubts that Phillips' approach to the game will bode the midfielder well for the future "He's great in training and has the makings, I believe, of being a good coach."

"I've marked him as someone who can go on and do more in the game."

Everyone at Port Talbot Town would like to wish Gareth the very best for the future and thank him for his efforts for the club.



## Old Gold recruit another from Lido

Carmarthen Town have signed midfielder Liam Thomas from Afan Lido. The wideman is the latest player to move to Richmond Park from the Aberavon-based club, as Mark Aizlewood looks to avoid a repeat of the relegation scrap they endured last season.

Another former Lido player, defender Carl Evans has been named as Aizlewood's skipper for the this season, with Tim Hicks taking over the role of club captain.

Other players to have made the switch from Lido to Carmarthen for the start of the season are Leon Jeanne, Craig Hanford and Anthony Finselbach.

## Busy time for WPL Referees in Europe

It's a busy period for Welsh Premier League Referee Lee Evans at the moment. He was in charge of the UEFA Europa League 2nd Qualifying Round game between HR and AIK in Reykjavik (Iceland) and last week he packed his kit bag again heading off to Servette in Switzerland who were hosting Rosenborg of Norway again in the Europa League 3rd Qualifying Round. The match was played at the 30,084 capacity Stade de Geneve, which hosted three group matches in the 2008 UEFA European Championship.

Rosenborg have quite a decent track record in UEFA competition having been in the group stages of the Champions' League on more than one occasion so this is a good appointment for Lee who was assisted by Kim Fisher (Cardiff), Phil Thomas (Trealaw) with Dean John (Swansea) as 4th Official.

On September 3rd, Lee from Llanllechid in Gwynedd, heads back to Switzerland to UEFA HQ for a two day seminar for Europe's Elite, Elite Development and First category referees who will be taking charge of the group stages of both the Champions League and Europa League games.

It does not stop there for Lee because FIFA have appointed him to referee a World Cup Qualification match on September 11th at a match to be advised nearer the time.

FAW Referees' Manager Rodger Gifford commented; "This could only be good for Welsh refereeing at this time. With Mark Whitby and Huw Jones getting games in UEFA Competition as well with our FIFA Assistant Referees also getting appointments, this surely must act as an incentive to take up the whistle.

"Add to this the very positive impression that Bryn Markham-Jones, Lewiss Edwards and Daniel Becket made on the UEFA Centre of Refereeing Excellence (CORE) project for promising young officials the future certainly looks good for Welsh Referees both at home and abroad.

Welsh Referee Observers are also in demand with Cardiff's Ray Ellingham getting his fourth appointment from UEFA this season when he goes to Tbilisi in Georgia for their U21 game with Croatia on August 15th whilst Referees' Manager Rodger Gifford goes to Poland in the 3rd Qualification Round of the Europa League for the game between Lech Poznan and AIK of Sweden on the 9th August and Brian Lawlor goes to Slovakia v France Under 21 on September 7th.

# A sit down with the player manager

from [www.the-nomads.co.uk](http://www.the-nomads.co.uk)



We recently sat down with one of only two Player/Managers in the Welsh Premier League, as Mark McGregor gave us his thoughts ahead of The Nomads' return to the top flight of Welsh football.

**Mark, can you give us a little background as to where you first started to kick a football and how your career developed in your early days?**

I was brought up in Blacon, a quiet suburb just outside of Chester and started playing when I was 10, which by today's standards is quite a late start.

Blacon Youth were my first team and I played with them to their Under 16 team.

**How did you get into the professional game?**

I became a YTS @ Wrexham for 2 years, before going pro with them in 1995 so the wages were near enough non-existent back then.

**What was the highlight of your career?**

That was probably playing in the 1997 FA Cup Quarter Final with Wrexham. We were praying for a big draw but ended up with Chesterfield!! We lost 1 – 0 and they went on to play against Middlesbrough in the Semi Final at Old Trafford. The nearest I get there nowadays is when I take the Mrs. shopping at The Trafford Centre!

I played for Wrexham, Burnley, Blackpool, Port Vale and Altrincham, racking up over 550 League and Cup appearances, with a few goals here and there!

My only real injury came when I was at Burnley where a knee injury kept me on the sidelines for about 4 months, but when I came back, I was playing alongside ex Man Utd and Blackburn Rovers defender David May.

We had a good partnership in defence for the rest of that season

**What is the best team you've played in and who did you play alongside in that team?**

I really enjoyed my time at Wrexham. Playing with Burnley in the Championship was great, but the best time of my career was probably the spell between 1997 and 1999 at The Racecourse.

I played alongside people like Gary Bennett, Bryan Hughes, Dave Brammer and Karl Connolly - all great lads with good careers behind them.

**What's the strongest team/best player you've ever played against?**

Jamie Petrie at training!

Seriously, the list could go on for a while, but the first few that stick out to me were Middlesbrough in the 1999-2000 FA Cup, where Wrexham were lucky enough to beat them 2-1 at The Racecourse with a team containing Gazza and Juninho!!!

I had Juninho in my pocket and the only time Gazza got away from me was in the bar afterwards!

When I was at Burnley we also beat a Tottenham Hotspur side containing Teddy Sheringham and Gus

Poyet – needless to say I had Teddy for pace... because he had none, but what a first touch.

Reading were always a good team as well, very difficult to beat at The Madejski Stadium.

**How did you first become involved in Welsh football and what are your thoughts on the current standard of the WPL?**

My first affiliation came with Wrexham obviously where we won a lot of Welsh cup games, playing teams like Aberystwyth and Newtown. I think we won 4 out of 5 Welsh cups as the club were always dependant on the cash prize in those days, beating the likes of Cardiff and Swansea.

I think that the standard has definitely increased over past 2-3 years, almost to the point where it is probably borderline with the bottom half of Conference skill-wise.

I would say TNS would be able to compete in the conference as they are as good as Newport.

The League just needs a bit of a push media wise to progress really and get a bit more notice taken of it around the country.

The recent nomination of Les Davies of Bangor as a possible European Player of the Year was fantastic for raising the profile of the league.

It's a shame that Jeff Stelling always talks about the results in Scottish divisions 2 and 3 yet doesn't mention the WPL when the result passes on the screen on Soccer Saturday... I think we are better than those teams.

**Do you subscribe to a particular footballing blueprint and can you share a little of it with us?**

I try and get the lads playing how I like to play - plenty of ball retention and keeping it on the ground when you can. We're lucky with the quality of the pitch at The Deeside Stadium, as it is always in a great condition, meaning that we can play the ball around nicely on the surface. It means we can play some fast attacking football but keep the ball in the process.

Over the past two seasons we've managed to average 3 goals a game and we'll be looking to maintain that to help us in the Welsh Premier League this season.

**How do you see the role of the academy teams in relation to the 1st team and the future of the club?**

I think that that Academy couldn't possibly be in a better shape.

I think it is known locally that we have one of the leading academies in North Wales with only Wrexham on par with it and possibly TNS.

There are age groups ranging from U8 - U19, which means over 200 kids from the local community regularly get involved for training and matches, which brings in a great deal of support from their parents who are seeing their kids develop.

It has been great that the Welsh FA are helping to fund The Academy this year, allowing Jay and his team to maintain the same high standards we've had over the past few years, where we have had to rely partly on funding from gap personnel.

A further highlight last season saw 7 of the Under 19's team play for the first team, a great example of how our youth squad not only supports, but integrates with the first team.

We've already earmarked a few of the U16 lads to step up to training with the first team shortly as we can see the potential in them becoming quality players over the next few years. **What do you think the season holds for The Nomads?**

I'm under no illusions... it's going to be a tough season, but the way that we score goals can only help us. You can defend well, but if you don't get a shot on target, you're never going to score and win a game.

I think we've been handed a tough test with the first three games of the season being against three of the biggest spenders in the league, but that's what we're here for, to ply our trade against the best teams out there, and if we can come away from those first three games with four points, I'll be happy, no delighted!

## **Ex-Lakesider Williams signs for Denbigh Town**

Danny Williams has signed for Welsh Alliance League club Denbigh Town.

During the 2008-09 season he enjoyed a successful season with Rhy1 in the Welsh Premier, winning the league before a short spell with Droylsden. The last two seasons he played for Bala under Colin Caton before signing at Central Park.

Williams had featured in pre-season friendly wins at Neston, Llangollen and Ellesmere Port before committing for the forthcoming season. Everyone is delighted to have Danny on board and his signing completes a busy summer of recruitment.

Assistant managers Gav Garrigan and Tommy Mutton are delighted with the news with Mutton commenting "Danny is a midfielder with pure ability and a great passing range. He makes the team tick and plays the game at his pace making it look simple. More importantly he brings the best out of his team mates. After a great summer of new signings for us he is the icing on the cake. Hopefully his addition will enable us to make a big challenge for the title this year."

Manager Richard Williams-Cooke is equally as happy saying

"This must be one of the greatest ever signings by the club. To get someone of Danny's experience and ability is a great coup and shows the ambition that the club has. Over the last year or two Danny hasn't played as much as he wanted due to injuries and other things so he is looking forward to the season and just loves playing football. He knows a few of the other lads from his time at Bala and came highly recommended by Colin Caton."

On a whole, I think that if we finish above 10th, it would be a steady first season back as we look to RE establish ourselves as a Premier League team and then push on from there.

As we know, it's going to be a lot tougher than the Cymru Alliance!

**If you were on a day off which team would you go and watch and why?**

I usually go and do a bit of homework and try and watch whoever we are next up against in the league. I've been getting to quite a few of the Airbus and Vauxhall Motors games recently and I am really impressed with the setup of our neighbours in Broughton. They are a great example for North Wales football.

I'm always looking for new methods and training ideas as well, so I'll often go and check out new teams and see what their warm ups consist of and see if there's anything that we can learn from them.

**As one of only two player/managers in the WPL how do you reconcile your managerial and your playing duties**

I love it! I'm not ready to stand on the sidelines full time yet and I find it a lot easier to connect with the players by playing alongside them rather than shouting from the sideline. I wouldn't change it at all, and love being a Player/Manager in the Welsh Premier League.

**Show Racism the  Card**

## Pre-Season Friendlies

Sat	23	June	The New Saints	v	Cefn Druids	5-0
Tue	26	June	Cefn Druids	v	Bangor City	0-2
Sat	30	June	Linfield FC	v	Bangor City	1-1
Sat	30	June	The New Saints	v	Conwy Borough	2-0
Sat	30	June	Llanelli AFC	v	Monmouth Town	4-1
Sat	7	July	Blacon FC	v	Gap Connah's Quay	0-6
Sat	7	July	Prestatyn Town	v	Eagle Sports	P-P
Sat	7	July	The New Saints	v	Wingate & Finchley	2-1
Tue	10	July	The New Saints	v	Bridgnorth Town	4-0
Tue	10	July	Gap Connah's Quay	v	Runcorn Town	3-1
Tue	10	July	AFC Porth	v	Port Talbot Town	0-3
Fri	13	July	The New Saints	v	Nuneaton Town	1-1
Sat	14	July	Airbus UK Broughton	v	Barrow FC	2-1
Sat	14	July	Ballymena United	v	Port Talbot Town	1-1 (in Dublin)
Sat	14	July	Aberystwyth Town	v	Wrexham	1-2
Sat	14	July	Afan Lido FC	v	Cambrian & Clydach B&G	3-1
Sat	14	July	Barry Town	v	Carmarthen Town	2-3
Sat	14	July	Caernarfon Town	v	Gap Connah's Quay	0-3
Sat	14	July	Glossop North End	v	Bala Town	0-1
Sat	14	July	Porthmadog FC	v	Newtown AFC	1-4
Sat	14	July	Prestatyn Town	v	Wingate & Finchley	2-0
Sun	15	July	Port Talbot Town	v	Bohemian FC	6-0 (in Dublin)
Tue	17	July	Colwyn Bay	v	Bangor City	3-2
Tue	17	July	Gap Connah's Quay	v	Vauxhall Motors	4-1
Tue	17	July	Airbus UK Broughton	v	Cammell Laird FC	4-1
Thu	19	July	Trefelin	v	Afan Lido FC	
Sat	21	July	Aberystwyth Town	v	Goytre United	3-4
Sat	21	July	Airbus UK Broughton	v	Southport	0-0
Sat	21	July	Barmouth & Dyffryn	v	Bala Town	0-3
Sat	21	July	Carmarthen Town	v	Newport County	3-1
Sat	21	July	Prestatyn Town	v	Dukinfield Town	6-2
Sat	21	July	Port Talbot Town	V	Swansea City	0-5
Sat	21	July	Wellington Amateurs	v	Newtown AFC	1-2
Sat	21	July	Stockport Sports	v	Gap Connah's Quay	2-1
Tue	24	July	Airbus UK Broughton	v	Buckley Town	3-0
Tue	24	July	Port Talbot Town	v	Cheltenham Town	1-1
Tue	24	July	Bala Town	v	Wrexham	1-3
Tue	24	July	Bridgend Town	v	Afan Lido FC	3-2
Tue	24	July	Gap Connah's Quay	v	Glantraeth	4-1
Tue	24	July	Holywell Town	v	Prestatyn Town	0-0
Tue	24	July	Conwy Borough	v	Bangor City	1-1
Wed	25	July	Aberystwyth Town	v	Swansea City	1-2
Fri	27	July	Ely Rangers	v	Port Talbot Town	1-5
Sat	28	July	Aberystwyth Town	v	Tata Steel	5-0
Sat	28	July	Bangor City	v	Ashton Athletic	8-0
Sat	28	July	Briton Ferry Llansawel	v	Llanelli AFC	2-3
Sat	28	July	Carmarthen Town	v	Swansea City XI	1-1
Sat	28	July	Gap Connah's Quay	v	AFC Fylde	0-2
Sat	28	July	Newtown AFC	v	Llanidloes Town	4-1
Sat	28	July	Prestatyn Town	v	Rochdale Town	1-0
Sat	28	July	Runcorn Town	v	Bala Town	0-2
Sat	28	July	The New Saints	v	Leeds United	3-1
Sat	28	July	Trafford FC	v	Airbus UK Broughton	1-0
Sat	28	July	West End FC	v	Afan Lido FC	1-7
Tue	31	July	Airbus UK Broughton	v	Chester FC	3-0
Tue	31	July	Bow Street FC	v	Aberystwyth Town	1-6
Tue	31	July	Newtown AFC	v	AFC Telford United	0-4
Tue	31	July	Prestatyn Town	v	Nantwich Town	1-6
Tue	31	July	Ruthin Town	v	Bala Town	0-1
Tue	31	July	Llanelli AFC	v	Yeovil Town	3-5
Thu	2	Aug	Aberaman Athletic	v	Afan Lido FC	2-2
Thu	2	Aug	Tata Steel FC	v	Port Talbot Town	1-2

Fri	3	Aug	Salford City	v	Gap Connah's Quay	0-2
Sat	4	Aug	Aberystwyth Town	v	Cambrian & Clydach	2-2
Sat	4	Aug	Briton Ferry Llansawel	v	Port Talbot Town	1-5
Sat	4	Aug	Bangor City	v	Everton XI	0-6
Sat	4	Aug	AFC Porth	v	Afan Lido FC	2-1
Sat	4	Aug	Bamber Bridge	v	Bala Town	1-1
Sat	4	Aug	Clitheroe FC	v	Airbus UK Broughton	3-2
Sat	4	Aug	Skelmersdale United	v	Airbus UK Broughton	1-1
Sat	4	Aug	Newtown AFC	v	Guilsfield FC	3-0
Sat	4	Aug	Taffs Well FC	v	Carmarthen Town	0-1
Sun	5	Aug	Llanelli AFC	v	Swansea City	1-1
Tue	7	Aug	Goytre United	v	Port Talbot Town	19:15
Tue	7	Aug	Holyhead Hotspur	v	Bangor City	19:30
Tue	7	Aug	Rhyl FC	v	Airbus UK Broughton	19:30
Tue	7	Aug	Tata Steel FC	v	Afan Lido FC	18:30
Fri	10	Aug	Llanelli AFC	v	Truro City	19:30
Sat	11	Aug	Airbus UK Broughton	v	Colwyn Bay	15:00
Sat	11	Aug	Bridgewater Town	v	Afan Lido FC	15:00
Sat	11	Aug	Chester FC	v	Bangor City	15:00
Sat	11	Aug	Cwmbran Town	v	Carmarthen Town	14:30
Sat	11	Aug	Gap Connah's Quay	v	Trafford FC	14:30
Sat	11	Aug	Nantwich Town	v	Bala Town	15:00
Sat	11	Aug	Newtown AFC	v	Hednesford Town	14:30
Sat	11	Aug	Porthmadog FC	v	Aberystwyth Town	15:00
Sat	11	Aug	Prestatyn Town	v	Rhyl FC	14:30



**Welsh Football Issue 159 has been published and is available to order. This is the first edition of 2012-13 and contains previews of the coming season**

**Other features in this issue include:**

- **full coverage, with many photos, of the UEFA Champions League and Europa League games in July featuring The New Saints, Bangor City, Llanelli and Cefn Druids**
- **feature on the Wales Women's squad and their Euro 2013 campaign**
- **Club features on CLWB CYMRIC and TYWYN BRYNCRUG**
- **Statistical highs and lows of 2011-12 in our "Best & Worst in Wales" feature**
- **History feature on Aberdare football marking the revival of the name Aberdare Town this season**

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Compiled by Mel Thomas at Soccerfile Wales

[mel@soccerfilewales.com](mailto:mel@soccerfilewales.com) Tel/Fax: 01766 830805

POSTAL COPIES distributed from WPL, 11 / 12 Neptune Court, Cardiff CF24 5PJ

Contact: Lucy Kelly via [lkelly@faw.co.uk](mailto:lkelly@faw.co.uk) or 02920 435 847