**Young Dragons fall to strong English side**

**A solid performance from England was enough to see off Wales in this derby affair between two British university heavyweights.**

Wales had the better of the opening quarter of the match, with Chris Miethke bringing his strong Glamorgan form with him into the clash and creating two big opportunities for his side.

Though Wales failed to capitalise on their chances and England got a grip of the game after some tactical changes from manager Steve Guinan.

Marcus Giglio gave his side the lead after 20 minutes, with goals from Sam MacVicar and a second-half brace from substitute Joe Lolley put the seal on a resounding win for a promising England side.

Coming into the friendly clash at Jenner Park in Barry, Steve Savage and his squad – made up of players from a selection of Welsh universities - were in a positive mood having picked up a draw at home to Scotland in Wrexham last month.

This team spirit was clear to see early on when University of Glamorgan player of the season, Miethke managed to make space down the right hand side before seeing his fired-in-cross well cleared.

But England were struggling to cope with the pressure down the right, and just 30 seconds later Miethke was in the same position again - this time Wales came even closer to breaking the deadlock with the pulled back cross rifling against the crossbar, before being cleared.

Wales were playing some nice football in the opening spells, with midfielders dropping deep to collect the ball from the defence, before working their way forward. This almost paid off when Adrian Hopkins of Cardiff Met was played in at an angle, but his shot was saved down low by Jonathan North in the England goals.

Three Lions’ manager Guinan – still currently playing for Conference National side Kidderminster Harriers – could see that, with Wales constantly finding space and creating chances, this game was only going one way at this stage.

A couple of tactical changes later and England were right back into the contest, creating opportunities of their own. The first of these fell to Hakeem Araba who charged down on goal before being brought down by ‘keeper Will Fuller just outside the area.

The referee decided against sending off Fuller to the dismay of Araba, who pointed out to the referee that the Welsh goalkeeper was the last man.

This was the first sign England showed of their attacking intent, and just two minutes after the controversial decision to keep Fuller on the field, Ben Brighton found the ball at his feet inside the penalty box, but his poked effort was well saved by Fuller.

Though Wales failed to clear their lines and England continued to push on, with Giglio the man to give his side the lead. A pulled back cross was picked up by the TNS player whose dummied shot left Fuller stranded in goal, before he calmly tapped the ball home.

Former Northampton Town forward Joe Benjamin, who had been a spectator up until this point, grew into the game more and more as the first half wore on. His fantastic skill and vision almost put his team in on goal again, but the linesman adjudged Giglio to be offside.

Benjamin showed another glimpse of his ability when his outside-of-the-foot cross-field pass managed to create another England attack - this coming just minutes after the current Billericay Town player fired a strong effort in on goal, which was well saved.

Despite all of the visitors openings on goal, Wales managed to break away after a cleared corner led to Chris Davey finding himself in on goal from a tight angle, but his curling effort was narrowly wide of the far post to the relief of ‘keeper North, who will claim to have had it covered.

A five minute period of play which saw both sides try and build play through their defensive midfielders, eventually came to a close when England worked the ball wide before crossing to MacVicar who turned inside the box and found the back of the net to double his sides lead.

It was a tough blow for Wales just five minutes before half-time, though their failure to cut out the cross eventually meant that Savage’s men would go in at the break with a mountain to climb if they were to get anything out of the game.

Though as has been clear right throughout Glamorgan’s own campaign under Savage this season, his side would not roll over, and they managed to put together some positive passing moves. Though ultimately there was to be no end product as substitute goalkeeper James Broadbent – who conceded three times on his last appearance in South Wales against Glam – was equal to any efforts.

This would prove costly as England showed no sign of sitting on their lead, creating chances through the middle with only the offside flag saving the Dragons from conceding a third with 48 minutes on the clock.

Against the run of play Davey found himself with another chance to get an effort in on goal on the hour mark after a nice ball over the top, but the Swansea University player let the ball get away from him and the chance passed Wales by.

That was to be the end of the hosts chances as Lolley - who came on with 30 minutes of the game remaining – got the first of his two goals after finding the back of the net following a scrappy corner which wasn’t dealt with.

This coming after Will Hutton had a chance of his own to extend his sides lead, but his effort was well saved by Fuller, though the resulting corner was delivered perfectly and the game was now all over at 3-0.

It was a case of England being professional and seeing the game out, but they managed more than that as Lolley was again in on goal after beating the offside trap and slotting the ball home to make it 4-0 to the away side.

With the temperature falling to -2°C the referee signalled the end of a match that was all-but-over by half-time, due to a strong and solid England performance against a Wales side who finished second in last year’s BUCS Home Nations tournament in Nottingham.

Speaking after his side’s victory, journeyman player-cum-coach Guinan applauded Wales’s promising start to the match.

He said: “We started really slowly and it’s fair to say that Wales were the brighter side in the opening 20 minutes.

“We struggled to get a firm grip on the game, but we tweaked our formation and started to play our own game.

“We scored two very good goals, and then there was only really one side in the game after we saw it through.”

Though the mood was different outside the Wales dressing room as Savage reflected on his sides defeat, pointing to the failure to take chances as they came.

“Put simply, we didn’t take our opportunities as they came,” Sav began.

“We did create some good chances against a strong and dynamic England side and we have now got to build on this ahead of tournament football.”

“It’s a case of taking our chances when we get them.”