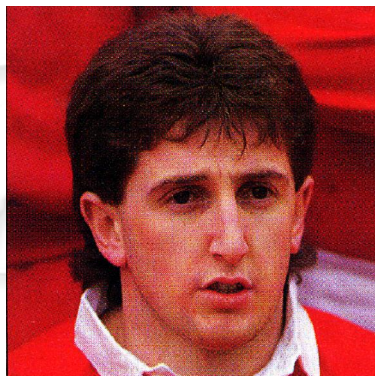


SPORTING LEGENDS: JONATHAN DAVIES

SPORT: RUGBY

COMPETITIVE ERA: 1982 - 1997

Jonathan Davies (born 24 October 1962, Trimsaran, Carmarthenshire) is a former Welsh dual-code rugby international.



Age 17, Jonathan left school and became an apprentice painter and decorator. After developing at Trimsaran RFC, he was given a trial with Llanelli but was rejected. Neath gave him another chance and he signed with them in 1982, selected to play at fly-half.

After 35 games for Neath he was selected to play for Wales, against England at home in the Cardiff Arms Park. After scoring a try and a drop goal, Davies was named Man of the Match in the Welsh victory. Jonathan was made Captain at Neath before being transferred to Llanelli. In 1988 he played a very important part in the Triple Crown success for Wales and between 1985 and 1997 he won 37 rugby union caps.

Problems in the Welsh game were cruelly exposed on the 1988 New Zealand tour, with injuries meaning Davies captained the side in four games - he stood out as the class player. The two tests were lost by fifty point margins, although Davies did score a 90 metre try in the second. Davies returned with ideas for Welsh rugby on how it could improve - he was ignored.

Davies was blamed in the media for the surprising Welsh defeat to Romania. As Llanelli placed pressure on him from the WRU to commit himself wholeheartedly to them, he controversially decided for the best interests of his family to move to the rugby league team Widnes, who signed him for £225,000.

After Widnes got into financial difficulties he moved to their local rivals Warrington. He represented both Great Britain and Wales at rugby league as well as playing with Australian team Canterbury Bulldogs.

SPORTING LEGENDS: JONATHAN DAVIES



Davies was the leading star of the Welsh Rugby Team during the 80s.

Davies had small stints playing with Australian rugby league teams the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs in 1991, and the North Queensland Cowboys in 1995. A huge signing with fantastic potential for the Cowboys squad, was unfortunately unable to get out to Australia until mid way through the 1995 Winfield Cup Premiership.

Thus the Cowboys were already looking down and out for the year and the team morale was rather low. He showed signs of brilliance, especially in a fantastic full field try against the Newcastle Knights in Newcastle. But he was openly critical of the infant club's administration and struggled to have an impact week in and week out, resulting in a release from the club.

After the birth of daughter Gena in 1995, Davies' wife Karen was diagnosed with cancer. In need of family support and as rugby union had turned professional, Davies went back to South Wales and signed to play for Cardiff RFC.

Davies had a lot of trouble readjusting to rugby union, particularly as he was played out of position: despite the fact that he had played many different positions in league he had only ever played fly-half in union. Many thought that his team mates deliberately did not pass the ball to him as they considered him a traitor for 'going North' in the first place.

On a guest appearance on A Question of Sport in 1995 he was asked what the biggest change was after returning to rugby union. Davies replied *"It's the first time I've been cold for seven years. I was never cold playing rugby league."*

In 1996 Davies was awarded an MBE and went with his family to Buckingham Palace to collect his award. Sadly in 1997, his wife Karen died.

Davies was also the boss of Super League side Celtic Crusaders, until 2009, when he was replaced by David Watkins.

SPORTING LEGENDS: JONATHAN DAVIES



Scott Burton's Final Thought

Jonathan Davies is certainly one of most recognisable faces of Welsh rugby over the past quarter of a century.

He gave an awful lot to the sport, and in return, the sport gave him the platform to become a national hero for Wales.

His technical ability and speed made him stand out from the rest, and the rest, as they say, is historyõ



Another trophy for the Jonathan Davies collection!