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VARSITY CHAMPIONS 2026

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A Note From the Editor

This year was my first time at Varsity, despite being in third year. I remember last year the FOMO of seeing so many other people enjoying themselves and celebrating the success of our sports teams. I'm glad to say that this year I was able to join in with the crowds of slightly rowdy and certainly passionate students. The day was warm and relaxed, and I will remember it in years to come as a highlight of my University experience.



Myself and the deputy editors attended Tennis, later basketball and, after a brief stop at the Men's Cricket, the Rugby at Arms Park. With so much to see, it was impossible to attend everything, luckily our team was able to be out and about, taking notes, getting pictures, collecting comments, and soaking up the vibes. From Llanrumney to Sport Wales, the Students' Union and Talybont, our team was out and about mixing a spot of journalism into their days, thank you to everyone who has contributed.

Although my own knowledge of sport can be a bit patchy, the passion, skill and determination of our sports teams was obvious from the start of the day. The play was exciting to watch, made all the more enjoyable by opportunity for some light-hearted Swansea-bashing.

For myself, and for anyone else who was able to get a ticket, the Men's Rugby at Arms Park was surely a highlight. Whilst in the first few minutes a Swansea victory seemed possible, as the game went on the Cardiff side took the lead, scoring dramatic try after dramatic try. Our victory was a further relief for myself as it made for an obvious choice of front page!
I want to also extend my thanks to the Students' Union, who made an effort to accommodate us at venues which allowed us to gather photos and content on the day.

We hope you enjoy reading this souvenir of a memorable day.





"

Welsh Varsity 2026 was a fantastic day for all, it saw record number of students all across the city once again showing everyone how amazing Team Cardiff is. To see everyone's hard work and effort go into the day did not go amiss with another smoothly run day, with athletes and supporters on their best form. As well with the shield and cup both retaining their rightful place in Cardiff, showing everyones hard work paying off, for yet another incredible year of Welsh Varsity.

Molly Elliot, VP Sports 25-26

Image credit: Cardiff Students' Union

Cardiff Netball Take Revenge at 2026 Welsh Varsity

Ella Simons
Head of News

Cardiff.....(55)
Swansea.....(37)

Welsh Varsity 2026 saw overwhelming success for Cardiff with CUNC adding their own win to Cardiff's impressive scoreline.

Another year of Welsh Varsity meant a tense match for Netball after a late defeat for CUNC last year. This year however, CUNC took back their title, winning 55-37 against Swansea, reclaiming glory after a shocking last minute defeat in last year's game. The girls on court were out for revenge and fought for a stunning win for all those in red on home turf.

Last year saw late heartbreak for Cardiff, Swansea were victorious which ended Cardiff's 14 year reign as Varsity champions. The game ended in a close 42-40 which went in the Swans' favour and named them the unlikely champions in a tense final few minutes for both sides. An excellent performance from both teams, yet Swansea were able to edge it in the final moments of play. However, this lit a fire under our girls who this year were a clear threat to Swansea to reclaim their top spot.

Despite the new changes for accessing high profile events such as Netball, the support was still a huge part of the game with roars of support from our students. Sport Wales National Centre once again was packed with students dressed in red and green who were separated by the players on the court with cheers and screams coming from both sides. The end of the last quarter and the final whistle prompted a sea of red flooding onto the court, to celebrate with our champions as they were once again named the rightful Welsh Varsity champions with their 18 goal lead.

Image Credits: Cardiff Students' Union





Team Captain Sienna Black shares her thoughts.

How does it feel to take back your varsity win?

"After losing last year, we were all really motivated to put things right. We knew we were good enough and that we deserved the win, so it feels amazing to take it back and finish my last game for CUNC on such a high."

How did you find the support from the Cardiff students?

"The support from the Cardiff students made a huge difference. When the score was tight early on, their energy really helped us keep momentum and step it up. The noise and encouragement pushed us in key moments, especially when we needed to turn over the ball and convert our shots."

What was a key memorable moment for you as a team during the match?

"Definitely when the final whistle went and the whole club ran onto the court. Being able to celebrate that moment together, with all your friends around you, is something you don't forget."



Cardiff Men Triumphant at Arms Park

Luke James
Sports Editor

What a glorious day it was on Wednesday, the perfect occasion for rugby. The crowd was packed, songs sung either side of the field by passionate support. And what a spectacle of rugby union were we treated to. The finale score of 32-15 seems like Cardiff were dominant throughout but is that the whole story?

Swansea led at half-time 15-10, Cardiff unable to convert any points off the tee. A brilliant steal and then try by Finn Charles in the 40th minute brought the home side within one score at the break.

But the real story of that half was Swansea's defence. Cardiff pushed and pushed but were held up on multiple occasions, turned over, and out-mauled. It seemed to be clinical defence, desperate, but borderline perfect.

The old question of does running rugby beat a set piece game was presented with a seemingly clear answer after the first 40. Swansea were on top, and they were fired up. James Price, the Swansea captain was having a stormer of a match, and his halfback pairing of Kai Inker and Llew O'Brien performed excellently under pressure as well as played such a good tactical game.

"The first half felt like a real battle between two old enemies"

However, Cardiff's Tomi Booth at 10, Finn Charles at 9, and Charlie Brook at fullback kept their side alive, including really clever tactical kicking to force Swansea back and presses the gainline. Booth's 50-22 whilst turning showed where Cardiff were best - the open play boot. They found touch easier and made more distance, partially because of the wind in the first half.

Yet Swansea had an advantage at scrum time, winning a penalty and generating ground in that department. Surely the scrum could bring them back into the game? This ended up turning on its head, and all of a sudden the running team was set piece dominant. Cengarle, and Twigg were excellent in this facet, with Twigg even putting through a nifty kick gaining much territory. The first half felt like a real battle between two old enemies. Swansea had the advantage but the pressure was slowly enveloping them, their defence stretched over and over and at some point it had to break. But throughout the first half they held strong, pressuring Cardiff, taking sensible kicking options including 3 points (one of only two kicks to go through the posts the entire match).

"Those wearing red could see clearly that they were on their way to another victory"

In particular, Kai Inker's ability around the ruck gave his side great encouragement, his early try with a quick chip and chase over Brook to regather and score and showed how red hot Swansea could be with momentum in their favour. Repeated efforts fell short but so did Cardiff's. Swansea looked more solid throughout the first half and it could be said they seemed more confident, or fired up, maybe due to the energy and anger from being relegated out of BUCS Super Rugby for next season. Whatever it was, Cardiff seemed to be the lesser team heading in at the break, Swansea were dominant.

However, with 40 remaining, Cardiff ran back onto the field and went on the charge. Twenty-two unanswered points, four tries. Dylan line at hooker (and later in the back row) had a remarkable game, and could have deserved man of the match. Captain Billy Moxey went over in a powerful push, displaying that his place was not only his leadership but also his ability as an 8th man. But Mason Archer's scores in the corner came from the back off pure brilliance all round. Cardiff's lineout was also solid, making steals and keeping the pressure on Swansea.

It felt that the men in green had no chance to score, Cardiff's defence had improved and their spirit was through the roof. Ruck after ruck, tackle after tackle, those wearing red could see clearly that they were on their way to another victory and there was nothing Swansea could do about it.

"Cardiff are deserving winners, across all three rugby matches"

The tackle on Archer to stop a certain try and instead holding up was incredible by Swansea but it was too little in the long run. Gaps started appearing on the short side and Cardiff started running through it. Tom Unsworth made a great break to advance into the 22 from the 10 before being brought down by frantic defence. Despite leading at the start, Swansea always felt like they were chasing the game, and it most certainly escaped their clutches. Ellis Davies had a fantastic match when he came onto the field, acting as both the first and second receiver, doing well defensively but also on fire on the attack. His running lines were excellent and game management pinpoint. But praise, and quite a lot of it, should be directed to Finn Charles. His energy and his heads-up rugby brought Cardiff back into the game. His try gave his side half-time momentum, and his passing kept the going again and again, always looking for the wide channel and metres you couldn't predict. Letting his forwards carry into contact gave him the space to launch the backs with dynamic shapes, as well as going himself at times.

Luke Rowley also did a great job at scrum half but to me Charles was the best player of the match, even more so than Dylan Line. Where Cardiff spotted gaps, miss-passes and attacking balls were thrown with total confidence, and they usually worked. Even if they only gained 5 metres it still added to the Swansea pressure, which eventually capitulated in dramatic fashion. Oliver Lewis' yellow card summed up what went wrong - frustration led to mistakes, leading to foul play and penalties.

Cardiff are deserving winners, across all three rugby matches and the wider varsity. The men's team did the university proud, pushing their opponent back when under pressure, and coming through to get on top and defeat Swansea despite initially trailing.

The skill displayed from both sides was impressive, but Cardiff truly were at their best when they were flying.

Image Credit: Cardiff Students' Union





Cardiff Thrash Swansea with 80 Points in Womens Rugby

Ifan Meredith
Taf-Od Editor

Cardiff's Women Rugby team came out victorious at this year's Welsh Varsity by thrashing Swansea with an 81 point to 0 following a 90 minutes show of performance by the Cardiff side.

This year's match was back in the Cardiff Arms Park after the game was forced to be moved last year to the Principality Stadium after Cardiff Rugby fell into administration. Cardiff Womens Rugby achieved the thrilling 13-try win over Swansea after showing courage in front of a home crowd for the second time in a row for the Welsh Varsity.

Cardiff entered the game in confidence after their 102-7 win against Swansea in last year's Welsh Varsity and after 6 minutess of play, managed to pass the Swansea defence and score their first try following a penalty conceded by Swansea. Three minutess later, Cardiff scored again and a conversion took them to 12 points up in the first 10 minutess.

Their final try of the first half came following a scrum in Cardiff's own half and a show of teamwork by the side which saw Karo Thomas accelerate towards the tryline and offloaded the ball to Eva Lewis to finish the job – Cardiff 43, Swansea 0.

As the referee blew the whistle for half time, the score stood at 45-0 for Cardiff as they rushed in 6 tries in total and it was obvious from the half time point that Cardiff were no force to be reckoned with and would come through triumph.

Throughout the game, Cardiff showed courage and resiliance as they constantly battled although having a clear lead from early on. Defensively, Cardiff remained strong to ensure a clean sheet and that Swansea stayed at 0 points.

As the second half got underway, what followed was an accumulation of scores as an additional 36 points was added by the 90th minutes and the first of those scores came only 3 minutess in as the side scored their 7th try to take the total to 52.

The last points of the came came Cardiff's way after 74 minutess as Cleo Pallister-Turley crossed the line for Cardiff as the final nail in Swansea's coffin. The final score, Cardiff 81, Swansea 0.

Speaking to Gair Rhydd, the loose head for the Cardiff side, Swyn Prysor said that: "playing varsity was a great opportunity, and was definitely a brilliant way to finish off my university career."

"The game was a testament to how hard the team has worked all season, especially coming up against such difficult opposition, and a great way to end the year."

"We talked a lot during the training camp about playing a fast game and really challenging Swansea, and I do believe that the 81-0 score reflected that. The explosive, expressive game we worked on also showed the talent of the squad, with 13 players scoring a try each in what was a great display of our style of rugby here in Cardiff."

This was Swyn's last appearance on the pitch for Cardiff Women's Rugby and was also a way to end on a high for their Head Coach, "It was also a great send off for our Head Coach, Nic, who has really pushed our standards as a club to get us to perform at that level, and we as a club cannot thank her enough."

"Swansea had some dangerous spells, with the girls managing to keep them away from the tryline with some excellent tackling and patience. Celebrating on the field with the team was spectacular, and was great to see all of our hard work paying off."

They managed the 81 point win in front of 10,000 student crowd and it's fair to say that the celebrations with the evening reflecting their triumph which contributed to Cardiff's total win of 42.5 points to Swansea's 9.5.

Image Credits: Cardiff Students' Union





LLANRUMNEY

Cardiff Cobras take on Swansea Titans in an Unsurprising Win



Ruby Collins
Head of Review

Cardiff.....(37)
Swansea.....(12)

With an exciting introduction by the Cardiff Snakecharmers Team, the Cardiff Cobras were determined not only to beat Swansea, but ensure they kept as much room between the two teams' scores as possible.

Despite the Cobra's unwavering confidence coming into the game, Wales Varsity's American Football score history is surprisingly mixed. Looking at Gair Rhydd's pre-Covid statistics, from 2015 onwards, the Wales' teams have been in tight competition. Before 2020, Swansea frequently dominated the Welsh Varsity American Football scene— a fact that the team has worked hard to change over the last few years.

These raised ambitions have been prompted by Cardiff Cobras' Head Coach Shaun Vaughn, who draws on his experience with the Bristol Aztecs and GB U19. Having reversed their history of losses, Cardiff's American Football Society now comfortably take on Swansea each year at Varsity: a legacy which this year's match helped develop.

With a kickoff from the Cardiff Cobras, the first quarter of the game began. While the crowd remained interested and attentive during what can often be an intermittent, on-and-off game, the Cobras allowed little intrigue as to the final score. At half time, the score sat at 21-12 to Cardiff, with Swansea having scored two touchdowns and sitting at nine points below the Cobras. In speaking to members of Cardiff's team and management, it was clear that for many Cobra players, this half-time advantage was not enough— they wanted to win in the most dominant fashion possible.

In a post-match interview with Vaughn, he revealed that the Cobras entered the game with the hope of preventing the Titans from scoring any points altogether.

For them, merely winning wasn't the goal, and instead they wanted the quality of the game to reflect the Cobra's growth as a team.

Two hours into the game, it was clear that the Cobras wouldn't allow the Titans to make any more touchdowns, with the score reflecting this at 36-12 to Cardiff. As the final quarter came to an end, Cardiff excitedly celebrated their victory with a score of 37-12. Energised by their success and contribution to Cardiff's impending 2026 win of the Welsh varsity shield, team morale was high. Chants could be heard by any remaining supporters on the sidelines— 'if you ain't Swansea, shoes off!'

Speaking to Shawn Vaughn, he also told Gair Rhydd of a few names that deserved extra attention and celebration for their performance in the match. Oliver Luck (number Eighteen), Louis Reece and George Owen (the Cobra's defence), all stood out for their effort and perseverance despite the game not playing out how they had imagined.

Although some team members might have hoped for a cleaner victory, the Cobras won comprehensively, which their excitement and scoreline reflected. A massive congratulations for their hard work through a long match against the competitive Titans.



Image Credits: Cardiff Students' Union





Cardiff Ladies End Swansea's Three-Year Reign in Dramatic Shootout

Olvia Griffin and Oliver Hanlon
News Editors

Cardiff University Ladies Football secured a dramatic Varsity victory over Swansea, prevailing on penalties after a fiercely contested 2–2 draw in normal time.

Neither side was willing to yield across the ninety minutes, with the match played at a relentless intensity that reflected its derby-day significance. The anticipation had been building long before kick-off and the atmosphere did not disappoint, as both teams fought for bragging rights.

Despite chances at both ends, the deadlock could not be broken in open play. Cardiff twice found the net, matched each time by Swansea, leaving the scoreline level at full-time and forcing the contest into a penalty shoot-out.

Under immense pressure Cardiff held their nerve to claim victory from the spot, bringing an end to Swansea's three-year Varsity winning streak and marking a significant moment for the Cardiff side.

Striker Freya Bostock proved pivotal, scoring a crucial headed goal during the match. Speaking after the game, she reflected on both the personal and collective achievement: "It was such a great win today, honestly I'm so happy. After three years being here, in my third year we finally got a win. I scored a header, my first Varsity goal – I'm buzzing right now."

Teammate Poppy Bridgen highlighted the unique pressure of the occasion, noting that while matches against Swansea can often feel routine, Varsity presents a different challenge: "When we play against Swansea it's normally a walk in the park, but Varsity is so much harder because the pressure is so much higher."

The penalty shoot-out tested Cardiff's composure, but preparation paid off. "We did a lot of practice on penalties thankfully," Bridgen explained. "I felt confident, but I was so scared when it was my turn. I just had to believe in myself and the others." Taking the penultimate penalty, she admitted to growing nerves but maintained her focus: "I just needed to believe in myself and the team – and we came out on top!"

With Varsity glory secured and the league title already in hand, Cardiff now turn their attention to upcoming play-off fixtures, where promotion to the top tier remains within reach.



CUFC Claim Fifth Consecutive Varsity Shield in a 3-0 Win

Mael Le Paih
Sports Editor

Cardiff.....(3)
Swansea.....(0)

Cardiff University Men's FC secured a dominant 3-0 victory over Swansea in this year's Welsh Varsity, claiming their fifth consecutive Shield. Giles Basson at the double and fresher Jacob Jones' masterful finish sealed the result at Llanrumney Sports Fields in front of a packed crowd of Cardiff and Swansea supporters.

It was a cagey start, as you'd expect from a Varsity fixture, but Cardiff gained momentum through dominant spells of possession. Pressing high and keeping the ball well in Swansea's half, attacking midfielder Paul Sunley was unlucky not to find a goal, testing Swansea numerous times. The Swans only real outlet was the counter-attack, which kept Cardiff honest and keeper Oliver Bounsall alert. Cardiff's defensive shape held firm though, and it was only a matter of time before the pressure told. Defensive midfielder Rob Elms won the penalty late in the first half and Basson stepped up, slotting bottom right to send Cardiff in 1-0 at the break.

The second half saw Cardiff pick up where they left off. Fresher Jacob Jones came off the bench, latched onto a ball over the top and found himself through on goal and coolly chipped the keeper to make it 2-0. Swansea continued to apply pressure and Cardiff remained disciplined defensively. In the closing stages of the game Basson provided a bit of trademark trickery in the box, finishing bottom right to seal his brace for 3-0 and the deserved win.

Captain Kori Parker led an organised and disciplined side, controlling the midfield battle and ensuring Cardiff never lost their shape. The defence and goalkeeper Oliver Bounsall kept a comfortable clean sheet from back to front, rarely tested but composed when called upon.

In the club's fifth varsity win in a row, Llanrumney was electric from kick off and provided the perfect backdrop of emotion, erupting when Jacob Jones' doubled the lead. Cardiff's red and Swansea's green surrounded the pitch, setting an intense atmosphere throughout that spurred both sides on.

Cardiff were the better side on the day and the Varsity win rounds off a strong season. Swansea showed brief moments of intent early on but were ultimately outclassed. With next year's fixture in Swansea, Cardiff will head there looking to make it six in a row.

Up the 'Diff.



SHENANIGANS

VARSITY RESULTS 2026

ROWING

KARATE

SAILING

EQUESTRIAN

MEN'S CYCLING

WOMEN'S CYCLING

ATHLETICS

MEN'S CANOE POLO

WOMEN'S CANOE POLO

GOLF

TRIATHLON

SWIMMING (SHORT COURSE)

CLAY PIGEON SHOOTING

CLIMBING

MIXED TABLE TENNIS

KICKBOXING

WOMEN'S TENNIS

MEN'S TENNIS

POWERLIFTING

NETBALL

WOMEN'S BADMINTON

ARCHERY

MEN'S BADMINTON - DRAW

TAE KWON DO











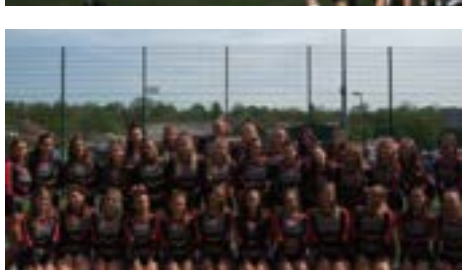


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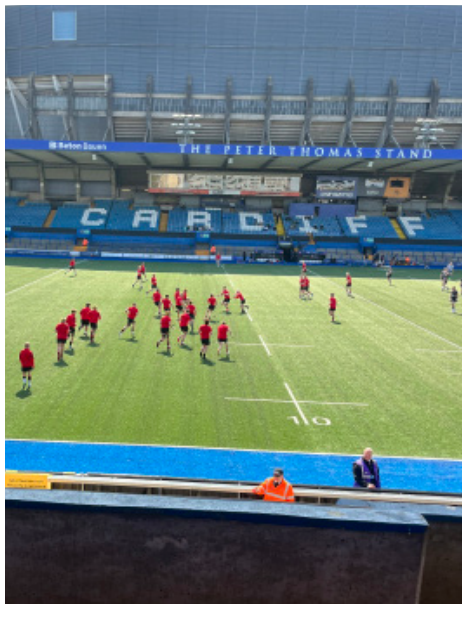












AERIAL FITNESS

MEN'S VOLLEYBALL

WOMEN'S FENCING

MEN'S FENCING

BASEBALL

MEN'S LACROSSE

WOMEN'S HOCKEY

RUGBY LEAGUE

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

WOMEN'S ULTIMATE FRISBEE

FRESHERS' RUGBY

WOMEN'S CRICKET T20

WOMEN'S LACROSSE

WOMEN'S WATER POLO

MEN'S HOCKEY

MEN'S BASKETBALL

MEN'S ULTIMATE FRISBEE

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

MEN'S FOOTBALL

WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

MEN'S FUTSAL

KORFBALL

MEN'S WATER POLO

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

MEN'S CRICKET T20

WOMEN'S RUGBY

MEN'S RUGBY



Cardiff's Shooting Stars

Joe Roberts
Contributor

Cardiff.....(168)
Swansea.....(150)

Varsity is always the best day of the university calendar, made even better by another resounding win against Swansea. And for Clay Pigeon Shooting it was no different.

Cardiff has held an unbroken streak for half a decade, so pressure was high. Team selection was tough, not helped by Swansea's smug confidence that this would be the year they finally broke their losing run. Swansea's captain (Matthew Phillips) sent over their practice scorecards. Some might call it psychological warfare, and it was working. Still, the best shots were chosen, from GB-level competitors to those who only picked up a gun at university. It was a mixed bag, but one I trusted to shake Swansea's certainty.

Wednesday arrived. Everyone jumped into action, donning red and applying face paint. Arriving at Treetops around half nine, my captain and I walked the ground inspecting the traps. The weather was lovely, a relief to many. Back at the clubhouse, Swansea were there waiting, but it was the mass of red that struck me. Shooting rarely draws spectators, yet this was our biggest turnout ever, a sign of the sport's growing popularity and common knowledge this was to be the battle of the ages.

After final checks, I briefed all competitors and handed out scorecards. We split into Ryder Cup-style groups: two Cardiff and two Swansea shooters. The competition was a 50-clay shoot, with the top five scores from each team deciding the winner. I was paired with our Welfare Secretary, Jack Benham, against Swansea's President and Captain, Andrew Rawlins and Matthew Phillips.

At the first stand, the sunshine proved more of a curse than a blessing. Calling "pull", the clay vanished straight into the glare. I dropped more than I liked, though so did everyone else. As we moved through the stands, performances improved and confidence grew. Passing groups confirmed similar progress, and our social media team were busy interviewing Swansea and churning out TikToks (@cardiffclayshooting).

By the final stand we had found our stride. With all groups finished, I had the daunting task of calculating scores. Yet watching Cardiff's lead progress gave me no reason to have ever worried. The final result: Cardiff 168, Swansea 150. We had done it!

Phillips said: "While Cardiff did manage to come out on top this time, we pushed them all the way and there's a definite sense that the gap is closing. A cracking Varsity, great shooting, great people, and exactly the kind of day that reminds you why you get involved in university sport. Next year, we'll be back for that 'unbroken streak.'"

I congratulated the team on an incredible performance. Swansea's spirits were lifted only by the buffet provided by one of our members, enjoyed by competitors and spectators alike. As the SU bus arrived to take everyone back to Cardiff, we thanked the ground owner and Swansea for a great day. With the scores submitted, another year, another Varsity, along with another Cardiff win, came to a close.

Image Credit: Joe Roberts.







Men's Hockey defeat Swansea





Rachel Bedding
Head of Spotlight

Cardiff.....(168)
Swansea.....(150)

Varsity started and ended strong for Cardiff, with an exceptional performance from both the men's and women's hockey sides. It was promised to be a good match, as although Cardiff play in the league above, Swansea just missed a relegation this season that would see the teams face each other in BUCs.

"The most interesting part of [Swansea's] game was a couple of entertaining haircuts"

A strong starting lineup consisted of some Varsity vets for Cardiff, and the hope that they'd extend Cardiff's winning streak. The men's game started off with consistent possession by Cardiff, holding firm against Swansea through a strong offensive play that dominated Swansea's defence. A short corner early into the first half saw Cardiff capitalise on the opportunity and Number 10: Euan Jones, scored the first goal of the game following a tenacious offensive effort in the D.

Riding on the high of that first goal saw more strong efforts from Cardiff, but an excitable Swansea crowd had rallied some spirit in their boys and they managed to hold Cardiff 1-0 until the end of the first half.

The second half opened strong with another early Cardiff goal from the edge of the D, followed with more strong possession play that Swansea struggled to break through. Swansea's

"An overall win from Cardiff's hockey club shows promise for these players in the future"

only goal of the game came from a short corner in the Cardiff end, and was swiftly answered by Cardiff to make the final score 3-1 in Cardiff's favour.

Whilst Swansea put up a good effort, the most interesting part of their game was a couple of entertaining haircuts, and they ultimately failed to break through Cardiff's defence effectively, and the team gave them very few mistakes to capitalise on. In comparison, Cardiff guarded their zone with an intense focus and jumped on every chance to pressure Swansea's offence, a tactic that worked well in the end as Swansea crumbled.

Supported by a sea of red in the stands, an overall win from Cardiff's hockey club shows promise for these players in the future.



Winning Wednesday's Continue for Cardiff Uni Ladies Hockey

Ella Simons
Head of News

With the pressure of defending their title firmly on their shoulders, Cardiff University Ladies' Hockey Club stepped onto the pitch knowing expectations were high. They rose to the occasion. Securing a 3-1 victory over Swansea, CULHC not only retained their Welsh Varsity title but improved on last year's 2-1 win, delivering a composed and commanding performance on home turf. From the outset, Cardiff looked in control. The team in red dictated the pace of the game, earning a series of short corners and repeatedly pressing deep into Swansea's half.

Their attacking intent was relentless and it felt as though they were firmly running the game. Yet Varsity never unfolds without drama. Swansea found a renewed burst of energy, pushing forward with urgency and threatening to disrupt Cardiff's rhythm. Their efforts paid off with a crucial goal, shifting the scoreline to a tense 2-1 and injecting fresh nerves into the match. The momentum threatened to turn once more when Swansea, in a bold tactical move, withdrew their goalkeeper in search of an equaliser.

It was a moment that underlined both the stakes of the game and the pressure Cardiff had applied throughout. Despite Swansea's all-out attacking push, Cardiff's defence remained composed and resolute, holding firm against the mounting intensity. CULHC responded in the best possible way. A late third goal sealed the victory, restoring a sense of calm and sparking celebration both on and off the pitch. It was a decisive finish that ensured the title would remain in Cardiff's hands for another year. As the final whistle blew, the energy at Sophia Gardens was electric.

A sea of Cardiff supporters, armed with handmade signs and unwavering enthusiasm, erupted in celebration. Players ran to meet the crowd, sharing a moment of triumph that reflected not just the team's efforts, but the collective spirit behind them. As CULHC later shared on Instagram, they were "super proud of their girls", a sentiment clearly echoed by the loyal supporters who sang and cheered from start to finish. Reflecting on the occasion, player Charlotte Wellings said: "Having Varsity on home turf for a second consecutive year was incredible.

The atmosphere at Sophia Gardens was electric, and the crowd truly delivered, especially the support from CUHC. From a player's perspective, the game was nothing short of a joy to be part of (particularly if you were wearing a Cardiff shirt). Securing a confident 3-1 victory over Swansea in front of a packed home crowd made the occasion even more special. As a final-year student, it was the perfect way to bring my Cardiff hockey career to a close."

The team's performance showcased the very best of the club; combining skill, composure and determination under pressure. Special recognition goes to Player of the Match, Charlotte Manton, whose outstanding performance played a key role in securing the win. With back-to-back Varsity victories on home soil, CULHC have once again proven their ability to deliver when it matters most – champions, and deservedly so.

Image Credits: Cardiff Students' Union

EN GARDE, PRETS, ALLEZ!
Cardiff Takes a Jab at Varsity

Jasmine Comanescu
Contributor

Men's, Draw.....(115-115)

Women's, Cardiff.....(135-64)

Cardiff Uni's fencing club continued their Varsity winning streak against Swansea in both men's and women's teams, contributing to Cardiff's overall triumph against their Welsh sporting rival.

The day started off in high spirits at 11:00, and I had the opportunity to catch the fencing president, Lukas Nemitsas, before the bouts took place. He voiced his trust in Cardiff, backed up by his experience in the previous two years where the team had come out victorious against their green opponents. "Our team is really great, both as fencers and as personalities, so I'm really excited to fence with them. Go Cardiff!"

"His trust was well-earned. The men's team gave a vigorous performance, remaining neck-to-neck with Swansea until the very end".

Across the three disciplines (Epee, Foil and Sabre), they won in two, leading to a nail-biting last bout in Foil. While Cardiff had fallen behind, the club's own president managed to secure a draw in total points, with 25-45, earning both teams a total of 115 points, giving Cardiff the overall win for their success in Epee and Sabre.

The women's team also delivered a spectacular performance, showcasing an incredible sweep across all three weapons, ending in a final score of 135-64 for Cardiff. As Epee fencer Az Kim described, "Everyone fenced extremely well, and even though Epee was touch-and-go for a bit, we fought a good fight and secured the win." As for Foil and Sabre, the team masterfully won with 45-12 and 45-13, respectively. This is especially impressive as the majority of the women's team has been reportedly injured throughout the semester and preserved regardless to proudly secure the win for Cardiff.

The sport was incredibly entertaining from all perspectives. The Cardiff community was strong, with supporters showing up with signs and voicing their Cardiff pride loudly for each point scored. Referee Tom Prince described the mix of great technique and "really nice team spirit (...) you can hear all of the support for Cardiff, cheering for every single point."

The victory of the club is sure to continue onwards, says Oskar Garlinski, current beginner's officer and future president for 2026/7. When asked about his goals for carrying on the torch at next year's varsity, he had one single response: "definitely win", a sentiment that was seen throughout the whole team as they celebrated their success—with ample sportsmanship still shown towards the Swans, of course.

Image Credit: Jasmine Comanescu





A Word From Tandy...
(*SU President 26-27*)

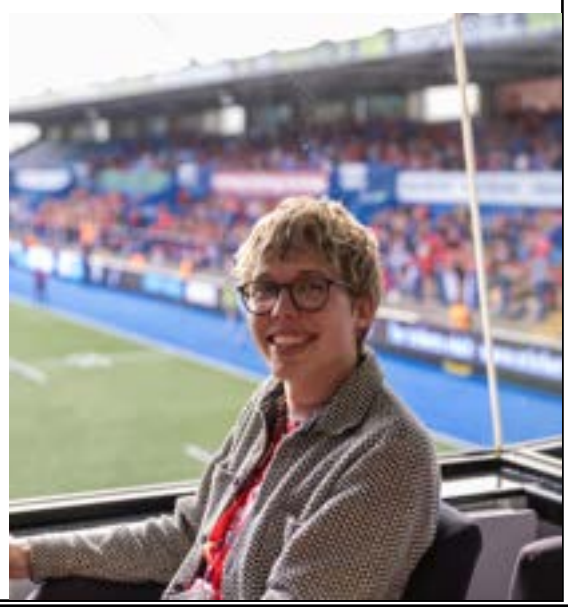
This year was the first varsity I've been to in my time at CU (I regret not going prior). Although the sports played were not exactly my forte, and I didn't know all the rules it was electrifying nonetheless.

It was also lovely because people helped explain all of the different sports to me! It was so so so wonderful to see everyone getting along, having a great time.

The level of dedication and skill from the players was exemplary and extraordinary as well! Everyone was so supportive and even the weather complemented the warm atmosphere on the day.

The town was thriving with red and green as I walked through and the multiple sporting locations were equally as competitive. However, in the end I was glad to see Cardiff take home the win!

It truly is a remarkable day of coming together and celebrating the joy of sport at Cardiff University. *Image Credit: Cardiff Students' Union*





A Red Tide Rises as Cardiff Dominate Varsity Tennis

Ethan Gerrard
Contributor

Cardiff arrived early and the day was already alive. Beneath a blaring sun and in the shadow of the castle, the tennis courts became a dense and shifting crowd, being packed tight and hard to see beyond the front rows, they were drenched in a sea of Cardiff red as students turned out in force.

From the opening points, the men's team imposed themselves. Alex Hamer and Frank Powell-Davies set things in motion with a controlled 6-2, 6-3 doubles win, before George Naunton and Jaitra de Saram delivered a ruthless 6-0, 6-0 performance. Swansea continued to crumble as the singles followed the same pattern, Hamer struck with precision befitting a top-16 UK university player, de Saram moved through his match with ease and Will Cheadle found another level at the end of a tight first set to close out 7-5, 6-2. Naunton wrapped up the set of matches without hesitation.

Across the adjacent courts, the women's team matched that intensity from the outset. Katya Saint and Kira Turpin moved confidently through their doubles, 6-2, 6-0, setting the tone for a series of commanding singles displays. Turpin's 6-0, 6-0 win was sharp and efficient, whilst Becky Dow closed out her match in little over half an hour. Edie Witcombe and Saint maintained the same level, controlling rallies and dictating play despite difficult, swirling winds. Turpin spoke candidly about the experience of stepping into that environment: "I was definitely more nervous than a regular fixture," she said. "There were at least 100 people watching… I felt like I had to perform." The scale of the crowd shifted the dynamic of the matches, making even routine points feel heightened.

With all four courts running side by side, attention shifted constantly across the space and the crowd naturally spread itself between matches, providing an equal platform for all categories. The students lined the fences throughout, tracking points, reacting to rallies and carrying the same energy from one court to the next. "Loads of people were sitting behind the courts… all cheering," Turpin noted. "It's a really good opportunity to show that the women's sport is good too."

What stood out was the consistency across the courts. Cardiff controlled rallies and served with authority. Adapting quickly to the wind they maintained a composure in conditions that could have disrupted rhythm. The level rarely dipped and the energy from the crowd carried through each match. By the time play had ended, the result reflected the tone set from the beginning. In front of a packed, sunlit crowd, Cardiff produced a performance defined by control and confidence.



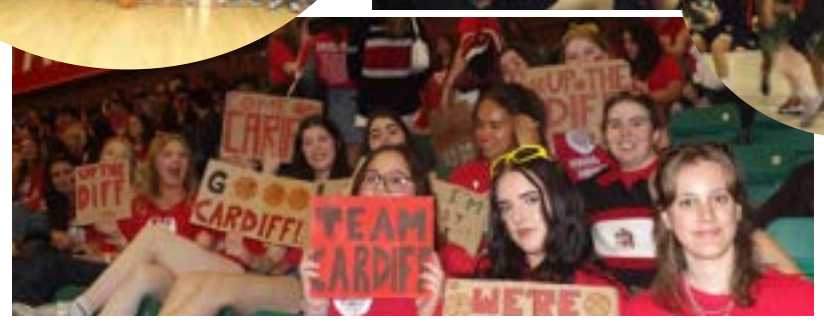














Swish Swish, Swansea!

Cardiff Men's Basketball win over the trophy

Bhamini Khandige
Deputy Editor

One thing about Cardiff's Men's Basketball team, they certainly got their heads in the game. While the Dragons dribbled their way into victory, the Swans were left drooling during the Varsity match at the Sports Wales National Centre. Not only was I able to watch the game from start to finish, but I had the pleasure of doing an exclusive courtside interview with the team's coach after the riveting match, who shared an insight into the team's season so far, his coaching career, and also what he's looking forward to for the rest of Varsity. Coach Kian called the Varsity game the team's, "best performance" of the year. A Varsity win during his first season coaching is a brilliant achievement to put under his belt, and Coach Kian is entirely grateful for his team, with them being the "best team [he's] ever had".

As a spectator, the environment courtside was simply electric. Between the energetic crowd, and the passionate players, it was clear on entry that I was in for an exhilarating experience as a viewer. Quirky and catchy chants from the crowd undoubtedly raised the team's morale, with many players often looking back and joining in with the rows full of supporters. The performance that the team put on made it impossible to take my eyes off the court, and as someone who's not even a massive fan of basketball, I was without a doubt hooked. I watched a few different sports at Varsity this year, and the Men's Basketball game was by far the most entertaining and engaging game of the day for me. It was clear that the courtside seats were filled with people with a genuine passion for the sport, or a genuine love for someone on the team which made for an incredibly welcoming and lovely atmosphere despite not having any personal ties to the game or the players.

Through my experience in the seats, I was able to learn a bit about the game too, from basketball jargon, to how the plays work. I was educated on all things basketball and suddenly Katy Perry's hit song "Swish Swish" made a lot more sense! Back to the game and my experience, I was particularly impressed with the camaraderie of the Cardiff team, as it seemed like they could almost read each other's minds on the court, which made for some brilliant and dynamic plays. It was lovely to see the players hyping each other up, and it was clear that the team's success boiled down to hard work, great coaching, team spirit, and a genuine love for the game. The match was brilliant to watch, with Swansea equally putting on a great effort, but the energy and environment was made all the sweeter, with our Cardiff boys bringing the trophy home after a tense, yet captivating game! I definitely left the venue a fan of both the sport, and the energy of the people present.

Image Credit: Bhamini Khandige

Cardiff Men's Cricket Claim the Crown For Their Tenth Consecutive Year

Toby Britton
Contributor

This year's Welsh Varsity T20 was once again hosted at Sophia Gardens, on a glorious day in the Welsh capital. The Swans won the toss and elected to bowl first, no doubt hoping to restrict Cardiff to a chaseable total and stop them from claiming a 10th victory in a row: a remarkable achievement.

These hopes were jilted early by openers Karl Leathley and Ben Garrett, taking 14 from the first over and setting the tone for the Cardiff innings in dominant fashion. This onslaught by the two Cardiff openers continued through the first powerplay, with Leathley hitting a number of impressive sixes over the midwicket boundary into the jovial Sophia Garden crowd.

"The Swansea bowling attack struggled, with the 6th over being dispatched by Ben Garrett, leaving Cardiff with a powerplay total of 72 for the loss of no wickets."

The openers continued scoring freely against the Swansea bowlers, feeling no real friction and batting with great success. In the 12th over Cardiff suffered their first setback with the loss of Garrett to Swansea bowler Huw Wheeler, for a very well made 58(38) which was much appreciated by the Cardiff supporters.

This brought fast scoring number 3 Hugo Caldicott to the crease who took no time in continuing the tone set by the two before him. Caldicott scored 2 boundaries in the next 2 overs, keeping Cardiff's score ticking. Though once again, Cardiff was set back with Wheeler taking his second wicket, the prized scalp of left-hander Karl Leathley, who left the field with a well made 63(39) including 5 sixes.

With James Dodds now joining Caldicott, Swansea managed to keep Cardiff quieter than the earlier mayhem of boundaries. Cardiff eventually finished on an extremely comprehensive total of 219/3, Caldicott being not out on 44, joined by Brendan Hildrebrand on 12 also not out.

The two Swansea openers strode to the crease after the break undoubtedly eager to put a dent into Cardiff's huge total. These hopes suffered an early setback with Ben Clements running through the Swansea openers defence, castling his stumps in the second over and then following up his early breakthrough with a maiden over in his second, bowling at serious pace.

Swansea limped through their powerplay to a score of 33/3 with additional breakthroughs from Toby Whelan in the 5th over and a stunning runout from Teddy Flemming in the offside, a bad omen for the Swansea innings, and something which the Cardiff crowd made known their appreciation of.

"Outside the powerplay, Swansea continued to be squeezed and were slumping in the face of very tight bowling from the aforementioned Whelan and off-spinner Tendekai Mataranyika."

Mataranyika impressed very much in this middle period— bowling tight lines, the Swansea batsmen struggled to get away, finishing with figures of 1 wicket for 9 runs from his 4 overs including the second maiden of the match. The other two standout bowlers for Cardiff were Toby Whelan and Teddy Flemming, both claiming two wickets apiece and going at run rates of 5 and 3.5 respectively.

The tight bowling from all of the Cardiff bowlers reflected clearly in Swansea's final score from their full allotment, with the Swans limping up to 101/9, therefore losing by the significant margin of 118 runs.

This commanding victory is a testament to the quality of the Cardiff team and their coach Ali Waldron who clearly worked extremely hard in building the confidence and skills to win for the 10th time in a row.

Image Credit, Bhamini Khandige









Cardiff Dominate Varsity Aerial Fitness Competition

Molly Spencer
Spotlight Editor

After weeks of preparation, Cardiff Aerial Fitness saw another win against Swansea with three gold medals, three silver and two bronze, tipping the scales to Cardiff. I had a unique experience being able to experience Varsity this year, not only as an editor but also as a competitor winning a silver medal in the intermediate category. Going into the competition, the standard was high and it was an honour to be able to represent my university as a final year student.

The day began early with competitors arriving from 10am as the poles were set up and costumes put on, everyone felt excited but nervous for their performances. With five different categories from Beginners, Aspiring, Intermediate, Advanced and the Group performances, Cardiff did an amazing job securing the win. The team secured first place in beginners, aspiring and intermediate categories. Alongside this we also took second place in beginners, intermediate, advanced and group categories and third in aspiring, leaving every single Cardiff competitor to finish with an award.

Aerial Fitness routines demand a balance of strength, flexibility and musicality which was clear and consistent throughout the competition. Officially, they are judged based on five categories; Tricks, Movement Execution, Quality & Flow, Choreography, Musicality and Overall Performance with ranging scores between 1 and 20. With three judges from various studios across Cardiff, it was an honour to see my team perform so well and be rewarded with their marks.

The atmosphere at Varsity is what really made the day special. The noise and cheering from the crowd after each move no matter the level created the joy and support across the board. There was no putting down of the other teams, it was all about creating that environment that put joy on people's faces and it was clear that each competitor had an amazing time performing with pure excitement from their smiles.

With results like these, Aerial Fitness has proven to be a clear, standout event for Cardiff this Varsity. As a sport with not a lot of awareness surrounding it, it is about the individual results contributing to the wider team effort and I could not be prouder of every single competitor with Annie (1st Beginners), Kami (3rd Beginners), Becky (1st Aspiring), Whitney (3rd Aspiring), Izzy (1st Intermediate), Me (2nd Intermediate), Ariana (2nd Advanced), Yas and Eva (2nd Group) smashing the competition. *Image Credit, Molly Spencer and Ariel Fitness*





"Aerial Fitness routines demand a balance of strength, flexibility and musicality which was clear and consistent throughout the competition"

Wristbands and Resales How Did Students Feel About Varsity This Year?

Oliver Hanlon
News Editor

Welsh Varsity is seen by many as the ultimate highlight of the student calendar. We asked students how they felt about the event and the changes to varsity this year. Many said the new wristband system, meant to manage high demand for popular fixtures, instead created a pre-event scramble that left many students empty-handed and frustrated. Additionally, many students had stories to tell of themselves or their friends having to purchase tickets privately from third parties.

The introduction of specific wristbands for high-demand events, such as basketball, hockey, and everything played on the Llanrumney sports fields, left many students feeling disappointed about missing their favourite events. One student argued that "these changes fundamentally altered the spirit of the day", making what is meant to be a fluid and collective student experience more fragmented. They further noted that "the system adds a layer of gatekeeping which disproportionately affects those with less flexibility or awareness", ultimately proving damaging towards the rich culture of Varsity.

Others felt the restrictions simply made it impossible to enjoy the variety of sports on offer. "It means you can't go to anything," one fourth-year student remarked, explaining that "who queues first gets where they want to go" while the rest were left to "watch whatever" was available. Another student echoed this sentiment, stating they "didn't realise they'd changed" the system until it was too late.

"Many of the most frustrating hurdles occurred before the event even began. Students reported long queues at collection points, only to find that the necessary wristbands were unavailable."

One respondent noted that the collection process "took like an hour and a half" only to find that "they had nothing in stock" for the basketball matches they wanted to see.

For those who reached the front of the queue, the experience was often high-pressure. One student described it as a "scramble for an answer" as they tried to select from the remaining options. The timing of the collection windows also proved problematic; one participant explained they missed out because they "didn't come back to uni until the last collection day". Another admitted they were completely unaware of the new requirements, stating: "I didn't know about the wristband system until someone went to collect my ticket."

The physical distance between venues and the time required for entry led to frustration for some on the day. One attendee reported missing the women's rugby entirely because of the "long wait to get back from Llanrumney". Even after navigating the travel delays, their struggles continued at the gate, as they missed the first "ten minutes at the start of the men's rugby just because the queue to get in was pretty packed".

The scarcity of official tickets fuelled a volatile secondary market. One student recounted having four devices queuing for a rugby ticket without success, eventually being forced to "buy someone's rugby ticket off them" privately.

While some tickets were sold between friends for the 'normal price' of £27, others stated that prices skyrocketed, with reports of people paying £60 just for rugby tickets, significantly over marke value. One student felt the event was "less valuable than it was in other years" adding that ";maybe because my life is like, miserable, this was worth it". Another respondent provided a detailed perspective on affordability, stating that while the day was a "rich social experience" the way it is managed is "not worth thirty-five quid from students".

"They argued that "thirty-five pounds is a lot of money for something that is quite restricted" and suggested that organisers should implement "price management" or "a lower ticket" for low-income students."

This participant even proposed a "discount for students with less accessibility" to the popular events and observed that, compared to previous years, "there were not many events this year" that justified the cost.

On the other hand, some found the price justified. One respondent replied: "absolutely. No doubt". Other students agreed the event was "definitely good and worth it". However, some remained unconvinced by the mandatory ticket, noting they "know a lot of people who didn't pay for Varsity tickets and had just as much fun". This student suggested the cost is only worth it "if you enjoy a sport so much that you really want to see it" concluding that they "could have had just as much fun without having watched" the rugby.

Cardiff University Students' Union were asked for comment, but did not respond.

‘Entry to All Daytime Sporting Events?’

Varsity Access Tells a Different Story

Olivia Griffin
News Editor

For thousands of students, Welsh Varsity promises a day of open access: a ticket, a city and dozens of fixtures to move between at will. Marketed as a festival of sport spanning Cardiff, the event trades on the idea of freedom, the ability to drift from one venue to another across a packed schedule.

This year, however, some students found that access was not as straightforward as it first appeared.

Welsh Varsity, one of the largest dates in Cardiff Students’ Union’s calendar, took place on April 22, bringing together dozens of fixtures across venues in the city. The annual event, which sees Cardiff compete against Swansea over a full day of sport, spans multiple locations and attracts thousands of students, with fixtures running concurrently across Cardiff.

Its scale is central to its appeal. From rugby at Cardiff Arms Park to smaller fixtures across university facilities, Varsity offers a city-wide programme that encourages movement between venues and engagement with a wide range of sports. It is designed to feel expansive: a full day event with multiple points of access.

This year, however, the structure of that access has raised questions about how clearly ticketing information was communicated to students before purchase.

The Welsh Varsity Festival Package was advertised as including “entry to all daytime sporting events”. At face value, this suggests broad and consistent access across the programme. In practice, access to a number of fixtures, including netball, hockey and events held at Llanrumney, required additional sport-specific wristbands, distributed in limited quantities on a first come, first served basis.

These wristbands were not allocated at the point of purchase. Instead, they were made available during ticket collection. As a result, access to certain fixtures depended on when ticket holders collected their packages and whether additional wristbands remained available. In effect, holding a ticket did not guarantee entry to all elements of the programme, despite

“The headline ticket... was not accompanied by an equally prominent explanation of how that access would operate in practice”

the breadth implied in the original description.

Information about this system was published across several areas of the Students’ Union website. References to capacity limits appeared in general ticket information, while further details about additional wristbands were included in FAQs and ticket collection guidance. Social media posts in the lead up to the event also noted that extra wristbands would be available “depending on availability”.

Taken together, this material sets out the structure of access. However, it does so across multiple sources rather than in a single, consolidated explanation presented at the point of purchase. The headline ticket description, emphasising access to “all daytime sporting events”, was not accompanied by an equally prominent explanation of how that access would operate in practice.

A poll conducted by *Gair Rhydd* found that approximately 84 percent of the 161 respondents surveyed were unaware, prior to purchasing their ticket, that additional wristbands would be required to access some fixtures. While not definitive, the result suggests that a proportion of students may not have fully understood the conditions attached to their ticket at the point of purchase.

The use of a first come, first served system adds a further layer of complexity. Capacity limits are standard at large scale events, particularly those spread across multiple venues. In this case, however, access to some fixtures was shaped not only by venue capacity, but by the availability of wristbands distributed separately from the ticket itself.

The result is a layered access model: a general ticket grants entry to the event as a whole, while additional steps are required to access specific fixtures within it. Two ticket holders purchasing the same package may therefore have experienced different levels of access, depending on when they collected their tickets and which wristbands remained available.

Under the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024, organisations selling to consumers are required to provide “material information” clearly and in good time, particularly where it may influence a purchasing decision. This includes information about

“The wristband system was intended to manage demand and improve access to high capacity fixtures”
- Students’ Union

the nature of what is being purchased, as well as any limitations or conditions attached to it.

Similarly, the Consumer Rights Act 2015 requires that services match the way they are described and that key terms are transparent and accessible. These provisions do not prevent organisers from imposing limits, but they do require that such conditions are communicated in a way that allows consumers to make informed decisions.

When approached for comment, Cardiff Students’ Union directed *Gair Rhydd* to its ‘Key Information’ section and general terms and conditions, where details relating to

“Fewer complaints had been received compared with previous years”

capacity and additional wristbands are set out.

In a follow up response, a spokesperson for the SU said more than 10,000 students attended across the day and that the event was delivered safely with a “strong atmosphere across all fixtures”. The spokesperson added that information about access arrangements had been shared at multiple points in the lead up to the event, including at the point of purchase and in post purchase communications.

However, the response does not clarify whether this information was presented within a single, consolidated set of terms and conditions outlining all access requirements. Instead, it points to details being distributed across different stages of communication, without specifying how prominently the need for additional, sport specific wristbands was presented during the ticket purchasing process.

The Students’ Union said the wristband system was intended to manage demand and improve access to high capacity fixtures, reporting “smoother and quicker” entry and reduced queuing compared to previous years. It did not, however, directly address why a first come, first served model was chosen over allocating access at the point of purchase.

The spokesperson also said that fewer complaints had been received compared with previous years. No further detail was provided on whether complaints related specifically to access to fixtures, or how any concerns raised are being addressed beyond a general post event review.

“The relationship between what is offered and how it is described is likely to come under closer scrutiny”

The question of how the Festival Package was described remains unresolved. While tickets were advertised as including “entry to all daytime sporting events”, the SU did not explicitly state whether it considers this wording to reflect the additional steps and capacity based restrictions that applied to certain fixtures.

Welsh Varsity operates at a scale that presents significant logistical challenges. Managing crowd flow, ensuring safety and maintaining access across multiple venues are all factors that shape how the event is organised.

But the questions raised this year extend beyond a single event. Where access is conditional or limited, the clarity with which those conditions are communicated becomes central to the experience itself. As Varsity continues to grow, the relationship between what is offered and how it is described is likely to come under closer scrutiny.

Did you know, prior to purchasing your ticket, that additional wristbands would be required to access additional fixtures?

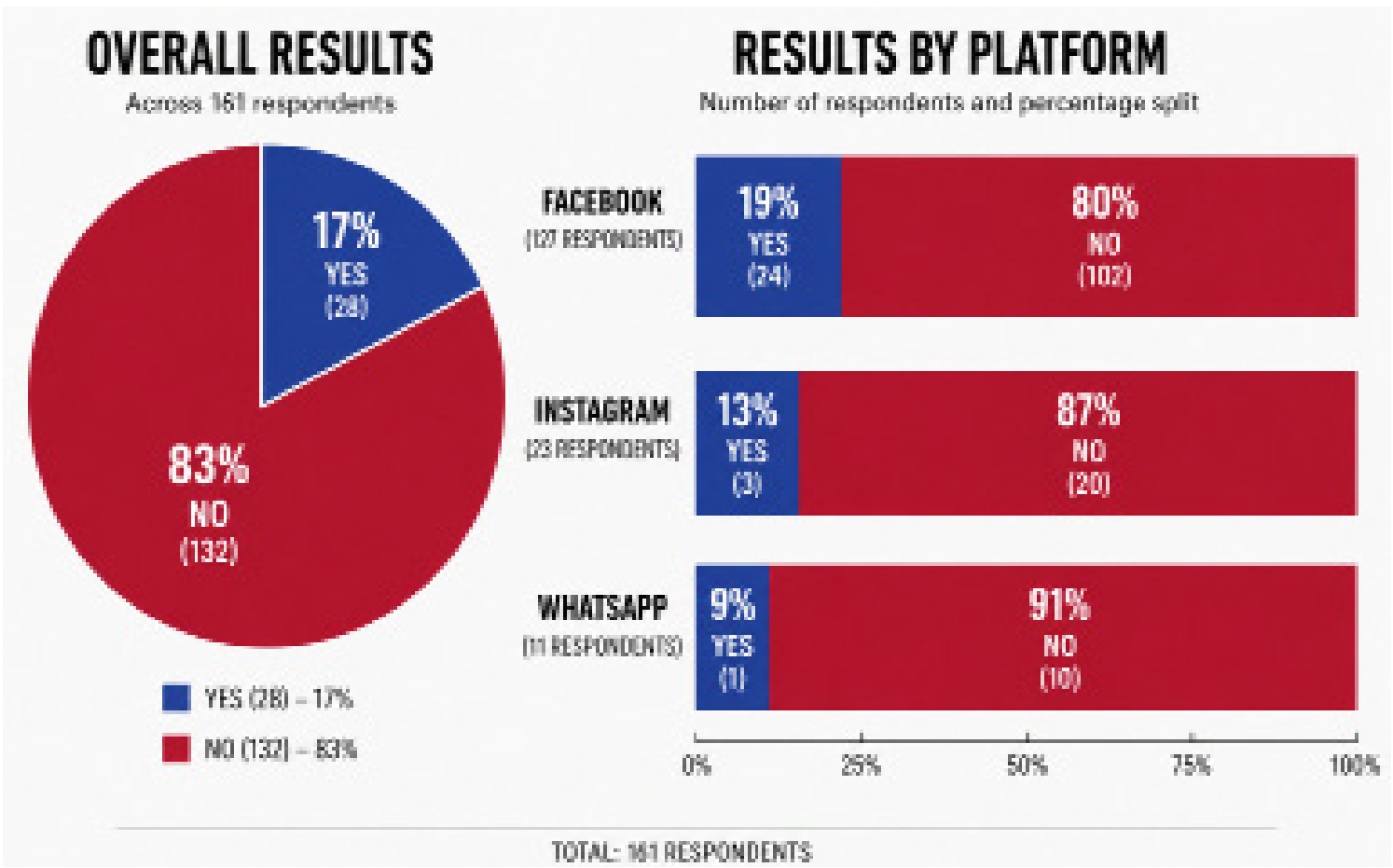


Image: Olivia Griffin, *Gair Rhydd.* Data collected by Olivia Griffin, *Gair Rhydd.*