

PASK, ALUN EDWARD ISLWYN (1937 - 1995), rugby player and teacher

Name: Alun Edward Islwyn Pask
Date of birth: 1937
Date of death: 1995
Spouse: Marilyn Pask (née Jakeways)
Child: Richard Alun Pask
Child: Jonathan Michael Pask
Child: Andrew Damian Pask
Parent: David Gwyn Pask
Parent: Winifred Dovey Pask (née Bray)
Gender: Male
Occupation: rugby player and teacher
Area of activity: Sports and Leisure Pursuits; Education
Author: Bryan Boots

Alun Pask was born on 10 September 1937 at Pontllanfraith, Monmouthshire, the second of the three sons of David Gwyn Pask (1910-1979) and his wife Winifred Dovey (née Bray, 1910-1976).

Alun Pask was a student at Pontllanfraith Grammar School and Loughborough College during the 1950s. He was proficient academically and was a keen sportsman. Initially for both the Grammar School and Rhymney Valley Schools he played rugby at scrum half but was switched to the back row in his final school year. In April 1955 he played for the Welsh Secondary Schools in Toulon against France (lost 14-9), and in Cardiff against England (drew 8-8).

Pask was brought to the attention of Abertillery RFC by Haydn Morgan who had played on the opposite side when the Parachute Regiment met the South Wales Borderers in a forces fixture in Cyprus during Pask's National Service. He made his Abertillery debut against Bridgend in December 1956. In January 1959 Pask was a member of the Abertillery and Ebbw Vale combined side that defeated the visiting Australian tourists by 6 points to 5 at Abertillery Park. Returning to college in April 1959 as captain he inspired Loughborough to an unexpected victory in the Middlesex Sevens overcoming London Welsh in the final at Twickenham.

Pask's first period as captain of the Abertillery side came in the 1960-61 season and in late November 1960 he was a member of the combined Abertillery and Ebbw Vale side who were narrowly beaten (0-3) by South Africa at Eugene Cross Park. After travelling as reserve on 13 occasions for the Welsh side he finally made his debut for Wales in Paris on 25 March 1961. He scored a try just before the interval putting Wales on level terms but the French proved the stronger in the second half and were the victors (8-6). The following year against the same opposition in Cardiff he would famously chase down and tackle French winger Rancoule, which saved the match and won him a place on the 1962 Lions tour.

Alun Pask married Marilyn Jakeways (b. 1939) in 1962 and they raised three sons together, Richard Alun (b. 1967), Jonathan Michael (b. 1970) and Andrew Damian (b. 1975). At the time Pask was a games master at Tredegar Comprehensive School. When he was selected for the Lions tour to South Africa that year the Monmouthshire Education Committee granted him permission to go but refused to pay him his salary for his extended leave, which many viewed as a political decision.

Pask played in the first three test matches against South Africa and showcased his anticipation, tackling and covering ability on the firm grounds. A rib injury forced him out of the final test but his superb diving effort in the provincial fixture against Western Province is recorded as one of best sporting photographs.

In 1964 Pask was invited along with 17 other stars of world rugby to take part in the South Africa Rugby Board's Jubilee Celebration. Pask accepted and played in all three celebratory matches but once again the Monmouthshire Education Committee withheld his salary because of the colour bar in South Africa. Days after the final match Pask played for Wales, who were on their first overseas tour, in a game against Boland; matches against South Africa, (lost 24-3) and Orange Free State would follow. Later that year Wales played Fiji at Cardiff Arms Park and Pask scored a magnificent try in a Welsh victory (28-22).

Alun Pask was a key member of the Welsh side that lifted the Triple Crown in 1965, the first time it had been achieved since 1952, and Wales were winners of the home nations' championship in both 1965 and 1966. Pask captained Wales at Twickenham in 1966 playing alongside Abertillery club mates Haydn Morgan and Allan Lewis and it was his second half try that ensured a Welsh victory over England (11-6).

Many in Wales were left angry when they were expecting Pask to be selected as captain of the 1966 British Lions, but the selection committee opted for the Scottish forward Michael Campbell-Lamerton instead. Despite the outcry the team performed well in the Australian leg of the tour beating the host nation in both tests, before they were brought back down to earth in New Zealand losing all four tests. They later played two matches in Canada in an exhausting 35 match tour.

Alun Pask's final appearance for Wales came against Ireland in 1967. He was selected for the match in Paris a few weeks later but withdrew due to influenza. He had played in 26 consecutive internationals for Wales and captained the side on six occasions. He announced his rugby retirement at the annual meeting of the Abertillery RFC in June 1967.

Pask continued to teach at Tredegar Comprehensive School, finally retiring in 1989 after 29 years at the school. He worked for the BBC in Cardiff and was a panellist when Brian Hoey took his *Sports Line Up* radio programme around the country. He was also a sports producer for BBC TV and worked with both **Carwyn James** and Peter Walker on their Sunday afternoon telecasts.

Alun Pask died of smoke inhalation following a fire at the family home in Lon Pennant, Cwm Gelli, Blackwood, on 1 November 1995. The funeral ceremony was held at St. Augustine's Church, Pontllanfraith, and at the Gwent Crematorium on 8 November.

Author

Bryan Boots

Sources

The South Wales gazette and Newport news, 10 January 1958, p. 1, 19 October 1962, p. 7, 30 June 1967, pp. 2 & 12, 9 November 1995, pp. 1 & 3

Leicester Evening Mail, 27 April 1959, p. 9

J. B. G. Thomas, *Rugby world*, October 1962

The Times, 3 November 1995, p. 21

Rugby Memorabilia Society

Further reading

Wikipedia Article: [Alun Pask](#)

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