

OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME // £3

GLOUCESTER RUGBY



Vs BATH RUGBY
SUNDAY 06/09/09
KO 3:30PM



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GARETH DELVE CAPTAIN'S CORNER

Well, it's finally here! We reported back for preseason training pretty early here at Gloucester, back in the first week of June in fact, so it feels like we've been building up to this one for quite a while now.

We've put in the hard yards on the training pitches and in the gym and got the three preseason games under our belts. But all the preparations are over and the season begins officially today.

Although it may seem as though that I'm moaning a bit about the length of preseason, it's only in jest.

From a personal point of view, I definitely needed it. It's well documented I've had the start to my last two seasons badly disrupted by injury. So, a summer when I've not toured anywhere but been able to focus on the season ahead has done me the world of good.

But, it's also gone brilliantly from the point of view of the whole squad. We have seen

It's also the first preseason where our Head of Strength of Conditioning, Mark Bitcon, has been in charge of our strength and fitness work.

He arrived at the start of last season so we'd already done preseason by the time he turned up. But, he's done a great job and all the boys feel in really great shape.

I'm also sure that every Guinness Premiership captain is saying what I'm about to but the spirit in the camp has been fantastic.

We ended last year on a low, there's no getting away from that. But everyone is definitely on the same page this time around.

The guys who have come in have fitted in really well. There's experience and class in the shape of the likes of Eliota Fuimanono-Sapolu, Nicky Robinson and Tom Joyce.

Just as encouraging is the way the lads who have come through the Academy ranks have fitted in. They're young, they're talented and they're hungry. They've been

other's company away from the training ground.

We're a squad who want to do well for each other, for the shirt, the club and the supporters. And I think that's been evident in the preseason games we've played where we've actually gone a couple of scores down in two of the games but dug deep and fought our way back into those matches.

That's the way it should be and that's exactly what you're going to see from us – total commitment. And I hope you'll acknowledge that, as you always do, by backing us all the way and hopefully roaring us onto victory.

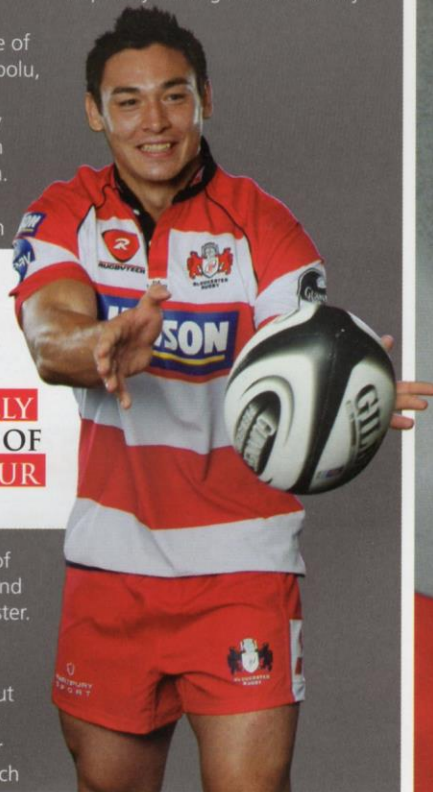
"WE'RE A SQUAD WHO WANT TO DO WELL FOR EACH OTHER. FOR THE SHIRT, THE CLUB AND THE SUPPORTERS. AND I THINK THAT'S BEEN EVIDENT IN THE PRESEASON GAMES WE'VE PLAYED WHERE WE'VE ACTUALLY GONE A COUPLE OF SCORES DOWN IN TWO OF THE GAMES BUT DUG DEEP AND FOUGHT OUR WAY BACK INTO THOSE MATCHES."

some changes, notably with Bryan Redpath taking over as Head Coach.

Brush has been excellent from day one. He hasn't looked to change everything overnight. But he's introduced a few things and tweaked a few others and it's really freshened things up.

schooled in the Gloucester way of doing things. They're local lads and are desperate to play for Gloucester.

I think that's really key to our prospects this season. We've a smaller squad than last season but we're a tightly knit group. We've been working hard together over the summer but also enjoying each



GARETH BUTLER GLOUCESTER VS BATH

IN any other close season the events at Gloucester would have been the focal point of English club rugby, with the change at the top and the squad trimming that has taken place.

But Bath and Harlequins have seen to it that the heat has been off new head coach Bryan Redpath because the national press have had bigger fish to fry.

Redpath has had his fair share to deal with, however. He starts the season today with a much-changed squad, even from the one he had when he took over from Dean Ryan back in June.

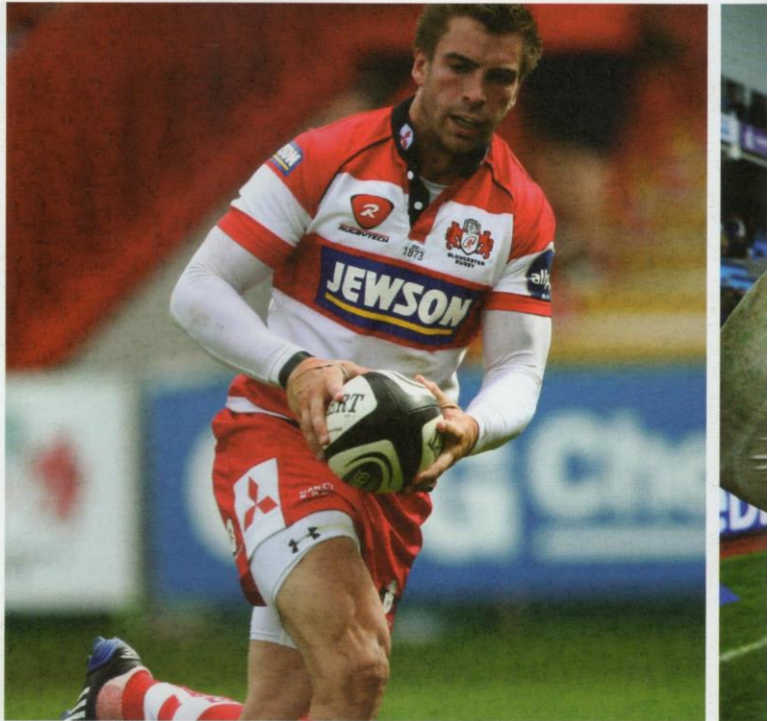
Matthew Watkins and Andy Titterrell have both since departed, and the Seru Rabeni deal unfortunately fell through due to a failed medical.

Only Nottingham centre Tim Molenaar has arrived, with Eliota Fuamaono-Sapolu's delayed work permit meaning he only started in earnest against the Ospreys last week.

On paper, the position the Cherry and Whites find themselves in is weaker than where they were at the end of the last campaign, which finished with four straight Guinness Premiership defeats with the EDF Energy Cup final mauling added in for good measure. The less said about that, the better.

But a squad weaker in numbers is not necessarily poorer off with all things considered.

There was a period at the peak of former head coach Ryan's powers when Gloucester seemed to be signing players more to stop them



THE TALK COMING OUT OF KINGSHOLM IS OF FRESH STARTS. A NEW ETHOS AND A NEW SET OF STANDARDS THE SQUAD LIVES BY. REDPATH AND THE PLAYERS ARE NO DOUBT TIRED OF BEING ASKED THE SAME QUESTIONS OVER AND OVER SINCE THE CHANGES WERE MADE AT THE START OF THE SUMMER.

going to other teams than because they were really needed at Kingsholm.

Chris Paterson, Gareth Cooper and Watkins are a trio who spring to mind, all three making little impact.

Watkins featured far more than he should have done because of some chronic injury issues in the backs, which if Gloucester suffer the same this season they will be right up the proverbial creek without a paddle in sight come the end of it.

But what is left is a squad of players who actually want to play for Gloucester. Many of those who left clearly did not. Olly Barkley, Iain Balshaw and Anthony Allen, all good

The Citizen



players, but had lost, or never had, the passion for the club which Redpath will tell you is a vital pre-requisite.

Carlos Nieto was offered a contract elsewhere and he took it – that's his prerogative.

Others, including Mark Foster, Willie Walker, Jack Forster and Jack Adams, were deemed surplus to requirements, although, more in the case of the two former than the two latter, failed to take the opportunities which came their way (apart from when they were playing for Worcester).

For the record, I would have kept Adams, but none of the rest.

CREATING HIS OWN SPECIAL CASE WAS RYAN LAMB. BUT FOR THE PLAYER, THE CLUB AND PROBABLY FOR LONDON IRISH, IT WAS BEST THAT LAMB MOVED ON. THE PROBABILITY IS HE'LL BE BACK A FEW YEARS DOWN THE LINE, OR IF HE FINDS HIS NICHE ELSEWHERE GOOD LUCK TO HIM.

Creating his own special case was Ryan Lamb. But for the player, the club and probably for London Irish, it was best that Lamb moved on. The probability is he'll be back a few years down the line, or if he finds his niche elsewhere good luck to him.

The guys who have come in from lower down the leagues want to play for the club, are cheaper than those who have left, and come with a thirst to prove themselves. Akapusi Qera came from National One and he was a revelation, so there's no reason why we will not be talking about one of Paul Doran-Jones, Darren Dawidiuk, Tim Molenaar or Rupert Harden as a first team regular come Christmas.

Elsewhere, Pierre Capdevielle, Dave Attwood, Tom Voyce, Fuimaono-Sapolu and Nicky Robinson all look sound acquisitions.

So instead of getting depressed about less players, how about a bit of enthusiasm about a streamlined squad with a real motivator in charge, who win and lose together and actually care a jot for the hooped shirts they wear and the fans they play in front of.

The talk coming out of Kingsholm is of fresh starts, a new ethos and a new set of standards the squad lives by. Redpath and the players are no-doubt tired of being asked the same questions over and over since the changes were made at the start of the summer.

Today is their opportunity to put the words into practice and show the rest of the Guinness Premiership that Gloucester Rugby are here to compete this season.

BRYAN REDPATH HEAD COACH

Q. THE GUINNESS PREMIERSHIP SEASON, YOUR FIRST AS HEAD COACH OF GLOUCESTER RUGBY, STARTS TODAY. YOU MUST BE INCREDIBLY EXCITED?

"Definitely. When I hung up my boots and moved into coaching, it was always my long term goal to be a Head Coach."

"It's happened a little sooner than I expected perhaps but I'm incredibly honoured to be leading Gloucester Rugby into this coming season."

"I've been here for four years now so I know the club, the players and staff. I'm familiar with the fans and the city. And I'm also aware of the importance of the relationship between the various parties."

"I've said in several interviews this summer that I feel that the relationship a player has with his club is all important. And I think we've got a squad of players here at Gloucester who buy into that."

"They'll be proud to wear the shirt and represent the club, its supporters and the city."

Q. PEOPLE WILL LOOK AT THE PLAYER TURNOVER FROM LAST SEASON. MANY OF THE DECISIONS WERE MADE BEFORE YOU TOOK OVER THE REINS. ARE YOU HAPPY WITH THE MAKE UP OF THE SQUAD?

"I'm very happy. What people may be unaware of is that our recruitment plans for this season



were very much a joint effort amongst the coaching staff so I certainly had a great deal of input into which new players we targeted."

"It's always a tricky time in the summer as a few of your players will arrive later than others as they'll be away on international tours etc so we've actually only had everyone here for the past few weeks."

"But everyone has settled in well, even Tim Molenaar who only trained with the squad for the first time on the Tuesday before the Ospreys game but came off the bench and showed some real promise."

"I'm also particularly happy that we've got a lot of lads who have

come through the Academy system. They've been brought up in the 'Gloucester way' and there's some real talent there."

Q. HOW DO YOU FEEL PRESEASON HAS GONE? IT'S ALL GONE REALLY WELL. THE FIRST GROUP OF PLAYERS REPORTED BACK PRETTY EARLY AND REPORTED BACK IN GREAT SHAPE."

"Mark Bitcon has done a great job with the squad from a strength and conditioning perspective. He's worked them hard but he's mixed things up and made it interesting as well."

"And that's also what we've tried to do as a coaching team. We haven't discarded everything that we did last season because a lot of

things worked well. But we have introduced a few new elements in an attempt to challenge the players and keep them fresh."

Q. WHAT HAVE YOU TAKEN FROM THE PRESEASON GAMES SO FAR?

"The three games have been interesting in different ways. We've taken the opportunity to give game time to as many different players as possible."

"For example, in Hazey's testimonial game, we had a look at some of the younger players like Freddie Burns and Jonny May in the backline and Paul Doran-Jones and Dave Attwood up front."

"More of the new faces have featured in the remaining games with Nicky Robinson getting a couple of matches and Eliota Fuimaono-Sapolu starting against the Ospreys."

"So, nearly everyone has had a run out and we've had the chance to look at a few different combinations."

"It's also been a valuable lesson in seeing how the different officials referee the game. We've had three different referees and all have had their own style. What we've picked up and what we must take into the new season is that we have to adapt very quickly otherwise we'll be refereed out of games."

"But we feel in good shape. We haven't picked up any serious injuries and we still have a few boys who are set to come back into the reckoning."

Q. THE AUTHORITIES HAVE TINKERED WITH THE LAWS AGAIN. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE CHANGES?

"We just get on with it really."



"We don't make the decisions or change the laws, we just have to adapt."

"I can see the logic behind having an extra prop forward in the matchday squad as a lot of games have gone uncontested in recent seasons and the scrum is an integral part of the game."

"And I think making pulling down the maul illegal is a positive step as it's a legitimate attacking weapon when well executed and helps to open up space in the wider channels if forwards are committed to defending it."

Q. BATH HAVE BEEN UNDER THE MEDIA SPOTLIGHT THIS SUMMER BUT THIS WON'T AFFECT THEIR FOCUS AHEAD OF THIS AFTERNOON'S GAME WILL IT?

"Not at all. That all happened some time ago now and they've had plenty of time to regroup and integrate their new players. If anything, it might have served to make them a tighter knit group."

"No, make no mistake, whoever they field this afternoon, Bath will be a tough prospect to open up the Guinness Premiership season."

"It'll be a battle but it's a fight that we're up for."

"I'VE BEEN HERE FOR FOUR YEARS NOW SO I KNOW THE CLUB, THE PLAYERS AND STAFF. I'M FAMILIAR WITH THE FANS AND THE CITY. AND I'M ALSO AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VARIOUS PARTIES."



NICKY ROBINSON



PLAYER PROFILE: NICKY ROBINSON

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

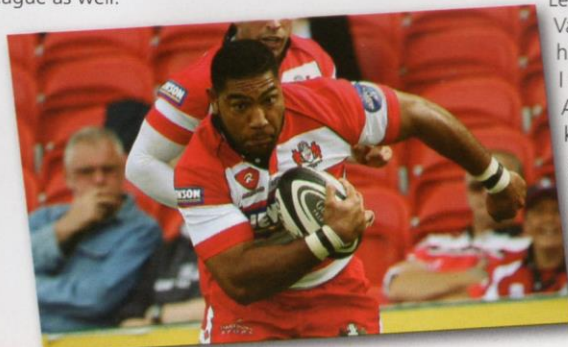
WHAT'S THE FIRST GAME YOU REMEMBER WATCHING?

The one I can really remember is when Wales beat England 10-9 at the old Arms Park. That was the game when Emyr Lewis put a kick in over the top and Rory Underwood looked favourite to get to the ball but Iwan Evans overtook him on the blindside to get the score.



WHO IS YOUR SPORT'S BEST PUNDIT?

Jonathan Davies without a doubt. He usually says fairly good stuff about me! And he knows his stuff when it comes to rugby union and rugby league as well.



CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE GAME OF CRICKET?

I usually have no problem explaining them to a bloke! I have tried explaining cricket to my girlfriend and she's not too bad to be fair. Actually, trying to explain the intricacies of Test Match cricket to anyone is a tough job. One day cricket is an easier job.



WHAT'S BEEN YOUR WORST FASHION CRIME?

I don't think I've committed one! I'm usually pretty well dressed!

WHO'S GOT THE FLASHIEST MOTOR AT THE CLUB?

Lesley Vainikolo and his Escalade I reckon. Although I know some of the boys have given Mark Bitcon some grief about his Porsche in the past.

IF MONEY WAS NO OBJECT WHAT WOULD YOU BUY?

That's a tough one. I think I'd buy one of those really awesome coffee machines, the sort that they use in the proper Italian cafes. I like my coffee!

WHICH CHARITIES DO YOU SUPPORT AND WHY?

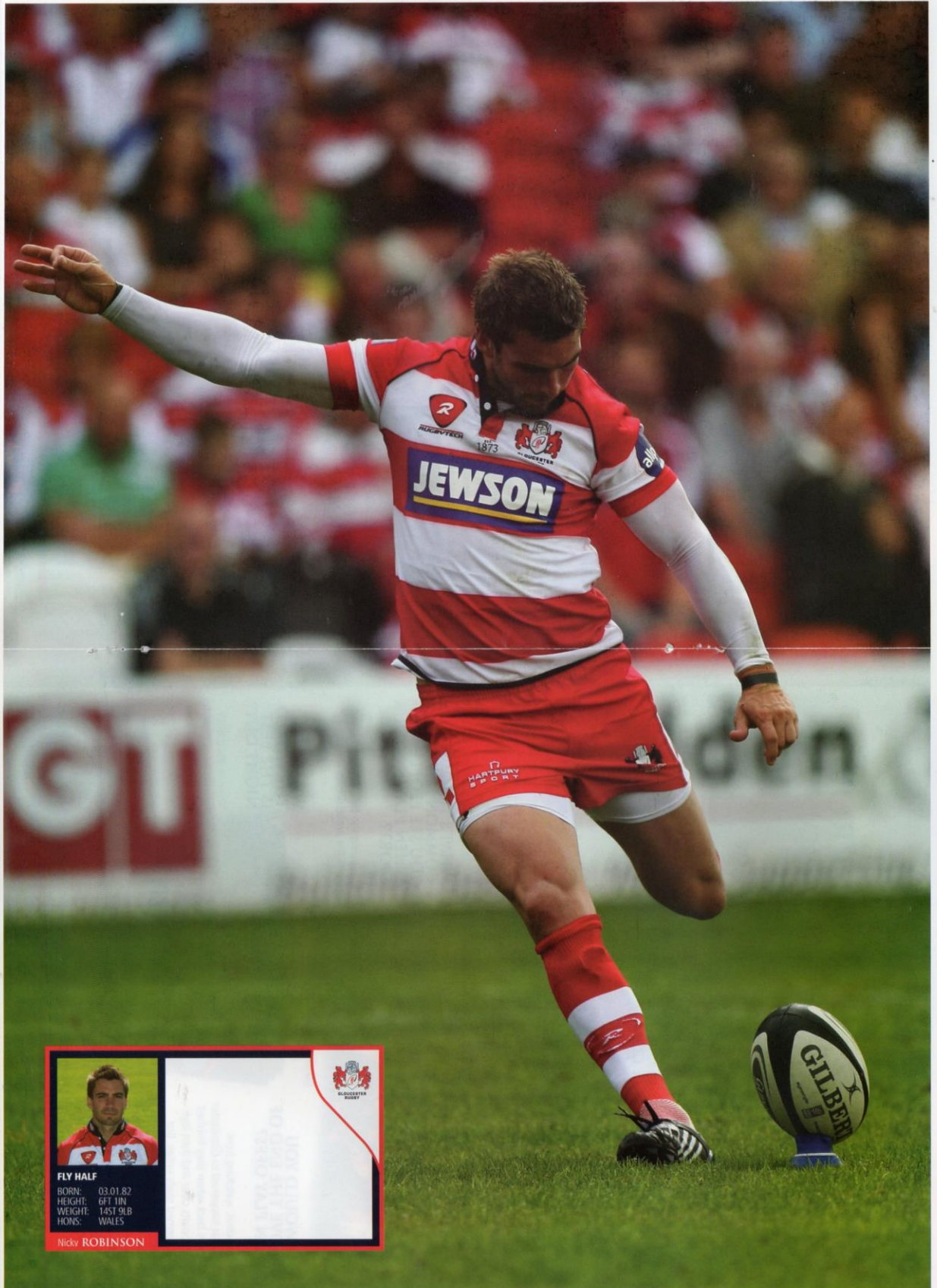
I've always supported the Cancer Research appeals, I have done for years. I also support Scope when I can as well.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BISCUIT?

That's really funny because I've just been having that conversation with a few of the boys. I'm going to have to give you a couple of categories here. The first, with tea, would be a digestive biscuit. That's a classic. As a biscuit on its own, without a drink, a chocolate hob nob.

CAN YOU PLAY A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT?

No. I haven't got a musical note in my body! I'd like to be able to but never got around to it.



	 <i>Worcester Rugby</i>
FLY HALF	
BORN: 03.01.82	
HEIGHT: 6FT 1IN	
WEIGHT: 145T 9LB	
HONS: WALES	
Nicky ROBINSON	

NICKY ROBINSON



PLAYER PROFILE: NICKY ROBINSON

IF YOU COULD BE IN A BAND, WHICH ONE WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Can I say Stereophonics or is that a bit too Welsh? It'd have to be a really cool rock band. I know, Kiss!



WHAT'S YOUR NICKNAME AT THE CLUB AND HOW DID IT COME ABOUT?

Dai. The standard nickname for any Welshman at an English club!

IF THERE WAS ONE RUGBY RELATED RULE OR LAW THAT YOU COULD CHANGE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

That's a tough one. I think the balance is about right at the moment. Bringing the maul back in I think is the right move. As a fly half, I wouldn't tinker with anything to do with kicking so I'll be controversial and say that scrums should be more like rugby league scrums. Get the ball in and out!

WHICH TWO OF YOUR TEAM MATES WOULD YOU WANT ON YOUR TEAM IN A PUB QUIZ?

Nick Wood and Dave "The Bore" Attwood. You've got to put "The Bore" in there! And Nick's got good general knowledge, very

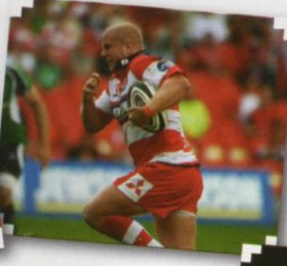
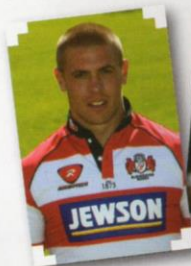
good at crosswords etc.

WHAT'S THE MOST COMMON MISTAKE YOU SEE PEOPLE MAKE WHEN PLAYING YOUR SPORT?

Dropping the ball. A basic one but even the professionals are prone to it.

HOW WOULD YOU IMPROVE THE END OF SEASON PLAY OFFS?

I have to admit, watching from Wales, what happened to Gloucester a few years back when they finished about 15 points clear and then lost the final seemed really unfair. But the game is about entertainment at the end of the day and it does create a spectacle at the end of the season even if the season does seem to get longer and longer. It'll be interesting to see how it works in the Magners this season.



WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THE BEST NIGHT OUT?

Vegas is good but I haven't been there for a few years so I'll say Brisbane.

HAS SPORT EVER BROUGHT TEARS TO YOUR EYES?

Apart from painful injuries, no!



BOB FENTON'S KINGSHOLM NEWS

WELL it's been some summer, hasn't it. The final whistle of the last match of last season seems a long, long time ago, and a heck of a lot has happened since then.

Unfortunately much of what has gone on has grabbed the attention for all the wrong reasons. The successful and very watchable Lions tour to South Africa has been long forgotten as a result of the firestorm of negative stories that have followed the now infamous 'bloodgate' affair at Harlequins, and the events that unfolded down at the Rec.

There will be some around the country who will get some kind of buzz from the misfortunes of Harlequins and Bath. Me? I just feel sorry for the supporters of both clubs who have had to sit by and watch the good names of their clubs get dragged through the mud.

happens on the pitch rather than off it. And for me, that has not come quickly enough!

Here at sunny Kingsholm (the sun always shines on the righteous) we have waved goodbye to a few old favourites and a coach, but we have some shiny new shirts and a few shiny new players to go in them.

Some of the new guys are so young though. They say you are getting old when policemen start to look young, I feel positively ancient looking at all the fresh-faced youngsters in the team line up now. I bet that they could make one razor blade last three months if they all shared it every morning!

I think it's really exciting though, watching these players develop and progress is always interesting. Of course there will be some who would prefer that we filled



Happily, though, the season proper starts today and we get a chance to put that behind us and talk about rugby for all the right reasons: what

every position with a hardened professional with as many international caps as games under their belts and will look on the

promotion of youngsters from the academy with a touch of worry.

While having bags of experience in every position is a good place to be the future of the game rests with clubs bringing through young talent, and to be fare we have a pretty good track record in this respect. The likes of Sinbad and Ollie Morgan have come through this way and have done pretty well – who is prepared to bet that a Sharples, Trinder or May will not do likewise? Time will, as ever, tell.

We also have a new– well not so much new, but re-titled and now in charge – coach. Anyone who has spoken to Bryan Redpath will know they are in the presence of a true 'rugby man'. Again some would prefer that we had gone shopping

for a big name, big time coach, but remember that they all had to start somewhere – they were all inexperienced once. But then Bryan is hardly inexperienced, is he.

Okay he might not have been the one picking the team or making the final decisions but he has been around long enough to know what's what. Personally I find his appointment exciting. If he can become as accomplished a coach, as he was a player then we are going to do very nicely indeed.

So we are where we are, let's get on with the season... The fixtures fairy was having a bit of a laugh when he put together the first round of the competition– all those derbies out of one hat, what kind of a coincidence was that... They didn't get them all though, how they missed Northampton v Leicester is beyond me.

We've also been handed a few strange kick off times and different match days. I'm a traditionalist I like 3pm on Saturday. But then evening games have something special about them too, and some of these changes are going to allow players turning out for local sides to get to games too, so there are pros and cons.

I do feel sorry for travelling fans though. I mean how many Leeds fans, keen to enjoy their first season back in the big time, are going to get to Worcester next Friday for an 8pm kick off. There are only so many days off work you can take.

But back to today, that fixture fairy I mentioned earlier has thrown us a juicy first run out against the boys from down the A46.

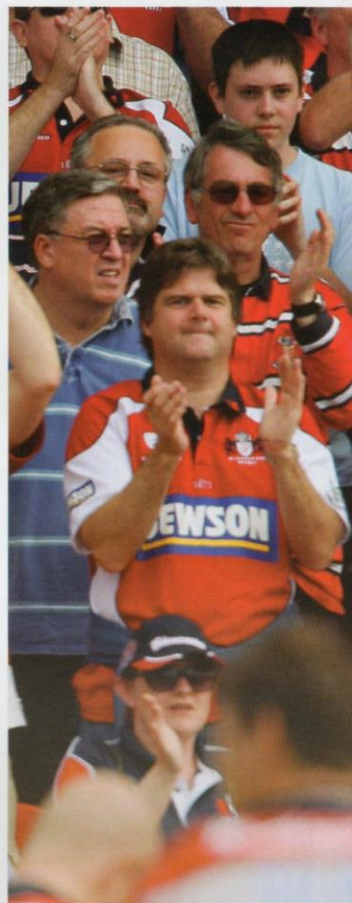


How best to describe their summer... Turbulent would maybe go close and that's good enough for me. I'm not going to go over all the events that have happened or are still happening as frankly I think we have all had enough of it, suffice to say it must have made Steve Meehan's life very umm... interesting maybe?

But sometimes adversity can serve a very good motivating factor for those involved, and you can bet that the Bath team will have pulled together and be doubly determined to succeed this season. Heaven knows they are cussed enough opponents at the best of times, what we don't need is for them to have even more determination to knock over anyone who stands in their path.

Last year they played some terrifically exciting rugby and three tries scored against us in the Andy Hazell / Lee Mears testimonial game a few weeks back showed that they were still more than capable of getting over the try line. Of course you can't read too much into a pre-season game when so many key players were missing, but even so I think we are in for a very tough test today.

Bring it on, though... I don't think I have looked forward to the start of a season for some time – well at least twelve months, anyway...



"LAST YEAR THEY PLAYED SOME TERRIFICALLY EXCITING RUGBY AND THREE TRIES SCORED AGAINST US IN THE ANDY HAZELL / LEE MEARS TESTIMONIAL GAME A FEW WEEKS BACK SHOWED THAT THEY WERE STILL MORE THAN CAPABLE OF GETTING OVER THE TRY LINE."

DAVE KING'S WORLD OF RUGBY

INTERESTING to look at how clubs have fared since the game went professional. In the PREMIER League the table compiled since 1996-1997 season until the completion of last season would read as follows:

POS	PLAYED	WON	DREW	LOST	PTS+	PTS -	BONUS PTS	PTS
1.	Leicester	290	196	16	78	7,714	5,234	777
2.	Wasps	290	173	13	104	7,416	5,896	709
3.	GLOUCESTER	290	164	9	127	6,850	6,170	672
4.	Bath	290	161	12	167	7,051	5,800	631
5.	Sale	290	146	14	130	6,839	6,898	614
6.	Saracens	290	147	9	144	6,895	6,538	570
7.	London Irish	290	135	9	146	6,425	6,730	553
8.	Newcastle	268	120	9	139	5,692	6,307	499
9.	Harlequins	268	119	8	141	6,147	6,179	486
10.	Northampton	246	128	5	113	5,639	5,126	485
11.	Bristol	220	78	9	133	4,436	5,666	345
12.	Worcester	110	37	6	67	1,897	2,449	192
13.	Leeds	110	29	2	79	1,934	2,978	141
14.	Richmond	48	23	2	23	1,327	1,214	46
15.	London Scottish	26	8	0	18	491	734	16
16.	Bedford	48	7	0	41	937	1,642	15
17.	Rotherham	44	2	0	42	644	1,533	15
18.	West Hartlepool	48	6	1	41	883	1,8802	13
19.	Orrell	22	3	0	19	352	886	6

STEVE HANLEY became the first ever Sale Sharks player to be granted a testimonial. Steve played 191 matches for the Sharks scoring 104 tries, 75 of those were recorded in the Premiership. The elusive winger gained one cap for England in the 1999 Five Nations when England were defeated by Wales. He made his club debut for Sale at Heywood Road in 1998 versus Cardiff.



046// GLOUCESTERRUGBY.CO.UK

OUR former head coach Richard Hill has joined French third tier club Chalon Sur Saone. The 48 year old has signed a two year deal with the French minnows. The club is located in the foothills of the Alps. Richard will be hoping to take his new club to promotion from Federale 1 Championship to Rugby Pro D2.



THERE have been 31 players who have captained the British & Irish Lions. There have been ten Irishmen, seven Englishmen, seven Scots and also seven Welshmen. Martin Johnson of England is the only player to have captained the Lions on consecutive tours in 1997 to South Africa and then again in 2001 to Australia.





OUR lock forward, Will James has taken over as Head Coach at South West One club Yatton where he has replaced former Bath and Bristol lock Mark Gabey who left the North Somerset Club at the end of last season. Will combines training and playing in the Premiership with the Cherry & Whites with his duties at Yatton. Plymouth born, Will, has had spells with Plymouth Albion and Cornish Pirates. Although he

will be unable to attend Saturday matches, the North Somerset Club will have their matches recorded, cut down and sent to Will via the internet. Will who has been capped on four occasions by Wales, has now completed his Level Three coaching award. He made his full international debut when he was called up by Gareth Jenkins for Wales versus England at Twickenham in August 2007.

INTERESTING statistics from the British & Irish Lions tour to South Africa in 2009 read: -

PLAYED	WON	DREW	LOST	PTS +	PTS -
10	7	1	2	311	171



MOST TRIES:

Ugo Monye 4,
Tommy Bowe 4,
Tom Croft 3.

MOST POINTS:

Stephen Jones 65,
Ronan O'Gara 51,
James Hook 33.

MOST STARTS:

Paul O'Connell & Tommy Bowe 6;
James Heaslip,
Stephen Jones,
Mike Phillips 5.

EVER PRESENT IN ALL

THREE TESTS:

Paul O'Connell,

Jamie Heaslip,
Stephen Jones,
Mike Phillips,
Tommy Bowe.

MOST MINUTES IN ACTION:

Tommy Bowe 480.

SELECTED BUT UNABLE TO PLAY:

Thomas O'Leary,
Tom Shanklin,
Alan Quinlan,
Jerry Flannery,
Ryan Jones.

FEWEST MINUTES IN ACTION:

Leigh Halfpenney
and Tim Payne 80.

COVENTRY, who were founded

in 1874 were facing extinction a year ago. Due to public support they have made it through administration. This famous old club have produced a string of notable players including Richard Cockerill, Fran Cotton, David Duckham and Danny Grewcock.



PETER ARNOLD'S GLOUCESTER TALK

THIS IS WHERE THE STORY REALLY STARTS...

OR does it? Usually, at this point in the season, I can wax lyrical about how nice it is to be home, and what a lot of laughter and tears we have to look forward to over the next nine months or so. But it's not like that, this time round, for the simple reason that, throughout 2009, rugby has not seemed to go away at all.

There was the Lions tour of course, where there was enough controversy to keep us all interested and even infuriated at times, but I wasn't really thinking about that so much as events on the home front.

The debacle at the end of last season has left some open wounds that won't be healed until they are treated out on the field and results throw a cloak over the events of last May. Perhaps we can then forget them, in much the same way that England's Ashes win has thrown a veil over the 5-0 thrashing the cricketers suffered in Australia

only two years ago.

Hindsight is a wonderful thing, and looking back, perhaps we should all have seen that there was something rotten in the state of Kingsholm rather earlier than most people did. We were losing highly promising young players to other clubs at a positively indecent rate. When we won matches, the manner of the victories didn't exactly fill one with enthusiasm.

Then, after the season had thankfully ground to a close, all the recriminations and wrangling started. To misquote the Duke of Wellington, I don't know what hey did to the players, but by God, they frightened me.

Tom Walkinshaw's 'root and branch' investigation seemed to take an age, but that was only right, because the last thing we can afford is some sort of half-cocked fudge.

Have the powers-that-be got it right? The next few months will tell, but my instincts are optimistic.

PIZZA THE ACTION

There are changes to the squad every year, of course, but I can't recall such a wholesale revolving door as we have observed this season. That's bound to cause some trepidation in the ranks, but we do have the reassurance that there is still a solid nucleus of experienced elver-eaters who know what it's like to be a Gloucester player, to keep things on course. We still have hardened campaigners like Mike Tindall, Ollie Azam, Andy Hazell and Alex Brown to keep things on track.

At the other end of the spectrum there is a catalogue of unfamiliar names. Go on, be honest, had you ever heard of Paul Doran-Jones until a few weeks ago? In fact, it seems to be our year for hyphens, with the biggest tongue-twister of them all, Eliota Fuimaono-Sapolu tipped to make a big impression once his paperwork is sorted out.

When I first heard of Tim Molenaar, I thought "Oh good. A South African!" but I was quite wrong. It appears he was born in New Zealand and has a Dutch passport. Other newcomers, whose names we are going to have to get used to, include Darren Dawidiuk, Rupert Harden and Pierre Capdevielle. I hope I've got my spelling right: if not I apologise.

Many of these guys come from the lower divisions, but we shouldn't read too much into that. We can all think of players who came here with huge reputations and impeccable qualifications who simply failed to cut the mustard. On the other hand we have blokes who arrived from lesser clubs, such as Qera and Will James, who have really made a name for themselves since becoming



THERE IS STILL A SOLID NUCLEUS OF EXPERIENCED ELVER-EATERS WHO KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A GLOUCESTER PLAYER, TO KEEP THINGS ON COURSE. WE STILL HAVE HARDENED CAMPAIGNERS LIKE MIKE TINDALL, OLLIE AZAM, ANDY HAZELL AND ALEX BROWN TO KEEP THINGS ON TRACK.



part of the Kingsholm scene.

It's a bit like a good pizza, really. We have a variety of toppings on a substantial base. But as Bryan Redpath is always saying, when you come right down to it, it's all about enthusiasm, devotion to the shirt and old-fashioned dog.

This is where the story really starts, as they used to say in the Goon Show. All the newcomers will rapidly find that we have rugby in our very blood.

And we didn't have to go into a joke shop for it.

NEW BRUSH SWEEPING CLEAN?

Obviously, we wish the best of luck to all our players this season, but this year, perhaps we should spare some of our good wishes for our new coach. If ever a guy was thrown in at the deep end it was

Bryan Redpath, known as 'Brush' to the squad, I'm told.

As far as I know, his coaching experience was, shall we say, limited when Dean Ryan recruited him, and I'm sure it never occurred to him that he was bringing in his eventual successor. Now, Bryan has inherited a very hot seat indeed, and it seems from the side lines that he has set about the job with admirable enthusiasm and not a little imagination and energy.

He is having to make do with a smaller squad this season, and isn't the only coach around the Premiership to face the same restriction. But then, having a large squad is not a guarantee of either success or silverware, as no one knows better than Gloucester. Perhaps having a tight-knit group has strengths of its own, leaving less room for dressing-room cliques and factions to arise, and more

opportunity for building an ethos where loyalty to the team and the club is a primary consideration. Prima donnas need not apply.

We've seen it all before. The reigns of Richard Hill, Nigel Melville, Philippe Saint Andre and Dean Ryan all started as bright new dawns, enjoyed a period of success and ended in tears. Perhaps Brush can break the mould. He has certainly begun with a breath of fresh air, which we hope, will translate itself on to the field. And produce some enjoyable rugby, a factor which was sadly lacking sometimes last time round.

So when you're doing your damndest to shout the boys on this season, spare a thought for the coach. He's as desperate for success as any of us. And has more to lose.

Best of luck Bryan Redpath! And all the back-room staff, for that matter.

STEVE COTTON GLOUCESTER VS BATH

Gloucester and Bath may not like to admit they have too much in common, but the theme of change has certainly been familiar to both clubs during an eventful summer.

It has been a case of out with the old, in with the new at both Kingsholm and the Recreation Ground.

No fewer than nine new faces have arrived at Gloucester, while 14 players have departed. There has also been the small matter of a new head honcho on the coaching side, with Bryan Redpath stepping up to replace Dean Ryan.

Down at Bath, meanwhile, 11 players have headed for the exit (although four of those departures, it is safe to suggest, were not planned) and eight new arrivals have linked up with the squad.

They, too, have also made changes on the coaching front, with Martin Haag coming in to replace Mark Bakewell as forwards chief.

As if today's Guinness Premiership derby opener was in need of any additional spice, there is the intrigue that surrounds how each team will deal with their summer of change.

Bath's ins and outs may have generated more headlines (and largely negative ones at that) but their pre-season form suggests Steve Meehan's men are moving quickly onto the next stage of their development.

If anything, their pack looks more mobile and dynamic than before thanks to the signings of David

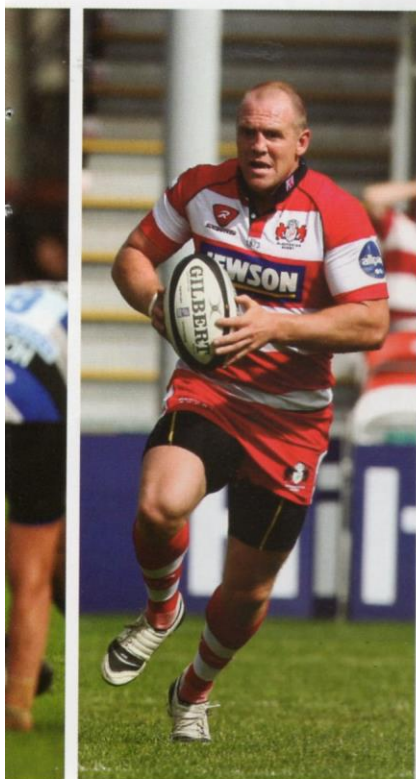


AS IF TODAY'S GUINNESS PREMIERSHIP DERBY OPENER WAS IN NEED OF ANY ADDITIONAL SPICE, THERE IS THE INTRIGUE THAT SURROUNDS HOW EACH TEAM WILL DEAL WITH THEIR SUMMER OF CHANGE.

Wilson, Julian Salvi and Ben Skirving – with Luke Watson to arrive in November, too.

Whether their back-line possesses enough depth and quality to deal with the injuries suffered by Butch James and Olly Barkley (and the controversial departure of talismanic outside centre Alex Crockett) remains to be seen – and this afternoon they will get a good examination.

For Gloucester, the return of several influential players to full fitness after an injury-disrupted 2008-09 season is likely to be central to their hopes of a more successful campaign.



Akapusi Qera, Mike Tindall, Gareth Delve, Peter Buxton, Oly Morgan and James Simpson-Daniel all missed extended periods of last season – and there can be no doubt that contributed greatly to Gloucester's failure to reach the Guinness Premiership play-offs.

But this is a new season and players at every club in the country will have headed into this weekend full of optimism. If Gloucester's old-stagers can stay fit and their summer recruits quickly find their feet, there is no reason why that optimism should not be justified here.

History may count for little in professional sport, but – including

HISTORY MAY COUNT FOR LITTLE IN PROFESSIONAL SPORT, BUT – INCLUDING THE 19-19 DRAW IN THE RECENT ANDY HAZELL-LEE MEARS TESTIMONIAL MATCH – IT IS NOW FIVE MATCHES AND 18 MONTHS SINCE BATH BEAT GLOUCESTER.

the 19-19 draw in the recent Andy Hazell-Lee Mears testimonial match – it is now five matches and 18 months since Bath beat Gloucester.

Last season's meetings between the sides provided some of the highlights of Gloucester's 2008-09 campaign. Not only was that elusive first league win at the Rec achieved, but the 36-27 victory in February provided one of the top-flight's matches of the season.

There will undoubtedly be nerves today, allied to an air of unfamiliarity on both sides of West Country rugby's great divide. But, once again, all the ingredients for a classic encounter are in place.

SATURDAY 15 AUGUST 2009 / 15:00 KO



GLOUCESTER RUGBY 19



BATH RUGBY 19

COACH'S COMMENTS

"Jonny May and Freddie Burns, for two 18/19-year-old players, were exceptional. Jonny's only been training with us for four weeks and to come in and play comfortably and not look massively out of depth, he did really well."

"It's not that I see him playing all the time but I definitely see a future for him. Freddie has a future to play in the first team more regularly than people thought."

HIGHLIGHT

There was plenty to admire in the play of both teams but the most enduring image of the day has to be Andy Hazell and Lee Mears doing a lap of honour after the game with their respective children in their arms.



More than 5,000 people came to Kingsholm on a sunny mid August afternoon not just to see Gloucester and Bath return to competitive action after eventful close seasons at both clubs, but also to pay tribute to two giants of West Country rugby.

Andy Hazell of Gloucester and Lee Mears of Bath may not measure amongst the biggest playing the game of rugby in this day and age but both players have had an impact at their respective clubs which goes beyond mere feet and inches.

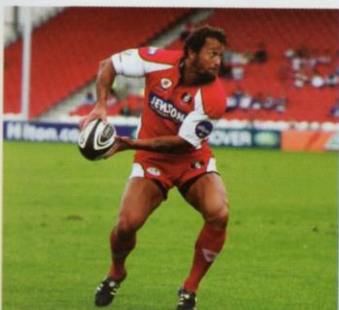
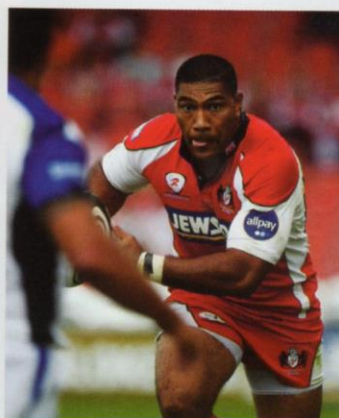
This joint testimonial match was a worthy conclusion to the benefit years of both players and who could

deny that both players deserved their day in the sun?

Gloucester took the opportunity to blood a number of youngsters and new signings. England U20 hopefuls Freddie Burns and Jonny May started in the backline whilst Tom voice, Paul Doran-Jones and Dave Attwood were amongst the new faces to start.

Bath, for their part, would probably have been glad just to return to competitive action after a summer of making headlines for the wrong reasons and there were first run outs for the likes of Matt Carraro, Nicky Little and Chris Cracknell.

GLOUCESTER TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO BLOOD A NUMBER OF YOUNGSTERS AND NEW SIGNINGS. ENGLAND U20 HOPEFULS FREDDIE BURNS AND JONNY MAY STARTED IN THE BACKLINE



Gloucester were out of the blocks quickest, going 10-0 up after a push over try from skipper Gareth Delve in the 13th minute, Spencer adding the extras to an earlier penalty.

Bath replied with a try of their own from Matt Carraro after a length of the field move started by a Voyce missed tackle on 38 minutes.

A Spencer penalty made it 13-7 at half time before an early Joe Maddock try reduced the deficit to a point, extended to four by the boot of the Kiwi, who missed nothing all afternoon.

Gloucester led 16-12 until the 69th minute, when Spencer slotted his

final penalty. A minute later Bath struck back to level the scores and that was how it finished.

In terms of useful feedback for the big Guinness Premiership opener between the same two teams, also at Kingsholm, there wasn't much to conclude.

The fact it was a preseason friendly and a testimonial game to boot and the fact that both teams will likely field vastly differing line ups on September 6th means that much of today's action can largely be confined to the memory banks.

It was still a great day for Messrs Hazell and Mears though...

THE TEAMS

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

T Voyce
C Sharples
J May
C Spencer
L Vainikolo
F Burns
D Lewis
A Dickinson
S Lawson
P Doran-Jones
D Attwood
A Brown
P Buxton
A Hazell
G Delve (capt)

REPLACEMENTS:

D Dawidiuk (S Lawson 51),
P Capdevielle (Doran-Jones 39),
A Eustace (Attwood 51),
D Williams (Delve 68),
R Lawson (Lewis 40),
M Tindall (Burns 40),
J S-Daniel (Vainikolo 51),
N Wood (Dickinson 51),
M Bortolami (Brown 51).

BATH RUGBY

J Cuthbert
J Maddock
M Carraro
B Williams
R Crane
N Little
S Bemand
D Barnes
L Mears (capt)
D Bell
S Hobson
D Grewcock
A Beattie
J Ovens
C Cracknell

REPLACEMENTS:

R Hawkins (Mears 26),
A Jarvis (Bell 40),
S Hooper (Grewcock 40),
B Skirving (Cracknell 40),
M Baxter (Bemand 30),
R Davis (Little 40),
M Stevenson (Crane 40),
P Dixon (Hawkins 51),
D Flatman (Barnes 40),
J Salvi (Ovens 40),
J Faamatuainu (Beattie 40),
M Claassens (Baxter 51),
S Hape (Williams 40), T
Cheeseman (Carraro 40).

SATURDAY 22 AUGUST 2009 / 15:00 KO



GLOUCESTER RUGBY 29



CONNACHT RUGBY 19

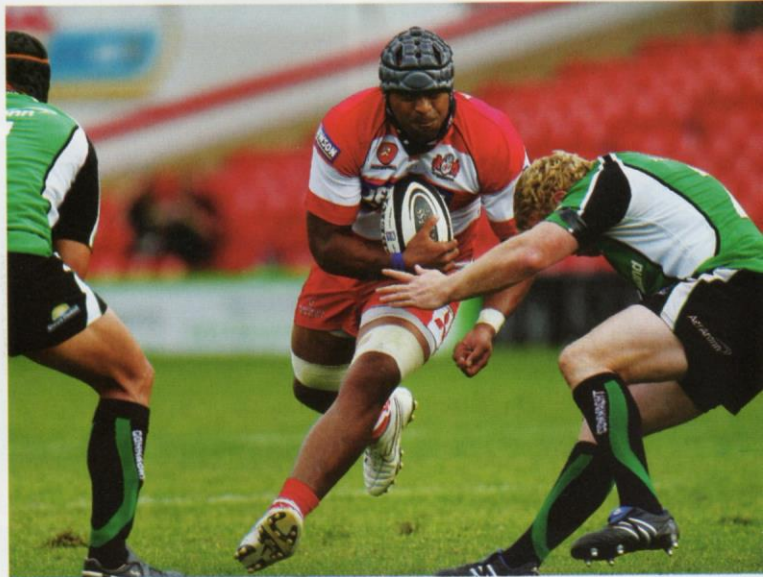
COACH'S COMMENTS

"I was happy it was a proper contest because we've struggled in those games in the past."

"On the whole I was fairly happy although we could have been better with our control around the breakdown."

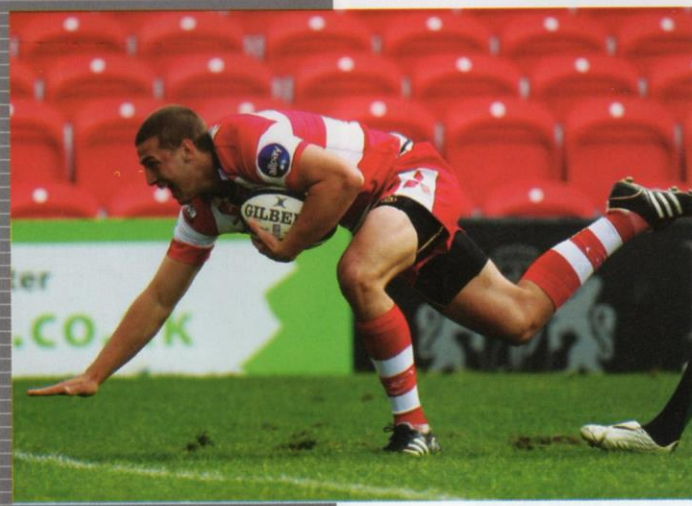
HIGHLIGHT

Several minutes from time, Academy centre Jonny May pounced as the Connacht defence couldn't handle an up and under from Dave Lewis, scooped up the loose ball and ran in untouched to score his first senior try at Kingsholm. It's entirely possible that May was gently rebuked in the dressing room after the game for celebrating his score before touching the ball down but there was no denying his delight as he crossed the line.



Gloucester Rugby clinched their first victory of the 2009-10 preseason campaign with a 29-19 win over Connacht but were made to work very hard for it by a dogged and determined Irish side.

If anyone had turned up at Kingsholm expecting to see Connacht quickly capitulate and allow Gloucester to romp to a 40 or 50 point victory then they were to be sadly mistaken.

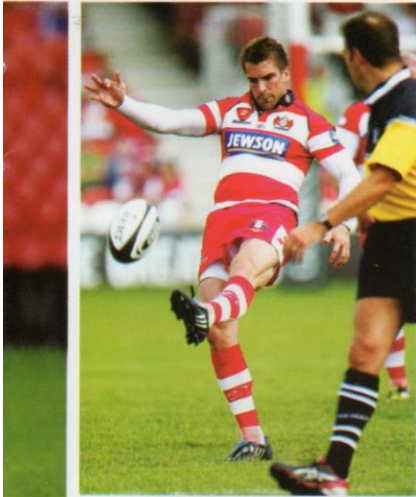


The visitors didn't come with a particularly ambitious game plan. But they did come prepared to compete and to make life hard for Gloucester. And they duly ticked both boxes.

In hindsight, Gloucester did make life difficult for themselves. From the off, they were on the front foot and dominating territory and possession.

However, on two separate occasions, they managed to turn over possession whilst deep in Connacht territory and pushing for a score and ended up under their own posts contemplating a long range score from the visitors.

GLOUCESTER DID REGROUP THROUGH A NICKY ROBINSON TRY AND CONVERSION BUT IT TOOK UNTIL EARLY IN THE SECOND HALF FOR THEM TO TAKE THE LEAD FROM NICK WOOD'S TRY AFTER HE BROKE A TACKLE AND ROMPED HOME FROM 10 METRES OUT.



To be fair, it was probably a valuable lesson. Turnovers will be ruthlessly punished in the cauldron of the Heineken Cup and the Guinness Premiership and Connacht may well have done Bryan Redpath a favour and saved him a job in emphasising the importance of holding onto possession.

Gloucester did regroup through a Nicky Robinson try and conversion but it took until early in the second half for them to take the lead from Nick Wood's try after he broke a tackle and romped home from 10 metres out.

James Simpson-Daniel's nifty footwork and try looked to have sealed things for Gloucester but still Connacht weren't done as they forced a passing error from Dave Lewis and Mike McCarthy pounced on the loose ball to score.

May's big moment did eventually put the game to bed for Gloucester with just a few minutes to go and killed

off the Irish challenge.

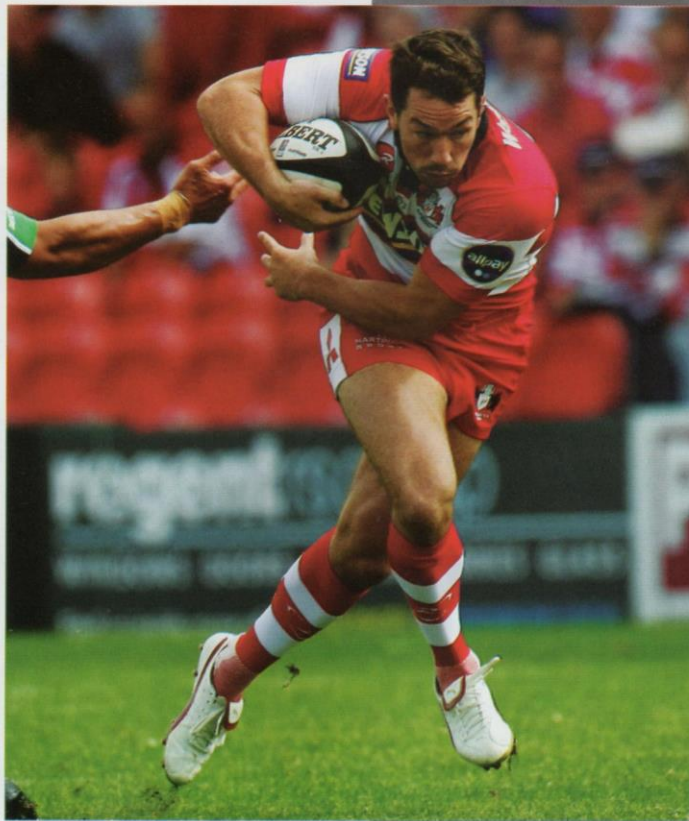
But Redpath's men had been given a valuable reminder of the importance of never underestimating an opponent and also that, by digging deep, competing and taking your chances when they come along, you can hang in there even when up against a seemingly superior opponent.

Much credit goes to Connacht for their effort and commitment but the win was duly chalked up and, importantly, no serious injuries to report.

THE TEAM

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

- T Voyce
- J Simpson-Daniel
- M Tindall
- C Spencer
- L Vainikolo
- N Robinson
- R Lawson
- N Wood
- S Lawson
- P Capdevielle
- A Eustace
- M Bortolami
- D Williams
- A Qera
- L Narraway



SATURDAY 29 AUGUST 2009 / 15:00 KO



GLOUCESTER RUGBY 16



OSPREYS RUGBY 22

COACH'S COMMENTS

"We get judged on next weekend. I can't question the players' commitment. We were beaten by a good side that capitalised on some changes we made."

"That's life but I can't question the players' desire to win the game."

HIGHLIGHT

England U20 winger Charlies Sharples enhancing his already burgeoning reputation with two well taken tries, the first showing off his unofficial title of quickest man in the squad as he burned off the Ospreys cover from 40 metres out.

Gloucester Rugby and the Ospreys delivered a curate's egg of a preseason friendly at Kingsholm to wrap up the 2009-10 preparations for both sides.

Moments of champagne rugby were interspersed with frustrating basic errors but the 7,145 supporters were treated to a committed display from both sides which left the result in the balance right up until the final few minutes.

In terms of drawing conclusions from the game, the raft of replacements made by both sides but, particularly the Ospreys, make things difficult.

The Ospreys fielded the game's decisive player in a young fly half who may well turn out to be

Biggar and better than their usual 10, James Hook. But Gloucester showed more than enough positives to give their supporters real encouragement heading into the Guinness Premiership season.

For the second weekend in a row, Gloucester were generous hosts and gave their visitors a lead to work with. Nikki Walker scored the opening try and Dan Biggar landed a huge penalty from well within his own half.

Against such a polished outfit, even without their British Lions, it would have been easy for the game to slip away particularly in a friendly with little on the line.

But Gloucester hit back hard, forcing the Ospreys onto the back



MOMENTS OF CHAMPAGNE RUGBY WERE INTERSPERSED WITH FRUSTRATING BASIC ERRORS BUT THE 7,145 SUPPORTERS WERE TREATED TO A COMMITTED DISPLAY FROM BOTH SIDES WHICH LEFT THE RESULT IN THE BALANCE RIGHT UP UNTIL THE FINAL FEW MINUTES.

foot and into conceding penalty after penalty.

For the second week in a row, Nicky Robinson's goalkicking looked in the groove and Charlie Sharples long range try after a midfield turnover gave the home team a deserved half time lead.

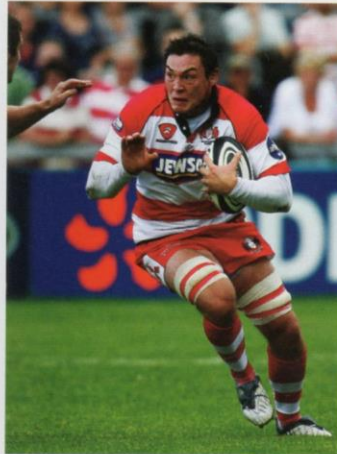
The Ospreys made several changes at half time but were hardly weakened with the likes of Duncan Jones, Ryan Jones and Jerry Collins all taking the field!

However, it was Sharples and Robinson who were again to the fore as Gloucester extended their lead shortly into the second period after a neat interchange between the two.

The scoreboard saw no change for the next 20 minutes or so as both teams were disrupted somewhat by the inevitable replacements but the Ospreys had the crucial final word.

Replacement Ospreys scrum half Tom Isaacs made a critical break from a set scrum, just eluding Dave Lewis' despairing tackle, to lead to Biggar's first try and the fly half sealed the game as he crossed for his second albeit from a forward looking pass. Referee Nigel Owens took an age to award the score as he consulted his touch judge but award it he did.

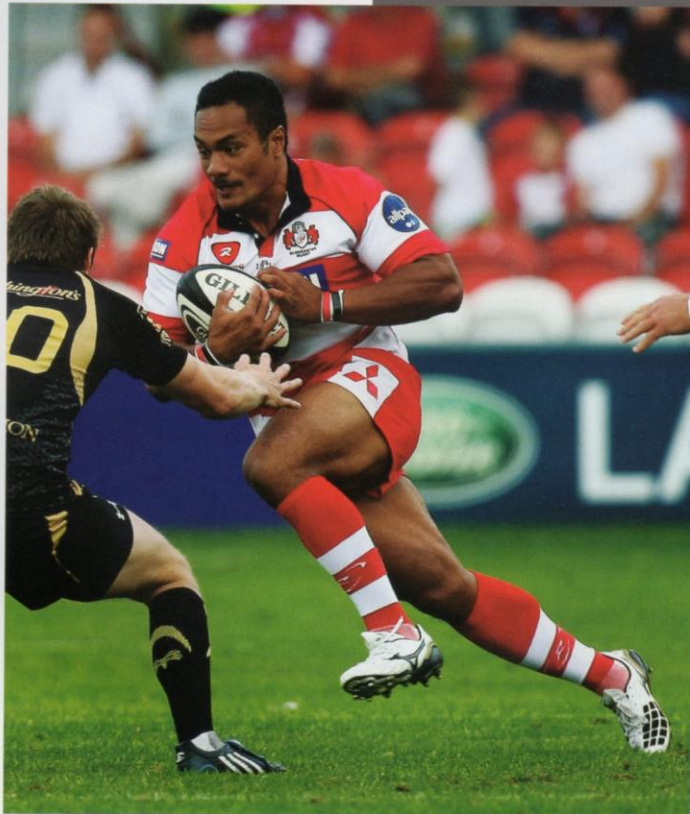
There was initial disappointment as Gloucester's desperate late fightback was to no avail but, given time to reflect, the positives outweighed the negatives and Head Coach Bryan Redpath has some pleasant selection considerations ahead of the Bath game.



THE TEAM

GLoucester RUGBY

T Voyce
C Sharples
M Tindall
E Fuimaono-Sapulu
J Simpson-Daniel
N Robinson
R Lawson
N Wood
S Lawson
G Somerville
D Attwood
Alex Brown
A Qera
A Hazell
G Delve



TODAY'S LINE-UPS

Vs BATH RUGBY
SUNDAY 06/09/09
KO 3:30PM

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

Vs BATH RUGBY

GUINNESS PREMIERSHIP



TOM VOYCE	15	FULLBACK
JAMES SIMPSON-DANIEL	14	WING
MIKE TINDALL	13	CENTRE
ELIOTA FUIMAONO-SAPOLU	12	CENTRE
CHARLIE SHARPLES	11	WING
NICKY ROBINSON	10	FLY-HALF
RORY LAWSON	9	SCRUM-HALF
NICK WOOD	1	PROP
SCOTT LAWSON	2	HOOKER
GREG SOMERVILLE	3	PROP
DAVE ATTWOOD	4	LOCK
ALEX BROWN	5	LOCK
ALASDAIR STROKOSCH	6	FLANKER
ANDREW HAZELL	7	FLANKER
GARETH DELVE (C)	8	NO.8

NICK ABENDANON
JOE MADDOCK
TOM CHEESEMAN
SHONTAYNE HAPE
MATT CARRARO
RYAN DAVIS
MICHAEL CLAASSENS (C)
DAVID FLATMAN
PIETER DIXON
DAVID WILSON
STUART HOOPER
DANNY GREWCOCK
ANDY BEATTIE
JULIAN SALVI
BEN SKIRVING

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	BP	PTS
1 Bath	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2 GLOUCESTER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Harlequins	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 Leeds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 Leicester	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 London Irish	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 Newcastle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8 Northampton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 Sale	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10 Saracens	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11 Wasps	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12 Worcester	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

TOP POINTS SCORERS: 2008-2009

239	Glen Jackson	Saracens
212	Butch James	Bath Rugby
187	Charlie Hodgson	Sale Sharks

TOP TRY SCORERS: 2008-2009

11	Joe Maddock	Bath Rugby
9	Mark Cueto	Sale Sharks
9	Paul Diggin	Northampton Saints

TOP GOAL KICKERS: 2008-2009

80	Glen Jackson	Saracens
79	Butch James	Bath Rugby
58	Charlie Hodgson	Sale Sharks

MOST APPEARANCES : 2008-2009

24	Chris Hala'ufia	London Irish
24	Richard Thorpe	London Irish
23	Steffon Armitage	London Irish

REPLACEMENTS

16	DARREN DAWIDUIK	16	LEE MEARS
17	PIERRE CAPDEVIELLE	17	DAVID BARNES
18	ALASDAIR DICKINSON	18	DUNCAN BELL
19	MARCO BORTOLAMI	19	PETER SHORT
20	AKAPUSI QERA	20	JONNY FAAMATUAINU
21	DAVE LEWIS	21	SCOTT BEMAND
22	FREDDIE BURNS	22	NICKY LITTLE
23	TIM MOLENAAR	23	MATT BANAHAN

THE OFFICIALS

REFEREE:
Andrew Small
ASSISTANT REFEREES:
Roy Maybank & Peter Huckle
4TH OFFICIAL:
Alan Biggs