

OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME // £3

GLOUCESTER RUGBY



Vs GLASGOW WARRIORS
SUNDAY 20/12/09
KO 12:45PM



Heineken Cup Round 4



GARETH DELVE CAPTAIN'S CORNER

I THINK you'll forgive me for stating the obvious when I say, on behalf of the squad, that we're pleased to be back at Kingsholm today.

Our return to European action didn't exactly go to plan last weekend when we travelled north to take on today's opponents, the Glasgow Warriors, at Firhill Arena.

It's not easy to put your finger on exactly why it went wrong last weekend. We'd trained well in the build up to the game, we've welcomed back a few players from injury over the past couple of weeks and were feeling reasonably confident after some positive performances recently.

We certainly weren't over confident, however. We took the challenge of the Warriors very seriously indeed. Rightly so as it turned out.

Although Glasgow had lost their opening two Heineken Cup matches, we were very aware that they currently find themselves top of the Magners League and had supplied ten players to Scotland during the Autumn tests.

Despite that, we found ourselves on the back foot right from the opening kick off. Glasgow were in our faces but we were guilty of putting ourselves under pressure.

We fell off a few tackles, our lineout misfired a couple of times, we turned the ball over unnecessarily and we conceded too many kickable penalties.

We tried to fight back in the

second half but Glasgow had ruthlessly exposed our shortcomings and were in no mood to let us back into the game.

All in all, it was an evening to forget and I genuinely feel for our supporters who continued to back us on the night even when the game looked to be beyond reach. They travelled a long way and braved the cold and deserved better really.

It was all the more disappointing given the professional job that we'd done against Newcastle the weekend before. Newcastle were a tough nut to crack and conditions meant that we had to play a certain way on the day.

We executed the game plan well against the Falcons, played the game in the right areas and took the points when Newcastle transgressed. It was a job well done and we will have to execute just as well today to get anything out of Glasgow.

From a personal point of view, it was strange to start the Glasgow game on the bench. I missed two games earlier this season when I was suspended and was given the night off when we played Australia.

Apart from that, I'd started all our other matches to this point so watching was an uncomfortable experience.

However, it is good to see the likes of Luke Narryaway and Peter

Buxton back in action after lengthy absences and having competition for places in the back row can only be a good thing.

So, I'm fighting for my place and the team will be fighting to get back to winning ways this afternoon.

Enjoy the game!



BRYAN REDPATH HEAD COACH

ON behalf of everyone at Gloucester Rugby, I'd like to wish the players, staff and supporters of the Glasgow Warriors a very warm welcome to Kingsholm this afternoon.

The Warriors have undertaken a long trip to come down and face us this weekend. We know from bitter experience last weekend just how tough a task it is to travel that far and compete.

This afternoon is an opportunity for us to set the record straight against the Warriors because we simply didn't do ourselves justice up at Firhill last Friday. In that respect, it's probably a good thing that we're taking them on again so quickly.

I wouldn't say we're looking for revenge because there really isn't room for that sort of sentiment in professional sport. But, we really didn't give a good account of ourselves up there. We owe it to ourselves and to our supporters to put things right with a much improved performance and, preferably, a win.

I think it's pretty clear from the comments that I made at the post match press conference at Firhill just how disappointed I was with the way things unfolded up there.

I'm a proud Scotsman and I was very proud to be leading Gloucester into Heineken Cup action north of the border. I was



also well aware of how fired up I was as a player when I was facing English opposition and our side contains enough Scots for that not to have come as any surprise.

Our preparation going into the game had been good. We'd trained as well as we have done all season. But, for some reason, our execution on the night was poor. We fell off tackles, we turned the ball over and didn't make the most of the possession that we did have.

We also fell foul of the referee and, as a result, Glasgow had all the possession and territory.

Dan Parks was given some pretty simple shots at goal and, even when he was out of range, he was able to pin us back in our own half. We've talked about keeping our half clean and we just didn't do it.

Take nothing away from Glasgow as they were the better side on the night. They took what we gave them, seized the game by the scruff of the neck and were worthy winners.

As a result, we've been very honest as a group this week. We've done our analysis and we've had our meetings. We've

looked each other in the eye and asked ourselves if that was good enough. And the answer is obviously no.

It was a step back for us as we'd put in some decent performances in recent weeks. We dogged out a win at home against the Leicester Tigers and could well have won up at Harlequins but only came away with a bonus point.

Then last time out, here at Kingsholm, we did a really professional job against a good Newcastle side. That game may not have been a classic but we did what we had to on the day.

Newcastle have been dark horses this season. A lot of big names have left Kingston Park over the past couple of seasons and their squad certainly doesn't contain the marquee players that it has in the past.

But they've recruited well and they've got a very tight unit up there. We knew that they would give us a tough game and we weren't disappointed in that respect.

I thought Jimmy Gopperth was excellent for them in that respect and the game was still well and truly up for grabs approaching half time.

However there was no concern, we knew exactly what we needed to do in the second half and we went out, executed the game plan perfectly in the second half and emerged with the win. That's

the level of execution required to win games at this level.

Biarritz obviously are the pace setters in Pool 2 now and they'll be difficult to catch. But there is still plenty for us to play for. The third, fourth and fifth ranked runners up in the Heineken Cup pools can qualify for the quarter finals of the Amlin Challenge Cup and the winners of that particular tournament qualify for the 2010-11 Heineken Cup. The incentive is there.

It's not just about that today, however. It's about bouncing back from last weekend and delivering a display worthy of the Gloucester shirt and worthy of our supporters.

We've been hurting, mentally and physically, as a result of last weekend and need to get back on the right track, not just in terms of the Heineken Cup but also because we have big Guinness Premiership games against Bath and Worcester coming up.

The proof will be in the pudding this afternoon. Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support so far this season and wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

WE'VE BEEN HURTING, MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY, AS A RESULT OF LAST WEEKEND AND NEED TO GET BACK ON THE RIGHT TRACK, NOT JUST IN TERMS OF THE HEINEKEN CUP BUT ALSO BECAUSE WE HAVE BIG GUINNESS PREMIERSHIP GAMES AGAINST BATH AND WORCESTER COMING UP.



GARETH BUTLER VIEW FROM THE CITIZEN

I woke up in the Ibis hotel in Glasgow city centre on Saturday morning wondering whether Friday night had actually happened. That might have been partly because of the few beers I had enjoyed after the game, but I wouldn't be surprised if the Gloucester players and management felt the same.

The morning after a defeat is never nice, no matter what level you play at, but when the margin was so large in such an important game as it was at the Firhill Arena, it can't have felt good.

There are always those few moments of bliss when you can't remember what happened the night before, before reality sets in as does the depression.

The type of night it was didn't help either. The Firhill Arena was clad in fog which gave it a mysterious feel a bit like something out of a dream.

Anyway, enough of that romantic stuff, Gloucester were second best last Friday. All the talk suggested they knew how to beat Glasgow, but then they seemed powerless to stop the Scots playing their game.

'Dan Parks will be good at kicking' was the talk around the club all week and Dan Parks was good at kicking – Gloucester just didn't have any answer.

But what better motivation than viewing the video of that defeat which was no doubt shown over and over in the early part of this week?

Nicky Robinson said before the trip



to Firhill that when you play poorly and scrape a win, sometimes the problems can get glossed over. He also said that in defeat there can be over-analysis of where it's going wrong. But I'm sure even he would accept that Friday's performance cannot be analysed enough.

Which in Gloucester's case last Friday can act as a massive

motivation, for Glasgow it is a huge source of confidence. These Heineken double headers always throw up intriguing second legs, no matter what happens in the first.

Whoever came up with the idea of playing it this way needs a big pat on the back because it makes the psychological battle as important as the on field stuff. This is something

The Citizen



the men in suits have got very right.

And what a turnaround a Gloucester win would be. No matter how you look at it, fortress Kingsholm or not, to avenge a 33-11 reverse is a mammoth task.

The odd thing is that a lot of people seem to expect it to happen. Gloucester were poor last week and

Glasgow showed they have the tools to dismantle them, so why should it be any different because the venue has changed?

If Gloucester do manage to win, it would beg the question as to how come they couldn't get close last week?

Playing at home is an obvious

advantage but these are professional players who are used to long away trips in big competitions. They should be able to deal with it.

Finally, there's the feeling that Gloucester have very little to lose from this afternoon's game, because their non qualification for the latter stages of the Heineken Cup is almost done and dusted.

That adds something further to the psychological battle. We may see a bit of the pressure on Gloucester evaporate and a bit more freedom in their play.

One of the problems last week was Gloucester tried to beat Glasgow at their own, pretty turgid game. I get the impression they (Glasgow) were ripe for the taking if attacked properly.

Charlie Sharples showed it didn't take much to breach the home defence and Gloucester kept it far too tight when they had a bit of possession and territory in the second half.

A result this week would also bring much-needed confidence ahead of the trip to Bath next time out. The west country derby has never been more important to both struggling sides.

A win for Gloucester would see them further up the Guinness Premiership table whereas Steve Meehan's men are desperately searching for a catalyst.

Let's hope the Cherry and Whites aren't the ones to provide it and come up with a festive away win to put a smile on all of our faces.

BOB FENTON'S KINGSHOLM NEWS

WELL barring a minor – no, make that major – miracle our Heineken Cup campaign for this season is over before we kick off today. Such is life in this competition that one defeat almost spells the end, two is disaster.

Given that Glasgow were effectively in the same position before last week's game kicked off, it is to their credit that they resisted the temptation to put out a second string side and paid respect to the competition by fielding a pretty much full strength outfit.

Too many games and pools are skewed by teams sending out 'the kids', and while I understand that there are bigger fish (or mars bars) to fry I would prefer to see the first choice players on the park whenever possible.

For us, now, the priority must be getting into sixth position in the league and securing that vital Heineken Cup spot for next season. A club like ours deserves a place in the premier competition, but deserving and getting are two different things. We have no divine right to be in the draw when it is made next year, we have to earn it. And that campaign must start now.

Sure, today's result will not make one jot of difference to our league position, but a good win is good for morale and winning can become a habit too. So a result today will help the mindset for the next league game, and perhaps boost – or provide – a bit of confidence for the guys.

Of course now that I have written that, Bryan will probably decide that

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IT WAS GREAT TO SEE JUNIOR AND TERRY – AND ALL THE OTHERS – TROTTERING OUT AT KINGSHOLM. SPEAKING TO THEM AFTERWARDS TERRY SAID THAT HE NEVER THOUGHT HE WOULD HEAR THE 'TER RY FAN O LUA' CHANT AGAIN, AND JUNIOR SAID THAT "... TO FINALLY RUN OUT AT KINGSHOLM ONCE AGAIN WAS FANTASTIC - DREAM STUFF THAT WAS!"

resting a number of key players is a good idea, but the confidence thing still counts – the whole team can draw strength from a good result, so let's get one today.

Changing tack a bit, did you see that article in the Citizen last weekend, apparently a number of our squad were to make an appearance in a local panto –

'Sleeping Beauty' no less.

The mind boggles... Greg Somerville as an Ugly Sister perhaps, Lesley Vainikolo as the wicked witch of the east (wing) (don't tell them where I stand, by the way). Question is, who would be sleeping beauty from among that lot???

I'm not qualified to comment here, so sought expert opinion from she who must be obeyed. I asked her to take a look through the mug shots in the last programme and pronounce who would be a suitable candidate.

The reply was not encouraging for any wannabe male models on the playing staff, "They've all taken a beating with the ugly stick," was the rather disparaging assessment – though Bryan Redpath is, apparently 'sweet'. Don't blame me, I'm just the messenger!

So last time we were here those that stayed on after the Newcastle match were treated to a fine display by a mishmash of players from the past as a Junior Paramore led side took on the Cherrypickers. I can't remember who won, but as the bucket collections raised over £3,300 I guess the real winners were the people of Samoa.

It was great to see Junior and Terry – and all the others - trotting out at Kingsholm, speaking to them afterwards Terry said that he never thought he would hear the 'Ter Ry Fan O Lua' chant again, and Junior said that "... to finally run out at Kingsholm once again was fantastic - dream stuff that was!"

But the biggest laugh of the

afternoon had to be when Nick Price strolled over to the shed – bottle of water in one hand, fag in the other... Doesn't he know that its all non-smoking at Castle Grim now?

It was also good to see Dougie Woodman and Phil Vickery wandering around the pitch with Junior at half time, though frankly with both of them being Wasps now I would have thought that the pitch was probably a bit too muddy for them to be safe on!

Despite the pantomime villain boos for the Vickster, he definitely qualifies as a legend, as does Dougie. Maybe one day they'll be back at their spiritual home in some capacity or another.

I guess the Cherrypickers were using the game as a bit of a warm up for their (this is an unashamed plug moment, by the way) clash with 'Team Shedweb' in the Help 4 Heroes fund raising match that will be played at Widden on 18th April. Put the date in your diaries once you open them in a few days time.

And talking of a few days time, can I take the opportunity to wish everyone a very happy and peaceful Christmas, may Santa bring you everything you desire – as ever my wish is an easy one – four points (or five) at Bath on 27th.

I would have wished for a couple of tickets too, but seeing as they only gave us an allocation of about four to start with that would have probably been hoping for too much.

See you all in the New Year!





PLAYER PROFILE: RORY LAWSON

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

WHAT'S THE FIRST GAME YOU REMEMBER WATCHING?

It would probably be one of my Dad's games (Alan was a scrum half for Scotland) because he was still playing when I was young. It would probably have been when he was playing for Heriots FP at Goldenacre. There are plenty of pictures of me in family albums diving around in puddles and mud!

In terms of internationals, one game that sticks out is Scotland beating England at Murrayfield in the Grand Slam decider in 1990, watching the game as a 9 year old in the West Stand.



WHO IS YOUR SPORT'S BEST PUNDIT?

Will Greenwood is very good and offers a recent player's perspective. Having just finished playing, he has a huge amount of knowledge of what it takes to be a modern professional rugby player.

Historically, there's only one answer – Bill McLaren. I grew up watching how much work he put into preparing for games.

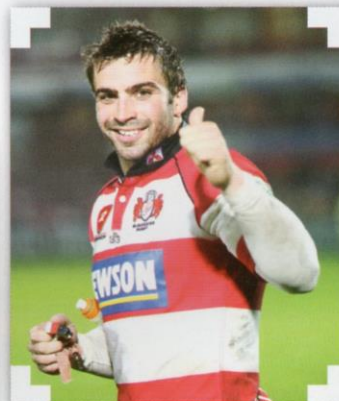


WHO'S GOT THE FLASHIEST MOTOR AT THE CLUB?

Lossie's (Carlos Spencer) new Range Rover is nice. I heard Les saying yesterday that he's growing out of the Escalade and it's old news! Bucko also owns a classic car masquerading as a B reg Fiesta!

WHO'S THE BEST DRESSER IN THE PLAYING DEPARTMENT? WHO'S THE WORST?

I normally get the nod for this one so we're obviously talking about second best although Nicky (Robinson) usually disputes it when I'm named best dressed!

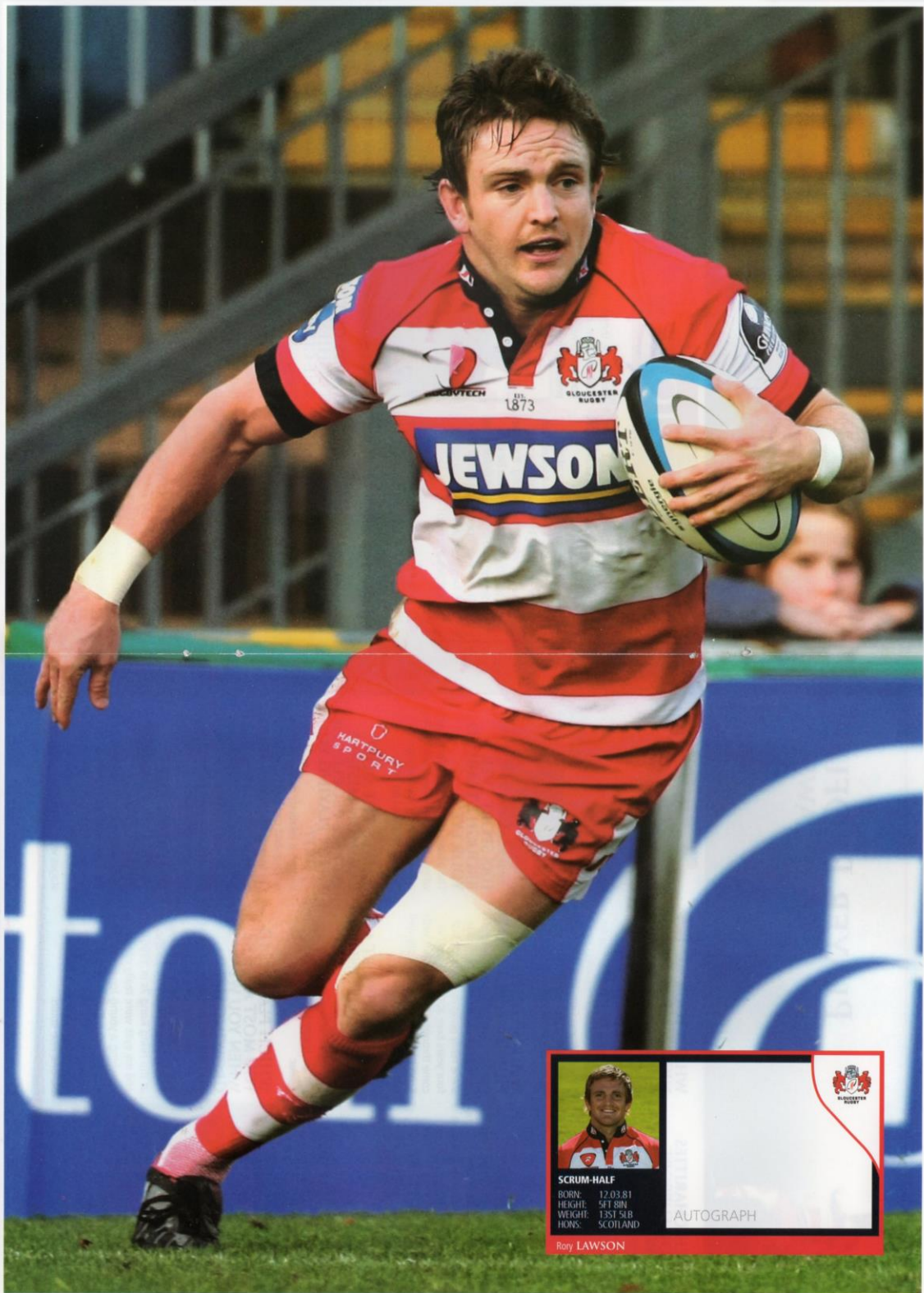


Carlos seems effortlessly cool though and does it without any bother. On the other hand, Les has a habit of coming in wearing some pretty nasty velour/ velvet type tracksuits and Olly Morgan can come in looking like a 70 year old some days.

IF MONEY WAS NO OBJECT WHAT WOULD YOU BUY?

I had this discussion with my girlfriend Max the other day talking about the £45m Euro Millions winner. Possibly a beachside plot in Grand Cayman







SCRUM-HALF
BORN: 12.03.81
HEIGHT: 5'11" 50
WEIGHT: 131 STB
HONS: SCOTLAND



AUTOGRAPH

Rory **LAWSON**



PLAYER PROFILE: RORY LAWSON

WHICH CHARITIES DO YOU SUPPORT AND WHY?

I'm an ambassador for the Wooden Spoon Society and I support a charity called dreams4u which is a Children's Charity which a friend of mine runs. And my family have supported various cancer charities.

CAN YOU PLAY A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT?

Yes, I attempt to play guitar. I got one a couple of Christmases ago and will be picking it up more and more as the winter closes in.

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

Maybe the Foo Fighters.



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

Gun. When I used to play club rugby in Scotland, the SRU put out a booklet for each club and I was named 'Young Gun' and that carried over to Edinburgh until I wasn't so young any more and I was just Gun!

WHO IS YOUR BEST FRIEND IN RUGBY?

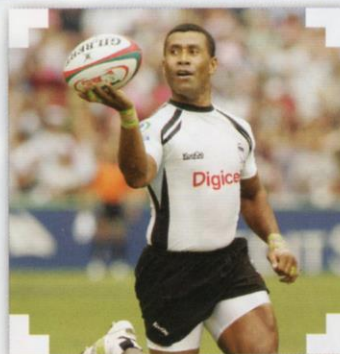
Difficult to say really because you make so many in rugby. I've made some really good mates in the last four years here at Gloucester. I've come through age group stuff with Scott Lawson and get on really well with Nicky Robinson.

DO YOU SUPPORT ANY OTHER SPORTING TEAMS?

Arsenal. I love watching all sports but am happy to sit back as a neutral viewer.

WHICH PLAYER DID YOU MOST ADMIRE WHEN YOU WERE GROWING UP?

From a scrum half point of view, there have been some great ones. Particularly Nick Farr-Jones and George Gregan. I was also at the Hong Kong 7s in 1996 and my eyes were really opened watching a young Jonah Lomu and Christian Cullen light that tournament up. Waisale Serevi could also do things in Sevens that no-one else could.



HAS SPORT EVER BROUGHT TEARS TO YOUR EYES?

There have been times after games when I have done. I'm a terrible loser and, when I was younger, got even more upset than I do now.

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

Rugby's a relatively simple game in essence and can be overcomplicated. But for me, the ability to pick off a three on two or a two on one. Defence's are so on top these days that the very best teams are the ones that make the most of the chances that come their way.

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THE BEST NIGHT OUT?

I was in Rio with my girlfriend during the 2006 Football World Cup in Germany. Brazil didn't go on to win but the nights out during the group stages were incredible.

DAVE KING'S WORLD OF RUGBY

STADE FRANCAIS' official club anthem is Gloria Gaynor's 'I will Survive', which reached number three in the French pop charts in 1997, it sold over 4,000,000 copies!



WHEN Max Guazzini took over Stade Francais in 1992 he wanted to create identifiable jerseys for the club. He decided to include three flashes of lightening which is now the club's emblem and to have a new shirt every year. In 2005 he introduced a pink shirt! Stade Francais played their first match in the new colours at Perpignan in September 2005 and lost the match by 16 points to twelve. Sales rose 20 per cent when the pink shirt was introduced and, in the 2007-2008 season, 95,000 were sold!



STADE Francais C.A.S.E. was formed in 1995 following the merger of the existing club with another Parisian team, Comite Athletic St Germain. Bernard Laporte was appointed Head Coach and Stade reached the Top 14, their third promotion in five seasons. It was in 1998 that Stade reached the Championship Final and won their first title since 1908 when they defeated Perpignan by 34 points to seven at Stade de France.

ONLY two of England's international matches have needed to be re-scheduled. The first came on 9th February 1952 when Ireland were due to visit Twickenham in the Five Nations tournament. The game was postponed due to the death of King George VI. The match was eventually played on 29th March, England won by 3 points to nil. The second match to be postponed came in January 1987 when heavy snow forced the cancellation of Scotland's trip to Twickenham. That Five Nations opening match was played on the 4th April and England defeated the Scots by 21 points to twelve.



LEAGUE matches in England started in 1987, the inaugural Courage League One clubs were: Bath, Bristol, Coventry, Gloucester, Harlequins, Leicester, Moseley, Nottingham, Orrell, Sale, Wasps and Waterloo.

Leicester were champions, Coventry and Sale were relegated. A programme on average in that season cost twenty pence. How prices have risen, in 1911 admission to Twickenham for a match with Scotland cost six shillings (thirty pence). For a match with New Zealand in November 2009 at Twickenham, a seat could cost £81 at the dearer end of the spectrum.



Dave King who has been a regular contributor to the club programme for several years has recently had a book published relating to Gloucester Rugby Club titled 'Cherry & White Companion' relating to all facts and figures of this club. It is currently on sale at major book shops in the area.



While Remembrance Day was a moment when we all remembered the fallen it was a poignant time to recall no fewer than 27 England International players lost their lives in the First World War including Henry Berry (pictured from this club). In the Second World War there were fourteen England International players who forfeited their lives including Chris Tanner from this club.



OUR former prop forward Mike Burton, who in 1975 became the first English player to be sent off in an international became better known for his exposure of the 'boot money' scandal that was rife in the 'Shamateur days'. Mike was reputedly paid £50, and given a free pair of boots to wear, which were Adidas products in an international match. On the actual match day all fifteen England players wore the same boots. In effect the Company had bought itself an 80 minute TV advert!



SINCE professional rugby union was adopted there have been 18 clubs that have participated in the Premier League. **Iain Balshaw** has registered tries against sixteen of these and the only two clubs he has failed to register a try against are his former club Bath and Orrell. Iain passed the landmark of 50 tries last season in our home match with London Irish. A close look at how he achieved that landmark came season by season like this with his then current club in capital letters: -

BATH: 1997-98: Richmond (away). Total: 1

1998-99: Bedford (Home), London Irish (Home), West Hartlepool (Away), Harlequins (Away), Saracens (Home), Bedford (Away), Saracens (away - 3 tries), Leicester (Home), West Hartlepool (Home - 2 tries), London Scottish (Home). Total: 13

1999-00: Northampton (Home), Bristol (Away), Newcastle (Home), Wasps (Home - 2 tries), Newcastle (Away), London Irish (Away - 2 tries), Bristol (Home - 2 tries), Gloucester (Away), Northampton (Away), Harlequins (Home - 2 tries), Saracens (Away). Total: 15

2000-01: Gloucester (Away), London Irish (home), Leicester (Home), Saracens (Away), Northampton (Home), Gloucester (Home). Total 6

2001-02: No Tries

2002-03: Newcastle (Away) Total: 1

2003-04: No Tries.

LEEDS: 2004-05: No tries.

2005-06: Wasps (Home), Saracens (Home). Total: 2

GLOUCESTER: 2006-07: Worcester (Away), London Irish (Home), Sale (Home). Total 3

2007-08: Leeds (Away), London Irish (Away), Newcastle (Away), Harlequins (Away). Total: 4

2008-09: Newcastle (home - 3 tries), Northampton (Home), London Irish (Home), Leicester (Away). Total: 6

Iain has scored 29 tries in home matches and 22 in away fixtures.

PETER ARNOLD'S GLOUCESTER TALK



IN FROM THE COLD?

WE managed to lose up at Glasgow last week. Bryan Redpath said that we "didn't turn up". I'm not surprised.

How can you expect the players to be very keen on facing a formidable side, on a table tennis-sized pitch, in temperatures low enough to freeze the ballcocks off a brass cistern? The fog didn't help, either.

It was all very well for the home side. They're used to wandering around in Caledonian weather, garbed in kilts and sporrans, with icy breezes nipping at their vitals. Our South Sea Islanders can't have liked it a bit.

Sorry lads. Only kidding. We were beaten by a better side on the night. Although the forecasters would have us believe that it isn't going to be any warmer this weekend, we do have home comforts this time round, which will, I believe, make a considerable difference. The next couple of hours will tell.

Would it be too sacrilegious to reveal that I can't get very interested in the

Heineken this time round?

I know that the potential financial rewards are huge, but the fact is that we have a new, smaller, squad under a new coach, and that does not, on the face of it, augur well when faced with really good teams from all over Europe.

Hopefully, our time will come in a season or two, but it's a bit early for a side which has only just started playing together to compete seriously yet awhile. The experience is valuable, of course, but surely our main priority must be to claw our way up the Premiership and try for a top four ranking.

That's going to be hard enough, goodness knows, but it's by no means impossible. No one seems to be able to stop Charlie Sharples at the moment, and there are a fair few rising stars to brighten these dark days for us,

GETTING AWAY WITH IT

I SEE that Wasps have escaped punishment after not playing

their away game against Sale. I must confess that I don't really understand the reasoning behind the decision.

According to what I have read, Wasps didn't actually refuse to take the field, and the ref didn't actually inform Wasps that he should be the bloke who made the decision.

I don't really know what went on at the hearing, of course, because I wasn't there, and the reports I've seen appear to be somewhat contradictory, and the poor old ref seems to be getting most of the blame. But it all seems a bit murky. However, I do know what we'd have said in the pre-professional days. "Huh!" we'd have muttered into our beer. "I'll bet we wouldn't have got away with it if it had been us!"

We knew, as an article of faith, that the Powers That Be always leaned over backwards in favour of the London clubs whenever any controversy arose, and that a Gloucester player had to be twice as good as his opposite number from one of those clubs in order to be

I HAD A VISIT FROM A NICE LADY WHO, OUT OF THE BLUE ASKED IF I WAS THE CHAP WHO WRITES IN THE RUGBY CLUB PROGRAMME. WELL, IT'S ALWAYS NICE TO BE RECOGNISED, SO I FREELY ADMITTED THAT I WAS, INDEED, HE.

selected for England. "How else" we would query "Did Nigel Starmer Smith get the nod ahead of Mickey Booth?"

We didn't actually hate clubs such as Wasps, Harlequins and Richmond. It was more a sort of amused, avuncular tolerance, much as a fond uncle might regard a spoiled nephew or two. I can remember one example that occurred when Quins were visiting us.

The Harlequins No.8 (whose name I forget) was being heavily touted in the press for the England spot in the forthcoming internationals. Unfortunately, he had to go off injured before half time.

"Ah!" came a voice from the stand. "He's chipped his nail varnish!"

WELL. HERE WE ARE MERRY CHRISTMAS

WE are gathered here today, in the face of this congregation, to participate in Gloucester's last home game before Christmas, and indeed, of 2009.

That makes it highly appropriate to be entertaining a Scottish side, today, because we can wish them a, lightly premature, 'Happy Hogmanay'. Pity it's not just after the New Year really, as then we might have been aided by the hangover factor.

I've already received my first Christmas present actually. I had a visit from a nice lady who, out of the blue asked if I was the chap who writes in the rugby club programme. Well, it's always nice to be recognised, so I freely admitted that I was, indeed, he.



"Nice to meet you" she smiled, and then, without so much as a by your leave, proceed to stick a needle in my arm.

No, she was neither a sadist, nor a Bath supporter. Just a community nurse who was giving me my flu jab. Fair enough, but as is usual on these occasions, my arm has stiffened up considerably, and my drinking hand is now considerably discommoded. Hope it clears up before Christmas Eve.

It's a long time now since Boxing Day was one of our more eagerly anticipated Kingsholm occasions when Old Merchant Tailors used to pay us a seasonal visit. They were never in any danger of winning of course, and the number of points

they conceded was exceeded only by the number of pints consumed by their coachloads of supporters who accompanied them.

It was always a very entertaining occasion, and in these sterner times, we don't get happy little run rounds any more, games played for the sheer fun of it.

More's the pity.

Ah well! Please accept my best wishes for a happy and alcohol free Christmas. Sorry, I'll rephrase that. I meant a 'free alcohol' Christmas. But I suppose not even Santa can deliver that.

Have a great time, everyone. See you in 2010.

DAVE BALMER

GETTING TO KNOW DAVE BALMER

WITH predicting the weather this past week a job for the professionals, it seemed an opportune time for the matchday programme to catch up with up with the man responsible for the Kingsholm pitch, Stadium Manager Dave Balmer.

Dave will have been with the club for 14 years come February 1st and immediately remarked how things have changed during his time at the club.

"When I started, there were only two full time employees – myself as the groundsman and the lady in the ticket office. It's all a bit different now."

"Now I have a team of two full time employees who look after the pitch and stadium as well as maintaining Bishops College."

Legislation introduced over the years is one of the things that has affected the way that Dave and his team go about their job.

"We have to be a lot more conscious about the Health and Safety aspects of the stadium nowadays especially when the capacity increased to 16,500. There are also the minimum standards criteria imposed by Premier Rugby that we have to adhere to."

"In terms of the pitch, we obviously have to try and maintain the pitch to the best possible standard bearing in mind the fact that the modern game features bigger, heavier players moving quicker



than ever before."

"We don't play as many midweek games as we used to and the players don't always train on the pitch although they like to do a team run on the day before a game. The squad training up at Hartpury College is a bonus in that respect."

Kingsholm as a stadium has been significantly changed in recent years with the building of the East and South Stand and that has also moved the goalposts, so to speak!

"There's increased shading, even from the East Stand, because you don't get the early morning sunshine like you used to."

"And the bigger South Stand means that the sun can't have as big a drying effect as it did in the past and the photosynthesis is also reduced meaning grass growth is reduced."

"So, we've had to compensate in other ways – using fertiliser and verti draining, for example."

Dave went on to explain what a challenge this season has been given that Gloucester enjoyed quite a dry period in the autumn followed by greater than average rainfall and severely reduced temperatures over the past week.

"It has been a challenge. With six to eight weeks of intense rain from the end of October onwards, the pitch hasn't really had the chance to dry at all. We've had wind but the rain has still come down."

"We've looked into the option of copying other clubs and going for a semi synthetic pitch but there's a massive cost associated with that. For example, the pitch at the Liberty Stadium cost in excess of £1.2m!"



Finally, Dave explained that he and the team have pulled out the stops to ensure that today's game goes ahead.

"This week has been tough as the weather has slowly deteriorated as the days have gone by. We actually put the frost protection on the pitch as early as Thursday last week because we knew that last weekend was going to be cold. North easterly winds have

brought the chill factor down to around zero or below."

"We then brought in increased pitch protection with an inflatable pitch cover which means that we could blow hot air over the pitch."

"Having had the pitch covered has kept the heat in the ground but the danger is that it can damage the grass if it's left on for too long. It has to be

carefully managed."

"It's been a tricky time and we haven't been able to a huge amount of work on the pitch because of the weather conditions since the Leicester game."

"In an ideal world, we'll get some good temperature in the New Year and a nice south westerly wind to dry the pitch out."

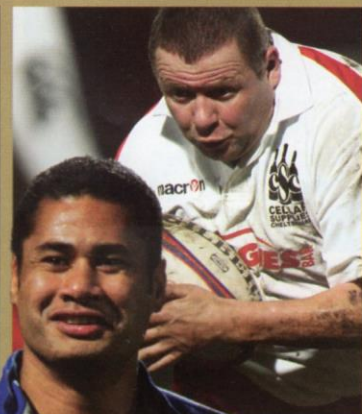
"But we'll see what comes!"

GALLERY

GLOUCESTER RUGBY HERITAGE CELEBRATION
5TH DECEMBER 2009
LEGENDS CHARITY MATCH
IN AID OF SAMOAN TSUNAMI APPEAL



060// GLOUCESTERRUGBY.CO.UK



vs GLASGOW WARRIORS //061

ACTION REPLAY

GUINNESS PREMIERSHIP

SATURDAY 5TH DECEMBER 2009 / 15:00 KO



GLOUCESTER RUGBY 25 NEWCASTLE FALCONS 13

COACH'S COMMENTS

"We had to grind out a win in the right way in conditions that weren't great. Winning is everything - it doesn't matter if you win well or win ugly."

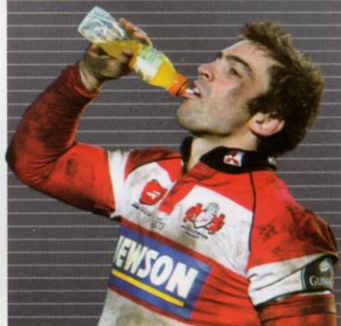
"There are no easy games in this league. It was a game we had to win going into two Heineken Cup matches against Glasgow in the next fortnight."

KEY MOMENT

Not so much a key moment as a key couple of minutes. Gloucester's strong start was in danger of being undermined by a spirited Falcons' comeback.

Inspired by influential fly half Jimmy Gopperth, Newcastle spent the final few minutes of the first half trying to overturn a 10-6 deficit.

Only magnificent Gloucester defence kept the Falcons at bay when a try at that point could well have turned the game decisively in Newcastle's favour.



Bryan Redpath admitted after the game that it hadn't been pretty. With constant rain teeming down at Kingsholm, that was inevitable. However Gloucester did a professional job in bringing the Falcons down to earth.

Newcastle rode into town with high hopes of adding Gloucester's scalp to those of Bath and London Irish who they had already beaten on the road this season.

Steve Bates' side certainly showed the qualities which have earned them those victories. Cannily orchestrated by Jimmy Gopperth, one of the summer's best signings in the Guinness Premiership (?), Newcastle were well drilled and

not light on skill and teamwork.

Gloucester did their best to knock them out of their stride as early as possible with Charlie Sharples crossing for his third try in two games after some excellent build up play.

However Newcastle showed real resilience as they overcame this setback and bounced back to take the game to Gloucester.

At half time they trailed by only four points and could very well have gone into the interval with a lead had it not been for some determined Gloucester defence.

With conditions worsening as the game wore on, Gloucester and, in particular, their pack, took the

FINAL SCORE 25-13 AND A JOB WELL DONE AS GLOUCESTER CONTINUE TO BUILD MOMENTUM AFTER SOME PROMISING DISPLAYS IN RECENT WEEKS.



game by the scruff of the neck.

Unable to secure any meaningful possession and, constantly on the back foot, the Falcons were forced to frequently infringe in order to keep Gloucester at bay and Nicky Robinson gratefully booted a 20 point haul.

Perhaps the biggest concern for Gloucester was the loss of Fijian international flanker Akapusi Qera who fell sickeningly to the floor after taking an accidental blow to the head in a midfield collision.

Qera, worryingly, didn't move for several minutes before being stretchered off but regained consciousness in the tunnel before spending a night in hospital under observation.

In his absence, his team mates were able to close out the game despite conceding a late try to Falcons' replacement Alex Tait.

Final score 25-13 and a job well done as Gloucester continue to build momentum after some promising displays in recent weeks.

The return of numerous individuals from international duty has been an obvious boost and Gloucester have now emerged triumphant from some of those close results which weren't going their way a short while ago.

Momentum builds and confidence grows as Gloucester head into a critical phase of the season.

THE TEAMS

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

Morgan
Sharples
Simpson-Daniel
Fuimaono-Sapolu
Vainikolo
Robinson
R. Lawson
Wood
S. Lawson
Somerville
Attwood
Brown
Strokosch
Qera
Delve

REPLACEMENTS:

Spencer for Morgan (71),
Doran-Jones for Somerville (66),
Narraway for Qera (54),
Dickinson for Wood (76),
Eustace for Brown (77),
Molenaar for F-Sapolu (62)

NOT USED: Dawidiuk, Lewis.



NEWCASTLE FALCONS

Amesbury
Williams
Bobo
Tu'ipulotu
Biggs
Gopperth
Charlton
Golding
Vickers
Hayman
Hudson
Swinson
Afu
B. Wilson
Levi

REPLACEMENTS:

Tait for Williams (47), Miller
for Gopperth (73), Pilgrim
for Charlton (64), Owens for Golding
(47), Thompson for Vickers (52),
Sorenson for Swinson (51), Welch
for Afu (59), Ward for Owens (68).



FRIDAY 11TH DECEMBER 2009 / 19:30 KO

**GLASGOW WARRIORS 33****GLOUCESTER RUGBY 11****COACH'S COMMENTS**

"I thought we were passive in defence and our discipline was poor and I thought we looked cumbersome in some aspects."

"I don't know why, because it was the best we have trained in eight weeks."

"I think Glasgow are playing well this year and deserved their victory. We were well and truly beaten by a team that did the basics better than us."

KEY MOMENT

Despite an indifferent start, Gloucester dragged themselves back into contention courtesy of Charlie Sharples' opportunistic try.

However, when Peter Buxton was harshly yellow carded for running into Bernardo Stortoni whilst chasing a high ball, the game changed.

With Bucko cooling off (rapidly given the Arctic conditions) in the sin bin, the first Glasgow try quickly followed and the second wasn't far behind.



Gloucester's Heineken hopes for 2009-10 were hijacked in the frozen surroundings of Firhill Arena at the hands of the Glasgow Warriors.

Bryan Redpath's side went into last Friday's match, the first leg of a double header against the Scottish region, on the back of several positive performances and looking to make a positive impact in this season's European competition.

However, it all went horribly wrong from the off as a series of unforced errors and ill discipline saw Scottish international fly half Dan Parks put the boot into Gloucester.

Parks must have thought that his Christmas had come early as he was gifted chance after chance

to boost his kicking stats in the first half and he gleefully accepted with five penalties in the first 26 minutes. Statisticians in the press box started hurriedly consulting the record books in case they were witnessing something remarkable in progress.

Thankfully, Parks couldn't keep up that rate of scoring and was even kind enough to inadvertently allow Gloucester back into the game.

Ironically for a man who was kicking so beautifully at goal, Parks' attempts at up and unders left something to be desired. Twice he sent such kicks backwards rather than forwards and, from the second, Charlie Sharples was able to dart home for a Gloucester score.



HOWEVER, IT ALL WENT HORRIBLY WRONG FROM THE OFF AS A SERIES OF UNFORCED ERRORS AND ILL DISCIPLINE SAW SCOTTISH INTERNATIONAL FLY HALF DAN PARKS PUT THE BOOT INTO GLOUCESTER.



Hope flickered briefly for Gloucester but it was quickly snuffed out with the sinbining of Peter Buxton. It looked a penalty at most as Buxton, eyes firmly on the ball, inadvertently collided with Glasgow full back Bernardo Stortoni as the Argentinian jumped to claim a restart.

Glasgow sensed it was time to move in for the kill and they duly did. The initial work was done up front as the Warriors' pack pummelled Gloucester around the fringes before swift ball gave Max Evans and Bernardo Stortoni the opportunity to score for the home side.

At 27-11 at half time, Gloucester had a mountain to climb and did set about their task with grim determination.

Gloucester did actually have the better of the second half but

were simply unable to penetrate a resolute Glasgow defence. The home side were able to absorb everything that was thrown at them and then manoeuvred Parks into position for him to slot his sixth and seventh penalties of the evening to complete the scoring.

It was a desperately disappointing evening for Gloucester who had achieved some decent results in recent weeks. However, on the night, Glasgow seemed to adapt better to the freezing conditions and made significantly fewer errors.

Gloucester were mostly playing on the back foot and under pressure and, in Dan Parks, Glasgow had the man to ruthlessly exploit any opportunity given him.

The one positive? Gloucester have a chance to put the record straight today.

THE TEAMS

GLASGOW WARRIORS

Stortoni
Murchie
M. Evans
Morrison
T. Evans
Parks
Cusiter
Welsh
Hall
Low
Turner
Gray
Brown
Barclay
Vernon

REPLACEMENTS:

Gregor for Stortoni (63), van der Merwe for Murchie (41), McMillan for Cusiter (70), Tkachuk for Welsh (60), Thomson for Hall (70), Kalman for Low (78), Barker for Gray (75), Forrester for Vernon (70).



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

Spencer
Sharples
Simpson-Daniel
Fuimaono-Sapolu
Vainikolo
Robinson
R. Lawson
Wood
S. Lawson
Somerville
Attwood
Brown
Buxton
Strokosch
Narraway

REPLACEMENTS:

Voyce for Spencer (56), Molenaar for Fuimaono-Sapolu (49), Dickinson for Wood (49), Doran-Jones for Somerville (63), Eustace for Brown (74), Delve for Buxton (63), Dawidiuk for S. Lawson (77), Lewis for R. Lawson (76).

TODAY'S LINE-UPS



VS GLASGOW WARRIORS
SUNDAY 20/12/09
KO 12:45PM

**GLOUCESTER
RUGBY**

VS

**GLASGOW
WARRIORS**

CARLOS SPENCER

15

FULLBACK

BERNARDO STORTONI

T CHARLIE SHARPLES

14

WING

PETER MURCHIE

JAMES SIMPSON-DANIEL

13

CENTRE

MAX EVANS

ELIOTA FUIMAONO-SAPOLU

12

CENTRE

GRAEME MORRISON

LESLEY VAINIKOLO

11

WING

THOM EVANS

NICKY ROBINSON

10

FLY-HALF

DAN PARKS

RORY LAWSON

9

SCRUM-HALF

CHRIS CUSITER

NICK WOOD

1

PROP

JON WELSH

SCOTT LAWSON

2

HOOKER

DOUGIE HALL

GREG SOMERVILLE

3

PROP

MORAY LOW

DAVE ATTWOOD

4

LOCK

RICHELIE GRAY

ALEX BROWN

5

LOCK

ALASTAIR KELLOCK (C)

PETER BUXTON (C)

6

FLANKER

KELLY BROWN

ALASDAIR STROKOSCH

7

FLANKER

JOHN BARCLAY

LUKE NARRAWAY

8

NO.8

RICHELIE VERNON

HEINEKEN CUP: POOL 2

Pos	Team	Pld	Pts
1	Biarritz	3	14
2	Newport Gwent Dragons	3	5
3	Glasgow Warriors	3	5
4	GLOUCESTER RUGBY	3	4

REPLACEMENTS

GLOUCESTER BENCH

- 16 DARREN DAWIDIUK
- 17 PAUL DORAN-JONES
- 18 ALASDAIR DICKINSON
- 19 ADAM EUSTACE
- 20 GARETH DELVE
- 21 DAVE LEWIS
- 22 TOM VOYCE
- 23 TIM MOLENAAR

GLASGOW BENCH

- 16 FERGUS THOMSON
- 17 ED KALMAN
- 18 KEVIN TKACHUK
- 19 DAN TURNER
- 20 JOHNNIE BEATTIE
- 21 COLIN GREGOR
- 22 MARK McMILLAN
- 23 DTH VAN DER MERWE

THE OFFICIALS

REFEREE:

Jerome Garces

ASSISTANT REFEREES:

Patrick Pechambert & Jerome Lamirand

4TH OFFICIAL:

Alan Biggs



Heineken Cup



FedEx



AMLIN

