

Gloucester

v NORTHAMPTON

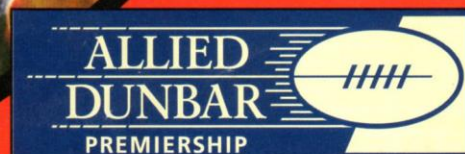
16th May 1999

Kick Off 3.00pm

£2.00



Inside:
Philippe's Season Review
Phil Vickery Poster
Gurns of the Season
and more...



Philippe On...

At the end of a difficult season, Philippe Saint-André speaks his mind about the burning issues at Kingsholm

On This Season:

We didn't start the season too badly. For example, we won our second game - away to Richmond, but we had a lot of injuries at the start of the season. One of the problems was that the guys who went on tour didn't have enough holiday; they came back quickly and came back tired. During the pre-season, the guys worked hard but we didn't work hard enough

a row, it's not because you're unlucky but because you aren't clever enough or because you aren't good enough or not fit enough. Luck can affect one game but it can't affect a whole season. A consistent problem over the season was the make-up of the squad: we had only two centres for example. So, when Terry Fanolua got injured and then, later, Richard Tombs was injured we had big problems. It's not that the pre-season wasn't hard enough, but we need to make our preparation more scientific. Rugby isn't the same as it was five years ago. I've

Clermont-Ferrand I was captain but I was also backs coach, so to be coach here isn't too different from what I've done before. The big surprise for me is that I have to talk money with the players and I have to find a good balance for my team. I have a budget and I can't go over my budget. Sometimes it's hard because I have to say to a good player that he's earning too much for this level. If I was the coach of an amateur club, I would keep all the players and maybe call three or four more. But I can't do that.

The revolution at Gloucester is this year

for professional rugby. The game progresses each year and each year its quicker and harder and its faster and its stronger. So, we played well for the start of the season, but we had problems competing at this level after that. We were unlucky in a few games - games that we lost after seven minutes of injury time. But then, sometimes you lose a game because you're unlucky, but when you lose seven or eight games in

taken on a new fitness coach to work with Ed Archer. I think we need two fitness coaches because Ed is good with weights and with the rehabilitation of the players and perhaps for training the part timers but he needs someone to work with.

On taking over as Player-coach:

When I was captain of France, I took the training sessions. At



Philippe On...

I'm not trying to reduce the playing budget for the sake of reducing it. Some of the guys are earning too much for the level they're playing at. Some of the guys are unhappy about what I've been saying to them, because they think they've played well for England 'A'. Me, I don't care about England 'A'; the guys must play well for Gloucester. I find it incredible that some guys were more interested in playing for England A than they were in playing for Gloucester. That attitude has to change. For me, the perfect example is Leicester. They have six or seven full internationals. Those players play in five nations games and then three days later play for their club and give 200%. All the guys who accept this will be with me and any guys who don't accept this won't have a place at Gloucester. They must understand this because it's Gloucester who pays them. The guys must be hungry and must be hungry to play for Gloucester. After they have done that, then they can go and play for England A and I will be very pleased for them.

On next season:

We play our last game of the season this Sunday but on the Monday we will start preparing

for the next season. On the Monday and the Tuesday we have two days of tests: body fat tests and physiological tests and fitness tests. After that, all the guys will take six weeks' holiday but will have an individual programme and when they come back in July, they will take the same tests. If a player takes six or seven weeks holiday and then comes back with 10% more body fat, we'll cut his wages. It's in their contracts that to play professional rugby here, they've got to be fit. All the guys at Gloucester know this and know that rugby gets faster and faster. I've changed the game plan a little and we must be fitter.

At the moment, we are behind the top six. If we are aiming at a top six place, we have to be working like we are aiming to win the championship. All the top clubs will be changing a lot of things, but we will have to change more things if we are to aim at their level. This will be hard for the players because they get six or seven weeks holiday, but it won't be holiday for them. They won't be at Kingsholm but they will have to come back fitter. It will be easy for me to tell because when they come back in July we will have the same tests that they took when they left. If

they've been eating pizza and drinking beer, I'll know. The last game of this season is Sunday but next season starts on Monday.

On Gloucester's style of play:

The new rugby is faster and more open. Before, if you could win your own scrums and line-outs and chased kicks, you could win at home but you'd lose away. If you play in that style now, you'll win four or five home games in a season but you'll lose everything away. If I don't change the way we play and the mentality that wants to play like this, we will be relegated to the second division next season. Rugby is faster and stronger and if we stay with the same game plan we'll be finished. I don't mean that we'll be playing a Barbarians style of rugby: we'll still need to win every scrum and every line-out. We will also need to be better in defence because for me, we're terrible in defence. We aren't clever enough and some of the guys don't work hard enough.

On the make-up of next season's squad:

Everybody knows that Sims will be leaving and that Scott Benton will be leaving. We have signed

Philippe On...

Paramore - a number eight with fifteen caps, and we've signed a great number 9 - Elton Moncrieff - who has impressed a lot of people and who has a lot of experience. He's played Super 12 and he's a top class player.

I need to find another two top players and two or three other good players at a good price. The problem for me is that sometimes the English or French players are too expensive for this level. In the southern hemisphere, there

that I would have to take terrible decisions. I know that there are problems taking such decisions because rugby is a collective game. I knew that this would make the end of the season difficult but I told Tom Walkinshaw and the other directors about this. When I take a decision like this, it's not a crazy decision because I know rugby and I know the game plan I want and I know they type of player I want. Losing the game against Sale wasn't a surprise for

some guys were more interested in playing for England A than for Gloucester. That attitude has to change.

aren't as many professional places. Here, if a big name player doesn't work hard enough, he can walk out and find another club. He can play second division or third division. There's always someone willing to pay him. The revolution in professional rugby was two years ago; at London Irish it was last year. The revolution at Gloucester is this year. If I don't take this decision, it will be terrible for Gloucester.

After the semi-final against Wasps, I knew the team couldn't keep going as it had done and

me. That was one of the last games some of those players will be playing for Gloucester. If I could, I would have picked a team made up 60% of United players, but when you have a direct choice between a player earning a lot of money and someone who's earning no money you have to select the player who's earning big money.

On Gloucester's prospects next season:

Next season we'll have 28 guys full-time. I can't promise that



they will play well, but they will work hard. I'll organise a good structure with two fitness coaches and Audley Lumsden and John Brain as assistant coaches. If we have bad results next season it will be my responsibility but I want to give us every opportunity. I am working to get us a top five place and to qualify for Europe - but the world cup will make it a difficult season. The game against Newcastle was probably the highlight of this season, but I hope that the real highlights will be next season!

As told to Martin Jones

Second Saints

Sincere congratulations from all at Kingsholm to Northampton on winning the runner-up spot in this season's Premiership. With a little more luck, and a slightly better start to the season, they might even have pipped Leicester to the title. While nobody would deny the Tigers their right to the top honours after a storming campaign, we in Gloucester would have been just as happy to see the Saints crowned as the 1998/9 Champions. They will certainly be worthy contenders in Europe next season, and we wish them all the best in that endeavour.

That's only part of the reason why Northampton are such welcome opponents here today. In fact, we'd be hard pressed to name

a side we'd prefer to help us wind up Gloucester's season. Fixtures between the two clubs go back an awfully long way, and are valued for that. There is also the thought that the Saints supporters are second only to our own Shedheads in their fierce loyalty to their team, and indeed, are just about the only travelling band of camp followers who have been known to outshout us on our own patch.

Northampton, and it must be said, Leicester, have the distinction of being traditional rugby clubs who play on a real rugby ground in front of supporters who have been following their sides for generations. It's very gratifying that the proven two best sides in England represent clubs that adhere, as closely as they can, to the tried-and-true values of the game. Visit either of their grounds and you quickly get the impression that rugby has not yet succumbed to pure commercialism, and that there is still more to the game than mere money.

Times change, of course, and it is right that rugby changes with them,

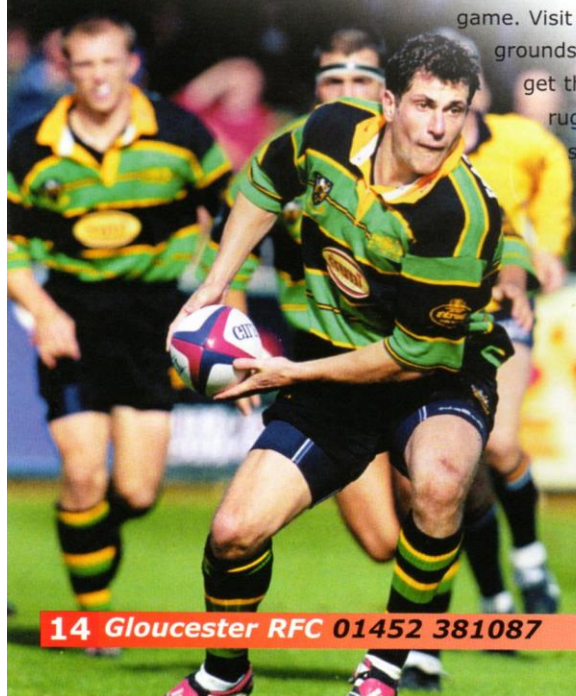
but your average supporter of the game doesn't want to see the baby thrown out with the bathwater. Northampton and Gloucester have this much in common: they have been among the top sides in England for over a century, and all that heritage has to count for something.

I expect that, by the time you read this the usual leg-pulling and badinage will have gone on between the two sets of fans in the various bars around the ground. Old acquaintances will have been greeted, much beer will have been quaffed, and everyone will now be looking forward to a fine game of rugby.

Neither will it have been lost on the home-grown supporters that the Saints fans, for the second time in two seasons, got behind Gloucester in the recent Cheltenham and Gloucester Cup Final against Bedford. I'm sure the players will be as grateful for that as the rest of us are.

For all these reasons, we have an affection for the great old Northampton club. We wish them well in the future, and hope they can go just that one step higher next season. That's assuming that Gloucester can't of course, and I for one am not quite ready to concede that point just yet.

Have a great day out, Saints. We couldn't wish to close the season in better company.



"Gloucester without Dave Sims will be a very strange place"

Peter Arnold

John Fidler had that right.

I know no more about the whys and wherefores of Dave Sims' decision to go on the transfer list than you do, and it wouldn't be appropriate for me to comment on them in these pages in any case. What I can, and indeed should, do is make an appreciation of his twelve years at Kingsholm, and the unique service which he has given to the club throughout that time.

I say 'unique' quite deliberately, because in my view, Dave Sims' contribution to Gloucester RFC has, in many ways, been just that. We've had our great players before. Mike Teague, John Watkins, Mickey Booth. You can name them as well as I can, but Dave had an aura about him which was unlike anything I have ever witnessed from anyone else, at Gloucester or any other club.

At the height of his powers he could simply dominate a game, even when he wasn't anywhere near the ball. His influence seemed to pervade the whole pitch. You were always conscious that he was there, controlling things, intimidating the opposition, and generally giving the impression that this was his game,

and no one was going to take it away from him.

I have long held the theory that his sometimes nickname, 'Our Dad' had as much to do with this influence over the whole side as it did with the arrival, on match day, of his son, Nathan.

Technically, of course, he is a consummate exponent of the lock forward profession, in every aspect of the role. I shall never know why he wasn't given more full England Caps. He was an ever-present in the 'A' side, and deserved, more than anyone, an extended run in the national colours.

This aura extended far beyond the playing surface. He always seemed to travel 'in his own space', as the saying goes. Even hard-bitten journalists as TV interviewers seemed to be in awe of him and treat him with the sort of respect normally afforded to elder statesmen in the game.

All this made him an invaluable asset to the team and the club. One felt that, as long as Dave was there, everything would come right in the end.

It usually did. But this time it hasn't. The Dave Sims of a few years ago would have been an ideal Captain to mould the new side which we are promised for next season. Times, circumstances and personalities do change as time rolls on, and we're just going to have to get by without him.

John Fidler is right. It is going to seem strange without that reassuring figure looming over everything. Dave Sims still has a lot of good rugby in him, and it is to be hoped that his new club, whoever it may be, appreciate what they have got.

We wish him well, whatever the future holds for him.



Peter Arnold

Good Points After All

Imagine that a lot of people, like me, couldn't really see the point of this season's Anglo-Welsh 'friendlies'. It never looked likely that they would become a regular feature of the English fixture lists, and one suspected that the opportunity to attract a few more paying customers through the turnstiles was the overriding reason for their inclusion this year.

Following the games against Cardiff and Swansea at Kingsholm, however, I am feeling a little less cynical. Cardiff, fielding a star-studded side, were lucky to win in injury time, and Swansea were given a thorough stuffing. All right - so they fielded a fair component of reserve players, but they also had three Internationals on view, so they were by no means no-hopers.

The gratifying thing about both games was that, like the Cheltenham and Gloucester Cup matches, they provided an opportunity for aspiring second-

string players to break into the senior fifteen. For some of the players this has worked already, and following the disappointing performance against Sale, it was good to see them thrown into the Saracens Premiership starting line-up. Players are never going to reach the highest standards unless they are allowed to compete at the top level, and win or lose, they do have to be given their chance sometime.

The other interesting factor was that the Swansea game enabled our three triallists to show us what they can do. Remember, one of them was still jet lagged, and another had only had one training session and can't speak a word of English anyway, so all things considered, all three came through with considerable credit.

Of course, the Anglo-Welsh games won't feature next season, so the point remains: C & G matches apart, how can we showcase our up-and-coming talent next season?

I suppose the European proposals may provide an answer, but the fixture list is overcrowded anyway, and the whole campaign is going to be distorted by the World Cup.

It's a problem which the Club management is going to have to solve one way or another, but I can't see any easy answer.



BACK TO THE FUTURE?

Only one club has supplied an entire front row for England in the same match. The opposition was South Africa, and the players concerned were Phil Blakeway, Steve Mills and Malcolm Preedy. Now, there's just an outside chance that history could repeat itself during this year's World Cup.

I don't suppose that Clive Woodward realised that when he made his selections for the 36-man squad going to Australia in a few weeks time, but with Trevor Woodman being taken along, together with Neil McCarthy, and with the likelihood that Phil Vickery will be added to the final 30-man selection, the possibility exists, at least for now.

Trevor has acquitted himself nobly since his return from injury, especially in the England 'A' matches, and it's good to see his potential has been recognised. Three hookers have been selected, including Phil Greening, and it would seem prudent to retain all three when the final cut is made, so Neil should be there or thereabouts. We're told that the reason for Phil's omission from the Australian party is to give him time to recover fully from his neck injury, although the way he has been playing lately, you could have fooled us.

It's all a bit of a pipe dream, of course, but we can always hope. Our fiercest good wishes go with all three of them.

Peter Arnold

Not all gloom and doom

No one in their right mind could claim that Gloucester's 125th

anniversary season has been a good one. I've been affected as badly as anyone by the generally downbeat atmosphere which has pervaded the old place during the second half of the campaign, and that certainly hasn't been helped by recent results.

However, it's part of my job to be as entertaining as possible on these pages, and you don't do that by concentrating on the gloomy side of things. So what, I asked myself, am I going to write about in the last programme of the 1998/9 season?

On consulting my records, surprising as it might seem, I have found that there is quite a lot to be cheerful about. Gloucester RFC has certainly had its high points this season, even

if it can sometimes be difficult to remember them.

Cast your mind back to September and you'll find that we didn't start the season at all badly. We did struggle a bit to beat London Irish 29-22 in our first home game, but if you look at the way the Exiles' season has gone since, in retrospect, it wasn't a bad result. That was immediately followed by an away win!

Richmond were the victims, and that was followed by an efficient demolition of West Hartlepool at Kingsholm. Then we lost, away to both Bath and Wasps, but both of them were close, and both of them could and should have been won. Neither of them was a really bad result, all things considered.

Then, on October 17th came one

of the season's highlights. In a really cracking game at Kingsholm we put 41 points on Newcastle Falcons, and not many sides can claim that this time round.

Things started to go astray after that, although it wasn't all bad. London Scottish, Bedford and Saracens were all put to the sword, and even the December game against Leicester, which we lost 18-23, might well have been won if it hadn't been for some arguable penalty decisions.

So we weren't too unhappy at Christmas. The New Year then started with a bang with an excellent win over Bath, and that's always something to savour.

Then our Premiership season fell apart, but there were other things to be happy about. After

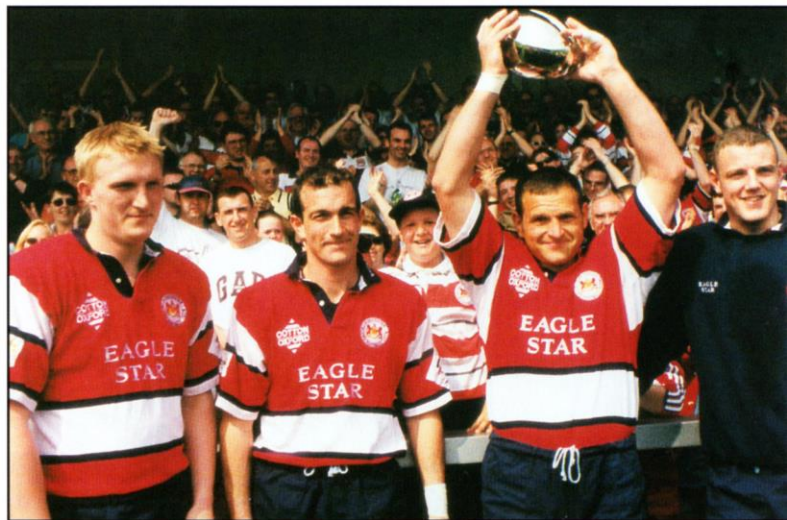


losing (badly) to Harlequins in the League, we reached the Tetley Bitter Cup Semi Final, for the third time in four years by squeaking past the same opposition just two weeks later.

The Semi against Wasps was, of course, one of the season's biggest disappointments. We wouldn't argue with the contention that we were the second-best side on the day, but having watched the video three times, I am convinced that three unfortunate decisions swung things against us. A try wasn't given which should have been, one was given which wasn't, and a forward pass went unpunished, leading to a spectacular Wasps try. No argument: these things happen, but it was galling nevertheless.

Meanwhile, the young guns were doing a great job in the Cheltenham and Gloucester Cup. I don't need to tell you that we won that one - at Northampton - and while it may not be the most prestigious competition in the calendar, it's a hard one to win, and to retain any trophy in today's competitive world is a considerable achievement.

Since then, we haven't had much to crow about, resultwise, but there are other good things to point to. Surely, the number of Gloucester players who have represented England at 'A' level this season must argue that there are a fair few quality players



around the Club, and the arrival of Neil McCarthy on the England benches is a cause for considerable satisfaction.

I think, however, the thing which has pleased me most has been the emergence of several young players, especially since Philippe Saint-André took over the reins. Mike Davis, Adam Eustace and Richard Ward have been particularly eye-catching, but there are others, too. It is to be hoped that next season's revamped squad doesn't put too many obstacles in the progress of these, and other, promising players.

I'm not being starry-eyed. I'm trying to point out that there are things to be pleased about in the 1998/9 season. Now on to the Millennium. If nothing else, it will be fascinating to see where we go from here.



TAILPIECE

Two great results last weekend. Gloucestershire beat Lancashire to reach the County Championship Final at Twickenham. Bristol will be back at Kingsholm next season.

Just for once, nostalgia IS what it used to be.

Summer well. See you next season.



Touch Judges

John Barnard
Bob Mullis

ALLIED
DUNBAR
PREMIERSHIP



GLOUCESTER

NORTHAMPTON (PROBABLE)

Sunday 16 May 1999 ko 3.00pm

15	CHRIS CATLING	Full Back	NICK BEAL	15
14	TOM BEIM	Right Wing	CRAIG MOIR	14
13	RICHARD TOMBS	Centre	ANDY NORTHEY	13
12	MIKE DAVIES	Centre	MATT ALLEN	12
11	ROB JEWELL	Left Wing	BEN COHEN	11
10	SIMON MANNIX	Outside Half	MATT DAWSON	10
9	IAN SANDERS	Scrum Half	DOMINIC MALONE	9
1	TREVOR WOODMAN	Prop	GARRY PAGEL	1
2	NEIL MCCARTHY	Hooker	CHRIS JOHNSON	2
3	PHIL VICKERY	Prop	MATT STEWART	3
4	ROB FIDLER	Lock	JON PHILLIPS	4
5	RICHARD WARD	Lock	ANDY NEWMAN	5
6	ADAM EUSTACE	Flanker	SIMON HEPHER	6
7	NATHAN CARTER	Flanker	BUDGE POUNTNEY	7
8	STEVE OJOMOH	No.8	TIM RODBER (C)	8
16	LAURIE BECK	Replacements	JON SLEIGHTHOLME	16
17	AUDLEY LUMSDEN		DAVID DANTIAQ	17
18	MARTYN KIMBER		ANDY BLYTH	18
19	ADEY POWLES		STEVE WALTER	19
20	CHRIS FORTEY		MATT VOLLAND	20
21	RICHARD STOTT		COLIN ALLEN	21
22	ANDY HAZELL		SIMON FOALE	22



Referee

Graham Hughes (RFU)

Kick-off 3.00pm

ALLIED
DUNBAR
PREMIERSHIP

