

Gloucester RFC Official Matchday Programme

Issue 04 | Price £2.50



Gloucester

RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

v Leeds Tykes

ZURICH PREMIERSHIP FIXTURE

SATURDAY 25TH OCTOBER 2003

KICK-OFF 3.00PM



Matchday Sponsor

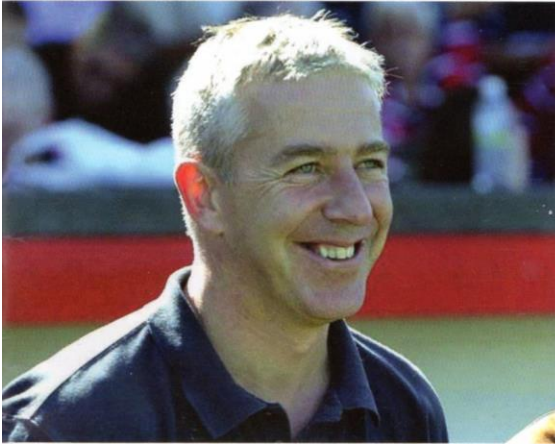
club sponsor
C&G Cheltenham & Gloucester

**ALL THE LATEST NEWS AND
VIEWS FROM KINGSHOLM**

**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
WITH DUNCAN MCRAE**

**ROUND UP OF THE
ZURICH PREMIERSHIP**

Front cover image by GPAImages.com



NIGEL'S NOTES...

Nigel Melville

Director of Rugby

"Winning away to Harlequins was a massive bonus for us..."

It gives me great pleasure to welcome Leeds Tykes to Kingsholm for this afternoon's Zurich Premiership action.

There may be a rugby World Cup taking place in Australia at the moment, but it has certainly not dampened everyone's enthusiasm for their Club teams, who are all working hard to produce quality performances during a difficult period.

Last week, both Leeds and ourselves gained valuable Premiership points with wins over Leicester and Harlequins respectively. Having played against Leicester the previous week, I am sure that you will all agree that they, more than anyone, are looking forward to the World Cup to end.

Winning away to Harlequins was a massive bonus for us, Quins have made an excellent start to the season, they are always strong at home and, of late, a much more physical team than usual. Whilst the game was low scoring and lacking fluidity, I was hugely impressed with the discipline and self-belief of the Gloucester team. Our defence was probably the outstanding feature, leaking just three points in two games is something to be proud of.

Last weekend we also saw the Gloucester Premiership debut of our latest recruit Duncan McRae. He certainly didn't take long to settle and bossed the game well from 10. I have been impressed with his professionalism since arriving and assure you that both Duncan, his wife Kerry and son Blane are really enjoying life in Gloucester.

Last weekend, it was great to see England winning well against South Africa. It was never going to be a high scoring game, but it was also never going to be

for the faint hearted. I thought all the Gloucester players had a steady game, but no one player really dominated the game. There still remain questions about England's form, but you could never bet against them, they know how to win a game, no matter how well they are playing – that is always a good omen.

Finally, I would like to thank you for being so positive and supportive to the numerous young players we have seen in action for the First XV this season. Players like Nick Wood, Rory Teague, Brad Davies, Simon Amor, Alex Page, Jon Goodridge and Will Mathews have all grown in stature as a result. It came as no surprise to me that our U21 team have had two resounding victories away from home at both Worcester and Leicester in recent weeks. Their continued development is of great importance to us all – thank you!





CAPTAIN'S CORNER

Jake Boer

Club Captain

“To not concede any points away from home is a massive achievement...”

Well, last weekend wasn't too bad. I think many people have called it a professional performance, that is to say, we won, we scored 16 points, and we didn't concede any.

In the build up to the Quins game we'd spent a lot of time talking through our game plan and objectives and ensuring we kept these in our minds through the 80 minutes.

One of the key points is defence. It has been key in our last two games, we only conceded three points against Leicester and then last Saturday's clean sheet, proved how focussed we've been

To not concede any points away from home is a massive achievement, and please correct me if I'm wrong, but I don't think that any other Gloucester side has ever done it before.

Defence has really come to the fore in recent years and teams are getting better and better every game and every season. Last year wasn't any different and we won a good number of games through our defensive performances.

We base our whole game on defence and attacks are built on it. One big tackle, one big turnover, they can all change a game.

Anyway, I'd like to welcome today's visitors Leeds Tykes. Although they started with a few disappointments, they've scored a lot of points in their last two matches.

The Tykes are an unpredictable side. They've got a good bunch of forwards and some real gas out wide. On their day they can be real contenders and we

can't afford to let them have a sniff of anything.

In Phil Christophers and David Rees they have two class players and the depth in their squad has been built on from last year.

It should be a good game today, which brings me on to the World Cup!

Last weekend was a disappointment from a South African perspective. The Springboks performed better than I expected, and they could have won the game against England, but they let Clive Woodward's team back into it in the second period.

They'll have their work cut out against the All Blacks should they reach the quarter-final, of course they've yet to come up against Terry and the Samoans!

I spoke to Thinus Delpont some weeks back, but haven't caught up with him for a while. The players in the World Cup are deeply focussed on the challenge ahead, but it'll be good to catch up afterwards.

Of course there is also Rodrigo, who has had a couple of appearances for the Pumas. Argentina are a force to be reckoned with and people shouldn't count them out. The World Cup is looking like being a really interesting tournament, and so is the Zurich Premiership this year.

When you look at the table we're in second place in the Zurich Premiership. So, with players missing, overall we've got to be pleased with our current position.

We all look forward to building on our points total this afternoon.

Rugby Union – A Popular Game

Cherry and Whites committee member David King is here with his usual words of wisdom for the official matchday programme. This week he looks at attendance figures and the growth of the game.

Rugby Union is indeed a popular game, although according to the latest statistics it is not at grass roots level!

Yet membership around the Zurich Premiership clubs shows a significant increase, albeit that Saracens is one club showing a down turn.

Here at Kingsholm we are well aware that increased attendances have been mirrored with a surge in membership. The proposed re-development of this grand old ground will hopefully see a further growth in both spheres.

Will rugby union be able to capitalise on

the coverage extended to the game by the World Cup?

Hopefully, but only in a small percentage, mainly because overall the game lacks the stadia.

Take for instance Leicester Tigers. For several seasons they have been the leading club in England, taking over the mantle from Bath. However, the Tigers are handicapped, their Welford Road ground is inevitably bursting at the seams. In the present climate the only clubs who can have increased members are those utilising soccer arenas.

Saracens at Vicarage Road, Rotherham at Millmoor, Wasps at the Causeway, Sale at Edgeley Park have capacity to hold extra numbers. Yet, in recent times London Wasps are the only one of this quartet to enjoy a degree of success. On



consideration, Wasps have had to rebuild their support base. Newcomers filling through the turnstiles now hail from Wycombe and not from West London their former base.

At the highest level the game is prospering especially when you consider that the first World Cup attracted 600,000 spectators. It is anticipated that 2.1 million people will witness this year's event.

Back in 1987 television attracted 300 million viewers. This time around 400 million are expected to tune into the action. Profit is now sky high compared to 1987 when the tournament was staged in Australia and New Zealand. This time £32.58 million is anticipated and an even higher amount may be collected.

There have been some heartening attendances for most clubs when staging their first home matches of this season. Bath entertained a crowd of 9,381 for the visit of Northampton a record for the Recreation Ground. London Irish saw 9,968 pass through the turnstiles when we visited.

Newcastle was watched by 7,062 against Saracens. The Vicarage Road club had an attendance of 7,730 when playing Leicester. Other attendance figures show healthy returns with Sale 8,105, Leicester 16,029, Harlequins 7,223, Leeds 4,093 and of course we had 10,114. These figures were ascertained from clubs who were participating in their first home encounters.

Interestingly, down in the Celtic League where regions now dominate, Celtic Warriors had 2,560. Leinster, our pre-season opponents 2,500. The Borders 3,000 and Llanelli 2,460, admittedly those were Celtic Cup encounters rather than League matches. The recent top of the league encounter between Llanelli and Celtic Warriors attracted less than 5,000. Compare that with attendances at Welford Road and Kingsholm! So, overall membership of these regions is minimal to date.

As we are aware Friday night action and

Sunday afternoon kick offs are now prevalent. On the weekend of 26th and 27th September, the Zurich Premiership were split. Three fixtures being played on the Friday evening and the other three on the Saturday afternoon it is interesting to note that Sale attracted 6,000 (8,105), Leeds 4,482 (4,093) and Leicester 16,815 (16,029). The figures in brackets allow comparison with their opening day fixtures.

At grass roots level the game is reputed to be less popular than rounders or dancing! It has been disclosed that 70% of school leavers in Britain never continue in active

“Other attendance figures show healthy returns with Sale 8,105, Leicester 16,029, Harlequins 7,223, Leeds 4,093 and of course we had 10,114.”

sport. In France that figure is reputed to be 20%! So, although there is a 12% increase in Zurich Premiership season tickets, the number of active clubs has decreased from 1,537 to 1,480.

In Gloucestershire we are lucky, for if there is no game at Kingsholm and travel is out of the question on any particular weekend, it is quite easy to take a short ride or stroll to watch junior matches. We know several of our members were delighted at the fare on display when Stroud met Old Patesians here at Kingsholm in the County Cup Final at the finale of last season.

This county stronghold hosts several clubs in our region belonging to the Gloucestershire Rugby Football Union. In Cheltenham District there are, Cheltenham, Cheltenham Civil Service, Cheltenham North, Cheltenham Saracens, Dowty, Fairford, Gloucestershire Constabulary, Old Patesians, RAF Innsworth, Smiths Industries, Stow-on-Wold, Tewkesbury and the University of

Gloucestershire, fourteen in total. In the Forest of Dean there are seven, Berry Hill, Bream, Cinderford, Drybrook, Lydney, Newent and Westbury on Severn.

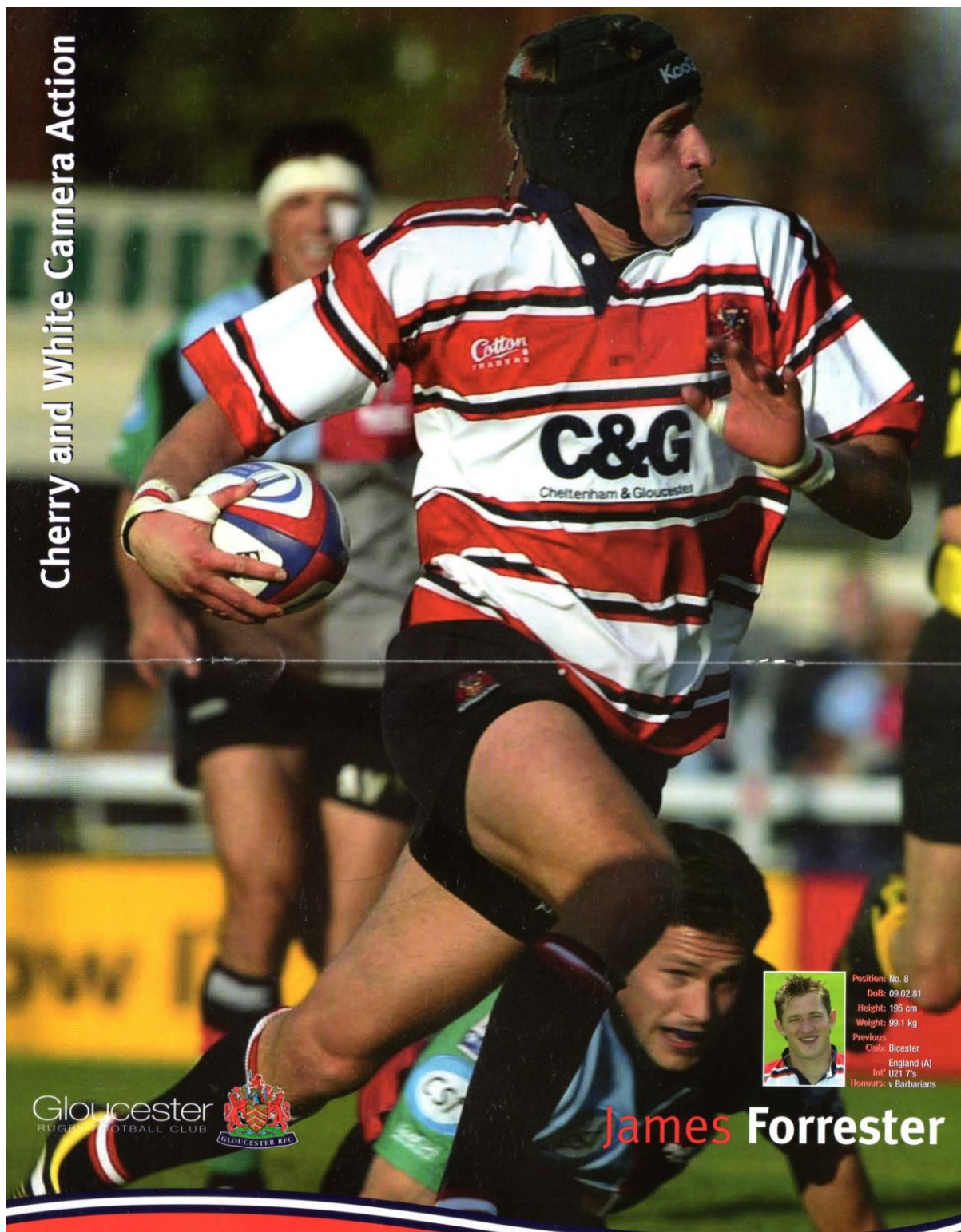
Stroud and District can boast ten clubs, Caincross, Cirencester, Dursley, Leyhill, Minchinhampton, Painswick, Royal Agricultural College and Stroud.

North Gloucester District Clubs number twenty clubs, Brockworth, Chosen Hill Former Pupils, Coney Hill, The Famous Pint Pot, Gloucester All Blues, Gloucester Civil Service Tigers, Gloucester Old Boys, The Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and

Wiltshire Regiment, Gordon League, Hartpury College, Hucclecote, Longlevens, Matson, Old Centralians, Old Cryptians, Old Richians, Spartans, Tredworth, Widden Old Boys and Gloucester RFC.

In total fifty-one clubs, some field more than one team. So plenty to play for if you are young and enthusiastic. More than enough if you want somewhere to go on a vacant afternoon. These clubs are based in the northern half of the county. Bristol has thirty-seven clubs, the oldest clubs of these four regions? In the Cheltenham district it is Stow-on-Wold (1879). In the Forest of Dean it is Bream (1878). In the North Gloucester District it is the Cherry & Whites, this clubs formation dating back to 1873. Stroud Rugby Club was also formed that same year but Painswick take pride in being formed one year earlier, the same year 1872 when Clifton of the Bristol District clubs was also formed. Dreams came to fruition, we must never let those fade away!

Cherry and White Camera Action



Gloucester
RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB



Position: No. 8
DoB: 09.02.81
Height: 195 cm
Weight: 99.1 kg
Previous
Club: Bicester
England (A)
Int'l: U21 7's
Honours: v Barbarians

James Forrester

club sponsor
C&G Cheltenham & Gloucester

For all your Gloucester Rugby Club photography visit www.gpaimages.com



THE STOOP SATURDAY 18 OCTOBER 2003



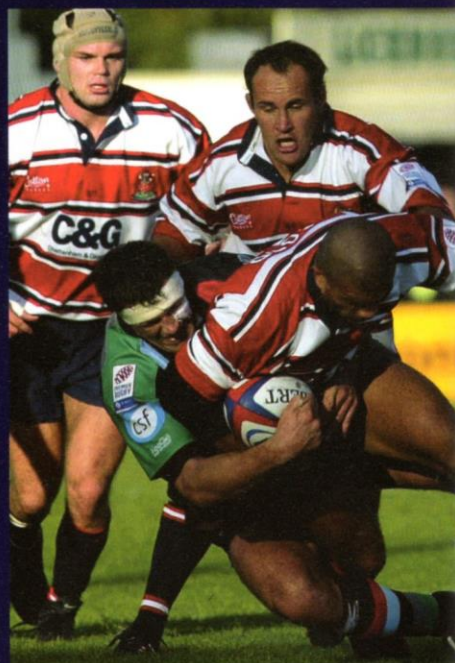
NEC HARLEQUINS 0



GLOUCESTER 16

TRIES: TODD CONVERSIONS: PAUL

PENALTIES: PAUL (3)



top left: Jake Boer and Chris Forety tackle Harlequins Pat Sanderson. top right: Duncan McRae kicks ahead.

bottom left: Robert Todd scores his second half try. bottom right: Robert Todd is tackled from behind by Harlequins Ceri Jones.

Pictures courtesy of Bruce Seabrook - GPA Images

Peter Arnold

Peter Arnold is back and this week looks at World Cup comments and comparisons between the Cherry and Whites' very own Nigel Melville and England coach Clive Woodward.

MAGIC MOMENTS

There have been complaints, from some quarters, that the initial stages of the World Cup have featured far too many mismatches, and things should have been arranged so that some of the lesser sides played each other before the big hitters entered the fray. This is a view with which I must respectfully disagree.

Having now reached that stage where Will Carling would undoubtedly described me as an 'old fart', I do have a certain advantage. When many people have to be out earning an honest crust, I can sit down with a civilised glass of Tio Pepe (à present on my recent birthday), and actually watch some of the minnows in action. And I'm bound to say that they have, for me, provided some of the

competition's magic moments.

For example, I loved the sight of the Namibian pack pushing the vaunted Argentine eight back a full twenty metres. It couldn't last, of course, but it was great for a moment. Parenthetically, it was pointed out by the Australian commentator that, although the South American outfit are known as 'The Pumas', the emblem on their shirts actually depicts a jaguar. All right then, clobber, if you're such a wildlife expert, are you sure that the animal shown on the Wallaby badge isn't, in fact, a kangaroo?

True, there haven't been any upsets at the time of writing, but the USA Eagles came mighty close, only going down 19-18 to Fiji, thanks to a missed conversion in the dying minutes. I also relish watching the Fijians, themselves, who

often seem to forget that they are not playing Sevens this time round.

I also enjoyed the way the Japanese buzzed around like hornets, giving the Scots more than one anxious minute or so. They simply ran and ran and ran.

I could go on. Taking the wider view, how can the smaller rugby nations ever hope to improve if they don't get a chance to try themselves out against the best? In any case, why shouldn't these countries reap the rewards of all the effort put in to reach the Cup proper? Take Namibia, not the largest or richest country in the world, who have managed to reach both cricket and rugby World Cup competitions. Indeed, they have one player who has appeared in both, which must be some sort of a record.

The lesser rugby nations may not have the skills, the professionalism or the fitness levels of the fancied sides, but one thing they do have in abundance is enthusiasm, and they've been showing it in spades. Even the Georgians never gave up against England.

No. Let the minnows show us what they can do. I certainly recommend that you watch them whenever you get the chance.

JUSTICE DONE. SORT OF.

Despite what I said above, I do try not to think like an old fart. However, I must admit that there are times when I



hanker after the old days. Like now,

You see, for virtually all my rugby playing and watching career, one thing remained constant. If a player was unfortunate enough to get hurt, then that was his bad luck. If the bloke who stepped in to replace him put in a good performance, then he kept his spot until he got injured in his turn, or suffered a lack of form, when the original incumbent claimed his place back. Many a player sparked a good international career by that route.

Years ago, England named two scrum-halves to go to Australia. They were 'Corky' Harding of Bristol, and our own Marcus Hannaford. Unfortunately, injury forced Marcus to pull out, and his place was taken by Bath's Richard Hill.

Harding also got injured quite early in the tour, and Hill stepped into his place, and did pretty well.

When the team returned, Richard kept his spot, ahead of both Harding and Hannaford and had quite a respectable England career. No one knows better than us about his coaching career since. We shall never know how Marcus would have fared had he been able to make the trip, but all things being equal, he would have come home as England's No. 1 scrum-half.

Things don't seem to be the same in the England camp in 2003. As everyone knows, 30 minutes before the Georgia game, Andy Gomersall wasn't even on the bench. Then Kyran Bracken's lumbago started playing him up, and Gommers moved up to the bench.

When Matt Dawson did his knee, Andy stepped in and put in, what I thought, was an outstanding performance, providing an immaculate service and being very unlucky not to have scored a try himself. Yet when the team for South Africa was announced, poor old Gommers had been shunted back into



Andy Deacon rebuffs a tackle from Harlequins James Hayter.

the wilderness.

Then Matt Dawson had to cry off and Andy pops up on the bench again. So justice, of a sort, would appear to have been done. Although, for my money, once Dawson had to drop out, Andy Gomersall should have been in the starting line-up. And I don't suppose you'll disagree with that.

As it happens, Kyran Bracken played a blinder against the Springboks, and good for him. However, that doesn't invalidate my argument. Who's to say that Gommers wouldn't have done at least as well?

GREAT MINDS

Do Clive Woodward and Nigel Melville share the same speech writer? I was struck by the fact that they made virtually identical statements in interviews following the England and Gloucester matches last Saturday. In effect, they both admitted that their respective games hadn't been pretty, but that both sides needed to do a job and

that they had done that. Great minds thinking alike or what?

I suppose that's one of the problems about cups and leagues. Winning is everything and entertainment comes a poor second. Not that I'm complaining. If you know the game, there's as much satisfaction to be gained from a stern forward battle as there is from a game where the ball is flying around among the backs every ten seconds. Let's face it: we've known that at Kingsholm for many a long year.

'THERE IS A DIVINITY...'

One report in the Citizen, last week, concerned me somewhat. Apparently, our own Thinus Delpont, currently on duty with the South African World Cup Squad, missed out on training 'because of a thigh problem'.

I think what they meant to print was 'because of a thigh problem'. At least, I hope that's what they meant. As the poet says, 'There is a Divinity which shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will'.



Position: Fly Half
DoB: 27.09.74
Height: 172 cm
Weight: 80.7 kg
Previous NSW
Club: Waratahs
Int'
Honours: Australia



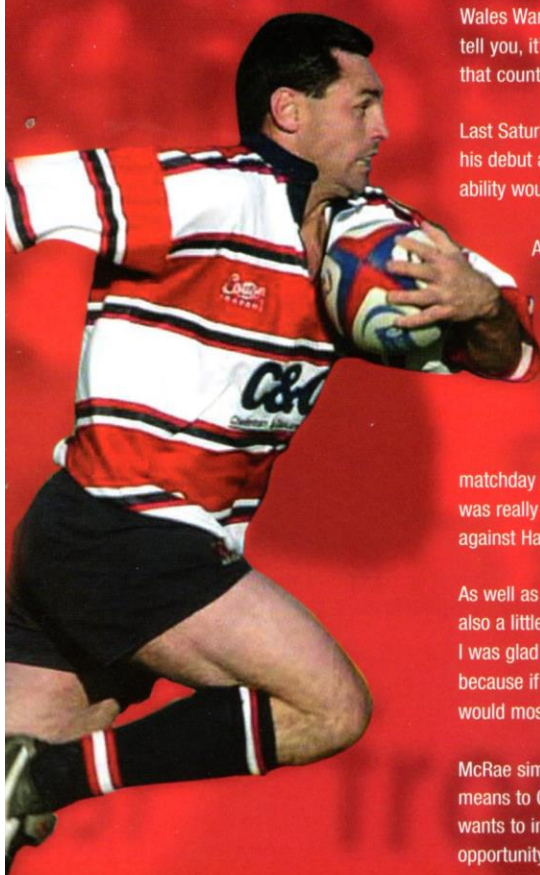
Duncan McRae

Two pages of thoughts and
comments from Gloucester Rugby
Club's new stand-off signing

for all the latest visit | www.gloucesterrugbyclub.com

Duncan McRae

Remember when it was first announced? Duncan McRae signs for Gloucester! With the departure of Ludovic Mercier, a big favourite with Cherry and White fans, the arrival of McRae has been eagerly awaited.



Many remember his time with Saracens and his most recent spell at New South Wales Waratahs, but as everyone will tell you, it's what you do for Gloucester that counts.

Last Saturday saw the 29 year-old make his debut and those waiting to see his ability would have been impressed.

A number of the post-match press reports picked up on McRae's arrival and his performance throughout the 80 minutes, and it was all very favourable.

Talking to the official matchday programme McRae said: "I was really excited with the away win against Harlequins."

As well as being excited, McRae was also a little more relaxed. "In some ways I was glad that my first game was away because if we had lost at home, the Shed would most probably have hung me!"

McRae simply knows how much rugby means to Gloucester supporters and wants to impress at every given opportunity.

Making his debut away from Kingsholm, may have helped him relax, because one of the first things he commented on upon his arrival in the West Country was the superb run of home victories.

"You can see why we're so hard to beat

at Kingsholm with the massive fan support behind the players.

"You don't want to let anyone down and it's a great record being unbeaten at Kingsholm for 33 games."

The former Waratah's first trip with his new team mates was away at Newcastle, before arriving at Kingsholm to experience the royal Cherry and Whites welcome as the team hit the pitch before kick off.

"I'd be lying if I didn't say I had a tingle going up my spine when the guys ran out against Leicester. It was a great occasion and a great day, and the boys came through with flying colours."

The Gloucester coaching staff welcomed McRae to Gloucester a little earlier than first expected, after the well-documented suspension he picked playing for his Sydney-based club Randwick in the Toohey's Cup.

And it's all worked out well with McRae arriving with his wife and young family. He's had time to settle in and sort out his flat and day-to-day things.

"It's been a good thing to have the extra week to prepare and settle in and learn about the guys both on and off the pitch. Saturday was a big game for me as it was my first.

"The original schedule was to arrive a little earlier, but I wouldn't have got here until about three days before the Leicester game, and would have rushed straight in to everything.

"I haven't had a chance for an off-season, as I've been playing since

January, so it's been a nice freshener to have a few weeks off, as there is a big year ahead. I've had the chance to get the kinks and bruises out."

Prior to last weekend's superb 16-0 win away at Quins, McRae was quick to point out the vital role that the clash had to play in this year's campaign.

"It's a pivotal point of our season, even this early on, because if we can get a win this week and come back to Kingsholm, we'll have a bit of confidence boost. The team can then try to make it three wins in a row, which could be a spring board going into our game against Bath a few weeks later." – said McRae late last week.

With McRae's arrival coming after the season has started, he has missed out on meeting up with some of the Cherry and White players who have gone off on World Cup duty.

Although there was a brief opportunity to meet some of them when the Aussie play-maker was here in the summer.

"The quality of players here is outstanding. When those guys come back from the World Cup it'll take everyone to a new level, and the competition for places will be much greater. I have to admit I've been impressed with the entire set up."

"It's been a good place to be and people are happy both off the field as well as on it, which is key to a successful team.

After reading his comments supporters can see that Gloucester's reputation for its love of rugby and passion for the game reaches far around the world.

McRae is well versed in the fanatical support in the city and having played with Saracens a few years back has experienced Gloucester fans at first hand.

"It is great to see a rugby town and get the support of the people. It's what you

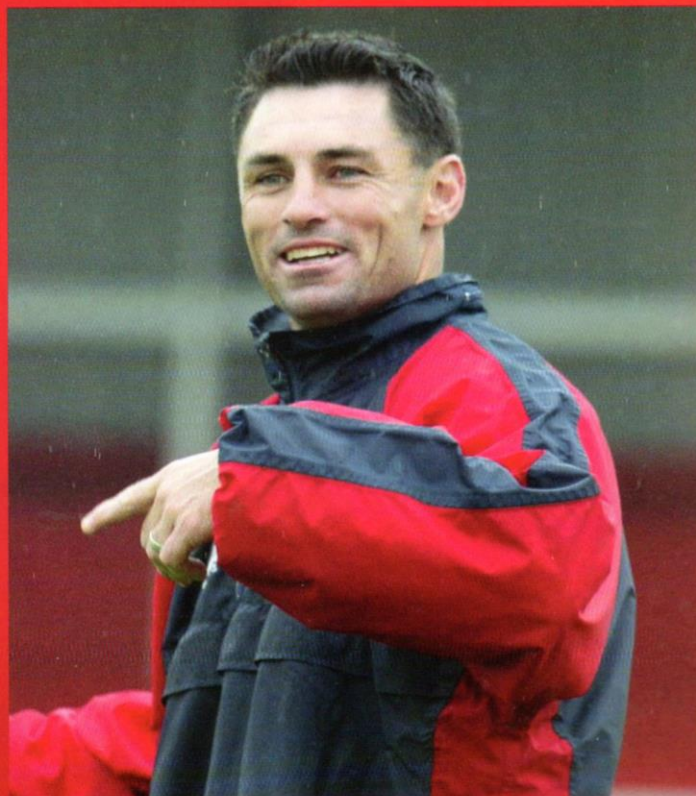
play for, the packed houses and the role you have to play in the community."

Some people might say the new Cherry and Whites signing is set to have a quiet settling in period with so much going on with the World Cup in Australia.

"It doesn't take any of the pressure off. It doesn't matter when you start playing. Whether you're playing now or in May, it still counts for five points. The games will count as much now as they do then."

It's been a couple of years since McRae's spell at Vicarage Road with Saracens, but he's certainly looking forward to his new role at Gloucester.

"Things have certainly changed and the Zurich Premiership has improved since I was last here. Every team has made a massive step up in terms of defensive performances, England has certainly taken the game to another level."



BY ANDY WYMAN

BBC RADIO GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Andy Wyman, one of BBC Radio Gloucestershire's summarisers, and a regular at Gloucester away games, pens this week's article. Andy is a head of year at Churchdown school and appropriately he writes a report on the season so far.

Just imagine the story. The lead item on BBC Radio Gloucestershire and on the back page of The Citizen is "Harry Potter to come to Kingsholm."

Really? Could the boy from Hogwarts School replace Nigel Melville and Dean Ryan? Is this how JK Rowling will end the last book? A far fetched scenario...but

"How does the full cross section of punditry that makes up the Cherry & Whites fan base assess the mixed bag of performances so far?"

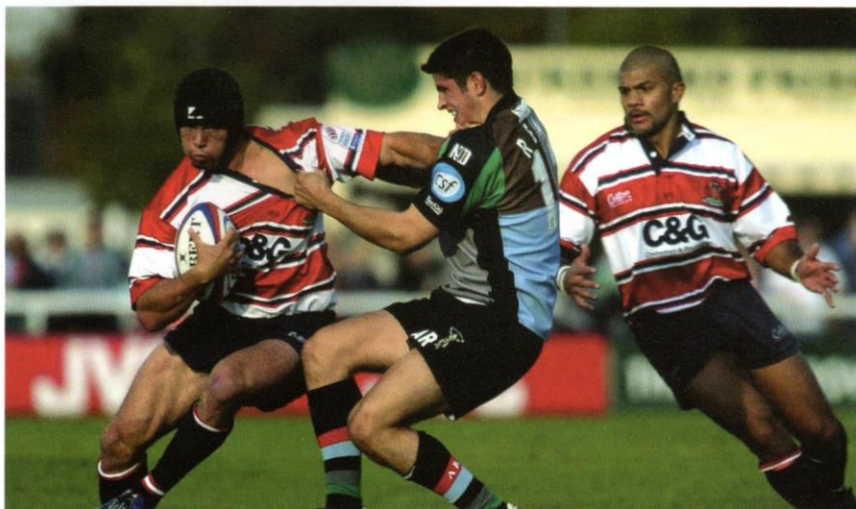
while you ponder it, here's another thought. With almost one third of the season completed by tonight, what would the school report say? How does the full cross section of punditry that makes up the Cherry & Whites fan base assess the mixed bag of performances so far?

The key thing, we're told, is that if the performance is right, the results will follow. That presupposes that the management behind the recruitment and team

selection have the right personnel in place to mesh together and produce their version of what a successful rugby side is. Even for a highly experienced professional, that's a tricky task at the best of times, and that's ignoring the complications thrown up by international selection.

Who'd be a coach anyway? You've recruited and planned for the period of the World Cup, but you've been so successful developing new talent and revitalising others that your skills have contributed to the further depletion of your squad. Now you really have got your work cut out. You've got to adapt and change. You've got the skeleton of a championship side, but it needs fleshing out. You've got some stalwarts to count on; some real talent that just missed selection for an Australian adventure and some new characters that offer different skills you've valued enough to acquire. To spice up the mix, bring on the young stars of the future. Let them "step up for the plate." You hope they are ready and "make the most of their opportunities." You're aware of their potential and believe it can blossom in the hot house of the Premiership.

The preparation of the side is vital. New combinations are going to need time to settle, so better to focus on



Henry Paul is tackled by Harlequins Andy Reay.

the organisation of defence. It's got to be easier to effectively establish skills that don't have the added responsibility of carrying the ball. Let's aggressively attack the opposition's moves and play off the confusion of the turnover. There are individual skills spread across the formation of the team and our set play, ball carrying confidence will improve with match practise.

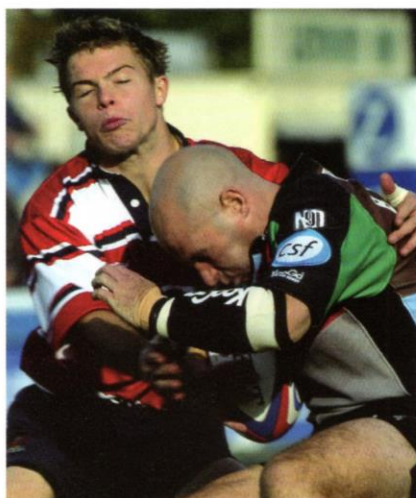
Rotherham are turned over with a typically patchy opening performance. The first half at London Irish eventually shows off the defensive work at its' abrasive best, but the co-ordination isn't complete enough to steal the show, even though we make it away on our toes with a bonus point. Saracens are blown away effectively and the width on the game fuels the optimism that the complete package is coming together.

Newcastle are the first to find any serious weak couplings in the defensive chain to show that the train can't always take the strain, and there are more injuries to test the planning and preparation. The home crowd is in heaven as Leicester succumbs to the new combinations. Now it's surely taking shape - and a wide and pacey shape at that.

Not so at The Stoop. Back to the defensive war, but this time the plan works. A new face helps to orchestrate a complete shut out and even hassle the mighty Quins into gifting a try that we'd hoped for. Not pretty to watch, but pretty effective in our quest for "World Cup" league points. So far, so good, most would argue. But why the difference in performance? What is form and what is its relationship to confidence? Why can some players produce the same high standard of performance week in week out whatever the makeup of the team? Why can the inclusion of a particular player have such an effect on another? What is real class?

Control these factors my son and a coach you shall be. Extract the essence of a Kingsholm crowd to sprinkle on the squad as they leave a bus and you'll earn the title "wizard." Perhaps the boy Potter is already here in another guise.....

Today we welcome the Tykes of Leeds. Long serving director of rugby Phil Davies took Clive Stuart-Smith from Gloucester in the summer, and their win over Leicester last Sunday came after a rousing second half. They were thought likely to be one of the major



Alex Page tackles Harlequins Paul Burke.

beneficiaries during this first part of the season due to a lack of World Cup calls, but so far that tag has been forcefully grabbed by Bath, who have already accumulated six wins they won't need later on. Leeds have already lost three games, but I expect them to be energetic among the forwards and physically powerful all over the pitch. If Gloucester can match that, I'd expect them to make it three wins in a row.

C'mon Glaws!

'Join us for commentary of every game'

BBC Radio Gloucestershire (104.7 FM & 1413 AM)

on the official club website, www.gloucesterrugbyclub.com.

and on the BBC website, www.bbc.co.uk/gloucestershire



Fans Zone

with
Bob Fenton

Avid supporter Bob Fenton is back in this issue for a very special day. His son Matthew is today's mascot.

Here we go then, back to Kingsholm and it's a bit of a special day for the Fenton household, as the boy Matthew is the matchday mascot.

The fact that he will be watching this game from his grandstand seat will

"It's been great to see the Gloucester boys doing well in the World Cup, how Terry has failed to get on the score sheet for Samoa is a bit of a mystery though..."

come as something of a relief to those who regularly inhabit the railing at the halfway line. His high-pitched urgings have been known to shatter windows in Denmark Road, so God knows what it does to their eardrums!

It's been great to see the Gloucester boys doing well in the World Cup, how Terry has failed to get on the score sheet for Samoa is a bit of a mystery though – seems just about everyone else has. Mind you he's always said he was a provider, more than a scorer.

Thinus has been South Africa's most consistent player – if they gave him the ball a bit more often he could show them how he has come on under the steady tutelage of the Shed. Clearly our old mate Florence can't forget he's a Gloucester boy – did you see that sly dig he gave him last Saturday? Rodders has had a run out for Argentina, but they haven't really got going

and may well be on the plane home before too long.

Vickster and Dougie have been the rocks in England's pack, and Andy Gomersall looked great when he came on for Matt Dawson against Georgia. Quite how Clive Woodward could leave him out against South Africa was a mystery to us all. I had Kieran Broken to break down with a back spasm during the national Anthem in the "How long Will He last" sweep, but he surprised us all by staying on.

You have to wonder what Andy has to do to get noticed. Everyone knows he was the form scrum half of the three towards the end of the season, yet he gets constantly overlooked. Blimey, even my missus knows he is a better player – I'd better go easy there, she is here today and may well read this...

Two more good results have moved us into position at the right end of the league, still somewhat behind the unmentionables from down the road. Last week's eminently forgettable match at The Stoop produced our first away win of the season, and followed up the excellent demolition of Leicester here two weeks ago

It was interesting to read on one of the Leicester web sites a moan from someone who said that they were amazed by the 'abuse' dished out to visiting players – particularly Austin Healy. I can only assume that the person who wrote this wasn't actually at the game, or if they were was not actually watching or listening to what was going on.

For all his faults (and the 1,200 odd words that I am allowed for each article are not enough to list them) Healy takes all the banter with a smile, and often gives as

good as he gets. He always seems to do his running and stretching exercises in front of the shed and laughs along with most of the comments. Had the writer been watching he would have seen Austin raising his hands above his head and applauding the crowd.

In the same game Josh Kronfeld was on the receiving end of some well-deserved Shed wit and wisdom, with one guy shouting 'Why didn't you sign for a good team, Josh?' His response, a rueful smile and a thumbs up to the crowd.

Clearly the writer didn't see any of this, and instead trotted out the usual boring diatribe about unruly Gloucester supporters. Maybe he should have spoken to the Tigers supporter who got himself marooned in the middle of the shed with us, he would have told him that he had quite a laugh with those around him.

Except, perhaps, when he had the tiger on a noose dangled in front of his eyes. Wurzel Rob is probably still trying to explain to his nipper why his toy tiger is now looking very bedraggled...

Because of programme deadlines I can't bring you the highlights of the GRSA evening with little and large Fidler. Considering use of the 'B' word (I'll whisper it – Bath) is banned at all GRSA meetings and carries a mandatory £5 fine for it's use, Fids may well have paid for a large chunk of the new grandstand development by the time you read this.

Rob was a great guy to talk to, and was held in very high esteem by Gloucester supporters generally – he was voted into the All Time Gloucester Dream Team in a poll that we ran on the old 'Rivals' website. Somewhere I have a photograph of him proudly holding the team mug – let's hope he uses it to slurp his tea down at the Rec.

Whether he was held in such high esteem elsewhere is debateable, I remember talking to him back in the old Shedhead days and having to contest with the

sound of a vacuum cleaner in the background. "Are you cleaning up while you are talking to me?" I said, "No," replied Rob, "that's my missus, I just got her a new Dyson for her birthday..." All heart that boy – but Kingsholm still seems a funny place without him.

Today we get a chance to welcome Leeds back to Kingsholm. Last season they were a bit of a surprise package and looked to be almost certain of a Heineken Cup spot until they fell away a bit in the closing stages of the season.

So far this term things have not gone as well for them, despite signing some big names in the summer – David Rees and Phil (Flock of Seagulls) Christophers among them. That said, they turned over

Leicester last week, so they'll come into this game with their tails up and they'll be keen to try to end our 33 match unbeaten home record.

We get to welcome our own would-be hero to the Kingsholm turf today – no, not Matthew – but the long-awaited home debut of Duncan McRae.

Duncan always looked to be a stylish player, and Saracens fans seem generally agreed that he was a quality player in the two seasons he spent with them. From what we could see at Quins last week he seems a silky player, and should bring a new dimension to our back play. Watching how he links up with Henry Paul is going to be interesting over the next couple of games.



Cherry and White Camera Action

Paul Johnstone



Position: Prop/Hooker

DoB: 16.10.70

Height: 181 cm

Weight: 108.9 kg

Previous: Bristol

Club: Shoguns

Int'

Honours: Zimbabwe

Paul Johnstone signed up with the Cherry and Whites during the summer and has been real asset to the squad. The former Zimbabwe international has slotted in at loosehead prop and formed a good front row partnership with Andy Deacon.

Gloucester
RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB



club sponsor

C&G Cheltenham & Gloucester

For all your Gloucester Rugby Club photography visit www.gpimages.com

TRY
CONVERSION
PENALTY
DROP GOAL

GLOUCESTER

Jon Goodridge	15
Marcel Garvey	14
Robert Todd	13
Henry Paul	12
James Simpson-Daniel	11
Duncan McRae	10
Alex Page	09
Paul Johnstone	01
Chris Fortey	02
Andy Deacon	03
Alex Brown	04
Mark Cornwell	05
Jake Boer (c)	06
Andy Hazell	07
James Forrester	08
Nick Wood	16
Steve Brotherstone	17
Adrian Olver	18
Adam Eustace	19
Peter Buxton	20
Simon Amor	21
Josh Frape	22

fullback
wing
centre
centre
wing
flyhalf
scrumhalf
prop
hooker
prop
lock
lock
flanker
flanker
no. 8

replacements



LEEDS TYKES

TRY
CONVERSION
PENALTY
DROP GOAL

Tim Walsh	15
Dan Scarbrough	14
Phil Christophers	13
Liam Botham	12
David Rees	11
Duncan Hodge	10
Ryan Walker	09
Mike Shelley	01
Rob Rawlinson	02
Simon Halford	03
Scott Morgan	04
Stuart Hooper	05
Matt Salter	06
James Ponton	07
Dan Hyde (c)	08
Matt Holt	16
Gary Powell	17
Phil Murphy	18
Stewart Campbell	19
Alan Dickens	20
Tristan Davies	21
Matt Cardy	22

ZURICH PREMIERSHIP 2003/04

TEAM	P	W	D	L	F	A	TB	LB	PTS
Bath Rugby	6	6	0	0	174	72	2	0	26
Gloucester	6	4	0	2	124	76	1	1	18
NEC Harlequins	6	4	0	2	142	118	1	1	18
Northampton Saints	6	3	1	2	169	141	3	1	18
London Wasps	6	3	0	3	155	138	1	2	15
Leeds Tykes	6	3	0	3	161	170	3	0	15
London Irish	6	3	0	3	121	116	0	2	14
Sale Sharks	6	2	1	3	137	127	1	3	14
Newcastle Falcons	6	2	0	4	123	134	1	3	12
Leicester Tigers	6	2	1	3	113	144	0	1	10
Saracens	6	2	1	3	124	168	0	0	8
Rotherham Titans	6	0	0	6	66	205	0	0	0

1972

TODAY'S MATCH OFFICIALS

Referee: Sean Davey RFU

1st TJ: Huw Jones-Williams RFU

2nd TJ: Peter Huckle RFU

Today's Result

Gloucester

Leeds

design: paul watkins
dunwoody
sports marketing

01635 35599 | www.d-sport.co.uk