

# BATH RUGBY

THE OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME OF BATH RUGBY  
PRICE £3.00 | VOLUME 5 ISSUE 2



## BATH RUGBY VS GLOUCESTER

ZURICH PREMIERSHIP  
SATURDAY  
2 OCTOBER 2004  
KICK-OFF 2.15pm

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# TODAY'S TEAMS



## Bath Rugby

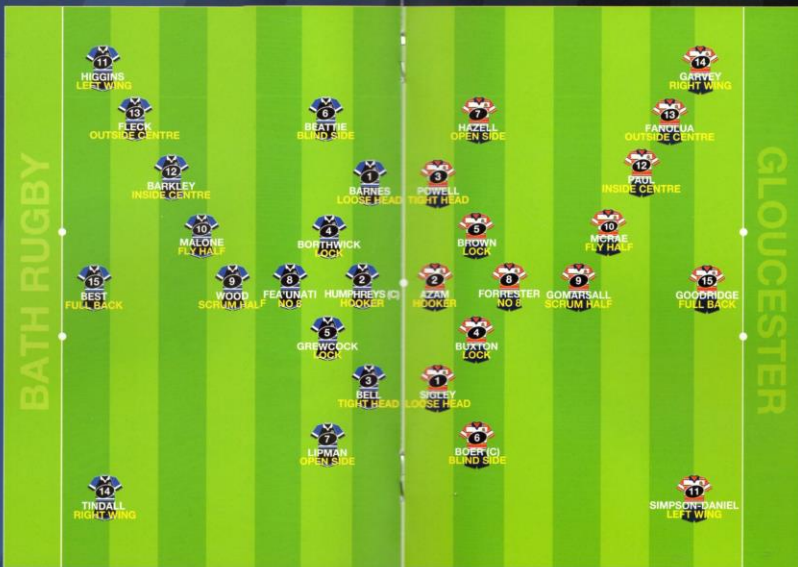
### LINEUP

- LEE BEST 15
- MIKE TINDALL 14
- ROBBIE FLECK 13
- OLLY BARKLEY 12
- ANDREW HIGGINS 11
- CHRIS MALONE 10
- MARTYN WOOD 9
- DAVID BARNES 1
- JONATHAN HUMPHREYS (C) 2
- DUNCAN BELL 3
- STEVE BORTHWICK 4
- DANNY GREWCOCK 5
- ANDY BEATTIE 6
- MICHAEL LIPMAN 7
- ZAK FEANATI 8

### REPLACEMENTS

- NICK WALSHE 16
- ROB HAWKINS 17
- MATT STEVENS 18
- KIERON LEWITT 19
- SPENCER DAVEY 20
- GARETH DELVE 21
- ROB FIDLER 22

HEAD COACH:  
John CONNOLLY



## Gloucester

### LINEUP

- JON GOODRIDGE 15
- MARCEL GARVEY 14
- TERRY FANOLUA 13
- HENRY PAUL 12
- JAMES SIMPSON-DANIEL 11
- DUNCAN MORAE 10
- ANDY GOMARSALL 9
- TERRY SIGLEY 1
- OLIVIER AZAM 2
- GARY POWELL 3
- PETER BUXTON 4
- ALEX BROWN 5
- JAKE BOER (C) 6
- ANDY HAZELL 7
- JAMES FORRESTER 8

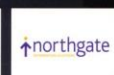
### REPLACEMENTS

- CHRIS FORTEY 16
- CHRISTO BEZUIDENHOUT 17
- NICK WOOD 18
- ADAM EUSTACE 19
- ADAM BALDING 20
- SIMON AMOR 21
- JAMES BAILEY 22

DIRECTOR OF RUGBY:  
NIGEL MELVILLE



TODAY'S OFFICIALS  
REFEREE: DAVE PEARSON  
TOUCH JUDGES: STEVE SAVAGE  
& ASHLEY REAY



# SPOTLIGHT GLOUCESTER



BY DOM RUMBLES

**Gloucester arrive at the Rec this afternoon knowing that they will never have a better chance to overcome a record that has been eating at them that stretches back to 1987 – they have never won a league match at the Rec.**

A win on today will come as a triple bonus for the Cherry and Whites. They could record their first win at the Rec in the league, topple Sale at the top of the table, and record their best ever start to a season.

With four rounds of the new Zurich Premiership season completed Nigel Melville's side are the form side in the competition, sitting pretty in second in the table with just a solitary bonus point separating them from top side Sale Sharks. They have regrouped from what was by their own admission a disappointing 2003/04 campaign, to become serious title contenders this time around.

At the heart of this tremendous start though is an incredible defensive record. Gloucester have conceded just 61 points and three tries in the competition to date – the meanest record by far. As Bath Rugby fans will know from the club's drive to the top of the table last season, it is possibly the most important aspect of the modern game. The mastermind behind this

solid foundation is Dave Ellis. Gloucester's defensive coach is well known within the rugby fraternity and is also the man behind France's defensive patterns.

However, Gloucester are not shy of attacking options either. At present they are playing some sublime, open attacking rugby and in Henry Paul and in Duncan McRea the club possess two of the most creative inside backs in the Premiership. Add to the mix the talents of James Simpson-Daniel and Marcel Garvey and it is easy to see why they have one of the most effective back lines around.

Gloucester have traditionally held an edge over their opponents up front, but at times last season the eight was found wanting. However, despite some high profile injuries this season the Cherry and Whites are back bossing the contact and set piece area. The return of Shed hero Olivier Azam has brought some stability to the front row, whilst also adding another attacking dimension. The French international hooker is a wonderful footballer and his work rate around the park is immense.

This afternoon's line out

battle between Alex Brown and Steve Borthwick is one not to be missed. Borthwick is the man at the front of the queue for the England place, but rival Brown is hot on the Bath Rugby man's heels and will be keen to prove his worth this afternoon. Another player to watch is James Forrester. The England A international is one of the best footballing number eights in the game and is also an

exceptional line out forward. He too will be keen to prove a point to Andy Robinson and the England management

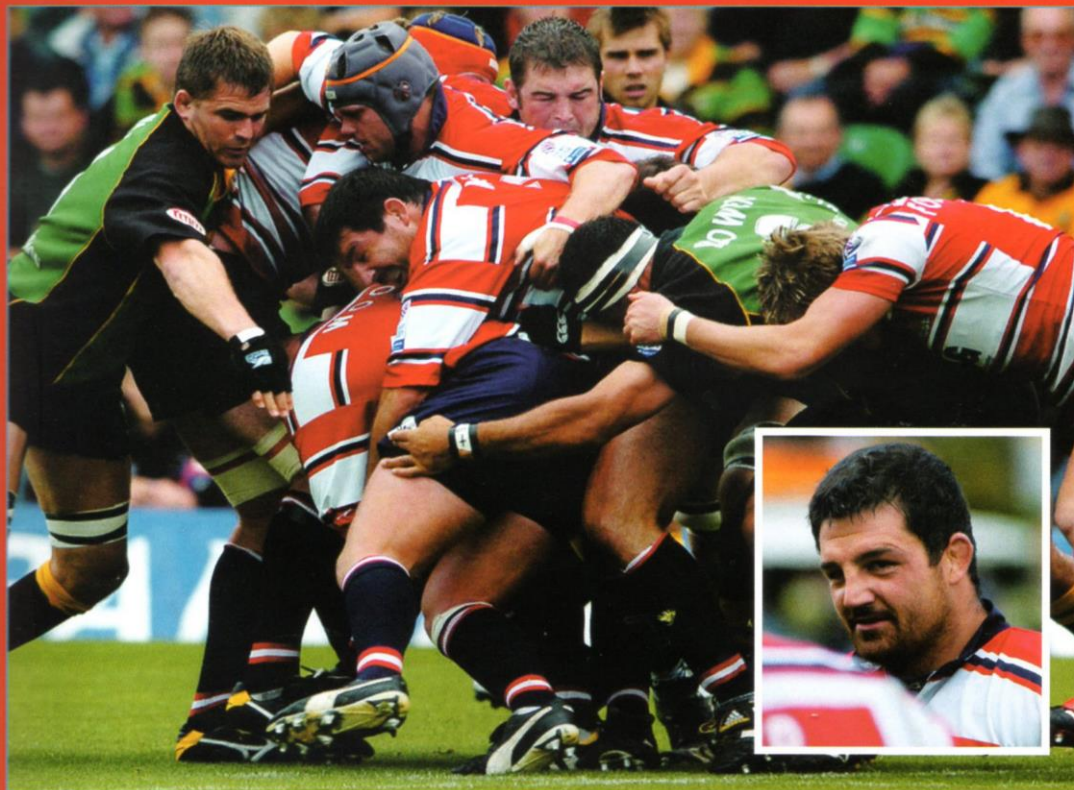
England World Cup hero Phil Vickery could be back on the bench for Gloucester today after recovering from a back operation, but if he does not make it then the Cherry and Whites will not be found wanting in this area despite the summer departure of Trevor Woodman to Sale. Young props Terry Sigley and Nick Wood have proven to be great acquisitions, whilst Gary Powell has also been immense.



Captain - Jake Boer

# SPOTLIGHT OLIVIER AZAM

BY TONY ASHTON



**The Gloucester front row may have lost an awesome presence in Trevor Woodman over the summer, but they have certainly gained another one through the return of Olivier Azam. After a spell with French side AS Montferrand Azam has come back to Kingsholm, the place where he formed a formidable front row partnership with Woodman and Phil Vickery and helped propel his side to the top of the Zurich Premiership standings.**

Azam is a tall man for a hooker, standing at 6' 1". He is very powerful and, having experience at prop, is a devastating scrummager. His work around the park is typically fierce and he certainly relishes the challenge at the contact area. Azam does not take a backward step on a rugby field, a quality that typifies Gloucester's tradition and reputation.

The Frenchman was always a popular figure during his first spell with Gloucester and the Shed have welcomed him back with open arms. He is a player you

love to have in your team and despite his fierce streak on the pitch he always has lots of time for fans off it, an admirable quality in the professional rugby environment. Azam's antics and look have attained him something of a cult status amongst Gloucester fans and he does perform the role of talisman when the Cherry and Whites come to town.

On top of all that, though, he is one heck of a player. His set-piece work is very strong, as you'd expect, but he works hard around

the pitch getting his hands on the ball and keeping the impetus going. When he tackles he makes an impact, and he wins his fair share of turnovers. Gloucester have plenty of flair players in Duncan McRae, Henry Paul, James Simpson-Daniel and Marcel Garvey, and they have plenty of ability in the pack with Jake Boer, Alex Brown and James Forrester. Olivier Azam is a vital cog in this team, a true competitor, and is definitely a man worth keeping an eye out for this afternoon.

# SUPPORTERS' CLUB

WITH GLYN EDWARDS

Welcome to the Rec today to the Gloucester supporters, as their team return to Bath once more, hoping to end their record of never having won a league game on our ground. An exciting draw two years ago in our recent bleak period was the closest they have come to date – and, of course, all those in Blue, Black and White here this afternoon will be hoping that it stays that way for some time to come! Gloucester are in a rich vein of form, however, so an excellent game is in prospect as we have now chalked up back-to-back wins and started to remember how to tackle. Last season's 41-7 triumph by Bath ensured that we finished top of the league table by a margin of 6 points. Wasps' home defeat by

**Leicester actually meant that we did not need that final victory, but the team did not know that as the final games kicked off, and they provided us with a memorable end to the season at the Rec.**

There remains a fierce local rivalry between the two clubs, although both sets of supporters now find themselves curiously united by a common sense of grievance. We share the experience of having won the league in the 'regular' season, only to fail to secure the Championship at Twickenham and end up with no silverware to show for a season of achievement. If we Bath supporters feel 'robbed' or, at the very least, mightily frustrated at the ultimate outcome, then spare a thought for the 'Shedheads'. In 2002-3

Gloucester not only won the league by 15 points but were simply humiliated in the Zurich Final by Wasps. The margin of their league superiority – amounting to 3 bonus point wins – was surely the only evidence needed that they were indeed the team of that season, which their Cup victory over Northampton merely served to confirm.

Bath last year, and Gloucester two seasons ago, were top of the table for virtually the entire campaign, and were then faced with a competitive lay-off for three weeks as a 'reward', whereas the momentum of the runners-up was maintained through a semi-final play-off and, in both 2003 and 2004, a European Final. There is always the risk of injuries, of course, but if luck is with you then maintaining

that competitive edge is a distinct advantage – as the last two years have proved. Yes, "rules are rules", and management, coaches, players, supporters, and even journalists were all aware of how the competition would be decided before it kicked off. Something to be grateful for in itself, I suppose, after the embarrassing shambles of previous seasons when it seemed that the goalposts were almost literally moved on a weekly basis. Remember when Leicester beat Bath in the first-ever Premiership Final? Quite late on in the season there were attempts to make the end-of-season match at HQ rather more than just a 'showpiece'. Sensibly the idea was resisted on that occasion, and a separate trophy was awarded to Leicester on the day.

So, why the change? We are told that the Clubs themselves all support the current format. Perhaps they do. The determination of the entire league competition on the last weekend in May has accorded the Play-Off Final a dramatic significance without which it would certainly struggle to capture the imagination, but is such a contrived ending to a nine-month league competition necessary, let alone fair? A Grand National with only three runners? The Zurich Premiership is surely now sufficiently well-established in its own right, and rightly





SUPPORTERS' CLUB

acknowledged as the leading club tournament in rugby, that such an engineered conclusion is rather self-mocking.

Furthermore, who's not in favour of the play-off system? Well, we're not – the fans. Scrutiny of all of the unofficial supporters' websites (with the exception of Wasps', understandably) showed clearly that whilst many welcomed or accepted an end-of-season 'celebration of the club game' at Twickenham, virtually all contributors considered Bath to be the true champions in 2004, just as they had 'crowned' Gloucester in 2003. Maybe we will be stuck with it for the foreseeable future, maybe not. In rugby, if the early years of professionalism have taught us anything at all it is not to be surprised by the next surprise!

#### **NOTICES BRSC MEMBERSHIP**

Membership Fees for Bath Rugby Supporters' Club for Season 2004/5 remain fixed at the initial 1996 levels – adults £5, under 16s £3, and families (2 adults and all under 16s) at £10. This must be the best value in English rugby! Membership provides an official BRSC enamel badge and card each season; 5% discount at the Club Shops and on Clubhouse bookings; quarterly newsletters; free or discounted admission

to BRSC events, and discounted BRSC coach travel to away fixtures; and, the chance to vote for the annual BRSC Players' Awards. Furthermore, great discounts are also available to BRSC members at Caffè Uno, Green Park Brasserie, Grill 42, Litten Tree, Nigel Dando (Jewellers), Test Stationers and Zoe Kenway Prints.

#### **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

##### **Wed 20th Oct 04**

– 'Heineken Cup Preview'; an evening 'fans'forum' in the Clubhouse.

##### **Wed 10th Nov 04**

– Ladies' Evening; 'Virgin Vie' Cosmetics in the Clubhouse, with proceeds to Bristol Children's Hospital. (Details from Penny Dale on 01672 563089.)

##### **Wed 24th Nov 04**

– Annual BRSC Quiz Night in the Clubhouse.

#### **SHIRT RAFFLES & 'TWO-IN-A-BATH'**

Doug Gibbs and his tireless team of volunteers will be repeating the highly successful 'Signed-Shirt Raffles' at all home matches this season, with proceeds continuing to support the Bath Rugby Community Foundation scheme and all of the great work that the Club is involved in throughout the B&NES area. The Joe 'Mad Dog' Maddock shirt at the Newcastle game raised £ 500..... This season our fund-raising ef-

forts will be supplemented by the new 'Two-in-a-Bath' competition, and your support, as ever, will help to make both initiatives a roaring success!

#### **CHARITY DONATIONS**

As well as supporting the Bath Rugby Community Foundation, BRSC makes regular donations from the proceeds of the sale of cards, calendars, key-rings, and those distinctive trumpet horns! In 2002/3 both the Multiple Sclerosis Society and the Bath Cancer Unit Support Group received a cheque for £100, and last season we were able to donate £200 to each. Well done to Penny and Kate Dale for their time and hard work, and many thanks to all of you who supported these good causes by buying your souvenirs! Available at the BRSC Clubhouse Desk before every home match.

#### **COACH TRAVEL**

A plea to all supporters with regard to coach travel to away matches. Please be aware that whilst one coach will always be run to domestic fixtures the provision of a second or subsequent coaches must be confirmed or cancelled by the Monday of the week before the game. So, to help Sue & Richard Andrews satisfy the demand for seats, please decide as early as possible if you want to travel and then book straightaway. Latecomers can always book seats that are avail-

able, of course, but it's very frustrating if late demand amounts to another full coach yet it's too late to arrange one.

Details of itineraries and costs can be found on the BRSC Website ([www.allez-bath.co.uk](http://www.allez-bath.co.uk)) or by contacting Sue & Richard on 01380 870691.

#### **NEWCASTLE WEEKEND**

An early reminder for 26/27th March 2005! Sue & Richard will be running a repeat of the highly successful 'Newcastle Weekend' this season for the match at Kingston Park, staying over at an hotel in South Shields. Please book as soon as possible to secure your place on the coach (as demand is expected to be high again) either at the BRSC Clubhouse Desk before any home game or by ringing 01380 870691.

#### **TV & VIDEO**

This 'free' package remains available for any Bath supporter who finds him or herself in hospital. If you or a member of your family would like to use this combo, please speak to a member of the BRSC Committee at the Clubhouse desk before any home game, or get in touch via our website: "[www.allez-bath.co.uk](http://www.allez-bath.co.uk)".

**Glyn Edwards**  
Press & Media Officer  
BRSC