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GLOUCESTER RUGBY

OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME

AVIVA PREMIERSHIP
VS. LONDON IRISH
18 FEBRUARY 2011, KO 7.45PM // £3

PLAYER
CHARLIE SHARPLES
FEATURE



+ GLOUCESTER CREW

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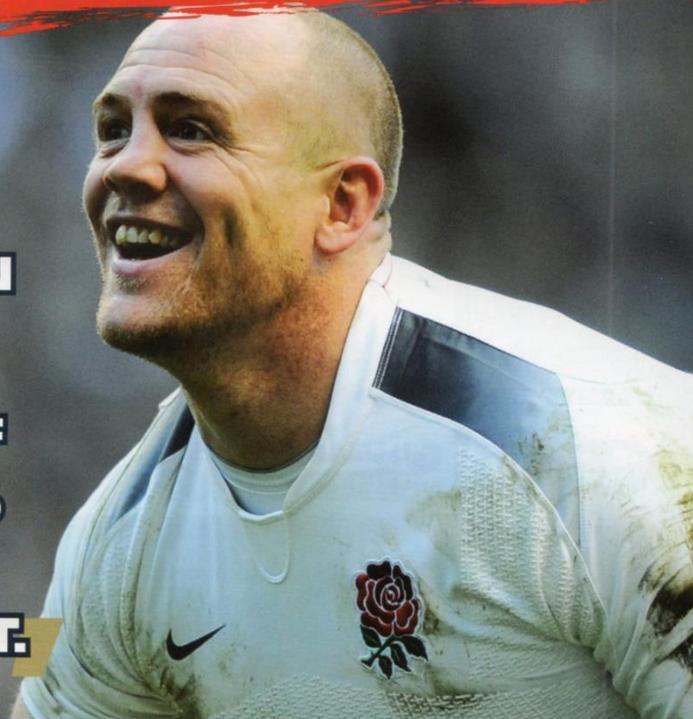
AVIVA PREMIERSHIP RUGBY



MIKE TINDALL

Captain's Corner

“QUALIFYING FOR A HOME SEMI FINAL IN THE LV=CUP AND MOVING BACK INTO THE TOP 4 OF THE AVIVA PREMIERSHIP TABLE IS A MASSIVE ACHIEVEMENT.”



It's been another good couple of weeks for Gloucester Rugby and I hope that nobody's going to start making cryptic comments about the boys chalking up two of their best results of the season while I'm away with England!

Seriously, they've been a couple of fantastic results. Qualifying for a home semi final in the LV=Cup and moving back into the top 4 of the Aviva Premiership table is a massive achievement.

I may have been on England duty for the past couple of weeks but I'm obviously still in touch with the coaches and the boys and I know how hard they've worked recently and the wins over London Irish and London Wasps are reward for those efforts.

I was particularly impressed with how the lads dogged out the win at Wasps last weekend. We haven't had a fantastic record there in recent

times, something the ESPN coverage kept reiterating every five minutes or so it seemed.

And, of course, wins away from home in the Premiership are really tough to come by so to come away from Adams Park with four points is a big deal.

Conditions meant that we also had to massively change our approach from the previous few weeks. Since we lost at Leeds on New Year's day, we've been playing some expansive rugby and scoring a lot of points.

The Wasps game meant that a change in tactics was required and the team executed it perfectly, especially in the first half. The second half was a little more nervy, and we've lost a few of those narrow ones in the past, so hanging on for the win was significant.

What's important, however, is that we back up that win this evening against London Irish. If we can do so,

then we'll really be staking a claim for a playoff place.

The odd thing is that they were here just a fortnight ago and I don't think anyone expected that we'd win so easily. However, I think we'll see a far different side here tonight.

They'll have been wounded by that result and, in a way, will be glad that they're back here so soon as it gives them a chance to put the record straight.

They're a tough opponent and nothing less than our best will be good enough tonight.

Finally, I've had a bit of stick regarding my 'exuberant' celebrations when I scored my try against Italy last weekend at Twickenham!

In my defence, it's been a while since I crossed for England and, let's face it, I didn't put in a swallow dive like Ashton!

Enjoy the game!

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**“WE’VE HAD TO
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**BRYAN
REDPATH**
EXCLUSIVE COACH’S NOTES

GLOUCESTER
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On behalf of everyone at Gloucester Rugby, I'd like to wish the players, staff and supporters of London Irish a very warm welcome to Kingsholm this evening.

Actually, I should say welcome back to Kingsholm because Toby Booth and his side were our guests here only a fortnight ago but, on that occasion, it was the LV= Cup not the Aviva Premiership.

A fortnight ago, things went very much our way. Everything clicked for us and very little happened for Irish that day.

We'd be naïve to think that this evening's game will be similar to a fortnight ago. They'll be a far different proposition from the one we faced in the LV= Cup.

They had a rough run of results in the last couple of months in 2010, but have actually won three out their past five games and got back to winning ways in the Premiership last weekend with their win over Newcastle Falcons at the Madejski.

So, we know that we'll have to be at our best tonight if we're to maintain our winning run but, having done the hard work and picking up a win at Wasps last Sunday, getting a result tonight is very important for us.

It won't be easy as we're coming into tonight's game off the back of a short week. Kicking off at 5pm on a Sunday evening away from home leaves you with a bit of a challenge when the following game is on the Friday evening!

We've had to manage the boys carefully this week as a result. There's no point flogging them on the training field at this point of the season particularly when it is such a short turnaround.

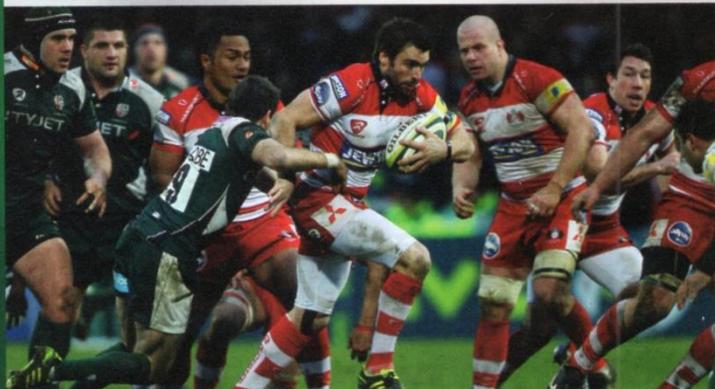
They need time for rest and recovery and the strength and conditioning staff, and our physios of course, have done a great job this week.

Last Sunday's win over Wasps was a big one for us and we had to work incredibly hard on the day especially when lost a couple of boys late to injury and had to reshuffle our resources.

However, once we saw the weather on Sunday morning we knew that this wasn't going to be a high scoring encounter!

As Carl Hogg said at the post match press conference, it was a day for 'round the corner and collision'! The forwards had to roll up their sleeves and do the hard work and the backs had to make the most of the possession.

It all went fairly well in the first



half. The pack fronted up and didn't allow Wasps to get any sort of go forward and Nicky (Robinson) and Davey (Lewis) kicked well to pin Wasps back.

However, we made life difficult for ourselves in the second half by allowing Wasps to get back into the game right at the start of the second half.

We needed to come out and kill the game off, keep Wasps from getting onto the score sheet for as long as possible so that they had to try and force the game which would leave them open to being picked off.

However, the two early penalties that we gave away allowed Dave Walder to nudge them back into

contention and, at 10-6 with half an hour to go, they had rediscovered their self belief and the crowd were back into the game.

It was then ourselves who were feeling the pressure a little bit and we had to produce a terrific defensive effort in order to clinch the win. So, we'll quite happily take the four points and look to push on from here.

Fourth place in the table is a good spot to be but it's incredibly tight at the moment. We're only two points behind Northampton in third place but we're only five points ahead of Bath who are down in eighth.

Stringing together a run of results now could see a team hurtling up the table. Look at Bath last season. They were next to bottom at the turn of the year but really got their act together and comfortably made the end of season play offs.

Admittedly, we have the games in hand over most clubs but we do have to make the most of those games in hand.

That's for the future though. This evening it's all about London Irish and taking care of the job in hand.

It's great to be back at Kingsholm and your support tonight will be greatly appreciated as it always is.

Enjoy the game!

View from **The Citizen**

with Nick Purewal

this is gloucestershire.co.uk



Doran-Jones : Desperate for silverware

"A trophy swag-bag would be the perfect thing to tuck under my arm before I go. That would be ideal, and a good way to round things off."

ENTERPRISING Paul Doran-Jones is desperate to steal some silverware with Gloucester before swapping Kingsholm for Franklin's Gardens.

Keen to leave a trophy legacy before joining Northampton Saints in the summer, the 25-year-old tighthead prop pledged full commitment to the Gloucester cause comes as standard.

Doran-Jones demolished the woefully inadequate Tim Payne as Gloucester's pack punished Wasps in the scrummage during last Sunday's 10-9 Adams Park victory.

The former London Welsh number three forged a robust combination with consistent Nick Wood and impressive hooker Darren Dawidiuk.

Gloucester's victory elevated them back to fourth in the Premiership, the playoff challenge escalating in the coming weeks.

With an LV=Cup semi-final on the cards to boot, Doran-Jones hopes to help Gloucester scoop their first honours since the 2006 European Challenge Cup.

Doran-Jones explained:
"I'd absolutely love to help Gloucester win some silverware



"It will be really hard for me to leave when the time comes. Whatever's happening then though, week to week now doesn't change one bit."

before I leave.

"A trophy swag-bag would be the perfect thing to tuck under my arm before I go. That would be ideal, and a good way to round things off."

"But we can't get carried away, or get ahead of ourselves, we've got a lot of work to do. Sunday was the kind of performance that can win you things, so we've just got to keep focusing on repeating those levels."

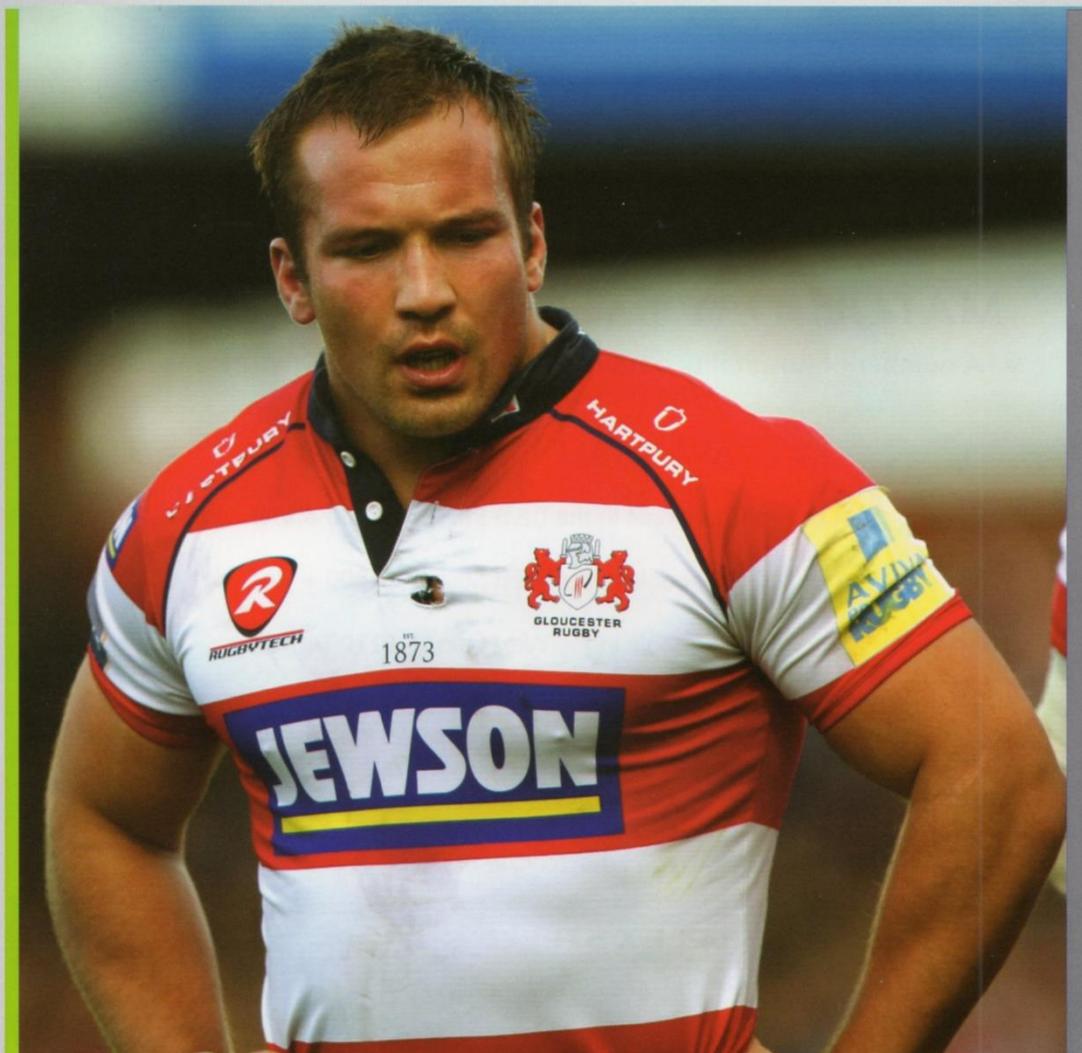
"It's a massive decision (to leave) and it was really tough. People are going to throw things around and people are going to pick reasons, but it was just aimed at trying to develop myself as a player."

"I'm really happy at Gloucester, I love playing for the club and all the day-to-day stuff that comes with that at Kingsholm."

"It will be really hard for me to leave when the time comes. Whatever's happening then though, week to week now doesn't change one bit."

"We've still got to keep striving to build those performances, improve as a pack and give the backs the platform they need to pull teams apart."

"If we can do all of that we'll keep



ourselves in the hunt for the top prizes we crave."

Rejecting praise for his personal performance that scooped him ESPN's nomination as Man of the Match at Wasps, Doran-Jones hailed Gloucester's resilience and discipline up front.

Anticipating another frenetic encounter when London Irish return to Kingsholm in Premiership action this evening, he said a fast start will be crucial.

He continued:
"We went to quite a direct game to account for the weather, and I really enjoyed it. They gave the award to

me, but any dominance was down to the whole eight."

"We've got a lot of weight in there with Big Jim and Will James at lock, and we were more than solid, which is a great forward effort."

"We train really hard as a pack of forwards and we put a lot of detail into the way we try to play. We want to play with movement and shape, but you can't do that in conditions like the weekend, and it was great we could adapt."

"Not many teams go to Wasps and win, they've got a really solid defensive structure and for us to manage that is massive. It carries

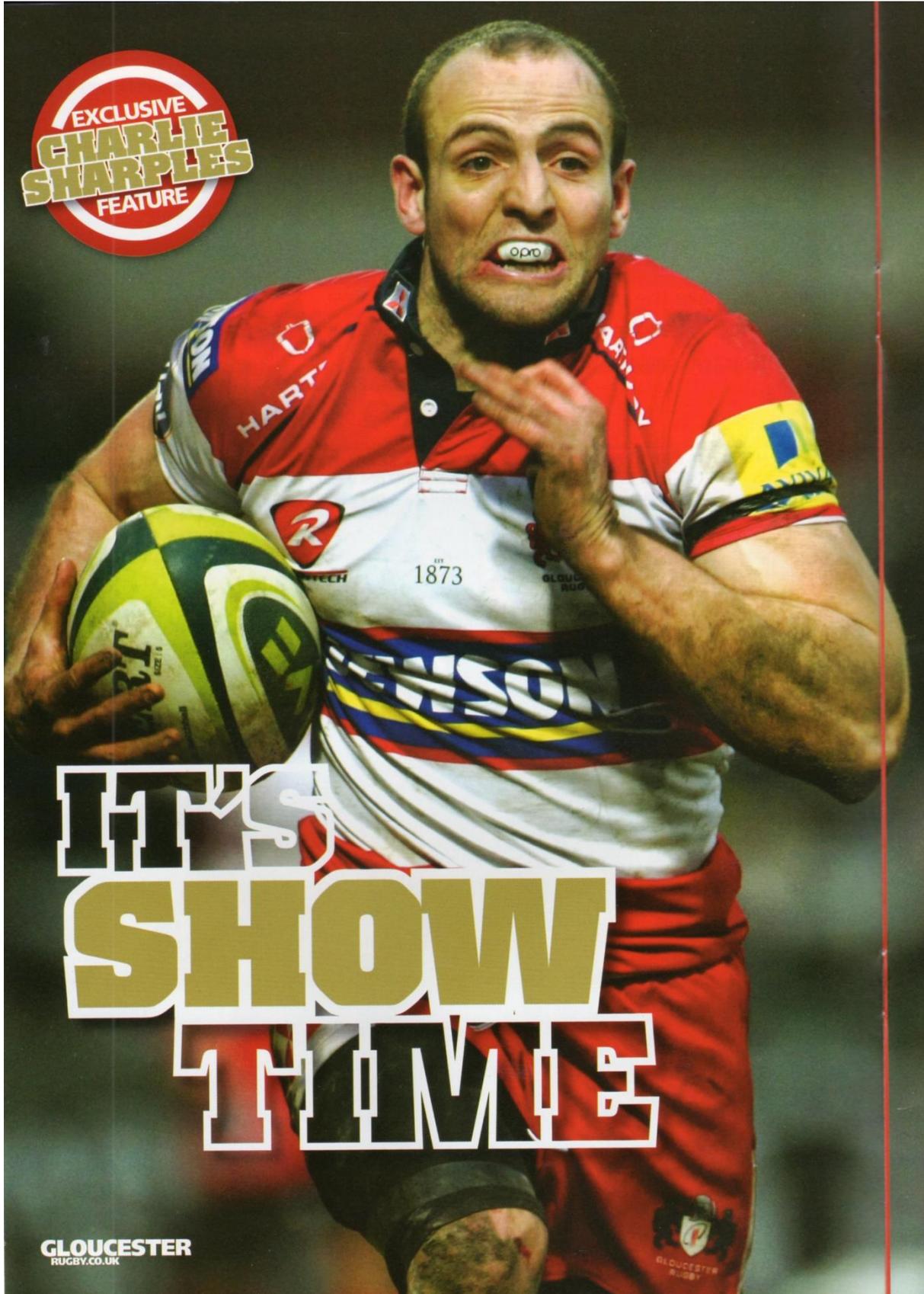
on the momentum we've built over the last few weeks, and allows us to keep that going."

"Irish will be a much tougher proposition this time around, they'll be galvanised by their win over Newcastle – but also by their frustrations with their performance here two weeks ago."

"They're a powerful side that obviously underperformed at Kingsholm two weeks ago, I think everyone knows that."

"We're not taking anything for granted, and we know we've got to start strongly and apply early pressure to have a chance."

EXCLUSIVE
**CHARLIE
SHARPLES**
FEATURE



IT'S SHOW TIME

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**GLOUCESTER
RUGBY**

Charlie Sharples has come way a long way in a short time.

'Discovered' at one of the Premiership Rugby Camps run on a regular basis by Gloucester Rugby's Community Department, he made the first team at the tender age of 18 and scored his first senior try in a win over Bath.

He went on to feature in the Junior World Cup for the England U20s before starting to score tries for fun for the first XV.

It's been a hectic couple of years and he's still only aged 21!

Talking to him at the club's training ground at Hartpury recently, his sheer enthusiasm for the game shines through and, surrounded by a number of his best mates, there is obviously no

level of performances, then I'll stay in the mix."

"But we can't do our job without the centres like Eli and Tins giving us ball at the right time, putting us into space etc. The fly halves do a great job getting the back line moving and we can't do anything, of course, without the pack winning quality ball!"

Five of his starts so far this season have been in the full back berth. Although he's known primarily as a winger, he's quick to stress that he'll play wherever it best suits the team.

"I actually quite enjoy playing at full back. It's not too much different to the wing in terms of the skill sets required but you tend to get your hands on the ball a bit more and more opportunities to counter attack."

stop banter and nicknames are part and parcel of it. Charlie has one of the more unusual – Mr Showbiz – where did that come from?

(Laughs). "That's down to Jeremy Paul when he was here. We were doing a skills session and I ran through, but didn't pass to anyone and he said something like 'That's not show friends, that's show business.' It got shortened and kind of stuck. It could be worse!"

Getting back to playing matters, a massive spell of games lies ahead for Gloucester and everyone at the club knows the next few weeks are huge.

"Yeah, we had a meeting the other day and Brush went through the fixtures and it's intense.

FACT

Charlie's Twitter name is MrShowbiz, and he currently has 529 followers

"WE'VE PLAYED A LOT OF RUGBY TOGETHER OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS AND THAT'S WHAT WE LOVE DOING. IT'S CHEESY BUT WHEN WE'RE ALL OUT THERE PLAYING AT KINGSHOLM, IT'S LIKE A DREAM COME TRUE."

danger of him getting too big for his newly acquired adidas boots!

"Scoring the tries is great but I was just happy to feature so much last year and I've been involved pretty much every game this year which is exactly what I wanted. My goal at the start of the season was to establish myself as a first team regular and it's going well at the minute. The tries are just a bonus."

Establishing a regular spot on the wing is a challenge in the Gloucester squad this season. As well as Sharples, the likes of Jonny May, James Simpson-Daniel, Lesley Vainikolo and Tom Voyce all have powerful arguments for regular inclusion.

It's a fact not lost upon the Hong Kong born flier.

"There's competition and that's the way it's always been. We've always had good wingers and I've had to gradually work my way up the list. Hopefully, as long as I keep working hard and maintaining my

"And playing at 15 helps my appreciation of the game overall and improves my wing game as a result. I'd love to be as accomplished a back three player as Balsh (Iain Balshaw) was when he was here."

There has been lots of talk about the youngsters coming through the ranks and making their mark at first team level and it's obvious that they're a really tight unit on and off the pitch.

"Yeah, we all live in the same block of flats so we see a fair bit of each other away from the rugby. We've all come through the Academy together and, although we've lost a few along the way, it's great to see your mates alongside you in the first team."

"We've played a lot of rugby together over the past few years and that's what we love doing. It's cheesy but when we're all out there playing at Kingsholm, it's like a dream come true."

Part of the daily routine at a professional rugby club is the non

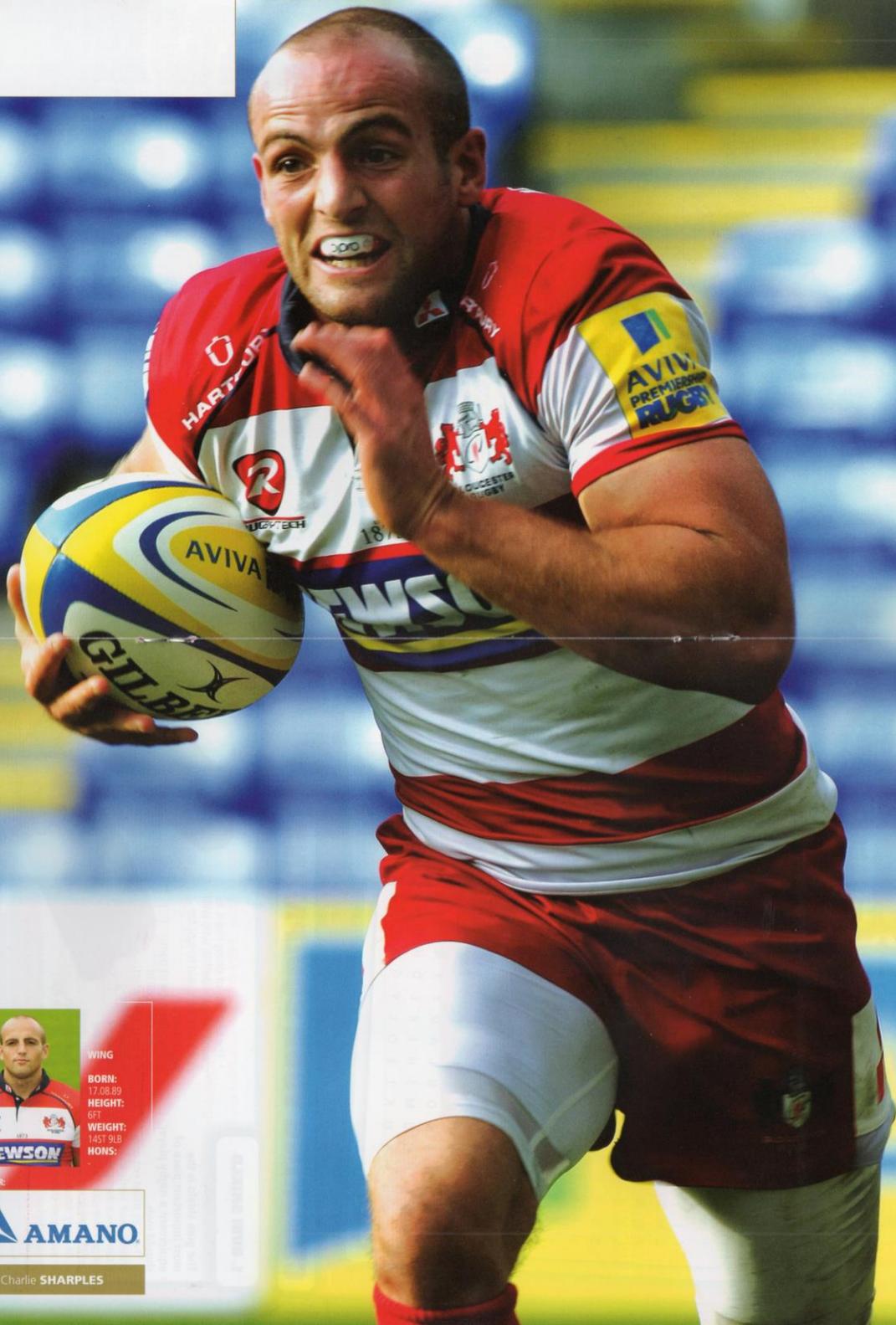
Equally, if we get good results out of the next five or six weeks, our season could be huge. We could be pushing for top four in the league and we have a semi final ahead of us as well."

Talking of the final, Sharples was a replacement in the thrilling yet heartbreaking final against Northampton last year. He admits going one better would be great but there's business to take care of first.

"Definitely. I was on the bench at Twickenham the year before as well. It was incredibly disappointing last year. We were in it from the first minute to the 80th but couldn't quite do it."

"To get back there would be great but we've got to turn up at home to the Dragons first. No-one's taking anything for granted on that one but we haven't even discussed it yet. We've got to get through these league matches first."

AUTOGRAPH:



WING
BORN: 17.08.89
HEIGHT: 6FT
WEIGHT: 145ST 9LB
HONS:



Charlie SHARPLES

Kingsholm News

with Bob Fenton

I'VE found a new terrible way to keep up to date with Gloucester on their travels. Watch it on the internet... Last Sunday I watched – or tried to watch – our magnificent win up at Wasps (man that sounds good) courtesy of one of those streaming websites.

Apart from all the players instantly becoming little pixels and pretty indistinguishable from each other, the fact that it kept crashing every five minutes meant I was forever hopping up and down to refresh the screen.

I did manage to see the important bits, though didn't we push our luck in the second half? However a win it was, and for only the second time in thirteen visits to Wycombe we come away with a win.



And I wasn't there to see it! Courtesy of the stupid kick off time it meant that I, and probably a whole bunch of other people, couldn't make the trip. Curses Mr ESPN – can't you make the 5pm games feature teams without supporters in future?

And if that wasn't bad enough, the second half coincided with feeding time at Chez Fenton and – I am now VERY reliably informed – watching rugby, restarting computers, cursing the odd Wasps player and groaning at missed penalty attempts are not something that would normally accompany a romantic early Valentine's Day dinner.

Fortunately for me, my long-suffering other half realises that there are certain

IT'S A GREAT COMPETITION AND – IF WE CAN PUT OUT THE DRAGONS FIRE (DO YOU GET THAT VERY CLEVER PLAY ON WORDS HERE... PUT OUT – DRAGONS, FIRE??? OH NEVER MIND) WE MUST BE IN WITH A CHANCE OF SOME SILVERWEAR.

things that must take precedence over others, so she consoled herself by laughing at me and the boy getting stressed, me trying to pretend that I was really listening to her and the inane babble of Austin Healey.

Anyway, to prove that I am a romantic I took her shopping to the horror that is Cribbs Causeway at the weekend. And got her a new Dyson as a bit of a Valentine's Day present... Stop giggling, I really did, it was one with a ball too – cost me a small fortune!

The Wasps win puts us in a great position in the table, in a Heineken Cup spot and with two games in hand over two of the three teams above us.

Of course games in hand mean nothing if you don't get the points from them, but this season we have now beaten both Bath and Wasps away from home (let's gloss over Exeter and Newcastle... and Leeds) so we should take confidence into any game, regardless of whether it is at Kingsholm or anywhere else.

Given the abject doom and gloom that hung over the City after the Exeter game, this is a great turn around. As I have written before, I believe Bristol is developing a side that plays with and for each other. It's great to see and long may it continue.

Of course let's not get ahead of ourselves. We've got a job to do here tonight before we go any further.

London Irish came to town a couple of weeks ago and put in the kind of non-performance that was previously only displayed by some travelling Gloucester sides.

When we drove that maul up the park for fully 18 miles (well that's what I was told by one of our props) in the first few minutes I knew that the game was won.

Such dominance demands the right result, and courtesy of eight tries we got it. I don't think I have ever witnessed a Premiership side collapse so abjectly as London Irish did (hang on, I can - Bath losing by the odd 60 points here a few years ago for a start) the other Saturday.

It was a great win, and one that puts us into the semi final of the LV= Cup. I know this tournament has its detractors, but let me say now that I am not one of them – you won't find me saying anything bad about it, or suggesting that its format is in anyway hard to understand.

It's a great competition and – if we can put out the Dragons fire (do you get that very clever play on words here... put out – dragons, fire??? Oh never mind) we must be in with a chance of some silverwear.

I digress though. Given the recent result against London Irish there are some supporters who will be thinking that today should be a stroll too. I'm not a person who subscribes to those ideas – that was then and this is now. Everything is different.

Of course the boys will take to the pitch full of confidence and heart, but that result means nothing now. If anything it will probably act as a motivating factor for the London Irish side who will be keen to avoid a similar hiding and get a bit of retribution. Despite their results of late – and I see they had a win last weekend

– London Irish are not a bad side. They have come up a bit short of late and have had the kind of run of form that would give any coach nightmares.

Toby Booth somehow manages to keep positive though, and all credit to him for that. He's got a bit of advice from Jake White of late – it'll be interesting to see if he has had a chance to make any significant difference yet.

I hope not – that can come next week.

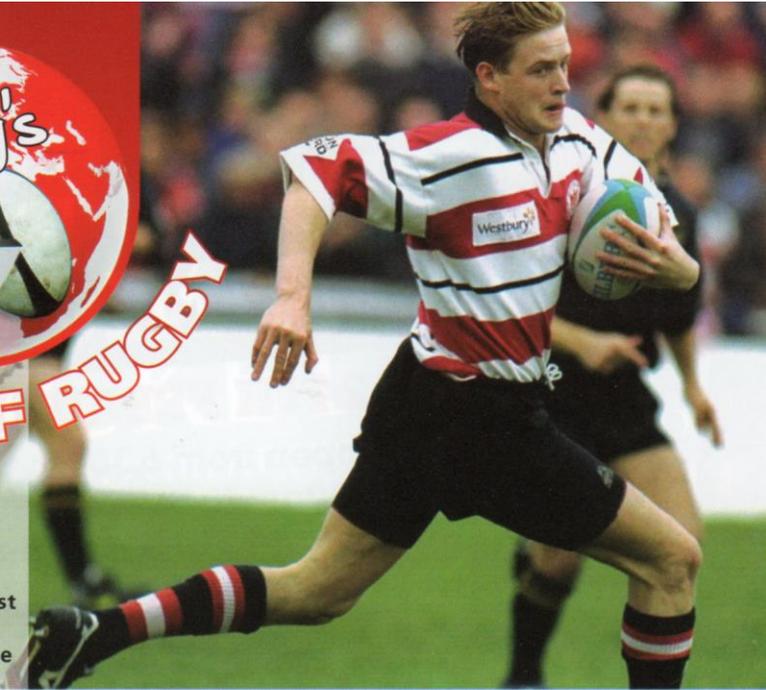


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Dave King's WORLD OF RUGBY

This is now the fifteenth season of professional Rugby Union. A nostalgic look back at our first completed season of 1996-97 in what was a new era for the game is not amiss.



Richard Hill, now at Worcester was at the helm where playing matters were concerned.

He declared at the outset of the season that finishing mid table in the League was a realistic target. It is fair to say that was exactly what he delivered.

It was a satisfactory outcome based on local talent. Leicester's famous ABC club had problems with a front trio of Andy Deacon, Phil Greening and Tony Windo!

Inspirational captain, Dave Sims had Rob Fidler as his lock partner. The latter developed well enough to be considered for England's Argentina tour.

Can you recall a back row of Pete Glanville, Simon Devereux and Nathan Carter who never seemed to stop running?

Admittedly, it was not all forward play. Mark Mapletoft in his first season at fly half was a revelation and topped the national points table. Chris Catling became recognised as one of the best young full backs in the country with Scott Benton at scrum half attracting attention.

In a battle hardened pack Phil Greening's arrival on the international scene was no more than the faithful who attended Kingsholm expected.

The season commenced with the club's worst ever defeat on the opening day of the season. Fielding a virtual United team the club were heavily beaten by 75 points to 19 on 31st August 1996 at The Stoop, home of Harlequins. In fact four consecutive defeats followed this reverse.

So five League games had been lost, it was a period of fairly coronary inducing times. Many pundits were forecasting that the Cherry and Whites were odds on for relegation!

It was a chilly Sunday afternoon at Kingsholm on 6th October where the players decided that reports of Gloucester's demise were greatly exaggerated.

On that day eventual champions Wasps were defeated in some style and the season was deemed to be



back on track. A 28 points to 23 victory in front of 5,886 spectators was a godsend.

That victory signalled a seven match winning streak, a club record including three away victories. A place in the Pilkington Cup Semi Finals was achieved where we were a shade unlucky to lose to Leicester. It was an opinion re-inforced with a 32 points to 30 win over the Tigers in a floodlit encounter a few days later.

On an individual basis the following players made their League debuts – Dave Timmington, Charlie Mulraine, Phil Vickery, Richard Ward, Rob York, Chris Catling, Ed Pearce, Craig Emmerson, Eral Anderson, Audley Lumsden, Nathan Carter and Chris Fortey. Charlie Mulraine scored a try on his debut in that demoralising opening day defeat at Harlequins.

It was a season where thirty -five players appeared for the club with another two as replacements. There were no ever presents, with Dave Sims, Mark Mapletoft and Rob Fidler appearing in 21 matches.

Tries were at a premium with only West Hartlepool and Orrell scoring fewer! On the other hand, the opposition were prevented from scoring tries in five games, the best record in the division!

Twice a total of eleven tries were conceded in a match, at Harlequins and in a 71 points to 21 defeat at Bath in the penultimate match of the season.

Strangely, there were more tries scored in away matches than at Kingsholm! Twenty-two at home exceeded by one try away!

Captain Dave Sims became the second player after Ian Smith to reach 100 League appearances for the club. League tables had been in existence before professionalism.

Mark Mapletoft re-wrote Gloucester's record books in a tremendous season which culminated with his worthy selection

for England's summer tour to Argentina. Mark ended the season with 269 points which placed him third in the Division One all time list and destroyed the club record of 85 points which Mark shared with Tim Smith.

The club fly half became only the second Gloucester player to pass career totals of 200 and 300 points after Tim Smith.

Overall, we scored 46 tries, converted 27, kicked 58 penalties and recorded 6 drop goals. We conceded 62 tries of which 46 were converted and conceded 54 penalties. No club recorded a drop goal against the Cherry and Whites.

Mike Lloyd was our leading try scorer with seven including a hat trick in our 37 points to 10 victory

	Pts	Tries	Con	Pens	Drops	Apps	Average
Tim Smith	593	10	57	142	2	94	6.31
Mark Mapletoft	375	8	34	84	5	34	11.03

Mark also equalled and then broke the club record for points in a match. First of all he equalled Tim Smith's record of 20 points and then in the momentous victory against Leicester he converted both tries and kicked six penalties for a 22 point haul. The six penalties equalled the club record he already shared with Tim Smith.

The highest attendance at Kingsholm was the 6,310 spectators who attended the Leicester match on 8th April 1997, while the 3,635 attendance against London Irish on 7th December 1996 was the lowest.

over West Hartlepool enabling him to become the first player to score a hat trick of tries for two different First Division sides. His previous hat trick was for Bristol against Rugby in March 1992.

Phil Greening was voted the R.F.U. Young Player of the Year and Mark Mapletoft was Unisys Top Scorer.

The average attendance for League matches at Kingsholm was 4,985 spectators while the average for away matches was 4,279.



GL13AX Gloucester Talk

with Peter Arnold

MEMORABLE

Ive been supporting Gloucester since the days of Stephenson's Rocket, but I seldom recall being quite so impressed by a performance as I was after the last time London Irish graced us with their presence.

Come to think of it, that was only two weeks ago, but I'm not really expecting a repeat performance. That would be too much to ask for, and in any case, the Premiership is a very different proposition from the LV= Cup.

On paper, the side which isn't very Irish and doesn't play in London, looked a strong one. Yes, they were missing a few players, but so were we.

What some people would regard as our first-choice three-quarter line was absent, with Tindall and Simpson Daniel away on international duty, and Vainikolo nursing a dislocated shoulder.

Many pundits maintain that, in the away fixture early on this season, the Gloucester pack was demolished, although I'm bound to mention that



there were, at the time, some very severe questions asked about the standard of refereeing.

Yet, a fortnight ago, we turned out with Attwood and Doran Jones absent, as was Scott Lawson, and with Jim Hamilton on his first run out since breaking his foot back in October.

Yet it was the Irish front eight, often regarded as one of the most formidable in the country, who were

on the receiving end.

As I say, this is a different day. Both sides need to win, Irish will want to set the record straight following a game in which they didn't seem to turn up, while Gloucester will want to prove that the last Kingsholm game wasn't some sort of transient purple patch.

There's a lot to play for in Premiership terms too.

But I don't have to tell you that.

AND FOR OUR NEXT TRICK...

So what next in the LV=? We all know that we have a home semi-final, which is a consummation devoutly to be wished, and we also know that the opposition will be provided by Newport Gwent Dragons, an easier prospect than they would have been on their own turf.

When I first saw that the

Welshmen were next on the menu, I thought that the occasion would see the return of an old nemesis. But it wasn't to be.

The first time we saw Paul Turner, around thirty years ago, he was playing at No. 10 for Newbridge, who were regular opponents in those days.

That night, Paul absolutely crucified us and beat us, it seemed,

virtually on his own. He ghosted through defences, beat tackles with Sinbad-style ease, and generally made a confounded nuisance of himself. He had Wales written all over him.

The next time Newbridge arrived, there was no Paul Turner. I asked one of their committee members after the game, what had happened to the young prodigy.

He grimaced and told me that he had asked for the captaincy and threatened to leave the club if he didn't get it.

No self-respecting club can submit to that sort of demand, so the result was inevitable. And I would just mention that we once had a similar occurrence at Gloucester, naming no names, with the identical result, so we do know about the situation.

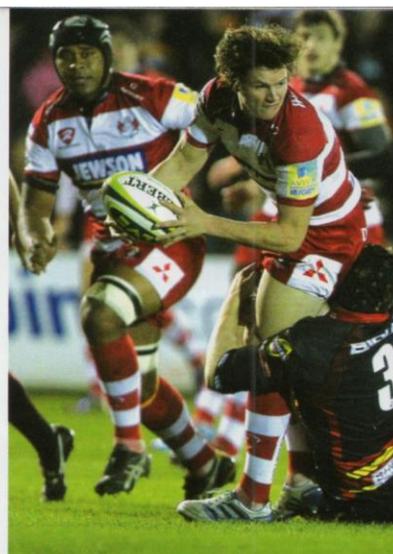
If memory serves, Paul Turner did have one Cap for Wales, and that was all. There was never any doubt about his talent, but one could ask questions about his personality.

Now, after six years in the hot

seat, he has parted company with Newport Gwent Dragons, under circumstances about which we shall never know, and perhaps we shouldn't, although there were reports of possible disciplinary action.

It's difficult to know what effect, if any, Mr. Turner's departure will have on our semi-final. There is bound to be some turmoil at the club at the moment, but often, after a situation like this, it's as though a cloud has been lifted, and everyone starts to play out of their skins, so we must watch the Dragons' results and prepare accordingly.

Should be quite a game.



DON'T WANT MANY MORE LIKE THAT!



Five minutes into the Wasps game, the rain was pouring down my neck. And I was only in front of the telly watching on ESPN, so I can't imagine what it was like for the players.

It reflects great credit on them all that they produced such a compelling encounter in conditions that would have ducks putting their umbrellas up.

The win was most gratifying, but I must confess that I don't want too many more like that. It's too hard on the nerves and heart muscles.

Much credit must, of course, go to

the pack. For a front eight that the commentators billed had the worst record in the Premiership, they put in a valiant display, and kept the Wasps forwards on the back foot for most of the game.

There was a point in about the third quarter when I thought that the home eight were getting on top, but the lads fought them off with considerable gusto.

They were, perhaps, aided by an enforced break of several minutes while an army of medics attended to Vardell and Simpson Daniel, and it was sad to see two of the most exciting runners in the game

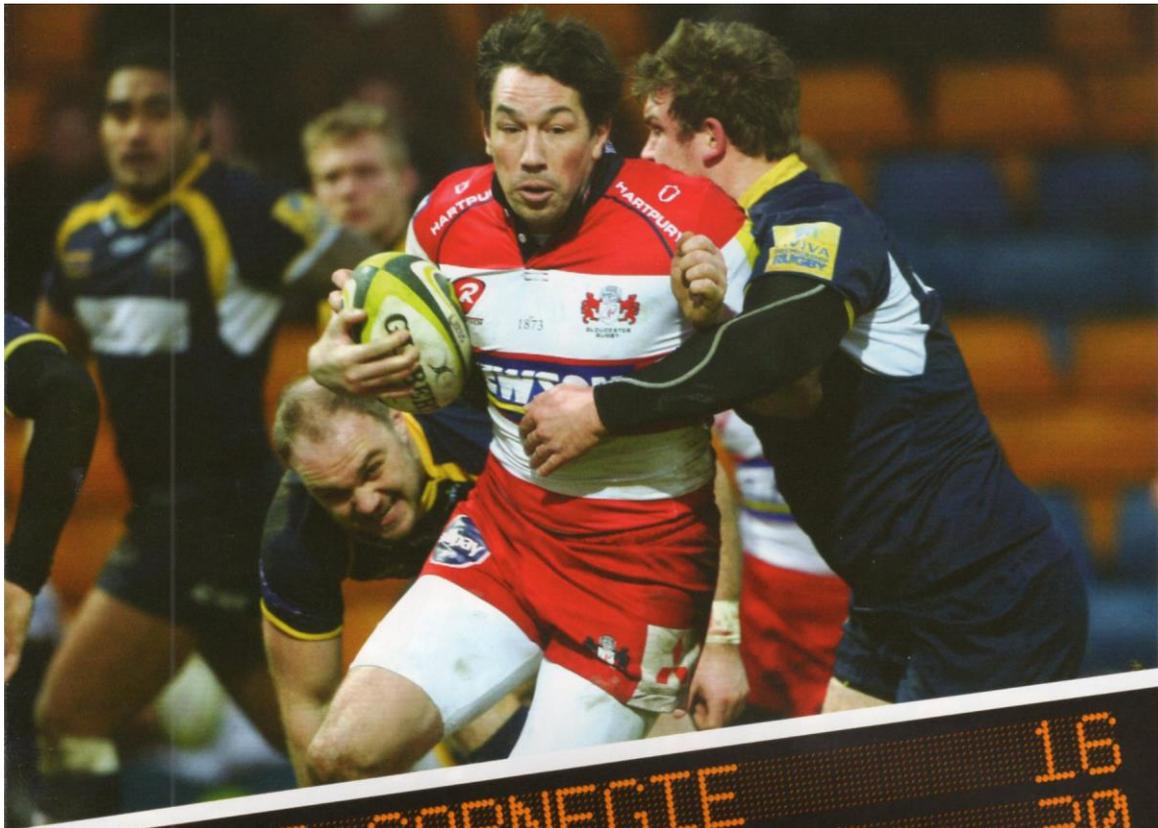
stretched off like that.

We can only hope that Sinbad's injury isn't as bad as it looked, and I'm told that he left the ground on a crutch under his own steam, so perhaps our worst fears won't be realised.

It's absolutely typical. Poor old Sinbad has been in wonderful form lately, even managing one dazzling run in last Sunday's dire conditions, and then goes and gets injured. It's the story of his life and simply not fair.

You can't write off a win away to Wasps. Not many sides manage it.

Well done, lads. Keep on keeping on.



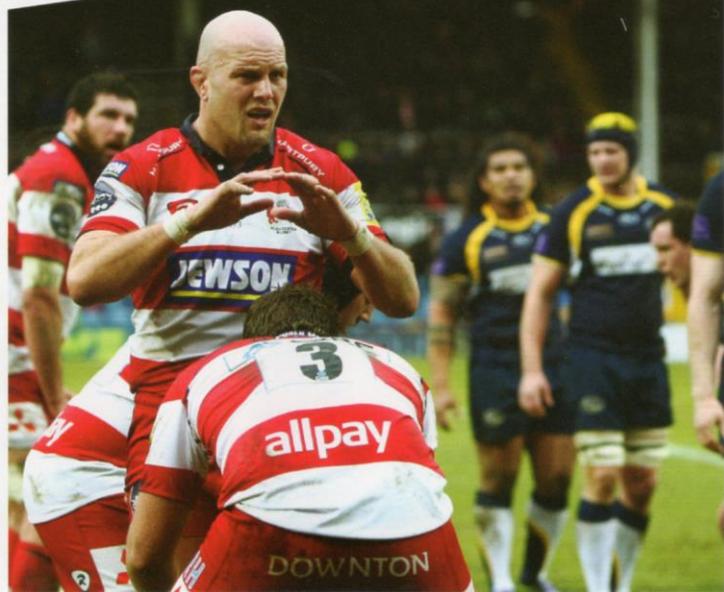
LEEDS	CARNEGIE	16
GLOUCESTER	RUGBY	30

Gloucester travelled north to Leeds, revisiting the scene of their New Year's Day Aviva Premiership setback, determined to put the record straight and duly did so with a 30-16 LV= Cup win which saw them move to the top of their qualifying group.

That previous meeting, which saw Leeds achieve their first Premiership win of the season, was a hugely disappointing outcome and Gloucester's body language in the opening few minutes alone hinted at a grim determination to emerge victorious this time around.

On this occasion, Gloucester got off to a good start with Lesley Vainikolo coming in off his wing to smash through the Leeds back line and open the scoring after only two minutes.

Taking this early lead was important



as it forced the home side to come out and chase the game a little which, in turn, offered opportunities to Bryan Redpath's side.

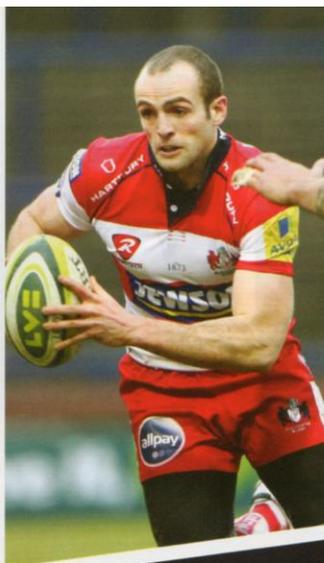
It was still hard fought, tense rugby and it proved difficult to shake off the tenacious Tykes. The boot of Leeds full back Ceiron Thomas kept Leeds in

KEY MOMENT

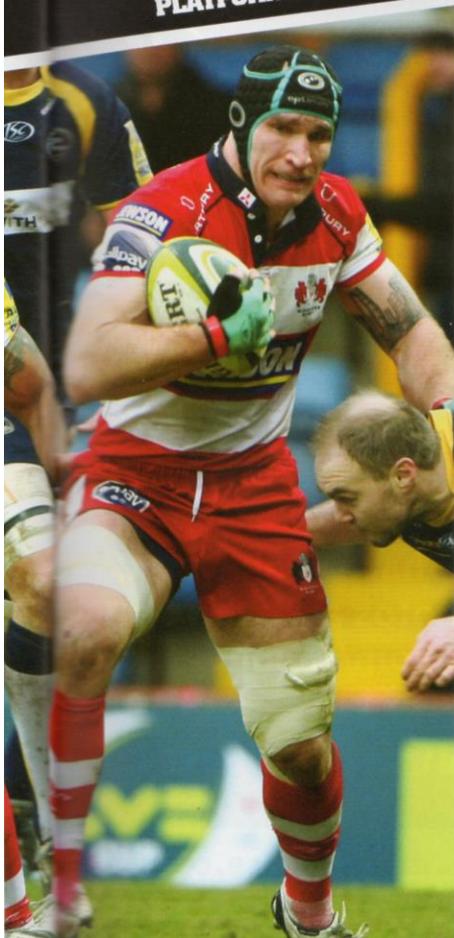


TRY 66mins Wood 16-23

Leeds were threatening a comeback when Scott Mathie scored a 63rd minute try. However, Tom Voyce promptly put Gloucester into a great field position and the pack did the rest with a well executed catch and drive and a try for Nick Wood.



"I THINK IT WAS A VERY WORKMANLIKE PERFORMANCE. WE GOT OUR APPROACH TO THE GAME RIGHT, MENTALLY AND STRUCTURALLY WE GOT THINGS RIGHT EARLY ON AND LAID A PLATFORM TO GO ON AND WIN THE GAME."



touch and, despite Tom Voyce's try for Gloucester, the half time score was a close one at 9-15.

The second half was a scrappy affair and Gloucester didn't look in any trouble at all and, in fact, extended the lead to 18-9 thanks to a Nicky Robinson penalty.

However, Lachlan Mackay's break from deep helped set up a try from nowhere for Scott Mathie with the conversion narrowing the gap to 18-16. The nerves started to jangle a little...

They were quickly eased. Tom Voyce's intelligent kick downfield pinned Leeds back near their own line. The Gloucester pack took over, launched a catch and drive and Nick Wood powered his way over.

Tim Molenaar's try four minutes later was the icing on the cake but a potentially vital one as it clinched the try scoring bonus point and gave Gloucester some breathing space at the top of pool 3 with London Irish to come to Kingsholm the following weekend.

Qualification for the LV= Cup semi finals was now in Gloucester's hands. A win over the Exiles would clinch the spot.

But, it was all made possible by the Headingley effort...

THE LINE UPS



LEEDS CARNEGIE

15. Ceiron Thomas
14. Lee Blackett
13. Henry Fa'afili
12. Scott Barrow
11. Michael Stephenson
10. Lachie Mackay
9. Warren Fury
1. Mike MacDonald
2. Phil Nilsen
3. Phil Swainston
4. Tom Denton
5. Kearnan Myall
6. Rhys Oakley
7. Jacob Rowan
8. Alfie To'oala Vaeluaga

16. Scott Freer
17. Gareth Hardy
18. Gareth Denman
19. James Craig
20. Oliver Stedman
21. Scott Mathie
22. James Tinncknell
23. Leigh Hinton

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

15. Charlie Sharples
14. Tom Voyce
13. Jonny May
12. Tim Molenaar
11. Lesley Vainikolo
10. Freddie Burns
9. Dave Lewis
1. Yann Thomas
2. Olivier Azam
3. Rupert Harden
4. Will James
5. Jim Hamilton
6. Alasdair Strokosch
7. Akapusi Qera
8. Matt Cox

16. Scott Lawson
17. Nick Wood
18. Shaun Knight
19. Alex Brown
20. Andrew Hazell
21. Jordi Pasqualin
22. Nicky Robinson
23. Tim Taylor



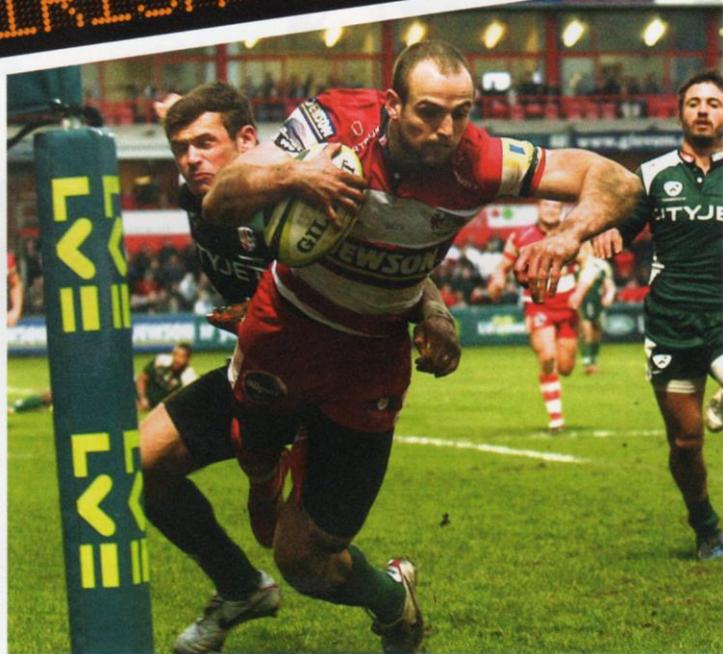
GLOUCESTER RUGBY	41
LONDON IRISH	08

Gloucester knew exactly what they had to achieve heading into this final pool match of the LV= Cup.

Two points clear at the top of pool 3, any sort of win would guarantee a home semi final. Little did anyone realise how comprehensive that win would be.

London Irish are a fine outfit with some quality players. Only a few short months ago, they were the only side who could keep pace with Northampton at the top of the Aviva Premiership Rugby table.

A losing run following that blistering start to the season obviously took its toll on confidence but they'd won two out of three before his game and fielded a line up boasting seven internationals in the starting line up.



However, the Exiles couldn't cope with a rampant Gloucester side who took the game by the scruff of the neck in a blistering

first half performance.

Gloucester ran in five tries in the first 40 minutes to all but put the game to bed much to the delight

GLOUCESTER
RUGBY.CO.UK

KEY MOMENT

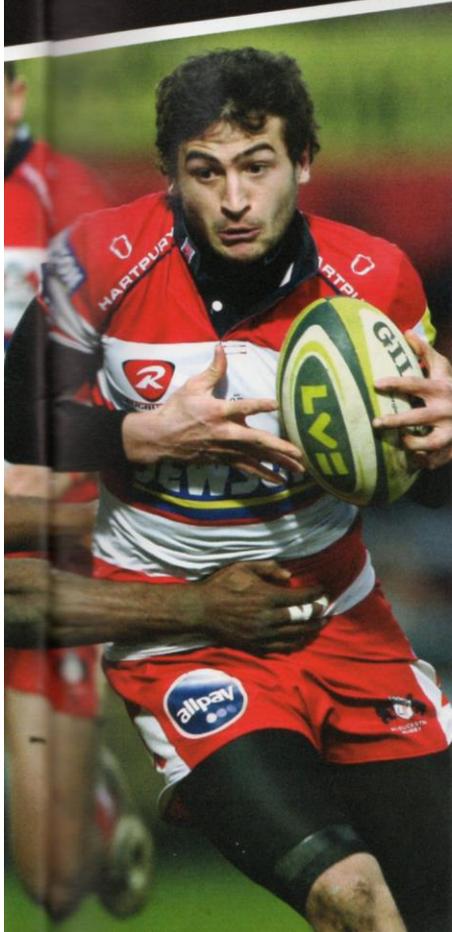


TRY 21mins **PENALTY** 17-0

12-0 down, Irish were still in the game as Ryan Lamb lined up a penalty attempt. The ball came back off the post, Gloucester countered and, seconds later, Sailosi Tagicakibau conceded a penalty try and received a yellow card to rub salt into the wounds.



"FIRST HALF WAS VERY GOOD. WE PLAYED INTO THE WIND AND WE STUCK TO STRUCTURE. WE WERE PRETTY MUCH ERROR FREE AND, WHEN WE HAD OPPORTUNITIES, WE TOOK THEM."



of a vociferous home support.

The Gloucester pack laid the platform for the win with one early 30m rolling maul sapping strength and confidence from the Irish eight. And the Gloucester backs made the most of that platform as they enjoyed a constant supply of quality ball.

Tim Molenaar scored for the second week in succession and the pace of Charlie Sharples saw the winger cross twice and pressure Tagicakibau in conceding the penalty try. Eliota Fuimaono-Sapolu was a constant thorn in the side of the Irish defence and Dave Lewis had probably his best game of the season.

A half time scoreline of 29 points to 3 hinted at a carnival of rugby in the second half but, with the win secured, Gloucester seemed to take their foot off the pedal a little and a constant stream of replacements saw the flow of the game broken up.

Hala'ufia scored a consolation for the visitors but Gloucester finished in style with two late tries to end the day on a high note and chalk up a fifth win in a row in all competitions.

THE LINE UPS



GLoucester Rugby

15. Olly Morgan
14. Charlie Sharples
13. Tim Molenaar
12. Eliota Fuimaono-Sapolu
11. Tom Joyce
10. Nicky Robinson
9. Dave Lewis
1. Nick Wood
2. Olivier Azam
3. Rupert Harden
4. Jim Hamilton
5. Alex Brown
6. Peter Buxton
7. Andrew Hazell
8. Alasdair Strokosch
16. Darren Dawidiuk
17. Yann Thomas
18. Pierre Capdevielle
19. Will James
20. Akapusi Qera
21. Jordi Pasqualin
22. Freddie Burns
23. Jonny May

LONDON IRISH

15. Topsy Ojo
14. Adam Thompstone
13. Seilala Mapusua
12. Dan Bowden
11. Sailosi Tagicakibau
10. Ryan Lamb
9. Darren Allinson
1. Dan Murphy
2. Brian Blaney
3. Paulica Ion
4. Nick Kennedy
5. Kieran Roche
6. Jamie Gibson
7. Steffon Armitage
8. George Stowers
16. Rob Herring
17. Will Johnson
18. Max Lahiff
19. Chris Hala'ufia
20. Richard Thorpe
21. Elvis Seveali'i
22. Chris Malone
23. Alfredo Lalanne

VS. LONDON IRISH // 18.02.11

TODAY'S LINE-UPS

GLoucester Rugby

2-0
3-3
6-3
13-3
16-3
16-6
16-9
23-9

OLLY MORGAN

15

FULLBACK

CHARLIE SHARPLES

14

WING

TIM MOLENAAR

13

CENTRE

ELIOTA FUJIMAONO-SAPOLU

12

CENTRE

TOM VOYCE

11

WING

NICKY ROBINSON

10

FLY-HALF

RORY LAWSON

9

SCRUM-HALF

NICK WOOD

1

PROP

SCOTT LAWSON

2

HOOKER

PAUL DORAN-JONES

3

PROP

WILL JAMES

4

LOCK

JIM HAMILTON

5

LOCK

PETER BUXTON

6

FLANKER

ANDREW HAZELL

7

FLANKER

LUKE NARRAWAY (C)

8

NO.8

OLIVIER AZAM

16

YANN THOMAS

17

RUPERT HARDEN

18

ALASDAIR STROKOSCH

19

AKAPUSI QERA

20

DAVE LEWIS

21

FREDDIE BURNS

22

JONNY MAY

23

LONDON IRISH

TOM HOMER

ADAM THOMPSTONE

ELVIS SEVEALI'I

SEILALA MAPUSUA (C)

TOPSY OJO

RYAN LAMB

DARREN ALLINSON;

CLARKE DERMODY

JAMES BUCKLAND

FAAN RAUTENBACH

NICK KENNEDY

KIERAN LOW

KIERAN ROCHE

JAMIE GIBSON

GEORGE STOWERS

ROB HERRING

DAN MURPHY

PAULICA ION

GARY JOHNSON

STEFFON ARMITAGE

CHRIS MALONE

DANIEL BOWDEN

ALFREDO LALANNE

MATCH SCORE

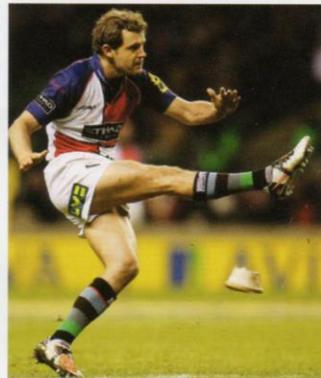
GLoucester Rugby
v
LONDON IRISH

REFEREE: David Rose
ASST REFEREES: Andrew Watson
and Paul Dix

THE STATS THAT MATTER

TOP POINTS SCORERS

PLAYER	TOTAL
NICK EVANS*	175
RYAN LAMB	146
DAVE WALDER	131
JIMMY GOPPERTH	126
OLLY BARKLEY	112



TOP TRY SCORERS

PLAYER	TOTAL
TOPSY OJO*	7
TOM VARNDELL	6
SCOTT HAMILTON	6
ALESANA TUILAGI	6
MANU TUILAGI	6

