



LV=CUP WINNERS 2010/11



# GLOUCESTER RUGBY

OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME

AVIVA PREMIERSHIP  
VS. SALE SHARKS  
7 MAY 2011, KO 3PM // E3

**+** **PLAYER**  
**NICK**  
**WOOD**  
**FEATURE**

**REGULAR**  
**FEATURES:**  
CLUB NEWS,  
BRYAN REDPATH,  
CITIZEN



**3 GAMES**  
**IN 8 DAYS!**

MATCH ACTION ON PAGE 60

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LUKE NARRAWAY

# Captain's Corner



**YOUR SUPPORT HAS, ONCE AGAIN, BEEN MAGNIFICENT THIS SEASON. IT HELPS TO MAKE KINGSHOLM THE FORTRESS THAT IT IS AND DRIVES US ON WHEN WE MOST NEED IT.**

**I'm not sure about you but I can't believe it's the final home game of the 2010-11 season! Where did the last nine months go?**

The marketing people at Premiership Rugby must be happy people this afternoon as there's something riding on nearly every game this afternoon after 21 rounds of action. Play off places to be clinched and relegation still hasn't been decided.

Our fate is in our own hands of course. Bath won at Newcastle last weekend to leave them five points behind us so we know that one point from today's game will be enough to see us into the end of season play offs.

So, we know what we have to do today and there's a real determination to make sure that we keep our destiny in our own hands and not have to rely on results elsewhere.

It's been a good week's training. We've had more guys out on the training pitches than we've been able to for quite some time. There's been competition for places and that's just the way you want it.

We've also had the benefit of a week off after the Saracens game and, to be honest, I think we needed it.

It wasn't just the fact that we played three games in eight days. We knew that was coming and Brush and Hoggy made the best use of the squad to have the best possible team out there for all three games.

We'd been in action pretty much every weekend since mid August when we played our first preseason friendly. Not every player features in every game of course but we all play our part in the build up whether we start or not.

To be able to switch off for a

week doesn't just heal the body, it allows you to refresh mentally as well and that's been important for us.

Salé will be a tricky opponent this afternoon. They're safe in the table and some might say that they've not got a lot to play for other than pride this afternoon.

However, they've nothing to lose. There's no pressure on them so they may well feel like giving it a real go this afternoon.

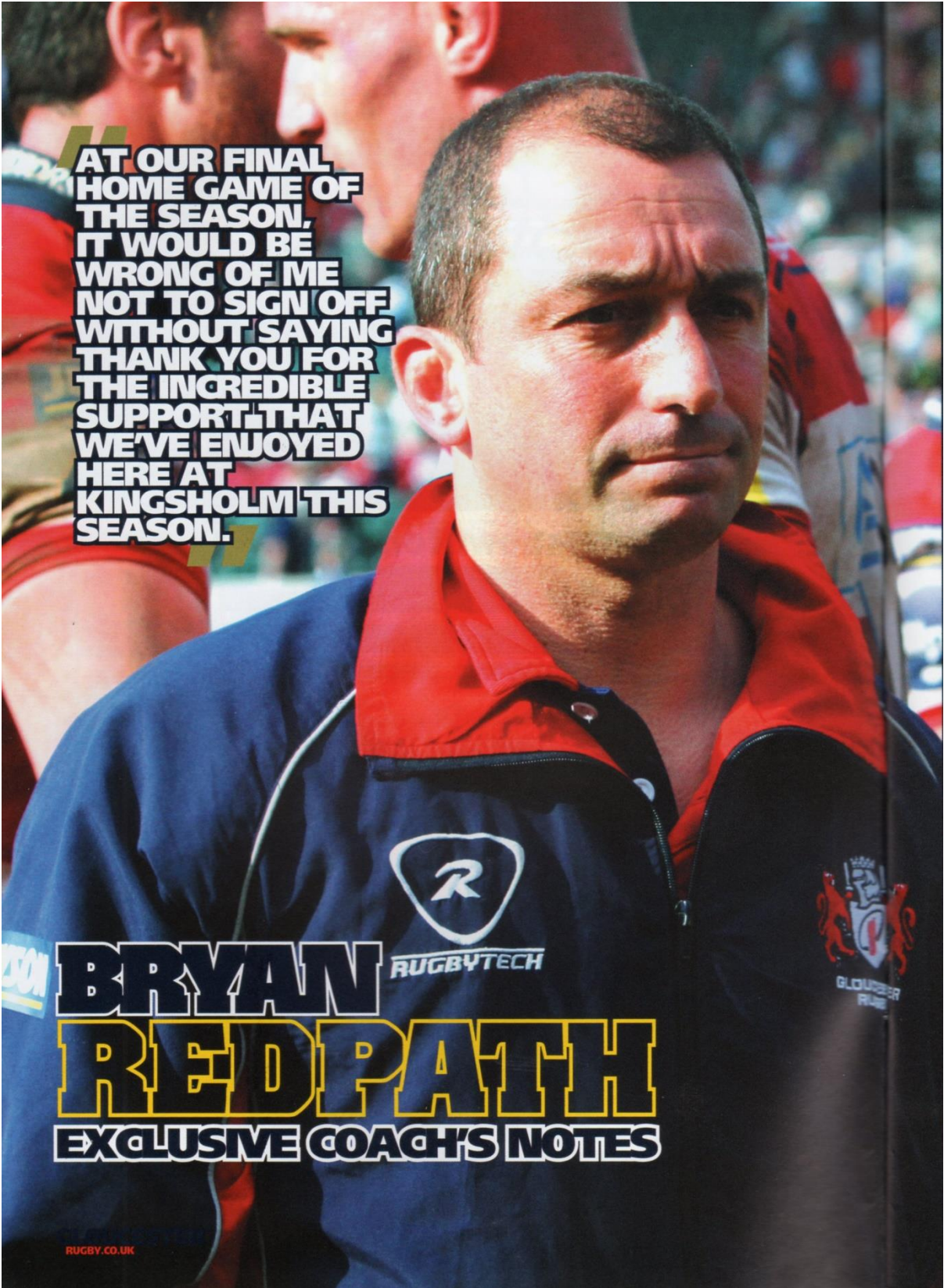
Whatever happens, it's our final home game of the season and it'd be wrong of me to end this column without thanking all of you on behalf of the whole squad.

Your support has, once again, been magnificent this season. It helps to make Kingsholm the fortress that it is and drives us on when we most need it.

**Enjoy the game.**

**GLOUCESTER**  
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**AT OUR FINAL HOME GAME OF THE SEASON, IT WOULD BE WRONG OF ME NOT TO SIGN OFF WITHOUT SAYING THANK YOU FOR THE INCREDIBLE SUPPORT THAT WE'VE ENJOYED HERE AT KINGSHOLM THIS SEASON.**

**BRYAN** RUGBYTECH  
**REDPATH**  
**EXCLUSIVE COACH'S NOTES**

**O**n behalf of everyone at Gloucester Rugby, I'd like to wish the players, staff and supporters of Sale Sharks a very warm welcome to Kingsholm this afternoon.

It's our final home game of the Aviva Premiership rugby season and sometimes there have been times in the past when there's been a bit of a party atmosphere at end of season fixtures.

More often than not the weather's not too bad and lends itself to the kind of open, running rugby that isn't always possible throughout the winter.

However, the structure of the domestic season and the introduction of the play offs means that it doesn't necessarily end here and that's exactly what we're hoping for.

All the games in hand have been played and every single team has played 21 matches and kicks off at the same time today.

There's so much still to be decided. How will the top four finish? Who will be relegated? Who will qualify for the Heineken Cup. It's all still up for grabs.

For ourselves, it's an easy equation. We have to win to make the play offs, it's as simple as that and we'll be focussing on nothing else.

I've read a lot of things in the past week or so about Leicester away or Saracens away, which would be the best place to go to in a semi final. Believe me, there's been none of that talk around the training ground.

You can't afford to look too far ahead and start thinking about what might happen if team A beats team B and team C beats team D. You just have to take care of business and the rest will take care of itself.

We've had a good week. With a couple of notable exceptions, we've had virtually everyone involved in training and that's been great. We had Sinbad back for the Saracens game and having the likes of Lesley Vainikolo and Peter Buxton back in the mix is a big bonus.

Everyone has benefitted from the weekend off as well. The boys needed it, to be honest. Everyone has worked hard, we've barely had a weekend off since mid August. In fact, if it hadn't been for a couple of postponements, we probably wouldn't have had a break at all.

It's meant that there's been an extra spring in the step this week, the bumps and bruises have had a little bit extra time to heal and we're fresher mentally.

That's a good thing because we have a job to do this afternoon and, hopefully, beyond that.

Anyone expecting Sale to roll over this afternoon will be sadly mistaken. I know Steve Diamond better than most and no team that

have quite as much importance for them but they'll be looking to finish on a high.

Particularly Charlie Hodgson, who I've known for a very long time. He has been a magnificent servant to the club and will be looking for one last big performance before he moves to Saracens.

It will also be the last time at Kingsholm for a number of our players who will be moving on to pastures new at the end of the season and it's sure to be an emotional occasion for them as well.

I'd like to thank those players for the efforts they've put in whilst wearing the Cherry and White of Gloucester and wish



he is charge of will give anything less than 100%. He won't stand for it.

When we played them at Edgeley Park a few weeks back, they played with a ferocity that showed how much they had riding on the game. They were desperate for the win to get them clear of the relegation scrap and played as if their lives depended on it.

We weren't quite at our best and a couple of things outside of our control didn't quite go our way and that resulted in a win for Sale and fair play to them.

This afternoon's game doesn't

them well at their new clubs or in whatever direction they now choose to head.

And, at our final home game of the season, it would be wrong of me not to sign off without saying thank you for the incredible support that we've enjoyed here at Kingsholm this season.

We never take it for granted and know that we have to earn it. But, when you get behind us, it makes such a difference to the side.

Hopefully we'll give you more to cheer about this afternoon.

Enjoy the game!

# View from The Citizen

with Nick Purewal

this is [gloucestershire.co.uk](http://gloucestershire.co.uk)



## Rupert Harden: Ready to pounce

*"...now we've got to get back to the standards we set for ourselves, and get the job done."*

**F**lawless rugby is not negotiable from here on in, believes determined Gloucester prop Rupert Harden.

The 25-year-old tighthead has called on the Cherry and Whites to deal with whatever Sale throw at them the most straightforward way – by cutting out the errors.

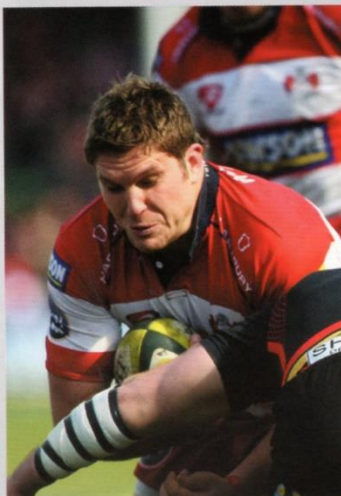
Fatigued Gloucester slumped to a 35-12 defeat at Saracens in their last Premiership outing, and now face Sale at Kingsholm today.

Beat the Sharks and Gloucester will make the play-offs: a fairly simple task that requires a fairly simple approach, said the Melbourne-born front-rower.

Bryan Redpath's men hit Saracens at the end of their three-match week, effectively hitting the energy wall in Watford.

Harden refused to allow that to account for the defeat, as frustrated Gloucester allowed the Fezheads to beat them the obvious way.

The Newcastle University graduate explained: "We cannot let anyone kill us through obvious tactics anymore, or things we know teams are going to throw at us.



*"We're desperate to defend our home record, and more than that, we know what a win will do for us in terms of the play-offs."*

"If someone comes with something left field that might be one thing, but it's not acceptable to know what's coming, and not be able to deal with it. Saracens just wait, they just wait for sides to make mistakes, and then they pounce on them.

"We played right into their hands down at Vicarage Road, but if we go back, we won't make the same mistakes again.

"At Sale we never got going, we never got into our stride and we allowed them far too much time to build something.

"Forget the refereeing issues, we only had ourselves to blame for that defeat, and now we have an opportunity to put that right. We've got to get back up to speed, and I think we will.

"We're desperate to defend our home record, and more than that, we know what a win will do for us in terms of the play-offs."

Still frustrated by the Saracens defeat despite some time off last week, Harden backed Gloucester to have a good go at the Men in Black if they face them again in the play-offs.

He continued: "Saracens are



obviously a really good side, they're clinical and they don't really make any errors.

"They didn't really have that much, but our error count just kept allowing them a route to victory.

"When you start the second half with a box kick that goes straight to touch, then a penalty that misses touch, you're slitting your own throat.

"Saracens are never going to tear you up, but what they will do is kill you with their structure, they suffocate you. And we just fell

into it, which was what was so frustrating.

"It would have been good to give them a hiding, hopefully before returning if that's what we can do.

"The long week was no excuse, everyone who goes out to play wants to play, and we just didn't execute particularly well.

"The saving grace is that we didn't go there and show our full hand and lose.

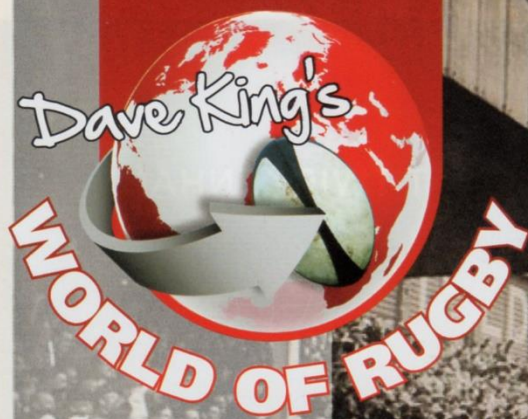
"If that had happened then we would be in trouble, because then we would feel we wouldn't be able

to get the job done.

"I think we've shown that we can beat them, we've done that twice already this year, so it was disappointing to lose out last week.

"But we didn't really do anything we set out to do, and not because they stopped us, just because we didn't get going.

"Not getting out of our half was probably what killed us, we didn't do that as we tried to. So now we've got to get back to the standards we set for ourselves, and get the job done."



# Dave King's WORLD OF RUGBY

**F**or our final home match of the regular Premiership season we are pleased to welcome Michael Pickford and twenty plus colleagues of his who were former players with Old Blues RFC. Now no longer part of our fixture list in the professional era they were a significant opposition in the truly amateur era.

Old Blues have a significant factor in the year they were founded for it was the same year that we were founded – 1873! Old Blues now play in Surrey League One! Their home ground is situated at Dornan Fields in Arthur Road, Motp spur Park in Surrey.

They originally played in dark blue jerseys and white shorts. In more recent times they have changed into navy blue with old gold and cardinal red stripes with navy blue shorts.

Originating from Christ's Hospital which was founded by King Edward VI in 1553 as a hospital for orphans in Newgate Street, London, the hospital developed its own school which is still known today as the Blue Coat School. The school was named after its prominent uniform of long bluecoats and yellow stockings.

Former scholars of Christ's Hospital had been known as 'Old Blues' from early times and subsequently a group of former pupils bonded together to form a Christ's Hospital old boys rugby football club and they were aptly named Old Blues RFC.

The first man to be knighted for

his services to rugby union – Sir George Rowland Hill attended Christ's Hospital between 1865 and 1870. He was president of the Rugby Football Union between 1904 and 1907 and President of Old Blues RFC between 1919 and 1927.

The club was founded by J.Wingfield and others while he became the club's first captain and Canon G.C.Bele who was the headmaster of Christ's Hospital School became the club's first President.

Old Blues' first fixture was against Christ's Hospital School at Palmers Green on 8th September 1873. In that season of 1873-74 they played ten matches.

Tragedy struck the club in 1883 when their club captain – S.F.Walsh had a heart attack on the pitch in a match versus Rosslyn Park at their new ground in North Dulwich. This tragedy suspended the Old Blues RFC for ten seasons!

The Old Blues club was revived in 1893. They eventually moved to Horsham in Sussex after 350 years in Newgate Street! In 1992 the Old Blues purchased a 10 acre site in Fairlop, Essex, the site remained

their base for 60 years.

In the 1920's and 30's the club was its peak with eight to ten teams fielded each week. Bath, GLOUCESTER, Harlequins, Leicester and Northampton were on their fixture list.

The year of 1960 signified a decline in their first class fixtures. In 1982 they sold their Fairlop site and moved to their present ground which is thirty miles from Christ's Hospital School.

Our involvement with Old Blues began in the 1922-23 season when Frank Ayliffe was our club captain. The Old Blues last visit to Kingsholm came in the 1970-71 season when Mike Nicholls was our captain. That was a season where 30 matches were played here at Kingsholm and our only defeat came in a 21 points to 11 reversal to visiting Bedford.

We met Old Blues RFC on 37 occasions with all the matches were staged here at Kingsholm. The Old Blues inflicted four defeats upon the 'Cherry & Whites', they also drew two matches, one of which was a remarkable pointless encounter in the 1960-61 season when Peter Ford was the club

captain.

The sequence of results at Kingsholm were as follows: -

1922-23	Won	39-8
1931-32	Lost	9-10
1945-46	Won	15-8
1955-56	Lost	6-14
1924-25	Win	21-10
1932-33	Won	21-9
1946-47	Won	24-8
1956-57	Won	16-3
1925-26	Won	39-13
1933-34	Won	18-5
1947-48	Won	10-5
1957-58	Won	22-0
1926-27	Won	14-7
1934-35	Won	13-3
1949-50	Won	19-0
1958-59	Won	9-6
1927-28	Won	26-5
1935-36	Lost	10-15
1950-51	Won	22-0
1959-60	Won	13-0
1928-29	Won	28-6
1936-37	Lost	7-11
1951-52	Won	56-3
1960-61	Drew	0-0
1929-30	Drew	6-6
1937-38	Won	23-3
1952-53	Won	24-3
1961-62	Won	40-3
1930-31	Won	15-0
1938-39	Won	8-0
1953-54	Won	11-6
1962-63	Won	46-3
1963-64	Won	10-8
1966-67	Won	8-3
1967-68	Won	32-3
1968-69	Won	59-8
1970-71	Won	44-9

Following the Great War 1914-18 the club were indebted to several stalwarts including G.T.E.Cockrill, R.C.Hare, C.J.W.Hodgson, P.Mayne, G.E.Middleditch, A.A.Jones, among others for re-establishing the club to a first class level.

The Old Blues participated in the first 7-a-side competition! It was staged by Ilford Wanderers in April 1926 and they drew 3-3 with Wasps in the final.

Although the Old Blues last success at Kingsholm was in the 1955-56 season, they were still a force to be reckoned with when five years later they defeated Saracens

## GLOUCESTER v. OLD BLUES.

By "TEEK."



23 points to 6 on 10th March 1961 when Saracens were based at their former ground at Bramley Road!

Old Blues have completed a successful season for 2010-11 finishing as runners up to Old Freemans in Surrey One. They completed their league programme with a comprehensive win at Old Whitgiftians by 48 points to ten.

Stan was making his 100th appearance for the club in 1925 against Old Blues. Stan Bayliss was buried in Gloucester Cemetery with his last resting place at the rear of the Cross of Sacrifice.

Old Blues are one of seven clubs with the prefix of 'Old' that we have played, the others are Old Cranleighans, Old Crocks, Old

Teams	Pld	W	D	L	For	Against	Pts
1. Old Freemans	20	17	0	3	481	283	80
2. OLD BLUES	20	16	1	3	559	191	77
3. Old Whitgiftians	20	12	2	6	404	355	61
4. Old Walcouthians	20	11	1	8	385	341	52
11. Chipstead	20	6	1	13	319	430	29

There is a note of poignancy with regard to visits by Old Blues due to the injury sustained by Stan Bayliss, one of our former players which resulted in his untimely death.

Edwardians, Old Merchant Taylors, Old Paulines and Old Regatians.

It is the club's earnest wish that Michael Pickard and his colleagues enjoy their visit to Kingsholm once again.



**A**s you enter the reception area at Kingsholm, a sign on the wall declares, "The Holy Writ of Gloucester Rugby Club demands: first, that the forwards shall win the ball; second, that the forwards shall keep the ball; and third, the backs shall buy the beer."

Things have changed slightly over the years and the backs have won plenty of plaudits so far this season for Gloucester Rugby but even the speedsters out wide will grudgingly admit that they couldn't do it without the hard work of the guys up front.

And one man in particular has certainly shouldered more than his fair share of the burden so far this season.

Prop Nick Wood has been a virtual institution in the loose head position. In fact, he's featured in more games in 2010-11 than in any other season in his career so far and freely admitted to the matchday programme that it's been hard work.

"It has been tough but I've enjoyed it all to be fair and I was very grateful to get a week off last week. At the start of the season, we had a good system working with Dicko (Alasdair Dickinson) and myself both playing well complementing each other."

"Not only was it a good rotation system to keep the competition fresh but it kept our bodies fresh as well. Unfortunately, though, Dicko was sidelined for a few months."

"It's difficult for anyone who isn't playing at this level to truly appreciate how tough it can be. The hits get bigger and there's more running and it takes longer to recover."

"It means that you have to make changes to your life away from the game and I've had to make sacrifices in my personal life to make sure that I'm rested enough for my professional career."

One event that did provide a

metaphorical shot in the arm was, of course, winning the LV= Cup and the 28 year old Swindon born prop admits that it came as a huge relief.

"It was wonderful, actually. I had my knee operated on before the Challenge Cup win in 2006 so missed out on that and I'd played in the past two Anglo Welsh finals so I was starting to feel as though I was jinxed a bit."

"It was great for the team, to fulfil our potential and lift that stigma of Gloucester not being able to win something. It lifted a huge amount of pressure and now we can focus

**"IT'S A BIT OF FUN AND A CONTINUATION OF THE SORT OF BANTER THAT YOU GET IN THE DRESSING ROOM AND IT'S GREAT FOR SOME OF US OLDER HEADS TO GET INTO THE YOUNGER BOYS A BIT! I TRY NOT TO TWEET TOO MUCH ABOUT THE RUGBY BUT JUST OFFER A GLIMPSE OF LIFE AWAY FROM THE GAME."**

on the Premiership."

At 28, he's already racked up an impressive 175 appearances for Gloucester and there are hopefully plenty more to come. With that experience though comes the knowledge that he's now one of the senior pros in the dressing room.

"You look around and you realise how much things have changed over the past couple of years. There are still a few stalwarts like Hazey, Bucko, Zed and Sinbad around but there's plenty of fresh blood coming in."

"It doesn't feel like it was that long ago that I was a wide eyed 20 year old wondering what lay in store. But, here I am. I don't think I've become that much of a grumpy old man over the past eight years."

In recent times, certain props seem to have gone on and on and Wood could well have his very best years ahead of him provided that he stays healthy.

"Of course, it all depends on the body. And, if the body holds out, hopefully the mind will be in good shape as well. I still love the game so I'll keep going as long as the body allows."

Away from the playing field, he's one of the more enthusiastic

'tweeters' in the squad an area which seems to have become another outlet for dressing room banter?

"I had a Twitter account originally about a year or 18 months ago but lapsed a bit and fell back into it a year or so later."

"It's a bit of fun and a continuation of the sort of banter that you get in the dressing room and it's great for some of us older heads to get into the younger boys a bit! I try not to Tweet too much about the rugby but just offer a glimpse of life away from

the game."

One notable topic seems to have become 'Sweater of the Day' with a number of photos of amazing knitwear having done the rounds!

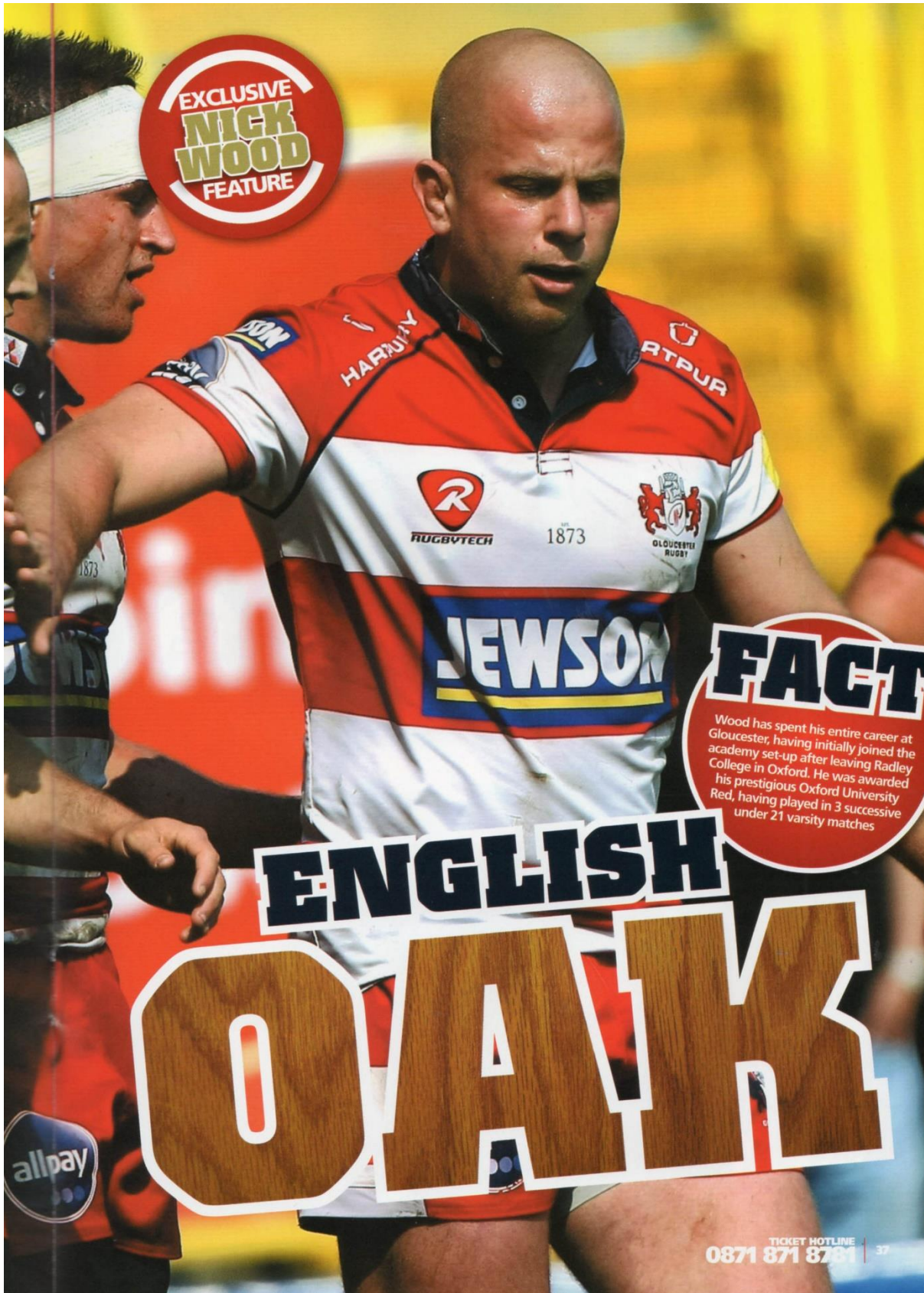
"There have been some pretty memorable outfits out there, I'm probably as guilty as anyone! I can't remember if it was Pete Buxton or Will James with one of his amazing deep Vs, but I felt I had to share it!"

"If you're talking deep Vs then Will James is your man and Andy Hazell is not afraid of a salmon number and Bucko always has something special lined up."

Finally, back to rugby matters. Sale are the visitors today and nothing else than a win will suffice if the club is to guarantee play off action?

"I think we not only need to win but need to put pressure on ourselves to get a bonus point as well and guarantee the play off place."

"We played them only a month or so ago and felt a bit hard done up there. It's fresh in the memory, we went up there and scored 31 points and lost. So, we have some wrongs to right."



EXCLUSIVE  
**NICK  
WOOD**  
FEATURE


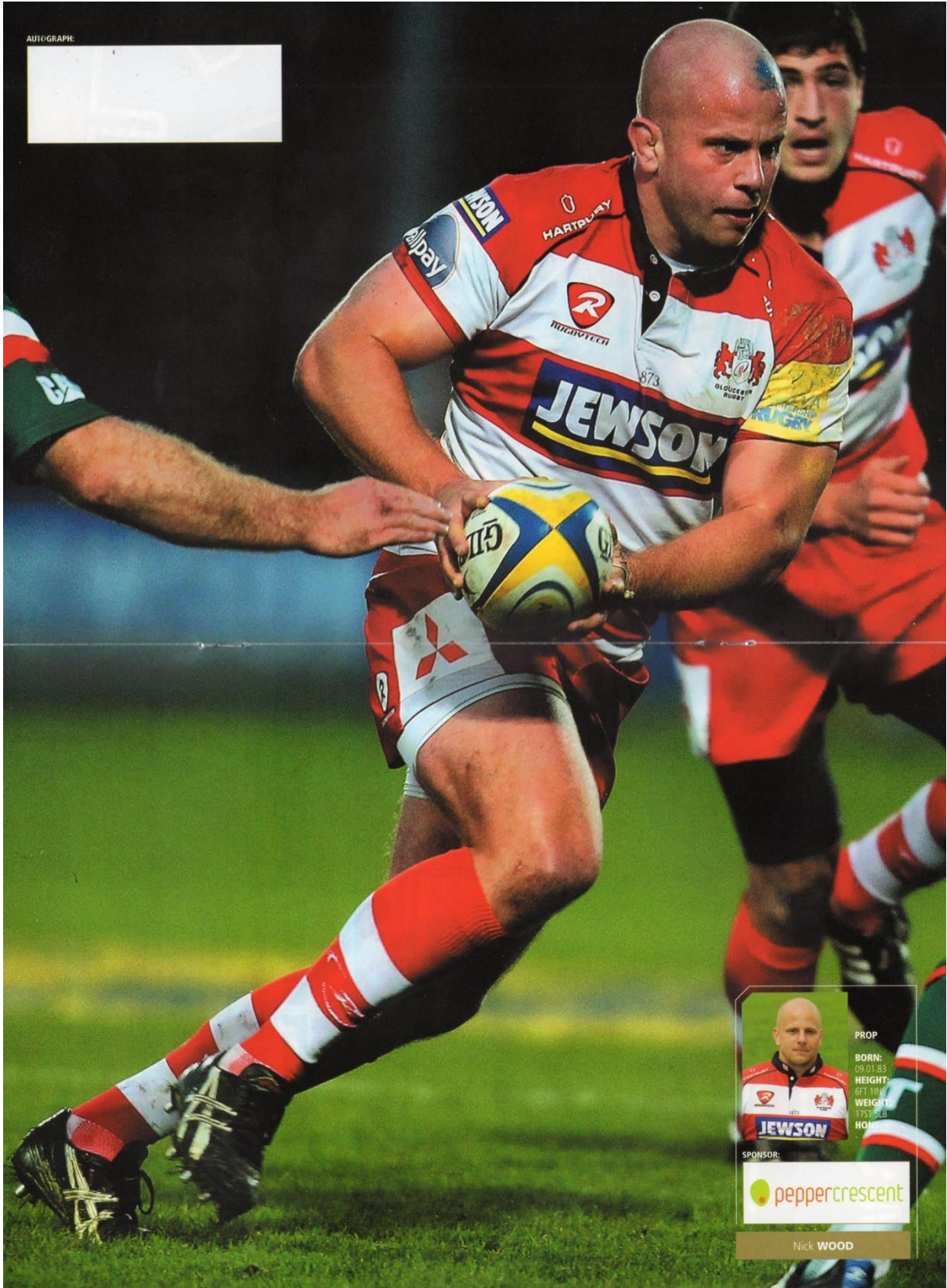
**FACT**  
Wood has spent his entire career at Gloucester, having initially joined the academy set-up after leaving Radley College in Oxford. He was awarded his prestigious Oxford University Red, having played in 3 successive under 21 varsity matches

# ENGLISH OAK

allpay


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AUTO-GRAPH:



PROP  
BORN: 09.01.83  
HEIGHT: 6FT 11IN  
WEIGHT: 175SLB  
HOME

SPONSOR:



Nick WOOD

# Kingsholm News

with Bob Fenton

**WELL we came through the eight days from hell rather well, didn't we? Three points at Leicester, four against Northampton and a bridge too far at Saracens but seven points from those matches is no mean achievement.**

I missed the Leicester game due to work commitments, though having watched snippets of it as it happened and the recording of it – or nearly all my daughter switched the Sky Plus off with about five minutes to go - it was clearly a classic.

We followed that up with another nail biting match against Northampton before slumping into a not wholly unexpected defeat at Saracens.

I had an interesting discussion with a mate who is a fervent round ball game follower – he derided me for the inability of rugby players to play three games in a week. It happens all the time in soccer, apparently.

The point that – and I'm not trying to knock soccer here – the intensity and physicality of a rugby match is several orders of magnitude higher than a football match was lost on him. Some people are beyond salvation.

But here we are though at the end of another season. I don't know about you, but for me it seems to have flown by this year...maybe it's because I am getting older or something. One thing's for sure, it's been a heck of a ride!



We are going to finish in a far better position that anyone would have predicted at the start of the season, in the play offs – unless we have a total meltdown today - and with the first bit of silverware in the trophy cabinet for quite a few years.

When you think back to the reactions after the first couple of weeks of the season you can't help but smile.

We were comprehensively written off by most pundits – and many of our own supporters – as relegation contenders and had had you suggested that we would be sitting pretty in the Heineken Cup draw and in with a chance of winning

the play offs you would have been laughed out of town.

Of course the Exeter game was a shock, but the reaction to it was way over the top and only a few weeks later we were beating Bath at their place.

The losses up at places like Newcastle, Sale and Leeds were as frustrating as the wins at Wasps and Northampton and the draw at Leicester were exhilarating. Quite why we seem to stumble at some grounds is beyond me. Maybe it's the rarefied atmosphere up north or something!

Our European campaign stuttered to a halt without really starting. A

**WE ARE GOING TO FINISH IN A FAR BETTER POSITION THAT ANYONE WOULD HAVE PREDICTED AT THE START OF THE SEASON... AND WITH THE FIRST BIT OF SILVERWARE IN THE TROPHY CABINET FOR QUITE A FEW YEARS.**

great away win at La Rochelle was followed up a week later by an abject performance against them in the return fixture. Maybe the events in the run up to that match had an effect on us.

Whatever the reasons, we're going to have to up our performance by a few notches in the Heineken Cup next season if we're not going to crash out early.

But the season's not over yet. A point today will see us into the play offs, a win guarantees another trip to Watford and who's to say that we can't get a result there that will take us on to Twickenham.

A couple of weeks ago the guys were pretty much dead on their

feet yet we still made a game of it before fatigue took over. This time we would go back with a fit, fresh team and everything to play for.

The only downside is that Watford is without doubt the worst venue in the Premiership even before you factor in the icing on the cake bad taste nonsense that is the 'Saracens song' and the mad man with the drum.

But if that's where we have to go, it's where we will go – I'll just borrow some industrial ear defenders from work for the day.

As ever we're going to say goodbye to a few players after the end of the season. Nicky Robinson, Paul Doran Jones and Dave Attwood being the

most high profile of them.

I'm sure we wish them all well and they can be assured of a warm welcome when they return with their respective clubs next season. Of course I hope they all have nightmare games when they play against us, that almost goes without saying.

Before leaving, and just in case you haven't had enough rugby for the season, can I point you towards a special annual contest that will take place on Sunday 8th May when the rag tag bunch that makes up the Shedweb Lions (sorry Russ – I meant well-honed bunch of mighty athletes) take on The Cherrypickers at Widden Old Boys RFC.

To add a bit of comedy value (oops, I mean professional refereeing) Ashley Rowden will be the man in charge on the day. Ash is a great guy and it's very kind of him to take this on, and with a pint in his hand – as it surely will be afterwards – is great company too.

Once again the match is preceded by a touch rugby tournament and followed by an awful lot of drinking all with the ambition of raising as much money as possible for a charity – this year The British Heart Foundation.

The touch tournament kicks off at 11am and the main match at 3pm, try to get along – it'll be well worth it and you will be contributing to a great cause.

Have a great summer, everyone. See you back here in August.



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# GL13AX Gloucester Talk with Peter Arnold

## HOME AND AWAY

**A**t the time of writing, it seems likely that this will be the final home game of the 2010/11 season.

It's been quite a journey, as it always is, but the campaign this time round has seen more extremes of highs and lows than even Kingsholm supporters are used to, and that's saying a bit.

Our lowest point of the year was undoubtedly the news that Tom Walkinshaw had died. Kingsholm without Tom is like the Cathedral without its tower, so much part of the fabric of Gloucester Rugby had he become.

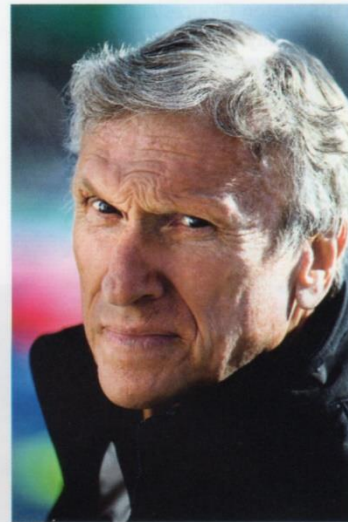
There was naturally an air of uncertainty and some apprehension around the place after his untimely passing, and I'm sure that contributed to performances on the field for a while at around that time.

We do seem to have weathered that particular storm now, and it's a great shame that Mr Walkinshaw couldn't be at Northampton the day we thrashed Newcastle to win the LV= Cup.

Like all of us he would have loved that epic 41-41 draw against Leicester, which was a phenomenon if ever I saw one. To be honest, no one gave us much of a chance before that game, and to come away with three points was a considerable achievement.

So, we've had times of jubilation and very real sadness. As usual, we've lost games we should have won, and won matches where the formbook indicated otherwise.

We've had players turning out for their various countries and other performers who have been suspended. As seems to be the norm these days, we've suffered from a



whole rash of injuries, often to the players we would least want to lose.

We've had luck and ill fortune. We even had one chap winning the crossbar challenge.

So we've had the lot this season. Just a typical Kingsholm year, really.

## DON'T LEAVE US OLLIE!

**U**nless we reach the Premiership Final, which is entirely possible of course, the formidable services of Olivier Azam won't be available again this season. That is how his suspension for seemingly head butting Adam Eustace during the Northampton match works out.

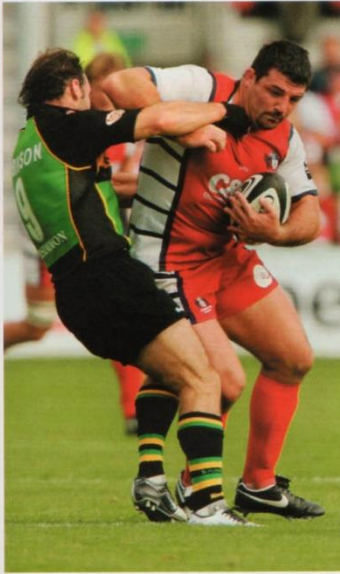
What happens after that, only Zed himself knows, if indeed he's made his own mind up yet, which I doubt. He is after all, 36 years old, which is getting a bit mature even for a front row forward.

However, watching his performance several times via my TV recording, I don't think we should let sheer anno domini influence us too much.

He's as tough as teak, and if he may have lost a smidgen of pace these days, that's more than counterbalanced by experience, wiliness and sheer enthusiasm. Even one of the TV commentators described him as a "nightmare to play against".

I've heard it said that Olivier got off lightly by only receiving a four week ban, and indeed, the head butt





incident did look horrid on the telly. There was also his previous record to consider.

However, having watched him many times, I don't really think that Zed is a dirty or malicious player. He doesn't really mean to hurt anyone, or cause injury.

His rugby brain works very fast, and I think it tells him what to do and where to go almost instantaneously. He then does that and never even thinks about anyone who might get in the way.

So that does sometimes result in some questionable play, but I don't believe there to be any malice about it.

Of course, only he can know how his iron hard frame can stand up to 80 minutes of Premiership rugby these days, and perhaps it could be an option to let him test himself

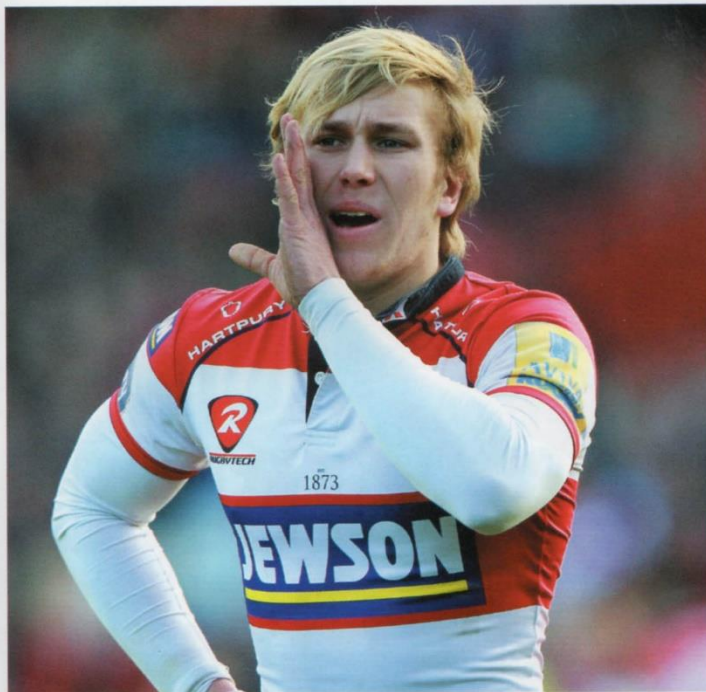
in the pre-season matches before deciding his future.

But I don't think we want to lose him. To my eye, the forwards seem to play with just that bit more intensity when he's on the field, but even his familiar figure on the touchline is a boost to morale.

Surely, if he does decide to hang up his boots, some role can be found for him around the club. I believe we would certainly be the poorer without him, and no one knows more about the rough and tumble of the front row than Zed does.

But whatever happens, I hope he stays in Gloucestershire. He has a successful restaurant in Cheltenham and a settled family here. In fact, he's one of us, and I can't remember saying that about a Frenchman before.

## AND FOR OUR NEXT TRICK...



**S**o where do we go from here? Next season looks likely to be a particularly interesting one for various reasons.

To start with, we have the World

Cup which is bound to disrupt most of the 'big' sides. In our own case, we seem likely to lose several influential players to the England and Scotland squads. Add that to the Six Nations, and you have a

sizeable chunk of the season when our first-choice players won't be available to us.

We also have a fair few defectors to replace, and while some of the gaps look to have been adequately filled, from where I sit as a humble supporter, that doesn't seem to be the case across the board.

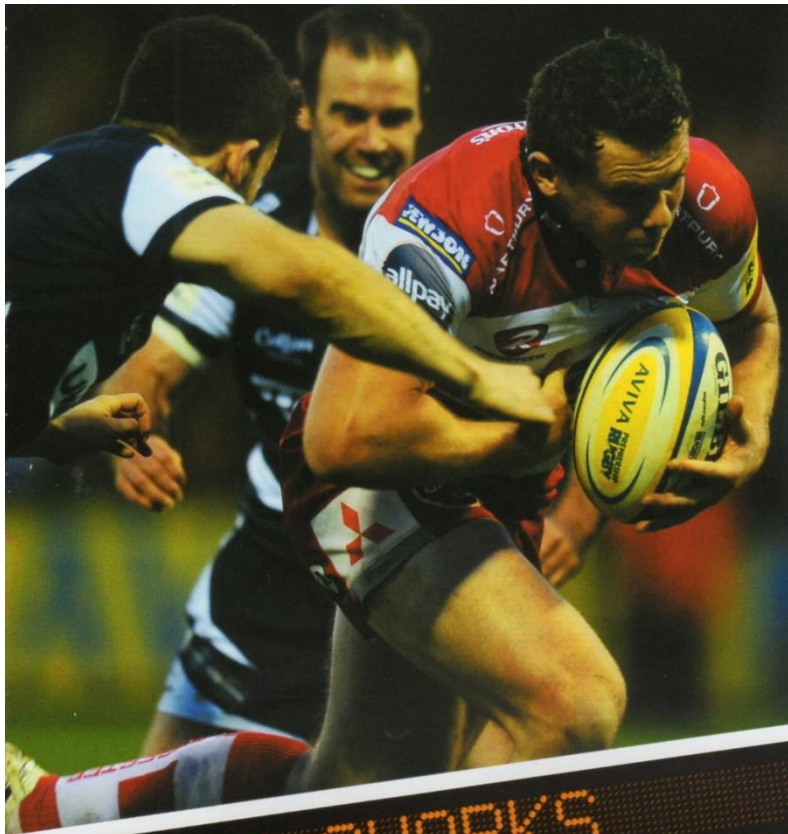
Of course, Bryan Redpath would be the first to say that the whole situation represents an excellent opportunity for some of our younger players to step up and show what they can do.

And that's true, of course: there does seem to be a wealth of young talent pushing for squad places at the moment. It could be that names such as Robson and Mills will be household ones by this time next year.

Meanwhile, we have the summer to look forward to with some excellent cricket in prospect. English golfers seem to be on the up and up too, and could this be Andy Murray's year at Wimbledon?

That will all be done and dusted by the next time we are all foregathered here again, which can't come too soon for me.

Summer well, everyone.



## SALE SHARKS GLOUCESTER RUGBY

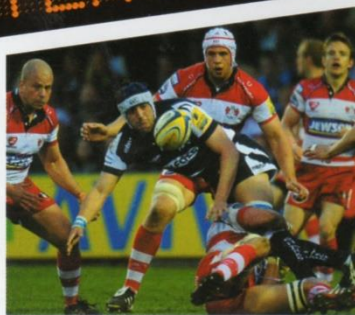
36  
31

**G**loucester couldn't take advantage of one of their games in hand as they slipped to a 31-36 defeat in the rearranged fixture against Sale at Edgeley Park.

It was a case of the one that got away for Bryan Redpath's side who looked to be well in charge of proceedings as half time approached courtesy of Tim Molenaar's try.

However, a moment of controversy saw the momentum of the game change completely when an accidental offside in midfield was not seen by referee Sean Davey. Sale played on and scored a try which gave them an unlikely half time lead.

Gloucester responded well and seemed set to strike back as they scrummaged several times near the Sale line. A succession of penalties



followed but no penalty try and the home time survived.

Sale then delivered a real sucker punch as a long kick downfield bounced kindly for Will Addison to score followed by tries for Paul Williams and Charlie Hodgson who caught Gloucester napping with a quick tap penalty.

Jonny May's score gave Gloucester hope and a penalty try secured a losing bonus point for Bryan Redpath's side but it was the home team celebrating at the final whistle.

### SALE SHARKS

15. Nick Macleod, 14. Ben Cohen, 13. Chris Bell, 12. Anitele'a Tuilagi, 11. Paul Williams, 10. Charlie Hodgson (c), 9. Will Cliff, 1. Eifion Roberts, 2. Neil Briggs, 3. Henry Thomas, 4. Chris Jones, 5. Wame Lewaravu, 6. Sean Cox, 7. James Gaskell, 8. Sisa Koyamaibole

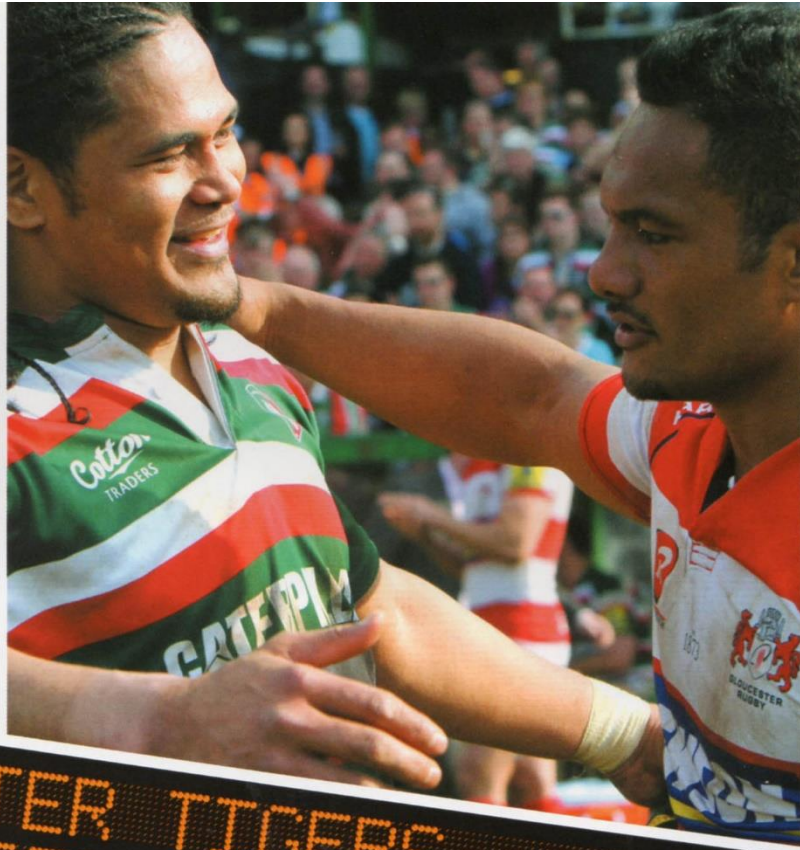
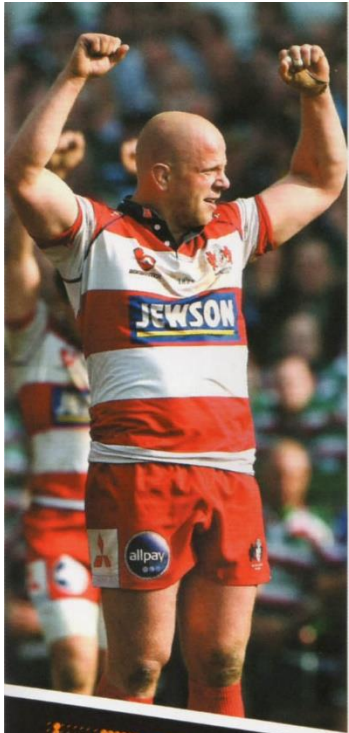
16. Marc Jones, 17. Lee Imiolek, 18. Simon McIntyre, 19. Nic Rouse, 20. Neil McMillan, 21. Chris Leck, 22. Iain Thornley, 23. Will Addison

### GLOUCESTER RUGBY

15. Olly Morgan, 14. Jonny May, 13. Henry Trinder, 12. Tim Molenaar, 11. Tom Voyce, 10. Freddie Burns, 9. Rory Lawson, 1. Nick Wood, 2. Scott Lawson, 3. Paul Doran-Jones, 4. Dave Attwood, 5. Alex Brown, 6. Alasdair Strokosch, 7. Akapusi Qera, 8. Luke Narraway (c)

16. Olivier Azam, 17. Alasdair Dickinson, 18. Rupert Harden, 19. Will James, 20. Brett Deacon, 21. Jordi Pasqualin, 22. Tim Taylor, 23. Eliota Fuimaono-Sapolu





LEICESTER TIGERS 41  
GLOUCESTER RUGBY 41

### LEICESTER TIGERS

15. Scott Hamilton, 14. Horacio Agulla, 13. Manu Tuilagi, 12. Billy Twelvetrees, 11. Alesana Tuilagi, 10. Toby Flood, 9. Ben Youngs, 1. Boris Stankovich, 2. Rob Hawkins, 3. Martin Castrogiovanni, 4. Steve Mafi, 5. George Skivington, 6. Tom Croft (c), 7. Ben Woods, 8. Thomas Waldrom

16. George Chuter, 17. Julian White, 18. Dan Cole, 19. Jordan Crane, 20. Craig Newby, 21. James Grindal, 22. Jeremy Staunton, 23. Matt Smith

### GLOUCESTER RUGBY

15. Olly Morgan, 14. Jonny May, 13. Henry Trinder, 12. Eliota Fuimaono-Sapolu, 11. Tom Voyce, 10. Freddie Burns, 9. Dave Lewis, 1. Alasdair Dickinson, 2. Scott Lawson, 3. Rupert Harden, 4. Will James, 5. Dave Attwood, 6. Matt Cox, 7. Andrew Hazell, 8. Brett Deacon (c)

16. Olivier Azam, 17. Nick Wood, 18. Paul Doran-Jones, 19. Alex Brown, 20. Alasdair Strokosch, 21. Rory Lawson, 22. Tim Taylor, 23. Tim Molenaar

**L**eicester Tigers and Gloucester Rugby delivered a glut of points at Welford Road as they shared an incredible 41-41 draw, the highest scoring draw in Premiership history and the most points the Tigers have conceded at home.

A draw was perhaps the fairest result as both teams played the game in a positive fashion and seemingly scored tries for fun.

A fine start for Gloucester saw Olly Morgan coast in for an early try but the full back was soon lost to injury as the home side responded through Scott Hamilton.

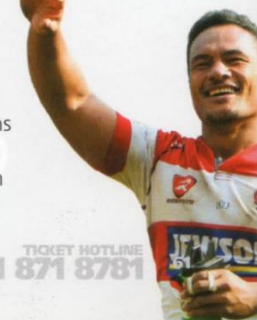
Gloucester went into half time with a well deserved lead but the hard work was blown away by a hat trick in 14 minutes from nemesis Alesana Tuilagi.

Showing incredible fortitude,

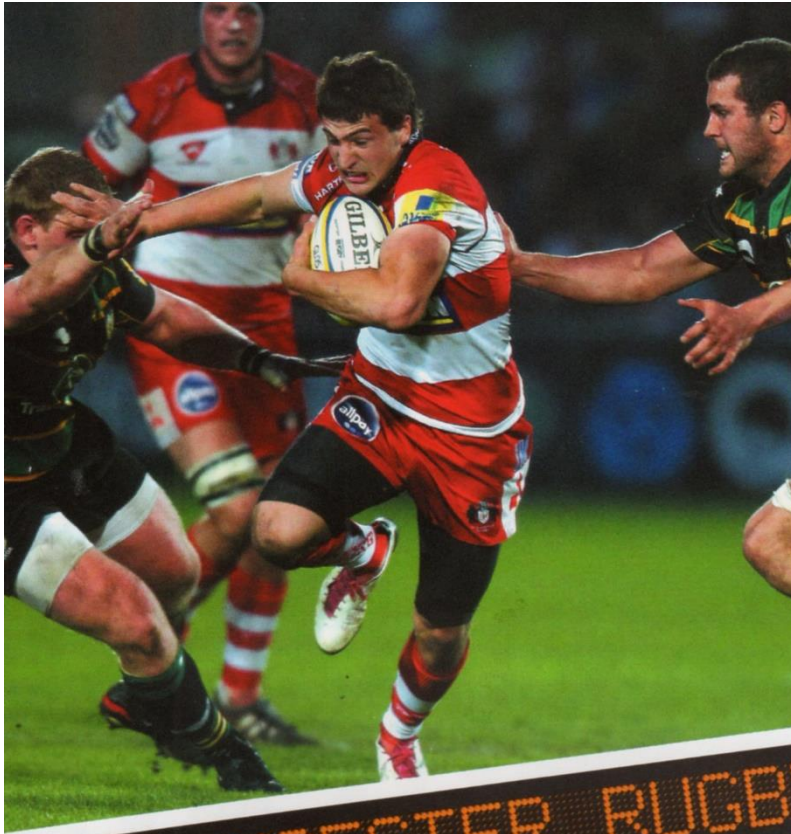
Gloucester hit back via tries from Andy Hazell and Tim Molenaar to draw level but Billy Twelvetrees' try on 69 minutes seemed to steady the ship for the Tigers and secure the points.

Needing only to run out the clock to take the win, the Tigers carried on moving the ball wide as the countdown clock neared zero perhaps trying to deny Gloucester a losing bonus point.

However, Eliota Fuimaono-Sapolu picked off an errant pass and ran it back all the way for an unexpected Gloucester try and Freddie Burns held his nerve to earn a draw with the conversion.



TICKET HOTLINE  
0871 871 8781

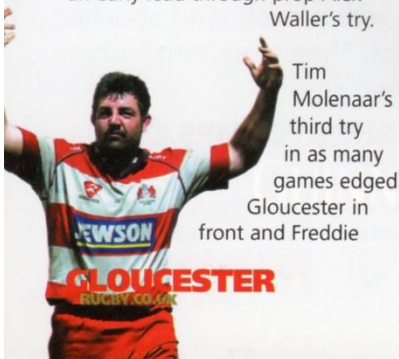


GLOUCESTER RUGBY 27  
NORTHAMPTON SAINTS 15

**G**loucester made it ten out of ten at Kingsholm in the Aviva Premiership as they earned a hard fought win over the Northampton Saints.

Much of the pre match talk revolved around Jim Mallinder's team selection as the Saint's Head Coach made numerous changes to his starting line up.

However, Northampton made a real game of it in the first half and took an early lead through prop Alex Waller's try.



Tim Molenaar's third try in as many games edged Gloucester in front and Freddie

Burns produced a superb chip for Charlie Sharples to turn on the afterburners and win the chase to score a second.

When Olivier Azam muscled his way over from a rolling maul on 50 minutes, Gloucester looked well set to push on for a try scoring bonus point.

However, Mallinder introduced all his big guns off the bench in the final quarter and Gloucester spent much of the final 20 minutes resolutely defending their own line.

The defence was only breached once, when the ball squirted loose from a Northampton scrum near the Gloucester line and scrum half Lee Dickson pounced.

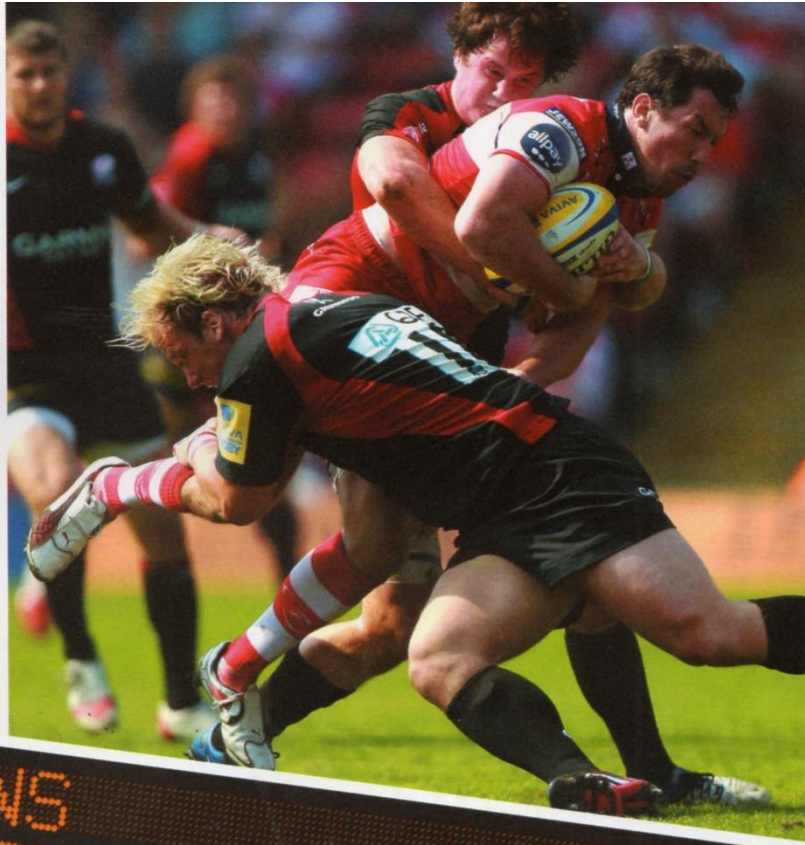
However, Gloucester hung on despite a ferocious assault from the visitors in the closing stages.

#### GLOUCESTER RUGBY

15. Freddie Burns, 14. Charlie Sharples, 13. Tim Molenaar, 12. Eliota Fuimaono-Sapulu, 11. Jonny May, 10. Nicky Robinson, 9. Rory Lawson, 1. Nick Wood, 2. Olivier Azam, 3. Paul Doran-Jones, 4. Dave Attwood, 5. Alex Brown, 6. Alasdair Strokosch, 7. Akapusi Qera, 8. Luke Narraway (c)
16. Scott Lawson, 17. Alasdair Dickinson, 18. Rupert Harden, 19. Will James, 20. Brett Deacon, 21. Dave Lewis, 22. Henry Trinder, 23. Tom Joyce

#### NORTHAMPTON SAINTS

15. Bruce Reihana, 14. Scott Armstrong, 13. Joe Ansbro, 12. Greig Tonks, 11. Paul Diggins, 10. Shane Geraghty, 9. Stuart Commins, 1. Alex Waller, 2. Brett Sharman, 3. Tom Mercey, 4. Adam Eustace, 5. Mark Sorenson, 6. Calum Clark (c), 7. Tom Wood, 8. Mark Easter
16. Dylan Hartley, 17. Soane Tonga'uiha, 18. Brian Mujati, 19. Courtney Lawes, 20. Phil Dowson, 21. Lee Dickson, 22. Stephen Myler, 23. Ben Foden



# SARACENS GLOUCESTER RUGBY 35 12

## SARACENS

15. Alex Goode, 14. David Strettle,  
13. Chris Wyles, 12. Brad Barritt,  
11. James Short, 10. Owen Farrell,  
9. Neil de Kock, 1. Matt Stevens,  
2. Schalk Brits, 3. Carlos Nieto,  
4. Steve Borthwick (c), 5. Mouritz Botha,  
6. Kelly Brown, 7. Jacques Burger,  
8. Ernst Joubert

16. Jamie George, 17. Rhys Gill,  
18. Petrus du Plessis, 19. Hugh Vyvyan,  
20. Andy Saul, 21. Richard Wigglesworth,  
22. Rodd Penney, 23. Noah Cato

## GLOUCESTER RUGBY

15. Tom Voyce, 14. Charlie Sharples,  
13. Henry Trinder, 12. Eliota Fuimaono-Sapolu,  
11. James Simpson-Daniel, 10. Freddie Burns,  
9. Dave Lewis, 1. Alasdair Dickinson,  
2. Scott Lawson, 3. Rupert Harden,  
4. Will James, 5. Jim Hamilton,  
6. Alasdair Strokosch, 7. Andrew Hazell,  
8. Brett Deacon (c)

16. Olivier Azam, 17. Nick Wood,  
18. Paul Doran-Jones, 19. Alex Brown,  
20. Luke Narraway, 21. Rory Lawson,  
22. Ryan Mills, 23. Tim Molenaar

**A** third game in eight days against a top four opponent proved to be a step too far for a weary Gloucester Rugby outfit as they were defeated 35-12 by Saracens at Vicarage Road.

Admirably, no-one in the Gloucester set up tried to make any excuses after the game but it was obvious that Saracens were the fresher of the two teams in a game blazed under a blazing sun in Watford.

Gloucester fought like demons in the opening stages and a physical encounter saw Andy Hazell and Henry Trinder both requiring stitches.

However, they were dealt a cruel blow when Freddie Burns' penalty attempt rebounded off the post, Saracens countered and, moments later, scored through the ever impressive Schalk Brits.



A catch and drive quickly resulted in a second score for the Men in Black before Gloucester produced the backs move of the match and a comeback try for James Simpson-Daniel.

Matt Stevens powered over shortly after half time to effectively settle the outcome although the bloodied and bandaged Trinder scored from long range.

Gloucester showed great heart to keep the home team at bay until David Strettle secured the bonus point a minute before the end to make the final score 35-12.

VS. SALE SHARKS // 07.05.11

# TODAY'S LINE-UPS

## GLOUCESTER RUGBY

- 5-0 TTT TOM VOYCE
- 5-3 TTT CHARLIE SHARPLES
- 12-3 TT HENRY TRINDER
- 4-3 ELIOTA FUIMAONO-SAPOLU
- 26-3 T JAMES SIMPSON-DANIEL
- 33-3 CCCCCC NICKY ROBINSON
- 33-10 T RORY LAWSON
- 40-10 T NICK WOOD
- 57-10 T SCOTT LAWSON
- 52-10 T PAUL DORAN-JONES
- 54-17 T DAVE ATTWOOD
- 51-17 T ALEX BROWN
- 65-17 ALASDAIR STROKOSCH
- AKAPUSI QERA
- LUKE NARRAWAY (C)
- DARREN DAWIDIUK
- ALASDAIR DICKINSON
- RUPERT HARDEN
- JIM HAMILTON
- BRETT DEACON
- T DAVE LEWIS
- CC TIM TAYLOR
- LESLEY VAINIKOLO

- 15 NICK MACLEOD
- FULLBACK
- 14 PAUL WILLIAMS THORNLEY
- WING
- 13 CHRIS BELL
- CENTRE
- 12 KYLE TONETTI
- CENTRE
- 11 WILL ADDISON
- WING
- 10 PEE CHARLIE HODGSON (C)
- FLY-HALF
- 9 CHRIS LECK PEE
- SCRUM-HALF
- 1 ASTON CROALL IMOLEK
- PROP
- 2 T NEIL BRIGGS
- HOOKER
- 3 MACEINRE EIFION LEWIS ROBERTS
- PROP
- 4 CHRIS JONES
- LOCK
- 5 ROUSE SEAN COX
- LOCK
- 6 GASKELL CARL FEARNES
- FLANKER
- 7 GASKELL NEIL MCMILLAN
- FLANKER
- 8 T? SISA KOYAMAIBOLE
- NO.8
- 16 MARC JONES
- 17 LEE IMIOLEK
- 18 HENRY THOMAS
- 19 NIC ROUSE
- 20 JAMES GASKELL
- 21 DWAYNE PEEL
- 22 ROB MILLER
- 23 IAIN THORNLEY

## SALE SHARKS

### MATCH SCORE

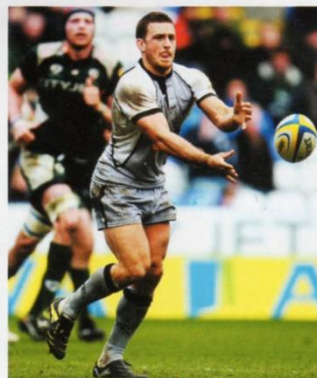
GLOUCESTER RUGBY  
v  
SALE SHARKS

REFEREE: David Rose  
ASST REFEREES: Don Helme and Nigel Carrick

### THE STATS THAT MATTER

#### TOP POINTS SCORERS

PLAYER	TOTAL
JIMMY GOPPERTH*	230
NICK EVANS	206
DAVE WALDER	203
GARETH STEENSON	177
STEPHEN MYLER	169



#### TOP TRY SCORERS

PLAYER	TOTAL
ALESANA TUILAGI*	11
CHRIS ASHTON	9
TOPSY OJO	8
SCOTT HAMILTON	7
MANU TUILAGI	7

