



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

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vs Harlequins

Aviva Premiership Rugby Round 07: 14.11.2014

Inside tonight's matchday programme we have an exclusive interview with lightning fast winger Charlie Sharples, action replays from the recent European victories against Brive and Oyonnax and features from our regular contributors Bob Fenton, Ian Randall, The Citizen and the Gloucester Rugby Heritage Project.



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CAPTAIN'S CORNER BILLY TWELVETREES

GOOD EVENING, AND A BIG WELCOME TO YOU ALL FOR TONIGHT'S CLASH WITH HARLEQUINS.



IT'S great for the squad to be gearing up for a return to home turf after a few weeks on the road. It's been a tough few weeks away from Kingsholm, but there have been plenty of positives to take from the performances from all of the squad.

The work we have put in at the start of the campaign shows that it will take a whole squad effort in order to be successful this season, and we are proud of the way the young lads stepped up in two tough games away from home

in the last fortnight.

Before that, we had a tough assignment in Oyonnax, and it was exactly what we expected - a partisan crowd and a massively proud opponent. So to come away with the win on French soil, meant that it was a happy trip home.

Moving on, the LV= Cup is a great competition, and the performance at Exeter was a spirited one. The result was desperately disappointing having led for so long, but gave the boys loads to work on.

Then, to go to London Welsh, with nine debutants in the squad,

and win against an experienced opponent, it is something to really be proud of. Lots of the squad stepped up, and Monday morning they deserved the plaudits in analysis.

Meanwhile, the international boys played very well last weekend for their respective countries, converting their great club form onto the international arena, and we hope they go well again this weekend.

We face Quins tonight, it has been a while since we tasted Aviva Premiership action, and we face a massively tough opponent tonight. They possess a strong squad, a very proud and experienced Director of Rugby in Conor O'Shea, and play an admirable brand of rugby.

That said, we have been putting in a lot of work in recent weeks, we have some fresh players and I can vouch that they are all chomping at the bit to have a crack tonight.

Kingsholm under the lights is always a special one and everyone will spend all day counting down for kick off.

It is great to be back at our home, and tonight is a night we have been looking forward to for a few weeks.

It should be a great game.

Billy



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WE HAVE BEEN PUTTING IN A LOT OF WORK IN RECENT WEEKS, WE HAVE SOME FRESH PLAYERS AND I CAN VOUCH THAT THEY ARE ALL CHOMPING AT THE BIT TO HAVE A CRACK TONIGHT.

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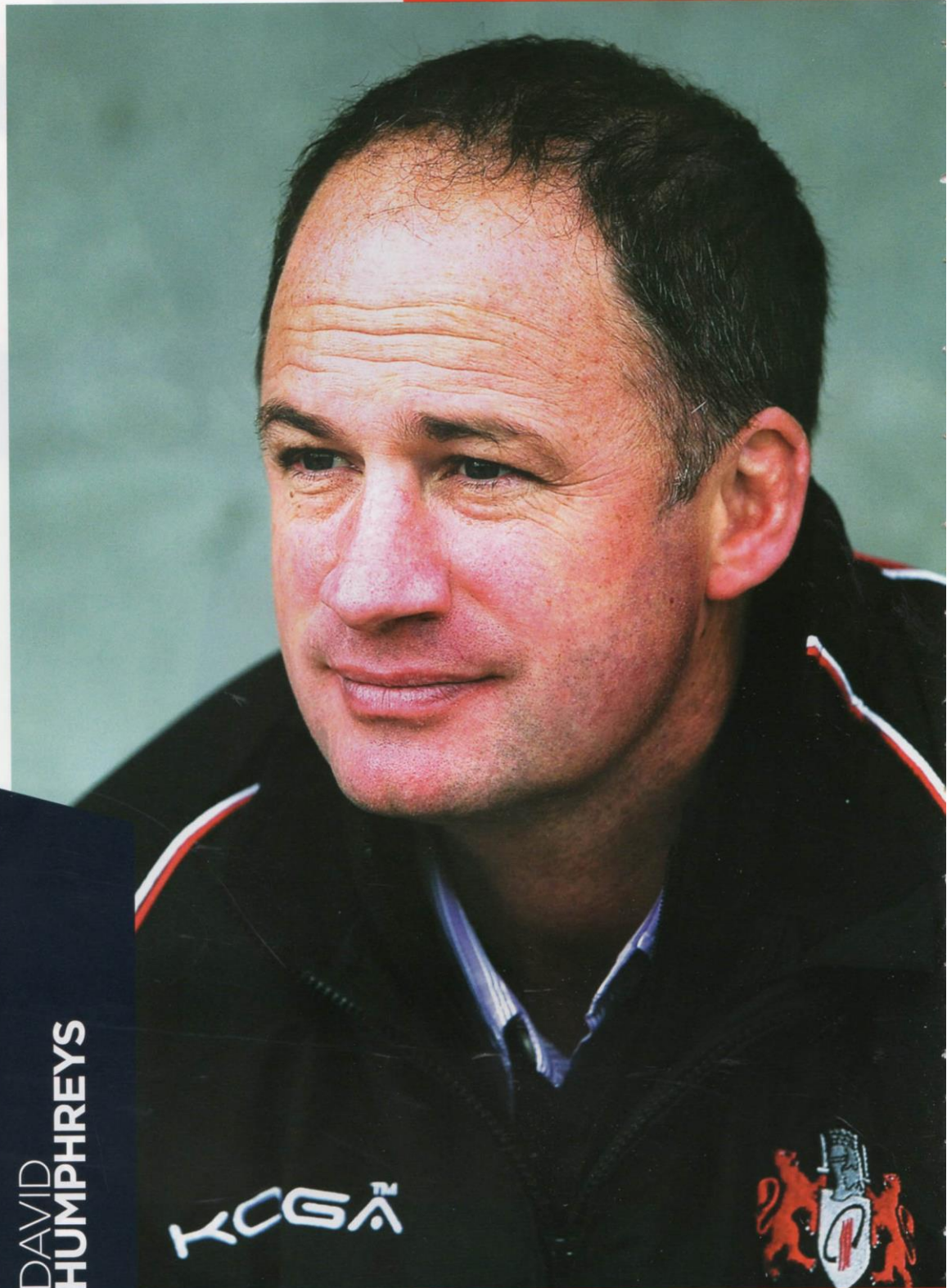
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5

DIR. OF
RUGBY

DAVID
HUMPHREYS



DAVID
HUMPHREYS

8

GOOD EVENING AND WELCOME TO KINGSHOLM AS WE RETURN TO AVIVA PREMIERSHIP ACTION AND, OF COURSE, A VERY WARM WELCOME TO ALL OUR VISITORS FROM HARLEQUINS.

IT goes without saying that we're delighted to be back here on our home turf after a series of testing fixtures on the road.

It's been a few weeks when everyone in the squad has got some game time and it's also been an opportunity for the coaches to look at a number of the Academy players in competitive fixtures.

I'm pleased to say that that we've come through the first two rounds of the two both cup competitions in reasonably good shape, with two wins from two in the European Rugby Challenge Cup and a win and a very narrow loss in the LV= Cup.

Incredibly it's nearly a month since we kicked off in Europe here against Brive, and it was obviously pleasing to get off and running with a bonus point victory. Charlie Sharples got the headlines on the evening with his hat-trick and it was a memorable way

taken for granted, and we really had to roll up our sleeves on the night. But it was a committed, physical performance, backed up by a great individual try from Matt Kvesic and superb goal kicking from Greig Laidlaw, that made us worthy winners on the night. Those victories have put us in a strong position moving into the next round of matches in early December.

Moving on to the LV= Cup, it's been a couple of weeks where we've had to change things around due to International call ups, but also to give some players some time off to recover from the first 8 matches.

But that has provided a number of players, who have been patiently biding their time, with the chance to show what they can do. The opener down at Exeter was frustrating because we performed really well for the first 50 minutes and did more than enough to win the game convincingly. We scored three tries on the day, and with a

late on to keep our line intact.

But it's back to Aviva Premiership action this evening and it's very important that, with some changes to our team, we continue to develop our game over the next three weeks and build on what was a positive start to the League campaign. Everyone is aware that we are entering a key part of the season and that has been reflected in the quality and intensity of training this week.

Harlequins have been one of top performing sides domestically in recent seasons, they have reached the play offs for the last 3 years, and will pose a real challenge for us this evening.

Like ourselves, they have a number of players on International duty this weekend, but through good recruitment and more importantly, the production of high quality Academy players, they have developed a depth to their playing squad that has enabled them to compete throughout

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IT SHOULD BE A GREAT ATMOSPHERE HERE THIS EVENING, I'VE REALLY ENJOYED OUR GAMES UNDER THE LIGHTS SO FAR THIS SEASON AND, HOPEFULLY, WE CAN CONTINUE OUR PROGRESS BY PUTTING IN A WINNING PERFORMANCE.

LIKE ME, I'M SURE EVERYONE IS LOOKING FORWARD TO GIVING CONOR O'SHEA AND HARLEQUINS A VERY WARM WELCOME TO KINGSHOLM!

for him to celebrate his 150th appearance for the club.

But it would have meant little had we not backed it up with a win in Oyonnax the following week. Wins on French soil are never to be

little more patience and accuracy we could have scored more.

However, it was a valuable lesson in game management for a young side and also reinforced the importance of playing for the full 80 minutes.

Last weekend was a completely different affair. It was hard fought and attritional and I was delighted that an even more inexperienced side, which featured four debutants, managed to close the game out. Particularly pleasing was the commitment in defence

these times of the season.

It should be a great atmosphere here this evening, I've really enjoyed our games under the lights so far this season and, hopefully, we can continue our progress by putting in a winning performance.

Like me, I'm sure everyone is looking forward to giving Conor O'Shea and Harlequins a very warm welcome to Kingsholm!

David

THE VIEW FROM The Citizen



**SCAN THE
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AND STORIES
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WEBSITE**

SHOPLIFTERS
caught out once
every three days
at Gloucester
Debenhams

**HARTPURY
FULL-BACK**
Sean Marsden
has been named
in the Barbarians'
starting line-up

**FROM
GARAGE
BUSINESS**
to £30 million
company

**TRIBUTE
TO FALLEN
TROOPS**
by Tesco as
'poppy-roni' pizza
goes on sale

GETTING THE DEMON OFF YOUR BACK

FEW in attendance tonight would have had any doubts over Jonny May's ability ahead of England's autumn opener with New Zealand.

Those who follow Gloucester on a regular basis would be under no illusions of the electric wing's capabilities – we have seen May do the great and unthinkable far too many times.

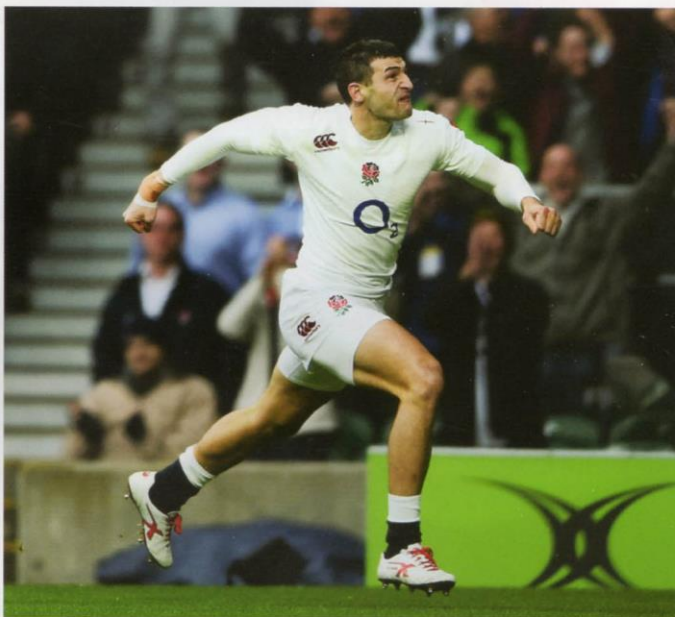
As the old adage goes there is no substitute for pace and he demonstrated that in devastating fashion against the All Blacks.

May has had his fair share of critics but he silenced them in the fourth minute of Saturday's defeat and left the 82,223 at Twickenham with no reservations.

The way he cruised around Conrad Smith and then beat Israel Dagg on the outside to open the scoring with his first international try was a stroke of genius.

Like a striker in football enduring a goal-drought, the pressure on a wing who is not fulfilling his primary job is palpable. Coaches and players alike will try to play it down but wings are there to finish opportunities, and boy didn't May just do that.

Hopefully we will now see the kind of form in a Cherry and



(above) Magical

Jonny exorcises some demons against the All Blacks

(right) Mercurial

Greig Laidlaw was simply fantastic for Scotland against the Pumas last weekend

White shirt transferred to the international stage on a far more regular basis.

As May put it he "got the demon off his back", a monkey perhaps, but the sentiment remains.

He said, "It's almost a demon off my back but hopefully it's the first of many and I can keep going from here."

"As a wing you want to score tries. As much as you go out there and think I'll just play the

“ AS A WING YOU WANT TO SCORE TRIES. AS MUCH AS YOU GO OUT THERE AND THINK I’LL JUST PLAY THE PLAY, IF THERE’S AN OPPORTUNITY TO SCORE I’M GOING TO TAKE IT BUT I’M NOT GOING TO NOT PASS IT IF IT IS ON FOR SOMEONE ELSE. Jonny May



play, if there’s an opportunity to score I’m going to take it but I’m not going to not pass it if it is on for someone else.

“The pressure does build on you and I remember thinking ‘bloody hell’ after dropping the ball against Ireland.

“You just want that chance to go out and prove yourself and I had that against New Zealand and put it right.

“I knew I could do it and the coaches did as well so I’m glad they’ve had the patience in me and that I was able to pay it back and do it for the team and England.

“I’ve been really happy with the way I have started the season and it’s even better to

translate it onto England.”

May was not the only Cherry and White on international duty over the weekend with Greig Laidlaw leading Scotland to a 41-31 victory over Argentina.

The diminutive scrum-half with a deadly boot has arguably been Gloucester’s best summer signing. Only fellow newcomer John Afoa comes close as such a vital cog in the team.

And just as Laidlaw has been the heartbeat at Gloucester he was so as captain of his country. He created tries for Sean Maitland and Stuart Hogg and booted 14-points.

Australia kept Richard Hibbard relatively quiet as they inflicted yet more late agony on Wales,

while Sila Puafisi, Aleki Lutui and Sione Kalamafoni helped Tonga to 23-9 victory over Georgia.

With such a glut of players on Test duty and others rested, we have seen two contrasting tales in the LV= Cup.

A superb performance was not enough for victory over Exeter Chiefs, who snatched a late win, but Gloucester’s young guns scraped past London Welsh.

Hopefully tonight we will see the best of both, a performance and result, and while Jonny May is not here to scorch a trail aren’t we lucky to have fellow speedster Charlie Sharples in equally impressive form.

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GLOUCESTER RUGBY
HERITAGEwww.gloucester rugbyheritage.org.ukON CENTRE
STAGE
– PART ONE

IN THE EARLY DAYS OF GLOUCESTER RUGBY THERE WAS NO SUCH POSITION AS CENTRE THREE-QUARTER. THE BACKS CONSISTED OF THREE "THREE-QUARTERS" AND A "BACK" OR FULL BACK AS WE WOULD NOW CALL HIM.

BY THE TIME THAT GLOUCESTER MOVED TO KINGSHOLM IN 1891, IT HAD BECOME COMMON FOR A FIFTH BACK TO PLAY BEHIND THE SCRUM, AND SO FOR THE FIRST TIME TWO PLAYERS WERE CALLED "CENTRES".

PERCY STOUT

The first star centre for Gloucester was Percy Stout who played for the Club between 1895 and 1900. He was an Old Cryptian and scored a try on his debut against Leicester.

He played four times for the Barbarians and was capped five times for England between 1898 and 1899. His brother, Frank, was a forward and often played in the same team for Gloucester and England.



Percy Stout in his England garb

These days it is usual for players to specialise in one position (with James Forrester's appearance at centre being a notable exception), but in the past it was common to play in several positions amongst the backs, and

even sometimes to take a turn in the forwards!

ROY JAMES

Roy James who made 298 appearances between 1924 and 1937, predominantly at centre, played in every position behind the scrum. He played his first game in 1924 against Guy's Hospital, but did not become a regular until the 1926-27 season. He captained the club in 1930-31, when a moderate season was lifted by the first double over Cardiff for 40 years.

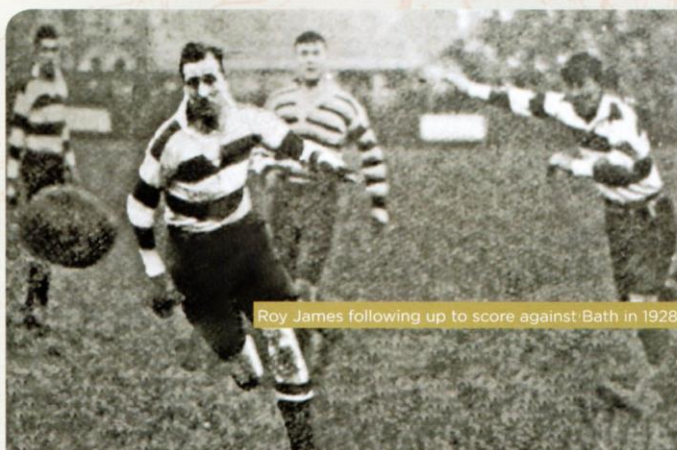
Roy also played 31 times for Gloucestershire, and was a member of the County Championship winning teams of 1930 and 1932. After his playing days were over, he coached Gloucester Old Boys and was their club president from 1945-51.

The 1930's was a very successful decade for the Club, and their record against Welsh teams (which was always the measure of a Gloucester season) was second to none. A significant contribution to this success was made by two outstanding centre three-quarters, Maurice McCanlis and Francis Edwards.

MAURICE MCCANLIS

Maurice McCanlis won Blues for Oxford University in 1926 and 1927. He was also a good cricketer, which won him Blues from 1926-28. He had played a few times for Blackheath before arriving at Kingsholm for the 1928-29 season. In 1929, he scored two tries in a famous Gloucester win, the first away at Cardiff since 1898.

Maurice was also a regular



Roy James following up to score against Bath in 1928



choice for the County, appearing alongside Roy James in the team that won the Championship in 1930. The County won the title again in 1931, McCanlis scoring a try in the final, when Warwickshire were defeated 10-9.

Maurice was now on the radar of the England selectors, winning two caps in 1931, and the following season helped the County to a hat trick of Championships when they beat Durham in the final.



Maurice McCanlis

FRANCIS EDWARDS

Francis Edwards, a product of Wycliffe College, first played for Gloucester in the 1932-33 season, starting in just eight games, but he became a regular in the following season. In 1934-35, in 31 appearances he scored no less than 21 tries. He also played 23 times for Gloucestershire.

By 1937-38 he had moved to the north of England where he played for Birkenhead Park, and the following season made it into the final England trial for the Rest which beat the senior team, but no cap was forthcoming.

The War then intervened, and Francis played in several of the wartime internationals, for which



Francis Edwards

caps were not awarded. After the war in 1945-46, he played one season for Leicester and just one game for Gloucester, before retiring.

KEN DANIELL

Ken Daniell, who went to the Central School, was the son of Norman, who enjoyed a distinguished playing career with Gloucester in the 1920's. Ken was very fleet of foot and initially played on the wing, before moving to centre to "see more of the ball".

Ken's first season was 1945-46, but he really came to the fore the following season, which included a stunning try at Cardiff, who then boasted the entire Welsh international back division. Ken left them in tatters, intercepting and running in from 60 yards.



Ken Daniell

In 89 appearances for Gloucester he scored 42 tries, and in one period in the 1947-48 season, he scored at least one try in 10 successive games. Unfortunately

he picked up a knee injury during the 1948-49 season, and by January 1950 this had caused his retirement at the age of 24.

JOHN BAYLISS

John Bayliss was a Gloucester legend, a bustling centre who tackled with ferocity. A favourite ploy of his, on receiving the ball, was to head for the nearest group of opposing forwards and drive straight into them, often emerging with ball still in hand on the other side. He was even more devastating against opposing backs, who knew they were in for a flattening whether they had the ball, John had the ball, or the ball was just somewhere in the vicinity.



John Bayliss

He first appeared for Gloucester in 1960, and by the 1961-62 season he was established as a first choice selection. He was in the cup winning team of 1972 and captained the club in the following season. In all John made 402 appearances, scoring 92 tries and kicking a single penalty against Birkenhead Park in 1968.

John was a stalwart of the County team with 57 appearances, and was captain from 1974-76, when they won successive County Championships. Although appearing in several England trial games, he was never capped. He was offered professional terms by Warrington, but decided not to "go north".

Of course, because of John's fearless approach he was bound to pick up injuries, and in 1973 he broke his neck, but he bounced back and played on until 1976.

PLAYER
FEATURE

CHARLIE
SHARPLES



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IT IS VERY MUCH MY CLUB,
AND I CAME THROUGH
THE ACADEMY SYSTEM
HERE. I HAVE LIVED IN THE
AREA FOR A LONG TIME
AND I VERY MUCH SEE IT
AS MY HOME.

**DID YOU
KNOW?** | CHARLIE IS CURRENTLY THE SECOND ALL-TIME TOP TRY SCORER
FOR GLOUCESTER WITH 61 TRIES

THE SHARPEST TOOL IN THE BOX

LAST TIME OUT AT KINGSHOLM, THE NIGHT BELONGED TO GLOUCESTER'S NUMBER FOURTEEN AND, ON HIS 150TH COMPETITIVE APPEARANCE IN CHERRY AND WHITE, CHARLIE SHARPLES DECIDED THAT IT WAS A PERFECT STAGE UPON WHICH TO RUN IN A HAT-TRICK.

PLAYER
FEATURE

CHARLIE
SHARPLES



“OUT OF EVERY GAME I’VE PLAYED, I HAVE NEVER GOT TO LEAD THE TEAM OUT. TO GET THE APPLAUSE FROM THE AMAZING CROWD WAS SPECIAL ENOUGH, BUT TO GET THE WIN AND GET THE HAT-TRICK AS WELL, THAT JUST MADE IT THAT LITTLE BIT MORE MEMORABLE - SO IT WAS A REALLY GOOD NIGHT FOR ME.”

DID YOU KNOW?

CHARLIE REPORTEDLY RAN 40M IN A TIME OF 4.82 SECONDS AT THE ENGLAND RWC TRAINING CAMP IN 2011.

SO, ahead of appearance number 152, Sharples is excited about the future and looking back on a special night at Kingsholm.

"That was a fantastic night for me, and I'm sure that it is one that I will always remember, not just because of the fashion in which it happened, but it was a real privilege for me and really special.

"Out of every game I've played, I have never got to lead the team out. To get the applause from the



amazing crowd was special enough, but to get the win and get the hat-trick as well, that just made it that little bit more memorable – so it was a really good night for me."

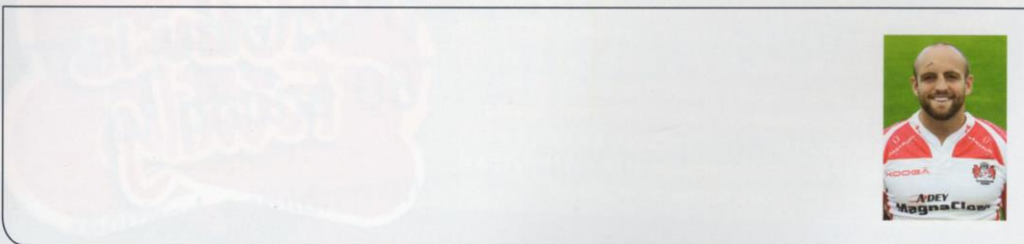
In the modern game, it goes without saying now that bringing up a milestone of 150 games, for a single club is a special achievement.

"I suppose you see it less and less these days and it is a business and you don't always get to choose where you stay and where you play your rugby.

"I've been perhaps fortunate, in that I've shown loyalty to Gloucester and the club has always been good to me. It is very much my club, and I came through the Academy system here. I have lived in the area for a long time and I very much see it as my home.

"I do feel very lucky to say that I have been here for as long as I have, seven years and to have played as many games as I have, is something I am very proud of, and it is a big honour for me."

GLOUCESTER RUGBY AUTOGRAPH COLLECTION



But how does the feeling of being considered as one of the senior players sit with Sharples?

"That's a little bit more difficult to get my head around! When I rocked up through the Academy, Nick Wood was already on one hundred games and now he's the next more senior player to myself!

"There's lots of guys here, that perhaps haven't been at the club that long, but have been in the game for a long time. Guys like Tom Palmer, Huddo and Hooky - there are a lot of guys that are in the, how can I say it nicely, '30 years and above age bracket'.

"It is good to have those guys around for us younger guys. It's been a good few years of course since I considered myself as one of the younger players, and now it is making that transition to being one of the senior members of the squad, even though I am only 25!"

And, tonight Sharples is expecting a huge challenge with Conor O'Shea's Harlequins the visitors to Kingsholm.

"It will be a really tough game for us against Quins, they play a great brand of running rugby. We will need to be on our game, and we've had a few weeks off to refresh which you need in a long season.



"We've had a good week of training, and we have to turn up at Kingsholm with a good mentality and continue the momentum that the guys have worked hard to maintain with some good performances during the LV= Cup weekends."

BOB FENTON'S

KINGSHOLM NEWS

” SO, IT'S FRIDAY NIGHT, THE LIGHTS ARE ON AND IT'S PROBABLY COLD AND WET. PERFECT! LET'S GET ON WITH IT, PUT THE QUINS AWAY AND MOVE UP THAT TABLE.

I T seems like a long time since we were last here at Kingsholm – one of those European game things I think... Yes, Brive, that was it. Since then, we've been over to France and on the road in the LV= Cup.

A good win in France has put us in an excellent position in our Challenge Cup group. I know that this competition does not push

everyone's buttons as it is seen as a lesser competition than the big cup proper. Similarly, the LV= Cup doesn't get people queuing around the block to get in.

Personally, I've never really understood that attitude. After all, there are only so many cups or trophies you can win in a season, so take what you can.

And, to be honest, I don't remember too many people not

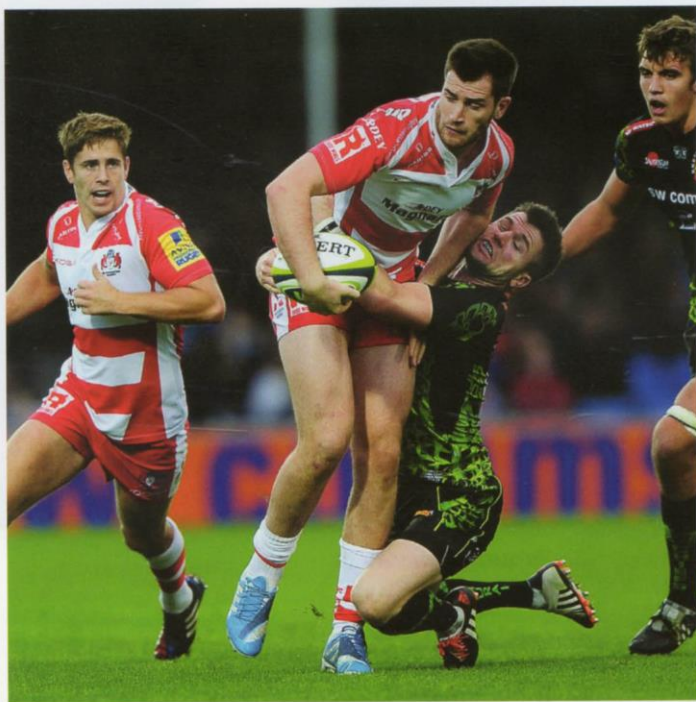
getting excited about our LV= Cup victory at Franklin's Gardens, or the Challenge Cup win against London Irish in the rain at the Stoop a few years back. So, maybe don't knock it, enjoy it!

The LV= continues to be bafflingly difficult to work out – I still can't understand the reasons why teams play opposition from other groups rather than from their own. But it is what it is. This season, the competition seems to have attracted more supporters as well, which has to be a good thing.

We were so close to getting off to a great start in the competition down at Exeter – impending arrival of grandchild number one meant I was busy with a paintbrush on the other side of the country and missed the game. I checked in at one point and we seemed to be steaming away with it, only to come back a bit later and find that it had got away from us by a single point.

I'm writing this the day before last week's London Welsh match, so hopefully our young tyros have gone up to Oxford and got the right result.

Off the field, we have had a bit of a result too – for the third year running, the club recording a profit in its annual accounts. Given the amount of money some clubs are throwing around, and



COMING UP... | BACK TO BACK VICTORIES IN THE EUROPEAN RUGBY CHALLENGE CUP



presumably racking up some pretty frightening debts at the same time, it's good that our club is on a much sounder financial footing and that bodes well for the future.

We've also had the second of the multimedia fans forums – very useful when work takes you to the far flung corners of the UK. It's great that the coaches and officials are doing these events, the level of communication between club and supporters is way better than not so many years ago, helped largely by the ability to stream the session plus the updates on Twitter.

The fact that the club also take into account questions posed online via the Twitter feed is a welcome feature as well. It allows supporters who live away from Gloucester to take an active part.

But, back to today, a small matter of a Premiership clash against Harlequins. Both sides will be short of a few players due to the Autumn internationals. I know these fixtures bring great deals of cash to the bank accounts of the home nations, but it still rankles that clubs are expected to play important league fixtures

without some of their key players. I seriously doubt that any other professional sport would allow this situation. But it is what it is, and we just have to get on with it.

In the run up to the England vs All Blacks game, I had to smile at Austin Healey's 'head to head' comments in the Telegraph. In case you missed it, when talking about Jonny May, he described him as having '...good pace, not

exceptional...' Really Austin? Really??? I'd love to see his list of players around who can cover the ground quicker than Jonny May – it won't be very long, that's for sure.

To be fair, it only took Jonny about three minutes of the match to show his exceptional lack of pace as he rounded Conrad Smith and then sped past Israel Dagg to score England's first try. Let's hope those words tasted nice as you ate them, Austin! A shame though that Jonny's try was the highlight of the game for England as New Zealand scrambled their way home.

Even without international players, both clubs here today can put out decent teams and, for me, this is a bit of a benchmark game. Prior to the LV= Cup we had hit a bit of form and put a good run of wins together. Quins sit just behind us in the league with an identical 3-3 win/ loss ratio – just the odd bonus point putting our noses in front.

So, it's Friday night, the lights are on and it's probably cold and wet. Perfect! Let's get on with it, put the Quins away and move up that table.



IAN RANDALL'S RUGBY TALK

IN THE WAKE OF REMEMBRANCE DAY THERE IS A BUCKET LOAD OF GOOD RUGBY THIS WEEKEND. ROUND 7 OF THE PREMIERSHIP STARTS TONIGHT, ENGLAND PLAY SOUTH AFRICA AT TWICKENHAM TOMORROW, AFTER WHICH THERE IS THE USA V TONGA GAME HERE (KO 4.45).

CROWDS will also flock to the Open meeting at Cheltenham Racecourse, the first big National Hunt benchmark of the jumping season. It's where James Simpson-Daniel was today, even though Monbeg Dude, the horse he co-owns with former team mates Mike Tindall and Nicky Robinson, wasn't running.

to be Sinbad's last first team appearance for Gloucester, in the LV= Cup against Newcastle.

"When I start talking about Dude I don't shut up" said James, smiling. "The first thing probably half the people I see say to me is 'how's the horse?' - even when I was hobbling around on crutches. It shows how they've shared in our fun with him.

He's been incredible."

I saw James at one of his favourite cafes in Cheltenham. A midweek lunchtime meeting with him would normally have meant a media call at Hartpury. But, tucking into a ham omelette, he openly admitted how the nine year old chaser had been a big outlet for him.

"I can't describe how good he's been for me" Sinbad said. "My ankle was very nasty, and remember I had my shoulder injury the season before - thankfully we got that right enough to play again.

"To be able to go racing - especially at Cheltenham - and watch him, get the adrenalin, get

"TO BE ABLE TO GO RACING - ESPECIALLY AT CHELTENHAM - AND WATCH HIM, GET THE ADRENALIN, GET THE BUZZ, HAS BEEN A GREAT PICK UP. IT WAS NICE TO GET WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL THE PRE MATCH NERVES BACK AGAIN WHEN HE HAD HIS FIRST RUN OF THE SEASON AT CHEPSTOW. ALL I'D HAD WAS A FEELING OF LOSS SINCE MY RETIREMENT. IT GOT THE HEART POUNDING AGAIN AND I WELCOMED IT.

James Simpson-Daniel



A year ago "the Dude", as James fondly calls him, finished 4th in the Murphy Group Handicap Chase. It was also the weekend of what turned out

"I suppose I should have pictures of my boys (George, 4 and Oliver, 2) on my phone screensaver but it's the Dude when he won the Welsh National.

the buzz, has been a great pick up. It was nice to get what you might call the pre match nerves back again when he had his first run of the season at Chepstow.



All I'd had was a feeling of loss since my retirement. It got the heart pounding again and I welcomed it."

This is the fifth season "Oydunow" (the name of the Simpson-Daniel/Robinson/Tindall syndicate) have owned Monbeg Dude. He really came to prominence by winning at the 2012 Open meeting at Cheltenham at 25-1, and then landing the Welsh National in January 2013.

Throughout, the horse has been trained in Herefordshire by Michael Scudamore, and James enjoys being able to pick up the phone to him.

"Michael is a brilliant trainer for us" said James. "He likes his rugby and we were friends with him before we had Dude. So we can ask him the silliest question in the world without him hanging up.

"Michael is probably a bit defensive with him, but he wants us to have an opinion about when and where he should run, so it's a good balance. He's not running at Cheltenham this weekend because if we went in

the same race he won two years ago he's be carrying a lot more weight. We're looking at a few other options."

Those options include the Hennessy Gold Cup at Newbury at the end of the month, or the Becher Chase at Aintree in December, which is run over the Grand National fences but a shorter distance. Earlier this year Monbeg Dude ran in the National and came 7th. Surely the boys would like to have another crack at it?

James finishes his food. For once, there is a pause in his enthusiastic chat.

"We've got that discussion to have and I'm not looking forward to it," he said. "I'd hate to make the wrong decision."

"This year there was no hard luck story. Paul Carberry gave him a cracking ride - he jumped well, on the whole - and two fences out there was no question in my mind he had a chance of winning.

"He did tire quite quickly after that but he's plugged away and kept going. He's held nothing

back and the weight wasn't a bad weight. There were no excuses, so would we get another run without a hard luck story?

"We've probably got five runs a season with him so could he go to another big race where he'd have a better chance?"

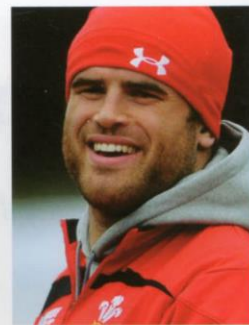
"One or two of the others might want to go for the National again because we're the type who would rather be ambitious with him. Every time we've been like that he's answered us and that's why we love him.

"Nicky (Robinson) would want him to run every day if he was able to. Essentially we are three friends having some brilliant days out watching our horse. What more could you ask for."

****Monbeg Dude's owners** are spread far and wide this weekend. Mike Tindall, along with Iain Balshaw, is playing for the Classic Lions in a veteran's tournament in Bermuda, while Nicky Robinson should be on duty after injury for Bristol at Nottingham in the Championship tonight.



PLAYER A to Z TOM ISAACS



...is for
ATMOSPHERE...
What is the best atmosphere you have experienced?
Wellington 7s in 2009 - 35,000 people all drunk in fancy dress!

...is for best mate
...**BEST MATE** in rugby?
Jamie Roberts - been best mates since school.

...is for **CAREER...**
If you weren't a rugby player what would you be?
Civil Engineer or something within construction.

...is for **DRIVE...**
what car are you driving?
Black Ford Focus TDCi. Not flash, but it is good on fuel!

...is for
EMBARRASSED...
most embarrassing moment on the field?
Knocking myself out in the first 10 minutes against Northampton in the A League at the start of the season!

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...is for **MATCH...**
What is the best match you have played in/watched?
Wales v England, Wembley 1999.

...is for
NICKNAME...
What's yours?
The boys know me by my initials, T.I

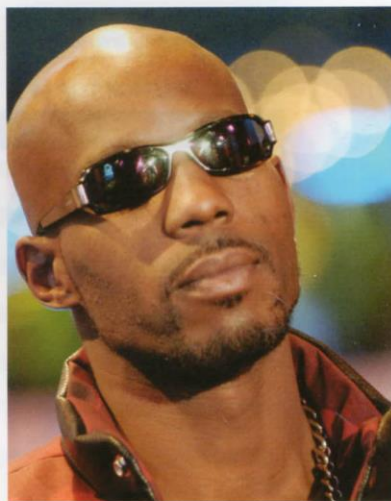
...is for
OPPONENT...
Who is the best player you have faced up against?
Casey Laulala. Crazy feet and a great offloading game.

...is for **PRIDE...**
What is your proudest moment?
Winning the 7s World Cup and graduating with a degree in Civil Engineering.

...is for
QUICKEST...
Who is the fastest player you have played with or against?
Shane Williams. Happy to have played with him and never against him!

...is for **RUN OUT MUSIC...**...what's your tune to run out to?
DMX - Party Up.

...is for
SUPPORT...
What teams do you support?
Cardiff RFC.





...is for
FASHION...

Who is the worst dressed player in the squad?
Probably Richard Hibbard and his selection of trucker hats!



...is for
GLOUCESTER RUGBY...

...best thing about Gloucester Rugby?
The support and noise from The Shed on match day.



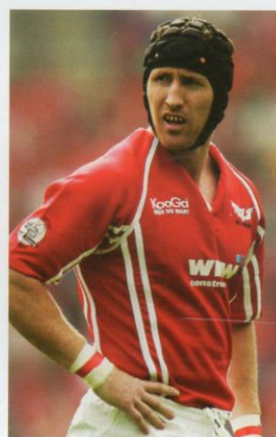
...is for
HARDMAN...

Who is the toughest opponent you have played against?
Filo TiaTia, he was a real enforcer. Respected by everyone.



...is for
IDOL...

Who is your sporting idol?
Joost Van der Westhuizen and Scott Gibbs.



...is for
JOKER...

Who is the funniest person you have shared a dressing room with?
The one-eared warrior, Barry Davies!



...is for
KINGSHOLM

...describe Kingsholm in three words?
Loud, Passionate, Fanatical.

...is for
LIFE after rugby...

What are your future plans?
Seeing as much of the world as I can



...is for **TRY...**
What is the best try you have ever scored?
My first professional try playing for Newport Gwent Dragons v Newcastle.

...is for **UNBELIEVABLE...**
Tell us something surprising about yourself
I used to play the trumpet...grade 3!

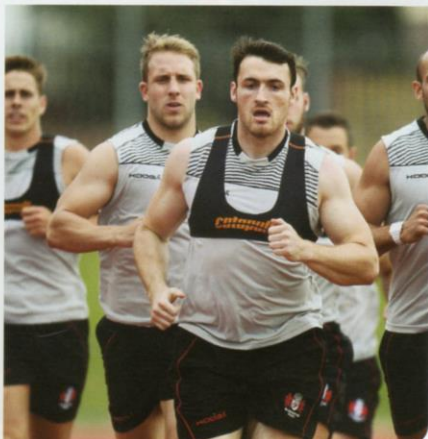
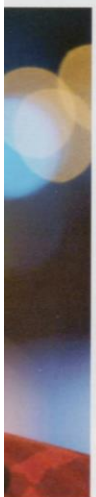
...is for **VISITOR...**
What is your favourite ground to play at?
Cardiff Arms Park. The only ground within 100m of a nightclub!

...is for **WORST...**
What is the worst thing about being a rugby player?
Dealing with the roller coaster of emotions.

...is for **X-RAY...**
What is the worst injury you have suffered?
Shoulder reconstruction took two operations.

...is for **YOUTH...**
What advice would you give to aspiring rugby players?
Control the controllables.

...is for **ZZZZ...**
Which player has the worst banter?
Shane Monahan takes a lot of stick for his quality of banter.



ACTION
REPLAY

VS
CA BRIVE

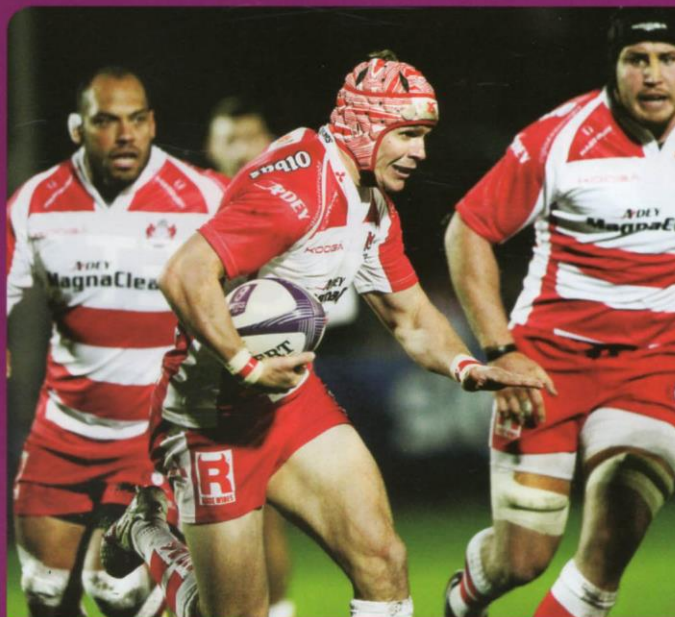
GLOUCESTER RUGBY

LINE-UP

15	FB	ROB COOK
14	W	CHARLIE SHARPLES
13	C	BILL MEAKES
12	C	BILLY TWELVETREES
11	W	JONNY MAY
10	FH	JAMES HOOK
9	SH	GREIG LAIDLAW
1	P	YANN THOMAS
2	H	RICHARD HIBBARD
3	P	JOHN AFOA
4	L	TOM SAVAGE
5	L	JAMES HUDSON
6	F	SIONE KALAMAFONI
7	F	MATT KVESIC
8	NB	BEN MORGAN

REPLACEMENTS

16	R	DARREN DAWIDIUK
17	R	NICK WOOD
18	R	SILA PUAFISI
19	R	ELLIOT STOOKE
20	R	ROSS MORIARTY
21	R	DAN ROBSON
22	R	BILLY BURNS
23	R	MARK ATKINSON



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

55

TRIES: Sharples (15, 49, 64), Hook (45), Dawidiuk (60), Robson (72), Penalty try (79) **PENS:** Laidlaw (31, 42) **CONS:** Laidlaw (16, 46, 49), Hook (61), Cook (65, 73, 80)



CA BRIVE

0



CA BRIVE

LINE-UP

15	FB	ALFI MAFI
14	W	MALAKAI RADIKEDIKE
13	C	BAPTISTE DELAGE
12	C	THOMAS SANCHOU
11	W	GUILLAUME NAMY
10	FH	RIAAN SWANEPOEL
9	SH	NICOLAS BEZY
1	P	KARLEN ASIESHVILI
2	H	LOUIS ACOSTA
3	P	DAMIEN JOURDAIN
4	L	PEET MARAIS
5	L	RUSSLAN BOUKEROU
6	F	HUGUES BRIATTE
7	F	POUTASI LUAFUTU
8	NB	KIERAN MURPHY

REPLACEMENTS

16	R	THOMAS ACQUIER
17	R	DAMIEN LAVERGNE
18	R	YUSUF TUNCER
19	R	VICTOR LEBAS
20	R	FABIEN SANCONNIE
21	R	DAMIEN NEVEU
22	R	ANDERSON NEISEN
23	R	HUGO VEYSSIERE



ROUND 01

SECOND HALF BLITZ TOO MUCH FOR BATTLING BRIVE

THE CHERRY AND WHITES MADE HISTORY IN ROUND ONE OF THE NEW EUROPEAN RUGBY CHALLENGE CUP, OPENING UP A NEW ERA OF EUROPEAN RUGBY WITH A CONVINCING VICTORY OVER TOP 14 SIDE CA BRIVE.

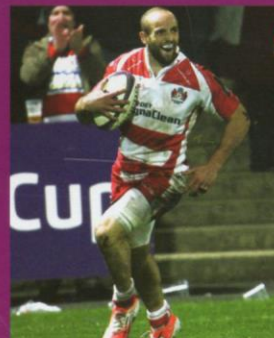
THE French side, boasting a serious continental pedigree, were spirited in the opening exchanges before the home side flexed their collective muscle to run away with the game in a dominant second half.

The evening belonged to winger Charlie Sharples who, aptly on his 150th competitive

hosts played all the rugby and were left to rue several missed opportunities at the turnaround with just a Sharples try and Greig Laidlaw penalty to show for all their first half control.

Brive did threaten on the odd occasion - their flair and adventure was admirable - but the host's defence was rarely breached. When it was, a loose

CHAMPAGNE MOMENT



Few could deny Charlie Sharples a hat trick on his 150th competitive appearance in Cherry and White.

The flying winger was a constant threat all night, and his first try was superbly worked by the whole backline, carving Brive apart before Sharples showed good composure to dot down.

”

IT'S JOB DONE WITH A GOOD SCORELINE AND I'M DELIGHTED WITH THE WAY WE GOT THE EUROPEAN CAMPAIGN STARTED. **David Humphreys**

appearance for the Cherry and Whites, crossed for a hat trick, much to the delight of the Kingsholm faithful.

Naming a strong squad against the Top 14 strugglers, the

ball was run back for a 'try' by Guillaume Namy, but it was rightly ruled out for a French knock on.

The hosts were struggling to create fireworks in the first half of the curtain raiser to the new European Rugby dawn, but in the second half, they fired into life, running in six tries.

After Laidlaw had added a second penalty, the first came from fly half James Hook, pulling the strings in some style for Gloucester, who picked up a supporting line from John Afoa to go under the posts.

This seemed to knock the spirit out of the visitors, and Gloucester took full advantage.

The third try came from milestone man Sharples, who was the beneficiary of some delightful vision from Laidlaw to collect a

kick and gleefully skip over.

Darren Dawidiuk came off the bench to pick up try number four, showing great power and pace to slide over, before Dan Robson this time noticed space behind the Brive defence to set Sharples up for his hat trick try with another neat chip.

It was Robson himself that picked up the sixth try, keeping up with a flying Jonny May after a quick tap penalty by the winger, to pick himself a deserved first score of the season.

The scrums had been a mess throughout, not for the want of the hosts' trying, but resets were common, making for a poor spectacle at the set piece.

Gloucester did smartly wrestle ascendancy and the final play saw the front row drive over for a penalty try to bring up the half century, and mark an ideal opening to the competition for the Cherry and Whites.



ACTION
REPLAY

VS
OYONNAX

OYONNAX

LINE-UP

15	FB	RIAAN SMIT
14	W	SILVERE TIAN
13	C	PIERRE AGUILLON
12	C	ROIMATA HANSELL-PUNE
11	W	ALEX LUATUA
10	FH	REGIS LESPINAS
9	SH	FABIEN CIBRAY
1	P	SOANE TONGA'UIHA
2	H	JODY JENNEKER
3	P	MARC CLERC
4	L	MIREK NEMECEK
5	L	VALENTIN URSACHE
6	F	GUILLAUME BERNAD
7	F	CHRISTOPHE ANDRE
8	N8	PEDRIE WANNENBURG

REPLACEMENTS

16	R	CLEMENT JULLIEN
17	R	ANTOINE TICHIT
18	R	ANTOINE GUILLAMON
19	R	PATRICK SOBELA
20	R	YOHAN DOMENECH
21	R	DUG CODJO
22	R	MATAALI PAEA
23	R	LEON POWER



OYONNAX

15

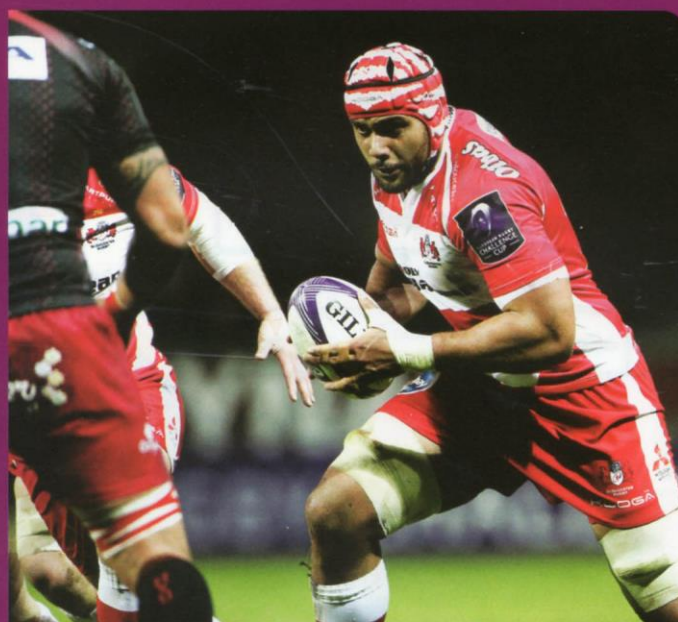
PENS: Smit (9, 31, 38, 45), Lospinas (49)



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

25

TRY: Kvesic (45) PENS: Laidlaw (4, 12, 33, 65, 71, 76) CONS: Laidlaw (46)



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

LINE-UP

15	FB	ROB COOK
14	W	CHARLIE SHARPLES
13	C	HENRY PURDY
12	C	BILLY TWELVETREES
11	W	JONNY MAY
10	FH	JAMES HOOK
9	SH	GREIG LAIDLAW
1	P	NICK WOOD
2	H	RICHARD HIBBARD
3	P	JOHN AFOA
4	L	TOM SAVAGE
5	L	JAMES HUDSON
6	F	SIONE KALAMAFONI
7	F	MATT KVESIC
8	N8	BEN MORGAN

REPLACEMENTS

16	R	DARREN DAWIDIUK
17		YANN THOMAS
18		SILA PUAFISI
19	R	ELLIOT STOOKE
20	R	ROSS MORIARTY
21		DAN ROBSON
22	R	BILLY BURNS
23	R	BILL MEAKES



ROUND 02

GLOUCESTER MAKE IT TWO FROM TWO IN EUROPE

WINNING AWAY IN FRANCE IS ALWAYS AN ACID TEST FOR ANY NEWLY FORMED SQUAD, AND THE CHERRY AND WHITES DID EXACTLY THAT IN TOUGH CONDITIONS IN THE FOOTHILLS OF THE ALPS IN ROUND TWO OF THE EUROPEAN RUGBY CHALLENGE CUP.

OYONNAX, a hugely proud and partisan Top 14 outfit, have claimed some serious scalps in their brief time at France's top table, and the Cherry and Whites were made to work overtime for the points at the Stade Charles-Mathon.

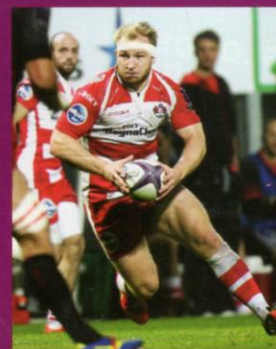
As always, the travelling support was large, but they too were met by

coolness to slot his three kicks, with one more dropping just short.

Charlie Sharples and Jonny May were trying hard to get involved, the pre-match soaking of the pitch curtailed ambitions of spreading the ball to the wide channels but both were dominant in the air, constantly claiming the ball from the French night sky.

Oyonnax struck the first blow in

CHAMPAGNE MOMENT



Matt Kvesic's try came at a crucial time and was an impressive finish. Taking the ball at first receiver after Charlie Sharples won a smart turnover, Kvesic swerved his way to the line, swatting off tacklers to score.

”

THE CHALLENGE FOR US WAS TO MATCH OYONNAX PHYSICALLY AND, UP FRONT, I THOUGHT WE WERE OUTSTANDING. WE'RE DELIGHTED TO COME AWAY WITH THE VICTORY. GREIG (LAIDLAW) WAS OUTSTANDING TOWARDS THE END, UNDER PRESSURE, WHEN EVERY KICK MADE A DIFFERENCE. BUT HE'S PLAYED LIKE THAT FOR THE LAST FEW WEEKS. **David Humphreys**

a vociferous and knowledgeable home faithful who backed their charges from minute one.

Indeed, at times the noise was something else – especially given that the crowd size was relatively modest and Greig Laidlaw showed admirable concentration when kicking at goal.

Laidlaw and Matt Kvesic were the two shining lights in terms of points, but the whole Gloucester team put in a real shift to secure a deserved win and back-to-back wins to kick off the pool.

The first half was the battle of the boot, Laidlaw and home full back Riaan Smit converted three penalties apiece as Gloucester tried to control proceedings in slippery conditions.

With respect for the kicker non-existent, the Scot showed extreme

the second half, Kvesic penalised for going off his feet at a ruck and handing Smit the chance to put the hosts in the lead for the first time, which he duly did.

But almost immediately, Kvesic redeemed himself to score the game's only try. Sharples was razor sharp at the breakdown to regain the kick off, and Laidlaw found the back rower, who stepped, slalomed, powered and then slid his way over the line from the 22 for an impressive solo score.

The try opened up a bit of breathing space but, taking over the kicking duties, Regis Lespinas kicked Oyonnax's fifth and final penalty to keep Gloucester honest.

In the closing stages though, the visitors turned the screw to

put the game to bed, Laidlaw and James Hook were putting the team in the right areas of the pitch and the penalty count was rising against the hosts, much to the hysteria of the home fans.

It was quite a feisty environment, prop Antoin Tichit was sinbinned at the maul, and Laidlaw set about closing the game out with the hosts infringing within goalkicking range. The scrum half was ice cool to slot three penalties in the closing stages, against a cacophony of noise to even deny the hosts a losing bonus point.

The win was hugely deserved and a very professional show from the Cherry and Whites who sit pretty at the top of the pool ahead of the December double header with Zebre.

TODAY'S TEAMS

GLoucester Rugby vs HARLEQUINS

REFEREE: Andrew Small ASSISTANTS: Paul Burton MBE and Paul Dix

TEAMS CORRECT AT TIME OF PRINT

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ROB **COOK**
FULL-BACK

CHARLIE **SHARPLES**
RIGHT WING

BILLY **MEAKES**
OUTSIDE CENTRE

MARK **ATKINSON**
INSIDE CENTRE

HENRY **PURDY**
LEFT WING

BILLY **TWELVETREES (C)**
FLY-HALF

DAN **ROBSON**
SCRUM-HALF

NICK **WOOD**
LOOSEHEAD PROP

DARREN **DAWIDIUK**
HOOKER

JOHN **AFOA**
TIGHTHEAD PROP

TOM **PALMER**
LOCK

JAMES **HUDSON**
LOCK

TOM **SAVAGE**
BLINDSIDE FLANKER

MATT **KVESIC**
OPENSIDE FLANKER

ROSS **MORIARTY**
NUMBER EIGHT

LUKE **COLE**
REPLACEMENT 1

JAMES **GIBBONS**
REPLACEMENT 2

YANN **THOMAS**
REPLACEMENT 3

ELLIOTT **STOOKE**
REPLACEMENT 4

GARETH **EVANS**
REPLACEMENT 5

CALLUM **BRALEY**
REPLACEMENT 6

ALED **THOMAS**
REPLACEMENT 7

STEVE **McCOLL**
REPLACEMENT 8

15

ROSS **CHISHOLM**
FULL-BACK

14

CHARLIE **WALKER**
RIGHT WING

13

MATT **HOPPER**
OUTSIDE CENTRE

12

JORDAN **TURNER-HALL**
INSIDE CENTRE

11

OLLIE **LINDSAY-HAGUE**
LEFT WING

10

NICK **EVANS**
FLY-HALF

9

KARL **DICKSON (C)**
SCRUM-HALF

1

MARK **LAMBERT**
LOOSEHEAD PROP

2

DAVE **WARD**
HOOKER

3

WILL **COLLIER**
TIGHTHEAD PROP

4

CHARLIE **MATTHEWS**
LOCK

5

GEORGE **ROBSON**
LOCK

6

JOE **TRAYFOOT**
BLINDSIDE FLANKER

7

LUKE **WALLACE**
OPENSIDE FLANKER

8

NICK **EASTER**
NUMBER EIGHT

16

ROB **BUCHANAN**
REPLACEMENT 1

17

DARRYL **MARFO**
REPLACEMENT 2

18

KYLE **SINCKLER**
REPLACEMENT 3

19

GEORGE **MERRICK**
REPLACEMENT 4

20

JACK **CLIFFORD**
REPLACEMENT 5

21

SAM **STUART**
REPLACEMENT 6

22

TIM **SWIEL**
REPLACEMENT 7

23

GEORGE **LOWE**
REPLACEMENT 8

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