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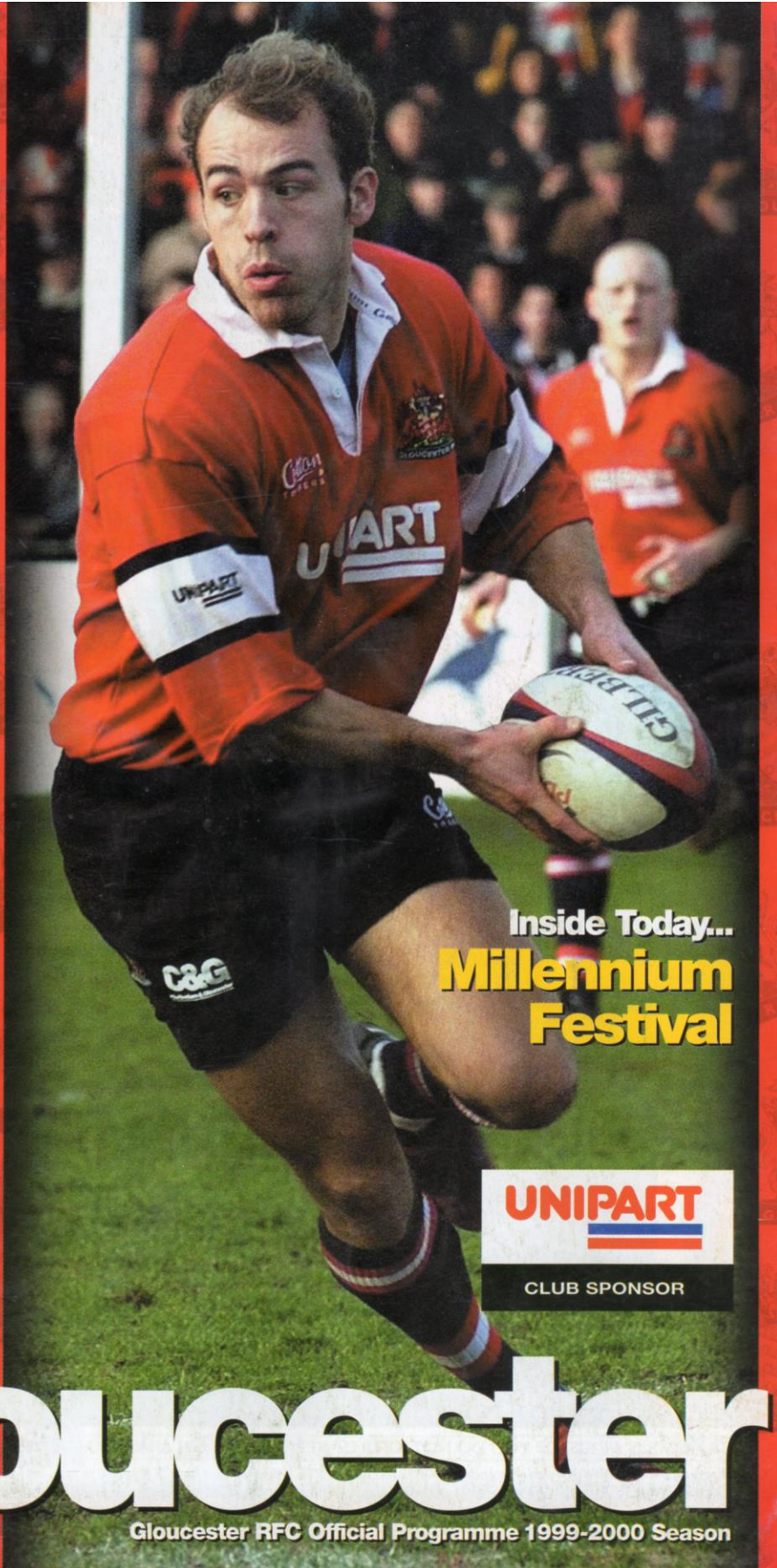
PORGES

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Gloucester

Issue 15 - £2.00

Gloucester RFC Official Programme 1999-2000 Season



Inside Today...
**Millennium
Festival**

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Welcome from The Editors

A Warm Welcome

So here we are, pouring with rain, the cricket season started and the penultimate match of the season at Kingsholm. And before today's encounter with London Wasps, the Gloucestershire Rugby Football Union will be staging the finals of three age groups of its "Millennium Festival" (four months into 2000 and the "M" word is still about!).

One wonders just how many of the youngsters taking part in the finals will go on to becoming professional players in the Premiership, hopefully with Gloucester. It says a lot that the finals are being "shared" by the two Allied Dunbar Premiership One clubs of the Gloucestershire Union - tomorrow's two finals are being staged as the "curtain-raiser" to the Bristol vs Newcastle Falcons games at the Memorial Stadium. The organisers had some very difficult decisions to make as to which finals were played where. The Bristol area produced just two finalists out of ten. So those two teams - Clevedon and Clifton - were allocated to the Memorial Stadium. This meant that a Gloucester team - Longlevens - and Dursley have to play their matches down in Bristol. The way things panned out did not go down too well in the Deacon household. Andy Deacon's son is playing in the Longlevens side! So special good

wishes to Longlevens tomorrow in Bristol. And while we are on the subject of Bristol, congratulations to the club on their win against Biarritz - on French soil as well. It would be good to see a West Country team go all the way in the European Shield.

Finally, Tony Martin who organises the Gloucester tug 'o war team (thus far undefeated against all opposition at Kingsholm) is on the lookout for new, err, "players" - what does one call a participant in a tug 'o war? If you want to help give opposing supporters the old "heave-ho", then contact Tony Martin on 01452 532788.

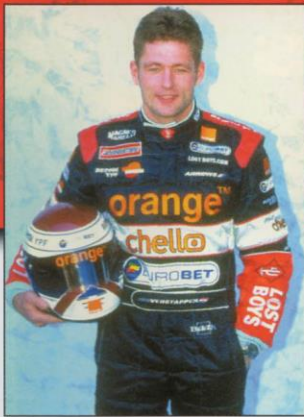
Finally, finally... this programme was prepared before the visit to

Welford Road on Tuesday - and Wasps' encounter with Bristol on Wednesday. Therefore, the team lists might well be somewhat wrong! And finally, finally, finally: Did you read the "small print" on page three of the May issue of Rugby World - the one with the "Raging Bull" on the cover? There at the bottom of the Who's Who panel was: "Special thanks this issue to: Mark for proposing to Katie ..."

Now, as Katie Coker, formally of St. John's Lane, is the writer/sub editor at Rugby World, does this mean that she is getting married? Alistair Downey, who now occupies Katie's seat at the Citizen remained tight-lipped. Hmm. But he did agree that one and one does indeed make two!



When Jos came to Kingsholm



When Dutch F1 driver Jos Verstappen saw what looked like a certain fourth place in last month's Brazilian Grand Prix become an out-of-the-points seventh, he realised that he was the problem and not his sleek Orange Arrows machine.

And the problem was his neck. His neck muscles just could not stand up to the massive G-forces that an F1 driver experiences as he drives around circuits at up to 200 mph. Realising something had to be done fast, Tom Walkinshaw turned to his "less glamorous" sporting interest – Gloucester Rugby Football Club – for help. And Verstappen was put into training with some of the strongest necks in the country. The diminutive Dutchman joined the likes of Phil Vickery and Trevor Woodman in the Kingsholm gym under the watchful eye of fitness coach Ed Archer in a bid to get back full fitness.

Ed and GRFC osteopath Jean-Pierre Darnaud have quietly been helping Verstappen – and will continue to do so



over the current F1 season. "Jos is working with weights in a specially-made programme," said Archer, who was temporarily drafted into the Arrows F1 team at the beginning of the season while they were recruiting a physio.

"The neck is one of those places where rugby players and racing drivers have a lot in common." "But you have to be very careful because you can do a lot of damage to your neck if you don't know what you are doing when exercising," he warned. While to most people the idea of a top racing driver in F1 coming to a rugby club for help in fitness might seem somewhat strange, Verstappen has no such thoughts. "I've definitely come to the right place to work on my neck," he insisted during a visit to Kingsholm. He went on to explain about the problem that caught up with him in Brazil. "Brazil is always hard because we drive around the track the opposite way

to normal – and that affects different muscles." "But this year, it was a nightmare for me," he admitted. "The car is so fast I could have finished fourth but it just slipped away because my neck was gone after 35 laps."

"In the end it went numb – on the left hand corners it would just flop onto the side of the cockpit because the muscles are weaker on that side. And, under braking, I just could not hold up my head and it would fall forward.

"But I was determined not to give up – it was one of the longest races of my life". With a scrumming machine suitably handy at Kingsholm, Verstappen, with Vickery and Woodman propping, became Gloucester's honorary Dutch hooker while the camera shutters clicked away!

Vickery quipped: "I don't think I would be too worried if Jos was coming at me on the pitch – unless he was in his car!" But Vickery turned serious and said: "If Jos wants to help his neck, he'll want to bulk up his upper body." Having met 'The Raging Bull' and team mates Woodman, McCarthy, and Gloucester's two Jones boys – Ian and Kingsley, Verstappen declared: "The size of these guys is incredible. I certainly wouldn't fancy playing rugby against them – they'd break me in half!"



Jos Verstappen

**Someone up there
doesn't like us**

**Peter
Arnold**

It almost seems as if some malign spirit has been hovering over Kingsholm recently. A few weeks ago we were riding high, basking in the euphoria of a table-topping spot, and then, quite suddenly it all went, as they say in the cop shows, pear shaped.

All right, so one has to expect an injury crisis at some point in the season. But this time, it's not just the quantity of damaged players which has been affecting us, it's also the quality. If someone had selected the people ruled out of several games, they could hardly have done us more damage. You can't lose your first choices at scrum-half, outside-half, in the centre, on both wings and at full-back without feeling the pinch.

Furthermore, we found ourselves taking on, arguably, the two best running sides in the Premiership in perfect, sunny conditions in a period when almost every other day was as wet and soggy as we've seen all season.

It would just be tempting fate too far to say that nothing else can go wrong, because it always can. Has someone out there been sticking pins into a wax effigy of Philippe Saint André?

CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE

I know it's not politically correct to say anything nice about Bath in these columns, but I must admit to feeling gratified to read Andy Robinson's club's attitude to Phil Vickery's sending off the other week.

I wouldn't want to get into the circumstances of the dismissal here. Apart from anything else, it would be

very easy to say something which might prejudice the disciplinary hearing in May in what is, after all, an official club publication. However it was nice to hear that the injured party, Mark Reagan, accepted Phil's apology gracefully and told him "not to worry about it". Similarly, Andy Robinson himself was reported to be quite laid back about the whole thing, insisting that there would be no Bath "witch hunt" over the matter. It's a nice attitude: one which hasn't always been seen in similar circumstances.

Of course, Phil isn't the only Gloucester prop to have blotted his copybook this way. There were times when the great Mike Burton almost seemed to be making a career of it. Not that 'Burto' always deserved the attentions he got, or that all the stories about him were true. I never quite believed, for example, the story that Mike Burton was once reported for putting in a late tackle – on the referee at the after-match dinner.

There was also the spoof press report posted on the notice board in the Clubhouse after one Calcutta Cup match. It read:

GLOUCESTER'S MIKE BURTON HAS RETURNED FROM MURRAY FIELD WITH A BADLY BRUISED LEG. OWNER CAN RECLAIM IT BY WRITING TO....

INTERESTING COMBINATION

I see that our old friend Richard Hill is to return to the English club scene next season. He's to leave Ebbw Vale and join Harlequins. We wish him every success in the world, and are pleased to think that his new

appointment probably means that we shall see him back at Kingsholm for at least one match next time round.

Fair play to Richard. He's done a very good job for Vale while he's been there. Last Saturday they were a shade unlucky to lose to London Irish and miss out on a European Shield semi-final spot. Similarly, he's put in a lot of sterling work for England 'A', as a whole clutch of Gloucester players can tell you.

One thing intrigues me. According to the report I read, Richard will be "working with" Quins coach, the great Zinzan Brooke. As we know, both of them are strong characters who do like to have their own way, which is no more than one would expect from someone who coaches at this level.

I wonder if all the sparks that fly will be on the field.

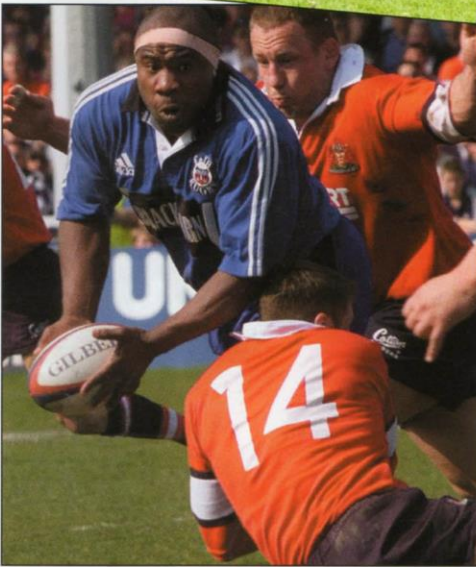
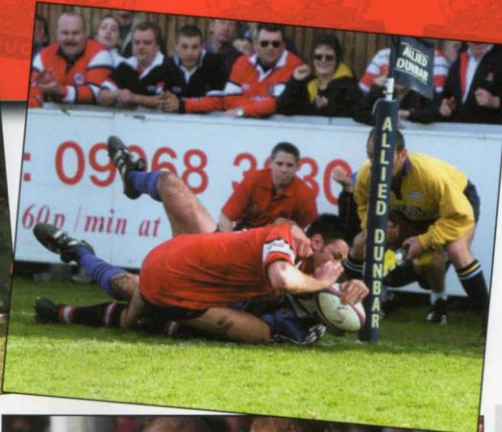
WELL DONE THE OLD BOYS

Amid the welter of Premiership points, Tetley Bitter Cup games, European competitions, it's nice to know that the good old County Cup has lost little of its prestige and appeal. Anyone who doubts that has only to consider this season's Final between Gloucester Old Boys and Cheltenham North. Possibly the skill levels weren't quite as high as one sees in the senior competitions, but that encounter need yield little to any other game, anywhere, in sheer commitment, passion and intensity.

Congratulations to the Old Boys, who just about squeaked it. No doubt the win made up for some disappointing results they've been suffering lately.

Match Action

Gloucester 16 - 36 Bath Rugby



Match Action

Read The News And Air Your Views on the Official Gloucester RFC Website
www.kingsholm-chronicle.org.uk

Action Extra

Leicester 24 - 13 Gloucester



Action Extra

Read The News And Air Your Views on the Official Gloucester RFC Website
www.kingsholm-chronicle.org.uk

From The Commentary Booth

by David Reed

Many, many, many years ago - when eligibility problems for Wales were not an issue, (as New Zealand had not yet been discovered); and before the days of only two Rugby giants in the West Country, since Bath would never have been a match even for Spartans or Hucclecote Old Boys on the field – the Persians began to encroach on Greek territory, so the inhabitants of the Greek city of Ionia started a revolution against the Persian opposition.

The date was 499 B.C. and the time 2.15 on a Saturday afternoon (no floodlights, of course, but even then Sky ruled the airways). The Persians, led by Darius, having trained for three hours a day, were supremely fit, and won the battle but this was only the first round.

Nine years later the second round was planned, but nobody had told the Persians who were still celebrating the close season. Rumours began circulating of an impending confrontation, so Darius despatched a messenger to find out what was happening.

The messenger returned with news that an Athenian army was

already heading towards the Persians. He reported that they appeared to be much stronger than the outfit that lost the first round, headed by a fully professional team, together with coaches, fitness experts, physios and baggage men.

Darius and his followers were not pleased with the news that the messenger brought. They began to curse and vilify him, and when the conflict resulted in a heavy defeat for the Persians, they blamed the messenger for his reporting of the event, which as it turned out proved entirely accurate.

Not much has changed in two and a half thousand years, as your correspondent can report from recent conversations with some followers of the Cherry and Whites: "I listened to you on the radio last week against London Irish /Northampton /Bath. I knew we would lose as soon as I heard you. Why can't you bring us good news for a change?" one said.

Let me emphasize that the 'followers' are not the genuine 'supporters' who, by their very nature, and at no little cost, show their loyalty and commitment by attending all matches, home and away, and hence are not among our regular listeners of live commentaries on BBC Radio Gloucestershire.

In truth, this season has provided less vilification than seasons past – trips to West Hartlepool and Bedford last year to name but two – until the Tetley Bitter Quarter-Final at London Irish a few weeks ago. Since then, my colleagues and I have had to carry the entire responsibility, or so it might seem, for recent disappointing results.

Not all the feedback is negative, however. I am pleased that we are able to provide a reliable service to the spouses of genuine supporters. Their knowledge of the result, before their partner gets home, enables them to know what mood to expect when their loved ones return from the battlefield, and prepare accordingly!

There is just one request that we have been unable to resolve so far. This comes from the supporter who would like the 'live' commentary delayed for about three hours, so his wife won't question why it's taken him so long to get home! A possible solution could be a microchip in each of his clocks to suspend time for the required period on match days.

Any better ideas?

David Reed

David Reed is the 'play – by – play' commentator for BBC Radio Gloucestershire.



Today's Officials

Referee:

Nigel Yates

Touch Judges:

Brian Campsall

Tony Spreadbury



CATHERINE JANE PINNER

Catherine, who was eight last month, comes from Swindon where she lives with her mother and father, Debbie and Derrick. She is a pupil at Brook Field School, Swindon, where the headmaster – a Welshman – is a keen Bath supporter! Catherine lists as her interests horse riding, playing the piano, the Brownies, reading and swimming. Her favourite rugby player is Steve Ojomoh, so hopefully she will not fall out with her headmaster! We hope you enjoy your special day at Kingsholm, Catherine.

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Saturday April 22, 2000

Today's Line-Ups

Gloucester

15	Chris Catling
14	Brian Johnson
13	Terry Fanolua
12	Chris Yates
11	Rob Jewell
10	Simon Mannix
9	Elton Moncrieff
1	Trevor Woodman
2	Neil McCarthy
3	Phil Vickery
4	Rob Fidler
5	Ian Jones
6	Steve Ojomoh
7	Kingsley Jones (C)
8	Ed Pearce

London Wasps

15	Josh Lewsey
14	Shane Roiser
13	Fraser Waters
12	Rob Henderson
11	Kenny Logan
10	Alex King
9	Martyn Wood
1	Darren Molloy
2	Phil Greening
3	Will Green
4	Simon Shaw
5	Andy Reed
6	Joe Worsley
7	Lawrence Dallaglio (C)
8	Paul Volley

Replacements

16	Chris Fortey	TBA	16
17	Andy Deacon	TBA	17
18	Adey Powles	TBA	18
19	Andrew Hazell	TBA	19
20	Ian Sanders	TBA	20
21	Byron Hayward	TBA	21
22	Joe Ewens	TBA	22