



# GLOUCESTER RUGBY

**vs Oyonnax**

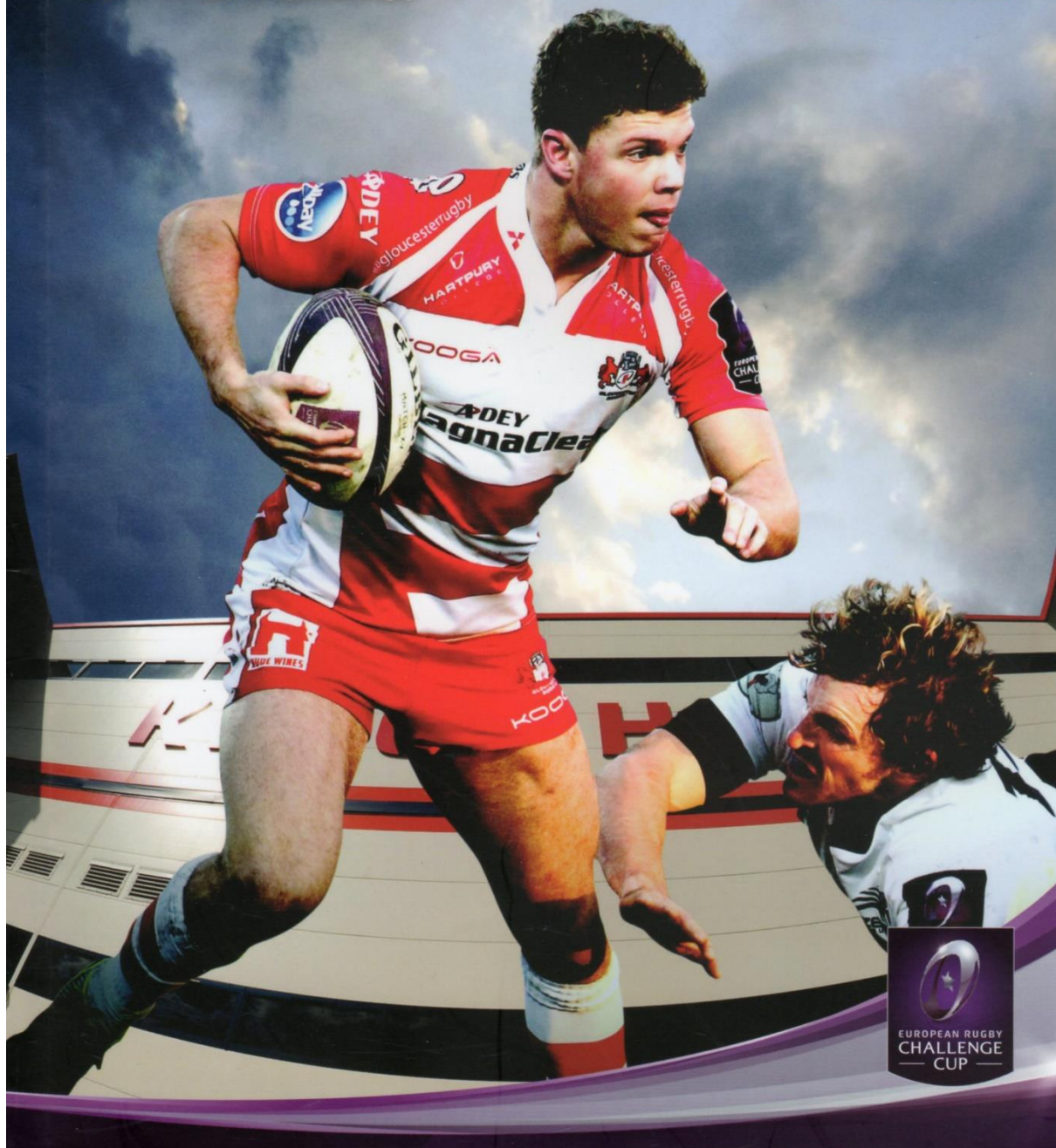
**European Rugby Challenge Cup Round 05: 17.01.2015**

Inside today's matchday programme we have an exclusive interview with Junior World Cup winner Henry Purdy, action replay from the recent victory over Exeter Chiefs and features from our regular contributors Bob Fenton, Ian Randall, The Citizen and the Gloucester Rugby Heritage Project.

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**PLUS**  
An **EXCLUSIVE**  
first interview  
with new signing  
Jeremy Thrush

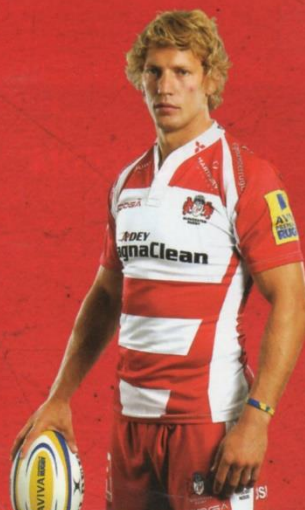






# CAPTAIN'S CORNER BILLY TWELVETREES

GOOD AFTERNOON, AND WELCOME TO KINGSHOLM FOR TODAY'S CLASH WITH OYONNAX, AND WELCOME TO ALL OF OUR GUESTS FROM FRANCE.



**W**E experienced a great, feisty atmosphere when we travelled to the Stade Charles Mathon in October, and we had to work really hard to produce the result.

Their form since has shown what a good result that was, as Christophe Urios' men have really impressed in the Top 14, coming off the back of a victory against Montpellier last weekend.

That said, we had a great result

last Friday night against Saracens. There has been a real buzz about the camp in the last fortnight, and it is a really good feeling after a tough Christmas period.

We spoke after the game of the satisfaction of putting in a memorable performance in front of our own supporters, especially after the backing and faith they have put in us.

Of course, margins in the Premiership are so tight, and

we were on the wrong end of this against Wasps, but in the victories against Exeter and Saracens we rode our luck at times but fully deserved the wins in the final reckoning.

I'm sure the closing stages of last Friday's game will stay in the minds of everyone at the club for a long time, and we have to use this as a springboard to maintain momentum going forward.

The next few weeks in Europe and the LV= Cup are massive for the squad. To keep the momentum going from the New Year, to see some players come back from injury and see some young guys taking the field is important. The momentum we can take from these games going back into the Premiership is crucial for our season.

All our focus, however, is on today's game, and it is testament to Oyonnax's development that they have established themselves in the Top 14 in only their second full season and taken some notable scalps.

This tournament has been a great thing to play in so far this season, to go four from four has been great, in what is a massively tricky group. We will be doing all we can today to make it five from five.

Enjoy the game.

Billy



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THIS TOURNAMENT HAS BEEN A GREAT THING TO PLAY IN SO FAR THIS SEASON, TO GO FOUR FROM FOUR HAS BEEN GREAT, IN WHAT IS A MASSIVELY TRICKY GROUP. WE WILL BE DOING ALL WE CAN TODAY TO MAKE IT FIVE FROM FIVE.

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GOOD AFTERNOON AND WELCOME BACK TO KINGSHOLM AS WE RESUME OUR EUROPEAN RUGBY CHALLENGE CUP CAMPAIGN AGAINST OYONNAX.

**I**'M sure many of you are still recovering from the drama and excitement of last week's Aviva Premiership game against Saracens. Throughout my career, I don't think I've ever experienced such a range of emotions as I did during the last five minutes of Friday's match.

A drop goal to win, a Saracens bonus point try disallowed, a TMO decision and, finally, a magnificent penalty kick from James Hook to win the game. In the end, we were lucky to get the opportunity to win the game, but the performance across the 80 minutes fully merited the final result. The celebrations both on and off the field showed what the victory meant to everyone involved!

We are all very confident that we are making progress and the hard work being done on the training pitch is increasingly being reflected in the way we are playing.

the future.

With players unwell in the build up to the game, losing Greig Laidlaw and Tom Palmer on match day and then suffering three significant injuries during the game, I was absolutely delighted with the character and determination that we showed on the night to find a way to win the game. No-one can ever question the heart or will to win within the current group of players.

home quarter-final.

We've made a good start in the pool so far with four wins from four games and the important thing now is to maintain the momentum of the last couple of weeks and win again this evening.

The first meeting between the two sides over in Oyonnax back in October was a tight encounter and was only settled in the final quarter of an hour through Greig's outstanding goal kicking. They had



He " "

THERE WAS MORE GOOD NEWS THIS WEEK WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT JEREMY THRUSH HAS AGREED TO JOIN GLOUCESTER AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE WORLD CUP. HE WILL BE A GREAT SIGNING FOR THE CLUB AS WE ADD EVEN MORE QUALITY TO THE FORWARD PACK FOR NEXT SEASON...

We're not always getting the results we would like, but the last two victories have shown that we are capable of beating anyone on our day and the experience of winning such close contests is important for

There was more good news this week with the announcement that Jeremy Thrush has agreed to join Gloucester at the conclusion of the World Cup. He will be a great signing for the Club as we add even more quality to the forward pack for next season and I'm sure you'll enjoy his interview in today's programme.

However, the next two weeks are all about Europe and we have two immediate goals – the first is to secure first place in the group to qualify for the knock out stages and the second is to guarantee a

a great victory last week in the Top 14 against Montpellier and are still very much in contention to win this pool, and qualify in Europe, if they can get a result today.

As has been the case all season, Kingsholm was intimidating and passionate against Saracens and we're all looking forward to another big European afternoon to thank you for your fantastic support.

David



## ALL BLACK JEREMY THRUSH SIGNS FOR GLOUCESTER RUGBY



**Gloucester Rugby are delighted to confirm the signing of New Zealand international second row Jeremy Thrush from the Hurricanes for next season.**

Thrush, who has won 11 caps for the All Blacks and was part of their recent UK Tour Squad, will join up with the Gloucester Squad at the end of the 2015 Rugby World Cup.

Director of Rugby, David Humphreys, was delighted to confirm his signing and commented, "Signing a player of Jeremy's ability further highlights Gloucester's ambition to compete with the best clubs in Europe. He has been a stand out performer in Super XV rugby over a number of seasons, and the experience he has gained being part of a successful All Blacks squad will be a key element in establishing Gloucester as one of the dominant forward packs in England.

"His recent man of the match performance against Scotland showed what Jeremy will bring to Gloucester in terms of his

rugby ability but he will also add huge value to the squad, both on and off the field, through his leadership abilities.

"As we continue to build our squad for the 2015/16 season, our initial focus was the retention of key players who were out of contract. This has now been done and with Jeremy's announcement this morning, we will continue to add strength in depth to our squad over the next few weeks."

Gloucester Rugby CEO Stephen Vaughan commented, "The addition of a top quality All Black like Jeremy to our squad demonstrates our determination to keep building towards having a squad capable of consistently challenging for honours going forward.

"We began a rebuilding process this season by introducing a completely new coaching set up and a host of new players and we see this exciting announcement as further reinforcement of our total commitment to investing in the playing squad."

**LATEST  
EDITION OF  
@ HOLM  
MAGAZINE  
NOW ON  
SALE**



**The second issue of the new lifestyle magazine '@ Holm' is on sale at today's game from all gates, and the club shop.**

Plenty of the squad have played their part in the production for the magazine with Dan Robson continuing as guest editor.

The latest edition features an exclusive chat with Tom Savage, and a look at life off the pitch for the Cherry and Whites including nods to music, film and gaming reviews.

The second issue is on sale for £4 and a subscription offer is also available.



# THE VIEW FROM The Citizen



**SCAN THE  
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AND STORIES  
FROM OUR  
WEBSITE**

**SNOW AND ICE  
PREDICTED**  
as severe  
weather warning  
issued for  
Gloucestershire

**SIX & SEVEN  
YEAR OLD  
LEFT ALONE** in  
Gloucester home  
while mums were  
off partying

**ANDY DEACON**  
leaves  
Cinderford  
Rugby Club

**BEN MORGAN**  
says thank you  
to all his well-  
wishers

## A MORAL VICTORY FOR RUGBY

**GLOUCESTER not only won on the scoreboard last Friday but it was a moral victory for rugby.**

Sitting in the press box, doing my utmost to remain impartial, I felt thoroughly deflated as Chris Ashton appeared to put the final nail in the Cherry and Whites' coffin.

Typically, the Premiership heavyweights did not come to play rugby. They came to shut up shop and force Gloucester into mistakes through the squeeze.

Saracens are symptomatic of the negative way rugby is increasingly played in the northern hemisphere.

Rugby where teams are often more successful without the ball than with it – defences win the day.

Love him or hate him, Austin Healey made the same point following Northampton Saints' festive victory over Harlequins at Twickenham.

Healey called for penalties to be devalued and questioned how match points could be reformed to encourage teams to play with the ball and not without it – to make rugby a more exciting spectacle in an increasingly competitive market.

Saracens did very little at Kingsholm – they are more comfortable without possession,



**(above) One way traffic**  
Saracens did little to entertain the crowd at Kingsholm

**(right) Celebrate**  
Gloucester, although not the finished article yet, showed glimpses of what we can expect at Kingsholm

forcing mistakes to pounce upon and the stats are reflective of that.

The Barnet-based club had just a 26 per cent share of possession and 24 per cent territory – you could claim that was down to Gloucester but it is a common trend.

They made just one clean break and beat six defenders compared to the Cherry and Whites' nine and 43.

They ran the ball only 57 times, compared to Gloucester's 170 and



” THEY WERE FULL OF AUDACITY, SKILL, SPEED AND FLAIR – WORTH THE ATTENDANCE FEE ALONE, UNLIKE SARACENS. IF I WAS A PUNTER I WOULD NOT BE PARTING WITH MY HARD EARNED TO REGULARLY ATTEND ALLIANZ PARK.



made just 252 metres, while opting to kick the ball away more.

Their first try came from the whistle of JP Doyle following a driving lineout and their other touchdowns from Billy and Mako Vunipola were off the back of forward drives.

Yes, it has a major part to play in the game but the big-spending club offered nothing else in terms of attack.

What do we want to see – brains or brawn? Hopefully a combination of both but at the moment the balance is off.

Gloucester on the other hand scored two tries which will surely contend for gongs at the end of the season.

They were full of audacity, skill, speed and flair – worth the attendance fee alone, unlike Saracens. If I was a punter I

would not be parting with my hard earned to regularly attend Allianz Park.

So when James Hook lined up and slotted the match winning kick from distance it was not just a win for Gloucester but a win for rugby.

Make no mistake, the same could be said of Gloucester's one-point victory over Exeter Chiefs the previous week. The Sandy Park faithful had every right to plead 'we was robbed.'

During that encounter the Chiefs had the majority of territory and possession and made 13 line-breaks to Gloucester's solitary one.

But the Cherry and Whites still displayed attacking enterprise and skill on occasions – take the build-up to Ben Morgan's try, with Matt Kvesic breaking out of his half as an example.

Fortunately it is not a common

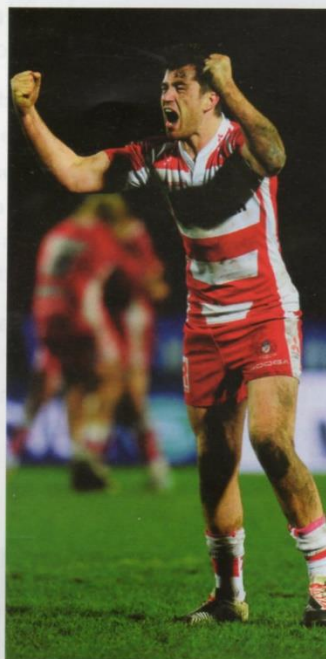
trend at Gloucester and now they appear to be sharpening their clinical edge we will hopefully see their pressure turned into points on a more regular basis.

This afternoon's clash against Oyonnax promises to be a much more open affair.

We whispered it quietly at the beginning of the season but as soon as the draw was made everyone knew Gloucester should top the pool.

They have done so in impressive fashion, currently unbeaten having taken 19 points from a possible 20.

David Humphreys men are top seeds in the European Challenge Cup and can book their place in the quarter-finals by completing a double over Oyonnax, who next season will be coached by former Kingsholm favourite Olivier Azam.



Citizen AVAILABLE DAILY



GLOUCESTER RUGBY  
HERITAGE

www.gloucester rugby heritage.org.uk

FLY  
HALVES  
- PART TWO**TERRY HOPSON**

**Terry arrived at Kingsholm at the start of the 1959-60 season, having already played two terms for Bath as a centre. Terry was an outstandingly gifted fly half who could kick long distances and make electrifying breaks.**

He swiftly formed a legendary partnership at half back with Mickey Booth. Between 1959 and 1970 Terry played 314 games for Gloucester, and partnered Mickey in 204 of those.

In January 1967 Hopson played for Western Counties against the touring Australians and had a fine game. In addition to scoring two penalties in the 9-0 win, he was



stopped inches short of the try line, after making a typical break.

Later that season due to a disagreement with the club over selection policy, Terry returned to Bath. However he was back at Kingsholm the following season.

He played for Western Counties against the South Africans in 1969, and for Gloucestershire in the losing final against Staffordshire in 1970.

He played for the county 20 times.

Terry broke his leg playing against Sale in April 1970 which ended his career. For Gloucester he scored 102 tries.

**TOM PALMER**

**Tom was a Cornishman who also played for Truro. He debuted at Gloucester in 1967, playing in the centre.**



He played his county rugby for Cornwall and appeared at fly half in the final against Lancashire, at Redruth before 22,000 spectators, in 1969. At one point Cornwall led 9-0, but lost in the end 9-11.

Following Terry Hopson's career ending injury, Tom took over at fly half, and with the evergreen Mickey Booth forged a sound partnership. They were the half backs throughout Gloucester's successful cup campaign of 1971-72 culminating in the 17-6 win over Moseley at Twickenham, in the final. Palmer and Booth both scored drop goals.

Tom's form that season was so good that he was England reserve

fly half through the International campaign, and went on to tour South Africa with England that summer, although he did not gain a cap. Tom made 210 team appearances for Gloucester and scored 258 points including 28 tries.

**CHRIS WILLIAMS**

**Chris was a big aggressive fly half, who first played for Lydney, St.Pauls College (Cheltenham), Headingley and RAF before joining Gloucester in November 1975.**

He appeared for the county in a semi-final game against Warwickshire in February 1975, whilst still a Headingley player. He made a regular place for himself in the next county campaign and



appeared in the winning final against Middlesex in March 1976.

Meanwhile for Gloucester he had a good working partnership with Peter Kingston at scrum half in 1975-76, and part of 1976-77, when Paul Howell took over. This combination played against





Leicester in the cup winning team of 1978, and the losing county final against North Midlands in the same season.

Chris won one England cap against France in 1976. Peter Butler and Mike Burton were in the same team. Williams played 101 times for Gloucester scoring 27 tries, and 23 times for Gloucestershire with seven tries.

### MIKE HAMLIN

**Mike was a long serving fly half, who first played for Coney Hill and Cheltenham, joining Gloucester for the start of the 1982-83 season. He played 343 games for the club, scoring 63 tries.**

For many seasons he had an outstanding partnership with Marcus Hannaford at scrum half. He captained Gloucester from 1989-91, and led the club in the cup final against Bath in 1990.



He was a player who never seemed to get injured. Evidence of this is in the sequence of appearances in successive seasons, 1983-91: 41,41,40,40,35,36,33,36.

### MARK MAPLETOFT

**Mark was a popular utility back, equally at home at fly half or full back, and a deadly goal kicker. In his 114 appearances for Gloucester he scored 1,365 points, consisting 39 tries, 183 conversions, 257 penalties and 11 drop goals.**

Mark started out with Rugby Lions for whom he played from

1990-94. He was a big factor in the team's rise to Courage League 1. However, after Rugby had endured two successive relegations, Mark came to Gloucester for the 1994-95 season where he played full back.

He made an immediate impression and was selected for an England 'A' cap, but he picked up an injury which kept him out of the game for a year. Back to full fitness for the start of the 1996-97 season Mark moved to fly half to accommodate the young Chris Catling at full back. This was a season of great success for Mark



as he totalled 458 points, and gained his single England cap.

In 1997-98 he played in the Cheltenham & Gloucester cup winning team which defeated Bedford 33-25. He scored a try, two conversions, two drop goals and a penalty.

In season 1998-99 Simon Mannix signed for Gloucester and Mark's chances became limited, and in July 1999 he moved to Saracens.

### LUDOVIC MERCIER

**In the early noughties there was quite a Gallic air to Kingsholm, with the presence of Phillipe Saint-Andre as Director of Rugby and Ollie Azam the Shed's favourite hooker.**

A band used to play La Marseillaise before the game, and to add to this heady mix Phillipe plucked Ludovic Mercier from the comparative obscurity of French League 2 team Aurillac.

"Ludo" was already kicking conversions and penalties for fun, and he quickly became another Shed hero.

His first season was 2001-02 and in his first five games he kicked 24 penalties. He continued in this vein all season and totalled 508 points, including 96 penalties and 77 conversions. He might not have had the natural elan one might expect in a French player, but he adopted a more English style.

He did though have a sharp eye for an interception. A case in point was in the Powergen Cup final against Northampton in 2003, with Gloucester pinned back to their 22, Ludo intercepted and made it to half way before passing to James Simpson-Daniel, who scored a glorious try, which put the result beyond doubt.

In that season Ludovic



scored another 394 points and won selection for France 'A'. Unfortunately for Gloucester he then returned to France for two seasons to play for Grenoble and Pau, but returned to Kingsholm for the 2005-06 season.

He played in the team which won the European Challenge Cup against London Irish that season, scoring two penalties and a conversion. In 2006-07 he found game time more difficult with the arrival of Ryan Lamb, and he left the club at the end of the season.

In his 105 games Ludovic scored 1,325 points, consisting of 14 tries, 224 conversions, 247 penalties and 22 drop goals.



PLAYER  
FEATURE

HENRY  
PURDY





**DID YOU KNOW?** | EDUCATED AT BURFORD SCHOOL AND COKETHORPE SCHOOL, OXFORD-  
BORN HENRY FIRST PLAYED WHEN SEVEN AT CHIPPING NORTON RFC.

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...IT HAS SURPASSED MY EXPECTATIONS, BUT TO BE HONEST YOU ARE HOPING FOR THAT, WHEN YOU HAVE HOPE YOU ARE ASPIRING TO DO THAT. WHEN YOU ACHIEVE IT, YOU SIT BACK AND THINK, 'YOU'VE DONE ALRIGHT, BUT WHAT NEXT?' SO NOW I CAN KEEP LOOKING FORWARD AND PUSH ON. BUT I HAVE LOVED EVERY MINUTE.

# IMPRESSION MADE

FRESH FROM A DREAM SUMMER, HENRY PURDY ARRIVED IN GLOUCESTER READY TO KNUCKLE AND WORK HARD AT HIS NEW CLUB.

**H**OWEVER, after impressing greatly in training and playing a big part in the club's success in the Premiership Rugby 7s in the summer, the 20-year old flyer is now looking to build on his eleven first team appearances and add to the three tries.

Defending the Junior World Championship was a special achievement for the band of promising youngsters and also the Backs and Attacks coach in the Cherry and White squad, and it is clear Purdy is keen to continue that momentum.

"It was a great experience, I was lucky enough to be in for two years, and they were both great experiences. This summer especially, to go over to New Zealand and retain the trophy was fantastic.

"It was a great bunch of boys and there was a lot of great camaraderie and banter and this made the trip even better.

"We played a great style of rugby under Walshey and it was a super summer and provides me with some really special memories."

The progression from Junior World Championships into the full national side is a clear pathway, displayed recently in the Southern Hemisphere with Handre Pollard (South Africa) and Sean McMahon



## PLAYER FEATURE

HENRY  
PURDY

(Australia) making the step up to impress in the full test arena.

Purdy can definitely see the importance of the tournament and the progression route it provides is clearly working.

"Absolutely, there was a lot of young talent on show. Even in the English team, there are a lot of the

it came to settling in at a new environment.

"It has definitely helped me, from a rugby perspective Nottingham was a great experience for me. Leicester have got a seriously strong squad, especially in the position I was pitching for at that point.



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IT WAS A GREAT EXPERIENCE, I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO BE IN FOR TWO YEARS, AND THEY WERE BOTH GREAT EXPERIENCES. THIS SUMMER ESPECIALLY, TO GO OVER TO NEW ZEALAND AND RETAIN THE TROPHY WAS FANTASTIC.

boys doing well, to name a few of them; Charlie Ewels and Maro Itoje are captaining their respective LV= Cup teams added to Nick Tompkins at Sarries and the boys here, Ross, Billy and Callum.

"The integration then into starting at Gloucester was great. It is nice to have a few familiar faces around when you start at a new club and the boys were really welcoming.

"To understand how Walshey worked, and to have mates like Ross and Stookey from the year before, with Callum as captain and Billy as well, it made it a lot easier. It was great."

During his time at Leicester Tigers, Purdy spent time at Nottingham in the Championship, an experience that he feels stood him in good stead when

"The opportunities for me at Nottingham were ideal, a chance to play and develop at a decent level. The Championship is a great standard and I could get a bit of game time.

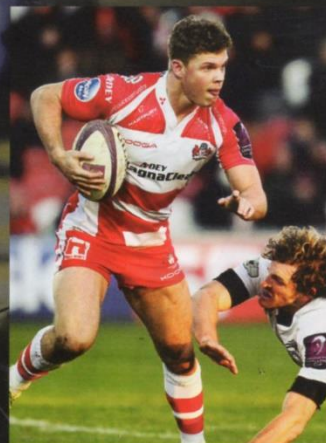
"That helped me when it came to this season as I was used to coming into a new environment and getting to know a new bunch of boys."

Even Purdy is slightly surprised at his rapid development in Cherry and White, to date making 11 appearances after the summer move, and the youngster is loving every minute.

"I would say it has surpassed my expectations, but to be honest you are hoping for that, when you have hope you are aspiring to do that. When you achieve it, you sit back and think, 'You've done



**DID YOU KNOW?** HENRY WAS A MEMBER OF LONDON WASPS ELITE PLAYER DEVELOPMENT GROUP BEFORE JOINING THE LEICESTER TIGERS ACADEMY



“... alright, but what next? So now I can keep looking forward and push on. But I have loved every minute.”

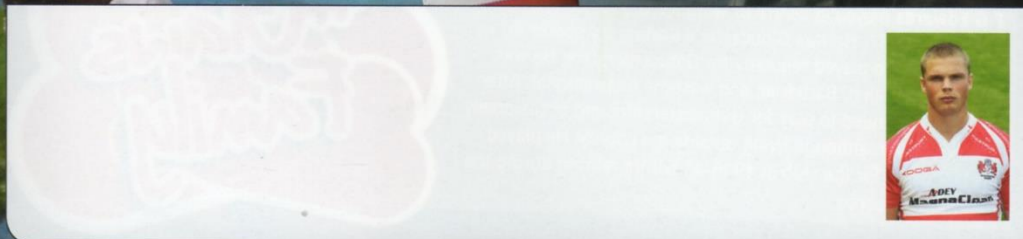
Development in a player is always tested with a trip to France, and Purdy excelled when Gloucester met today's visitors in October, and knows full well the tough challenge Christophe Urios' men will pose at Kingsholm.

“They have some big boys and they pride themselves on carrying hard and their ability in broken field play, so the occasion over there was pretty special. Both sets of fans were amazing and hopefully we can welcome them to Kingsholm and get the support behind us and have a good win.

“We know the next egg of qualification could be reached. We said at the start of the season that Europe was a target of ours and we want to be competing really well on all fronts.

“This means we have to take every challenge as it comes and really work hard to get to where we want to be.”

**GLOUCESTER RUGBY** AUTOGRAPH COLLECTION





# BOB FENTON'S

## KINGSHOLM NEWS

**”** FOR YEARS WE HAVE RAVED ABOUT THE TRY AGAINST WASPS WHEN SINBAD TURNED DALLAGLIO AND SHAW INSIDE OUT BEFORE RELEASING JAMES BAILEY TO SCORE. I RECKON THAT BRALEY'S TRY WAS EVEN BETTER.

**S** O how's your pulse rate? Back to near normal after the last outing here at Kingsholm? I think I am just about there now.

How do you sum up a game like that? It has to be one of the best games we have seen for many a year and, as for the ending... Well James Hook's last ditch penalty was on par with the now legendary conversion that

Mark Mapletoft landed against Leicester all those years ago.

It was a great end to a really good game, we've seen a real change of late in our team. Yes the defeat against Bath was a poor one, against Wasps we were unlucky - there was a fag paper between the teams; at Exeter we showed great tenacity and last week - with what some would argue is a weakened squad - we

pulled out a great result.

Saracens have a reputation of hunting down their opponents to grind out results this season, well last Friday the boot was firmly on the other foot. Apart from their driving mauls and one or two flashes, they showed nothing - our defence absolutely had them in the bag.

And what can you say about our two tries? Well Dan 'Dobby' Robson came close in the corner once, before executing a perfect chip and chase to dot down. That was an outstanding score, worthy of a try of the season contender.

But then, a few minutes later, Jonny May, Gareth Evans and Callum Braley decided to go one better and score what has to be the try of the season.

For years we have raved about the try against Wasps when Sinbad turned Dallaglio and Shaw inside out before releasing James Bailey to score. I reckon that Braley's try was even better.

The guts of Jonny May to run across his own defence from the five metre line, Gareth's bustling run through the centre and then the final pace from the young man to go under the posts... a score worthy of winning any game anywhere. Don't worry if you haven't seen it yet, it'll be repeated on TV for years.





COMING  
UP...

DARREN DAWIDIUK ANSWERS OUR A-Z QUESTIONS



But the win comes at a cost. First Ben Morgan - who had played his England rival Billy Vunipola off the park up to that point - went down as he drove for the line, then Nick Wood was down for an age before leaving on a stretcher. Fortunately it looks like Nick's injury is not so serious, but sadly it seems that we are going to be without Ben for some time.

It's a salient reminder of the risks that are in front of these guys week in, week out. The hits are huge now and I know I mocked Saracens a bit last week over their micro-chip things but, joking aside, that is a great innovative idea for our sport.

We're playing catch up with others - notably NFL in the States and I believe it has been trialled in Rugby League - but if those things can help prevent one serious injury then they are worth the investment.

I can't not mention the reaction

of the Saracens team and staff in the way they reacted to both Ben and Nick's injuries. Watching them applaud the players off the field - including some of their replacements who seemed to



form an impromptu line-up by the tunnel - was good to see and shows the sportsmanship and respect that lives on in our sport.

I guess the other frustrating thing from last weekend is that the win didn't make a difference to our league position. I don't think that there has ever been such a congested mid table since leagues began. At the time of writing Wasps have won seven and lost six and are in fourth position, we have won six and lost seven and are in ninth! It's all to play for!

For now, though, it's time for a break from the league for matters European and Cup. Today against Oyonnax we have a chance to nail down our home quarter-final in the Challenge Cup. I guess we'll be resting a few players through this period but there is no way we will be taking this one lightly.

Not only is there the home tie to play for, there is also this great thing called 'momentum' that is so important to teams. Earlier in the season we were on a roll before the Autumn Internationals disrupted it all for us, we can't let it slip again.

Quite how our French visitors will treat this game is a conundrum. They've scraped themselves up the Top 14 a bit now and are looking like they will avoid relegation and it's not completely impossible for them to get out of the group - two bonus point wins and no points for us from the next two games would see them go ahead of us in the table.

That's not going to happen though, I can be complacent but there is no way that David, Laurie et al will be sending out the team with that mindset. We know from the Brive game here that these are not easy games, but a good early score should settle things down.

We'll do that ok, the only way is up!



# IAN RANDALL'S RUGBY TALK

THINK OF A PLAYER WHO HAD FOUR WINNERS MEDALS IN HIS TIME AT GLOUCESTER. HE SPENT TWO SPELLS AT THE CLUB, PLAYING A TOTAL OF 239 MATCHES. A FRIENDLY, OFTEN WITTY MAN OFF THE FIELD, LONG STANDING SUPPORTERS COMPARED HIS PLAY TO GLOUCESTER FORWARDS OF OLD.

**N**EEDED another clue? Probably not, but he owned a French restaurant in Cheltenham, and he'll take a keen interest in tonight's game.

Olivier Azam is on his way to Oyonnax in the summer as their new Director of Rugby, having cut his teeth looking after the forwards at Toulon and Lyon.

"I first spoke about coaching to Nigel Melville and I did a bit under Dean Ryan," Olivier told me ahead of today's game.

"I knew I wanted to go into coaching and I have learned from every coach in the way they would do things and why. I would ask myself if I would have made the same decisions. I tried to analyse things from the coaches' point of view.

"I did my badges at Gloucester and the opportunity to go to Toulon when I retired was exciting as they had not done well the year before. I was with another young coach (Pierre Mignoni) and we worked hard together. It was a great experience to have Philippe Saint





Andre and then Bernard Laporte guiding us."

Philippe and "Zed" go back a long way. They played at Clermont together before the one brought the other to Kingsholm first time round nearly 15 years ago. His first spell ended in 2003, but he was only back in France with Montferrand for a year before he had two English teams chasing him.

"I had wanted to go back to France to try and get in the French squad for the World Cup," Azam said.

"I was not enjoying my rugby though and Philippe was at Sale. He wanted to take me there as a player coach but it was a bit early for me, and Tom Walkinshaw heard about it and picked up the phone.

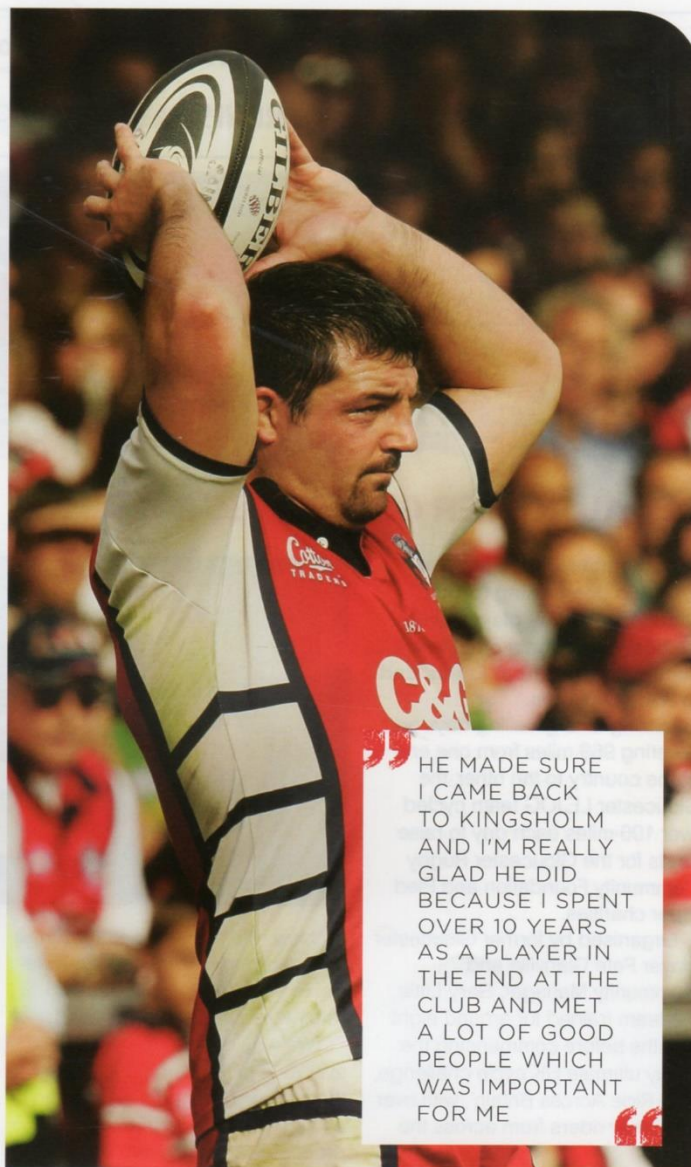
"He made sure I came back to Kingsholm and I'm really glad he did because I spent over 10 years as a player in the end at the club and met a lot of good people which was important for me."

Even now, I could feel Azam's warmth towards the club still burns strongly. He welcomes the fact that Alex Brown, Peter Buxton and Trevor Woodman are still involved, and has been sorry to see a string of former colleagues (Brown, James Forrester, Andy Hazell, Olly Morgan and James Simpson-Daniel) all retire early because of injury.

"They have been unlucky because they were good professionals" Olivier went on.

"I really enjoyed being around guys like Andy Hazell because of everything he put his body through on the pitch, and I also knew if we worked hard to give James some good ball he would always do something amazing - things I couldn't do!

"I've been lucky in my career. I had only two big injuries over 18 seasons and I missed more games because of the scrapes I got into. That was part of my game and I didn't mind getting



HE MADE SURE I CAME BACK TO KINGSHOLM AND I'M REALLY GLAD HE DID BECAUSE I SPENT OVER 10 YEARS AS A PLAYER IN THE END AT THE CLUB AND MET A LOT OF GOOD PEOPLE WHICH WAS IMPORTANT FOR ME

stuck into the opposition. I think I have strong genes, so I must thank my parents for that."

A parent himself, Azam's son is a keen Gloucester supporter, and having met his wife here too, any televised matches are essential viewing with Thomas wearing his very own Gloucester shirt. Next season, dad will ensure he's got an Oyonnax one to go with it.

"Oyonnax reminds me a lot of Gloucester when I first joined the club because of the spirit which is running through it. This is their

second year in the Top 14 and the town lives for the rugby team.

"They need to keep developing as a squad but they have a lot of pride and they work really hard, that is what they are known for. At the moment I am focussed on keeping Lyon in the Top 14, but I am starting to analyse the squad and staff at Oyonnax to make sure we can improve the team next season."

There won't be a fan in the ground today who wouldn't wish him well as he takes on that task.



NEW  
SIGNING

JEREMY  
THRUSH

# ALL BLACK JEREMY THRUSH JOINS GLOUCESTER





GLOUCESTER RUGBY ACHIEVED A SIGNIFICANT SIGNING COUP THIS WEEK WHEN THEY ANNOUNCED THE SIGNING OF NEW ZEALAND INTERNATIONAL SECOND ROW JEREMY THRUSH FOR NEXT SEASON.

**T**HE 29 year old All Black is currently preparing for what could be a very big 2015 for him – a Super Rugby campaign with the Hurricanes and trying to make the All Black World Cup squad before moving to Gloucester.

Speaking exclusively to the Gloucester Rugby matchday programme, he admitted that it's a massive 12 months ahead of him.

"It's going to be an exciting time and I'm really looking forward to it. I've obviously got a bit of rugby to play over here in New Zealand before I get over there, but I'm very excited about the challenge of playing in the Aviva Premiership and being in England is going to be a fantastic experience for me and my partner."

Eagle eyed Gloucester fans

what the club is all about. What he told me really excited me so all I had to do was go home and have a good think about what I wanted to do. And it was a pretty easy decision to be fair."

There's been a significant New Zealand presence in the Gloucester squad over the past few seasons – Greg Somerville and Jimmy Cowan are two recent All Blacks to don the Cherry and White – and there have been plenty of people for him to talk to about the potential move.

"I don't really know Jimmy (Cowan) that well so haven't spoken to him, but I do know John Afoa which is good and I play with Tom Marshall's brother Jim here at the Hurricanes, so we've had a couple of conversations about the prospect.

"I've also talked to some other

hard to hopefully make that All Black squad for the World Cup.

"But I was thinking about the next challenge, and I was genuinely excited about the way David spoke to me about what Gloucester are looking to achieve, how they hope to be contesting for titles in the future.

"It might not happen immediately, but they're looking to build something long term and that really excited me. I want to come over and contest for things and help to build a team that can do that.

"I've also come up against Laurie Fisher's teams many times over the years. The Brumbies have always been a tough team to play against and that's credit to him. He's a very respected coach in the Southern Hemisphere and that's another reason I'm looking forward to it."

”

...IT WAS REALLY GOOD TO CATCH UP WITH DAVID HUMPHREYS OVER THERE AND HE EXPLAINED TO ME WHAT GLOUCESTER'S PLANS ARE AND WHAT THE CLUB IS ALL ABOUT. WHAT HE TOLD ME REALLY EXCITED ME SO ALL I HAD TO DO WAS GO HOME AND HAVE A GOOD THINK ABOUT WHAT I WANTED TO DO. AND IT WAS A PRETTY EASY DECISION TO BE FAIR.



may have spotted Thrush featuring for the All Blacks on their recent tour to the UK – he scored a try in the win over Scotland – and it was on that visit that the prospect of joining Gloucester was first mooted.

"We first started talking when I was over there on the New Zealand tour back in the Autumn. My agent told me that Gloucester were interested and would like to meet up with me before I headed back home to New Zealand.

"So, it was really good to catch up with David Humphreys over there and he explained to me what Gloucester's plans are and

people who've been to Gloucester and who know the area. They all had good things to say about it. One of the All Black trainers also used to work with Gloucester and told me it's a great place to go and a lovely part of England, so that all helped."

Having already achieved a lot in the game, the Auckland born player still has plenty of ambitions and feels that it's the right point in his career to embrace a new challenge.

"I think the timing is right to be honest. I'm hoping to have a good year in Super Rugby with the Hurricanes and will be working

We signed off by pointing out that one of Gloucester's first overseas signings was a New Zealand second row named Ian Jones who went on to make quite an impact at Kingsholm. Thrush admits that he'll be happy to follow in his footsteps.

"I've bumped into Ian quite a fair bit over the years what with his commentary work and he also did a little bit of coaching with me when I was coming through the age groups.

"If I can make an impression like he did with the Gloucester supporters, then I think I'll be doing alright!"





## PLAYER A to Z DARREN DAWIDIUK



...is for

### ATMOSPHERE...

What is the best atmosphere you have experienced?

Heineken Cup game in Toulouse a few seasons ago

...is for best mate  
...**BEST MATE** in rugby?

Too many to mention, I can't pick just one!



...is for **CAREER**...

If you weren't a rugby player what would you be?  
Beach bum

...is for **DRIVE**...

what car are you driving?  
Renault Megane Sport

...is for  
**EMBARRASSED**...  
most embarrassing moment on the field?

When I was red carded against Bath at the Rec for making a good tackle



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...is for **MATCH**...

What is the best match you have played in/watched?

Winning the LV= Cup at Northampton in 2011

...is for

### NICKNAME...

What's yours?  
Duke or Dukey

...is for

### OPPONENT...

Who is the best player you have faced up against?  
Jonny Wilkinson

...is for **PRIDE**...

What is your proudest moment?  
Reaching 100 appearances for Gloucester last weekend

...is for

### QUICKEST...

Who is the fastest player you have played with or against?  
Jonny May

...is for **RUN OUT**

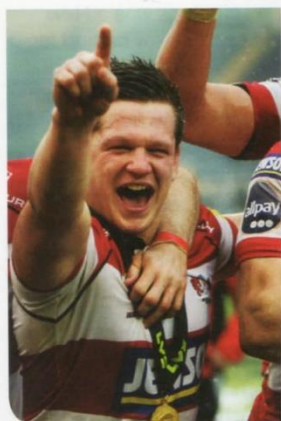
### MUSIC...what's

your tune to run out to?  
Red Hot Chili Peppers - Can't Stop

...is for

### SUPPORT...

What teams do you support?  
My local team, Truro







...is for **FASHION...**  
Who is the worst dressed player in the squad?  
Shane Monahan – sorry mate!

...is for **GLOUCESTER RUGBY...** best thing about Gloucester Rugby?  
*It's a proper rugby club with proper rugby values*

...is for **HARDMAN...**  
Who is the toughest opponent you have played against?  
Gareth Delve

...is for **IDOL...**  
Who is your sporting idol?  
Neil Back

...is for **JOKER...**  
Who is the funniest person you have shared a dressing room with?  
*They're a comedy duo – Andy Hazell and Will James*

...is for **KINGSHOLM**  
...describe Kingsholm in three words?  
*Electric, passionate, uplifting*

...is for **LIFE after rugby...**  
What are your future plans?  
*Travelling around the world*

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...is for **TRY...**  
What is the best try you have ever scored?  
*Against London Irish, I did a show and go and did the full back!*

...is for **UNBELIEVABLE...**  
Tell us something surprising about yourself  
*I spend a lot of time surfing when I go home to Cornwall*

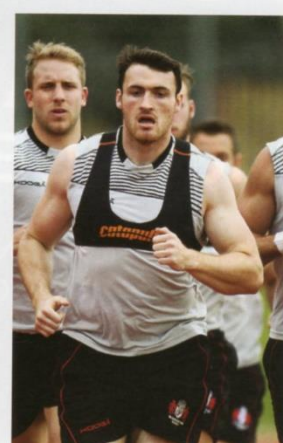
...is for **VISITOR...**  
What is your favourite ground to play at?  
*Kingsholm – no competition*

...is for **WORST...**  
What is the worst thing about being a rugby player?  
*Injuries*

...is for **X-RAY...**  
What is the worst injury you have suffered?  
*Ruptured bicep tendon*

...is for **YOUTH...**  
What advice would you give to aspiring rugby players?  
*Work hard, never give up*

...is for **ZZZzz...**  
Which player has the worst banter?  
*Shane Monahan*





# ACTION REPLAY

VS  
WASPS

## GLOUCESTER RUGBY

### LINE-UP

15	FB	STEVE MCCOLL
14	W	CHARLIE SHARPLES
13	C	MARK ATKINSON
12	C	BILLY TWELVETREES (C)
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	TOM PALMER
6	F	SIONE KALAMAFONI
7	F	MATT KVESIC
8	NB	GARETH EVANS

### REPLACEMENTS

16	H	DARREN DAWIDIUK
17	P	YANN THOMAS
18	P	SHAUN KNIGHT
19	L	JAMES HUDSON
20	NB	ROSS MORIARTY
21	SH	DAN ROBSON
22	FB	BILLY BURNS
23		HENRY PURDY



# GLOUCESTER RUGBY

# 23

**TRIES:** May (1), Kvesic (29) **CONS:** Laidlaw (1, 30) **PENS:** Laidlaw (45, 51, 59)



# WASPS

# 30

**TRIES:** Wade (8), Varndell (19), Hughes (36) **CONS:** Goode (9, 19, 37) **PENS:** Goode (16, 63), Daly (75)



## WASPS

### LINE-UP

15	FB	ANDREA MASI
14	W	CHRISTIAN WADE
13	C	ELLIOT DALY
12	C	BEN JACOBS
11	W	TOM VARNDELL
10	FH	ANDY GOODE
9	SH	JOE SIMPSON
1	P	MATT MULLAN
2	H	ED SHERVINGTON
3	P	LORENZO CITTADINI
4	L	JAMES GASKELL
5	L	KEARNAN MYALL
6	F	ASHLEY JOHNSON
7	F	JAMES HASKELL (C)
8	NB	NATHAN HUGHES

### REPLACEMENTS

16	H	CARLO FESTUCCIA
17	P	SIMON MCINTYRE
18	P	JAKE COOPER-WOLLEY
19	L	BRADLEY DAVIES
20	F	SAM JONES
21		CHARLIE DAVIES
22		ALEX LOZOWSKI
23	FB	ROB MILLER



# GLOUCESTER COMEBACK COMES UP JUST SHORT

THE CHERRY AND WHITES FESTIVE PERIOD ENDED WITH A SECOND DEFEAT AS A FULL HOUSE WITNESSED A SPIRITED EFFORT COME UP JUST SHORT AGAINST WASPS.

**T**HE buoyant visitors, still riding the wave of positive momentum following their move to Coventry, struck at key times and fed off mistakes to keep the hosts at arms' length, well marshalled by Andy Goode throughout.

The hosts could not have made a better start, Jonny May skating over in the first 45 seconds, before Wasps ran in three key

late penalties meant that a losing bonus point was Gloucester's only reward.

Frustratingly, the first two tries from Wasps were gifts. Firstly Tom Varndell broke a tackle to pass fed inside to fellow wing Christian Wade for the score, and then Varndell capitalised on a brutally unkind bounce of the ball to ghost over.

To their credit, the Gloucester pack stepped up, and dominated

” KINGS HOLM IS A GREAT PLACE TO PLAY - WITH OUR SECOND SELL-OUT CROWD - BUT WE ARE NOT WHERE WE WANT TO BE. BUT, IF WE SHOW THE ENERGY THAT WE DID IN THE SECOND HALF, WE WILL WIN MATCHES. **David Humphreys**

scores, which the hosts were unable to overcome.

Gloucester dug deep in the second half and so very nearly produced a memorable comeback, getting to within one point at one stage. However, two

– leading to the again-impressive Matt Kvesic to dot down at the rear of a rolling maul.

However, Nathan Hughes was again a thorn in Gloucester's side, picking up the away side's third score as Wasps rolled a maul of their over the line.

The full house was being treated to an exciting game, with the Cherry and Whites turning round at the break, well in the game, but left to rue a small handful of mistakes that had led to Wasps' scores.

The scrum was impressive and was well on top, but Gloucester again found plenty of possession and territory, but found multiple phases unable to yield scores.

With Goode adding a first half penalty, the Cherry and Whites trailed by ten.

## CHAMPAGNE MOMENT



Gloucester made a perfect start, a lightning fast first phase move carved open the visitor's defence, and Jonny May finished off with good strength to allow his momentum to carry him over, despite the attention of several defenders.

The Gloucester pack resumed their superiority in the second half on and put in a great effort, allowing Greig Laidlaw to kick three penalties in the third quarter to bring the gap to just a single point.

Goode replied with one more of his own, and as the game ticked towards the end, and Gloucester hammering at the Wasps' line, a simple offside call on half way allowed Elliot Daly to end the scoring with a long distance penalty to bring to the end another frustrating afternoon.

Plenty of effort, attrition and grunt from the hosts, but the final pass and spark to find that elusive second half score was missing for the hosts who ended 2014 on a losing note.





# ACTION REPLAY

VS  
EXETER  
CHIEFS

## EXETER CHIEFS

### LINE-UP

- 15 FB PHIL DOLLMAN
- 14 W JACK NOWELL
- 13 C HENRY SLADE
- 12 C SAM HILL
- 11 W MATT JESS
- 10 FH GARETH STEENSON
- 9 SH WILL CHUDLEY
- 1 P BEN MOON
- 2 H JACK YEANDLE
- 3 P MORAY LOW
- 4 L DEAN MUMM (C)
- 5 L MITCH LEES
- 6 F DAVE EWERS
- 7 F BEN WHITE
- 8 NB THOMAS WALDROM

### REPLACEMENTS

- 16 H LUKE COWAN-DICKIE
- 17 P CARL RIMMER
- 18 P TOMAS FRANCIS
- 19 L JERRY SEXTON
- 20 SAM SIMMONDS
- 21 SH HAYDN THOMAS
- 22 C IAN WHITTEN
- 23 FB BYRON MCGUIGAN



## EXETER CHIEFS

25

**TRIES:** Nowell (48), Jess (50), Waldrom (70) **CONS:** Steenson (49, 51) **PENS:** Steenson (56, 61)



## GLOUCESTER RUGBY

26

**TRIES:** Savage (52), Morgan (67) **CONS:** Laidlaw (53, 68) **PENS:** Laidlaw (2, 21, 58) **DG:** Twelvetrees (45)



## GLOUCESTER RUGBY

### LINE-UP

- 15 FB CHARLIE SHARPLES
- 14 W DAVID HALAIFONUA
- 13 C MARK ATKINSON
- 12 C BILLY TWELVETREES (C)
- 11 W JONNY MAY
- 10 FH JAMES HOOK
- 9 SH GREIG LAIDLAW
- 1 P NICK WOOD
- 2 H DARREN DAWIDIUK
- 3 P JOHN AFOA
- 4 L TOM SAVAGE
- 5 L TOM PALMER
- 6 F SIONE KALAMAFONI
- 7 F MATT KVESIC
- 8 NB BEN MORGAN

### REPLACEMENTS

- 16 H ALEKI LUTUI
- 17 YANN THOMAS
- 18 P SHAUN KNIGHT
- 19 ELLIOTT STOOKE
- 20 F GARETH EVANS
- 21 DAN ROBSON
- 22 BILLY BURNS
- 23 BILL MEAKES



# GLOUCESTER HAVE THE EXE FACTOR AT SANDY PARK

AFTER A SOMEWHAT SUBDUED FESTIVE PERIOD, GLOUCESTER RUGBY GOT 2015 OFF TO A WINNING START WITH A NARROW 26-25 WIN OVER THE EXETER CHIEFS AT SANDY PARK.

**B**ACK to back home defeats against Bath and Wasps had taken the gloss off Christmas celebrations, but the Cherry and Whites responded in the best possible way.

As has often been the case between these two sides in recent times, it went down to the wire. In 2012-13, a late Gareth Steenson penalty gave the Chiefs

The second half was a completely different matter. Gloucester had extended their lead to 9-0 when a missed tackle and a misplaced pass resulted in two Exeter tries and the game had turned on its head

Crucially, Gloucester hit straight back and regained the momentum as Tom Savage charged down a kick and re-gathered to score. The kickers

”

THERE WERE CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF THE GAME WHICH DIDN'T GO WELL BUT ULTIMATELY TODAY WAS ALL ABOUT THE RESULT. **David Humphreys**

a 40-39 win at Sandy Park. Last season, he missed a last minute conversion as Gloucester hung on for a 14-13 win.

So, no-one would have been surprised that Steenson was in the spotlight as the game went into its final throes with the final outcome on the line. The Irish fly half has been in stellar form with the boot but, fortunately for Gloucester, his late conversion hit the upright and stayed out.

It had been a game of two halves. With the wind behind them in the first half, the Chiefs turned down kicks for goal but ran into a resolute Gloucester defence. Greig Laidlaw on the other hand, gratefully kicked the two penalty chances he was given.

then took over, slotting penalties as the lead changed hands several times.

With just over ten minutes to play, Ben Morgan crashed over for a close range try and Gloucester seemed to have finally taken a grip of the game.

However, there was still time for his opposite number, Thomas Waldrom, to power over and the pressure was squarely on Steenson's shoulders with the Gloucester supporters barely able to look.

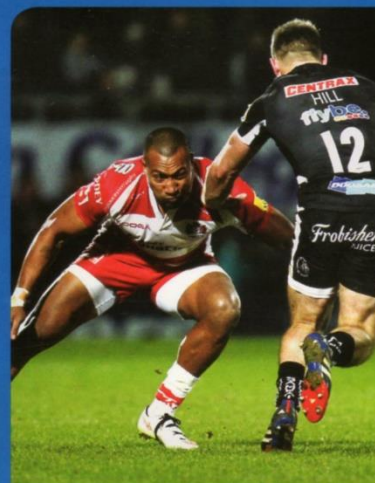
Irish eyes were smiling, but they didn't belong to the Exeter fly half. On this occasion, it was David Humphreys who was able to celebrate as his team headed up the M5 with their first points of 2015 safely secured.

## CHAMPAGNE MOMENT



Gloucester had conceded two tries in two minutes, and the game seemed to be slipping away from them when Tom Savage intervened.

He charged down Gareth Steenson then re-gathered the loose ball to touch down and score and get Gloucester right back into the game. It was a pivotal moment.







# TODAY'S TEAMS

## GLOUCESTER RUGBY vs OYONNAX

REFEREE: Andrew McMenemy (SRU) ASSISTANTS: Peter Allan (SRU), Bob Nevins (SRU)

TEAMS CORRECT AT TIME OF PRINT

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JAMES **HOOK**  
FULL-BACK  
DAVID **HALAIFONUA**  
RIGHT WING  
MARK **ATKINSON**  
OUTSIDE CENTRE  
BILLY **TWELVETREES** (C)  
INSIDE CENTRE  
JONNY **MAY**  
LEFT WING  
BILLY **BURNS**  
FLY-HALF  
GREIG **LAIDLAW**  
SCRUM-HALF  
YANN **THOMAS**  
LOOSEHEAD PROP  
RICHARD **HIBBARD**  
HOOKER  
JOHN **AFOA**  
TIGHTHEAD PROP  
TOM **SAVAGE**  
LOCK  
JAMES **HUDSON**  
LOCK  
SIONE **KALAMAFONI**  
BLINDSIDE FLANKER  
MATT **KVESIC**  
OPENSIDE FLANKER  
GARETH **EVANS**  
NUMBER EIGHT

DARREN **DAWIDIUK**  
REPLACEMENT 1  
DAN **MURPHY**  
REPLACEMENT 2  
SHAUN **KNIGHT**  
REPLACEMENT 3  
ELLIOTT **STOOKE**  
REPLACEMENT 4  
ROSS **MORIARTY**  
REPLACEMENT 5  
DAN **ROBSON**  
REPLACEMENT 6  
HENRY **PURDY**  
REPLACEMENT 7  
BILL **MEAKES**  
REPLACEMENT 8

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MAXIME **LEBOURHIS**  
FULL-BACK  
DUG **CODJO**  
RIGHT WING  
GUILLIAUME **BOUSSES**  
OUTSIDE CENTRE  
ROIMATA **HANSELL-PUNE**  
INSIDE CENTRE  
JEAN-FRANCOIS **COUX**  
LEFT WING  
REGIS **LESPINAS**  
FLY-HALF  
FABIEN **CIBRAY**  
SCRUM-HALF  
LUKAS **RAPANT**  
LOOSEHEAD PROP  
PAULA **NGAUAMO**  
HOOKER  
ANTOINE **GUILLAMON**  
TIGHTHEAD PROP  
THIBAUT **LASSALLE**  
LOCK  
GEOFFREY **FABBRI**  
LOCK  
GUILLAUME **BERNAD**  
BLINDSIDE FLANKER  
VALENTIN **URSACHE**  
OPENSIDE FLANKER  
CHRISTOPHE **ANDRE**  
NUMBER EIGHT

CLEMENT **JULLIEN**  
REPLACEMENT 1  
ANTOINE **TICHIT**  
REPLACEMENT 2  
RUAAN **DU PREEZ**  
REPLACEMENT 3  
PATRICK **SOBELA**  
REPLACEMENT 4  
ARTHUR **AZIZA**  
REPLACEMENT 5  
ALEX **LUATUA**  
REPLACEMENT 6  
YVES **DONGUY**  
REPLACEMENT 7  
DAMIEN **LAGRANGE**  
REPLACEMENT 8

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