



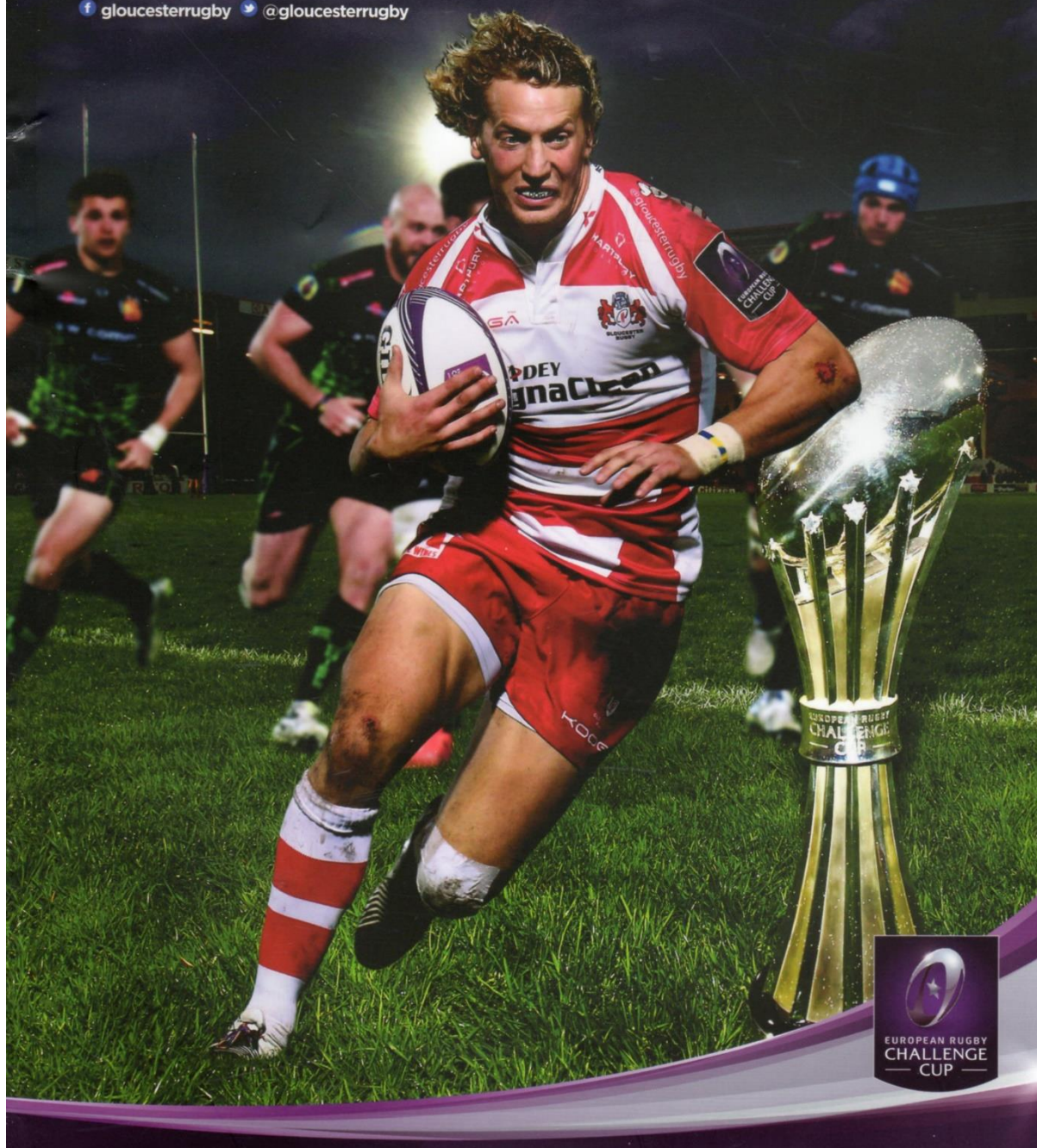
GLOUCESTER RUGBY

vs Exeter Chiefs

European Rugby Challenge Cup Semi-Final: 18.04.2015

Inside tonight's matchday programme we have an exclusive interview with captain Billy Twelvetrees, an action replay from Gloucester's Quarter-Final victory over Connacht Rugby and features from our regular contributors Bob Fenton, Ian Randall, The Citizen and the Gloucester Rugby Heritage Project.

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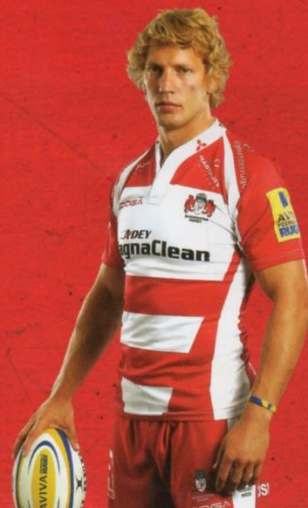


EUROPEAN RUGBY
CHALLENGE
CUP



CAPTAIN'S CORNER BILLY TWELVETREES

GOOD EVENING, AND WELCOME TO KINGSHOLM FOR TONIGHT'S EUROPEAN RUGBY CHALLENGE CUP SEMI-FINAL WITH EXETER CHIEFS.



It is a massive game for both sides, and two well-matched teams, as evidenced by our previous three meetings this season, and we just can't wait for that first whistle.

Kingsholm hasn't hosted a European semi-final for a number of years now, and we now have a chance to make history in

the inaugural version of this tournament. But we know the challenge posed by Rob Baxter and his squad is a huge one.

It's an occasion that we, as players all want be playing in. Even on the back of a narrow away defeat, there are plenty of positive aspects from that game that we have built on this week in our preparations.



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KINGSHOLM HASN'T HOSTED A EUROPEAN SEMI-FINAL FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS NOW, AND WE NOW HAVE A CHANCE TO MAKE HISTORY IN THE INAUGURAL VERSION OF THIS TOURNAMENT.

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We left the field on Saturday bitterly disappointed, but it is something we have to learn from and improve the know-how within our squad in terms of how to close games out.

We can take great heart from our scrummage performance, as well as the impact of our young players who slotted in and made a difference in the closing stages. It's testament to the hard work they are putting in behind the scenes, and this stands us in good stead going forward.

The competitiveness of the Aviva Premiership this year has been staggering, and we know the challenges ahead for the rest of the campaign, but we are targeting a strong finish, building off the back of a strong performance this evening.

Knockout rugby in front of a full house is one of the things we aspire to, and the occasions we need to thrive upon as a squad. We want to make games like this a regular thing, especially at Kingsholm.

The players can't wait to get on the field in front of our home crowd and play this game.

Thank you for your support, we appreciate it massively!
Enjoy the game

Billy

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GOOD EVENING AND WELCOME TO KINGSHOLM FOR THIS EVENING'S EUROPEAN RUGBY CHALLENGE CUP SEMI-FINAL AGAINST EXETER CHIEFS.

TONIGHT'S game will go a long way to defining our season. Last September we spoke as a group about the highs and lows that lay ahead in our first season together and, despite our disappointing League position, our Challenge Cup performances have been of the highest quality.

The players worked really hard throughout the pool stages, with two notable away wins in France, to ensure we qualified for the knock out stages as number one seeds.

History has shown that home advantage in Europe is so important and the Kingsholm support played a big part in our close quarter-final win over Connacht, providing incredible backing in those important final few minutes.

Undefeated at home in 2015, Kingsholm is again becoming a difficult and intimidating stadium for teams to visit. That's incredibly important for us.

Tonight that support

this Club wants to be involved in on a regular basis.

Throughout this season I believe we have shown the team spirit

taken patience and time and Rob Baxter deserves huge credit for what he has achieved over the last few years.



and commitment that underpins everything we do on and off the pitch. We haven't always produced the right results on the pitch, but our ambitions in this competition are very clear and we will need to deliver a quality performance to ensure that we

Three of the last four meetings between the two sides have resulted in one point victories showing how closely matched both teams are. Tonight's game will be a great occasion but it will be the team that deals best with the pressures of semi-final rugby

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THROUGHOUT THIS SEASON I BELIEVE WE HAVE SHOWN THE TEAM SPIRIT AND COMMITMENT THAT UNDERPINS EVERYTHING WE DO ON AND OFF THE PITCH. WE HAVEN'T ALWAYS PRODUCED THE RIGHT RESULTS ON THE PITCH, BUT OUR AMBITIONS IN THIS COMPETITION ARE VERY CLEAR AND WE WILL NEED TO DELIVER A QUALITY PERFORMANCE TO ENSURE THAT WE KEEP THOSE AMBITIONS ALIVE.

will be even more crucial, and there has been a huge sense of excitement and anticipation around the squad this week as we've prepared for the semi-final. These are the games that everyone at

keep those ambitions alive.

Our opponents, Exeter, have had another very good season across all competitions. Finalists in the LV= Cup, top 4 contenders in the Aviva Premiership and with a good win last weekend against Northampton to complete a league double over the current champions, they will come to Kingsholm with a lot of confidence.

Their steady progression from Premiership newcomers to consistent challengers has

that will progress to the Stoop.

Thank you again for your support and encouragement throughout the season.

I hope you've enjoyed our European adventure so far this season and that you'll enjoy playing a central role in another memorable night under the lights at Kingsholm.

Enjoy the game.

David

THE VIEW FROM The Citizen



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POLICE DOG
finds large bag of
drugs in car

**TORY
MANIFESTO**
to offer 1.3m
families right to
buy scheme

**GLOUCESTER
CITY** close to
beating the drop

**TAXIS AND
PRIVATE HIRE**
drivers targeted
by Gloucester
police

A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD

GARETH EVANS believes the Kingsholm crowd can give Gloucester the edge to beat Exeter Chiefs in today's European Challenge Cup semi-final.

Eight of the last nine encounters between the West Country rivals have come down to a score or less and the number eight, who bagged a try against the Chiefs in the LV= Cup, reckons home advantage could be key.

A sellout crowd is expected at Castle Grim for the clash, with the club targeting a first major piece of silverware since 2011 and a route into next season's European Champions Cup.

Evans said, "They are always a good team to play against, we've had some crackers over the past few seasons, we both play an exciting brand and it will be a great occasion.

"The home crowd at Kingsholm can be a huge influence. It gives you that extra boost when you're tired, when're blowing and you need to find that extra 10 per cent that crowd can lift you and drive you home. I can't wait, a European semi-final at Kingsholm will be great."

While Exeter warmed up for the encounter by completing a Premiership double over



(above) Fan Power

Evans believes the Kingsholm crowd will give Gloucester the edge in tonight's encounter

Northampton Saints to move into the top four, Gloucester slipped to an agonising 29-26 defeat to Harlequins.

Indiscipline proved costly for the Cherry and Whites who lost two men to the sin-bin in the last ten minutes and conceded two tries while they were reduced in numbers.

But, while Evans was disappointed with the defeat, he remains optimistic and insists it will not dent their confidence

” THE HOME CROWD AT KINGSHOLM CAN BE A HUGE INFLUENCE. IT GIVES YOU THAT EXTRA BOOST WHEN YOU'RE TIRED, WHEN'RE BLOWING AND YOU NEED TO FIND THAT EXTRA 10 PER CENT THAT CROWD CAN LIFT YOU AND DRIVE YOU HOME. I CAN'T WAIT, A EUROPEAN SEMI-FINAL AT KINGSHOLM WILL BE GREAT. **Gareth Evans**



ahead of the season-defining encounter.

"Frustrating is the word we will take away from that, we were in control for large portions of the game but in the end it came down to discipline and you can't afford to have two men in the bin at the same time and Quins made us pay.

"Quins defended very well and we got unlucky at some key points. We can talk about whether we were clinical enough while they had men in the bin and, if you look at those periods, they have won the points difference quite heavily and that

was the difference.

"But it won't rock confidence at all. The guys were sat in the changing room saying 'how have we managed to lose that', we know we're within a few per cent of being a very good team.

"We have shown what we can do in patches, throughout the season we've been getting closer and closer to getting a full 80 minutes and, once we do that, we will be very dangerous."

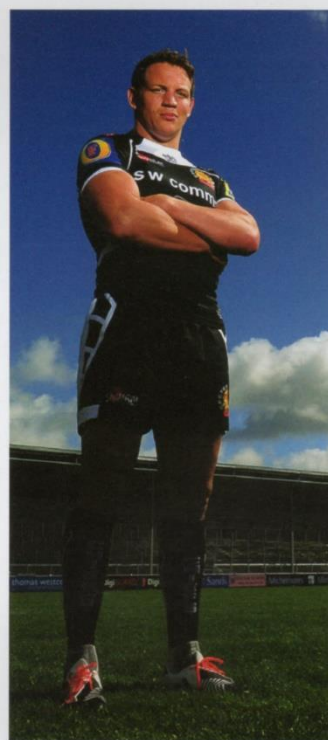
Much of Rob Baxter's side's strength is based upon their back-row with the likes of Thomas Waldrom, Dave Ewers and Ben White, with Cheltenham-educated

England flanker Tom Johnson currently unable to break into the match-day squad.

Gloucester rested Matt Kvesic for Saturday's defeat at the hands of Harlequins but, other than long term casualty Ben Morgan, the back-row will be at full strength against the Chiefs and Evans expects a ferocious battle at the breakdown.

He added, "Their back-row is going very well this year, they've got Tom Waldrom, who has been dotting down for a few tries, and it will be a key area of the battle.

"The breakdown will be hugely important as always and if we can win that it will have a big impact in the game."



Citizen AVAILABLE DAILY

GLOUCESTER RUGBY
HERITAGEwww.gloucester rugbyheritage.org.ukDID YOU
KNOW?DECIDING POLITICAL DIFFERENCES
ON THE RUGBY PITCH

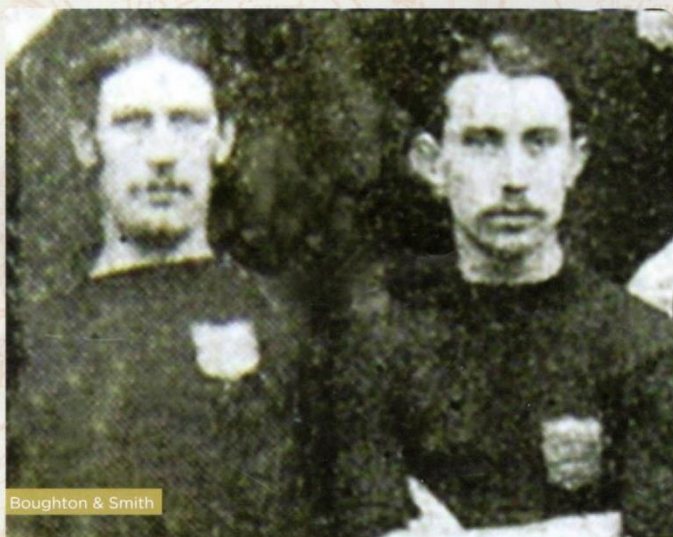
WITH a general election looming, it may be timely to recall a rugby match played in the early days of the Gloucester club between the adherents of the two main political parties of the day.

Towards the end of the 1885-86 season, a match was played at the Spa (this being before the acquisition of Kingsholm) on a Saturday afternoon between Conservative and Liberal members of the Gloucester Club. The game drew a large crowd and partisan support was vociferous throughout.

Indeed the Gloucester Chronicle reported, "...the excitement being such as is seldom witnessed at the Spa; the betting at the commencement of hostilities was in favour of the Conservatives to the extent of 6 to 2."

Hubert Boughton led the "Blues" and T. G. Smith the "Yellows." The Chronicle continued:

"At about twenty minutes to four o'clock Smith kicked off from the Beaufort end, the "ballot" ball falling into the hands of Dere, who returned it to the centre of the field, where some slight scrimmaging took place." The Liberals had a try disallowed, but "still hung" round the polling-booth of their opponents, where H. V. Jones got the ball and passed to Coates, who made a splendid run in and scored a try, and Jones, taking the place-kick, placed a goal. Starr, following up, crawled into the polling-booth and recorded a second vote in favour



of the Liberals; the shot for goal was a failure."

"These reverses fairly aroused the spirits of the Tories, and for a time they played up with great determination, but they did not exhibit the same amount of dash and combination as their Radical friends. When the whistle sounded for the close of the poll the Liberals had a majority of one goal and three tries to one try."

The match was played for charity and a cheque for £18 11s 10d was handed over to the Mayor. He decided that the funds of the poor-box were rather low at 26s, so disposed of £5 there. He gave another £5 to the Charity Organisation Society, and the balance to the Soup Kitchen.

FIRST SUNDAY MATCH
The first Gloucester match

played at Kingsholm on a Sunday was against arch-rivals Bristol, on 3rd February 1894. Gloucester won 7-3 with Stuart Dix scoring the only try. The game was reported in The Times under the headline "10,000 watch first Sunday match".

**WHEN REPLACEMENTS WERE
A NOVEL INNOVATION**

The match programme for Gloucester v St. Luke's College on 13th November 1894 informed the Kingsholm faithful that:

"Under the new law regarding replacements both sides this evening will have players standing - or, rather, sitting by, to take the place of any colleagues who may be genuinely injured. It should be emphasised that the extension of this law applies only



to county championship matches and the Rugby Union knock-out competition games - from the first round only. Further, only two replacements are permitted for either side; moreover, a player may be replaced only when, in the opinion of a medical practitioner, he is so injured that he should not continue playing in the match. It may sound a little autocratic, but it ensures there is none of this soccer nonsense whereby a manager can send on a substitute at any time because he doesn't like the way a player is performing."

HOW TO START A SEASON

On 15th September 1900, Gloucester started the season with a home win against Clifton by 66-0, with George Clutterbuck scoring 6 tries, a record number of tries in one match for Gloucester: he was supported by "Whacker" Smith scoring 2 tries, and "Jummer" Stephens (grandfather of current club president Eric Stephens) one, out of a total try count of 16.

In the return match at Clifton on 9th February 1901, Gloucester triumphed by 64-3, with Clutterbuck collecting a further 3 tries; this was matched by J Lewis out of a total try count of 14.

Clutterbuck's record did not last long. The following season, Clifton again travelled to Kingsholm for the first match on 21st September 1901. This time they were humbled 74-0, a score which beat all previous Gloucester records, as did the individual try scoring feat of "Whacker" Smith with 8 out of a total of 18 tries. Clutterbuck played in this match, but the fickle finger of fate failed to



Clutterbuck



Romans

give him a single try.

In the return match on January 11th 1902, Gloucester prevailed by

a paltry 20-3, scoring 6 tries; the glut was over. George Romans did the kicking in all 4 matches, and helped himself to 31 conversions.

WHO GETS MEAT FOR TEA?

The provision of hearty food both for the players and the spectators seems to be a recurring theme over the years. In 1929, cartoonist "TEEK" was amused by the change which came over Gloucester fans at the start of the rugby season.

The Club also had a commitment to provide teas for the players, and at the start of the 1947/48 season a Mr. Outridge made an offer to cater each Saturday during the season. His charge would be £7/10/- for 55 persons for a Meat Tea, and £5 for a Plain Tea with cakes and sandwiches. The committee decided to accept the offer of £5 teas, and only on exceptional occasions, at the discretion of the committee, to give the £7/10/- meal.

Apparently Cardiff was regarded as an exceptional case, since the Meat Tea was first offered after the match with them on 11th October 1947. It must have gone down well, because Leicester were also awarded a "full meat tea" three weeks later. By 15th November, the full tea was also to be provided after United matches.

By December the teas were so popular that the tea room was becoming overcrowded, and players who came in late went short - and close supervision was introduced on persons entering without tickets.



EYES ON THE PRIZE

WITH THE EUROPEAN RUGBY CHALLENGE CUP SEMI-FINAL THE FOCUS THIS EVENING, THE CHERRY AND WHITES ARE PREPARING FOR THEIR BIGGEST GAME OF THE SEASON, AND CLUB CAPTAIN BILLY TWELVETREES IS PROUD TO BE LEADING THE SIDE IN SUCH A BIG GAME IN HIS FIRST YEAR IN THE ROLE.

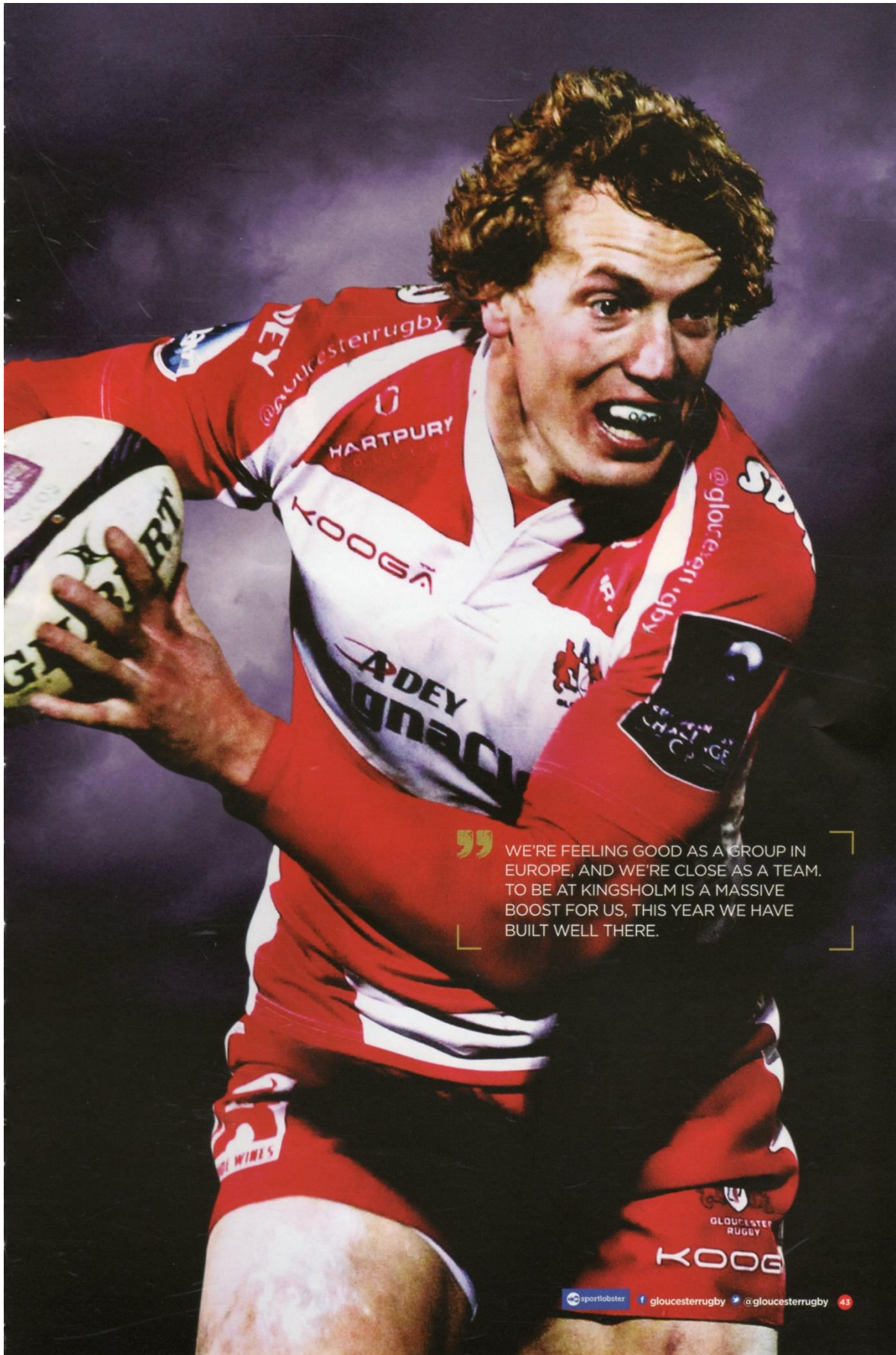
KINGSHOLM, under the lights and in front of a passionate home crowd, is the recipe to create lasting memories in a Cherry and White shirt, and Twelvetrees is ready to make the most of the occasion.

"Yeah, I think it is a massive occasion for this group of players, it's knockout rugby at Kingsholm. To have a home semi-final against another English team is going to

be a big occasion.

"We're feeling good as a group in Europe, and we're close as a team. To be at Kingsholm is a massive boost for us, this year we have built well there.

"We're in knockout rugby now and we're up against a top team, it's winner takes all and it doesn't get any bigger than that. So, as a group, we are massively up for it, and there is no shortage of motivation.



” WE’RE FEELING GOOD AS A GROUP IN EUROPE, AND WE’RE CLOSE AS A TEAM. TO BE AT KINGSHOLM IS A MASSIVE BOOST FOR US, THIS YEAR WE HAVE BUILT WELL THERE.

PLAYER FEATURE

BILLY
TWELVETREES

"After the disappointment of last week where we should have won against Quins, and the win over Connacht, the boys are really looking forward to this game and we cannot wait to get out there."

With ticket sales for the game flying over the sunny Easter weekend, a bumper Kingsholm crowd will back the boys this evening, and Twelvetrees knows the home crowd can have a big impact with their vociferous,



honest and passionate support throughout the eighty minutes.

"The Kingsholm crowd will be massive, as it always is at home. Every time we turn up and they are cheering us into the stands

when we go and warm up. The Shed are really loud and really get behind us, and this shows when the boys are blowing a little bit harder, you get that extra bit of energy when it comes to the dying minutes of the game.

"It has shown in the games we've had at home this year, the home support are helping us to get over the line, so it is a good weapon to have for us as a team."

Tonight's game is the fourth chapter of the friendly rivalry between the Chiefs and the Cherry and Whites, with honours even in the Aviva Premiership, and Twelvetrees is taking note of the events of those two games, as an indicator of the quality of both teams and the competitiveness to expect.

"The home result here, and down at Sandy Park show that it is decided by such small margins, and both teams are most likely aware of that. Both teams play an attractive brand of rugby so it is going to be an exciting night.

"I think every week we are developing as a unit together, and I think that is showing through the development we have as a team, and the performances we have put together, when we get it right.

And, in his first year as skipper, the British and Irish Lion, and England man is relishing his time



working with his team mates, as he continues to develop and learn his personal game. And with Greig Laidlaw and James Hook helping him on the inside, he is looking forward to future seasons developing with the International duo.

"It's good to have the experienced boys either side of you and it's great for Gloucester Rugby, so I have enjoyed every minute of it, learning as a captain and getting better alongside these guys."

The 9-10-12 axis is a key one for any rugby team. Hopefully Gloucester's version will be firing on all cylinders tonight and will help to drive the team to victory.

DID YOU
KNOW?

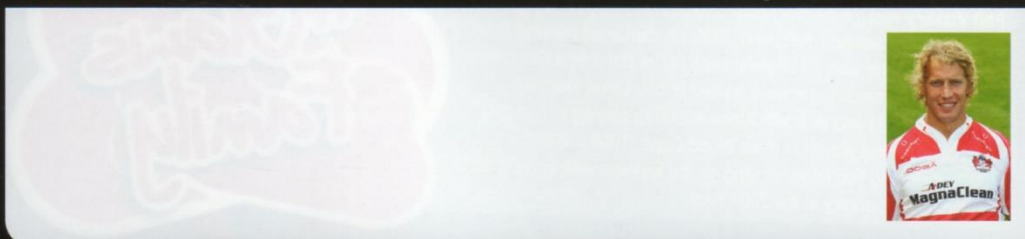
BILLY SIGNED FOR LEICESTER IN 2009 AFTER AN OUTSTANDING SEASON FOR BEDFORD, IN WHICH HE SCORED 18 TRIES, 16 CONVERSIONS AND 13 PENALTIES



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THE KINGSHOLM CROWD WILL BE MASSIVE, AS IT ALWAYS IS AT HOME. EVERY TIME WE TURN UP AND THEY ARE CHEERING US INTO THE STANDS WHEN WE GO AND WARM UP. THE SHED ARE REALLY LOUD AND REALLY GET BEHIND US, AND THIS SHOWS WHEN THE BOYS ARE BLOWING A LITTLE BIT HARDER, YOU GET THAT EXTRA BIT OF ENERGY WHEN IT COMES TO THE DYING MINUTES OF THE GAME.

GLoucester RUGBY AUTOGRAPH COLLECTION



BOB FENTON'S

KINGSHOLM NEWS

” SOMEWHERE IN THE RUGBY FIRMAMENT THERE IS A FIENDISH INDIVIDUAL WHO DREAMS UP RULES AND REGULATIONS THAT ARE INCOMPREHENSIBLE FOR MERE MORTALS.

HERE we go then, the latest in the long list of 'most important games of the season that we must win'.

Only this one, as far as this season goes, really is. Win today and we can look forward to another in the 'games we must win' series. But we can think about that at around about 9:30 tonight.

The Connacht quarter-final¹ was an interesting affair, where many of us thought it would be a bit of a straightforward affair, it proved to be anything but. At half time it looked ok, two tries to the good and the visitors yet to land a punch, but for us that was the end of the scoring.

One try for the Irish boys and all the pressure going into the final few minutes had many of us pondering 'what happens next' if it ended all square after 80 minutes. Fortunately we held on and here we are today in another sudden death match against our friends from down the M5.

I think we can safely banish any thoughts of Exeter lifting their collective feet off of the pedal for this one. They come into to game in a rich vein of form and sit pretty in fourth place having dispatched Northampton last weekend.

Wearing my @Holm hat, I chatted with Paddy Anson - Gloucester's Head of Strength



and Conditioning - last week. He spent many a happy year at the County Ground and Sandy Park and gave me a bit of an insight to how the coaching team at Exeter prepared themselves.

I did ask him if he thought that Rob Baxter et al would be looking at this game as a distraction from the real business of the Premiership. Suffice to say he was pretty definite that

this would not be the case. For tonight's winners there is a shot at silverware and the Exeter coaching team will be wanting to get their hands on it just as much as our guys.

You'll have to buy the next edition of the magazine to find out what else Paddy had to say about his time at Exeter, and a whole lot else besides!

The other bonus for us,

COMING UP... | GARETH EVANS ANSWERS OUR A-Z QUESTIONS

should we be fortunate enough to end up the winners of this competition means that we'll go into a play-off for a European Champions Cup place.

Quite how this has all been worked out is way beyond me. Somewhere in the rugby

team, two other Gloucester teams celebrated a couple of outstanding successes. The Gloucester-Hartpury ladies side had a thumping 50 - 3 win over Kendall in the Junior Cup Final - a fantastic achievement in their first year.

rather my company - is very proud to be the sponsor of the side so maybe we will have helped a little along the way.

They've both set themselves some very high standards now, let's hope that they can better this next year and that their success



firmament there is a fiendish individual who dreams up rules and regulations that are incomprehensible for mere mortals. But I guess we shouldn't worry too much about that, we've got to win this game first!

Our preparation for this game could have been better. Having taken the lead at Harlequins we decided that we didn't need all our players on the pitch and rapidly discovered that 13 v 15 inevitably leads to disaster. Not always though - remember that heroic defence against Leicester a few seasons ago.

While last weekend may not have been the best for the first

Not to be outdone, the Gloucester Wheelchair Rugby team smashed their way to promotion from the third division too. Again a fantastic achievement, and again completed in their first season. I think I am correct in saying that the team only lost one game in all the pool stages.

Later this year the Wheelchair Rugby team will take part in the national championships to be held at the 'CopperBox' on the Olympic Park in London. That'll be a great tournament - my tickets are already in the post (I hope!).

I have to declare a bit of a vested interest in this lot, I - or

encourages others to come along and try the sport out.

It's fantastic that the professional club has thrown its weight and support behind both these teams, there is no doubt that the work done by the Community team has really made a difference and helped them get to where they are today.

If you haven't done so already, have a look at some of the work the Community boys are doing. It's not all about the rugby - important as that is of course - there are all sorts of education activities going on around the place. Check it out, I guarantee you'll be impressed.

IAN RANDALL'S RUGBY TALK

I WAS AS SURPRISED AS MANY SUPPORTERS BY THE SUNDAY TIMES ARTICLE OVER EASTER CONCERNING A STRATEGIC REVIEW OF GLOUCESTER RUGBY, CARRIED OUT BY EXTERNAL CONSULTANTS, WITH A VIEW TO THE CLUB POSSIBLY PASSING TO NEW OWNERS.

W AS it April 1st? No. True, the Walkinshaws do not own 100% of the club, but over the last 18 years their backing has been loyal and the ties feel emotionally strong.

I can only say that Stephen Vaughan has proved himself to be a shrewd CEO and if he thinks there is money out there - you could almost call it a Dragons Den situation - then perhaps Ryan Walkinshaw might consider releasing a slice of his family's stake in the club for the right investment.

Either way it looks a slow burner of a situation given the large sums of money involved.

So, let's spin back to April 1997, when Tom Walkinshaw bought Gloucester Rugby. How many semi finals have the team been in since then?

The answer is 12, with tonight being the 13th, and if that's more than you can mentally recall let me help you through a dozen games that have been converted into six pieces of silverware.

It would be fair to say that three of those successes in



finals do NOT mean a great deal given the current structure.

Two were in the short lived Cheltenham and Gloucester Cup, where in 1998 and 1999 Gloucester won finals at Franklins Gardens against Bedford, and the Premiership

play off win over Bristol in 2002 was at a time when winning the league meant a separate trophy.

That idea was soon ditched too, and while Gloucester fans hated the ruling with a real passion for several seasons afterwards, I think there is an

acceptance now that the play offs, as a concept, isn't going to change any time soon.

The other three final victories included one in this competition at the Stoop, the same venue being used for this year's final, although a repeat fixture against London Irish is no longer possible.

James Forrester's successful chase of his own kick gave Dean Ryan something to show for his first full season in charge in 2006, and Nigel Melville also marked his first full term with a trophy in 2003, when Forrester also scored in the Powergen Cup triumph over Northampton.

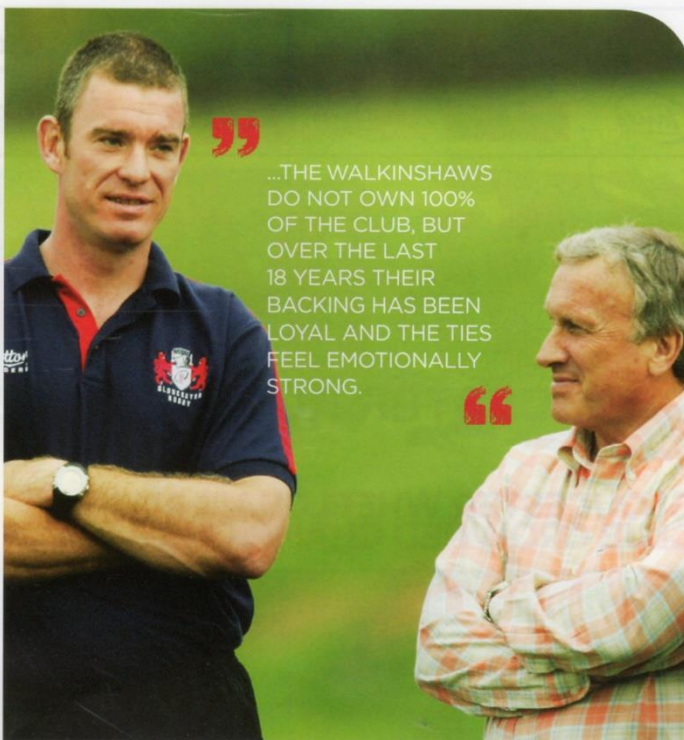
In terms of profile, that to me was the most significant, and certainly more so than the LV= Cup win in 2011 when, again at Franklins Gardens, Gloucester under Bryan Redpath comfortably accounted for Newcastle.

If that was Redpath's only chance of glory, Dean Ryan's departure in 2009 came after three opportunities slipped through Gloucester's fingers.

They had reached the Premiership final in 2007 only to be soundly beaten by Leicester, and Tigers got to Twickenham final 12 months later as well with a narrow win in the semi final here. When Ryan's team were hammered by Cardiff in the EDF (now LV=) Final, his tenure didn't last long.

The same was true for the man Ryan replaced. Former Wasps scrum half Melville had seen Gloucester lose a Parker Pen (Challenge Cup) semi final to Sale only weeks after his arrival in 2002. But three years later - and remember Gloucester had lost the 2003 play off final without playing a semi final, such were the rules 12 years ago - Melville left after Saracens secured a Heineken Cup spot beating Gloucester in the Zurich Wildcard final.

One might argue Gloucester's route into the Champions Cup



...THE WALKINSHAW'S DO NOT OWN 100% OF THE CLUB, BUT OVER THE LAST 18 YEARS THEIR BACKING HAS BEEN LOYAL AND THE TIES FEEL EMOTIONALLY STRONG.

next autumn is no less of a "wildcard" option - all of which leaves the one semi final that these days be the highest profile of them all.

It remains the one occasion that Gloucester have reached the last four in the top flight European competition, and even 14 years on, Leon Lloyd's try for Leicester in the Heineken Cup

clash at Watford in 2001 remains a topic of controversy whenever the game is discussed.

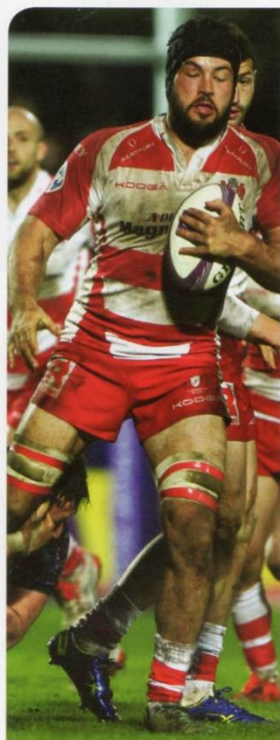
It's worth saying then that of those dozen semi finals, Gloucester have won nine and lost only three, but on the evidence of last weekend and previous tussles with the Chiefs, they'll need to play well to enhance that record any further.

Exeter are well drilled, solid at set pieces, tireless in terms of their work ethic and with enough flair to add some sparkle - you could say there is no obvious weakness.

This looks the stronger of the two ties, and while Chiefs may still have the Premiership play offs to think about, it's fair to say the Challenge Cup, and what may follow, is everything to Gloucester in terms of the season.

Win here, and they will fancy their chances against the victors at Murrayfield last night between Edinburgh and the Dragons. Achieving that however, will take some doing.





PLAYER A to Z GARETH EVANS



...is for
ATMOSPHERE...

What is the best atmosphere you have experienced?
Kingsholm, but Thomond Park was a close second.

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



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

If you weren't a rugby player what would you be?
Professional Xbox player

...is for **DRIVE...**
what car are you driving?
Ford Focus

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

Dropping a high ball in the middle of the pitch against Wasps

A

B

C

D

E

M

N

O

P

Q

R

S

...is for **MATCH...**
What is the best match you have played in/watched?
Perpignan away in the Heineken Cup

...is for
NICKNAME...
What's yours?
MegaMind

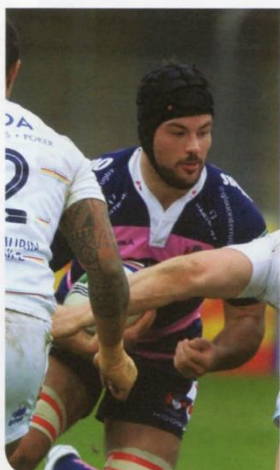
...is for
OPPONENT...
Who is the best player you have faced up against?
Imanol Harinordoquy

...is for **PRIDE...**
What is your proudest moment?
Winning the Premiership 7s

...is for
QUICKEST...
Who is the fastest player you have played with or against?
Charlie Sharples

...is for **RUN OUT MUSIC...** what's your tune to run out to?
Johnny Cash — God's Gonna Cut You Down

...is for
SUPPORT...
What teams do you support?
Bath...sorry





...is for
FASHION...
Who is the worst
dressed player in
the squad?
Matt Kvesic

...is for
**GLOUCESTER
RUGBY...**best
thing about
Gloucester Rugby?
Playing at
Kingsholm

...is for
HARDMAN...
Who is the
toughest opponent
you have played
against?
Pete Buxton

...is for **IDOL...**
Who is your
sporting idol?
Jonah Lomu

...is for **JOKER...**
Who is the funniest
person you have
shared a dressing
room with?
Elliott Stooke

...is for
KINGSHOLM
...describe
Kingsholm in three
words?
Atmosphere,
Passion, Loud

...is for **LIFE after
rugby...**
What are your
future plans?
Running my own
business

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...is for **TRY...**
What is the best
try you have ever
scored?
Against Exeter
in the 7s at
Kingsholm

...is for
UNBELIEVABLE...
Tell us something
surprising about
yourself
Qualified Scuba
Diver

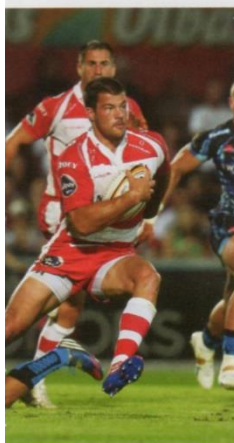
...is for **VISITOR...**
What is your
favourite ground to
play at?
Sandy Park,
always a great
atmosphere

...is for **WORST...**
What is the worst
thing about being
a rugby player?
Pre Season fitness

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

...is for **YOUTH...**
What advice
would you give
to aspiring rugby
players?
Just have fun!

...is for **ZZZZ...**
Which player has
the worst banter?
Matt Kvesic



ACTION
REPLAY

VS
CONNACHT
RUGBY

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

LINE-UP

15	FB	STEVE M'COLL
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	DAN MURPHY
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	N8	GARETH EVANS

REPLACEMENTS

16		DARREN DAWIDIUK
17	R	NICK WOOD
18	R	SILA PUAFISI
19		JAMES HUDSON
20	R	ROSS MORIARTY
21		DAN ROBSON
22		BILLY BURNS
23		HENRY PURDY



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

14

TRIES: Sharples (20), Meakes (30) CONS: Laidlaw (21, 31)



CONNACHT RUGBY

7

TRY: Penalty try (65) CON: Carty (66)



CONNACHT RUGBY

LINE-UP

15	FB	MILS MULIAINA
14	W	TIERNAN O'HALLORAN
13	C	DANIE POOLMAN
12	C	ROBBIE HENSHAW
11	W	MATT HEALY
10	FH	JACK CARTY
9	SH	KIERAN MARMION
1	P	DENNIS BUCKLEY
2	H	TOM M'CARTNEY
3	P	RODNEY AH YOU
4	L	QUINN ROUX
5	L	ALY MULDOWNY
6	F	ANDREW BROWNE
7	F	EOGHAN MASTERSON
8	N8	JOHN MULDOON

REPLACEMENTS

16		SHANE DELAHUNT
17		JP COONEY
18		FINLAY BEALHAM
19	R	GEORGE NAOPU
20	R	JAMES CONNOLLY
21	R	IAN PORTER
22	R	CRAIG RONALDSON
23	R	DARRAGH LEADER



QUARTER-FINAL

GLOUCESTER EDGE TENSE THRILLER

THE CHERRY AND WHITES BOOKED THEIR SPOT IN THEIR FIRST EUROPEAN SEMI-FINAL SINCE 2006 AS THEY EDGED A NERVOUS CONTEST WITH CONNACHT ON A DRAMATIC KINGSHOLM NIGHT.

THE Gloucester scoring was all done in the first period, the Cherry and Whites turning around 14-0 up, with the second packed with committed defending and determination to keep the Galwaymen at bay

On the night, the hosts welcomed back Greig Laidlaw after international duty and the Scot gave direction and calm to Gloucester's play, allowing

the defence, and the ball sat up for Bill Meakes to stroll onto and touch down for his first European try on another impressive and cap a measured display from the Aussie.

With Irish superstar Robbie Henshaw in their ranks, and led by Pat Lam, the men from Galway were not going to go away without a fight and the Cherry and Whites, rightly so, were on their guard.

”

THE INITIAL REACTION IS ONE OF RELIEF - WE GOT OURSELVES IN A GOOD POSITION. I THOUGHT WE PLAYED SOME VERY GOOD RUGBY IN THE FIRST HALF.

David Humphreys

James Hook to do what he does best.

It took until the end of the first quarter for the first score, to come. After failing to convert a few good positions, the hosts struck. Hook collected a kick, and spotted a mis-match, stepping his way through the onrushing defence, before via Steve McColl, Charlie Sharples skipped over for his fifth try of this season's competition.

Laidlaw converted and Kingsholm was jubilant after the first score. It then got better as, ten minutes later, Gloucester pounced for their second try after a spell of intense pressure finally brought its reward.

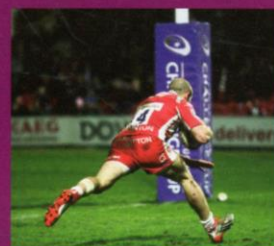
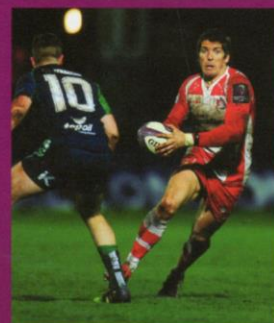
Again, Hook was the catalyst as the Welshman threaded a perfectly judged kick through

Gloucester's back three of Steve McColl, Jonny May and Sharples were dealing with Connacht's tactic of kicking long, when they didn't play through Henshaw, but in the second half, the visitors tightened and shortened their game up.

It was the Irish province who collected the next, and thankfully final points of the evening, after Laidlaw had drifted a penalty just wide of the mark, a kick which may well have finished the game of successful.

Ill discipline saw Connacht move into the Gloucester 22. Following a kick to the corner, a 13 man maul rumbled over towards the line but was brought down illegally, and referee Mathieu Raynal awarded a penalty try, setting nerves

CHAMPAGNE MOMENT



Knockout rugby is decided by fine margins, but James Hook yet again sprinkled some stardust on the game with a shimmy and step to set up Charlie Sharples to break the deadlock.

jangling around Kingsholm.

In the final quarter, the Cherry and Whites to a man, stood up and put their bodies on the line to hold back the constant waves of attacks. Led by Richard Hibbard and Tom Palmer the tackle-count was rising.

Even when the pressure was relieved and the hosts could attack, the ball came straight back. But roared on by the typically vociferous Kingsholm crowd, the ball never got close to the line again.

A huge hit from replacement Ross Moriarty forced a crucial knock on with no time left on the clock, and drew the blast of the final whistle much to the relief of the thousands packed into Kingsholm.

Time to do it all again tonight!

HARLEQUINS

LINE-UP

- 15 FB OLLIE LINDSAY-HAGUE
- 14 W MARLAND YARDE
- 13 C ASAELI TIKOIROITUMA
- 12 C HARRY SLOAN
- 11 W CHARLIE WALKER
- 10 FH NICK EVANS
- 9 SH DANNY CARE
- 1 P JOE MARLER (C) ■
- 2 H DAVE WARD
- 3 P MATT SHIELDS
- 4 L NICK EASTER
- 5 L GEORGE ROBSON
- 6 F LUKE WALLACE
- 7 F CHRIS ROBshaw
- 8 N8 JACK CLIFFORD ■

REPLACEMENTS

- 16 ROB BUCHANAN
- 17 P MARK LAMBERT
- 18 DARRYL MARFO
- 19 W CHARLIE MATTHEWS
- 20 NETANI TALEI
- 21 KARL DICKSON
- 22 BEN BOTICA
- 23 N8 UGO MONYE



HARLEQUINS

29

TRIES: Walker (9), Yarde (69), Lindsay-Hague (74) **CON:** Evans (75) **PENS:** Evans (22, 28, 51, 56)



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

26

TRIES: Meakes (30), Sharples (47), Robson (78) **CON:** Laidlaw (31) **PENS:** Laidlaw (18, 23, 61)



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

LINE-UP

- 15 FB STEVE MCCOLL
- 14 W CHARLIE SHARPLES ■
- 13 C BILL MEAKES
- 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 JAMES HUDSON
- 6 F SIONE KALAMAFONI
- 7 F JACOB ROWAN
- 8 N8 GARETH EVANS

REPLACEMENTS

- 16 H DARREN DAWIDIUK
- 17 P DAN MURPHY
- 18 P SILA PUAFISI
- 19 L MARIANO GALARZA
- 20 N8 ROSS MORIARTY ■
- 21 SH DAN ROBSON
- 22 C BILLY BURNS
- 23 FB HENRY PURDY

GLOUCESTER CRUELLY DENIED AT THE STOOP

RUGBY CAN BE A CRUEL GAME, AND LAST SATURDAY IT PROVED TO BE EXACTLY THAT AS, DESPITE DOMINATING THE CONTEST, THE CHERRY AND WHITES WERE HIT BY LATE SUCKER PUNCHES AND WENT DOWN TO A NARROW DEFEAT AT A SUN-DRENCHED TWICKENHAM STOOP.

S CRUM dominance throughout didn't yield the number of points it deserved, as the home team hung on in defence before stealing the game late on.

The game swung on a pair of late yellow cards for the Cherry and Whites, resulting in a brace of Quins' tries with Gloucester reduced to 13 men.

Gloucester will rue their

ghosted through the defence, and fed Bill Meakes to power through a pair of tackles and dot down for a well deserved score.

It was all Gloucester at this point, Quins were struggling to create a spark and were chancing their arm to get a break. However, the Cherry and White defence was up to the task.

Finally, referee Pearce's patience at the scrum ran out,

”

IN THE END, IT WAS PROBABLY A LITTLE BIT OF A LACK OF DISCIPLINE AT THE END OF THE SECOND HALF THAT COST US THE OPPORTUNITY TO WIN THE GAME. **David Humphreys**

indiscipline which handed the hosts the chance to win, and a failure to capitalise on the numerical advantage when Conor O'Shea's men were reduced to 14 on two separate occasions.

Early scrum dominance from Gloucester made the sold out Stoop shift uncomfortably in their seats, but they were on their feet as Charlie Walker skated home to finish a break after nine minutes.

That was against the run of play, but the Cherry and Whites kept their composure and the scrum presented a pair of penalty chances for Greig Laidlaw, which he duly chipped over, either side of a pair of Nick Evans' attempts.

It took Gloucester half an hour to break down Quins, but it was a try worth waiting for. James Hook

and Quins' captain Joe Marler was shown yellow, allowing Gloucester to take a 13-11 lead into the break, which they could and perhaps should have increased.

The visitors struck first in the second half though, Meakes the architect as his long cut out pass sent Charlie Sharples into the corner.

Quins sensed the game slipping away and it was the ever reliable Evans who came to the fore as he chipped over a pair of penalties to bring the deficit to a single point.

Jack Clifford was then sent to the naughty step for a late collision with Sharples, a decision that incensed the home crowd, who voiced their displeasure in

CHAMPAGNE MOMENT



Although Gloucester scored three good tries, it was gratifying to see the pack impose themselves right from the very first scrum. The Quins eight were splintered as the Cherry and Whites forwards drove them backwards at a rate of knots.

a thoroughly unsporting way as Laidlaw chipped over the resulting penalty.

Decisions now started to go the way of the home team, and Ross Moriarty was sin binned at the maul, before Charlie Sharples immediately followed him for a very harsh knock on call as he went to collect an errant pass.

Quins then proceeded to power over in the maul through Marland Yarde and, with Sharples' wing exposed, Ollie Lindsay-Hague added a further score to rub salt into the wounds.

Evans' conversion looked to have denied a losing bonus point to the Cherry and Whites, but Dan Robson bravely skated over from a Meakes break to get Gloucester back within a score.

But Quins were able to hang on in the end to keep their seventh place hopes alive, and all but end Gloucester's.

TODAY'S TEAMS

GLoucester Rugby vs EXETER Chiefs

REFEREE: John Lacey (Ire) ASSISTANTS: Jerome Garces (Fra) and Pascal Gauzere (Fra)

TEAMS CORRECT AT TIME OF PRINT

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CHARLIE **SHARPLES**

FULL-BACK

HENRY **PURDY**

RIGHT WING

BILL **MEAKES**

OUTSIDE CENTRE

BILLY **TWELVETREES** (C)

INSIDE CENTRE

JONNY **MAY**

LEFT WING

JAMES **HOOK**

FLY-HALF

GREIG **LAIDLAW**

SCRUM-HALF

NICK **WOOD**

LOOSEHEAD PROP

RICHARD **HIBBARD**

HOOKER

JOHN **AFOA**

TIGHTHEAD PROP

TOM **SAVAGE**

LOCK

TOM **PALMER**

LOCK

SIONE **KALAMAFONI**

BLINDSIDE FLANKER

MATT **KVESIC**

OPENSIDE FLANKER

GARETH **EVANS**

NUMBER EIGHT

DARREN **DAWIDIUK**

REPLACEMENT 1

DAN **MURPHY**

REPLACEMENT 2

SILA **PUAFISI**

REPLACEMENT 3

MARIANO **GALARZA**

REPLACEMENT 4

ROSS **MORIARTY**

REPLACEMENT 5

DAN **ROBSON**

REPLACEMENT 6

BILLY **BURNS**

REPLACEMENT 7

BRENDAN **MACKEN**

REPLACEMENT 8

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23

PHIL **DOLLMAN**

FULL-BACK

IAN **WHITTEN**

RIGHT WING

JACK **NOWELL**

OUTSIDE CENTRE

SAM **HILL**

INSIDE CENTRE

MATT **JESS**

LEFT WING

HENRY **SLADE**

FLY-HALF

WILL **CHUDLEY**

SCRUM-HALF

BEN **MOON**

LOOSEHEAD PROP

JACK **YEANDLE**

HOOKER

TOMAS **FRANCIS**

TIGHTHEAD PROP

DEAN **MUMM** (C)

LOCK

MITCH **LEES**

LOCK

DAVE **EWERS**

BLINDSIDE FLANKER

BEN **WHITE**

OPENSIDE FLANKER

THOMAS **WALDROM**

NUMBER EIGHT

ELVIS **TAIONE**

REPLACEMENT 1

CARL **RIMMER**

REPLACEMENT 2

ALEX **BROWN**

REPLACEMENT 3

SAM **SKINNER**

REPLACEMENT 4

KAI **HORSTMANN**

REPLACEMENT 5

DAVE **LEWIS**

REPLACEMENT 6

GARETH **STEENSON**

REPLACEMENT 7

TOM **JAMES**

REPLACEMENT 8

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