



The Official Programme
of Gloucester Rugby

Issue 2 • £3.00



Gloucester Rugby v Sale Sharks

13.10.07 15.00



INSIDE

100 Not Out

Olivier Azam's landmark

Eight On Eight

Dean Ryan's career uncovered

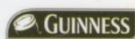
On The Hunt

Meet the Sale Sharks

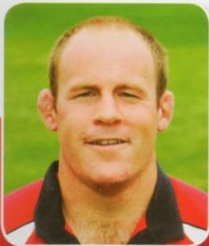
PLUS: Ryan's Review, Match Action, Ticket Latest, Community News, Fans Zone, Peter Arnold

Club Sponsor

JEWSON



www.guinnesspremiership.com



CAPTAIN'S CORNER

Gloucester face Sale Sharks this afternoon unbeaten after the first four rounds of the Guinness Premiership under captain Peter Buxton.

▶ THERE is no denying it has been a very special start for us in the Guinness Premiership.

To be unbeaten after the first four games, three of which have been away, is a great achievement for us and something we can really build on in the coming weeks.

Last Saturday's performance at Leicester was a very good one but I think it is a measure of where we want to be as a side that we left Welford Road just a little disappointed.

I thought our scrum pressure created a great platform for us and off the back of that plenty of opportunities came our way. In that respect, we were slightly disappointed we didn't score more points.

We were in the position of making the final quarter pretty comfortable for ourselves and really enjoy the occasion but it didn't happen that way.

There are obviously areas of the contest where we can improve but I think it would be wrong to get too worked up about issues we can

resolve over time.

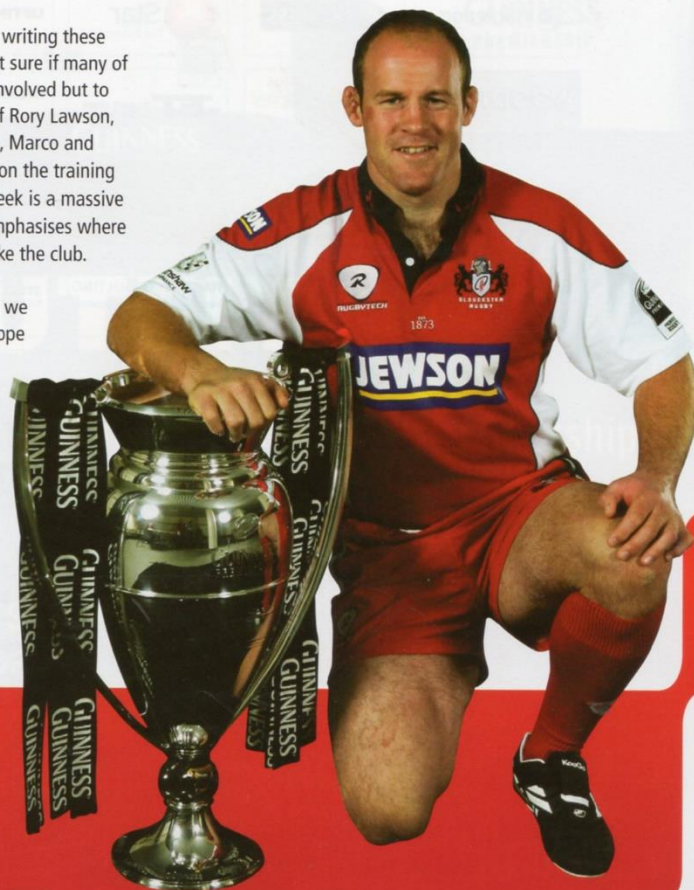
To be captain of a team that wins at Welford Road is a tremendous feeling but everyone within the squad deserves credit. It has been a busy few weeks since the start of the season during the World Cup but with that competition reaching its decisive stages, a number of players have returned to the squad this week.

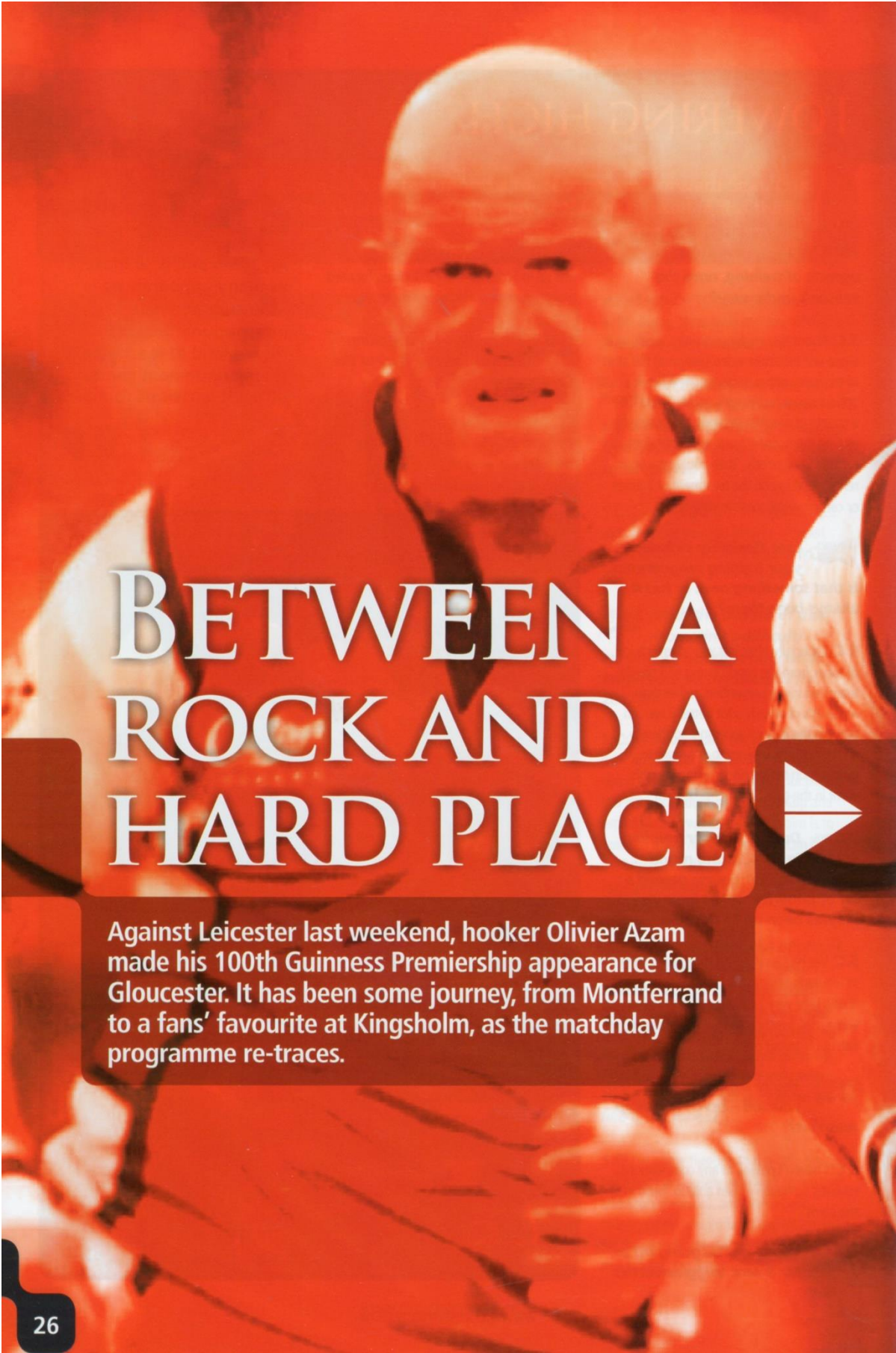
At the time of writing these notes, I am not sure if many of them will be involved but to see the likes of Rory Lawson, Chris Paterson, Marco and Akapusi Qera on the training ground this week is a massive lift and just emphasises where we want to take the club.

This afternoon we welcome Philippe Saint-Andre and Sale Sharks to Kingsholm for another intense, physical and tough afternoon in the Guinness Premiership.

We are all aware of the threat Sale possess – they play some great rugby, are durable and will get in our faces. It is up to us to respond, be right on the top of our game and try and get the right result.

Kingsholm should be rocking again this afternoon so get behind the boys, create that unique atmosphere and help us towards another victory.





BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE



Against Leicester last weekend, hooker Olivier Azam made his 100th Guinness Premiership appearance for Gloucester. It has been some journey, from Montferrand to a fans' favourite at Kingsholm, as the matchday programme re-traces.





OLIVIER AZAM

▶ IT IS THE thick end of eight years since a relative unknown from Michelin country dipped a toe in the bubbling waters of Castle Grim and started a two-part journey that has made him one of the most durable and respected members of the cauliflower ear brigade anywhere in the country.

There is something dark and ever so slightly edgy about Olivier Azam but the regulars who sardine themselves inside Kingsholm every Saturday have taken him to their hearts as one of their own.

He was born in Tarbes, the home of the legendary Philippe 'Charging Bull' Dintrans and played his first serious rugby at Montferrand where Roger Vigier earned his stripes. They are names that might not mean a great deal on this side of Channel but they count for plenty in the blood-soaked annals of French rugby.

Azam arrived at Kingsholm under former boss Philippe Saint-Andre in 2000, who made a habit of plucking players from all over the world and assembling them under Gloucester's new-look banner. But none have flourished as well as Azam, and that includes double World Cup winner Jason Little or 79-times capped All Black Ian Jones.

As Gloucester grabbed Leicester by the unmentionables last weekend Azam was central when the pressure was applied. Alongside towering efforts from Patrice Collazo and Carlos Nieto, he helped Dean Ryan's side dismantle the Guinness Premiership champions piece by piece in the set scrum.

If there is one thing we have

learnt since his debut in 2000 is that he loves to scrummage. His commitment is total, attitude incendiary.

As he eye-balled his opposite number at Welford Road, it launched a 1,000 memories: "For me to reach this achievement at a club like Gloucester is a great achievement," he said this week.

"My commitment is with Gloucester, of how proud I am to represent the club and how happy I am to play for them.

"When I first came here with Philippe Saint-Andre I didn't know what to expect but I knew the Premiership was a great opportunity for me to improve myself as a player. What it did was take me out of my comfort zone.

"I knew about French rugby but I didn't know about rugby here, of the variations in the game in England. It gave me a chance to live in another country, experience new cultures and a place to live – it has opened me up a bit more as an individual and as a player and for that I am thankful."

Consequently, Gloucester has loved him to bits. His confrontation style, monstrous presence and ball carrying qualities in his first stint with the club made him an instant hero. There may have been more consistent players doing the business but Azam's notoriously fierce winning mentality fired the imagination.

It appeared only a matter of time stood between him and a place in the heart of the French Test scrum. But the call never came, he had the occasional brush with authorities and he returned to his home-town club for one

last stint before re-surfacing at Kingsholm again more than two seasons ago.

"I had to adapt to a different game," he said. "Players went to ground more, there were more rucks and less off-loads – at the start it was made easier for me because there was a French coach and during that time I think I built a rapport with the supporters.

"I think it was a two-way thing: They could see what I was trying to do, how I wanted to do well for the club and responded. That was fantastic for me – and the support at Kingsholm is always great."

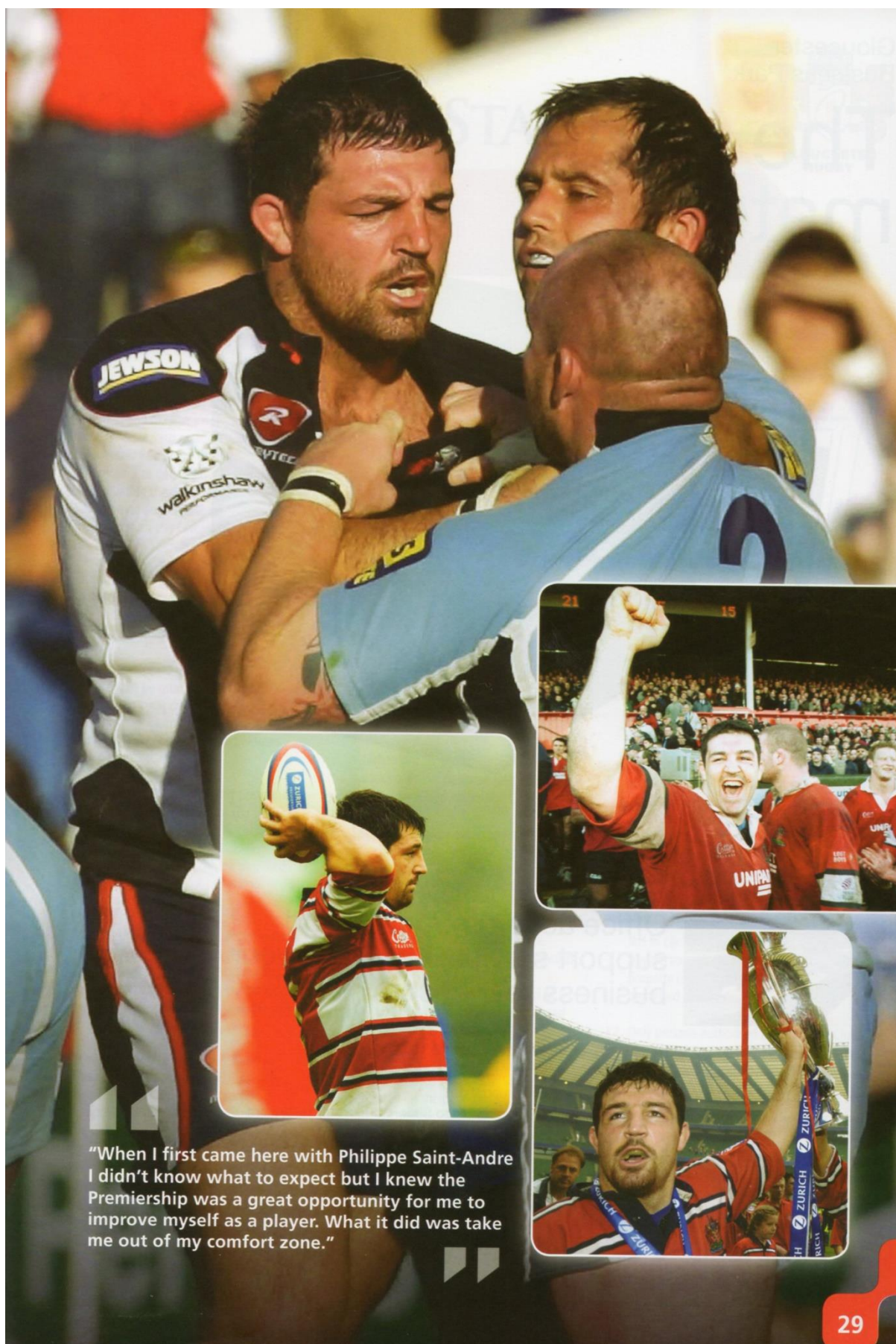
This season, Gloucester have so many options in each position that players are aware it is impossible to play every game. Andy Titterrell has already shown plenty as a dynamic and mobile operator and later this month Jeremy Paul comes to town via the Wallabies and the ACT Brumbies.

Azam has been around too long to get worked up about that but admits he has never seen a better squad at Kingsholm.

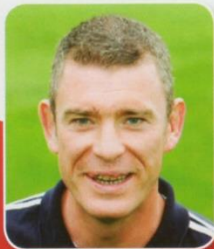
"Since I was away the club improved," he said. "There are better players, coaches and structure. The training facilities are first class, the coaches want to be the best and everything is moving forward.

"For the future we must keep trying to improve so we can try and win a trophy. We are relaxed the squad is fantastic and we want to do well.

"For me, I am in the best place. I know Gloucester and I like its rugby – it is a fantastic place to be."



"When I first came here with Philippe Saint-Andre I didn't know what to expect but I knew the Premiership was a great opportunity for me to improve myself as a player. What it did was take me out of my comfort zone."



RYAN'S REVIEW

After four rounds in the Guinness Premiership, Gloucester are unbeaten and top of the table. Dean Ryan rounds up all the latest action today.



Gloucester have made the perfect start to the Guinness Premiership season, you must be thrilled?

DR: I AM really pleased, yes. It is not so much that we are unbeaten it is the fact three of those games are away from home during the World Cup.

Our victory at Saracens is now looking a particularly good one, even at this stage, because they are one of the form teams currently. Vicarage Road is an uncompromising place to go and earn a result and they have subsequently shown that they are well capable of winning on the road too.

Saturday's performance and victory over Leicester was also highly satisfying. To win so convincingly against one of our major rivals was great for everyone but at the same time I felt we missed out on a golden opportunity to win even more convincingly.

Overall, we have made a very encouraging start but we need to maintain our upward curve and look to get even better.



Was Saturday's victory a measure of Gloucester's development from last season?

DR: A LOT of people got caught up in tagging Saturday's game a potential revenge mission following the final last season. For me, it wasn't that. It was about staking our claim this season, about going into an environment that has a reputation for success and outstanding achievement and staking a claim about ourselves and what we want to be.

We are obviously aware that both teams could be vastly different at other times of the season but the approach and determination of both teams are the same. There was no way a guy like

Richard Cockerill would send out a team at Welford Road that was under-prepared or not willing to fight tooth and nail.

In that way, the way we built our foundation from the scrummage, created opportunities and defended really well were all aspects of our performance that I thought were fantastic and are great for us going forward.



Even now, the table is beginning to take shape – can you read anything into it?

DR: YES and no really. From our point of view, we always knew that the World Cup period would be vital in establishing momentum.



Our victory at Saracens is now looking a particularly good one, even at this stage, because they are one of form teams currently. Vicarage Road is an uncompromising place to go and earn a result and they have subsequently shown that they are well capable of winning on the road too.



1873

Patrice Collazo



James Simpson-Daniel v Saracens



Action v Worcester

That in no way undervalues our achievement but what it does is create plenty of space between ourselves and other teams who we consider long-term threats. Going into this weekend, I think Wasps are the equivalent of three bonus point victories behind us and Leicester are six points behind.

We want to give ourselves the best possibility of being successful over a nine month season that will move into knockout football. Our start has been excellent for us – on and off the field – there is a feel good factor about the place and that is great for the club.



Sale are here this afternoon and they beat Wasps last weekend. It will be another tough game?

DR: WE know that every game is tough and Sale have a recent reputation as one of the best teams in the country. Form, injuries and World Cup commitments may have hindered them this season but

they have a large number of outstanding players and are capable of being a handful.

We have obviously looked at them carefully and the try they scored against Bath a fortnight ago emphasises their potency.

Any team with a guy like Charlie Hodgson involved are dangerous and we must be exceptionally careful. They showed last season, that even with an under-strength team, they are capable, resourceful and well coached.

But it is only our second game at Kingsholm this season and I would expect another fizzing atmosphere, a full stadium and a big response from our start to the season.

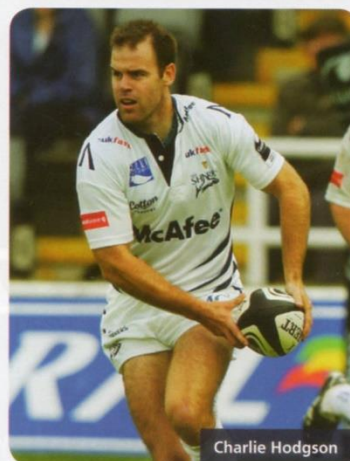
The crowd reaction against Worcester was fantastic and that is something that really gets us all going – another occasion like that today is just what is required.



Any team with a guy like Charlie Hodgson involved are dangerous and we must be exceptionally careful. They showed last season, that even with an under-strength team, they are capable, resourceful and well coached.



Dean Ryan



Charlie Hodgson

TODAY'S TEAMS

Saturday 13th October 2007 15.00

Gloucester Rugby
v Sale Sharks



Gloucester RUGBY



31



Sale SHARKS

12

	Olly MORGAN	15	Full Back	15	Ben FODEN	
	Leon LLOYD	14	Right Wing	14	Oriol RIPOL	
	Mike TINDALL	13	Centre	13	Rudi KEIL	
	Anthony ALLEN	12	Centre	12	Lee THOMAS	
	James BAILEY	11	Left Wing	11	Elvis SEVEALI'I	
	Ryan LAMB	10	Fly Half	10	Charlie HODGSON	
	Gareth COOPER	9	Scrum Half	9	Richard WIGGLESWORTH	
	Nick WOOD	1	Prop	1	Lionel FAURE	
	Andy TITTERRELL	2	Hooker	2	Neil BRIGGS	
	Carlos NIETO	3	Prop	3	Stuart TURNER	
	Will JAMES	4	Lock	4	Dean SCHOFIELD (c)	
	Alex BROWN	5	Lock	5	Sean COX	
	Peter BUXTON (c)	6	Flanker	6	Chris JONES	
	Alasdair STROKOSCH	7	Flanker	7	Magnus LUND	
	Luke NARRAWAY	8	No 8	8	Nathan BONNER-EVANS	

Replacements

	Olivier AZAM	16		16	Marc JONES	
	Christian CALIFANO	17		17	Ben EVANS	
	Marco BORTOLAMI	18		18	Christian DAY	
	Akapusi QERA	19		19	David TAIT	
	Rory LAWSON	20		20	Sililo MARTENS	
	Willie WALKER	21		21	Chris MAYOR	
	Iain BALSHAW	22		22	Chris BELL	



HEAD COACH
Dean RYAN



DIRECTOR OF RUGBY
Philippe SAINT ANDRE



SPOTLIGHT

with **Mike Prendergast**

by Ian Randall



WHAT'S THE MOTTO YOU LIVE BY?

Whether it is in sport or anything else, I think if you put enough work in, you'll be rewarded at the end of it.



WHAT IS YOUR MOST PRIZED POSSESSION?

My family. My partner Shona and I have a little girl, Emma who is two and a half. They would be top of the tree for me.



WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE BREAKFAST CEREAL?

Weetabix. It's good nutrition first thing, although I'd normally take a protein shake as well when I get in.



WHICH COMPANY WOULD BE YOUR IDEAL SPONSOR?

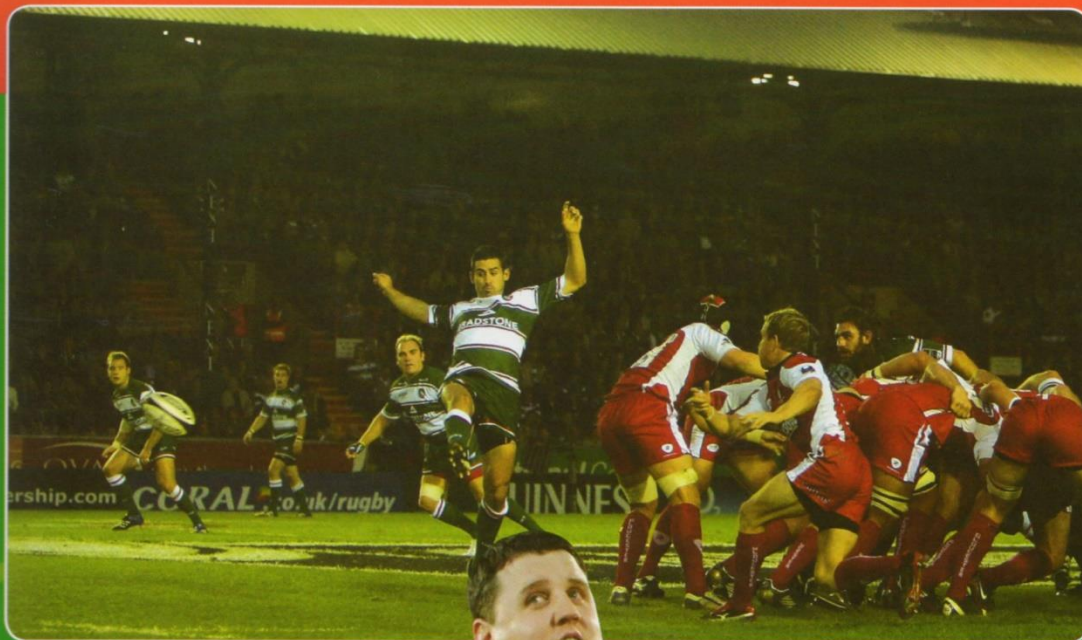
If Mercedes would like to give me a car that would be nice.



ARE YOU A SPENDER OR A SAVER?

I'd say I'm a spender, but my girlfriend might disagree. I like to buy





nice clothes and eat out well when I'm socialising.

WHAT MADE YOU LAST LOSE YOUR TEMPER?

Arriving for training to find someone else had taken my seat in the changing room. Space is tight and you go looking for another place and you won't get it.

TELL US SOMETHING YOUR TEAM MATES DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU...

I'm quite a good singer – let's just leave it there.

WHICH TV WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A CONTESTANT ON, AND WHY?

Who Wants to be a Millionaire, because obviously you have a chance to win a million pounds. The only thing is that the questions near the end do get a bit difficult....



WHO IS YOUR FAVOURITE PERSON ON TV?

Peter Kay. He's very witty and has a great sense of humour.

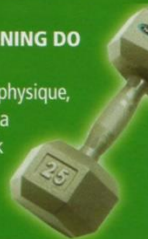


IF YOU WENT TO UNIVERSITY, WHICH DEGREE WOULD YOU DO?

If I had the brains I'd do medicine because every doctor I know has a nice house and a nice car. I actually did a sports management course when I was at Munster. It was meant to take two years but I ended up taking five just because I had so little time. I'd like to maybe go back to that and do a degree in it.

WHAT PART OF TRAINING DO YOU ENJOY MOST?

Weight training to build up my physique, and speed work because being a scrum-half you need to be quick over the first few yards



IF THERE IS A PRANK BEING PLAYED, WHO IS USUALLY THE CULPRIT?

Luke Narryway is definitely involved, and Andy Hazell isn't usually too far away either.



WHICH OTHER SPORTING EVENT WOULD YOU LIKE A TICKET FOR?

My home county, Limerick, got to the All Ireland Hurling Final in the summer. I missed it so would love to go if they got there next year.

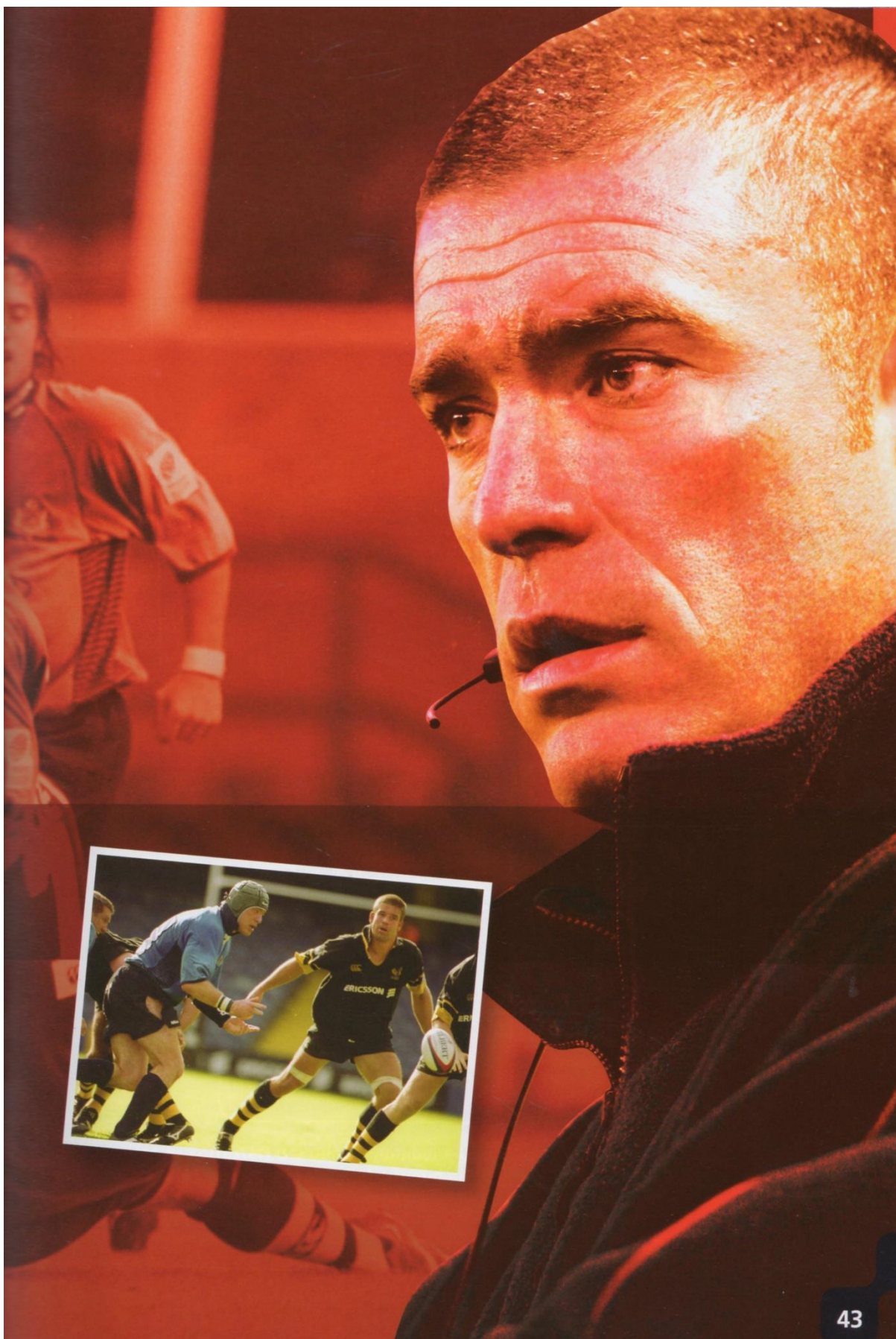




EIGHT ON EIGHT



Before the start of the season, BBC Radio Gloucestershire summariser and former Gloucester number eight **SIMON DEVEREUX** talked to Gloucester's head coach **DEAN RYAN** about his career at the back of the scrum, the role of number eights and his job now at Kingsholm.





Dean Ryan

EIGHT ON EIGHT

When you started out as a player, did you see yourself as a number eight?

I came to rugby late, and started playing on the wing. I'd played a lot of football and it wasn't until I joined the Army at 16 I started playing regularly. If you were over 6ft tall you didn't get a lot of choice in those circles, and that's when I first played at eight. It was very different to now because there was no lifting in the line-out and some of the second rows were enormous – think Martin Bayfield or Richard West. Eight's were a good size too – regularly 6'6. Now I'd be a second row because eight is a dynamic role and you need a lot of skills I didn't have. The game is much faster and cleaner now.

You first came to prominence at Saracens, how did that come about?

Sarries were a great club for me. I was posted to Cambridge and their Coach Tony Russ lived in Ely. He'd seen me play for the Combined Services and so he used to pick me up and we'd travel together. The club prospered and we got out of Division 2 with a really good group that combined well. It included Jason Leonard, and some that hadn't quite made it at Wasps and Quins. I had two and a half years there and was there was talk of recognition in the London side that played in the divisional championships. I then had a serious arm injury and people were saying to go further you need to play at the top end of Division 1 and not scrapping at the bottom, but Saracens was built on good people. It became a breeding ground. Jason Leonard went to Quins, Ben Clarke came through, and it generated other players who stayed and made it into the competitive club it is now.

Who were the number eights you looked up to?

There was a host of them, but I think Dean Richards and Mike Teague were right at the top. It was a competitive area with big personalities. You could add Tim Rodber and Ben Clarke to that list, and looking at myself I'm pleased to say I got in that mix. Teague – and not just because I'm at Gloucester – would easily be able to transfer his skills into this era. He could carry ball and operate on a strong physical level. Richards was outstanding at close quarters, especially in the maul and line-out. Mike wasn't as tall but that made him more mobile.

Would you like to be playing now?

Looking back I'm pleased I played in both the amateur and professional eras. Some things that happened then would never happen now and vice versa, but I've no wish to be involved now. It hurts and you can see it. In my last year at Bristol I was carrying a lot of painful injuries and however much you are willing the body starts to say no. The game is much more physical and there's always a young guy on the block wishing to make a point with you. I was pleased to retire when I did.

Did you always want to go into coaching?

It seemed a natural route to take because I always told people what to do on the field. When I was at Newcastle with Rob Andrew and Steve Bates we all coached, and I took the forwards. Bristol offered the same role and then latterly the job as Head Coach – it was the first step on the ladder, although in hindsight a bit too early. You tend to take the first job on your ego, whether you have the skills

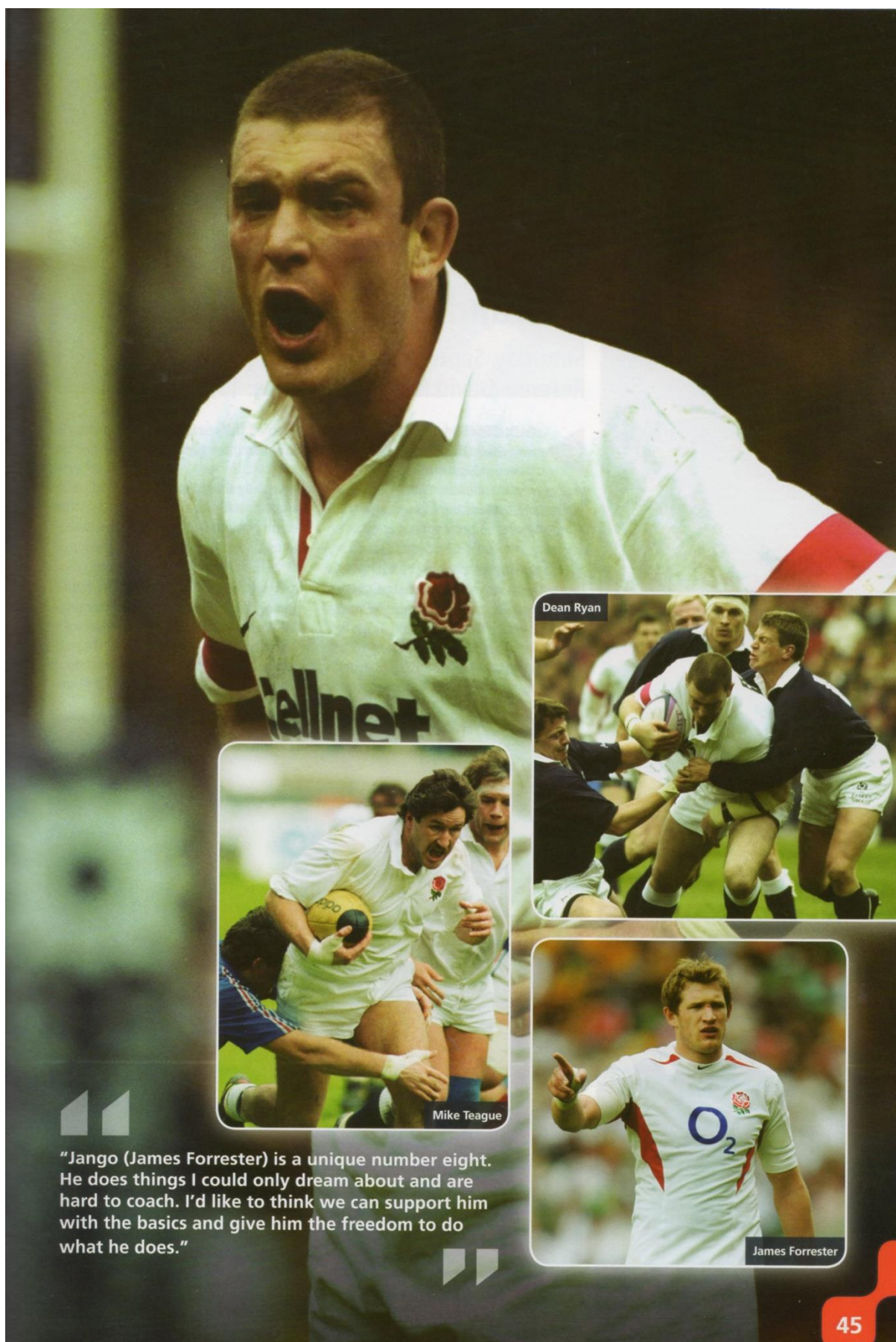
set or not. Rather than hang on there, I moved back to doing the forwards here with Nigel Melville, and in the end it was a step back to come forward again. I could have stayed at Bristol but I didn't have the skills to do the job fully at the time and I would have sunk without trace otherwise.

Are you excited by the potential here at Gloucester?

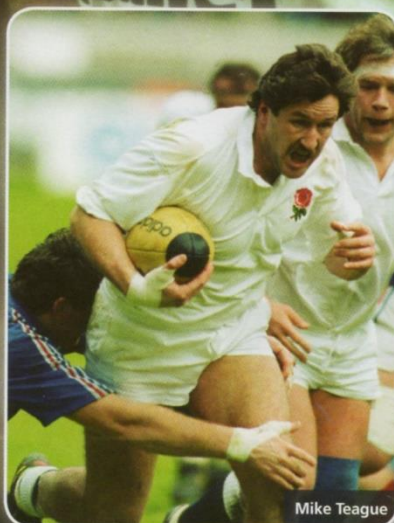
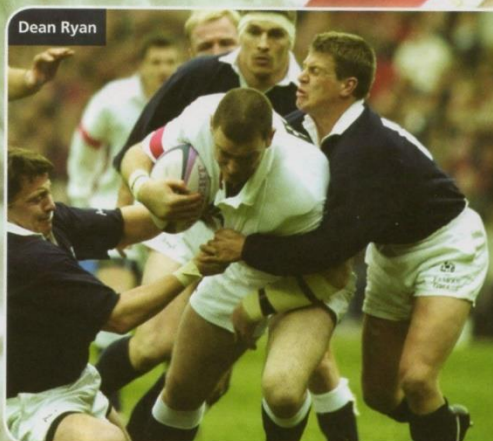
I'm pleased with the philosophy. We're building a group which can offer more balance, although there are times when other teams can take that away. We've needed a bit more experience and physicality and we've tried to recruit to help that. The facilities and the environment we provide are important. In the amateur days guys would train in the dark winter mornings and then turn up to their club sessions in 15 different jerseys and wear odd socks. It brought people together, and there was a certain quality that can't be there now because we don't operate like that, but we have to keep moving forward. Hartpury is excellent for us, because it gives us the skills and conditioning that adds to the personality of the player and if you don't have that the rest is a waste of time.

What about the number eights you currently have at the club?

Jango (James Forrester) is a unique number eight. He does things I could only dream about and are hard to coach. I'd like to think we can support him with the basics and give him the freedom to do what he does. Adam and Gareth when he's fit will bring a lot of physical strength and Luke started the season well at Leeds. We need a contrast to build play in a number of different ways and I think we've got that.

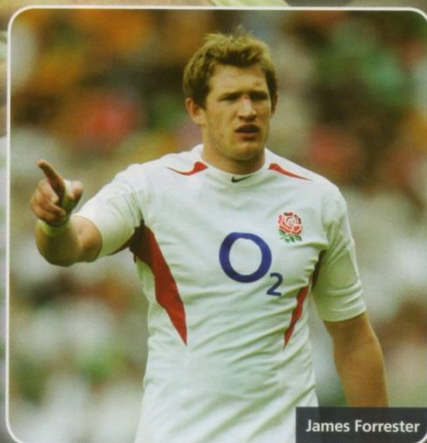


Dean Ryan



Mike Teague

“Jango (James Forrester) is a unique number eight. He does things I could only dream about and are hard to coach. I’d like to think we can support him with the basics and give him the freedom to do what he does.”



James Forrester

MATCH ACTION

Gloucester Rugby
Worcester Warriors

29
7



Time line

31 mins	
Lamb PEN	3-0
38 mins	
Lamb PEN	6-0
47 mins	
Simpson-Daniel TRY, Lamb CON	16-0
58 mins	
Quinnell TRY, Drahm CON	16-7
60 mins	
Azam TRY	21-7
73 mins	
Lamb DROP-GOAL	24-7
79 mins	
Tindall TRY 29-7	29-7

Gloucester Line-up

15	Morgan	
14	Bailey	
13	Tindall	(1t)
12	Allen	
11	Simpson-Daniel	(1t)
10	Lamb	(2p, 1c, 1dg)
9	Prendergast	
1	Wood	
2	Azam	(1t)
3	Nieto	
4	Buxton	(capt)
5	Brown	
6	Strokosch	
7	Hazell	
8	Narraway	
REPS		
16	Titterrell	(Azam)
17	Califano	
18	Pendlebury	
19	Balding	(Narraway)
20	Lewis	(Prendergast)
21	Walker	
22	Pryce	

A Grandstand Opening

Saturday, September 29

Referee: David Rose, Attendance: 15,871

▶ GLOUCESTER launched their new C&G Grandstand with a thoroughly absorbing, gritty victory over neighbours Worcester Warriors in front of the biggest crowd at Kingsholm in the professional era.

More than 15,000 packed themselves inside the newly refurbished stadium to see Peter Buxton's men squeeze the life out of Mike Ruddock's side. Tries from James Simpson-Daniel, hooker Olivier Azam and the returning Mike Tindall eased Gloucester to victory and

stretched their unbeaten start to the season to three games.

It was only 6-0 at half-time – Ryan Lamb knocking over two penalties in the last nine minutes of the half – as both teams traded territory and possession without unlocking either defence. There was some characteristically hard running from Tindall for Gloucester and Dale Rasmussen and Dom Feaunati for Worcester. But the game changed seven minutes after the re-start. Thinus Delpont flung out a hopeful pass to the left but



www.gloucester rugby.co.uk



Man of the Match



His brilliant individual try was enough to burst the game open. A typical finish from JAMES SIMPSON-DANIEL.

it evaded all the Worcester options and Simpson-Daniel picked up, glided away from Rasmussen, twisted and turned before stepping on the gas and beating Delpont and Shane Drahm to the line.

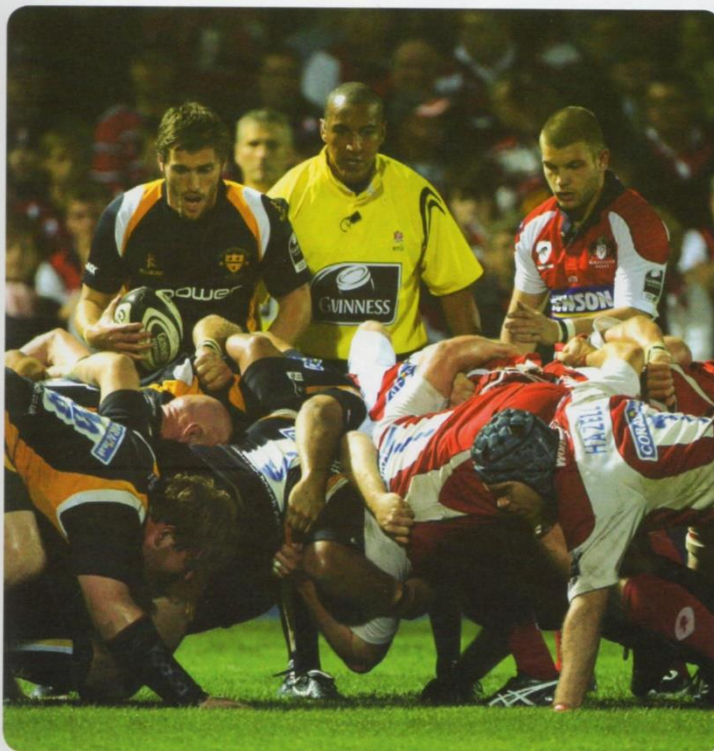
Lamb converted and Gloucester were 16-0 ahead. But almost immediately, Worcester hit back when, from a line-out, replacement Gavin Quinnell got up a serious head of steam and managed to get the ball down despite the tackle from Andy Hazell.

However, any thoughts of a Worcester comeback were snuffed out two minutes later. Gloucester drove a line-out to the corner, Alex Brown took the catch and as the drive came on, Gloucester peeled infield for Azam to touch down. The score broke the back of the game. Gloucester swept up any threat thanks to their excellent defence and in the final minute they scored again. Simpson-Daniel fielded a high kick and ran back, the impressive James Bailey almost got through a half-gap before Lamb chipped and Tindall chased down past Marcel Garvey to seal Gloucester's victory.

Coach's Comment



"Worcester were very robust in defence and we just needed something to break to build from. "Ironically it came off of a mistake by them which allowed Sinbad (Simpson-Daniel) to run in from 60 metres. That changes the dynamic of the second half and freed the game up a little," Gloucester's head coach Dean Ryan.





NO CATCH PETER ARNOLD

It has been a hectic fortnight since the last home game: Two victories, contracts renewed, players leaving and the small matter of World Cup players returning to Kingsholm. Peter Arnold rounds up all the action.

ADIEU LUDO

EVERYONE will be sad at witnessing Ludovic Mercier fading into the Kingsholm twilight. He says he's going to take a short sabbatical before deciding where he goes from here, but that he'd like to stay in England. That's ominous: we wouldn't want to see him slotting goals at

Kingsholm in anyone's colours but ours.

This, of course, brings to an end Ludo's second stint at Gloucester. When he first arrived none of us had ever heard of him. All we really knew was that he was one of a clutch of players recruited from France by our then coach, Philippe Saint-Andre, and

which also included other unknowns (to us) as Messrs Yachvili, Azam and Collazo.

There was no doubt, however, who made the most immediate impact. Ludo kicked so many goals that he became one of the fastest players to score 500 points in the Premiership. The distances he achieved were remarkable, and so much height did he get on the ball that the Kingsholm goalposts had to be extended.

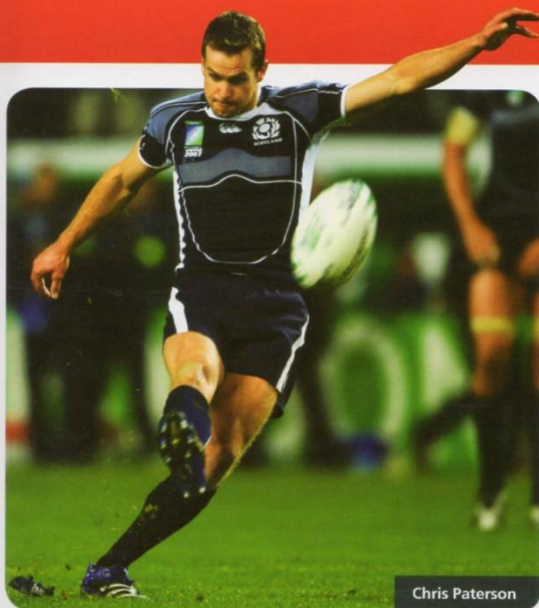
But my favourite memory of Ludovic Mercier didn't arise at Castle Grim at all. It came at Twickenham, no less, right at the beginning of the Cup Final, which we were contesting with our old friends from down the A38. Bristol kicked off, and committed the cardinal sin of kicking the ball straight out. They then compounded the error by giving away a penalty at the resulting scrum. Up to the centre spot stepped Monsieur Mercier and slotted the ball through the centre of the uprights with the greatest of aplomb. Looking back, Bristol was never really in the game after that.

Ludo then returned to France in search of international honours. When they didn't materialise, we were delighted to welcome him back, but it has to be said that his second stint was as successful as his first. The English game had moved on in his absence, and perhaps his style didn't quite fit in with the type of rugby Gloucester wanted to play. For whatever reason he simply didn't get many matches.

Mercier's greatest weapon is his lethal boot. There are probably only two or three players in the world who can kick goals as infallibly as he can. Unfortunately, one of those two or three is on his way to Kingsholm. At the time of writing, Chris Paterson hasn't missed a shot at goal in the whole of the World Cup tournament, and I suspect that his signing was the last straw for Ludo.



Ludovic Mercier v Bristol Rugby



Chris Paterson

You can't really blame the chap for that, and I'm sure we all wish him well wherever he lands up next. But please, Ludo. Don't bring your boots back to Kingsholm.

BRAINTEASER

TALK about a superfluity of riches. We shall be fascinated to see how the Gloucester selection system handles the return of our World Cup participants, given that the existing squad hasn't done too badly in their absence.

The aforementioned Paterson gives us a case in point. I suppose that if you can call on the best goal kicker in the world, then you want to do so. But where to fit him in? We know that No.10 is his preferred position, but Ryan Lamb is doing very nicely thank you. Chris has also starred at full-back for Scotland, but where does that leave Olly Morgan, one of the brightest young hopes at No.15 in the country? The Scot has also made a very efficient job of playing on the wing, but there is the small matter of Sinbad and the Volcano to consider.

With our full compliment of locks back in contention, one would assume that Pete Buxton will revert to the back row, but that area is looking a bit crowded, too especially

with young Strokosch having already made an impact, and the large Mr. Qera winging his way from Fiji.

I could go on. Scrum-half is a bone of contention, as is the problem at lock. I suppose it's a nice problem to have, but I wouldn't want the job of sorting out all the permutations and combinations.

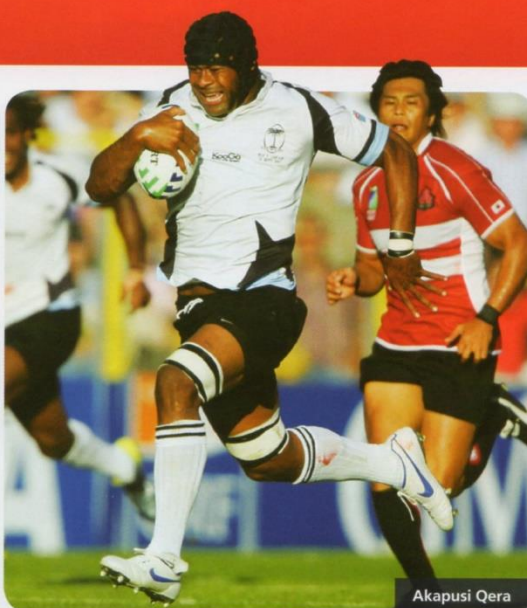
I must say, however, that I like the look of Qera, who is big, fast and aggressive. Mike Burton would say that he'll be all right when he's been Gloucesterised.

GOODE VIBRATIONS

LAST weekend was highly satisfactory from the points of view of both England and Gloucester. My favourite comment came from Leon Lloyd, who as you know, has pitched up at Kingsholm after a lifetime stint with Leicester, and has slotted in as if he were an old Gloucester hand.

As you know, he started last Saturday evening's fun by intercepting a pass from his old mate, Andy Goode and galloping a fair old distance to score our opening try. After the game he remarked, "That's the best pass from Goody I've had in about twelve years!"

www.gloucester rugby.co.uk



Akapusi Qera

We could mull over that match all day, and some of us probably will, but it does have to be said that a win at Welford Road is a rare beast and always gratefully received. The sight of a significant number of Leicester supporters abandoning the ground ten minutes before the end of a game which, I'm told, was remarkable for the relative silence from the home fans, must have pleased our travelling support mightily. After all, we're still smarting from last season's Premiership play-off disaster.

Don't get me wrong. I've nothing against the Leicester supporters, whose company we have always enjoyed, home or away, win or lose. I expect they'll recover their poise and enthusiasm when their side starts winning again, which they assuredly will.

Much has been made of the absence of Leicester's World Cup players, but I don't really go along with that. The Tigers have always been able to point to a very strong and deep squad, and the side they turned out last Saturday would have demolished most opposition. Indeed, they've been doing just that thus far into the season. Anyway, we are suffering the same syndrome, plus a significant number of strategically important injuries.

Let's just enjoy the moment.

MATCH OF THE DAYS

It was the clash we loved to hate: A semi-final against arch-rivals Bath. Did a controversial touch-judge decision cost Gloucester a day at Twickenham? Dave King reports.

▶ HERE IS A little question. Can you recall the season when Gloucester completed a 'double' over Bath Rugby Club? If you can it would be the season of 1981-82 when we defeated the Somerset club 33-15 at Kingsholm and 12-6 at the Recreation Ground.

Gloucester have repeated that rare feat since once - albeit in second XV encounters in the season of 1988-89 when our United team recorded a 30-18 victory here at Kingsholm on 12th November 1988, then travelled to the Recreation Ground the following February and defeated Bath United 12-9. That same season only a month later on the 25th March we were afforded the opportunity to register a second victory at first team level when we were drawn at home in a Pilkington Cup semi-final. Only a month previous we had defeated the men from Somerset 18-12 at Kingsholm.

So, the stage was set for a West Country epic with the all-conquering Bath team visiting Kingsholm, a ground where Wasps and Leicester had failed to lower the colours of Gloucester. Ten internationals were named in the Bath line-up compared to Gloucester's solitary cap, Malcolm Preedy. The prop forward was the only Kingsholm player to have experienced international rugby - the gaps were vast but a massive crowd were ready to lift Gloucester to new heights. Irrespective of this daunting task, it was envisaged that such luminaries as Tony Swift, Simon Halliday, Stuart Barnes, Richard Hill, Gareth Chilcott, Graham Dawe, Nigel Redman, Andy Robinson, John Hall and David Egerton, were set to play second fiddle to an inspired Gloucester team. There were many who easily recalled that only Bristol had won on the hallowed turf of Kingsholm to date that season and the Memorial Ground Club had only won by a single point.

The press and media noted that Bath



had further internationals named on the replacements bench in Cronin, Palmer and Simpson so there was no manner in which Gloucester could win with the galaxy of stars set to take the stage at Kingsholm. However, the Kingsholm faithful could not begin to comprehend that even with the odds stacked against them it would prove to be an obstacle on the path to victory. As the day dawned hopes were raised to the maximum. Could the scribes and followers of Bath Rugby be confounded? On the day it was a strip of wood that would be the deciding factor, not human toil, effort or skill.

Would Gloucester be able to match the undoubted fire power of the Recreation Ground Club? The metronomic boot of Tim Smith was considered to be vital as he was the club's leading point scorer up to that day with 298 points. Nick Price and Jim Breeze led the way in the try scoring stakes at that time with 16 tries apiece. The match was a sell out with isolated spectators climbing the floodlight pylons for a vantage point. It was a match where the width of a post proved crucial. A Stuart Barnes kick was flagged in as successful in the first half as it crossed over the top of a post. Later Tim Smith's kick

was ruled out, tough decisions by the touch judges - that ultimately swung the contest. That effort was deemed to have been a score by the Kingsholm crowd, many of the players thought likewise. However, touch judge - Laurie Prideaux was the villain of the day and stated it was six inches outside the post. This was confirmed by the other touch judge Gordon Hewitt. Tim Smith was convinced it was a score. The following day BBC Rugby Special backed Smith's claim.

The match overall was a huge disappointment as a spectacle. Neither side threatened to score a try, there was no inspiration in the back play. Forwards dominated, the first minute penalty by Smith was to no avail, two in reply from the current Sky TV pundit, Barnes, wiped out that early lead. The victory allowed Bath to earn a place in the Pilkington Cup Final against Leicester at Twickenham. An occasion, but not a spectacle, readily recognised Breeze who eighteen years later recognises that apt summary. Jim is now the proprietor of Ebley Motor Auto Sales and Repairs at Dudbridge, near Stroud. "Bath were the team of that period far superior to other clubs but we always felt we could give them a close game as the scoreline justified.

www.gloucesterrugby.co.uk



Bath were the team of that period far superior to other clubs but we always felt we could give them a close game as the scoreline justified. They were professional in every aspect of the game. They were a good all round team...



Tim Smith



Ian Smith

They were professional in every aspect of the game. They were a good all round team," he said.

Breeze, who made 279 first team appearances for this club reflected on how injury brought a halt to his career at top level. "I smashed my kneecap and faced reconstruction. I've since had the odd game since for All Blues and the Cherry Pickers. I have many memories of Saturday – Wednesday – Saturday in a week, we were not paid and you had to travel down to Wales midweek for some matches after work. Cup matches were highlights and facing the cream of English rugby clubs and matching them was an achievement when we had a team of locals."

A Bath prospective of the game came from Brian Jones in his book 'Bath – Ace of Clubs' "The barrenness of the Gloucester armoury was cruelly revealed as it seemed that even it's key players had largely forgotten that the Kingsholm Club fielded 15 men. Gloucester Rugby had no ideas about breaking down the Bath defence. A lack of variety and resource was fatal for their ambition."

MATCH OF THE DAYS

THE TEAMS

GLOUCESTER:

T.SMITH
J.BREEZE
D.CUMMINS
R.MOGG
N.PRICE
M.HAMLIN
M.HANNAFORD (CAPTAIN)
M.PREEDY
K.DUNN
R.PASCALL
N.SCRIVENS
J.ETHERIDGE
J.GADD
I.SMITH
B.CLARK

REPLACEMENTS

L.GARDINER
J.ROBERTS
J.HAWKER
P.ASHMEAD
R.JONES
R.MCLEAN

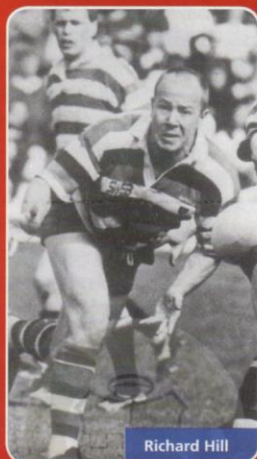
BATH:

A.LUMSDEN
A.SWIFT
S.HALLIDAY
J.GUSCOTT
B.TREVASKIS
S.BARNES (CAPTAIN)
R.HILL
G.CHILCOTT
G.DAWE
M.LEE
J.MORRISON
N.REDMAN
A.ROBINSON
J.HALL
D.EGERTON

REPLACEMENTS

S.KNIGHT
J.DEANE
D.CRONIN
V.OBUGU
J.PALMER
P.SIMPSON

REFEREE: R.QUITENTON (LONDON SOCIETY)



Richard Hill



Andy Robinson




Nigel Redman



Stuart Barnes

FAN ZONE WITH BOB FENTON

Bob Fenton reflects on out with the old, in with the new at Kingsholm this afternoon. Ludovic Mercier may have gone to pastures new but Gloucester's victory at Welford Road last weekend has set up today's little dust-up perfectly.

 MANY congratulations to Ryan Lamb on scooping the Guinness Premiership player of the month award. Having scored 46 points in the first three games Lamb was odds on to claim the crown.

It's somewhat ironic that Ryan scooped his award the day after Ludo announced that he was to leave the club. A case of on with the new and out with the old.

When Philippe persuaded Ludo to come to Kingsholm know one knew what to expect. Internet searches showed several lunatic murderers but no Ludovic Mercier's. But rarely has a player made such an impact. Out of the blue we had this bloke who would nail penalties from distances that we would never have considered and could hammer clearance kicks from inside his own in goal area to way past half way.

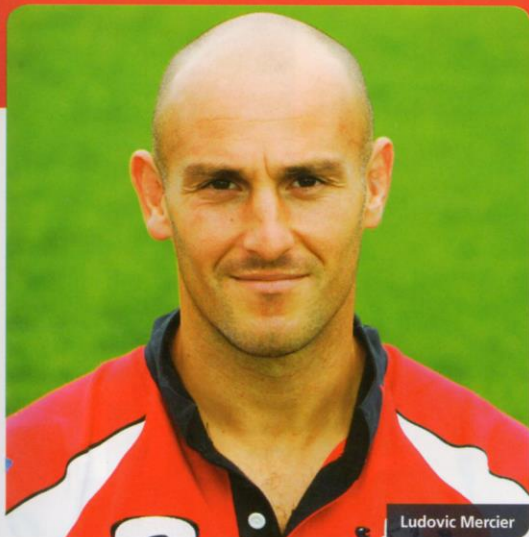
Then he left, apparently to try to pursue an international career by heading back to France. And then he came back again - but never really fitted back in. The style of play had moved on to a faster, more fluid, pattern and while there is always a place for a goal kicker, the new demands at stand-off did not really suit Ludo's style.

That's not to say that he could not play a running passing game, he could, but it was never his real strength. The idea of him slotting in at full-back was tried but the emergence of first Jon Goodridge and then Olly Morgan meant that the number 15 jersey became as out of reach as the 10.

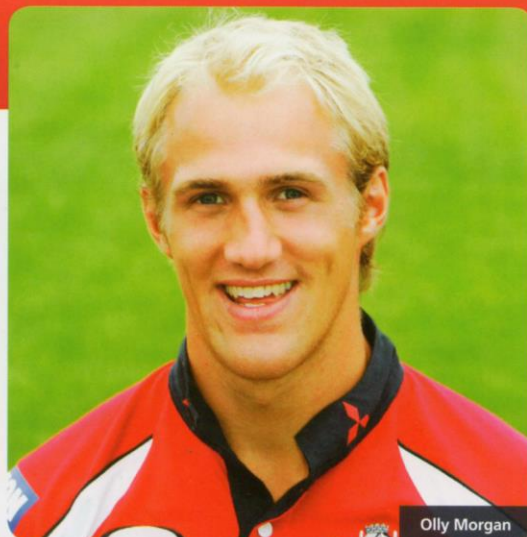
So it was little surprise that he has gone on elsewhere. He goes with everyone's best wishes. Personally I will remember him hitting drop goals off his wrong foot to really rub in victories, the booming long range penalties but most of all his intercepts - most notably at Twickenham.



Philippe Saint Andre



Ludovic Mercier



Olly Morgan



"He goes with everyone's best wishes. Personally I will remember him hitting drop goals off his wrong foot to really rub in victories, the booming long range penalties but most of all his intercepts – most notably at Twickenham."

Bob Fenton on Ludovic Mercier



Off the field he was a real gent to, whether that was giving impromptu kicking lessons to kids after a game had ended, or discussing the relative healthy eating merits of Pizza over Pasta in Ask in Cheltenham. A genuinely decent bloke. Just a thought, but will he get a second cathedral print from the KSM?

So what a weekend of rugby we've just had. In the World Cup things turned upside down with England pulling off a terrific victory over Australia, to be topped a few hours later by France out-thinking then out playing the much vaunted All Blacks. The papers on Sunday were filled with gripes from the New Zealanders as they tried to blame everyone but themselves for their failure. A lot of the comment was on certain refereeing decisions, suffice to say I think referee Wayne Barnes should avoid a holiday in New Zealand for a few years.

I did like the text I received at about 10:30 on Saturday night to say that the All Blacks had decided to drop the Haka before World

Cup matches – apparently they are to replace it with the Hokey Chokey... I can tell you that my Kiwi mate in Cheltenham did not find that too funny though.

Then on Sunday Fiji ran South Africa close for a while before the Boks finally exerted some control and ran out comfortable winners. Finally Scotland were dumped out by an Argentinean side that have been an absolute revelation during the competition.

But without doubt the result of the weekend was our win up at Welford Road, giving us four out of four so far this season. Leon Lloyd must have had mixed emotions when he read Andy Goode's floating pass early in the game to pluck it out of the air and scamper home. From that moment on I thought the game was ours.

Roy Maybank did his best to become my all time favourite referee by awarding a penalty try as Leicester collapsed at scrum time. Had things been slightly different we could have been the first team to pick up a

four-try bonus point at Leicester. Oh well, next year.

But that was then and this is now, and we need to keep it going and make it five out of five against Sale.

Last week they achieved a first in the Guinness Premiership – a complete shut out against Wasps. While they are yet to win on their travels this season they ran Bath mighty close a couple of weeks ago, so no complacency, please.

It'll give a couple of the boys a chance to say hello to old colleagues, Andy Titterrell will be wanting to get into the starting line up to put one over on his old side, while Rudi Kiel will have similar feelings as he steps out onto the Kingsholm turn in a Sale jersey.

Rumours abound that our old coach St Philippe of Andre is going to ship out of Sale shortly to take over the helm of the French national side. If that does turn out to be the case I am sure he will be very successful and I'm sure we would all wish him the best of luck.

At the moment though, the eyes of the French side are on a certain game to be played in Paris this weekend. If they win that, and the one remaining game afterwards following in Bernard Laport's shoes is going to be mighty difficult for whoever takes over...

MATCH ACTION

Leicester Tigers
Gloucester Rugby

17
30



Time line

3 mins	
Leon TRY, Walker CON 0-7	0-7
13 mins	
Goode PEN	3-7
15 mins	
Walker PEN	3-10
20 mins	
PENALTY TRY, Walker CON 3-17	3-17
31 mins	
Walker PEN	3-20
53 mins	
Walker PEN	3-23
70 mins	
Croft TRY, Burke con	10-23
74 mins	
Walker TRY and CON	10-30
78 mins	
Cornwell TRY, Burke CON	17-30

Gloucester Line-up

15	Morgan	
14	Lloyd	(1t)
13	Tindall	
12	Allen	
11	Bailey	
10	Walker	(1t, 3c, 3p)
9	Prendergast	
1	Collazo	
2	Azam	
3	Nieto	
4	Buxton	(capt)
5	Brown	
6	Strokosch	
7	Hazell	
8	Narraway	(Penalty try)
REPS		
16	Titterrell	(Azam)
17	Califano	(Nieto)
18	Wood	(Collazo)
19	James	(Hazell)
20	Cooper	(Prendergast)
21	Lamb	
22	Foster	(Allen)

Tigers Tamed!

Saturday, October 6

Referee: Roy Maybank, Attendance: 17,101

▶ GLOUCESTER came within an ace of securing their third successive away five-point victory against reigning champions Leicester at Welford Road.

They scored three tries and could have had more – in fact they had two potential scores through Peter Buxton and Gareth Cooper ruled out – but were far superior to the Tigers to extend their unbeaten run to four matches. Gloucester got the perfect start after three minutes. Leicester

attacked to the left but Andy Goode's pass towards Tom Varndell was plucked from the air by Leon Lloyd, who returned to his former club with the opening try.

From that gift, Gloucester's forwards simply laid waste to the home-town pack. They scrummaged them off their feet – Patrice Collazo made a serious mess of Julian White – while Carlos Nieto anchored the whole effort from the tight-head side of the scrum. And defensively, Gloucester were



www.gloucester rugby.co.uk



excellent. Led by another physically dominant performance from Alasdair Strokosch and Alex Brown, Leicester ran-around with ball in hand until the very end.

Gloucester's foundation allowed them to establish a 20-3 lead thanks to the accuracy of Willie Walker's boot, another who had a very good evening, and a 20th minute penalty try.

If there is one thing that will mark Gloucester will have been their inability

to grab a bonus point try and despite last-quarter scores from Tom Croft and Matt Cornwell, Walker sealed the match when he broke free from replacement Paul Burke and dived over following a line-out drive.

The result was of serious implications to both teams. Not only does it enhance Gloucester's position at the top of the Guinness Premiership table but it increases the distance between them and the likes of Wasps and Leicester.



www.gloucester rugby.co.uk

Man of the Match



The Gloucester pack were outstanding, Patrice Collazo did a brilliant job on

Julian White but CARLOS NIETO anchored the whole effort from tight-head.

Player's Comment



"That was the best pass I've had off Andy Goode in 12 years. I took

a gamble because if I hadn't have caught that pass then Tom Varndell would have scored at the other end. Fortunately for me the risk paid off," try scorer Leon Lloyd

