



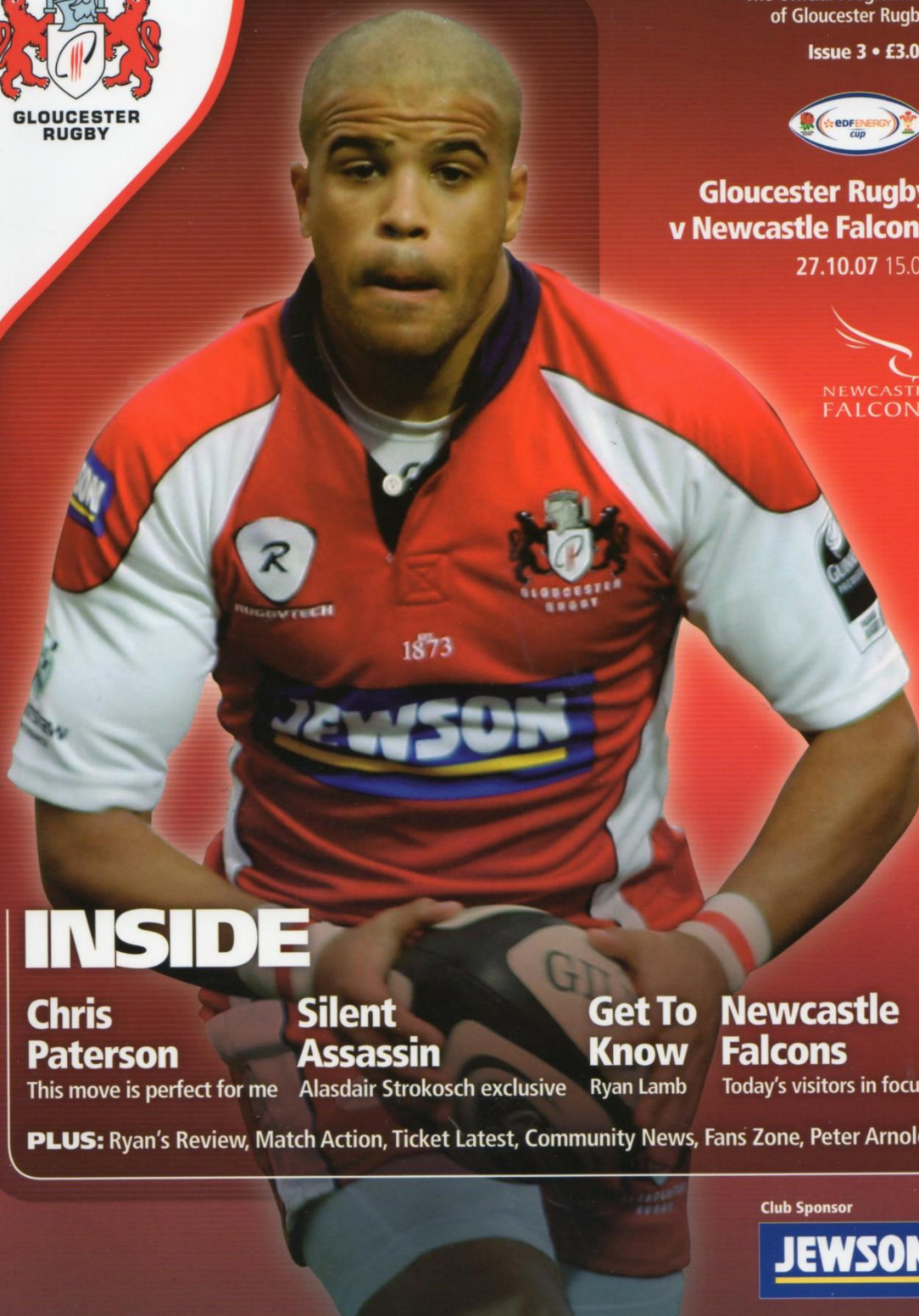
The Official Programme
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Gloucester Rugby v Newcastle Falcons

27.10.07 15.00



INSIDE

Chris Paterson

This move is perfect for me

Silent Assassin

Alasdair Strokosch exclusive

Get To Know

Ryan Lamb

Newcastle Falcons

Today's visitors in focus

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

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CAPTAIN'S CORNER

Gloucester suffered their first Guinness Premiership defeat of the season on Saturday but skipper Marco Bortolami is determined they bounce back today.

I HAVE heard our performance against London Irish last Sunday described as many things.

When we look back at the game I don't think it is possible to escape the fact that London Irish designed and executed a game plan that was very effective.

They were able to slow possession, reduced the game to a scrappy, stop-start battle and we couldn't get free from it. Although we dislike to lose, you have to admire the way they set about their task specifically designed to negate our running game.

It was not a nice experience I can tell you, but we are not going to start beating ourselves up simply because we lost a game. It is unrealistic to think we can win every game this season – we are a marked team, other clubs raise the level of their performance against us and we must react to that challenge.

Personally, I am still getting

back into life at the club after the World Cup but it will be a great honour to lead the team again today. I think Bucko can be really proud of his achievements during the World Cup – not just as a player but also as a leader and captain.

I think it shows the strength of the squad we are building and we will have some very big names involved today. This is a major competition, we are all fighting for places and the opportunity to

impress the coaches and you can guarantee there will be no let up in our approach.

Just as London Irish kicked back against us following their defeat against Wasps, we must now do the same. The Heineken Cup is just around the corner and we must be ready for the challenge.

Today, Newcastle are the visitors to Kingsholm and they have won three and lost three from their first

six Premiership games. They have had some of the best young players in the country in the England squad and over the last few years have made their name as a cup side.

We must be ready for their challenge, protect our home form and come out all guns blazing. We need to show a response from last week so please get behind the team today, lift us with your voices and help us back to winning ways.

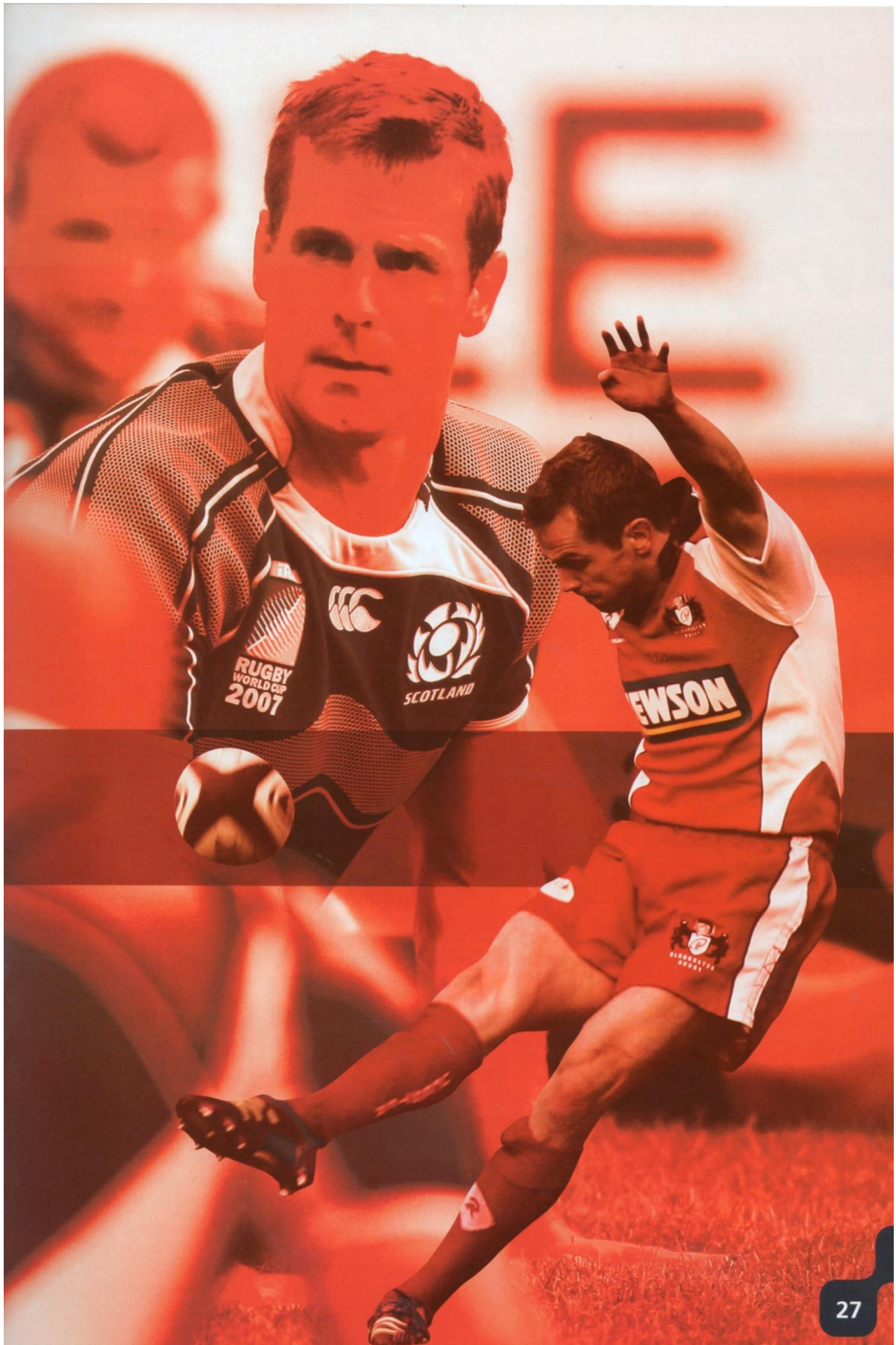




MAKING THE RIGHT MOVE



Chris Paterson has made the leap of faith and joined Gloucester from Edinburgh and as Gabrielle Lewis from the Citizen discovers, it was a move he could have made years ago.





CHRIS PATERSON

▶ IT DID not take much to convince Chris Paterson that he simply had to sign for Gloucester.

His gut was already driving him south when he made the trip with Edinburgh to Kingsholm in the Heineken Cup last year and left awestruck by what he had seen.

By the time it all went pear-shaped at Murrayfield, with the club's former owner, Bob Carruthers, and the Scottish Rugby Union wrangling over money and control, Paterson had taken his leave. The lure of Gloucester's potential and the plans laid down by coaches Dean Ryan and Bryan Redpath, a former Edinburgh and Scotland colleague of Paterson's, proved overwhelmingly convincing.

"There was contact with Gloucester 18 months ago when I signed my last contract with Edinburgh, and arguably I should have come," Paterson revealed.

"But when I came down for the Heineken Cup game in January and saw the squad and the way they play and the policy they have to get players firing on all cylinders - at my age playing every game catches up on you - and the support, I thought then what a great place to play.

"What really sealed it for me was when I came down and met Bryan and Dean and I was so excited by what they had to say and the challenges they were going to set. "I was flying back on my own and I sat on the plane with an A4 sheet of paper and drew a line down the middle for positives and negatives. There were 36 positives and not one negative for coming, and that made my decision. "That's how big an opportunity it was for me and

I'm delighted to be here."

Paterson played his first professional game at Kingsholm - a pre-season friendly with Edinburgh in 1999 - and the tingling roar of the Shed never left him.

Almost two weeks ago, the world's best kicker - whose reputation was enhanced with his perfect 17 goals at the World Cup - became part of that aura.

The Sale game came too early for Paterson to have picked up on all the intricacies of Ryan and Redpath's game-plan and he made his debut at London Irish last Sunday and kicked a conversion and a penalty.

It has meant Paterson has had little time to wallow in Scotland's failure to reach the World Cup semi-finals in Paris. Adamant the Scots had the wherewithal to dispatch Argentina, even though they squandered copious ball in the first hour, the defeat left him shattered.

"I can honestly say that I have never felt as I did after that Argentina game," he said. "Simon Taylor, myself, Jason White, the older players realised what a great opportunity that was - perhaps some of the younger players didn't feel as disappointed as we did. "The best thing for me was coming here. That game was on the Sunday night, I got home to Edinburgh on the Monday and by Tuesday morning I was down here.

"I was back up in Edinburgh on Monday for a one-to-one with Frank Hadden and everyone I bumped into still had that hangover and was pretty down. "I was cheery and upbeat because I had got my teeth into a new challenge."

How different it would have been had Paterson headed back to Edinburgh.

Along with the change of ownership came the exodus of players, which included Alasdair Dickinson and Alasdair Strokosch joining Rory Lawson and coach Carl Hogg at Gloucester, and the appointment of former England coach Andy Robinson at the helm.

So after nine seasons at Murrayfield, the 29-year-old with 81 caps to his name made a leap of faith. "It was a wrench to leave after being there so long, but as the majority of players I grew up with in Edinburgh have moved on, even to go back after the World Cup I'd only know a handful of players because there was such a big turnover. So what I knew at Edinburgh had changed as well," Paterson said.

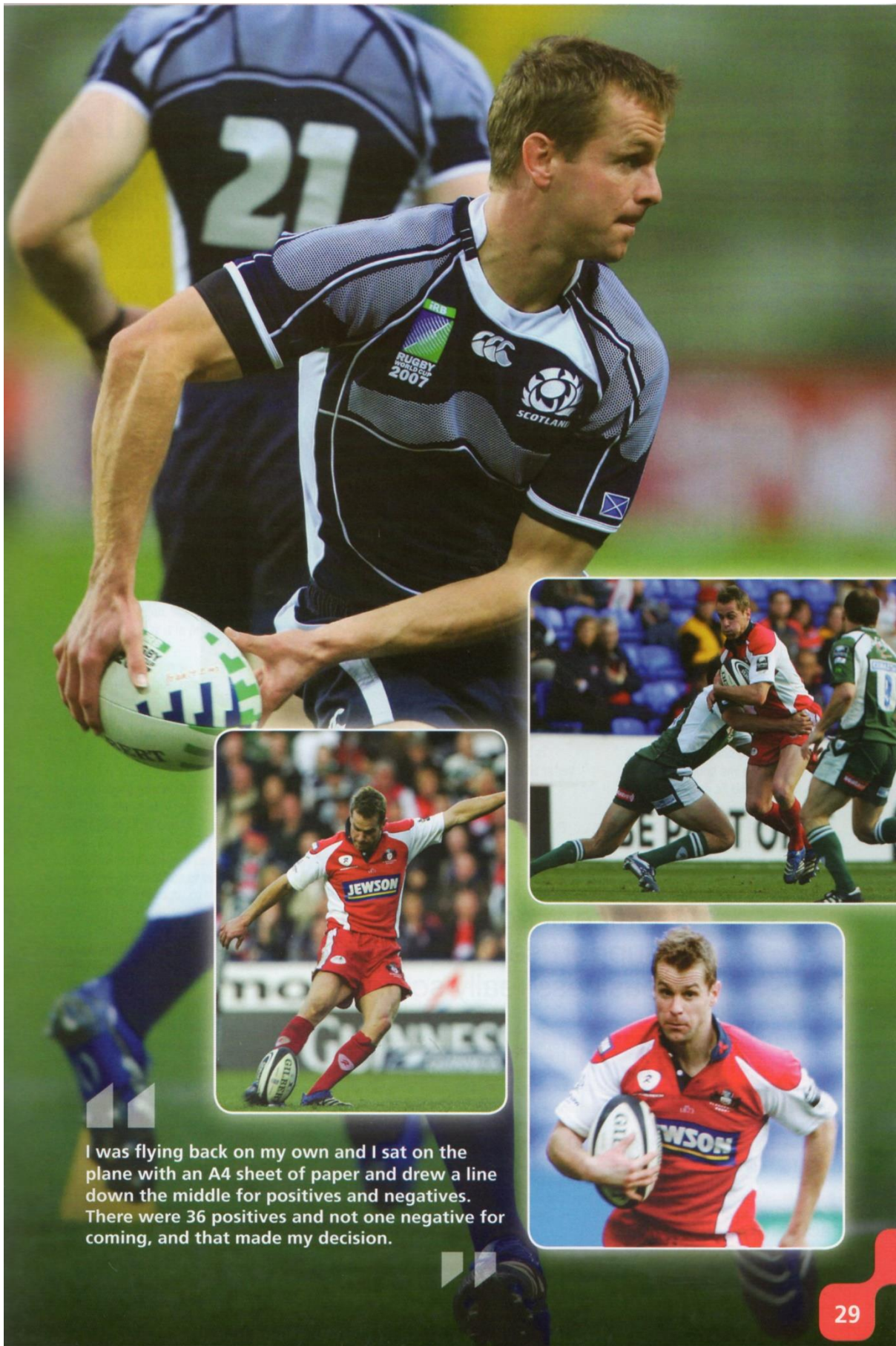
"But for me a move had to happen. Everyone in life needs challenges.

"There's a risk involved - can you play for Scotland if you're not playing regularly? But it's something I am prepared to do and hopefully coming to a great club like this with great fans can improve me as a player."

His versatility has seen him flit between positions for club and country.

But wherever he plays in the back-line, Paterson's experience and proficiency with the boot will come in handy for Gloucester.

As he says: "I just want to play and do the best I can. If it's in the back three or at 10, I will give all that I have. "I'm too old to get stressed about the positional thing."



I was flying back on my own and I sat on the plane with an A4 sheet of paper and drew a line down the middle for positives and negatives. There were 36 positives and not one negative for coming, and that made my decision.



RYAN'S REVIEW

Gloucester suffered their first defeat of the season last Sunday and head coach Dean Ryan looks back at events at London Irish and to today's visitors Newcastle.



The last unbeaten record in the Premiership came to an end at London Irish last Sunday, how did you see the game?

DR: YOU ARE only in with a shout if you can impose your gameplan. At 3-0 we hadn't given any indication we would. We hadn't had an opportunity to play or had any field position and that didn't change much in the second half.

There wasn't a fast ball or a ruck that didn't have people all over it in the game. That just meant there was going to be a tight scoreline. If the foundations of the game are not allowing quick phase ball then we're only waiting for someone to do something miraculous.

To be honest, Irish were pretty well thought out. They made sure it was very scrappy and they kicked very quickly into their phases to make sure they kept us looking for ball. They've got a good line-out, I was bemused at the scrum, the breakdown became very static and we struggled to see where our game was coming from. We got into the mix but they scored a good try which took it away from us.

It was a game in which we didn't do a huge amount wrong overall, we just didn't get the front foot ball and didn't get moving into phases.

We don't control all the factors which allow that to happen and when those are removed from the game, it becomes very tight with no opportunities to score and that's what we saw.



How would you sum up the first six Premiership matches?

DR: WE KNEW for some time we would be operating during the World Cup period and planned accordingly. We have had our disruption too and for the first five games were restricted to squad of 23 or

24 players so some guys have played a lot of rugby.

Last Sunday was an opportunity to integrate some of these guys back into the squad and that was very important, regardless of the result. I am not getting worked up with the defeat – it is very important we maintain the perspective of our start.

We won five out of six – with three away. Any away victory in the Premiership is a significant achievement because every side looks to protect their home form – and two were against teams who we consider to be long-term threats in Leicester and Saracens.

A win against Irish would have been the



Last Sunday was an opportunity to integrate some of these guys back into the squad and that was very important, regardless of the result. I am not getting worked up with the defeat – it is very important we maintain the perspective of our start.



Jeremy Paul



Action v London Irish



Action v London Irish

perfect start but it is massively unrealistic to think we will not lose games this season. The important thing now is how we react to that disappointment today.

DR: *The squad is now at virtual full strength does that make your job more difficult?*

DR: I HAVE found some of the reaction about the strength of our squad quite strange. I am thrilled to have such a vast array of talent to work with on a daily basis and select into a matchday squad.

To have the options we have is fantastic for Gloucester and the rugby we can potentially play. To me, the challenge is to blend those options, create a dynamic and responsive group that can take the club forward.

We have a massive amount of quality available to us – that is because people have seen the way we have developed and progressed in recent seasons and want to be a part of it. I want international-quality players to want to play for us because it shows we are doing things right.

I am sure it will take some time to find the blend but that is the challenge and what excites us as coaches.



We are away from the Premiership today and will soon be approaching Europe, how do you go about today's opponents Newcastle?

DR: I HAVE made it clear quite often that we simply don't look at it as another competition but just as another game. We want to be successful in every competition we play in because that is how we are judged. At the same time, we have made no secret of the fact that Europe is a place where we want to improve but today is significant in its own right.

We have the opportunity, with a home game, to get off to a positive start in the EDF Energy Cup but Newcastle have made their reputation over the last few years in cup competitions so we have to be wary.

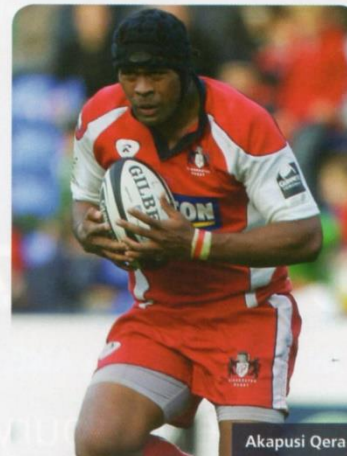
At the time of writing, I am not sure who they will have available but as they showed last year in the Premiership, they have plenty of talent, can shift the emphasis of their attack around the field and are competitive.

I think they are two teams who like to play a good, open brand of rugby and that is what I expect this afternoon.

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



Akapusi Qera

TODAY'S TEAMS

Saturday 27th October 2007 15.00
Gloucester Rugby
 v **Newcastle Falcons**



18



Newcastle Falcons

18

	Olly MORGAN	15	Full Back	15	Tom MAY	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Iain BALSHAW	14	Right Wing	14	Ollie PHILLIPS	<input type="checkbox"/>
	James SIMPSON-DANIEL	13	Centre	13	Tim VISSER	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Anthony ALLEN	12	Centre	12	Steve JONES	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mark FOSTER	11	Left Wing	11	John RUDD	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Chris PATERSON	10	Fly Half	10	Toby FLOOD	
	Rory LAWSON	9	Scrum Half	9	Hall CHARLTON	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Alasdair DICKINSON	1	Prop	1	Joe McDONNELL (c)	
	Jeremy PAUL	2	Hooker	2	Matt THOMPSON	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Christian CALIFANO	3	Prop	3	David WILSON	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Marco BORTOLAMI (c)	4	Lock	4	Andy PERRY	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Will JAMES	5	Lock	5	Mark SORENSON	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Alasdair STROKOSCH	6	Flanker	6	Geoff PARLING	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Akapusi QERA	7	Flanker	7	Brent WILSON	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adam BALDING	8	No 8	8	Russell WINTER	

Replacements

	Andy TITTERRELL	16		16	Andy LONG	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jack FORSTER	17		17	Micky WARD	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jonathan PENDLEBURY	18		18	Jason OAKES	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gareth DELVE	19		19	Ed WILLIAMSON	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gareth COOPER	20		20	James GRINDAL	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Willie WALKER	21		21	Alex TAIT	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Karl PRYCE	22		22	Adam DEHATY	<input type="checkbox"/>



HEAD COACH
Dean RYAN



DIRECTOR OF RUGBY
John FLETCHER



SPOTLIGHT

with **Ryan Lamb**

by Ian Randall



WHAT'S THE MOTTO YOU LIVE BY?

The Only Fools and Horses one, "who dares wins." If you try something on a rugby pitch, try it again, or try something different. Sometimes people get a bit annoyed with me because of that.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST PRIZED POSSESSION?

My Staffordshire bull terrier. I bought him off a Gloucester fan who lives in Cinderford, and when I get home from training my life revolves around him.



WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE BREAKFAST CEREAL?

I used to love Golden Nuggets when I was younger, but they're not so good now because of the amount of sugar in them. Now I try to stick to Weetabix or porridge.



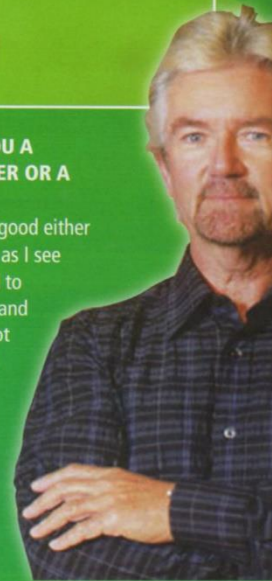
WHICH COMPANY WOULD BE YOUR IDEAL SPONSOR?

Playboy. It would be nice to have lots of beautiful girls around you, but my girlfriend's not going to be happy about that!

ARE YOU A SPENDER OR A SAVER?

Spender. It's not good either because as soon as I see something I tend to splash out on it, and my girlfriend's not pleased with me on that front either ...

WHAT MADE YOU LAST LOSE YOUR TEMPER?





Califano or Simpson-Daniel putting stones in my boots before we go training. I put my feet in - it cuts me up.



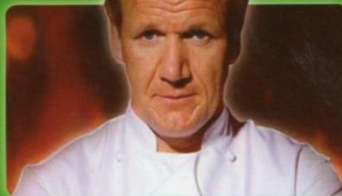
WHO IS THE MOST INTERESTING PERSON YOU'VE EVER MET ?

Christian Califano is "interesting." The first time I met him I went to shake hand and he picked me up, smashed me into a sofa and started a fight. I thought then he was a character.

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

Deal or No Deal would be an adrenalin rush to be on. Like I said I'm a spender so I'd try and go for the big prize - and probably end up in the 1p club.

WHO IS YOUR FAVOURITE PERSON ON TV?



Gordon Ramsay. I do like Hell's Kitchen.

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

Something where there's a lot of freedom and you can live the university life. I would think it would be Sport Science or Sport Psychology, although I'm not sure what it entails, Rugby Studies at Hartpury College sounds hilarious too.

WHAT PART OF TRAINING DO YOU ENJOY MOST?

Skills training, such as passing and decision making, which are drills that Motts (Mike Anthony) and Denis Betts set up. I'm not into the strength related stuff because I can't lift a lot and so you tend to stick to what you're good at.

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

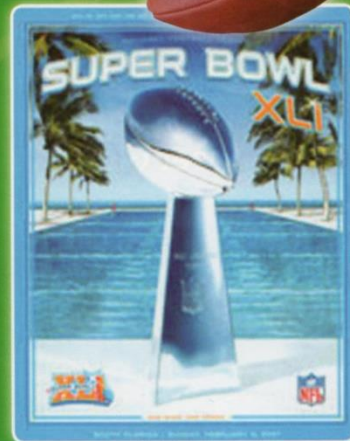
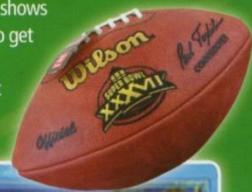
Andy Hazell. Last year he rang all the boys and pretended to tell them they

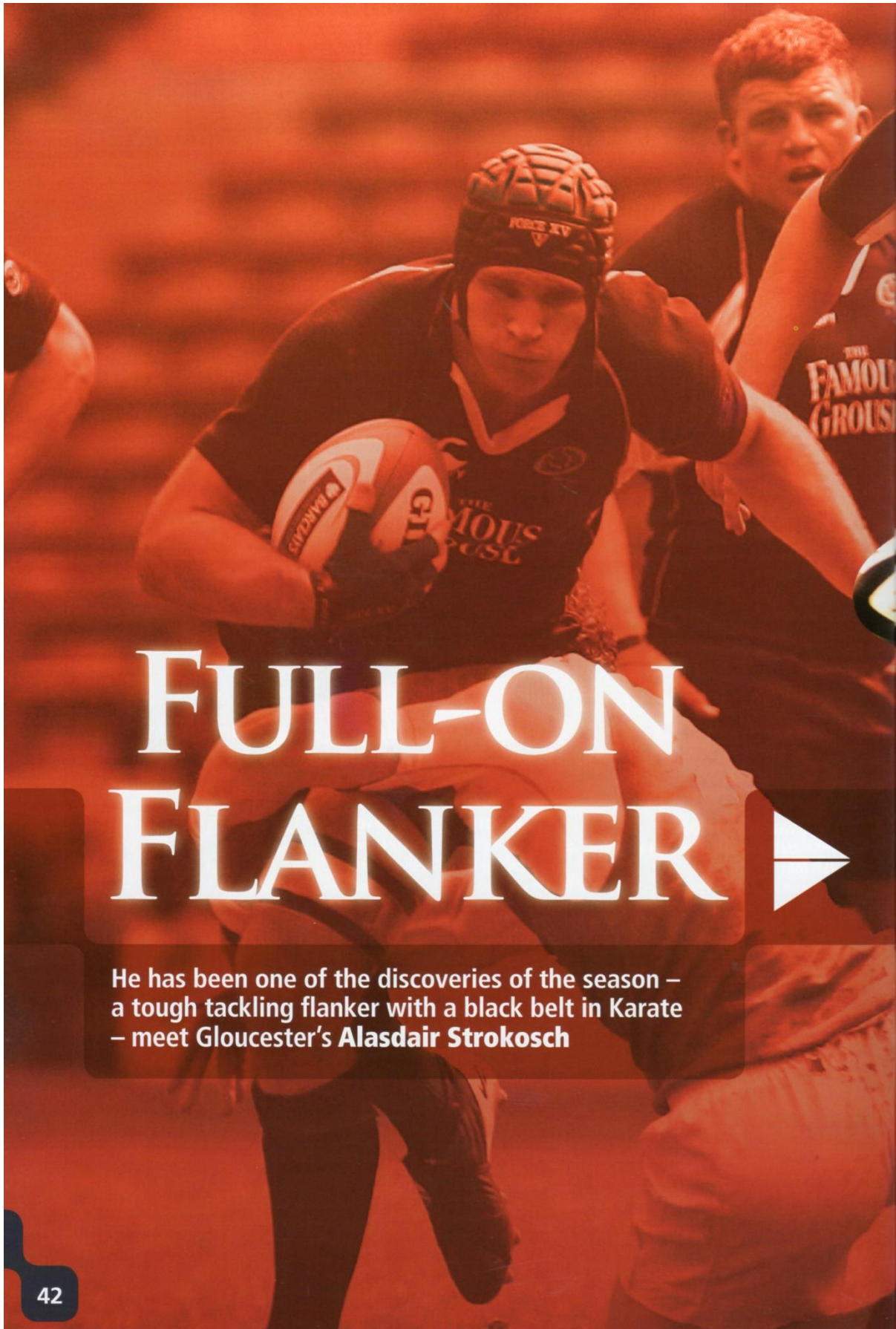
had a gas or water leak. He recorded the conversations and posted them as pod casts on the internet, which was good fun.



WHICH OTHER SPORTING EVENT WOULD YOU LIKE A TICKET FOR?

NFL Superbowl. It's a massive event with good shows alongside it, so to get a ticket for that would be a great experience.





FULL-ON FLANKER



He has been one of the discoveries of the season – a tough tackling flanker with a black belt in Karate – meet Gloucester's **Alasdair Strokosch**





FULL-ON FLANKER

▶ FOR A MAN who is always on a single-handed seek and destroy mission when in a scrum cap and also possesses the uniquely dangerous attribute of a black belt in Karate, it would be unwise to take liberties with Alasdair Strokosch.

As anyone who has had the misfortune to be dismantled at the contact area or emptied in a bone-rearranging tackle by the former Edinburgh flanker will testify, Strokosch has gone down a storm since his summer move south of the border.

His work rate is stratospheric, endurance phenomenal. In an area as competitive as Gloucester's back row jungle, where the options are endless and resources plentiful, Strokosch has turned plenty of heads with his approach, competitiveness and drive.

"It's probably going better than I hoped at this stage," he told the matchday programme. "I have got into the first team and had an opportunity – I am a long way from where I want to be but I have made a good start.

"The competition for places is always going to be there and hopefully I will be a better player for that competition. We have excellent back row options so there is a lot of work to do – but the easiest thing is to just try and play well when given the chance."

The man with the German father and Paisley upbringing is as down to earth and reflective off the field as he is menace on it. Already regarded as one of the biggest defenders in the Magners League, Strokosch is convinced the Guinness Premiership is a step-up again from what he was used to at Murrayfield.

"The Premiership is a lot more physical than the Magners League," he said. "I don't think the pace of the game is as quick but the intensity is higher, if you make a mistake you get punished and that makes you respect opponents very much.

"I think as an individual you can always do better but I just want to keep cracking away, enjoying my rugby and trying to get better. We have a lot of good attributes in our back row, a really high work, players capable of putting in a lot of tackles and ball players – we have a lot of options."

He is also versatile, switching from the blind to the openside when Andy Hazell's innards were rearranged against Leicester and he has also operated at number eight too.

It would be wrong to say he has burst onto the scene from nowhere – at Edinburgh he had the formidable talents of Simon Taylor, Allister Hogg and former fly-half Todd Blackadder to contend with and it worked wonders for his development.

The wealth of talent is even greater at Gloucester but this thinking, meticulous back rower has all the attributes to become a real star.

He picked up his only Scotland cap against Australia last November and trained with their World Cup squad until August before moving to Cheltenham where he lives with his girlfriend.

Coming from the relative obscurity of Edinburgh, despite the illustrious surroundings, was a culture shock but he marvels at the level of support Gloucester generate.

"To be honest, when you are used

to playing in a stadium with a 1,000 people there it is fantastic to see the level of support at Gloucester – it has been a bit surprising but great – particularly at Kingsholm," he said.

His father's family still live in Hamburg but he took up rugby when he was nine and then when he moved to Edinburgh began to take it more seriously before moving south to Gloucester.

Strokosch is also more than handy at martial arts – earning a black belt in Karate and he has also dabbled in the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) so it is advisable not to spill his pint.

"I did karate for years and have a black belt – I have tried to keep it quite since coming down here but it has got out," he said. "I'm a big fan of UFC, I like watching it and I've been to see it a couple of times – but I have not kept it up – rugby is my thing."

So what now as Gloucester prepare for today's EDF Energy Cup competition and the on-rushing Heineken Cup?

"I think we have definitely made a good start," he said. "We have been solid and at times we have played some really, really good rugby."

"We were disappointed to lose last weekend because we were aiming to get through the first six games unbeaten and hopefully by winning them all.

"At Edinburgh it was very different. The best you could hope for was perhaps a quarter-final at best. Gloucester is very different we have a big squad and want to get to a semi-final or final.

"We want to win a competition – it's as simple as that."



The competition for places is always going to be there and hopefully I will be a better player for that competition. We have excellent back row options so there is a lot of work to do – but the easiest thing is to just try and play well when given the chance.



MATCH ACTION

Gloucester Rugby
Sale Sharks

31
12



Time line

5 mins	Bourrest TRY	0-5
12 mins	Lamb PEN	3-5
22 mins	Lamb PEN	6-5
31 mins	Lamb PEN	9-5
37 mins	Lamb PEN	12-5
40 mins	Ripol TRY, Hodgson CON	12-12
43 mins	Lloyd TRY, Lamb CON 19-12	19-12
45 mins	Lloyd TRY	24-12
60 mins	Morgan TRY, Lamb CON	31-12

Gloucester Line-up

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

Sharks Attacked

Saturday, October 13

Referee: Ashley Rowden, Attendance: 14,075

▶ GLOUCESTER made it five out of five in the Guinness Premiership with a three-try victory over Sale at Kingsholm.

Although the victory as conclusive as the scoreboard suggests, head coach Dean Ryan described the performance as Gloucester's worst of the season.

"I thought we were too individual in the first-half and that cost us – it wasn't a bad wake-up call in that respect," he said. "When we played as a unit and as a team in the second half we were much

more effective.

"We gave ourselves a great chance of a bonus point but then went back to being too individual."

It was Sale who scored first after only five minutes. Gloucester's defence was aggressive but when the Sharks took the ball into a maul, prop Benoit Bourrest blasted through to score.

Charlie Hodgson missed the conversion and Gloucester responded with a series of Ryan Lamb penalties. The stand-off nailed



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penalties after 12, 22, 31 and 37 minutes to establish a comfortable Gloucester lead.

However, right on the half-time whistle, Sale scored again. Ben Foden and Julien Laharrague combined very well down the left, picking off Carlos Nieto in the defensive line. Oriol Ripol took over and he weaved past two defenders to score brilliantly under the sticks.

Hodgson converted to level the scores at 12-12. But Gloucester hit back immediately after the re-start. With lock Sean Cox in the sinbin, the hosts drove a line-out infield, Leon Lloyd combined with Nick Wood and

the winger scored in the corner.

Two minutes later, Gloucester were in again. This time it was Anthony Allen who made the line break and he fed Mike Tindall before the centre put Lloyd away for his second score.

It virtually sealed the contest and when Lamb's raking kick sat up beautifully for Iain Balshaw, Ollie Morgan claimed try number three with a clear run to the line.

Gloucester had plenty of time to search for a bonus point but it never came in the dying stages.



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Man of the Match

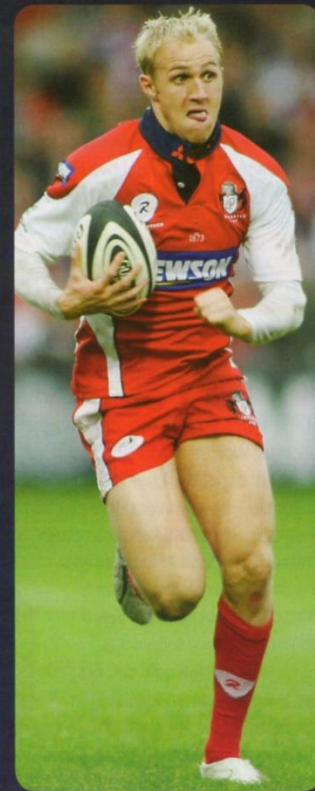


Leon Lloyd's two tries in the second half were the difference between the two teams.

Coach's Comment



"Sadly when we were touching distance from a bonus point we went back to doing everything individually and we wouldn't have scored (a fourth try) as long as we'd stayed out there. "It wasn't a bad wake-up call for us," head coach Dean Ryan.





PETER ARNOLD

Gin and tonic and a holiday – life is a beach for Peter Arnold – but he still finds time to digest the latest goings on in planet rugby this afternoon.

EVERYONE SO WHAT WENT WRONG?

I SUPPOSE it couldn't last. Our start to the Guinness Premiership season was just too good to be absolutely genuine. You could also say that the dismal record of London Irish thus far was too bad to be true, and that someone

was going to suffer sooner or later. It was just a pity that it had to be us in what seems to have been a pretty undistinguished match all round.

The experience is a wake-up call for all of us. I don't profess to know what went wrong, but in retrospect, the first

signs of a slightly worrying malaise appeared during the first half of the Sale game. Whatever the cause, I've no doubt that it will be addressed very quickly.

There's one good thing about it. I always think that an unbeaten record can become a millstone round the neck all too soon. It's easy to slip into a mindset where the emphasis is on not losing rather than winning, and that can be disaster.

At least that one is out of the way.

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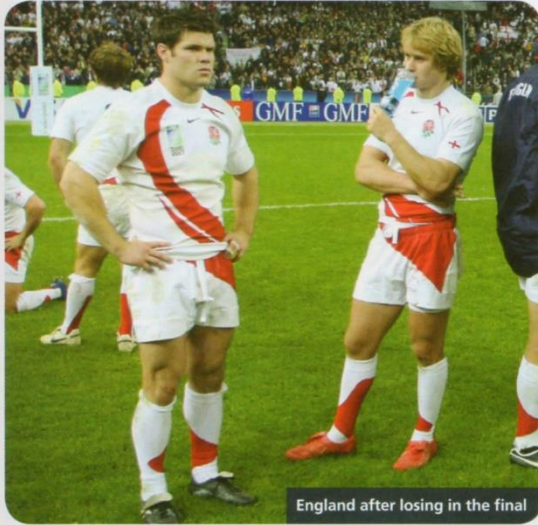
I SEE that some idiots have blamed Forest referee, Wayne Barnes, for New Zealand's loss to France in the World Cup. I can see that it must have been extremely galling for All Blacks' supporters to see their side beaten after they had started the tournament as such runaway favourites that the whole thing must have seemed like a stroll in the Champs Elysee to some people. However to take the defeat so badly as to issue death threats against the referee is way beyond any acceptable pale. In any case, blaming the ref when you lose is usually a symptom of an inability to find any other excuse.

Apparently, the morons blamed a missed forward pass for their side's defeat. Did they consider, I wonder, that, if the hype was to be believed, the game should not have been that close anyway. If you're only one pass away from being beaten then you've got problems anyway.

I'm no expert, but I would suspect that no ref however experienced, could put his hand on his heart and state that he's gone a whole match without missing one fractionally forward pass.



Wayne Barnes



England after losing in the final



Azam v Irish

Referees are only human after all.

I thought better of the New Zealand public, who aren't usually regarded as whingers. I notice that one text going around asks, "What's the difference between an All Black and a tea bag?" Answer: "The tea bag stays in the cup longer."

UNKIND

THAT'S not the only unkind quip I've heard, either. Apparently the difference between a Wallaby and a 747 is that the 747 stops whining when it comes down to earth.

But the unkindest cut of all concerns our old friends from over the Severn Bridge. Allegedly, the film *Free Willy* was the last occasion when whales got out of their pool.

SINCERE APOLOGIES

SO MUCH has been written and aired about the World Cup Final that the whole thing is now getting a bit boring, so I'm certainly not going to inflict my twopennyworth on you here. Except to add my sincere apologies to the England squad. I wasn't the only one, by any means, to doubt whether they would even get out of their pool, and that was

before the plane carrying them even left Heathrow.

Indeed, after the first South African match, I even entertained the blasphemous thought that it wouldn't altogether be a bad thing if they did fall at the first hurdle so that everyone could come home early, suitably chastened, and informed about the real state of things, and set about repairing the situation.

I was wrong. Sheer bloody-mindedness got them all the way to the final, and you have to admire them for that. What happens now is well and truly in the melting pot.

I do have to tell you, however, that my abiding memory of World Cup 2007 won't be that tense final, but the equally nail-biting semi against France. My reason is that, accompanied by my beautiful and talented wife, I watched it from a fairly plush hotel room in a fairly posh hotel in, of all places, Douglas, Isle of Man.

That's not the first place you'd think of where rugby is concerned, although I did see three sets of goal posts in our travels around the island. But there we were, and I had to deal with the situation.

So, remembering Confucius' famous saying about rape – 'lay back and enjoy it', I resolved to make the best of it. The result was that we watched the game (thankfully, TV reception was excellent) lolling in our room, nibbling on biscuits, seven sorts of cheese, sliced apples, grapes and celery. Oh, and very large helpings of gin and tonic, courtesy of room service.

Bearing in mind the result of the match, it was a highly pleasurable experience, although the Lions' Den it emphatically wasn't.

I don't suppose I'll ever do it again, but I enjoyed it while it was happening.

Incidentally, I would highly recommend a holiday on the IOM. You can now reach it from Staverton in less than an hour. But you don't need to wait for the next World Cup to do so.

WELCOME

CHRIS Paterson landed 17 kicks out of 17 at the World Cup. Then he joins Gloucester and missed his first one. You know, I just knew that was going to happen.

Welcome to Gloucester rugby, Chris.

MATCH OF THE DAYS

It was a day when Gloucester rocked the World. Ahead of the 1991 World Cup, Gloucester's finest stunned Ireland at Kingsholm, as Dave King uncovers.

▶ IMAGINE the scene – 100 years of rugby union to celebrate at Kingsholm – the date – Saturday, September 21st 1991, the visitors – the exalted Irish Presidents XV – the Irish National Team.

It was a visit to help prepare Ireland for their forthcoming World Cup match with Zimbabwe which was less than three weeks away and they came to this Red Rose shire to face a Gloucester side prepared to fight tooth and nail in front of a baying Kingsholm.

The Irish side contained plenty of household names – and they were expected to follow England's example of the previous week and make life distinctly uncomfortable for the Courage League side.

Kingsholm folk talked about Donal Lenihan, Simon Geoghegan, Nigel Popplewell, Mick Galway and Phil Matthews in the Irish side and of the 34-4 defeat Gloucester had suffered to England the week before.

Consequently, there were four changes made in the Gloucester line-up. Peter Miles replaced Nigel Scrivens at lock, England Under-21 fly-half Neil Matthews and Marcus Hannaford came in for Mike Hamlin and Richard Williams at half-back and Jerry Perrins on the right wing for the injured Derrick Morgan.

Ireland were led by Hucclecote-born captain Phil Matthews who stressed before the match: "I am sorry I will be unable to stay after the match as I was hoping to sample some of the Gloucester night life."

Lenihan, hooker Steve Smith and centre Brendan Mullin were British Lions.

It was a match where Gloucester produced a performance to herald. Each player was inspired, playing with a confidence and ferocity they had not displayed prior the week



before and a full-time score line of 14-13 did not reflect Gloucester's overall superiority.

The Irish, with Matthews to the fore, started the game the stronger and it was no surprise when Jim Staples went over for a try after Phil Matthews and Steve Smith sucked in the Gloucester cover. However, after that initial threat the Kingsholm men never looked back.

John Hawker took three strikes against the head while Dave Sims reigned supreme in the line-out eclipsing the vaunted British Lion Lenihan. Ian Smith was in imperious form in the loose while the rugged Sam Masters and Paul Ashmead were prominent in the contact areas.

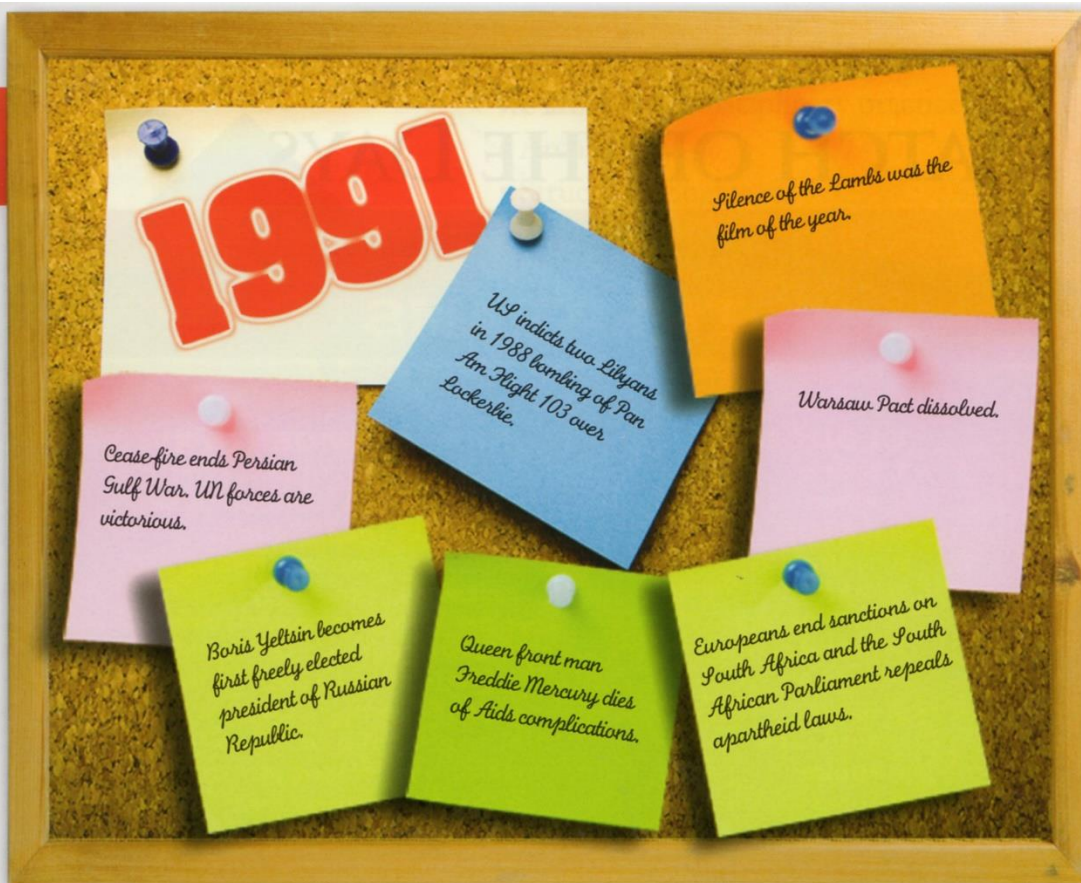
It was an afternoon when the home-town pack laid siege – and it stunned Ireland into submission.

The three-quarters, who the previous week

had to display heroic deeds in defence against England, were able to prove themselves more dangerous than the Irish.

Gloucester scrum-half Marcus Hannaford was at his sharpest while fly-half Matthews merely confirmed his burgeoning promise and talent. The Irish lead lasted a mere five minutes before Hannaford and Smith combined to send Perrins over from a five metre scrum. Full-back Tim Smith added a penalty on the stroke of half-time.

Within three minutes of the restart the full-back kicked a further penalty to confirm a six point lead. Although Ashmead had a try disallowed for a forward pass after a scintillating break from Hannaford this was a Gloucester team not to be denied. A second try came when centre Simon Morris picked up and dived over in the corner after Matthews had been held up short of the try line.



It was a match where Gloucester produced a performance to herald. Each player was inspired, playing with a confidence and ferocity they had not displayed prior the week before...



Dave Sims

Gloucester were to go close on numerous occasions but Smith knocked on following a delicate chip from Scotland 'A' centre Don Caskie and a pass from Perrins fell behind Hawker with the try line begging.

Ireland's hopes were raised when Keyes kicked a penalty and then converted a try by David Curtis. It was more than the men from Ireland deserved and the point deficit at the final whistle was flattering to say the least.

Former Gloucester favourite Sims, who recently left his post as groundsman at Sandy Park, the home of Exeter Chiefs to return to playing duties with Cornish All Blacks at the age of 37 years, said: "The game was most enjoyable. We should have won

more comprehensively. We tackled well and knocked the Irish back."

Another former Gloucester lock Peter Miles, who now assists at Cinderford RFC added: "It was unbelievable. I don't recall playing in a more committed side and the crowd on the day were superb. We should have had two more tries than we scored."

But what of the Irish who often play on a whim and a prayer? They defeated Zimbabwe 55-11, Japan 21-16, lost 24-15 to Scotland, then lost to Australia by a single point in the quarter-final of the 1991 World Cup.

Former Gloucester centre, Caskie, who now assists Ian Smith at Moseley, reflected: "It was probably the most satisfying game that I played in. everybody played well and the tackling was superb."

Keith Richardson, who can still be seen as a regular visitor to Kingsholm and was at that time the Club coach added: "It was a very good performance, Ireland had a lot of early ball but we had more ideas and commitment than them."

MATCH OF THE DAYS

THE TEAMS

GLOUCESTER:

T. SMITH
J. PERRINS
D. CASKIE
S. MORRIS
N. MARMENT
N. MATTHEWS
M. HANNAFORD
P. JONES
J. HAWKER
R. PHILLIPS
P. MILES
D. SIMS
P. ASHMEAD
I. SMITH (CAPTAIN)
S. MASTERS

REPLACEMENTS:

R. WILLIAMS
L. GARDINER
D. KEARSEY
A. DEACON
B. CLARK
S. DEVERAUX

IRISH PRESIDENTS XV:

J. SHARPLES (LONDON IRISH)
S. GEOGHEGAN (LONDON IRISH)
B. MULLIN (BLACKROCK)
D. CURTIS (LONDON IRISH)
J. CLARKE (DOLPHIN)
R. KEYES (CORK CONSTITUTION)
R. SAUNDERS (LONDON IRISH)
N. POPPLEWELL (GREYSTONES)
S. SMITH (BALLYMENA)
D. FITZGERALD (D.L.S.P.)
D. LENIHAN (CORK CONSTITUTION)
M. GALWAY SHANNON)
P. MATTHEWS (WANDERERS, CAPTAIN)
G. HAMILTON (BALLYMENA)
B. ROBINSON (BALLYMENA)

REPLACEMENTS:

K. MURPHY
N. BARRY
F. AHERNE
T. KINGSTON
G. HALPIN
N. MANNION



Simon Geoghegan



Brendan Mullin



Nicholas Popplewell



James Staples

FAN ZONE WITH BOB FENTON

The World Cup maybe finally over but in Bob Fenton's eyes the player of the tournament was a prop well known at Castle Grim. He will also be at Wasps next weekend making a nuisance of himself after today's visit from Newcastle.

▶ SO IT'S all over then... no more Rugby World Cup. I'm going to miss it. It has to be one of the best competitions to have taken place.

The so-called fancied teams failed – largely – to deliver, and the minnows stood up and gave a good account of themselves – even Portugal, who shipped points by the hundreds managed to grab a try against the All Blacks.

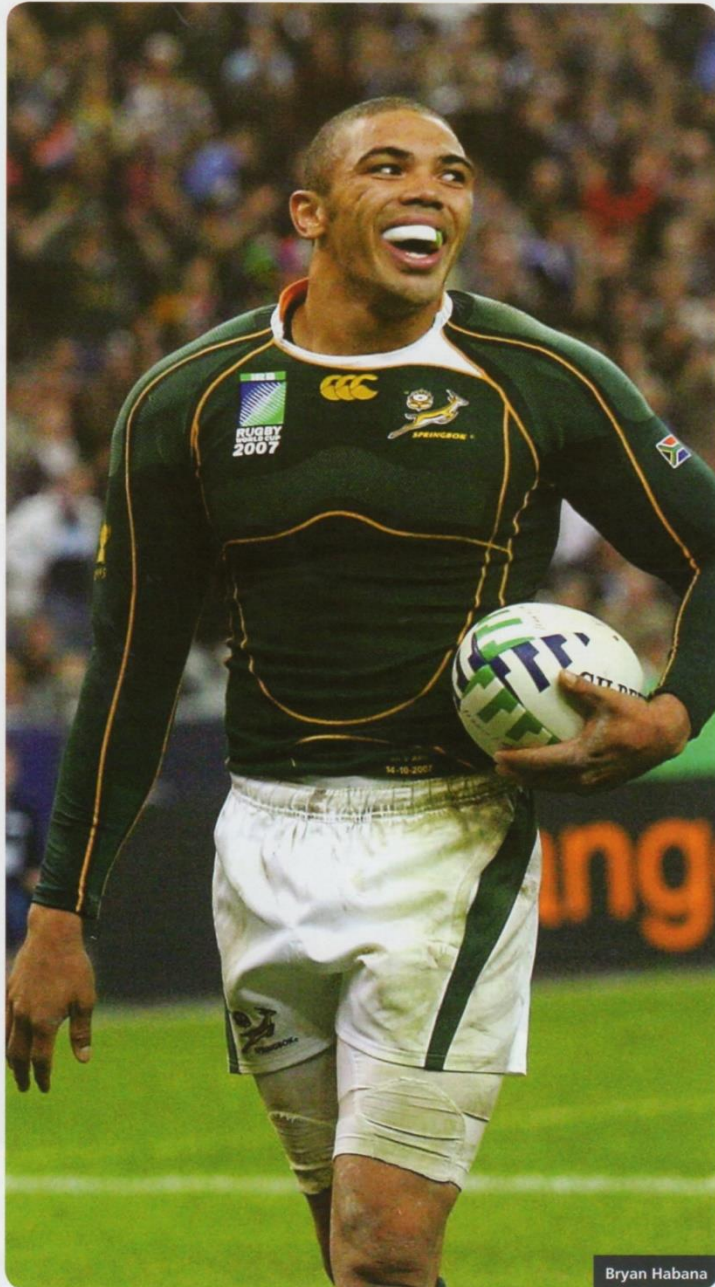
But what can you say about England. I don't think anyone, not even Brian Ashton or Phil Vickery, could have imagined that they would end the competition with a loser's medal. I know I didn't – I wrote them off at the quarter-final stage as did just about everyone. Well apart from all those people who are now re-trenching their position to say that they always thought they would go all the way.

So when the humble pie stand opens alongside the pasties and the burgers behind the whateveritis called now stand I'll take my place in the queue for a large portion.

Every single member of the England squad can leave with their medals around their necks and their heads held high, with pride intact knowing that they couldn't have done more. Well except perhaps Nick Abendybanana – or whatever his name is from Bath – he scooted over as a late call up a few days before the final and got their just in time to get his track suit on and go up and collect his medal.

I could have done that and I'm fat and fifty. He'll never get an easier gong. Let's hope they made him carry all the shopping out to the coach when they stocked up with cheap booze at Sangatte on the way home. It's the least he could have done.

I missed out on who was voted the man of the tournament, probably one of the South



Bryan Habana



Rodrigo Roncero



Action v London Irish



I have never been so glad I didn't get to a game. The Mad Stad looked like it was only about a tenth full and Gloucester looked like they never really got out of first gear. I'm sure Dean has had more than a few words.

Bob Fenton on the London Irish result



Africans, and maybe the one man publicity machine that is Brian Habana. Great player that he is I don't believe he should have even been in the running.

For me there was one stand out play who performed head and shoulders above expectations and everyone else. Take a bow ex-Gloucester boy Rodrigo Roncero.

He was, quite simply, immense. In an Argentinean side that punched well above their weight he epitomised their spirit. He did his day job on the front line with the destructive efficiency that we remember him for from his time at Castle Grim, but he's added so much more to his game.

He was quick to the breakdown, turned over the opposition on too many occasions to count and showed great pace to keep up with flowing backs moves. You would see him at the scrum or line-out sucking in huge lungfuls of air and you would think he was finished. A few moments later he would be off with the ball in hand, or hunting down the opposition with evil intention written all over his face.

Quite brilliant, I reckon if you look up 'Modern Prop' on Wikipedia now it will say two words: Rodrigo Roncero. And before

anyone bothers to look it up when they get home, no I haven't been sad enough to add it. Yet.

But what about matters closer to home, the rest of the great weekend of sport. Well Diddy David Hamilton or whoever the bloke is who zips around in a little racing car blew his chances (not that I am remotely interested – Formula One must be the most boring sport on earth) but more importantly we surrendered our unbeaten start to London Irish in what has to be one of the worst games of rugby ever seen.

Much more of that on the telly and any new converts to the game who were picked up during the coverage of the World Cup will be scuttling off back to wherever it was they came from in double quick time.

Fortunately domestic issues prevented me travelling so I was left to watch it on the box. I have never been so glad I didn't get to a game. The Mad Stad looked like it was only about a tenth full and Gloucester looked like they never really got out of first gear. I'm sure Dean has had more than a few words. Still we go into the first of many breaks still on top of the league so things are not that bad.

There was one bright spot over the weekend though, at least the boy's team cruised to their second consecutive win on Sunday morning, dispatching Painswick 34 – 19 on their own patch.

It's the EDF Energy Cup today, and Newcastle come to town fresh from a complete hammering by Bath last weekend. Quite what sort of team they will have to pick from remains to be seen as most of their players seem to be intent on spending the season in casualty. Whether this means that their World Cup contingent will get a start remains to be seen, but if they do I think Messrs Flood, Tait and that other bloke who plays for them whose name I can't remember can be assured of a very warm reception.

Actually our Marketing Gurus should start a rumour to say Jonny is playing today. After the last World Cup when Newcastle came to town the place was full of people who came to see the sainted one. The bunch in front of us even had photos from the newspapers so they could recognise him. They were very confused when we tried telling them Jonny was wearing 15 and playing for Gloucester – well he was, Jonny Goodridge that is.

So after today it's another EDF Cup game up at Wasps. Me and the boy have been fortunate (if that's the right word) enough to be given a couple of tickets for a box at Adams Causeway Park or whatever it's called now, but only on the understanding that I don't start swearing at anyone or do anything to upset all the other corporate Wasps fans.

As if...

MATCH ACTION

London Irish
Gloucester Rugby

15
10



Time line

3 mins	
Hewat PEN	3-0
44 mins	
De Vedia TRY, Hewat CON	10-0
50 mins	
Balshaw TRY, Paterson CON	10-7
72 mins	
De Vedia TRY	15-7
74 mins	
Paterson PEN	15-10

Gloucester Line-up

15	Balshaw	(1t)
14	Paterson	(1c, 1p)
13	Tindall	
12	Allen	
11	Bailey	
10	Lamb	
9	Prendergast	
1	Patrice Collazo	
2	Titterrell	
3	Califano	
4	Bortolami	
5	Brown	
6	Buxton	(capt)
7	Qera	
8	Narraway	
REPS		
16	Azam	(Titterrell)
17	Dickinson	(Collazo)
18	James	(Bortolami)
19	Strokosch	(Qera)
20	Lawson	(Prendergast)
21	Walker	
22	Pryce	

Irish eyes were smiling

Madejski Stadium, Sunday, October 21
Referee: Sean Davey, Attendance: 7,582

TWO second half tries from Tomas De Vedia ended Gloucester's unbeaten start in the Guinness Premiership last Sunday.

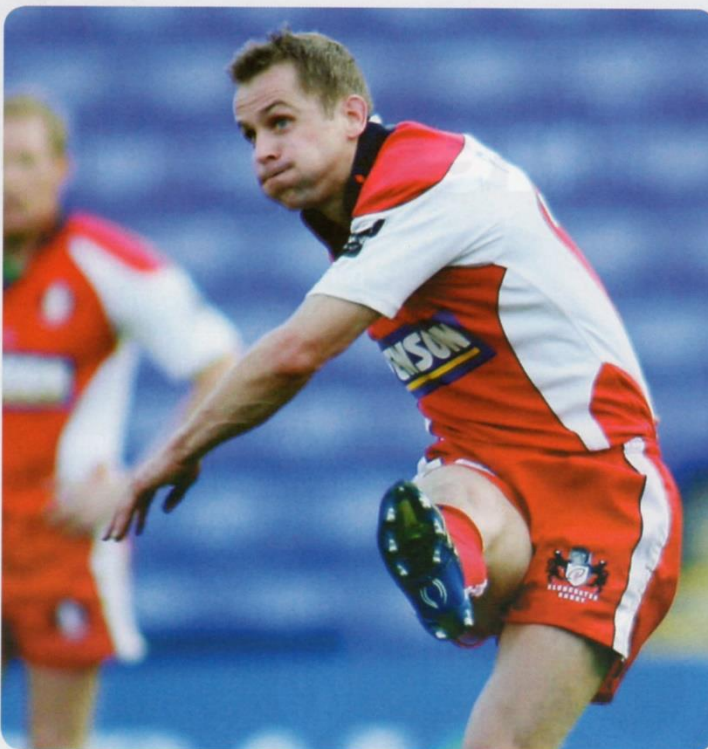
In a contest low on quality but big on attitude and physicality, London Irish produced a smart gameplan and executed it to near perfection to end the last unbeaten run in the Premiership.

With the scrum and contact area a slow, messy battle and with their blitz defence in top order, Irish dominated despite

plenty of good Gloucester defence.

It was only 3-0 at half-time thanks to Peter Hewat's penalty after three minutes but it was Irish who dominated the rest of the half – turning Gloucester quickly after one or two phases with delicate kicking and some neat approach work by Shane Geraghty.

Gloucester did do some good things but they were hampered without quick ball and when Irish scored after the re-start, a 10-0 lead was sizeable given



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Man of the Match



Not only did Iain Balshaw take his try well but he worked hard all afternoon against Irish's kicking game.

the nature of the contest.

Delon Armitage carried hard up the centre from a line-out move and when possession came back to Geraghty, he slid a lovely little kick for De Vedia who got behind the cover to score.

But Gloucester did hit back with a try after 50 minutes. Peter Buxton gathered Rory Lawson's kick brilliantly and for perhaps the only time in the contest Gloucester gained quick ball for James Bailey to find Iain Balshaw and he

chased after his own kick, beat Paul Hodgson and scored brilliantly.

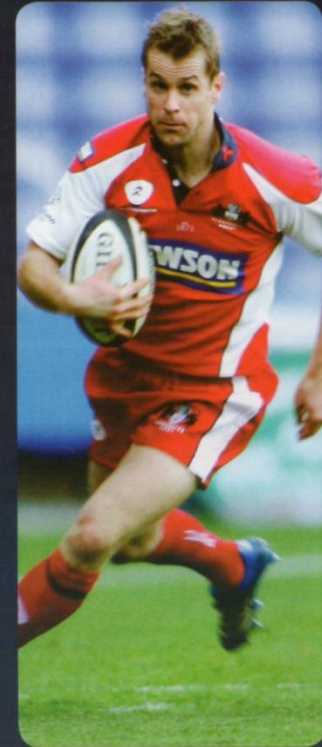
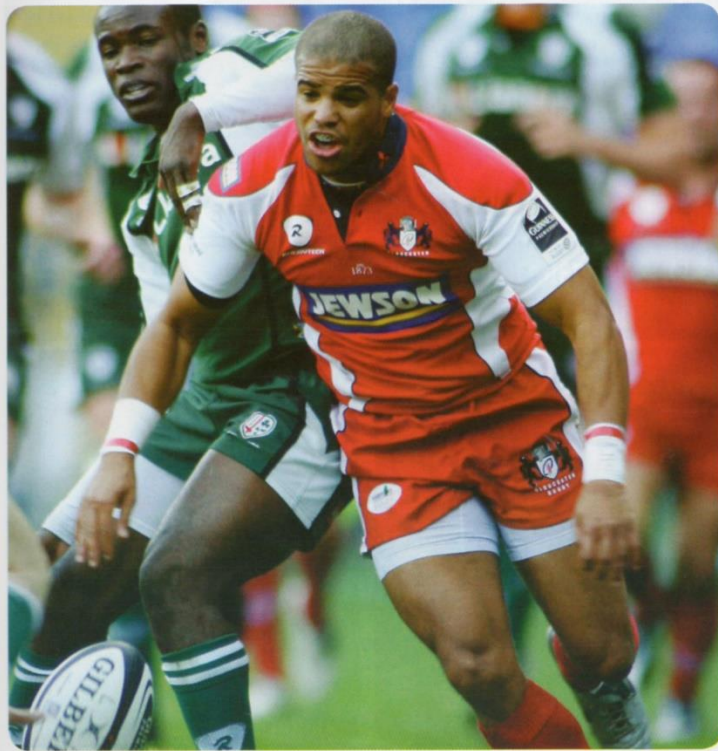
It dragged Gloucester back to 10-7 down but they could not score again and Irish made them pay with a second score. Again it was Geraghty who angled in a lovely little kick and although Topsy Ojo dived over the ball, De Vedia touched down.

There was still time for Chris Paterson to land a 74th minute penalty and for a period of late Gloucester pressure but Irish held out to claim a deserved victory.

Coach's Comment

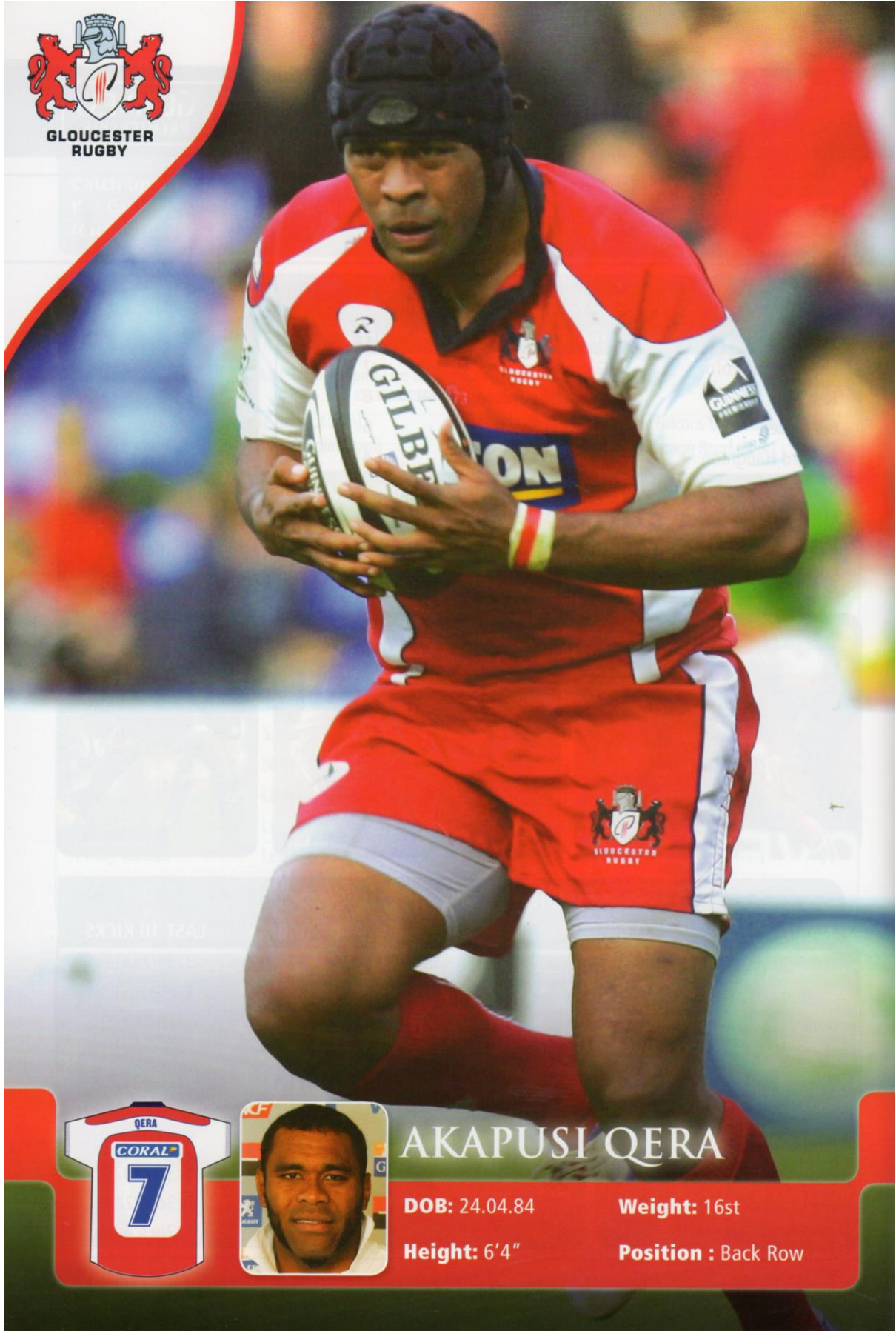


"You're only in with a shout if you can impose your gameplan. At 3-0 we hadn't given any indication we would. We hadn't had an opportunity to play or had any field position and that didn't change much in the second half," head coach Dean Ryan.





**GLOUCESTER
RUGBY**



AKAPUSI QERA

DOB: 24.04.84

Weight: 16st

Height: 6'4"

Position : Back Row