



The Official Programme
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Latest from the
Kingsholm coach

PLUS: match action, meet Chris Paterson, Fans Zone, Peter Arnold

Heineken Cup Round Two



ercrugby.com



CAPTAIN'S CORNER

Gloucester are back at Kingsholm tonight for a massive Heineken Cup clash and skipper Peter Buxton looks ahead.

▶ ONE THING is for sure, it will be one hell of an occasion at Kingsholm tonight.

The Heineken Cup is back in town and we expect a capacity crowd to see one of the most attractive ties of the second round today.

Last Friday night we made a great start to the competition with a bonus point victory away to Ulster. Not many teams go to Belfast and produce the sort of first-half performance we did and although a few things fell into our laps, we played some tremendous stuff.

But what gave us equal amount of pleasure was our second half defensive display and the way we shut the game out – in direct contrast to the final quarter at Wasps when we let our winning position slip.

It showed we are good enough to compete in this competition and although it is only a start, our 32-14 win was a great boost to confidence. I thought we mixed up our pace and

power well and we will need to again tonight.

A dropped ball or a missed tackle is enough to sway games in this competition so we will have to be fully tuned in to the challenge tonight. We recognise the Ospreys as one of the major forces within the European Cup and their recruitment process has been exceptional. They have always been a very good side but have pulled in key players in the second row position, scrum-half position and back row to really take another step forward.

We are aware of the threat they possess and we must be ready for it. But this is Kingsholm – it will be a history

making occasion tonight – the first time Kingsholm will be open to its new full capacity following the re-development.

So please get behind the boys tonight, make it a special Gloucester atmosphere and help us to a second Heineken Cup victory.

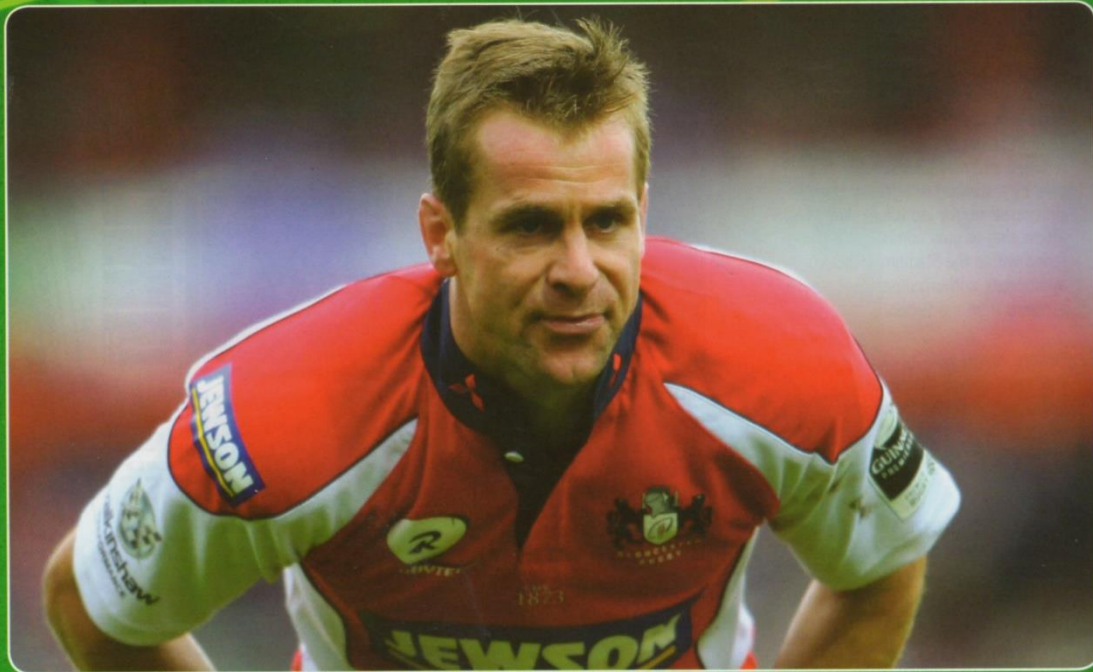




SPOTLIGHT

with **Chris Paterson**

by Ian Randall



WHAT'S THE MOTTO YOU LIVE BY ?

Enjoy. I think you have to have a smile on your face. If you do that, you have more fun and you play to your optimum.



WHAT IS YOUR MOST PRIZED POSSESSION ?

Probably my house in Edinburgh.



WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE BREAKFAST CEREAL ?

Without doubt Coco-Pops. I can't get enough of them, and can eat up to four or five bowls in one day. I'm not sure what our nutritionist will say to that !



WHICH COMPANY WOULD BE YOUR IDEAL SPONSOR ?

Coca Cola. I've been a non drinker all my life so I've given them quite a lot over the years. It would be nice to get a bit back.



ARE YOU A SPENDER OR A SAVER ?

I'm a boring saver. I see rugby as quite a short career and I like to plan for the future.



WHO IS YOUR FAVOURITE PERSON ON TV ?

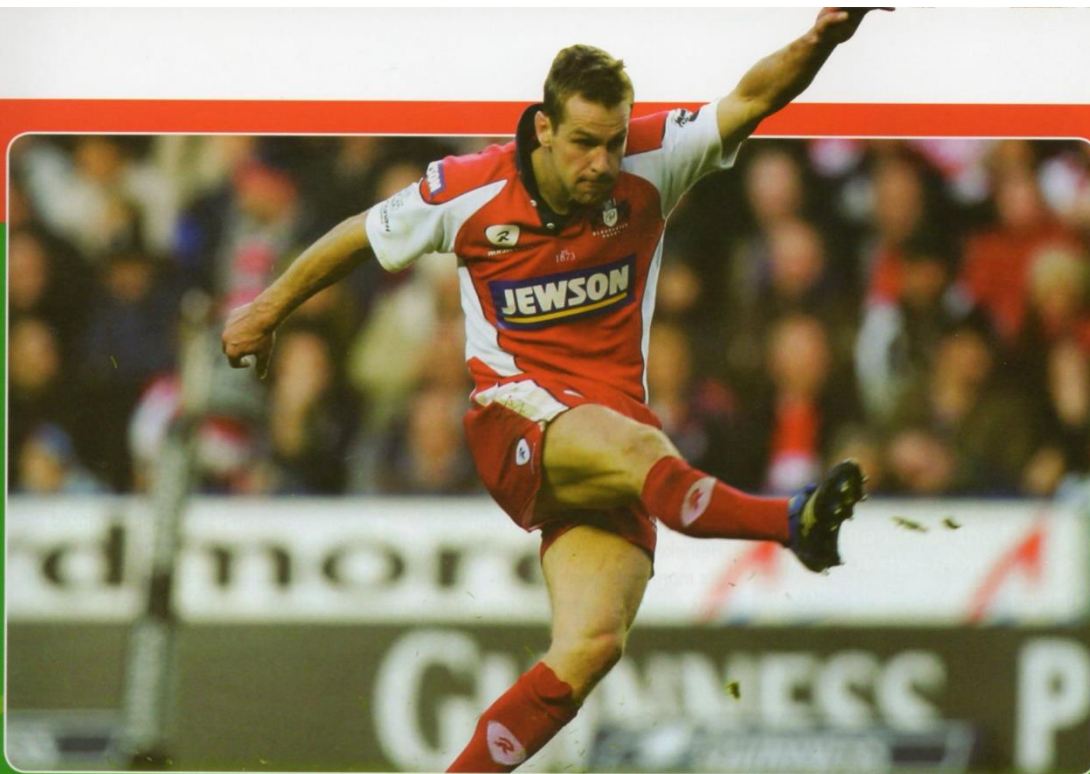
Ally McCoist on A Question of Sport. He was a hero of mine growing up, and he has this image of a likeable rogue who loves to chat.



WHAT MADE YOU LAST LOSE YOUR TEMPER ?

Probably the Scotland versus Argentina game at the World Cup. I was angry that we didn't back ourselves to play enough





rugby in the first 60 minutes.

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

My playing weight is around the 81/82 kg mark. Sometimes it does drop to as low as 78kg which is very light, so I have to try and avoid people as much as possible and be as powerful as I can.



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

Simon Taylor. He's a great friend but he's a real introvert and it's difficult to know what goes on in his head. Two or three years ago when people were freely buying iPods he bought

a record player, and instead of a laptop he owns a typewriter and sends letters by post rather than e-mail. He joined Stade Francais after the World Cup.

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

Either Fifteen to One or Countdown. I went to school with Gordon Ross, who now plays for Saracens and we used to rush home and dodge our homework to watch them. He was always better than me but it was good fun.



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

I was doing a PE teaching degree when I turned professional. I did three years and I suppose the option would be there to finish it if I ever needed to.

WHAT PART OF TRAINING DO YOU ENJOY MOST ?

All of it. I always look forward to training after a game, especially because I struggle

to sleep. Things you did badly hang over you, and things you did well you're excited by, so I want the first session to come round as soon as possible.

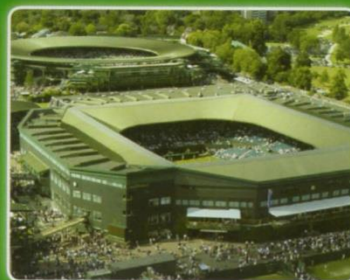
IF THERE IS A PRANK BEING PLAYED, WHO IS USUALLY THE CULPRIT ?

I'm keeping my wits about me at the moment to find out who the trouble makers are. So far in the Gloucester squad I'd have to say Andy Hazell..



WHICH OTHER SPORTING EVENT WOULD YOU LIKE A TICKET FOR ?

Everything ! I'm a massive fan of all sports - football, golf, motor racing - you name it, I probably like it. I've never been to Wimbledon - that would be quite exciting.





RYAN'S REVIEW

Gloucester got their Heineken Cup campaign off to a perfect start last week and head coach Dean Ryan looks back at the victory over Ulster.



It would be impossible to start this week without mentioning Ulster last Friday – it must have given everyone a great deal of pleasure?

DR: OF COURSE it did. Any away victory in the Heineken Cup is worth cherishing and particularly such a convincing one at a venue as tough as Ravenhill. As a group we are a year old and a year more experienced. It's too early to say how far we've come but we are more mature than we were this time last season and people need to remember that but that.

We're stronger as a squad, which means we won't be exposed when two or three get injured and that will allow us to compete better in Europe. This game is only a good start. Europe is over a series of games and we've got enormous challenges with Ospreys on the horizon tonight.

We're getting better but the Heineken Cup is a unique experience for a lot of guys. It's like playing international rugby and the only time you realise how quick it is, is when you're playing in it. We have no real history in the competition like

other clubs and that is why Friday was such an important step for us.

You can coach principles and basics but when you put it under scrutiny in the Heineken Cup you can't tell for another six months whether it works. This was a good image of us getting some confidence and feeling good about things we're trying to do and how we achieve them.



Was the result a bit of a kick-back after the defeat at Wasps?

DR: YES and no I think. Ryan Lamb said after Friday's game that the players were seething following the Wasps defeat and that showed just how much it

meant to them. We didn't get beaten up because we lost at High Wycombe. For more than hour we played very much to script some of our best rugby for a long time. I wouldn't say that it convinced us we could beat these teams but it was confirmation we are heading in the right direction.

We did a lot of really pleasing things against them that are not always obvious and we built on that against Ulster. I don't want anyone to get carried away because we have a lot still to work on and improve but it has been a really good start.

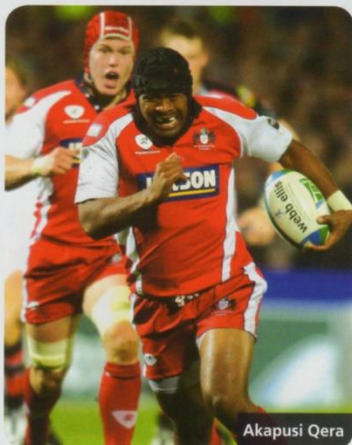


What did you make of the other games last weekend?

DR: THE standard in the Heineken Cup



We're getting better but the Heineken Cup is a unique experience for a lot of guys. It's like playing international rugby and the only time you realise how quick it is, is when you're playing in it. We have no real history in the competition like other clubs and that is why Friday was such an important step for us.



Akapusi Qera



Action v Ulster



Ryan Lamb scoring

seems to go up year after year. We worked tremendously hard just to have the opportunity to experience it again last season because we realise it is one of the premier club tournaments in the world.

The intensity, physicality and skill level is as close to Test match rugby as you can get and it is a great learning experience for us as players and coaches and something different for the supporters. The magnitude of the Wasps versus Munster game was staggering and it emphasised what a tremendous breeding ground this competition is for international players of the future.

To me, virtually every side has got better which should make for a great competition. You only have to look back at last year to appreciate what a challenge it is just to get out of the pool stages – it is where a club of this size and stature needs to be on a regular basis.



Tonight we face the Ospreys. How do you assess their challenge?

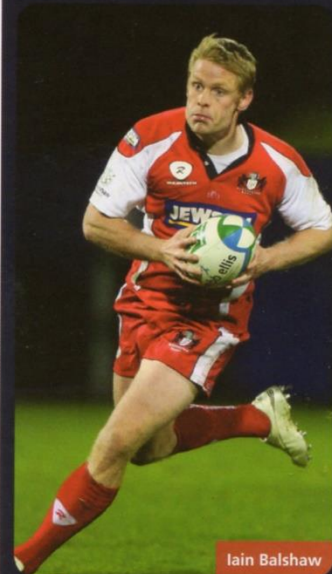
DR: QUITE simply, they are an exceptional side. We had first-hand experience last season when we lost in the EDF Energy Cup and they have obviously recruited shrewdly since then to add to what is an already excellent squad.

It is one of the biggest games Kingsholm has ever staged. We are in Europe, against a top side and the new fully refurbished Kingsholm will be fully operational for the first time – it should be a great night.

We appreciate The Ospreys will be one of the favourites for the competition and in the likes of James Hook, Gavin Henson, Marty Holah and Alun Wyn-Jones have some world class players.

They are really well set up and coached by Lyn Jones but from our point of view last Friday will count for nothing if we don't get a result tonight. Kingsholm will be full tonight, the atmosphere will be special and we want to produce another good performance.

It is one of the biggest games Kingsholm has ever staged. We are in Europe, against a top side and the new fully refurbished Kingsholm will be fully operational for the first time – it should be a great night.



Iain Balshaw



Alun-Wyn Jones

TODAY'S TEAMS

Saturday 16th November 2007 20.00

Gloucester Rugby
v Ospreys



	Iain BALSHAW	15	Full Back	15	Lee BYRNE	
	James SIMPSON-DANIEL	14	Right Wing	14	Nikki WALKER	
	Mike TINDALL	13	Centre	13	Sonny PARKER	
	Anthony ALLEN	12	Centre	12	Gavin HENSON	
	Lesley VAINIKOLO	11	Left Wing	11	Shane WILLIAMS	
	Ryan LAMB	10	Fly Half	10	James HOOK	
	Rory LAWSON	9	Scrum Half	9	Justin MARSHALL	
	Nick WOOD	1	Prop	1	Duncan JONES	
	Olivier AZAM	2	Hooker	2	Huw BENNETT	
	Carlos NIETO	3	Prop	3	Adam JONES	
	Peter BUXTON ©	4	Lock	4	Ian GOUGH	
	Marco BORTOLAMI	5	Lock	5	Ian EVANS	
	Alasdair STROKOSCH	6	Flanker	6	Alun Wyn JONES	
	Akapusi QERA	7	Flanker	7	Marty HOLAH	
	Luke NARRAWAY	8	No 8	8	Filo TIATIA	

Replacements

	Andy TITTERRELL	16	16	Richard HIBBARD	
	Christian CALIFANO	17	17	Paul JAMES	
	Will JAMES	18	18	Jonathan THOMAS	
	Gareth DELVE	19	19	Ben LEWIS	
	Mike PRENDERGAST	20	20	Mike PHILLIPS	
	Chris PATERSON	21	21	Shaun CONNOR	
	Olly MORGAN	22	22	Andrew BISHOP	

Heineken Cup



SPOTLIGHT

with **Rory Lawson**

by Ian Randall



WHAT'S THE MOTTO YOU LIVE BY?

Throw yourself into everything you do 100% and enjoy it.



WHAT IS YOUR MOST PRIZED POSSESSION?

My watch, which was bought for me for my birthday by my girlfriend.



WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE BREAKFAST CEREAL?

Special K Red Berries or Oat So Simple porridge. I can't split those two.



WHICH COMPANY WOULD BE YOUR IDEAL SPONSOR?

I would say a yacht cruising company or a holiday company.

If I didn't fancy the break I could always sell it.



ARE YOU A SPENDER OR A SAVER?

I'm a binge spender. I don't spend continually but I don't save a whole lot either. I go out on specific days and spend lots.



WHAT MADE YOU LAST LOSE YOUR TEMPER?

The traffic on the way to training in the morning.



WHO IS YOUR FAVOURITE PERSON ON TV?

It's not one person but I do like Dragons Den. Duncan

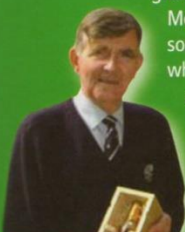
Bannantyne and the rest of the panel are very amusing.





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

Believe it or not, I would say my grandparents. A lot of people will know my grandfather is Bill McLaren, and he's got some great stories, whether they are about rugby, the war, or anything else. If you want to feel stupid, I go and talk to them.



Luke Narryway. Marco sometimes pitches in



as well if a new player is involved.

WHICH OTHER SPORTING EVENT WOULD YOU LIKE A TICKET FOR ?

Probably the Ryder Cup, but I love watching all sport - tennis, athletics, formula 1, American football, the works. Recently I'd have liked to have been at the final round of F1 or the NFL game at Wembley.

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

I graduated from Edinburgh in 2003 with an MA in Business Studies. I don't fancy going back, if at all possible.

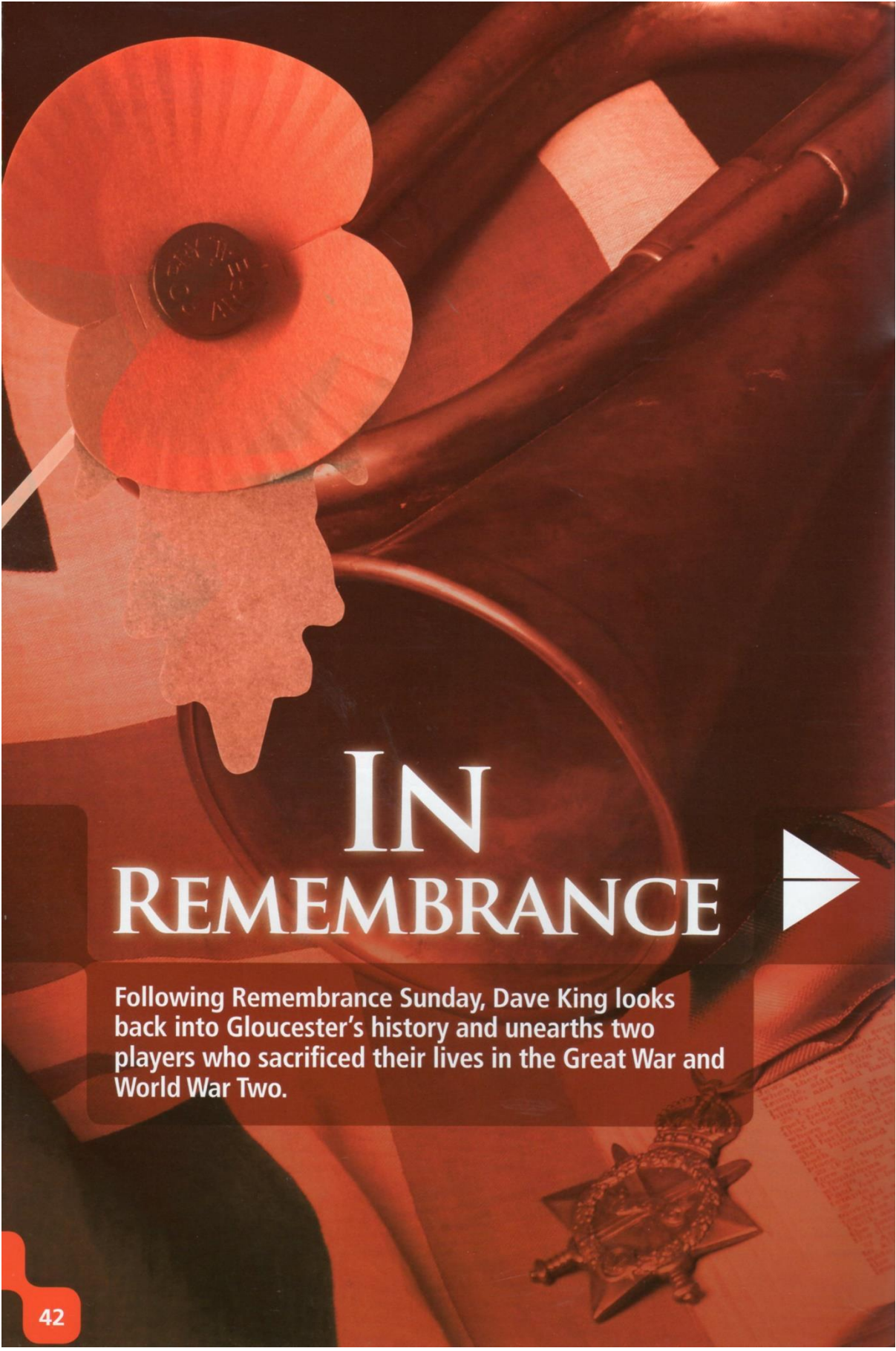
WHAT PART OF TRAINING DO YOU ENJOY MOST ?

I love all training, so long as there's no rain falling. We're lucky to do what we do and you should never take any of it for granted.

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

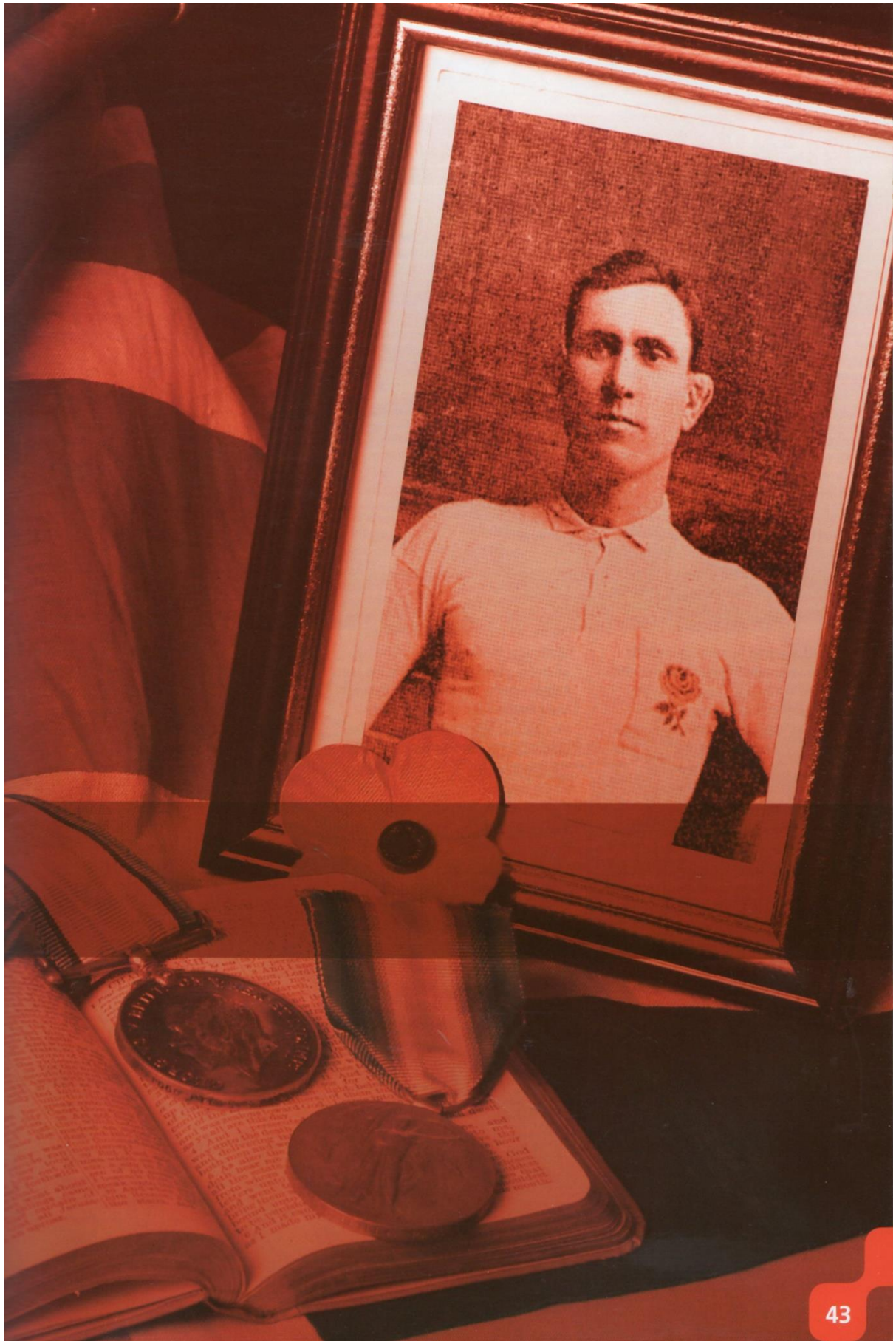
Christian Califano, and maybe one of the youngsters, such as Ryan Lamb or





IN REMEMBRANCE

Following Remembrance Sunday, Dave King looks back into Gloucester's history and unearths two players who sacrificed their lives in the Great War and World War Two.



IN REMEMBRANCE



▶ WHEN World War One broke in 1914, the Rugby Football Union's attitude was one of total support for the war effort. Within nine days of the outbreak they had sent out a circular to their member clubs encouraging all to join up and fight. Players who were fearless on the rugby field were now fearless in the trenches of the Somme. Rugby union encountered the highest casualty list of any sport.

In fact 27 players who had up to the outset of war represented England forfeited their lives. Among those brave men was **Henry Berry** who at the age of 32 gave his life for his country. Berry was born on the 8th January 1883 and educated at St Marks School in the City, Gloucester was the only club that he appeared for, although he gained representative honours with both Gloucestershire and the Army.

Capped as a prop forward, he made his International debut against Wales in 1910. Included in the same England XV were his Gloucester Rugby Club colleagues David 'Dai' Gent and William Johns. Upon being awarded his first cap the local press described him: 'H. Berry, a finely built scrummager whose cap has been delayed, for it was richly deserved last season. He was very conspicuous for Gloucester versus the Australians and subsequently became a reserve! Years ago this would have been fatal for his chances of the much desired 'white jersey' but fortunately times have changed. In the west Berry is regarded as the best scrummager in England and a great forward.'

Berry made four appearances for his country during which he scored two tries

and England never lost. They defeated Wales at Twickenham 11-6, France in Paris 11-3, Scotland at Inverleath by 14-5. The other match had the rare occurrence of being pointless when England met Ireland at Twickenham. Henry's two tries came in the away Internationals with France and Scotland. All of those appearances came in 1910.

He served his country with distinction, not only on the field of play but also in the armed forces for he had an admirable military career. He served with the Gloucestershire Regiment during the South African conflict. It was during this war that Henry was awarded the Queens Medal. The Gloucester Rugby forward also served in St Helena and India as well as the Army Reserve.

The former England international was recalled for the Great War of 1914-18 where he served as a corporal in the 1st Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment. Sadly, he was killed in action on 9th May 1915 at Festerbert, France. He was survived by his wife Beatrice Eveline Berry. The couple lived in nearby Alvin Street at no. 68, a stone throw from Kingsholm. Henry is commemorated on the Le Touret Memorial at Pas de Calais on Panel 17 of the memorial. Over 13,000 names are listed of men who fell in this area with no known resting place.

Christopher Champion Tanner, popularly known as 'Kit', was born on 24th June 1908 in Cheltenham. He was educated at Cheltenham College. A wing three-quarter, he played for Cambridge University, Richmond and Gloucester. He represented

both the Barbarians, for whom he scored a hat-trick on his debut and Gloucestershire. Tanner made his debut for England in 1930 while he was studying at Pembroke College, Cambridge, against Scotland at Twickenham on 15th May. A pointless encounter ensured that it was the first scoreless draw between the teams since 1910.

In total, the Cheltenham born winger made four appearance for England scoring a try on his final appearance against Scotland on 19th March 1932 at Twickenham.

Christopher 'Kit' Tanner was ordained in 1935 and became curate at Farnham, he remained there until 1937 when he took over the curacy of St Mary de Lode in Gloucester until 1939. He was the rector of Haslemere in 1939 when the Second World War broke out and he then joined the Royal Naval Reserve.

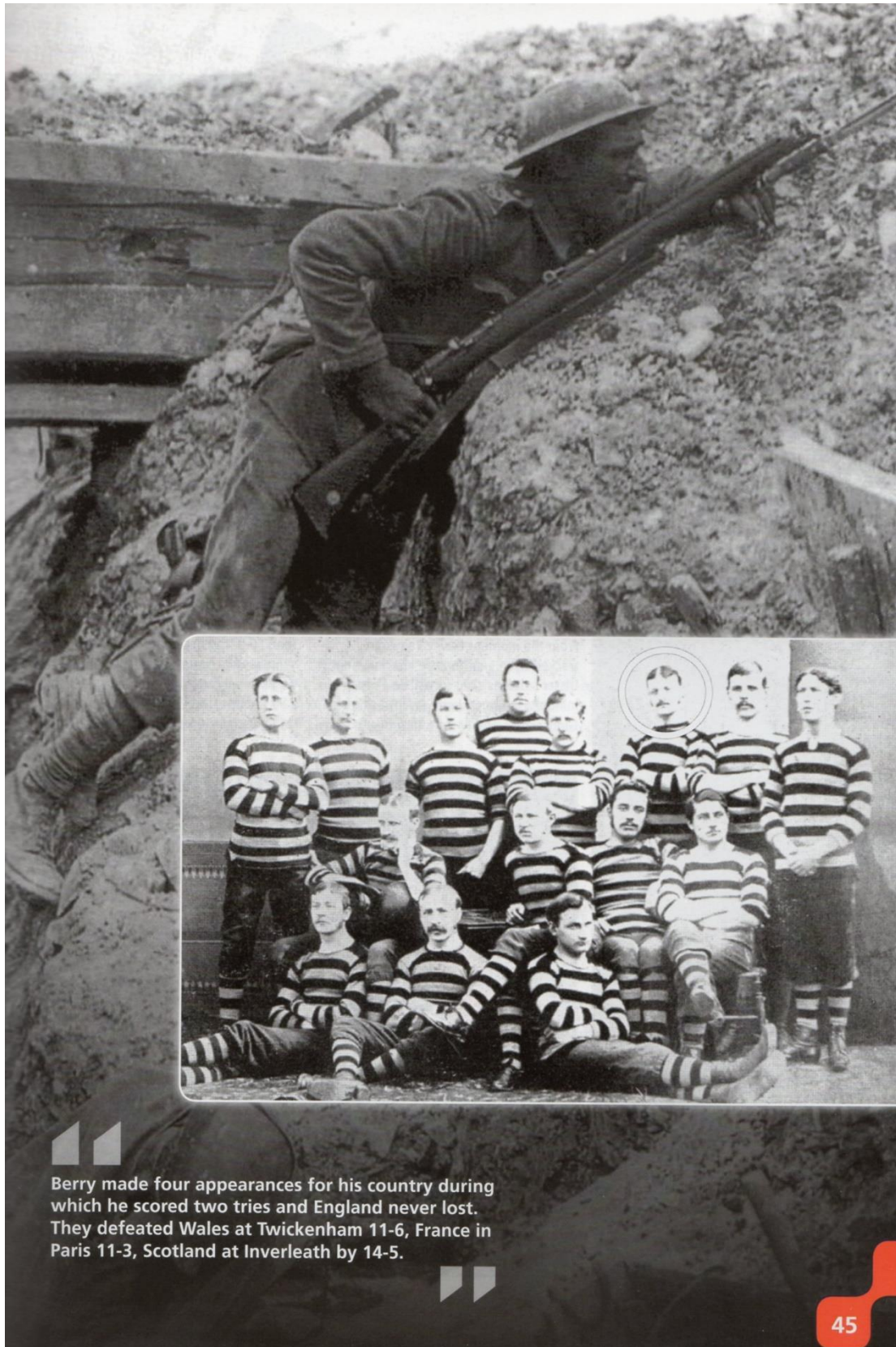
Christopher was killed in action off Crete in the bloody battle that took place in 1941. He was serving aboard H.M.S. Fiji. He was awarded a posthumous Albert Medal in 1942 for his heroic efforts saving wounded sailors when H.M.S. Fiji was sunk by an enemy salvo. He repeatedly risked his life as he made 30 trips between the rescue ship and the ailing and sinking H.M.S. Fiji.

He had saved the life of an injured sailor when in one last attempt to save life he was overcome by exhaustion and drowned. Tanner was the only England player to win the Albert Medal during the Second World War.

Today, the Albert Medal is known as the George Cross. Christopher 'Kit' Tanner is commemorated at Portsmouth Naval Memorial in Hampshire on Panel 60 Column 3. The memorial is situated on Southsea Common overlooking the promenade which is accessible at all times.

Henry Berry was one of 27 England Internationals to forfeit their lives in the Great War and Christopher Tanner was one of fourteen to do so in the Second World War. Both were two of many brave men who embodied the spirit of Rugby Union and of Englishmen in a hour of need and deed.





Berry made four appearances for his country during which he scored two tries and England never lost. They defeated Wales at Twickenham 11-6, France in Paris 11-3, Scotland at Inverleath by 14-5.

N.B. The team photo above is from about 1876/77, and the H. J. Berry shown ringed is therefore NOT the correct H. J. Berry

MATCH ACTION

Ulster Rugby
Gloucester Rugby

14
32



Time line

8 mins	
Vainikolo TRY	0-5
10 mins	
Tindall TRY	0-10
17 mins	
Lamb TRY and CON	6-5
23 mins	
Simpson-Daniel TRY	0-22
28 mins	
Balshaw TRY, Lamb CON	0-29
30 mins	
McCullough TRY, Wallace CON	7-29
40 mins	
Wallace TRY and CON	14-29
67 mins	
Lamb PEN	14-32

Gloucester Line-up

15	Iain Balshaw	(1t)
14	James Simpson-Daniel	(1t)
13	Mike Tindall	(1t)
12	Anthony Allen	
11	Lesley Vainikolo	(1t)
10	Ryan Lamb	(1t, 2c, 1p)
9	Rory Lawson	
1	Nick Wood	
2	Olivier Azam	
3	Carlos Nieto	
4	Peter Buxton	(capt)
5	Alex Brown	
6	Alasdair Strokosch	
7	Akapusi Qera	
8	Luke Narryway	
REPS		
16	Andy Titterrell	(Azam)
17	Christian Califano	(Wood)
18	Marco Bortolami	(Strokosch)
19	Gareth Delves	(Narryway)
20	Mike Prendergast	(Lawson)
21	Chris Paterson	(Lamb)
22	Olly Morgan	(Allen)

Glorious Gloucester

Friday, October 9

Ravenhill, Referee: Nigel Owens (Wales).

▶ GLOUCESTER produced a stunning 22 minutes of counter-attacking rugby to get off to the best possible start in this season's Heineken Cup.

Ravenhill was left stunned as Gloucester scored five first-half tries to claim a bonus point victory in the opening round of matches last Friday.

From the moment Lesley Vainikolo tracked Ryan Lamb's little kick in behind Ulster's defence to score after eight minutes, the hosts were swept aside by Gloucester's ability from turn-over ball

and quality when running from deep.

The likes of Iain Balshaw, Mike Tindall and Ryan Lamb had a field day as they cut Ulster to ribbons. The second try, scored by Tindall was a classic. Lamb ran from a scrum inside Gloucester's half, Balshaw and James Simpson-Daniel combined brilliantly down the left and Balshaw sent Tindall to the line.

Their 10-0 lead became 17-0 after 17 minutes Luke Narryway, Tindall and Vainikolo all carried hard before Lamb cut back against Ulster's defence to score. Lamb was at the forefront of Gloucester's



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next try – picking off Paddy Wallace’s pass and racing clear before finding Simpson-Daniel, who had roared up on his outside for the try.

Ulster were shell shocked. They had conceded so much ball at the tackle area that Gloucester were a threat even without the ball and when Isaac Boss ran up a blind alley from a scrum, Simpson-Daniel off-loaded to Balshaw who capped a fantastic performance with try number five.

At 29-0 ahead, the game was as good as over. With almost no pressure on them, Ulster opened up and a couple of line breaks from Andrew Trimble signified their intent. From

one of his breaks, Matt McCullough followed up to score and right on the half-time interval Wallace broke through Gloucester’s defence for try number two to make the score 14-29.

However, Gloucester didn’t waver and defended brilliantly in the second half. Akapusi Qera, Alex Brown, Nick Wood, Peter Buxton and Alasdair Strokosch got through a mountain of work and they will take as much pleasure from their second half shut-out as they did from the first-half fireworks.

If there were any lingering doubts, Lamb sealed a comprehensive victory with a 67th minute penalty to make it the perfect opening night in Belfast.



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Man of the Match



Akapusi Qera had a tremendous impact on the game – his work rate, ball carrying and tackle count were crucial.

Ryan’s Comment



“After the Wasps game [in the EDF Energy Cup] we were seething. We wanted to show what we were about and I think we did that,” fly-half Ryan Lamb.





PETER ARNOLD

Never a man to turn down a women in uniform, Peter Arnold talks all things Gloucester with a nurse, remembers past glory days against Welsh giants Pontypool and looks back at Gloucester's victory at Ravenhill.

WELL KEEP A WELCOME...(OF SORTS)

I'M SURE many of our longer serving supporters will agree when I remark that there is always a special buzz around the place when we entertain a Welsh club. Indeed, there was a time when one of the Principality teams seemed to be here about once a fortnight. Together with Bristol, Gloucester used to have the strongest Anglo-Welsh fixture list in the country largely for the obviously geographical reasons.

There was more room in the programme then, of course, because we used to play on most Wednesday evenings, as well as at the weekends. Indeed, some of those floodlit games yielded some of the most memorable Kingsholm occasions.

One of them involved Pontypool, which might not be a name to strike fear into

the hearts of today's Premiership sides, but 20 or so years ago was a real power in the land. This was largely because of an absolutely awesome pack, fronted by a trio who played en bloc for Wales an indecent number of times. They also had, in David Bishop, one of the toughest and most uncompromising scrum-halves in the business to marshal things. Incidentally, one of the back rowers, and I believe, captain of Wales at the time, was TV pundit Eddie Butler.

It has become part of Kingsholm Folklore that, at one point, Mr. Butler considered joining Gloucester, but having come along and sussed things out, didn't like the competition provided by Mike Teague, John Gadd and Mike Longstaff, so decided to stay in the Valleys.

Anyway, on that particular Wednesday evening, Gloucester fielded a young, inexperienced prop named Malcolm

Preedy, who together with Tony Windo and Steve Mills, became one of our more formidable front row trios. Malcolm distinguished himself that evening by nicking the ball off his opposite number, the great Graham Price, and diving over for a try. Pricey was not best pleased.

We did win the game. Just, and that resulted in a very pleasant interlude the following morning.

It was Severn Sound's opening day on air, and their very first guest was Max Boyce, who apart from being rugby's favourite bard, was the arch Pontypool supporter.

On being told that Gloucester had beaten 'Pooler' the night before, he allowed the air waves to remain silent for a moment, and then, in a voice redolent of grief, uttered just five words: "Did they? Did they really?" and that



Eddie Butler



Mike Teague



was the end of that conversation.

I laughed my socks off.

HEAVING A THIGH

I HAVE a bad leg at the moment, and had to pay a visit to the hospital as a result. I suppose there are worse ways to spend a wet November afternoon than having one's thigh manipulated by an attractive, blond nurse, and the occasion was enlivened by the fact that she recognised me as soon as I walked in, although I didn't know her from Eve. It appears that she's a great Gloucester supporter and comes along to Kingsholm with her husband from time to time.

After she'd finished putting my leg through manoeuvres which would have earned the approval of Torquemada, she suddenly asked me, "What went wrong on Sunday, then?" to which I replied that a lot of people would like to know the answer to that. It never does to underestimate Wasps, but surely we should not have surrendered a dozen-point lead in the last ten minutes or so,

in a game we apparently dominated.

There's something peculiar about our encounters with Wasps. You can't have failed to notice the number of times they've put one over on us in the last few minutes of an encounter. If a side is demonstrably better than Gloucester, then so be it, but I don't think that's the case with the High Wycombe outfit. And let's face it, they had a pretty dire start to the Premiership while we were riding high. I don't really understand it at all.

But never mind. It was nice to meet a nurse with her priorities right. Cheers, Donna! I'll be round to see you again the next time I need my kneecap unscrewed.

THAT'S BETTER!

WE WERE all a bit upset by the way Wasps were able to come from behind and sneak past us a couple of weeks ago, and I see that they repeated the exercise last weekend as well. With hindsight, however, there was no chance of Ulster doing anything similar to us last Friday. Having stunned everyone by gaining a try bonus point in record time,

there was no way we were going to slip up in the same way on two successive weekends.

Predictably, Ulster who fielded a very respectable side in spite of injuries, weren't going to roll over after Gloucester's initial blitz. They were performing on their own pitch in front of a highly partisan crowd, and a counter attack was inevitable. Fair play – they scored a couple of good tries, but the way the lads closed the game out in the second half was, in its way, as admirable as the display of attacking nous and flair shown in the first half hour. Why take chances? We already had our bonus point.

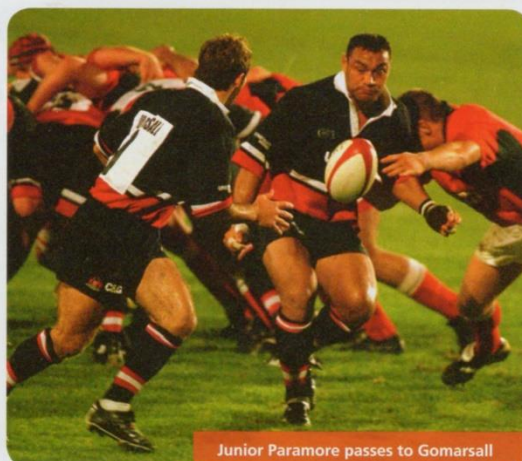
Ravenhill on November 9th 2007 was the first occasion when the Gloucester backs really demonstrated the mayhem of which they are capable, and my own feeling is that there is probably more to come. But it's worth remembering that such a display isn't possible unless the forwards are doing their job too. What will happen when Andy Hazell is available is anyone's guess.

MATCH OF THE DAYS

It was Gloucester's debut in the Heineken Cup – away to one of the biggest teams in Europe – the Llanelli Scarlets. Skipped by former Wales captain Kingsley Jones, Gloucester shocked Stradey Park with an opening victory that is still one of their best results in the competition.



Chris Yates



Junior Paramore passes to Gomarsall

▶ RARELY can there have been a more arduous task on an opening Heineken Cup night – away to Llanelli Scarlets at fortress Stradey Park.

But that was the task that fell on Gloucester on Friday, October 6 2000 – a European date with destiny that set them on their way to a semi-final appearance in their first season.

Llanelli included 11 full Welsh internationals in their starting line-up and had another on the bench but Gloucester ground out a remarkable 27-20 victory – their first at Stradey Park for 62 years.

Gloucester's victory was even more remarkable when you consider that stand-off Simon Mannix was withdrawn at half-time with a broken bone in his hand and 75-times capped Wallaby centre Jason Little was switched from centre to number 10. It was one of Little's most remarkable performances. He scored a brilliant individual try and made a second for Andy Hazell in the second half.

The contest started at a ferocious pace with Llanelli on the front foot but Gloucester kept their composure and scored from only

their second foray into the Llanelli half. Chris Wyatt was penalised for pulling down a maul and Mannix kicked the penalty. The Kiwi fly-half repeated the act with two more to give the visitors a 9-0 lead after 25 minutes – the second after a Chris Catling-inspired counter attack from under their own posts before Llanelli's Stephen Jones landed two for the home side.

The loss of Mannix forced a reshuffle with Terry Fanolua moving into centre and replacement Frank Schisano playing on the wing. With Gloucester's forwards trading serious blows with the Scarlets, it took a piece of Little magic to increase the lead to 14-6 in the 38th minute when he took the ball in midfield, checked, then stepped and sliced through the midfield before sprinting wide of full-back Matt Cardey to touch down. Andy Gomarsall, forced to take on the kicking duties in the absence of Mannix, missed the conversion.

Gomarsall missed another long range effort after the interval but atoned when he made a brilliant 40 metre break down to the blindside to combine with Catling and Schisano before the move broke down as Gloucester's pressure intensified. With Andy Hazell replacing Steve Ojomoh

in the 57th minute Gloucester subsequently stepped up a gear – their forwards getting on top in the scrum and the contact area. Gomarsall fluffed a simple penalty but a charging 35 metre break by Chris Yates created the platform for Gloucester's second try. He recycled the ball to Little who in turn sent Hazell under the posts for Gomarsall to add the extra points.

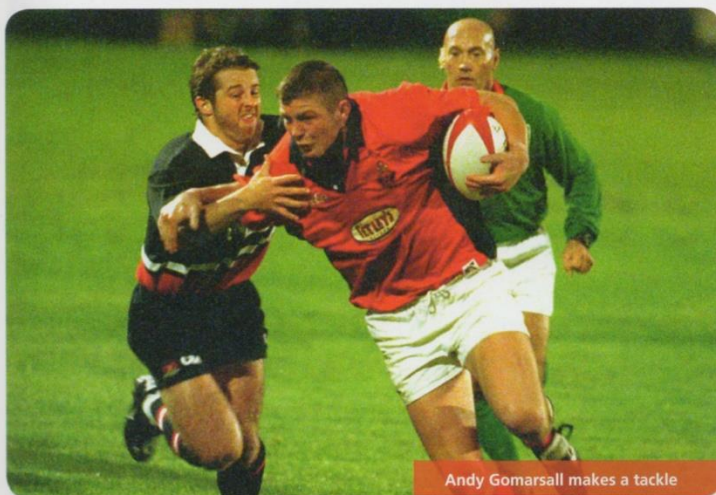
Another try went begging when Azam went on a dummy throwing run with Little on his shoulder but Schisano dropped the pass with the line begging. In a remarkable contest, Fanolua became Gloucester's third kicker of the night and duly stroked over a penalty when Scott Quinnell high tackled Gomarsall.

Llanelli threw everything at Gloucester in the final minutes and Wyatt dived over from Rupert Moon's reverse pass. However, Fanolua sealed a famous victory with his second penalty.

Kingsley Jones who returned to his home land and lead Gloucester to victory, said of Little's display: "It proved what a world class player he was to step in and cope superbly and score an outstanding try.



The contest started at a ferocious pace with Llanelli on the front foot but Gloucester kept their composure and scored from only their second foray into the Llanelli half....



Andy Gomarsall makes a tackle

Every team needs a match winner. We had Jason Little."

Jones was no stranger to Stradey Park, having led Ebbw Vale to their first victory there in 27 years in December 1997, when he scored the winning try from 35 metres. Gloucester likewise had struggled there losing 38 matches out of 41.

John Brain who was the Gloucester forwards guru but who now assists Bristol Rugby reminisced: "That was one of the most talented Gloucester squads that I have worked with."

That first win for Gloucester at Stradey Park in 62 years, the last being in the 1937-38 season, was a truly momentous victory for Jones. Those who travelled to West Wales will never forget that night, a night when the European Cup came alive for Gloucester.

"It was a honour to be captain," Jones added. "We were a good side even though we were underdogs – it was a fantastic performance."

FAN ZONE WITH BOB FENTON

For me, apart from the end of season when everything really shakes down, this is the best part of the year. The start of the Heineken Cup pool stages.

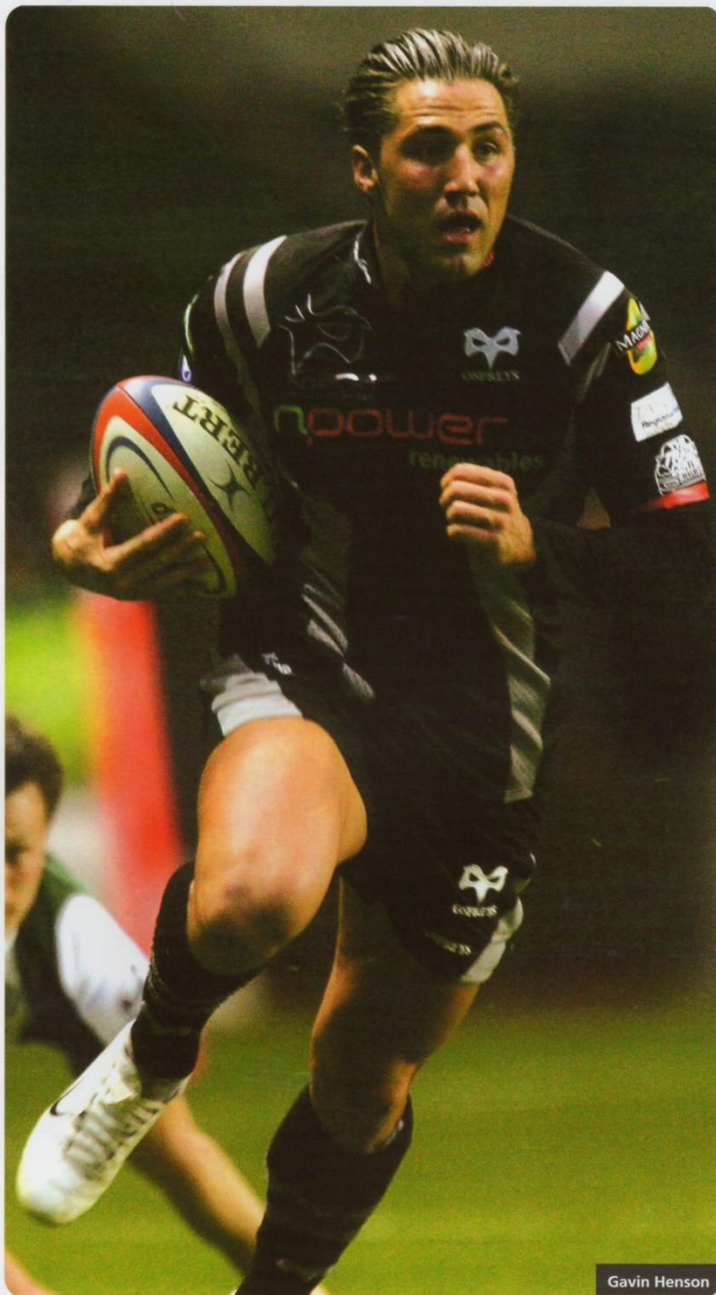
 AFTER THE slightly unsatisfying starter of the two EDF matches, we're into the main course with a huge game against the Ospreys tonight. And in a bit of a throw-back to times long gone, a (almost) midweek game under the lights, chances are that it'll be wet and cold, and memories of long gone battles against the likes of Pontypool (front rows coming in with heads swinging like a group of grazing bullocks), and no need for a ball for the first 20 as the sides were happy to batter hell out of each other.

Of course being a young upstart (stop sniggering) I am too young to remember all of that...

Those two EDF matches, though – what a contrast, yet in a way how similar. Against Newcastle we were, I think it is fair to say, played off the park for about 70 minutes. Then in the closing moments got our act together and staged a come back to grab the draw. And with Wasps and Newport also sharing the points, there was everything to play for last weekend.

And play we did, helped in no small part by Wasps fielding a Chelsea Pensioner at No 8 we absolutely shredded them in the first half. The small group of travelling Gloucester fans probably could not believe what they were seeing as a pretty much full strength Wasps side managed were comprehensively stuffed in every department.

But then we got the mirror image of the previous week as we collectively dozed off, Wasps took off their old man so he could collect his pension or sign some books – one of the two – and replaced him with a turbo-charged James Haskell. Talk about bigger come backs than Lazarus – my mate Barney claims Wasps made a secret substitution by bringing on Harry Houdini to help them out – even he wouldn't have dreamed of escapes like that. But escape they did, and barring a major upset our interest in the competition is all but over.





Lesley Vainikolo



Akapusi Qera



Without knowing the line-ups for tonight's encounter I can't be sure, but I bet there are at least 24 internationals on the pitch at the start, with another 10 sat on the bench. And that's pretty much the same at every game taking part – well apart from a few lesser French and Italian sides.



Couple of amusing things though, the boy collared Simon Shaw and asked him whether it was 'annoying' to play against Victor Matfield in the World Cup final. Watching Shaw searching for an answer that would be suitable for an 14-year-old boy was a joy to watch, he eventually mumbled "maybe annoying is not the word I would use..." That and asking former All Black Craig Dowd whether he had anything to say to Wayne Barnes about the now infamous forward pass. The look in Dowd's eyes suggested further questioning on this subject could be bad for your health...

Oh and Iain Balshaw got himself a new starry-eyed fan in the shape of my sister!

Still, we are now free to concentrate on this particular cup competition – and to nick a line from one of the sponsor's rivals: probably the best rugby competition in the world.

I really think it is the best, way better than the rugby basketball played in the Super 14 – entertaining though that is the New Zealand NPC is a more enthralling competition – way better than any domestic competition and, in my eyes on a par with the World Cup itself.

Just look at the squads – international players all over the park. Without knowing the line-ups for tonight's encounter I can't be sure, but I bet there are at least 24 internationals on the pitch at the start, with another 10 sat on the bench. And that's pretty much the same at every game taking part – well apart from a few lesser French and Italian sides.

The intensity and ferocity of the competition is awe inspiring. Look at last weekend. We were simply outstanding against Ulster. Not being able to make the trip I had to put up with the dozy commentator on Sky talking about how Gloucester were rocking, in a rough patch and had a problem closing out games. Yeah right – a couple of iffy results and we're on the slide.

18 minutes in and we had secured a bonus point, watched a team playing with power, pace and precision like we knew they could, already seen Mike Tindall score the try of the tournament, had several close ups of Chewy doing a celebration dance in the crowd (still needs some work there, mate) and hopefully had a large portion of humble pie delivered to the commentary box.

Then, to defy the doubters who thought we could not close out a game, we proceeded to do just that with some immense defensive performances and a collective iron will not to let the lead slip.

With due respect to Ulster, though, today is going to be a much tougher challenge. The Ospreys have an awesome squad. In Mike Phillips and James Hook they have perhaps one of the best half-back pairings to be found at any club in the world, then there is the super model Gavin Church (sorry, I know that was a cheap shot) starting to show his true class after an indifferent few months.

We talk – rightly – about our exciting back division, but check out theirs. They have a world class line-up and when they hit form they are almost unstoppable. London Irish felt the force a few weeks ago in the EDF – seven tries were slammed past the visitors, this after the men from Reading had had the temerity to take the lead.

In the last few weeks we have seen the best and worst of Gloucester's defence: indifferent against Newcastle and Wasps, superb against Ulster. There can be no doubt which one has to turn up tonight.

Last weekend the Wasps v Munster clash was billed as the match of the round – there can be no doubt that the coming together of these two rugby juggernauts tonight is the game of this weekend.

I can't wait.

MATCH ACTION



Gloucester Rugby
Newcastle Falcons

18
18



Man of the Match

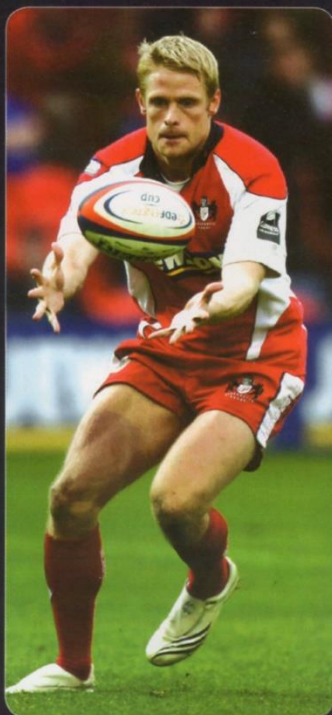


Iain Balshaw was a constant threat with ball in hand and immaculate under the high ball.

Dean's Comment



"We were too individual in the first half. When we played as a unit and maintained our intensity in the second half we looked a much better side," said head coach Dean Ryan.



Sinbad the Saviour

Saturday, October 27

Referee: Sean Davey, Attendance: 10,358



JAMES SIMPSON-DANIEL scored twice in the last 11 minutes to grab Gloucester a draw against Newcastle at Kingsholm.

In a disappointing performance, the winger crossed beneath the sticks after 69 minutes before plunging over in the far right corner in stoppage time to rescue a draw.

Newcastle were worth far more than the draw having led for long periods. They got off to the perfect start when Toby Flood sent Ollie Phillips scored with far too much comfort down the left.

It took Gloucester 18 minutes to open their account when Chris Paterson landed a penalty but it was the visitors who kept the ball better in contact and when they scored again before the break, it was impossible to say they did not deserve it.

Flood chased after his own chip and as the pressure came on, Gloucester failed to clear their lines. John Rudd turned over James

Bailey and after the penalty was driven to the corner, hooker Matt Thompson was driven over for the score to make it 12-3.

Although replacement Willie Walker banged over a penalty, Flood took Newcastle 18-6 in front with two further three-pointers to edge Newcastle close to victory. However, Gloucester found some energy from somewhere and when Marco Bortolami tapped down from a line-out, Simpson-Daniel cut a lovely angled break to the line.

The try should have counted for nothing when winger Tom May chased after his own kick but fumbled the ball forward over the line. It was the let-off Gloucester needed and when Balshaw, Simpson-Daniel and Bailey combined down the right, Gloucester kept possession for long enough to strike. Walker and Gareth Cooper shipped play out and Simpson-Daniel dived in to score.

Walker's conversion would have won it but it would have been tough on Newcastle.



MATCH ACTION



London Wasps
Gloucester Rugby

29
26



Wasps Wonders

Sunday, November 4

Referee: Wayne Barnes, Attendance: 7,802

▶ LONDON WASPS produced a remarkable second half fight back to revive their season thanks to a inspirational performance from James Haskell.

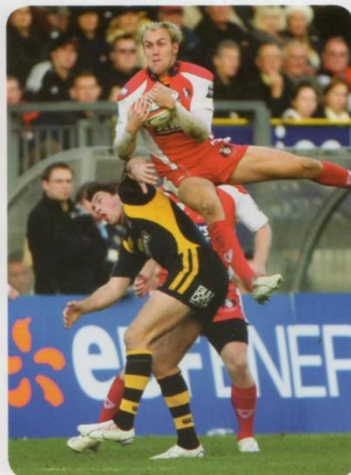
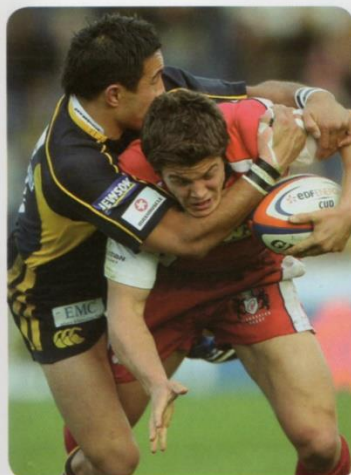
For the best part of an hour in this hugely physical contest, Gloucester had been by far the better side. Not only had they operated at the sharp end physically, they had also scored four tries to lead 21-3 and then 26-8.

But they failed to close the game out to leave them virtually out of the EDF Energy Cup. They did get the perfect start when Rory Lawson hurtled through a gap at the contact area following good work by Alex Brown and Nick Wood and when Lawson and Ryan Lamb combined after half an hour, hooker Olivier Azam was bundled over for the second try.

Wasps had been second best in virtually every area. Gloucester scrummaged

expertly, used the line-out well and were far more creative. Wasps did get on the board before the break with a Danny Cipriani penalty but it hardly seemed to matter. Gloucester were next to score again – Lamb sending Narraway up the centre on an angled break before Lamb and Lawson combined again and James Simpson-Daniel gave the scoring pass to Olly Morgan. The home side responded when Tom Voyce raced to the line after a brilliant piece of skill from Fraser Waters shipped the ball on. If that raised the spirits then Gloucester's fourth try from Iain Balshaw seemed to end the hopes – the winger running onto Lamb's long pass to score.

Gloucester were 28-6 ahead and seemingly home and hosed. But Haskell and Raphael Ibanez changed the momentum of the contest. Wasps suddenly drove the ball well and Haskell was driven over to the left of the sticks and when Peter Buxton was sent to the sinbin, the pressure told.



Man of the Match



Although there were four tries, prop Nick Wood helped lay the foundation in the

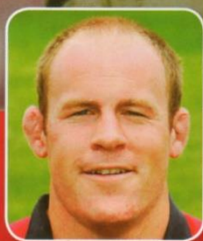
set scrum.

Dean's Comment



"This has happened before which is what makes it disappointed. We jumped in to try and close the game out – we are desperately disappointed because for an hour we controlled the game," head coach Dean Ryan.





PETER BUXTON

DOB: 21.08.78

Weight: 18st 1lb

Height: 6'4"

Position : Back Row