



The Official Programme  
of Gloucester Rugby

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**Gloucester Rugby  
v CS Bourgoin**

15.12.07 15.00

# INSIDE

**Mike  
Teague**

Number eight  
opens up

**Dean  
Ryan**

The head coach rounds-up all  
the latest on-field action

**CS  
Bourgoin**

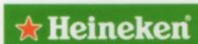
Meet today's Heineken Cup  
visitors with a player interview

**Leon  
Lloyd**

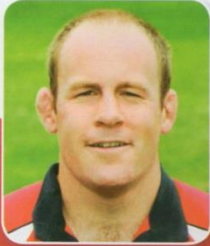
and Leicester in  
Match of the Days

**PLUS:** Fans Zone, Peter Arnold, community update and ticket news

Heineken Cup Round Four



[ercrugby.com](http://ercrugby.com)



## CAPTAIN'S CORNER

Skipper Peter Buxton knows there is plenty still to be done in the Heineken Cup this season.

WE ARE now half-way through our Heineken Cup campaign and today welcome Bourgoin to Kingsholm in Round Four.

There is no way of denying it we have made a great start in the competition and to have taken 14 points from a possible 15 is a great return after three games.

But this is not the time to sit back and rely on the fact we are at Kingsholm today to simply produce another performance. This is the Heineken Cup, a competition that brings the very best out of teams and our pool is very much still open.

We have talked all week about the need to be focused, controlled and composed. There is nothing more dangerous than a wounded French team, Bourgoin are a proud unit who are doing well in the Top 14 competition so we must give them every bit of respect.

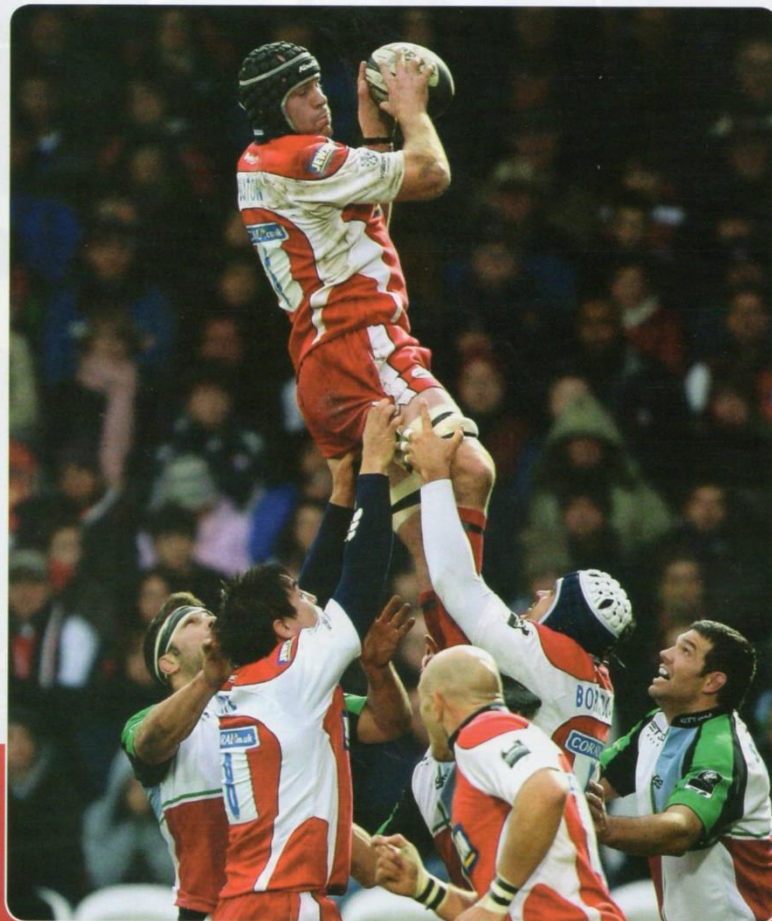
Last Friday, we were thrilled to see so many supporters at the Stade Pierre Rajon for one of our most complete performances of the season. We set the tone early,

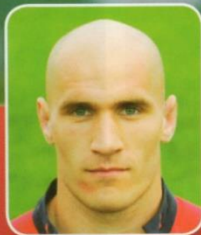
were physical and determined and scored four good tries.

At the moment we are flitting from one competition to another but the important thing from my point of view is that we are retaining our intensity and ability to win matches in different conditions and against different opposition.

That is of vital importance as the season reaches a very critical stage. After today's game we have three important Premiership matches coming up and we want to be firing for those encounters. That is why maintaining our Heineken Cup form and home record are crucial.

We are all expecting another great Kingsholm crowd today, so please get behind the boys because your support really does count. On behalf of all the squad and the coaches, may I wish you all a Happy Christmas and will be back with you for the derby against Bristol.





## ALASDAIR STROKOSCH

**DOB:** 21.02.83

**Weight:** 15st 5lb

**Height:** 6'3"

**Position :** Back Row



# EIGHT ON EIGHT

WITH SIMON DEVEREUX

Arguably the best-known player in Gloucester's history Mike Teague was an England icon and named as player of the series for the British Lions in 1989. In his latest series, Simon Devereux catches up with 'Iron' Mike.



# EIGHT ON EIGHT

**Where did rugby start for you?**

**MT:** I went to Churchdown School (as Dave Sims did later) and my main two sports became athletics and rugby. I was selected to run in the 400 metres for Cheltenham and District, and there was talk of me moving up to 800metres, which was run over two laps of the track rather than one. One was enough for me so after that the balance changed and rugby took over. As most people will know I played for the All Blues before coming to Gloucester.

**When I was a teenager, I used to stand and watch from the Shed with Tony Windo, and there we were a few years later playing with the guys we used to admire so much. I felt that was why Gloucester outperformed sides laden with internationals. How did it feel for you with so many players from the city playing for the club?**

**MT:** We had something that virtually no other club could match. The slogan now is "the pride, the honour, the passion, the history", and it's nice to think we helped create that history. People like Preedy, Mills, Blakeway, Burton, Boyle, Gadd, Hamlin, Mogg - they were great blokes, working class blokes if you like. Moggy would be digging a hole for Severn Trent on a Saturday morning, yet he still give his all at Kingsholm in the afternoon, and you never wanted to fail. The intensity of rugby in Gloucester meant that if you made a mistake you were reminded about it all week everywhere you went, and the joke wore a bit thin by the end of the day.

**SD: Do you remember the "Mad Dog" training we used to do in pre season?**

**MT:** Attitude was a big thing, wasn't it? When it came to a game we didn't fear anything after doing that stuff - endurance running, hill running, often at three quarter pace, carrying logs and rocks and diving into murky water when you couldn't see what was beneath the surface.

**SD: Compared to today, we probably played more and trained less?**

**MT:** We'd think nothing of going to work, finishing early, sleeping on the bus travelling to a midweek game in Wales, playing, having a few beers, and then sleeping on the way back before going to work the next day. The club might play 50 games in a season. The pride and passion was there but they were good players too. Ask Steve Mills to throw a ball against a target as if it was a line-out and he'd hit it 95 times out of 100.

**SD: At Gloucester we used to call you Mighty Mike, but where did the Iron Mike tag come from?**

**MT:** That was Paul Ackford. Obviously Mike Tyson was World Heavyweight Champion at the time, but there was an incident on tour (Mike refused to elaborate - ed) and he just came out with it and it stuck.

**SD: You played in the back row at six as well as eight - did you have a preference?**

**MT:** I did, and it cost me a lot of England caps. There was a trend towards 6'6 number eights and I was only 6'3 but I told the coach Geoff Cooke I wanted to play at eight when he was trying to pick a more interchangeable back row. People in the squad then would have been Gary Rees, John Hall, Mickey Skinner, Dean Richards, Peter Winterbottom and me. After my debut I didn't get in the side for four years until 1989.

**SD: You had two spells at Gloucester, and played for Cardiff and Moseley in between. Was it hard to leave?**

**MT:** Yes and no. I always felt I played my best rugby in a red and white shirt and I had a long chat with Alan Brinn about it. I was invited to go on tour by Cardiff, which was a great club at the time. It was suggested by certain people that my international career would benefit from a

move there, as it had for another England international, John Scott. Eventually, I decided to go. The Moseley one - I can say now - was about money. I think I was the highest "paid" player in England when I went there.

**SD: Do you remember coming back, because I played in your first game of that second spell against Bedford.....**

**MT:** It was funny because within two minutes I knew I had made the right decision. I caught the ball from the kick off, went into contact, set the ball up and the rest of the pack drove over the top of me. I'd been trying to get them to do that all the time I was at Moseley. I felt like I was immediately at home, and really enjoyed that last season but the body was starting to tell me time was nearly up.

**SD: Towards the end of your last season, there was talk of you going for the captaincy the following year because of your presence on the field. Do you regret not doing that?**

**MT:** I do. I would have loved to have done that when I came back, but the body wouldn't take it, which is why I declined the idea. When I stopped I was 34, but games like the win over Leicester (Barrie Corless' final match as Coach) were special for those players at that time.

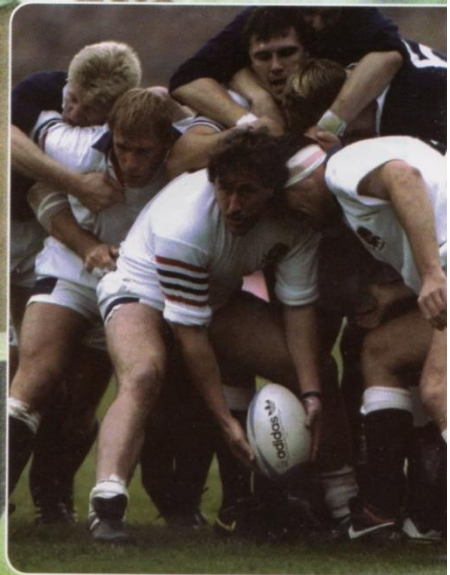
**SD: Your career ended before true professionalism, but Dean Ryan said that you would fit in well in the modern game. Would you liked to have been playing today?**

**MT:** I had my time and enjoyed every minute of it. There would be many gains playing now but you never replace the camaraderie and honesty of playing with fifteen blokes in a Gloucester shirt.

**Hear Mike Teague talking to Simon Devereux about his England memories and Gloucester in 2007 at [bbc.co.uk/gloucestershire/sport](http://bbc.co.uk/gloucestershire/sport)**



Attitude is a big thing in rugby. We'd do sessions in the Forest of Dean, often running at three quarter pace and then diving into areas where you couldn't see what was beneath the muddy surface. When it came to a game you didn't fear anything.





# RYAN'S REVIEW

Five points, injuries and another away win - it has been a busy week for head coach Dean Ryan



*Although Friday's result was slightly overshadowed by injuries, you must have been thrilled with the performance?*

**DR:** ABSOLUTELY. I thought it was one of the most complete performances I have seen from us in that competition. We were devastating against Ulster from turn-over ball and the frequency with which we kept scoring was a bit freakish but last Friday we won the match through our control and composure. There are certain elements that are vital to have away in Europe and they are accentuated in France even further, but we were excellent in terms of our physicality, our set-piece operated under scrutiny and we took our chances with great effect.

Our pressure and ability to soak up pressure in turn made them make mistakes. When you are away from home that is what you want to see. It is a squad game and from 1-22, the back room team and management all ensured we got the mood right from the start to get the result.



*A lot of the immediate reaction was that we are*

*already in the knockout stages, how do you view it?*

**DR:** I DON'T think I have ever been involved in this competition where a group has not gone down to the final game. As a player, I was knocked out on try count so when I say we are solely focussing on today's game, I mean it. We have all been through enough experiences at the top end of this game not to get carried away and we won't be.

After today's game we are only two thirds through the pool stages - there is a tremendous amount still to play for - and we must not be complacent. What we have done is create a position for ourselves that is really pleasing but we must back that up with three more solid performances.

There is a possibility that two teams will not emerge from this pool so we just have to concentrate on finishing top which means crossing off today's game with another victory. I know it sometimes sounds boring but we have to make sure we make no mistakes and that process continues today.



*There were casualties, how are they now?*

**DR:** IT'S why we have such a strong squad and the reason we have integrated players during certain Premiership matches. I hope now people can understand the importance and value of that process for us. We need a core group of players 25 or 30 strong so we can cope with these set-backs.



**Of all the injuries from Friday, Olly Morgan is by far the most serious and we have taken advice from a specialist this week on his shoulder injury and we should know more soon. Both Mike and Iain returned to training this week and there was good news for Chris Paterson because his rib injury was not as bad as first feared.**

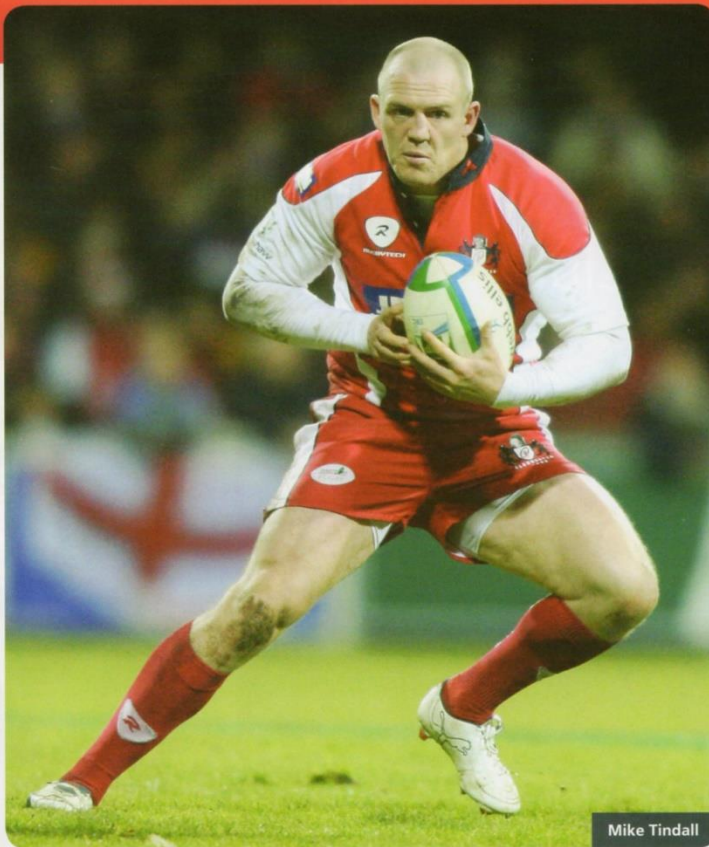


Ryan Lamb



Iain Balshaw





Mike Tindall

Of all the injuries from Friday, Olly Morgan is by far the most serious and we have taken advice from a specialist this week on his shoulder injury and we should know more soon. Both Mike and Iain returned to training this week and there was good news for Chris Paterson because his rib injury was not as bad as first feared.

There is a lot of talk of intensity these days but the Heineken Cup is a tough place to be week in, week out and you are bound to pick up injuries. How you manage them is the most important thing.



**Bourgoin are back at Kingsholm this afternoon for the return, are you expecting another similar game?**

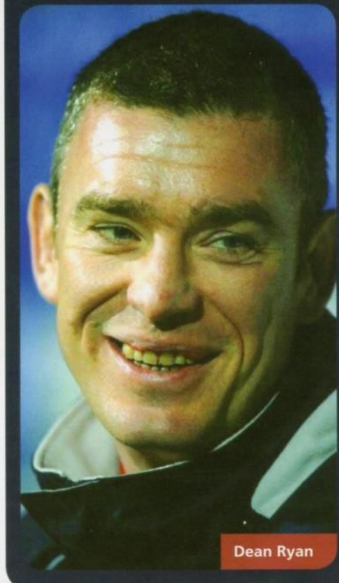
**DR:** I AM pretty sure they will be revved up for some kind of response and that is what we are expecting. They are a proud

side and really fancied the game last Friday. We obviously have no idea what sort of frame of mind they will be in this afternoon but that is not for us to worry about.

Pierre Raschi is a proud man and I am sure he will be looking at his side this afternoon and plotting a good performance. For the first couple of games in the tournament, the pressure was not really on us – the teams we were up against dominated the build up and expectation – but the boot is on the other foot now and we have to face that expectation.

I am sure we can operate under those pressures but it is up to us to force the game, impose ourselves and dictate the pattern and style of play we want. It won't be easy because this is the Heineken Cup but I am positive we can go out and perform again and get another result.

“ We obviously have no idea what sort of frame of mind they will be in this afternoon but that is not for us to worry about. Pierre Raschi is a proud man and I am sure he will be looking at his side this afternoon and plotting a good performance. ”



Dean Ryan



Chris Paterson

# TODAY'S TEAMS

Saturday 15th December 2007 15.00

Gloucester Rugby  
v CS Bourgoin Rugby



	Iain BALSCHAW	15	Full Back	15	Anthony FOREST	
	James SIMPSON-DANIEL	14	Right Wing	14	David JANIN	
	Mike TINDALL	13	Centre	13	Rudolf COETZEE	
	Anthony ALLEN	12	Centre	12	Sebastien LALOO	
	Lesley VAINIKOLO	11	Left Wing	11	Mathieu NICOLAS	
	Ryan LAMB	10	Fly Half	10	Benjamin BOYET	
	Rory LAWSON	9	Scrum Half	9	Morgan PARRA	
	Nick WOOD	1	Prop	1	Karena WIHONGI	
	Olivier AZAM	2	Hooker	2	Benoit CABELLO	
	Carlos NIETO	3	Prop	3	Pablo CARDINALI	
	Peter BUXTON ©	4	Lock	4	© Julien PIERRE	
	Alex BROWN	5	Lock	5	Damien FEVRE	
	Luke NARRAWAY	6	Flanker	6	Julien FRIER	
	Akapusi QERA	7	Flanker	7	Mark RENNIE	
	Gareth DELVE	8	No 8	8	Wessel JOOSTE	

## Replacements

	Andy TITTERRELL	16		16	Jean-Philippe GENEVOIS	
	Christian CALIFANO	17		17	Olivier SOURGENS	
	Marco BORTOLAMI	18		18	Chris WYATTS	
	Alasdair STROKOSCH	19		19	Sylvain NICOLAS	
	Gareth COOPER	20		20	Michael FOREST	
	Willie WALKER	21		21	Matias VIAZZO	
	Leon LLOYD	22		22	Jean-Francois COUX	

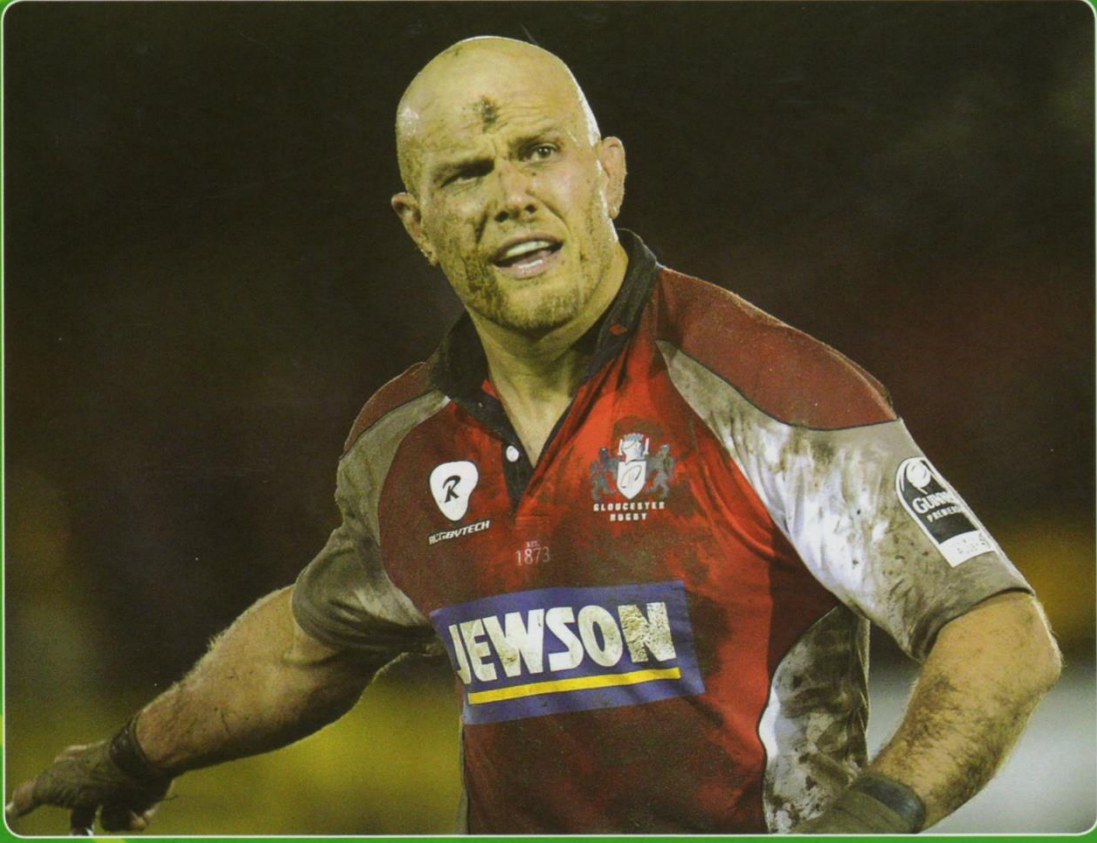
Heineken Cup



# SPOTLIGHT

with **Will James**

by Ian Randall



**WHAT'S THE MOTTO YOU LIVE BY?**  
 It covers rugby and life in general. If you work hard, enjoy what you do and are really focussed on it, then you do well out of it. If you apply your mind to something then you can make a success of yourself.

**WHAT IS YOUR MOST PRIZED POSSESSION?**  
 I used to have a high powered motorcycle in my early twenties, so that would have been my most prized possession



for a while before I sold it. Now, I'd say it's family life.

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE BREAKFAST CEREAL?**  
 I don't eat a lot of cereal. I tend to go for eggs and other high protein foods, but if you pressed me I'd say Corn Flakes with warm milk.



**WHICH COMPANY WOULD BE YOUR IDEAL SPONSOR?**  
 Like most of the boys I'd say a car sponsor. I drive a Mitsubishi Shogun, but I like Range Rovers too. Could you stretch to a Bentley?

**ARE YOU A SPENDER OR A SAVER?**  
 I'm a bit of both. I've got two young children so a lot of my money goes on them and the rest of the family. You can't play rugby forever - although I want to continue as long as I can - and that makes you think about what you will do afterwards.

**WHO IS YOUR FAVOURITE PERSON ON TV ?**  
 Simon Cowell. I don't watch a lot of X-Factor but I do like his attitude. The other one





would be Jeremy Clarkson on Top Gear.

**WHAT MADE YOU LAST LOSE YOUR TEMPER?**

Rude people. Manners cost nothing, do they?

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



I can play the drums. Since my wedding it's become more difficult because it's obviously loud and I don't have a big detached house but I grew up playing them from the age of 12 or 13. Carmin Apice was probably my favourite, but that's a few years ago now.



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

My wife. I'll get told off if I don't say that. We met in a night club when I was 18. I'm sure there are more romantic places but that's how it was for us.



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

I'd have a go on Big Brother. It frustrates me watching some of the slightly weird people and I'd like think I could straighten some of them out a little bit.

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

Surfing studies at Plymouth University. A couple of mates when I played at Plymouth Albion were on that course. It was slightly more practical than theory as far as I know!



**WHAT PART OF TRAINING DO YOU ENJOY MOST?**

I like the physical fitness side, but the rugby is pretty good as well. I just enjoy being a professional player. It's an amazing thing to do and I enjoy every minute..

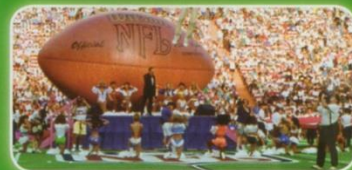
**IF THERE IS A PRANK BEING PLAYED, WHO IS USUALLY THE CULPRIT?**

Christian Califano and Andy Hazell are the main two, but sometimes Ryan Lamb is in on it too. I've noticed that's a recurring theme.....



**WHICH OTHER SPORTING EVENT WOULD YOU LOVE A TICKET FOR?**

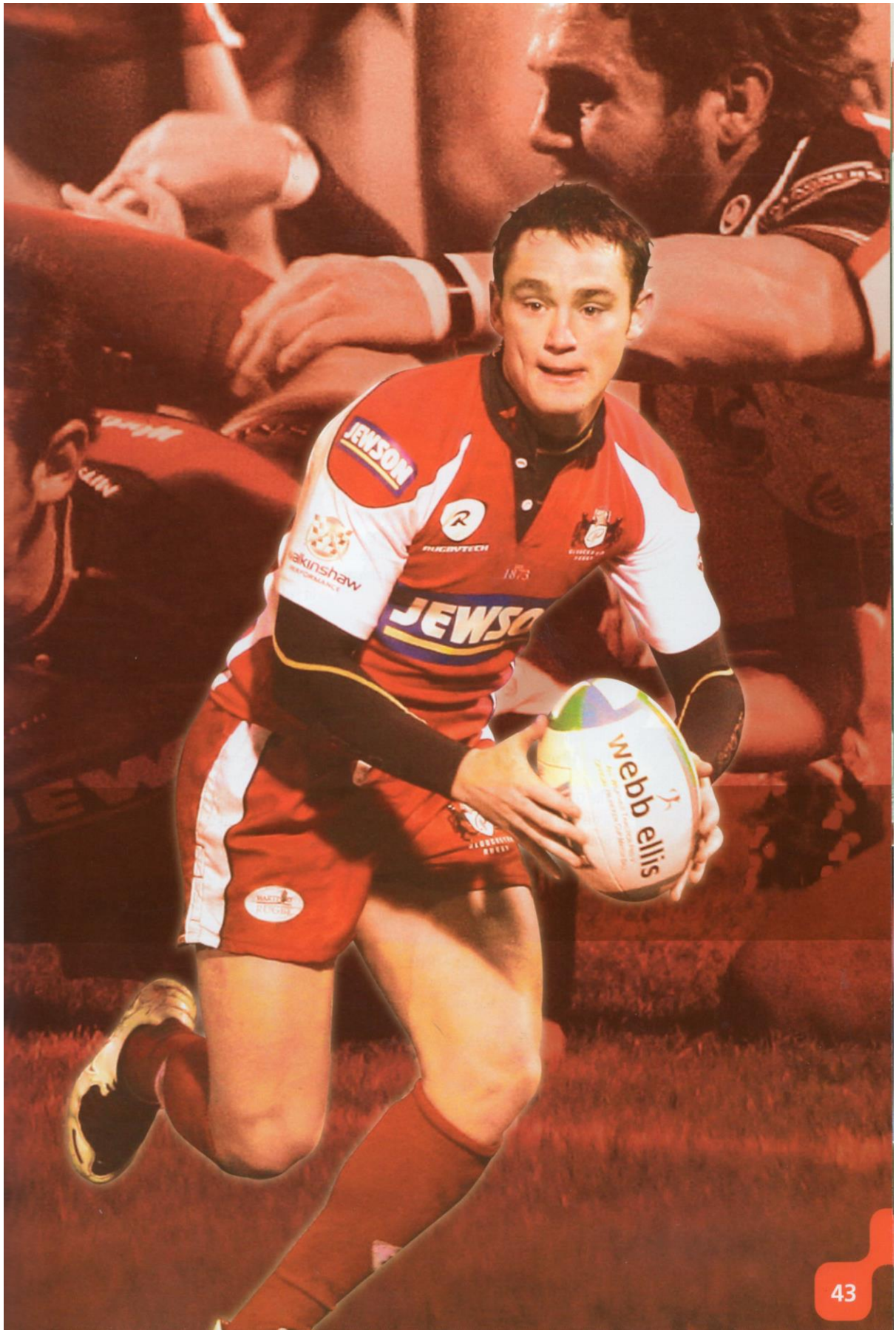
The Superbowl because it's a spectacle which is both sport and entertainment. It would be a whole package if you went to see that.



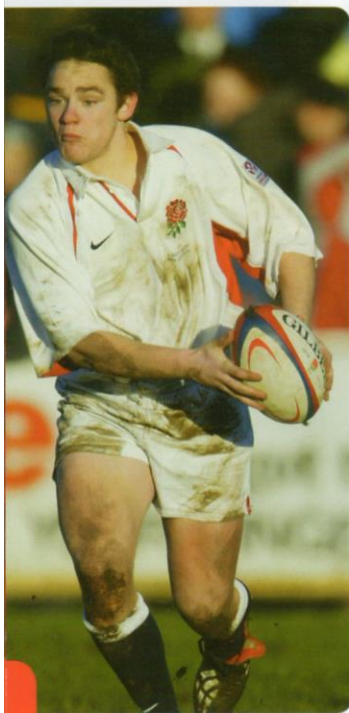
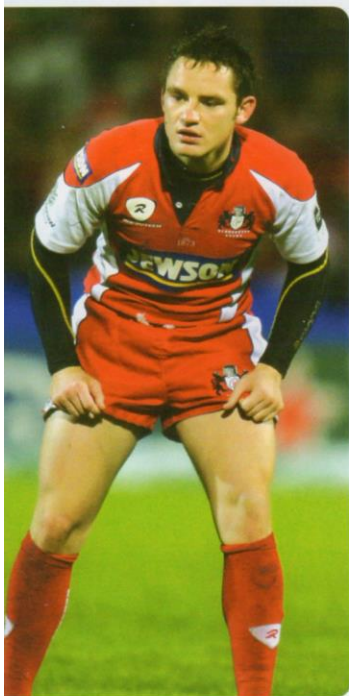


# LAMB HAS A FRESH SPRING IN HIS STEP

Ryan Lamb produced one of his best performances last Friday but as he tells Steve Cotton of the Western Daily Press, a growing maturity and all-round game is key to his development.



## LAMB HAS A FRESH SPRING IN HIS STEP



▶ IF THE mark of a top rugby player is possessing the ability to look at his own game and realise where he needs to improve, then Ryan Lamb is well on the road to becoming something quite special.

Gloucester's 21-year-old fly-half was quick to highlight his own physical deficiencies after last season's Guinness Premiership final defeat to Leicester - and duly spent the appropriate time during the summer working hard in the gym.

Now Lamb is tirelessly working away on his kicking game - both for goal and territory - after acknowledging that the top fly-halves in the business offer more than merely a broken-field attacking threat.

Lamb's display in Gloucester's 31-7 win over Bourgoin at Stade Pierre Rajon eight days ago was recognised by his head coach, Dean Ryan, as one of the youngster's most complete 80 minutes since he gatecrashed the first team here at the expense of Ludovic Mercier little more than 18 months ago.

The Gloucester-born playmaker conjured a display alarmingly flaw-free as he kept Bourgoin pinned in their own territory, controlling the game off the platform given to him by his forwards and his scrum-half, Rory Lawson.

Throw in an interception try, a try-scoring pass to James Simpson-Daniel and one to Anthony Allen, as well as a perfect night of goal-kicking, and it is easy to see why Ryan was full of such praise for his young No 10.

"I knew I had to get my kicking game sorted to pin them back in the right areas - and I think I did that quite well," said Lamb.

"I was quite happy with the way I played, but that came off the back of what the pack did. I thought they were awesome - as was Rory's passing, which was very good on a wet and windy night.

"I think we had to come out of the blocks

in that first 20 - like any French team at home, if you nullify them then you've always got a chance. Their heads started dropping after we got a few quick tries and that was fantastic for us - as was getting the bonus point away from home."

Gloucester's season is progressing exactly how head coach Ryan would have liked - top of the Premiership and top of their Heineken Cup pool with 14 points from a possible 15.

And equally Lamb is pleased with the way his own game is coming along, recognising what he needs to add to his game in order to become one of the best players in his position.

"We're playing in the biggest competitions in Europe - the Guinness Premiership and the Heineken Cup - so if you don't have that kind of maturity and a kicking game, like Stephen Jones and Ronan O'Gara have, then you won't be around for long," said Lamb.

"Everyone likes a Jack-in-the-box, everyone likes to watch good TV, but I think having a kicking game, being mature and able to control a game is a big part of being a 10. "I've been working a lot on my kicking and Jon Callard comes down quite a bit and helps me. It's just a matter of getting my technique right and last week I was very happy with my kicking game. I'm just trying to get consistency - that's a big thing about kicking.

"They weren't terribly difficult kicks in Bourgoin, but if you want consistency then you have to kick what's in front of you - and those kicks are high-pressure because people expect you to get them.

"I wasn't really a prolific goal-kicker when I was a kid. When I played for the England age-group sides I was kicking for goal, but I wouldn't say I was the best at that - I'd rather win a game by scoring tries if I could.

"But I know that if you want to make a good living from this game, you have to have a good kicking game as a 10 - that's for goal and for territory."

“  
We're playing in the biggest competitions in Europe - the Guinness Premiership and the Heineken Cup - so if you don't have that kind of maturity and a kicking game, like Stephen Jones and Ronan O'Gara have, then you won't be around for long...  
”





# MATCH ACTION

CS Bourgoin  
Gloucester Rugby

7  
31



## Time line

5 mins	Allen TRY, Lamb CON	0-7
21 mins	Lamb PEN	0-10
33 mins	Simpson-Daniel TRY, Lamb CON	0-17
47 mins	Lamb TRY, Lamb CON	0-24
57 mins	Frier TRY, Boyet CON	7-24
80 mins	Titterrell TRY, Lamb CON	7-31

## Gloucester Line-up

15	Olly Morgan	
14	Iain Balshaw	
13	Mike Tindall	
12	Anthony Allen	(1t)
11	James Simpson-Daniel	(1t)
10	Ryan Lamb	(1t, 4c, 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	Gareth Delve	
REPS		
16	Andy Titterrell	(1t) (Azam)
17	Christian Califano	
18	Will James	
19	Luke Narraway	(Strokosch)
20	Gareth Cooper	(Balshaw)
21	Chris Paterson	(Tindall, Balshaw)
22	Lloyd	(Morgan)

## Five star win

Friday, December 7  
Stade Pierre Rajon, Referee: Alain Roland (IRE).

▶ ANDY TITTERRELL'S last-minute try secured Gloucester's second successive away bonus point victory in the Heineken Cup last Friday.

In one of their most controlled and composed performances of the season, Gloucester enhanced their qualification chances with a thoroughly convincing victory that was based on their ability to take their chances that reduced Bourgoin to an error-strewn mess.

Thanks to the excellence of half-back partners Rory Lawson and Ryan Lamb,

some heavy duty scrummaging from Carlos Nieto and Nick Wood and the sheer physicality of Mike Tindall, Peter Buxton and the rest, Gloucester's dominance never wavered.

They were off and running as early as the fifth minute when Anthony Allen slipped the attentions of his marker to twist free and dive over. There was more to come from Gloucester. A couple of bursts from Akapusi Qera and some neat kicking kept Gloucester in control and when Lamb jinked his way behind Benjamin Boyet, he somehow delivered





a brilliant over-head pass for James Simpson-Daniel to score.

Gloucester were 17-0 ahead and if Simpson-Daniel had been able to gather another little kick from Lamb, Gloucester would have been three tries to the good by the break. However, it took them only seven minutes to score again – this time Lamb read Boyet's pass to perfection to pick off his long, hanging ball and race to the line.

A raft of injuries disrupted Gloucester's momentum and Bourgoin ramped up the pressure to earn a try from close

range through Julien Frier and although they kept the pressure on, Gloucester's defence held out – they dominated the collisions and knocked the hosts back from a series of short-range rucks.

With time running down and a hail storm engulfing the ground, it looked as though Gloucester may have to forgo their bonus point. However, Lamb had different ideas and when he attacked to the left of the sticks, fired a lovely pass onto Luke Narraway, running a tremendous line from deep for Titterrell to bundle over and seal the bonus point.



## Man of the Match

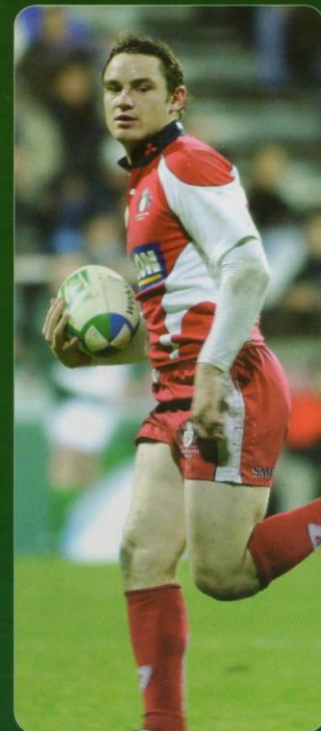


Stand-off Ryan Lamb produced a sublime and mature performance to guide Gloucester home.

## Coach's Comment



"I thought our first-half work was outstanding and as good as we have played for a long time. To come here and perform like that is very satisfying," head coach Dean Ryan





# PETER ARNOLD

Peter Arnold is off the make the brandy butter but he still has time to exalt the victory in Bourgoin, pay tribute to Andy Hazell's excellence and casts an eye forward until 2008.

## ROUND TWO

I MUST admit that I felt a bit worried about last week's trip to Bourgoin. Playing a top French team is never going to be an easy assignment, and the difficulties are compounded when you have to take them on in their own bailiwick. Memories of last season's traumatic experiences against Agen kept surfacing, and the weather forecast wasn't great either. Between you and me, I would have been satisfied, if not exactly happy, with a losing bonus point.

In the event about the only thing I was right about was the weather. Playing in a hailstorm may be appropriate for the start of the White Christmas season, but it doesn't do anything for the standard of rugby or for the health and wellbeing of either players or spectators.

As all the world now knows, we got

our bonus point all right, but it was a four try one, which, I suspect, exceeded almost everyone's expectations. For my money, the nice thing about the win was that all four tries were down to the playmakers, even Andy Titterrell's one, although I wouldn't expect him to agree with me. You'll find that most front-row forwards' tries come as a result of a 40-yard run, two sidesteps and a dummy. If you listen to their accounts, that is.

Bourgoin must have been shaken rigid by the experience and will be out to put the record straight. Just because we won away doesn't automatically mean we'll do the business again here at home. Remember last season? Although we lost at Agen, we didn't do too badly. Here at Kingsholm we got absolutely hammered.

If only we can get away without any

more blasted injuries. We may have strength in depth these days, but six (if you count Iain Balshaw's cut leg) is a bit much, even in the Heineken Cup.

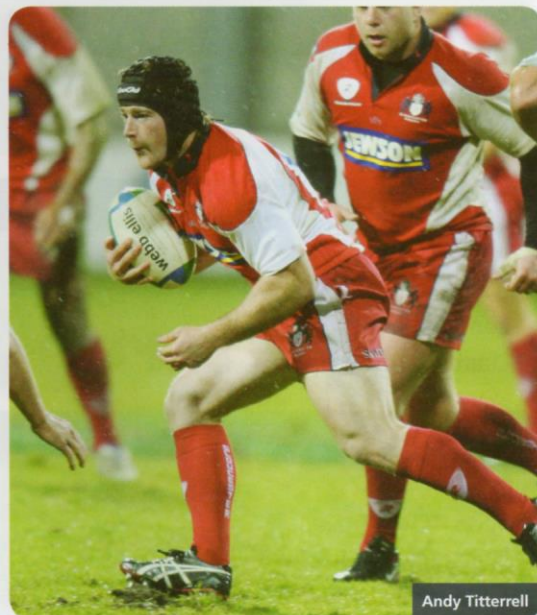
## SIMPLY THE BEST

WE'RE all sorry to see that Andy Hazell has been rendered hors de combat so soon after his recovery from an earlier injury. Back-to-back damage of this sort seems to be fairly common: no sooner does someone return to fitness than he goes down with another misfortune. I don't pretend to know why this should be so, but there is a theory that a returning player unconsciously tends to favour his recently damaged part, and therefore throws more stress on other bits of his anatomy.

Reports don't seem to indicate that Haze's latest setback is all that serious, which given the storming performances he put in after his first injury, is very good news for all concerned.



Andy Hazell



Andy Titterrell



End of the game v Bourgoin

Actually, my own theory is that Andy was so gobsmacked by getting some well-deserved recognition at last, that his knee blew up.

In case you hadn't heard, Andy Hazell was voted BBC West's Rugby Player of the year, a fairly modest award as these things go, but it does show that some people recognise his enormous abilities and are prepared to put their votes where their mouths are. I hope Brian Ashton was watching.

There must have been quite keen competition for the accolade, not least from our own Marco Bortolami, who did not just have a storming season for us last time round, but showed his captaincy skills as well. Don't forget, he did captain his country in the World Cup, so must have been in with a shout.

Of course, Marco is slightly damaged at the time of writing, too, and we hope to see him back soon. Dean Ryan was quite right when he intimated that losing two players of the calibre of Andy and Marco on the eve of a European Cup match in

France would have had us weeping into our beer all the way to Bourgoin, but our strength in depth these days is such as to temper those fears a little.

Nevertheless, any side has to miss those two. Hope they're both back soon.

### CONDOLENCES

WE WERE sorry to hear that Lesley Vainikolo had to go back to New Zealand on account of a family bereavement.

He might be a newcomer to the Kingsholm scene, and indeed to Rugby Union in general, but he's one of us now, and as such can rely on the sympathy and support of every last one of us.

### 'TIS THE SEASON...

AS YOU very well know, this is our last home game before we disperse to commit Christmas. In fact, it will be very nearly 2008 before this congregation will be gathered here again in the search for mutual truth and purpose.

Well, it's been quite a sleigh ride since

last Yuletide, hasn't it? We've seen some great rugby, and some which, frankly, wasn't that good. We've greeted some excellent new players, and bade farewell to one or two who we would rather have kept. We've endured the odd thrashing, but have seen some notable wins over opposition which the pundits would have you believe we didn't have a dog's chance of beating.

I've no reason to believe that the future will be much different, although the omens are good. But then, we wouldn't have it any different would we?

Actually, I'm feeling pretty smug at the moment because I've virtually finished my Christmas shopping with almost two weeks to go. Courtesy, I must admit, of my trusty laptop and the Internet.

I hope the run-up to Christmas is as trouble-free as mine seems to be, and that you have a thoroughly enjoyable Festive Season.

The traditional greeting is in order: Merry Christmas to both my readers.

# MATCH OF THE DAYS

With victories over Llanelli and Cardiff, Gloucester travelled to Watford for their first ever Heineken Cup semi-final against Leicester – only for a current member of Dean Ryan's squad to break their hearts, as Dave King recalls.



Andy Hazell



Tim Stimpson, Leon Lloyd and Martin Corry jump with Ian Jones

▶ GLOUCESTER may have set themselves up for safe passage into the knockout stages of this season's Heineken Cup but it was not too long ago that the Kingsholm club were two victories away from being crowned champions of Europe.

But before a potential final against Stade Francais in Paris, Gloucester had to negotiate those super heavy weights Leicester Tigers in the semi-final at Vicarage Road, the home of Watford Football Club on Saturday, 21st April 2001.

It had been a rollicking start in Europe for Gloucester. They had defeated Llanelli at Stradey Park on their Heineken Cup debut 27-20, Roma were demolished in a 52-12 win at Kingsholm with Tom Beim scoring a tournament record of five tries.

The 1999 Heineken Cup finalists Colomiers were the only club to lower Gloucester's colours in that initial season when they won 30-19 at home following a 19-19 draw at Kingsholm. Gloucester then squeezed past Llanelli for a second time, this one at Castle Grim when Elton Moncrieff's drop-goal was deflected over the crossbar by Llanelli flanker Dafydd Jones to seal a 28-27 victory.

Roma fared better at home by restricting Gloucester to a 38-29 victory. However, this could not prevent Philippe Saint-Andre's side topping the group and earning home advantage in the quarter-finals against inaugural 1996 finalists Cardiff.

Against the back-drop of a fervent Kingsholm and led brilliantly by Kingsley Jones and Jason Little, Gloucester won their quarter-final 21-15 – seven penalties from Simon Mannix (6) and Byron Hayward got the better of Cardiff's two tries as their discipline wavered. The Welsh champions scored the only two tries of a close match with Simon Mannix (6) and Byron Hayward punishing the Welsh clubs indiscipline with penalty goals.

The semi-final draw made in Dublin ensured Leicester and Gloucester were to meet for the 180th time in a rivalry stretching back to 1891. As many as 7,000 fans were set to converge on the Herefordshire town but the pre-match preparation was hindered by rumours, discontent and speculation.

Gloucester were badly hit with injuries with Trevor Woodman, so destructive against Cardiff, replaced by Andy Deacon and a half-fit Junior Paramore played at number eight. Chris Catling failed to recover from injury

which meant Byron Hayward started at full-back. Neither Robert Todd or Joe Ewens were able to take a vacant right wing position and with Joel Dume from France officiating the odds were stacked.

A poor Premiership campaign was cast aside as 30 coach loads of fans travelled east in hope. A lot of supporters had journeyed from Llanelli to Roma, Kingsholm to Colomiers and now to the outpost of Watford.

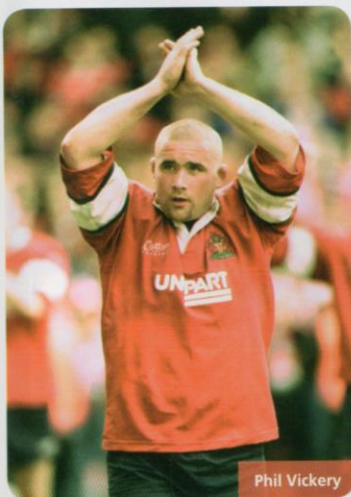
Hopes were high despite a fourth-choice wing – Rory Greenslade-Jones drafted in at the last minute. Could Gloucester reach the final against Stade to be staged in Paris at the Parc des Princes on 19 May?

The player who separated the teams finds himself at Gloucester these days. Leon Lloyd cut a perfect angle to take Tim Stimpson's pass in the 22nd minute after the full-back had run back James Simpson-Daniel's clearance kick.

The score was a travesty of justice, what should have been a scrum to Gloucester from a Graham Rowntree knock-on-referee Dume had initially signalled advantage – ended with Lloyd scoring behind the posts.



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Phil Vickery

Sadly, it was our only real defensive mistake during the game. It was left to Mannix to keep Gloucester afloat with five penalties. Stimpson kept the Tigers ahead with four penalties and a conversion. Without Catling and Beim our attacking edge was blunted, while Paramore and Martin Johnson were sinbinned for a fracas. There was despair in the dying minutes when Ian Jones pinched a wayward Cockerill line-out close to the Leicester line but Martin Corry robbed Jake Boer and all was lost.

Kingsley Jones recalled: 'The people who had written us off were fools. There were some world class players in the team and nobody extended to let themselves down.'

Phil Vickery, the shaven-headed Raging Bull

added: "When things go wrong and you lose games there is a bucketful of rubbish and also a bucketful of good and everyone looks in the bucketful of rubbish. It was important we made Leicester beat us and not give them the game."

An under-fire Saint-Andre recalled Rowntree's knock-on that referee Dume had initially signalled advantage to Gloucester before Lloyd scored behind the posts. "Of course it was a knock-on, sure, it was a mistake to kick the ball because Leicester counter-attacked and scored but normally it would have been a scrum as it was our advantage."

It was a season where Saint-Andre had a well chronicled list of problems. An adventure was over and it was the Tigers who growled and prowled onward. Stade Francais awaited the victors.

On reflection a unity of purpose had been missing all season. The idiosyncratic Saint-Andre had not seen eye to eye with some of his senior players and Gloucester's troubles were well documented. It was time for change, but a hard fought European campaign still lives long in the memory.

# MATCH OF THE DAYS

## THE TEAMS

### LEICESTER:

T.STIMPSON  
G.MURPHY  
L.LLOYD  
P.HOWARD  
T.STIMPSON  
A.GOODER  
A.HEALEY  
G.ROWNTREE  
D.WEST  
D.GARFORTH  
M.JOHNSON (CAPTAIN)  
B.KAY  
W.JOHNSON  
N.BACK  
M.CORRY

### REPLACEMENTS:

R.COCKERILL  
P.GUSTARD  
J.HAMILTON  
G.GELDERBLOOM  
R.NEBBETT  
P.FRESHWATER

### GLOUCESTER:

B.HAYWARD  
R.GREENSLADE-JONES  
T.FANOLUA  
J.LITTLE  
J.SIMPSON-DANIEL  
S.MANNIX  
A.GOMARSALL  
P.VICKERY (CAPTAIN)  
O.AZAM  
A.DEACON  
R.FIDLER  
I.JONES  
J.BOER  
K.JONES  
J.PARAMORE

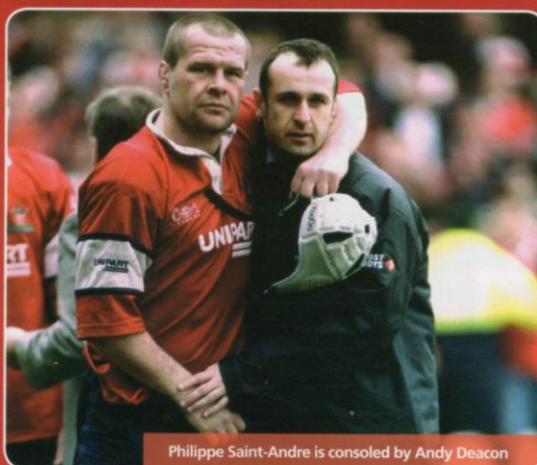
### REPLACEMENTS:

C.YATES  
C.FORTEY  
M.CORNWELL  
A.HAZELL  
S.OJOMOH  
E.MONCRIEFF  
N.COX

ATTENDANCE: 14,010, REFEREE: J.DUME (FRANCE)



Rob Fidler



Philippe Saint-Andre is consoled by Andy Deacon

## FAN ZONE WITH BOB FENTON

Bob Fenton has put down his paint brush, cut the lawn, tiled the bathroom and set up the Christmas tree all in time to make it to Kingsholm this afternoon for another dose of European rugby.

▶ AM I GLAD to be back to thinking about rugby (yes I do stop for a while). Her indoors has welded a paintbrush into my hand with a command to start renovating the house... Err why – it's new... we only moved in 14 years ago and I quite like magnolia with flaky bits.

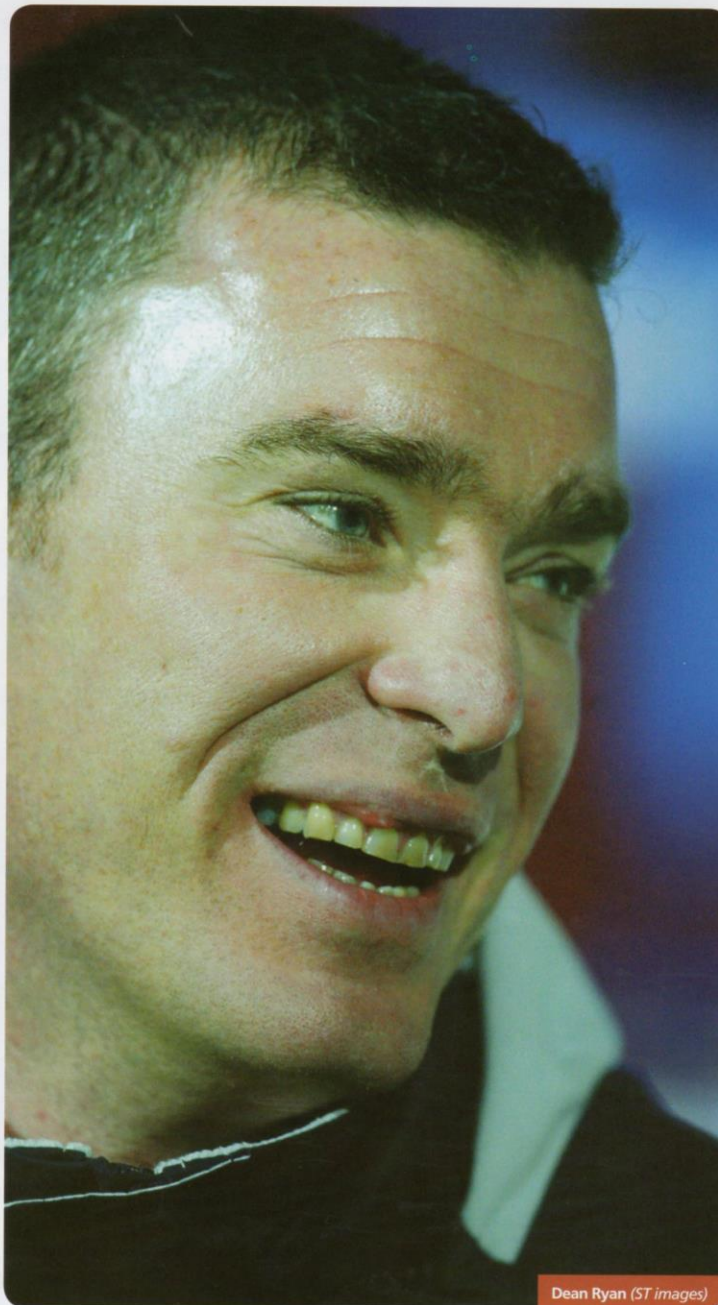
But she who must be obeyed has gone out for a while, so I can hide in the corner and do more pleasurable things for a while – like write this stuff.

So another great result in France last weekend, hopefully the travellers who made it over will have dried out by now, both inside and out. The weather conditions in the second half looked terrible, you half expected to see a long line of animals filing in two-by-two into a big boat somewhere in the background.

It was another good result though, and to grab the bonus point try with only a few seconds left on the watch was the icing on the cake though at some cost. We seemed to be getting through our backs at a rapid rate of knots as they went down one after the other.

The trip home must have resembled something from M\*A\*S\*H (for younger readers, try Casualty) with helicopters bringing in the wounded to an over-stretched and overstressed Kingsholm treatment room. Hopefully none were too badly hurt and they will all be back soon.

Another bonus point today would be good, with Bourgoin all but out of the competition you would think they have nothing much to play for. Hopefully they will do as many French sides do, decide it's not going to be their day and

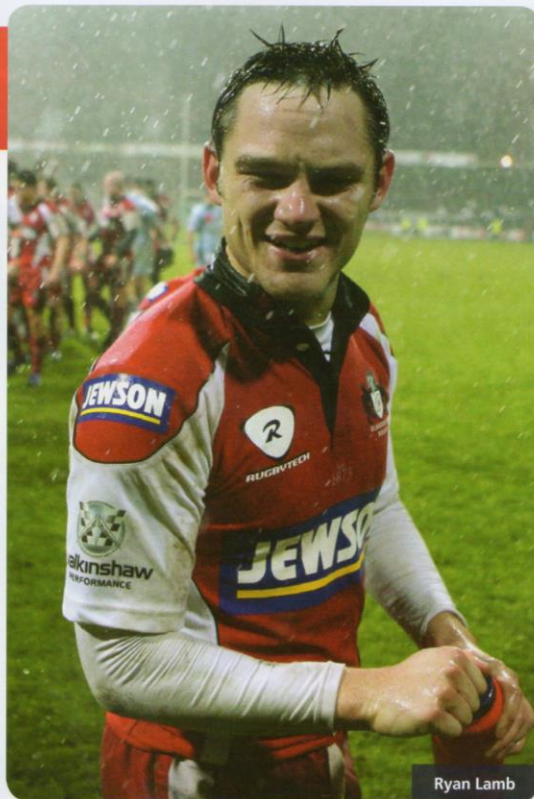


Dean Ryan (ST images)





Anthony Allen



Ryan Lamb



**It was another good result though, and to grab the bonus point try with only a few seconds left on the watch was the icing on the cake though at some cost. We seemed to be getting through our backs at a rapid rate of knots as they went down one after the other.**



go through the motions allowing us to rattle in a hatful of points.

And if we can repeat the dose against Ulster we should be in pretty good shape to qualify out of the group stages without the need to consult calculators, sextants, logarithmic tables to work about a million different permutations.

Of course what would make things even simpler would be Ulster to pull off what would be considered a shock result over the Ospreys. That would leave us sitting pretty and take the pressure off our trip to the Liberty Stadium in January. Yes, yes, stop counting chickens...

While I am already thinking about the next stages Dean is probably reverting

to quote number one, namely "We're focusing on one game at a time..." Quite right too. After the almost shock against Quins a few weeks ago it's probably better that they focus on the job in hand and leave the day dreaming to us.

On matters closer to home, it's interesting to see that Rugby Times - that well known bringer of one hundred percent accurate news - has Dean spending a few days 'Down South' on something of a scouting trip.

The downside is that the stories about players being moved on out of Kingsholm also surface as people try to work out the permutations. I suppose there is no real harm in it, except for the players who see

they are being talked about in that way. I'd hate it if people were talking about me being shipped on out of my job - I guess some people just get a bit carried away with the fantasy league stuff and let the fantasy become some sort of reality.

But isn't it a bit early to be running this kind of rumour - normally we don't see this sort of stuff until much later in the season - well apart from the constant stories from 'sources' that t'other Ryan (Lamb) is going to sign for Leicester. He's been going to move to Welford Road for ages now. I just don't understand why people persist with these stories. It can't do much for a player to constantly read stuff like that. Ju st get behind him now and enjoy what he does on the park.

So this being the last match here before Christmas, what are you all hoping for from Santa? As ever mine is a simple request - five points today, four tries against Bristol on 29th December and a priceless away win at Bath in the New Year - is that too much to ask?

Didn't think so... Have a great Christmas everyone.

# MATCH ACTION



Gloucester Rugby  
Harlequins

27  
25



## Time Line

2 mins	
Malone PEN	0-3
6 mins	
Keogh TRY	0-8
15 mins	
Monye TRY	0-13
19 mins	
Vainikolo TRY, Paterson CON	7-13
27 mins	
Malone TRY, CON	7-20
29 mins	
Paterson PEN	10-20
34 mins	
Keogh TRY	10-25
36 mins	
Paterson PEN	13-25
44 mins	
Tindall TRY, Paterson CON	20-25
57 mins	
Vainikolo TRY, Paterson CON	27-25



## Volcano erupts

Saturday, November 24

Referee: Sean Davey, Attendance: 13,506

LESLEY VAINIKOLO scored twice to rescue the points after Harlequins had raced into a massive half-time lead.

The Tongan winger crossed once in the first-half and then stepped his way brilliantly to the line in the second to round off a remarkable Gloucester comeback.

Mike Tindall scored the other try as Dean Ryan's side, showing plenty of changes, overturned Quins' brilliant start.

Simon Keogh scored their first try following a pass from Andy Gomarsall and a brilliant break by David Strettle. When Strettle launched a sizzling attack again minutes later, Gloucester's defence was undone and Chris Malone nudged a lovely kick behind James Simpson-Daniel for Ugo Monye to score.

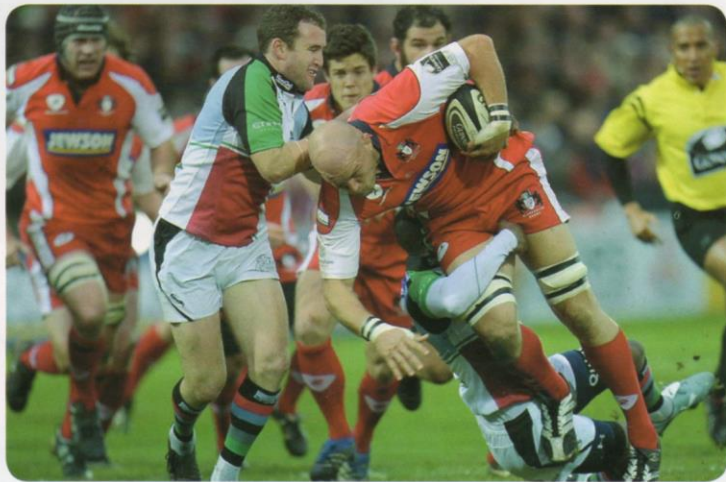
It took Gloucester until the end of the first quarter to threaten and when they did, Andy Hazell, Simpson-Daniel and Allen were all

involved before Vainikolo finished off for his first try at Kingsholm.

However, when Hazell was sinbinned, Malone waltzed in for a try to make it 20-7 and then added a bonus point after only 32 minutes when Nick Easter fed in Keogh for his second try.

Although things looked bleak, Gloucester started the second half with much more intensity and one thunderous driving maul went 30 metres. It was not long before Olly Morgan and Patrice Collazo launched an attack, Chris Paterson found Tindall and the England man linked with Allen before taking the return pass to score.

When Quins lost Ceri Jones and Gomarsall to the sinbin, Gloucester's pressure grew and from a series of rucks, Gareth Delve cut back and off-loaded for Vainikolo to step brilliant round the cover and under the sticks to complete a remarkable Gloucester comeback.



# MATCH ACTION



**Dragons**  
**Gloucester Rugby**

**11**  
**13**



## Decisive Delve

Friday, November 30

Rodney Parade, Attendance: 4,576

**▶** GARETH DELVE scored Gloucester's only try in the final throws of match dominated by the weather as Dean Ryan's side ended their EDF Energy Cup campaign with a victory.

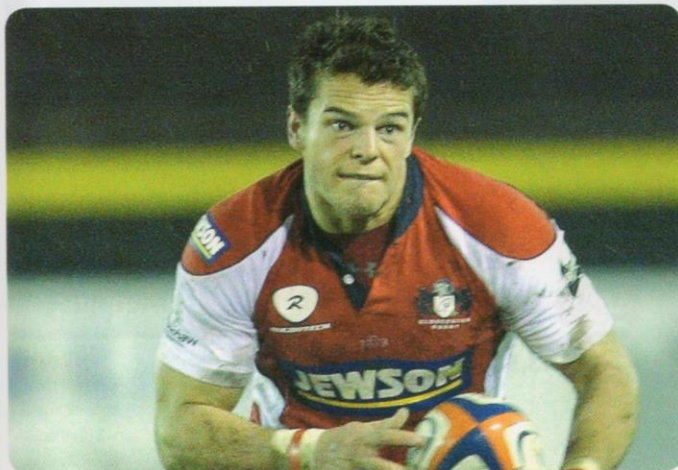
The number eight was in the van guard of a move that pushed the Dragons eight backwards before he touched down to complete a Gloucester comeback that looked to have slid away in the horrendous conditions.

Neither side could qualify for the knockout stages of the competition but the victory will be one Gloucester can really build on – coming as it did away from home and with a side containing plenty of changes. Both teams had their chances – Ceri Sweeney was at the centre of most things for the Dragons, while Leon Lloyd looked to have a perfectly good try ruled out in the first-half when he chased through a Willie Walker chip. The conditions dominated and although the line-out wobbled, they had a really good go in the scrum and Delve carried plenty of ball with power and

attacking edge. The game was locked at 3-3 when the Dragons scored the opening try. Sweeney kicked through and Gloucester were forced to concede a five metre scrum after Mike Prendergast kicked the ball dead. As the pressure came on, prop Adam Black was driven over for the score to make it 8-3. Walker made it 8-8 at the start of the second half but when Sweeney landed a 62nd minute penalty to the take the hosts 11-6 ahead, it looked a long way back for Gloucester given the conditions.

However, there was always the prospect they might just engineer one clear cut opportunity. When Olly Morgan launched a daring count-attack that swung right, James Bailey got outside his man and kicked in behind Newport's defence. Will James came through to charge down Sweeney's kick and from the scrum, Delve levelled the scores with the try.

It was left to Chris Paterson to kick the last minute conversion and seal a tough, tense victory for Gloucester.



[www.gloucester rugby.co.uk](http://www.gloucester rugby.co.uk)

## Time Line

<b>4 mins</b>	
Walker PEN	0-3
<b>17 mins</b>	
Sweeney PEN	3-3
<b>40 mins</b>	
Black TRY	8-3
<b>46 mins</b>	
Walker PEN	8-6
<b>62 mins</b>	
Sweeney PEN	11-6
<b>79 mins</b>	
Delve TRY, Paterson CON	11-13

