



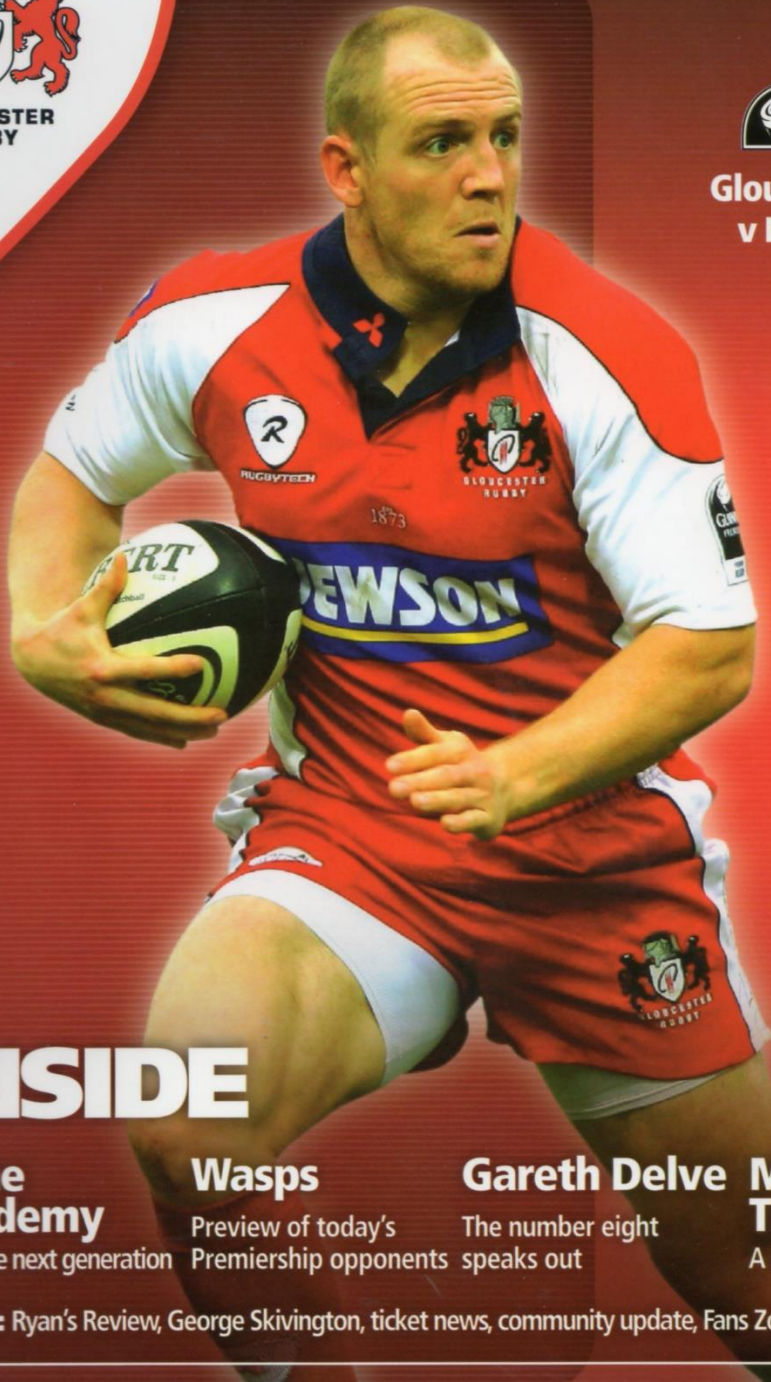
The Official Programme
of Gloucester Rugby

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Gloucester Rugby v London Wasps

26.01.08 15.00



INSIDE

Fame Academy

meet the next generation

Wasps

Preview of today's
Premiership opponents

Gareth Delve

The number eight
speaks out

Match Of The Days

A Kingsholm thriller

PLUS: Ryan's Review, George Skivington, ticket news, community update, Fans Zone and Peter Arnold

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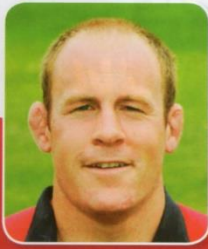
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CAPTAIN'S CORNER

Peter Buxton looks back at the victory over Ulster and ahead to this afternoon's clash with Wasps.

▶ HIGH profile games are coming thick and fast. We are mixing massive Heineken Cup games with equally significant Guinness Premiership matches and today's meeting with Wasps is no exception.

In fact, it is arguable that this is our



biggest game of the season so far. Wasps are the reigning European Champions, have a remarkable intensity about their rugby and have a good record here at Kingsholm. There is no escaping that this is an acid test in the Premiership.

We are defending a very proud home record that now stretches back 21 matches, are into the knockout stages of the Heineken Cup and lead the Premiership – we are doing some pretty good things ourselves at the moment and that must continue.

Although we didn't produce the level of performance we were aiming for against Ulster, we scored five tries in a pivotal European Cup match and that in itself is an achievement. We have already

played Wasps this season and although we lost played some excellent rugby for an hour of the contest at High Wycombe in the EDF Energy Cup.

If we can reproduce those good things today then I think we stand an excellent chance against a very good all-round side that mixes physicality, a blitz defence and a cutting edge very well.

Without question this is one of our biggest games of the season – not just now but any season – because both clubs are at the forefront of the game in England and have a tremendous rivalry.

We are progressing well but are all aware of the significance of today's game. I know I seem to say this every time I write this column but we really do need your support this afternoon. On Sunday the atmosphere seemed a bit flat but today we need a full-on Kingsholm experience in what is a huge occasion for both teams.





RYAN'S REVIEW

Gloucester's Head Coach believes the five-try victory over Ulster was worth more credit than his team got and looks ahead to today's visit of Wasps.



Looking back, how would you review the Ulster game?

DR: "MY initial reaction was one of disappointment at our performance – we scored five tries, some of which were excellent, but ended up hanging on. It was not the level of performance we were looking for.

We didn't play very well and you can't hide from that. We looked rusty and maybe there were more tense moments than there should otherwise have been. But we have still finished top of a tough pool in some style and that is the point we need to remember.

"We achieved bonus points in four of our six games – two coming away from home – and that is a considerable achievement given the quality of the opposition we faced. I think it would be wrong for us to get too over-heated about the defeats at Bath and the Ospreys. In both those games we scored the same number of tries and I think in the long-term we will learn a great deal about ourselves and how we operate in those conditions.



It means we have Munster



Munster v Wasps last week

in the quarter-final – could there have been a bigger draw?

DR: "FROM our point of view, probably not. There is obviously recent history between the two clubs and the supporters and it will be an incredible occasion. Munster already have a legacy in Europe as previous winners, a tradition of operating in the knockout stages – this is their tenth successive time in the knockout stages – and that says everything you need to know about their consistency, ability to emerge from very tough pools and then go on even further.

"They have a remarkable knack of staying in games, they do the basics

incredibly well and have world class kicker. They are obviously a genuine threat but we have done what we set out to do and got a home draw. History suggests that is significant and we are just delighted to test ourselves against a team of their quality in this competition."

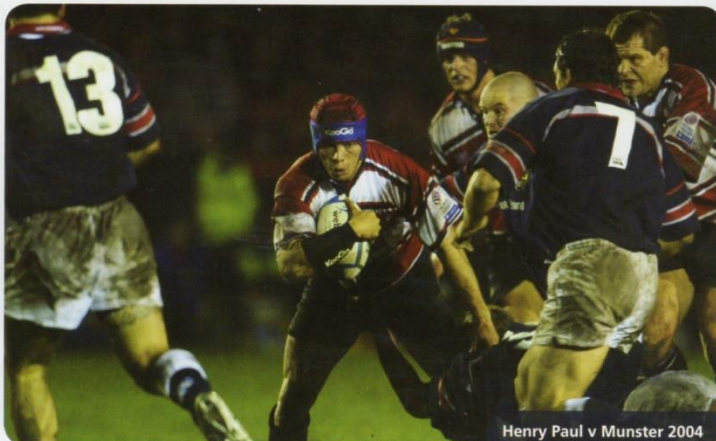


On Sunday we lost Marco Bortolami to injury – it has been a bruising few weeks?

DR: "INJURIES are part and parcel of a season of this length but losing Marco is an obvious blow to us because we are also without Alex Brown for a number of weeks. The news with Marco was



Munster already have a legacy in Europe as previous winners, a tradition of operating in the knockout stages – this is their tenth successive time in the knockout stages – and that says everything you need to know about their consistency, ability to emerge from very tough pools and then go on even further.



Henry Paul v Munster 2004



Action v Ulster

better than we were expecting because he does not need an operation and he can begin his recovery almost straight away. We have a squad to cope with these issues and we just have to get on with it. The news on the other injured players is also encouraging – Andy Hazell is very close to a return from his knee injury and that will greatly add to our strength in depth.

Talking of players, how has Lesley Vainikolo adapted to being back with the squad?

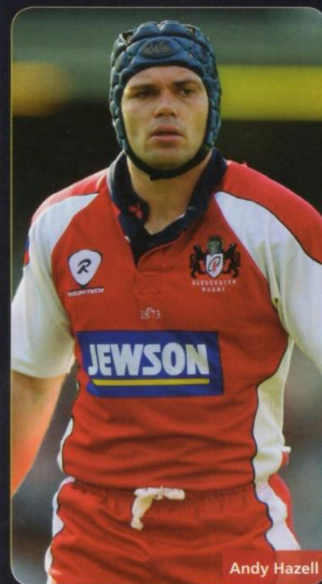
DR: "WE feel it is important that Lesley concentrates on his rugby because he has been through an incredibly traumatic couple of months. We are here to offer that support network for him and I think the reaction he got last Sunday shows just how much people respect him. He is learning

all the time and we are here to aid that development. It is important we keep him sufficiently away from the limelight so he can concentrate on his development.

Today we play wasps in the Guinness Premiership – big games are coming thick and fast?

DR: "YES they are and in some ways this is the biggest of the season so far. Wasps are the reigning Heineken Cup champions and have a remarkable group of players who know how to win these big games and have made a habit of it in recent years. You only have to look down their squad list to appreciate how good they are. Without doubt this is always one of the biggest games of the season at Kingsholm and it is a challenge both teams will relish. Occasions don't come much bigger than this."

Andy Hazell is very close to a return from his knee injury and that will greatly add to our strength in depth.



Andy Hazell



Marco Bortolami

TODAY'S TEAMS

Saturday 26th January 2008 15.00

Gloucester Rugby
v London Wasps



Gloucester
RUGBY



18



London
WASPS

17

	Iain BALSHAW	15	Full Back	15	Josh LEWSEY	
	James BAILEY	14	Right Wing	14	David DOHERTY	
	James SIMPSON-DANIEL	13	Centre	13	Fraser WATERS	
	Mike TINDALL	12	Centre	12	Rob HOADLEY	
	Lesley VAINIKOLO	11	Left Wing	11	Dominic WALDOUCK	
	Ryan LAMB	10	Fly Half	10	Danny CIPRIANI	
	Rory LAWSON	9	Scrum Half	9	Eoin REDDAN	
	Nick WOOD	1	Prop	1	Tim PAYNE	
	Olivier AZAM	2	Hooker	2	Joe WARD	
	Carlos NIETO	3	Prop	3	Phil VICKERY	
	Peter BUXTON ©	4	Lock	4	Tom PALMER	
	Will JAMES	5	Lock	5	George SKIVINGTON	
	Luke NARRAWAY	6	Flanker	6	James HASKELL	
	Andy HAZELL	7	Flanker	7	Tom REES	
	Gareth DELVE	8	No 8	8	Lawrence DALLAGLIO ©	

Replacements

	Jeremy PAUL	16		16	Rob WEBBER	
	Patrice COLLAZO	17		17	Nick ADAMS	
	Dan TUOHY	18		18	John HART	
	Alasdair STROKOSCH	19		19	Dan LEO	
	Gareth COOPER	20		20	Mark McMILLAN	
	Willie WALKER	21		21	Dave WALDER	
	Mark FOSTER	22		22	Mark VAN GISBERGEN	



HEAD COACH
Dean RYAN



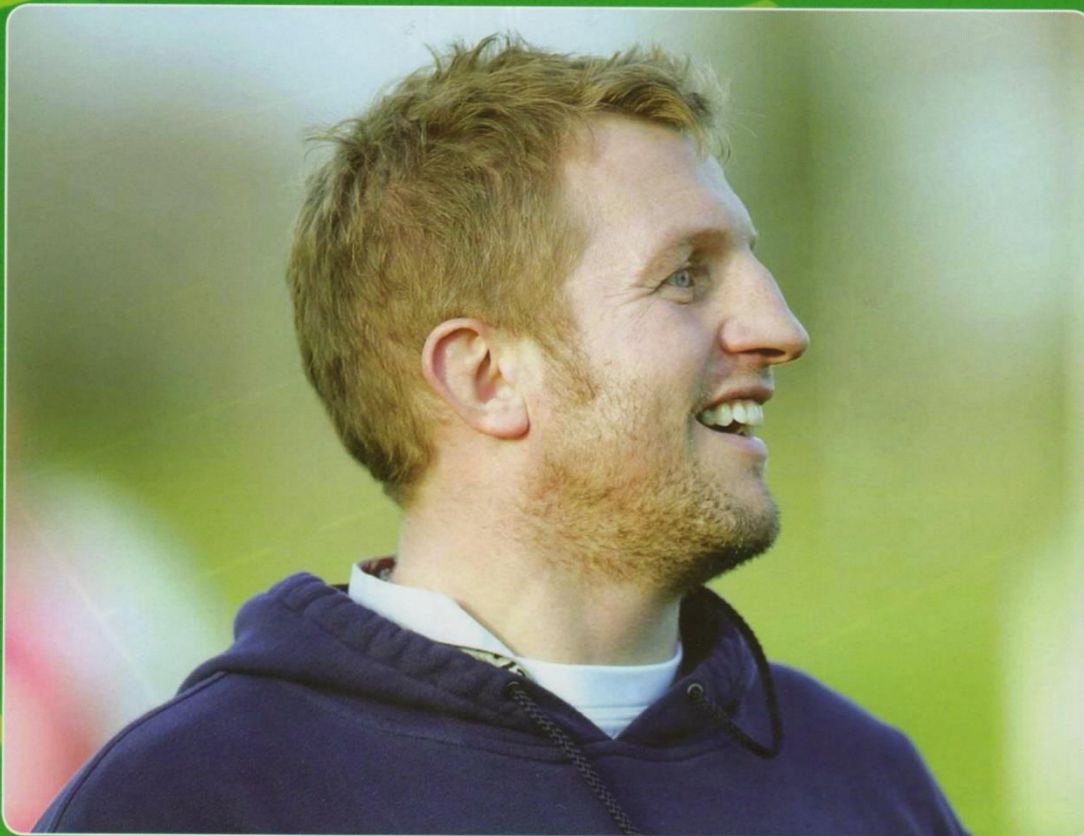
HEAD COACH
Ian MCGEEGHAN



SPOTLIGHT

with Denis Betts

by Ian Randall



WHAT'S THE MOTTO YOU LIVE BY?

I haven't really got a motto that I live by but generally it's just be the best you can be. Work hard, be good and just enjoy yourself.

WHAT'S YOUR MOST PRIZED POSSESSION?

Pretty easy question - my family. I've got five daughters and a beautiful wife. Outside that I've not got much else as you can probably guess.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BREAKFAST CEREAL?

I like just something simple really like Shredded Wheat. In our house there are plenty



of Cheerios, Wheatabix and Rice Krispies but it would normally be Shredded Wheat for me as it normally stays in the cupboard because the girls don't like it.

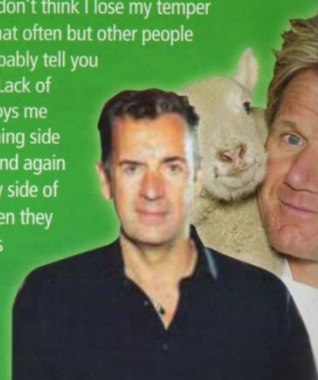
WHICH COMPANY WOULD BE YOUR IDEAL SPONSOR?

Probably somebody like Chrysler so I could get a big Voyager to carry all my kids around with me.



WHAT MADE YOU LAST LOSE YOUR TEMPER?

I don't think I lose my temper that often but other people would probably tell you different. Lack of effort annoys me on a coaching side of things and again on a family side of things, when they don't do as they are told. I sound like a bit of a





dictator really but people not doing as they are told makes me lose my temper.

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

I've actually got a very good singing voice, I don't think they know that about me because it's hidden behind this actual voice that I've got. They think I've got this rough kind of voice but beneath it all I've got an angelic singing voice.

WHO'S YOUR FAVOURITE PERSON ON TV?

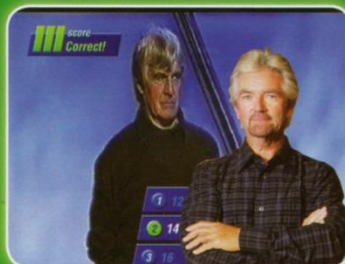
At the moment Gordon Ramsay or Duncan Bannatyne off Dragons Den. I seem to enjoy them at the moment. They are quite straight down the middle. It always amazes me when you've got someone like Gordon Ramsay who's a very successful man but nobody takes his advice, it's quite funny and I like the way he deals with that.



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

I'd like to say fifteen to one, I could answer some questions and be considered smart but it would probably be the one with Noel Edmonds, Deal

or No Deal because there are no questions involved it's just pure luck. One show to look smart and one just to get on and try and win some money.



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

My father-in-law is probably the most interesting person I've ever met. He's worked hard all his life, he's got plenty of stories - most of them probably made up, but he's a very interesting person.

IF YOU WENT TO UNIVERSITY WHICH DEGREE WOULD YOU DO?

Well I started a degree in Sports Management after I'd finished playing, but I soon got involved in the culture and after the first year soon realised I couldn't do it. But something like Sports Management, Sports Psychology - anything with Sport in it would probably do for me.

WHAT PART OF TRAINING DO YOU ENJOY THE MOST?

I enjoy all training. At the moment I'm riding a bike quite a lot. Dean got me into riding a bike about a year ago and I'm really enjoying that.

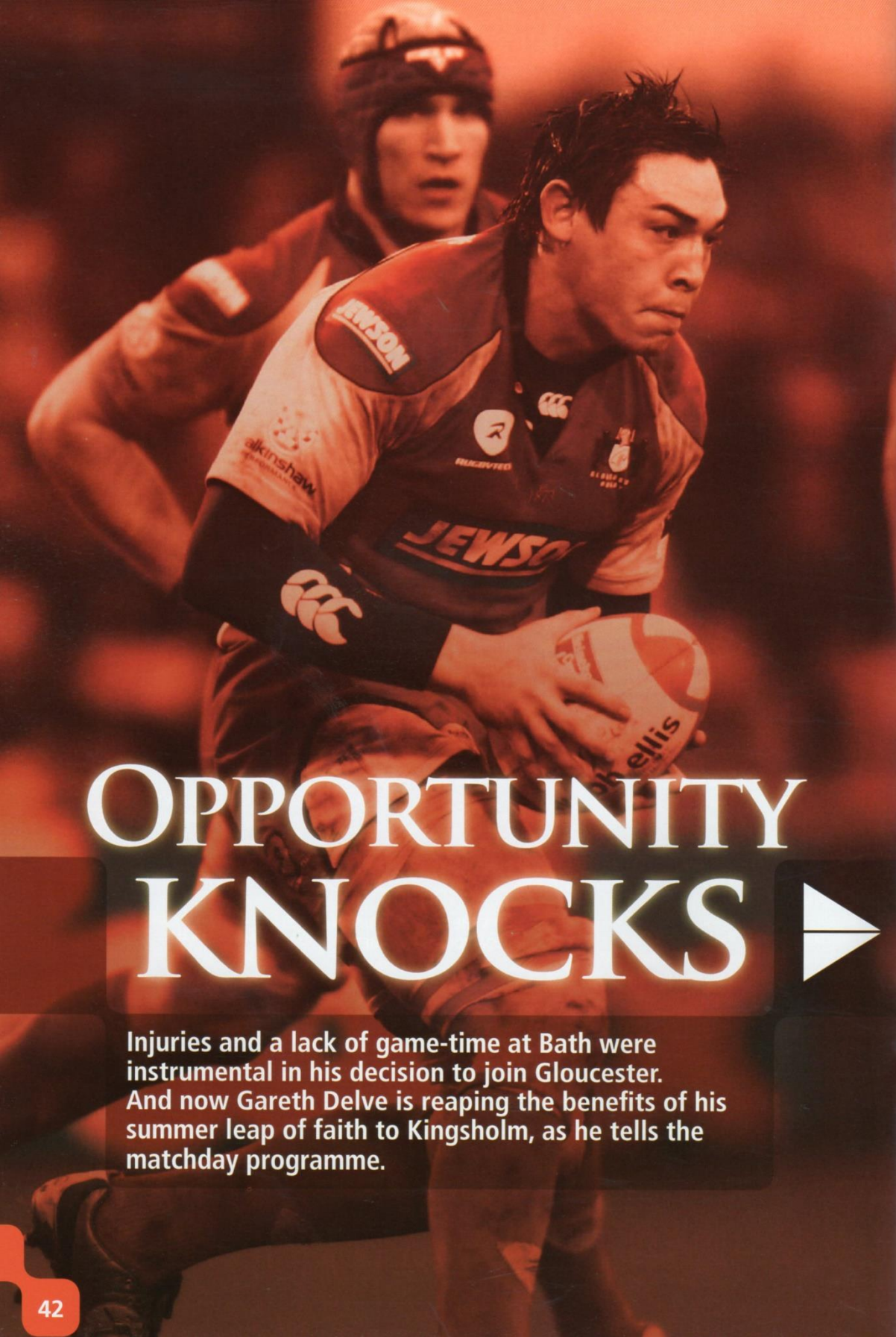
IF THERE'S A PRANK TO BE PLAYED WHO'S NORMALLY THE CULPRIT?

Probably Carl Hogg - he's quite funny. He looks quite dour and dull but he's actually very, very funny so he'd be the one making the practical jokes. It's just the way he walks, talks and the way he looks, he's just a very funny man without trying.



WHAT OTHER SPORTING EVENT WOULD YOU LOVE A TICKET FOR?

I know everyone else has talked about American Football which I find quite dull. But, I'm a bit of a soccer fan so I wouldn't mind going to an FA Cup final especially at the new Wembley - that would be very special. Also, when I lived over in New Zealand I spent quite a lot of time in Australia and went to a couple of AFL games, so one of their big grand final games where they have about 100,000 people would also be a very special occasion to go to.



OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Injuries and a lack of game-time at Bath were instrumental in his decision to join Gloucester. And now Gareth Delve is reaping the benefits of his summer leap of faith to Kingsholm, as he tells the matchday programme.



OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS



▶ OF ALL THE signings who migrated to Kingsholm in the summer, from the monstrous haircut and aggression of Lesley Vainikolo, the point-scoring brilliance of Chris Paterson, the dynamic hooking qualities of Andy Titterrell and Jeremy Paul and the game-breaking brilliance of Akapusi Qera, one man went about his business with more determination than most.

Gareth Delve had made a life-altering decision. He left local rivals Bath and dipped a toe into the boiling waters of Castle Grim as he underwent a recovery process to correct ruptured cruciate ligaments in his left knee.

To most it would seem at the very least risky. He could have returned to his native Wales but the easy option was not the option that captivated Delve – it was the thought of working in Dean Ryan's squad and testing himself alongside some of the best players in the Guinness Premiership.

"When I met Dean [Ryan] he knew more about my game and where he saw me fitting in with Gloucester's style of play than coaches I had been working with for a number of years," Delve said.

"He could see the potential in me and had faith and belief in my abilities and that in turn gave me a lot of confidence that moving to Gloucester was the right thing for me.

"He explained the plans he had and what he wanted to achieve with the club, the players he planned to bring in and it was

a massive selling point. It was a huge decision for me but at the same time the best I could have made."

Delve's qualities as an agile, physical ball-playing number eight were not in question but at Bath injuries as their rotation policy that meant Zac Feaunati started the majority of the big games were key to his decision. In the summer he spent hours gradually returning to full fitness – pounding out the miles with Luke Anthony, Gloucester's former physiotherapist.

His potential to compliment the game-breaking talents of James Forrester and Luke Narryway were obvious and he has now benefitted from a series of starts at number eight.

"I had to work hard when I got to the club and to be honest I came back pretty quickly from the injury," he said. "They can take nine months but I was back in seven, well ahead of schedule. "I am still working hard with Motsy [Mike Anthony] because I know there is a lot more to come from me in terms of speed and leg strength but my progress is good and I am pleased with the way it is going."

Delve made his debut against today's opponents Wasps in the EDF Energy Cup and has since made 10 appearances in all competitions – including five in a row where he scored tries against Newport and then Bourgoin in the Heineken Cup.

His forcefulness from the back of

the scrum, defensive qualities and ability to link play are crucial to the rest of Gloucester's season and he has already caught the eye of new Wales coach Warren Gatland. And he will only get better too – his contribution this afternoon may well be crucial to Gloucester's hopes against the current Heineken Cup champions.

"I had a good relationship with the supporters at Bath and the club supported me through bad times but I needed a new start and Gloucester was perfect for me," he said.

"We are putting together a great squad and I think we can achieve something special this season." That something special has been tested severely over the last few weeks following back-to-back defeats against Bath and the Ospreys and a far from convincing performance against Ulster last Sunday.

"I think the last couple of weeks have brought us back down to earth a little bit," Delve admitted. "Those two losses in a row were tough pills to swallow but we are still a very good team and have the ambition and desire to achieve something this season. "Last week we scored five tries against Ulster – a very good European team – so we mustn't get too down-hearted about that. There are a lot of guys who have been at the club for a long time and want to achieve something this season.

"Can we do it? I see no reason why not – we have a special group of players here."



I am still working hard with Motsy [Mike Anthony] because I know there is a lot more to come from me in terms of speed and leg strength but my progress is good and I am pleased with the way it is going.

MATCH ACTION

Gloucester Rugby
Ulster

29
21



Time line

18 mins	
Qera TRY, Paterson CON	7-0
20 mins	
Bowe TRY, Wallace CON	7-7
33 mins	
Strokosch TRY, Paterson CON	14-7
44 mins	
Trimble TRY, Wallace con	14-14
58 mins	
Qera TRY	19-14
71 mins	
Balshaw TRY	24-14
77 mins	
Bowe TRY, O'Connor CON	24-21
79 mins	
Narraway TRY	29-21

5 tries see Gloucester through

Sunday, January 20, Kingsholm

Attendance: 12,480, Referee: Romain Poite (Fra)

▶ GLOUCESTER scored five tries to earn a Heineken Cup quarter-final showdown against Munster and finally see off a brave Ulster effort at Kingsholm last Sunday.

Although still in the game until deep into the last quarter, Ulster were eventually undone by Gloucester's superior finishing power. There were excellent performances from Rory Lawson, Mike Tindall and Nick Wood to name only three but Gloucester's overall showing was patchy and Ulster punched well above their weight thanks the efforts of

Isaac Boss, Neil Best and Justin Harrison.

Gloucester took the lead when Tindall spun out of a midfield tackle brilliantly, made good ground and off-loaded to Akapusi Qera, who scored. However, Ulster hit back with a try of their own when Boss made a great break and his pass found Tommy Bowe who scored in the corner.

The home side dominated the scrummages and from a series of powerful drives Olivier Azam bundled forward, the impressive Alasdair

Gloucester Line-up

15	Balshaw	(1t)
14	Simpson-Daniel	
13	Tindall	
12	Allen	
11	Vainikolo	
10	Paterson	(2c)
9	Lawson	
1	Wood	
2	Azam	
3	Nieto	
4	Buxton	
5	Bortolami	
6	Strokosch	(1t)
7	Qera	(2t)
8	Delve	
REPS		
16	Walker	(Tindall)
17	Lamb	(Paterson)
18	Cooper	(Lawson)
19	Titterrell	(Azam)
20	James	(Bortolami)
21	Narraway	(Delve) (1t)
22		



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Strokosch powered into score.

However, immediately after the re-start Ulster scored again to level the scores at 14-14. Bowe gathered a long kick and re-gathered his own chip before combining with Best and Harrison and Andrew Trimble scored a very good try.

Gloucester did get back in front when both James Simpson-Daniel, a growing influence on the contest and Anthony Allen, carried well, Lesley Vainikolo was stopped just short of the line but Qera was sent over to the left.

When they played flat and fast, Gloucester looked a dangerous side and when Lamb picked out Simpson-Daniel with a lovely flat pass that missed out both centres, Vainikolo was on hand to send Iain Balshaw in for try number four and a bonus point.

Ulster did hit back with another try from Bowe following a lovely move from a scrum and that cut Gloucester's lead to 24-21. However, Gloucester sealed the contest when Lamb picked out another lovely flat pass to Luke Narraway, who stepped the cover to score.



Man of the Match



Mike Tindall. The England man was brilliant under the high ball, instrumental in Gloucester's first try and tough in the tackle.

Coach's Comment



"We didn't play very well, it was that simple. But we have done what we set out to do and that was to qualify top of the pool," head coach Dean Ryan.





PETER ARNOLD

It is the time of the season when injuries occur just at the wrong time and Peter Arnold casts a sage old eye over recent events at Kingsholm.

BROWNE OFF

ALEX BROWN appears to be one of those players, rather like James Simpson-Daniel, who manages to get injured just when they want to be at their fittest. Eighteen months or so ago he broke his arm when he was certainly in the frame for the autumn internationals, and now he has suffered an identical injury just after he was selected for the Saxons squad.

That was thoroughly bad luck for him, and we all hope he's back to his storming best as soon as possible. Dean Ryan reckons that he is a notoriously quick healer and the club certainly didn't waste any time getting him the very best treatment available. I see that he reckons he'll miss five matches, which seems a tad optimistic, but we sure hope he's right.

As far as the club is concerned, things

could have been worse. The Welsh selectors did us a favour by leaving out Will James, although I suppose there's always a chance that an injury during the Six Nations might present him with a late call-up.

We shall obviously be without Marco Bortolami for the international period which, allied to Brown's injury, leaves us a bit exposed in the lock area. However, there's a guy called Pendlebury, who seems to have been forgotten recently, and I expect young Dan Touhy is champing at the bit, and deserves a chance.

But, if in doubt, call on Bucko. Although by preference a back-row man, Peter Buxton has made a very good fist of slotting into the second row when called upon, and we could do far worse than a Will James/Peter Buxton lock combination.

But hurry up and get fit, Alex. We want you back as soon as poss.

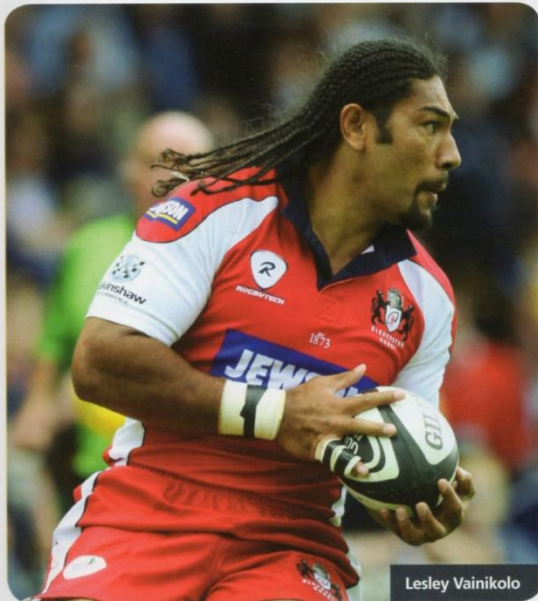
CONDOLENCES

BREAKING his arm in the now-infamous Ospreys match was certainly unlucky for Alex Brown, but I'm sure he would be the first to say that his misfortune pales into insignificance when compared with that suffered by Lesley Vainikolo. To lose a brother is a tragedy, but when one's father departs this life within two or three weeks later – well, there aren't really words which adequately describe it.

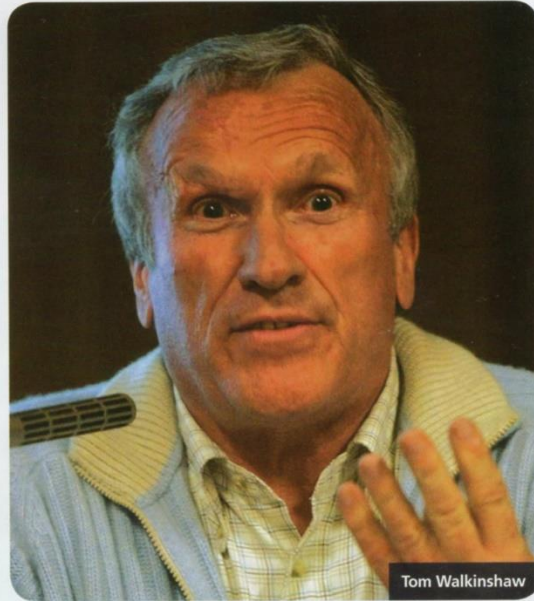
By a cruel coincidence, Lesley was learning of his first selection to the England squad just at the time his father died, and never learned of his son's achievement. It was an irony fit for a Greek tragedy, and anyone who read



Alex Brown



Lesley Vainikolo



Tom Walkinshaw

the 'News of the World' interview with Les, reprinted in the 'Citizen', will have gained some insight into his state of mind. I suppose shattered but bearing up would describe it.

Lesley won't need telling that we all feel for him at this time and will do anything we can to help. I imagine that his sincerely held Christian beliefs will have sustained him considerably.

To say that he has made a big impression since he arrived at Kingsholm would be to understate the case. Obviously, his playing abilities have caught the eye right up to the highest levels of the game, but there's far more to it than that. He has rapidly become a highly valued and appreciated squad member, and has rapidly made his mark in the wider community. The 'Citizen' even wrote an editorial about him, praising his virtues as a role model. I might mention that the paper's editor, not a rugby man, doesn't throw that sort of compliment about lightly.

It is to be hoped that Les and his delightful family can put their

tribulations behind them and get back to the path they have been so delightfully treading as soon as may be, and we wish them well in that.

Why does this sort of thing only happen to the nice blokes? Never seems to happen to the b*****s.

MONSTER MUNSTER

I DON'T think we could have asked for a better draw than Munster in the Heineken. If past experience is anything to go by, that weekend in April will be a great day, not just at Kingsholm but throughout the city centre. On previous occasions, Munster have brought an army of supporters, plus a fair few hangers-on just for the day out, and have turned Gloucester into a home-from-home for people of the Irish persuasion. Pubs and eateries have been full, banter and badinage have reigned supreme.

I don't mean to imply that the match will be any sort of a doddle. Munster have far more experience than us in European rugby, and actually won the thing two years ago. You won't need reminding about the history of games between our two

clubs, which is intriguing to say the least.

Still, at Kingsholm my fifty pence will be on Gloucester. You can't deny the home factor, and hopefully, the weather will be drier than it is now, which will be encouraging for our talented back division, which is significantly different, and better, than the last time the two sides met.

It's going to be a genuine Kingsholm occasion, and such things don't come any better than that.

THANKS, TOM

I quote:

"We have a very tight-knit management team. Dean Ryan, Ken Nottage and I have a very close relationship. We talk every day, or every second day, and that means that, good or bad, I am just as much to blame, if things are not working, as the rest of them."

Tom Walkinshaw wrote that in his Citizen column ten days or so ago.

Thanks, Tom. That's big of you.

MATCH OF THE DAYS

It was a conversion that could have consigned Gloucester to relegation – Tim Stimpson had the chance to earn West Hartlepool a famous Kingsholm win but then disaster struck, as Dave King recalls.

IF THERE is a match in Gloucester's recent history that shaped the course of the club, a freezing January day in 1996 almost consigned the club to the foot of the Courage League – and there is no telling where they would be now.

It was not a derby, a top of the table showdown or a cup semi-final – it was a relegation battle between the bottom two in the division and an occasion that swung on a missed conversion that went a long way to saving Gloucester's season.

There are few matches in the history of this club that could have produced such-heart stopping afternoon as the Courage League match here at Kingsholm on Saturday 6th January 1996, the opposition – West Hartlepool, who had failed to register a single point from nine games. Gloucester had only two from 10.

Such was the league position of the two clubs that Gloucester needed to defeat West Hartlepool to be left with anything more than a purely mathematical hope of avoiding relegation. The Courage League table stood as follows that winters day.

There were not many among the meagre crowd that attended Kingsholm that day who were not aware that defeat would have lost the club even the most slender hope of surviving in Courage League that season.

Gloucester's only win of the season had

been at West Hartlepool in September with a nail biting 27-19 success when thanks to a late try from Andy Deacon.

The drama was not to be confined on the field because five players were asked to leave the club, including former Scotland international Pete Jones and fellow prop Andrew Martin. Accompanying the duo were centre Cass Hannaford, scrum-half Paul Salter and prop James Broady.

Jones had played 190 first team matches for the club but had a serious hamstring injury while Martin had made 23 first team appearances since joining Gloucester in 1991. While Salter (8), Hannaford (2) and Broady (1) made limited appearances, Broady was set to sign for Rugby Lions. These players were deemed surplus to Director of Coaching Richard Hill's requirements as recent signings of Trevor Woodman, Alastair Saverimutto and Charlie Mulraine had increased the depth of the squad.

The day of the match dawned with unbelievable apprehension among Gloucester's followers. Hartlepool were dwarfed in the line-out and yet they obtained a good share of the ball. Gloucester were quite clearly heavier in the pack but they could not turn this power into points and the visitors out-scored the hosts two tries to one.

In the first half the visitors were off to a great start when they took the lead for a third minute penalty by Tim Stimpson



Dave Sims

– a man who would play a key role that afternoon. Minutes later Tim Smith equalised with a penalty and then in the 15th minute he kicked another to take the lead.

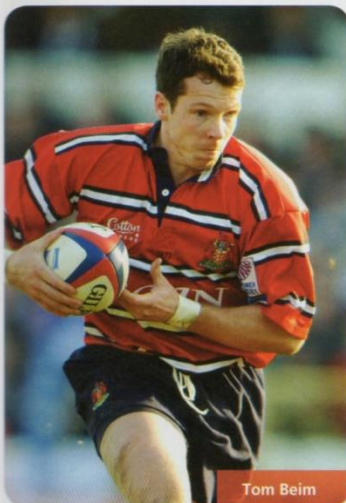
However, Stimpson was on target again in the 28th minute and by half-time West Hartlepool were 11-6 ahead after prop Mike Shelley dived over for the opening try. It was due to the efforts of captain Dave Sims and flankers Ian Smith and Peter Glanville that Gloucester were still in contention. With England lock, Richard West totally ineffective, it was the possession provided by Sims from the front of the line-out that was to prove crucial.

Smith landed another penalty before being stretchered off with suspected medial ligament damage to his knee but his replacement Lee Osborne put Gloucester ahead with a penalty.

Position	Club	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	For	Against	Points
1	Bath	10	10	0	0	328	149	20
9	Gloucester	10	1	0	9	145	238	2
10	Hartlepool	9	0	0	9	140	226	0



West Hartlepool were a very hard side to play against after all they had been to Kingsholm and won before. I always thought they travelled well, maybe because of the long distances they have to endure.



Tom Beim

The tide was turning and when Don Caskie broke free, he sent Tom Beim over for the crucial try. Gloucester led 17-11 after 56 minutes but Gloucester could not close the game out and then disaster struck. West captain Stimpson with his long stride raced over for a try and the following conversion from in front of the posts was a formality. Some fans were already leaving Kingsholm – Gloucester's fate already looked sealed and relegation a step closer.

But the drama was only just beginning. As the floodlights shone down on Gloucester's hopes, all Stimpson had to do was slot the conversion but he somehow dragged his kick wide of the posts – his two from six

attempts that day were decisive in West's defeat.

Hill reflected: "If we had lost it would have been very difficult to have been positive for the rest of the season."

Sims acknowledged how difficult it was to win that day: "West Hartlepool were a very hard side to play against after all they had been to Kingsholm and won before. I always thought they travelled well, maybe because of the long distances they have to endure."

For a crest fallen Stimpson, the years would not diminish the memory: "I was breathing hard after the run in for the try and I considered giving the kick to Ashley Parker but it did not seem fair with so much pressure on it. Sadly, my head came up a bit quick and I hooked it."

The lifeline was vital – Gloucester's 17-16 victory closed the gap between them and Saracens and Gloucester eventually clawed their way to safety. It was some journey.

MATCH OF THE DAYS

THE TEAMS

GLOUCESTER:

T.SMITH
P.HOLFORD
M.ROBERTS
D.CASKIE
T.BEIM
M.KIMBER
B.FENLEY
A.POWLES
P.GREENING
W.BULLOCK
D.SIMS (CAPTAIN)
R.WEST
P.GLANVILLE
I.SMITH
P.MILES

REPLACEMENTS:

L.OSBORNE
L.BECK
J.HAWKER
A.DEACON

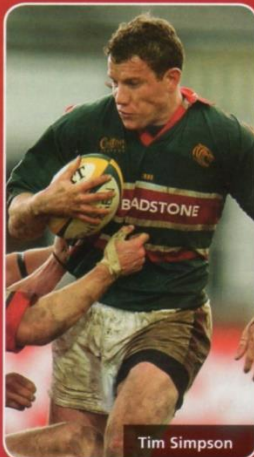
WEST HARTLEPOOL:

T.STIMPSON(CAPTAIN)
O.EVANS
P.HODDER
C.LEE
A.BLYTH
A.PARKER
S.COOK
P.BEAL
T.HERBERT
M.SHELLEY
P.EVANS
K.WESTGARTH
R.LEACH
A.BROWN
D.MITCHELL

REPLACEMENTS:

S.SPARKS
D.LOCKEY
A.ELWIN
D.TICFFE

REFEREE: C.REES (LONDON)



Tim Simpson



Kingsholm '96

FAN ZONE WITH BOB FENTON

With the thought of a Heineken Cup quarter-final against Munster on the back burner, Bob Fenton turns his attentions on one Lawrence Dallaglio this afternoon. And whisper it quietly in the Shed, he actually has a great deal of respect for the number eight.

SO NOW we know then... Munster at home in April. That's going to be a nice walk in the park isn't it... Well, isn't it? Of course in the run up to the game we'll get all the 'Miracle Match' guff (*yawn*) thrown at us by all sections of the media, especially dear old Stuart. Tell you what though, I bet they neglect to mention the fact that we have beaten them twice in recent years at Kingsholm, and there is no reason why we shouldn't make it three out of three.

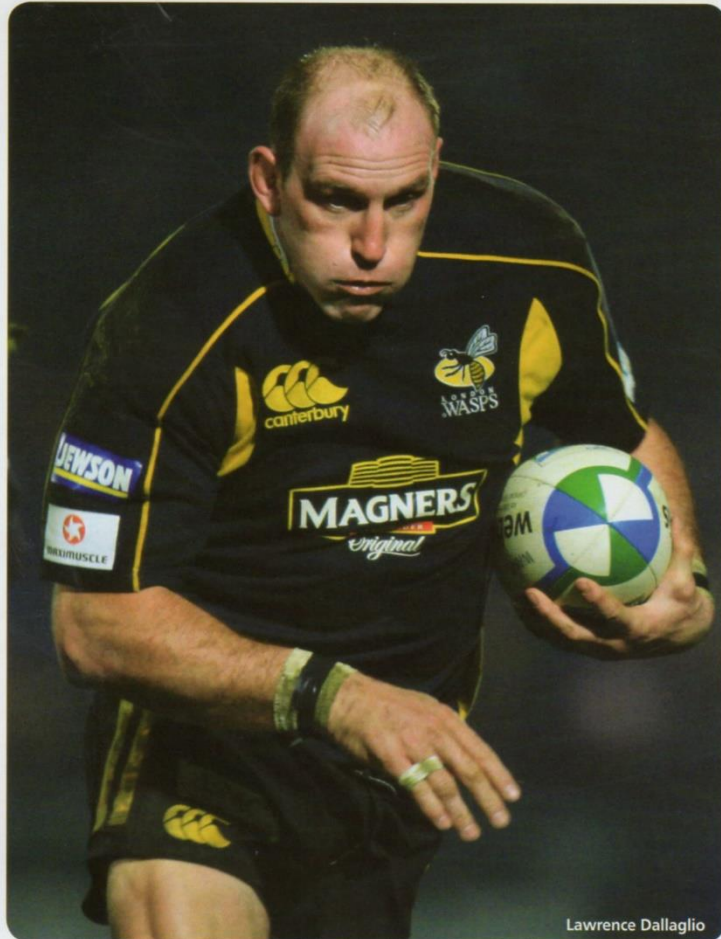
No doubt about it though, we'll have to step up a gear from last week. It was amusing to see people speculating on semi-final venues and discussing the fact that we could stick six tries on them to secure second billing. Err, shame no one told Ulster they were supposed to roll over and die for us.

As it was, it was way too close for my heart and only a liberal dousing with vino colapso returned things to normal. But we're through, and into the quarter-finals which I guess means job done. Unlike another side that are out here today...

Wasps, then... If you ask just about any supporter from any other club in the Guinness Premiership who their least favourite opposition club is, the majority will say the men from High Wycombe. Even down here, Wasps have, in many people's eyes, usurped Bath as the team you love to hate.

Of course we have a particular chip on our shoulder stretching back to the now-infamous season where we were comprehensively stuffed in the Premiership final having run away with the league. But what is it about the men in black that makes them so unpopular with opposition supporters.

I'm going to whisper this because some



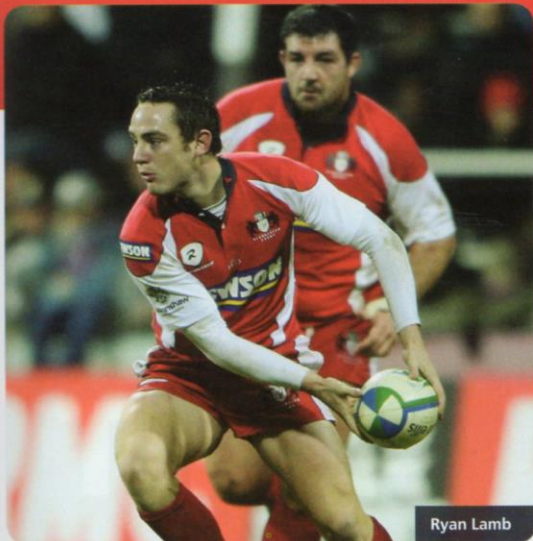
Lawrence Dallaglio

people may not like it: I think it's all down to envy. You cannot argue that over recent years they have been THE team in England, their success rate in European and domestic competition sets them up as one of the great sides of the modern era.

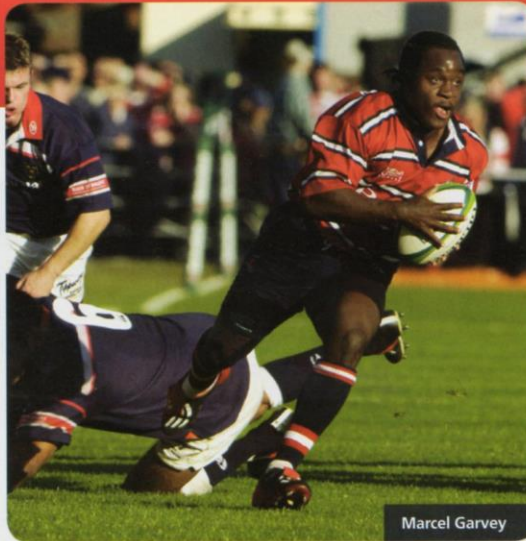
Sure they have their dark side, but which team doesn't. They also have one Lawrence Bruno Nero Dallaglio among their ranks – well to the end of this season anyway.

Dear old Lol has done more to get up the noses of opposition fans than any player to ever walk the earth. I recently said that Mark Regan could retire and take up a role as a pantomime baddy, well Lawrence can trump that and put himself up for the Mr Evil role in any film going. And today is the last time we are going to get the chance to pass on our thanks to him before he retires at the end of the season.....

But answer this truthfully – who wouldn't



Ryan Lamb



Marcel Garvey



That man has an iron will to win that is way in excess of just about anyone else you can name. Watch him on the field and you will see one of the most dedicated, ruthless and efficient players of recent years.

Bob Fenton on Lawrence Dallaglio



want a player like him in their side? That man has an iron will to win that is way in excess of just about anyone else you can name. Watch him on the field and you will see one of the most dedicated, ruthless and efficient players of recent years.

OK he may be past his best now, but a few years ago he was the best in his position to be found anywhere in the world. And I'll be if he ever reads this he'll want to give me an argument that he is STILL the best player in his position anywhere in the world.

And maybe because of that he comes over as arrogant, and his readiness to talk to the press often marks him down as a man with an ego to match his talent. But is it arrogance or simple self-belief?

I don't know, but I'm willing to bet that if someone like Tim Henman had half an ounce of the Dallaglio self belief or will to win he would have won Wimbledon half a dozen times and once with his racquet in his teeth for good measure.

Off the field he has a sense of humour that's

for sure. I remember one of the luminaries from the KSM recounting a conversation he had with Lawrence when trying to persuade him to come to Gloucester to talk at a supporters meeting.

"I often do that for little clubs around the country..." he said. Come on; tell me that you didn't smile at that...

And the other thing to look forward to today is the match up between two of the best young number 10s in the country, Messrs Lamb and Cipriani. Both are outstanding talents and England is very lucky to have both of them – and Geraghty, Flood, Hodgson and some bloke called Wilkinson – talk about an abundance of riches!

The arguments about who is the best out of the two today will go on and on, safe to say I know which one I would rather have. And he's already under contract here, so that's ok.

Finally, even though it's a little early, a few words about our away trip to Wasps in May. You will recall that during the floods last

year two guys from Tewksbury rugby club sadly died while trying to pump out part of the clubhouse.

Barney Burnham, everyone's favourite Wasps fan, approached Tewksbury RFC with an idea of a walk to raise money for charity in their memory, somewhat foolishly I agreed to become involved and as a result we will be walking from Kingsholm to High Wycombe to arrive on Sunday in time for our match on 4th May.

The charities nominated are the Salvation Army and Breast Cancer Care, the details of how to donate are being sorted out now, so watch this space for more information on how you can support us.

I know that at least another six people from Gloucester have volunteered to take part, together with a bunch of people from Wasps. It should be great fun – I'm in training already and regularly walk from my chair to the kitchen to get a cold one rather than expecting the missus to bring it to me.

So put the date in your diary – we set off on 29th April, with the first overnight stop at Old Pats RFC. Not sure what is being arranged for that night, but something will be happening to raise more money. Stick the date in your diary and watch out for more information soon.

Now, having said too many nice things about Wasps than is possibly good for me, let's get out there and stuff 'em!

HONOURING THE LEGENDS

Last weekend Mike Teague and Peter Butler were honoured in Gloucester's Walk of Legends and as the Citizen's Ben Falconer reports, it was a fantastic occasion for the club.

TWO great names of Gloucester Rugby's past unveiled the club's Walk of Legends on Sunday. Mike Teague and Peter Butler, nominated by www.thisisgloucestershire.co.uk voters, were the first to see their name plaques go down in history next to the new C&G

Stand at Kingsholm. Both continue to be adored by the Kingsholm faithful and on Sunday were presented to the supporters at half time during the Heineken Cup pool match against Ulster, too.

"It was a great day, especially to see so

many old friends who I grew up with in rugby," said Peter. Known as "Butler the Boot" for his unerring accuracy in aiming the ball between the uprights, he served the club from 1972 to 1982 and holds the club points-scoring record. He trialled for Gloucester in 1972 and pulled on the fullback's 15 jersey for the first time at the start of that season - against Moseley at Kingsholm, who Gloucester defeated in the John Player Cup final in the previous May.

"It was magic then," said Peter. "Thinking about it now, it still seems like yesterday. "And I had the same feeling again when we went out on the pitch at half time. "To turn round and see supporters in The Shed was magnificent - then you turn round again and there is this huge edifice of the main stand." He and his family were guests of the club for the game.

Number eight and blindside flanker Mike, who started his career at All Blues in the city, went on to become the player of the series in the victorious 1989 Lions tour to Australia and experienced many distinguished hours in the red rose of England.

But his deeds wearing the Cherry and White of Gloucester earned him legend status between 1978 and 1995.

"Iron" Mike brought along four great names from the past too - Mike Hamlin, Richard Mogg, Dave Pointon and his backrow comrade-in-arms, John Gadd.

"We had a fantastic day," said Mike. "My first captain John Watkins was there, with Malcolm Preedy too. "It was long time since I last walked





Peter Butler



Mike Teague

out at Kingsholm and it was with mixed emotions but it was very nice to be there. "When you think of all the great players who have represented the club, it really is some honour."

The scheme to install special paving stones bearing the names of Gloucester's greats from the past has been such a success with www.thisisgloucestershire.co.uk voters that more than the original ten will be placed on the walkway in to the new stand.

It is the icing on the cake of the new south stand re-development, which has taken the ground's capacity to 16,500. So too has the scheme with the general public, who can also buy bricks bearing their names.

To find out more about buying a brick, log on to www.gloucester rugby club.com. Both Peter and Mike's stones will be installed this week, weather permitting.



Gloucester Rugby Walk of Legends



www.gloucester rugby.co.uk