



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

The Official Programme
of Gloucester Rugby

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Gloucester Rugby v Leicester Tigers

09.02.08 15.00



INSIDE

Tough Nut

Andy Hazell gears up
for the Tigers

Dean Ryan

Wasps result means
so much

Up Close

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Leicester Tigers

England

Round-up

PLUS: Match of the Days, Fans Zone, Community Update and Ticket News

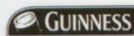
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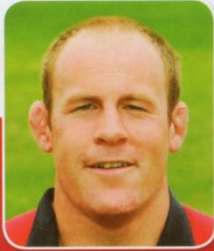
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CAPTAIN'S CORNER

It's been a punishing few weeks but Peter Buxton and Gloucester are ready for the Tigers today.

▶ WELL, WE certainly needed a break.

After four successive games – two in the Heineken Cup and two in the Guinness Premiership – we were certainly due a slight break in the intensity of our schedule.

It has been a breathless and bruising start to 2008 but we are still where we want to be in the Premiership and the talk of the town is of our Heineken Cup quarter-final against Munster in April.

Although we didn't play last weekend there has been no escape from our schedule and today we welcome the reigning Guinness Premiership champions Leicester to Kingsholm.

This really is now the crux of the season. We are entering a period of six successive Guinness Premiership matches, will face the added complications of the Six Nations Championship and are further stretched because of injuries.

There are many issues to face over the coming weeks

but we have strength, belief and determination from our togetherness not to be fazed and we will react in the right way.

Our victory over Wasps was massively significant because even though they were in the lower half of the table they are still a threat later in the season and the four points we won put even more daylight between us.

It showed we are able to beat these sides who have gathered great experience at winning big, one-off matches and that will do our confidence no harm at all. We have everything in our armoury to be fully equipped when we meet these teams and that will be the same against Leicester this afternoon.

Although they may be somewhat in a transitional period with a new coach, the Tigers remain fiercely strong – they are from the school as Wasps and have a pedigree in churning result after result.

For that reason and despite the fact both teams will be

without key players, this is simply a massive occasion today.

When we were in the process of shutting the match down against Wasps, the atmosphere from the stands and terraces was one of the best this season.

We will need that intensity again today – please make it as tough as possible for them – and get right behind the boys.

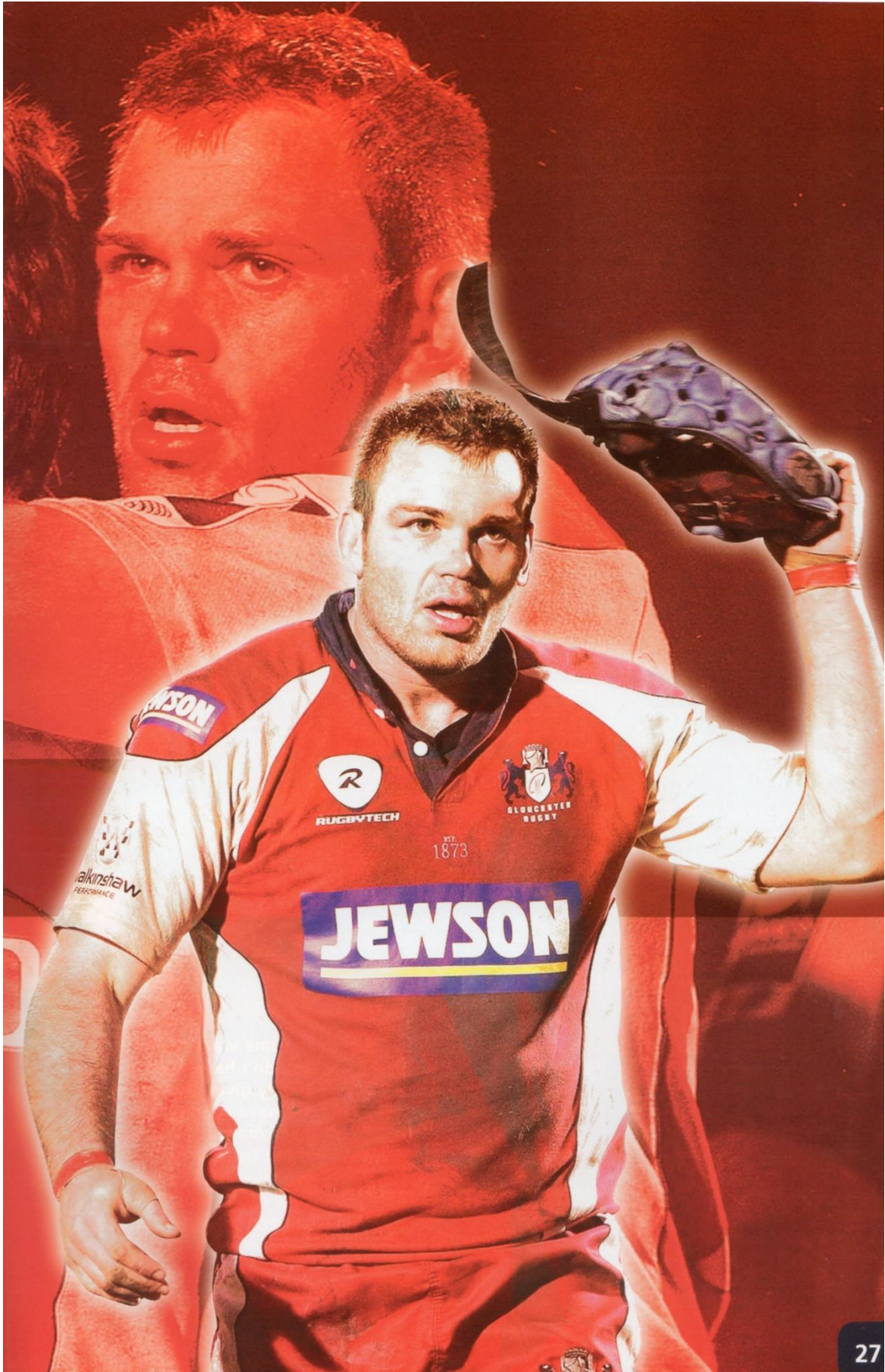




TOUGH NUT TO CRACK



He may have been out of action since November but Andy Hazell's return against Wasps was vital for Gloucester. And as he tells the matchday programme, he is ready for another tussle against Leicester this afternoon.



TOUGH NUT TO CRACK

▶ WHEN you come up against those traditional ruckers and maulers from Welford Road – a collection of no-nonsense hard heads expertly schooled in the art of knock-out rugby – a man with the ferocious competitive instincts of Andy Hazell come in very handy.

It might only be his second game back from knee damage but the importance of Hazell's contribution on the openside flank may be one of the more decisive factors this afternoon.

During a period when clubs have been disrupted by injuries and international call-ups, the return of Hazell has been very timely to Dean Ryan's squad.

Considering he had been out of action since the end of November after limping off against the Dragons in the EDF Energy Cup after tweaking ligaments in his knee, he did remarkably well to last the course against Wasps a fortnight ago.

One tackle on Tom Rees – when he emptied his opposite number from an over-thrown line-out – was a sight to warm the hearts of Gloucester supporters everywhere.

In short, Hazell is one of the most significant players in the squad. Like Peter Buxton, his fellow flanker, he is the heart-beat by which the team operates.

"It is tough being on the sidelines but I have been there before – injuries are part and parcel of the game and although difficult, I just had to get on with it," he said.

"But we have created a squad that can cope with guys being out injured. I obviously want to play all the time but it gave me the chance to get absolutely right and I have come back into a team at the top of the Premiership and into

the last eight in the Heineken Cup.

"In some ways my return couldn't have been more timely given the schedule we have coming up – we have made a great start in these competitions and now we must try and kick on and take it further – there is so much we want to achieve as a group.

"There seems to be a special feel about the place at the moment and I want to play my part in that over the coming weeks."

Hazell is now Gloucester's longest serving player. He has already seen a decade of service in the number seven shirt and in all competitions made 174 appearances with 19 tries.

But it is his energy, enthusiasm and work-rate that is most captivating. It is a testament to Gloucester's achievements that they have managed so well without such a competitive tyro who can dish it out but who has also taken his fair share of punishment.

For all the arguments about size and his international ambitions, ask Rees about his physicality and intensity.

Today, Gloucester enter a period of six successive Premiership matches and then face the small matter of Munster in the Heineken Cup – an occasion for which Hazell was made.

"There has been no let-up in the intensity since the new year – massive games against some of the best teams in Europe have come one after the other and there will be no dropping in the demands today," he said.

"Both Wasps and Leicester represent the benchmarks in English rugby in terms of their ability to win one-off games and we can learn a lot from the win over Wasps.

"They have made it their business to challenge for silverware at the end of the season and we want to be in that bracket too. The win over Wasps was vital because it should convince us we can beat these teams.

"Leicester may have been going through a slight transition with new players and a new coach in Marcelo Loffreda but they still have the knack of winning games and are in a great position.

"We know all about them – their strengths and their competitiveness – and we will have to match them today. Games between the two teams are always some of the biggest of the season and although there will be

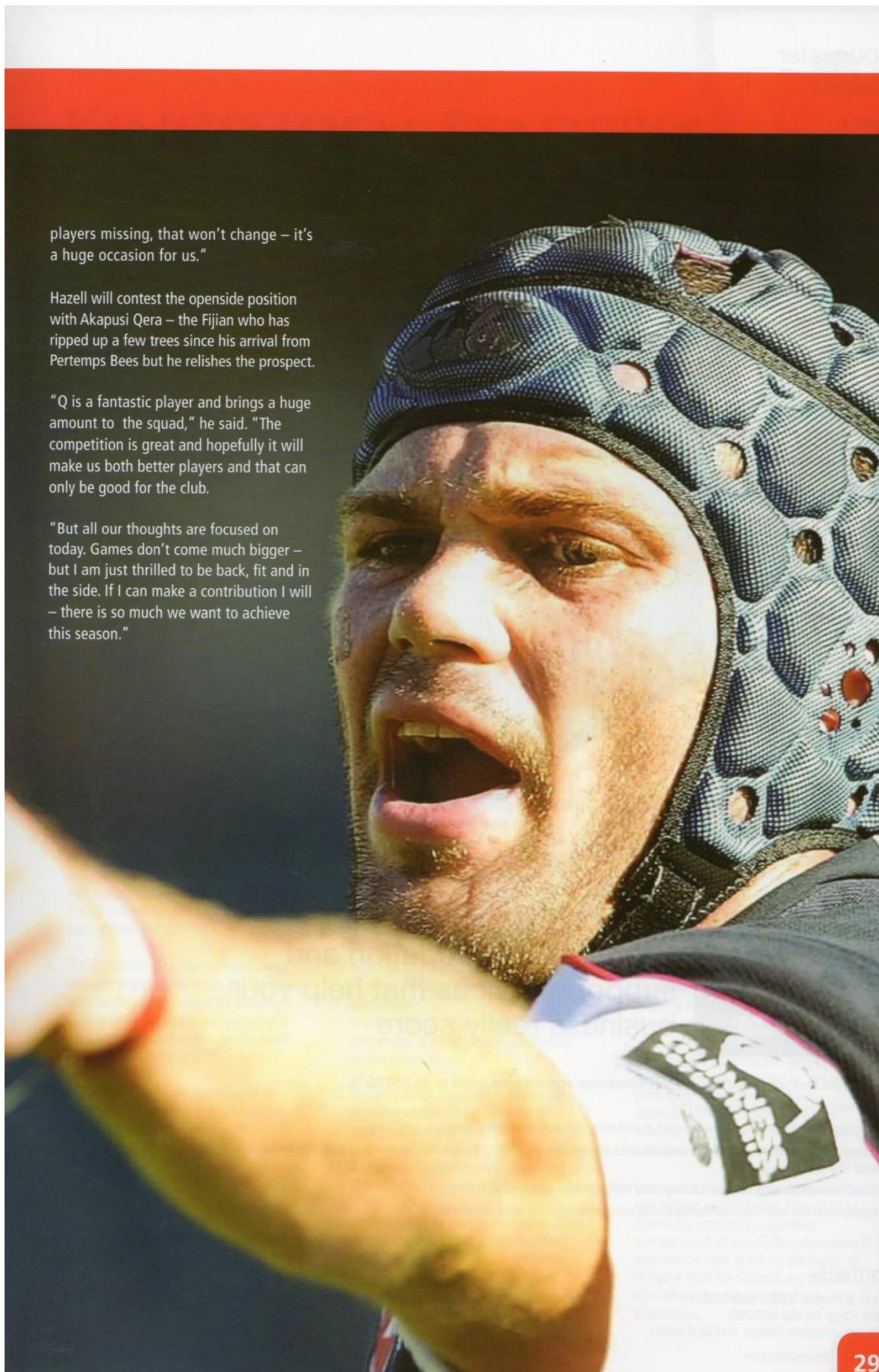
▶ ▶
In some ways my return couldn't have been more timely given the schedule we have coming up – we have made a great start in these competitions and now we must try and kick on and take it further – there is so much we want to achieve as a group.
▶ ▶

players missing, that won't change – it's a huge occasion for us."

Hazell will contest the openside position with Akapusi Qera – the Fijian who has ripped up a few trees since his arrival from Pertemps Bees but he relishes the prospect.

"Q is a fantastic player and brings a huge amount to the squad," he said. "The competition is great and hopefully it will make us both better players and that can only be good for the club.

"But all our thoughts are focused on today. Games don't come much bigger – but I am just thrilled to be back, fit and in the side. If I can make a contribution I will – there is so much we want to achieve this season."





RYAN'S REVIEW

Head coach Dean Ryan looks back at the victory over Wasps and ahead to today's clash with Leicester Tigers.

THE VICTORY OVER WASPS WAS A TENSE AFFAIR BUT CRUCIAL ALL THE SAME?

DR: IT WAS significant on a number of levels because there were some good aspects to our performance I want to see again. We know Wasps are a stand-out side and that we were likely to face some sort of reaction following their elimination from the Heineken Cup against Munster.

In parts I thought we played some good football and in the second half our forward pack was outstanding. Wasps are experts in being able to absorb pressure for long periods and then break out and score and they caught us twice. But I thought we showed great character and resolve to shut the game out like we did.

We are learning all the time in games like this and although there are elements of the performance we need to look at, beating a team of Wasps' qualities in a game that put even more distance between us was great for us. We need to re-produce the good things in the performance over the next few weeks as the Premiership begins to shake down.

WE WILL BE TWO GAMES INTO THE SIX NATIONS AT THE END OF THE WEEKEND. HOW DO YOU THINK THE GLOUCESTER PLAYERS WENT LAST WEEKEND?

DR: THEY were obviously over-shadowed by the injuries sustained to Mike Tindall and Ryan Lamb. They are two of our most significant decision-making backs so to be without them for any length of time is potentially damaging for us. I am just disappointed for the pair of them they were injured in the first games of the competition because they were sure to play key roles in their respective teams.

As for the new caps in the England team, we are pleased with their contribution

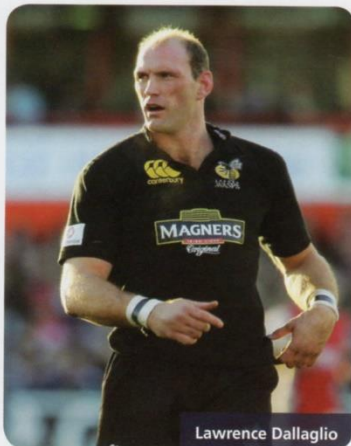
on what was ultimately a disappointing afternoon against Wales. Lesley probably got far more exposure than he was expecting because of the injury to David Strettle and he did the things he has done for us.

We always knew his game would turn up but as he showed he is far more than simply brute strength and physicality. His catch on the run and then off-load to Toby Flood was fantastic and clearly showed his all-round skill set as a very shrewd footballer.

I was also really pleased for Luke Narryway and his selection. He has been one of our stand-out performers this season and I was



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Lawrence Dallaglio



Lesley Vainikolo - first cap



Ryan Lamb

confident he could make the step up. He got through his tackles, turned over some ball and certainly deserves another chance. Everyone can be proud of his efforts this season.

WITH CALL-UPS AND INJURIES IT MUST BE A VERY DIFFICULT STAGE OF THE SEASON?

DR: SOMETIMES you find yourself battling against events that are out of your control like injuries at this stage of the season. We always thought we would be stretched and it just so happens we are playing Leicester when both teams are at their most depleted.

We are fortunate enough have an experienced core of forwards remaining with us but we have been low on numbers in the backs this week. There is nothing we can do about it – we just have to get on, prepare as well as we can and concentrate on our next challenge.



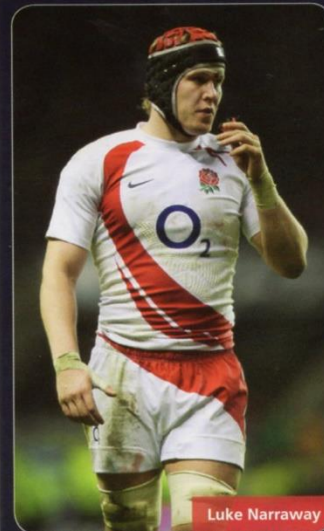
THAT CHALLENGE IS LEICESTER – WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THEIR SEASON SO FAR?

DR: AS ALWAYS, they have been pretty impressive. Even under a period of transition with a new coach they have been able to churn out Premiership results. I think both teams know a lot about each other and respect each other for their individual achievements. Like Wasps, Leicester have made a habit of winning these big, one-off matches and I think their approach will be physical, conformational and direct and once again it will be up to us to counter that and match it.

I want us to concentrate on the aspects of our game that make us a threat and if we can do that, I hope we can cause a very good team some problems. Despite the players missing today these are two teams who will really compete against each other.



I was also really pleased for Luke Narraway and his selection. He has been one of our stand-out performers this season and I was confident he could make the step up.



Luke Narraway



Tom Vardell

TODAY'S TEAMS

Saturday 9th February 2008 15.00

Gloucester Rugby
v Leicester Tigers



13



Leicester
TIGERS

20

<input type="checkbox"/>	James BAILEY	15	Full Back	15	Sam VESTY	<input type="checkbox"/>
	James SIMPSON-DANIEL	14	Right Wing	14	Johne MURPHY	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jack ADAMS	13	Centre	13	Ollie SMITH	
	Anthony ALLEN	12	Centre	12	Aaron MAUGER	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mark FOSTER	11	Left Wing	11	Tom VARNDELL	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Willie WALKER	10	Fly Half	10	Andy GOODE	
	Rory LAWSON	9	Scrum Half	9	Frank MURPHY	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nick WOOD	1	Prop	1	Marcos AYERZA	
	Olivier AZAM	2	Hooker	2	George CHUTER	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jack FORSTER	3	Prop	3	Alex MORENO	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Peter BUXTON ©	4	Lock	4	Louis DEACON	
	Will JAMES	5	Lock	5	Marco WENTZEL	
	Alasdair STROKOSCH	6	Flanker	6	Martin CORRY ©	
	Andy HAZELL	7	Flanker	7	Luke ABRAHAM	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adam BALDING	8	No 8	8	Jordan CRANE	<input type="checkbox"/>

Replacements

	Jeremy PAUL	16		16	Benjamin KAYSER	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Christian CALIFANO	17		17	Dave YOUNG	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jonathan PENDLEBURY	18		18	Brett DEACON	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Andy TITTERRELL	19		19	Ben HERRING	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gareth COOPER	20		20	Ben YOUNGS	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ali JAMES	21		21	Ian HUMPHREYS	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Charlie SHARPLES	22		22	Ayoola ERINLE	<input type="checkbox"/>



HEAD COACH
Dean RYAN



HEAD COACH
Marcelo LOFFREDA



SPOTLIGHT

with **Olly Morgan**

by Ian Randall



WHAT'S THE MOTTO YOU LIVE BY?

Work hard play hard. It's a motto I lived by at school. If you put the work in and play hard you know you'll get your rewards.



WHAT'S YOUR MOST PRIZED POSSESSION?



My most prized possession would probably be my i-Phone. I got it last week and it's pretty cool, I just keep wanting to use it all the time.



WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BREAKFAST CEREAL?

Probably Jordan's Muesli because it's healthy but it also tastes nice at the same time.



much into property development and things like that.

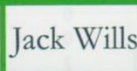


ARE YOU A SPENDER OR A SAVER?

Definitely a saver. I tend to put a lot of it away in savings and things. Obviously I enjoy myself but I can't do it too much because I've got to look after myself for the future.



WHICH COMPANY WOULD BE YOUR IDEAL SPONSOR?



You've got the clothing companies like Diesel, Abercrombie, Jack Wills and stuff that I tend to wear a lot. But probably a building construction company because I'm very



WHAT MADE YOU LAST LOSE YOUR TEMPER?

Andy Hazell making fun of me. Over numerous things, about being a school boy and going to Millfield - I think he's quite jealous about that really. He's bitter about it with me a lot of the time.



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

To be honest with you there probably isn't anything. They probably know everything about me because I'm quite an honest person so I do tend to say stupid things that most guys would keep to themselves.

WHO'S YOUR FAVOURITE PERSON ON TV?

Jonathan Ross. I watch him every Friday and find him hilarious so he's probably my favourite person on TV.



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

I'd quite like to be on Question of Sport, it's quite a standard sporting one that everyone would like to be on. A lot of great people have been on there so for me that would be the best one.



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

Christian Califano. Even though he's not fluent in English, I could watch him all day and he'd amuse me and interest me. I've missed him since I've been away with my shoulder injury.



IF YOU WENT TO UNIVERSITY WHICH DEGREE WOULD YOU DO?

I'd probably like to do something along the lines of Business, Business start-up, Property development, Management all that kind of stuff. Possibly at a University up North because my sisters up there and she speaks very highly of it.

WHAT PART OF TRAINING DO YOU ENJOY MOST?

The conditioning side of things, especially in pre-season when the weathers nice and people are geared ready for the new season. It's competitive and it's good but at any time conditioning games are always good fun.

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

Andy Hazell's probably the culprit - Ryan Lamb possibly. If it's being played on someone it'll probably be on me. An example of a prank is that I went back into the changing rooms after a training session and found a dead mouse in my shoe. I put my foot in it and didn't realise what it was until I saw it and absolutely jumped out of my skin. Those are the sort of things that they do.



WHICH OTHER SPORTING EVENT WOULD YOU LOVE A TICKET FOR?

Superbowl. Superbowl is always a good one to go to. I'd quite like to go to some of the American games like Baseball and Basketball. But, probably the Superbowl would be the best.





RYAN LAMB

BACK TO SCHOOL

GLOUCESTER Rugby's Ryan Lamb was voted the Premiership Player of the Month back in September.

And this week he was on hand to present kit provided by Gilbert to St Peter's School as part of a new scheme set up by Premier Rugby to provide as much rugby kit across the country as possible.

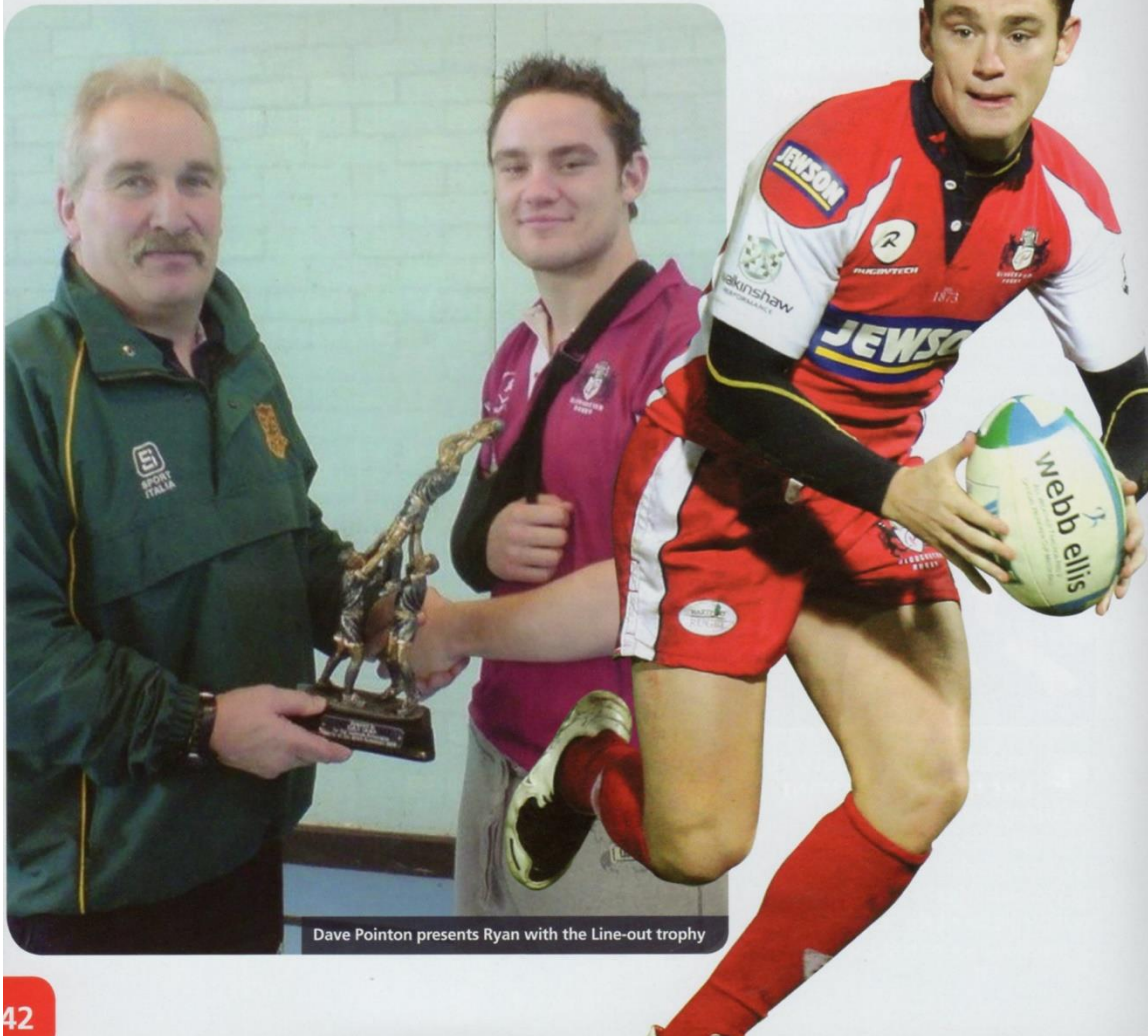
Supporters select a Player of the Month each and every month. The player is

then given the option of who to give a complete set of rugby jerseys to as part of the drive towards improving community rugby. Flanker Alasdair Strokosch has since won the award for Gloucester.

Ryan was asked which school he wanted to present the kit to and he said: "It has to be St Peter's - that is where I learnt to play rugby and thanks to them I am now enjoying life in the Premiership with

Gloucester - it was a fantastic breeding ground."

As part of the presentation, Ryan was presented with a trophy from his old rugby coach Dave Pointon, he said: "Ryan is such a gifted player I thought as a joke I'd get him something symbolizing something he can't do, hence the line-out lifting trophy."



Dave Pointon presents Ryan with the Line-out trophy



VALCANO STARTS TO RUN

Gloucester's Lesley Vainikolo will be a key man for England in Rome tomorrow and as he tells the matchday programme becoming an international player is a dream come true.

VALCANO STARTS TO RUN



▶ LESLEY VAINIKOLO has one aim in Rome tomorrow – to get his hands on the ball more as England search for their first win in this season's Six Nations Championship.

The giant Tongan-born wing's international rugby union career began in brilliant fashion against Wales when he set up a try for Toby Flood minutes after replacing the injured David Strettle.

But he became a fringe figure in the dismal second-half performance that allowed the Welsh to come back from the near-dead and record their first win at Twickenham for 20 years.

"I definitely want to get my hands on the ball more this time," he said. "It's hard to be patient, but I've learnt that as a wing in union you have to be. In league you expect to touch the ball 20-25 times a game. In union it could be a maximum of around 10."

The big smile Vainikolo gave as he ran on for his first cap gave the impression of a man relishing his unexpectedly early opportunity to shine.

But he added: "I was really nervous - I was just hiding it. I was thinking 'I don't want to go on', but the cheer I got from the people was a massive lift.

"It just lifts your energy higher and from then on I was thinking 'Man, these people love you'. Hopefully I can keep them happy with me.

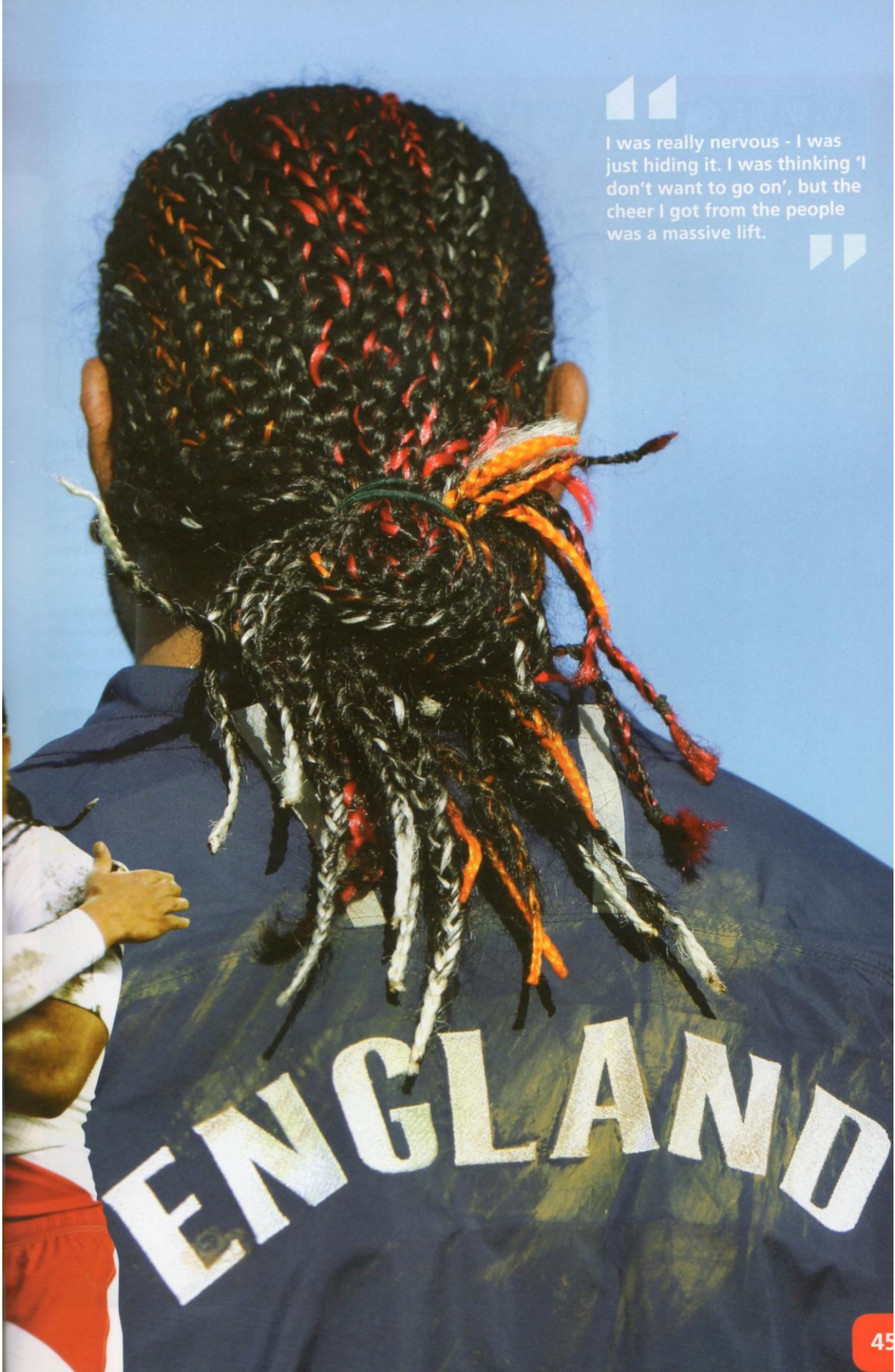
"It wasn't the result I wanted on my debut, but at least I had a taste of it and I was lucky that Mike was inside me and Iain behind."

Centre Tindall, however, became another casualty of the Wales game, a bruised liver putting him in hospital and out of the entire Six Nations campaign. Jamie Noon replaces him.

But Balshaw remains at full-back and said of Vainikolo's influence: "We all know he is a class act. When he put Toby over you could see how skilful he is considering how powerful he is. We hope to use him more - use him when we need to.

"I am sure we will. It was frustrating that we didn't last Saturday, but hopefully he can do it on the international stage like he does at Gloucester - and also create space for the rest of us."





I was really nervous - I was just hiding it. I was thinking 'I don't want to go on', but the cheer I got from the people was a massive lift.



MATCH ACTION

Gloucester Rugby
London Wasps

18
17



Time line

4 mins	Lamb PEN	3-0
16 mins	Lamb PEN	6-0
18 mins	Cipriani PEN	6-3
19 mins	Lamb PEN	9-3
40 mins	Lamb PEN	12-3
42 mins	Lamb PEN	15-3
47 mins	Lamb PEN	18-3
63 mins	Buckland TRY, Cipriani CON	18-10
65 mins	Waldouck TRY, Cipriani CON	18-17

Gloucester Line-up

15	Willie Walker
14	Iain Balshaw
13	James Simpson-Daniel
12	Mike Tindall
11	James Bailey
10	Ryan Lamb (6 pens, YC)
9	Rory Lawson
1	Nick Wood
2	Olivier Azam
3	Carlos Nieto
4	Peter Buxton (capt)
5	Will James
6	Luke Narraway
7	Andy Hazell
8	Gareth Delve
REPS	
16	Jeremy Paul (Azam)
17	Patrice Collazo (Wood)
18	Dan Tuohy
19	Alasdair Strokosch (Delve, Narraway, blood 12-23)
20	Gareth Cooper (Lawson)
21	Anthony Allen (Tindall)
22	Mark Foster (Bailey blood 46-60)

A sting in the tail

Saturday, January 26, Kingsholm

Referee: Dave Pearson Attendance: 16,200

RYAN LAMB kicked six penalties to ease Gloucester to a vital victory over reigning Heineken Cup champions Wasps at Kingsholm.

In a tough, tight, tense occasion at Kingsholm Gloucester saw off a ferocious second half onslaught from Wasps to consolidate their position at the head of the Premiership table.

There were yet more impressive

performances from Luke Narraway, Carlos Nieto, Will James and Nick Wood as Gloucester finally subdued a fiery Wasps effort in the second period.

Gloucester were 6-0 ahead thanks to two Lamb penalties before Danny Cipriani landed his first three points as both teams traded possession and territory in a typically full-on and physical start.

Wasps' difficulties with the referee were



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Man of the Match



Lock Will James produced an outstanding display in the line-out and also with ball in hand.

intensified when they lost James Haskell and Tom Palmer to the sinbin and Lamb simply kept the board ticking over with penalties. Gloucester led 12-3 at half-time and then 18-3 when the stand-off knocked over two more three pointers after the re-start.

At this stage the game was over. Gloucester's advantage was sizeable and had they managed to score a try it may have broken Wasps' resistance.

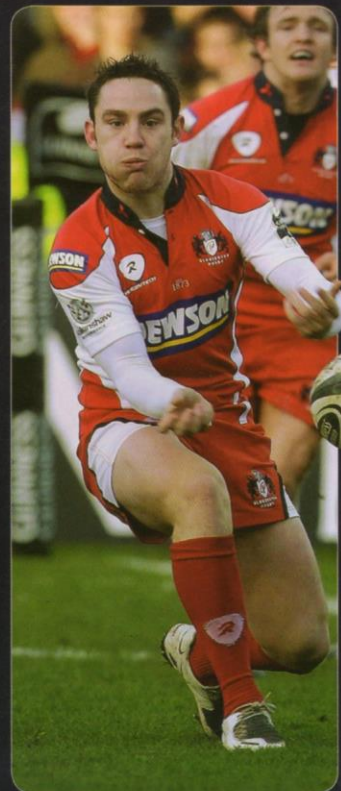
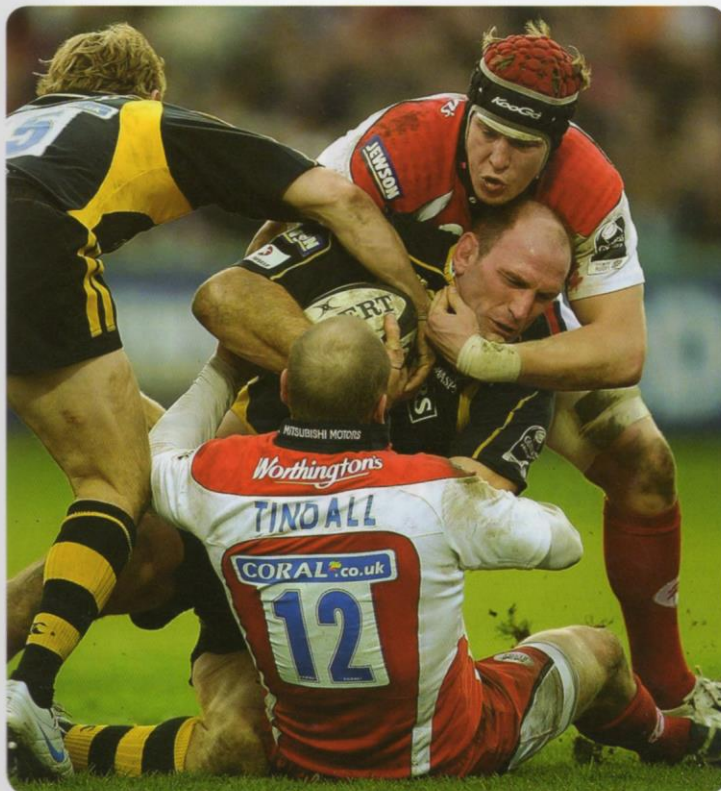
But the visitors responded with two tries. First, replacement hooker James Buckland peeled off down the short side of a line-out and when Haskell burst left, he fed Dominick Waldouck on an outside break to score.

Cipriani converted both to leave Gloucester leading by one point. It took a remarkable series of short range drives over a four minute period to shut the game out and cement four more vital points.

Coach's Comment



"It wasn't our best performance but four points against a side like Wasps is huge for us," head coach Dean Ryan.





PETER ARNOLD

Peter Arnold believes the raft of international call-ups and injuries will detract from this afternoon's firecracker at Kingsholm, Gloucester have made the right decision to play their Heineken Cup tie with Munster at home and looks back (through his fingers) at England's defeat against Wales.

SHOULD WE BE HERE?

IT'S ALWAYS good to welcome Leicester to Kingsholm. Glaws v Tigers has provided some of the most memorable Castle Grim encounters over the years. And probably will again. However, you could be pardoned for quoting the current TV commercial and saying to yourself, "I shouldn't be here."

It's a shame that our overcrowded season forces the annual encounter to be

rescheduled so that our two ancient and respected sides have to meet when we're both badly affected by Six Nations calls. Surely to goodness we all want to see both teams at full strength for one of the most eagerly anticipated games in the season. That's even more marked this time round, because a glance at the table will show you that today's result could have a very real influence on the eventual outcome of the Premiership for 2007/8

It's particularly galling at the moment because there is a whole bevy of excellent players who will be sitting on their backsides doing absolutely nothing this weekend. Take one example. We have four players in the Scotland squad. Last weekend not one of them made the starting line-up and only one was on the bench. That's a sheer waste of manpower.

I wonder if clubs should be allowed to recall players in this position for club matches where necessary. All right, so that would increase the chances of injury, but, as the players concerned are presumably only second or third choice for their national team, would that be so terrible?

Anyway, if you worry about that sort of thing, no one would ever play the game at all.

But this is Gloucester v Leicester in a game where the two sides should be evenly matched. It's always a game to be relished, and I don't see any reason why things should be any different this time round.

WE'M GOIN' NOWUR!

GLOUCESTER will be playing Munster in the Heineken Cup quarter-finals at Kingsholm and, as we say round yer, that's it and all about it.

That's not just me talking. We have complete assurances on the matter from both Tom Walkinshaw and Ken Nottage.

The lads played their hearts out to get this far in Europe's premier competition, and we're not about to throw our very considerable home advantage away, just because some pundit somewhere suggests that everyone might make more money by shifting the match to a larger, remote, venue. It's going to be difficult enough to beat the Irishmen in any case, and we'd be nuts to discard any



Luke Narraway



piece of leverage that we can lay our hands on. OK, so we might make a few more quid by moving the match, but surely, it would be even more profitable to be able to play a semi.

I quite take the point of those non season ticket holders who point out that Kingsholm will be packed to the eyebrows, and that they have a much better chance of getting a ticket at a larger ground, and I'm sorry for those who miss out, but I think we ought to look at a rather broader picture.

On the memorable occasions when Munster visited us previously, they brought a lot of people with them, and not all of them came to the match. There were a lot of wives, girlfriends, family and assorted companions along too. Quite a lot of people made a weekend of it.

That represents a sizeable contribution to the city's economy. Pubs, restaurants, shops, visitor attractions all reaped the benefit. Move the game away and all that revenue would be lost to us.

If Gloucester Rugby is anything, it's part of the wider Gloucester community. We represent something more than a mere sports club. That being so, we should be delighted when we can bring some economic advantage into the good old city. The more prosperous the city, the better

off everyone, including the club is. That way everyone benefits.

SHAMBLES!

I WAS almost inclined to ignore events at Twickenham last Saturday, and draw a veil over the shambles that was the England-Wales game. If ever a team self destructed in a game that should have been done and dusted, that was it. I couldn't really believe what I was watching. So inept was England's second half display that it almost looked as if it wasn't accidental. You'd almost have to try to be that bad.

I don't want to think about it anymore. I'll just consider our on contribution. Starting with that of Iain Balshaw, who definitely had his problems although he did some good things too. Is it any wonder? When the whole world (seemingly) tells you that you are rubbish, and shouldn't have been picked, then you're hardly in a state of confidence when the first high ball comes at you.

I can just about accept the mind games which the Welsh coach played before the game, but when the likes of Jeremy Guscott add their shrill squeaks to the chorus of disapproval, then I think it's sheer bad form.

As for the others, I thought that Mike Tindall was doing well before his departure. He has a bruised liver, they tell me. We all hope he

recovers quickly, and at least he won't have many more opportunities for injury before he resumes Kingsholm duty.

Lesley Vainikolo's contribution was more puzzling. He made England's try with great expertise and aplomb and really showed his potential. However, there seemed some reluctance to try to get the ball to him, and he was left alone and palely loitering far too often. Of course, Strettle's injury meant that he was on the field a lot earlier than was intended, and I suspect he was meant to be on the other wing. That meant that England's planning was probably disrupted to some extent.

The reactions of the Welsh defence were interesting too. It seemed the tacklers were content to lie down on the floor and hope he'd trip over them rather than put in a tackle. Can't say I blame them.

Luke Narraway was, in my view, a big success. After he settled down he did everything right. He nicked a couple of line-outs, put in some very telling tackles, and generally made a thorough nuisance of himself.

If there's any justice at all, then he should have a big international future, following in the footsteps of a great Gloucester dynasty of back-row men, stretching from Tommy Joyce to Mike Teague.

MATCH OF THE DAYS

It was a familiar story for Gloucester at the Rec – but it could have been so different against a side with 15 internationals – as Dave King recalls



Mark Mapletoft

▶ IT HAS never been much of a place for celebration the Recreation Ground but Gloucester's task on September 26 1998 approached the near impossible.

For the first time in Premiership history they faced a team containing 15 internationals in the starting line-up – but produced a Herculean effort against the odds to take Bath's glittering array of stars to the limit.

Bath scored only once after the 27th minute but they had done enough to retain their unblemished home record over the visitors from Kingsholm. It was their seventh win in eight league matches at a drenched Rec against their fierce local rivals.

Although Gloucester surrendered their 100% start to the season, they did at least battle all the way to the end and there was no repetition of their last two visits to the banks of the Avon when they shipped 118 points. On reflection Gloucester might have come

closer than the margin of a try had Mark Mapletoft been able to strike his goal kicks more accurately. As we gradually eroded an 18-0 deficit, Mapletoft hooked a likely penalty kick and failed with the conversion of the tries as we matched Bath in the try count.

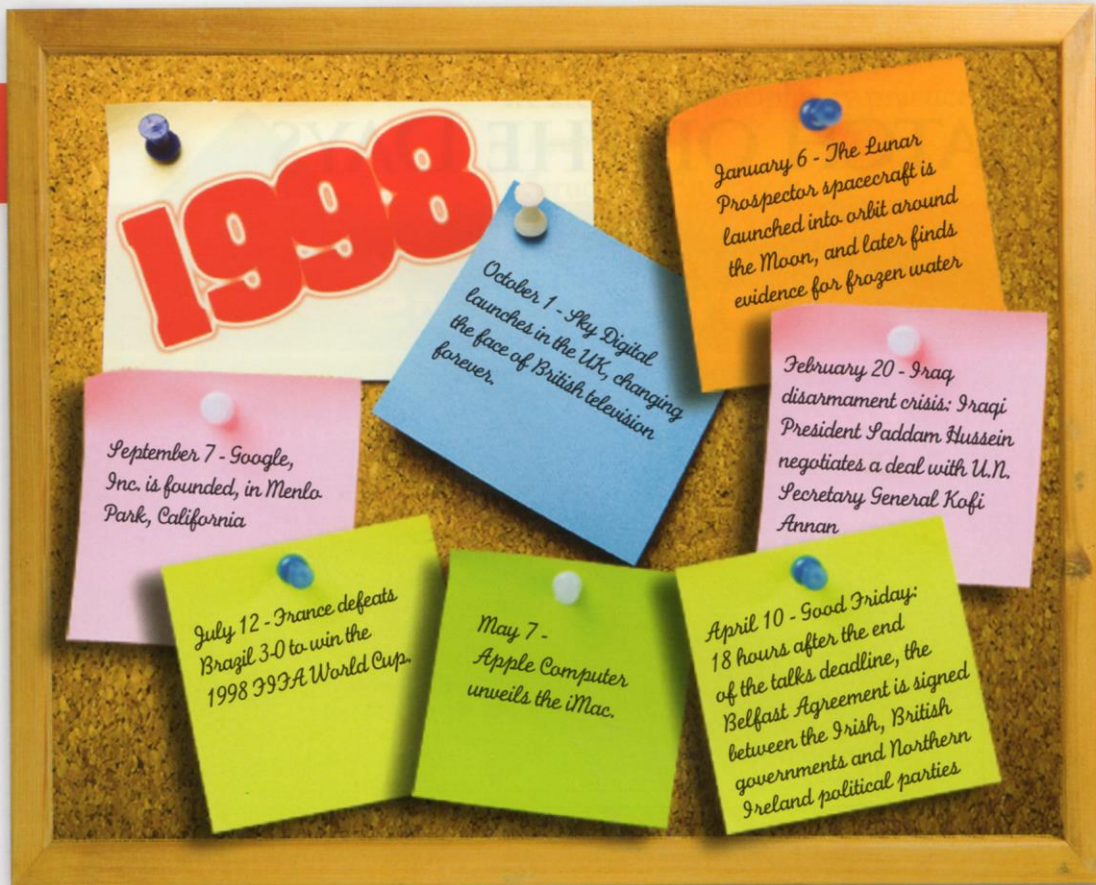
However, it was Bath's ferocious start that was eventual difference between the teams. They scored four times between the 12th and 27th minutes. Adedayo Adebayo scooped up a fumbled pass to run 40 yards for a try, Mike Catt kicked two penalties and then converted a try he had made for hooker Andy Long.

Gloucester belatedly scored two minutes later when Simon Mannix charged down a clearance kick from Matt Perry but they trailed at half-time 18-5. Mapletoft landed a drop-goal within minutes of the re-start and then landed a 63rd minute penalty as Gloucester closed the gap to 18-11. Catt increased Bath's lead to 21-11 to virtually make the game safe.

But there was still time for Gloucester to stage one last effort. Philippe Saint-Andre turned up in midfield, wrong footed the Bath defence, eluded the cover tacklers and scored to shave the gap to five points.

It was a match Gloucester could have easily won. Bath were superb and clinical in the first half but they were there to be taken in the second half.

Despite the pre-match hype it was once again a Recreation Ground defeat. Former Bath favourite Gareth Chilcott believed the men from Kingsholm had a great chance of ending their hoodoo before the game: "Gloucester has their best chance of winning at Bath since the leagues started." He stated, 'Coochie', did blast a warning though, "Bath always raise their game for this one and its going to take a mighty Gloucester performance." There had been false hopes raised when our Second XV had travelled south to the Georgian City mid week and drew 33-33.



Gloucester has their best chance of winning at Bath since the leagues started." He stated. 'Coochie', did blast a warning though, "Bath always raise their game for this one and its going to take a mighty Gloucester performance.



There was no repeat at first level with a performance which would have at least ensured a point.

Bath coach Andy Robinson, now with Edinburgh, recalled, "We were good at the start and we continued the game but we stopped playing and let Gloucester in. Gloucester slowed our ball up and we ran out of options and could not kick start our game which was frustrating but we won and that was what was important."

Richard Hill, now of Bristol but at that time the Gloucester coach added: "Bath always prepare well for Gloucester, they get themselves up for Gloucester and they are always charged right up. You have to be fully

committed to win there."

It was a nightmare time for Dave Hilton, now of Bristol but then the Bath loose-head. Along with his wife Ann he had been involved in a five car pile-up near Nimlet that blocked the A46 for an hour. The kick off for this match was delayed for 15 minutes. The Scotland prop added – "I was more than shaken up after the game. Holding five Gloucester scrums on our line was more testing."

Gloucester skipper, Dave Sims who had at that stage played seven of eight winless games at the Rec said: "Bath are always one of those sides you never want to lose to – it's a local derby and we were aiming to be the best in the west."



Chris Catling

MATCH OF THE DAYS

THE TEAMS

BATH:

M.PERRY
I.EVANS
K.MAGGS
P DE GLANVILLE
A.ADEBAYO
M.CATT
A.NICOL
D.HILTON
A.LONG
J.MALLET
N.REDMAN
B.STURNHAM
N.THOMAS
R.WEBSTER
E.PETERS

REPLACEMENTS:

I.BALSHAW
M.REGAN
K.YATES
R.EARNSHAW
S.HATELEY
J.CALLARD
D.JONES.

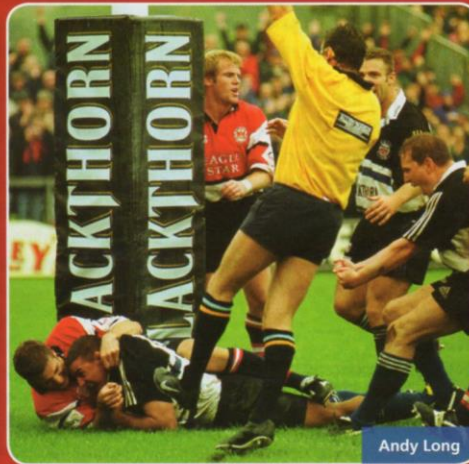
GLOUCESTER:

C.CATLING
R.JEWELL
S.MANNIX
R.TOMBS
P.ST ANDRE
M.MAPLETOFT
S.BENTON
T.WINDO
P.GREENING
A.DEACON
R.FIDLER
D.SIMS (CAPTAIN)
S.OJOMOH
N.CARTER
S.DEVERAUX

REPLACEMENTS:

T.WOODMAN
C.FORTEY
M.CORNWELL
E.PEARCE
A.LUMSDEN
L.BECK
R.GREENSLADE-JONES

REFEREE: N.YATES - ATTENDANCE: 8,200



FAN ZONE WITH BOB FENTON

Bob Fenton casts his eye over the latest Guinness Premiership fans poll and comes up with some interesting conclusions before looking ahead to this afternoon's visit from Leicester.

▶ HERE'S a thing. Did you know that our visitors from Leicester are, according to a survey, the most tech-savvy rugby fans in the Premiership. Stop laughing, it's true. Well if you believe the results of a survey carried out by a bank into the attitudes of rugby supporters, it is.

In a story buried away in the Daily Telegraph the other week Brendan Gallagher, an otherwise fine rugby writer, was given the chore of making some sort of sense of this research. He was obviously a bit slow out of the blocks towards the door when the editor came in waving the survey and looking for someone to hack out 200 words.

This survey showed a few 'interesting' facts – for a start, Gloucester fans are more likely to be found spending money in a record shop than any other set of supporters?

And I'd take issue with the fact that we are less tech-savvy than our East Midlands friends. Given our track record in hacking, mass voting and otherwise skewing just about any poll or vote on the web I think that mantle is rightfully ours.

Other things to make you go 'Hmmm' include the fact that Sale fans, it appears, are more likely to be found spending money on clothes – about £1,200 a year in fact. Those replica shirts must be mighty expensive up there. And Newcastle fans spend more on 'bling' than their Premiership counterparts. I must confess that this is something I have singularly failed to notice.

Wasps supporters spend over £500 quid a month in on-line shopping – must be hunting for more canned cheering for the mausoleum that is The Causeway I reckon, and Harlequins fans spent over

200 quid on Christmas presents – what, for each other? How very kind of them.

About the only statistic I found remotely plausible was the one that said that rugby fans are more likely to spend a few quid in an off licence than fans of Premiership clubs in the round ball game. Well slap my thigh, I would never have guessed...

Apparently, for reasons best known to themselves, Barclays Bank conducted this survey and polled thousands of fans. Well no-one asked me, and I bank with them – did anyone ask you??? Which kind of begs the question who did they talk to, and perhaps more pertinently, why did they bother???

It got them a few cheap headlines I suppose.

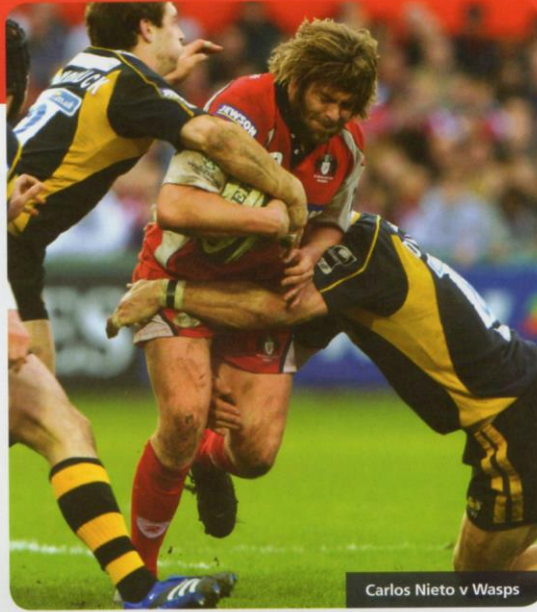
So tech savvy Leicester then... The old fixtures people were having a bit of



Gloucester fans



Chris Paterson



Carlos Nieto v Wasps



Unfortunately the international scene took its toll on us with Ryan Lamb getting himself crocked playing for the idiotically named England Saxons hopefully he will not be out for too long. We also look like being without Mike Tindall for a while - he looked in great pain when he came off against Wales.

Bob Fenton on the Lamb and Tindall injuries



a laugh when they put the schedules together for this term, weren't they. Heineken Cup pool 'decider' followed by playing two of the domestic game's superpowers one behind the other. No challenge there, then.

But we more than showed that we are capable of rising to the challenge with the win over Wasps. For me that game had about four minutes of sheer beauty, the way we controlled the ball in those final stages and kept it away from Wasps was a sight to behold.

Of course there was some hand-wringing from certain sections of the media who think we should have launched a length-of-the-field attack in an effort to either win more comfortably or crash out in a blaze of glory.

Yeah right, the records show that we

won the game, took the points and stayed top of the table. In other words, job done – end of story.

Another Herculean effort is required today. While both sides will be missing players due to distraction of the Six Nations (move it to the end of the season so it stops skewing the playing field, watch the clubs who have imported the majority of their squads start to pick up points where they shouldn't etc etc [climbs off soap box and stops ranting]) it is a chance for some of the lesser players – if you can call any of our squad lesser player - to get some game time

We've been talking for ages about the strength in depth we have in the squad down here, so now's the time for them to step up to the plate. I have every confidence that they won't let us down this afternoon.

Finally big congratulations to Luke and Lesley for making their England debuts, both acquitted themselves well in an otherwise dismal display. Chris Paterson almost made it to the line when he came on for Scotland against France too.

Unfortunately the international scene took its toll on us with Ryan Lamb getting himself crocked playing for the idiotically named England Saxons hopefully he will not be out for too long. We also look like being without Mike Tindall for a while - he looked in great pain when he came off against Wales.

Finally, finally, another plug for the fund raising walk in memory of Bram and Chris Lane from Tewkesbury RFC who tragically died in the floods last year. Details of how you can support the walk are available on websites all over the place, and very shortly the KSM will send out details to all their members.

I know times are hard, but a couple of quid from everyone here today would mean a massive pay day for the two nominated charities – Breast Cancer Care and the Salvation Army.

Cheers.