



**GLOUCESTER
RUGBY**

The Official Programme
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**Gloucester Rugby
v Saracens**

12.04.08 12.35



SARACENS



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CAPTAIN'S CORNER

Skipper Marco Bortolami is positive that Gloucester can bounce back against Saracens today.

I AM NOT going to dwell on last week's defeat against Munster.

I don't think anybody who comes into Kingsholm regularly will appreciate just how much we all hurt, just how much we all care and just how much we all want to do well for this club.

In many ways our performance in the first 50-odd minutes was as good as anything we have produced in recent weeks and we stressed one of the best teams in Europe. There are many aspects we can be rightly proud of and in the coming weeks we must build on those.

In the post-match analysis head coach Dean Ryan said he would not deviate from his belief we are moving forward and I am equally as passionate we are developing as a squad.

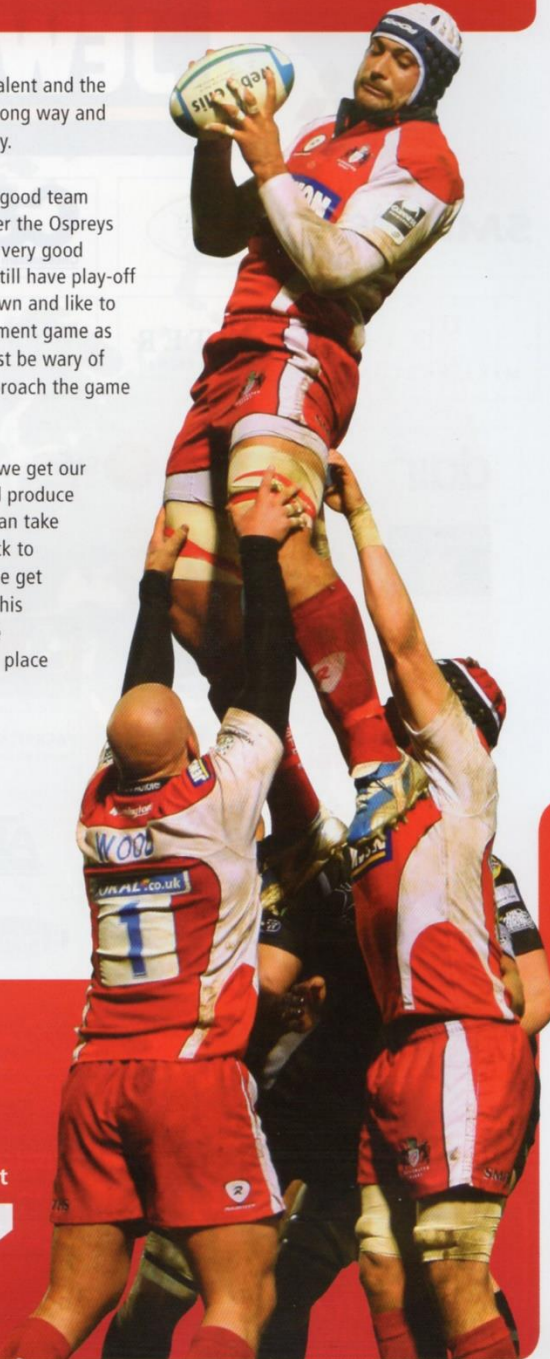
Against Munster it was not quite good enough but our task now is to replicate that level against Saracens today.

We have four Guinness Premiership games remaining – three at home – and we must hit the right levels of commitment, belief and execution to get a home play-off. This team is good

enough, it has the talent and the ability to go a very long way and that must start today.

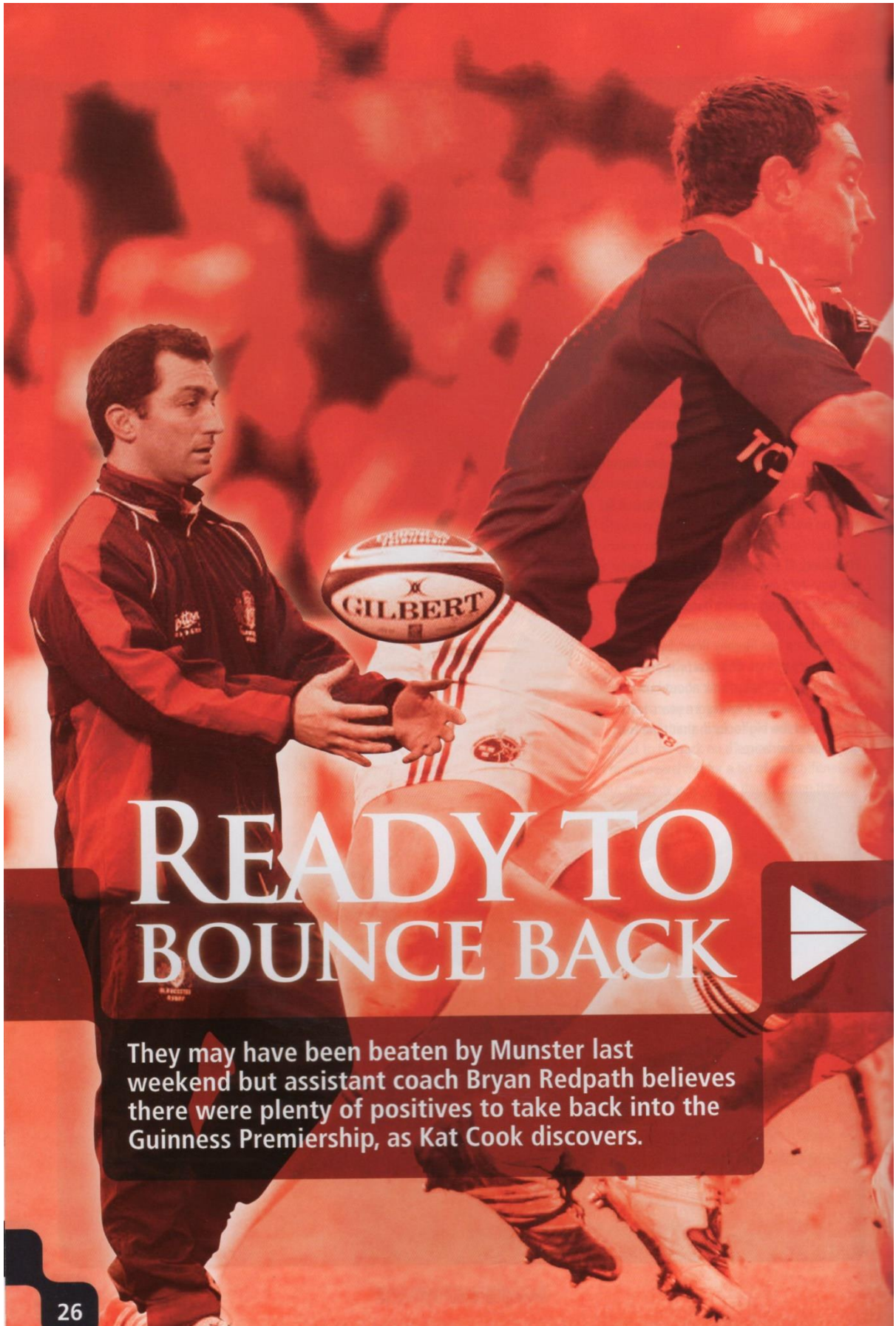
Saracens are a very good team and their victory over the Ospreys last weekend was a very good achievement. They still have play-off ambitions of their own and like to play a similar movement game as ourselves so we must be wary of their threat and approach the game in the right way.

But I am positive if we get our own game right and produce a performance we can take forward and get back to winning ways. Please get behind the players this afternoon and make Kingsholm a special place again.



Against Munster it was not quite good enough but our task now is to replicate that level against Saracens today.





READY TO BOUNCE BACK



They may have been beaten by Munster last weekend but assistant coach Bryan Redpath believes there were plenty of positives to take back into the Guinness Premiership, as Kat Cook discovers.



READY TO BOUNCE BACK

▶ GLOUCESTER will begin their run-in towards the Guinness Premiership play-offs today – fortified by the knowledge that despite their Heineken Cup elimination against Munster last Saturday they are making progress against Europe's elite.

Assistant coach Bryan Redpath, a man with more rugby brain cells than most, believes Gloucester's overall contribution in their mini Heineken Cup classic against the former champions can go a long way in ensuring qualification in the Premiership's latter stages.

"The biggest thing we could take out of last week is that in the first 40 minutes of the game we actually played how we wanted to," the former Scotland scrum-half told the matchday programme.

"I think we put them under enough pressure for them to make mistakes and for us then to capitalise on those opportunities. We only had about six real opportunities in the game, and to have a real chance we needed to capitalise on at least four. As it was we only took about one or two and that percentage against a top team like Munster was never really going to ask enough questions of them despite our territorial and possession superiority in the first-half."

Despite Gloucester's defeat their performance was considerably better than the ones against Bristol, Harlequins and Worcester and as the Premiership reaches its end game in the coming weeks, Redpath believes his side are well placed to press forward starting against Saracens today.

The Men in Black reached the Heineken Cup semi-finals for the first time with victory over the Ospreys and Redpath knows they will present another stern examination today.

"Saracens will come to Kingsholm with plenty of confidence but we need to

concentrate on some of our phase-play, we knocked-on about four or five balls in the middle of the pitch which are aspects we can easily eradicate. Some of it's execution, some of it positional but they are mistakes we can cut out of our game.

"The important thing is that they are things we can change which is pleasing. If there were things in there that we couldn't actually change because we're not good enough then we'd be a bit worried.

This weekend if we create the same atmosphere within the game and then we'll get opportunities."

Munster's superiority was based on their withering defence and fierce competitiveness at the contact area. They were able to soak up wave after wave of pressure before making their limited possession count with tries from Ian Dowling and Doug Howlett.

"Seven of their forwards are Irish forwards at Test level, five or six of them are probably British Lions players as well. We always appreciated they would have their periods in the game because they are an outstanding side – we needed to take those opportunities and we didn't – that doesn't make us a poor side because it's all part of us developing in Europe.

"If you think of last year to this year we've come a long way in a space of a season, that's the positives that we need to take in to today. We need to perform like we did in the first 40 minutes of that game to win in the next four games now that we are in the Premiership."

Redpath was at pains to reiterate Gloucester's billing as Premiership leaders and added: "What we've got to do is realise that many people will have an opinion on what is going on and we've got to let them have that. When we're in our training group we believe that what

we're doing is right. This weekend for us is trying to replicate the approach we had and the atmosphere we created in the first 40 minutes of the Munster game.

"We need to let the players know that they're going in the right direction. We believe a game's right and we believe the way we're approaching it is the right way.

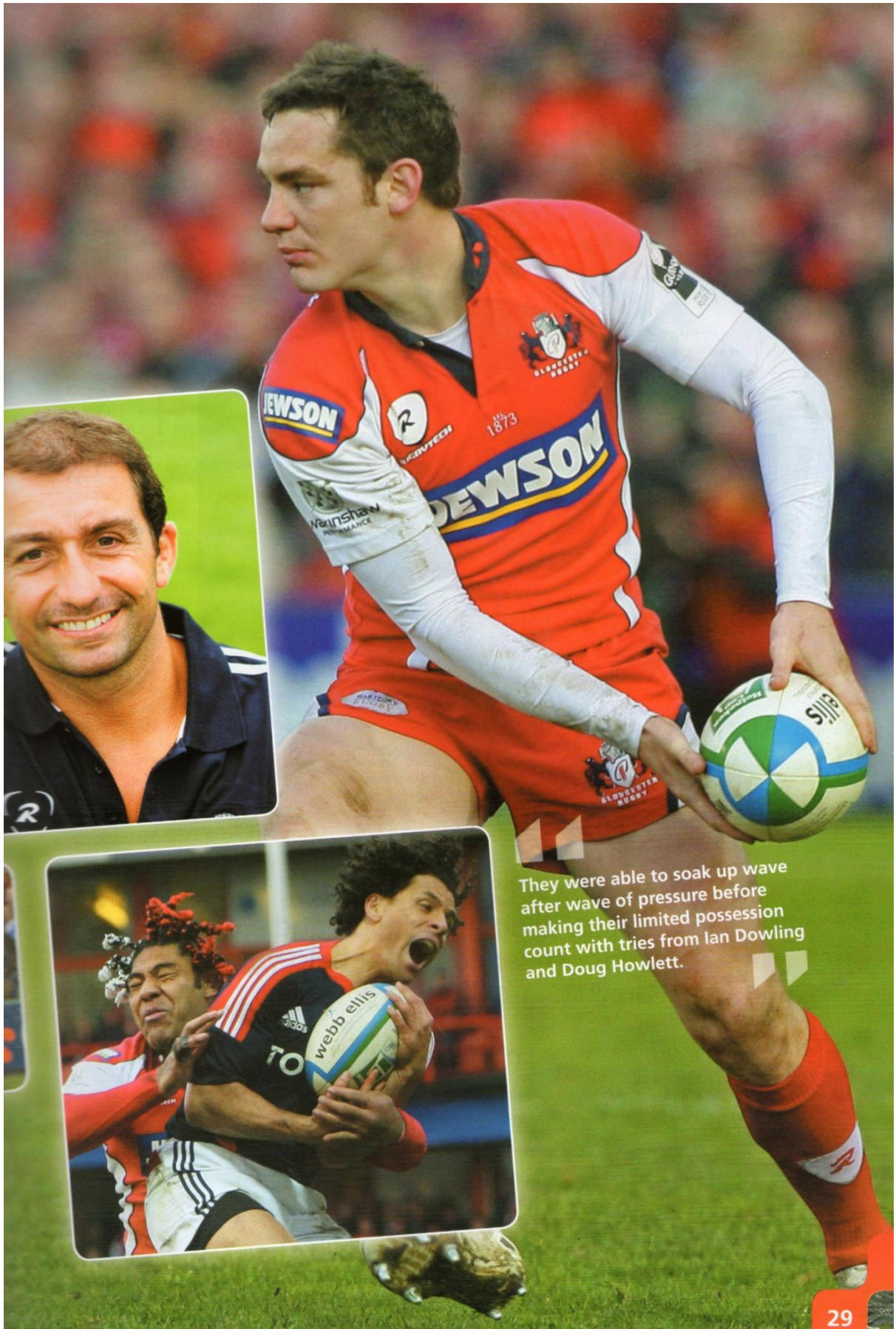
We've got three of our four games at home and that is a big asset. We've got to make sure our first 20 minutes of every game is up there, and stick to what we talk about from Monday to Friday. If we do that we'll be in the game."

Redpath knows Sarries will be confident following their success over the Ospreys and they are still hunting a play-off place with matches running out.

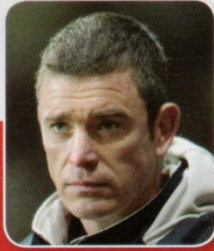
"I'm sure they'll probably want to continue their form from last weekend. We are well aware how good a side they are with some key players on their team – we have to make sure that



our part of our game is right, if that's the case then we'll compete with anyone. "We've got to realise we need to move on. There's no better way than to come back home against a top side. We want to prove that we can be a contender in this Premiership."



They were able to soak up wave after wave of pressure before making their limited possession count with tries from Ian Dowling and Doug Howlett.



RYAN'S REVIEW

Head Coach Dean Ryan evaluates Gloucester's defeat against Munster but is already looking forward to today against Saracens.



Our Heineken Cup campaign came to an end last weekend, can you have any complaints?

DR: From our point of view there was a clear image of what we want to be as a group and as a side and that is important because as coaches we can work with that structure.

I think it was fairly difficult to do that after games against Worcester, Bristol and Harlequins but in the first-half we played some of the best rugby we have done for a long time and I would be disappointed if people couldn't recognise that.

We went into a game against a side purposely built for Europe and with a campaign history that is virtually unmatched. I am pretty sure it was their 10th appearance in the quarter-finals and they set themselves standards in the competition that has taken them a long time to attain. It is easy to forget that

despite their legacy they have won the competition once. We are further on in our progress this time last season when we failed to successfully get through the group phases.

This season we progressed from a tougher group as winners and that naturally meant we would face a quality side in the last eight but I am totally convinced what we are trying to do is right and I won't deviate from that.

We will never be a side that will win this competition if we don't believe we are

building something special. We showed on Saturday we are heading in the right direction. I felt we did everything we talked about to cause them problems but they withstood it – you have to give them credit for that because their defence forced errors.

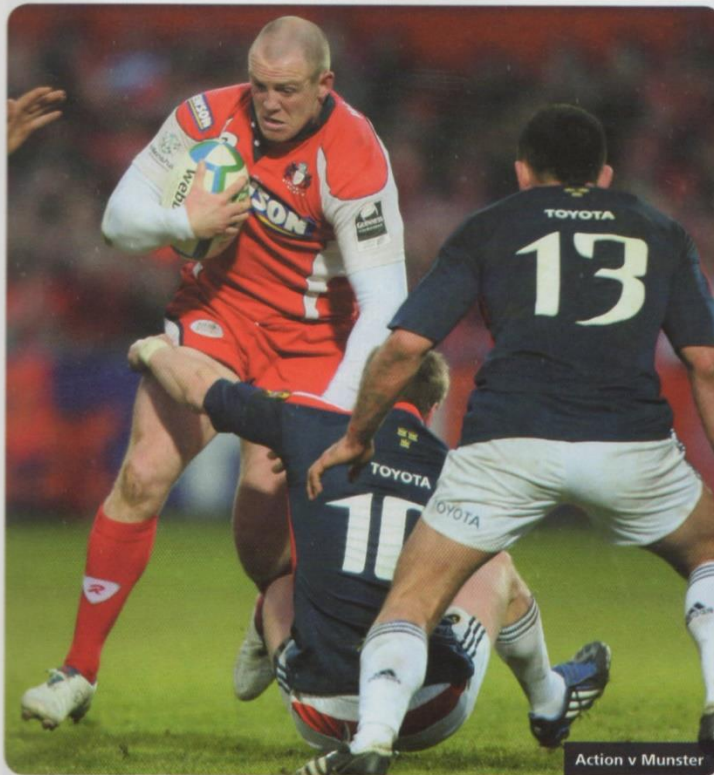
There was no lack of focus or belief. You simply have to give Munster credit for how well they dealt with everything we threw at them. I was proud of how we stood up and tested them – we must move on and be positive off the back of that performance.



This season we progressed from a tougher group as winners and that naturally meant we would face a quality side in the last eight but I am totally convinced what we are trying to do is right and I won't deviate from that.



Action v Munster



Action v Munster



Where do you take the season now?

DR: SOMETIMES I am surprised by the knee-jerk reaction outside of the group. We lost to a very good side on Saturday but we went into it as the leading English club and we are top of the Guinness Premiership. I am pretty confident that if we reproduce the sort of performance we generated in long periods last weekend we will be a threat long-term and in the knockout stages of the competition.

I am only concerned at getting our game right and if we can do that we can build on what we already have in place. We want to be contested play-off finals and we are in a good position to push on now. We have operated with a reduced squad up until the last fortnight because of international call-ups but now we are all back together we will be working from a considerable position of strength.

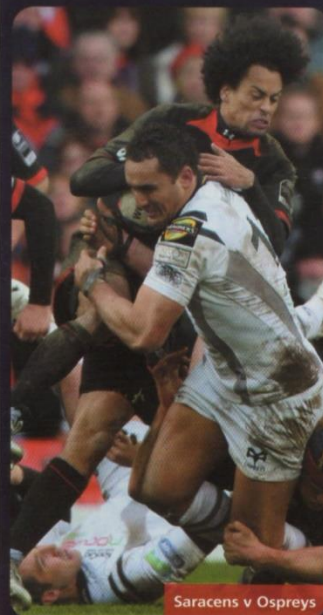


Today, Saracens are the visitors and they beat the Ospreys last weekend. They will be tough this afternoon?

DR: THEY certainly will be. Their performance against the Ospreys was very impressive – they did a lot of good things and managed to nullify a very competitive pack of forwards and backline that was the heartbeat of Wales's Grand Slam. They have added more movement to their game and I have a lot of time for Alan Gaffney and what he has put together there. They are still fighting for a play-off place so we must be mindful of that and also of what last weekend's result would have done for their confidence. But it is up to us to go out and produce level of performance we produced in the first half against Munster, bring our movement game into play and be competitive. If we can do that then I am sure we can get a positive result.



Their performance against the Ospreys was very impressive – they did a lot of good things and managed to nullify a very competitive pack of forwards and backline that was the heartbeat of Wales's Grand Slam.



Saracens v Ospreys



Dean Ryan

TODAY'S TEAMS

Saturday 12th April 2008 12.35

Gloucester Rugby
v Saracens



Gloucester RUGBY



39



Saracens

15

	Olly MORGAN	15	Full Back	15	Dan SCARBROUGH	
	Iain BALSHAW	14	Right Wing	14	Richard HAUGHTON	
	James SIMPSON-DANIEL	13	Centre	13	Kevin SORRELL	
	Mike TINDALL	12	Centre	12	Adam POWELL	
	Lesley VAINIKOLO	11	Left Wing	11	Kameli RATUVOU	
	Ryan LAMB	10	Fly Half	10	Glen JACKSON	
	Rory LAWSON	9	Scrum Half	9	Neil de KOCK ©	
	Nick WOOD	1	Prop	1	Nick LLOYD	
	Andy TITTERRELL	2	Hooker	2	Matt CAIRNS	
	Carlos NIETO	3	Prop	3	Cobus VISAGIE	
	Marco BORTOLAMI ©	4	Lock	4	Hugh VYVYAN	
	Alex BROWN	5	Lock	5	Tom RYDER	
	Alasdair STROKOSCH	6	Flanker	6	Kris CHESNEY	
	Akapusi QERA	7	Flanker	7	Don BARRELL	
	Luke NARRAWAY	8	No 8	8	Ben SKIRVING	

Replacements

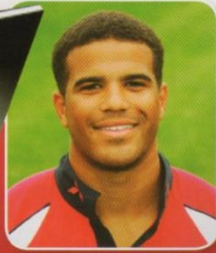
	Olivier AZAM	16		16	Fabio ONGARO	
	Jack FORSTER	17		17	Cencus JOHNSTON	
	Gareth DELVE	18		18	Iain FULLARTON	
	Will JAMES	19		19	David SEYMOUR	
	Gareth COOPER	20		20	Moses RAULUNI	
	Chris PATERSON	21		21	Rodd PENNEY	
	Willie WALKER	22		22	Edd THROWER	



HEAD COACH
Dean RYAN



HEAD COACH
Alan GAFFNEY



SPOTLIGHT

with James Bailey

by Ian Randall



WHAT'S THE MOTTO YOU LIVE BY?

In terms of rugby, look good, play good. If your boots are clean, you've got a new hair cut, you feel confident in your appearance and that definitely goes out onto the pitch.



WHAT IS YOUR MOST PRIZED POSSESSION?

Rugby wise, my first England cap at under 16 level. It's a long time ago now, but it was a special moment for me and my family. I've got the shirt and the cap framed in my Dad's house.



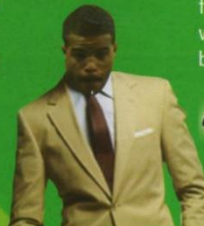
WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE BREAKFAST CEREAL?

Lucky Charms. I remember when they were out first time round in the 1980's. You struggle to get them now - they're about £4 a box in Selfridges.



WHICH COMPANY WOULD BE YOUR IDEAL SPONSOR?

Dolce Gabbana. I'd be very happy if they could sort me out with a few suits.



ARE YOU A SPENDER OR A SAVER?

I'm a spender. I'm quite into my clothes, so a lot goes on that.



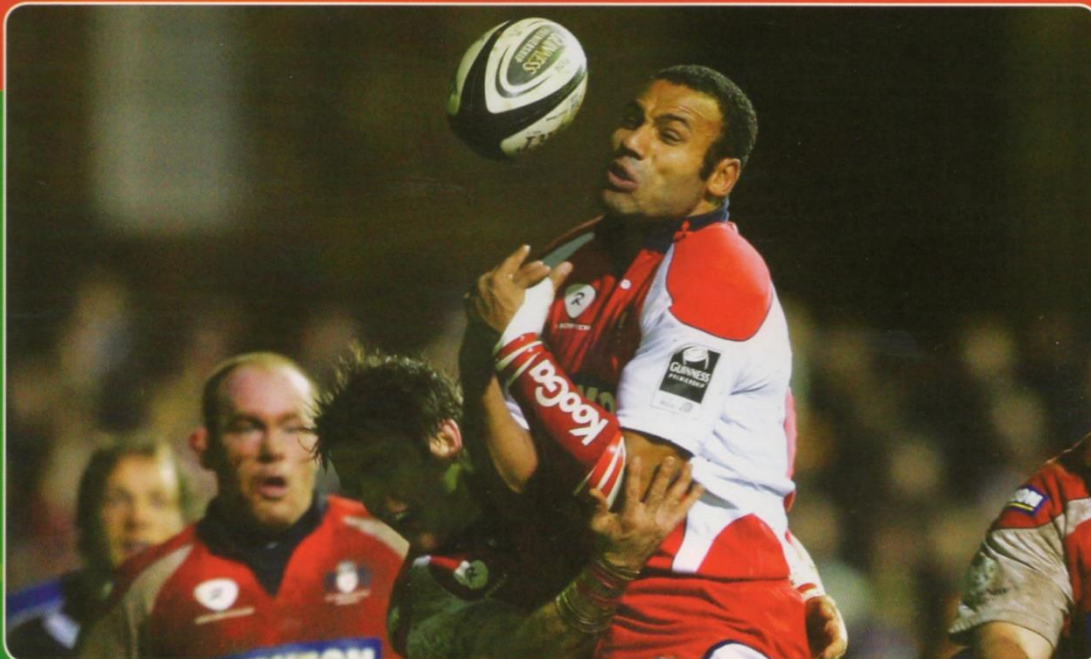
WHAT MADE YOU LAST LOSE YOUR TEMPER?

I'm generally pretty relaxed but I'm a big Arsenal fan so the last few weeks haven't been too good.



WHO IS YOUR FAVOURITE PERSON ON TV?

Ian Wright, when



he's being a football pundit. I love him being passionate about England.

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

I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here. I think I'd be ok on some of the tests, like eating bugs. I'd be able to skip through that.



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

A few years ago I played with Khalid

Benazzi, who was Abdel Benazzi's younger brother. He wasn't the most gifted rugby player, more of an enforcer, and I'm sure he had links with some Moroccan cartel. He WAS interesting.



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

Probably something along the lines of corporate event planning. After rugby I'd quite like to go into laying on sporting events, parties, that sort of thing.

WHAT PART OF TRAINING DO YOU ENJOY MOST ?

The rugby sessions - after all, we are rugby players. I enjoy the unit sessions too, when we're working on our elusive skills, kicking, and so on.

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

The pranksters are Califano and Hazell, but the



ultimate wind up merchant we have is Leon Lloyd. He always tries to touch that raw nerve.

WHICH OTHER SPORTING EVENT WOULD YOU LOVE A TICKET FOR?

A big fight in Las Vegas. I'd have loved to have gone to the Hatton/Mayweather fight. Boxing is in my family - my Dad used to box for England - and in terms of sport it is the ultimate challenge. 2 men, no excuses, and the best man wins.

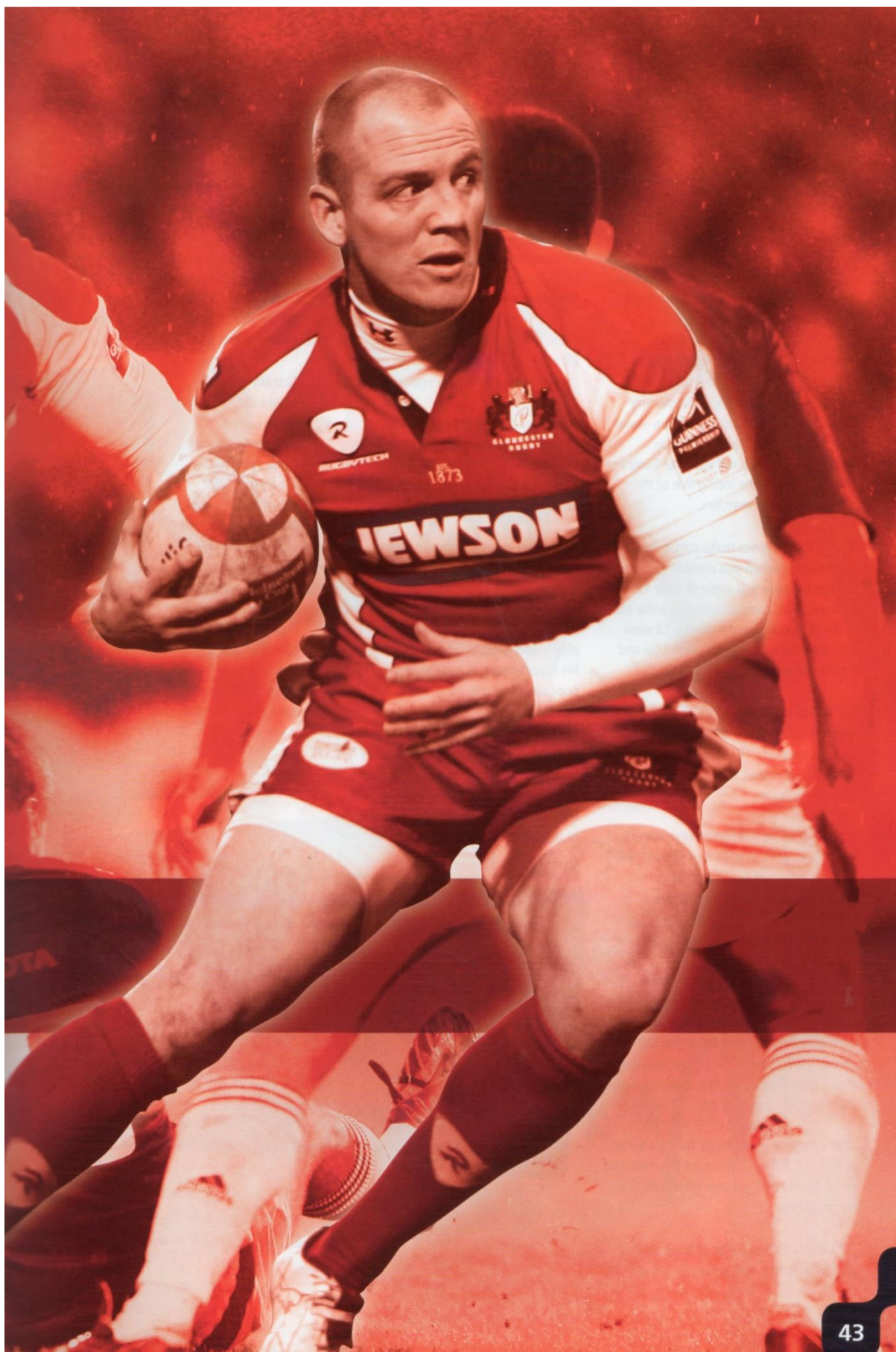




TOUGH TALKING TINDALL BACK IN THE FOLD



After suffering a horror injury on England duty, Mike Tindall returned to Gloucester colours last weekend and could be the key man as the Guinness Premiership reaches its climax, as Steve Cotton of the Western Daily Press reports.



TOUGH TALKING TINDALL BACK IN THE FOLD

▶ MIKE TINDALL has already achieved a remarkable feat this season by playing Heineken Cup rugby just two months after suffering a torn liver and punctured lung.

Now he is eager to play his part by helping Gloucester get their faltering season back on track by rediscovering their sparkling pre-Christmas form – and that starts against Saracens today. The Kingsholm club still lead the Guinness Premiership, despite losing five of their last seven league matches.

In fact, the statistics make particularly grim reading when you consider Gloucester have lost eight of their 12 matches in all competitions since the turn of the year, compared with the 12 wins they claimed from 13 Heineken Cup and Premiership matches before then.

But Tindall is not overly concerned by recent results, claiming the performance in last weekend's 16-3 Heineken Cup quarter-final defeat to Munster showed signs of promise.

And the 29-year-old centre says now is the time to deliver, with four Premiership matches left to play. "We do base ourselves mainly on performances rather than results, and we haven't been performing," said the World Cup winner.

"But we were generally happy, especially with the first 40 minutes, against Munster. We missed opportunities and while people have said that Munster never looked like losing, the way we've analysed that game is that they didn't look like challenging us apart from on turnover ball.

"We've got one goal to go for and we've said that if we can't focus on the next two home games and get two wins then there are problems.

"Obviously there is a lot of frustration and disappointment in the fact we are out

of Europe – and we can't hide from that. In some ways, though, you can use that to fuel you in your next matches, and we have got two big games at home now."

Tindall replaced Anthony Allen when the 21-year-old suffered a shoulder injury shortly before half-time against Munster.

And even if Allen does overcome his injury in time to face Saracens at Kingsholm this afternoon, it would be something of a surprise if Tindall does not start his first match for Gloucester since January 26.

He proved in his 45-minute outing last weekend that the horror injury he suffered while playing for England against Wales on February 2 has not sapped his courageous, full metal jacket style of play – and Gloucester could certainly use his experience and cool head after such a poor run of results.

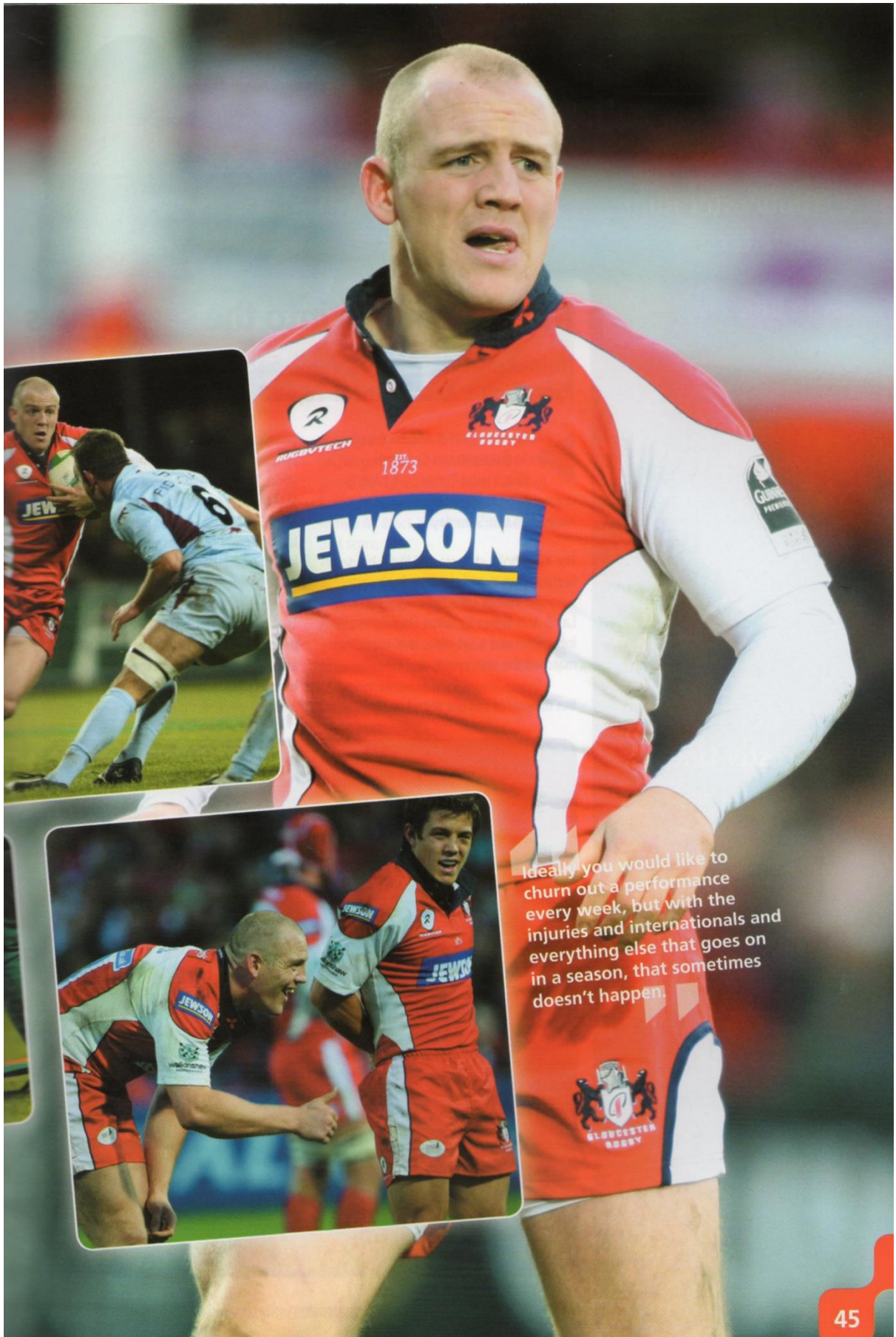
"Last weekend's match was obviously frustrating, but it was nice to be back out on the field again," he said. "As a team we have scraped wins, we've lost games we should have won and now we've just got to get back to playing a consistent game.

"We won the first however many games and everyone talked us up – then you go through a little bad patch and everyone bags you. We've just got to make sure we ignore you all and get back to how we know we can play.

"Ideally you would like to churn out a performance every week, but with the injuries and internationals and everything else that goes on in a season, that sometimes doesn't happen. "But it's our job to make sure we don't compound that and in some ways we have been very indifferent over the last few weeks."



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MATCH ACTION

Gloucester Rugby
Munster

3
16



Time line

14 mins	O'Gara PEN	0-3
37 mins	Dowling TRY	0-8
49 mins	O'Gara PEN	0-11
62 mins	Doug TRY	0-16
66 mins	Lamb PEN (3-16)	3-16

Munster march into the semi-finals

Heineken Cup, Quarter-final, Saturday, April 5,
Kingsholm, Attendance: 16,500, Referee: Nigel Owen

▶ GLOUCESTER'S hopes of a place in the Heineken Cup semi-finals were ended by a bitterly unforgiving Munster performance at Kingsholm last Saturday.

The Kingsholm club started like a house on fire and dominated the opening quarter with the likes of Luke Narraway, Ryan Lamb and James Simpson-Daniel heavily influential and a set-piece that more than matched the Irish province.

But they could not get ahead on the

scoreboard and after Chris Paterson had missed two penalty attempts head onto the sticks, Munster made them pay with the first try. They broke left after the brilliant Alan Quinlan had turned over ball and after Ian Dowling broke down the wing, Munster kept the ball through 15 phases and the same player scored in the opposite corner.

That put Munster 8-0 ahead following a penalty by Ronan O'Gara and Gloucester also lost Carlos Nieto to the sinbin after he was penalised for not rolling away at a ruck.

Gloucester Line-up

15	Olly Morgan	
14	Chris Paterson	
13	James Simpson-Daniel	
12	Anthony Allen	
11	Lesley Vainikolo	
10	Ryan Lamb	(1p)
9	Rory Lawson	
1	Nick Wood	
2	Andy Titterrell	
3	Carlos Nieto	
4	Marco Bortolami (c)	
5	Alex Brown	
6	Peter Buxton	
7	Andy Hazell	
8	Luke Narraway	
REPS		
16	Jeremy Paul	(Titterrell)
17	Alasdair Dickinson	(Wood)
18	Will James	(Bortolami)
19	Gareth Delve	(Buxton)
20	Gareth Cooper	(Lawson)
21	Willie Walker	(Paterson)
22	Mike Tindall	(Allen)



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Man of the Match



Luke Narryway – the Gloucester number eight carried hard throughout.

Gloucester's game in the first-half was some of the best rugby they had played in a while but Munster's crushing ability without the ball in defence was outstanding. Led by Quinlan, Denis Leamy and Paul O'Connell, Munster's fighting qualities were outstanding and although Gloucester hammered away, failed to breach the line.

Munster soaked up Gloucester's increasingly frantic attempts to break the game open and O'Gara added a second penalty to take the visitors 11-0

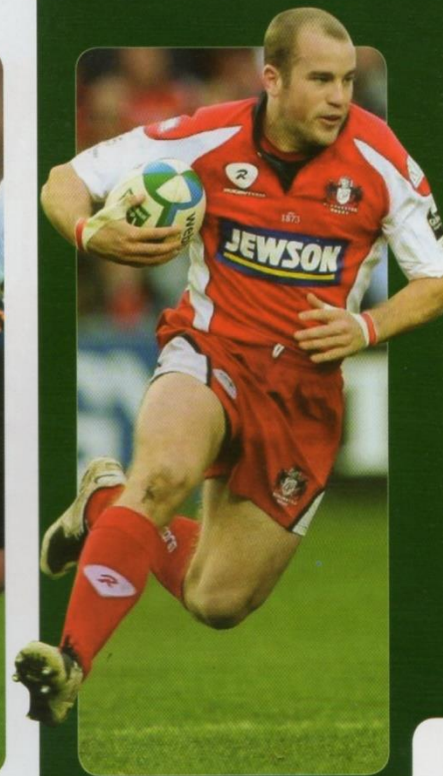
ahead. And when full-back Denis Hurley exchanged passes with Doug Howlett down the right, the full-back kicked in behind Gloucester's defence and the former All Black beat Lamb to the ball and score.

Although Gloucester kept themselves alive with a Lamb penalty in the close stages, it was Munster's suffocating defence, organisational qualities and killer instinct from turnover ball that powered the former champions back into the semi-finals and a meeting against Saracens.

Coach's Comment



"I am convinced the path we are following is the right one and I won't deviate from that," head coach Dean Ryan.





PETER ARNOLD

Peter Arnold has been around long enough to see the Munster defeat for what it was, believes Declan Kidney could be winging his way to the IRFU and welcomes back Alex Brown and Olly Morgan.

NO COMPLAINTS

SO THAT'S it then. The Heineken is over for another year as far as we're concerned. Not that we have any cause for complaint. We were beaten by a better side on the day, and no doubt, will have learned several very valuable lessons in the process.

Perhaps the most useful one concerns defence. For a long time some people have maintained that defences win matches in these sorts of high pressure games: we've seen the truth of that theory in international matches over several years, and saw another proof of it last Saturday.

You can't say that Gloucester actually did very much wrong. Ryan Lamb, James Simpson-Daniel and Anthony Allen in the first half looked to be very potent threats, but superb organisation and hard do-or-die tackling undid all their efforts. In the pack, Andy Hazell was immense even by his standards and Luke Narraway looked every inch worth his international credentials. The front five tried their utmost, and even gave the famed Munster line-out a little heart burn at the beginning.

In short, this was a worthy performance by the lads. It wasn't one of those infuriating days when they didn't seem to want to be there, neither did there seem to be any lack of concentration. Munster, with their vast experience of Heineken rugby, simply knew too much, and had the firepower to exploit it. I'm sure they'll know they've been in a game.

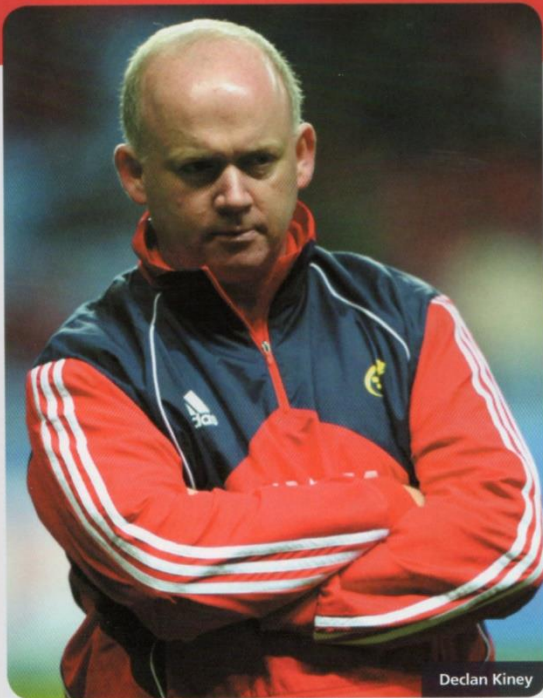
If I were in charge of the Irish RFU, I would be sending the heavies out to kidnap Declan Kidney and drag him kicking and screaming into the international fold. Why should they look any further?

We shall never know what would have happened if Chris Paterson had landed those two early penalties, sitters that they were. Perhaps the occasion got to him, in spite of his vast experience of big-game rugby on the international stage. It must be very different taking your kicks at Murrayfield, where the crowd is largely behind you and a comparatively long way away from you, and trying the same thing, before the dust had even settled after the kick-off, with the crowd, including a couple of thousand of the enemy, virtually breathing down your neck at Kingsholm.

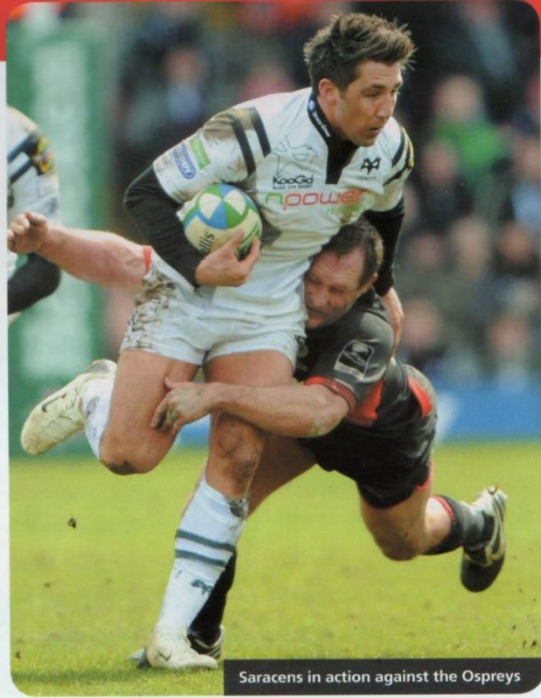
I'm not going to crucify the bloke for his misses. Any kicker can have an off day, and I'm sure that, had the chances come later in the game when the nerves had



Alex Brown



Dedan Kiney



Saracens in action against the Ospreys

had time to settle, he would have landed both of them with the greatest of aplomb.

But as I say, we shall never know what an early six-point lead would have done to the match.

What we do know was that Gloucester v Munster on April 5th 2008 was one of the great Kingsholm occasions.

FAIR PLAY TO SARRIES

WE DO have to congratulate today's welcome opponents for their unexpected (with respect) victory over the Ospreys last week. It means we shall have played two semi-finalists, due to meet shortly, on successive weeks and will be able to judge their relative merits.

I can't resist pointing out, however, that the last time Ospreys lost in the Heineken cup was right here at Kingsholm.

BACK WITH THE BAA-BAAS?

IT WOULD be surprising if a clutch of the chaps we welcomed here last Saturday weren't back at Kingsholm when the Barbarians grace us with their presence

next month. It's inconceivable that Ireland could turn out a side that is anywhere near representative without a solid contingent of Munster players stiffening their ranks. For that matter, we could well see a few old friends from Ulster, too, last here in January in the group stages of the Heineken Cup.

Barbarian F.C. which is the official name of the world's most prestigious rugby club. Have a long and varied history of matches against Ireland. I think I'm right in saying that in the year 2000 they beat the Irish 31-30 at Lansdowne Road, I don't actually recall the game, but it must have been a highly enjoyable, not to say frenetic occasion.

Of course, Gloucester has provided a great many Barbarians over the years, including Mike Burton, which raises a sardonic eyebrow, because one of the rules of the club is that anyone who plays for them must be able to behave himself on and off the field. Not that Burto didn't. Of course not.

My favourite pair of Gloucester Barbarians are Dick and Ian Smith, our one and only

pair of father and son Baa-Baas. There should have been another one when Rob Fidler was selected to follow in his father John's footsteps by playing in the black-and-white shirt. Unfortunately, Rob got himself injured just at the wrong time, and never made it.

One of the Barbarians' traditions is that they always select an uncapped player. Can we hope for someone local at Kingsholm? I would humbly advance the name of Nick Wood for the honour, although there are other candidates. Jake Forster, Dan Tuohy (who has Irish roots) Ryan Lamb...

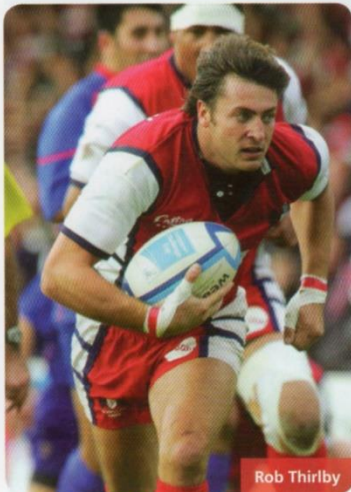
WELCOME BACK!

IT WAS great to see Alex Brown and Olly Morgan back in the fold after injury, and both performing so nobly. Even better, was to see Mike Tindall putting an entire half in, during the most demanding game of the season when many of us doubted whether he would be able to run out again this year.

Welcome back lads! There's still a job to be done.

MATCH OF THE DAYS

It was a trip into the unknown – Gloucester were off to Romania in the European Challenge Cup – and despite the conditions preserved their 100% record in the European Challenge Cup, as Dave King recalls.



Rob Thirlby



Jon Goodridge

IT WAS a trip into the unknown – a frozen journey into rugby's wasteland that meant Gloucester had everything to lose and hardly anything to gain.

They were making the journey to Bucharest in the European Challenge Cup and with temperatures way below zero, Gloucester's visit to the Army Sports Club at the Steau Stadium was looking more than a challenging one – if not in playing terms.

The visit to Bucharest was the fifth match in what was to become a nine match success story as we were to lift the cup in a thrilling finale triumph against London Irish at The Stoop the following May.

The team that lined up against the Romanian side only included three of the team that had faced Saracens in their Guinness Premiership match the week before and there was no secret made of the fact that a five point haul would keep Gloucester as the leaders of Pool Three.

There was no doubt the experience would be a new one for virtually every player and supporter who was making the trip – and more than 100 braved the conditions to see Gloucester tough out a narrow victory.

Despite being out-classed at Kingsholm, the home side were determined, hugely physical, made the most of a playing surface that was partly frozen and partly mud and had the benefit of some inconsistent refereeing decisions from Frenchman David Rosich.

The first half was played out as predicted with Jake Boer's try the only score in a very scrappy starting 40 minutes. The home team's defence earned praise from all quarters to restrict Gloucester to a single score. This was in direct contrast to the score line of 106-3 in the corresponding pool match staged at Kingsholm the October before.

The conditions were playing a significant part with Marcel Garvey, Terry Fanolua and Rob Thirlby all wearing thermals and both Bayonne and Toulon had only

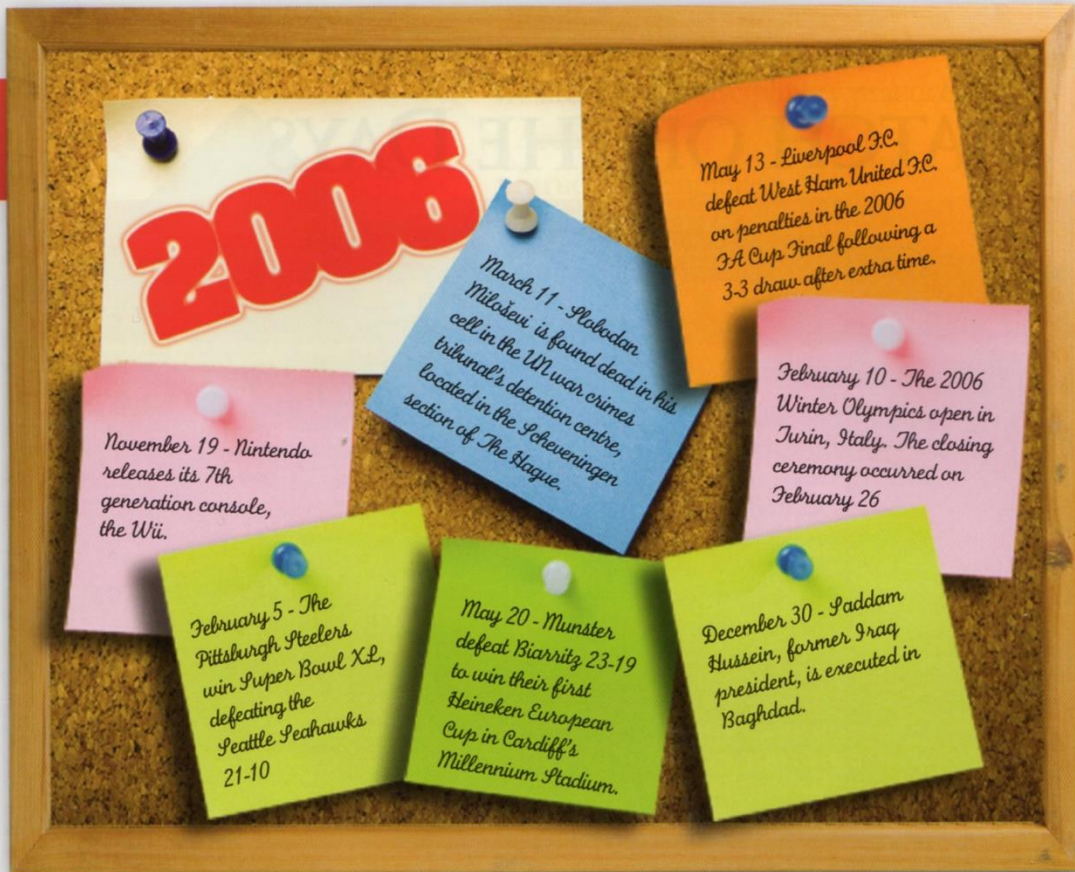
recorded narrow victories at the Ghincea Stadium on previous visits

Boer's try was set up in the fourth minute when Simon Amor found touch and Adam Eustace secured line-out ball to set up a rolling maul and Boer scored in the freezing conditions.

It was time to show Bucceresti who was in charge and it was replacement Gary Powell who powered over following Luke Narraway's tapped free kick that opened up the home defence for Rob Elloway to touch down.

The response from the home team was obvious, Raliu and Mihalache charged up field and a three man overlap saw Correl Tatu score in the corner. With the home side only trailing by 12-7 the sinbining of Terry Fanolua raised their hopes to fever pitch. However, Amor steadied the fraying nerves with a penalty.

That signalled an immediate response from Dean Ryan who sent three of his experienced players to turn the match in the final quarter. With the Bucceresti



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prop Nicolae Nere sent to the sinbin the home team were visibly tiring and Gloucester established a more definite advantage when Mefin Davies moved the ball out of the maul to send Peter Richards in for a try.

When Bucceresti flanker Madlalin Baraulea conceded a penalty by tackling Narraway as he steered the ball at the scrum, the penalty try awarded preserved Gloucester's 100% record.

Few Gloucester fans begrudged Dumbrava's two late penalties that enabled the Romanian hosts a respectable score line losing by only 27-13.

Overall the weekend was something that wouldn't be happening again soon but for those hardiest of Shedheads it was a great experience.

Fans from Gloucester laid flowers at the memorial to the rugby players killed in the revolution. Alan Kear of the KSM presented Bucceresti Juniors Coach, Gheorghe Hustui and Team Captain Vicentui Cermat with one of four full sets of kits they had purchased raising £2,100 from their members, a creditable effort.

Head Coach Dean Ryan said: 'I didn't think we were ever going to get the score line that maybe others thought. We had to get across a few hurdles in terms

of conditions and law interpretation and we did that.' He went on to add, 'It was a huge leveller. You could hardly stand up and there was a pretty liberal use of the tackle law by the French referee.

"It was very difficult to come out here, with the disruption to the side and we're pretty happy we achieved what we came here for."



MATCH OF THE DAYS

THE TEAMS

STEAU BUCCURESTI:

15. DAN DUMBRAVA
14. CATALIN NICOLAE
13. CATALIN DASCALU
12. CSABA GAL
11. ION TEODORESCU
10. FLORIN VLAICU
9. ALEXANDRU LUPU
1. NICOLAE NERE
2. MARCEL MIHALACHE
3. PAULICA ION
4. CORNEL TATU
5. CRISTIAN MOCANU
6. MADALIN BARAULEA
7. DANIEL CARPO
8. COSMIN RATIU

REPLACEMENTS:

16. RADU BASALAU
17. BOGDAN ZEBEGA
18. STERE SPONTE
19. STELIAN BURCEA
20. ONAL AGEACAI
21. CATALIN FERCU
22. IULIAN ANDREI

REFEREE: D.ROSICH (FRANCE).

GLOUCESTER:

15. JON GOODRIDGE
14. MARCEL GARVEY
13. TERRY FANOLUA
12. ANTHONY ALLEN
11. ROB THIRLBY
10. SIMON AMOR
9. HAYDN THOMAS
1. NICK WOOD
2. ROB ELLOWAY
3. TERRY SIGLEY
4. ADAM EUSTACE
5. MARK CORNWELL
6. PETER BUXTON
7. JAKE BOER
8. LUKE NARRAWAY

REPLACEMENTS:

16. MEFIN DAVIES
17. GARY POWELL
18. ALEX BROWN
19. QUINTON DAVIDS
20. PETER RICHARDS
21. LUDOVIC MERCIER
22. MARK FOSTER



Peter Richards scores his try

FAN ZONE WITH BOB FENTON

Bob Fenton hits back at the critics following last Saturday's Heineken Cup defeat, delights in what makes Kingsholm special and is ready for another vital game this afternoon.

▶ YOU KNOW sometimes I despair. Last weekend we played one of the best cup teams around. And we lost. That, my friends, is what sport is all about – you play and sometimes you win, sometimes you lose (yes, yes, I know sometimes you draw too, but that's not the point).

But some of the comments from people following the match were incredible – if you believe some “supporters” we have no players of any note, we have no heart and we have no fight.

You have to wonder what game some people were watching, maybe it's the fact that when you watch it on the telly you only see a minute amount of the game and that distorts the perception. But I was there, and I can tell you that I thought we were a hell of a lot better than some people – some apparent Gloucester

supporters – may think.

Andy Hazell is a superman in cherry and white, Ryan Lamb played one of his best game in ages, our front five more than stood up to what was essentially the Irish national pack, and at times our eight were bullying them all round the park.

What Munster had that we didn't was a fantastic intensity about their play, their defensive effort was one of the best I have seen in many years, I can't think of many teams that could match it. They scored two tries against us, the second quite exception effort finished by one of the best try scorers in modern rugby history.

But I tell you this – if we only played half a dozen or so matches every year we would be doing just the same. Without sounding disrespectful to Munster, they are a cup side and not a lot more. The

hopelessly inadequate Magners League means that they do not have to play at that level week in, week out. They know that at the start of the season they are virtually nailed on for a Heineken Cup place.

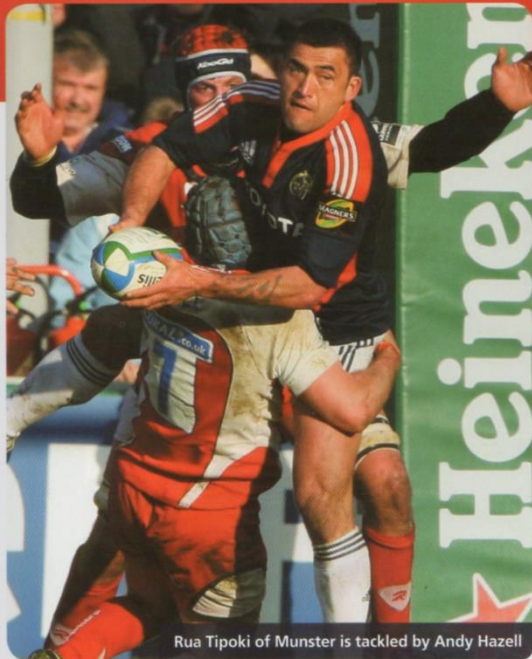
I'll go as far as saying that if Munster were to play in the Premiership they would be scrapping for a European place along with a few other sides – fourth or fifth place at best.

Similarly their support at Kingsholm was brilliant – the best away support I have ever seen in the place. But look at the attendance at the next Magners league match, they will be lucky if the total attendance matches the number of people in Gloucester who were wearing Munster colours.

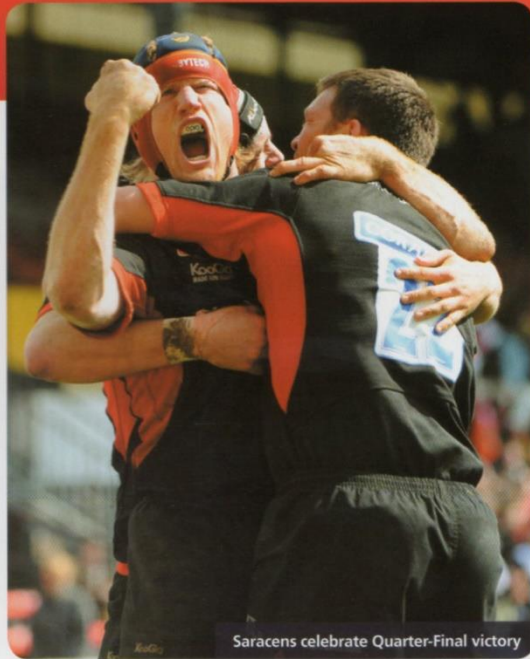
But good luck to them in the next round.



Munster Rugby Fans



Rua Tipoki of Munster is tackled by Andy Hazell



Saracens celebrate Quarter-Final victory



Andy Hazell is a superman in cherry and white, Ryan Lamb played one of his best game in ages, our front five more than stood up to what was essentially the Irish national pack...

Bob Fenton on the Heineken Cup performance.



Like us, our visitors today were in Heineken Cup action last week, I started to watch it on the box but turned it off. I'm sure it was an interesting match but the anti-social drummers that occupy a couple of seats at Vicarage Road contrived to make it an unwatchable event – although any victory over the Ospreys is very notable.

I'm going to sound like a grumpy old man now, but someone, somewhere, should bar those people from ever entering a ground. If I want to listen to people banging drums I'll watch a re-run of 'Zulu' or similar. The migraine inducing nonsense is the reason why I, and an awful lot of other people, will not go to Vicarage Road.

A few days before the Munster game, the venerable 'Pricey' and I were asked to talk about all things Gloucester to the 'Total

Rugby' programme (and to those who watched it: apologies for the very cheesy bits, they made us do it!), one of the things we talked about was atmosphere and what made Kingsholm special.

Watching the first five minutes of the Sarries – Ospreys game I thought I should have answered that by saying what we didn't have that meant Kingsholm was special.

We don't have drummers banging away all match, we don't have furry mascots or great fat balloon men covering the players tunnel, we don't have canned cheering, we don't have overly loud music when Gloucester score, we don't have Smashy and Nicey DJs, we don't have tasteless dancing girls.

Instead we have, on average, about 12,000 knowledgeable fans who are

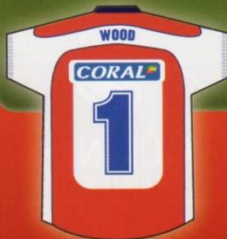
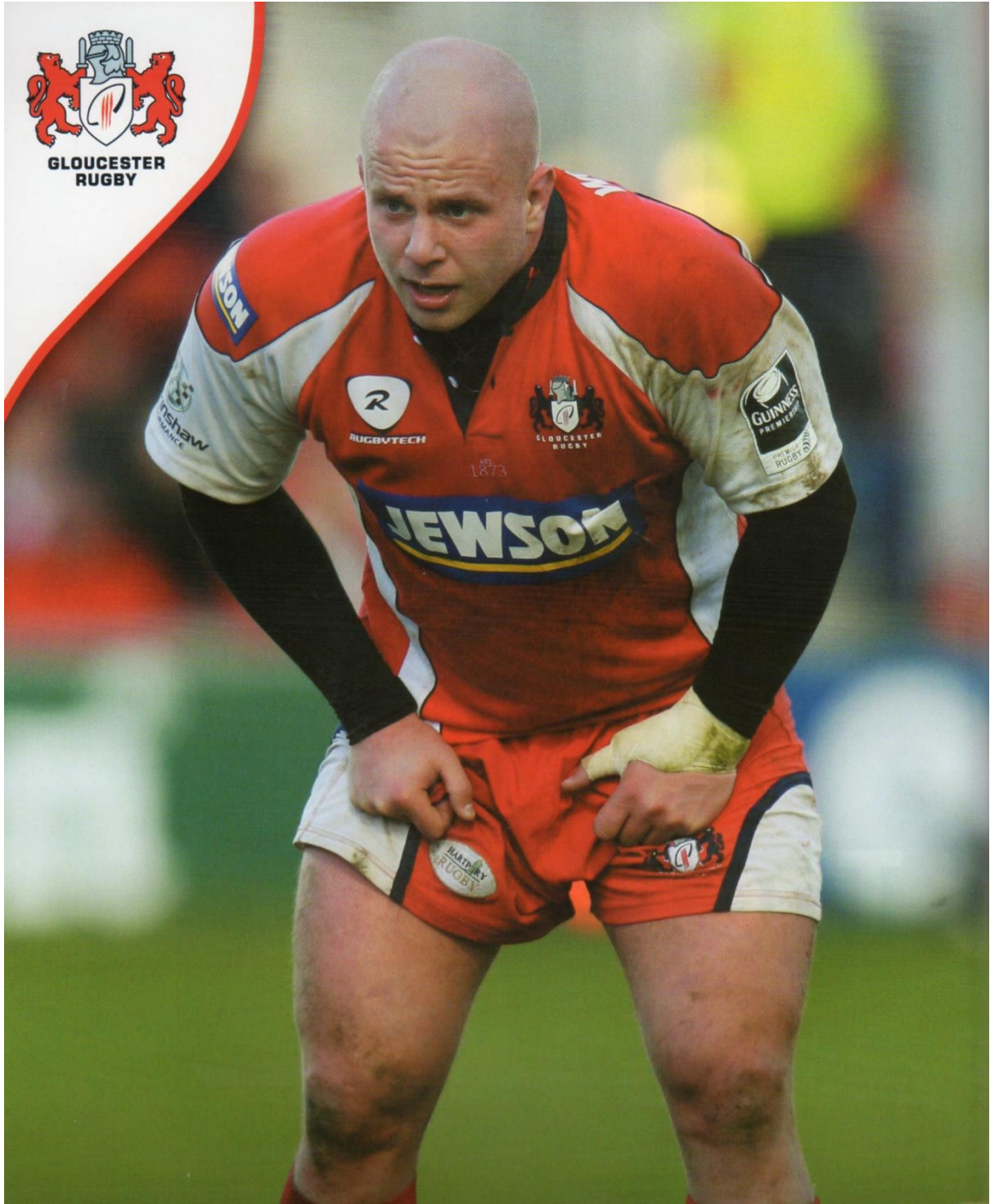
more than capable of creating a real atmosphere, something that makes you want to take part rather than telling you that you ought to take part. And believe me, there is a real difference. And long may that continue. If that makes us old fashioned, then so be it.

Turning to on-field matters, Saracens produced an excellent display to gain a semi-final berth in the Heineken Cup, not many people gave them much of a chance against The Ospreys but they fought their way to a well deserved victory.

This has been a good season for the men from Watford, building nicely from the tail end of last term. For so long now they have had a fantastic array of talent in their squad, but little cohesion on the field – all the players and none of the team if you like. They are a very different outfit now, and a genuine force in the Premiership.

So today is going to be some encounter and one that is no doubt going to prove very difficult for all the various pundits to call. Well except for me: a home win, of course.

How could it be anything else?



NICK WOOD

DOB: 09.01.83

Weight: 17st 5lb

Height: 6'1"

Position: Prop