

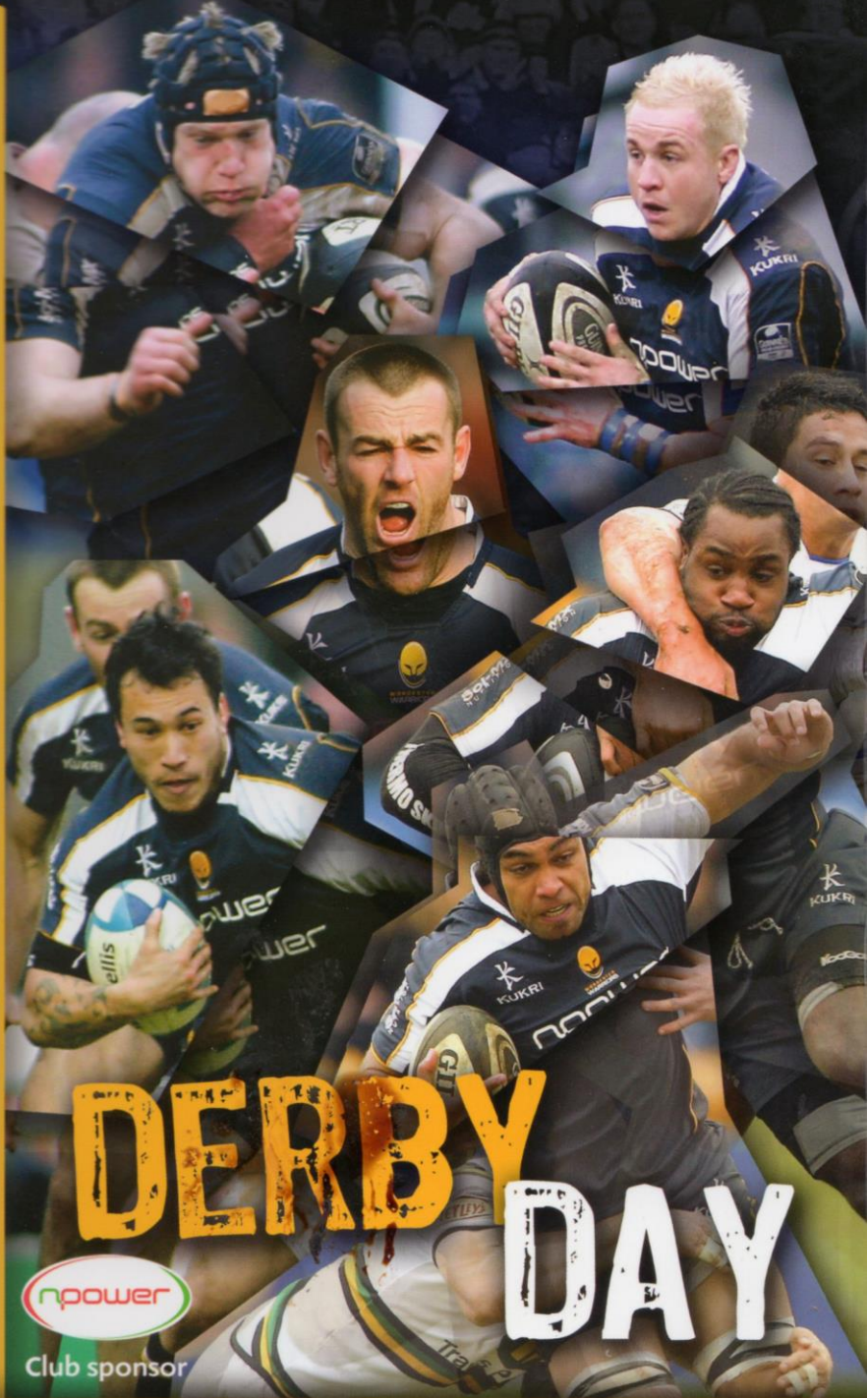


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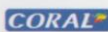
VS GLOUCESTER RUGBY
SUNDAY 22ND MARCH 2009 • KICK-OFF 3PM



DERBY DAY



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THE CHERRY & WHITES

In the unique world that is Gloucester Rugby, the team that was written off and rubbished following back-to-back Heineken Cup defeats have thrived in the Guinness Premiership totalling to date a respectable twelve wins from a possible eighteen ahead of their clash with the Warriors today.

Consistency has never been Gloucester's problem. Indeed, they have finished top of the pile for the last two seasons. What they have not been able to do is transmit that ability into play-off success but momentum is suddenly beginning to shift again at Castle Grim.

Victory from the back of beyond against London Irish was full of all the things Gloucester get regularly criticised for not having: Resolve, attitude, stratospheric belief and bulging physicality levels. Combine that with their victory over London Wasps at Kingsholm last weekend where they picked up another 4 vital points, suddenly Dean Ryan's side are believing in themselves once again.

There are signs that the likes of Gareth Delve and Greg Somerville may just be the dogs unmentionables given performances so far. Delve's return from a long-term knee injury has given Gloucester a carrier in heavy traffic, while Somerville's mountain of knowledge and all-round expertise have been a galvanising influence.

Throw in new arrival Carlos Spencer and his box of tricks, the game-breaking qualities of James Simpson-Daniel, the running abilities of Iain Balshaw and the marksmanship of Olly Barkley and it is easy to appreciate that Gloucester are feeling pretty good about themselves.

However, early season defeats against Leicester and Sale Sharks had left one of the most fancied sides in the country staring up from the uncomfortable position of seventh place, struggling to adapt to the new Experimental Law Variations (ELV's) and generally fumbling around for cohesion and reliability at the start of the campaign.

The close season was not so much about what happened at Gloucester as what didn't happen. Despite finishing top of the Guinness Premiership pile again at the end of the regular 2007-8 season, Gloucester again failed to transfer their obvious potential into a dividend during the play-offs – it was a familiar, unfulfilled ending to what threatened to be a triumphant season.

By that time, head coach Ryan had done the majority of his recruiting – a policy that included nabbing one of Bath's diamonds in Barkley – Llanelli centre Matthew Watkins and former Gloucester second row Adam Eustace – also from Stradey Park.

When he completed negotiations to bring Canterbury prop Somerville to Kingsholm, the general thought was that Gloucester's squad was stronger than last season's and well capable of challenging again this season.

But the most striking advances have been made by players

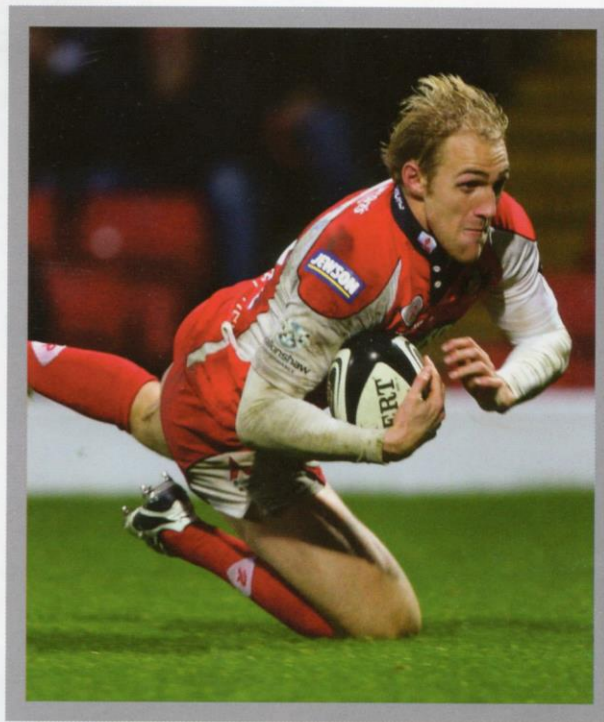
already in situ. The increasingly influential Luke Narryway is maturing into a leader, while the safe as houses Olly Morgan is a year older and a year wiser and attracting the attentions of the England selectors.

Gloucester's Premiership campaign got off to the worst possible start with a home defeat to those Tigers – their third successive victory at Kingsholm in eight months. Tries from Geordan Murphy and Toby Flood sealed a 20-8 victory – Gloucester's only try coming from the outstanding Morgan in the first-half.

But they responded by winning for the first time ever at the Rec in league rugby in a spot of west country tribalism unique to the people involved. They backed that up with a tense victory over Harlequins, the Premiership pace-setters, with tries from Morgan and Alasdair Strokosch before Charlie Hodgson subjected them to a withering kicking assault at Edgeley Park as they struggled to come to terms with the ELV's. They have won games but have not been convincing so far this season – as the Falcons will testify.

They re-grouped with a 39-23 win over Newcastle at Kingsholm that included a bonus point and then built on that success with a 24-19 victory over Wasps in the EDF Energy Cup with tries from Willie Walker and Lesley Vainikolo and will face the Ospreys in the semi-finals next month.

Despite bitter Heineken Cup disappointment, victories over Saracens and then back-to-back bonus point successes over Bristol and Northampton means Gloucester make their latest journey of 2009 in good heart and shape and in the Guinness Premiership that has accelerated in recent weeks with wins over Irish, Bath and Wasps before the trip to Sixway's today.



DIRECTOR OF RUGBY DEAN RYAN

Famed for his no-nonsense approach as a player for Wasps, Newcastle and Bristol, Ryan became Gloucester's head coach in 2004-5 when he replaced Nigel Melville.

He is now the longest serving head coach in the Guinness Premiership and in his first full season guided the club the European Challenge Cup final with victory over London Irish. Instrumental in blooding the likes of Ryan Lamb, Anthony Allen, Olly Morgan, Narryway and co, Ryan has taken Gloucester to the top of the table in two successive seasons. His young side were gunned down against Leicester in the 2006-7 final and although they finished top last season, lost to the same opponents in the semi-finals. There is no doubting Gloucester's consistency or ability – all Ryan and his fellow coaches, Bryan Redpath, Denis Betts and Carl Hogg need to do now is transfer that quality into knockout matches and land the big one.



SURNAME	CHRISTIAN	POSITION	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	HONOURS
Adams	Jack	Centre	6ft 1in	15st	
Allen	Anthony	Centre	5ft 11in	14st 7lb	England
Azam	James	Wing	6ft 1in	19st	France
Balshaw	Iain	Full back	6ft 1in	14st 2lb	England
Barkley	Olly	Centre	5ft 10in	14st 6lb	England
Bortolami	Marco	Lock	6ft 5in	17st 5lb	Italy
Brown	Alex	Lock	6ft 7lb	18st 1lb	England
Buxton	Peter	Back row	6ft 4in	18st 1lb	
Cooper	Gareth	Fly half	5ft 7in	13st	Wales
Delve	Gareth	Back row	6ft 3in	18st 1lb	Wales
Dickinson	Alasdair	Prop	6ft	17st 5lb	Scotland
Eustace	Adam	Lock	6ft 5in	16st 12lb	
Forrester	James	Back row	6ft 5in	17st 4lb	England
Foster	Jack	Prop	6ft 1in	18st 11lb	
Foster	Mark	Wing	6ft	15st 10lb	
Hazell	Andrew	Back row	6ft	14st 13lb	England
James	Will	Lock	6ft 6in	18st 11lb	Wales
Lamb	Ryan	Stand off	5ft 9in	13st 5lb	
Lawson	Rory	Scrum half	5ft 8in	13st 5lb	Scotland
Lewis	Dave	Scrum half	5ft 7in	12st 8lb	
McMillan	Ross	Hooker	6ft 1in	16st 7lb	
Morgan	Olly	Full back	6ft 2in	14st 2lb	England
Narraway	Luke	Back row	6ft 3in	17st	England
Nieto	Carlos	Prop	6ft 1in	17st 4lb	Italy
Norton	Dan	Wing	5ft 10in	12st 8lb	
Oera	Akapusi	Back row	6ft 4in	16st	Fiji
Sharples	Charlie	Wing	6ft	14st 9lb	
Simpson-Daniel	James	Wing	6ft	14st 6lb	England
Somerville	Greg	Prop	6ft 1in	18st 2lb	New Zealand
Spencer	Carlos	Fly half	6ft 1in	15st 6lb	New Zealand
Strokosch	Alasdair	Back row	6ft 3in	16st 11lb	Scotland
Titterell	Andy	Hooker	5ft 10in	14st 11lb	England
Tindall	Mike	Centre	6ft 2in	15st 12lb	England
Trinder	Henry	Centre	6ft	13st 5lb	
Vainikolo	Lesley	Wing	6ft 2in	17st 8lb	England
Watkins	Matthew	Centre	6ft	14st 7lb	Wales
Williams	Dan	Number 8	6ft 5in	16st 7lb	
Wood	Nick	Prop	6ft 1in	17st 5lb	
Young	Dave	Prop	6ft	18st 6lb	
Wilson	Roger	Number 8	6ft 3in	16st 9lb	Ireland



V



TODAY'S SQUADS

	CHRIS LATHAM	15	FULL BACK	15	OLLY MORGAN	
	RICO GEAR	14	RIGHT WING	14	IAIN BALSHAW	
	HAL LUSCOMBE	13	CENTRE	13	ANTHONY ALLEN	
	DALE RASMUSSEN	12	CENTRE	12	OLLY BARKLEY	
	MARCEL GARVEY	11	LEFT WING	11	CHARLIE SHARPLES	
	WILLIE WALKER	10	FLY HALF	10	CARLOS SPENCER	
	RYAN POWELL	9	SCRUM HALF	9	RORY LAWSON	
	MATT MULLAN	1	PROP	1	NICK WOOD	
	ALEKI LUTUITUI	2	HOKKER	2	OLIVIER AZAM	
	DARREN MORRIS	3	PROP	3	GREG SOMERVILLE	
	GREG RAWLINSON	4	LOCK	4	WILL JAMES	
	WILL BOWLEY	5	LOCK	5	ALEX BROWN	
	NETANI TALEI	6	BLINDSIDE	6	LUKE NARRAWAY	
	PAT SANDERSON (C)	7	OPENSIDE	7	ANDY HAZELL	
	KAI HORSTMANN	8	NO.8	8	GARETH DELVE	
	CALLUM BLACK	16	REPLACEMENT	16	ANDY TITTERRELL	
	CHRIS FORTEY	17	REPLACEMENT	17	JACK FORSTER	
	GRAHAM KITCHENER	18	REPLACEMENT	18	ADAM EUSTACE	
	JAMES COLLINS	19	REPLACEMENT	19	AKAPUSI QERA	
	JONNY ARR	20	REPLACEMENT	20	RYAN LAMB	
	JOE CARLISLE	21	REPLACEMENT	21	MATTHEW WATKINS	
	MILES BENJAMIN	22	REPLACEMENT	22	MARK FOSTER	

DIRECTOR OF RUGBY
Mike Ruddock



Final Score

DIRECTOR OF RUGBY
Dean Ryan

TODAY'S OFFICIALS

REFEREE - Dave Pearson
TOUCH JUDGES - Martin Buck & Don Heme
FOURTH OFFICIAL - Rob Debney