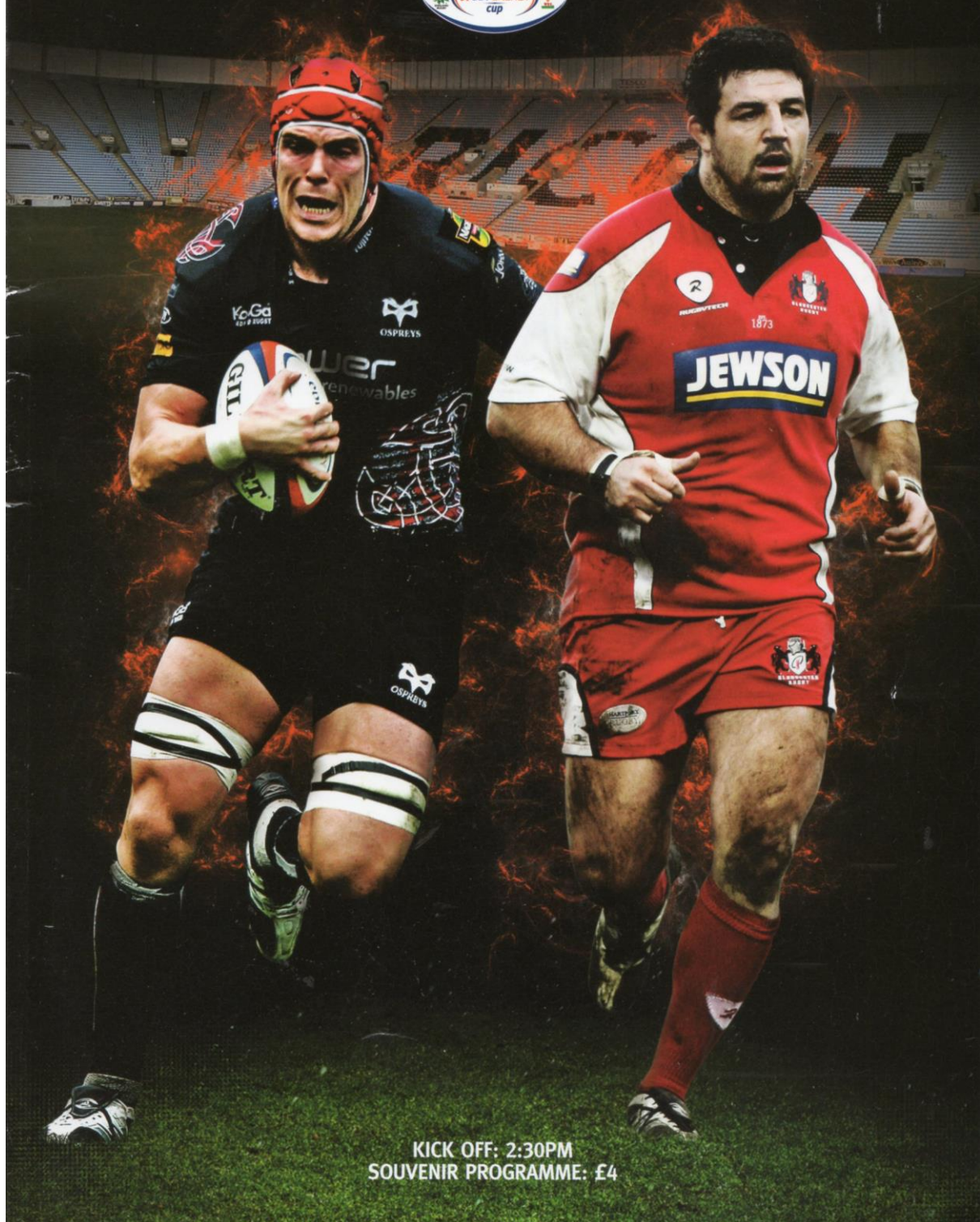




GLOUCESTER RUGBY V. OSPREYS



EDF ENERGY CUP SEMI-FINAL
RICOH ARENA, COVENTRY | SATURDAY 28 MARCH 2009



KICK OFF: 2:30PM
SOUVENIR PROGRAMME: £4

MATCH PREVIEW

BY ROB WILDMAN

EDF ENERGY CUP SEMI-FINAL 1
KICK OFF: 2.30 PM



First, apologies to those faithful Gloucester fans, but can we get the obvious and a hard fact out of the way. This semi-final can easily be described as the underachievers versus the champions.

The uncharitable will describe the Cherry and Whites as 'chokers' but some of us want to eat our pre-match brunch in the Mango Café, opposite Kingsholm, undisturbed next time we are in the city.

Even the most hardened Gloucester supporter must acknowledge that their men have something to prove after a number of near misses in major games. Remember Leicester in last season's Guinness Premiership semi final? And we will make just one reference to Cardiff Blues and two decisive European Cup pool games this season.

Kingsholm regulars can look to the results in this season's EDF Energy Cup for comfort. Tight victories over Gwent Dragons (25-20), Wasps (24-19) and Newcastle (11-10) show that their men are able to grind out the results. But now it is time for another big game.

Ospreys do not lack for motivation either. They are seeking back-to-back titles, following last season's win in the final against Leicester Tigers at Twickenham.

A second success would further the growing reputation of Welsh regional rugby. Ospreys have stated their ambition to be the best in Europe

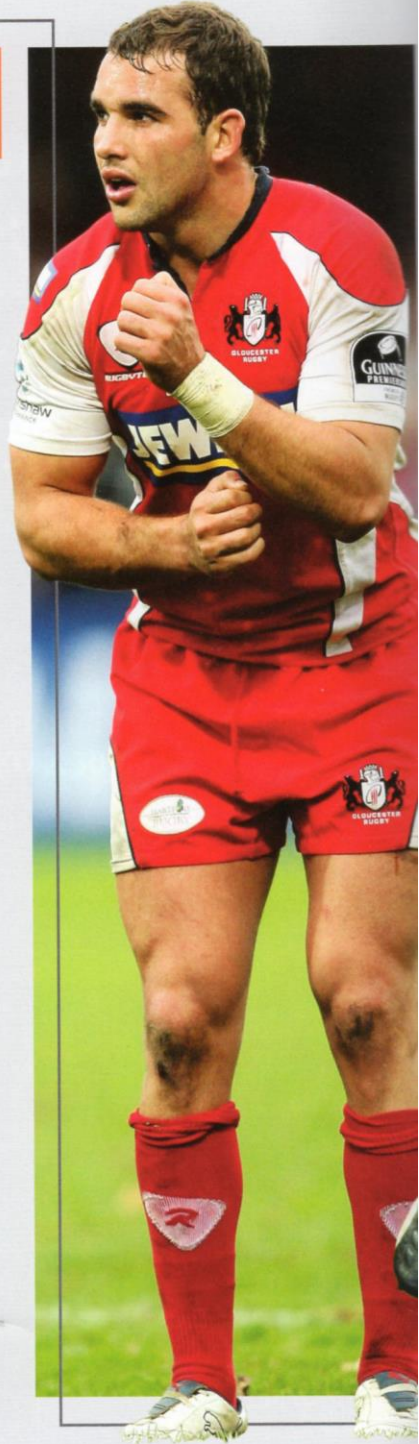
and their players have the ability to win well.

Just remember the way Saracens were swept aside in last season's semi-final at the Millennium Stadium. It was a majestic performance, delivered only a week after the Grand Slam triumph. Shane Williams scored two tries and there was one each for Gavin Henson and Filo Tiatia. Will today's game be a similar outcome?

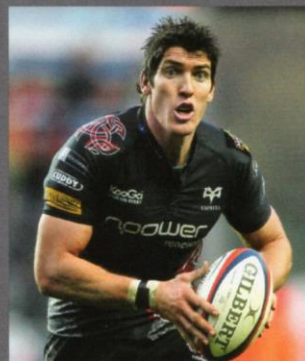
If a neutral can have a say among fiercely-proud supporters then the form 'horse' is Gloucester. They have had an unbroken stint of rigorous action in the Guinness Premiership. Games against Sale, Harlequins, Bath, Leicester, Wasps and Worcester should make for a battle-hardened team strengthened by their internationals from the RBS Six Nations Championship, led by England's Mike Tindall.

The Ospreys have had far less rugby (only two games in the Magners League since mid-February) and will be reliant on their gang of Welsh players to quickly find the form that undid Saracens last March. The likes of Williams and Henson are used to making the jump from international to domestic rugby and will not be too concerned about the lack of regular league action.

It is a difficult game to predict. Each team won their respective home game when the teams last met, in two Heineken Cup pool games two years ago. They were unforgiving games and it will be the same today.



GLOUCESTER RUGBY V. OSPREYS



GLOUCESTER RUGBY: ALL TIME LEADING POINTS SCORERS: EDF ENERGY CUP



	NAME	POINTS	POINTS/MATCH
1	Ludovic Mercier	76	15.2
2	Willie Walker	39	6.5
3	James Simpson-Daniel	25	4.17
4	Lesley Vainikolo	15	3.75
5	Ryan Lamb	14	3.5
6	Olly Barkley	11	5.5
7	Iain Balshaw	10	2.5
8	Rory Lawson	10	1.43
9	John Goodridge	10	5
10	Peter Richards	10	2.5



OSPREYS: ALL TIME LEADING POINTS SCORERS: EDF ENERGY CUP



	NAME	POINTS	POINTS/MATCH
1	James Hook	144	13.09
2	Shane Williams	60	5.45
3	Gavin Henson	53	5.89
4	Shaun Connor	35	3.5
5	Nikki Walker	25	2.78
6	Sonny Parker	20	2
7	Lee Byrne	20	1.82
8	Matthew Jones	16	5.33
9	Barry Williams	10	1.25
10	Tommy Bowe	10	3.33



WELCOME

Whenever two clubs the size of Gloucester and the Ospreys meet, no matter what the occasion, competition or circumstance, supporters of each side are guaranteed a memorable confrontation.

On behalf of everyone associated with Gloucester Rugby, can I welcome you all to the Ricoh Arena this afternoon for what should be a great rugby spectacle between two Welsh and two English clubs.

There will be a truly international flavour on show in both of the semi-finals and following the culmination of the RBS Six Nations Championship, each of the four teams will have key individuals, decision makers and game-breakers back in club colours and that is fantastic for the competition.

For Gloucester that is even more significant. Any team would miss the leadership qualities of a Mike Tindall or the physical prowess of an Alasdair Strokosch and we are delighted individuals of that calibre are available today.

We have come head to head with the Ospreys for big games in the past. It was only last season we found ourselves competing in the pool stages of Europe together which resulted in both sides taking a crucial win at our home grounds.

There is no doubt in my mind that this Gloucester team have learnt from previous experiences and their ability and talent to win games will enable them to progress to the final stages of this competition as well as continuing to fight it out at the top of the Guinness Premiership.



A club of this size and stature demands to be competing regularly in the knockout stages of major competitions - that is what we have set out to do and we are ready for the challenge we will face today.

As always we are joined here today by our tremendously loyal supporters and I hope they will cheer the players on and really help make this day a memorable occasion.

Dean Ryan, Head Coach



"IT WAS ONLY LAST SEASON WE FOUND OURSELVES COMPETING IN THE POOL STAGES OF EUROPE TOGETHER WHICH RESULTED IN BOTH SIDES TAKING A CRUCIAL WIN AT OUR HOME GROUNDS."





ROAD TO THE RICOH

Gloucester progressed to the semi-finals of the EDF Energy Cup for the first time this season with a clean sweep of victories in the pool stages.

They got off to the best possible start with potentially their hardest game of the group stages. Willie Walker scored a try, kicked three penalties and a conversion as Gloucester eased past Wasps 24-19 at Kingsholm. Lesley Vainikolo was also on the score-sheet with a typical poachers try.

Gloucester's win was secured by a Ryan Lamb drop-goal. The second game in the group, against Paul Turner's Dragons, proved far closer than it might have done. The Welsh side were durable and competitive for long periods and Gloucester needed two more scores from the powerful Vainikolo to set them up for a 25-20 victory.

Also on the score sheet were Iain Balshaw and scrum-half Rory Lawson as Gloucester made their Kingsholm advantage count with a second successive victory.

EDF ENERGY CUP 2008-09: GROUP A STANDINGS

TEAM	PLD	W	D	L	F	A	TF	TA	TB	LB	PTS
GLOUCESTER RUGBY	3	3	0	0	60	49	7	6	1	0	13
London Wasps	3	2	0	1	66	47	8	4	1	1	10
N' Gwent Dragons	3	1	0	2	55	60	7	8	0	1	5
Newcastle Falcons	3	0	0	3	37	62	4	8	0	1	1



Dean Ryan's side were almost certain of qualification into the knock-out stages and secured their passage with a 11-10 win away at Newcastle. In a tight, tense

game, Newcastle led until the death when replacement Apo Satala was bundled over from close range to seal Gloucester's date with the Ospreys.

EDF ENERGY CUP 2008-09: GLOUCESTER RUGBY: Top Scorers

TOTAL	NAME	TRIES	CONS	PEN	DG
16	WILLIE WALKER	1	1	3	0
15	Lesley Vainikolo	3	0	0	0
11	Olly Barkley	0	1	3	0
5	Apolosi Satala	1	0	0	0
5	Scott Lawson	1	0	0	0
5	Iain Balshaw	1	0	0	0
3	Ryan Lamb	0	0	0	1



GAME 1:
SATURDAY 4TH OCTOBER 2008
VENUE: KINGSHOLM
ATTENDANCE: 7,864

GLOUCESTER GLORIOUS AS WASPS WIMPER



GLOUCESTER RUGBY 24 - 19 **LONDON WASPS**



Ryan Lamb 1DG,
 Willie Walker 1T + 1C + 3P,
 Lesley Vainikolo 1T

Mark Robinson 1T,
 Jeremy Staunton 2P,
 Dave Walder 1P,
 James Haskell 1T



GAME 2:
SATURDAY 25TH OCTOBER 2008
VENUE: KINGSHOLM
ATTENDANCE: 8,057

BATTLING GLOUCESTER SLAY DRAGONS

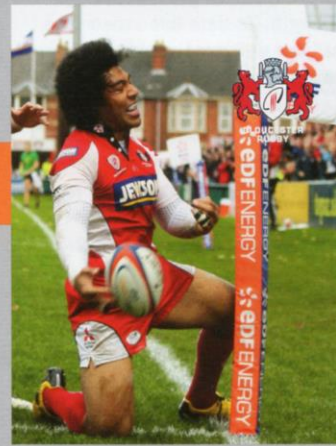


GLOUCESTER RUGBY 25 - 20 **N' GWENT DRAGONS**



Iain Balshaw 1T,
 Olly Barkley 1C + 1P,
 Scott Lawson 1T,
 Lesley Vainikolo 2T

Shaun Connor 1C + 1P,
 Richard Fussell 1T,
 Grant Webb 1T,
 Jason Tovey 1T,



GAME 3:
SUNDAY 2ND NOVEMBER 2008
VENUE: KINGSTON PARK
ATTENDANCE: 3,614

GLOUCESTER SQUEAK INTO SEMI-FINALS

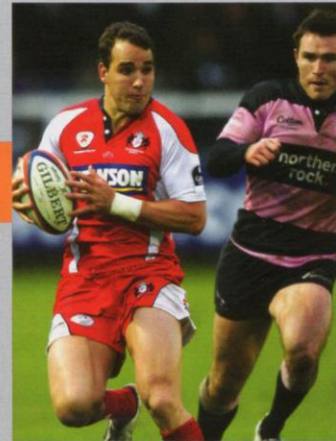


NEWCASTLE FALCONS 10 - 11 **GLOUCESTER RUGBY**



Rob Miller 2C,
 Jon Golding 1T,
 Rory Clegg 1P

Olly Barkley 2P,
 Apolosi Satala 1T





THREE TO WATCH



GARETH DELVE

The number eight has been a revelation since his return from another cruciate ligament injury in February. Delve sustained the injury on Test duty with Wales last summer but his return has coincided with Gloucester's challenge at the top of the Guinness Premiership.

His ability at close quarters, carrying qualities and ultra physicality is key in Gloucester's forward armoury. Delve moved to Kingsholm from Bath almost two seasons ago and although his number of appearances have been limited, his value, leadership credentials and sheer hunger to make up for lost time mean he is one of the most valued members of the Gloucester squad.

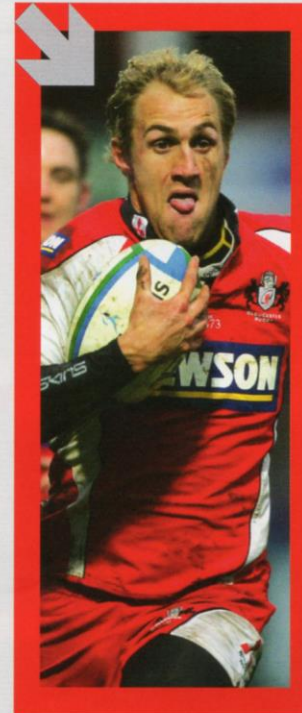


GREG SOMERVILLE

The most capped prop in All Blacks history, Somerville's record needs no explaining. He joined Gloucester from Canterbury in November after winning 68 caps for the All Blacks.

A tight-head specialist, Somerville made his debut against London Irish five days before Christmas but suffered a detached retina in his left eye.

However, he recovered ahead of schedule and has been a key element in Gloucester's forward pack. Outstanding at the set-piece, his scrummaging qualities, destructive defending and mountains of experience means he has been one of the most under-stated but most valuable signings of the season.



OLLY MORGAN

There is probably no better full-back in the country under the high ball. Morgan has been in the form of his life this season – not only as Gloucester's dependable last line of defence but he has also added an additional attacking threat to his game.

He has been at the forefront of Gloucester's Guinness Premiership try-scoring charts all season and his ability to return possession from deep, alongside Iain Balshaw and James Simpson-Daniel, has been instrumental for Gloucester. A member of Martin Johnson's Elite Player Squad, Morgan has been close to England recognition this season.



SPOTLIGHT ON RORY LAWSON

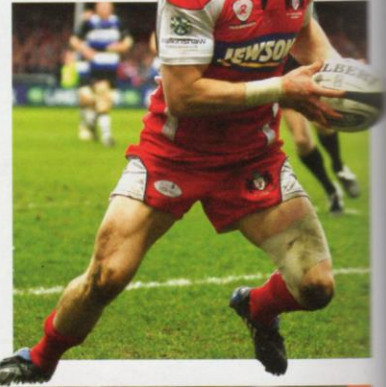
WHAT WAS THE FIRST MATCH YOU REMEMBER WATCHING ?

The one that sticks out for me is the 1990 Grand Slam game, Scotland against England at Murrayfield. I had to peer from behind one of the pillars in the West Stand to see Tony Stainger score the winning try.



WHICH 2 OF YOUR TEAM MATES WOULD YOU WANT WITH YOU ON A QUIZ TEAM?

Iain Balshaw - for the questions that are just a bit different, because he loves stats and the Guinness Book of Records and Gareth Delve, because he seems to know a lot about things you shouldn't know a lot about.



WHO IS YOUR FAVOURITE SPORT'S PUNDIT?

That's an easy one for me - my grandfather, Bill McLaren. He's the best there has been.



WHO'S GOT THE FLASHIEST MOTOR AT THE CLUB?

Gareth Cooper and our fitness coach Mark Bitcon. Coops has got a new BMW X6, and Mark's got a Porsche which he likes to cruise around in.



IF MONEY WAS NO OBJECT, WHAT WOULD BE THE FIRST THING YOU WOULD BUY?

A private plane to take me anywhere out of Staverton Airport.

CAN YOU PLAY A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT ?

I've been learning the guitar for just over a year.

WHICH CHARITY DO YOU SUPPORT, AND WHY?

Three in all. The Wooden Spoon Society, Cancer Research, because we've been affected by that in the family, and one run by a friend of mine in Scotland called Dreams for You. It helps disadvantaged and disabled children.

WHAT IS YOUR NICKNAME AT THE CLUB AND HOW DID IT COME ABOUT ?

Muckle. It came from Mike Anthony, our old conditioning coach. He had massive feet for a guy of 5'9, which I used to call his muckle hoofs, so he called me muckle and it stuck. Muckle is a Scottish word for big.

HOW WOULD YOU IMPROVE THE PREMIERSHIP PLAY OFFS ?

Get better at winning them! I think we're all aware that they're not going to change because it's a big thing for the Guinness Premiership.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BISCUIT?

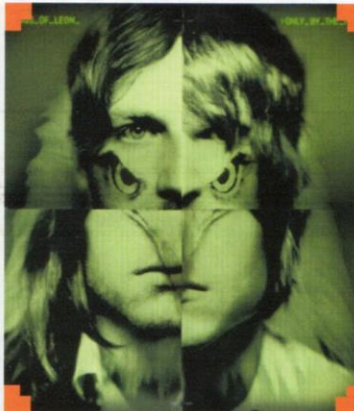
I like an Oreo cookie, but in a milk shake with a couple of scoops of ice cream.

**WHAT'S BEEN YOUR WORST FASHION CRIME ?**

I've got a pair of silver trainers at the moment, but there's no crime in having them ! They've drawn a bit of chat from the boys, but it's all been positive...

IF YOU COULD BE IN A BAND, WHICH ONE WOULD YOU CHOOSE ?

I've just read Slash's book from Guns 'n' Roses. Being in a 90's band sounds like it was pretty crazy. Of the modern stuff, I'd say Kings of Leon.

**HAS YOUR SPORT EVER BROUGHT YOU TO TEARS?**

Yes, because you can put a lot into rugby and sometimes not get out of it what you want. Your emotion has got to come out somehow, whether it's because you've suffered a bad injury or because you've lost.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN CRICKET ?

Two teams of eleven, one team bats, one team fields and tries to get the batting team out. Once they've done that, they go in and try and beat their score.

WHAT'S THE MOST COMMON MISTAKE YOU SEE PEOPLE MAKING IN YOUR SPORT?

I'm going to sound like an old man here, but for the youngsters it's worrying about getting physically big enough to play the game before their natural time to do so.

For me as a scrum half, it's being able to do the basic skills, catch a ball, pass it accurately. If you can do that, you can build the rest around it.

**WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THE BEST NIGHT OUT ?**

I was in Rio during the 2006 football World Cup. That was unbelievable, although I've had a few good nights out in Edinburgh too.



JAMES SIMPSON-DANIEL



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

V



OSPREYS

15	OLLY MORGAN	FULL BACK	GAVIN HENSON	15
14	IAIN BALSHAW	WING	TOMMY BOWE	14
13	MIKE TINDALL (C)	CENTRE	SONNY PARKER	13
12	ANTHONY ALLEN	CENTRE	ANDREW BISHOP	12
11	JAMES SIMPSON-DANIEL	WING	SHANE WILLIAMS	11
10	RYAN LAMB	FLY HALF	JAMES HOOK	10
9	RORY LAWSON	SCRUM HALF	JAMIE NUTBROWN	9
1	ALASDAIR DICKINSON	PROP	PAUL JAMES	1
2	OLIVIER AZAM	HOOKER	RICHARD HIBBARD	2
3	GREG SOMERVILLE	PROP	ADAM JONES	3
4	ALEX BROWN	LOCK	IAN GOUGH	4
5	WILL JAMES	LOCK	ANDY LLOYD	5
6	ALASDAIR STROKOSCH	FLANKER	TOM SMITH	6
7	ANDY HAZELL	FLANKER	MARTY HOLAH	7
8	GARETH DELVE	NO.8	RYAN JONES (C)	8
16	ANDY TITTERRELL	REPLACEMENT	HUW BENNETT	16
17	CARLOS NIETO	REPLACEMENT	CAI GRIFFITHS	17
18	MARCO BORTOLAMI	REPLACEMENT	ALUN-WYN JONES	18
19	LUKE NARRAWAY	REPLACEMENT	FILO TIATIA	19
20	GARETH COOPER	REPLACEMENT	MIKE PHILLIPS	20
21	OLLY BARKLEY	REPLACEMENT	DAN BIGGAR	21
22	MATTHEW WATKINS	REPLACEMENT	JONATHAN SPRATT	22

FOUNDED: 1873
HEAD COACH: DEAN RYAN



THE ABOVE TEAMS WERE
CORRECT AT TIME OF PRINT

FOUNDED: 2003
HEAD COACH: SEAN HOLLEY

REFEREE: N. OWENS ASSISTANT REFS: N. WHITEHOUSE, J. MASON
TMO: W.D BEVAN ASSISTANT REFS 3&4: B. ROBERTSON, R. MULLIS