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Cardiff Blues v Gloucester Rugby



Gleision Caerdydd v Caerloyw
14/03/2010 | 12.15 kick off | £3.00



Captain's Column Colofn y Capten

I would like to welcome all the supporters of Cardiff Blues and Gloucester to the Cardiff City Stadium for this afternoon's LV=Cup semi final match.

Gloucester are a very familiar team to us by now having played them four times over the last two seasons. Probably the most memorable game for many of our fans was last years Cup Final. It was a special day for a lot of us, to go out and put in a performance like that was very satisfying and something we were very proud of. It seemed that everything we touched turned to gold, which doesn't happen that often.

Everyone turned up that day and put one over Gloucester. I think everything seemed to click, and everything happened for us. It must have been a coach's dream, where they can put the pen and pad down and just see the players go at it. It was awesome to be involved in. We had a bit of a



celebration, all the squad stayed up in London and we had a great night out.

However, I think this afternoon's match against them will be a different proposition. We played them in pool stages up in Kingsholm and we managed to

win there - just. They seemed to have improved massively since last season and especially since Christmas; they've recorded some big wins, including a big win at Harlequins. This year's competition is also different to last year with both teams missing international players who are involved in the Six Nations.

We also welcome back a familiar face this afternoon and it's good to welcome Nicky Robinson back. He's a Cardiff boy through and through, and was at the club for many a year and served the club very well for those years. He's gone to Gloucester for a bit of a break from his hometown, but we look forward to seeing him on the pitch at Cardiff, I'm sure he'll get a very warm welcome.

I hope you all enjoy the match.

PAUL TITO
Cardiff Blues Captain



Today's Teams Tîmau Heddiw



SCORER	TIME	POINTS

MARCH FIXTURES

SUNDAY 7 MARCH 16:00 KICK OFF
CARDIFF BLUES 20 LEINSTER 29

SUNDAY 14 MARCH 12:15 KICK OFF
CARDIFF BLUES V GLOUCESTER RUGBY

FRIDAY 26 MARCH 19:05 KICK OFF
CARDIFF BLUES V ULSTER RUGBY

TICKET OFFICE
0845 345 1400

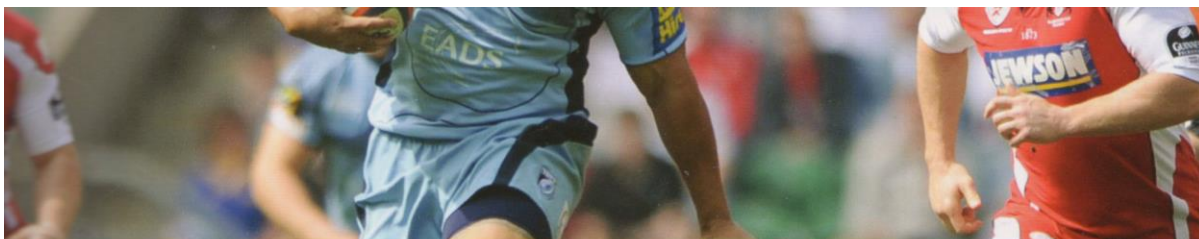


Cardiff Blues

15. BEN BLAIR
14. RICHARD MUSTOE
13. CASEY LAULALA
12. GAVIN EVANS
11. CHRIS CZEKAJ
10. CERI SWEENEY
9. GARETH COOPER
8. XAVIER RUSH
7. MAAMA MOLITIKA
6. ANDY POWELL
5. PAUL TITO (C)
4. SCOTT MORGAN
3. SCOTT ANDREWS
2. T RHYS THOMAS
1. TAUFA'AO FILISE

16. HUW DOWDEN
17. IAN GEORGE
18. ANDRIES PRETORIUS
19. BEN WHITE
20. DARREN ALLINSON
21. SAM NORTON-KNIGHT
22. DAFYDD HEWITT





Gloucester Rugby

15. OLLY MORGAN
 14. JAMES SIMPSON-DANIEL
 13. MIKE TINDALL (CAPT)
 12. ELIOTA FUIMAONO-SAPOLU
 11. LESLEY VAINIKOLO
 10. NICKY ROBINSON
 9. ANDY WILLIAMS
 8. ADAM EUSTACE
 7. AKAPUSI QERA
 6. PETER BUXTON
 5. ALEX BROWN
 4. WILL JAMES
 3. PIERRE CAPDEVIELLE
 2. OLIVIER AZAM
 1. NICK WOOD
-
16. DARREN DAWIDIUK
 17. YANN THOMAS
 18. PAUL DORAN-JONES
 19. APO SATALA
 20. JAKE BOER
 21. DAVE LEWIS
 22. TIM TAYLOR
 23. TIM MOLENAAR



SCORER	TIME	POINTS

MATCH OFFICIALS

REFEREE
GEORGE CLANCY (IRFU)

TOUCH JUDGES
JAMES JONES (WRU)
DAVID BODILLY (WRU)

TMO
TONY ROWLANDS (WRU)

Match Sponsor



The Opposition Y Gwrthwynebwy



Any semi final is a big match but this afternoon's game against the Cardiff Blues is a massive one for Gloucester Rugby.

Making the final would be a huge achievement given that Bryan Redpath's side started this tournament off back in November by losing their first two pool matches, including a 25-26 home reverse to today's opponents.

However, a win over Worcester kept Gloucester's slim hopes alive going into the final round of group matches.

Scarlets needed to gain nothing from their home game against the Blues and duly did so but Gloucester needed a bonus point win away at Harlequins.

Losing 20-0 after 25 minutes, said win looked unlikely but Gloucester hit back and Tim Taylor's conversion clinched a memorable 31-29 victory.

To be competitive today, Gloucester need to translate their home form into performances on the road. The recent 47-3 victory over Sale Sharks means that Gloucester have now scored 93 points and 13 tries in their last two home fixtures. Indeed, the only setbacks so far in 2010 have been away defeats at Leicester Tigers and London Wasps.

It's a welcome change in fortunes given that the 2009-10 season was shaping up to be a difficult first one in charge for new Head Coach Bryan Redpath.

However, the turn of the year had a magical effect on

Gloucester Rugby and it's been one positive story after another.

Fourteen of the current squad have signed new contracts for next season and the club made its first new signing for next season when it announced recently that Brett Deacon of Leicester would be moving to Kingsholm this season.

Things look settled off the pitch as well with Redpath confirmed as Head Coach until at least the end of next season, his coaching team in place and under contract and the announcement that Sir Ian McGeechan is acting as an advisor to the former Scotland international scrum half.

As alluded to above, despite the opening day victory over local rivals Bath, it was a difficult few months in the run up to Christmas.

A crippling injury list, in addition to a number of suspensions, meant that Gloucester couldn't even field fifteen against fifteen on the training paddock at one point. A number of close results went against Gloucester. Several narrow defeats could so easily have been victories.

Throughout it all, however, Redpath remained admirably positive and maintained that his side were more than capable of delivering big performances.

Gloucester's injury situation has eased somewhat in recent weeks although Redpath has been deprived of



the services of a host of players recently due to various international call ups, a scenario Cardiff will have little sympathy for given that they have been in exactly the same situation!

And, with more resources at Redpath's disposal, the performances and more importantly, the results, have started to follow.

The self belief in the side has been visibly rising in recent weeks and recent displays, against Biarritz, the Newport Gwent Dragons, Worcester Warriors, Harlequins (twice!) and Sale have resulted in six wins and an increasing try count.

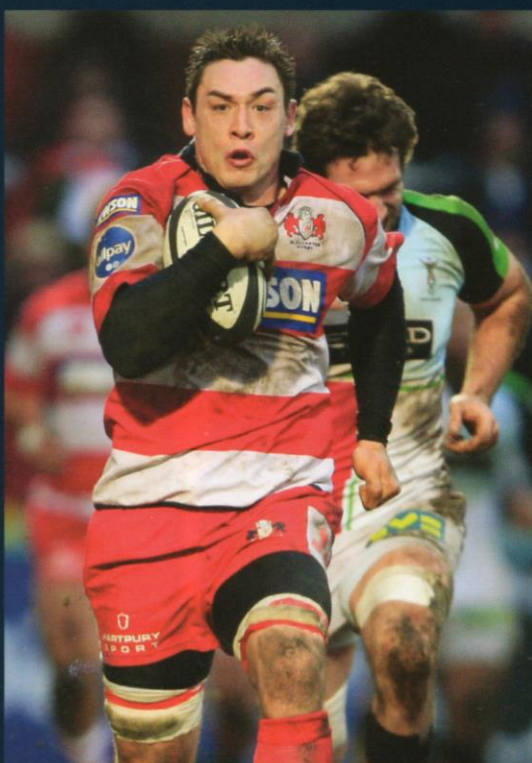
The challenge now is to maintain that good form and translate it into another victory on the road.

That is a big ask in itself. Cardiff have a good home record and, although missing several international players today, have had the better of the recent meetings between the two sides.

This afternoon represents a very tough assignment and the team will have to operate at 100% to be in with a chance of leaving Cardiff with the win.

Given the recent history, it could well be a titanic tussle this afternoon.

May the best team win!



Three To Watch Tri i Wyllo



NICKY ROBINSON

The Welsh international made a dream start to his Guinness Premiership career with a Man of the Match performance in the televised victory over Bath.

The fly half joined Gloucester Rugby in the summer having spent his entire career to date with the Cardiff Blues.

His performance on the opening weekend against Bath which included 14 points with the boot, has gone a long way to making Gloucester supporters forget about his performances against them for Cardiff last season!

Has been a regular fixture in the fly half position so far this season and is closing in on 200 points for the first team.



ELIOTA FUIMAONO-SAPOLU

Eliota became an instant hero with the Shed following his summer move from local rivals Bath Rugby with his passionate display against his former club on the opening day of the Guinness Premiership season.

Capable of playing fly half or inside centre, Eliota brings the solid defence to the Gloucester backline that you'd expect from a Samoan international but also soft hands and an eye for a gap.

His presence was missed in the Gloucester midfield when he was away on international duty in the autumn but has been in sparkling form recently.

Has settled in so well that he recently extended his contract until the end of the 2011-12 season.



DAVE ATTWOOD

Attwood's signing from Bristol Rugby didn't create back page headlines unlike those of Nicky Robinson or Eliota Fuimaono-Sapolu but the big second row has started his Gloucester career in a similarly impressive manner.

Capped by England at U19 and U20 level, Attwood was also been a Saxons call up before his summer move up the A38.

Impressive during preseason, he has gone on to form a promising second row partnership with Alex Brown and scored his first Guinness Premiership try against the Worcester Warriors back in January.

His fine form was rewarded with an England Saxons call up and he made his debut against Ireland A at the Rec.

