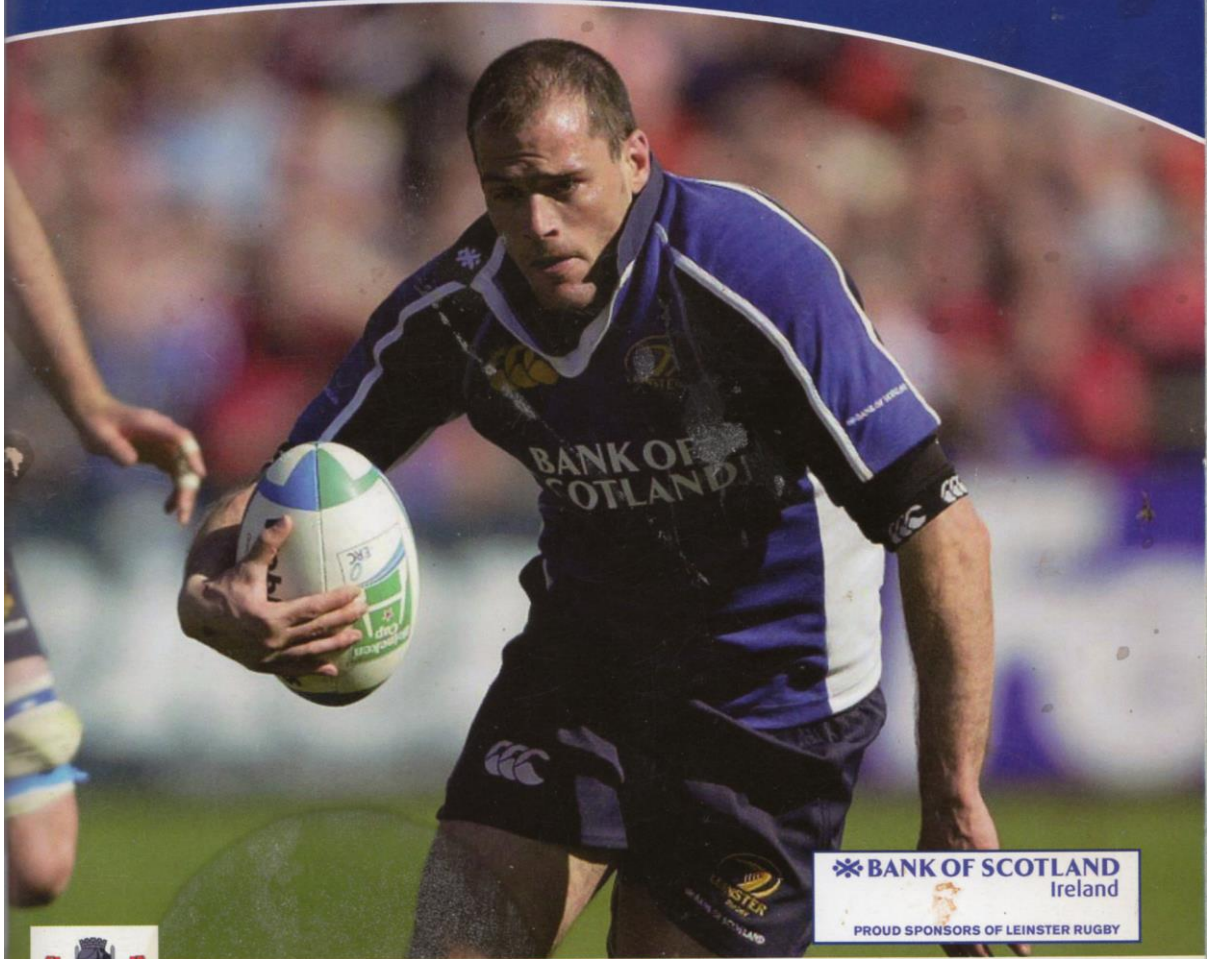


Official Matchday Programme

LEINSTER



v Gloucester



BANK OF SCOTLAND
Ireland

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Saturday 21st October 2006, Lansdowne Road, Kick Off 5.30pm

€5

Heineken Cup
Round One



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FedEx



A look at tonight's visitors

GLOUCESTER



if Ryan makes a number of changes or is able to welcome back a couple of his more established senior figures like Mike Tindall and Marco Bortolami from injury and international duty respectively.

Gloucester opened their season with a west country derby victory over their nearest and dearest from Bath on the opening weekend – youngsters Jack Adams and Olly Morgan scoring the tries in their 24-19 success.

Under the lights at Sixways last Friday, Gloucester triumphed in a purely domestic dispute against M5 rivals Worcester to remain unbeaten in the Guinness Premiership and give themselves the perfect preparation ahead of tonight's potentially explosive Heineken Cup match at Lansdowne Road.

They ended their first section of five Guinness Premiership matches with four victories and a draw and sit in third place in the table with 18 points.

Considering head coach Dean Ryan has been without a raft of potential first-choice players through injury, Gloucester start to the season has been hugely encouraging as they prepare for their toughest examination so far against Leinster.

Tonight they turn their attentions to the Heineken Cup and possible one of the most daunting trips imaginable against Brian O'Driscoll's star-studded side.

But there is no doubt Gloucester will be on a high, even

They then got the better of Harlequins at the Stoop in a far more disjointed performance that was revved up by a virtuoso performance from scrum-half Peter Richards.

It was a solid if unspectacular start for Ryan's side. The Kingsholm head coach has concocted one of the most exciting groups of players in the country, blending a mixture of youthful swagger and talent with high-quality experience in key positions.

From the beginning of the campaign they have been tagged as one of the favourites to the final stages of a number of competitions but Ryan is only too well aware that his group of players have only just begun their journey.

"Our ambition is to be at the top end of Europe but our journey has only just begun," he has said. "There will be some pain along the way but we have an exciting and developing group of players who all work tremendously hard to try and be successful.

[Opposition Preview]

"We are on a journey together and there is a long way to go. What has been pleasing is that we have endured a number of injuries but still progressed well. We are capable of making a number of changes and still be very competitive."

Gloucester's new-found freedom, partly orchestrated by design and partly by necessity, ended in triumph with the European Challenge Cup against London Irish last season. But by then, the wheels were already in motion for this campaign.

Under the stewardship of Ryan and his assistants Bryan Redpath and Denis Betts, Italian duo Marco Bortolami and Carlos Nieto joined from Narbonne and Viadana respectively in two of the highest profile signings of the close season.

Bortolami has already shown what an outstanding athlete he is and is a natural leader of growing reputation in Gloucester's pack and Nieto is regarded as one of the best tighthead props in the Six Nations.



Christian Califano, once voted in the all-time best French front row, switched from Agen and has been a revelation – offering immediate set-piece quality and a perfect learning base for youngster Jack Forster.



There have been other additions too. With Ryan Lamb initially out of action with an ankle injury, Willie Walker has taken his opportunity in the number 10 shirt, while both scrum-half Rory Lawson and lock Will James have the potential to make serious impacts.

Iain Balshaw completed the summer recruitment drive from Leeds and can be deployed from either wing or full-back and scored the final of Gloucester's three tries in the 33-24 victory over Worcester. It has meant that Ryan's biggest job in pre-season has been managing the vast expectation on his squad.

"There is an awful lot this squad can achieve but we must not get ahead of ourselves – we have a long way to go and a lot of development to go through," Ryan said.

Photos by Bruce Seabrook, GPA Images

Leinster

Gloucester



Head Coach:
Michael CHEIKA

Girvan DEMPSEY	15 Full Back
Shane HORGAN	14 Right Wing
Brian O'DRISCOLL (C)	13 2nd Centre
Gordon D'ARCY	12 1st Centre
Denis HICKIE	11 Left Wing
Felipe CONTEPOMI	10 Out-half
Chris WHITAKER	9 Scrum-Half
Ronan McCORMACK	1 Loose Head
Brian BLANEY	2 Hooker
Will GREEN	3 Tight Head
Trevor HOGAN	4 2nd Row
Malcolm O'KELLY	5 2nd Row
Cameron JOWITT	6 Flanker
Keith GLEESON	7 Flanker
Jamie HEASLIP	8 No. 8

Iain BALSRAW
James BAILEY
Jack ADAMS
Anthony ALLEN
Mark FOSTER
Ryan LAMB
Peter RICHARDS
Nick WOOD
Mefin DAVIES
Christian CALIFANO
Adam EUSTACE
Marco BORTOLAMI (C)
Peter BUXTON
Andy HAZELL
James FORRESTER



Head Coach:
Dean RYAN

Leinster Pack

	Height	Weight
Front Row		
Ronan McCormack	5ft 10	112kg
Brian Blaney	5ft 9	103kg
Will Green	6ft	116kg
		331kg
2nd Row		
Trevor Hogan	6ft 5	109kg
Malcolm O'Kelly	6ft 8	117kg
		226kg
Back Row		
Cameron Jowitt	6ft 6	113kg
Keith Gleeson	6ft 1	98kg
Jamie Heaslip	6ft 4	109kg
		320kg
Total pack weight		877kg

Gloucester Pack

	Height	Weight
Front Row		
Dick Wood	6ft 1	109kg
Mefin Davies	5ft 10	93kg
Christian Califano	5ft 11	110kg
		314kg
2nd Row		
Adam Eustace	6ft 5	107kg
Marco Bortolami (Capt)	6ft 5	107kg
		214kg
Back Row		
Peter Buxton	6ft 4	110kg
Andy Hazell	6ft 0	93kg
James Forrester	6ft 5	104kg
		307kg
Total pack weight		835kg

Leinster Replacements:

- 16 Harry VERMAAS
- 17 Reggie CORRIGAN
- 18 Owen FINEGAN
- 19 Stephen KEOGH
- 20 Cillian WILLIS
- 21 Christian WARNER
- 22 Luke FITZGERALD

Gloucester Replacements:

- Olivier AZAM 16
- Carlos NIETO 17
- Jack FORSTER 18
- Jake BOER 19
- Ludovic MERCIER 20
- Rory LAWSON 21
- Mike TINDALL 22

Today's Officials

Referee: Christophe Berdos (FFR) • **Sub Referee:** Eric Gauzins (FFR)
Touch Judge: Bruno Bessot (FFR) • **4th Official:** Kevin Beggs (ARLB) • **5th Official:** Cian O'Brien (ARLB) • **TMO:** Daniel Dartigeas (FFR)

