



the exile

Official Matchday Magazine of London Irish



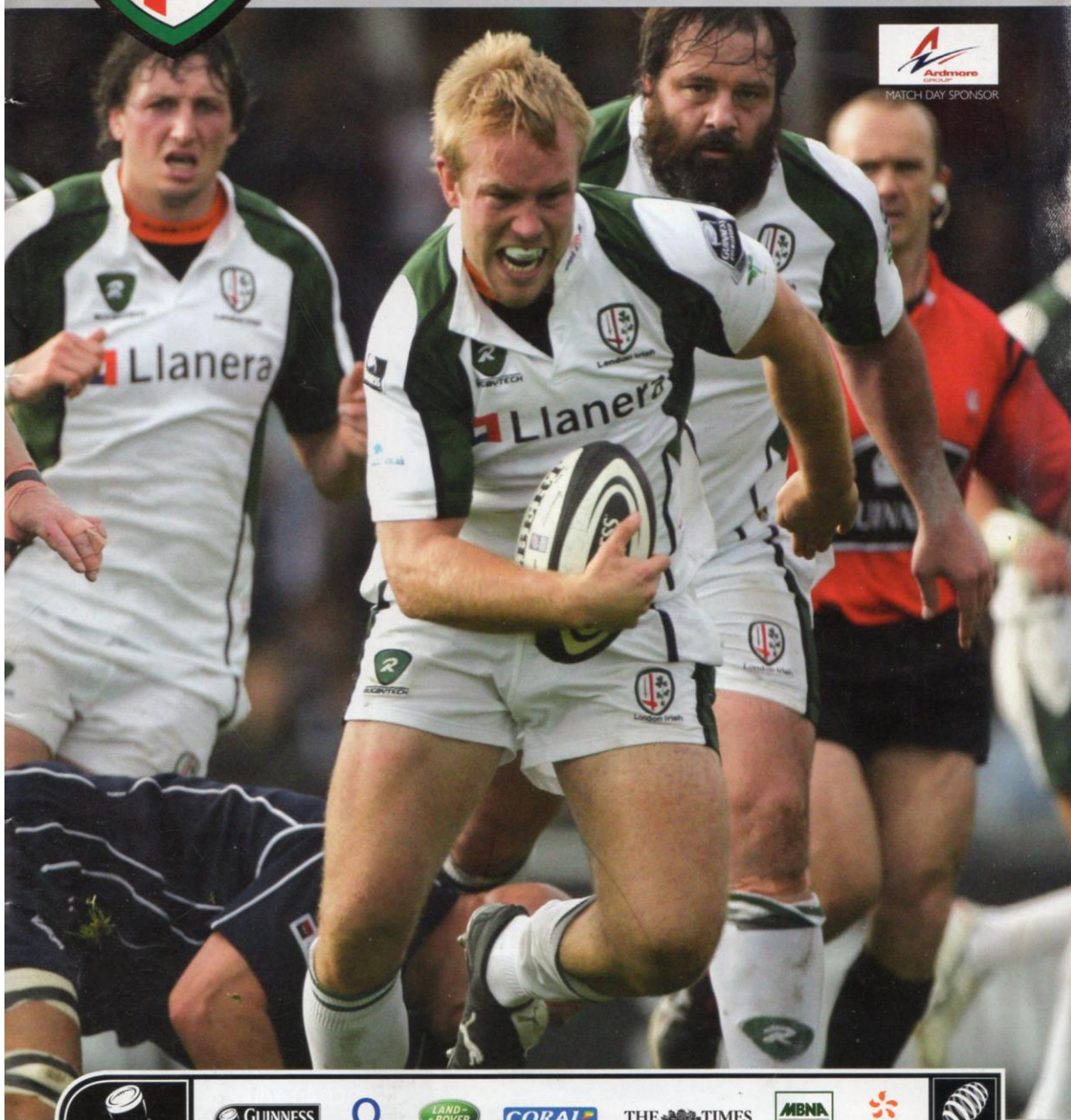
A GUINNESS PREMIERSHIP MATCH

21st October 2007

kick-off 4.00pm

vs: GLOUCESTER RUGBY

ISSUE 3 £3.00













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INSIDE : TODAY'S OPPOSITION • PLAYER NEWS • RICHARD THORPE INTERVIEW



Introducing... **GLOUCESTER RUGBY**

An early season overview **by Alastair Downey**

Judge simply by results and everything is rosy in Gloucester's garden: Five Guinness Premiership dust-ups, five victories – and the only unbeaten record in the league

But Saturday's three-try victory over Sale Sharks was not altogether a pleasing experience for head coach Dean Ryan, who labelled it Gloucester's worst performance of the season. It gave, if any were needed, the clearest indication yet that standards are rising all the time at Castle Grim.

"I thought in the first-half we were too individual and that is not about the team. It wasn't a bad wake-up call for us," Ryan said.

"We were within touching distance of a bonus point but we went back to doing things as individuals and it cost us. I am not that impressed."

Despite Gloucester's occasional fallibilities, they have been the side to watch so far this season. Their scrummage has operated at close to

maximum temperature, their defence, for the most part, has been magnificent and they are always a threat with ball in hand.

And while any number of seasoned individuals has led the way – the likes of the relentless Andy Hazell, the under-stated but consistently brilliant Peter Buxton and the organisational qualities of Mike Tindall – have kept Gloucester ticking over, Ryan has recruited shrewdly over the summer.

Andy Titterrell, the England hooker, arrived from Sale Sharks to provide versatility and dynamism in the scrum, Alasdair Strokosck, a tough tackling, no nonsense flanker appeared from Edinburgh and has gone down a storm.

Throw in the likes of Chris Paterson, Fiji's Akapusi Qera, one of the form players at the World Cup and the small

matter of Lesley Vainikolo and it is easy to appreciate why Gloucester have made such a solid start.

The club is now free from World Cup commitments – Marco Bortolami, Paterson and Qera returned last week and all three will be in contention this afternoon.

Gloucester started their season with a commanding victory over newly promoted Leeds Carnegie. Vainikolo announced himself to the Premiership with a debut record five tries as the Kingsholm club won 49-24.

It was virtually the perfect start and although Vainikolo injured his neck in Gloucester's next encounter against Saracens, their broken-field capabilities ensured another bonus point victory at Vicarage Road.



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With the likes of Ryan Lamb, Anthony Allen and Luke Narraway all to the fore, Ryan's side collected what is turning out to be a priceless second away victory thanks to their 38-31 success.

After two successive away games, Gloucester returned to the home comforts of Kingsholm to launch their new 7,000-seat capacity C&G Grandstand and a dose of M5 derby mayhem against Worcester.

Defences ruled the roost for much of the first-half but when James Simpson-Daniel picked off a wayward pass from Thinus Delpont the winger twisted and turned before getting on his afterburners to beat the cover and score.

Further tries followed from Olivier Azam and the returning Tindall as Gloucester eased their way to a 29-7 victory in front of more than 15,000 at Kingsholm – the biggest crowd ever during the professional era.

What followed was a fourth successive victory and third away from home when Leon Lloyd set up victory over his former club Leicester at Welford Road. Another brilliant scrummaging performance from Carlos Nieto, Azam and Patrice Collazo established the foundations for a 30-17 victory. Willie Walker contributed 20 points that included a second half try.

"It made up a little bit for the final. This is completely different though, it's not knockout rugby, it's the build-up to get that far. But you can't take anything away from this performance – the boys did okay," Walker said.

Gloucester made it five from five with a 31-12 win over Sale thanks to two tries from Lloyd, making it three in two games, and full-back Olly Morgan.

But Ryan wants more – particularly on the performance front – and their first chance will come against London Irish this afternoon.

THREE GLOUCESTER RUGBY TO WATCH



Marco BORTOLAMI

Position: **Lock**
Height: **1.95m 6ft 5in**
Weight: **112kg 17st 5lb**
Date of Birth: **12/06/80**



Andy HAZELL

Position: **Back row**
Height: **1.83m 6ft 0in**
Weight: **95kg 14st 13lb**
Date of Birth: **25/04/78**



Chris PATERSON

Position: **Full back/Stand-off wing**
Height: **1.83m 6ft 0in**
Weight: **79kg 12st 6lb**
Date of Birth: **30/03/78**

HEAD 2 HEAD IRISH V GLOUCESTER

London Irish have lost three successive matches in the Guinness Premiership, but at Madejski Stadium in the competition the Exiles have been beaten just twice since last November.

Gloucester Rugby have made the perfect start to their season with five successive victories. Three of those wins have been on the road and Gloucester's best ever away run in the Premiership is four consecutive victories from April-September 2002.

Both encounters between the two in the Guinness Premiership last season went the way of Gloucester. Gloucester have won on three of their last five visits to Madejski Stadium.

GUINNESS PREMIERSHIP
NEXT 10 PREMIER FIXTURES

Date	Time	Opposition	Venue
Sat 24th Nov 07	15:00	Harlequins	Kingsholm
Sun 23rd Dec 07	15:00	Newcastle Falcons	Kingston Park
Sat 29th Dec 07	15:00	Bristol Rugby	Kingsholm
Sat 5th Jan 08	14:15	Bath Rugby	Recreation Ground
Sat 26th Jan 08	15:00	London Wasps	Kingsholm
Sun 17th Feb 08	15:00	Bristol Rugby	Ashton Gate
Sat 23rd Feb 08	15:00	Newcastle Falcons	Kingsholm
Sat 1st Mar 08	15:00	Harlequins	The Stoop
Sat 8th Mar 08	15:00	London Irish	Kingsholm
Fri 14th Mar 08	19:45	Sale Sharks	Edgeley Park

CLUB INFORMATION:

Kingsholm Stadium, Kingsholm Road, Kingsholm, Gloucester GL1 3AX
Capacity: 16,000 • Director of Rugby: Dean Ryan
Website: www.gloucester rugby.co.uk • Tel: 01452 300951



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“For the future we must keep trying to improve so we can try and win a trophy. We are relaxed the squad is fantastic and we want to do well.”

OLIVIER Azam

A profile of a special Frenchman **by Alastair Downey**

It is the thick end of eight years since a relative unknown from Michelin country dipped a toe in the bubbling waters of Gloucester and started a two-part journey that has made him one of the most durable and respected members of the cauliflower ear brigade anywhere in the country.

There is something dark and ever so slightly edgy about Olivier Azam but the regulars who sardine themselves inside Kingsholm every Saturday have taken him to their hearts as one of their own.

He was born in Tarbes, the home of the legendary Philippe ‘Charging Bull’ Dintrans and played his first serious rugby at Montferrand where Roger Vigier earned his stripes. They are names that might not mean a great deal on this side of Channel but they count for plenty in the blood-soaked annals of French rugby.



SQUAD LIST

Azam arrived at Kingsholm under former boss Philippe Saint-Andre in 2000; Philippe made a habit of plucking players from all over the world and assembling them under Gloucester's new-look banner. But none has flourished as well as Azam, and that includes double World Cup winner Jason Little or 79-times capped All Black Ian Jones.

As Gloucester grabbed Leicester by the unmentionables two weeks ago and then set about dismantling Sale Sharks last weekend, Azam was central when the pressure was applied.

If there is one thing we have learnt since his debut in 2000 is that he loves to scrummage. His commitment is total, attitude incendiary.

"My commitment is with Gloucester, of how proud I am to represent the club and how happy I am to play for them.

"When I first came here with Philippe Saint-Andre I didn't know what to expect but I knew the Premiership was a great opportunity for me to improve myself as a player. What it did was take me out of my comfort zone.

"I knew about French rugby but I didn't know about rugby here, of the variations in the game in England. It gave me a chance to live in another country, experience new cultures and a place to live – it has opened me up a bit more as an individual and as a player and for that I am thankful."

Consequently, Gloucester has loved him to bits. His confrontation style, monstrous presence and ball carrying qualities in his first stint with the club made him an instant hero. There may have been more consistent players doing the business but Azam's notoriously fierce winning mentally fired the imagination.

"For the future we must keep trying to improve so we can try and win a trophy," he says. "We are relaxed, the squad is fantastic and we want to do well."

Surname	Name	Position	Height (Metric) (Imp)	Weight (Metric) (Imp)	DOB	Honours
Adams	Jack	Centre	1.82m 6ft 0in	96kg 15st 0lb	17/09/86	
Allen	Anthony	Centre	1.80m 5ft 11in	92kg 14st 7lb	01/09/86	England
Azam	Olivier	Hooker	1.85m 6ft 1in	120kg 19st 0lb	21/10/74	France
Bailey	James	Wing	1.80m 5ft 11in	93kg 14st 1lb	05/08/83	
Balding	Adam	Back row	1.88m 6ft 2in	110kg 17st 4lb	07/12/79	
Balshaw	Iain	Wing/Full back	1.85m 6ft 1in	94kg 14st 2lb	14/04/79	England/Lions
Bortolami	Marco	Lock	1.95m 6ft 5in	112kg 17st 5lb	12/06/80	Italy
Brown	Alex	Lock	2.01m 6ft 7in	116kg 18st 1lb	17/05/79	England
Buxton	Peter	Back row	1.92 m 6ft 4in	115kg 18st 1lb	21/08/78	
Califano	Christian	Prop	1.80m 5ft 11in	112kg 17st 5lb	16/05/72	France
Collazo	Patrice	Prop	1.85m 6ft 1in	114kg 17st 11lb	27/04/74	France
Cooper	Gareth	Scrum half	1.72m 5ft 7in	84kg 13st 0lb	07/05/79	Wales/Lions
Davies	Mark	Stand-off	1.78m 5ft 10in	80kg 12st 8lb	16/03/89	
Delve	Gareth	Number 8	1.91m 6ft 3in	115kg 18st 1lb	30/12/82	Wales
Dickinson	Alasdair	Prop	1.84m 6ft 0in	112kg 17st 5lb	11/09/83	
Forrester	James	Number 8	1.95m 6ft 5in	110kg 17st 4lb	09/02/81	England
Forster	Jack	Prop	1.86m 6ft 1in	120kg 18st 11lb	19/03/87	
Foster	Mark	Wing	1.83m 6ft 0in	100kg 15st 0lb	02/09/83	
Hazell	Andrew	Back row	1.83m 6ft 0in	95kg 14st 13lb	25/04/78	England
James	Ali	Centre	1.83m 6ft 0in	95kg 14st 13lb	11/10/79	
James	Will	Lock	1.99m 6ft 6in	120kg 18st 11lb	22/12/76	
Lamb	Ryan	Stand-off	1.76m 5ft 9in	85kg 13st 5lb	18/05/86	
Lawson	Rory	Scrum half	1.73m 5ft 8in	85kg 13st 5lb	12/03/81	Scotland
Lewis	Dave	Scrum half	1.70m 5ft 7in	80kg 12st 8lb	29/04/89	
Lloyd	Leon	Wing/Centre	1.93m 6ft 4in	98kg 15st 3lb	22/09/77	England
McMillan	Ross	Hooker	1.85m 6ft 1in	104kg 16st 7lb	02/06/87	
Mercier	Ludovic	Stand-off	1.80m 5ft 11in	90kg 14st 2lb	01/11/76	
Morgan	Olly	Full back	1.89m 6ft 2in	94kg 14st 2lb	03/11/85	England
Narraway	Luke	Back row	1.90m 6ft 3in	108kg 15st 13lb	07/08/83	
Nieto	Carlos	Prop	1.86m 6ft 1in	110kg 17st 4lb	28/04/76	Italy
Norton	Dan	Wing	1.79m 5ft 10in	80kg 12st 8lb	22/03/88	
Paterson	Chris	Full back/Stand-off wing	1.83m 6ft 0in	79kg 12st 6lb	30/03/78	Scotland
Paul	Jeremy	Hooker	1.84m 6ft 0in	104kg 16st 4lb	14/03/77	Australia
Pendlebury	Jonathan	Lock	1.94m 6ft 4in	110kg 17st 4lb	15/01/83	
Prendergast	Mike	Scrum half	1.80m 5ft 11in	84kg 13st 3lb	21/05/77	
Pryce	Karl	Wing	1.98m 6ft 6in	120kg 18st 11lb	27/07/86	
Qera	Akapusi	Back row	1.94m 6ft 4in	103kg 16st 0lb	24/04/84	Fiji
Sharples	Charlie	Wing	1.84m 6ft 0in	93kg 14st 9lb	17/08/89	
Simpson-Daniel	James	Wing	1.82m 6ft 0in	92kg 14st 6lb	30/05/82	England
Strokosch	Alasdair	Back row	1.91m 6ft 3in	107kg 15st 5lb	21/02/83	Scotland
Titterrell	Andy	Hooker	1.81m 5ft 10in	94kg 14st 2lb	10/01/81	England/Lions
Tindall	Mike	Centre	1.88m 6ft 2in	102kg 15st 12lb	18/10/78	England
Trinder	Henry	Centre	1.83m 6ft 0in	85kg 13st 5lb	14/04/89	
Tuohy	Dan	Lock	1.90m 6ft 5in	112kg 17st 8lb	18/06/85	
Vainikolo	Lesley	Wing	1.88m 6ft 2in	112kg 17st 8lb	04/05/79	
Walker	Willie	Stand-off/Full back	1.83m 6ft 0in	88kg 13st 12lb	19/05/78	
Williams	Dan	Back row	1.97m 6ft 5in	104kg 16st 7lb	01/02/89	
Wood	Nick	Prop	1.86m 6ft 1in	112kg 17st 5lb	09/01/83	



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LONDON IRISH v GLOUCESTER RUGBY



LONDON IRISH

London Irish DoR: **Brian Smith**

Full Back	15	Hewat Peter
Wing	14	Ojo Topsy
Centre	13	Armitage Delon
Centre	12	Mapusua Seilala
Wing	11	Tagicakibau Sailosi
Fly Half	10	Geraghty Shane
Scrum Half	9	Hodgson Paul
Prop	1	Murphy Dan
Hooker	2	Paice David
Prop	3	Lea'aetoa Tonga
Lock	4	Kennedy Nick
Lock	5	Casey Bob (Capt)
Flanker	6	Roche Kieran
Flanker	7	Danaher Declan
No. 8	8	Murphy Phil

Replacements:

R1	16	Warren Tom
R2	17	Mackie Stuart
R3	18	Johnson Gary
R4	19	Armitage Steffon
R5	20	Thorpe Richard
R6	21	Fury Warren
R7	22	Staunton Jeremy



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

Head Coach: **Dean Ryan**

Full Back	15	Morgan Olly
Wing	14	Paterson Chris
Centre	13	Tindall Mike
Centre	12	Allen Anthony
Wing	11	Bailey James
Fly Half	10	Lamb Ryan
Scrum Half	9	Lawson Rory
Prop	1	Collazo Patrice
Hooker	2	Azam Olivier
Prop	3	Nieto Carlos
Lock	4	Bortolami Marco (Capt)
Lock	5	Brown Alex
Flanker	6	Strokosch Alasdair
Flanker	7	Qera Akapusi
No. 8	8	Narraway Luke

Replacements:

R1	16	Titterrell Andy
R2	17	Wood Nick
R3	18	Buxton Peter
R4	19	James Will
R5	20	Prendergast Mike
R6	21	Balshaw Ian
R7	22	Walker Willie

MATCH OFFICIALS



REFEREE

Mr Sean Davey (RFU)



TOUCH JUDGE 1

Mr Robin Goodliffe (RFU)



TOUCH JUDGE 2

Mr Paul Dix (RFU)

13 4

FOURTH OFFICIAL

Mr John Dennison (RFU)

Next up at the Madejski Stadium

London Irish v Harlequins, Sunday 28th October. Kick off 3.00pm