



ULSTER
Rugby

www.rugby.com

INSIDE

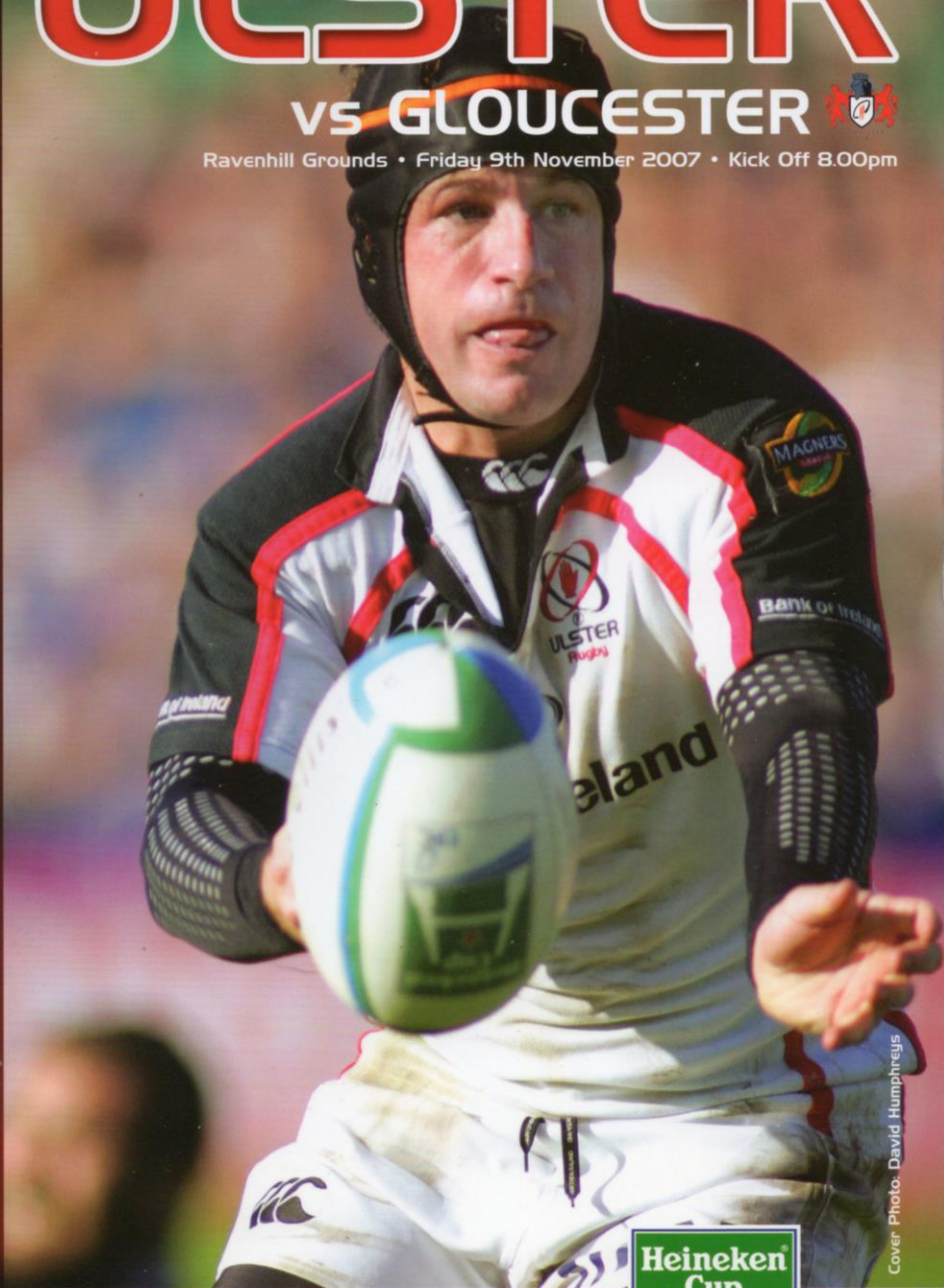
- Centre Fold Poster Pull Out
- Interview with Michael Reid
- Paul Steinmetz on his recovery
- Gary Longwell on the 07/08 Ulster Academy
- Player Features: David Humphreys, Mark Bartholomeusz
- Interview with RWC 07 Referee Alain Rolland
- Heineken Cup memories from former players

official matchday programme £3.00

ULSTER

vs GLOUCESTER 

Ravenhill Grounds • Friday 9th November 2007 • Kick Off 8.00pm



Cover Photo: David Humphreys

Heineken Cup Round One



ercrugby.com

The ATHLETIC STORES Ltd

COMPLETE SPORTS OUTFITTER

41 Queen Street, BELFAST, BT1 6EB Tel: 028 9032 0491
 www.athleticstores.com e-mail: info@athleticstores.com



Rory Best
Captain

Referee:
Nigel Owens (WRU)
Touch Judges:
Nigel Whitehouse (WRU)
Jon Mason (WRU)
Gary Greer (USFRF)
John Coyle (USFRF)

Bank of Ireland

Ulster Rugby vs Gloucester



Peter Buxton
Captain

Replacements from:

Nigel Brady 16
Declan Fitzpatrick 17
Ryan Caldwell 18
Kieron Dawson 19
Kieran Campbell 20
Paddy Wallace 21
Mark Bartholomeusz 22

1st XV Team

Bryn Cunningham 15
Tommy Bowe 14
Andrew Trimble 13
Rob Dewey 12
Mark McCrea 11
David Humphreys 10
Isaac Boss 9
Justin Fitzpatrick 1
(c) Rory Best 2
Bryan Young 3
Justin Harrison 4
Carlo Del Fava 5
Matt McCullough 6
Neil Best 7
Roger Wilson 8

1st XV Team

Iain Balshaw 15
James Simpson-Daniel 14
Mike Tindall 13
Anthony Allen 12
Lesley Vainokolo 11
Ryan Lamb 10
Rory Lawson 9
Nick Wood 1
Olivier Azam 2
Carlos Nieto 3
Peter Buxton (c) 4
Alex Brown 5
Alasdair Strokosch 6
Akapusi Qera 7
Luke Narraway 8

Replacements

Andy Titterell 16
Christian Califano 17
Marco Bortolami 18
Gareth Delve 19
Mike Prendergast 20
Chris Paterson 21
Ollie Morgan 22

Heineken Cup



ercrugby.com



GLOUCESTER RUGBY: THE SEASON SO FAR...

For the second time in Heineken Cup history, Gloucester make the trip to Ravenhill tonight on the back of two defeats and a draw in their last three games – Sunday's 29-26 reverse at Wasps was one of the more staggering defeats in recent times considering Gloucester had been 21-3 and then 26-8 up with a fraction over 15 minutes remaining at Adams Park.

So, if you had asked Dean Ryan three weeks ago about the state of Gloucester's campaign so far, he would more than likely have said it could not have gone much better.

Even after Sunday's defeat in High Wycombe there can be room for the odd bright thought. Ryan's side more than stacked up physically against the Heineken Cup champions; thanks to Carlos Nieto, Olivier Azam and Nick Wood, who scrummaged their socks off and possess the type of all-court game that is capable of threatening the very best. But the question remains: Can they close out these really big games at the top end of Europe?

Last season's losing Guinness Premiership team made almost the perfect start to the season: five wins from six in the first section of the Premiership – their only defeat coming at London Irish – before drawing against Newcastle and losing to Wasps in the EDF Energy Cup.

Following their shellacking at Twickenham in May, Ryan moved heaven and earth to strengthen what was already a tremendously gifted squad.

While the likes of the brilliantly precocious Ryan Lamb, the rapidly emerging Anthony Allen and full-back Olly Morgan had another season under their belts, heavy weights arrived in numbers.

Lesley Vainikolo, the try-hunting giant from Bradford was the most high profile arrival alongside the likes of Chris Paterson, Wallaby hooker Jeremy Paul and Fiji's Akapusi Qera. There have been other additions

too: Alasdair Strokosch is a tackle-hungry, workaholic back row forward, Leon Lloyd made the switch from the Tigers and Andy Titterrell has added versatility and dynamism to the hooking options.

All have made definitive contributions already. Gloucester got up and running with successive away games against Leeds Carnegie and Saracens as the finishing touches to the new C&G Grandstand were being put to Kingsholm's summer redevelopment.

Vainikolo announced himself on the Premiership with a debut record five tries at Headingley, as Gloucester ran riot in the second half to claim a 49-24 victory with eight tries in all.

"Some of the tries were very special," said head coach Dean Ryan. "Lesley was on the end of some good attacking play and scored some tries which any winger could have scored. "But the one try he scored straight off the kick off was pure Lesley. He was happy with that and I am happy for him. Simply by being on the field he creates space for others. I thought Anthony Allen had one of his best ever games thanks to the space created by Lesley. I'm delighted for him."

Gloucester followed that up with a hard-earned victory away to Saracens that put them under greater scrutiny. Although Vainikolo suffered a neck

injury, Gloucester plundered tries from Anthony Allen, Ryan Lamb, Luke Narraway and Olly Morgan to record a 38-31 victory.

It gave them maximum points after two rounds and last week they opened up at Kingsholm with a 29-7 success over neighbours Worcester Warriors.

However, it was tougher than the scoreline suggested. Worcester attacked the set-piece and attempted to be a threat in the wide channels but thanks to a brilliant individual try from James Simpson-Daniel, a punishing drive and score from Olivier Azam and a returning try from Mike Tindall eased Gloucester to victory in front of almost 16,000 supporters.

"That was the toughest contest we have had so far," Ryan said of the win. "Worcester had a slightly different approach from what we've seen from them in the past and they're playing with a lot more ambition."

A 29-7 win over Leicester at Welford Road and a convincing victory over Sale strengthened their position – before their first defeat and a draw undermined their great start. That great start has lost its momentum in the last fortnight – there would be no better place for them to rediscover it tonight.





Bank of Ireland



Meet the Volcano



Lesley Vainikolo arrived at Gloucester Rugby Club at the start of the season from Bradford Bulls Rugby League Club with a legendary try-scoring record and a massive reputation. He announced himself to the Guinness Premiership in September with five tries on his debut.

The fall-out is still settling after the most remarkable Premiership debut ever – his five tries against Leeds Carnegie helped Gloucester to the top of the table after Round One following his single-handed demolition job at Headingley. But what is it about one of the most prolific try-scorers in history that turns him from a God-fearing family man into a try-scoring wrecking machine of unimaginable terror?

“Our parents brought us into this world to do something special. God gave me the talent to use what I have got, to have a purpose in my life,” he said. “My philosophy is to stick together as a family, to put a smile on their faces and repay their faith in me – I owe them everything.”

The 28-year-old then narrows his theory still further when it comes to his rugby: “Every time I get the ball, all I am thinking about is breaking the defensive line. For me it’s about doing the hard yards. I was taught to run hard and

if you are tackled, come back and run harder – it’s a one on one contest and that is what excites me.”

Vainikolo’s record in rugby league still takes some believing. His 149 tries came in only 152 appearances – an almost impossible strike-rate – even for a winger of his size combined with pace. The most remarkable aspect is that he appears totally at ease with his celebrity status and unfazed by the expectation



he now faces at Kingsholm.

Tongan by birth, Vainikolo, the youngest of five brothers, moved to South Auckland when he was six and took up rugby league when he was 11. He was also a prodigious sprinter – and was timed at 10.8 seconds for the 100 metres at the 1997 Junior World Championships.

“Four of my brothers played rugby,” he said. “My mother was a good netball player and very athletic – we were encouraged to play sport – as the youngest and the smallest I had to fight for the ball.

“Only my eldest brother – Intamoa – had the brains to do something else but Karva, Soloman and Israel all played – they were fit, strong and when Soloman was selected to play for Bay of Plenty it was a massive thing for the family.”

Vainikolo’s break came in 1998 when his idol, former Australian great Mal Meninga, contacted him to offer him a deal at the Canberra Raiders. “Mal was an idol for me when I was growing up,” he said. “I spent five years at the Raiders and it was fantastic. Then Bradford came in and it changed my life.”

If Bradford changed his life then Vainikolo’s impact changed the face of the Super League. In 2004 he scored 37 tries in 26 appearances, including five hat-tricks. His last appearance was against Leeds Rhinos when he scored the opening try during the Bulls’ 38-14 massacre and the last of his 149 tries.

“The decision to come to Gloucester was a hard one for me to make, but I knew it was the right one. I like to think I helped Bradford achieve good things, but this was a new challenge in my life and something I wanted to experience. I am learning in union that it is about doing the little bits right, of getting the forward platform established, of retaining the ball for long periods. It is still early for me in my career, I have a lot to learn but I have made a good start and want to continue it.”



The Fans' View



The Shed vs The Terrace

Both Ravenhill and Gloucester's ground Kingsholm are very traditional rugby grounds – places where terracing is still in place and a sacred home to fervent supporters. Ulster and Gloucester Supporters give their respective views on their spiritual homes.

Bob Rumble, Chairman of Gloucester Rugby Supporters Club

For me it is fascinating that both sets of supporters and both terrace areas are so similar. The only thing that separates them is the accent. There are not many grounds that have the passion (or the hostility and intimidation) of Ravenhill or Kingsholm.

The Gloucester supporters love coming to Ravenhill as it is home from home. Having travelled to France in the competition, both Perpignan and Colomiers also have a very special atmosphere.

For me what makes The Shed at Kingsholm so special is that in this politically correct world, you can definitely leave out The Shed – PC we are not!

Both teams have a great deal of support and passion for their team, and for me it is about the similarities between The Shed and The Ravenhill Terrace, rather than one is better than the other. Of course when the two teams meet, each thinks that their team and their area is best, but once the final whistle goes there is banter between the two sets of supporters, and you might just remember it the next day!

For me the big dissimilarity is that it always rains in Belfast! Having said that on a more serious note, the July floods in Gloucester were

catastrophic and so many people have not got back into their homes.

I look forward to being at Ravenhill on Friday night, and wish all Ulster fans good luck – just not too much good luck!

Stephen Todd, Ulster Rugby Supporter

Being a supporter on the terrace at Ravenhill (and also part of the infamous second barrier crew), means great banter, a good atmosphere and great support for the team. There are usually a few choice comments from the supporters and I would definitely compare the atmosphere with the Shed at Kingsholm where there can be pointed comments against referee or opposition, though always good natured.

The roof over The Shed at Kingsholm helps keep the atmosphere in, and I am looking forward to the proposed redevelopment at Ravenhill which will see the Terrace covered. Both areas are famous for building up the support long before the game, when everyone is anticipating the match ahead and getting the atmosphere going. I am looking forward to going to Kingsholm in January, and of course am planning to return to The Shed and renew some friendships. Of course on Friday night we will all be partisan during the game, but once it is all over it will be forgotten. Both sets of fans make visitors very welcome and buy them a drink once hostilities are over.



MATCH FROM THE PAST

Heineken Cup: Match Report

Ulster 14 - 12 Gloucester

7th January 2005, Ravenhill

Ulster produced a brave and gutsy performance against Gloucester at a rain-sodden Ravenhill to secure a 14-12 win in the Heineken Cup. The Ravenhill crowd, the biggest of the season, were 'singing in the rain', as they celebrated Ulster's win.

Gloucester were first on the score sheet with a penalty from centre Henry Paul to take a 3-0 lead.

A tap penalty from David Humphreys got Ulster into Gloucester territory, but the pass failed to reach Roger Wilson. Kieran Campbell conceded a penalty in the 29th, which Henry Paul successfully kicked from 40 metres. A third penalty was added in the 33rd minute after a collapsed Ulster scrum, giving Gloucester a 9-0 lead.

Ulster's first score of the evening came in the 39th minute, when David Humphreys kicked a penalty from near the halfway line.

Gloucesters Simon Amor then pulled Gloucester's lead back to nine points with a drop goal into injury time in the first half.

Ulster thought they were heading into the break having cut Gloucester's lead, when Tommy Bowe ran on to a crossfield kick from David Humphreys. However, he was adjudged offside by referee Nigel Whitehouse. Half time score: Ulster 3-12 Gloucester

Six minutes into the second half, David Humphreys gave a repeat crossfield kick, which was again gathered by Tommy Bowe, before passing on for Bryn Cunningham to cross the try-line. Humphreys missed the conversion, but Ulster had cut Gloucester's lead to four points, with the score at 8-12.

Gloucester came twice close to scoring Marcel Garvey knocking

on just short of the line, and then coming close to scoring again, only stopped by the combination of Paul Steinmetz and Tyrone Howe making a try-saving tackle.

Ulster then brought on the 'fresh legs' of Andy Ward, Rowan Frost and Rory Best. A penalty from David Humphreys on 69 minutes cut Gloucester's lead to a point, when he slotted over an excellent penalty from close to the touchline. Four minutes later Ulster took the lead in the match, with another penalty from man of the match Humphreys.

In the closing minutes the Ulster line was under constant pressure from Ulster. Simon Amor pushed a drop goal effort wide into injury time, and with Ulster's defence holding strong, the Ravenhill crowd were left ecstatic as the referee blew the final whistle. Final score: Ulster 14-12 Gloucester



Ulster: Cunningham; Bowe, Steinmetz, Maggs, Howe; Humphreys Campbell; S Best, R Best, Moore, Longwell, McCullough, Feather (capt), N Best, Wilson.
Replacements: Shields, McCormack, Frost, Ward, Doak, Larkin, Wallace.

Gloucester: Goodridge; Garvey, Fanolua, Paul, Bailey; Amor, Gomarsall; Bezuidenhout, Parkes, Vickery, Eustace, Brown, Boer (capt), Hazell, Balding.
Replacements: Elloway, Sigley, Wood, Buxton, Forrester Page, Mauer.

Referee: Nigel Whitehouse
Attendance: 11,435

