Focus on the Opposition

Gloucester Club was founded in 1873 and soon became one of the powerhouses of English rugby. For the first 18 years, Gloucester played on The Spa cricket ground, but were evicted in early 1891 after putting salt on the frozen ground to enable a match to go ahead - the salt seriously damaged the grass, which did not please the cricket club! A few years earlier, thousands of spectators caused considerable damage when Gloucester played its first-ever evening match under floodlights.

In 1891 the club moved into its "new" ground, Kingsholm. And since moving, Gloucester has built up, over the past 90 seasons (the club closed down during the two World Wars), a record that is the envy of sports clubs all over the world.

Gloucester's home record since 1891 shows an astonishing overall winning record of 77.31 percent, making Kingsholm one of the toughest sports grounds in the world for a visiting team to claim a win. In terms of scoring, Gloucester have posted nearly 40,000 points, with opponents scoring a mere 17,000 points.

Only once in history has Gloucester had a losing season at Kingsholm. In 1895/96, Gloucester only won six of the seventeen matches played at Kingsholm. Seven were lost and six were drawn to give a 47.06 percent winning record.

Perhaps the highest profile current Gloucester player is tighthead prop Phil Vickery who now virtually "owns" the England number 3 jersey. Also in Clive Woodward's England squad is Trevor Woodman who waits patiently on the bench for the loosehead prop to get injured. Other capped England internationals in the Gloucester team include forwards Neil McCarthy, Steve Opomoh and Rob Fidler and winger Tom Beirn.

The 1999-2000 season captain is Kingsley Jones, who returns from an ankle injury picked up at the end of last year, only weeks after moving to Kingsholm from Ebbw Vale. Jones has many Wales appearances behind him - and he has captained Wales on one occasion. He is a natural leader on the field and also takes his off the field responsibilities very seriously.

Gloucester is coached by the former French captain and legendary winger Philippe Saint André. He was appointed player/coach early in 1999 after the club parted company with Richard Hill, the director of Rugby. The Frenchman had already endeared himself to Kingsholm's Shed, rugby's equivalent to Anfield's Kop in soccer. Saint André has become a big hero in Gloucester - almost as revered as he is in his native France.

As a player, Saint André's career is effectively over. He keeps fit and has been known to turn out occasionally for Gloucester's "United" team, describing himself as "Gloucester's seventh choice winger!" Among the capped overseas players is the legendary All Black lock Ian Jones. Other capped overseas internationals include Terry Fanolua and Junior Paramore (both Samoa), Richard Tombs (Australia) and Simon Mannix (All Blacks).

Gloucester was the first winner of the Tetley's Bitter Cup, England's premier knockout competition. But in the Allied Dunbar Premiership, a title has been elusive. The Cheltenham & Gloucester Cup was won by Gloucester in its inaugural season, as was the short-lived Worthington Tens competition. Gloucester retained the Cheltenham & Gloucester Cup in its second season.
Today's Teams

Newcastle Rugby Football Club

15 Pete Massey
14 Michael Wood
13 Jannie Noon
12 Tom May
11 Inga Tuigamala
10 Jonny Wilkinson
 9 Gary Armstrong (C)
 1 Ian Peel
 2 Richie Horton
 3 Marius Hurter
 4 Doddie Weir
 5 Stuart Grimes
 6 Steve O'Neill
 7 Richard Arnold
 8 Ross Beattie

Subs
16 Hall Charlton
17 David Walder
18 Mike Howe
19 Hugh Vyvyan
20 Micky Ward
21 Jimmy Cartnell
22 Martin Shaw

Changes

15 Byron Hayward
14 Chris Catling
13 Joe Ewen
12 Chris Yates
11 Brian Johnson
10 Simon Mannix
 9 Elton Moncrieff
 1 Trevor Woodman
 2 Jawad Djoudi
 3 Phil Vickery
 4 Rob Fidler
 5 Ian Jones
 6 Junior Paramore
 7 Kingsley Jones (C)
 8 Steve Ojomoh

Subs
16 Adam Eustace
17 Andrew Hazell
18 Rob Jewell
19 Neil McCarthy
20 Mark Cornwell
21 Andy Deacon
22

Referee: BRIAN CAMPALL (RFU)
Touch Judges: JOHN BARNARD (RFU)
BARRY OLDHAM (RFU)

Half Time Score
Full Time Score

TELEWEST COMMUNICATIONS INCORPORATING

CABLE YOUGSBIRE YOUGSBIRE IMMINUS