

£3.00



NEWCASTLE FALCONS V



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

Kingston Park
Sunday 29th September 2013
Kick off 3.00pm



FALCONS

MAIN SPONSOR	ASSOCIATE SPONSOR	MATCH SPONSOR	BALL SPONSOR	OFFICIAL CLOTHING SUPPLIER
Fairstone	Sintons	uts	SPONSOR PREMIERSHIP RUGBY	Barbour

TODAY'S VISITORS

Gloucester Rugby make the long trip north to take on Newcastle Falcons today, with a spring in their step following last weekend's dramatic last gasp win over Northampton Saints.

Billy Twelvetrees' penalty, the very last kick of the match, secured a 26-24 win over the Saints and clinched Gloucester's first Aviva Premiership victory of the season.

It literally snatched victory from the jaws of defeat. With 90 seconds to go, Gloucester were in possession and leading 23-17, only for George North to inspire a length of the field try for Jamie Elliott and seemingly win the game for the visitors.

However, the British & Irish Lions tourist held his nerve when Gloucester were awarded a penalty following the restart, and bisected the posts to get the Cherry and Whites up and running.

It was a welcome boost for Nigel Davies and his team, who hadn't enjoyed the rub of the green in the opening two rounds.

The opening day fixture, at home to Sale Sharks, saw the West Countrymen struggle to reach their potential and, with a number of marginal TMO calls going the way of the visitors, it was a disappointing start.

Gloucester looked to bounce back the following week, away at Saracens, but found themselves playing for 78 minutes with only 14 men and, despite a gallant effort, the men in black eventually ground them down.

But there is now a renewed buzz around Kingsholm, and the challenge today will

be to build upon the momentum of last weekend.

It won't be an easy task at a venue where Gloucester have not enjoyed the best of records in recent times. The last visit, back in December 2011, saw the Falcons edge a 26-25 cliffhanger.

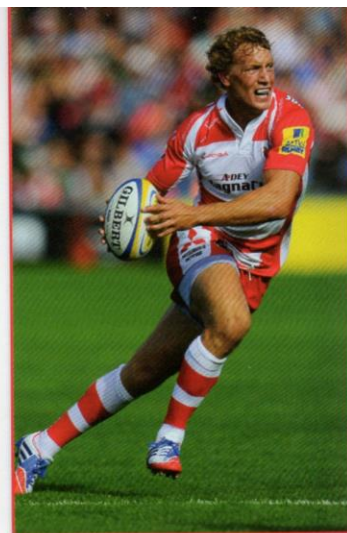
It is the sort of game that Gloucester need to get a result from, however, if they are to have genuine top four aspirations. Nigel Davies' side have shown themselves to be capable of beating the very best, but consistency has been frustratingly elusive.

The talent is certainly there. The aforementioned Twelvetrees earned international recognition with both England and the Lions last season.

Similarly, Freddie Burns and Jonny May both represented England for the first time last season, while the newly capped Matt Kvesic joined from Worcester Warriors.

Those talented young prospects now have another year of experience under their belts and, when they all achieve their potential, the sky's the limit.

Crucially, it's Nigel Davies' second season at the helm. 2012-13 saw the former Scarlets head coach do a sterling job in helping steer a side that had slightly lost its direction back on course.



He did so having only taken over the reins as pre-season training started and, in the circumstances, a fifth place finish in the Aviva Premiership was a fine effort.

Even then, though, there was a sense of frustration that a top four finish had eluded Gloucester and reaching the play-offs remains the number one objective.

Today, though, is all about the Falcons. Although the season is in its embryonic stages, Dean Richards' side have already proved themselves to a dogged opponent – victories away at Sale Sharks don't happen by accident.

The Falcons will be looking to make the most of their home fixtures, and seeking to bounce back after defeat at Leicester Tigers last weekend.

Gloucester will need to be on top of their game to achieve a rare victory in the North East this afternoon.

GLOUCESTER'S FIRST THREE

Saturday 7th September Gloucester Rugby 16 - 22 Sale Sharks
Sunday 15th September Saracens 44 - 12 Gloucester Rugby
Saturday 21st September Gloucester Rugby 26 - 24 Northampton Saints



**GLOUCESTER
RUGBY**

THREE TO WATCH

Tom Savage

Gloucester Rugby's new club captain has enjoyed an incredible professional rugby career to date.

In just over two years, he has gone from asking the club if he could train with them over the summer, to becoming a first team regular and now skipping the side.

Equally at home in the second-row, or on the blindside flank, Savage has been the first name on the team sheet under Nigel Davies' tenure, and can be relied upon to deliver a consistently whole hearted performance.

The 24-year-old is relishing the role of captain, leads from the front and is sure to play a prominent role today.

Freddie Burns

It's been quite a year for Gloucester's 23-year-old fly-half.

Always prodigiously talented and capable of conjuring up something from nothing, the Bath-born player has added maturity and consistency to his game.

He won his first England cap as a replacement against New Zealand in the autumn internationals, and then started both Tests on the summer tour of Argentina, helping guide Stuart Lancaster's side to a memorable series win.

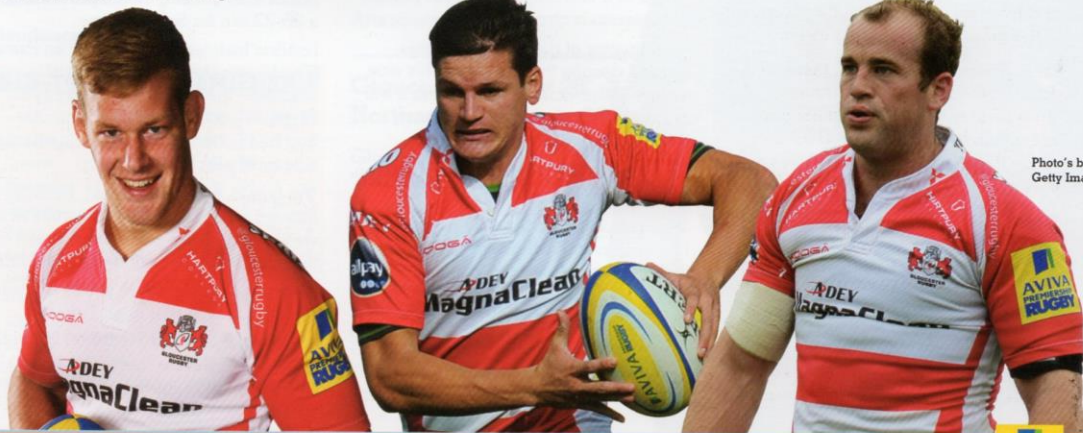
The winner of last season's Gilbert Golden Boot award, his goal kicking could be vital this afternoon.

James Simpson-Daniel

The return of James Simpson-Daniel to the starting line up has been like having a new signing at his disposal for director of rugby Nigel Davies.

The winger was in superb form last season, even being mentioned in terms of Lions selection, when he suffered a season ending shoulder injury in a game at Harlequins last November.

Now fully recovered and back to full fitness, 'Sinbad' has already looked in good nick this season, and his inimitable balanced running and handling skills created a memorable debut try for Elliott Stooke last weekend.



Photo's by
Getty Images