



NEWCASTLE FALCONS

GLOUCESTER
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- 15 Simon Hammersley
- 14 Tom Catterick
- 13 Chris Harris
- 12 Adam Powell
- 11 Sinoti Sinoti
- 10 Mike Delany
- 9 Ruki Tipuna

- 1 Rob Vickers
- 2 Scott Lawson
- 3 Taione Ve'a
- 4 Calum Green
- 5 Mouritz Botha
- 6 Richard Mayhew
- 7 Will Welch (c)
- 8 Todd Clever

- 16 George McGuigan
- 17 Eric Fry
- 18 Scott Wilson
- 19 Josh Furno
- 20 Ally Hogg
- 21 Michael Young
- 22 Craig Willis
- 23 Tom Penny

NEWCASTLE FALCONS

Referee:

Tom Foley

Assistant Referees:

Andrew Small

Wayne Fella

TMO:

Trevor Fisher

- 15 Rob Cook
- 14 Charlie Sharples
- 13 Bill Meakes
- 12 Billy Twelvetrees (capt)
- 11 Henry Purdy
- 10 Billy Burns
- 9 Willi Heinz

- 1 Nick Wood
- 2 Richard Hibbard
- 3 John Afoa
- 4 Tom Savage
- 5 Elliott Stooke
- 6 Jacob Rowan
- 7 Matt Kvesic
- 8 Lewis Ludlow

- 16 Tom Lindsay
- 17 Paddy McAllister
- 18 Yann Thomas
- 19 Tim Hicks
- 20 Sione Kalamafoni
- 21 Callum Braley
- 22 Mat Protheroe
- 23 Steve McColl

GLOUCESTER RUGBY



LAWSON LOOKS BACK ON GLOUCESTER TENURE

Over 140 years old, Gloucester Rugby Football Club has been one of the main heartbeats of the West Country city since 1873.

One of the traditional powerhouses of the game, the Cherry & Whites, their Kingsholm Stadium and the infamous Shed are synonymous with the sport and are ingrained deep in its rich tapestry of tradition and history.

A member of the Falcons squad with links to today's visitors, by virtue of a four season stint between 2008 and 2012, Scott Lawson is well placed to comment on what Gloucester is like as a club and give an insight into the mind-set that surrounds it.

"I was there for four years and I absolutely loved it. It is a historic club with a real depth to its history and it has a lot of pride and passion surrounding it."

"It is one of the main focuses of the town that everyone gets behind, so it was a great club to play for."

Playing to regular capacity crowds of 16,500, the atmosphere within Kingsholm, or Castle Grim as its sometimes known as to visiting supporters is amongst one of the most intense in the Aviva Premiership, with Lawson believing the club's foundations play a massive part in stirring that passion.

"It's a traditional rugby club but it goes a bit beyond that. It's always been there if you want. It's been there since before professionalism, the stadium is slap bang in the middle of the town, everyone gets behind it."

"There's also no real external factors or threats within the area, you are born and bred a Gloucester fan and that breeds that intense support."

Oft credited as being an extra man and willing their team on towards victory and ably demonstrated on the last meeting between the two clubs back in April, the Shed is among the

most famous spectator stands in world sport and one that made its mark on the Scottish hooker.

"It's good to get that backing when things are going well, when they aren't then they are quick to tell you! As a Gloucester player though the Shed is another part of your home ground advantage that you use."

With a history spanning nearly a century and a half and the subsequent prestige bestowed on the club as a result, the club has a very particular ethos coursing through its very fabric. Is that the same as something like the "Leicester Way" though? For Lawson it is.

"Yeah, they have 'a way' as you say, but your clubs like your Leicester's, your Bath's and your Northampton's do too. It's just been the way they have been formed and that has let them move seamlessly into professionalism from amateur clubs."

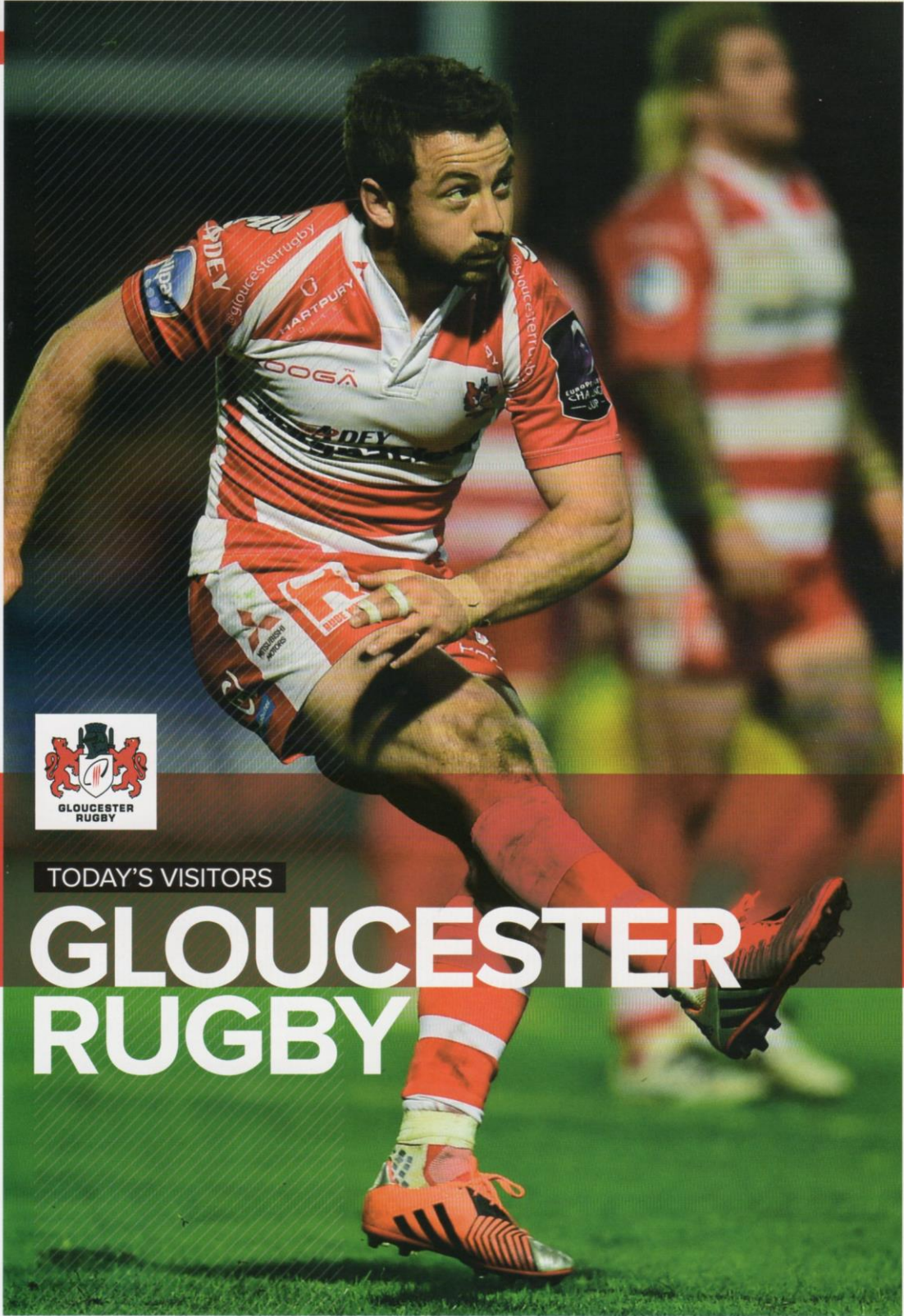
Looking to tonight's fixture, entertainment is seemingly guaranteed and the Falcons front row stalwart won't be found complaining if it is the same result he used to get when playing in the famous cherry and white shirts.

"Newcastle have always been a team that Gloucester have had to play their best rugby against, there is something about the games between the two."

"When I was there, the Falcons were a team we would always struggle to beat here in the North East, in fact I don't think we won any of the games here at Kingston Park, so hopefully its that same result on Friday!"

"They of course have evolved since I was there, with new players, new coaches and new infrastructure so it will be a totally different challenge but it's good that we have them as the first game up."





TODAY'S VISITORS

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

THE CHERRY AND WHITES HEAD INTO THE NEW CAMPAIGN WITH A GREATER SENSE OF FAMILIARITY THAN IN RECENT YEARS, WITH A MUCH QUIETER AND SETTLED SUMMER SETTING THE SQUAD UP WELL AHEAD OF THE NEW CAMPAIGN.

This time just over 12 months ago a whole host of new players were finding their feet and the coaching team had literally just arrived. It was little surprise that the Aviva Premiership season got off to a shaky start away at defending champions, Northampton Saints.

Wind the clock forward and Director of Rugby David Humphreys and Head Coach Laurie Fisher embark on their second season at the helm, with the only new face seeing Jonny Bell join as Defence Coach alongside the Senior Coaching Team of Nick Walshe and Trevor Woodman.

With All Black Jeremy Thrush and stand out Super Rugby performer Tom Marshall two new high profile signings, the Cherry and Whites are building a strong squad as well as focusing on continuing to utilise the efforts of the Gloucester Rugby Academy following impressive debut seasons from a number of their young stars.

Meanwhile, Paul Doran Jones returns to the club for a second spell, joined as new front row resources by fellow Props Paddy McAllister and Nicky Thomas, while Tom Lindsay will add considerable experience to the hooking ranks.

Rugby World Cup saw England duo Ben Morgan and Jonny May representing the Red Rose, David Halaifonua and Sione Kalamafoni lining up for Tonga, Greig Laidlaw skippering Scotland, Mariano Galarza in the Argentina squad and Ross Moriarty and James Hook called up by Wales, so preseason provided valuable playing time for the rest of the squad.

And strength in depth is going to be a key element for every single Premiership side this season. The unique make up of this season means that there will be no weekends off from mid-October onwards or LV= Cup weekends when the youngsters often get a run out.

No, it is a diet of Premiership and European rugby all the way through until the end of the season and the sides who cope best with the inevitable injuries and loss of form that crop up will finish in the top half.

The challenge for Gloucester is to build on the progress made last season. The team may well have lifted the European Rugby Challenge Cup, but no-one was happy with the team's finishing position in the Aviva Premiership.

It all kicks off this evening at what has been a testing venue for Gloucester in recent seasons. The Falcons have also strengthened over the summer and will be determined to get off to a winning start in front of their own fans.

It's a marathon not a sprint, but both teams will be hoping to start with a bang tonight.

THREE TO WATCH

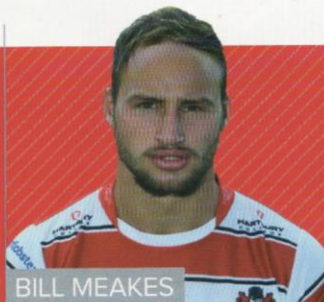


MATT KVESIC

The back rower continues to go from strength to strength in Cherry and White as he prepares for his third season at the club, after being part of the initial 50-man England training squad.

Still only 23, Kvesic is a natural scavenger at the breakdown, in the mould of several of the stars of Rugby World Cup 2015 with an impressive repertoire of power, pace and footwork to boot.

A Gloucester-fan growing up, Kvesic picked up Player of the Season Awards across the board at the club, and will be looking to build on a season of fine form.

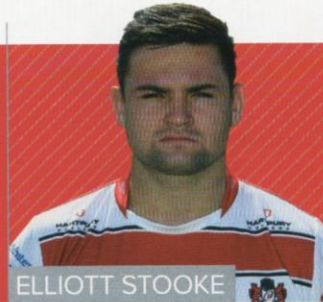


BILL MEAKES

Centre Meakes is well at home on the Premiership stage, and the powerful midfielder has cemented his spot in the first team squad in recent seasons after arriving on an emergency loan in the season of 2013-14.

The Australian was plying his trade for Clifton RFC in National League Two, but impressed the Cherry and Whites in his early outings and has not looked back since.

After representing his country at Sevens, the man from Manly, possesses an eye for a gap, and solid defence, proving to be a key component of the Gloucester Rugby squad in recent seasons.



ELLIOTT STOOKE

A product of the Gloucester Rugby Academy, Stooke has over 60 first team appearances and the powerful and energetic lock continues to develop and learn under the tutelage of Laurie Fisher.

A Junior World Champion in 2013, Stooke made a try-scoring debut against Northampton Saints on a dramatic day in September 2013, and has excelled in a Cherry and White jersey since.