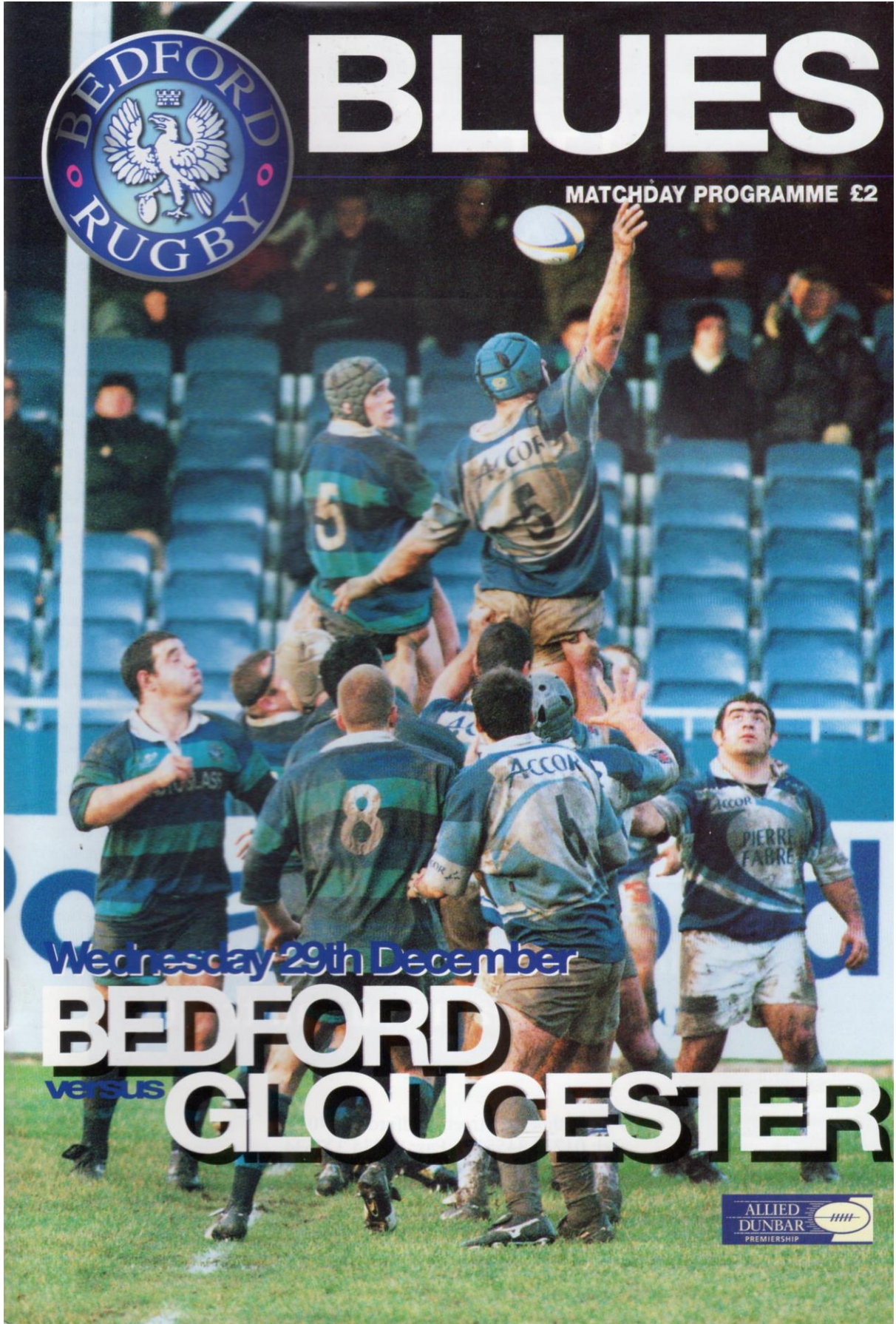




BLUES

MATCHDAY PROGRAMME £2



Wednesday 29th December

BEDFORD
versus **GLOUCESTER**



BEDFORD v GLOUCESTER

Wednesday 29th December

If more recent results are any guide we should be having a close hard fought game here tonight.

It is a pity that it has to be on a Wednesday evening just after Christmas as I am sure that this will once again reflect on the attendance. Gloucester are a well supported club when they travel, but whether many of their loyal supporters will want to travel for an evening game is debatable.

Gloucester and Bedford have played each other more often these last two seasons, mainly due to both teams reaching the final of the Cheltenham & Gloucester Cup for two seasons on the run. Last season there were 3 very good games the first at Gloucester in the Allied Dunbar League where the home team won 31-21 but only after a great fight back by Bedford after 0-24 defeat shortly after half time.

The return at Goldington Road ended in a win 19-15 for 'The Blues'.

Things were very close when Mark Mapletoft, normally a very reliable kicker missed two easy penalties.

Then a fortnight later at Northampton the teams met again in the first of the Cheltenham & Gloucester cup. Neither team was at full strength but Gloucester obviously had better reserves and won 24-9.

This game tonight will only be the fourth time the clubs have met in League competition. They met in a Division One match at Gloucester 1989-90 (the league was not home and away then) but when Bedford's short stay in Division One ended they only met again last season.

Gloucester have always been in the top flight.

Some friendly matches have been arranged but even these have not been regular. The Gloucester Club was founded in 1873 and played Bedford once in 1905-06 but no further games were arranged until

1936-7, then home and away were arranged each season until somebody known as Hitler put a stop to any rugby matches. After the war there was a single regular fixture until the Courage League started. These games were usually arranged in September as early October which was good for both sides, well certainly better than a December night!

After a very indifferent season Gloucester are going well in Division One this season. I don't know what their team will be but they now have former Bedford favourite Junior Paramore and Joe Ewens on their books. Neil McCarthy is also there who played for Bedford in 1996-97.

In 1972 Gloucester won the very first Knock Out Cup competition beating Moseley 17-6 and 1982 they again played Moseley in the final and shared the title after a 12-12 draw. In Between, 1978, they beat Leicester 6-3.

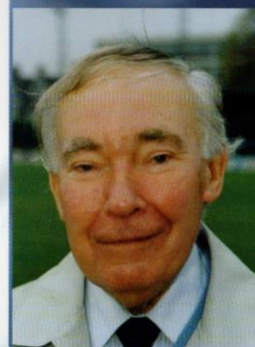
If Bedford supporters are looking for a good sign, I suppose it is worth saying that we do better against Gloucester at Goldington Road but don't forget that the return match is Saturday 6th May. That might have to be rearranged as it is on the same day as the European Shield Semi Final. Gets a bit complicated nowadays as Mike Green said in a recent programme "there was a time, not long back, when everyone knew exactly what they were doing" and it suited the supporters.

The complete record between the clubs:

	P	W	D	L
Home	26	14	2	10
Away	30	6	2	22
Neutral Ground	2	-	-	2

A Happy New Year!

TODAY'S
VISITORS





GLoucester PROFILES

LAURIE BECK



Of the current Gloucester squad, only the evergreen Andy Deacon has been on the club's books longer. For the past decade, Laurie has provided essential back-up for the no. 9 berth, where he can be relied upon to provide a consistently reliable service.

ANDY DEACON



A genuine Gloucester folk-hero, the former drayman has found a new lease of life since the onset of professionalism. A strong runner with the ball and powerful scrummager, the club was immensely relieved to have been able to draw upon his stamina and experience during Vickery's long absence last season.

JOE EWENS



After two abortive attempts to sign this young man regarded as one of the top emerging English centres, it was third time lucky for Philippe. After struggling to hold down a first team place with Bedford last season, Joe will be looking to prove himself at Premiership level.

TERRY FANOLUA

Terry was an instant success since arriving at the start of the 97/98 season. He found himself a closely marked man last season and often found himself stifled before he could cause real damage. With the arrival of two new specialist centres, Terry will not be lacking in motivation.

ROB FIDLER



Despite being one of a small group of players to have shone during the disastrous tour to Australia, Rob disappointingly failed to feature in the England selectors' plans last season. His talent lies in his ability not only at the front of the line-out, but also as a highly mobile and aggressive tackler.

IAN JONES



Gloucester's major signing this season. Jones, who has 79 All Blacks caps, brings a wealth of experience into Gloucester's second row – and indeed into the pack. Scored a try on his debut for Gloucester (vs Biarritz in the European Shield). Wanted to finish his playing career in the Allied Dunbar Premiership and Kingsholm was his choice – "this is real rugby territory," he says.

SIMON MANNIX



His excellent ball distribution and belligerent defensive tackling coupled with a highly vocal leadership style and an eye for the quick break has made Simon the focus of the team's success so far this season. Gloucester will need to fully utilise all his experience and skills if they are to achieve the target of European Cup rugby next season.

JUNIOR PARAMORE



Samoan International Junior brings a wealth of experience together with a reputation enhanced by strong performances. Though primarily a back-row specialist, Junior could also provide cover at centre if needed. His unfortunate calf injury means his debut for Gloucester will be further delayed.

PHIL VICKERY



One of the biggest cheers of last season came when Phil made his comeback from a neck injury in the Tetley Cup semi-final at Loftus Road. An almost permanent fixture in England's World Cup campaign and a racing certainty to be one of the first names on the team sheet for the Six Nations.

JOHN BRAIN



The former Gloucester stalwart proved himself to be such an effective forwards coach that the players demanded his return – despite John having taken a promotion in his day job. Clearly highly respected by the entire squad, he nevertheless has a tough job to do as Gloucester strive for a top five finish.

STEVE OJOMOH



Steve has played at 6 or 8 and has a proven ability to break through defences by breaking powerfully from the base of the scrum or gain vital yards when given space in open play. His explosive power is simply awesome and his sturdiness in defensive situations has saved Gloucester countless points against.

RICHARD TOMBS



The indestructible Richard Tombs missed his first league game for Gloucester through injury after one and a half seasons of being a constant presence on the team sheet. He remains a solid presence at the heart of the team and has proved himself to be one of Gloucester's most committed performers.

COACHES

PHILIPPE SAINT-ANDRÉ



Thrust into the hot-seat last spring and working with an inherited squad, Philippe found it impossible to break the dismal form. However he has brought in several new faces and dismissed a number of local favourites. It remains to be seen if this strategy will best be described as a hasty reflex action or an enlightened masterstroke.

AUDLEY LUMSDEN



Audley was brought onto the coaching staff in the latter stages of last season. He faces many challenges ahead as Gloucester's back division goes through a second transition phase with a number of players being brought in over the summer to add strength in depth to the midfield.



BEDFORD

GLOUCESTER

15	Scott Stewart
14	Alistair McLean
13	Dan Harris
12	Ronnie Eriksson
11	George Truelove
10	Andrew Thompson
9	Andy Gomarsall (Capt)
1	Adam Black
2	Chris Pearson
3	Adrian Olver
4	Chad Eagle
5	Roy Winters
6	David Edwards
7	Florent Rossigneux
8	Nick Broughton

Full Back
Right Wing
Outside Centre
Inside Centre
Left Wing
Fly Half
Scrum Half
Loose Head Prop
Hooker
Tight Head Prop
Second Row
Second Row
Blindside Flanker
Openside Flanker
No. 8

Byron Hayward	15
Chris Catling	14
Terry Fanolua	13
Chris Yates	12
Tom Beim	11
Simon Mannix	10
Elton Moncrieff	9
Trevor Woodman	1
Chris Fortey	2
Phil Vickery	3
Rob Fidler	4
Ian Jones	5
Steve Ojomoh	6
Kingsley Jones	7
Ed Pearce	8

16	Ryan O'Neill
17	Jamie Elphick
18	Richard Elliott
19	Marek Kwisiuk
20	Virgil Hartland
21	Andrew Johnson
22	Phil Elphick

Replacements

	16
	17
	18
	19
	20
	21
	22

Internationals in RED

BEDFORD POINTS																									
VISITORS POINTS																									
TIME																									
SCORER																									

PENALTIES

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24

PENALTIES

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24

SCRUMS

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15

LINE OUTS

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18

LINE OUTS

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18

SCRUMS

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15

This programme was prepared well in advance and teams are subject to change.