

# THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2004

## WARRIOR FANOLUA SAVES GLOUCESTER BLUSHES IN-YOUR-FACE CENTRE PUTS IN VIRTUOSO DISPLAY TO HAND POINTS TO HOSTS

GLOUCESTER 29 HARLEQUINS 23

When it comes to in-your-face midfield aggression, nobody does it quite like Terry Fanolua.

He might not possess the same multi-skilled variations as Will Greenwood or James Simpson-Daniel – two of the more gifted footballers strutting their stuff around the Premiership – but if it's war-paint and warrior instinct you are after, Fanolua has a reputation to die for.

On an afternoon when Gloucester's game management faltered around their key decision-makers of nine, 10 and 12 and consequently spluttered to put away a side dismembered by Worcester seven days previously, it was three pieces of head down how's-your-father from Fanolua that ensured there was no Kingsholm catastrophe.

They may have secured their first bonus point of the season, but this was another fits-and-starts performance that will displease Nigel Melville and Dean Ryan in a number of ways and would have almost certainly resulted in defeat against a team with an ounce more belief, slightly more attacking edge and a tighter defence than Harlequins.

But Fanolua has always operated at the distinctly sharp end of the game and Quins had no answer to his natural instincts as one of the most physical predators close to the line.

He is one of life's pain merchants and Harlequins found out the hard way because his three meaningful intrusions past Greenwood and Co. created three tries and 21 points.

And how Gloucester needed Fanolua's Saturday best. Quins, for all the pre-match doom-mongering, obvious vulnerability and awful record, were excellent.

They may have suffered their sixth Premiership defeat on the trot but there appears to be light at the end of the tunnel for Mark Evans and Paul Turner.

"We will come through periods like this and be better people for it," Evans said.

"I thought we handled a number of things very well and we can build on this going forward.

"We had our chances but probably deserved what we got in the end."

What will please Evans most is that Harlequins gave it the full Monty and then some – no mean achievement for one of the flakiest teams in the business when the going gets tough – particularly at the unwelcoming delights of Kingsholm, with a 19-year-old in the front row and an Academy rookie starting at blindside.

But inspired by a heavy ball-carrying performance from Tony Diprose, a typically energetic display by Andre Vos, no end of guile from Greenwood and Dafydd James in the centre and the spiky Matt Henjak at scrum-half, Harlequins made an excellent start that rattled Gloucester from any lingering complacency.

Indeed, they were 10-0 up inside as many minutes – a shock to anybody's system – not least Evans, who could not have dreamt of a better opening.

Jeremy Staunton had already kicked a fourth-minute penalty when Quins kept the ball through a multi-phased attack after Ugo Monye had out-climbed Marcel Garvey to gather Henjak's well-placed kick.

Greenwood and Tani Fuga breathed life into the move and when the England centre came again across the face of the posts, full-back Gavin Duffy beat James Forrester's tackle to score from short range.

Ryan, never one to mince his words, particularly when there is somebody within berating distance, said after the match: "We are slashing our own throats all the time at the moment. We are not getting pulled apart by teams but we are giving them opportunities that are costing us."

He was right. Defensively they were not at their best and, after playing far too deep, it took Gloucester until the start of the second quarter to construct anything of noteworthy intent.

Quins were cut to smithereens at a scrum within striking distance – an area they suffered in all afternoon thanks initially to the combined muscle of Christo Bezuidenhout, Olivier Azam and Gary Powell – and Paul picked up a brilliant take from Gomarsall's pass, with Simpson-Daniel alert enough to race on to McRae's angled kick to score.

But the home side still trailed until four minutes from the break before Quins ignored Fanolua's first warning shot.

Forrester was on duty at the tail of a line-out 22 metres out and Gomarsall and McRae combined to send Fanolua hurtling full throttle over Greenwood. Although he was held within distance of the line, Fanolua managed to offload to Paul, who scored and converted.

When they attacked with precision and control, Gloucester were at times very good and the same combination worked immediately after the re-start.

Forrester's climb and pass was shielded brilliantly by Bezuidenhout, Gomarsall nipped through the hole the South African created and Fanolua slashed his way in to score. Gloucester's deficit had become a 22-13 advantage but still Quins' enthusiasm for the grim and grotty did not diminish.

Once again, a series of sustained assaults looked to have headed into a cul-de-sac before Greenwood sensed an opportunity by dancing his way to the line through a thicket of defenders. Staunton's conversion cut the lead to 22-20.

However, the game changed virtually from the kick-off. Harlequins dozed fatally at a line-out and fell foul of the Azam-Peter Buxton one-two and when the hooker got into a flesh area of the Quins defence, Fanolua was on hand to finish the move and earn a bonus point.

Gloucester then had half-an-hour to click into something like top gear but Harlequins' effort was outstanding. And it could have been even better had Simpson-Daniel not made a brilliant tackle on Monye, who got away with Paul's pass in the closing stages.

As it was, they settled for a losing bonus point after the generous Mr. Spreadbury had awarded a penalty within Staunton's range. It was what Quins deserved.

#### MATCH FACTS.

GLOUCESTER: J. Goodridge; M. Garvey, T. Fanolua (J. Bailey 76), H. Paul, J. Simpson-Daniel; D. McRae, A. Gomarsall; C. Bezuidenhout (T. Sigley 62), O. Azam (C. Fortey 57), G. Powell (P. Vickery 55), P. Buxton, A. Brown, J. Boer (capt.), A. Hazell (A. Balding 55), J. Forrester.

Reps. not used: A. Page, A. Eustace.

HARLEQUINS: G. Duffy (A. Jarvis 73); G. Harder, W. Greenwood, D. James, U. Monye (S. Keogh 72); J. Staunton, M. Henjak; C. Jones, T. Fuga, M. Lambert (J. Dawson 87), R. Winters (K. Rudzki 62), S. Maill, N. Easter (L. Sherriff 71), A. Vos (capt.), T. Diprose.

Reps not used: C. Dott, O. Palepoi.

REFEREE: T. Spreadbury (RFU).

ATTENDANCE: 11,471

STAR MAN: TERRY FANOLUA.

His two tries were the difference in another energetic performance by the Kingsholm centre.

TIMELINE.

FOUR MINUTES: Jeremy Staunton kicks Harlequins ahead with a penalty after Gloucester were offside.

Gloucester 0, Harlequins 3

NINE MINUTES: Quins keep the ball in a multi-phase move and full-back Gavin Duffy bursts in close to the line, Staunton converts.

Gloucester 0, Harlequins 10

14 MINUTES: Henry Paul penalty for offside.

Gloucester 3, Harlequins 10

24 MINUTES: Gloucester turn over a scrum, Paul picks up a low pass and Duncan McRae's kick is picked up by James Simpson-Daniel, who scores.

Gloucester 8 Harlequins 10

29 MINUTES: Staunton adds a penalty.

Gloucester 8 Harlequins 13

36 MINUTES: James Forrester wins a line-out, Terry Fanolua bundles up the middle and offloads to Paul who scores. He converts his own try.

Gloucester 15 Harlequins 13

41 MINUTES: Forrester wins another line-out, Christo Bezuidenhout shields the ball and Andy Gomarsall puts Fanolua in for a try. Paul converts.

Gloucester 22 Harlequins 13

48 MINUTES: Will Greenwood scores after concerted pressure. Staunton converts.

Gloucester 22 Harlequins 20

50 MINUTES: Again from a line-out, Pete Buxton and Azam swap passes before Gomarsall and McRae combine to send Fanolua in for his second try. Paul converts.

Gloucester 29 Harlequins 20

83 MINUTES: Staunton grabs Quins a point with a late penalty.

Gloucester 29 Harlequins 23

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