

## **GLOUCESTER RUGBY**

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2005**

**TOULON SUFFER KINGSHOLM THRASHING**

**GLOUCESTER RUGBY 66 TOULON 5**

They have now scored 39 tries in only four matches and could have won by an even greater margin than the 66-5 scoreline against a side who worked tirelessly but hardly threatened.

James Simpson-Daniel, on his return from injury, scored twice and showed the sort of verve, balance and skill that will be vital against Wasps and Leeds in the Guinness Premiership over Christmas.

There was also a debut try for prop Jack Forster, who managed to barge his way home for the final score late in the game, but exactly what Gloucester's coaching team can glean from such a one-sided contest will be something of a mystery.

Nothing that Toulon attempted matched the power, pace and precision of the Premiership but all Gloucester could do was play what was ahead of them.

They went at a point a minute in the opening quarter which threatened the sort of score Gloucester piled on Bucuresti earlier in the competition but the home side could not maintain the momentum and began to force passes in the contact area that led to turnovers.

The first try came after six minutes when Alex Brown held a line-out catch and Jake Boer was driven over for the score.

The second try was down to a lovely angled run by Brown, who was able to pick his hole in Toulon's defensive line and take Ludovic Mercier's pass to surge home.

And when Gary Powell sniffed out the line following a powerful break by Mike Tindall and more good work by Mercier, Gloucester were virtually home and hosed at 21-0 ahead.

It became 28-0 when Peter Richards burgled possession from the base of a scrum and chipped forward. Although Toulon got back to cover, Boer was on hand to rob possession and dive over for his second.

The contest then virtually petered out. Gloucester had done the job they had set out to do and could maintain their momentum. At times they had too many players around the ball and when they forced possession in and out of tackle, plenty of chances went begging.

In fact, Toulon managed a try of their own when they drove a line-out in behind Gloucester's defence and skipper Franck Comba scored in the far corner.

Gloucester held a 28-5 lead at the break and followed up with six second half tries and as head coach Dean Ryan used his entire replacements bench.

Mercier got the ball rolling in the second half when he chipped a penalty quickly in behind Toulon's defence and Adam Balding was able to touch the ball down before it rolled dead.

Richards got the sixth try when Gloucester shifted possession in field from a scrum and the scrum-half dummied his way over to make it 42-5.

The next try, Simpson-Daniel's first, was a real beauty. Duncan McRae, on for Mercier, linked with Fanolua 50 metres out and Simpson-Daniel swerved his way past two defenders and into vast open space for a lovely try.

Nick Wood got the next, finishing off a flowing move that involved Simpson-Daniel and Mark Foster and Wood finished off close to the line.

Simpson-Daniel added the ninth as Toulon tired and Forster rounded the whole thing off when he barrelled his way to the line.

HT: 28 - 5

Attendance: 9,037

Referee: Simon McDowell

JC