

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2006

EIGHT-TRY GLOUCESTER ARE TOO STRONG

GLOUCESTER RUGBY 63 BRISTOL RUGBY 25

GLOUCESTER bounced back from their opening EDF Energy Cup defeat to the Ospreys by subjecting Bristol to an eight-try defeat at Kingsholm. The strength of the victory gives them a chance of qualification to the knockout stages and once they shook off a sluggish, miss-directed opening 30 minutes, cut Bristol apart with some devastating counter attacking.

There were two tries for full-back Jon Goodridge and one apiece for James Bailey, Mark Foster, Peter Richards, James Forrester, Ryan Lamb and Rory Lawson.

The nature of the victory was utterly convincing once they were in full flow but Gloucester were once again dogged by a slow opening that lacked structure and direction.

The contest was locked at six points all after 23 minutes – Ludovic Mercier and Danny Gray swapping two kicks each – as both sides turned over the ball too frequently.

But pattern was already being set. Gloucester were totally convincing at scrum-time – the experienced trio of Patrice Collazo, Mefin Davies and Christian Califano caused plenty of problems, while Peter Buxton, Andy Hazell and Adam Eustace all made good contributions in and around the contact area and with ball in hand.

There was also a striking performance from Will James, who unravelled his best performance in a Gloucester shirt, combining good line-out service, damaging scrummaging and a willing ball carrier.

However, the game was 28 minutes old before Gloucester scored their first try. Buxton and Hazell made the initial telling surges to the right from a line-out and when Pete Richards swung possession to the left, Jack Adams took a great line and put Mark Foster away in the corner for a very good score.

That took Gloucester 10 points clear at 16-6 but Bristol hit back with a try of their own. Gloucester made a hash of a comfortable defensive position when Adams fumbled forward and Bernardo Stortoni hacked on and was awarded the try close to the deadball line.

Gloucester then grabbed the contest by the scruff of the neck. Both teams had already been reduced to 14 men when Bristol's Nathan Budgett and Gloucester's Collazo were yellow carded and the pressure began to tell on Bristol immediately.

Adams almost created a try for Hazell with a lovely break and inside pass but the flanker spilt the ball forward before Mariano Sambucetti was sinbinned for a professional foul three minutes before the break.

Gloucester's scrummaging power was already reaping dividends and from another big drive, Richards picked up, broke across the face of the defence and just made the corner for the second try.

It was the sign the floodgates were about to open. Bristol's much-changed side could not live with Gloucester after the break, despite fine performances from Stortoni and Luke Arscott.

The second period was only six minutes old when Mercier was twice involved in a move that allowed Adams to give the scoring pass to Goodridge and with Lamb now in the mix, Gloucester's adventurous intentions grew further.

Lamb, who is capable of some sublime distribution, sent Buxton galloping through a midfield hole with a lovely flat pass, the very impressive Luke Narraway added support and Lamb was on hand to scoop up his pass to score in the corner for try number four as Gloucester went 35-13 ahead.

There was yet more to come to keep the crowd enthralled. Anthony Allen, showing all the awareness and skills that marks him down as a very special talent, cut a huge swathe through Bristol's retreating defence and sent Goodridge in for his second try after 57 minutes.

To Bristol's credit, they kept coming at Gloucester but they simply could not live with the home side's firepower up front and willingness to shift the ball out wide.

James Bailey, who was outstanding in defence, grabbed the next try when he read play brilliantly to pick off Reay's pass and storm home from half-way to make it 49-13.

James Forrester got the next when he was able to break off a scrum and follow Allen's wonderfully incisive charge to accept the scoring pass and Rory Lawson completed the rout when he charged home from distance following a midfield turn-over.

In between times there were two tries for Bristol as Gloucester played the last quarter with only 14 men because of a dead leg to Adams. First, Sambucetti finished a quite brilliant move that swept possession through half a dozen hands down the left before Bristol took advantage of Gloucester's lack of defenders by spreading play right to the lock who scored from short range.

And then Reay got on the score sheet to prompt Bristol's hopes for a bonus point but Gloucester held out to earn a commanding and very welcome victory.

Gloucester Team

15. Jon Goodridge 14. James Bailey 13. Rudi Keil 12. Jack Adams 11. Mark Foster 10. Ludovic Mercier 9. Peter Richards 1. Patrice Collazo 2. Mefin Davies 3. Christian Califano 4. Will James 5. Adam Eustace 6. Peter Buxton 7. Andy Hazell 8. Luke Narraway

16. Olivier Azam 17. Jack Forster 18. Jake Boer 19. James Forrester 20. Rory Lawson 21. Anthony Allen 22. Ryan Lamb

Bristol Rugby Team

15. Luke Arscott 14. Bernardo Stortoni 13. Walter Pozzebon 12. Sam Cox 11. Andy Reay 10. Danny Gray 9. Brian O'Riordan 1. Mark Irish 2. David Blaney 3. Jason Hobson 4. Mariano Sambucetti 5. Nathan Budgett 6. Richard Martin-Redman 7. Craig Short 8. Geraint Lewis

16. Saul Nelson 17. Justin Wring 18. Wayne Thompson 19. Dave Attwood 20. Chevvv Pennycook 21. Greg Nicholls 22. Ashley Maggs

HT: 23 - 13

Attendance: 6,743

Referee: Ashley Rowden

JC