

## **GLOUCESTER RUGBY**

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2006**

**RUDI'S DOUBLE SINKS SARRIES**

**GLOUCESTER RUGBY 21 SARACENS 12**

RUDI KEIL'S two expertly taken first-half tries extended Gloucester's unbeaten run in the Guinness Premiership and provided the backbone of their crucial victory over Saracens.

Without the flash factor of the regular Kingsholm headline grabbers, Keil's all-round expertise in defence, his sense of organisation and ultra-hard running and tackling helped Gloucester back to winning ways.

His was a performance hewn from rock as Gloucester edged a contest that was wracked with nervous tension once Saracens mounted a comeback that kept the home side off the scoreboard for almost 50 minutes.

But this was a priceless victory for Dean Ryan's side. Without a raft of senior figures because of injury and international call-ups, the performance was entrusted to men with little first team exposure this season and they responded to the situation brilliantly.

Adam Balding, Luke Narryaway and Rory Lawson ran themselves into floor for the cause. Lawson also kicked intelligently and Keil marshalled Ryan Lamb and Jack Adams with a sense of purpose and direction from midfield.

There were also four yellow cards – three for Gloucester – and although they rocked from time to time in the second half to keep Saracens in the contest, showed that some of the lessons handed out in the Heineken Cup are beginning to sink in.

It was far from a classic encounter but a bonfire night mist hung over the ground like something out of Mordor that only added to the atmospheric and sense of drama.

Against a backdrop of two straight defeats, Gloucester were up and running early. Willie Walker, who also produced two tackles out of the napalm department, kicked an early penalty before the home side scored their first try. Narraway was heavily involved in the attack that provided space for Lamb and he danced his way through a gap and sent a long pass to Keil, who slide home in the corner.

It was everything Lamb was good at – vision, penetration and distribution – and it was exactly what Gloucester needed. The second try arrived at the start of the second quarter and again it was simple in its design and execution.

Lawson fed Lamb from a scrum and the stand-off held possession long enough before sending Keil through a midfield gap and under the sticks.

That took Gloucester 18-3 ahead but Saracens were then able to keep them at bay for long enough to mount a challenge of their own. Gloucester continually fell foul of the referee at the breakdown and conceded a host of penalties that disrupted their momentum and denied them field position.

They also lost lock Adam Eustace and Keil to the sinbin for a professional foul and foul play respectively to leave them scrambling about with only 13 men at the fag end of the half.

Saracens, through the efforts of David Seymour, Simon Raiwalui and the pace of Dan Scarbrough battled back to allow Glen Jackson two more pops at goal that dragged the score back to 18-9 at the break.

And when Jackson found the target again five minutes into the second half, Saracens were only six points adrift and scenting a complete turnaround.

But despite enjoying a huge amount of possession in the second period and also engineering a number of good attacking positions, ran aground against wave after wave of home-town defence.

Marco Bortolami, Nick Wood and Peter Buxton were remarkable in their efforts as Sarries' best efforts slowly faded, despite the fact James Bailey spent 10 minutes in the cooler. Gloucester were then to make changes in a bid to close out the game.

Lamb was replaced by Ludovic Mercier to help provide the field position they lacked and Jonathan Pendlebury came on for the hard working Eustace in the pack.

But the game was still not safe. Gloucester needed at least one more score to be certain of the points and with time ticking down they got it. They were awarded a penalty in front of the Shed and Mercier was handed the responsibility. He duly curled his left-footed attempt through the posts to hand Gloucester a 21-12 lead.

It meant Sarries had to score twice and although there was the occasional jitter, Gloucester held on to claim four vital Premiership points and send them back to the top of the table.

#### Gloucester Team

15. Willie Walker 14. James Bailey 13. Jack Adams 12. Rudi Keil  
11. James Simpson-Daniel 10. Ryan Lamb 9. Rory Lawson 1. Nick  
Wood 2. Mefin Davies 3. Carlos Nieto 4. Adam Eustace 5. Marco  
Bortolami 6. Peter Buxton 7. Luke Narraway 8. Adam Balding

16. Olivier Azam 17. Patrice Collazo 18. Jonathan Pendlebury  
19. Will James 20. Haydn Thomas 21. Ludovic Mercier 22. Rob Thirlby

#### Saracens Team

15. Dan Scarbrough 14. Richard Haughton 13. Kevin Sorrell 12. Ben  
Johnston 11. Kameli Ratuvo 10. Glen Jackson 9. Neil De Kock  
1. Kevin Yates 2. Fabio Ongaro 3. Cobus Visagie 4. Iain Fullarton  
5. Simon Raiwalui 6. Hugh Vyvyan 7. David Seymour 8. Ben Skirving

16. Shane Byrne 17. Arron Liffchak 18. Kris Chesney 19. Tom Ryder  
20. Alan Dickens 21. Andy Farrell 22. Rodd Penney

HT: 18 - 9

Attendance: 10,052

JC