

# **GLOUCESTER RUGBY**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2007**

**DAVIES LEADS GLOUCESTER TO A TEAM VICTORY**

**GLOUCESTER UNITED 43 BATH UNITED 35**

Mark Davies produced an outstanding kicking display to edge Gloucester to a tense 43-35 victory over Bath in the Guinness A League at Kingsholm last night.

The brother of Gloucester stand-off Brad, Davies was in immaculate form – collecting 28 points as Gloucester recovered from a half-time deficit to earn a thoroughly determined victory against a Bath side who out-scored them five tries to three.

Despite the flood of points, the contest rarely caught light and Gloucester needed all the expertise of their senior players to get the better of a determined and physical Bath effort that was led by the wise old head of Rob Fidler and the powerful surges of Hottie Louw.

Gloucester can thank the excellent efforts of Adam Eustace particularly up front, scrum-half Haydn Thomas, the power of Rudi Keil and the attacking threat of full-back Jon Goodridge, who collected two tries.

Bath, despite the occasional difficulty at the scrum, were bullish in the tackle area, got men over the ball and competed like fury – particularly number eight Jonny Faamatuainu, prop Simon Emms, hooker Rob Hawkins and the excellent scrum-half Pietro Travagli.

And had goal-kicker Luke Cozens matched Davies' accuracy, Bath may well have won but he managed only four successful kicks from eight attempts and Gloucester squeezed home.

The hosts led 6-3 after 19 minutes – Davies and Cozens swapping penalties – before Bath scored their first try and it was a cracker.

Louw carried hard and straight from a line-out, Cozens shipped play left where Ian Davey made good ground and when Cozens and Faamatuainu combined again up the centre 20 yards out, Travagli scored by the posts. The try gave an idea of Bath's potential potency but their discipline at the tackle area started to cost them and Davies re-established Gloucester's lead with penalties after 26 and 31 minutes to take them 12-8 ahead.

Gloucester then scored their first try and it was very neat in its execution. They dragged a scrum to the short side and although Thomas was half-tackled, he still managed to get his pass away to Goodridge who scored with an angled break. Davies' conversion made it 19-8.

However, Bath immediately hit back and flanker Jamie Miller was bundled over from a line-out and then right on half-time, the visitors scored their third try and it was another fine score. Cozens ran back a long kick and fed centre George Hughes, who brushed aside some weak midfield tackling to send Faamatuainu in for the score and turn the match completely around.

Bath's 20-19 lead was immediately stretched after the break when Cozens landed a penalty following a collapsed scrum but crucially Gloucester always remained in touch and Davies was again right on the money with a 48th minute penalty for off-side.

It was now that Gloucester needed all the expertise of Eustace, Jonathan Pendlebury and the hard working Paul Price because Bath sensed a killer score and after 50 minutes they appeared to have found it. Travagli was alert enough to chip to the narrow side over Karl Pryce and prop Ryan Wederall got in front of the Gloucester winger to win the race and touch down.

At 28-22 in front, Bath had the game where they wanted it but their indiscipline at the contact area cost them and they lost Faamatuainu to the sinbin for a persistent team offence and Gloucester made the man advantage tell when Anthony Allen's break was beautifully finished off by Goodridge for his second try of the game to take Gloucester 29-28 ahead.

When the hosts managed quick ball from the contact area they looked capable of stressing the Bath defence and when Davies landed a 66th minute penalty, the tide began to turn.

With Allen coming more into the game Gloucester scored the try that broke the game open. Replacement Rod Petty finished well in the left corner past Louw to send Gloucester 37-28 ahead.

There was still time for Louw to score from another close-range assault with eight minutes remaining but when Davies landed an 80th minute drop-goal, the points were safely in Gloucester's hands.

HT: 19 - 20

Attendance: 1,326

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