

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

FRIDAY, JANUARY 4, 2008

BATH TAKE HONOURS IN DERBY CRUNCH

BATH RUGBY 10 GLOUCESTER RUGBY 5

Gloucester suffered yet more heartache on the banks of the Avon as Bath maintained their astonishing home stranglehold over the Kingsholm club.

Bath's superiority was virtually complete throughout in terms of their territorial dominance that was established through a withering performance from their forwards in which the likes of Danny Grewcock, Michael Lipman and Lee Mears stood out.

Although the defeat will cut Gloucester to the core, it does not derail Dean Ryan's long-term goal to establish his side at the head of the Guinness Premiership.

Considering they spent so long without the ball and at times produced a brilliant scrambling defensive performance, they can be at least partly satisfied with a losing bonus point.

Their work-rate in difficult conditions was excellent and in the likes of Alex Brown, Nick Wood, Peter Buxton and Mike Tindall had willing warriors who worked their socks off.

But it was Bath's vastly superior first-half performance, where given the conditions they managed to retain possession and play some excellent attacking rugby through Butch James and Olly Barkley, that set them up for victory.

The critical try came 10 minutes after the re-start, when after a period of excellent defence, Bath retrieved a clearance kick from Olivier Azam and Nick Abendanon picked out Joe Maddock with a brilliant cross-field kick for the try.

Barkley added the conversion to go with a first-half penalty to give Bath a 10-0 lead, and although Chris Paterson picked a lovely line past Shaun Berne and Mears in the 60th minute to race over for a 50-metre score Gloucester could not engineer another try in the last quarter to snatch victory.

Due to technical issues, a full report will follow on Saturday.

Bath Team

15. Nick Abendanon 14. Joe Maddock 13. Alex Crockett 12. Olly Barkley 11. Matthew Banahan 10. Butch James 9. Michael Claassens 1. David Barnes 2. Lee Mears 3. Matt Stevens 4. Steve Borthwick 5. Danny Grewcock 6. Andy Beattie 7. Michael Lipman 8. Daniel Browne

16. Pieter Dixon 17. Paulica Ion 18. Peter Short 19. Jonny Fa'amatuainu 20. Nick Walshe 21. Shaun Berne 22. Michael Stephenson

Gloucester Rugby Team

15. Willie Walker 14. Leon Lloyd 13. Mike Tindall 12. Anthony Allen 11. James Bailey 10. Ryan Lamb 9. Rory Lawson 1. Nick Wood 2. Olivier Azam 3. Carlos Nieto 4. Marco Bortolami 5. Alex Brown 6. Peter Buxton 7. Akapusi Qera 8. Luke Narryaway

16. Jeremy Paul 17. Patrice Collazo 18. Will James 19. Alasdair Strokosch 20. Mike Prendergast 21. Chris Paterson 22. Mark Foster

HT: 3 - 0

Attendance: 10,600

JC