

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2009

SIXWAYS – GUINNESS PREMIERSHIP

WARRIORS CLAIM DERBY DAY VICTORY

WORCESTER WARRIORS 14 GLOUCESTER RUGBY 10

Match Report by Anna Michell

Worcester Warriors claimed a derby day victory at Sixways as they held firm to a 14-10 win over Gloucester.

Gloucester enjoyed early possession and a penalty for not rolling away went against Worcester, giving the visitors the chance to take the lead. Carlos Spencer stepped up but his effort drifted badly wide right after two minutes.

Gloucester continued to hold on to possession until a knock on by Iain Balshaw finally allowed Worcester to take charge of the ball at the scrum and Willie Walker showed no signs of nerves against his parent club with a drilled kick into Gloucester's half.

Luck escaped the home team in the opening minutes when Worcester made an impact from a lineout ball before Walker kicked downfield only to run dead.

Gloucester attacked from deep when Olly Morgan cut a superb line leaving Chris Latham ending up in the advertising boards and in some pain before Gloucester tried to force the pass and lost the ball.

Worcester came alive in the 17th minute as they took the ball allowing ex-Gloucester winger Marcel Garvey to race over the Gloucester line, beating Will James and Rory Lawson to put Worcester a head by 5 points to nil. Walker saw his kick slide wide left of the posts keeping the score 5-0.

Gloucester responded from the kick off with Morgan showing real pace to fly down the right before a penalty was given, allowing Gloucester to opt for the scrum. The Gloucester pack started turning the screw at the scrum as the penalty count mounted against the hosts Worcester with referee Dave Pearson deciding to award a penalty try under the posts. Carlos Spencer kicked the conversion giving his Gloucester side a two point lead.

Walker kicked a long-range penalty taking the hosts into an 8-7 lead in the 29th minute. Worcester skipper Pat Sanderson fired up the home crowd and turned over ball for Worcester as Gloucester tried to make yards through the forwards. Worcester continued forward into Gloucester's half with a kick into touch but Gloucester were able to take a quick line-out before Morgan was forced into a hurried clearance. Gloucester gave away another penalty in the 32nd minute by playing the ball on the floor allowing Walker to broaden Worcester's lead to 11-7.

From the re-start the Gloucester defence looked at each other from a high up and under from Matthew Jones and when it ran clear Kai Horstman was blocked off the ball as the penalty count gradually went against Gloucester. Walker again made Gloucester pay by drilling the ball through the posts to give the Warriors a 14-7 advantage six minutes from the break.

Apo Satala looked like he was going to get Gloucester's second try just before the break until being tackled into touch by Marcel Garvey. A penalty awarded to Gloucester just before the interval for playing the ball off their feet saw Carlos Spencer cut the lead to 14-10 at half-time.

From the kick off a superb take from a high up and under from Walker saw Warriors make a bright start until neat work from Gloucester at the breakdown saw them turn over ball and win the scrum. Gloucester came strong again and an arching run from Spencer saw him dart clear and then feed Watkins but he was dragged up just short by Benjamin's tackle. A visiting scrum saw the Gloucester pack and backs really click and put Worcester under real pressure for a sustained period but the Worcester defence held firm before a knock on from Qera.

Gloucester were thumping on the home line with Morgan and Luke Narryay combining for the England back row to sprint home only for a tackle from Ryan Powell to drag him down and the ball to squirm out.

Spencer was next to kick in behind to put Warriors under yet more pressure in the opening 15 minutes of the second half.

Spencer looked to unlock Warriors with a chip over the top after a lost lineout but his kick had too much pace and ran dead. A break from Horstmann saw the home pack make yards and Fortey crashed through the middle before Walker's neat chip out wide just failed to find a full pace Garvey.

Aleki Lutui replaced Fortey in the front row as Worcester found renewed life and linked the phases together before the ball was turned over and Gloucester hacked away and made long distance.

Worcester were rattling into tackles all over the pitch with Benjamin bringing Iain Balshaw down and Gear quick on the action to win the penalty. Walker stepped up with a long range attempt but his effort pulled up short and Ryan Lamb kicked long.

Matt Mullan took the ball on as the home forwards again looked to shunt from deep but a penalty gave Olly Barkley the chance to make it a one-point game with eight minutes left but his kick went left of the posts.

One last attack from Gloucester saw them tear towards the Warriors line but a knock on finished their hopes of scoring a late try allowing Worcester the derby day win in front of a sell-out home crowd of 12,024.