

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2010

KINGSHOLM – AMLIN CHALLENGE CUP

ITALIANS PUT TO THE SWORD IN 14 TRY ROMP

GLOUCESTER RUGBY 90 FEMI-CZ RUGBY ROVIGO 7

Match Report by Duncan Wood

Gloucester got back to winning ways on Saturday after last weekend's hiccup in Agen with a comprehensive 90-7 win over Rugby Rovigo to get their Amlin Challenge Cup campaign back on track.

The outcome was never in doubt after a blistering opening start from Bryan Redpath's side in what turned out to be little more than a glorified training session.

The Italians competed gamely but were never at the races although they did earn one of the biggest cheers of the afternoon when they scored a second half try.

Gloucester simply had too much pace and power in all areas for the visitors and it's tricky to see how much the coaching team can take from this ahead of the visit of Harlequins next Saturday.

It was a day to remember, however, for some of Gloucester's young stars and Jonny May was a deserved Man of the Match after chalking up a well taken hat trick.

Gloucester made a dream start as their pack quickly had Rovigo on the back foot. It led to Henry Trinder making a spectacular break into the 22 and Andy Hazell strolled through a yawning gap to score under the posts. Burns converted for 7-0 after 2 minutes.

Almost immediately, James Simpson-Daniel ripped open the Italians down the right flank for the second score and Burns' conversion hinted at ominous things for Rovigo.

The Italians responded well, enjoying a good spell of possession and earned a huge round of applause from the Kingsholm crowd for kicking for the corner rather than at the posts.

However, Gloucester were quickly back in the Rovigo 22 after a neat kick through from Burns. The fly half then benefitted from some punishing work from the pack and dived over the line for the third try before converting his own try.

Gloucester's forwards were having a rare old time of it in the loose, enjoying the ball in hand and making good yards.

But it was Jonny May who almost opened up the visitors with a cunning kick through. He showed great pace after the ball but Rovigo winger Marko Stanojevic just got back to save the day.

His pack couldn't match the effort, however, and the ensuing 5m scrum resulted in a penalty try. Jonny May then skinned the Rovigo defence for Gloucester's fifth and, with Burns converting both, it was a 35-0 lead after 28 minutes.

Simpson-Daniel scooped up a loose ball in midfield and outpaced the cover for the sixth on the half hour and it was now a question of how many.

Superb hands from the Gloucester back line then bewitched the Rovigo defence as Burns' inside pass found Simpson-Daniel who put Olly Morgan in for the score. Burns missed the conversion and received some good-natured boos!

A rare foray into Gloucester territory gave Rovigo fly half Davide Duca a chance for some redemption but the fly half pushed his penalty attempt wide of the posts as their afternoon of woe continued.

There was still time for a searing break from Trinder to carve open Rovigo. He looked as though he could have made the line but unselfishly passed to Lesley Vainikolo who jogged home untouched. Burns again converted for a 54-0 lead.

Rovigo staggered back to the dressing room like punch drunk boxers after a first half pummelling. They had already lost two of their number, seemingly not to injury but to sheer exhaustion. The second half stretched ahead like an eternity for the visitors.

But there was no respite. Vainikolo bulldozed his way over the fullback for his second, and Burns' twinkling feet put Jonny May in for his second try.

At 68-0, you could have forgiven Rovigo for giving up. However, they stuck at it and earned a massive ovation when replacement Bustos fought his way to the line to score after a period of pressure.

Stung by this, Gloucester launched a length of the field move with Simpson-Daniel and Morgan combining to give Henry Trinder some space and the centre sprinted clear of the cover before finishing with a spectacular dive for 73-7.

Trinder was yellow carded for an offence at the breakdown as the hour mark approached and Rovigo enjoyed some time in the Gloucester half as the inevitable raft of replacements seemed to take the steam out of the home challenge.

The numbers on the pitch were evened up when Rovigo's Zorzi was sinbinned before Morgan finished off good work by May and Vainikolo as he latched onto a long pass from Nicky Robinson.

With the game in the bag, Gloucester were able to play out the game with only six backs but it mattered little as May's dummy sent him clear and he showed a clean pair of heels to the defence with Robinson converting for 85-7.

Charlie Sharples finished things off as he fought his way to the line and referee Raynal brought an end to proceedings with the Italians battered and bruised and longing for the flight home.

JC