

# **GLOUCESTER RUGBY**

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 30, 2011**

**HEADINGLEY CARNEGIE – LV= CUP**

**FOUR-TRY GLOUCESTER TAKE THE SPOILS AT LEEDS**

**LEEDS CARNEGIE 16 GLOUCESTER RUGBY 30**

**Match Report by Duncan Wood**

Gloucester partly exorcised the demons of New Year's Day with a hard fought but deserved 30-16 win over Leeds Carnegie at Headingley to move into top spot of pool 3 of the LV= Cup.

Tries from Vainikolo, Voyce, Wood and Molenaar secured a try scoring bonus point although Gloucester were only able to relax in the final few minutes as a tenacious Leeds side refused to throw in the towel.

The boot of Ceiron Thomas kept Leeds in the hunt and a long range try from replacement scrum half Scott Mathie hinted at a comeback on 63 minutes with the score poised at 18-16 to Gloucester.

However, the late scores from Wood and Molenaar secured the win and completed a job well done.

It was a committed and determined performance and Gloucester deserve praise for the cohesion to their play given the number of changes they made to their starting line up.

The long trip home will have been considerably more pleasurable than four weeks ago.

Unlike New Year's Day, Gloucester struck early. A Leeds knock on deep in their own 22 gifted their visitors' possession and superb field position.

Gloucester ran a set backs move from the scrum and Lesley Vainikolo, coming in off the wing, had enough pace and power to make the line for a 5-0 lead after two minutes.

Aided by some ill-discipline, Leeds tried to hit back immediately but the Gloucester defence, in these early stages, was admirably robust with Akapusi Qera leading the way with one massive hit in midfield.

To be fair, Leeds did look lively at this point and kept Gloucester pinned back until they eventually earned a kickable penalty and Ceiron Thomas slotted the kick with ease.

A good response followed from Gloucester as forwards and backs combined to move the ball menacingly into the Leeds 22. The home side transgressed and Burns made it 8-3.

Gloucester looked to build on the lead but a turnover on halfway gave Leeds a chance to counter and, although the defence got back, a penalty followed and Thomas narrowed the gap to 8-6.

The pack then deserved the plaudits as they forced a free kick on a Leeds scrum. Freddie Burns took advantage with an audacious chip and catch. Jim Hamilton powered on before Tom Voyce wriggled under the posts to score. Burns converted for 15-6.

Sadly it was to be Burns last contribution. He came out of a tackle limping minutes earlier and departed following the conversion to be replaced by Nicky Robinson.

A series of baffling decisions at the scrum then presented Leeds with a tremendous opportunity to score as the clock ran down for half time but Gloucester's goal line defence was terrific and the home side had to settle for a Thomas penalty.

At 15-9, this one was very much in the balance but the try count, two tries to none in Gloucester's favour, told its own story.

Leeds were still in the game courtesy of some curious refereeing and also some ill-discipline on the part of Gloucester. When Bryan Redpath's side hung on to the ball and worked their way through some phases, they looked by far the more dangerous.

The second half started in helter-skelter fashion with Charlie Sharples using his pace in defence to tidy up a couple of dangerous situations while referee Hodges missed a seemingly blatant off the ball tackle on Nicky Robinson as he chased his own kick ahead.

Leeds enjoyed the better of the territory in the opening skirmishes and had certainly stepped up their intensity in the tackle but there were no clear-cut scoring chances until Robinson kicked a 55th minute penalty as Gloucester forced a penalty at a Leeds scrum.

With the game seemingly going nowhere, Leeds suddenly struck from nowhere. Lachlan Mackay slipped a tackle on his own 22 and made huge chunks of ground. The support was good and Scott Mathie took a scoring pass to go under the posts. Thomas converted to make it 16-18 on 64 minutes.

Gloucester had seemingly been in cruise control but were now fighting to secure the win and the sight of Lesley Vainikolo having to be helped from the pitch didn't improve the mood.

However, Tom Voyce's cunning kick downfield gave Gloucester A1 field position and the pack took full advantage with a catch and drive and try for Nick Wood. Robinson added the extras for 25-16.

The fourth duly followed as Sharples and May eluded some tired tackling to enable Tim Molenaar to cut an angle and sprint clear for the bonus point to secure the win.