

# **GLOUCESTER RUGBY**

**SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2011**

**KINGSHOLM – AVIVA PREMIERSHIP RUGBY**

**TEN TRY GLOUCESTER DEPSATCH SALE  
AND CRUISE TO PLAY OFFS**

**GLOUCESTER RUGBY 68 SALE SHARKS 17**

**Match Report by Duncan Wood**

It took a while to click into gear but, once they did, Gloucester were too much for the Sale Sharks as they rounded off the regular season with a ten try salvo on their way to an Aviva Premiership play off semi-final at Saracens.

The win was probably in the bag at half time with Gloucester holding a 19-3 lead but Sale had played with abandon knowing that they had nothing to lose and caused plenty of problems.

However, a fourth try soon after the break well and truly settled the encounter and Gloucester ran riot thereafter.

Charlie Sharples scored a hat trick and Henry Trinder wasn't far behind with a brace but it was all based on a dominant performance by the pack.

Saracens now lie in wait as Gloucester return to the scene of a recent defeat hoping to go one better on this occasion with the reward of a trip to Twickenham on the horizon.

The departing trio of Dave Attwood, Paul Doran-Jones and Nicky Robinson led the team out as Gloucester were greeted with rapturous acclaim by the Kingsholm crowd.

Heavy overnight rain had seemingly soaked straight into the turf and left the playing surface in pristine condition for rugby.

Gloucester started off at a furious pace as Sale mishandled the kick off and Henry Trinder almost burst through the midfield. Sale held out but came up offside only for Nicky Robinson to drag his kick across the posts.

The visitors came back strongly and almost opened the scoring as they worked a few phases in the Gloucester 22 only for the key pass to go astray.

It was an uncertain phase of play but things settled down courtesy of a powerful catch and drive and neat kick through into the Sale 22 from Tom Voyce.

Perhaps heartened by the early drive, Gloucester turned down a kickable penalty as the Sale scrum buckled and went for the corner only for a man to get in front of the ball carrier as the maul was set up.

The Kingsholm faithful were finally brought to life on 16 minutes. A key turnover on halfway saw Tom Voyce scamper down the blindside and link with James Simpson-Daniel. Sinbad couldn't get away but his inside pass found Rory Lawson who just made the line for a 5-0 lead.

The Sharks were, to their credit, intent on playing some rugby and a superb break from Dwayne Peel almost opened up Gloucester who scrambled back at the expense of a penalty.

Sale went to the corner on two occasions but were held out so took the points on offer with Charlie Hodgson's penalty reducing the gap to 5-3.

Gloucester responded with a kick to the corner and a nicely worked catch and drive which saw Scott Lawson scramble over for the second try. Robinson converted for 12-3.

A quick tap from Rory Lawson then had Sale in real trouble as he linked with Tom Voyce who accelerated into the visitors' 22 but a defensive knock on halted the move with a try beckoning.

The home scrum was in the ascendancy but couldn't quite drive Sale over the line. Instead, the ball went wide and Henry Trinder sliced through the defensive line to score although he flirted dangerously with the dead ball line! Robinson added the extras for a 19-3 lead after 35 minutes.

Half time came with no further addition to the score although Charlie Sharples almost blasted his way clear for another score as time expired.

Gloucester were comfortable enough but it had been a slightly disjointed first half with Bryan Redpath's side threatening to cut loose but too many breaks in play stopping that happening.

The pack were clearly enjoying themselves. Several lineout drives had sent Sale back many metres and the scrum looked comfortable.

Sale had had their moments and Hodgson and Peel were clearly capable of being a handful at half back but, should Gloucester get the next score, their resolve may weaken?

That score wasn't long in coming as the pack drove Sale into submission. Releasing the ball at the right time, Robinson's long pass saw Voyce come into the line and draw the last man for Sharples to canter in untouched. Robinson converted.

And Sharples second was just minutes later after a quick tap caught the Sharks on their heels and Robinson's floated pass again found the winger unmarked. Robinson's conversion made it 33-3.

Gloucester were brimming with confidence but it actually worked against them from the restart as they attacked from deep but Robinson's pass was picked off by Sale hooker Neil Briggs who had only to rumble to the line to score. Hodgson made it 33-10 with the conversion.

As if annoyed by the lapse, Gloucester duly scored again as sublime hands from Fuimaono-Sapolu sent Trinder in under the posts. A simple Robinson conversion extended the lead to 40-10.

Gloucester's backs were now enjoying the freedom of Kingsholm and Sharples completed his hat trick after good hands from Trinder and Robinson crossed three minutes later for a popular try. The fly half had converted both for a 54-10 lead.

Sale showed great resolve and a certain defiance as McMillan scored after a spell of possession near the Gloucester line. Charlie Hodgson's final act for Sale was to convert the try as he was promptly replaced by Rob Miller.

There was still time for globetrotter style hands to carve out a try for James Simpson-Daniel and Tim Taylor added yet another conversion as Sale wilted in the face of the onslaught.

Dave Lewis darted over for the final score as the scoreboard reflected a 68-17 outcome and the scene was set for the Kingsholm hordes to acclaim their heroes.

JC