

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2012

SIXWAYS – AVIVA PREMIERSHIP RUGBY

BURNS' LATE PENALTY SNATCHES DRAW FOR GLOUCESTER

WORCESTER WARRIORS 16 GLOUCESTER RUGBY 16

Fly half Freddie Burns showed nerves of steel to land a penalty with the last kick of the match to earn Gloucester a 16-16 draw at Worcester on Saturday.

The kick gave Gloucester a draw and two points from a game that looked as though it had slipped away when Worcester's Andy Goode gave his team the lead for the first time with a last-minute penalty of his own.

But credit to Gloucester's pack who dug deep and forced Worcester to concede a penalty on their own scrum put-in and Burns kept his cool to do the rest.

In fairness, a draw was probably the most just result all round. Neither team had been able to get a grip on an error strewn game which never seemed to really get going.

Henry Trinder's 65th minute try finished off one quality Gloucester move and it seemed as though that would be enough, only for Worcester to hit straight back through replacement prop James Currie.

Those two tries set up the late drama and the calm nerve of the respective kickers ensured that the spoils were shared.

Gloucester will be disappointed to have conceded the lead having worked so hard to gain the ascendancy but a win and a draw is not a bad return from two games on the road.

There were no changes to the Gloucester line up as kick off time approached at Sixways. Conditions were perfect as the Warriors sought a first win of the season while Gloucester looked to make it two in a row on the road.

The Cherry and Whites would have wanted a quick start and duly got one as Billy Twelvetrees smashed over a long-range penalty when Dan Robson was taken off the ball.

Gloucester's first defensive duties came as Jonny May sliced his clearance after a cunning grubber through from Andy Goode but Worcester overthrew the lineout and Twelvetrees cleared.

The game went through an error strewn phase and Goode levelled the scores when Andy Hazell broke early from a scrum, conceded after a high ball was spilled.

Goode was then off target from halfway when Gloucester went off their feet in support of the tackled player. The Warriors were marginally having the better of things at this stage.

Gloucester's pack then took control with a controlled series of pick and go's which moved steadily into the home 22, until the Warriors were caught offside and Twelvetrees slotted an easy penalty for a 6-3 lead.

Goode was off target with a 28 minute penalty and Gloucester were then indebted to a try saving tackle from Jonny May as Chris Jones rampaged towards the line.

Simpson-Daniel then had to repeat the heroics with a flying tackle on Alex Grove after a midfield break from Matt Kvesic as Gloucester lived dangerously in defence.

So, it was somewhat against the run of play when Twelvetrees had a chance to extend the lead as Gloucester won a penalty at scrum time but his kick drifted just wide.

A golden opportunity then went begging as Andy Goode was sinbinned for pulling a man back off the ball.

The catch and drive set up a great position but Robson's pass to Simpson-Daniel after a sharp break down the blindside was a fraction low and spilled with the line beckoning.

The threat wasn't over but Gloucester were penalised for holding on near the Warriors line to end the half.

Half time came with the game not really having got going. Worcester had possibly enjoyed slightly more possession and had almost scored twice.

However, Gloucester would be kicking themselves for not scoring just before half time. Both teams had missed kicks at goal and only time would tell how important this would prove to be for both teams.

A good start was needed but it went the way of the Warriors. Twelvetrees put a kick out on the full, the pack conceded a penalty and Joe Carlisle levelled the scores in Goode's absence.

There was an immediate chance for Twelvetrees to restore the lead but his kick, though well struck, faded right of the uprights.

Carlisle then wasted a scoring chance in similar fashion as Gloucester were penalised for the third time for the same offence at the lineout.

The game was crying out for something to happen and Nigel Davies tried to force the pace by bringing on Burns, Knight and Qera. But still the scrappy nature of the game continued.

But finally, Gloucester's backs clicked into gear. May and Monahan exploited a gaping blindside before the inside pass found Trinder who just evaded Drauinui to score. Burns converted for a 13-6 lead.

The home side weren't done, though. Drauninui got outside Trinder to make good ground into the Gloucester 22 and quick ball presented replacement prop James Currie with a close-range score. Carlisle's conversion made it 13-13.

With less than 10 minutes to go, it was all to play for, and the home side were sensing their first win of the season and finishing strongly.

And, with two minutes to go, a lineout penalty, apparently against Jim Hamilton, gave Goode the chance to be a hero and the fly half made no mistake for a 16-13 lead.

There was one late twist. With no time remaining, Gloucester won a penalty at a Worcester scrum and Burns showed nerves of steel to kick the goal to earn the draw.

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