

# **GLOUCESTER RUGBY**

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2012**

KINGSHOLM – AVIVA PREMIERSHIP RUGBY  
GLOUCESTER EDGE WEST COUNTRY DERBY  
IN KINGSHOLM NAIL-BITER

GLOUCESTER RUGBY 16 BATH RUGBY 10

It went down to the wire at Kingsholm on Saturday afternoon but Gloucester Rugby hung on to the local bragging rights with a hard fought 16-10 win over rivals Bath.

As has been the case so often this season, Gloucester did it the hard way. On this occasion, they had to overcome a 10 point deficit as Stephen Donald shocked the home crowd with a superb first minute score.

It was a setback that would have rocked most teams and Gloucester did take a while to settle. However, what followed was a performance of passion and resilience as the Cherry and Whites hit back to take the spoils.

It wasn't a classic; these games seldom are. But, if you like your club rugby served up at 100 miles an hour, with no quarter asked and none given, then Kingsholm was the place for you.

After a tough opening quarter, Gloucester scrapped and battled their way back into the game courtesy of two penalties from Freddie Burns to get back into contention at half time.

And they followed this up after the break with a performance of sheer doggedness as Nigel Davies' side took an iron grip on proceeding courtesy of a massive effort up front from the pack.

The only thing that was really lacking in the second half was the finishing touch. Gloucester created several gilt-edged scoring opportunities but were denied by last ditch defence that bordered on the heroic from Bath.

Rob Cook did cross but Shane Monahan was denied by the TMO and Henry Trinder was denied when a TMO referral could and should have produced a try. It all meant that Gloucester only led by a narrow six point margin going into the final few minutes.

Even with time up on the clock and in possession of the ball, Gloucester made it interesting as they failed to punt the ball dread until common sense prevailed and the contest was put to an end.

Another big win for Gloucester who can reflect on four wins from six Aviva Premiership outings as they now enter European competition.

Such joyous scenes seemed unlikely as Gloucester were caught cold within the first minute.

Nothing looked on when Stephen Donald took the ball in the ten channel, but the All Black spotted a gap between Twelvetrees and Wood and simply outsprinted the cover to score. He converted his own try to stun the crowd.

It was a very loose opening from the home team who then lost control at a ruck before having a kick charged down as they endured a nervy first few minutes.

Gloucester did settle and created a couple of half chances in the Bath 22, but weren't quite able to finish them off and get back on terms.

Bath then gave Gloucester another real scare, as Kyle Eastmond latched onto a canny grubber through from Sam Vesty . But the winger just put a foot in touch before his offload inside found Abendanon who thought he'd scored.

The visitors were creating problems with their patient possession game and Gloucester were constantly being pushed backwards by the tactical kicking of Donald whenever the opportunity arose.

And one such kick led to a penalty chance as the home pack were penalised, not for the first time, at scrum time and Donald made it 10-0 after 20 minutes.

Everything was working against the Cherry and Whites at this point. Knock on's were being missed, and a long clearance downfield from Burns rolled dead to bring play back 60 metres and increase the frustration.

Finally, though, the home pack made some inroads, won some penalties, and Freddie Burns opened the account on the half hour with a well struck penalty.

Gloucester were suddenly alive and breaks from Edmonds and Monahan quickly led to another penalty chance and Burns narrowed the gap to 10-6 to Bath.

Half time came with neither side troubling the scoreboard further and everything to play for.

Only Donald's moment of individual brilliance really separated the sides although Gloucester would be the first to admit that they hadn't been at their best.

Bath had done well what they've done well all season. Play for position and wait for the errors to come. Gloucester would have to find an answer.

An early knock-on gifted Gloucester good early field position and Simon Taylor was quickly pinged for not rolling away. However, Burns' penalty attempt slid past the right hand upright.

Gloucester were full of intent and Burns almost opened up the Bath defence with Twelvetrees only an ankle tap away from scoring.

Monahan then returned a loose kick in superb style, battling his way to the line with three men hanging off him but the try was disallowed after consultation with the TMO for a double movement.

However, the momentum was building and building, and an overlap was finally created for Rob Cook on the left-hand wing. Again the TMO was called for but this time the try was given. Burns added a superb touchline conversion for a 13-10 lead.

Bath responded with a good spell of possession and Gloucester were forced to work hard in defence although failing to find touch with kicks wasn't helping matters.

The hour mark came and so did the moment the home crowd has been waiting for as Jimmy Cowan entered the fray with the game very much in the balance.

Qera and Morgan were starting to rampage with ball in hand and Bath were starting to hang on in defence. But hang on they did as Gloucester sought the crucial score.

Twice Gloucester earned penalties from attacking 5 metre scrums, but were then penalised themselves so settled for a coolly taken drop goal from Burns and a 16-10 lead.

It provoked a furious fight back from the visitors who showed some ambition for literally the first time in the second half. They drove close to the Gloucester line as Donald jinked his way through but crucially knocked on.

The game then seemed done and dusted as Gloucester rose to claim a Bath lineout with less than a minute remaining.

However, possession was bizarrely kicked away and an interception then thrown, before the ball was finally, and to the relief of the crowd, hoofed into the Shed to clinch the win.

JC