

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2012

KINGSHOLM – AMLIN CHALLENGE CUP

GLOUCESTER MAKE IT TWO FROM TWO IN EUROPE
WITH BORDEAUX WIN

GLOUCESTER RUGBY 25 BORDEAUX-BEGLES 13

It wasn't quite a vintage performance but Gloucester sunk Bordeaux on Thursday evening to earn their second Amlin Challenge Cup win of the season by 25 points to 13.

It was, quite literally, a game of two halves. Gloucester probably had the win in the bag by half time, having secured the try scoring bonus point.

In doing so, Gloucester turned on the style and scored two of their best tries of the season. It all looked set for a cracking second 40 minutes. However, the second half never really got going as both sides committed numerous handling errors and conceded penalties.

The referee was probably the busiest man on the pitch in the second half and it was only from the very last play of the half that the second period deadlock was broken as Bordeaux scored a consolation try.

When all is said and done, however, Gloucester can reflect upon a bonus point win which keeps them in the mix in Pool 1 and now turn their attention to Leicester Tigers next weekend.

Heavy rain in the run up to kick off had thankfully subsided as Gloucester got their Amlin Challenge Cup campaign underway. Gloucester started promisingly with a fine break from Huia Edmonds. However, the hooker didn't see the unmarked Charlie Sharples outside him. Bordeaux killed the ball but Twelvetrees hit the upright with his penalty attempt.

No such mistake was made a couple of minutes later as James Simpson-Daniel carved open the visitors. Swift recycling created the overlap and Akapusi Qera put Will James over in the corner for the game's first try.

The second wasn't long in coming as Gloucester countered from deep. Jimmy Cowan put in an intelligent kick ahead, and Billy Twelvetrees had time to scoop and gather and trot in for the score and a 10-0 lead.

Bordeaux did look lively with ball in hand and a break and chip ahead from fly half Nicolas Sanchez almost fashioned a try, with Cowan perhaps lucky not to be adjudged to have tackled the man without the ball in a dangerous situation.

There was some reward for their endeavours, however, as Sanchez slotted one penalty when Gloucester came in at the side of a ruck and a second as the Gloucester back row broke early from a scrum.

Nigel Davies' side had been starved of possession but made the most of their next bit of decent ball in hand.

Simpson-Daniel ghosted in off his wing to create the extra man and straightened the line beautifully to put Charlie Sharples over in the corner and a 15-6 lead after 26 minutes.

Twelvetrees had endured an unlucky evening with the boot, two attempts coming back off the posts, but got off the mark with a penalty five minutes before half time.

Then followed a try of brilliance. Ben Morgan made the initial break with Mike Tindall in support. Huia Edmonds took it on and this time saw Sharples who sprinted home. Twelvetrees added the extras.

So Gloucester went into half time with a decent 25-6 lead and a try scoring bonus point already in the bank.

It hadn't been perfect but the fluency was starting to come into Gloucester's play.

Powerful ball carrying in the pack was offset with sinewy running in the backs, and more tries beckoned in the second half if the team maintained their focus.

There was an early setback as Sione Kalamafoni limped off injured in the early minutes, but Sanchez couldn't take advantage as his subsequent penalty attempt fell short.

It was a disjointed opening ten minutes from Gloucester with several handling errors and penalties conceded. And Bordeaux nearly took advantage but second row Tisseau was held up over the line by Cowan.

It was Gloucester's first real spell under the cosh, and they were reduced to 14 men when Will James was sinbinned for an incident at a ruck just five metres from his own line.

A man to the good, Bordeaux opted to scrum but, boosted by the arrival of Wood, Britton and Harden, Gloucester won the penalty and cleared.

It had actually become a scrappy game of rugby by now. Twelvetrees glanced the post with a long-range penalty attempt, but the first 20 minutes passed with no further addition to the score.

A raft of replacements from both sides didn't help the continuity and the game looked set to drift towards the final whistle with neither team able to gain the ascendancy and referee Mitrea's whistle working overtime.

Gloucester strived hard to finish in style but it just didn't happen and a late break by Felix Le Bourhis took advantage of some tired tackling to put flanker Gautier Gibouin in for a consolation score with no time left on the clock.