

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2000

FIRST HOME WIN IS DOWN TO MANNIX

FLY-HALF GIVES THE KINGSHOLM FAITHFUL
SOMETHING TO CHEER

GLOUCESTER 27 HARLEQUINS 23

GLOUCESTER

C. Catling	15
J. Ewens	14
T. Fanolua	13
C. Yates	12
T. Beim	11
S. Mannix	10
A. Gomarsall	9
O. Azam	1
C. Fortey	2
A. Powles	3
R. Fidler	4
I. Jones	5
S. Ojomoh	6
K. Jones (capt.)	7
J. Paramore	8

Reps: I. Sanders,
J. Simpson-Daniel,
S. Sanchez, P. Vickery,
M. Cornwell, A. Eustace,
A. Hazell.

HARLEQUINS

R. O'Neill
B. Gollings
W. Greenwood
N. Burrows
B. Daniel
P. Burke
P. Richards
J. Leonard
K. Wood
B. Starr
G. Morgan
A. Codling
R. Jenkins
D. Wilson
S. White-Cooper

Reps: M. Powell,
N. Greenstock, J. Williams,
R. Mathieson, T. Fuga,
A. Dawling.

REFEREE: R. Goodliffe (RFU)

STAR MAN: Simon Mannix

Simon Mannix delivered a faultless kicking display to put the boot into Harlequins as Gloucester recorded their first victory of the season at a seething Kingsholm.

Mannix was on target with nine penalties, all 27 points, as Gloucester overcame tries from Will Greenwood and Nick Burrows to secure a battling victory.

The king is dead, long live the king at Kingsholm as Gloucester's new regime under Kingsley Jones attempted to get the season back on track following Ian Jones' mid-week resignation from the captaincy hot-seat.

Coach Philippe Saint-Andre tinkered with his starting line-up, switching Chris Catling to full-back and Terry Fanolua to centre, undoubtedly their rightful positions.

However, it did little good in a horrendous Gloucester start. The kick-off was deep, but Andy Gomarsall's inside pass was knocked on to award Harlequins a scrum under the Gloucester posts.

They defended four waves of Harlequins attacks, Gloucester infringed and Paul Burke put 'Quins in front.

Stirred by their initial gift, Harlequins produced a white-hot opening. Gloucester's kick was deep and Harlequins spun left. Ryan O'Neill hurtled into the line to link with Ben Gollings and David Wilson, Gomarsall missed Will Greenwood and he hurtled in to score.

The conversion took 'Quins 10 points ahead and barely five minutes had gone.

Mannix landed a penalty to get Gloucester up and running, and they proceeded to dominate possession but lacked the clinical final ball.

Catling collected a high kick and countered with verve. He collected his own chip and linked with Olivier Azam and Steve Ojomoh as Gloucester piled forward.

Joe Ewens found Fanolua and Kingsley Jones on the left and Gloucester rumbled infield. Mannix received just outside the 22 and showed a beautiful dummy to slice through, but with a certain try gaping, Chris Yates overran the scoring pass.

Gloucester continued to batter on, forcing a succession of good attacking positions, but crucially they again failed to make their pressure tell.

Crucially, Gloucester were again suffering a lack of discipline and the warning lights were flashing when 'Quins attacked at pace.

Greenwood's forward pass to Wood denied a certain score, but Gloucester's leaky defence again failed to stop a midfield burst and although Catling felled Wood, Nick Burrows was on hand to score after 32 minutes.

The conversion took them 17-6 ahead, but Mannix landed two further penalties before the break to one from Burke to leave Gloucester trailing 12-20.

Half-time :
Gloucester 12, Harlequins 20

The thought of a third successive home defeat was a real threat at the break. Gloucester had set their stall out to win all their remaining home games of the season and a third straight home defeat would [have] ripped the heart out of Kingsholm.

But Gloucester's intent was clear and as long as Mannix held his ice-cool nerve, Gloucester were kept just in touch.

He firstly cut the deficit to five points after Phil Vickery had wrapped up Wood and then Gloucester produced their most stinging attack of the match.

A rampaging forward drive took play to underneath the posts and when Yates was held just short, Mannix landed yet another penalty.

With Vickery on the field, Gloucester's scrummage, although not completely rock steady, was far more solid and robust.

However, their attacking credentials were seriously hampered by a chronic lack of getting the basics right. Their play was littered with handling errors any time they got near the line.

It was not pretty, but undeniably frantic and it appeared at times that Gloucester's will to win would be their undoing because play was so fragmented, but the forwards were hard working and resourceful and Gloucester, as well as fighting against the referee, gradually ground 'Quins down.

Mannix's seventh penalty hauled Gloucester to 21-23 down and set up a barnstorming finish.

A Wood body check on Catling gave Mannix his eighth successful penalty and Gloucester were in front for the first time in the match with just nine minutes remaining.

Having battled so hard for the advantage, Gloucester were not going to let it slip and when Mannix landed his ninth penalty, a monster from just inside the Gloucester half, Gloucester were four points ahead.

Catling then made a try, and game-saving tackle as 'Quins charged through again.

But 'Quins rampaged back but crucially Vickery and Gloucester turned a scrummage on their own line to win back possession and clear their lines.

The atmosphere was like a relegation dogfight and when Gomarsall's kick was fielded into touch by Brendon Daniel, it signalled frantic and deserved celebrations.

JC