

THE CITIZEN

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2000

JONES HONOURED IN EUROPEAN TIE

STAND-IN SKIPPER GIVEN CAPTAIN'S ARMBAND FOR LLANELLI CLASH

Kingsley Jones spoke last night of his 'great honour' at being asked to lead Gloucester into the Heineken Cup confrontation with Llanelli at Stradey Park tomorrow.

Jones retains the captain's armband for Gloucester's first ever clash in Europe's premier club competition and will make an emotional return to the country he led as national skipper.

The destiny of the full-time captaincy is no nearer to being resolved, but Jones will have the task of leading Gloucester against last year's semi-finalists.

"I just wanted to be involved in the team to play Llanelli initially, that was my goal, but it's a great bonus and such an honour to be captain," he said.

"The Heineken Cup is a huge competition and the games do not come along every day in your career and it will be a fantastic weekend for Gloucester."

Gloucester will train under the Kingsholm floodlights tonight, with injury problems still affecting coach Philippe Saint-Andre's squad.

Hard-nosed hooker Olivier Azam will replace Chris Fortey, who twisted his lower leg against Bristol, while Joe Ewens will miss out because of a hamstring injury and is likely to be replaced by Terry Fanolua.

Loose-head prop Adey Powles, suffering with a rib injury, should start with Serge Simon on the bench.

"I am not nervous about it, just really, really looking forward to it more than anything because it is also personal for me," Jones said.

"We worked hard for nine months last season to qualify and now we don't want to put up a poor show.

"There is no doubt we can win there. I am not saying we are going to win because that would be foolish, but provided everybody is up for it and we play like we did in the second half against Bristol, anything could happen."

And Jones knows exactly what it will take to pilot Gloucester to victory in what is sure to be a highly abrasive atmosphere.

The desire for battle is already burning bright in Jones and he added: "I was captain of Ebbw Vale when we won there for the first time in 27 years and that is something I am very proud of and I hope I can captain Gloucester to victory there.

"We know it's going to be aggressive and it will be up to the forwards to keep the ball, have strong set pieces and not make any errors," he said.

Llanelli have already named a side which includes 11 full internationals and another on the bench. However, they have sprung a surprise by naming Welsh Six Nations scrum half Rupert Moon on the bench, replacing him with Guy Easterby.

The Scarlets are captained by British Lion Scott Quinnell and include big names Matt Cardey, Dafydd James, Stephen Jones, and Chris Wyatt.

LLANELLI v. Gloucester, tomorrow, Stradey Park, 7.05: M. Cardey, M. Jones, D. James. S. Finau, G. Evans, S. Jones, G. Easterby, P. Booth, R. McBryde, J. Davis, C. Wyatt, C. Gillies, D. Jones, I. Boobyer, S. Quinnell (c).

Reps: M. Thomas, V. Cooper, M. Buckingham, R. Moon, N. Boobyer, A. Lawson, A. N. Other.

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