

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27, 2001

GLORIOUS GLOUCESTER REPEL WELSH INVADERS AT KINGSHOLM

PARAMORE'S EFFORTS ENSURE FAMOUS WIN

GLOUCESTER 21 CARDIFF 15

Gloucester are one match away from a place in the Heineken Cup final after a quite brilliantly dedicated display against Cardiff at a raucous Kingsholm.

Led by a Herculean performance from Junior Paramore, the Cherry and Whites drove Cardiff into the floor with a remorseless display up front summed up by outstanding discipline.

With Trevor Woodman and the whole of the pack on fire, Philippe Saint-Andre's men simply never gave in and with Simon Mannix kicking six penalties and Byron Hayward one, Gloucester marched into the last four.

As the final whistle sounded thousands of supporters invaded the ground to the chant of 'Gloucester, Gloucester' and congregated in front of the main stand to acclaim their heroes on an emotionally exhausting afternoon.

Philippe Saint-Andre was able to name a team that included Trevor Woodman and Chris Catling and they made a barnstorming start. They drove Cardiff back with a series of true grit drives and attacked the heart of the Welsh defence with two spiralling kicks from Simon Mannix.

From the first, Catling got there ahead of Rhys Williams and recovered possession to allow Gloucester to hammer on again.

They then stamped a massive statement on the game when Rob Fidler held a great catch and Gloucester drove Cardiff back 25 metres and when Spencer John came around from the wrong side, Mannix struck Gloucester ahead.

The noise told you the kick was good way before it went over. Catling then fielded his second superb take as Gloucester sensed blood, but they were penalised for off-side and Cardiff relieved the pressure.

Jake Boer made a great tackle on Emyr Lewis in midfield and then the unthinkable happened – Neil Jenkins missed a penalty to preserve Gloucester's lead. The occasion inevitably bred mistakes and some of Gloucester's line kicking was not accurate enough and Mannix missed two highly kickable penalties to let the Blue and Blacks off the hook.

This was Cardiff's best period and Jenkins levelled the scores with a long range penalty to punish Gloucester's inability to take their chances. But this was developing into a real humdinger. The commitment was astonishing and Junior Paramore made an astonishing chest to chest challenge on Quinnell.

There were the signs that Gloucester's belief and confidence may finally spring to the surface. Mannix nailed them back in front, but it was in the set piece Gloucester were causing havoc. Woodman was having a tremendous game against David Young and Phil Vickery likewise against Spencer John.

Gloucester took play deep inside the Cardiff half and kicked two penalties to touch and drove, but had to settle for a third Mannix score when Cardiff pulled down a maul.

They had their tails up now. And with Paramore crunching big holes around the fringes and all the tackles being nailed in midfield, the effort could not be faulted. The problem was Mannix's goal kicking. He missed a third right on the interval and all three he would have nailed in Rome last week.

Half-time:
Gloucester 9, Cardiff 3

Gloucester's game before the break had been about nailed down simplicity. There was not a great invention, but it is hard to argue against their forward power.

The first score after the break would be crucial and Kingsholm was rocked to its foundations when Cardiff scored the first try of the game just two minutes after the re-start.

Catling knocked on and from the scrum Lewis picked up and found Martyn Williams. The rampaging openside saw Catling come towards him and chipped over his head. The bounce was cruel to Tom Beim and Nick Walne collected to pounce over and score.

That took Cardiff to within a point, but Gloucester refused to buckle. Mannix held his nerve to land his fourth penalty before the game exploded into life.

Jenkins aimed a deep kick behind Catling, but the Gloucester full-back countered superbly, cutting through midfield and setting them away. It was what the crowd needed as it brought the whole thing back to the boil.

Mannix landed his fifth penalty to make the score 15-8 and 10 minutes later his sixth to give Gloucester breathing space for the first time.

It was do or die stuff. Gloucester dominated in the line-out and drove the Cardiff pack at every opportunity, preying on their tendency to concede penalties. It was an astonishing effort as Gloucester desperately tried to make every tackle.

It was all Gloucester. They had applied an astonishing amount of pressure and Terry Fanolua got them going down the right when he made a great tackle and hacked on, but neither he nor Joe Ewens could collect possession.

But they would not let Cardiff settle and Jason Little aimed to prize open the defence with two barging runs, but it was the utter power of Paramore and the front row that was causing most problems. They were absolutely exhausted, but continued to make the tackles.

The Blues and Blacks had really struggled in midfield but Mannix departed with a cut to his head to be replaced by Byron Hayward. However, he tied Cardiff down with a splendid kick to the corner and minutes later had the chance to extend Gloucester's lead.

Martyn Williams was penalised for killing the ball and Hayward struck Gloucester ever closer to the semi-finals. However, there was still time for Cardiff and they roused themselves for a hair raising finish as bodies lay strewn across the field.

Boer made an astonishing tackle on Spencer John from a tap penalty, but Gloucester's desperate defence was finally breached when Jenkins' high kick beat Fanolua and Gareth Thomas was adjudged to have scored. Jenkins converted but it didn't matter and Gloucester had made it into the semi-finals.

GLOUCESTER: C. Catling; J. Ewens, T. Fanolua, J. Little, T. Beim; S. Mannix, E. Moncrieff; T. Woodman, O. Azam, P. Vickery, R. Fidler, I. Jones, J. Boer, K. Jones (capt.), J. Paramore.
Reps.: A. Gomarsall, B. Hayward, C. Yates, A. Hazell, C. Fortey, A. Deacon, E. Pearce.

CARDIFF: R. Williams; N. Walne, J. Robinson, P. Muller, G. Thomas; N. Jenkins, R. Howley; S. John, J. Humphreys, D. Young (capt.), C. Quinnell, J. Tait, O. Williams, M. Williams, E. Lewis.
Reps.: R. Powell, M. Rayer, C. Morgan, S. Moore, A. Lewis, P. Rogers, G. Kacala.

REFEREE: J. Jutge (France)

STAR MAN: Junior Paramore

JC