

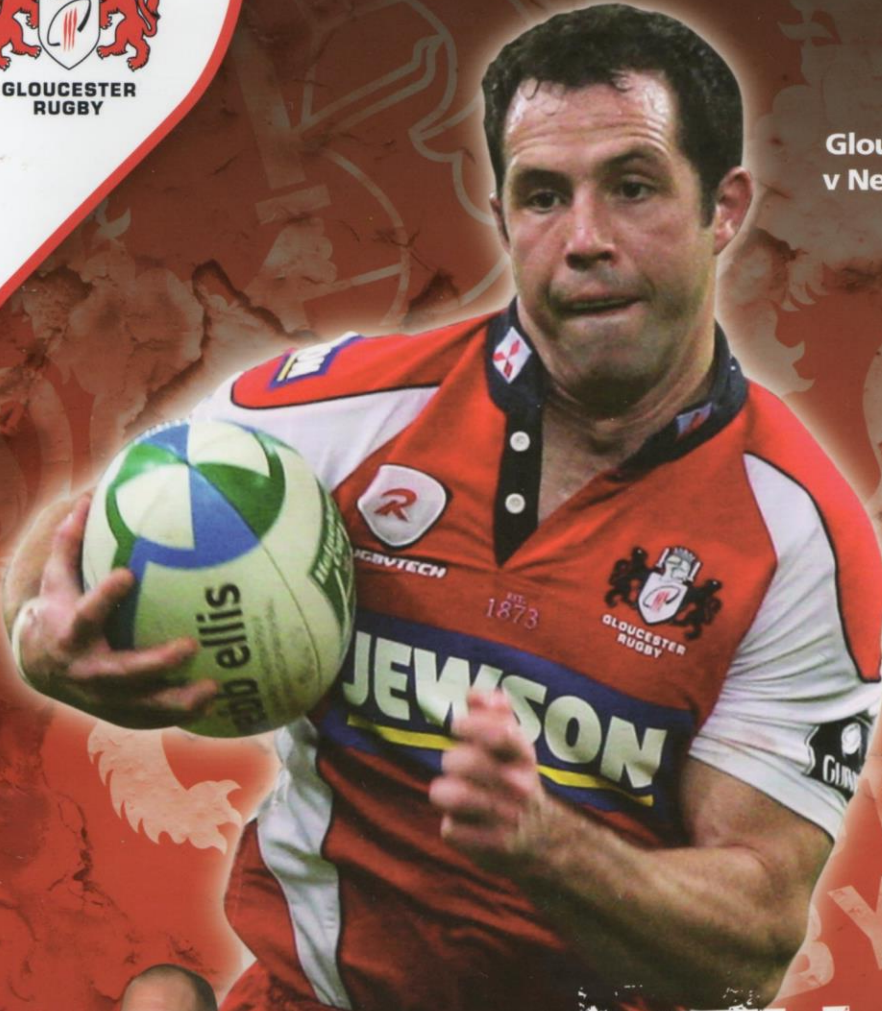


OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME OF GLOUCESTER RUGBY 2008/2009 ISSUE 06 • £3.00



Gloucester Rugby
v Newport Gwent
Dragons

25.10.08 15.00



GARETH COOPER



MIKE TINDALL

Gloucester's skipper opens up

DRAGONS DEN

Everything you need to know about the Dragons

DEAN RYAN

Looks back at Cardiff

BILL PALMER

Meet a remarkable supporter

PLUS: Community news, Martin St. Quinton, ticket update and much more.



Club Sponsor



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CAPTAIN'S CORNER



THERE might be an outside perception that the EDF Energy Cup is not as important as the Guinness Premiership or the Heineken Cup.

I can tell you for a fact that nothing could be further from the truth. Regardless of the result at the Millennium Stadium last Sunday, we would be targeting this competition with the same determination and intensity as any other game. You don't become successful by picking and choosing – we want to win every game we play in and this simply represents our next challenge.

The Dragons are a Heineken Cup side this season and took Bath to the wire at the Rec last weekend. Any side who is capable of restricting one of Bath's free-scoring qualities to just 13 points certainly demands respect. They also got off to a winning start in this competition so it will be up to us to set the tempo, lay the

frame-work of how we want to play and then go and produce a performance.

I felt we got the foundations of our game pretty much right last Sunday against Cardiff. Our forward platform was good, we were more of a threat than Cardiff from passages of play we created and we



There were also certain aspects within the game we felt unhappy with. We are not a side who get on the wrong side of referees by any means but a couple of key calls went against us on Sunday and they had a direct bearing on the outcome of contest.



scored three good tries.

But we simply made too many errors at critical periods and the 90 second spell before half-time when they scored 14 points were crucial in shaping the result of the match. We have obviously left ourselves a lot to do in the remainder of the pool stages but it is certainly not all over, not by a long way and that is important for us.


There were also certain aspects within the game we felt unhappy with. We are not a side who get on the wrong side of referees by any means, but a couple of key calls went against us on Sunday and they had a direct bearing on the outcome of contest.

We have worked hard this week, reviewed what happened at the Millennium Stadium and want to move on. Today represents a massive opportunity for us – please get behind the boys and help us towards another EDF Energy Cup victory.





CUP CRED

 Gloucester turn their attentions to the EDF Energy Cup this afternoon and as Mike Tindall tells Gareth Butler of the Citizen, this is another huge game



ESSENTIALS

CUP CREDENTIALS



IF THE EDF Energy Cup is the trophy on offer then Mike Tindall will take it – although he hopes it leads to bigger and better things appearing in the Kingsholm trophy cabinet.

Gloucester's skipper would be delighted to bag a piece of silverware this year to give his side a taste of winning in a big final. And the more games the Cherry and Whites win in this competition, the more they will go after a place in the final.

"I would hope that if we won the EDF it would give us that little bit to go on and win something else," Tindall said this week. "We're not just looking to win the EDF but I would say it would be nice to win a trophy of any kind.

"We've been so near and just getting that winning mentality in a final would help the squad. So I have to say yes we would definitely take a trophy this year, you've got to say that."

Tindall trudged off the Millennium Stadium field a disappointed man last week, just like the thousands of Gloucester fans who made the trip to Cardiff with high expectations for their Heineken Cup match against the Blues.

He felt that Gloucester made most of the running in the game, with Cardiff living off the all-too frequent errors they made. And a couple of crucial decisions from Alain Rolland didn't help the situation either.

"We created a lot, they created very little, but took the chances that we gave them," Tindall said. "We missed far too many tackles, the referee missed far too many knock-ons. But at the end of the day we've got react to stuff like that.

"We reacted poorly and I think the one on ones killed us. Two of the tries they scored came direct from a knock-on that wasn't

seen and our defensive frailties off the back of that.

"It's just a bit frustrating that you feel you deserve to get something out of the game and you don't."

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We created a lot, they created very little, but took the chances that we gave them

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 Tindall also feels there were wrong decisions made in terms of the replacement used on Sunday when Ryan Lamb and Olly Morgan were forced off through injury.

He said: "In hindsight it would have been easier to put Willie (Walker) at 10 and put Balsh to full-back, people who are a bit more common. But it happened and we've had times where you get the best out of Willie at full-back.

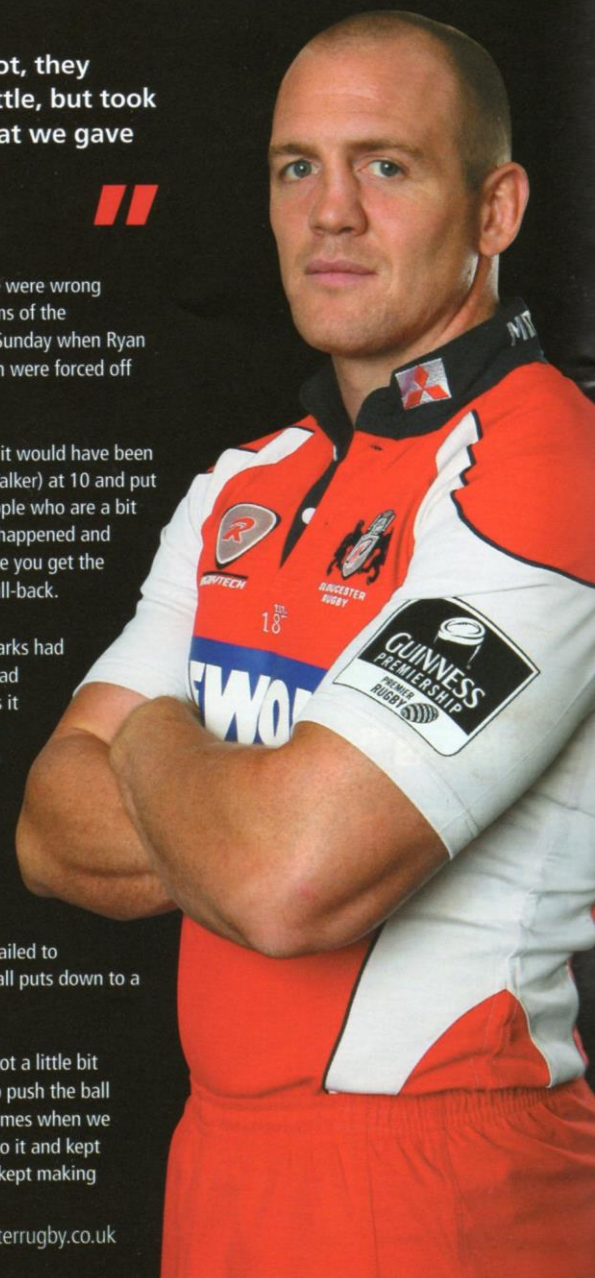
"I had to go in one, Barks had to go in one, Sinbad had to come in one. So yes it caused disruption but we had a lot of ball in the second half and we were camped in their 22 for long periods."

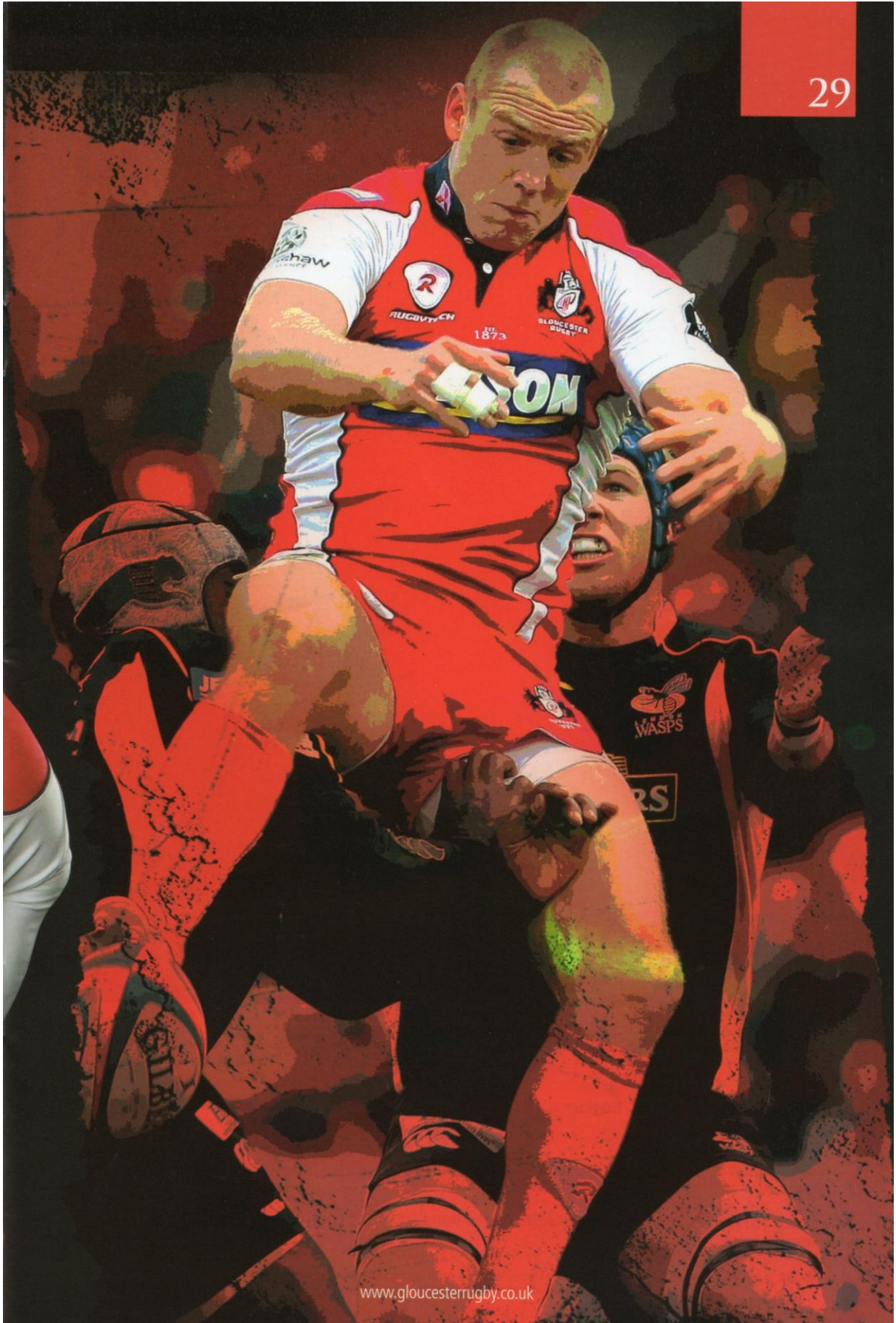
But despite that pressure, Gloucester failed to capitalise, which Tindall puts down to a lack of patience.

He said: "I think we got a little bit impatient and tried to push the ball through a couple of times when we should have kept on to it and kept plugging away. If we kept making

yards and yards eventually you score as long as you keep the ball.

"If we come away with two points it's probably looked on as a completely different story."







RYAN'S REVIEW



The defeat at Cardiff on Sunday has left us with a lot to do in the Heineken Cup, how did you view it?

DR: THERE were elements of our game against Cardiff that went pretty well and we can be happy with but underlying that were some disappointing aspects that cost us dearly. They scored two tries far too easily and the errors were slightly uncharacteristic considering how we have been playing.

Amongst that we had to re-organise significantly due to injuries and that unbalanced us. We probably need to look at that aspect of the contest also. I

thought when we had the ball and we kept it we were capable of being a real threat. We scored three times and could have quite easily come away with two bonus points that would have given us a really good footing in the group but they defended really well and made the most of two or three opportunities that came directly from our mistakes.



Q: Where does that defeat leave your qualification hopes?

DR: IT'S certainly not all over but what it means is that we have put a bit of pressure on ourselves fairly early on in the pool stages that means we cannot

afford any more slip ups. Calvisano back to back gives us a good opportunity to get back on track and force everything onto Cardiff's return to Kingsholm, which will be a massive occasion.

We have to keep picking up points. We are good enough to take qualification into the last two games and if we can do that we have a chance.



Q: Does Sunday's defeat make today's game even more important?

DR: I WOULDN'T say it makes it any more important – they are all important. We are not at the stage where we can sit back



Nicky Robinson of Cardiff celebrates after scoring a try



James Simpson-Daniel of Gloucester takes on the Cardiff defence

and pick and choose the competitions we want to do well in. In many ways this is a continuation of last weekend.

The Dragons are a Heineken Cup team who caused one of the form teams in the Guinness Premiership plenty of problems last weekend, we have another Magners League referee which will mean certain elements will resemble the Heineken Cup and we want to progress in this competition.

We made a positive start against Wasps earlier this month in a game that has traditionally decided the outcome of the pool so we want to push it towards the knockout phases. I think on current form the Dragons are one of the form teams in Wales so I am sure they will be full of confidence and very competitive. We want to do well in every game we play and today is no different at all.



Q: *There are obviously injuries, how has that affected preparations for today?*

DR: THERE are some players who have been asked to take a heavy load because we have had injuries for a number of weeks now and there is no real sign of that improving.

We are still two or three weeks away from getting the likes of Anthony Allen and Will James back which will be a significant help during the international period but we are also without Luke Narraway and Olly Morgan with hamstring strains.

Numbers are down which means we do not have the scope we might have wanted to give people a rest. But that is what we have got to deal with and we will.



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TODAY'S TEAMS

Saturday 25th October 15.00
Gloucester Rugby v Newport Gwent Dragons

GLoucester RUGBY

REPLACEMENTS

- 16. TITTERRELL
- 17. FORSTER
- 18. EUSTACE
- 19. SATALA
- 20. COOPER
- 21. ROBERTS
- 22. ADAMS

REPLACEMENTS

- 16. WILKIS
- 17. MURPHY
- 18. BEARMAN
- 19. RINGER
- 20. MAULE
- 21. TOWEY
- 22. ISAACS

Guinness Premiership Table *as of 2nd October*

Pos	Team	Pld	W	D	L	F	A	TF	TA	TB	LB	Pts
1	Bath Rugby	5	4	0	1	134	99	16	9	2	1	19
2	Leicester Tigers	5	4	0	1	111	94	10	8	0	0	16
3	Sale Sharks	5	4	0	1	70	67	3	4	0	0	16
4	Harlequins	5	3	0	2	132	109	17	10	2	2	16
5	Saracens	5	3	0	2	129	84	10	5	1	2	15
6	London Irish	5	3	0	2	120	91	14	9	1	2	15
7	Gloucester Rugby	5	3	0	2	101	103	10	13	1	0	13
8	Newcastle Falcons	5	2	0	3	95	122	9	12	0	1	9
9	Northampton Saints	5	2	0	3	98	120	7	9	0	0	8
10	London Wasps	5	1	0	4	95	107	7	11	0	3	7
11	Worcester Warriors	5	1	0	4	83	117	7	13	0	2	6
12	Bristol Rugby	5	0	0	5	58	113	4	11	0	2	2

Today's Officials

Referee: Nigel Owers

Touch Judges: M. Aplin & S Edwards *25 (12) 20 (12)*

4th: R Mullis

Replacement Ref: Mark Tovey



PERSONAL FILES

with Alasdair Strokosch



by Ian Randall



Strokosch

He is renowned for his huge tackling and groundwork, and was highly impressive in his debut season for Gloucester.

He managed to force his way into the Scottish national side for the 2008 Six Nations Championship and Scotland's summer tour to Argentina and was the stand-out performer when Scotland beat England at Murrayfield.

He managed to dislodge Gloucester workhorse Peter Buxton of the blindside position towards the end of the season and will hope to continue his consistent form throughout the new 2008-09 season.



11

AC/DC



CLIVE CUSSLER



VALHALLA RISING

15

A Dick Piss Novel

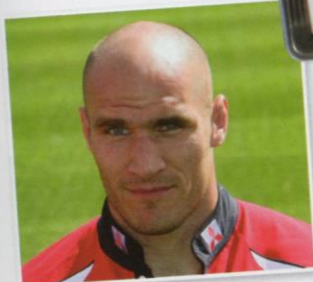


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1. What is the first match you remember watching?

It would have been a Scotland v England international, although I cannot remember precisely which one. I was taken as a little boy and really enjoyed it.

2. Who is your sport's best pundit?

Bill McLaren. There was no-one like him. He did the Five (Six) Nations for such a long time and he had such a recognisable voice.

3. Can you explain cricket?

No, not a chance. It's something I've never been interested in.

4. What's been your worst fashion crime?

Probably everything. I'm not fashionable. I wear a baggy T-shirt and a pair of jeans most of the time.

5. Who has the flashiest motor at the club?

Alex Brown. He's got a Porsche Cayenne.

6. If money was no object, what would be the first thing you would buy?

An Aston Martin DBS, because it's probably the best looking car ever made. After that it would be a Bentley Continental GT...

7. Which charity do you support and why?

I donate to Cancer Research and the Dogs Trust. I've got a little Labrador cross who keeps me on my toes. My grandmother died of cancer and it's such a horrible disease. You don't catch it, it can happen to anyone and it can destroy the lives of whole families.

8. What's your favourite biscuit?

A Wagon Wheel. It's the marshmallow and biscuit.

9. Who is the most famous person with your christian name?

Ally McCoist. I'm not really a Rangers or a Celtic fan. There's too much going on to side with one or the other.

10. Can you play a musical instrument?

I used to play the guitar when I was younger. I could play a few tunes in my bedroom but I've not done that for years.

11. If you could be in a band, which one would you choose?

Either Guns 'n' Roses or AC/DC. When I'm in the car I'll put some rock music on and turn it up loud.

12. How would you improve the play-offs?

I think the way they are is the only way to have them. If you extend them any more that's another game in the season.

13. What is your nickname at the club and how did it come about?

It's usually just Strokes or Stroker. I was called "the assassin" for a while but that's died off now.

14. Which 2 of your team mates would you want with you on a quiz team?

Nick Wood and Alex Brown. Woody is pretty brainy, and Alex seems smart - or he's just posh.

15. What was the last book you read?

A book by Clive Cussler called Valhalla Rising.

16. Has your sport ever brought you to tears?

No, not really. I get a bit frustrated if we lose or I play badly but I probably wouldn't cry. I'm not that emotional.

17. If there was one rule or law you could change, what would it be?

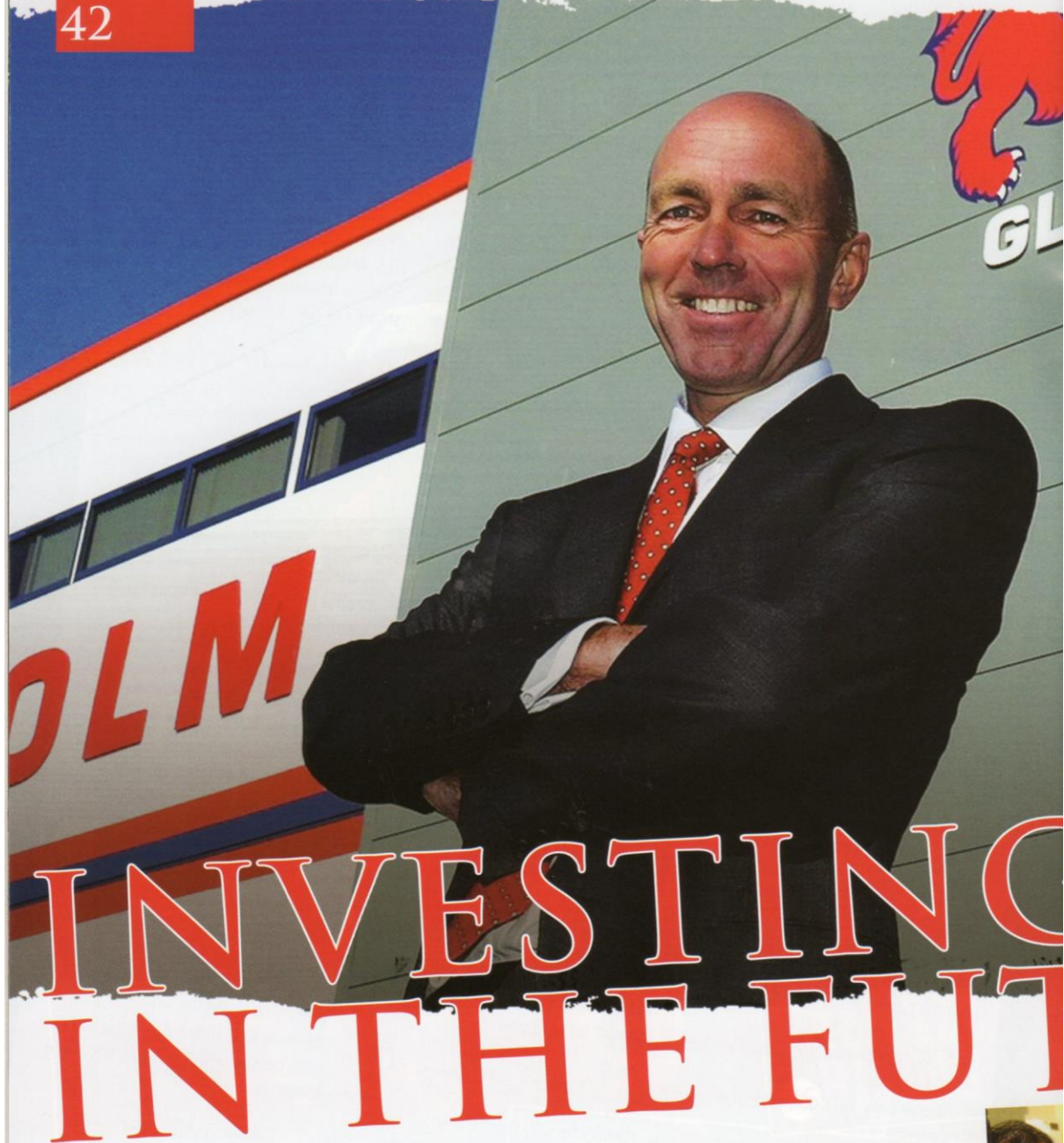
I'd scrap the ELV's. I think they've made a mess of everything. The game isn't half as good to watch as it was last year and it's bit of a pain to play in as well.

18. What's the most common mistake you see players making in your sport?


The one that bugs me is people getting to a certain level and then thinking that they have made it. I hate people with big ego's and a big mouth.

19. Where in the world is the best night out?

I don't go out that much but I'd say Edinburgh. People in Glasgow can be friendlier than people in Edinburgh, but Edinburgh is probably wealthier. More students in a smaller place makes it more relaxed I think.



INVESTING IN THE FUT

 This week, Gloucester announced a new investor will join Tom Walkinshaw on the board of directors. Here, the matchday programme unveils Martin St. Quinton.





DUCESTER
RUGBY



GLOUCESTER Rugby are delighted to announce that Martin St Quinton has

become a major new partner in the Guinness Premiership club.

The Walkinshaw family will remain as principle owners with Tom as Chairman – a position he has held for more than a decade at the Kingsholm club.



Tom Walkinshaw has done a huge amount for the club over the last decade and I want to support him to take the club to the next level – a level where we can challenge the best in Europe over the long-term.



The telecommunications entrepreneur (50) will also sit on the board of Directors alongside managing director Ken Nottage and other board directors after purchasing a 25% shareholding in the club.

“Any major off-field development such as this is extremely important for any club and I would like to take this opportunity of welcoming Martin on board on behalf of everyone at Gloucester Rugby,” Walkinshaw said.

“Martin’s involvement comes at a vital time for the club when we are growing and developing faster than at any time in our history.

“He has tremendous business acumen and will add value as a stakeholder – I am delighted to be able to bring him onboard at the club.”

St Quinton has had a distinguished business career. In 1980 he started The Saint Group, a private office equipment company, which he sold to Danka PLC in 1993. From then until 1999 he was CEO of Danka’s International Operations. During this six-year period he acquired over 50 companies in 30 different countries.

In 2000, he founded another company Azzurri Communications which has grown to 700 staff and a £150million turnover in eight years. In 2003, St Quinton was named Ernst & Young Technology Entrepreneur of the Year.

His interest in rugby started at Pocklington School in Yorkshire where he was 1st XV captain, he went on to play for Durham University.

St Quinton said: “I am extremely excited about the opportunity to join this club with such history, tradition and passion. To be involved with such a major institution like Gloucester is not only humbling but a tremendous challenge.

“Tom Walkinshaw has done a huge amount for the club over the last decade and I want to support him to take the club to the next level – a level where we can challenge the best in Europe over the long-term.

“The club owns its own ground at Kingsholm and the priority will be to enlarge the stadium to a 20,000 capacity, thereby providing the financial backbone to enable to the club to consistently win trophies.

“This is a once in a lifetime opportunity and I am thrilled at the prospect of getting involved.”

URE





A REMARKABLE SUPPORTER



A CONSTANT inhabitant of the Shed and a long-time resident of Gloucester, Bill Palmer is an amazing man – Gloucester to the core.

As a youth he fought the Japanese in the hostile Burma jungle in World War II. As a mere stripling he volunteered for the Army aged 18, bade farewell to a family of seven and encountered the foothills of East India and entered the infamous 'Valley of Death'. Amid the carnage, he encountered tropical diseases and his life ebbed and flowed throughout the war.

But a born survivor, he escaped death's

door and returned to his beloved and native city of Gloucester. He became a renowned local sprinter at St Gregory's Athletic Club and in 1947, two years after the cessation of hostilities in Europe and the Far East; he joined the newly formed Coney Hill Rugby Club.

Palmer featured as a left wing three-quarter and was a member of an outstanding Coney Hill team that in the season of 1947-48 had this remarkable record – Played 31, Won 29, Lost 1, Drew 1. Points for 728 – Against 38, A truly phenomenal record, Bill, poignantly points out that he is one of two survivors of that magnificent team. Modesty forbids him

stating his contribution in tries or points.

He eventually joined Gloucester All Blues and played half a dozen matches for Gloucester United. The team in those days was often selected from the North Gloucester Combination.

Everything in his life is Gloucester orientated. After attending Smarts School and Archdeacon in his formative years, he can readily recall winning the 100 yards race on the Kingsholm playing surface and being presented with a box of chocolates as reward for his breathless effort.

On the day I met Bill in Mangoes Café

opposite Kingsholm, he was in a reflective mood. His first memories of players were two former England players, full-back Harold Boughton who at the time would feature in the afternoon at Kingsholm and could then be spotted in the evenings driving a service bus around the streets of the City and the reverend C.C Tanner, popularly known as 'Kit', who had made a clear and definite impression on the young Palmer, a man who was a true legend and who gave his life in the cause of saving others at sea.

Memories flooded back as he visualised the Kingsholm ground half a century ago. "It was 3d and 6d to stand on the Tump," he recalled, "Money was an issue in the early days and I remember queues forming to be allowed in free at half-time."

ABLE

As Bill recalls, the pitch in his early days was not as fastidiously cared for as it is today: "Good heavens no, I have seen cart houses on there as well as sheep in the summer - all before the Second World War," he said.

Gloucester and the county play a huge role in his life and still do. "I was proud of the City, I still am and also of serving in the Gloucestershire Regiment."

Palmer has been a season ticket holder for over 40 years at Gloucester, a man who has witnessed amazing progress on and off the field of play. Individuals have been etched in his memory, his admiration of players through the years are readily recalled and he reels off Willie Jones, George Hastings, Bill Cartmell, John Gwilliam to name but a few.

Never a man to sit idly by he used to carry a board around to perimeter of the Kingsholm pitch with the team changes prior to the match. He interestingly

pointed out that it was wrong to envisage that the ground had always had a purpose just for Rugby Union. "Oh no, I have seen Americans demonstrating a game of baseball, a woman's Lacrosse International England versus Ireland, motorcycle football and boxing."

Still an active member of the Salvation Army, he has also worked as a hospital volunteer. Amazingly at the age of 65 he commenced a career as an undertaker. There is no malice from his war experience, as he states "no one can be proud of those days, it's in the past, not to be forgotten, but life moves on."



Palmer has been a season ticket holder for over 40 years at Gloucester, a man who has witnessed amazing progress on and off the field of play.



Can a man of 84 years of age have a favourite player or visualize the future for this club? Well, Bill Palmer can, for he unequivocally named James Forrester without a moment's hesitation. Although

he believed his best position would be at blindside flanker. Bill considers that Richard Hill was the coach who laid the early foundations for the progress made from amateur origins. He considers that the England RFU selectors could at one time have considered Dean Ryan, prior to the appointed of Martin Johnson.

As we were about to depart from our hours long enthralling conversation, Bill could not help but reflect on all those years spent on the terracing at Kingsholm. "I shall stand there again this season and recall the likes of Mickey Booth, Charlie Dunn, Derek Ibbotson, Peter Ford and Mike Burton who was harshly dealt with by the referees. Those were the days when you left the ground and people would be standing on their doorsteps waiting to hear the score as we left. Life moves on and that new stand is something to behold, it will be popular but also have its detractors, but that is life in every aspect."

This remarkable man was set to depart in a reflective mood but suddenly changed into a mood of optimism "I'm off to watch the 'A' team play tonight'. A man who had made a clear contribution to life and a man this rugby club is proud to have as a staunch supporter. He spent years saluting other people; perhaps it is time to salute Bill Palmer, the ever green resident of 'The Shed'.

David King.



James Forrester, Bill Palmer and David King

GLOUCESTER RUGBY 22
BIARRITZ OLYMPIQUE 10



Sinbad settles it

Saturday, October 10, Attendance: 11,723
Kingsholm, Referee: Peter Allen (SCO)



GLOUCESTER got their Heineken Cup campaign up and running with a comprehensive and mature performance against Biarritz at Kingsholm.

Although it was not a classic performance, Gloucester thoroughly dominated the contest, controlled an immaculate set-piece and scored one try through James Simpson-Daniel.

There were some excellent performances from Olivier Azam, Mike Tindall and Peter Buxton as Gloucester held sway at the contact area and denied Biarritz any opportunity into the game, despite their excellent drift defence.

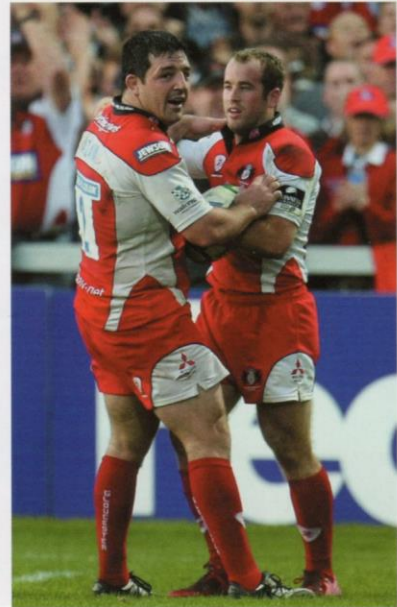
Biarritz made an aggressive start thanks to the efforts of Magnus Lund and Jacques Cronje but gave away too many penalties at the breakdown. Ollly Barkley landed four penalties as Gloucester opened up their lead.

And when Narraway fumbled a Biarritz line-out close to the line, Gloucester recycled and Mike Tindall to the left and Simpson-Daniel dived in to score his 18th try in Heineken Cup rugby. Barkley slotted an immaculate touchline

conversion and the hosts were up and running at 16-3 ahead.

However, Biarritz did strike back early in the second half with a try of their own. Romain Cabannes broke through the midfield and off-loaded to Jean-Baptiste Gobelet, who scored beneath the sticks to narrow the gap to only six points.

But that was as good as it got for the French side as first Barkley and then Ryan Lamb slotted penalties to take Gloucester comfortably clear.



Man of the Match



Olivier Azam produced a tremendous performance at hooker.

Coach's Comment



"It was vital we got off to a winning start in this competition against a very good French side," head coach Dean Ryan.



Timeline

1 mins	Barkley pen	3-0
9 mins	Barkley pen	6-0
11 mins	Peyrelongue drop goal	6-3
31 mins	Barkley pen	9-3
39 mins	Simpson-Daniel try, Barkley con	16-3
42 mins	Gobelet try, Peyrelongue con	16-10
52 mins	Barkley pen	19-10
79 mins	Lamb pen	22-10

Gloucester Line-up

15	Olly Morgan	(yc)
14	Iain Balshaw	
13	Mike Tindall	(capt)
12	Olly Barkley	(4p, 1c)
11	James Simpson-Daniel	(1t)
10	Ryan Lamb	(1p)
9	Gareth Cooper	
1	Alasdair Dickinson	
2	Olivier Azam	
3	Carlos Nieto	
4	Marco Bortolami	
5	Alex Brown	
6	Peter Buxton	
7	Alasdair Strokosch	
8	Luke Narryay	
REPS		
16	Scott Lawson	
17	Jack Forster	
18	Andy Hazell	
19	Adam Eustace	
20	Rory Lawson	(Cooper)
21	Willie Walker	
22	Lesley Vainikolo	(Barkley)



PETER ARNOLD

There are not many players with the flair and imagination of James Forrester and here Pete Arnold pays his own tribute and looks back at the Cardiff game

COMET JANGO

JUST occasionally, perhaps once in a generation, a sport produces a genius; someone who seems to be playing the game by different rules from anyone else and almost makes things up as he goes along. You can't really coach such phenomena, you just have to let them do their own thing, and try, somehow, to integrate them into the needs of their team.

George Best was one such on the soccer field. England cricket captain, Kevin Peterson is bidding fair to become another one, getting away with shots that most batsmen would never imagine, let alone attempt. I wouldn't argue with you if you were to enter James Simpson-Daniel's name to the list: remember that outrageous dummy in the England v. Barbarians game a few years ago? Sinbad actually let go off the ball and pulled it back in before leaving Jonah Lomu in his wake as if he were pulling a milk float.

James Forrester also scored a memorable try in that game, almost ignoring the unfortunate Mr. Lomu as if he were Robert Raikes on his plinth in Gloucester Park.

It might seem coincidental, or even greedy, to have two such creative

geniuses in one side at the same time, and indeed we didn't see them operating together as often as we would have liked because both of them suffered more from illness and injury than was really their due. Happily Sinbad is still with us and working his magic, but we've lost Jango.

One does have to feel for the guy. It's tragic for him to have to call it a day at just the point in his career when he might have been reaching his peak. Furthermore, it's a tragedy for the game as a whole and sport in general, because such a talent doesn't come along very often.

To me, James Forrester didn't really look like a rugby player. A spider of a man, all arms and legs, but, boy, could those long legs eat up the ground. We shall not see his like again.



Leigh Halfpenny



James Forrester

Players like that are a bit like a comet. They brighten our skies for a while, then disappear below our horizon. The difference is that comets tend to return at set intervals. Unfortunately, we've seen the last of James.

So what will he do now? That remains to be seen, but knowing Jango, it's sure to be something unexpected.

DVD?

HERE'S an idea. Why doesn't the club trawl through the videos and produce a DVD called 'Jango's Best Bits'? It would be highly entertaining, and a sure-fire best seller. I'd love to write the commentary for it.

MIKE HAS A HAND IN IT

DURING a visit to the Theatre of Glass in Bath recently, my wife came across an intriguing exhibit. It's a handprint of Mike Tindall, immortalised in glass.

But hang about a bit. We all know 'Tins' is a tough character, but impressing his bare hand in molten glass? Ouch!



Mike Tindall

James Forrester also scored a memorable try in that game, almost ignoring the unfortunate Mr. Lomu as if he were Robert Raikes on his plinth in Gloucester Park.

NO DISGRACE

LEWIS Hamilton won in Shanghai, Andy Murray won his title in Madrid. Bearing in mind the old adage that good things come in threes, the omens looked promising for our trip to Cardiff last Sunday. However another old saying tells us that there's an exception to every rule, and that was the truism which came out on top in the end.

Actually, I'm at something of a

disadvantage when discussing the affair. Circumstances prevented me from watching or even listening to the game, and all I have is some rather sketchy reports to go on. However, I did note that Ceefax described the match as 'arguably the best game in the competition so far', which was encouraging, and I suppose that any contest which ends by one side beating the other by four tries to three has to have a good deal going for it. All right; so we were on the receiving end, but there's no disgrace in that.

To be honest, I was never very happy about Gloucester's chances at the Millennium Stadium. We don't have a very good record while playing on the wide open spaces of an international size ground, and to compound that by adding a crowd of fanatical Welsh fans to the mix doesn't argue that any visitor is going to have an easy ride. One also has to admit that the Blues are a very good side indeed this season.

I also note that the malign fate which seems to pursue us injury-wise have been at it again. If you had to pick the three players you'd least like to lose during the course of a match, then outside half, full-back and number eight would be very strong candidates. I don't like the sound of the injuries, either. Hamstrings can be notoriously difficult to heal, and a hip injury can mean anything.

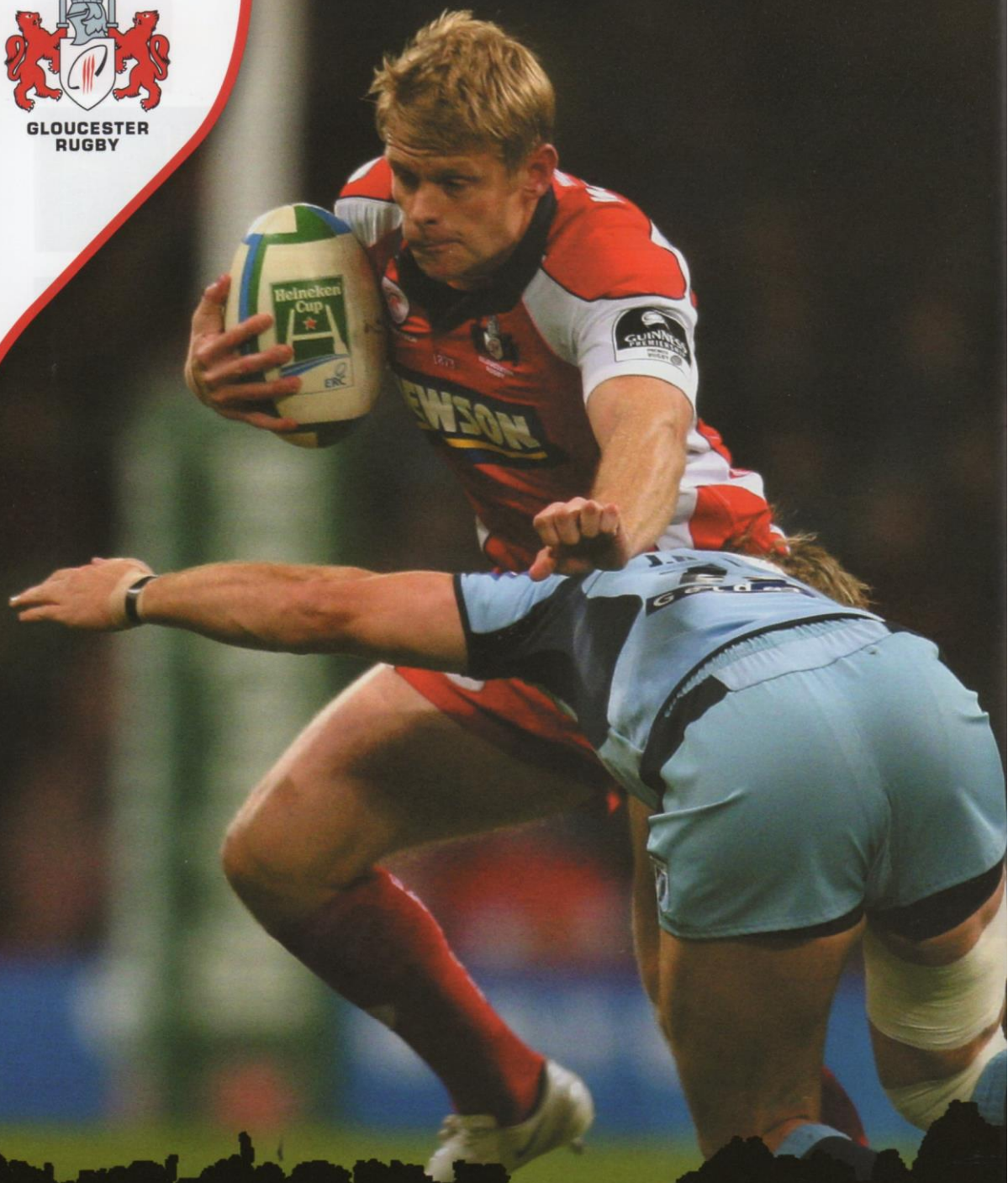
We've always got the return fixture to look forward to. I have a sneaking feeling that the result will be reversed when they come to our place. And who's to say how Cardiff will get on against Biarritz?

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

JUST a thought. When Leigh Halfpenny scores two tries, does he become a Penny?



**GLOUCESTER
RUGBY**



IAIN BALSHAW

DOB: 14.04.79 **Weight:** 14st 2lb

Height: 6'1" **Position:** Wing/Full Back



FAN ZONE WITH BOB FENTON

Yet another competition, yet another Welsh opponent. Bob Fenton is hoping for a better result today than at the Millennium Stadium last weekend and also pays his own tribute to James Forrester.

ANOTHER weekend, another cup match and another Welsh opponent. This time it's the EDF Energy Cup and the visitors are Newport or the Dragons. What better way to put the disappointment of last weekend behind us than with a thumping win over this group of cross-border raiders.

Last weekend down in Cardiff showed what a powerful competition the

Heineken Cup is – result aside – in fact a couple of minutes before half time aside – that was a great game of rugby played in a magnificent stadium.

The Gloucester support was outstanding – it comes to something when 'home' fans need to be urged on by a PA announcer with a big drum to get them to cheer for their side. God forbid we ever go down that road.

But back to today, if we win this one then we have to be in the box seat to qualify from the group. Newcastle away will not be a pushover, but given what is likely to be at stake for both clubs I reckon we will have a greater desire to win. That leaves us just two games away from securing a Heineken Cup spot for next year.

But let's not count chickens just yet, these cross border clashes can produce some funny results, and while Newport will come here as underdogs they are more

than capable of creating an upset.

But rather than look at today's game, I want to go back a couple of weeks. I don't know about you, but any excitement that I had in the run up to the Heineken Cup matches against Biarritz and Cardiff was knocked asunder by the news that injury was going to force the retirement of James Forrester.

By now a lot will have been said and written about Django, but stay with me while I add my tuppenceworth.

There are not many players who, when they get the ball in hand, make you sit forward or stand that bit taller. For a while Gloucester were lucky to have two. James Simpson-Daniel was – and still is – one, and the other was James.

He was the epitome of the new look back row, not for him the lumbering from ruck to maul of some of his predecessors, he was one of those rare forwards who you didn't mind seeing strung out in the backs. His pace, eye for the gap and ball skills were better than most three quarters could ever hope to be.

He could more than hold his own in the tight too, offering a great line-out option when required. Which was a bit surprising given his build – the word 'rangy' could have been invented for him.

I remember seeing him thrown on at the Mad Stad against London Irish – probably his first appearance in the first team, given a few minutes in a game that was already lost. Would he cope – his answer was emphatic. Taking the ball from the base of a scrum just outside the Irish 22 he blasted past the defence to score under the posts. Very much a taste of what was to come.

We'll all remember his match winning try at The Stoop in the European Challenge Cup – trademark Forrester – pace and power. I firmly believe that there was



James Forrester



James Simpson-Daniel of Gloucester takes on the Cardiff defence

no other player around who could have scored that try. And every one who was there will all remember seeing him carried off at Ashton Gate when he suffered his final and career ending injury.

He was not only a great player, he was a top bloke too. Earlier this year when we made the walk to Wycombe to raise money in memory of Chris and Bram Lane he gave up his own time to come along to Bicester Rugby Club to spend time with the walkers, some of his old coaches and some young lads who were playing there.

Not only that, he turned up with a bunch of stuff that he had got signed for us to auction – when I told him that someone had paid well over a hundred quid for his training top he was genuinely surprised.

I don't know if James bothered to read the web to see what people were saying on the day his retirement was announced, I suspect he had other things on his mind. Had he done so, though, he could have clicked onto just about any fan site from

any club and seen nothing but sadness for his situation, and almost universal acclaim for his prodigious talent.



There are not many players who, when they get the ball in hand, make you sit forward or stand that bit taller. For a while Gloucester were lucky to have two. James Simpson-Daniel was – and still is – one, and the other was James.

So now he joins that ever-growing list of sportsmen who have the "what if?" tag attached to him. What if he hadn't suffered those injuries... I can't answer that, but for what it's worth I reckon

he would have been one of the most influential players of all time. Perhaps the best epitaph for him came from an old friend of mine who has long hung up his boots: "Forrester was the kind of player that made kids want to play rugby," he said. Rugby – and Gloucester Rugby in particular – is a sadder place without him. We all wish him the very best in whatever comes next. Thanks for the memories, James.

Finally I can't go without a shameless plug for my charity walk across the Sahara desert next March. Many people have already given hard earned cash to aid my cause, I am both gobsmacked and grateful for their kindness and generosity.

I won't go into the details in this programme, suffice to say that if you want to know more please visit the snappily titled website I have put up: www.bobinthedesert.co.uk. That will give you all the reasons behind the walk what it entails and a link to a site where, should you so desire, you can make a donation.

CARDIFF BLUES
GLOUCESTER RUGBY

37
24



Cardiff give Gloucester the blues

Sunday, October 19, Attendance: 27,114
Millennium Stadium, Referee: A Roland



GLOUCESTER failed to build on their impressive victory over Biarritz by sliding to a five-try defeat against Cardiff last Sunday.

The Magners League side now top pool six with a perfect 10 points from two matches which leaves Gloucester with it all to do to qualify for the knockout stages.

In one of the games of the tournament so far, in front of the sixth largest crowd for a pool game, Gloucester recovered after conceding an early try to Leigh Halfpenny to dominate the second quarter.

They overturned a 10-point deficit thanks to tries from Olly Morgan and then Iain Balshaw, who finished off in the far right corner after Gloucester had pushed Cardiff off their own ball at a scrum.

But in 90 seconds before the break, the Blues scored twice to establish a lead they would never relinquish. First, Halfpenny collected Olly Barkley's attempted pass to jump away from James Simpson-Daniel's tackle and race away to score. And then, from the re-start, Ben Blair launched a counter-attack, Jamie Robinson powered forward and Gareth Thomas went beneath the sticks despite the fact there appeared a

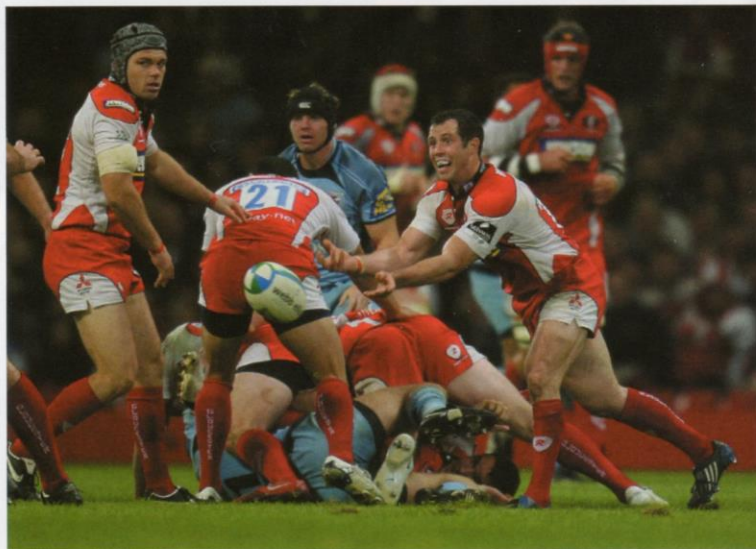
knock-on in the build up.

However, Gloucester responded quickly after the break with a second try from Balshaw. Great work from Mike Tindall and Lesley Vainikolo put Balshaw away for the score and the conversion from Barkley dragged Gloucester to within three points again.

If they had managed to score next they may have gone on to win the game but it

was the Blues who claimed the vital next score. Thomas appeared to have knocked on in the build up but when the Blues turned over Gloucester on their own line, the hugely impressive number eight Andy Powell made a clattering charge and Nicky Robinson plunged over to score.

There was still time for Blair to add a penalty and for Paul Tito to tackle Simpson-Daniel close to the line without the ball but the hosts held on for a vital victory.



Man of the Match



Ali Dickinson produced a powerful performance in the tight and loose.

Coach's Comment



"It means we now have to do something special in the group but it is certainly not all over," head coach Dean Ryan.



Timeline

3 mins	Halfpenny try, Blair con	7-0
12 mins	Blair pen	10-0
18 mins	Barkley pen	10-3
21 mins	Blair pen	13-3
23 mins	Morgan try, Barkley con	13-10
31 mins	Balshaw try, Barkley con	13-17
38 mins	Halfpenny try, Blair con	20-17
40 mins	Thomas try, Blair con	27-17
49 mins	Balshaw try, Barkley con	27-24
62 mins	N Robinson try, Blair con	34-24
71 mins	Blair pen	37-24

Gloucester Line-up

15	Olly Morgan	
14	Iain Balshaw	(2t)
13	Mike Tindall	(capt)
12	Olly Barkley	(3c, 1p)
11	James Simpson-Daniel	
10	Ryan Lamb	
9	Gareth Cooper	
1	Alasdair Dickinson	
2	Olivier Azam	(yc)
3	Carlos Nieto	
4	Marco Bortolami	
5	Alex Brown	
6	Peter Buxton	
7	Alasdair Strokosch	
8	Luke Narraway	
REPS		
16	Scott Lawson	(Azam)
17	Jack Forster	
18	Andy Hazell	(Buxton)
19	Adam Eustace	(Narraway)
20	Rory Lawson	(Cooper)
21	Willie Walker	(Morgan)
22	Lesley Vainikolo	(Lamb)