

# **GLOUCESTER RUGBY**

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 9, 2013**

STADE MAYOL – FRIENDLY

GLOUCESTER RUGBY PRE-SEASON KICKS OFF WITH DEFEAT  
IN TOULON

R C TOULON 41 GLOUCESTER RUGBY 17

Match Report By Tom Burrows

European champions Toulon turned on the style to defeat battling Gloucester six tries to three. A 42-17 score-line will have disappointed but at this early stage of the season there were promising signs. The Citizen's Chief Rugby Writer Nick Purewal reports from the Stade Mayol.

The star-studded hosts put the finishing touches to their pre-season just a week before the start of the French Top 14 with a display of power and guile.

But despite clear daylight in the score-line, the unflustered Cherry and Whites can be proud with their resolve, and also several elements of their performance.

Scrum-half Tavis Knoyle capped an industrious debut with a smart score, while sharp centre Henry Trinder bagged himself a try brace.

While Toulon are purring into their league season, the Cherry and Whites had just dropped down from a brutal eight days' altitude training in Tignes in the French Alps.

Four training sessions a day proved the punishing Alpine regime, but the work rate and desire from the visitors was evident to the very last.

Result aside, director of rugby Nigel Davies was impressed with the way his men stuck to their task.

Gloucester do not start their league season until they host Sale Sharks at Kingsholm on Saturday, September 7.

Davies said his men now have a serious yardstick for improvement in the interim.

He said: "I was very impressed with several aspects of our play.

"Of course, no one wants to lose and the result is frustrating, but looking beyond that we have battled extremely well against the European champions and one of the best sides around.

"All the debutants impressed, and there are a number of areas where we can be reasonably pleased.

"We got exactly what I wanted out of this game in many ways: it is an excellent barometer of our progress."

The rampant hosts blasted out of the blocks with three tries inside the first quarter-hour.

Virgile Bruni, Maxime Mermoz and Josua Tuisova all capped moves dripping with élan and guile, outstripping the Cherry and Whites.

The argument was not totally one-sided though, as among that triple salvo former Scarlets half-back Knoyle nipped home from smart tight play for a debut Gloucester score.

Impressive full-back Rob Cook sent Trinder over in the right corner next, as Davies' men searched a serious foothold.

Just when Gloucester were ready to force a real tussle though, Tuisova bore in off his wing to create an easy finish for former England full-back Delon Armitage.

Gloucester rode out a yellow card for captain Tom Savage impressively, closing out the first-half and even ten minutes of the second without conceding.

But then Steffon Armitage romped home, and South African Danie Rossouw followed suit.

Toulon then went hunting for a grandstand finish – only for Trinder to keep them at bay.

Replacement fly-half Johnny Bentley's clever cross-field chip offered Trinder a chance, and he steamed past two covering defenders to pluck the ball and steal over.

Bentley had cut a fine line off Jonny May in the build-up to Trinder's second try, and looked sharp on his first Gloucester outing since making the switch from Cornish Pirates this summer.

#### RC Toulon Line-ups

15. D Armitage
14. D Smith
13. M Mermoz
12. M Giteau
11. J Tuisova
10. J Wilkinson
9. S Tillous-Borde
8. C Masoe
7. S Armitage
6. V Bruni
5. J Suta
4. K Mikautadze
3. C Hayman
2. B Noribot
1. A Sheridan

## Gloucester Rugby Line-ups

15. R Cook
14. S Monahan
13. H Trinder
12. T Molenaar
11. J May
10. F Burns
9. T Knoyle
8. B Morgan
7. M Kvesic
6. S Kalamafoni
5. T Savage
4. J Hudson
3. Y Thomas
2. D Dawidiuk
1. N Wood

JC