

# **GLOUCESTER RUGBY**

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 30, 2013**

**KINGSHOLM – FRIENDLY**

**GLOUCESTER BATTLE TO HARD FOUGHT WIN  
OVER DOGGED PLYMOUTH**

**GLOUCESTER RUGBY 22 PLYMOUTH ALBION 13**

**Match Report By Duncan Wood**

Gloucester secured their first pre-season win of 2013 with a battling win over a Plymouth Albion side who provided tough opposition on the evening.

The visitors were certainly a competitive, combative outfit on the evening and made life far from easy for Nigel Davies' side.

However, a good workout in front of their home crowd was probably what Gloucester needed in this fixture, and they never really looked in any danger of letting this one slip.

In fact, had they displayed sharper finishing skills, the outcome would have been far more comfortable than it turned out to be.

Credit must go to the visitors though. They provided stern opposition on the evening, no little skill and will be a tough nut to crack this season.

The first score came after five minutes, following a jinking run from Jonny Bentley into the Plymouth 22. He was tackled just short, but Gloucester stayed patient and, a couple of phases later, Dan Murphy crashed over.

The visitors had an immediate chance to respond when Bentley was penalised for holding on in his own 22, but fly half Mugford dragged his penalty wide of the posts.

Bentley promptly showed him how it was done, after a searing break from Drew Cheshire. Albion were caught offside as they scrambled back, and Bentley had no issues with the penalty for an 8-0 lead.

A scrappy passage of play followed, with Gloucester frustrated by handling errors which were preventing them taking a real grip on the game. Bentley thought he'd scored the second try but lost control of the ball going over the line.

And it was Plymouth who were to trouble the scoreboard operator next, taking advantage of a number of refereeing decisions going their way to earn an easy penalty opportunity for Mugford.

Gloucester were stung into action and Stooke and Molenaar both produced powerful breaks to storm into the Albion 22.

Pale Nonu was sinbinned and Gloucester opted for the catch and drive. The pack did the hard work, and Jimmy Cowan darted over from close range. Bentley added the extras for 15-3 after 35 minutes.

Plymouth finished the first half in spirited fashion, showing they were far from finished, and also began the second period well, almost scoring but being held up over the line.

A series of 5 metre scrums followed, and Gloucester were under some pressure, but forced a turnover to end the immediate danger. However, Mugford did add a 51st minute penalty to narrow the gap to 15-6.

The response was immediate. A slick backs move saw Tim Molenaar spin a long pass off his right hand to find the flying Martyn Thomas, and the full back stepped the last man to score. Bentley added the conversion.

Nigel Davies had by now sent on a number of his young replacements, and Plymouth hit back while they were still getting to grips with the speed of the game, Heath Stevens fighting his way over from a couple of yards out. Full back Chris Elder converted.

Gloucester needed a further score to finish the game off, but contrived to spoil a couple of gilt-edged chances.

Trialist Jaryd Robinson produced a superb cross kick which looked to be perfect for Drew Cheshire to gather and score, only for the ball to take an unkind bounce.

Robinson and Gareth Evans then got in each other's way to knock on with a sure fire try beckoning.

The referee drew a close to proceedings with no further scores and Gloucester duly clinched their first win off the pre-season.

#### Gloucester Rugby Line-ups

Martyn Thomas; Steph Reynolds, Tim Molenaar, Mike Tindall, Drew Cheshire; Jonny Bentley, Jimmy Cowan; Dan Murphy, Dan George, Tom Heard; Elliott Stooke, Will James; Matt Cox, Andy Hazell (capt.), Gareth Evans

#### Replacements:

Koree Britton, James Gibbons, Yann Thomas, Tom Hicks, Lewis Ludlow, Reece Boughton, Billy Burns, Jaryd Robinson, Charlie Norman, Jonny Hill, Seb Rodwell

#### Plymouth Albion Line-ups

Chris Elder; Jack Arnott, Toby Howley-Berridge, Pale Nonu, Jamie Davies; Dan Mugford, Ruairi Cushion; Dave Morton, Davy McGregor, Matt Shields; Ian Ascroft-Leigh, Brett Beukeboom; Herbie Stupple, Eoghan Grace, Rhys Oakley (capt)

#### Replacements:

Gareth Evans, Ben Rogers, Tom Harrison, Sean-Michael Stephen, Sam Matavesi, Paul Rowley, Rob Langley, Heath Stevens, Lewis Warner, James Shanahan