

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2014

KINGSHOLM – LV= CUP

GLOUCESTER ROUND OFF LV= CUP POOL STAGES
WITH FINE WASPS WIN

GLOUCESTER RUGBY 36 LONDON WASPS 5

Matt Cox and Henry Trinder led the way with a brace of tries apiece, as Gloucester clinched a fine 36-5 LV= Cup victory over London Wasps on Saturday afternoon.

It's a win that maintains the momentum that Gloucester have built up in recent weeks, and sends the team into next weekend's Aviva Premiership trip to Sale Sharks in good spirits.

And it was a handsome win at that. Gloucester took the game to Wasps from the off and, once they'd scored the first try, didn't really look back.

The set piece was solid, as was the defence and, despite testing conditions, the Cherry and Whites moved the ball around ambitiously and reaped the rewards.

It may only be scant consolation after Wasps sneaked a 32-30 win here at Kingsholm in the Aviva Premiership, but it's a further step in the right direction. And with the teams still to meet in the Premiership and the Amlin Challenge Cup quarter final, a useful psychological blow.

With the likes of Ryan Mills and Henry Trinder making successful comebacks after injury, and more youthful prospects such as Lloyd Evans and Sam Underhill being successfully introduced off the bench, it was a good day at the office for Gloucester.

Tougher challenges lie in wait over the next few weeks, starting with Sale next Friday. But Gloucester will train this week with smiles on their faces.

It was nearly an electric start as firstly Ryan Mills, then Martyn Thomas, sliced their way through the Wasps defence and almost to the line. A catch and drive then fought its way over the line, but the ball wasn't grounded.

It was all Gloucester in the opening few minutes, with the Wasps defence at full stretch, but the first score remained elusive, the closest Gloucester coming being a missed Rob Cook penalty on 11 minutes.

However, the breakthrough finally came on 13 minutes. Good interplay between backs and forwards took play deep into the Wasps 22. Ryan Mills dinked a chip over the defensive line, it wasn't dealt with and Henry Trinder pounced on the loose ball.

And Trinder extended the lead four minutes later. A Wasps back line move broke down on the Gloucester 22, Trinder scooped up the loose ball, pinned back his ears and ran it back all the way. Cook converted for 12-0.

The third try wasn't far behind. Another Wasps handling error was the cause, Gareth Evans hacking on and gathering. The support was there, and Matt Cox powered over in the corner. Cook added a superb touchline conversion.

It had been a torrid start for the visitors, but they showed great spirit to hit back from virtually their first visit to the Gloucester 22, a well-executed catch and drive resulting in a try for Ashley Johnson.

The score understandably gave Wasps a boost, and they spent much of the next few minutes in possession and applying pressure. But Gloucester held with Matt Cox and Rupert Harden doing some sterling work in defence.

The Cherry and Whites regrouped though, spending the rest of the half in Wasps territory. Rob Cook added a penalty as time expired and Gloucester had a tidy 22-5 lead at the break.

It had been a good 40 minutes for Gloucester, and the advantage was well deserved although Wasps weren't out of this, and had shown in glimpses what they were capable of.

The first score in the second half was going to be important, and Wasps did now seem to have the wind at their backs. However, Gloucester were in the box seat and would be looking to kick on.

Dan George and Bill Meakes came on for Koree Britton and Henry Trinder at half time, but it was the visitors who started in lively fashion. The Cherry and Whites defended their line stoutly, however, and a great run from Meakes brought the crowd to their feet.

Gloucester in fact had a couple of really good chances in the opening few minutes of the half, but couldn't apply the finishing touch, much to the disappointment of the Kingsholm faithful.

But it was a good old fashioned rolling maul that brought about the try scoring bonus point. A great set up splintered the Wasps defence and Matt Cox touched down for his second. Cook again converted for a 29-5 lead.

Gloucester still weren't done, and Wasps skipper Chris Bell was yellow carded with the defence at full stretch. It left the visitors a man light, and Dan Murphy took advantage by blasting over from close range. Cook completed the scoring with the conversion.