

# **GLOUCESTER RUGBY**

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 16, 2014**

**KINGSHOLM – PRE-SEASON FRIENDLY**

**CHERRY AND WHITES BRING UP HALF CENTURY IN IMPRESSIVE  
PRE-SEASON VICTORY**

**GLOUCESTER RUGBY 62 YORKSHIRE CARNEGIE 19**

Gloucester Rugby got their pre-season campaign off and running with an impressive victory over Yorkshire Carnegie at Kingsholm. There was a pair of tries apiece for summer acquisitions Steve McColl, Henry Purdy and James Hook.

The Cherry and Whites ran in ten tries overall against spirited opponents with many standout players on show to give the home side plenty to be excited about ahead of the new campaign.

Head Coach Laurie Fisher handed first appearances to eleven summer signings in Cherry and White.

Ex-Yorkshire Carnegie duo Steve McColl and Jacob Rowan both made starts, and it was the Scottish full back McColl who had to be on his guard early on.

The visitors threw the ball wide and number eight Ryan Burrows stormed down the touchline, but a strong tackle from McColl forced him into touch.

The Cherry and Whites thought they had opened the scoring after 6 minutes. Dan Robson had quick ball after a Jacob Rowan break and as Billy Burns offered down the blindside, the fly half spilt the ball as he went to dot down.

The first try did come minutes later, Yorkshire failed to clear the ball and good hands in the backs including Aleki Lutui saw Henry Purdy dive over to open the scoring.

Purdy then picked himself up another score. Mark Atkinson made a smart break and despite being unable to free his hands, Purdy was on hand to pick up and show super strength to dot down. With Billy Burns receiving treatment, Dan Robson chipped over the simple conversion.

The Championship side worked their way into the game in the second quarter, earning a penalty, and from the ensuing line out, hooker Joe Graham burst free to power over in the corner. Harry Leonard missed the conversion, but it handed the hosts a wake-up call.

Purdy nearly then picked himself up a hat trick, bundled into touch after neat hands from Robson and Kalamafoni but he couldn't quite reach the try line.

Yorkshire were growing into the game and good phase play from a McColl mistake saw a David Doherty break set up Chris Jones for the equalizing try under the posts. Leonard duly levelled the scores.

Carnegie were proving a tough nut to crack at the breakdown but good work from Moriarty created a loose ball which was hacked forward by Stooke. Joined by Robson, the second row did well to chase down McIlwain and earn a penalty.

The Cherry and Whites set up a line out, and impressively drove over with Aleki Lutui emerging with the ball. Burns converted well and the Cherry and Whites had regained their lead.

After a raft of changes at half time, the Cherry and Whites flew out of the blocks. Within thirty seconds of the restart, Greig Laidlaw's quick tap found Dan Thomas and the Welshman fed McColl for the hosts' fourth try.

And within 5 minutes of his first appearance in Cherry and White, James Hook picked himself up a try, much to the delight of the home crowd. With Greig Laidlaw buzzing around the breakdown, Hook was making space for others and with Atkinson and Darren Dawidiuk going close, Hook spotted a gap he couldn't ignore to dive over.

Hook and Laidlaw were impressing greatly; the Welshman was taking the ball to the line and finding plenty of willing runners.

From another set of strong phases, Gloucester drove close to the line until Dan Thomas fumbled to give the visitors a reprieve in defence.

Try number six came shortly after. A strong rolling maul from the pack laid the platform for Greig Laidlaw to show and go his way over the line.

Christian Georgiou then picked up a third try for the visitors, showing good pace to beat Bill Meakes and then step inside the cover for an impressive score, which Glyn Hughes improved.

Then the Cherry and Whites scored a stunner, and for pre-season standards, it was good enough to grace any rugby field.

Hook took the ball to the line and found Atkinson on a smart line. As the centre went to ground he returned the ball to the Welshman behind his back, who in turn found McColl for his second of the afternoon.

The next try went to Hook, showing balance and agility to dance through tackles from a Shaun Knight pass, and dive over.

The hosts brought up their half-century with seven minutes remaining; flanker Dan Thomas the scorer as the rolling maul again proved a potent weapon.

There was also time for Rob Cook to get in on the action. Charlie Sharples made a sparkling break and found the full back on his shoulder for a long-distance score.

That ended the scoring and ten tries delivered for the start of the new season sent the Kingsholm crowd home happy.

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