

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2014

KINGSHOLM – AVIVA PREMIERSHIP RUGBY

GLOUCESTER RUE MISSED CHANCES AS QUINS TAKE THE WIN

GLOUCESTER RUGBY 15 HARLEQUINS 22

Gloucester and Harlequins went at it hammer and tongs at Kingsholm on Friday evening, but the home side will rue a number of missed scoring opportunities as the visitors battled to a 22-15 win.

For half an hour, Gloucester seemed in total control. Most of the game was being played in the Quins half, scoring chances were being created and Billy Twelvetrees kept the scoreboard ticking over.

A 12-0 lead was the least the Cherry and Whites deserved in all honesty, but they paid the price for not making more of their scoring chances.

And once Harlequins scored their first try, a little against the run of play, the momentum swung completely with the visitors starting to take control of the game.

The match was still in the balance right up until the very last minute though. Quins edged in front on the hour mark as Gloucester continued to squander chances, but the home side threw everything at the visitors in the final stages.

However, one real moment of class settled the contest. Karl Dickson had to scramble back as the ball shot out of the back of a Quins scrum, but he produced a peach of a cross kick for Charlie Walker to run on to and score.

It deserved to decide the outcome, and Quins had their first league triumph at Kingsholm since 1999.

Meanwhile, Gloucester were left to ponder about what might have been. There was never much between the sides and bit more accuracy would surely have seen the points go their way.

As it is, the video review will make painful viewing, but it's important that the lessons are taken on board ahead of the never easy trip to Newcastle next weekend.

The evening all started so well. Nick Wood, breaking the club Premiership appearance record, led the team out and there was a real buzz around the stadium on a clear, dry night.

After putting the kick-off out on the full, Billy Twelvetrees responded in the best possible way, slotting a 3rd minute penalty after Quins were caught offside and then another after seven minutes after a ruck offence.

Twelvetrees then opened the Quins defence with a lovely show and go. Billy Meakes was up in support, but cut inside away from his support and the chance was gone.

The skipper was also driving the visitors back with a series of booming kicks. This led to another penalty chance on 16 minutes, but his kick drifted wide of the right hand upright.

The Cherry and Whites then so very nearly scored the game's first try. A long miss pass bounced up nicely for Henry Purdy who made good ground before passing inside to Rob Cook. The full-back showed good strength and seemed to make the line, but the TMO couldn't confirm and a five metre scrum was awarded.

The Gloucester scrum was steady and Quins scrum-half Karl Dickson came around offside to concede the penalty. Twelvetrees knocked over the penalty. However, the score came at a price as Cook left the field injured.

It had been all Gloucester to this point, and more pressure led to another penalty chance shortly afterwards. Twelvetrees needed no second invitation for 12-0 and Quins skipper Nick Easter was spoken to about the rising penalty count.

However, the visitors weren't about to be ruled out of the contest just yet. Charlie Walker showed their potential with a lightning fast break down the right before chipping ahead and almost re-gathering.

However, it led to a five metre lineout, which Quins set up perfectly and Easter touched down to get his team back into the game. Evans, reliable as always, added the conversion.

Evans then stunned the home crowd somewhat when he was off target with a 34th penalty attempt, but made amends a minute or so later. Remarkably, despite Gloucester's dominance, it was now a two point game at 12-10.

Gloucester needed to settle a little, and another penalty chance immediately presented itself. However, Twelvetrees hooked his kick from head on to the posts.

There were no further scores in the remaining time, so Gloucester headed into the dressing rooms with a narrow 12-10 lead. Most of Kingsholm were scratching their heads as to how it was so close.

However, it's all about taking chances. Gloucester had threatened several times without crossing the Quins line. In one visit to the Gloucester 22, Quins came away with a try.

Worryingly for Gloucester, Quins had the better of the opening exchanges of the second half. Dickson and Evans were starting to pull the strings and their famed offloading game was starting to click.

The visitors kept the Cherry and Whites pinned back in their own half for a good ten minutes. The defence was solid though and, eventually, Charlie Walker knocked on to relieve the pressure, although Billy Twelvetrees missed a long-range penalty attempt and another moments later.

Gloucester paid a dear price for their generosity. Quins moved downfield, launched another well executed rolling maul and drove over from the 22. Luke Wallace claimed the score and Evans converted. Quins had the lead for the first time.

The Cherry and Whites responded in the right way. Aled Thomas was tackled late after he kicked ahead. The penalty was awarded and Thomas, taking over goal-kicking duties made it 15-17 with 19 minutes left to play.

Gloucester gave it everything in an attempt to get back on terms, and had a couple of half chances but that was as close as they got.

Instead, it was a moment of vision and execution from Dickson that settled the outcome, much to the disappointment of the home faithful.

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