

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

SEPTEMBER 13, 2015

KINGSHOLM – WEST COUNTRY CHALLENGE CUP

**GLOUCESTER PUT BATH TO THE SWORD IN WEST COUNTRY
CHALLENGE CUP ROMP**

GLOUCESTER RUGBY 50 BATH RUGBY 7

Match Report By Duncan Wood

In the unfamiliar surroundings of the Memorial Stadium, Gloucester were simply far too strong for a young Bath side, running in eight tries on their way to a 50-7 West Country Challenge Cup win on Sunday afternoon.

The damage was done in the first half, as a Gloucester line-up boasting a number of returning international players were just too powerful for their young counterparts, particularly in the physical one on one challenges.

The outcome was well and truly decided by the time the teams returned to the dressing rooms for their half time refreshments, and it was just a question of how many.

The second half was a more disjointed affair, understandable given the number of changes made by both sides and the score-line has to be put in context given the strength of the opposition, but Gloucester can take heart from a decent hit out and an important first win in the West Country Challenge Cup.

The Cherry and Whites now have a weekend off to regroup and can analyse the findings of the last two weeks, before taking on Bath at the Rec in the same competition on September 26th before entertaining Exeter Chiefs, once again at the Memorial Stadium, on October 3rd.

Gloucester started brightly from the off in pleasant conditions at the Mem, Charlie Sharples scoring on one flank, before Henry Purdy showed good strength to cross in the opposite corner.

Down 10-0 early on, the young Bath side, to their credit, enjoyed a good spell of pressure in the minutes that followed, opting to kick for the corner and try the catch and drive. However, the Gloucester defence was up to the challenge.

The Cherry and Whites promptly broke from their own line, swiftly moving the ball across the back line and, when Steve McColl chipped ahead past Luke Arscott, the Bath full-back took him out late and was yellow carded.

The catch and drive didn't work, but Gloucester forced a handling error from the Bath defence and Billy Twelvetrees had no issues putting in Charlie Sharples for his second try. James Hook landed an impressive conversion from wide out.

Adam Hastings was short with a long-range penalty attempt as the visitors battled to get on the scoreboard, but it was Jacob Rowan catching the eye at this point with a couple of huge hits in defence.

However, it was fellow back rower Matt Kvesic who was next on the scoresheet, touching down after a powerful catch and drive split the Bath defence asunder. Hook converted for 24-0.

The pack then flexed their muscle at scrum time to force a penalty try, before wonderful work in the backs from Hook, Twelvetrees and McColl put Sharples in for his hat-trick and a 36-0 lead at half time.

Predictably, there were a slew of replacements at half time, and the scoring took a back seat while things settled down. However, some deft handling from John Afoa after brave work from Bill Meakes got Gloucester moving again as Callum Braley took an offload from the prop to dive over. Twelvetrees converted for 45-0.

It had been one-way traffic, but Bath finally got something for their efforts on 62 minutes as Max Clark sliced through the rearranged midfield defence to sprint clear and score. Adam Hastings added the extras.

However, Gloucester were to have the final word on the day. Having repelled some more Bath advances, the Cherry and Whites moved downfield and put a penalty into the corner. Once again, the catch and drive was well-set and Dan Thomas claimed the final try of the day.

Gloucester Rugby Lineups

Steve McColl; Charlie Sharples, Billy Twelvetrees, Bill Meakes, Henry Purdy; James Hook, Callum Braley; Paddy McAllister, Richard Hibbard, Paul Doran-Jones; Tom Savage, Elliott Stooke; Jacob Rowan, Matt Kvesic, Lewis Ludlow.

Replacements:

Darren Dawidiuk, Yann Thomas, John Afoa, Tom Hicks, Gareth Evans, Harry Randall, Olly Thorley, Mark Atkinson, Ross Moriarty, Joe Batley, Mat Protheroe, Rob Cook, Nicky Thomas, Dan Thomas, Steph Reynolds.

Bath Rugby Lineups

Luke Arscott; Darren Atkins, Max Clark, Rory Jennings, Shaquille Jack; Adam Hastings, Will Homer; Beno Obano, Tom Dunn, Kane Palma-Newport; Charlie Ewels (c), Tom Ellis; Sydney Blackmore, Max Northcote-Green, Zach Mercer

Replacements:

Tom Woolstencroft, Nick Auterac, Jack Edmondson, Max Lahiff, Matt Garvey, Matt Bolwell, Jonathan Evans, Alex O'Meara