

# **GLOUCESTER RUGBY**

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2015**

**RICOH ARENA – AVIVA PREMIERSHIP RUGBY**

**FEW FIREWORKS FROM GLOUCESTER IN DISAPPOINTING  
23-3 DEFEAT AT WASPS**

**WASPS 23 GLOUCESTER RUGBY 3**

Little went right for Gloucester Rugby at the Ricoh Arena on Sunday afternoon, playing more than half an hour with 14 men and being on the wrong end of a number of key moments as Wasps dogged out a 23-3 Aviva Premiership win.

It wasn't a classic and neither side will be particularly pleased with their performance. Wasps, however, can console themselves with the four points gained.

In hindsight, there wasn't really that much to choose between the two teams, especially at half time. However, Wasps had taken full advantage of the chances that had presented themselves while Gloucester, despite much huffing and puffing, couldn't get anything going.

And the much hoped for second-half comeback was derailed shortly after the resumption when David Halaifonua was sent off for a dangerous tackle.

Playing the rest of the game with only 14 men, Gloucester dug deep and, to their credit, only conceded one try in that period. In fact, they actually created several good scoring opportunities but couldn't take them – it was that sort of day.

Wasps lived on the edge defensively and got away with some close calls near their own line. However, they were only punished six minutes from time when Lorenzo Cittadini was sent off for a punch on Billy Twelvetrees.

It all added up to a deeply frustrating day at the office for Gloucester who couldn't be faulted for effort but who will, once again, look at the amount of possession and territory they enjoyed and wonder how they didn't score more points.

A week of hard work now lies in wait for the Cherry and Whites as they prepare for the opening round of the European Rugby Challenge Cup. Two wins from four in the Aviva Premiership so far. It's not a bad start but there's a lot still to come from this aside.

Gloucester actually started brightly on the day, winning a scrum penalty and Matt Kvesic snaffling Wasps ball at the breakdown. It resulted in good possession but the Cherry and Whites got little change out of the Wasps defence in the early exchanges.

The first chance of points went to Wasps though as Gloucester interfered with a lineout jumper. The kick was from halfway, but the cannon boot of Elliot Daly just had the legs to open the scoring after 11 minutes.

There was little of note to report in the next few minutes but, as the first quarter drew to a close, Wasps extended their lead although there was a fair bit of luck involved.

A high kick from Gloucester was spilled but fell kindly for Christian Wade. The winger spotted the chance to counter and needed no second invitation, linking well with Piutau and Daly who returned the ball for Wade to score under the posts. Ruaridh Jackson converted for 10-0.

It was a blow for Gloucester who did try and hit back from the restart but without any joy. They were then penalised at a scrum on halfway and Daly boomed over another long-range kick for 13-0.

Gloucester were getting nothing from the referee at this point, and Matt Kvesic was penalised for not releasing the ball carrier shortly afterwards and Daly was on target again for 16-0.

Half time came with the home team holding on to that advantage and reflecting on a good 40 minutes of work. Bizarrely, there hadn't really been that much between the two teams with neither side hitting their straps.

However, Wasps had taken full advantage of the loose ball that led to their try and boomed over three long distance penalty kicks. Gloucester had spent time in the Wasps 22, but not created any real openings and the home side's discipline had meant that Greig Laidlaw's kicking tee was unused to this point.

Lacklustre to this point, Gloucester needed a strong start and were let off the hook slightly when Daly hooked perhaps his easiest penalty of the afternoon on 43 minutes.

But the task for Gloucester then became so much harder when David Halaifonua took down Bradley Davies with a big tackle, It went to the TMO who ruled it high and late and the Tongan was red-carded.

Greig Laidlaw reduced the deficit with a 49th minute penalty, but Wasps responded by forcing a penalty try as Gloucester illegally halted a catch and drive. Jackson's conversion opened up a 23-3 lead.

The Cherry and Whites battled bravely to try and get back into it. Greig Laidlaw was stopped inches short and Elliott Stooke couldn't hold on to the ball just a few metres out after some excellent build-up play.

Billy Twelvetrees then sliced through, was brought down a couple of metres short and three Wasps flew off their feet, but no penalty resulted and the home side won the turnover to clear.

Gloucester actually spent the best part of the final quarter hammering away in the Wasps 22, but they just couldn't force their way over. Referee Tempest seemed to miss some canny misdemeanours in the red zone, George Smith blatantly failing to retreat ten metres when Willi Heinz took a quick tap.

But he did even up the numbers with six minutes left to play when the TMO spotted Cittadini punching and the prop had to go.

It was all too late to affect the outcome. Wasps only had a short time to hold out and they duly did so.

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