

# **GLOUCESTER RUGBY**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 20, 2016**

**MADEJSKI STADIUM – AVIVA PREMIERSHIP RUGBY**

**INDISCIPLINE COSTS GLOUCESTER DEAR IN GRIM DEFEAT  
TO LONDON IRISH**

**LONDON IRISH 23 GLOUCESTER RUGBY 18**

Gloucester couldn't hold on at the Madejski Stadium on Sunday afternoon, as they conceded ten late points with two men in the sinbin to slip to a 23-18 defeat to London Irish.

It was an afternoon when little went right for the Cherry and Whites. An early disallowed try was compounded by three yellow cards in total, a number of injuries to senior players and a 13-18 lead being clawed back in the final 15 minutes.

The officiating was certainly a huge factor on the day and Gloucester didn't help themselves by giving away a number of key penalties, particularly at the set piece.

But the try by Twelvetrees that was ruled out was a significant moment, while the yellow card for Tom Marshall should surely have been matched by one for Irish when they killed the ball near their own line, as it was the same offence but arguably in a more critical position.

However, the game was still more than winnable for a Gloucester side who weren't at their best, but hung in there doggedly even when things weren't going well. The defence in particular kept them in the game in the first half.

With the game finely poised at 10-10 at half time, Henry Trinder's second half try nudged Gloucester in front for the first time and it was then a case of closing the game out.

This proved to be easier said than done. The Cherry and Whites couldn't clear from a scrum in their own 22 and it set up a passage of play which resulted in two yellow cards and a try for the Exiles which restored a narrow advantage.

Even then, there were a couple of decent chances with lineouts in the Irish 22, but a lack of accuracy saw Irish hold out with ease.

It's been a poor couple of weeks for Gloucester, with today's result coming so soon after last week's setback at Worcester. Top six will now be a tough ask but next week against Bath offers the perfect opportunity to bounce back.

Gloucester had to soak up a lot of early Irish pressure in front of a big crowd at the Madejski, but looked to have scored a cracker on seven minutes. Trinder dabbled a grubber through, Marshall gathered and found Braley who put Twelvetrees over.

However, after checking the screen, referee Carley ruled that Braley was in front of the kick and hadn't retreated, and disallowed the try. It was tight, and who knows how things might have panned out if it had been given.

And it turned out to be a double blow as Irish kicked the penalty downfield, before Irish stretched Gloucester left and right until Halani Aulika touched down near the posts. Greig Tonks converted.

Hook quickly narrowed the gap with a 13th minute penalty, but Gloucester failed to clear their lines from the restart to give the hosts great field position, and this led to a Tonks penalty which restored the seven point deficit at 10-3.

Hook had an immediate chance to eat into the lead again with a tough penalty from wide out on the left, but his well-struck kick faded just wide of the right hand upright.

Gloucester enjoyed a decent spell, but couldn't convert their chances and were swiftly back under pressure. Wood and Hibbard both limped off injured while Tom Marshall was yellow carded for reasons unknown.

Irish scented blood and threw everything at Gloucester in attack. The defence was stretched, but crucially held on under huge pressure from the home side.

This phase of play proved to be huge as Gloucester moved downfield and pounced to level the scores. Thrush made a key break, Matt Kvesic drove to within a metre or so of the line, and his offload found Lewis Ludlow who spun out of a tackle to score. Hook's conversion levelled the scores at 10 apiece.

So, despite being on the back foot for large periods of the half, having a man sinbinned and having had what looked like a perfectly good score disallowed, Gloucester went into the break on terms.

It hadn't been a classic. Despite being backed by a big crowd, Irish looked low on confidence but had enjoyed marginally the better of things and would be kicking themselves for coughing up the lead so late and when the Cherry and Whites were down to 14 men.

Twelvetrees' disallowed try had been a blow, but the commitment in defence from Gloucester had been first class. The defensive stand as half time approached could have been pivotal. Things were still very much in the balance.

Gloucester though were dealt a further blow in the opening exchanges of the second half as Charlie Sharples limped off to be replaced by Rob Cook while Henry Trinder went off for an HIA.

And it was first blood to the Irish as they won a penalty on a Gloucester put in at a set scrum, and Tonks duly made it 13-10 only for Hook to level matters once again three minutes later with his second penalty of the game.

Hook then dipped into his box of tricks and conjured up a superb try for Henry Trinder. Rob Cook made a key break in the build-up, but Hook's grubber was sublime and Trinder gathered well to score and give Gloucester a 13-18 lead.

It looked like a key moment, and Gloucester would have been confident of kicking on and closing out the win.

It wasn't to be....

The hosts came straight back at Gloucester and piled on the pressure with the Cherry and Whites simply unable to get out of their own 22. A series of five metre scrums resulted in Irish penalties and Yann Thomas was sinbinned.

With Nick Wood off injured, scrums were uncontested and Irish went to the corner. Gloucester repelled a couple of catch and drives, but Tom Savage was also yellow carded and Blair Cowan drove over from the next lineout. Tonks converted for a 20-18 lead for Irish after 71 minutes.

To their credit, Gloucester, by now down to 13 men, fronted up and had a couple of well-placed lineouts in the Irish 22, but couldn't make anything of them.

And, almost inevitably, it was an Irish penalty that clinched the game. Another soft penalty gave Tonks the chance to extend the lead and he made no mistake.

JC