

THE CITIZEN

FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 1985

GLOUCESTER v. BATH

SEMI FINAL SPECIAL

LOOK OUT BATH – TAYLOR

The confidence flowing through Gloucester's three-quarter line is clear to see. Selectors have stuck with the same four players – Derrick Morgan, Richard Mogg, Paul Taylor and Nick Price – for the last 17 successive matches and that has been a vital factor in a fast improving back division.

Tomorrow, though, the Gloucester threes face their stiffest test of the season against South West rivals Bath, who are rightly proud of their speedy and effective three-quarters.

Yet centre Taylor, who takes over the captaincy from the unavailable John Orwin tomorrow, is unimpressed by Bath's reputation.

"We respect Bath, they are a good side," says Taylor, "but they will not be able to run the ball tomorrow as they do against other sides. Our defensive system is strong and they will not have the chance.

"Even then I believe our three-quarters are better than Bath's and they will have a devil of a job holding us."

Gloucester lost 19-9 against Bath away in December and in training this week the players plus coach Bob Redwood studied a video of the match.

"It was a useful film-night for us," said Taylor. "We were able to look again at the moments of indiscipline which cost us points.

"We were also unhappy with a couple of refereeing decisions and on the day we were unfortunate to lose.

"But over recent matches our discipline has been excellent, particularly during our win against Cheltenham.

"And in Laurie Prideaux we have a top class referee in charge. We have a lot of respect for him and he is the right man for a tough match.

"The mood among the players is magnificent. We are all convinced we are on our way to the final."

IT'S OUR CUP, SAYS SPURRELL

Former Paratrooper Roger Spurrell, who captains Bath at Kingsholm tomorrow, is aiming for a crash-landing on Gloucester's 21-match unbeaten home record.

"This is the tie we did not want in the semi-final," admits Spurrell. "It could have been a great South-West final, but we are still confident we will beat Gloucester and go on to retain the trophy.

"We have done a tremendous amount of preparation for this game. Our attitude is right and we are running into our best form.

"Winning the Cup last season was the culmination of four years hard work by everybody at the club, from the last committee man to coach Jack Rowel. And we have no intention of letting the Cup escape from our grasp.

"Commitment is the key and we will be full of it. It does not matter how much skill a side has, all 15 players must want to win badly.

"That's why I believe Bath would have beaten the side that England fielded against Rumania in January, not necessarily through skill, but by determination.

"And that's what gives us a great chance at Kingsholm."

The 29-year-old Spurrell plus his back row partners Paul Simpson and John Hall were the driving force behind Bath winning the competition last season, yet he has missed out on England recognition while 10 of his teammates have been called up. "I would love to play for England, but I am not too worried about missing out," says Spurrell.

Former Plymouth Albion player Spurrell, 5ft. 11 ins. and 15 stone, will be a key figure tomorrow. The winners of the back-row battle between Spurrell, Simpson and Hall against Gloucester trio John Gadd, Mike Teague and Ian Smith could well turn the match.

MOBILE DICK

Second row forward Dick Burn makes only his second appearance in the Gloucester first team, replacing John Orwin, and it will be a nerve-racking moment when he steps out in front of around 10,000 spectators at Kingsholm.

"He will handle it okay," says Gloucester skipper Paul Taylor. "His debut was against Saracens in an earlier round and he did well then. He is a big, fit player who will be pretty mobile.

"And he will win line-out balls for us. He is up against Nigel Gaymond at the front of the line and can do well. I tip Burn and John Brain to out-jump Gaymond and Nigel Redman.

Gloucester and Bath have each earned £2,800 from Cup sponsors John Player for reaching the last four. The winners will go to Twickenham, where both finalists receive £3,500.

PRIDEAUX IN CHARGE

Laurie Prideaux, a former student at the College of St. Paul and St. Mary, who started his refereeing days as a novice with the Gloucester Society, will be in charge of the Gloucester-Bath semi-final tomorrow.

Cornishman Prideaux, from the North Midlands' Society, took charge of the France-Scotland match in Paris last month. He has also been in the middle for a South Africa-New Zealand Test match.

Freddie Howard (Lancashire/Manchester) is the referee for Coventry-London Welsh.

Watch out for drop goal attempts from Bath fly-half John Horton. He will try to lift Bath hopes with an early score.

And Horton was successful with drop goals against Berry Hill in the third round and Sale in the quarter-finals.

TEAMS :

GLOUCESTER : T. Smith; D. Morgan, R. Mogg, P. Taylor, N. Price; M. Hamlin, M. Hannaford; P. Blakeway, K. White, R. Pascall, D. Burn, J. Brain, J. Gadd, M. Teague, I. Smith.

REPLACEMENTS : P. Kingston, D. Pointon, J. Breeze.

BATH : C. Martin; D. Trick, J. Palmer, A. Rees, B. Trevaskis; J. Horton, R. Hill; G. Chilcott, G. Bess, R. Lee, N. Gaymond, N. Redman, R. Spurrell, J. Hall, P. Simpson.

REPLACEMENTS : C. Stanley, J. Dean, D. Egerton, D. Sole, J. Guscott, R. Palmer.

THE John Player cup final will be at Twickenham on Saturday, April 27.

PROGRESS to the semi-finals : –

Gloucester, third round : beat Richmond 29-0 (tries from Hannaford, Pascall, Morgan, Price, Bennett; conversions T. Smith 3; penalty T. Smith).

Fourth round : beat Saracens 29-3 (tries from I. Smith, Taylor, Morgan, Cummins, Price; conversions T. Smith 3, penalty T. Smith).

Quarter-finals : beat Harlequins 31-12 (tries from Morgan 2, Price; conversions T. Smith 2; penalties T. Smith 5).

Bath, third round : beat Berry Hill 24-3 (tries from Hall, J. Palmer, Stanley, Lee; conversion and penalty J. Palmer; drop goal Horton).

Fourth round : beat Blackheath 37-3 (tries from Trevaskis 3, Trick, Martin, Hill; conversions, J. Palmer 2, penalties J. Palmer 3).

Quarter final : beat Sale 25-15 (tries from Simpson, Trick; conversion J. Palmer; penalties D. Trick 3, J. Palmer; drop goal J. Horton).

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