

# THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2001

QUINS DEMOLISHED BY 14-MAN GLOUCESTER

PARAMORE'S FINAL TRY CAPS A BRILLIANT DISPLAY  
BY THE CHERRY AND WHITES

GLOUCESTER 33 HARLEQUINS 7

Junior Paramore gave a two-fisted salute to acclaim Gloucester's thumping 14-man, three-try victory over Harlequins.

In a raucous Kingsholm atmosphere, the Samoan back-row forward collected the Cherry and Whites' final try in a performance of absolute dominance up front and a barnstorming display in midfield, held together by Robert Todd.

Gloucester took the lead in the first minute with a penalty try and added a second through a marvellous break from Diego Albanese, who was later sent off. But that almost seemed to galvanise Gloucester in the second period as they carved Harlequins apart.

Kingsholm roared Gloucester ahead with barely 60 seconds on the clock.

Ludovic Mercier's high kick-off was retrieved by the home forwards with Jake Boer and Andy Hazell foraging on the floor. Mercier then launched a massive Garryowen and Chris Catling, in for Alessandro Stoica, surged forward to collect possession.

Gloucester were there in numbers and drove to beneath the shadow of the posts, where Dimitri Yachvili's intended pass to Mercier was knocked on by Dan Luger and the referee awarded a penalty try. In a breathless minute, Gloucester were 7-0 ahead.

Gloucester had started in bruising fashion and should have done better minutes later when Catling again fielded a high kick and fed Diego Albanese. He spotted Mercier with room on the open side, but his attempted drop-goal drifted wide.

Gloucester were penalised in a scrum and Harlequins tapped a quick penalty. Will Greenwood made the initial burst, Mark Mapletoft glided past Patrice Collazo and splintered the home defence and Greenwood sprinted up on his shoulder to take the inside pass and beat Albanese's desperate tackle to score.

From there, Gloucester tightened the screw. It took them just five more minutes to regain the lead. They controlled the scrum, Boer set up a second phase and Mercier sent Albanese, who had come off his wing, screaming through midfield. He went past Mapletoft and Matt Moore before scooting away from Ryan O'Niell for a wonderful score, which Mercier converted.

It was not so much the points difference, but their overall control in crucial areas of the field, particularly up front where, as an eight, Gloucester were in charge.

It was fluid and entertaining, and there was an edge to Gloucester. But there is never an easy afternoon at Kingsholm and with minutes remaining before the break, Albanese was sent off.

Yachvili aimed a high kick towards Mapletoft who held the catch. Albanese came in and looked to push him away to get to the ball, before being dismissed for what the referee interpreted as a butt as the Argentinian and the former Gloucester number 10 came together. It left Gloucester with 14 men for 40 minutes, as they disappeared down the tunnel ahead.

Half-time: Gloucester 14, 'Quins 7.

Despite their lead, Gloucester were going to have to tug at their heart-strings to secure a victory a man behind. It was going to require a huge effort for them, and they immediately made a tactical switch.

Whenever there was a line-out Hazell would move to the wing and only link up with his forwards at the scrum.

The atmosphere had changed from the carnival. There was more bite and growl around the old ground, but the first significant impact of the second period was when Ed Pierce, a bull waiting to be released, thundered into Mapletoft and as he hit the floor trod the outside half into Kingsholm.

It was the spark Gloucester needed. There was fight in the belly, and driven on by the likes of Adam Eustace, Rob Fidler and hunched shoulders of Vickery and Azam, Gloucester's workrate never ceased.

Mercier, who had already failed with two penalties, held his nerve to land two in quick succession after Gloucester battled for everything. It allowed Gloucester to build a 20-7 lead and Kingsholm swayed in delight.

Gloucester seemed quicker and hungrier, particularly on the floor, where Harlequins were robbed time and again by the Cherry and White pick-pockets.

Mercier extended Gloucester's lead with a 40-metre drop-goal following another bruising charge by Todd as Gloucester led 23-7.

Harlequins never established the platform needed up front and although they were quick outside could never hold onto the ball long enough to cause serious damage.

Gloucester, though, drove on. They almost conjured a try from nothing when Hazell showed blistering speed to cut away down the blindside and burst away from the cover, only to be brought down by O'Neill.

It would have been a wonderful effort, but the most pleasing aspect for Saint-Andre will be their defence in the second period.

Quins never looked like scoring a try, and Gloucester just smothered them. Mercier collected his 16th point with his third penalty.

Quins had degenerated into a shambles behind the scrum in the closing stages and Gloucester got what they deserved.

Federico Pucciariello and Rob Fidler made crucial drives and Fidler was aware enough to off-load to Paramore to score. Mercier converted and Gloucester had collected a thumping success.

GLOUCESTER: C. Catling; D. O'Leary, J. Ewens, R. Todd, D. Albanese; L. Mercier, D. Yachvili; P. Vickery (capt.), O. Azam, P. Collazo, R. Fidler, E. Pearce, A. Eustace, A. Hazell, J. Boer.

Reps.: A. Gomarsall, J. Goodridge, A. Stoica, J. Forrester, F. Pucciariello, C. Fortey, J. Paramore.

HARLEQUINS: R. O'Neill; M. Moore, W. Greenwood, N. Greenstock, D. Luger; M. Mapletoft, S. Bernard; J. Leonard, T. Fuga, A. Olver, G. Morgan (capt.), S. White-Cooper, P. Sanderson, T. Tamrua, T. Diprose.

Reps.: J. Roddam, J. Dawson, A. Codling, R. Winters, M. Powell, N. Burrows, P. Burke

REFEREE: J. Barnard.

STAR MAN: Robert Todd.

JC