

OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME

ISSUE
07

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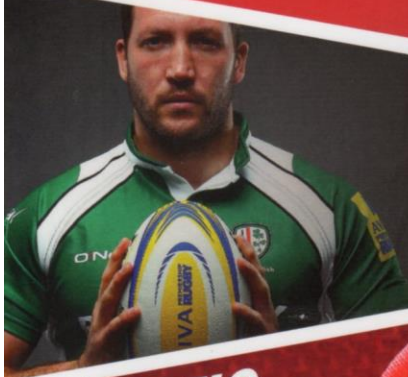
GLOUCESTER RUGBY

vs LONDON IRISH
AVIVA PREMIERSHIP RUGBY - ROUND 8



**MITSUBISHI
MOTORS**

MAIN CLUB PARTNER



**GREIG
LAIDLAW**


PLUS...
**CLUB NEWS
BACK TO SCHOOL
ACTION REPLAY**



**EXCLUSIVE PROGRAMME
INTERVIEW ON PAGE 40**

02.01.16
KICK-OFF 3.00PM
KINGSHOLM

AVIVA PREMIERSHIP RUGBY

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CAPTAIN'S CORNER BILLY TWELVETREES

GOOD AFTERNOON AND WELCOME TO KINGSHOLM FOR TODAY'S GAME AGAINST LONDON IRISH.

FIRST of all, on behalf of the whole playing squad, we would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year, and it's great to start off 2016 with a big home game against an excellent team.

We left 2015 on a good note, and to leave Twickenham on Sunday disappointed that we didn't secure a maximum point win is something very few people expected from us, especially with a few boys dropping out in the build up, and then the injuries during the game.

That reaction in that

(RIGHT) The squad were thankful of all your support at Twickenham



...WE ARE BACK IN FRONT OF OUR HOME FANS. AT A PLACE WHERE WE ONLY LOST ONCE IN 2015. SO WE ARE DETERMINED TO START THE YEAR OFF ON A WINNING NOTE. AND TAKE MOMENTUM INTO A TRIP TO SANDY PARK NEXT WEEKEND.

environment showed the strength in depth in the squad, especially for someone like Nicky Thomas to put in a shift for over an hour up against England's first choice, Joe Marler.

We were happy with how we played at Twickenham and how we embraced the challenge of the in form Harlequins in front of 71,000 supporters.

During my career I have loved playing at Twickenham and this was no different, and it was phenomenal to see so many travelling supporters in Cherry and White and, believe me, you were definitely heard and made a real difference!

It's always a positive note to score five tries away from home, and although some quarters have suggested a number of these were gifted to us, this comes from the work we are putting in on our defensive work with Jonny Bell.

We were putting a quality attacking team like Harlequins under pressure, and this forced the mistakes, and one positive for us is that we were able to take advantage and finish them off.

Looking ahead now to the New Year, our rugby starts today with London Irish the visitors to Kingsholm, and the squad are hugely excited.

The Exiles find themselves in

a similar position to where we were last season, as a result of a number of changes to their playing squad, and picked up a deserved first win last weekend over Northampton, so they will be buoyed by that win.

But we are back in front of our home fans, at a place where we only lost once in 2015, so we are determined to start the year off on a winning note, and take momentum into a trip to Sandy Park next weekend.

Enjoy the game

Billy



Speaking to GRTV after the match, David Humphreys praised his squad after playing their part in a terrific 39-39 draw v Harlequins at Twickenham

COMING UP...

EXCLUSIVE MATCHDAY PROGRAMME INTERVIEW
GREIG LAIDLAW



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DAVID HUMPHREYS

DIRECTOR OF RUGBY

HAVING FINISHED 2015 IN STYLE WITH BIG GAME 8 AGAINST HARLEQUINS IN TWICKENHAM, THERE'S NO BETTER WAY TO KICK OFF 2016 THAN AT 3PM ON A SATURDAY AFTERNOON, IN FRONT OF A PACKED AND PASSIONATE KINGSHOLM.

THROUGHOUT the last 18 months Kingsholm has once again become a really tough and intimidating stadium for visiting teams to come and play.

With only one home defeat in 2015, a very narrow loss to Saracens in October, your fantastic support and ability to lift the team has played a central role in re-establishing Kingsholm as a Premiership venue to be feared and enjoyed in equal measure!

In welcoming our visitors from London Irish today, I have many happy memories of my two seasons at Sunbury back at the start of the professional rugby era.

Much has changed since then and, similar to Gloucester this time last year, they are in a period of transition with a new management team and an influx of quality players.

As they showed last weekend in their victory over Northampton, they are getting better and better as a team every week and we will need to improve some areas of our game from last Sunday to win this afternoon.

Big Game 8 against Harlequins was a great occasion and, while we can take many positives from the 39-39 draw, ultimately we were disappointed not to have won the game. Laurie summed it up perfectly on Twitter when he wrote that we won and lost the game about four times each and then settled for the draw.

When you consider the number

of enforced changes to the team prior to kick off and the injuries to key players during the course of the match, getting 3 points against a team of the quality of Harlequins proved that we are finally developing the depth of squad required to perform across the course of the season.

Many of you have asked me about our squad rotation policy so far this season. Last weekend showed the importance of having players who can step in at Premiership level without compromising team performance, and we will continue to manage the squad over the next few weeks to ensure that we have a squad fit and performing through the Six Nations at the back end of the season.

Sunday's game again highlighted the competitiveness of the Aviva Premiership and the small margins between winning and losing in this league. With so few points separating the teams in the middle of the league table, every point is crucial and we know how important a big performance is again this afternoon.

As always, we were very grateful of the fantastic support at Twickenham and, with the biggest crowd of the season at Kingsholm today, we're looking forward to getting 2016 off to the best possible start.

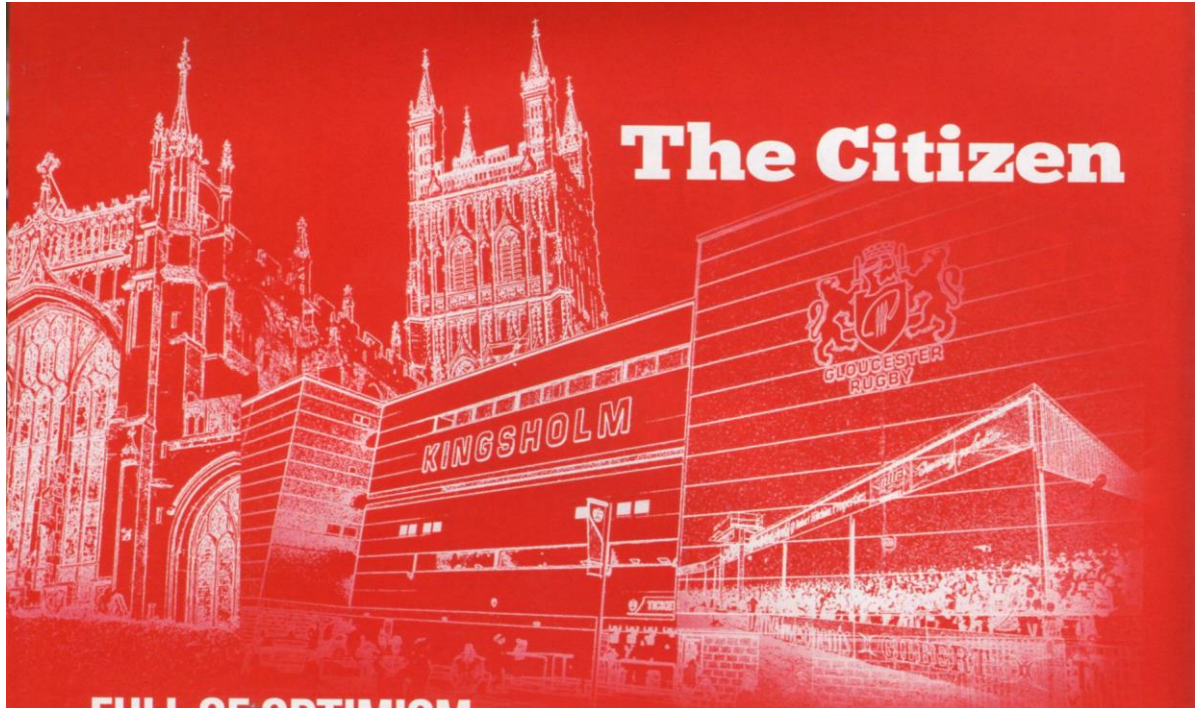
Happy New Year.

David



(ABOVE & LEFT) The squad are in high spirits after back-to-back victories over Worcester in the Challenge Cup and a great performance against Harlequins at Twickenham

The Citizen



FULL OF OPTIMISM

AS WE RING IN THE NEW YEAR THERE IS MUCH TO BE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT – BOTH FOR THE CHERRY AND WHITES AND THE RED ROSE.

IT'S fair to say 2015 has been a tumultuous year, there have been exceptional highs and heart-breaking lows but, on both the domestic and international stage, there is hope.

Gloucester finished the 2014-2015 campaign in a disappointing ninth place but salvaged some pride by winning the European Rugby Challenge Cup crown.

It was as if the entire city descended on Twickenham as the Stoop was turned Cherry and White for the evening, and wild celebrations were sparked by a Billy Twelvetrees try and the deadly eye (and boot!) of Greig Laidlaw against his former club.

That quickly descended into despair as Pierre Bernard booted the champions back into the Challenge Cup as Bordeaux-Begles won the right to dine at the top table of Europe in a bizarre and rapidly binned set of play-offs.

It was a travesty that Gloucester should win the competition on the one occasion that in itself did not lead to the Champions Cup the following season.



Truth be told you have to question whether the Cherry and Whites are ready to trade shots with Europe's big boys but they are undoubtedly making progress.

They have now won 13 Challenge Cup matches on the

bounce – a competition record of sorts – and have lost at Kingsholm just once in the last calendar year.

When David Humphreys and Laurie Fisher took to the helm, the key messages we kept hearing were about Gloucester's traditional



▼ **JEREMY THRUSH HAS ALREADY ESTABLISHED HIMSELF AS A CROWD FAVOURITE. A REAL LEADER OF MEN AND FULCRUM OF THE FORWARDS** ▼

values and rebuilding Castle Grim as a fortress. And you can only conclude they have done that.

They could and perhaps should have beaten Saracens back in October and, with the exception of the torrid time the pack endured at Franklin's Gardens, which was more a case of referee interpretation, the set-piece has been a strength.

Jeremy Thrush has already established himself as a crowd favourite, a real leader of men and fulcrum of the forwards and there is no longer a relentless reliance on the likes of John Afoa or Matt Kvesic.

The back-line has been the concern with the management opting to experiment with players and positions, but that is perhaps credit to the strength in depth and competition they now have.

However it will be key that they discover consistent combinations to balance with their squad rotation policy.

While at Gloucester it has been, and continues to be, a case of small tweaks, England required a radical overhaul.

The RFU's worst nightmares became reality as England crashed out of the World Cup at the group stages – a first for the Red Rose or any tournament host for that matter.

It was always a possibility after Stuart Lancaster's men were drawn in the Pool of Death with Australia, Fiji and Wales but it never really seemed plausible that the hosts



should fall at the first hurdle.

However that's exactly what happened as first Wales then Australia put paid to a nation's hopes and the management team's privileged position.

With the exception of England's miserable failure, the tournament was a resounding success – the most competitive and compelling we have witnessed.

Kingsholm too, played its part and the four matches staged here will live long in the memory, a crowning moment for Gloucester as a 'rugby city'.

Cultures collided, more than 57,000 passed through the turnstiles over the course of the four games and an estimated £48million was generated for the local economy.

Now England are in the Eddie Jones era. Hope for both players and supporters.

The old guard have already gone with Lancaster, Andy Farrell, Graham Rowntree and Mike Catt departed and Steve Borthwick and Paul Gustard already taking their place.

Could the Six Nations nearly men finally reclaim the Championship crown after a five year wait?

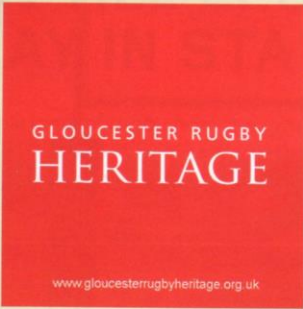
They undoubtedly have the talent, the test will be whether Jones and co can strike the right balance in both selection and game-plan.

Gloucester's England contingent dwindled during 2015, with just Ben Morgan and Jonny May at the World Cup but Billy Twelvetrees could return as the abrasive, ball-playing centre and Matt Kvesic could be the biggest beneficiary of Jones' appointment.

Chris Robshaw's days as both captain and an open-side flanker appear to be up.

Kvesic, who swept all the Gloucester club awards in 2015, was the best English seven in the land last season. He has more competition this time round but should be a shoo-in for the Australian's first elite player squad.

Citizen
AVAILABLE DAILY

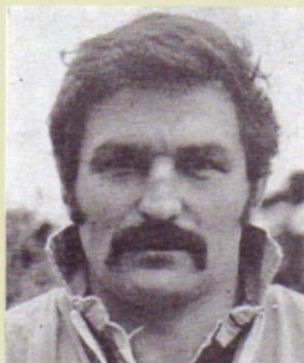


GLOUCESTER PROPS PART 3

THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY OF THE CLUB, GLOUCESTER BUILT AND MAINTAINED A FINE AND DESERVED REPUTATION FOR HARD UNCOMPROMISING PROP FORWARDS - OTHER CLUBS, INCLUDING THE WELSH, ALWAYS KNEW THAT THEY WERE IN FOR A TOUGH ENCOUNTER UP FRONT WHEN THEY FACED THE CHERRY AND WHITES.

This third of what will now be five articles on great Gloucester props takes us from the sixties into the eighties.

ROBIN COWLING
LOOSE-HEAD prop Robin Cowling, a nephew of the great Gloucester captain John A'Bear, played 216 games for Gloucester, appearing in the first knock-out cup final in 1971-72. 5ft 10in and only 14½ stone at his peak, he was a fierce competitor, a powerful scrummager and quick around the field.



He also played for Western Counties against the All Blacks in 1972-73 and in four County Championship finals (1971-72-73-74), before moving to Leicester where he won eight England caps.

Robin Cowling was born in 1944 in Ipswich, but the family moved back to Gloucester when he was a small boy and Robin was educated at Sidcot

School, Somerset and the Royal Agricultural College Cirencester.

On leaving college, he joined Gloucester as a hooker but quickly moved to prop. He made his debut in 1967 but it was not until 1970-71 that he established himself at both club and county level. In 1971-72 he propped alongside Mike Burton in both the Knockout Cup and County Championship victories and that summer was chosen as a reserve for the England tour of South Africa.

In 1973-74, despite success with Gloucestershire, he lost favour with the Gloucester selectors and played in less than half the games. The following season he took a job as farm manager in Market Harborough and joined the Leicester club, where he went on to play with distinction until 1981.

Robin Cowling has been on the Exeter coaching staff since 1997, apart from two years with Cornish Pirates, and currently manages the Exeter Academy.

KEITH RICHARDSON

KEITH Richardson was a big mobile prop who also played No 8. He made 278 appearances for Gloucester (1968-77) and captained the club in 1974-75. He was capped by Gloucestershire and played for Southern Counties against the All Blacks.

He also played for Loughborough Colleges, Rosslyn Park and Bath and captained



Dorset and Wilts in the County Championship.

Keith Richardson was born in 1944 and educated at George Stephenson Grammar School in Newcastle and Loughborough College. On leaving Loughborough, he took a post as physical education master at Wycliffe College in autumn 1968.

He joined Gloucester as a No 8, but moved up to prop in the latter part of his first season. Established at prop, he would still play in the back row when required.

Following selection for Southern Counties against the All Blacks in 1972, his career peaked over the next three years. He was a reserve for England against Wales in 1973-74 and became Gloucester captain the following year when he led from the front, playing in 43 of the 45 games and winning 32.

In 1975-76, under Mike Burton's captaincy, he played 48 games, captaining the club in Burton's absence. To quote Phil Blakeway, "If you cut his veins you'd find red and white all the



way through. He was certainly a tremendous competitor for Gloucester."

Keith Richardson became club coach in 1987-88, a position he held until 1993-94. After leaving Gloucester, he coached Harlequins and England A, and has written widely on rugby.

PHIL BLAKEWAY

WIDELY regarded as one of the finest prop forwards ever to represent Gloucester, comfortable on either side of the scrum, Phil Blakeway played 141 games for his club between 1971 and 1985 (including the 1982 Pilkington cup final) in a career blighted by injury. He played 19 games for Gloucestershire and won 19 caps for England, touring South Africa with the 1980 British Lions. He captained South and South West against the 1981 Australians and 1983 All Blacks, and was a Barbarian.



Born on New Years Eve 1950, Phil Blakeway was a product of Kings School, Sherborne and Cheltenham Colts. He played for Cheltenham against Gloucester at Kingsholm in April 1971 before joining the Gloucester club later that year.

In May 1975, having worked his way up through the England Under 23 and England B teams, he toured Australia with England although not playing in the internationals. Then, in October 1977, on the verge of a full cap,

he broke his neck playing at Kingsholm against South Wales Police. Not realising the extent of the damage, he turned out for Gloucestershire against Cornwall three days later and exacerbated the injury.

It was thought his career was over but, within eighteen months, he had come back to make his debut for England and to keep his place throughout the 1980 Grand Slam season. This earned him a Lions tour of South Africa that summer, but a recurring rib injury forced him to leave the field during his first game of the tour – and ended his involvement.

Phil kept his England place for the next two seasons, enhancing his reputation, but following the 1982 England tour of North America he announced his retirement. Coming back once more the following year, he played throughout the Five Nations campaign and toured South Africa with England, starting in the first test alongside Steve Mills and Malcolm Preedy in an all-Gloucester front row. Now playing on borrowed time, he put in one last monumental effort to play through a final Five Nations season before retiring from all rugby in 1985.

GORDON SARGENT

GORDON Sargent made 200 appearances for Gloucester between 1976 and 1987, captaining his club in 1983-84 and playing in the 1978 and 1982 Cup finals.

He played regularly for Gloucestershire, appearing in the 1980 and 1981 County Championship Finals. A robust prop, who ran hard and straight, he represented England at Under 23 and B levels and gained one full international cap. He was a Barbarian in 1981 and 1982.

Gordon Sargent was born in Gloucester in 1949 and educated at Lydney Secondary School. He

played for Lydney RFC for nine years from the age of 16 and was club captain for two years (1974-76). He had represented England at Under 23 level and Gloucestershire in two County Championship semi-finals when he joined Gloucester at the age of 26.

Gordon played for Gloucester throughout the successful 1978 cup campaign and toured



Romania with England B that summer. Alternately in favour with either club or county, he was nonetheless chosen as the only prop on the bench for England's Grand Slam decider against Wales in 1980.

In 1980-81, again assigned to the bench, he finally came on for his only cap against Ireland at Dublin when Phil Blakeway was injured. He played for Gloucestershire in the 1981 County Championship Final and for the Barbarians in 1981 and 1982.

Limited opportunities at Gloucester caused Sargent to return to Lydney in 1982-83, but he was elected by the Gloucester players to return to captain the side the following year. This was the only time in the club's history that a player from an outside club had been invited to become captain. It was to be his last full season.

After retirement, he remained involved with the game as coach and then director of rugby at Lydney RFC.





**GREIG
LAIDLAW**



SCAN ME
to access the
linked video

A VERY GOOD YEAR

AS WE WELCOME IN 2016, THE NEW YEAR BRINGS NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND THE CHANCE TO LOOK BACK ON WHAT HAS PROVED TO BE A MEMORABLE YEAR FOR GREIG LAIDLAW.

THE last twelve months, fore example, have seen a dramatic victory over former club Edinburgh in the European Rugby Challenge Cup Final, as well as the memorable Scottish campaign in Rugby World Cup 2015.

With London Irish the visitors to Kingsholm today, Laidlaw is determined to hit the ground running as the wrapping paper and champagne are tidied away, with a big post-hootenanny win.



The Exiles pose a big threat, but Laidlaw is hugely excited about the added atmosphere of the Kingsholm Festive feeling.

"It's always a busy time of year, and an important time of year with so many Aviva Premiership games crammed in week on week.

"It's a period full of big games, and coming back

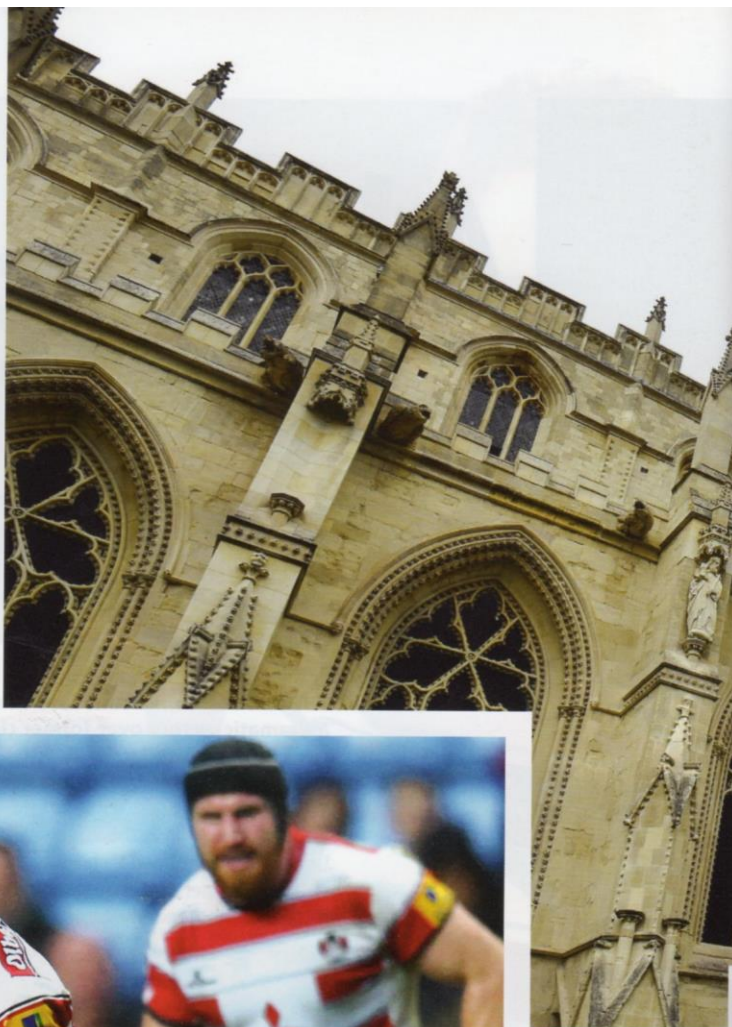
WE LOVE PLAYING AT HOME, AND PLAYING AT KINGSHOLM WITH A BIG VOCAL CROWD BEHIND US.

to Kingsholm and the importance of especially winning your home games means that the Irish game today, is no different."

The Exiles can call upon a number of Scottish internationals, who will know their captain very well, so Laidlaw is clear about the threat that faces the Cherry and Whites this afternoon.

"Irish have a number of boys that I know well, they're a side that has had a lot of change at the start of the season. They're a side now that is slowly developing week on week and they will pose a huge challenge to us this week.

"They're a team that will be organised, very physical and will try and play with a lot of skill. So we're going to have to be at our best to get a result out of the game."





being so tight, they are going to be looking to come to Kingsholm and show their skills as a squad and they will fancy their chance of getting a result.

"It's a big game for us, and important to start 2016 off well."

The Cherry and Whites only lost one domestic fixture at Kingsholm in 2015, a feat that they can look back on with an element of pride, and Laidlaw is challenging his teammates to keep pushing on.

"It's a game to focus on ourselves, especially playing at home. It is a big factor. We love playing at home, and playing at Kingsholm with a big vocal crowd behind us.

"You have to put yourself in the best possible position for that crowd to get behind us and be in a position to win the game."

2015 has been a year of massive highs and a small low for the Scottish scrum half, but, with the New Year firmly welcomed in, it is clear that he can look back in reflective mood before turning his head to the coming twelve months.

"It's been a good year, a tough year with some particular highlights as always. To win the Challenge Cup was hugely memorable for

IT'S A PERIOD FULL OF BIG GAMES, AND COMING BACK TO KINGSHOLM AND THE IMPORTANCE OF ESPECIALLY WINNING YOUR HOME GAMES TODAY, IS NO DIFFERENT.

Gloucester can empathise with the Exiles who, much the same as the Cherry and Whites 18 months ago, went through a massive transition in the summer. But that change makes them no more or no less dangerous a proposition at Kingsholm.

"I think so, the unknown element of Irish, makes them a dangerous team with what they bring in attack and their patterns. So, defensively, we are going to have to put in a big shift.

"With the Aviva Premiership

me, and to captain my country in a Rugby World Cup on domestic home soil was a personal highlight.

"The Challenge Cup was a big thing for me in terms of a club perspective, and to then play in a Rugby World Cup for your country is a huge honour and privilege for myself.

"Now I can settle back in at Gloucester and search for some consistency in our season and see what the new year brings."

KINGSHOLM NEWS WITH BOB FENTON



IN A DISTANT GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY BOB GELDOF AND THE BOOMTOWN RATS HAD A SONG CALLED 'I DON'T LIKE MONDAYS'.



WELL, I can tell you that when it comes to rugby, I really, really don't like Thursdays.

I have decided – perhaps unilaterally though I suspect every marketing person in every club will agree – that Thursday is, without doubt, the worst day of the week for a rugby match.

I know the TV blokes at Sky (all hail the great TV) think it's a great idea. But, for me, no! No way. Not ever again. Why? Because it really messes with my head.

There is something about walking into Kingsholm to watch a game that, for me, says in really large letters in front of my eyes 'Weekend – breathe and relax'. So I do. I meet up with mates, have a couple of beers, enjoy (hopefully)

the game, celebrate (hopefully) the win and then wander on home to enjoy a few days off.

And then about seven hours later the blooming alarm clock goes off. And, at that point, all rational thought goes out of the window before the slow dawning realisation that it isn't Saturday and I have to drag my carcass back into the real world and head into work.

Fortunately, I manage to ghost through the day in a somewhat zombie-like state, though my productivity levels are probably slightly down on what they usually are.

So I can't tell you how happy I am to be back here on a Saturday and a 3pm kick off...

Call me an old traditionalist but

this is rugby time, nothing else compares. So it's a bit of a surprise to note that from the 15 games we have played this season (and I'm including the preseason West Country Tournament thing), that this is just the second time that we have played at the 'traditional' time. Ok, Worcester was close with a 2pm kick off, so let's call it 1.5 times.

It's a hard one to balance though. We all know the TV money is important but it does mean that many supporters don't get to games now, or watch on TV rather than get along to the ground.

We know the TV guys love coming to Kingsholm, it's more than the fact that they love the sandwiches that Duncan and Tom in the media team make them – we have it all - easy access to our own ground and, importantly, a crowd and a bit of genuine noise.

By the latter I mean we do not rely on those ear splitting, intensely





WE ALSO DON'T HAVE A BUNCH OF WANNABE COZY POWELL'S (YOUNGER READERS ASK YOUR PARENTS... OR GRAND PARENTS) SMASHING THE HELL OUT OF A DRUM FOR NO GOOD REASON.

FOR ME (THE OLD TRADITIONALIST) THESE GIMMICKS DO NOT ADD TO THE EXPERIENCE OF THE GAME. THEY DETRACT HUGELY.

annoying men on the microphone that you find at Wasps and, sadly, at the home of our visitors today.

We also don't have a bunch of wannabe Cozy Powell's (younger readers ask your parents... or grand parents) smashing the hell out of a drum for no good reason.

For me (the old traditionalist) these gimmicks do not add to the experience of the game, they detract hugely. To the point that places like the Ricoh, Madejski and Allianz Park are crossed off my travel plans as soon as the fixtures come out.

We may be considered old fashioned out here in Gloucestershire, but at least we remain true to the spirit of support and long may we shun such histrionics. I think if we were to ask dear old Graham Spring to start screaming 'Come.... On.... You... GLAWS....' (in the style of

the man at the Mad Stad) he would probably explode.

Enough though. Our visitors, London Irish.... I'm not sure how much longer they are going to be holed up in Reading, stories abound that they might be moving back to err... London.

I used to live just up the road from their old Sunbury base, always enjoyed going there, and a friend's son used to play in their junior side. It was always good for a beer and a laugh, and I hope that if they do move that they can re-ignite some of that Sunbury feel about their new home.

They've had a rotten start to the season and prop up the table without a single point to their name. I've not seen a huge amount of them on highlights programmes, the bits I have seen seem to suggest that they are as short on luck as they are on points.



I hope they turn it around. For the reasons above, I have a bit of a soft spot for them and would hate to see them drop out of the Premiership.

Of course, that said, they won't get much from today, though I would be pretty happy if we share nine tries between us (we'll have the five) and they left with two points to start their New Year off in a bit of a better way than 2015 ended.

Finally, as it's the first game of the New Year, I wish everyone a happy and successful 2016, let's look forward to the men in Cherry and White starting that march up the table and going on an unbeaten run in the Premiership that matches the record we currently hold in European competitions.

Cheers!





RANDALL ON RUGBY

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU. AS AT THE START OF THE SEASON, THE TURN OF THE YEAR TENDS TO BE A JUNCTION POINT - A TIME FOR RENEWED OPTIMISM BASED ON THE BEST, NOT THE WORST, OF WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE - AND NO-ONE FEELS THAT MORE THAN JONNY MAY.

2015 was eventful for the England wing bounced from Hartpury into the Gloucester Academy by Phil Greenway, who spotted the wiry flier during his studies for his Sports Business Management degree.

May completed his studies last summer and graduated with a 2:2 degree, as well as winning the Challenge Cup with Gloucester, playing in the World Cup and getting engaged to his long time girl friend Sophie. The wedding is planned for 2017, but there is plenty to get his teeth into before that.

"The potential at Gloucester is humungous" said May when I met up with him. "We haven't done amazingly this season and there is a sense of frustration that we haven't performed as well as we can but we're still in the fight. Take a breath and give us a chance."

May talks as fast as he runs - his best time for the 100 metres is 10.7 seconds - and it's that pace which took him upwards from his club rugby with Gloucester into the international arena.

He now has 19 England caps, but with the arrival of Eddie Jones as successor to Stuart Lancaster, he admits it's a new era.



IN MY OPINION THERE IS NEVER ANY REASON WHY WE SHOULD LOSE AT HOME. AND AWAY WE SHOULD BE COMPETITIVE IN EVERY GAME.

JONNY MAY



"THIS IS MY CLUB AND I REALLY FEEL PART OF IT HAVING COME THROUGH THE ACADEMY"

"It's always sad when it doesn't work out for someone like Stuart who is such a good guy" added May. "He gave it everything and was a great bloke, but sport is cutthroat, we experience it as players and he has experienced it as a coach. Ultimately we didn't perform as well as we should have done and Stuart paid the price for that."

"On another day we could have won the Wales game, but to be fair Australia were too good for

us, and now I'm sure everyone is thinking that they have to prove themselves again.

"I've not met or spoken to Eddie Jones but I know I have to concentrate on playing as well as I can because the Premiership is full of top class wingers - Charlie (Sharples) here at Gloucester, Christian Wade, Marland Yarde, Chris Ashton...plus Jack (Nowell) and Anthony (Watson) who were in the World Cup squad."

May smiles when I mention the Challenge Cup success last spring. It was his first winner's medal.

"This is my club and I really feel part of it having come through the Academy" said Jonny. "We showed glimpses of what we could do in that competition and to win it was brilliant. When people talk about it, you feel very proud, but we don't want to be known as just a Challenge Cup team, we want to use it to push forward."

2016 starts with Gloucester still having 15 Premiership matches to play, so plenty of time to make something of it and league success is high on May's wish list for the new year.

"We've been disappointed to underachieve in the Premiership, but you end up where you deserve to be. There are slightly weaker and slightly stronger teams but the margins are really small and, with a couple of exceptions, all the other teams probably think they can make the top six."

"The consistent teams have had the same coaching staff in place for a long time. We've had changes, but then we've tended to have one season which has been ok followed by one which has been disappointing, and you can say that about the last two now."

May is prompted by the passing figure of Nick Wood here but he's right. The sequence for the last five seasons reads 3rd, 9th, 5th, 9th and 9th.

"In my opinion there is never any reason why we should lose at home, and away we should be competitive in every game" May concluded.

"It's about coming out on the right end of the one of two moments that decide every match, and if we can win more than we lose we'll at least be hanging in there for a top six place.

"Do that, and win the Challenge Cup again, and it'll be a happy year all round."



Back To School

by Callum Braley, age 21

PRIMARY SCHOOL

I WENT TO Silverhill Primary School, and then I moved to Colstons at the start of Year Three

MY BEST FRIEND WAS Ben Sullivan and Cyrus Caven

Callum's best friends

1. Ben
2. Cyrus
3. Duncan
4. Tom
5. David



MY FAVOURITE TEACHER WAS Mrs PM Phillips-Masters, Mr Watts and Mr Digby

MY FAVOURITE SCHOOL DINNER WAS Hot dog and chips, but I loved strawberry jam sponge with tellytubby custard

Dear Mr and Mrs Braley

We regret to inform you that Callum has become obsessed with the school custard and now thinks he is a 'telly-tubby'?



IN MY SNACK BOX I HAD White choc chip chewie bars were the best

MY PRIMARY SCHOOL LOVE WAS A girl called Ellie

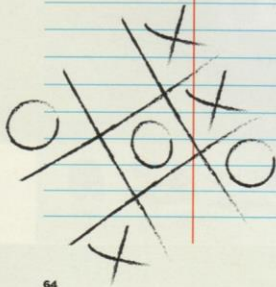
MY FIRST SCHOOL PLAY WAS Christmas Nativity

IN THE PLAYGROUND, I used to love playing tag

MY EARLIEST RUGBY MEMORY Driving to the rugby club for the first time with my Dad aged 5, and on the way he asked if I wanted to play for Frampton Cotterell or St Mary's - I chose the latter because I liked the name

WHEN WE PLAYED RUGBY I PRETENDED TO BE Wilko every time

AT SPORTS DAY, I used to do the 50 yard dash, I think I'm the same pace now as I was then



SECONDARY SCHOOL

I WENT TO Colston's

MY FAVOURITE MEMORY The last couple of weeks of year 11 are very strong memories but some of the funnier moments probably can't be put in here.

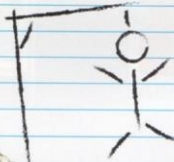
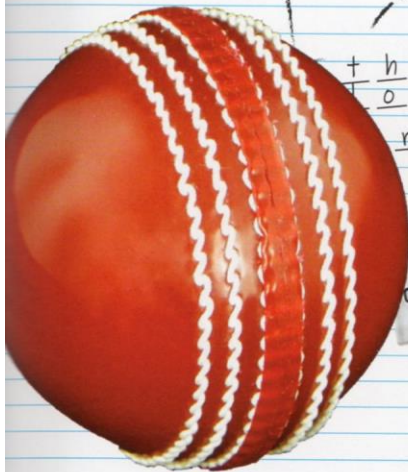
I ENJOYED everything about school, apart from homework

MY GRADES WERE I think I got 7A's, 2 B's and 2 C's

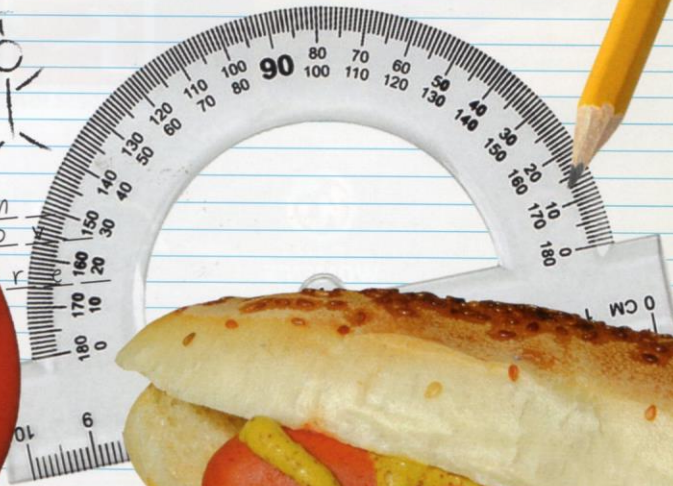
MY HARDEST SUBJECT WAS probably French

MY UNIFORM WAS A navy blazer with amber stripes

Callum's timetable
Cricket
Hockey
Rugby
French



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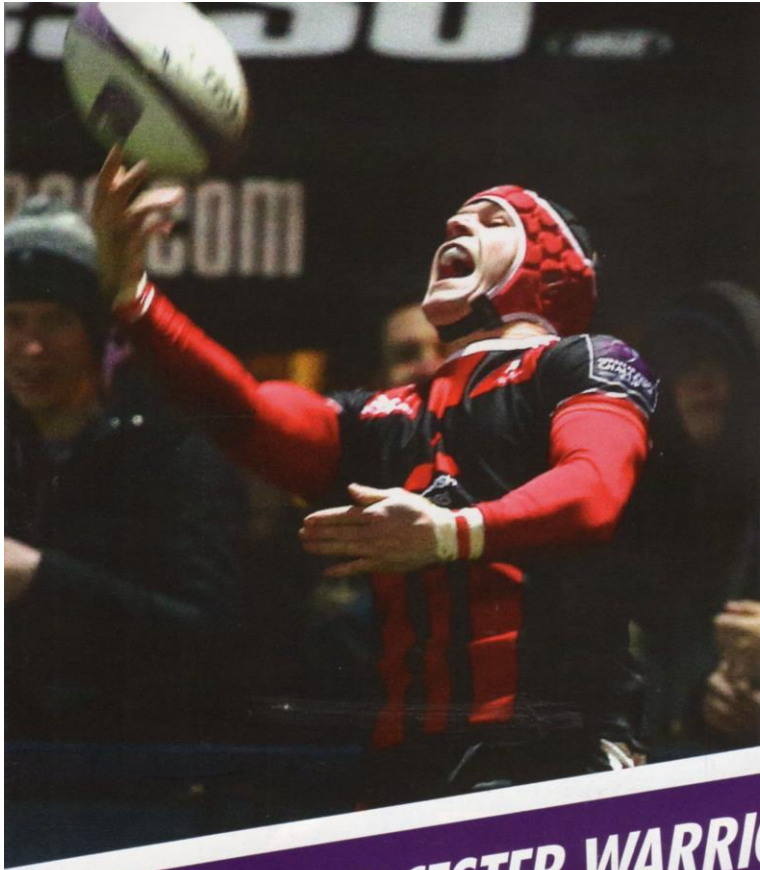
IN PE, I USED TO Love all the sports, especially hockey and cricket

GOT IN TROUBLE FOR Talking too much in French, I was a good boy in all honesty

MY FAVOURITE SCHOOL TRIP WAS Either a hockey tour to Barcelona or some CCF trips

AT SCHOOL I WANTED TO BE A rugby player

ON WORK EXPERIENCE I WENT TO A gym, which wasn't too much fun!



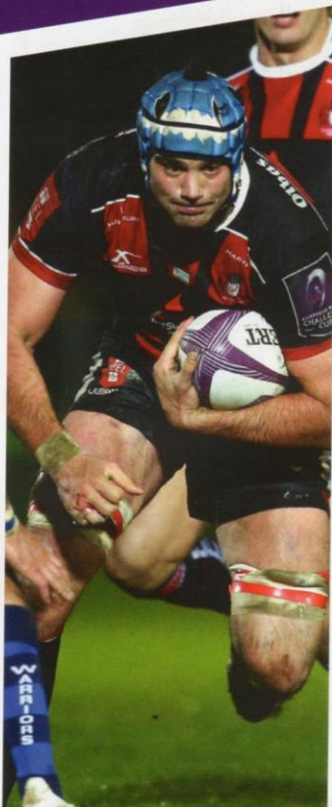
to show what they could do in front of the Sky Sports cameras.

Greig Laidlaw was first on the scoreboard from the kicking tee after a scrum penalty to the visitors, before the hosts showed their quality with a well-worked flowing move from first phase for winger Dean Hammond to just about dot down despite desperate cover tackles from Laidlaw and David Halaifonua.

The home side and crowd were buoyed by this impressively worked score, but the Cherry and Whites worked hard to quieten them down and work their way back into control of proceedings.

The visitors scrum was certainly edging the contest, with Nick Wood giving his opposite man Gareth Milasinovich a torrid time, resulting in a yellow card for the

WORCESTER WARRIORS 22 GLOUCESTER RUGBY 34



Henry Purdy - "...the tries were down to the hard work by the boys..."

HALF TIME 10-10

ATTENDANCE 6,774

REFEREE Alexandre Ruiz (France)

THE Cherry and Whites took a closer step to the European Rugby Challenge Cup quarter-finals with an impressive five-try victory in the first of the European 'double-header' against Worcester Warriors.

It was Thursday night-lights at Sixways, and a European trip a lot closer to home than usual for David Humphreys' men with one eye on an unbeaten pool stage campaign.

14 changes were rung from the win over Sale Sharks the previous Friday, with Sione Kalamafoni the sole survivor, as plenty of squad members were handed the chance

Warriors' prop.

A powerful shove at the scrum forced then possession to turnover into Gloucester hands, and Mark Atkinson floated a superb cross kick to the left wing where Henry Purdy was on hand to collect, and shunt his way past the cover tackles for an impressively powerful finish.

The half ended with the Warriors on the front foot, but the Cherry and Whites held firm to keep their line intact, with Ryan Lamb opting for a drop goal with an advantage being played to see the two sides head into

the break on level terms.

It was the impressive Purdy who crossed for the first points of the second period, as good pressure from the Cherry and Whites in the 22 saw Billy Burns unleash a neat inside pass to send Purdy over after shaking off the attention of a number of tackles.

Gloucester were now threatening to break loose and they crossed for a third try shortly afterwards. Henry Trinder's twinkle toes took him past some static defenders and when he was brought to ground, Burns' bullet flat pass was perfect for Rob Cook to collect and gleefully dive over.

The Cherry and Whites were



THE DAYS OF TALKING ABOUT EASY GAMES ARE LONG GONE. IT'S ABOUT ESTABLISHING FIELD POSITION AND MAKING THE OPPOSITION MAKE LOTS OF TACKLES. WHICH WE DID IN THE FIRST HALF. DAVID HUMPHREYS

beginning to take an iron grip on the game and Pool 3 as a whole, but Worcester pressure saw Lewis Ludlow sinbinned and replacement Mike Daniels crash over from a multi-player maul.

Down to 14-men with 15 minutes left to play, the game was truly in the balance now, but marshalled by Greig Laidlaw, the visitors always looked comfortable.

Indeed, Laidlaw's sharp thinking saw him dummy his way past a defender, and scoot away to send Steve McColl sliding over, and the bonus point was in the bag.

There was still time for the visitors to add a fifth try with the backs now full of confidence.

MATCHDAY SQUADS

WORCESTER WARRIORS

- 15 Ben Howard
- 14 Dean Hammond 1T
- 13 Alex Grove
- 12 Andy Symons
- 11 Tom Biggs
- 10 Ryan Lamb 2C 1D
- 9 Charlie Mulchrone (C)
- 1 Ryan Bower
- 2 Jaba Bregvadze
- 3 Gareth Milasinovich ■
- 4 Dan Sanderson
- 5 Darren O'Shea 1T
- 6 Matt Cox
- 7 Carl Kirwan
- 8 Marco Mama

- 16 Ben Sowrey
- 17 Val Rapava Ruskin
- 18 Mike Daniels 1T
- 19 Darren Barry
- 20 Sam Betty
- 21 Jonny Arr
- 22 Tiff Eden
- 23 Max Stelling

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

- 15 Stevie McColl 1T
- 14 David Halaifonua
- 13 Henry Trinder
- 12 Mark Atkinson
- 11 Henry Purdy 2T
- 10 Billy Burns
- 9 Greig Laidlaw (C) 3C 1P
- 1 Nick Wood
- 2 Tom Lindsay
- 3 Paul Doran-Jones
- 4 Elliot Stooke
- 5 Mariano Galarza
- 6 Sione Kalafamoni
- 7 Jacob Rowan
- 8 Lewis Ludlow ■

- 16 Darren Dawiduk
- 17 Yann Thomas
- 18 Nicky Thomas
- 19 Tom Hicks
- 20 Daniel Thomas
- 21 Callum Braley
- 22 Billy Twelvetrees 1T
- 23 Rob Cook 1T

Burns' double pump drew in the defence, before a perfectly looped chip saw replacement Billy Twelvetrees soar highest to claim and fall over the line.

The maximum point win was in the bag, even though Darren O'Shea rumbled over for a consolation try for the hosts.

It was an impressive win for the Cherry and Whites, a third in three European games, well and truly job well done on a tricky night.



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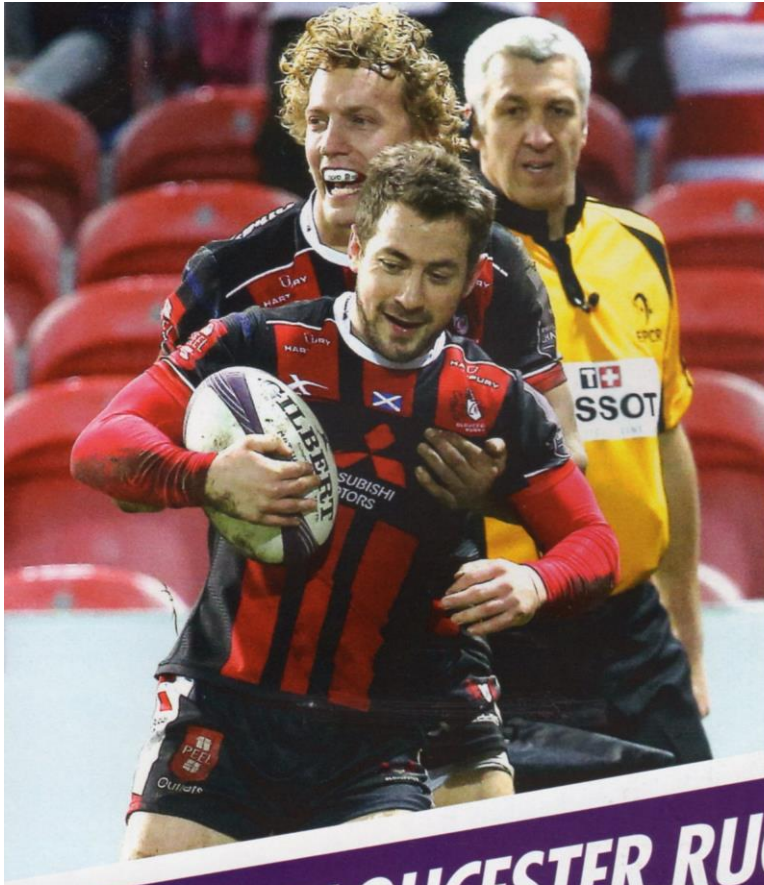
OFFICIAL LEGAL PARTNER

APPLYING THE LAW

It was a fairly uncontroversial evening for the officials – one yellow card per side and no real flash points on the night.

The only decision that had to be referred upstairs to the TMO was following Rob Cook's scamper down the line for the third Gloucester try.

The referee asked his colleague to check for a possible forward pass and to see if Cook had put a foot in touch. The answer was 'non' in both cases and the try was given.



GLOUCESTER RUGBY 27 WORCESTER WARRIORS 13



HALF TIME 16-10
ATTENDANCE 10,942
REFEREE Ian Davies (Wales)

HAVING defeated the same opponent seven days previously at Sixways, Gloucester know coming into this game that a repeat performance would strengthen their grip at the top of the table.

The win was duly achieved, but it was far from easy and, unlike the away leg, Gloucester couldn't secure the try scoring bonus point thanks to some spirited defence from the visitors.

The Warriors didn't offer too much in attack, Ben Howard the one exception, but they set out to make life as difficult as possible

for Gloucester through dogged defence and brave breakdown work and they certainly achieved that on the night.

It was a frustrating experience for the Cherry and Whites who did their utmost to play with ambition and at pace, but found themselves continually slowed up



by a combination of the sticky conditions underfoot and the quality of the Worcester tackling.

There was even a very brief period in the first half when Worcester pounced for a try following a good turnover at a ruck, when those of a nervous disposition might have wondered if it was going to be one of those nights.

However, Gloucester stuck at it and continued to dominate. One of the consequences of Worcester having to defend so much meant that they conceded a lot of penalties.

And, in Greig Laidlaw, Gloucester have the man for that sort of opportunity. The scrum-half chipped in with 17 points from the boot as well as scoring his first

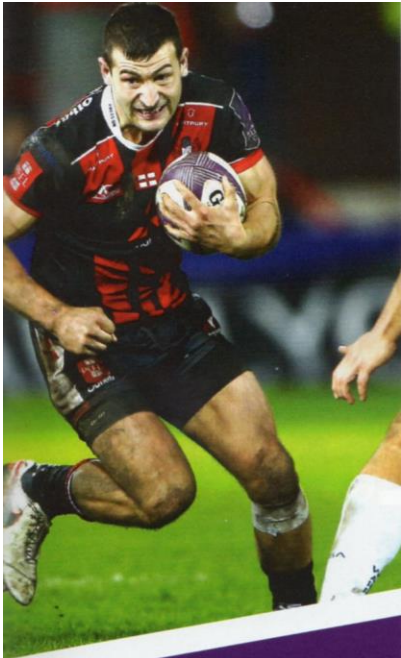


Speaking to GRTV **Matt Kvesic** was happy to get the victory after tough battle in contact area

try for the club in a fine all round performance.

Laidlaw got Gloucester off and running on the night with his first penalty but, despite continuing to press, the Cherry and Whites found themselves trailing when turnover ball was swiftly shipped out to Ben Howard and the full-back had the pace to score.

It was a blow but Gloucester brushed it off. Laidlaw narrowed the gap with a second penalty before scoring a try which gave his team a lead that they would never



METRES RUN WITH THE BALL
GLoucester 345M
WARRIORS 274M

WE'RE DELIGHTED TO BE COMING INTO CHRISTMAS TOP OF THE POOL WITH FOUR WINS OUT OF FOUR.
DAVID HUMPHREYS

relinquish.
 It owed much to Rob Cook who countered from deep before Jonny May, who was hungry for action throughout, took it on, chipped ahead, won the ball on the deck and provided the pass for Laidlaw to score.
 The Scotland captain then knocked over his third penalty to give Gloucester a hard-earned 16-10 lead at the interval.
 In an ideal world, Gloucester would have kicked on from there. But, Worcester continued to scrap, harry and generally make a nuisance of themselves. Laidlaw added two more penalties but Worcester added one of their own through Ryan Lamb.
 The outcome, if it had ever been in doubt, was finally settled as Matt

MATCHDAY SQUADS

GLoucester RUGBY

- 15 Rob Cook
- 14 Charlie Sharples
- 13 Henry Purdy
- 12 Billy Twelvetrees (C)
- 11 Jonny May
- 10 James Hook
- 9 Greig Laidlaw 1T 1C 5P
- 1 Yann Thomas
- 2 Darren Dawiduk
- 3 Nicky Thomas
- 4 Tom Savage
- 5 Mariano Galarza
- 6 Jacob Rowan
- 7 Matt Kvesic 1T
- 8 Lewis Ludlow

- 16 Tom Lindsay
- 17 Dan Murphy
- 18 Josh McNulty
- 19 Elliot Stooke
- 20 Tom Hicks
- 21 Willi Heinz
- 22 Billy Burns
- 23 Mark Atkinson

WORCESTER WARRIORS

- 15 Ben Howard 1T
- 14 Dean Hammond
- 13 Alex Grove
- 12 Andy Symons
- 11 Tom Biggs
- 10 Ryan Lamb 1C 2P
- 9 Charlie Mulchrone (C)
- 1 Val Rapava Ruskin
- 2 Ben Sowrey
- 3 Mike Daniels
- 4 Dan Sanderson
- 5 Tevita Cavubati
- 6 Sam Betty
- 7 Carl Kirwan
- 8 Marco Mama

- 16 Jaba Bregvadze
- 17 Ryan Bower
- 18 Gareth Milasinovich
- 19 Darren Barry
- 20 Huw Taylor
- 21 Jonny Arr
- 22 Tiff Eden
- 23 Max Stelling

Kvesic touched down after a well executed catch and drive but that was it for the scoring.

The game's final few moments very much told the tale of the evening. Gloucester pushed hard in search of a third try, Willi Heinz darting towards the line but a Worcester leg got under the ball and the TMO, quite rightly, ruled that no try had been scored.

So near, but yet so far...

PENALTIES CONCEDED
GLoucester 5
WARRIORS 15



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OFFICIAL LEGAL PARTNER

APPLYING THE LAW

Referee Ian Davies had a solid game overall, with no real controversial incidents to deal with and just the final minute TMO referral.

However, the penalty count afterwards, 15 against Worcester and 5 against Gloucester told its own tale. With Gloucester struggling to break down the visitors, would a yellow card at some point have opened things up. We'll never know!

3-0 6-14 15-14
 3-7 9-14 22-14
 6-7 12-14 27-14



TODAY'S TEAMSHEET

GLOUCESTER RUGBY vs LONDON IRISH

Aviva Premiership Rugby - Round 8
 Saturday 2nd January 2016, KO 15:00 Kingsholm



ROB COOK	FULLBACK 15	FULLBACK	SEAN MAITLAND
CHARLIE SHARPLES	RIGHT WING 14	RIGHT WING <i>T</i>	ALEX LEWINGTON
BILL MEAKES	OUTSIDE CENTRE 13	OUTSIDE CENTRE <i>T</i>	CIARAN HEARN
BILLY TWELVETREES (C)	INSIDE CENTRE 12	INSIDE CENTRE	JOHNNY WILLIAMS
HENRY PURDY	LEFT WING 11	LEFT WING	ASAELI TIKOIROTUMA
JAMES HOOK <i>PPPPC</i>	FLY HALF 10	FLY HALF <i>ec</i>	CHRIS NOAKES
WILLI HEINZ	SCRUM HALF 9	SCRUM HALF	BRENDAN McKIBBIN
DAN MURPHY	LOOSEHEAD PROP 1	LOOSEHEAD PROP	TOM COURT
RICHARD HIBBARD	HOKKER 2	HOKKER	DAVID PAICE
NICKY THOMAS	TIGHTHEAD PROP 3	TIGHTHEAD PROP	BEN FRANKS
JEREMY THRUSH	LOCK 4	LOCK	MATT SYMONS (C)
MARIANO GALARZA	LOCK 5	LOCK	WILLIAM LLOYD
ROSS MORIARTY	BLINDSIDE FLANKER 6	BLINDSIDE FLANKER	LUKE NARRAWAY
MATT KVESIC <i>T</i>	OPENSIDE FLANKER 7	OPENSIDE FLANKER	BLAIR COWAN
SIONE KALAMAFONI	NUMBER 8 8	NUMBER 8	OFISA TREVIRANUS
DARREN DAWIDIUK	REPLACEMENT 16	REPLACEMENT	JIMMY STEVENS
YANN THOMAS	REPLACEMENT 17	REPLACEMENT	TOM SMALLBONE
PADDY McALLISTER	REPLACEMENT 18	REPLACEMENT	HALANI AULIKA
BEN MORGAN	REPLACEMENT 19	REPLACEMENT	JEBB SINCLAIR
JACOB ROWAN	REPLACEMENT 20	REPLACEMENT	JOE TRAYFOOT
GREIG LAIDLAW	REPLACEMENT 21	REPLACEMENT	SCOTT STEELE
BILLY BURNS <i>T</i>	REPLACEMENT 22	REPLACEMENT	SHANE GERAGHTY
MARK ATKINSON	REPLACEMENT 23	REPLACEMENT	FERGUS MULCHRONE

Officials

Referee Tom Foley Assistant Referees Kelvin Stewart and Jonathan Healy