

OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME

ISSUE
13

PRICE: £3



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

vs NEWPORT GWENT DRAGONS

EUROPEAN RUGBY CHALLENGE CUP QUARTER-FINAL



CHAMPIONS
2014/15



PLUS...
HERITAGE
ACTION REPLAY
RUGBY NEWS

EXCLUSIVE PROGRAMME
INTERVIEW ON PAGE 40

**BILLY
TWELVETREES**

09.04.16

KICK-OFF 12.45
KINGSHOLM

EUROPEAN RUGBY CHALLENGE CUP



OFFICIAL PARTNERS



OFFICIAL SUPPLIERS



CAPTAIN'S CORNER BILLY TWELVETREES

GOOD AFTERNOON, AND WELCOME TO THIS AFTERNOON'S EUROPEAN RUGBY CHALLENGE CUP QUARTER FINAL WITH THE NEWPORT GWENT DRAGONS.

WE have fond memories of last season's campaign in the tournament, and it was potentially where we displayed some of our best rugby, and certainly some real character in some tough games.

Knock-out rugby at Kingsholm is always special, and today we face a really tough challenge to progress to the next round.

And of course this week, there is a Celtic edge with the Dragons making the short trip across the bridge to Kingsholm today, and no doubt they will have a vociferous

(RIGHT) The whole squad understand the importance of today's game as we look to maintain our 100% record in this season's tournament.



...WE HAVE TO MAKE EVERY TACKLE. FIGHT FOR EVERY LOOSE BALL AND FOR EVERY METRE THAT WE CAN GAIN. AND I KNOW FULL WELL THAT THE TEAM WILL BE WELL UP FOR THE CHALLENGE.

travelling support behind them.

Of course, we would like to be coming into this game on the back of a win, but there was so much to be positive about last weekend against Tigers.

As a squad, we are always demanding the best from each other, and although we were defeated at Welford Road we take a lot of heart from the performance.

That said, we were frustrated that we couldn't hold onto a win in a game where we led by seventeen points at one point.

But I know first hand the quality that exists in the Tigers team, and also the Welford Road factor, so we can't dwell on what might have been for too long.

This week, we have to not only



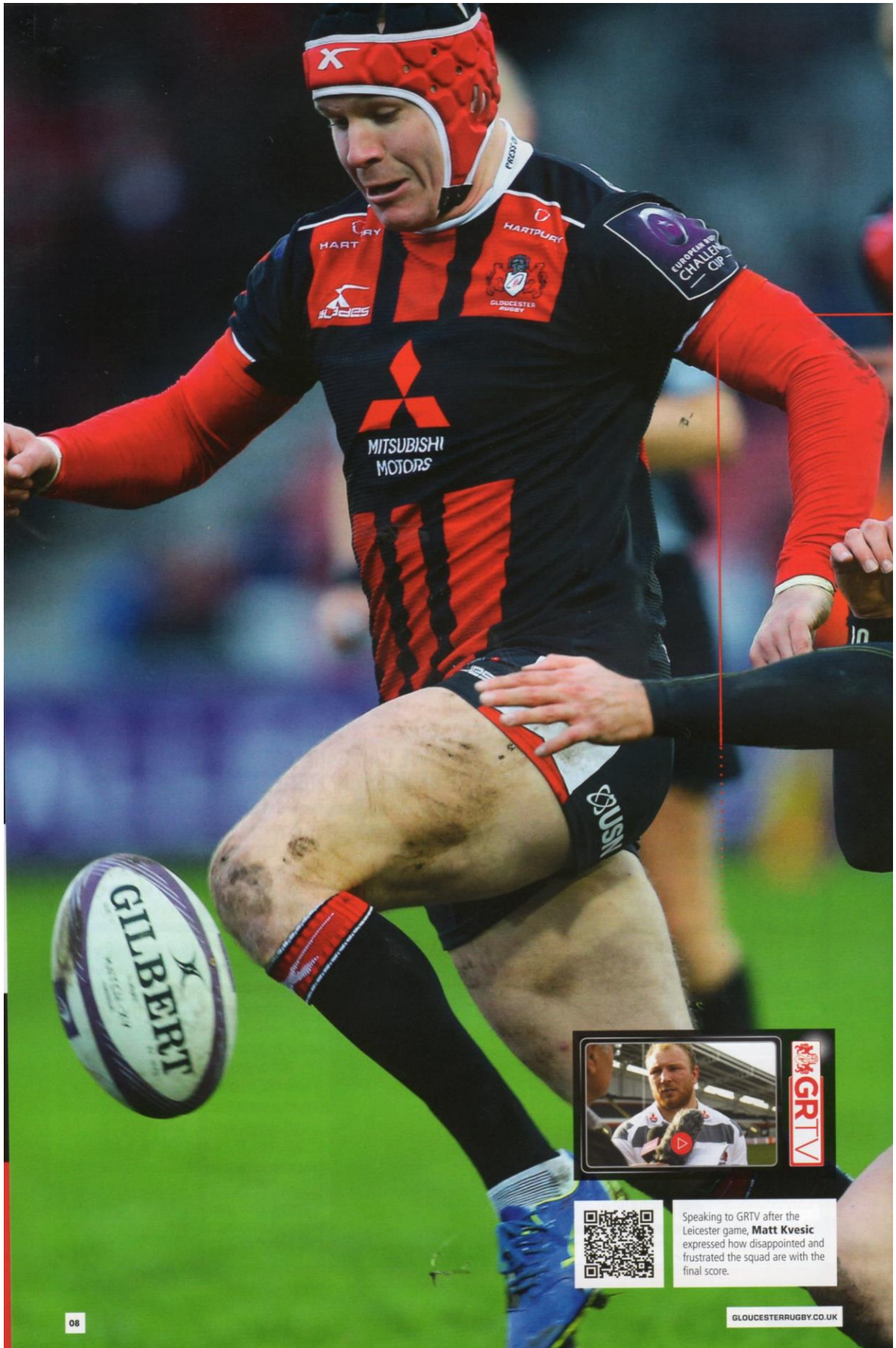
bounce back as a squad, but do so at Kingsholm in front of our own fans, and the fixture is one we have been looking forward to for a number of weeks.

The Dragons are a very well coached team, with a dangerous squad that will be keen to come to Kingsholm and take our scalp and enhance their own prospects of making the final.

But that's knock-out rugby, we have to make every tackle, fight for every loose ball and for every metre that we can gain, and I know full well that the team will be well up for the challenge.

Enjoy the game!

Billy



Speaking to GRTV after the Leicester game, **Matt Kvesic** expressed how disappointed and frustrated the squad are with the final score.

COMING UP...

EXCLUSIVE MATCHDAY PROGRAMME INTERVIEW
BILLY TWELVETREES

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DAVID HUMPHREYS

DIRECTOR OF RUGBY

I'M DELIGHTED TO WELCOME LYN JONES AND THE NEWPORT GWENT DRAGONS TO KINGSHOLM THIS AFTERNOON FOR A MASSIVELY IMPORTANT EUROPEAN RUGBY CHALLENGE CUP QUARTER-FINAL.



AFTER a really tough run of 10 consecutive Aviva Premiership matches, and a disappointing last four weeks, we're excited to be back in the competition that brought us success and many memories last season.

Anyone who was at the Stoop last May will appreciate how much it meant to both the players, staff and supporters to beat Edinburgh and lift the Challenge Cup.

One of our primary goals for this season is to be the first team to retain the Challenge Cup and winning Pool 4 unbeaten and finishing as one of the top two seeds has given us home advantage this afternoon.

History has shown how hard it is to win games away from home in the knock-out stages of any competition, and your support will play a major role in another big afternoon of European rugby at Kingsholm.

That support was amazing throughout the knock-out and play-off stages of last season's tournament, and there were some thrilling games. It could be very significant again today.

The Dragons, like ourselves, have had a disappointing few weeks in their domestic league, the Guinness Pro12, and know the Challenge Cup is their only route into next season's Champions Cup.

Over the last couple of seasons, Lyn Jones has assembled an experienced squad and together with international quality players like Faletau, Morgan and Amos they are a difficult side to play against.

However, our focus all week has been on what we need to

WE ALL KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF TODAY'S GAME AND THE PRESSURE THAT COMES WITH KNOCK-OUT RUGBY. LAST YEAR WE RAISED OUR PERFORMANCE AT EACH STAGE OF THE CHALLENGE CUP AND, WHEN YOU CONSIDER THE QUALITY OF OPPOSITION IN THE TOURNAMENT AGAIN THIS SEASON, WE WILL NEED THE SAME IMPROVEMENT OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS TO HAVE A CHANCE OF RETAINING THE TROPHY.



The squad are ready to maintain their 100% record in the tournament and put the last few weeks results behind them

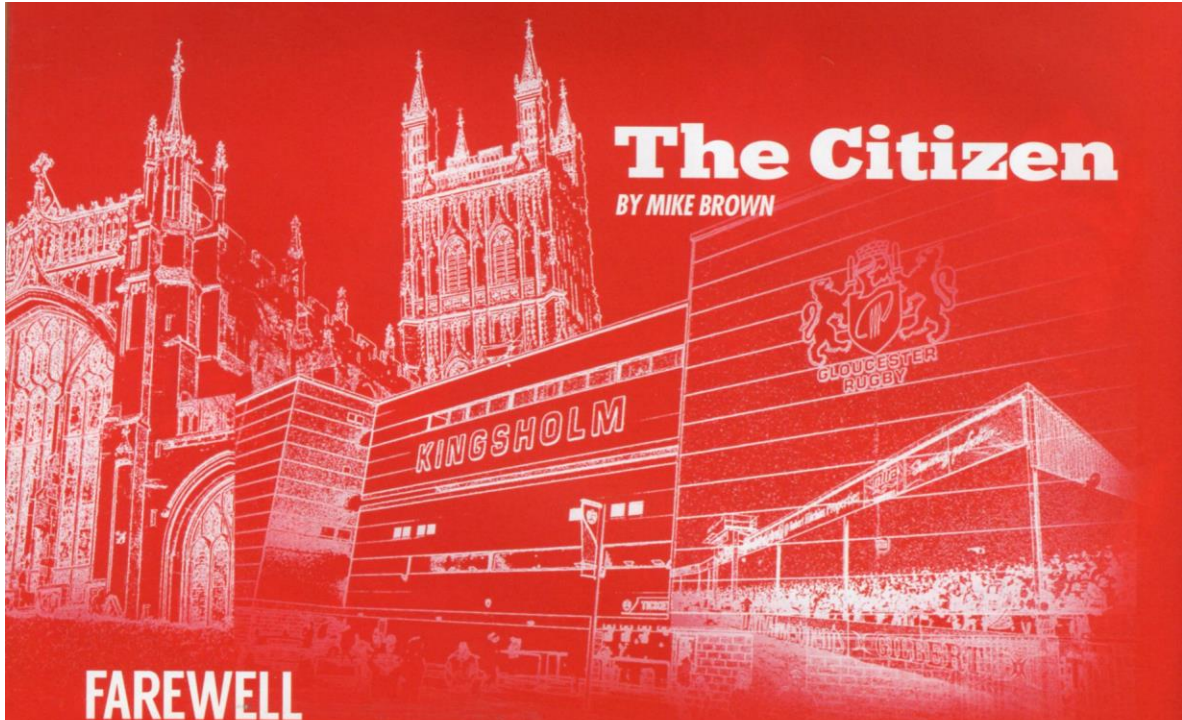
do to win the game and taking confidence from what was a much-improved performance against Leicester Tigers.

At Welford Road we played with real energy and ambition and, despite the disappointment of losing the game, it was great to see players coming back from injury and producing top quality performances.

We all know the importance of today's game and the pressure that comes with knock-out rugby. Last year we raised our performance at each stage of the Challenge Cup and, when you consider the quality of opposition in the tournament again this season, we will need the same improvement over the next few weeks to have a chance of retaining the trophy.

Over the past couple of seasons there have been many special days at Kingsholm, and this afternoon is about producing another winning performance that you can all enjoy and celebrate.

David



The Citizen

BY MIKE BROWN

FAREWELL

TODAY I COME TO THE END OF THE LINE AND BID FAREWELL TO BOTH GLOUCESTER CITIZEN AND THIS VERY SPECIAL RUGBY CLUB AFTER MORE THAN TWO THOROUGHLY ENJOYABLE YEARS.



▼▼ **NOT TO MENTION THE NUMEROUS AWAY TRIPS IN EUROPE AS THE CLUB MARCHED TO THE CHALLENGE CUP TITLE LAST SEASON AND THAT GLORIOUS NIGHT AT THE STOOP - HERE'S HOPING TODAY IS THE LATEST STEP TO DEFENDING THAT CROWN AND EARNING A PLACE AMONG THE ELITE. ▼▼**

DURING that time I have covered 85 first team games, the A-team, three Six Nations campaigns and a World Cup, not to mention countless press conferences, axings, sackings

and signings.

Having spent almost four years covering predominantly rugby, but also anything from Premiership football to world title boxing for a press agency, coming here was an

ideal opportunity to get my teeth stuck into one club on a day-to-day, in-depth basis.

I've made no secret of the fact that in the past Gloucester was a club I loved to hate and I mean that as a compliment. It is a reflection upon the success of yesteryears, the solid foundations it is built upon and the unrivalled support and passion this club is so lucky to have.

On so many occasions before training and becoming a journalist I made the trip to Kingsholm to see Cardiff soundly sent packing, European dreams shattered yet again and the insults of the Shed still ringing in my ears.

(Fortunately I also have the memories of that Heineken Cup win when 14-man Cardiff defied the odds after Olivier Azam's dive and that glorious EDF Final triumph before you snatched Nicky Robinson away)

But less of that!

The 'dislike' of Gloucester was purely built upon the fact that the Cherry and Whites were, and are, a great traditional club, built upon a rich history and solid foundations, with some of the loudest and

proudest fans you will find.

Now having covered the club for just a handful of years I have nothing but respect for Gloucester Rugby and will, a little ashamedly, always have a soft spot for the Cherry and Whites.

I have also been fortunate to work with a club that possesses such a wealth of playing talent – from star backs like Freddie Burns, Mike Tindall, James Simpson-Daniel to Jonny May, James Hook and Greig Laidlaw and gnarly forwards



▼ ALSO A MENTION TO STEPHEN VAUGHAN WHO HAS DONE A REMARKABLE JOB WITH LIMITED INVESTMENT TO MAINTAIN A PROFIT-MAKING OPERATION AND HAS ALWAYS PICKED UP THE PHONE WHEN I HAVE BEEN HARASSING. ▼

My time here has hardly coincided with any sustained spells of success but that is not to say there have not been numerous highlights.

There have been some outstanding victories to toast and wins over Exeter (2014), Saracens (2015), and Bath and Wasps earlier this year standout.

That is not to mention the numerous away trips in Europe as the club marched to the Challenge Cup title last season and that glorious night at the Stoop – here's hoping today is the latest step to defending that crown and earning a place among the elite.

like Richard Hibbard, John Afoa and Jeremy Thrush.

Gloucester genuinely have a squad packed with talent and while recent weeks have seen their season falter I do believe they are moving forward, even if the league position will not reflect that.

Covering the downfall of Nigel Davies and then the appointments and progression of the current backroom staff did not come without its challenges and it has not always been plain sailing.

But under David Humphreys, one of the most astute and professional rugby men I have worked with, is a group of coaches with incredible

experience and variety in expertise, who have always been a pleasure to deal with.

There are understandably plenty of frustrations as this club ails again, but hopefully next year this will not be so as the new regime will deliver some of the success their potential suggests.

The squad will be stronger with Matu Motu'u, Josh Hohnneck and Matt Scott adding further strength in depth – on paper at least the potential starting line-ups next season look a match for anybody.

They will undoubtedly continue to progress under the ownership of Martin St Quinton, who appears the perfect fit and is a humble man with deep pockets, who is impressively knowledgeable, passionate and involved in the Club.

And also a mention to Stephen Vaughan who has done a remarkable job with limited investment to maintain a profit-making operation and has always picked up the phone when I have been harassing.

I will certainly walk through the Kingsholm gates with a heavy heart following full-time today but hopefully I will be back in my new capacity as Head of Media at Cardiff Blues.

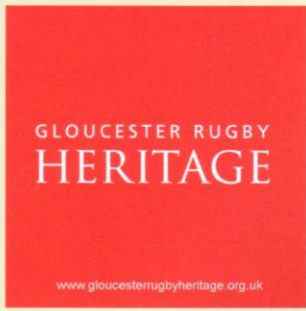
It has been long enough since these two great clubs of British rugby went head to head and fingers crossed they can resume their great rivalry in the top tier of Europe very soon.

I'm sure I will cause David, Duncan and Tom far less headaches and damage limitation to implement as I cross to the dark side of PR.

So a massive thank you to all of the management, players and back-room staff at this wonderful club and of course all of the supporters who have made Gloucester and Kingsholm such a great place to work.

It really has been an honour. Let's hear 'Glawster' ring from the Shed one more time.

Citizen
AVAILABLE DAILY



GLOUCESTER v NEWPORT AN ANCIENT RIVALRY

TODAY WE WELCOME THE NEWPORT GWENT DRAGONS AND TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO LOOK AT OVER A HUNDRED YEARS OF RIVALRY BETWEEN THE CHERRY AND WHITES AND NEWPORT RFC, THE MIGHTY "BLACK AND AMBERS", FROM 1878 TO 1995 IN THE AMATEUR ERA.

Always one of Gloucester's most respected opponents, the playing record tells the story:

1878-1995:
PLD 195 W 56 L 119 D 20
Gloucester Win Percentage: 28.71%

Compare this with Gloucester's playing record against Bath in the amateur era:

1882-1996:
PLD 180 W 112 L 49 D 19
Gloucester Win Percentage: 62.22%

or even against Leicester:

1891-1996:
PLD 167 W 89 L 72 D 6
Gloucester Win Percentage: 53.29%

**THE FIRST MATCH:
NEWPORT 0
GLOUCESTER 0**
Rodney Parade, 7 December 1878
GLOUCESTER first played Newport on 7 December 1878, five years after the Gloucester club was formed. Newport, formed a year later in 1874, had acquired the Rodney Parade ground the previous year. Both sides were unbeaten. It was Gloucester's first match against Welsh opposition and the first of countless trips across the Severn into Wales. The trail-blazing captain was Frank Brown, who did much towards establishing Gloucester as a first class club.

The match was played in fine weather in front of a large crowd. As in so many future contests between the two sides, Gloucester had the edge up front but had to defend stubbornly to keep out the Newport backs. The Gloucestershire Chronicle described the match as "one of the best ever seen at the Newport ground", a view shared by the Western Mail whose correspondent said that "the match was the hardest that Newport has had to play all season, and the pleasantest by far."

A return game was played at the Spa Ground Gloucester on 15 February, which Newport won by a try to 0. It was Gloucester's only defeat of 1878-79. Newport remained unbeaten.

**A CLEAN SWEEP:
GLOUCESTER 12
NEWPORT 9**
Kingsholm, 29 January 1921
WHEN Newport came to Kingsholm on 29 January 1921 they were undefeated that season and had not lost to Gloucester for 13 years. The Gloucester Citizen commented, "Not since the famous All Blacks came to Gloucester in 1905 has a match aroused such tremendous interest as the visit of the Invincible Newport XV to Kingsholm this afternoon."

The match lived up to



• "FATHER" DIX

expectations, Gloucester winning a tense contest largely through superlative performances by their half backs Dix and Robbins who controlled the game. "Father" Dix scored a try and Robbins kicked a conversion and dropped a goal; a try from forward Joe Harris completed the scoring. Welsh international scrum half Tommy Vile instigated the best of the Newport moves, scoring a try himself and creating tries for Holland and Plummer.

The Citizen said, "A notable day for Gloucester football. I doubt if a more exciting match has ever been seen at Kingsholm." and the South Wales Daily News summed up, "The record has gone; it has found a last resting place like so many other Welsh records at Kingsholm. All Wales will sympathise with Newport."

The players were each presented with an inscribed silver cigarette case to commemorate the victory and Gloucester went on to defeat all four top Welsh clubs (Newport, Cardiff, Swansea



and Llanelli) at Kingsholm that season.

**THE DOUBLE:
NEWPORT 6
GLOUCESTER 10**

Rodney Parade, 14 January 1933
THIS was the second time that Gloucester had achieved the double over Newport, the first being in 1881-82. The Cherry and Whites had not won at Rodney Parade for 50 years and arrived on a foggy day with a three quarter line missing Kit Tanner and Roy James, but their young replacements Bob Hook and Francis Edwards, at the start of long and distinguished careers with the club, both had outstanding games in attack and defence. In the pack, England international back row Peter Hordern, an ex-Newport player, gave one of his storming performances.

Gloucester's tries were scored by Vernon Sheppard and John Brooks and converted by Bob Hook. Conditions were slippery underfoot but the Citizen rated Gloucester's victory as "one of the best exhibitions of football a Gloucester side has given on Welsh soil for many years."

Gloucester went on to complete the double with a 10-0 win at Kingsholm in March. It was an outstanding period in the club's history, under the captaincy of Fred Wadley.



• BOB HOOK

**A "DING-DONG THRILLER":
GLOUCESTER 17
NEWPORT 13**

Kingsholm 18 October 1975
IN 1975 the Anglo-Welsh rivalry was still at its height at club level and nowhere more than at Kingsholm where, throughout the seventies, Gloucester had an outstanding record against Welsh sides. This close and thrilling game was headlined in the Citizen, "Gloucester win the big one – a ding-dong thriller".

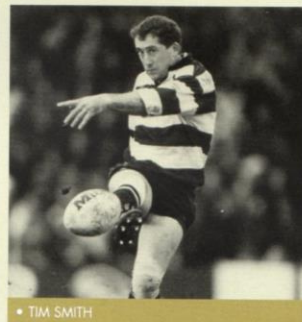
After Gloucester had taken an early lead through two Peter Butler penalties, Newport's right wing Ken Davies scored in the corner. Back came Gloucester with a try from Dick Smith in which he sold an outrageous dummy to go over to the delight of the crowd. Newport replied with a Fuller penalty and then right on half time went ahead with a try from Richard Taylor which Fuller converted to make the score 10-13.

Gloucester regained the lead in the second half when a kick ahead by Peter Kingston was taken by Richard Mogg who eluded several tackles to put Eddie Pinkney away, Kingston taking the final pass to go over in the corner. Victory was secured when Peter Butler landed a 40 yard penalty to make the score 17-13.

**THE LAST MATCH:
GLOUCESTER 44
NEWPORT 19**

Kingsholm, 17 March 1995
IN an era of national cup and league competitions with the game about to turn professional, the "friendly" matches between English and Welsh clubs on the traditional fixture list had started to lose their relevance and teams were rarely at full strength.

For entertainment value,



• TIM SMITH

however, this match could not be faulted. With almost an hour gone, the Cherry and Whites were 19-12 down from tries scored for Newport by no. 8 Mark Workman and centre Simon Enoch and were now playing into a strong wind.

But, having struggled to win quick possession all night, the home team suddenly sparked into life and ran in five tries – some from deep in their own half. Man of the Match Mike Roberts, Pete Miles, Chris Dee, Robin Saltmarsh and Tim Smith all scored against a tiring defence. Gloucester were running penalties from everywhere – even in front of their posts. Hylton Brown had scored for Gloucester in the first half.

Sadly, this was to be the last fixture played between the two clubs. When hostilities ceased in 1995 one of the longest standing rivalries in senior club rugby worldwide came to an end after 117 years and 195 games.

For the next eight years Newport RFC continued to compete in European competition, but the two sides were never drawn together. Then, with the formation of the Newport-Gwent region (the "Dragons") in 2003, the opportunity to continue the ancient rivalry was gone perhaps forever, although the Black and Ambers do continue to thrive in the Premiership of the Welsh Principality League and share their Rodney Parade headquarters with the regional side.



BILLY TWELVETREES

 @Billy_12trees 2 May 2015
Great day yesterday! Loved every minute of it! Fantastic group of boys...



NOT WITHOUT A FIGHT

GLOUCESTER RUGBY HAVE ENJOYED THEIR OUTINGS IN THE EUROPEAN RUGBY CHALLENGE CUP IN RECENT SEASONS, AND WHEN CLUB CAPTAIN BILLY TWELVETREES LIFTED THE TROPHY ALOFT LAST MAY, THE SMILES AND JOYOUS SCENES SHOWED THE DESIRE IN THE SQUAD TO SUCCEED.

THE knock-out journey begins again this afternoon, and the challenge is even greater as the holders look to take a step closer to retaining their title a year on, this time in Lyon, as well as secure the passport to the top table of European Rugby.

Edinburgh were defeated on that memorable night at The Stoop, and another quality Pro 12 outfit are in the opposite corner for the Cherry and Whites this week, and need to be overcome if Twelvetrees can lead his men to back-to-back titles.



At the club's training ground this week, Twelvetrees is quick to highlight the benefits of the competition as this group of players continue to grow and develop together.

WE BACK OURSELVES TO TAKE ON ANYONE. AND THE SQUAD HAVE SHOWN THEIR DESIRE THIS SEASON.

"What's been good is that we have been really successful in this competition. Last season's campaign gave us a different focus, and we played some of our best rugby away from the Premiership.

"We know full well the targets you can set yourself in the tournament, and if you get a full house of pool victories then you can secure yourself a home quarter final, and we know how massive the home advantage can be.



IT'S MASSIVE FOR US AS PLAYERS TO HAVE THE KINGSHOLM CROWD BACKING. BUT AT THE SAME TIME WE HAVE TO GIVE THEM PLENTY TO CHEER ABOUT. THE TEAM REACT TO THE HOME CROWD, AND IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THE LIFT THEY CAN GIVE TO THE TEAM.

"This season's campaign has been really tricky so far, and we've come through some massive tests as a squad against quality opposition. Going to La Rochelle and winning, added to the back to back wins over Worcester show the quality of our pool.

"We've been able to hand all of the squad the opportunity to impress, and it's great to reflect on the pool stages and say that all of those that came in, have done exactly that."

The challenges of knock-out rugby will be no real surprise to the

Cherry and White camp, but with Dragons reaching the semi-finals of the competition last time out, Twelvetrees knows that Lyn Jones' charges have the European pedigree.

"As a team we don't play domestically, there will be an element of surprise to both sides,



but we can analyse each other. That gives the game a different edge, but we know what a quality side they are.

"With players like Taulupe Faletau in their ranks, they are a dangerous squad with lots of depth.

"There's also Shaun (Knight) who will know all about us from last season, and he will be familiar with how we play.

"But it's knock-out rugby, every team we play at this level possesses a real threat, so it comes down to the small margins of course, but also whatever team turns up on the

day. That's the thrill of the knock-out stages."

As Twelvetrees touched upon, the Cherry and Whites hold the trump card of the Kingsholm crowd this afternoon, and this was earned off the back of a number of determined and focused displays in the pool stages.

"It's massive for us as players to have the Kingsholm crowd backing, but at the same time we have to give them plenty to cheer about. The team react to the home crowd, and it goes without saying the lift they can give to the team.

"It's an Anglo-Welsh clash, with a lunchtime kick off, so there is a huge amount to be excited about for players and staff in both camps."

There is no burying their heads in the sand for the Cherry and White camp, with Twelvetrees admitting the disappointment of the last few weeks, but the team have to be able to draw a line under recent run outs, and push ahead in a big end of the season.

"Every week we run out is massive for us, and we were looking for that, especially after the win over Wasps, and the boys know what they need to do now to step up in performance and the results will come.

"This week's game is a big one for us, as is every week, but in terms of our European ambitions, and momentum on the field with plenty of rugby still to be played.

"Our campaign last year will hopefully stand us in good stead as a squad, and with a number of injuries across the squad, we have been delighted with the lads that have come in and made a big impact.

"These experiences will no doubt be crucial this weekend. We back ourselves to take on anyone, and the squad have shown their desire this season.

"When called upon we'll be ready, and the squad has shown that it can rotate around and adapt when we lose a few lads, we have another hungry guy ready to step in.

"We want to build momentum and enjoy ourselves, first and foremost!"

KINGSHOLM NEWS WITH BOB

FENTON



REMEMBER THE LAST GLOUCESTER PROGRAMME? IF YOU READ MY STUFF IN THAT EDITION YOU WOULD HAVE SEEN ME BANGING ON ABOUT 'HOPE', AND HOW SOMETIMES WHEN HOPE IS DASHED IT HURTS. AND IT CAN REALLY HURT.

WISE words from Ellis Boy 'Red' Redding in the magnificent film, 'The Shawshank Redemption.' I reckon Red must have been a season ticket holder at Gloucester Rugby...

So what can I say about the Bath game that hasn't been said by someone else over the past few weeks? Not much, and I don't really want to dwell on it too much. There is something nice about stopping banging your head against a wall, it stops hurting after a while.

Of course, the fact that it was Bath made the experience all the more painful, allied to the fact that as a team it never really looked like we were going to score. You can't argue about three tries to none.

More disappointing for me



was yet more additions to the sick list, if it gets much worse we'll be picking people from the stands. Which should be OK as pretty much everyone I spoke with after the Bath game said that they would be able to do a better job than the team on the pitch!

Then last weekend a trip to the Tigers' lair at Welford Road. Hope levels were below zero to be honest, even eternal optimists can get disheartened sometimes. Even though I was offered some free hospitality at the game - No 1 son works for one of their sponsors - having some guys doing work on my house meant that my viewing was courtesy of BT Sport.

I don't know about anyone else but I find watching my team on TV about the hardest, most stressful couple of hours that you can imagine. I can't sit down, I'm pacing

the room, muttering away to myself or shouting out loud at the TV.

The fact that last weekend was the weekend that Mrs F decided to wash all our curtains, meant that anyone walking past would have seen this demented person shouting and waving their arms around. Fortunately no-one rang the men in white coats, and although the site of the old Coney Hill Asylum is just over the road no one came to take me away.

For the first half an hour of the game it was more of a resigned silence though. Leicester seemed to have us on the proverbial toast. And then it all changed... Three tries, miraculous kicking from Greig and we were not only in front, we were murdering them, and the Tigers suddenly looked about as threatening as the little fur ball that lives in my house.

COMING UP...

BACK TO SCHOOL
WITH OLLIE THORLEY



PAGE
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TALKING OF EFFORT AND COMMITMENT. WHAT CAN YOU SAY ABOUT TOM SAVAGE? HE HAS BEEN IMMENSE OF LATE. HE'S EVERYWHERE ON THE PARK AND HAS REALLY GROWN THIS SEASON. WHETHER THAT IS THE COACHING HE IS GETTING NOW, OR SOME OF THE SUPER FOODS BEING SHOVELLED INTO HIM BY CHEF WILL HE HAS DEVELOPED INTO A COMPLETE MACHINE.

Hope! It was back in spades. For a bit. By fair means or foul they destroyed us in the second half, helped in no small part by a few questionable decisions give by the ref - as one wit on Twitter commented:

"Leicester seemed a better side in the second half after they bought J P Doyle on!" Harsh but -

maybe - fair. Certainly one of our coaches seemed to think so.

So we returned from Leicester with just one point for effort. Yes a huge effort, miles more than we had seen in any of our previous three games. It's one of those things that you can never prove, but I reckon that if we had played like that against Worcester, Irish and probably

Bath, we would have come away with wins in all three games.

And that's all that us supporters ask for - effort and commitment. I hate it when people talk about 'gallant losers' - the clue is in the second word. But go down fighting and that's OK for me - after all sometimes teams are better than us and they win - that's sport. But if the effort is there for all to see then you can live with those defeats - I could quote Kipling here - facing triumph and disaster and treat them the same - all that. But I won't. Or rather I just did. Sort of...

Talking of effort and commitment, what can you say about Tom Savage? He has been immense of late, he's everywhere on the park and has really grown this season. Whether that is the coaching he is getting now, or some of the super foods being shovelled into him by Chef Will he has developed into a complete machine.

Around the place now are the forms for the Player of the Season poll - Vote Tom! Assuming he plays today - and he will because we don't have anyone else who is fit - watch him closely. Watch how often he is - to use a phrase I'll borrow from my mate JP (not Doyle by the way - this JP can be found between the pages of this edition of @Holm) - 'Jonny on the spot' making a tackle or first to the breakdown. And when you have done that, find a form and write his name on it for Player of the Season!

He hasn't paid me for saying all that, and in the interest of balance I should say that other players can be voted for too. But they aren't as deserving. So don't vote for them.

I may have to go into hiding from 30 or so other big blokes now.





RANDALL ON RUGBY

SUMMER IS HERE (SIC) SO WEARING MY HAT AS PA ANNOUNCER AT GLOUCESTERSHIRE CRICKET I WAS UNABLE TO FOLLOW TO ANY GREAT DEPTH MATTERS AT WELFORD ROAD LAST SATURDAY.

FROM the highlights and speaking to friends who were there, it seems Gloucester's performance was back to a more acceptable level in a lot of areas, but it is unrealistic to go from a choppy sea to a millpond in a week. On that basis I would say a losing bonus point mustn't be dismissed out of hand.

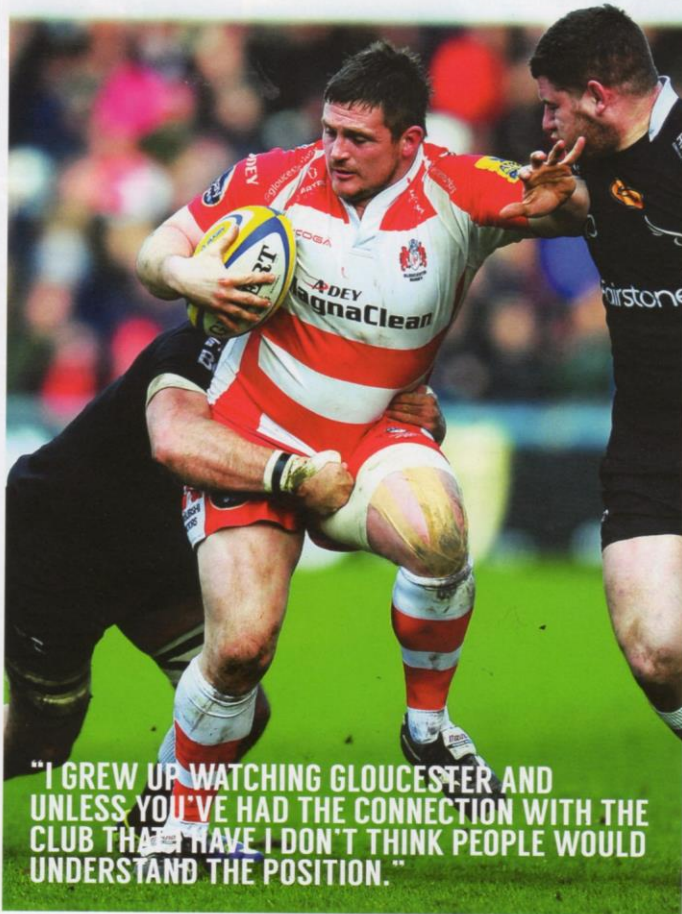
That said, my neighbour Dave - a Shed season ticket holder - admitted after the Bath game that he would swap losing all the remaining Premiership matches for Gloucester retaining the Challenge Cup, which brings us here this lunchtime for the visit of the Dragons.

With Sale playing Montpellier last night, both teams will know who awaits them in the last four at kick off today, and one player in particular will be keen to put on a good show.

Prop Shaun Knight left Kingsholm for the Dragons last summer, a Gloucester boy putting his career before the sentiment of staying at his home city club.

"I felt professionally I had to do it, and I don't think I had a great deal of choice" Knight told me.

"The new coaches came in, they had their perception of me



"I GREW UP WATCHING GLOUCESTER AND UNLESS YOU'VE HAD THE CONNECTION WITH THE CLUB THAT I HAVE I DON'T THINK PEOPLE WOULD UNDERSTAND THE POSITION."

A NEW LEAGUE. SOME NEW TEAMS AND SOME DIFFERENT OPPONENTS. I'VE GOT SOME GOOD MATES WHO ARE STILL AT GLOUCESTER THOUGH. SO IT WOULD BE GREAT TO BE INVOLVED AGAINST THEM. SHAUN KNIGHT

and while I got on with them on a personal level they didn't see me in any future plans.

"I had one year left on my contract. Director of Rugby David Humphreys told me the way things stood from his point of

the ensuing tussle with Bordeaux-Begles that saw Gloucester miss out on a Champions Cup place.

"That wasn't a good feeling after we'd won the Challenge Cup", said the 26 year old, who made 77 appearances in cherry and white.

underdogs, we know that and I think it'll be a good thing for us.

"We've got a few of the Wales lads back like 'Toby' Faletau (bound for Bath next season) and Hallam Amos and if we're somewhere near to the best we've been this season



Photo: WRU / Huw Evans Agency

view and I took that chat with him as the signal to look for a move elsewhere, but it wasn't easy.

"I grew up watching Gloucester and unless you've had the connection with the club that I have I don't think people would understand the position."

Knight played mini rugby at Matson from the age of six, went to Widden Old Boys as a teenager and then played for two further seasons at Redwell Road before joining the Gloucester Academy.

His memories of European games at Gloucester includes clashes with Perpignan, Edinburgh, Munster and Connacht, when he was part of the nerve shredding play off semi final last season. He also had ten minutes as a replacement in

"There was a lot of disappointment felt by everyone around the club, because it was as if there was no reward for us. This season there is the carrot of a place directly into the Champions Cup, and that feels right."

Knight signed a 12 month deal at Rodney Parade, and has made 19 appearances for the Dragons so far, although he wasn't in the squad beaten 26-20 by the Ospreys last weekend, a result typical of recent weeks.

"We've had a lot of close matches and we've been unlucky in quite a few" Knight went on.

"I've been a bit surprised by Gloucester's form lately but there are some very good squads in the Premiership. We'll be the

then we could give Gloucester a tough afternoon."

Knight - and Dragons head coach Kingsley Jones - will certainly be able to brief the Dragons about playing at Kingsholm, which will be invaluable since the teams have not met here in European action since the pool stages of the 2009-10 Heineken Cup.

Gloucester won 19-17, and edged the return match 32-23 on their way to a quarter final against Wasps.

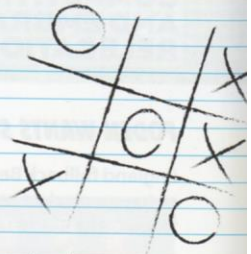
"I've had some fresh challenges this season" said Knight. "A new league, some new teams and some different opponents. I've got some good mates who are still at Gloucester though, so it would be great to be involved against them."



Back To School

by Ollie Thorley, age 20

PRIMARY SCHOOL



I WENT TO Cheltenham College Junior School

MY BEST FRIENDS WERE Ned Kenwright and Christian Johnston

Ollie's best friends

1. Ned
2. Christian
3. Duncan
4. Tom



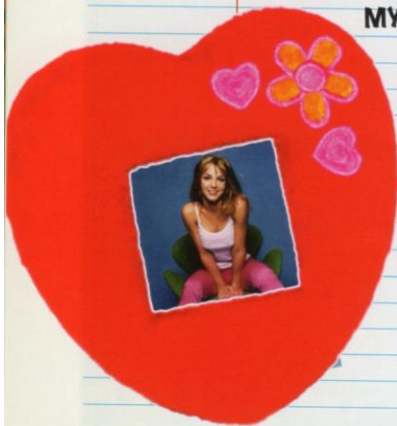
MY FAVOURITE SUBJECT WAS History

MY FAVOURITE TEACHER WAS Mr Lewis

MY FAVOURITE SCHOOL DINNER WAS Fish and chips

IN MY SNACK BOX I HAD Ambrosia rice pudding (still a guilty pleasure) and ham & pickle sandwiches

MY FIRST SCHOOL PLAY WAS Snow White & the Seven Dwarves - I was the Huntsman!



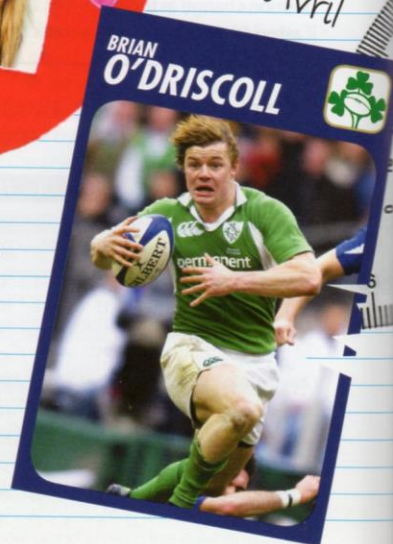
IN THE PLAYGROUND, I was always chucking a rugby ball around

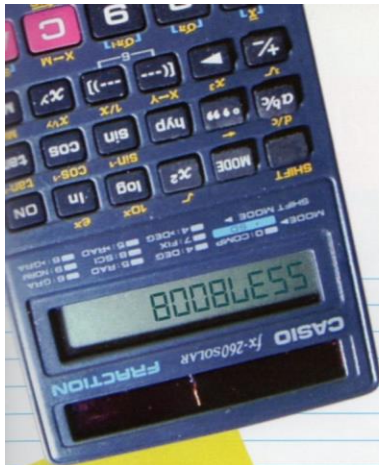
MY PRIMARY SCHOOL LOVE WAS Britney Spears or Avril Lavigne

MY EARLIEST RUGBY MEMORY Winning the 2007 County Cup with Stow RFC

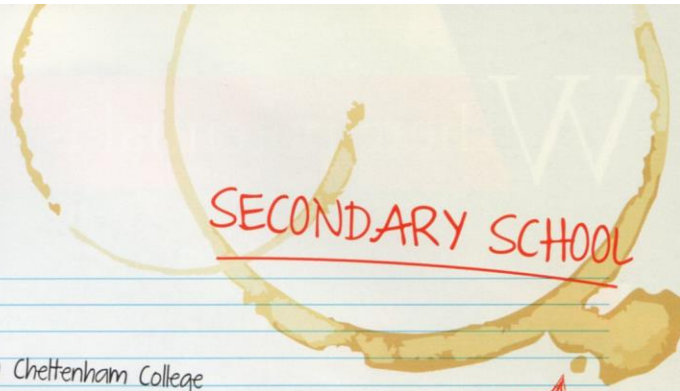
WHEN WE PLAYED RUGBY I PRETENDED TO BE Brian O'Driscoll

AT SPORTS DAY, I Broke the 100m and Discus records!





Ollie's timetable
 Revision
 Rugby
 Swotting up
 Gymnastics
 Dinosaur roar practice



I WENT TO Cheltenham College

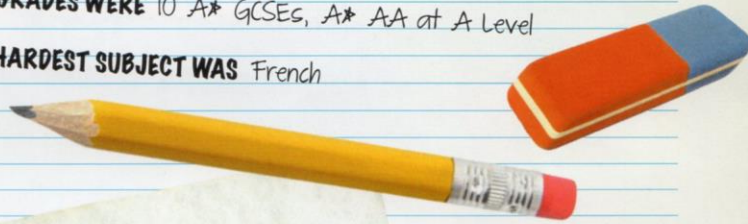
MY FAVOURITE MEMORY IS the rugby tour to SA



I ENJOYED CCF, History and Rugby

MY GRADES WERE 10 A* GCSEs, A* AA at A Level

MY HARDEST SUBJECT WAS French



Dear Mr and Mrs Thorley
 We regret to inform you that we will be banning Ollie from art classes after he was caught painting himself green and roaring like a dinosaur



MY UNIFORM WAS Grey with any tie that you had earned

GOT IN TROUBLE FOR To get in trouble, you have to be caught....



IN PE, I USED TO Enjoy gymnastics

MY FAVOURITE SCHOOL TRIP WAS Drayton Manor

AT SCHOOL I WANTED TO BE A dinosaur - probably a Triceratops or Velociraptor

ON WORK EXPERIENCE I WENT TO A retirement home



LONDON IRISH 23 GLOUCESTER RUGBY 18



HALF TIME 10-10
ATTENDANCE 17,752
REFEREE Matt Carley

THE Cherry and Whites travelled to Reading in Round Seventeen, hoping to crash the St Patrick's Day party. But it was the majority of the 17,000 crowd at the Madejski Stadium that were sent home happy.

Bottom side London Irish were the hungrier side and edged the result, with a final quarter of indiscipline proving to be the difference as referee Matthew Carley issued a pair of yellow cards as the Cherry and Whites defended for their lives on their own try line.

A well-worked Henry Trinder try put Gloucester into a lead on the

hour that they would've looked to consolidate. But ten points late on from the Exiles swung the result on its head as the visitors fell foul of Mr Carley's whistle.

It was a hugely frustrating afternoon, with very little going right for the Cherry and Whites, with the Exiles scraping a win that they were so desperate for.

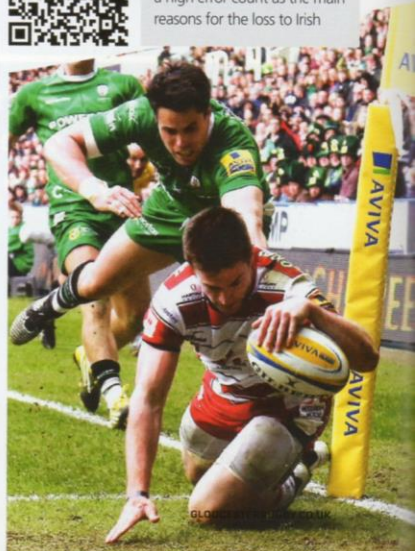
Things started badly for Gloucester, a warning of things to come perhaps? An early try for Billy Twelvetrees was chalked off, and to compound the disappointment, Halani Aulika then barged over to cross for the Exiles.

James Hook narrowed the gap with a penalty, but Greig Tonks added three points of his own to restore the margin.

The Cherry and Whites were creating bright openings, but couldn't convert them into points, as Nick Wood and Richard Hibbard



Skipper **Billy Twelvetrees** pinpointed poor discipline and a high error count as the main reasons for the loss to Irish



both limped out of the action, and debutant Tom Marshall was shown the first of three yellow cards in the afternoon.

Great defence from Gloucester ensued, clearly displaying the desire to get the result as wave after wave of Irish offence was repelled.

Weathering the storm, the Cherry and Whites then turned defence into attack, with Lewis Ludlow finishing off a Matt Kvesic break for his first Premiership try.

Hook's conversion leveled the scores up at ten apiece at the turnaround.

Tonks and Hook then exchanged penalties as possession changed

METRES RUN WITH THE BALL

**IRISH 284M
GLOUCESTER 293M**

ALL WE ASK FOR FROM REFEREES EVERY WEEK IS CONSISTENCY. THERE WERE A COUPLE OF CALLS THERE TODAY THAT WENT DIFFERENT WAYS.

DAVID HUMPHREYS



hands, but it was Gloucester who looked more likely to score next.

They duly did, replacement Rob Cook made the crucial midfield break, and Hook dinked through the stretched Exiles' defence perfectly for Henry Trinder to swoop to collect

MATCHDAY SQUADS



LONDON IRISH

- 15 Sean Maitland
- 14 Alex Lewington
- 13 Ciaran Hearn
- 12 Johnny Williams
- 11 Topsy Ojo
- 10 Greig Tonks 2C 3P
- 9 Scott Steele
- 1 Tom Court
- 2 Tom Cruse
- 3 Halani Aulika 1T
- 4 William Lloyd
- 5 Matt Symons
- 6 Luke Narraway
- 7 Blair Cowan 1T
- 8 Rob McCusker

- 16 David Paice
- 17 Tom Smallbone
- 18 Leo Halavatau
- 19 Jerry Sexton
- 20 Jebb Sinclair
- 21 Brendan McKibbin
- 22 Theo Brophy Clews
- 23 Fergus Mulchrone



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

- 15 Tom Marshall ■
- 14 Charlie Sharples
- 13 Bill Meakes
- 12 Billy Twelvetrees
- 11 Henry Trinder 1T
- 10 James Hook 1C 2P
- 9 Callum Braley
- 1 Nick Wood
- 2 Richard Hibbard
- 3 John Afoa
- 4 Jeremy Thrush
- 5 Mariano Galarza
- 6 Sione Kalamafoni
- 7 Matt Kvesic
- 8 Lewis Ludlow 1T

- 16 Darren Dawidiuk
- 17 Yann Thomas ■
- 18 Paul Doran-Jones
- 19 Tom Savage ■
- 20 Gareth Evans
- 21 Harry Randall
- 22 Mark Atkinson
- 23 Rob Cook

and dive over.

It looked to be a key moment, but again Gloucester's indiscipline allowed Irish the chance to work the field possession to apply pressure.

A series of five metre scrum penalties resulted in a yellow card for Yann Thomas.

Irish opted for the corner and the Cherry and Whites looked to have survived the onslaught, but couldn't escape punishment, with Tom Savage following Thomas to the

PENALTIES CONCEDED
**IRISH 9
GLOUCESTER 19**

naughty step.

Blair Cowan was driven over from the resulting drive, and with Tonks' conversion, Gloucester trailed.

The 13 men attacked valiantly, but couldn't make the inroads to cross the line, and Irish were able to work a final position for Tonks to add a further penalty and secure a crucial win for the Exiles.

**Sherbornes
Solicitors Ltd**

OFFICIAL LEGAL PARTNER

**APPLYING
THE LAW**

It's fair to say that there was a certain amount of frustration in the Gloucester camp at the refereeing on the day, not just because of the three yellow cards issued.

One of them, to Tom Marshall for a hand in the ruck on the touchline near the Gloucester 10 metre line, seemed to be no worse an offence than Irish killing the ball near their own line. However, no card was issued to the home side....



GLOUCESTER RUGBY 12

BATH RUGBY 17



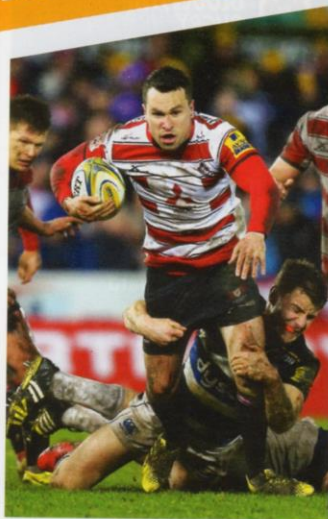
HALF TIME 9-7
ATTENDANCE 16,115
REFEREE Wayne Barnes

A third defeat in a row for the Cherry and Whites, and perhaps the most painful of all – a home defeat to Bath Rugby.

It was a great opportunity for Gloucester to clinch a memorable double over their bitter local rivals, having triumphed at the Rec just a few short weeks ago.

However, despite leading at half time, Gloucester couldn't close the game out in the second half and, although it was all square going into the final few minutes, Bath's Semesa Rokodoguni pounced for a late try which snatched the points.

It all added up to a deeply



frustrating afternoon for players and supporters alike. Losing to Bath hurts, losing at home is worse, and losing late on when the game has been so close just rubs salt into the wounds.

And, coming hot on the heels



David Humphreys says the players need to dust themselves down and put in the work to bounce back

of away defeats at Worcester and London Irish, it leaves Gloucester well and truly behind the eight ball when it comes to securing a top six spot and automatic qualification for next season's European Rugby Challenge Cup.

It all started really well for Gloucester on the day. They took the play to Bath from the off, forced the visitors on to the back foot and Greig Laidlaw kicked two penalties for a 6-0 lead.

However, Bath were quickly back in the game and it was a soft score

considering how good Gloucester's defence has been this season. The unlikely figure of Henry Thomas broke three tackles before putting Chris Cook over for the first try of the afternoon.

Laidlaw quickly restored the lead with his third penalty of the afternoon, but the second quarter of the game produced no further scoring as neither side was able to gain the ascendancy.

After the resumption though, Bath were quick to get on to the front foot. Gloucester coughed up possession in their own half and the visitors made the most of the gift, patiently creating an opening



A LOT OF THE STUFF WE BUILT THE EARLY PART OF THE SEASON ON. THAT ALLOWED US TO BE COMPETING AND MOVING TOWARDS THE TOP OF THE TABLE. JUST HASN'T BEEN THERE THE LAST THREE WEEKS. DAVID HUMPHREYS

for Semesa Rokodoguni who finished well.

The Cherry and Whites had to regroup and withstand a period of pressure, but then enjoyed a decent spell themselves, establishing camp within the Bath 22 but, crucially, only coming away with a penalty to show for their efforts.

At 12-12, the game was finely poised but a couple of key incidents went the way of the visitors and it proved to be decisive.

An accidental offside pinned Gloucester back deep in their own half. Under pressure, Mariano Galarza nicked a Bath lineout but the ball ran frustratingly dead at the home end.

MATCHDAY SQUADS



GLoucester RUGBY

- 15 Tom Marshall
- 14 David Halaifonua
- 13 Bill Meakes
- 12 Billy Twelvetrees
- 11 Steve McColl
- 10 James Hook
- 9 Greig Laidlaw 4P
- 1 Paddy McAllister
- 2 Darren Dawidiuk
- 3 John Afoa
- 4 Tom Savage
- 5 Jeremy Thrush
- 6 Sione Kalamafoni
- 7 Matt Kvesic
- 8 Ross Moriarty

- 16 Richard Hibbard
- 17 Yann Thomas
- 18 Paul Doran-Jones
- 19 Mariano Galarza
- 20 Gareth Evans
- 21 Callum Braley
- 22 Mark Atkinson
- 23 Henry Trinder



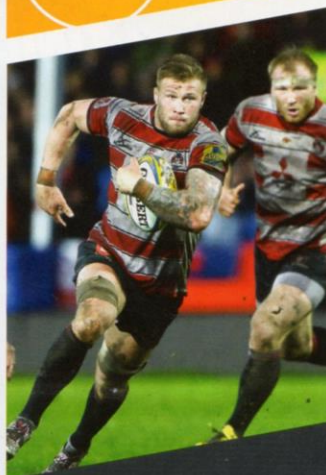
BATH RUGBY

- 15 Anthony Watson
- 14 Semesa Rokoduguni 2T
- 13 Jonathan Joseph
- 12 Ollie Devoto
- 11 Matt Banahan
- 10 George Ford 1C
- 9 Chris Cook 1T
- 1 Nathan Catt
- 2 Rob Webber
- 3 Henry Thomas
- 4 Charlie Ewels
- 5 Dominic Day
- 6 Matt Garvey
- 7 Francois Louw
- 8 Leroy Houston

- 16 Tom Dunn
- 17 Max Lahiff
- 18 David Wilson
- 19 Amanaki Mafi
- 20 Guy Mercer
- 21 Jonathan Evans
- 22 Rhys Priestland
- 23 Horacio Agulla

Gloucester then seemed to disrupt the Bath scrum and the ball ran loose. However, Rokodoguni scooped it up and navigated a route somehow through a pile of bodies and had enough strength to make the line.

Ford was off target with the conversion and, try as they might to regain possession, Gloucester couldn't quite do so. Cook hoofed the ball over the Shed and Bath had the win.



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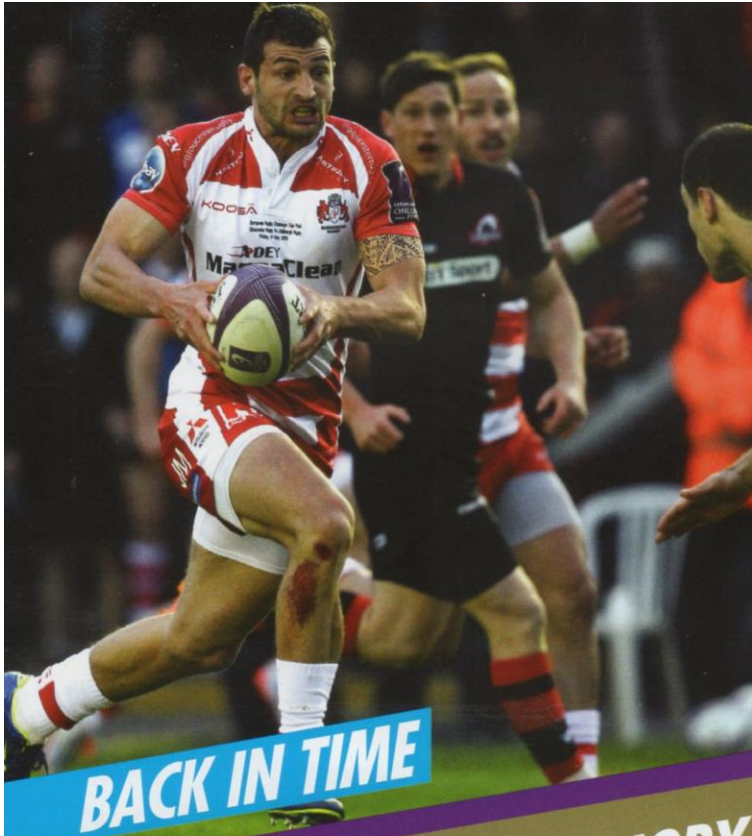
OFFICIAL LEGAL PARTNER

APPLYING THE LAW

One of the best things you can say about a refereeing performance is that you haven't noticed the referee!

And that was the case in terms of Wayne Barnes' contribution on the day – no yellow cards, no unnecessary referrals to the TMO.

Mr Barnes kept things moving along nicely.



side could barely lay a finger on him, although Cornell du Preez's outstretched digit was just enough to deny the winger a try of his own at a crucial point.

Gloucester were already leading 10-3 at that point, and another score would surely have given them an unassailable lead. Gareth Evans thought he had touched down shortly afterwards, but the TMO decreed otherwise, and Edinburgh lived to fight again.

With Sam Hidalgo-Clyne putting boot to ball to good effect, both on and off the tee, Edinburgh refused to be shaken off and were hanging on grimly at half time, trailing by just 13 points to 6 despite Gloucester's domination.

However, Greig Laidlaw was

BACK IN TIME



**EDINBURGH RUGBY 13
GLOUCESTER RUGBY 19**

HALF TIME 6-13

ATTENDANCE 14,316

REFEREE Jerome Garcès (France)

IT brought a successful end to a European odyssey which has seen the squad travel twice to France and once to Italy, before seeing off the best that the British Isles could throw at them in the knock-out stages.

And, on May Day, how fitting was it that Gloucester's appropriately named winger was named as Man of the Match following his superb contribution?

Jonny May was the architect of Gloucester's only try on the night as he ripped open Edinburgh's defence to set up Billy Twelvetrees. The Scottish





EUROPEAN RUGBY CHALLENGE CUP FINAL 2014/15

WE PLAYED VERY WELL IN THE FIRST HALF. COMING INTO THE GAME WE TALKED ABOUT CREATING PACE IN THE GAME AND NOT LETTING EDINBURGH SETTLE.

THERE'S UNBELIEVABLE CHARACTER AND THERE'S UNBELIEVABLE BELIEF WITHIN THIS SQUAD.

DAVID HUMPHREYS

putting on a clinic of scrum-half play in his personal battle with his fellow Scotland scrum-half, and his two second half penalties seemed to put Gloucester well down the path to victory.

But, if Gloucester have struggled in one area this season, it's been closing out games and this proved to be an issue once again when they seemed to be coasting.

Ross Moriarty was yellow

MATCHDAY SQUADS

EDINBURGH RUGBY

- 15 Greig Tonks
- 14 Dougie Fife
- 13 Sam Beard
- 12 Andries Strauss
- 11 Tim Visser
- 10 Phil Burleigh
- 9 Sam Hidalgo-Clyne 1C 2P
- 1 Alasdair Dickinson
- 2 Ross Ford 1T
- 3 WP Nel
- 4 Anton Bresler ■
- 5 Ben Toolis
- 6 Mike Coman (C)
- 7 Roddy Grant
- 8 Cornell Du Preez
- 16 Stuart McNally
- 17 Rory Sutherland
- 18 John Andress
- 19 Fraser McKenzie
- 20 Hamish Watson
- 21 Nathan Fowles
- 22 Tom Heathcote
- 23 Tom Brown

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

- 15 Charlie Sharples
- 14 Jonny May
- 13 Bill Meakes ■
- 12 Billy Twelvetrees (C) 1T
- 11 Henry Purdy
- 10 James Hook
- 9 Greig Laidlaw 1C 4P
- 1 Nick Wood
- 2 Richard Hibbard
- 3 John Afoa
- 4 Tom Savage
- 5 Tom Palmer
- 6 Ross Moriarty ■
- 7 Matt Kvesic
- 8 Gareth Evans
- 16 Darren Dawiduk
- 17 Yann Thomas
- 18 Sila Puafisi
- 19 Mariano Galarza
- 20 Jacob Rowan
- 21 Dan Robson
- 22 Billy Burns
- 23 Stevie McColl

carded, and was swiftly followed to the sidelines by Bill Meakes whose red card seemed to be harsh considering he appeared to be trying to move a runner on a blocking path out of his way.

With Gloucester down to 13 men, Edinburgh sensed a way back into the game and duly took the opportunity. They had barely threatened up to this point, but Ross Ford powered over from close range and it was game on.

TWICKENHAM STOOP MAN OF THE MATCH: JONNY MAY

It was an uncomfortable few minutes for Gloucester as Edinburgh threw everything into attack, and one key penalty was won at the breakdown by Yann Thomas to stem the tide.

It proved to be pivotal. Gloucester moved downfield to dominate possession in the final few minutes, Laidlaw expertly marshaling his troops to run down the clock.

In desperation, Edinburgh conceded a penalty with a minute to go as they sought to snatch back the ball and, even though Laidlaw was off target, he made sure the ball went dead and Gloucester had their first silverware for four years.



0-3 8-6 11-12 21-18
 5-3 11-6 11-15 21-23
 5-6 11-9 11-18
 18-18



TODAY'S TEAMSHEET

GLoucester RUGBY vs NEWPORT GWENT DRAGONS

European Rugby Challenge Cup - Quarter-Final

Saturday 9th April 2016, KO 12:45 Kingsholm

Teams correct at time of print



TOM MARSHALL	FULLBACK	15	FULLBACK	<i>P</i>	CARL MEYER
ROB COOK	RIGHT WING	14	RIGHT WING	<i>Hickman</i>	ASHTON HEWITT
BILL MEAKES	OUTSIDE CENTRE	13	OUTSIDE CENTRE	<i>TRINDER</i>	TYLER MORGAN
MARK ATKINSON	INSIDE CENTRE	12	INSIDE CENTRE		ADAM WARREN
HENRY TRINDER	LEFT WING	11	LEFT WING	<i>McColl T</i>	HALLAM AMOS
JAMES HOOK	FLY HALF	10	FLY HALF	<i>PPPP</i>	DORIAN JONES
GREIG LAIDLAW (C)	SCrum HALF	9	SCrum HALF	<i>PPCP</i>	SAREL PRETORIUS
PADDY McALLISTER	LOOSEHEAD PROP	1	LOOSEHEAD PROP		PHIL PRICE
RICHARD HIBBARD	HOOKEr	2	HOOKEr		ELLIOT DEE
JOHN AFOA	TIGHTHEAD PROP	3	TIGHTHEAD PROP		BROK HARRIS
TOM SAVAGE	LOCK	4	LOCK		RYNARD LANDMAN
MARIANO GALARZA	LOCK	5	LOCK	<i>Crosswell</i>	MATTHEW SCREECH
SIONE KALAMAFONI	BLINDSIDE FLANKER	6	BLINDSIDE FLANKER		LEWIS EVANS <i>(C)</i>
MATT KVESIC	OPENSIDE FLANKER	7	OPENSIDE FLANKER		NIC CUDD
BEN MORGAN	NUMBER 8	8	NUMBER 8	<i>T</i>	TAULUPE FALETAU (C)

DARREN DAWIDIUK	REPLACEMENT	16	REPLACEMENT	<i>Buckley</i>	THOMAS RHYS THOMAS
YANN THOMAS	REPLACEMENT	17	REPLACEMENT		BORIS STANKOVICH
PAUL DORAN-JONES	REPLACEMENT	18	REPLACEMENT	<i>knol cut</i>	LLOYD FAIRBROTHER
ELLIOTT STOOKE	REPLACEMENT	19	REPLACEMENT	<i>SCREECH</i>	NICK CROSSWELL
GARETH EVANS	REPLACEMENT	20	REPLACEMENT		ED JACKSON
CALLUM BRALEY	REPLACEMENT	21	REPLACEMENT	<i>T</i>	CHARLIE DAVIES
MAT PROTHEROE	REPLACEMENT	22	REPLACEMENT		ANGUS O'BRIEN
STEVE McCOLL	REPLACEMENT	23	REPLACEMENT	<i>LEWIS</i>	ADAM HUGHES

Officials

Referee Pascal Gauzere (FRA)
Assistant Referees Dudley Phillips (IRE) & Laurent Cardona (FRA)

