

OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME || 2016/17 SEASON || GLOUCESTER RUGBY



**GLOUCESTER  
RUGBY**

VERSUS

# STADE ROCHELAIS

ISSUE 9 || EUROPEAN RUGBY CHALLENGE CUP  
ROUND 3 || THURSDAY 8 DECEMBER 2016 || £3



EUROPEAN RUGBY  
CHALLENGE  
CUP

OFFICIAL PARTNERS



OFFICIAL SUPPORTER



OFFICIAL SUPPLIER



CAPTAIN'S CORNER

## GREIG LAIDLAW



GOOD EVENING, AND WELCOME TO KINGSHOLM AS WE RE-FOCUS OUR ATTENTIONS ON EUROPEAN RUGBY CHALLENGE CUP MATTERS, WITH AN EXCITING AND TESTING DOUBLE-HEADER WITH LA ROCHELLE.

We go into this game in a good place - we picked up a hard-fought bonus point win against Bristol, but know that we still have a lot more to give in front of our own fans.

We didn't get going in the first half on Saturday, but we kept a lot of faith in our systems and I think our application and performance in the second half was really strong. I was pleased with the ruthlessness that we showed to secure a bonus point.

After a tricky start to the season in front of our own fans, we have put a real emphasis on building a strong base at Kingsholm, and after four wins on the bounce in all competitions, the whole squad has contributed to building some confidence around the place.

That said, although we have faith in our own abilities, we face another huge test this evening. La Rochelle are a quality outfit and we had two very tricky games with them last season in our pool.



We know the threats that they pose and this season they have demonstrated a strong all-round game in the Top 14. As a result, we are hugely excited about the challenge we face this week.

Despite the short turnaround, the squad is buoyed by a good recovery and a good atmosphere around the training centre at Hartpury and there are players competing very hard for every jersey, which is credit to everyone.

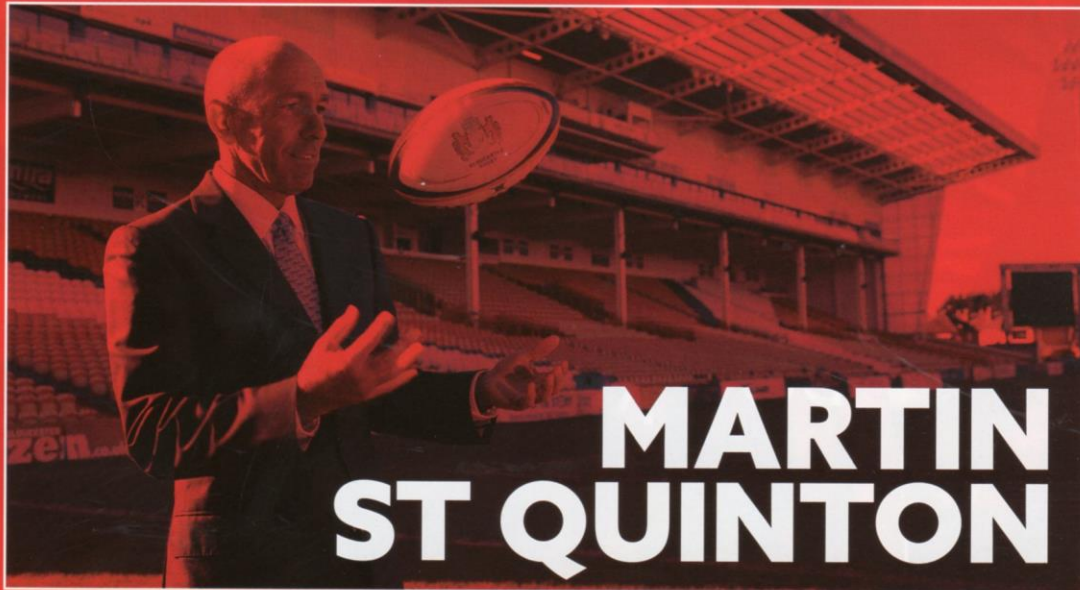
It's really good to be back in and around the group after the Autumn internationals, and we have an important few weeks ahead in the build-up to Kingsholm.

Weirdly, this early in the month this is our final home game of 2016! I want to thank all of our supporters for their backing and belief over the past twelve months and we look forward to an exciting 2017.

Wishing everyone a great time over the festive period and we hope that the results over the next few weeks in the lead up to the New Year and beyond provide plenty of cheer!

Enjoy the game

*Greig*



# MARTIN ST QUINTON

Good evening and welcome to Kingsholm for the second time in five days.

Tonight, of course, it's a return to European action as we welcome La Rochelle for the first game in a double-header which will go a long way towards determining who will top the pool.

Like ourselves, La Rochelle have started the competition with two good wins so something has to give this evening.

We do come into the game on the back of some good results, most recently last Saturday's victory over Bristol which earned us a valuable five Aviva Premiership points.

It was good to welcome back one of our oldest rivals after too long a gap. The Bristol derby is one of the games that I enjoyed when I first became involved with Gloucester, and it was terrific to resume the rivalry.

I was able to speak to the Bristol Chairman Chris Booy during the game and it was fascinating to be able to talk about the challenges that they have faced this season as the newly promoted club.



Chris would never look to make excuses, but it's obvious for all to see that not being able to finalise planning and, in particular recruit new players, until the conclusion of the Championship play-offs is a key factor.

It's a topic that has inspired much debate in recent times. Chris was quoted in *The Rugby Paper* last Sunday as saying that a 'first past the post' promotion system would be a lot fairer. His view is that a team dominating the Championship come the New Year, could at least start targeting new

signings, confident that they won't slip up in a winner takes all play-off scenario.

Another argument, of course, is to do away with relegation from the Premiership and promotion from the Championship altogether. To create a league like the Guinness Pro 12, for example.

One obvious response to that is to quote the recent examples of Worcester Warriors and Exeter Chiefs. Both teams made their way through the leagues, ultimately achieving their goal of promotion to the Premiership and both have been worthy additions.

Should promotion and relegation be done away with, the possibility of another club following in their footsteps would be gone.

It's an argument that's sure to go on for some time!

Finally, tonight is our final home game of 2016 so I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Enjoy the game.

*Martin*

## GOOD EVENING AND WELCOME TO KINGSHOLM FOR WHAT IS SURE TO BE ANOTHER MEMORABLE EUROPEAN GAME UNDER THE LIGHTS.

Over the past few years, we've made no secret of the fact that the European Rugby Challenge Cup is a tournament that is very important to us.

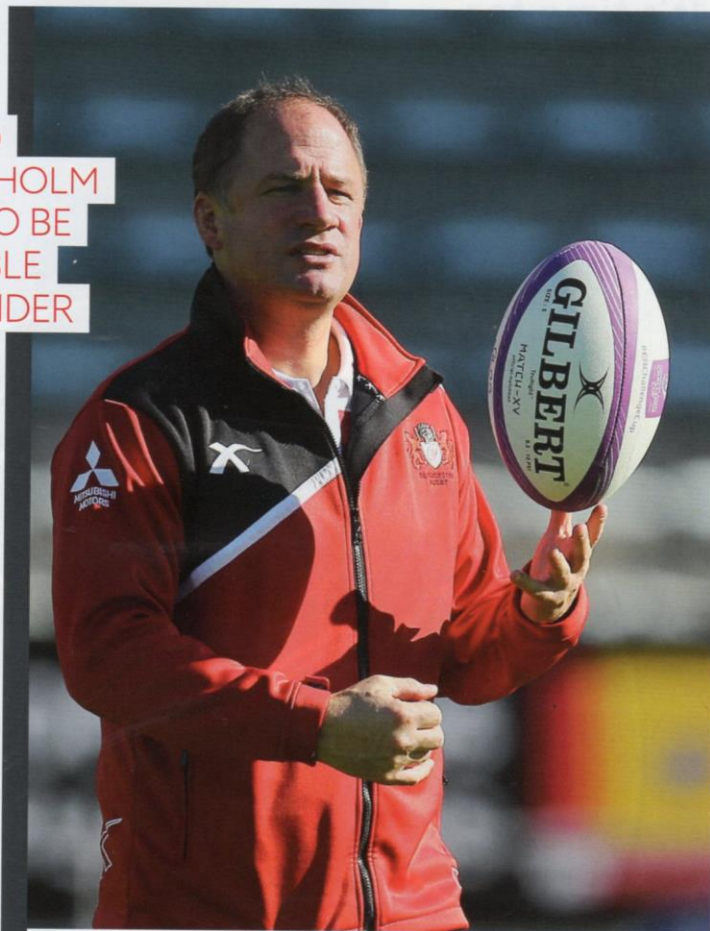
Lifting the tournament on that memorable evening at the Stoop remains one of the highlights of my time here at Gloucester, and it was desperately disappointing to bow out at the quarter-final stage last season and end our defence of the title.

We've an excellent record in the pool stages, 22 wins in a row now, something we're very proud of. However, that will be put to the test this evening against a La Rochelle side who have been very impressive both in the Top 14 and in the European Rugby Challenge Cup this season.

They've invested heavily in their playing squad over the past year or so, adding some real quality through the likes of Brock James and Victor Vito, and they're now a genuine force to be reckoned with in the French club game.

That said, we come into the game on the back of some decent performances ourselves, having taken 11 points from the last 15 available in the Aviva Premiership.

We've played two of the in-form teams in Wasps and Saracens, earning a bonus point win from the first and were desperately disappointed not to back that up against Saracens at Allianz Park when we only came away with a



losing bonus point when it could have been a win.

And, last weekend, I was impressed with our composure and maturity against Bristol when we came up against a team battling for their lives. The first 40 minutes didn't go as we would have wanted, but we responded well in the second half to secure a bonus point win.

That's given us a boost and helped to establish some real momentum heading into a crucial part of the season. We want to be competing on both fronts and the next few weeks will be key to that.

This evening will see us take the opportunity to give some game time to a few players who have been chomping at the

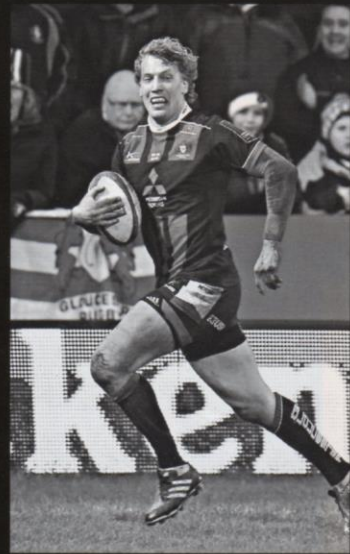
bit recently, eager to feature recently when we've been able to name a relatively unchanged side.

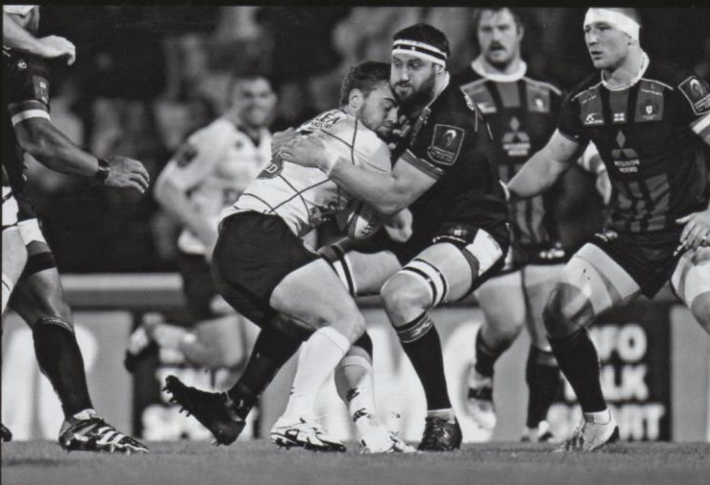
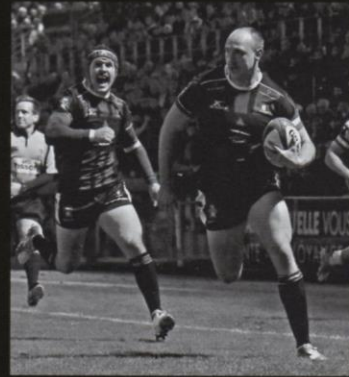
They'll get the chance to contribute this evening and stake a claim going forward. Selection has been an interesting debate in recent weeks, and is set to become even more challenging in a positive way as we welcome a number of players back to training.

With tonight being our final home game in 2016, it just remains for me to say thank you for your support this year and with you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Enjoy the game.

*David*





LAST TIME WE MET

SATURDAY 16 JANUARY 2016  
KICK OFF 15:00 | KINGSHOLM



**20**



**10**

- 15 Cook 1T
- 14 Sharples
- 13 Twelvetrees 1T
- 12 Atkinson ▾
- 11 Halaifonua
- 10 Burns
- 9 Laidlaw 2P, 2C ▾
- 1 Y Thomas ▾
- 2 Dawidiuk
- 3 N Thomas ▾
- 4 Savage ▾
- 5 Galarza
- 6 Moriarty ▾
- 7 Rowan
- 8 Ludlow ▾

- 15 Lapeyre 1T
- 14 Roudil
- 13 Barraque
- 12 Aguillon
- 11 Northam ▾
- 10 Fortassin ▾
- 9 Audy 1C, 1P ▾
- 1 Synaeghel ▾
- 2 Forbes ▾
- 3 Atonio
- 4 Lagrange ▾
- 5 Cedaro ▾
- 6 Kieft
- 7 Eaton
- 8 Amosa

Replacements used:  
Lindsay, Murphy,  
McNulty, Latta,  
Stoake, Braley,  
McColl, Kvesic

Replacements used:  
Gau, Seneca, Pelo,  
Sozy, Gaurdon,  
Lebail, Holmes,  
Lacroix

# A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE



DECEMBER 19TH 2010 SAW GLOUCESTER TAKE ON LA ROCHELLE ON ONE OF THE COLDEST EVENINGS EXPERIENCED AT KINGSHOLM.

The pitch had been covered in the build-up to the game but, with temperatures dropping to minus 15 degrees centigrade on the evening, conditions soon became challenging. In fact, it got so cold that night that the home game the following weekend was lost as a result.

It was also an emotional occasion. Gloucester had triumphed 13-6 in

La Rochelle the weekend before but, as they travelled back, the news filtered through that Tom Walkinshaw had passed away.

His sons, Ryan and Sean Walkinshaw, led the teams out on the evening as a lone piper played. Understandably, the atmosphere was sombre and that perhaps contributed to Gloucester's lacklustre performance on the night.

Despite scoring three tries through Lesley Vainikolo (2) and Freddie Burns, a distracted and disjointed Cherry and Whites side slipped to an 18-24 defeat and would bow out of the competition at the pool stage.









VIEW FROM THE

# GLOUCESTER Citizen

**L**ewis Ludlow admitted he was pleasantly surprised to be picked ahead of Wales star Ross Moriarty for Gloucester's West Country derby against Bristol.

Moriarty was one of the shining lights during a mixed autumn series for Wales in the number eight shirt having operated mostly at blindside flanker for his club but had to settle for a place on the bench on his return from international duty.



Ludlow, 22, has enjoyed getting an extended run in the side, already equalling the four Premiership starts he made last season and impressing during Moriarty's absence.

He said:

"It was nice. I wasn't expecting it to start with but that's testament to the coaches sticking with the same team that's played over the last two weeks, getting a good result against Wasps and then a good

performance against Saracens - unfortunately we didn't quite get the win but we were there or thereabouts so I'm really happy.

"The depth we've got in our back row is unbelievable so it's nice to get a good few runs in it and bringing Ross back, he's a hell of a player so to learn stuff off him is great."

Asked if he can continue to keep Moriarty out of the side, Ludlow said:

"I'll do my best. I'll keep working hard and that's all I can do. I can only control what I can control."

Ludlow, who can also play at number eight, believes that competition for places is driving standards up, helping Gloucester win two of their last three in the Premiership.

The Rifles Cup was also on the line for the first time in eight years against local rivals Bristol and Ludlow felt that added extra significance to the game.

"It's not every day you can play for a cup and to play for a cup in such a local derby, everyone wants to get their hands on it and it's nice that we could do it now," he said.

"All 15, all 23 players, the whole squad who's worked hard all this week it means a lot to everyone, getting that first 15 jersey, getting that first 23 jersey.

"Everyone's fighting for it, there's good competition in all places and that really shows on the pitch with that energy and desire to win and that's what got us the win there."

With that trophy safely locked away in the cabinet until the end of March when the sides meet again at Ashton Gate, Ludlow insists Gloucester are hungry to get their hands on more silverware this season.



**"Everyone's fighting for it, there's good competition in all places and that really shows on the pitch with that energy and desire to win and that's what got us the win there."**

Many see the European Challenge Cup as their best opportunity and they now face a crucial double header against La Rochelle, which will go a long way to determining who will win the group, with the French outfit coming to Kingsholm on Thursday before the return clash nine days later.

"That's our aim to work towards them (trophies) and we're not going to stop until we get there," said Ludlow.

"We've had a good run in that competition over the last few years and hopefully it will be no different this time around.

"We can go into Thursday with a lot of confidence. It's two back-to-back games and you get to know the team so I'm sure it will be a good contest."

GLOUCESTER RUGBY  
HERITAGE[www.gloucesterrugbyheritage.org.uk](http://www.gloucesterrugbyheritage.org.uk)

## GREAT PLAYERS FROM THE GLOUCESTER BACK ROW

## PART 5

THE SEVENTIES  
AND EIGHTIES**JOHN SIMONETT**

At 6ft 5ins John was a formidable No.8, and very useful line-out forward. He captained the Scotland Under 19's, St.Paul's College and British Colleges XV's. In 1978-79 he was a member of the senior Scotland squad.

He played in every round of Gloucester's 1978 cup campaign culminating in the win over Leicester at Twickenham. He also played county rugby for Gloucestershire.

John was born on 18 August 1950 in Trinidad, and was educated at Fettes College, Edinburgh. From 1972 to 1976 he played for and captained St.Paul's College and whilst there appeared for Gloucestershire in the second row against Monmouthshire.

He became a PE teacher at Beaufort School and made his debut for Gloucester on 4 September 1976 against Broughton Park, and proceeded to play three seasons in the back row at number 8. The cup campaign of 1978 included a sweeping win over Gosforth (now Newcastle), who were the current holders, and John made a significant contribution to the team's success.

In what proved to be his final game against Sale in April 1979 he broke his thumb. Soon after, he took up a teaching post at King's School, which involved weekend work, so he informed the club he would no longer be able to play on Saturdays. He had made 98 appearances for Gloucester.

John was and still is an outstanding amateur magician and is a member of the Inner Magic Circle.

**MIKE LONGSTAFF**

Mike attended Sir Thomas Rich's School, and represented the South-West Schools at full back against London Schools. He then played for Old Richians, before first appearing for Gloucester in one game in October 1973 against Cheltenham at full-back.

In the following season he appeared eight times, again at full-back before returning to Old Richians for the 1975-76 season. In 1976-77 he reappeared at Kingsholm but played most of his rugby for the United, and was a very reliable kicker, scoring over 250 points in the 1977-78 season. By this time he was playing in the centre, but first team opportunities were rare.

Gloucester had a shaky start to the 1980-81 season when in

October successive games to Moseley and Newport were lost 11-27 and 6-38 respectively. Next up was a daunting Wednesday evening game at Pontypool. For the first time a back row of Mike Longstaff, John Gadd and Mike Teague was selected. Gloucester posted a famous 17-15 victory, due in no small measure to that back row. This was the first win at Pontypool by an English club since September 1978. Mike was now established and went on to make 162 appearances for the firsts, scoring 23 tries. The same back row appeared in the drawn RFU Knock-out final of 1982 against Moseley.

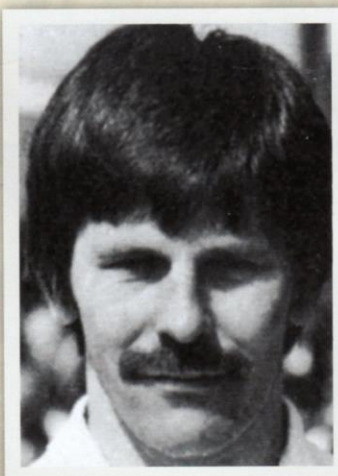
Towards the end of his career at Gloucester, Mike started to be plagued by injuries and played his last game against Cheltenham in November 1986. He went on to play for Stroud and Old Richians.

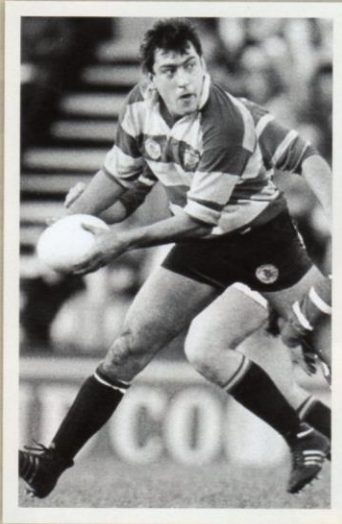
**JOHN GADD**

John was one of those players who was extremely unfortunate not to gain a full England cap. He played in an England trial game in 1981, and for England 'B' in 1981 and 1982.

He did actually play for the England team which beat Fiji in 1982, and scored two tries, but no caps were awarded for that game. In 1983 he again pulled on the England shirt to play against Canada, but no caps were awarded.

John was born in New Zealand, but came to this country at an early age and attended Newent School. He went on to play for Newent, and Gloucester Old Boys before making his first appearance for Gloucester





on 13 September 1978 against Cheltenham.

However, it was not until the 1980-81 season that he became a regular selection, and that game against Pontypool which was a defining moment for Mike Longstaff, was no less important for Gadd who scored a try.

John was a player of great consistency, who did a lot of unseen work, winning balls on the ground, and generally getting his hands dirty. A quiet man off the field, he was dynamic on it and scored a lot of tries.

The 1981-82 season was a great one for Gloucester, and a fair part of that could be put down to the back row of Gadd, Teague and Longstaff. Of the 48 games played, 41 were won and only three lost. It was a major disappointment when the cup final against Moseley was only drawn. John was also in the team which lost the cup final to Bath in 1990.

John was a member of the South & South-West team which played New Zealand in 1983, and in the Gloucestershire County Championship winning team of 1983, which defeated Yorkshire.

From 1978 to 1991 John made 281 appearances for Gloucester, scoring 61 tries.

## MIKE TEAGUE

The third member of that famous back-row, Mike Teague, is one of the all-time greats of Gloucester Rugby.

He made 303 appearances for the Cherry and Whites between 1978 and 1995, scoring 76 tries, including 20 in the 1981-82 season, when he was in the team which shared the cup with Moseley. He also appeared in the losing cup final against Bath in 1990. He won 27 England caps, and three for the British Lions. He also played six times for the Barbarians.

Mike was born on 8 October 1960 and was educated at Churchdown Academy. He played local rugby for Gloucester All Blues before making his first appearance for Gloucester in November 1978 against Exeter University, scoring a try.

It was not long before Mike was on the England selectors' radar, and, after appearing for England Under 23s, he played for England 'B' against France 'B' in November 1981.

However, it was not until February 1985 when Mike came off the bench to replace John Hall that he gained his first cap against France. His full debut came on the England tour of New Zealand that summer where he played in both tests.

There was then nearly a four year gap and, determined to regain his place, Mike undertook extreme



training methods, including running with logs or rocks, known as 'Mad Dog' training.

Eventually the selectors again took interest and he was selected for England in all the home championship games of 1989.

Indeed his form was so good that he was selected to go on the British Lions tour of Australia that same year. He missed the first Test, which was lost, due to injury, but played so well in the other two Tests (won 19-12 and 19-18) that he was made 'Player of the Series'.

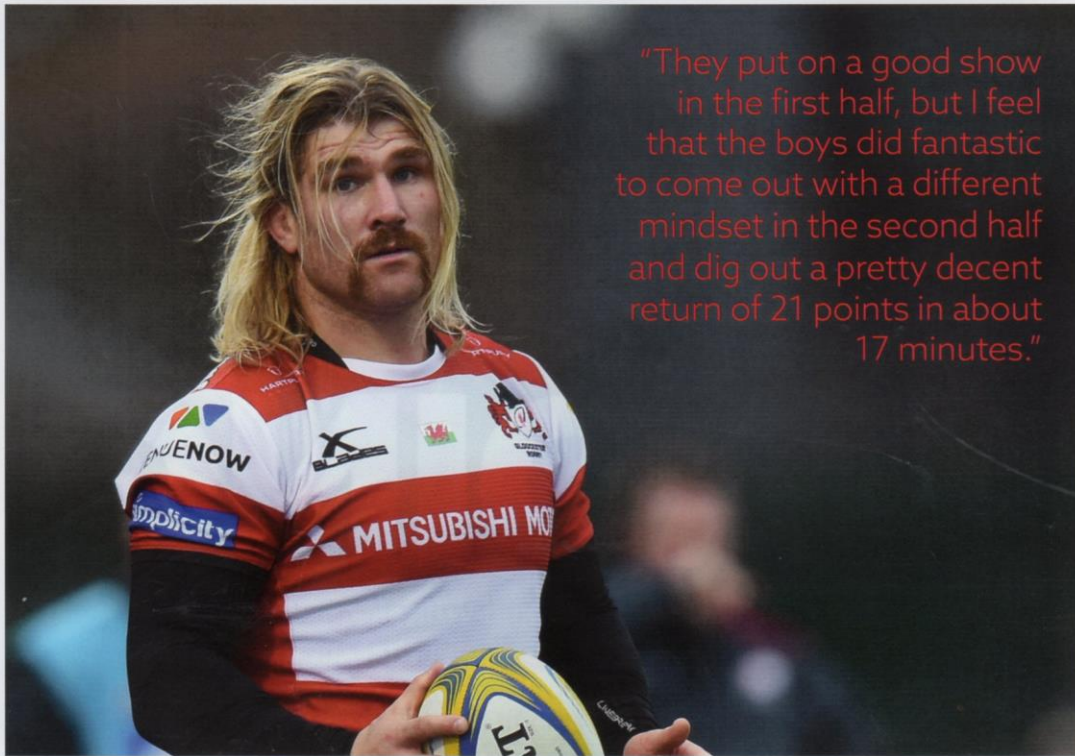
Rugby writer John Griffiths said, "Having nursed a troublesome shoulder injury for much of the visit, he tore into the tight and loose with shoulder dipped and with total disregard for personal safety."

Back home Mike was a key player in England's Grand Slam winning team of 1991 and later in the same year played in five of the six games England played in the World Cup, including the final against Australia which was lost 12-6.

In 1993 Mike again toured with the British Lions to New Zealand and came off the bench in the second Test. That Test was won, so Teague was unbeaten in his three Lions appearances.

From 1991 to 1994 Mike played for Moseley, but returned to Kingsholm for one final season, retiring after the last game against Harlequins on 29 April 1995.





"They put on a good show in the first half, but I feel that the boys did fantastic to come out with a different mindset in the second half and dig out a pretty decent return of 21 points in about 17 minutes."

**After putting pen to paper on a new contract, Richard Hibbard is full of excitement at being right at the coalface for his team.**

The British and Irish Lion star has been hard at work behind the scenes to add new strings to his bow, and his durability and energy was fully evident in a fascinating arm wrestle with local rivals Bristol last time out.

Hibbard reflects on a mental toughness shown by the hosts last weekend and, despite a short turnaround, they are in a good place as attentions turn to Anglo-French matters this evening.

"We knew that the Bristol game was going to be tough, we were aware that Bristol are getting better week on week, and we had no doubt that they are not too far away from the first win themselves.

"They put on a good show in the first half, but I feel that the boys did fantastic to come out with a different mindset in the second half

and dig out a pretty decent return of 21 points in about 17 minutes."

Sometimes in rugby, there are variables that you have no control of and this evening sees the Cherry and Whites meet La Rochelle off the back of a short turnaround and Hibbard insists that the squad will be ready for what is in store.



# LEADING BY EXAMPLE

As the Cherry and Whites approach the apex of the corner that they are trying to turn, they have called upon the leaders in their squad to drive the standards forward into the New Year



"We just have to get our recovery right in this instance, and ensure that our details are spot on, and get the preparation for the game sorted. It is going to be a huge game for us, and La Rochelle are flying high in the Top 14, so we know that it is going to be tough.

"We've got to stick to what we're doing well and try to match them physically. The challenge of a double header is always a tough one, no matter what happens in the first fixture.

"We plan for a team perhaps twice in the season, but very rarely is it twice in a row, and it is a difficult one to do, but we know that it will be fun!"

La Rochelle are a familiar foe, with the Cherry and Whites edging two hugely physical and fierce encounters in European competition last season. But there is no hiding from the sheer size of the French pack, with a real Pacific Island influence.

"They have got some seriously big boys! They're huge, but that is typical of the French league to be fair.

"They are a difficult team to play against, especially if you let them get out into the open spaces, so we've got to bring a good D this week and shut them off early."

There is no hiding in the Gloucester squad, with everyone admitting frustration at the start of the campaign as a lot of hard work and impressive rugby was often undone and a result would narrowly slip away. Hibbard sees it no differently, yet targets a real change in fortunes.

"I thought we had a frustrating start to the season, and whilst it was disappointing, it was more frustrating as we showed many good signs, but didn't get the results to show for it.

"We're almost there, the season isn't going to slip away, and I think over the last four to five weeks, we have done some really good stuff



and our fortunes seem to be turning around and we've picked up some impressive results.

"That said, we are not the finished article yet, and we know that we need to push on in our performance and that starts by pushing on in Europe this week.

"If we do the stuff that we've been doing well, and then couple that with the things we're aiming to improve, and do them well, then we'll be in a good place down the line."

And you can get used to continuing to see the flashes of blonde hair in the Gloucester pack for the coming seasons as Hibbard reflects on a new deal agreed with the club.

"I just like to focus on my rugby in the main, and it was great to get my future sorted quickly and the response that I got from our supporters really blew me away, it was awesome.

"I am enjoying the brand that we are trying to build as a squad and I am really enjoying representing this club. I'm excited to be part of what we are trying to do and want to be a big part of our efforts."





## KINGSHOLM NEWS

with

# Bob Fenton

**T**alk about a game of two halves! Last week against Bristol, in a first half that seemed to take a lifetime, we never looked like we would come close to scoring. One short break later and the boys are on fire, and it looks like we are destined to spend the next 40 minutes camped in their 22 only going back into our half to collect a restart.

Before the game Nick Wood was speaking and said (stand by for sporting cliché 101) '... in a derby game form goes out of the window...'. To a point. Bristol huffed and puffed in the first half but didn't really put us under that much pressure and, turning round only six points behind, when they had enjoyed the lion's share of possession, always meant we would power past them in the end.

Sure, a tough nut to crack, but the gulf between the Premiership and Championship is now huge, and, unless teams yoyo down and back in consecutive seasons, the chances of them surviving are becoming more and more difficult.

As has been said before, the play-off system doesn't help, no one is going to invest in new squad members when you cannot be sure of promotion until a few weeks before the season actually starts. The choice seems simple, either scrap those play-offs or move the season back so that it finishes a lot earlier and the teams can plan properly.



*"So many of our games have slipped away as a result of a decision here or a bounce of the ball there, with a little more luck we could have been sitting pretty in the top half of the table. Let's hope when the league restarts we can have more performances like the second half last week to keep us there."*

Sad to say that the writing looks to be on the wall for Bristol already - they have a huge game against Worcester coming up and, if they lose that one, it'll be game over. Just as we start getting used to the Rifles Cup fixtures they will be gone again. Maybe we should set it up as some kind of annual charity match that is played between the sides...

But looking at last week's game was like a snap shot of our season. First half trying things - maybe a little too hard - and things not quite coming off. Second half, a few tweaks and minor adjustment and we are a team transformed.

So many of our games have slipped away as a result of a decision here or a bounce of the ball there, with a little more luck we could have been sitting pretty in the top half of the table. As it is, at the time of writing (i.e. before the Newcastle v Harlequins match) we are sat in sixth position - a nice place to be for sure. Let's hope when the league restarts we can have more performances like the second half last week to keep us there.

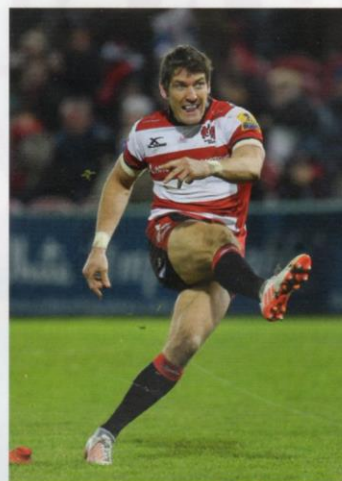
But for now it's European action and a visit from La Rochelle. This has been a bit of a season with a difference for those guys. Like us in recent years they have been rattling around lower mid table in the French Top 14, but this year they have caught everyone on the hop and are firmly fixed in the top four of their league.

Not only that, they are being linked in the press with a whole heap of superstars from the Southern Hemisphere who are apparently ready to pack their backs and head for the lovely city of La Rochelle. I can understand that - it's a great place.

It must be amazingly hard for those Super Rugby players to end up in the Top 14 - that season is so long that the next one starts before the current one finishes! For those players used to having only play a handful of Super Rugby fixtures to be faced with that kind of schedule...

Must be mad, worse than here - and John Afoa described just one set of Premiership games as '...like having to play a whole Super Rugby season in six weeks...' recently. Still, considering as they are earning wheelbarrows full of Euros every week and living in fantastic parts of the world, maybe we shouldn't feel too sad for them!

That crushing fixture schedule does make you wonder how serious La Rochelle will take this competition



though. Surely for them the opportunity of finishing in the top half of the table and getting a shot at the Champions Cup next season will be a bit of a draw. Unlike in previous years when they have been focussed on surviving in the division and have used the competition as a chance to rest a few players.

I guess we'll see, but there is no doubt that this is a big game tonight - almost a decider for our group. Win this one well and we are in prime position to top the group come the end of this part of the tournament, and be well placed to push on and perhaps bring home the trophy again.

This is our last home game before Christmas so - seems funny to say that when it is only 8th December, but that's the way things have

worked out. Once again the guys have a gruelling schedule over the festive period (who really thinks New Year's Day games are a good idea for anyone - players can't celebrate and fans can't get to games...) So, we should doff our caps - or whatever it is you do to whatever it is you wear - to their commitment and dedication. Fear not, chaps, I'll make it my mission to eat and drink your share of festive cheer too.

So, that just leaves me to wish all our readers a very happy and peaceful Christmas break. As ever I have only asked Santa for one thing - wins against Quins on 27th and Northampton on 1 January.

That's not too much to ask, after all we know from his Cherry and White 'strip' that Santa is a Gloucester fan!

# RANDALL on RUGBY



Olivier Azam



**HOT ON THE HEELS OF THE DERBY AGAINST BRISTOL, STADE ROCHELAIS ROLL INTO KINGSHOLM FOR WHAT FEELS A PIVOTAL GAME IN GLOUCESTER'S CHALLENGE CUP GROUP.**

The French side is 4th in the Top 14 and unbeaten at home this season, so Gloucester will want a convincing victory to lead the pool ahead of the return fixture on Saturday week. They also have a small points difference (9) and a try deficit (3) to try and make up.

Today's visitors are coached by former Gloucester prop Patrice Collazo, who has been with Stade Rochelais for five years and signed a new four year contract earlier this year.

He is probably one of four French players to have worn Cherry &

White who supporters would instantly remember. The other three? Philippe Saint-Andre, Ludovic Mercier, and Olivier Azam.

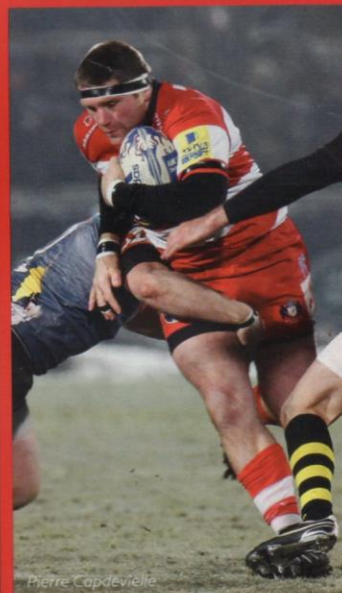
They were not the only ones however, so the opportunity to recall the less familiar names with the former hooker - who is now living locally again - wasn't one I wanted to turn down. Hopefully his memories will spark a few of your own.

### **Pierre Capdevielle**

**2009-2011 || 26 matches**

"I played with Pierre at Clermont, and he came to Gloucester at the end of Dean Ryan's time at the club.

"I knew he fancied the experience of playing abroad before he retired and I put him in touch with Ken Nottage.



Pierre Capdevielle

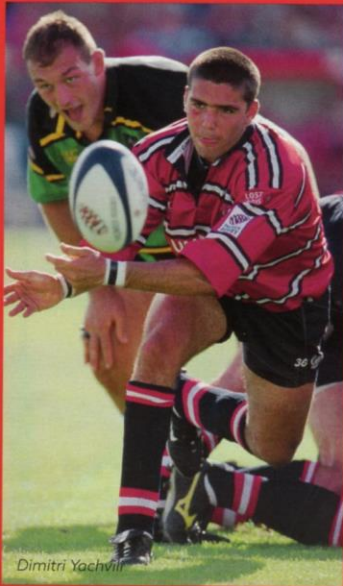
"He had a great time here and was appreciated by a lot of the young players because he passed on a lot of experience."

### **Christian Califano**

**2006-2008 || 24 matches**

"Christian was a legend of the French team. I remember Dean Ryan asking Patrice Collazo and I if we knew any good props. We suggested Christian and he thought we were joking.

"He was at Agen and we knew he wasn't happy there. To be fair he was out of shape when he arrived but Mike Anthony got him fit, he played really well and ended up going on tour with France at the end of the first season."



Dimitri Yachvili

**Dimitri Yachvili**

2000-01 || 18 games

"We all know he's been a star. Philippe brought him here and he was so young he used to ride a bicycle to training because he didn't have a driving licence."

"He had talent and an attitude about him and he kept Andy Gomarsall on the bench - just a shame he didn't stay longer but he wanted to get back to France."



Christian Califano

**Serge Simon**

1999-2000 || 13 games

"Serge was a doctor and a great character from the dark age of French rugby. He didn't play a lot but kept fit and used to come on a match to match contract and do some damage for us."

"I remember one game he arrived at the hotel on the morning of the match with some hand luggage and his boots in a plastic bag, and the other front rows would certainly remember him."

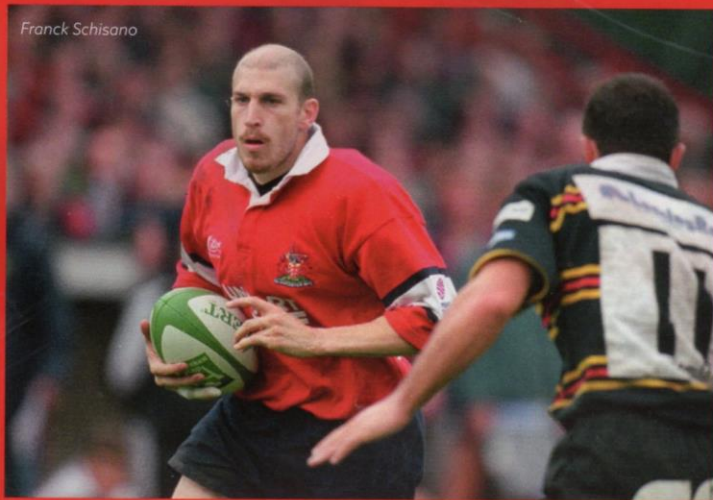
coming back after injury. He had a short contract and stayed until the end of the season."

**Pierre Caillet**

2002 || 2 matches

"Pierre was like Yachvili, a young player with a lot of potential. The difference for him was nobody got injured and he couldn't get in the team."

Stade Rochelais drew their home Top 14 game with Racing Metro '92 last Saturday, and Azam has a lot



Franck Schisano

**Franck Schisano**

2000-01 || 5 matches

"Franck arrived at the same time as me and he used to live in a flat above me. He was more an athlete than a rugby player, and even brought his own leg press machine into the club."

"He scored a hat trick in a game at Rotherham but his wife was homesick and he went back to France quite quickly."

**Noel Curnier**

2005 || 4 matches

"Chris Fortey and I were both injured when Noel arrived. We had signed Mefin Davies as well, and with him it was similar to Califano - he needed some games as he was

of time for the job his former loose head colleague in the Gloucester front row is doing for tonight's opponents."

"Stade Rochelais had big investment three or four years ago and slowly they have climbed the Top 14 with good recruitment" he said.

"Patrice started as forwards coach but he is more in charge now and he and the President have done really well."

"I spoke to Patrice only a couple of weeks ago. They have a lot of power up front and some big ball carriers. Sometimes French teams don't go much for the Challenge Cup but I think Stade Rochelais will, and over the two games it'll be tight."

ACTION REPLAY || SUNDAY 27 NOVEMBER || ALLIANZ PARK || ATT 7,982

# Saracens

# 24

Tries: Ellery, Barrott. Conversions: Lozowski. Penalties: Lozowski (4).

# Gloucester Rugby

# 20

Tries: Burns, Morgan. Conversions: Hook (2). Penalties: Hook (2).

A week after defeating Wasps, Gloucester went toe to toe with another of the Premiership's top two sides when they took on Saracens at Allianz Park.

However, the Cherry and Whites couldn't quite follow up the impressive victory over Wasps, as the Men in Black just edged a close encounter, taking the points with a 24-20 win.

It's a measure of how competitive the team have been in recent weeks that they left North London unhappy at only securing a losing bonus point. Against many other opponents, the quality of the performance would have resulted in a win.

Saracens aren't Premiership and European champions by chance though. With the game in the balance, they eked out valuable points when they most needed them and kept Gloucester at bay when they were pressing to extend their lead. They've almost made it an art-form in recent seasons.



- 15 Goode
- 14 Ellery 1T
- 13 Bosch ▼
- 12 Barritt 1T
- 11 Wyles
- 10 Lozowski 4P, 1C ▼
- 9 Wigglesworth ▼
- 1 Barrington ▼
- 2 Brits
- 3 Du Plessis ▼
- 4 Rhodes
- 5 Hamilton
- 6 Brown
- 7 Burger
- 8 Wray

Replacements used:  
Lamositele, Figallo,  
Spencer, Tompkins,  
Fenby

- 15 Hook 2C, 2P
- 14 Sharples
- 13 Scott
- 12 Atkinson
- 11 Purdy ▼
- 10 Burns 1T ▼
- 9 Heinz ▼
- 1 McAllister ▼
- 2 Hibbard
- 3 Afoa ▼
- 4 Savage
- 5 Galarza ▼
- 6 Ludlow
- 7 Rowan
- 8 Morgan 1T ▼

Replacements used:  
Hohneck, Doran-  
Jones, Latta, Kvesic,  
Braley, Twelvetrees,  
Thorley

That doesn't make it any the less frustrating for Gloucester who will also think that they contributed to their own downfall to a certain extent. Twice in the first quarter they opened up a seven-point lead only to immediately concede to allow the home team back into the game.

But Gloucester need to focus on the positives from this encounter even if defeat hurt bitterly at the time. Things are moving in the right direction, the challenge is to maintain the momentum.

It was a dream start for Gloucester as Saracens, playing into the wind, couldn't deal with the game's opening kick-off. The Cherry and Whites took full advantage,



creating the position from which Ben Morgan blasted over.

Gloucester then defended magnificently, only to undo their good work as a charged down kick led to a gift score for Brad Barritt. Billy Burns duly profited from an Alex Goode error to restore the lead before Mike Ellery got Saracens straight back into the game as the home team gathered the restart.

It had been a breathless opening quarter and the game did settle down after that, the only further score before half-time being a James Hook penalty although

Henry Purdy came close to adding a third try.

After the resumption, Gloucester again had to defend their line with passion but, crucially, didn't come away with points after a sharp break by Billy Burns. Discipline then started to cost them dear and Alex Lozowski took full advantage.

The Cherry and Whites trailed by four points going into the final few minutes and opted to go for the posts when a kick to the corner was an option. The kick drifted wide and Gloucester's chances disappeared with it.



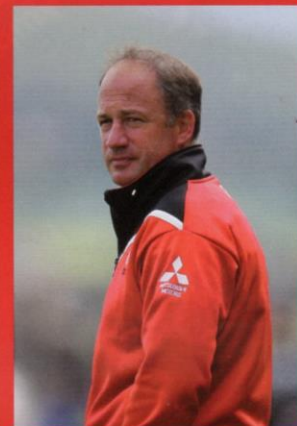
## APPLYING THE LAW WITH



Official Legal Partner

A big occasion for referee Greg Macdonald on only his fourth outing as a Premiership referee.

Unfortunately, Gloucester gave away a series of penalties either side of half-time and John Afoa was yellow-carded which was a big bonus for Saracens as the game went into its final stages.



## DIRECTOR OF RUGBY DAVID HUMPHREYS

"It was an unbelievable effort but we're very disappointed.

"Against a team who defend as well as Saracens you have got to take your opportunities. The positive is that we created a lot of opportunities.

"I thought we played some good rugby. I thought the effort and energy made it difficult for Saracens but ultimately it wasn't enough to win the game."

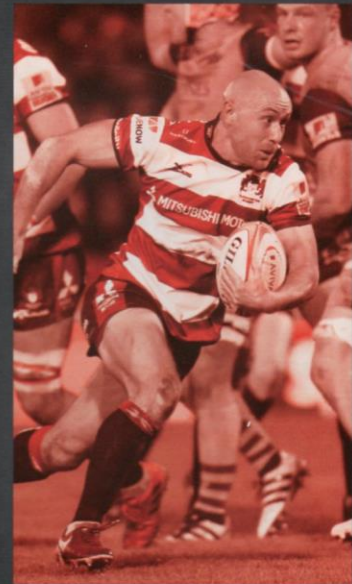
ACTION REPLAY || SATURDAY 3 DECEMBER || KINGSHOLM STADIUM || ATT 14,430

# Gloucester Rugby 26

Tries: Scott, Heinz, Penalty Try, Purdy, Conversions: Hook (3).

# Bristol Rugby 18

Tries: Wallace, Arscott. Conversions: Woodward. Penalties: Woodward (2)



All of Gloucester's pre-match talk emphasized that, despite Bristol being winless in the Aviva Premiership coming into this encounter, that nothing would be taken for granted, Bristol were being viewed as a wounded animal.

And local derbies are, of course, notorious for throwing form out of the window. Struggling sides can often lift their games on these occasions and upset the odds.

And for 40 minutes, Bristol threatened to do exactly that. The visitors, making the short trip up the M5 for the first time in over eight years, didn't do anything special in the first half but simply took advantage of a lacklustre display from Gloucester.



- 15 Hook 3C
- 14 Sharples
- 13 Scott 1T
- 12 Atkinson ▼
- 11 Purdy 1T ▼
- 10 Burns
- 9 Heinz 1T ▼
- 1 McAllister ▼
- 2 Hibbard ▼
- 3 Afoa ▼
- 4 Savage ▼
- 5 Galarza
- 6 Ludlow
- 7 Rowan
- 8 Morgan ▼

Replacements used:  
Lindsay, Hohneck,  
Doran-Jones, Latta,  
Moriarty, Laidlaw,  
Twelvetrees, Thorley.



- 15 Woodward 1C, 2P
- 14 Edwards ▼
- 13 Tovey
- 12 Hurrell
- 11 Wallace 1T
- 10 Jarvis ▼
- 9 Williams ▼
- 1 Traynor ▼
- 2 Hawkins ▼
- 3 Cortes ▼
- 4 Fisher
- 5 Sorenson ▼
- 6 Eadie
- 7 Robinson
- 8 Crane ▼

Replacements used:  
Jones, Bevington,  
Ford-Robinson ■,  
Fenton-Wells, Cliff,  
Searle, Arscott 1T.

The Cherry and Whites may simply have been trying too hard, but nothing came off in a scrappy opening half. Bristol went in at half-time 0-6 up having kicked two penalties and nobody could really complain about their slim advantage.

But Gloucester crucially got off to a flyer at the start of the second half and never looked back. Credit must go initially to Billy Twelvetrees. The centre was a half-time replacement and made an instant impact. His measured kick firstly pinned Bristol back before his perfectly weighted pass put Matt Scott over for the game's first try.

It was important that the Cherry and Whites got back into the game because an air of frustration



and nervousness was starting to envelop Kingsholm. With the weight off their shoulders, Gloucester cut loose.

Equally significant was the blow to Bristol's morale at that point. Had they hung on for an extra ten minutes, who knows what the outcome would have been? As it was, you could almost see their players thinking, "Here we go again."

The pack paved the way for Willi Heinz to pounce for the second as Bristol lost control of their own scrum possession, while a couple

of key calls went Gloucester's way as they were awarded a penalty try while Bristol had a try ruled out for blocking.

When Henry Purdy left Luke Arcscott grasping at thin air to score the fourth, it was all over bar the shouting. However, Gloucester maybe switched off mentally at this point and Bristol swooped for two late tries with virtually no time left on the clock.

It was academic, the visitors didn't get a losing bonus point but perhaps restored a little pride.



## APPLYING THE LAW WITH



Official Legal Partner

Referee Matthew Carley had to make full use of the Television Match Official, particularly in the second half, as a number of marginal calls had to be double-checked.

Two key ones went Gloucester's way – their try was a penalty try as Bristol's Jamal Ford-Robinson pulled down a maul illegally, for which he was also shown a yellow card. The second saw a try for Bristol's Jon Fisher ruled out for blocking.



DIRECTOR OF RUGBY

## DAVID HUMPHREYS

"The first half was not as good as we would like and that was credit to the way Bristol played and what they brought to the game. But we knew we were better than that first-half performance. We then did the basics much better, created field position and took the opportunities that came our way."

"The mark of a very good team is that every week they are desperate to win and I thought, despite a disappointing first half, we came out in the second half and showed that desperation for 26 minutes."





# TEAM LINE-UPS

THURSDAY 8 DECEMBER  
EUROPEAN RUGBY  
CHALLENGE CUP RD 3



T	P	C	D						T	P	C	D
				DAVID HALAIFONUA	15	FULLBACK	15	KINI MURUMURIVALU				
				OLLIE THORLEY	14	RIGHT WING	14	GABRIEL LACROIX				
				MATT SCOTT	13	OUTSIDE CENTRE	13	ZACK HOLMES				
				MARK ATKINSON	12	INSIDE CENTRE	12	PIERRE AGUILLON				
				HENRY PURDY	11	LEFT WING	11	STEEVE BARRY				
				BILLY BURNS	10	FLY-HALF	10	BROCK JAMES				
				GREIG LAIDLAW (C)	9	SCRUM HALF	9	RICKY JANUARIE				
				JOSH HOHNECK	1	LOOSEHEAD PROP	1	MIKE CORBEL				
				MOTU MATU'U	2	HOKER	2	JEREMIE MAUROUARD				
				SALESI MA'AFU	3	TIGHTHEAD PROP	3	MOHAMED BOUGHANMI				
				TOM SAVAGE	4	LOCK	4	ROMANA GRAHAM				
				JOE LATTA	5	LOCK	5	JONE QOVU				
				ROSS MORIARTY	6	BLINDSIDE FLANKER	6	JASON EATON (C)				
				MATT KVESIC	7	OPENSIDE FLANKER	7	KEVIN GOURDON				
				GARETH EVANS	8	NUMBER 8	8	VIKTOR VITO				
				<b>REPLACEMENTS</b>				<b>REPLACEMENTS</b>				
				TOM LINDSAY	16		16	MAXIME GAU				
				YANN THOMAS	17		17	DANY PRISO				
				PAUL DORAN-JONES	18	<b>MATCH OFFICIALS</b>	18	MATHIEU TANGUY				
				TOM DENTON	19	REFEREE: Andrew Brace	19	ROMAIN SAZY				
				FREDDIE CLARKE	20	ASSISTANT REFEREES: Leo Colgan and Joy Neville	20	ARTHUR RETIERE				
				CALLUM BRALEY	21		21	ELLIOT ROUDIL				
				CHARLIE SHARPLES	22		22	VINCENT RATTEZ				
				LEWIS LUDLOW	23		23	UINI ANTONIO				