

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



**GLOUCESTER
RUGBY**

VERSUS

AVIRON BAYONNAIS

ISSUE 12 || EUROPEAN RUGBY CHALLENGE CUP
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EUROPEAN RUGBY
CHALLENGE CUP

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CAPTAIN'S CORNER

GREIG LAIDLAW



GOOD EVENING AND WELCOME TO KINGSHOLM FOR TONIGHT'S FINAL POOL 1 GAME WITH BAYONNE.

It's safe to say, it is great to be back on home soil after what was a very weird and unusual afternoon this time last week.

The staff and officials in Treviso were very quick in relocating the game, and despite a swift change and a wee bit of confusion, I felt the squad were so professional in the way we reacted, adapted and did the job in hand.

We prepared as normal, despite a frustrating wait at Venice airport on the tarmac, then travelled to the Stadio Monigo ready for a big performance.

We could see from when we arrived that the pitch was not in a good way and the referee had no hesitation in saying it was unplayable.

It was heartening to hear after the game that Treviso supporters were helping our fans get across town, and it really does display the true values of rugby!

Going into the game, the pressure was on us, La Rochelle failing to get a bonus point on Thursday evening, meant we knew what we had to do, but the challenge then is to go and do it.

And there is a lot to be happy about, I know from my time in the Pro 12, that Treviso are a difficult proposition on home soil,

especially on the pitch that they train on daily! Therefore, to go out and score six tries and not concede a point is a massive boost to the squad and puts us in a very simple position this weekend.

However, we found Bayonne a tough nut to crack in Round One, we recorded a big win but we also found areas for improvement in our own game with the strength of their rolling maul. I think it is definitely something to be happy about that, ever since, our defence in that area has been much improved.

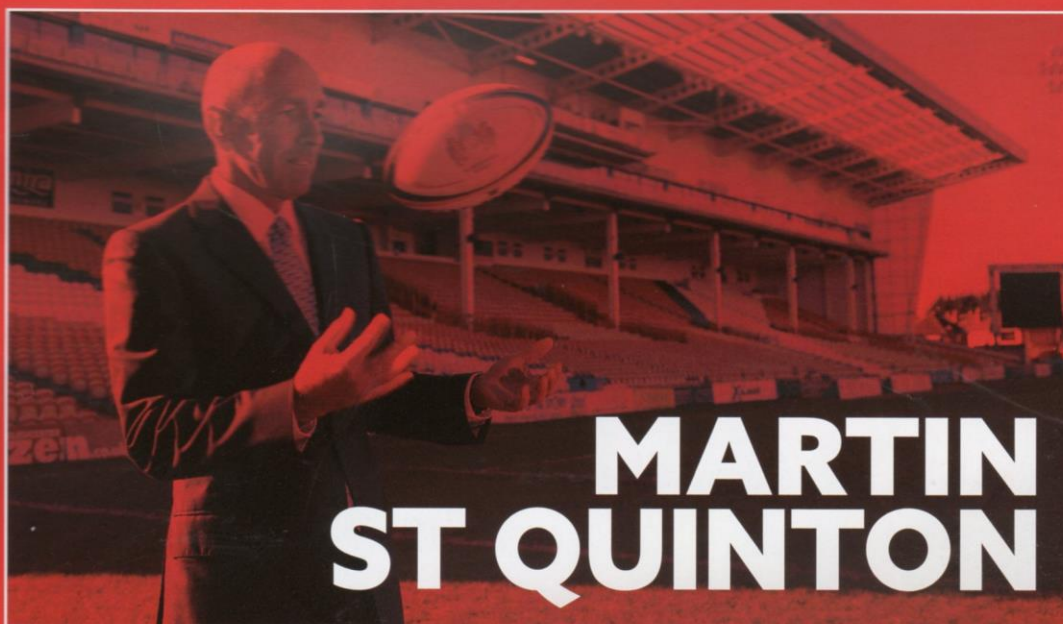
We're in a good place as a squad now. When I last penned my programme notes, we were looking for a spark and some momentum, and scoring nearly one hundred points over the last two weekends, has seen the spring in our step return and we're excited for the challenge tonight.

To get to where we want to be, we need to build momentum, and we found from the last Anglo-Welsh and European window that the whole squad knuckled down and put in some great performances. And, as we see another big block of Premiership games on the horizon in February, we know we can really get up a head of steam.

Late kick off tonight, but the boys will be hugely up for this one and excited to run out in front of the home crowd and secure the valuable prize of a home quarter-final at the end of the game.

Enjoy the game

Greig



MARTIN ST QUINTON

Good evening and a very warm welcome to everyone for what will hopefully be the latest in a rich history of memorable European games under the Kingsholm lights.

Thanks to the phenomenal efforts of the squad last week in Italy, we find ourselves in a position where we know what we need to do in order to secure a home quarter-final, something that is very important to us as a club.

I wasn't fortunate enough to be able to travel to Italy last week, but I was in constant contact with Stephen Vaughan who was keeping me apprised of developments and I think that, in the circumstances, the squad did a terrific job. For them to keep their composure and come away with a bonus point victory after everything that went on was a very impressive effort.

It does, however, show how difficult it can be to stage games in countries like Italy, Romania and Russia at this time of year when

freezing weather conditions can occur.

You only have to think back to those pictures last year when Connacht played Enisei, players with ice in their beards etc. If I remember correctly, the Connacht squad were then stranded for a few days which would obviously have incurred a significant expense and affected their preparations for the following game.

Aviva Premiership clubs have an agreement with a company called Sports and Stadia Services Ltd, who can be called in to put in place the protective domes which keep pitches warm and dry and ensure a fixture can go ahead.

However, that's obviously not an option for all the teams competing in Europe and that was highlighted in Treviso last weekend and also in Romania last weekend where the Timisoara Saracens game against Stade Francais was called off.

The ideal solution would obviously be for all teams in the competition to have access to the same facilities to ensure a level playing field,



pardon the pun! But that's not so easy to organise.

From our point of view, the important thing is that an alternative venue was found, we secured the five points and our destiny is still in our own hands.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to our supporters who travelled to give us their backing last weekend. For so many to travel, and then show such ingenuity and determination to make the rearranged game speaks volumes.

It was a terrific effort and I salute you!

Martin

GOOD EVENING AND WELCOME BACK TO KINGSHOLM FOR OUR FINAL CHALLENGE CUP POOL GAME OF THE 2016/17 SEASON.

At the start of every season we highlight the importance of bonus points in both the Aviva Premiership and European competition.

In the Premiership, bonus points have kept us within touching distance of the top 6 despite losing a number of very close games.

In Europe, after last weekend's bonus point victory in Treviso together with La Rochelle's failure to get a bonus point in Bayonne, we can now win our pool and secure a home quarter-final with a big performance and win tonight.

The trip to Treviso could have been memorable for all the wrong reasons. A two hour delay on the runway in Venice due to heavy snow, late arrival at the hotel, an unplayable pitch, a change of venue to an artificial training pitch with poor floodlights....

Plenty of excuses for a poor performance, but huge credit to all the players and staff who made sure we got what we needed from the game. It was a very professional performance and the bonus point victory was as comprehensive as the scoreline suggested.

As always, the Gloucester supporters who made the trip were magnificent and of the 700 spectators who watched the game at Treviso's training ground, it felt like most of them were backing Gloucester and gave the players a huge incentive to play well. For those of us who had played club



rugby in the amateur days, it brought back many memories!

Back to tonight's game. Over the past couple of seasons, we've placed a real emphasis on the Challenge Cup and not only do we want to be involved in the knock out stages, we want a home quarter-final to give us the best opportunity to progress further.

It's also about maintaining the momentum we've built up over the last couple of weeks prior to the next group of Premiership fixtures. After tonight, the next two weeks of Anglo-Welsh fixtures give us the chance to give some players a rest but equally, and just as importantly, an opportunity for a number of players who have waited patiently for game time.

Unlike previous years where injuries have taken their toll on player availability at this stage of the season, we have had 90% players fit for selection

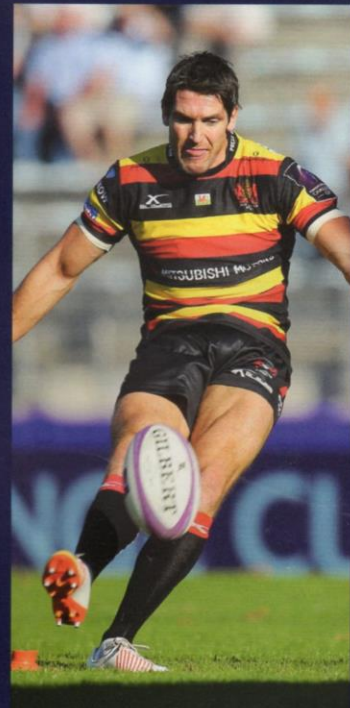
over the past 2 weeks. While that creates some interesting selection dilemmas, it reflects the quality of our medical and S&C programmes in developing players capable of surviving the demands of professional rugby.

It's particularly important throughout the Six Nations when we have a number of players away on international duty. Congratulations to Jonny May, Greig Laidlaw, Matt Scott and Ross Moriarty on their selections for their respective countries and I'm looking forward to watch them represent Gloucester on the international stage.

I'm sure you'll join with me in extending a very warm Kingsholm welcome to all the Bayonne staff, players and supporters.

Enjoy the game.

David



LAST TIME OUT

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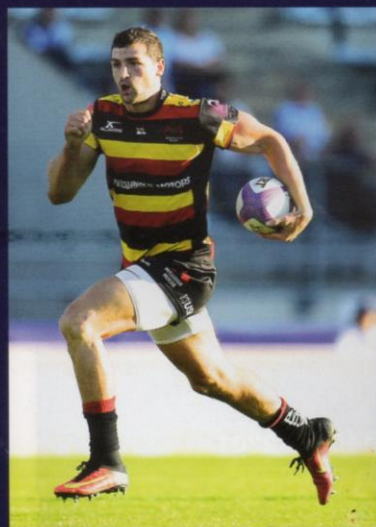
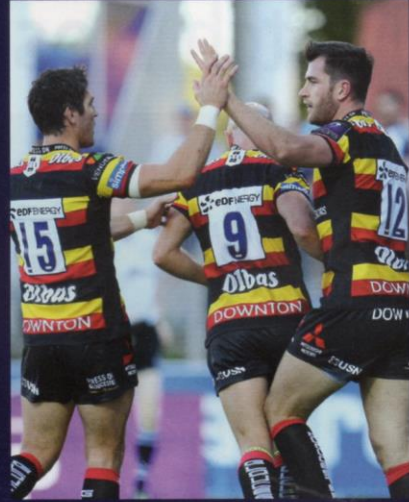
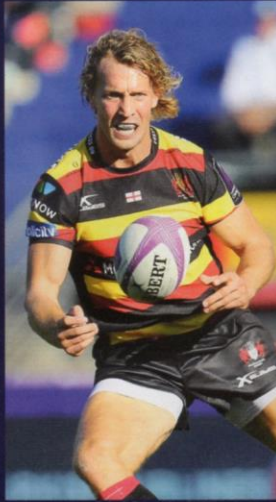
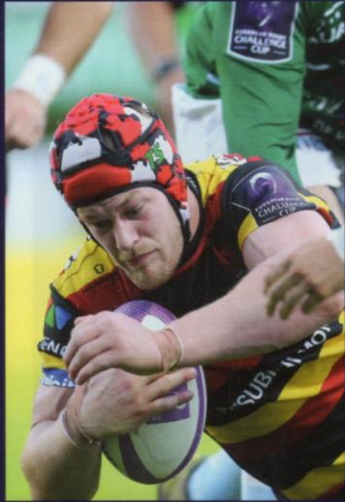


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| 15 Jane ▼ | 15 Hook 4C 3P |
| 14 Laveau ▼ | 14 Halaifonua ▼ |
| 13 Whitelock | 13 Scott 1T |
| 12 Lacroix | 12 Atkinson 2T |
| 11 Fuster | 11 May 1T ▼ |
| 10 Meret 2P 3C | 10 Twelvetrees 1T |
| 9 Duhalde ▼ | 9 Heinz ▼ |
| 1 Iguiniz ▼ | 1 Y.Thomas ▼ |
| 2 Labouyrie 2T ▼ | 2 Hibbard ▼ |
| 3 Choirat ▼ | 3 Doran-Jones ▼ |
| 4 Ducat | 4 Savage 1T |
| 5 Jaulhac ▼ | 5 Latta ▼ |
| 6 Duputs ▼ | 6 Ludlow ▼ |
| 7 Oulai 1T | 7 Rowan |
| 8 Lespinasse | 8 Morgan ▼ |

Replacements used:
Leitaua, Bordenave,
Taufa, Huete, Saubusse,
Chouzenoux, Maillard,
Mamao

Replacements used:
Matu'u ■, Orr, Afoa,
Galarza, Kvesic,
Braley, thorley,
sharples







VIEW FROM THE

Citizen **GLOUCESTER**

An epic experience in bizarre circumstances that will live long in the memory is how one die-hard Gloucester fan has described the weekend's trip to Treviso.

Kingsholm Supporters' Mutual (KSM) chairman Bob Rumble, who has been following the Cherry and Whites for over 40 years and rarely misses a game home or away, said he had never experienced anything like the situation that unfolded in northern Italy on Saturday.

Fans were gathering inside the Stadio Monigo, Benetton Treviso's

home ground, when it soon became clear that the game would be unable to go ahead there due to a massive patch of ice.

However, from the depths of despair that left many facing the prospect of a long, wasted journey it turned into a day to remember for the right reasons as they were transferred four kilometres to the Italian club's training ground for the game to take place on a 4G pitch in surroundings more akin to a lower league local rugby ground with Gloucester claiming a 41-0 win that sent them into the European Challenge Cup quarter-finals.





"For obvious reasons it will live in the memory forever," Rumble told The Citizen.

"It turned out to be epic in the most bizarre way.

"Underpinning it all was the professional performance on the pitch from Gloucester - it was first class.

"How they must have felt having people so close to them I don't know. It must have been different for them as well.

"I think people were incredibly disappointed at the original venue, wondering what was going to happen next, but it was all good in the end thanks to the team performance and we all had a great evening out."

The KSM took 150 Gloucester fans and had their own coaches to transfer their members from one ground to the other, while Treviso arranged transport to take the rest with stories also emerging of others getting car lifts with some home supporters.

It is thought between 300 and

350 visiting fans of the 700-strong crowd were in the Ghirada Sports Centre, standing on the muddy sidelines with tape going around parts to separate them from the pitch.

Rumble, 68, said:

"If you took the 4G pitch out of it, it was very much like a rec or local park but without anyone walking their dogs!

"Treviso were very professional in getting people down there and didn't leave anyone in the lurch.

"From the moment the referee

announced the venue change everything from there was professionally handled.

"Benetton Treviso were hugely hospitable. Apart from the fact it was pretty cold it was all in all job done on the pitch and everyone went away pretty happy because of the result, to get the five points and the fact that we kept them to nil.

"So many of our people said they had never experienced anything like this before and that they would be able to look back in years to come and say 'I was there.'"



GLOUCESTER RUGBY
HERITAGE

www.gloucesterrugbyheritage.org.uk

TOUCHING
GREATNESSGLOUCESTER AND TOULOUSE
IN 2011-12

The 2011-12 season will be remembered by the Gloucester faithful as one in which a talented Gloucester side, who had been tipped to make the Aviva Premiership play-offs, lost their last six games to finish eighth. However, the season was also notable for one glorious highlight – the home and away Heineken Cup ties against the all-conquering Toulouse.

Gloucester had been drawn in a strong group with Toulouse, Harlequins and Connacht. The opening match could not have been more daunting. The opposition was Toulouse, the French champions and the only club to have won the cup four times, on their home turf, the Stade Ernest-Wallon.

Gloucester, reeling after the expulsion of Mike Tindall from the England squad, following incidents at the 2011 World Cup, and the suspension of Eliota Fuimaono-Sapolo, following an outburst on Twitter, had had the worst of weeks in preparation and were very much the underdogs.

TOULOUSE 21 GLOUCESTER 17, STADE ERNEST-WALLON, SUNDAY NOVEMBER 13 2011

Given no chance by the pundits, Gloucester rose to the occasion and, in an effort of heroic proportions, almost won the game.

Man of the Match Mike Tindall had a towering game. In a match in which the eyes of the rugby world were upon him he turned in one of his best performances in a Gloucester shirt, creating tries for Charlie Sharples and Henry Trinder and making a number of try-saving tackles.

Tindall inspired his young back-line in which Jonny May, a late replacement for Olly Morgan at full back, Henry Trinder, coming in for the suspended Fuimaono-Sapolo, and Charlie Sharples were also outstanding.

The Telegraph commented:

"Right wing Sharples should have been in New Zealand with England – his omission remains baffling – and

was a constant threat on Sunday... Trinder is one of the most instinctive young players in England and he clearly demonstrated that in the second half when he appeared on Tindall's shoulder at exactly the right time and then showed a fair turn of speed to score a well-worked try. Who knows who is selecting England squads these days but hopefully somebody out there noticed."

The visitors had led 10-0 after Freddie Burns landed a penalty and converted a try from Charlie Sharples, created by Mike Tindall, but Toulouse came back through a penalty by Luke McAlister who then put a beautifully weighted chip into the right corner for wing Timoci Matanavou to touch down.

McAlister missed the conversion, but was on target with a simple penalty 11 minutes into the second half after Alasdair Strokosch was sin-binned for slapping the ball out of Matanavou's hands. The Toulouse pack were now dominant with Australian scrum half Luke Burgess giving a powerful display.

Burns missed a relatively straightforward opportunity to put Gloucester back in front minutes later, and Toulouse should have gone further ahead when a rampaging burst from flanker Yannick Nyanga split the visitors' defence, but they wasted a huge overlap on the left when Yves Donguy dropped Poitrenaud's pass with the line gaping.

The hosts then had another try disallowed for a forward pass from Matanavou, and their frustration grew when Lionel Beauxis, on as a



replacement for McAlister, sliced a drop-goal attempt wide from inside the Gloucester 22.

Beauxis was successful from the tee when Gloucester were penalised at a scrum, to make the score 14-10 but then Toulouse attempted to attack from deep only to lose the ball thirty metres out, allowing Tindall to make a half-break and send Trinder bursting through to score, Burns converting to make it 17-14 with 10 minutes left.

A famous victory was now on the cards, but it was not to be. Full back Clement Poitrenaud gathered a pass from his winger Matanavou that appeared to be forward, but referee Peter Fitzgibbon ruled that the ball had come back off a Gloucester hand and Poitrenaud went over for the winning score.

GLOUCESTER 34 TOULOUSE 24, KINGSHOLM, FRIDAY JANUARY 20 2012

By the time Gloucester came to play the return match against Toulouse, they had lost both home and away to Harlequins and put themselves out of contention for a place in the last eight. Their opponents still had everything to play for, but Gloucester were playing to avenge their defeat in November in the south of France.

Once again Gloucester confounded the pundits with easily their most accomplished performance of the season. They scored tries through Jonny May (two), Akapusi Qera and Charlie Sharples and played with a spirit that suggested that the second half of the domestic season would be significantly more prolific than the first.

The Telegraph commented:

"On the evidence of this, the Heineken Cup quarter finals will be a poorer place without the Cherry and Whites."

A man down in the first minute when Nick Wood was yellow-carded, Gloucester found themselves in front less than 90



seconds later, thanks to Charlie Sharples and Jonny May, who was again at full-back. The pair chased a speculative punt from Freddie Burns and forced Timoci Matanavou into a clearance kick that Sharples charged down behind the Toulouse line. May was on hand to touch down and Burns converted.

It was a lead that lasted five minutes. Toulouse created a platform in midfield and with Gloucester short on numbers, Thierry Dusatoir gathered in centre field and raced 40 metres for a try. Lionel Beauxis added the points from in front of the posts.

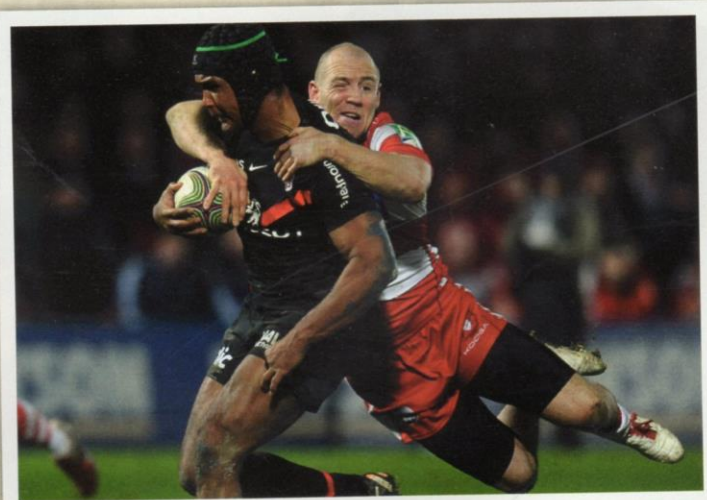
The outside half edged the visitors in front with a penalty after 14 minutes and shortly after, Matanavou made up for his earlier gaffe, with a try that highlighted the quality of the visiting three quarters. Beauxis, Florin Fritz and full-back Clement Poitrenaud created the opportunity with three exquisite passes and Matanavou had the simple task of touching down.

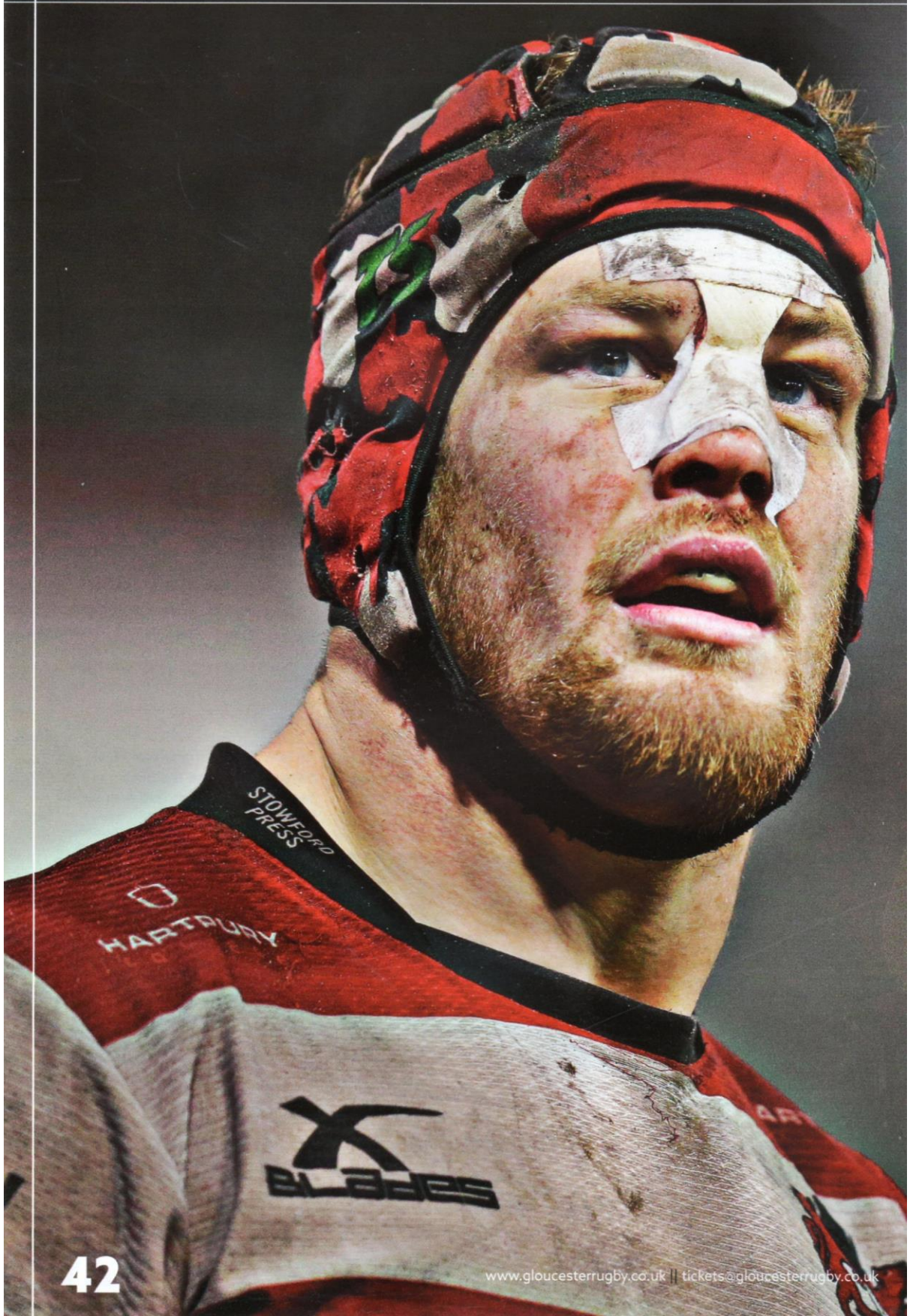
Gloucester struck back with a tremendous try from Qera who powered over after Burns had delivered the scoring pass with Toulouse back-peddalling in front of their own posts.

Then Mike Tindall kicked ahead and May delivered the perfect pass for Sharples to score a try that Burns converted. A Burns penalty increased the lead, but Matanavou's second try, 17 minutes from time, was converted by Beauxis to bring the scores level.

24-24 and anybody's game but then Burns, with a penalty from close in and May with a second try after James Simpson-Daniel had shown a clean pair of heels to half the Toulouse pack, put the seal on a wonderful night for Gloucester rugby.

No less a judge than Peter Ford believed this to be the best performance that he had ever seen from a Gloucester team.





HOLDING ONTO THE SHIRT





A strange thing happened in Treviso last weekend - Tom Savage left the field of play having only played for an hour. And he wasn't injured!

Just look at a Gloucester Rugby team sheet this season, and you will be able to note a few changes as the squad has rotated with lots of players given the chance to impress.

But one number has been a constant. Tom Savage and the number four shirt have formed a dependable and regular relationship in Cherry and White.

The totemic second row has been an ever-present and his durability, physicality and relentless style of play have earned him rave reviews as, like a Duracell battery (other brands are available), he just keeps on going.

Set to make another start tonight against Bayonne, and still bearing the marks of a recent cut to his

head, the 27-year old lock looks well set to add many more appearances to his 137 to date, as he explains ahead of this evening's game.

"Obviously, I've been lucky enough to have a really good run of games this season, and long may it continue. I'm enjoying being involved in the side week in, week out and with that comes the responsibility of playing with a consistency and hopefully I'm doing that.

"I aim to keep my performance levels pretty high, and I'm really looking to crack on now with every chance I get to play and improve as a player, as much as I can."

His story has been well told - painting the Hartpury club house one summer, then asking for a trial with the team and subsequently earning a contract. But, after making his bow during Rugby World Cup 2011, Savage has become a true part of the fixtures and fittings at the club.

"I still count myself as quite a young player around the place really. Obviously, I've been here a little while now and I guess you fall into the role of a senior player more than being told.

"I'm someone who aims to lead from the front, and lead by example and try to be as good a professional around the club as I can be. Therefore it is about ticking all the boxes that I can in my preparation so that I'm in the best place possible come the weekend."

The second row resources at the club are an area of strength, and Savage praises his colleagues and the qualities that they bring to the squad.

"We've got a good stock in the second row, it's a competitive position within the squad, with Jeremy, Mariano both being internationals, and then Joey Latta and Tom Denton in the squad too. On top of this we've got a good

group of young boys that are pushing on the door.

"The bottom line of this is that you've got to be on top of your game every week to hold onto the shirt, and the boys are just pushing each other every week. The harder we work amongst the second-row unit, the more we can improve and help the team as a collective."

A tricky start to the season for the Cherry and Whites hasn't been one to savour, but Savage knows that the squad are showing so many bring signs of improvement.

"There were all sorts of reasons why it wasn't clicking at the start of the season. Every single game presented a different reason perhaps to why it wasn't working and we weren't closing out games. But it is nice to see now that we are learning every week from our mistakes.

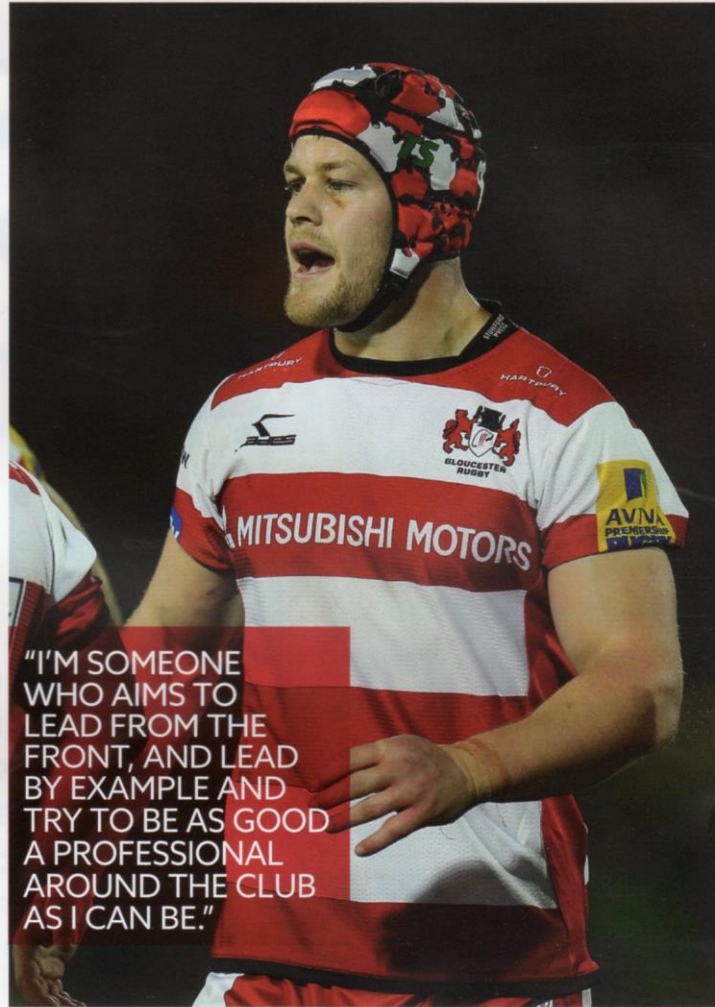
"However, we are not happy where we are at now at all. And I think we're still being hard on ourselves. We're reviewing every fine detail going into each game, and even if we've had a good result we know that there are still areas to improve on those and give that little bit extra."

Bayonne are the visitors to Kingsholm this evening, and Savage knows that the focus is on a positive result first and foremost, without worrying too much about the connotations to follow

"There are no easy games, any time we play, and every team gives their best in professional rugby. We know that we've got to do A before B, then C and D will follow and we are focused on staying on the task in hand and make sure that we go and get it right and we will come away with the result."

After a disrupted trip to Treviso, Savage reflects on a memorable afternoon in Italy, with Gloucester leaving nothing to chance to secure the win.

"That's the way we went into the game, if it could go wrong, it did



go wrong. The day before we were stuck on the plane for a few hours on the tarmac because they couldn't get the stairs to the plane because of the snow.

"The following day we arrived to a frozen pitch, getting told the game was cancelled to then getting told we have to play in an hour. So sometimes these things go out of the window and you have to get on with it.

"We still had to get out there and do the job on the pitch and get on with it without making any excuses, and doing the job the best we can."

And as Gloucester end another pool stage campaign, they have a knockout stage to look forward

to, in a competition that holds a number of great memories for Savage.

"Those memories are the ones that you remember, and we try to put ourselves back in position to make more memories. Hopefully we can build on what we have done so far in this competition and build on that tonight and give ourselves the best opportunity to go out and do that.

"That night in May 2015 was one of the best nights of my career, and I always remember those moments. This competition is an enjoyable one and one that we want to do well in, and hope there will be plenty more memories to come."



KINGSHOLM NEWS

with

Bob Fenton

Well good evening and welcome to Kingsholm. I know my memory is not what it used to be so I may well stand to be corrected, but this is the only time I can recall being at Kingsholm for a Saturday night game?

I've got to say that I think it's a nutty time for a game, normally I'll be into my second or third glass of something and be contemplating how I can hide from the X Voice/ Dancing Factor or whatever it is that passes for Saturday evening entertainment... Hang on, maybe this isn't such a bad kick off time after all!

So, we come here in good shape, our European destiny firmly in our own hands. A couple of weeks ago La Rochelle had put themselves in the box seat. But last weekend's Italian job, coupled with their failure to inflict four tries on Bayonne (thanks boys), has opened up the door for us.

Last weekend in Italy must have been one of the oddest experiences you could have as a professional rugby player - turning up all prepped to go at a proper stadium only to be turned around and dispatched to a training pitch with nothing at all around it.

For those as long in the tooth as me, think back to those old A Team night games at Oxstalls - just enough light to see what was happening!



I don't think we should underestimate the difficulty and mental toughness that was called for last weekend. I know exactly how that feels... More than once I have gone to completely the wrong building for a meeting, or been asked to change rooms... it's mentally draining - this artistic temperament needs certainty!

I did enjoy the pictures from the event - poor old Duncan having to sit out pitch side rather in his nice specially heated seat with all his assistants bringing him hot drinks, not to mention our analytics team perching themselves somewhat precariously on top of the kit van. No doubt a complete health and safety risk assessment had been completed beforehand.

Joking aside, it did undoubtedly take a bit of mental toughness to adapt and to then get that kind of result away from home speaks volumes. And let's not forget the great effort made by the travelling support too - for those that made the trip it has no doubt reached legendary status and will soon be talked about in reverential terms along with so many other '... you just had to be there...' matches.

So, we know what we have to do tonight - simple really - score four tries and win the game and that's us done and dusted into the quarter finals and we can look forward to another home tie and no doubt another strange match day and kick off time.

For Bayonne the competition is done and dusted, so it's hard to see them wanting to risk too much, especially as they are in the unfortunate position of propping up the Top 14.

I would have thought that their attention will be on trying to remedy that position rather than creating an upset here, and then there is the old cliché about French sides never travelling well...

But you never know - pride is a funny thing and complacency is a killer. I'm confident that our coaches will ensure that the boys are switched on, a couple of early scores should see us home at a canter.

Four tries should be a bit of a breeze shouldn't it? We've run in over a dozen in the last few games, most of them dotted down by Matt Scott - who is rapidly establishing himself as a Gloucester hero for

his ability to score from pretty much anywhere on the park. No doubt in a few weeks time, when the thorny subject of player of the season comes up, he'll figure on the shortlist. I've already voted, Tom 'The Machine' Savage - every time. Where he gets his energy from is mystery.

Talking of tries, what about Worcester's last one here! I think I said in my notes in the programme that I hoped the game didn't turn on a refereeing decision - but that was one that Wayne Barnes got miles wrong. Everyone in the ground - except him - saw the ball go forward in the tackle from the Worcester player. Even Alafoti Faosiliva looked surprised when he got waved on! Did you notice Wayne taking a sneaky look at the big screen at the Worcester Street end when he jogged back to half way? Had he not picked up the fact from 14,000 people telling him he got it wrong



by then he got to see it in all its glory. No harm done though.

And earlier this week some of the worst kept secrets in rugby got confirmed - Matt Kvesic is off to play his rugby in Exeter - good luck Matt - and we've got a few new faces coming on board too. No doubt there will be more ins and outs announced in good time.

The other big news was the announcement of the first Kingsholm concerts - Little Mix... Nope, me neither! I thought we had signed someone called Little Mick - someone like all those South American footballers who only seem to have one name.

Seriously though, while not my cup of tea, if the little mixers can pull in a good crowd and a lot of people get to have some fun - while at the same time throwing much welcome money into the Gloucester Rugby kitty - what's not to like? I don't get the howls of outrage from some corners of the empire, after all no one is forcing you to go - I'll just make sure I am somewhere else that night!

Best comment on them on Twitter though - from the inestimable Tommo - 'Little Mix playing at Kingsholm... I fancy us to get a try bonus point...'



RANDALL on RUGBY



I SUPPOSE IT IS HUMAN NATURE TO FORGET THE ROUTINE AND REMEMBER THE EXCEPTIONAL. LAST SATURDAY WAS ONE SUCH OCCASION.

Games in Italy have proved challenging in the past for my friends at BBC Gloucestershire, notably against Viadana and Roma, but last weekend's postponement and rapid switch to a different venue was a new one.

The plaudits handed out on social media to Andrew Pugh and Richard Martin plus the small team at base were well deserved for delivering a commentary under such circumstances.

Just as the weather in Italy posed some testing logistical problems, Stephen Vaughan's recent appearance on BBC Gloucestershire's "Cherry & White Wednesday" also saw the CEO questioned on a variety of topical issues as the season heads into an important phase on and off the field.

Events continue to evolve but I thought it was worth detailing some of the main points raised here.

What is the vision for the club over the next few years? Are you satisfied with being 8th or 9th and making a profit, or are Gloucester looking to be genuine top 4 contenders?

"I think we have a squad that can get into the top four, although I



accept that looks a long shot this season now. We are not happy to be 8th and making a profit, and this season we won't make a profit, after investing a lot last year in the playing department, the coaches and the academy.

"Ask David Humphreys, Richard Hibbard or anyone else and Premiership wise we don't like being where we are, but we have some big players fit again and there is still a lot of rugby to be played."

Is Gloucester Rugby paying up to the salary cap?

"At the base level, yes. The salary cap is £7 million pounds, but there are various credits on top, for example selection of academy players and home grown players.

"The various credits could take the cap up to £9.5 million pounds,

but most clubs take a sensible approach now and leave a 'rainy day' element in case you get a series of injuries which you cannot cover via injury dispensation. We don't have a benefactor at the club, so we're one of the ones who don't fully use those extra credits."

When can we expect anything definitive on the proposed takeover?

"All the relevant parties have been spoken to and the informal signs are positive. We are waiting for formal approval. The next EPCR board meeting is on February 14th but we have intimated to them that is too long to wait.

"We have to get on with running the club and then, if the answer is yes, we can sit down with Mohamed Altrad and his team to discuss what happens next."



What is in this deal for Mohed Altrad?

"He wants to use rugby - and Gloucester Rugby - as a vehicle to market the Altrad brand in the UK. That, even as a passionate Montpellier man, is his prime objective.

"We have been in no rush to sell a majority stake, and Martin St Quinton doesn't need to sell his shares but if it all goes through, and hopefully it does, it will be good financially for Gloucester Rugby.

"We cannot be afraid of the future and bringing investment in, but equally we must not forget the DNA of the club."

Is there any update on a new pitch, and will it be a hybrid, plastic, or grass?

"The most expensive option is the Desso pitch like the one they have at Twickenham. Behind that are various new hybrid pitches, and then there's a synthetic pitch with an organic infill, which is what was installed at Worcester.

"Ultimately, we are looking at a new pitch, but the Altrad deal going through would change the dynamic over the decision, and we might be able to afford something different if we wait.



"I thought Gloucester fans would be against a synthetic pitch but speaking to some of them in La Rochelle I was surprised by how many seemed keen on it.

"What's certain is that we need a better pitch than the one we currently have and whether it's 2017 or 2018 we need to do it."

How much faith do you have in the coaching set-up?

"I have complete faith in the coaches. I see how much work they put in and how much knowledge they have. Martin St Quinton and I do not shirk making decisions and while everyone will have their opinion we believe they are one of the best units in the Premiership."

What promises can the club give over healthier food options in the Fanzone?

"I accept that is an issue. Our dilemma is trying to please everyone. I'll take up the suggestions over offering jacket potatoes rather than pasties or chips and see if we can trial them, but if they don't sell then they'll be withdrawn."

Stephen will watch today hoping for that additional revenue stream which would come from a home quarter final.

Gloucester now have matters in their own hands after Stade Rochelais failed to get a bonus point win in Bayonne, despite being 24-9 up early in the second half, with three tries already on the board.

Last weekend really was a surprise on so many fronts. If order is restored tonight, clear a space in your diary for an extra game two weeks before Easter.



ACTION REPLAY || SATURDAY 7 JANUARY || KINGSHOLM || ATT 14,584

Gloucester Rugby 55

Tries: May, Scott (2), Rowan, Afoa, Sharples, Hohneck. Conversions: Laidlaw (3), Twelvetrees (4). Penalties: Laidlaw, Burns.

Worcester Warriors 19

Tries: Vuna, Cavubati, Fa'osiliva. Conversions: Mills (2).



Coming into this game, there had been a feeling around the Gloucester camp that a big win was in the pipeline, such had been the team's rank bad luck in a series of narrow defeats.

And, unfortunately for Worcester Warriors, they were well and truly on the receiving end as Gloucester clicked into gear on the day and unleashed their frustrations on neighbours from up the M5.

The Cherry and Whites, to the delight of the home crowd, roared into an early lead, withstood an attempted comeback from the visitors before easing clear in the second half as Worcester heads dropped.

It was comfortably Gloucester's most comprehensive win of the season, and something of an anomaly in terms of meetings between these two sides which are usually close, tense affairs.

Worcester had actually come into the game with morale high after



- 15 Marshall ▼
- 14 Sharples 1T
- 13 Scott 2T
- 12 Twelvetrees 4C
- 11 May 1T
- 10 Burns 1P ▼
- 9 Laidlaw 3C 1P ▼
- 1 Hohneck 1T ▼
- 2 Hibbard ▼
- 3 Ma'afu ▼
- 4 Savage
- 5 Thrush ▼
- 6 Moriarty
- 7 Rowan 1T
- 8 Morgan ▼

Replacements used:
Matu'u, McAllister,
Afoa 1T, Latta,
Ludlow, Vellacott,
Symons, Halaifonua

- 15 Shillcock
- 14 Hammond
- 13 Olivier
- 12 Wilson
- 11 Vuna 1T ▼
- 10 Mills 2C
- 9 Dowsett ▼
- 1 Rapava Ruskin ▼
- 2 Singleton ▼
- 3 Schonert ▼
- 4 O'Callaghan ▼
- 5 Barry ▼
- 6 Fa'osiliva 1T
- 7 Lewis
- 8 Dowson ▼

Replacements used:
Bregvadze,
Leleimalefaga, Alo,
Spencer, Cavubati 1T,
Mama, Baldwin, Howard



a decent win over Harlequins the week before. But their fragile confidence was shattered early on and they now find themselves looking nervously over their shoulders as a resurgent Bristol close in.

Meanwhile Gloucester keep in touch with the top half of the table, just three points off fifth spot and with spirits high.

Jonny May was one of the shining lights on the day and he'd already



Tom Marshall's chip found Jeremy Thrush on the right wing and the second row's inside pass found John Afoa to send the prop rampaging home.

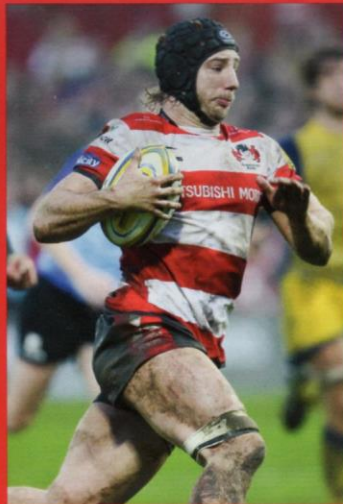
Charlie Sharples and Matt Scott crossed for further tries as Worcester started to wilt, but the visitors did take advantage of some over ambitious play from Gloucester to fashion a try for Tevita Cavubati.

Gloucester's pack then muscled their way over the line, Josh Hohneck claiming the score, before Worcester had the final word when Alafati Faosiliva dotted down with everyone else in the stadium waiting for the whistle to blow for a blatant forward pass.

almost scored one before he got the scoreboard moving with an opportunist 14th minute try. May then put Matt Scott over for the second and Gloucester were off and running.

The Warriors did battle their way back into things as Cooper Vuna scored a typically eye-catching solo score on the half hour, but Jacob Rowan scored an excellent third just three minutes later to quash any thoughts of a comeback.

The main thing now was to get the try scoring bonus point, and it came on the hour mark from a move Made in New Zealand.



APPLYING THE LAW WITH



Official Legal Partner

By and large, referee Wayne Barnes had a fairly uneventful game as he let the game flow to the best of his ability.

However, he won't look back fondly on Worcester's final try when Sam Lewis lost the ball a good two yards forward before Alafoti Faosiliva picked it up to score with everyone else on the pitch standing still waiting for the whistle which didn't come!



DIRECTOR OF RUGBY

DAVID HUMPHREYS

"At this moment in time, it feels like our best performance of the season. Beating Wasps at home was an outstanding performance, but today was a case of in order to score that many points, we took our opportunities.

"The basics were all there - the set-piece was good, our defence was good - and we took our opportunities."

ACTION REPLAY || SATURDAY 14 JANUARY || LA GHIRADA || ATT 700

Benetton Treviso 0

Gloucester Rugby 41

Tries: Hook, Hibbard (2), Scott, Halaifonua, Twelvetrees. Conversions: Laidlaw (2), Burns (2). Penalties: Laidlaw.



Trips to Europe are never easy. You have to factor in the travel, unfamiliar conditions and teams that typically play well in front of a partisan home support.

And in the case of games in France, Italy, Romania and Russia, there's also the small matter of the winter weather to take into account. And Gloucester well and truly had a taste of that in Treviso last weekend.

Knowing that a bonus point win would propel them past La Rochelle and to the top of pool one, Gloucester arrived at the Stade Communale di Monigo in a positive frame of mind, looking to secure the win first and foremost but to also try and secure the crucial bonus point.



- 15 McLean ▼
- 14 Buondonno
- 13 Benvenuti
- 12 Sgarbi
- 11 Sperandio
- 10 Allan ▼
- 9 Bronzini ▼
- 1 Zani ▼
- 2 Gega ▼
- 3 Pasquali ▼
- 4 Fuser
- 5 Paulo
- 6 Lazzaroni
- 7 Barbieri ▼
- 8 Barbini ▼

Replacements used:
Santamaria, De Marchi, Zanusso, Budd, Steyn, Gori, McKinley, Iannone.

- 15 Hook 1T
- 14 Sharples
- 13 Scott 1T ▼
- 12 Twelvetrees 1T
- 11 May ▼
- 10 Burns 2C
- 9 Laidlaw 2C 1P ▼
- 1 Hohneck ▼
- 2 Hibbard 2T ▼
- 3 Afoa ▼
- 4 Savage ▼
- 5 Thrush
- 6 Moriarty ▼
- 7 Rowan
- 8 Morgan

Replacements used:
Dawidiuk, Thomas, Doran-Jones, Latta, Ludlow, Heinz, Symons, Halaifonua 1T

However, the preparations were well and truly derailed when the referee found the pitch boggy in some places and frozen solid in others – game off!

There followed a period of uncertainty whilst various options were explored. Ultimately, after a rapid inspection, Treviso's 4G training pitch was selected and everyone decamped to the new venue.

It could easily have all gone wrong for Gloucester after this disruption but, credit to the team, they pulled together and delivered a performance that was significant in terms of the efficiency with which they went about their business.

They took a while to get going – in all likelihood, the players probably took longer than usual to warm up – but, once Greig Laidlaw got the scoreboard moving with an eighth minute penalty, Gloucester were off and running.





James Hook went over for the first try after a good break from Charlie Sharples, but Treviso then dug in and defended doggedly for the next 15 minutes or so.

Just as it looked as though half time would come with only one try scored, the Gloucester pack clicked into gear, the catch and drive was efficiently executed and Richard Hibbard finished it off.

Two tries in the bag by half time and everything was on schedule. However, again the home side proved to be a doughty opponent, refusing to simply be rolled over. With the hour mark approaching and the pitch freezing, the fear grew that the referee would call it a game after 60 minutes.

Again the pack took control. They shoved Treviso off their own ball

and set up the position from which Matt Scott sliced through for his 12th of the season. This was soon followed by another catch and drive try, Hibbard again the scorer.

A wag in the crowd shouted out to the referee that he could call it off now! Gloucester were 29-0 up and the five points looked secure.

To his credit though, the referee stuck it out until the end and so did Gloucester. David Halaifonua was rewarded for a good kick chase as he pounced upon a wicked bounce, showing good power to score.

But it was Billy Twelvetrees who had the final word, powering his way through a tiring defence to score from 35 metres and conclude the try scoring.

Job done and the focus now turns to this evening and the visit of Bayonne.



APPLYING THE LAW WITH



Official Legal Partner

For once, all the pressure was on the referee ahead of the game! Monsieur Thomas Charabas had to make the difficult, but correct, call to deem the playing surface at the Stade Communale di Monigo unplayable.

Once the game itself actually started, he refereed it sympathetically in the circumstances, and the nicest thing you can say is that he was barely noticed - always a good sign!



**DEFENCE COACH
JONNY BELL**

"We're clearly delighted with the result. We knew we needed a bonus point win and, given everything that happened pre-match, I thought that the guys were magnificent.

"The supporters have been magnificent and we must say a huge thanks to all those Gloucester fans, and hopefully we've given them something to party about."



TEAM LINE-UPS

SATURDAY 21 JANUARY
EUROPEAN RUGBY
CHALLENGE CUP | RD 6



T P C D				T P C D								
				TOM MARSHALL	15	FULLBACK	15	JULIEN TISSERON				
				CHARLIE SHARPLES	14	RIGHT WING	14	BASTIEN FUSTER				
				ANDY SYMONS	13	OUTSIDE CENTRE	13	THIBAUT LACROIX				
				BILLY TWELVETREES	12	INSIDE CENTRE	12	ADAM WHITELOCK				
				JONNY MAY	11	LEFT WING	11	JULIEN JANE				
				BILLY BURNS	10	FLY-HALF	10	RAPHAEL LAGARDE				
				WILLI HEINZ (C)	9	SCRUM HALF	9	GUILLAUME ROUET				
				YANN THOMAS	1	LOOSEHEAD PROP	1	JEROME SCHUSTER				
				DARREN DAWIDIUK	2	HOOKER	2	MANU LEIATAUA				
				JOHN AFOA	3	TIGHTHEAD PROP	3	LORENZO CITTADINI				
				TOM SAVAGE	4	LOCK	4	GUILLAUME DUCAT				
				JEREMY THRUSH	5	LOCK	5	ADAM JAULHAC				
				LEWIS LUDLOW	6	BLINDSIDE FLANKER	6	TANERAU LATIMER				
				JACOB ROWAN	7	OPENSIDE FLANKER	7	DION EVRARD OULAI				
				BEN MORGAN	8	NUMBER 8	8	PJ VAN LILL				
REPLACEMENTS				REPLACEMENTS								
				HENRY WALKER	16		16	JOSE RAMON AYARZA				
				JOSH HOHNECK	17		17	ARETZ IGUINIZ				
				PAUL DORAN-JONES	18	MATCH OFFICIALS	18	TOMA TAUFU				
				JOE LATTA	19	REFEREE:	19	PELU TAELE				
				GARETH EVANS	20	Lloyd Linton		MANU SAUBUSSE				
				CALLUM BRALEY	21	ASSISTANT REFEREES:	20	MARTIN LAVEAU				
				MATT SCOTT	22	Fin Brown &		WILLIE DU PLESSIS				
				HENRY PURDY	23	Dave Sutherland	21	JEAN-BLAISE LESPINASSE				
							22					
							23					