

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



VERSUS

NEWPORT GWENT DRAGONS

ISSUE 13 || ANGLO-WELSH CUP
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CAPTAIN'S CORNER

GREIG LAIDLAW



GOOD AFTERNOON AND WELCOME TO KINGSHOLM FOR THE FINAL ANGLO-WELSH CUP POOL GAME FOR US THIS SEASON, AND WELCOME TO THE PLAYERS AND STAFF OF THE NEWPORT GWENT DRAGONS.

For obvious reasons, I'm writing this whilst away with Scotland, but of course I will have half an eye on events at Kingsholm and how the young guys are getting on.

Firstly, I'm hugely excited about the upcoming Six Nations, and looking for a good campaign with my Scottish team mates.

There's a buzz around Scottish rugby at the moment, Glasgow's win at Leicester is a good example, and we can't wait for the tournament to start.

It's of course the last campaign for Vern as well, and he will be looking to go out on a high before returning to club rugby in France.

On Gloucester matters, it has been a good few weeks and the squad are in a good place. One thing that pleased me was how quickly we parked the defeat by Northampton at the turn of the year and moved on.

We could have very easily fallen into the trap of feeling sorry for ourselves after losing narrowly and frustratingly to Harlequins and Northampton, but we dusted ourselves down and cracked on to record some great results starting against Worcester and then in Europe.

I followed the game last Friday on television from camp, and I was chuffed to see how well the young squad reacted to the events of the game, and to earn a draw in the end was probably a fair outcome.

I'm chuffed for Ben Vellacott as well who swooped to secure the draw. He has a really bright future ahead of him and I know from working with him what he has to offer and how excited he is to make an impact in the Cherry and White shirt.

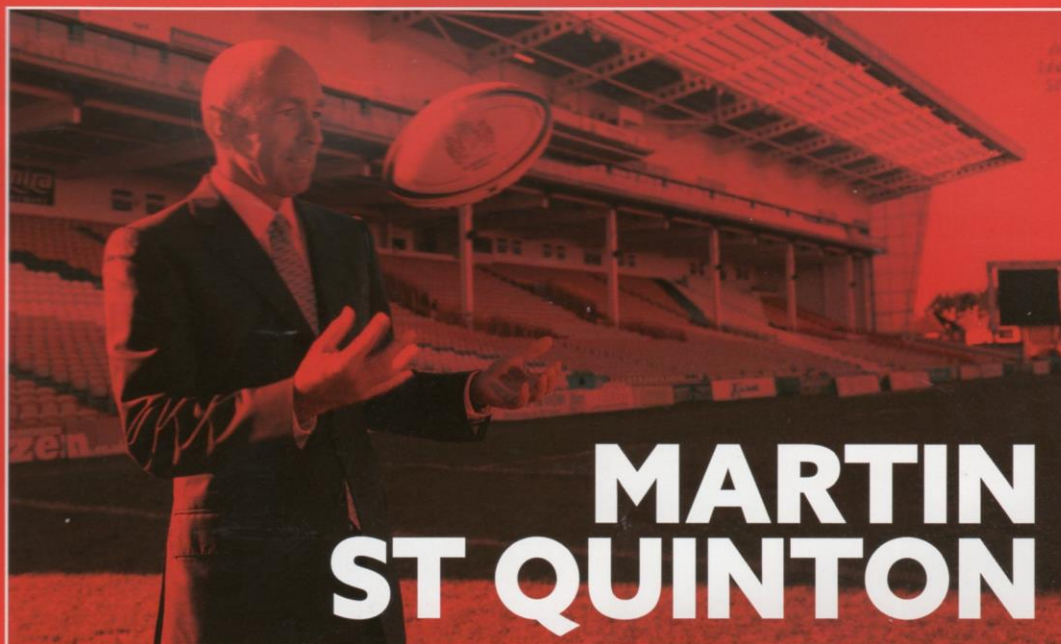
Going into this weekend, it will be great to see more of the squad get a run out at Kingsholm, and for the likes of Henry Trinder and Sione Kalamafoni, the whole squad is buoyed to see the return of the two guys who have worked so hard behind the scenes to get back in the mix.

The Dragons can't qualify, but I know for sure that whoever takes to the pitch on either side this weekend, they will be giving their all for the shirt and their teammates ahead of another big return to domestic action next weekend.

My attention is now of course on the match against Ireland at Murrayfield this weekend - and I'm hugely excited for that. To be part of another RBS Six Nations campaign, and to be captaining my country is an honour that never lessens and I intend to make the most of every moment.

Enjoy today's game

Greig



MARTIN ST QUINTON

Good afternoon and welcome to Kingsholm for the final pool game of this season's Anglo-Welsh Cup.

Unfortunately, following the result of our game at Bath last Friday evening, and the outcome of the Leicester vs Northampton game the following day, we can no longer qualify for the semi-finals.

However, I personally feel that there have been many positives from the tournament for us and that one win from our three games so far does not really reflect the quality of the performances from some very young sides.

Think back, for example, to our opening game of the competition against Saracens. It seems a long time ago now - the side were wearing the commemorative Poppy shirts - when a late comeback resulted in a last-ditch victory.

I can say, hand on heart, that it was one of the most thrilling games that I've witnessed here at Kingsholm in recent seasons and it was fantastic

to see so many of our most promising Academy prospects involved. Their joy at clinching the win was a sight to behold and I know the crowd appreciated their efforts.

Subsequent away trips to Northampton and Bath have resulted in a narrow defeat and a draw, and I believe that we could easily have taken more points from those games.

However, we have embraced the principles of the competition and used the games as an opportunity to give our younger players some valuable time and I hope that we will reap the rewards of that approach in the future.

Last weekend though, we saw some players of a rather different vintage take to the Kingsholm turf when the Gloucester Rugby Heroes took on the South Africa Legends.

It was a fantastic weekend of rugby activities, and credit to the visitors who were superb ambassadors for the game. The coaching clinic they held at Longlevens RFC will have



won many friends and inspired so many young players.

As for the game itself, the players on both sides have lost a yard or two of place since they were in their prime, but the commitment and desire to win was very much in evidence and a tremendously competitive game ensued.

Following on from last year's fixture against the Salford Red Devils Rugby League side, the Gloucester Rugby Heroes look as though they're here to stay, and I for one am delighted at that!

Martin

GOOD AFTERNOON AND WELCOME TO KINGSHOLM FOR OUR FINAL POOL MATCH IN THIS SEASON'S ANGLO-WELSH CUP.

And, of course, a warm welcome to the players, staff and supporters of the Newport Gwent Dragons.

Matches between English and Welsh sides are always hard-fought affairs and, in a lot of cases, the players on duty today have been waiting patiently for a chance to show what they can do in a first team shirt and will be looking to make the most of the opportunity.

The Anglo-Welsh competition this season has certainly provided us with some positives. We've been able to give valuable game time to a number of squad members, particularly the younger players and they've certainly risen to the occasion, especially in the round one game against Saracens.

It was also good to be able to use last weekend's game at Bath to select Sione Kalamafoni and Henry Trinder for the first time this season. Conditions on the night obviously weren't ideal, but I was delighted to see both of them back playing after all the hard work they have put in to get back to fitness after suffering nasty injuries. They both needed that first 80 minutes back in competitive rugby and will get better and better the more they play over the next few weeks.

We will have a similar approach to today's game. A number of seasoned professionals lining up alongside some of our most promising young players. They've trained well against many of the senior players this week and are all very much looking forward to the



game and an opportunity to perform at Kingsholm.

Although we can't now qualify for the knock out stages of the Anglo-Welsh competition, it's important that we get another win to build upon the momentum that we have created in recent weeks. We know there is a testing set of Aviva Premiership fixtures ahead of us but, over the past few European and Anglo-Welsh games, we have been able to get some players much needed game time, while resting others, and we'll be well prepared for the challenge of Leicester next weekend.

There is still an awful lot to play for this season as we try to move our way up the Premiership table, and after our bonus point

win over Bayonne, there is a European quarter-final against Cardiff in April to look forward to.

The start of the RBS Six Nations competition is an exciting time of year for all rugby supporters and I'm really looking forward to watching this year's matches. For me, there isn't a clear favourite going into the competition and it's a year where I think there will be a few shocks and surprises!

Good luck to all the Gloucester players involved and in wishing them success as they represent their country and club at the highest level, I'll be hoping for another Ireland win....

Enjoy the game today.

David



VIEW FROM THE

GLOUCESTER Citizen

If things had panned out differently Freddie Clarke could have been playing for Bath in last Friday night's Anglo-Welsh Cup game against Gloucester.

The 24-year-old back-row forward was one of the standout performers for the Cherry and Whites in the 17-17 draw at the Recreation Ground and he is hoping to keep impressing to earn his first senior contract.

Clarke has seen his dreams dashed before as he often featured for Bath United in the A-League during his three years doing a

sports performance degree at Bath University but was not offered anything at the end of it.

He remained upbeat and spent a year playing full-time with London Scottish in the Championship before making the move to Kingsholm last summer.

"You've got to roll with the punches when you play rugby, it's a tough sport," said Clarke on his setback at Bath.

"Not everyone can play the game so I accepted it at the time. The career choice I made at the time I was very happy with so I didn't look





at it as a negative move knowing where I was going and obviously now this is where I want to be - playing for Gloucester."

Clarke returned to Bath with a bit of a point to prove and declared himself "very pleased" with his performance at number eight.

"I went to university at Bath so I know a lot of people in this team and it was good to come back, see some familiar faces and give a good performance," said Clarke.

"It was not the best because we didn't get the win but a draw was close enough.

"I played at the Rec many times, it's a great place to play and fortunately Gloucester gave me the chance to play."

Clarke is loving life at Gloucester at the moment and he is confident of following in the footsteps of scrum-half Ben Vellacott, who graduated from the Academy earlier this month.

"I came with an injury but fortunately was able to overcome that and feel that I'm progressing nicely," said Clarke.

"Hopefully I'll get a few more chances in the weeks to come and keep proving myself to the coaches.

"Benny's done very well, he thoroughly deserves that (senior

contract) and that is definitely my main aim for the season to progress into that first team.

"I wouldn't put myself in this position if I didn't think I could do it. You've got to take a few chances in your life and I think this is the one big one I'm going to take."

Clarke's versatility could go in his favour as he is equally comfortable

at blindside flanker, while at 6ft 5in he can also do a job in the second row.

"I've alternated between six and eight in the A-League," said Clarke.

"I've played a couple of European games coming on in the second row but my main position is six or eight."



GLOUCESTER RUGBY
HERITAGE

www.gloucester rugbyheritage.org.uk



KINGSLEY JONES

Kingsley Jones had already won 10 caps for Wales, one as captain, before arriving at Kingsholm in 1998. As well as leading Wales, he captained every team he played for. His first club was Ebbw Vale, and it was whilst playing for them that he won his first cap against the Barbarians in 1996.

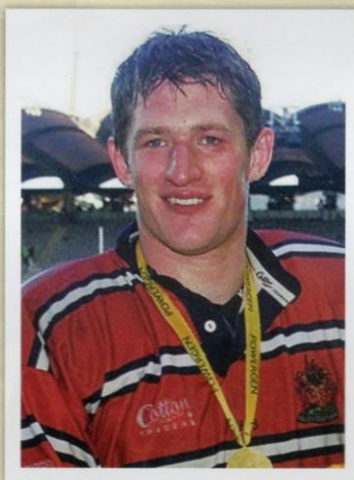
His first appearance for Gloucester was off the bench against Sale on 12 December 1998. He started the next two games, but snapped his Achilles tendon playing against Wasps. That ended his season but he was made captain for the following term, and he led the side to third position in the Premiership.

Ian Jones was made captain for 2000-01 but resigned the role early on, and Kingsley took the helm again. Gloucester had an indifferent league campaign, but in the club's first season of Heineken Cup rugby, they advanced to the semi-final only to lose narrowly to Leicester.

Most Gloucester fans were then disappointed when Kingsley

GREAT PLAYERS FROM THE GLOUCESTER BACK ROW: THE NOUGHTIES

announced that he was moving to Worcester, where he was yet again made captain. He later became Director of Rugby at Doncaster, before joining up with Phillipe Saint-Andre at Sale where the duo led the club to the triumph in the European Shield in 2005 and the Premiership title in 2006. Kingsley coached Russia in the World Cup of 2011, and is currently coaching Newport Gwent Dragons.



JAMES FORRESTER

James was a hugely talented, speedy and popular open-side or number 8. In addition, he had the pace of a three-quarter, and did play at centre for Gloucester as well as in the back row.

His was a career that was cruelly curtailed by injury whilst he was at the peak of his powers. He made 136 appearances for Gloucester, scoring 54 tries. He won two full England caps as well as several appearances for England 'A'.

James 'Django' Forrester was born

on 9 February 1981 and educated at St.Edward's School, Oxford.

He joined the Gloucester Academy in 1999, and made his first team debut on Easter Monday that year, away against London Irish. The game was lost but James scored a try.

It was the following season when he really broke through, scoring hat tricks of tries against Caerphilly in October and Bristol in the Powergen Cup in December. He appeared for England Under 21's, followed by 'A' caps against Wales and Samoa. At the end of the season he was in the Gloucester team that won the Zurich Championship final against Bristol, and played for England in a non-cap game against the Barbarians.

In 2002-03 Gloucester won the Powergen Cup, beating Northampton in the final at Twickenham, and 'Django' scored a try. He gained a further 'A' cap against Scotland, scoring two tries in a 78-6 demolition.

James suffered a dislocated shoulder playing for England 'A' against France in 2003, but in the 2004-05 season gained his two full England caps both as a replacement against Wales and Samoa. Towards the end of that season he played several games for Gloucester in the centre, scoring two tries against Newcastle.

In 2006 Gloucester won a thrilling European Rugby Challenge Cup final against London Irish. James scored what proved to be the crucial try, when kicking ahead and winning a thrilling chase to touch-down just inside the dead ball line.

In April 2007 in a game against Bristol at Ashton Gate, James suffered a very severe knee injury. He missed all the following season to surgery and rehab. During an attempted come back playing in an 'A' fixture against Sale, James broke down and he immediately announced his retirement. What might he have achieved but for that injury?



ADAM BALDING

Adam Balding was born on 7 December 1979 and first played for his home club Coventry. He was then spotted by Leicester for whom he played 66 times, before coming to Gloucester for the start of the 2004-05 season. By the time he arrived at Kingsholm he had already played at England Under 21 and England 'A' level.

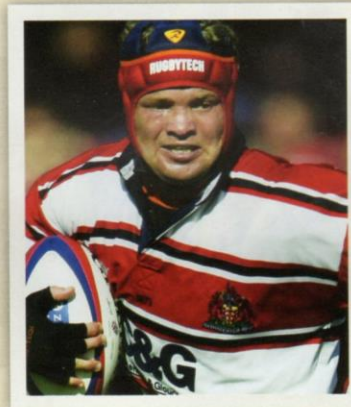
At Castle Grim he was an immediate success and became a "Shed" favourite. Although initially playing a few games at blind side flanker he soon settled at Number 8 where he was brave, forthright and extremely mobile. He was so well thought of by the club that despite having only played one term he was appointed captain for the 2005-06 season.

Cruelly in the first game of the season against Worcester he suffered a fractured cheek bone

which required surgery and as a result only started 11 games in that season, and thereafter never seemed to regain his earlier form.

Appearances became harder to come by and after the 2007-08 season he went north to play for Leeds. Further moves to Newcastle, Worcester and London Welsh followed, and he even played a few games for Cinderford in 2013, helping to keep them in National League 1, just two levels below Gloucester. Adam made 62 appearances for Gloucester.

In 2015 Adam was Event Co-ordinator in Gloucester for the Rugby World Cup. He is now back with the Club as Head of Community.



JAKE BOER

Although a South African, Jake Boer was taken to the hearts of the Shed because he demonstrated "Gloucester Dog". In 2002-03 he took over the reins of captaincy from injured Phil Vickery, and was made club captain from 2003-05. That season the sports writers of the national press made Jake "Premiership Player of the Season" as well as "Overseas Player of the Season". He made 190 appearances for Gloucester from 2000-10 in two spells and scored 32 tries.

Jake Boer was born on 1 November 1975 in Cape Town, South Africa. He first played for Village Football Club and Cape Town, before appearing for Western Province 'B'.

Injury followed and he decided to try his luck in England.

He tried to break into the Leicester side, but was up against Neil Back, Martin Corry and Lewis Moody for a place in the back-row. Leicester offered him a contract, but in search of regular first team rugby, Jake moved on to London Irish where he played two seasons before signing for Gloucester for the start of the 2000-01 season. He was an immediate favourite and scored a try in the Zurich Championship final win against Bristol at Twickenham.

Phil Vickery was made captain for the 2002-03 season, but suffered injury, leading to Boer taking over. He played in all but three games and scored 14 tries. Gloucester topped the Premiership by 15 points, and Jake lifted the Powergen Cup after Northampton were beaten 40-22 in the final. Unfortunately this was the first season where the league title was to be decided by a knock-out tournament and Wasps trounced Gloucester in the final 39-3.

In 2006-07 Gloucester again topped the Premiership, and Jake was a replacement in the final against Leicester which was lost 16-44. Boer then decided to return to South Africa due to business commitments.

However, that was not the end of his Gloucester career. Early in the 2009-10 season, the Cherry and Whites were hit badly by injuries, and in October Bryan Redpath asked Jake to help out. He made six appearances before making his final bow on 17 April in a Premiership game against Northampton.

In August 2010, Andy Deacon who was Director of Rugby at Cinderford asked Jake to come to the Foresters as a Player/ Defence coach. Boer played a few games, but returned to South Africa in January 2011.

He was a welcome guest at last Sunday's game between the Gloucester Rugby Heroes and the South Africa Legends.

FULLY FOCUSSED







The Anglo-Welsh Cup has been a happy hunting ground for the Cherry and Whites in recent seasons, and with silverware in the trophy cabinet from 2011 still gleaming, the club have been able to eke out every positive they can from the tournament in recent seasons, whatever it has been called!

The Gloucester production line continues to roll, and while Callum Braley continues to make a name for himself as a relatively new face in the first team, the scrum-half will this afternoon provide the experience to pilot a young side against the Dragons.

Braley is part of the young leaders in the squad and, after helping the side to a 17-17 draw at a damp and drizzly Rec last Friday night, he can clearly see the collective improvement around the whole squad, and calls upon this as a reason why the defeat was never on the cards.

"I think the good way to look at

it, is that the Gloucester of a few seasons ago would've lost that game. I think the boys showed a lot of character to get the draw from a difficult game.

"They scored with a couple of minutes to go, then our heads could have gone, and we could have let the game slide and taken nothing from it. But the boys will be happy with the effort they showed, and the resilience in the last five minutes to get two points out of it.

"The two points are definitely better for confidence than none."

It's the role of captain that is bestowed on a lucky few, and the scrum-half is able to slot into the shoes of fellow half back leaders Greig Laidlaw and Willi Heinz to provide the direction and lead by example from the number nine jersey.

"Ultimately, I focus on doing my job, and you cannot lead any side if you're not performing, and that is a massive focus.

"At the same time, you've got to focus on a team where everyone knows their role, their details and we have a clear mind of what we want to do in the game."

Harry Randall, Alex Seville, Joe Mullis and Ciaran Knight are all set to embark on time with England U20s, with the game against France complete by the time you pick up this programme at Kingsholm, and Braley is excited for his club mates to experience the tests and memories of age group rugby.

Having lifted the title in 2014, Braley is backing the Cherry and White trio to impress when called upon.

"They've been away for a few weeks now, and they will have a great time. I have very fond memories of my time with England throughout the two years that I was fortunate enough to be involved.

"I'm sure that the boys going to take part this year will have a great time, and they will take a lot from the experiences that present themselves."

Braley has formed himself a strong reputation for leadership and leading the charge from the front, captaining the side on a number of occasions, including in the cauldron of the Stade Marcel Deflandre and the trip to La Rochelle.

It's these experiences that he calls upon as hugely positive as he grows as a player.

"For sure, I do like leading the boys, and it's a massive honour for myself, every time that I get asked to do so. It's a special feeling knowing that the coaches have the faith in me, and the trust in my leadership ability.

"That said, there is still a lot more for me to learn, and I'm still very young and leading the senior players is a big thing for me that I am excited to keep improving. But it's a good challenge, and something that I am really enjoying doing.

"I enjoy the game time whenever it arises, and if that is by being captain, then I relish every chance."

A whole host of new faces have been handed the chance to represent the Cherry and White jersey over the past few weeks of Anglo-Welsh action, with the win over Saracens at Kingsholm, probably a stand out moment from the season as a whole.



And Braley is able to praise the influence of the competition, and the benefit that it will have on all of the squad in the long term, with a big few weeks ahead and the return of the Aviva Premiership.

"The Anglo-Welsh is always a good opportunity for us to get some game time, and the whole squad make the most of it. From last Friday, and coming into this weekend I am looking forward to getting some good game time and knuckle down to perform well.

"I've got the opportunity to get some more involvement over the next couple of weeks during the Six Nations period, and to be involved in a squad that is heading in the right direction."

"THE ANGLO-WELSH IS ALWAYS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR US TO GET SOME GAME TIME, AND THE WHOLE SQUAD MAKE THE MOST OF IT."

Of course, in recent weeks, it was revealed that Braley was one of a host of Gloucester stars to put pen to paper on a new deal, and the scrum half admits it was a very easy decision to remain part of a young, talented spine at the club.

"For sure, it is definitely something that is exciting to be part of. There are a lot of young boys, that have played together for a number of years now, and to be involved in that mix is very exciting.

"The club have got a clear vision in where they want to go, and where they want to be going over the next few years. That is an exciting vision to be a part of, but I think everyone is aware how big a task it is and the challenges that we all faced over the last couple of years.

"This is a squad now that is really developing and truly appreciates how tough it is going to be, and looking forward to the challenges."





KINGSHOLM NEWS

with

Bob Fenton

After several rounds of competing in the Anglo-Welsh competition today we get to play a team who really are Welsh! Fancy...

Given my rapidly decreasing number of brain cells it becomes harder by the week to figure out how this all works. But seemingly after other results last weekend, we are almost certainly out of the competition. There is a scenario that says if we win by about 60 points, and Leicester lose by about the same score, we could overtake them. But the reality is that's it all done for another season.

Still it's good to be back at Kingsholm and let's hope for a bit more of what we saw last time we were here - ten tries scored against Bayonne grabbing us that home quarter final against Cardiff. And another - even later - Saturday night kick off. Oh well, TV is king and the paying public? Well we don't seem to matter all that much.

But back to the Bayonne game - I love the little highlights real that the club sent out, three and a half minutes of Gloucester tries, all of the French scores being edited out. Makes you wonder whether one or two of our boys were in the edit suite making sure that a couple of little howlers didn't ever get seen again.

Picking the best tries for me is always difficult - except for that last game where there was a clear and obvious winner. Forget the clever



passes and cross field kicks, the miss-moves and gallops down the touchline.

Nope for me it was Josh Hohnock's score that brought me the biggest smile. If you recall he took a short pass right in front of the posts and looked likely to ship the ball wide to one of the outside backs to cross for the score. That was right up until the point when he saw the French half back standing between him and a try under the posts. One drop of the left shoulder and he was heading straight for the poor little 10 - who was probably muttering whatever the French is for, 'Oh my days, this is going to hurt' -

before smashing him so hard I half expected to see a human shaped hole appear in the Tump as he flew backwards.

Hopefully his ribs have now recovered and he is able to walk in straight lines again. But I bet he still wakes up at night screaming after dreaming of an 18 stone New Zealand monster careering towards him.

Then last week, a typical wet evening down at the Rec and a local derby against Bath. The conditions were terrible, freezing cold, soaking wet with no escape from the rain. almost impossible to see what was

happening and hardly able to hang on to anything. But enough of the tribulations of the fans in the stands, it wasn't much better for the players.

Early on it looked like we were going to steal that one, but in the end fought well to get the draw. Probably a fair result on the night, but one that didn't help too much for either side.

One of the stand-out performances from that night came from the referee - Andrew Jackson. I thought he was brilliant. Unfussy, clear with the players and running the game with great common sense. Little incidents were dealt with quickly without the constant need to refer every decision to the TMO. Of course, the chances are that he wanted to get it over and done with and get out of the rain, but either way it was a great performance and long may that continue. Well done sir!

The other highlights - no disrespect to Darren Dawidiuk and Ben Vellacott for their excellent tries - were to see Henry Trinder and Sione Kalamafoni returning after long, long injury lay-offs. I think Sione's last significant action for Gloucester was talking to me for



@Holm magazine back in May after he scooped all the players' and coaches' awards for an outstanding season.

And Henry... Well, rumour has it that the producers of various hospital dramas turned down a script based on his recent number of injuries on the grounds that they were more than one mortal could possibly cope with, and no one would believe that anyone would cope with. But it's great to see the

pair of them back - it must be like having two new players bouncing into the squad.

Back to today then. I know that for some people this is a bit of a lesser competition but, at the end of the day, it represents a chance to win one of a few trophies that are available every season, so why not go for it? And it gives a great opportunity to (a) rest a few players and (b) give some of the wider squad a chance to get some first team experience.

And on top of that, we owe Newport one. Back in April they came up here, rained on our parade and ended our ambitions of defending the European Rugby Challenge Cup by sneaking a win in the last few minutes at the end of the quarter-final.

So, while there may be nothing in terms of progress in the competition for us today, we know that these cross border matches are the stuff of legends - those old enough will recall those mid-week encounters where having a ball was optional for the first 15 minutes!

Something like that today will do very nicely...



RANDALL on RUGBY



OVER THE COURSE OF A SEASON SOME MATCHES MATTER MORE THAN OTHERS, AND I HAVE TO SAY THE RESULT OF TODAY'S ENCOUNTER WOULD NOT BE TOWARDS THE TOP OF MANY LISTS YOU COULD DRAW UP.

Leicester's victory over Northampton means Gloucester cannot qualify for the knockout stages of the Anglo Welsh Cup, while the Dragons are also out of contention after losing to Newcastle at Rodney Parade.

You may have seen the pictures of the pitch which resembled a small flood plain by the time the referee called a halt after 68 minutes. It's one of those images which will stand out for some time, and it fuels the argument that the only way three teams can share one venue is with a 3G surface in place.

Gloucester's absence from the semi-finals of this competition means the players will have two weeks in March without a game, by which point their relationship with Hartpury may have become much closer in more ways than one.

Hartpury currently have 99 points from a possible 100 in National Division One, with promotion to the Championship now looking a formality. Moreover, former Gloucester Director of Rugby Nigel Melville's ideas for the second tier now he has his feet under the desk at the RFU, include teams being able to field up to eight loan



players from a Premiership "buddy club." For Gloucester and Hartpury not to be paired together would be ludicrous.

The link, of course, is already strong. The two latest contractual announcements - with new deals for Gareth Evans and Ben Vellacott - both secured the futures of players who are Academy products, with Vellacott scoring four tries in Hartpury's recent win at Fylde and then scuttling over at the Rec in a brief cameo appearance in the draw at Bath eight days ago.

While the salary cap continues to rise, clubs are rewarded through additional credits for developing their own talent and any discussion over the most valuable player (sic) to come through the Gloucester-Hartpury system over the past decade would have to

include Tom Savage. The 27 year old's route into professional rugby certainly proves players develop at different rates.

Standing in the Hartpury clubhouse, Tom told me:

"I came here having not played a lot of rugby. I didn't play at all until my local club at Bishops Castle in Shropshire started a junior section when I was 15. I played there for a season before going to the colts at Shrewsbury.

"I started in the fresher's team at Hartpury and gradually moved up until I made the first team, and in my final year I was awarded a scholarship. Originally I came here to study but also to see if I could improve my rugby enough to do well at it. It seemed a far fetched dream at the time."

Savage captained the Hartpury



side that won the National Division 3 South West title in 2010-11. Throw forward to the present day and he's made 138 appearances for Gloucester, while in the background the team he left behind have powered up through the pyramid. This may be their third season in the third tier, but Savage has not been surprised by their rapid rise, with another title this season now within reach.

"My Hartpury team was essentially made up of boys on scholarships, although we did have two former Wales internationals in Nathan Thomas, who was also a lecturer,

and Darren Morris, who was player coach," Savage added.

"I owe a lot to Mark Cornwell, who is now Head Coach, and Allan Lewis, who was Academy Director at Gloucester and pushed for the club to look at me as I was a bit of an unknown quantity."

"I always look for their results and it's great they are doing so well. There was always going to be a stage where it would get a bit sticky and they would get some more experienced boys in but it's impossible not to see them going up this year.

"I know there is talk of more direct links between Premiership and Championship teams, and at the moment it's hard for some of the younger lads to go to be expected to go to Rotherham or London Scottish and make a difference with one day's training. If the "buddy" system is implemented and Hartpury go up, it's happy days."

Savage isn't the only sporting professional in his family. His older brother Ben is a freestyle mountain bike stunt rider, and his dad rode motor bikes competitively too. Falling into rugby as he did, he humbly acknowledges he's been

fortunate with opportunities, and that time invested by others, plus his own dedication, has been time well spent. Looking over his shoulder, he can also see the next group of players following behind.

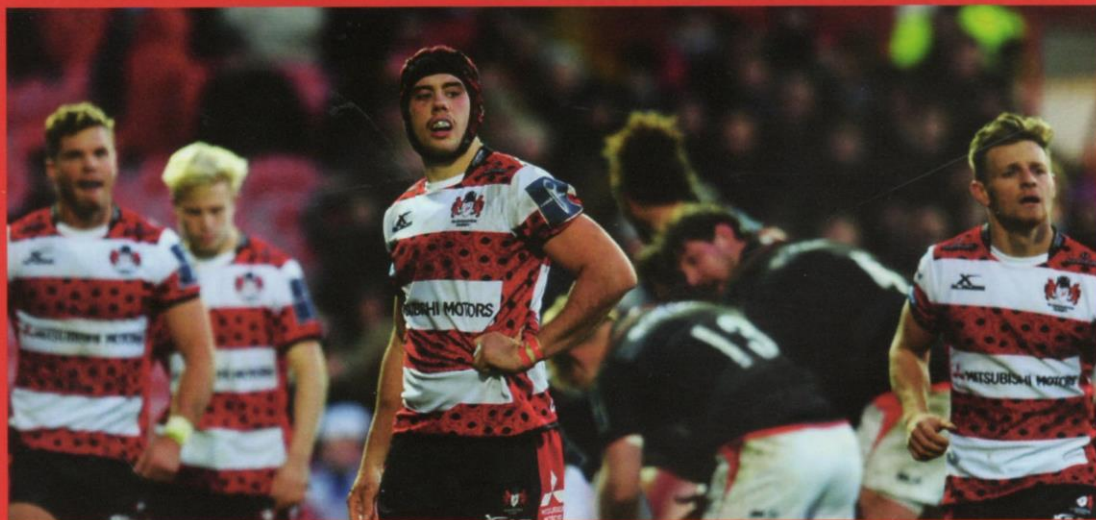
"We are well stocked in terms of back five forwards" he said. "Lewis Ludlow was given the opportunity to lead the team in the Anglo Welsh Cup earlier in the season and did really well.

"Freddie Clarke has been playing in the Championship and you could see in his performance last week at Bath he has really stepped up. If you add in Joe Batley and Charlie Beckett the stock is really high."

We'll no doubt see some of those younger players today as the pool stages of the Anglo Welsh competition reach their conclusion.

Unbeaten for their last four matches in all competitions Gloucester will want to extend that run, but with bigger fish to fry over the coming month in Premiership don't expect any risks in team selection.

Even the durable Savage may get a Saturday off.



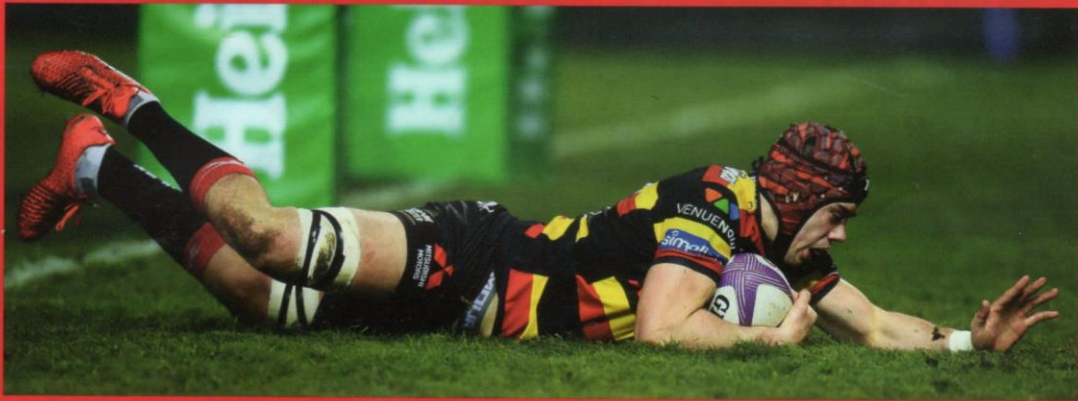
ACTION REPLAY || SATURDAY 21 JANUARY || KINGSHOLM || ATT 9,265

Gloucester Rugby 64

Tries: Ludlow, Heinz (3), May, Dawidiuk, Symons, Purdy, Hohneck, Braley. Conversions: Burns (6), Twelvetrees.

Aviron Bayonnais 19

Tries: Laveau (3). Conversions: Meret (2).



This was a potential banana skin for Gloucester, but they passed their French test with flying colours.

The visitors, Aviron Bayonnais, came into the game as the whipping boys of pool one having lost all their games in Europe to this point. They were there for the taking, surely?

Gloucester had succeeded in taking a try scoring bonus point in Treviso to return to the top of the pool. Doing the same against Bayonne to secure top spot would be straightforward, wouldn't it?

Thankfully, the Gloucester team didn't think like this. They knew they had a job to do and they went out and did it in a most professional manner. Knowing that a bonus point win would keep La Rochelle at bay, that fourth try was in the bag after just 32 minutes.

And, perhaps thinking of games earlier this season that slipped away, Gloucester didn't take their

foot off the throttle. No, they went on to run in another six tries as they put the French side to the sword and earn a home quarter-final.

Knowing you need a try scoring bonus point can be a dangerous



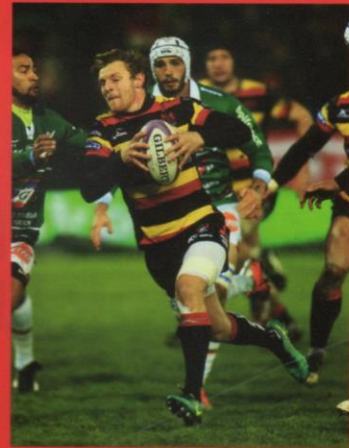
- 15 Marshall
- 14 Sharples ▼
- 13 Symons 1T
- 12 Twelvetrees 1C ▼
- 11 May 1T
- 10 Burns 6C
- 9 Heinz 3T ▼
- 1 Thomas ▼
- 2 Dawidiuk 1T ▼
- 3 Afoa ▼
- 4 Savage ▼
- 5 Thrush
- 6 Ludlow 1T
- 7 Rowan ▼
- 8 Evans

Replacements used:
Walker, Hohneck 1T,
Doran-Jones, Latta,
Kvesic, Braley 1T,
Scott, Purdy 1T.



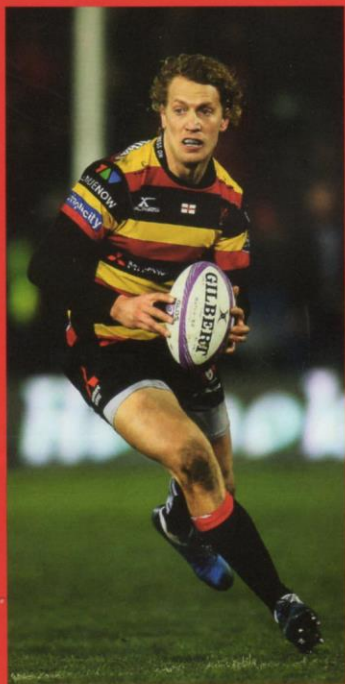
- 15 Tisseron
- 14 Laveau 3T ▼
- 13 Fuster ▼
- 12 Lacroix
- 11 Toniga
- 10 Meret 2C
- 9 Duhalde ▼
- 1 Bordenave ▼
- 2 Labouyrie ▼
- 3 Taufa ▼
- 4 Ducat
- 5 Jaulhac
- 6 Lespinasse
- 7 Marmouyet ▼
- 8 Polutele

Replacements used:
Ayarza ■, Iguiniz,
Khinchagishvili,
Muscarditz, Saubusse,
Mamao, Duputs.



thing. There's a temptation to go away from your game plan and force things a bit. And, when things don't quite go to plan, a slight panic can set in.

On the night, there was no hint of this from Gloucester. They got a dream start when Lewis Ludlow crashed over from close range, before Willi Heinz took over. He sniped over twice from close



And the second half progressed much the same as the first. Andy Symons showed quick feet to step his way over for his first try for the club and Heinz completed his hat-trick, although he looked a touch offside as he chased Billy Burns' kick through.

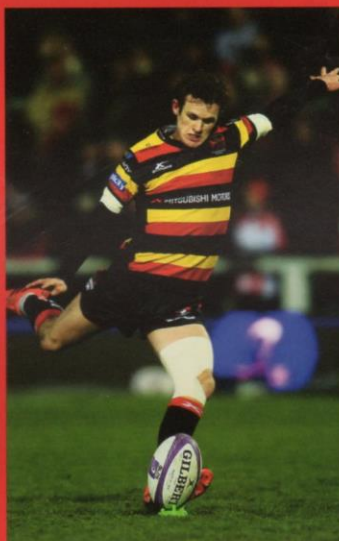
Bayonne were then gifted another try, this one due to a loose pass, but Gloucester shrugged it off and Purdy, Hohneck and Braley all crossed before the hour mark.

Remarkably, there was no scoring in the final quarter, but Gloucester had completed their mission by that point. 64-19 the final score and progression to the knock-out stages assured.

range and could have had a third when he failed to ground the ball properly.

Heinz then helped to put Jonny May over for the vital fourth try, and Darren Dawidiuk ensured the half finished on a high as he touched down after a well-executed catch and drive.

The only alarms had been of Gloucester's making. A couple of missed tackles and an interception leading to two Bayonne scores against the run of play.



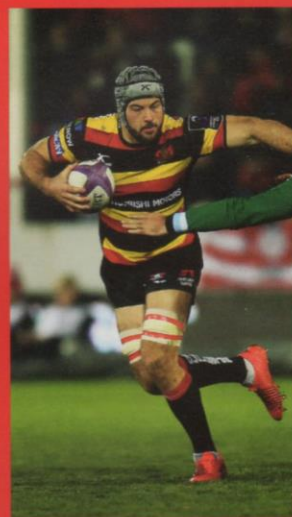
APPLYING THE LAW WITH



Official Legal Partner

An understandably busy night for referee Lloyd Linton who didn't have the benefit of a Television Match Official to help him. Had he done so, a couple of 50/50 try scoring calls may have gone the other way.

But the referee backed himself on the night and did a good job of keeping the game moving.



ATTACKS AND BACKS COACH

TIM TAYLOR

"I think everyone who was out there on Saturday night put their hands up for the shirt, and put in a good performance and a good shift.

"There was good work rate off the ball again, and some great scramble defence at the end of the match not to let them in."



ACTION REPLAY || FRIDAY 27 JANUARY || THE RECREATION GROUND || ATT 12,680

Bath Rugby 17

Tries: Brew Penalties: Priestland (4)

Gloucester Rugby 17

Tries: Dawidiuk, Vellacott Conversions: Hook (2) Penalties: Hook



Trying to close the gap on pool leaders Leicester, Gloucester named a strong side and made a strong start. Unsurprisingly in the conditions, it was a catch and drive that led to the try, Gloucester stayed patient and Darren Dawidiuk claimed the score, James Hook adding an excellent conversion.

There were chances to build on the lead. Dan Thomas was desperately close to scoring the second after good work from Braley and Halaifonua but was hauled down by Aled Brew. And at least one kickable penalty was turned down in favour of kicking for the corner.

Indeed, the only other score of the half came via a Rhys Priestland penalty and Bath were still very much in the hunt as they only trailed 3-7 at the turnaround.

And the home team were a different proposition after the resumption. Bath took control of the territorial battle, half-backs Cook and Priestland kept Gloucester pinned back with some astute kicking and, although the Cherry and White defence was solid, penalties started to come.

Priestland was in solid form from the kicking tee and, although Hook knocked over a 52nd minute penalty, three from the Bath pivot had edged his team into a 12-10 lead by the hour mark.

The home team now turned the screw, pinning Gloucester back deep and forcing them to try and play from their own 22 to try and regain the lead.

Why does it always seem to rain when Gloucester play a competitive fixture at Bath? It doesn't happen all the time, of course. It just seems that fixtures at Bath are played under black skies with rain teeming down...

Last weekend was no exception. Television coverage decreed that the game was played on a Friday evening under the Recreation Ground lights and the rain duly fell throughout the whole evening.

In fairness, the pitch held up very well in the circumstances. However, any pretensions of running rugby had to be very quickly put on to the back burner. Tactical kicking was the order of the day in a game when not having possession was the preferred option.



- 15 Davies
- 14 Williams
- 13 Wilson ▼
- 12 Tapuai
- 11 Brew 1T ▼
- 10 Priestland 4P
- 9 Cook
- 1 Obano ▼
- 2 Walker ▼
- 3 Knight ▼
- 4 Douglas
- 5 Ellis ▼
- 6 Sisi
- 7 Mercer ▼
- 8 Grant ▼

Replacements used:
Van Vuuren, Marfo,
Lahiff, Stooke,
Bayliss, Hastings,
Clark

- 15 Marshall ▼
- 14 Halaifonua
- 13 Trindr
- 12 Symons
- 11 Purdy
- 10 Hook 2C 1P
- 9 Braley ▼
- 1 Thomas ▼
- 2 Dawidiuk 1T ▼
- 3 Doran-Jones ▼
- 4 Batley ▼
- 5 Latta
- 6 Kalamafoni
- 7 Thomas ▼
- 8 Clarke

Replacements used:
Matu'u, Orr, Mo'afu,
Denton, Safe,
Vellacott, Evans,
Protheroe



As it was, Bath looked the more likely to score and duly did so on 75 minutes. Max Clark picked up a loose ball and kicked long to turn Gloucester around. Jeff Williams gathered but was halted by Henry Purdy. However, the ball was swiftly switched left and a neat flip inside from Harry Davies put Aled Brew over and gave Bath a 17-10 lead.

Having struggled to main inroads for so much of the second half, a Gloucester fightback looked

unlikely. However, the Cherry and Whites refused to roll over. The pack provided the platform with some powerful carrying around the fringes before Ben Vellacott darted around a ruck, catching the Bath fringe defence napping, and dived over.

It was now over to James Hook. It was a straightforward conversion ordinarily, but the conditions and circumstances made this a tester. The Welsh fly-half didn't flinch and clinched the draw.



APPLYING THE LAW WITH



Official Legal Partner

Credit to referee Andrew Jackson, we didn't really notice him on the evening and that's usually a good sign!

There were no flash points on the evening, no controversial calls, a good night at the office for him.



ACADEMY BACKS & ATTACK COACH

RICHARD WHIFFIN

"I thought after the first half we were in control so we had the opportunity to take the game. But I'm really pleased that we managed to finish off strongly, come back and we had some control in that 22 and it was lovely to see Benny Vellacott come off the bench and snipe one of his trademark tries."



TEAM LINE-UPS

SATURDAY 4 FEBRUARY
ANGLO-WELSH CUP
ROUND 4



T P C D				T P C D								
				MAT PROTHEROE	15	FULLBACK	15	CARL MEYER				
				DAVID HALAIFONUUA	14	RIGHT WING	14	ADAM HUGHES (C)				
				HENRY TRINDER	13	OUTSIDE CENTRE	13	TYLER MORGAN				
				ELLIOTT CREED	12	INSIDE CENTRE	12	ADAM WARREN				
				TOM HUDSON	11	LEFT WING	11	TOM PRYDIE				
				LLOYD EVANS	10	FLY-HALF	10	DORIAN JONES				
				CALLUM BRALEY (C)	9	SCRUM HALF	9	SAREL PRETORIOUS				
				CAMERON ORR	1	LOOSEHEAD PROP	1	THOMAS DAVIES				
				MOTU MATU'U	2	HOOKER	2	RHYS BUCKLEY				
				SALESI MA'AFU	3	TIGHTHEAD PROP	3	BROK HARRIS				
				JOE BATLEY	4	LOCK	4	MATTHEW SCREECH				
				TOM DENTON	5	LOCK	5	RYNARD LANDMAN				
				SIONE KALAMAFONI	6	BLINDSIDE FLANKER	6	OLIVER GRIFFITHS				
				DAN THOMAS	7	OPENSIDE FLANKER	7	NIC CUDD				
				FREDDIE CLARKE	8	NUMBER 8	8	HARRISON KEDDIE				
REPLACEMENTS				REPLACEMENTS								
				DARREN DAWIDIUK	16		16	THOMAS RHYS THOMAS				
				YANN THOMAS	17		17	CRAIG MITCHELL				
				PAUL DORAN-JONES	18	MATCH OFFICIALS	18	LLOYD FAIRBROTHER				
				CHARLIE BECKETT	19	REFEREE:	19	JAMES THOMAS				
				WILL SAFE	20	Rhys Thomas		ROBSON BLAKE				
				BEN VELLACOTT	21	ASSISTANT REFEREES:	20	CHARLIE BLAKE				
				HENRY PURDY	22	Paul Dix &		ANGUS O'BRIEN				
				HARRY ROBINSON	23	Andrew Jackson	21	SAM BEARD				