

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

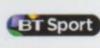


GLOUCESTER RUGBY

VERSUS

SARACENS

ISSUE 14 || AVIVA PREMIERSHIP RUGBY
FRIDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2017 || £3



CAPTAIN'S CORNER

GREIG LAIDLAW



GOOD EVENING AND WELCOME TO KINGSHOLM AS WE WELCOME SARACENS FOR ROUND 15 IN THE AVIVA PREMIERSHIP, AND ANOTHER EXCITING AND IMPORTANT GAME FOR THE SQUAD.

I kept abreast of proceedings at Welford Road last weekend, and I know that the squad would have been in a good place going into the game.

But it was a match where we found ourselves playing catch up from early on, and at the level of competition, you cannot afford an uphill climb during the game, especially at a venue like Welford Road.

We knew that Tigers would be a side determined to put to bed a bad run, and we were on the wrong end of a backlash. That said, we would've been massively disappointed with the result and performance, and that heightens the importance of the game this evening, with a trio of massive games to come over the next few weeks.

There is no hiding place at this level, and I expect a lot of work has gone in at Hartpury this week. There is a lot of pride and drive in our squad and in many ways, welcoming the double champions is a big test, but ideal to focus the minds.

I was very proud to lead my Scottish team into the cauldron that was the Stade de France on Sunday afternoon, and as I

pen these notes, I'm awaiting the results of the first half knock that I took.

The first round of action was so competitive and we were thrilled to pick up the win over Ireland, it was a perfect way to kick start the tournament.

To win at Murrayfield is such a special feeling for me, and the cameras were able to pick up on a special moment for me as the final kick went through the posts. It was such a tough game, which ebbed and flowed and to get the win against such a quality Irish team was something I was so proud of.

As a result, we went to Paris full of confidence and excited for a huge test against a French team finding their identity under Guy Noves, and we gave a great account of ourselves.

But that's not what we want to be reflecting on, we're a Scottish team that is growing together, and we are disappointed that after a mammoth effort we couldn't get the win.

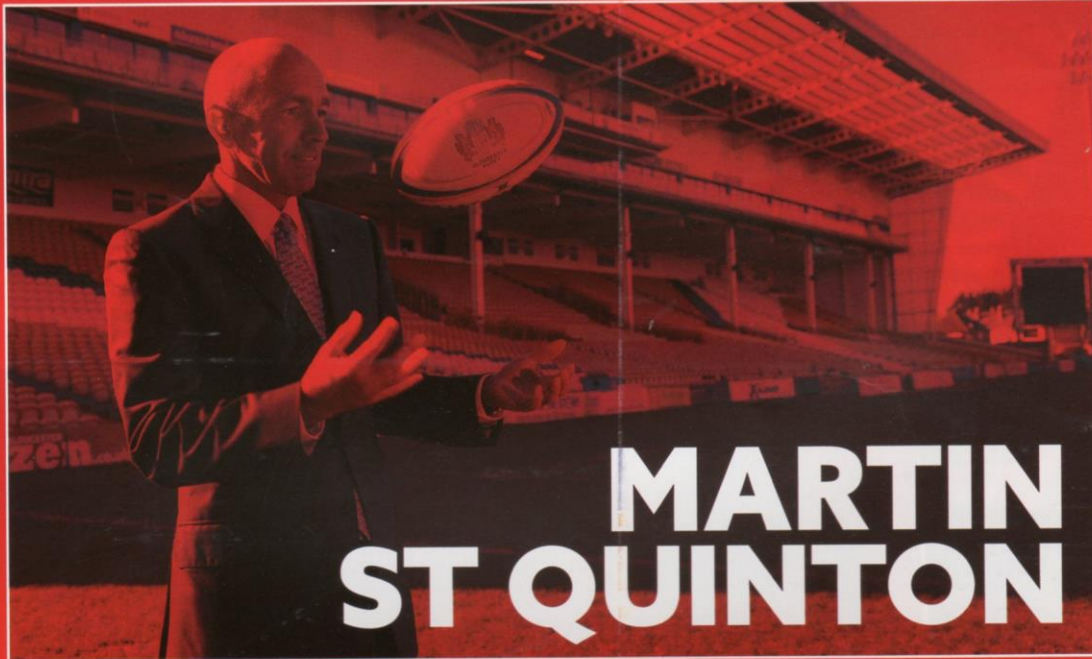
Back to domestic matters, I am fully behind the Gloucester squad as they approach tonight's game with Saracens, and they will be pushing themselves to the limit to get the result in front of the home faithful.

All the talk is cheap if we don't back it up, and the only thing that matters is between the white lines on Friday evening.

Get behind the team, they will respond and we will keep building and improving!

Enjoy today's game

Greig



MARTIN ST QUINTON

Good evening and welcome to Kingsholm for what should be another memorable evening under the Kingsholm floodlights.

The Aviva Premiership resumed last weekend and both ourselves and Saracens found ourselves on the wrong end of our respective scorelines. Both teams will be looking to get back to winning ways tonight, and it won't be a game for the faint-hearted.

The first meeting this season between the two teams was a close fought encounter and finished with Saracens edging it by just four points. It was a game that we felt we could have won, and we'll be looking to try and reverse that outcome this evening.

I think, however, we could all probably benefit from it not being quite as stressful a game as the one two seasons ago, when we triumphed thanks to that last gasp penalty goal from James Hook!

Saracens looked to all intents and



purposes as though they'd won the game, especially when Chris Ashton raced clear. However, it suddenly became clear that he was offside and it gave James that opportunity to seize the day – and he duly did so, showing great composure to land a kick that was far from easy.

Away from the field of play, as I write these notes, we are still awaiting clarification on whether Mohed Altrad will be allowed to continue with his plans to become majority shareholder at the club. There is an EPCR board meeting in Switzerland this week and,

hopefully, the situation will be a lot clearer after that.

It's a process that to date has probably taken a lot longer than any of us would have wanted but, whatever the outcome, we will endeavor to keep our supporters and stakeholders as fully informed as we possibly can at the appropriate moment.

For now, however, all I can do is ask you to get behind the team tonight in your own unique way and we can all hopefully play our part in cheering them on to victory.

Martin

IT'S BEEN A LONG WEEK.

Last Saturday's performance at Leicester fell way below the standards we've set for ourselves this season. I said immediately after the game in post-match media that it was our worst performance of the season and, by the time we'd finished our review of the game on Monday afternoon, everyone knew we'd missed a great opportunity to get a result at Welford Road.

Leicester didn't have to play well to win the game. They didn't need to due to our mistakes and, most disappointingly, we didn't have the physical, competitive edge that has characterised our performances this season, even in defeat.

That won't be the case this evening at Kingsholm. We know we let ourselves down last weekend and I know we'll respond tonight with a massive physical performance against Saracens. As always after a defeat, there's been an extra edge to training all week and we all know the importance of this evening's game.

I'm sure you'll give Mark McCall, the players, management and supporters of Saracens a very warm Friday night welcome to Kingsholm. They have become the dominant force in English and European rugby and we've enjoyed some very close games with them over the past couple of seasons. James Hook's 50 metre winning kick two years ago will live long in the memories of everyone who was there!

Talking of close games, this season's Six Nations has already produced some really high quality



Test match rugby. I sat and watched all three games on Sunday and, for the neutral, Wales v England was the best Test I've seen for a long time. With Ross Moriarty outstanding for Wales, it looked like they might finally end England's unbeaten run but you could only admire the way the England players remained calm and composed and executed two perfect passes under pressure for Elliott Daly's match winning try.

In Paris, I was really disappointed for Greig. There's never a good time to be injured but after their great start to the tournament

in beating Ireland, I expected Scotland to win in France and Greig's nasty injury was a huge blow to the team. He has played a key role in their progression under Vern Cotter and they missed his leadership (and place kicking!) in another tight game.

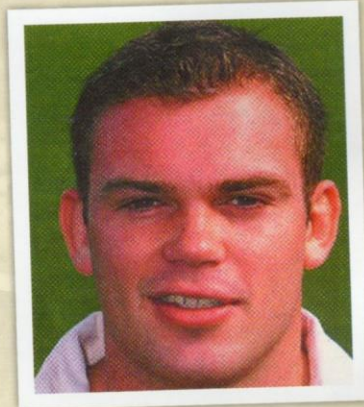
Our performance department will be working hard to get Greig back to full fitness as soon as possible to and allow him to finish his Gloucester career on a high.

Enjoy the game this evening.

David

GLOUCESTER RUGBY
HERITAGE

www.gloucesterrugbyheritage.org.uk



ANDREW HAZELL

The careers of professional rugby players tend to be short, often pursued at several clubs. Not so, Andy Hazell, an old fashioned one club man, who proudly played for the Cherry & Whites from 1997 to 2013 at open side flanker, making 263 appearances and scoring 26 tries. Of those appearances 178 were in the Premiership. In the Heineken Cup he made 29 appearances. On top of all that he won seven England caps.

He was a terrier in the tackle, fast around the field, and did a lot of work on the ground to win turnover ball. He was that increasingly rare animal, a player playing for his home-town club.

Andy Hazell was born in Gloucester on 25 April 1978, and educated at Severn Vale School. He played local rugby for Old Richians and Gloucester Old Boys, before making his debut for Gloucester off the bench against Newcastle on 14 December 1997.

That was his sole appearance for

GREAT PLAYERS FROM THE GLOUCESTER BACK ROW: NOUGHTIES AND TEENS

the season, and indeed it took quite a while before he could break into the team, because of competition from Nathan Carter and then Kingsley Jones.

Andy began to play more regularly during the 2000-01 season and was a replacement when Gloucester made it to the semi-final of the Heineken Cup, losing narrowly to Leicester. The national selectors were beginning to take notice and Andy played for England 'A' against Scotland in 2001.

The 2002-03 season was a great one for the club. The Premiership was topped by no fewer than 15 points, and Andy was in the team which beat Northampton 40-22 at Twickenham in the final of the Powergen Cup. A factor in the team's success that season was the formidable back-row of Jake Boer, Andy Hazell and James Forrester.

By this time Andy was making regular appearances for England 'A', but it was not until November 2004 that he gained his first senior cap, starting against Canada, and a week later was a replacement against South Africa. Four more caps, including a try against Italy, followed in the 2005 Six Nations championship, and his final cap was against South Africa in 2007.

Meanwhile more success was achieved in 2006 with Gloucester when the European Rugby Challenge Cup was won. London Irish were beaten 36-34 after extra time, in a thrilling final played at the Stoop, and Andy scored a try, The Times correspondent writing, "Hazell charged through a gap in a breaking lineout".

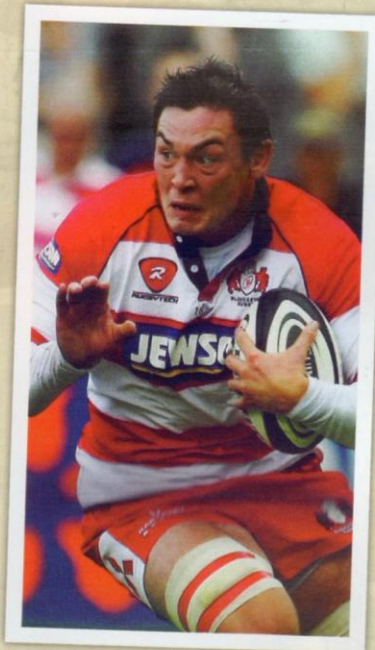
As the years passed Andy seemed to be troubled by more frequent injuries, but one more title was won



in 2011, when he was in the team that won the LV= Cup, defeating Newcastle 34-9 at Northampton. The injuries continued and in 2013 after he suffered two concussions in quick succession he decided to retire.

Andy said, "I would swap all my England caps for a Premiership win with Gloucester."

That tells you all you need to know about the man.



GARETH DELVE

Gloucester never really saw the best of Gareth Delve. He was a skilled and respected number eight, but suffered from so many injuries whilst at the club, that it made it difficult for him to sustain form.

He played three seasons from 2007 to 2010, but only accumulated 55 appearances. In his final season, when he was captain, he appeared 24 times but even then he was injured on 27 March against Leeds which proved to be his last game for the club.

Gareth Delve was born on 30 December 1982 in Cardiff and attended Rumney High School.

In 2001 he took up a professional contract with Bath, and although staying there until 2007 never held down a regular first team place. He did, however, attract the attention of the Welsh selectors, and he won 11 caps between 2006 and 2010.

Gareth made his debut for Gloucester as a replacement against Wasps in the EDF Cup on 4 November 2007, but did not make his first Premiership appearance until 24 November against Harlequins.

In the injury ravaged 2008-09 season, Gareth had a late run of games including the ill-fated EDF final against Cardiff at Twickenham, when Nicky Robinson played a big part in the Welsh club's 50-12 win.

The following season Gareth was made club captain. There was mixed success; a finish of only seventh in the Premiership, and defeat in another cup final. This time the LV= Cup was lost to Northampton 24-30 at Worcester. Almost inevitably Delve missed the final through injury.

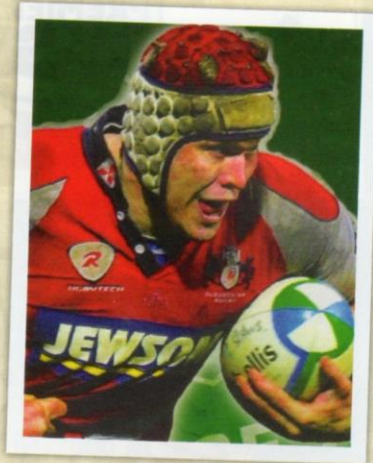
At the end of the season Gareth went to Australia to play for and captain the Melbourne Rebels. He later played for NEC Green Rockets in Japan, before spending the 2015-16 season with Ospreys.

LUKE NARRAWAY

Luke Narraway was a solid durable Number 8, who emerged from the Gloucester Academy system, and went on to play for England at Under 18, Under 21 and senior level, winning seven caps. He captained Gloucester in the 2011-12 season. Luke made 162 appearances for the Cherry and Whites from 2003 to 2012, scoring 16 tries.

Luke was born in Worcester on 7 September 1983, and attended The Chantry School in that city. He made his debut for Gloucester on 4 May 2003 against Leeds.

However, it would not be until the 2006-07 season that he would gain a regular place. He had to compete against Junior Paramore,

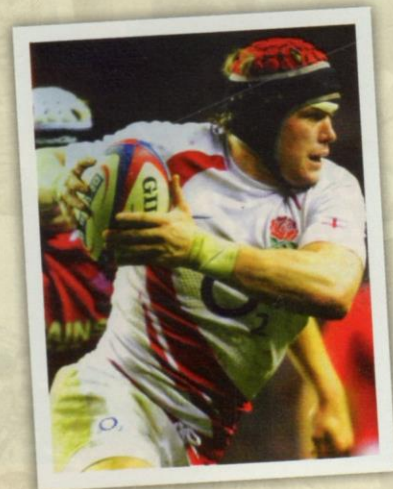


James Forrester and Adam Balding. He came off the bench in the successful European Rugby Challenge Cup final against London Irish in 2006.

Naraway was captain in his final season but missed Gloucester's victory in the LV= Cup Final against Newcastle, through injury.

For England, Luke won the first of his caps against Wales on 2 February 2008, and later that year won two more on the tour of New Zealand. He won the last of his caps off the bench against Ireland in 2009.

Early in 2012, contract talks between the club and Naraway broke down, and he moved to France to play two seasons for Perpignan. He was then signed up by London Irish, where he remains.





KEEP ON KEEPING ON >>>



A feature about all that is good about the Cherry and Whites this season has been the relentless energy and drive of the team.

Back rower Jacob Rowan is a leader on the pitch, and frequently leads the charge for the Cherry and Whites as they aim to get in the faces of their opponents.

With a huge tackle count, and a couple of tries thrown in for good measure too, the Yorkshireman is targeting a strong response from the team this weekend, as the Cherry and Whites look to bounce back after defeat at Leicester last Saturday, with Saracens the visitors to Kingsholm this evening.

"We need to get back on the horse really, we weren't good against Leicester and we know that. We felt like we went there in good spirits, and we were confident but we just didn't get out of the blocks.

"We've had a good training week and now it is just a matter of going

out there this weekend, and proving how good we are."

With Ross Moriarty flying the flag for the Cherry and White back-row unit in the RBS Six Nations, Rowan is delighted to be part of a small team of players that are driving one another on to improve, develop and grow, with the aim of improving the team as a whole.

"There is a good vibe in the back row. It's hugely competitive, and there are that many players that can play in different positions across the back row. You've really got to be on your game if you want to play, keep the jersey and play the following week.

"That competition is only going to help us, and it's going to breed well across the team as we all push one another to improve and get better."

With Head Coach Laurie Fisher lauded as a true expert of the breakdown and tackle area, Rowan talks about the help he has

received from his coach, and the development he has seen in his own game.

"Laurie has helped my game massively, especially around the breakdown, with the training drills that he has delivered, and the knowledge around decision making. When to have a look and when to leave it alone, he's really helped me in that area."

Rowan has made the number 7 jersey his own over the course of the season, and after spending part of his career in the Championship, he is happy to reflect on his journey to where he is now - a fully-fledged Aviva Premiership player.

"I have settled in really well, and this is my home now. I think everyone that is involved in a squad environment is determined to do all that they can to earn the start, and I think that is no different here.

"It's been about proving your worth, through working hard and showing



your energy in every session. Then when you get handed the opportunity, you know you have to set your stall out, and take it with both hands."

Lining up against Rowan this weekend, could be a multi-capped Rugby World Cup winning Springbok in Schalk Burger, and the back-row battle is an exciting one, and fills the squad with a lot of energy and drive.

"It's a massive challenge, and Saracens on the whole have a lot of depth across their squad, some of the players have been capped all over the world.

"There is no doubt the battle we have on our hands across the squad, and we are massively excited and relishing the test, against a team that has experienced so much success in recent seasons."

"THAT COMPETITION IS ONLY GOING TO HELP US, AND IT'S GOING TO BREED WELL ACROSS THE TEAM AS WE ALL PUSH ONE ANOTHER TO IMPROVE AND GET BETTER."



There is no hiding from the fact that last weekend was a blip for the Cherry and Whites, and the squad are building the confidence to bounce back.

This starts from the first whistle, and the ability to get the home crowd raucous and on side early doors.

Rowan highlights the Kingsholm factor as a key part of the Gloucester ammunition.

"We're going to need the home crowd from minute one, and we need them roaring for us on Friday night.

"The job for us is to give them something to roar about from the start, and make sure we're in a good place."



KINGSHOLM NEWS with *Bob Fenton*

So, while the big boys are away playing for their corporate guests and the usual once-a-year rugby fans, and us mere mortals have been disenfranchised by the phenomenal ticket prices, we can get on with enjoying the real rugby.

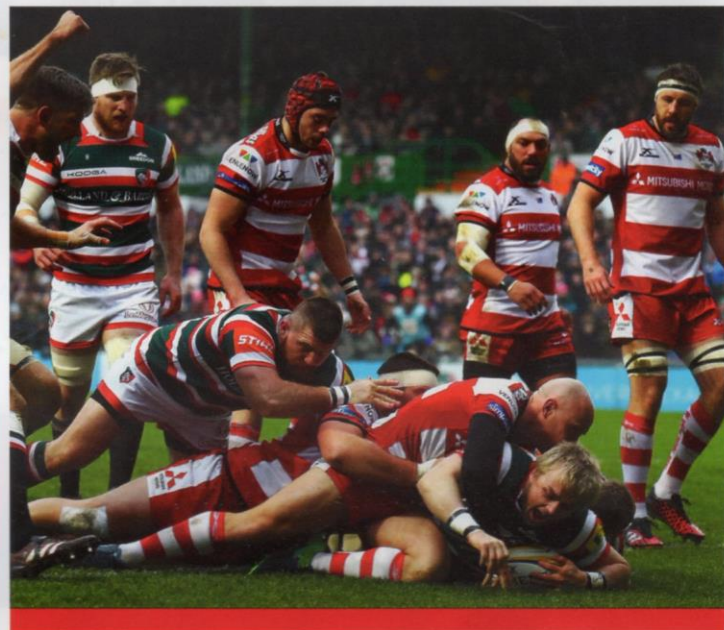
That's not to say I don't enjoy the Six Nations, or other internationals, I do but to me they take second place to a Gloucester game every day of the week.

That said, I think the way our fixtures have worked out, the Six Nations competition might have done us a few favours as we face some of the hardest games of the season knowing that the opposition will be shorn of a few international stars.

Starting last week we rolled into back-to-back fixtures against the axis of evil - or Leicester, Saracens and Wasps as they are generally known.

Heading up to Welford Road you couldn't help feeling that there was not a better time to play them. Their form was faltering, they had players away with the international squads and more than a few injuries to contend with. But you know what they say about wounded tigers...

Yeah... they get really vicious and chew you up horribly. There really isn't much you can say after a game like that, even for an eternal optimist like me there were no real



bright spots to cling on to. As one of our coaches said, probably the worst performance of the season so best forgotten and move on.

One of the worst places to be after a game like that is anywhere near social media. I'm beginning to believe that there are a few people who actually look forward to a game like that so they can vent their negativity. You don't see a peep from them after a good performance, but any kind of a defeat and there they are - all over the airwaves with the usual 'sack somebody' comment.

Of course everyone is more than

entitled to say what they think. But, for me personally I do find myself questioning why they bother? Still, I don't have to read it do I, there's always that lovely little 'mute' button.

But back to the axis of evil... To be fair to Leicester and Wasps, they are not too evil, but Saracens? Well, what can you say?

Pretty much anything you like really - after all they are just about everyone outside North London's favourite team to hate. They apparently bend all the rules, have 136 full time internationals in their squad who all play for £4.80 a week

and a free hairdressing course at Hatfield College, all their fans are glory hunters who don't know a thing about the game, they have no respect for anyone, their players are remote controlled (we know what that little patch behind the ears is really all about) and have probably the worst song ever to be played in a stadium anywhere.

Of course, that's all a load of old tosh - well apart from the song bit, that's true, it is the most hideous thing I've heard since whenever - and to be honest I find this irrational dislike of the club just that, irrational.

Maybe a few years ago they did a few things that were a bit distasteful - I think we all recall the attempt to unfurl that banner in the Shed - but that kind of thing is long gone. What we have now is a fantastically well run club with a team spirit that many other clubs can only aspire to. I'm sure that there is more than a tinge of the green-eyed monster sitting behind a lot of those comments from other fans for sure.

'But what about the enormous salary costs?' I hear you cry! Like everyone else I don't know the answer to that and we have to



trust in the authorities to police it properly. But look at it this way, if the rumours about M. Altrad and his millions coming to Gloucester are true, and we wake up one day to read that Aaron Cruden and half his All Black team mates have all discovered relatives from Frampton on Severn and have signed for Gloucester, are we going to jump up and complain that we couldn't possibly afford all of them, or jump up and shout 'the title is ours!'

I think we know the answer. So, respect where it is due, but that said I hope they leave here without a point tonight!

The men in black are making their second trip to the wild west in as many weeks, last week they suffered a surprising reverse at Worcester so we know they will be bursting at the seams to tear into us tonight. If our performance is remotely similar to last Saturday then this is going to be the start of a long and uncomfortable night.

However, if we dig in and produce the kind of rugby that this side is capable of then who knows? We've said it before, but Kingsholm on a dark night with the lights on becomes an intimidating place to visit. The massive hardcore of supporters will be here doing their bit to lift the side, we can leave the harbingers of doom to follow on the internet as usual.

Hopefully we can have a repeat of the performance of a few seasons ago with James Hook nailing the winning penalty from just in front of his own goal line. We need a release like that, something to lift the roof and propel us into the next few games with some confidence.



RANDALL on RUGBY



TWO ULSTERMEN WILL HAVE HAD PLENTY TO PONDER THIS WEEK.

Worcester's win over Saracens will have been a jolt to their Director of Rugby Mark McCall - although he conceded afterwards that the result was fair - while David Humphreys saw the optimism ahead of Gloucester's visit to Leicester swiftly extinguished at Welford Road.

Humphreys was still playing when McCall was Head Coach at Ulster but now in the same role at different clubs, both have plenty to play for in this important phase of the season.



The biggest difference at this stage between the two is their time in post. When Humphreys was appointed in 2014, McCall already had four years behind him, and with that time has come a consistency in performance at Saracens recognised most by those supporters who remember the club 20 years before, among them freelance rugby writer and Saracens programme columnist Jason Harris.

"My first season was the one at Enfield, before we moved to Watford in 1997 and nearly won the league, losing out narrowly to Newcastle" he reflected.

"We did win the Cup that year, and then after a bit of a dip since about 2009 it's been a gradual building process to a point where we're probably in the best period in the club's history.

"Defence was the first thing McCall, first with Brendan Venter and then with Paul Gustard, turned his attention to. He wanted the team drilled well enough to read both Saracens' own game and that of the opposition, and since about 2012, after the first Premiership title, the defence has been the best in England and possibly in Europe."

Success on the field has gone hand in hand, finally, with a move back from Watford to a venue closer to their traditional home in Southgate. Allianz Park's roots are, of course, in athletics but development of the West Stand would complete the modernisation of a venue that was the first in England to use an artificial pitch, and Jason Harris believes that is where the club's potential growth lies.

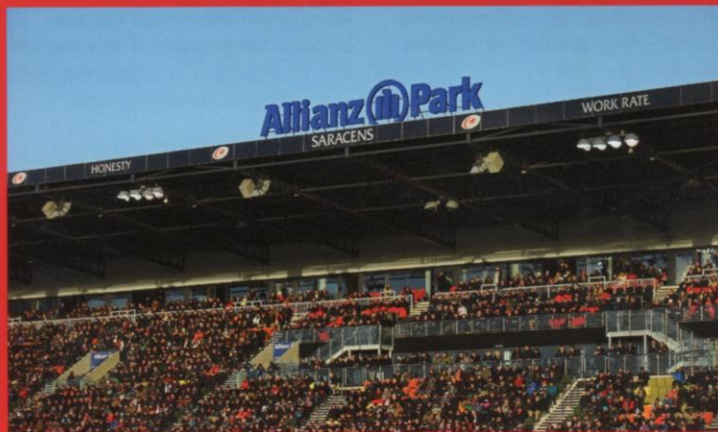


"The West Stand is a 1960's hangover, and the biggest gain from a new one would be the extra facilities and more community use rather than crowd size, which the club isn't too concerned about. Saracens is still restricted in terms of capacity by the lease for the ground and the road network around it within a heavily residential area, but it would be another step I hope people would recognise.

"In the past some fans of other teams were a bit snobby that Saracens shared a football ground and were perceived to be a side with South African mercenaries who strangled the life out of a

game. Since the 2009 shake up (when more than a dozen players left in one summer) faith has been put in younger players. The squad isn't radically overhauled each season and now there is a big group with over 100 appearances each behind them."

Eight of last weekend's starting team at Worcester fall into that bracket but it wasn't enough to prevent a result which went against the form book, even given the meticulous squad rotation Saracens use. David Humphreys frequently talks about Gloucester's players needing to be as fresh in February as they are in the sunshine in September, and



Harris puts Saracens' durability down to their player management.

"Saracens don't have such a thing as a regular first team player any more" he said.

"Players are competing for places but they tend to know several weeks in advance which games they are likely to be playing in. Even in the last five years we've seen the game become significantly more physical with more collisions and players getting hurt a lot more.

"It's almost a case of every player having their own calendar and knowing with some certainty when they can take a week's holiday because they are being rested. At the end of the season the team tends to pick itself but between September and the beginning of April there is plenty for all of them to look forward to."

Tonight is Saracens' third successive Friday night visit to Kingsholm in the Premiership. In January 2015 James Hook slotted a winning penalty in the last minute, while Gloucester narrowly lost last season's game which kicked off the season here after the World Cup.

Given the results six days ago, both teams will be keen to avoid back to back defeats, and Jason Harris won't be surprised to see Samoan lock Fa'atiga Lemalu in the Saracens team after being signed last week.

"The Australian Will Skelton did a great job for seven weeks but with George Kruis injured and Mark Flanagan not having broken into the team after his move from Bedford, the second row needed bolstering and Lemalu should give it that extra edge. The atmosphere is always good at Gloucester but I don't think Saracens will be concerned by that."

You can follow Jason Harris on Twitter @LargeRugby



VIEW FROM THE

Citizen

GLOUCESTER

Tom Hudson once thought he would never play rugby again – now he is determined to make the most of his second bite of the cherry with Gloucester.

The 22-year-old joined the club's academy at the start of the season after four years out of action, making his first start in the 24-13 win over Newport Gwent Dragons on the wing in the Anglo-Welsh Cup two weeks ago.

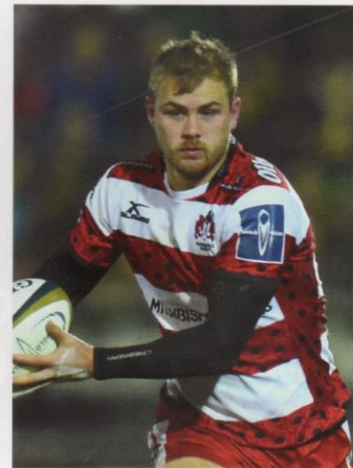
Hudson was in the Leicester Tigers academy when he picked up a mysterious chronic injury, which

caused him to retire after two years of trying to battle his way back to fitness and failed attempted comebacks.

He ended up getting a job as Regional Development Officer at KL Tigers, an affiliate club to the Welford Road outfit in Malaysia, and after spending two years in Kuala Lumpur he found a doctor who was able to solve the problem.

"The injury itself was pretty unclear, hence why I had to retire," said Hudson.

"I would do my rehab for a torn groin or torn abductor and get back





to running and in contact it would just tear again.

"I then went to Malaysia. I managed to get myself fit out there and saw a bloke who could fix it. It was more of a neural injury in the end.

"I don't know what word to attach to it - luck, fate. I like to think more fate, there's certainly some romance in the story but I'm grateful to be here today.

"Sometimes the worst things can end up being the best and that was certainly the case.

"It made me more hungry, more determined, a little bit older, a little bit more mature, which some people would laugh at but it's given me a second bite of the cherry."

Once he got back to fitness Hudson got in touch with Gloucester's Head of Academy Neil McCarthy, his former coach at Leicester, and was given a second chance to make it as a professional player.

Hudson, who is capable of playing anywhere across the back line, came on as a replacement in the Anglo-Welsh Cup games against Saracens and Northampton earlier in the season before playing the full 80 minutes in the dead rubber against Newport - a special moment for the youngster.

"It was superb. It was a huge day for me. Coming back from a long run of injuries, it was really good to get the shirt on, play in front of the Kingsholm crowd and get the win.

"I'm hugely grateful for the powers that be for giving me an opportunity.

"It's been a long road since pre-season, it's a hard nine months but it's really nice to top it off with a start, with a win at Kingsholm so all good all-round."

"It made me more hungry, more determined, a little bit older, a little bit more mature, which some people would laugh at but it's given me a second bite of the cherry."

Given Hudson's own injury nightmare, seeing fellow Academy talent Elliott Creed lying on the ground with a horrific ankle injury at the end of the game certainly struck a chord.

"It's awful to see. Me saying it's the nature of the game doesn't do anyone any favours. Elliott's a true professional and a true athlete so he'll get himself back fit.

"We all go on the pitch every day in training knowing these things happen, we've just got to try and manage it as best we can what happens to us and equally our peers, we just try to support them as best we can."



ACTION REPLAY || SATURDAY 4 FEBRUARY || KINGSHOLM || ATT 8,310

Gloucester Rugby 24

Tries: Trinder, Orr, Vellacott. Conversions: Evans (3). Penalties: Evans.

Newport Gwent Dragons 13

Tries: Screech (2). Penalties: Prydie.



Despite going into the game knowing that even a bonus point win would not be enough to guarantee qualification for the knockout stages of the Anglo-Welsh Cup, Gloucester did a professional job against the Newport Gwent Dragons and ran out 24-13 winners.

The complexities of the competition meant that Gloucester couldn't overtake the Leicester Tigers at the top of the pool, despite the two teams not having played each other in the competition.

However, all the talk before the game from Gloucester focussed on the importance of maintaining the recent good form and momentum



- 15 Protheror
- 14 Halaifonua
- 13 Trinder 1T
- 12 Creed
- 11 Hudson
- 10 Evans 1P 3C
- 9 Braley ▼
- 1 Orr 1T ▼
- 2 Matu'u ▼
- 3 Ma'afu ▼
- 4 Batley ▼
- 5 Denton
- 6 Kalamafoni ▼
- 7 D Thomas
- 8 Clarke ▼

Replacements used: Dawidiuk, Y Thomas, McNulty, Latta, Beckett, Vellacott 1T, Safe.

- 15 Meyer
- 14 Hughes
- 13 Morgan
- 12 Dixon ▼
- 11 Prydie 1P
- 10 Jones ▼
- 9 Davies ▼
- 1 Hobbs ▼
- 2 Rhys Thomas ▼
- 3 Fairbrother ▼
- 4 Screech 2T
- 5 Sweet
- 6 Thomas ▼
- 7 Cudd
- 8 Crosswell ▼

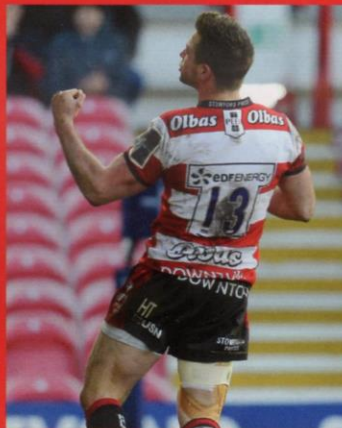
Replacements used: Buckley, Davies, Mitchell, Landman, Blake, Knoble, O'Brien, Beard.

and also of pride in the shirt and delivering a performance for the supporters. And the Cherry and Whites ticked all the boxes.

It wasn't easy. The Dragons named a decent side and came to Kingsholm in no mood to simply roll over on a ground where they triumphed last season in the European Rugby Challenge Cup quarter-final.

Gloucester took the initiative from the off, but couldn't quite find the moment of magic to unlock the visiting defence and get the scoreboard moving. In fact, against the run of play, the Dragons took a 26th minute lead through a Tom Prydie penalty.

Credit to Gloucester, they didn't try and force things. Sticking to the game plan, the catch and drive proved to be the route to success and Cameron Orr was the man who claimed the try as the Cherry and Whites went into half-time with a 7-3 lead.



And the second half again saw Gloucester dominate possession and territory. But, unlike the first half, they found a way through the Dragons defence pretty quickly this time. Henry Trinder was a popular scorer as he cut a nice line off a Callum Braley pass.

Lloyd Evans extended the lead to 17-3 with the conversion and a subsequent penalty, but the visitors, who to their credit were still fighting hard, hit back with a catch and drive try for second row Matthew Screech.

In fact, the visitors had a decent spell after that score and Gloucester had to dig deep for a while, but responded in the best possible way as Ben Vellacott scampered over after a quickly taken tap penalty.



That pretty much put the game to bed although the Dragons did cross for another late score and a second try for Screech, before the game finished on a sad note for Gloucester when Elliott Creed was stretchered off with an ankle injury.

APPLYING THE LAW WITH



Official Legal Partner

It's never easy without a TMO on duty, but Gloucester will feel a couple of potential scores were ruled out by the lack of available replays.

Referee Rhys Thomas also didn't endear himself to the Kingsholm faithful with a slightly fussy performance which didn't help the flow of the game.



DEFENCE COACH JONNY BELL

"That is what it is all about - these international windows can give opportunities to younger players - and we talked in the changing rooms afterwards just about how important that was.

"It was important that we carried on that momentum, from the win against Sarries here, those players have been on an upward curve, and have not always got the win, but there has just always been an edge to these guys.

"That gives us selection dilemmas, but it also gives us strength there as well, it keeps momentum going and we are going to a tough place next week at Leicester, and we needed the win today to keep that momentum going."

ACTION REPLAY || SATURDAY 11 FEBRUARY || WELFORD ROAD || ATT 20,918

Leicester Tigers 34

Tries: Hamilton, Conversions: Burns, Williams (3), Penalties: Thompson, Mermoz, Drop Goals: Williams

Gloucester Rugby 9

Penalties: Burns (3)



Gloucester travelled to Welford Road last weekend in good spirits, having enjoyed a decent run of results in the weeks leading up to the game.

However, they were brought crashing down to earth with a bump as they got off to a bad start against the Tigers and simply never got back on terms.

Credit to the Tigers who seized the initiative right from the kick-off. They played with a passion and intensity that delighted the home crowd who created a partisan atmosphere. It was a tough environment for Gloucester on the day.

It was a blow for the team's top six hopes as the Tigers had been just three points clear of Gloucester in



- 15 Tait
- 14 Thompson 1P
- 13 Roberts
- 12 Smith ▼
- 11 Brady ▼
- 10 Burns 1C ▼
- 9 Kitto
- 1 Rizzo ▼
- 2 T Youngs (c) ▼
- 3 Cilliers ▼
- 4 Slater
- 5 Barrow ▼
- 6 Fitzgerald
- 7 O'Connor
- 8 Hamilton 1T ▼

Replacements used:

McGuigan, Genge, Bateman, M William, Thacker, Harrison, O Williams 3C 1DG, Mermoz 1T.

- 15 Marshall
- 14 Sharples ▼
- 13 Symons
- 12 Twelvetrees
- 11 Purdy ▼
- 10 Burns 3P
- 9 Heinz (c) ▼
- 1 Hohnack ▼
- 2 Hibbard 1T ▼
- 3 Afoa ▼
- 4 Savage ▼
- 5 Thrush
- 6 Ludlow
- 7 Rowan
- 8 Kalamafoni ▼

Replacements used:

Matu'u, Thomas, Ma'afu, Galarza, Kvesic, Braley, Hook, Scott.

fifth place after 13 rounds. A win for the Cherry and Whites would have been a huge bonus, but it never looked on the cards after a rough opening.

During those first few minutes, Gloucester lost Sione Kalamafoni to injury and, while the Tongan was out of the action, the home team pounced with a try from back rower Luke Hamilton.

Billy Burns and older brother Freddie then swapped penalties but, with the home pack enjoying the ascendancy at the set-piece, momentum was well and truly behind Leicester.

Desperate defence kept the Tigers out as they poured forward, but it proved to be a temporary reprieve as a five metre scrum gave their pack a perfect attacking platform and a penalty try was the result.

Going for the jugular, Leicester were then denied a third try as an effort from Jono Kitto was ruled out for a block before Gloucester enjoyed possibly their best spell of the game.

A catch and drive looked set to power over the Tigers line, but was blatantly pulled down by two of the Leicester back row. A further penalty was the result but Gloucester couldn't capitalise.

Tom Savage then came close as he rampaged towards the line, only to be tackled just short. Quickly recycled ball created what seemed to be an overlap on the left, but the chance went begging.



It was a massive escape for Leicester, who rubbed salt into the wounds by moving downfield and extending the lead through an Owen Williams drop-goal.

The Cherry and Whites regrouped and worked hard after the resumption to get back into the game. Billy Burns narrowed the gap with two penalties, but that was as good as it got.

Having absorbed a lot of pressure, Leicester pounced for two late

scores to secure the try scoring bonus point. Adam Thompstone found a good line to score the third with just eight minutes to go, and that gave the home pack the perfect incentive to throw everything at Gloucester in the final few minutes.

They needed no second invitation and, with the final play of the game, a concerted forward effort resulted in Maxime Mermoz touching down.



APPLYING THE LAW WITH



Official Legal Partner

Referee Ian Tempest refereed what he saw in front of him, and Gloucester were penalised mercilessly on the day.

Perhaps the only complaint the Cherry and Whites might have is that they had a shout for a penalty try when a catch and drive was blatantly pulled down when heading for the line.

But he decided otherwise and Gloucester's best chance was gone.



DIRECTOR OF RUGBY:

DAVID HUMPHREYS

"We pride ourselves, no matter where we play and who we play against, of having a physical edge.

"Our set-piece let us down. We know when we come to Welford Road that we have to have a set-piece to allow us to play. We did not have that."



TEAM LINE-UPS

FRIDAY 17 FEBRUARY
AVIVA PREMIERSHIP
RUGBY | ROUND 15



SARACENS

T P C D								T P C D				
				TOM MARSHALL	15	FULLBACK	15	MATT GALLAGHER				
				CHARLIE SHARPLES	14	RIGHT WING	14	CHRIS ASHTON				
				MATT SCOTT	13	OUTSIDE CENTRE	13	NICK TOMPKINS				
				BILLY TWELVETREES	12	INSIDE CENTRE	12	BRAD BARRITT (C)				
				DAVID HALAIFONUA	11	LEFT WING	11	MIKE ELLERY				
				BILLY BURNS	10	FLY-HALF	10	ALEX LOZOWSKI				
				WILLI HEINZ (C)	9	SCRUM HALF	9	RICHARD WIGGLESWORTH				
				JOSH HOHNECK	1	LOOSEHEAD PROP	1	RICHARD BARRINGTON				
				RICHARD HIBBARD	2	HOOVER	2	SCHALK BRITS				
				SALESI MA'AFU	3	TIGHTHEAD PROP	3	PETRUS DU PLESSIS				
				TOM SAVAGE	4	LOCK	4	MICHAEL RHODES				
				JEREMY THRUSH	5	LOCK	5	JIM HAMILTON				
				ROSS MORIARTY	6	BLINDSIDE FLANKER	6	WILL FRASER				
				JACOB ROWAN	7	OPENSIDE FLANKER	7	SCHALK BURGER				
				BEN MORGAN	8	NUMBER 8	8	JACKSON WRAY				
				REPLACEMENTS				REPLACEMENTS				
				MOTU MATU'U	16		16	JARED SAUNDERS				
				YANN THOMAS	17		17	TITI LAMOSITELE				
				PAUL DORAN-JONES	18	MATCH OFFICIALS	18	JUAN FIGALLO				
				MARIANO GALARZA	19	REFEREE:	19	MARK FLANAGAN				
				LEWIS LUDLOW	20	Wayne Barnes	20	KELLY BROWN				
				CALLUM BRALEY	21	ASSISTANT REFEREES:	21	BEN SPENCER				
				JAMES HOOK	22	Jack Makepeace & Nigel Carrick	22	MAX MALINS				
				HENRY TRINDER	23		23	MARCELO BOSCH				