

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

FRIDAY, AUGUST 25, 2017

KINGSHOLM – PRE-SEASON FRIENDLY

GLOUCESTER'S YOUNG GUNS SURVIVE SPIRITED
HARTPURY COMEBACK

KICK OFF: 5:30 P.M.

GLOUCESTER RUGBY 41 HARTPURY RFC 33

Match Report By Duncan Wood

Hartpury were a late stand-in for this testimonial fixture, but proved more than up to the task as they pushed a youthful Gloucester side all the way before Callum Braley's late try helped to secure an entertaining 41-33 win.

Gloucester looked well set as their more experienced heads opened up a 26-19 half-time lead, but a number of changes, both planned and enforced, saw the Cherry and Whites finish with a number of youngsters playing out of position and the visitors almost took advantage.

Gloucester had to withstand some early pressure as the visitors tried to capitalise on a handling error. The defence was robust, but came at a cost as Jake Polledri, looking to make an impression against his former club, had to limp off.

There was plenty of ambition in the opening ten minutes as both teams looked to make the most of perfect conditions. Perhaps a little bit too much ambition as some promising moves petered out due to inaccurate passing.

Gloucester came close to opening the scoring as a catch and drive from a five metre lineout close[sic]. But it was the visitors who opened the scoring via the same tactic; hooker Luke Stratford awarded the score.

It provoked Gloucester into an instant response. A penalty award allowed Carwyn Penny to take play into the Hartpury 22. The catch and drive came up just short, but Gloucester maintained possession and Ed Slater crashed over from close range. Billy Twelvetrees added the extras.

Gloucester were then guilty of a lapse of concentration, as one of their own, Harry Randall, caught the defence napping with a quick tap penalty and drew the last man to put Harry Cochrane in at the corner. James Williams added a fine conversion to make it 7-12.

Once again, the Cherry and Whites hit back immediately. Hartpury transgressed from the restart and the kick went to the corner. Maul one was halted illegally, but the second resulted in a score for Moto Matu'u.

Twelvetrees couldn't add the conversion but did give Gloucester the lead shortly afterwards. The catch and drive again set up great position, Matu broke off, Braley was in support and Twelvetrees took the pass to crash over before converting his own score. 19-12 after 29 minutes.

Hartpury then levelled matters, very much against the run of play. Their scrum was going back at a rate of knots but Rhys Oakley secured possession. Fly-half Williams took it up and offloaded to Ed Sheldon who produced a superb sidestep before outpacing the defence. Williams converted for 19-all.

The Gloucester lead was promptly restored. Again Hartpury ill-discipline from the restart let them down. Again the catch and drive made the hard yards, but this time it was Andy Cramond who powered over from close range. Twelvetrees converted again.

An entertaining first half came to a close with Gloucester in the ascendant by 26 points to 19. Both teams had come to play and it had resulted in an open encounter.

There were several replacements for both sides at half time and, when play resumed, Gloucester put themselves under pressure by

conceding a number of unnecessary penalties. A powerful scrum ended the immediate threat.

The Cherry and Whites made more replacements in the next few minutes, and the back line in particular had a very youthful look about it by this stage.

The game had lost its way a little bit, but Hartpury pounced upon an error on 58 minutes, Callum Braley having a kick charged down and the visitors pouring downfield to level the scores as Alex Craig scrambled over from close range with Jacob Perry converting.

The visitors were full of running at this stage and deservedly took the lead on 66 minutes. Mike Wilcox fielded a kick downfield and inspired a thrilling counter attack which saw Harry Cochrane step the last man and dive over under the posts. Perry's conversion made it 26-33.

The end-to-end nature of the game continued apace as Charlie Chapman showed great feet to score Gloucester's fifth try, but Penny couldn't quite convert to level the scores. 31-33 with eight minutes to play.

Gloucester now had self-belief, and it proved to be key as Callum Braley finished off a fine move, inspired by a break by Henry Trinder, and went over under the posts to make Penny's conversion a straightforward one.

And Penny had the final word as his last-minute penalty secured the win.

Gloucester Rugby Lineups

15. Tom Hudson; 14. Ollie Thorley, 13. Matt Scott, 12. Billy Twelvetrees, 11. Henry Trinder; 10. Carwyn Penny, 9. Callum Braley; 1. Josh Hohneck, 2. Motu Matu'u, 3. Fraser Balmain, 4. Ed Slater (capt), 5. Andy Cramond, 6. Freddie Clarke, 7. Jake Polledri, 8. Gareth Evans

Replacements:

16. Joe Mullis, 17. Cameron Orr, 18. Ciaran Knight, 19. Tom Denton, 20. Charlie Beckett, 21. Charlie Chapman, 22. Tom Seabrook, 23. Jacob Morris, 24. Reece Dunn

Hartpury RFC Lineups

15. Mike Wilcox; 14. Harry Cochrane, 13. Luke Eves, 12. George Boulton, 11. Ed Sheldon; 10. James Williams, 9. Harry Randall; 1. Mike Flook, 2. Luke Stratford, 3. Alex Gibson, 4. BJ Edwards, 5. Alex Craig, 6. Rob Langley, 7. Mat Gilbert, 8. Rhys Oakley.

Replacements:

16. Tom Heard, 17. Des Merrey, 18. Henry Walker, 19. Joe Dancer, 20. Joe Quinn, 21. Iain Grieve, 22. Darrel Dyer, 23. Will Safe, 24. Jamie Forrester, 25. Jacob Perry, 26. Elias Caven

JC