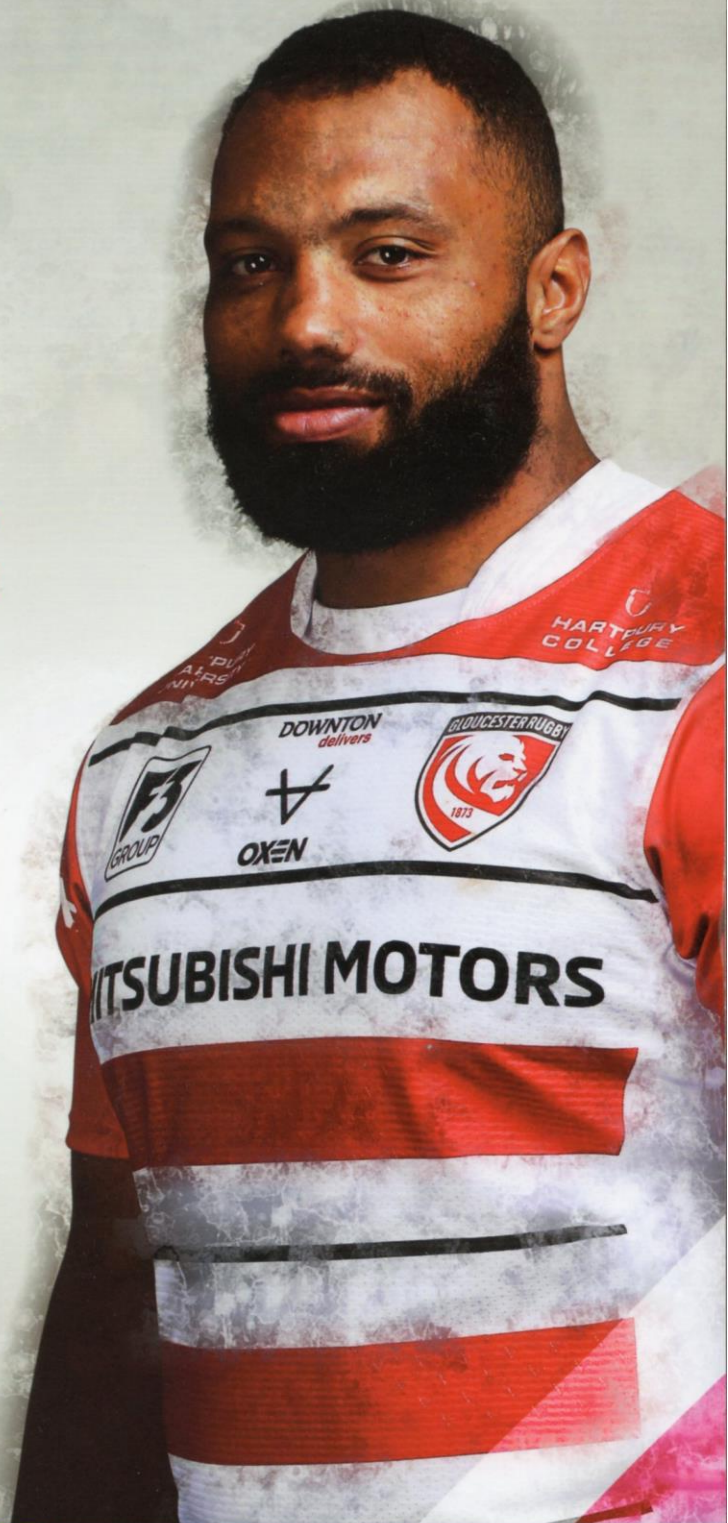




CHERRY & WHITES



GLoucester RUGBY v CONNACHT RUGBY

HEINEKEN CHAMPIONS CUP
8 DECEMBER 2019
1.00PM | £3.50





CHAIRMAN

MARTIN ST. QUINTON



GOOD AFTERNOON AND A VERY WARM WELCOME TO KINGSHOLM AS WE CONTINUE OUR HEINEKEN CHAMPIONS CUP CAMPAIGN AGAINST CONNACHT RUGBY.

In recent seasons, we have played Connacht on a number of occasions, including a couple of European knock-out fixtures, and they have all been very close, hard-fought encounters. We expect nothing different this afternoon.

So far in the Heineken Champions Cup we have been extremely close to achieving a couple of very good results against two strong French sides. They were two contrasting displays – we established a good lead against Toulouse but couldn't quite hold on, and then against Montpellier our second-half comeback came up just short.

It's encouraging that we've finished within a score against both those teams – Toulouse

of course are the current Top 14 champions and four-time Heineken Cup winners – but it's also been a reminder of the quality of this tournament.

Consequently, coming into these back to back encounters against Connacht, we know that our European hopes are still alive, but we also know that we need to win these two games. Should we do so, we can be competitive against Montpellier and Toulouse in the final two rounds.

It goes without saying that it's been a frustrating few weeks. As Johan said after the game at Harlequins last weekend, 'we've not been outclassed or outperformed in any of the recent matches. But it's a game of very fine margins and we've been just on the wrong side of those'. We will continue to work hard, undeterred.

What has been consistent is the fantastic support that we've received, whether it be on the road in Europe or here at Kingsholm. Supporting a Club can have its ups and down, but we have really appreciated your backing and would welcome more of the same today.

Enjoy the game.

Martin

“ WE KNOW THAT OUR EUROPEAN HOPES ARE STILL ALIVE, BUT WE ALSO KNOW THAT WE NEED TO WIN THESE TWO GAMES ”



COLUMN SPONSORED BY



CEO

LANCE BRADLEY



GOOD AFTERNOON, AND A VERY WARM WELCOME TO KINGSHOLM THIS AFTERNOON - IN PARTICULAR TO THE PLAYERS, STAFF AND SUPPORTERS OF CONNACHT RUGBY.

These back to back European fixtures nearly always prove to be pivotal in terms of determining the overall outcome of the group. And I truly believe that the next two weekends, here at Kingsholm today and away in Galway next weekend, will be exactly that.

We've had a tough run of results over the last few weeks, so I, and more importantly, the team, hugely appreciate your continued support today. It really does make a difference.

Two losing bonus points from the first two matches in the pool, against Toulouse and Montpellier, seems scant reward for our performances, but such is the nature of professional sport. We feel we could have won both games. Last time out in particular it was great to see so many of our youngsters do so well away from home against such top flight opposition.

We've proved that we can match up well against those two teams, and can take confidence from those matches for the return games in rounds five and six.

The game in Montpellier two weekends ago was my first European away fixture as CEO of Gloucester Rugby. It was terrific to be able to mix with so many of you over in the South of France, and witness first hand the amazing support that you give the team on the road in Europe.

I especially enjoyed the Question and Answer session with Johan Ackermann and Rory Teague that we arranged for the supporters who travelled with us, something that we will look to repeat in the future.

The Irish bar in the centre of town where we met so many of you on Saturday afternoon wasn't too bad either. I'll look forward to catching up with those of you who are coming to Galway in a similar establishment next weekend.

It just leaves me to thank you again for your ongoing support. As a rugby fan myself, I appreciate that it's been a tough few weeks. But we genuinely feel that we're competitive as a team and that our efforts will be rewarded with some wins very shortly, hopefully starting this afternoon.

Lance

“ LAST TIME OUT IN PARTICULAR IT WAS GREAT TO SEE SO MANY OF OUR YOUNGSTERS DO SO WELL AWAY FROM HOME AGAINST SUCH TOP FLIGHT OPPOSITION ”



GLOUCESTER RUGBY EDGE THRILLER IN CONNACHT TO EARN HOME SEMI-FINAL

Gloucester delighted and distressed their supporters in equal measure at the Sportsground, but finally edged an enthralling quarter-final against Connacht by 33 points to 28 and keep their European dreams alive.

It was, quite frankly, a game that you simply couldn't take your eyes off. Gloucester have developed a reputation for their games going to the wire in recent times and this was no different. In fact, the Cherry and Whites ensured that the public got their money's worth by keeping the ball alive even when time had expired!

Both teams more than played their part on the day. Connacht were particularly good in the first half and then showed great resolve to fight their way back into the match just when it looked as though their goose was cooked.

There were incidents galore throughout, Gloucester spent the first half hour trying to



adapt to the way Romain Poite was refereeing the game and spent 20 minutes with only 14 men on the pitch following yellow cards to Ben Morgan and Lewis Ludlow.

But they went into half-time with an important 10-17 lead, three tries in the bag albeit with a hint of luck involved in the first two.

And Gloucester just about kept Connacht at bay as the second half ebbed and flowed. The home team could never quite be shaken off, but they were just about held at arm's length.

Crucially, the Cherry and Whites kept their composure when it mattered and, on the day, edged enough of the key moments to ensure that Kingsholm would be hosting a European Rugby Challenge Cup semi-final.

In fine conditions in Galway, early decisions went against Gloucester, Charlie Sharples perhaps lucky to escape censure as he tackled the catcher in the air from the kick-off, swiftly followed by a free kick conceded at the game's first lineout.

But Gloucester stunned the home crowd by taking a fourth minute lead. Connacht actually nicked Gloucester lineout ball, but the tap back went loose and James Hanson pounced on the bouncing ball before steaming ahead and stepping the last man to dive over. Owen Williams' conversion hit the upright and stayed out.

However, the Cherry and Whites put themselves under pressure from the restart, knocking on and then conceding a scrum penalty. The kick went to the corner and Gloucester held the initial surge, but

the ball was spun out wide and scrum-half Kieran Marmion had enough pace to find a gap and score. Jack Carty couldn't convert.

The home side, backed by a vociferous crowd, were looking very lively at this point and Gloucester were having to work hard in defence as well as to get onside with the officials with most of the calls going Connacht's way.

Gloucester could barely buy a decision, and it came as no real surprise when number eight Ben Morgan was yellow carded for a high tackle on 16 minutes, the real irritation being that it came after Tom Marshall had seemingly kept the ball infield following a kick to touch.

Connacht's handling wasn't helping them out but, following another free-kick for delaying a lineout, the home team struck. Hooker McCartney made the initial break and, although Gloucester got back, the ball was kept alive with some lovely handling for Bundee Aki to power over. Carty was off target again but Connacht led 10-5 on 22 minutes.

Morgan returned without further damage to the scoreboard and Gloucester promptly hit back. Again there was an element of luck in the build-up as Gloucester misfired at a five metre lineout only for Connacht to knock on.

Solid scrum ball then gave the backs good ball to work with, they worked a slick move and Owen Williams' long pass gave Tom Marshall enough room to go in at the corner and level matters at 10-10 after 28 minutes.

Gloucester were finally showing signs of starting to get their game going, Trinder pinning Connacht back with a lovely kick into the 22 and the Cherry and Whites then thought they'd re-taken the lead after Val Rapava Ruskin burst through powerfully.

Ed Slater went over on the left as Gloucester kept the ball alive, but once again the officials intervened as they ruled that Atkinson's pass to the second row was forward. Referee Poite and his assistants were rapidly becoming key players.

But Gloucester kept up the pressure and deservedly broke through on 38 minutes. Nothing really looked on for Henry Trinder as he entered the 22, but a beautiful body swerve and outside break saw him break the defensive line and the centre had the strength to make the line despite three defenders in attendance. Williams converted from the touchline for 10-17.

So a breathless 40 minutes came to an end with Gloucester holding sway on the scoreboard. It had been an eventful half and the feeling was that there was a long way to go in this tie just yet.

Gloucester's first try was slightly fortunate but, when they got going, they looked really good with ball in hand and could easily have been further ahead. However, discipline was a concern and there was every possibility that Monsieur Poite could still have a big part to play.

The second half started well for Gloucester as they disrupted Connacht ruck ball and won a penalty. Owen Williams didn't seem to strike the ball cleanly, but it had the legs and Gloucester had a 10-20 lead.



However, the home team struck back immediately. With the referee playing advantage for a scrum penalty, a lovely kick through from Marmion forced Tom Marshall to turn and he and Owen Williams were beaten to the ball by Niyi Adeolokun for the score.

Connacht were suddenly on fire as Adeolokun made a telling break down the right. The cover defence got back as the home team knocked on with the line in sight. Gloucester were penalised for offside and Carty's penalty narrowed the gap to 18-20 after 48 minutes.

Gloucester then proceeded to waste a couple of good scoring opportunities, but finally broke through on 56 minutes. Mark Atkinson made a telling outside break before finding John Afoa on his inside and the prop romped home from 22 metres out. Williams added an important conversion for an 18-27 lead.

Equally as important was his 64th minute penalty as the Gloucester scrum forced a penalty out of the Connacht pack and the lead was extended to 18-30.

But back came the home side as they saw their European hopes drifting away. Gloucester muscled up in defence, perhaps too physically, and Lewis Ludlow was yellow carded for leading with the shoulder in the tackle. Craig Ronaldson's penalty narrowed the gap to 21-30 with 12 minutes left to play.

And Connacht promptly made it 28-30 as Gloucester were again caught flat footed by a chip in behind the defensive line, Matt Healy gathering to step the final man and score. Ronaldson converted and it was game on.

Gloucester still carried on playing their ambitious game, slick handling taking play into the Connacht 22. In desperation, the ball was knocked on deliberately by Jarrad Butler, who saw yellow for his actions, and Billy Twelvetrees had an easy penalty as Ludlow returned to the fray.

Connacht gave it everything as time expired, but the Gloucester defence was up to the task. A vital steal of the ball by Callum Braley looked to have settled things as he ripped the ball from the ball carrier but, instead of kicking the ball out, Gloucester hoofed the ball downfield.

Thankfully Matt Healy was caught in possession as he sprinted back to his own line and conceded a penalty. This time, the ball did get kicked into touch and Gloucester were finally able to breathe a sigh of relief!



GLOUCESTER RUGBY UNITED RUN IN FIVE TRIES IN SHIELD WIN OVER LEICESTER TIGERS



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Gloucester Rugby United got their Premiership Rugby Shield campaign off to the best possible start with a 33-15 victory over Leicester Tigers at Kingsholm recently, scoring five tries on the way to clinch a five point return.

It was a scrappy start on the night with both sides taking their time to get their attacking and defensive structures into place. There were a few nervous knock-ons but the players on both teams soon relaxed and really got stuck into the match.

The Cherry and Whites were strong early on at the set-piece and built their attack from this solid platform. The front row of Alex Seville, Henry Walker and Ciaran Knight worked hard in the scrum and kept Gloucester Rugby United on the front foot all game.

Jack Reeves was the first to get over the try line for Gloucester Rugby United after bursting through the Leicester defence from short range. George Barton slotted the conversion to give the home side a 7-0 lead after only five minutes.





33-15



Gloucester Rugby United gained confidence from this score and put pressure on Leicester in their own half. Hinkley and Seabrook linked well from a Barton kick and gained the Cherry and Whites significant ground.

The forwards worked hard, making metre by metre deep in the Leicester half and it wasn't long before there was enough space to pass it out to the backs. Seabrook ran in and took the ball flat at full pace and wrestled his way over the try line and Barton slotted the kick to put his team 14 points ahead.

The home side gained confidence from this second score and started to play some ambitious attacking rugby.

Gloucester Rugby United:

Tom Hudson; 14. Tom Stanton, 13. Tom Seabrook, 12. Jack Reeves, 11. Jake Morris; 10. George Barton, 9. Charlie Chapman; 1. Alex Seville, 2. Henry Walker, 3. Ciaran Knight; 4. Harry Butler, 5. Simon Linsell (capt); 6. Josh Gray, 7. Aaron Hinkley, 8. Jack Clement

Replacements:

Ethan Hunt, 17. Harry Fry, 18. Ashley Challenger, 19. Archie Tarbuck, 20. Joe Howard, 21. Stephen Varney, 22. Louis Hillman-Cooper, 23. Reece Dunn

TRIES: Reeves, Seabrook, Stanton (2), Hunt

CONVERSIONS: Barton (4)



Unfortunately, the defence was equally as open and Leicester made the most of this by breaking through. Captain Harry Simmons saw a gap and made a charge for the line scoring the away side's first try of the game. The conversion was good and made things close going into the break. 14-7 the score at half-time.

Leicester were first to get on the scoresheet after half time through a Sam Costelow penalty but it was Gloucester who scored the first try of the second half to settle any nerves.

Hinkley showed his skill by making a dash for the try line and holding up the Leicester defence, before offloading the ball out the back for Tom Stanton.

The game really opened up after this score and it wasn't long before the Kingsholm fans had something else to cheer about. The backs all linked well and put Stanton in a bit of space. The electric winger used his pace

to touch down for a try in the right-hand corner. Barton showed composure to knock over the conversion from such a tight angle.

The tries continued to flow for Gloucester Rugby and the forwards worked together well to drive a maul from a 5m lineout over the line. Once again Barton kept his composure to kick the conversion from such a tight angle.

Leicester didn't give up and came back fighting. After a string of solid attack, Jimmy Stevens burrowed his way over the try line for the away team. The conversion was wide and Leicester continued to put the pressure on until the final whistle.

A good start to the Premiership Rugby Shield campaign and the squad will hope for a similar result when they face Northampton Wanderers on December 16.

Report by Louis Shaw

FIVE EPIC CONFRONTATIONS WITH THE IRISHMEN OF CONNACHT

Connacht was founded in 1885, when six small clubs in the province came together to form the Connacht branch of the Irish Rugby Football Union. Connacht has only 8% of the population of Ireland, and as a result, it has a much smaller base from which to pick players, when compared to the other three provinces of Leinster, Munster and Ulster. In addition, it has to compete with traditional Gaelic sports such as Hurling and Gaelic Football.

The first Connacht player to play for Ireland was Henry Anderson, who in 1903 played against England. He would go on to become President of the IRFU.

In 1946-47, the Interprovincial Championship was inaugurated, and each season all four provinces would compete. To compensate Connacht for its reduced player base, it was decided that any English born Irish international player must play for Connacht in the Championship. It was still the case however, that most seasons Connacht struggled for success. They never won the Championship outright, but did share the title in 1956, 1957 and 1965.

All the provinces turned professional when the regulations changed in 1995. For many seasons Connacht played in the second tier European Challenge Cup, and from 1996 to 1998 were coached by Warren Gatland.

Connacht first qualified for the Heineken Cup in 2011, and were drawn in the same group as Gloucester. This would be the first time the two clubs had met.

10 DECEMBER 2011, HEINEKEN CUP CONNACHT 10 GLOUCESTER 14

This result was a welcome one for the Cherry and Whites as it followed four defeats in a row. It was won the hard way. Connacht were up for it, and pressed hard from the kick-off, but two Freddie Burns penalties eased Gloucester's worries. After thirty minutes Eliota Fuimaono-Sapolu made a lovely off-load to James Simpson-Daniel who streaked home. Just minutes later Connacht struck back. A high kick was not dealt with by Gloucester, and the Connacht skipper, Gavin Duffy, caught the ball and scored. With the wind in the second half,



Connacht looked quite capable of taking the game away from Gloucester. Niall O'Connor quickly kicked a penalty, and the gap was just one point. However, the Gloucester pack held firm and slowly turned the tide. Freddie Burns kicked another penalty, and Gloucester just held on to win.

17 DECEMBER 2011, HEINEKEN CUP GLOUCESTER 23 CONNACHT 19

The following week, Connacht could consider themselves very unlucky to lose this game as they dominated for long periods. Tim Taylor kicked a penalty for an early lead, but when Gloucester over-elaborated in the backs, wing Tiernan O'Halloran intercepted and ran in a try. Against the run of play Tim Taylor nipped over from short range to restore the home side's advantage. After that Connacht dominated and four penalties from Niall O'Connor, to two from Freddie Burns, meant that the Irishmen were leading 19-16 after 72 minutes, and well worth it. With fewer than four minutes left Jonny May fended off flanker Jonny O'Connor, and at great speed scored in the corner. Freddie Burns kicked the difficult conversion.

3 APRIL 2015, EUROPEAN RUGBY CHALLENGE CUP QUARTER-FINAL GLOUCESTER 14 CONNACHT 7

Pat Lam was now coaching Connacht, and would lead them to the Guinness Pro12 Championship in 2016.

Gloucester did all of their scoring in the first half. After 20 minutes, James Hook fielded a high kick

and counter attacked. He made a break and handed on to Steve McColl who in turn put Charlie Sharples away for a try. Ten minutes later, following intense pressure, Hook figured again. He kicked through and the ball popped up for Billy Meakes to go over. Both tries were converted by Greig Laidlaw. Connacht were far from out of it, for they came back hard in the second half. After 65 minutes a 13-man maul rumbled towards the Gloucester line before it was taken down, to concede a penalty try. However, hard as Connacht then attacked, Gloucester held firm, aided by a vociferous crowd.

Gloucester went on to win the Challenge Cup, defeating Edinburgh in the final. There then followed two further games to gain qualification for the subsequent season's Champions' Cup (formerly the Heineken Cup). The outcome was that Gloucester met Connacht again in the first of those.

24 MAY 2015, CHAMPIONS' CUP PLAY-OFF GLOUCESTER 40 CONNACHT 32



This was a very exciting game which switched back and forth, and Connacht seemed on two occasions to have the game wrapped up. Gloucester started with a bang, when after only two minutes the pack drove over for Moriarty to touch down. Greig Laidlaw converted and Gloucester seemed to be on their way. Connacht had other ideas. First Jack Carty kicked a penalty, and when Billy Meakes made a poor pass to Charlie Sharples, the ball went clear for John Cooney to pick up and run in from 50 metres. Laidlaw restored parity with a penalty, and then Meakes gave a well-timed pass to James Hook who charged through a gap to put Sharples in for a try. The Cherry and Whites were now 15-10 up, but back came Connacht. A neat off-load from wing Fionn Carr created a try for Carty, which he converted himself.

Early in the second half, Laidlaw restored Gloucester's lead with another penalty. But yet again Connacht stormed back, and following a cross-kick, Matt Healy gathered and scored. With only a minute to go Carty kicked a penalty for a 25-18 lead, and Connacht seemed safe. With time up Meakes eluded three tacklers to score, and Laidlaw's conversion meant there would be extra-time.

Now Gloucester took the lead yet again when James Hook kicked a magnificent 60 metre penalty. After two minutes of the final period of extra-time Healy scored his second try. Carty converted. Connacht were 32-28 up, and again seemed to have the game won. Gloucester gathered themselves for a final effort, and against 14 men, following a sin-binning, the forwards managed to drive replacement Darren Dawidiuk over for a try. A minute later Jonny May side-stepped four tacklers deep in Gloucester's half, linked with Twelvetrees and Hook, before receiving the ball again to score a magnificent try. Laidlaw converted, and Gloucester had got out of jail.

A week later Gloucester lost the second play-off tie against Bordeaux Begles, a home game played at Worcester because Madness were performing a concert at Kingsholm!

31 MARCH 2018, EUROPEAN RUGBY CHALLENGE CUP QUARTER-FINAL CONNACHT 28 GLOUCESTER 33

This was yet another game where fortunes fluctuated throughout. James Hanson started the ball rolling for Gloucester when he pounced on a poor line-out tap, gathered the ball and ran in from 30 metres. But this only roused Connacht, and tries by Kieran Marmion and Bundee Aki, either side of a yellow card for Ben Morgan, put them in the lead. Gloucester struck back with two tries of their own. The first was from Tom Marshall, followed by a jinking run from Henry Trinder to score the second, to put Gloucester 17-10 up at half-time.

Early in the second half Owen Williams struck a penalty to increase the lead. Yet, again Connacht rallied. A try from Niyi Adeolokun, and a Carty penalty, cut the lead to two points. Gloucester seemed to have made the game safe after John Afoa rumbled over, for Williams to convert and kick another penalty for a 30-18 lead after 67 minutes. But then Lewis Ludlow was yellow carded. Connacht took advantage with a try from Matt Healy, which Craig Ronaldson converted. Then a penalty by Jack Carty cut the lead to two points. A late Billy Twelvetrees penalty settled Gloucester's nerves.

Gloucester made it to the final only to lose unluckily to Cardiff Blues 31-30.



**“ ALL IT TAKES
IS ONE GAME FOR
IT ALL TO CLICK,
THE MOMENTUM
SWINGS IN YOUR
FAVOUR AND YOU’RE
AWAY THEN ”**



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JAMAL FORD- ROBINSON

ELEVEN GAMES INTO THE 2019-20 SEASON AND JAMAL FORD-ROBINSON IS PUTTING IN AN EARLY BID FOR THE 'IRONMAN' TITLE AT GLOUCESTER RUGBY, HAVING APPEARED IN ALL THE MATCHES SO FAR, THE ONLY PLAYER TO DO SO.



The 26-year-old prop arrived during the summer, by his own admission, with something of a point to prove after a difficult season with Northampton Saints. And he's certainly started the right way.

The longer than usual preseason wasn't for everyone but, as was the case with some of the other new signings, it helped him settle in quickly to his new club.

"Yes, it was a long preseason, but it was nice. It gave me a few weeks to get to know everyone when we weren't running through plays, lifting weights or doing general fitness. It was good to get to know my team-mates quite well before we started playing matches.

"I'd spent most of last season with Northampton injured. That second year there was very frustrating. And things were looking pretty bleak to be honest in the long term, and then Gloucester Rugby came forward and tabled an offer which I couldn't refuse!

"That experience definitely motivated me to make a real go of it here. I don't think there were any so-called doubters out there. But maybe it helped me prove to myself that I could get back to the levels I'd operated at before.

He was of course called up by England in 2017 for a non-cap international against the Barbarians, before touring Argentina that summer. But he quickly dismisses any talk linking him and a possible call-up.

"No, that's completely out of my hands. If I can get back to a level that I'm happy with, that's the main thing. That's what I'm aiming for. First of all, I have to be performing week in, week out for Gloucester Rugby.

"I'm not going to lie, the first couple of games were tough in terms of fitness. I hadn't realised that I hadn't missed a game so far this season. That's pretty cool. I only managed two A League appearances at the end of last year, so that's a step in the right direction."

The bread and butter for any prop is the set-piece of course, and Ford-Robinson has been holding his own on that front. But he's also a mobile forward, one who enjoys running with ball in hand, and Gloucester Rugby's style of play suits him in that respect?

**“ FIRST OF ALL,
I HAVE TO BE
PERFORMING WEEK
IN, WEEK OUT
FOR GLOUCESTER
RUGBY ”**





"That's something I was definitely looking forward to when I signed here. Chris Boyd did the same at Northampton to get everyone more comfortable with ball in hand and that's the same message I got from David and Johan."

"They said that they didn't just want players who were good at set-piece for example. They wanted everyone, from 1 to 15, to be able to pass and tackle and be comfortable playing rugby all over the pitch."

"And that suits me. At Quins, I was able to get my hands on the ball a couple of times. I still haven't managed a blistering break down the wing yet, but it's a part of the game that I enjoy."

And, even though it's still very early on in his career in Cherry and White, he's very quickly been able to realise what this squad is capable of when it clicks into gear.

"There's heaps of potential here. And it's a little frustrating because you've seen glimpses of it during the games so far and you see it on the training pitch. But we've not been able to translate that into an 80 minute performance as Johan has talked about recently."

"But, at times like this, you just have to trust what you are doing. All it takes is one game for it all to click, the momentum swings in your favour and you're away then. It's just taken us longer than we'd like to get there."

"It's been a weird couple of weeks as we've moved from Premiership to Europe, back to Premiership for a week and then back to Europe today. It's a tough start to the season, 15 games in a row, but you do get the opportunity every week to look at what hasn't gone so well and put things right a few days later."



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

ON MAY 24 2015, GLOUCESTER RUGBY AND CONNACHT RUGBY CONTESTED ONE OF THE MOST THRILLING EUROPEAN FIXTURES IN RECENT HISTORY.

48



The teams had already met once that season, in the European Rugby Challenge Cup semi-final at Kingsholm the month before, with the Cherry and Whites edging a 14-7 victory.

Victory in the final over Edinburgh followed but, for just that one season, winning the Challenge Cup didn't guarantee a Heineken Cup spot. Instead a play-off system was in place and Gloucester Rugby took on Connacht with a place against Bordeaux in the final up for grabs.

It was an unbelievable finish to the game at Kingsholm. Connacht, who were magnificent

throughout, had threatened to spoil the party as they took a seven point lead into the last minute of play.

There looked to be no way back for Gloucester, the season looked to be coming to a disappointing end, and the proud unbeaten 2015 run at Kingsholm looked to have gone.

However, somehow, Gloucester managed to wrest back possession and launch one final attack. The lightning feet of Bill Meakes saved the day. His previous European outing, in the final, resulted in a red card. On this occasion, he scored a sensational solo score which sent

the game into extra time.

And extra time produced twists and turns galore. James Hook repeated his long-range penalty against Saracens to give Gloucester the advantage before Connacht looked to have dealt a mortal blow, in controversial circumstances, when Matt Healy darted over. Robbie Henshaw seemed to have knocked on but the score was awarded.

However, just as Gloucester's goose looked cooked, Darren Dawidiuk finished off a catch and drive to nudge Gloucester back in front before Jonny May scored one of the tries of the season to secure a 40-32 win.



1. RICHARD HIBBARD

The popular hooker, a former Wales international and British and Irish Lion, left Gloucester Rugby at the end of the 2017-18 season to join the Dragons where he is still playing. In four seasons, made 100 appearances for the club.

2. JONNY MAY

The winger scored the winning try on the day. He left Gloucester Rugby to join Leicester Tigers in the summer of 2017 with Ed Slater moving the other way. Recently played in the Rugby World Cup Final for England.

3. GREIG LAIDLAW

Gloucester Rugby's scrum-half and captain at the end of the 2016-17 season, following the European Rugby Challenge Cup defeat against Stade Francais. In three seasons, he kicked 550 points for the Cherry and Whites. He moved to Clermont-Auvergne where he still plays.

4. NICK WOOD

In a career that started in the 2003-4 season, Nick Wood left Gloucester Rugby in the summer of 2016 and announced his retirement that autumn. Nick made an incredible 278 competitive

appearances for the club. Is now Master in charge of rugby at Radley College and a promising referee.

5. BILL MEAKES

Billy enjoyed a short but entertaining career with Gloucester Rugby. Joined on loan from Clifton RFC and quickly earned a senior contract.

Became a first team regular before earning the chance to return home and join the Western Force and then the Melbourne Rebels. Has trained with Australia and represented the Barbarians.

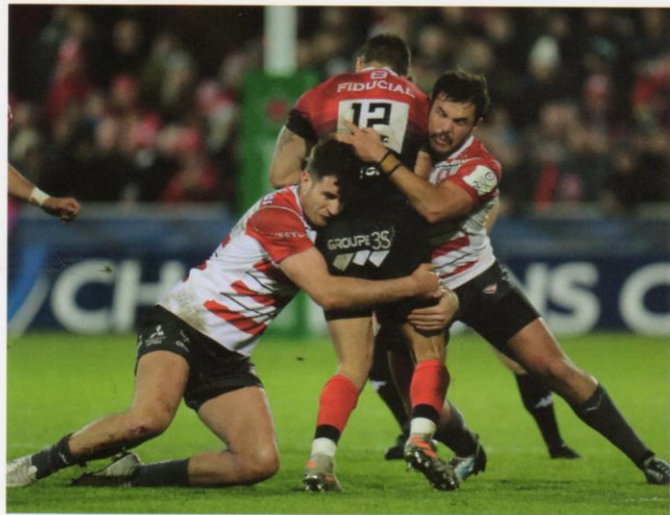
SECOND HALF COMEBACK FROM TOULOUSE DENIES BRAVE GLOUCESTER RUGBY

WHAT HAPPENED

After a scintillating first half from Gloucester Rugby, Toulouse dominated proceedings after the break, starving the Cherry and Whites of possession and fighting back to earn a very professional 20-25 Heineken Champions Cup victory.

The Cherry and Whites went into half-time leading by 20 points to 9, and were good value for it. In fact, they came close to adding a third try on the stroke of half-time. Had it been scored, who knows how the game would have panned out from there.

Gloucester Rugby had soaked up some early pressure from Toulouse, and went 0-3 down to a Zack Holmes drop goal, but then stunned the pre-tournament favourites with two stunning long-range tries from Joe Simpson, both converted by Danny Cipriani to open up a 14-3 lead.



The respective fly-halves then kicked two penalties apiece so, with half-time approaching, the Cherry and Whites were pushing hard for a third try and went into the break with their tails up and the Kingsholm crowd buzzing.

However, the expensively assembled and star-studded

visitors took an iron grip on proceedings in the second 40 minutes, keeping hold of possession for long periods and slowly but surely, wearing the home team down.

Penalties from Ntamack and Ramos made it 20-15, before Sébastien Bézy wriggled his way over on the hour mark after a long period of pressure in the home 22, Ramos converting to complete the comeback as the visitors took a 20-22 lead.

Gloucester Rugby emptied the tank in the final quarter looking to retake the lead, but crucial errors, especially at the lineout, thwarted the efforts and Ramos extended the lead with a 68th minute penalty.

Still the Cherry and Whites battled and there were a couple of late chances, including a five metre lineout, but it wasn't to be as Toulouse closed out a hard-fought win.





20-25



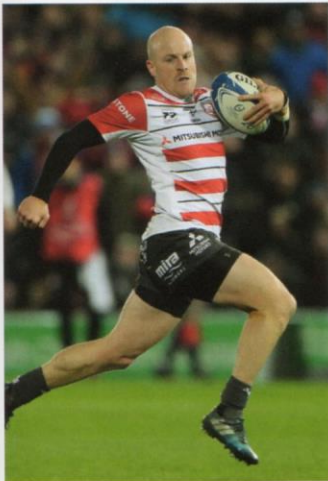
HOW IT HAPPENED

See how the game at Kingsholm unfolded in our play by play commentary.



IN PICTURES

View the best of the match action as captured by the club photographer.



TIMELINE

- 10' Joe Simpson
- 12' Danny Cipriani
- 20' Joe Simpson
- 20' Danny Cipriani
- 23' Thomas Ramos
- 27' Danny Cipriani
- 30' Thomas Ramos
- 34' Danny Cipriani
- 42' Romain Ntamack
- 51' Thomas Ramos
- 61' Sebastien Bezy
- 62' Thomas Ramos
- 68' Thomas Ramos

WHAT THEY HAD TO SAY



Head Coach Johan Ackermann and centre Chris Harris were on media duties after the game.



HUGE EFFORT FROM GLOUCESTER RUGBY COMES UP JUST SHORT IN MONTPELLIER

WHAT HAPPENED

A magnificent second half comeback from Gloucester Rugby wasn't quite enough in Montpellier a fortnight ago, the home team hanging on for a 30-27 Heineken Champions Cup win despite the Cherry and Whites pushing them all the way to the final whistle.

The Cherry and Whites looked out of it at half-time. However, Gloucester Rugby, aided somewhat by a red card for the home team's Jacques Du Plessis, battled back bravely and were pushing for the go ahead score when time ran out on them.

The opening quarter was actually fairly even. Montpellier featured some massive players in their side, but the Cherry and Whites fronted up bravely and looked to play with ball in hand whenever they were in possession.

Benoit Paillaugue opened the scoring with a penalty before, almost out of nothing, Jan Serfontein latched on to a kick ahead for the game's first try.



The centre may have been in front of the kick, but the score stood and Paillaugue converted for 10-0.

Billy Twelvetrees kicked a penalty to get the Cherry and Whites off and running, but some over-ambition in their own 22 saw the ball turned over and Montpellier took full advantage as Caleb Timu went over from close range.

Gloucester Rugby hit back with a great try, Lloyd Evans darting through before finding Callum Braley with an inside pass for the scrum-half to slide over.

However, a key phase of play just before half-time, following another turnover, saw the home team turn the screw up front and Nemani Nadolo powered his way over.

The Cherry and Whites hit back in the second half, Matt Banahan going over from close range. Du Plessis was sent off for elbowing Gerbrandt Grobler and two penalties from Paillaugue and one from Twelvetrees made it 30-20.

Another beauty of a try then got Gloucester Rugby back into it. Rees-Zammit went down the right and kicked ahead, Thorley gathered only to be brought down just short but Joe Simpson was on hand to pick up and dive over.

Lloyd Evans held his nerve to convert to narrow the gap to 30-27 but, despite a couple of half-chances, time ran out on the Cherry and Whites as the home time held on for a nervy victory with the home fans nervously biting their nails.



















*To utilise the QR codes, download a QR app to your smartphone



30-27



TIMELINE

-  **13'**
Benoit Paillaugue
-  **21'**
Jan Serfontein
-  **22'**
Benoit Paillaugue
-  **27'**
Billy Twelvetrees
-  **32'**
Caleb Time
-  **33'**
Benoit Paillaugue
-  **35'**
Callum Braley
-  **36'**
Billy Twelvetrees
-  **40'**
Nemani Nadolo
-  **40'**
Benoit Paillaugue
-  **45'**
Matt Banahan
-  **46'**
Billy Twelvetrees
-  **52'**
Benoit Paillaugue
-  **55'**
Jacques du Plessis
-  **59'**
Billy Twelvetrees
-  **64'**
Benoit Paillaugue
-  **74'**
Joe Simpson
-  **76'**
Lloyd Evans

HOW IT HAPPENED

See how the game at the GGL Stadium unfolded in our play by play commentary.



IN PICTURES

View the best of the match action as captured by the club photographer.



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WHAT THEY HAD TO SAY



Head Coach Johan Ackermann and second row Gerbrandt Grobler were on media duties after the game.



VS



CONNACHT
RUGBY

82

T P C D				POSITION	T P C D						
				Tom MARSHALL 15	FULL BACK	15	Matt HEALY				
				Louis REES-ZAMMIT 14	RIGHT WING	14	John PORCH				
				Chris HARRIS 13	OUTSIDE CENTRE	13	Tom FARRELL				
				Mark ATKINSON 12	INSIDE CENTRE	12	Tom DALY				
				Ollie THORLEY 11	LEFT WING	11	Kyle GODWIN				
				Danny CIPRIANI 10	FLY-HALF	10	Conor FITZGERLAD				
				Joe SIMPSON 9	SCRUM-HALF	9	Caolin BLADE				
				Val RAPAVA RUSKIN 1	LOOSEHEAD PROP	1	Peter MCCABE				
				Franco MARAIS 2	HOOKER	2	Dave HEFFERNAN				
				Jamal FORD-ROBINSON 3	TIGHTHEAD PROP	3	Dominic ROBERTSON-MCCOY				
				Alex CRAIG 4	LOCK	4	Ultan DILLANE				
				Franco MOSTERT 5	LOCK	5	Quinn ROUX (C)				
				Ruan ACKERMANN 6	BLINDSIDE FLANKER	6	Eoghan MASTERSON				
				Lewis LUDLOW 7	OPENSIDE FLANKER	7	Colby FAINGA'A				
				Ben MORGAN (C) 8	NUMBER 8	8	Robin COPELAND				
REPLACEMENTS					REPLACEMENTS						
				Todd GLEAVE 16	 MATCH OFFICIALS Referee: Pascal Gauzere (FRA) Assistant Referees: Maxime Chalon (FRA) Pierre Baptiste Nuchy(FRA)	16	Shane DELAHUNT				
				Josh HONNECK 17		17	Matthew BURKE				
				Fraser BALMAIN 18		18	Finlay BEALHAM				
				Freddie CLARKE 19		19	Joe MAKSYMIW				
				Jake POLLEDRI 20		20	Paul BOYLE				
				Callum BRALEY 21		21	Angus LLOYD				
				Billy TWELVETREES 22		22	Jack CARTY				
				Matt BANAHAN 23		23	Peter ROBB				