

COLUMN SPONSORED BY



CEO

LANCE BRADLEY



GOOD EVENING AND A VERY FESTIVE WELCOME TO KINGSHOLM TO YOU ALL, INCLUDING OUR FRIENDS AND NEAREST NEIGHBOURS FROM WORCESTER WARRIORS.

We were all hugely disappointed at how our last game, away in Galway against Connacht Rugby, finished. Coming away with two points when it could so easily have been five left us all feeling deflated. Once again, however, it was great to meet so many of you following us on our European travels.

We have picked up bonus points in both our away games in the Heineken Champions Cup. That has left us second in our group, which means we are still fighting – to qualify as one the best runners-up.

What will really help is getting you, our 16th man, along to Kingsholm for our next Champions Cup game, against Montpellier on January 11th. If you keep an eye on our social media channels you'll see some special offers to tempt you along. And don't forget that because of the way our fixtures fall, that game will be your last chance to see us at home for over a month.

I've been along to watch training this week, and I'm pleased to say that the squad were in fine form in preparation for our return to domestic action this evening as we resume our Gallagher Premiership Rugby campaign with what should be a cracker of a local derby against the Warriors.

It's an important couple of weeks of Premiership action. Due to the unique nature of this season following the Rugby World Cup, it's still relatively early in terms of games played – this is only our sixth Premiership fixture of the season.

Our next two home games, tonight against Worcester and the Bath game on January 4th, are very significant and we really appreciate your support here at Kingsholm. It means a lot to all of us, especially the players.

Away from the field of play, we've made a couple of big announcements this week.

Firstly, we're all delighted that Ben Morgan has agreed to extend his stay at Gloucester Rugby with a new long-term contract. Ben seems to be playing the best rugby of his career so far, through last season and into this, and we're delighted he's going to be part of the Club for some time yet.

We were also delighted to announce that we will be hosting the final of the Tyrrells Premier 15s this season. The women's game is growing quickly, and our Gloucester-Hartpury team are consistently in the top four. Wouldn't it be great for them to reach the final and play at home, with the Kingsholm faithful cheering them on?

If you haven't watched women's rugby yet, then why not come along to a game? And put May 31st in your diary to come and watch the final at Kingsholm. It'll be a fantastic occasion.

Merry Christmas!

Lance

MM WOULDN'T
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THE FINAL
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KINGSHOLM
FAITHFUL
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CHAIRMAN

MARTIN ST. Quinton



GOOD EVENING AND A VERY WARM WELCOME TO KINGSHOLM AS WE RETURN TO GALLAGHER PREMIERSHIP ACTION AGAINST WORCESTER WARRIORS.

The game against Worcester, of course, is one of our local derbies although it doesn't quite have the historical significance of the other derbies when we play against the likes of Bath and Bristol.

In fact, it was only in the late 1990s that this became a regular fixture as Worcester started to climb their way up the leagues under the leadership of Cecil Duckworth.

Since then, no matter how well the respective teams are doing in the league at that point, this game always seems to produce a hard-fought encounter with barely a score

in it. In fact, there have been a number of draws.

We come into tonight's game looking to get back to winning ways after last weekend's defeat in Connacht. That game in Galway showed just how competitive the Heineken Champions Cup can be. One lapse can cost you the game.

I genuinely feel that our results in Europe so far haven't really done us justice. We could easily have won all four of our pool games to date – but have unfortunately lost three matches by a combined margin of 11 points. That's how tight things have been.

We're not quite getting the rub of the green at the moment, but this evening's game presents us with an opportunity to bounce back in front of our own supporters.

It's bound to be a fantastic atmosphere and I'm confident that we will sign off 2019 at Kingsholm in style. Thank you for all the support you give this Club.

Happy Christmas and enjoy the game!

Martin





MIXED FEELINGS FOR GLOUCESTER RUGBY IN FRUSTRATING DEFEAT AWAY AT WORCESTER WARRIORS

Sixways continued to be a bogey ground for Gloucester Rugby earlier this year as Worcester Warriors battled their way to a 27-20 Gallagher Premiership victory. However, the losing bonus point saw the Cherry and Whites qualify for the end of season play-offs.

It's not the way that Gloucester Rugby would have wanted to qualify for the semi-finals for the first time since 2011. They'd come into the game in a decent run of form, and looked well set when they led at half-time.



However, a determined second half effort from the Warriors proved to be decisive despite Gloucester Rugby's best efforts to get back into the game. As it was, the losing bonus point was enough to ensure post-season participation despite defeat on the day.

There were celebrations on the pitch at full-time as home players and supporters celebrated Premiership survival. Relegation wasn't quite cut and dried. Newcastle were still technically still alive and were Gloucester Rugby's opponents at Kingsholm the following weekend when their fate was confirmed for definite.

It was a lively start on the day from the home side who kept Gloucester Rugby pinned back in their own half for the first few minutes. A half break from Nick Schonert, supported by Marco Mama, had the Cherry and Whites scrambling and a penalty was conceded. Duncan Weir made no mistake for 3-0 after six minutes.

The Cherry and Whites took a little while to work their way into the game, but finally got things going on 11 minutes. A good catch and drive got the Worcester pack moving backwards, before slick hands saw Henry Purdy come in off the wing to loop around Danny Cipriani and power his way to the line. 3-5 after 11 minutes.

However, the Gloucester Rugby back line was caught offside shortly after the restart and, from just outside the 10 metre line, Weir was on target with his second penalty of the afternoon to edge his team in front 6-5.

The Warriors were clearly fired up, and extended their lead on 19 minutes. A neat inside pass from Weir sent Perry Humphreys through a gap and into the 22. Willil Heinz got back, but quickly recycled ball sent Weir clear and under the posts. The fly-half converted his own try for 13-5.

The Cherry and Whites were quickly back on the front foot, probing for openings in the home defence which was forced to give away a penalty bang in front of their own posts, and Billy Twelvetrees slotted the penalty to narrow the gap to 13-8.

A piece of Cipriani magic then had Gloucester Rugby moving forward again, the fly-half chipping over the defensive line and regathering. The Warriors were stretched as Purdy threatened twice but just held out.

The Cherry and Whites were starting to ask all sorts of questions in the Worcester 22, and the home defence seemed to get away with some dubious work at the breakdown but continued to hang tough and deny the wisitors

And, finally, the pressure told as half-time approached. Danny Cipriani sent Billy Twelvetrees steaming through a gap and received the ball back from the centre. Mark Atkinson took Cipriani's offload and then found Willi Heinz who went under the posts untouched for a fine score. Twelvetrees converted for 13-15.

It gave the Cherry and Whites the narrowest of leads at half-time, and perhaps deservedly so given the pressure they'd applied in the final 15 minutes of the half. It was reminiscent of the score just before half-time against Bath a few weeks ago. Would it prove to be just as pivotal?

Gloucester Rugby would feel satisfied to be in front at the interval and to now have the wind at their backs, but very conscious that their advantage was a narrow one and that Worcester had asked a few questions of their own in the first half. There was plenty of rugby left to play in this one just yet.

And the second half started with the home team desperate to regain the lead. Gloucester Rugby's scrum found itself under some pressure, as did its defence, and a string of penalties gave the Warriors all the possession they needed.



Something had to give as the home team poured forward, wave after wave of attack slamming into Gloucester Rugby tacklers and, eventually, hooker Niall Annett touched down against the post padding. Weir converted for 20-15 after 50 minutes

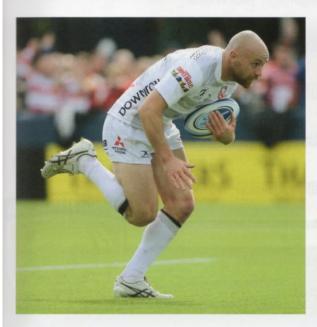
Indiscipline was starting to hurt the Cherry and Whites at this stage, and they would have to recover their composure to work their way back into the game. But the momentum was firmly behind the home team especially as Danny Cipriani left the field.

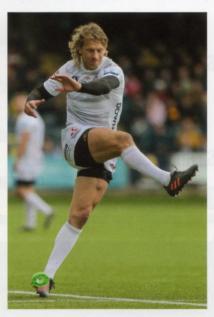
And Worcester made the most of it, as they laid siege to the Gloucester Rugby line. A big defensive stand followed, but it wasn't enough as Darren Barry crashed over from close range and Weir converted for 27-15.

A big response was needed, and the Cherry and Whites showed great heart to immediately go over for their third try. A close-range catch and drive was held out, but the ball was released to the backs and Charlie Sharples' long pass put Purdy over for his second. Twelvetrees' conversion hit the upright and stayed out.

Trailing 27-20, Gloucester Rugby were still within losing bonus point range but the minutes were ticking away in frustrating fashion and the Warriors were winning the territorial battle.

There was one last opportunity as a penalty award allowed Lloyd Evans to drill the kick into the corner, but Worcester managed to spoil possession and close out a vital win as Gloucester Rugby's quest for a first league win at Sixways since May 2010 goes on.





GLOUCESTER RUGBY HERITAGE

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS: THE GLOUCESTER V WORCESTER DERBY MATCH



A BIT OF HISTORY

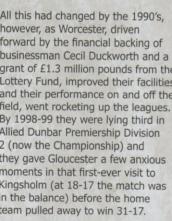
Although Gloucester and Worcester met twice on Worcester's ground in 1877 and 1881, it was over a hundred years before the two clubs played their third match, a fourth round encounter in the Tetlev Bitter Cup at Kingsholm in January 1999. For most of this time, the relative status of the clubs had kept them apart, with Gloucester's fixture list featuring the best clubs in England and Wales, while Worcester had a more parochial and less demanding fixture list.

All this had changed by the 1990's, however, as Worcester, driven forward by the financial backing of businessman Cecil Duckworth and a grant of £1.3 million pounds from the Lottery Fund, improved their facilities and their performance on and off the field, went rocketing up the leagues. By 1998-99 they were lying third in Allied Dunbar Premiership Division 2 (now the Championship) and they gave Gloucester a few anxious moments in that first-ever visit to Kingsholm (at 18-17 the match was in the balance) before the home team pulled away to win 31-17.



THE DERBY GAME

Worcester finally made the breakthrough into the top tier of English Rugby in 2004 under the direction of former Gloucester forward John Brain and today will be the 27th Premiership game between the two clubs. The matches quickly became typical derby games - often tense hard-fought dogfights - and we can expect the same today. Four of the 26 games have been drawn (an unusually high proportion) and twelve losing bonus points have been won. Let's go back today and look at some of those desperately close games.



WORCESTER 15 GLOUCESTER 15

SEPTEMBER 4 2005, SIXWAYS.

After Gloucester had completed a fairly comfortable double in Worcester's first season in the Premiership, they met determined opposition at the start of the following season in a Worcester pack that dominated the scrums and held their own throughout. The fact that two heavyweight packs virtually cancelled each other out did not make for pretty rugby for the impartial observer and a score of five Brown penalty goals to Worcester, countering four penalties and a dropped goal from the siege-gun boot of Ludovic Mercier for Gloucester tells its own story. Nevertheless, for the faithful it was a tense and gripping, if ultimately frustrating, derby dogfight.

JANUARY 2 2010, KINGSHOLM, **GLOUCESTER 13 WORCESTER 13**

Gloucester created all the chances in the second half of this match but failed to take them and Worcester, with heroic defence and an outstanding display from Australian World Cup-winning full back Chris Latham, held on for a draw. Deservedly leading 13-5 at half time, Worcester appeared to attempt to sit on their lead, a policy which should have cost them dear, but for Gloucester handling errors. Gloucester finally drew level through a Dave Attwood try with just 15 seconds remaining on the clock, but Carlos Spencer missed the conversion and the spoils were shared.

MAY 8 2010, SIXWAYS WORCESTER 22 GLOUCESTER 23

Worcester were already down, having lost their relegation battle with Leeds Carnegie the week before, when they took on Gloucester in the final



match of the season at Sixways. In an exciting and entertaining first half, Chris Pennell scored first for Worcester after a good move begun by fly half Joe Carlisle. Chris Latham, playing in his last game for Worcester, then had a try disallowed and Gloucester came back to take the lead through a Nicky Robinson penalty and an Akapusi Oera try. When Lesley Vainikolo went over in the corner, Gloucester increased their lead to 13-8. Back came Worcester through an interception try by Alex Grove to go into half time 15-13 ahead. Third quarter changes took the intensity out of both sides and the game became scrappy, Gloucester finally going ahead through a Nicky Robinson penalty. The last ten minutes then provided a grandstand finish. First Scott Lawson scored a try for Gloucester which was converted by Robinson and then, fittingly, Latham scored in the dying minutes to leave Worcester agonisingly close, perhaps summing up their whole season.

SEPTEMBER 15 2012, SIXWAYS, WORCESTER 16 GLOUCESTER 16

Warriors' chances of a first home win of the season disappeared in a dramatic finish at Sixways when Freddie Burns, who had come on as a replacement for Gloucester, kicked a penalty in the dying moments to secure a barely deserved 16-16 draw. It had seemed that Andy Goode, who had an excellent game, had secured victory for the home side two minutes earlier after Jim Hamilton, the Gloucester captain, had pushed James Percival in the lineout, but Burns who had replaced Mike Tindall, kept his nerve amid tremendous tension, to slot the ball between the posts. Gloucester had led 6-3 at the interval, thanks to penalties from Billy Twelvetrees. In the second half both sides scored tries, Gloucester's try coming from Henry Trinder.

OCTOBER 31 2015, KINGSHOLM, Gloucester 24 Worcester 22

Gloucester dominated the match up front but Worcester would not lie down and their determined challenge made this one of the best and certainly one of the most exciting matches between the two sides. Gloucester went ahead within two minutes of the start when an excellent kick by James Hook gave them a lineout from which Richard Hibbard

drove over. From the restart, however, Cooper Vuna intercepted a pass from Bill Meakes for a simple run in and the conversion put the visitors in front. Following a penalty from Twelvetrees to regain the lead, Meakes, Jonny May and Billy Twelvetrees all handled slickly to create a try for Sione Kalamafoni. Twelvetrees missed the conversion but kicked a penalty to give Gloucester a 16-7 lead after twenty minutes. A penalty from Rvan Mills reduced the arrears before hooker Annett went over. The conversion briefly restored Worcester's lead before a long distance penalty from Twelvetrees, rebounding in off the post, gave Gloucester a 19-17 lead at the end of a breathtaking first half. An excellent movement from deep inside their own half enabled Pennell to send in Cooper Vuna for his second try and Worcester had regained the lead. Billy Burns came on for Gloucester and galvanised the attack, his second clean break sending in Halaifonua for the try which retook the lead. The match ended with the visitor's Nick Schonert yellowcarded and Gloucester bombarding the visitor's line, but they held firm, denying Gloucester the bonus point.

SEPTEMBER 9 2016, SIXWAYS, WORCESTER 23 GLOUCESTER 23

This match came just one week after Gloucester's 38-31 defeat by Leicester at Kingsholm, where they had snatched defeat from the jaws of victory, and in some ways was equally hard to take. Although the visitors came back from 11 points down after Faosiliva had been shown a red card with 50 minutes on the clock, their supporters were left with the feeling that this was a match that they should have won. 20-9 down at that stage, they had dominated for long stretches of the game, but had been unable to find a way through a Worcester defence that had scored three tries to nil on the counterattack, three Laidlaw penalties being Gloucester's only reward. Now they took advantage of the extra man and first Matt Scott was sent under the posts by Mark Atkinson and, after a Heathcote penalty for the Warriors, Purdy finished a glorious move in the corner, Laidlaw's conversion levelling the scores. There was still time for Gloucester to lay siege to the Worcester line, but they hung on bravely for the draw.







TO HAVE MADE

100 APPEARANCES

MEANS THE

ABSOLUTE WORLD

TO ME AND MY

FAMILY AND IS

SOMETHING THAT

I'M VERY PROUD TO

HAVE ACHIEVED



GALLI BRALEN

THE RECENT HEINEKEN CHAMPIONS CUP CAMPAIGN AT HOME TO CONNACHT RUGBY SAW ANOTHER GLOUCESTER RUGBY PLAYER REACH A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE.





On this occasion it was Callum Braley who, when he took the field as a second-half replacement, made his 100th competitive appearance for the club.

He arrived at Kingsholm in the summer of 2014, and admits that he can't believe how quickly that time has passed by.

"It feels like a while ago since I joined Gloucester Rugby. But, at the same time, it kind of feels as if I've only just arrived. The last five and a half years have passed by pretty quickly, I've loved every minute of it so far"

It's been an eventful few years, by his own admission. An Academy graduate back then, he's now an international player, has 100 senior appearances to his name and is a husband and a father. He laughs when this is put to him.

"Yeah, when you put it like that, loads of things have happened in my life and Gloucester Rugby has been a huge part of that. To have made 100 appearances means the absolute world to me and my family and is something that I'm very proud to have achieved."

He's too modest to mention it himself, but the Bristol born scrum-half has now made the seventh highest number of appearances in the current squad.

"I never realised that, or that I'd be in this position. I'm just very grateful to have had so many chances to play and to wear the Cherry and White shirt so many times. I've always just wanted to work hard and keep improving and make the most of every minute.

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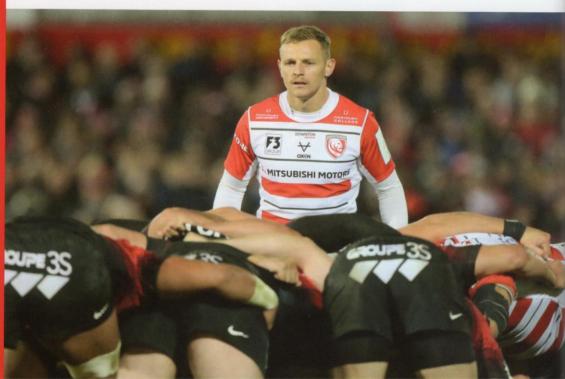
"It did strike me earlier this year, I'd coached a few of the first year Academy boys, and I was seeing them come through and that was quite strange. It did make me feel a wee bit older, but there are still a few who are quite a bit older than me!"

100 plus appearances is a decent body of work, and he's able to look back upon quite a few memorable moments.

"The try against Saracens a few seasons back was definitely a highlight, making my Prem debut here at Kingsholm against Quins was also a big moment, a very proud day for myself. My first Heineken try against Castres stands out, and also the final against Cardiff in Bilbao – I felt I learned a lot that day and tried to use the experience to learn and move forward."

A THE PREMIERSHIP IS WIDE OPEN. EVERYONE IS MASSIVELY EXCITED 77







HEARTACHE FOR THE CHERRY AND WHITES AT THE STOOP IN 23-19 QUINS DEFEAT

WHAT HAPPENED

Gloucester Rugby gave it everything at the Stoop and outscored their hosts by three tries to two, but missed kicks proved pivotal as Harlequins eked out a narrow 23-19 Gallagher Premiership victory at the Stoop.

There was very little to choose between the two teams on the day, and Gloucester Rugby were in it right up until the very last play, trailing by just one point, when Marcus Smith slotted a penalty with the last play of the game to secure the win.

Up to then, the lead had changed hands several times and, especially when Ben Morgan crashed over midway through the second half to give his team a 13-19 lead, Gloucester Rugby looked a good bet to take the win.

But it's a game of small margins. A few decisions went the way



of the home side, and a missed penalty on 72 minutes could have seen Gloucester Rugby take an important step forward. But it wasn't to be.

Quins took an early 3-0 lead, but Ollie Thorley's opportunist try, spotting a gap around the ruck area and bursting through to score, was converted by Cipriani for 3-7.

Ross Chisholm ghosted his way

over for Quins' first try, Smith converting, but patient build-up play and good hands put Thorley over in the corner for his second and gave Gloucester Rugby a narrow 10-12 lead at half-time.

The home team came out fired up for the second half, and Smith kicked his second penalty for 13-12, but Morgan burst clear from a ruck 10 metres out to power over. Cipriani converted for 13-19 and the Cherry and Whites looked well set.

However, Quins hit straight back, although there looked to be a knock-on in the build-up to Alex Dombrandt's try. Smith held his nerve to convert for 20-19.

A tense final quarter followed, and Billy Twelvetrees was narrowly wide with a 72 minute penalty before the Cherry and Whites were punished when trying to run the ball from the shadow of their own posts with no time left. A penalty was conceded and Smith made it 23-19 at the final whistle.







23-19



HOW IT HAPPENED

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



IN PICTURES

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











WHAT THEY HAD TO SAY

Ackermann was on post-match media duties.







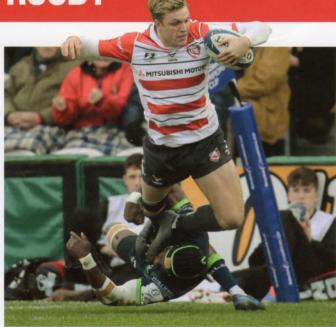
GLOUCESTER RUGBY FIND FORM WITH BONUS POINT WIN OVER CONNACHT RUGBY

WHAT HAPPENED

After a frustrating first half when little seemed to go right, Gloucester Rugby put a spring back in their step with a much improved second 40 minutes, clinching a morale-boosting 26-17 Heineken Champions Cup win over Connacht at Kingsholm a fortnight ago.

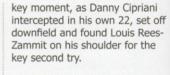
The Cherry and Whites have been on the wrong end of some intangibles in recent weeks, competing hard but coming out on the wrong end of a few tight scorelines. And, at half time on the day, it looked as though it might be a similar tale against Connacht.

It was actually a dream start, Tom Marshall ghosting home for an early try, Cipriani converting. But Connacht hit back immediately through John Porch, Carty adding the extras to level the scores, and the fly-half then slotted a penalty for a 7-10 lead.



The rest of the half was a frustrating combination of missed scoring opportunities and refereeing decisions going the way of the visitors. There was a concerned air around Kingsholm at half-time.

But the game turned on one



Gloucester Rugby didn't look back. The shackles were off, the half backs ran the game intelligently and, symbolically, the sun broke through and chased away the persistent rain.

Connacht had Kyle Godwin sinbinned, and Gloucester Rugby took full advantage as Tom Marshall and Jake Polledri went over to secure the try scoring bonus point.

The visitors kept plugging away, but had to wait until the last play of the game to score a consolation try, Quinn Roux, powering his way over from close range but it was too little, too late for Connacht.





26-17 CONNACHT







岩**4'** Danny Cipriani



∦8' Jack Carty **17'** Jack Carty

59' Kyle Godwin



H 46'
Danny Cipriani



9 63'

64' Danny Cipriani 73' Billy



Conor Fitzgerald



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.







WHAT THEY HAD TO SAY



Head Coach Johan Ackermann and captain Ben Morgan were on postmatch media duties.



VS



| T | P | C | D | | | POSITION | | STREET STREET | 1 | P | C | D |
|---|--------------|-----|-------------------|---------------------|----------------|------------------------------|------------|-------------------|---|----|---|---|
| | | | | Tom MARSHALL | 15 | FULL BACK | 15 | Chris PENNELL | | | | |
| | | | | Louis REES-ZAMMIT | 14 | RIGHT WING | 14 | Perry HUMPHREYS | | | | |
| | | | | Chris HARRIS | 13 | OUTSIDE CENTRE | 13 | Ashley BECK | | | | |
| 7 | | | | Mark ATKINSON | 12 | INSIDE CENTRE | 12 | Ryan MILLS (C) | | | | |
| | | | | Ollie THORLEY | 11 | LEFT WING | 11 | Melani NANAI | | | | |
| | | (8) | | Danny CIPRIANI | 10 | FLY-HALF | 10 | Duncan WEIR | | 00 | | |
| | | | | Willi HEINZ (C) | 9 | SCRUM-HALF | 9 | Francois HOUGAARD | | | | |
| | | | | Val RAPAVA RUSKIN | 1 | LOOSEHEAD PROP | 1 | Callum BLACK | | | | |
| | | | | Franco MARAIS | 2 | HOOKER | 2 | Matt MOULDS | | | | |
| | | | 100 | Fraser BALMAIN | 3 | TIGHTHEAD PROP | 3 | Nick SCHONERT | | | | |
| | | | 7780 | Alex CRAIG | 4 | LOCK | 4 | Anton BRESLER | | | | |
| | | | | Franco MOSTERT | 5 | LOCK | 5 | Graham KITCHENER | | | | |
| | | | | Ruan ACKERMANN | 6 | BLINDSIDE FLANKER | 6 | Ted HILL | | | | |
| | | | 4 | Lewis LUDLOW | 7 | OPENSIDE FLANKER | 7 | Sam LEWIS | | | | |
| | | | | Ben MORGAN | 8 | NUMBER 8 | 8 | Cornell DU PREEZ | | | | |
| | REPLACEMENTS | | | | | | | REPLACEMENT | S | | | |
| | | | | Todd GLEAVE | 16 | | 16 | Joe TAUFETE'E | | | | |
| | | | | Josh HOHNECK | 17 | | 17 | Ryan BOWER | | 14 | | |
| | | | | Jamal FORD-ROBINSON | 18 | MATCH OFFICIALS | 18 | Richard PALFRAMAN | | | | |
| | | | | Gerbrandt GROBLER | 19 | Referee: | 19 | Michael FATIALOFA | | | | |
| | | | | Freddie CLARKE | 20 | Christophe Ridley Assistant | 20 | GJ VAN VELZE | | | | |
| | | | | Joe SIMPSON | 21 | Referees: Andrew Jackson | 21 | Michael HEANEY | | | | |
| | | | Billy TWELVETREES | 22 | Greg Macdonald | 22 | Jono LANCE | | | | | |
| | | | | Matt BANAHAN | 23 | | 23 | Tom HOWE | | | | |
| | - | | - | | | | | | | | | |