

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2003

GLOUCESTER TRIUMPH AFTER A MESSY START

CHERRY AND WHITES WALTZ TO A FOUR TRY TREVISO TRIUMPH

Gloucester started their European campaign with a win, although they made a messy start and only led 15-12 at the break.

However, the Cherry and Whites took control in the second half and completed the win with an Adam Eustace try which ensured a bonus point.

TREVISO 12

GLOUCESTER 33

15. S. Legg	1. G. Fallva	15. T. Delpont	1. T. Woodman
14. G. Canale	2. A. Tejada	14. J. Frape	2. C. Fortey
13. T. Visentin	3. S. Costanzo	13. R. Todd	3. P. Vickery
12. D. Elgner	4. C. Checchinato	12. H. Paul	4. M. Cornwell
11. D. Dallan	5. E. Pavanello	11. J. Simpson-Daniel	5. A. Brown
10. F. Smith	6. J. Erasmus	10. D. McRae	6. J. Boer
9. P. Travagli	7. S. Garozzo	9. A. Gomarsall	7. A. Hazell
	8. S. Parisse		8. J. Paramore

Replacements:

F. Sharaglini	C. Collins
M. Dallan	A. Deacon
F. Properzi Curti	R. Roncero
S. Dellape	A. Eustace
S. Palmer	P. Buxton
A. Troncon	A. Page
M. Perziano	J. Goodridge

Referee : Hugh Watkins (Wales)

THEY got there in the end. Gloucester opened their Heineken Cup assault with a sometimes messy but in the end highly convincing victory over Italian champions Treviso.

Hardly inspiring at times and occasionally full of mistakes, Nigel Melville's men nevertheless negotiated a potential booby trap and emerged with a bonus point to boot thanks to Adam Eustace's late try – their fourth – which completed a job well done.

The victory should give Gloucester immediate momentum, and on the back of a powerful effort from their forwards and a sensational try from James Simpson-Daniel, they recovered from a rickety first-half in some style.

Junior Paramore was the other try-scorer, crossing once in each half to cap an industrious performance but there were hard working Gloucester bodies all over the place, from props Phil Vickery and Trevor Woodman in the scrums, Alex Brown, Jake Boer and a heads up display from Duncan McRae.

But the first-half was a tale of anxiety and mistakes. It was a measure of Gloucester's uncertainty that, despite an avalanche of possession and a territorial dominance that bordered on the ludicrous, they found themselves only three points ahead.

They turned over possession, coughed up numerous attacking chances, and were unsure in defence to concede two soft tries.

To their credit, Treviso defended magnificently against an opening Gloucester advance that should have produced more than it did.

Thinus Delpont led the initial assault, carrying possession menacingly through thickets of defenders but on each occasion Gloucester lost the ball in contact or threw a wild pass that cost them any advantage.

After drawing Gloucester's sting, Treviso stole the first try and it made the visitors look a little foolish.

They attacked from a line-out, and when possession arrived at Francois Smith, the outside half, he stopped before barging between McRae and Henry Paul before putting Tommaso Visentin in for the score.

Gloucester responded with a penalty through Paul but then lost Delpont to the sin bin after Pietro Travagli's kick bounced its way to the touchline and the full-back was penalised after throwing the ball into touch to deny Canale a clear sight of the ball.

Gloucester had hardly been efficient up until this point, despite the crushing dominance in the scrum and some effective line-out work and it took a moment of genius from Simpson-Daniel to hand them the lead.

Josh Frape fielded a wayward clearance kick and fed the winger on his own 22. With room to power into, Simpson-Daniel blasted between both centres and into wide open space. He stopped, looking for support, before stepping on the gas again that took him into Treviso's 22. As the cover converged, he dived for the line to complete a quite brilliant individual try.

If that was supposed to ease Gloucester's nerves, they were mistaken. No sooner had they escaped with a 10-7 advantage than they were behind again. Alessandro Troncon, already on at scrum-half, was quick to spot the Gloucester turn over, and kick into acres of space behind Simpson-Daniel.

With no full-back, Canale raced forward and hacked on, profiting from a half-hearted chase from the Gloucester winger, controlled the bounce of the ball and scored.

It was a terrible blow to the visitors. They had worked themselves to a standstill just to get level and desperately needed a quick response to avoid any further problems.

Treviso had visited Gloucester territory twice and scored twice to plunder the lead and shake Gloucester's morale at the end of the first half.

Despite their uncertainties, there were hints of what was to come. From the restart, Andy Hazell did what he does best at the break down, stole possession and Andy Gomarsall sent Paramore in from close range. It was the break Gloucester needed. They controlled the game in the second half – did not concede a single point, and gradually strangled the life out of Treviso.

They were less flamboyant but were always in control. It took them only two minutes to extend their lead when Treviso were penalised for collapsing a maul and Paul kicked the penalty for an 18-12 advantage. He was at it again six minutes later when the home side were penalised for off-side and it was now when Gloucester's experience took over.

McRae who had his best game in a Cherry and White's shirt, was always alert for the chance to break, and was at the hub of most things they got right.

Their third try came after 52 minutes when McRae's ball was fielded by Simpson-Daniel and his reverse ball put Paramore in for the score.

Gloucester's pack had gradually taken charge, denied Treviso ball, and created numerous chances to seal the bonus point. The introduction of Peter Buxton was a telling factor in the late surge and just as it seemed they would be denied the try they deserved, a second replacement, Eustace, thundered between two despairing tackles and behind the posts for a bonus point Gloucester deserved and a victory that will be crucial.