

# THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, 2004

## HEINEKEN CUP RUGBY

### CLINICAL GLOUCESTER CRUISE INTO THE CUP QUARTER-FINALS

GLOUCESTER 42

TREVISO 11

15. J. Goodridge	1. T. Woodman	15. S. Mason	1. P. Joubert-Ribbens
14. M. Garvey	2. C. Fortey	14. S. Legg	2. F. Ongaro
13. R. Todd	3. P. Vickery	13. T. Visentin	3. R. Martinez
12. H. Paul	4. A. Eustace	12. W. Pozzebon	4. C. Checchinato
11. J. Simpson-Daniel	5. A. Brown	11. B. Williams	5. A. Gritti
10. D. McRae	6. J. Boer (capt)	10. F. Smith	6. S. Garozzo
9. A. Gomarsall	7. P. Buxton	9. S. Picone	7. S. Orlando
	8. J. Forrester		8. S. Palmer

Reps. C. Collins, A. Deacon,  
R. Roncero, M. Cornwell,  
J. Paramore, A. Page, T. Fanolua.

Reps. P. Travagli, J. Erasmus,  
D. Eigner, G. Fallva, M. Montani,  
P. Di Santo, E. Pavenello.

Referee : E. Darriere (Fra).

Gloucester progressed into the quarter-finals of the Heineken Cup with a six-try dismantling of Treviso – and could face a titanic return against Munster in the knock-out stages.

However, their opponents will not be confirmed until the culmination of the pool stages on Sunday, but barring two crushing away wins for Wasps in Perpignan and Llanelli at Northampton, Nigel Melville and his chums will be back at Thomond Park.

Gloucester secured their passage with four first half tries and were never in danger despite terrible conditions.

There were some outstanding performances, from Pete Buxton and Andy Gomarsall, but they will wait to discover their fate.

Mathematics and rugby players do not always mix – unless of course you are talking about whose round it is at the bar – but the equation for Gloucester was pretty simple.

If they won against Treviso in their final Pool Five encounter they would qualify for the knockout stages of the Heineken Cup, but if they could score four tries and earn a bonus point, they could top the pool and earn a home draw.

But for that to happen they would have to out-do Munster, a not inconsiderable achievement considering they were up against a managerless Bourgoin side who were hammered by Gloucester last weekend.

The prospect of a bonus point was by no means certain given the treacherously swirling wind and a pre-game deluge that left Kingsholm looking like a ploughed field.

Gloucester chose to play into the teeth of the gale and despite an effort from Treviso that bordered on the Herculean, a supply of ball they could have only dreamt about and a willingness to play some rugby, they were cut to pieces by Gloucester's superior pace in the wide areas and crushing power up front.

There was plenty of merit in Treviso's effort but they were outgunned in the crucial areas, notably the scrum and the line-out, while Gloucester drove possession at the end of the half with clinical precision and maximum distance.

Despite weathering a rickety 10 minutes when the wind and conditions produced a host of errors, Gloucester cut Treviso open with a lovely try.

The hugely impressive Chris Fortey straightened an attack in midfield after Phil Vickery had leant his weight to the move and when Treviso drifted across to defend, Duncan McRae sent a beautiful short pass into the path of James Simpson-Daniell who went away to the line.

HENRY PAUL'S conversion took Gloucester clear but Treviso, through a thorough effort from flanker Salvatore Garozzo, later to be sinbinned and number eight Scott Palmer, dominated territory for the next 10 minutes and came away with two Simon Mason penalties to trail on 7-6 after 22 minutes.

But they couldn't match Gloucester's cutting edge and after another lovely piece of attacking awareness by McRae, his pass found James Forrester on the left and the number eight delivered an over-head ball to Jon Goodridge who ran in to score.

Prompted by the excellent Andy Gomarsall and well served by a pack of forwards who were well and truly on top, Gloucester went in again after 32 minutes. Adam Eustace, as hard working as anybody, took a line-out, Pete Buxton burrowed forward and McRae's flat pass sent Robert Todd hurtling in to score.

PAUL converted and Gloucester led 21-6. And they would have the chance to increase the lead right on the interval when Treviso could not withstand a battering at the scrummage and the referee awarded a penalty try.

HALF-TIME : Gloucester 28, Treviso 6

Despite the vast difference in the scores, Treviso plugged away, hopelessly outclassed but desperate to make an impression. They were as physical as could have been expected and Gloucester required every ounce of their effort to forge a commanding lead.

With their mission accomplished in the first half, it was asking almost the impossible for Gloucester to reproduce such a supercharged second half, but credit where credit is due.

After losing Rodrigo Roncero, on for Trevor Woodman to the sinbin for deliberately knocking down a pass, Gloucester found themselves enough room to score a fifth try.

Garvey came close to the breakdown to quickly clear from a ruck and McRae, dancing across the field, picked out Forrester lurking with intent.

He had enough awareness to send BUXTON, Gloucester's outstanding forward with his power, weight of tackle and sheer effort, in at the far corner and behind the posts for a deserved try.

And how Gloucester had needed Buxton's presence. He has emerged as one of their most crucial players over the last month and with Gomarsall also getting through a terrific amount of work, the home side kept Treviso at bay.

However, the Italians deserved something for their effort and after a sustained period of pressure, replacement Darrell Eigner was close enough to collect a ricochet and squeeze home in the left corner.

It was impossible to say Treviso had not deserved to score and despite their dominance, Gloucester had to make any number of tackles to dent the visitors any further ground.

But the mini recovery could not last and Gloucester found enough room to score their sixth try. Gomarsall tapped a quick penalty and after a slight fumble from Mark Cornwall, Gomarsall scooped away a pass to Garvery who beat his marker and cut back inside to score a lovely try.

Paul converted to leave Treviso trailing 42-11 and that was it as far as the scoring was concerned. But the news of Munster's fourth and bonus point try in Limerick was greeted with predictable groans by a 10,000 Kingsholm crowd.

It means a return trip to Thomond Park, Gloucester's third in two seasons, is now a distinct possibility.