



# CHERRY & WHITES



## GLOUCESTER RUGBY v NORTHAMPTON SAINTS

GALLAGHER PREMIERSHIP  
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## GLOUCESTER RUGBY

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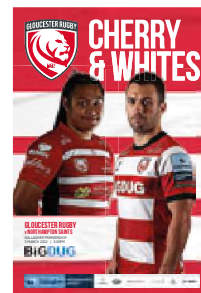
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# LANCE BRADLEY

CEO

**WELCOME TO SATURDAY AFTERNOON AT KINGSHOLM, AND OUR FIRST HOME GAME FOR A MONTH. AND IN FACT, IT'S NOT JUST A HOME GAME, IT'S TWO HOME GAMES.**

For the 3pm kick off we have our men's team playing Northampton Saints, and I'd like to extend a warm welcome to the Saints' players, officials and fans. After a couple of disappointing defeats on the road it's good to be back home, and hopefully get the result that will keep us in the mix in this incredibly tight Gallagher Premiership.

Saints too will be looking to bounce back having not won a game since the end of January. It has all the makings of a great game between two strong teams.

At 5.30 our Gloucester-Hartpury women's team take on Worcester Warriors. Worcester are only one place behind us in the Allianz Premier 15s, so we will be looking to open up a bigger gap below us, and to close in on the top six.

It's great to be able to welcome women's rugby to Kingsholm again, and we do hope you enjoy the opportunity to see another top flight game.

Today we also remember three men with close connections to the Club.

Firstly, Alan Brinn, who played a record 574 times for the Club in the

1960s and 70s, and who went on to become Club Chairman, leading the Club into the professional era. Alan passed away in February aged 81. It's unlikely that Alan's appearance record will ever be broken, and his memory will be forever ingrained in the history of the Club.

Secondly, Jack Jeffery. Jack was a season ticket holder here at Gloucester Rugby, and played for Evesham Rugby Club. It was during a game for Evesham in February that Jack was injured, and, tragically, died later in hospital.

And thirdly, we will be remembering Sam Polledri, Jake's brother. Sam

**"IT'S A DAY OF MIXED EMOTIONS AT KINGSHOLM. SOME SADNESS, SOME CELEBRATION AND, WE HOPE, SOME FABULOUS RUGBY"**

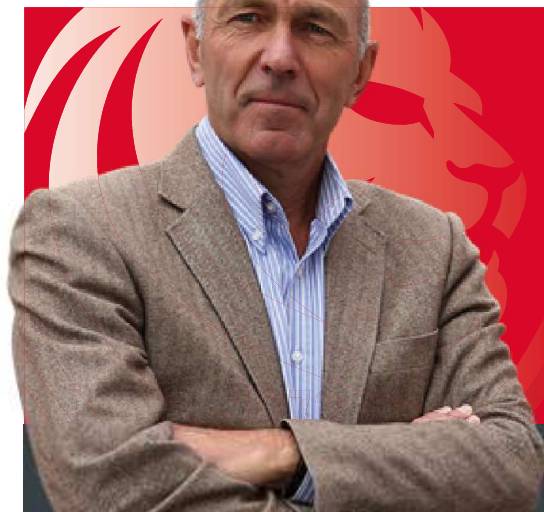
suffered a suspected heart attack last weekend and passed away at the far-too-young age of 24.

The men's families are with us today, and we will be asking everyone to show their respect with a minute's applause before kick off.

Also today we celebrate the career of a Club stalwart, Charlie Sharples. Charlie joined the Club at the age of fourteen, and this week announced his retirement from the game. You will have your chance to give Charlie a huge cheer, as we've all done so many times before, at half-time. Although Charlie will no longer be playing for the Club, I'm very pleased to be able to say that he will still be around, hosting hospitality on match days and as a member of the Former Players' Committee.

So it's a day of mixed emotions at Kingsholm. Some sadness, some celebration and, we hope, some fabulous rugby from both the men and the women. It's a reminder of what a great game it is that we all love, and that together, we are a squad of thousands.

**Best wishes  
Lance**



# MARTIN ST. QUINTON

CHAIRMAN

**WELCOME TO KINGSHOLM STADIUM FOR ANOTHER BIG SATURDAY AFTERNOON AT THE HOME OF GLOUCESTER RUGBY.**

Today we host Northampton Saints who are one of our oldest rivals in the Premiership and we welcome their players, staff and travelling fans for what should be a great game.

Led by Chris Boyd, today's visitors will be a tough test and are one of many teams pushing for a place in the top four.

It was a tough challenge against leaders, Leicester Tigers, last weekend but it was a valuable reminder that we need to continue to improve if we are to be a genuine top four contender come the end of the season.

The Gallagher Premiership is so tight and teams from 3rd to 8th are separated by just 10 points. We currently sit 6th in the league so will need to win as many games as possible if we are to achieve a play-off place.

This week we say goodbye to a club legend. Charlie Sharples announced his retirement from professional rugby and this brings back so many memories of his highlights with the club.

A one club man, I wish Charlie all the best for his future and thank him



for his outstanding commitment and contribution to Gloucester Rugby.

Unfortunately, we also remember Alan Brinn, who passed away in early February. The former Cherry and White was a another club legend and will be hugely missed by the rugby community. With 574 games for the club, he holds the Cherry and White appearance record and was a much loved member of

the wider rugby community.

We will be remembering Alan, and thanking Charlie, at the game on Saturday.

Thank you, as ever, for your support. I know you will be right behind the team this afternoon.

**Enjoy the game,  
Martin**



# NEWSNEWSNEWSNEWS



## OBITUARY: ALAN BRINN

Gloucester Rugby were saddened to hear about the passing of former player Alan Brinn, aged 81.

Alan Brinn was a lock forward who was noted as a formidable scrummager and a powerful presence around the field. One of the genuine greats of Gloucester Rugby, he holds the Gloucester Club Record of 574 appearances, made between 1960 and 1979.

Head to page 28 for more.

## CHARLIE SHARPLES ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT



Gloucester Rugby have announced that club stalwart Charlie Sharples has retired from professional rugby with immediate effect.

The Cherry and White winger has played 275 times for his childhood club and has scored 455 points in a career which has seen him become one of Gloucester Rugby's biggest contributors in the professional era.

Head to page 36 for more.

## TODAY'S MATCHDAY MASCOT

Today's matchday mascot is **Hugo Drapper**. Hugo attends Farleigh School in Andover. As a Scotsman he's an avid supporter of the national team and will be cheering on loudly the Scotsman playing for Gloucester Rugby today. His favourite Gloucester Rugby players are Chris Harris and Adam Hastings.

The Gloucester Rugby Matchday Mascot is kindly sponsored this season by:



CHELTEHAM  
COLLEGE



GLOUCESTER RUGBY  
HERITAGESOUTH SEAS  
FLAIR AT  
KINGSHOLM

Although the New Zealand Maoris came to Gloucester in 1889, no team from the South Seas Islands was seen in the city for another eighty years. First to visit were Fiji.

**FIJI**

On 10th October 1970, Fiji gained independence and their High Commissioner travelled down to Kingsholm to watch his team take on Western Counties at Kingsholm. To put it mildly, Fiji were a very physical side, but were confronted that day by some prime Gloucester beef in the form of the fearsome John Bayliss at centre, John Spalding at scrum-half, and Alan Brinn, Dick Smith and Charlie Hannaford in the Counties pack. A violent game saw Spalding suffer a couple of broken ribs, and John Pullin head-butted out of the game, but Dick Smith scored an early try, later made a break to set one up for Jon Gabitass, and in between Hannaford poached another, all of which served to see Counties home 25-13.

Fiji returned to play Gloucester in 2012. Typically robust, Fiji leapt out of the blocks to an 18-0 lead, but Matt Cox scored just before the break, and the Gloucester pack gained the upper hand in the second half, forcing two penalty tries. A try from Koree Britton edged Gloucester Rugby ahead 31-29, and they saw the game out desperately defending their line. Dan Robson's boot contributed eleven points in a cracking game.



Akapusi Qera

Several Fijians have donned the Cherry and White, most notably the irrepressible Akapusi Qera, who made 105 appearances in the back row, 2007-14, and helped Gloucester Rugby to finish top of the Premiership in his first season, before winning the LV Cup in 2011 and the Premiership Sevens in 2013. He was joined by Apo Satala with 16 appearances, 2008-10. Only briefly seen were Koli Sewabu in the back row, Semi Tadulala in the centre, and Andrew Bulumakau, a centre who also played in the 2013 Sevens success.

**SAMOA**

In 1995, Western Samoa, captained by Pat Lam, faced the South West Division at Kingsholm. The Gloucester Rugby representatives were Paul Holford on the wing, Bruce Fenley at scrum-half, and Tony Windo,

Dave Sims and Pete Glanville in the pack. Holford and Glanville shone mainly in defence, and Fenley delivered a scoring pass, but the visitors scored four tries to win 31-16.

In 2010, the Samoan national side ran in ten tries as they thrashed Combined Services 66-25 at Kingsholm.

One of Gloucester Rugby's first signings in the professional era was Terry Fanolua, and it was one of their best. Terry made 226 appearances for Gloucester Rugby, 1997-2006, his utter commitment to the cause, his strong running at centre, and his ability to break a tackle making him a Shed favourite. He was a key figure in a very successful Club side, scoring a try and making a match-winning tackle on Rory Underwood in the final of the Cheltenham &



Terry Fanolua





Junior Paramore



Eliota Fuimaono-Sapolu



Lesley Vainikolo

Gloucester Cup in 1998, and also contributing much to winning the Powergen Cup in 2003.

He was joined at Gloucester by his cousin, Junior Paramore, who made 116 appearances in the back row, 1999-2004, loved not only for his powerful presence but also for his sheer enjoyment of the game – his trademark entry as a replacement involved a detour in front of the opposing backs with a grin from ear to ear.

Another who could never be faulted for lack of effort was Eliota Fuimaono-Sapolu, who made 67 appearances at centre, 2009-12. Perhaps the highlight of his time with Gloucester was his outstanding performance, including a try, as Newcastle were beaten 34-7 in the final of the LV Cup at Northampton in 2011. A few appearances were also made by Motu Matu'u at hooker and Logovi'i Mulipola at prop.

## TONGA

The England Saxons entertained Tonga at Kingsholm in 2011. Out in the backs, Charlie Sharples and Henry Trinder saw very little of the ball as a dominant Saxons

pack, featuring Dave Attwood, kept it to themselves. They bludgeoned their way to a hat trick of penalty tries and victory 41-14.

With both Tonga and USA scheduled to play RWC 2015 matches at Kingsholm, they decided to familiarise themselves with the ground beforehand, and met there in late 2014. Tonga included several Gloucester Rugby players in David Halaifonua on the



Sione Kalamafoni

wing, Aleki Lutui at hooker, Lua Lokotui in the second row, Sione Kalamafoni in the back row and Sila Puafisi coming on as a prop replacement. Tonga won a fast, furious and entertaining game 40-12. In the RWC proper, Tonga met Georgia at Kingsholm, with Lokotui, Kalamafoni and Puafisi again involved. A very tight game saw Georgia edge home 17-10.

The first Tongan player to be signed by Gloucester Rugby was Seti Kiole, a winger, who made 17 appearances in the 2004-05 season. He was followed by Lesley Vainikolo, a winger known as "the Volcano", who exploded on the scene in 2007, scoring five tries on his debut at Leeds, and helping Gloucester Rugby to finish top of the Premiership. He made 86 appearances and scored 36 tries in five seasons with the Club. When he left in 2012, Sione Kalamafoni arrived, and also stayed for five seasons, during which he made 107 appearances. David Halaifonua made 38 appearances, 2014-18. Lua Lokotui, 2012-14, and Sila Puafisi, 2013-15, each made 15 appearances, but Aleki Lutui only four in 2014-15.



# BEN MEEHAN

## THE AMBIDEXTROUS, PERFECTIONIST KICKER READY TO BATTLE IN CHERRY AND WHITE

Wednesdays are usually a rest day for the players. A chance to recover from the tough Tuesday session and prepare for the end of the week.

However, Ben Meehan is at the Club and is practising his kicking with Harry Elrington who is acting as ball boy with the promise of a coffee afterwards as a reward for his help.

Very few players come in on their day off, but the Cherry and White scrum half is a perfectionist and is often found hitting box kicks off both his left and right feet whilst his teammates walk their dogs or run any other errands that a professional rugby player might have.

Joining the Club ahead of the start of this season, Meehan has settled in well and is loving playing in front of such passionate fans each week.

"It's really good," Meehan says in response to how he's finding life in Gloucestershire. "In terms of it being a Club, it is actually a Club if that makes any sense.

"People care about the team here. It's nice to play somewhere where the fans actually care about the team, and they'll be there week in week out."

The Cherry and White fans are famous worldwide and having played against them whilst at London Irish, Ben has first-hand experience of how hostile Kingsholm is for away teams.

"On gameday, everyone cares about the game and the fans will go to the pub, have a few beers and enjoy the game and they just love it. It's always sold out pretty much and that lap around the Shed just shows how much people care. It gives us an extra bit of a lift.

"I've played at Kingsholm on the other

end of it when I was playing for Irish and I remember thinking that this place was mental and it was rocking. When we got scored against, it was like we had no chance with the crowd against us.

"Now, I put up a box kick, Ollie Thorley goes and gets it man and ball, and the Shed just erupts. Can you imagine being on the other end of that?!"

One of the reasons that the scrumhalf is practising on his day off is the fact that he kicks off both feet, an incredibly valuable skill that requires constant work to perfect.

"My brother played football for Sheffield Wednesday, and we mostly trained together playing football until I was 12 or 13. When I turned about 14, I didn't really want to play football anymore. I was sick of people falling over and crying so he was like why don't you play rugby?

"My school was playing rugby so I was like, ok I'll play. And he said that there was only one rule, you've got to kick with both feet. If you don't kick with both feet, I'll only buy you one boot.

"I'd use both feet in football so he was like, why wouldn't you use both feet in rugby? And I didn't want to be running around with one boot on!"

Being able to kick off both feet is a real weapon in Meehan's arsenal and gives him and the team a real advantage.

"You'd be surprised with how unappreciated it is in the modern day game. It's good to hear that people notice it but I think the advantage is unbelievable. You don't need to have a kicking 10 because the nine can do all of the kicking.





"Little things like exit rucks, rather than taking another ruck to the inside line, you can kick it from anywhere.

"The biggest thing from a team perspective is that it saves energy for the forwards because they don't have to take extra rucks to get a better angle for a right footed kicker for example if he's on the left-hand side of the field.

"I don't need any set up rucks. I can just kick it from anywhere and I think that's the biggest advantage."

It's a really interesting point and it is surprising that in a sport where the margin between victory and failure is so small that more kickers aren't comfortable off both feet.

"How many people in the comp naturally kick off both feet? None. Jonny Wilkinson did it and he won a World Cup with it. I thought that would have been the nail in the coffin for people to realise that kickers need to be comfortable off both feet.

"I just think that it's the most underrated skill and everyone should be trying to do it."

It does double the workload though and kicking sessions take twice as long as they would do normally.

"You can imagine that for a right footed kicker, a kicking session could take 30 minutes. You'd do it all with your right foot. My kicking sessions take an hour because I've got to do both feet.



"I'm a perfectionist, so if I don't hit it exactly where I want to hit it, three times in a row, I'll go back to the start and do it again. That would just be with my right foot so when I switch to my left, I start the process over again.

"My kicking sessions can sometimes take two hours!

"I had a coach when I was in the U20 Australian team and he told me that I was never going to be a good scrumhalf because I was left footed.

"So I was like, you obviously don't know me so I went and kicked it with my right foot and showed him.

"I don't know why more people don't coach it. You coach to pass off both hands so why not coach to kick with both feet. It's just absurd."

A big factor for Meehan's arrival at Gloucester Rugby was the fact that he had worked with George Skivington in the past.

"He has a way of talking to the boys. For example, Tuesday is our hardest training day and you sort of go in thinking that you don't really want to train because it's going to be tiring.

"Then he'll give this speech and you'll go from not wanting to train to being ready to go to battle. I don't know how to describe it but that's the best way

and we all work out of that meeting room ready to go.

"It's the same on gameday. We'll walk in and we'll be nervous and he'll get up and find the words and he just has this way of talking to people that just gets you right to the core and to the bit where, you're not ready to fight, but you're ready to go to battle with your brothers."

Skivington has made big changes since joining the Club and has got the players playing for the city and representing those in the stands out on the pitch.

"There's thousands of people that work hard for a living and it's drilled into us that if they come and spend their money then the least we can do is put everything we've got into that game.

"I don't like saying it, but we live a good life. We go in for five hours on a Monday, five hours on a Tuesday, we have Wednesday off, we work on Thursday and then captain's run on Friday and then play on Saturday.

"Some fans that come and watch us are up at 7am, go to work in the freezing cold on a job site. On their Saturday, they could choose to do 1000 things but they want to wear their Gloucester jersey, stand in the Shed and cheer the boys on.

"The least we can do is go out there and dive on that loose ball or chase back a bit harder than the opposition."



# CHERRY AND WHITE LEGEND ALAN BRINN PASSES AWAY

Words: Gloucester Rugby Heritage



## GLOUCESTER RUGBY WAS SADDENED TO HEAR ABOUT THE PASSING OF FORMER PLAYER ALAN BRINN, AGED 81.

Alan Brinn was a lock forward who was noted as a formidable scrummager and a powerful presence around the field.

One of the genuine greats of Gloucester Rugby, he holds the Gloucester Rugby club record of 574 appearances, made between 1960 and 1979, a record that may well stand forever.

Brinn played for Gloucester Rugby in their victory over Moseley in the final of the first ever club knockout competition in 1972 and was capped three times for England that year.

He played 48 times for Gloucestershire and appeared for the county in six successive County Championship Finals 1970-71-72-73-74-75; he was on the winning side in 1972, 1974 and 1975.

He also played for Western Counties against the 1969 Springboks, 1970 Fijians and 1972 All Blacks and for South & South West against the 1973 Wallabies and the 1970 RFU President's Centenary XV.

On his retirement as a player he served as an England Rugby associate selector and as Gloucester club chairman.

Alan Brinn was born on 21 July 1940 in the village of Ystrad in the Rhondda Valley. He came to Gloucester from Hereford RFC in 1960, playing 37 games in his first season.

His formidable scrummaging and all-round performances made him a first choice for Gloucester Rugby for the next five seasons but it was only after over 150 solid 1st XV performances that Alan Brinn, still aged only 25, gained county recognition, when he made his debut in a 3-0 victory over Cornwall at Camborne on 13 November 1965.

He was now clearly in the England selectors' sights and the following season was chosen to play for the Possibles against the Probables in the second England trial.

He was the only Gloucester Rugby player chosen to play for the South

and South West against the RFU President's Overseas XV at Bristol – one of the four matches against an all-star touring side which were held to celebrate the RFU Centenary.

He played for Western Counties against the Fijians and was invited to attend training sessions for the England tour of Japan and the Far East that autumn but was not in the final 23 who were chosen.

He played in his second County Championship Final against Surrey at Kingsholm but was on the losing side.

1971-72 was a great season for Gloucester Rugby, Gloucestershire and Alan Brinn.

Gloucester won the inaugural club knockout competition, an achievement based on the performance of their dominant pack, and Gloucestershire won the County Championship for the first time for 35 years, beating Warwickshire at Coventry.



Brinn contributed largely to both successes. He was selected for the final England trial at Twickenham where, although The Rest were beaten 37-6, he performed well enough to be one of three members of the Rest side to be picked for the international against Wales at Twickenham.

The Citizen said that it was "a richly deserved honour" and The Times: "Brinn clearly packs his weight and has earned his cap for old-fashioned but still commendable values."

In its match report the Citizen said "Brinn, the Longlevens sports shop owner, was a force in the scrum where his weight was largely responsible for keeping Wales under control."

He went on to play against Ireland at Twickenham and Scotland at Murrayfield but missed the international in Paris due to an ankle injury.

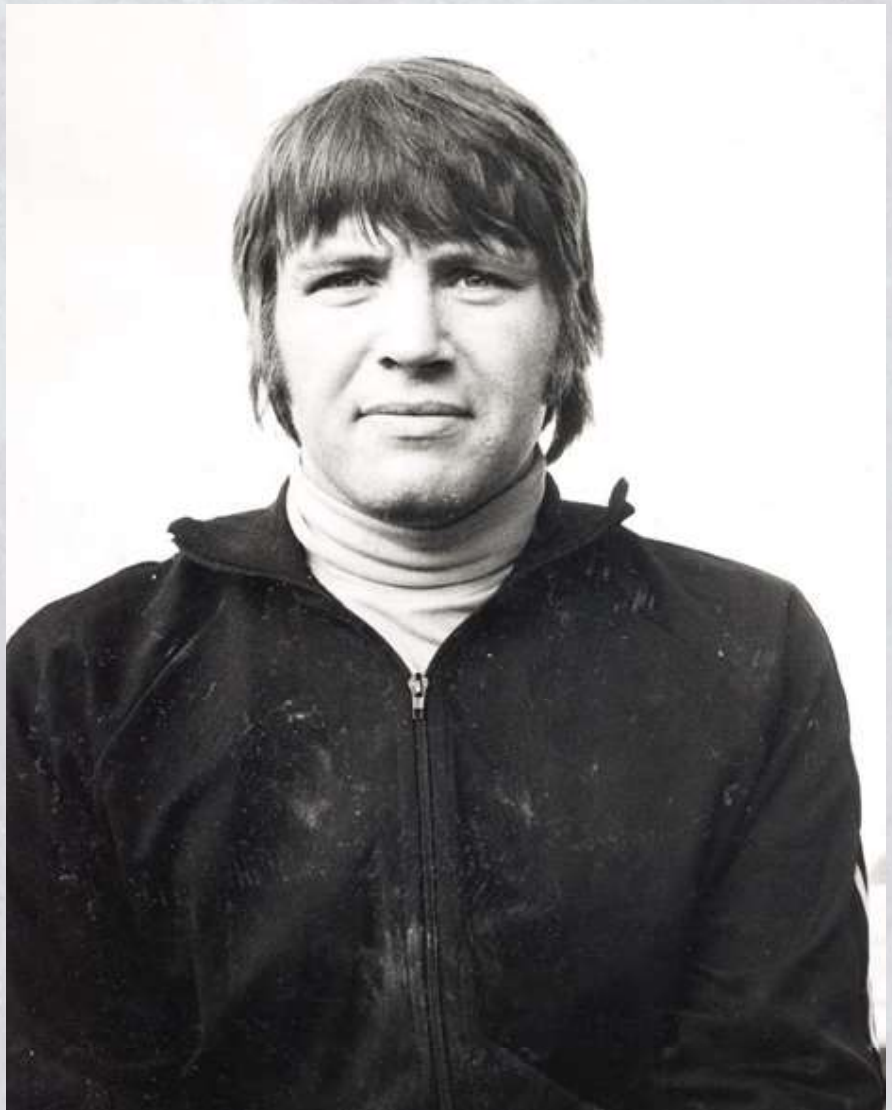
Aged 32, Brinn continued to be a major force in West Country rugby for the next five years.

He played for Western Counties against the 1972 All Blacks and for the South and South West against the 1973 Wallabies and was again on the winning side in the 1974 County Championship victory over Lancashire at Blundellsands.

He played throughout the 1974-75 County Championship campaign, finishing in the final which Gloucester Rugby won 13-9, defeating Eastern Counties at Kingsholm.

He made his 500th appearance for Gloucester that season and together with Peter Ford and Dick Smith, the other players to reach that mark, was presented with a carriage clock by the club (later they would be joined by Bob Clewes and Richard Mogg as the five members of the exclusive "500 club.")

Aged 37, Brinn stepped down to become Gloucester United captain



in 1977-78, but still made 11 appearances for the first XV.

He made one appearance in 1978-79 in a 13-0 win over Newport at

**"HE MADE ONE  
APPEARANCE IN  
1978-79 IN A 13-0  
WIN OVER NEWPORT  
AT KINGSHOLM  
BEFORE PLAYING  
HIS 574TH AND  
FINAL GAME"**

Kingsholm before playing his 574th and final game as a replacement on 10 November 1979 at Kingsholm against Plymouth Albion.

He would surely have gone on to make 600 1st XV appearances for the club if, at the start of the 1977-78 season, he hadn't chosen to step down to make way for younger players and captain Gloucester United.

After retiring from rugby, Alan ran his sports outfitting business in Eastgate Street, Gloucester.

He became an England Rugby associate national selector and was Gloucester RFC chairman throughout the difficult years leading up to the start of the professional era in 1996.

## ACADEMY UPDATE

# U18s BEAT YORKSHIRE 21-12 AT FINALS DAY



## GLOUCESTER RUGBY'S U18s DEFEATED YORKSHIRE 21-12 IN THE LEAGUE'S FINALS DAY AT SIXWAYS STADIUM ON SUNDAY.

Ioan Jones scored two tries with Ty Lewis also getting over for a score and Keillen Cullen slotted all three conversions to make each try a seven point score.

It was a great way for the squad to finish their U18 programme after some difficult results throughout the season and U18 Head Coach Matt Teague was pleased with how the lads played.

"It was a great performance from each individual and it's great that we can end the U18 season on a high with this win against Yorkshire.

"Each player has trained incredibly hard and they can be really proud of the way that they played and represented the badge each time they pulled the shirt on."

After impressing for Gloucester Rugby U18s, Will Gilderson has been selected to play for England U18s in their upcoming fixture away in France.

## U17S

Our Academy under 17 development squad captained by Max Knight, played their first fixture of the season against Worcester Warriors U17s at Sixways last Thursday, picking up a 19-35 victory.

Under 17 Players Mikey Nixon and Ioan Jones have also been selected for the upcoming England Under 17 Development Camp.





# GEORGE BARTON

## ACADEMY PROFILE



Words: Will Hartshorn

**STRONG RANGE OF PASSING OFF OF BOTH HANDS, A STRONG EYE FOR IDENTIFYING GAPS, A HIGH-LEVEL RUGBY BRAIN, QUICK FEET, EXEMPLARY KICKING ABILITY, A STRONG TACKLE; TO FIND A FLY HALF WHO CAN TICK OFF ALL OF THESE BOXES IS EASIER SAID THAN DONE, AND WHEN YOU GET YOUR HANDS ONE, YOU BETTER HOLD TIGHT, BECAUSE THEY ARE SOME OF THE MOST VALUABLE PLAYERS A SQUAD CAN HAVE.**

George Barton, the product of Longlevens RFC, may just tick all those boxes.

At the age of only 21, George has a wealth of top-flight experience after getting a long stretch of opportunities in the 2020-21 season, in which he truly flourished.

Despite many different attributes, the young fly half is known primarily for his superb goal kicking ability. During the 2020-21 season, he managed to put 38 points on the board across just nine games.

This stat was good enough to secure him the highest kick

percentage of the year, in the Gallagher Premiership, a staggering achievement for a 20-year-old in his first full senior season.

As we have seen Barton more and more, his confidence has clearly grown and seen him flourish.

Runs on and off the ball are made with more aggression and intent, passes have been held for higher risk, higher reward efforts and his eye for space in behind has been more prevalent too.

On the other side of the ball, the 21-year-old standoff has shown he can not only hold his own, but stick some dominant hits on the

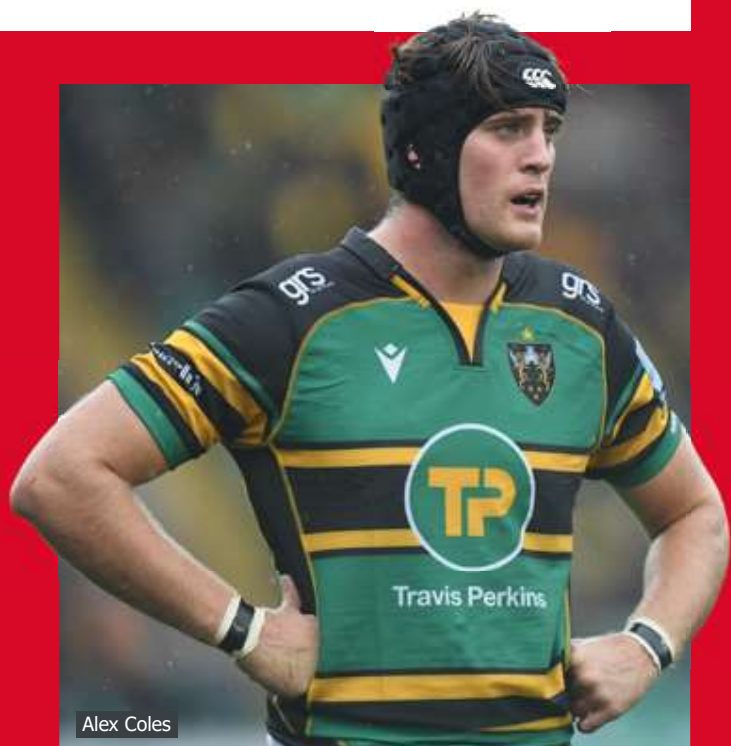
opposition, a trait some fly halves rarely possess.

The arrival of Adam Hastings alongside the rise of fly-half turned full back Lloyd Evans has presented a big selection challenge for boss George Skivington, but he has previously made his excitement and trust in Barton known.

Three seasons of experience, England U20 caps, highest kick percentage award, backing from the boss; all at the age of 21...

If you didn't know George Barton after his Champions Cup game winner against Ulster, you soon will... Watch this space.

# STATS CORNER



Alex Coles



James Grayson

- Gloucester Rugby have won just two of their last six Premiership matches against Northampton Saints at home (D1 L3); despite leading at half-time on all six occasions.
- Gloucester Rugby have lost their last two matches in the Premiership, however, they have not lost three in a row since a run of eight straight defeats between December 2020 and February 2021, which included a home loss to Northampton Saints (26-31 in January 2021).
- Northampton Saints are currently on a run of three straight defeats in the Premiership, their worst run since a sequence of nine consecutive losses between August and December 2020; however, their last two defeats have come by margins of three points or fewer.
- Northampton Saints have won four of their eight matches away from home in this season's Premiership, with their last three victories coming by an average margin of 23 points.
- Gloucester Rugby have recorded the lowest percentage of time in possession of any team in this season's Premiership (47%), while only Worcester Warriors and Bath Rugby (both 45%) have spent less time in opposition territory than Gloucester Rugby this term (46%).
- Northampton Saints have the quickest average attacking ruck speed amongst all sides in this season's Premiership (3.2 seconds); Gloucester Rugby, on the other hand, have the slowest average attacking ruck speed this term (4.3 seconds).
- No player has hit more defensive rucks in this season's Premiership than Gloucester Rugby's Lewis Ludlow (123), while his teammate Ruan Ackermann is joint-fifth for defensive ruck arrivals (96).
- Northampton Saints' David Ribbans has conceded more penalties than any other player in this season's Premiership (26), with his four penalties conceded against Exeter Chiefs also a league-high in last weekend's round of fixtures.
- No player completed more tackles in last weekend's round of fixtures than Northampton Saints' Alex Coles (24) or Sam Matavesi (23); however, no player has made more tackles this season than Gloucester Rugby's Lewis Ludlow (236).
- Northampton Saints fly-half James Grayson provided three break assist passes for his teammates against Exeter Chiefs last weekend – the most of any player in Round 18 – after failing to provide a single one in his first five appearances this term.





# CHARLIE SHARPLES BIDS FAREWELL TO GLOUCESTER RUGBY

**GLOUCESTER RUGBY LEGEND CHARLIE SHARPLES HAS RETIRED FROM PROFESSIONAL RUGBY AFTER A SUCCESSFUL 15-YEAR CAREER WITH THE CHERRY AND WHITES.**



The winger scored 455 points in 275 appearances and will go down in history as a true Kingsholm legend.

Speaking about his retirement, Charlie spoke about stepping away from the sport he has loved so much.

"There's so much to reflect on. My intention going into this season was to maximise all of the rugby and enjoy it as much as I could. I wanted to stay as injury free as possible and just enjoy being on the pitch because I knew that it was coming to an end at the end of the season.

"I was ready to finish in July and I'd got my head around doing that but unfortunately I dislocated my shoulder and the prognosis was that I needed surgery and that was going to keep me out for most of the season."

Having prepared to retire at the end of the season, Charlie injured his shoulder in an A League fixture against Bristol and was left with a difficult decision to make.

"It was quite a difficult time and it did put me in a bit of a spin because I felt like the rugby had been taken away from me because I wasn't ready to finish at that moment, I was ready to finish in July.

"I had a couple of weeks before my operation and I was contemplating my future and whether I would try and rehab and come back and possibly get back for the end of the season, or was it the right time for me to hang up my boots.

"That was really difficult for me. I just had to go with my gut and the way that I felt."

Being forced away from the pitch gave Charlie the time he needed to digest his options and after some time to consider his options, he concluded that it was time to retire.

"My body hasn't been kind to me over the last few years and I just had to listen to it and think that it's the right time.

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FEATURE

"I'm not the future of the club anymore. As sentimental as it would have been to come back for one game, that may or may not even have happened. Also, that one game wouldn't have changed the course of my career."

"In a few years when I'm able to reflect, it's been an amazing career and one game wouldn't have made that any better or any worse."

Professional athletes rarely get the opportunity to end on their own terms and it was the support of those at the club who helped Charlie with his decision.

"It definitely just felt to me that it was the right time. Luckily the club was really supportive and I had some good conversations with Alex Brown and George Skivington who have both been in that same position themselves."

"The sensible option was to hang the boots up and the positive that's given me is that it's given me this time to enable my transition and has made my transition easier than it would have been if I'd just gone straight from rugby into working a new job."

"I'm very grateful to the club for that support."

Charlie will start a new job in the world of finance but won't be a stranger at Kingsholm as he will be taking up an ambassadorial role as well as becoming a member of the former player's committee.

"The focus is still around rehabbing my shoulder and getting that right because I want to remain active in life after rugby and you never know, I could get invited back



to play in a charity match at Kingsholm so I need to at least be able to put in half a shift!

"I have a lot of clarity around it now and I feel like it is the right decision and it's obviously tinged with a bit of disappointment with what I wasn't able to achieve this season but ultimately it's the right thing and I'm very proud of what I've been able to do for Gloucester Rugby."







**GLOUCESTER RUGBY  
FOUNDATION**

PARTICIPATION · EDUCATION · WELLBEING



# PROJECT RUGBY – GIRLS RUGBY

**PROJECT RUGBY IS A PARTNERSHIP WITH PREMIERSHIP RUGBY, RFU AND PREMIERSHIP RUGBY CLUBS WHO HAVE AN AIM TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION, ENGAGING WITH NEW AUDIENCES FROM TRADITIONALLY UNDER REPRESENTED GROUPS WITHIN THE COMMUNITIES OVER THE COUNTRY.**

One focus for the Gloucester Rugby Foundation is to increase participation within the Women's and Girls' game over Gloucestershire and West Oxfordshire. The main way in which we are looking to achieve this is by heading into secondary schools providing the opportunities and exposure for pupils to experience rugby in a female only environment.

We are dedicated to providing a positive experience for girls, over a 5-week programme to help them on their way to participating in weekly rugby sessions, and the hope that they will transition into local rugby clubs. Our Foundation Team will be there to assist and support participants on their journey into regular rugby sessions.



We are still looking for more schools to come on board with the programme and make the first step into providing new opportunities for girls within your school. The year groups that are eligible for this programme are year 9, 10 and 11's.

## WHAT TO DO NEXT?

Parents/Guardians – Let your school know about this opportunity. (All bookings must be through the schools)

Teachers – Contact Gloucester Rugby Foundation for more information. (Please see contact details below – or visit our website [www.gloucesterrugby.co.uk/foundation](http://www.gloucesterrugby.co.uk/foundation) )

**For more information on the programme, please contact our Lead Participation Officer, Kelsey Jones, on [kelseyjones@gloucesterrugby.co.uk](mailto:kelseyjones@gloucesterrugby.co.uk)**



## GLOUCESTER RUGBY DENIED BY STRONG LEICESTER TIGERS

Gloucester Rugby lost 35-23 to top of the league Leicester Tigers at Welford Road on Saturday.

### What happened?

Leicester scored four tries and showed why they are the side at the top of the Gallagher Premiership as they left Gloucester Rugby empty handed.

The Cherry and Whites were competitive and had a narrow 16-14 lead at half time but ultimately made too many errors against the ruthless side.

It was Adam Hastings who put Gloucester Rugby on the scoreboard after missing his first penalty attempt but Leicester hit back with a try from Jack van Poortvliet. Former Gloucester Rugby player, Freddie Burns, was in fine form for the Tigers and nailed the conversion giving the hosts a 7-3 lead.

Hastings slotted another penalty but again, Leicester hit back with a try, this time from Jasper Wiese.

Suddenly, Santiago Carreras made a break and threw a pass out to Ollie Thorley who went over for Gloucester Rugby's first try of the match. Hastings nailed the conversion and suddenly we were within one point.

Just before the break, Hastings slotted another penalty to take us two points ahead of Leicester making the score 16-14 to the Cherry and Whites at the break.

In the second half, Leicester came out and scored tries through Hanro Liebenberg and Guy Porter to build a healthy lead.

Freddie Burns kicked three penalties and a late Harry Elrlington try wasn't enough to kick start a last ditch effort for a losing bonus point.

Lewis Ludlow collected the ball and offloaded to Freddie Clarke who then passed to Elrlington who had the pace to go over.

However, despite a last gasp effort to get within seven points, it wasn't possible and we come away from Welford Road empty handed.







## KEY MOMENT: OLLIE THORLEY TRY

It was a great break from Santiago Carreras which set Ollie Thorley up for the try. The winger still had plenty of work to do and had to duck under the Nadolo tackle to make it over the line.





# WOMEN'S RUGBY



## GLOUCESTER-HARTPURY WOMEN ARE PLAYING AT KINGSHOLM!

They host Worcester Warriors Women after the men's game against Northampton Saints and will kick off at 5:30pm.

Make sure you stay around to watch the Allianz Premier 15s fixture.

## "I'M HOPING THAT I'LL EARN MY CAP IN THE SIX NATIONS" - SISILIA TUIPULOTU OPENS UP ON WOMEN'S SIX NATIONS AMBITIONS FOR WALES

Words: Enya Lackie



GLOUCESTER-HARTPURY'S SISILIA TUIPULOTU HOPES TO MAKE HER WELSH DEBUT AFTER BEING SELECTED FOR WALES' TRAINING CAMP AHEAD OF THE WOMEN'S SIX NATIONS IN MARCH.

Since Wales' historic announcement of the new women's rugby contracts on January 12, Wales have announced that the Cherry and Whites' youngster Tuipulotu has received a retainer contract.

Tuipulotu says: "I think that since the contracts have come out, I think we have a good chance in the Six Nations to be one of the top teams in the UK out of all the Six Nations competing."

In the rugby community, Tuipulotu's name has been watched after her impressive performances so far in the Allianz Premier 15s and Welsh Training Camp.



When asked about her time at the Welsh training camp, her instant reaction was "there's no way to explain it. I'm grateful."

When reflecting on the competitive nature of the training camp, her automatic response was the word "intense".

She says: "The work rate was really high. There were no stops. You had to just keep going. The only stop you get it is to drink water.

"But, it's good because then you know the transitions in the game to move from one thing to another.

Even after her taste of the demands that international rugby brings, she smiled at the prospect of more action by saying: "I'm hoping that I'll probably earn my cap in the Six Nations but who knows... that's a big mission.

"I got called up in the Six Nations last year but I didn't end up getting capped."

Tuipulotu also talks about her thoughts on the new Welsh contracts.

"I think there needs to be a boost for the clubs in Wales.

"In Wales right now, there isn't really any pathway for girls to go through for them to end up playing for Wales."

With a great percentage of recognised Welsh International players found in English Premiership squads, she continues to say that players "have to come to England to play and then get chosen to play for Wales."

"I feel like there would be more of a chance for women in Wales to want to play for Wales, if they have [Premiership standard] clubs."

#### Her season so far...

So far this season, Tuipulotu is well on her way to becoming one of the big names in the Allianz Premier 15s.

A force to be reckoned with, Tuipulotu spoke about her individual drive and passion to continue to improve.

She says: "In training sessions it might seem intimidating but you've got to push yourself to be as good as them.

"Training with them [experienced premiership players] just pushes you even more and to earn your spot on the team."

With the hard work paying off, Tuipulotu talks about her progression this season into the Allianz Premier 15s.

She says: "So that cup game [between Bristol Bears and Gloucester-Hartpury on October 30], people say I performed very well and so my coaches saw what I could do."

"They [the coaches] took a chance on me on the Loughborough game" where Gloucester-Hartpury lost by two points (31-33) on December 4.

She continues: "I started on the bench and eventually I was in the starting 15 and for the past 4 weeks, I've been starting."

Apart from her time training for Wales, Tuipulotu has commented on her favourite moment so far this season.

Her highlight was when she scored "the two tries in the Worcester game" on December 18.

She smiled when reminiscing and said: "It was pretty good because we ended up getting the bonus point and then the six points altogether because of those two tries I scored."

#### How Tuipulotu started...

The laughter soon started after Tuipulotu reveals her original ambitions to peruse her netball at college.

She says: "I went into college thinking that I was going to do netball but I didn't like it... they also told me I was a bit violent so I stopped."

"Then, one of the coaches in college came up to me and asked me if I ever tried rugby and at that time, no."

"I turned up to one training session and I loved it. And that was that."

"One of the coach's from Worcester [Warriors] actually approached me and then another coach from Gloucester called and it was either choose Worcester or Gloucester...so I chose Gloucester."

Alongside her rugby career, the rising star also consistently works hard to juggle her studying for her psychology degree at the University of Gloucestershire.

But for now, it is all eyes on the imminent Six Nations tournament that starts on March 26.



# THE TEAMS



VS



T P C D

T P C D

				Emma <b>SING</b>	15	Cat <b>MCNANEY</b>				
				Ellie <b>UNDERWOOD</b>	14	Lydia <b>THOMPSON (C)</b>				
				Hannah <b>JONES</b>	13	Carys <b>COX</b>				
				Kerin <b>LAKE</b>	12	Meg <b>VARLEY</b>				
				Millie <b>WOOD</b>	11	Paige <b>FARRIES</b>				
				Robyn <b>WILKINS</b>	10	Minori <b>YAMAMOTO</b>				
				Bianca <b>BLACKBURN</b>	9	Caity <b>MATTINSON</b>				
				Cara <b>HOPE</b>	1	Akina <b>GONDWE</b>				
				Kelsey <b>JONES</b>	2	Carys <b>PHILLIPS</b>				
				Cerys <b>HALE</b>	3	Laura <b>KEATES</b>				
				Sisilia <b>TUIPULOTU</b>	4	Amelia <b>BUCKLAND HURRY</b>				
				Kristine <b>SOMMER</b>	5	Alycia <b>WASHINGTON</b>				
				Gwen <b>CRABB</b>	6	Cara <b>BRINGAT</b>				
				Bethan <b>LEWIS</b>	7	Alex <b>CALLENDER</b>				
				Anna <b>CAPLICE</b>	8	Jo <b>BROWN</b>				

## REPLACEMENTS

				Ellie <b>GILBERT</b>	16	El <b>FEBREY</b>				
				Ranni <b>SAMUDA</b>	17	Abby <b>SMITHEMAN</b>				
				Kathryn <b>BUGGY</b>	18	Carmen <b>TREMELLING</b>				
				Shya <b>PINNOCK</b>	19	Elizabeth <b>SHERMER</b>				
				Tabitha <b>COPSON</b>	20	Taz <b>BRICKNELL</b>				
				Alicia <b>MAUDE</b>	21	Jess <b>KERSHAW</b>				
				Daisy <b>FAHEY</b>	22	Ellen <b>MURPHY</b>				
				Rachel <b>LUND</b>	23	Sarah <b>NICHOLAS</b>				



## THE TEAMS



VS



T P C D

T P C D

				Kyle <b>MOYLE</b>	15	Rory <b>HUTCHINSON</b>				
				Santiago <b>CARRERAS</b>	14	Courtnall <b>SKOSAN</b>				
				Tom <b>SEABROOK</b>	13	Matt <b>PROCTOR</b>				
				Billy <b>TWELVETREES</b>	12	Fraser <b>DINGWALL (C)</b>				
				Ollie <b>THORLEY</b>	11	Tom <b>COLLINS</b>				
				Adam <b>HASTINGS</b>	10	Dan <b>BIGGAR</b>				
				Ben <b>MEEHAN</b>	9	Alex <b>MITCHELL</b>				
				Harry <b>ELRINGTON</b>	1	Emmanuel <b>IYOGUN</b>				
				Santiago <b>SOCINO</b>	2	Sam <b>MATAVESI</b>				
				Fraser <b>BALMAIN</b>	3	Ehren <b>PAINTER</b>				
				Freddie <b>CLARKE</b>	4	David <b>RIBBANS</b>				
				Matias <b>ALEMANNO</b>	5	Api <b>RATUNIYARAWA</b>				
				Jordy <b>REID</b>	6	Alex <b>COLES</b>				
				Jack <b>CLEMENT</b>	7	Teimana <b>HARRISON</b>				
				Ruan <b>ACKERMANN (C)</b>	8	Juarno <b>AUGUSTUS</b>				

## REPLACEMENTS

				Henry <b>WALKER</b>	16	Mike <b>HAYWOOD</b>				
				Val <b>RAPAVA RUSKIN</b>	17	Nick <b>AUTERAC</b>				
				Jamal <b>FORD ROBINSON</b>	18	Paul <b>HILL</b>				
				Andrew <b>DAVIDSON</b>	19	Brandon <b>NANSEN</b>				
				Alex <b>CRAIG</b>	20	Karl <b>WILKINS</b>				
				Charlie <b>CHAPMAN</b>	21	Tom <b>JAMES</b>				
				George <b>BARTON</b>	22	James <b>GRAYSON</b>				
				Louis <b>REES ZAMMIT</b>	23	Piers <b>FRANCIS</b>				

## MATCH OFFICIALS

**Referee:** Ian Tempest (102nd Premiership game)  
**Assistant Referees:** Michael Hudson and Paul Dix  
**TMO:** Claire Hodnett **Citing Officer:** Richard Nunn