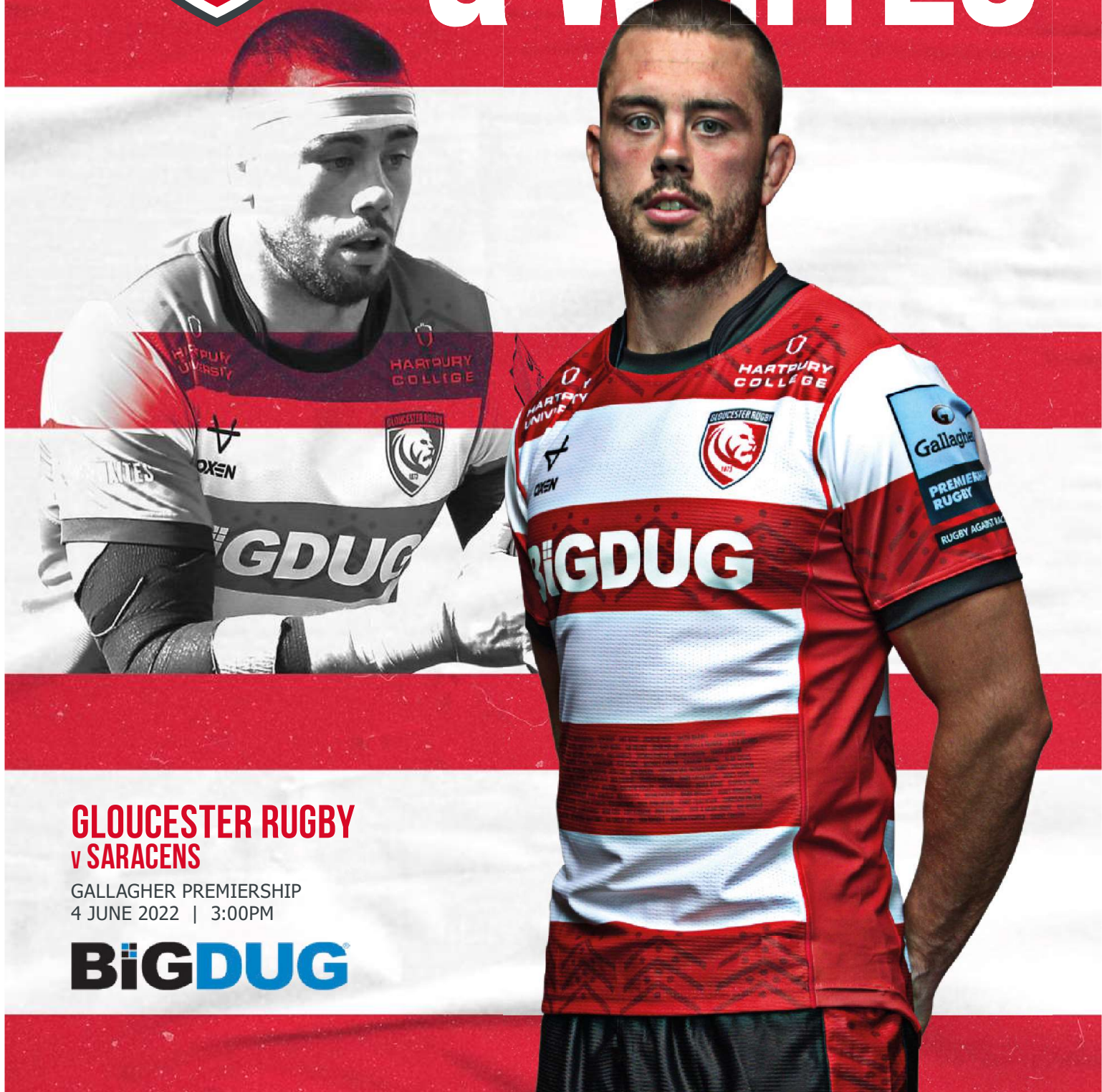




CHERRY & WHITES



GLOUCESTER RUGBY v SARACENS

GALLAGHER PREMIERSHIP
4 JUNE 2022 | 3:00PM

BiGDUG



Gallagher

PREMIERSHIP
RUGBY



FULLER'S
LONDON PRIDE



BT SPORT



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

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LANCE BRADLEY

CEO

WELCOME TO KINGSHOLM, AND OUR FINAL HOME MATCH OF THE 21/22 SEASON. OUR VISITORS TODAY ARE SARACENS, AND I'M SURE YOU'LL GIVE THEM OUR USUAL WARM WELCOME.

After a disappointing end to the 20/21 season, when we were forced to cancel our final two games due to Covid and finished 11th, I don't think there were many people outside the Club who would have predicted we'd have such a good season this time round.

We've done well in all three of the competitions we entered, and going into this final Gallagher Premiership game still have a chance, albeit out of our hands, of finishing in the top 4.

Perhaps even more importantly, we've developed significantly as a squad and as a Club, and we have some strong foundations in place which we hope will bring future success.

Foremost in that respect was the news that George Skivington has signed a new contract. This is great news for us all. Anything that's really worth having takes time, and a lot of hard work, to achieve, and we really feel we're on our way to building something special here. If you haven't seen George's interview where he talks about his feelings for the Club then [click here to view it](#).

**"WE'VE DEVELOPED
SIGNIFICANTLY AS A SQUAD AND
AS A CLUB, AND WE HAVE SOME
STRONG FOUNDATIONS IN PLACE
WHICH WE HOPE WILL BRING
FUTURE SUCCESS"**

You will have heard the announcements this week about key players signing new contracts, and there will be more to come over the next few weeks. They're keen to stay at the Club because they can see what we're building.

What's also exciting is the announcement we're going to be making at half time today about some more of our youngsters being awarded their first Academy contracts. We've been saying for some time now that our Academy is the key to our future success. That's why we've been investing in it so heavily. We continue to refine what we're doing on the development pathway, and how that not only helps find our future stars, but also how we encourage a love of rugby and its values in our wider community.

The other good news we announced recently is the substantial increase in funding we're making for our Gloucester-Hartpury women's team.

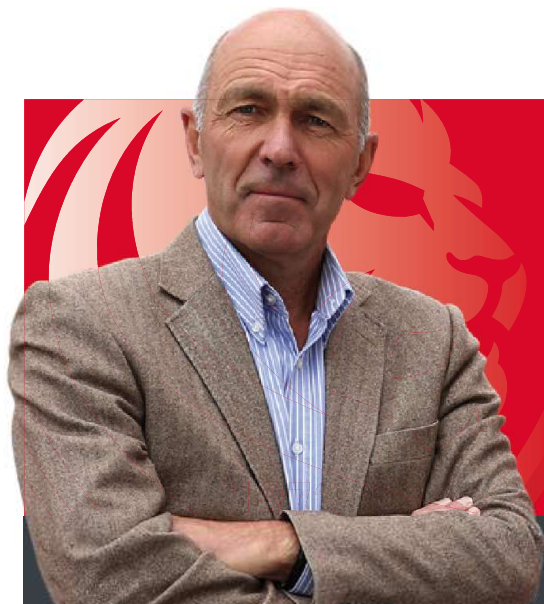
It's a very exciting time for women's rugby, with interest in the game growing rapidly. The England vs Wales match in the Tik Tok Six Nations that we hosted recently was our second highest crowd of the season, and, at the time, a record crowd for an England women's game.

If you haven't been to a women's game yet, make a note to come along next season. You won't be disappointed.

I'll be wandering around the ground before kick-off again this afternoon, so do come over and say hello. I'm always interested to hear what you're thinking about how things are going.

Together, we are a squad of thousands.

**Best wishes
Lance**



MARTIN ST. QUINTON

CHAIRMAN

GOOD AFTERNOON AND WELCOME TO OUR LAST HOME FIXTURE OF THE SEASON. IT'S ALL COME DOWN TO THE FINAL ROUND AND IF RESULTS GO OUR WAY, THERE IS STILL A SLIM CHANCE THAT WE WILL MAKE THE PLAYOFFS.

We recently played Saracens, of course, in the quarter-final of the Challenge Cup so we know how good a side they are and that we will have to play at our best this afternoon. No matter what the result, it has been a successful season for us and that is why we were delighted to announce last week that George Skivington has signed a new long term contract to stay at Kingsholm.

It's a hugely exciting time for Gloucester Rugby. George and his coaching staff, have been instrumental in creating a professional and positive culture that delivers results.

I am sure we are all looking forward to seeing how we progress going into next season.

It is of course the Queen's Platinum Jubilee this week and it is great to be able to celebrate this occasion with you all at Kingsholm. I think today, our Queen deserves a big cheer... along with our Cherry and Whites!

It's been a great season and I want to thank you for the massive contribution you as fans make to this great Club.

**Enjoy the game,
Martin**



"IT HAS BEEN A SUCCESSFUL SEASON FOR US AND THAT IS WHY WE WERE DELIGHTED TO ANNOUNCE LAST WEEK THAT GEORGE SKIVINGTON HAS SIGNED A NEW LONG TERM CONTRACT TO STAY AT KINGSHOLM"

NEWSNEWSNEWSNEWS

GEORGE SKIVINGTON COMMITS FUTURE TO GLOUCESTER RUGBY

Gloucester Rugby is delighted to announce that George Skivington has committed his future to Kingsholm having signed a new long-term deal with the Cherry and Whites.

The 39-year-old joined Gloucester Rugby in the summer of 2020 as Head Coach and is now coming to the end of his second full season at the helm of the Cherry and Whites.

Joining in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic, Skivington helped steer the team through a turbulent season and used the challenges of that initial few months to lay the foundations which have been built on this year.

Skivington said that it was an easy decision to sign on and stay at Kingsholm.

"I'm massively grateful to the Club for giving me this contract. The Club did take a punt on me. There were higher profile coaches that they could have gone for which would have been the easy option in terms of people's perceptions.

"My ambition is to prove them right and show them that they've hired the right guy and I'll continue to do that. We want to be a successful club year after year."



TODAY'S MASCOT

Today's matchday mascot is **Arabella Ollivier**. She is currently at the Godstowe Preparatory School in High Wycombe. Arabella's family has a long tradition of playing for Amersham and Chiltern Rugby Club, at one point making up the entire second team front row.

Her favourite Gloucester Rugby player is Jonny May and she is a good all round sportswoman, enjoying netball, horse-riding, swimming, gymnastics and lacrosse as well as rugby.

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



CHELTEMHAM COLLEGE





LAST TIME WE MET

GLOUCESTER RUGBY KNOCKED OUT OF CHALLENGE CUP

A strong Saracens side defeated Gloucester Rugby 44-15 at Kingsholm to progress to the semi-final of the Challenge Cup.

Gloucester Rugby put up a strong test and fought until the end but were ultimately the second best side on the evening.

What happened?

Owen Farrell kicked three first half penalties and converted Aled Davies' try to give our visitors a 16-5 lead at the break.

Jack Singleton pushed himself over for a maul try to give the Cherry and Whites five points in what was a close fought opening 40 minutes.

The two sides were both shown yellow cards. Ollie Thorley for a high hit with Jamie George's attempt on Jordy Reid given the same punishment.

With the score 16-5 at half time, Gloucester Rugby were first to get on the board in the second half with Adam Hastings slotting a penalty after Duncan Taylor was caught sealing at the breakdown.

The visitors then hit back with four tries through Maro Itoje, Nick Tompkins, Jamie George and Duncan Taylor with Farrell adding the extras every time.

Val Rapava-Ruskin was shown yellow for playing the ball on the floor, making any hopes of a comeback challenging.

Staying in the fight for the full 80 however, Louis Rees-Zammit received the ball with just minutes to go. The winger gathered his own chip to score under the posts with Billy Twelvetrees' conversion adding the extras.

The result means that Gloucester Rugby are knocked out of the Challenge Cup with Saracens progressing to the semi-final.



GLoucester RUGBY
HERITAGE

SOUTH AFRICANS WHO HAVE PLAYED FOR GLOUCESTER

Most Gloucester supporters would think that it is only since the game went professional that any South Africans played for the Club. However, as far back as the 1952-53 season a second row forward, Freddie Steinhobel, played in six games. He was better known as a Cheltenham player (1948-52) who appeared 12 times for Gloucestershire, and got as far as an England trial game in 1950.

Then there is long gap. Cape Town born, Jake Boer made 190 appearances for the Cherry and Whites between 2000 and 2010, scoring 32 tries. He was a fierce tackler, and speedy in attack. Jake was a great favourite of the Shed, respected for his total commitment to the cause. In 2003 his form was so outstanding that he was made Premiership Player of the Season. That year he captained the team

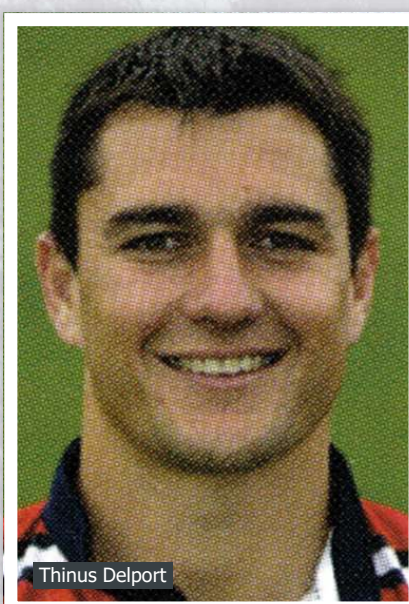


Jake Boer

which beat Northampton 40-22, to win the Powergen Cup before 75,000 spectators at Twickenham. It was Gloucester's first major trophy in 20 years. In that 2002-03 season he scored 14 tries, and he was made club captain for the following two seasons. Jake returned to South Africa after the end of the 2006-07 season, but was persuaded to return to Kingsholm two years later to help out because of an injury crisis involving back-row forwards.

Thinus Delpoit also played in the Northampton game, and scored a try. He was a fine full-back gifted with great pace, which he used to advantage. He won 18 Springbok caps. He only had one full season at Kingsholm, appearing in 30 games and scoring six tries. He played for South Africa in the 2003 World Cup, and on his return to Gloucester in November appeared in five games before a bad knee injury when playing against Harlequins ended his season. Possibly because the Club was worried about the long-term problems that could arise from the injury, his contract was not renewed. However, Thinus moved on to Worcester where he played from 2004-08, making 79 Premiership appearances, and stayed largely injury free.

Several other South Africans appeared for Gloucester in the noughties. Christo Bezuidenhout, a prop, made 19 appearances in the 2004-05 season. In 2004 Delarey Du Preez was a hooker who made five appearances, and



Thinus Delpoit

the same year Riaan van der Bergh appeared six times. He was a full-back. Quinton Davids played seven times in the 2005-06 season in the second row, and in the next season Rudi Keil played 17 times in the centre, and merited more.

When Johan Ackermann became Head Coach in August 2017, he soon set about bringing South African players to the Club. Gerbrandt Grobler (2018-20) was an uncompromising second row forward who made 33 appearances and scored seven tries. In the back-row, Jaco Kriel (2018-19) made 20 appearances. He won 11 South Africa caps. He played in the Premiership Semi-Final play-off against Saracens in May 2019. Also in that team was Franco Marais (2018-20), who was a hooker. He made 39 appearances for Gloucester. A third

South African in the play-off was Franco Mostert (2018-20), a fine second row forward, who made 29 appearances. So far, he has won 50 Springbok caps, and was a World Cup winner in 2019.

Two more South Africans played a few games for Gloucester. Dom Coetzer, a fly-half, made four appearances from 2018-19, and prop Jaco Visagie seven appearances over the same period of time. When Johan Ackermann left the Club in May 2020 to coach in Japan, any South African still at Kingsholm soon departed, except for one, Johan's son Ruan.

Ruan Ackermann made 33 appearances for the Lions in South Africa in the 2016-17 season, before coming to Gloucester with his father. He made his first appearance as a replacement against Exeter on 1 September 2017, and started in the next game against Harlequins. In his early games he played on the blind-side flank, but soon moved to No.8 to fill the space left by injury to Ben Morgan. He scored his first try on

“WHEN JOHAN ACKERMANN BECAME HEAD COACH IN AUGUST 2017, HE SOON SET ABOUT BRINGING SOUTH AFRICAN PLAYERS TO THE CLUB”

12 October 2017, in a European Challenge Cup game against Pau. Ruan quickly made an impression and in November he was the Premiership Player of the Month. He played in the final of the European Challenge Cup against Cardiff Blues, when Gloucester lost unluckily to a penalty in the last minute. Ruan started the 2018-19 season well, scoring two tries against Bath, but was side-lined by injury for a lot of the season. On his return he scored tries in four successive games in March, against Harlequins, Wasps, Northampton and Bath. He played in the Premiership Play-off game against Saracens, after Gloucester had finished third in the table. The 2019-20 and 2020-21 seasons were disrupted by the

Coronavirus pandemic, but Ruan's form was consistent. Yet it was his outstanding displays in the current season that have made people really take notice. He has been in rampaging form. His barnstorming runs are often only stopped by three tacklers attempting to bring him down. On 2 January 2022 Ruan made his 100th appearance, against Harlequins and celebrated with a try. He was made BT Man of the Match in successive games against Newcastle and London Irish, scoring two tries in the latter game. Having qualified for England selection through residence, there has been a lot of speculation that Eddie Jones might make the call, but so far that has not happened. There's plenty of time yet.



Ruan Ackermann

LEWIS LUDLOW

ON THE LAST GAME OF THE SEASON AND THE IMPROVEMENTS FROM LAST YEAR

It's all come down to this last game at Kingsholm. If Gloucester Rugby beat Saracens and Newcastle do us a favour against Northampton Saints, then a space in the top four is mathematically still possible.

With one last hoorah at Kingsholm this year, there is no denying the improvements that have been made this season and Lewis Ludlow is looking forward to getting out there against Saracens.

"It's hugely exciting. It's nice to go into the last game of the season with something to play for. Something that we've prided ourselves on all year is making the Shed proud and hopefully we can do that one more time and we can get into the top four."

Compared to last season, where the Cherry and Whites finished 11th in the league, the progress has been clear.

"We've made a huge amount of progress as a group and a lot of that comes down to the coaches and how well they've coached us as a group with the players buying into it. Anyone from inside the camp will say that we should have made the top four pretty easily. We let ourselves down in a couple of games.

"That is where that growth comes into next year and how much progress we've made will take us into what will be another good year next year."

Last week it was announced that George Skivington had signed a contract extension and Lewis is delighted that the Head Coach has signed on.

"Everyone knows that he's pretty black or white in what he does and what he says. He's delivered so far on what he's said and as players, that's all we can ask for. When a coach tells you to do something, you believe in it and you back it and you see the rewards.

"Last year there were doubts about the maul and how much we were doing it and whether or not it actually worked. This year it's been an absolute weapon for us and that's all down to him.

"This year would not have happened without last year at all."

In all good teams, a period of adversity can help bring a group together and last year's pain is what helped the results this season.

"Once we had the core group that understood what the long term goal was and once we'd all bought into the coaches plan, in terms of how we are going to work, we started to learn the way that they wanted us to play. It was obviously frustrating but to come out on the right side of those little games this year, they were the games last year that we were losing by one or two points. This year we've been picking up the wins and that is what eventually moves you up the table.

"We have had a couple of games where we let ourselves down, the majority have been good in the way that we've stuck to a plan and gone out and executed it."

One thing that is unique to Gloucester Rugby is the fans. There is no other fan



base like it and Ludlow believes that they are a valuable asset to the club.

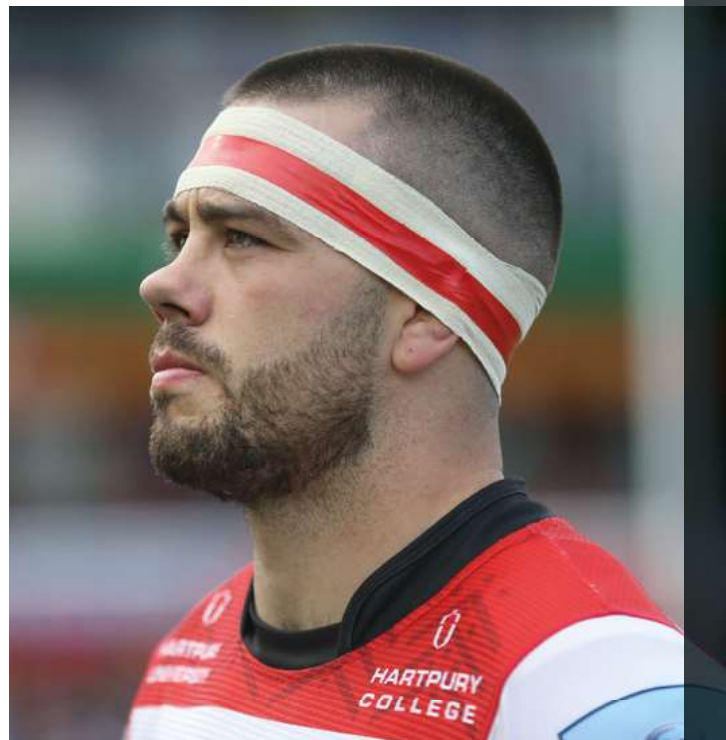
"We speak about it all the time within our training. We've got the best fan base out there. There are no better fans than Gloucester fans. I've been at Gloucester nearly 10 years now and I haven't heard the Shed as loud as it's been this year. I haven't heard the songs being sung like they've been sung this year and there's just been an absolute buy in from everyone, whether that's inside or outside of the club.

"We've done laps after we've lost and the fans understand it. They can see the progress and they can see we are buying into George and his coaching team. It's just such a good feeling to know that those fans are behind you. Yeah, they are the best fans in the world but when you've done badly, they let you know. You want to make them proud and you want to make the city proud and I think that's what we've really bought into this year."

Gloucester Rugby fans know what they are talking about. They are so passionate which means that when the team doesn't perform, because they genuinely care, they hurt as much as the players.

"I could walk around Tesco or walk around the village and people will come up and say that we should have done this or that and I'm like 'yeah we should have done, you know what you're on about.' They care about the club and we've got a group of players now with that same care which we haven't had before. We haven't had a group of players who care so much about the club and care so much about what the fans feel week in week out and understand it. That's why things have gone the way that they have this year."

It's fair to say that George Skivington has helped connect the rugby club to the city again and this has been a real motivation for the players this season.



"We talked about it in pre-season. About understanding the team and understanding the club. It's just a rugby mad city. You look back through the ages and you look back in modern history around players getting testimonials and winning cups and topping the league. We've looked right back at players who have represented Gloucester over 500 times and who have been in the war and sacrificed their lives in the war and representing Gloucester through that.

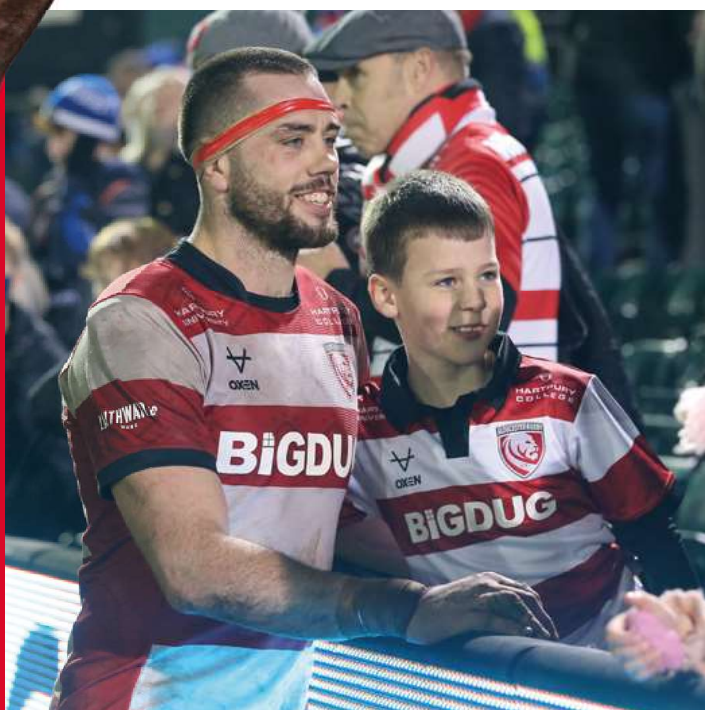
"There is such a high standard and to understand all of that and what it means for this city, there's nothing else in the city. Rugby is the main thing people look forward to in this city and understanding that as a player, the boys now understand how much of a privilege it is putting on the shirt and what it represents. That's what has really sunk in this year and boys have realised that it's such a huge honour that you have to go out there and do it proud."

Turning the attention back to this final home game of the season, Ludlow knows that it is a must win for our top four hopes.

"We have to win. Whatever happens elsewhere around the league, it is what it is. If we win, then we might be through so all we can do is do our stuff well and go from there. Whatever happens happens. Ideally, we finish on a high, whether that's at Kingsholm or Twickenham at the end of the year, it will be what it will be. All we can control is how well we can play against Sarries."

There's no better place to play rugby than Kingsholm and Lewis is expecting it to be a special occasion.

"There is no better place to play. I love playing at Kingsholm and I love the crowd and I love the whole place. The boys have realised that this year and we said in training that it feels like ages since we've played here. It'll be great to be back there. Hopefully the weather is nice and everyone can enjoy themselves, including us lot on the pitch."



STATS CORNER



Ruan Ackermann has made more carries than anyone else



Ben Earl has completed more tackles than anyone else

- Gloucester Rugby won their last Premiership match against Saracens after losing three in a row previously (25-24 in Round 13); however, they lost on the last occasion they welcomed Saracens to Kingsholm (12-21 in November 2019) after beating them three times in a row previously at home.
- Gloucester Rugby have won just one of their last five Premiership matches (L4); however, their four losses during that period all came by margins of just six points or fewer; they have lost their last nine fixtures on the final day of the regular Premiership season.
- Gloucester Rugby have won three of their last four Premiership fixtures at home (L1), including their most recent by a margin of 64 points (64-0 v Bath Rugby in Round 24), their largest ever margin of victory in the competition.
- Saracens are currently on a run of seven straight Premiership victories, their longest such run since they won 16 games in a row between March and December 2018; however, they have won just one of their last four matches on the final day of the regular Premiership season (D1 L2).
- Saracens are currently on a run of three straight Premiership victories away from home after winning just one of their previous four (L3); six of their last seven away games have seen a margin of two points or less between the two teams at half-time.
- Gloucester Rugby are the only side to have completed fewer than 2,000 carries in this season's Premiership (1,922); however, their average of 6.7 meters ran per carry is the fourth highest average in the league this term.
- Only London Irish (32) have scored more tries in the final 20 minutes of matches than Gloucester Rugby (28) in this season's Premiership; however, no team has scored more (26) or conceded fewer tries (10) in the 40-60 minute period of games than Saracens this term.
- Saracens completed 24 dominant tackles in their most recent Premiership fixture against Northampton Saints, the second highest amount a team has made in a single Premiership game this term; Saracens rank third for tackles made in the league this season (135).
- Gloucester Rugby's Ruan Ackermann has made more carries than any other player in this season's Premiership (271); his teammates Lewis Ludlow (292) and Freddie Clarke (258) also rank second and third respectively for tackles made in the league this term.
- No player has successfully completed more tackles in this season's Premiership than Saracens' Ben Earl (331); his teammate Billy Vunipola also ranks joint-second for dominant tackles made this term (15).



Harlequins



GLOUCESTER RUGBY FALL SHORT IN TENSE TWICKENHAM ENCOUNTER VS HARLEQUINS

Gloucester Rugby were on the losing end of a tight 28-24 result at Twickenham with Harlequins coming away as the winners from the encounter.

Having not won at the home of English rugby since 2003, the Cherry and Whites put themselves in a good position at half time but Harlequins showed their class with a comeback to secure the win.

What happened?

Gloucester Rugby managed to build a good score in the first half and took a 24-7 lead into the break.

Ben Morgan opened the scoring for Gloucester Rugby with a try after a well worked maul and the big No.8 broke away to go over for a score.

It was then Harlequins' No.8, Alex Dombrandt, who scored an opportunistic try for the London side with Marcus Smith converting.

Santiago Carreras launched an attack and offloaded to Freddie Clarke who showed his pace to dive over the line.

Chris Harris then got over the line for our third try after combining with Lewis Ludlow in attack.

Adam Hastings was accurate from the tee and also slotted a drop goal to extend the Cherry and White lead.

In the second half, the Cherry and Whites were forced to make some early changes due to injury with both Chris Harris and Santiago Carreras leaving the field early.

Joe Marchant scored two tries for Harlequins with Caden Murley's try being the one that gave them the lead and ultimately the victory.





THE TEAMS



VS



SARACENS

T P C D

T P C D

				Santiago CARRERAS	15	Elliott OBATOYINBO				
				Louis REES ZAMMIT	14	Max MALINS				
				Chris HARRIS	13	Alex LOZOWSKI				
				Georgi KVESELADZE	12	Duncan TAYLOR				
				Ollie THORLEY	11	Ben HARRIS				
				Adam HASTINGS	10	Manu VUNIPOLA				
				Ben MEEHAN	9	Ivan VAN ZYL				
				Val RAPAVA RUSKIN	1	Eroni MAWI				
				Jack SINGLETON	2	Kapeli PIFELETI				
				Kirill GOTOVTSEV	3	Alec CLAREY				
				Freddie CLARKE	4	Callum HUNTER-HILL				
				Matias ALEMANNO	5	Tim SWINSON				
				Jordy REID	6	Jackson WRAY (C)				
				Lewis LUDLOW (C)	7	Toby KNIGHT				
				Ruan ACKERMANN	8	Janco VENTER				

REPLACEMENTS

				Santiago SOCINO	16	Theo DAN				
				Harry ELRINGTON	17	Ralph ADAMS-HALE				
				Fraser BALMAIN	18	Sam WAINWRIGHT				
				Andrew DAVIDSON	19	Cameron BOON				
				Jack CLEMENT	20	Sean REFFELL				
				Charlie CHAPMAN	21	Ruben DE HAAS				
				Billy TWELVETREES	22	Dom MORRIS				
				Jonny MAY	23	Josh HALLETT				

MATCH OFFICIALS

Referee: Wayne Barnes (258th Premiership game)

Assistant Referees: Andrew Jackson and Simon Harding

TMO: Tom Foley **Citing Officer:** John Byett