



WALTER TAYLOR - KINGSHOLM FAVOURITE

At 10st 9lbs and 5 ft 7 ½ ins, Walter was considered a useful size for a wing three-quarter in the 1890s. He also possessed breathtaking speed.

When he received the ball a buzz of excitement would ripple through the crowd, as they anticipated a try from one of those spectacular dazzling runs from his own half for which he was famous.

The Kingsholm faithful loved him too for his gentlemanly conduct, his unassuming manner, and the success he enjoyed as captain.

FRAMPTON BOY

Walter was born at Frampton in 1871, the son of a coachman, but the family moved to Gloucester when he was aged 2. He grew up to become a printer compositor.

Walter's football career commenced with a local club, the Beaufort, but word of his ability soon spread, and he was invited to play for the Gloucester 2nd XV in October 1890.

He scored 2 tries in his first game against Lydney, and 3 tries in his third game against Moseley, enough to earn him rapid promotion into the Gloucester 1stXV.

STARTLING DEBUTS

He marked his senior debut against Penarth with a sensational try from the half-way line to secure a 3-0 win (one point for Walter's try and two points for the conversion).

He scored again the following week against Birmingham Old Edwardians, and then ran in 4 tries against Exeter (the 14-0 result seems less decisive than the tally of 10 tries and 2 conversions).

During his 20 appearances that season he scored 11 tries, and became the Club's leading try scorer.

He also made his debut for the County, and went all the way with them to the County Championship Final at Manchester.

Walter also played in an international trial match for Western Counties versus the Midlands.

During this remarkable first season in senior rugby, Walter displayed the fortunate habit of scoring in his first match at every level - for the Beaufort, Gloucester 2nd XV, Gloucester 1st XV, Gloucestershire and Western Counties.

TOP TRY SCORER

His most successful season as regards try scoring came in 1892-



Extract from a Teek cartoon from Gloucester v. Northampton match, 24 Sep 1927



Walter Taylor

93, when he ran in 18 during 25 appearances. Indeed Walter went on to be top try scorer for Gloucester for seven of the ten seasons between 1890 and 1900.

When he finally hung up his boots in 1903, he had made 250 appearances, scoring 127 tries, 17 conversions, 1 penalty, and 7 dropped goals, totalling 399 points. He made 30 appearances for Gloucestershire.

CAPTAIN FANTASTIC

Walter captained the Club for four seasons, 1896-1900, during which they played 132 matches, winning 92, losing 26 and drawing 14; scoring 1291 points against 477. His team became known as the "record smashers".

The highlight of his first season as captain was against Llanelli (so spelt until 1965, when the name was officially changed to Llanelli). They arrived at Kingsholm unbeaten with only 3 fixtures to go in their

season, but Gloucester triumphed 5-3 in a very tight game.

The crowd were enthralled, gave the Gloucester team a rousing ovation as they left the field, and carried Walter off on their shoulders.

The highlight of his last season as captain was to lead the Club to a 13-0 win in their first encounter with the Barbarians.

AN ALL ROUND SPORTSMAN

On the running track, Walter's best performance was 12 seconds for the 120 yards. He won the 100 yards at the Midlands

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Counties championship, and competed in the Amateur Athletic Championships at Stamford Bridge (where he also played rugby for Gloucester against Old Merchant Taylors).

He was an excellent cricketer and shot; and he played a few games of football for Gloucester City.

"FIREWORKS IN THE STREETS"

Walter was interviewed in 1951 at the age of 80, and said:

"Perhaps my most outstanding memory did not take place on the field of play. It was in Northgate Street, Gloucester.

"We had just returned from beating Llanelli in 1898. What a welcome we were given – the first English club to beat all four Welsh teams (Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and Llanelli) in one season. There were thousands of people at the station.

"Somebody snatched my bag – it turned up next week at Kingsholm with all my kit washed and ironed –

and they chaired us through the city. In all the big business houses they were showing coloured lights and letting off fireworks ... Those were wonderful days. I should like to see them all again."

This was a poignant remark, since Walter was by then blind. He died in 1955, a much-loved Gloucester hero to the end.



The Gloucester team which beat Llanelli on 3 April 1897