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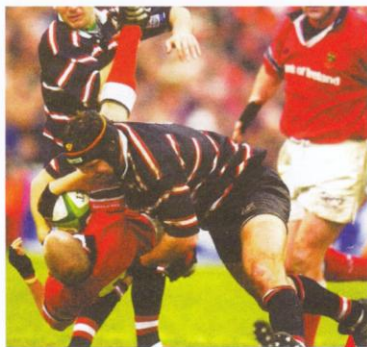
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# GLOUCESTER & MUNSTER OLD ADVERSARIES IN THE HEINEKEN CUP

**In the ten seasons that Gloucester have qualified for the Heineken Cup they have been drawn against Munster four times, which makes the match today the eighth tie between the two teams. Munster have won five and Gloucester two of the seven previous games.**

Most impartial observers (and I imagine all Munster supporters) remember the "Miracle Match" at Thomond Park on 18 January, 2003 when Munster had to win by 27 points to progress to the ¼ finals and, thanks to a last minute conversion by Ronan O'Gara, did exactly that, winning 33-6, but fewer remember Gloucester's magnificent performance at Kingsholm which had made that necessary.

Gloucester won the first leg at Kingsholm on 12 October by 35 points to 16, outscoring Munster by 4 tries to 1. The Gloucester try scorers were Jake Boer (2), Marcel Garvey and Ludovic Mercier. Mercier also kicked 3 penalty goals and 3 conversions. Munster



Jake Boer upends Peter Stringer

scored a consolation try deep into injury time through Peter Stringer and Ronan O'Gara kicked the conversion and three penalty goals. The match was notable for an outstanding display from Henry Paul as a counter-attacking full back determined to keep the ball in hand and turn defence into attack at every opportunity. Other fine performances came from an impressive back row of Jake Boer, Peter Buxton and James Forrester who outplayed their opposite numbers. Munster had turned round only 16 points to 9 down at

half time with the wind now at their backs, but Gloucester, using Buxton as a third lineout forward, began to now dominate the line outs and in a 15 minute period, midway through the second half, scored 19 points without reply. Jake Boer was deservedly Man of the Match.

Despite the Thomond Park debacle, 2002-03 was Gloucester's finest season of the professional era, finishing 15 points clear at the top of the Zurich Premiership and beating Northampton 40-22 in the Powergen Cup Final at Twickenham.

## FIRST VISITORS FROM MUNSTER 1885

It was in January 1885, twelve years after the founding of the club, that the first team from Munster arrived in the city to play Gloucester RFC on the old Spa ground.

Queen's College Cork were on a short tour during the Christmas vacation, which involved playing Cardiff, Newport and Gloucester in the space of four days – a daunting task even in 1885. The first match against Cardiff on the Friday had ended in an honourable draw, but

Queen's College had been well beaten by the formidable Newport side by five tries to nil the following day.

On Monday 12 January it was the turn of Gloucester. The club had been having mixed fortunes after the wonderful years of 1882-83 (the "Invincible" season) and 1883-84 (when they lost only twice), but



Jimmy Boughton

they won the match handsomely by two goals and two tries to nil. H D Hay, a late substitution for an otherwise full-strength Gloucester, scored a try in his only game for the club and the other tries were scored by George Coates, Jimmy Boughton and H V Jones who converted twice. Among the Queen's College forwards was John Staveley Dick who, two years later, made his international debut at Lansdowne Road, playing in Ireland's first victory over England - by two goals to nil after twelve unsuccessful attempts.

### THE IRISH RETURN 1955-73

It would be 70 years before the next visit to Gloucester by a team from Ireland. Then in September 1955 a match was arranged with Dublin Wanderers which was won by Gloucester 12-3, George Hastings scoring a try and Mike Baker three penalties.

This was followed by matches against Dublin club side Bective Rangers who were played four times between 1967 and 1971 (with Gloucester victorious on each occasion) and the Wolfhounds, in

those days an invitation XV similar to the Barbarians, who were played four times between 1965 and 1973 (with Gloucester coming out on top in the last three fixtures).

### THE IRISH JOIN THE CELEBRATIONS 1973-74 Gloucester RFC Centenary Year

The last of the four matches against the Wolfhounds at Kingsholm was played on September in the centenary season 1973-74. A team boasting 9 Irish internationals and Scottish and British Lions prop Ian "Mighty Mouse" MacLauchlan was beaten 6-3 in a tight game which provided a curtain raiser for Gloucester's epic victory over a star-studded International XV two weeks later.

### 1991-92 Kingsholm Centenary Year

The Irish returned in September 1991 for a match to celebrate the centenary of the Kingsholm ground. An Irish President's XV, Ireland in all but name, used the match in their build-up for the 1991 World Cup but Gloucester, in an outstanding performance, deservedly won the game 14-13 and but for missed opportunities could have won by more.

The Irish XV, captained by Gloucester-born Phil Matthews, were on top in the early stages, but after conceding a try scored by full back Jim Staples, the Gloucester pack began to gain control with Dave Sims dominating British Lion Donal Lenihan in the



George Hastings



Dave Sims

line-out and John Hawker taking three strikes against the head. At half back Marcus Hannaford and Neil Matthews were superb behind a rampaging back row of Ian Smith, Paul Ashmead and Sam Masters. The home side equalised through a try by Jerry Perrins and two penalties by Tim Smith either side of half time put them six points ahead. When Simon Morris picked up and dived over after Neil Matthews had been brought down just short of the line, Gloucester led by 14 points to 4. The Irish came back in the closing minutes through a penalty and converted try to give a final 14-13 scoreline that was flattering to the visitors.

It was a happy Gloucester changing room after a match described by centre Don Caskie as "probably the most satisfying I have ever played in."