

GLOUCESTER RUGBY
HERITAGE

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EUROPE BECKONS

WITH today's match raising the prospect of European Cup rugby next season and resulting from success in the European Challenge Cup, we look back at Gloucester's most successful season in the old Heineken Cup and at the Club's previous success in the Challenge Cup.

THE 2000-01 HEINEKEN CUP CAMPAIGN

Gloucester's group matches were spread far and wide, the opposition being Llanelli in Wales, Colomiers in France and Roma in Italy.

The first four matches were played in successive weeks. Gloucester kicked off in their first ever Heineken Cup game with an encouraging away win, 27-20, at Llanelli. Jason Little scored a try in only his second game for the Club, having scored two on his debut against Bristol the previous week; Andy Hazell scored another. Kicking duties were shared out between Andy Gomersall with a conversion, Simon Mannix with three penalties and Terry Fanolua with two.

The following weekend saw a try-fest against Roma at Kingsholm, with Tom Beim scoring five and Frank Schisano, in his only season with Gloucester, one. Elton Moncrieff added four penalties and two conversions, whilst Terry Fanolua again chipped in with his boot with three conversions. Roma were sent packing to the tune of 52-12.

Next came home and away games in successive weeks



Tom Beim scoring one of his six tries against Roma

against Colomiers and these severely dented Gloucester's chances of progressing. Following a 22-22 draw at Kingsholm, in which all Gloucester's points came from the boot except for a penalty try, there was defeat by 19-30 in France.

After a break of more than two months, action resumed in the New Year with the visit of Llanelli to Kingsholm. In a nerve-racking game, Gloucester looked set for an early exit from the competition, but were pressing hard on the Llanelli line at the end of the game, when Elton Moncrieff scored a dropped goal in the most bizarre of circumstances.

His kick from right under the posts had no hope of going

over until it hit one of the Llanelli players trying to charge it down, and it ballooned up over the bar. Gloucester had squeaked it 28-27.

The final game in Rome was duly won 38-29. Simon Mannix was the main contributor with eight penalties as well as converting the tries scored by Joe Ewens and Jason Little.

In somewhat fortuitous fashion, Gloucester were through to a quarter-final at home to Cardiff. They made the Kingsholm factor count. Although failing to register a try, six penalties from Simon Mannix and one from Byron Hayward were enough to secure victory 21-15. This led to an all-English semi-final.



**21ST APRIL 2001
LEICESTER 19
GLOUCESTER 15**

Gloucester: B Hayward; R Greenslade-Jones, T Fanolua, J Little, J Simpson-Daniel; S Mannix, A Gomersall; A Deacon, O Azam, P Vickery, R Fidler, I Jones, J Boer, K Jones, J Paramore.

Leicester: G Murphy; W Stanley, L Lloyd, P Howard, T Stimpson; A Goode, A Healey; G Rowntree, D West, D Garforth, M Johnson, B Kay, W Johnson, N Back, M Corry.

Gloucester made an electric start and forced an early penalty, which Simon Mannix kicked from in front of the Leicester posts. The game was played at such a pace that it was hard to catch your breath, but Leicester turned round 16-9 ahead, having scored what proved to be the only try of the match in contentious fashion.

Leicester knocked on and the referee called advantage to Gloucester, who failed to progress before losing the ball again, but the referee failed to bring them back for the original offence as Tim Stimpson started a flowing move, finished off by Leon Lloyd scoring under the posts.

If anything the heat increased in the second half, and Junior

Paramore and Martin Johnson were sent to cool off in the sin bin after the most notable confrontation of the afternoon.

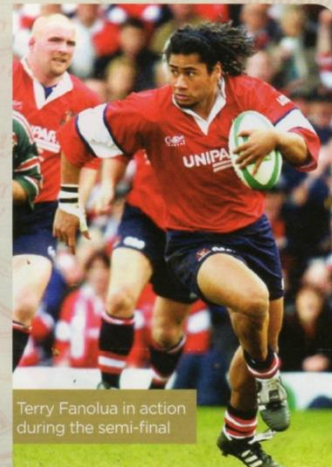
The tension could have been cut with a knife as Gloucester threw everything into a last-ditch effort. Four points behind, they kicked a penalty into touch, from which Mannix kicked to the opposite corner – no try resulted but Ian Jones somehow regained possession, only for it to be lost again and Leicester cleared to end the match.

It was a desperately close run thing, and to this day remains the closest that Gloucester has come to success in the European Cup.

EUROPEAN CHALLENGE CUP SUCCESS IN 2006

Gloucester's progress through the group stages was perhaps most remarkable for the scale of success achieved against Toulon home and away. Victory 74-3 in Toulon, still Gloucester's biggest ever away win, was followed a week later with a 66-5 triumph at Kingsholm. Gloucester scored ten tries in each match.

However, Gloucester also went into the record books with 106-3 (4 tries for Sinbad) against Steaua Bucuresti, which remains their highest team score and greatest



Terry Fanolua in action during the semi-final

margin of victory in any game. Bayonne were the other victims as Gloucester romped through with six wins in the group.

This meant a home quarter-final and Brive did not put up much of a show at Kingsholm as Gloucester ran in 7 tries as they won 46-13.

The semi-final opponents were Worcester, who had been defeated 27-16 in the league the previous week, and this proved a good guide to the form in the Cup as Gloucester ran out 31-23 winners with tries from James Simpson-Daniel, Anthony Allen and Mark Foster.

The final against London Irish at the Stoop was a dramatic affair, which went to extra time before Gloucester edged home 36-34. Gloucester were leading 18-13 at half time, thanks to tries by Mark Foster and Andy Hazell. A long range try by James Simpson-Daniel seemed to have sewn things up for Gloucester going into the last quarter.

But then Irish came roaring back and two tries (one converted) in the closing minutes levelled the scores. In extra time a penalty goal from London Irish edged them ahead but then came the moment of the match when Jamie Forrester collected his own hack through to touch down just inside the dead ball line and claim a memorable victory 36-34.



The silverware secured