

GLOUCESTER RUGBY
HERITAGE

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EUROPE BECKONS PART 2

WELCOME BACK BORDEAUX-BÈGLES

TONIGHT provides an opportunity to look back at previous encounters with Gloucester's European play-off opponents, Union Bordeaux-Bègles, who were formed in 2006 by a merger of Stade Bordelais and CA Bordeaux-Bègles Gironde.

Gloucester had played three matches against the former Bordeaux-Bègles club before the merger. The very first match, in 1975, was an exciting open game under floodlights which the visitors won by 21 points to 20, with the result hanging on the conversion of Gloucester's last minute try. The match captivated the Kingsholm fans, but European rugby was still 21 years away.

The two sides met next in Gloucester's first season of European competition:

**GLOUCESTER 10
BORDEAUX-BÈGLES 17,
EUROPEAN CONFERENCE,
16 OCTOBER 1996**

In contrast to the first match in 1975, this tie in Pool D of the European Conference was a dismal affair. In a match of missed opportunities, Gloucester, who were 10-3 down at half time, dominated the second half but although enjoying an enormous territorial advantage could not break the Bègles line and the scores were only finally levelled when Gloucester were awarded a penalty try with six minutes to go.

Mark Mapletoft then missed two difficult penalty chances before Begles centre Luc Lafforgue raced



through to score the winning try.

The third encounter, a pre-season friendly played at Biscarosse in August 1999, was attended by Clive Woodward, who was assessing the form of Gloucester front row Trevor Woodman, Neil McCarthy and Phil Vickery. Gloucester won the match 19-11, a promising start to a successful 1999-2000 season.

Twelve years later, the first matches against the combined Union Bordeaux-Bègles club took place in the European Challenge Cup:

**GLOUCESTER 25
UNION BORDEAUX-BÈGLES 13
AMLIN CHALLENGE CUP,
18 OCTOBER 2012**

Gloucester's form under Nigel Davies was gathering momentum following a narrow opening

day defeat at Kingsholm by Northampton and this solid workmanlike win extended their unbeaten run to seven games.

Despite the loss of Andy Hazell, who was suspended following his sending-off at Mont de Marsan in the opening tie the previous week, Gloucester had far too much power in their back row for Bordeaux.

Ben Morgan rampaged around and set up Charlie Sharples' second try of the night to secure the bonus point after only 37 minutes, with a stunning break from defence. Sione Kalamafoni made a big impression before he limped off early in the second half and Akapusi Qera, playing openside in place of Hazell, completed a dynamic back row.

Gloucester had opened the scoring with a try from lock Will James after James Simpson-Daniel



had stretched Bordeaux's defence. All Black scrum half Jimmy Cowan, who had a sound game on his first start for Gloucester, then set up Billy Twelvetrees with a clever kick from halfway for the fly-half to score Gloucester's second.

A superb attack from a line-out saw Sinbad come off his wing to set up Sharples for his first try. Twelvetrees found the target, after four missed kicks, with a long-range penalty and Morgan's storming run from the restart kick was supported by Twelvetrees and Huia Edmonds, who gave Sharples an easy run-in.

Gloucester lost impetus in the second half when they were disrupted by the sin-binning of James for throwing a punch and injuries to Kalamafoni, Mike Tindall (who was celebrating his 34th birthday), Jim Hamilton and Tim Taylor, which forced them to play the last three minutes with 14 men.

Bordeaux had tries from lock François Tisseau and wing Avesini Vasuinubu ruled out by the television match official before flanker Gauthier Gibouin crossed with the final play of the match.

UNION BORDEAUX-BEGLES 26 GLOUCESTER 31

AMLIN CHALLENGE CUP,
11 JANUARY 2013

Gloucester gained their fifth Challenge Cup win in five games with this hard-fought victory against a weakened Bordeaux-Bègles side and so qualified for the quarter finals of the competition.

Coming into the match on the back of a disappointing 18-12 home defeat against London Irish, they took a long time to get into their stride, and looked set to lose that 100 percent record when trailing 26-25 (and by 2 tries to 1) going into the closing stages. Freddie Burns had an outstanding night for Gloucester, kicking eight penalties and converting Darren Dawidui's try to score 26 of his side's 31 points.

Gloucester's night had started badly when they were delayed in traffic and the match kicked off late. The situation got worse when, after



an early exchange of penalties, they were caught cold and weak tackling allowed Charles Brousse to make a try for winger Raphael Carballo.

Gloucester started to settle and Dawidui's try following a 10 metre rolling maul on 30 minutes and further penalties from Burns gave the Cherry and Whites a 19-13 lead. But then disaster struck – more soft tackling allowed Bordeaux to steam through the middle all too easily, with Brousse again leading the charge and it was prop Tamato Leopolu's try that left Gloucester red-faced at the break, as Munro's conversion wrestled Bordeaux a 20-19 advantage.

In the second half, two penalties

for the home side and one for Gloucester left the score at Bordeaux 26 Gloucester 22 with Huia Edmonds in the bin and time running out. Suddenly Gloucester became galvanised, with breaks by Ben Morgan and Tim Molenaar finding gaps and Jonny May looking threatening.

Several half chances were created and when Bordeaux lock Chaveau joined Edmonds in the bin, Gloucester began to dominate at last, two penalties by Burns bringing a precious two point lead. Still Bordeaux came back at Gloucester and Freddie Burns's eighth penalty and the final whistle were greeted with equal relief.

