

GLOUCESTER RUGBY HERITAGE

www.gloucester rugbyheritage.org.uk

THE PRIDE THE PASSION THE HONOUR THE HISTORY

MEMORIES OF 1970

The Fijians have played at Kingsholm once before – on Fijian Independence Day, 10 October 1970.

A 14-match tour (Fiji's first outside the southern hemisphere) had been arranged to coincide with the granting of independence. The tour would include matches against England Under 25, Wales Under 25, the Barbarians and various regional selections.

The second match was held at Kingsholm against Western Counties (Gloucestershire & Somerset) on Independence Day itself.

Anticipation was high. The match was a 20,000 sell-out (mostly standing in those days) and police had waived parking restrictions in the area for the afternoon.

It was the sort of damp, grey, drizzly afternoon, when aromatic pipe tobacco hung in the air and the smell of liniment drifted off the players in the scrum. Not a day for sparkling Fijian rugby!

Getting to the match early to claim a position in the Shed close to the half-way line, we had a long wait, as the kick-off was delayed until the Fijian High Commissioner had arrived from a ceremony in London.

To say that the match between a typical

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME ONE SHILLING



WESTERN COUNTIES
(GLOUCESTERSHIRE & SOMERSET)
v.
FIJI

KINGSHOLM GROUND, GLOUCESTER
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10th, 1970
Kick-off: 3.15 p.m.

WESTERN COUNTIES (GLOUCESTERSHIRE & SOMERSET)		FIJI	
Colours: Red		Colours: White with Pale Reddish	
15. J. WATERMAN Forward	Full Back	15. INERE BEADROMO Ovoro	Full Back
14. P. KNIGHT Captain	Threequarters	14. RAVUAMA LATHLEVI Sivola	Threequarters
13. M. C. BESE Forward	Right Wing	13. KINIVILAME NALAVU Cavuni	Right Wing
12. J. BAYLES Threequarters	Right Centre	12. PETASA VUKELA Sivola	Right Centre
11. M. B. COLLINS Threequarters	Left Centre	11. POU TIKOUSIVA Si. Jonekoro	Left Centre
10. J. B. GIBBANS Threequarters	Left Wing	10. ISIMEI BATHENAGA Sivola	Left Wing
9. J. SPALDING Threequarters	Half Backs	9. SEMESA SERIVOU Tavuni	Half Backs
8. J. ROGERS Threequarters	Out-Half	8. JONIA QORO Sivola	Out-Half
7. G. NEAMES Threequarters	Scrum Half	7. VENANI YARO Cavuni	Scrum Half
6. E. J. WATT Threequarters	Forwards	6. APENIA TOKARAVAU Tavuni	Forwards
5. A. J. BRINN Threequarters		5. JOPE MATCARALAVU Ovoro	
4. M. BRILETT Captain Gloucestershire		4. MALI KURABU Sivola	
3. R. C. HANNAFORD Threequarters		3. SELA TOGA Captain Somerset	
2. D. SMITH Threequarters		2. ATONO RACHRE Si. Jonekoro	
1. M. PALMER Captain Gloucestershire		1. JOYATEKI SOVAU Sivola	

Threequarters: D. Tyler, M. Lloyd, J. White, B. Burridge
Scrum Half: R. A. 1966 Gloucester Society of Rugby
Reference: R. E. Johnson (Kent Society of Rugby)
Made by the Staff of the Royal Gloucestershire House



John Bayliss



John Spalding



Alan Brinn



Dick Smith

The Fijians had started their tour at Exeter three days earlier and had impressed the media with their adventurous running rugby in winning 17-3. Tom Palmer of Gloucester had played outside half for the home side at Exeter. John Bayliss, John Spalding, Alan Brinn and Dick Smith were to play for Western Counties at Kingsholm.

tough Western Counties side, led by an uncompromising captain in Bristol and England's Dave Rollitt, and a Fijian side running on adrenalin and playing in front of their High Commissioner on their Independence Day was physical would be an understatement! In the front of the Shed on the halfway line you could feel every hit.

The match, though injury and penalty strewn, was exciting. Dick Smith scored soon after the kick-off after the Fijians had thrown long at a line-out near their own line and Counties dominated the first half hour.

Then came a typical Fijian surge right down the field with backs and forwards combining at speed. It was what we had all come to see and culminated in a try for prop Jona Qoro who sidestepped four defenders on the way to the line.

The conversion brought Fiji level but a penalty by full back Waterman and a dropped goal by Gabitass gave Counties the lead.

Back came the Fijians when a kick ahead found scrum half Batibasaga who threaded his way through the defence and converted his own try. Counties 11 Fiji 10 at half time.

England hooker John Pullin retired at half time with a nasty head wound and was replaced by his Bristol colleague John White.

Early in the second half, a dropped goal by Batibasaga gave the Fijians the lead for the only time, the Counties quickly regaining it when Hannaford scored from a careless knock back.

Radrodo crossed for the Fijians after a brilliant passing move, but the final pass was judged forward and the Fijian game became untidy. Jon Gabitass, who played for much of the game with a depressed cheek bone fracture, punished them with two penalties and then converted his own try from a blindside break by Dick Smith to make the final score Western Counties 25 Fiji 13.

The Fijians went on to beat East Midlands at Leicester, win spectacularly against the Barbarians at Newcastle and lose narrowly to England Under 25 and Wales Under 25 in a successful first tour.

THE FIJIAN CONNECTION

Since the game turned professional, Pacific Islanders have played a prominent part at Gloucester Rugby.

Terry Fanolua, Junior Paramore and Eliota Fuimaono-Sapolu of Samoa, Lesley Vainikolo and Sione Kalamafoni of Tonga and Akapusi Qera, Apo Satala and Koli Sewabu of Fiji have all performed outstandingly for the club.

Kolinio "Koli" Sewabu joined Gloucester in 2001 from Begles Bordeaux. A typical fast and physical Fijian flanker, he played 19 games in the back row in his one season with the club, scoring 7 tries.

His last appearance was at Twickenham in the Zurich Championship final win over Bristol on June 8 2002. He left Gloucester to play for Yamaha in Japan.

Capped on 24 occasions by Fiji, he played in the 1999 and 2003 World Cups. Koli



Ismeli Batibasaga



Koli Sewabu



Apo Satala



Apo Satala

Sewabu retired in 2008, aged 33, and now coaches in New Zealand, having gained a degree in sport science at Massey University.

Apolosi Vonowale "Apo" Satala was 30 years old and had been capped four times by Fiji, when he joined Gloucester on trial from Leeds Carnegie in September 2008.

A soldier serving in the 1st Battalion, the Royal Regiment of Scotland, he was a key member of the outstanding British Army 7, which won the Twickenham and Melrose Sevens, and other tournaments worldwide.

Playing for Fiji, he had won a Rugby Sevens World Cup winner's medal in 2005 and a Commonwealth Games bronze medal in 2006.

Satala played 22 games for Gloucester in 2008-09, injecting power and pace into the back row, where he was a constant threat in attack, if a little suspect in defence.

He toured Europe with Fiji in autumn 2009, playing against Ireland and captaining his country in a 29-18 win over Romania, before rejoining Gloucester for a second season, as cover for back row injuries.

A soldier first, Apo Satala missed selection for the Army v Navy match at Twickenham this year due to active service in Afghanistan.

Openside **Akapusi Qera** took the Premiership by storm when he was signed by Gloucester from Pertemps Bees at the start of the 2007-08 season and finished third behind Olly Barkley and James Simpson-Daniel as Premiership Player of the Year.

A cruciate ligament injury kept him out of the side for much of 2008-09 and it was only in the second half of 2009-10 that he regained his old form and was voted Gloucester Player of the Year.

Perhaps an even better and more complete player now than at the start of his Gloucester career, he has scored 29 tries in 110 appearances and is on his way to joining the ranks of the Kingsholm greats.

He has 22 caps for Fiji to date, captaining his country in his last international in August last year and scoring the first try in Fiji's famous 38-34 victory over Wales in Nantes, which took them to the quarter finals of the 2007 World Cup.

Earlier this year he played for the Barbarians against England and Ireland.

Bonus
CHERRIES

GLOUCESTER RUGBY
HERITAGE

