

GLOUCESTER RUGBY
HERITAGE

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GREAT PLAYERS FROM THE GLOUCESTER BACK ROW

PART FOUR

The Sixties and
Seventies**GARY WHITE**

Gary White had pace and good hands, playing across the back row and occasionally at centre. He played 234 games for Gloucester between 1958 and 1972, scoring 82 tries, a record of which even Peter Ford or Dick Smith would be proud. He was also a useful place kicker, totalling 129 points for his club in 1963-64.

Gary was born at Holton in Somerset in 1937. After a trial season with Gloucester in 1958-59, he returned to junior rugby with Old Centralians, but re-joined Gloucester to make his breakthrough in 1962-63, scoring 5 tries against Old Blues at Kingsholm and, overall, 15 tries in 17 games. He made his County Championship debut for Somerset the following season.

Established as a regular first choice for Somerset, he moved to Bristol for a season in 1964-65

and played against Gloucester at both Kingsholm and the Memorial Ground before returning to the club the following year.

Gary White captained Gloucester in 1966-67, but the team had limited success in a season blighted by injuries. After retirement in 1972 he coached in Gloucester junior rugby and spent four seasons at Cinderford.

JIM JARRETT

Born in Pontypool in 1941, Jim Jarrett was a rugged and mobile lock and no.8. Before joining Gloucester, he had played for St Luke's College, Exeter, for Pontypool, where he had been club captain, and for Monmouthshire.



He moved up to lock from no 8 while with Pontypool, where he skippered a Combined Pontypool-Newbridge-Cross Keys XV to a 12-3 victory against the 1966-67 Wallabies.

On his arrival at Kingsholm in 1967, Jim formed an outstanding second row partnership with Alan Brinn. He played his rugby hard and gave and asked no quarter. His aggressive style sometimes offended the

sensibilities of some referees, but he was a firm favourite of the Shed.

In a game at Bristol in September 1968, Jim scored in a way that would not be possible today. He caught a Bristol drop-out and called for a mark, then pointed to the posts and coolly dropped a goal from fully 45 yards. Inspired by this, Gloucester went on to win the game 9-6. The following December, he played against his old club in Pontypool, where he scored two tries in a 14-9 win.

Jim played 10 times for Gloucestershire and appeared in the losing Championship final against Staffordshire in 1970. After that final loss, he transferred his allegiance to Dorset and Wilts and played for Southern Counties against the 1972-73 All Blacks.

In his later seasons he moved back to number 8, often partnered by John Watkins and John Haines. He made 235 appearances for Gloucester and scored 20 tries, plus that dropped goal from a mark.

MIKE POTTER

Coming to Kingsholm from Coney Hill RFC at the age of 25, powerful No 8 Mike Potter made an immediate impact on his debut against Bective Rangers in September 1968, the Times predicting that "always on the ball.....he could become a real find." He played a remarkable 88 games in his first two seasons for the 1st XV.

Perhaps one of his greatest performances was in the epic 9-4 Cup quarter-final victory over London Welsh at Old Deer Park

in March 1972 where he scored the winning try and was generally considered to have outplayed the great Mervyn Davies at No 8. He went on to play in the semi-final success at Coventry and in the victory over Moseley at Twickenham in the first Club Knock-out Cup Final.



He made his county debut in 1972-73 in the quarter final of the County Championship, a 39-12 victory over Oxfordshire at Kingsholm, but opportunities were rare with England internationals Watkins, Hannaford, Rafter and Rollitt competing for back row places in the county team.

When Mike Potter retired in 1976 he had made 224 appearances, scoring 20 tries. Loved by the Shed, he represented the hard working loyal club man who on his day could be a match for any opposition.

JOHN HAINES

John Haines was a hard-working and speedy open side wing forward who played 269 times for Gloucester between 1968 and 1982, scoring 51 tries, and 22 times for



Gloucestershire, appearing in three County Championship Finals. He was also reserve for three England trials.

Born in Gloucester in 1949, he was educated at The Crypt School and played first for Gordon League. While with the League, he skippered an England Boys Clubs international team which completed the double over Wales.

John made his 1st XV debut in the 1968-69 season, aged 19, but competition for back row places was fierce, and it was not until 1970-71 that he became established in the side. He played less for the 1st XV in 1971-72, but did play in the famous victory over London Welsh in the quarter-final of the Club Knock-out Cup.

In the next four seasons, John Haines played 133 games for Gloucester, scoring 36 tries. He finally made his Gloucestershire debut in January 1973, in a quarter-final against Oxford, and was on the winning side in the next two County Championship Finals: Lancashire at Blundellsands in 1974 and Eastern Counties at Kingsholm in 1975.

Back and knee injuries blighted his 1976-77 season, but he returned the following year to play in his third County Championship Final, against North Midlands at Moseley.

JOHN WATKINS

The dynamic wing forward John Watkins is one of the legends of Gloucester Rugby. Born within sight of the Kingsholm ground in 1945, he made 389 appearances, scoring 109 tries, although waiting until 1969 before joining Gloucester from junior club Gordon League. In June 1972, within three years of his 1st XV debut for Gloucester. John made his England international debut in an historic 18-9 victory over South Africa in Johannesburg, where The Times said "he has improved more than any other forward and made nonsense of his limited experience."



He went on to play against New Zealand and Wales the following winter and then to take part in a 16-10 victory over the All Blacks in Auckland on the 1973 summer tour, thereby gaining the rare distinction of playing on winning England teams in both South Africa and New Zealand.

Back home, further internationals followed against Australia in 1973-74 and France and Wales in 1974-75.

John played throughout Gloucester's successful 1971-72 and 1977-78 cup campaigns, captaining the club to victory in 1978, and in his three seasons as club captain, from 1976-79, had the proud record of P150 W107 D5 L38.

He played 42 games for Gloucestershire and was a County Championship winner in 1974, 1975 and 1976, captaining the county in 1977. He represented Western Counties against the All Blacks in 1972 and the Wallabies in 1973 and 1975 and represented the South and South West against the All Blacks in 1978.

John made 14 appearances for the Barbarians, including South Wales tours in 1974, 1975 and 1977 and a tour of Canada and the USA in 1976.

After retirement as a player, he returned to local rugby, where he refereed for many years.