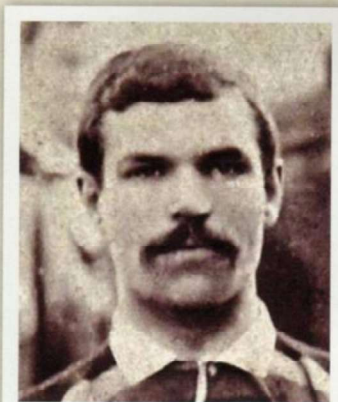


GLOUCESTER RUGBY
HERITAGE

www.gloucester rugbyheritage.org.uk

1892-2009

PLAYED	222
WON	118
LOST	84
DRAWN	19
ABANDONED	1
FOR	2548
AGAINST	1955



Walter Taylor



Bill Hook

GLOUCESTER V BRISTOL
THE GREAT
LOCAL DERBY

Today we welcome back Bristol Rugby to Kingsholm for the first time in eight long years and resume a rivalry that goes back to 1892, four years after the founding of the Bristol club and the year after the opening of Kingsholm.

For over 100 years the County Championship dominated the English domestic season, and to play county rugby was the first step towards gaining international recognition. Gloucestershire, the most successful and best supported of all the counties during that period, drew their team almost entirely from the Bristol and Gloucester clubs and rivalry for places was intense. Most of the crowd came to both club and county games and knew the players from both sides. Teammates one week were fierce rivals the next, adding an extra spice to proceedings.

Bristol Football Club (RFU) was founded in 1888 with the merger of the Carlton and Redland Park clubs and the County Cricket Ground in Nevil Road was leased for home games. This arrangement continued until the First World War.

The first season was fairly successful despite a strong fixture list, but the second was not and Bristol, unable to raise a side for their first scheduled fixture against the Gloucester 1st XV in October 1889, lost heavily to the 2nd XV at The Spa in November the following season.

The club recovered, however, and in 1891-92 won 20 of their 24 matches. Home and away fixtures with Gloucester were arranged for 1892-93, and so the great rivalry began.

THE FIRST MATCH

GLOUCESTER 15
BRISTOL 0

Kingsholm, October 1 1892

Described as "Gloucester's first big game of the season", the match was spoilt as a spectacle when Bristol's talented full back, Gibbs, dislocated his shoulder after ten minutes and Bristol were reduced to 14 men. The highlight was a try by Gloucester centre Walter Jackson, who had toured South Africa with the British Lions the previous summer. Receiving the ball on the half way line, he ran through the entire Bristol team to score under the posts. Gloucester's other tries were scored by wing Walter Taylor, who was Gloucester's leading scorer that season with 18 tries, forward H G Brown and half back Albert Collins.

The return fixture at Nevil Road, Bristol was drawn 2 points all, each side scoring a try.

BAPTISMS OF FIRE

The matches became highlights of the season for both clubs. Here, two players describe their first experience of a Bristol v Gloucester derby:

BILL HOOK

Memorial Ground, September 1938

England and Gloucester full back Bill Hook was just 17 and a schoolboy at Sir Thomas Rich's School when

he played his first away game for the 1st XV at the Memorial Ground against Bristol in September 1938. It was the start of Bristol's Golden Jubilee season and, having lost narrowly to Gloucester both home and away the previous season, they were more than usually keen to get their revenge.

Bill told how the legendary Gloucester hooker "Bumps" Carpenter took him under his wing, introducing him to the Bristol changing room with the words, "This is the babby we've brought down. He'll take anything fair and square, but you drop him anything below the line and I'll be looking for you." Then, beckoning to the youngster, "Come on me babby, you'll be alright, now."

Bumps was right, Bill need not have worried. Gloucester won the match by 6 points to 0, Bill's elder brother Bob scoring both their tries, and the Times reported, "The most notable features of the match were the forceful rushes of the Gloucester pack and the back play of W Hook, a seventeen year old schoolboy."



ALASTAIR HIGNELL
Memorial Ground, February 1973

England and Bristol scrum half and full back Alastair Hignell tells of how he joined Bristol as a raw 18 year old, hoping to play Colts rugby. Turning up for his first mid-week training session, he was told by the coach, "There's no Colts game this week, but you're playing on

Saturday. United are a man short." He added, "It's the big one this weekend...Gloucester United." The whole team bristled and looked suitably stern. Somebody said "Who's the scrum half?" "Here he is - it's Alastair," said the coach. "Poor sod!" was the reply.

The match was played in inches of mud - a typical pitch at the "Mem" in the '70s. In the first few minutes, Bristol lost their hooker and Alastair spent the rest of the game being trampled by his seven man pack going backwards - or if he was unlucky and the Gloucester pack stayed bound - by all fifteen! Somehow Bristol held on and there was only the odd point in it at the end. Alastair survived and went on to run out many times at Kingsholm for Cambridge University, Bristol and Gloucestershire. Rejoicing in the Shed's nickname of "Alice" he always got that little bit of extra attention when the fans thought that local hero Peter Butler should have been playing for the county - or for England - in his place.

ALL-CONQUERING GLOUCESTER GO DOWN AT BRISTOL

BRISTOL 12 GLOUCESTER 6

*Memorial Ground, September 26
1981*

1980-81 was Gloucester's greatest season of the amateur era - a season in which they lost only three of the 48 games played. The first of these was at Bristol in a typical "no quarter asked or given" derby game.

Gloucester trailed to a Phil Cue penalty in the second minute, but gradually gained some control, leading to Tony Durkin replying in kind to level the scores at half time. Cue and Les Jones exchanged penalties early in the second half, but after twenty minutes, Bob Hesford and Nigel Pomphrey shattered the Gloucester defence with Pomphrey crashing over in the corner. Cue added a further penalty and when John Fidler was sent

off following a monumental free-for-all, the match was all but won for Bristol. The back-row play of Hesford and Rafter and the pinpoint kicking of outside half Cue had swung the game.

GLOUCESTER AT HOME AT ASHTON GATE

GLOUCESTER 35 BRISTOL 13

Ashton Gate, April 28 2007

As the demolition of the old South Stand at Kingsholm was already under way, the home match with Bristol was rearranged to be played at Ashton Gate. It was the last match before the play-offs. Gloucester were top and Bristol were in third place, just two points behind, in their best season since the game turned professional. The first match, at the Memorial Ground in November, had been won by Bristol in foul conditions. Now, the weather was perfect.

13,000 travelling Gloucester fans turned Ashton Gate into a sea of red and white and created a "home" atmosphere. Gloucester played with pace and precision. Bristol, having beaten Leicester 30-13 in a rearranged fixture earlier in the week, faded as the game went on. Tries were scored for Gloucester by Willie Walker, Mark Foster, Jake Boer and Andy Hazell and for Bristol by David Lemi and Brian Lima. Walker kicked 3 penalties and 3 conversions to total 20 points for the match. An otherwise perfect day for the travelling fans was marred by a knee ligament injury to James Forrester, which eventually was to end his career.

The following week, Gloucester beat Saracens by 50 points to 9 at a reduced capacity Kingsholm and Bristol lost by 24 points to 16 to Leicester at Welford Road, Leicester going on to beat Gloucester 44-16 in the final at Twickenham.

Just two seasons later, Bristol were relegated.