

GLOUCESTER RUGBY
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GLOUCESTER V CARDIFF

OLD OPPONENTS FROM ACROSS THE BRIDGE

Today we welcome the Cardiff Blues and take the opportunity to look back over more than a hundred years of rivalry between the Cherry & Whites and the formidable Cardiff RFC, from the first match in 1882, when the first stands were built at Cardiff Arms Park, to the last, a Heineken Cup quarter-final at Kingsholm in 2001, two years before the Cardiff Blues regional side were formed.

Few English clubs played home and away fixtures against Cardiff and although the Welsh club, seeking to broaden their fixture list, reduced the matches to one per season in 1969, they remained amongst the most prestigious and eagerly-awaited fixtures of the Gloucester season. A win against Cardiff was hugely prized by all English clubs.

As with the other Welsh giants, Newport, the playing record during the amateur era tells the story:

v Cardiff 1882-1996:
Played 162, Won 38, Lost 106,
Drawn 18 (Gloucester Win %age:

23.46)

v Newport 1878-1996:
Played 195, Won 56, Lost 119,
Drawn 20 (Gloucester Win %age:
28.71)

**The first match: Gloucester 1
goal 7 tries Cardiff 0 Spa Ground
Gloucester 28 October 1882**

**(before the introduction of the
points system)**

The first visit of Cardiff was eagerly awaited and drew a crowd of 4,000 to The Spa. Cardiff were expected to win, but Gloucester were much the better team on the day, "passing with remarkable judgment and accuracy, and showing such pluck and smartness in their backs that their opponents found themselves incapable of making any firm and determined stand. Hence the victory was a decisive one." The Gloucester tries were scored by Fream (2), Taylor (2), Brown, Dewey, Boughton and Coates, Boughton converting one.

Gloucester's "Invincibles" led by Frank Brown, in his last season

as captain, remained unbeaten throughout the 1882-83 season, although they could only draw the return match at Cardiff, 1 try each.

**A rare double: Cardiff 4 (1dg)
Gloucester 6 (2t) Cardiff Arms
Park 14 February 1931**

Gloucester pulled off one of the best wins in the club's 58 year history with this victory over Cardiff, in the process completing their first double over the Welshmen since 1890-91: Fred Wadley scored early for Gloucester but Cardiff responded with a dropped goal by Graham Jones (then worth four points) to give the home side a half time lead of four points to three. Despite a heroic forward effort by Gloucester, this seemed likely to be the final score until, in the last minute, Gloucester captain Roy James made a brilliant break. He exchanged passes with John Brookes before going over for a great try to win the game 6-4.





Jubilee triumph: Gloucester 14 (1g; 1pg; 1t; 1dg) Cardiff 0 Kingsholm 23 February 1952

Gloucester, celebrating 60 years at Kingsholm, brought off the crowning achievement of their record-breaking Diamond Jubilee season by beating a star-studded Cardiff side 14-0 in front of 12,000 spectators. It was their first win over Cardiff for 14 years.

Winger John Taylor and fly half Bill Cartmell scored Gloucester's tries, Bill Hook converted one and kicked a penalty and Michael Baker dropped a goal. The pack held the whip hand in the tight and the marking and tackling were deadly, allowing the Welsh international backs no room for manoeuvre, wing forward Dennis Ibbotson being outstanding. Bill Hook at full back gave one of his best displays of the season and at half back Jenkins and Cartmell controlled the game.

Victory at Cardiff at last: Cardiff 6 (2pg) Gloucester 11 (2t; 1pg) Cardiff Arms Park 1 November 1991

Again, a tremendous performance by the Gloucester pack earned the visitors their first win at the Arms Park since 1935. A sweeping initial attack by the forwards and



carried on by Marcus Hannaford and Don Caskie took Gloucester deep into Cardiff territory, where they stayed for much of the first half, the constant pressure yielding a Sam Masters try from a scrum on the Cardiff line and a Tim Smith penalty. The 7-0 half time lead was increased to 11-0 by a Jerry Perrins try from a surge by the pack and, although David Evans replied with two penalties for the home side, Gloucester ended the match camped on the Cardiff line.

The last match: Gloucester 21 (7pg) Cardiff 15 (1g; 1t; 1pg) Kingsholm 27 January 2001

The last game of the series was perhaps the biggest of all. In a season of mixed success, Gloucester, having scraped through their last group game against Llanelli with a disputed dropped goal, were hosts to Cardiff in the quarter finals of the Heineken Cup. Cardiff started as favourites but the Gloucester forwards were superb with Trevor Woodman, Junior Paramore and Ian Jones outstanding in a completely dominant pack. As a result, Gloucester controlled possession and territory throughout and were always ahead on the scoreboard, despite conceding the only two tries of the game. Simon Mannix kicked six of their seven penalties and wings Nick Walne and Gavin Thomas scored the Cardiff tries as Gloucester progressed to their only European Champions Cup semi-final to date.

And so to our visitors today. Welcome the Blues!

When the five Welsh regions were

originally formed from the nine professional clubs in the Welsh Premiership in 2003, Cardiff was the only stand-alone club allowed to form a region of its own. However, with the collapse of the Celtic Warriors in 2004, Pontypridd were brought under the Cardiff regional umbrella.

Since then, Gloucester and the Blues have played eight times in domestic and European cup competition, each winning four games. The Blues beat Gloucester comprehensively by 50 points to 12 in front of 55,000 spectators at Twickenham in the 2009 Anglo-Welsh Cup Final but in the most recent encounter Gloucester beat the Blues 40-3 in an Anglo-Welsh group match at Kingsholm. Otherwise, the matches have been close and keenly fought. We can expect no less this evening.

