

GLOUCESTER RUGBY  
HERITAGE



**SEASON 1981-82**

**Captain** Steve Mills

**Played** 48

**Won** 41

**Lost** 3

**Drawn** 4

**For** 1024

**Against** 300



**BACK:** T R Tandy (Hon Sec), T Pritchard, M Elway, R Collins, J Jarrett, AD Wadley (Hon Treasurer), A Brinn, CAR Lancaster, AC Pope, P Hawker, J Bennett, E Stephens

**MIDDLE:** R Morris, M Longstaff, M Teague, J Brain, S Boyle, A Turton, J Fidler, J Orwin, J Gadd, M Preedy, S Parslow, L Jones, S Ashmead, M Booth, T Day

**W**as this the greatest season in the history of the Gloucester club? If not, it was surely their greatest season in the amateur era. The figures speak for themselves. Coached by Dick Smith, captained by Steve Mills, with Mike Nicholls as team manager, the club carried all before them.

Gloucester were the first English club for five years to win the Daily Mail Anglo-Welsh merit table and reached the John Player Cup Final at Twickenham, drawing the match after extra time and sharing the cup. They were a young side (the average age of the team that played at Twickenham was 25) full of promising players, whose coach's philosophy was to

go forward at every opportunity, putting the ball on the floor and driving over the top of it. As coach Dick Smith said "We decided on a plan of rucking the ball and picking people up and carrying them into rucks and no mauling whatsoever. And it was very, very successful." A workmanlike side became a great side as the season progressed.

Three forwards in Gloucester's match day squad at Twickenham in May 1982 had already been capped by England; five more were to be capped in the future. Three (prop Phil Blakeway 1980, lock Steve Boyle 1983 and No 8 Mike Teague 1989 and 1993) toured with the British Lions and lock John Orwin went on to captain England on the 1988 tour of Australia. Hooker Steve Mills and lock John Fidler had been

capped on England's summer tour of Argentina, prop Gordon Sargent against Ireland the previous season, and prop Malcolm Preedy was to form part of an all-Gloucester front row in the first test of the 1984 tour of South Africa. Behind the international front five, the back row of Teague, John Gadd and Mike Longstaff were an outstanding unit and key to the team's success. Mike Teague, then just 22, was already a dominant force both as ball-winner and ball-player, scoring 20 tries as the side's leading scorer. The dynamic Gadd, also 22, with his impressive work rate, was (like Dick Smith himself) desperately unlucky not to win a full England cap while Longstaff, a converted full back and the unsung hero of the side, had the pace to be first to the breakdown, setting it up for Gadd and Teague to take over.



**FRONT:** R Smith (Coach), A Mitchell, P Ford, P Blakeway, R Clewes, AG Hudson (Chairman), S Mills (Captain), Canon HM Hughes (President), S Baker, R Mogg, P Taylor, J Holder, M Nicholls (Hon Team Sec)

**SEATED:** P Pritchard, K White

At scrum half, the promising Steve Baker, again only 22, who already had 100 games behind him, formed a sound partnership with county fly half Les Jones. In the threequarters, wings Richard Mogg, a veteran at 26, who had been capped by England at every level save full international, and the elusive Welshman Phil Pritchard who bagged 15 tries, played alongside the indestructible hard-tackling Paul Taylor and the creative Steve Parsloe. Full back Paul Ford scored 241 points including six tries that season.

During the season, notable away wins were achieved at Leicester, Northampton, Moseley, Bedford, Neath, Coventry, London Scottish and Bath. Ten tries were scored at home to Oxford University and six each against

Sale and Saracens. The team were unbeaten in the 22 matches played after Christmas.

In the John Player Cup, Gloucester met Sale in the semi-final at Kingsholm and, after containing the visitors while playing against a strong wind in the first half, shut them out of the game in the second to win 13-6, scoring two tries to nil. The try scorers were Ford, after a break from Parsloe, and Teague. Gloucester were drawn against Coventry in the semi-final at Coundon Road, just as they had been in the inaugural competition of 1971-72. This time the result was emphatic, as Gloucester, dominating the lineout through Steve Boyle, won 18-9, with tries from Phil Pritchard and Steve Parsloe.

And so to the final against Moseley, again their opponents of ten years before. Gloucester controlled possession for long periods, but for once lacked penetration and the game was a dull 9-9 draw (3 penalties apiece) at the final whistle, resulting in extra time. A fine Perry drop goal early in the second period seemed to have won the game for Moseley, but Paul Ford's penalty for Gloucester in the dying minutes just squeezed over off a post, and the Cup was shared for the only time in its history.

Not only was 1981-82 a triumphant season for the 1st XV, but Gloucester United, under the captaincy of John Haines, won 31 of their 35 games, only narrowly losing four.