

GLOUCESTER RUGBY
HERITAGE



**GLOUCESTER
RUGBY**

SEASON 2006-07

Captain Marco Bortolami

Played 33

Won 21

Lost 10

Drawn 2

For 531

Against 404

PREMIERSHIP

Played 22

Won 15

Lost 5

Drawn 2

For 531

Against 404

Position 1st



This was an outstanding season, with the Cherry and Whites topping the Premiership by points difference from Leicester. Dean Ryan was Head Coach, and under the dynamic captaincy of Marco Bortolami, the Italian international, who had joined the club from Narbonne, the team only lost one game at Kingsholm, to Agen in the Heineken Cup. Hopes were therefore high when the Premiership Final was played against Leicester. That game was a disaster as Alesana Tuilagi ran over or through Gloucester tacklers to score two tries as Leicester triumphed 44-16.

Gloucester had dynamic backs in fly-half

Ryan Lamb, centre Anthony Allen, who won two England caps in the autumn, full-back Olly Morgan, capped twice in the Six Nations and wing James Simpson-Daniel, which could tear sides to pieces. Bristol were defeated 63-25 in the EDF Cup, Sale 44-24 in the league and Saracens 50-9 in the Premiership semi-final. In the forwards Andy Hazell was the Premiership's top tackler, and Peter Buxton was a tower of strength in the back-row. Another Italian, Carlos Nieto arrived from Viadana, and together with Nick Wood and Ollie Azam formed an outstanding front-row.

Gloucester's Heineken Cup campaign was spoilt by defeats in the first two rounds to Leinster away and Agen at home. Back-



to-back wins over Edinburgh brought the team back into contention, but the need to win at Agen proved too much and the game was lost 18-26. However, the best was left till last as Leinster, the group winners, were beaten at Kingsholm 19-13 in a fine performance, tries being scored by Christian Califano and Mark Foster, plus a penalty try. Willie Walker and Ryan Lamb kicked conversions.

The Premiership campaign got off to a flying start with seven wins and a draw (at Leicester), with notable victories away to Harlequins 31-21, and home wins against Bath, Northampton, Saracens and Wasps. The first defeat was 12-14 at Bristol to a last-minute drop goal. There then followed a familiar

pattern for Gloucester of winning at Kingsholm, but losing on the road, until a 7-5 win at Northampton proved to be one more nail in the Saints coffin, as they were relegated at the end of the season. Next game Leicester were beaten 28-24 at Kingsholm, with Willie Walker kicking six penalties on top of tries from Andy Hazell and Peter Richards. Gloucester's final "home" game was played at Ashton Gate, Bristol, due to the demolition of the old stand at Kingsholm. But no matter the Cherry and Whites won 35-13. However, the highly talented James Forrester was injured and it proved to be the end of his career. This was a tragedy, both for James and the club.

Only Saracens now stood between

Gloucester and the Premiership final. Sarries were overwhelmed 50-9 at Kingsholm. Gloucester scored seven tries through Peter Richards, Luke Narryway, Anthony Allen, Mark Foster, Andy Hazell, Christian Califano, plus another penalty try. Willie Walker kicked six conversions, and a penalty.

The team travelled full of hope to Twickenham for the final, but Leicester and Tuilagi were unstoppable and full value for their win. Gloucester could only muster one try from Ryan Lamb, and Willie Walker kicked three penalties and a conversion.

The following season, Gloucester would again top the table, only to lose in the semi-final, again to Leicester.