

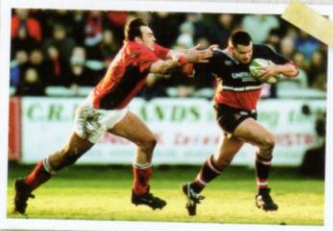
SOME GLORY DAYS IN EUROPE

GLoucester's FIRST AND BEST SEASON IN EUROPE

This is Gloucester's eleventh season in the Champions Cup. These seasons have seen some memorable games against the leading sides in Europe, but we have yet to progress further than when we first tasted the competition in 2000-01.

Llanelli 20 Gloucester 27 6th October 2000 at Stradey Park

Gloucester's debut in the Heineken Cup saw them travel to Stradey Park to face the semi-finalists from the previous season. Gloucester showed controlled aggression to come away with a fine win, which featured Junior Paramore repeatedly stopping Llanelli in their tracks with some thumping tackles. Jason Little scored the first try just before half-time, but Scarlets hit back immediately to make it 13-14 at the break.



In the second half the Gloucester front row, with Serge Simon playing perhaps his best game for Gloucester alongside Ollly Azam and Phil Vickery, dominated the opposition. Chris Yates made several bulldozing runs to set up the position from which Andy Hazell raced in under the posts. With an injury to Simon Mannix, the goal kicking was shared between Andy Gomarsall and Terry Fanolua, but all three stepped up to the mark to seal a victorious start in Europe.

Gloucester 28 Llanelli 27 13th January 2001

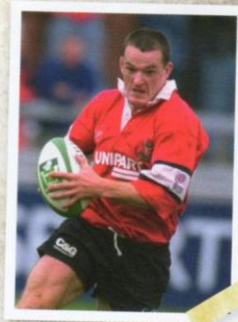
The return match was another thriller, with passion reigning supreme in a match full of drama and scintillating rugby. Gloucester soon found themselves 0-13 behind, but fought back to 10-13 by half-time.



Llanelli remained ahead as time was running out, but at the last gasp, Gloucester won possession at half-way, and Kingsholm shook with noise and emotion as Jake Boer, Chris Yates and Tom Beim ploughed forward. The ball was recycled, but Phil Vickery found himself isolated. He clung on and went to ground, the defence converged and, with nowhere else to go, Elton Moncrieff tried a drop goal from right under the posts. It was heading under the bar until it struck the shoulder of a Welsh defender, and wobbled up and over. A freak score, but it won the game, and meant that Gloucester qualified for the knockout stages at their first attempt.

Gloucester 21 Cardiff 15 27th January 2001

The quarter-final again saw Gloucester's pack take the game by the scruff of the neck, with Trevor Woodman, Ollly Azam and Phil Vickery to the fore in demolishing the Cardiff scrum, and Rob Fidler and Ian Jones reigning supreme in the lineouts. In the back row, Kingsley Jones gave a master class in scavenging and winning turnover ball, Jake Boer tackled like a demon and was ever present to make the hard yards, whilst Junior Paramore was frighteningly effective with the ball in hand.



This domination up front won a stream of penalties, with Simon Mannix kicking six and Byron Hayward one to win the game.

Gloucester then lost 15-19 in a titanic struggle in the semi-final against Leicester, who went on to win the final, but what a first season in the Champions Trophy.

ONE FOR DAVID HUMPHREYS TO REMEMBER

Gloucester 55 Ulster 13 30th October 2004

Playing at stand-off for Ulster, David Humphreys showed his footballing artistry to create space for a try which he scored himself and converted. He added two penalties, but that was the extent of Ulster's scoring as Gloucester ran riot in the second half, with Chris



“ HE PRODUCED A BURST OF SPEED WHICH LEFT TERRIFIED DEFENDERS CLUTCHING IN DESPAIR. AS HE WENT OVER THE LINE THE ROAR MUST HAVE WOKEN UP CHILDREN ACROSS HALF OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE ”



Fortey having the game of his life in another dominant Gloucester forward performance. Andy Hazell was in his best seek and destroy mode and Phil Vickery exuded menace at every scrum, even if the backs were the ones to benefit by scoring most of the six tries.

GLOUCESTER'S BEST MATCH IN EUROPE?

Gloucester 34 Toulouse 24
20th January 2012

No less an authority on Gloucester Rugby than Peter Ford judged this to be the finest performance he had ever seen by a Gloucester team, coming against the four times champions of Europe. Toulouse tried some mind games by muscling in on Gloucester's traditional foray in front of the Shed at the end of their warm-up, but succeeded only in firing up both the home team and supporters.

It started badly with Nick Wood despatched to the sin bin in the first minute, but a couple of minutes later a Toulouse clearance kick whacked Jonny May on the nose and he still had the wit to pounce on the ball and score. Despite Akapusi Qera strolling in for a try, Toulouse led 17-14 at half-time.

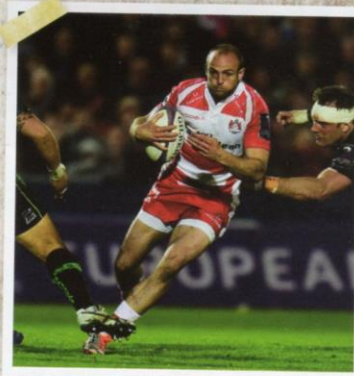
Mike Tindall set up the first attack of the second half with a delightful grubber kick, Jonny May won the race to the ball, and sent Charlie Sharples over for a mesmerising try. With the game tied at 24-24, came the move which lives best in the memory. James "Sinbad" Simpson-Daniel left Matanavou for dead on the left flank, drew the cover and fed the ball to May just over the halfway line. There seemed to be sufficient cover, but he produced a burst of speed which left terrified defenders clutching in despair. As he went over the line the roar must have woken up children across half of Gloucestershire. "I'll remember that moment for the rest of my life" said May afterwards. "Can we play you every week?" chanted a delirious Shed at the shell-shocked Frenchmen.

THE TRACK RECORD AGAINST EXETER

Gloucester 30 Exeter 19
18th April 2015

Until last Saturday, Gloucester and Exeter had never met in the Champions Cup, their only previous encounter in a European competition coming in this Challenge Cup semi-final.

Gloucester had won their group with an unblemished record of six wins out of six, and then came through a hard quarter-final, 14-7 against Connacht, thereby securing home advantage for the semi.



The game started at a blistering pace, but the only try of the first half came when a tricky kick by James Hook caused chaos in the Exeter defence and Bill Meakes grabbed the ball to score. Exeter pressure after the resumption allowed them to close to within one point with a couple of penalties, but birthday boy Tom Savage celebrated by peeling off and darting over for the decisive try. Taione caused a few jitters with a late try, but Jonny May settled nerves by intercepting and racing in for the final try. Gloucester went on to beat Edinburgh 19-13 in the final at the Stoop.