

IT ALL STARTED WITH BATH V GLOUCESTER

In 1971 the RFU was persuaded, reluctantly, to introduce a National Knockout Competition – there was no cup on offer, no sponsor, and clubs themselves had to agree a date on which to play each fixture. Bath and Gloucester were drawn together in the first round, and kicked the competition off on 30th September 1971 at the Rec.

EARLY GLOUCESTER SUCCESS

It was not a good advert for cup rugby, decided entirely on penalties. But the Gloucester fans liked Mike Nicholls winning nine strikes against the head, their pack “pushing Bath half-way back to Radstock”, and the trusty boot of Eric Stephens seeing them home 12-3. Despite being drawn away in every round, Gloucester went on to win the competition, defeating Moseley 17-6 in the final at Twickenham.



Gloucester's first home cup game came the following season, also against Bath. The Gloucester pack eventually took control in a frustrating game in wet conditions, and tries from Alan Brinn, John Watkins and Eddie Pinkney saw them home 16-0.

BATH'S PURPLE PATCH

The teams next met in a semi-final in 1985 at Kingsholm. Tim Smith did all of the scoring for Gloucester with two tries and a penalty, but the Bath pack got the upper hand and squeezed home 12-11.

In the Pilkington Cup at Kingsholm in 1989, the programme notes reminded that the match “isn't a replay of the Siege of Gloucester, or a re-enactment of the Battle of Sedgemoor, and there's very little danger of the wives and children of the losing side being sold into slavery.” But nobody was fooled. Bath were reckoned to be the best side in England at the time, but there was little sign of this as they squeezed home in a tense encounter by two penalties to one.

It was very different in 1990, when Bath played out of their skins in the final at Twickenham, inspired by a majestic performance from Jeremy Guscott. Gloucester were still in the game when John Gadd was sent off, but it then became a rout as Bath ran in four tries in the last quarter to romp home 48-6.

They met again in a semi-final in 1992. On the day when the Prince of Wales came to Gloucester to attend the enthronement of the new Bishop of Gloucester, a much larger crowd descended on Kingsholm. An exciting game in which Gloucester kicked their goals and Bath scored tries, was tied at 15-15 at the end of normal time. In extra time, Gloucester edged ahead with a penalty, but the Shed looked on in horror as Tony Swift and Jim Fallon ran in tries in the last three minutes for Bath to win 27-18.

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In another semi-final in 1996, at the Rec, Gloucester conceded too many penalties. It was a try apiece from Adedayo Adebayo for Bath and Scott Benton for Gloucester, but the boot of Jon Callard secured victory for Bath, 19-10.

GLoucester REVIVED BY TETLEY'S

The teams clashed twice in successive seasons in the Tetley's Bitter Cup. Early in 2000 at Kingsholm, Gloucester were sitting pretty at the top of the Premiership, but it was a rain-lashed Monday evening under the floodlights. Consequently, it was not a game for the purists, but a packed Kingsholm loved the 13-6 result. Gloucester scored the only try, and perhaps fittingly it was a penalty try.

Later in the year, the teams met again, this time at the Rec, and Bath were 15-7 to the good at half-time, but Gloucester took control in the second half and starved Bath of ball. Tries from Byron



Byron Hayward who contributed 22 points in the two matches in 2000

Hayward, Mark Cornwell and Tom Beim trumped six penalties from Jon Preston for a hard-earned 24-18 win.

POWER RESTORED TO BATH

In the Powergen Cup, there were successive wins for Bath in 2005, starting with a game at Kingsholm which ended 19-19, before Andy Williams scored the winning try late in extra time. Later in the year at the Rec, Bath scored two tries in short order in the first half and Gloucester were left chasing a game which they lost 12-21.

A change of supplier to the EDF Cup in 2006, brought a change in fortunes, with Gloucester steadily dismantling Bath up front at Kingsholm.

The pressure led to a penalty try, and three more from Adam Balding, James Merriman and Willie Walker to ensure victory 30-12.

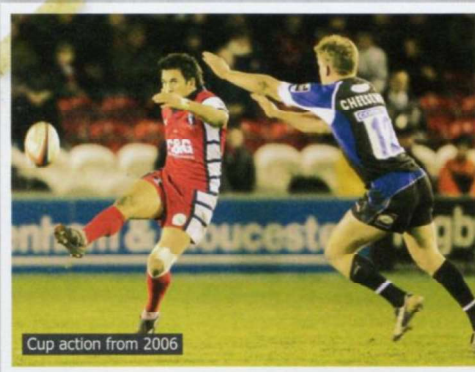
RECENT CUP ENCOUNTERS

When the teams met at Kingsholm in the LV= Cup in 2013, Gloucester seemed to have done well in playing into the wind in the first half and turning around all square, but they collapsed in the second half and lost 5-32.

A dismal Anglo-Welsh Cup pool game in the rain at the Rec in 2017 was enlivened when Ben Vellacott spotted a gap to nip through for a late try, James Hook's conversion earning a 17-17 draw.

Last season the teams met in the equivalent of today's match – the final pool match in the Premiership Cup. Postponed to a Monday evening thanks to snow on the Rec, a more experienced Bath side gave a lesson to Gloucester's youthful team to the tune of 52-0, the largest margin ever between these clubs.

Gloucester and Bath have never met in a European campaign, but today's match is the 16th in other cup competitions. Bath are ahead with 9 wins to 5, with one drawn; they are also ahead on points scored 297-196.



Cup action from 2006



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