

# BATH, A CLUB EVEN OLDER THAN GLOUCESTER

Bath is one of the oldest rugby clubs in the country. It was founded in 1865, eight years before Gloucester. Originally, they played at North Parade, Bath, but then had a nomadic existence for several years before they leased a plot of land at Pulteney Meadow, known locally as the Rec. The rest, as they say, is history.

Bath are amongst Gloucester's longest standing opponents, the first meeting being at the Spa on 2 December 1882, when Gloucester triumphed by three goals and three tries to nil. Apart from 1890 to 1895 and 1906 to 1913, Gloucester have played Bath ever since.

In the early days Gloucester had by far the better of things. Bath's first win did not happen until 1922 when they won 9-6 at the Recreation Ground. They did not win at Kingsholm until 1938. It has to be admitted that in more recent times Bath have often had the whip hand.

## 5 MAY 1990: PILKINGTON CUP FINAL BATH 48 GLOUCESTER 6

Only the week before this game, Gloucester had only to beat Nottingham in the final league game of the season to win the title. Unfortunately, Nottingham were the better team on the day and won 12-3, and the title went to Wasps. Morale was bound to have been affected. In any event Bath romped home 48-6. To rub it in John Gadd was sent off in the second half. The game was already lost at that point, but against 14 men Bath ran in three more tries, to make eight in all. Keith Richardson, the Gloucester coach, said of the Bath team, "I haven't seen any club side that could have played against them."

## 10 APRIL 1996: COURAGE LEAGUE 1 GLOUCESTER 16 BATH 10

By this point in the season Gloucester were in desperate trouble near the foot of the table. The season had started disastrously, with nine out of first ten games lost. The appointment of Richard Hill as Director of Rugby had led to an improvement, but relegation was still a very real fear, when league leaders Bath came to Kingsholm, to play a Wednesday night game under the flood-lights. Gloucester's cause was not

helped by injuries, resulting in seven first choice players being absent. But the Cherry and Whites were up for this game and within four minutes had scored. Scrum-half Scott Benton took a tap-penalty and weaved his way through the defence, and when tackled, found wing Paul Holford on his shoulder, who scored in the corner. Tim Smith kicked a fine conversion, and six minutes later slotted a penalty to put Gloucester 10-0 up. Inevitably Bath fought back, and Phil de Glanville scored by the posts. Butland converted and kicked a penalty to level the scores. Amid increasing tension, Smith kicked two penalties, and Gloucester hung on for a famous victory. The Times noted, "They feature the local cathedral on the match programme, and the prayers of the supporters were answered by a display of raw courage that downed the Courage Championship leaders."

Gloucester avoided relegation, and Bath went on to win the Championship, as well as the Pilkington Cup.

## 4 NOVEMBER 2000: TETLEY'S BITTER CUP BATH 18 GLOUCESTER 24

There was some criticism locally of the non-selection of Ian Jones and Jason Little for this game; perhaps more of the former omission rather than the latter. Andy Hazell and Mark Cornwell had fine games, but it was the display of Tom Beim on the wing which really caught the eye.

For most of the first half Gloucester conspired to upset the referee, conceding a string of penalties, culminating in the sin-binning of Phil Vickery for a late tackle. Jon Preston took full advantage and kicked four penalties for a 12-0 lead. Just before half-time Gloucester struck back. Tom Beim took a tap penalty, and fed Byron Hayward for a try, which he converted himself. There was still time for Preston to kick yet another penalty for Bath to lead 15-7 at the break. When Preston kicked another penalty soon after the resumption, it looked as if the game was going the way of

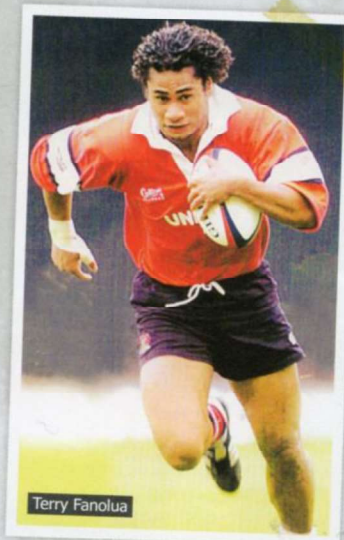


so many Gloucester visits to the Rec. But Cornwell was driven over for a typical forward's try, and then Beim scored a superb try running down the touch-line, and jinking inside to score from 40 metres. Bath came storming back but Chris Catling made two try-saving tackles on Iain Balshaw and Kevin Maggs in the final quarter, as Gloucester resisted the tide to win.

#### 4 MAY 2002: PREMIERSHIP GLOUCESTER 68 BATH 12

This was Gloucester's biggest ever win against their old opponents. It was one of the few seasons when Bath struggled in the Premiership. They finished eleventh, whilst Gloucester won the Zurich Championship final against Bristol.

Mike Tindall and Iain Balshaw were missing from the Bath line-up, and so were a number of others due to a horrendous injury list, and this did not help matters. Gloucester were utterly dominant and scored nine tries. James Simpson-Daniel scored a hat trick, whilst Terry Fanolua (2), Junior Paramore, Robert Todd, Patrice Collazo, and Henry Paul ran in the other tries. Ludovic Mercier boosted the score with seven



conversions, two penalties and a drop goal, to contribute 23 points. Bath scored tries through Sam Cox and Gareth Delve (who was making his Bath debut), whilst Olly Barkley kicked a conversion.

#### 13 SEPTEMBER 2008: PREMIERSHIP BATH 17 GLOUCESTER 21

Since the inception of leagues in 1987, the Rec had been a graveyard for the Cherry and Whites. They had never won there. Dean Ryan was now Gloucester's head coach. In Gloucester's previous game they had been beaten at Kingsholm 20-8 by Leicester. Ryan took the brave decision to drop fly-half Ryan Lamb, and play Willie Walker. His faith was rewarded as Walker played a blinder, scoring a try, conversion, two penalties and a drop goal, and generally pulled the strings to keep Gloucester on the front foot. In contrast, his opposite number, South African World Cup winner Butch James, had a nightmare with the boot, making one successful kick out of seven attempts.

Walker set his stall out after only one minute when he dropped a goal. Bath soon replied as captain Michael Lipman burst through for a try. Walker kicked two penalties, and at half-time Gloucester were leading 9-5. As the tension mounted, in the 62nd minute Gloucester swung a scrum to the blind-side. Luke Narraway picked up, sold a dummy and sped away to the line. Two minutes later, to add to James' miserable day, Walker charged down his kick, scooped up the ball and scored. His conversion was good, and suddenly Gloucester were 21-5 ahead. But Bath fought back, bravely scoring two tries in the last ten minutes through Joe Maddock and Nick Abendanon. James at last got one between the posts, but it was just too late for Bath. Gloucester had won at Bath for the first time in a league game.

