

# NEWCASTLE FALCONS

IN 1877 THE GOSFORTH RUGBY CLUB WAS FOUNDED. FOR YEARS IT LIVED A NOMADIC EXISTENCE, AND INDEED THE CLUB WAS CALLED GOSFORTH NOMADS.

Eventually Gosforth shared the Northumberland County ground with Northern rugby club, to play their home games. In 1951 Gosforth acquired ground close to the Great North Road, and having built a new stadium, started playing there in 1955, calling it "The New Ground". In the seventies the club became very powerful and won the John Player Cup in successive seasons from 1975 to 1977.

However, by the time national leagues started in 1987, Gosforth found themselves in Division 2. In 1990 there was another move, to Kingston Park, which was followed by a change of name to Newcastle/Gosforth, and finally Newcastle in 1995, corresponding with the arrival of professional rugby. Newcastle won the Premiership title in 1997-98. Gloucester have played a total of 58 games against Gosforth or Newcastle, and won 35 of them, lost 20 and three have been drawn.

The clubs first met on 13 March 1977 at Gosforth in a John Player cup game. The usually reliable Peter Butler missed several kicks, and Gosforth went through by one penalty to nil, They went on to win the cup for the second season running.

## 25 FEBRUARY 1978: JOHN PLAYER CUP GLOUCESTER 19 GOSFORTH 10

**Team:** Peter Butler; Bob Clewes, Richard Jardine, Brian Vine, Richard Mogg; Chris Williams, Paul Howell; Gordon Sargent, Steve Mills, Mike Burton, Steve Boyle, John Fidler, John Watkins (captain), John Simonett, Viv Wooley.

**Tries:** Wooley, Mills, Williams; Conversions; Butler (2);  
**Penalty:** Butler

Gloucester were determined to right the wrongs of the previous season's defeat, and were fired up. After ten minutes Howell made a blind-side break, and fed Clewes who kicked ahead. Gosforth full-back Patrick slipped, and Wooley following up picked up to score. Butler converted. The try woke up Gosforth who caused problems through their big pack, especially in the line-out. However, three penalty attempts went wide, and although Butler also missed one, he succeeded with another, so Gloucester led 9-0 at half-time.

Gosforth continued to press, but a fine tackle by Mogg stopped a likely try. Back came Gloucester. Howell



Gloucester Rugby, 1977/78

fed Watkins, who cut round the front of a line-out, passed to Mills, who scored in the corner. Still Gosforth attacked, but more penalties were missed. Another run by Howell caused confusion, before Williams broke through to score near the posts. Butler converted, to take the lead to 19-0. The now desperate Gosforth attacked and scored a try through Moor in the corner. The unimpressed Shed saluted this with a chorus of "Happy Birthday to you". Gloucester had now relaxed and in the third minute of injury time Harry Robinson scored Gosforth's second try.



2011 LV Cup Final winners

## 20 MARCH 2011: LV CUP FINAL GLOUCESTER 34 NEWCASTLE 7 (PLAYED AT NORTHAMPTON)

**Team:** Olly Morgan; Charlie Sharples, Tim Molenaar, Eliota Fuimaono-Sapolu, Tom Voyce; Nicky Robinson, Jordy Pasquelin; Nick Wood, Ollie Azam, Richard Harden, Jim Hamilton, Alex Brown, AkapusiQera, Andy Hazell, Luke Narraway. Replacements: Freddie Burns, Henry Trinder, Tim Taylor, Yann Thomas, Darren Dawidiuk, Sean Knight, Will James, Mark Cox  
**Tries:** Voyce, Sharples, Fuimaono-Sapolu, Dawidiuk;  
**Conversions:** Robinson (4); Penalties: Robinson (2)

Welsh fly-half Robinson who was leaving the club at the end of the season played an influential part in this win. He converted all four tries, and added two penalties, whereas the usually reliable Jimmy Gopperth had an off day with several misses.

The Cherry & Whites took an early lead when Fuimaono-Sapolu created space for Voyce to score in the corner. Gloucester dominated for long periods, but a Robinson penalty was the only addition to the score in the first half. Gloucester continued to dominate, and it was inevitable that the dam would break. Seven minutes after Robinson had kicked his second penalty, he exchanged passes with Fuimaono-Sapolu, for the latter to score. Replacement Burns gave a fine scoring pass to Sharples, and suddenly Gloucester were leading 27-0.

Newcastle did not give up and Luke Eaves scored from a five metre scrum. Dawidiuk was driven over from a line-out in the last move of the game.

## 20 APRIL 2018; EUROPEAN CHALLENGE CUP SEMI-FINAL GLOUCESTER 33 NEWCASTLE 12

**Team:** Jason Woodward; Tom Marshall, Billy Twelvetrees, Mark Atkinson, Henry Trinder; Billy Burns, Calum Braley; Paddy McAllister, Motu Matu'u, Fraser Balmain, Ed Slater (captain), Mariano Galarzo, Ruan Ackermann, Jake Polledri, Ben Morgan. Replacements: Andy Symons, John Afoa, Lewis Ludlow, Ben Vellacott, Josh Hohneck, Freddie Clarke, Charlie Sharples, James Hanson.

**Tries:** Marshall, Matu'u, Burns, Vellacott; Conversions: Twelvetrees (2); Penalties: Twelvetrees (3)

Only a few weeks before, Newcastle had won the Premiership game at Kingsholm, and the way this game started it looked as if Gloucester were again up against it. A catch and drive from ex Gloucester player Scott Laidlaw resulted in a try. Gloucester continued to suffer pressure, not helped by a series of errors. At last, Woodward made a break to send in Marshall to square the scores. Thus encouraged the Cherry and Whites took control. Twelvetrees kicked a penalty and just on half-time a catch and drive resulted in a try for Matu'u.

Billy Burns was next to score, benefitting from a Marshall off-load. Scott Lawson scored a second try to give Newcastle hope, but two Twelvetrees penalties stretched the lead to 26-12, and settled any Gloucester nerves. Newcastle fought back hard, but Gloucester broke out of defence and replacement Vellacott scored the final try.

Gloucester played Cardiff Blues in the final, only to lose to a last minute penalty.



Tom Marshall lands a try