

GLoucester RUGBY  
HERITAGE

# SOUTH SEAS FLAIR AT KINGSHOLM

Although the New Zealand Maoris came to Gloucester in 1889, no team from the South Seas Islands was seen in the city for another eighty years. First to visit were Fiji.

## FIJI

On 10th October 1970, Fiji gained independence and their High Commissioner travelled down to Kingsholm to watch his team take on Western Counties at Kingsholm. To put it mildly, Fiji were a very physical side, but were confronted that day by some prime Gloucester beef in the form of the fearsome John Bayliss at centre, John Spalding at scrum-half, and Alan Brinn, Dick Smith and Charlie Hannaford in the Counties pack. A violent game saw Spalding suffer a couple of broken ribs, and John Pullin head-butted out of the game, but Dick Smith scored an early try, later made a break to set one up for Jon Gabitass, and in between Hannaford poached another, all of which served to see Counties home 25-13.

Fiji returned to play Gloucester in 2012. Typically robust, Fiji leapt out of the blocks to an 18-0 lead, but Matt Cox scored just before the break, and the Gloucester pack gained the upper hand in the second half, forcing two penalty tries. A try from Koree Britton edged Gloucester Rugby ahead 31-29, and they saw the game out desperately defending their line. Dan Robson's boot contributed eleven points in a cracking game.



Akapusi Qera

Several Fijians have donned the Cherry and White, most notably the irrepressible Akapusi Qera, who made 105 appearances in the back row, 2007-14, and helped Gloucester Rugby to finish top of the Premiership in his first season, before winning the LV Cup in 2011 and the Premiership Sevens in 2013. He was joined by Apo Satala with 16 appearances, 2008-10. Only briefly seen were Koli Sewabu in the back row, Semi Tadulala in the centre, and Andrew Bulumakau, a centre who also played in the 2013 Sevens success.

## SAMOA

In 1995, Western Samoa, captained by Pat Lam, faced the South West Division at Kingsholm. The Gloucester Rugby representatives were Paul Holford on the wing, Bruce Fenley at scrum-half, and Tony Windo,

Dave Sims and Pete Glanville in the pack. Holford and Glanville shone mainly in defence, and Fenley delivered a scoring pass, but the visitors scored four tries to win 31-16.

In 2010, the Samoan national side ran in ten tries as they thrashed Combined Services 66-25 at Kingsholm.

One of Gloucester Rugby's first signings in the professional era was Terry Fanolua, and it was one of their best. Terry made 226 appearances for Gloucester Rugby, 1997-2006, his utter commitment to the cause, his strong running at centre, and his ability to break a tackle making him a Shed favourite. He was a key figure in a very successful Club side, scoring a try and making a match-winning tackle on Rory Underwood in the final of the Cheltenham &



Terry Fanolua



Junior Paramore



Eliota Fuimaono-Sapolu



Lesley Vainikolo

Gloucester Cup in 1998, and also contributing much to winning the Powergen Cup in 2003.

He was joined at Gloucester by his cousin, Junior Paramore, who made 116 appearances in the back row, 1999-2004, loved not only for his powerful presence but also for his sheer enjoyment of the game – his trademark entry as a replacement involved a detour in front of the opposing backs with a grin from ear to ear.

Another who could never be faulted for lack of effort was Eliota Fuimaono-Sapolu, who made 67 appearances at centre, 2009-12. Perhaps the highlight of his time with Gloucester was his outstanding performance, including a try, as Newcastle were beaten 34-7 in the final of the LV Cup at Northampton in 2011. A few appearances were also made by Motu Matu'u at hooker and Logovi'i Mulipola at prop.

**TONGA**

The England Saxons entertained Tonga at Kingsholm in 2011. Out in the backs, Charlie Sharples and Henry Trinder saw very little of the ball as a dominant Saxons

pack, featuring Dave Attwood, kept it to themselves. They bludgeoned their way to a hat trick of penalty tries and victory 41-14.

With both Tonga and USA scheduled to play RWC 2015 matches at Kingsholm, they decided to familiarise themselves with the ground beforehand, and met there in late 2014. Tonga included several Gloucester Rugby players in David Halaifonua on the

wing, Aleki Lutui at hooker, Lua Lokotui in the second row, Sione Kalamafoni in the back row and Sila Puafisi coming on as a prop replacement. Tonga won a fast, furious and entertaining game 40-12. In the RWC proper, Tonga met Georgia at Kingsholm, with Lokotui, Kalamafoni and Puafisi again involved. A very tight game saw Georgia edge home 17-10.

The first Tongan player to be signed by Gloucester Rugby was Seti Kiole, a winger, who made 17 appearances in the 2004-05 season. He was followed by Lesley Vainikolo, a winger known as "the Volcano", who exploded on the scene in 2007, scoring five tries on his debut at Leeds, and helping Gloucester Rugby to finish top of the Premiership. He made 86 appearances and scored 36 tries in five seasons with the Club. When he left in 2012, Sione Kalamafoni arrived, and also stayed for five seasons, during which he made 107 appearances. David Halaifonua made 38 appearances, 2014-18. Lua Lokotui, 2012-14, and Sila Puafisi, 2013-15, each made 15 appearances, but Aleki Lutui only four in 2014-15.



Sione Kalamafoni