

GLOUCESTER RUGBY
HERITAGECUP MATCHES
AGAINST
NORTHAMPTON

There is a long history to matches between Gloucester and Northampton, the teams having first met in 1899, when Gloucester won 18-8 at Kingsholm. So far there have been 162 matches, with 94 won by Gloucester and 62 by Northampton. However, the first encounter in a cup competition came in a semi-final of the Pilkington Cup in March 1990 at Franklin's Gardens. Playing into a strong wind in the first half, Gloucester were forced to run rather than kick, and scored tries through Mike Teague and Derrick Morgan, but turned round 8-12 behind. With the wind behind them, Gloucester kept Northampton pinned down, and Tim Smith kicked three penalties to secure a 17-12 win.

In January 1994, Northampton came to Kingsholm in the same competition. Paul Holford's try and a Tim Smith penalty put Gloucester ahead 8-3 at half-time, after which an unconscious Don Caskie was taken off to the Royal, but Northampton were stifled very effectively and Smith eventually kicked another penalty for an 11-6 win.

In the 1997-98 season, the teams met in two different cup competitions, both at Franklin's Gardens. In the C&G, a below-strength Gloucester had the better of the scoreless first half an hour, but were then put to the sword to the tune of 5-30, Mark Cornwell's try providing the only relief. In the Tetley's Bitter Cup,



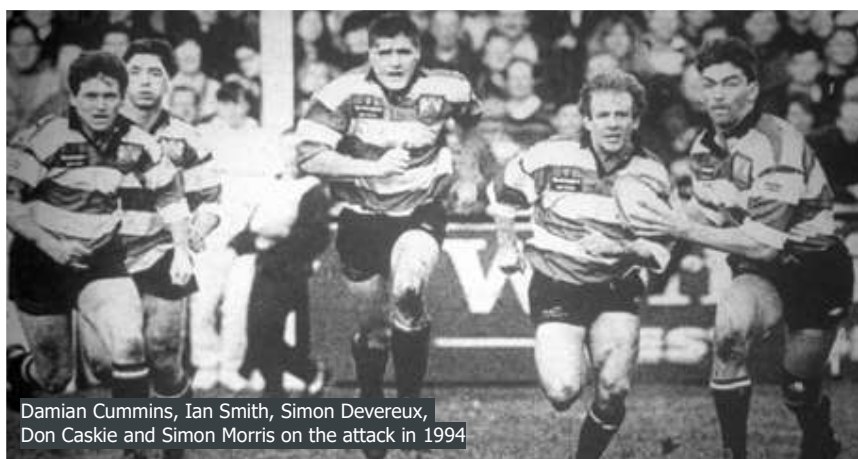
Gloucester celebrate their win in 1990

two penalties kicked by Mark Mapletoft and a try by Mike Lloyd in injury time could not disguise a dismal performance which produced a similar result, 11-30.

Despite this loss to Northampton in the group stage of the C&G, Gloucester won all their other games, topped the group, and were back at Franklin's Gardens in April 1998 to play Bedford in the final, which resulted in Gloucester

lifting the Cup with a 33-25 victory. Northampton again hosted the final of this competition in 1999, and the same finalists made it through; this time Gloucester won more comfortably, 24-9.

Gloucester had a wonderful run in the Powergen Cup in 2002-03. Having defeated Exeter 35-6 and Saracens 51-20, they went to Franklin's Gardens to defeat Leicester 16-11 in the semi-



Damian Cummins, Ian Smith, Simon Devereux, Don Caskie and Simon Morris on the attack in 1994

final. They found Northampton waiting for them in front of 75,000 spectators for the final at Twickenham, where Andy Deacon at age 37 was the oldest player to appear in a rugby cup final. A breathless first half saw Gloucester score tries through James "Sinbad" Simpson-Daniel and Marcel Garvey, with Northampton replying through Nick Beal. Both Ludo Mercier and Paul Grayson had their kicking boots on, but Gloucester conceded more penalties and turned round 20-22 down. Increasingly dominant up-front, Gloucester denied Northampton any further points in the second half. James Forrester scored a try, and Ludo continued to kick points, before the Frenchman intercepted deep in his own half and handed on to Sinbad, who rounded off one of Gloucester's greatest victories with another try at the death to make it 40-22.

The teams met in another final at Worcester in March 2010, for the LV Cup. A stirring match was closely contested throughout, with a try apiece in the first half from Akapusi Qera and Tonga'uiha, and penalties putting Northampton ahead 20-14. The Gloucester pack forced a penalty try, but Downey and Dickson scored for Northampton. Down 24-30, Gloucester put in a huge effort and Nicky Robinson appeared to



The Gloucester team celebrate

score a try, but it was disallowed on review – it was that close. The following season Gloucester again reached the final, which was played at Franklin's Gardens, where they went one better and overwhelmed Newcastle 34-7.

Gloucester found the going very tough during two LV Cup visits to Franklin's Gardens in 2013. In January, Northampton gave an inexperienced team a rugby lesson in discipline and forward power as they were well beaten 7-26, Ryan Mills converting his own try for Gloucester's only points. And in November, Ollie Thorley became Gloucester's youngest player in the professional era, but the result was similar, 6-33.

In the Anglo-Welsh Cup in November 2016, again at Franklin's Gardens, it was much closer. Tries in the second half for Thorley and Dan Thomas reduced the deficit to 13-19, but there it ended.

The most recent cup meeting was in the Premiership Cup at Kingsholm in November 2018. On a filthy night, Northampton played with the elements in the first half, and scored first with a try from Piers Francis, but an interception try by Matt Banahan, converted by Billy Twelvetrees, put Gloucester ahead 7-5 at half-time.

With time up at the end of the game, and Gloucester behind 7-12, their forwards drove a penalty over the line and were convinced they had scored. The referee disagreed, but the TMO stepped in, and the replay showed that Gerbrandt Grobler had just inched the ball up to the line. The try was awarded, the scores were level, and Billy Twelvetrees held his nerve to kick the conversion and secure a last gasp win, 14-12 – it was that close again.

Despite the longevity of the rivalry between Gloucester and Northampton, today represents a first in that the teams have never met previously in a European competition.



Tom Savage appeals to the referee to review the Grobler try