

## GLOUCESTER RUGBY HERITAGE

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# UP FOR THE CUP

Today's match is the fourth cup tie between Gloucester and London Welsh. Like today's encounter the three previous meetings have been in the domestic cup competition, in its various forms.

### 1971-72 RFU KNOCKOUT CUP QUARTER FINAL, 4 March 1972 London Welsh 4 - Gloucester 9

This was the key match in Gloucester's successful 1971-72 cup campaign, captained by Mike Nicholls, and was one of the club's greatest ever victories away from Kingsholm.

Gloucester had reached the quarter final of the first ever RFU knockout cup competition by winning at Bath and Bristol. Now they were drawn away for a third time against London Welsh, arguably the strongest club in England at the time.

The London Welsh team contained four Lions: John Dawes, Gerald Davies, John Taylor and Mervyn Davies, and seven other internationals. They were overwhelming favourites to win the tie.



(L-R) Mervyn Davies, Gerald Davies, John Dawes and John Taylor

LONDON WELSH (Colours—Red)		GLOUCESTER (Colours—Cherry and White)	
15 D. Llewellyn	Full Back	E. J. F. Stephens	15
14 T. G. R. Davies †	Threequarters	R. J. Clewley	14
13 S. J. Dawes †		R. Jardine	13
12 K. Hughes †		J. A. Bayliss	12
11 J. Shanklin †		J. Dix	11
10 R. H. Phillips	Fly Half	T. Palmer	10
9 W. G. Hulin †	Scrum Half	M. H. Booth	9
1 F. J. Williams or T. G. Davies	Forwards	R. J. Cowling	1
2 A. P. Baker		M. J. Nicholls (Capt.)	2
3 I. C. Jones †		† M. A. Burton	3
4 T. G. Evans †		N. A. Jackson	4
5 M. G. Roberts †		J. S. Jarrett	5
6 J. Taylor †		J. A. Watkins	6
8 T. M. Davist or A. R. Pender		M. J. Potter	8
7 A. J. Gray (Capt.) †		R. Smith	7

† International.  
Referee: Mr. K. A. Pattinson (North Midlands)

Gloucester's success stemmed from a tremendous performance from their pack, in which the back row of Mike Potter, John Watkins and John Haines were outstanding.

Nigel Jackson and Jim Jarrett were also dominant in the line-out and, as a result, London Welsh were condemned to run with whatever quality of ball they could muster.

A fierce wind was blowing down the pitch at Old Deer Park and London Welsh, playing with the wind, scored first through an unconverted try by scrum half Hulin.

After Eric Stephens had kicked a penalty for Gloucester early in the second half, the Gloucester half backs Mickey Booth and Tom Palmer used the



wind superbly and London Welsh were pinned back.

A Garryowen from Booth high into the London Welsh half was pursued by the Gloucester forwards and Mike Potter was driven over the line for a try which Eric Stephens converted.

Welsh tried everything they knew in the final phases of the game but Gloucester held out for a famous victory.

The match is best summed up by press comments at the time:

**Sunday Telegraph:**

From the moment that the Gloucester forwards heeled against the loose head

in the first scrum, an ugly feeling must have touched Welsh hearts that the quarter-final of the RFU Knock-out competition was not going to go quite according to plan. Nor did it.

**Daily Telegraph:** ...they [the Welsh] were completely outplayed in the loose, where John Watkins led an inspired back row.....The Gloucester forwards played with a ferocity and a sense of purpose that has not been matched by a club pack in England since the great days of Coventry 10 years ago.

**Sunday Express:** Exiles skipper John Dawes said, "They were iron men and they gave us our hardest game ever."

Gloucester went on to draw the semi-final 6-6 at Coventry in a hard and bitterly fought contest, progressing as the away team.



John Watkins



Rob Jewell, who scored two first half tries



Mike Nicholls leads Gloucester out at Twickenham under an arch of elver nets.

They then beat Moseley 17-6 in the final at Twickenham to end a heroic campaign as the first-ever RFU knockout champions.

**1982-83 JOHN PLAYER CUP  
3RD ROUND, 22 January 1983  
Gloucester 3 - London Welsh 14**

Gloucester were the joint holders of the John Player Cup, having drawn 12-12 in extra time against Moseley (again) in the 1981-82 final.

1981-82 had been arguably the club's greatest ever season, in which they lost just 3 out of 48 games. The following season was a different matter, however, and Gloucester had been in disappointing form before facing London Welsh in a 3rd round tie.

The Gloucester pack were missing Teague, Orwin and Boyle, but had been holding their own in the first half.

Then with the score at 3-3, thanks to a drop goal by Les Jones, a fumble on the Gloucester line allowed Clive Rees to drop over and score. From that point onwards the London Welsh forwards were lifted and took control of the game, taking the score to 10-3 at half time.

In the second half it was one-way traffic. Gloucester were comprehensively outplayed in every department and at times it seemed that only the siege gun kicking of Jones prevented a landslide.

Yet they held on and it was only in injury time that Rees scored his second to seal the Welsh victory they richly deserved.

**1997-98 TETLEY BITTER CUP  
4TH ROUND, 3 January 1998  
London Welsh 18 - Gloucester 34**

London Welsh were now two divisions below Gloucester when the two sides met in the fourth round of the Tetley Bitter Cup.

The match was played in dreadful conditions, with a howling gale blowing down the pitch, alternately accompanied by torrential outbursts of rain and brief periods of sunshine.

Gloucester held a slender 17-15 first half lead due to two tries by Rob Jewell and a penalty try but, in the second half with the elements behind them, Gloucester were rampant and tries by Cornwell, Sims and Mapletoft secured the match.



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