

## GLOUCESTER RUGBY HERITAGE

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# THE FOOTLOOSE FEZ

**Saracens were founded in 1876, only 3 years after Gloucester, by the Old Boys of the Philological School in Marylebone, London (later to become St Marylebone Grammar School).**

They must have had a sense of humour and history, which would no doubt have irritated Richard the Lionheart but amused Saladin, because they amalgamated with a neighbouring club, the Crusaders, two years later yet retained the Saracens name.

In 1892 Saracens moved from Crown Lane, Southgate, to Firs Farm, Winchmore Hill, and then played at nine different grounds before moving to Bramley Road, Southgate for the 1939–40 season (although the Second World War actually prevented them from playing there until 1945).

They had a fairly restricted fixture list after the war, finding it difficult to attract first class sides to Bramley Road, where the facilities were very basic.

After some bleak years in the early 1980s, the club won the second division in 1989 winning every match.

The next year in the first division they surprised many by finishing fourth in the league behind Wasps, Gloucester and Bath. However, they continued to suffer from star players defecting to bigger name London clubs, and in 1993 they were again relegated.

They bounced back two years later, but only avoided the drop in 1996 when the RFU decided that there should be no relegation in the first season of professional rugby.

Crucially Nigel Wray stepped in to provide the financial backing required for a professional club and, from then on, star players joined rather

than left the Club.

**THE CLUBS  
FIRST MET  
IN 1968 AND  
DREW THE  
MATCH 3-3**

than left the Club.

Saracens moved again in 1996 to Enfield FC's ground at Southbury Road, and a year later, to Watford FC's home ground at Vicarage Road. The Fez Heads were born, and the club embarked on a professional transformation.

They have, of course, played their home games all over the place this season, but have now opened a fine new stadium at Allianz Park. It seems consistent with their peripatetic history that they promptly abandon it in favour of Twickenham for their European games.

It all feels very different to Gloucester who have been rooted at Kingsholm for 122 years - except for that one little foray to Ashton Gate whilst the new stand was being built in 2007 - but even this blemish suggests that it will be 2123 before you next have to travel away from Kingsholm for a home match.

## FACTS AND FIGURES VERSUS THE FEZ

**There will be a good many at Kingsholm today who may well have been at the first fixture with Saracens, because unlike most of our Premiership opponents, Saracens are a relatively recent addition to the Gloucester fixture list.**

However, even those who were present may have difficulty in recalling that first encounter - in a rather undistinguished match at Kingsholm on 23rd March 1968, the clubs played out an uninspiring 3-3 draw. Gloucester's only scoring contribution was a penalty by the immaculate Don Rutherford.

Floods and frost caused a couple of seasons to pass before the next fixture, played at

▼ Don Rutherford, captain and scorer in the first match



Southgate on 4th December 1971, which Saracens won 20-12.

Gloucester's points came from a try by Dave Owen, converted by Eric Stephens, who also

## GLOUCESTER

(Red and White)

FULL BACK	
1 <b>D. RUTHERFORD</b> (t)	(Captain)
THREEQUARTERS	
2 <b>D. MEDCROFT</b>	R.W.
3 <b>J. BAYLISS</b> (c)	R.C.
4 <b>R. JARDINE</b>	L.C.
5 <b>J. GROVES</b> (c)	L.W.
HALF BACKS	
6 <b>T. PALMER</b> (c)	O.H.
7 <b>J. SPALDING</b>	S.H.
FORWARDS	
8 <b>J. FOWKE</b> (c)	
9 <b>M. NICHOLLS</b> (c)	
10 <b>R. COWLING</b>	
11 <b>A. BRINN</b> (c)	
12 <b>N. JACKSON</b>	
13 <b>P. FORD</b> (t)	
14 <b>D. OWEN</b> (c)	
15 <b>R. SMITH</b> (c)	

## SARACENS

FULL BACK	
15 <b>G. HUNT</b> (c)	
THREEQUARTERS	
14 <b>A. JANAWAY</b> (c)	R.W.
13 <b>R. WEAVER</b> (c)	R.C.
12 <b>W. DOBBS</b> (c)	L.C.
11 <b>K. CAREY</b> (c)	L.W.
HALF BACKS	
10 <b>M. J. ALDER</b> (c)	O.H.
9 <b>D. BRIGHT</b>	S.H.
FORWARDS	
1 <b>R. BLOOM</b> (c)	
2 <b>J. LOCKWOOD</b> (c)	
3 <b>C. LEFEVER</b> (c)	
4 <b>B. GOODCHILD</b> (c)	
5 <b>J. BAIRD</b>	
6 <b>J. EVANS</b>	
8 <b>G. A. SHERRIFF</b> (t)	
7 <b>M. PLAYER</b> (c)	

kicked a penalty, and Mickey Booth chipped in with a dropped goal. Gloucester were shorn of four of their best, playing in the England trial at Exeter that day.

Thereafter, fixtures were arranged once a season, alternately home and away, until the introduction of leagues, although even this only led to fixtures once per season until 1995-96. Since then, the teams have met most seasons, home and away, with the occasional break when Sarries slipped out of the top flight.

The teams also met in two successive seasons in the John Player Cup, Gloucester winning 29-3 on 23rd February 1985, with Nick Price, Derrick Morgan, Paul Taylor, Laurie Cummins and Ian Smith running in tries, and Tim Smith converting three of them and adding a penalty.

Gloucester had a good run against London clubs in the Cup that season, beating Richmond, Saracens and Harlequins in successive rounds, before tripping up 11-12 against Bath in the semi-final.

On 8th March 1986, Gloucester progressed again at the expense of Saracens, thanks to a 13-6 win at Southgate, courtesy of a try from Marcus Hannaford and three penalties by Tim Smith, but lost at London Scottish in the next round.

► The teams listed in the match programme for the first match between Gloucester and Saracens



▲ Ludo Mercier, whose kicking was even more impressive without his boots

Overall Gloucester are well ahead in the total series between the two clubs, both in terms of results, having won 39 and lost 18 of the 61 matches played to date, and also points scored with a margin of 1302 to 1033.

The record is a little more even in league matches, with Gloucester ahead 23-16 in wins and 924 to 823 in points.

The main reason for this imbalance is the Kingsholm factor – Saracens have only twice returned home from Gloucester with a win under their belts.

The first of those was a long time coming – Gloucester came unstuck 13-14 in the 23rd game in the series on 30th April 2005; the second being last season, when a 17-19 defeat on 29th October 2011 ended a two year unbeaten league record at Kingsholm.

## BIGGEST WINS

**The greatest margin of victory for Gloucester is 50-9, secured in the league semi-final on 5th May 2007. Tries came from all parts of the team - Peter Richards, Luke Narraway, Anthony Allen, Mark Foster, Andy Hazell, Christian Califano and a penalty try, with the ever dependable Willie Walker chipping in six conversions and a penalty. Jon Goodridge came off the bench during this match to make his last appearance for the Club.**

The Cherry and White horde invaded Twickenham for the final the following week, only to be deflated by a 16-44 defeat to a rampant Leicester.

The highest score by Gloucester against Saracens is 51-20 in the Powergen Cup on 25th January 2003. Tries were scored by Thinus Delpoit (2), James Forrester (2), Terry Fanolua, Andy Gomersall, Adam Eustace and Rodrigo Roncero. Conversions were kicked by Henry Paul and Ludovic Mercier (3), who also kicked a penalty.

A week later, the teams met again in a league fixture at Vicarage Road, Watford, and Gloucester won again, 29-22. On this occasion "Terry from Gloucester" Fanolua again scored a try, but the hero of the hour was Ludo Mercier with a full house of scoring – one try, two conversions, four penalties and a dropped goal.

The biggest wins by Saracens were 41-11 on 14th September 1996, and 50-20 on 20th August 2000.

Bonus  
CHERRIES

GLOUCESTER RUGBY  
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