

CHERRY & WHITES



V LONDON IRISH

GLOUCESTER RUGBY
OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME
2017/18 SEASON / ISSUE 07
AVIVA PREMIERSHIP RUGBY
SATURDAY 2 DECEMBER 2017
KO 15.00 / £3



CAPTAIN'S CORNER

WILLI HEINZ

GOOD AFTERNOON, AND WELCOME TO KINGSHOLM AS WE WELCOME LONDON IRISH FOR ROUND 10 OF THE AVIVA PREMIERSHIP.

It is always nice writing these notes off the back of a good win and another positive week leading into this match. We are starting to see the results of consistent and genuine preparation and having a full squad rowing in the same direction.

Our challenge week on week is to maintain these standards and look for those incremental improvements to help drive us forward. This is something the coaches are challenging us on as players driving amongst the group.

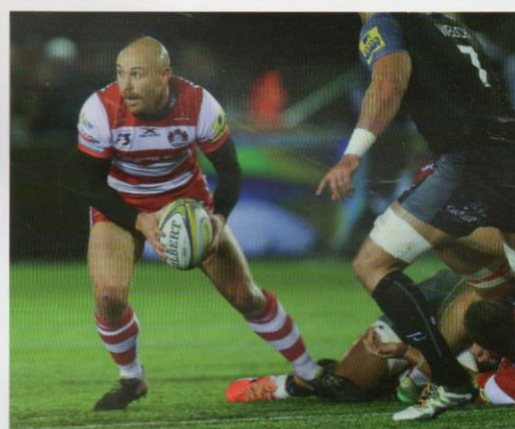
Last time out at home, we had to dig really deep and edge past Saracens, and this was a huge moment for us as a squad. In the first half, we were under the cosh, under so much pressure and we had to work really hard to get us out of our 22. But Saracens just kept coming back.

I think we've shown some positive improvements in our game over the past few weeks, particularly on defence. The excitement and energy is there but also the trust and patience within the defensive system which is something we focus on regularly. We're determined to be aggressive and make every tackle, but also be patient and wait for that opportunity to turn the ball over rather than give away cheap penalties.

A lot of hard work went in during preseason, and it's been good to see the start of the progress in that area.

What I enjoyed about the Saracens win was how clinical we were in the opposition 22 - when we got the opportunities, we were patient and scored two crucial tries. Our bench made a fantastic impact in that last 20 minutes, as they have done for a number of weeks now.

Saracens did get some territory after that, but our defence was fierce and kept pushing them back, epitomised by Ruan Ackermann and Tom Hudson holding them up 5 metres from our own line, and the decision from the visitors to take the points and a losing bonus point with the last kick of the game was testament to what we deserved from the game.



We were understandably delighted, but the focus quickly turned to our next challenge, and it was a short week before we travelled up to Newcastle.

It was new for us to go up 48 hours before the game, but the decision to do so really worked. We were able to spend a lot of time together as a squad, socialising together and getting our preparation spot on.

Our performance on Friday was possibly our best of the season to date. We always felt in control, and it was great to see us get the four try bonus point to take maximum points from the game. I still felt at times in the second half we were a little impatient when we had the ball, forcing the passes, so this is an area of improvement moving forward.

Kingston Park is a notoriously difficult place to visit, and the Falcons have played some fantastic rugby this season. So, it was a massive result for us and important for our development as a squad.

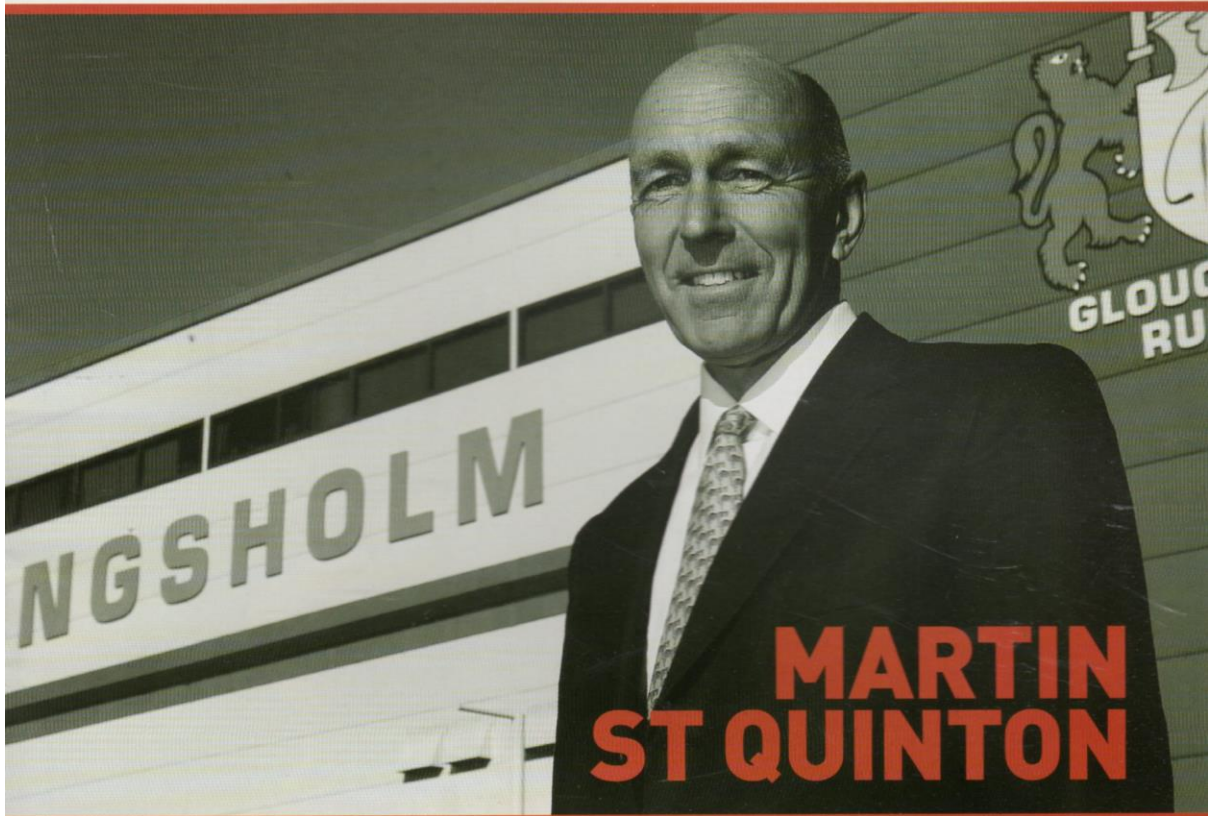
We're back on home soil this weekend, and we're looking forward to what will be a really tough test against London Irish.

In their past two games, they've come so close to beating Bath and Wasps, and will be growing in confidence. It's a big test for us, because we know Irish will come to Kingsholm with nothing to lose and will relish taking us on.

But, the Kingsholm crowd will be a massive factor, and after a few weeks of good rugby, we're excited about continuing that.

Enjoy the game

Willi



MARTIN ST QUINTON

Good afternoon and welcome to Kingsholm for our latest Aviva Premiership fixture. In particular, a very warm welcome to the players, staff and supporters of London Irish.

I'm delighted to be able to write these notes with the team having won their past four Aviva Premiership matches, and five out of the last six games in all competitions. At a time when we have been missing a few players on international duty, and still struggling with a lengthy injury list, it's been a terrific effort from all concerned.

I was particularly impressed with last Friday's win at Newcastle. Kingston Park is always a difficult fixture. The travel involved, if nothing else, makes it the toughest away trip of the season – and we're back there in the Anglo-Welsh Cup in February! When Johan requested that the team travel up to Newcastle 48 hours

before the game, to give the squad more time to get over the coach trip, we were happy to back him and it certainly paid off. It was a fine performance.

That win, and the fantastic result the week before with Saracens, sets us up nicely for the next few rounds of the Premiership. It's good to have climbed the table into the top six, but having worked so hard to achieve that, we know that we have to work equally hard to stay there.

That begins this afternoon against a London Irish side who are battling for every point. Anyone expecting an easy outing today would be mistaken and I know that Johan and the squad will be taking nothing for granted.

There has been plenty of debate this week regarding recruitment and retention with Ross Moriarty confirmed as joining the Dragons. It's always difficult to see a player who has developed through our system then depart for another Club. However, once the WRU made their

recent announcement regarding players with fewer than 60 caps having to play their club rugby in Wales in order to be eligible to represent their country, Ross was always likely to move across the Severn Bridge.

At the end of the season, we will look back on his contributions and wish him well. For now, we are keen to see him return to fitness and perform well in a Gloucester shirt, and I know Ross wants to give it his best.

In terms of contract news, I can confirm that David Humphreys is working incredibly hard on that front and we will be making a number of exciting announcements when the time is right for all concerned.

Please give the team your full support, as you always do.

Enjoy the game

Martin

GOOD AFTERNOON AND I'M DELIGHTED TO WELCOME EVERYONE BACK TO KINGSHOLM TODAY FOR ROUND 10 OF THE AVIVA PREMIERSHIP AGAINST LONDON IRISH.

In my programme notes before the Saracens game, I talked about how we had found a way this year to win close games in the last couple of minutes. That change from the previous couple of seasons was due to a multitude of things – improved fitness, quality of player, greater belief in the style of play and, of course, the Ackermann effect...

More than anything else, Johan has given the players the confidence to go out, enjoy themselves on the pitch, and play for each other. Our style of play, and our ambition to play, will continue to evolve and develop throughout the season. But anyone who has watched our last two wins over Saracens and Newcastle will know that those results were based on an unbelievable defensive effort.

Successful rugby teams are built on a strong set piece and a quality defence and despite one blip away to Sale, our defence has been an outstanding feature of the first nine rounds of the Premiership. Jonny Bell has established a really strong defensive system but, as with the attack, the players have got to believe in what they're doing and enjoy defending. The last 2 weeks have shown that they do!

With four wins in a row against the form teams in the Premiership, we have built up some real confidence and momentum, but today will be another huge challenge for us. Despite their league position, London Irish could easily have won their last two Premiership matches and, as has been proved many times in the past, you have to be at your best to win any Premiership game.

Away from the rugby pitch, it's that time of year again and, as always, there's a lot of speculation and rumour around which players will be joining Gloucester and which players will be leaving.

While we were all disappointed to hear the news last Monday that Ross Moriarty was returning to Wales to play for the Dragons, everyone understands his reasons for doing so.

During his time at Gloucester, Ross has developed into a top quality international player and a player who has given 100% every time he has worn a Gloucester jersey. Due to injury it has been a frustrating start to the season for him, but now that his future has been decided, we're all looking forward to seeing Ross back fit and finishing his Gloucester career on a high.

DAVID HUMPHREYS



A special word of welcome to Nick Kennedy and all the staff, players and supporters from London Irish. Having enjoyed two seasons at Sunbury at the start of the professional era, I was delighted to see them back in the Premiership at the start of the season and, apart from this afternoon, wish them every success for the rest of the season.

Enjoy the game and help us continue our unbeaten run at a loud and intimidating Kingsholm.

Regards

David

GLOUCESTER RUGBY
HERITAGE

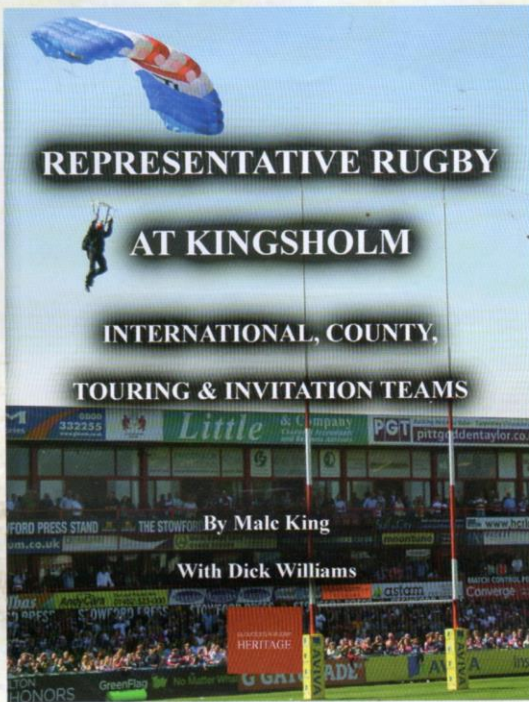
THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR THE KINGSHOLM FAITHFUL

If you enjoyed our book on Kingsholm, then the next Gloucester Rugby Heritage book is due out shortly, and will be on sale at a discounted price in the Club shops at Kingsholm and the Quays. The book launch will be advertised on the Club and GRH websites, and the book should be available on the shelves before Christmas.

The Gloucester Club played their first match at Kingsholm in October 1891. Within a month both International and County Trial matches had been staged on the new ground. It was soon established as a venue regularly favoured by the rugby authorities, and remains so to this day. After England acquired permanent headquarters, Kingsholm was dubbed the "Twickenham of the West".

"Representative Rugby at Kingsholm" records the many matches played over the past 125 years at Gloucester, involving international, county and invitational sides. These teams have

International sides representing 21 different countries have played at Kingsholm – the book will enable you to name them all. Starting with England and Wales in 1900, through several visits by the All Blacks, the WW2 wartime internationals, and fixtures during the 1991 and 2015 Rugby World Cups, all manner of matches are recalled. In addition to full international sides, there have been "A" team, age group and



England v Wales lineout 1900

brought the best rugby players in the world to show off their skills and savour the atmosphere at Kingsholm. Many regard having "I played at Kingsholm" on their CV as one of the highlights of their rugby careers.



New Zealand Haka 1924



schoolboy internationals as well. Details and statistics on every one of these matches are recorded in the book.

For the best part of a century the County match was the big match of the season, with Gloucestershire enjoying unparalleled success. The first County Championship Final staged at Kingsholm was in 1902, a 3-9 loss to Durham, but success soon followed when Yorkshire were defeated 23-0 in the 1910 final. Thereafter, Gloucestershire enjoyed golden periods between the wars, winning three successive Championships in 1920-22 and again in 1930-32.



But perhaps the most persistently successful period came during the fifteen seasons, 1969-84, when Gloucestershire appeared in eight County Championship finals, including seven in succession, and won four of them. These campaigns included many a fine victory at Kingsholm.

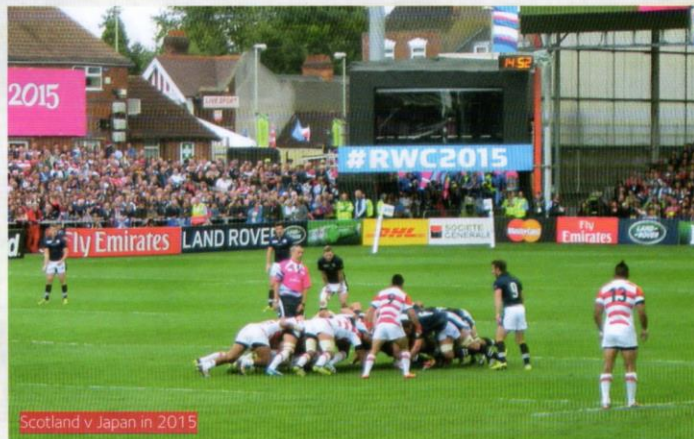
Invitational sides have also been eager to include Kingsholm in their itineraries, for special celebratory games, Barbarians matches, or teams such as the Bosuns or the Irish Wolfhounds. Arguably the strongest side to play at Kingsholm was an International XV assembled by

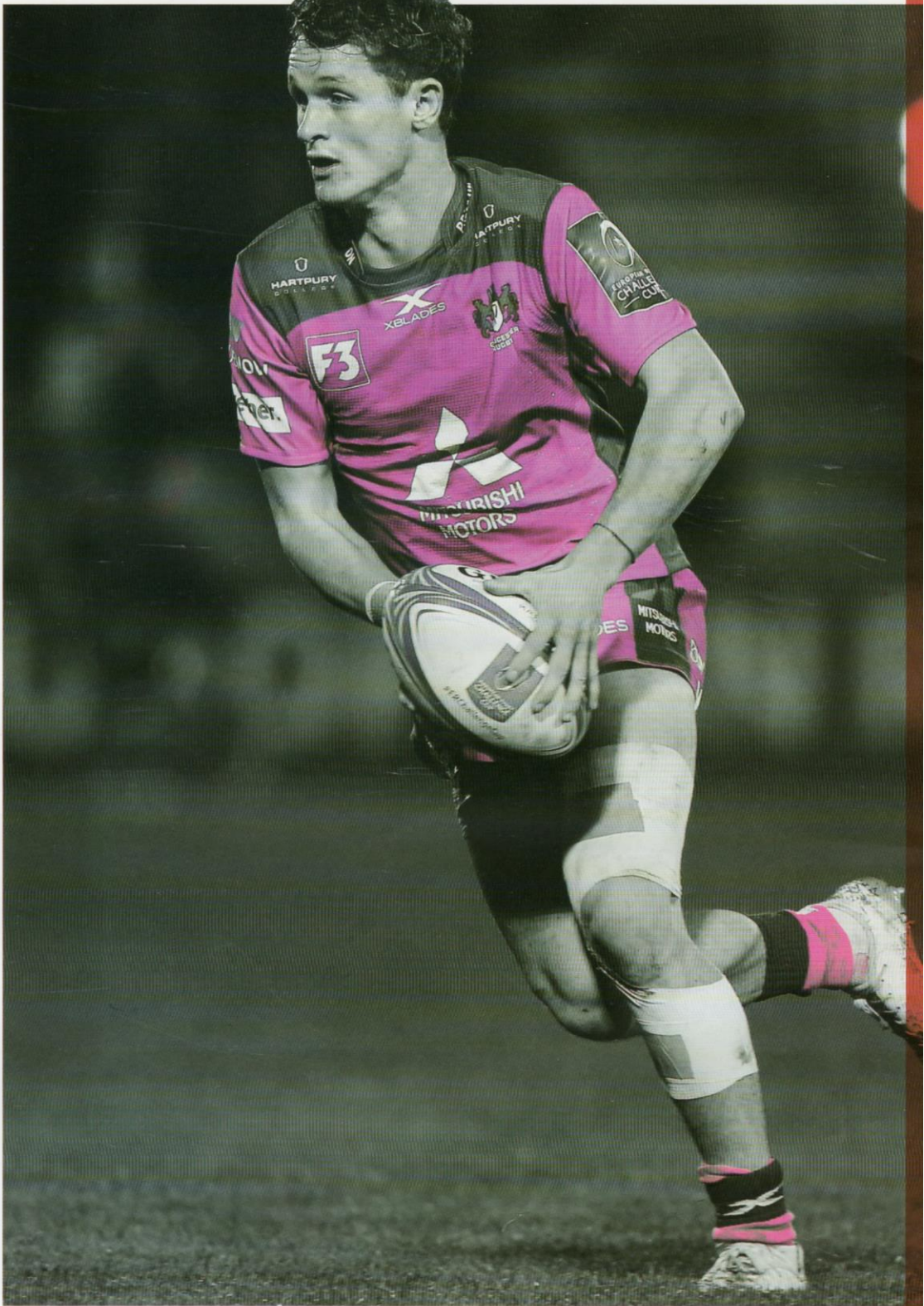


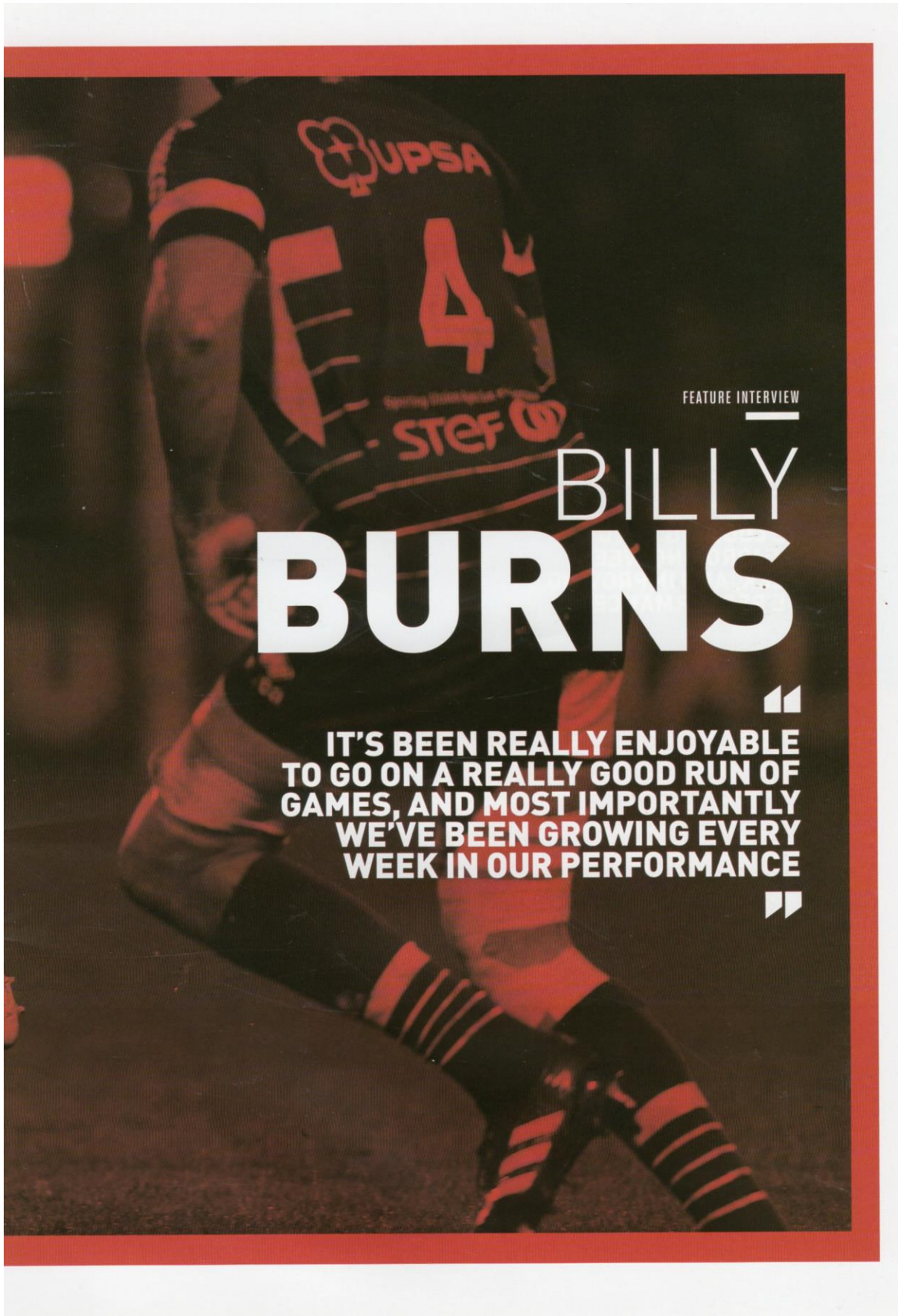
Don Rutherford in 1973 to celebrate the centenary of the Club, when a star-studded team including the likes of Pierre Villepreux, John Dawes and David Duckham performed their magic. Yet Gloucester, led by their fiery captain, Mike Nicholls, rose to the occasion and won a famous victory, 24-14.

This book, richly illustrated, and printed

with a hard cover in large format, presents many facts and figures, but most of all it should serve to bring back memories of great games played by many of the sport's best players on the hallowed turf of Kingsholm. It has been produced by Gloucester Rugby Heritage, a registered charity run by volunteers and supported by Gloucester Rugby and Gloucestershire Archives.







FEATURE INTERVIEW

BILLY BURNS

IT'S BEEN REALLY ENJOYABLE
TO GO ON A REALLY GOOD RUN OF
GAMES, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY
WE'VE BEEN GROWING EVERY
WEEK IN OUR PERFORMANCE



“**WE’RE LOOKING TO JUST KEEP IMPROVING WEEK ON WEEK, AND IMPROVING THESE PERFORMANCES**”

It’s been a good few weeks for Billy Burns in the Cherry and White number ten shirt and, ahead of this weekend’s Round 10 clash with London Irish, the fly half is eager for feet to remain firmly on the ground on a personal and collective level.

Burns was in charge of the Friday night win at Kingston Park, setting up a number of impressive attacking opportunities, as the Cherry and Whites showed a clinical edge to pick up a bonus point win at the home of the early season pace setters.

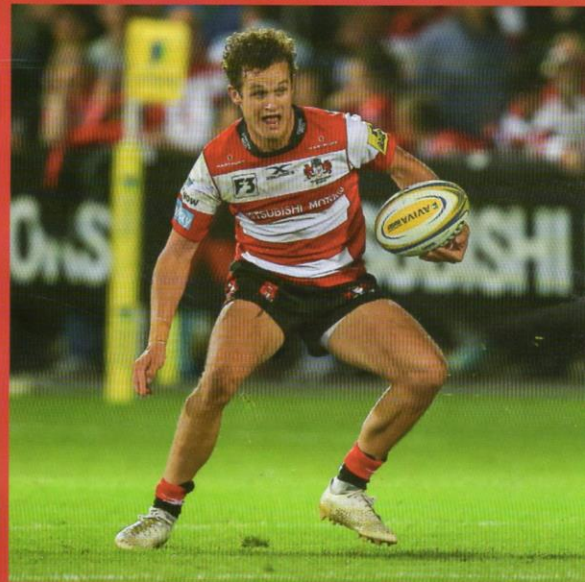
But for Burns, the most important factor is not what has happened, but for what is yet to come.

“It’s been really enjoyable to go on a really good run of games, and most importantly we’ve been growing every week in our performance, and results have been coming off the back of that.

“I saw a stat that said it’s been a while since we won three games in a row in the Aviva Premiership, but we can’t get ahead of ourselves, we know it’s going to be a tough game against London Irish at home.

“They’ve shown really good signs in their recent results. We’re focusing on what we have to do week by week, and go from there.”

A lot of what has impressed about Johan Ackermann’s men is their defence, with Saracens and Newcastle both running into



a committed rearguard, and Burns is enjoying playing his part in the systems.

“I’m loving it actually, a lot of people look at me and think I’m the sort of player that hates defending. Especially this season as



Jonny Bell has given us a good boost to defend.

"We're enjoying being in those battles, and it's all about trying to get the ball, being aggressive, getting off the line and working hard for each other. That's what we have been all about through preseason and the start of the season so far."

The Cherry and Whites went up a day early for last week's win in the North East, and Burns accepts in hindsight how useful this call was.

"It's easy to say after a win of course, but it made a massive difference for us. It's a horrible trip getting up there on a coach, a long old way."

"It was good to get up there early, spend a lot of time together as a team which was nice, and then get the result off the back of it. So, everyone was happy!"

London Irish are the visitors to Kingsholm this weekend, and Nick Kennedy's men have shown plenty of signs in recent weeks of their quality, and Burns knows that this is a good reminder for the Gloucester team to be on their guard throughout.

"We've looked at a lot of Irish's stuff this week, and they've definitely been unlucky in a couple of games and they've played some great stuff. They've got quality individuals, and some great team play throughout."

"It's going to be a tough challenge, and Johan has challenged us to prepare exactly the same as you have to do each week in the Aviva Premiership."

"There's such a fine margin between teams these days, and if you're not on the money one week then you can pay for it. So we're looking to ensure that our house is in order this week, and hopefully that will put us in good stead and hopefully we can get a positive result."



After four Premiership triumphs on the spin, the Cherry and Whites are in a good place, but Burns knows full well the importance of wiping the slate clean each week and repeating the good things.

"Don't get me wrong, we come in on a Monday and the reviews are always a lot better after we've won on the weekend. But we're very much about keeping our feet on the ground."

"As much as you can go on a winning run, you can start losing games even easier. We're looking to just keep improving week on week, and improving these performances."

"We've keen to never take a step back, keep building on that winning run, and keep moving up the table."



KINGSHOLM NEWS

WITH **BOB FENTON**

Come on then, admit it... when Saracens announced their squad the other week you looked at it and thought 'We'll do well to come second tonight...'

And at half time when, restarts excepted, we had hardly got out of our own 22 and we had rattled up about 500 tackles, you said to yourself '... if we can get a losing bonus point tonight we'll have done well...'

But whatever was put into the half time tea worked its wonders. The defensive effort of the first half was matched by a bullying attitude in the second. Ben Vellacott fired up the afterburners when he came on and his pace around the park seemed to unsettle Saracens. His pick up and break – you've all seen it – and Andy Symons' neat little pirouette that left Schalk Berger grasping at thin air galvanised the team and saw us rattle in two quick tries – both worthy of winning any game.

And all that against a Saracens team who were shorn of a few of their top players and were down to their last 27 international stars. Before kick-off I was talking about this with one of the Gloucester management team. We were of the same mind that Saracens could put out two sides through the season and take two places in the top four – and all the time staying under the salary cap – apparently!

Then Newcastle away... I think the last time we had won up in the frozen north east was back in the heady days of Philippe Saint-Andre's tenure, I was working in Edinburgh at the time and travelled down for it – Franck Schisano scored for us – about the only time he did. I wonder whatever became of Franck... I don't have to wonder, actually – he's running his own vineyard, just south of Carcassonne!

So, we travel to this potential banana skin of a match in good spirit and things start off like they did against Saracens – namely that we are getting battered for about 10 minutes. And just like the Saracens game our defence is not just holding, but forcing Newcastle further and further back, before they eventually ran out of options and patience and turned the ball over.



Once on the front foot the pace and power that we have across the whole team saw three quick scores. Sometimes the bounce goes with you but you have to be there to take advantage of it.

That spark going forward is matched by the superbly muscular defence that more than matched just about everything thrown at it. Tom Savage – for so often in the past a one man wrecking ball of a player – has been joined by two similar tackling machines in the form of Messrs Ludlow and Ackermann. Between the three of them they have put the snarl back into the Gloucester Dog of old... The guy from Opta who records all the stats must get repetitive strain injury from constantly clicking on their names during a game!

And now here we are, London Irish... All the pundits and most of the fans will be thinking '...five points for Gloucester...'. But we're playing a team who, less than half way through the season, are fighting for their lives at the foot of the table so let's take nothing for granted

One thing to –hopefully – watch out for will be the two Marshall brothers playing against each other. That's



assuming that our Tom and their James are both fit and selected. That could add some interesting side notes to this particular dish.

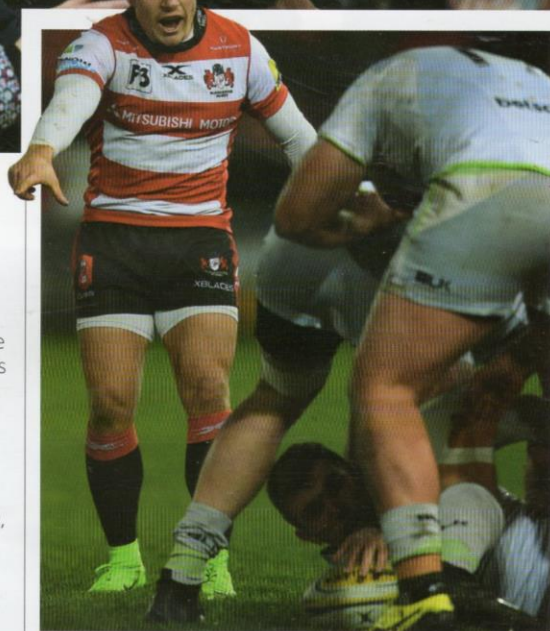
Regular readers of this column over the years will know that I have a bit of a soft spot for the Irish Exiles – they have always produced great rugby playing teams, so I hope they can do enough to stay up and build. Of course, there's nothing down for them today, and we are going to add to their worries, but hopefully they can turn things around in other games over the course of the rest of the season.

In that quiet period between the Saracens and Newcastle matches we had the fun of another 'storm' on social media, it's not worth going into the details of it here, that would serve no purpose.

But it does make me laugh how so many people 'know' something... Just read all the tweets with 'apparently'; 'I'm led to believe' or 'allegedly' tacked into them. Or those people who suggest that something they have 'heard' (i.e. made up) in one message and then confirm it as fact in the next because someone else 'who knows something' has also commented on it.

Everything from people coming and going, player wages, ground improvements – all from things that they have '... heard...'. Stop listening to the voices in your head and get out more would be my advice!

It's always fun to see how many of these invented stories end up in the national press as 'facts' too... It's not that long ago that I bet a mate that I could put a story onto a message board and get it into the national press inside two weeks. A totally invented story with no base in fact



– remember the Johan Goosen to Gloucester story on Shedweb a few years back? I very much enjoyed the cold pint that was my reward after the sports pages of a daily newspaper duly reprinted my fabricated story almost word for word. How does it go, never let the facts get in the way of a good story!

One story that has a bit of a ring of truth about it is that those multi-coloured poachers from TW1 are trying to tempt Henry Trinder to the bright lights of the Stoop. This would not be good news. Henry has been with us for ages now, so this is not a welcome bit of news.

Some free advice from me: don't do it, Henry – I lived in Twickenham for years... It's not all that it's cracked up to be, and here at Holm is much better for you!

RANDALL

on RUGBY



DO YOU REMEMBER THE TIME WHEN MICHAEL SCHUMACHER RETIRED FROM FORMULA 1, OR THE JAMES BOND FILM "SKYFALL" LAUNCHED?

Both were in October 2012, and that was the last time - before last Friday - that Gloucester Rugby recorded four successive Premiership wins.

As Charlie Beckett put it on BBC Radio Gloucestershire's Cherry and White Wednesday, "...there has been a lot of hot and cold in between."

Right now though, and I must credit former prop Nick Wood for spotting this word in a post on social media, Gloucester look invigorated and that energy has in no small part been due to a family link.

While Head Coach Johan Ackermann has become a huge figure in the club in a short time, his son Ruan has been drawing plaudits left, right and centre for his displays in the back row and as the 21 year old me, such a relationship demands ultimate professionalism.

"When I was at the Lions I knew some of the guys quite well so sometimes we would joke about me calling him 'coach' like everyone else.

"If there was a conversation between us, perhaps with just one other coach there, I might call him 'Paps' but my brother and I had a nickname for him which we used regularly which was 'Goe'. It meant it could stop a training drill and ask a question if I wanted to and he'd know who it was from."

"Coming to Gloucester was new for me, but with my father leaving the Lions there could have been a new culture there too.

"Either way it meant change and none of us, including me, knew about him accepting Gloucester's offer until he called a meeting



and told everyone at the same time. It wasn't until about two weeks before the Super Rugby final that he mentioned Gloucester were interested.

"I came over and met David Humphreys after the final, spent a week here and weighed up the move from there. I haven't played for the Springboks yet so it looked a good opportunity and I'm still young enough to potentially go back in the future."

Even having played a full Super Rugby campaign, Ackermann is racking up the minutes for Gloucester this season. His ten appearances include six full games, and three others where he has played an hour or more, but he wouldn't have it any other way.

"You have a responsibility towards your team-mates to deliver your best and your work ethic must never be at fault" Ruan added.

EVEN THE STRONGEST AND MOST SKILFUL PLAYERS MAKE MISTAKES, SO I JUST PRIDE MYSELF ON DOING EXTRA WORK TO MAKE SURE THAT ON THE FIELD I CAN BE AS POSITIVE AS POSSIBLE

"Even the strongest and most skilful players make mistakes, so I just pride myself on doing extra work to make sure that on the field I can be as positive as possible. Sides keep the ball a lot longer here so, whether you are attacking or defending, you need to be alert to deal with, say, ten phases at a time."

London Irish's position in the Premiership has worsened since they came here in the Anglo-Welsh Cup. Back to back wins for Worcester and two home defeats for the Exiles has left them bottom of the table. They have a sprinkling of South Africans in their ranks, so Ruan knows there is a competitive game in prospect.

"Franco van der Merwe played both with and under my father at the Lions so he, in particular, will want to prove a point. They have a few experienced names and a big pack so we must start well early on.

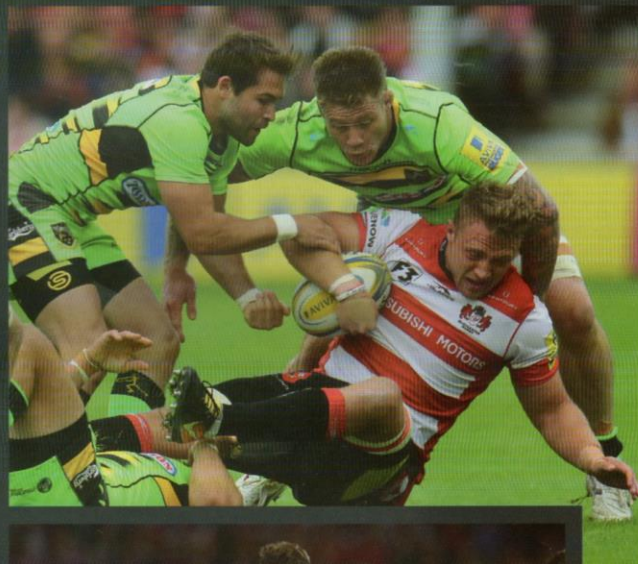
"We put in over 100 tackles in the first half against Saracens and were still mentally and physically fit enough to put our game together and score two tries in the second half. My father always says there is nothing worse than playing a desperate team but with every win we are gaining more confidence."

As we enter the final month before talks can openly take place between players and clubs over contracts for next season, it is inevitable that Gloucester will be linked with potential external signings. In the social media world, the rumours are already circling with another South African back row, Kwagga Smith, among the names being mentioned – a man Ruan Ackermann knows very well.

"He's got a lot of X factor and one of the biggest hearts as a rugby player," he concluded.

"He brings a lot of energy, his loose game is tremendous because of his Sevens skills and he was always one to lift us on the field, not only by the way he played but by what he said."

No wonder he's in demand...





GLOUCESTER RUGBY

47-7

LONDON IRISH

TRIES:

Henry Trinder, Callum Braley, Jeremy Thrush, Val Rapava Ruskin, Jake Polledri, Willi Heinz, Tom Hudson

CONVERSIONS:

Billy Twelvetrees (4), Billy Burns (2)

DATE: Sat 11th Nov 17
KO: 12:30

TRIES:

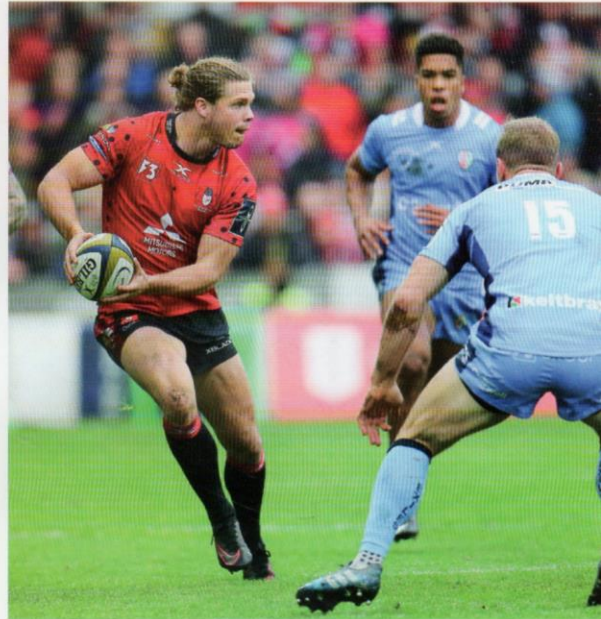
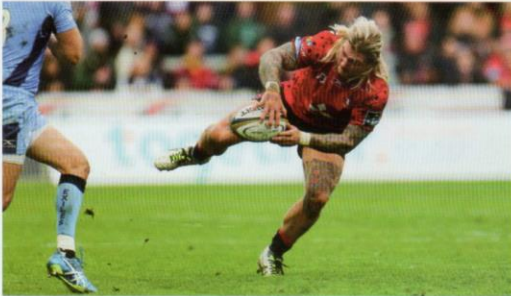
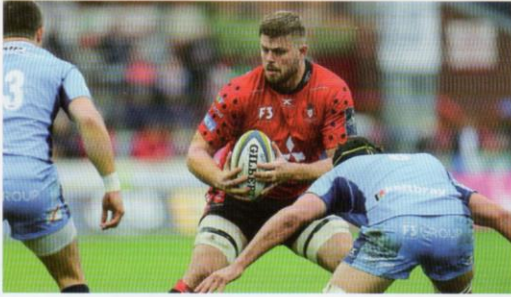
Tom Woolstencroft

CONVERSIONS:

Greig Tonks

ACTION REPLAY





After taking some time to hit their collective stride, Gloucester clinched their first Anglo-Welsh Cup win of 2017-18 with a comprehensive 47-7 victory over London Irish.

After the late 26-24 defeat in the opening round at Leicester the week before, a result that was tough to take having led late on, the win keeps Gloucester in the hunt for a semi-final spot.

The fixture took place on Remembrance Day, and the minute's silence was impeccably observed by the Kingsholm crowd as usual.

In fact, it took the home crowd a while to find their voice, largely because there wasn't that much to shout about. It was a much-changed Gloucester outfit, many of the first team having been given the previous week off, and it took a while for the team to gel again.

Willi Heinz opened the scoring following a quickly taken tap penalty and Val Rapava Ruskin bundled his way over from close range. The half had actually been notable for some dogged Irish resistance but Tom Hudson's try on the stroke of half-time opened up a 19-0 lead.

So it seemed as though all that was left for Gloucester to achieve was to score the fourth try and secure the try-scoring bonus point. However, Irish struck first through Tom Woolstencroft and it took until the hour mark for the Cherry and Whites to achieve their goal.

Jeremy Thrush was the man who scored the vital fourth try and was very quickly followed across the whitewash by Henry Trinder as Irish's valiant resistance started to crumble.

Both teams rang the changes in the final quarter and Gloucester

IT'S MASSIVELY IMPORTANT FOR THE TEAM AND THE CLUB, ESPECIALLY HAVING THE FINAL AT HOME AND I THINK THE TEAM WE PUT OUT TODAY SHOWS WE WANT TO GO OUT AND WIN IT.

WE'VE GOT A GOOD SQUAD, WE'VE GOT GOOD DEPTH. IT WAS SO IMPORTANT TO GET A FIVE-POINTER WITH BATH WINNING IN THE LAST MINUTE LAST NIGHT AND WASPS WINNING AS WELL SO IT'S GOING TO BE A TOUGH POOL.

BACKS COACH TIM TAYLOR

finished the stronger. Callum Braley touched down from close range after an attack from deep, before Jake Polledri finished off a fine break by James Hanson.

Job done for Gloucester who took five points on the day as well as making sure that as many players were as battle hardened as possible for the following Friday's return to Aviva Premiership action against European Champions Saracens.



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

23-17

SARACENS

TRIES:

Ollie Thorley, Tom Hudson

CONVERSIONS:

Billy Twelvetrees (2)

PENALTIES:

Billy Twelvetrees (3)

DATE: Fri 17th Nov 17

KO: 19:45

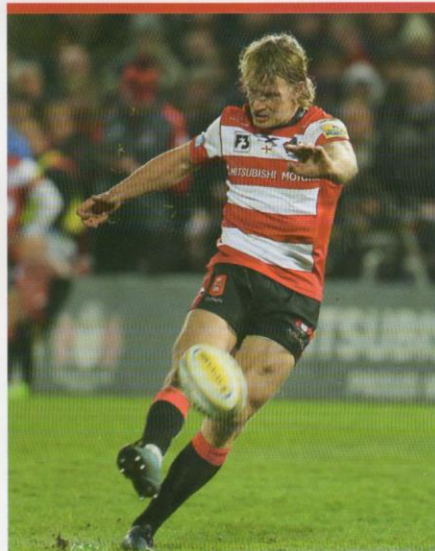
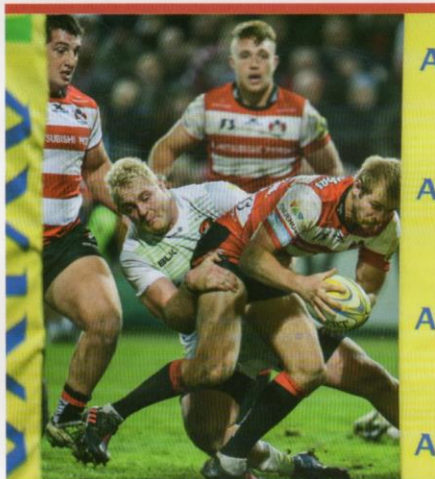
TRIES:

Schalk Brits

PENALTIES:

Ben Spencer, Alex Lozowski (3)

ACTION REPLAY



People often talk about a game of two halves – the 23-17 Aviva Premiership victory over Saracens last time out here at Kingsholm was the perfect example.

The 'Season so Far' programme notes provided by the Men in Black's media team talked at length about the team's new-found attacking prowess – top ranked points scorers, try scorers, clean breaks made and metres made.

However, on the night, it was like watching the Saracens of a few years ago as the visitors delivered a 40 minutes of efficiently pragmatic rugby. Tactical kicking was the order of the day as Gloucester were consistently pinned back in their own half.

In fact, although the Cherry and Whites took an early 3-0 lead, that was once of just a couple of occasions when Gloucester were able to make it into the opposition half as Saracens applied the squeeze.

Gloucester's defence in that first 40 minutes was magnificent and, despite Saracens leading 9-3 at the turnaround, it was actually a moral victory for Gloucester for the game to be that close at half-time.

Even the most ardent Gloucester fan would have been slightly stunned by the nature of the turnaround once the second-half commenced. Having been starved of possession for so long, Gloucester suddenly started to enjoy some ball in hand and made the most of it.

The gap was narrowed by a penalty from Billy Twelvetrees, but a controversial try from Schalk Brits, where there seemed to be more than a hint of blocking, could have been a shattering blow with the score now 14-6 to Saracens.

Twelvetrees slotted his third penalty to keep Gloucester in touch, before the Cherry and Whites hit Saracens with a double try salvo in the space of six minutes.

Firstly, patient build-up play took the action into the Saracens 22 before Billy Burns floated a perfectly-weighted cross-kick for Ollie Thorley to catch and score. And this was followed by great work from the forwards, patiently going through the phases until Tom Hudson powered his way over.

The 6-14 deficit had now become a 23-14 lead, but it was time to defend again for Gloucester. They dodged a bullet when Ben Spencer very nearly wriggled his way to the line but held out valiantly until the game's last kick when Spencer knocked over a penalty to earn his side a losing bonus point.

A memorable win for the Cherry and Whites which took the team, momentarily, into the top 3 of the Aviva Premiership table and had Kingsholm buzzing.



WE ARE DELIGHTED TO GET OVER THE WINNING LINE AS WE SHOWED A LOT OF CHARACTER AND FIGHT TO WIN A MASSIVE CHALLENGE AGAINST A GREAT SIDE.

HOWEVER, WE DON'T WANT TO GET CARRIED AWAY WITH ONE WIN AS WE NEED TO BE MORE CONSISTENT AS WE HAVEN'T TRAVELLED WELL THIS SEASON.

GLoucESTER RUGBY HEAD COACH, JOHAN ACKERMANN





TEAM LINE-UPS



SATURDAY 2 DECEMBER // AVIVA PREMIERSHIP RUGBY // ROUND 10

T P C D		POSITION		T P C D	
		TOM HUDSON 15	FULL BACK	15	JAMES MARSHALL
		HENRY PURDY 14	RIGHT WING	14	JOE COKANASIGA
		ANDY SYMONS 13	OUTSIDE CENTRE	13	FERGUS MULCHRONE
		BILLY TWELVETREES 12	INSIDE CENTRE	12	LUKE McLEAN
		OLLIE THORLEY 11	LEFT WING	11	ALEX LEWINGTON
		BILLY BURNS 10	FLY-HALF	10	TOMMY BELL
		WILLI HEINZ (C) 9	SCRUM-HALF	9	BEN MEEHAN
		JOSH HOHNECK 1	LOOSEHEAD PROP	1	BEN FRANKS
		JAMES HANSON 2	HOOKER	2	DAVID PAICE (C)
		JOHN AFOA 3	TIGHTENED PROP	3	OLLIE HOSKINS
		TOM SAVAGE 4	LOCK	4	FRANCO VAN DER MERWE
		ED SLATER 5	LOCK	5	TEOFILO PAULO
		JAKE POLLEDRI 6	BLINDSIDE FLANKER	6	MIKE COMAN
		LEWIS LUDLOW 7	OPENSIDE FLANKER	7	MAXNORTHCOTE-GREEN
		RUAN ACKERMANN 8	NUMBER 8	8	BLAIR COWAN
REPLACEMENTS		MATCH OFFICIALS		REPLACEMENTS	
		RICHARD HIBBARD 16	REFEREE Ian Tempest	16	TOM WOOLSTENCROFT
		PADDY MCALLISTER 17	ASSISTANT REFEREES Jack Makepeace & Philip Watters	17	HARRY ELRINGTON
		GARETH DENMAN 18	TMO Sean Davey	18	PETRUS DU PLESSIS
		JEREMY THRUSH 19	CITING COMMISSIONER Dave Guyan	19	SEBASTIAN DE CHAVES
		FREDDIE CLARKE 20		20	CONOR GILSENAN
		BEN VELLACOTT 21		21	SCOTT STEELE
		MATT SCOTT 22		22	GREIG TONKS
		MARK ATKINSON 23		23	TOM FOWLIE