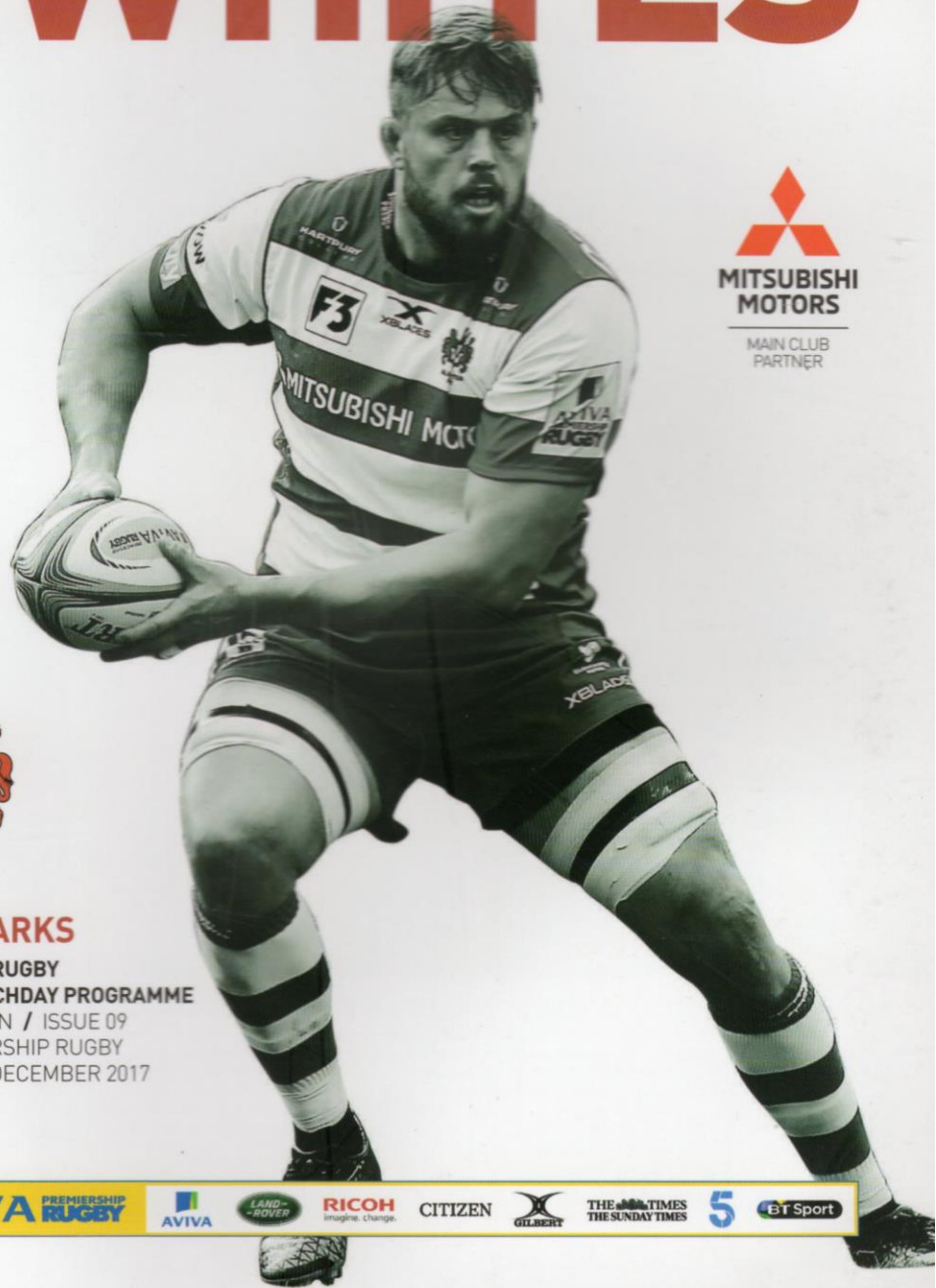


# CHERRY & WHITES



  
**MITSUBISHI  
MOTORS**  
MAIN CLUB  
PARTNER



## V SALE SHARKS

**GLOUCESTER RUGBY  
OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME**  
2017/18 SEASON / ISSUE 09  
AVIVA PREMIERSHIP RUGBY  
SATURDAY 30 DECEMBER 2017  
KO 15.00 / £3

 **AVIVA** PREMIERSHIP RUGBY

 AVIVA

 LAND-ROVER

 RICOH  
Imagine. change.

CITIZEN

 GELLICORE

THE SUNDAY TIMES  
THE SUNDAY TIMES

5

 BT Sport

CAPTAIN'S CORNER

# WILLI HEINZ

GOOD AFTERNOON AND WELCOME BACK TO KINGSHOLM FOR THE FINAL TIME THIS YEAR. I HOPE EVERYONE HAS ENJOYED A FANTASTIC CHRISTMAS WITH THEIR LOVED ONES.

I'm often asked, as a professional sportsman, just how much we can enjoy Christmas taking into account training and matches. Well, we still enjoy it, we get a couple of days off to relax but we just can't go too overboard on the food and drink!

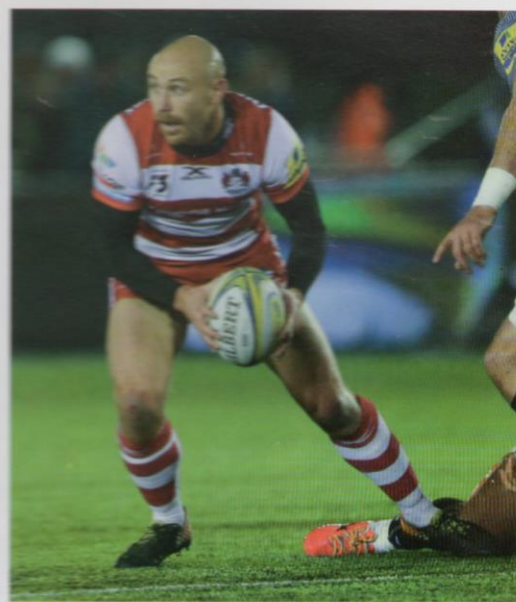
We were back in training on Boxing Day, for example, working hard to prepare for what is going to be a very tough game today against the Sale Sharks.

We reported for training earlier this week, determined to bounce back after the disappointment of losing at Wasps last weekend, a game which we let slip after a positive first 40 minutes.

We weren't perfect in the first half, far from it, but we played some pretty good stuff in that first 40, and scored some good tries against a very good Wasps side. It's easy to say with the benefit of hindsight that, if we'd made the most of a good scoring opportunity at the start of the second half, we could well have gone on to win the game.

The game turned on a few key moments, the try against the run of play from Thomas Young the notable one. Our ill-discipline for the next 10 minutes after this try allowed Wasps to stretch their lead and we never really got ourselves back into the game. Wasps punished us for some sloppy play which blew the scoreline right open.

It did serve as a reminder though of the standards that are required to compete at the top level. We came into the game on the back



of some good form, but you can't afford for your standards to dip even for a short period and expect to win.

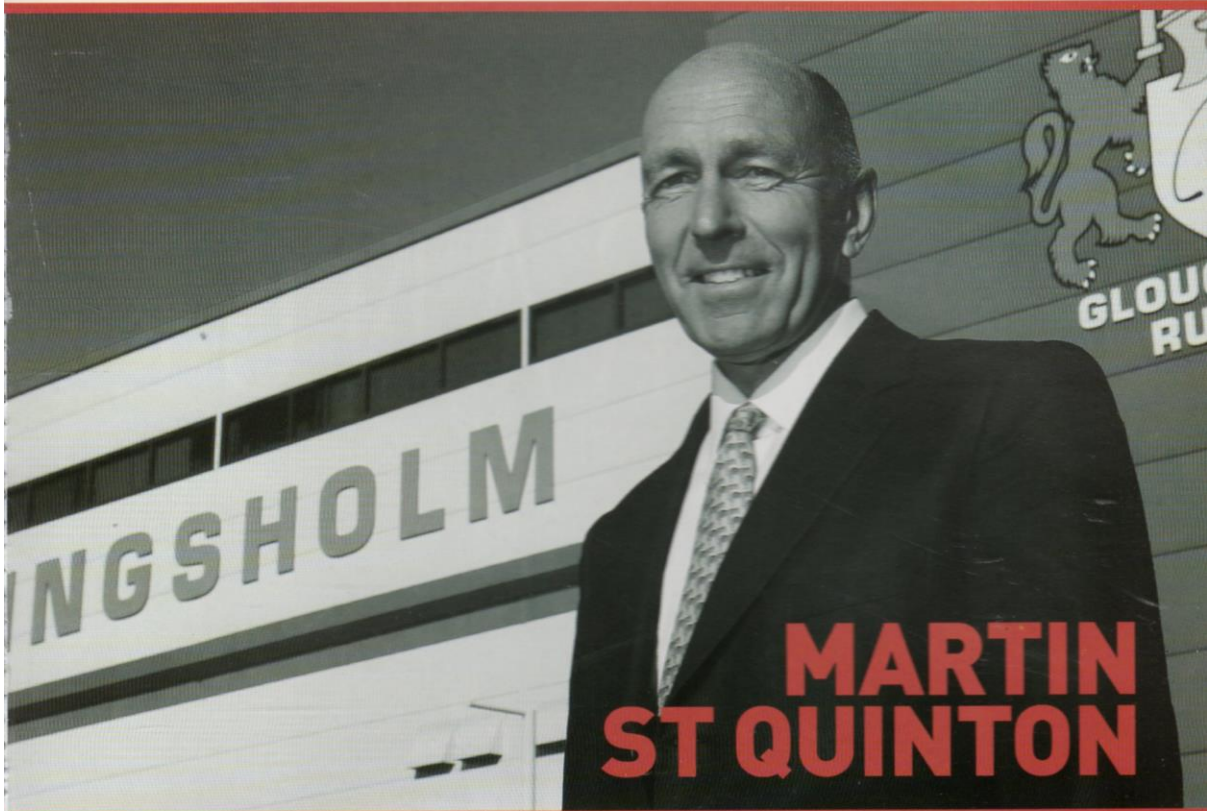
It's something we've spoken about this week and we know from bitter experience earlier this season that, if we make errors, then Sale will pounce on them. They scored three interception tries that night and we can't do that again.

One thing that has given us a real boost this week is the news that today's game is a sell-out. Kingsholm is always a fantastic stadium to play at, the support is second to none. However, when it's full, it goes to another level and we can't wait for kick-off.

I'd just like to wish everyone a Happy New Year, thanks for all your support this season and we'll be giving everything to sign off 2017 in style.

Enjoy the game!

*Willi*



## MARTIN ST QUINTON

**G**ood afternoon and welcome to Kingsholm for the latest round of Aviva Premiership Rugby.

In particular, a very warm welcome to the players, staff and supporters of Sale Sharks.

I have to admit, I'm amazed these are the final set of programme notes that I will pen in 2017 – the last 12 months have flown by. As always, it's been an eventful year in the life of Gloucester Rugby! It is only when you sit down and reflect, you appreciate quite how much has been achieved.

I do feel that we have made real progress on and off the field, and that we enter 2018 in good shape and well positioned to press on and secure a place in next year's Champions Cup, and possibly, a spot in the end of season play-offs.

It is an appropriate moment to take stock as we are exactly halfway through the Premiership season. A record of seven victories from eleven matches is a decent return, and we obviously hope to maintain our recent good record in Europe, and make the knock-out stages.

However, as Johan Ackermann has been keen to point out in his recent media interviews, there is a lot of work ahead and we've achieved nothing yet, but the squad is well prepared and keen to do well. If you had read the number of pre-season predictions by the pundits, we were largely written off before any rugby had been played. So, to be competing well at the top level and beating some of the so called big names has been gratifying.

We need to build on these foundations, and I feel that we are in a good position to do so. We announced in the run-up to Christmas that David Humphreys, Jonny Bell and Tim Taylor had signed new contracts and we have retained the services of a number of key players

for next season and beyond. Just as importantly, we have seen some excellent performances from some of our younger squad members which reflects well on the ongoing work of the Academy and augurs well for the future.

I'm incredibly excited about what lies ahead in 2018 and I hope you all share that sentiment – the fact that we had sold out today's game a couple of weeks in advance, and that so many of you have already renewed your Club Memberships, would suggest so.

I would like to finish by thanking you all for your ongoing support. We've had ups and downs this year, but the backing from the Gloucester Rugby family has always been there and that is something everyone at the Club appreciates and never takes for granted.

Happy New Year, and let's hope 2018 is a great year for Glos.

*Martin*

GOOD AFTERNOON AND I'M DELIGHTED TO WELCOME EVERYONE BACK TO KINGSHOLM TODAY FOR ROUND 12 OF THE AVIVA PREMIERSHIP AGAINST SALE SHARKS AND OUR FINAL FIXTURE OF 2017. I HOPE EVERYONE HAS ENJOYED THEMSELVES OVER THE FESTIVE PERIOD.

**2** 017 has been quite some year at Gloucester Rugby, eventful to say the least! It's not always been easy, we've been through some tough times and I think we've all learned a lot about ourselves in the process. But I genuinely believe that, as a group, we're stronger for the experience.

We didn't finish last season as we would have wanted. We desperately wanted to lift that trophy in Edinburgh and qualify for the Champions Cup. But, disappointed as we were on that evening, we returned full of enthusiasm for the next chapter under Johan.

We worked hard over the summer to make sure that everything was in place for his arrival, and it's credit to everyone at the club where we find ourselves now as we head into 2018, especially as Johan only arrived literally days before our first preseason friendly.

We often talk about rugby being a game of small margins, and last year we lost so many matches late on. This year, we've been finishing on the right side of those narrow outcomes. That's not down to luck, that's down to the hard work we did in preseason to get fitter and mentally stronger and the impact made by a number of new players who have strengthened the squad.

To be successful at the top level, you need to have real depth. And that's really been shown over the first few months of this season when we've had to manage for long periods without the likes of Fraser Balmain, Tom Marshall, Ben Morgan, Ross Moriarty, Charlie Sharples and Jason Woodward.

For us to currently be in the top four, despite missing those senior players, shows the importance of the squad and also how much some of younger players have stepped up and performed when called upon.

So, there have been challenges, but I think the last six months have seen us on an upward curve, playing a new style of rugby and entering the New Year with real optimism for the future.

We were disappointed with the outcome last week at

# DAVID HUMPHREYS



Wasps. We went there full of confidence and, for an hour, there was nothing in it. But, going back to small margins, one try changed the momentum of the game.

But it shows just how far we've come that we played some really good rugby against a quality side like Wasps, scored four tries yet are still disappointed to come away with just the one point.

At the same time, it showed us that we can't afford to fall below the standards we set ourselves for even a short period of time at this level, something we'll be conscious of today against a very good Sale side.

Enjoy the game and I hope you can create a loud and intimidating Kingsholm today and help us to maintain our unbeaten home run this season.

Regards

*David*

GLoucester RUGBY  
HERITAGE



**GLoucester  
RUGBY**

**SEASON 2006-07**

Captain Marco Bortolami

**Played** 33

**Won** 21

**Lost** 10

**Drawn** 2

**For** 531

**Against** 404

**PREMIERSHIP**

**Played** 22

**Won** 15

**Lost** 5

**Drawn** 2

**For** 531

**Against** 404

**Position** 1st



**T**his was an outstanding season, with the Cherry and Whites topping the Premiership by points difference from Leicester. Dean Ryan was Head Coach, and under the dynamic captaincy of Marco Bortolami, the Italian international, who had joined the club from Narbonne, the team only lost one game at Kingsholm, to Agen in the Heineken Cup. Hopes were therefore high when the Premiership Final was played against Leicester. That game was a disaster as Alesana Tuiilagi ran over or through Gloucester tacklers to score two tries as Leicester triumphed 44-16.

Gloucester had dynamic backs in fly-half

Ryan Lamb, centre Anthony Allen, who won two England caps in the autumn, full-back Olly Morgan, capped twice in the Six Nations and wing James Simpson-Daniel, which could tear sides to pieces. Bristol were defeated 63-25 in the EDF Cup, Sale 44-24 in the league and Saracens 50-9 in the Premiership semi-final. In the forwards Andy Hazell was the Premiership's top tackler, and Peter Buxton was a tower of strength in the back-row. Another Italian, Carlos Nieto arrived from Viadana, and together with Nick Wood and Ollie Azam formed an outstanding front-row.

Gloucester's Heineken Cup campaign was spoilt by defeats in the first two rounds to Leinster away and Agen at home. Back-



to-back wins over Edinburgh brought the team back into contention, but the need to win at Agen proved too much and the game was lost 18-26. However, the best was left till last as Leinster, the group winners, were beaten at Kingsholm 19-13 in a fine performance, tries being scored by Christian Califano and Mark Foster, plus a penalty try. Willie Walker and Ryan Lamb kicked conversions.

The Premiership campaign got off to a flying start with seven wins and a draw (at Leicester), with notable victories away to Harlequins 31-21, and home wins against Bath, Northampton, Saracens and Wasps. The first defeat was 12-14 at Bristol to a last-minute drop goal. There then followed a familiar

pattern for Gloucester of winning at Kingsholm, but losing on the road, until a 7-5 win at Northampton proved to be one more nail in the Saints coffin, as they were relegated at the end of the season. Next game Leicester were beaten 28-24 at Kingsholm, with Willie Walker kicking six penalties on top of tries from Andy Hazell and Peter Richards. Gloucester's final "home" game was played at Ashton Gate, Bristol, due to the demolition of the old stand at Kingsholm. But no matter the Cherry and Whites won 35-13. However, the highly talented James Forrester was injured and it proved to be the end of his career. This was a tragedy, both for James and the club.

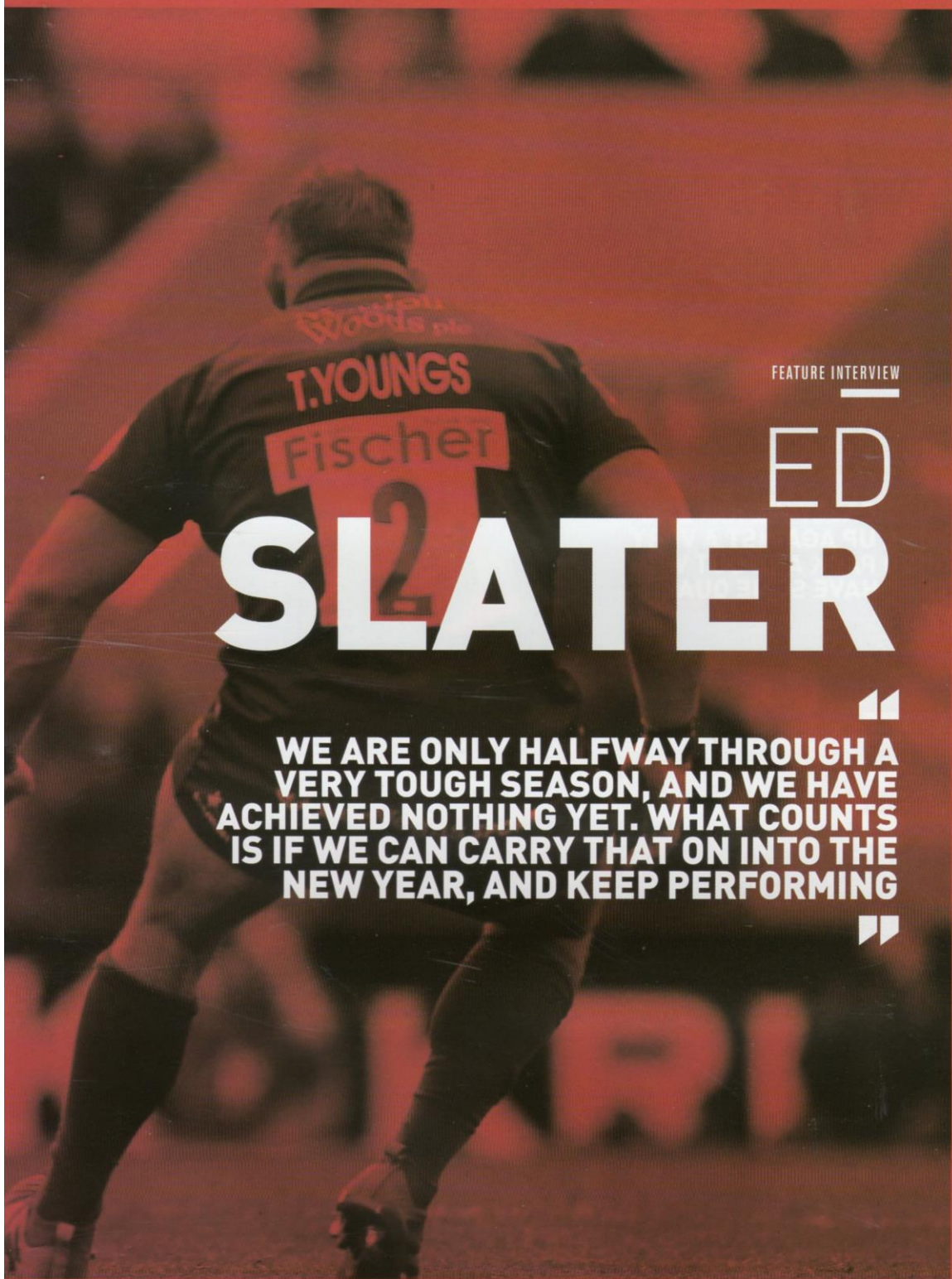
Only Saracens now stood between

Gloucester and the Premiership final. Sarries were overwhelmed 50-9 at Kingsholm. Gloucester scored seven tries through Peter Richards, Luke Narryway, Anthony Allen, Mark Foster, Andy Hazell, Christian Califano, plus another penalty try. Willie Walker kicked six conversions, and a penalty.

The team travelled full of hope to Twickenham for the final, but Leicester and Tuilagi were unstoppable and full value for their win. Gloucester could only muster one try from Ryan Lamb, and Willie Walker kicked three penalties and a conversion.

The following season, Gloucester would again top the table, only to lose in the semi-final, again to Leicester.





FEATURE INTERVIEW

ED

# SLATER

“ WE ARE ONLY HALFWAY THROUGH A VERY TOUGH SEASON, AND WE HAVE ACHIEVED NOTHING YET. WHAT COUNTS IS IF WE CAN CARRY THAT ON INTO THE NEW YEAR, AND KEEP PERFORMING

”





“**PHYSICALLY WE HAVE TO TURN UP AGAINST A VERY GOOD PACK AND OUT WIDE THEY HAVE SOME QUALITY**”

**E**d Slater arrived at Gloucester late this summer, having started preseason training with the Leicester Tigers. But he has been quick to make up for lost time. The experienced operator had been on the radar of the Cherry and Whites for some time, and he made his impact early on at the club with a number of hugely important contributions.

The summer move happened so quickly that Slater had little time to get used to his new surroundings, but the second row has been finding his feet in style in Gloucestershire.

“I’ve been feeling very settled in the area, and my family moved down from Leicester just before Christmas which was obviously good timing.

“They’ve moved down to Gloucestershire which is a beautiful part of the country, and we’re looking forward to exploring all over the county. The area has a lot to offer me and my young family and we’re excited about that.

“As far as the club is concerned, I’ve been here a few months, and I’ve loved it. I was welcomed by the players really well when I first arrived, and I was straight into a camp in Portugal which was a great way to get to know the players and staff at the club.

“Now we’re a fair few games into the season, there’s hopefully a bit of respect from playing and doing my bit, building

relationships between myself and a number of other players.

“There’s now plenty of work for me still to do on a personal level - it’s a new club, a new environment and I feel that I’ve got plenty still to offer as a player, where I can improve in some areas of the game. Physically I’m aiming to really get back to my best and contribute to what is a great club, and a great group of players.”

The opening night win over Exeter Chiefs sparked joyous scenes at Kingsholm, but the following results brought the Cherry and Whites back to earth with a bump, and Slater points to these moments as key to the journey that the squad are only just embarking on.

“I think the early season inconsistencies could be down to a few things - a new coach has come in, and there are a few new faces across the pitch, and we were just trying to work out what kind of game we were wanting to play. To be fair, Johan has put that responsibility on us as players, and moving on from a few of the early results, you can see how our game has changed.

“We have become very comfortable with each other, which has been proved with a number of the results, and we have had players putting their hands up and playing very well for us. We’re still in the early stages, and looking at every game, there are certainly areas where we can improve.

“If we’re going to get to being a top side, we have to be able



to perform away from Kingsholm too, and that is probably the most frustrating aspect of the Wasps game. We had it in our hands, and I think we let that slip as opposed to Wasps being the better side. That's where I see where we are at the moment."

Slater moved to Kingsholm following several seasons of strong domestic showings at Welford Road, and he is keen to impart his experiences on his Cherry and White team mates come the business end of the campaign.

"I think from my experience, the back end of the season is the most crucial. During my time at Leicester, perhaps we didn't get off to the best of starts, but we made sure that we finished as best as we could. That is what got us into the play-offs however many years in a row.

"We are only halfway through a very tough season, and we have achieved nothing yet. What counts is if we can carry that on into the New Year, and keep performing, and trying as hard as possible to close out games. That is the most important thing for me.

"There is no noise about finishing in the play offs at all, we're in the old cliché of taking it game by game, week by week, and if you are to finish anywhere near that top four, you have to be finishing the season well. There are teams that have done well and then faded away. There's a lot of senior guys in our squad to ensure the right messages are passed through the team.

"It doesn't matter if you beat Saracens at home in November, what counts at the end of the season is the closing stages. We've got to make sure that we keep continuing to work

week by week and not just being happy with the odd big wins. We can't be happy with that, and we have to be focused on pushing our expectations of each other."

The Gloucester back row has impressed in the early parts of the season, and Slater is full of praise for the young guns behind him in the scrum.

"It's exciting to see some of the prospects in that back row unit. Jake Polledri has had a big impact and if he can continue that form and be consistent he has all the attributes to be a successful player. We talk about Freddie Clarke who reads the game very well as a back rower, and has the natural ball skills to play across the back five.

"I've been massively impressed with Lewis Ludlow, his work rate is phenomenal and up there with a lot of players that I have played with and against. His effort and tackle count is fantastic at seven, he reminds me of a Lewis Moody with his work round the field, hitting everything and getting around the field..

"Ruan has been a big physical influence, he's a calming presence added to his Super Rugby experience. These guys have impressed and we still haven't seen much from Ben Morgan and Ross Moriarty. They're two players that when I signed I was massively excited to play alongside, and there's a lot still to come this season from both Ben and Ross in what has been a strong area for us."

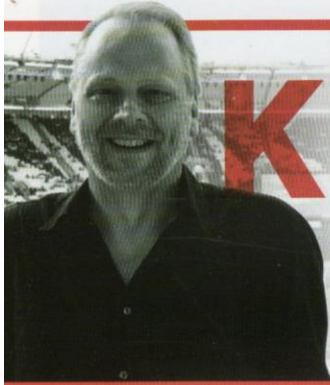
And with Sale Sharks at Kingsholm to bring 2017 to an end, Slater says the 'revenge' word is nowhere near the lips of the side.

"I don't think revenge comes anywhere close. If you go chasing things like that, you can go off your game. It's not something we think about, and this week especially we have to put in a performance off the back of the result at Wasps last weekend.

"That's where we have to perform. Sale are in form and they're a difficult team to play against, especially having beaten Bath so well last time out. We had 70% possession at Sale earlier in the season, and lost the way we did, so what that tells you is we made too many mistakes and we have to manage the game better.

"We have to ensure we're winning collisions with the ball, and if we manage territory well, we can cause some damage. Physically we have to turn up against a very good pack and out wide they have some quality."





# KINGSHOLM NEWS

WITH **BOB FENTON**

**W**elcome back, I hope all our readers had an excellent Christmas and are ready for a spectacular New Year.

Reflection time... Hand on heart, how many of us thought that we would be sat comfortably in the top end of the table with a 100 per cent home run and a few excellent away victories under our belts?

How many people felt that after the first round of Premiership games that it was going to be a very long season?

How many people would have thought that as we went into the Christmas fixtures we would be sitting on a record of nine back to back wins?

I'm going to hazard a guess that pretty much everyone had some dark thoughts about what this term was going to be like. But isn't it great to have – so far – been proved so wrong?

The dismal performance at Sale in September when every shred of luck that could have left us packed its bags and hopped over to the opposition has, in a weird way, seemed to galvanise the team and since then – the reverse in Pau apart – things have picked up massively.

Well until last Saturday when the wheels came off a bit up in Coventry. Even though the score line looked bad, I really don't think that was a fair reflection of the game, it was far more even than that. Wasps capitalised on little mistakes as we tried to chase the game, but at the end of the day the score line doesn't lie.

And all that achieved with an injury list that has our treatment room looking more like a scene from M\*A\*S\*H (younger readers look it up on the internet). I don't know what magic Johan has brought into the club, but it's unrecognisable from not that many months ago. Players seem happier – I guess winning does that for you – but more than that, it's the style and panache that we are seeing week in and week out.

Not so long ago barely a handful of supporters would have



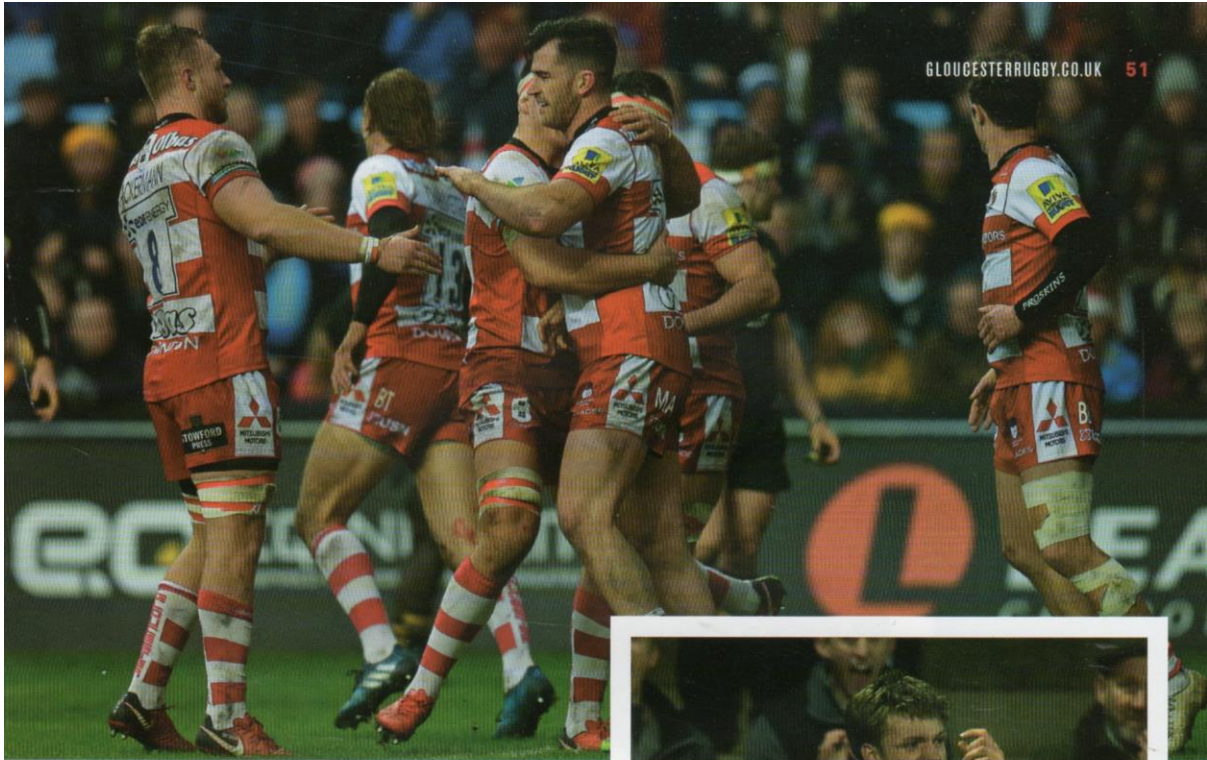
heard of the likes of Freddie Clarke or Jake Polledri – now we see their names on the team sheet and think 'Great – solid, exciting, young guys ready to set the house on fire'. No weakness there and it's great to see them stepping up and grabbing their opportunities.

The icing on the cake for me came in December when an otherwise dull Wednesday turned into a day of huge celebration as a whole flurry of players put their names to new contracts at the club.

It got to the point where the productivity levels of companies across Gloucester slumped as fans could not do anything other than constantly refresh their Twitter accounts to see who the latest to pledge their future to the cause would be.

Not to be outdone, David Humphreys opted to stay put – another great result, stability is key and what we are building here is going to be something wonderful.

Of course, I claim total responsibility for Henry Trinder signing on again, he clearly headed my advice in the last programme that, living in Twickenham is not all that it is



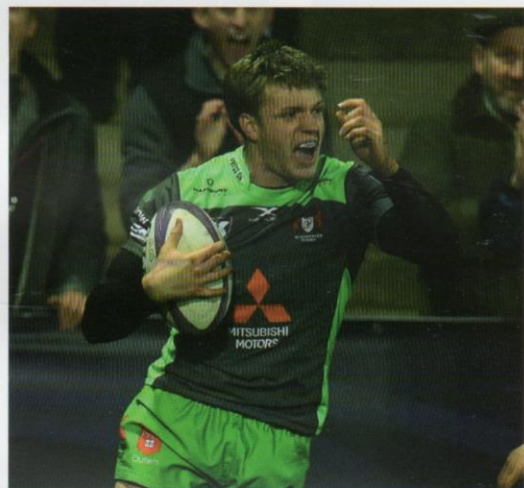
cracked up to be, and stayed here in Gloucestershire.

The following week James 'Chibba' Hanson realised that this was the place to be and opted to stay in the sunny uplands of Gloucester and not go back to Australia. He's a bloke with a massive Gloucester future ahead of him, as my wise and zen like buddy Justin has pointed out, he has shades of Schalk Brits about him, and for me you couldn't offer higher praise. Has to be said though, he's got more shades of Cut Throat Jake from Captain Pugwash about him... (Younger readers – back to the internet!)

Some stay, some go. I think every Gloucester fan was more than a little sad when Richard Hibbard announced that he would be heading back over the bridge to keep Ross Moriarty company at Newport come the end of the season.

What an absolute warrior that bloke is, he has to be up there with some of the all-time great signings that we have made: never less than 100 per cent, never a backward step. When Richard announced his departure, he said that he '...liked to make an impression on the shirt...' – I think he's made a bigger impression on some opposition players who were either silly enough to run down his channel or tried to stop him in full flight!

So today then, a chance to get a little pay back for that result in September. We can dream of pasting 50+ points on Sale but I really don't think that's going to happen, they are far too good a team for that. And if you were a Sale player would you want to go back into the changing rooms and face the very scary Steve Diamond if that had just happened? I think I'd walk back to Manchester in my socks rather than do that.



He does attract a bit of 'bad press', does Mr D, but I have to say that I do have a sneaking respect for him. He obviously cares hugely about his team and is not afraid to say what is on his mind, especially when the adrenalin is pumping just after a game.

He got into a bit of trouble the other day for some comments about a referee, but let's be honest – we've all said worse. And, if he is going to be asked his opinion minutes after just losing a game to a bit of a dodgy decision, he's surely got every right to answer. I hope he's got a face like he's chewing a wasp come interview time today though! I also hope he doesn't know where to find me if he wants to discuss that last comment too.

All that leaves me to do now is to take us back to where we started and to wish everyone a fantastic New Year. Let's hope for a re-run of the first half of the season to take us up to May – who knows where this train is going to take us – sit back and enjoy the ride.

# RANDALL

## on RUGBY



AS WE TURN THE CORNER INTO 2018, GLOUCESTER EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO SALE, WHO ARRIVE AT KINGSHOLM FOR THIS SELL OUT FIXTURE HAVING UNCEREMONIOUSLY DUMPED BATH ON THEIR BACKSIDES LAST SATURDAY.

**T**he Sharks don't always travel well, but they have ability that should be respected today. As all the Premiership sides have now played each other once, it seemed an appropriate time to assess whose half term report might receive a decent grade and whose might not.

And who better to share those thoughts with than Andrew Pugh, the voice you will regularly hear describing Gloucester's matches on BBC Radio Gloucestershire here at Kingsholm, in Parma and all points in between.

### BATH

I'm not sure they have kicked on that much from last season, partly due to international calls during the autumn. Rokodunguri remains a lethal finisher in space, but their home form has been poor with just two victories, Gloucester being among the sides to win there. They should be in the top half but possibly not in the top four.

### EXETER

The Chiefs look back to their well drilled selves, with their organisation and patient phase play clinically effective, and Sam Simmonds has added some zip to their back row. With a good buffer at the moment they must be strong favourites to finish top and I can see them winning the play offs as well.

### HARLEQUINS

By contrast to Exeter, 'Quins season has spluttered because they are not competitive enough up front. Injuries have ravaged John Kingston's options, and consequently a lot of pressure has been put on the fledgling talent that is Marcus Smith, even with the excellent Danny Care as his half back partner. A bottom half finish appears their likely prospect.

### LEICESTER

Tigers have the fire power - Jonny May has prospered after his summer move - but their pack doesn't quite dominate like

it used to and the defeat to Saracens on Christmas Eve, on top of a surprise loss to Worcester, has given them ground to make up. That said, nothing would surprise me less than to see them force their way into the top four.

### LONDON IRISH

It's hard to see anything other than an immediate return to the Championship for the Exiles, whose performances have regularly come up short since that win over Harlequins in their first fixture. Some of their better players could be cherry picked by other clubs if they go down, but at least in that scenario there would be no play-offs to worry about when chasing a return in 12 months time.

### NEWCASTLE

The Falcons started the season really well but have faded back to where we are used to seeing them in the table. Dean Richards' blending of the squad has become gradually more cosmopolitan each season, and Takulua, Sinoti and Socino give

“  
**AN INJURY FREE  
 RUN DURING THE SIX  
 NATIONS COULD YET  
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 BUT A TOP SIX  
 FINISH LOOKS WELL  
 WITHIN THE SQUAD'S  
 COMPASS**  
 ”



the side a flair that means they are no longer relegation fodder. In the bottom half, but well clear of trouble.

#### **NORTHAMPTON**

Gloucester go to Franklins Gardens next Saturday with the Saints having an awful time. Jim Malinder's departure has left Alan Dickens and Dorian West in charge, with West under fire for the performance of the Northampton pack. There looks to be an extensive rebuild to do, and I can only see a finish in the bottom half and Challenge Cup rugby next season.

#### **SALE**

Today's visitors have not been the same sum of their parts on a consistent basis since beating Gloucester in September. As with 'Quins and to a lesser extent Leicester, the platform isn't always there for de Klerk, O'Connor and Solomona to showcase their skills, so it's likely to be a second successive season in lower mid-table.

#### **SARACENS**

It was hard to explain their recent run of six straight defeats in all competitions, and their response has been predictably strong. Some of their stars are getting older but Alex Goode remains the best footballing full back in the Premiership and with their full side out they will surely be in the first four.

#### **WORCESTER**

There is immediate change due at Sixways, with Allan Solomons taking over as Director of Rugby next week from Gary Gold,

who is off to the USA. Now with a 10 point cushion over London Irish, Francois Hougaard remains their stand out player, and Solomons' challenge will be to retain the club's younger talent and recruit well enough to hold off, in all probability, Bristol next season. Likely to finish 11th.

#### **WASPS**

On paper a tremendous team, and on occasion (last Saturday included) deadly in attack with Cipriani as conductor. Stumbled during the autumn, and international calls will surely hit them again during the Six Nations. Perhaps the most difficult one to predict, but certainly in the top six with the potential to make the play offs.

And finally...

#### **GLOUCESTER**

The most improved side in the Premiership, with so much of that down to Johan Ackermann, despite his arrival close to the start of the season. He has shown faith in youth - not just his own son, but Polledri, Ludlow, Clarke and Thorley to name but four - and instilled confidence in players who previously appeared to lack it. The defence has been ferocious in most of the matches and the game plan has been more expansive. An injury free run during the Six Nations could yet see a sustained top four challenge but a top six finish looks well within the squad's compass.

Happy 2018!



**ZEBRE  
RUGBY**

**26-33**

**GLOUCESTER  
RUGBY**

**TRIES:**

Johan Meyer, Renato Giammarioli,  
Tommaso Boni, Ciaran Gaffney,

**CONVERSIONS:**

Guglielmo Palazzani, Carlo Canna (2)

**DATE:** Sat 9th Dec 17  
**KO:** 14:30

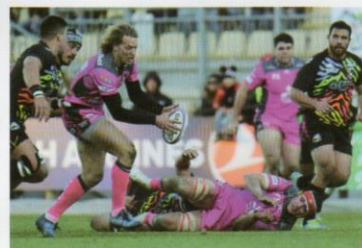
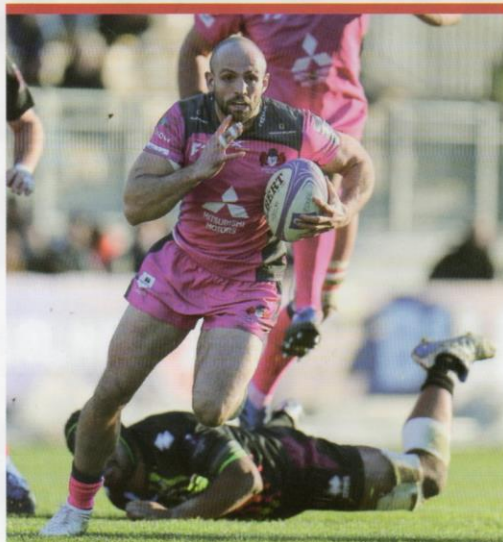
**TRIES:**

Ruan Ackermann, Ollie Thorley (2),  
Owen Williams, Richard Hibbard

**CONVERSIONS:**

Owen Williams (4)

**ACTION REPLAY**





**T**he Cherry and Whites needed a strong performance in the winter sun of Parma in Round 3 to keep in touch with Pau at the top of the Pool, and they got that with a strong showing at the Stadio Sergio Lanfranchi.

They had to work hard for the result against the Guinness Pro 14 outfit, and recover from a slow start to overcome a first half deficit to take maximum points.

The Italians named a strong side on their home turf, but home advantage was negated with the presence of a healthy number of travelling supporters in Cherry and White, enjoying a pre-Christmas trip to Italy.

Zebre, coached by former Ireland international Michael Bradley made a strong start, crossing for a pair of well worked tries in the opening quarter through back row duo Johan Meyer and Renato Giammarioli. However the second score was shrouded in doubt with the officials confident the number eight was not in touch when dotting the ball down in the corner.

Gloucester regrouped from the fourteen-point deficit and set about responding. Richard Hibbard was driven over in the corner, but referee Mike Adamson did not spot any grounding, and with a few chances spurned, Ruan Ackermann drove his way over from close range.

Ben Vellacott and Tom Savage both then had tries chalked off, but the visitors levelled just before the break with a move direct off the training ground.

Richard Hibbard peeled off a maul and, with decoy runners catching the eyes of the Zebre defence, Ollie Thorley scorched through a hole to score as Hibbard offloaded with one hand.

But, with time up in the first half, Zebre regained the lead, influential fly half Carlo Canna's through the legs pass helped to outflank the Gloucester defence and Tommaso Boni went over to score.



**WE STARTED BADLY AND WENT 14 POINTS DOWN. SO, ONE POSITIVE IS THAT WE CAME BACK FROM THAT AND GOT OVER THE WINNING LINE WITH A BONUS POINT.**

**WE'LL TAKE IT BUT, THEN AGAIN, WE LET OURSELVES DOWN AS IT WAS A SIMILAR START TO THE ONE AT PAU, THE ONLY DIFFERENCE BEING THAT WE GOT IT BACK.**



HEAD COACH JOHAN ACKERMANN

After the break, the Cherry and Whites came flying out of the blocks, a powerful break from Man of the Match Jake Polledri sent the Zebre defence into reverse gear and the back rower combined with Charlie Sharples to send Thorley over for his second.

This was followed up by a solo score from Owen Williams, securing the bonus point in the process on the fifty minute mark. The next job was to secure the victory.

Zebre centre Mattia Bellini spent 10 minutes in the sinbin for a deliberate knock-on, and upon his return, Richard Hibbard was driven over as the visiting pack dominated the game up front.

But, Zebre did send the nerves jangling when Irish winger Ciaran Gaffney reacted quickest to a loose ball to score, but the Cherry and Whites managed the closing stages well to secure the victory.





**GLOUCESTER RUGBY**

**69-12**

**ZEBRE RUGBY**

**TRIES:**

David Halaifónua (2), Ollie Thorley (4), Freddie Clarke, Will Safe, Charlie Sharples, Cameron Orr, Motu Matu'u

**CONVERSIONS:**

Owen Williams, Billy Twelvetrees (6)

**DATE:** Sat 16th Dec 17  
**KO:** 15:00

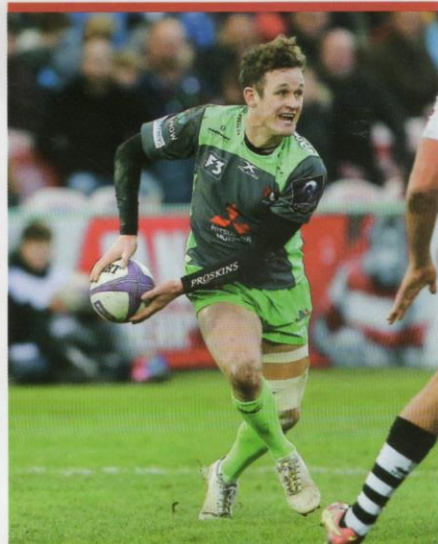
**TRIES:**

Matteo Pratichetti, Valerio Bernabo

**CONVERSIONS:**

Serafin Bordoli

**ACTION REPLAY**



**W**ith Pau winning with a try scoring bonus point over Agen on Thursday evening, and opening up an eight point lead at the top of pool three, Gloucester knew coming into this game that they needed a good win to keep in touch.

And, despite having been made to work desperately hard for a win over the same opponent in Parma seven days earlier, the Cherry and Whites put Zebre to the sword at Kingsholm scoring 11 tries on their way to a 69-12 victory.

Both teams had made several changes to their starting line-ups, with Johan Ackermann giving a number of young guns the chance to shine in front of their home crowd. And the likes of Ollie Thorley plus the back row trio of Freddie Clarke, Jake Polledri and Will Safe made the most of the opportunity.

Thorley grabbed the headlines as he ran in four tries, but he'd be the first to pay tribute to the rest of his team-mates who created the opportunities that he finished with aplomb.

In truth, the game was done and dusted before the first quarter had come to an end. By that point, the try scoring bonus point was in the bag and the Italian side were already looking shell-shocked and down the barrel of a heavy defeat.

Gloucester kept pressing and went into half-time with a 45-0 lead and, although the momentum eased off a little in the final quarter as multiple replacements were made and the Italians dug in, the final scoreline definitely reflected Gloucester's superiority.

Billy Burns was at his mercurial best, his deft touches with the boot leading to the first and third tries, both scored by David Halaifonua, which bookended a nice finish by Thorley for the second.

The back row then got into the action. Freddie Clarke finished well from close range and Will Safe powered through from 20 metres out as his fine running line split the defensive line. Jake Polledri then set up Charlie Sharples with a 70 metre break.

There was still time before half-time for Cameron Orr to break a tackle to score on his first start of the season and it was then just a case of how many.

Owen Williams replaced Burns at half-time and his cross-kick to Thorley quickly extended the lead, before former Gloucester hooker Tommaso D'Apice was sinbinned and current hooker Motu Matu'u scored after a catch and drive.

Thorley completed his hat-trick before Matteo Praticetti finished well to finally claw back some pride for Zebre. Thorley promptly touched down for his fourth but the Italian side had the last word as Valerio Bernabo managed to force his way over from close range.



**I THOUGHT WE PLAYED WITH REAL INTENT RIGHT FROM THE FIRST WHISTLE. OUR EXECUTION, OUR GO-FORWARD AND OUR OPTION TAKING WAS VERY GOOD.**

**WE'RE DELIGHTED WITH THE WIN BUT, AS ALWAYS, THERE ARE THINGS THAT WE HAVE TO IMPROVE ON. WE KNOW THAT IN THE WEEKS AHEAD THAT THERE ARE GOING TO BE SOME BIG TESTS.**



ASSISTANT COACH JONNY BELL



# TEAM LINE-UPS



SATURDAY 30 DECEMBER // AVIVA PREMIERSHIP RUGBY // ROUND 12

T P C D		POSITION		T P C D	
		TOM MARSHALL 15	FULL BACK	15	JAMES O'CONNOR
		CHARLIE SHARPLES 14	RIGHT WING	14	DENNY SOLOMONA
		HENRY TRINDER 13	OUTSIDE CENTRE	13	SAM JAMES
		BILLY TWELVETREES 12	INSIDE CENTRE	12	ROHAN JANSE VAN RENSBURG
		OLLIE THORLEY 11	LEFT WING	11	BYRON MCGUIGAN
		BILLY BURNS 10	FLY-HALF	10	AJ MACGINTY
		BEN VELLACOTT 9	SCRUM-HALF	9	FAF DE KLERK
		JOSH HOHNECK 1	LOOSEHEAD PROP	1	ROSS HARRISON
		JAMES HANSON 2	HOOKER	2	ROB WEBBER
		JOHN AFOA 3	TIGHTHEAD PROP	3	WILLGRIFF JOHN
		TOM SAVAGE 4	LOCK	4	BRYN EVANS
		ED SLATER (C) 5	LOCK	5	ANDREI OSTRIKOV
		JAKE POLLEDRI 6	BLINDSIDE FLANKER	6	JONO ROSS (C)
		LEWIS LUDLOW 7	OPENSIDE FLANKER	7	BEN CURRY
		RUAN ACKERMANN 8	NUMBER 8	8	JOSH STRAUSS
REPLACEMENTS:		REPLACEMENTS			
		RICHARD HIBBARD 16		16	MARC JONES
		CAMERON ORR 17		17	JAMES FLYNN
		FRASER BALMAIN 18		18	HALANI AULIKA
		JEREMY THRUSH 19		19	GEORGE NOTT
		BEN MORGAN 20		20	CAMERON NEILD
		CALLUM BRALEY 21		21	WILL CLIFF
		OWEN WILLIAMS 22		22	MIKE HALEY
		JASON WOODWARD 23		23	JOSH CHARNLEY

**MATCH OFFICIALS**

**REFEREE**

Andrew Jackson

**ASSISTANT REFEREES**

Jack Makepeace & Jonathan Healy

**TMO**

Sean Davey