

CHERRY & WHITES



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**GLOUCESTER
RUGBY**

V HARLEQUINS

**GLOUCESTER RUGBY
OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME**

2017/18 SEASON / ISSUE 15
AVIVA PREMIERSHIP RUGBY
SATURDAY 14 APRIL 2018
KO 15.00 / £3

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TODAY'S MATCHDAY
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THE SUNDAY TIMES

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BT Sport

CAPTAIN'S CORNER

WILLI HEINZ

GOOD AFTERNOON AND WELCOME TO KINGSHOLM FOR TODAY'S CLASH AGAINST HARLEQUINS AS WE RETURN TO OUR HOME GROUND WITH A POINT TO PROVE THIS AFTERNOON.

We embark on probably the biggest part of the season for us, with three home games on the spin, and it's not over the top to say that if we want to succeed this season, we have to come out from this spell with wins.

We take on teams around us in the table in the Aviva Premiership, the games including a European Rugby Challenge Cup semi-final and a West Country derby. We have lots still to play for, and it's definitely where we wanted to be.

That said, we need a response from last weekend. Not taking anything away from Exeter, they were superb, but we should have made it harder for them, and given a better account of ourselves.

We started really well and showed good energy in defence, but the attack was relentless from the Chiefs and they were so clinical in what they did when they got in to our 22. We put bodies on the line but couldn't hold them out.

When we had the ball, we had to make good use of it, but we didn't. We have to eradicate those simple errors in our game in the remaining games this season, as we are at a point where we will get punished and it will cost us.

We have shown this season the improvements that we have made, and I am genuinely excited to see where we are going and the development we can make as a squad – but we have to seize the opportunities that we have.



Harlequins will be a team that will be keen to bounce back from a defeat themselves last weekend, and they will be a tough nut to crack. Regardless of their place in the league, their squad quality speaks for itself, with England internationals throughout their side, and as a team we need to hit our top level to come out on top.

With every point counting at this stage of the season, especially in the middle of the table which is so congested, we know the job in hand, talk is cheap and it's time to put the performances in to get the results.

On a personal note, I was frustrated to come off early at Sandy Park, and at the time of writing, I'm working hard with the physio team to ensure I have a chance of being available for selection this week and contributing to the squad.

This week, we need our support to be roaring, and we're excited to be back in front of our home fans after six weeks away.

Enjoy the game.

Willi





MARTIN ST QUINTON

Good afternoon and welcome back to Kingsholm for the first time in what seems like ages! In particular, a very warm welcome to all the players, staff and supporters of Harlequins.

It is well over a month since our last home fixture which was against Newcastle Falcons. A lot has happened since that game and our Champions Cup qualification hopes are still very much alive. It is still possible for us to finish in the top six in the League, and we have made great progress in the European Rugby Challenge Cup to reach the semi-finals.

So, that last home game against Newcastle finished on a disappointing note when we could not quite pull off what would have been a thrilling comeback. Wasps just managed to clinch a draw with us the week before with the last kick of the game, which meant that unfortunately some vital league points slipped away.

However, we showed great character to bounce back the following week at London Irish to secure maximum points and then, of course, our fine win in Connacht where the team played so well.

Including today, we now have three home games in a row, three games that will very much define our season. If the team perform as we know they

can, we'll be set for some very exciting matches as the season reaches its conclusion.

It's been incredibly heartening to see the 'SOLD OUT' signs go up so far in advance of the Bath game and to hear of ticket sales going so well for both today and the ERC Cup semi-final against Newcastle next Friday.

Your support is so important to the team, and never more so than on big occasions like the remaining three home games ahead of us.

Thank you once again for that support and let's hope we're all toasting a Gloucester win at 5pm this afternoon.

Martin

AFTER THREE TOUGH GAMES ON THE ROAD, IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK IN THE FAMILIAR SURROUNDINGS OF KINGSHOLM FOR THE NEXT THREE MATCHES.

First up are Harlequins and I'd like to welcome John Kingston and all the Harlequins players, staff and supporters to Kingsholm this afternoon. A special mention for John who, after 17 years at Harlequins, is moving on at the end of the season and I'm sure you will join with me in wishing him every success as he moves on to his next challenge.

With just three Aviva Premiership rounds remaining, as well as a European Rugby Challenge Cup semi-final against Newcastle, we really are at the business end of the season and there is still have an awful lot left to play for.

With Johan's late arrival at Gloucester just before the start of the Premiership, no-one really knew what to expect from the 2017/18 season. Adapting to a new style of play is often difficult but from the start, the players were very excited by the challenge and we have given ourselves a great opportunity to qualify for next season's Champions Cup. Throughout the course of the season, there have been some ups and downs but we're unquestionably in a much stronger position than we were 12 months ago.

Last Sunday's performance at Sandy Park was very disappointing but again Exeter showed why they're the defending champions and comfortably top of the league again this season.

Despite the scoreline, for long periods of the game our defence was very good but we couldn't hold on to the ball long enough to put them under any pressure. Throughout the season we have scored some great tries and our attack will be much better today against Harlequins.

The Challenge Cup has been an important competition for us over the past few years and the European win in Galway was another outstanding away victory. Connacht have beaten many of the top European sides at the Sportsground and the victory brought us the added bonus of a home semi-final against Newcastle.

The game itself showed us at our very best but also saw us fall below the standards we set for ourselves to allow Connacht back into the game and guarantee a nervous final few minutes for

DAVID HUMPHREYS.



both ourselves and our travelling supporters. Many thanks to all the supporters who made the trip and gave us their usual wonderful support.

It's hard to believe another season is nearing its end, but we're determined to finish the season well, starting with winning our next three fixtures here at Kingsholm. There will be plenty of twists and turns in the remaining three rounds of the Premiership, but all we can do is focus on our own performances and prepare for each game as a cup final.

One thing is for sure – there's very rarely a dull moment at this club, and there will be plenty of excitement over the next few weeks!

Enjoy the game.

David

GLOUCESTER RUGBY HERITAGE

BACK: J. Holder, M. Elway, T. Pritchard, C. Pope, M. Billington, E. Stephens, P. Hawker, D. Wadley (Hon Treasurer), N. Duncalfe, T. Tandy (Hon Secretary)

SECOND: R. Morris, M. Nicholls, P. Williams, S. Mills, C. Williams, S. Boyle, J. Simonett, J. Fidler, G. Sargent, V. Wooley, E. Pinkey, Dr. T. Durkin (Hon Club Doctor), Canon M. Hughes (Vice President)

THIRD: D. Dawe (Fixture Secretary), D. Pointon, B. Vine, G. Hudson (Chairman), J. Watkins (Captain), T. Voyce (President), J. Haines, R. Clewes, P. Butler, M. Burton

FRONT: P. Howell, P. Kingston, R. Correia



**GLOUCESTER
RUGBY**

THE CUP REGAINED

1977-78

Captain John Watkins

Played 49

Won 38

Lost 11

For 993

Against 501

Gloucester continued to be a force to be reckoned with throughout the 70's, consistently fielding the most powerful pack in the country. At times, their game was seen, outside Gloucester, to be limited in scope and ambition, in contrast to the more expansive game they played in the 80's, but it was mighty effective. Not least, Gloucester were led by example by a series of outstanding club men who were proud to wear the cherry and white shirt. What marks out 1977-78 from amongst a succession of great seasons is the victory at Twickenham to regain the John Player Cup and the acknowledgement of Gloucester, somewhat grudgingly in some quarters, as England's premier club.

Gloucester embarked on the new season in good shape. Under the captaincy of John Watkins, popular, dedicated and something of a perfectionist, they had scored a record number of points in 1976-77 and toured the USA that summer with great success. They started the season well and by the end of October had won fourteen of the sixteen games played.

Injuries, combined with regional and divisional trials, county calls and a demanding fixture list, now stretched Gloucester to the limit. In a disappointing but understandable end to the year the club suffered eight of the eleven losses incurred in the entire season.

Then began a transformation in fortune. Starting with a 21-9 victory over Moseley on January 2, Gloucester went on to win 20 of their remaining 21 games, losing only one, 12-6 at Abertillery when they rested their cup squad, five days before their quarter final tie away to Wasps. They began the cup campaign four weeks later following wins against Moseley, London Scottish, Leicester and Wasps and never looked back.

After a comfortable 38-6 first round win over Lydney at Kingsholm on January 28, with 17 points from the boot of Peter Butler and tries for Bob Clewes (2), Richard Mogg, Steve Boyle and Viv Wooley, the second round saw Gloucester drawn against holders Gosforth again with home advantage, in front of a 10,000 crowd. This was rightly billed as "Match of the Day" with Gosforth the defending cup-holders



who were going for a hat-trick of titles against Gloucester, the 1971-72 winners, whom they had knocked out the previous year. The match was sweet revenge for Gloucester, who outplayed the holders in every phase of the game to win 19-10. Viv Wooley, Steve Mills and Chris Williams scoring tries with Peter Butler adding two conversions and a penalty.

The quarter final away at Wasps was dominated by the Gloucester pack, notably locks Steve Boyle and John Fidler in the lineout, but illuminated by a magnificent try by Richard Mogg in which Brian Vine, Richard Jardine and Chris Williams all played their part. Viv Wooley scored a well worked try, assisted by John Simonett, and Peter Butler kicked a penalty and conversion in a 13-3 win.

Another away draw in the semi-final, this time at Twickenham, saw Gloucester, six points down at half time against the wind, pin Harlequins in their own half after the interval. Peter Butler kicked two penalties and converted a try by Bob Clewes who beat two men to score in the corner and complete a 12-6 victory.

And so to the final at Twickenham, on 15th April. Gloucester and Leicester were the premier clubs in the country that season and the match was billed in some quarters as a club championship. More than anything it was a clash of styles. Leicester played an expansive game, using their fast and talented backs at every opportunity. Gloucester, although not short of try-scoring backs, were more conservative, basing their game on their mighty pack, the tactical kicking of their half backs and their points-scoring machine Peter Butler. They kept faith with the XV that had started every round of the competition. This was Leicester's first cup final appearance and the sense of anticipation amongst both sets of supporters was immense. A crowd of 24,000 was more than double the previous record for the event and created a vibrant atmosphere in the stadium.

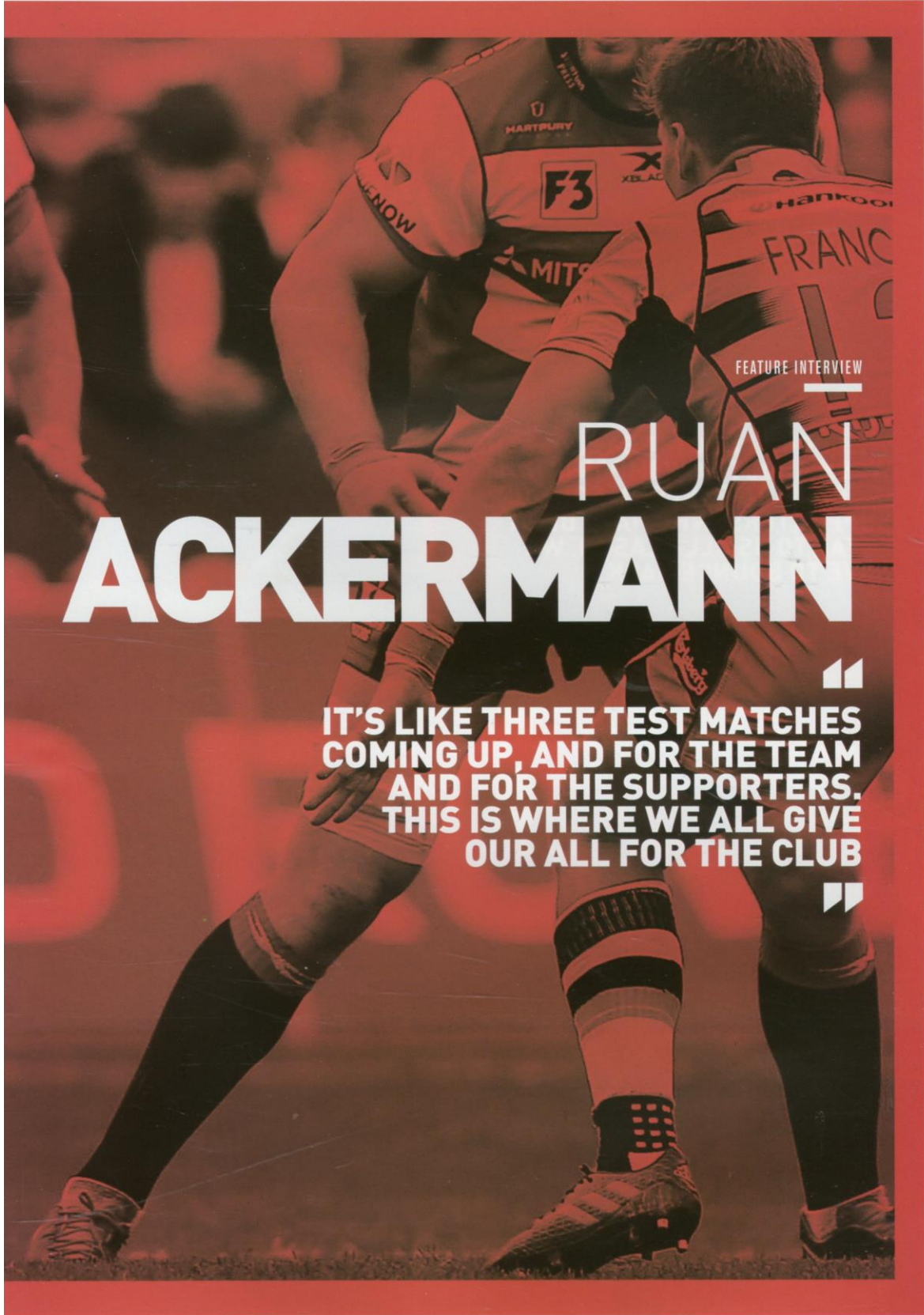
In the end it was Gloucester who triumphed by six points to three in a tense match, disappointing perhaps to the impartial, but greatly appreciated by the partisan. Despite the close scoreline, the Cherry and Whites dominated territory and possession, and scored the only try. Richard

Mogg was the hero of the final, not only scoring Gloucester's try, which Peter Butler converted, but also bringing off a match-saving tackle close to the final whistle.

Commemorative ties (which had been produced before the game!) were presented to the players and the Mayor gave a civic reception for the team in the Guildhall. The cup was paraded at Kingsholm after the final match of the season, which was British Lion Mike Burton's last game, and was held aloft by captain John Watkins and by Burton, the previous club captain, who were carried shoulder high by the players.

The cup success and outstanding run of victories did not go unnoticed. Mike Burton gained two further England caps and at the end of the season, no fewer than six Gloucester players - Richard Mogg, Richard Jardine, Steve Mills, Gordon Sargent, Steve Boyle and John Fidler - were chosen to tour Romania with England B. Paul Howell was described by Peter Robbins in his review of the English season as "by far and away the most impressive scrum half" he had seen and John Fidler "still the best uncapped lock".





FEATURE INTERVIEW

RUAN ACKERMANN

“
IT'S LIKE THREE TEST MATCHES
COMING UP, AND FOR THE TEAM
AND FOR THE SUPPORTERS.
THIS IS WHERE WE ALL GIVE
OUR ALL FOR THE CLUB
”

thirty minutes, but they got a bit of a break and went through and they didn't look back.

"It just shows the patience that they had with ball in hand, and when they have the ball their attacking leaders stood up and took the challenge on. We had to respond to that."

After spending his developing years in Super Rugby, Ackermann speaks about how he has benefitted from every new challenge faced in Cherry and White this year, with the opportunity to adapt and grow his game with every opponent.

"Every game, to be honest, up to now, has been different for me. Especially the away games getting the feel for the opposition, and the environments, the surroundings of each stadium – it's all been new to me.

"I think that's the one thing for me this weekend, we're back at Kingsholm, I know what we get from our supporters, and having already played Harlequins this season, I know what to expect from another quality team.

"I think they're in a similar spot to us, not quite getting that performance out every week in terms of consistency, and I think it is two teams, desperate to get a result.

"In terms of this weekend, I think it's important for us to perform. We spoke about it early in the week about how important it is for us to perform for our supporters, who have been loyal to us all season. We have to bounce back."

And for a youngster from South Africa and the non-stop sunshine, Ackermann admits he's enjoyed the cold winter,



but he is glad to see the back of the heavy snowfall!

"Hopefully in a few more weeks we can get some sun, as we've had lots of rain after the snow! It's been a culture shock! Hopefully in the next few games, we can get some sunshine and play in some warm weather. The snow was great, but glad to see the back of it now!"

With the Cherry and Whites facing the task of three consecutive home games in the coming weeks, their end of the season position is in their hands. Ackermann is determined to grab this opportunity with both hands – with no regrets.

"It's massive. If we can get the victories, especially in the Aviva Premiership, get those wins with good performances, and then in the Challenge Cup semi-final against Newcastle, it's also a big one for us.

"It's like three test matches coming up, and for the team and for the supporters. This is where we all give our all for the club."



“WE SPOKE ABOUT IT EARLY IN THE WEEK ABOUT HOW IMPORTANT IT IS FOR US TO PERFORM FOR OUR SUPPORTERS, WHO HAVE BEEN LOYAL TO US ALL SEASON. WE HAVE TO BOUNCE BACK”



There is a small group of players that have trod the path from South African rugby to Kingsholm

and, after a summer move alongside Head Coach and Father Johan, Ruan Ackermann feels firmly at home after swapping Gauteng for Gloucestershire.

The back rower, who picked up the Aviva Premiership Player of the Month for November has been quick to find his feet and spoke this week about the challenge of swapping Super Rugby for rugby in the Northern Hemisphere.

“I must be honest in saying that it’s been tough, every team that we play has been tough and every game has been really physical in the forwards.

“You get teams that are starting

to throw the ball around now, which we have to be aware of. There was a lot of mauling and kicking over the winter and even now, playing in the mud and rain, you have to be aware of the mauling type of game that teams are playing.

“It’s good, but also it works you a lot more. Your Sunday and your Mondays have been a lot harder, as I feel a lot more sore! But it’s definitely been a fun challenge.”

The game at Sandy Park last weekend was definitely an afternoon to forget for the Cherry and Whites, who ran into the league leaders in top form, but Ackermann knows that the learnings from that game will stand a developing squad in good stead, especially with the unique attack that the Chiefs unleashed.

“It was definitely a lesson for us. If you hold onto the ball, and keep attacking then you will get the break, and find the gap. If you keep hammering the defence, you’ll get results. I felt our defence was really good for the first



KINGSHOLM NEWS

WITH **BOB FENTON**

Well, it seems an awful long time since we were here last, so long ago that there was snow on the ground.

But even though it was a while ago, the result still smarts – it's not often that you score four tries and still lose the game, so a tough one to take. Doubly so for me as my standing bet that we would go the season unbeaten at home vanished along with the points.

It was one of those days when the ball would not go over the posts for the conversions, all four missed – I honestly can't remember the last time something like that happened. Yet it did, and that was that.

Sadly, the missed kicks provided ample opportunity for a small army of anonymous keyboard warriors to vent their bile in the general direction of Billy Burns. An undeserving target if there ever was one.

It's totally wrong to single out an individual as being responsible for a defeat – or for a win for that matter – it's a team game and as anyone who has ever been in a dressing room will know, you win and lose as a team.

Billy obviously felt it, saying on Twitter that he took responsibility and feeling that he had let people down. Sorry



mate, that's just silly. Where were all your tweets about winning games with your kicks because there have been an awful lot more of those? It was one of those days, we know you will bounce back and we love you for your obvious passion and commitment to the Gloucester jersey.

I don't think anyone really understands the pressure these guys must be under when they line up a kick – I have been known to glibly state that they should be able to land goals in a firework display, but that is said with all the surety of someone who fell over backwards last time they tried to kick a goal in a competitive match.

That pressure was brought home to me a few seasons back when I was on the touchline right alongside Andy Goode as he lined up a kick. Here was a bloke who was a virtual kicking machine yet he was twitching, sweating desperately trying to control his breathing as he went for a goal in a match that had long been won.

What's done is done though, and the results through the last few weeks of February and March put us in a bit of a hole and demanded a positive result up at London Irish in our next league game. Those of us who have been around a while thought we





TURKISH

already knew the script – team scrapping for its Premiership life at home to a team short on form and with a notorious away record.

And about ten minutes into the game and everything was following that script nicely – well not nicely at all, but following the script. 40 minutes into the game and it was a different story and come full time we were heading back towards the M4 (or stuck in traffic trying to get out of the car park) with five points in the bag.

Then it was off to Ireland – sadly not for me – for a quarter final of the European Rugby Challenge Cup. What a great display that was, gutsy to the end and some great tries into the bargain. Of course, we made it hard for ourselves, that's what we do. It did make me laugh out loud when I read someone suggesting that Gloucester should add a tag line along the lines of 'Gloucester Rugby... causing heart palpitations since 1873...' Wish I had thought of that!

Our reward for that win: a home semi-final against Newcastle... A best of three decider to see who goes to possibly the hardest venue to reach as a supporter. Really, who thought it was a good idea to hold the final there? That can all wait until next Friday though...

Last week we needed Wasps to do us a favour and get a win up at Sale (they didn't) and Leicester to do the business over Bath (they did). I don't know that I like watching other games hoping that teams can help us out. I long for the days when we don't need to think about things like this – it makes my head hurt trying to work out all the different permutations!



At the time of writing we have yet to play Exeter, so I don't know if we will make it three wins out of three on the road. My sometimes half-witted son is reading over my shoulder telling me we have no chance, but then he said that about Connacht and London Irish, so what does he know!

But today it's all about league points and results elsewhere. Harlequins got a bit of a pasting from London Irish last week, so will come down here looking to salvage a bit of pride. We'll need five points to keep us in the hunt for that elusive sixth place.

Come on boys, give my old heart a bit of a rest here – get this one put to bed before half time, please!

RANDALL

on RUGBY



THREE PREMIERSHIP MATCHES REMAINING, TWO POSSIBLE ROUTES BACK INTO THE CHAMPIONS CUP AND (REALISTICALLY, ALTHOUGH I ACCEPT A SECOND IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE) ONE PIECE OF SILVERWARE STILL AVAILABLE.

Gloucester Rugby can see the finishing line of the season on the horizon but all their stocks of energy and resolve will be needed with a minimum of four high profile games to come.

Having seen Exeter demolish Bath with a largely second string team in the Anglo-Welsh Cup final, last Sunday's ruthless display was not a surprise. The Premiership table remains tight, but Sale still have to go to Sandy Park and their last game is at home to Leicester. With two home games in their last three, Gloucester will still feel they can overhaul them.

If Martin St Quinton's preseason benchmark of Champions Cup qualification is secured, one of the players that has helped them reach that target has overachieved on a personal level, and that's his own opinion, not mine.

Freddie Clarke has been involved in 24 of Gloucester's 30 matches in Johan Ackermann's first year at the club, having been promoted from the Academy last summer.

"If you had told me I would get that number of opportunities I would have bitten your arm off," joked Clarke.

"I set myself a variety of challenges at the start of the season, most of them I've hit, and even the ones I felt were unrealistic I've hit as well. I've been fit for selection every week, which is something I pride myself on, and I think I have become more efficient in the way I use my energy. It's been great to get that amount of game time from Johan and I don't want it to stop."

Having been left out in Connacht and at Exeter, Clarke might have to accept that it could do until next season, but he's still made huge strides since switching from Championship club London Scottish in the summer of 2016

*I was a late bloomer personally and the Championship is



a great league for development and for people who are still waiting for that chance at a Premiership club," Freddie added.

"We were full time (London Scottish are part time now) but the difference between there and here is the infrastructure, access to gym facilities and so on. I was living at home in Surrey, and, with us training at Richmond, I was leaving before 6am just to get in on time. Such a drive isn't ideal."

"I was fortunate to go to Millfield School and I had always had the ambition to play top level sport. Neil McCarthy, who was the Head of Academy, always maintained I was his biggest bargain when I signed for Gloucester, because I was 24 in the October and that was the last year I could be an Academy player.

"A lot of people thought it was a negative decision to go from a top end Championship club to the bottom of the



pile in an Academy but this season I've put my head through the window and earned the reward for it."

Injuries to Ben Morgan, Ross Moriarty and Gareth Evans saw Clarke start for the first time - and score - in the reverse fixture against Harlequins at the Stoop in September. In wet and windy conditions, Gloucester lost 28-17 after being undone at the breakdown, something Clarke accepts mustn't happen again today.

"We felt we lost that match rather than 'Quins winning it," Clarke added. "I grew up playing a lot against Jack Clifford and you have to respect the amount of English talent they've got.

"For us, it's about being able to get through the first three phases. Tim Taylor has a stat that it's in that time where most of the errors occur, and teams who consistently get past that point go on to win the game."

Repeatedly, Clarke talks about those unstructured points across the 80 minutes where Gloucester want to get their X factor players involved and whilst a lot of supporters are already pinpointing the home game with Bath as the decisive remaining fixture, it would be wrong for anyone to dismiss Harlequins today.

True, their away record is poor, but they have some smart thinkers who could ruin Gloucester's afternoon if the team doesn't, as the saying goes, "buy in" to everything that's been done at Hartpury over the past week.



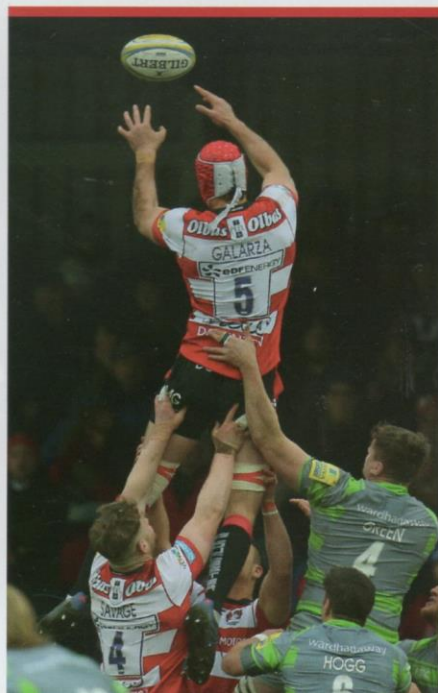
GLOUCESTER RUGBY 20-21 NEWCASTLE FALCONS

TRIES:
Jason Woodward, David Halaifonua,
Mark Atkinson, Lewis Ludlow

DATE: Sat 3rd Mar 18
KO: 15:00

TRIES:
Ally Hogg, Micky Young
CONVERSIONS:
Joel Hodgson
PENALTIES:
Joel Hodgson (3)

ACTION REPLAY



A week after Jimmy Gopperth's last-gasp conversion snatched a draw for Wasps at Kingsholm, another late kick denied Gloucester valuable Aviva Premiership points against the Newcastle Falcons.

On this occasion, it was Billy Twelvetrees who had the chance to secure a late win for the Cherry and Whites, Lewis Ludlow's try bringing Gloucester back to within a point of the Falcons.

Twelvetrees' kick started bang on target, the Shed loudly cheering as it left his boot. But it drifted just left of the posts in the last few metres of its flight and Gloucester's last chance had gone.

Absolutely no-one blamed the kicker. It was his first shot at goal on the day and, as a second-half replacement, Twelvetrees had more than played his part in a brave second-half comeback that so very nearly overhauled a half-time deficit.

However, Gloucester left themselves just too much to do on the day despite outscoring the Falcons by four tries to two. An error-strewn performance, in the first-half in particular, meant that Newcastle didn't have to work too hard for their points and Dean Richards' side took full advantage.

That the game took place in the first place was testimony to the efforts of the Gloucester staff and supporters. Heavy snow on the Thursday and Friday left Kingsholm under several inches of the white stuff, and it took a massive effort to clear the stadium in time.

Joel Hodgson's early penalty gave the visitors a 0-3 lead, but Jason Woodward then showed real class to score a beauty of a try, rolling a kick forward off his left boot before gathering to score.

But Gloucester couldn't kick on. Ally Hogg scored something of a soft try as Michael Young fielded a high kick in his own half, before setting off downfield without a finger laid on him and finding his back rower in support to score.

David Halaifonua then saw yellow for a high tackle, and Hodgson slotted two more penalties to give Newcastle a 5-16 half-time lead.



LAST WEEK WHEN WE DREW AGAINST WASPS, WE HAD 40% POSSESSION AND WERE LUCKY. TODAY WE HAD THE LION'S SHARE BUT WE COULDN'T PUT THEM AWAY.

IT'S VERY DISAPPOINTING FOR THE GROUP OF PLAYERS AND IT IS HURTING THEM BUT WE HAD TO WORK VERY HARD FOR OUR FOUR TRIES WHILE WE GAVE THEM TWO SOFT ONES.

THE BENCH MADE A DIFFERENCE AND WE FOUGHT HARD BUT WE CAN'T BLAME THE GOAL-KICKERS AS WE SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN IN THAT POSITION.

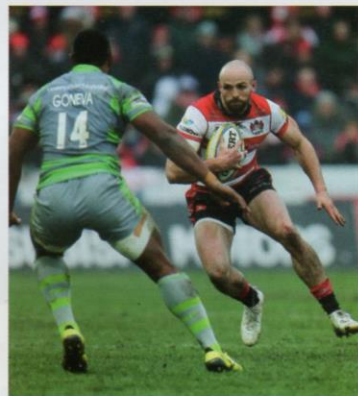


HEAD COACH JOHAN ACKERMANN

Gloucester did get back into the game at the start of the second half, Halaifonua crossing in the corner. However, the visitors immediately benefitted from a turnover and Young went over the line himself on this occasion.

The Cherry and Whites rung the changes in a bid to try and turn the momentum, but the Falcons dug deep in defence and it took until the 65th minute before Mark Atkinson dived over for Gloucester's third try.

Crucially, all three conversions had been missed leaving the Cherry and Whites six points behind going into the final few minutes. Ludlow scored the fourth as a well-executed catch and drive powered over leaving Twelvetrees with a chance for glory, but it wasn't to be.





LONDON IRISH 29-33 GLOUCESTER RUGBY

TRIES:
Joshua McNally, Piet van Zyl,
Theo Brophy Clews, Joe Cokanasiga

CONVERSIONS:
James Marshall (2), Tommy Bell

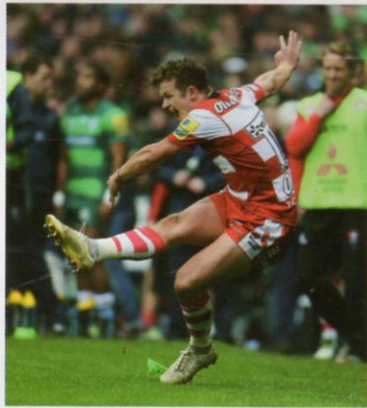
PENALTIES:
James Marshall (2)

DATE: Sat 24th Mar 18
KO: 15:00

TRIES:
James Hanson, Tom Marshall (2),
Lewis Ludlow, Mark Atkinson

CONVERSIONS:
Billy Twelvetrees (2), Billy Burns (2)

ACTION REPLAY



After 25 minutes in this Aviva Premiership contest, Gloucester looked dead and buried. Trailing 17-0 to a London Irish side scrapping for their very existence in the top flight, the Cherry and Whites simply hadn't got going.

Then followed half an hour of scintillating attacking rugby as Johan Ackermann's side turned the game on its head, running in five tries and having two more disallowed. The Exiles simply couldn't live with it.

However, having scored 33 unanswered points, Gloucester then found themselves hanging on for dear life as Irish scored two tries in quick succession to get themselves back into the game. But hang on they did and left the Madejski Stadium with a vital five Premiership points in the bag.

It was an 80 minutes to delight and infuriate Gloucester supporters. When they were good, they were very, very good but, when they were bad, they were horrid as the nursery rhyme goes.

In the final reckoning though, a win's a win and Gloucester's top four ambitions remain alive.

The Exiles, under new management, came out like a team possessed. Gloucester could barely get their hands on the ball and the home side deservedly took an early lead through tries from McNally and Van Zyl.

The game then swung as Irish misfired at a lineout. James Hanson pounced on the loose ball and, several phases later, burrowed over near the posts to get Gloucester off and running.

It started a frantic few minutes as tries from Tom Marshall and Lewis Ludlow made it three in eight minutes and earned the Cherry and Whites an unlikely half-time lead.

The momentum was maintained after half-time. Two potential tries were chalked off for crossing and a forward pass, but tries from Atkinson and Marshall seemed to have put the game to bed.

Not so. Irish hit back through Brophy Clews and Cokanasiga to set the alarm bells ringing but Gloucester managed to safely negotiate the final few minutes to close out the win.



AT 17-0, I WAS LOST FOR WORDS IN THE SENSE THAT IT WAS MISTAKE AFTER MISTAKE, PENALTY AFTER PENALTY AND WE DIDN'T SEE THE BALL. THEY GOT THE POINTS.

TO CLAW IT BACK BEFORE HALF-TIME WAS A BIG POSITIVE. A LOT OF CHARACTER WAS SHOWN TO SCORE THREE GOOD TRIES AND BE BACK IN THE CONTEST.



HEAD COACH JOHAN ACKERMANN



TEAM LINE-UPS



SATURDAY 14 APRIL // AVIVA PREMIERSHIP RUGBY // ROUND 20

T P C D		POSITION		T P C D	
		TOM HUDSON	15 FULL BACK	15	MIKE BROWN
		CHARLIE SHARPLES	14 RIGHT WING	14	CHARLIE WALKER
		HENRY TRINDER	13 OUTSIDE CENTRE	13	JOE MARCHANT
		MARK ATKINSON	12 INSIDE CENTRE	12	FRANCIS SAILI
		JASON WOODWARD	11 LEFT WING	11	TOM VISSER
		OWEN WILLIAMS	10 FLY-HALF	10	MARCUS SMITH
		CALLUM BRALEY	9 SCRUM-HALF	9	DANNY CARE (C)
		JOSH HOHNECK	1 LOOSEHEAD PROP	1	JOE MARLER
		JAMES HANSON	2 HOOKER	2	DAVE WARD
		JOHN AFOA	3 TIGHTHEAD PROP	3	KYLE SINCKLER
		TOM SAVAGE	4 LOCK	4	CHARLIE MATTHEWS
		ED SLATER (C)	5 LOCK	5	STAN SOUTH
		JAKE POLLEDRI	6 BLINDSIDE FLANKER	6	CHRIS ROBshaw
		LEWIS LUDLOW	7 OPENSIDE FLANKER	7	JACK CLIFFORD
		RUAN ACKERMANN	8 NUMBER 8	8	MATHEW LUAMANU
REPLACEMENTS		REPLACEMENTS			
		MOTU MATU'U	16	16	JOE GRAY
		PADDY MCALLISTER	17	17	MARK LAMBERT
		FRASER BALMAIN	18	18	WILL COLLIER
		JEREMY THRUSH	19	19	GEORGE MERRICK
		FREDDIE CLARKE	20	20	ARCHIE WHITE
		BEN VELLACOTT	21	21	DAVE LEWIS
		BILLY BURNS	22	22	JAMES LANG
		BILLY TWELVETREES	23	23	ALOFA ALOFA

MATCH OFFICIALS

REFEREE
Luke Pearce

ASSISTANT REFEREES
Anthony Woodthorpe & Jonathan Healy

TMO
Graham Hughes

CITING COMMISSIONER
Ashley Rowden