



**Security
Systems**

Championships

**1991/92 COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP
GLOUCESTERSHIRE v SOMERSET**

Saturday, October 5th, 1991

**Clifton, Station Road, Cribbs Causeway, Henbury, Bristol
3.00 p.m.**

**ADT Sponsors of English Rugby
at Divisional, County and Under 21 level**

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME





ADT SECURITY SYSTEMS DIVISIONAL AND COUNTY STRUCTURE

by

BARRY NEWCOMBE

Rugby Correspondent, Sunday Express

Yes, the World Cup is on. No, the Rugby Union has not taken leave of its senses by staging the ADT Security Systems Divisional and County Championships at exactly the same time as the first three week-ends of the World Cup programme.

The England squad has taken 26 players for World Cup duty which still leaves a few thousand others who are fit, eager, and anxious to prove themselves in the most demanding and available arena. That is why, from Aspatia to Redruth, the activity on the ADT front is considerable.

After three week-ends, there will be a new ADT Security Systems Divisional champion team while in the County Championship four sides will have progressed to the semi-final stage which will be played on 21st March next year, with the final to come at Twickenham on 18th April.

During this autumn there are people who would argue that the most important matches being played at Twickenham are those between England and New Zealand, Italy, and the USA in the pool stage of the World Cup and then the World Cup final itself on 2nd November. There are some people who would disagree with that and most of these people support either Cornwall or Yorkshire.

When they said that Cornwall actually emptied last season so that vast armies of supporters could come to Twickenham for the final against Yorkshire they were not far short of the truth. You could not hire a coach in Cornwall or Devon in that frantic week because they were all heading east for Twickenham in great columns, the black and yellow favours hanging from windows, flapping in the breeze.

Early arrivals at Twickenham for the ADT Security Systems County Championship final knew instantly that they were in for a special day. If you wanted a perfect example of county rugby atmosphere, here it was spread before you in the presence of 57,000 people.

The thought was that Yorkshire would win. For a time that looked more than possible and the more you remembered that Cornwall were being supported in the ratio of three to one, the more you realised that this could influence events on the pitch. Yorkshire, once comfortably ahead at 16—3 with 28 minutes left, were caught one minute from normal time. In extra time, with an avalanche of backing, Cornwall won 29—20 for their first county title since 1908.

Graham Dawe, the Bath and England hooker, was in the Cornwall side and even in his vast experience of winning for his country and winning for Bath in cup finals there had been nothing quite like this. The celebration on the day itself was one thing—but in Cornwall the victory was applauded for days on end.

'When we went back home it was as if everyone wanted to let us know what they felt', said Dawe, a farmer, 'the reception we had all over Cornwall was fantastic and the players will remember it for ever.'

Cornwall's victory and Yorkshire's full part in the final was a marvellous advertisement for county rugby. The commitment of players for whom this was the greatest stage they had reached in their rugby careers was enormous. The opportunity was there and it was taken.

No match in the Divisional Championship has attracted 57,000 spectators or anything like that figure. But there is tradition and feeling of identity in the County Championship which the Divisional Championship does not yet possess. One day it may.

But there can be no argument against the value of divisions within the playing structure of English rugby. It is here that players can be offered a different test of their abilities than their clubs or their counties can provide. The Divisional Championship is a testing ground over a concentrated three-week period and anyone who takes part knows that the only stage beyond is the England squad itself.

London were last winter's winners. They beat the North 43—8 and the Midlands 25—24 and drew 12—12 with the South West. Minus their England squad players London took off for a close season tour of Australia and had considerable learning experience.

All the divisions will come to accept that these learning experiences are necessary. The more exposure to Southern hemisphere standards the better and the divisions can broaden the number of players who are given the opportunity.

The top New Zealand provinces and Australian states provide demanding opposition. The South African provinces will come back into the international reckoning once all the barriers of apartheid have been removed to the satisfaction of rugby's administrators. So there will be no shortage of top Southern hemisphere opposition looking to play the English divisions.

This season's Divisional Championship offers a chance to impress to a new group of players who have their opportunity because of the World Cup.

Nothing is more certain than that the England squad will be undergoing change this winter in the aftermath of the World Cup. There will be a period of re-assessment before the 1992 'Five Nations' Championship, so from during the ADT Security Systems Divisional Championship is going to be of real value to the England management.

Yes, the World Cup is on and I hope its impact is beneficial at all levels of the game. But the ADT Security Systems Divisional and County Championships are clear reminders of the challenges which lie ahead.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A special welcome to the Somerset RFU Players, Officials and Supporters on this our 1st County Championship game for season 1991/92.

No doubt today's game between our adjoining Counties will be keenly contested particularly as players on both sides know each other so well and much friendly rivalry has existed over the years.

On 31/3/84 both our Counties played in the County Final at Twickenham and all those who were present will remember what a splendid game and occasion it was, with the final result being 36—18 to Gloucestershire. No less than 16 full international players took the field that day and that was without Mike Teague, Gordon Sargent and Nigel Redman who were replacements.

It is a great pleasure to see many former county schools, colts and under 21's playing for both sides today, our counties work extremely hard to produce, select, coach and encourage players for top class rugby.

We are extremely grateful to Clifton RFC for hosting today's match and making all the many necessary arrangements.

Thanks are due to ADT Security Systems as sponsors of the County Championship and their generous support to rugby football in general.

Today's referee and match officials are sincerely thanked and we hope they enjoy the game as much as hopefully the players and spectators will.

Have a grand day and enjoy meeting old friends and new.

MIKE L. SHORE
President, G.R.F.U.

LIKE OLD TIMES

There's a nostalgic, even old fashioned, feel about this season's County activities, so far, Gloucestershire v. Cornwall, Devon v. Somerset, and now Gloucestershire v. Somerset. Doesn't it all sound pleasantly familiar?

In the old days, for a decade and more, the outcome of the Gloucestershire — Somerset game had a very great bearing on the Championship itself. Indeed, there were occasions when it virtually decided it. The South West were undoubtedly the strongest division in the competition, and whoever came out on top were going to take a very great deal of beating in the final rounds.

Not wishing to be discourteous to our distinguished, and very welcome, visitors, that usually seemed to be Gloucestershire — but only by the twitch of a mathematician's ballpoint. Towards the end of the season, people whose numeracy didn't extend much beyond totting up the price of a round of beers would become experts on points difference, percentages and decimal points.

Even when they fiddled about with the geography and brought in the Divisions, they couldn't keep 'the old firm' down. By March 31st, 1984 Gloucestershire had won Division 1 (Group A), and Somerset Division 1 (Group B). 'Glos.' went perilously close in the Semi-Final by shading Middlesex, 13-12, while Somerset were scarcely more comfortable in beating Yorkshire at Bath, 15-13. The Twickenham Final, three months later, was a showpiece game from any point of view, Gloucestershire winning a match which featured seven tries, all of them good ones.

After that season the Divisional Championship intervened, and we all know the sequence of events since.

So history is on our side today. There seems no reason why we shouldn't see a very good game, with the traditional friendly rivalry well in evidence. But we must give Somerset due warning — Gloucestershire have no intention whatsoever of staying in Division Three for any longer than absolutely necessary, and old friends or not, our visitors are on the receiving end of a determined campaign to rectify matters. It's nice to be able to start that campaign at Clifton. No Club in England has a more honourable pedigree than today's generous hosts, and we're really playing on hallowed ground here at Cribb's Causeway. It might surprise our contingent from the North of the County to learn that, founded in 1872, Clifton RFC is actually a year older than Gloucester, and seventeen years older than Cheltenham. And before Bristolians say anything at all, Clifton antedates Bristol by sixteen years.

Those of us who have been fortunate enough to watch Clifton, over the past season or two, will be conscious that there is a very good side hereabouts, which shows signs of continuing success. We all wish them the best for this season, and for the others to come. And thanks for the hospitality.

PETER ARNOLD

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Colours:
Red

- 15 **JEFF POWELL** (Berry Hill)
14 **MIKE STUBBS** (Lydney)
13 **KERI LOCK** (Bristol)
12 **GARY JONES** (Berry Hill)
11 **JOHN PHILLIPS** (Bristol)
- 10 **LEE OSBOURNE** (Berry Hill)
9 **TONY BEBBER** (Lydney)
- 1 **GARETH WILLIAMS** (Lydney)
2 **NICK NELMES** (Lydney)
3 **PETER HOLMYARD** (Cheltenham)
4 **ANDY PLAYER** (Bristol)
5 **ROY YATES** (Lydney)
6 **DAVE SPENCER [Capt.]** (Lydney)
7 **MIKE STEELE** (Cheltenham)
8 **IAN PATTEN** (Bristol)

Replacements

- 16 **JULIAN HARRY** (Stroud)
17 **STEVE RATCLIFFE** (Chelt. North)

Referee:
Mr. K.V. HOSKING
(Devon Society)

Full Back
Right Wing
Right Centre
Left Centre
Left Wing

Outside Half
Scrum Half

Prop
Hooker
Prop
Lock
Lock
Flanker
Flanker
No. 8

Touch Judges:

- Mr. T. PRATT** (Hampshire)
Mr. M. COXWELL (Army)

SOMERSET

Colours:
Black, White and Crimson

- 15 **N. EDMONDS** (Bridgwater & Albion)
14 **A. BEAVER** (Bristol)
13 **B. CUNDY** (Bath)
12 **C. BOOK** (Bath)
11 **E. FRENCH** (Combe Down)
- 10 **T. REEMAN** (Bath)
9 **P. SMITH** (Combe Down)
- 1 **T. HARRIS** (Bridgwater & Albion)
2 **C. REES** (Bridgwater & Albion)
3 **A. CROKER** (Weston-s-Mare)
4 **M. RACKHAM** (Bridgwater & Albion)
5 **M. MATHEWS** (Combe Down)
6 **S. WITHEY** (Oldfield)
8 **G. BULLER** (Bridgwater & Albion)
7 **P. BEAZER** (Combe Down)

Replacements

- 17 **I. MITCHELL** (Weston-s-Mare)
18 **M. BADGER** (Weston-s-Mare)

The Gloucestershire Rugby Football Union acknowledge the generous support of:

CLIFTON R.F.C. • KE PRINTING SERVICES
WHITBREAD LTD. • MERCHANT'S COACHES • Mr. FRED MANSFIELD