

Gloucester Rugby

The Official Matchday Programme of Gloucester Rugby

Price £2.50



Gloucester Pre-Season Fixtures
11.08.06 v Saracens 19.30
26.08.06 v Llanelli Scarlets 15.00

Remember This?

The matchday programme reviews the European Challenge Cup final

Saracens & Llanelli Previews

back in time with Elton Moncrieff's winning drop-goal

Dean Ryan

What's in store for Gloucester this season?

Introducing

A look at who is new in the squad

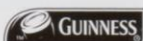
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All the latest community news, ticket information and Premiership ins and outs in the pre-season magazine



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Ryan's Preview

The **European Challenge Cup** winners start their pre-season campaign against Saracens tonight and head coach **Dean Ryan** previews the season ahead...



After Gloucester had been knocked out of the Powergen Cup last season, you were asked whether it would hurt your Heineken Cup chances and you replied it was not about Europe but winning matches, the end of the season must have given you an enormous amount of satisfaction?

DR: That night against Bath, we had lost on a saturated evening in a game where a couple of mistakes really cost us and I was very disappointed to have lost the game in insolation, regardless of anything else. I was absolutely adamant about what I said. It is about winning games and winning trophies.

We wanted to do well in every match because good teams who are really serious about themselves measure success by the big games they win. To me, games are an end in themselves.

The end of the season was so satisfying because we convinced ourselves we could win competitions and that is what we want to be measured by.

Our victory over London Irish has merely opened a huge chasm of determination in this squad to go even further and succeed more. We are breeding a competitive and highly motivated group of individuals that want to build on that trophy and taste more of that winning feeling.



Understandably, expectation maybe the biggest hurdle your squad faces this season?

DR: The Guinness Premiership is an environment that gets harder and harder and more competitive by the season. There is no point whatsoever in trying to analyse who might do well or where certain teams may finish.

I think this season will be one of the most direct, competitive and demanding there has been. I can totally appreciate the expectation that surrounds the side we have assembled and continue to build. But we are still in the early stages of a long-term plan. Some of these guys still do not possess much Premiership experience and there will be some pain along the way.

But it's how we manage that, that is the most important thing. By the end of last season we were one of the most adventurous teams in the country and we obviously want to maintain that enthusiasm but combine it with pragmatism – it's a fantastic challenge for us all to be involved in.

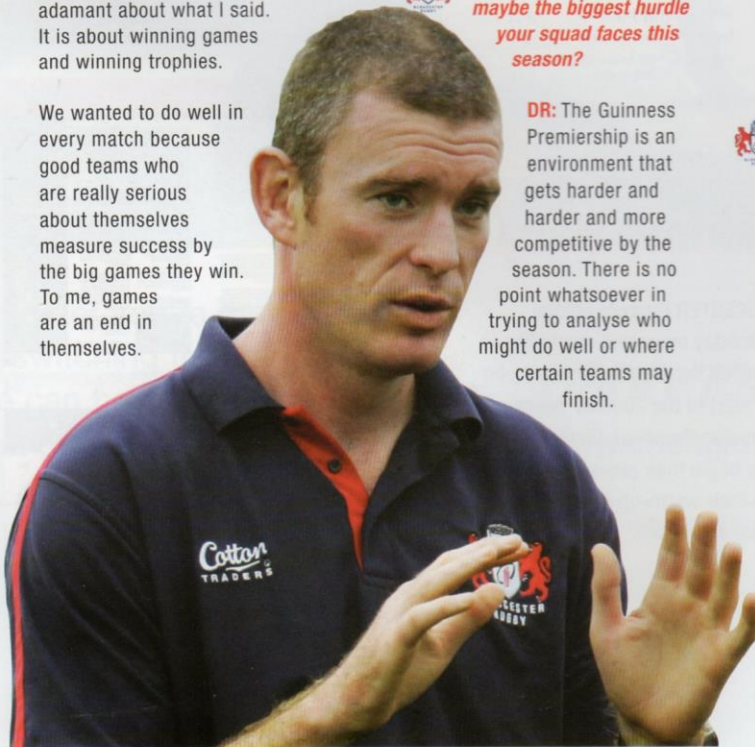


What can you learn from these pre-season games?

DR: One eye is always on the Premiership, it has to be. But pre-season is about providing opportunities for players to stake a claim for selection because that is their only chance.

I do not believe the Premiership is an environment where you can test people out, unless there are injuries and it is unavoidable. The players have already worked exceptionally hard – they have really been pushed this summer – and are now raring to go.

There is a tremendous amount of drive to succeed and that is the most pleasing thing because the players have taken ownership of what we want to achieve.



“I think this season will be one of the most direct, competitive and demanding there has been.”

As a coach, I am invigorated to see internationals like Marco Bortolami and Iain Balshaw in action.

They are the calibre of players we want to attract and I think they will all be fantastic additions.

I would like to think our preparations at home and in Portugal have already given us an edge in what we are trying to achieve but now we have to take that onto the field.



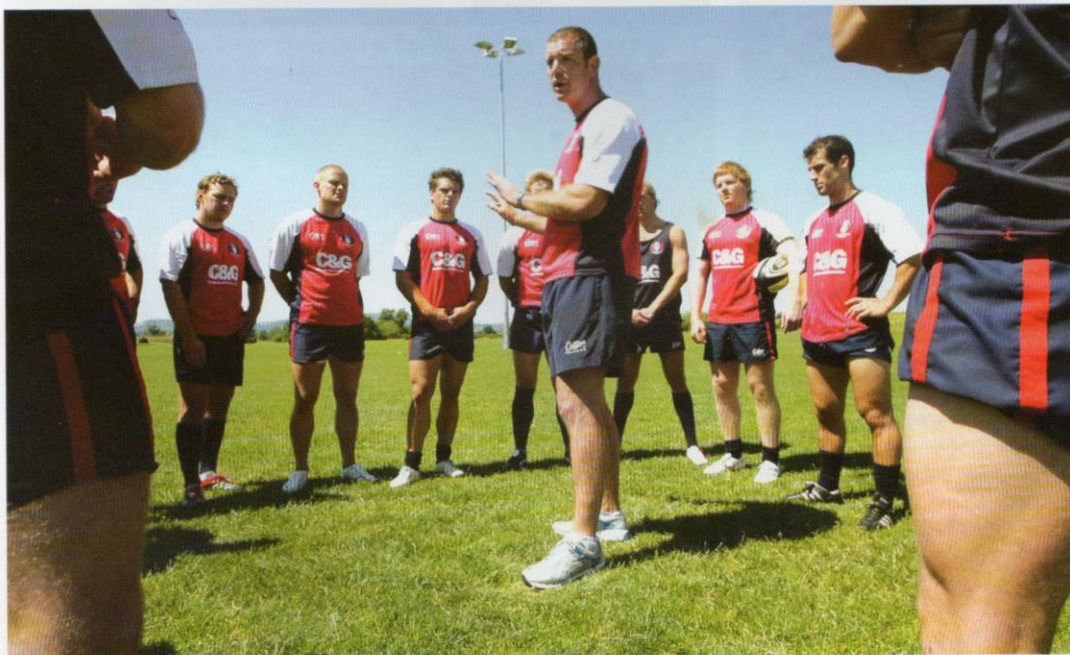
You mention Bortolami and Balshaw, you must be really pleased with the quality of the

squad this season?

DR: I am delighted by the way it has shaped up. We looked at certain areas that we felt needed strengthening last season and have recruited high-quality players in each position.

I think everyone is pretty aware how important guys like Bortolami and Carlos Nieto are to any side because they are established internationals and will give us great leadership qualities and big-match experience.

But I am also really excited about Will James, Willie Walker and



Ryan's Preview...

Rory Lawson. I believe they all could make a big statement in the Premiership and delighted they chose to join us.

Not many people will have heard or seen much of Willie Walker but he has excellent skill levels and provides us with an option at 10 and 15, Rory Lawson is competitive and fitted in very well and Ross McMillan is another youngster who can play a key role for us in our future development.

What we have done is enhance our existing squad with a mixture of experience and youthful promise and combining it in the right way is our next challenge.



Finally, what does it mean for this club to be back in the European Cup this season?

DR: A club and an area like Gloucester demands to be exposed to Europe's premier club competition because it is the pinnacle of where we want to be.

Winning the Challenge Cup was a fantastic experience but we have to move on and aim to progress from that this season onto an even bigger stage.

We are in a tough group but it is where we want to get tested.

We will play teams like Leinster, who have been at the top end of the European game for a long time and it will be a great chance for this squad to show exactly how good they are.





Who's new at Glou

Marco Bortolami →



THE NARBONNE second row joined the Kingsholm club on a two-year contract until June 2008.

Bortolami was made Italy's youngest captain in 2003 when he led the Azzurri into battle against the All Blacks, following his debut as a 20-year-old.

He has since won 45 international caps and was a star performer in the Six Nations last season.

WHAT HE SAID: "I'm delighted to be joining Gloucester and am looking forward to the

challenge of playing club rugby in England.

"There were a number of clubs who expressed an interest in signing me, but I was extremely impressed when I met Dean Ryan and he outlined his vision for Gloucester Rugby."

WHAT THEY SAID: "He had a storming Six Nations, is 25-years-old and is his national captain – to sign someone of his ability is fantastic for us. He is a top quality athlete and a lot of people were in the race for him," Dean Ryan, Gloucester Rugby's head coach.

Carlos Nieto →



NIETO (29) joined Gloucester on a three-year contract that will begin in the summer and run until June 2009.

The tough scrummaging set-piece specialist, who has nine Italian caps, can be seen as a direct replacement for Phil Vickery on the tighthead side of the scrum.

The Argentinian-born prop made his Italy debut against England in the 2002 Six Nations and was recalled by Pierre Berbizier to the national set-up for the 2005 summer tour of Argentina

and Australia.

WHAT HE SAID: "I believe Gloucester will be strong contenders for domestic and European honours in the next three years and that's something I want to be part of."

WHAT THEY SAID: "I am motivated to sign players who I believe will bring us a new dimension and an extra edge to our game. I am sure Carlos, as an international who is getting better all the time, can do that," head coach Dean Ryan.

Christian Califano →



ONE OF the giants of the French Test scrum over the last decade, Califano joined Gloucester Rugby on a two-year contract.

The 33-year-old tight-head prop, equally at home at loose-head, won 68 caps during an illustrious international career where he made a name for himself as one of the most destructive scrummagers in the business.

Califano moved to Kingsholm from French club side Agen, who are now in Gloucester's Heineken Cup pool.

WHAT HE SAID: "The club has massive potential and I am coming to Gloucester because I believe we can win trophies."

"Dean Ryan has a very clear vision for the team and their progress on the field this season and qualifying for the Heineken Cup is a sign of things to come. The training facilities are first class and I can't wait to experience the famous atmosphere of Kingsholm on match day."

WHAT THEY SAID: "He brings with him a weight of experience that is almost unparalleled in the European game. He has spent the majority of his career in the Heineken Cup and will help us enormously as we test ourselves in club rugby's most challenging environment next year," head coach Dean Ryan.

Willie Walker →



FORMER Otago Highlanders stand-off Willie Walker agreed a two-year deal with the Kingsholm club.

The 27-year-old, who can also play at full-back, will join Gloucester in the summer following extensive experience in New Zealand's NPC with North Harbour and the Super 12 with the Highlanders.

WHAT HE SAID: "It is a great honour to be joining an English club because the Guinness Premiership is one of the most respected

competitions in the world.

"Gloucester are a huge club known the world over and I am thrilled to have the chance to contribute to their future success."

WHAT THEY SAID: "He has plenty of experience at a very high level and is the calibre of player we want going forward. We have made no secret of the fact we need to strengthen the squad ahead of next season and this signing confirms that," head coach Dean Ryan.



ester The men who have joined Dean Ryan's squad → → →

THE BRITISH LION and England winger/full-back, has joined Gloucester Rugby on a two-year contract from Leeds Tykes. Balshaw has made 106 Premiership appearances for Bath and Leeds scoring 38 tries, as well as winning 24 England caps as one of the most dangerous game-breakers and broken-field runners in the business.

He made his debut for Bath in the 1997/98 season and represented the west country club for seven years, scoring 15 tries in 21 appearances in 1999/2000 – the same season he made his England debut against Ireland.

British Lions selection followed for the tour to Australia in 2001 and Balshaw also picked up a World Cup winner's medal for England in 2003, scoring the crucial try in the win over Samoa in the group stages and coming on as a

replacement against Australia in the epic final. A move to Leeds Tykes in 2004 reunited Balshaw with former Bath coach Jon Callard and an ultimately victorious Powergen Cup run earned Balshaw an England recall and Leeds qualification for the Heineken Cup.

WHAT HE SAID: "Gloucester is a club with massive potential which can only grow in the Heineken Cup next season. You are always aware, no matter what club you play for, of Gloucester's tradition, support and the standing it has in the local community and I cannot wait to be a part of it."

WHAT THEY SAID: "We have made some clearly defined and outstanding progress with a group of youngsters this season that has been hugely positive, but alongside that we felt we needed some experience and Iain Balshaw has plenty of that," head coach Dean Ryan.

← Iain Balshaw



SCRUM-HALF Lawson signed a two-year contract from the Edinburgh Gunners. Former Heriots FP player Lawson, who is the son of former Scotland star Alan Lawson and the grandson of commentator Bill McLaren, has scored two tries for Edinburgh and has helped them to third spot in the Celtic League this season.

WHAT THEY SAID: "He is the number three scrum-half in Scotland and has ambitions to move even higher so I believe we have got ourselves a really good player who will only get better – it is another great signing for us," head coach Dean Ryan.

← Rory Lawson



THE 6FT, 6in second row has pledged his future to the Kingsholm club until July 2008 after switching from the Cornish Pirates where he was a key member of the side.

The former Wales A lock, nicknamed 'Bull', had been watched by Gloucester's head coach Dean Ryan and has already impressed during pre-season training.

WHAT HE SAID: "I am 29-years-old and it's a great move for me – what can I say – I am delighted. This is a fantastic opportunity to have a crack at Premiership rugby and to be joining a club of Gloucester's calibre is a great feeling."

WHAT THEY SAID: "He is a big, physical player and will add a lot to the second row options we already have available at the club. It really is good news for us," head coach Dean Ryan.

← Will James



GLOUCESTER beat off the advances of a number of top Premiership clubs to secure the services of McMillan (19), who is regarded as one of the brightest prospects in the country. McMillan is currently at Sheffield Hallam University but is ready to defer his degree in PE and Youth Sport to follow his career at Gloucester.

He scored the winning try for England Under-18s in the AER final against France last season and has been a key member of the Nottingham side in National One this season.

WHAT HE SAID: "It's a huge move for me on and off the field. It will be the first time I will have been involved in a fully professional club and it is something I am massively looking forward to."

WHAT THEY SAID: "I think Ross's signing is just a continuation of the process we started last season by playing and recruiting some of the most talented youngsters in the country. These players have shown they are the future of the club and I am delighted Ross wants to be a part of that."

← Ross McMillan



Remember When...



Elton Moncrieff

Heineken Cup 13.01.01 Gloucester 28, Llanelli 27



Beneath the shadow of the posts, behind a shattered but physically dominant pack, Gloucester staged one late, last assault on Llanelli's line.

Both teams had slugged themselves to a virtual standstill – the crimson warriors on both teams waged a savage war up front – but it was Llanelli who shown the more precision with two tries for Mark Jones.

Gloucester were kept in touch through the boot of Simon Mannix, who chipped away with penalty after penalty before the final act of a thrilling encounter. Possession came back on the Gloucester side of a ruck to scrum-half Elton Moncrieff, who shaped to distribute the ball before opting to drop at goal.

He was too close to the target, but his scuffed kick hit the back of Dafydd Rees-Jones and looped over the bar to settle a

remarkable contest.

Llanelli outside-half Stephen Jones slotted over five penalties and one conversion to give the Scarlets the initiative before Moncrieff struck. Mannix kept the home side ticking with six penalties and a conversion.

Llanelli rued a dropped ball by otherwise excellent prop Martyn Madden with the line in his sight just before half-time.

The Scarlets were also hampered by indiscipline, losing Rees-Jones and Salesi Finau to the sinbin and allowed Mannix numerous attempts at goal.

Gloucester had the better of the first-half, with their superior power up front pegging Llanelli back, but it was the Scarlets who scored the points. Jones



3-2-Watch

Stephen Jones (stand-off)



JONES joined Llanelli in 1996 and was a key member of the Scarlets until 2003/4 season. In his Welsh top-level career, he made more than 200 appearances and scored almost 2,000 points. In 2004 he joined Clermont Auvergne but opted to rejoin Llanelli on a three-year deal this season.

Jones made his international debut for Wales in 1998 against South Africa and is the country's second highest points scorer. In 2005 he was selected for the British Lions tour to New Zealand but lost out in a battle with Jonny Wilkinson. His return to Stradey Park will be key this season.

Alix Popham: (number 8)



THE NUMBER eight has made 17 appearances for Wales and skipped his country at Under-21 level. He was the stand-out performer in the Powergen Cup semi-final against Bath last season as a tough tackling, mobile ball winner.

Will bring with him plenty of experience having had spells with Leeds Tykes, where he made 35 appearances and the Dragons. Is developing a big future and will be key for the Scarlets this season.



“Gloucester had the better of the first-half, with their superior power up front pegging Llanelli back.”

kicked two of his penalties before Mark Jones got his first try.

A powering break by Madden saw the ball fed wide to Dafydd James who switched the ball cleverly inside for his winger to cross. Jones converted and Llanelli held a 13-0 lead.

But Gloucester's pressure, build around the power of the front row and the towering excellence of Ian Jones, told when referee Didier Menee awarded a penalty try after Llanelli pulled down a maul close to their line. Mannix's conversion and a penalty had the home side 10-13 behind at the break. Jones and Mannix exchanged penalties straight after the interval, but Mark Jones' second try looked to have given Llanelli the edge.

Dafydd James broke from the halfway line, drew Terry Fanolua and fed Jones,

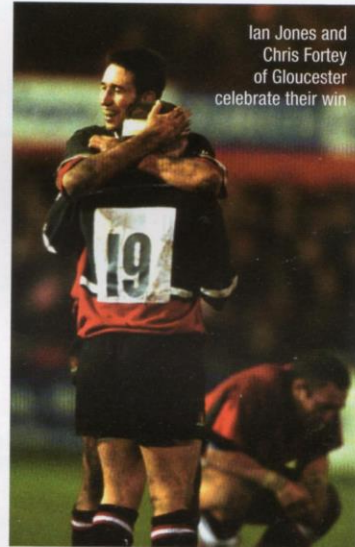
who had the pace and strength to shake off the cover and cross in the corner.

Mannix's boot kept Gloucester in touch with four penalties and with Jake Boer, Kingsley Jones and Steve Ojomoh all battering away in the closing stages, Gloucester salvaged a remarkable victory when Moncrieff's effort snuck over.

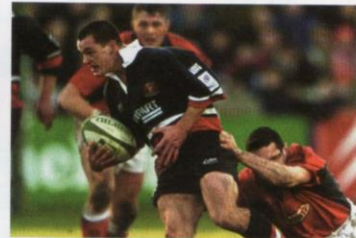
GLOUCESTER: C. Catling, T. Fanolua, J. Little, C. Yates, T. Beim, S. Mannix, E. Moncrieff, T. Woodman, O. Azam, P. Vickery, R. Fidler, I. Jones, J. Boer, K. Jones, S. Ojomoh.
Replacements: A. Gomarsall, B. Hayward, R. Greenslade-Jones, C. Fortey, A. Hazell, A. Eustace, A. Deacon.

LLANELLI: Evans, M. Jones, James, Finau, Proctor, S Jones, Moon, Booth, McBryde, Madden, Cooper, C. Gillies, Wyatt, D. Jones, Quinnell. Replacements: J Davies, M Thomas, Katula, Buckingham, Peel, Lawson, Cardey.

REFEREE: D Menee (France).



Ian Jones and Chris Fortey of Gloucester celebrate their win



Deacon Manu (prop)

DEACON Manu has made 64 Super 14 appearances for the Chiefs following his debut in 2001.

Manu's ability to prop on both sides of the scrum has made him an invaluable asset to the Chiefs. Manu, who was selected as one the NZ Rugby Almanac's five Promising Players of the Year for 2000.

He has also represented New Zealand Maori and will be a key man for the Scarlets in the Celtic League and Heineken Cup this season.



Match Action

Gloucester Line-up

- 15 Rob Thirlby
- 14 James Simpson-Daniel
- 13 Mike Tindall
- 12 Anthony Allen
- 11 Mark Foster
- 10 Ryan Lamb
- 9 Peter Richards
- 1 Patrice Collazo
- 2 Mefin Davies
- 3 Jack Forster
- 4 Jonathan Pendlebury
- 5 Alex Brown
- 6 Peter Buxton
- 7 Andy Hazell
- 8 James Forrester

REPS

- 16 Olivier Azam
- 17 Gary Powell
- 18 Adam Eustace
- 19 Luke Narraway
- 20 Haydn Thomas
- 21 Ludovic Mercier
- 22 James Bailey

London Irish Line-up

- 15 Delon Armitage
- 14 Topsy Ojo
- 13 Mike Catt
- 12 Riki Flutey
- 11 Sailosi Tagicakibau
- 10 Barry Everitt
- 9 Paul Hodgson
- 1 Neal Hatley
- 2 Robbie Russell
- 3 Richard Skuse
- 4 Bob Casey
- 5 Nick Kennedy
- 6 Kieran Roche
- 7 Olivier Magne
- 8 Juan Manuel Leguizamon

REPS

- 16 Michael Collins
- 17 David Paice
- 18 Declan Danaher
- 19 Phil Murphy
- 20 Gonzalo Tiesi
- 21 Ben Willis
- 22 Shane



Gloucester Rugby 36
London Irish 34

European Champions!

Sunday May 21 2006

Ref: Nigel Whitehouse (Wales) Att: 12,053



James Forrester produced a sublime moment of inspirational attacking instinct to score the try that sealed Gloucester's victory in the European Challenge Cup.

His score was even more remarkable, coming as it did following a brilliant step and break from Anthony Allen and feed by Peter Richards, because the number eight still had enough about him in all the mayhem to show great pace in the 115th minute of a clattering final to take the one real opportunity that came Gloucester's way in the final 20 minutes.

The lead swapped hands throughout and when London Irish - stoked to the brim up front - scored late on through Olivier Magne and Robbie Russell, Gloucester had to start all over again after losing a 12 point lead with 11 minutes to go.

But this side, forged by the talismanic qualities of skipper Peter Buxton, the relentless, bone-crushing excellence of Andy Hazell and the giant presence of Alex Brown, raised themselves to land the trophy. There were outstanding contributions from Peter Richards, James Simpson-Daniel, Allen and Mike Tindall as Gloucester out-scored the Irish four tries to three.

With both teams already in the Heineken Cup next season, this one-off match thudded into life immediately and Barry Everitt gave Irish a 6-0 lead with two penalties after seven minutes.

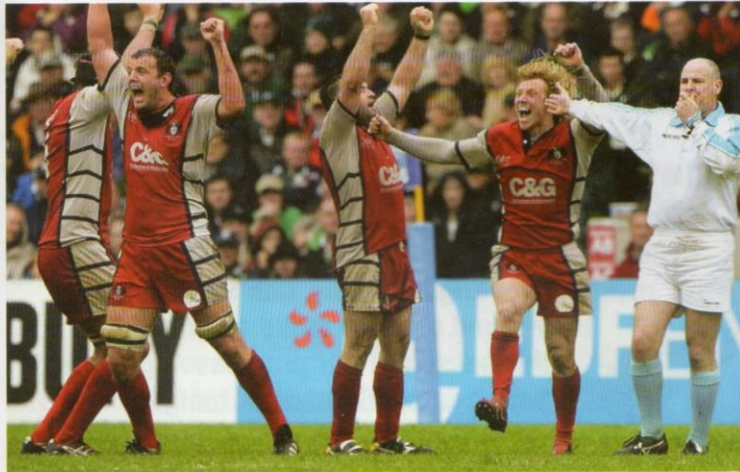
However, Gloucester bounced off the ropes and hit back with their first try.

They maintained possession after Irish had been turned over, Mefin Davies drove into the heart of the Irish defence following a quick free kick by Richards, and when possession came to the short side, Tindall kicked for Mark Foster to out-strip Topsy Ojo for the score.

With the Irish attacking the set-piece, Gloucester needed their wits about them but scored again after 29 minutes. Ryan Lamb, a man who the Irish hunted all afternoon, kicked a penalty to the corner, Brown held the catch and from a powerful drive, Hazell was bundled over to score and extend Gloucester's lead to 15-6.

The points kept coming. Gloucester's lead was eroded when Everitt launched a huge cross-field kick and under pressure, Rob Thirlby failed to control the ball and Delon Armitage scored.





Although Lamb nailed a penalty before the break, Gloucester's 18-13 lead looked a slender one and so it proved when the Irish snapped over a drop-goal immediately after the re-start.

With Juan Manuel Leguizamon and Bob Casey churning through a vast amount of work, Gloucester were always under serious pressure and then came the moment that should have won Gloucester match.

Casey attempted a long pass in midfield but Simpson-Daniel prowled brilliantly, scooped up the bouncing ball and blasted his way to the line to stretch Gloucester's lead to 31-19.

But any thoughts the game was over evaporated almost as quickly as the champagne corks started popping.



Magne was awarded a somewhat dubious looking try after 77 minutes following an avalanche of close range pressure and in the sixth minute of stoppage time, Russell was barrelled over from another shuddering line-out drive to tie the scores at 31-31.

Everitt's conversion would have won the game but he pulled his kick across the face of the sticks and Gloucester could breathe again.

Three points down in extra time, Gloucester knew they needed to keep the ball alive and get possession deep inside the Irish half but when a tackled needed to be made, a Buxton, Davies, Collazo or Tindall got themselves in the road and for sheer guts alone, Gloucester were worthy winners. When the decisive try came, it arrived almost from nothing.

Allen somehow had enough in the tank to break the first line of defence and when Richards came in and fed Forrester, his instinct to chase down what he had served him brilliantly.

With Foster for company, the number eight dived on his hip to send the Gloucester supporters into ecstasy.

Coaches Comment...

Dean Ryan



"It was fantastic - I am thrilled for everyone involved in this team. It

is about winning trophies and I thought we showed tremendous effort and passion - it is great for the club."

Man of the Match...

Andy Hazell

