

Gloucester Rugby

The Official Matchday Programme of Gloucester Rugby

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Gloucester Rugby
v Bath Rugby
02.09.06 15.00

Forrester Fire

The Gloucester number eight looks ahead

Chris Hewett

How times have changed in the west country

Opposition Spotlight

Bath preview, three to watch and squad pen pics

Ryan's Review

All the latest behind the scenes at Kingsholm

Hall Of Fame

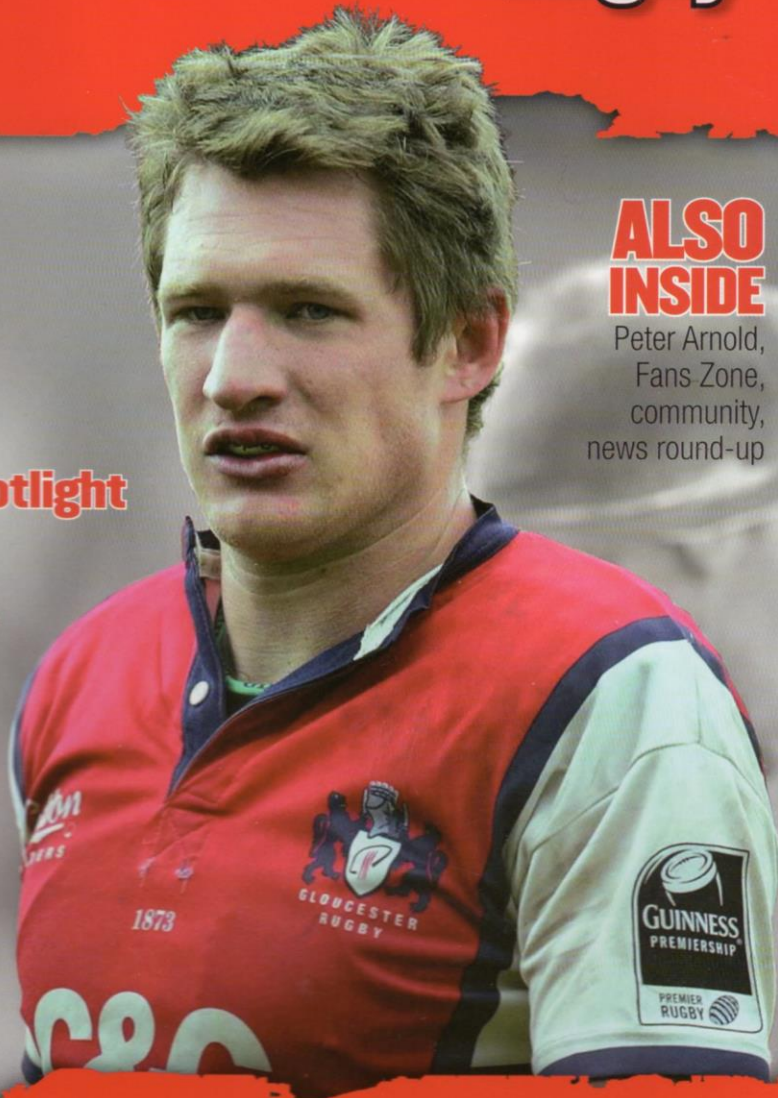
Gloucester Rugby Hall of Fame – John Gwilliam

Get To Know

Marco Bortolami

ALSO INSIDE

Peter Arnold, Fans Zone, community, news round-up



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Captain's Corner

I will start these programme notes today by trying to describe what an honour it is to be named captain of Gloucester on my Guinness Premiership debut.

MAY BE new to the club, but I am already aware of traditions of the great captains the club have produced throughout its history and it is a wonderful feeling to try and join that illustrious list.

Peter Buxton is Gloucester's club captain this season and he has done a fantastic job in pre-season and will have a major part to play in the coming months. I am simply today's matchday captain but it will be a privilege to lead Gloucester onto the field in one of the oldest derby fixtures in England.

I have only been here a short time, but I already understand the passion the people of Gloucester have for rugby and that is very humbling and exciting.

Today we welcome Bath to Kingsholm and the anticipation ahead of this game has steadily risen ever since the fixture list was announced in the summer.

Bath are a fantastically competitive side with a great set of forwards and we respect their capabilities as a side very much,



because their record demands it. If you were here last week for our final pre-season game against Llanelli, you will have seen a side coming together very fast with a great amount of potential. We created chances and played with good intensity and that is very important for our development.

I believe we are entering a very exciting period for Gloucester Rugby and I am delighted to be part of it.

Enjoy the game this afternoon, get right behind the team and roar us to an opening day victory.

Front row seats: Christian Califano, Mefin Davies and Nick Wood prepare to scrummage



in association with
dair*

Match Action



Gloucester Rugby 29
Llanelli Scarlets 22

Forrester ensures pre-season ends on a high

Ref: Sean Davey Att: 5,454

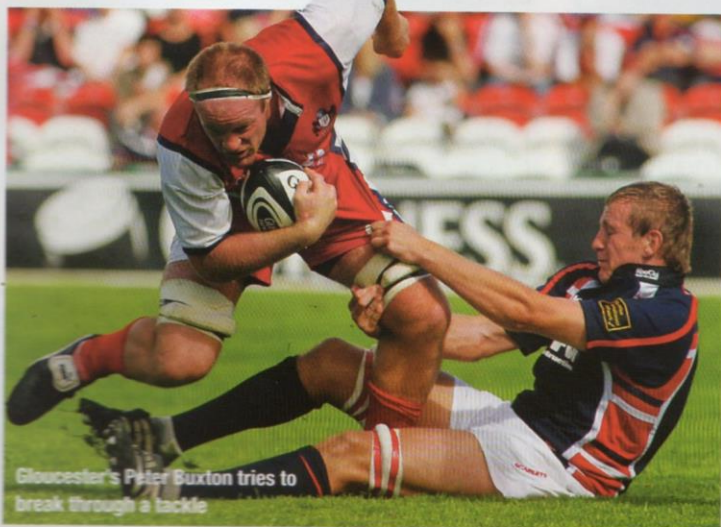
TRIES apiece from James Bailey and James Forrester ensured Gloucester completed their mini-series of pre-season games with a victory over Llanelli last Saturday.

In a contest that was every bit as tight and examining as the scoreline suggests, Gloucester ground out a much-needed victory – forged largely by outstanding contributions from Forrester, Peter Buxton, Marco Bortolami, Willie Walker and Pete Richards.

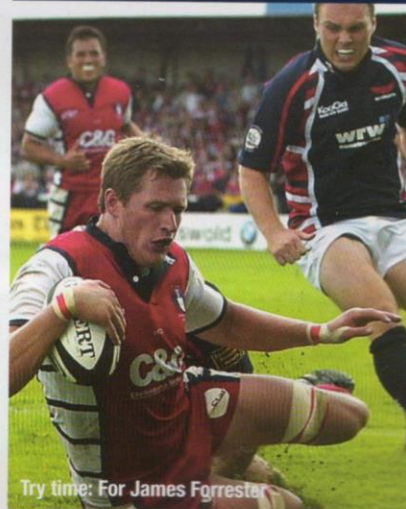
It hinted that although Dean Ryan's squad has its injury problems, Gloucester still look a very useful side when they combine their obvious attacking potential with a touch more composure.

Their first try owed a good deal to a combination of forward power and slick handling. After Walker had driven a penalty to touch, Bortolami claimed the catch and after Gloucester's drive was held, Richards combined with Walker and Rudi Keil sent Bailey under the sticks for the score.

Llanelli had already scored themselves by then through centre Gavin Evans, who was to re-establish Llanelli's lead in the second half. But with Walker kicking superbly at goal, Gloucester sealed the victory when Olivier Azam took a strike against the head and Forrester picked up to beat the cover and score the crucial try.



Gloucester's Peter Buxton tries to break through a tackle



Try time: For James Forrester

Coaches Comment...

Dean Ryan



"I think we saw today a performance with greater intensity and at levels we can expect in the Guinness Premiership. We created plenty of chances and that is really pleasing. When we combine that attacking instinct with a touch more composure, I think you saw the side we are capable of becoming in the long-term."

Man of the Match...

Peter Buxton



Although Forrester grabbed the try, Buxton's work rate, endeavour and ball carrying act as the cement in Gloucester's forward effort.




2006/7 Squad

Gloucester Rugby



Jack Adams
Centre
 Height: 6' 0"
 Weight: 15st 2lb
 DOB: 17.09.86


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Anthony Allen
Centre
 Height: 5' 10"
 Weight: 14st 3lb
 DOB: 01.09.86


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Olivier Azam
Hooker
 Height: 6' 0"
 Weight: 18st 5lb
 DOB: 21.10.74
 INT HON: France

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James Bailey
Wing
 Height: 5' 10"
 Weight: 14st 1lb
 DOB: 05.08.83


Player Sponsor



Adam Balding
Number 8
 Height: 6' 2"
 Weight: 17st 7lb
 DOB: 07.12.79

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Iain Balshaw
Wing/Full-Back
 Height: 5' 10"
 Weight: 14st 7lb
 DOB: 14.04.79
 INT HON: England

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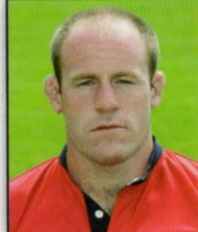
Jake Boer
Flanker
 Height: 6'11"
 Weight: 16st 8lb
 DOB: 01.11.75
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Marco Bortolami
Lock
 Height: 6'6"
 Weight: 17st 2lb
 DOB: 12.06.80
 INT HON: Italy
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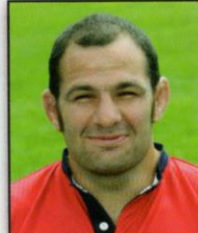
Alex Brown
Lock
 Height: 6'7"
 Weight: 17st 8lb
 DOB: 17.09.79
 INT HON: England
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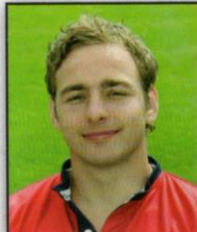
Peter Buxton
Back Row
 Height: 6'3"
 Weight: 17st 5lb
 DOB: 21.08.78
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Christian Califano
Prop
 Height: 5'10"
 Weight: 17st 5lb
 DOB: 16.05.72
 INT HON: France
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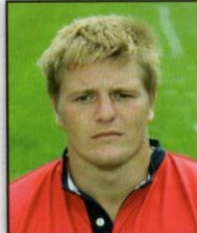
Patrice Collazo
Prop
 Height: 6'0"
 Weight: 17st 2lb
 DOB: 27.04.74
 INT HON: France
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Brad Davies
Outside Half
 Height: 5'9"
 Weight: 14st 1lb
 DOB: 13.02.83
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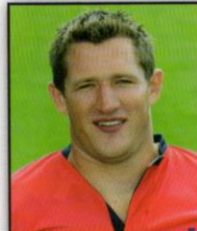
Mefin Davies
Hooker
 Height: 5'10"
 Weight: 16st 5lb
 DOB: 02.09.72
 INT HON: Wales
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Rob Elloway
Hooker
 Height: 6'0"
 Weight: 15st 4lb
 DOB: 09.11.83
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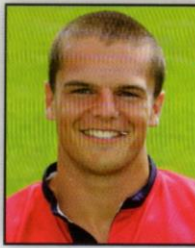
Adam Eustace
Lock
 Height: 6'4"
 Weight: 17st 2lb
 DOB: 09.01.79
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James Forrester
Number 8
 Height: 6'5"
 Weight: 16st 8lb
 DOB: 09.02.81
 INT HON: England
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Jack Forster
Prop
 Height: 6'0"
 Weight: 18st 6lb
 DOB: 19.03.87
 Player Sponsor

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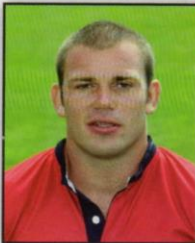
Mark Foster
Wing/Centre
 Height: 6' 1"
 Weight: 14st 3lb
 DOB: 02.09.83

Player Sponsor





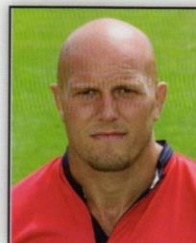
Jon Goodridge
Full Back
 Height: 6' 1"
 Weight: 14st 1lb
 DOB: 26.02.81

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Andy Hazell
Flanker
 Height: 6' 0"
 Weight: 15st 8lb
 DOB: 25.04.78
 INT HON: England

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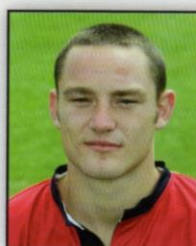
Will James
Lock
 Height: 6' 6"
 Weight: 19st 8lb
 DOB: 22.12.76

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Rudi Keil
Centre
 Height: 6' 1"
 Weight: 14st 1lb
 DOB: 08.12.77

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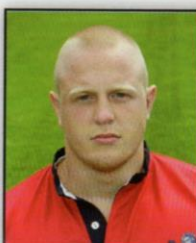
Ryan Lamb
Stand-Off
 Height: 5' 9"
 Weight: 13st 6lb
 DOB: 18.53.86

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Rory Lawson
Scrum Half
 Height: 5' 9"
 Weight: 12st 8lb
 DOB: 12.03.81

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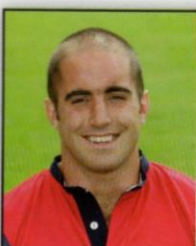
Ross McMillan
Hooker
 Height: 6' 2"
 Weight: 17st 2lb
 DOB: 02.06.87

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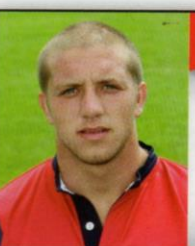
Ludovic Mercier
Stand-Off
 Height: 5' 10"
 Weight: 14st 0lb
 DOB: 01.11.76

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James Merriman
Flanker
 Height: 6' 0"
 Weight: 14st 7lb
 DOB: 17.01.84

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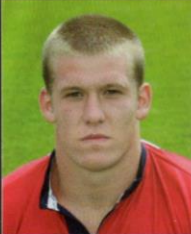
Dean Miller
Flanker
 Height: 6' 3"
 Weight: 15st 3lb
 DOB: 13.09.87

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Olly Morgan
Full-Back
 Height: 6' 3"
 Weight: 14st 6lb
 DOB: 03.11.85

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Luke Narraway

Back Row

Height: 6' 3"
Weight: 15st 4lb
DOB: 07.09.83

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HARTBURY RUGBY





Carlos Nieto

Prop

Height: 6' 1"
Weight: 17st 2lb
DOB: 28.04.76

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Jonathan Pendlebury

Lock

Height: 6' 5"
Weight: 18st 6lb
DOB: 15.01.83

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Peter Richards

Scrum Half

Height: 5' 10"
Weight: 13st 8lb
DOB: 10.03.78

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Terry Sigley

Prop

Height: 6' 2"
Weight: 14st 3lb
DOB: 01.09.86

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James Simpson-Daniel

Wing

Height: 5' 11"
Weight: 14st 1lb
DOB: 30.05.82

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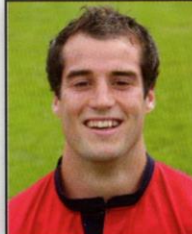



Rob Thirlby

Wing/FB

Height: 6' 2"
Weight: 14st 1lb
DOB: 02.03.79

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Haydn Thomas

Scrum Half

Height: 5' 8"
Weight: 12st 4lb
DOB: 18.10.78

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Mike Tindall

Centre

Height: 6' 2"
Weight: 15st 8lb
DOB: 18.10.78
INT HON: England

Player Sponsor
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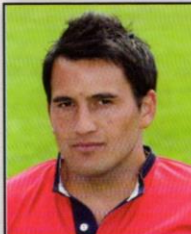



Dan Tuohy

Lock

Height: 6' 6"
Weight: 17st 0lb
DOB: 18.06.85

Player Sponsor
HARTBURY RUGBY




Willie Walker

Stand-Off

Height: 5' 10"
Weight: 14st 0lb
DOB: 19.05.78

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Nick Wood

Prop

Height: 6' 2"
Weight: 17st 2lb
DOB: 09.01.83

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Forrest Fire

He scored the try that landed the European Challenge Cup last season and then missed out on England's tour to Australia because of a shoulder injury. But **James Forrester** is back and means business, as he tells the matchday programme.

ANY GLOUCESTER follower worth his (and her) salt will have particularly fond memories of James Bailey's try against Wasps last season – coming as it did after a bit of James Simpson-Daniel jiggery pokery and harum-scarum left a certain Lawrence Bruno Nero grasping rather forlornly for thin air.

But the singularly most important try for the Kingsholmites last year came in the biggest game of the campaign, which also happened to be the last, at the Stoop in the European Challenge Cup final.

Although a forward was responsible for a large slice of its construction and eventual execution, he runs with a pedigree of a back and has the handling skills to go with them.

When James Forrester, the luxuriously gifted and free-spirited number eight set his long legs sprinting after his own little roller behind London Irish's shattered defence, the odds were on the ball beating his best efforts and rolling harmlessly dead.

But Forrester hunted it down – putting behind him the best part of 100 minutes incendiary confrontation against the Irish to seal Gloucester's trophy glory.

It said a lot about the man, of where he has come from and where he wants to be. Against Llanelli last weekend he was at it again – linking play with outrageous over-head passes,

twisting and turning out of contact and popping up with odd 40-metre try for good measure in a performance that hinted at more glories to come.

However, there is more to him these days than the freakishly gifted, skinny, beanpole who burst onto the scene almost half a decade ago.

A shoulder injury kept him out of England's summer tour to Australia and he spent the time cocooned away in a gym, building himself up physically for the forthcoming hostilities, both domestically and internationally.

So, will all the hard work pay off? "I certainly hope so," Forrester said. "I obviously didn't tour and spent time building myself up physically and hopefully it will all work out.

"I already think it's the right decision, I feel strong and more powerful and I am really quite excited about this season."

It hardly looks as though Forrester gets excited about anything. He re-defines the word 'laidback' but he is inwardly driven and hugely determined.

"We have a very competitive squad at Gloucester and my first job is to cement a place there and try and make the number eight jersey my own," he said. "I accept that I might not play every game but I am really enjoying my rugby and sometimes it



Player Interview

08



Position: Number 8
Height: 6ft 5in
Weight: 16st 8lb
DOB: 9/2/81



get to know:

1): Describe yourself in three words: Laidback, thoughtful, honest

2): If you were not a professional rugby player, what would you be doing now? I am not totally sure. I was half-way through a course at university in history and sociology so I might finish that.

3): How do you like to relax? Reading, skiing – although I am not able to do much of that these days – and walking my dog.

4): Favourite holiday destination? It has to be Thailand

5): Who is your favourite player? Former All Black Christian Cullen.

6): What are your best moments in the sport? That has to be winning the two cups with Gloucester – both fantastic experiences.

“We have loads of ability within the squad and it’s great being around it. There is a lot of pressure but I feel energised and ready to try and get even better, which has to be the aim of everybody.”

takes a lot for me to say that.

“We have loads of ability within the squad and it’s great being around it. There is a lot of pressure, but I feel energised and ready to try and get even better, which has to be the aim of everybody.”

Forrester’s physique has morphed. He has added more than a stone in muscle mass without appearing to lose that searing change of pace and direction. It has made him more than able to go tow-to-toe in the tight phases of the contest, where bigger men like Dallaglio and Martin Corry earn their corn.

Although both men are savagely competitive, it is hard to believe they can accomplish some of the things Forrester gets away with. Throw in his line-out capabilities and he is developing into the real package.

“The key is that I feel a lot better physically and that can only be a benefit. I cannot say how much I am relishing this season.

“It is difficult to put my finger on what has not gone right in the past but I am looking forward to the extra responsibility as a senior player because we have to stand up and play well.”

Since Forrester joined the club only Simpson-Daniel, Andy Hazell and Adam Eustace remain in the squad as a new group of exciting, young and gifted individuals cut their teeth at the top end of the game.

“These guys have their feet on the floor but they are the future of the club and it is great watching them come through,” Forrester said. “I have no idea how many people may or may not be tipping us to do well this season.

“All I know is that the squad is confident, has worked very hard and is totally ambitious to succeed. It is a great feeling to

be a part of it and I cannot wait to get started.”

He might appear relaxed and laidback, but beneath his exterior, Forrester’s fire burns as strongly as ever to succeed – not only for Gloucester but for the white of England as well.



Ryan's Review

The **European Challenge Cup** winners start the Guinness Premiership campaign against **Bath Rugby** today and head coach **Dean Ryan** previews the season ahead...



Gloucester's pre-season was tough and not without its casualties but what did you learn from last Saturday's victory over Llanelli?

DR: We needed to replicate the type of intensity we will face in the Guinness Premiership during pre-season. I felt that in our first two

games – because we were starting out and because we were trying a lot of new players in a system that was new to them all – we were understandably lacking the type of presence I was looking for.

But last weekend, with key individuals like Andy Hazell, Peter Richards and Peter Buxton back in the side, guys who were with us last season and know what to expect, I was delighted with the intensity we created, the chances that came off the back of that and the confidence that began to flow.

I think our three games against top quality opposition will stand us in really good stead in the weeks and months to come. I am really happy with the group as a whole because their work ethic and desire to succeed is astronomical. When we play at a certain pace and learn to be more clinical, we

will be getting where we want to be.



Understandably, there have been injuries. What is the situation with Carlos Nieto, Ryan Lamb and James Simpson-Daniel?

DR: There is a chance we will begin the season without three key individuals and that is not only disappointing for the team but disappointing for the players themselves.

Carlos is the sort of guy we want at the club. To my mind, he was the form tighthead in the Six Nations Championship last season and is the calibre of player we need around. He had a cyst that needed an operation but is recovering very well. I feel for him because he is a player at a new club and is desperate to do well. Sinbad had an operation last week on his collarbone and has had 10 days away from the club.



“I have said it before and I will say it again that the Premiership is **getting tougher** and more examining by the season.”



Everybody knows what a fantastic game-breaker he is and we will miss him. He has picked up high-profile injuries on the eve of England games but his record for Gloucester is fantastic and hopefully he will be with us back soon.

Ryan twisted an ankle more than a fortnight ago and is doing okay. But although he will miss the start of the season which is a shame for us and him.



Bath are our visitors this afternoon, could there have been a more difficult start to the Premiership season?

DR: I don't think it matters who you play in the Premiership and whatever stage of the season. I have said it before and I will say it again that the Premiership is getting tougher and more examining by the season.

We know about Bath's obvious qualities and we have prepared well. It will be strange to play them on the opening day of the season but I am positive we will have an incessant Kingsholm noise lifting the roof today and we hope to respond to it.

I am sure it will be a typical derby and that is something we relish.



There will be players making their Guinness Premiership debuts for Gloucester today, how impressed have you been with the new recruits?

DR: I cannot speak highly enough for the attitude of the entire squad and that obviously includes the new players. The attitude, desire and work ethic has been first class in pre-season. But I am delighted by all the new additions. We have high-quality individuals

– not just as players but as people – and that is fantastic.

People will have seen what a quality individual and athlete Marco Bortolami is and he will give us fantastic leadership qualities. Christian Califano came in as an individual who we believed could aid the development of guys like Jack Forster, but I have been hugely impressed with everything he has done on and off the field – he will play a significant role for us.

Everybody is aware what a special runner Iain Balshaw is and we saw glimpses of that last weekend. Willie Walker has great skills and a first-class attitude and I am sure there is more to come from Will James and Rory Lawson in this environment because they are both individuals who have thrived on the extra responsibility at a higher level.



Gloucester RUGBY



Bath RUGBY

	Olly MORGAN	15	Full Back	15	Michael STEPHENSON	
	Iain BALSCHAW	14	Right Wing	14	Andy HIGGINS	
	Mike TINDALL	13	Centre	13	Ryan DAVIS	
	Anthony ALLEN	12	Centre	12	Olly BARKLEY	
	Mark FOSTER	11	Left Wing	11	David BORY	
	Willie WALKER	10	Fly Half	10	Shaun BERNE	
	Peter RICHARDS	9	Scrum Half	9	Nick WALSHE	
	Nick WOOD	1	Prop	1	David FLATMAN	
	Mefin DAVIES	2	Hooker	2	Lee MEARS	
	Christian CALIFANO	3	Prop	3	Duncan BELL	
	Marco BORTOLAMI ©	4	Lock	4	Steve BORTHWICK ©	
	Alex BROWN	5	Lock	5	Danny GREWCOCK	
	Peter BUXTON	6	Flanker	6	Peter SHORT	
	Andy HAZELL	7	Flanker	7	Michael LIPMAN	
	James FORRESTER	8	No 8	8	Gareth DELVE	

Replacements

	Olivier AZAM	16	Substitute 1	16	Rob HAWKINS	
	Jack FORSTER	17	Substitute 2	17	David BARNES	
	Will JAMES	18	Substitute 3	18	Isaac FEANATI	
	Luke NARRAWAY	19	Substitute 4	19	Rob FIDLER	
	Rory LAWSON	20	Substitute 5	20	Andy WILLIAMS	
	Ludovic MERCIER	21	Substitute 6	21	Chris MALONE	
	Rudi KEIL	22	Substitute 7	22	Joe MADDOCK	



Change of identity

Chris Hewett is one of the most respected rugby journalists in the country. Although he lives in Bath, he is also has a secret desire to become a Shedhead and is convinced a leopard really can change its spots.

THE QUESTION has been asked in the super-snooty environs of the Recreation Ground - or Ground Zero, as it has become known to the good folk of Gloucester - for many years. Why, in the name of all that is holy, would a rugby aficionado buy a season ticket at Kingsholm when, for the sake of an hour's drive, he or she might sample some proper entertainment at Bath?

Many Bristolians learned the lesson long ago, flocking in their hundreds along the A4 on a Saturday afternoon rather than slum it at a half-deserted Memorial Ground. How come the penny failed to drop with the Shedheads? Were they so agoraphobic that they could not handle the sight of the ball moving beyond the scrum-half? Were they under some delusion that they required a passport to visit the Georgian City? Or was it a case of them being plain stubborn?

It now appears they were right all along. This season, Kingsholm should be one of the hot-spots of English sport. (Be there, or be square). By comparison, the Rec promises to be as cold as charity. (Be there if Waitrose is closed). Gloucester are in the Heineken Cup - Leinster, Agen and Edinburgh are safely on the

fixture list, offering three high peaks of competitive argy-bargy - while Bath are stuck in the foothills of the other European competition, a piece of business Gloucester took care of back in May before moving on to bigger and better things.

Gloucester are a team in the ascendant, newly armed with a back division full of bright young things and a tight five bolstered by a couple of Test-class recruits from Azzurri country. They are shooting at the stars. For their part, Bath are rebuilding for the second time in nine months. It will be no surprise today if they arrive in a dumper truck and take the field in hard hats.

How the worm has turned. During their golden decade, the Recites ripped the you-know-what out of Gloucester, deriding their antediluvian 10-man approach while glorying in their own brilliance with ball in hand. The two sides are still playing different games, but on the evidence of last season, the boot is firmly attached to the other foot.

Ryan Lamb and Anthony Allen, two major new talents in the Kingsholm back-line, were the talks of the town last season; Olly Morgan and Mark Foster hinted at riches to come; Jack

Adams, a centre not yet out of his teens, will bring something of his own to the party when he returns to match fitness following some serious hassle of the orthopaedic variety. Bath know a thing or two about back play, even if their current backs have barely seen the ball these last few years. Yet it is reasonable to suggest that they never produced this quality of player in this volume, even in their pomp.

Throw James Simpson-Daniel and Peter Richards, whose impersonation of Roadrunner on chemicals grows more uncanny by the week, into the mix - not to mention a certain Iain Balshaw, who chose Gloucester ahead of Bath, his old club, when he joined the exodus from Leeds - and there is one hell of a lot going on between numbers 9 and 15. Assuming Carlos Nieto and the wonderful Marco Bortolami settle properly at Castle Grim and churn out some much-needed ball, anything could happen. Who knows? Bath may even widen their own game a little. There were signs of this during Brian Ashton's

too many for the Shed - but times have changed. If professionalism democratised rugby as a whole, the Premiership has democratised west country rugby in particular.

These age-old derby matches will never lose their hard edge - the Bath pack, still a unit capable of inspiring fear and loathing in equal measure, will ensure as much. But if Meehan and Bakewell go at least some of the way down "Ashton Boulevard" and find ways of allowing the likes of Olly Barkley to indulge in a little self-expression, there may soon be two local teams equipped to play an all-round game. And that would be good for the Premiership, not least because it would stop certain highly influential people bad-mouthing its contribution to the England cause.

Memories are short. Gloucester are playing with far more abandon and showing infinitely more in the creativity department than Martin Johnson, and company displayed in winning the World Cup three years ago, yet

"Memories are short. Gloucester are playing with far more abandon and showing more in the creativity department than Martin Johnson and company in winning the World Cup three years ago."



all-too-brief second sojourn at the Rec, and the new coaches, Steve Meehan and Mark Bakewell, have arrived on the banks of the Avon from France talking about "adventure" and promising to be "conceptual" in their approach.

Bath supporters once assumed such words to be outside the vocabulary of mere Gloucester types - three syllables was blithely considered one

somehow, the blood-and-thunder league on which England based their seizure of the Webb Ellis Trophy is now being spurned as the tournament that will undermine their defence of it. It is, self-evidently, a cowpat of an argument. Those at the top of the rugby ladder have always talked their fair share of balls, but if they pondered this subject for more than a nanosecond before spouting forth, they would understand that England scooped the jackpot because of the Premiership, not in spite of it. Ask Johnson.

Should Gloucester, perhaps more than any side in the country, build strongly on the foundations laid during the second half of last season, it remains just about possible that lightning will strike twice. Here's hoping.



Peter Arnold

He has been an ever-present in the matchday programme and firm fans' favourite. Peter Arnold is back today with another quality contribution.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF IT SO FAR?

GOOD WIN last Saturday. True, the Scarlets did incur the ref's displeasure to the extent of two yellow cards and one red, but at least they weren't accused of ball tampering.

That said, I can't say that I get too excited by the pre-season games. To start with, we humble spectators don't really know what's going on. We can't be sure what the coaches are trying to get out of the match, or just what they're expecting from the players.

We also have to bear in mind that the opposition has an agenda of its own. Put the two together, and you have a recipe for some mighty peculiar results. The score at the end of these matches doesn't usually mean a lot.

Having said all that, our pre-season programme does, as far as we know, seem to have revealed a very satisfactory progression, culminating in a match of high intensity, possibly resembling a Heineken Cup match.

There are plusses for the spectators, too. We do get to see how the young players and the recently arrived squad members fit into the scheme of things. It's also

interesting to watch players we think we know being given a run-out in unfamiliar positions. Is that a pointer for things to come? Time will reveal all.

The downside is that we do tend to accumulate an injury list before the season has even started. Most of our walking wounded don't seem to have suffered too badly, but we do have to marvel at the continuing ill luck of James Simpson-Daniel. I'm afraid that we have all become resigned to having to do without him at frequent intervals, and it is to be hoped that, this time, we can look forward to an extended period of watching his undoubted mercurial genius.

It would be a tragedy if he ever became just another three-quarter in the cause of consciously trying to avoid injury.

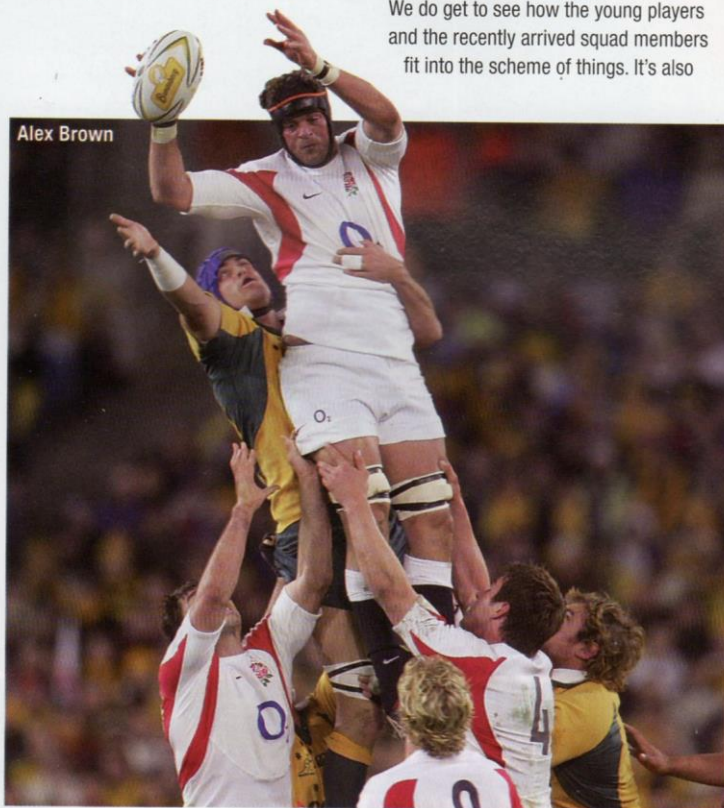
However, our relatively lengthy injury list has revealed that we now have considerably greater strength in depth than has sometimes been the case.

Now we're down to the real stuff, and I'm looking forward to the season enormously.

SUMMER BLUES

THE LUCKIEST man Melbourne when England played Australia last June was undoubtedly Alex Brown. I thought that his treatment by Andy Robinson was unjust but it did, at least mean that he was spared involvement in what was a pretty inept display by England.

He had impressed a lot of people the previous week, by his activities around the park, but one has to admit that the line-out didn't exactly prosper. No disgrace



Alex Brown

Peter Richards



“Peter Richards was his usual gritty self, and tried his heart out.”

in that: A fair few locks around the world have suffered at the hands of the Australian second row, and I suppose that his demotion was on the cards as a result, but it didn't seem right to deny him a place on the bench. After all, Louis Deacon had looked fairly anonymous when he replaced Alex in the first match.

I suppose you could say that Simpson-Daniel was even luckier by missing both matches, but that thought is tempered by the fact that he had a very painful leg to contend with.

As for the other lads, I think that Iain Balshaw showed glimpses of his very special talents.

Peter Richards was his usual gritty self, and tried his heart out. I am sure Mr Redpath

will be working hard with him over the coming months and the hot breath on his neck from Rory Lawson and Haydn Thomas will certainly give him an added incentive. Nevertheless, I should think that Harry Ellis will have been watching with a certain degree of trepidation. If nothing else, an Australian tour does stiffen your sinews if you have anything about you, and Pete will have learned a thing or two from the experience.

So where now for England? Wish I knew. It's all very well for Andy Robinson to point to the lads left behind on that trip, but they didn't actually cover themselves in glory in last year's Six Nations, did they?

The new coaching team has hardly had time to settle in, to be fair, and I see that Mr Robinson is now calling for a “root and

branch” shake up of the England set-up. You will have your own thoughts about where any such purge should start. It will be interesting to see how such a strong character as Rob Andrew fits into the scheme of things.

As I've said before, the ways of selectors are like the peace of God. They passeth all understanding, and the mixture of talents at the top at the moment doesn't seem likely to make them any more comprehensible.

ZARA AT THE ZENITH

I NEVER thought I'd be writing about three-day eventing in these pages, but Zara Phillips' heroics in Germany last weekend make it an imperative just at the moment. Mike Tindall certainly won't want to be outshone, but even his talents, which have often made him an unsung hero in the backline, will have to be honed to their sharpest to match a gold medal in the World Equestrian Championships.

As they say: “Now follow that!”

Pat Sanderson



Hall of Fame with Dave King

GLOUCESTER GREATS: John Gwilliam

Volume 1 - Issue 1

JOHNS Gwilliam is revered in the history of Welsh rugby after leading the Red Dragon to victory over the All Blacks from his favourite number eight position.

The year was 1953 and the Welsh team was packed with household names of that decade: Cliff Morgan, Bleddyn Williams, Lewis Jones, Ken Jones and Roy John. The fact that John Gwilliam had previously celebrated a most momentous achievement by leading Wales to two Grand Slams in both 1950 and 1952 ensued that in his native country he was regarded as one of the Principality's finest ever captains.

John's move to Kingsholm in 1952 was regarded as a coup - not only within the club itself but also in the wider circle of the game of rugby union.

The inspirational Gwilliam was easily recalled by Gloucester Rugby legend, Peter Ford.

"John was a tremendous number eight who was equally effective at lock," he said. "He arrived at Kingsholm when Bob Hodge was the club captain and of course Bob was also a number eight. We had an embarrassment of riches really.

"John was a very religious man, first class on the field of play and also away from the playing area. I made a friend of John, who recommended me to the England selectors and when I was actually selected to represent my country he was the first to congratulate me.

"John was a very strong player with very large hands, hence his nickname of 'Bucket', a man with strong principles and very much a family man. In all, over a period



of two to three seasons at the club he must of played upward of 40 to 50 matches.

"I can readily recall the abuse he received from a Neath crowd who were annoyed that John had replaced one of their players in the Welsh team and how he dealt with a certain player who verbally abused him."



"I can readily recall the abuse he received from a Neath crowd who were annoyed that John had replaced one of their players in the Welsh team and how he dealt with a certain player who verbally abused him. I had fond memories of John when he was here at Kingsholm and still retain them to this day."

His move came as a surprise to the Welsh Rugby Union, and yet John was a player who had only made sporadic appearances for Welsh clubs, Newport, Pontypridd and Llanelli. In fact his move to Kingsholm came from a base north of the border in Scotland. That base was Glensalmond where John was a school teacher. He was born in 1924, the son of a mining surveyor, and life in Pontypridd between



the wars was economically tough. Degrees of poverty hung over the area and so his father Bert Gwilliam sought his mothers help in setting up a business in the town of Monmouth.

The move came when John was 11. He had attained acclaim within the Gwilliam household by entering Pontypridd Grammar School after passing the eleven plus examination. It was only after a few weeks there that he moved to Monmouth's Direct Grant semi-public school from his local grammar school.

In his early days at Monmouth it was cricket that dominated his life. John recorded two centuries in one day, a rare achievement by any standard. One was for his House XI and then one for Monmouth Town.

They were forerunners to John being invited to a trial by Glamorgan C.C.C. However, it was the winter game of rugby union that eventually dominated the young Welshman's life.

As captain of a successful Monmouth XV in 1940 he soon attracted the attention of Newport. He was asked to play in a few matches for the Rodney Parade Club before attending Trinity College at Cambridge University.

That move to Cambridge came after the outbreak of World War Two. John was 18 in 1941 when he enrolled at one of England's premier universities.

He was to enjoy two spells at university which was interspersed with military service. In his first spell he struggled to make an overall impression. He only appeared once for the university team. His rugby was confined to appearances for the Sixty Club, the university second XV.

The early 1940's was a tumultuous



period in Gwilliam's personal life as he entered Sandhurst Military College where he eventually became commissioned into the Royal Tank Regiment. He saw action in France and Germany as a Tank Commander. He actually landed on the Normandy Beaches, albeit, behind the original assault.

At the end of the War, John returned to play again for Newport. The still relatively young Welshman then returned to Cambridge University for a second phase.

He completed a wish to obtain a 'Blue' and appeared in two Varsity matches. In 1947 Cambridge enjoyed a 6-0 victory but in 1948, John was in a losing side when Oxford exacted revenge 14-8.

In 1949 Gwilliam was deemed to have performed well enough in his History Tripos to be offered a position at Trinity College, Glenalmond in Scotland.



Hall of Fame...

It was from his new base in Scotland that he enjoyed regular outings with Edinburgh Wanderers.

It was from here that the famed lock forward who was equally adept at number eight moved to Kingsholm.

The move came as a complete surprise in Welsh Rugby Union circles. For having obtained teaching posts in Scotland and England he sought to pursue his playing career away from the confines of Wales. It was in 1952 that John Gwilliam decided to come south.

He had begun to find the travelling

between Wales and Scotland tedious. The journey to visit family in Lydney and Llanelli was also time consuming.

Therefore, a move to his native south Wales or southern England became a priority. His decision obviously alerted most of the Welsh clubs, in particular Llanelli for whom he had made the odd appearance in the past. Pontypool and Newport were also mentioned to be interested in recruiting the Welsh captain.

In total John spent three seasons here at Kingsholm. During that time he was able to meet many of his international

“In total John spent three seasons here at Kingsholm. During that time he was able to meet many of his international colleagues as Welsh clubs were prevalent on the club fixture list.”



colleagues as Welsh clubs were prevalent on the club fixture list.

An 8-0 win over Welsh giants Cardiff in February 1953 was a highlight of his Gloucester career. John retired from first class rugby in 1954.

He subsequently moved to London where he joined the Staff of Dulwich College in London.

He completed his educational posts when he was appointed Headmaster of Birkenhead School. It was here that John spent twenty-five years from 1963 to 1988.

John and his wife Pegi had five children and when last heard of he was residing in Llandfairfechon where they were enjoying retirement in a pleasant small village on the coast between Conway and Bangor.

Fan Zone

with Bob Fenton

They are the games we love to hate – **the local derby**. Regular Shed dweller **Bob Fenton** turns the clock back to unearth a cup classic that he hopes can inspire today's Gloucester vintage to victory...

WELL, THERE are probably easier ways to start a season than with a first up clash with your nearest and dearest rivals, but that's what we have today. Bath at home, first day of the season... it doesn't come much bigger or better than that.

Forget all those manufactured 'London' derbies (Wycombe versus Reading or Watford against the only team in London) that are used to sell a few seats at Twickenham, this one is the real deal.

It's as much a clash of cultures as it is of rugby – the fancy Beau Brummell dandy's from Bath against their more workmanlike near neighbours, or more recently the Shamaturism that was (allegedly) rife at Bath against the more ethical stance taken by the men from Gloucester.

One of the great things about derbies is the chance to put one over your fiercest rivals on their own turf. It's safe to say that this

has not been something that Gloucester have been particularly good at. While Bath have enjoyed some pretty regular success at Kingsholm, the same cannot be said about our record down at the Rec.

I've lost count of the times I have been there thinking '... this is going to be the one...' only to make the journey home in sullen silence, broken only by the need to curse a referee, a bad decision or a missed tackle. There has, though, been one exception to the rule.

You have to go back a few years to find it – to 4th November, 2000, to be precise, but win we did – a 24-18 victory in the fourth round of Tetley Bitter Cup. The first win at the Rec by the men from Gloucester since Noah started constructing his Arc. Well OK, since 1971 but it seemed a lot longer.

It's probably fair to say that the level of animosity on the field had dulled by the

time that game was played. After all we had installed ex-Bath scrum-half Richard Hill as coach by then, and the team that took the field on that day featured Steve Ojomoh and Ed Pearce, both of whom had previously plied their trade for the men in blue, white and black.

The days of players like Mike Teague keeping a Bath jersey in the cab of his truck to clean his boots after a days work on a building site were becoming a thing of the past. But for the supporters who made the journey down the A46, this meant nothing, the wounds were still raw from previous defeats, and it was about time we got that all important away win there.

The portents for an away victory were not too good come match day. For a start, our coach St Philippe Andre, decided that commentating for French TV on some French international in Paris was a bit more important than travelling to the Rec. Secondly he made the decision that the cup was a lower priority than the league or the Heineken Cup for the season and had decided to rest star players like Ian Jones, Jason Little, Kingsley Jones and a few others.

Add to that some pretty indifferent away form and you could be forgiven for making the journey more in hope than expectation.

The first half was a pretty scrappy affair as both sides struggled to get any meaningful possession. Phil Vickery saw yellow for what was judged to be a late tackle on Shaun Berne, and Andy Hazell was producing a one-man super show to stop Bath getting any kind of momentum. The home side were away out in front though, courtesy of Jon Preston's boot they were





“**Gloucester** hit the accelerator and ripped Bath apart. With **Andy Hazell** switching from defensive super man to offensive unstoppable force...”

12–0 up with a few seconds of the first half left to play. We got back into it courtesy of Byron Hayward who managed to scramble over for a try which he then converted to close the gap.

Two more Preston penalties put the home side 11 points in front, but rather than collapsing to defeat as many would expect Gloucester hit the accelerator and ripped Bath apart. With Andy Hazell switching from defensive super man to offensive unstoppable force we rattled up 17 unanswered points.

First Hayward – probably only playing after Simon Mannix had turned in a mediocre performance at Colomiers the previous week – landed a penalty to take his and Gloucester’s tally to double figures, four minutes later the gap was down to one point.

From a line-out, the forwards drove, Tom Beim came in from the left wing and, from the ruck he set up in the middle of the field, Mark Cornwell crashed over for Hayward to convert.

With Bath faltering Gloucester made two changes that would inspire them to even greater efforts, Kiwi scrum-half Elton Moncrieff made way for Andy Gomarsall and Steve Ojomoh, who had almost literally run himself into the ground went off to be replaced by the powerhouse that

was Junior Paramore.

One minute later Beim produced what should have been judged the try of the season. From a scrum on our own 10-metre line, Gloucester wheeled towards the touchline. A clever pass from full-back Chris Catling gave Beim the space he needed to beat his marker. From there, he set off on a 50-metre run that took him past three more would-be tacklers. Byron gleefully stepped up to boot the extra points and put us 6 points clear.



Fan zone...

There was plenty of time for Bath to respond, and respond they did. They rained down attack after attack on the Gloucester line, but every time they managed to get close they coughed up possession. No frills defence saw Gomarsall and Hayward booting the ball as far down the field as humanly possible forcing the home side to attack from deep in their own territory.

Twice they got through and twice last ditch tackles snuffed out any hope of a score. First of all Joe Ewens (remember him) stopped Kevin Maggs, minutes later Iain Balshaw (who does he play for now?) looked certain to seal the match with a late try. Certain, that is, that is if you reckoned without Mr Dependable Chris Catling, 'Crazy Legs' lined him up and hit him with a text book tackle that sent the Bath man crashing to the ground.

When referee Steve Lander blew his whistle for full-time you could have heard the roar from the Gloucester crowd at Kingsholm. Fantastic... a heady mixture of relief and celebration. We could win at the Rec, it was only a matter of time until we did it again. Except we're still waiting...!

For the record, the teams on that day were:

BATH: Perry, Balshaw, Maggs, Berne, A. Adebayo, Catt, Preston, Emms, Regan, Horsman, Haag, Borthwick, G. Thomas, Clarke, N. Thomas. **Replacements:** Thirlby, Mallett, Gabey, Cooper, Long, Cox, Lloyd.

GLOUCESTER: Catling, Jewell, Ewens, Fanolua, Beim, Hayward, Moncrieff, Vickery, Fortey, Deacon, Fidler, Cornwell, Boer, Hazell, Ojomoh. **Replacements:** Gomarsall, Pearce, Paramore, Simpson-Daniel, Greenslade-Jones, Kwisiuk, Sanchez.

A few names you'll recognise, I had to look twice at Mr Kwisiuk – first name Marek, an on-loan hooker Mr Downey tells me.

7th April, 2007... let's do it again then!



"When referee **Steve Lander** blew his whistle for full-time you could have heard the roar from the Gloucester crowd at **Kingsholm.**"