

# Captain's Corner

"We have been able to shape and control games very well in the **Premiership** and we need to take that ability into the **higher level** in the **Heineken Cup.**"

HAVE to say, it is fantastic to be back at Kingsholm and in a Gloucester jersey again.

Since the Saracens game I have been on international duty with Italy and although that has been a fantastic experience, I have missed being in the Gloucester squad, training with the players and being involved with the team.

I was at the game against Bath last weekend and it was great to see us win another west country derby and it brought it home to me how much I have settled in at the club and what it means to the people.

I don't have to explain just what an important match this is for us today. We have been here before against one of the best teams in the competition and today will be no exception.

What is important from our point of view is that Europe does not just become a series of lessons but that we are able to keep the pool alive by gaining our first victory this afternoon.

It is important I don't go over points that have already been talked about but it is vital we take into this afternoon's game the lessons we learnt in the defeats against Leinster and Agen.

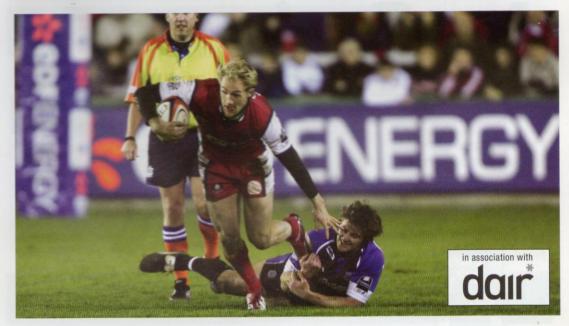
We have been able to shape and control games very well in the Premiership and we need to take that ability into the higher level in the Heineken Cup. Both Leinster and Agen showed us how physical we need to be to compete and now I think we have a better understanding of this competition.

Today, Edinburgh are the visitors to Kingsholm and we respect their capabilities greatly. They have a whole

host of internationals in their squad from Scotland, Australia and New Zealand and have claimed some noticeable scalps away from home already this season, including Munster in the Magners League.

They are one of the form clubs in that competition so we will have to be at our very best to get the result we need.

But a full and passionate Kingsholm is crucial to our hopes, so get behind all of us today and help us to our first Heineken Cup win.



## Ryan's Review

Gloucester are back in the **Heineken Cup** today and head coach **Dean Ryan** previews the crucial clash against **Edinburgh** 

Europe has been a tough experience so far this season; from what position do you start today's game?

**DR:** What is important for me is that we give ourselves the best possible chance of progression from our pool and we appreciate that is going to be exceptionally difficult given our current position.

That means we have to target a positive result this afternoon to give ourselves any chance at all. What we are desperate to avoid is Europe becoming a series of lessons for us later down the line if we don't get the right result.

We definitely want something tangible on next weekend's game and that necessitates winning today. As a group, we are all aware of the lessons we learnt from our first two pool games and since then we have built on that and come into today on the back of some excellent results in November.

I think last weekend was a really good example of how we are able

to manage games in the right way and in the right areas, even if we have made a number of changes. It is that capability we need to display in Europe. If we can, I think we can do well.

How do you take on last Saturday's victory over Bath forward this afternoon in an even tougher environment?

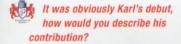
DR: What pleased me last Saturday was that we were able to operate with a clearly defined shape and structure with a team that was not used to playing with each other. It signified to me we are developing in the right way, with the right group of individuals.





What that will be exposed to today is greater physical scrutiny, a more directional threat and better game management. I think it will be a fantastic step for our squad against a team loaded with international players.

Last week we were able to give players who had not featured in the senior squad some rugby and that is vital with the schedule we have coming up. I was particularly pleased for James Merriman and Karl Pryce who both did very well.



DR: : I thought he did very well. He is a massive threat simply by being there but he has the capabilities to an excellent footballer wrapped up in a big man.

Opponents expect him to runstraight over you because he is 6ft 6in and 18 stone, but there is much more to him than that. He showed great awareness for James Merriman's try and offloaded very well.

It was a huge benefit to expose him to senior competition and that will only give him confidence. Karl is now a genuine selection possibility for these games and that will only benefit the strength of the squad.

What is important to remember though is that we are talking about a 20-year-old from rugby league



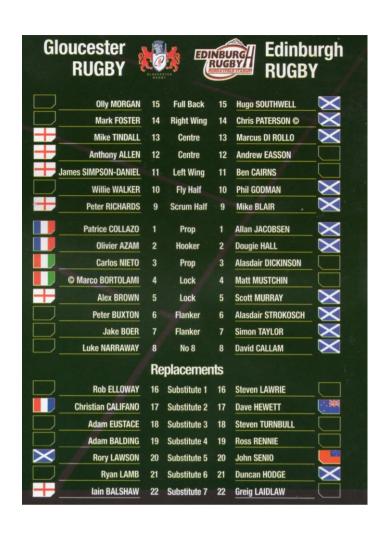
and we are not in a position to get ahead of ourselves and talk of a finished article. We wouldn't do that with a 20-year-old who had only experienced rugby union. He is learning all the time and that is great for us.

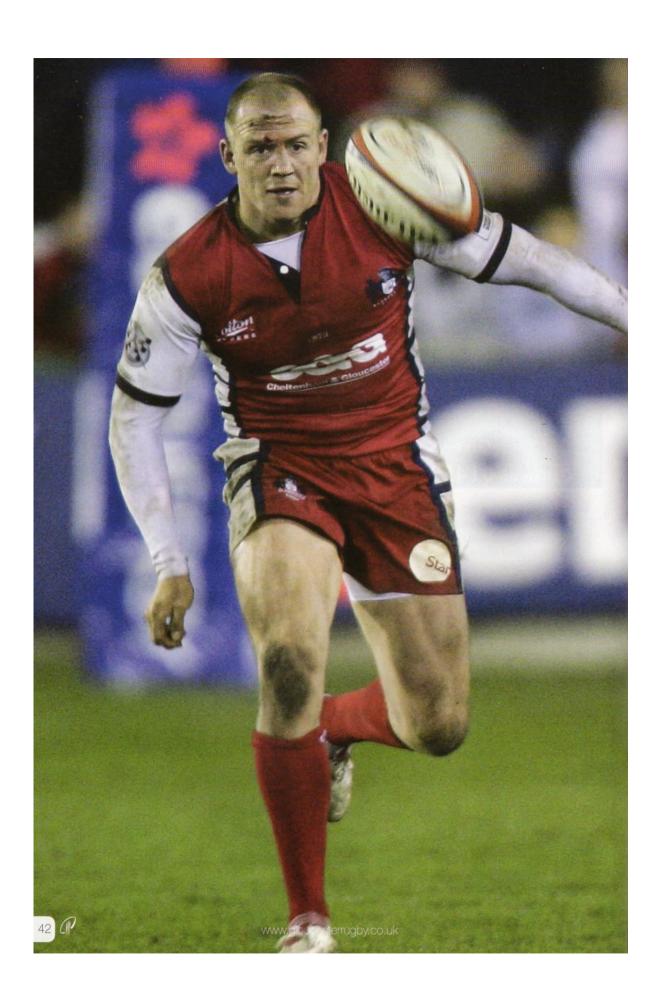
Edinburgh have beaten
Leinster already and ran Agen
close in France – it will be a really
tough ask this afternoon?

DR: Most definitely. People can get pre-occupied with thinking purely about the threat of Leinster and Agen but Edinburgh are a very good side indeed and will believe they have the know-how to get an away win today.

They are littered with Scotland internationals, have a vastly

experienced forward pack and some dynamic backs. In terms of difficulty, this is right up there with any other examination we could face today. Scrum-half Mike Blair is an excellent player, they have guys like centre Marcus Di Rollo, full-back Chris Paterson and number eight Simon Taylor which gives them quality all-round. In terms of squad strength, they are right up there with anyone else.





### Iron Mike spells I out Euro mission

Gloucester and England centre Mike Tindall is back from injury and raring to go. Today, he will forge a midfield partnership with Anthony Allen against Edinburgh and as Steve Cotton reports, knows only a win will do.

IKE TINDALL has never shirked a challenge in his life - and he is not willing to give up on Gloucester's Heineken Cup campaign just yet.

Maybe it is the Ridings granite in him, maybe it is simply the way he approaches life and rugby, but the England centre remains positive about his side's hopes of reaching the knockout stages in the most competitive and questioning club competition on the planet - even though he appreciates they will need to win their four remaining Pool Two matches to get there – a task that is already an exceptionally difficult task.

He spoke to the Western Daily Press this week clearly sporting the pains of war – scars are spread across his already beaten up features – but it shows the way he plays the game, always on the edge, totally full-on and committed to his team.

But Heineken Cup defeats away at Leinster and home to Agen, when Tindall was still recovering from a calf injury, have left Gloucester propping up the pool - but success in their double header against Edinburgh, which starts with today's clash at Kingsholm, can go a long way to keeping them in the chase for a quarter-final spot.

And while optimistic, Tindall is also bluntly realistic about the enormity of the challenge facing Gloucester, not just this weekend but in the three pool matches that follow.

"We can still get out of this group if we win every game," said the Yorkshireman. "Leinster are playing Agen twice now, so if one of them wins one and one of them wins the other - and we win both of our games - ourselves and Leinster will be on two wins from four and Agen will be on three.

"Then if we beat Agen away we will be on three wins, the same as them, so it will come down to Leinster at home to see who goes through. So we've got to win every

"We've made it tough for ourselves by losing our home game against Agen, but now we've got to go and win our last four games.

"If we can get a good win this weekend, it puts a seed of doubt in



ayer Intervier

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Position: Centre
Height: 6'2"
Weight: 15st 8lb

their minds for next weekend too, so this is a massive game for us."
Gloucester came into this season's Heineken Cup unbeaten in the Premiership and with high hopes of establishing themselves among Europe's elite after winning last season's second-tier European Challenge Cup on the back of the performances of the bright young things of the English game.

But as Tindall concedes, they have not yet done themselves justice in the main competition, particularly at home to Agen, when they failed to come to terms with the French side's power and physicality – two of Tindall's watch-words.

Now they have an ideal opportunity to go some way to putting that right, albeit against one of the most gifted and under-rated teams in the competition.

"We haven't really stepped up to the plate yet in the Heineken Cup," said Tindall.

"We had enough opportunities to score against Leinster, but they

were just very clinical while we made mistakes. We've just got to stick to what we are doing and it'll come right.

"We have played some good rugby since, we have only lost once in the league, so if we can get a good win this weekend hopefully it can set us up for a heavy month of rugby."

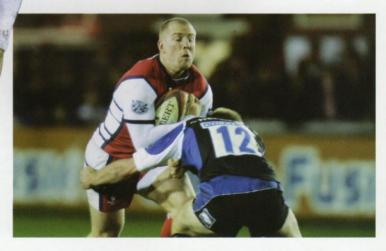
But Edinburgh are likely to be no pushovers. They beat Leinster 25-24 in their most recent Heineken Cup outing and their squad boasts a host of Scotland internationals, including Chris Paterson and Mike Blair.

And Tindall, a member of the England sides that lost key Six Nations matches to Scotland in 2000 and earlier this year, knows all about the dangers Edinburgh will pose.

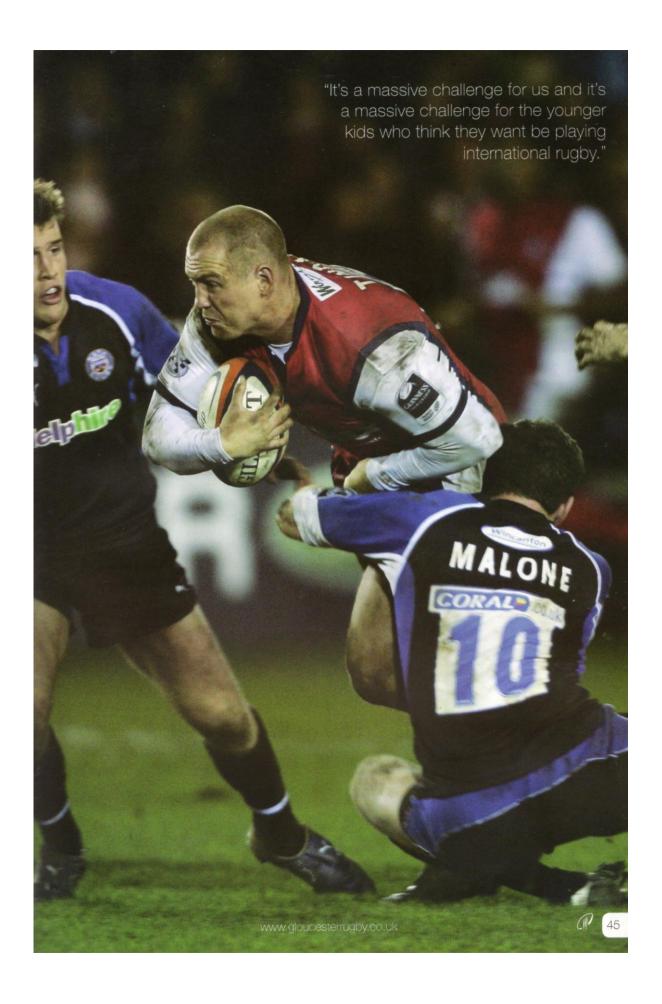
"Edinburgh have beaten Leinster this season so they have done us a favour," said Tindall. "We can't at all disrespect them, they've got 12 of the Scottish team in there and I know it's not easy to beat them on the international stage as well as the club stage.

"It's a massive challenge for us and it's a massive challenge for the younger kids who think they want to be playing international rugby. We are playing against international opposition, basically."

That is where Tindall's international experience with England becomes vital. He is the man who can shape the way Gloucester approach the contest this afternoon and if he is on his game, the home side will have enough about them to give it a really good go.



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### **Match Action**

#### **Time line**

7 mins	
PEN TRY, Walker CON	7-0
18 mins	MA
Balding TRY Walker CON	14-0
34 mins	
Parkes TRY	14-5
40 mins	
Walker PEN	17-5
52mins	The state
Merriman TRY	22-5
33 mins	
Cheeseman TRY Malone CON	22-12
65 mins	
Walker PEN	25-12
70 mins	1817
Walker TRY Walker CON	30-12



### Gloucester Line-up 15 Olly Morgan

14	Karl Pryce	MARKET SAME
13	Mike Tindall c	A CONTRACTOR
12	Jack Adams	
11	Mark Foster	T. The said
10	Willie Walker	(1t 2p, 2c)
9	Haydn Thomas	
	Patrice Collazo	
1 2	Rob Elloway	
3	Carlos Nieto	
4	Will James	
5	Jonathan Pendlebury	
6	Jake Boer	
7	James Merriman	(1t)
8	Adam Balding	(1t)
REPS		THE RESERVE
16	Ross McMillan	(Elloway)
17	Jack Forster	(Colazo)
18	Adam Eustace	(Pendlebury
19	Alex Brown	(Boer)
20	Rory Lawson	(Thomas)
21	James Simpson-Daniel	(Adams)
22	Brad Davies	

**Gloucester Rugby Bath Rugby** 

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#### **Bath Flushed Away!**

Saturday, December 2 Ref: Dave Pearson Att: 7,453

WILLIE WALKER contributed 15 points as Gloucester earned their second win of the season over Bath at Kingsholm.

Despite the four tries and comfortable winning margin it was not enough to pilot Gloucester into the knockout stages of the EDF Energy Cup thanks to the Ospreys' defeat of Bristol.

But head coach Dean Ryan was more

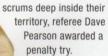
than satisfied with what he saw from

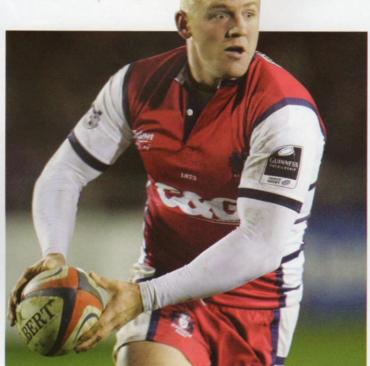
the performances of Mike Tindall and debutant Karl Pryce.

his much-changed line-up and praised

Gloucester scored four tries in total and were ahead after only seven minutes.

They dominated the Bath pack at the set-piece after a series of line-outs and







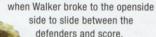
They were to cross again soon after when Adam Balding finished off close to the line following powerful surges by Tindall and James Merriman and some damaging ground made by the forwards.

With nothing to lose, Bath at least attempted to play some rugby and kept the ball exceptionally well for long periods without truly threatening Gloucester's defence.

However, they did manage a try from a line-out when loose-head prop Daniel Parkes burrowed in from close range.

break and closed the game out with the try of the game at the start of the second half. Walker shaped to kick under pressure inside his own 22 but dropped his shoulder and fed Olly Morgan on the charge. The full-back made a telling break before off-loading to Pryce and the winger was aware enough to send the scoring pass inside to Merriman who galloped in to score.

Bath were to score again when Tom Cheeseman tracked a break by Michael Stephenson and Jonny Faamatuianu to score but Gloucester had the final say





#### Man of the Match...

#### Willie Walker



contributed 15 points from stand-off, controlled the game well and kept Gloucester moving forward

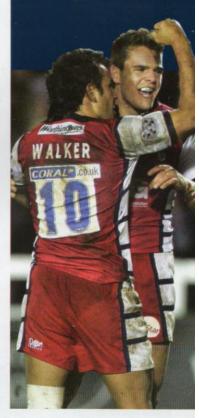
#### Coaches Comment...

#### **Dean Ryan**



"I have invested a lot of time into this group and they have in me - I love working with them and

have so much I want to achieve," head coach Dean Ryan.



## Hall of Fame with Dave King



### **John Watkins**

He was the prototype of the modern-day flank forward — **John Watkins** was a **Kingsholm legend** even in his playing days and joins the Hall of Fame today.

PHENONEMON in his time, John Watkins was a flanker renowned for his tireless work in the loose and regarded as one of the best ball winners in the game in the 1970s.

He was a player who was adored by the Kingsholm faithful because of his prodigious work rate. Watkins was born on 28th November 1946 in Gloucester and was educated at Linden Secondary Modern School within the city. Watkins was, and still is in some quarters, regarded as the finest openside flanker to play for the club. He may not have earned the caps that Tom Voyce did or merited the press attention that a modern day flanker enjoys but he belongs to be ranked alongside the Voyces and Hazells.

He played for local city club Gordon League before moving to Kingsholm. His outstanding form for Gloucester soon attracted the attention of both the county and England selectors. And like many of the Gloucester players who have merited, selection at national level he had to make his bow on the international scene in foreign land.

The game was at Ellis Park;
Johannesburg on 3rd June 1972 and
included in that team was his Gloucester
team-mate Mike Burton. In actual fact
a third of the team came from the west
country. The Gloucester duo were joined
by Alan Morley, John Pullin, who was the
England captain and Peter Knight from
Bristol.

It was a match that England won 18-9 but the match was played in acrimonious circumstances and South Africans failed to appear for the post match reception. The contest was played in front of 77,400 partisan white South Africans and at the time it was reputed that a thousand coloured South Africans were England's only support.

During the match, Stack Stevens the England prop forward had to leave the field with an injury. Watkins, who weighed a mere 14 stone, was asked to pack down at tighthead while his Gloucester colleague Burton was fielded out of position at loosehead.

Watkins was regarded as the outstanding player on that tour to South Africa where the touring party were able to maintain an invincible playing record.







Always regarded, not unlike Andy Hazell, to be a small man by the standards of international flankers but there was never a player more dedicated or consistent. Renowned for his grafting he was invariably always first to the loose ball. That England XV on his debut for England was as follows:

S.A. Doble (Moseley); A.J. Morley (Bristol), J.P.A.G. Janion (Bedford), P.S. Preece (Coventry), P.M. Knight (Bristol); A.G.B. Old (Middlesbrough), J.G. Webster (Moseley); C.B. Stevens (Penzance & Newlyn), J.V. Pullin (Bristol, Captain), M.A. Burton (Gloucester), P.J. Larter (Northampton), C.W. Ralston (Richmond), *J.A. Watkins (Gloucester)*, A.G. Ripley (Rosslyn Park), A. Neary (Broughton Park).

Watkins was also a prominent member with both the Barbarians and Gloucestershire. He was a member of the county team that won three consecutive Championship titles in 1974, 1975 and 1976, defeating Lancashire 22-12 at Blundellsands; Eastern Counties 13-9 at Kingsholm and Middlesex 24-9 at Richmond.

A climax to his career at county level came when he was asked to captain Gloucestershire in 1977 but unfortunately they lost their semi-final to Lancashire 19-15 at the Vale of Lune ground, Lancaster. The team he captained in that semi-final contained no fewer than eight players from Gloucester:

P.E. Butler (Gloucester); R. Clewes (Gloucester), C.J. Williams (Bristol), D.S. Sorrell (Bristol), R.R. Mogg (Gloucester), C.G. Williams (Gloucester), P. Kingston (Gloucester); M.A. Burton (Gloucester), J.V. Pullin (Bristol), B.J. Nelmes (Bristol), N. Pomphrey (Bristol), S.A. Boyle (Gloucester), J. Watkins (Captain, Gloucester), D.M. Rollit (Bristol), M. Rafter (Bristol).

John Watkins was also a more than useful cricketer, representing local Gloucester

club, Arcadians. When his senior rugby career ended he played for Forest of Dean, club, Bream, where he assisted in a coaching capacity. John was also player/coach at Longlevens RFC. In more recent seasons John could be seen officiating in many local rugby union fixtures. The former England and Gloucester flanker still resides in Gloucester.

Always regarded as a modest man, Watkins can reflect upon a career wherein he made 386 first team appearances for Gloucester and scored 104 tries. He set a club record of scoring the most tries in a season by a forward in the season of 1972-1973 when he recorded 20 tries. That record was eventually surpassed by Mike Teague.

Surely one of his proudest moments came when he appeared in the first Gloucester XV to win the inaugural Rugby Union's National Competition in April 1972 against Moseley at Twickenham. Those names that will forever be revered within the

### **Hall of Fame...**

club's history were: -

E.J. Stephens; R.J. Clewes, J.A. Bayliss, R. Morris, J. Dix; T. Palmer, M.H. Booth; R.J. Cowling, M.J. Nicholls (Captain), M.A. Burton, J.S. Jarrett, A. Brinn, *J.A. Watkins*, M.J. Potter, R. Smith.

The ultimate honour at club level came when he was asked to captain the club in the 1976-1977, 1977-1978 and 1978-1979 seasons. Out of a total of 148 matches played, 108 were won, 4

were drawn and 36 ended in defeat, a fine record.

That season of 1977-78, saw John emulate his winning appearance in a Twickenham final when he captained Gloucester to further success in the RFC National Cup by defeating Leicester by 6-3. Richard Mogg was the game's only try scorer with Peter Butler converting. 'Dusty' Hare replied with a penalty for the 'Tigers'. The Gloucester team was: -

P.E. Butler; R.J. Clewes, B.J. Vine, R. Jardine, R.R. Mogg; C.G. Williams, P.R. Howell; G.A.F. Sargent, S.G.F. Mills, M.A. Burton, S.B. Boyle, J.H. Fidler, *J.A. Watkins, (Captain)*, J.F. Simonett, V.J. Wooley.

Few players, if any, have played the game as whole heartedly as John Watkins, a player who should have received more caps for England than he did and a player who was a member of an England team defeating the famed, 'All Blacks' on their own territory,

#### CAPS

YEAR	VERSUS	DATE	VENUE	RESULT
1972	South Africa	3rd June	Ellis Park, Johannesburg	Won 18-9
1973	New Zealand	6th Jan	Twickenham	Lost 0-9
	Wales	20th Jan	Cardiff Arms Park	Lost 9-25
(mighton)	New Zealand	15th Sept	Auckland, New Zealand	Won 16-10
lapasetti i	Australia	17th Nov	Twickenham	Won 20-3
1975	France	1st Feb	Twickenham	Lost 20-27
	Wales	15th Feb	Cardiff Arms Park	Lost 4-20



Legendary Gloucester & England prop Mike Burton recently included John in his alltime classic Red Rose Selection saying of the former Gloucester Club stalwart: "This man played at six against South Africa in 1972 and the 'All Blacks' in '73' helping beat them both in their own back-yard.

"He was an exceptional player and I'm amazed he didn't get more caps."

Will any Gloucester player ever repeat that feat of winning in South Africa and New Zealand again?

**David King** 

## Fan Zone with Bob Fenton

**Bob Fenton** would rather have a **Heineken** any day – and this afternoon he will get his wish when **Edinburgh** plot a victory at Kingsholm. And the regular Shed dweller knows it will be a tough afternoon in Europe's premier club tournament.

**So ONCE** again we switch almost seamlessly from one competition to another this week, from the EDF Energy Cup to the Heineken. Personally if you are going to offer me a cup of either I'll take the beer - always a more palatable option.

Yes it's back to the top table of club rugby, and a chance to get a bit of pride back in our European Cup campaign that has faltered somewhat after

successive defeats to Leinster and Agen.

Mind you the fare last week wasn't too bad - it may have proved ultimately meaningless but any win over Bath is a good one. It was also a good game to give new boy Karl Pryce a run out. God he's huge... when you talk about players running over people you can say it in the literal sense with him - he could step over most players.

Can you imagine Simon Amor trying to grab him by the shirt collar - he'll need one of those stair-lift things to get him even close

But, as usual, I digress. Like last week this is a game that ultimately may not mean a great deal, but a win today could change that. Our progression in this competition seems to rest on securing victories in the remaining four fixtures and, while not impossible,





## "Long gone is the time when you could look at a fixture list for a competition like this and circle a few games that you thought could be win bankers"

would require a Herculean effort. Even then we would be left needing results in other groups to go our way so we could sneak in as one of the best runners-up.

It's been done before – Leicester once got out of the group stages with – I think – just 19 points. They got to the semifinal that year, if we could replicate that achievement I would be well chuffed. I confess though that I will not be holding my breath.

Whatever the eventual outcome of the group, and whether we progress this year or not, these games are another few miles up the learning curve of our squad. It'll set them in good shape for the future because I firmly believe that we are about to become as permanent a fixture in the competition as our visitors today.

Which brings us nicely on to Edinburgh. While they may be a new outfit, rugby in that part of the world is just as important as it is in our corner of England. Just take a look at a map of the south east of Scotland and count the famous names — Hawick, Jedborough, Herriots, Melrose, Watsonians etc etc... You can't help but read them in a Bill McClaren-type voice.

I lived in Edinburgh for a few years not so long ago and took in a few games up there. They have the same passion as us but on a bit of a smaller scale, but it's like stepping back in time when you go into these little grounds. It's good, though, and I thoroughly recommend anyone who is up there to go along to one of the smaller clubs for a visit.

The Celtic League and the new clubs like Gunners, Glasgow whoevers and Border Reivers have changed the face of rugby up there, and only a local will be able to tell you whether that's for better or worse, you can't argue that they have raised the general standard, though.

Long gone is the time when you could look at a fixture list for a competition like this and circle a few games that you thought could be win bankers. How many people predicted a reversal at home to Agen last time out? Quite a bit of egg on quite a few faces, including yours truly.

Similarly any thoughts of "...it's only some club from Edinburgh, we can turn them over..." should be banished forthwith. Check out their last result in this competition – a win over Leinster. And last year they turned over Wasps in this competition, and we all know how hard it is to get any kind of result against that outfit.

### **Fan Zone**



And their overall record in the competition is not so bad – played 55, won 20. If you're interested our record is played 29 and won 17. So, on paper, we have a better pedigree. Trouble is, we play on grass so records don't really mean that much.

One things for sure, the return match could never be accused of being overhyped up there in the frozen north. Check out the Edinburgh Gunners website – the banner bills the match as "The Battle of Britain" and ponders whether it'll be another Bannockburn or Culloden. Err... neither, it'll be a rugby match.

Given the antics at Murrayfield before

recent internationals, and the tendency to hype up the 'Scottishness' of the occasion perhaps we shouldn't be too surprised.

Edinburgh are going well in their league, sitting fourth in the table. Like us they had a win over local rivals last weekend, beating the Border Rievers 17–3. In the match report on their website it says that they "pirated the points"?

'Scuse me... pirated? What? Did they all get dressed up like Johnny Depp (easy girls) in Pirates of the Caribbean and stole them? I've been accused of turning in an odd bit of prose myself from time to time, but not in my most Guinness (can I say that word in a

Heineken-sponsored competition?) fuelled moments would I have come up with that one.

However if it helps I'll don an eye patch and learn the words to 'howevermany men on a dead man's chest' if it means we will get the points today.

Final thought and changing tack a million per cent: Watching the band go through their repertoire before the Bath game last weekend and I was struck by a thought. How about if before they left the field they wandered (ok marched) past our opposition and played some sort of funereal music, just to get them in the mood for what was about to come their way.

