

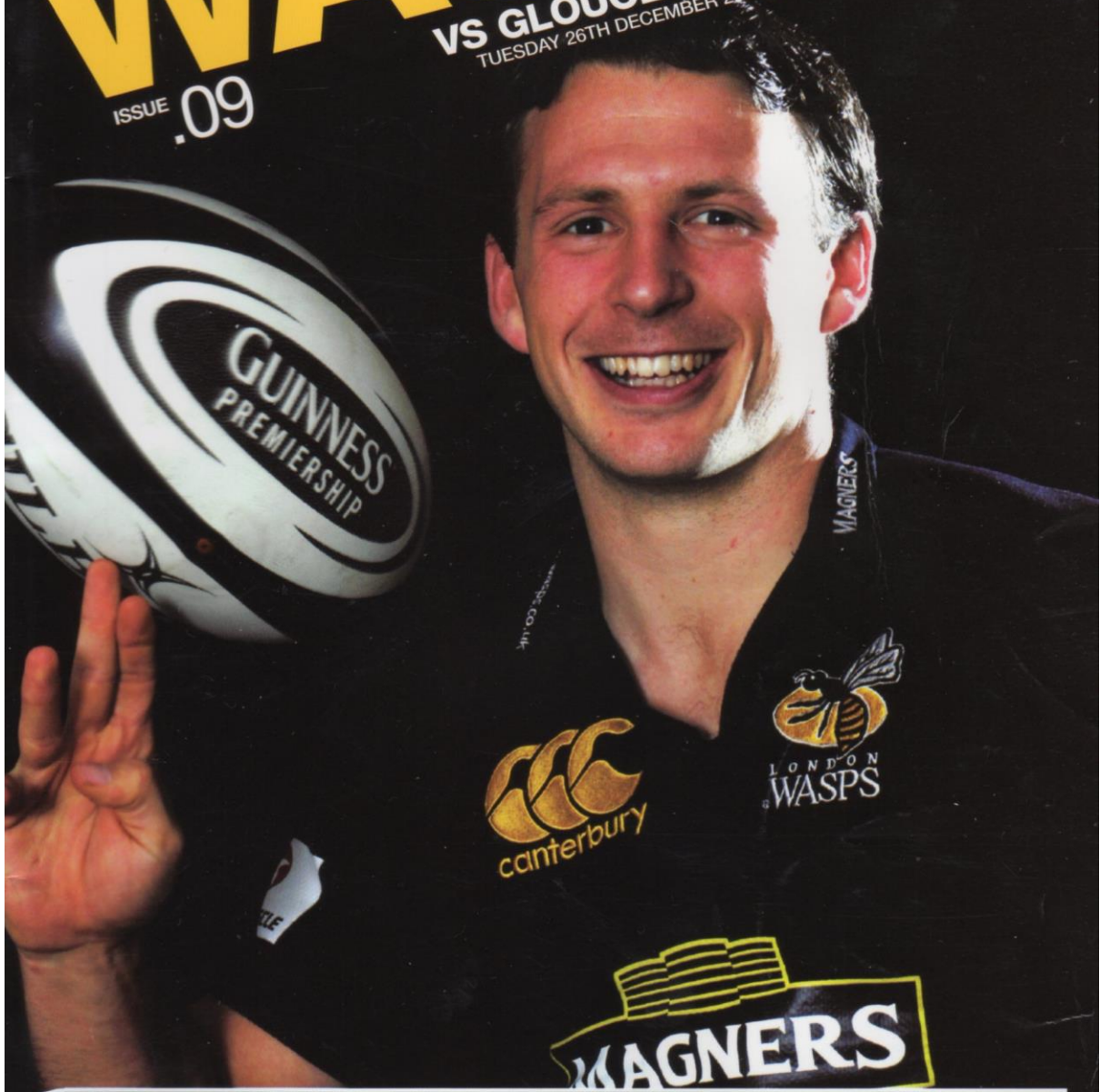
LONDON WASPS

2006-07 WWW.WASPS.CO.UK
OFFICIAL MATCHDAY MAGAZINE £3.00



VS GLOUCESTER RUGBY
TUESDAY 26TH DECEMBER 2006 KICK OFF 3.00PM

ISSUE .09



GUINNESS PREMIERSHIP FINAL, TWICKENHAM, 12 MAY 2007				TICKETS: www.guinnesspremiership.com/FINAL				

www.wasps.co.uk			

CHIEFLY SPEAKING

DAVID DAVIES, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

WELCOME TO TOM WALKINSHAW AND GLOUCESTER RFC ON THE OCCASION OF WHAT IS BECOMING OUR ANNUAL BOXING DAY FIXTURE, AND IF THIS FIXTURE FOLLOWS THE LAST FOUR ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN OUR CLUBS IT PROMISES TO BE ONE OF THE BEST GAMES IN THE LEAGUE PROGRAMME.

Since our last home game there has been a considerable amount of comment about the structure of the elite game in England and before one speculates on its future direction, it is worth bearing in mind a few findings from the recent Premier Rugby fan survey. Over 12,000 supporters took part making this the largest survey of its kind, for which we in the game are extremely grateful to all of you who responded.

When questioned about the Guinness Premiership, 82% of that 12,000 felt that the standard of play had either improved or stayed the same since 2003 86% felt the standard of play was either excellent or very good, and across the league the attendances as a whole have risen by 10%, which means that for the eighth consecutive year attendances are up. Not a bad endorsement!

Furthermore, so far this season a supporter at Guinness Premiership game will have seen on average 43.48 points being scored. This is in contrast to a Magners League game, which averages 39.19 or a French Top 14 match, which averages slightly higher at 39.4. In addition, the Guinness Premiership has recorded an average of more tries per match, at 4.17, than the Magners League, at 3.74 per match, or indeed the French Top 14, where it is 3.21. This would suggest to me that the Guinness Premiership is producing a standard of play that should be built upon, and that the Guinness Premiership is in better shape than it has been for years.

It is inevitable that the busy Christmas schedule is going to prompt debate in the rugby community probably when seen in the light of the player burnout debate. The compression of fixtures has been necessitated by the need to meet the RFU's demands for England's World Cup preparations,

most particularly the scheduling of a meaningless test series in South Africa at the start of this summer. Mindful of this, the league has worked with the Professional Rugby Players' Association to agree a policy of player rotation for the clubs to abide by during this period.

Going back a step however, the occurrence of an early end of season international tour is similar to that faced by the French clubs last summer. In that instance, those players selected for the national team's tour of New Zealand, which overlapped with the dates of the Top 14 league play offs, made their way onto the tours as their teams were knocked out. Applying this type of solution to the Premiership, given the amount of time the World Cup squads are likely to spend together, would have been highly satisfactory in meeting everybody in England's concerns, and would have allowed the league to sensibly spread out these current Christmas games. Unfortunately this suggestion was not acceptable to the Rugby Football Union and as a result an extra game has had to be fitted in at Christmas time to allow the play offs to run their course prior to the national team leaving for South Africa.

In my view it is a real shame that this olive branch was not grasped by the RFU. However, the combination of good will from both the spectators – who I am sure will turn up in numbers – and the players, who will benefit from the rotation policy put in place by the clubs, alongside a traditional festive spirit will ensure that the games played over the next 2 weeks will include some of the best rugby that we have seen this season.

On behalf of everyone here at London Wasps I wish you the merriest of Christmases and all the best for the New Year.

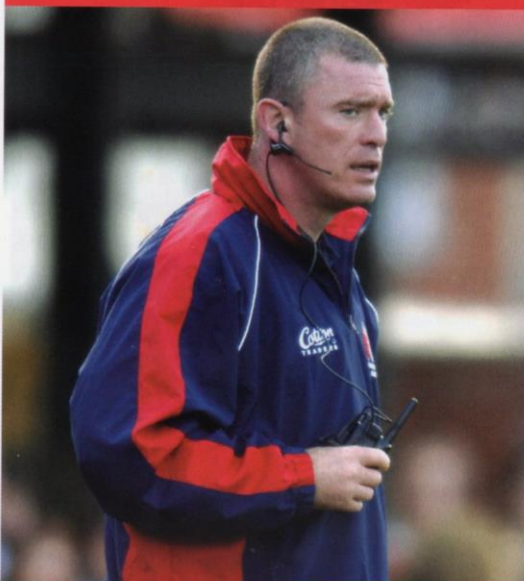




GLOUCESTER RUGBY
GUINNESS PREMIERSHIP
POSITION AT TIME OF PRINT: 2ND

DIRECTOR OF RUGBY

DEAN RYAN



Dean played for Saracens, Wasps, Newcastle and Bristol, and the former England number eight tasted league success as a player with both Wasps (89-90) and Newcastle (97-98). Regardless as one of the most competitive and robust forwards of his generation, he guided Newcastle to the Premiership title at their first attempt. He moved into coaching whilst at Bristol, taking over from Bob Dwyer at the Memorial Stadium club in the summer of 2000. Ryan was in charge at Bristol for two seasons, taking them to the Zurich Championship final in 2002, before joining up with Nigel Melville at Gloucester that summer. The 38-year-old has had three years as coach at Gloucester. His first season saw Gloucester win the Powergen Cup at Twickenham and finish top of the regular Zurich Premiership season, but lose the Premiership final to Wasps. There has also been a Heineken Cup quarter-final in the 2003/04 season, before his appointment in the summer of 2005 as Head Coach as a replacement to Nigel Melville.

FACING THE LITMUS TEST

IF THERE is such a thing as a Guinness Premiership litmus test, then a trip to Wasps is probably just about it.

Dean Ryan and his Gloucester side make the trip to High Wycombe this afternoon riding high in the Guinness Premiership and fighting for their lives in the Heineken Cup – it should be a wonderful prospect between two of the mightiest clubs in the land.

Back in November, before England's world fell apart, Gloucester won the corresponding fixture 27-21 in a mini classic and there was enough in the contest to suggest an equally tense afternoon today.

The Kingsholmites produced three vital results during the autumn international period in November, their only setback coming against leaders Bristol at the Memorial Stadium, 14-12.

Their run in the Guinness Premiership followed on from two tortuous Heineken Cup defeats at the hands of Leinster's dazzling glitterati and the power and physicality of Agen as Ryan's young and inexperienced side were dealt a number of chastening European lessons.

But in the last fortnight, Gloucester have shown they are capable of learning those lessons by beating Edinburgh back-to-back to re-ignite their European adventure.

Before Europe intervened, Gloucester ended their first section of five Guinness Premiership matches with four victories and a draw and have won seven of their nine games in all.

They opened their season with a West Country derby victory over their nearest and dearest from Bath – youngsters Jack Adams and Olly Morgan scoring the tries in their 24-19 success. They then got the better of Harlequins at the Stoop in a far more disjointed performance that was revved up by a virtuoso performance from scrum-half Peter Richards.

It was a solid if unspectacular start for Ryan's side. The Kingsholm head coach has concocted one of the most exciting groups of players in the country, blending a mixture of youthful swagger and talent with high-quality experience in key positions.

Under the stewardship of Ryan and his assistants Bryan Redpath and Denis Betts, Italian duo Marco Bortolami and Carlos Nieto joined from Narbonne and Viadana respectively in two of the highest profile signings of the close season.

Bortolami has already shown what an outstanding athlete he is and is a natural leader of growing reputation in Gloucester's pack and Nieto is regarded as one of the best tighthead props in the Six Nations.

Christian Califano, once voted in the all-time best French front row, switched from Agen and has been a revelation – offering immediate set-piece quality and a perfect learning base for youngster Jack Forster.

There have been other additions too. With Ryan Lamb initially out of action with an ankle injury, Willie Walker has taken his opportunity in the number 10 shirt, while both scrum-half



Rory Lawson and lock Will James have the potential to make serious impacts.

Iain Balshaw completed the summer recruitment drive from Leeds and can be deployed from either wing or full-back and scored the final of Gloucester's three tries in the 33-24 victory over Worcester. It has meant that Ryan's biggest job has been managing the vast expectation on his squad.

"There is an awful lot this squad can achieve but we must not get ahead of ourselves – we have a long way to go and a lot of development to go through," Ryan said.

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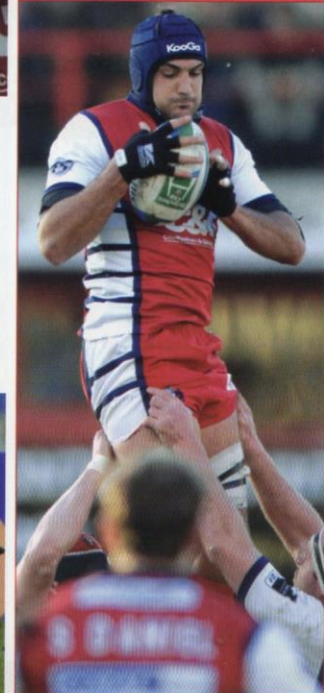
CLUB CAPTAIN

MARCO BORTOLAMI

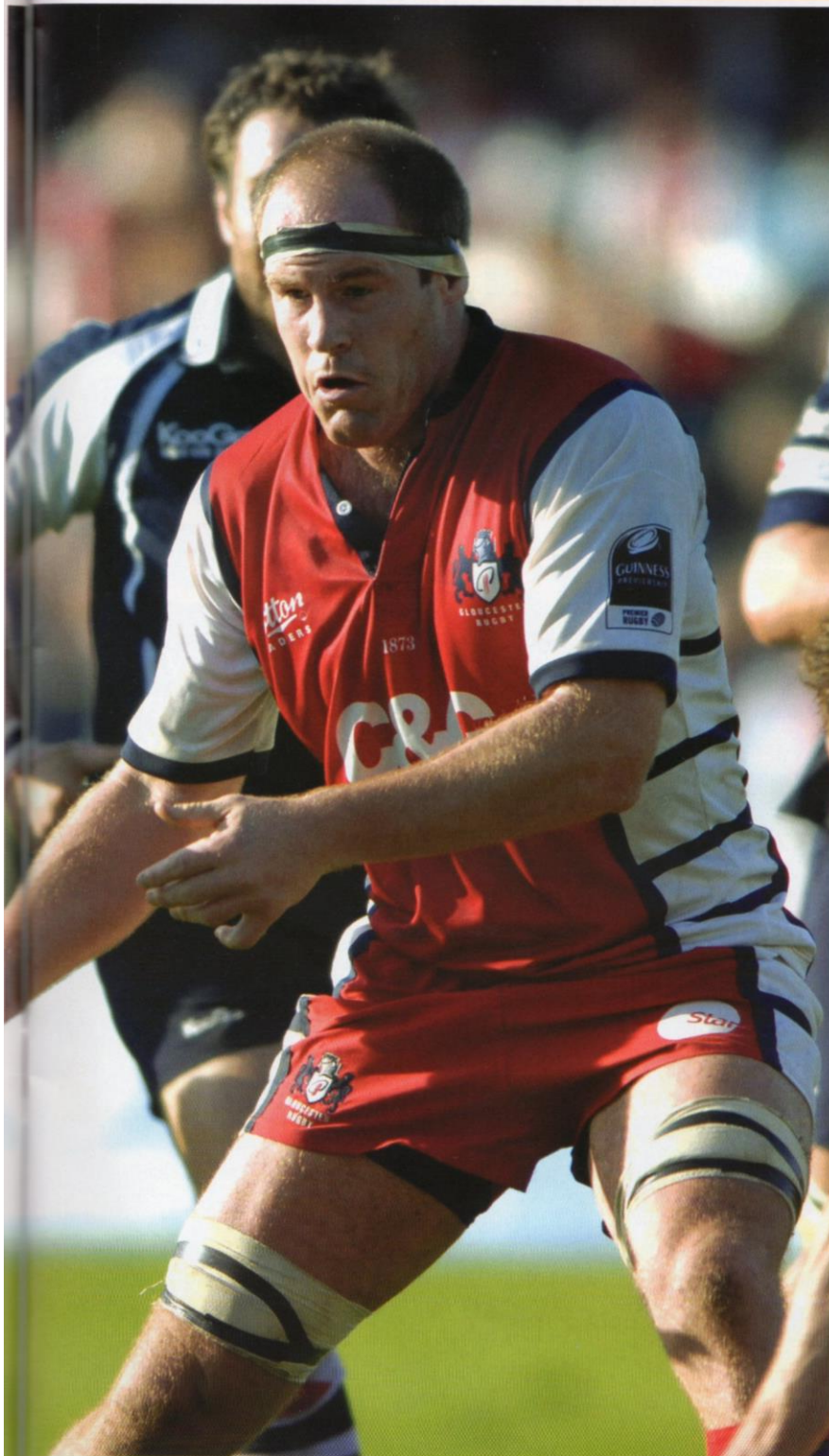
The Italian skipper has been a revelation since his arriving from Narbonne in the summer of 2006, on a two year contract.

An outstanding leader he 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.

Bortolami one of the best lineout tacticians in the business and has provided Gloucester with a hard edge in their forward pack. He is also a mean defender and is fast becoming one of the most respected players in the Premiership. Bortolami skippered Gloucester for the first time against Llanelli in pre-season.



FOCUS 3




FLANKER

PETERBUXTON

Buxton never gains many headlines but has been described by head coach Dean Ryan as the heartbeat of the side. Strong and powerful Buxton is one of the most under rated but most consistent members of the team.

FLANKER

ANDYHAZELL



The openside flanker has just recovered from a shoulder injury and at the start of the season was one of the most important members of the squad. Outstanding at the breakdown Hazell also has a huge tackle count and is one of the best opensides in the country.

CENTRE

ANTHONYALLEN



The England centre is only in his second season but is a marked man. He has great balance and footwork and is forming a great understanding with Mike Tindall. He is capable of turning a game with a line break and has a bright future.

LONDON WASPS

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

		T	C	P	DG		T	C	P	DG
FULL BACK	15 MARK VAN GISBERGEN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	15 IAIN BALSHAW	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WING	14 PAUL SACKEY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	14 JAMES SIMPSON-DANIEL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CENTRE	13 JOSH LEWSEY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	13 MIKE TINDALL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CENTRE	12 DOMINIC WALDOUCK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	12 ANTHONY ALLEN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WING	11 TOM VOYCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11 MARK FOSTER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FLY HALF	10 ALEX KING (C)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10 RYAN LAMB	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCRUM HALF	9 SIMON AMOR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9 PETER RICHARDS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PROP	1 TIM PAYNE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 CHRISTIAN CALIFANO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HOOVER	2 RAPHAEL IBANEZ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 OLIVIER AZAM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PROP	3 PETER BRACKEN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3 CARLOS NIETO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LOCK	4 SIMON SHAW	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4 MARCO BORTOLAMI (C)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LOCK	5 RICHARD BIRKETT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5 ALEX BROWN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FLANKER	6 DAN LEO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6 PETER BUXTON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FLANKER	7 JONNY O'CONNOR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7 ANDY HAZELL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NO.8	8 JOE WORSLEY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8 JAMES FORRESTER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

REPLACEMENTS

16 JOE WARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17 NICK ADAMS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18 GEORGE SKIVINGTON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19 JAMES HASKELL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20 EOIN REDDAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 JEREMY STAUNTON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22 DANNY CIPRIANI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

REPLACEMENTS

16 ROB ELLOWAY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17 PATRICE COLLAZO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18 ADAM BALDING	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19 ADAM EUSTACE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20 WILLIE WALKER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 RORY LAWSON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22 OLLY MORGAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



TUESDAY 26TH DECEMBER 2006

TICKET HOTLINE: 0870 414 1515
BUY ONLINE WWW.WASPS.CO.UK



MATCH OFFICIALS

REFEREE:	WAYNE BARNES
TOUCH JUDGE:	PAUL EMERSON
TOUCH JUDGE:	ROGER BAILEFF
FOURTH OFFICIAL:	DEAN RICHARDS
TIME KEEPER:	BOB OCKENDEN

MATCH SCORES

	WASPS	VISITORS
HALF TIME		
FULL TIME		