

Gloucester Rugby

The Official Matchday Programme of Gloucester Rugby

Issue 10 • Price £3.00



Gloucester Rugby
v London Irish
01.01.07 15.00

2006 Year Review

Remember all the greatest action from the last 12 months

Line-out king

Lift off with London Irish's Nick Kennedy

Ryan's Review

All the latest from the Gloucester coach

Get to know

Jack Forster

Gloucester legend

Peter Ford joins the Hall of Fame

London Irish

All you need to know about today's opponents

ALSO INSIDE

Fans Zone,
Peter Arnold,
Ticket news,
community update

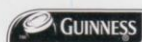


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GUINNESS PREMIERSHIP FINAL, TWICKENHAM, 12 MAY 2007

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Captain's Corner

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"Today, a very good team in **London Irish** come to Kingsholm for the first game of the **new year.**"

MAY I start these first programme notes of 2007 by wishing you a very Happy New Year - and I hope the hangovers have gone by now so you can enjoy the match this afternoon.

Well, it was a very disappointing finish to 2006 on Boxing Day against Wasps. We did not play well enough for long enough against one of the best organised and controlled teams in the Guinness Premiership and paid the heaviest of prices for not making the most of our opportunities.

The dressing room was a disappointed place to be afterwards - very silent and downbeat - because we all recognised we let a big opportunity to make a statement about ourselves go.

But once you go 19 points behind to a team of Wasps' quality it is very difficult to start turn to it around and we simply left it too late. But one defeat like that does not disrupt the work head coach Dean Ryan has done with this squad over the last 12 to 18 months and we must all remember that.

We are making progress on and off the field and learning very fast with every game we play. Today, a very good team in London Irish come to Kingsholm for the first game of the new year.

I was not at the Madejski Stadium in November for our victory but I believe London Irish have improved very much since then and beat Premiership leaders Leicester on Boxing Day.

They combine a big, strong set of forwards who attack the scrum and line-out with some excellent backs who are

a threat from anywhere on the field and are one of the in-form teams in the league at the moment so today is a massive test of our capabilities.

The season is now beginning to take shape for every team. We have made a great start and we need to continue our momentum with every performance. Please get behind the players this afternoon because the support is fantastic and help get us back to winning ways today.

Happy New Year.



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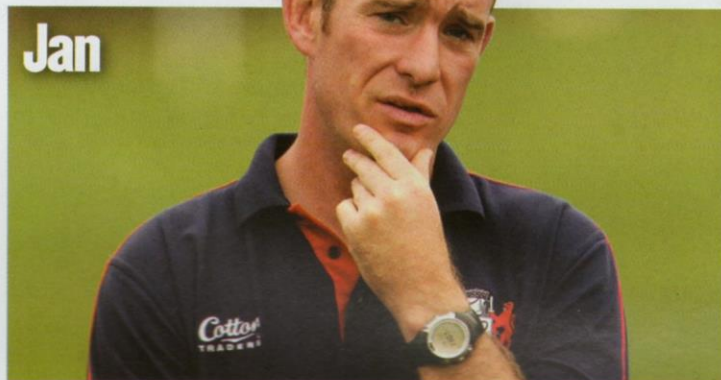
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Review of the year – 2006

It has been an excellent year for **Gloucester Rugby**. Not only did they land a major trophy, they were also involved in some remarkable matches. Here, the matchday programme looks back at **2006**.



January

THE year of 2006 begins with the news that number eight Adam Balding has signed a new two-year contract at the club. On January 8, a try from Peter Richards and 14 points from Ludovic Mercier steer Gloucester to a 19-9 victory over Saracens.

Two days later, head coach Dean Ryan continues his development of the club by signing former Great Britain and Wigan rugby league star Denis Betts.

On the 10th, Welsh sevens specialist James Merriman agrees to extend his contract by a year and four days

later in freezing conditions, tries from Richards, Rob Elloway and Jake Boer ease Gloucester to a 27-13 victory over Bucuresti in the European Challenge Cup.

Ryan continues to strengthen his squad when he confirms the arrival of Cornish Pirates lock Will James, who will join the club for the start of the 2006-07 season.

Gloucester continue to sweep all before them in Europe by beating Bayonne 32-19 at Kingsholm. Tries came from a Gary Powell brace, Mike Tindall and Olly Morgan.

But perhaps the most significant news of the month is that James Simpson-Daniel agrees a new contract extension until 2009.

In the only defeat of the month, three Mercier penalties are not enough to get the better of London Irish, who win 13-9 at Kingsholm.

February

FEBRUARY proves to be a huge month for the club and it is dominated by the confirmation that Gloucester have signed Italian national captain Marco Bortolami and tight-head prop Carlos Nieto.

They bounce back from their defeat to London Irish when they beat Leicester under the lights at Kingsholm 34-16. James Bailey and Mark Foster score the



Part 1



tries and it is also confirmed that young centre Jack Adams has extended his contract by a year.

The positive vibes continue when the club announces that both Bailey and Jon Goodridge have agreed deals to remain at Kingsholm until 2008.

On the pitch, Fanolua scores the only try as Gloucester beat Newcastle 13-9 at Kingston Park.

Jake Boer, the brilliant flanker, agrees a one-year contract extension and Henry Paul and Simon Amor are selected for the England Sevens squad.

But the month ends badly when Bath beat

Gloucester 18-15 at Kingsholm, despite tries from James Bailey and Foster.



RYAN LAMB, who had been making a name himself in the number 10 position following his elevation into the senior side, signs a contract until 2008. However, Gloucester legend Terry Fanolua announces he will not see out the final year of his contract and joins Brive.

But the recruitment continued when Ryan signed scrum-half Rory Lawson on a

two-year contract from Edinburgh.

On March 11, Richards again finds the target alongside Mercier, but Gloucester lose a thriller by one point 21-20 to Northampton.

Duncan McRae, the former Australian A stand-off, announced his retirement due to a persistent knee injury and heads home with immediate effect.

On the field, the poor month continues for Gloucester and despite tries from Anthony Allen and Simpson-Daniel, Gloucester lose a west country derby to Bristol 20-15 at Kingsholm.

Off it, Willie Walker, the former Otago

Review of the year – 2006



play-maker, announces he will be joining the club on a two-year deal for the start of the new season.

In the Guinness A League, Fanolua scores the only try as Gloucester are beaten by London Irish.



APRIL proves to be a highly significant month for the club in many ways.

It starts with a 46-13 victory over Brive in the Challenge Cup thanks to tries from Tindall, Simpson-Daniel, Andy Hazell,

Richards and James Forrester.

Lock Mark Cornwell announces he will become Gloucester's assistant Academy manager and combine the position by playing for Pertemps Bees. He will also skipper the National One side after retiring from Premiership rugby.

Despite five penalties from Lamb an excellent all-round team performance, Gloucester lose to eventual champions Sale Sharks 18-15 in Stockport.

On April 15, two tries from Foster and one from Simpson-Daniel helps Gloucester to a 27-16 win over local rivals Worcester. Lamb and Tindall kick two penalties each.

The club also announce that former South African lock Quinton Davids will be released from his contract with immediate effect.

Phil Vickery also confirms, that after 11 years with the club, he has refused a new deal and will join Wasps.

But Gloucester reach the final of the Challenge Cup final following a second successive victory over Worcester. Foster again finds the try line and so does Allen and Simpson-Daniel in Gloucester's 31-23 win.

They end the month with a four try win over Leeds thanks to scores from Hazell, Richards, Tindall and Simpson-Daniel.



Part 1



May

A BRILLIANT individual score from James Forrester sealed glory for Gloucester in the European Challenge Cup final against London Irish in the month's highlight. His injury-time try hands Gloucester a 36-34 win after tries from Foster, Hazell and Simpson-Daniel.

However, despite two scores from Allen, one from Lamb and one from Bailey, Gloucester miss out on a play-off place after a 32-37 defeat against Wasps.

Olly Morgan has surgery on a fractured jaw bone and is out for three months.

As the season comes to an end, Ryan continues his rebuilding process and on the 10th confirms that both assistant coach Bryan Redpath and fitness and conditioning coach Mike Anthony will remain at the club until 2009.

A day later, British Lions full-back Iain Balshaw is announced as the latest signing when he joins from Leeds on a two-year contract.

Carl Hogg is named as the new Academy manager and Christian Califano, one of the greatest props of all-time, joins the club from Agen.

On May 23, Hazell is named as the players' player of the year.

June

WHILE the majority of the squad are now on a well-earned break, Anthony Allen and Ryan Lamb are involved in the Under-21 World Championships and both face New Zealand.

On June 2, Gloucester announce that Under-21 hooker Ross McMillan has joined the club from Nottingham.

On the 20th, Gloucester are grouped with Leinster, Agen and Edinburgh in the Heineken Cup Pool Two.

PART 2
Continues on page 42

Ryan's Review

Gloucester begin 2007 with a home game against **London Irish** and head coach Dean Ryan looks back at the defeat against Wasps and today's visitors to Kingsholm.



Today will be our third game in a week, has last Friday's postponement had any repercussions?

DR: It was no secret last Friday that we wanted to play and Newcastle didn't. Personally, I was unaware of any safety issues out there. When you were in the middle of the pitch you could see all the

corners which to me made it playable.

The decision to call the game off is solely the referee's decision. We can't afford for it to be a decision of teams subject to what shape they are in. I'd be concerned if that's the case.

It's a crucial period for us and we wanted to play. What it did do was effect our thinking ahead of the Wasps game because there was a possibility we would have tailored the starting line-up to suit those opponents and the threat they presented to us.

Now, we need to find another free window that is suitable to both clubs for the re-arranged game and that could prove difficult.

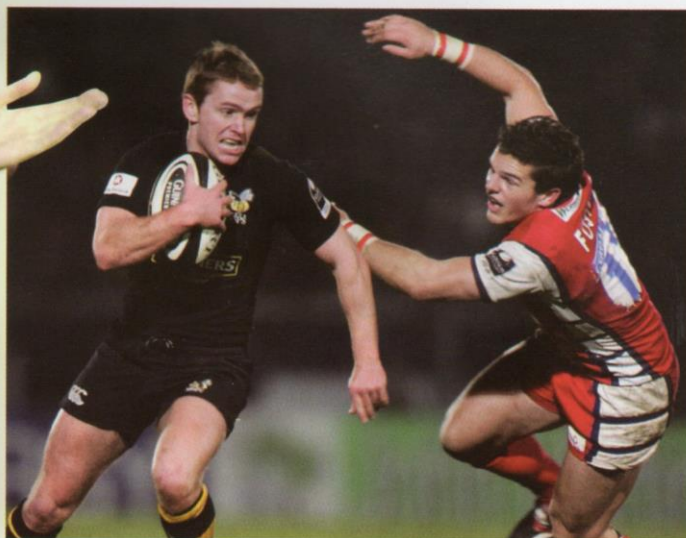
Premiership defeat, what happened?

DR: I don't think that's the best we've seen of Gloucester over the first 40 minutes this season and that disappoints me and the team. When you go to places like Wasps and Leicester there are certain elements you require in your game but we didn't turn up with a huge amount of physicality and we got caught with a cautious frame of mind. It is not a place or environment where you can flick from page to page of a manual in the hope of becoming successful. It is a place where you've got to be full-out and we weren't in the first half and paid dearly for it.

We were better in the second half, but unless we're prepared to carry that level of physicality and ambition into the contest at the start we'll always be



On boxing day we went to Wasps and suffered our second successive Guinness





“We do virtually have a **full strength squad** to select from at the moment and at this stage of the season, **that is vital.**”


chasing a pretty big lead. We've just got to get the environment right where we aren't so concerned over what's right and wrong. In the past we have been guilty of playing with too much ambition and while we try and find that balance, Monday's first half was a poor outcome. But I have said many times already this season that winning or losing one week does not lose sight of what we're trying to do with this group. As a team at this stage of its development, we don't lose six or 12 months investment on the back of 40 minutes and that is very important we keep the perspective right and keep building.

impact off the bench with his break and pass for Rory Lawson's try. Mefin Davies also returned from a nasty calf injury and that was also great to see. We do virtually have a full strength squad to select from at the moment and at this stage of the season, that is vital. There were times when we did create opportunities in high field position but we must extract that clinical instinct to make the most of those chances.

Leicester, who have got to the top of the table, is a good one. It was a very significant victory for us when we won in Reading during November but I think they have improved significantly since then. They have some outstanding forwards in Nick Kennedy, Bob Casey and a big, powerful back row and they possess one of the best set-piece games in the Premiership.

We saw on Monday that, a bit like Wasps, they have the ability to make the most of half-chances thanks to their pace and willingness to attack from deep so I think today will be a really good contest.

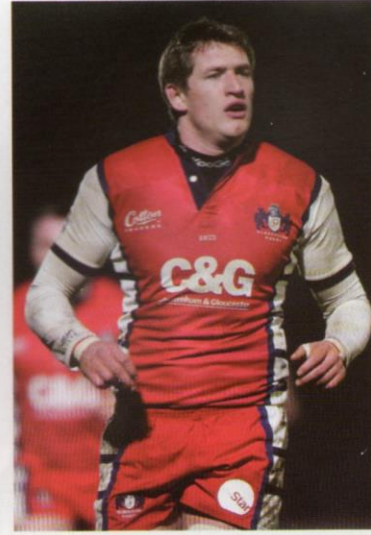
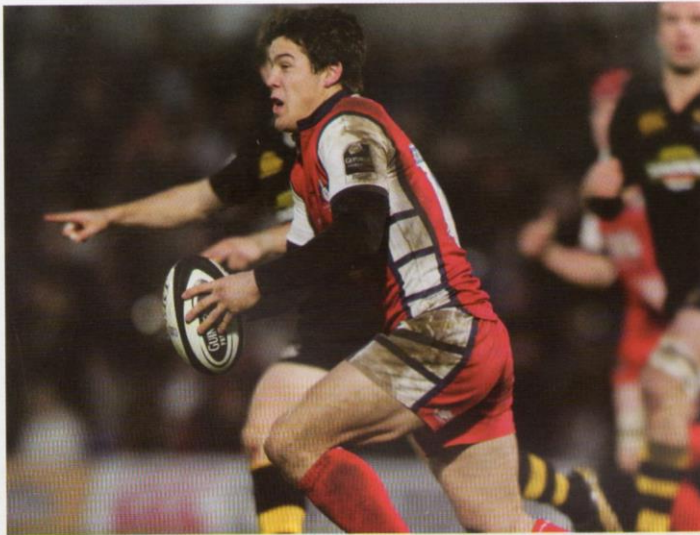
 **Today we welcome London Irish to Kingsholm and they have made a very impressive start to the christmas period.**

 **What were the plus points?**

DR: We don't give up – that is not in the mentality of this group of players and it was also great to see someone like James Forrester make an immediate

DR: They certainly have. I admire the way they try and play the game and the philosophy they use. We know from experience that Worcester, despite their position in the table, are very tough to beat at home and any victory over

As a club and a team we appreciate the importance and significance of today's game in terms of getting back on track in the Premiership in what is a huge month of rugby for us.



Gloucester RUGBY



London IRISH

	Olly MORGAN	15	Full Back	15	Delon ARMITAGE	
	James SIMPSON-DANIEL	14	Right Wing	14	Topsy OJO	
	Mike TINDALL	13	Centre	13	Nils MORDT	
	Anthony ALLEN	12	Centre	12	Seilala MAPUSUA	
	Mark FOSTER	11	Left Wing	11	Justin BISHOP	
	Ryan LAMB	10	Fly Half	10	Shane GERAGHTY	
	Rory LAWSON	9	Scrum Half	9	Paul HODGSON	
	Nick WOOD	1	Prop	1	Neal HATLEY	
	Mefin DAVIES	2	Hooker	2	Danie COETZEE	
	Carlos NIETO	3	Prop	3	Faan RAUTENBACH	
	© Marco BORTOLAMI	4	Lock	4	James HUDSON	
	Alex BROWN	5	Lock	5	Bob CASEY ©	
	Peter BUXTON	6	Flanker	6	Kieran ROCHE	
	Andy HAZELL	7	Flanker	7	Olivier MAGNE	
	James FORRESTER	8	No 8	8	Phil MURPHY	

Replacements

	Olivier AZAM	16	Substitute 1	16	David PAICE	
	Christian CALIFANO	17	Substitute 2	17	Tonga LEA'AETOA	
	Luke NARRAWAY	18	Substitute 3	18	Nick KENNEDY	
	Adam EUSTACE	19	Substitute 4	19	Juan-Manuel LEGUIZAMON	
	Pete RICHARDS	20	Substitute 5	20	Steffon ARMITAGE	
	Willie WALKER	21	Substitute 6	21	Barry EVERITT	
	Iain BALSCHAW	22	Substitute 7	22	Riki FLUTEY	

Review of the year – 2006



July

GLOUCESTER announce their first match in the Heineken Cup will be away to one of the favourites for the competition – Leinster in October.

Bath will be the visitors to Kingsholm for the first game in the Premiership and Ryan's side go to Portugal for a pre-season training camp that involves all the players that are not involved in summer tours.

August

CARLOS Nieto has shoulder operation

and will be out of action for eight weeks after specialists pick up a cyst.

On August 11, four new signings – Bortolami, Lawson, Walker and James – all play in the defeat against Saracens in pre-season.

The following week, Gloucester lose 19-7 away to Llanelli and Simpson-Daniel suffers a fractured collarbone and will be out of action for at least eight weeks.

Bortolami is named as captain for the first time as Gloucester pick up their first pre-season win of the season – 29-22 – to prepare for the launch of the Guinness Premiership in style.

September

KINGSHOLM is a complete sell-out as Gloucester begin the season with a 24-19 victory over Bath – Ollly Morgan and Jack Adams score the try as Ryan's side start the campaign in the best possible fashion.

Pete Richards then inspires Gloucester to a 31-21 win over Harlequins with an early contender for try of the season but in the victory, lock Alex Brown fractures his forearm.

Bath reclaim some west country pride with a win in the A league.



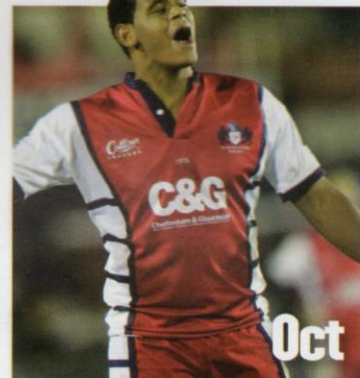
Oct



Oct



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October

Brad Davies comes off the bench on the 16th to kick an equalising penalty to maintain Gloucester's unbeaten start of the season with a 27-27 draw at Welford Road. Tries come from Forrester and Allen.

Gloucester then beat Northampton 28-7 to go top of the table for the first time in the season. Forrester continues his try scoring form converting a break from the 22.

Ryan makes 13 changes to the side for the start of the EDF Energy Cup campaign and Gloucester suffer a heavy 49-19 defeat in Swansea and get well beaten by the Ospreys in the EDF Energy despite a late fight back.

THE MONTH begins with number eight James Forrester being named as Guinness Premiership player of the month following a series of outstanding performances. 06/10 – James Forrester is named as Guinness Premiership player of the month.

Ryan Lamb returns from an ankle injury as Gloucester thrash an under strength Bristol in the EDF Energy Cup. The final was 63-25 as Gloucester ran in eight tries, including one for the young stand-off.

Gloucester then announce another

major signing with the arrival of former Bradford Bulls winger Karl Pryce. He scored 17 tries in both of his last two seasons and has signed on a two-year contract.

Two days later, Pryce watches his new club collect another four league points with a 33-24 win over Worcester. Tries come from Adams, Allen and a first try for Iain Balshaw.

After five rounds of the Guinness Premiership, Andy Hazell is named as the top tackler.

At the end of the month the Heineken Cup starts with a trip to Lansdowne road to face Leinster. A brave Gloucester side

Review of the year – 2006



are out classed by an experienced Irish side to go down 37-20, despite tries from Foster and Adams.

The following week, Agen stun Kingsholm to claim a shock 26-32 victory thanks to their pack and some excellent finishing.

Anthony Allen is rewarded for his consistently impressive performances in both the Guinness Premiership and the Heineken Cup with a call up to join our other England internationals in the squad to face the All Blacks at Twickenham and wins his first cap in England's defeat.



SIMPSON-DANIEL returned from his broken collarbone to help Gloucester to beat Sarries 21-12 on a cold night at Kingsholm. Rudi Keil, who is one of three yellow cards to Gloucester, scores two tries in the first half.

Head Coach Dean Ryan is named as the October Guinness Premiership's Head Coach of the month.

Brown returns from his broken arm to face London Irish at Reading. Gloucester secure a tough away victory which keeps them at the top of the Guinness Premiership thanks to tries from Rory Lawson, James Bailey and Simpson-Daniel.

Mark Cornwall scores on his first cap for

the Barbarians and Bristol end Gloucester's unbeaten run in the Premiership when Jason Strange lands a last minute drop-goal at the Memorial Stadium.

Gloucester Rugby's own lottery – Try Lines - is launched giving fans a chance to win £10,000 daily.

Ryan's side continue to make progress in the Premiership with a 27-21 victory over Wasps. Allen continued his try scoring form when he touched down early in the second half to start Gloucester's fightback.

Youngsters Jack Forster and Jack Adams sign new two-year deals. Forster then went on to mark the





occasion with a try against London Irish for the A Team in their first win of the year.

Allen signs a new two-year deal at the club following his debut for England.

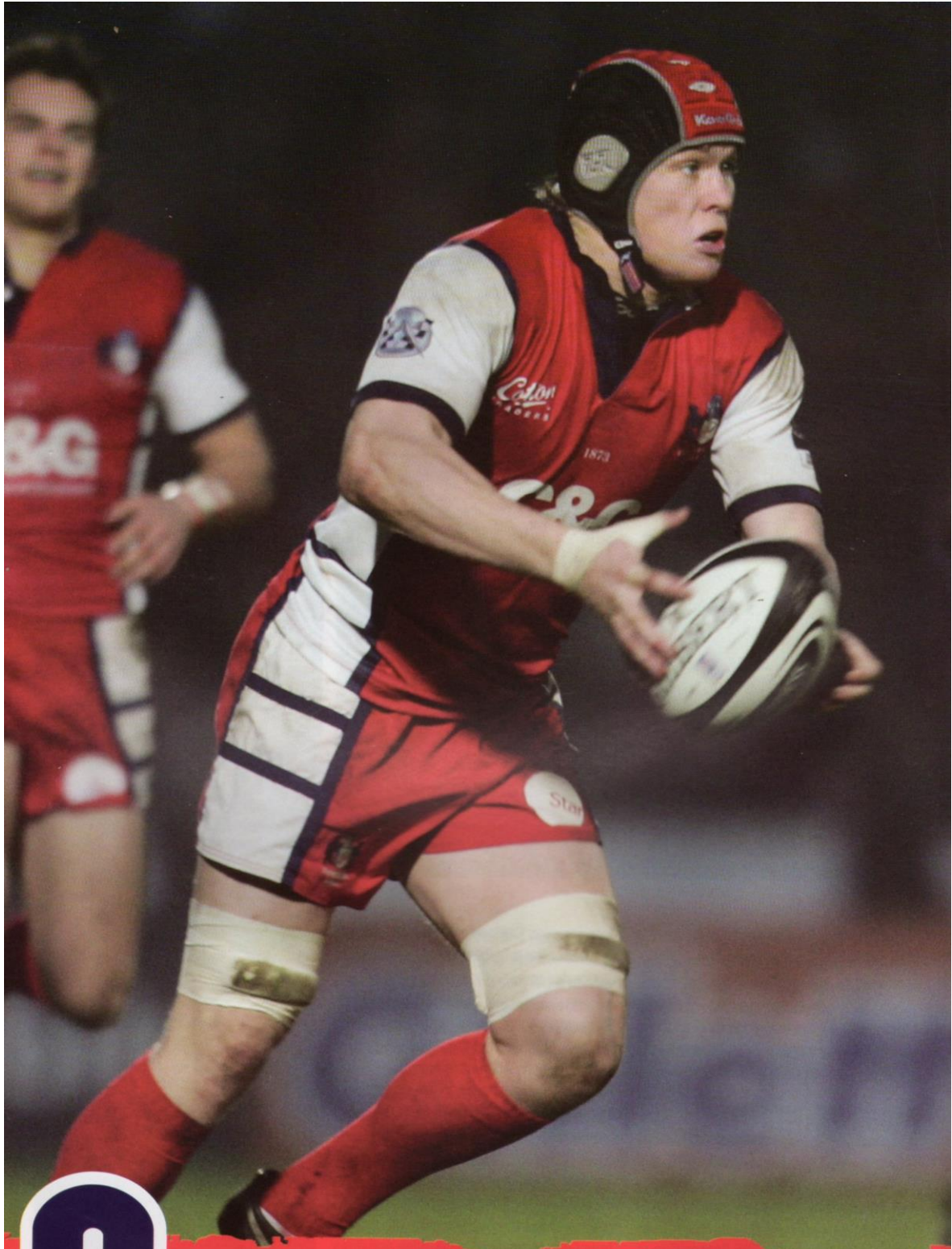


PRYCE starts his first game for the first team as Gloucester get a bonus point, 30-12 over Bath in the EDF Energy Cup. The Osprey's win over Bristol in Swansea however means that the Welsh side progress from the pool and into the semi finals.

Prop Christian Califano extends his contract by a year after a fantastic start to his Gloucester career.

Gloucester record a vital bonus point win over Edinburgh in the Heineken Cup 38-22. Anthony Allen caps his return from England colours with a try and others follow from Tindall, Olivier Azam and Simpson-Daniel.

And last week, Gloucester kept their European hopes alive with another five points against the Scottish side with scores from Luke Narraway, Tindall, Allen and Ollly Morgan. The 31-14 win puts Gloucester second in pool two. They end the year with a 33-12 defeat against Wasps in the premiership.



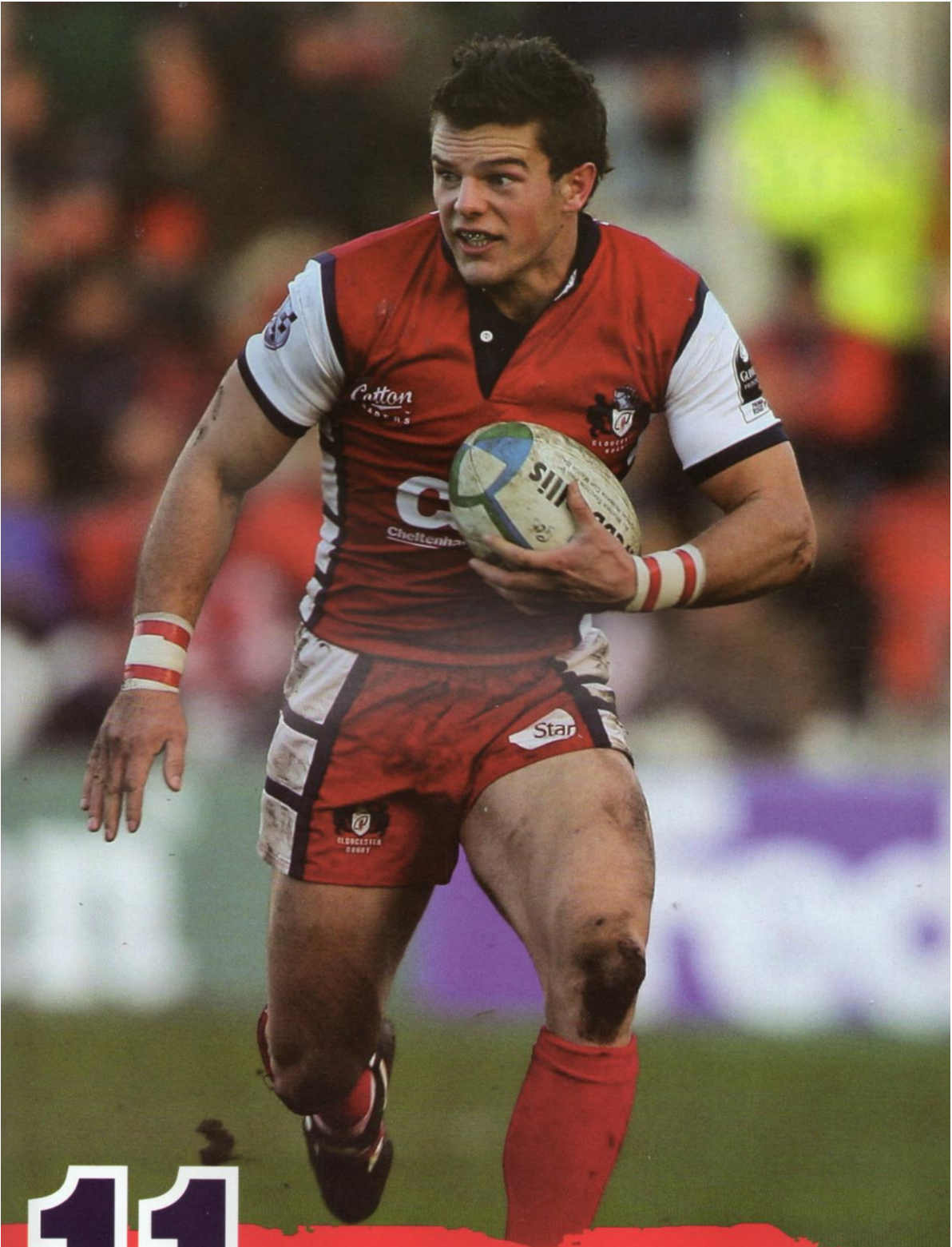
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Luke Narraway

Stats

Position: Back Row • Height: 6'3"
Weight: 15st 4lb • DOB: 07.09.83





11

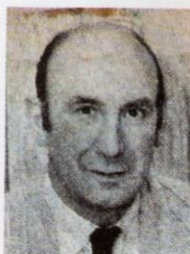
Mark Foster

Stats

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



Hall of Fame with Dave King



Peter Ford

Peter Ford was one tough nut and was good enough to represent **England in a glittering career**. And today he joins the Hall of Fame.

I F EVER the phrase 'a tough nut to crack' summed up a former Glorious Gloucester perfectly, then it would be for Peter Ford.

As a player and a man he has devoted all his efforts to the good of Gloucester Rugby. He is always a familiar and formidable opponent to all who wished to dismantle the Citadel of Kingsholm.

He has an indomitable character and is a

loyal and respected son of Kingsholm who has given great service to this club.

If one player epitomised the traditions and style of Gloucester before the professional era was even muted it was surely Ford. It was an era when Gloucester were renowned for their forward power and total domination up front was the key.

For those of us that are looking in, it is probably apt that Mike Burton describes

Ford when he first witnessed him. It was when he was watching from the terraces when Gloucester were entertaining Birkenhead Park in the early 1960s.



"On the flank was Peter Ford, who was balding, lean and toothless with Vaseline shinning on his head and legs. Early in the

game John Spalding took a savaging from one of the visitors flankers and went down injured. Soon after he recovered and right in front of my viewing position, I saw Ford deal with the miscreant. Neither Ford nor the experienced old guard could accept a Gloucester player being roughed up. Ford landed one fierce punch on the Birkenhead player and he went down."

Normal service was resumed and the match, according to the author, reverted to normality.

Ford was born on 2nd May 1932 and was educated within the city at Central Modern School. His initial playing days were spent with Gordon League RFC before moving to Kingsholm.

However, the powerful and rugged flanker remained faithful to his junior club throughout his playing career. Although his playing days are well behind him he has served the Kingsholm Club in several official capacities since. At present he is





the club's President and also serves on the Kingsholm Supporters' Mutual as a Committee member.

A once proud captain of Gloucester, he led the club in the 1955-1956, 1956-1957 and 1957-1958 seasons. There was a one season break from the tenure before he once again returned to the helm in the 1959-1960 season and in the 1960-1961 season.

Amazingly, Ford is one of a small group of players who have made over 500 appearances for the club, the other four being Alan Brinn, Robert Clewes, Richard Mogg and Dick Smith. He also scored 146 tries for Gloucester, a club record for a forward.

This undisputed, unassuming character was never better illustrated than his reaction to the fact that had been awarded his first international Cap. Contacted by a local newspaper reporter to tell him the good news he replied, 'Eh, hang on a

minute, say that again'

The last Gordon League player to have been awarded an international cap had been prop forward Ken Wilson.

At the time of his selection one newspaper report said: ***"Peter Ford forced the England selectors to include him in the England team against Wales last Saturday and his first appearance will not be his last."***

"To reach international status after such a long career ensures he is not going to make the mistakes a player of less than 31 years of age might. Apart from his maturity and the vast range of his experience he is one of the most consistently reliable players I have seen."

"The road to Twickenham has been somewhat tortuous as several years ago Ford had been asked to standby as an England reserve. Then he was forgotten until after a richly deserved

game for the Barbarians last season at Newport when one hoped he would meet the eye of selectors.'

"They had watched him in 50 county matches in the past 10 years. The selectors are human and were as susceptible as the next when it came to the glamour of the Barbarians. He appeared for the Barbarians on Boxing Day and he distinguished himself admirably in the two English trials."

"Peter Ford accepted philosophically the fact that he was not selected for the abortive exhibition by England versus New Zealand. Then came the agonising decision he and the County selectors made when it was agreed he could not risk injury in the Cornwall play off. Luckily, Gloucestershire won and nobody could blame Ford's absence!"

As a post script the report then added, ***'He made it to Twickenham fit and uninjured. A lifetime dream come true,***

Hall of Fame...

you might think, but Ford played as calmly and coolly as if this had been a regular club match.'

The England XV on Peter Ford's debut: -

J.G. Wilcox (Harlequins, Captain); M.S. Phillips (Fylde), M.P. Weston (Durham City), R.D. Sangwin (Hull E.R.), J.M. Ranson (Roselyn Park); J.P. Horrocks-Taylor (Middlesbrough), S.J.S. Clarke (Cambridge University); C.R. Jacobs (Northampton), S.A.M Hodgson (Durham City), N.J. Drake-Lee (Cambridge University), A.M. Davis (Torquay Athletic), R.E. Powell (Leicester), P.J. Ford (Gloucester), D.G. Perry (Bedford), D.P. Rogers (Bedford).

The referee was Mr K.D. Kellsler (Ireland).

Ford went onto earn a further three caps with England. When his playing career ended he eventually became a RFU selector. He was also chairman of the selectors at Gloucester for a period.

He is a well known and respected member of the local committee, he was a family member of a wholesale fruit traders in the locality. As well as representing the Barbarians, Gloucestershire and this club, Peter also represented the Royal Air Force. Keeping in the family tradition many will recall his son Paul, later playing full back for Gloucester Rugby Club. Peter now

resides at Churchdown on the city outskirts.

For those with long memories you will easily recall many of the stalwarts of Gloucester that played alongside Peter Ford in those days, Micky Booth, Terry Hopson, Don Rutherford, Ron Pitt, John Bayliss and Mike

Nicholls to mention a few.

Ford's enthusiasm for the game of rugby union has never wavered, nor his love of Gloucester. A glance up at the main grandstand will see one of the mainstays of this club seated waiting eagerly for the kick-off and he is immediately immersed within the game.



CAPS

YEAR	VERSUS	DATE	VENUE	RESULT
1964	Wales	18th January	Twickenham	Drew 6-6
	Ireland	8th February	Twickenham	Lost 5-18
	France	22nd February	Stade Colombes, Paris	Won 6-3
	Scotland	21st March	Murrayfield, Edinburgh	Lost 6-15



Fan Zone with Bob Fenton

Bob Fenton will be nursing a severe hangover in the Shed this afternoon but is ready for a fierce battle against one of the **biggest forward units** and **most effective backlines** in the country against **London Irish**

IS THIS our first home game on New Year's Day – I can't remember us playing a previous one?

Mind you more often than not I can't remember what I did on New Year's Day – the majority have been spent in some sort of hung-over slumber. And, working on the basis that quite a few people here today will be nursing a bit of a thick head I am typing this out quietly, and I'll whisper: Happy New Year everyone.

As ever the Christmas/New Year programme has been a bit cluttered with three games scheduled to take place inside 10 days. That knocks the festive over-indulgences on the head for the players. Kind of makes you glad that you never got to live the dream and that we are free to create havoc with our metabolism for a few days.

But our programme was shortened by the weather a week ago. The fog came down and the Falcons were grounded. To be fair I think the decision to call off the Newcastle game was probably the right one, I know Deano doesn't agree but then players always want to play.

Standing in the shed at 6:30 you couldn't see the grandstand and you wondered how any player was going to cope with a ball kicked high into the sky. Thoughts of sub-pantomime moments and the crowd shouting "It's behind you!" as the hapless players looked around for the ball sprang to mind.

In fact a couple of new chants had already been tried out: "You can't see what you're doing!" for the ref, and "Where are you!" for everyone else.

But perhaps the funniest comment of the night has to go to the esteemed leader of certain fans' organisation who said, as Patrice Collazo and Olly Azam appeared out of the greyness, "Quick, take a picture, you could caption it 'Gorillas in the mist!'" For the usual small fortune your identity will be withheld from two of our err... most feisty... front row forwards, either that or prepare to be outed at the next meet the players evening.

Seemingly like the players I went home and watched the incredibly dull Northampton v Wasps match. Afterwards I thought that if Wasps played like that on Boxing Day we had to be in with a chance of breaking our Adams Park duck.

Except that wasn't quite how it turned out... By the end of Christmas day I was

"Or maybe it's just the fact that every time we roll up there the **Wasps** players **ratchet up the intensity** notch by a few hundred twists and take us apart."





Bob Casey grapples with Matt Salter

“**Kennedy** and his partner in crime **Bob Casey** must be right up there among the best second row pairing to be found **anywhere** in club rugby at the moment.”

sick of stuffing, so was well chuffed when the men in black dished out another large portion at Adams Park on Tuesday. There's something about that place that just doesn't feel right – maybe it's the cheesy announcer, perhaps it's the totally manufactured 'clap – along' attempts to generate some sort of support from the home fans.

Or maybe it's just the fact that every time we roll up there the Wasps players ratchet up the intensity notch by a few hundred twists and take us apart. As it was it proved to be another fruitless trip up the M40, but on the brightside I escaped from turgid Christmas TV for a while.

But today it's London Irish and as ever it promises to be a hard fought affair. We grabbed a win up at their place not so long ago, the match turning on a Sinbad interception. It could have easily gone the other way, and the Irish boys showed what a good side they really are with two wins out of two over the Christmas period.

Today the battle royal promises to in the forwards. When we played them at the Mad Stad Nick Kennedy was missing from the side but he will probably be back in the starting line up today.

Kennedy and his partner in crime Bob Casey must be right up there among the best second row pairing to be found anywhere in club rugby at the moment. When they are on form every line-out is a test and opposition hookers must spend many a sleepless hour sweating about these two jolly green giants being launched into the air as they are trying to throw in. Whoever we put out today is going to have their work cut out containing them.

Behind their meaty pack Irish have a more than capable back line. Like our own Ryan Lamb they have unearthed a little gem in the shape of Shane Geraghty – a 20-year-old who has all the tricks and skills. Definitely one to watch.

And the guy standing just outside him is likely to be the four-capped Samoan Sellala Mapusua who has more than a shade of the Terry Fanolua's about him. You know what you're going to get from a Samoan centre – bruises and lots of them.

Off the field London Irish will bring more than a dash of colour to the away fans section of the Buildbase Stand. We're used to seeing those guys in the green nuclear-explosion type wigs, recently they have added some of the most sinister

'monks' to their travelling numbers.

Watch out for these guys in their trademark habits, they are followers of the Order of the Odd-Shaped Ball.

For those who haven't stumbled across this Order, check out their website: www.orderoftheoddshapedball.org. The match reviews and reports are among the funniest you will find anywhere on the web (beware of the slightly adult content). Some of the stuff they put up is laugh out loud funny, but it is also very well informed and well worth a read.

Those sitting around them will soon found out that a vow of silence is not among the rules of their Order, and if you meet them at the bar afterwards you will realise that taking the odd glass or ten is most definitely in.

Finally after we got home from the postponed Newcastle game, the boy pointed out the team sheet in the programme – we had 15 full internationals in the starting 22, 10 of whom were in the starting 15, had the selection been different it would have been 12. Has that ever happened before?

Match Action

Time line

15 mins	
Sackey TRY	5-0
25 mins	
Palmer TRY, King CON	12-0
32 mins	
Palmer TRY, King CON	19-0
53 mins	
Lawson TRY	19-5
65mins	
Carlos Nieto yellow card	
68 mins	
Voyce TRY, King CON	26-5
72 mins	
Allen TRY, Lamb CON	26-12
74 mins	
Haskell TRY, Cipriani CON	33-12

Gloucester Line-up

15	Iain Balshaw	
14	James Simpson-Daniel	
13	Mike Tindall	
12	Anthony Allen	(1t)
11	Mark Foster	
10	Willie Walker	
9	Pete Richards	
1	Patrice Collazo	
2	Olivier Azam	
3	Christian Califano	
4	Marco Bortolami (capt)	
5	Alex Brown	
6	Peter Buxton	
7	Andy Hazell	
8	Luke Narraway	
REPS		
16	Mefin Davies	(Azam)
17	Carlos Nieto	(Yellow card, Collazo)
18	James Forrester	(Narraway)
19	Adam Eustace	(Bortolami)
20	Ryan Lamb	(1 con, Walker)
21	Rory Lawson	(1 try, Richards)
22	Ollie Morgan	(Foster)

London Wasps
Gloucester Rugby

33
12



New heading...

Tuesday, December 26
Ref: Wayne Barnes Att: 10,000

GLOUCESTER suffered their second Guinness Premiership defeat of the season against Wasps on Boxing Day – going down five tries to two at High Wycombe.

Despite a positive start with plenty of high field position and territory, Gloucester failed to make the most of their opportunities in the first quarter and paid a heavy price.

Wasps' first try came after 15 minutes when Paul Sackey finished expertly down the left after good play from Dominic Waldouck and Mark Van Gisbergen.

It was just what Gloucester didn't need and when Tom Palmer was driven over from a line-out after 25 minutes, Wasps were 12-0 ahead without having to do too much.

Although they lost Phil Vickery to injury after 29 minutes, Wasps scored again when Gloucester failed to clear their lines effectively and Palmer pounced on Willie Walker's attempted clearance, took the catch and had enough pace to score.

The score basically killed the game and at 19-0 ahead, and with Daniel Leo and Joe Worsley in excellent form,





Man of the Match...

Peter Buxton



Once again the blindside flanker carried possession hard, made his tackles and contested at the breakdown

Wasps were cruising. However, Gloucester were much more effective in the second half and began to cause problems at the contact area and have a right go at the set-piece.

From a close-range scrum after 53 minutes, replacement James Forrester picked up, used all his pace and power to make the break and send an over-head pass inside to Rory Lawson, who scored.

The score gave Gloucester an outside chance of saving something from the game and although they dominated the next stage

of the contest, could not grab the score that would have stoked their revival even further.

As it was, Wasps claimed their bonus point when Tom Voyce took a lovely inside pass from Alex King to grab their bonus point try.

There was still time for Anthony Allen to take an ambitious Worsley pass with eight minutes to go to race 80 metres to score, Gloucester trailed 26-12.

But there was still time for James Haskell to add a fifth try for Wasps to cement a thoroughly deserved victory.

Coaches Comment...

Dean Ryan



"We got ourselves into a black hole we couldn't get out of because we were too conservative – it was a disappointing performance," head coach Dean Ryan.



2006-07 Season so far...



