

Gloucester Rugby

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Gloucester Rugby
v Newcastle Falcons
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Behind the Scenes

Kingsholm Grandstand's Last Stand

Nick Wood

All the Latest from Gloucester's In-form Prop

Ryan's Review

Gloucester's head coach looks back at the Quins victory

Newcastle

All you need to know about today's opponents

Richard Mogg

Joins the Hall Of Fame

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Captain's Corner

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dair*

"I think **Newcastle** are an improving and competitive side so we must ensure the hard work achieved over the last month or so is not wasted."



IT'S GREAT to be back – I have missed Kingsholm and its atmosphere during the Six Nations with Italy.

For the international players at every club, it has been a very heavy schedule over the last two months and I have been there was a massive cheer when Italy's result against Scotland was read out at Kingsholm.

I think the Six Nations has shown Italy are now capable of competing on a regular basis at home and away and for the development of the game in my

country, this is a massive step forward for and as captain it has pleased me hugely.

While I have been away, I have obviously kept in touch with the squad and with the results and they have been fantastic. Speaking with Dean, I understand that it was during the international periods last season we lost our momentum but it our four successive victories shows this squad is developing really well.

To be successful in the long-term and over a nine-month season requires strength in

depth, a committed squad and a determination to work for one another and we have that at Gloucester.

For me, I am delighted to be back with the squad for our final push towards the end of the season and we start that this afternoon against a Newcastle team who will also welcome back their England internationals.

One of the players that really made a mark on the Championship was Toby Flood, they have a mercurial Jonny Wilkinson and Mathew Tait in the

backline too so will be a massive threat to our play-off chances.

I think Newcastle are an improving and competitive side so we must ensure the hard work achieved over the last month or so is not wasted.

We are in the run-in now and we are desperate for a good draw in the play-offs. This is also the last game in front of the current Grandstand, the support has been wonderful all season so please give it the send off it deserves this afternoon and get right behind the boys.



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A Grandstand's place in history

A massive fire destroyed the original Grandstand at Kingsholm and today – ahead of the new development – Dave King charts the history of the structure and the amazing story behind it.

TODAY will be an historic day in Kingsholm's history. It will be the final game played in front of the current Grandstand before the re-development begins later this month and bring the curtain down on a unique piece of Gloucester folklore.

There have been two structures on the current site, the original stand was erected in 1926 at a cost of £2,500 and measured 180 feet by 40 feet and stood proudly in place until Saturday 9th September 1933 when it was destroyed by fire.

On that day, shortly after noon, a major fire started began in the main stand and threatened to engulf Bertram Mills Circus. It was feared that the circus with its menagerie of wild animals, would become involved as only a few yards separated it from the blazing building.

Along with the employees of the circus the Gloucester Fire Brigade averted the danger and damage was limited to a caravan and its contents. The terrified animals had to be rushed to safety and some horses got loose amid the carnage.

All that remained of the original structure after the blaze was twisted and blackened framework, the whole of the wooden area having been reduced to ashes. Iron uprights still supported the bulging roof that threatened to collapse and but for fencing having been torn down the flames may have been spread further.

So intense was the heat that two firemen and a circus attendant were overcome by the fumes and heat. As the firemen sprayed streams of water on the fire, heat blistered their hands.

Three engines were in attendance and all the available police resources were called upon to control the thousands who had collected and crowded around the ground. There were 3,000 feet of hose delivering streams of water from the mains in Worcester Street and Dean's Walk to control the flames that were roaring up the side of the stand.

There were grave concerns that the menagerie containing the wild animals would become involved. Employees of the circus along with willing helpers took the animals to safety. The elephants were taken to St Catherine's Meadows and cages containing tigers were dragged into Dean's Walk. With regard to the horses, some of whom broke away, found a haven in the Kingsholm Recreation Ground.

After assessing the situation, Supt. Windebank, the Brigade Chief, decided that the imperative task was to protect the circus. Firemen drenched the caravans with water until it was possible to move them to another part of the ground. At the time Mr Bertram Mills described the scene as an amazing escape. He also informed everyone that although the 2.30pm show would be cancelled the

5.30pm show would continue regardless.

Although the stand was insured, it was a blow to the club at the start of a new season. The original stand accommodated 1,750 spectators and it was believed that the fire began in the Worcester Street end of the ground.

Amazingly, almost two months later out of the ruins of then old structure a new and vastly improved stand was raised. The new structure was slightly smaller seated 1,330 people while in front of the stand there was room for 1,500 people to stand, most of them under cover.

Within the space of eight weeks remarkable progress had been made. After the remains of the old stand had been removed day and night shifts were in operation to erect the steel framework and carpenters were employed to fix the seats in position.

The main contract for the work was given to William Jones, a general building contractor of Worcester Street, Gloucester. While Messrs Davies Brothers and Co Ltd of Crown Works, Wolverhampton were responsible for the structural work. Gloucester Stone & Co Ltd of Barnwood supplied specially reinforced fireproof units for terraces and steps.

The new stand was in operation for the first time on Saturday 11th November 1933 for the County Championship match between Gloucestershire and Somerset. The teams were: -

Gloucestershire: *H. Boughton (Gloucester); C.C. Tanner (Gloucester), D.W. Burland (Bristol), J.C. Brooks (Gloucester), R. James (Gloucester); D. Meadows (Gloucester), C. Fifield (Gloucester); E. Comley (Gloucester), A.D. Carpenter (Gloucester), F.W. Tucker (Bristol), K. Foss (Clifton), C.A.L. Richards*

(Clifton and Oxford University), I. Williams (Gloucester), C. Murray (Bristol) A.T. Payne (Bristol).

Somerset: *K.C. Kinnersley (Bristol); A.E. Merrett (Bath), S. Williams (Bath), W.H. Mancriff (Bath), K.G. Harvey (Bristol); T.J.M. Barrington (Bristol), P.S. Luffman (St Thomas Hospital); N.W. Matthews (Bath), G.G. Gregory (Bristol), F.W. Williams (Weston-Super-Mare), J. Price (Taunton), R.V. Watkins (Devonport Services), J.W.R. Swayne (Bridgwater), F.C. Goddard (Taunton), B. Barber (Bath).*

Referee: *Mr J.H. Ball (London).*

For Gloucester Rugby Club it was one week later when they were able to take to the field in front of the new stand on 18th November 1933 against west country rivals Bath. The Gloucester team was as follows: -

H. Boughton; G.R. James, J.S. Brooks, M.A. McCanlis, C.C. Tanner; C. Fifield, D. Meadows; F. Wadley (Captain), A. Carpenter, E. Cowley, R. Morris, J.G. A'bear, I. Williams, A. Welshman, P. Horden.

Bath fielded the following XV: -

R. Banks; A.E. Merrett, W.H. Mancriff, G..V. Wynne-Jones, W.E. Hancock; S. Williams, J.T.C. Taylor; B.C. Barber (Captain), J. Jones, P. Clothier, I.H. Brooks, J. Minto, D. Crichton-Miller, P. Meen, N.W. Matthews.

Referee: *C.H.F. Gilbert (Midland Counties).*

So, at the start of next season Kingsholm will witness it's third grandstand, one lasted seven years, the second 73 years, will the forthcoming new stand outlast its previous and take Gloucester to the next level in the Guinness Premiership?

David King





Ryan's Review

With four victories in a row it has been a very good **Six Nations** period for **Gloucester** and Head Coach **Dean Ryan** looks back at the latest win over **Harlequins**.



Last weekend's victory was the fourth in a row during the Six Nations period – a slight change from last season?

DR: IT HAS been fantastic for our confidence, belief and progression as a side to operate at that level without what you could describe as the spine of our experience,

know-how and game management through the Six Nations.

During the international periods last season we struggled for form, it took us far too long to re-discover our momentum afterwards and it made this stage of the season a real struggle because we were playing catch up.

This time last season I said we would only know about the development of this group in a year to 18 months and I think that has started to come through in this phase of the campaign. We have given ourselves a great opportunity to press on for a home semi-final and that is all we can ask for.

Before today, we have managed to

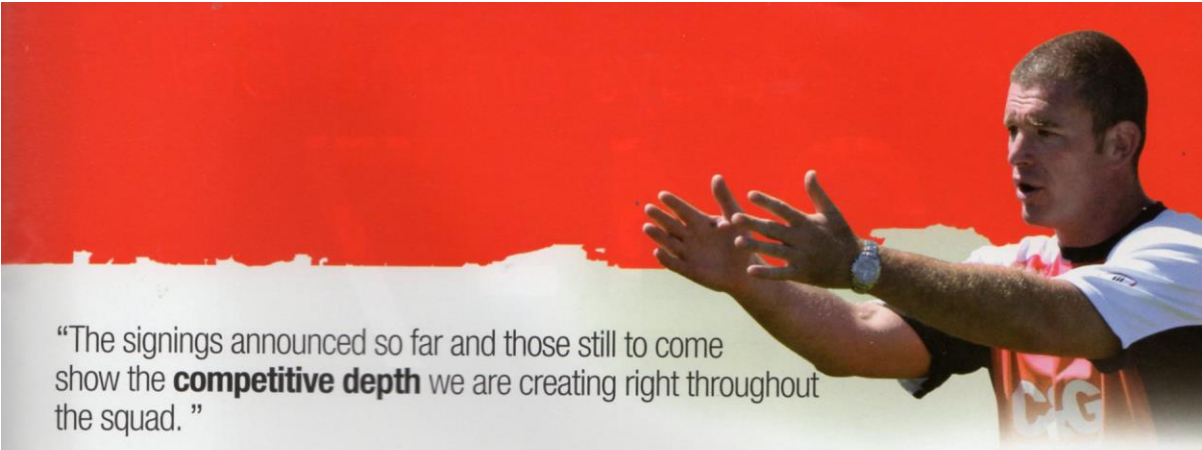
back up four successive wins and that is a great testament to not only the senior players we were left with like Pete Buxton, Andy Hazell, Alex Brown, Peter Richards and Olivier Azam but guys like Nick Wood and Jack Forster – two young and developing forwards – and the growing maturity of Ryan Lamb and Anthony Allen.

It has been great to watch them go out and play with a freedom and confidence despite the size of the games. We appreciate we are not the most physical side in the Premiership but at this stage of the season we can create our own problems for the opposition through movement and that is what has pleased me and the players.



Peter Buxton





“The signings announced so far and those still to come show the **competitive depth** we are creating right throughout the squad.”



Against Harlequins, we won comfortably but you were not entirely pleased with the performance?

DR: I THOUGHT we produced a generally scrappy performance but had plenty of opportunities to create a comfortable scoreline for ourselves and that is something we didn't do.

We got dragged into a mess and it left us with a taste of disappointment when we should have enjoyed it because some of the stuff we played was pretty good in the areas where we wanted to be a threat.

Perhaps we thought it was going to be a little more comfortable than it was after our start and consequently did

not control the game as much as we should have done.

We need to be more ruthless and kill opponents off. Quins deserve a huge amount of credit for rallying the way they did but they shouldn't have been in a position to do that.



It has been another busy week off the field too. Pete Richards has joined London Irish and Gareth Cooper is his replacement?

DR: GARETH has all the qualities you would associate with an international number nine and his ability to break the line can be devastating to the opposition and we are delighted he has decided to join us. The signings announced so far and those still to come show the

competitive depth we are creating right throughout the squad. I'm really pleased we have been able to recruit Gareth and am expecting big things from him next season.



Newcastle are the third successive visitors to Kingsholm today, what do you expect from them?

DR: I THINK the postponement gave them a chance to establish a little bit of stability and, like us, they will relish the dry conditions of the last few weeks. They are probably slightly further on in terms of their development than us – they are well known for producing the likes of Wilkinson, Noon, Tait and May – but this year Toby Flood has burst onto the scene too.



Andy Hazell



Matthew Tait

Gloucester RUGBY

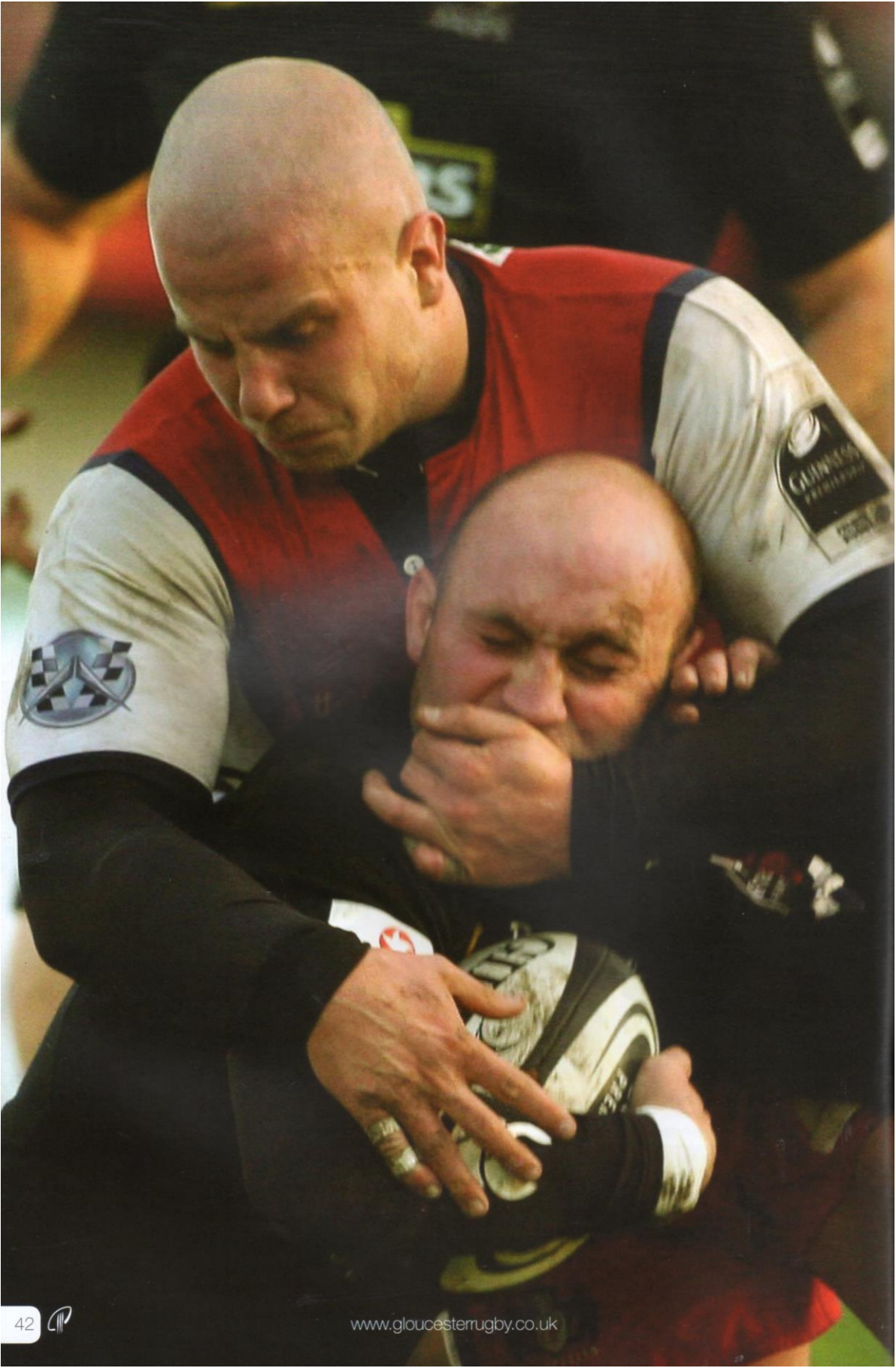


Newcastle FALCONS

	Willie WALKER	15	Full Back	15	Matthew BURKE ©	
	James BAILEY	14	Right Wing	14	Tom MAY	
	Mike TINDALL	13	Centre	13	Mathew TAIT	
	Anthony ALLEN	12	Centre	12	Jamie NOON	
	James SIMPSON-DANIEL	11	Left Wing	11	Toby FLOOD	
	Ryan LAMB	10	Fly Half	10	Jonny WILKINSON	
	Pete RICHARDS	9	Scrum Half	9	James GRINDAL	
	Nick WOOD	1	Prop	1	Joe McDONNELL	
	Mefin DAVIES	2	Hooker	2	Matt THOMPSON	
	Carlos NIETO	3	Prop	3	Micky WARD	
	Will JAMES	4	Lock	4	Mark SORENSON	
	Marco BORTOLAMI	5	Lock	5	Jason OAKES	
	© Jake BOER	6	Flanker	6	Geoff PARLING	
	Andy HAZELL	7	Flanker	7	Ben WOODS	
	James FORRESTER	8	No 8	8	Brent WILSON	

Replacements

	Olivier AZAM	16	Substitute 1	16	Jon GOLDING	
	Jack FORSTER	17	Substitute 2	17	Andy LONG	
	Adam EUSTACE	18	Substitute 3	18	Andy PERRY	
	Jonathan PENDLEBURY	19	Substitute 4	19	Andy BUIST	
	Haydn THOMAS	20	Substitute 5	20	John RUDD	
	Rudi KEIL	21	Substitute 6	21	Lee DICKSON	
	Jon GOODRIDGE	22	Substitute 7	22	Loki CRICHTON	



Seeing the Wood for the trees

Steve Cotton from the Western Daily Press talks to Gloucester prop Nick Wood about his continued development this season – and the desire at Kingsholm to keep their great run on track.

WHEN the names of Gloucester's emerging young talent are reeled off, one player who often fails to earn a mention is Nick Wood.

Ryan Lamb, Anthony Allen, Olly Morgan, Jack Adams and Jack Forster are all discussed, while James Simpson-Daniel – who reaches the grand old age of 25 this spring – still just about makes the list.

But prop Wood, who recently turned 24, is a young man learning his trade in the most difficult position of all – and has taken another massive step forward this season. Wood has taken on the added responsibility of being Gloucester's senior prop in the last two matches – the victories over Leicester and Harlequins – with 20-year-old Forster starting at tighthead.

But the former Cambridge student's eagerness to learn is still as strong as ever, and he doffs his cap in the direction of senior figures such as Carlos Nieto, Patrice Collazo and Christian Califano when it comes to his front-row education.

"When it comes to learning off them, it's all about the technical expertise these guys have got," said the Swindonian.

"They're around the age of 30, and in the time they've been playing rugby they've played a lot of international and European Cup rugby.

"There's so much they have learned from playing against high-quality opposition that they can pass on to me – and they do. So it's brilliant having these people around."

Wood's emergence has owed plenty to his own willingness to put in the graft – in the gym, on the training field and in matches – and his continued involvement with the England Saxons is proof enough that his development is being monitored by the national team hierarchy.

England hardly have an embarrassment of riches in the propping department at the moment, but Wood is looking no further ahead than today's Guinness Premiership match against Newcastle. The match is the club's final game at Kingsholm in its current state – with the grandstand due to be hauled down and replaced with a modern structure after the Falcons' visit.

And the Premiership summit awaits if Gloucester can extend their winning run to five matches. But Wood is taking little notice of those who slip into the easy



Player Interview

01



Nick's Stats

Position: Prop

Height: 6'2"

Weight: 17st 2lb

DOB: 09.01.83



cliché of suggesting Newcastle's pack will offer little in the way of resistance.

"I think as soon as you lose respect for the opposition you are playing at the weekend then you are in trouble," said Wood.

"That's when you go in complacent, and teams like Newcastle get on top of you.

"Whatever weaknesses they have, they make up for and they know how to work around, so it's not going to be an easy challenge this weekend.

"They've got such a potent back-line – and they need the wins – so it will be a difficult game.

"We need the win to take the top spot and they need the win for their own reasons."

Gloucester have been providing plenty in the way of entertainment over the past couple of weekends – their last two matches have yielded a total of 14 tries. But with eight of those being scored against Gloucester – four by Leicester, four by Harlequins – head coach Dean Ryan has made it clear to his players this week that they must start to tighten up this weekend.

"The Leicester game (the 28-24 win), in particular, was a great game to be involved in," said Wood.

"Unfortunately, we let four tries in, and that's two

games in a row where that has happened.

"As Dean has said to the boys – and to the media – we were just sloppy against Harlequins.

"We scored our four tries, got five points, but at the same time we let four tries in. If they had kicked their kicks it would have been a completely different game."

As the end of the season approaches, Gloucester have the look of a team who will end up challenging for top honours for the first time since the ill-fated 2003 Twickenham final against Wasps. They topped the Premiership table by 15 points at the end of that season – but were hammered 39-3 in the inaugural play-off final after a three-week break.

Now, as Wood points out, their aim to maintain the momentum they have built up over the past few weeks, a period when they have at times been without such experienced campaigners as Nieto, Marco Bortolami, Mike Tindall, Iain Balshaw and Morgan.

"We have had a couple of difficult periods where we have lost a couple on the bounce," said Wood.

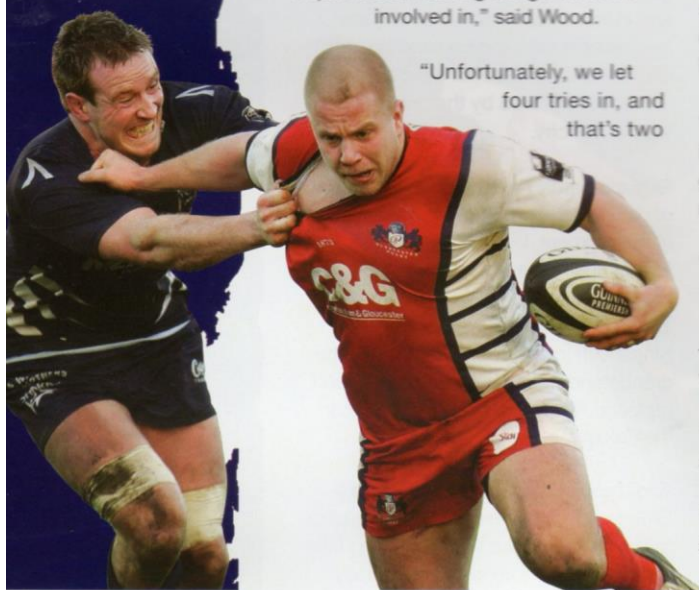
"But we've only lost four games this season – one of those was to Wasps (33-12) and the other three have been last-minute losses.

"We have been up there all season but it's a case of keeping our foot on the gas to really hammer home the wins now and make sure we stay up there.

"Now we will find out if this squad wants to be in the play-offs and challenging for the Premiership title – and everyone in the squad should want to play in a Premiership final.

"It's what Dean's been building the squad for and this is our chance.

"It may be as he expected, it may be sooner, but we are up there and we have given ourselves a foothold."





"It's not going to be an easy challenge this weekend they've got such a potent back line - and they need the wins - so it will be a difficult game."

Match Action

Time line

 4 min	
Wood TRY, Walker CON	7-0
 10 min	
Walker PEN	10-0
 15 mins	
Bailey TRY, Walker CON	17-0
 31 mins	
Jarvis PEN	17-3
 33 mins	
Keogh TRY	17-8
 36 mins	
Forrester TRY, Walker CON	24-8
 43 mins	
Williams TRY	24-13
 56 mins	
Walker PEN	27-13
 60 mins	
Foster TRY, Walker CON	34-13
 74 mins	
Fuga TRY	34-18
 80 mins	
Brown TRY, Mehrtens CON	34-25

Gloucester Line-up

15	Willie Walker	(2p 4c)
14	James Bailey	(11)
13	James Simpson-Daniel	
12	Anthony Allen	
11	Mark Foster	(11)
10	Ryan Lamb	
9	Peter Richards	
1	Nick Wood	(11)
2	Olivier Azam	
3	Jack Forster	
4	Will James	
5	Alex Brown	
6	Peter Buxton	(capt)
7	Andy Hazell	
8	James Forrester	(11)
REPS		
16	Mefin Davies	(Azam)
17	Patrice Collazo	(Wood)
18	Adam Eustace	(Brown)
19	Jonathan Pendlebury	
20	Haydn Thomas	(Richards)
21	Jon Goodridge	(Lamb)
22	Rudi Keil	(Allen)

Gloucester Rugby 34
NEC Harlequins 25



Gloucester march on

Saturday, March 17

Referee: Dave Pearson, Attendance: 10,391

GLOUCESTER strengthened their claims for a play-off place with a thoroughly deserved victory over Harlequins – although they were made to work for it by the Londoners.

The home side earned a bonus point but for the second successive week conceded four tries.

When they played with structure and decisiveness, Gloucester were in a different league and opened up a 17-0 lead with tries from Nick Wood – who gathered

and scored when Tani Fuga's line-out throw ended in the prop's hands and then James Bailey took Andy Hazell's short pass to weave his way through a number of defenders to score after 15 minutes.

But then things started to go astray. Adrian Jarvis kicked a penalty and when Gloucester were turned over in midfield before half-time, they never recovered control of the ball and Andre Vos put Simon Keogh into score.

However, Gloucester did hit back with a brilliant score of their own when Ryan





Man of the Match...

Andy Hazell



The flanker produced another outstanding performance full of energy and tackle power.

Lamb fielded a high kick by Jarvis, dummied his way forward and then sent James Forrester scampering to the line outside the Quins defence.

That made the score 24-8 but immediately after the re-start Andrew Mehrtens picked out a lovely pass to Tom Williams, who got to the line.

A Walker penalty made it 27-13 and then the hosts scored another stunning try. James Bailey held a high kick and set Pete Richards on a trademark searing break. He linked

with Pete Buxton, Mefin Davies and Alex Brown deep inside Quins territory and from the ruck, Lamb kicked across field for Mark Foster to catch and score.

Although the score took Gloucester clear, Quins mounted a brilliant late rally that grabbed them a bonus point with two tries.

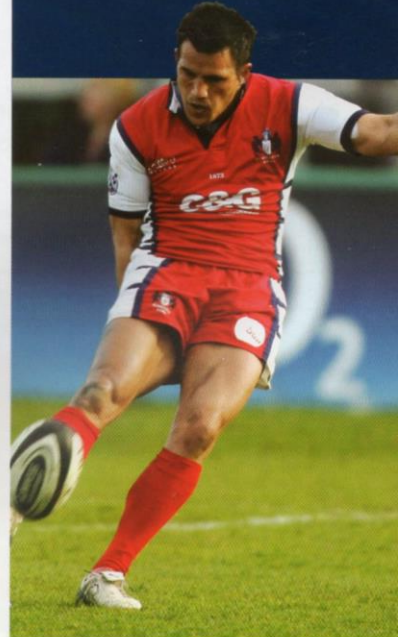
First, hooker Fuga scored following a period of heavy close-range pressure and in the last minute Steve So'oialo took a quick tap penalty and sent Mike Brown to the line to leave Quins 34-25 adrift at the final whistle.

Coaches Comment...

Dean Ryan



"I think we are a little bit disappointed in the overall performance because we started so well – we gave a glimpse of what we could achieve," Gloucester's head coach Dean Ryan.





Peter Arnold

The **Kingsholm Grandstand** has been part of **Peter Arnold's** life since he was a boy and today he waves a **fond farewell** to a piece of **Gloucester history**, looks back at the **Six Nations** and delights in the victory over **Harlequins**.

NOSTALGIA ISN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE (BUT THEN, IT NEVER WAS)

FORGETTING the little matter of a possible home Premiership semi-final for a moment, this is probably the last time we shall see the ground dominated by the old grandstand. It is to be demolished to make way for a new all-singing, all-dancing facility which will occupy just about the whole south side of the ground.

Time moves on, of course, and there's no doubt that the new facilities are necessary if Gloucester is to meet the challenges presented by the years ahead. I can't help heaving a nostalgic sigh, however.

For almost eighty years the grand old stand has presided over every Kingsholm event. When it's gone, the ground may be improved, but it won't be the same.

You could liken the old girl to a fading dowager. Time has softened and ravaged her once handsome features, her beautiful gown has become threadbare and frayed at the elbows, and if you listen very carefully, you can hear her corsets creak. She's our

old lady, however, and we'll be sorry to see her pass into the realm of forgotten things.

Perhaps I'm being fanciful, but you can't expect me to remain entirely unmoved by the disappearance of a structure which has been an important part of my life since my childhood.

Hail and farewell old girl! I, for one, will miss you.

DOING US PROUD

DON'T know what you think, but I consider that the Gloucester representatives in the various Six Nations squads are doing us proud. They've all put in sterling performances and done everything that their coaches can have asked of them.

You could certainly say that about Olly Morgan's abbreviated career so far. Before his shoulder injury, he had looked one of the few England successes during the Ireland debacle, safe under the high ball and tackling his heart out. It's a shame he didn't get many chances to show his attacking abilities which might just have shocked a few people.

I suppose Olly's one consolation for his injury is that it caused him to miss the worst humiliations of the Croke Park disaster and that he can't be blamed for any of it.

Mike Tindall has been looking good, too. He will be choked to miss the Wales encounter, but has been a pivotal factor in England's partial revival. His try against France virtually settled the game. Admittedly it was a fairly close-range affair, but he had manoeuvred himself into the right place at the right time, and the pass from Shane Geraghty was deflected by Mike Catt and wasn't all that easy to take. A less experienced centre could well have fluffed it.

Our two Italians have done well, too. Carlos Nieto started by getting a bit of a going over from France's Olivier Molloud, as have many other props, so there's no shame in that. Since then, however, he's put in some storming performances, and his usual replacement after around an hour seems to be a tactical ploy rather than any reflection on his abilities.

Not much need be added about Marco Bortolami. He has simply been immense in his country's cause, both around the park and as captain. If I were to pick a World XV right now, he would be in it.

I'm sure that both Marco and Carlos would be happy to concede that half a season working with the Gloucester pack has done them no harm at all.

Finally, I was delighted to see that Rory Lawson got a start against Wales. Coming off the bench for Scotland throughout the tournament, he has proved a more than adequate



The Grandstand





Mike Catt & Mike Tindall v France

replacement for Chris Cussiter, and indeed, has outshone him at times. Frank Haddon obviously agrees. Again, a few months under the tutelage of Brian Redpath would seem to have helped him a lot.

So well done the lads! Keep on keeping on!

INTERESTING WEEKEND

FASCINATING couple of days last weekend. I never liked England's chances in front of the ravening horde at the Millennium Stadium, but I think their problems were compounded when they lost Joe Worsley early on. That left a back row so inexperienced as to be almost laughable. To put them up against Ryan Jones and friends was almost unfair. (I don't think things would have been the same if Forrester and Hazell had been doing their thing).

I still can't understand why not a single member of the Gloucester back row, known up and down the country as the best in England, was even picked in the national extended squad. As I've said before, the ways of selectors are like the Peace of God.

They passeth all understanding. It was nice, however to see Rory Lawson have such a storming first start for Scotland.

As for the Premiership, last weekend's results all went our way. Gloucester's performance attracted criticism, and was described by Dean Ryan as "scrappy". Maybe so, but we did secure four tries and a bonus point. It's also worth pointing out that 'Quins were on a good trot, and had been described by the pundits as the form team in the Premiership. If we can put in a scrappy performance and still put on over 30 points against such opposition, then things can't be too bad can they?

It was gratifying from our point of view to see both Bristol and Wasps lose. Makes for a very tight top of the table.

One thing nobody has told me at the time of writing. If we do land a home Premiership semi-final, where are we going to play it?

AND FINALLY...

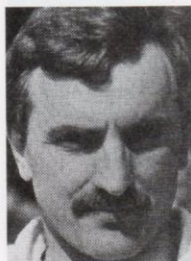
...has Adam Eustace learned the words to 'Sospan Vach'?



Carlos Nieto

Hall of Fame

with Dave King



Richard Mogg

Did the versatility of **Richard Mogg** cost him an England cap? He was one of the most prolific try-scorers in Gloucester's history, was the last man to 500 appearances and joins **Dave King's Hall of Fame** today

RICHARD MOGG was one of the most accomplished and versatile players ever to represent Gloucester – but did that versatility cost him an international cap?

Mogg was a club genius and became only the fifth player in Gloucester's history to make 500 first team appearances when he faced Sale on 21st April 1990 at Kingsholm.

He combined his playing days with his employment with Seven Trent Water

Authority and it is often said he could be seen digging up Bristol Road on a Saturday morning before heading to Kingsholm in the afternoon.

The former Tredworth three-quarter was given the honour of making his milestone appearance when the club selectors chose him to play in two matches over the Easter period of that year rather than select him to play at Nottingham in a vital league encounter on 28th April or the impending Pilkington Cup Final versus Bath, one week later.

Yet, it could all have ended as quickly as it began for the speedster who went onto score 161 tries before that memorable day. At the age of 18, he arrived at Kingsholm on a trial basis but found he missed his mates at Tredworth so much, he decided to return for a month before coming back to Kingsholm for a second go – it was a decision he was not to regret.

Mogg made his first team debut for the club against Cheltenham four games from the end of the 1974-1975 season



Richard Mogg is far right





“He was gathering a reputation as a prolific scorer of tries and bagged four when Gloucester set a points record with a **87-3 victory** against Exeter in the first round of the **John Player Cup** in the 1985-86 season”

and he scored his first try in his third first team match against Clifton in April 1975. In his second season in the 1975-76 season he secured a regular first team position, a season where he kicked six conversions and a penalty.

A season later, Mogg scored 20 tries in 35 appearances including six versus Guys Hospital in a 50-6 victory. In the 1977-78 season he scored the only try of the match in the club's 6-3 victory in the John Player Cup Final against Leicester at Twickenham.

Honours soon became part of his career too and in the 1978-79 season he was selected for the England Under-23 team and also for the South West division against the All Blacks, a season where Gloucester retained the South West Merit Table Championship.

In 1979-80 he scored a hat-trick for the 1978 John Player Cup team who had a domestic tussle against the 1972 Knock Out team. It was not enough for the '78' team who were defeated by a single point in a 28-27 encounter.

In the following season the former Hatherley School pupil was attracting the attention of the National selectors when he played in an England trial. He was eventually capped at 'B' team level. He had previously played for England Colts and Under-23's.

The 1981-82 season was one of success for Gloucester when they became joint winners of the John Player Cup and also became the Anglo Welsh Pennant Champions - setting a club record of wins in a season.

Mogg became the club's top try scorer the following season when he recorded 17 from 36 appearances. Once again the centre or wing was selected to face the All Blacks when he appeared for the South West Division in the 1983-84 season.

He was gathering a reputation as a prolific scorer of tries and bagged four when Gloucester set a points record with a 87-3 victory against Exeter in the first round of the John Player Cup in the 1985-86 season. The following season he made his 400th appearance for the club versus Newbridge.

In April 1988, Mogg was selected in the Barbarians Easter tour of South Wales. He was selected for two of the tour matches against Cardiff and Swansea.

Hall of Fame...

In the latter fixture he raced 50 yards to score a try. His try scoring vein never deserted him and in the 1988-89 season he scored seven tries in his 34 first team appearances.

In 1990 he scored his 150th first team try, also making his 499th first team appearance versus Headingley. Many wise old Kingsholm heads believed he could and should have gained an international cap.

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A look at the three quarters available at that time saw David Duckham of Coventry, Alan Morley of Bristol, Mike Lampowski of Headingley with Mike Slemen of Liverpool preferred for the left wing position but his

record was outstanding nevertheless. Mogg always regarded the Gloucester team of 1981-82 as the finest he had played in at Kingsholm. When you consider this was a team boasting the calibre of Steve Boyle, Mike Teague, Phil Blakeway and John Fidler, it was easy to agree with his choice.

At the time of the of his 500th appearance he stated that Paul Taylor and Mike Hamlin were players he had enjoyed playing with and they topped his list of the club's best players at that time.

Of his selection to the Barbarians, he said: “It came as a shock when I heard the news and I really enjoyed my two matches with the Barbarians.”

He was 33-years-of-age when he made his 500th appearance for the club. Regarded as a folk hero among Kingsholm devotees, he was a proud man to have joined Gloucester Rugby's elite and exclusive 500 appearance club. He will probably be the last addition to this exclusive group of Alan Brinn (1960-1978), Bob Clewes (1968-1982), Dick Smith (1958-1977) and Peter Ford (1951-1967).

A great servant to this club, Mogg was without doubt one of the finest three-quarters to have graced Kingsholm. Yet he could so easily have missed out on an outstanding club career for Tredworth nearly embraced his talents once again. They did in his later years for he returned to his roots and played many matches even when he was well into his 40s such was his love of the game and everything connected with this city.

