

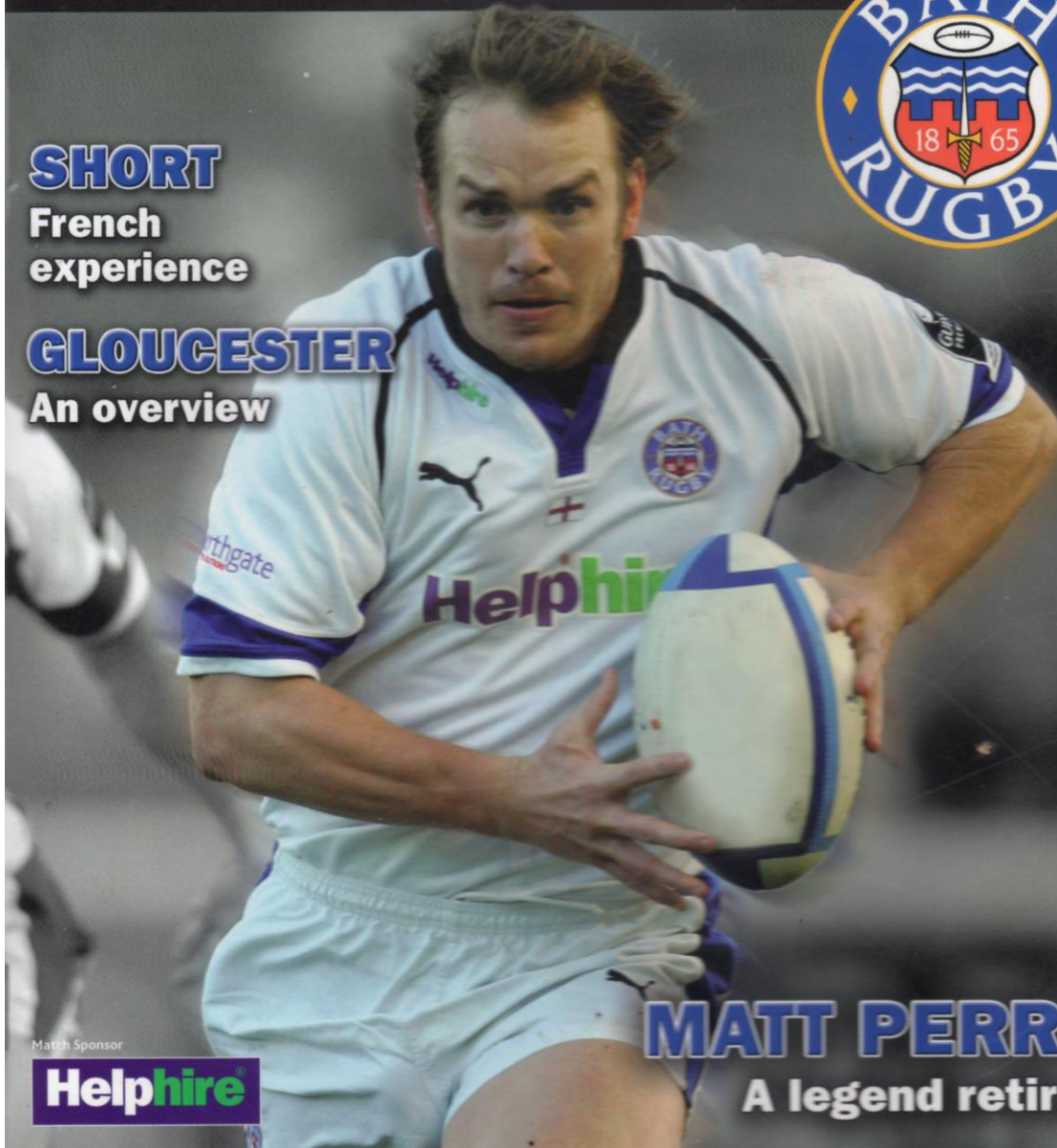
BATH RUGBY

V GLOUCESTER RUGBY • SATURDAY 7TH APRIL 2007 • KICK-OFF 2.15PM



SHORT
French
experience

GLOUCESTER
An overview

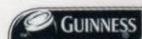
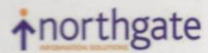


MATT PERRY
A legend retires

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GUINNESS PREMIERSHIP FINAL, TWICKENHAM, 12 MAY 2007

TICKETS: www.guinnesspremiership.com/FINAL

BATH RUGBY



GLOUCESTER

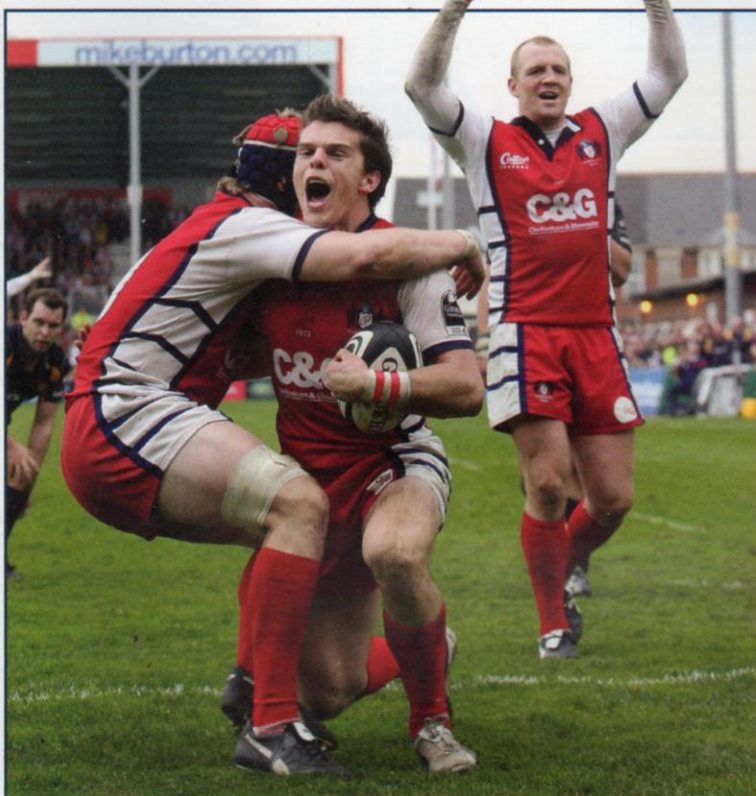
	Nick ABENDANON	15	FULL BACK	15	Willie WALKER	
	Joe MADDOCK	14	RIGHT WING	14	James BAILEY	
	Shaun BERNE	13	CENTRE	13	Mike TINDALL	
	Olly BARKLEY	12	CENTRE	12	Anthony ALLEN	
	Tom CHEESEMAN	11	LEFT WING	11	James SIMPSON-DANIEL	
	Chris MALONE	10	FLY HALF	10	Ryan LAMB	
	Nick WALSHE	9	SCRUM HALF	9	Peter RICHARDS	
	David BARNES	1	PROP	1	Nick WOOD	
	Lee MEARS	2	HOKKER	2	Mefin DAVIES	
	Matt STEVENS	3	PROP	3	Carlos NIETO	
	Steve BORTHWICK (C)	4	LOCK	4	Marco BORTOLAMI (C)	
	Danny GREWCOCK	5	LOCK	5	Alex BROWN	
	Andy BEATTIE	6	FLANKER	6	Peter BUXTON	
	Michael LIPMAN	7	FLANKER	7	Andy HAZELL	
	Isaac FEAUNATI	8	NO. 8	8	James FORRESTER	
	Pieter DIXON	16	REPLACEMENT	16	Olivier AZAM	
	Aaron JARVIS	17	REPLACEMENT	17	Jack FORSTER	
	Peter SHORT	18	REPLACEMENT	18	Jake BOER	
	James SCAYSBROOK	19	REPLACEMENT	19	Adam EUSTACE	
	Andy WILLIAMS	20	REPLACEMENT	20	Rory LAWSON	
	David BORY	21	REPLACEMENT	21	Mark FOSTER	
	Chev WALKER	22	REPLACEMENT	22	Iain BALSHAW	

TODAY'S OFFICIALS: Referee | Dave Pearson | Touch Judges | Peter Huckle and Ashley Reay



CONSISTENCY THE KEY

PICTURES | GETTYIMAGES



It will not be lost on the Cherry and White side of this domestic dispute that their record at the Rec is on the abysmal side of horrendous – but that is unlikely to faze Dean Ryan and his troops this afternoon.

The Gloucester head coach brings his Guinness Premiership table-toppers to Bath for one of the most eagerly anticipated fixtures of the season, aiming for a home draw in the play-offs. Gloucester's season has been one of consistency, built on the back of an unbeaten home record and some crucial victories on the road.

From the beginning of the

campaign they have been tagged as one of the favourites for the final stages of a number of competitions, but Ryan is only too aware that this group of players have only just begun their journey – emphasised when they finished third in their Heineken Cup pool.

"Our ambition is to be at the top end of Europe but our journey has only just begun," he has said. "There will be some pain along the way but we have an exciting and developing group of players who all work tremendously hard to try and be successful. We are on a journey together and there is a long way to go."

Last season culminated in the triumph over London Irish last season in the European Challenge Cup Final, and by then, the wheels were already in motion for this campaign.

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 is an outstanding athlete and 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 set-piece quality and a perfect learning base for youngster Jack Forster.

There were other additions too. With Ryan Lamb initially out of action with an ankle injury, Willie Walker took his opportunity in the number ten 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 with the likes of Andy Hazell, Peter Buxton and Alex Brown playing some outstanding rugby up front, Gloucester have enough quality all over the field to do some real damage, as victories over Sale and Wasps demonstrate. It has meant that Ryan's biggest job has been managing the vast expectation of his squad.

With close victories over Worcester, Northampton and Leicester in recent weeks, Gloucester are closing in on their top-two target and will relish the battle today.

THE CAPTAIN

MARCO BORTOLAMI

Marco Bortolami joined Gloucester from French side

Narbonne last summer on a two-year deal, and first led his new club in a pre-season match against Llanelli.

Although only 26 years old, Bortolami brought with him huge amounts of top-level experience, as he made his debut for Italy when only 20, and has now notched up 57 caps.

The lock was courted by a number of Premiership clubs before he decided to head to Kingsholm, but Dean Ryan's keenness to sign him was matched by the Italian's impressions of the Gloucester coach, whose attitude and vision for the club persuaded him after one meeting that the West Country club would suit him. The reputation of the passionate Kingsholm crowd also appealed, perhaps not surprisingly to someone with Latin blood.

Handing the captaincy to Bortolami straight away might seem like a surprising decision, but he had firmly established his leadership credentials already, having become Italy's youngest captain in 2003. At the end of last year, he was named Italian player of the year by the coaches in his homeland, and this season he led Italy to their first away win in the 6 Nations, against Scotland. With his countryman Carlos Nieto ahead of him in the front row, Bortolami has been vital to Gloucester's success this season.



“ He was named Italian player of the year by the coaches in his homeland, and this season he led Italy to their first away win in the 6 Nations **”**



ONE TO WATCH

JAMES SIMPSON-DANIEL

WORDS | HILARY WEALE

James Simpson-Daniel joined Gloucester from Sedbergh School and has established himself as one of the game's biggest talents. 'Sinbad', as he is commonly known, made his Gloucester debut against Rotherham in 2001 when he scored a superb individual try.

After a great performance against Jonah Lomu when he faced the Barbarians in May 2002, the winger has enjoyed a number of good performances for England. His first try for his country came against Italy in the Six Nations in 2003 and he subsequently played in the opening game against New Zealand on the 2004 tour.

A member of the England squad that won the Churchill Cup in 2005, Simpson-Daniel joined the senior squad's tour to Australia last summer, but missed the Tests with a leg injury. Indeed, he has a history of injuries and illness that must be frustrating for one who is still only 24, and which has prevented him from notching up more than nine caps. He began this season on the sidelines once more after undergoing surgery on multiple fractures in his right collarbone, an injury he suffered in a pre-season friendly against Llanelli.

But on his day, and injury-free, Simpson-Daniel is one of the most electric finishers in the Premiership.

4 to watch

ANTHONY ALLEN

One of Gloucester's crop of talented youngsters, the fly-half made his England debut in the autumn.



JAKE BOER

The South African flanker is returning home at the end of the season, but his influence, determination and effort are sure to remain undimmed until then.





“ On his day, and injury-free, Simpson-Daniel is one of the most electric finishers in the Premiership ”

Bath fans may have unpleasant recollections which back up this assertion, as he burst onto the scene with a hat-trick against the club in a record defeat in May 2002. Although a wing, he has also been deployed at centre, and he has managed to make 17 appearances and score four tries this season, despite putting in more than his fair share of time with the medics. In fact, he has made over 100 appearances for Gloucester since 2001, and totted up over fifty tries in all.

DIRECTOR OF RUGBY

DEAN RYAN

Dean Ryan became Head Coach in the summer of 2004, having joined Gloucester two years before as assistant to Nigel Melville. During his first season in charge, Ryan guided Gloucester to victory in the Powergen Cup Final, and to the top of the Zurich Premiership table, though they lost out in the Championship Final to Wasps.



A no-nonsense No 8 – never likely to take a step back – Ryan played for Saracens, Wasps, Newcastle and Bristol, and it was at the last that he began his coaching career. It is fair to say that his reputation as a robust player has continued in his new role. Successful at Newcastle, who won the Premiership in their first year in the top flight, Ryan then took Bristol to the Zurich Championship final in 2002, his second year at the club, before he switched to Gloucester.

This season has been one of the most successful for Gloucester in recent years, and the development of a number of promising young players is testament to Ryan’s astute recruitment and coaching ability.

JAMES FORRESTER

The back-row player is a frequent try scorer from the base of the scrum, and keen to make up for lost time after a number of injuries.



MIKE TINDALL

Known for his direct running at centre and strong defensive work for both England and Gloucester.

