

Gloucester Rugby

The Official Matchday Programme of Gloucester Rugby

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**Gloucester Rugby
v Saracens**
SARACENS 05.05.07 13.00

All to play for

A Chris Hewett Exclusive

Super Seven

Gloucester boys make
England squad

Play-offs our next test

Dean Ryan

Digger Morris

Gloucester legend joins the
Hall of Fame

ALSO INSIDE

Peter Arnold, Fans
Zone, Buy a brick,
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CRUNCH TIMES!

Guinness Premiership Semi-Final



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GUINNESS PREMIERSHIP FINAL, TWICKENHAM, 12 MAY 2007

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Captain's Corner

in association with

dair*

“We got the job done last Saturday, scored four tries and finished top of the Guinness Premiership after 22 matches and to me that is a wonderful achievement.”



WHAT can I say?

I am pretty sure nobody in the squad was expecting the sort of reception, level of support or number of Gloucester shirts on show at Ashton Gate last weekend and it made me realise just how fortunate I am to be involved with this club.

When we came out of the tunnel, all we could see to the left was a sea of red and white shirts – it was special for all of us – and on behalf of the squad, I want to take this opportunity

and thank everyone for making the trip to Bristol and turning it into Kingsholm.

We got the job done last Saturday, scored four tries and finished top of the Guinness Premiership after 22 matches and to me that is a wonderful achievement.

But we are aware we get nothing for it – there are still two games to be won before one of the remaining four teams is crowned champions – and that is why we need to retain our focus, energy

and commitment for this semi-final against Saracens.

We have already played some huge matches this season but today's game is the biggest so far. For some of the squad, it will be the biggest game of our lives and we must be ready for the challenge that lies ahead.

Saracens are a very effective and dangerous team, capable of producing some lovely moments and I am sure the conditions will suit them today. We will respect them for their ability but we must

be confident, play with passion and belief and seize the moment.

It will seem strange to be at a three-sided Kingsholm today but this is where the supporters come in. We will need even more encouragement, even more fire and even more passion to help us along.

On behalf of all the players, thank you for your support this season. My first year in the Premiership has been a memorable one – and we are not ready for it to finish just yet.







Plenty still on offer as Premiership goes to the wire

Gloucester know more about the agonies of the play-offs than most but as Chris Hewett of the Independent tells the matchday programme, there is plenty to enthuse regulars at Kingsholm this afternoon.

AS PETER Cook liked to say: "Here's an interesting fact." (He also liked to say he was "an only twin", but that's beside the point). Gloucester have claimed two championships in five years - an achievement that would put them level with Wasps as the third most successful English league team of the last 20 years, were it not for a system under which a team wins nothing for winning.

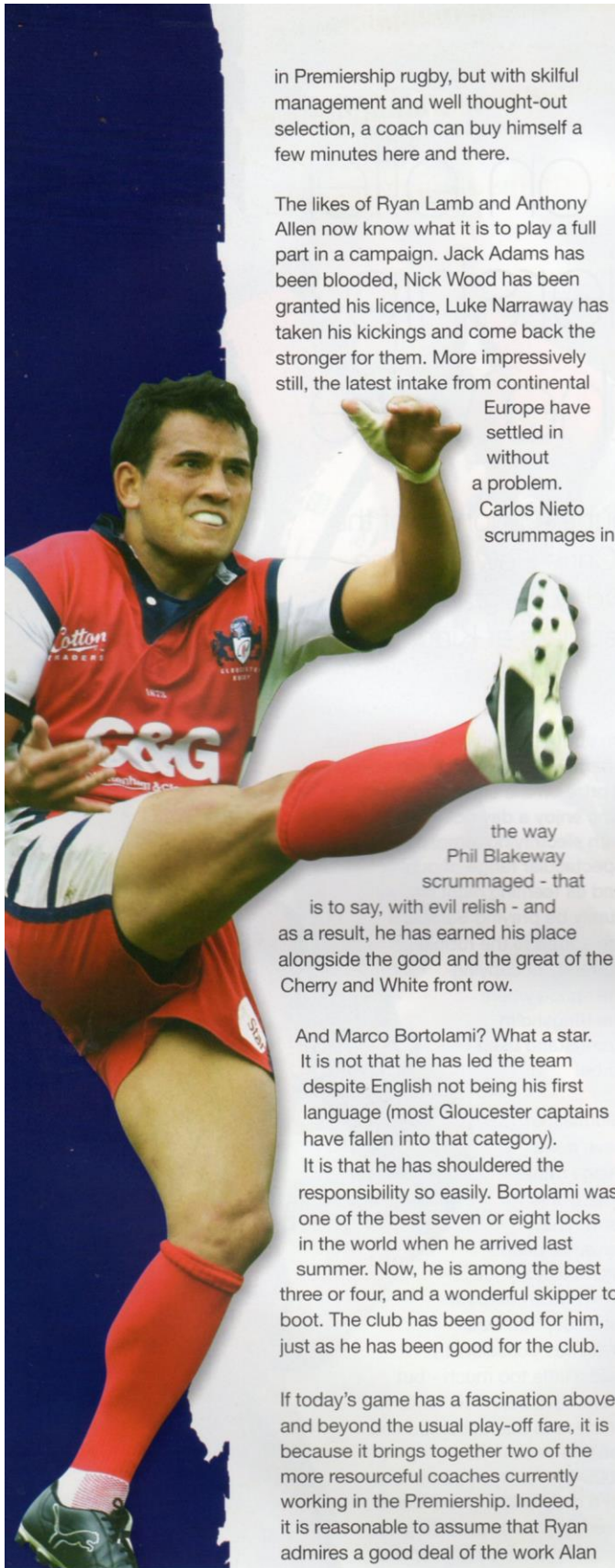
(Another interesting fact, to be sure). The Shedheads and Shedettes will feel good about being in today's semi-final with Saracens - they like to welcome a London side to Kingsholm at this time of year, in the way Hannibal Lecter enjoyed having a friend for dinner - but they would feel a whole lot better if the play-offs were a figment of the imagination and the title had been decided over the course of 22 matches played in the full range of winds and weathers.

Still, professional rugby is what it is. The play-offs fall into the same category as global warming and measles - unpopular, but difficult to eradicate - and as a consequence, there is not much point banging

on about the injustice of it all. This afternoon's little rumble at least has a prize on the end of it, and those who enjoy a day out at Twickenham, with electrifying atmosphere, its spectacular range of quality beers and its teeming night life, will surely be praying Saracens are added to the rubble currently occupying the space where the Kingsholm grandstand used to be.

Gloucester have done things rather quietly this term. They have not been silent, exactly - it could be argued, for instance, that Dean Ryan has occasionally said a little too much - but there have been few fanfares of the kind that accompanied the late-season flowering in 2005-06. As Ryan points out on a daily basis, good teams need time and space to grow. There is precious little space





in Premiership rugby, but with skilful management and well thought-out selection, a coach can buy himself a few minutes here and there.

The likes of Ryan Lamb and Anthony Allen now know what it is to play a full part in a campaign. Jack Adams has been blooded, Nick Wood has been granted his licence, Luke Narryway has taken his kickings and come back the stronger for them. More impressively still, the latest intake from continental

Europe have settled in without a problem. Carlos Nieto scrummages in

the way Phil Blakeway scrummaged - that is to say, with evil relish - and as a result, he has earned his place alongside the good and the great of the Cherry and White front row.

And Marco Bortolami? What a star. It is not that he has led the team despite English not being his first language (most Gloucester captains have fallen into that category). It is that he has shouldered the responsibility so easily. Bortolami was one of the best seven or eight locks in the world when he arrived last summer. Now, he is among the best three or four, and a wonderful skipper to boot. The club has been good for him, just as he has been good for the club.

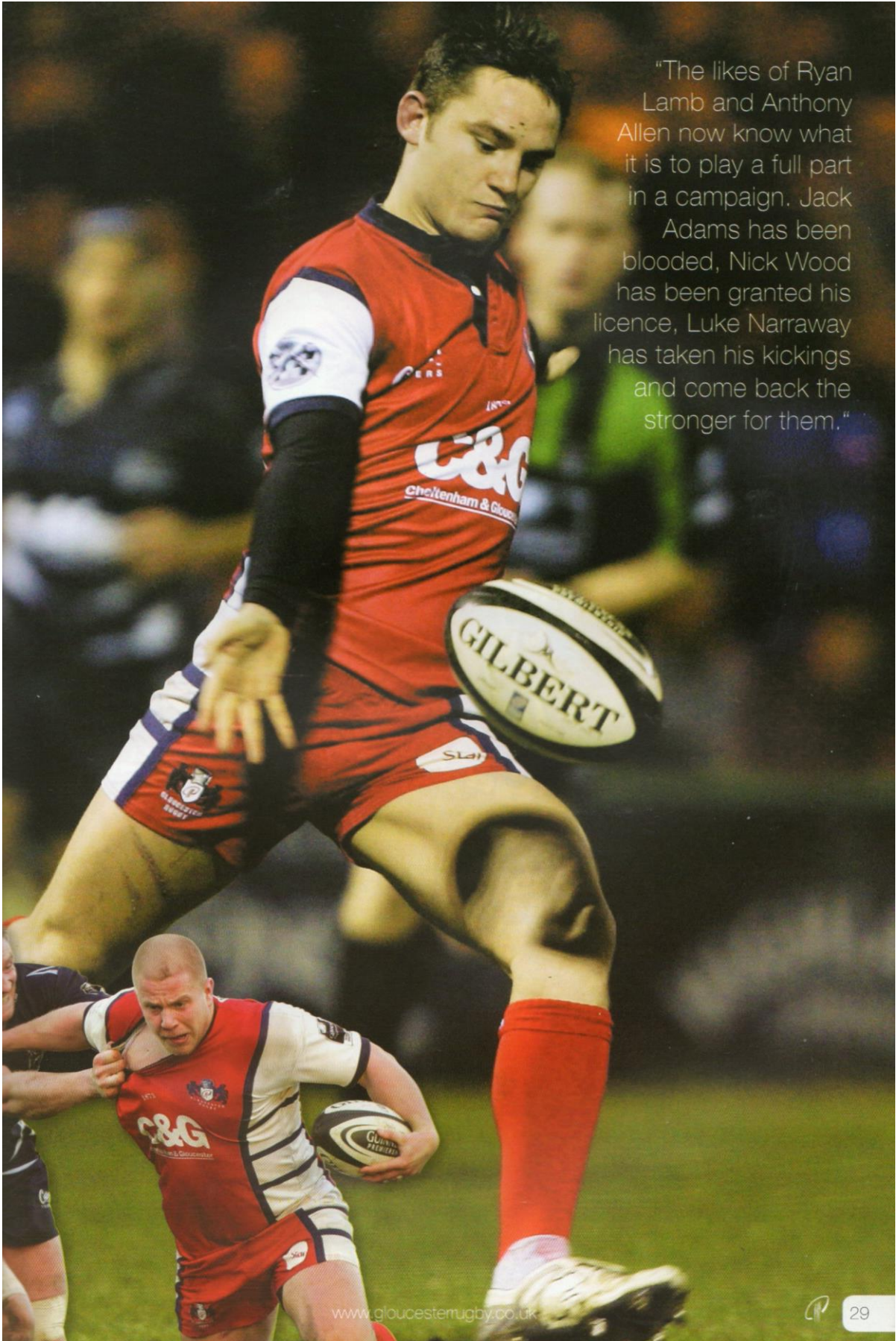
If today's game has a fascination above and beyond the usual play-off fare, it is because it brings together two of the more resourceful coaches currently working in the Premiership. Indeed, it is reasonable to assume that Ryan admires a good deal of the work Alan

Gaffney has put in at Saracens. After years of big-name distraction - to put it mildly, Francois Pienaar and Wayne Shelford were not what the club needed at director of rugby level - Nigel Wray and company finally changed tack and bought themselves a technocrat with a deep understanding of the mechanics of team-building.

Gaffney has suffered a knock or two in recent weeks; his side invented a new way of losing when they met Bath in the semi-final of the European Challenge Cup, and they were comprehensively smithereneed by a pumped-up Worcester team last weekend. But all things considered, they have been excellent. So excellent, indeed, that Gloucester would be well advised to give this fixture their full attention.

These should be exciting times for both clubs, but rugby politics being what it is, the shape of next season has yet to emerge. The positioning of the World Cup has certainly distorted things - why is it, exactly, that a northern hemisphere tournament should be scheduled for the benefit of the southern hemisphere nations? - and the absence of an agreement on Heineken Cup affairs leaves an unpleasant taste in the mouth. It was interesting to see the likes of Lamb, Allen and Adams pitting themselves against Felipe Contepomi, Gordon D'Arcy and Brian O'Driscoll before Christmas. It would be more interesting still to see them do it with a full season's experience under their collective belt. Fingers crossed, and all that.

In the meantime, we'll take the games on offer. Right-minded rugby folk understand that Gloucester should already be champions, having beaten Leicester to the title by a gnat's crotchet, and it is profoundly frustrating that they are not. But look at it this way. In 2003, the Kingsholmites topped the table by so many points, Stephen Hawking himself stopped counting. What did they get for their trouble? A Twickenham trouncing from dear old Lawrence Dallaglio and his brood. Whatever happens now, it cannot possibly be



"The likes of Ryan Lamb and Anthony Allen now know what it is to play a full part in a campaign. Jack Adams has been blooded, Nick Wood has been granted his licence, Luke Narraway has taken his kickings and come back the stronger for them."

Ryan's Review

Dean Ryan saw his side finish **top of the Premiership** last weekend but now has his sights firmly set on **Saracens**.



First, you must be thrilled to have finished top of the Guinness Premiership last week?

DR: ABSOLUTELY. To me, the season is split into two distinct parts and finishing top on Saturday was a great achievement.

To finish top of the Premiership after



22 matches and almost nine months indicates just how far we have developed as a squad and that is something everyone involved can be really proud of.

We won 15 matches out of those 22 and that shows tremendous consistency, durability and strength of character. I said about this time last year that it would take 12 or 18 months to fully appreciate just how far the likes of Ryan Lamb, Anthony Allen, Olly Morgan and Jack Adams have progressed and they have obviously shouldered a great deal more responsibility.

We have jumped from fifth place last season to first this, which shows the upward curve of the squad's progress. But I still think there is more to come in many ways. This is a young group, capable of developing even further and that is what we

want to achieve in the long-term.

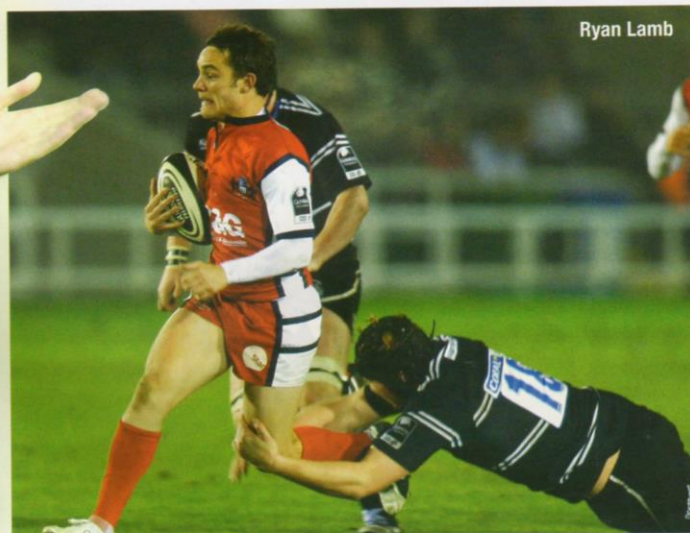
The journey for this group has only just started, we have made additions and improvements to the squad ahead of next season and we want to achieve as much as we can.

It doesn't matter to me we are not recognized for finishing top – we understand the significance inside the group and now we are chasing knockout rugby which brings its own challenges.




Does everything change now you are in the semi-finals?

DR: NO, not really. Our aim at the start of the season was to finish in a play-off place, ideally in the top two. We have achieved that and now we turn our attentions to day's match and hopefully a final.



Ryan Lamb





“If we keep our **composure**, maintain the **ethos** that has got us this far already and **prepare well**, then I am **positive** we can get a **good result**.”

We need to keep doing what we have done for the majority of the season, set a platform and a foundation and aim to play our rugby off the back of that. At this stage of the season it is about managing the players to get them ready for big, one-off matches.

If we keep our composure, maintain the ethos that has got us this far already and prepare well, then I am positive we can get a good result.



We are obviously at Kingsholm today, what did you make of the atmosphere at Ashton Gate last weekend?

DR: When you get that level of support it really doesn't matter where we play. I thought the whole experience was fantastic and a great advert for Gloucester Rugby – not just on the field but off it too. I watched the game

from the gantry and to look across and see the Dolman stand absolutely packed with red and white was a pretty humbling experience for everyone. The crowd was almost 16,000 and more than 13,000 were from Gloucester – that is a tremendous testament for the thirst of rugby in this city and indicates and what we can achieve with the ground development.

It was a great advert for Gloucester Rugby and although it will be a strange experience at a three-sided Kingsholm, a semi-final at home will be another great occasion.



Saracens are one of the form teams in the Premiership at the moment – it is a difficult game today?

DR: THEY have found some stability; they play some excellent attacking

rugby and have hit some fantastic form since Christmas.

This afternoon's game is very difficult. Saracens are dark horses but have plenty of experience, potential game-breakers and a resourceful set of forwards who are very physical.

I have a lot of time for Alan Gaffney their coach – he has achieved a tremendous amount in the game and Saracens will have our full respect and attention because both Premiership games between the teams this season have been very close.

It should be a great occasion, a great atmosphere and a great game between two teams who look to play the game in the right way.

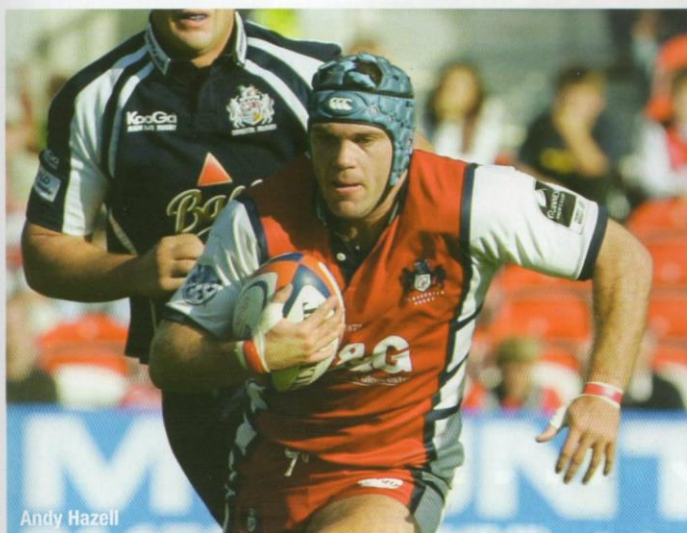


Finally, we had seven players named in the England squad this week, that must give you great pleasure?

DR: WHAT gives me a huge amount of pleasure is to see the likes of Andy Hazell and Peter Buxton recognized for their season's effort.

I have said consistently we are not the same side when they are not involved and their contribution to our success has been seen by England.

Alex Brown has also been outstanding for us, the threat possessed by Peter Richards, James Simpson-Daniel and Anthony Allen is well known and I am positive they will all be a success.



Andy Hazell

Gloucester RUGBY



Saracens

	Willie WALKER	15	Full Back	15	Thomas CASTAIGNEDE	
	Mark FOSTER	14	Right Wing	14	Dan SCARBROUGH	
	James SIMPSON-DANIEL	13	Centre	13	Kevin SORRELL	
	Anthony ALLEN	12	Centre	12	Andy FARRELL	
	Iain BALSHAW	11	Left Wing	11	Kameli RATUVOU	
	Ryan LAMB	10	Fly Half	10	Glen JACKSON	
	Peter RICHARDS	9	Scrum Half	9	Neil de KOCK	
	Nick WOOD	1	Prop	1	Kevin YATES	
	Olivier AZAM	2	Hooker	2	Fabio ONGARO	
	Carlos NIETO	3	Prop	3	Cobus VISAGIE	
	© Marco BORTOLAMI	4	Lock	4	Iain FULLARTON	
	Alex BROWN	5	Lock	5	Simon RAIWALUI ©	
	Peter BUXTON	6	Flanker	6	Kris CHESNEY	
	Andy HAZELL	7	Flanker	7	Richard HILL	
	Luke NARRAWAY	8	No 8	8	Ben SKIRVING	

Replacements

	Mefin DAVIES	16	Substitute 1	16	Matt CAIRNS	
	Christian CALIFANO	17	Substitute 2	17	Cencus JOHNSTON	
	Willi JAMES	18	Substitute 3	18	Hugh VYVYAN	
	Adam EUSTACE	19	Substitute 4	19	David SEYMOUR	
	Rory LAWSON	20	Substitute 5	20	Moses RAULUNI	
	Jack ADAMS	21	Substitute 6	21	Adam POWELL	
	Jon GOODRIDGE	22	Substitute 7	22	Rodd PENNEY	



Magnificent Seven



This week, seven Gloucester players were named in the England squad for the summer tour to South Africa and the matchday programme looks ahead at the challenges they will face.

PETER BUXTON doesn't do over-statement. He talks about England's chances on the forthcoming tour to South Africa in much the same way he has slugged it out for Gloucester this season – quietly, determined and ready for the contest.

The Kingsholm flanker was one of seven Gloucester players named in Brian Ashton's tour squad and will hope to win his first senior cap that would be reward for his quite outstanding club form.

Alongside Andy Hazell, Buxton has been one of Gloucester's stand-out performers this season – the Kingsholm mix is not the same without them – and the pair will be joined by fellow forwards Nick Wood and Alex Brown.

"I'm not going to get over-excited about it yet because there are a lot of good players on the tour," Buxton said.

"I'm just going to go along and try and enjoy the tour for what it is - enjoy working with different people than I'm used to here and hopefully get some game time.

"The players who you'd see as first starters would have said going

to South Africa would be a hard tour. There is a lot of experience and some exciting backs involved in the squad and we can go fairly confident that we can have a crack at them, but it is going to be a tough place to play.

"I don't know if I'll play any of the games and if I'm lucky enough to get on the field I'll try and do my best. I just want to take as much out of the experience as I can.

"Dean had a quiet word on Monday and then I heard it on the radio when I was driving the car on Tuesday - I think it is just reward for the season going quite well for the squad and it has not gone too bad for me personally too."

Gloucester's head coach Dean Ryan was equally delighted and alongside the senior squad, Ryan Lamb, Iain Balshaw and Jack Forster were named in the Saxons squad a day later to take Kingsholm's representatives to 10.



ENGLAND
RUGBY



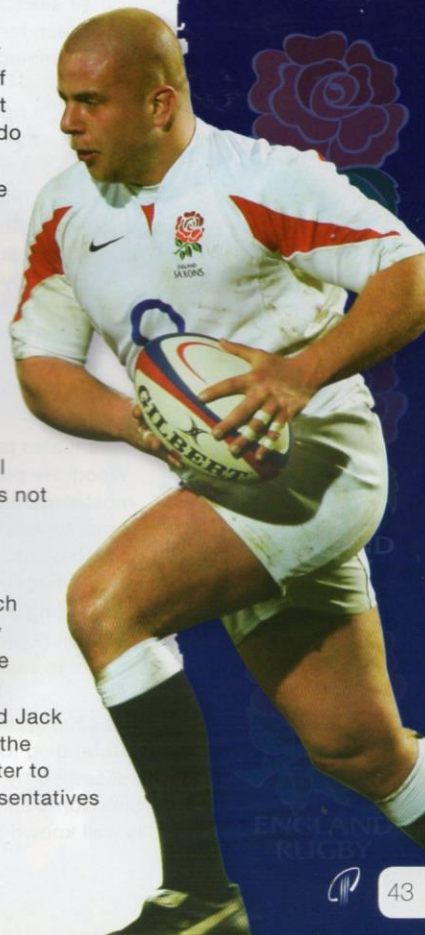
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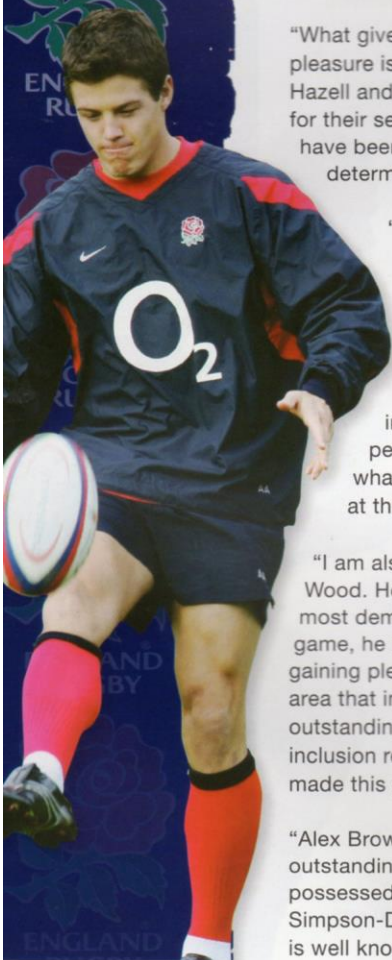
ENGLAND RUGBY



ENGLAND RUGBY



ENGLAND RUGBY



"What gives me a huge amount of pleasure is to see the likes of Andy Hazell and Peter Buxton recognized for their season's effort because they have been fantastic, consistent and determined for us," Ryan said.

"I have said consistently this year we are not the same side when they are not involved and their contribution to our success has been seen by England and their inclusion is great for them personally and reflects on what we are trying to achieve at the club in the long term.

"I am also really pleased for Nick Wood. He plays in one of the most demanding positions in the game, he is a young man who is gaining plenty of experience in an area that international teams require outstanding prospects and his inclusion reflects the progress he has made this year.

"Alex Brown has also been outstanding for us, the threat possessed by Peter Richards, James Simpson-Daniel and Anthony Allen is well known and I am positive they

will all be a success on this tour."

Allen, who has made the highest number of clean breaks for Gloucester this season, added: "I have been very fortunate enough to have already experienced England this season and it was fantastic.

"To be selected on any England tour is a great achievement and a huge honour – there are some fantastic players involved in this tour and we are going to go and give it our best shot.

"It is an exciting time to be involved and I am pretty sure everyone from Gloucester will feel the same."





“What gives me a huge amount of pleasure is to see the likes of Andy Hazell and Peter Buxton recognized for their season’s effort because they have been fantastic, consistent and determined for us,” Ryan said

Match Action

Time line

 3 min	
Walker PEN	3-0
 17 min	
Walker PEN	6-0
 19 mins	
Hill PEN	6-3
 23 mins	
Walker PEN	9-3
 29 mins	
Walker try	14-3
 32 mins	
Lemi try	14-8
 38 mins	
Foster TRY, Walker CON	21-8
 47 mins	
Boer TRY, Walker CON	28-8
 52 mins	
Lima TRY	28-13
 55 mins	
Hazell TRY, Walker CON	35-13

Gloucester Line-up

15	Walker	(1t 3c, 3p)
14	Balshaw	
13	Simpson-Daniel	
12	Allen	
11	Foster	(1t)
10	Lamb	
9	Richards	
1	Wood	
2	Azam	
3	Nieto	
4	Bortolami (capt)	
5	Brown	
6	Buxton	
7	Hazell	(1t)
8	Forrester	
REPS		
16	M. Davies	(Azam)
17	Califano	(Wood)
18	James	
19	Boer	(1t) (Forrester)
20	Lawson	(Richards)
21	Adams	
22	Goodridge	

Gloucester Rugby
Bristol Rugby

35
13



Bristol Bashed!

Saturday, April 28

Referee: Sean Davey, Attendance: 15,852

GLOUCESTER turned Ashton Gate into a mini Kingsholm to claim the west country bragging rights with a comprehensive victory over Bristol.

Gloucester's bonus point win ensured they finished top of the Premiership ahead of Leicester and the victory was never in doubt thanks to two first-half tries.

Three Willie Walker penalties put Gloucester 9-3 ahead after 23 minutes before the full-back scored the first try. Ryan Lamb made a clever little break

before picking out a beautiful pass to Marco Bortolami, who sent Walker in past Shaun Perry for the score.

But Bristol responded with a try of their own when David Lemi gathered his little chip and chase to score brilliantly in the left corner.

That cut Gloucester's lead to 14-8 but they stretched it again before the break thanks to another Bristol mistake and then quick thinking from Anthony Allen. Lee Robinson took a quick line-out and looked to find Roy Winters infield but





Man of the Match...

Jake Boer



An early replacement for James Forrester, Jake Boer produced a wonderfully wholehearted performance that was rewarded with a try.

the second row dropped the pass, Allen scooped it up and delivered the scoring ball to Mark Foster.

Immediately after the re-start Gloucester scored again to virtually seal the points. David Hill's kick went dead and from the scrum 20 metres out, the hugely impressive Jake Boer burst through a gap between Perry and David Lemi to race to the posts.

That made the score 28-8 and although Brian Lima cut the gap when he made the most of a mix-up between Lamb and Allen to take Winters' pass and beat the

cover, it was too much for Bristol.

However, there was no danger Gloucester would lose the points and they grabbed a bonus point score in the 55th minute when Allen jinked his way up the centre, Peter Richards took over to get within metres of the line and Andy Hazell scored following up.

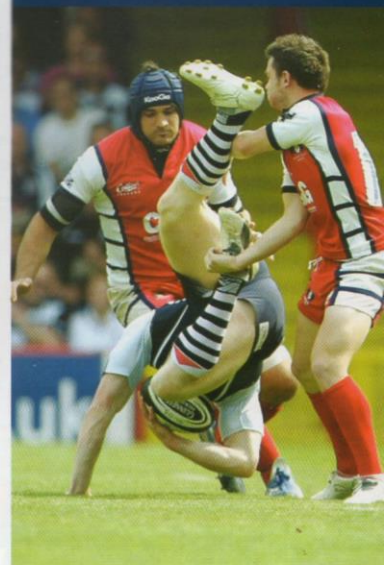
There was still time for Bristol to enjoy a large amount of possession in the last quarter but Gloucester's defence stayed strong and they closed out the victory that sealed top spot in the Guinness Premiership.

Coaches Comment...

Dean Ryan



"I think to finish top of the Premiership after 22 matches and nine months is a great achievement for this squad, they can all be delighted with what they achieved," head coach Dean Ryan.





Peter Arnold

Peter Arnold quite liked **Ashton Gate** but as he points out, it's not **Kingsholm**. He continues his end of term report and cannot believe **James Forrester** has been struck by **injury** again.

HOME AGAIN, HOME AGAIN...

ASHTON GATE is a nice place to visit but I wouldn't want to live there. It's great to be back at Kingsholm even if the old place does look like, and in fact is, a building site. Hopefully, it will all come right by next season and we can look forward to a new, super-duper, all singing, all dancing new stand, reinforcing what Ken Nottage has recently called our 'spiritual home'.

We can anticipate that with some pleasure, but today is all about a play-off semi-final. This is quite an occasion of course. If we win then the next time we shall be gathered together in the face of this congregation will be at Twickers, no less.

That would be a great achievement, attained by a side which has by no means reached its full potential and from

which there is a great deal to come.

There are mixed views about play-offs, but I will merely say that, surely, any fair minded person would agree that any side which can play 22 matches, against the top sides in the land, over a long, hard season, can claim to be the best team in the country.

But here's a thought. If Leicester had not been docked one point for fielding an ineligible player, then they would have pipped us at the post and we would have been playing Bristol today. Again.

END OF TERM REPORT (Cont.)

LAST week I started to give you my thoughts, such as they are, on how players new to the Gloucester ranks have fared during their first season at the club. Unfortunately, time, space and incipient inebriation prevented me from completing the process. This I shall now proceed to do, knowing full well that some people will agree with me while others will suspect that, at last, I have gone completely doolally.

I suspect that few of us had ever heard of Will James when he arrived here. We knew he hailed from Cornwall, which was a recommendation in itself, the examples of Phil Vickery and Trevor Woodman being fresh in our minds. We did hear that he was a big guy, which encouraged those of us who had been feeling for quite a while that our pack needed a little reinforcement in the beef department.

We weren't disappointed, although after a few appearances, it became apparent

that Will had more to offer than sheer bulk. When he had settled down he showed that he can put himself about a bit and is a very handy man to have on your side. When international calls and injury have thrust him into the squad he has performed nobly and hasn't let anyone down.

I'm not saying he's the finished article yet awhile, but a saying from the great Mike Burton comes to mind: "He'll be all right when he's been Gloucesterized!"

Christian Califano is a different kettle of fish altogether. Anyone who knows anything will have been aware of his front-row prowess in the French game, and although not in the first flush of youth, is a player who would be a great addition to any side. He moves around the field like a lump of French granite, owns any piece of field he happens to be standing on and simply destroys any unfortunate who happens to be in front of him at the set piece.

With Christian, what you see is what you get. We've seen it and we've got it.

Finally, there's the Italian Job. Watching on the box I was always impressed by Marco Bortolami from the first time I saw him. He may be fairly small by the standards of modern lock forwards, but his all-round game has made him, in my estimation, one of the very best locks in Europe and possibly in the world. He is also a very fine motivational captain as he has demonstrated time and again in Gloucester matches this season. His signing may have been the shrewdest in the Premiership this season.

It was to our advantage that Marco



Will James





James Forrester

brought Carlos Nieto along with him. He obviously had talent, but I'm sure he would agree that his exposure to Kingsholm has helped his development at both club and international level. He's certainly a good man to have around.

Of course we also have home-grown talent coming to the fore. Jack Forster and Nick Wood have both made great strides this year, and to my mind, have England written all over them

But what do I know? I said the same about Andy Hazell.

BAD LUCK JANGO

WHAT rotten luck James Forrester does get. He will be as sick as a psittacoid at having to be carried from the field at Ashton Gate, almost before he had got his boots wet. Reports that he's done a

knee ligament were confirmed on Monday and that means he's lost any chance of travelling to South Africa with England, and with Brian Ashton having to cope with a severely depleted squad for that trip, his chances of selection must have been very good indeed.

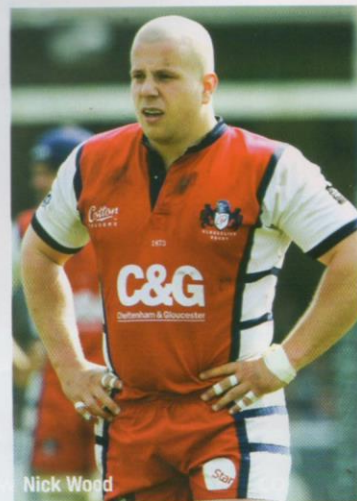
I suppose that one bright side to James' misfortune does arise. If he can't play today then it's likely we shall see Jake Boer in action again. For the positively final time at Kingsholm.

You'll recall that emotional occasion, a few weeks ago, when we bade farewell to one of the finest servants the club has ever had. Now we get a chance to see him just once more.

A string of farewell appearances never did anyone any harm. Look what it did for Frank Sinatra.

Meanwhile, get well soon James Forrester. We're going to need you.

Summer well, everyone.



Nick Wood

Hall of Fame

with Dave King



Roy 'Digger' Morris

He was one of the **hardest men** ever to play for the club; he was a **boxer, comedian and loved his greyhounds**. **'Digger' Morris** was a second row genius and joins the Hall of Fame today

HE HAD an animal instinct for survival, he was as tough as teak – he was Roy 'Digger' Morris – one of the hardest and most respected Gloucester forwards in history.

Easily recognisable because of his large cauliflower ears, huge oval face and indomitable spirit, Morris was feted wherever he went within the city boundary. Once, on the playing field at Victory Park, Cainscross, he uttered to a teenage Mike Burton: 'Come on son, never stay down.'

He was the epitome of Gloucester Rugby and would serve Gloucester as a player, committee man and life member.

'Digger' attended Hatherley Road Junior School and graduated to the School senior team before going onto play for Tredworth Night School XV, Gordon League Juniors, Wagon Works Juniors and the Works Senior team.

As a boy, Digger was a scrum-half but eventually filled out to become a lock. Born in 1911, he joined Gloucester in 1930 and apart from the five years he spent in the Royal Air Force where he served several other clubs, he was a one-club man.

The debut he craved for as a Gloucester player came against Northampton at Franklin's Gardens in 1931 and during his playing career he was noted for the fact that his once tackled and stopped Prince Oblenski in full flight. The press were less than generous in praise as Oblenski was



Digger Morris was a big influence on Mike Burton





“As one can imagine **Roy Morris** was obviously one of **Kingholm's favourite sons** and his nickname of **'Digger'** evolved from the humour on the terraces where the spectators were in awe of the way that he **'got stuck into the opposition'**. They knew and recognised that they were witnessing one of the **hardest men** to represent the club.”

stretchered off; they described 'Digger's' challenge as a 'brutal tackle'.

But the partnership he formed in Gloucester's second row with John A'Bear forged a unique relationship between the two players and was one of the best combinations in Gloucester's history.

Such was the relationship between the two men, John was best man at 'Digger's' wedding at the Church of St Paul's on 11th April 1936. In his long career with Gloucester, honours came 'Digger's' way - he played in two England trial matches, he was travelling reserve for England for matches against Scotland, Wales and New Zealand Services. He represented Major Stanley's XV and captained both Gloucester and Gloucestershire, winning his county cap in 1938.

The outbreak of the Second World War saw 'Digger' serve in the Middle East where he played for England Services against the Welsh Services. He also represented the RAF Central Mediterranean Forces versus an Eighth Army XV, compiled of mainly New Zealand Servicemen.

As one can imagine Roy Morris was obviously one of Kingholm's favourite sons and his nickname of 'Digger' evolved from the humour on the terraces where the spectators were in awe of the way that he 'got stuck into the opposition'. They knew and recognised that they were witnessing one of the hardest men to represent the club.

In his reflective moments, 'Digger'

always rated Gloucester's victories pre-Second World War in Wales as his career highlights. The 1933 inaugural win over Swansea at St Helen's was followed two years later with a 3-0 victory at Cardiff Arms Park and then a hat-trick of wins on Welsh soil was obtained with a five points to three victory over Llanelli at Stradey Park. A victory the club had tried to attain since 1898. It was a match in which 'Digger' scored a try, Harold Boughton converted.

The team that recorded that meritable win in West Wales was: -

H. Boughton; R. Hook, F.G. Edwards, J.C. Brooke (Captain), E. Phillips; E. Day, D. Meadows; T. Price, A.D. Carpenter C. Harris, D.G. A'Bear, R. Morris, P. Horden, I. Williams, A. Welshman. Reserve Dr Dick.

Hall of Fame...

The 1930's were notable years for 'Digger'. For half a season in 1935 he could claim to be the club's leading try scorer. Another of his claims was the fact that he was the only man to have captained his County in two cup finals in the same season. He led the county in the 1947 County Final against Lancashire at Blundellsands in a drawn encounter before losing the replay by 14-3 at Kingsholm.

In total, the hard as nails lock forward made 311 appearances for this club and recorded 17 tries. He was the Club Captain in the 1946-47 season.

His last match for this club was when he played for the United XV versus Old Lutonians at the age of 45.

'Digger' always stated that he was extremely proud to have played in the Gloucester team of the 1932-33 season that contained seven players who had or were to represent

England. They were Tom Voyce, Sid Smart, Harold Boughton, 'Bumps' Carpenter, C.C. 'Kit' Tanner, Peter Horden and Graham Parker.

Away from rugby, 'Digger' was a more than useful heavyweight boxer who once fought on the same bill as the legendary Tommy Farr. He once knocked out an opponent within 70 seconds of the first bell and represented the Royal Air Force in the Middle East and Italy.

Anyone wishing to try their luck against the Gloucester giant could also find him at the Gloucester Baths or at a booth in Westgate Street.

He was also a good club cricketer and playing for the rugby players against the cricket team at the Spa he once scored 34 runs and took 4 for 19 runs to enable his team of rugby players to win by one run.

Greyhound racing was another fascination

of 'Digger's', and he owned a greyhound named 'Clifton Scarf' which he raced at the old Gloucester Greyhound stadium. In his later years 'Digger' could often be seen walking his greyhounds as a means of recreation.

Such was his range of talents for he was a born comedian and he trod the boards with the Royal Air Force and often attended civilian concert parties as a dialect comedian.

When his funeral was held at St Oswalds Church in Coney Hill it was the end of a remarkable era for the club. Although his wife Florence died in the early 1960's, his daughter Josephine was an England darts player while one of his sons, Roy, made over 250 appearances for this club.

There is no doubt that Roy 'Digger' Morris was a man who is emblazoned in Gloucester's history – there will never be another like him.

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Fan Zone

with Bob Fenton

It's been a hell of a long season for **Shedhead Bob Fenton**. He will be back this afternoon for his last instalment of the campaign, thrilled at the progress **Dean Ryan** has made with the squad and hoping for a trip to **Twickenham**.

PLAY-OFFS here we are. Top of the pile at the end of the regular season is a fantastic achievement. And to be playing the game at Kingsholm, albeit with a reduced crowd, is another huge plus.

It's going to be a really weird experience looking across the ground and not seeing rows of seats in front of you. Presumably – and as ever I could be wrong here – some people will be standing along the touchline where the new grandstand will soon start to take shape – if they do it'll be like watching park rugby for them, only on a bit of a grander scale.

But if it's going to be a bit strange for the supporters, heaven knows what it will be like for the players. For a start where are they going to get changed???

We were talking about this on Saturday on the way home from Bristol, the favourite was the gents in Teagues – the picture of Olly Azam trying to scrub the Kingsholm mud off in a little hand basin in the gents had us in stitches, mind you several pints of the premiership's sponsors brew had been consumed by then.

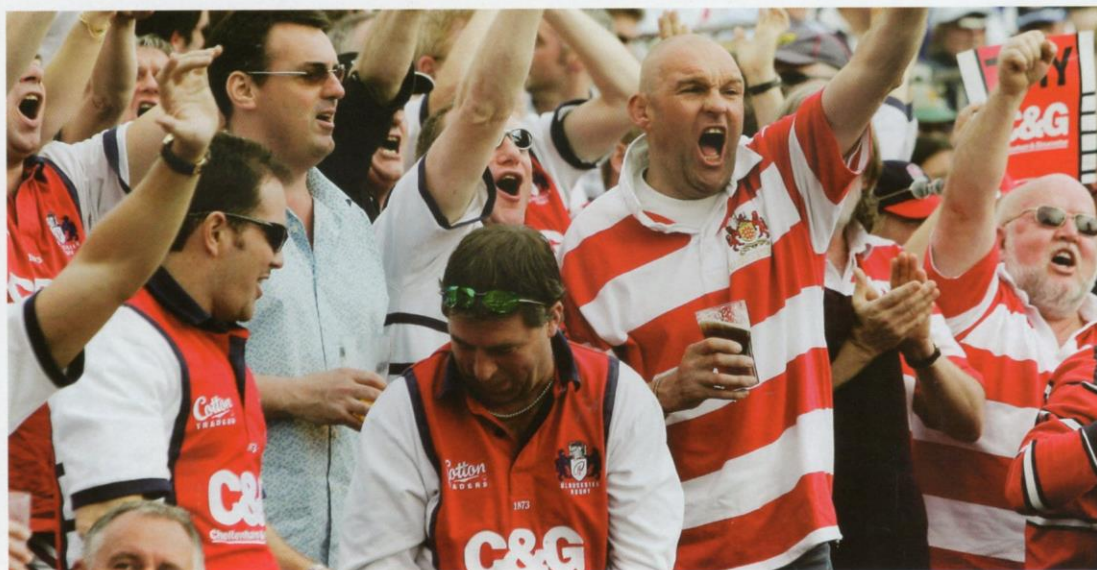
I remember the great Ian Jones telling a story about playing at Murrayfield for the

All Blacks years ago when the place was being redeveloped – one end of the stadium was a building site, apparently. He said the atmosphere was very strange with noise ringing round three sides of the place and then complete quiet on the other one.

Mind you, Harlequins played like that for a season while they were building their new west stand. Hang on, that was the year they were relegated, so lets hope that there are no omens there.

Years ago when I was living in London I was taken prisoner and made to go to Highbury to a round ball game, this was when the

"I was in the **Williams Stand** and watching the massive stand opposite slowly turn into a **sea of Gloucester colours** was truly awesome. A photograph I took halfway through the second half has already been converted to become the 'wallpaper' on my lap top. It was just stunning to see, and made me **immensely proud** of my fellow supporters."





old stadium was being modernised. It was a similar thing with one end being rebuilt but instead of leaving a view of cranes, concrete and other bits and bobs of the building trade a huge mural of fans cheering had been erected.

It looked ummm... interesting... but don't knock it, maybe some of the more poorly supported teams should be investigating this as an option. It would go well with the canned 'atmosphere' that is creeping into some stadiums.

There was nothing canned about the atmosphere at Ashton Gate last week though. Many people had reservations about playing a home game in the back yard of the opposition, but what a success it turned out to be.

Driving down the M5 every car and bus had cherry and white passengers or ribbons, it was like the whole of Gloucester was on the move.

I was in the Williams Stand and watching the massive stand opposite slowly turn into a sea of Gloucester colours was truly awesome. A photograph I took halfway through the second half has already been converted to become the 'wallpaper' on my lap top. It was just stunning to see, and made me immensely proud of my fellow supporters.

And the noise from that crowd... what can

you say? We were sat near a small enclave of Bristol supporters, bless their cotton socks they tried hard, but as soon as a quiet murmuring from them was heard the wall of sound that came from every corner was better than anything Phil Spector could have dreamed off. (Note for younger readers – ask a parent about Motown and 'wall of sound' production).

A tip of the hat to those Bristol supporters though, they helped make that day special, the bars in and around the ground were heaving and the banter friendly and warm. Bristol far exceeded their wildest dreams this season, and fingers crossed they pull off a shock result at Welford Road later today.

A rematch of our Premiership Final (except it wasn't called that then) from a few years ago would be a great way to end the season. If the result was a repeat of that afternoon it would make it even better.

But of course we have a small matter of Saracens to get past first. Considering the resources they have at their disposal Sarries should be a major force in English rugby, but they have never really clicked. That is until just after Christmas, when they started getting everything together on and off the field

They have timed their season really well, and have hit a rich vein of form just when it matters most. Their record on the road is not

that bad, Saracens of old were never really a force on their travels, but they have put that behind them. They took a bit of a battering at Worcester last week but let's not read anything into that.

In the two meetings this season they have proved a tough nut to crack, honours are even with one win apiece so this is the 'best of three' decider. There is an irony about playing Saracens in the play-offs, it was only two years ago that they beat us at Twickenham to take a European Cup wild card spot. So we owe them a big one for that.

Actually that's a good place to take a quick look on how far we have progressed. Three years ago we were taking part in the wildcard having finished in sixth position, last year we went one better and finished fifth, but lost 10 games during the campaign.

This year we top the tree, we maintained a 100% record at home and have halved the number of games that we lost. That is real progress. So here's to one more game after today, and one last huge hurrah.

So all it leaves is for me to say thank you to Dean, his coaching staff, all the players and the off-field team for their effort, commitment and entertainment, and thank you to you for reading my stuff.

Semi-Final Preview

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Fixtures Preview...



Semi-Final FIXTURES - Saturday 5th May



Gloucester Rugby v Saracens (Kingsholm, 1.00pm) Live on **SKY SPORTS**

Leicester Tigers v Bristol Rugby (Welford Road, 5.30pm) Live on **SKY SPORTS**

Gloucester Rugby v Saracens



Gloucester Rugby finished on top of the pile in the Guinness Premiership table for the first time since 2002/03, and were the only side in the competition to remain unbeaten at home during the campaign. Gloucester's only defeat in their last eight matches was 12-19 at Newcastle on 13 April. Saracens secured their best league finish since they also ended up 4th in season 1999/2000, this was despite the fact that **Sarries** have won just one of their last six away games in the Guinness Premiership: 22-7 at London Irish on 23 March. Each side won its respective home game when the two clubs clashed in the Guinness Premiership this season, whilst Saracens have won just once in 17 previous visits to Kingsholm in all competitions: 14-13 in the Premiership on 30 April 2005.

