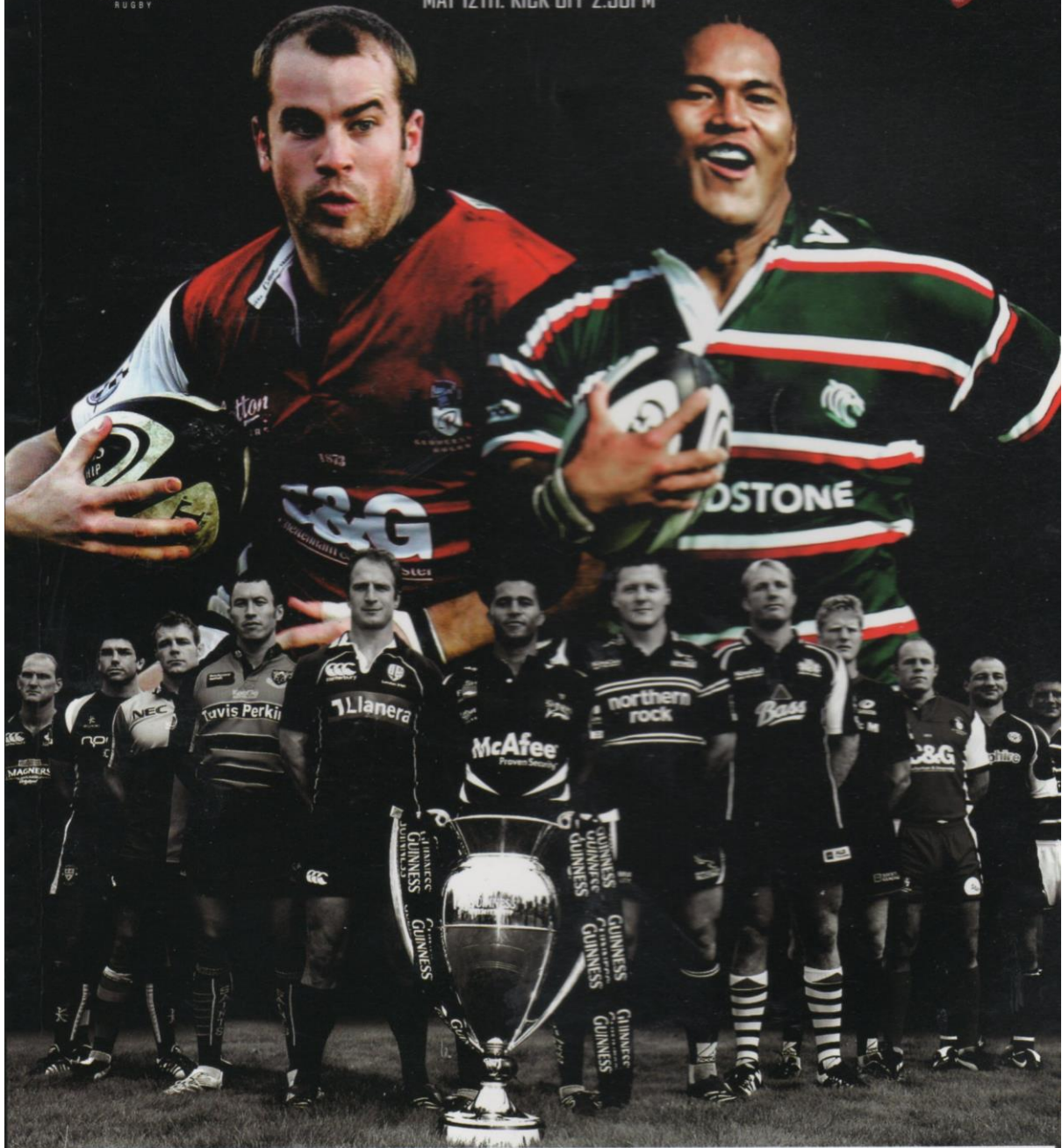


SOUVENIR PROGRAMME £4

THE GUINNESS PREMIERSHIP FINAL 2007



TWELVE TEAMS. ONE TURF. ONE WINNER.
MAY 12TH. KICK OFF 2.30PM



GUINNESS PREMIERSHIP

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www.guinnesspremiership.com



MATCH PREVIEW

BY PAUL MORGAN, EDITOR OF RUGBY WORLD MAGAZINE

AT Twickenham today it will be a case of the immovable object up against the irresistible force as the country's top two clubs battle it out to be named England's best.

The immovable object is in the shape of the Leicester Tigers pack and the Gloucester backs have been this season's irresistible force in England.

Not one point separated these two powerhouses in the regular season and both duly won their Premiership Semi Finals to make it to Twickenham today.

Both sides have bad memories of Premiership Finals so something will have to give today.

In 2003 Gloucester topped the Premiership by 15 points and then suffered a 39-3 drubbing against London Wasps as their title hopes were blown to shreds.

While last season Leicester lost 45-20 to Sale Sharks a year after being defeated 39-14 by London Wasps.

So while Leicester have a treble of trophies on their mind - the Heineken Cup Final follows on 20 May - they also have a hat trick of Premiership Final defeats to avoid.

Gloucester coach Dean Ryan believes his side will not be affected by the 2003 hammering by London Wasps.

"Parallels will obviously be drawn with what happened in 2003, but this team won't carry that burden," said Ryan "If we carried history around with us, then we would be burdened, but we don't." Gloucester showed how potent their backs

could be in their Guinness Premiership Semi Final scoring seven tries in a 50-9 rout of Saracens.

"Fifty points was flattering," Ryan admitted, "and we will have to step up again at Twickenham.

"Finals are a different environment. It will be on a big stage against an outstanding side, offering us a very physical challenge.

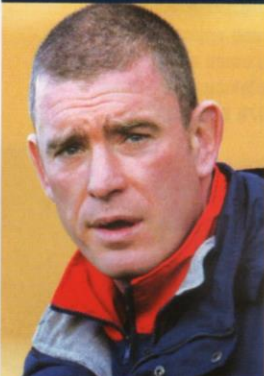
"PARALLELS WILL OBVIOUSLY BE DRAWN WITH WHAT HAPPENED IN 2003, BUT THIS TEAM WON'T CARRY THAT BURDEN."

"We have a lot of confidence in our game and we'll be keen to go out and do ourselves justice in the final."

The victory over Saracens in their Guinness Premiership Semi Final meant that Gloucester were the only side in the competition to remain unbeaten at home during the campaign. Their only defeat in their last eight matches was 12-19 at Newcastle on 13 April and they became only the second side to pass the 50-point mark in the semi-finals, following London Wasps in 2003-04, who of course went on to lift the title.

"We played some great stuff. We see ourselves as a side that needs movement - we can't get caught up in a static contest - and we need to keep the game moving," Ryan added.

The Gloucester coach will also have an unusual problem today as he is banned from the touchline and dressing room after being found guilty by the RFU of threatening and verbally abusing referee Rob Debney, so expect to see him somewhere in the stands.



"THE PRE-MATCH STUFF IS ABOUT WHAT YOU HAVE DONE ON MONDAY TO THURSDAY."



Ryan can of course be relaxed about the effect this has had on his team when they are winning.

"The pre-match stuff is about what you have done on Monday to Thursday," said Ryan. "People don't take too much in pre-match. I have a good coaching staff around me and we tend to talk about the same things."

Leicester were forced to grind out their Guinness Premiership Semi Final victory, 26-14 over Bristol, and had to rely on their world-class forwards to get them home.

They made it to the play-offs for a third successive season and it is probably no surprise that they beat Bristol as the Tigers have lost only one of their last 38 Premiership encounters at Welford Road.

Leicester have at least won a Championship final at Twickenham but that was back in 2001 when Bath were beaten 22-10.

Leicester coach Pet Howard is returning to his native Australia at the end of the season, and he watched his side run in tries through Harry Ellis and Geordan Murphy, while Andy Goode contributed 16 points with the boot in the semi.

Howard also believes his side are in better shape that they were a year ago.

"A year ago, we won easily against London Irish and didn't turn up the next week," Howard said.

"So we're in there. It's a one-on-one game and the best team will win."

Leicester also have the advantage of a victory at Twickenham this season as they took EDF Energy Cup last month.

"We've been to Twickenham once this year and we won. We've played in some pretty big games, some pretty big one-off games and we've dealt with that," said Howard.



"A YEAR AGO, WE WON EASILY AGAINST LONDON IRISH AND DIDN'T TURN UP THE NEXT WEEK."

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THE GUINNESS PREMIERSHIP FINAL 2007



CLUB NEWS



"A SEASON TICKET GUARANTEES ENTRY INTO 11 GUINNESS PREMIERSHIP GAMES, A 50% DISCOUNT ON EDF ENERGY CUP TICKETS, PRIORITY BOOKINGS AND MUCH, MUCH MORE."

SEASON TICKETS

GLOUCESTER Rugby have launched their season ticket package ahead of the 2007/08 season entitled 'See it to believe it.'

The main feature at Kingsholm next season will be the development of the new South Stand that will increase the capacity from 12,500 to 16,000. There is also a price freeze in the Bulldbase Stand and more information can be gathered online at www.gloucester rugby.co.uk

"The new South Stand is the biggest off-field development the club has ever undertaken and it will create a fantastic, brand new all-seater facility our great supporters can be proud of," said Gloucester's managing director Ken Nottage.

A season ticket guarantees entry into 11 Guinness Premiership games, a 50% discount on EDF Energy Cup tickets, priority bookings and much, much more. For ticket information call the hotline number on 0871 871 8781 (option 2).

NEW SIGNINGS

HEAD COACH Dean Ryan has already been busy attracting new players ahead of next season and more will follow. He has already secured the services of Lions Gareth Cooper and Andy Titterrell.

Cooper will come in as direct replacement for Peter Richards, who will join London Irish after today's final and Titterrell will join Gloucester from Sale Sharks.

Ryan has also added former Munster number nine Mike Prendergast and number eight Gareth Delve from Bath. The two other confirmed signings were also the first ones to be announced.

Alasdair Stokosch, a tough tackling flanker from Edinburgh, joined the club alongside his team mate, prop Alasdair Dickinson for next season.

Gloucester Rugby would like to wish every player leaving the club this season the very best for the future.





WALK OF LEGENDS

Gloucester Rugby is one of the oldest rugby club's in the world - and one of the biggest in Europe. The new South Stand, due to open for the 2007/08 season, marks another chapter in the very proud history of Kingsholm. Alongside the new stand we are creating a 'Walk of Legends' where supporters will also have the opportunity to take their place in Gloucester's history.

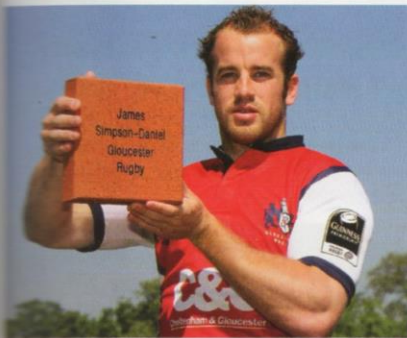
The 'Walk of Legends' will celebrate Gloucester's glorious past while also providing the opportunity for our supporters to take pride in the future.

Help us build a great future and sponsor a paver in the 'Walk of Legends'.

You will be able to choose from either single (two lines) or double (four lines) stones, engraved with your name and personal message.

Inscriptions could include you and your partners name, celebration of an anniversary, birthday, remembering a loved one or celebrating a birth.

Full information packs and registration forms will be available soon. To register your interest go online to www.gloucesterrugby.co.uk or contact 01452 872284



OPPORTUNITIES AT GLOUCESTER RUGBY

There are a variety of different opportunities available for you and your business at Kingsholm which include:

EXECUTIVE SUITES

Seasonal suites provide the ideal opportunity for you to mix business with pleasure whilst enjoying the match day experience in the comfort of your own private environment.

THE 1873 CLUB

Join Kingsholm's exclusive members club to get the best seats in the house and access to the 1873 club bar and lounge, perfect for networking and entertaining.

MATCH SPONSOR

This is a great opportunity to raise your company's profile whilst giving your guests a memorable day at Kingsholm and entertaining in the luxury of your own box



RESTAURANT

The Legends Lounge has a panoramic view of the pitch from the touchline and is the perfect location to entertain smaller groups of people whilst enjoying a superb four course pre-match meal.

ADVERTISING

Opportunities exist to align your brand with Gloucester Rugby in other ways, which include advertising around the pitch perimeter of Kingsholm, banners on the club website or advertising in the match day programme.

SPONSORSHIP

A variety of sponsorships are available from kit branding, stadium and suite naming rights down to individual player sponsorship.

SPONSORSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY

Gloucester Rugby has its own community department who get out in the local schools and clubs aiming to inspire children and youths in Gloucestershire to improve their fitness and get involved in rugby. They have a range of different sponsorship opportunities available to get your brand out in the region and associated with these positive programs.

CONFERENCE AND BANQUETING

New for 2007 Gloucester Rugby can boost a variety of fully equipped, modern conference facilities, of which come with the inspiring view over the hallowed turf of Kingsholm. We can accommodate anything from 1 to 1 business meetings to a 300 theatre style conference or exhibition. This development will allow access to Kingsholm's new facilities 7 days a week.

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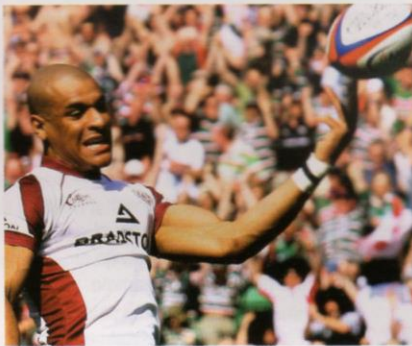
THE GUINNESS PREMIERSHIP FINAL 2007



HOW GLOUCESTER RUGBY **CAN WIN**

SHOOT DOWN THE WING MAN

Leicester Tigers lead the Guinness Premiership tries scored by wings with a whopping 22: nine from Tom Vandell, six from Alex Tuilegi, three from Seru Rabeni, two from Leon Lloyd, and one each from Geordan and Johnie Murphy.



TRY THE DROP

Opposing players have dropped six goals against Leicester Tigers this season - more than any other club has conceded. Two apiece by Gloucester Rugby's Willie Walker and Lee Thomas (Sale), and one each by Bath's Shaun Berne, Alex King (Wasps).



"GLOUCESTER AND LEICESTER HAVE MET ON 195 PREVIOUS OCCASIONS WITH THE WEST COUNTRYMEN WINNING 101 TO THE TIGERS 87, AND SEVEN FURTHER MATCHES DRAWN."

FIVE FOR 6, 7 AND 8

Leicester Tigers have scored 15 Guinness Premiership tries by back-rowers this season to lead the league, split evenly with five tries apiece for shirts 6, 7 and 8.



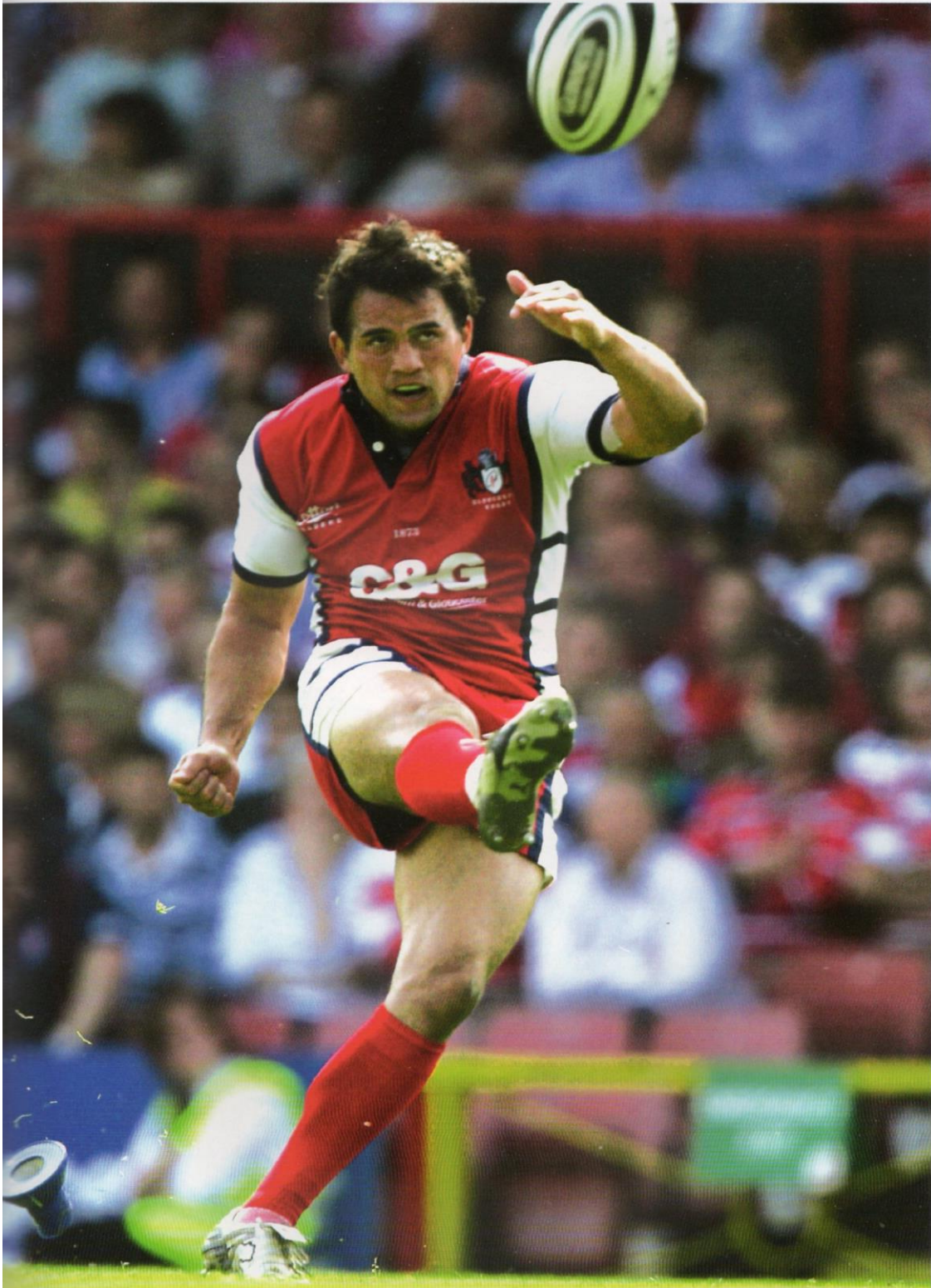
LET HISTORY TAKE ITS COURSE

Gloucester Rugby and Leicester Tigers have met on 195 previous occasions with the West countrymen winning 101 to the Tigers 87, and seven further matches drawn.



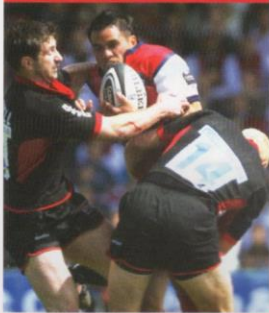
SCORE THE FIRST TRY

In the four previous Premiership finals the team that has scored the first try on the day has gone on to carry off the prize.



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"WE MUST REPRODUCE
EVERYTHING GOOD
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typical rate (variable)



MARCO BORTOLAMI

BY ALASTAIR DOWNEY, GLOUCESTER RUGBY

HE MAY NOT be from the deepest, darkest depths of the Forest of Dean or have been reared on inter-city rivalries like so many of his predecessors but Marco Bortolami was made for Gloucester and its rugby.

For one, he is far too good looking to have spent endless hours at the bottom of a zillion rucks and he is fluent in three languages, some would say that is precisely three more than many who have pulled on the famous Gloucester shirt down the years, but the thing about him that those who regularly sardine themselves into Kingsholm love is this: He cares. Get beneath the Italian exterior and he will have Cherry and White blood running through his veins.

Bortolami has been a revelation this season and carries with him that unmistakable whiff of a genius in the making. His contribution as a player has approached stratospheric heights but it has been the levels he has attained as captain and figurehead that has been most significant.

If he appeared this afternoon in the colours of Leicester you could be forgiven for thinking that a younger Martin Johnson had rolled back the years for the all-rucking, all-mauling Midlanders such is Bortolami's significance to Gloucester these days.

There maybe more eye-catching performers in the Kingsholm ranks just now - Andy Hazell has been in remarkable form all season, Carlos Nieto has set about opposition set-pieces with a cruel intensity, Nick Wood has emerged to force his

way into England's summer tour and Peter Buxton has been one of the most consistent performers all year - but Bortolami brings that something extra, leadership qualities, physicality and presence that made Johnson such a star.

Speaking after Saturday's 50-9 semi-final victory over Saracens, Bortolami said: "We must reproduce everything good that we did against Saracens - and we were very good - if we are to beat Leicester," "We must remember we have brilliant young backs who can hurt any team, we must defend and tackle like we did today against a tough Saracens side and build pressure, and we must take care always to protect our set-piece ball.

"If we do all that, and our fans can transport the passion of Kingsholm to Twickenham, then who knows? Leicester are a magnificent team, but if we remain confident and bring all our qualities into the game we can claim a big breakthrough victory for the club."

Gloucester may have shifted the emphasis away from their tried and trusted *modus operandi* - a general forward mayhem of yester-year - to a fledgling brood of bright young backs who have space and attack on their minds, but there is still room for a dynamic forward here and there.

As a consequence, Bortolami's star has risen spectacularly since his move from Narbonne. When he joined Gloucester a year ago he was in the top seven or eight locks in the world, now he is surely in the top four or five and life and rugby in England have enhanced him even further.

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"I love the English mentality," he said. "In England, everything is done properly - in life and rugby - and that to me is very important.

"The level of organisation and professionalism at Gloucester is something I was not expecting. We have an environment here between the players and the coaches that is very special and that is something not easy to create.

"MARCO HAS BEEN EVERYTHING WE EXPECTED HIM TO BE AND THEN A LITTLE BIT MORE."

"For me, I am working in the best environment. I am someone who needs to push themselves every single day. I don't just want to sit in the corner to do my job because then I will not try and become the best.

"I think that is why we have reached the final. We have worked so hard as a group to get where we are and that is what has impressed me most. I am in a place where I want to be successful - Gloucester is a great club, the supporters live and breathe their rugby and that makes it very special for me and the rest of the players."

From the very moment he traded blows with Bath's formidable duo of Danny Grewcock and

Steve Borthwick on the opening weekend of hostilities back in September, Bortolami has become a totem of excellence thanks to his on-field leadership skills, consistency and durability.

"Marco has been everything we expected him to be and then a little bit more," said his club coach Dean Ryan, who knows a thing or two about forward play. "He is a wonderful athlete and is already an exceptional captain. To me, he has been one of the signings of the season, anywhere, and one of the most influential players in the Guinness Premiership.

"There is a natural presence about him that not only inspires but leads too and that is very important. To have been singled out to captain his country at such a young age is testament to how people view him and he has been fantastic for us."

Bortolami (26) is now on the cusp of great things with Gloucester and should Ryan's fledgling side win the ultimate domestic prize this afternoon, the Italian national captain's contribution over the last ten months will have been a crucial component.

He may not be the flashiest, well known or biggest and nastiest lock forward in the Premiership but Bortolami is one of the best - as anyone in Gloucester colours could tell you.



