

GLoucester Rugby Heritage

LEICESTER TIGERS

On 3 August 1880, at a meeting at the George Hotel in Leicester, three local clubs amalgamated to form Leicester rugby club. Those three clubs were Leicester Societies AFC, Leicester Amateur FC and Leicester Alert.

Twelve weeks later, on 23 October the first game was played, against Moseley, and the result was a 0-0 draw. The game was played at the Belgrave Cricket and Cycle Ground. Later, some games were played at Victoria Park, before Leicester found their true home at Welford Road. From the earliest days Leicester were already known as the "Tigers".

Gloucester first played Leicester on 31 October 1891 on the Belgrave ground, where Gloucester triumphed 15-0. Tries were scored by Walter Jackson, Trevor Powell and Walter Taylor, Jackson converting all three tries.

In all the two clubs have met on 230 occasions, with Gloucester winning 109, Leicester 113, and eight games drawn.

In the late nineties and early noughties, Tigers were the Cherry & Whites' nemesis. In 1997 Leicester won a semi-final game in the Pilkington Cup at Kingsholm. In 2001, the first time Gloucester had qualified for the Heineken Cup and made it to the semi-final, there was another defeat to Tigers. Then in 2007, Gloucester topped the Premiership but were thrashed in the league final 44-16 by Alesana Tuilagi and his colleagues. The following season Gloucester again finished first, and had a home semi-final only to lose to a last-minute Andy Goode drop goal.

John Player Cup Final: 15 April 1978: Gloucester 6 Leicester 3

Team: Peter Butler; Bob Clewes, Richard Jardine, Brian Vine, Richard Mogg; Chris Williams, Paul Howell; Gordon Sargent, Steve Mills, Mike Burton, Steve Boyle, John Fidler, John Watkins (captain), John Simonett, Viv Wooley

Scorers: Try: Mogg; Conversion: Butler

Five special trains took Gloucester supporters to the Twickenham final. Many more travelled by car or coach, and it was estimated that 2,000 Cherry & White supporters were in the crowd. The outstanding Gloucester pack put Tigers under extreme pressure. Both Butler and Leicester's ace kicker Dusty Hare missed with penalties, and the game was pointless, until the 36th minute,

when Gloucester scored the only try of the game. Inevitably, the forwards started the drive through Burton and Sargent. A charge to the left by Simonett and Howell, allowed fly-half Williams to gain further ground. Boyle carried the move on before releasing wing Mogg, to break two tackles and score in the corner. Butler kicked the conversion from the touch-line.



Burton



Sargent



Simonett



Howell

In the second half, Leicester endeavoured to turn the game through their backs, and caused Gloucester some concern. Hare missed two more penalties before succeeding with his fourth effort. Gloucester attacked in turn, and almost scored through Clewes, but he was bundled into touch. In the end, Tigers got on top and only a superb tackle from Mogg stopped a try from Bob Barker. The pressure was still intense to the end, but there were no further scores. The victorious Gloucester team was honoured with a civic reception at Gloucester Guildhall, and Gloucester's MP, Sally Oppenheim, who had been at Twickenham, hosted a celebratory dinner at the House of Commons. "We are the Gloucester boys" was heard ringing around the Palace of Westminster.

Premiership: 8 April 1997: Gloucester 32 Leicester 30

Team: Audley Lumsden; Eral Anderson, Craig Emmerson, Martin Roberts, Mike Peters; Mark Mapletoft, Scott Benton; Andy Deacon, Phil Greening, Tony Windo, Rob Fidler, Dave Sims, Nathan Carter, Simon Devereux, Andrew Stanley.

Replacement: Peter Hart.

Scorers: Tries: Lumsden, Greening; Conversions: Mapletoft (2); Penalties: Mapletoft (6)

Gloucester had a dreadful start to the season, losing the first five games, but had recovered to mid-table security. Meanwhile Leicester were challenging at the top of the table.

The game was played mid-week under the Kingsholm floodlights, usually a guarantee of a dramatic contest. This one certainly was. Early on, Joel Stransky kicked two penalties to Mapletoft's one; then after 14 minutes Stransky broke to send in Craig Joiner for a try, which the former converted. Mapletoft kept Gloucester in the hunt with a penalty, before a John Liley try took the Tigers further ahead. There was an exchange of penalties, so that at half-time Leicester led 18-9.

In the second half, Mapletoft kicked his fourth penalty, before Lumsden picked up and ran in a spectacular try from 50 metres. Mapletoft's conversion put the Cherry and Whites ahead for the first time. He stretched the lead with yet another penalty, but Adel Kardooni scored a short range try, and Stransky's conversion put Tigers 25-22 up. Mapletoft kicked yet another penalty to square the scores. But with time running out Leicester appeared to have won the game with a try from Rory Underwood. Only a couple of minutes remained when from a 15 metre line-out the Gloucester pack hurled Tigers back, and Greening was driven over. Mapletoft converted from the touch-line to signal wild celebration, with everybody expecting the final whistle to blow. But no, several minutes more play eventually saw Leicester win a five-metre line-out, but somehow Gloucester kept them out, and the end of the game signalled a pitch invasion.

Premiership: 16 April 2011: Leicester 41 Gloucester 41

Team: Olly Morgan; Tom Joyce, Eliota Fuimaono-Sapolu, Henry Trinder, Jonny May; Freddie Burns, Dave Lewis; Rupert Harden, Scott Lawson, Alasdair Dickinson, Will James, Dave Attwood, Matt Cox, Brett Deacon, Andy Hazell.
Replacements: Nick Wood, Alex Brown, Tim Taylor, Tim Molenaar, Ollie Azam, Alasdair Strokosch, Rory Lawson, Paul Doran-Jones

Scorers: Tries: Fuimaono-Sapolu (2), Morgan, Hazell, T.Molenaar; Conversions: Burns (5); Penalties: Burns (2)



This was an exciting game of ten tries, divided equally between the two teams. Gloucester were first off the mark within three minutes, when Olly Morgan sliced through the backs for a try but, as so often in his career, he suffered a shoulder injury almost immediately after scoring. On seven minutes Leicester were level after Scott Hamilton crossed, and Toby Flood took Tigers in to the lead with a penalty. Gloucester were soon back in front when Fuimaono-Sapolu scored the first of his tries, and by half-time the Cherry & Whites led 17-13.

Soon after the break it looked as if Leicester had wrested the game back when Alesana Tuilagi scored a hat trick of tries in 14 minutes to put the Tigers 14 points up. But back came Gloucester with tries from Hazell and replacement Molenaar to square things. Again, Leicester appeared to have won the game when Billy Twelvetrees crossed, but in the last move of the game Fuimaono-Sapolu intercepted and ran in from his own 22 to score a glorious try. Burns converted, as he had all the tries, to gain a thrilling draw.

