

CHERRY & WHITES



**GLOUCESTER
RUGBY**

V SECTION PALOISE

**GLOUCESTER RUGBY
OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME**
2017/18 SEASON / ISSUE 10
EUROPEAN RUGBY CHALLENGE CUP
FRIDAY 19 JANUARY 2018
KO 19.45 / £2.50



OFFICIAL PARTNERS



OFFICIAL SUPPORTER



OFFICIAL SUPPLIER



CAPTAIN'S CORNER

WILLI HEINZ

GOOD EVENING, AND WELCOME TO KINGSHOLM FOR TONIGHT'S FINAL POOL STAGE GAME OF THE EUROPEAN RUGBY CHALLENGE CUP.

We've got a big game on our hands tonight, and, effectively, we are playing our first knockout game of the season. Before we get into the mathematics, permutations and possible outcomes, we know what we need to do.

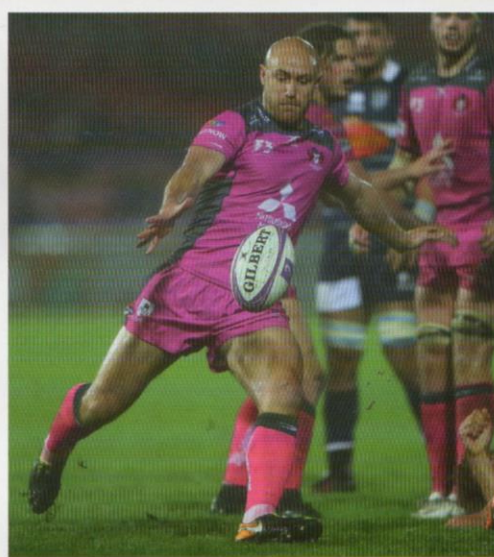
Whatever the result, we are confident that if we put in the performance that we know we are capable of, the result and what is next will take care of itself.

As a squad, this year we are confident in our ability to take on any team and beat them, and so we are not getting too focussed on possible quarter-final opponents. Of course, it was nice to have our qualification for the knock-out stages sewn up with one game to go, especially after losing in week one, but we have since shown a ruthless edge to put our fate in our own hands.

The Challenge Cup is a tournament that has been good to us in recent seasons, and we're excited for another outing this week against a good team.

We were frustrated with how we performed against Pau earlier in the season, and we did a lot of hard work to get back into the game after trailing by 20 points. We should probably have won, and with another 5 minutes, I have no doubt that we would have got the result.

But it was massive credit to the team, firstly to secure a losing bonus point in time expired, and to hold Pau to just three tries. That bonus point could be crucial.



Our last home against Sale was a good one for us. We didn't play particularly well, against a massively tricky opponent, but we were able to grind out the win despite not necessarily firing on all cylinders.

This was a confidence boost for us, and the following week at Northampton, we got ourselves in a good position to win the game but some ill-discipline and sloppy play cost us in the end.

We had a number of opportunities in good parts of the pitch in that game to put Saints away but our own inaccuracies let us down. In order for us to kick on in the second half of the season we need to be more ruthless when these moments come. Rest assured, we are all working hard to bridge that gap.

It was so frustrating in the closing stages, a couple of decisions went against us, but those calls do tend to level out across the season. Let's hope so anyway.

However, we shouldn't have let the game get that close, we had lots of chances to close the game out, and we'll have to take some massive learnings from that, and ensure it doesn't happen again.

We're excited for this week's game, and for a big few weeks of cup competition ahead of a big return to Aviva Premiership action.

Enjoy the game

Willi



Good Evening and welcome to Kingsholm for this Final Round of the pool stages of the European Rugby Challenge Cup. In particular, a very warm welcome to the players, staff and supporters of Section Paloise.

As we thought, following our defeat in Round One in Pau it's all come down to this final match. Since that evening in October at the Stade de Hameau, we have matched Pau's results against Agen and Zebre, and secured four bonus point wins.

It means that, although we have already secured a Quarter-Final place, we do need to win tonight to have the home fixture. There are various permutations, but we know we can top the pool if we

take four points to Pau's none, or indeed five points to their one.

We are in this position thanks to a very professional performance down in Agen last Friday. I was fortunate enough to be at the game and was very impressed by the way the team went about their business to bring home the five points. Winning in France is never easy, regardless of the opposition, and everyone did their job on the night which was good to see.

It was not a huge home crowd in Agen, but it was pleasing to see so many Gloucester fans there backing the team in their own unique way. I know how much our fans enjoy their European trips and we are always grateful to have them there supporting us.

On the subject of fans, I am very much looking forward to the Fans Forum on

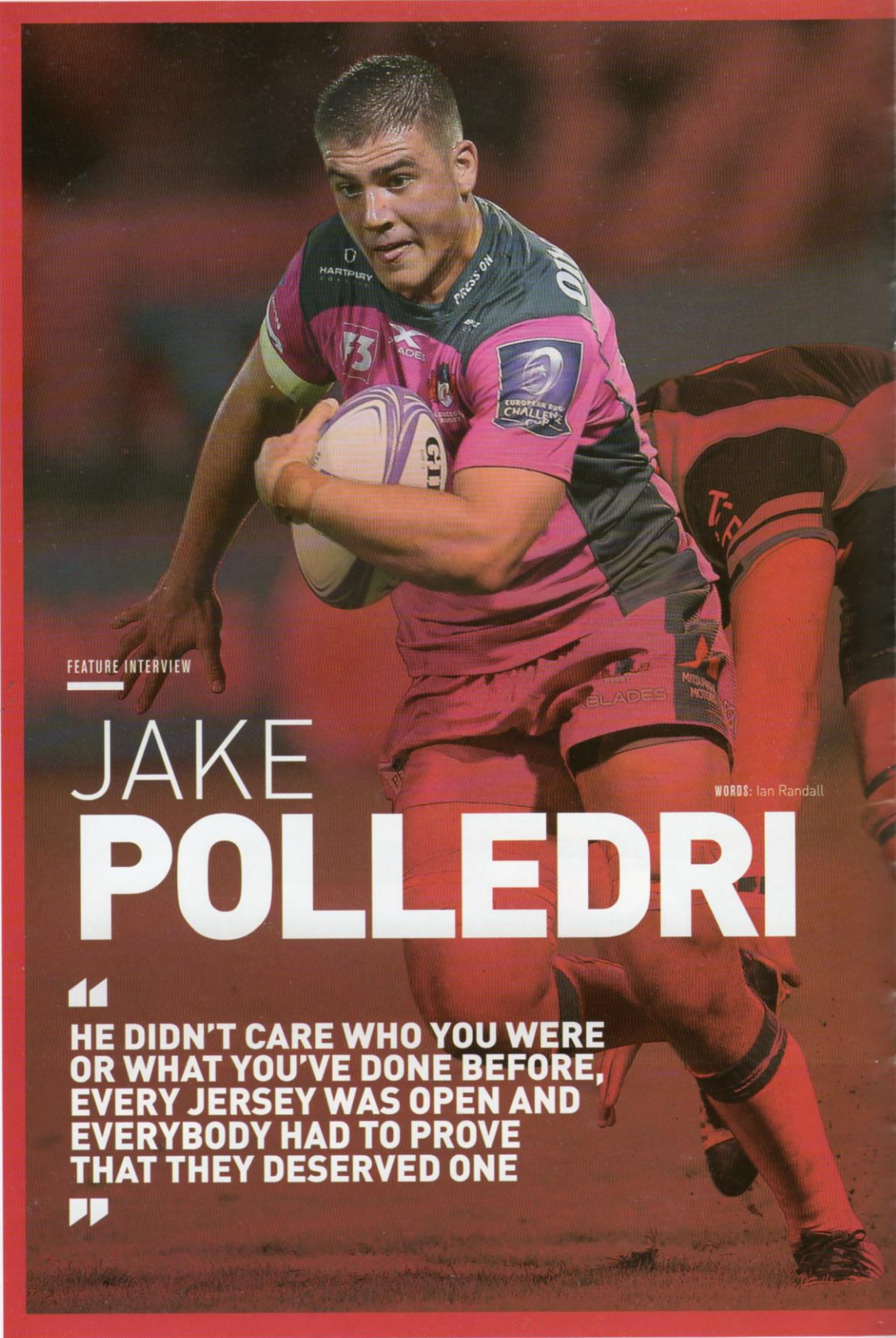
Monday 22nd January at Kingsholm. As a management team, we are very committed to communicating with our fan base in as open and frank a manner as possible. We last held an event like this just before the season started, and a lot has happened since!

So, it seems an appropriate time to provide updates on a number of topics. Anyone who has attended in the past knows that we don't duck any questions, so we look forward to seeing you there and tackling your queries.

For now though, the focus is very much on this evening and let's all play our part in helping the team secure a home Quarter-Final by cheering them on as loudly as we can.

Enjoy the game

Martin



FEATURE INTERVIEW

JAKE POLLEDRI

WORDS: Ian Randall

“ HE DIDN'T CARE WHO YOU WERE OR WHAT YOU'VE DONE BEFORE, EVERY JERSEY WAS OPEN AND EVERYBODY HAD TO PROVE THAT THEY DESERVED ONE

”



If you were in Pau last October – and even if you weren't – you'll have probably followed Gloucester's group in the Challenge Cup expecting tonight's game to decide the pool.

True to form, there have been no slip-ups along the way for either team, so it comes down to a shoot out with both clubs ensured of a quarter final place, but with a home tie the prize tonight.

It's worth reiterating how it is worked out, as the head to head results heavily influence matters if teams finish level in the same group. With a deficit of three points Gloucester are not only looking for a win, but one by more than the margin of defeat in the away fixture, where Owen Williams secured a losing bonus point with his last minute conversion. If it gets as far as tries scored by the two teams across the two games, it will be a nail biting evening.

The match in Pau saw the full debut of Jake Polledri, the back row having appeared for the last four minutes of the Premiership game against Northampton the previous week. It's fair to say his impact graph since has been almost vertical, culminating in his call-up into the Italy training squad for the Six Nations.

He flies out on Sunday, and he admitted it has been a rapid rise from National League rugby with Hartpury last season to being on the cusp of the international stage.

"My agent rang me with the news and it was a big shock" Polledri told me. "I'm

really excited about it now and I'm looking forward to the camp. It's really come about through the opportunity I've been given at Gloucester, and it's overwhelming because I've only just started at the club.

"When I signed I only thought I might get one or two games in the first season here and there if people were rested. Like any young boy you're always going to try your hardest and luckily it's gone well."

The 22-year-old is new to rugby's fast lane but he's adapting quickly, and it's a far cry from playing at Dings Crusaders as a teenager and helping his father Peter, who runs two well known fast food franchises.

"I was helping to do the sandwiches in those days and I knew I had to give my rugby a big push for a couple of years if I was going to make it." Jake added.

"I did study accountancy so I do have an AAT qualification as a fall back and I'm not the finished product yet. I'm still learning the game and in one of Johan Ackermann's first team meetings he said he didn't care who you were or what you've done before, every jersey was open and everybody had to prove that they deserved one, which was good for me as a young player."

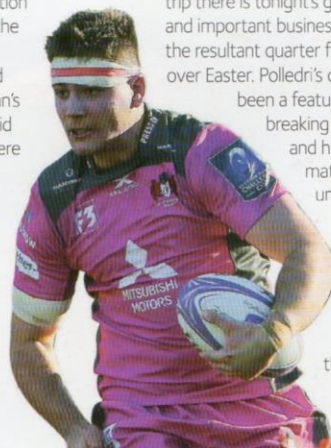
Polledri's development

will continue with the Italian squad over the next few days, under the guidance of Director of Rugby Conor O'Shea. He confirmed that the former Ireland full-back met him in Cheltenham last summer to confirm his awareness of the move to Gloucester and his potential to play for the Azurri, having been capped by them at Under 20 level. O'Shea was also an interested spectator in Parma last month when Gloucester beat Zebre, and he's now invited Polledri to learn from one of the best loose forwards of his generation in Sergio Parisse.

"In Italy Parisse is like a God," Jake joked. "He's the centre of the team and everything revolves around him so it'll be good to be there and get involved with him. The language will be interesting – I can understand some of it but I can't speak it, so hopefully they'll speak English!"

Ahead of what clearly will be an exciting trip there is tonight's game to deal with, and important business it is too with the resultant quarter final taking place over Easter. Polledri's direct running has been a feature of his play since breaking into the team, and his thoughts on the match are similarly uncomplicated.

"We were a bit sloppy in Pau and we really need to nail a performance when they come to us."





WASPS 49-24 GLOUCESTER RUGBY

TRIES:

Willie Le Roux, Christian Wade (2), Thomas Young, Guy Thompson, Dan Robson

CONVERSIONS:

Danny Cipriani (5)

PENALTIES:

Danny Cipriani (3)

DATE: Sat 23rd Dec 17
KO: 15:00

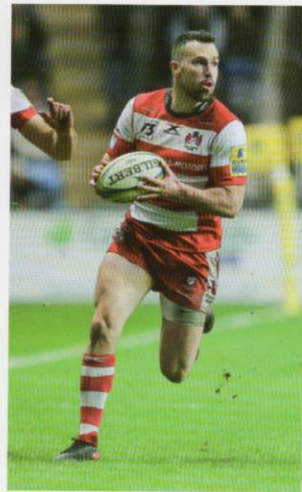
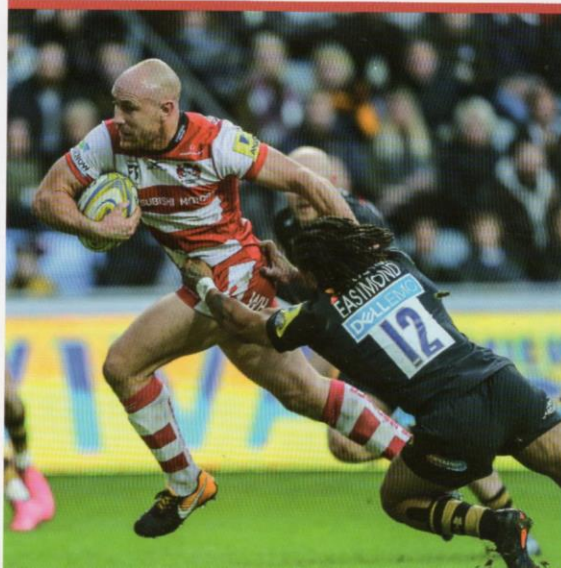
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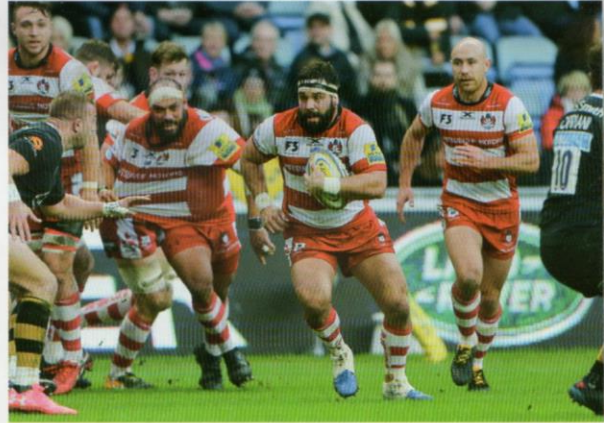
Willi Heinz, Mark Atkinson, Tom Marshall, Freddie Clarke

CONVERSIONS:

Billy Twelvetrees (2)

ACTION REPLAY





With two teams in good form coming into this game, something had to give at the Ricoh and, despite a spirited showing from Gloucester, the spoils went to Wasps on the day.

The final scoreline, 49-24 seems to indicate a comfortable win for Dai Young's side. But the final outcome certainly doesn't do Gloucester justice, three late scores from Wasps as the Cherry and Whites chased the game giving the score a lopsided look.

In fact, Gloucester looked in the driving seat until about ten minutes into the second half. At that point, they'd scored three first half tries and were pushing hard for the bonus point as they attacked in the home 22.

However, the game then swung dramatically the way of Wasps as Tom Cruse got away with some 'professional' work in the tackle area, before a forward pass set Willie Le Roux free to put Thomas Young away for a crucial score.

It gave Wasps the lead and they didn't look back as some Gloucester indiscipline, allied to some loose play as they attacked from deep in a bid to get back in the game, gave the home team the chances they needed to put the game to bed.

A late score from Freddie Clarke did at least give Gloucester a try scoring bonus point, the least they deserved for their efforts on the day.

As disappointed as they were as they left the Ricoh, Gloucester could at least reflect on having pushed one of the in-form teams in the Aviva Premiership so hard on the day.

That was certainly the case in the first half when both teams went toe to toe in attack. An early try from Willie Le Roux for the home side was swiftly cancelled out by a well-taken score from Willi Heinz before Mark Atkinson capitalised on a strong break from Ollie Thorley to give Gloucester the lead.

Danny Cipriani narrowed the gap with a 32nd minute penalty and then converted Christian Wade's try to nudge Wasps back in front. However, Gloucester showed their resilience by hitting

I WAS VERY PLEASED AT HALF-TIME FOR THOUGH THERE WERE TIMES WE WERE UNDER A LOT OF PRESSURE, WE STUCK IT OUT.

IN THE SECOND HALF IT ALL WENT PEAR-SHAPED AS THERE WERE ONE OR TWO HUGE MOMENTUM SWINGS WHICH PROVED CRUCIAL.

THEIR BENCH MADE A HUGE DIFFERENCE AND WE BEGAN TO CHASE THE GAME AND THREW A FEW CARELESS PASSES, WHICH WERE NOT NECESSARY.



HEAD COACH JOHAN ACKERMANN

back through Tom Marshall to go into half-time with a narrow 15-17 lead.

The Cherry and Whites then looked well capable of extending their lead as they threatened at the start of the second half, but were left reeling by Thomas Young's long-range effort which changed the game decisively.

Cipriani extended the lead with two penalties as Gloucester lost a bit of shape as they chased the game and Guy Thompson put the result beyond doubt as Wasps took advantage of a Gloucester handling error in their own 22.

Freddie Clarke finished well from close range to ensure that Gloucester would take something from the game and also gave hope of a losing bonus point. However, Dan Robson profited from another error to score and Christian Wade's last gasp score just rubbed salt into the wound.



GLOUCESTER RUGBY **20-16** SALE SHARKS

TRIES:

David Halaifonua, Ben Vellacott

CONVERSIONS:

Billy Twelvetrees (2)

PENALTIES:

Billy Twelvetrees (2)

DATE: Sat 30th Dec 17

KO: 15:00

TRIES:

AJ MacGinty

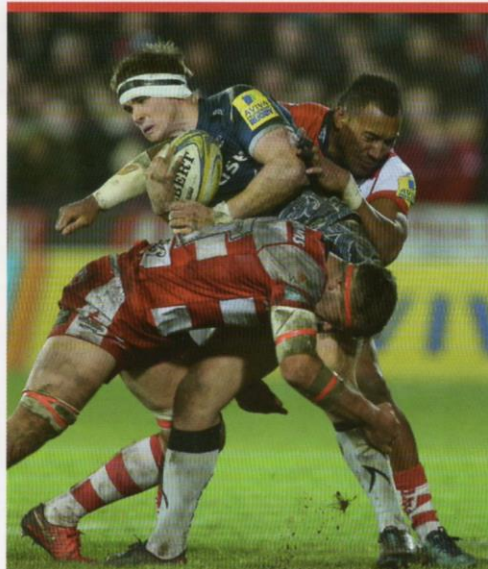
CONVERSIONS:

AJ MacGinty

PENALTIES:

AJ MacGinty (3)

ACTION REPLAY



It wasn't pretty at times, but Gloucester finally managed to hold off a determined Sale Sharks challenge and finish 2017 on a winning note, a victory that kept the Cherry and Whites in the top four of the Aviva Premiership table.

Gloucester really didn't get going on the day, and much of that was down to a dogged defensive effort from the visitors which prevented the Cherry and Whites from ever really hitting their stride.

And Sale, despite being dominated in terms of possession and territory and having to make twice as many tackles in defence, made their most of their visits to the Gloucester half, AJ MacGinty contributing all his side's 16 points on the day.

It meant that Gloucester could never open up a decent lead and could certainly never relax, especially in the final couple of minutes when Sale, needing a try to win, laid siege to the Gloucester line until a superb steal from Ed Slater rescued the day.

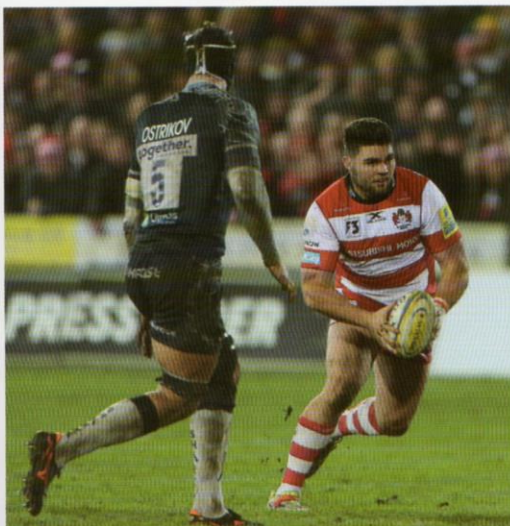
The second row was signed during the summer to bring his experience to bear at moments like these, and his work at the breakdown sparked enthusiastic celebrations in the sell-out crowd.

Much of the outpouring of emotion was down to the fact that it had been a nervy encounter throughout. Gloucester threatened briefly from the start, but Sale held firm and moved downfield to take a 0-6 lead from two MacGinty penalties.

There was no lack of effort from Gloucester but, every time they seemed to be hitting their stride, an error halted the momentum.

That was until the 33rd minute, when skipper Tom Savage turned down an easy penalty kick at goal in favour of a five metre scrum, and his courage was rewarded with a try in the corner for David Halaifonua, Billy Twelvetrees converting.

However, Sale ensured they would go into half-time with a



I'M GRATEFUL THAT WE GOT OVER THE WINNING LINE. THE LESS SAID, THE BETTER BECAUSE AGAIN OUR ERROR RATE AND THE NUMBER OF BASIC MISTAKES WE MADE WAS JUST TOO HIGH. SOME GUYS REALLY STEPPED UP AND MADE THE VITAL TURNS WHEN NEEDED.

IT'S GOOD TO END 2017 ON A WIN. WE'RE HAPPY WHERE WE ARE IN THE TABLE BUT WE'RE NOT HAPPY WITH OUR GAME. THERE'S A LOT OF ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT.



HEAD COACH JOHAN ACKERMANN

narrow lead as MacGinty slotted his third penalty for a 7-9 lead.

The Cherry and Whites badly needed an early score to settle the nerves, and duly got one as Ben Vellacott pounced from close range to mark his first Aviva Premiership start in style.

But the visitors refused to be shaken off, and hit back almost straight away, Faf de Klerk making a break at the tail of the lineout before offloading for MacGinty to cross, the fly-half converting his own try to give his team a narrow 14-16 lead.

The Sale defence then muscled up in some style and it looked as though there would be no way through for Gloucester. But, crucially, two penalties were conceded near halfway and Billy Twelvetrees landed them both.

It was now a case of holding Sale out, and Gloucester just about completed the job although it wasn't without a scare!





TEAM LINE-UPS



FRIDAY 19 JANUARY // EUROPEAN RUGBY CHALLENGE CUP

T	P	C	D	POSITION		T	P	C	D
				JASON WOODWARD	15	FULL BACK	15	MATHIAS COLOMBET	
				HENRY PURDY	14	RIGHT WING	14	FRANK HALAI	
				BILLY TWELVETREES	13	OUTSIDE CENTRE	13	FLORIAN NICOT	
				ANDY SYMONS	12	INSIDE CENTRE	12	JALE VATUBUA	
				OLLIE THORLEY	11	LEFT WING	11	WATISONI VOTU	
				BILLY BURNS	10	FLY-HALF	10	BRANDON FAJARDO	
				BEN VELLACOTT	9	SCRUM-HALF	9	CLOVIS LEBAIL	
				JOSH HOHNECK	1	LOOSEHEAD PROP	1	JAMIE MACKINTOSH (C)	
				RICHARD HIBBARD	2	HOOKER	2	LAURENT BOUCHET	
				JOHN AFOA	3	TIGHTHEAD PROP	3	LOURENS ADRIAANSE	
				TOM SAVAGE (C)	4	LOCK	4	FABRICE METZ	
				JEREMY THRUSH	5	LOCK	5	MASALOSALO TUTAIA	
				ROSS MORIARTY	6	BLINDSIDE FLANKER	6	DANIEL RAMSAY	
				LEWIS LUDLOW	7	OPENSIDE FLANKER	7	GIOVANNI HABEL KUFFNER	
				BEN MORGAN	8	NUMBER 8	8	PETER SAILI	
				REPLACEMENTS				REPLACEMENTS	
				MOTU MATU'U	16			16	LUCAS REY
				CAMERON ORR	17			17	IGNACIO CALLES
				FRASER BALMAIN	18			18	MATTHEW TIERNEY
				ED SLATER	19			19	BEN MÓWEN
				FREDDIE CLARKE	20			20	LEKIMA TAGITAGIVALU
				JAKE POLLEDRI	21			21	CHRISTOPHER KAISER
				CALLUM BRALEY	22			22	ANTOINE HASTOY
				OWEN WILLIAMS	23			23	BASTIEN POURAILLY
				MATCH OFFICIALS					
				REFEREE John Lacey (Ire)					
				ASSISTANT REFEREES Stuart Gaffkin (Ire) & Paul Haycock (Ire)					
				TMO Olly Hodges (IRFU)					
				CITING COMMISSIONER Stefano Marrama (Ita)					



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