



GLOUCESTER

V

BATH RUGBY



Saturday 8

April 2000

Kick-off 3.00pm



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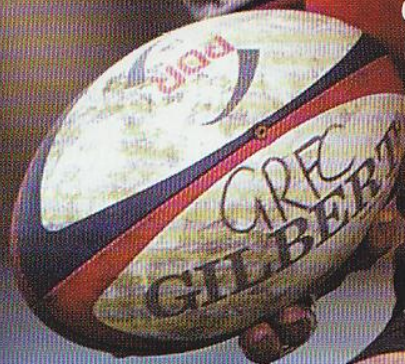
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Match Action

**Gloucester against
Harlequins...**

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Gloucester

Issue 14 - £2.00

Gloucester RFC Official Programme 1999-2000 Season

Welcome from The Editors

A Warm Welcome

The “cherry and white” of Gloucester can be found virtually anywhere on this planet – and it is just a matter of time before the Sunday Sport discovers Elvis wearing a Gloucester rugby shirt on a London Transport bus as it negotiates the lunar landscape.

Readers of the club’s website Kingsholm Chronicle are reporting daily sightings of the shirt in the most obscure of places.

Oh yea, I once thought! Is the jersey THAT famous?

The mind has been changed! I was recently in Canada (well, with few matches these past weeks, one has to get some sports fix) and was deposited at the Quality Inn at Vancouver Airport awaiting an overnight connection to Alberta.

The hotel had a sports bar ... so feeling a thirst coming on I duly donned my cherry and White jersey and descended to the bowels of the hostelry and their sports bar. I had not had time to count all the

TV screens in the room when I heard the voice.

“Get back to The Shed,” it boomed from somewhere in the corner.

And then I saw the London Irish jersey nursing a glass containing amber liquid.

And with a pound worth more than two Canadian dollars – and Canadian prices a lot cheaper than here – there was some severe testing of Molson’s Canadian draught, not to mention the planning of a booze-up to end all booze-ups after next season’s Heineken Cup Final between Gloucester and London Irish!

Who would have thought a friendly chat and drink between two correctly attired rugby fans from different Premiership clubs in a sports bar in Vancouver trying to get grips with a hoops game and some puck-pushing on two television screens?

Just goes to show that it is always worth packing that replica jersey when on a trip!

And the jersey story does not end there. A few days later in Edmonton I was wearing the same jersey while on a shopping trip to the West Edmonton Mall (said to be the largest in the world – and with over 800 shops and entertainment venues, who am I to argue?).

“Where did you get that Gloucester rugby shirt from,” a Canadian voice asked as I walked into a sports attire shop close by the Mall’s ice rink? He was told –and I was told about the six rugby clubs in Edmonton.

So another pleasant evening – this time checking on whether the Molson brew in Alberta was different from that in British Columbia (and at four bucks fifty for a litre pitcher, a lot of testing was undertaken!).

The problem was that in the spirit of Anglo-Canadian rugby relations, my cherry and white jersey is still in Canada.

But I do have a very nice Edmonton Oilers jersey.



Coach's Viewpoint

Phillipe Saint-André

"I do look on that result against Northampton as having a positive side. I think it helped us to produce a win against Harlequins."

This is a very important game for us this afternoon – it's a 'derby' and for us it's a chance for us to get back to winning ways at Kingsholm after the Northampton game a month ago.

I do look on that result against Northampton as having a positive side. I think it helped us to produce a win against Harlequins, the first win at the Stoop since November 1994. And winning two weeks ago has, I believe, given the guys that something extra for today's match.

Europe, we now find ourselves in April and just two points behind the leaders Northampton!

There have been some important behind the scenes development. Physiotherapist Jean-Pierre Darnaud has agreed to join us on a full time basis from Marseilles.

And Peter Finch, our fitness coach is staying for a further year. These two have played a very important part in our success so far this season.

Another important development is that Phil Vickery has signed for a further two years.

"We have home advantage – and it will be very good to win this afternoon. I know that we will have the supporters behind us."

You can expect more news for the playing side as we start thinking about next season – but not much can be done until we know just what the 'salary cap' will be for next season.

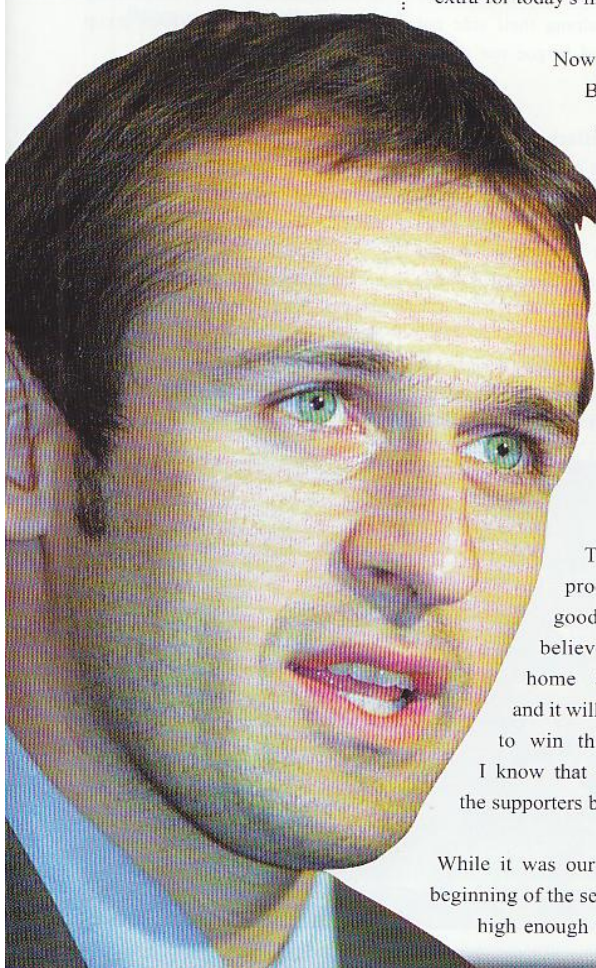
We still have six more matches this season. And from those six matches, I think that we need probably two wins to get into Europe.

Now we know that Bath have been playing very well for the last two months – in fact since we met in the Cup at the beginning of the year and played in those bad conditions.

Today will produce a very good game, I believe. We have home advantage – and it will be very good to win this afternoon.

I know that we will have the supporters behind us.

While it was our target at the beginning of the season to finish high enough to qualify for



Read The News And Air Your Views on the Official Gloucester RFC Website
www.kingsholm-chronicle.org.uk

Breath of Fresh Air

Peter Arnold

My favourite comment on the current eligibility furore came from our own charismatic skipper, Kingsley Jones recently. Apparently, when asked if he thought that any further Gloucester players were good enough to play for England, he replied, "Well, my Grandfather came from Ross-on-Wye!"

It was a nice way to inject a little humour into what is a rather sad little controversy. I am reminded about Bob 'Dino' Phillips' remark when he was asked how he, as good a Forester as ever killed a bear*, came to be drafted into the Welsh Development Squad at one point. "Ah well," he smiled. "I own a corgi."

Doesn't seem quite as funny now, does it? If you don't know, don't ask. If you do - no offence, butties.

BAD HANDWRITING?

I've been amazed at how many times I've seen the players affected by that controversy described as 'illegible' rather than 'ineligible'. Doesn't say much for the sub-editing profession, does it? On the other hand, perhaps they're right. Perhaps the affected players got their spots because the selectors couldn't read their handwriting on the official paperwork.

FIDLER ON THE HOOFF

I suppose that not even as large a fellow as John Fidler can be in two places at once, so we can appreciate

why he has decided to concentrate on his outside business interests and give up his position as the club's Team Secretary.

However, we don't have to like it. After all, GRFC without 'Fids' is a bit like Kingsholm without one of the goal posts. He's been around the place so long, as player and administrator, that we almost regard him as part of the fabric. He assures us that he will still be around, possibly taking up more than his fair share of space in the Shed, and it will no doubt, be a pleasurable, if unusual, experience for him to watch a game just for the enjoyment of it, without any of the cares of management.

I wasn't living in Gloucester when John played his first season for the club, but kept seeing his name popping up in press reports. Speaking on the phone to one elderly relative, I enquired as to who this new young lock forward was. The reply was scathing. "I'll never come to anything," I was told.

"Just brute force and bloody ignorance!" Which goes to show just how wrong even the dedicated and experienced supporter can be.

The relative in question was supping Guinness in the Great Clubhouse in the Sky by the time John won the first of his four caps for England, against Argentina. In fact he was the first Gloucester player to visit that country since John A'Bear, another lock forward,

actually skippered England on a tour before the Second World War. All the pundits told us that he was the fourth lock on the tour, only there to play in the 'bits and pieces' matches. Some of us knew better however.

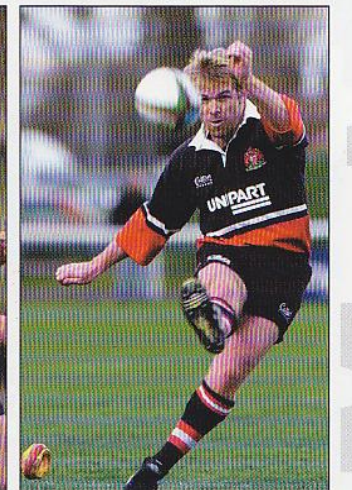
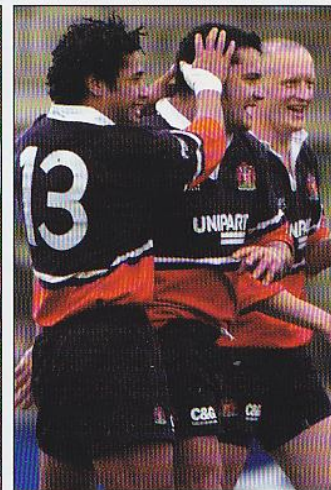
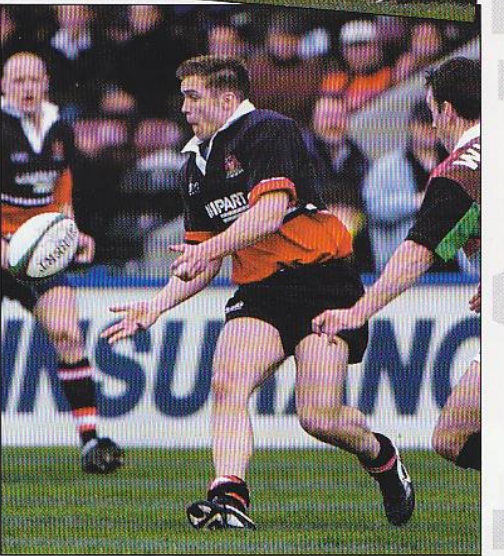
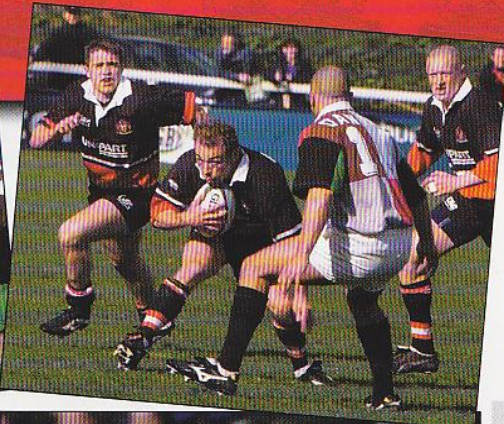
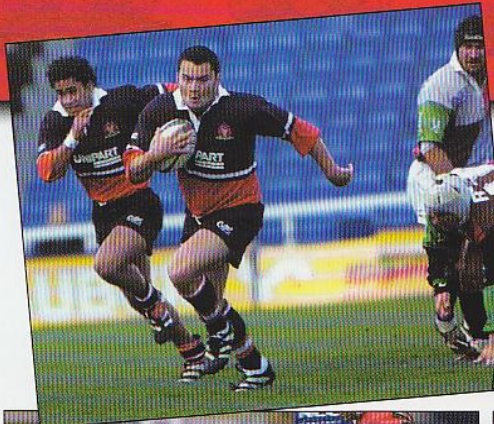
A few weeks before the party set off, a couple of us took the opportunity to talk to the tour Captain, Bill Beaumont, who was at Kingsholm for a game against Fylde over Easter. Obviously, we asked him about John, one of the surprise selections. The reply intrigued us. "They've got some big boys out there," said Bill. "And I want 'Fid's' arm wrapped around me when we come up against them!" So we weren't at all surprised when John Fidler played in both Test Matches.

And in some ways John Fidler doesn't change much. There he was, in one of the most crucial and difficult jobs in the club, through all the traumas and difficulties of the post-professionalism period. At times he has had to endure much more than his fair share of the flak flying around when unpopular decisions had to be made. He endured it all with the forthrightness, strength and refusal to buckle under pressure that he used to display on the field. There were times when it was a great reassurance to have "Fid's' arm wrapped around us".

I don't know who is going to assume John's mantle. But one thing's for sure - he's going to be a hard act to follow.

Match Action

Harlequins 34 - 24 Gloucester

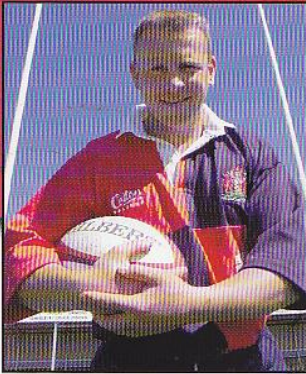


Match Action

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Captain's Comment

Kingsley Jones



Looking at the two sides, it could be that Bath are the favourites today - but then, since when have we be unhappy at being the underdog?

We are all looking forward to the Bath game! And not just because it's Bath – it's our first home game since Northampton four weeks ago and we want to erase the memory of that and get back to winning ways.

Having been at Kingsholm now for 18 months or so, I know just what it means for the people of Gloucester to beat Bath. As they say, this is more than just a rugby game!

Every one of us in the team appreciates just how much this one means to our supporters.

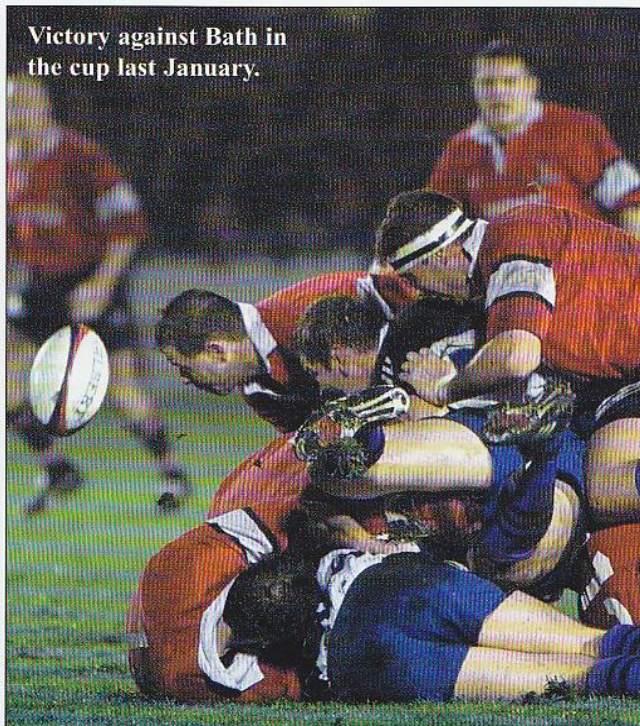
Another reason why I would like to beat Bath today is simply because they are a good side – everyone is talking about how good they are at the moment. It is certainly true that they have hit some form.

Looking at the two sides, it could be that Bath are the

favourites today – but then, since when have we be unhappy at being the underdog?

Bath are sneaking up the table and it is only natural that they – and others – are quietly fancying a result here today!

For both teams, it is a game that quite simply HAS to be won if Allied Dunbar Premiership title aspirations are to be realised!



But as far a Gloucester are concerned, our sights are still where they were at the beginning of the season – we are still focusing on getting a place in the Heinekein Cup. So a win today will be a big step in qualifying for Europe next season.

It is said that Bath plays better on dry surfaces – so maybe the ground won't suit them too much on Saturday, I'm not sure what the weather will do in the latter part of the week.

But no matter what the weather or conditions, we are looking forward to today's match immensely. Though I have to admit that I hope the temperature gets a little higher!

From The Commentary Booth

by Pete Wilson

MATTERS OF ROUTINE

I've always thought of a rugby fan as a creature of habit. I'm sure in many homes any weekend with a Gloucester home game on a Saturday follows a welcome and familiar pattern.

Having spent the week – or at this time of the season, the best part of a fortnight – digesting the impact of the last round of matches, by Friday night it's time to listen to BBC Radio Gloucestershire and pick up the Citizen to find out what the thinking is for Saturday's game.

Lately, as they say, there's not been much to go on. Philippe has delayed naming his team until Saturday, so his pre-match thoughts, along with those of John Brain and Kingsley Jones tend to be on the cagey side.

Yes it'll be a tough game, we'll give the opposition respect (but not too much) and we must play as a collective, but specifics about tactics are kept under wraps.

This merely fuels the discussions in the pubs and clubs both inside and outside the city on the likely team, which is more often than not different to the one written on the "white board" in the tunnel at Kingsholm.

Should Chris Catling be playing on the wing or at full back, where he did so well at Quins, and how good can Phil Vickery really be?

Both have become such popular figures at Kingsholm it's hard to believe that they only made their first team debuts four seasons ago, Vickery against London Irish and Catling against Pontypridd. Their impact since then has been considerable.

Local hostilities are also a great breeding ground for rumours – like the one about Tom Walkinshaw buying the Elmbridge Court site, and re-locating Gloucester to a new 20,000 capacity all-seater stadium costing 10 million pounds.

Practical as this may look – better facilities, and a larger capacity for the big games, the roots at Kingsholm run very deep. Could the unique atmosphere in "The Shed" be recreated anywhere else?

Probably not, but then Mickey Booth, Gloucester to the core, doesn't even call it "The Shed" anyway. To Mickey, and a few others no doubt, it's always been the St Marks Street Stand. Far be it from me to question someone of his credentials.

Come Saturday – match day – it's an early trip to the supermarket with the most important lady, before

scanning the sports pages of the morning papers.

The imagination starts to run riot as lunch time approaches.

What would it really be like to pull on the Cherry & White shirt, not in the comfort of home, but in the Gloucester dressing room, and then run out to a standing ovation with Bath as the opposition?

The thought of it.....

In the bar before the game, there are the pre-match nerves. Sure it'll be a fierce contest, but it is one we can win, though there's always that niggle that says the result could go against us if the players have an off day.

They're only human after all.....but it's amazing how those fears disappear after a couple of pints. Confidence is sky high, and programme in hand, it's time to head for that regular vantage point.

As I said, the day is a matter of routine. Is it the same for you?

C'mon Glaws !

Pete Wilson is a freelance presenter at BBC Radio Gloucestershire and is a regular in the commentary box at Kingsholm.

John Fidler

The End Of An Era

John Fidler

The man they call Mr. Gloucester will take one final bow before taking his place amongst the Kingsholm legends at the end of the season.

John Fidler will bring the curtain down on 30 years of unstinting service when he leaves his position as team administrative manager to close the pages of an extraordinary Gloucester career.

No longer will the great bear of a man prowl the Kingsholm corridors of power. The knarled features of the former England lock, so synonymous with the ground, will no longer be an everyday feature in and around the club, but he will not be leaving completely.

"We all have the same feeling about it – rugby is the best game in the world and I will be very, very sad to leave. But it has come at the right time," Fidler said.

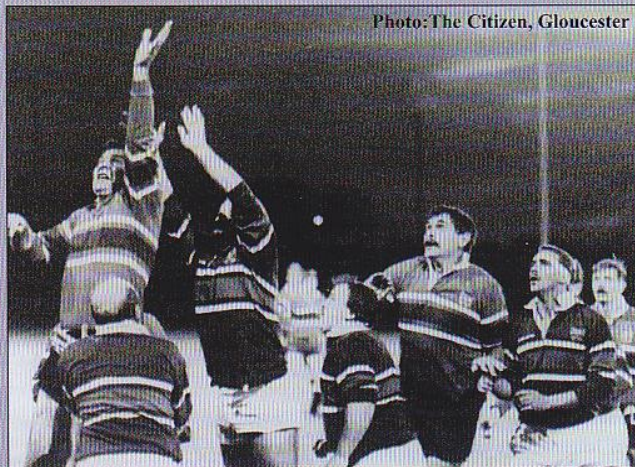
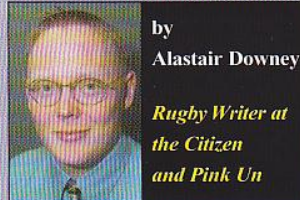


Photo: The Citizen, Gloucester



by
Alastair Downey

*Rugby Writer at
the Citizen
and Pink Un*

"It's entirely my own decision and I have thought very sensibly about it." It is easy to see why rugby was Fidler's life.

He is a man steeped in the game and its traditions, but with the schedule professional rugby demands, it was impossible for him to run his soaring building company, JHF Construction, and to work the punishing hours demanded by a team who are currently third in the Premiership.

"This week I was up at five in the morning to go to London on business for the rugby club and I didn't get back until nine o'clock," he said. "Then I have to get up the next day and do a day's work." I am the sort of person that when I decide to do

something, I want to give it 100 per cent." Fidler spent 13 seasons at Kingsholm as a player between 1972 and 1985, during which time he won his four England caps. Many judges believe he was unlucky not to win more international recognition.

Fidler will not be torn from the club completely. On match days, he will tour the hospitality boxes and he will always be on the end of the phone, just in case coaches Philippe Saint-André or John Brain need to tap into his vastly complete rugby brain.

"I am still going to be helping out with hospitality on match days, but I won't have people asking me endless questions and I can go and enjoy the match. But I have thoroughly enjoyed the rough with the smooth."

"I want to watch a game from the Shed for a change – I have not done that for a while!" And he asks with a laugh: "I wonder if I could have a deck chair in the Shed with a nice bottle of red wine? That would do me just fine!"

Fidler has managed to adapt as rugby has evolved since he was plunged into the action at Kingsholm. He made his senior club debut against Broughton Park on September 2 at Kingsholm and went on to make more than 400 first team appearances.

Remarkably, he played in nine County Championship finals, and when you add in his four national caps – against Argentina in 1981 and South Africa in 1984 – you get the almost complete players' dossier.

Continued on Page 32

John Fidler

The End Of An Era

Continued from Page 31

"I have seen the transition from amateurism to professionalism and it was very difficult – but it is settling down slowly," he said.

"It's a great game we are involved in and it has not changed that much – it's just off the field that we have to get together. The league system of the Allied Dunbar Premiership is good, competitive and enjoyable and we must make sure that we have games at Kingsholm every other week – we are all working hard towards that," he said.

Immediately, he has hit the nail on the head. Supporters demand that they can watch their team on a regular basis. And Fidler knows that mechanism should be in place.

That is not to say that Fidler has not had his hard times during his

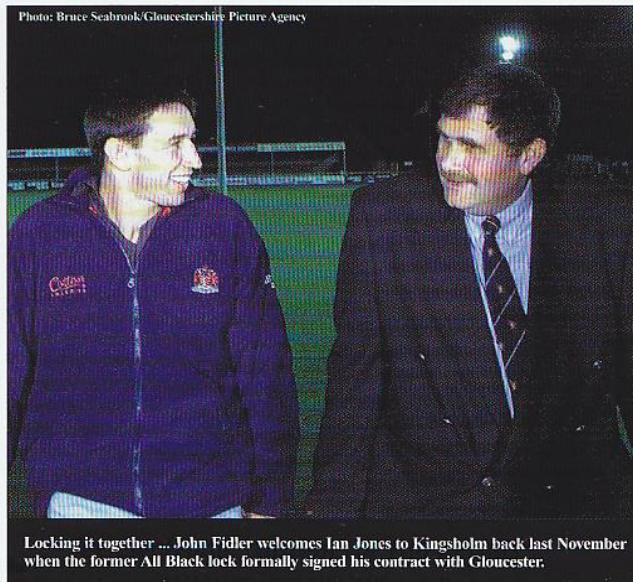
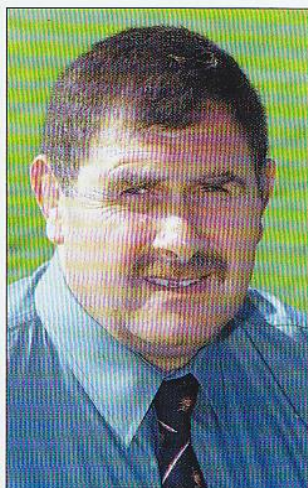


Photo: Bruce Scabrook/Gloucestershire Picture Agency

Locking it together ... John Fidler welcomes Ian Jones to Kingsholm back last November when the former All Black lock formally signed his contract with Gloucester.

managerial roles, but, just like when he was playing, he refused to let them get the better of him.

"I was there when we went two years without winning an away game. Last year at West Hartlepool was the lowest point in my life ever. We all have our bad days but we all want to make Gloucester a success," he said.

He was also the target of supporters' vitriol last season because he was seen as the accessible public face of the club. Even so, he freely admits he has enjoyed his Gloucester career.

"I have enjoyed 98 per cent of it without question," he said. And one highlight stands out like a beacon. "Securing the services of Ian Jones is one of the highlights.

When John Hall and I met him in that Auckland hotel, I was a little apprehensive when you consider what he has achieved. But I knew he was the man for Gloucester," Fidler added.

He is now looking forward to watching his son Rob ply his Gloucester trade and is relishing the futures under Saint-André.

"They are a great bunch of guys at the club and we are getting Gloucester up where they should be – challenging for honours.

"We shall be in Europe next season and I am looking forward to who they are playing already."

"I just can't wait to book the air tickets," he said.



Today's Officials

Referee:

Chris Rees (RFU)

Touch Judges:

Roy Maybank (RFU)

Mike Ramsden (RFU)



ANN TIVEY

A belated happy seventh birthday April 6 to Ann Tivey who has been watching Gloucester at Kingsholm with her day for the past three seasons. Ann, who lives in Fulbrook across the border in Oxfordshire with her two and a half years-old brother Andrew and her parents Bob and Jacqui, attends Burford Primary School.

She is becoming a discerning Gloucester supporter - Ann says her favourite game was seeing Gloucester beat Bath in the Cup in January ... and the worst was losing last season in the semi final against Wasps. Among her favourite pastimes are swimming, gymnastics, ballet and reading. Oh, yes, and playing rugby - she plays for the under seven's at Witney RFC.

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Saturday April 8, 2000

Today's Line-Ups

Gloucester 16

- 15 Chris Catling
- 14 Brian Johnson
- 13 Terry Fanolua
- 12 Chris Yates
- 11 Rob Jewell
- 10 Simon Mannix
- 9 Elton Moncrieff
- 1 Trevor Woodman
- 2 Neil McCarthy
- 3 Phil Vickery
- 4 Rob Fidler
- 5 Ian Jones
- 6 Steve Ojomoh
- 7 Kingsley Jones(C)
- 8 Ed Pearce

Bath Rugby 36

- 15 Matt Perry
- 14 Iain Balshaw
- 13 Kevin Maggs
- 12 Mike Tindall
- 11 Adedayo Adebayo
- 10 Mike Catt
- 9 Jon Preston
- 1 Victor Ubogu
- 2 Mark Regan
- 3 John Mallett
- 4 Martin Haag
- 5 Steve Borthwick
- 6 Angus Gardiner
- 7 Ben Clarke(C)
- 8 Dan Lyle

Replacements

- 16 Chris Fortey
- 17 Andy Deacon
- 18 Adey Powles
- 19 Andrew Hazell
- 20 Ian Sanders
- 21 Byron Hayward
- 22 Joe Ewens

- 16 Gareth Cooper
- 17 Andy Long
- 18 Chris Horsman
- 19 Phil de Glanville
- 20 Shaun Berne
- 21 Gavin Thomas
- 22 Ben Sturnham