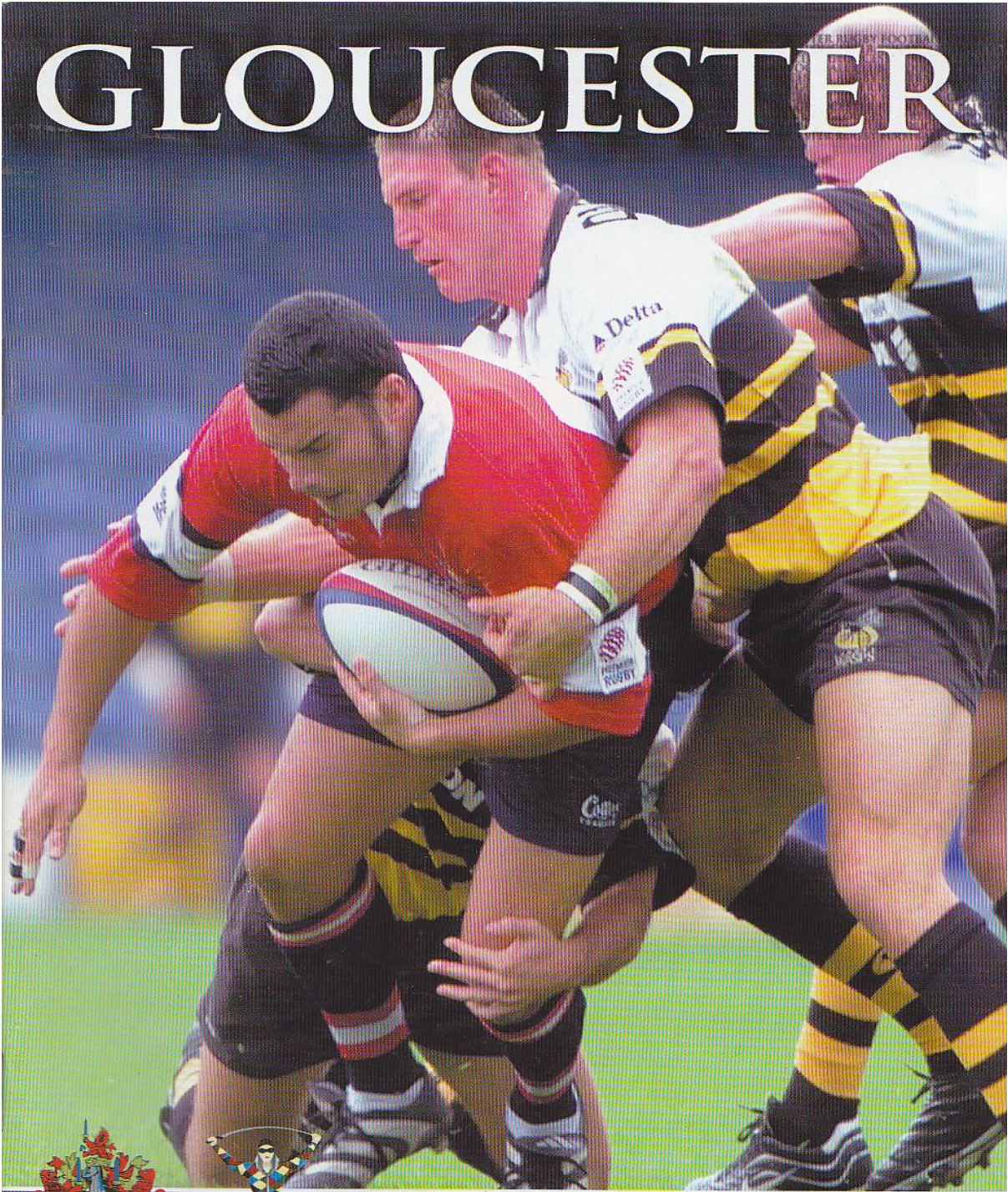


GLOUCESTER



GLOUCESTER V NEC HARLEQUINS

SATURDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2000 KICK-OFF 2.00PM

GLOUCESTER RFC OFFICIAL PROGRAMME

2000-2001 SEASON

ISSUE 03 - £2.00

UNIPART

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ZURICH

PREMIERSHIP



TODAY'S TEAMS

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 23TH, 2000

27 GLOUCESTER*

1	OLIVIER AZAM (I)
11	TOM BEIM
15	CHRIS CATLING
20	MARK CORNWELL
21	ADAM EUSTACE
14	JO EWENS
13	TERRY FANALOA (I)
4	ROB FIDLER(I)
2	CHRIS FORTEY
9	ANDY GOMARSALL (I)
22	ANDREW HAZELL
5	IAN JONES (I)
7	KINGSLEY JONES (I) (C)
10	SIMON MANNIX
6	STEVE OJOMOH (I)

NEC HARLEQUINS* 23

15	MARK MAPLETOFT
14	RYAN O'NEILL
13	WILL GREENWOOD
12	NICK BURROWS
11	BEN GOLLINGS
10	PAUL BURKE
9	PETER RICHARDS
1	JASON LEONARD
2	(C) KEITH WOOD
3	BRUCE STARR
4	GARRICK MORGAN
5	ADAM JONES
6	RORY JENKINS
7	DAVID WILSON
8	STEVE WHITE-COOPER

REPLACEMENTS

8	JUNIOR PARAMORE (I)	16	MATTHEW POWELL
3	ADEY POWLES	17	NICK GREENSTOCK
18	STEPHANE SANCHEZ	18	BRENDON DANIEL
16	IAN SANDERS	19	RAMIN MATHIESON
17	JAMES SIMPSON-DANIEL	20	TANI FUGA
19	PHIL VICKERY	21	LEE SOPER
12	CHRIS YATES	22	ANDY DAWLING

TODAY'S OFFICIALS

REFEREE: JOHN BARNARD
TOUCH JUDGES: D SAINSBURY & A REAY
FOURTH OFFICIAL: G BRIDGEMAN

Ball boys now sponsored by: **Marlborough Stirling**



KARL GAULDER AGE 4

Karl has just started school for the first time last week. He attends Beeches Green Primary, Quedgeley.

He attends the games as often as he can with his Dad.

His favourite player is Chris Fortey.



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PIA SPORT

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WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS HARLEQUINS

"LAST YEAR WAS A BIT OF AN OASIS IN WHAT WAS BECOMING A SERIOUS DROUGHT OF WINS FOR THE CHERRY AND WHITES IN THIS PARTICULAR FIXTURE."

TODAY WE WELCOME THE MIGHTY NEC HARLEQUINS TO OUR HUMBLE ABODE HERE AT KINGSHOLM.

Two clubs that, during their 'amateur' days and early professional era were as far removed from each other on the Rugby spectrum as can be, now find themselves sharing similar fates. A cursory glance at the two clubs former players reveals a leaning towards high flying London business men at the Middlesex club whilst here at GLI our players were locals who generally plied their trade using manual skills. A look now however, reveals eerie similarities.

Both clubs have recruited heavily in the past two seasons, securing the services of International legends as players who both have since taken high profile positions on the coaching staff. I am of course referring to the great all black captain Zin-Zan Brooke, and our very own Philippe Saint-Andre.

Both clubs during the summer sought to buy the very best international rugby had to offer buy each signing members of the world cup winning Australian team. Our own Jason Little who arrived on Tuesday and David Wilson (his brother-in-law indeed), the Wallaby flanker who has already made his debut for Quins.

Both clubs now have on their playing staff players who each topped the charts as top point

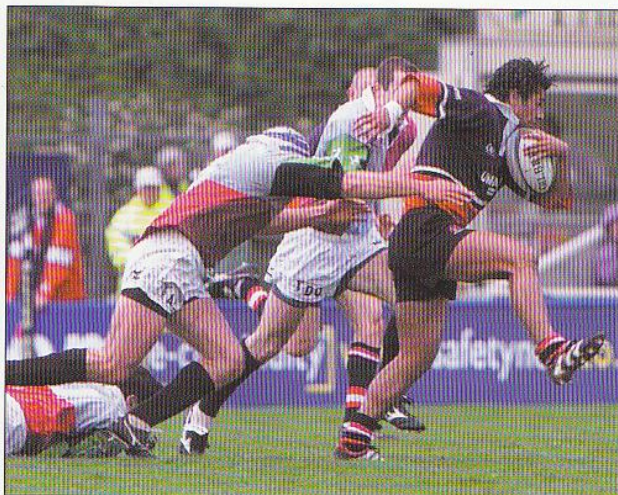
scorers for the Cherry and Whites. The present holder of the number ten jersey Simon Mannix, who is racking up the points and the player he deposed Mark Mapletoft who in his time also became the league top scorer. Tofty left Sarries this summer for Quins.

These comparisons are easy to find if a little tenuous. A look at the league table and a conversation with the coaching staff of either club also leads to another comparison. Both clubs have had a stuttering start to the season, and both are having problems in producing the quality rugby that, on paper at least both clubs should be playing consistently. Their league positions, (9th and 10th at the time of writing), believe the obvious quality and ambition both clubs possess and the coaches are at a loss to explain why. (Save a few injuries on our part)

There and I didn't even mention Richard Hill!

Last year was a bit of an oasis in what was becoming a serious drought of wins for the Cherry and Whites in this particular fixture. We hadn't beaten Quins home or away in a league fixture since November 5th 1994. Last campaign however we beat them home and away. By a point in a closely fought match at Kingsholm and more comfortably away at the stoop last spring. While we wish the Quins team and supporters the best for the season including Mr Hill and 'Tofty' let us hope the waters have not dried up again just yet.

BELOW: ACTION FROM THE LAST TIME THE TWO SIDES CLASHED.



PREVIOUS MEETINGS

25 MAR 2000	GLoucester VS NEC HARLEQUINS THE STOOP	38 - 24
15 OCT 1999	GLoucester VS NEC HARLEQUINS KINGSHOLM	24 - 23
13 FEB 1999	GLoucester VS NEC HARLEQUINS KINGSHOLM	20 - 31
20 OCT 1998	GLoucester VS NEC HARLEQUINS THE STOOP	7 - 39



COACH'S CORNER

WITH JOHN BRAIN

ABOVE:
GLOUCESTER'S
CHRIS YATES
BREAKS AWAY FROM
NEWCASTLE'S ROSS
NESDALE

THIS WEEK I'LL START WITH WEDNESDAY AND WORK BACK. WITH RESPECT TO IAN JONES' DECISION TO RESIGN THE CAPTAINCY, IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO PLAY, CAPTAIN AND TAKE ON A FRONT LINE COACHING ROLE.

"I'M SURE THAT EVERY ONE KNOWS IAN ONLY WANTS SUCCESS FOR GLOUCESTER RUGBY CLUB, HE'LL HAVE DONE A LOT OF SOUL SEARCHING."

To be able to stand up in front of your peers and say to them that you feel it is all too much will have earned him even more respect on top of the vast amount people have already for him. I'm sure that every one knows Ian only wants success for Gloucester Rugby Club, he'll have done a lot of soul searching and decided that his position wasn't best for the team its as simple as that. He feels he just wants to concentrate on playing. I know the playing staff will all be very supportive know as they will be with Kingsley this Saturday.

On Tuesday we were finally able to welcome Jason Little to the Club. I think his presence at the club will be a massive boost for ally the Tated with it. He is a world class player with a lot of experience. Playing in two world cup finals and until very recently the Tri-Nations competition.

We want to use this experience any way we can to help the squad. Rather than being forward with his ideas however Jason has a reputation for being able to blend in to any team, I think he'll want to get his head down work hard and concentrate on getting fit. The encouraging news from the medical staff is that this will be sooner rather than later.

The game against Wasps was a very low point of the season for the club. Defence was a big problem as well as our work rate off the ball. Last year we prided ourselves with our pressure defence and how we played without the ball forcing errors and capitalising on them. This season this same hunger has not been evident, particularly against Wasps and Sale. We have played reasonably well if only in patches against Rotherham and Newcastle; we gave a spirited performance against Bath, and should have won the game. Defence is the foundation on which you build your game we have seen it as a priority and worked hard on it all week. The players had to endure a video session this week, which was hard on some players. They have responded well and training has been good.

These next two games against Quins and Bristol are must win matches, to Finnish with four wins out of eight at this point of the season will mean our goal of European Qualification is still possible. If we loose it will be a different matter.

Focusing on today's game it is Richard Hills first game back at Kingsholm, I'm sure all the players, staff and supporters will want to extend their best wishes to him today. We must remember the current crop of players and indeed the coach would probably not be here if it were not for Richard. He put a lot of pride back into rugby at Gloucester and created a very good work ethic. On a personal note I very much enjoyed working with him and hope to have a beer after the game (as long as he pays). I wish him and his team much success this season just not starting today.

GLOUCESTER RUGBY CLUB ACADEMY

MATCH REPORT:
GRFC ACADEMY
VERSUS
SALE JETS
VENUE: HOME
DATE: 2ND
SEPTEMBER 2000

RESULT:
LOST 23-39

THE GLOUCESTER ACADEMY STARTED ITS U21 LEAGUE CAMPAIGN WITH A DISAPPOINTING RESULT AT KINGSHOLM LOSING TO SALE SHARKS 23 TO 39.

The match started well for the home team with Gloucester having the better of the opening exchanges keeping Sale under pressure both in the forwards and in the backs with centre Duncan Murray making a superb break only to find no support on either side. From the resulting ruck Gloucester were awarded their first penalty of the evening, which outside half Joe Goatley converted to give the home team a 3-nil lead.

Sale's reply was immediate, when a high tackle in mid-field allowed Sales No 10 Charles Hodgson to convert the penalty to bring the scores level. A penalty by Gloucester's Goatley and Sale's Hodgson brought the scores level again at 6-6 before young Academy winger Marcel Garvey became the first player at U21 level to be sin binned for foul play. Sale piled on the pressure and scored a converted try to lead 13-6. Garvey returned to the fray only to see Sale go further ahead with another converted try to lead 20-6 at the break.

Gloucester were disappointed to be down by this score, but a very good defensive display by the Sale team and Gloucester's misunderstanding in defence led to both tries and a deserved half time lead for the visitors. The second half started poorly for Gloucester with Sale converting a penalty within a minute of the restart to lead 23 - 6 and continued to

put themselves under pressure losing restart kicks and dropping the ball in maul situations to gift possession to the visitors.

Finally Gloucester woke up and in their best passage of play following a break by Garvey, scrum half Chris Walton took the play to the opponents try line and from the ensuing ruck Sale were penalised to allow Goatley to score his 3rd penalty of the match and bring the score to 9-23. Gloucester made several changes bringing on hooker Luke Thomson, brother Chad at 6, Ollie Lamb on the wing and Josh Frape into the centre bringing immediate results.

Gloucester through their forwards took the game to Sale driving lineout and mauls to keep Sale pinned in their own half and were rewarded with two converted tries scored by skipper Tom Miklausic and hooker Luke Thomson to a sole penalty by Sale. Now with the score at 23-29 Gloucester looked to be in the driving seat only to lose the ball in the tackle and see Sale break away for another converted try by the outstanding player of the night, outside half Charles Hodgson. A further converted try on the final whistle saw a disappointed Gloucester lose their first league game of the season with a final score of 23 - 39.

Gloucester had some good spells and had a very good scrummage, plus the lineout worked well, but they will need to work on restart kicks, retaining possession of the ball and their defensive strategy before their next league match away to Rotherham.

Report: John Haines, Academy Team Manager.

B B C RADIO GLOUCESTERSHIRE

104.7 FM & 1413 AM

FIRST FOR COVERAGE OF THE CHERRY & WHITES

GLOUCESTER RUGBY CLUB ACADEMY

THE ACADEMY HELD THE FIRST OF 3 PROPOSED CURTAIN RAISER'S TO 1ST XV MATCHES PRIOR TO CHRISTMAS AT KINGSHOLM AND IT PROVED A SUCCESS FOR THE SQUAD.

The Academy kicked off and immediately put pressure on the Worcester defence, being quick into the tackle and harassing their opponents into giving away a line out in an ideal attacking position for Gloucester. They drove the lineout several times towards the visitors line and eventually Nick Southern, one of this years new Academy signings from England Schools U18 group, broke through to score to give the Academy a 5 point to nil early lead.

Gloucester continued to put pressure on the visitor's line, winning recycled ball only to have the final pass go astray. This combined with good defensive work from Worcester, denied them further try scoring opportunities. It was from one of these passages of play that lock Tom Skelding created a little bit of history for himself and the Gloucester Club when he became the first player at this age group to be sin-bind for being over enthusiastic at the ruck!

Gloucester used this disadvantage to good use continuing to pressure the visitors line and were rewarded with a penalty from John-Paul Goatley before Tom Skelding rejoined the fray. The referees whistle a few minutes later ended an entertaining first half with Gloucester 8:0 ahead.

At the start of the second half, Gloucester replaced former England U16 group prop Rob Tipper with Nick Kibble after he had been injured at a ruck and a few minutes later the outstanding locally born scrum half Clive Stuart-Smith, who played at half back with James Simpson-Daniel at England U18 group, had to leave the field with a cut head which required 5 stitches. He was replaced by Ollie Sills from Cheltenham.

Gloucester kept up the pressure and had the best passage of play of the whole match, with a succession of well taken tries through Tom Skelding, James "Sinbad" Simpson Daniel, who collected his own kick ahead to score and again it

was "Sinbad" who made the break for Drybrook centre and former captain of Welsh schools, Duncan Murray to score under the posts. John-Paul Goatley converting two of these to put the Academy 27:nil ahead.

Gloucester made several changes now and as against Bath in the previous match, relaxed lost their concentration and were put under pressure by the visitors who sensed they were not performing. To their credit Worcester coached by former Gloucester players Tim Smith and Larry Cummings, now enjoyed their best period of the game and were rewarded with two well executed tries, both converted to bring the score to 27:14. The Academy spurred on by the "Shed" now filling up prior to the 1st team game, gave them great support and were rewarded by an excellent run from another of the Academy's England U18 schools player wing Marcel Garvey, followed by a try from his former team mate at St.Peters, wing Ollie lamb.

The Academy again had it's own piece of history when the referee blew for full time before the conversion attempt could be taken, deciding Gloucester had taken more than the allotted time of one minute allowed this season for kicks at goal!

This was a competent display by the newly formed Academy side, which will play matches at U19 and U21 level this season. Coach's Nick Marmont and Andrew Stanley will be pleased with the result knowing they have a talented squad and a goods basis to work from.

All the Academy player's agreed the best moment of the day for them, was the ovation given to them by the "Shed" as they ran around the Kingsholm pitch to warm down, this is some thing which remains in the mind and hearts of any player who has represented G.R.F.C.

Thank you "Shed" and all Gloucester fans!

Report: John Haines.
Academy Team Manager.

MATCH REPORT:
GRFC ACADEMY
VERSUS
WORCESTER U19'S
VENUE: HOME
DATE: 9TH
SEPTEMBER 2000

RESULT:
WON 32:14

ACADEMY PLAYER
NICK COX DURING
TRAINING



BY IAN RANDALL

I REMEMBER IT WELL SEPTEMBER THE 22ND 1995 - A FRIDAY. I HAD ONLY BEEN AT BBC RADIO GLOUCESTERSHIRE ON A FULL TIME BASIS SINCE THE PREVIOUS APRIL, WHEN GLOUCESTER WERE TREADING WATER FOLLOWING THE DEPARTURE OF BARRIE CORLESS.

**"I MUST SAY
HERE RICHARD
IS HEAD AND
SHOULDERS
ABOVE ANYONE
ELSE I'VE EVER
HAD TO DEAL
WITH"**

Then, club Chairman Allan Brinn announced that former Bath and England scrum half Richard Hill was to be the new Director of Coaching. Imagine it. One of the stalwarts of many a titanic struggle against Gloucester by the men from the Rec coming up the A46 to Kingsholm - but we needn't have worried. Hill may have played for Bath, but first and foremost he was a lover of rugby.

On a personal note I must say here Richard is head and shoulders above anyone else I've ever had to deal with on behalf of the station. He understood the role of the media, never shirked a question (even in defeat), and nothing was too

much trouble. I even remember him, before one big match, doing a mock TV interview for some media students after an evening training session - AND it was raining. Many would have refused.

My own memory tells me it didn't take supporters long to warm to Hill. He wasn't blue and black to the core despite his time at Bath, and he set about turning round a Gloucester team with some deep rooted problems with the sort of vigour that would characterise his spell at the helm. On more than one occasion I recall him referring to the players "busting a gut" both in training and match situations, but effort can only take you so far. Quality then takes over. I'm sure Gloucester have less contact sessions now under Philippe.

But back to "Richer Dill" as he was known in some publications. One wonders where Gloucester would be if his policy of recruiting young English players had been maintained - remember rugby was in that transitional phase.

FROM THE COMME



With all deference to the likes of Craig Emerson, Mike Lloyd, Mike Peters, and a few others of their era, extended training couldn't bridge the gap with the first influx of foreign stars - Sella, Lynagh, Stransky, and so on. But Hill's legacy remains. Catling, Fortey, Woodman, Vickery, even Ewens (a target even though he ultimately arrived after Hill left) have all been major players. Hill started what we see today.

Richard's return to Premiership coaching follows a spell out of the limelight after leaving Gloucester in February 1999 after a run of 7 defeats in 9 League matches. Despite this I probably wasn't the only one to be surprised - Gloucester (with the exception of Barrie Corless didn't do this sort of thing mid-season - let alone to someone only half way through a five year contract. The actual conversation between Hill and the club remains the stuff of legend. Telling a trialist he's not wanted at a training session at Oxstalls may be par for the course, but your Director of Rugby? I'd like to think

Gloucester would do things differently given another chance.

In the intervening year Hill has been working as a coaching consultant, mostly at Ebbw Vale but also in schools with projects run by Alistair Saverimutto, the Coventry centre who had a spell at Gloucester under Hill. Then Zinzan Brooke offered him the chance to work at The Stoop - and soon he and Mark Mapletoft were reunited after Tofty failed to uproot any trees at Saracens. The two obviously have mutual respect for each other - and Mark, if he plays, will be assured a warm welcome this afternoon.

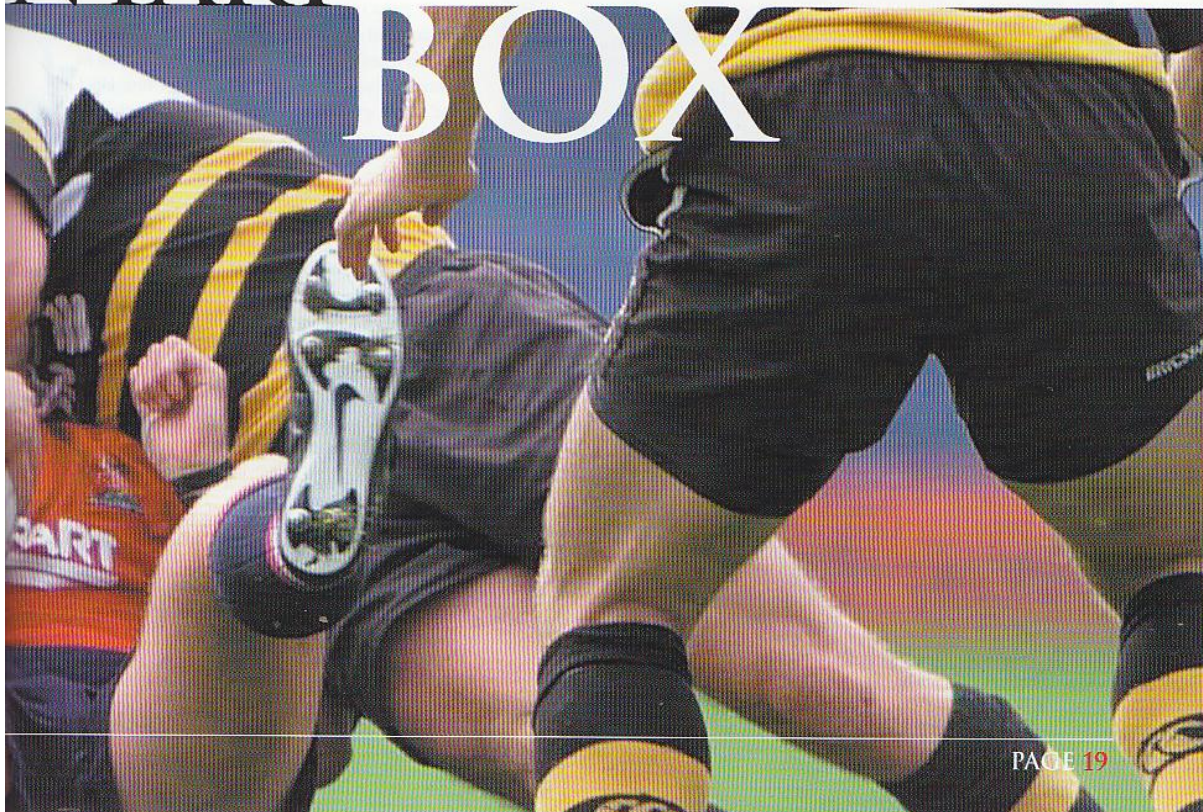
Form suggests today could be a close game, especially as matches involving Quins this season have been high scoring affairs. Gloucester desperately need a home win. Let's hope they get it.

C'mon Glaws !

B B C

NTARY

BOX



JASON LITTLE SIGNS FOR GLOUCESTER

THIS WEEK SAW THE BELATED ARRIVAL AT KINGSHOLM OF ONE OF WORLD RUGBY'S GREATEST CENTRES AUSTRALIAN JASON LITTLE.

Much has been written since the news was first leaked that he was considering joining Gloucester RFC, and the moment finally arrived on Tuesday when he was unveiled at a press conference held in the members bar.

Jason begins a two-year contract with a wealth of experience and a pedigree of utmost integrity. He remains one of the worlds finest backs, still in the Australian starting line-up 11 years after making his debut in 1989 against of all countries France. (Another country well represented at Gloucester this year)

Little's 75th and final test for the Wallabies was in their clash against the South African Springboks in Durban on August 26-the great three-quarter's 30th birthday. Jason has enjoyed a most distinguished international career. He is one of only a handful of players to have played in and indeed win two world cup finals (in 1991 and 1999). He also joined a select band of individuals to captain his country when he led Australia against the United States in last years World Cup.

Little played 105 matches for his native Queensland before moving to New South Wales in 1999. In 2000 he was appointed the NSW Waratahs captain.

A former Australian school boy and Australian Under 17 representative, Little, playing outside centre, made his Test debut against France in Strasbourg in what was to become the first of his many overseas campaigns with the Wallabies.

He established a slashing midfield partnership as a youngster with his good friend Tim Horan which carried on through the two players magnificent careers at international level. Without question, at their peak, the Little-Horan combination was the most celebrated pairing in world rugby.

It is therefore ironic that Little and Horan will finish their outstanding careers in England, Jason here at Gloucester and Tim with Saracens.

BELOW: JASON LITTLE IN HIS NEW TEAM COLOURS



"JASON BEGINS A TWO-YEAR CONTRACT WITH A WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE AND A PEDIGREE OF UTMOST INTEGRITY."



GLOUCESTER RUGBY CLUB

PHYSIO

EIGHTEEN MONTHS AGO, WE ALL KNEW THAT RICHARD HILL WOULD ONE-DAY RETURN TO KINGSHOLM WITH A RIVAL TEAM

No one would have bet against it. However, not even the Kiwis in the squad would have put money on him returning with a London club! A warm welcome to Richard, and to Quins.

"AS SUPPORT STAFF WE MUST ENSURE THAT PLAYERS HAVE EVERYTHING NECESSARY TO RECOVER AFTER MATCHES AND TRAINING."

The rugby calendar flashes by as the seasons arrive quicker and busier than ever. We have already had one week where we scarcely squeezed in – a coach trip south and a plane trip north between final whistle and kick-off. But our step up into the top flight of Northern Hemisphere rugby means we must deal with the demands placed on us as a team by the many high intensity games to come in 2000/2001. Success at this level will come only with passion hard work and attention to small detail. As support staff we must ensure that players have everything necessary to recover after matches and training, and to best prepare for the next fixture.

The rise in domestic rugby standards was illustrated by the national teams' performances in South Africa this summer. This has been possible because of the improvement in

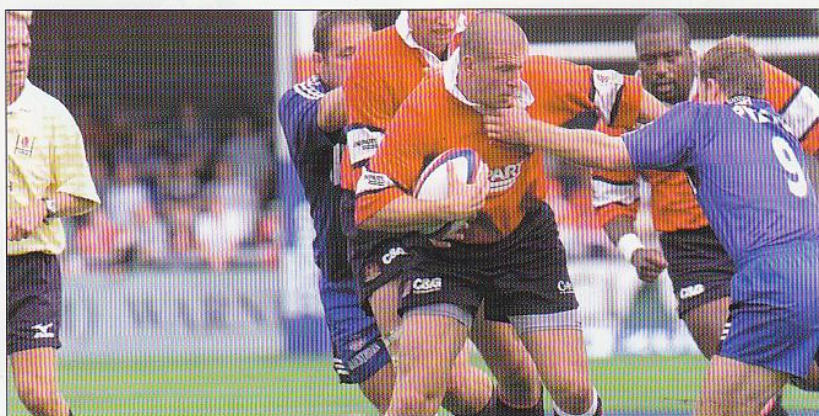
players' conditioning. Physically our present squad lines up in a different league to the squad of even two years ago. They are now faster, stronger and capable of working harder for longer periods. To develop our performance still further we constantly seek new information through regular contact with some of the best sports doctors in England and France, and through meetings with fitness advisers and physiotherapists from England, South Africa and New Zealand. We are now better equipped to scientifically monitor and develop players' physical preparation.

The need to focus on detail means that time between games is now measured in hours rather than days: hours of sleep, hours between meals, hours between training sessions and hours late a certain new parent in the squad runs for training! Food quantities are now talked about in terms of grams rather than platefuls and alcohol in units rather than kegs (except in Berry Hill)

The discipline and hard work paid off last season and with continued effort and improvement behind the scenes at Gloucester RFC we will develop still further into a regular at the top of European Rugby.

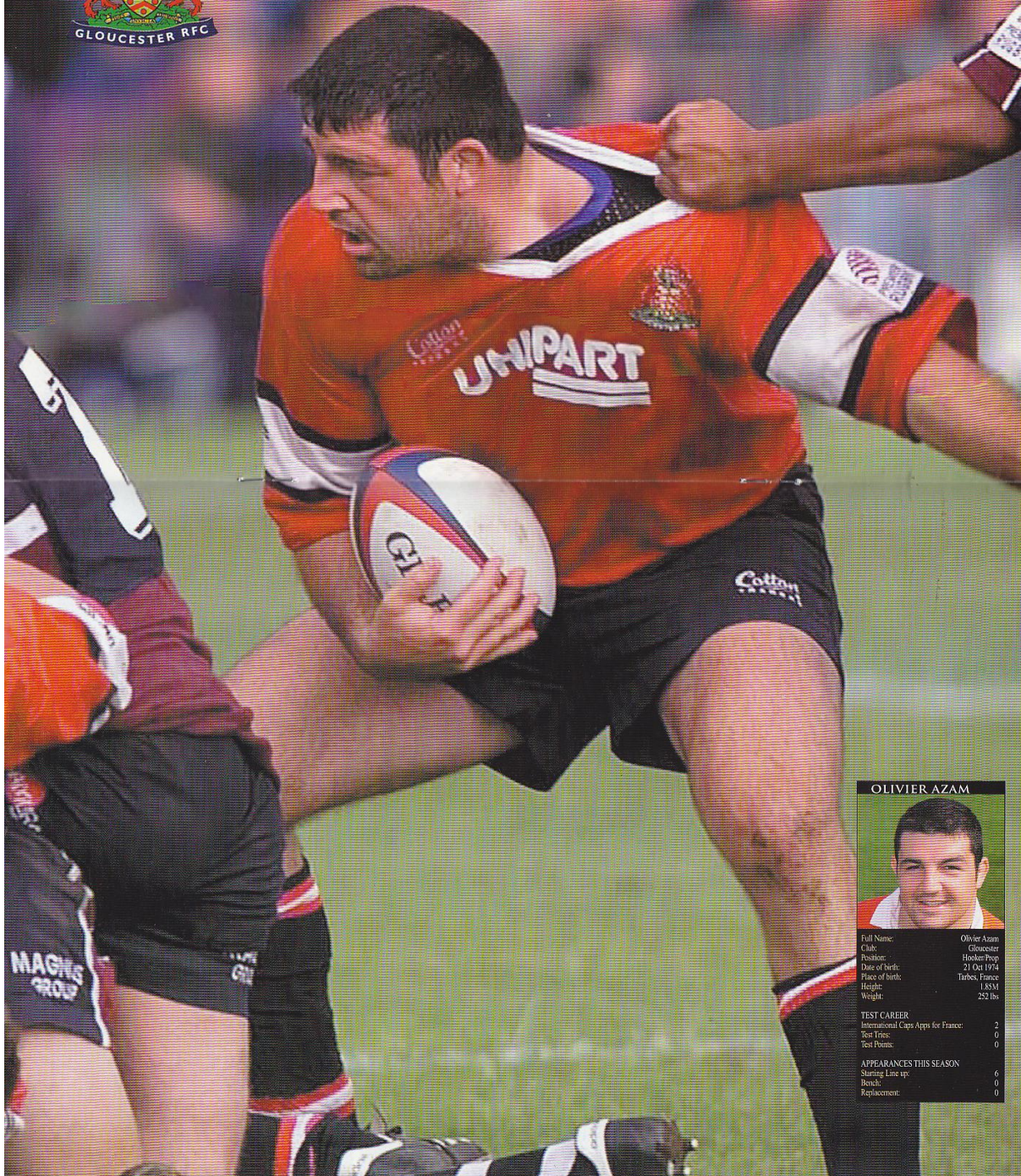
**BY ED ARCHER
(CONDITIONING COACH)**

RIGHT: CHRIS FORTEY IN ACTION AGAINST BATH



GLOUCESTER RUGBY CLUB

OLIVIER AZAM



OLIVIER AZAM



Full Name: Olivier Azam
Club: Gloucester
Position: Hooker/Prop
Date of birth: 21 Oct 1974
Place of birth: Tarbes, France
Height: 1.85M
Weight: 232 lbs

TEST CAREER
International Caps Apps for France: 2
Test Caps: 0
Test Points: 0

APPEARANCES THIS SEASON
Starting Line up: 6
Bench: 0
Replacement: 0

MATCH ACTION

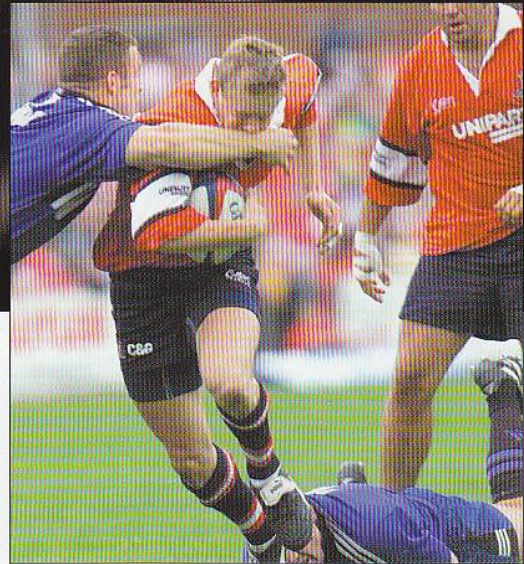
GLOUCESTER 21-22 BATH



TOP LEFT: Bath's Ian Balshaw leaps as Gloucester's Dave Lougheed passes while tackled by Bath's Mike Tindall.

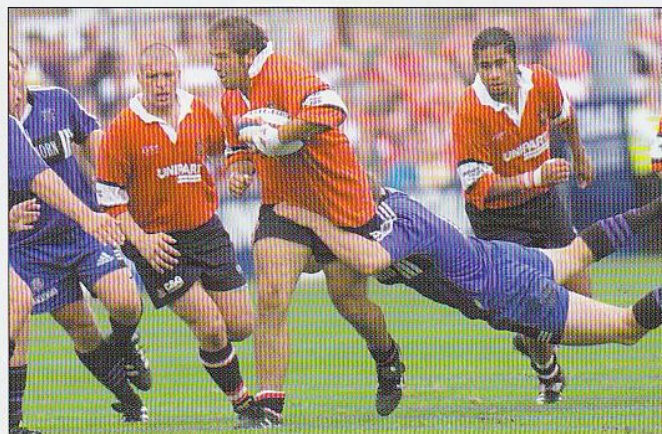


TOP RIGHT: Terry Fanolua is tackled by Angus Gardiner (on ground).

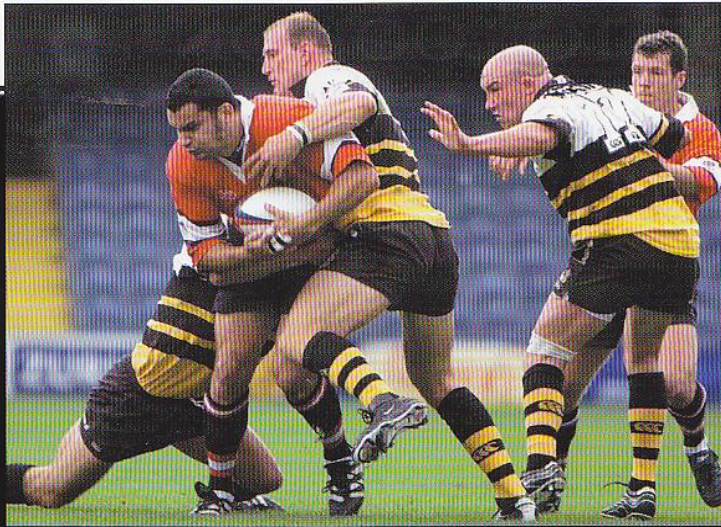


CENTRE: Chris Catling is blocked by Baths Kevin Maggs.

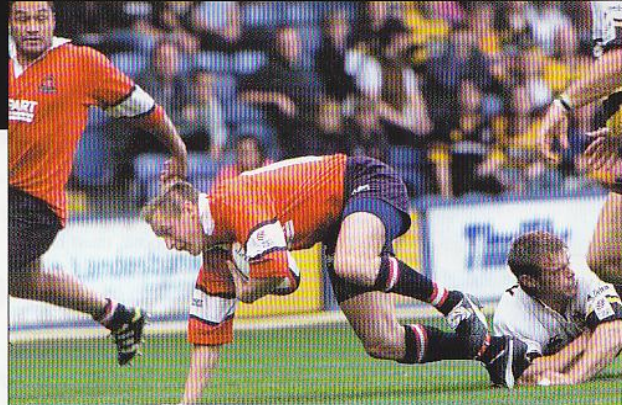
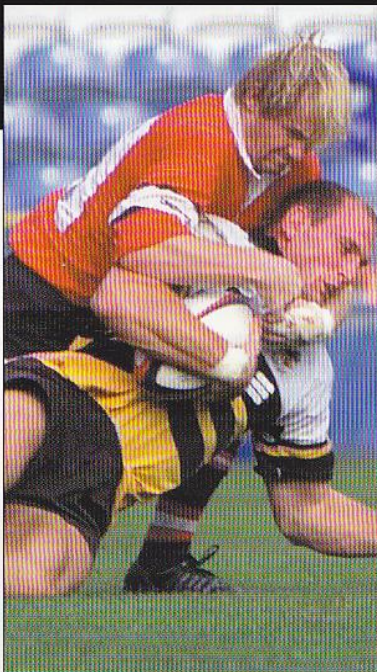
BOTTOM RIGHT: Gloucester's Serge Simon drags a Bath player behind him as he makes a break.



BOTTOM LEFT: Chris Yates out paces Bath's Mark Regan.



LONDON WASPS 43 - 23 GLOUCESTER



TOP: Chris Yates in action.
ABOVE: Simon Mannix tackles Dallaglio.
ABOVE RIGHT: Chris Catling breaks free.
BOTTOM RIGHT: Ian Jones wins a line out for Gloucester

YOU'VE GOT TO LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, HAVEN'T YOU ?

IT MIGHT SOUND A BIT LIKE SAYING "APART FROM THAT, MRS LINCOLN, HOW DID YOU ENJOY THE SHOW ?", BUT I THOUGHT THAT BYRON HAYWARD HAD A PRETTY IMPRESSIVE GAME AGAINST BATH.

"IT'S NEVER EASY FITTING IN AT A NEW CLUB ESPECIALLY ONE AS CLOSE-KNIT AS GLOUCESTER"

Even if he did miss his kicks. When we discovered. Later, that he'd played a fair part of the game with a severely injured shoulder, his performance became even more praiseworthy.

That got me thinking that there isn't much point sitting around and wringing our hands about the disappointments of the last couple of weeks. Far better to take a look at the pluses which have emerged this season. For pluses there have been, not least the chance for Byron Hayward to show us his quality at outside-half, provided by the injury to Simon Mannix. You will remember that he spent most of his time, last season, playing at full-back, although his Welsh Cap was awarded at No.10.

For me, another plus has been provided by Jake Boer. He was one of those players I had sort of heard of, and I suppose, must have seen on the odd occasion, but I must admit that he had left no impression on me.

When I learned that he was coming here, along with Robert Todd, I felt he

was decidedly the junior partner in the transaction. After all, we're not exactly short of quality back-row men, are we ? As things have transpired, I couldn't have been more wrong.

It's never easy fitting in at a new club, especially one as close-knit as Gloucester. Jake Boer however, seems to have taken to the Kingsholm scene like a shark to water, and his slightly mind-boggling work-rate, on both sides of the scrum has been a sight to behold. Competition for back row places is now intense, especially with young Andrew Hazell impressing some very good judges and being tipped for an England 'A' spot.

The third plus concerns the re-emergence of Andy Gomersall as a very real force in the England scrum-half reckoning. From his very early days, he looked like a very special player, but then, he seemed to lose his way at both Wasps and Bedford, and his career was blighted, more than most, by injury. Indeed, he seems to have been around so long that it's quite a surprise to learn that he's still only 26.

Now, he looks to me to be a very high-class performer indeed, and it will be very interesting to see him up against Augustine Pichot next week.

So - there are bright sides to look on, and why don't we do just that ?



BYRON HAYWARD ABOVE AND IN ACTION BELOW AGAINST SARACENS



YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!

THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE AROUND HERE WHO LIKE TO SPEND THE AFTERNOONS IN THEIR PREFERRED LOCAL BOOZER WHEN GLOUCESTER AREN'T PLAYING AT HOME.

It's quite an attractive proposition: sit there enjoying the odd bevvy or two with a group of like-minded mates, watching the Premiership Rugby on Sky up there on the pub's big screen.

The only problem is that it might all come crashing around our heads.

My spies in the trade tell me that Sky are to restructure their payment schedules for the gig pub systems at the end of next month. I don't pretend to be conversant with all the detail, but apparently it all has to do with their new deal with the Football authorities to screen Premiership soccer next season. I gather that landlords will be asked to pay a flat fee rather than taking advantage of the pay-per-view facility. Or something like that.

To give you an idea of the implications, one licensee of my acquaintance has been told that he will be asked to pay around £800 per month, rather than his current £187 for the same period!

Not surprisingly, his brewery isn't going to wear that, and has given him notice that he can say goodbye to his big-screen set-up when the new charges are introduced. His own suspicion is that the majority of other landlords around will be forced to make the same decision.

That would be a great shame, especially for people who, for one reason or another, can't get to follow their team around the country. And I'm not even thinking about the effect it will all have on soccer audiences, and therefore on the Saturday afternoon pub trade.

Governments have discovered lately that you can't go on extracting money out of people willy-nilly. Sooner or later, the sacrificial lamb bites back.

Perhaps Sky should take note.

"SOONER OR LATER, THE SACRIFICIAL LAMB BITES BACK"

INVITATION TO YOUNGSTERS

GLOUCESTER ALL BLUES ARE CELEBRATING THEIR 75TH ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR, AND CONGRATULATIONS TO THEM FOR THAT.

However, they take the view that milestones can be read from both directions, and such occasions aren't solely about looking back.

For years now, the Blues have had a policy of encouraging youth rugby, and have been running teams for young hopefuls of 12

years old and upwards. They would like to continue and enhance that policy, and have room for several more lads in that age group. They train on a Sunday morning, and would welcome any aspiring young player who would like to turn up.

Do you have a youngster who would like to have a go? If so, ring 'Mac' on

01452 501623.

You never know. Your lad could start off wearing blue, and in a few years time switch to cherry-and-white.

BELOW: TOM WALKINSHAW WITH SON SEAN



THE CAPTAIN

KINGSLEY JONES



IAN JONES'S RESIGNATION OF THE CAPTAINCY THIS WEEK HAS MEANT A RE INSTATEMENT (FOR THIS MATCH AT LEAST), OF LAST YEARS CAPTAIN KINGSLEY JONES.

On a personal note, this season has not started at all well for me. Last year as captain I continued playing despite picking up a couple of knocks. This year we started badly against Saracens I was absent on that occasion and perhaps rushed back a bit quick. I played against Sale and, it was felt that I should start against Rotherham. I was to lend my experience and vocal support to the team and Ian, even though I wasn't captain. **I played and my injuries are not healing totally.**

While we are on the subject of captaincy, I've played two games this year and although I wasn't captain, I was told by Philippe to be very vocal. Ian has backed me, and I have tried to be as supportive of him as I was able. Around the team I am seen as someone who is very vocal and I guess I must be saying something right. Ian for his part is a very experienced individual as much as anybody in the game. I think that at the time Gloucester would have been very naïve not to recognise this and try to utilise it. Because of all his knowledge and understanding of the game it wasn't such a bitter pill to swallow loosing the captaincy to him. The club had to use his capacity to pass things on to other players.

Ian has since felt it best for the club to change his position slightly, however, I don't think his presence on and off the field will change, but if I'm asked to take over the captaincy I'll do so with open arms. I didn't expect to lead Gloucester out quite so early. I had always hoped to at some point, maybe next season, but its here now, it won't affect my game I'm used to it and I'm sure Ian will back me.

The club has had a tough start results haven't gone our way loosing two home games by a point. We know how proud people are of our results at home. We've tried to build a fortress, and to loose at Kingsholm isn't acceptable. Against Bath we tried our best, we don't believe in being unlucky you make your own luck. We missed kicks but I don't want to blame anyone because we should have won with out them

We have now lost two home games this season as many as we lost all last year. Loosing to Sale was criminal we have to make it up somehow; we've made it tough because we can't loose another game at home as far as I'm concerned, we'll have to go unbeaten at Kingsholm. We lost away at Sarries and Wasps last year and lost at home to Bath and still finished third so its still possible; we just have to make sure we don't loose again.

"IAN HAS SINCE FELT IT BEST FOR THE CLUB TO CHANGE HIS POSITION SLIGHTLY."



LEFT: KINGSLEY JONES AFTER THE MATCH AGAINST SALE.