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# Gloucester

Gloucester RFC official matchday programme 2001-2002

**vs London Wasps**

Friday 23rd November 2001 kick-off 7.30pm

[issue] 8

[price] £2.00

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# Line-ups



## 43 Gloucester VS London Wasps 13

<input type="checkbox"/>	Robert Todd	15	Matthew Leek	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Daren O'Leary	14	Shane Roiser	<input type="checkbox"/>
i	Terry Fanolua	13	Fraser Waters	i
<input type="checkbox"/>	Henry Paul	12	Mark Denney	i
i	Diego Albanese	11	Kenny Logan	i
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ludovic Mercier	10	Alex King	i
i	Andy Gomarsall	9	Martyn Wood	i
i	Patrice Collazo	1	Craig Dowd	i
i	Olivier Azam	2	Phil Greening	i
i	Federico Pucciariello	3	Will Green	i
i	Rob Fidler	4	Simon Shaw	i
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ed Pearce	5	Ian Jones	i
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adam Eustace	6	Rory Jenkins	i
i	Andy Hazell	7	Paul Volley	i
c	Jake Boer	8	Mark Lock	<input type="checkbox"/>

### [replacements]

<input type="checkbox"/>	T.B.A	16	Alex Page	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	T.B.A	17	T.B.A	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	T.B.A	18	Stuart Abbott	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	T.B.A	19	Colin Allan	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	T.B.A	20	Joe Beardshaw	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	T.B.A	21	Ali McKenzie	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	T.B.A	22	Trevor Leota	i

[teams correct at 21/11/01]

i [denotes international]  
c [denotes captain]

[today's officials]

[referee]  
[touch judges]

# Coach's Corner

[Philippe Saint-André]

**"We must respect Wasps and not forget that they beat us home and away, three times last season..."**



**The result at Newcastle was such a big shame for us. We were playing the team in second place and if we had won, we would now be second and challenging for the league.**

We lost the game in the end by only two points but we were in control for long periods of the match.

We missed three or four very important kicks, we had two tries disallowed and Joe Ewens was very unlucky to knock-on over the line. If we add these points up we would have scored twenty-seven more points and we would again not be talking about a loss but a very good win.

The away matches and those at home are absolutely different. Away games are far more difficult but we must learn from the mistakes we have made away from home this year.

At Saracens, we were asleep for the first half. At London Irish we had very bad discipline and at Newcastle we were 13-6 up and had the opportunity to kill the game off but we didn't do this. We will get fewer chances to score, away from home and we must learn to be more clinical and take our chances.

There are many good things that came out of this weekend and we must

remain positive. This team is still relatively new and is learning all the time. This weekend our discipline was good and our defence was strong but we missed chances to score.

Our results away from home show the importance of the bonus points system. We won against Sale and scored four tries, which gave us five points. We also picked up three points by losing by less than seven away at Saracens, London Irish and Newcastle. If we add all these points up, it is the same as winning two games, away from home.

Tonight's game has become even more important. We must respect Wasps and not forget that they beat us three times last season including home and away, and that they also had a very good result against Leeds last weekend. We have our own targets this year though. We have lost one game at home, against Leicester and I hope this is the last one.

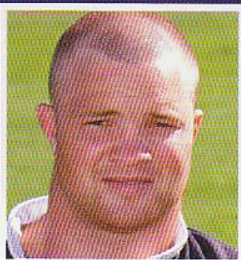
I would like to welcome Nigel Melville tonight. He has done a wonderful job with Wasps

in his time there. He has not become a bad Director of Rugby in one year. People have such small memories and I understand the pressure he is under. He is a great Director of Rugby and I have great respect for him.

In tonight's game we will also welcome Ian Jones back to Kingsholm for the first time. He was a great player and did much for Gloucester Rugby Club in his time here.

Tonight though, there will be no room for sentiment. Every league game is very hard. We lost against the second placed team on Sunday, now we are fifth, but only six points behind Newcastle. There are still many positive things for us at Gloucester and we must start winning points again tonight.





## Match

# Captain

[Jake Boer]

D.O.B: 01/11/75

Position: Flanker

Height: 1.87m

Weight: 103.4kg

Former Club: London Irish

### There were many factors that lead to our defeat at the hands of Newcastle last weekend.

I wouldn't say we had the Falcons on the rack in the first half but we definitely exerted a lot of pressure and created a lot of scoring opportunities. Unfortunately, we had tries disallowed and we missed a few kicks.

Going in to the second half I was very positive about the way the game was going. Then various things seemed to go wrong. We made some bad decisions, and as captain, possibly I made a bad decision. That happens in games but I don't believe the decision I made swung the game.

In the last fifteen minutes they put the pressure back on to us and we gave away kickable penalties. For this we were punished once again and we can't let that happen.

With the contrasting fortunes that we are suffering at home and away, I have been asked many times what I think the causes are. It is a very difficult question to answer. I can only talk about my personal preparation for the game and it is exactly the same whether I am home or away. I would like to think that everyone else in the squad prepares exactly the same as well. Putting a finger on why we miss kicks away from home, or we don't score our tries is something can't answer.

If you look at the games we have lost away from home it's disappointing. We have lost three games by less than five points. We are there but not able to take the next step and win the game. That is the unknown quality we lack away from home.

Personally though, I don't think we should be looking for reasons as to why we lose away from home. With the quality we have in this squad I don't feel we should be losing away from home at all and certainly not looking for excuses.

Tonight, our focus must turn solely to Wasps. From a personal point of view they are a team that, since I have been

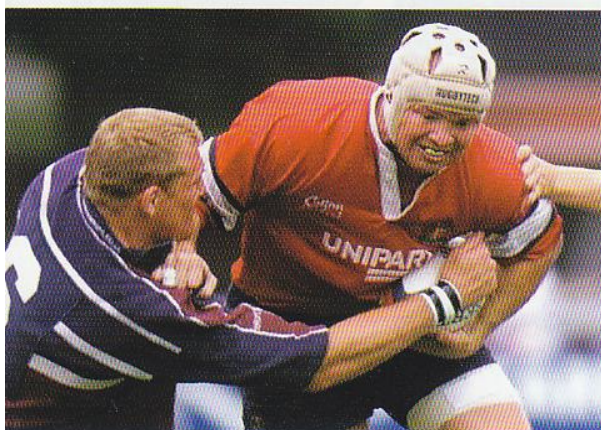
in this country, I have not done so well against. There are teams you always want to perform against and Wasps are certainly one of them and I think we owe them a performance after last season.

We must respect them; they had a poor start to the season, but will no doubt come here fired up looking to repeat their performance last week.

We would never take this game lightly but three weeks ago this is a game we might have had much shorter odds on. Wasps though have turned in some good performances in the last few weeks and we come to tonight's match after a poor performance. I would hate to be a bookie tonight.

One thing that will change at home for this game is the conditions. It will be cold and visibility will not be so good. Once the game starts though, your body warms up and there is something very special about playing under floodlights. It's hard to explain but there is an aura created within the ground, like at a game of night cricket. I think there will be a very special atmosphere here tonight and I hope that after a hard week at work, people will be able to come down tonight, relax and enjoy a great game.

**"Wasps though have turned in some good performances in the last few weeks and we come to tonight's match after a poor performance. I would hate to be a bookie tonight."**



# Gloucester Academy News

## result

**Gloucester U19's**  
**26**  
**Leicester U19's**  
**07**

When the two clubs met earlier in the season, Gloucester scored a late try to draw the match 20:20. This game was to be a totally different story as the Gloucester's forwards, who last week were dominated by Maidenhead, took control of the Tigers pack and with it the match.

After only five minutes of play, centre, John-Paul Goatley charged down a clearance kick to collect the ball himself and race over for a try. It was converted by debutante fly half, Dai Evans from Hartpury College and gave Gloucester an early seven- point lead.

Gloucester continued to wear down their opposition with some marvellous forward play combined with strong running from the backs. But they were unable to convert this superiority into points as a final pass or wrong decision at the vital moment let them down.

This profligacy meant Gloucester turned around at half time with

**After last weeks surprise exit from the National KO Cup, Gloucester U19's were determined to make amends and show the Academy coaches their true ability and they did so in style!**

what looked like a slender seven-point lead to show for all their possession and territorial advantage.

The second half was a different affair as Gloucester stretched their lead from the kick off. Winning a line out deep in the Tiger's twenty-two, they span the ball wide and a simple move in the three-quarters saw winger, Andy MacRae take a good line to split the Tigers defence and score wide out. Dai Evans converted to increase the lead to 14:nil as Gloucester were beginning to take a stranglehold in the game.

Almost immediately Gloucester scored again through Andy MacRae. Good work by lock, Alex West created good ruck ball close to the Tigers line. Again the ball was released wide for MacRae to round his opposite number and score another converted try giving Gloucester a 21:0 lead.

The Academy team were now well in command and Andy MacRae was denied a deserved hat-trick try when the referee called him back for a dubious crossing decision. Pressure on the ensuing scrum saw prop, Dan Hodge sin binned and Tigers eased the pressure momentarily with a kick to touch.

Gloucester though would not let up and another good run by MacRae saw replacement winger, Joe Pointon, cross the line unopposed for the home sides fourth try of the match. It went unconverted but still gave Gloucester a deserved 26:nil lead.

Gloucester kept the pressure on the visitors but were denied a further score and disappointingly they let Leicester score a consolation try right on the final whistle. It made the final score line look somewhat better for the Tigers at 26:7.

This was an outstanding display following last week's dismal performance at Maidenhead and the whole squad and coaches can take credit for the vastly improved performance. The team showed they have the ability to dog it out and the character to play for Gloucester when the chips are down.

## U21 LEAGUE TABLE 2001-2002

LAST UPDATED 19/11/2001

TEAM	P	W	L	D	F	A	TRY F	TRY A	T BON	L BON	PTS
BRISTOL	8	8	0	0	245	137	33	16	4	0	36
LEICESTER	8	6	2	0	191	107	27	13	3	1	28
SARACENS	8	5	3	0	267	196	34	27	5	0	25
LONDON WASPS	7	5	2	0	224	141	32	18	4	1	25
SALE	8	4	4	0	174	170	21	18	2	1	19
<b>GLoucester</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>
LONDON IRISH	8	3	5	0	163	189	20	25	3	1	16
HARLEQUINS	7	3	4	0	152	170	18	26	1	2	15
BATH	7	2	5	0	144	181	20	22	2	2	12
NORTHAMPTON	7	2	5	0	163	202	20	25	3	0	11
NEWCASTLE	5	2	3	0	84	108	10	13	1	0	9
LEEDS	6	0	6	0	54	300	6	43	0	0	0

## GLoucester ACADEMY FIXTURES 2001/2002

DATE	VENUE	ACADEMY U21'S/U19'S	U21 RESULT	U19 RESULT	DATE	VENUE	ACADEMY U21'S/U19'S	U21 RESULT	U19 RESULT
1/9/01	Away	Northampton	L 43-24	-	5/1/02	HOME	LONDON IRISH U19		
8/9/01	HOME	SARACENS	W 64-31	-	12/1/02	HOME	NEWPORT U19		
15/9/01	Away	Leicester	L 19-15	-	19/1/02	Away	Bath U19		
26/9/01	HOME	SALE 7.00PM WEDS	W 41-10	-	26/1/02	HOME	BRISTOL		
6/10/01	Away	Bristol U19	-	L 17-23	2/2/02	Away	Wasps U19		
13/10/01	Away	Harlequins 2.30 KO	L 15-16		9/2/02	Away	London Irish		
20/10/01	HOME	LONDON IRISH	W 27-26		16/2/02	HOME	SARACENS U19		
28/10/01	Away	Bristol (Sun) / Wasps U19's	-	Canceled	23/2/02	HOME	HARLEQUINS 2.30 KO		
4/11/01	Away	London Irish U19 (Sun)			2/3/02	Away	Bristol U19		
10/11/01	Away	Divisional training			6/3/02	Away	Sale 7.00pm Weds		
17/11/01	HOME	LEICESTER U19			9/3/02	HOME	SWANSEA U19		
24/11/01	Away	Wasps			16/3/02	HOME	LEICESTER		
1/12/01	Away	Leeds			23/3/02	Away	Harlequins U19's 2.30 KO		
8/12/01	HOME	BATH			30/3/02	Away	Saracens		
15/12/01	TBA	Northampton U19			6/4/02	HOME	NEWCASTLE		
22/12/01	HOME	WASPS			13/4/02	HOME	NORTHAMPTON		
29/12/01	-				20/4/02	HOME	LEEDS		
					27/4/02	Away	Bath		

**Ticket and Information Hotline - Tel: 0871 871 8781**

[academy]

17

**I never underestimate the privileged position I hold by presenting the Saturday mid-morning programme on BBC Radio Gloucestershire.**

**"None of us though, could have forecast a victory by such a wide margin, even if Ludovic seemed to leave his favourite kicking boots in his training kit."**

I get to talk to all sorts of local people with stories to tell about a million different topics - both out and about at events around the county, and from the comfort of the studio - but I must admit that Saturday November the 9th was a bit like a busman's holiday.

I often finish my programme at midday and amble to Kingsholm for a game in the afternoon, but to tidy up and make the 12.30 kick off against Bristol looked unlikely. "We could base your programme there in the morning", suggested my producer, Trish Campbell. "How about finding out what goes on

at Kingsholm before kick off on a match day?" That's what you call a win-win situation.

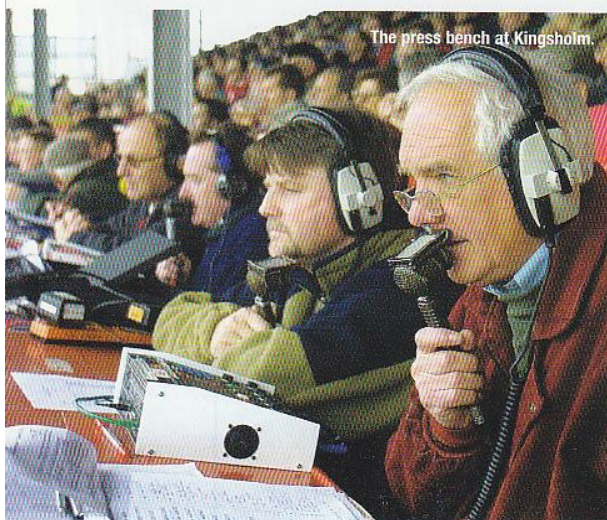
I was a little surprised to find the ground a hive of activity when I arrived at around 8.15. Ted Ball, normally to be found at the players entrance gate, was already in position, and messrs Balmer and Balmer - groundsmen of the hallowed turf - had already been hard at it for over an hour. With sub zero temperatures forecast on the Friday night, Dave and Gareth had covered the pitch, which proved a wise move based on the thermometer on the side of the home dug out. Dave told me he wouldn't have been concerned with a 3pm kick off, but needed the heavy black sheets as an insurance policy against the earlier start. Even by the time my programme began at 9 o'clock, the dressing rooms were cleaned, the shirts were up in the boiler room to air and warm, and the caterers were busy laying tables. Kick off was still more than three hours away.

Safety is high on the agenda at a big sporting venue like Kingsholm, and if there are any problems it's Ken Nottage, as Managing Director, who has to

face the music. Recent changes to ensure major incidents are avoided include special viewing positions for children behind the advertising boards, more stewards to stop gangways being blocked, and more limited access for photographers, caused by a player at one top game crashing into a lens pitchside. Ouch....

Talking of photographers, official cameraman Bruce Seabrook was another of the early arrivals, keen to check the conditions from all his normal vantage points for the match. Not all Bruce's shots are taken during the game. There are background shots, offbeat shots, casual shots - the list is almost endless. Under the category "confrontation" comes Gareth Archer's punch thrown at Trevor Woodman - I must remember to ask him if he caught it on film.

Peak time at the top end of Kingsholm - if you'll pardon the pun - is as kick off approaches. No matchday would run smoothly without the club's oracle, Geraldine Peake. Geraldine's the longest serving member of the administrative staff, and that experience brings the



The press bench at Kingsholm.



Kingsholm

personal touch to running the "front of house" area in the club office. Next door is the shop, and John Hudson, who's in charge on a Saturday, is just as much a mind of information. John's grandfather (Arthur) and father (Gordon) both played for Gloucester and England, and it was Arthur who raced to the ground when the grandstand caught fire in 1936 when a circus was being held in the car park. The replacement stand - the one in use today - was rebuilt in just nine weeks. John's delighted to be the third generation of Hudsons to serve the club, and never mind the replica shirts and computer mousemats, the shop is an aladdin's cave of Cherry and

White goodies to satisfy any Gloucester supporter. James Simpson-Daniel, Fred Holford (Andy Deacon's father in law), catering contractor Rob Mewes and Tom Walkinshaw also spared me a few minutes during a fascinating three hours, during which I learned a huge amount about the preparations for a match at Kingsholm. None of us though, could have forecast a victory by such a wide margin, even if Ludovic seemed to leave his favourite kicking boots in his training kit.

Today, we welcome struggling Wasps, whose sting seemed to have been drawn by other teams so far this season. Back in February, Philippe offered to

stand down after the home defeat here against the same opposition. He said he was "sick for the supporters" by the performance.

Suffice to say, a similar result outcome today wouldn't be too popular.

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**"Today, we welcome struggling Wasps, whose sting seemed to have been drawn by other teams so far this season."**

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#### C'mon Glaws !



Will Green, Phil Greening and Darren Molloy share a joke with the Gloucester pack

# Head2Head

Today's head to head, once again focuses on former teammates. Together Rob Fidler and Ian Jones made up Gloucester's formidable second row for two seasons.



Gloucester  
Rugby Football Club



Everyone involved with Gloucester has said how much they learnt from Ian during his time here and Fidler is no exception. To talk of them as mentor and protégé does not do either player justice but today will give Fidler the perfect opportunity to show everyone just how much he has learnt from the All Black Legend as the lineout will undoubtedly be a fiercely contested aspect of tonight's game.

Jones will no-doubt have a few more tricks up his sleeve and their confrontation will be absorbing.

## Rob Fidler

### Strengths

"From the way I look at it, I have a strong line out game but, more than that my strength is in the general work around the park" says Fidler, he adds "it's nothing outstanding, but consistent. It's not glamorous but it's a job someone has to do it and I would say my strong point was getting on with the graft that has to be done".

### Weaknesses

For a player who seems to have been a fixture in the Gloucester pack forever, it is hard to believe there are many faults in Fidler's game. "There are obviously some parts of the game I am not so good at", admits Fidler "The way I look at it though is that I am always trying to improve every aspect of it. There are some things I am good at but I try to improve all round all the time".

## Fidlerstats

Nick Name **Fids**  
Position **Lock**  
Born **21/09/74**  
Height **1.96m**  
Weight **112.5kg**  
Int Hons **England**



### Fidler on Jones

"Ian's reputation as a player goes before him. You don't play that many games for an All Black team that at the time was the best in the world without being a great player. When he joined Gloucester he brought a lot of the 'losing is not an option', All Black mentality with him. Obviously, playing with him, helped my game, and you have to respect the large knowledge he has of the game". "Playing against him is a great challenge. He is very strong in the line out so to compete and win lineout ball against him will be hard. But he is also a very awkward player to play against. He makes it very difficult for you to win any clean ball in the line-out or rucks. He seems to be everywhere getting in your way"

### High Point

"Obviously my first cap for England against New Zealand was a high point and funnily enough that was against Ian as well", says Fids. "I suppose for Gloucester, reaching the Heineken Cup Semi-final was a high point and a disappointment that we didn't progress". Fidler then shows true form and admits, "Every time I pull on a Gloucester shirt is a high point for me".

### Low Point

"Every fitness session is a low point for me", says Fidler with a wry smile. "Any time you are not in the squad is a low point", he says, and then adds "We lost a lot of games in the last few minutes last season and that is disappointing. You work really hard for seventy-five minutes and then watch the game slip away in the dying moments. Any game that is lost in the dying minutes when we could have won is a low point".

### Ambitions

On an international level if you can progress to get a full cap that's got to be the highest you can get. It's something you strive for as a kid playing junior rugby. Just being involved with the England set up is great. I want to get there and stay there. My aim is to play at that level and stay at that level."

# Robert Todd

[player focus]



**In the last player focus (Bristol programme), the spotlight turned on to Ed Pearce and talked about him as the forgotten man of last season.**

Today the attention is turned to another player who endured a terrible season last year, for completely different reasons.

If Ed Pearce was the forgotten man, then Robert Todd was somewhat an unknown soldier. We all new he was here but never really saw him.

He joined the club at the beginning of last season after some thunderous performances for London Irish. Once in Cherry and White colours however, he endured a soul-destroying nine months of injury hell. When asked to list all the injuries he suffered he says with a wry smile, "Only the one mate, just my foot".

The injury he sustained was in a pre-season friendly against Munster. Time is always a great healer, but this injury was beginning to take over his life. "It was a pretty low moment.

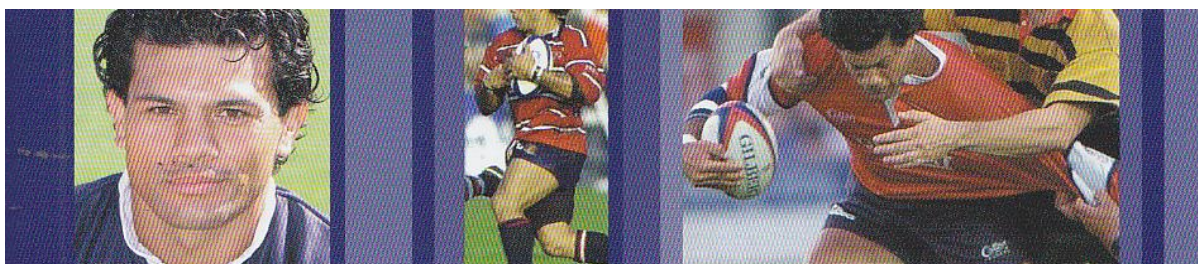
When you join a new team and you are trying to establish yourself but you can't contribute anything on the pitch it's always disappointing".

As spring approached so did Todd's comeback match and ironically he played his only full game of the season against his former employers. After a tough eighty minutes however, Todd was feeling the strain. With the Heineken Cup semi-final fast approaching, time was of the essence and the team had a hard session the next day. Exacerbated by his previous injury Todd picked up a hamstring injury that forced him out of the season's finale. As Todd puts it, "An exclamation mark at the end of the season".

That though, was last season. Pre-season started well for the Kiwi. He was able to see consultants over the summer and allowed himself that extra

## [Robert Todd] centre

**"In pre-season, Philippe Saint Andre joked that Todd had already played more games in August than he had managed in the whole of the previous season."**



time off away from rugby for the wound to heal.

Todd has returned to the club with renewed vigour as he admits he has a lost season to catch up on.

"When I came back I was focused on doing the basics well. Trying not to miss a tackle or drop a ball and make sure that every pass I made hit its target. Just the simple things and the other things would come in time".

Todd was so concerned with re-mastering the basics of the game that it was not uncommon to see him throwing passes at the post pads "just to get his muscle memory back".

In pre-season, Philippe Saint Andre joked that Todd had already played more games in August than he had managed in the whole of the previous season. Todd admits to being more than a little nervous before the Bezier game.

"It was my first game back and there was a lot of new guys in the club. You have to get to know them and how they play. That's what pre-season is all about. You focus on them and then you focus on yourself, as you try to cement a spot in the starting line up. At the back of my mind

obviously was the worry that my foot wouldn't hold up".

Todd's foot came through unscathed and once the pre-season was out of the way it was down to the real business of making himself a permanent fixture in the team. Unlike last year however, when Todd was a fixture on the treatment table, now he is a fixture in the team.

In fact, he has recovered so well that he is in danger of becoming the one-thing players hate more than being labelled a casualty; a utility player. The unfortunate injury to Chris Catling has meant a re-shuffle of the back line. By switching to full back, Todd has now played in all of the three-quarter positions.

Todd has spent more time recently with the coaching staff, learning new kicking techniques and catching the high balls demanded in his new position. He admits to watching hours of video footage on positional play as he takes a crash course in the arts of a full back. But, rather than concerning himself with labels, Todd is just pleased to be playing and is in pragmatic mood at the moment.

"We have four centres at the club, all trying to play in two

positions, which is good for competition in the squad. Henry and Terry have played a few games together and are getting on well. Before that, Joe and myself were going well, all you can do is go out and play well and leave the headache's up to the coach. At the moment I am happy to be getting the opportunity of playing other positions, although I would obviously prefer to get a game in the position I played most".

Back play now has moved on from set positions making set plays. It is not uncommon for the wingers to pop up in midfield hungry for work and indeed full backs taking a crash ball in the centres. Todd is no different.

"Gone are the days when one player would play only one position. There is lot of chopping and changing as guys adapt to different requirements. Terry, Joe and myself have all played at different positions this season and it can only enhance you as a player".

It is apparent in the different goals Todd has set himself this season, just how far his physical and psychological state has moved on. When he spoke last season he focused his time on

just learning to run and play again. Now he has set his stall out and wants to aim that little bit higher.

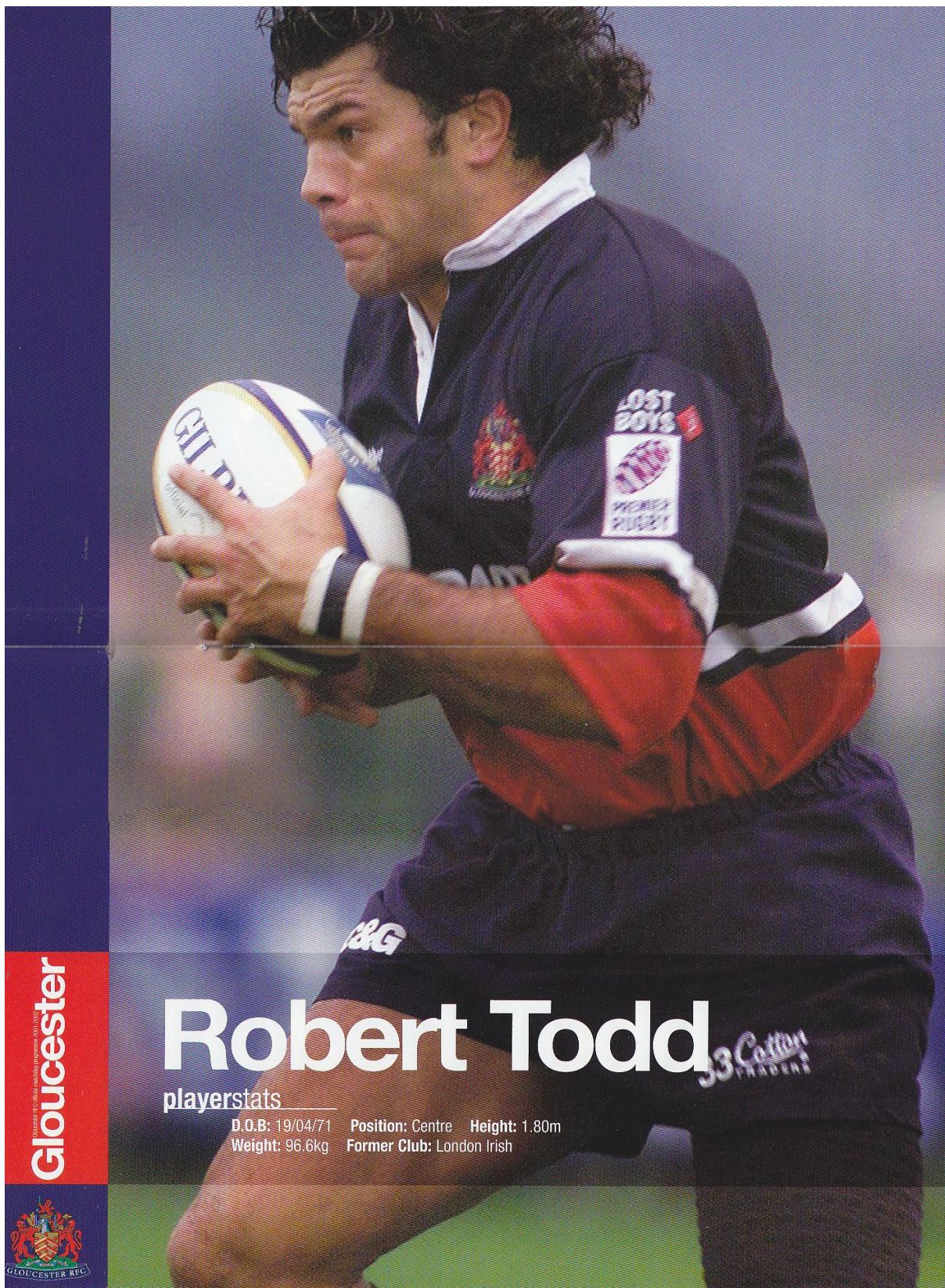
"I guess you know you've made it back when the big games come along. If we are good enough to get to a final and I am selected in my position, then I'll know I'm considered good enough. That's where my targets are now. To cement a first team place so that in my mind I'll know I'm back, and here to stay".

Only time will tell if Gloucester are good enough to make it to any finals later this season. Robert Todd began a marathon last August and only in May or June will he be confident that he has reached the finish line.

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**"Todd was so concerned with re-mastering the basics of the game that it was not uncommon to see him throwing passes at the post pads "just to get his muscle memory back."**

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Gloucester



# Robert Todd

playerstats

D.O.B: 19/04/71    Position: Centre    Height: 1.80m  
Weight: 96.6kg    Former Club: London Irish

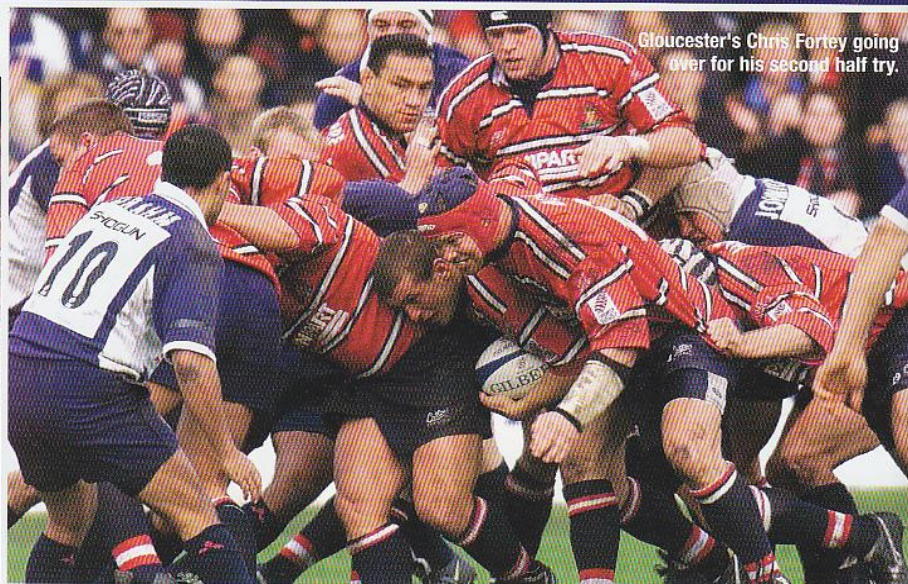
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## Match Action vs

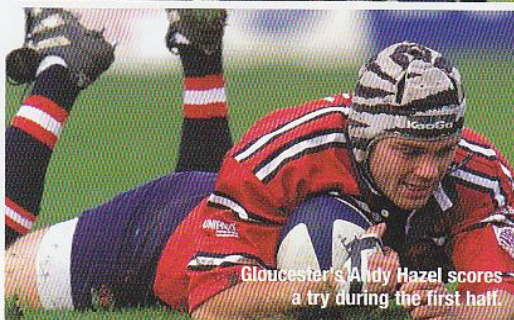
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Chris Catling



Gloucester's Chris Fortey going over for his second half try.



Gloucester's Andy Hazel scores a try during the first half.

Photography Supplied by Brue Seabrook GPA

### matchstats

Attendance 8431



51

Gloucester: **51 points**

Tries: Hazell, Paramore, Catling, Fortey, Gomersall, Simpson-Daniel

Conversions: Mercier (5), Paul

Penalties: Mercier (3)



17

Bristol Shoguns: **17 points**

Tries: Rees, Sheridan.

Conversions: Drahm (2)

Penalties: Drahm.



Henry Paul is held by Bristol's Gareth Archer

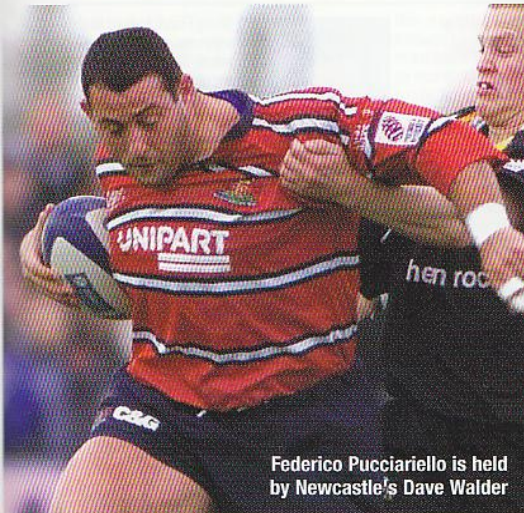
Zurich Premiership

# Match Action vs

# Newcastle

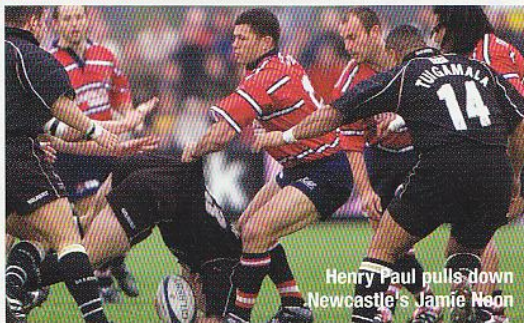
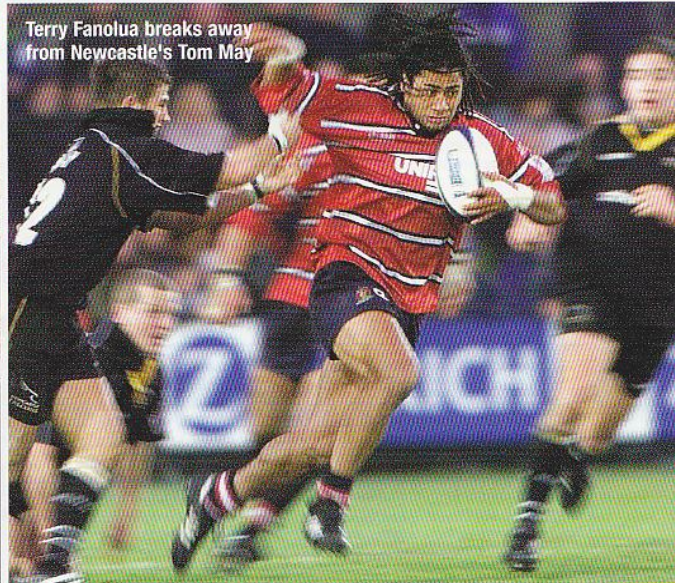
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Zurich Premiership  
18-11-01



Federico Pucciariello is held by Newcastle's Dave Walder

Terry Fanolua breaks away from Newcastle's Tom May



Henry Paul pulls down Newcastle's Jamie Neen

Photography Supplied by Brue Seabrook GPA

## matchstats

Attendance 5576



Newcastle Falcons: **18 points**  
Tries: -  
**18** Conversions: -  
Penalties: David Walder (6)



Gloucester: **16 points**  
Tries: Andy Gomarsall  
**16** Conversions: Ludovic Mercier  
Penalties: Ludovic Mercier (3)



Andy Gomarsall on his way to a first half try.

Zurich Premiership

Ticket and Information Hotline - Tel: 0871 871 8781

[match action]

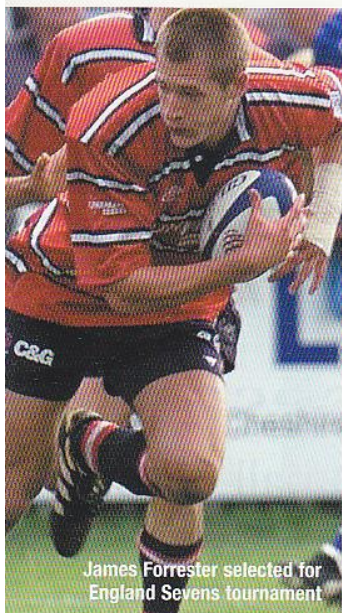
33

# Peter Arnold

[contributor]

## LUCKY SEVENS

Not even the most devout and practising supporter - and I am honoured to count myself among that number - would claim that Gloucester has a distinguished record in the seven-a-side game. Indeed, we were always rather sniffy about it.



James Forrester selected for England Sevens tournament

The attitude around here was always something along the lines of "All right if you like that sort of thing. If your idea of a good game is to see people flying up and down the field, scoring tries every ten seconds, then by all means indulge yourself."

In short, we regarded Sevens as suitable for ballerinas, Harlequins and perhaps the occasional Scot (who invented the game, anyway) but not really for the likes of us. Not for real, red-blooded, boiler-room sorts of players such as we produce at Kingsholm.

It's not at all surprising, therefore, that I can't

remember, just off the top of my head, a single case of a Gloucester player being drafted into an England squad, but the times, as someone once sang, they are a changing. Now, rather like the bus service, we have two coming along at once. James Forester and James Simpson-Daniel were both selected for the England party at the IRB Sevens tournament in Durban.

Good luck to them. They are certainly two of the brightest stars emerging over the horizon at Gloucester, and could both have a glittering career ahead of them. The experience will, if nothing else, give them experience of the International, big-match

atmosphere, and a taste of touring at that level. Their selection will also keep them in the eyes and minds of the Powers That Be. This is particularly important in the case of James Forester, who missed out badly at U19 and U21 level through injury.

The squad didn't do half badly, either. They reached the semi-final, where they lost to Samoa, which is no disgrace in the sevens game.

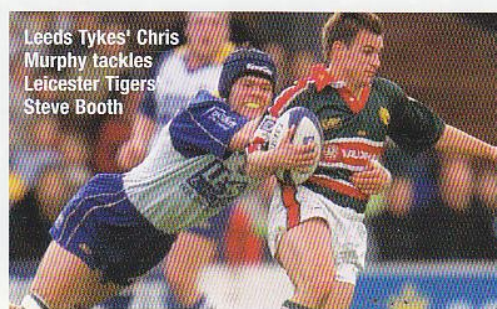
We all hope the trip was all they could have wished. It's odd they are both named 'James' though. Well, it could hardly have been 'Jim' could it? This is Sevens we are talking about, old man.

## WHY NOT GO THE WHOLE HOG ?

I note that Dean Richards, understandably annoyed at seeing the Tigers go down at Leeds while being severely depleted by England calls, called for a halt to Premiership matches during the November International period. One can see his point, but the question then arises, when do we play the

three games so postponed? Do we extend the season even further?

Might as well take a leaf from the book of the Australian Golf Association, which has recently announced that their season will now run from January to December each year.



Leeds Tykes' Chris Murphy tackles Leicester Tigers' Steve Booth

## WOULDN'T YOU JUST KNOW IT ?

**Drawn away to Bristol in the Cup. We might have guessed. It's straight out of the script for a 'Roy of the Rovers' comic strip.**

Drawn away to Bristol in the Cup. We might have guessed. It's straight out of the script for a 'Roy of the Rovers' comic strip.

Playing Bristol is a special occasion at any time. Playing them in the Cup is enormous. Playing them in the Cup at Bristol, just weeks after giving them a fearful walloping at Kingsholm is a prospect to make the hairs stand up on the back of the neck. It certainly won't be a game for the faint of heart, whether in the front five or on the touchline. To say that they will

be out for revenge is like stating that Columbus was a bit of a navigator.

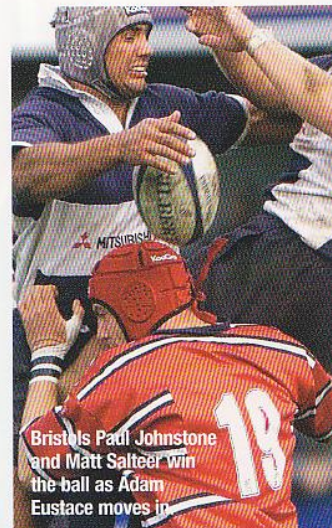
The more support we can muster down at the Memorial Ground, the better. Better make a note in your diary right now.

And, while on the subject of Bristol, I don't blame Dean Ryan for placing the blame for their 50-point massacre squarely on the shoulders of Garath Archer for getting himself sent off. He had to have some straw to clutch at, after all. I was, however,

somewhat disappointed to see that whole sections of the press took the same attitude.

Sure - playing half a game with only 14 men must be a disadvantage, but I would point out that when Gloucester found themselves in exactly the same situation against Harlequins, they still went on to win the game. Win it well, at that, scoring 19 unanswered points while being a man down.

It isn't always quantity which matters.



## SOMEBODY OWES ME 56p

**On November 6th I received a letter which had been posted on October 22nd. If Heather and Ian Lindsay had sent it to me via carrier pigeon it would have arrived faster than that.**

Let's not be too hard on the Post Office, however: Heather and Ian had posted it, from their home in Tuffley, via Gloucester Rugby Football Club, so it had to be redirected to my home address.

Unfortunately, I had to pay 56p. postage due on the thing. Which raises the question, why did the postman not charge the Club rather than yours truly? After all, he

wasn't to know that the item was going to be sent on to me, was he?

The letter itself was interesting. It enclosed a copy of a Boston, Massachusetts, newspaper produced exclusively for British visitors to that fascinating city. On the back page is a story about Gloucester RFC's abortive interest in Brive flanker,

Pierre Caillet, which seems a slightly odd choice of story, all things considered.

The Lindsays, however, loved it. "It gave us a smile, and was a hint of home", they wrote.

I'm very grateful to Heather and Ian for sending me the piece. It's always good to receive personal stories like that for possible inclusion in these pages. However, you'd

save me time, and possibly money, if you would be good enough to post them directly to me at 74, Victoria Street, Gloucester GL1 4EW. Or you could Email me at PeteArnold@aol.com.

But that 56p. still rankles. I'm not sure just who does owe it to me - Heather and Ian Lindsey or GRFC. After all, it's getting on towards a half of Toby, isn't it?

**Ticket and Information Hotline - Tel: 0871 871 8781**

**[contributor]**

**39**

# The Durban Seven

**A moment of magic and a lung-searing, strength sapping, sprint from fifty metres out and New Zealand skipper, Eric Rush, helped his side to a thrilling 19-17 win over Samoa in the final of the Durban leg of the IRB World Sevens Series.**

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**"As a schoolboy Simpson-Daniel professed to being a rather good sevens player, almost suggesting he preferred the shortened game. He though was still very surprised at the levels of intricacy with which the game is played at international level."**

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Many of the sixteen entries fielded some exciting newcomers to the Sevens circuit. However, there was little to suggest that the pecking-order in the World Sevens Series would change since the Kiwis won their second consecutive world crown at the conclusion of the previous series in Cardiff in June this year.

The defending champions, New Zealand, provided evidence of their continued superiority in the shortened form of the game, when they easily disposed of the Springboks (45-7 in the Final), to win their fourth consecutive title at the Dubai Sevens the previous week.

As expected, New Zealand were the first to qualify for the semi-finals of the IRB's World Series when they beat France 26-0. Samoa, South Africa and England were less obvious semi-finalists.

Outside of the so-called 'big five' of the Southern Hemisphere and South Sea Islands, England, Wales, Argentina and Portugal were favoured to reach the play-offs, but none of these teams were

expected to advance past the quarterfinal stages.

Before the start of the tournament England were seeded eighth and early results suggested that this was a fair reflection, considering the team had met only the previous week for some intensive sevens training at Bisham Abbey before the long flight to Durban.

True to form, England made it through to the quarterfinals of the main competition but looked as though they would succumb to a routine victory for the Australians. The boys in green and gold scored first and not long after, lost a simple try with a knock-on. But, against all odds, England, who did everything well, except kick at goal, scored five tries to win 27-7.

This was probably the greatest victory for England in the tournament. They were then beaten in the semi-finals by the Samoans, who themselves were the beaten finalists in the thrilling finale.

Before the tournament started, new England Sevens Manager, Joe Lydon said: "We've

announced a squad with a strong blend of development players and specialist Sevens experience.

"Durban presents each of the players with the opportunity to stake a claim for selection to the England Sevens squad to be named in December.

"It will be this larger squad that will begin the preparations for the remaining IRB World Sevens tournaments of 2002, which for England culminates in August with the Manchester Commonwealth games." Gloucester's representatives in this exciting young squad were former Academy player's James Forrester and James Simpson-Daniel, who have both made a big impact with the Gloucester 1st team this season.

Both enjoyed the trip tremendously and make no secret for their desire to allow themselves more opportunities like it.

"As an experience it's certainly up there," says fly half, Simpson-Daniel, "At the end of the day it's England sevens. It's a representative team that was treated very professionally, by

the coaches and all the players. It was something different as well".

How did they cope with the step up to a full representative side after only a few months as full professionals? As one would expect, they took it in the stride with aplomb.

"It wasn't so much a step up, as a step across" explains Simpson-Daniel, "You step up from the Academy to the first team, but then because it is a different game you step across. It was a young squad and a great learning experience. Joe Lydon, the Team Manager treated us all like adults and since the trip we have been promised a lot of feedback which is excellent as a young player".

The experience was all the sweeter for back row man Forrester, who previously had

never represented England at any level. His selection by the England management was seen as a gamble as of all the players in the party he was the one they new least about.

The gamble more than paid off as he was awarded England's player of the tournament, as his rise to prominence was nothing short of exceptional.

"I was one of the players on the trip that they didn't know much about", admits Forrester. "I started the trip as twelfth man but started the next game and played quite well. I think I got the award because the management were so surprised at as a 'wildcard', how well I played".

This season Forrester has proved that he has the uncanny knack of being in the right place at the right time to score tries. He took this enviable skill

with him on tour and scored in his first game against Georgia.

"It was one of the highlights for me. It was my first game for any England team and I scored a try with my first touch. I got the ball a long way out and kept running".

As a schoolboy Simpson-Daniel professed to being a rather good sevens player, almost suggesting he preferred the shortened game. He though was still very surprised at the levels of intricacy with which the game is played at international level.

"It was so much more technical than before. I used to try a couple of dummy switches and play from there", says Simpson-Daniel.

Forrester agrees, "We spent over two hours in our first session at Bisham Abbey just talking about defence".

Another aspect both players found hard to adapt to was the attitude of their opponents at the tackle.

"All the Southern Hemisphere teams were very physical", says Forrester, "It was always difficult but we were beaten by New Zealand on the floor. They always contest the ball at the tackle situations and we found it very hard to get the ball back. We had a way of defending the space but they would send in three people at the tackle and steal the ball".

This difference in attitude no doubt comes from the abundance of tournaments the teams like New Zealand play in, year on year. With the Commonwealth games approaching next summer though and the massive part sevens has to play in it, both players are under no illusion that the profile needs to be heightened.

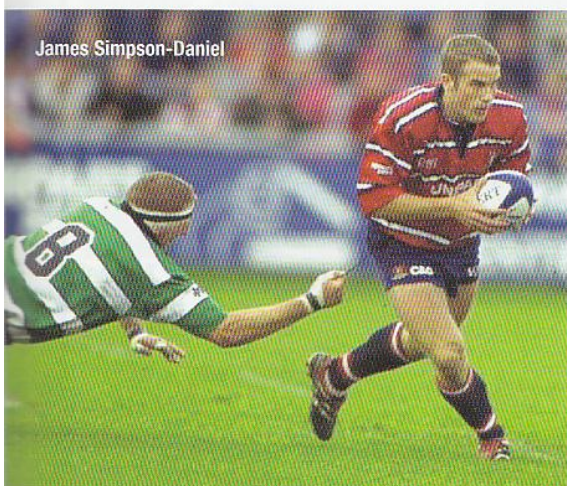
Forrester concurs but is confident that with a similar approach to the sevens game, England too can challenge the supremacy of the Southern Hemisphere giants.

"I would definitely say that if we can keep a small number of good players together we could certainly be contenders".

Both returned to Gloucester a little jaded but well tanned. The tonic for them both to help them recover after a long hard week was a training session in freezing conditions at Kingsholm.

Both may have started the week in sevens heaven, but have returned to earth with a bump. The message from the England sevens management team is simple. Get your head down and focus on your club side.

With all the will in the world, with our congested domestic season it may take a heavenly miracle to provide the time and resources our sevens players need to compete with the best in the world.



James Simpson-Daniel