Gloucester vs Ebbw Vale
Friday 25th January 2002 kick-off 7:05pm

[Website: www.gloucesterrugbyclub.com]
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[replacements]

| TBC | 16 | Damien Penisini |
| TBC | 17 | Jonathan Evans |
| TBC | 18 | Ockert Booyse |
| TBC | 19 | Rhys Williams |
| TBC | 20 | David Weatherly |
| TBC | 21 | Andrew Bevan |
| TBC | 22 | Ross Watts |

[teams correct at 23/01/02]

i [denotes international]

[referee] Mr Desantis FIR
[touch judges] Mr Lombardi FIR, TBC FIR
As was quoted in the press after the London Irish game, I was very disappointed at the way we played on Sunday.

We did a lot of talking about certain things before the game but then at key times, players did their own thing. What was so disappointing was the way we tired to play in those conditions. If it is on then great, but in conditions like we encountered on Sunday, we must learn to use the weather to our advantage. Barry Everett embarrassed us with the way he played.

Tonight though, we have a chance to put that right against a team who have had a lot of success this season. More recently though they have picked up their form with a good win against Cardiff. I have seen them on a couple of occasions this season; they were close to beating Uster and recently they beat Agen by fifty-nine points. Regardless of what people think about that particular game, to go to France and win as they did will give them great confidence.

We have to be careful. We are second in the Zurich Premiership; they are at the second end of the Celtic League. On paper we should not have a problem, but as they say, rugby isn’t played on paper. Off the field Ebbw Vale are dealing with a lot of political trauma that will decide their future. Having been in a similar situation with Bedford, I am well aware of the pressure a side can project in adversity.

There is nothing better to focus the mind on the job at hand than when you feel as if the whole world is kicking you. In recent years they have lost or let go a lot of players but they now have a number of good young players in the squad, a lot of whom are being rewarded with Wales caps. As a young team two things can happen at Kingsholm. They will either be bashed by the whole experience or, like good players, the atmosphere will encourage them to play. We need to be prepared for that.

Mike Ruddock and Kevin Hopkins, Ebbw Vale’s coaches, realise the resources at their disposal are not the same as Cardiff’s or Llanelli’s and so have structured their game plan accordingly. They know where their strengths are and will play to them. They may not have any superstars but they have a reasonable pack, a good scrum, and a goal kicking point machine. We found out to our cost on Sunday what guys like that can do to us.

Tonight should all be about positives. At the start of the season we set ourselves the target of winning the Shield and finishing in the top four of the Premiership. At present both goals are still within reach. At the start of this competition I think we would have been very happy if someone offered us a home tie in the quarterfinals against Ebbw Vale after winning all of our Pool games.

At Kingsholm, Gloucester should be regarded as favourites whoever the opposition are. If an Australian or All Black team toured and played here you would always like to think Gloucester would do well. I have discovered over the years that no team can ever underestimate a Gloucester team at Kingsholm. They have always played with pride and I am sure that the supporters will let them know if they are not reaching the expected heights.

Tonight we need to be disciplined. The structure of our game has got to be sound, much better than on Sunday. If we get the drop goal tonight again we must play to the conditions and use them to our advantage. We have worked really hard to get to this position so we must be positive. Last Sunday our whole game was not acceptable but we have worked hard all week and I hope that tonight we can put our marker down for the rest of the season. If we can get our performance right I am confident we can win.

“Kingsholm, Gloucester should be regarded as favourites whoever the opposition are. If an Australian or All Black team toured and played here you would always like to think Gloucester would do well.”
We have watched the video of last weekend's game and everyone in the camp is disappointed.

We didn't always stick to our game plan and were punished, but to suggest that we weren't trying or that we didn't want to be there is simply not true. I can only speak about my personal experience but no one ever gives up to win a game.

All respect must go to the Irish. They had a very simple game plan and stuck to it for the entire eighty minutes. Nearly every time they got into our territory they came away with three points and on one occasion they scored a try. Obviously the conditions played a big part in the game, but we can't use that as an excuse. Barry Everitt sat in the pocket, played one or two phases and if it wasn't on he then kicked very well. At this level we must learn to play smart and use the conditions better.

As a result of last weekend's loss, we have put more pressure back on ourselves; we are in this business to win silverware and now we are out of one cup. Tonight though will be a perfect opportunity to rectify that. It will almost be like a England v Wales game tonight, and both teams will be desperate to win. Fortunately we are on our home patch so we have to make sure we do everything we can to win.

I said it last weekend; you don't get second chances in Cup competitions especially at this stage. We have to go out and do the business tonight because there is no better way to get into the European Cup next year than to win the Shield. The chance is there, we have everything this time and if we can get us to the top so it's all about getting the mind set right tonight and getting a win.

If you look at where we are now, we are second in the league and in the quarterfinal of the Shield. As a squad we need to capitalise on all our previous hard work. We need to work hard to make sure we finish in the top four of the league but we must also come away with three more victories in the Shield.

Ethel Vale will travel to Kingsholm as underdogs but I always believe that whichever two teams play in a game, they both have the same chance to win when they run out onto the field. There may be a few bigger names in one of the teams but rugby is all about desire and passion. It comes from the heart. It's a physical game and if you don't go out prepared to play physically you can be shown up by any team.

It doesn't matter who you are, you need to have the same attitude in every game or you will slip up. As captain I will be trying to instil in all the players that this is as big a game as any other. Personally, I believe we have a good chance but we need to get our mind set right.

The last time I captained the team on a Friday night I said I was hoping for an electric atmosphere and that is certainly what I got. On Sunday there were so many of our supporters there, it was almost as if we were the home team. We feel that we let them down on Saturday and that we owe it to the fans, and ourselves, to get another big win. There is no better time to do that tonight.

Once again I hope we have a great game of rugby and that both sets of supporters enjoy the evening.
A hastily arranged fixture with NEC Harlequins U19's was played at the Oxtalls and gave the Gloucester Academy U19 squad an important run out prior to their 1st round plate competition versus Cornish side Wadebridge, the following weekend.

Although Gloucester were able to maintain the pressure on Quins, a loose kick ahead was gathered by their fullback, who returned the kick upfield. Gloucester's full back Ben Scaife and winger Niall Codlin both missed the ball and allowed a Quins player who was following up to gather the ball and score wide out to reduce the lead to 10-05.

Gloucester's response was immediate. From the kick off they won good field position close to the visitor's line. Alex Wood won the ball out and a good forward drive enabled flanker Tom Brown to score. With outside half Dai Evans again adding the conversion from wide out, Gloucester went into half time 17-05 up.

The second half was all Gloucester. They continued to put pressure on the visitors, and Dai Evans was able to finish off promising moves. However they did go further ahead when winger Andy Macrae charged down a following kick to gather and score by the posts for Dai Evans to convert for a 24-05 lead after ten minutes of the second half. Following a sustained pressure on the Quins line, Gloucester scored again. A slick three-quarter move released Joe Finney, who collected the ball off the toes to score in the corner. Dai Evans, who had a perfect afternoon with the boot, converted from wide out.

With the score now at 31-05, Gloucester took advantage to give the whole squad a game. After not playing for several weeks, it was an ideal opportunity to have a run in the squad prior to the following weekend when they played Cornish side Wadebridge away in the 1st round of the National Cup, Plate Competition. Naturally the team took some of their earlier cohesion, but still managed to create scoring chances which went unconverted leaving the final score at Gloucester 31: Harlequins 05.

The move paid off double as Gloucester Academy U19's bested the Wadebridge Camels by 35 points to seven and now play Dewsbury at home in the next round.
I seem to recall saying at the same stage last season after Gloucester lost in the Cup against Leicester that the club had 2 priorities left.

"...alongside Gloucester are three other teams who will fancy this as a route to next season's Heineken Cup."

So it is again after the Madeski magic that is exclusive to Richard Hill eluded Gloucester last Sunday. Hill steadied Gloucester to a win there over Richmond, but since London Irish have moved in it's not been a happy venue. Allowing for the injuries among the front row, the scrum was sound enough, but Paul Turner admitted afterwards that there were few real positions from which Gloucester could create any pressure. In Barry Everitt, the Edibles have a deadly goal kicker, and every Gloucester line out call seemed to have

And so... here's the insurance policy against a League collapse. The group stages of the Parker Pen Shield may have had all the appeal of the Cheltenham & Gloucester Cup, but as I'm sure you know, Gloucester have a history of winning competitions in the first year they enter them. It would be nice to extend that run, but alongside Gloucester are 3 other teams who will fancy this as a route to next season's Heineken Cup. Matthew Saracens, Bristol or Sale are left in the Powergen, with Bristol having the weakest Premiership position. It's possible the semi finals could be all English affairs, but London Irish will surely have to show more than they did last weekend to overcome Pau in France.

This is only the second home match since the League game against Newcastle, and due to print deadlines, the first in which I've had chance to mention one of the most talked about games of rugby ever played on Kingsholm. It's been prominent in the media for all the wrong reasons, and at the time of going to press there's no sign of a final outcome. No one is now allowed to comment on the matter until that stage is reached, but I do find the suspension system very strange. Trevor Woodman's dismissal in La Rochelle has cost him a 42 ban, greater than Olivier Azam was given for losing his temper against the Falcons, with all that entailed. Azam doesn't even miss a Premiership match. I suppose Olivier's greater punishment, depending on the..."
findings of the RFU disciplinary panel may be ahead of him, but I hope not.

The season now enters that stop/start phase we always associate with the spring and the Six Nations, and it means a lot of time away with England for some of the club's top players.

It's an ever expanding list, with 8 players selected for representative training outside the senior squad. Chris Fortey is the oldest at 26, all the others are 23 or under, and it can surely only benefit the likes of Hazel, Forrester and Simpson-Daniel. Given what now remains of the season, only injuries would seem to open up chances for Stuart-Smith, Boodridge and Cox, but we've had glimpses of all of them, and they have time on their side.

Tonight, Ebbo Vale can be assured of a warm, but not too friendly welcome. It's been a long time, and they got through to this stage after an extraordinary match against Agen in the closest of the eight groups. Having to score nine tries against a top French side - and managing it - says you deserve to qualify for the knockout stages, but several reports I read put a question mark against Agen's commitment. Whether that was justified or not, and whether it was a genuine Vale performance we will find out tonight, but comparative League records suggest Gloucester start favourites.

Finally, a sobering thought as to how quickly times change, not only in rugby, but in all sports. Philippe is coming to the end of his 5th season at Gloucester, and later this month he will celebrate three years in charge of the team, three years in which he's hardly played. Still only 34, one wonders what he might have contributed as a player since the summer of 1999 without other responsibilities. Interestingly, when you assess his record, he's % of wins is higher than Richard Hill's, but no better than the average throughout the club's history - and in the case of away games in isolation - marginally worse. It's a topic my colleague David Reed will expand on in the London Irish programme in a fortnight's time.

C'mon Glaws!!
**Cornwallstats**

- **Nick Name**: Pasty
- **Position**: Lock
- **Born**: 22/03/73
- **Height**: 2.01m
- **Weight**: 110kg
- **Int. Hons**: England (A)

**Mark Cornwall**

**Strengths**

The ever-modest Cornwall declines to comment on his own strengths instead choosing to leave that to the coaching staff. He will thought admit that a lock needs a good all round game. At a smoky six foot seven with good handling skills though, Cornwall has all the attributes of a modern day lock. His line out work has always been of the highest standard and time and again he is able to secure Gloucester ball and more often than not steal the oppositions.

**Weaknesses**

"Everyone has weaknesses and again it may be up to the coaches to comment on mine", says Cornwall. It is testament to the change in a modern day lock's mental approach that Cornwall lists "offensive tackling", as an area on which he would like to improve. Also, compared to Rob Fitzgerald's greater Cornwall is more of a head up player who scores more than his quota of tries in wide positions. Being pigeon holed as either is not a weakness although Cornwall admits that he needs to do both jobs.

**High Points**

Cornwall lists his major high point as simply playing for Gloucester as a professional Rugby player. "It's the club I love and to have been here for so long is a high point. Also turning professional. When you see others around you retire or take up another profession, to be a professional player and staying a professional for as long making a career out of it is a high point.

Not only an excellent servant for the club but also a fixture in the England A set up in recent seasons. "I have played nine or ten times for England A and that has to be up there as a high point, I loved pulling on an England Shirt", says Cornwall.

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**Low Points**

"Losing to Bath before Christmas is one", says Cornwall. "Also any injuries and I've had my fair share", he continues. "Not winning anything substantial with Gloucester. I have been here for so long and we have always been a middle of the road team we didn't have the extra bit that we need to win honours or silverware."

**Cornwall on the Parker Pen Shield**

"This club is fully focused on winning the Parker Pen Shield, we said it right from the first game against La Rochelle. The tournament organisers have made sure that clubs can get into the European Cup by winning the Shield. Every Club in the Premiership wants to be in that competition so you don't need any extra motivation. Some say it is through the back door but who cares, you have to win the tournament first."

**Cornwall on Ebbw Vale**

"If you go into any game with the wrong attitude then it can be a banana skin waiting to happen. We will respect Ebbw Vale when they come down here, you must respect every team. We will respect them but we will also go out in front of a packed Kingsholm and try to win the game. I don't care if it is three nil, a win is a win and that is what counts."

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www.gloucesterrugbyclub.com
Six months ago, James Forrester was one of eight former Gloucester Rugby Club Academy players who were awarded first team contracts.

His name was largely unknown.

In a previous programme Forrester described his main aim as being able to establish himself as a first team squad member and make as many appearances as possible. He hoped to use this season as a learning curve to develop his game and improve his rugby skills.

His development, under the watchful eye of Laurent Seigné, has been such that since the start of the season he has scored two first team try tries, scored with his first touch in an England Sevens game and last week, was called into the England A training squad for the Six Nations match against Scotland.

Forrester though is well aware that you are only as good as your last game and in a world he describes as "cut throat", Forrester refuses to get carried away.

"My goals haven't really changed", says Forrester. "Obviously the recognition I have got from England A is a real bonus but I am nowhere near first choice at the club. I have only started one Premiership game so my goal is still to play as many games for Gloucester as possible and, if I get a chance, to play well. I am in the England A squad and I would love an A cap but really I want to play Premiership games."

Forrester's rise has been nothing short of meteoric. At the start of the season he listed his career high point as "scoring a try on debut against London Irish at the end of last season". This season he has moved through the ranks of both Gloucester and the England set up with haste and admits that his rise to prominence has been a shock.

"I try not to get too excited about it all really", says the ever modest Forrester, adding, "because if the bubble bursts I don't want to be too disappointed". When listening to Forrester speak it is easy to understand where his drive and motivation comes from.

He realises that regardless of Philippe Saint-Andre's assurance that the best players will play, he no Phil Vickery and one bad game too many could mean a fall in the wilderness.

"Literally, every game I have played in this year has been the biggest game of my life. The Cup game against Bristol was a huge game but then came Newcastle and then Parma. Although Parma wasn't such a big game, it was still a chance for me to play and I know that if I play badly I may not play again for two months. That is why I always try as hard as I can."

It was at the Memorial Ground in the Powergen Cup against Bristol that Forrester made his biggest impact to date. In a game where he showed all the qualities of a modern day thinker, Forrester capped a superb performance with a match-winning drop goal of nerves.

"That was amazing", says Forrester. "We had a great week in training leading up to that game."

[James Forrester] Back Row

"Literally, every game I have played in this year has been the biggest game of my life. The Cup game against Bristol was a huge game but then came Newcastle and then Parma".

www.gloucesterrugbyclub.com
On the day, Andy Deacon was Captain and he really fired everyone up. They had the strongest team on paper but I was confident.*

Perhaps his most memorable try was his first. He sprinted almost the length of the pitch to catch the home-side Simpson-Daniel. The young flyer was locked at the vital moment and Forrestor was not to be caught.

The first to congratulate the younger was a rather excitable Phil Vickery. The British Lion and Club Captain has long been an admirer of Forrestor and couldn't contain his joy. Forrestor admits that the rest of the team were slightly less enthusiastic. As with anyone sending their apprenticeship. Forrestor was congratulated by the senior members of the team, and nothing more was said.

Forrestor's youthful exuberance earned him a start against Newcastle. It was the first time that Forrestor considered that he had been selected on merit. The game has now become infamous for other reasons, but Forrestor, although disappointed about being the sacrificial lamb that made way for Chris Forley as Oliver Aspinall was sent off, still has fond memories of the game.

"It was a real boost to be selected for that game and in the first ruck of the game I cleaned out Jimmy Wilkinson*, says a star struck Forrestor.

From one big name to a somewhat more intimate, Forrestor met up with the England 'A' training squad at Pennyhill last week.

"I recognised everyone there", said Forrestor. "Fenby, Balchin, Healy and Gaskell. I was lucky because I met the rest of the Gloucester boys in the car park too. Hug around with them. I would have hated being there on my own*."

Forrestor is also truant enough to suggest that some of his esteemed colleagues even recognised him, although he says that that was reserved to some of his former England Sevens teammates.

One of his teammates from the shortened version of the game is fellow Gloucester stalwart James Simpson-Daniel. Simpson-Daniel and Forrestor both made the trip to Dublin with the Sevens team.

"My first reaction to being selected for England A was embarrassment. I don't think I have really turned it off. I have made only one Premiership game and there are probably loads of players in my position that have played for more games at that level*.

It is certain that the relatively inexperienced Forrestor will not be found wanting in the company he is keeping at present but for his own peace of mind, he has his sights firmly set on Club matters.

*My goal is still to play in the Premiership this season and play lots at that level. I have had one good game, and everyone is getting excited. But I still feel that one bad game and I'll be labelled as not good enough. I still have a lot to prove*.

Forrestor's hunger for recognition and hard work are sure to serve Gloucester well for a long time to come.
James Forrester

**Player Stats**
- **D.O.B:** 09/02/81
- **Position:** Back Row
- **Height:** 1.95m
- **Weight:** 98kg
- **Former Club:** Exeter
- **International Honours:** England 7's
Match Action vs

GRAN Parma [home]

European Shield
5-01-02

Patrice Collaza is held in a tackle from Gran Parma's Pierferro Carra.

Henry Paul breaks through a tackle from Gran Parma's Jon Boden and Filippo Severi.

Photography Supplied by Bruce Seabrook GPA

matchstats

Gloucester: 99 points
Tries: O'Leary, St. Evens, Familius, Aboodoe, Paul, Stuart-Smith, Sevuvalu 2, Form celebrates, Paramore, Hazel
Conversions: Paul 12

GRAN Parma: 00 points

Koli Sevuvalu on his way to his first half try.

32 [match action] www.gloucesterrugbyclub.com
Match Action vs London Irish [away]

Powergen Cup 20-01-02

Federico Pucciarello

Andy Remall breaks thru London Irish defence.

Chris Forley breaks thru London Irish defence.

Photography Supplied by Bruce Seabrook GPA

matchstats

London Irish: 25 points
Tries: Evertt
Conversions: Evertt 5
Penalties: Evertt

Gloucester: 10 points
Tries: Gorman
Conversions: Mercer
Penalties: Mercer

Bob Fidler tries to win a line out.

Powergen Cup

Ticket and Information Hotline - Tel: 0871 871 8781
BOGEOY

What's with Gloucester and the Madejski Stadium?

We don't seem to be able to win anywhere these days. To make matters worse, we seem to lose at least as much through our own shortcomings as through the quality of the opposition. Not that there's anything new about 'bogey' grounds. For years we couldn't win on the old Richmond/London Scottish pitch, however hard we tried. Even worse, there used to be a saying around the Welsh capital that Cardiff could turn out fifteen men with wooden legs and still beat Gloucester at the Arms Park. Mind you, there was some justification for that. We had to wait 35 years for a win down there. So there's hope for us yet at the Madejski.

YOU'VE GOT TO LAUGH

For some reason that escapes me (well, it doesn't, actually, but it would take too long to go into here), just before Christmas I invited everyone to send me their favourite rugby jokes for possible publication, just so long as they weren't pornographic or libellous.

I might have known. First off the mark was my old friend, and former constituent, incidentally, Alan Keare from Hucclecote, who provided the following contributions.

His first story concerns the great Gordon Brown, 'Big Broon the Thimble', who sadly died last year. It appears that, on tour on one occasion, he wasn't very impressed by the hotel accommodation provided, and resolved to say so. Apparently, he collared the manager, and growled, "This is supposed to be a five star hotel. But look - there's a hole in the roof!"

Quite unfazed, the manager replied, "Yes sir! That's so you can see the five stars!"

His other story is about a skilful, possibly Irish, who had an arrangement with the local convent to get their kit washed every week. All very efficient and a satisfactory effort for all concerned.

Each week the kit would return, all clean and pressed, with a meticulously itemised bill in the following format: 15 shirts at 99p, £1.25, 16 pairs of shorts at 69p, 99p, and so on.

Being sensitive souls, as most rugby players are, the club decided not to risk embarrassing the pious sisters by including their jock straps. However, the inevitable happened, and one wayward support accidentally got left in the bundle of washing.

It didn't worry the nuns at all. Back it came, with all the rest, and the annotation: '1 crash helmet, 10p.'

If that story isn't true then it ought to be.

If anyone else would like to contribute, they can do so by emailing me at PeterArnold@Big.co.uk or by dropping me a line at 74 Victoria Street, Gloucester, GL1 4BW.

www.gloucesterrugbyclub.com
I KEEP THINKING IT’S WEDNESDAY

It was Mike Burton who once said that you don’t learn how to be a prop forward until you’ve played on the side of a slag heap, somewhere outside Ebbw Vale on a wet Wednesday night. Believe it or not, it was meant to be a compliment.

I think we all know what he meant. Your Cardiffis, Swanseaes and Newporters may get all the limelight, but there were always good old Valley clubs, which did not get the publicity, but who could easily turn most sides over if they didn’t watch themselves.

I suppose the most noteworthy of these, for a good few seasons, was the Pontypool side. With the famous front row of Graham Price, Bobby Windsor and Charlie Faulkner, and Eddie Butler directing things from number 8, they had, without doubt, the best Welsh club pack I have ever seen, and with the awesome David Bishop behind them at scrum-half, they were a formidable proposition indeed.

There was one wet Wednesday evening at Kingsholm when ‘Poolie’ arrived in all their majesty, and Gloucester turned out a bright, precocious but inexperienced prop against them. His name was Malcolm Preedy. As always, the game was very tight, and on this occasion, Gloucester just about won, but it was one incident, about half-way through the match which sticks in the mind.

There was a line-out on the Pontypool line, on their own throw-in. The safe option was obvious - throw it short to Graham Price, then arguably the best prop in the Northern Hemisphere, and let him barrel away with it. Things didn’t quite go to plan, however. ‘Poolie’ got the ball all right, but then, in an act of staggering insolence, young Malcolm Preedy, smiling, took the ball out of his hands, and dropped over for a try.

We asked Graham afterwards, what he thought of young Preedy. “He’ll be all right,” came the reply. “Just send him back to your United for a few matches.”

No doubt the advice was sound and well meant, but at the time, the words ‘ellar’ and ‘gazpalo’ did spring to mind.

Pontypool were by no means the only South Wales club to give us memorable occasions, both at home and away. Many of them have slipped well down the rankings nowadys, but I’d be surprised if they don’t play the game as passionately as they ever did. On one occasion, Newbridge visited us, and Gloucester were absolutely crucified by a young, mercurial outside-half named Paul Turner. Paul is now, of course, comfortably established as part of our coaching team, which is a case of poacher turned gamekeeper. If you like.

Other names spring to mind. One doesn’t hear much of Glamorgan Wanderers, or South Wales Police these days, but there was a time when both of those clubs could give anyone a run for their money. The same could be said for Bridgend, Abertillery, and several other good, old, locally based clubs.

But Mike Burton was right. We did always seem to play them on a Wednesday evening, and as often as not, it was raining.

Well, I can’t answer for the weather this evening, and it’s Friday rather than Wednesday, but the atmosphere is highly nostalgic for some of us. And I don’t really care what day of the week it is. It’s great to see good old ‘Ebbw” back at Kingsholm.

And, while we’re about it, let’s wish them “all the best” in their Principality Cup game against Neath.

Ticket and Information Hotline - Tel: 0871 871 8781