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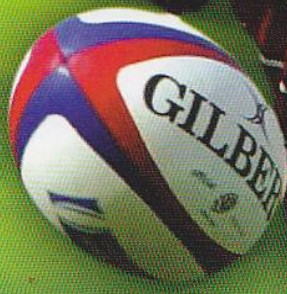
round
one

Gloucester RFC Official Matchday Programme

Issue 05 | Price £2.50

Gloucester

RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB



VS Munster

HEINEKEN CUP FIXTURE

SATURDAY 12TH OCTOBER 2002

KICK-OFF 3.00PM

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NIGEL'S NOTES...

Nigel Melville

Director of Rugby

Good afternoon and welcome to Kingsholm for our opening game of this season's Heineken European Cup. The anticipation for this particular fixture has been growing since qualification last season, try buying a ticket for the match in Gloucester this week – too late!

Pool 2 – Gloucester, Perpignan, Munster, Viadana

It was always going to be a problem explaining the challenge we face in Pool 2, however, my old friend Steve Jones did a magnificent job in the Sunday Times earlier this week,

'If the Heineken Cup were only a three-team event this time, and simply offered the prospect of Gloucester, Munster and Perpignan squaring up, it would still promise riches.

Gloucester open their Pool 2 programme at Kingsholm on Saturday against Munster, the renowned but so far un-rewarded Euro-fighters, and it is doubtful if many international matches this season will match that occasion for thunder. Both sides then have to go to Perpignan in the French South-East, to a stadium where flags fly the legend "This is not France", in homage to their beloved Catalonia. By the time the three great Clubs have battled out the qualifying position (Viadana, the worthy Italians, will be only bystanders) blood will have been spilled and the tournament's cultural richness wonderfully enhanced, while supporters of all three teams, passionate, classless, parochial, antagonistic towards the rugby mainstreams and towards their own city-slicking capitals, will find that they have more in common than they could ever bring themselves to admit'.

Thanks Steve I couldn't have put it better myself!

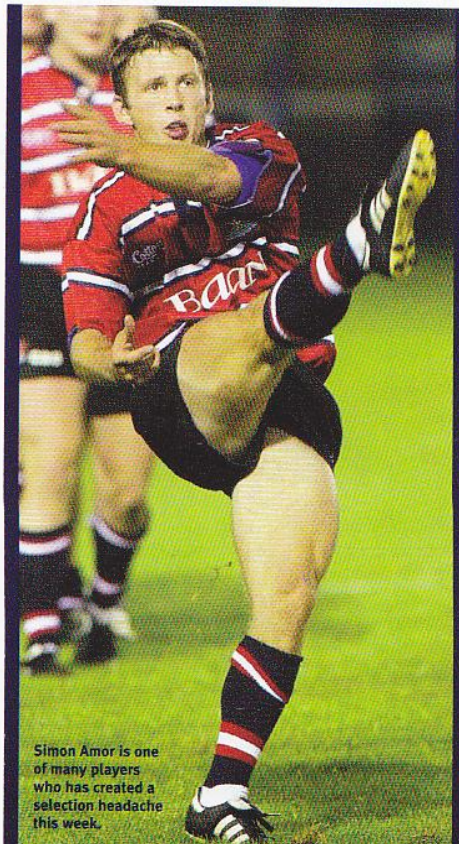
On the domestic front, last Saturday's convincing victory over Saracens maintained our unbeaten start

to the Premiership season. This was another positive performance, I felt that the performances of Andy Deacon, Adam Eustace, Peter Buxton, Rodrigo Roncero, Clive Stuart-Smith and Simon Amor maintained the competitive edge of the squad and created a few selectorial headaches this week.

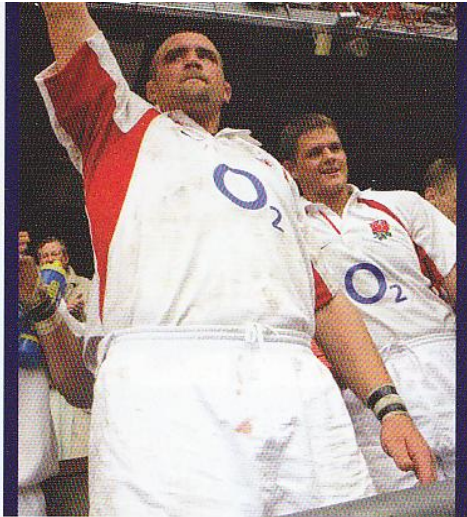
Munster, have had an equally good start to the Celtic League, despite losing their Irish internationals to the World Cup Qualification rounds. Last week's victory over Neath in Wales demonstrated that they are in great shape and still producing the kind of performance that has enhanced their reputation across Europe.

There will be no hiding places on the field this afternoon, there is no doubt that the Heineken Cup is a step closer to international intensity for the players in terms of physicality, intensity and pace. There will be no lack of passion on the terraces either, both sets of supporters carry formidable reputations.

The scene is set, it's Saturday afternoon, Kingsholm, the Heineken Cup, Gloucester v Munster – we have all the ingredients – enjoy a great day's rugby, this is what it's all about! ■



Simon Amor is one of many players who has created a selection headache this week.



CAPTAIN'S CORNER

Phil Vickery
Club Captain

First of all, I would like to welcome everyone to Kingsholm today for what promises to be a massive Heineken Cup test for both sides. We have known for some time that the ground would be a sell out and the noise generated inside these walls this afternoon will once again remind everyone of the special Kingsholm atmosphere.

We start the match as leaders of the Zurich Premiership and unbeaten in six games. We know that we have put ourselves in a good position leading up to this fixture, but today is all about Cup rugby and how we perform on the day so we can take nothing for granted.

“IN OUR FIRST SEASON OF HEINEKEN CUP RUGBY WE MADE IT TO THE SEMI-FINAL STAGES AND AS CURRENT LEADERS OF THE PREMIERSHIP, I THINK WE TOO HAVE ESTABLISHED OUR PEDIGREE.”

Munster, our visitors today, bring with them a fantastic European pedigree. They have contested two out of the last three Heineken Cup finals and are far more experienced at this level than we are. They have a lot of international experience in their side and in recent seasons they have won in France at places like Toulouse and we all know what a tough ask that is. They will have no fears about travelling here.

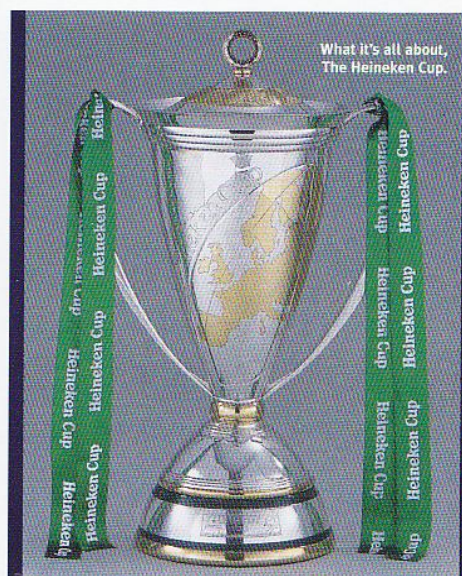
Having said that, we too started our Heineken Cup journey on the road two years ago at Llanelli. Stradey Park is still one of the hardest places in European rugby to go but we went there as Heineken Cup novices and won. In our first season of Heineken Cup rugby we made it to the Semi-Final stages and as current leaders of the Premiership, I think we too have established our pedigree.

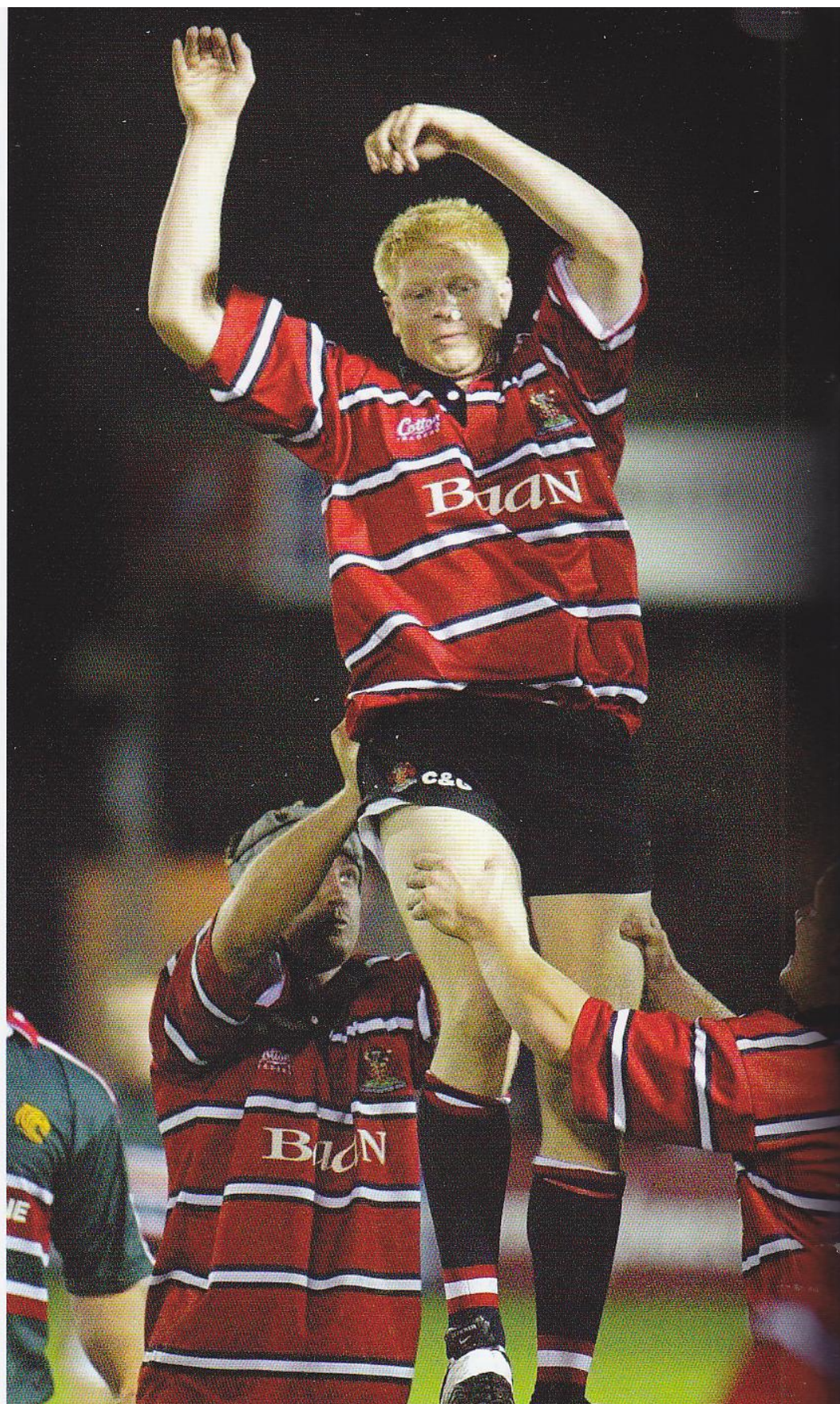
The Heineken Cup is a massive competition. It is the closest thing we have in the Northern Hemisphere to international rugby. The teams playing in the competition are the best teams from their respective countries and every game offers a different challenge against strong opposition. I think we are all seeing in the Zurich Premiership though a marked rise in intensity and pace. Nearly every team now has an abundance of international experience to call on week in, week out and the gap between domestic and European competition, although still there, is getting smaller.

As I said earlier, today is all about Cup rugby, the focus changes slightly for all the players as it is something of a one off. We start at home and the results in the Premiership this season have shown us how important home form is. This is especially true in the Heineken Cup. We are desperate to make sure that we get off to a good start in the Pool stages because an early win gets you points in the bag and you are off and running.

Added to this, we all feel very proud of our record at Kingsholm. We have set ourselves targets this year and it doesn't matter who we are playing against, we have to have confidence in our ability and focus on our performance. That is what will win us matches.

I hope you all enjoy the match. ■





The 'Watch This Face' feature returns this week as we look into our Cherry and White tinted crystal ball and try to predict which of the Club's youngsters will be next rising star.

To kick this feature off this season we have gone for a bit of a banker in Nick Southern. 'Strawberry' has been part of the Gloucester Academy for three seasons and is now an established member of the U21 and United squad.

Looking for a fresh challenge, Southern left the Leicester Tigers youth set up and joined the inaugural Gloucester Rugby Club Academy at the same time as James Simpson-Daniel and James Forrester.

A former Uppingham schoolboy, Nick came to prominence in the England Schools U18 group and joined up with Gloucester as a very promising back row or lock.

"I came to visit on the same day as Simbad, (Simpson-Daniel) and I loved the atmosphere here. I was very impressed with the set up and my family were well looked after so that was that", admits Southern.

Nick's progress and passage to the 1st team has not followed the same fast-tracked path as that of his former schoolboy teammates and he is yet to make the break-through to the senior squad.

Injury and the complicated cut off dates have prevented him from progressing through the international ranks, something that he admits to being very disappointed about. The ever pragmatic Southern however, claims to have seen both sides to the selection coin and has decided not to grumble.

He has continued to bide his time and work his apprenticeship in the junior ranks. His main goal after all he admits is to make it as a first team player.

This season Southern, who has been inducted into the inaugural Gloucester England Rugby Academy process, has been a regular in the Gloucester U21 side performing exceptionally well at either back row or lock. He is also one of the younger players who has benefited from the restructuring of the Gloucester United side.

He was one of the try scorers in the demolition of the Leicester Tigers second string latching on to a Clive Stuart-Smith break and touching down under the posts. His tall frame and all round contribution made him stand out literally head and shoulders above the competition.

"It's a step up in pace from the U21 games, which was a good thing, because we had less time to think and so had to react quicker and do things on instinct. It is definitely a good progression and helps to bridge the gap to the first team", explains Southern.

Southern's involvement with the Gloucester England Rugby Academy has allowed him more time to work on personal development. Southern is working hard with the Academy and 1st team coaches and with Dave Ellis on his defence, can spend time on a one-to-one basis honing and fine-tuning his already well developed skills.

"He is one of the most athletic players I have worked with and that certainly bodes well for his ability to play at the next level", says Carl Douglas, Academy Director.

"It means that he will be able to get around the park and involve himself with all aspects of play, which is very important in the position he plays", he added.

Southern's ability to play in any of the forward positions, apart from the front row, has meant that he is a valuable commodity at this level. His dynamic style of running has led to comparisons with former Academy teammate James Forrester. Southern loves to run with the ball in hand and although he has yet to make the impact that Forrester has, Southern's ability to move up to lock and perform equally well means that his time will surely come.

"As coaches, we are always looking for players to be adaptable, it is important not to pigeon hole anyone, particularly at this age. We try to look objectively at his strengths and decide where this can best benefit the team. Fortunately he has strengths across a whole range of areas", admits Carl Douglas.

Southern admits that back row is his preferred position but whilst other more illustrious players have hang ups about the versatile tag, Southern says he is prepared to play anywhere if it means a place in the team.

Like many of the Academy recruits, Southern has decided to take up a place at Gloucestershire University where he studies full time on a Multi-Media degree. Gloucester Rugby Club has undertaken to prepare all their students for life after rugby and Southern even suggests that his course by nature keeps him fresh and focused away from the game.

"I want to keep away from the sports side. I know a lot of guys my age are doing sports studies but I get enough of that day in, day out at the Club and to be honest it has no interest for me. I wanted something completely different and I think it keeps me sharp when I come back to rugby and the nature of the course actually makes it more relaxing", says Southern.

Southern admits that the progress made in recent seasons by Academy graduates James Simpson-Daniel, James Forrester and more recently Marcel Garvey have provided a real fillip for those players still hoping to make the grade.

Southern played for a young United side that one against Northampton at the beginning of the week and produced another fine display.

With Nigel Melville and Dean Ryan practising a policy of 'if they are good enough, they are old enough', one feels his time will come sooner than later.

Nick Southern, watch this face.

U21 & UNITED ROUND UP

SARACENS (u21) 15 GLOUCESTER (u21) 59

Gloucester U21's visited Saracens this weekend and recorded their most emphatic victory of the season so far 15-59.

The young Cherry and White ran in eight tries in perhaps their most impressive performance to date.

"The performance is improving and the players are playing in a positive manner, whether they are chasing a kick or putting the ball through the hands. They are working very hard at every aspect of the game and that creates pressure on the opposition. If it is sustained other teams cannot cope with it or build a platform of their own", said Academy Director Carl Douglas.

The coaching staff had made a number of changes for this trip to Saracens but Douglas felt that as a squad the U21's are showing continual signs of improvement and praised the all round team effort of this performance. The Gloucester Academy players now have two weekends off to concentrate on their physical conditioning and attention to detail.

Gloucester's young full back Neil Hunter opened the scoring with a penalty, and his personal haul of twenty points with a further penalty and seven-out-of-eight conversions was the foundation for an excellent victory away from home.

The profile of Gloucester's try-scorers, with two from the back row and the other six being shared between the half backs and three-quarters emphasised the nature of the total rugby currently being played by Gloucester's young guns.

"The forwards and backs got their hands on the ball and were scoring", said Douglas.

Blind side flanker Tom Brown notched up Gloucester's first try of the afternoon and

after converting this, Hunter then added another penalty.

Gloucester dominated territory and possession and were rewarded with further scores from centre Chris Wilkes and number eight Matt Evans. Hunter added a further conversion for a 25-3 half time lead.

Scrum half Matt Brittan and left wing Mark Foster added further scores in the second half to effectively seal the game.

Saracens replied with two tries of their own before Gloucester wingers Andy Macrae and Foster, with his second try, took the Cherry and Whites to the 50-point mark. Hunter added two more conversions before fly half Brad Davies waltzed through the weak Saracens defence to score Gloucester's final try.

"Winning away from home always provides a massive boost and it tends to fill team with a great deal of confidence before the next game", said Douglas.

The U21 squad now have a hard two-week training programme ahead of them before they entertain Wasps on November 25th.

WANDERERS 8 GLOUCESTER UNITED 15

Led by Clive Stuart-Smith a young looking Gloucester United side travelled to Franklin's Gardens last night to play the Northampton Wanderers.

They were greeted by a 600-plus strong crowd and began the evening poorly as they fell behind to a penalty in just the second minute, kicked by Northampton fly-half James Brooks.

Despite this start and the fact that they were playing the more cohesive rugby the Wanderers could not capitalise on their superiority in possession and territory



Clive Stuart-Smith led the United side to victory.

For the majority of the game, it looked like the result might get away from the United particularly when Northampton Saints U21's flanker Brett McNamee scored a try in the 14th minute to increase the home side's lead.

The Wanderers did keep up the pressure, but it was Gloucester United that threatened to score next through wing Daren O'Leary. His efforts were thwarted though by a forward pass from outside centre Andy Frost.

Gloucester did get on the scoresheet in the first half however, through the boot of England Sevens sensation Simon Amor to make it 8-3.

The second half started much better for the Gloucester United side and the Wanderers were caught on the hop when Gloucester's full-back Chris Catling chip-kicked the ball over the head of Ian Vass and collected the bouncing ball to score the United's first try.

Wanderers fly half Brooks answered back with a penalty to take the scoreline back to 11-8. And it looked as though the game would end that way. In fact it was Gloucester that scored in dying moments of the game. Following a lineout and a break from Amor. The United's U21 flanker Matt Evans was the man who crossed over the line to the delight of the Gloucester bench. Amor successfully kicked the conversion and the game ended 11-15.

HEAD 2 HEAD

Today's head to head focuses on two colossuses of the back row. Both Jim Williams and Peter Buxton are relatively new to their respective teams and whilst Williams already enjoys the respect of the very demanding Munster fans, one feels that Peter Buxton, in his first season at Gloucester has all the credentials to be an instant hit with the Cherry and White supporters.

Strengths

With the nickname of 'Horse', Buxton has a very imposing stature. He has a very high work rate and all the natural attributes of a back row ball carrier.

"I just love to get the ball over the gain line", say the former Newport player.

Weaknesses

Buxton joined up with his Gloucester teammates in July and has had to adapt very quickly to the defensive patterns and structure put in place by Dave Ellis. Buxton admits that this defensive structure was all very new to him but has worked hard to fit in. His efforts have made a favourable impression with the French and Gloucester defensive Guru, Ellis.

High Points

The best day I think I have had was in the Cup Final against Neath a couple of years ago", says Buxton.

"It was just a brilliant day We played at the Millennium Stadium in front of nearly 50, 000 people and it was a fantastic occasion. Then we got back and there were people everywhere."

Low points

As with any sportsman Buxton has had his fair share of knocks, including back, leg and ankle injuries. These have kept him out of the game and, like any person who loves his sport, that has left Buxton low. Touchwood though, he has never been out too long and at present is fighting fit and raring to go.

Buxton on the Heineken Cup

"I don't think that the Heineken Cup is as big a step up from the Premiership as it is from the Welsh Leagues but it is still there.

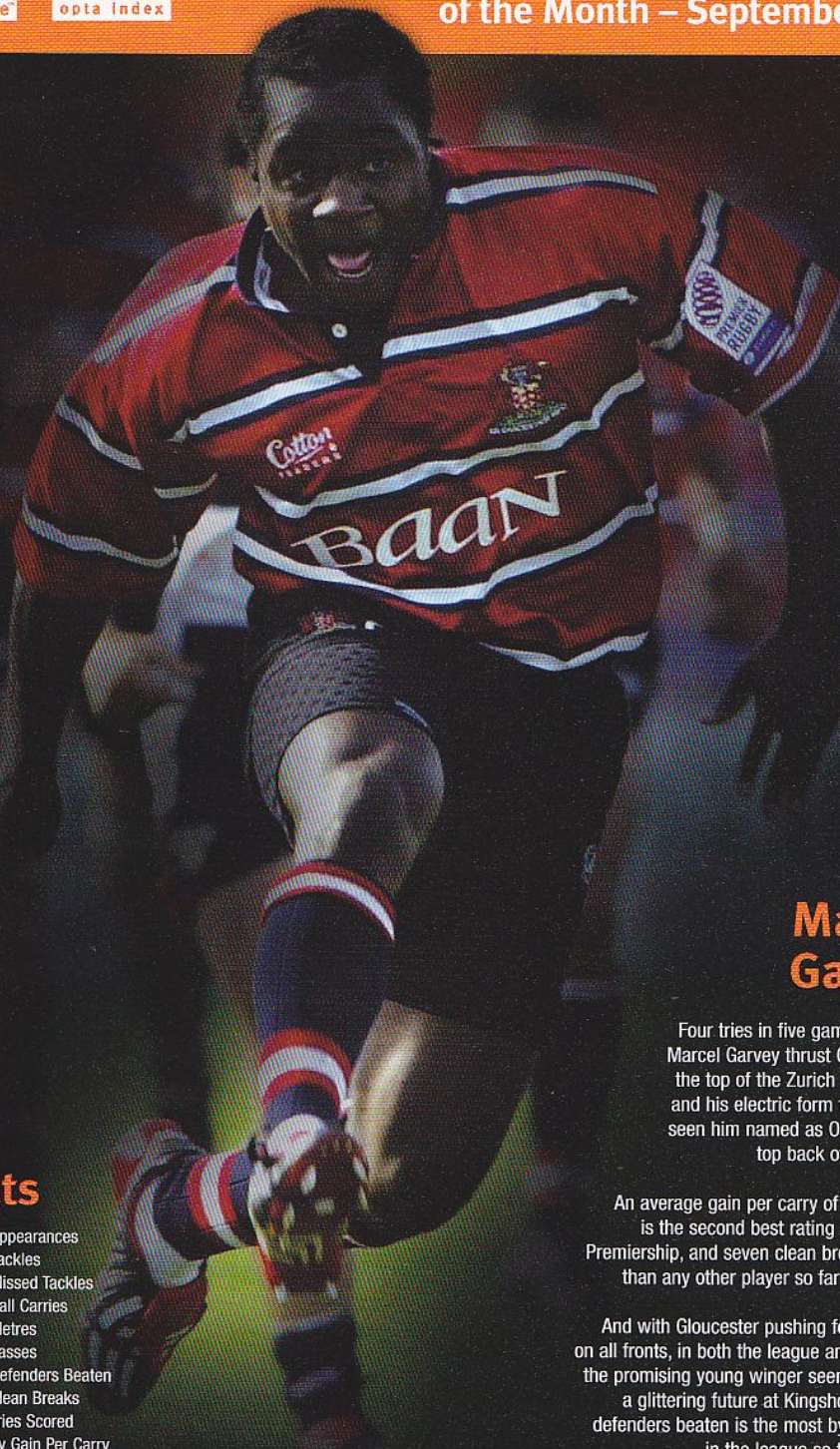
Munster are a very good team, they are very organised and they play a lot of good rugby. We won't get as many chances today so we have to be more clinical in everything we do. Any mistakes we do make, we will be punished for".

"Last season I found that the Heineken Cup was more intense than some international A fixtures. The teams playing are the best in their country and they are not there without good reason".

"We have been in good form but we start with a clean slate today, I'm sure that Munster will say the same. They are in good form as well but today is a different competition and another challenge".



Orange Opta Gloucester Player of the Month – September 2002



Marcel Garvey

Four tries in five games has seen Marcel Garvey thrust Gloucester to the top of the Zurich Premiership, and his electric form this year has seen him named as Orange Opta's top back of September.

Stats

5	Appearances
6	Tackles
2	Missed Tackles
22	Ball Carries
286	Metres
3	Passes
19	Defenders Beaten
7	Clean Breaks
4	Tries Scored
13	Av Gain Per Carry

An average gain per carry of 13.0 metres is the second best rating in the Zurich Premiership, and seven clean breaks is more than any other player so far this season.

And with Gloucester pushing for silverware on all fronts, in both the league and in Europe, the promising young winger seems all set for a glittering future at Kingsholm - his 19 defenders beaten is the most by any winger in the league so far this term.

Against a backdrop of off the field rumour and counter rumour, Munster arrive here today for the start of Gloucester's second Heineken Cup campaign. Having been to Italy (Rome) and France (Colomiers) last time round, the prospect of an Irish trip this season has made the draw an exciting one for supporters. Another French jaunt, especially to the south in December, isn't to be sniffed at either, and before that, there's Viadana next week. For lovers of pasta rather than pies, one to savour.

you can shake a stick at....but that's for the future. Munster's visit here today will ensure a very special atmosphere. Yes, Eire has gaelic football and hurling - the rules for which are both beyond me - but here in Gloucestershire we have two sporting venues, just 10 miles apart, that the Irish will associate with more easily than most. The Irish invasion for the National Hunt Festival at Prestbury Park is legendary. Istabraq, Dawn Run and Arkle, and characters like Pat Taaffe, Charlie Swan and Aiden

IAN RANDALL

BBC RADIO GLOUCESTERSHIRE

The potential enjoyment of all this has been enhanced by what we've seen so far. An unbeaten Premiership record, a bonus point in each of the home matches, and the team showing an ability to keep going at full throttle even when the contest is essentially over. If I had to be critical it would be over the 100 mph attitude at the start of games. The hype and energy seems to take 40 minutes to get down to controllable levels, but when Gloucester get there, the opposition is finding the blend of pace and power hard to stop.

The news earlier this week that the club are committed to staying at Kingsholm will have been greeted with a sigh of relief by many. It wasn't really a surprise, as the Archdeacon Meadow project (a new stadium holding 15,000 with 9,000 seats) would have involved a huge one off cost. You are, after all, building all 4 sides at once. The issue now though is the development of the club's traditional home. It needs to be bigger and better, without losing that earthy appeal. "Uncle Tom" is looking for backers to come in and help him, and that's not a surprise either as he has other businesses that are taking time and money. In my opinion work MUST start as soon as this season is over, so things have got to happen pretty quickly and 12 months from now, we may be surrounded by more rubble than

O'Brien are worshipped with a passion that's also reserved for rugby. In the era of Willie John Bride, Mike Gibson et al, almost all the Irish team played domestically, and little was seen of them outside the Five Nations. Now, a tournament like the Heineken Cup means we have a provincial team where men like Clohessy, Galwey and O'Gara are household names.

Today's game will revive painful memories for Robert Todd. In the summer of 2000, just after signing for Gloucester, Todd was injured in a pre-season game in Ireland between the clubs, and missed the whole of the campaign that followed. For the record, Gloucester won that match, but Munster were under strength and their extensive Heineken Cup experience will make them a side to be feared today. Rest assured mind you, that Todd will want to play despite that troublesome thumb which nearly kept him out against Saracens last week.

All the reports I read said Munster were impressive at the Gnuil in the Celtic competition against Neath last weekend. Their finishing was clinical, and O'Gara produced a silky performance at outside half. As a team they only play in 3 competitions, the Celtic, the Inter

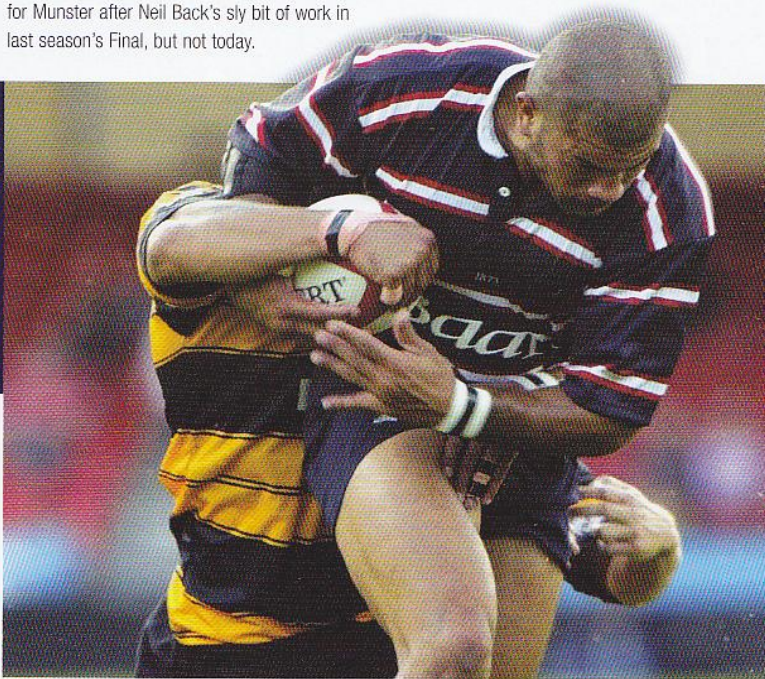
Provincial and the Heineken Cup, so for Gloucester to draw them in the group stages is a little unlucky. Later on, when they have fewer games, perhaps the sharpness mightn't have been there, but the cards have been dealt.

You've got to beat the best at some stage, and Gloucester could hardly be in ruder health on the field than they are now. I had a lot of sympathy for Munster after Neil Back's sly bit of work in last season's Final, but not today.

Finally, my colleague Bob Hunt is in the Shed today to sample the atmosphere for our "Matchday" programme. If he puts a microphone under your nose, don't be shy....and no swearing !!

B B C

C'mon Glaws !



Robert Todd will be hoping for better luck today against Munster.

RADIO GLOUCESTERSHIRE

104.7 FM & 1413 AM

B B C

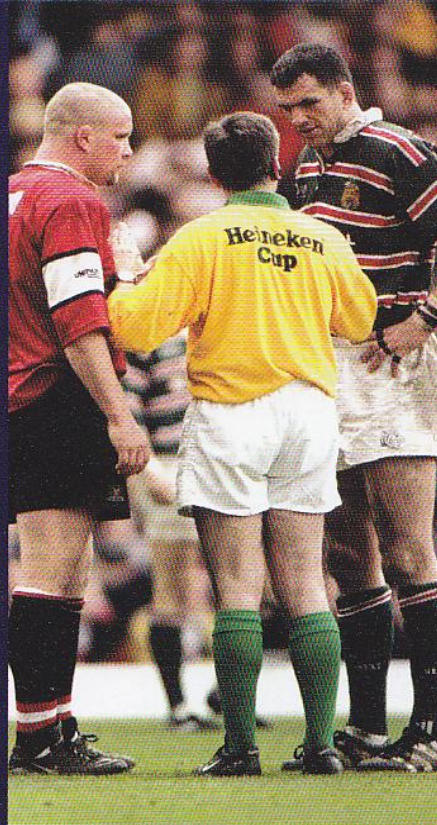
FIRST FOR COVERAGE OF THE CHERRY & WHITES

Gloucester will be looking to better their last attempt at Heineken Cup glory, which ended in a semi-final defeat at the hands of the eventual winners, Leicester.

Back in the Big Time

Alastair Downey of

The  Citizen



Of all the Heineken Cup openings available to Gloucester, Munster must have been at the bottom of the Kingsholm wish-list. The fiercely competitive Irish side bring their vastly impressive European Cup record to Kingsholm today, not to mention a legion of fanatical supporters, for the opening of a pool that will be astonishingly competitive.

The current best in the Premiership against the most ruthless Irish challengers promises to be a bone jarringly ferocious clash, but there is more to Pool Two than simply Cherry and Scarlet. For the forward connoisseurs, this group can take the biscuit as the all scrummaging, all rucking, all mauling pool that also includes Perpignan - one of the less forgiving French packs - and the unknown Viadana, who will have to go some to win a point. But it is the very thought of having the top-flight clubs back at Kingsholm that really excites.

Munster, with a vast array of quality players - Ronan O'Gara, Rob Henderson, Jim Williams and John Hayes to name but four, are the sort of opponents Gloucester live for. This is where the club, under the astute leadership of Nigel Melville and Dean Ryan, need to be. It is no longer good enough to flirt with Europe's elite for a season and then drop out. In their first season in the competition, Gloucester reached the semi-final but

failed to requalify for the following year. That was a massive blow to the club and for all the worth of the Parker Pen Shield, or whatever it is called nowadays, it is back among Europe's major clubs that Gloucester need to be.

This week, the city has thrived on the atmosphere and build-up to a match that is as important as any in recent times. Gloucester fans have been camped in the Shed since about lunchtime on Tuesday just to ensure they get their favourite position and Kingsholm will be a sell-out today.

Munster fans making their first pilgrimage to God's little acre will be guaranteed a warm welcome and a white-hot reception at game time, but that is what the Heineken Cup is all about. It brings different cultures, people, and clubs together and helps forge bonds, albeit not during the match, that may well last a life time. Kingsholm will be a seething, atmospheric bowl of passion this afternoon that no football ground could recreate.

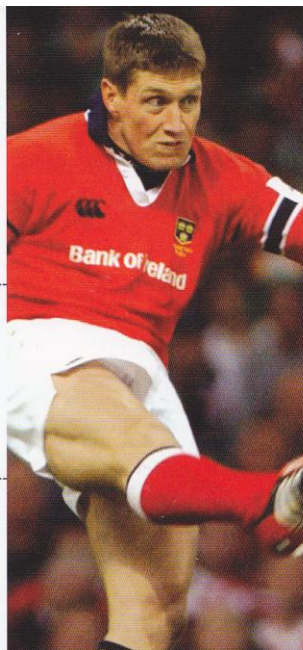
Gloucester want to keep that alive and know next season they will need to ensure their qualification. But for this afternoon, sit back, or lean forward and enjoy a game that could go down in Heineken Cup folklore.



- Henry Paul 15
- Marcel Garvey 14
- Terry Fanolua 13
- Robert Todd 12
- Tom Beim 11
- Ludovic Mercier 10
- Andy Gomersall 09
- Trevor Woodman 01
- Olivier Azam 02
- (c) Phil Vickery 03
- Adam Eustace 04
- Mark Cornwell 05
- Jake Boer 06
- Pete Buxton 07
- James Forrester 08
- Simon Amor 16
- James Simpson-Daniel 17
- Clive Stuart-Smith 18
- Rob Fidler 19
- Chris Fortey 20
- Rodrigo Roncero 21
- Ed Pearce 22



- Jeremy Staunton
- John Kelly
- Mike Mullins
- Rob Henderson
- Mossie Lawlor
- Ronan O'Gara
- Peter Stringer
- Marcus Horan
- Frank Sheahan
- John Hayes
- Mick Galwey
- Mick O'Driscoll
- Jim Williams (c)
- Alan Quinlan
- Anthony Foley
- Simon Kerr
- James Blaney
- Eddie Halvey
- Denis Leamy
- Mike Prendergast
- Jason Holland
- Dominic Crotty



TODAY'S MATCH OFFICIALS Referee: J.Dume FFR
 1st TJ: J.C Gastou FFR
 2nd TJ: D.Dartigeas FFR



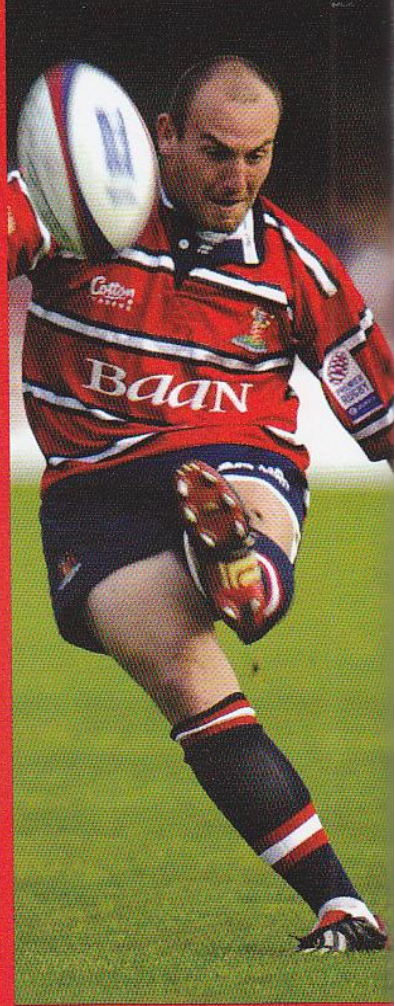
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KINGSHOLM SATURDAY 5 OCTOBER 2002



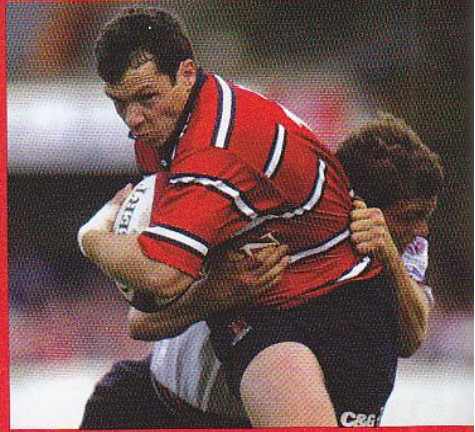
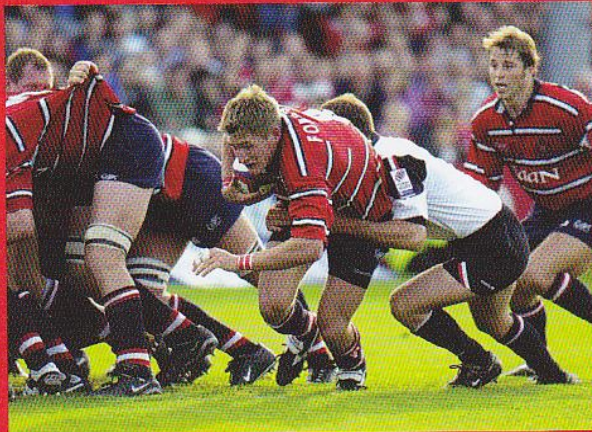
GLOUCESTER 44

TRIES: BOER, AZAM (2), FANOLUA, MERCIER
CONVERSIONS: MERCIER (5) PENALTIES: MERCIER (3)



SARACENS 14

TRIES: JOHNSTON PENALTIES: GOODE (2), LITTLE



(Top Left) Terry Fanolua leaves Saracens Johnny Marsters on the floor.
(Top Right) Ludovic Mercier opens the scoring.
(Middle Left) James Forrester is tackled by Saracens Kyran Bracken.
(Middle Right) Saracens Ben Johnson holds onto Tom Beim.
(bottom Left) Olivier Azam goes over to score a second half try.

Fans Eye View

With Bob Fenton

What is it about the English mentality that loves this build 'em up, knock 'em down thing? Why do some commentators insist on looking for the negatives when there are so many positives around them?

Yes I know that bad news sells, and no one likes good news really, but after reading some of last weekend's papers you can forgive me - and everyone else in Gloucester - for feeling a little hard done by. What am I on about - let me enlighten you: the contents of the match reports in certain national newspapers.

In case you have forgotten, last weekend Gloucester battered a well-tipped Saracens side into the ground, running in five tries in the process. Saracens themselves managed one, and arguably the best try of the match at that. But try finding any mention of that in Mark Souster's report in Monday's Times. Finding a needle in a haystack is going to be easier.

Instead Mr Souster bangs on for nine of his ten paragraphs about what he perceives as financial difficulties at Castle Grim. Despite the assurances and comments from our urbane managing director, Ken Noitage, Souster rambles on about finances rather than rugby.

In fact when you do plod through to the final paragraph - all 62 words of it - don't expect to find any details of the match, who scored the tries or what happened. The only details Mark finds space for is the fact that Andy Kershaw got himself sin-binned and we scored two tries either side of half time. Don't expect to find the details of who did what to whom though.

And Sunday's Independent wasn't a whole lot better. Tim Glover's match report was fine, but you wonder why he had to drag up the story about 'chaos' at the ticket office

allegedly caused by staff discontent. Did he get stuck outside waiting to pick up his free ticket or something? There was no sign of any chaos when I went in, and talking to others on Sunday no one saw any real problems either - four windows open and queues moving quickly seemed to be the overriding impression.

It is far more likely that some people staggered across the road from The Jockey at the last minute to try to get in. Anyone who has been at Kingsholm this season will know that with crowds averaging well over 9,000 - well over 10,000 on Saturday - getting in before 2:30pm is strongly advised.

The question is, though, what place have these comments got in a match report anyway. Call me old fashioned, but I - and I suspect most other people - read them to get a flavour of the match and what happened. I know that the sport section of many papers is precariously close to the business pages, but keep the two subjects apart please chaps.

Fortunately for those down Gloucester way, we have the Gloucester Citizen and Alastair Downey to keep the reporting honest. Alastair's idea of a financial crisis is not having enough money to get his round in afterwards - not that he deigns to join us in the bar that often nowadays, he's clearly far too grand for that. Mind you he did give me a tenner for petrol when I gave him a lift down to Bath a few weeks back. I think he claimed £56 back for the train fare on his expenses, though.

Anyway, rant over. Today we get down to the serious business of the Heineken Cup, and welcome Munster to Castle Grim. The very mention of their name is enough to spark a wave of excitement among the hacks who can visualise a series of bad puns and 'funny' headlines.



The first paper to run a headline 'Munster Mash' must lose points for lack of invention, especially where there are much more up to date versions such as Munsters Inc - watch out for their big hairy number eight - Sully, I think his name is - a real scary dude. And that one-eyed half back Mike Pickowski... enough already!

There is no doubt that this game will be a real test of how far Gloucester have come, although Munster are in the middle of a rebuilding programme, their European pedigree is beyond reproach. And with the final of the competition being to be played at Lansdown Road you can bet that they will be desperate to get to it. This game should be a cracker.

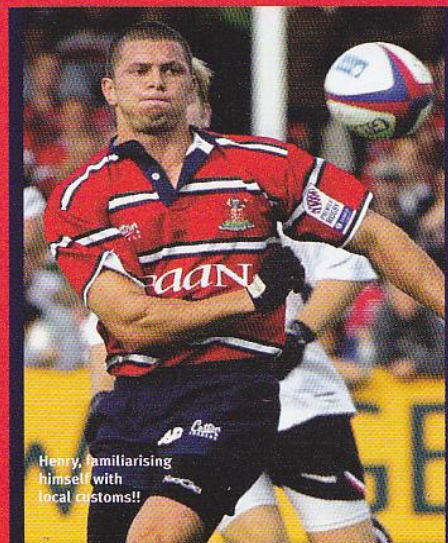
As Stephen Jones (now there is a real rugby writer) said in his Sunday Times column, '... it is doubtful if many international matches will match this occasion for thunder...'. Let's hope he's right, and lets hope that Mark Souster et al remember that they are there to enlighten their readers about on-field events as well as off...

It was also nice to see former supremo Philippe Saint Andre' saying that he believed that Gloucester had the ability to go all the way in the competition. I hope he's right, mind you two weekends over in Ireland are going to be a test of stamina for both my wallet and my liver! Finally it is with some regret that I have to tell you that I have serious reservations over the eyesight of one of our

own players. As he wandered through the car park after the game last Saturday, Henry Paul was confronted by a poorly shaven, 6-foot tall bloke wearing a red and white stripped dress (okay toga) under his Gloucester rugby shirt.

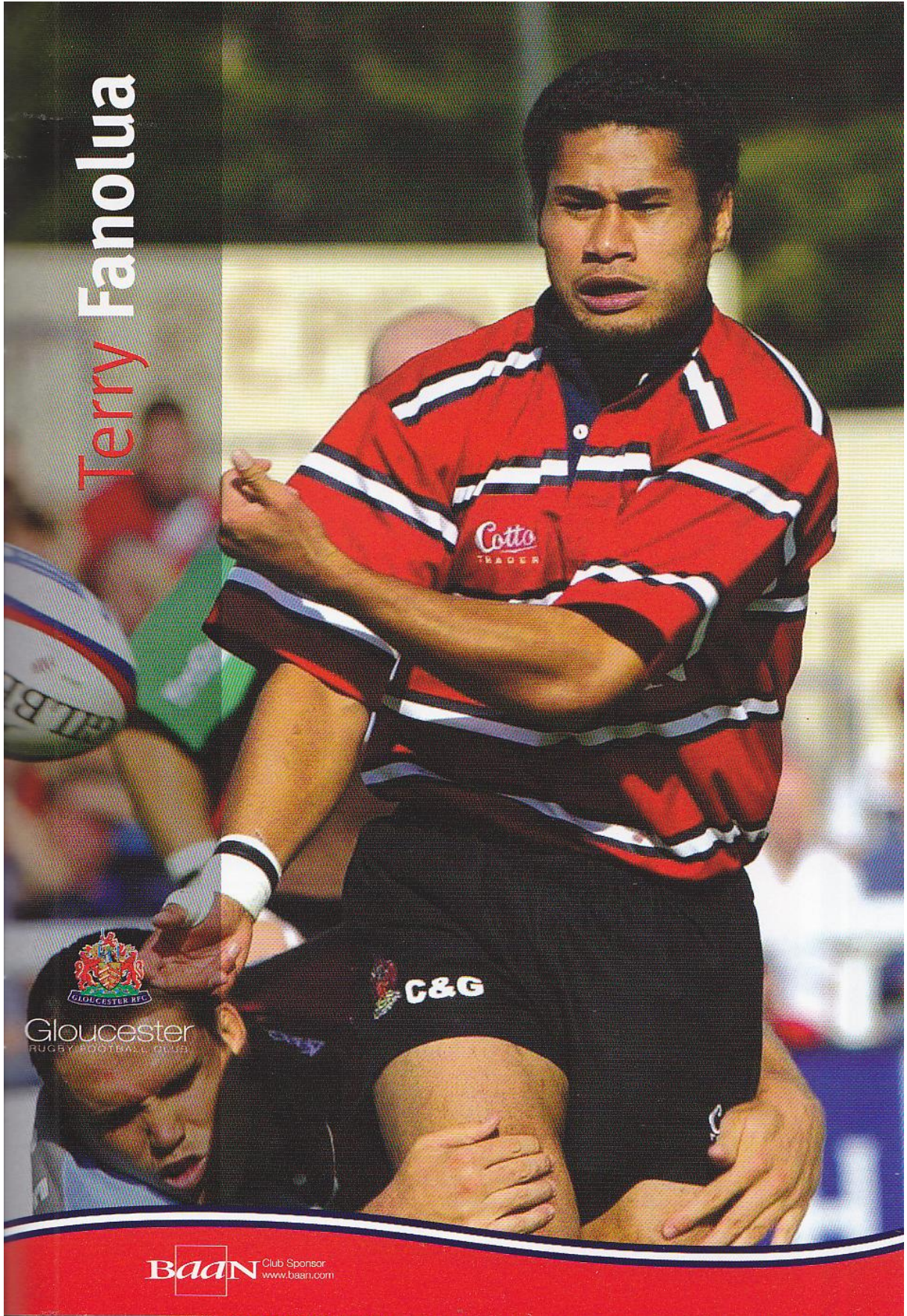
Clearly somewhat the worse for drink 'Wurzel' Rob (for it was he) told Henry that he might see him '... in town...' and that he would still be wearing his dress. Henry looked him up and down and said "You want to be careful mate, I might try and pull you!"

Not even with the worlds strongest beer goggles, Henry...



Henry, familiarising himself with local customs!!

Terry Fanolua




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"...the roar of approval from the packed Kingsholm crowd proved that he is still a crowd favourite in this rugby-mad part of England."

TERRY FANOLUA, BUSINESS AS USUAL

He may have lost his trademark dreadlocks and grown a beard during the off-season, but for Gloucester's hard-hitting Samoan international Terry Fanolua, it has been business as usual as the 2002/03 season kicks off.

At just 28, but with a wealth of experience behind him, Fanolua now finds himself one of the elder statesmen at Gloucester. He joined the Club over five seasons ago and has remained one of Kingsholm's cult heroes.

The beard, grown over the summer, as if to compensate for the loss of his unique hairstyle, is not a fashion statement insists Fanolua. Indeed the back, who has played in every position behind the scrum except scrum half was playing for his beloved Samoa in a world cup qualifier when he broke his jaw. The beard was the result of the lengthy healing process that prevented him from shaving.

"Some of the players have been giving me stick about my beard," laughs Fanolua, rubbing his hand over his chin.

He may be sporting a new look, for this season but Gloucester fans will expect the same style of play from the powerful centre, a player who is well known

around these parts for his all-action physical midfield displays and bone-jarring defence.

As total rugby demands that a team has forwards who can play as backs and backs that can mix it up front, Fanolua is often seen at the bottom of a ruck or at the centre of a maul fighting for possession.

Of course, Fanolua's hairstyle is not the only thing that has changed at Gloucester in recent months. The Samoan, who has become like part of the furniture at Kingsholm has seen a new management regime take over at the Club. Former Wasps boss Nigel Melville took over in March last season following the departure of Frenchman Philippe Saint-Andre.

Fanolua was one of the great Frenchman's first signings and has out-lived many of the subsequent recruits, as his commitment and attitude have become the benchmark that all new Cherry and Whites are measured by.

So far Fanolua is very impressed by the way the new regime has shaped up under the methodical Melville and his right-hand man Dean Ryan, who joined the Club in the summer. Both have wasted no time in developing the existing structures and begun to

implement their own style of play. Introducing a new game plan along the way.

"This year everything is so well-organised," says Fanolua. "Everything's structured under Nigel and as a player you know exactly where you have to be at a certain time, what you're going to be doing and how long for. Everything - skills, fitness and defence - is really well integrated and you feel that every minute of what you're doing is for a purpose".

"Also they are trying to develop a new game plan for us. We are now starting to adapt if things aren't going right and we have the payers to do that. Nigel and Dean are asking everyone to buy into this game-plan but it takes time".

Fanolua's arrival at Gloucester was fairly low-key, with little or no fanfare greeting the Samoan international when he crossed the Kingsholm threshold a few years back. He arrived at a time when players travelling from Cheltenham were considered foreigners, but after showing that he was just as willing - if not more so - to put his body on the line for the Cherry and White shirt as any home-grown player, the Shed faithful have taken him as one of their own. As he dived over the try line last weekend against Saracens, to add to the 20 Premiership tries he already has to his credit, the roar of approval from the packed Kingsholm crowd proved that he is still a crowd favourite in this rugby-mad part of England.

"It's enjoyable being known around the city and talking rugby with the fans - it certainly ensures your feet stay on the ground," he says.

As well as ensuring he plays his part in the continuing Gloucester revolution, the former Auckland Colt has set his sights on making the Samoa squad for RWC 2003. He took his first international steps with the Samoa Sevens squad before making his full international Test debut in 1996. In total he has made 18 Test appearances for his country, and is hungry for more.

By his own admission, Fanolua made a slow start to last year as five years of almost non-stop rugby had begun to take their toll and left him fatigued. This year

Fanolua had intended to take the European summer off from rugby, but couldn't resist a late call-up to the Samoa side for the rugby World Cup qualifying Test against Fiji in June.

Fanolua was in outstanding form, scoring a try in the 22-12 victory, over his South Sea rivals but unfortunately picked up a broken jaw in the dying moments of the match.

"It was a bit annoying to pick up that injury so late, but the coach John Boe came up to me after the match and said 'Get yourself ready for the next season', so hopefully I can stay involved for the World Cup, although it's down to me to stay in form with Gloucester. But that is definitely my main aim for this year - to make the Samoa World Cup squad."

First of all though, there is the more pressing matter of helping Gloucester build on an excellent last term, where they finished third in the Zurich Premiership and won the Zurich Championship play-off trophy at Twickenham.

Fanolua has started all of Gloucester's six Zurich Premiership matches before the start of European competition today, and his versatility and resilience will be essential over the length of a forty-one week season.

Before the start of the Zurich Premiership, which is proving to be the most competitive league in years, Gloucester were many peoples tip to be the closest rivals to the Leicester Tigers crown. After six rounds of matches, Gloucester remain unbeaten and are six points clear.

Even more impressive is the Cherry and Whites home record. They are unbeaten since September last year and Fanolua, along with his other team mates is in no mood to relinquish this track record.

"We want to make Kingsholm a fortress and win all our games here, for the fans and ourselves, that is just something that we want to do. I believe that if everyone buys into our game plan and we play as well as we can, then there is no reason why we can't stay unbeaten at home this season". ■

Peter Arnold

IRRESISTIBLE

"Irresistible. Simply irresistible". That was how Nick Cain of the Sunday Times, not always Gloucester's most enthusiastic supporter, described the pack's performance against Saracens last Saturday. He also pointed out that the effort was achieved without "Gloucester's two pillars", by which he meant that Phil Vickery and Junior Paramore weren't playing. He finished his piece by opining that Munster "Will have their work cut out" today. My inbuilt superstition about such matters warns me not to comment further on that.

To be fair, Nick's comments weren't all so complimentary. He also mentioned some "truly sloppy" passing in mid field, with which I find it hard to disagree. Nevertheless, the performance, as Nigel Melville said after the match, while 'a long way from perfect' did open up a six-point gap for us at the head of the table.

The way results are going this season, the odd extra bonus point, such as was secured last Saturday, may turn out to be of enormous value come next May. So might the precious ten points secured away from home so far

We also ought to consider buying a beer or two for the Northampton lads when they arrive here on November 2nd. Interestingly, they lost, quite convincingly, to Saracens, a couple of weeks ago, then, in true Saints fashion, bounced straight back to beat Wasps last week. That was particularly [leasant, because the London club had, almost unnoticed, sneaked up on the blind side to come within two points of us at the top of the table.

Then, to complete the round robin, we take five points from our game with Saracens. We sure do live in interesting times.

STOUT SALES UP

It is to be regretted that, over the years, our experiences with Irish rugby have been fairly limited. From what one sees and hears of sides from across the water, the whole atmosphere and ethos of the game over there seem to gel very well with the way we like to do things at Kingsholm - a fierce loyalty to their team, considerable knowledge of what's going on out in the middle, and the ability to laugh, even when things are going wrong, are just three factors which spring to mind.

There are dangers in this however. I recall four friends of mine, not for the first time, making the trip to Lansdowne Road to watch the home side play England. Ireland were expected to win that encounter, so the happy quartet found it quite appropriate to stay at the St. Jude's Guest House. As you undoubtedly know, St. Jude is the Patron Saint of Lost Causes.

I can't recall the result of the match, but everyone had a very good time, anyway. Unfortunately, or perhaps, fortunately, they fell among Bective Rangers, and were persuaded, without too much difficulty, to accompany their new-found friends back to their own clubhouse.

They finally got home on Tuesday. That didn't do much for marital harmony, although I'm glad to say that all four marriages did survive the hiccup.

On the reverse side of the coin, there was the one and only time when the great Willie John Macbride played at Kingsholm. The occasion was a celebration of the Gloucestershire RFU's centenary. Gloucestershire were



"Irresistible. Simply irresistible" Nick Cain of the Sunday Times, talking about Gloucesters pack against Saracens.



the County Champions at the time, so it wasn't too difficult to attract an extremely strong International XV to play the County at Kingsholm. The icing on the cake was provided by Willie John, who agreed to skipper the representative side.

In the event the visitors were - well - stuffed is the word which springs to mind. Not surprising really. The Gloucestershire side had been playing together for a few seasons, while the visitors, however strong the individual components, were essentially a scratch side.

Obviously, Willie John made an after-match speech, perched on a stool in the bar, a pint of Guinness in one gargantuan paw. This is how he started.

"It's great to be at Kingsholm. Before I came, I'd heard a lot about your ground. I'd heard a lot about your rugby. I'd heard a lot about your crowd."

"As soon as I arrived, I knew everything they said about your ground was true."
"Five minutes into the game, I knew everything they said about your rugby was true." "But as soon as I ran out on the field, I knew everything they said about your crowd was true!"

Lovely man. Pity we didn't see more of him.

QUITE RIGHT TOO

I see that the RFU's proposal to host the next-but-one World Cup majors heavily on playing a lot of games in soccer stadia. I suppose that does make financial sense in terms of bums on seats.

However, I was gratified to note that the Powers That Be haven't lost all their sensibilities in the search for filthy lucre. Kingsholm and Wellford Road both feature in the proposed list of venues. Quite right too. Why should visiting foreigners be deprived of the Shed Experience?

Of course, this would not be the first time we've staged a World Cup match. Last time the tournament came to these shores we witnessed the ritual slaughter of the American Eagles by the mighty All Blacks. A mismatch if ever there was one.

A few weeks before that we hosted two games as warm-up matches for the respective national sides, when England and an Irish President's XV took on Gloucester on successive Saturdays as part of our Ground Centenary celebrations. The two games could hardly have been more contrasting.

England, led out by Mike Teague in honour of the occasion, beat us fairly convincingly, but didn't really get away from us until the last quarter. I recall one point, quite early on, when the Gloucester pack was pushing the international eight all over the park. "Go easy on 'em, Glos!" came a voice from the Shed.

The atmosphere among the England players and management after the game was decidedly dour. They hadn't had the happy little work-out they had been expecting.

The following week, we actually beat the Ireland side. Yet you couldn't have wished for a more cheerful bunch of fellows that those who decimated our stocks of Guinness during the post-match conviviality.

Around two weeks later, virtually the same fifteen gave the eventual Champions, Australia, one hell of a fright. It took a magic moment from David Campese, right at the death, to spare them a potentially disastrous defeat.

As the Irish President said to me that evening at Kingsholm.

"In England the situation is always serious but never hopeless. In Ireland, it's always hopeless but never serious!"

Today's Up Close & Personal is with young scrum half Clive Stuart-Smith...

You have recently signed professional terms with Gloucester, but you have been involved with the Club for much longer than that. Describe the Club in three words.

"Passionate, well supported and with huge potential, I know that that is more than three".

What are your goals for the season?

"I just want to play. I am doing the training but not playing as much as I want. It's frustrating because although you know the reasons why, it is still difficult to be on the bench"

What are your long-term goals?

"I just want to be happy, doing what I love to do. At the moment that is rugby. I am used to being in the middle calling the plays and being involved so long term I want to be first choice. Obviously, England is a big goal but playing regularly and enjoying it is important".

Who is the best player you have played with or against?

"Phil Vickery is up there. Not because of who he is, but because of what he does. Lots of players hide behind their reputation but he really leads from the front. Also playing with Marcel (Garvey) and Simbad (Simpson-Daniel) is a pleasure because they can do things other players can't". *(Editor: Clive also wanted everyone to know that Andy Deacon had been like a father to him and that he thought that the rumour about him being 37 was untrue. He is really 26).*

Who are your sporting heroes or heroines?

"George Greegan and Tiger Woods. I live with a golfer so I am very much part of that scene at the moment. They (Woods and Greegan) are both top guys in their field. They are both Mr Consistent but also awesome under pressure".

Away from the game, what do you do to relax?

"I like to get away from the game completely. Basically after an intense training session or game I like to do something very light-hearted. I like to mess around and sometimes I do play the fool. Also I like card tricks, I'm getting quite good".

What would be an ideal twenty-four hours for you?

"It would start with a proper lie in and then a huge breakfast. I would watch a DVD and then go out and play in the World Cup final, and win the game with seven tries and a left footed drop goal. Then after the

match, for the rest of the evening I would go out with a very famous female celebrity..."

When going out, what is your favourite tippie?

"I'm not much of a drinker really. I like the Barcardi Breezers, I'm a bit of girl really. If I'm off the beer then you can't get better than a coke".

What is your favourite food?

"I like Indian or home made Chicken Stir Fries"

Which famous person, living or dead, would you like to take out to dinner?

"Lee Evans, because I like his take on things and David Blaine, because I would love to pick his brains on things".

What one personal item could you not be without at the moment?

"It used to be my mobile phone but I think I have got over that so know it would have to be my pack of cards"

What is the best game that you have played in or seen?

I think that the best games are the close ones that are only decided at the end. I remember watching the World Cup semi final between England and Australia on TV when Rob Andrew dropped the match winning goal. The Atmosphere was amazing. Also as part of the FIRA U19 side we played in France last year and we dominated the game and the team spirit was fantastic.

What sort of music do you listen to?

"I like all sorts, basically anyone who can sing".

What book are you reading at the moment?

I like reading autobiographies. I have just finished Rob Howley's but I have also read Martin Johnson's and Austin Healey's, I know there is a pattern emerging".

What is the best piece of advice you have ever been given?

"When you find something you love put your whole heart into it, I think they meant always do your best and don't stop until you get what you want. Also I like you are only as good as your last game".

Who has been the biggest influence on your career so far?

"My Dad definately. He has always supported me and is easily the biggest influence on my rugby".