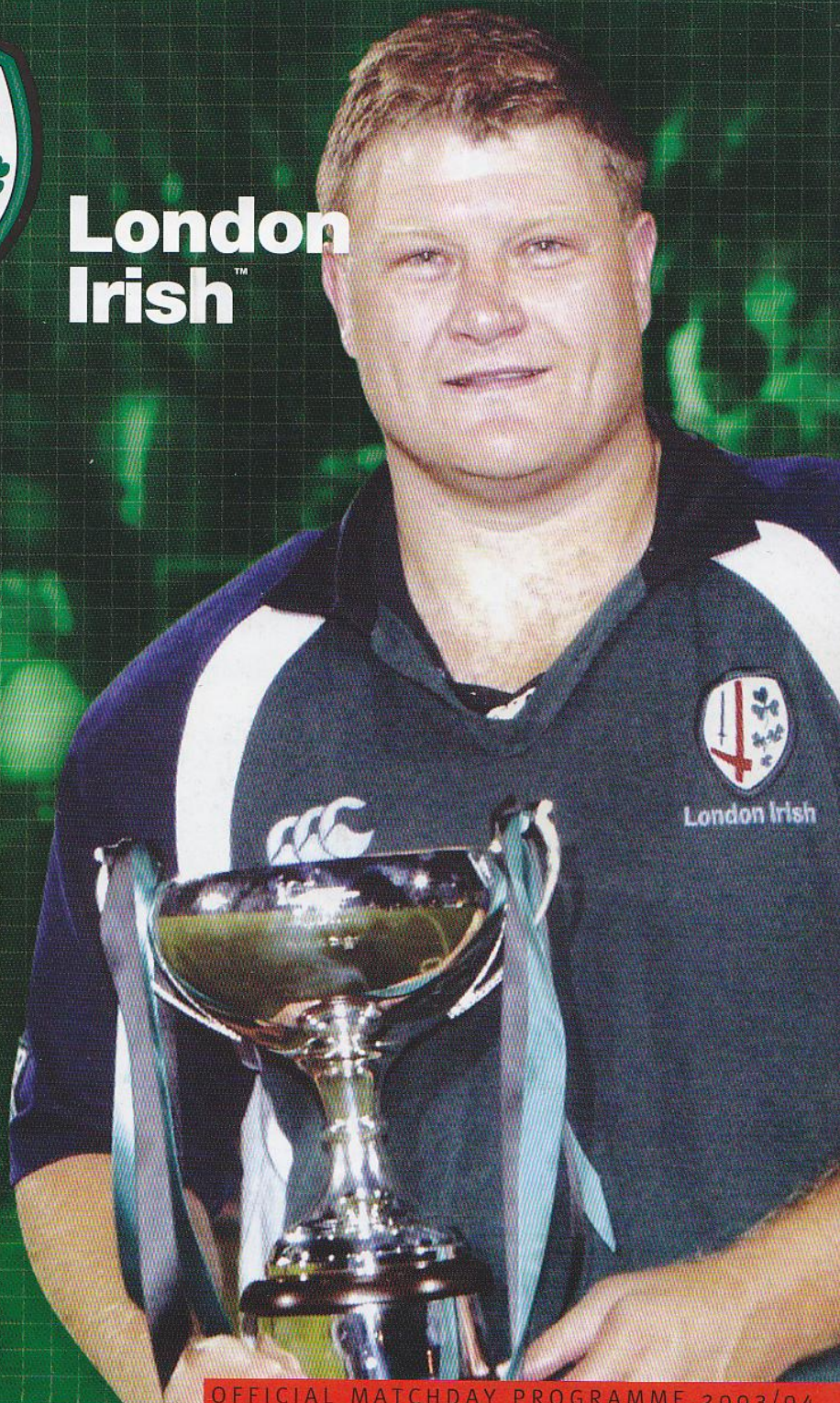




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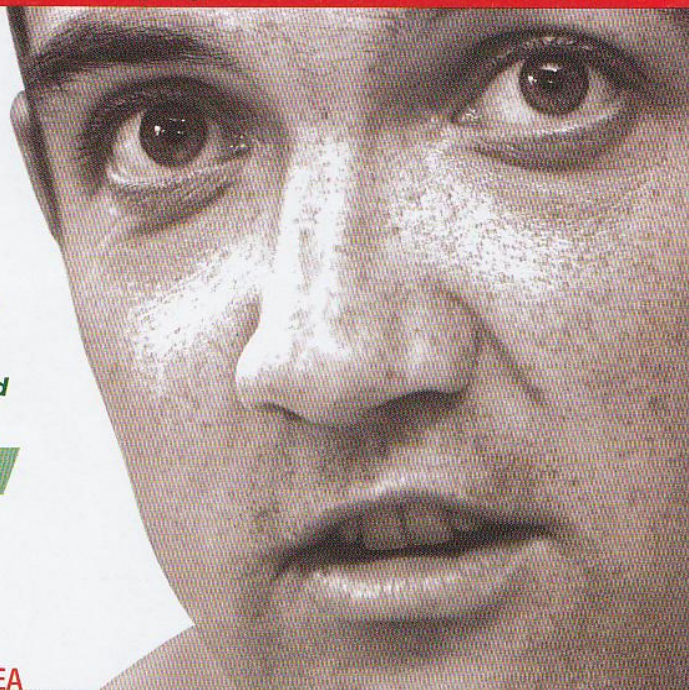
**London
Irish**

WELCOME

Welcome from Managing Director, **Conor O'Shea**



***I sincerely hope that we
continue to improve the match
day experience for all our sup-
porters and visitors both on and
off the pitch ...***



MANAGING DIRECTOR - CONOR O'SHEA

It's my pleasure to welcome everybody here today for our opening home game of the season. We extend a warm London Irish welcome to the directors, management, players and supporters of Gloucester. I sincerely hope that we continue to improve the match day experience for all our supporters and visitors both on and off the pitch as our support continues to grow both in terms of numbers and volume.

I will leave Ryan to discuss the rugby, suffice to say that our coaches Gary Gold and the newly arrived Paul Hull, along with the respective

specialist coaches, have put the players through a rigorous pre-season programme. I think all of us, players, management and supporters alike are glad that the real deal is finally here.

Off the pitch Pat Coyne, the club's Commercial Director, has overseen the launch of our new website, which is second to none, a new merchandise range created by Canterbury, that has been well received by all and a season ticket offer that with your support has seen us increase our revenue on last year. This, along with continuing work with all our other

corporate partners and sponsors, sees the club set fair going into the new season.

However as a good friend of mine would have said, "let the main thing stay the main thing" and that is rugby. We have a strong squad together for the start of the season and are all disappointed that Kieron Dawson, Justin Bishop and Phil Murphy are not off to the World Cup with Ireland and Canada respectively. Ireland and Canada's loss is most definitely our gain. The guys want to repay the faith that you showed last year and return us to the

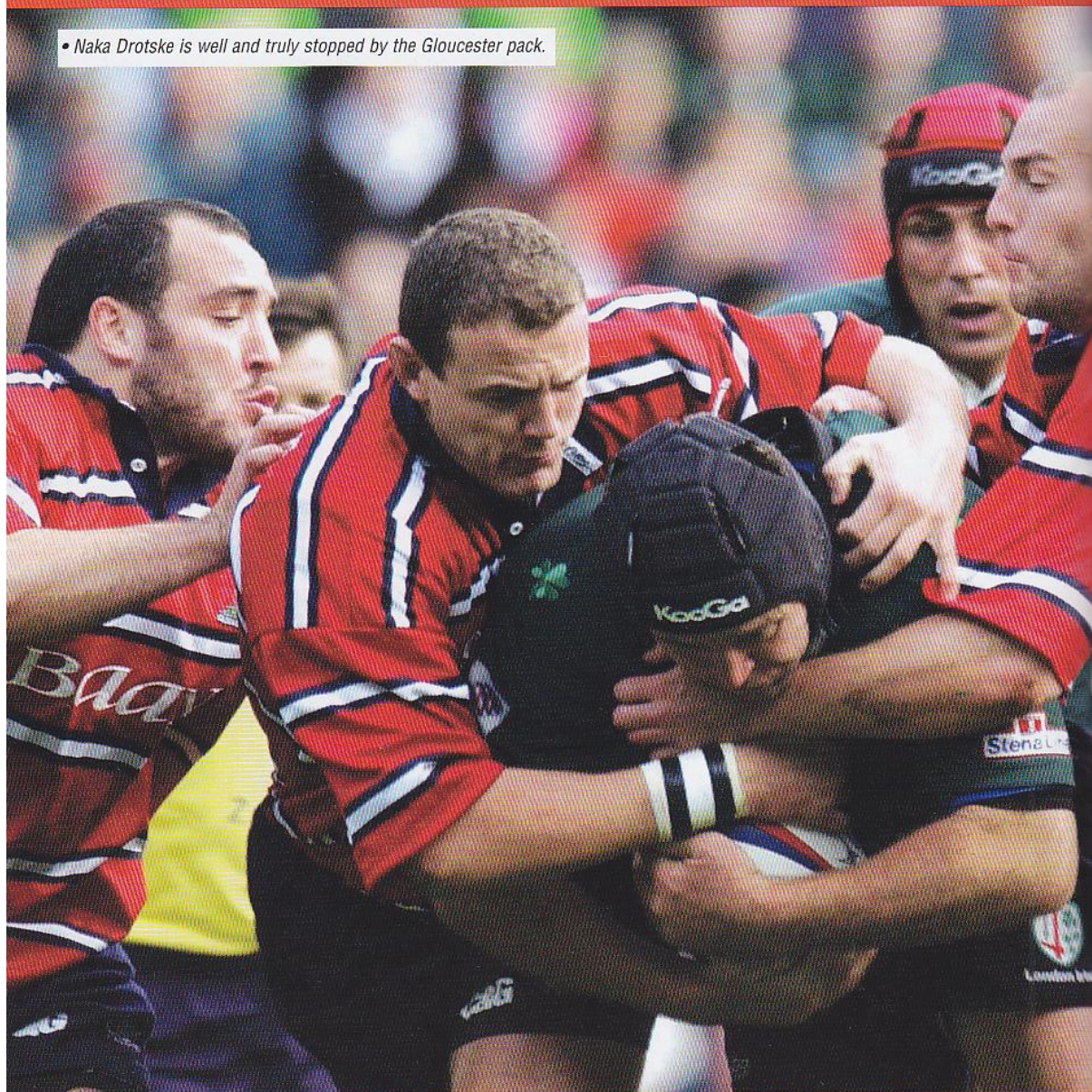
winning ways we are used to at the Madejski. They face a stern challenge from Gloucester today, who were the best team in the land last year. I know that both sides of the London Irish family will take today's challenge on with customary zeal.

On behalf of everyone at the club enjoy the match and the concert we have arranged. If you don't already have a season ticket I hope that you will avail of the 'Try Before You Buy' offer that applies for today's game, but above all enjoy the rugby. I will see you later today and throughout the season.

TODAY'S Visitors



• Naka Drotske is well and truly stopped by the Gloucester pack.

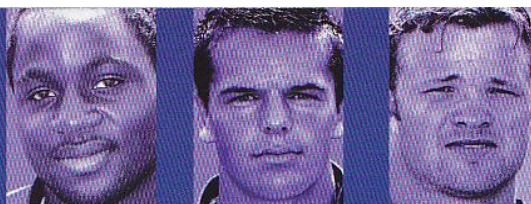


Last week saw Gloucester continue their two-year unbeaten Premiership record at Kingsholm with a 22-8 victory over league new-comers Rotherham.

The opening day's four points set up Gloucester's 2003/04 campaign in unbeaten fashion that the coaching staff and players will want to continue today at the Madejski Stadium.

Baan

GLOUCESTER RFC



• GLOUCESTER'S DANGER MEN - Marcel Garvey, James Forrester, Jake Boer

The last 12 months have been some of the most memorable in the 130-year history of the Club, with a successful Powergen Cup campaign and a superb nine-month control on the regular Zurich Premiership season.

In most years, supporters, players and coaches couldn't have asked for more, but the disappointment of a Heineken Cup exit and defeat at Wasps in the Zurich Premiership final, has made the Club even more determined this year.

The summer months saw Nigel Melville and Dean Ryan recruit five quality additions to the squad. Alex Brown and Paul Johnstone joined from West Country rivals Bristol Shoguns. 24 year-old Brown has had an immediate impact on the team's line-out options, and 32 year-old Johnstone has slotted in well in the front row.

Joining up with the two Bristol boys have been Steve Brotherstone and Alex Page from Newcastle and Wasps respectively. Both have enjoyed an active pre-season.

The final summer signing was former Saracens man Duncan McRae. The 28 year-old Aussie fly-half is still involved with his club Randwick in the Tooheys New Cup in Australia and is set to join up with his team mates during the next three weeks.

With the new signings settling in,

Gloucester's pre-season saw the likes of Leinster (twice), Glasgow and Northampton take on the Cherry and Whites. Nigel Melville's new-look team, which included a number of Academy recruits, secured two wins (against Glasgow and Northampton), a draw (17-17 all at home against Leinster) and one defeat away at Donnybrook.

Throughout the pre-season activity Gloucester were without the players who were fighting it out for a chance to compete in the World Cup.

Phil Vickery, Trevor Woodman and Andy Gomarsall all secured their tickets on the plane to Australia, but James Simpson-Daniel and Andy Hazell were unlucky to miss out. Hazell returned the week before the start of the season and Simpson-Daniel is out injured with a back problem sustained during his time with England.

In addition to the England stars, another three members of last year's successful squad are also absent. Prop forward Rodrigo Roncero will be competing for a place in the Pumas starting line-

up, and Thinus Delpont and Terry Fanolua will be with South Africa and Samoa respectively.

With the World Cup on-going until November, both Melville and Dean Ryan have been working hard with the younger players to ensure they can provide the team with options, and at the same time combine well with the experience of the likes of Henry Paul, Andy Deacon, Robert Todd and Jake Boer.

The absence of six top quality players has meant players including Rory Teague and Brad Davies have had an opportunity to impress and stake a claim for a starting berth.

With a good pre-season behind them both Davies and Teague earned a place in the starting line-up last weekend, with the 18 year-old full-back scoring his first try on his competitive debut for the Cherry and Whites.

Four points from the 22-8 win over Rotherham Titans last Saturday see Gloucester come into today's game hoping to build a good early season record. ■



WRITTEN BY: Justin Hopwood



LONDON IRISH

Vs

GLOUCESTER

BACKS	HORAK, Michael	<input type="checkbox"/>	15	<input type="checkbox"/>	TEAGUE, Rory	BACKS
	SACKEY, Paul	<input type="checkbox"/>	14	<input type="checkbox"/>	GARVEY, Marcel	
	APPLEFORD, Geoff	<input type="checkbox"/>	13	<input type="checkbox"/>	TODD, Robert	
	MORDT, Nils	<input type="checkbox"/>	12	<input type="checkbox"/>	PAUL, Henry	
	BISHOP, Justin	<input type="checkbox"/>	11	<input type="checkbox"/>	GOODRIDGE, John	
	MAPLETOFT, Mark	<input type="checkbox"/>	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	DAVIES, Brad	
	EDWARDS, Darren	<input type="checkbox"/>	9	<input type="checkbox"/>	AMOR, Simon	
FORWARDS	HATLEY, Neal	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	JOHNSTONE, Paul	FORWARDS
	DROTSKE, Naka	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	BROTHERSTONE, Steve	
	HARDWICK, Rob	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	DEACON, Andy	
	STRUDWICK, Ryan (C)	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	EUSTACE, Adam	
	CASEY, Bob	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	BROWN, Alex	
	GUSTARD, Paul	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	BOER, Jake (C)	
	DAWSON, Kieron	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	HAZELL, Andy	
	SHEASBY, Chris	<input type="checkbox"/>	8	<input type="checkbox"/>	PARAMORE, Junior	
REPLACEMENTS	DURANT, Pierre	<input type="checkbox"/>	16	<input type="checkbox"/>	PAGE, Alex	REPLACEMENTS
	FLAVIN, Adrian	<input type="checkbox"/>	17	<input type="checkbox"/>	THOMAS, Steve	
	ROCHE, Kieran	<input type="checkbox"/>	18	<input type="checkbox"/>	FRAPE, Josh	
	MURPHY, Phil	<input type="checkbox"/>	19	<input type="checkbox"/>	COLLINS, Chris	
	CANNON, Matt	<input type="checkbox"/>	20	<input type="checkbox"/>	FORRESTER, James	
	BARRETT, Kevin	<input type="checkbox"/>	21	<input type="checkbox"/>	WOOD, Nicholas	
	EVERITT, Barry	<input type="checkbox"/>	22	<input type="checkbox"/>	CORNWELL, Mark	

TODAYS OFFICIALS:

REFEREE:
Mr Chris White

TOUCH JUDGE 1:
Mr Stuart Terhegge

TOUCH JUDGE 2:
Mr Paul Emerson

4TH OFFICIAL:
Mr W Barnes

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