

Gloucester RFC Official Matchday Programme

Issue 11 | Price £2.50



Gloucester

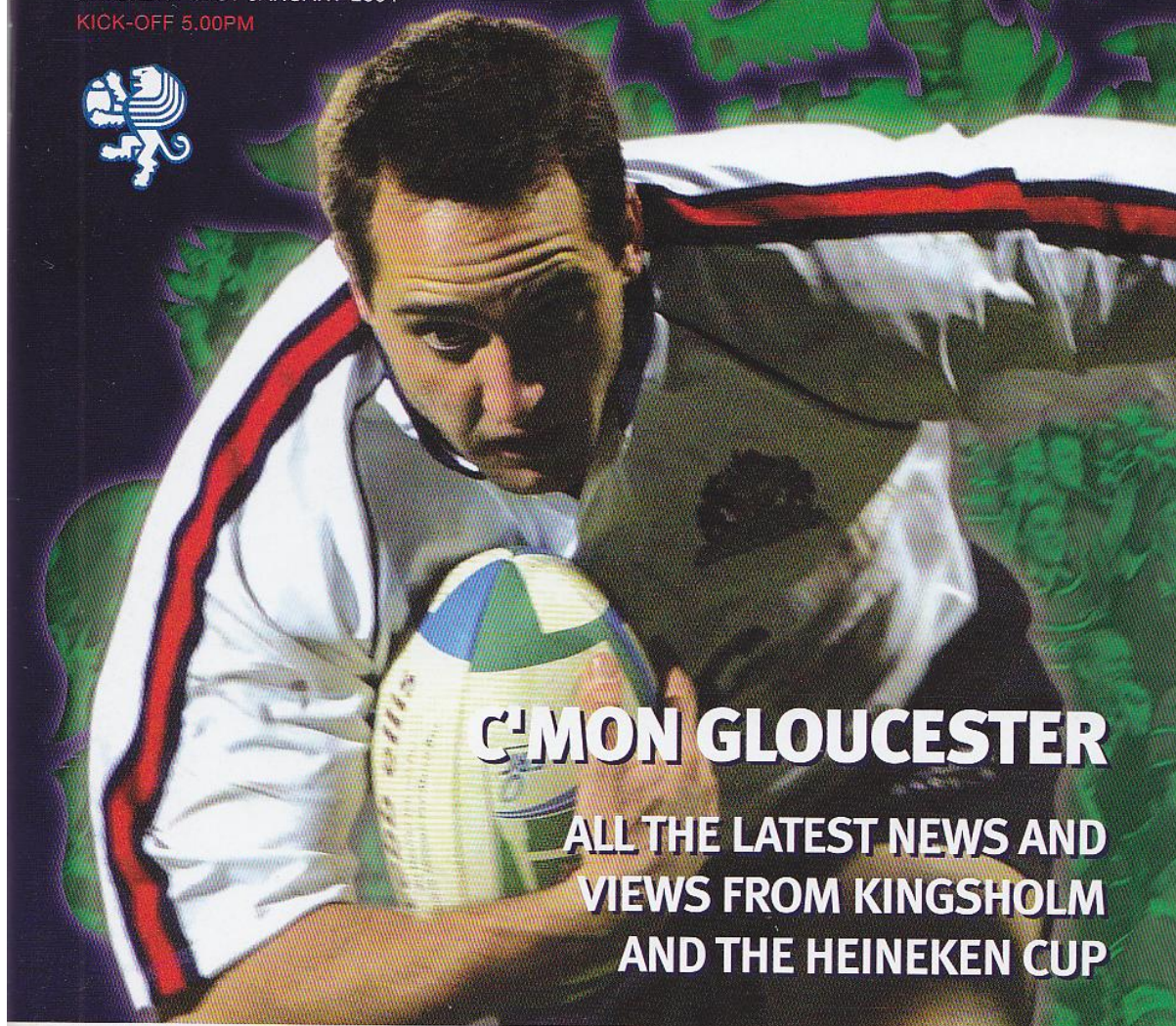
RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

v Benetton Treviso

HEINEKEN CUP FIXTURE

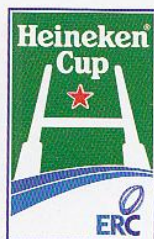
SATURDAY 31ST JANUARY 2004

KICK-OFF 5.00PM



COMON GLOUCESTER

ALL THE LATEST NEWS AND
VIEWS FROM KINGSHOLM
AND THE HEINEKEN CUP



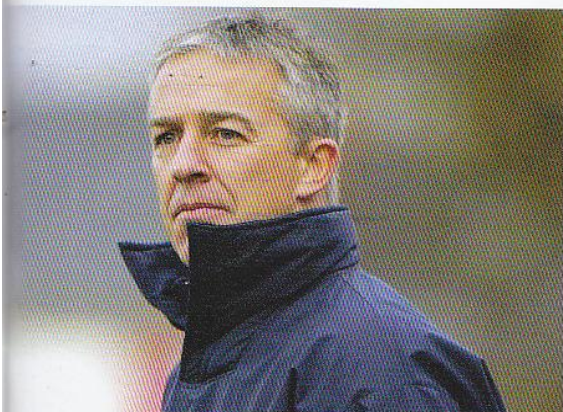
Heineken® Cup

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Round Six



NIGEL'S NOTES...

Nigel Melville

Director of Rugby

"The standards of European rugby are raising each year..."

It gives me great pleasure to welcome Treviso to Kingsholm for our sixth and final Heineken Cup pool game of the season, I am sure you will agree with me that Group Five has been everything we thought it would be!

The Heineken European Cup now sits comfortably alongside the Southern Hemisphere's Super 12 competition. The standards of European rugby are raising each year, England are the current World Champions and France are tipped to win the next World Cup in 2007, the Club game in Europe is now as strong as it has ever been.

Today's visitors Treviso have once again been great ambassadors for Italian rugby, it can't have been easy trying to close the gap on their French, English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish opponents when the game in those countries was developing at such a rapid rate, but they have, earning them a reputation as a difficult team to beat, home and away. It is no surprise that Italy's Six Nations squad announced this week includes so many Treviso players.

January has been one of the most demanding months I have been involved in since joining Gloucester. Leicester (a), Munster (h), Munster (a), Bourgain (a) and Treviso (h) is a tough schedule by anyone's standards, so many things can go wrong, on and off the pitch. Fortunately we have a group of players and coaches at Gloucester who are constantly trying to raise their standards and take the Club forward.

Last weekend we travelled to Bourgain for yet another 'must win' game, I do find 'must win' a strange way of looking at a game of rugby, we've never actually gone into a game thinking it doesn't matter if we lose. In France, we faced one of the country's form sides, Bourgain had only lost once at home this season – to Munster. There was talk of bonus points before the

game, but the weather was appalling, the likelihood of high scoring, free running game appeared remote.

After just 30 seconds and seven points on the board, thanks to a Marcel Garvey try and Henry Paul touchline conversion, the rain stopped and the game turned into an absolute cracker. The final try of the game scored by James Simpson-Daniel in the closing minutes brought a well-deserved bonus point for the team who had played with great passion and commitment throughout a bruising encounter.

We may have travelled hundreds of miles during the last month, playing in some of the most intimidating grounds in Europe, but we are never alone. During the past four weeks thousands have travelled by bus, cars, coaches, boats and planes to watch us play. The support has been absolutely unbelievable, I cannot give enough praise for the effort and commitment so many people make to support us. As a result, Gloucester's reputation both at home and abroad continues to grow, it is no coincidence that our away form has also improved – thank you to everyone of you for your continued support.

Finally, I would like to congratulate all the Gloucester players announced in a variety of international squads this weekend. Once again Simon Amor captains the England 7s squad who travel to New Zealand this weekend. Brad Davies, Andy Frost, Nick Wood and Marcel Garvey will be representing England U21s, and Olly Morgan, Matt Tait, Ryan Lamb and Rory Teague have been playing for the England U19s. In addition James Merriman was named in the Welsh Six Nations training squad. The full England squad announced this week includes James Simpson-Daniel, Trevor Woodman, Phil Vickery, Andy Gomarsall and a return to the international arena for Henry Paul.

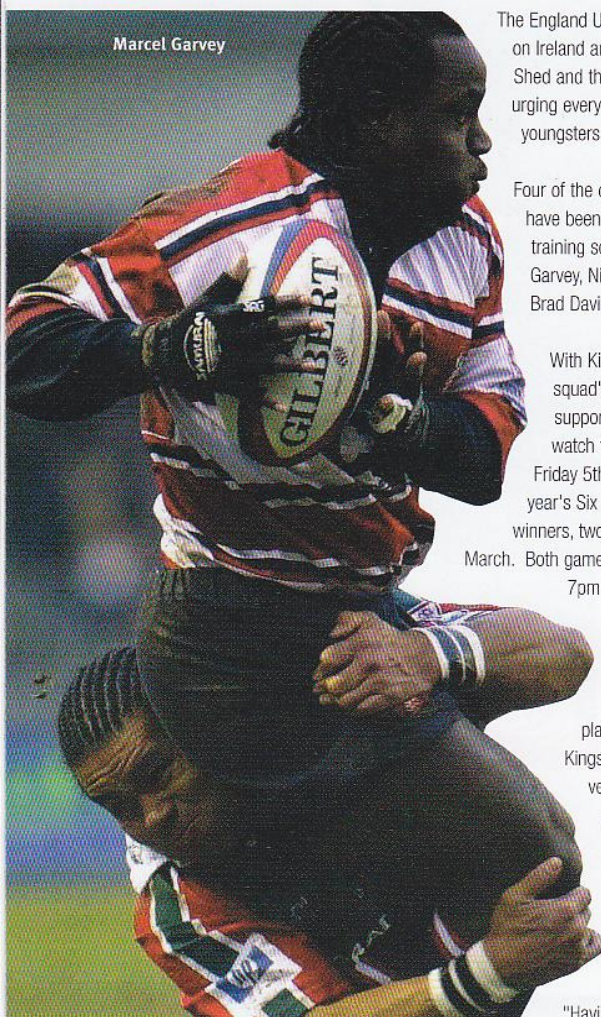
Enjoy today's game.

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England Play at Kingsholm



Kingsholm is becoming the home of the England U21s side this Spring, as it'll be hosting the young England side's RBS Six Nations campaign.



Marcel Garvey

The England U21s team will be taking on Ireland and Wales in front of the Shed and the Cherry and Whites are urging everyone to get behind the youngsters.

Four of the current first team squad have been named in the provisional training squad, including Marcel Garvey, Nick Wood, Andy Frost and Brad Davies.

With Kingsholm now being the squad's official home base, supporters will be able to watch them take on Ireland on Friday 5th March and Wales, last year's Six Nations and Grand Slam winners, two weeks later, on 19th March. Both games will kick off around 7pm or 7.30pm.

Peter Drewett, England U21 manager, said: "From a player's point of view, Kingsholm is a fantastic venue. The south west is a real rugby heartland and the Gloucester crowds, in particular, are dedicated and knowledgeable supporters.

"Having the back up of a

thoroughly professional set up, like the one at Gloucester, will be a huge advantage to us. It will ensure that the games run smoothly while raising the profile of the tournament and attracting supporters."

Karen Ellis, Gloucester RFC's Commercial Director said: We are delighted at the prospect of hosting these two England U21's matches, giving Kingsholm the opportunity to showcase England's finest young talent. Gloucestershire is a region renowned for it's passion for rugby union and we look forward to welcoming all of the nations rugby fans to what we are sure will be two memorable matches."

Kingsholm, with frequent 11,000 capacity crowds, is sure to provide a fantastic home atmosphere for these talented young England players.

The England U21 set-up plays a key development role, helping players to step up to full England selection. Almost all the big names in Clive Woodward's senior squad have come up through the Under 21 ranks.

Nigel Melville, Gloucester RFC's Director of Rugby said, "These games give us all a great opportunity to watch the international stars of the present and future. Both Dean Ryan and myself have been involved with the management of the U21s in the past which has a proven track record of providing the next generation of full

England internationals.

"We are very proud that some of Gloucester's brightest young stars such as James Simpson-Daniel, James Forrester, Marcel Garvey and Jon Goodridge have all benefited from their involvement in the England set-up. If England go on to retain the World Cup in 2007 it's difficult to imagine that a large number of this U21 squad will not be playing a significant part."

The south west has an excellent record of developing young talent for England teams. The region's clubs and schools provided more than a quarter of the recently named England U19 squad and 12 of the 31 players who took part in last year's U21 IRB World Cup.

Drewett, who has lived in the south west for the past 30 years, said the venue will hold added significance for the coaching team as well as players, "Both John Callard and John Redman had distinguished careers with Gloucester's west country rivals Bath in the 1980s, during which time I played alongside them for three years."

Tickets are priced from £8 for adults and £2 for under 16s, with concessions costing £4 per game. The Club has also introduced a saving for supporters if they wish to buy for both the home England U21 Internationals. Tickets for both games are available from Gloucester Rugby Club's ticket hotline on 0871 871 8781.



Brad Davies



Andy Frost



Nick Wood

Gloucester Rugby Club is also promoting special deals for group bookings from schools, clubs and other organisations for both games.

More details can be obtained from James Bennett, Gloucester RFC's Community Development Manager by email at jamesbennett@gloucesterrugbyclub.com. All tickets are on sale NOW.

Ticket Prices: £9 for adults, £2 for U16s and £5 for concessions

Tickets AVAILABLE NOW
call 0871 871 8781

ENGLAND U21 SIX NATIONS TRAINING SQUAD

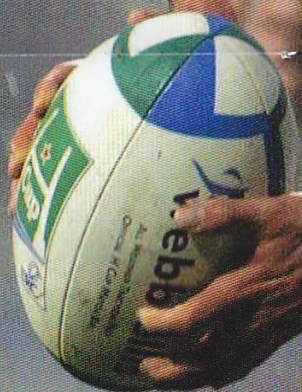
FORWARDS

Aston Croall - Saracens
Christian Day - Sale Sharks
Stuart Friswell - Leicester Tigers
Matt Hampson - Leicester Tigers
James Haskell - London Wasps
Rob Hawkins - Bath
Mark Hopley - Worcester RFC
Andrew Kyriacou - Sale Sharks
Magnus Lund - Sale Sharks
Tom Parker - NEC Harlequins
Geoff Parling - Newcastle Falcons
James Percival - Worcester RFC
Tom Rees - London Wasps
Ben Russell - Saracens
Will Skinner - Leicester Tigers
Ben Skirving - Saracens
Tom Warren - Worcester RFC
David Wilson - Newcastle Falcons
Nick Wood - Gloucester RFC

BACKS

James Bailey - Bristol Shoguns
Henry Barratt - NEC Harlequins
Chris Bell - NEC Harlequins
Jon Clarke - Northampton Saints
Spencer Davey - Bath
Brad Davies - Gloucester RFC
Andrew Frost - Gloucester RFC
Marcel Garvey - Gloucester RFC
Adrian Jarvis - NEC Harlequins
Ugo Monye - NEC Harlequins
Nils Mordt - London Irish
Luke Myring - Leicester Tigers
Andy Reay - NEC Harlequins
Clive Stuart-Smith - Leeds Tykes
Richard Wigglesworth - Sale Sharks
Tom Williams - NEC Harlequins

Cherry and White Camera Action



Gloucester
RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB



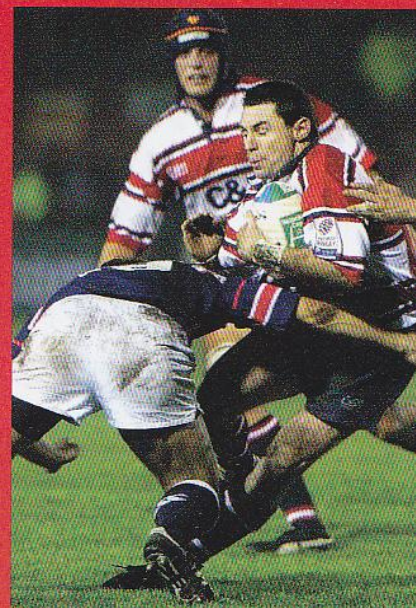
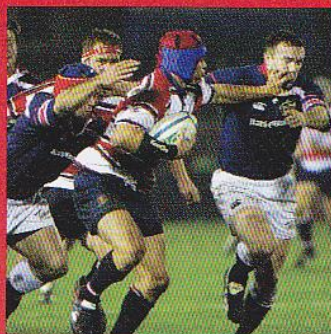
Position: Fly Half/
Full Back
DoB: 26.02.81
Height: 186 cm
Weight: 86 kg
Previous GRFC
Club: Academy
Int'l
Honours: England U21

Jon Goodridge

club sponsor

C&G Cheltenham & Gloucester

For all your Gloucester Rugby Club photography visit www.gpacimages.com



KINGSHOLM SATURDAY 10 JANUARY 2004



GLOUCESTER 22

TRIES: SIMPSON-DANIEL CONVERSIONS: PAUL
PENALTIES: PAUL (4) DROP GOALS: PAUL



MUNSTER 11

TRIES: HORGAN PENALTIES: O'GARA (2)

top left: Marcel Garvey is tackled by Munsters Jim Williams. middle: Henry Paul and Munsters Mike Mullins (left) and John Kelly (right).

above: Duncan McRae is tackled by Munsters Shaun Payne and Rob Henderson (right).



THOMOND PARK SATURDAY 17 JANUARY 2004



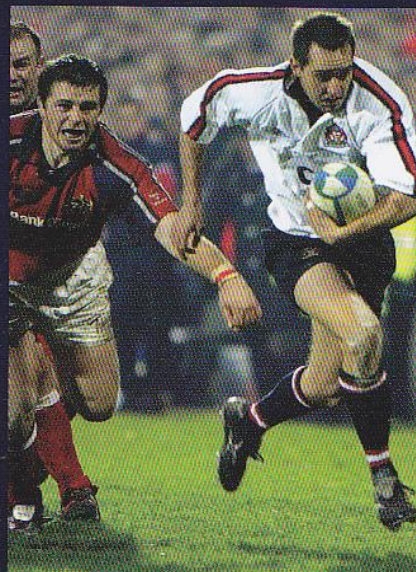
MUNSTER 35

TRIES: HORAN (2), SHEAHAN, KELLY
CONVERSIONS: O'GARA (3) PENALTIES: O'GARA (3)



GLOUCESTER 14

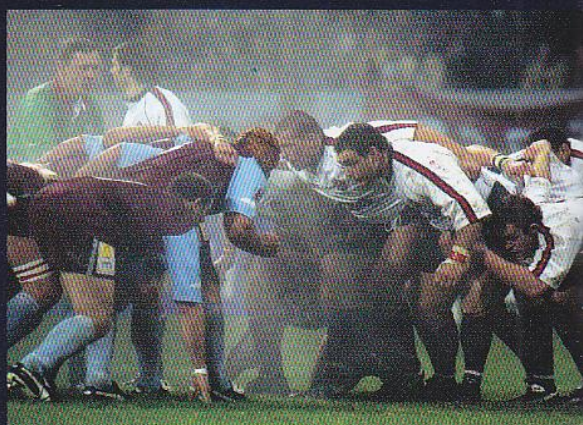
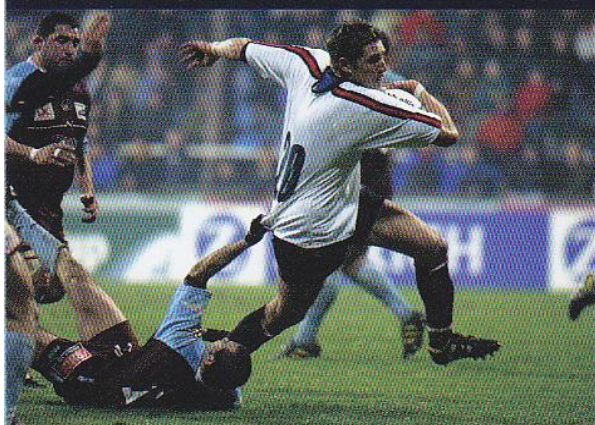
TRIES: GOODRIDGE PENALTIES: PAUL (3)



far left: Junior Paramore escapes a tackle from Munsters Anthony Horgan. left: James Simpson-Daniel escapes a tackle from Munsters Donnacha O'Callaghan.

above: Jon Goodridge runs in his second half try.

Pictures courtesy of Bruce Seabrook - GPA Images



STADE PIERRE RAJON SATURDAY 24 JANUARY 2004



BOURGAIN 18

TRIES: **PAPE, FRITZ** CONVERSIONS: **BOYET**

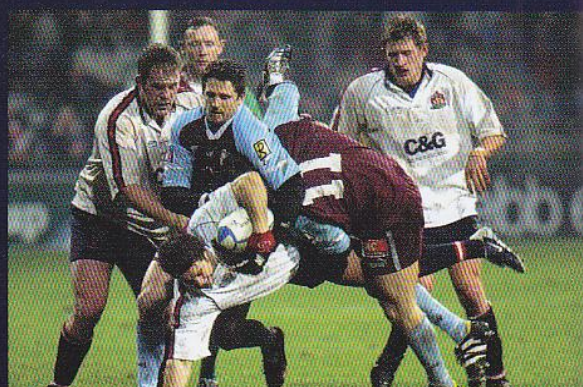
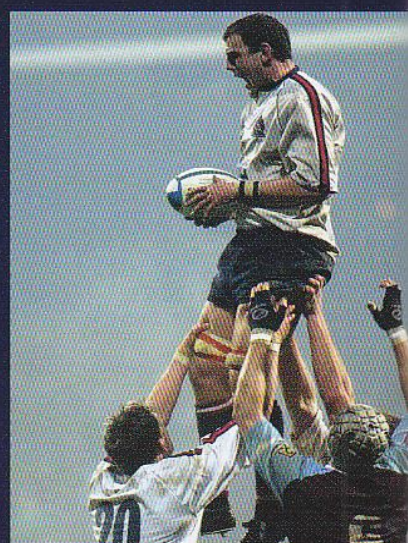
DROPGOALS: **BOYET (2)**



GLOUCESTER 37

TRIES: **GARVEY, PAUL, MCRAE, SIMPSON-DANIEL**

CONVERSIONS: **PAUL (4)** PENALTIES: **PAUL (3)**



top left: James Forrester evades a tackle from Bourgoins Anthony Forest. top right: Gloucester's scrum down. middle: Adam Eustace wins a line out. bottom left: Henry Paul passes. bottom right: Andy Gomarsall is halted by Bourgoins's Francois Coux-Jean (right).

Pictures courtesy of Bruce Seabrook - GPA Images

Jake Boer

The Gloucester Citizen's Alastair Downey caught up with club captain Jake Boer for this week's official matchday programme.

EVEN IN the hurly-burly of the Heineken Cup, in its frenetic close-quarter exchanges and withering mental demands, Jake Boer stands out as a man with a nose for the action.

When he gathered his men beneath the posts at the Stade Pierre Rajon last Saturday night following Florian Fritz's intercept try that gave Bourgoin the lead, Gloucester's European campaign could have headed two ways - either down the U-bend or to salvation that would almost guarantee a place in the knockout stages of the competition.

In the past, Gloucester would have fretted and squabbled amongst themselves - they never turn down the opportunity for a bit of a scrap if they can possibly avoid it - but over the past month they have transferred obvious potential into a series of emphatically important results.

Boer admitted he gets so caught up in the relentless cycle of travel, train, play, travel, train play, that he has no idea of scores in recent matches, but he has been

delighted by their effort considering Gloucester have trekked to Leicester, Munster and France in January.

"As a captain I do feel a huge measure of responsibility about how we have approached the last month," he said.

"Overall, I am pretty happy with the way we have played. We have made some stupid errors - some have been my fault - but it has been a big learning curve for everybody.

"But I think we have been able to keep our game at an unbelievable level and to take three results out of four like we have, has been massive.

"We were all disappointed with the Munster result but to pick ourselves up mentally a week after that was a huge ask and we did it.

"It felt like no sooner were we off the plane from Ireland than we were back on it to go to France and that is difficult."

But along the way, Gloucester have unearthed a few gems. Alongside Boer, his forwards have been simply outstanding if you take into account their recent schedule - Pete Buxton might not be an all-singing, all-dancing openside but his sheer work-load and force of character has been exemplary, as has Alex Brown's and Trevor Woodman's when it has all got a bit messy.

Director of rugby Nigel Melville has also welcomed back Phil Vickery and James



Forrester from long-term injuries to strengthen Gloucester's armoury with a potential quarter-final ahead.

And in the roughest European waters, Henry Paul has emerged as one of the most instinctive attacking weapons in the game.

His foot work and distribution in helping create Duncan McRae's try last weekend were outstanding, while the poise and composure of the Australian when Gloucester's game needed shaping in France was excellent in their pursuit of four tries and a bonus point.

Andy Gomarsall has also added a bucket-load of experience and awareness to Gloucester's game and his effort in the first half against Bourgoin was outstanding.

"We play a slightly different game in Europe - slightly quicker - which means our options have to be better," said Boer.

"Sometimes, when the game is played

so quickly and options need to be taken and decisions made, it is easy to make the wrong ones.

"For me it has been a massive learning curve this month, but I think we have played to the best of our ability and got the results we needed."

But for now Boer would only look forward to today's visit of Treviso and another physical pounding against the Italian champions.

"It is about looking after the body at this stage," he said.

"But Treviso won't lie down and it will not be an easy game for us.

"They have improved during the competition and will be keen to end on a high."

And so to will Gloucester. A quarter-final place is within their grasp and they have come too far in the last four weeks to let that opportunity go.



United Match Action

Two of the club's colts team members were making their debuts for the United, Goran Antonjevic and Andrew Bird at half back. Both gave favourable impressions. Mark Bedney opened the scoring with a try after eleven minutes. Antonjevic converted. Treviso replied with a try from Giacomo Piloti which Foavio Donati failed to convert. Back row forward Simon Deveraux in an impressive display increased the United lead with a try in the 38th minute. So the United fifteen reached half time with 12-5 lead.

After the break Treviso were awarded a penalty try in the 62nd minute which Donati converted. Andrew Pinarello increased the Italian club's lead three minutes later with another try. Foavio Donati added the conversion. A penalty try was awarded to the United team in the 74th minute which Jason Merchant converted to bring the scores level at 19-19.

The Bennetton team scrum half that afternoon was Alessandro Troncon who captained the Italian World Cup bid in Australia 2003!

GLOUCESTER 1ST XV

Martin Roberts: Paul Holford: Simon Morris:
Ian Morgan: Chris Dee: Paul Beech:
Julian Davis: Pete Jones: George Mann:
Bob Phillips: Dave Sims: Richard West:
Ian Smith (Capt): Bob Fowke:
Replacements: Tony Windo: Jeremy Perrins:
Mark Wadley: Peter Glanville
and Mark Bedney.

BENNETTON TREVISO 1ST XV

P.Dotto: J.Kirwan: E.Ceselin: A.Pallodo
(Captain): L.Perziano: M.Lynagh: V.Taselatto:
G.Grespan: J.Manenti: G.Rossi: R.Favaro:
M.Giacheri: L.Dolfato: W.Cristofolletto:
F.Coppo.

Referee: Nigel Cousins (RFU)

Match Action

Kicking off in bright sunshine Julian Davis put the Cherry and Whites ahead with a 6th minute try. Fly half Paul Beech added the conversion. Treviso were level eight minutes later when Leonardo Perziano scored a try. Michael Lynagh added a successful

conversion. The Italian team took the lead after twenty-eight minutes when Giovane Rossi crossed the try line. Lynagh missed the conversion. At half time Bennetton Treviso lead 12-7.

Within six minutes of the resumption Paul Beech kicked a penalty. In the 49th minute Bob Fowke put the Cherry and Whites in the lead with a try.

The Italian club were not to be denied with a Michael Lynagh penalty bringing the scores level at 15 points each. Once again the impressive Paul Beech added three points with a 74th minute penalty. Almost on the final whistle a Simon Morris try duly converted by the 21 year old Paul Beech, gave the cherry and Whites a 25-15 victory.

Of course Michael Lynagh is now a television pundit while John Kirwan the former All Black winger, is the Coach to the Italian National Team and led them in the 2003 World Cup tournament in Australia.

Michael Lynagh who was Captain of the successful Australian 1991 World Cup Winners had this to say after the match. "It was very stop-start and we never got flowing. We lost our cool a little bit. Gloucester played very well and seemed to have a very well organised team especially in the back row where they had a good understanding with each other and with the scrum half (Davis). Beech played very well. He was given some good ball by his forwards and took a lot of good options."

John Kirwan, now the Italian Coach added: "I don't like losing and it was a hard game but we had a good trip. The game could have gone either way but at the end of the day Gloucester dug in and came out on top/ A re-match in Italy would be good."



Michael Lynagh played for Australia (1984-95) and won Caps scoring 911 points.

John Kirwan played for New Zealand (1984-94) and won 63 Caps scoring 35 tries. Played Rugby League in 1995-96 for Auckland Warriors

After the summer break Gloucester prepared for the new season. The following pre-season tour was set for a five day Italian adventure. Fixtures had been arranged with Casale and Treviso. Barry Corless had been appointed as the Club's first full time director of rugby.

A party of 22 players set off from Kingsholm at 8.30am on that early September morning prior to the 1993-94 season. The coach headed for Gatwick airport where the following players were on a 1.30pm flight to Northern Italy: -

Tim Smith: Mark Nicholls: Ian Smith: Don Caskie: Jason Merchant: Bob Phillips: Julian Davis: Tony Windo: Marcus Hannaford: Richard West: Mark Nicholson: Dave Sims: Simon Morris: Paul Ashmead: Andy Deacon: Bob Fowke: Ian Morgan: Dave Kearsey: Paul Holford: Simon Deveraux: Paul Beech and John Hawker.

The Cherry and White party stayed at Ledo de Jossolo near Venice. Michael Lynagh the current television pundit was still a member of Treviso but was not included in their team scheduled to entertain Gloucester RFC.

Following a comfortable 45-10 victory over Casale it was generally expected that a similar result would follow against Treviso. The two teams that took the field that September afternoon were as follows: -

BENETTON TREVISIO

P.Dotto: L.Perziano: F.Donati: S.Zorgi (O.Colledo): R. Montero: M.Vinsentin: R.Casellato: G.Grespan (Capt): M.Treevisor: S.Kelemenic: R.Annibal: M.Giaccheri (P.Gretti): L.Dolfato: F.Rigo (P.Bot): F.Coppo.
Replacements not used: Fracastato: Gulliato: Vinsentin: Mazzariol

GLOUCESTER RFC

T.Smith: P.Holford: S.Morris: D.Caskie: M.Nicholson: D.Cummins (P.Beech): M.Hannaford (J.Davis): R.Phillips: J.Hawker: A.Deacon: D.Sims: R.West: P.Ashmead: I.Smith (Capt): R.Fowke.
Replacements not used: J.Merchant: I.Morgan: T.Windo: D.Kearsey: S.Deveraux and M.Nicholls.

On a rainy afternoon some indifferent refereeing baulked any ideas the Cherry and Whites had of securing a second victory on this short tour. Consistently stepping in front of the Gloucester pack at the scrums he prevented any driving start and it resulted in a distinct disadvantage to the frustrated Gloucester players. As a result the back row were constantly back peddling.

Rigo opened the scoring for Treviso in the 17th minute with a try which Dotto converted. The Italians increased their lead with a 22nd minute penalty from Dotto and then three minutes later Dolfato crossed for a try. The fifteen point lead was reduced when Tim Smith landed a 38th minute penalty. Despite a spirited second half performance which saw replacement Paul Beech reduce the arrears with a 54th minute penalty, followed by a Don Caskie try converted by Tim Smith nine minutes later, a penalty by Treviso full back Dotto in the 65th minute completed the scoring to give the hosts a 18-13 victory.

Meanwhile back at Kingsholm a Gloucester team were defeating Blackheath 34-14.

Their line-up was as follows: - M.Roberts: D.Morgan: C.O'Donoghue: B.Maslen: C.Dee:

A.Johnson: L.Beck: P.Jones: G.Mann: A.Martin: P.Miles (S.Masters): P.Bell: P.Glanville (M.Wadley): A.Stanley (Capt): R.Baxter.
Replacements not used: B.Fenley

Ashley Johnson scored fourteen points with a try, penalty and three conversions. While Peter Glanville, Pete Jones, Laurie Beck and Alan Martin all scored tries in a convincing victory.

A United team set to play a North Gloucester Combination XV the following Monday evening made interesting reading! With Tom Beim, Rob Fidler, Phil Greening and Chris Fortey all set to become first team regulars

UNITED

T.Beim: C.Andrews: B.Salter: B.Chamberlain: J.Etheridge: N.Paisely: A.Bird: L.Fortey: P.Greening: M.Bilous: C.Stokes: R.Fidler: R.Rainford: J.Tonks: N.Evans.
Replacements: J.Middlecote: N.Merrett: L.O'Neill: C.Fortey: S.Miles: K.Snow

Home and away, it was an interesting time!



Peter Arnold

Resident Gloucester historian Peter Arnold enjoys the build-up to the final Heineken Cup pool game and writes some interesting thoughts.

THE FUTURE'S BRIGHT

To paraphrase a famous telephone company commercial, 'The future's bright. The future's cherry-and-white'.

That thought was originally prompted by the sight of Jon Goodridge, making a try out of virtually nothing in the away game against Munster.

It showed considerable invention, vision and speed and was the bright spot in an otherwise disappointing afternoon. It also made me think that, when Thinus Delpont returns from injury next season, fine player

though he is, he's going to have some serious competition for the full-back spot.

He may not be the only one looking over his shoulder. When Chris Collins was thrown into the furnace at the home Munster match, he performed admirably without batting an eyelid. Indeed, there were those recommending that he keep his spot when Chris Fortey returned from is one-week suspension.

I suppose that when in doubt, go for the experienced man, but I do have to say that I didn't really notice much difference when Collins came on to cover for Fortey during the latter's sin-binning the following week.

World Cup call-ups, injury and the occasional suspension have distorted things for Gloucester this season. The good news about that is that the situation has allowed various young players to stand up and be counted. Brad Davies and Rory Teague both showed promise at the beginning of the campaign, as did Nick Wood and one or two others.

We mustn't forget Marcel Garvey either. He's been such an ever-present over the past eighteen months or so that we tend not to think of him as a youngster any more. Yet he still qualifies for next week's England U21 training squad, alongside three other Gloucester players. We also have four players in the England U19 squad.

It's also worth mentioning James Merriman who was drafted into the full

Welsh training squad, despite the fact that he's scarcely set foot on the Kingsholm turf during a Senior XV match.

It's all great stuff as far as the future of the Gloucester side, and indeed of the club itself. There's a lot to be said for 'rolling your own' rather than buying in 'tailor made' from all over the world.

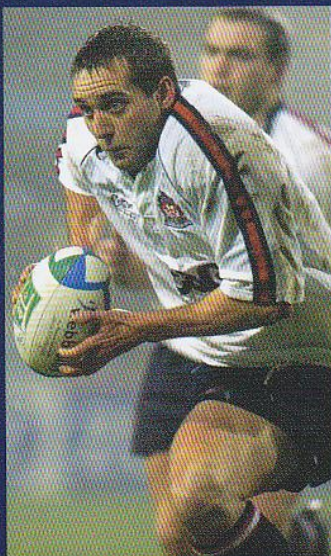
But the Merriman call-up reminds me of another Gloucester player who looked for Welsh recognition, although Merriman is as Welsh as they come.

Remember that forthright prop forward, Bob 'Dino' Phillips, who was called into a Welsh Development Squad on one occasion. Now Bob's a great bloke and a fine player in his time, but he has a 'Glawstershire' accent you could cut with a brick, and is one of the last blokes I would associate with a Welsh career.

When I asked him how it all came about, he grinned and explained, "Well, Pete. I own a corgi!"

JONNO AND SIMMO

The news that Martin Johnson has retired from international rugby hardly came as a surprise. In the game against Gloucester he looked jaded and out of sorts for 40 minutes before being substituted, and in the following match actually started on the bench. Something was obviously in the wind.





We shall miss him in the white shirt. Every time he ran on to the field he had an aura about him; a brooding presence which meant you always knew he was there. I can only think of one player who had that same sort of charisma – if that's the right word – and that was our own Dave Sims.

Indeed, the similarities between the two are remarkable. Both were dominant figures in the second row, both were natural born leaders who never looked quite as effective when playing under someone else. Indeed, if Martin Johnson had never been born, then it's eminently possible that Simmo might have fulfilled the same role in the England camp. He was quite good enough to do so, and in any other era, would have played for England far more often than he did.

Watch the video of that epic World Cup Final and you'll see what I'm getting at. When Johnson held the ball for just those few extra hard yards before releasing it for the climactic drop goal he was doing exactly what Dave Sims would have done. It isn't impossible to replace the

dominant figure of Martin Johnson holding the Webb Ellis Trophy aloft with that of Dave Sims. Two of a kind if I've ever seen it.

Neither player was exactly a shrinking violet, in fact one little bunch in the Shed used to hold an informal sweepstake on how long it would be before Jonno took a 10-minute break, but Big Dave wasn't an angel, either. What they did have, in spades, was the total respect of players and spectators alike.

It's to be hoped that we'll still see a lot of Martin Johnson at Kingsholm before he discards his boots altogether. England, and eventually Leicester, won't be the same without him.

WELCOME IN THE HILLSIDES?

If I'd paid more attention during Joe Whiteley's lessons, all those years ago, at the Crypt School, I might be able to quote the French for 'the mind boggles'. Just another sign of a misspent youth, but it did cross my mind when I first heard that

Philippe St. André had tossed his chapeau in the ring in the contest to find a new Welsh coach.

Then before I'd really got my head around it, Bourgoin went and sacked him after the bonus-point defeat by Gloucester last Saturday. Head honcho, Pierre Marconnet, pointed out that it's not really a good idea to let your boss read about your new job application in the newspapers before you've told him about it. He did add that it was 'the last straw which broke the camel's back', so his English is obviously better than my French.

No one knows more about Philippe's abrasive management style than we do, and how it would mix with the unique Welsh temperament is anyone's guess.

I can't see it happening, myself, but it would be interesting to watch if it did. From the safe side of the Bristol Channel, anyway.

Best of luck, Philippe. We don't like to see anyone forced to join the dole queue.

BY IAN RANDALL

BBC RADIO GLOUCESTERSHIRE



BBC Radio Gloucestershire's Ian Randall takes a look into his crystal ball and pens his pool qualification predictions and who meets who in the quarter-finals.

Tonight's finale to the pool stages of the Heineken Cup for Gloucester draws parallels with both previous campaigns.

In the first, Gloucester had the 'banker' of an away game against Roma as the final match, one where a win

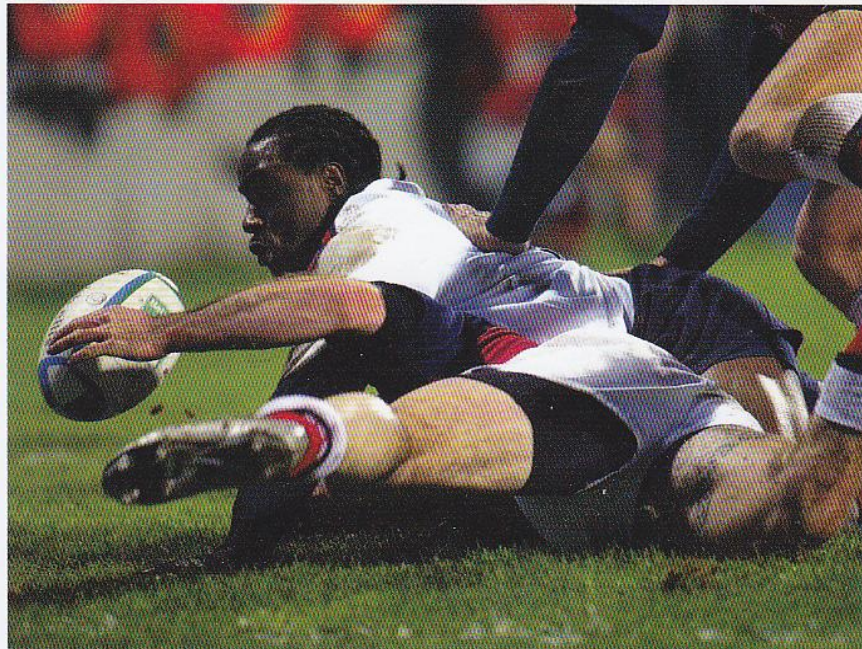
conditions permitting.

The cold snap this week took me back to Viadana's visit, which followed a spell of similarly cold weather. Stadium manager Dave Balmer had to hire some warm air blowers to ensure the game was played on time, even though Kingsholm was covered for a week beforehand. That game was also a 3pm kick off - I hope the 5pm kick off tonight isn't an issue.

"...it seems unthinkable that Pool 5 won't be one of the two groups where two teams qualify."

I was sat at my desk on Monday and the groups make Gloucester's position look a healthy one. On form, and given the final round of fixtures, it seems unthinkable that Pool 5 won't be one of the two groups where two teams qualify. The other one looks likely to be Pool 2, where Edinburgh travel to Toulouse for their last game with the only 100% record in the competition. This is the weekend where the fascination of the Heineken Cup comes into its own, so here are my predictions for the last eight.

set up the never to be forgotten game against Llanelli. Again, it is Italian opposition last, this time with home advantage that Gloucester will hope to make count,



Pool 1.

Only one team will qualify here, and that will have come from last night's game between Leicester and Stade Francais at Welford Road. This has been an evenly contested group, and despite the Tigers' poor League form, I think they will have done enough to go through with 19 points.

Quarter Final Ranking : Leicester (6)

Pool 2.

Scotland will be represented for the first time by Edinburgh after wins in each of their first five games, but they will have had a lot to play for in France this afternoon. A win would have given them a home quarter final as top seeds, but defeat could see them dropping to the bottom of the pecking order as the second best runners up. They beat Toulouse at home and their defence has been excellent, but I fancy they might just come up short away – leaving the French side as possible opponents for Gloucester.

Quarter Final Ranking: Toulouse (2) Edinburgh (8).

Pool 3.

Another shoot out on French soil here, with Leinster going to Biarritz three points clear at the top. The permutations are almost endless. Biarritz must win, but Leinster could still pip them if they were to get a losing bonus point – that is unless Biarritz can score four tries. See what I mean? The Irishmen have already won at Sale and Cardiff, and by the time you read this I think they'll have completed a hat trick and finish top with 22 points.

Quarter Final Ranking: Leinster (4)

Pool 4.

Franklins Gardens will be heaving tomorrow for the clash between Northampton and Llanelli. Both teams have lost only once, and the Scarlets narrow one point lead will only come into play in the event of a draw. It's hard to split them, but home advantage might just tip it Northampton's way and make them another qualifier with 22 points.

Quarter Final Ranking: Northampton (3)

Pool 5.

No doubt you are familiar with this one. Last week's excellent result in what proved to be Philippe Saint Andre's last match in charge of Bourgoin should mean the Cherry & Whites go through along with Munster, who

“Last week's excellent result in what proved to be Philippe Saint Andre's last match in charge of Bourgoin should mean the Cherry & Whites go through...”

despite losing here remain a very efficient unit. They ought to get their bonus point against the French, leaving Gloucester to go through with more points than some of the other group winners, yet only qualifying as the best runners up.

Quarter Final Ranking: Munster (1), Gloucester (7).

Pool 6.

The only one where the points and the fixtures see three teams still in with a chance. Wasps appear to be well placed, but their last game is in Perpignan – and Gloucester are well aware of how hard that can be. The Catalans could haul in Wasps four point lead with a victory, but that may not be enough as both can still be overtaken by the Celtic Warriors, whose last game is away to bottom side Calvisano. It is possible three teams could finish on 19 or 20 points, and I think the Warriors might just sneak it with Wasps losing in France.

Quarter Final Ranking: Celtic Warriors (5).

That leaves the last eight potentially looking like this:

Munster v Edinburgh

Toulouse v Gloucester

Northampton v Leicester

Leinster v Celtic Warriors

A strong quartet of matches, and somewhere new for Gloucester fans to visit in April...but then I'd gladly suffer the humiliation of being totally inaccurate with the above if it meant the Cherry & Whites could somehow sneak a home draw!

C'mon Glaws !

Fans Zone

with
Bob Fenton

In this week's programme Bob Fenton looks at the last few weeks of Heineken Cup action as well as a few other bits and bobs.

Well it's been a great few weeks, hasn't it? The Heineken Cup has proved to be it's usual heady mix of elation and despair in equal measures as first of all we edged passed Munster at home, only to be blown away over there. Strong

"Year on year these sides have got better, and that goes to show what progress can be made when your national team competes at the highest level. "

feelings of déjà vu all round, then.

Those results left the group wide open again, with both the front-runners equal on points before last weekend's games. Munster held the whip hand though, with a trip to Treviso to look forward to, while we trekked south to France to face Bourgoin.

Both sides earned the requisite bonus point – though did we leave it late or what, I'm reliably informed that sales of valium reached an all time high last Saturday – to leave the pool table all square at 19 points all.

And it seems that the result was the final nail in our old coach Philippe Saint Andre's Bourgoin coffin, he apparently got the chop after the game. Seems his boss was not too impressed with Philippe chucking his hat into the ring for the vacant position as coach of the Welsh side, and this coupled with a poor run of form of late, saw the

end of his two-year stint.

He's too good a bloke to keep down and I'm pretty sure he'll bounce back somewhere soon enough, though probably not standing at the helm of Welsh rugby.

We all know the rules for qualification (see section in programme), but maybe there should be a third way of deciding things. As the competition is sponsored by a drinks company why not organise home and away drinking competitions between sets of supporters. Last one standing wins. Hang on, haven't we just done that, and didn't that end in a draw. Oh I give up, just point me in the right direction and I'll try to be there.

I've never been good at tables or maths and sometimes working out all the permutations to see who finishes top, who qualifies for a runner up spot or who you play in the quarter finals, needs someone with a masters degree in quantum statistics or something similar.

I'm sure that there will be someone else writing somewhere in this programme who will know the answer of who needs to do what to whom in order to qualify. I hope so, because trying to work out all the options has been doing my head in all week.

I suppose before we give ourselves a headache over who goes where next we had better secure the win and bonus point from today's game, otherwise all the 'what ifs' will be completely academic. And that may not be as easy as you think. A few years ago getting an Italian side in your Heineken Cup group was seen as an impending try-fest, not any more though. Check the results and see



how well Treviso, Calvisano et al have done this term.

Year on year these sides have got better, and that goes to show what progress can be made when your national team competes at the highest level. There can be little doubt that the progress made in the club game in Italy has gone hand in hand with that made by the national side – maybe that's an argument for including some of the up and coming Eastern European teams in a higher class international tournament.

Another great plus for the competition this year has been the TV coverage. You have to say Sky TV have done a fantastic job this time around with games on all over the weekend, and the round-up show on a Sunday evening that draws everything together.

Conor O'Shea has been great on that programme, bursting with enthusiasm and

with really interesting and balanced comments – surely a great media career beckons for him, Sky should get him on the Rugby Club more often – make a change from the Stuart Barnes / Dewi Morris Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum act.

Shame about Tony ("Wooden??? Me???) Dipstick though, but I suppose you can't have everything.

Changing subjects with all the speed of a Sinbad side-step, did you read that stuff in the paper the other day about Phil Vickery's Raging Bull outfit branching out into women's clothing – or more precisely, underwear? Come on, you must have seen the picture of Vickster, Duggie and Foro standing in the middle of Gloucester, each crammed into a lacy bra.

I suppose we should be grateful for small mercies that they didn't go for the whole basque and stockings outfit (steady girls) they would have looked like Frank N

Furter from the 'Rocky Horror Picture Show' after he had let himself go a bit.

I think he needs to work on the name a bit though – 'Moody Cow'. Can you imagine in a couple of weeks time on Valentines Day handing your nearest and dearest a box with that emblazoned across it? Man alive it makes me wince to think of the slap that would follow soon afterwards, not to mention the immediate withdrawal of permission to get along to the Sale game...

Finally does anyone know when the Johnny Wilkinson Fan Club will be returning their tickets for next weeks Newcastle game. After all now that the 'Golden Boy Of English Rugby' (© all newspapers) is crocked and unlikely to appear – except possibly as a water boy – they won't have any use for their tickets. I know of at least five people – proper rugby fans at that – who are still trying to get hold of some tickets.

**BENETTON TREVISO**

Round Six