

Gloucester RFC Official Matchday Programme

Issue 13 | Price £2.50



# Gloucester

RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

**v Sale Sharks**

ZURICH PREMIERSHIP FIXTURE

SATURDAY 14TH FEBRUARY 2004

KICK-OFF 6.00PM



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**ZURICH PREMIERSHIP  
ROUND-UP AND PREVIEW**

**ENGLAND U21s AND  
SIX NATIONS PREVIEW**

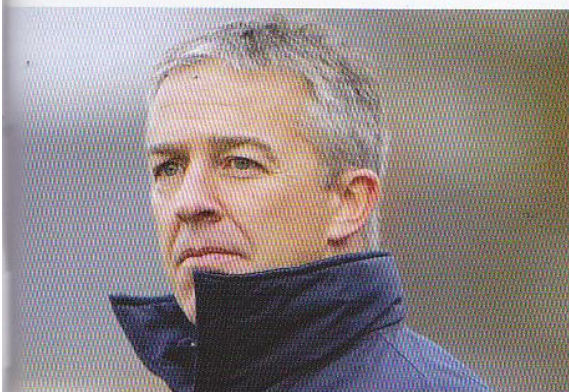
**ENGLAND U21s POSTER**

Front cover image by GPAImages.com

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## NIGEL'S NOTES...

**Nigel Melville**

Director of Rugby

It gives me great pleasure to welcome Sale Sharks back to Kingsholm for tonight's Zurich Premiership action. This is, of course, yet another weekend where the contest is more a test of depth than a show of strength, but I am sure it will be no less competitive, both teams need valuable Zurich Premiership points.

This week brought back fond memories of Friday nights in the pubs in Otley where the Club captain was doing the rounds (not drinking them) looking for players for the following afternoon's game – "What time's kick off?" – "What time can you make it," came the reply.

When the 22 man England squad was announced on Sunday, it became a 28 man squad who were then to be joined by a further 10 players. All 38 players were to spend most of the week with England at Pennyhill Park returning to their Clubs on Thursday. Even in the 'good old amateur days' we managed to train together on at least two nights a week!

The call on the Gloucester website for those season ticket holders not selected for tonight's game, to travel to Kingsholm to support the team will at least guarantee an enthusiastic support for tonight's Cherry and Whites. It may, however, be necessary to bring on a few from the stand rather than the bench in the second half, so please keep yourselves warm!

I would like to take this opportunity of wishing Sir Clive Woodward and his squad a successful Six Nations Championship. It will be interesting to see how the team fares without Martin Johnson at the helm and no Jonny to kick the goals. I would like to congratulate Trevor, Phil, Andy and Henry on their selections, James Forrester and Andy Hazell are just a phone call away and I have no doubt that James Simpson-Daniel will play a part in this season's Six Nations.

In addition, there have been a large number of other

representative call-ups throughout the Club this week including four with England U21s (Davies, Wood, Frost and Garvey) and two with Wales U21s (Meriman and Brown).

From our Academy ranks there have also been the following, Matt Deacon, Chris McNeil, Will Jones and Danny Pointon with England 16 age group, Jack Adams, Nick Abedanon, Dan Hall, Pete Swatkins, Nick Runciman, Gary Holmes with England 18 age group, Rory Teague, Ryan Lamb, Matt Tait and Ollie Morgan with England U19s, and Ed Shervington and Will Waldron with Wales U19s. I would like to pass on my congratulations to each and everyone of these young players.

Tonight's opposition Sale Sharks travel to Kingsholm without their top stars, both Jason Robinson and Chris Jones are with England, whilst a number of others are playing with the various age group teams. During the past few seasons under Brian Kennedy's leadership, Sale are emerging as one of the most progressive Clubs in the Premiership. Their ambitious move to a new Stadium has dramatically increased their support, they play an exciting expansive game, and demonstrated against Leinster just a few weeks ago, they are no push over home or away.

This week The Sharks, last week The Falcons, and the fan's favourite Rob Andrew made his annual visit to Kingsholm. The conditions were poor but the game was entertaining with both sides committed to a running game.

I was a little disappointed to learn of BBC Radio Gloucestershire's rather 'down-beat' commentary. The game had some pretty sensational tries from where I was sitting.

I was particularly pleased to see Andy Hazell complete his first full game since recovering from injury, but the highlight was the way the squad worked for each other. The team spirit has been fantastic this season and has undoubtedly been strengthened by the unbelievably positive support the team has received during January's tough schedule - thank you.

Have a great evening's rugby!





## CAPTAIN'S CORNER

**Jake Boer**

Club Captain

**"The last month and a half has been huge for us. We've shown a lot of character."**

First and foremost, it's good to be back from the realms of flu. I struggled last week in training, woke up through the evening on the Friday with a fever, and there was just no way I could play on the Saturday.

Of course, Andy Hazell came in and you know the rest. I hate missing games, and the team did brilliantly anyway.

I wasn't able to watch the game, and I didn't listen to the radio either. I find it difficult enough to watch a game from the stands let alone listen to it at home!

Anyway we were all back in to the office on Monday, apart from the England boys, who were getting ready for the RBS Six Nations.

It's going to be another interesting tournament this season, and of course England will be the team to beat, having held the Webb Ellis Cup aloft back in November.

England have had a few changes, with Martin Johnson retiring and Jonny Wilkinson out injured. Sir Clive has got a good core squad, and a few new guys have been called up. The question is whether they can be as influential as those who'll be missing. But they must go into the tournament as the favourites.

France are a team that are growing rapidly. They have some absolute class players, and as they have always done, they can upset anyone on their day. It all comes down to the level of consistency that they adopt.

Italy are also unpredictable. They can play so well at times, and score a lot of points. Their game is on an annual upward curve. You only have to look at the way they've performed in the Heineken Cup. Treviso's results were not a true reflection of their performances in our pool. The national side has a good coaching structure and I have a feeling they may well get a big scalp this year.

The Welsh are on a high. Their new provincial teams

have exceeded expectations in the Heineken Cup, and the national side put in a great account of themselves in the World Cup. In some ways they were unlucky not to go further.

Scotland are a different story though. They've lost a lot of key players and had a big change around in terms of structure. International rugby sometimes goes in peaks and troughs. Unfortunately Scotland are at a bit of a low point at the moment.

Finally, we come to Ireland. They're a brilliant side at times. Perhaps they don't get as much credit as they deserve. There are some real class players in their team. On the right day in Lansdowne Road they can really turn it on. They've some good tournaments in recent years. It'll be interesting to see if they can maintain that this year.

Just before we finish, we can come back to the Zurich Premiership. The internationals games are on, both at full cap level and also U21s and U19s, and there will be some players missing for all teams over the next few weeks.

At Kingsholm, it is up to the guys who come in to do a job. The last month and a half has been huge for us. We've shown a lot of character. Last weekend's result was massive for us. The next two weeks against Sale and Rotherham will be vital.

Bath and Wasps are also in form and with teams like Northampton, Sale and London Irish still up there, it can't be much tighter.

We had a slow start to the season, I don't believe we can blame the World Cup, there were some of our own errors responsible for those results.

We're building week by week. We've always said that it is a week-by-week task and momentum comes from that.

Today is the next step and enjoy the game.



# GRFC Chaplain

**Gloucester Rugby Club would like to welcome Steve Austin-Sparks to its ranks. Steve is a minister of a local church and part of the Score organisation, a charity involved in sports chaplaincy. The new member within Kingsholm's ranks writes a few words to outline his role and how he became involved with the Cherry and Whites.**



How did I come to be chaplain at Gloucester Rugby Club? That's a question I have been asked many times, but I'm still amazed at the answer.

It all started with a chance phone call from one of the members of the local Baptist Church, of which I am the minister. He called John Boyers, chaplain of Manchester United football club, to ask John to speak at a function he was arranging.

John Boyers is in constant contact with the chaplain at Wasps, David Chawner, who knew Nigel Melville from his days at the London-based club. Nigel had happened to have been in contact with David about chaplaincy at Gloucester Rugby club. So the ball got rolling and there was a planned meeting between David Chawner and two other potential chaplains. I was invited to that meeting and as a result I was put forward for the role at Kingsholm. Various checks, and further conversations, gave me the OK and I was introduced to Nigel Melville, and there you have it in a nutshell.

Nothing amazing in that you might say, but, the chance contacts, the timing of events, the remarkable way in which everything came together, and knowing the decisions making process – yes, amazed, that sums up my feelings!

First and foremost I have to say what a privilege it is to be involved at Gloucester

Rugby Club. Standing in a packed Shed on a sunny Saturday afternoon watching Marcel Garvey race down the wing to score another try in a convincing win over Newcastle Falcons, knowing that I was part of this in some small way. Indeed, only days earlier, Marcel had made me feel welcome to the club by coming over and introducing himself to me. It still doesn't feel real, not even to me, who was brought up within the shadow of Twickenham.

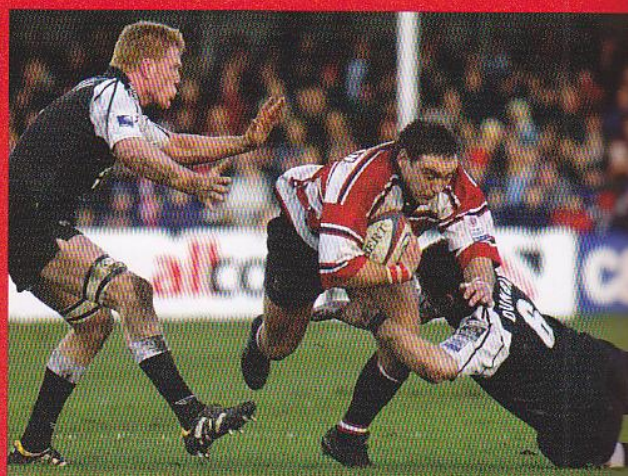
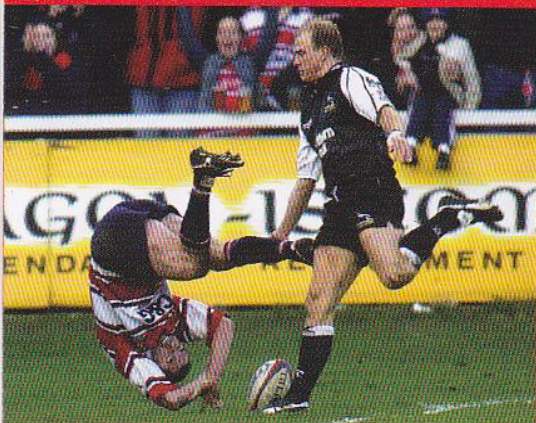
Not only am I part of the Club, but I'm part of a growing network of chaplains that are working across a wide variety of sports who are supported by SCORE ([www.scorechaplaincy.org.uk](http://www.scorechaplaincy.org.uk)), a charity involved in developing sports chaplaincy. It is through this that I can draw on the experience of others to help me provide first class chaplaincy to a club with such a distinguished a reputation as Gloucester's.

So, can we expect divine intervention on the pitch now? Well, if we face Munster in Ireland for the semis, that might be handy, but it's not quite what I'm there for! My role is to support the players and staff within the Club by providing pastoral and spiritual care to all, whether they have any religious beliefs or not. In practice, this will involve being available, by regular weekly contact with those at the club, developing friendships, and being prepared to support those who need and ask for it – especially at times of personal crisis. Life can be tough for those under the watchful eye of thousands of expectant fans, if I can help in some small way, I will have done my job.

**Thanks for the welcome, and enjoy the match.**

**Steve Austin-Sparks**  
(Chaplain)





KINGSHOLM SATURDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2004



## GLOUCESTER 36

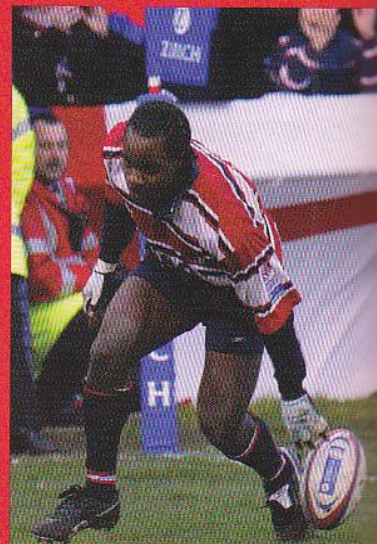
TRIES: TODD, GARVEY, MCRAE, FORRESTER, FANOLUA

CONVERSIONS: PAUL (4) PENALTIES: PAUL



## NEWCASTLE FALCONS 12

TRIES: MAY, BRITZ PENALTIES: WALDER



top left: Duncan McRae goes over for his first half try. top right: Trevor Woodman breaks out of a Newcastle's Jon Dunbar tackle.  
middle: Marcel Garvey crosses for his first half try. bottom left: James Forrester crosses for a second half try. bottom right: Terry Fanolua crosses for a try.



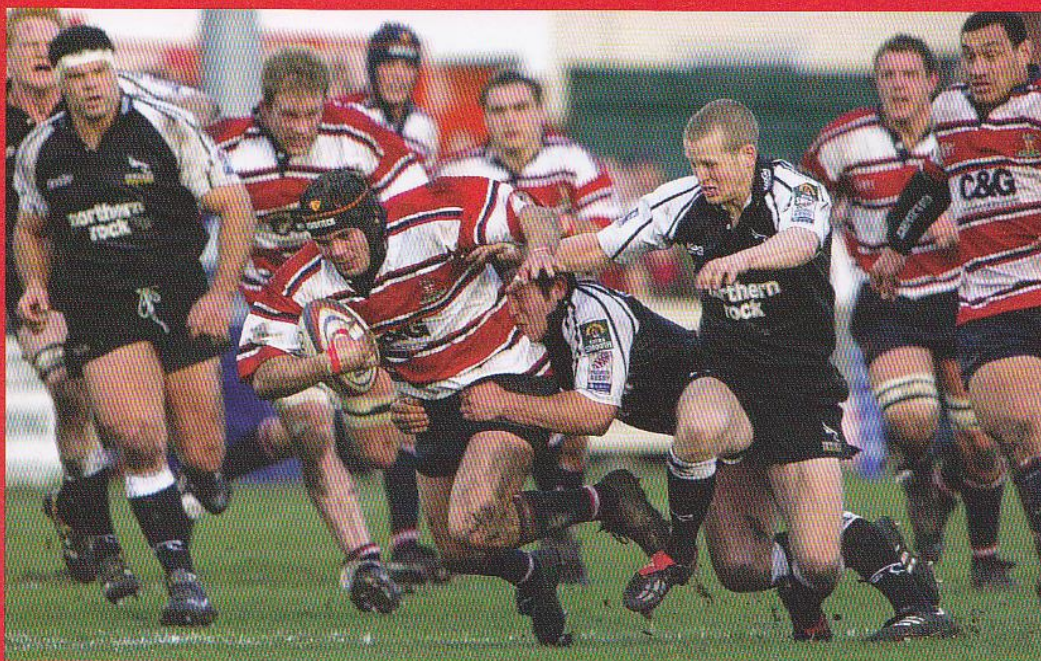
**Gloucester hammered Newcastle 36-12 in the Zurich Premiership clash at Kingsholm last weekend.**

The Cherry and Whites destroyed the Falcons hopes with three early tries, while centre Henry Paul continued to impress with a personal tally of 11 points.

Gloucester centre Robert Todd wasted no time in crossing over the line within the first minute and further tries to flying winger Marcel Garvey and Australian-born fly-half Duncan McRae put the hosts well in control going into the break.

Newcastle managed to close the gap slightly with a try to Tom May, but tries to Gloucester back James Forrester and winger Terry Fanolua to secure the bonus point and the comprehensive win.

Attendance: 11,000



top right: Gloucester's front row Phil Vickery, Chris Fortey and Trevor Woodman.

bottom: Andy Hazell on the attack.

Pictures courtesy of Bruce Seabrook - GPA Images



## BY IAN RANDALL

BBC RADIO GLOUCESTERSHIRE



BBC Radio Gloucestershire's Ian Randall takes an extract from his recent book for this week's matchday programme.

The favourite car sticker for Gloucester supporters tends to be 'Can you survive The Shed?' Another could be 'Gloucester do it in February' – part company with their directors of rugby, that is.

Three times in recent years this has been the month when the club have got twitchy about how things were progressing, and the man at the top has departed, but I'd lay long odds against it happening this year based on current form.

The trend began in 1995. Ironically, Gloucester had just beaten Leicester 9-3 on a muddy Kingsholm Saturday when Barrie Corless left, and the manner of his departure came as a surprise to Corless himself.

*'The Chairman, Peter Ford, was ill at the time. He was away from both his business and the club. Three or four*

*of the committee came in one afternoon, said they wanted a chat, and then told me they'd decided Gloucester didn't need a Director of Rugby anymore, and that was it. My mind went back to a conversation I'd had with Peter the previous summer, when he said "watch your back – there are a lot of people at the club who would love to be doing what you are doing, and people who you think are your friends are not always your friends." They had it all planned out, and what annoyed me was the person who was firing the bullets wasn't Alan Brinn, who was Chairman in Peter's absence, but Fred Reed, who I had played squash with on a fairly regular basis. Perhaps he didn't like the fact that I used to beat him.'*

Sometimes coaches can buy themselves time if they've had a poor League season with a Cup run. The prospect of some silverware from just a couple of results can paper over the cracks, at least in the interim. Barrie Corless didn't have that luxury, but Richard Hill could still have taken Gloucester to Twickenham in 1999. Gloucester had reached the quarter finals of the Pilkington Cup by beating Worcester and Henley, and they had home advantage to come in the last eight against Harlequins when, almost four years to the day after Corless left Kingsholm, Hill also cleared his desk. David Foyle, as Chairman of the Board of Directors at the club, felt the club couldn't wait any longer to make the change.

*'Since Christmas the results had been progressively worse, and the body language of the players on and off the pitch spoke volumes. We were grateful for what Richard had done for us but he seemed to have hit a brick wall. We set out clear objectives, and we'd set a budget to let him have the players he wanted to help the club achieve that objective. We were a poor tenth and that wasn't good enough. It was a commercial decision because we had put the admission prices up considerably at the start of the 1998/99 season and the fans hadn't been getting the rugby they expected. It would have been easy to have said that "there's always next year" but we felt we should have taken a big stride forward.'*

At this stage there was a definite change of gear, with





the former French captain Philippe Saint Andre becoming the Cherry & Whites first foreign coach – and player coach at that, at least initially. He hung up his playing boots in the summer of 1999, but the February factor was to come into play again in deciding Gloucester's last change of playing management.

Philippe had agreed a contract through until the summer of 2002 in December 1999, but by Christmas 2001 discussions had already started about what would happen beyond that date. He'd been quite public about his position, saying that if the club wanted him to stay, he would consider the options that were presented to him. Yet again the timing of the decision put the spotlight on a game against Harlequins. It was announced that Saint Andre's contract wasn't being renewed, and that he would leave the club after the Premiership match at the Stoop.

*'I have a big respect for Gloucester. The supporters were marvellous to me for five years. It was hard and there were a lot of rumours but that's life. I tried all the time to give my best and I am proud of what I did, especially in the last two years. In my career I played with my heart, and I think it's a value Gloucester supporters like. When I first took the team we lost away at West Hartlepool and Bedford, and the players weren't at the right level. My first job was to win, and that's what I tried to put into the minds of the players. The club had to think about the future and I understood that. In professional rugby you must anticipate.'*

It is fair to say life was never dull at Kingsholm under Philippe. Saint Andre waved an emotional goodbye at the Stoop to hundreds of travelling Gloucester supporters, many of whom stayed on at the final whistle to wait for him at the end of the players' tunnel.

From that day, his successor could only blow a promising position. The team were well placed to qualify for the 2002/03 Heineken Cup, and there was the prospect of a place in the end of season play-offs, which were in place for the first time.

Enter the grey haired Nigel Melville, another former England scrum half, and a man highly regarded by former Gloucester legend Mike Burton.

*'Nigel had done a great job at Wasps. He had a*

*reputation as a productive and constructive coach, but in the long term whether he was successful or not would be decided by the League standings. The crowd are knowledgeable and will give people a fair chance, and*

**“...Nigel has achieved a Powergen Cup success, a play off Final win and a number one standing in the end of season Premiership table”**

*once you've proved you're not a "jacker" to them, you're ok. Nigel also knew it was one of the plum jobs because there is no league football in Gloucester.'*

Two years into a four year contract, Nigel has achieved a Powergen Cup success, a play off Final win and a number one standing in the end of season Premiership table, which brought with it Heineken Cup qualification for this season. On his own admission however, he is never content – which I suspect is bad news for Gloucester's opponents while he remains in charge

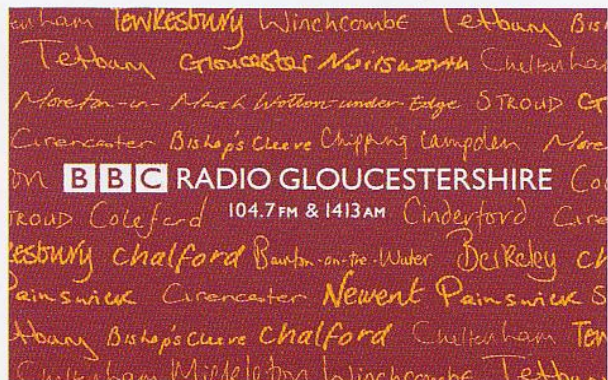
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and on the BBC website, [www.bbc.co.uk/gloucestershire](http://www.bbc.co.uk/gloucestershire)





# Peter Arnold

Peter Arnold, in his 25th year as a contributor to the matchday programme, rounds up the week's events.

## SEEMS A LONG TIME AGO

It's amazing how quickly we forget. Here we are, well and truly involved in Zurich Premiership matters, when only two weeks ago we were scratching our heads and trying to work out how the Heineken Cup seedings were likely to affect us.

In fact, by 4.30 on the afternoon of Saturday 31 January, we thought we knew. One supporter told me he never thought he would see so many glum faces leaving the Shed after a 42-point,

six-try victory.

The reason for all the misery was, of course, that Munster had just gained their bonus point over Bourgoin, and we thought we were all off to Thomond Park again. A few minutes later, it all changed when Wasps nipped in and took the second seeding, so we were all off to High Wycombe over Easter.

We might still be travelling to meet Munster again, of course, but it won't be at Thomond Park. The rules say that the semis have to be played on a neutral ground in the home country of the home team. Mind you, I don't know how any ground in Ireland can be said to be

neutral when an English team travels to play Munster. Furthermore, the ground has to have a capacity of 20,000 or more, which would seem to indicate Lansdowne Road. As most of the Munster lads have played there for Ireland, that would give them a decided edge, too.

I don't actually think that the gap between Gloucester and Munster, on any ground, is as wide as some people seem to think. Take a look at the Bourgoin results. Gloucester put over 80 points on the Frenchmen in our two encounters. Munster struggled to win by a single point over there, and would not have gained their bonus point at home with that last-breath penalty try given by Bristol's Tony Spreadbury, in what even Ronan O'Gara, himself, called a 'home town decision'. So much for West Country solidarity.

Oh well. Now we have to beat Wasps. That will be a decided pleasure

## NOT A PRETTY CITE

Talking about Wasps, and referees for that matter, I was fascinated to read that the Causeway side has cited five players, involved in no fewer than twelve incidents perceived to have taken place during their away fixture at Perpignan.

I watched that game on the telly and, while I thoroughly enjoyed it, it wasn't one you would wish to take your maiden





aunt to see. Not all that surprising given the raging intensity of the home support and the importance of the occasion.

However, on hearing of the citings, it occurred to me to wonder about the match officials. Perhaps I'm losing the plot, but I thought that the citing procedure was established to give some recourse where referees and touch judges have, in the eyes of the aggrieved side, either insufficiently reacted to a case of foul play, or have missed it altogether.

The ref hasn't been born who can go a whole game without missing something, but to have missed, or ignored one such incident, on average, around every seven minutes throughout the game must reflect very badly upon both him and his assistance.

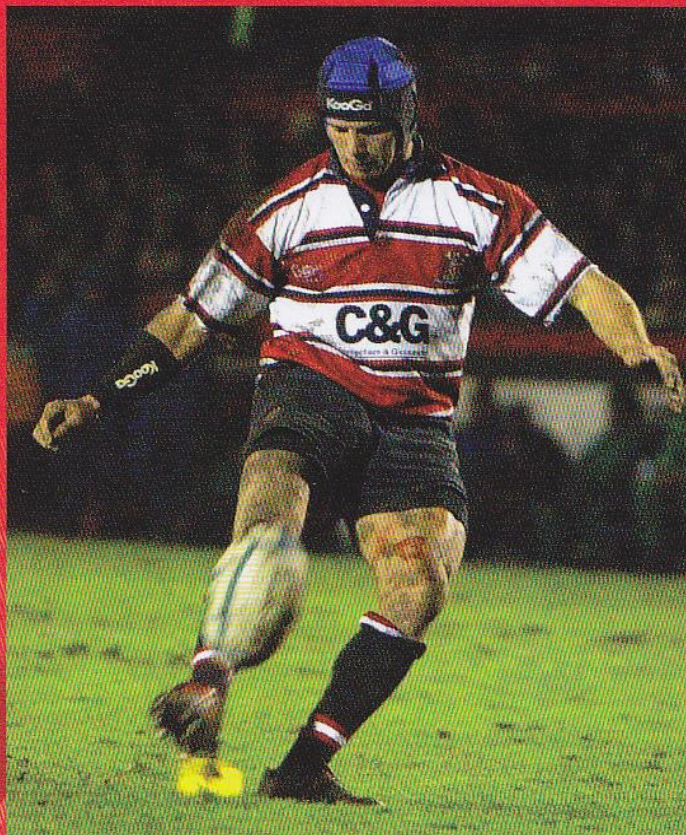
Referees have a very difficult, sometimes impossible job, these days, and I don't accuse them of incompetence easily, and neither am I this time, but, surely, that must be the inference in this case.

I don't regard Wasps as perennial whingers in the class of some I could mention, but Warren Gatland and his people must have been seriously miffed on this occasion. It will be interesting to see what happens now.

## FAREWELL DEAN

I was sorry to see that Dean Richards has been given his marching orders at Leicester. 23 years, six of them as head coach, at the same club is an awfully long time, and given his record, I could have wished that Deano had jumped before he was pushed. As you get older, you get set in your ways, and the world, including the game of rugby, moves on around you. Possibly, Dean Richards wasn't quite keeping up with the speed of events.

Leicester matches won't be the same without that familiar unsmiling figure,



hulking around the touchline. We shall miss him, and wish him well wherever he goes from here.

I see that Leicester have promised to mount a search 'worldwide' to find the right replacement. They don't need to go that far. Philippe St. André is looking for a job.

## FINGERS CROSSED

By the time you read this, we will know how many Gloucester players have made the cut for the England squad for the Italy match. All fingers crossed, but however you look at it, to have five players in the final 28, plus two more invited to join the squad for training, not to mention our contingent in the U21 and U19 squad is a considerable feather in the club's collective cap.

Of course, James Simpson-Daniel's absence through injury when Sir Clive Woodward came along to the Newcastle game won't have done his chances any good at all. Poor old Sinbad seems to have an absolute genius for going down sick or injured at just the worst possible moment as far as his England ambitions are concerned.

It reminds me of one brilliant young scrum-half, who years ago, had exactly the same problem. His name was Nigel Melville.

## DAMNING WITH FAINT PRAISE

I was amused to read one report which said that Henry Paul put in a 'solid performance' against Newcastle Falcons. If that was a solid performance, then the Mona Lisa is a seaside postcard.



# KICKING OVER THE TRACES

**Dave King takes time out to look at Gloucester's goal kickers from years gone by. Current man in the hot seat is Henry Paul, and the way he's slotting the shots at the moment is pretty impressive.**



Byron Hayward.

Who has been the best kicker of them all? Our members have been fortunate to witness four players here at Kingsholm in recent years that have been prolific points accumulators. They are Byron Hayward, Mark Mapletoft, Simon Mannix and Ludovic Mercier.

Some of you would be surprised to see Byron Hayward figuring in this quartet. It would be fair to say Byron struggled to find his true form in his stint at this club. But few doubted his ability to notch points at a consistent rate.

Last season 2002-2003, Byron was the leading League Division One scorer in Welsh rugby with 453 points for Champions Pontypool. In fact the fly-half failed by 10 points to break Pontypool's all time scoring record of 517 set by full back Robin Williams in 1974-75 season.

Byron aggregated 508 points. He accumulated these as follows: - 453 Division One points in the Principality Cup and 16 from three friendly matches. However, he had not finished there! For Byron collected a further 24 points while 'guesting' in three games for Ebbw Vale to accumulate 533, which is the record haul in Welsh rugby. The previous record was 515 points set by Jamie Davies of Aberavon.

Byron also set the record for the most

conversions in a season with a total of 104. Byron has represented Wales twice versus Zimbabwe and South Africa in 1998. Welsh Internationals are rare at Kingsholm but it will be interesting to see whether James Merriman and Michael Scudamore, who were in the Welsh Under 19 squad that participated in the Junior World Cup staged in France during April 2003, progress to full honours. James has already been called up to train with the Welsh National squad, prior to the Six Nations Championship.

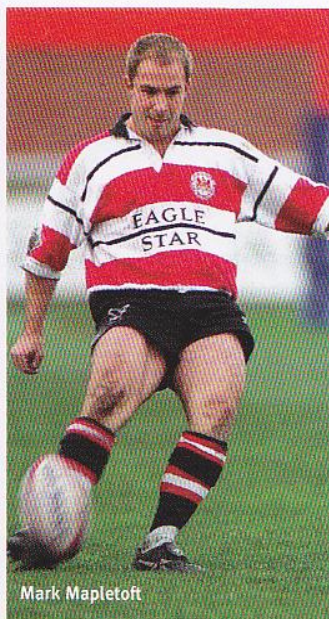
Our vision of Mark Mapletoft is one of a complete all round player. Mark lit many a dark day with his prodigious talent. Sadly, 'Tofty', will be recorded as a 'one cap wonder' by England. Unfair? There have been far less accomplished players who have gained numerous honours. Full back or fly half? This was always a question pondered on the terraces and in the stands. One wonders if Mark's heart always lay at Kingsholm subsequent moves have not enriched his standing.

Mark is in fourteenth place in scoring the most points in a season in the top division of English rugby. It was here at Gloucester in the 1997-98 season that Mark notched up 275 points. That figure surpassed his total of 269 scored only the previous season.

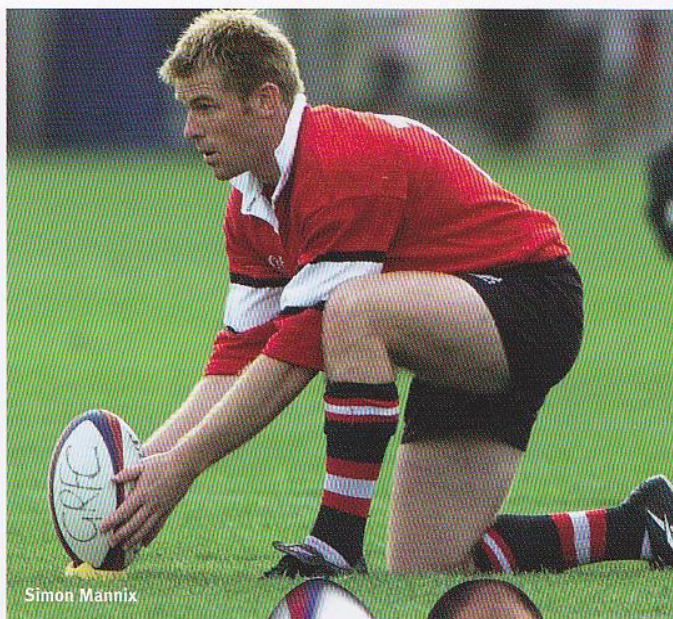
So, Mark holds fourteenth and seventeenth position in the league all time records. His consistency did not end, there for in 1998-99 'Tofty' scored 198 points, which put him in forty-sixth position in the roll for most points in a season.

Simon Mannix had his detractors amongst





Mark Maplettoft



Simon Mannix

the Kingsholm faithful but as one former English international remarked to me upon his signing from Sale, 'He will do a fine job for Gloucester.' A total of 282 points scored in the 1999-2000 season showed that he accomplished the purpose he was brought to the club to achieve. That total put Simon in tenth position in the all time records.

Now to 'Le Boot', none other than the recently departed Ludovic Mercier without doubt the most prolific long distance kicker to grace the Kingsholm turf. A total of 255 points scored in 2002-2003 season left the Frenchman in twenty-first place but of course his previous season's total of 334 left him in second place in the overall list of most points in a season. Tantalisingly close to Barry Everett of London Irish who scored nine more points in that same season.

Strange, how London Irish have two of the most prolific points scorers on their playing staff – Barry Everett and Mark Maplettoft! To enter the top sixty our own Henry Paul will have to surpass 181 set by Jez Harris of Leicester in 1994-95.

We all have our favourite players. Their virtues are the subject of endless debate, Mercier over Mannix, Maplettoft over either. Could Byron Hayward in a different era have matched this trio? – We will never

know, all four gave good service. In entering this list it is interesting to note that Ludovic Mercier scored eight tries, Simon Mannix three in his one season reaching these heights. Mark Maplettoft 17 tries in his three seasons.

Ludovic Mercier, heads the list of dropped goals with 12 in 2001-2002. Byron Hayward proved he was more settled in his homeland and regained his confidence. Mark Maplettoft, a gifted player wherever he sets his stall has seen recent seasons blighted by injury and yet this campaign his form had returned to keep the prolific Barry Everett on the sidelines in the early part of the season.

Gloucester RFC members have been lucky to see these four players in the Cherry and Whites shirt. They have kept the scoreboard moving along at a fair pace. Only London Irish with Barry Everett, Jarrod Cunningham, Neil Woods and David Humphreys can match these.

DAVID KING



Ludovic Mercier



# Fans Zone

with  
**Bob Fenton**

Regular member of the Shed Bob Fenton puts pen to paper for this week's matchday programme.

Having just about got my breath back after last weekend's demolition of Newcastle, it's time to start all over again for today's run out against Sale Sharks.

And what a day to pick to play – Valentines Day! I reckon that there is around 8,000 blokes here today who

**“big congratulations to all the boys who have been selected to play for England against Italy...”**

know that they are in for extreme grief from the wife / girlfriend for sneaking down to Kingsholm and a few pints of whatever takes your fancy, instead of spending the cash on a swanky meal for two at some horribly overpriced place in Cheltenham.

I did offer 'she who must be obeyed' the chance to go out to eat after the game but for some reason she decided against. I mean, what's wrong with a nice relaxing drink in Teague's before the best money can buy in the Kingsholm Chipper? I'm all heart me. And if she reads this I'm dead...

In case you haven't noticed, this is our second Zurich Premiership match in a row, to be closely followed by three on the road. What is it with the people who draw up the fixtures – do you think the concept of playing home one week and away the next is too difficult for them to grasp? And why do we have to play the same side twice in four weeks?

You have to think that after a hard morning of looking out the window and counting paper clips, the fixtures committee clear off for a few pink gins and then just throw the schedule together before leaving to go home at 3pm.

When Sale arrive they will have a Gloucester old boy in their numbers having signed our old scrum half Scott Benton on an 18 month deal. Scotty was a great favourite when he was down here, and it's good to see that after being released by Leeds he has finally got himself a club.

Oddly enough I was doing some file clearing on the computer the other day and I found an interview I had done with Scotty. One of the questions I asked him was what was his favourite memory from his days at Gloucester. Without drawing breath he said it was the night game against Bath some five years ago, when his break from the base of a scrum almost saw him reach the line. He was hauled down just short, but Paul Holford was on his shoulder to take the ball and go over in the corner to set up one of the great victories of recent years.

In all the years that Scott played with us his Dad used to travel down from Leeds to watch every home game – what a great guy he was too – I ran into him at Leeds a few years back and we had a pint and a chat. If you're here today it's my round and I'll see you in the bar afterwards.

Changing the subject somewhat, it was interesting to see the proposal to build a temporary grandstand where the Worcester Street end is now. I have to say I have mixed emotions about this. Apparently it's going to end up moving some 20 yards or so towards the Tump, and the in-goal





areas may be narrowed.

Of course the extra seats will be really welcome and will give families and children the opportunity for a good view. I've no problem with that. No, what's causing me sleepless nights is the fact that the pitch could be moved up a bit by shortening the in-goal areas.

Even before I explain I guess that there are a number of people who know where this is leading. For more years than I care to remember I have stood in roughly the same spot in the Shed, just to the left of the halfway line. When the move takes place all of a sudden I could be in a slightly different position – but hey, let's wait and see.

And memo to Cotton Traders, or whoever

is making our kit next season, please make sure that you include braking parachutes like drag racers for Marcel and Sinbad to help them decelerate quickly. With the way they've been running in the tries in recent weeks, they'll need something to slow them down.

Finally, big congratulations to all the boys who have been selected to play for England against Italy, no big surprise that Vickster and Dougie will be spending their afternoon propping things up, but isn't it good to see Henry getting the recognition that his recent form deserves. Sir Clive (curtsey when you read that bit) obviously had his eyes open when he came down last Saturday.

And it's about time that Andy Gomarsall got the starting berth in the number nine

jersey, though it seems that some sections of the media still regard it as a shock.

Listening to Radio Five in the car on the way home on Monday, Ian Robertson was describing Andy's inclusion as a '... shock selection...' adding that Motormouth Dawson would be bitterly disappointed about being dropped to the bench.

What planet is he on! Dawson has been so busy ligging his way around various TV Studios since the World Cup (new idea for programme makers: I'm a non-entity and want to be a celebrity – let me come in, Starring M. Dawson) that he hasn't had time to play rugby. If – as Sir Clive (curtsey, tug forelock) always says – the squad was picked on form he wouldn't have made it as a water boy let alone a scrum half.



TRY  
CONVERSION  
PENALTY  
DROP GOAL

## GLOUCESTER

15	Jon Goodridge	fullback
14	Josh Frape	wing
13	Terry Fanolua	centre
12	Robert Todd	centre
11	James Simpson-Daniel	wing
10	Duncan McRae	flyhalf
09	Alex Page	scrumhalf
01	Rodrigo Roncero	prop
02	Chris Fortey	hooker
03	Andy Deacon	prop
04	Adam Eustace	lock
05	Alex Brown	lock
06	Jake Boer (c)	flanker
07	Peter Buxton	flanker
08	Junior Paramore	no. 8
16		replacements
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		



## SALE SHARKS

TRY  
CONVERSION  
PENALTY  
DROP GOAL

15	Vaughan Goings
14	Chris Mayor
13	Jos Baxendell
12	Graeme Bond
11	Steve Hanley
10	Mike Hercus
09	Scott Benton
01	Kevin Yates
02	Matt Cairns
03	Stuart Turner
04	Dean Schofield
05	Andrew Sheridan
06	Ben Lloyd
07	Hugh Perrett
08	Alex Sanderson
16	
17	
18	
19	
20	
21	
22	

## ZURICH PREMIERSHIP 2003/04

TEAM	P	W	D	L	F	A	TB	LB	PTS
Bath Rugby	15	13	0	2	357	197	3	2	57
London Wasps	15	11	0	4	403	266	4	2	50
Northampton Saints	15	9	1	5	407	314	4	2	44
<b>Gloucester</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>41</b>
London Irish	15	9	0	6	319	310	1	3	40
NEC Harlequins	15	8	1	6	340	299	3	3	40
Sale Sharks	15	6	3	6	341	272	3	5	38
Newcastle Falcons	15	6	0	9	333	333	2	6	32
Leicester Tigers	15	5	2	8	276	315	1	2	26
Leeds Tykes	15	5	0	10	302	418	3	2	25
Saracens	15	5	1	9	267	379	1	2	23
Rotherham Titans	15	0	0	15	184	491	0	1	1

1330

## TODAY'S MATCH OFFICIALS

Referee: Tony Spreadbury RFU  
1st TJ: Andy Melrose RFU  
2nd TJ: Andrew Pearce RFU  
4th Official: Mark Tovey

## Today's Result

Gloucester **38**  
Sale Sharks **12**

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