



It's certainly good to be back here today. Nobody has got good memories of last week, but to get straight back into it, gives us the chance to put things right. The last thing you want as a team is to finish it all with a game like that at the Rec.

But that's enough of last week, welcome to everyone at Kingsholm this evening. It's our third meeting with Sale this season, honours are even so far and I'm sure that today will be interesting.

This week we've looked at pretty much everything as well as recognising the myriad of issues that affect us from day-to-day as players and coaches.

There are some players moving on at the end of this season and on behalf of everyone at the Club I'd like to thank them for their years of commitment and enthusiasm, and wish them all the success for the future. With this being the last home game of the year, I'm sure they'll want to finish on a high in front of you all.

From your point of view I think it's been a roller-coaster of a year, what with the World Cup and the Six Nations and the occasional five week break in the season.

But it has given us the chance to look at the younger generation of players. This week we announced players like Ryan Lamb and Oliver Morgan committing their futures to us. Our young guys are very exciting individuals and we've all put a lot of time into identifying their abilities and working with them.

Preparations for next season are close on the horizon and we're in discussions with some new players as well. Hopefully in the next few weeks we'll be able to tell you more, but it's quite a detailed process that has to be completed before we say too much.

Off-the-field preparations are also gathering pace. I

NIGEL'S NOTES...

Nigel Melville

Director of Rugby

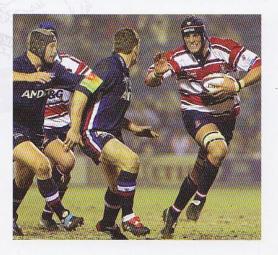
"From your point of view I think it's been a roller-coaster of a year..."

understand that we're in the latter stages of developments for the Kingsholm Road end of the ground and the new 2,500 seated stand.

This is key to our success. As much as I know how much you all enjoy standing in the Shed, and also how much we enjoy you all being there, this new stand will offer a host of new opportunities. It'll allow us to bring in new families to the game, children and their parents will be able to come together to the game and have a great view of the match. We all want to see things move forward here.

Looking at today's visitors Sale, they're a very good side, as we saw at the end of the March. I was talking to someone this week about them and I'd like to see Charlie Hodgson start for England in the summer tour. He is one of the most complete fly-halves in the game. He has fantastic vision and it will be interesting to see whether he can get more out of the back line this summer.

Finally, thank you all for everything this year.





Welcome back to Kingsholm, and just a brief article this week.

Today offers us the chance to put things right. We did not play last Saturday against Bath, and there is no better way to put that bad memory behind us than returning here in front of all our supporters.

We let ourselves down last Saturday, but we can't change that now. This week we've looked at all areas of the game including our decision-making. This has to be right, especially in such big games.

CAPTAIN'S CORNER

Jake Boer
Club Captain

"Today's game provides us with our chance to get into the Heineken Cup."

Today's game provides us with our chance to get into the Heineken Cup. We need to keep it in our control going into the European finals weekend next week.

In the next few weeks we say goodbye to a few good friends and players as people move on to new clubs. It is part of the modern game but when you're as good friends as we all are, we'll stay in touch.

Finally, thank you to everyone. It's been a slightly different season, but I hope that you have enjoyed it all, and more to the point, enjoy it today.

Farewell and Thank You

It's the last matchday programme of the season and it's time to say thank you and farewell to a number of members of staff.

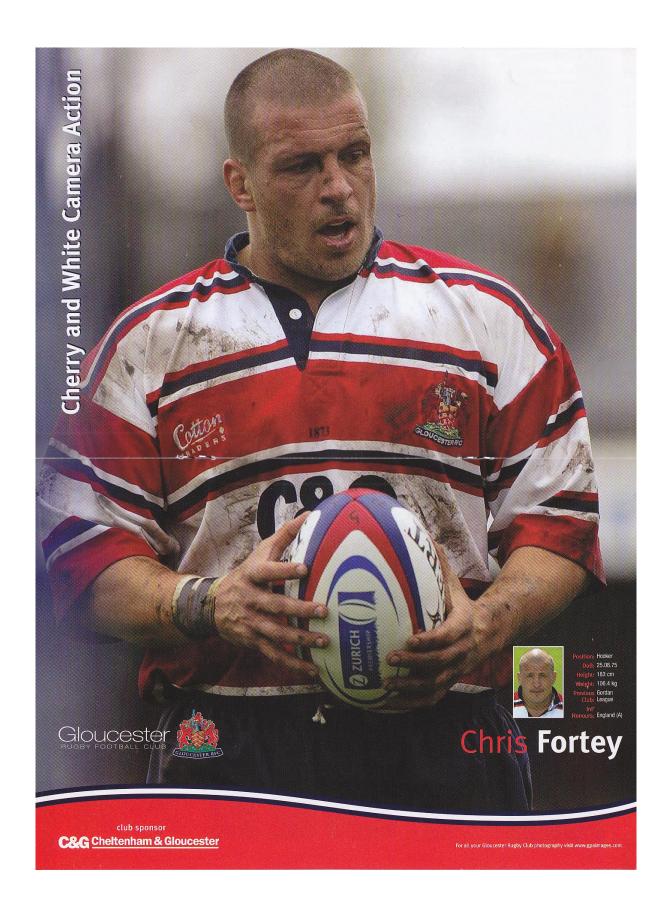
Trevor Woodman is moving on to today's opponents Sale Sharks. The England loose-head prop joined the Cherry and Whites in January 1996 from Bath and made 123 appearances in all competitions for the Kingsholm club, scoring 12 tries. Trevor, who has been a loyal and committed member of the Gloucester team, will join the Sharks after the current 2003/04 season finishes.

Joining Trevor at Edgeley Park is Robert Todd has made 92 Zurich Premiership appearances for Gloucester since he arrived from London Irish, and has played a key role in the development of the side over recent years.

Everyone at Gloucester Rugby Club would like to wish Dougle and Toddy all the best for the future and we thank them for their years of service.







WEBB ELLIS

In the final matchday programme, resident historian and stats man Dave King looks back at William Webb Ellis, the founder of the game, and where it all began.

> William Webb Ellis – a name synonymous with rugby union and engraved on the

trophy that
former
England
Captain
Martin
Johnson
held
triumphantly

in Sydney,
Australia on 23rd
November 2003 to
herald England's World
Cup Final victory.

A little known fact is that William
Webb Ellis was born of parents who
hailed from the West Country. So perhaps it
was fitting that in England's hour of triumph
there was no fewer than eight west country
players in the England squad:- Phil Vickery,
Andy Gomarsall and Trevor Woodman of
Gloucester. Mark Regan of Leeds, who was
born in Bristol and lain Balshaw, Mike Catt,
Mike Tindall, Danny Grewcock of Bath.
Danny Grewcock had to unfortunately
return home due to injury before a ball
had been kicked in anger.

William Webb Ellis moved to the Midlands town of Rugby after his father died serving his country in the Peninsular Wars against Napoleon's armies. At Rugby, William was enrolled at the famous public school.

It was in 1823 as a 16-year-old schoolboy he quite by accident

invented the game we now know as Rugby Union. It was during a soccer match that he decided to grab the ball and run with it. That was how the game of rugby was born.

While a nation celebrated the famous World Cup victory that so enthralled a Royal family and a Prime Minister, the memory of William Webb Ellis is almost beyond recall. William is buried in a small town in southern France, Merton.

This sporting legend has no monument or statue to mark his last resting place! The reason his body lies unforgotten in Merton is that he had travelled to southern France to search for a cure for his chronic tuberculosis. He failed in his mission and died alone and penniless on 24 February 1872.

Amazingly for many years he had laid in an anonymous grave that had almost vanished from sight due to being overgrown. It was re-discovered in 1958.

The federation Francaise de Rugby, the games governing body in France was then charged with tending to the sporting shrine. The grave lies high on a mountain in the Vieux Chateau cemetery.

There is a rugby team in Merton named Webb Ellis where the French speak with pride of the sportsman and eccentric vicar who made his home among them in his final years.

William Webb Ellis is buried on one of the lower tiers among many wealthy people who visited the South of France for the air, the spa waters and the mild weather. On



his grave stand two cactus plants that were erected by Rugby School. The headstone commemorates the exploits of William Webb Ellis, 'who with a fine disregard for the rules of football played in his time, first took the ball in his arms and ran with it.'

The grave receives few visitors these days, those that do so are rugby players and supporters of the game. William Webb Ellis's mother came from Upton St Leonards near Gloucester. His father from just over the county border from Upton on Severn in Worcestershire. The couple moved many times during their marriage as James Webb Ellis was a soldier and was posted to Dublin and Manchester where it was reputed he was born.

William was only six years of age when his father died. James's widow, Ann Webb,

used the money from her husband's army pension to pay for William's education.

Neither William, nor his elder brother Thomas had any children and so the family line became extinct. It was only two years after William invented rugby that he entered the church. He later became the vicar of St Clement Danes in London and the nearby St Georges.

Sport played an important part in his life and besides soccer and rugby William enjoyed playing cricket and appeared in one first class match for Oxford University. It was a considerable time after his untimely death that his grave was discovered in Merton by a French scrum half Roger Dries who was a local man.

How many will make the pilgrimage to his resting place when the world cup is held in

France 2007? Will an England captain retain the Cup, and if so will he pay homage to the man who is credited with inventing the game that is currently enthralling a new breed of spectator who have swelled the members who regularly throng the grounds.

Here at Kingsholm this season we have only failed to reach capacity in three attendances at Zurich Premiership games. They have been Rotherham 10,114, Saracens 10,050 and Leeds 9,832.

William Webb Ellis as a boy could not possibly have envisaged the impact he would make on people's sporting life when he picked a ball up and ran with it. A game that will run forever and ever.

DAVID KING

BY IAN RANDALL BBC RADIO GLOUCESTERSHIRE





BBC Radio Gloucestershire's Ian Randall pens his thoughts from the last two weeks.

What a week!

The global nature of the game was emphasised this week as clubs revealed new signings for next season - an Australian and a Samoan to London Irish, an Argentinian and (unsurprisingly) a Frenchman to today's opponents. Philippe hasn't wasted any time

"Paul's nomination on the shortlist for Zurich Player of the Year says a lot about the season he has had."

with his recruiting.

Saint-Andre's contribution as director of rugby at Kingsholm makes it easy to gloss over his time as a player here. In two seasons, 31 Premiership appearances yielded 14 tries, his brace on his debut against Bristol showed an alert brain and a tactical

awareness that meant, despite playing outside his homeland, Philippe won the last four of his sixty nine French caps at Gloucester.

If his acquisition as a player was something of a coup, Saint Andre's elevation to coaching the Cherry & Whites was a calculated gamble. Owner Tom Walkinshaw was balancing the probable loss of one valuable cutting edge on the field for a sharper all round team under Saint Andre's guidance, and it didn't take the Frenchman long to see that combining playing and coaching was virtually impossible. He started only three games after Richard Hill left, his last appearance coming in the 1999 Tetley Cup semi final defeat at Wasps.

Saint Andre's three closed seasons as Director of Rugby each produced one major acquisition.

All Black lock lan Jones lock was highly regarded throughout the world, having won more than 70 caps.

Jason Little was no less experienced playing in the centre for Australia, and Henry Paul, of course is still here. Paul's nomination on the shortlist for Zurich Player of the Year says a lot about the season he has had.

Now, as Nigel Melville considers what to do with his





budget, it's worth remembering that (as far as I recall) Saint Andre never publicly complained about not being able to sign a player.

There always seemed scope to do so, despite the salary cap. While he was here, he worked with a large range of people. Going through three forwards coaches as well as two for the backs, indicates either instability or a constant striving for improvement, depending on your point of view. Saint Andre often spoke of the strange way in which he and John Brain, outwardly so different, complimented each other in their philosophy on rugby. The same was true in his relationship with Kingsley Jones, and the two are now re-united at Sale.

Saint Andre was also the first man to take Gloucester into the Heineken Cup, and here he is today trying to prevent

the Cherry & Whites getting back in again next season. Both may qualify of course depending on other results, but Gloucester won't want to leave that to chance.

Saint Andre has already been on the end of one defeat here this season with Bourgoin, though a close game looked likely until the last 20 minutes, and, in the first game at Sale after his appointment, he watched the Sharks defeat Gloucester convincingly at Edgeley Park.

It's not rocket science to work out why Sale are dangerous. In Robinson, Cueto, Hanley and Hodgson they have orchestrators of havoc and finshers of chances. All this depends on getting the ball, and at the Rec last week Gloucester didn't have it for long enough. They are always a side who give you a chance, but they are equally liable to make you pay for







any mistakes. I did hear that Saint Andre felt quite happy with the talent in terms of backs at Sale, but that, in his words, he needed a few "animals" in the pack. I think we get the idea. Suffice to say, with the prize on offer today, Gloucester will want to shake last Saturday's disappointment out of their system pretty smartly and show us all that it was as unacceptable in the dressing room as it was on the touchline.

"Saint Andre was also the first man to take Gloucester into the Heineken Cup, and here he is today trying to prevent the Cherry & Whites getting back in again next season"

C'mon Glaws!



Peter Amold

Peter Arnold rounds up the last few weeks at the final home game of the season.

JUMPING THE GUN

Spoke too soon, didn't I. Having spent quite a few words in the Wasps programme going on about the last home game of the season, I now find I have to do it all over again. In my own defence, I must say that I'm only a simple Gloucester lad, and the fixture situation at this time of year makes my brain hurt. Like the young lady from Khartoum, I'm unsure of who's doing what and to whom.

Let's not complain, though. As Confucius he say, let's just lay back and enjoy it.

ANOTHER CHANCE TO SEE...

One good thing about today is that it probably gives us another chance to say 'Goodbye, and thanks a lot' to Andy Deacon. The announcement of his impending retirement came just after I had sent in my last piece of programme copy, so I didn't get the chance to make my own acknowledgement of his enormous contribution to Gloucester rugby over the last sixteen years or so.

Over that period, no one, anywhere in the country, has enjoyed propping against 'Deacs'. In many another era he would have had a whole clutch of England caps to his name. It was his misfortune that

when he first came on the scene he had the formidable Phil Blakeway to supersede. You will recall that Gloucester is still the only club to provide an entire England front row in Blakeway, Mills and Preedy, and Andy didn't get a look in.

Great shame, that, but he does have the even greater, some would say, distinction of enjoying the respect and admiration of just about everyone in rugby who knows anything about anything. I was very pleased to hear Stuart Barnes say on TV that Andy Deacon is a "great bloke, and a great bloke to have a beer with after the game."

That from a Bath player! Not a bad sporting epitaph for any man, is it?



Of course, we probably wouldn't have the pleasure of watching Andy Deacon start today if Phil Vickery had been fit. it's terribly bad luck on the 'Raging Bull' to have suffered a second disc injury in around eighteen months, and therefore being forced to miss out on another trip to New Zealand and Australia.

I'm certain, however, that every Gloucester supporter will agree that immediate surgery was the right option. If all goes well, it could mean that Phil will be back, fit and rarin' to go for the start of next season. England's loss could well be Gloucester's gain.



Best of luck, Phil. Hope the rehabilitation proceeds at lightning speed.

BEATEN BY A BETTER TEAM

One thing about Gloucester. When they lose, they really do the job properly. Leeds, Munster, Wasps, Bath - all genuine hidings, and played on the winners' home grounds. It seems that the old awaymatch syndrome, which I had thought was on the way out, is still alive and well and infesting Kingsholm.

It's so fiendishly difficult to explain. If one knew what was causing it, something could be done about it. It has survived radically different squads of players and at least two changes of coaching staff. Anyone who watched both the Wasps and Bath games must have thought they were seeing two different teams.

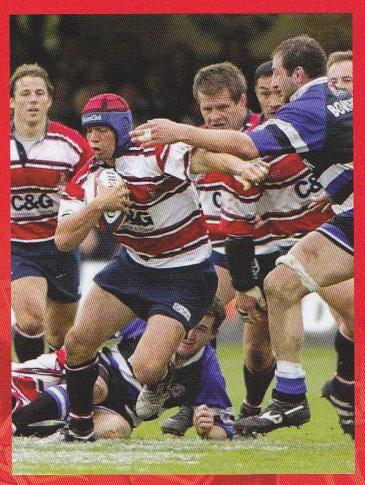
Of course, the Kingsholm factor must be taken into account, but it's not the whole answer. Bath, for example, won their game here, as well as last Saturday's disaster. On that evidence, one must concede, gracefully I hope, that Bath was a better side than Gloucester this season. Good luck to them. I hope they go on to win the play-off final.

But I wish someone could explain that wretched away-match hoodoo.

QUITE UNNECESSARY

As I say, we were well beaten by a better side last Saturday, but the occasion was made even worse for me by an article which appeared in the Bath Chronicle prior to the game. I'm not going to name the would-be comedian who wrote it, because he doesn't deserve the publicity.

Briefly, according to the Citizen, it included a rather soggy assault on Gloucester supporters, and especially on the inhabitants of the Shed. One of the highlights of the attack was a



statement that all Shedheads wear the number 1 on their shirts because it's an easy number to remember. If that's what the writer believes to be sparkling wit, then perhaps he should stick to reporting flower shows and church fetes, and leave humour to people who understand it.

I don't know his motive for the attack. Perhaps someone spilt his dry martini last time he was here. I do know that both the Bath and Gloucester clubs, and indeed the game itself, can do without this sort of thing, which really has nothing to do with rugby.

I will happily admit that the Shed can be loud, rude and even offensive at times, but one thing they never are is snide. If

they are going to insult you, you'll know you've been insulted.

I'm not tempted to exchange literary jousting with Bath Chronicle's reporter. If I were, I'd start by asking if it's a coincidence that, on the very day Bath sealed their top spot in the Premiership, three asylum seekers were arrested trying to get out of the country.

SUMMER WELL

I'll say it again. I hope you all have a great summer, and thanks for giving your attention to my meanderings again this season. Hope to see you again next time round.

Cheers!

Gloucester vs Sale Sharks

Head to Head



The matchday programme weighs up the key head to heads at today's big Zurich Wild Card clash.





Two of the hottest properties in the game come face to face. Both have an open running game and both are match winners with their ability. The two speedsters will be looking to seal the match-winning try.





Garvey Hanley

Hanley's height against Garvey's power – it makes for an intriguing battle. Gloucester's right wing man put his all into the final few minutes against Bath last weekend, and Hanley is lethal if given any space to run at a defence.







Fortey Titterrell



Titterrell is-part of the England elite squad and has impressed at all levels. He's likely to face Chris Fortey this afternoon, and Gloucester's number two is in monstrous form. Against London Irish he picked up Sky's man of the match award, and many say he was unlucky not to get it again against Wasps in the Premiership.



Brown Day



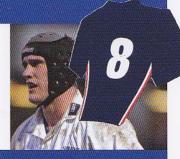
Day is one of the up and coming young talents on the circuit, much like Alex Brown was a couple of years ago. Brown has matured into one of the classiest second row forwards in the English game, and those in the know are saying Day is hot on his heels.



Paramore Jones



Chris Jones has had a wonderful season, as has Junior Paramore. Jones is seen as one of the new breed of back-row forwards who adds options to the line-out as well as the loose, and Paramore is hard-nosed and power personified.



Fans Zone

_{with} Bob Fenton

Regular Shed dweller Bob Fenton rounds up his thoughts from recent weeks.

Before the start of the season I was asked by Radio Gloucester where I thought we would end up at the end of the season. Being a good Gloucester boy – and therefore natural pessimist – I said I couldn't see them topping the pile, but second or third was a possibility.

game was like a cup final as we tried to overtake Northampton. His reasoning was that as soon as we lost one game we were really out of it.

Well it could be argued that the team who ended our third place aspirations was none other than our visitors today, Sale Sharks. Remember the drubbing they handed out to us on a Friday night in Stockport? Well the play off game today gives us a chance for some immediate revenge and at the same time end their Heineken Cup hopes.

So sorry Philippe, sorry Toddy and sorry Dougie. I know the Sharks are your new employers from the end of this season.

In an ideal world we wouldn't want to be playing this game, but Sale will be well up for it. They have everything to play for today and they could be the only side who rest everything on it, after they finished fifth from bottom of the league.

Why just them? Well think about it. Bath have qualified through their league position, as have Northampton. Wasps have also qualified, but hope to qualify again through winning the competition next week, if they do, then Gloucester are the lucky beneficiaries of their league placed qualification. And if Montferrand win the Parker Pen competition then Leicester will probably get a place as well.

Harlequins, meanwhile, have the aforesaid Parker Pen final next week, and will be concerned over injuries in the week before their biggest game for decades. So the team from Stockport sit there hoping that we all fall over ourselves or qualify another way and they can wander in unopposed.

Whatever you think of the play-offs,

"Well it could be argued that the team who ended our third place aspirations was none other than our visitors today,"

Well I wasn't far out, but despite all the wailing and nashing of teeth in some quarters fourth is not all that bad. Not so many seasons ago fourth from bottom was more of the norm, so fourth from top must be okay.

And of course the play offs mean that we have another game at Castle Grim and that means that the team have the chance to make amends for last Saturday's Bath Fiasco and put a bit of a smile back on our faces.

Talking of Bath, we should congratulate them on topping the pile this season, no matter how much it hurts us to do so. They have had a huge turnaround in fortunes in the last 12 months, now we must wait and see whether they actually win anything, or get mugged in West London as we did last year.

But back to today. Towards the end of the season Dean Ryan said that every today gives us another last hurrah for Andy Deacon and Robert Todd. And now we can add Trevor Woodman to the list. I remember talking to Trevor some time ago, and asking him about a story Terry Fanolua told me about a time when he lived with Dougie and Vickster.

Tezza said that he had never seen so much food on a plate or be eaten by normal human beings. "Yeah, I think we were eating a lot back then," said Dougie. Let's hope the cooks up at Sale are up to the task.

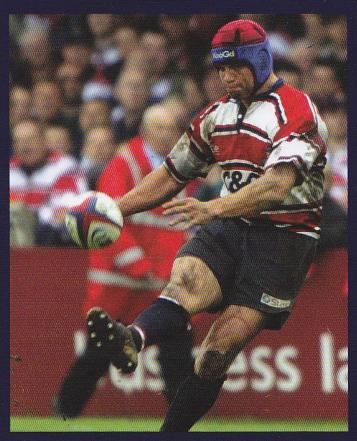
They had best check their mobile phone bills and all – remember the stories about Vixter and Dougie ringing each other up from different bedrooms in their house to argue about who was making breakfast? All true, I'm afraid.

And a note to everyone please: When these boys do their lap of honour to say goodbye at the end of the game, please keep off the pitch and let them do it – your selfish actions spoil the party for the rest of us who are too old, too fat or too drunk to climb over all the hoardings.

On to totally different things: The other day I heard Septic Batter, or whoever the guy is who is the boss of the round ball game, came up with a brilliant idea that there should be no more draws, and all soccer games should be decided by a penalty shoot out.

Well that got the old brain cells ticking over, maybe Rugby should do the same, but at the end of the season to decide who wins things. Rather than the clubs having to play yet more fixtures (whatever happened to player burn out?) we should let the supporters take part.

My first thought was for a penalty style shoot out, but with the fans taking the kicks, maybe without shoes on to add to the 'entertainment'. Too dull, we need more entertainment. How about making them drink 10 pints of lager and do the running around the poll thing to get really dizzy before trying? Nah boring, been done before.



But here's an idea — they have to do it on Bungee Ropes tied to the goal posts at the other end of the pitch — only the fittest (or fattest) would get to the ball before being shot back with great force into the distance. Think of the suspense, think of the fun! Unless you were standing in the wrong end and had to duck the flying torsos! Come on Premier Rugby, you know it makes sense...

it's been a funny old season though – completely disrupted by internationals and the World Cup. Some French colleagues I work with have said that they cannot believe that the English Premiership carried on through the World Cup.

In France, they said, the competitions were curtailed and everything was worked on some sort of knock out basis. We have to think of that for the future – teams with a smattering of internationals will continue to be

penalised, and be left playing catch-up through the rest of the season. And with so much resting on the European Tournament is it right that the very future of a club should be jeopardised in this way?

Well that's it from me for another season, thank you for the kind comments I have had from a few people, the others – and you know who you are – can keep 'em to yerselves! Good luck to all those players who are leaving us, we look forward to seeing you back here soon – you know you will get a warm welcome, well you will until kick-off anyway. After that anything goes - once Whispering John warms up his vocal chords you best stick to the grandstand side of things for the sake of your sanity not to mention your eardrums.

Have a great summer, and I'll see you all back here in a few months time. Happy holidays.





GLOUCESTER

SALE SHARKS

	- 4			, 7 5,7
Jon Goodridge	15	fullback	15	Jason Robinson
Marcel Garvey	14	wing	14	Mark Cueto
Terry Fanolua	13	centre	13	Chris Mayor
Henry Paul	12	centre	12	Chris Rhys Jones
James Simpson-Daniel	11	wing	11	Steve Hanley
Duncan McRae	10	flyhalf	10	Charlie Hodgson
Andy Gomarsall	09	scrumhalf	09	Scott Benton
Trevor Woodman	01	prop	01	Barry Stewart
Chris Fortey	02	hooker	02	Andy Titterrell
Andy Deacon	03	prop	03	Stuart Turner
Adam Eustace	04	lock	04	Christian Day
Alex Brown	05	lock	05	Jason White
Jake Boer (c)	06	flanker	06	Peter Anglesea
Andy Hazell	07	flanker	07	Hugh Perrett
Peter Buxton	08	no. 8	80	Chris Jones
Delarey Du Preez	16	replacements	16	John Rodham
Rodrigo Roncero	17	The state of the s	17	Martin Halsall
Nick Wood	18		18	Dean Schofield
Mark Cornwell	19		19	Phil Davies
Simon Amor	20		20	Vaughan Going
Riaan van der Bergh	21		21	Mike Hercus
Robert Todd	22		22	Richard Wigglesworth

ZURICH PREMIERSHIP 2003/04

TEAM	P	W	D	L	F	A	ТВ	LB	PTS
Bath Rugby	22	18	0	4	508	311	4	3	79
London Wasps	22	16	0	6	575	406	6	3	73
Northampton Saints	22	15	1	6	574	416	6	2	70
Gloucester	22	14	0	8	491	412	4	3	63
Leicester Tigers	22	11	3	8	537	430	4	2	55
NEC Harlequins	22	10	2	10	502	449	4	6	54
Sale Sharks	22	9	3	10	510	472	5	6	53
London Irish	22	10	1	11	427	454	1	6	49
Newcastle Falcons	22	7	2	13	497	525	4	9	45
Saracens	22	8	1	13	397	543	3	3	39
Leeds Tykes	22	7	1	14	449	588	4	3	37
Rotherham Titans	22	0	0	22	309	770	0	3	3

2452

TODAY'S MATCH OFFICIALS

Referee: Roy Maybank 1st TJ: Ashley Reay 2nd TJ: Bob Mullis

4th Official: Mark Tover

Today's Result

Gloucester 44



Sale



