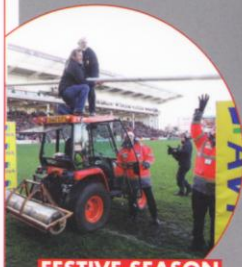


GLOUCESTER RUGBY



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SHAUN OF THE RED



THE PRIDE ~ THE PASSION ~ THE HONOUR ~ THE HISTORY

AVIVA PREMIERSHIP RUGBY





CAPTAIN'S CORNER

TOM SAVAGE

Good afternoon and, of course, a very Happy New Year to everyone connected with Gloucester Rugby.

It's great to sit here now and pen my column on the back of two great wins for the squad. Obviously I'm still hugely frustrated to be sidelined, but the efforts of the squad over the festive period to record the back to back victories fills me with plenty of pride.

For sure, it was great to end 2013 on the back of a pair of wins to give

in the season at Allianz Park, for the first 40 minutes we battled and actually went in ahead but ran out of steam in the second half.

Despite the results early on in the season, it would be fair to say that we have never been outclassed and the score line on that day was a tough one to take despite our efforts.

Saracens have a huge depth of squad, something which we are trying to emulate here at Kingsholm. Nigel has been a very busy man behind the scenes forming the

"...TODAY WILL BE A MASSIVE TEST, A FIERCE LOCAL DERBY WITH A LOT AT STAKE."

us plenty of confidence as we roll into the New Year.

I'd like to extend a warm welcome to our first visitors of 2014, league leaders Saracens, who as expected are setting the pace at the top of the table.

We let ourselves down early on

squad for next year and trying to create competition at every position.

The options we possess at the moment are great, and testament to the rotation policy we've employed this season. We have a big pool of top players all with plenty of match experience.

I know for sure the squad have been putting in an awful lot of work behind the scenes going into this game. Saracens lost here last year, and will want to put that right. But we will be guarding the gates of fortress Kingsholm and doing our best to impose our game plan and intensity.

We know that the festive period has been a cheerful one for our support and, as we dust off our collective New Year hangover, clear your voices and get Kingsholm rocking so we can kick off 2014 with a memorable afternoon.

Enjoy the game,

Sav

United The squad and all the coaches have been working hard behind the scenes.



NIGEL DAVIES DIRECTOR OF RUGBY



"...WE CAN NOW START TO LOOK UP THE TABLE AND THE TEAMS ABOVE US, RATHER THAN LOOKING AT THE TEAMS BELOW US. IT HELPS ENCOURAGE A MORE POSITIVE MINDSET."

COACH'S NOTES

I'd like to wish everyone a warm welcome to Kingsholm for our first home match of 2014 and, of course, a very Happy New Year.

The last couple of weeks have seen us play two vitally important Aviva Premiership fixtures, and

earlier in the season, and that is giving us a platform to play from.

Last weekend's game was a case in point. Admittedly, we didn't get off to the best of starts at the Madejski Stadium but, from that point on, I thought we managed the game well.



I'm delighted that we've emerged with wins from both the Worcester Warriors and London Irish fixtures.

We knew that both games would be tough, the two sides are embroiled in a fight for their Premiership lives at the foot of the table. We expected them to come hard at us, and we weren't disappointed.

But I think we've turned a corner in the last month or so. Our set piece is more solid than it was

We secured our own ball efficiently and played the game in the right areas of the pitch, forcing Irish to play from deep. Our defence was pretty good and we took the points when they were on offer.

We had to endure a nervous final few minutes, as was the case against Worcester the week before, but overall it was a job well done on the road.

And you can't underestimate

the positive impact that back to back wins can have on a squad of players. It was very important for us to finish 2013 on a high note and carry that momentum into the New Year.

As I said when I was doing my media work after the game, we can now start to look up the table and the teams above us, rather than looking at the teams below us. It helps encourage a more positive mindset.

That's something we'll certainly need to have against today's opponents, Saracens. Credit to them, they've been excellent so far this season and deserve to be top of the table.

Our game at Allianz Park earlier this season was obviously a difficult one for us, as we played 78 minutes with only 14 men. Despite that, I thought we competed very well for the first hour or so.

Discipline will obviously be key for us again this weekend. As Saracens proved in that first meeting, they will take full advantage of any numerical superiority.

But it's a challenge that we should embrace today. Last season's encounter was a pulsating one, and today's meeting could be just as tight.

Finally, I'd like to take a moment to thank all our supporters for sticking with us and giving the players your full backing in recent weeks.

I wrote in my last programme notes that the opposition are trying to shut us up. They didn't succeed in the Worcester game a fortnight ago, and hopefully won't do so today!

Happy New Year,

Nigel



VIEW FROM The Citizen

with **MIKE BROWN**

Mike talks to Gloucester's Director of Rugby, Nigel Davies and asks how he believes 2014 will be the year Gloucester turn their fortunes around and climb the table.

LOOKING UP



After completing a festive double with a hard fought victory over London Irish, Nigel Davies proclaimed Gloucester could go into 2014 looking up the Aviva Premiership table and rightly so.

The first half of the season has been a tumultuous one for the Cherry and Whites to say the least.

Davies' men have lost 10 of their 17 competitive fixtures to date and go into today's clash with Saracens having won just two league encounters on their home patch – Kingsholm is no longer the fortress it once was.

Those statistics cannot be ignored and it is certainly not pretty reading for the Cherry and White faithful, but there are plenty of reasons for optimism going into the New Year.

"It was great to get this result on the back of Worcester and it gives us momentum going into the New Year," said Davies at the Madejski Stadium.

"It builds momentum, confidence and belief in the team after a crucial Christmas period

where we really had to get two wins. It allows us to start looking upwards rather than downwards.

"It's about belief and knowing you can do it. The best sides hang in games and win games at the death because they keep hold of that faith. It takes time to hold onto that belief but we are starting to grow it."

Games like the one in Reading would have been lost earlier in the season but Gloucester dogged it out and hung on for another crucial four points despite being outscored three tries to one.

Over the last six weeks Davies and his coaching team have solidified a shaky pack, who have since held their own against Leicester Tigers and dominated the likes of Edinburgh.

For consecutive weeks hookers, Darren Dawidiuk and Huia Edmonds, picked up man-of-the-match awards and Elliott Stooke is growing in prominence with each game.

Matt Kvesic and Ben Morgan are nearing a return to their best and, in Billy Twelvetrees, Gloucester have found a fly-half to pull the strings

and release one of the most exciting back-lines in the country.

The centre-cum-fly-half orchestrated with aplomb against the Exiles - putting the forwards in the right areas and running when it

areas, are defensively sound and kick their goals.

"In the context of that Billy fits most of those characteristics but he still wants to play 12 with the option of 10 as well."

to climb the table with just 11 points separating Gloucester and the play-off places - it's certainly a tall order but, if they continue to build on recent performances, it is achievable.



"...IT TAKES TIME TO HOLD ONTO THAT BELIEF BUT WE ARE STARTING TO GROW IT."

was on to do so.

While Twelvetrees' long-term future remains at inside centre, he left Davies with little doubt that he can continue to do a job in the number 10 hot-seat when required.

He said: "When you look at the consistent top 10s and they are solid, very pivotal in the game, act as that pivot between backs and forwards, put the team in the right

Saracens undoubtedly pose the biggest challenge Gloucester have faced this season, and it's a daunting start to 2014. But it is certainly not an insurmountable one.

Following Sarries' visit today, Gloucester move into European and LV= Cup action before facing Sale Sharks, the team above them eighth in the Premiership table.

There stands another opportunity

Looking further ahead Davies has already begun to address the problems faced this season and incoming signings John Afoa and Richard Hibbard will bring an abundance of quality and experience.

While Gloucester have had their troubles in the past four months they can ring out the old and ring in the new with an optimistic smile.

GLOUCESTER RUGBY
HERITAGE

www.gloucester rugby heritage.org.uk

TOM VOYCE GLOUCESTER'S GREATEST?

Tom Voyle played a starring role for England and the Lions, and later became President of the RFU.

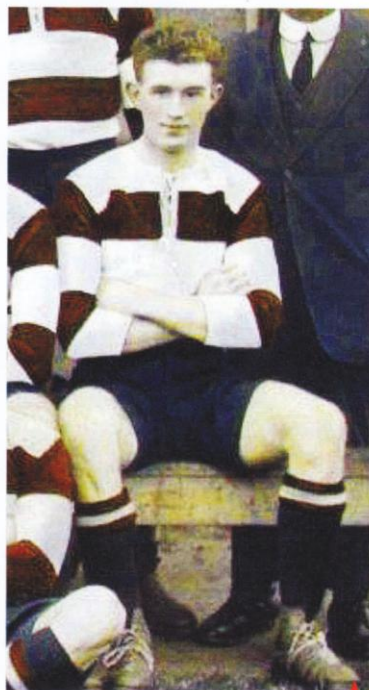
But most of all he was Gloucester through and through, born in the City in 1897, dying there in 1980, his whole life epitomising the devotion to the game which Gloucester rugby breeds.

Tom, the son of a lighter captain, grew up in the shadow of Kingsholm at Dean's Walk. He went to the Gloucester National School, where the motto was "Never Step Backwards". Tom adopted this as the principle by which to play rugby.

He came to rugby prominence as a schoolboy, earning his first England cap at fly-half with the U15s in the 1910-11 season. He had just started to play senior rugby for the Gordon League, when the Great War intervened.

Tom enlisted as a Private in the Glo'sters as soon as war broke out, but he was found to be under age and was told to go away until he was 18. He persevered and landed in France in 1916, was promoted to Sergeant, and later gained a commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Royal West Kent Regiment.

In 1917 he was wounded in



Tom at the start of his career with Gloucester in 1919

the right eye, which left him with impaired eyesight for the rest of his life, but it didn't prevent him from serving as a Major in the Signal Corps in the Second World War. Nor did he let it hold him back on

the rugby pitch.

After the war Tom joined Gloucester and they first played him on the wing, but when "Tart" Hall dropped out just before a game, Tom was switched to wing forward and there he remained.

Within months of his first-class debut, Tom had gained Club, County and International caps. He was soon famous the length and breadth of the country, and outside it too.

Especially in Wales where he quickly became the man they loved most to hate for the havoc which he wreaked amongst their vaunted back division.

"FATHER OF ALL WING FORWARDS"

An enthusiastic press bestowed a number of titles upon Tom – "King of Gloucester", "Scourge of the Welsh", and "Father of all Wing Forwards".

The last of these referred to the way in which he revolutionised the role of wing forward. Tom was not content with being just one of the pack, and turned into a predator. He broke quickly from set pieces and used his speed to chase down the opposing backs and win the ball in loose play.



◦ Sid Smart, George Halford and Tom Voyce, all captains of Gloucester, in their England strip

The impact he made has caused successive generations of wing forwards to copy his style.

Tom recognised that he often played on the limit of the law, and told this story about himself:

"There was the occasion when the referee was going to take some drastic action. That great tactician, George Halford, immediately shouted to me: "I'll report you to the committee next week!" and the astonished referee said: "Play on, men!"

Tom appeared in every match of England's Grand Slam winning teams of 1921, 1923 and 1924.

Wavell Wakefield, his England captain, wrote: "...the name of Tom Voyce is synonymous with that of Gloucester. Think of one and the other springs to mind, for he was a great player from a great club - a wonderful inspiration to any side. Tom had that personality and mental, competitive outlook that makes up

a great player. He was always best in adversity and there is no forward I would rather have with me in a tight corner than Tom Voyce with a grin, his sleeves rolled up, his tireless energy and his love for the game, for the hard knocks he could give and take. We must have had some 50 big games together and always I have known that where he was most wanted, there should I find him."

He also recalled a try which Tom scored: "I passed to him some 30 yards from the line, hoping he would heave the ball out at once. But Tom was going to score himself and the whole Welsh team tried to stop him but score he did."

THE LION WHO ROARED

Tom played for Gloucestershire, the Army and the Barbarians, and also for the British Isles team which toured South Africa in 1924; he appeared in two internationals and ended the tour as leading scorer.

By the end of his career, Tom had won 27 caps with England, and made 165 appearances for Gloucester, scoring 219 points, including 55 tries.

50 YEARS RUNNING THE GAME

He was determined to put something back into the game which he loved so much, and on his retirement as a player, Tom was immediately elected onto the Gloucester committee, and remained there in various capacities until he finally stood down as President of the Club in 1979.

He served almost as long on the County Union Executive, and was President for two seasons, 1933-35. He was appointed as Gloucester's representative on the Rugby Union committee in 1931, and remained there for 40 years, becoming President of the RFU in 1960-61, the only Gloucester man to have achieved this honour.

Tom did much good work outside rugby too. He served on Gloucester City Council, and was active in many other organisations, including Municipal Charities, Gloucester Royal Infirmary Governors, Hospital Welfare Committee, British Legion, War Pensions Committee, City Youth Committee, Boy Scouts, National Savings Committee and Road Safety Committee.

He was awarded the OBE in 1962 for his public work in Gloucestershire, particularly with the National Playing Fields Association.

He died at his home in Tewkesbury Road, Gloucester, not far from his beloved Kingsholm.

THE LAST WORD

Tom himself wrote: "...the thrills of victory...Herculean battles against odds...the subtle change of tactics which tipped the scales...the roars which have shaken Kingsholm to signalise an outstanding feat, and above all, the grand comradeship which shines like a jewel in the history of Gloucester Rugby...these are but a few of many corners in my own particular treasure-house of memories."



Tom in action against Wales




ExtraMEDIA

Shaun Knight @Shaunkn1ght
The knight boys #3generations



ExtraMEDIA

Shaun Knight @Shaunkn1ght
Great wins for @MatsonRFC today hopefully us
@gloucester rugby boys can do it tomorrow



BORN TO SCRUM

SCRUM LAWS HAVE CONFUSED AND FRUSTRATED MOST THIS SEASON, BUT FOR ONE OF THE GLOUCESTER PACK, THE DAY JOB IS STILL THE SAME, AND FOR **SHAUN KNIGHT** AND HIS CHERRY AND WHITE COMRADES, THE JOB IS ONLY JUST BEGINNING.

Performances up front have been on the up in recent weeks and, the Heineken Cup double header against Edinburgh in particular, saw the Gloucester forwards dominate in both games, which was a delight for all to see.

"Definitely, it was nice to have a game where we had dominance up front, we've been criticised about that this season. The games went well, and at least we're going in the right direction. Edinburgh aren't a bad pack by any stretch of the imagination, full of Scottish internationals so it was a good thing for us"

Knight, as part of his development, spent a period on loan at Edinburgh two years ago, and for the Matson born tighthead, it was a weird feeling returning to a venue he called

home, albeit for a short period.

"It was a bit weird yeah, the majority of the boys are still there from when I was there two years ago, so it was nice to see a few of them two weeks in a row. I haven't seen them since I was up there.

"I only played at Murrayfield a few times when I was up there so it was good to go back up there and finish on the winning side."

In the return match at Kingsholm, flashbacks of Cherry and White juggernauts sprinting a maul downfield returned as Gloucester earned a penalty try following a 20 metre maul.

"To get that score from the rolling maul was immense, it was a side of our game that we had perhaps neglected, but we're now putting the work in as a unit and we're training very hard."

Gloucester born-and-bred, Knight recognises the importance of local rugby, and still has a real interest in grass roots rugby, especially at Matson RFC in the city.

"I still coach up there, they're going really well this season as well. It's nice to have a break from

"GLOUCESTER, FOR ME, IS A HOT BED OF RUGBY, THERE'S A CLUB EVERY TWO MILES THAT YOU GO. IT'S JUST NUTS. MATSON IS ONE THAT HAS A GREAT HISTORY, AND THEY ARE UP AND COMING AGAIN."

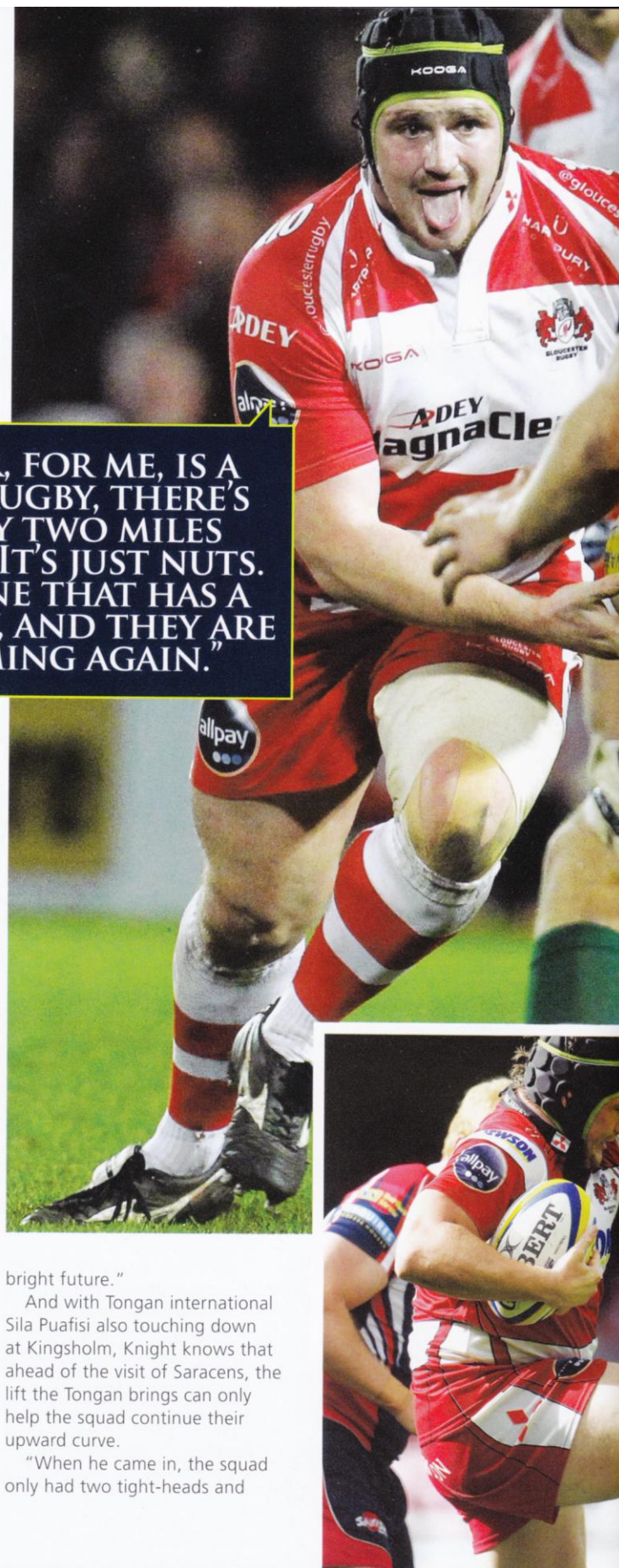
my rugby and focus on something else. It's good to have something else to focus your mind on.

"Gloucester, for me, is a hot bed of rugby, there's a club every two miles that you go. It's just nuts. Matson is one that has a great history, and they are up and coming again. There's lots of young players that want to train and want to put the work in."

"They've been working really hard to earn a Sport England grant because the roof at the club is all but finished. It's falling down and, if they can't fix it, then they worry about going into liquidation.

In the world of professional rugby, it's always a comfort to have the presence of a familiar face, and for Knight, cousin Ryan Charles is part of the Gloucester Rugby Gold Academy and Knight is impressed with the young hooker's progression.

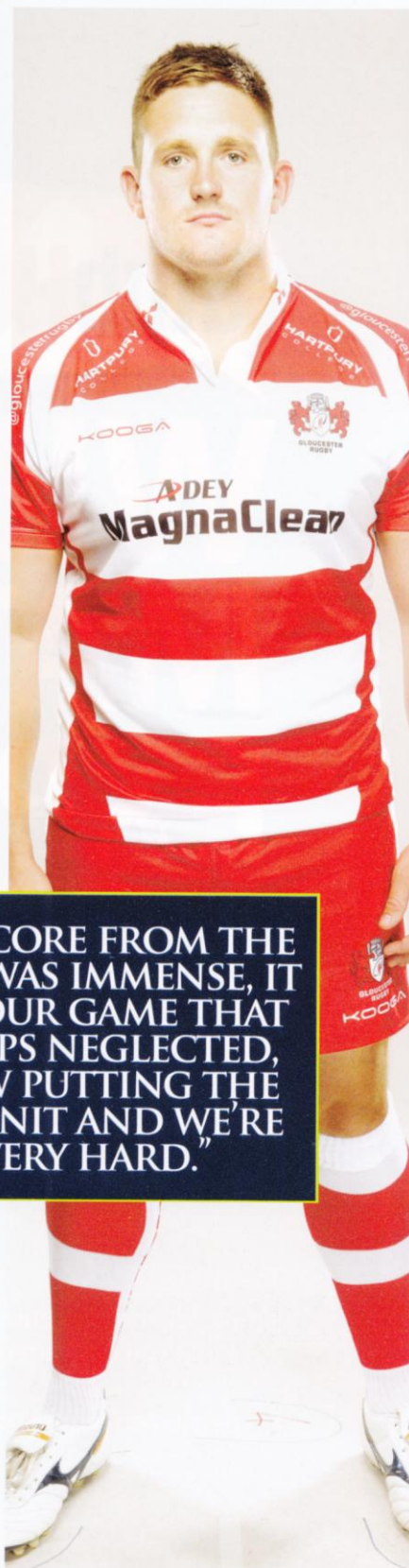
"He's a good player, he's my first cousin and we grew up like a brother. I pick him up most mornings and he's progressing really well. He struggled a bit in recent weeks with a slight concussion, but he's fighting hard and doing well as he's got a



bright future."

And with Tongan international Sila Puafisi also touching down at Kingsholm, Knight knows that ahead of the visit of Saracens, the lift the Tongan brings can only help the squad continue their upward curve.

"When he came in, the squad only had two tight-heads and



"TO GET THAT SCORE FROM THE ROLLING MAUL WAS IMMENSE, IT WAS A SIDE OF OUR GAME THAT WE HAD PERHAPS NEGLECTED, BUT WE'RE NOW PUTTING THE WORK IN AS A UNIT AND WE'RE TRAINING VERY HARD."



he's come in and given us a lot of strength there now.

"I didn't play down at Saracens but they rolling mauled us quite badly and the scrum went alright, but maul wise we got trampled on. But this week we've got a chance to put that right against a good pack and put our stamp on what we can do."



KINGSHOLM NEWS with BOB FENTON

Saracens are the Marmite team of the Premiership, their fans love them, everyone else hates them

... **A**nd breathe. Two of the most important games we will have played for some time successfully negotiated. Not pretty watching, but eight points collected and while, we still have to look up to see most of the other teams in the division, the fears some may have harboured about us falling over the edge of the Premiership cliff have should have been allayed.

Let's wind the clock back to a couple of weeks ago, Worcester came to town no doubt having targeted this game as the one that would turn their season around for them. Fair play to them, they gave it a go too.

Given our notoriously slow starts this season, I think our clever play



Christmas Lights
Billy and Jonny have both put in big performance over the last 2 weekends

of delaying the start by using a clown and a balloon to knock the cross bar off – thus making our guys think the game had been on for 30 mins so could start to play – was the key. That and moving the goal line back by a few millimetres to just stop Worcester scoring that second half try... Dave Balmer – Man of the Match!

To call that game tense would be a massive understatement though. The day before I had to undergo one of those routine health checks that blokes of my age have to endure every now and then. There was some concern that my blood pressure was a bit on the high side – lucky they didn't take it at Kingsholm with about five minutes to go, it would have been off the scale!

If it was compelling – if painful – watching for us supporters, heaven knows what it must have been like to play in. The fear of a missed tackle or a minor mistake must have been suffocating for the guys on the field.

Credit to both sides then that it was played in good spirit throughout, and you could see what it meant to the boys at the end. Whether they were celebrating the win or the fact that Nigel Davies allegedly planned to 'cancel Christmas' if they lost is not clear – either way they deserved it.

Then last week it was round two of the coronary inducing double header up at the Mad Stad. Despite winning there last season, it's not been the happiest of



Flats He may have played for Bath but at least he understands a scrum



hunting grounds for us, but win we did – though we were determined to make every second seem like an hour.

For a little while it looked like we might stretch away and get a big enough gap on the score board to take a little of the tension away, not to be though... Another helter-skelter last few minutes when either side could have won it, fortunately we held on to take the points.

Watching it back later it was interesting to listen to the comments of the commentators and their guests.

While Matt 'the mouth' Dawson was seemingly making a late grab for Austin Healy's 'most irritating man behind a microphone' title – and you have many, many miles to go to get that one, Matt - David Flatman was both interesting and insightful – not to mention funny.

I've long enjoyed his written contributions, but this was the first

time that I have really heard him during a game. I get the feeling he – and therefore by extension the other front row players in the Premiership – is as frustrated as the rest of us with what goes on at scrum time.

I believe that a group of 'senior' prop forwards have been asked to give their views on what is going wrong at scrum time, let's hope they can make some headway. The tit for tat penalties and free kicks that are routinely awarded are making a mockery out of this part of the game.

If those law makers at HQ and elsewhere in the world want a game without scrums there is a little one played down the length of the M56 (and a few other outposts) that might interest you.

So today then... Before the Worcester game I was busy telling anyone who would listen – or who couldn't get away from me – that if

we beat Worcester, we would win away at London Irish and then beat Saracens at home.

Well, two sides of that triangle have been completed, what of the third? I confess though, that my prediction may have been based on more bravado than hard facts, and was made before I watched Saracens blow Leicester off the park.

They were unstoppable; that was a performance of some magnitude and was one produced by a great side hitting their straps. Leicester were short of a few players – probably only 13 or so full internationals in their side – but they were never in it – a scary performance for the rest of the Premiership to witness.

Saracens are the Marmite team of the Premiership, their fans love them, everyone else hates them – or so you might think if you believe a lot of what is said.

We all know that they have quality international players in every position throughout their squad, and in their 'United' side, and in their reserve to the united side, and in the reserve to the reserve squad etc etc.

But you can have all the players and none of the team – something that could have been levelled at the Saracens of a few years ago. Sickeningly for the rest of the Prem, this isn't the case now – they have both!

If you cut away some of the envy though, most will have more than grudging respect for them – us old traditionalists may not like some of their off field marketing, but you can't hide from the fact that they are one heck of a rugby team. Hopefully though, they will have worn themselves out and will not hit that peak today and my three-sided prediction will prove to be accurate.

But for now let's go back to where I came in, we're at half time in the season, we have more teams above than below, but we're improving. My glass is still half full, the only way is up!

Have a great 2014.



HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU. I'M SURE AFTER LAST SUNDAY'S RESULT, AND THE SCRAPPY WIN OVER WORCESTER, THERE WILL BE A LITTLE MORE OPTIMISM EVEN IF IT WILL BE TEMPERED BY AKAPUSI QERA'S WIDELY RUMOURED DEPARTURE TO TOULOUSE.

THE "negotiation window" is now open for next season, so Nigel can really press the pedal with regard to potential signings.

I'm indebted to my good friend and BBC Gloucestershire commentator Andrew Pugh for today's thoughts. Gloucester have now played everybody in the Premiership. A good time, then, to assess each team, taking the sides in the order Gloucester have met them.

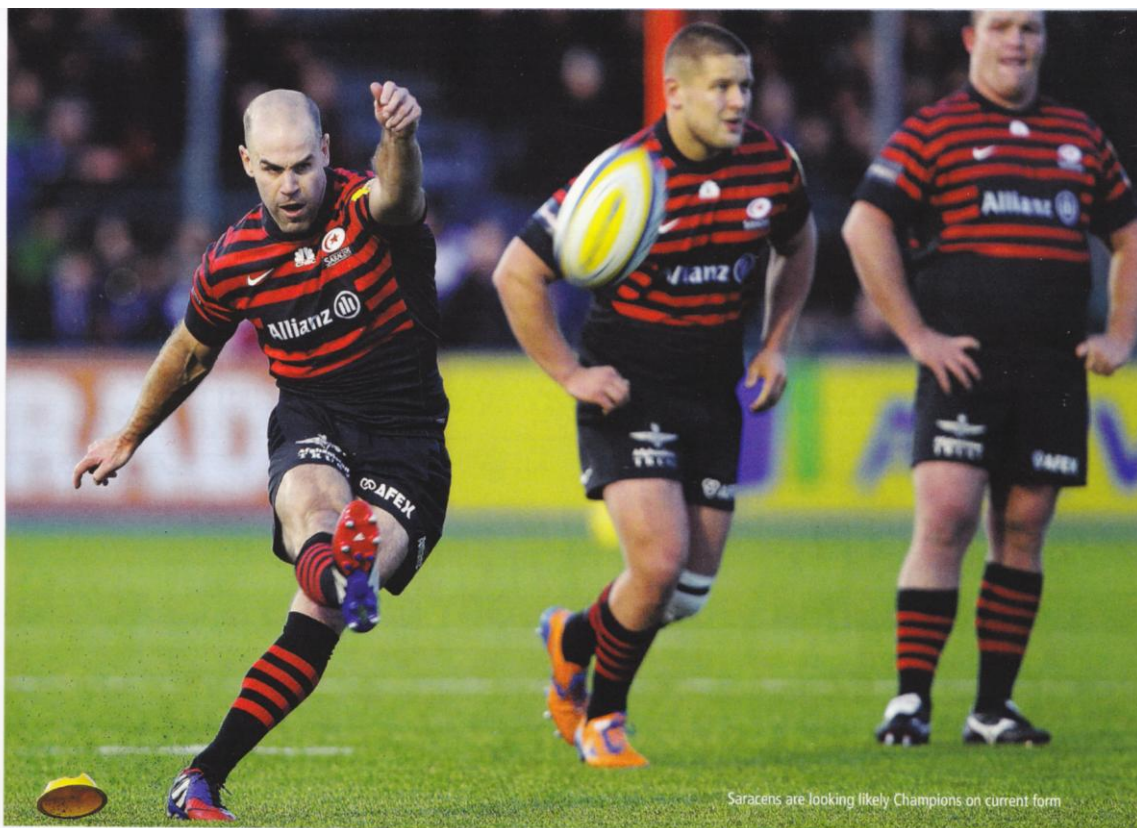
SALE: Sharks were very pumped up for the opening game. The result was as much about Gloucester's deficiencies as anything else, but since then Sale have come on quite well. They look a side in the mould of Exeter, building a team ethos without big names (Cipriani apart) which is more than the sum of the parts. Hard to beat at home.

SARACENS: They look the complete package. The rugby they play has expanded greatly, and that seems to be down in no small measure to the synthetic pitch at Allianz Park. It's no longer just about attritional forward play and Owen Farrell's boot. They've also got great depth in their squad to cope with injuries and international calls, and they look favourites to be champions.

NORTHAMPTON: Saints also play a nicely balanced all round game, and George North has made a difference since his arrival in the summer. Samu Manoa is in great form at the moment, as are other key players in their pack like Lawes and Hartley. They have a lot going for them but probably don't have the overall strength in depth that Saracens would. Their best 23, though, would push them hard.

NEWCASTLE: Falcons don't have the "pull" of other clubs so Dean Richards has to make the best of what he has available. They made Gloucester struggle at Kingston Park, and should have enough to distance themselves from London Irish and certainly Worcester.





Saracens are looking likely Champions on current form

Assuming they stay up, Richards will want to bolster his squad but long term I still see them in the bottom half of the table.

EXETER: I'm a huge admirer of Rob Baxter, who gets more out of his players than probably anyone else in the Premiership. Dean Mumm is an inspirational leader, and they did a very efficient, professional job against Gloucester at Kingsholm. If players like Steenson and the evergreen Haydn Thomas retain their form. I would put them in the top six come the end of the season.

BATH: The most improved team. There is depth in the squad, though not to the extent of Saracens, and some players - Dave Attwood is a good example - are close to their best form after a fallow period. You've got to respect that they've done with strong financial backing, although after Gary Gold's departure it will be interesting to see how their slimmed down coaching team fares.

WASPS: I would call them competitive. Not the biggest pack, although Launchbury is clearly a talent at lock, and Dai Young has worked out that Elliot Daly's best position is at full back. Home games

will be important, but I expect them to win most of those even without Wade's pace because of injury. Probably not quite good enough for the top six.

HARLEQUINS: Not quite the force they were, partly because the pack has lost the ballast of James Johnstone and Olly Kohn. Having said that, Care remains a box of tricks and Nick Evans is still a tremendous player at fly half. Still attractive to watch, and will be in the scrap for a top four place.

LEICESTER: Tigers are used to bossing sides around, and Richard Cockerill's recent comments about the Sale scrum may indicate some frustration that they aren't doing that this season. The stand out result was the hammering they took at Saracens, when there seemed a lack of fire and energy, which is very unusual but they are a very resilient club and I wouldn't bet against them making a run into the top four.

WORCESTER: The Championship beckons. Dean Ryan inherited a squad put together by someone else, and it's not happening for him, or the squad as a group. They would probably have only two players who other Premiership clubs would queue up

to sign - Chris Pennell and Jonathan Thomas. Dean said early on it was a four year project, and it certainly looks that way.

LONDON IRISH: Despite the recent takeover, Irish have a lot of work to do to from the base they are working from. Their two recent big name signings - James O'Connor and CJ Van de Linde - are only contracted until the end of the season. I only see them as a bottom half team in the short to medium term.

Andrew's top four are Saracens, Saints, Leicester and Bath. He tipped Gloucester to finish 6th at the start of the season, but concedes it will take a big effort to make that now, although the run-in may help with a late flourish.

Today the dynamic is different to the last two games, where Gloucester needed to win. This afternoon they won't be expected to do so, which may just release the shackles a bit and produce potentially the best game at Kingsholm so far this season.



Follow Ian on Twitter: @ian_randall1

In each and every match programme, we'll be offering Gloucester Rugby supporters the opportunity to provide the questions which will form the basis of an interview for that week's chosen player.

Simply keep an eye on the official Gloucester Rugby Twitter feed, [@gloucesterrugby](#), in the weeks leading up to a game to see which player we'll be featuring and how you can submit your questions.

Do you want to know what they have for breakfast? Find out who has the worst dress sense, who has the best banter and who is the biggest moaner?

#AskSila



[@rugbylaws](#)

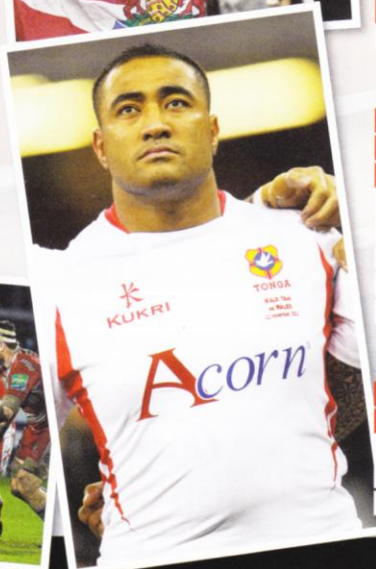
Do you have any brothers that play rugby?

I have three older brothers and I'm the only one that plays rugby. One of them is a police officer and the others work in the United States.

[@DurrantRonald](#)

What do you think you can bring to the club to lift the players?

I will bring my 'A' game to every time I put on the Gloucester shirt, to try my best in my position and I will do everything to motivate the players around me and make the supporters happy.



[@sirmattmills](#)

How much do you bench?

160 kg

[@jcoleary](#)

How many t-bone steaks do you reckon you could eat in one go?

I'm on a strict diet so I'm not a big fan of that.

[@byakko8](#)

How are you finding settling into the UK and Gloucester?

Really happy to be in Gloucester, the boys and management have been really welcoming and I've liked to walk around the streets and see the supporters.

[@glosrugbyfan97](#)

What has been the greatest moment of your career so far?

Representing my country, Tonga, is the best feeling you can have.



NEXT TIME...

We have our star centre, **Henry Trinder**, poised and ready for your tweets to feature in the matchday programme against Munster on 11th January



Quickfire Round

Favourite film? I love the films like Troy and Gladiator. My favourite is probably 300.

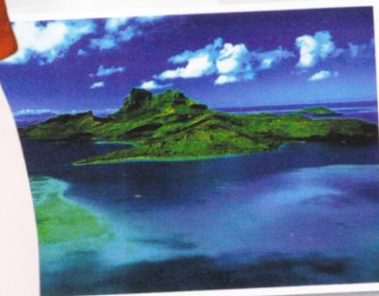


Favourite song?

Ha, my favourite songs are the love songs, the ones like Backstreet Boys, Boyzone, 'What is love?'. I'm a bit of a romantic.

Favourite holiday destination?

Can't beat being back in Tonga.



Best mate in the squad?

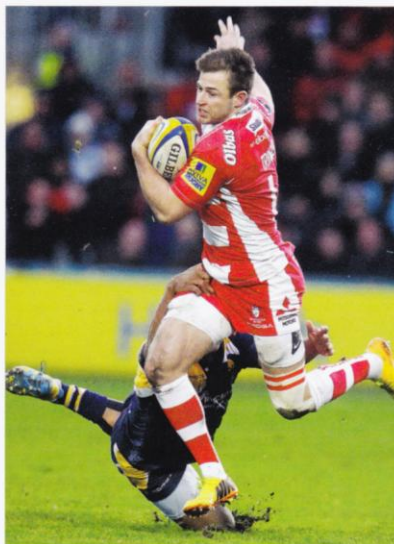
I have to stick with my Tongan buddies, so Lua and Sione are the guys I hang out with.

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

#	POS	NAME
15	FB	Rob Cook
14	W	Charlie Sharples
13	C	Henry Trinder
12	C	Mike Tindall
11	W	Jonny May ■
10	FH	Billy Twelvetrees (c)
9	SH	Jimmy Cowan
1	P	Nick Wood
2	H	Darren Dawidiuk
3	P	Sila Puafisi
4	L	Elliott Stooke
5	L	James Hudson
6	F	Matt Cox
7	F	Matt Kvesic
8	N8	Ben Morgan
16		Huia Edmonds
17	P	Yann Thomas
18	P	Shaun Knight
19		Tom Hicks
20	F	Akapusi Qera
21	SH	Dan Robson
22		Freddie Burns
23		Martyn Thomas

WORCESTER WARRIORS

#	POS	NAME
15	FB	Chris Pennell
14	W	James Stephenson
13	C	Alex Grove
12	C	Ravai Fatiaki
11	W	Josh Drauniniu
10	FH	Ignacio Mieres
9	SH	Jeremy Su'a
1	P	Ofa Fainga'anuku
2	H	Chris Brooker
3	P	Rob O'Donnell
4	L	James Percival
5	L	Mariano Galarza
6	F	Richard de Carpentier ■
7	F	Sam Betty
8	N8	Jonathan Thomas (c)
16	H	Nick Seymour
17		Jeremy Becasseau
18	P	John Andress
19	L	Chris Jones
20	N8	Leonardo Senatore
21	SH	Paul Hodgson
22	FH	Paul Warwick
23	C	Andy Symons



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

PENS: Twelvetrees (2, 35, 60, 65)

WORCESTER WARRIORS

PENS: Mieres (5, 52)

12

6

IT WASN'T PRETTY, IT WAS ATTRITIONAL BUT FOR THE CHERRY AND WHITES, THE WIN WAS IN THE BAG IN A GAME THAT WILL BE LONG REMEMBERED FOR THE ACTION THAT PRECEDED THE MAIN EVENT.

The conditions were windy, rainy and horrid but two teams, desperate for wins, fought it out and the hosts came out on top much to both the delight and relief of a capacity Kingsholm crowd.

The watching eyes of the nation tuned in on a Sunday afternoon to watch the game but instead, thanks to over exuberance in the pre-match entertainment, the players were kept in their pen as one of the Big Balls caused the crossbar to be dislodged. As ground staff and IT manager worked to repair the damage, the result was a half hour delay.

When the game did get started, the fired-up Cherry and Whites went into an early lead as the scrum earned a penalty from which Billy Twelvetrees chipped over.

Ignacio Mieres responded when Matt Kvesic was harshly judged to have gone off his feet and the Argentine leveled the score.

It was harem-scarem stuff at Kingsholm, it was a tense atmosphere as the hosts tried to ignite their support and create chances but Worcester were frustrating all attacks from the Cherry and White backline.

Rob Cook was a busy man as the kicking duel continued to go back and forth. Gloucester regained the lead when Twelvetrees added his second penalty after Sila Puafisi had Ofa Fainga'anuku in trouble at the scrum.

Gloucester went into half time,

in the lead but with the Warriors breathing down their necks leading to a very nervy second half.

Gloucester, without a Premiership

defenders before almost being beheaded by Richard de Carpentier.

The back rower was sin-binned, no penalty try was awarded but

Champagne Moment:

In tough conditions, Billy Twelvetrees kicked four vital penalties for the Cherry and Whites. It was blustery and windy but the fly-half kept his cool to land the vital points.



win since September and with the Warriors hunting their first win all season, something had to give and the second half was a rather uninspiring spectacle with both sides desperate not to make a key mistake.

Mieres leveled the scores as Worcester returned the favour of a scrum penalty and then Gloucester seemingly lifted the tempo to put the visitors under pressure.

Twelvetrees' boot again was on target as Worcester flew offside in midfield and then the killer blow came with 15 minutes on JP Doyle's clock remaining. Worcester hooker Nick Seymour's defensive throw was misjudged by the jumpers and flew into the arms of Dan Robson who sidestepped past three

Twelvetrees converted the penalty to open up a six-point lead that Gloucester wouldn't relinquish.

Worcester however, and to their complete credit, kept plugging away and with time running out could've dramatically stolen the points. Paul Warwick stepped through in midfield and as he looked to have slid over the line, a combination of Henry Trinder and Jonny May held him up and Gloucester breathed a huge sigh of relief.

May was sinbinned late on as Worcester tried to attack from deep but when wing James Stephenson fumbled out wide into touch, Doyle called time on a bizarre but vital afternoon for the Cherry and Whites.

GLoucester Rugby

#	POS	NAME
15	FB	Rob Cook
14	W	Charlie Sharples
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12	C	Mike Tindall
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10	FH	Billy Twelvetrees (c)
9	SH	Jimmy Cowan
1	P	Nick Wood
2	H	Huia Edmonds
3	P	Sila Puafisi
4	L	Elliott Stooke
5	L	James Hudson
6	F	Matt Cox
7	F	Matt Kvesic
8	N8	Ben Morgan
16		Koree Britton
17	P	Yann Thomas
18	P	Shaun Knight
19	L	Will James
20		Gareth Evans
21	SH	Dan Robson
22	C	Freddie Burns
23	FB	Martyn Thomas

LONDON IRISH

#	POS	NAME
15	FB	James O'Connor
14	W	Topsy Ojo
13	C	Fergus Mulchrone
12	C	Eamon Sheridan
11	W	Alex Lewington
10	FH	Ian Humphreys
9	SH	Tomas O'Leary
1	P	Matt Parr
2	H	Jimmy Stevens
3	P	Leo Halavatau
4	L	George Skivington (c)
5	L	Ian Gough
6	F	Kieran Low
7	F	Ofisa Treviranus
8	N8	Blair Cowan
16	H	Mike Mayhew
17	P	John Yapp
18	P	Jamie Hagan
19	L	Nic Rouse
20	N8	Jebb Sinclair
21	W	Andy Fenby
22	FH	Shane Geraghty
23		Ed Hoadley



LONDON IRISH

19

TRIES: Mulchrone (1), Sheridan (56, 70) CONS: Humphreys (2), Geraghty (70)

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

22

TRY: May (25) CON: Twelvetrees (26) PENS: Twelvetrees (7, 19, 40, 53), Burns (60)

IT WENT DOWN TO THE WIRE, GLOUCESTER SUPPORTERS BITING THEIR NAILS AS THEIR TEAM HUNG ON TO A NARROW LEAD. BUT HANG ON THEY DID, AND NIGEL DAVIES' SIDE MADE IT TWO WINS IN A ROW IN THE AVIVA PREMIERSHIP.

The Madejski Stadium hasn't been the happiest of hunting grounds for the Cherry and Whites over the years, but the 22-19 victory made it three on the bounce in all competitions.

Just seven days after outlasting Worcester in a real slugfest at Kingsholm, Gloucester were made to work just as hard for victory by the Exiles.

After a terrible start, Irish took the lead with a Fergus Mulchrone try after just a minute, Gloucester slowly but surely took control of the game and started to boss proceedings.

Genuine try scoring chance were few and far between despite some promising build up play, but Irish's indiscipline gave Billy Twelvetrees ample opportunity to keep the scoreboard ticking over.

Gloucester's one try was also

Twelvetrees and Freddie Burns versus an Eamonn Sheridan try, saw Gloucester hold a ten point lead going into the final ten minutes.

Gloucester looked well set

However, from long range, the fly half's kick never threatened the uprights and Gloucester breathed again.

It was the Exiles' final chance, and they now face a hugely

Champagne Moment:

Gloucester's try was based on Billy Twelvetrees' quick wits and Jonny May's fast feet. The former pounced on a ball left unguarded at the base of a London Irish ruck, flipped it up to May, and the winger sprinted home for an opportunist try.



to control the game and run down the clock, but conceded

significant fixture against Worcester at the foot of the table.

"IT'S VERY IMPORTANT WE BUILT MOMENTUM OVER THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD - THAT'S TWO WINS ON THE TROT, WHICH IS VERY IMPORTANT TO US. IT BUILDS CONFIDENCE, BELIEF AND WE CAN MOVE FORWARD AND ACTUALLY START GOING UP THE TABLE RATHER THAN GOING DOWN." NIGEL DAVIES

down to some smart play from the Gloucester fly half and, with Irish seemingly bereft of ideas in attack, a 16-7 half time lead was a handy one.

Things opened up slightly in the second half – one thrilling sequence saw play move from one end to other in a matter of seconds – but penalties from

possession to allow Irish to move downfield and for Sheridan to power over for his second.

Momentum was definitely now with the home team, and the Madejski Stadium crowd got behind their team enthusiastically. When the Irish pack forced a scrum penalty, Shane Geraghty had a chance to level the scores.



Teams correct at time of print: 2nd January 2014



TODAY'S TEAMS



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

ROB COOK	FULLBACK
CHARLIE SHARPLES	RIGHT WING
HENRY TRINDER	CENTRE
MIKE TINDALL	CENTRE
JONNY MAY	LEFT WING
BILLY TWELVETREES (C)	FLY HALF
JIMMY COWAN	SCRUM HALF
NICK WOOD	PROP
HUIA EDMONDS	HOOKER
SILA PUAFISI	PROP
ELLIOTT STOOKE	LOCK
JAMES HUDSON	LOCK
MATT COX	FLANKER
MATT KVESIC	FLANKER
BEN MORGAN	NO.8

KOREE BRITTON	REPLACEMENT
YANN THOMAS	REPLACEMENT
SHAUN KNIGHT	REPLACEMENT
WILL JAMES	REPLACEMENT
GARETH EVANS	REPLACEMENT
DAN ROBSON	REPLACEMENT
FREDDIE BURNS	REPLACEMENT
MARTYN THOMAS	REPLACEMENT

SARACENS

ALEX GOODE	FULLBACK
CHRIS ASHTON	RIGHT WING
MARCELO BOSCH	CENTRE
BRAD BARRITT	CENTRE
DAVID STRETTLE	LEFT WING
CHARLIE HODGSON	FLY HALF
RICHARD WIGGLESWORTH	SCRUM HALF
MAKO VUNIPOLA	PROP
SCHALK BRITS	HOOKER
MATT STEVENS	PROP
STEVE BORTHWICK (C)	LOCK
ALISTAIR HARGREAVES	LOCK
BILLY VUNIPOLA	FLANKER
KELLY BROWN	FLANKER
ERNST JOUBERT	NO.8

JAMIE GEORGE	REPLACEMENT
RICHARD BARRINGTON	REPLACEMENT
JAMES JOHNSTON	REPLACEMENT
GEORGE KRUIS	REPLACEMENT
JACKSON WRAY	REPLACEMENT
NEIL DE KOCK	REPLACEMENT
OWEN FARRELL	REPLACEMENT
CHRIS WYLES	REPLACEMENT

**IN CHARGE
TODAY:**

Referee: **Luke Pearce**
Assistant Referees: **Nigel Carrick and Peter Huckle**