

GLOUCESTER RUGBY



£3 | 11.01.14
HEINEKEN CUP
vs. MUNSTER RUGBY

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Historical
ACTION REPLAY
from 2008
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**EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW**

with **JONNY MAY**
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world & local
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JONNY BE GOOD

THE PRIDE ~ THE PASSION ~ THE HONOUR ~ THE HISTORY

Heineken CUP *ROUND 5*



FedEx

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CAPTAIN'S CORNER

TOM SAVAGE

Good evening and a very warm welcome to you all to Kingsholm for tonight's eagerly anticipated clash with Munster, a chance to welcome one of the biggest teams in Europe and to our own backyard.

We've always looked to make Kingsholm a fortress, we love playing here in front of our own supporters. But we've not always been at our best here this season. It's a painful truth to take, but

the future of European rugby, you cannot beat evenings like tonight. Two of the best-supported clubs in world rugby and, for the players, it's an atmosphere like no other.

Some of the senior lads in the squad have told us what it was like back in 2008, the atmosphere in the city and in the stadium that day. It was a special occasion, and today could be as well.

We're still alive in this Pool of the Heineken Cup, but we're going to have to play our best

"...FOR THE PLAYERS, IT'S AN ATMOSPHERE LIKE NO OTHER."

Support We are all looking forward to the atmosphere at Kingsholm tonight.

we're eager to put things right. And it would be great to do so against Munster.

Whatever the outcome of the talks behind the scenes regarding

in the final pair of games up against two of Europe's elite. We've shown glimpses this season of what we can do, it's just producing it more consistently and we owe it to ourselves and to our fine supporters.

With regards to myself, the injury is healing well. I've had scans recently and the experts are happy with how it's coming along. I should be out of the sling fairly shortly which is a big step. It's frustrating and you can't rush things, but I cannot wait to pull on the Cherry and White shirt and help do my bit for the team.

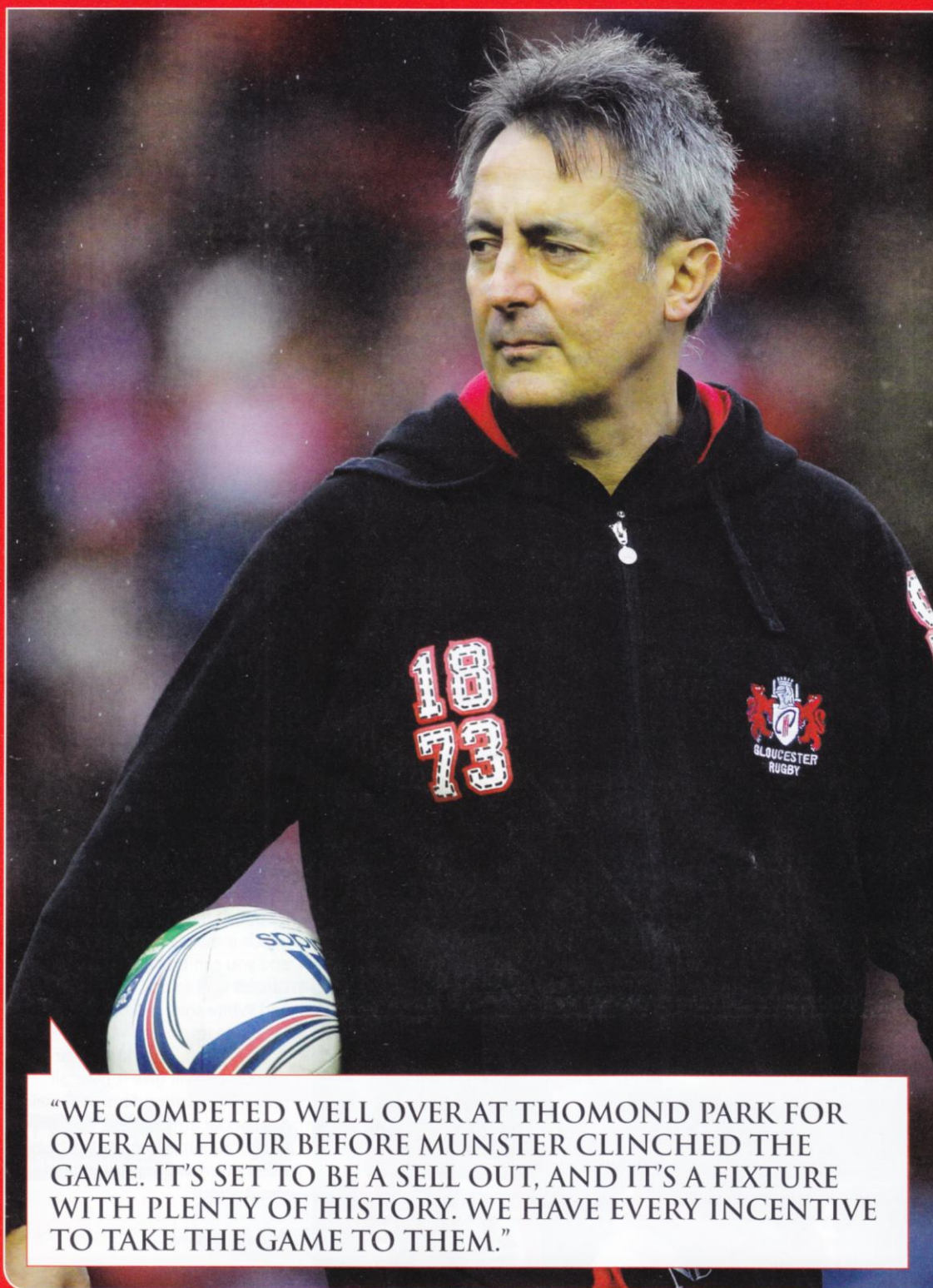
It's a given, but I know our supporters will give it their all today. The visiting fans will make it a special atmosphere, but we know our supporters will drown them out if we give them plenty to shout about.

Enjoy the game,

Sav



NIGEL DAVIES DIRECTOR OF RUGBY



"WE COMPETED WELL OVER AT THOMOND PARK FOR OVER AN HOUR BEFORE MUNSTER CLINCHED THE GAME. IT'S SET TO BE A SELL OUT, AND IT'S A FIXTURE WITH PLENTY OF HISTORY. WE HAVE EVERY INCENTIVE TO TAKE THE GAME TO THEM."

COACH'S NOTES

I'd like to wish everyone a very warm welcome to Kingsholm for this evening's Heineken Cup clash with Munster.

Tonight's game is important for two main reasons. Firstly, it's a

obviously top the pool after four rounds of action but it could have been very different. Going into injury time in Perpignan, it looked to all intents and purposes that Munster were set to lose.

However, they have a winning

leg of the double header at Murrayfield.

We didn't, of course, so it's all academic. The standings show that Munster have a five point advantage over us, so only a win will keep our challenge alive going into the final weekend of matches.

We have to be positive. We competed well over at Thomond Park for over an hour before Munster clinched the game. It's set to be a sell out, and it's a fixture with plenty of history. We have every incentive to take the game to them.

And, of course, we have something to prove to ourselves and to our supporters after last weekend. No-one was more disappointed than myself after last week's performance and we've taken a long hard look at ourselves this week.

We came into the Saracens game, having won the two previous fixtures and, although no-one underestimated the size of the task in hand, we simply didn't perform on the day.

That's not to take anything away from Saracens. They were extremely efficient on the day and put us under a lot of pressure. But we expected more from ourselves.

That's something we'll be looking to put right today. Munster will be just as tough a proposition, but it's a challenge that we aim to embrace rather than shirk from.

These occasions, passionate encounters against top class opposition, are there to be made the most of. Let's hope that this evening can be another in a long line of memorable European evenings at Kingsholm!

Enjoy your evening here at Kingsholm,

Nigel



game that we must win if we're to have any opportunity of topping the pool and progressing in this season's Heineken Cup.

Secondly, it's a chance for us to bounce back and restore some pride after last weekend's below par outing in the Premiership against Saracens.

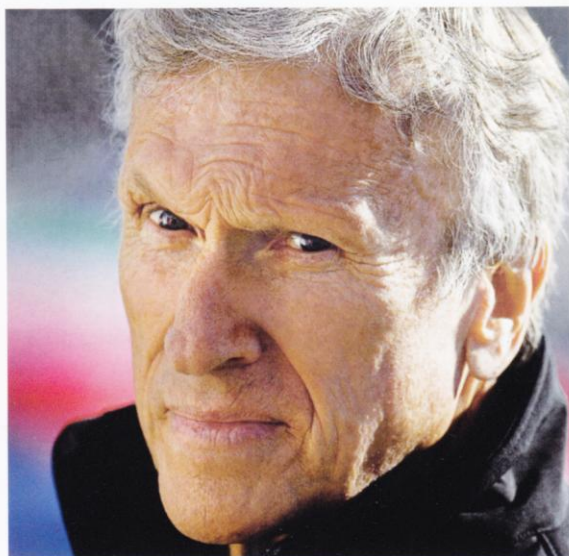
In terms of Europe, Munster

mentality that has been honed from years of competing in this tournament. They kept going right up until the final whistle, quite literally, and snatched the win.

Had they lost, it would have given us a golden opportunity to go above them on points had we completed the double against Edinburgh having won the first

GLOUCESTER RUGBY CLUB NEWS

TOM WALKINSHAW TO BE INDUCTED INTO PREMIERSHIP RUGBY HALL OF FAME



Premiership Rugby confirmed last week that the late Gloucester Rugby Chairman, Tom Walkinshaw, will be inducted into its Hall of Fame at a prestigious ceremony on January 22nd at the HAC in London.

Tom, who sadly passed away in December 2010 at the age of 64, will be inducted alongside Martin Johnson, Rob Baxter, Ed Morrison, Lewis Moody and George Chuter.

Johnson, Baxter, Morrison, Chuter and Moody will be present, while Walkinshaw will be represented by his son Ryan, currently the majority shareholder and Chairman at Gloucester Rugby.

The Dinner - which has both British Airways and Heathrow Express as partners - will raise

money for both Sport Relief and The Supporters Club.

"The six men represent a who's who of professional club rugby in England and we are delighted to welcome them into our Hall of Fame," said Phil Winstanley the Rugby Director at Premiership Rugby.

"In the list we have two Rugby World Cup winners, one of Aviva Premiership Rugby's leading coaches, a man who refereed a Rugby World Cup Final, a player who played more than 200 Premiership matches and a club owner who left an indelible mark on the game here in England. A formidable line-up.

"The Hall of Fame Dinner has become a significant date in the rugby calendar as it gives us a chance to look back on 18 years of professional rugby in England."

1873

MAN OF THE MATCH

Gloucester's winning run was brought to an abrupt halt as Saracens delivered probably the best performance by a visiting side at Kingsholm this season. Rob Cook was named Man of the Match by the 1873 Club members.

The Cherry and Whites fought bravely, but Saracens showed exactly why they're top of the Aviva Premiership table to date with a dominating display.

Rob came into the Abbey Business Lounge after the game to receive his award from Richard Currie from Colour Connection who are a sponsor of Gloucester Rugby.

He then took part in an informal Q&A, facilitated by former Gloucester back row forward Simon Devereux alongside team mates Charlie Sharples and Elliott Stooke.

Simon provided the following summary: "A comprehensive defeat by the Premiership leaders Saracens in what was the best opening half performance of a visiting side seen this season at Kingsholm.

"After recent improvements, this was a step back for Gloucester. They will be looking for greater precision and energy levels in their work next week with the visit of a powerful Munster side in the Heineken Cup."





VIEW FROM The Citizen

with **MIKE BROWN**

Mike looks at the very real possibility of an Anglo-Welsh league being formed next season and what effects it would have on the existing Premiership clubs.

NOISY NEIGHBOURS?



Peter Tom

With civil war continuing to rage across the border the prospect of an Anglo-Welsh league next season remains a very real possibility.

The four Welsh regions, Cardiff Blues, Newport Gwent Dragons, the Ospreys and Scarlets – represented by Regional Rugby Wales – remain locked in dispute with the Welsh Rugby Union, with statements and counter statements fed to the press on an almost daily basis.

What does all this mean for Gloucester and the Aviva Premiership clubs?

It all stems from uncertainty over Europe and disagreements in the Principality over funding and control of players.

As it stands, and with the rival factions refusing to budge, the Heineken Cup is facing an uncertain future – we know this already.

The English clubs have continually reiterated they will not return to the fold, the Welsh regions have joined them and the French clubs have indicated they

will only compete if Premiership clubs are involved.

Wales' regions' preference is to take part in the new Rugby Champions Cup, along with clubs from across Europe, which will reportedly guarantee them an extra £1million each and remain in the PRO12 with their union's approval. The latest idea offering salvation is an improved British and Irish Cup.

And, as a rugby supporter, it is absolutely critical a resolution to this confusion is found and, more importantly, agreed upon.

The current situation is enough to enrage the people that matter most – namely the players, coaches and supporters – and it is absolutely critical that a pan-European tournament and encounters such as today's, in whatever guise, remain.

The WRU's approval appears unforthcoming and if they fail to meet the regions' January 31st deadline, and the Irish and Scots fail to come on board with either proposal, the regions will begin to explore 'Plan B' – a fully blown Anglo-Welsh league.

Proposals are already on the table with Leicester Tigers boss Peter Tom

revealing plans last month.

He said:

"We have discussed the matter at board level and given it our unanimous approval. The Welsh teams are 100 per cent solid in their desire to join forces with us. They see the restoration of the traditional fixtures with the English clubs as the most effective way of bringing back the crowds they've lost in recent seasons.

"The regions are fighting for their very existence but this isn't a one-way street. Every English club wants to fill its stadium and there's no question that the Welsh teams will give the Premiership a new dimension."

The proposed competition would include the current 12 Aviva Premiership clubs and all four Welsh regions, making up for the loss of European fixtures.

Each region will receive a vital increase in funding and if one of the four is relegated in the first season the remaining three could be protected.

This has not gone down well with the Championship clubs, who fight every week for promotion and a slice of the lucrative Premiership pie, and will be another stumbling block to overcome.

But Davies, who was previously director of rugby at the Scarlets and coached Wales, believes it would be a positive move.

The history between English and Welsh clubs is undeniable. To the die-hard rugby fan those cross border clashes with the old enemy are something to behold, something special and romantic.

Gloucester versus Cardiff Blues or Bath against the Scarlets on a Saturday afternoon would stir the passions of more than 100 years of history, and is as attractive as the biggest encounters currently on offer in the Premiership.

Davies said:

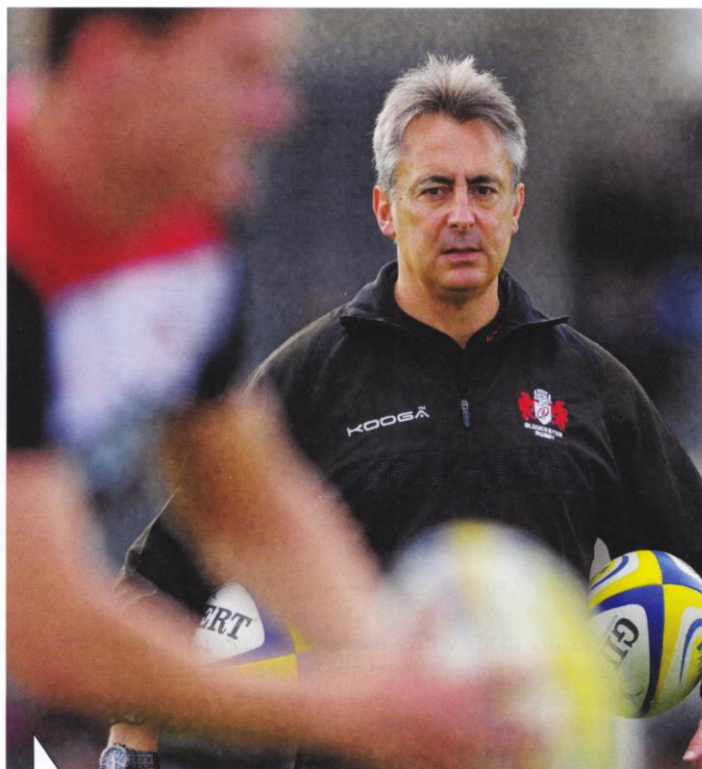
"On a personal note an Anglo-Welsh league would be really good.

I'm not sure how it would work out with the other Celtic Nations but purely on a Welsh basis it would be good.

"With the identities and historic rivalries between Welsh and English

quarter system.

Gwyn Nicholls, 'The Prince of Centres', hailed from Westbury-on-Severn and captained Wales to glory against New Zealand in 1905.



"WITH THE IDENTITIES AND HISTORIC RIVALRIES BETWEEN WELSH AND ENGLISH CLUBS IT WOULD BE FANTASTIC."

clubs it would be fantastic."

Welsh rugby largely owes its existence to the West Country. Many of the founding clubs' earliest players were English and their fixtures were against clubs in the southwest.

The Hancock brothers of Somerset were integral in the formative years of Cardiff RFC and Frank Hancock was central to the creation of the three-

Those close ties between Wales and the West Country continue to this very day and the creation of an Anglo-Welsh league would not only give the ailing regions a new lease of life but reinvigorate the domestic season.

Whatever happens the administrators would be wise to remember those who earn a living from the game, and those like you, the supporters, who invest their hard earned to watch it.

GLOUCESTER RUGBY
HERITAGE

www.gloucester rugby heritage.org.uk

GLOUCESTER & MUNSTER OLD ADVERSARIES IN THE HEINEKEN CUP

In the ten seasons that Gloucester have qualified for the Heineken Cup they have been drawn against Munster four times, which makes the match today the eighth tie between the two teams. Munster have won five and Gloucester two of the seven previous games.

Most impartial observers (and I imagine all Munster supporters) remember the "Miracle Match" at Thomond Park on 18 January, 2003 when Munster had to win by 27 points to progress to the ¼ finals and, thanks to a last minute conversion by Ronan O'Gara, did exactly that, winning 33-6, but fewer remember Gloucester's magnificent performance at Kingsholm which had made that necessary.

Gloucester won the first leg at Kingsholm on 12 October by 35 points to 16, outscoring Munster by 4 tries to 1. The Gloucester try scorers were Jake Boer (2), Marcel Garvey and Ludovic Mercier. Mercier also kicked 3 penalty goals and 3 conversions. Munster



Jake Boer upends Peter Stringer

scored a consolation try deep into injury time through Peter Stringer and Ronan O'Gara kicked the conversion and three penalty goals. The match was notable for an outstanding display from Henry Paul as a counter-attacking full back determined to keep the ball in hand and turn defence into attack at every opportunity. Other fine performances came from an impressive back row of Jake Boer, Peter Buxton and James Forrester who outplayed their opposite numbers. Munster had turned round only 16 points to 9 down at

half time with the wind now at their backs, but Gloucester, using Buxton as a third lineout forward, began to now dominate the line outs and in a 15 minute period, midway through the second half, scored 19 points without reply. Jake Boer was deservedly Man of the Match.

Despite the Thomond Park debacle, 2002-03 was Gloucester's finest season of the professional era, finishing 15 points clear at the top of the Zurich Premiership and beating Northampton 40-22 in the Powergen Cup Final at Twickenham.

FIRST VISITORS FROM MUNSTER 1885

It was in January 1885, twelve years after the founding of the club, that the first team from Munster arrived in the city to play Gloucester RFC on the old Spa ground.

Queen's College Cork were on a short tour during the Christmas vacation, which involved playing Cardiff, Newport and Gloucester in the space of four days – a daunting task even in 1885. The first match against Cardiff on the Friday had ended in an honourable draw, but

Queen's College had been well beaten by the formidable Newport side by five tries to nil the following day.

On Monday 12 January it was the turn of Gloucester. The club had been having mixed fortunes after the wonderful years of 1882-83 (the "Invincible" season) and 1883-84 (when they lost only twice), but



Jimmy Boughton

they won the match handsomely by two goals and two tries to nil. H D Hay, a late substitution for an otherwise full-strength Gloucester, scored a try in his only game for the club and the other tries were scored by George Coates, Jimmy Boughton and H V Jones who converted twice. Among the Queen's College forwards was John Staveley Dick who, two years later, made his international debut at Lansdowne Road, playing in Ireland's first victory over England - by two goals to nil after twelve unsuccessful attempts.

THE IRISH RETURN 1955-73

It would be 70 years before the next visit to Gloucester by a team from Ireland. Then in September 1955 a match was arranged with Dublin Wanderers which was won by Gloucester 12-3, George Hastings scoring a try and Mike Baker three penalties.

This was followed by matches against Dublin club side Bective Rangers who were played four times between 1967 and 1971 (with Gloucester victorious on each occasion) and the Wolfhounds, in

those days an invitation XV similar to the Barbarians, who were played four times between 1965 and 1973 (with Gloucester coming out on top in the last three fixtures).

THE IRISH JOIN THE CELEBRATIONS 1973-74 Gloucester RFC Centenary Year

The last of the four matches against the Wolfhounds at Kingsholm was played on September in the centenary season 1973-74. A team boasting 9 Irish internationals and Scottish and British Lions prop Ian "Mighty Mouse" MacLauchlan was beaten 6-3 in a tight game which provided a curtain raiser for Gloucester's epic victory over a star-studded International XV two weeks later.

1991-92 Kingsholm Centenary Year

The Irish returned in September 1991 for a match to celebrate the centenary of the Kingsholm ground. An Irish President's XV, Ireland in all but name, used the match in their build-up for the 1991 World Cup but Gloucester, in an outstanding performance, deservedly won the game 14-13 and but for missed opportunities could have won by more.

The Irish XV, captained by Gloucester-born Phil Matthews, were on top in the early stages, but after conceding a try scored by full back Jim Staples, the Gloucester pack began to gain control with Dave Sims dominating British Lion Donal Lenihan in the



George Hastings



Dave Sims

line-out and John Hawker taking three strikes against the head. At half back Marcus Hannaford and Neil Matthews were superb behind a rampaging back row of Ian Smith, Paul Ashmead and Sam Masters. The home side equalised through a try by Jerry Perrins and two penalties by Tim Smith either side of half time put them six points ahead. When Simon Morris picked up and dived over after Neil Matthews had been brought down just short of the line, Gloucester led by 14 points to 4. The Irish came back in the closing minutes through a penalty and converted try to give a final 14-13 scoreline that was flattering to the visitors.

It was a happy Gloucester changing room after a match described by centre Don Caskie as "probably the most satisfying I have ever played in."





CLEAN PAIR OF HEELS

FOR SUPPORTERS OF THE CHERRY AND WHITES, THE BUZZ OF EXCITEMENT THAT GOES AROUND THE GAME WHENEVER THE BALL LANDS IN THE HANDS OF WINGER **JONNY MAY** IS A REGULAR THING.

The 23 year old winger is actually a very grounded character. However, even he cannot hide his excitement with the arrival of Munster at Kingsholm this afternoon.

outings of late.

"I feel like I'm improving with every game and playing some of my best rugby at the moment. I'm playing better than I've ever played before, so lots of learning but I'm

"GET THE BIG TEAM IN TOWN, GET THAT SHED FULL AND GET THE BOYS HAVING A GOOD CRACK AT THEM, AND SHOWING WHAT WE CAN DO."

When May raced away for his 11th try in his last 15 Aviva Premiership games in Gloucester's win over London Irish, the class of one of England's brightest and speediest talents was well and truly underlined, and the Swindon-born winger is certainly enjoying his

very happy.

"The way I like to play it, is to get busy, get stuck in and the more you do that, the more chances you create for yourself, and it's just about finishing those chances."

Plenty is being published in the national press about May in recent



An interview with Jonny
for UWE Hartpury



weeks and, hopefully, the national selectors continue to take note. But he insists that his focus firmly remains on events on the pitch for Gloucester.

"The best thing recently is that we've been winning tight games, and it's been tough. But we really want to go into the New Year and kick it off with more wins and push on from there.

"My head is fully focused on Gloucester, no matter what is being written about me and England. I can only influence what I do in a Cherry and White shirt after all."

Now a Cherry and White regular, May has played a big part in many memorable European wins at Kingsholm, and the prospect of another is something May relishes in his own unique way.

"Exactly, we've got one of the biggest teams in Europe coming to



"THE WAY I LIKE TO PLAY IT, IS TO GET BUSY, GET STUCK IN AND THE MORE YOU DO THAT, THE MORE CHANCES YOU CREATE FOR YOURSELF, AND IT'S JUST ABOUT FINISHING THOSE CHANCES."



our home and we're going to have a crack at them. We've got nothing to lose.

"We've taken on giants before, it's definitely something that can happen and we're more than capable of doing so. Some of the best memories I have in my career are playing under the lights, and beating these huge teams like Perpignan and Toulouse, in the past few years.

"Get the big team in town, get that Shed full and get the boys having a good crack at them, and showing what we can do.

"I can remember all the games we've had with Munster in the past and what incredible occasions they have been. From the 'Miracle Match' to the game in 2008 there are great memories and history.

"Even the boys that were involved

in those games tell us what a day it was in 2008, and we'd love for it to be similar this year".

With close mates Henry Trinder and Charlie Sharples committing their respective futures to the cause at Kingsholm, May insists that it's only good for the squad and that, with 2014 in its infancy, his aims are clear.

"Definitely, it's good to have so many boys looking to stay and the core group staying together but from my point of view it's all about focusing on what we're doing now and getting things right.

"Firstly just focus on myself, keep improving and playing my best rugby. Secondly to be successful with Gloucester and realise the fine potential we have, and obviously the cherry on the top would be to be involved with England."



KINGSHOLM NEWS with BOB FENTON

All the teams seem to have been doing their level best to not qualify in any way that could be considered straightforward. Let's leave the fans hanging on in hope, seems to be the way forward.

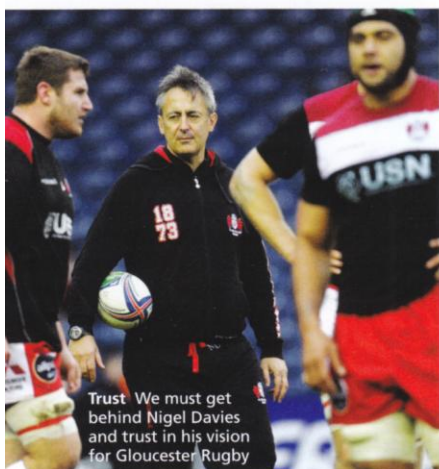
Where to start... That wasn't the best start to the New Year that we could have hoped for and, despite my over optimistic prediction that having beaten Worcester and London Irish we would complete the holiday season hat trick with a win over Saracens, it turned out to be a case of men against boys.

I'll admit it, the prediction was made by engaging heart over head, I always predict – hope for – a win, but a few minutes before kick off when a work colleague – and a visiting Bristol supporter to boot – asked me what I really thought, I answered that the score line then, i.e. 0 – 0 was about the closest we were going to get to them all match.

Saracens are an outstanding team, their Director of Rugby, Mark McCall



Champions? Saracens certainly played like potential champions last weekend



Trust We must get behind Nigel Davies and trust in his vision for Gloucester Rugby

said after the game that he thought their first 40 minutes last Saturday was the best they have played all year. From where I was sitting you could see why, their off-loading game was superb – at one point about 15 short passes in about a ten metre 'box'. We couldn't get close to them. It was like watching the Harlem Globetrotters!

Let the arguments rage about how they can assemble that squad and stay under the salary cap – we all have our views – but as a rugby supporter you have to sometimes just suck it up and admit that they are the best team in the Premiership by a country mile. Simple rugby played with tremendously high skill levels at maximum intensity. There's no shame in losing to a team like

that, the pain and despair comes from the way it happens.

I won't rake over the coals now, what's done is done and can't be undone. I'll just say that I had an interesting chat with a proper Gloucester Legend, Phil Blakeway, after the game. I think I can paraphrase what he said with something along the lines of '... we wouldn't have let that happen back then...'. I suppose the one bright spot is that our league position is unaltered. Another could be that we aren't Worcester fans!

I do, though, have to disagree with a lot of the 'sack [insert name]' here comments. Our sport has always been better than that – I would hate to see rugby descend into farcical world that is premiership



football, when managers come and go on a never-ending merry-go-round after a few months in a job.

It's no surprise that the most successful clubs are the ones that have stability in the back room team and build a vision and ethos for their clubs. That means going through the lean times as a team in the knowledge that it will come right e.g. Alex Ferguson, Arsene Wenger etc. It's either that or find a stupidly rich sugar daddy who will effectively buy a trophy for them...

One thing about sport though - after every defeat there is an almost immediate chance of redemption in the form of the next fixture. And as fixtures come, a Gloucester versus Munster clash is right up there with the best of them.

No doubt in the run up to the game there will have been all sorts of media comment invoking memories of the so-called 'Miracle Match' from back in 2003 -

remember it, Munster had to win by 27 points to kick us out of a quarter-final spot? Remember how we all watched the ever-dependable Ronan O'Gara converting a try scored with the clock showing 80 minutes to hit precisely that number?

Yes I remember all of that, but I don't remember any miracles. I remember Henry Paul being so far out of his depth at full back that you barely see the top of his head... I remember Ludo tapping and running a penalty when the whole world - or at least all of the people inside Thomond Park who were not wearing Munster red - knew he should have gone for the points... I remember Nigel Melville and Dean Ryan looking shell shocked at the final whistle... and I remember all the nonsense about game plans left in the back of taxi. Not a single miracle among them, just nightmares! So please, no more

of that!

Oddly though, despite two defeats getting out of our qualification group is not out of the question. All the teams seem to have been doing their level best to not qualify in any way that could be considered straightforward. Let's leave the fans hanging on in hope, seems to be the way forward.

If we win today and score four tries into the bargain (no harm in dreaming is there?) we'll be level on points with Munster. Then a four-try win away in Perpignan - perhaps Naz and Strokes can do us a favour and get about 11 of their side sin binned at the same time - it's all down to the Munster - Edinburgh result. And Edinburgh have already beaten Munster so why not do it again. Then that's it - we're through!

Don't suppose that anyone has got a few more straws I can clutch at, please?



IT'S MONDAY AFTERNOON AT GLOUCESTER'S TRAINING BASE AT HARTPURY AND JAMES SIMPSON-DANIEL HAS A BUZZ ABOUT HIM.



52

HIS new baby son Oliver is doing well, the plastic boot that has been supporting his ankle since his November operation has been removed, and he knows he will be at Kingsholm until he's 34 after signing to stay for two more seasons.

He's also just come out of a 90 minute team meeting. Perhaps that's where the buzz has come from.

"We've had to take the criticism from the Saracens game on the chin" he told me.

"They did all the simple things well and made the game look easy. Good teams and players do that. The biggest negative was that the dogged Gloucester effort people are used to was missing.

"We've a very loyal fan base and they will support you if they see you're doing all the ugly stuff and getting amongst the opposition. If you're beaten by a better side so be it, but we cannot expect them to keep coming to the well without

seeing something in return."

Sinbad is on crutches, and will be for another six weeks, but he - and his surgeon - are pleased with the progress so far, especially when there were a handful of separate elements to the injury rather than just a clean break. A lot happened and healing will therefore take longer.

"I had an X-ray on the Friday after New Year and it all looks to be healing up ok, with the plate holding everything together" James went on.

"If it had been a clean break and nothing more I might have been off the crutches by now, but if we progress on schedule I'll lose them in mid February and then we should be able to really up the rehab.

Through my career I've learned that if a surgeon says four to six months don't think the timescale will be at the lower end. Six months forward from the operation would be mid May, and unless something dramatic happens the season will probably be over then.

"The positive - and that's how I'm looking at it - is that I have the summer to make sure I'm absolutely spot-on for when we have the pre-season games in August."

Who will be in the squad at that point is a question that would fill many evenings over a pint in the meantime. The club has a clutch of players in their mid thirties who are out of contract.

Other younger players may choose to go, or be released. Simpson-Daniel chuckles at the idea of him being the senior professional, but the fact he is here at all speaks volumes for his loyalty - the one factor he says he can pull out from that mind wrenching decision in the 2010-11 season to turn down French side Castres, who wanted him to join them in the Top 14.

"It feels like a long time ago but I remember it all. I was very open with Bryan Redpath. I went



James has signed for a further two seasons with Gloucester

to have a look around and it was a fantastic set up. I met the coaching staff and, when I came back, I couldn't think of a single negative, but when the contract came through I was away with the England Saxons. My heart sank when I read it.

"It was a really good contract, life changing you could say. I'd been really impressed with Castres,

and my wife was really supportive, saying how we'd have a great time, our son George could learn the language and that we could do five years and come home.

"You reel off the reasons why you should have gone, and people ask you why you didn't. The thing is Gloucester have always been good to me, and in my head I talked my way round to staying.

When I signed, I was relieved. Do I regret it? No. I felt comfortable here, and I still do."

If there was anything to be taken from last Saturday's dismantling by Saracens, it was that it could be called a dry run for the intensity Munster will show this evening. Sitting top of Pool 6, they know a win here will seal the group and Simpson-Daniel is first to acknowledge that the visit of a side steeped in Heineken Cup history is a special occasion.

"They are not the Munster we are used to but the core base is still there" he said.

"They'll be clinical in the contact area, and if they fall behind they'll chip away at the scoreboard. We've got to go out there and put a little bit of last weekend right by being physical, sticking the ball up in the air and piling into them.

"The Shed will love that and we must come off thinking we've given it a real go."



Randall almost signed for French Top 14 side Castres in 2010

ExtraMEDIA

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?

#AskHenry



@stephentitus

What's your most awesome and game changing skill?

Passing to Jonny May or Charlie Sharples and let them do the fancy running.



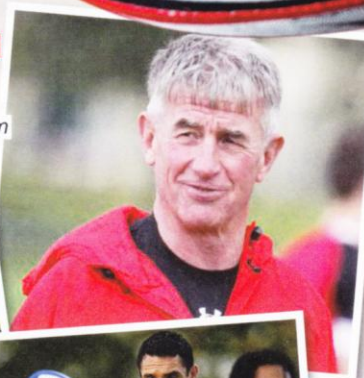
@harrfowke

How was the film you watched on Wednesday evening?

I watched Paranormal Activity. It was one of those where you had to hide under your hoody and not jump out of your seat.

@stephentitus

Who's the most influential coach you've worked with? Who's taught you the most?



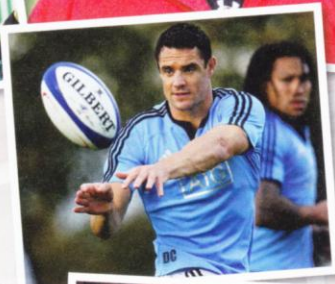
Allan Lewis was the man who taught me the most, from when I left college to when I joined the Academy at Hartpury College.

@robfordie

Any player of anytime who would you love to have in the Gloucester team?

Play with?

Probably have to be Dan Carter, he's just class.



@geoffchopperfan

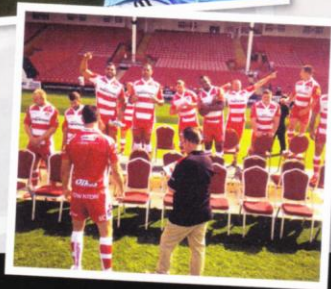
What did you see yourself doing 10 years ago?

Anything in professional sport really. 10 years from now I hope to still be playing if the body will let me!

@Jomariemills

If you hadn't become a professional rugby player, what would have been your dream profession?

A film critic!





KINGSHOW

NEXT TIME...



We have our flying fullback, **Rob Cook**, poised and ready for your tweets to feature in the matchday programme against Wasps on 1st February

Quickfire Round

Favourite film? Lord of the Rings, all of them



Favourite song? 'Cruise' by Florida George Line

Favourite holiday destination? Chicago



Best mate in the squad? Jonny May



Best dressed in the squad? Ryan Mills

Worst dressed in the squad? Hazey



Best banter? Hazey

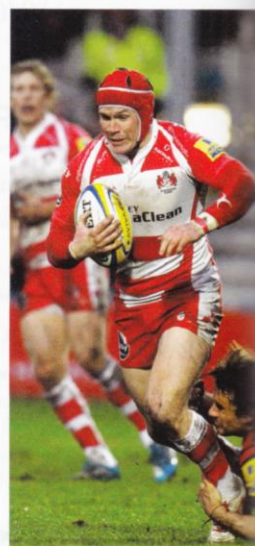
Worst banter? Woody!

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

#	POS	NAME
15	FB	Rob Cook
14	W	Charlie Sharples
13	C	Mike Tindall
12	C	Billy Twelvetrees (c)
11	W	Jonny May
10	FH	Freddie Burns
9	SH	Jimmy Cowan ■
1	P	Nick Wood
2	H	Hua 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	H	Darren Dawidiuk
17	P	Yann Thomas
18	P	Shaun Knight
19	L	Will James
20	N8	Gareth Evans
21	SH	Dan Robson
22	C	Shane Monahan
23	FB	Martyn Thomas

SARACENS

#	POS	NAME
15	FB	Alex Goode
14	W	Chris Ashton
13	C	Marcelo Bosch
12	C	Brad Barritt
11	W	David Strettle
10	FH	Owen Farrell
9	SH	Neil de Kock
1	P	Mako Vunipola
2	H	Schalk Brits
3	P	James Johnston
4	L	Steve Borthwick (c) ■
5	L	Alistair Hargreaves
6	F	Jackson Wray
7	F	Kelly Brown
8	N8	Billy Vunipola ■
16	H	Jamie George
17	P	Rhys Gill
18	P	Matt Stevens
19	L	Mouritz Botha
20	F	Justin Melck
21	SH	Richard Wigglesworth
22	FH	Charlie Hodgson
23	W	Chris Wyles



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

8

TRY: Cox (69) PEN: Twelvetrees (38)

SARACENS

29

TRIES: de Kock (8), Strettle (21), Goode (47) CON: Farrell (48) PENS: Farrell (3, 16, 29, 60)

THE GLOUCESTER RUGBY GROUND STAFF WORKED THEIR USUAL MAGIC TO ENSURE THE GAME WENT AHEAD, THE KINGSHOLM CROWD BRAVED THE WEATHER AND SAW A FANTASTIC DISPLAY OF RUGBY.

Sadly it was the opposition who turned on the style as Saracens recorded their biggest win at Kingsholm and condemned Gloucester to a fifth home Aviva Premiership defeat of the season.

With Northampton taking top spot in the table following their win over Harlequins on Friday night, the men from Allianz Park blew Gloucester away in the first forty minutes with an impressive display of attacking flair and defensive intensity.

In truth, Gloucester's only solace was earned with a stronger second half display, which restricted their visitors to just the one try. But, when Matt Cox barged over late on, it was merely a consolation.

Saracens could have been forgiven for having one eye on next week's Heineken Cup crunch with Toulouse, but instead Mark McCall named a side packed to the rafters with international, big money talent and, from the outset, it was evident that the Men in Black had the upper hand.

The Gloucester cause wasn't helped as Jimmy Cowan sacrificed himself for a yellow card with just minutes gone. With the Vunipola duo barging holes around fringes, and the star-studded backline getting relentless quick ball, the home defence was working overtime but in the first half, Saracens crossed the whitewash twice.

First to score was scrum-half

Neil De Kock who slid over after a break and dummy from Schalk Brits. Then David Strettle put the finishing touches to a well constructed move

by Luke Pearce.

Billy Vunipola got his big frame on the wrong side to kill the ball, before the ref earned instant

"WE WERE SECOND BEST IN MOST DEPARTMENTS, WE TRIED THINGS AND THEY DIDN'T WORK. SARACENS ARE A QUALITY SIDE WITH QUALITY THROUGHOUT AND WE COULDN'T MATCH THEM. THE REPLACEMENTS CAME ON AND GAVE US A LIFT BUT WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO LIFT OURSELVES FROM THIS." DIRECTOR OF RUGBY, NIGEL DAVIES

featuring both backs and forwards.

For some times this season, you could accept that Gloucester were having an off day – in this instance, they were working hard, they were making breaks but Saracens were defending their line and capitalising on any mistakes.

A hugely frustrating period of the game followed but, as the Cherry and Whites huffed and puffed, all they could record was a Billy Twelvetrees penalty from distance.

The first score of the second half would be crucial, and it went the way of the visitors. The Cherry and White pack produced a fine scrum, but Billy Vunipola's excellent offload set his backs free and Alex Goode cross untouched.

Gloucester, much to their credit, came back fighting, Dan Robson and Gareth Evans came on and the youngsters made a big impact, with Saracens seeing two men sin binned

popularity in the Shed as he sent Steve Borthwick to the naughty step for sacking a lineout jumper.

With Gloucester now hoping to thrash home the two-man advantage, the visitors won a penalty at the scrum and the key moment passed.

Matt Cox did however barge his way over after several phases of pressure, but the game petered out as those in Cherry and White sloped towards the exits.

After two impressive wins against London Irish and Worcester, Gloucester went into the game with a bag of confidence.

Instead it was the team setting the pace at the top of the table, who secured another impressive win and as the lights went out on another Kingsholm defeat, the Cherry and Whites will seek a pick-me-up in today's game against Munster.

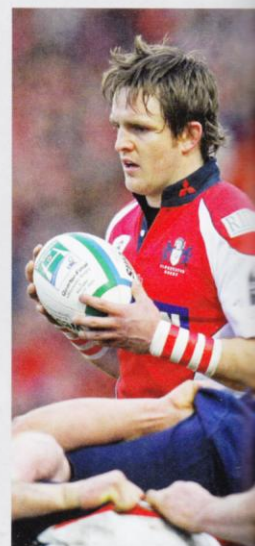
Historical ACTION REPLAY

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

#	POS	NAME
15	FB	Olly Morgan
14	W	Chris Paterson
13	C	James Simpson-Daniel
12	C	Anthony Allen
11	W	Lesley Vainikolo
10	FH	Ryan Lamb
9	SH	Rory Lawson
1	P	Nick Wood
2	H	Andy Titterrell
3	P	Carlos Nieto
4	L	Marco Bortolami
5	L	Alex Brown
6	F	Peter Buxton
7	F	Andy Hazell
8	N8	Luke Narryway
16	R	Jeremy Paul
17	R	Alasdair Dickinson
18	R	Will James
19	R	Gareth Delve
20	R	Gareth Cooper
21	R	Willie Walker
22	R	Mike Tindall

MUNSTER RUGBY

#	POS	NAME
15	FB	Denis Hurley
14	W	Doug Howlett
13	C	Rua Tipoki
12	C	Lifeimi Mafi
11	W	Ian Dowling
10	FH	Ronan O'Gara
9	SH	Tomas O'Leary
1	P	Tony Buckley
2	H	Jerry Flannery
3	P	John Hayes
4	L	Donncha O'Callaghan
5	L	Paul O'Connell
6	F	Alan Quinlan
7	F	David Wallace
8	N8	Denis Leamy
16	R	Frank Sheahan
17	R	Federico Pucciariello
18	R	Mick O'Driscoll
19	R	Anthony Foley
20	R	Peter Stringer
21	R	Paul Warwick
22	R	Kieran Lewis



HEINEKEN CUP Match Details: 5th April 2008 15:00 Attendance: 16,500 Referee: Nigel Owens

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

PEN: Lamb

MUNSTER RUGBY

TRIES: Dowling, Howlett PENS: O'Gara (x2)

3

16

GLOUCESTER RUGBY'S 2007-8 HEINEKEN CUP HOPES CAME APART AT THE SEAMS IN THE SPACE OF 80 MINUTES, AS MUNSTER FIRSTLY RODE THEIR LUCK, THEN CLINICALLY TOOK THEIR CHANCES TO LEAVE THE CHERRY AND WHITES WONDERING WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

Dean Ryan's side had earned their home quarter final having won five out of six of their pool matches, the only setback being defeat away at the Ospreys.

And, also going well in the Premiership, Gloucester came into the game full of confidence and duly threw the proverbial kitchen sink at Munster in the opening quarter.

boots, hooking two efforts from almost head on to the posts. However, credit must go to the Munster defence, which repelled everything that was thrown at them.

And salt was rubbed into some already raw wounds, when Munster struck just before half time. It was a scrappy try, a loose ball almost being picked off but bouncing kindly for Ian Dowling to score in the corner.

Ronan O'Gara extended the Munster lead with a penalty, before a Gloucester turnover on halfway allowed the Irish province to effectively put the game to bed, quick hands gave Denis Hurley the chance to roll a grubber towards the Gloucester line and Doug Howlett pounced.

Gloucester continued to battle, Ryan Lamb kicked a 66th minute penalty, and there

"MUNSTER ARE A TEAM BUILT FOR EUROPEAN RUGBY AND HAVE BEEN SCHOOLED IN IT FOR YEARS. WE ARE SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT, WITH A YOUNG CORE OF PLAYERS AND A GAME BASED ON MOVEMENT AND WE DID PLENTY OF GOOD THINGS BUT COULDN'T QUITE BREAK THROUGH."

DEAN RYAN



Incredibly, despite the visitors struggling to get any form of meaningful possession, Munster led 3-0 after the opening exchanges.

In hindsight, many will point to the fact that the normally reliable Chris Paterson mislaid his kicking

It was a body blow, but Gloucester came out fighting in the second half. Sadly, the script remained the same. Lots of pressure from the home team, lots of committed defence from the visitors and little and no reward for the Kingsholm faithful to celebrate.

was half chances, but none converted.

Time eventually ran out on Gloucester. Munster had done a professional job on the day to qualify for the semi finals, and the Cherry and Whites could only reflect on what might have been.

Teams correct at time of print: 10th January 2014



TODAY'S TEAMS



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

ROB COOK	FULLBACK	15
CHARLIE SHARPLES	RIGHT WING	14
HENRY TRINDER	CENTRE	13
BILLY TWELVETREES (C)	CENTRE	12
JONNY MAY	LEFT WING	11
FREDDIE BURNS	FLY HALF	10
DAN ROBSON	SCRUM HALF	9
YANN THOMAS	PROP	1
DARREN DAWIDIUK	HOOKER	2
SILA PUAFISI	PROP	3
ELLIOTT STOOKE	LOCK	4
JAMES HUDSON	LOCK	5
MATT COX	FLANKER	6
MATT KVESIC	FLANKER	7
BEN MORGAN	NO.8	8
HUIA EDMONDS	REPLACEMENT	16
DAN MURPHY	REPLACEMENT	17
SHAUN KNIGHT	REPLACEMENT	18
WILL JAMES	REPLACEMENT	19
GARETH EVANS	REPLACEMENT	20
JIMMY COWAN	REPLACEMENT	21
SHANE MONAHAN	REPLACEMENT	22
MARTYN THOMAS	REPLACEMENT	23

MUNSTER RUGBY

FELIX JONES	FULLBACK	
KEITH EARLS	RIGHT WING	
CASEY LAULALA	CENTRE	
JAMES DOWNEY	CENTRE	
JOHNE MURPHY	LEFT WING	
IAN KEATLEY	FLY HALF	
CATHAL SHERIDAN	SCRUM HALF	
JAMES CRONIN	PROP	
DAMIEN VARLEY	HOOKER	
BJ BOTHA	PROP	
DONNCHA O'CALLAGHAN	LOCK	
PAUL O'CONNELL	LOCK	
PETER O'MAHONY (C)	FLANKER	
TOMMY O'DONNELL	FLANKER	
JAMES COUGHLAN	NO.8	
DUNCAN CASEY	REPLACEMENT	
DAVE KILCOYNE	REPLACEMENT	
STEPHEN ARCHER	REPLACEMENT	
BILLY HOLLAND	REPLACEMENT	
CJ STANDER	REPLACEMENT	
DUNCAN WILLIAMS	REPLACEMENT	
JJ HANRAHAN	REPLACEMENT	
DENIS HURLEY	REPLACEMENT	

IN CHARGE TODAY: Referee: Leighton Hodges (WRU) Assistant Referees: Gwyn Morris and Wayne Davies

Heineken CUP



FedEx

Amlin

