

# GLOUCESTER RUGBY



£3 | 22.03.14  
AVIVA PREMIERSHIP RUGBY  
VS. NEWCASTLE FALCONS



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# PROP STAR

THE PRIDE ~ THE PASSION ~ THE HONOUR ~ THE HISTORY



## NIGEL DAVIES DIRECTOR OF RUGBY



"...WE'VE TRAINED HARD THIS WEEK, WE'VE TRAINED WELL. IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE KICK OFF THIS REMAINING GROUP OF MATCHES IN STYLE AND THAT'S WHAT WE HOPE TO DO."



# COACH'S NOTES

**G**ood afternoon and welcome to Kingsholm for this latest round of Aviva Premiership action.

It's obviously been a few weeks since we played our last game, and it's good to be back in action today.

Our last outing was obviously

to achieve over the remaining few weeks of the season.

There's still a lot to play for. We have six matches remaining in the Aviva Premiership, and the goal is to try and win each and every one and finish as high up the table as we possibly can.



the disappointing defeat away at Northampton, and it's been frustrating not having had a match since that day to try and bounce back and put a few things right.

We have used the time wisely of course. A couple of weekends without a game does allow a few injuries to clear up, and we've been able to welcome a couple of players back into training as we prepare for Newcastle today.

It's also given us the opportunity to sit down as a group, talk about where we are and what we want

We also travel to London Wasps in the quarter final of the Amlin Challenge Cup. We reached the same stage of the tournament last season before bowing out against Biarritz.

We learned a lot from that occasion and are determined to try and progress beyond the quarters this season.

For myself, I'm pleased that I have a few more players available to select from this week following the return of our internationals following the conclusion of the

Six Nations.

I've often been asked over the years, both at the Scarlets and here at Gloucester, about the inconvenience of losing so many players for the Autumn internationals and the Six Nations.

Having been fortunate enough to represent my country myself, I can safely say that there is no higher honour for a player. We encourage all our players to be the very best they possibly can, and playing international rugby is the pinnacle.

What it does mean is that, as Director of Rugby, I have to juggle my resources in terms of the playing squad and, occasionally, get a bit creative! But that all comes with the territory.

Regardless of who is wearing the Gloucester shirt today, we know that we face a real challenge against the Newcastle Falcons this afternoon.

They've had a tough season since returning to the Premiership following a year in the Championship, but they're still fighting hard with Worcester just 11 points behind them in the table.

You'd expect nothing less than total commitment from a team led by Dean Richards and they've pushed us hard in both the games we've played against them already this season, particularly the one at Kingston Park.

We'll need to be at our best to get something from the game today. But we've trained hard this week, we've trained well. It's important that we kick off this remaining group of matches in style and that's what we hope to do.

Enjoy your afternoon here at Kingsholm,

*Nigel*



# VIEW FROM The Citizen

with **MIKE BROWN**

Mike reviews the 2014 RBS Six Nations with a special spotlight on how Gloucester's international trio of Twelvetrees, May and Morgan performed.

## THE JOY OF SIX

**T**he RBS Six Nations came to a thrilling conclusion last weekend with Ireland taking the title thanks to their 22-20 victory over France in Paris.

### PLAYER OF THE CHAMPIONSHIP:

**Mike Brown (ENG):**

My marginally more talented namesake is the complete package and has benefitted enormously from his switch from the wing. Spikey and deadly on the counter-attack, the Harlequins full-back contributed four tries during the Championship and grew in prominence throughout.

The other contenders: Danny Care, David Denton, Brice Dulin, Taulupe Faletau, Owen Farrell, Leonardo Ghiraldini, Cian Healy, Jamie Heaslip, Yohan Huget, Rob Kearney, Brian O'Driscoll, Chris Robshaw, Jonny Sexton, Andrew Trimble, Sam Warburton.

### TRY OF THE CHAMPIONSHIP:

**Danny Care (ENG) v Ireland**

Care's try came straight out of

the Harlequins play-book with Chris Robshaw laying the foundations, Mike Brown providing the burst and Care the finish. It was a perfect combination of pace, power and finesse to send Twickenham into raptures. Gael Fickou's heartbreaker against England and Jamie Roberts' second touchdown against Scotland also deserve a mention.

### BEST BREAKTHROUGH:

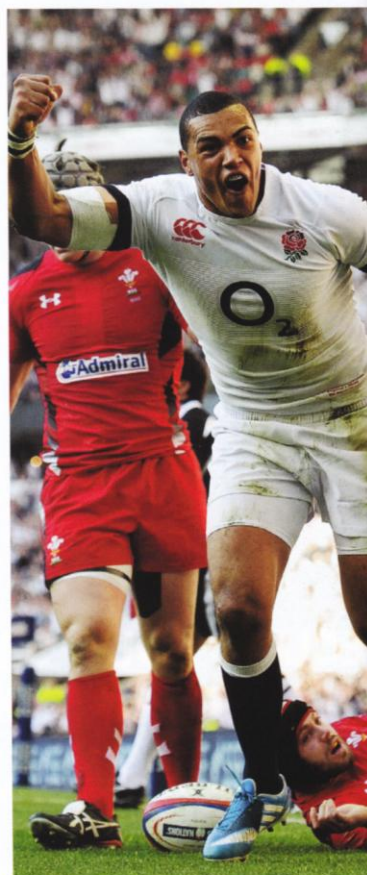
**Luther Burrell (ENG):**

There was nothing unlucky about 13 as Burrell made the move to Test rugby with seamless ease. The Northampton Saints centre formed an effective partnership with Billy Twelvetrees and powered over for three tries. An honourable mention must also go to Billy Vunipola and Italy's Leonardo Sarto.

### BEST COACH:

**Stuart Lancaster (ENG)**

Joe Schmidt took home the ultimate prize but the rebuilding job Lancaster has completed with England is remarkable. Lancaster has picked his side up from last season's Millennium Stadium massacre and moulded them into



serious World Cup contenders.

He was not afraid of the big calls, selecting three backs with just one cap between them for the tournament opener and has given the likes of Danny Care and Brown a licence to thrill.

At the other end of the spectrum, some of the selection decisions made by Philippe Saint-André and Scott Johnson truly left the mind boggled - they might well have been plucking names from a tombola.

#### **THE LIFE OF BRIAN AWARD:**

**Brian O'Driscoll (IRE)**

**How fitting that O'Driscoll, the world's most capped player and undoubtedly the finest exponent of our great game drew the curtain on his career with a Six Nations crown.**

Some of the fawning over the Leinster centre may have become a little nauseas but you simply cannot overlook what 'BOD' has done in the sport and in particular the Six Nations. He showed glimpses of his dazzling talent, particularly in the Aviva Stadium farewell against Italy, and bowed out in style.

To put O'Driscoll's Six Nations achievements in plain writing - he holds the records for the most appearances, tries, carries by a back, metres made, clean breaks, defenders beaten, offloads and turnovers. He is also second on the list for try assists and tackles.

#### **SPOTLIGHT ON THE CHERRY AND WHITES:**

**Billy Twelvetrees:**

The golden-locked centre received plenty of unjustified criticism in the early stages of the tournament but grew in prominence and truly took centre-stage.

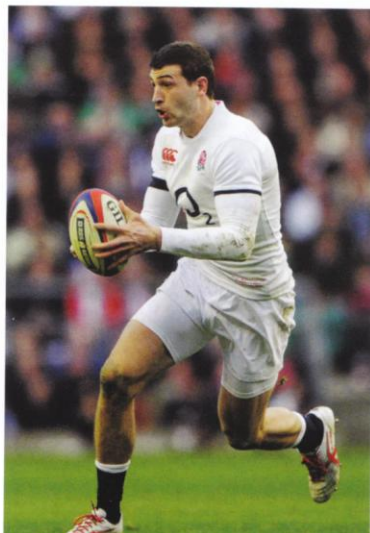
The form of Owen Farrell and the cutting edge of the English back-line owes a great deal to the subtleties of Twelvetrees and his ability to come in at first-receiver or offer a second kicking option. What

you are always guaranteed from the Gloucester stand-in captain is the basics, he is the glue in the England back-line and has formed an increasingly effective partnership with Luther Burrell.



#### **Jonny May:**

The Kingsholm favourite entered the Six Nations in dazzling form but lasted just eight minutes of the opener against France after suffering a broken nose that Mike Tindall would be proud of. May made the transition to the Championship comfortably and always looked a danger in attack. He did nothing wrong but will have his work cut out to clinch a starting spot in New Zealand with Stuart Lancaster boasting a wealth of wing talent.



#### **Ben Morgan:**

**One of the biggest challenges for Morgan was to turn his super-sub performances into something more sustained. He made impressive impacts from the bench in the opening three games, bringing real impetus and venom to England's charge. After Billy Vunipola was ruled out of the final two rounds with an ankle injury, Morgan stepped into the void and continued to rampage.**

The 25-year-old is sometimes criticised for his work-rate but performed like a man possessed throughout the tournament. He was second on the carry count against Italy and was beaten by only Tom Wood on tackles successfully made the previous week against Wales. The challenge now is to transfer that form to the Cherry and White.



#### **TEAM OF THE CHAMPIONSHIP:**

M Brown (ENG); A Trimble (IRE), B O'Driscoll (IRE), J Roberts (WAL), Y Huget (FRA); J Sexton (IRE), D Care (ENG); C Healy (IRE), D Hartley (ENG), M Ross (IRE), J Launchbury (ENG), C Lawes (ENG), P O'Mahony (IRE), S Warburton (WAL), B Vunipola (ENG)

## GLOUCESTER RUGBY HERITAGE

[www.gloucester rugby heritage.org.uk](http://www.gloucester rugby heritage.org.uk)

# VIVA L'ITALIA!



**W**ith England playing in Rome last weekend, and Marco Bortolami winning his 104th cap for Italy, what better time to remember Gloucester's Italian connections, the matches played against Italian club sides and the Italian players who have played at Kingsholm.

### THE FIRST MATCHES

Gloucester played Italian sides three times in the amateur era. The first match took place on 18 September 1958 in front of 10,000 spectators at Kingsholm. Rugby Milano, the most successful club in Italy at the time, were playing the opening match of an ambitious three match tour.

The Italians handled well in difficult conditions and the match was close until the last quarter when lack of possession finally told and they conceded four tries, Gloucester running out 23-3 winners.

Gloucester played twice more against touring Italian opposition before the game changed forever in 1996. In September 1974 they entertained the Italian side L'Aquila at Kingsholm in a one-sided

encounter that ended in a 75-0 Gloucester victory.

Much more competitive (and satisfying) was a 25-15 victory at Kingsholm in April 1993 over a Benetton Treviso XV which included Australian outside half Michael Lynagh and All Blacks wing John Kirwan.

### EUROPEAN COMPETITION

With professionalism came European competition and, starting with the first match against Petrarca Padova on 7 September 1997 in the European Shield, Gloucester have been drawn seven times against Italian clubs.

All fourteen games have been won and only one game was truly close: a 38-29 victory over Roma in 2000-01 in the Heineken Cup – the year that Gloucester went on to reach their only Heineken Cup semi-final.

### THE GLOUCESTER ITALIANS

Gloucester players were now recruited from all over the world and among the signings were four leading Italians.



Cristian Stoica

### CRISTIAN STOICA

When the 25 year old Cristian Stoica (also known as Alessandro) arrived at Kingsholm as a Philippe Saint-Andre summer signing from Narbonne in August 2001, he was described by the Citizen as "the Romanian-born golden boy of Italian rugby."

He was the current Italian full back, although he played centre (his preferred position) for his club Narbonne.

Stoica initially appeared to be an excellent acquisition in either position but, with the arrival of Henry Paul to join Robert Todd, Terry Fanolua and Joe Ewens in competition for centre places, it became obvious that his

future at Gloucester lay primarily at full back and things went downhill from there.

After starting in all four pre-season friendlies (including a 27-5 win over French champions Toulouse at Kingsholm) and the first six league and European games of the regular season, he was relegated to the bench for the Harlequins game on 13 October.

Within a couple of days, news broke in the French press that a discontented Stoica was moving to Castres. This was confirmed in *The Times* on 8th November. Three days later, Stoica captained Italy from centre against Canada in Rovigo and played in the centre throughout the 2002 Six Nations tournament. He went on to win 71 caps for his country.

#### FEDERICO PUCCIARIELLO

More successful was the recruitment of Federico Pucciariello. Born in Argentina, Pucciariello, grandson of an Italian immigrant, had played for the country of his birth at Under 21 level before making his debut for Italy.

Like Stoica, he was a Saint-Andre



Federico Pucciariello

2001 summer signing from Narbonne and, like Stoica, had played in the May 2001 European Challenge Cup Final in which Narbonne lost to Harlequins in extra time.

Pucciariello was an outstanding scrummager who could play in any of the three front row positions. He was a formidable opponent and a daunting sight to see waiting on the bench. He played 24 games in his one season with the club and won four of his seven international caps in the Six Nations that season,

starting against England and Scotland and coming off the bench against Ireland and Wales.

Many fans were sorry to see him leave for Bourgoin after just one year at Kingsholm. He went on to play four seasons for Munster before retiring to work in his home town of Rosario, Argentina in 2009.



Marco Bortolami

#### MARCO BORTOLAMI

26 year old lock Marco Bortolami from Padova, who had been Italy's youngest ever captain in 2002, already had a huge reputation both as captain and as one of the best locks in world rugby when he arrived at Kingsholm at the start of the 2006-07 season.

He did not disappoint. Bortolami proved to be a dynamic, committed and powerful performer who, coming straight into the side as captain, took Gloucester to the top of the 2006-07 Guinness Premiership table.

Chosen as captain of the Sky "Premiership Team of the Season" for 2006-07, he led Gloucester to a 50-9 rout of Saracens in the Premiership semi-final at Kingsholm and it was a huge loss when he had to miss the Twickenham final defeat by Leicester through injury, which he described in November 2012 as "... one of the toughest experiences of my life..."

Although not quite recapturing his 2006-07 form, Bortolami again led Gloucester to the top of the Premiership in 2007-08. Once again, only Leicester stood between Gloucester and the ultimate prize, but they suffered an agonising 26-25 semi-final defeat at Kingsholm in a match they should have won.

A string of injuries, which were to lead to three shoulder operations, affected his form for the remaining two years of Bortolami's Gloucester career and he spent much of 2009-10 on the sidelines. He joined the newly formed Aironi in Italy at the end of the season after playing 73 games for the club.

Although continuing to perform well at international level, Marco Bortolami believes that he was at the peak of his career while playing for Gloucester in 2006-07.

#### CARLOS NIETO

A second 2006 signing was another Italian-Argentine prop, Carlos Nieto, who transferred from Viadana to join his international captain, Bortolami at Kingsholm.

Until his recall in 2005, he had won just one cap for Italy, coming off the bench to replace Pucciariello against England in Rome in 2002, but the 29 year old from La Plata was now, like Bortolami, in the form of his life.

Nieto joined a formidable front row pool including French veterans Patrice Collazo and Christian Califano, Nick Wood and Jack




Carlos Nieto

Forster, and hookers Ollie Azam and Mefin Davies. He turned in consistently dominant performances in his three seasons and started in 60 of his 65 games. He was an essential ingredient of Gloucester's 2006-2008 successes and was sorely missed when he left for Saracens in 2009.

Carlos Nieto played the majority of his 34-match international career while a Gloucester player and retired from international rugby on joining Saracens. After four successful years with Saracens he retired at the end of last season, aged 37.





# DOING A PROPER JOB

CHANGES TO THE SCRUMMAGING LAWS, FEEDING CALLS AND EARLY SHOVS ARE STILL CAPTURING THE HEADLINES AT SET PIECE TIME.

**B**ut for Yann Thomas, the recipe is simple - a bucket load of hard work and putting in the hard yards alongside experienced colleagues, all pushing in the same direction aiming to improve the Gloucester scrum.

With the season entering

thought it was going to go. We've got a couple of weeks now to put things right.

"Obviously as we know, Tony Windo has moved on and we've now got Trevor Woodman on board to deliver the expertise that he brings for the front row boys.

"I'd like to thank Tony Windo

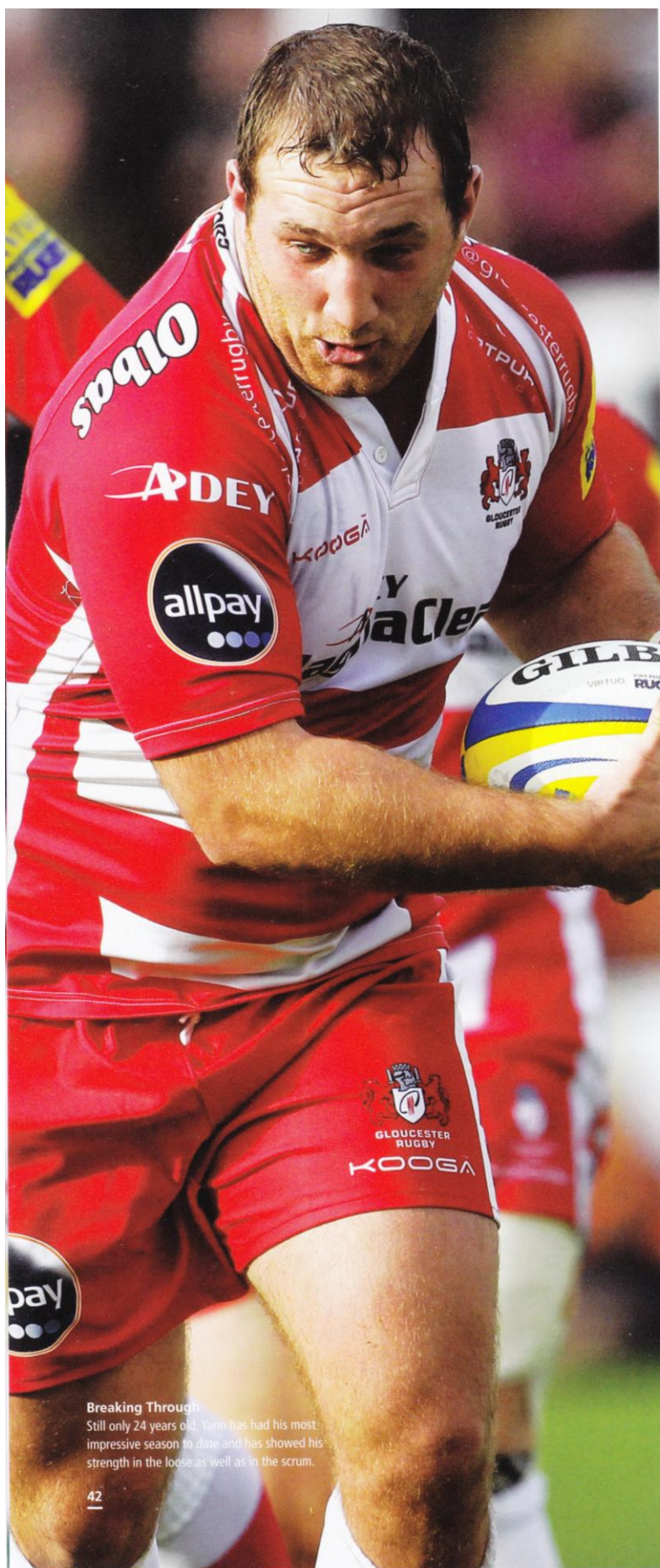
**"...IT'S A BIG GAME FOR US TO KICK OFF A BIG RUN UP TO THE END OF THE SEASON NOW AND WE HAVE TO PERFORM AT OUR BEST."**

the final furlongs of the Aviva Premiership race, focus in the camp is firmly on a strong finish. With a week off, minds and bodies have been refreshed ready for the big final push.

"Obviously the season probably has not gone as well as we

so much for the work he has done with me and how he has helped me over the last few seasons with my development.

"We've had this last week now, the week off and it now feels like a mini pre season. All the boys have come in refreshed physically and



**Breaking Through**  
Still only 24 years old, Yann has had his most impressive season to date and has showed his strength in the loose as well as in the scrum.

mentally and really looking forward to the Falcons game."

Thomas has made 25 appearances for the Cherry and Whites this season, after a few seasons learning the trade and has really seized his opportunity in the front row close-quarter battles this campaign.

"Definitely been a breakthrough season for me, I've sort of been there and thereabouts in the last few seasons behind the likes of Nick Wood and Dan Murphy, two great loose head props.

"It's been hard work, but I've perhaps had age on my side and I'd like to think I've taken my opportunities when they came my way, not just on the loose head but also on the tight head.

"The ability to swap both sides probably stands me in good stead, but I still have to take these opportunities. It doesn't matter what game it is or how many starts you get. When you play for Gloucester you have the culture of working hard and putting in everything for the shirt – that's something that I really try to do.

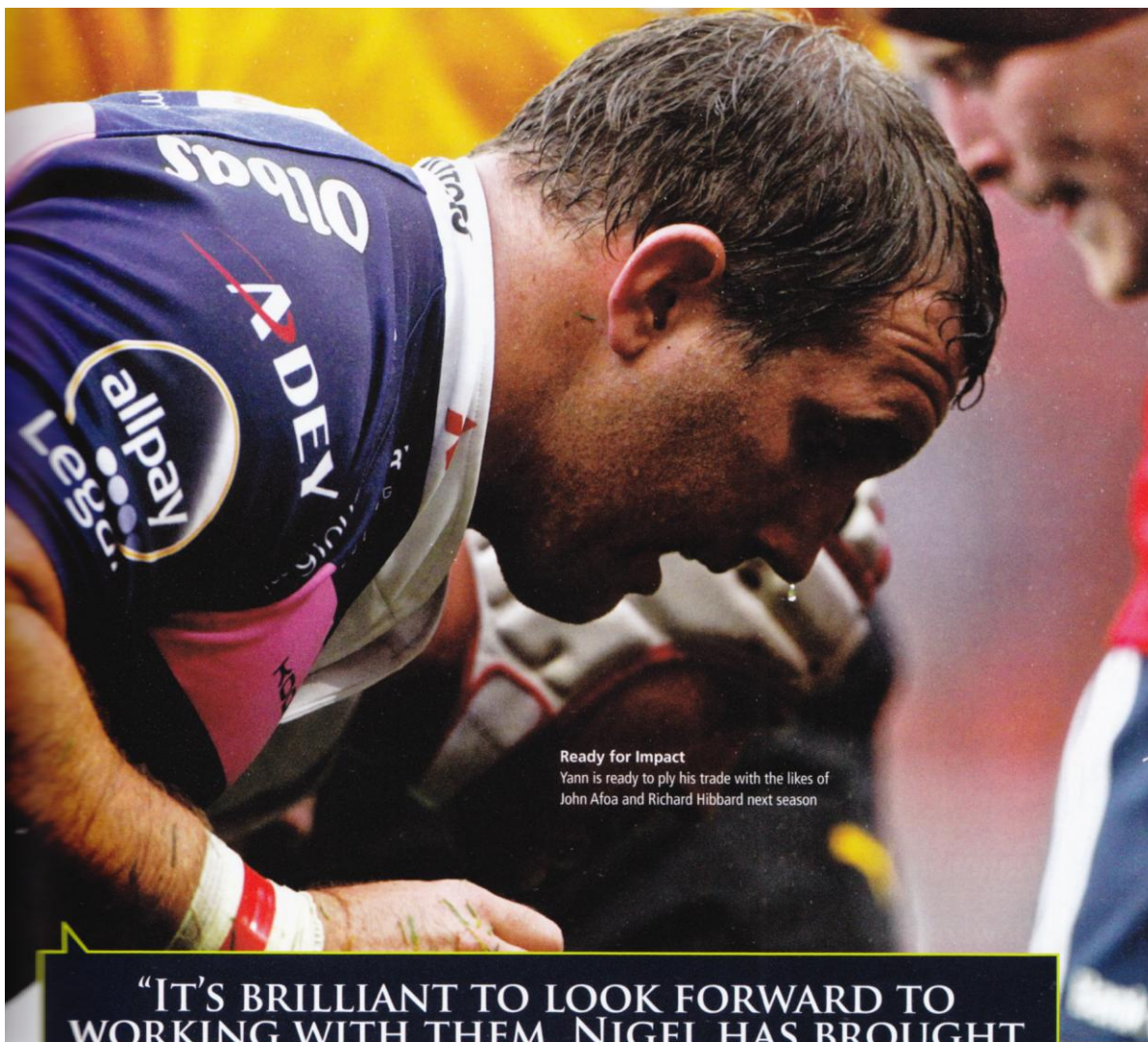
"I've been lucky really to work with the likes of John Brain, who developed me so much and obviously with Tony Windo who has put in a lot of time and care for me.

"Even some of the players who have since moved on, like Olivier Azam, he was one of the best scrummaging hookers around, you can learn so much from a man like that.

"And, in the handful of seasons that I have been at the club, working with Nick Wood – it is clear he is probably one of the best scrummaging props in the Premiership. To learn off someone like that is good!"

So far, the club has announced the arrivals of two internationals to join the front row union at Kingsholm next season, and Thomas is excited to get to work with John Afoa and Richard Hibbard.

"It's brilliant to look forward to working with them. Nigel has brought in Big John Afoa and, with Richard Hibbard coming in as well, we have more quality in



#### Ready for Impact

Yann is ready to ply his trade with the likes of John Afoa and Richard Hibbard next season

**"IT'S BRILLIANT TO LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH THEM. NIGEL HAS BROUGHT IN BIG JOHN AFOA AND, WITH RICHARD HIBBARD COMING IN AS WELL, WE HAVE MORE QUALITY IN THAT POSITION. THEY'LL BRING MASSIVE EXPERIENCE TO US."**

that position. They'll bring massive experience to us."

There's no hiding from the fact this season hasn't quite gone to plan for the Cherry and Whites, but Thomas is feeling positive and determined to finish on a real high with silverware still a possibility and, with a recent call-up to the Saxons under his belt, he is confident he can continue to push for recognition.

"We've still got a lot to play for this season, we've still got the Amlin Quarter Final at Wasps and we have to thrive on the chances that we still have and we have to make the

most of them.

"The Saxons was a great experience for me, it was obviously disappointing to not get on. But it's great to get my name in the mix and know that your performances are being recognised.

"It's nice, it's a little pay off and, let's be honest, it's every little boy's dream to put on an England shirt, so that week for me was really exciting."

With Newcastle Falcons in town today, Thomas accepts the strong challenge posed by Dean Richards' men and challenges his teammates to reach a lofty level of performance

in order to triumph against the spirited men from the North East.

"It's always going to be a tough game, the way that the Premiership is now, there is no easy game. A few seasons ago maybe you could expect to pick up a few cheap wins here or there. But all the teams are top quality, so it's the beauty of the game.

"Newcastle is always a tough game for us, we scrapped out a good win, it was a hard fought battle up there and they're a tough side. It's a big game for us to kick off a big run up to the end of the season now and we have to perform at our best."



## KINGSHOLM NEWS with BOB FENTON

*They will be scrapping for their lives as it looks like the relegation trap door is going to open for either them or Worcester.*



Great Scot 9 or 10, Greig Laidlaw is another quality signing for next season

**H**ere we go then, international distractions out of the way and into the business end of the season.

Only four matches left at Kingsholm this term – I'm working on the assumption that we beat Wasps in the Amlin Challenge Cup and get a home semi-final, by the way – so it's time to bury the past and build for the future and start rebuilding fortress Kingsholm.

It's exciting to see the list of new players arriving at the club continuing to grow - Greig Laidlaw will be a welcome addition to the squad, his goal kicking stats are pretty special and the ability to

play at nine or ten will be more than useful.

Lots of other names being bandied about too. Is it too early to say 'something special' is happening at Gloucester? No one has used that term before have they??

We can't get through this stuff without talking about the Six Nations though. Regular readers will know that international rugby tends to leave me a bit cold, largely down to the fact that the chances of getting tickets to get along to a match are somewhere between slim and none, as the majority go to corporates guests with little interest in what is happening in front of

them. But I did find this year's competition really captivating.

Having been taken prisoner and made to go shopping on the last Saturday of the tournament I missed pretty much all of the first half of England's match in Rome. I did get home in time to join the general BBC love in with Manu Tuilagi though – I can't have been the only one screaming at the TV in frustration as his name was mentioned every 7 seconds or so.

I felt quite sorry for Luther Burrell – who had been playing pretty well throughout the tournament - being taken off to let the non-passing one onto the field. It's just lucky it wasn't our Billy who got the shepherds crook.

Our boys did well though. Billy was his solid self and doesn't get anywhere near the credit for what he does, Jonny must have covered miles of turf looking for work but really didn't get the breaks and Ben – well he was immense. Forget the great lump of lard from Saracens, he brings far more to the game.

Of course the big question is will he continue that form for his club – perhaps we should play in white shirts and see if that helps. When he is on form like this, though, he's outstanding. And even when the Italian pack had our scrum trundling backwards at a rate of knots he was able to pick up the ball and tidy things up. Though to be fair he's had quite a bit of practice in scrums going backwards this season... not any more though – the only way is forward!



was scored by one of the Tommies' boys who ran almost the length of the field to score. Charlie Sharples, who was there to present the trophy, must have been impressed!

I was back here last week for the Darts evening – what a laugh that was... we rapidly learned that two of our young tyros Elliott Stooke and Gareth Evans probably don't have the makings of a professional darts player. It was great fun though, and it's really good to see things like that happening at the stadium. Gone are the days of facilities just being used on match days, try getting along to some of these events, you'll enjoy yourself!

I just hope we get a better choice of bands this summer for any concert that might be happening, but, whatever you do, don't take advice from Whispering John (welcome back, today Buddy) - it'll be terrible and make your ears bleed!

Having those three back in the side today – assuming they all play – is going to be important, even though Newcastle are right in the mire we can't be complacent. They will be scrapping for their lives as it looks like the relegation trap door is going to open for either them or Worcester.

This is the third meeting we have had with them this season and we come into it two wins to the good. That doesn't mean anything though. Remember London Irish last term – we played and beat them on about 17 occasions (or so it felt), yet when it came to the league match they came down here and turned us over.

While there may not have been much happening on the professional rugby front at Kingsholm recently, I have enjoyed some rugby here. In one of those work-meets-fun events I was here for the final of the Gloucestershire schools under-14 competition between Churchdown School and Sir Thomas Rich's Grammar School.

What a great game that was, without doubt the best of the three finals since my company became sponsors. It ended 15 – 12 to Churchdown (and thus avoided me getting it in the ear from Mrs F who

works at the school for not making her lot win). But the try of the match



Thriller! Kingsholm saw a wonderful game between Churchdown School and Sir Thomas Rich's Grammar School



IN ATHLETICS TERMS, WE HAVE REACHED THE BELL. THE SIX NATIONS IS OVER, AND WE ARE ABOUT TO START THE FINAL LAP OF THE SEASON.

**F**OR some, the chance of silverware this season is still alive. For others, it's about finishing the campaign as strongly as possible and hoping for better next time round.

Arguably, Gloucester has a foot in both camps. The Amlin Challenge Cup quarter final is still ahead, but I'll return to that later.

Premiership wise, the table does not make happy reading with six games remaining. The gap to Sale in sixth place is now 16 points and although the Sharks have a difficult run in, it would be long odds on Gloucester closing it.

My next door neighbour is a season ticket holder who, like thousands of others, was recently sent details of next season's prices. For the second summer in three, the club will draw deeply on the fans loyalty and eternal optimism.

What we do know is re-enforcements are coming, and on the evidence of what I have seen of

the Championship in recent weeks, so are Bristol.

They will be welcomed back at the top table, and would have the resources of making a genuine fist of it. Stephen Lansdown has backed Andy Robinson to assemble a big squad but - and this is only my view - they would still need to recruit half a dozen senior players if they seal promotion.

The issue then is the timing, as the play off final is in June, when everyone else has had a head start in the recruitment process. No doubt conversations are taking place already.

It must be said, though, that there is a big gap between the heavier weights in the Championship and the rest. I was at Penzance earlier this month for a game between Cornish Pirates and Jersey.

The conditions at the Mennaye were a mudbath - think that famous Fran Cotton photograph - and while

you could not question the honest endeavour of both teams, the sharpness just wasn't there.

As the Jersey chairman said, without the considerable support both financially and at the gate that the Premiership teams get, Championship teams would in many cases be close to folding if one individual walks away.

That level of backing is the only means by which they can survive full time.

Drop to the third tier, and Gloucestershire could have two sides next season. Cinderford are currently in the relegation zone but with games in hand should be able to get themselves to safety.

This is the second season the Foresters have spent the bulk of the season near the bottom, and from



Mudbath - Fran Cotton

September they may have Hartpury to contend with as well.

After a couple of near misses, they currently top Division 2 South with a handy cushion between themselves and the chasers. They still have to play both Canterbury

defeats to Harlequins, London Irish and Bath.

In that time, Gloucester have brought Trevor Woodman back to the club as scrum coach. "Dougie" fulfilled the same role at Wasps for four years, so it will be a game

Kingsholm in the Premiership.

Gloucester will want to set off on this final leg of what has seemed a long slog of a season on the right foot.

Today's visitors Newcastle look safe from the drop, but Dean



**Dougie** Trevor Woodman knows a thing or two about scrummaging

and Amptill, but unless they lose both and their form collapses, they should be able to clinch the title.

Going up another level will also give Gloucester good options if they want to do dual registration deals for younger players to give them regular rugby.

By the time we meet again, Gloucester will have taken on Wasps in the Amlin Challenge Cup quarter final. Dai Young's team lost some impetus before the recent fortnight off with successive

of some significance for him personally, but it also offers the chance to salvage something from a season where league form has been indifferent.

It will be almost ten years to the day since Wasps won a Heineken Cup quarter final between the teams 34-3 at the same venue. What better time to find some form with a home semi final on offer to the winners?

After today, only Bath and London Irish are still to come to

Richards will know better than anyone that their persistent problem this season has been their low level scoring, which puts high demands on the Falcons defence.

They have not reached the 20 point mark in any Premiership fixture. Bear that in mind when you look at the tally today.

**ExtraMEDIA**   

Follow Ian on Twitter: [@ian\\_randall1](https://twitter.com/ian_randall1)

## GLOUCESTER RUGBY

#	POS	NAME
15	FB	Rob Cook
14	W	Charlie Sharples
13	C	Henry Trinder
12	C	Ryan Mills
11	W	Martyn Thomas
10	FH	Freddie Burns
9	SH	Jimmy Cowan
1	P	Nick Wood
2	H	Darren Dawidiuk
3	P	Sila Puafisi ■
4	L	Elliott Stooke
5	L	James Hudson (C) ■
6	F	Sione Kalamafoni
7	F	Matt Cox
8	N8	Gareth Evans
16	H	Koree Britton
17	P	Yann Thomas
18	P	Rupert Harden
19	L	Will James
20	R	Matt Kvesic
21		Tavis Knoyle
22	SH	Dan Robson
23	C	Shane Monahan

## SALE SHARKS

#	POS	NAME
15	FB	Rob Miller
14	W	Tom Brady
13	C	Johnny Leota
12	C	Sam Tuitupou
11	W	Mark Cueto
10	FH	Danny Cipriani
9	SH	Dwayne Peel
1	P	Ross Harrison
2	H	Tommy Taylor
3	P	Vadim Cobilas
4	L	Jonathan Mills
5	L	Michael Paterson
6	F	Dan Braid (C)
7	F	David Seymour
8	N8	James Gaskell
16	H	Marc Jones
17	P	Eifion Lewis-Roberts
18	P	Tony Buckley
19	L	Viliami Fihaki
20		Mark Easter
21	SH	Will Cliff
22	FH	Nick Macleod
23	C	Tom Arscott





**Match Details:** 7th February 2014, KO 20:00, AJ Bell Stadium  
**Attendance:** 6,059  
**Referee:** Matt Carley

## SALE SHARKS

**TRIES:** Miller (9, 14), Braid (37, 43) **CONS:** Cipriani (38, 43)

## GLOUCESTER RUGBY

**TRIES:** M. Thomas (1), Sharples (28) **PENS:** Burns (45, 60, 76)

24

19

**THE CHERRY AND WHITES TRAVELLED NORTH TO THE AJ BELL STADIUM AND CAME AWAY WITH JUST A LOSING BONUS POINT, FOLLOWING AN ATTRITIONAL BATTLE WITH SALE SHARKS WHO SIMPLY CAPITALISED ON THE OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED TO THEM BY THE VISITORS.**

**I**t was a typically chilly evening in Salford, and the strangely quiet stadium was stunned into near silence when Gloucester made a superb start.

Good tempo from the outset gave Jimmy Cowan space, and the Kiwi's neat grubber behind the defence bounced perfectly for Martyn Thomas to race on to and touch down.

The Sharks however then hit back with two tries, which owed much to good tempo and fortune. James Gaskell wriggled free from a tackle to gain metres and Dwayne Peel fed Danny Cipriani, who in turn put Rob Miller over in the corner with a neat flat pass, which sucked in the Gloucester defence.

Miller then repeated the trick minutes later, as Sale attacked with slow ball, a slip in the midfield defence opened the door and Miller ghosted over the line shrugging off some weak tackling.

Despite the two scores for the hosts, Gloucester did look to be on top, but fierce loading of the breakdown from the well-drilled hosts were stifling every attack.

However, on the half hour the Cherry and Whites got their second score thanks to an opportune attempt from a quick penalty.

Freddie Burns spotted acres of space behind Mark Cueto and the fly-half boomed a kick over his head. As the ball bounced the experienced Cueto didn't realise Charlie Sharples was loitering behind him, and the Gloucester winger scorched past his opposite number to gather and

dot down and level the scores at 10 apiece.

But then Gloucester's indiscipline proved their complete undoing. Referee Matthew Carley was pernickety at best throughout the game, but there were no excuses as James Hudson was sent to the sin bin for slapping the ball from Peel's hand.

serious danger of drifting well and truly away from the visitors but, slowly but surely, they wrested back the initiative and controlled the game albeit without troubling the scoreboard.

Burns slotted two penalties to make it 24-16 but missed two subsequent efforts to bring the win

### Champagne Moment:

*Charlie Sharples showed express pace to force experienced Mark Cueto into a shocker of a mistake, and the Gloucester winger crossed for another try in a rich vein of form after alert thinking from Freddie Burns.*



From the resulting line out, the Sharks rumbled over through Dan Braid and went into half time 17-10 ahead.

The second half started awfully for the visitors, the kick off was left to bounce and Sale were held up over

within reach. As time was running out, Gloucester were asking all the questions but couldn't get over the line as Sale were content to wait for the mistake and clear their lines.

Burns did add a late penalty to

**"I HAVE TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MISTAKE. AS CAPTAIN I SHOULDN'T HAVE GIVEN THE REFEREE AN OPTION TO CARD ME, AND OUR DISCIPLINE LET US DOWN IN A GAME WE SHOULD HAVE WON."** JAMES HUDSON

the line. Sila Puafisi was then carded for a similar offence and then the Sharks repeated the trick to go over again through Braid.

Down to 13, the game was in

earn the losing bonus point and thankfully for the visitors, Rob Miller's missed penalty with the last kick of the game meant Gloucester didn't leave Salford pointless.

## GLOUCESTER RUGBY

#	POS	NAME
15	FB	Rob Cook
14	W	Charlie Sharples
13	C	Henry Trinder
12	C	Mike Tindall (C)
11	W	Martyn Thomas
10	FH	Ryan Mills
9	SH	Dan Robson
1	P	Nick Wood
2	H	Darren Dawidiuk
3	P	Sila Puafisi
4	L	Elliott Stooke
5	L	Will James
6	F	Sione Kalamafoni
7	F	Matt Kvesic
8	N8	Ben Morgan
16	H	Huia Edmonds
17	P	Yann Thomas
18	P	Rupert Harden
19	L	James Hudson
20		Matt Cox
21		Jimmy Cowan
22		Freddie Burns
23		Shane Monahan

## LEICESTER TIGERS

#	POS	NAME
15	FB	Mathew Tait
14	W	Niki Goneva
13	C	Matt Smith
12	C	Anthony Allen
11	W	Adam Thompstone
10	FH	Toby Flood (C)
9	SH	Ben Youngs
1	P	Marcos Ayerza
2	H	Tom Youngs
3	P	Logovi'i Mulipola
4	L	Ed Slater
5	L	Graham Kitchener
6	F	Jamie Gibson
7	F	Julian Salvi
8	N8	Jordan Crane
16	H	Rob Hawkins
17		Boris Stankovich
18	P	Fraser Balmain
19	L	Louis Deacon
20	N8	Thomas Waldrom
21	SH	David Mele
22		Owen Williams
23	C	Blaine Scully





**Match Details:** 16th February 2014, KO 14:00, Welford Road

**Attendance:** 22,195

**Referee:** Dean Richards

## LEICESTER TIGERS

TRY: Tait (67) PENS: Flood (31, 77)

## GLOUCESTER RUGBY

TRY: Sharples (50) PEN: Cook (37)

11

8

**PLAYING LEICESTER TIGERS AT WELFORD ROAD IS ONE OF THE MOST DAUNTING PROSPECTS ON THE AVIVA PREMIERSHIP FIXTURE CALENDAR.**

**Y**et Gloucester left the East Midland kicking themselves, having well and truly rattled the Tigers before slipping to a late defeat in controversial fashion.

Nigel Davies' side took the game to their hosts from the off and arguably created more clear cut scoring opportunities. Crucially, however, they only converted one of these into points and that came back to haunt them.

Their key moment occurred just three minutes from time with the teams locked together at eight points apiece.

Gloucester were scrummaging on their own 22 when scrum half Dan Robson was pulled up for a not straight feed. It looked straight enough, and was certainly straighter than Tigers scrum half David Mele's subsequent efforts.

However, all the officials saw was a Gloucester offence at the next scrum, a penalty was awarded and Toby Flood's kick won the game.

It was a bitter blow for Gloucester who deserved better. Sione Kalamafoni had a try disallowed for a forward pass in the opening minutes and Matt Kvesic knocked on under pressure near the Tigers line.

The home side were trying desperately to gain the upper hand, but were continually knocked out of their stride by some robust Gloucester defence. Half time came with only a penalty apiece registering on the scoreboard.

However, Gloucester broke the deadlock on 50 minutes and

stunned the home crowd. Charlie Sharples provided the finish, but the winger was indebted to key contributions from Martyn Thomas

and the Tigers eventually fought their way on to level terms through Mathew Tait's try.

It was a setback but Gloucester



**Champagne Moment:** *Charlie Sharples' second half try was a thing of beauty. Patient build up play resulted in Henry Trinder being able to ghost around Tom Youngs. Martyn Thomas was in support and his sublime reverse pass to Sharples on the angle and sprinting over the line.*

and Henry Trinder.

Two other great opportunities came and went, but Gloucester couldn't extend their advantage

looked good value for a draw, the very least their efforts on the day deserved, until those pivotal late scrummages...

**"I WAS VERY COMPLIMENTARY TO THE PLAYERS BECAUSE OF THE WAY THEY COMMITTED TO THE GAME. THE WORK IN THE CONTACT AREA WAS EXCEPTIONAL.**

**"WE WERE UNDER A LOT OF PRESSURE IN THE SET-PIECE, BUT WE PLAYED AROUND THAT AND TRIED TO PLAY A FLUID GAME.**

**"I THOUGHT WE WERE GREAT. WHAT CAN YOU SAY WHEN GUYS GIVE EVERYTHING? WE HAVE JUST GOT TO USE THAT AS A BENCHMARK."** NIGEL DAVIES

## GLOUCESTER RUGBY

#	POS	NAME
15	FB	Rob Cook
14	W	Charlie Sharples
13	C	Henry Trinder
12	C	Mike Tindall (C)
11	W	Shane Monahan
10	FH	Ryan Mills
9	SH	Dan Robson
1	P	Nick Wood
2	H	Darren Dawidiuk
3	P	Rupert Harden
4	L	Elliott Stooke
5	L	James Hudson
6	F	Sione Kalamafoni
7	F	Matt Kvesic
8	N8	Gareth Evans
16	H	Huia Edmonds
17	P	Dan Murphy
18	P	Yann Thomas ■
19	L	Will James
20	N8	Matt Cox
21	SH	Jimmy Cowan
22	C	Freddie Burns
23	FH	Steph Reynolds

## HARLEQUINS

#	POS	NAME
15	FB	Ollie Lindsay-Hague
14	W	Sam Smith
13	C	Ugo Monye
12	C	Tim Molenaar
11	W	Paul Sackey
10	FH	Ben Botica
9	SH	Karl Dickson
1	P	Mark Lambert ■
2	H	Joe Gray
3	P	Kyle Sinckler
4	L	Nick Kennedy
5	L	George Robson
6	F	Maurie Fa'asavalu
7	F	Luke Wallace
8	N8	Nick Easter (C)
16	H	Dave Ward
17	P	Darryl Marfo
18	P	Paul Doran Jones
19	L	Charlie Matthews
20	F	Tom Guest
21	C	Sam Stuart
22	C	Louis Grimoldby ■
23		Jordan Burns





**Match Details:** 22nd February 2014, KO 14:00, Kingsholm

**Attendance:** 12,531

**Referee:** Greg Garner

## GLOUCESTER RUGBY

**TRIES:** Kalamafoni (13), Kvesic (48), Murphy (56) **CONS:** Cook (14, 57) **PENS:** Cook (44, 61)

## HARLEQUINS

**TRIES:** Lindsay-Hague (29), Ward (74) **CONS:** Botica (29, 75) **PENS:** Botica (1, 12)

25

20

**GLOUCESTER PRODUCED A ROUSING PERIOD OF RUGBY SHORTLY AFTER HALF TIME TO BLOW AWAY HARLEQUINS ON A CHILLY AFTERNOON AT KINGSHOLM.**

**T**wo tries, made and finished by the forwards put the control of the Aviva Premiership clash in the hands of the hosts before a late response from the Quins set the pulse racing.

It was a really big win for Nigel Davies' men, who responded well to narrow defeats at Sale Sharks and Leicester Tigers to take the prized scalp of the men from The Stoop.

The day belonged to Andy Hazell, the club legend booked his spot in the annals of the club as he lead out the team to a huge ovation, and the current day wearers of the Cherry and White shirt took inspiration and put in a big performance.

Quins started well, two penalties from the boot of Ben Botica got the scoreboard moving with Gloucester barely having a touch.

When Gloucester did gain possession, they turned it into territory and chances. Several consecutive rolling mauls were brought down and Rob Buchanan saw yellow.

The immediate chance was lost, however, but, when the ball was returned with interest, Dan Robson found James Hudson who discovered his inner Harlem Globetrotter to deliver a perfectly weighted and directed one-handed offload into the hands of Sione Kalamafoni who won't score a simpler try.

It was an impressive score from the Cherry and Whites and a good reward for the spell of pressure imposed on the visitors.

Quins then began to hit back, enjoying plenty of possession,

and forcing the hosts to work hard in defence.

Despite Tim Molenaar limping off on his return to Kingsholm, the visitors hit back with an opportunist score. Karl Dickson took a quick tap and found Ollie Lindsay-Hague on his shoulder, and the whippet full back had a stroll to the line. A score that Botica then improved for a 7-12 half time lead.

The thought of another Kingsholm

It should have come, and analysis of one move will have been a painful one. Shane Monahan made a searing break from Henry Trinder's neat offload and, with Jimmy Cowan on his inside, the pass was agonisingly short of the hands of the Kiwi replacement.

Rob Cook who had been impressive from the tee, added a penalty when Louis Grimoldby was shown a contentiously awarded

**"I THOUGHT WE PLAYED VERY WELL THROUGHOUT THE GAME TODAY. WE HAD A GREAT FIELD POSITION ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS AND PROBABLY DIDN'T GET WHAT WE SHOULD HAVE OUT OF IT, THAT'S SOMETHING THAT WE'VE GOT TO GET A LOT MORE CLINICAL WITH.**

**"I'VE GOT TO APPLAUD MY PLAYERS AND COACHES FOR REMAINING CALM UNDER A LOT OF PRESSURE AND CONTINUING TO PLAY RUGBY."**  
NIGEL DAVIES

defeat was lingering in the mind of the home following, but a strong period of dominance after the interval all but put the game to bed.

First of all, a smart Dan Robson kick forced Lindsay-Hague to put a foot in touch near his own line. From the following lineout, a huge rolling maul saw Matt Kvesic dot down for his first try in a Gloucester shirt.

Shortly after, Dan Murphy took a reverse pass from Dan Robson and hit a smart to barge his way over from short range. It was a devastating spell from the Cherry and Whites and they had the scent of a bonus point in their collective nostrils.

yellow card for a deliberate knock-on. The decision did not go down well for the visitors and Nick Easter seemingly lost his cool and became the circus villain in the eyes of The Shed.

A try did come, but it came for Quins, a rolling maul gaining momentum and Dave Ward touching down for the try after Yann Thomas was sinbinned with several minutes still remaining.

In truth, Gloucester did recover well and saw out time smartly to secure the win with Matt Kvesic winning yet another key turnover to win a penalty and kill of any lingering hopes of a Quins comeback.

Teams correct at time of print: 20th March 2014



# TODAY'S TEAMS



## GLOUCESTER RUGBY

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

## NEWCASTLE FALCONS

<b><u>ALEX TAIT</u></b>	FULLBACK	
<b><u>NOAH CATO</u></b>	RIGHT WING	
<b><u>GONZALO TIESI</u></b>	CENTRE	
<b><u>ADAM POWELL</u></b>	CENTRE	
<b><u>LEE SMITH</u></b>	LEFT WING	
<b><u>PHIL GODMAN</u></b>	FLY HALF	
<b><u>MIKE BLAIR</u></b>	SCRUM HALF	
<b><u>ROB VICKERS</u></b>	PROP	
<b><u>SCOTT LAWSON</u></b>	HOOKER	
<b><u>OLIVER TOMASZCZYK</u></b>	PROP	
<b><u>SCOTT MACLEOD</u></b>	LOCK	
<b><u>FRASER MCKENZIE</u></b>	LOCK	
<b><u>WILL WELCH (C)</u></b>	FLANKER	
<b><u>ANDY SAULL</u></b>	FLANKER	
<b><u>MARK WILSON</u></b>	NO.8	
<b><u>GEORGE MCGUIGAN</u></b>	REPLACEMENT	
<b><u>GARY STRAIN</u></b>	REPLACEMENT	
<b><u>SCOTT WILSON</u></b>	REPLACEMENT	
<b><u>SEAN TOMES</u></b>	REPLACEMENT	
<b><u>CHRIS YORK</u></b>	REPLACEMENT	
<b><u>WARREN FURY</u></b>	REPLACEMENT	
<b><u>JOEL HODGSON</u></b>	REPLACEMENT	
<b><u>DANNY BARNES</u></b>	REPLACEMENT	

**IN CHARGE  
TODAY:**

**Referee: Wayne Barnes**

**Assistant Referees: Roger Baileff and Robin Goodliffe**