

GLOUCESTER RUGBY

**ADEY
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Gloucester Rugby main club sponsor

vs Sale Sharks

Aviva Premiership Rugby Round 02: 13.09.2014

Inside today's matchday programme we have an exclusive interview with new signing Greig Laidlaw, we pay tribute to club legend James Simpson-Daniel & picture galleries from the recent pre-season matches against Yorkshire Carnegie, Munster Rugby and Scarlets. We also have features from our regular contributors Bob Fenton, Ian Randall, The Citizen and the Gloucester Rugby Heritage Project.

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AVIVA PREMIERSHIP
RUGBY

AVIVA

**LAND
ROVER**

GreenFlag

GUINNESS

GILBERT

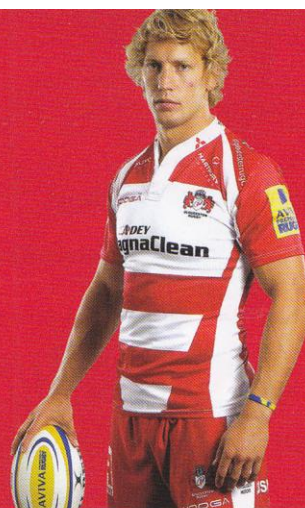
CITIZEN

BT Sport



CAPTAIN'S CORNER BILLY TWELVETREES

GOOD AFTERNOON, AND WELCOME TO KINGS HOLM TO ALL OF OUR SUPPORTERS, AND THOSE FROM SALE SHARKS.



A S my first column of the season, it's a great honour for me to be writing this as captain of Gloucester Rugby.

It's been a busy summer, there have been a lot of changes at the club, and there has been a lot of hard work behind the scenes in a very short space of time.

We've brought in some quality players and some quality coaches, but we knew that we were facing a very tough opener at Northampton.

Last Friday, in the simplest of terms, was a huge disappointment. We came up against a Saints squad that has been growing for a number of years and know their game inside out.

Fair play to Northampton, they were very clinical, fed off our errors and made us pay. They're a team that has set a good standard of rugby, and that is why they are champions.

But it's a long season, and that was just one game. We've

analysed last week's performance and turned our attention to what will be a big test today against Steve Diamond's Sale Sharks.

It's been a tough week for us, where the intensity of training has been ramped up – with a lot of boys eager to get their own season under way, and give our supporters a performance to be proud of.

With the sad news of James Simpson-Daniel's retirement, it was a tough time for the squad as Sinbad broke the news to us. A great mate to all of us, it's a huge shame for the club and the game of rugby to see one of the finest talents have to hang up his boots.

We know full well that running out this afternoon behind Sinbad, and the fine ovation he will receive will drive us on even more.

Today will be a full Kingsholm debut to many of our new faces, and behind the scenes every one of them has been mightily impressed with the welcome they have received from the support.

The roar from The Shed is special and unique for this club, and no doubt that this afternoon, it will be our sixteenth man.

Thank you for your continued support,

Enjoy the game

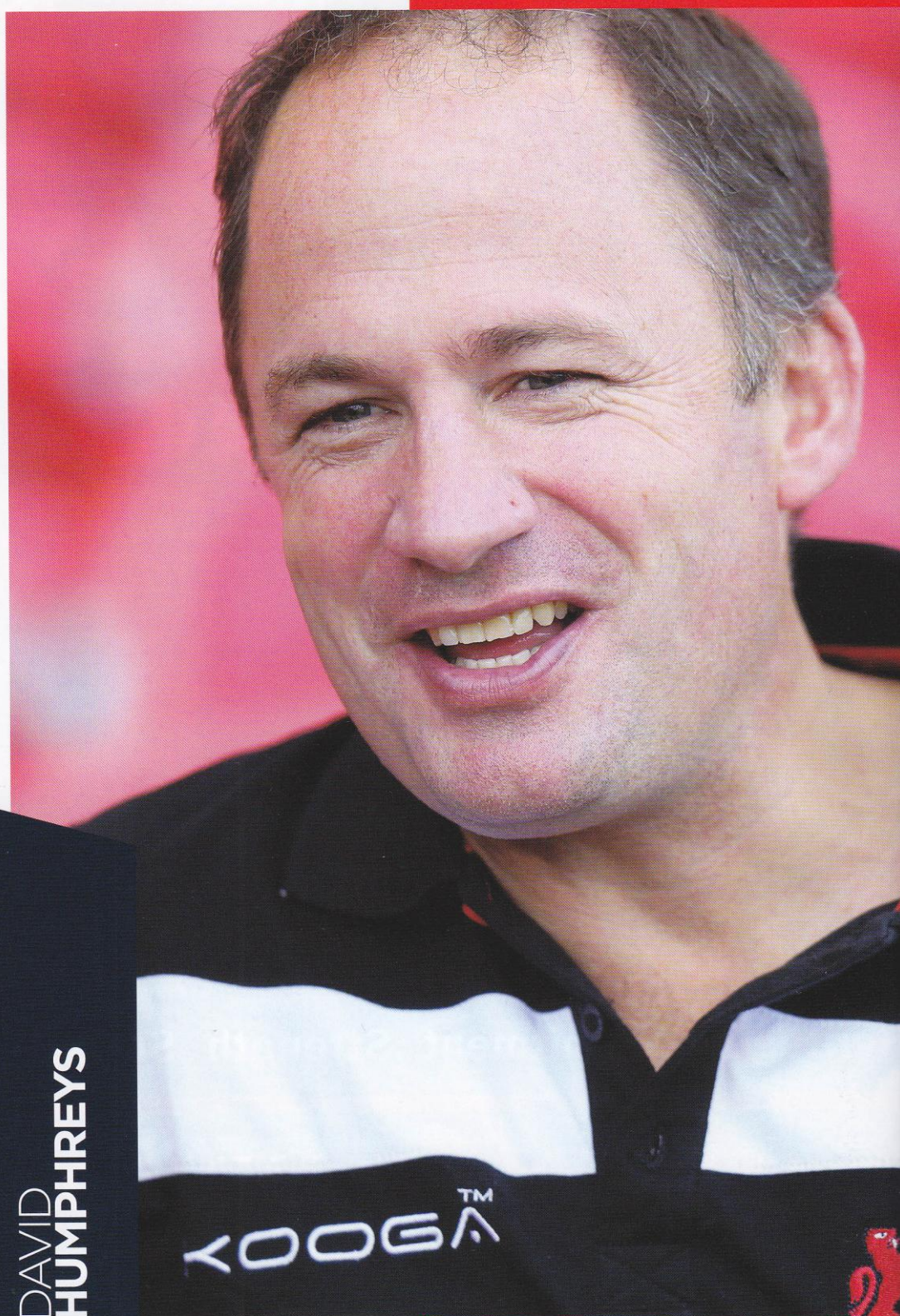
BILLY

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IT'S BEEN A TOUGH WEEK FOR US, WHERE THE INTENSITY OF TRAINING HAS BEEN RAMPED UP – WITH A LOT OF BOYS EAGER TO GET THEIR OWN SEASON UNDER WAY, AND GIVE OUR SUPPORTERS A PERFORMANCE TO BE PROUD OF.



DIR. OF
RUGBY | DAVID
HUMPHREYS



DAVID
HUMPHREYS

8

GOOD AFTERNOON AND WELCOME TO KINGSHOLM FOR OUR FIRST AVIVA PREMIERSHIP FIXTURE OF THE SEASON. AND, OF COURSE, A WARM WELCOME TO ALL OUR VISITORS FROM SALE SHARKS.

HAVING officially taken up my post with Gloucester on August 1st, it's been a whirlwind few weeks and it's hard to believe that in such a short space of time, we've won the Premiership Rugby 7s title at Kingsholm, competed in the World Club 7s at Twickenham, played three preseason friendlies and started our Aviva Premiership campaign.

Pre season has flown by and, as I've said several times in the media over the past few weeks, with all the changes at Gloucester Rugby, both on and off the pitch, we really could have done with some more time together as a group to prepare for the challenges of competing in such a competitive Aviva Premiership.

In the same way that we have strengthened our squad, many of the other teams have recruited quality players, which will again raise the level of competition.

We knew that our

season opener last Friday evening was going to be a tough one. Northampton Saints were the best and most successful team in England last season - they won the Aviva Premiership and the Amlin Challenge Cup, which is a phenomenal effort. They have a quality squad and, crucially, have some real continuity. They have had virtually no turnover of players or staff during the close season and that really showed in their performance against us.

They are considerably further down their development curve than we are, and the challenge for us is to close that gap as quickly as possible.

We have quality players at the club, and we also have quality coaches. Laurie Fisher arrived in Gloucester less than a month ago and everyone who understands sport knows that it takes time to implement a style of play that will get the best out of this group of players.

We know that we will improve

and be better than we were at Franklin's Gardens. Nobody enjoyed that experience and it's up to all of us to make sure that we make the necessary improvements.

The game itself was very competitive for 30 minutes but, conceding a number of key penalties, and then a try with the last play of the first half meant that Northampton were very comfortable at half time.

But we'll learn from that and several players who experienced the Aviva Premiership for the very first time, now know what it's all about and what will be required from them to be successful both individually and as part of the team, this season and beyond.

What's important now is how we respond and put in a performance today against Sale Sharks.

They too started with a defeat last weekend, and will be equally as determined as us to get their season off and running. Steve Diamond and

PRE SEASON HAS FLOWN BY AND, AS I'VE SAID SEVERAL TIMES IN THE MEDIA OVER THE PAST FEW WEEKS, WITH ALL THE CHANGES AT GLOUCESTER RUGBY, BOTH ON AND OFF THE PITCH, WE REALLY COULD HAVE DONE WITH SOME MORE TIME TOGETHER AS A GROUP TO PREPARE FOR THE CHALLENGES OF COMPETING IN SUCH A COMPETITIVE AVIVA PREMIERSHIP.



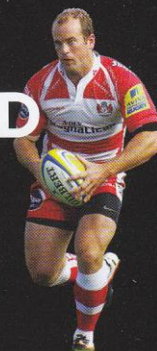
Bryan Redpath have forged a tough, tight knit unit and they have become a very difficult side to play against.

Finally, I'd just like to say how much I'm looking forward to playing at home today. The atmosphere during the Premier Rugby 7s was tremendous but I know that it will be on a different scale today.

That's vitally important to the team and very much appreciated.

DAVID

GLOUCESTER RUGBY LEGEND JAMES SIMPSON-DANIEL FORCED TO RETIRE FROM PROFESSIONAL RUGBY



It was with great regret that Gloucester Rugby last week confirmed that James Simpson-Daniel has had to retire due to injury.

The 32 year old winger has been sidelined since last November when he suffered an horrific ankle injury in an LV= Cup fixture against Newcastle Falcons at Kingsholm.

Sinbad, as he is affectionately known by all connected with Gloucester Rugby, has battled bravely in an attempt to regain full fitness but has reluctantly been forced to admit defeat.

Despite the desperately disappointing news, Simpson-Daniel preferred to dwell on the positives when he spoke to the club website upon making the announcement.

"When I was given the diagnosis by the specialist, they were

obviously the last words I wanted to hear. But I know that I've given it everything and I can't praise the Gloucester Rugby medical staff highly enough.

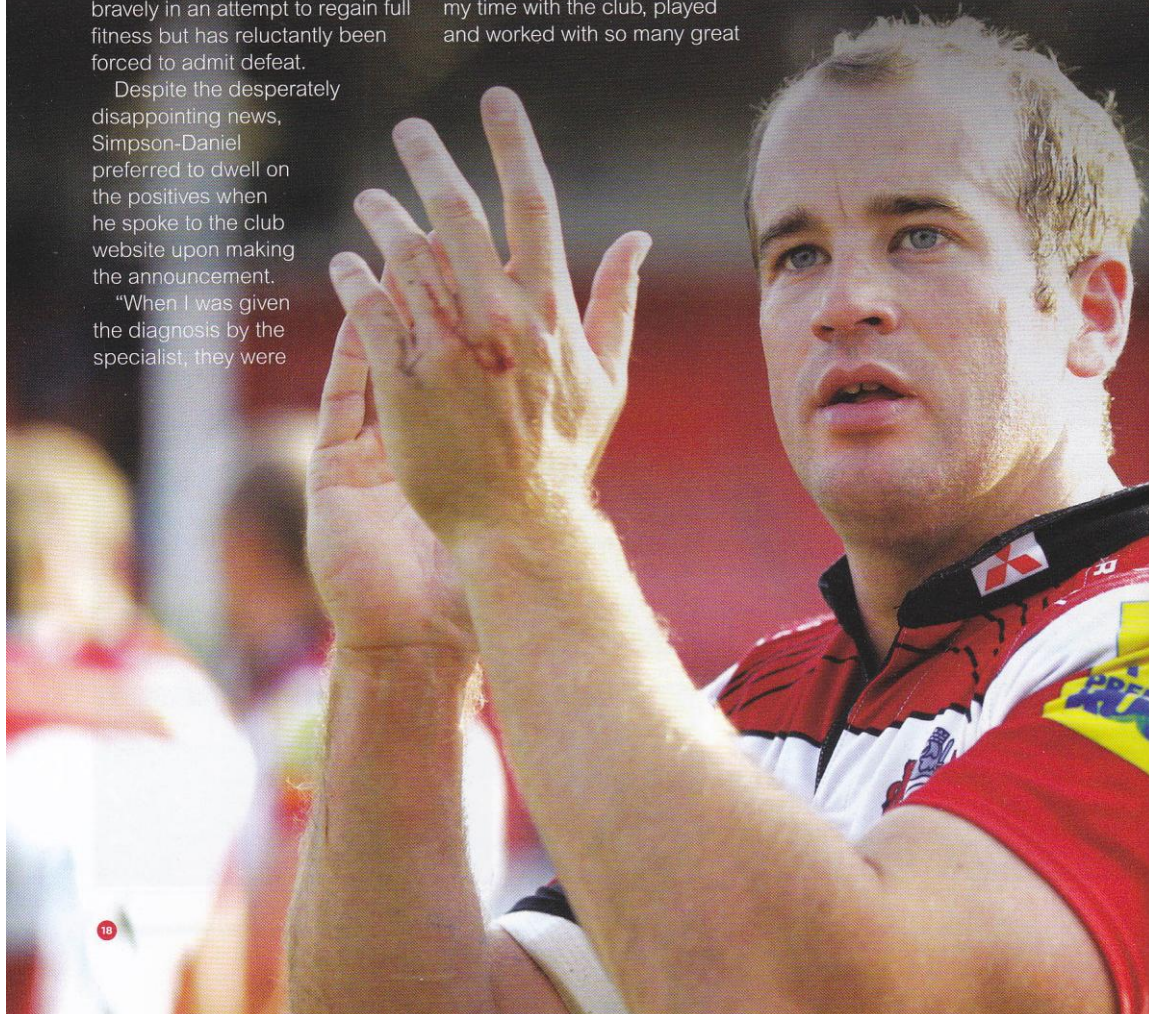
"I don't think it's really sunk in yet to be honest. But I've had a really good trot, I can't have any complaints. It would have been nice to have won more trophies with Gloucester, but I've got so many fantastic memories from my time in the game.

"I've loved every minute of my time with the club, played and worked with so many great

people, made so many friends and, of course, played my home games at the best home ground in club rugby, Kingsholm.

"That's what I'll miss the most. That roar as you exit the tunnel and run on to the pitch. The Gloucester supporters have always been fantastic to me and I'll always be grateful.

"But it's now time to start on a new chapter, I'll take my time and consider my options. But, whatever I do, Gloucester Rugby



CLASSIC SINBAD MOMENTS

scan here
for Sinbad's
magic England
try against the
Barbarians and his
opposite winger,
Jonah Lomu.
26 May 2002



scan here
for Sinbad turning
Lawrence Dallaglio
and the rest of
the London
Wasps defence
inside out.
26 May 2002



will always be a huge part of my life."

Simpson-Daniel joined Gloucester Rugby as a teenager straight from Sedbergh School, and quickly gave a glimpse of things to come, scoring a try on debut against Rotherham in 2001.

He proceeded to light up grounds all over the country with his dazzling talent, a sensational score for England against the Barbarians when he outfoxed Jonah Lomu living long in the memory.

He won 10 England caps, untimely illness and injury robbing him of what should have been many more appearances for his country, but he will be

remembered primarily for wearing the Cherry and White of Gloucester.

Across 14 seasons, he made more Premiership appearances for the club than any other player, scoring 118 tries from 250 starts.

Director of Rugby David Humphreys spoke of his regret at not being able to see Simpson-Daniel in competitive action.

"He was a unique talent. I played against him and, even though he was an opponent who could really hurt you on the pitch, he was a joy to watch.

"It's a real blow for him and, personally, I'm disappointed that he's had to retire before I had the

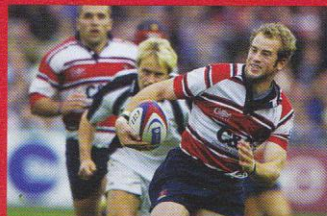
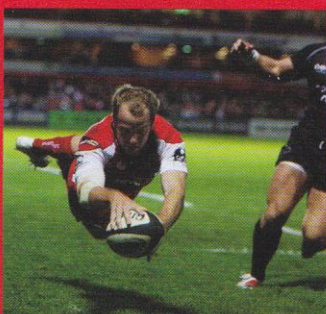
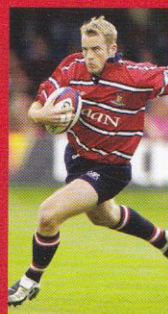
opportunity to enjoy seeing him play as a colleague.

"But his influence on this Gloucester Rugby side will continue to be felt. He's helped to develop and mentor the likes of Jonny May and Charlie Sharples, both international wingers in their own right. And he will have inspired countless others to play the game.

"On behalf of everyone at Gloucester Rugby, I'd like to thank him for everything he's done for the club and wish him all the very best for the future."

Sinbad will be leading the team out today, so there is one last chance to show a true Gloucester Rugby legend exactly how much he means to us all.

CLASSIC SINBAD PHOTOS



THE VIEW FROM The Citizen



**SCAN THE
CODE FOR
MORE NEWS
AND STORIES
FROM OUR
WEBSITE**

**PHONE
CHARGERS
FOR IPHONES**
pulled from
shelves

**ANIMAL
RIGHTS
GROUPS** search
Gloucestershire
for wounded
badgers

**GLOUCESTER
CITY'S PLANS**
for a new stadium
will go before
the city council's
planning committee

**STRANGE
FRUIT BURNS
2 STONE**
Sold Out in
most Stores!

THE FEEL-GOOD FACTOR

**WEEK one and a record
Premiership defeat in the first
competitive match of the David
Humphreys-Laurie Fisher era.
Hardly the perfect start.**

All of that optimism, a new dawn at Gloucester with a world class squad and a coaching team to boot.

The club did their best to temper the feel-good factor surging through the corridors of Kingsholm and the city of Gloucester, but supporters were still brimming with hope for the new season.

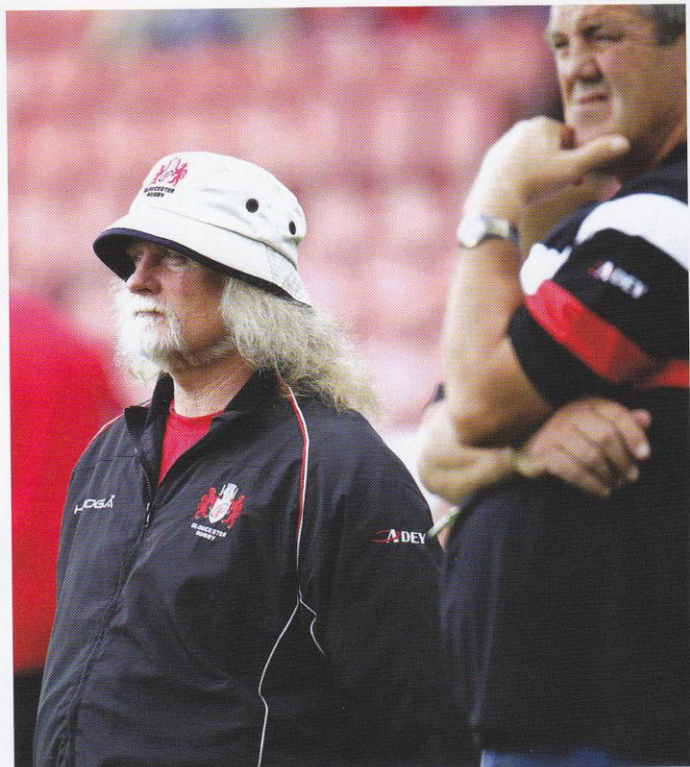
At the official Aviva Premiership launch, journalists, coaches and players alike were all cooing about the impressive summer of change, top four finishes and what lies ahead for the Cherry and Whites.

Now we know...or have at least had our eyes widened.

Make no mistake now is not the time to push any panic buttons. Humphreys always maintained that the rebuilding process at Gloucester would take time.

Northampton Saints gave a realistic appraisal to exactly where the Cherry and Whites currently stand.

It displayed just how big the gulf in quality is between the champions and Gloucester who finished ninth.



Laurie and the coaching team will be calling on all their experience to bring the new-look Gloucester team together

Unlike today's hosts, Saints have been building this ruthless squad for five years, they signed just two players in the summer and know exactly what each player brings and where they fit in. They possess a sixth sense of what their teammate will do next.

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...IT WAS A GOOD LESSON OF THE IMPROVEMENTS WE NEED TO MAKE IF WE WANT TO BE THE TOP TEAM IN THE LEAGUE. WE WILL ADDRESS WHAT WENT WRONG AND QUICKLY TURN OUR FOCUS TO SALE. IN ALL THE TIMES I HAVE FACED NORTHAMPTON THAT WAS THE BEST THEY HAVE PLAYED. **Charlie Sharples**



As Charlie Sharples said:
 “You can’t justify losing the first game of the season by 50 points which was incredibly disappointing after all the expectation and all the hard work.
 “It was difficult to know what to expect going into the game because we had only been together for a few weeks, I don’t think anyone expected us to lose like that and that was the most disappointing aspect - we weren’t able to compete.
 “But it was a good lesson of the improvements we need to make if we want to be the top team in the league.
 “We will address what went wrong and quickly turn our focus

to Sale. In all the times I have faced Northampton that was the best they have played.”

There is no reason why Gloucester cannot substantially close the gap, maybe we just need to be more realistic in our expectations.

You cannot deny that Gloucester boast a squad packed with the quality to compete with any team when they are at the top of their game.

You cannot deny that Gloucester boast a coaching team with a formidable and widespread experience which would be the envy of anyone else in the Premiership.

As pointed out by several

players and pundits on both sides of the fence, Sharples included, Northampton’s performance on Friday was good enough to beat any side.

They were ruthlessly efficient and clinical, confrontational and disciplined. Everything they touched turned to gold.

So while the defeat was a dose of reality there is no immediate need to be downbeat. Today’s clash with Sale Shark provides the perfect opportunity to bounce back and right a few wrongs.

One thing is for sure, we all know that there is much more to come from Gloucester.

Citizen AVAILABLE DAILY

GLOUCESTER RUGBY HERITAGE

www.gloucester rugbyheritage.org.uk

THE LION'S DEN

IN THE NORTH-EAST CORNER OF THE GROUND IS THE LION'S DEN, THE OLDEST BUILDING ON THE KINGSHOLM GROUND.

ON match days, the main room acts as a watering hole for spectators, who can enjoy a drink whilst admiring the team photographs and honours boards, which adorn the walls.

Covering most of the history of the Club, these display the players and the playing record for each season. At other times, this room can be hired by those who want to enjoy a function surrounded by Gloucester Rugby heritage.

The building also houses the Glo'ster Boys Bar, home of the Players' Association, where former heroes of the Shed gather to reminisce amidst photos of their exploits. The rest of the building is given over to offices and storerooms and, during the week, the Club's Community and Stadium Management departments operate from here.

ORIGINS

The Club suffered a big loss from hosting the England v Wales International in 1900, and it took some years to get the balance sheet back onto an even keel.

Five years later they were confident enough to contemplate paying more rent, and therefore asked the Gloucester Football and Athletic Ground Company, who owned the ground, to develop the facilities there.

The Company Board decided



A. W. Vears

that they should build a gymnasium, training quarters, Club office and committee room, for which the Club agreed that they would pay extra rent of £100 a season.

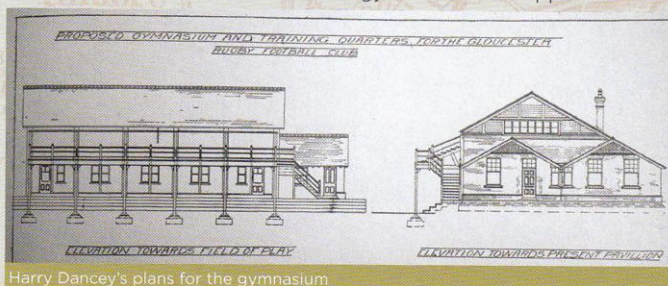
Shareholders in the Company were invited to a meeting at Kingsholm in June 1905 to hear about the plans, which were presented by the Company architect, Harry Dancey.

The Company Chairman, A. W. Vears, said that the cost would be £1,012, and admitted that the

The meeting degenerated into a debate about the relative merits of electric or gas lighting. Messrs Moffatt and Robinson both argued strongly against "the electric light", believing "incandescent gas as an illuminant" to be more economical and efficient – "electric light was a thing of the past" and four times as expensive.

Others were just as vehement in favour of electric lighting. Mr Jennings contended that "the electric light in Gloucester is especially good", and Mr Grant insisted it was cheaper than gas, on the evidence of the two lights (one gas and one electric) in his home.

Eventually the Chairman managed to put the motion to the meeting, erection of the gymnasium was approved

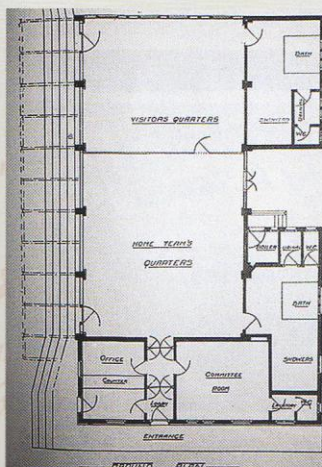


Harry Dancey's plans for the gymnasium

Club rather than the Company and its shareholders would benefit from the new facilities, but nevertheless recommended the scheme as a means of supporting the Club.

unanimously, and the pressure was then on to have it erected for the start of the season.

The building work (including electric lights) was entrusted to Mr A. J. Dolman, the cold-water



The original layout of the interior of the gymnasium

plumbing to Messrs Turner and Pritchard, and the boiler and hot-water supply to Messrs Woodward and Co.

The gymnasium was opened with some fanfare by the local MP, Russell Rea, before the first match of the season on 23rd September 1905. The presence of the great and the good of Gloucester, who made speeches galore, and Fred Rowland's band, made it quite an occasion.

Company took out an additional mortgage of £1,000 with the Gloucester Conservative Benefit Society, and issued a further 150 shares in the Company, which were all bought by the Club.

THUMBS UP FROM THE ALL BLACKS

A month after the gymnasium was opened the first All Blacks side to tour in the Northern Hemisphere came to Kingsholm. Gloucester were pulverised 44-0, but at least the gymnasium was admired by the visitors, who reckoned it housed the best facilities they had come across on their tour.

Indeed four of them were so keen on their Kingsholm experience that they came back at the end of their tour to don the Cherry and White in a match against Leicester. They were instrumental in Gloucester winning 20-0 and Leicester were not amused.

WAR MEMORIAL

At the end of the First World War, the Club erected a



The builders posing proudly in front of the newly constructed gymnasium

As can be seen on the plans, the original design included a balcony overlooking the pitch, described as an additional grandstand. This was not included in the original construction to reduce costs, the intention being to add it later, but that never happened.

The total cost of the gymnasium turned out to be £1,140. To fund this, the Ground

memorial to those players who had lost their lives in the war. It was placed just inside the door of the gymnasium through which the players exited on their way out to the pitch to start a game, and it became a tradition that the players all reached up to touch it as they passed as a mark of respect. The memorial now hangs in the entrance corridor to the Lion's Den.



Original war memorial in Lions' Den, which has now been updated with a new one on the wall outside the Club reception

ALL A QUESTION OF TIMING

The original clock on the gymnasium also dated back to the years following World War One, when it was presented by the Club President, Sir James Bruton. A man was paid £2 a year to keep it wound up.

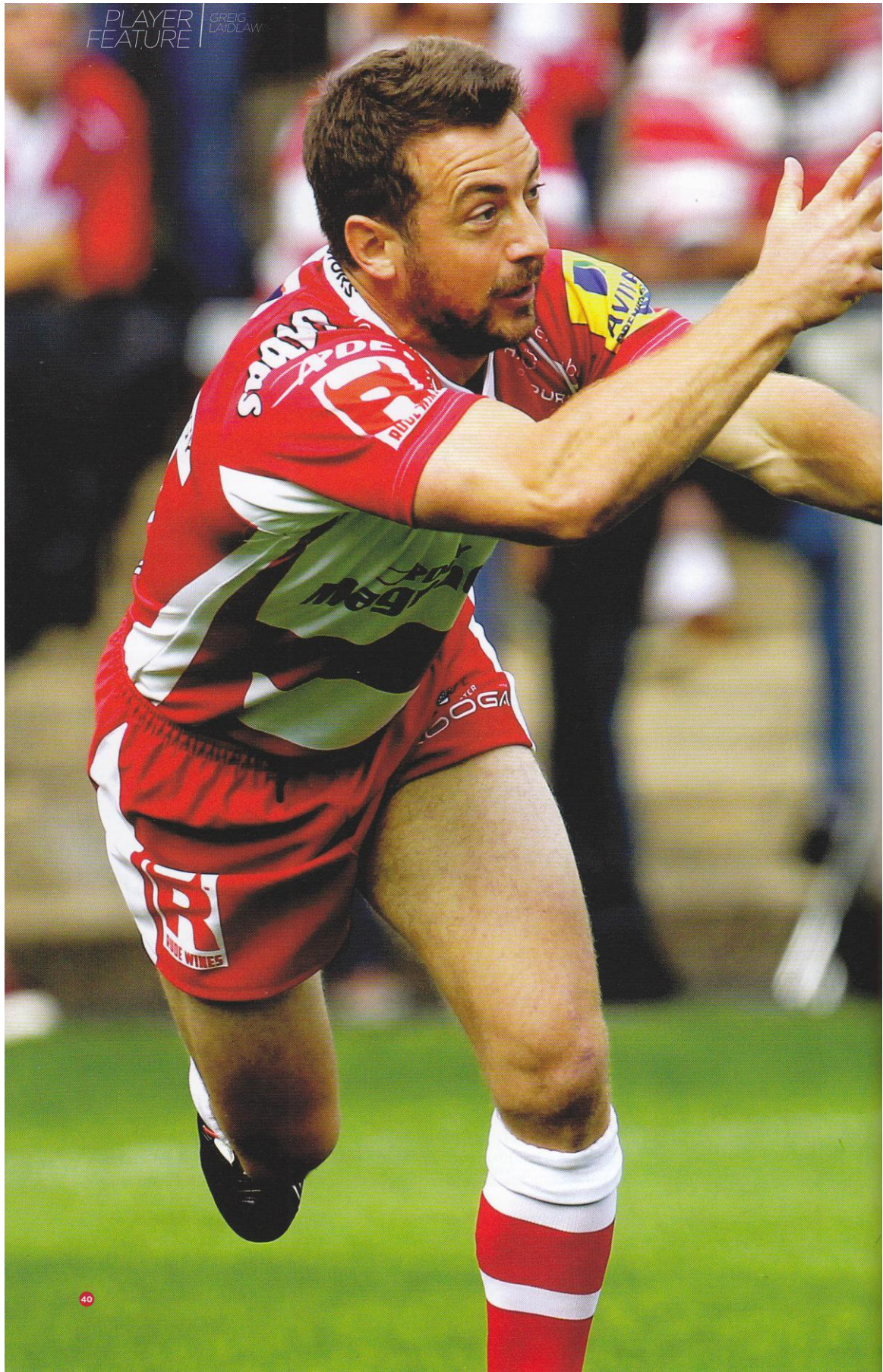
By 1946 Mr Brunsdon had this job and was being paid 2 guineas a year. He demanded an increase in salary to £5 per year, but the Club committee reacted by dispensing with his services altogether, and adding the job to the groundsman's duties.

MEAT OR NO MEAT

For several decades the two teams were served teas in the gymnasium after a game. These teas became so popular, and the number of gate crashers so great, that the Club had to issue tickets for entry. However, the standard of the teas did vary.

In 1947 the Committee decided that the caterer should provide teas for 55 people in the Lions' Den. Normally this would be plain teas with cakes and sandwiches, at a total cost of £5.

Only on special occasions would they splash out £7.50 on meat teas, an honour first accorded to Cardiff and Leicester.



LAYING DOWN THE LAW

GLOUCESTER HAS BEEN HOME TO MANY AN EXPERIENCED SCOTTISH INTERNATIONAL, AND THE LATEST CLASSY OPERATOR LANDING IN THE SOUTH WEST FROM NORTH OF THE BORDER IS SETTLING IN VERY WELL IN HIS NEW SURROUNDINGS.

GREIG LAIDLAW has been calling Murrayfield his home for the past seven seasons of his career and, at the prime age of 28, the scrum half is preparing for his full home debut at his new place of work on Kingsholm Road.

Following in the footsteps of recent Scots; Lawson x2, Strokosch, Hamilton and Redpath the multi-talented Laidlaw is enjoying things, as he explained ahead of today's game.

"Pre season has been good, and the boys have gelled behind

the scenes. It's been good to get down, settled well and I'm very much looking forward to getting my first Aviva Premiership run out at Kingsholm this weekend.

"I've settled in really well in the area, I'm enjoying it very much. It's a busy enough place but it's also quiet enough to get away from things, and that is something that I like."

With the noise of the pre-season friendlies still fresh in his mind, Laidlaw is raring to go against Sale Sharks, and cannot wait to experience Kingsholm in full voice.

"Ah, the crowd during pre-season against Munster certainly took me aback, around about 13 thousand here, it was magnificent. It just shows what the club means to the local people around the area and, for us as a playing group, we really appreciate that support."

Greig got a fortnight of tough pre-season under his belt at Kingsholm and Hartpury College before returning to Scotland for the birth of his first child Ruary, and he already has plans to introduce the youngest Laidlaw to the glawsfamily!

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"AH, THE CROWD DURING PRE-SEASON AGAINST MUNSTER CERTAINLY TOOK ME ABACK, AROUND ABOUT 13 THOUSAND HERE, IT WAS MAGNIFICENT. IT JUST SHOWS WHAT THE CLUB MEANS TO THE LOCAL PEOPLE AROUND THE AREA AND, FOR US AS A PLAYING GROUP, WE REALLY APPRECIATE THAT SUPPORT."

"As long as the game is during the day and it's not his bedtime! I'd be delighted to get him along and show him what it is all about, and my wife is also excited to come along and enjoy Kingsholm too."

On the pitch, Laidlaw's career has seen him take on some of world rugby's finest, both domestically in the Pro 12 for Edinburgh and as a key part of the Scotland side, and Friday's defeat at Northampton Saints definitely confirmed his assessment of the challenge ahead in the Aviva Premiership.

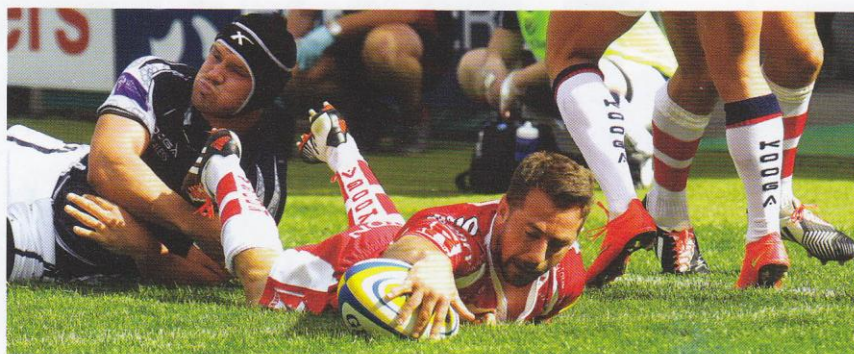
"When I signed, that was the big draw, playing in the Premiership, along with Gloucester being such a fantastic club. I

his half-back colleagues, Dan Robson, Callum Braley, Aled Thomas, Billy Burns and James Hook, all players with varying experience.

"We're working together well as a six, and that's the way you get better as players and as a squad. You need your squad in a competition like this; it's so attritional and confrontational.

"Working together and training hard helps you get the best out of your squad, and ultimately that makes you better players."

In the Sale Sharks ranks this afternoon is another experienced Scottish halfback in Chris Cusiter, and Laidlaw is relishing locking horns again with his compatriot.



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“THEY WILL BE LOOKING TO COME DOWN HERE AND GET A RESULT SO WE NEED TO PREPARE WELL AND WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE GAME AND A STRONG KINGSHOLM CROWD.”

think, when you look at the games you play in this league there are no easy games.

"That is what you want, and you can get the most out of yourself as a player. It's really important that we get our home form right this season, and that is a really key part of having a successful campaign."

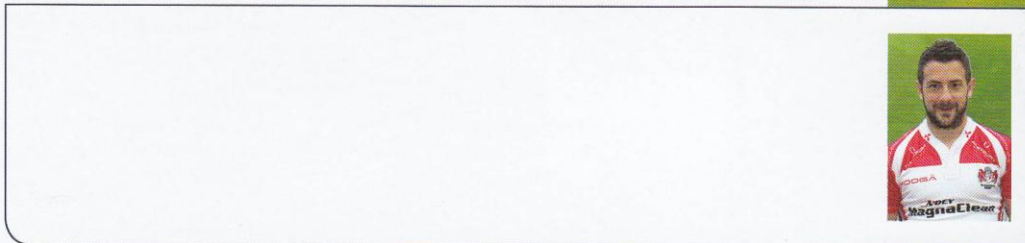
During a long and testing domestic season, strength in depth is a key component to a successful campaign, and Laidlaw is enjoying the work with

"You've got to look forward to this battle.

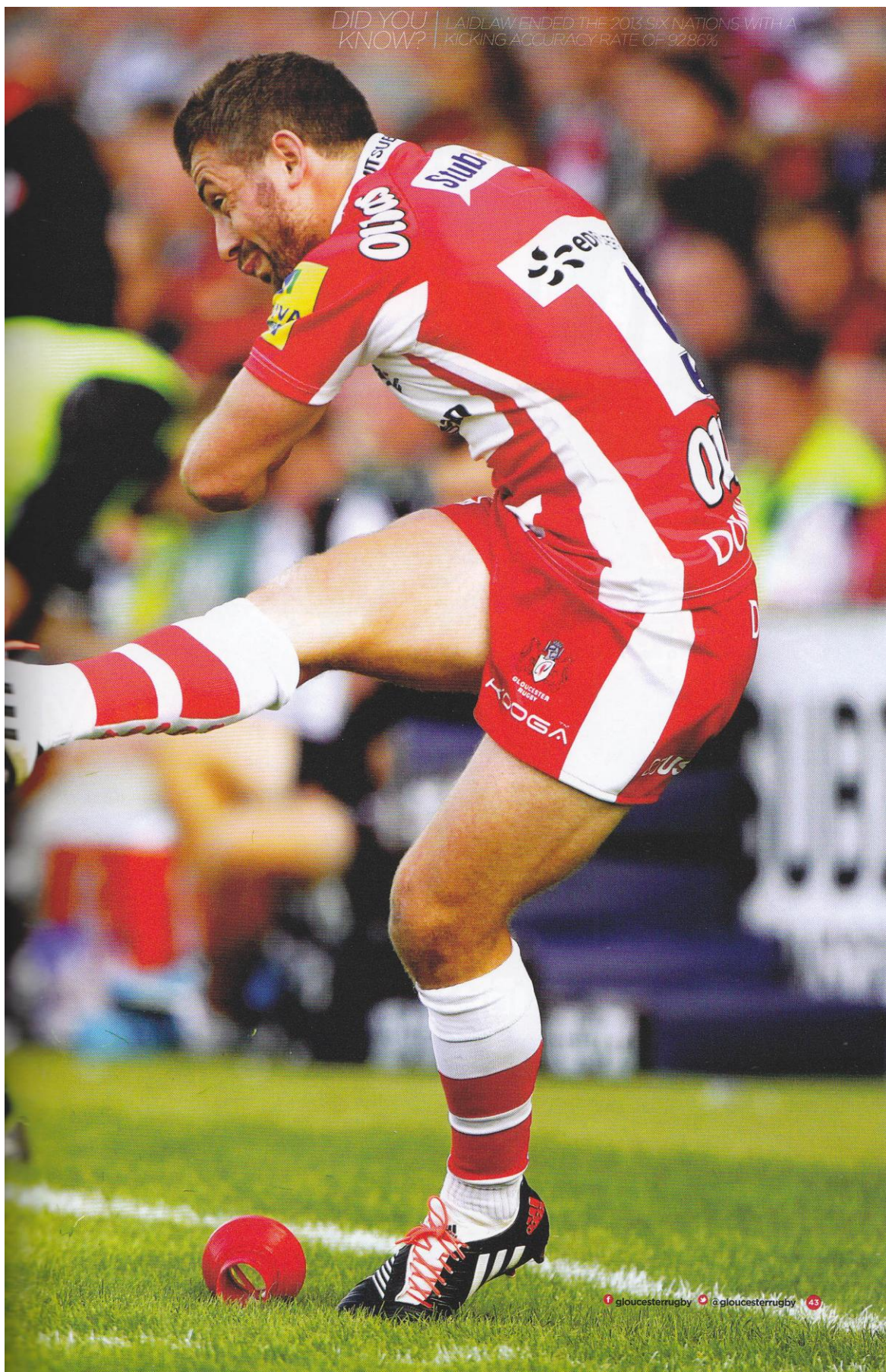
Traditionally I've come up against Cus when he's played for Glasgow and I've been playing for Edinburgh. There's a slightly different slant on it now, but I'm sure he'll be keen to get in and about us. Likewise we'll be keen to get into them.

"They will be looking to come down here and get a result so we need to prepare well and we're looking forward to the game and a strong Kingsholm crowd."

GLOUCESTER RUGBY AUTOGRAPH COLLECTION



DID YOU
KNOW? LAIDLAW ENDED THE 2013 SIX NATIONS WITH A
KICKING ACCURACY RATE OF 92.86%



BOB FENTON'S

KINGSHOLM NEWS

” TWITTER WENT NUTS, HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE SAYING GREAT THINGS. AND BEING THE BLOKE HE IS, SINBAD SPENT THE NEXT FEW HOURS (DAYS PROBABLY) RESPONDING TO EVERYONE PERSONALLY. THAT, MY FRIENDS, IS PURE CLASS.

T HERE'S this sparkly band for the 1970s with a singer whose name we no longer mention, they used to sing a song that went 'Hello, Hello, It's good to be back... etc.'. Well here we are, and it is good to be back.

It's been some summer, I can't remember one like it. We ended the season in, it's fair to say, some disarray. A terrible losing record, discord everywhere and the biggest of black clouds hanging over Castle Grim.

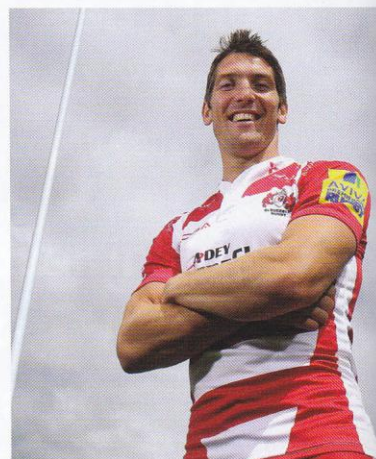
But, at the same time we were announcing some great signings – Richard Hibbard, John Afoa and Greig Laidlaw were all Gloucester bound. And then we said goodbye to Nigel Davies.

It was getting hard to keep up with all the comings and goings, and the rest of the rugby world were sitting back and scratching their heads with disbelief at what was happening down in GL1.

The search for a coach was on, bookies across the city took bets on everyone in the rugby world as the next helmsman of the good ship Gloucester. Then out of leftfield comes David Humphreys...and John Muggleton... and Nick Walshe... and Laurie Fisher.

And then we signed James Hook! If the Harlem Globetrotters played rugby, next season they would be playing in Cherry and White!

I don't know about you, but by

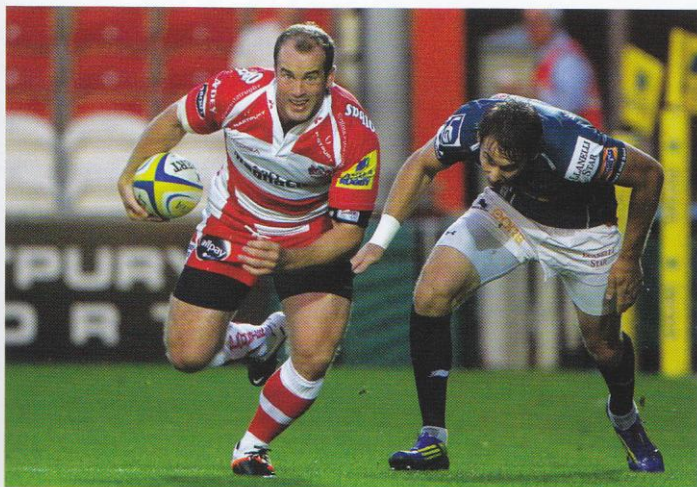


that point my head was spinning. The talent we had on and off the field was awesome. We went from laughing stock to jaw-dropping quality in a matter of weeks.

If the Aviva Premiership was 'The Great British Bake Off' we had the best ingredients and some hugely qualified chefs in the tent. But did we have the recipe to blend it into the best cake in the competition? Only time would tell...

Everything we read from David Humphreys stressed that the cake mix process was going to take a bit of time, that pre-season had been far from ideal with players and coaches arriving at different times, and that expectations needed to be managed.





And while all that was going on we won the Premiership Rugby Sevens Series – again. And got crushed in the World Sevens – again. Spirits among supporters was sky high though.

Right up through pre-season – a couple of home wins, including a trashing of Munster who turned up a played in a kit that looked like they had coloured it in with highlight pen!

A setback at Llanelli was perceived as not a bad thing and a bit of a reality check. Just in time for the first proper game of the season, a little matter of a visit to Frankenstein's Gardens and a run out against last season's champions. What could go wrong?

Well two things, in very rapid succession.

For me the first was more significant than the second. On September 2nd, the following few words appeared on Twitter: "It's with a heavy heart I announce my retirement from rugby..."

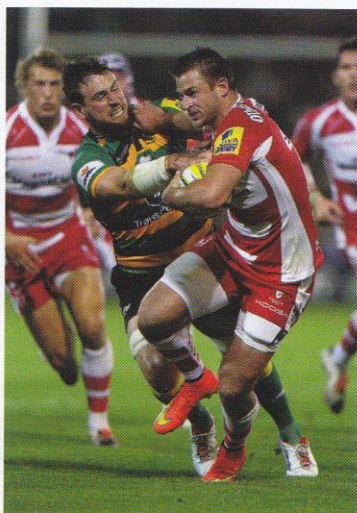
And with that, the fantastic James Simpson Daniel left the stage. I guess it was always a possibility that last season's injury was going to be the thing that pulled the curtain down on Sinbad's career. But we all hoped it would be otherwise.

James was, without doubt, the most skilful player I have

ever had the privilege to watch. I remember seeing him a youngster in the 'United' squad playing alongside another prodigious talent by the name of James Forrester.

Gobsmackingly good even at a young age. I was told by no less a person than Andy Gomarsall that James '... was going to be a very special player, once we can sort out what his best position is...'. Pretty good judge of a player was our Andy.

Everyone will have their favourite Sinbad moment, turning Lawrence Dallaglio and Simon Shaw inside out in one fell swoop, running rings round Jonah



Lomu... and Christian Cullen... and Percy Montgomery – a list of Sinbad moments would fill this programme and more.

Rugby fans up and down the country, regardless of their clubs, lined up to pay tribute and to wonder how such a talented player only clocked up 10 caps for his country. I'm with them, had he been born in any – and I mean any – other country he could have opened a milliners shop to cope with the number of caps he would have won.

Twitter went nuts, hundreds of people saying great things. And being the bloke he is, Sinbad spent the next few hours (days probably) responding to everyone personally. That, my friends, is pure class.

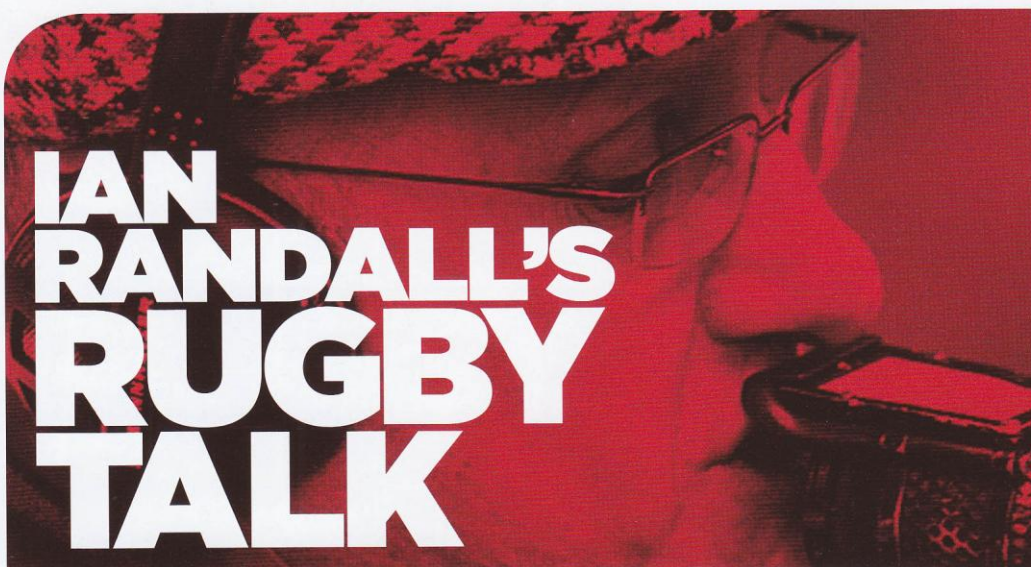
Of course the second thing that went a bit wrong was on Friday night up at Northampton. In fact it went very wrong indeed; you'd need to be a super sleuth to find good things from that tape.

Earlier in the day I was chatting with my friend Martin. I said that for me a good result would be a performance and possibly a losing bonus point. He rather tellingly said that he feared we would come unstuck. He's a bit of a better judge than me.

But facts, people. Northampton Saints are an awesome team - we should aspire to be like them. A great, settled, squad with a coaching team that has been in place for some time – and it showed. They weren't champions last season for nothing and it's going to be a very good side that turns them over this season.

So disappointed at the scale of defeat, but not too surprised. Despite that I am so full of confidence that we are on the right road on and off the field. We need to keep our heads and it will come right. Those chefs we have will get the recipe right and it's not going to be too long before they are serving up a very tasty cake indeed.

Enjoy the season!



HANDS UP WHO IS PLEASED TO BE BACK HERE ON A SATURDAY AFTERNOON? HANDS UP WHO SAW THE MARGIN OF DEFEAT AT NORTHAMPTON COMING... I CERTAINLY DIDN'T.

In a way the game was a shot to nothing. Gloucester could lose by 10 points at Franklins Gardens at any stage in the season and barely an eyelid would be batted. Net outcome, zero points.

To lose by such a wide margin to an impressive Saints team (net outcome also zero points) merely emphasised what David Humphreys had stated repeatedly since he arrived. Moulding this group won't be done overnight.

Following James Simpson-Daniel's retirement - which is reflected elsewhere - he is now the longest serving member of the squad, and is working with his fifth different Director of Rugby at Kingsholm, having been signed by Nigel Melville.

"It felt strange sitting in a team meeting at the start of the season, looking around and realising that from the old guard there was only Sinbad and I left" said Wood.

"Obviously now it's only me, although Alex Brown and Tim

the most of the group. Everyone has their own personality and something to add."

"It has felt like a gear change though, on the coaching side as well as the playing side. It's a real investment from the club. Only Trevor Woodman remains from the previous coaching set-up, and he was only part of it towards the end of last season.

"The new players have come in and pushed training levels because everyone is trying to keep up with James Hook, John Afoa and Richard Hibbard. The average age is down even though some of the guys are over 30 but they have a lot of rugby left in them and I think it's a good balance of age and experience."

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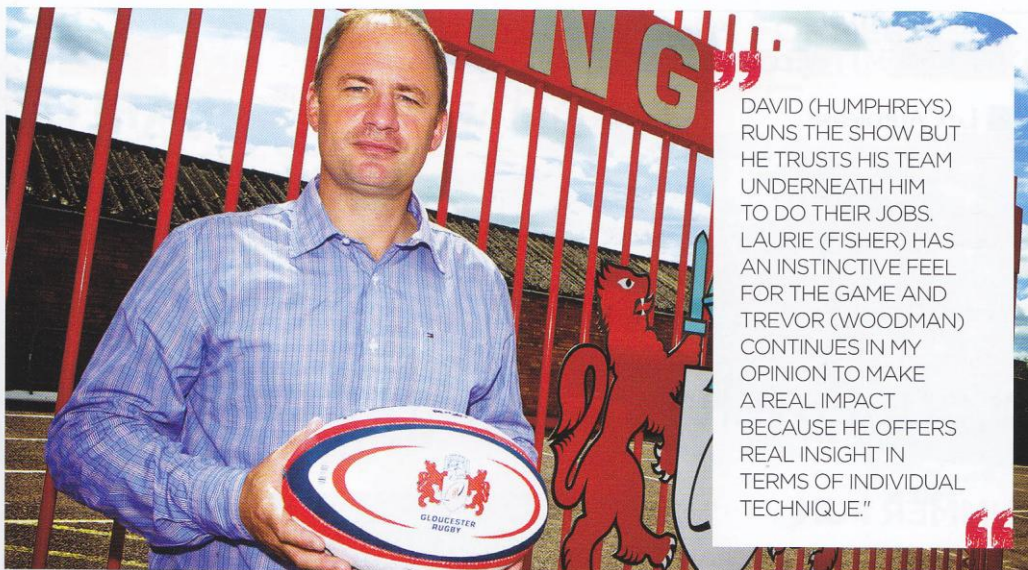
IT HAS FELT LIKE A GEAR CHANGE THOUGH, ON THE COACHING SIDE AS WELL AS THE PLAYING SIDE. IT'S A REAL INVESTMENT FROM THE CLUB. ONLY TREVOR WOODMAN REMAINS FROM THE PREVIOUS COACHING SET-UP, AND HE WAS ONLY PART OF IT TOWARDS THE END OF LAST SEASON.

THE NEW PLAYERS HAVE COME IN AND PUSHED TRAINING LEVELS BECAUSE EVERYONE IS TRYING TO KEEP UP WITH JAMES HOOK, JOHN AFOA AND RICHARD HIBBARD. THE AVERAGE AGE IS DOWN EVEN THOUGH SOME OF THE GUYS ARE OVER 30 BUT THEY HAVE A LOT OF RUGBY LEFT IN THEM AND I THINK IT'S A GOOD BALANCE OF AGE AND EXPERIENCE. **Nick Wood**

One man unable to help stem the green, yellow and gold tide was Nick Wood, who has been troubled since pre season by spasms in his back.

Taylor have non playing roles. It's a bit daunting in a way but I've been around long enough and seen the squad change enough times to realise you have to make

I've been lucky to interview props at Gloucester for nigh on 20 years and Wood is a chip off the old block in that regard - thoughtful, droll at times, and



DAVID (HUMPHREYS) RUNS THE SHOW BUT HE TRUSTS HIS TEAM UNDERNEATH HIM TO DO THEIR JOBS. LAURIE (FISHER) HAS AN INSTINCTIVE FEEL FOR THE GAME AND TREVOR (WOODMAN) CONTINUES IN MY OPINION TO MAKE A REAL IMPACT BECAUSE HE OFFERS REAL INSIGHT IN TERMS OF INDIVIDUAL TECHNIQUE."

rated highly by his peers, even if that hasn't translated into a bucket load of England caps. He's conscious too, that in terms of honours he has some catching up to do, having been loyal to Gloucester throughout his career.

"I missed out on the 2006 Challenge Cup final through injury, so I didn't feel 100% part of it, and in 2007-08 I was part of the squad that fell at the final hurdle in the Premiership. To me, that still stings even now.

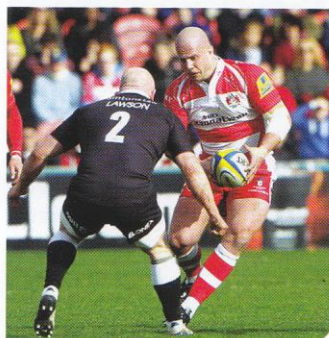
"Gloucester is one of the four teams to have constantly been in the top division and the other three (Bath, Leicester and Wasps) have all won it. That tells a tale of nearly men and I want to be around when we are up there again and finish the job off, although as a squad we're not talking about titles or top four or top six because we are effectively starting from scratch.

"We're talking about a philosophy and brand of rugby that we want to play, based on individual performances of a certain calibre. Nine times out of ten the result should take care of itself in that situation.

"David (Humphreys) runs the show but he trusts his team underneath him to do their jobs. Laurie (Fisher) has an instinctive

feel for the game and Trevor (Woodman) continues in my opinion to make a real impact because he offers real insight in terms of individual technique."

It has been unusual for Wood to miss games on fitness grounds in recent times. The odd minor operation at the end of the season has been down to wear and tear, and he's working harder than ever to stay in the best possible shape, conceding that, in his early days



at Gloucester, youth and overall fitness would carry him through if he had a beer after a match. Do that these days and you'll soon be out of the team, such is the competition for places.

"We've made some incredible signings. We've got three international class fly halves now (Hook, Laidlaw and Twelvetrees)

and guys like Mark Atkinson and Jacob Rowan have come in and impressed me.

"I'm also glad we've got Aleki Lutui. I hated playing against him. He'd hit you in the tackle like you would never believe, it was like running into a wall. He's an absolute tank and as fit as ever."

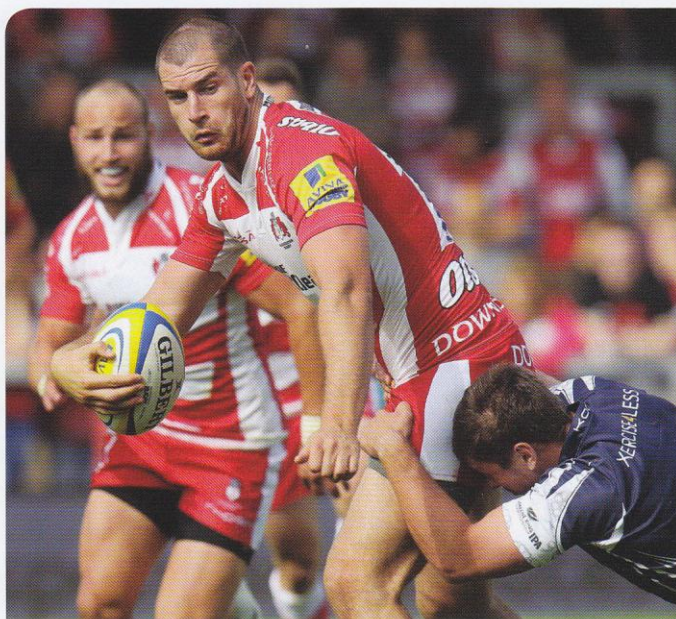
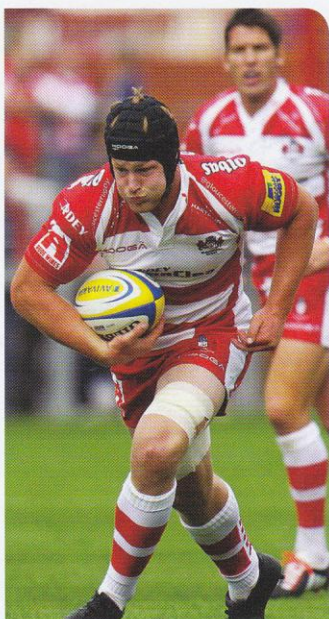
Ahead of the team selection announced yesterday, it's not clear if Wood will be involved today, as Gloucester welcome Sale for their first home game of the Premiership season, just as they did 12 months ago.

Wood frowns as I mention it, recalling how the Sharks caught Gloucester napping with two tries off first phase possession on the way to victory.

In 2012-13, Sale nearly went down, but last season they improved significantly and qualified for the Champions Cup where they're in with three real heavyweights - Clermont Auvergne, Munster and Saracens.

Steve Diamond put their opening weekend defeat to Bath down to poor discipline as George Ford kicked six penalties. Here, then, are two teams trying to get out of the blocks.

It's time for the emotional momentum Kingsholm can provide to come into play.



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

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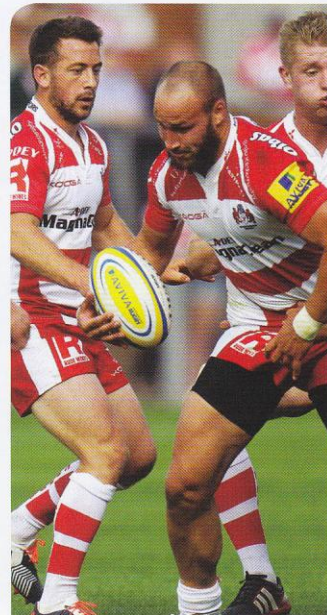
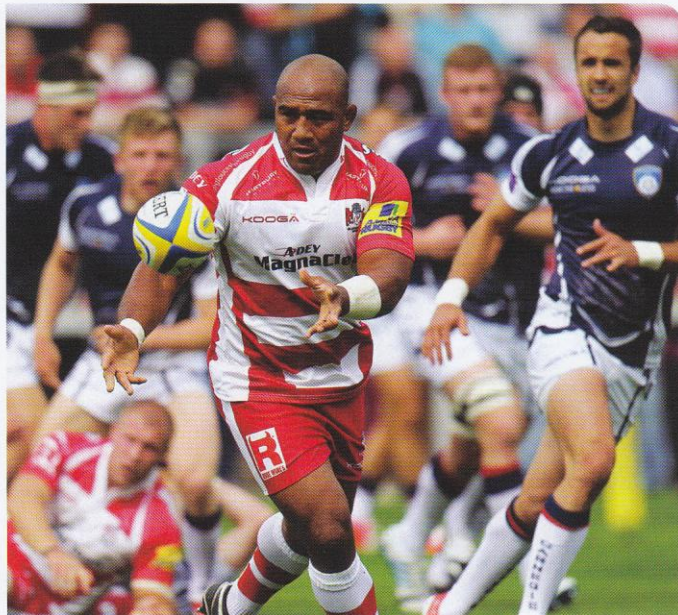
TRIES: Purdy (x2), Lutui, McColl (x2), Hook (x2), Laidlaw, Thomas, Cook **CONS:** Robson, Burns, Laidlaw (x4)

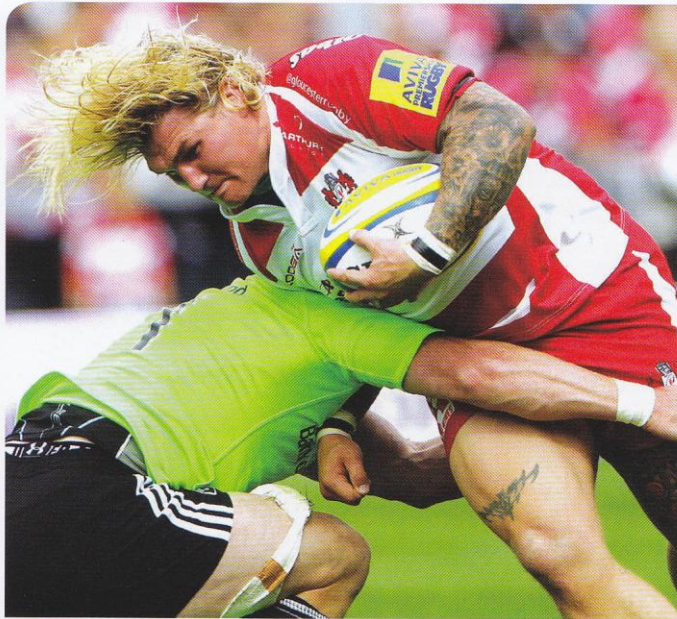
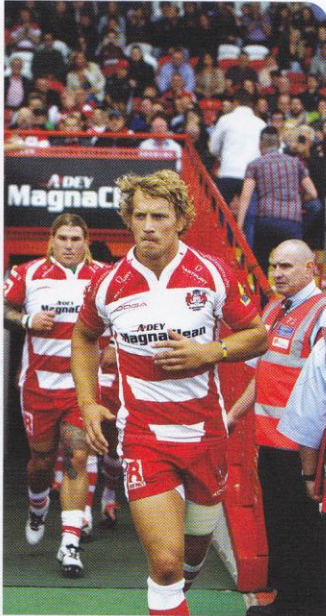


YORKSHIRE CARNEGIE

19

TRIES: Graham, Jones, Georgiou **CONS:** Leonard, Hughes





GLOUCESTER RUGBY

45

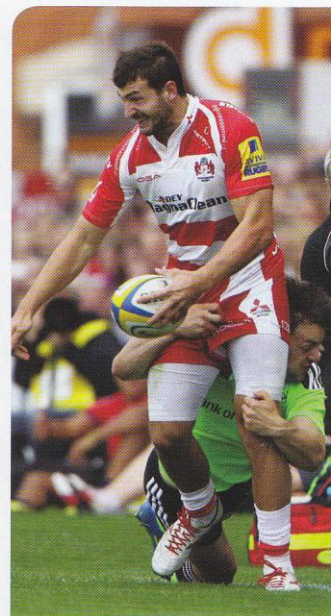
TRIES: Penalty try, Twelvetees, Kvesic (x2), Stooke (x2) **PENS:** Hook (x3) **CONS:** Hook (x2), Burns

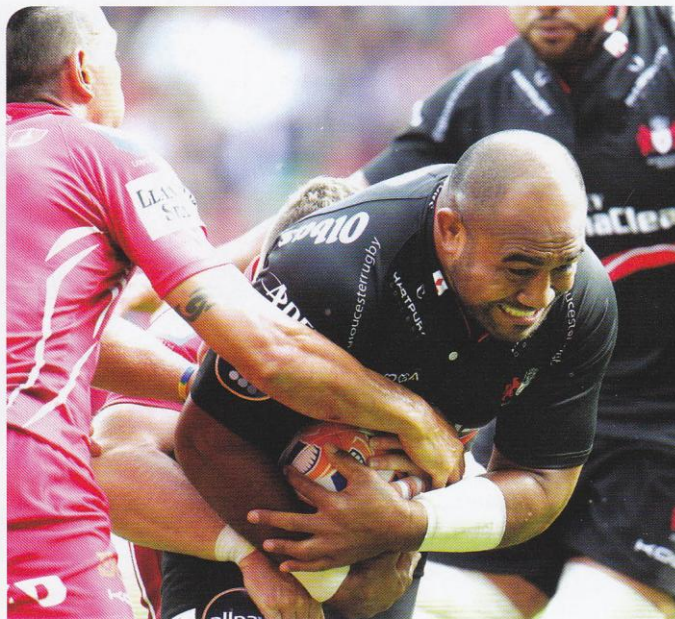
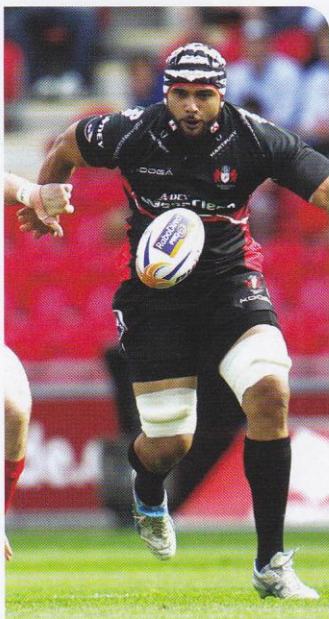


MUNSTER RUGBY

08

TRY: Bohane **PEN:** Holland





SCARLETS

29

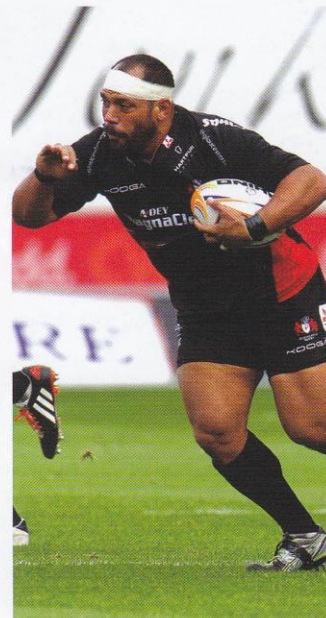
TRIES: Owens, Williams, Tagicakibau, Pitman **CONS:** Priestland (x2), Shingler **PEN:** Priestland



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

24

TRIES: Trinder, Lutui, McColl **CONS:** Hook, Thomas, Braley **PEN:** Hook





TODAY'S TEAMS

GLoucester RUGBY vs SALE SHARKS

REFEREE: Greg Garner ASSISTANTS: Stuart Terheege and Kelvin Stewart

TEAMS CORRECT AT TIME OF PRINT

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ROB **COOK**
FULL-BACK

CHARLIE **SHARPLES**
RIGHT WING

HENRY **TRINDER**
OUTSIDE CENTRE

BILLY **TWELVETREES (C)**
INSIDE CENTRE

JONNY **MAY**
LEFT WING

JAMES **HOOK**
FLY-HALF

GREIG **LAIDLAW**
SCRUM-HALF

DAN **MURPHY**
LOOSEHEAD PROP

RICHARD **HIBBARD**
HOOKER

JOHN **AFOA**
TIGHTHEAD PROP

TOM **SAVAGE**
LOCK

JAMES **HUDSON**
LOCK

SIONE **KALAMAFONI**
BLINDSIDE FLANKER

JACOB **ROWAN**
OPENSIDE FLANKER

BEN **MORGAN**
NUMBER EIGHT

DARREN **DAWIDIUK**
REPLACEMENT 1

YANN **THOMAS**
REPLACEMENT 2

SILA **PUAFISI**
REPLACEMENT 3

TOM **PALMER**
REPLACEMENT 4

ROSS **MORIARTY**
REPLACEMENT 5

DAN **ROBSON**
REPLACEMENT 6

MARK **ATKINSON**
REPLACEMENT 7

STEVE **McCOLL**
REPLACEMENT 8

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LUKE **McLEAN**
FULL-BACK

TOM **BRADY**
RIGHT WING

WILL **ADDISON**
OUTSIDE CENTRE

SAM **TUITUPOU**
INSIDE CENTRE

MARK **CUETO**
LEFT WING

DANNY **CIPRIANI**
FLY-HALF

CHRIS **CUSITER**
SCRUM-HALF

EIFION **LEWIS ROBERTS**
LOOSEHEAD PROP

MARC **JONES**
HOOKER

VADIM **COBILAS**
TIGHTHEAD PROP

NATHAN **HINES**
LOCK

MICHAEL **PATERSON**
LOCK

DAN **BRAID (C)**
BLINDSIDE FLANKER

DAVID **SEYMOUR**
OPENSIDE FLANKER

MARK **EASTER**
NUMBER EIGHT

SHALVA **MAMUKASKVILLI**
REPLACEMENT 1

ALBERTO **DE MARCHI**
REPLACEMENT 2

ROSS **HARRISON**
REPLACEMENT 3

JONATHAN **MILLS**
REPLACEMENT 4

MAGNUS **LUND**
REPLACEMENT 5

WILL **CLIFF**
REPLACEMENT 6

JOE **FORD**
REPLACEMENT 7

MARK **JENNINGS**
REPLACEMENT 8

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