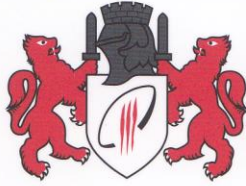


OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME
ISSUE
01

PRICE: £3



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

vs SARACENS
AVIVA PREMIERSHIP RUGBY - ROUND 2



**ROB
COOK**

EXCLUSIVE PROGRAMME
INTERVIEW ON PAGE 40

PLUS...
CLUB NEWS
BACK TO SCHOOL ^{NEW}
ACTION REPLAYS

23.10.15
KICK-OFF 7.45PM
KINGSHOLM

AVIVA PREMIERSHIP RUGBY

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CAPTAIN'S CORNER BILLY TWELVETREES

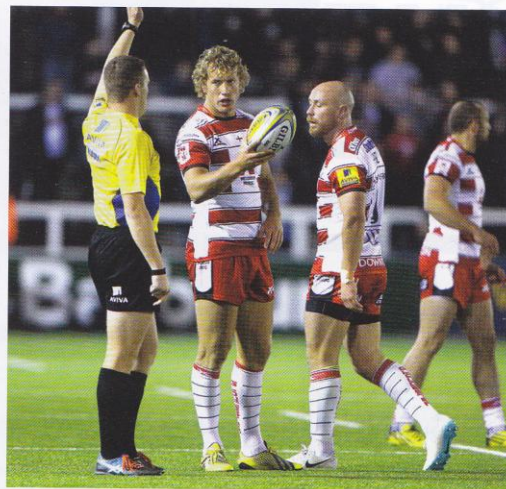
GOOD EVENING AND IT'S GREAT TO WELCOME YOU ALL TO KINGSHOLM FOR THE FIRST TIME IN WHAT SEEMS LIKE AN ETERNITY!

SO much has happened in the rugby world and at the club since we signed off at the end of last season against Connacht, and there is now so much to look forward to in Cherry and White.

It is great to be Captain of this club for another season, to lead this group of players forward and to build on last season's efforts is a huge focus for us as a team.

We have developed a strong leadership group throughout the squad and we are all striving to make this squad and this club the best that it can be.

(RIGHT) Billy indicates his intentions to the ref
(BELOW) Defence coach Jonny Bell has worked the squad hard during pre-season



IT IS SUCH A GOOD FEELING TO IMPOSE OUR GAME AND CONTROL THE ACTION FOR MOST OF THE GAME, AND TESTAMENT TO THE HARD WORK WE HAVE BEEN PUTTING IN BEHIND THE SCENES AT HARTPURY WITH LAURIE AND THE COACHES.



We have had a fantastic long pre-season, with all the new guys settling in well and the players that have been here for a while making them welcome. For us to be back at home tonight is what the players look forward to. It is also fantastic to be sat here penning these notes off the back of a fine opening win against tough opposition.

It is such a good feeling to impose

our game and control the action for most of the game, and testament to the hard work we have been putting in behind the scenes at Hartpury with Laurie and the coaches.

We have also been working closely on the defensive systems that Jonny Bell has brought to the table, and we were thrilled with our opening forty minutes on Friday evening.

That said, we know the second half we dropped off a bit, but we have been frank and honest with one another to ensure we put that right this weekend.

We know we will have to be at our best this Friday evening, but the boys are champing at the bit to get back to Kingsholm, and in front of

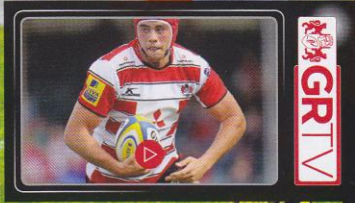
our own fans following a slightly nomadic end to last season.

With Rugby World Cup involvement ceased for most, we know Saracens will be able to call upon a lot of quality to add to their squad and they looked impressive in their opening game.

We know what happened last year in the corresponding fixture, and that showed that we can more than compete with the top teams, so this Friday we really cannot wait to get going as we embark on two big home games back to back.

Enjoy the game

Billy



Lewis Ludlow was a standout performer in Friday night's victory at Newcastle, but preferred to focus on the team effort when he spoke to the media after the game.

COMING UP...

EXCLUSIVE MATCHDAY PROGRAMME INTERVIEW
WITH ROB COOK



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DAVID HUMPHREYS

DIRECTOR OF RUGBY

WITH AT LEAST 28 CONSECUTIVE WEEKENDS OF AVIVA PREMIERSHIP AND EUROPEAN RUGBY AHEAD. SQUAD DEPTH WILL BE TESTED LIKE NEVER BEFORE!

I WASN'T SURPRISED TO READ THAT KINGSHOLM WAS RECENTLY RATED AS THE SECOND BEST STADIUM AT RUGBY WORLD CUP 2015 – A HUGE COMPLIMENT FOR ALL THE SUPPORTERS AND STAFF OF GLOUCESTER RUGBY AND I'M SURE YOU'RE ALL EXCITED TO BE BACK AT HOME FOR OUR AVIVA PREMIERSHIP FIXTURE AGAINST SARACENS THIS EVENING.

THERE have been some great games in Gloucester over the past 12 months, but Friday night under lights creates a unique atmosphere at Kingsholm. The whole squad is really looking forward to the first home game of the season and building on last weekend's performance.

The win at Newcastle was a great start to the new season. After a long and tough preseason for the players, everyone was ready to get back into competitive rugby. We produced a really disciplined and accurate away performance, particularly in the first half, and Billy's goal kicking was of the highest quality.

It's been a few years since we managed a win on the first weekend of the new season and, as we found last November, Kingston Park is a hard place to come away from with a win!

Tonight will be a very different test against one of the consistent teams in England over the past few seasons and the defending Aviva Premiership champions. They had a comprehensive win against Sale on the opening weekend, and we will have to perform at our very best to repeat the drama

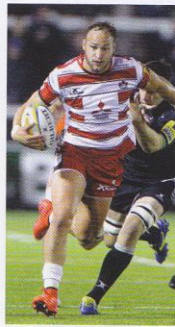
of January's last minute win and continue our unbeaten run at Kingsholm in 2015.

Over the last couple of weeks we have welcomed a number of our RWC players back into Gloucester training and, despite the disappointment of their RWC exit, they have added enthusiasm and quality to our training sessions and will provide some real depth to the squad over the course of the next few months.

With at least 28 consecutive weekends of Aviva Premiership and European rugby ahead, squad depth will be tested like never before!

Despite the lack of Northern Hemisphere representation in the semi-finals of RWC, the last five weeks have given rugby a huge boost through the drama and excitement of so many high quality matches and some outstanding team performances.

In welcoming Saracens, their supporters and all Gloucester supporters back to Kingsholm this evening, we also look forward to building on the RWC legacy by creating and inspiring a new generation of rugby fans who will enjoy the most competitive Aviva Premiership season ever!

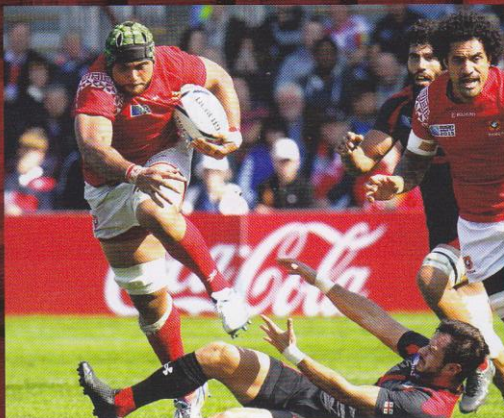


(RIGHT) Captain Billy Twelvetrees leads the team out against Exeter Chiefs in the West Country Cup
(ABOVE) Bill Meakes makes a break leading to Charlie Sharples try against Newcastle last weekend

LAST TIME AT KINGSHOLM



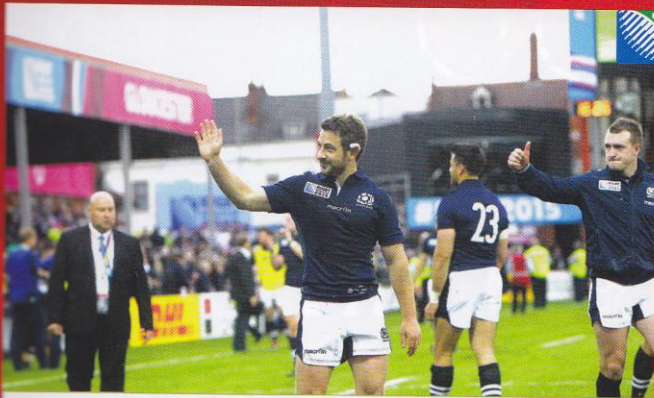
The atmosphere at Kingsholm was buzzing for its opening fixture, Tonga vs Georgia



Not even a rampaging Sione Kalamafoni could stop Georgia from picking up their first ever RWC victory



Japan fans cheered on the Cherry Blossoms at the home of the Cherry and Whites



Greig Laidlaw thanks the fans after the victory over Japan

**RUGBY
WORLD CUP
2015**

TONGA vs GEORGIA
Pool C, Attendance 14,200

SCOTLAND vs JAPAN
Pool B, Attendance 14,354

ARGENTINA vs GEORGIA
Pool B, Attendance 14,256

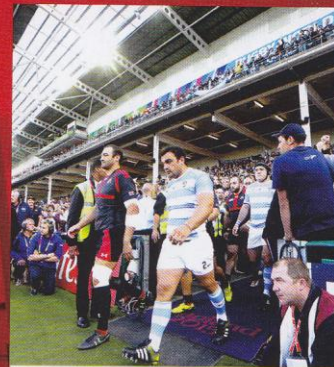
USA vs JAPAN
Pool B, Attendance 14,517



Argentina fans enjoying the action from The Shed



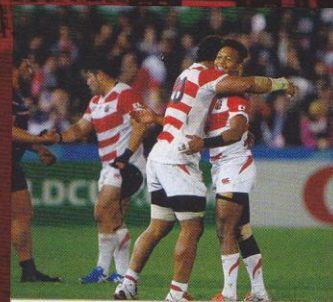
Japan and Scotland fans enjoyed the day at Kingsholm



Argentina and Georgia make their way onto the pitch



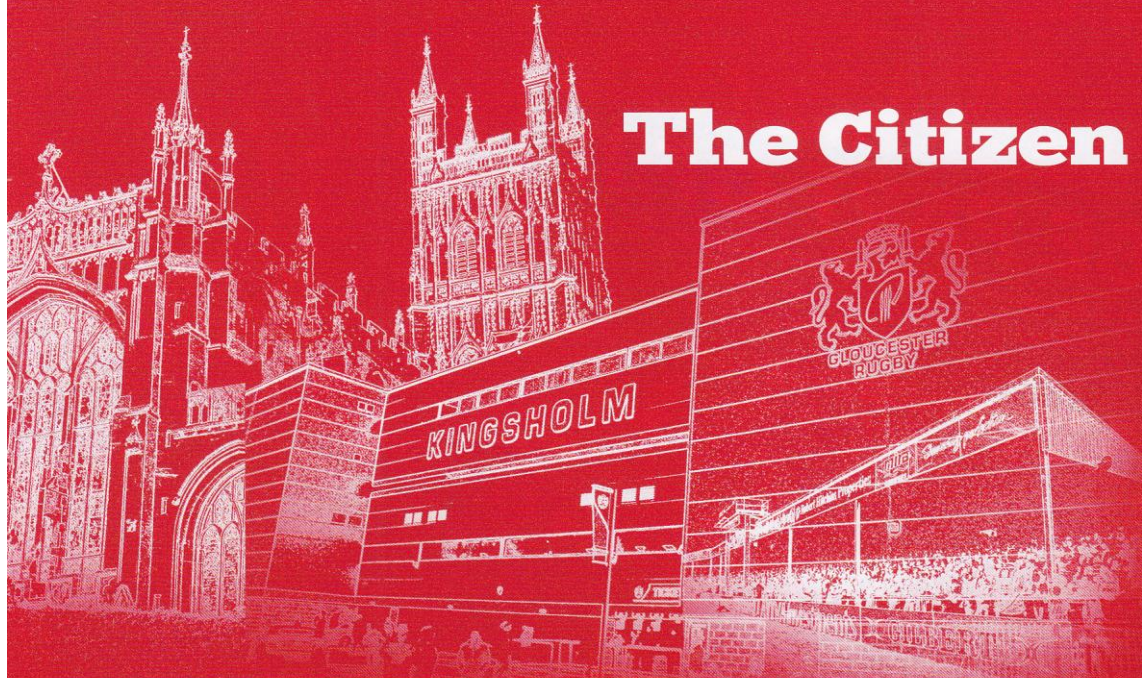
The victorious Puma players pose for selfies with their adoring fans



Japan celebrate the victory over the USA

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU NEXT TIME

The Citizen

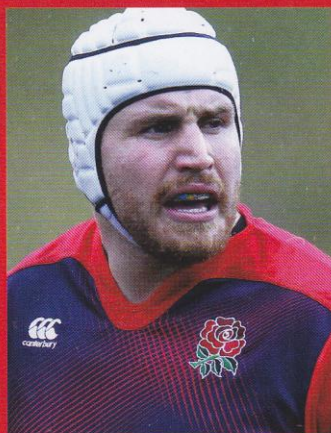


INTERNATIONALS BACK TO PROVE A POINT

TWICKENHAM WILL PLAY HOST TO AN EXTRA ROUND OF THE RUGBY CHAMPIONSHIP THIS WEEKEND AS THE WORLD CUP SEMI-FINALS TAKE PLACE WITH NO NORTHERN HEMISPHERE REPRESENTATION.

THERE will also be no Gloucester representation as the quest for the Webb Ellis Cup comes to a culmination – Jeremy Thrush overlooked by New Zealand and Mariano Galarza cruelly banned by a disciplinary panel with no room to wriggle.

With the exception of the second-row duo, however, the Cherry and Whites' remaining international talent is back at 'Holm and ready for a renewed assault on domestic honours.



Ben Morgan and Jonny May both came off the bench in last week's victory over Newcastle Falcons, Gloucester's first opening night win since 2009, and quite frankly they will be relieved to be back on the pitch.

Enough column inches, myself included, have been dedicated to the failings of England in a home World Cup and they will relish being surrounded by their home comforts and in a team that lacks no clarity.

Looking beyond the wilted Red Rose, while disappointed to be out of the tournament, Gloucester's Test stars will be enthused with their own performances and brimming with confidence.

Greig Laidlaw has arguably been the finest scrum-half in the tournament and almost single-handedly dragged the Scots to the quarter-finals where they burst into life with no reward.

The diminutive number nine



dictated the pace of games, led by example throughout, could put a box-kick on a six-pence and was deadly in front of goal. Only Aaron Smith of New Zealand has been as consistently good.

James Hook will be frustrated by his lack of opportunities, but it is nothing new for the mercurial play-maker and he is the consummate professional.

The real positive from the

Welsh camp as far as Gloucester is concerned is Ross Moriarty, who looked well at home on the Test stage.

He got better and better throughout last season and will benefit enormously from rubbing shoulders with the likes of Sam Warburton, Dan Lydiate and Taulupe Faletau, and working with Warren Gatland.

The abrasive, explosive ball-carrier



will be left with no uncertainty at what it takes to make it on the international stage and we will hopefully see him take his game to yet another level.

Then we have Tonga duo Sione Kalamafoni and David Halaifonua. We did not see a lot of Halaifonua for Gloucester last season and he was restricted to a limited role with Ikale Tahi.

But Kalamafoni was his usual self and following a disappointing collective campaign he will be champing at the bit to get back out on the Kingsholm turf.

So where do Gloucester stand compared to this time last year? Well, you can say with no uncertainty they are in a much better position.

There have been no wholesale changes to the management and coaching staff and no mass influx of players.

The new additions have added a dose of class and depth to their relevant positions and the squad have been together for an elongated pre-season – the World Cup omissions of the likes of Hibbard, Twelvetrees and Kvesic adding further strength throughout.

Gloucester were attempting to put in place and develop a spine through their squad and starting line-up last season.

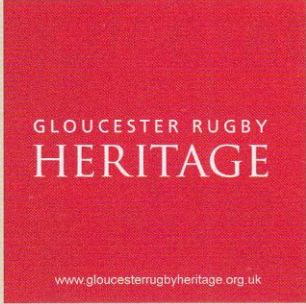
This season, Afoa-Hibbard-Savage-Kvesic-Morgan-Laidlaw-Hook-Twelvetrees-May-Sharples runs through the core and is established.

But make no mistake, the side does not pick itself. At second-row you have Savage, Galarza and Thrush, Laidlaw and Willi Heinz at scrum-half and where do you fit Tom Marshall?

These are wonderful luxuries to have and very necessary with the nature of rugby and the injuries the club will sustain.

But the club are now far stronger in terms of both playing resources and preparation. Ninth place was not good enough last year, it would be a disaster this time around. Top six must be the minimum.

Citizen
AVAILABLE DAILY



GLOUCESTER HOOKERS

PART 1

FOR MANY YEARS, POSITIONS IN A RUGBY TEAM, ESPECIALLY THE FORWARDS, WERE NOT DEFINED. IN THE VERY EARLY DAYS, AS A SCRUM WAS FORMED THE FIRST PLAYERS TO ARRIVE WOULD FORM THE FRONT ROW AND SO ON.

TIME passed, but for many years, although a team might have a regular front row, they could move around and fill in at prop or hooker. This was the case until well into the 1920s.

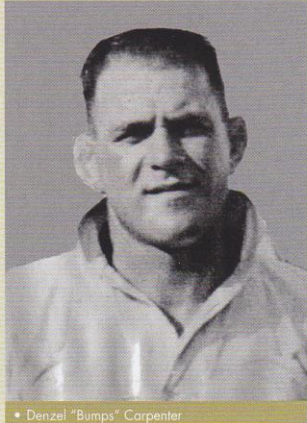
In the late 1920s, a miner from the Forest of Dean began his career at Kingsholm. **Denzel "Bumps" Carpenter** became a legend. He was born in 1900, and had already made seven appearances for Gloucestershire as a Cinderford player.

He played his first game for Gloucester on 1 November 1928 against Oxford University, and quickly established himself in the first fifteen. He first appeared for the club as a prop, but then became the club's regular hooker over a long career which only ended when Gloucester stopped playing games in 1941 because of the war.

He made his sole appearance for England against South Africa in 1932, where he started as a prop, but moved to hooker at half time. He was a reserve for England on more than twenty occasions.

"Bumps" played 61 times for Gloucestershire, which is the most by any Gloucester player. He appeared in five County Championship finals and was on the winning side four times, 1930, 31, 32 and 37.

He was as tough as teak. He would often work a shift at Lightmoor Colliery, and then come on to play for Gloucester



• Denzel "Bumps" Carpenter

the same day. He was held in great respect. In 1938 when Bill Hook, the Gloucester and England full back, played his first away game at Bristol, he was only 17 years old.

Before the game "Bumps" beckoned to Bill and took him into the Bristol dressing room, and addressed the whole team as follows:

"This is the babby we've brought down. He'll take anything fair and square, but you drop anything below the line and I'll be looking for you." Then beckoning to Bill, "Come on me babby, you'll be alright now."

And he was; at one stage he was tackled by one of Bristol's England internationals, who enquired solicitously as they lay on the ground together, whether Bill was OK. Bill said it was the easiest game of his whole career, and what is more Gloucester won 6-0.

Denzel made 354 appearances for Gloucester which, at the time, was the record for the club.

Forwards these days are very big fellows. Sixty years or so ago they were not so large, but even by those standards **Cyril Thomas** was referred to as "slight", weighing in at 12 stone.

He was, however, a brilliant hooker, who seemed to win endless strikes against the head in every game. He first played for Yorkley and Lydney before making his debut for Gloucester in February 1948 against Oxford University.

Although acknowledged as an outstanding hooker he only played in one England trial game and that was towards the end of his career, in 1959. It is also surprising that he only made 13 appearances for Gloucestershire, but this was largely due to the fact that John Thorne, the Bristol and England hooker, was selected in preference most of the time.

Ironically in 1960 when retirement approached he broke back into the county team and displacing Thorne he made three appearances. However, he played his last game for Gloucester on 31 December 1960 against Newbridge having made 357 appearances for the Club.

Cyril captained Gloucester in the 1958-59 season, which was not a successful one, where only 17 out of 42 games were won. From 1947 to 1960 he played in





COMING UP...
**RANDALL ON RUGBY
WITH PAUL DORAN-JONES**

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52

357 games for the club.
Reg Chamberlayne was a good hooker whose career corresponded with that of Cyril Thomas. Consequently he was invariably his understudy. However, he still made 127 appearances from 1948 to 1962,



• Reg Chamberlayne



• Cyril Thomas

and would have walked into the first XV of most first class clubs. He did though play in 43 games in the 1950-51 season, when Cyril returned to Lydney for one season.

Mike Nicholls was born in September 1940 and played his early rugby for Old Centralians. He had a baptism of fire when making his first appearance for Gloucester in September 1961 at Cardiff. It took him until the 1965-66 season to become first choice hooker, but for the next ten seasons there was no shifting him.

He was an uncompromising player and like a terrier around the field. He captained the team



• A grimly determined Mike Nicholls leading out the Gloucester team at Twickenham, under a canopy of elver nets

with great success from 1970-72 and again in 1973-74, each of which were record-breaking seasons in terms of games won. In the 1970-71 season he played in all 51 games, and in 1973-74 in 52 out of 54.

Perhaps the most memorable season was 1971-72, when Gloucester won the inaugural National Knock-Out Competition. The team played all their games away from home at Bath, Bristol, London Welsh, Coventry and, in the final, at Twickenham, Moseley.

The most memorable game was the win (9-4) against London Welsh, whose team contained four British Lions and



seven internationals. Nobody gave Gloucester a chance against such star-studded opposition. Much of the success must be put down to the leadership of Mike, who inspired the team. His pre-match talks, players freely admitted, were frightening.

The style of play did not endear Gloucester to the purists, or the press. It was a case of a formidable pack, rock hard tackling and well directed kicking. But it worked. The whole team was galvanised by Mike's leadership.

Although so successful at club level, Mike only made 10 appearances for the county from 1961 to 1972. He was unfortunate in that John Thorne and John Pullin, both of Bristol, were his competitors for the hooking berth. He also played in one England trial game.

Mike played his last game on 22 October 1977 against Nottingham. In his career he made 434 appearances for the club. After retirement he became team coach and a long serving Committee man for the Club. After a long illness he died in December 2012.



sportobster

f GLOUCESTERRUGBY

@GLOUCESTERRUGBY

ROB COOK



@robcook1515

Good win for
@MalvernRugby colts this
afternoon. Lots to work
on but still unbeaten!
Big session Tuesday!!
#progression



ROARING TO GO

THE NEW AVIVA PREMIERSHIP SEASON WAS A LONG TIME IN COMING AND, AFTER A STOP START CAMPAIGN LAST TIME OUT DUE TO INJURY, ROB COOK IS BACK IN THE GROOVE AND IS CHALLENGING THE CHERRY AND WHITES TO BUILD ON THEIR OPENING NIGHT VICTORY, AND IN FRONT OF THEIR OWN FANS.

THE return to Kingsholm has also been a long time in coming - May 24th's European Rugby Champions Cup play off victory over Connacht was the last time the Cherry and Whites ran out at their spiritual home, in front of their own fans, so this Friday is a long awaited return.

In the sweeper role at full back, Cook was in prime position to marshal and coordinate the Cherry and White defensive effort which forced countless penalties on the artificial turf of Kingston Park, and Cook is backing the

squad to take great confidence from that as they return to the green, green grass of Holm this Friday.

"It was a massive win for us, that first half performance was one of the best that I have been involved in as a Gloucester player. We controlled the game, and the

I'M CHOMPING AT THE BIT TO BUILD ON A PRESEASON WHERE I FELT REALLY GOOD AND SHARP, AND BUILD ON WHAT WE ARE WORKING ON AS A SQUAD. THAT STARTS THIS WEEKEND

fact that they gave away so many penalties shows how threatened they were by us.

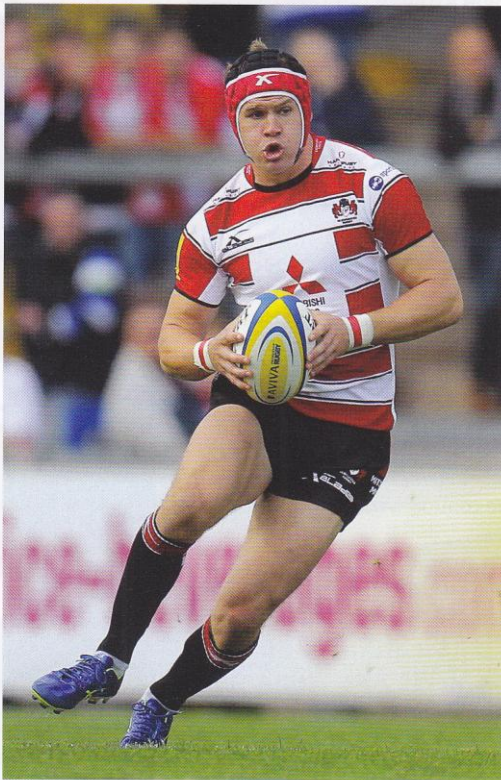
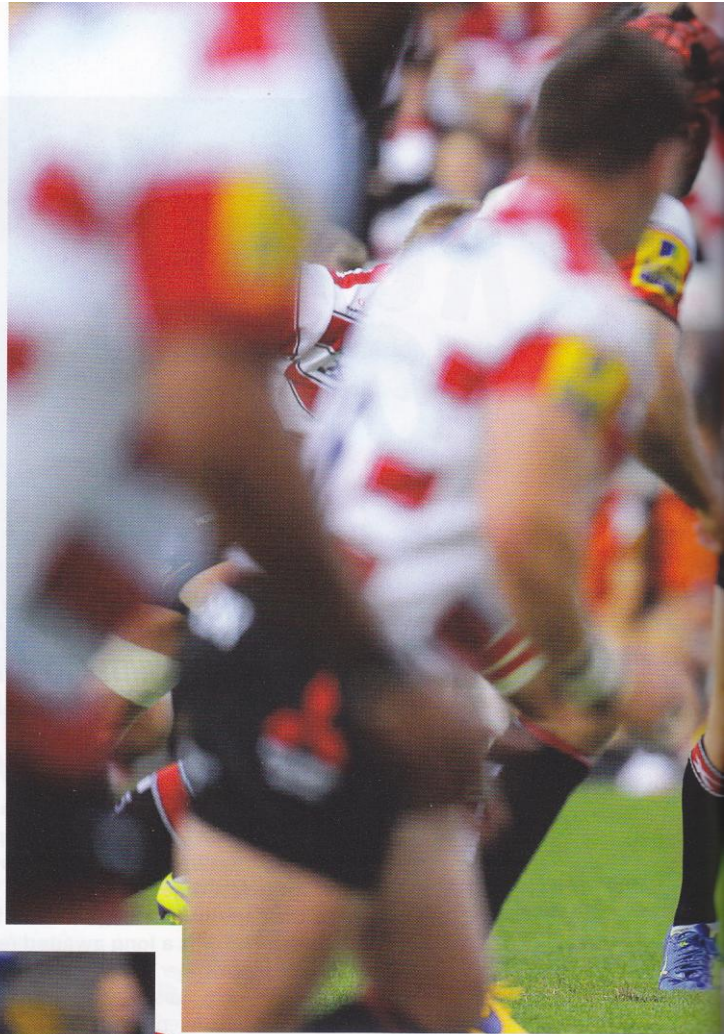
"It's a shame we didn't get the bonus point, but at the start of the game we would've probably bitten someone's hand off to get four points at Kingston Park.

"It was a great start, a good performance and we want to crack on. It has been a long preseason and of course we played a few friendlies but at the end of it, we really wanted to get started."

Newcastle Falcons' DoR Dean Richards was quick to lament the Falcons' indiscipline last Friday evening in the North East, but Cook believes that it was the pressure applied from the visitors that forced the indiscretion and subsequent points.

"One thing we said that we wanted, was to be disciplined, as that is what Falcons based their game on and working territory. And I think in the first half we stuck to it really well.

"Our game and our intensity caused them to give away a lot of penalties, and Billy kicked superbly.

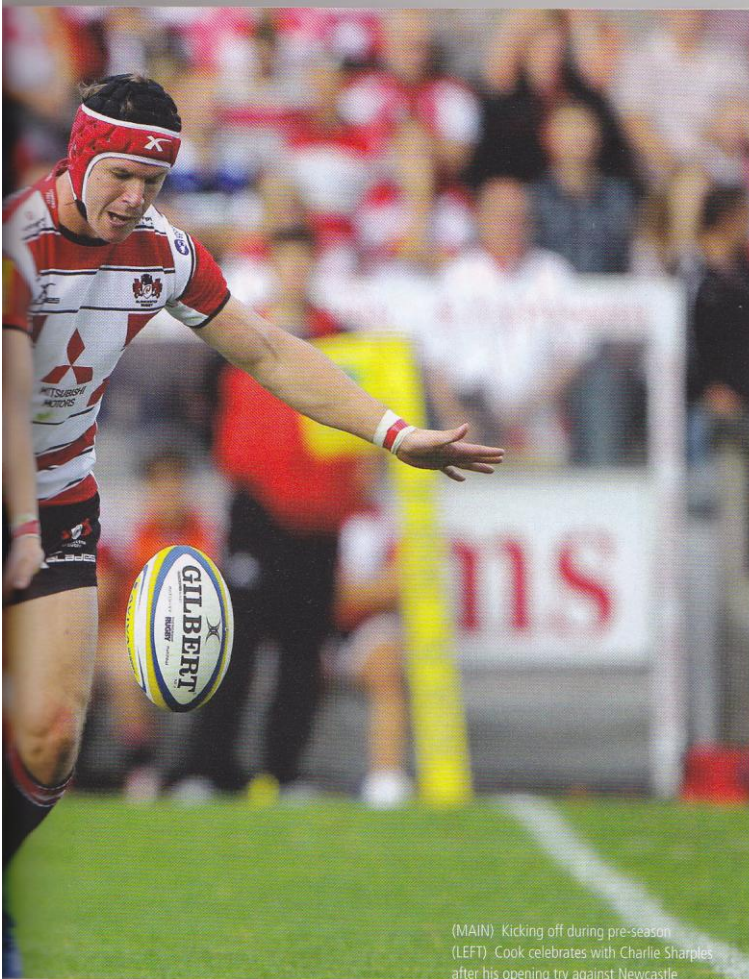


WE'RE OBVIOUSLY STILL UNDEFEATED AT KINGSHOLM IN 2015. AND WE ARE MASSIVELY EXCITED TO GO OUT AND PUT A PERFORMANCE IN AND I AM SURE THE SUPPORTERS ARE BANG UP FOR IT TOO.

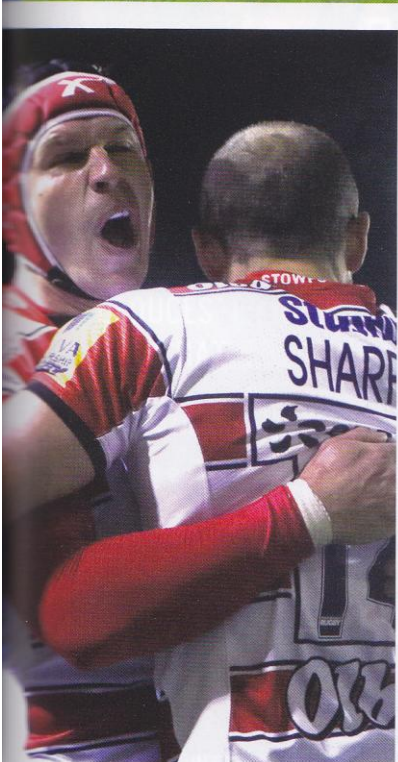
"Billy's kicking on Friday night was exceptional to score 29 points and they weren't all just in front of the posts, they were from all over the pitch. He was 10 from 13 in the end and they were all tricky kicks and that was excellent.

"Billy controlled the game, and at ten it is a pivotal position and he bossed the game."

The return to Kingsholm this weekend is long awaited for the squad, but with the Rugby World Cup roadshow rolling off, the squad have been able to familiarize



(MAIN) Kicking off during pre-season
 (LEFT) Cook celebrates with Charlie Sharples after his opening try against Newcastle
 (RIGHT) Rob races away to score against Bath in the West Country Cup



themselves with the famous old ground which rocked for four pool stage games over the past month, as Cook reveals.

"We're obviously still undefeated at Kingsholm in 2015, and we are massively excited to go out and put a performance in and I am sure the supporters are bang up for it too."

"It's been a long time away from Kingsholm now, and we have been there for several training sessions so now we need to concentrate on getting the W."

With the home nations' involvement in the tournament ceased, it is to the benefit of the Aviva Premiership clubs as numerous players will be available for this Friday's game on both sides.

Cook admits that although it's been a difficult few weeks for some of the squad, they have been welcomed back with open arms and all have turned their focus onto

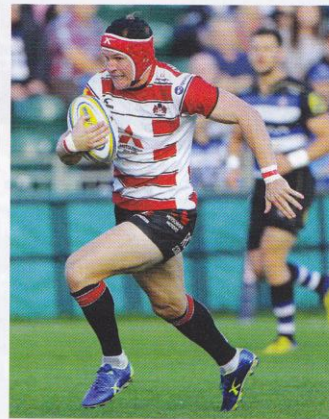
a big Cherry and White effort.

"We've had such a long preseason without the Rugby World Cup guys and I know that a few of them have been in and out of squads, but the bigger picture now is that it is a big bonus for us as a squad.

"This week we welcomed back Ross and Hooky, and that adds to us a squad. Even though there have been a few sessions where we have felt like we are down to the bare bones, we have still been together as a strong unit.

"Now we have got Ross, James as well as Sione and David back after Jonny and Ben, we are in a good place. It adds depth to our squad now they are back, and we can all crack on together."

The tough test in the North East was passed with merit, and this Friday, reigning champions Saracens roll into town, perhaps with one eye on redemption following James Hook's last gasp penalty kick in the January fixture between the two sides.



"Not so much on last year, we know we have to do a job. Saracens played well last week and they will be brimming in confidence as well, so it all hints at a good game this Friday, and I cannot wait to get going.

"I'm glad that I got a few games under my belt at the end of the last season, otherwise I would've been 10/11 months without a game, and I'm chomping at the bit to build on a preseason where I felt really good and sharp, and build on what we are working on as a squad. That starts this weekend."

KINGSHOLM NEWS WITH BOB

FENTON



SO, IT'S MID-OCTOBER AND THERE'S SOME SORT OF RUGBY COMPETITION GOING ON IN LONDON THIS WEEKEND. WHAT BETTER TIME IS THERE TO KICK OFF THE SEASON OF PROPER RUGBY IN DOWNTOWN GLOUCESTER?



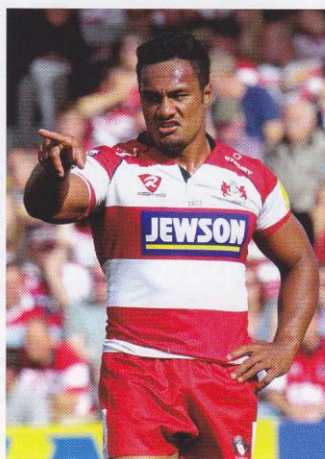
NO, that's harsh. Rugby World Cup has been a tremendous event, some outstanding rugby, some amazing highs and some terrible, terrible lows.

For the teams from the north it's been a tough competition. England underperformed, Wales decided to abandon rugby and audition for an episode of 'Casualty', Ireland came up against – for me – the team of the tournament in the form of Argentina, and as for Scotland...

What can you say about the way they went out of the tournament? Cruel doesn't even come close. As I write, the discussion about whether the TMO could have been consulted on that last play rages on. All I'll say, is that in other games the TMO has been consulted on, everything up to and including whether you were allowed to have sugar in your tea. So it was very strange that such an

important decision was not referred.

One of the things that has taken of the edge of the tournament has been the constant referrals to a third official, resulting in stop/start games that have dragged on for



way over the usual time. Getting it right is important, getting on with the game is more important. Of course go for the big decisions, but checking for a relatively innocuous event that happened miles back in play... no, not for me.

And then there is the issue about disciplinary punishments and sanctions... Our former centre Eliota Fuimaono-Sapolu has been typically strident on the subject, but he has a point. Some sanctions and citings have appeared to disproportionately impact the smaller nations. Something to be looked at after the tournament, for sure. Level playing fields and all of that.

But as I said, some of the games have been absolutely outstanding, not least the great games that have been played here on this very patch. Hopefully the semi-finals will be immense occasions, especially

COMING UP...

**ACTION REPLAY
VS NEWCASTLE FALCONS**



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IT'S GOING TO BE A MAJORLY INTENSE SEASON THIS ONE. NO LITTLE CUP COMPETITION HALFWAY THROUGH TO GIVE PEOPLE A BIT OF A REST – IT'S GOING TO BE RELENTLESS. STRAP YOURSELVES IN FOR THE RIDE!

as I am going to the Australia v Argentina game, and the final is a fitting conclusion to the event.

But, as I said at the top, we're here for proper rugby. We got off to a great start to the season last week with a win up in Newcastle even though it seemed that we were doing all we could not to get the win as we let the Falcons back into things. The boys done well, especially as we were short of many players who would normally be considered among the first names on the team sheet. Cometh the hour, and all of that.

It's a tough old test tonight against everybody's least favourite team, Saracens. Despite the many great things they do around their new stadium, the great welcome they have for visiting fans, they seem to be out there among the outlaws. Maybe that '...no one likes us, we don't care...' thing works for them. But it's a new season, so a new chance: I love them. Maybe...

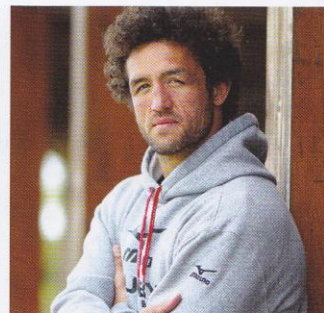
I've written before about one

of their number who, for me, is a stand out player – Schalk Brits, that grinning, whole-hearted hooker they have on their books. If that wasn't enough, they have another superman on their roster: I'm talking Jacques Burger here.

Jacques is the epitome of what a rugby player should be. Fearlessly determined, skilful (ok skilful-ish) committed and honest. He is a man who, literally, leads with his face. And it shows!

He plays with all the spirit of a 12 year old kid, crashing around the park and trying to get involved in every second of the day. He makes the hits and takes the hits. Remember a season or so ago when Nick Wood accidentally stood on him and got a red card for it – after the game it was Burger tweeting a 'no hard feelings' message.

He's one of those guys that makes me smile when he runs on the field. The kind of guy that I would point out to my kids when they were starting out in the game, saying



'Play like Jacques – but don't tell yer Mum'. His World Cup ended in probably a fitting way for him, with a concussion! Shame he couldn't go out on the field with his mates.

Assuming he is on the field tonight he'll be rampaging around, getting under the skin of everyone in Cherry and White. I know we can, on very rare occasions, be just a touch 'one-eyed,' but watch him tonight and answer this question: how much of a hero would he have been if he had played here at Kingsholm? He'd be a folk hero. Really hope he has a rubbish game tonight though!!

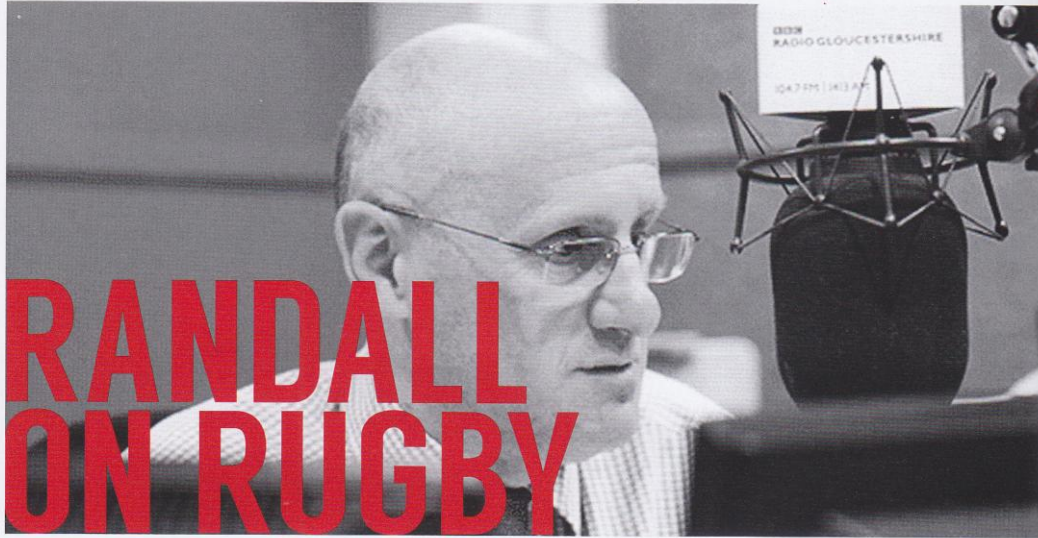
It's going to be a majorly intense season this one, no little cup competition halfway through to give people a bit of a rest – it's going to be relentless. Strap yourselves in for the ride!

And tonight... this is a big game and a chance for us to make a huge statement about where we have come from, and where we are going. We'll probably be without a few big names and the challenge for the squad is to stand up and be counted.

Let's hope we have a big Friday night crowd under the Kingsholm (super-enhanced) lights, a killer atmosphere and a win to really get the season off to a flyer.

Not too much to ask is it?





RANDALL ON RUGBY

SHORTLY AFTER 9:15PM LAST FRIDAY NIGHT, PAUL DORAN-JONES REACHED 49 COMPETITIVE APPEARANCES FOR GLOUCESTER RUGBY AND COULD WELL MAKE HIS 50TH TONIGHT

HIS 48th was in the Premiership play off semi final against Saracens in May 2011 and a lot has happened in between, not all of it positive, and you sense there is catching up to do in terms of his career.

"There was a lot of heart in the decision to come back here" he told me. "It's not a secret I had a terrible two years at Harlequins, I didn't get on the pitch very much and, as a competitive guy who only wants to play, it was hard.

"For whatever reason I just couldn't stay fit and I knew it worked here for me before so I'm trying to recreate that. In hindsight it would have been easy to say you should never have left but I did so to try and further myself."

When he did depart Kingsholm that summer, the 26 year old Doran-Jones had played for England against Scotland and Ireland in the Six Nations and in the Barbarians match at Twickenham at the end of the season.

His destination was Northampton, who had the formidable Brian Mujati as first choice tight head and who had just lost to Leinster in the Heineken Cup final after the Irish province produced a thrilling second half comeback.

Four years on, Doran-Jones prefers to look forward rather than back.



I HAVE BELIEF IN MY OWN ABILITY AND I KNOW WHAT I CAN DO WHEN I AM FIT AND FIRING AND I DON'T THINK 30 IS A BAD AGE FOR A PROP. THERE IS STILL ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT IN MY PERFORMANCE AND THAT IS WHAT I AM LOOKING TO EXTRACT.



"I don't want to pick holes in the decisions I made, I can't change them and I don't necessarily think I would anyway," said Doran-Jones with a certainty that you need as a professional sportsman.

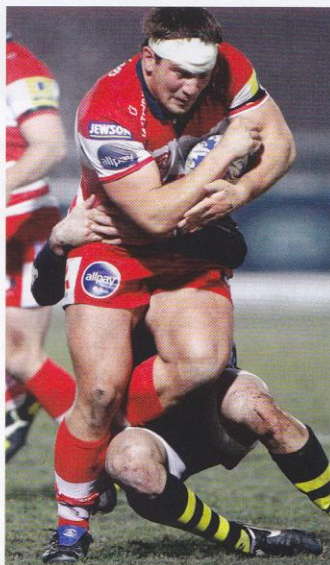
"I don't regret them and I do think I read the game better now. I have belief in my own ability and I know what I can do when I am fit and firing and I don't think 30 is a bad age for a prop. There is still room for improvement in my performance and that is what I am looking to extract."

Doran-Jones' last international duty was on the summer tour to Argentina in 2013, when he had been head-hunted by 'Quins after they lost James Johnston to tonight's opponents, Saracens.

There appeared no reason why he should not remain in the international picture, but Doran-Jones admits what transpired was very different.

"My form wasn't great at The Stoop after I picked up a neck injury in my second game and carried it on and off for the whole season" Paul said.

"The scrum rules changed and I never had a consistent run to adapt to them, and then last season I tore my calf early on and didn't play again, which is why I can't wait to pick up where I left off here if I can. I had a call to meet David Humphreys and Laurie Fisher and they gave me the opportunity to come back."



It's fair to say Doran-Jones hasn't put many miles on the clock over the last four seasons. His total tally of Premiership appearances is less than half that of Nick Wood and there is only two years between them, and that may work in Gloucester's favour in the long run, especially if Paul's enthusiasm carries from our chat onto the pitch.

"Last season Gloucester were probably the form team after Christmas and there are some great people in and around the playing group" he said.

"It's a tough old schedule this year so we're all going to be needed but we're all buzzing to get out here again especially after the atmosphere which has been around Kingsholm with the World Cup.

"Saracens are an astute and hard nosed side and any indiscipline plays right into their hands but we'll look to take them on up front and cause them problems."

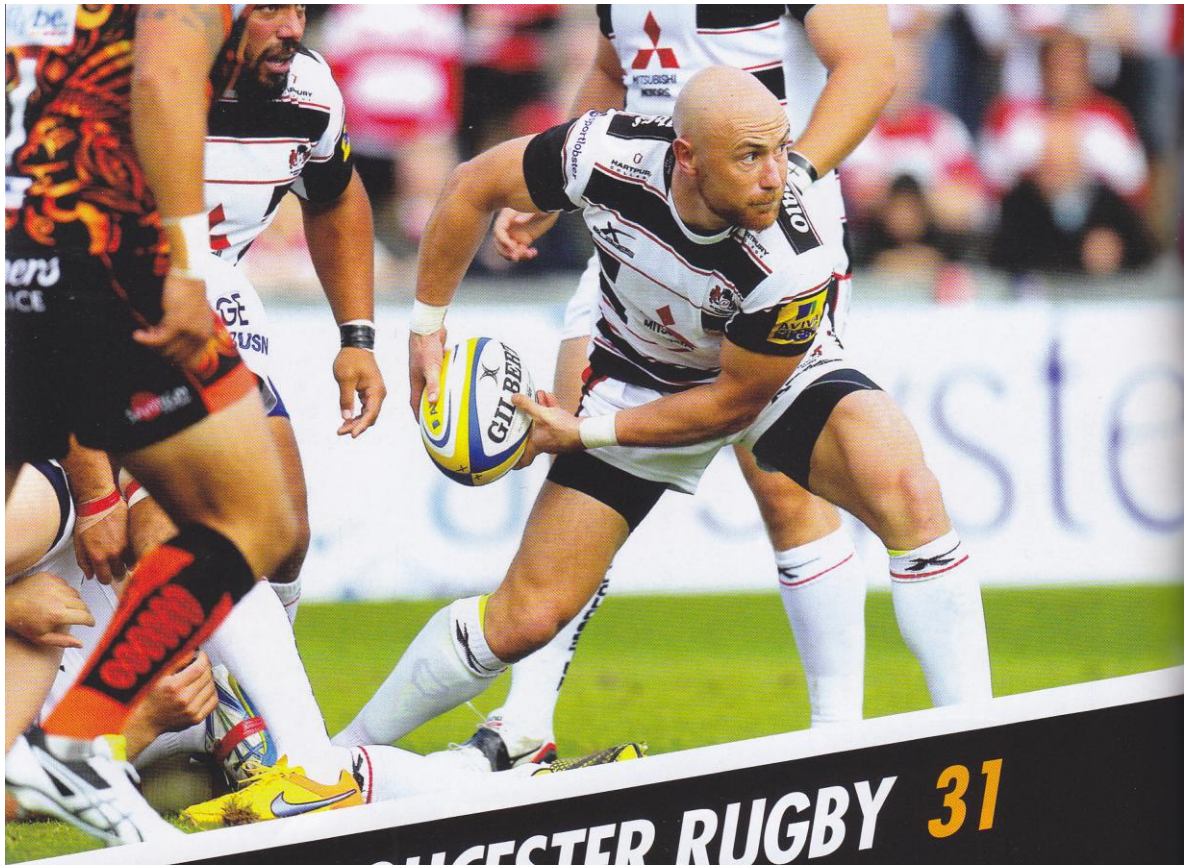
As we welcome Mark McCall's team, my mind goes back to January and James Hook's booming last minute penalty that secured victory and started an 11 match unbeaten run at home through until the end of the season.

It's hard to see it not being just as close this evening after last weekend's opening round of games saw both sides dominate at the breakdown and in the scrum, with Billy Twelvetrees' accuracy from the tee accounting for Newcastle and Sale conceding five tries at Allianz Park.

An early litmus test, then, for the season ahead.

@IAN_RANDALL1

Long chat with knowledgeable rugby friend re #LancasterOut. Suggested he was first lieutenant material but needed visionary above him.



GLOUCESTER RUGBY 31

EXETER CHIEFS 33

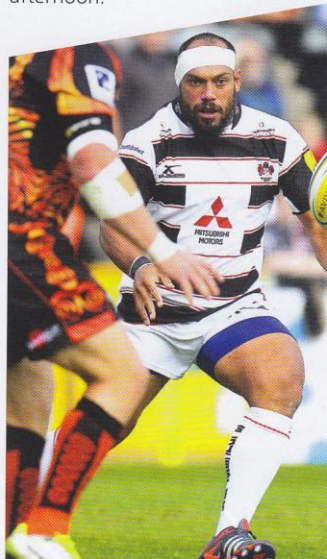
THE CHERRY AND WHITES concluded their preseason programme and nomadic summer as they welcomed Exeter Chiefs to the Memorial Stadium for a fiercely contested match.

Both sides handed more game time to the wider squads, and the action was end-to-end as the two teams continued to fine-tune their preparations ahead of the new campaign.

The Chiefs started the better of the two sides, striking with two tries in quick succession through Thomas Waldrom and Luke Cowan-Dickie.

It was a bruising encounter at the Memorial Stadium, with several Gloucester players leaving the field with knocks even before the half hour mark was reached.

The flurry of replacements failed to knock the 'home' side however, as after Julian Salvi's yellow card for persistent infringements, Matt Kvesic dotted down from a powerful rolling maul to open the Cherry and Whites' account for the afternoon.

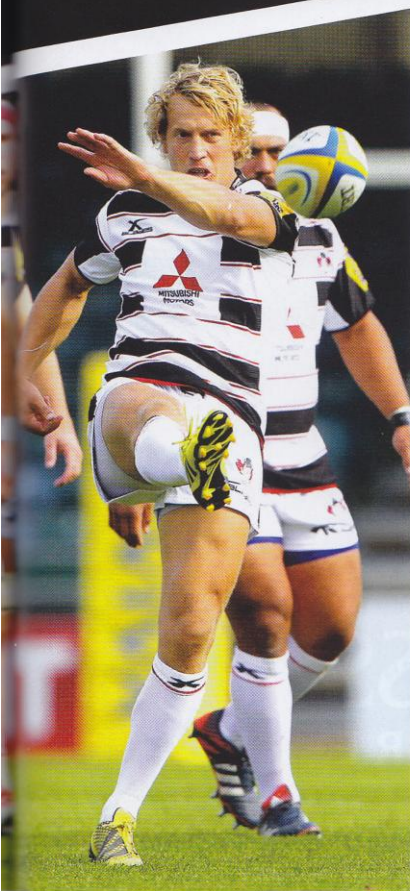
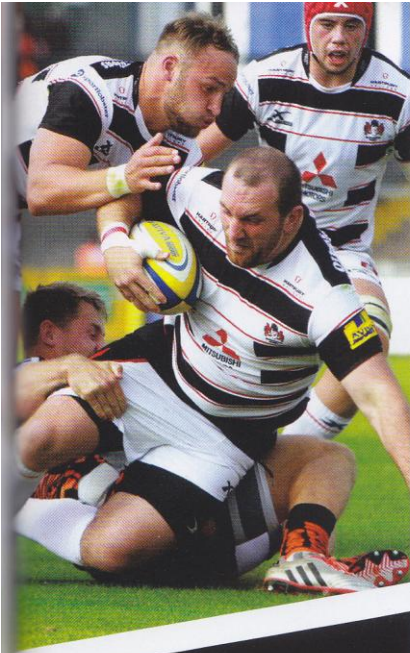


David Humphreys reflects on the 31-33 defeat to Exeter Chiefs

Chiefs' pivot Steenson added a penalty, but the Cherry and Whites responded as Henry Purdy ghosted over out wide after neat midfield play, before Steenson added another penalty.

But, as the half time whistle approached, the home crowd was treated to some strong driving mauls before Willi Heinz fed Mark Atkinson to break a tackle and stretch over to allow Billy Twelvetrees to convert for a 21-20 lead.

The topsy-turvy nature of the contest continued as Chiefs were



MATCHDAY SQUADS



GLoucester RUGBY

- 15 Rob Cook
- 14 Charlie Sharples
- 13 Bill Meakes
- 12 Mark Atkinson 1T
- 11 Henry Purdy 1T
- 10 Billy Twelvetrees 4C 1P
- 9 Willi Heinz
- 1 Paddy McAllister
- 2 Darren Dawidiuk
- 3 John Afoa
- 4 Tom Savage
- 5 Elliott Stooke
- 6 Jacob Rowan
- 7 Matt Kvesic 1T
- 8 Gareth Evans

Replacemnets

Tom Lindsay, Yann Thomas, Paul Doran-Jones, Tom Hicks, Dan Thomas, Callum Braley, Steve McColl 1T, Olly Thorley, Nicky Thomas, Alex Craig, Lewis Ludlow, Mat Protheroe



EXETER CHIEFS

- 15 Phil Dollman
- 14 Olly Woodburn
- 13 Ian Whitten
- 12 Sam Hill
- 11 James Short
- 10 Gareth Steenson 3C 2P
- 9 Will Chudley
- 1 Ben Moon
- 2 Luke Cowan-Dickie 1T
- 3 Moray Low
- 4 Mitch Lees
- 5 Damian Welch
- 6 Don Armand 1T
- 7 Julian Salvi
- 8 Thomas Waldrom 1T

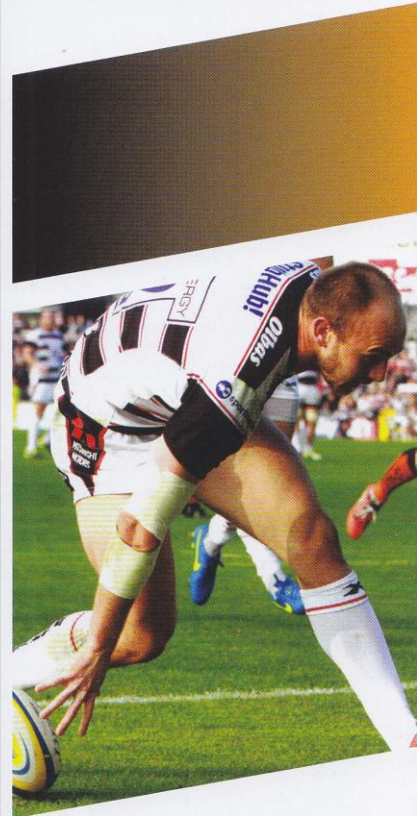
Replacemnets

Jack Yeandle, Alec Hepburn, Alex Brown, Ollie Atkins, Tom Johnson, Dave Lewis, Will Hooley 2P, Matt Jess, Shaun Malton, Harry Williams, Jonny Hill, Ben White, Kai Horstmann, Haydn Thomas, Max Bodilly, Byron McGuigan

first on the board in the second period, as Don Armand benefitted from a Gareth Steenson break to reach over for the try but the hosts came back strongly.

Chiefs were living on the edge in defence, conceding countless penalties, and had it been a competitive league game, Twelvetrees would've no doubt been happy to keep punishing them from the tee.

Utilising the final practice live

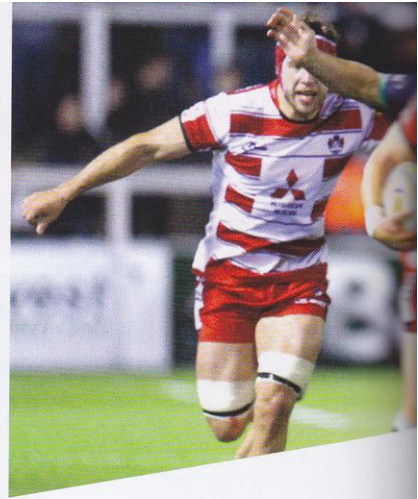
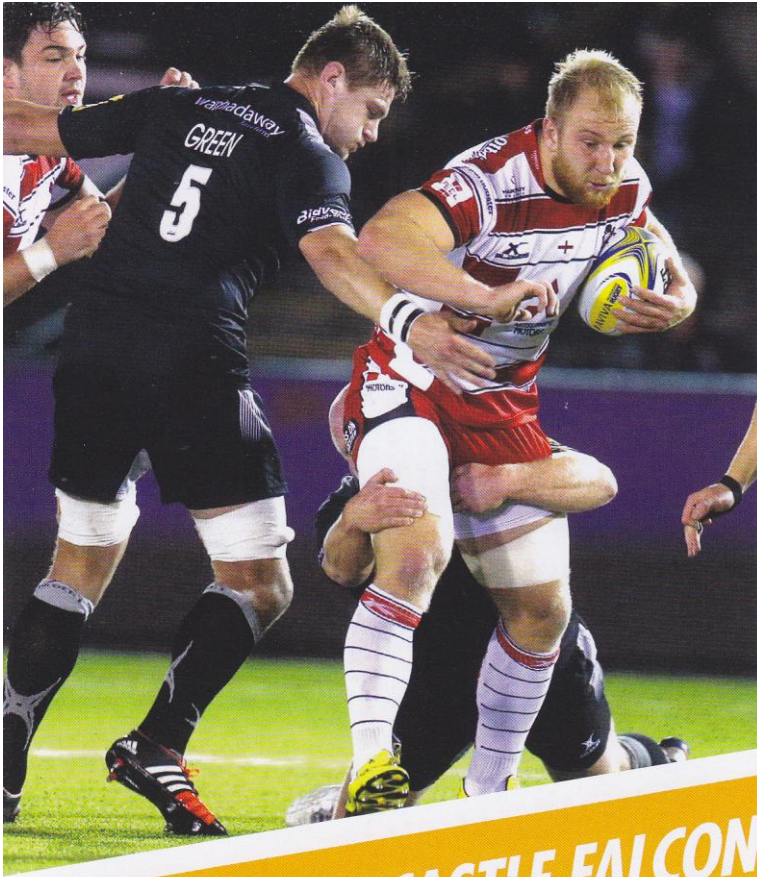


environment, the skipper backed his pack by kicking to the corner as the two forward packs continued to muscle up.

Concerted pressure in the Chiefs' 22 saw Twelvetrees spin out of a tackle and feed Steve McColl who romped over.

Replacement Will Hooley then kicked Chiefs back into the lead, before Twelvetrees responded in kind.

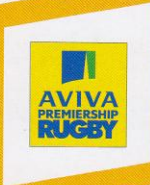
The last word did, however, go to Hooley who was handed the chance to steal the victory and the inaugural West Country Challenge Cup.



did give Newcastle the briefest glimmer of hope. But it was fleeting and Gloucester emerged comfortable winners.

Director of Rugby David Humphreys had spoken before the game of how excited his team were

NEWCASTLE FALCONS 27 GLOUCESTER RUGBY 39

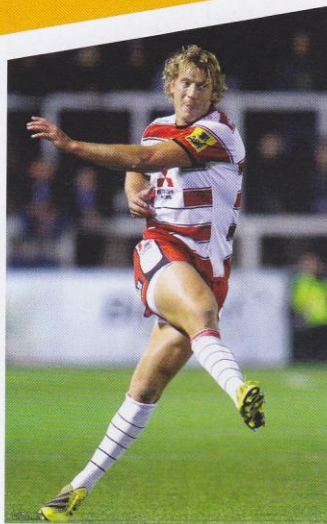


HALF TIME 3-27
ATTENDANCE 5,049
REFEREE Tom Foley

GLOUCESTER RUGBY got their Aviva Premiership campaign off to a winning start with an impressive 39-27 victory over Newcastle Falcons at Kingston Park last Friday evening.

It's a venue that has not been one of Gloucester's favourite grounds in recent seasons but, with Billy Twelvetrees in excellent kicking form, the Cherry and Whites took a stranglehold on the game in the first half and didn't let go.

The home side did, inevitably, try and mount a second half comeback, and a couple of defensive lapses from Gloucester



@GLOUCESTERRUGBY

Elliott Stooke @elliottstooke
Long journey home made easier with a good win last night, big thanks too all the support up there! #GlawsFamily



Bill Meakes thrilled to kick season off with hard fought win

to kick off their competitive season and this certainly showed in the first 40 minutes.

Gloucester left their World Cup returnees on the bench and went with the line-up that had, by and large, competed in the club's preseason campaign. And they certainly rose to the occasion.

Shutting down the home offence with some stifling defence, Gloucester were able to get the scoreboard ticking over with four penalties from Billy Twelvetrees as Newcastle fell foul of the referee.



The Cherry and Whites then pounced for two tries in four minutes to well and truly put the cat amongst the pigeons. The first came after a good break from John Afoa, followed by patient build up play and Matt Kvesic crashed over in the corner.

METRES RUN WITH THE BALL

**NEWCASTLE 300M
GLOUCESTER 370M**

I'M DELIGHTED TO HAVE FOUR POINTS. HISTORICALLY WE HAVEN'T STARTED THE SEASON PARTICULARLY WELL AND WE HAVEN'T HAD A GREAT RECORD UP IN NEWCASTLE.

DAVID HUMPHREYS

The second was a real eye catcher, Bill Meakes spotting a back row forward lurking in the back line, burning him off and then putting Charlie Sharples in for the score.

When Twelvetrees added his fifth penalty on the stroke of half-time, Gloucester were up by 27 points to 3 and the teams left the Kingston Park pitch to near silence, so stunned were the crowd.

Twelvetrees duly extended the lead with another penalty after the resumption, before Newcastle hit back.

New fly-half Mike Delany was the architect as his skills created

MATCHDAY SQUADS



NEWCASTLE FALCONS

- 15 Simon **Hammersley** 1T
- 14 Tom **Catterick**
- 13 Chris **Harris** 1T
- 12 Adam **Powell**
- 11 Sinoti **Sinoti**
- 10 Mike **Delany** 3C 2P
- 9 Ruki **Tipuna**
- 1 Rob **Vickers**
- 2 Scott **Lawson**
- 3 Taione **Vea**
- 4 Mouritz **Botha**
- 5 Calum **Green**
- 6 Richard **Mayhew**
- 7 Will **Welch**
- 8 Todd **Clever**

- 16 George **McGuigan** 1T
- 17 Eric **Fry**
- 18 Scott **Wilson**
- 19 Josh **Furno**
- 20 Ally **Hogg**
- 21 Micky **Young**
- 22 Craig **Willis**
- 23 Tom **Penny**



GLOUCESTER RUGBY

- 15 Rob **Cook**
- 14 Charlie **Sharples** 1T
- 13 Bill **Meakes**
- 12 Mark **Atkinson**
- 11 Henry **Purdy**
- 10 Billy **Twelvetrees** 1C 9P
- 9 Willi **Heinz**
- 1 Paddy **McAllister**
- 2 Richard **Hibbard**
- 3 John **Afoa**
- 4 Tom **Savage**
- 5 Elliott **Stooke**
- 6 Jacob **Rowan**
- 7 Matt **Kvesic** 1T
- 8 Lewis **Ludlow**

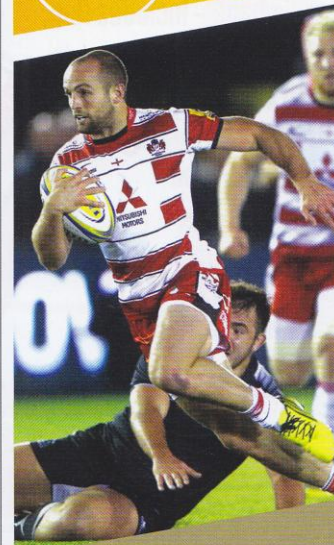
- 16 Tom **Lindsay**
- 17 Yann **Thomas**
- 18 Paul **Doran-Jones**
- 19 Sione **Kalamafoni**
- 20 Ben **Morgan**
- 21 Callum **Brale**
- 22 Jonny **May**
- 23 Steve **McColl**

tries for Simon Hammersley and Chris Harris.

However, Twelvetrees kept his focus and his eyes on the posts as Newcastle proved unable to stop giving away penalties. The Gloucester skipper added four more penalties to take his personal haul to 29 points and even a late try from Newcastle hooker George McGuigan only caused the most minor of alarms in the Gloucester ranks.

PENALTIES CONCEDED

**NEWCASTLE 13
GLOUCESTER 7**



CHAMPAGNE MOMENT

Gloucester's second try of the evening was beautifully executed. Clean lineout ball off the top was spun into midfield where Mark Atkinson took the ball into contact.

Quick recycling saw the ball moved right, where Bill Meakes sliced through the Newcastle defence before finding Charlie Sharples who sprinted clear to score.



TONIGHT'S TEAMSHEET

GLOUCESTER RUGBY vs SARACENS



Aviva Premiership Rugby - Round 2
Friday 23rd October 2015, KO 19:45 Kingsholm

CHARLIE SHARPLES	FULLBACK	15	FULLBACK	ALEX GOODE
DAVID HALAIFONUA	RIGHT WING	14	RIGHT WING	CHRIS ASHTON
BILLY TWELVETREES (C)	OUTSIDE CENTRE	13	OUTSIDE CENTRE	TIM STREATHER
BILL MEAKES	INSIDE CENTRE	12	INSIDE CENTRE	DUNCAN TAYLOR
JONNY MAY	LEFT WING	11	LEFT WING	MIKE ELLERY
JAMES HOOK	FLY HALF	10	FLY HALF	CHARLIE HODGSON
WILLI HEINZ	SCRUM HALF	9	SCRUM HALF	NEIL DE KOCK
PADDY McALLISTER	LOOSEHEAD PROP	1	LOOSEHEAD PROP	RHYS GILL
RICHARD HIBBARD	HOKKER	2	HOKKER	JAMIE GEORGE
JOHN AFOA	TIGHTHEAD PROP	3	TIGHTHEAD PROP	PETRUS DU PLESSIS
TOM SAVAGE	LOCK	4	LOCK	MARO ITOJE (C)
SIONE KALAMAFONI	LOCK	5	LOCK	JIM HAMILTON
LEWIS LUDLOW	BLINDSIDE FLANKER	6	BLINDSIDE FLANKER	MICHAEL RHODES
MATT KVESIC	OPENSIDE FLANKER	7	OPENSIDE FLANKER	KELLY BROWN
BEN MORGAN	NUMBER 8	8	NUMBER 8	JACKSON WRAY

TOM LINDSAY	REPLACEMENT	16	REPLACEMENT	DAVE PORECKI
YANN THOMAS	REPLACEMENT	17	REPLACEMENT	MAKO VUNIPOLA
PAUL DORAN-JONES	REPLACEMENT	18	REPLACEMENT	TITI LAMOSITELE
ELLIOTT STOOKE	REPLACEMENT	19	REPLACEMENT	GEORGE KRUIS
JACOB ROWAN	REPLACEMENT	20	REPLACEMENT	WILL FRASER
CALLUM BRALEY	REPLACEMENT	21	REPLACEMENT	BEN SPENCER
MARK ATKINSON	REPLACEMENT	22	REPLACEMENT	NICK TOMPKINS
STEVE McCOLL	REPLACEMENT	23	REPLACEMENT	BEN RANSOM

Officials

Referee Matthew Carley Assistant Referees Simon Harding and Roy Maybank