

Rugby Football Union



THORN COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

**GLOUCESTERSHIRE
V
NORTHUMBERLAND**

Saturday 31st January 1981

KINGSHOLM GROUND

Kingsholm Road, Gloucester.

KICK OFF 2-30p.m.

(Programme 30p)



THORN COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Colours—White

15	P. E. Butler	Gloucester	Full Back
14	L. Dick X	Cheltenham	Right Wing
13	P. Cue	Bristol	Right Centre
12	P. Taylor	Gloucester	Left Centre
11	R. R. Mogg	Gloucester	Left Wing
10	D. Sorrell	Bristol	Stand Off
9	P. Kingston X	Gloucester	Scrum Half
1	G. A. F. Sargent	Gloucester	Prop
2	K. Bogira	Bristol	Hooker
3	A. Sheppard X	Bristol	Prop
4	N. Pomphrey	Bristol	Lock
5	J. Fidler	Gloucester	Lock
6	M. J. Rafier (Capt.) X	Bristol	Flanker
7	P. Wood	Gloucester	Flanker
8	R. Hesford	Bristol	No. 8

Replacements:

16	J. Carr	Bristol University
17	P. Howell	Gloucester
18	S. Baker	Gloucester
19	K. White	Gloucester
20	P. Blakeway X	Gloucester
21	S. Boyle	Gloucester

Touch Judge:

B. Abrahams East Midlands Referees' Society

Referee:

R. C. Quittenton Sussex/London Society

THORN COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

NORTHUMBERLAND

Colours—Green with Red & Amber Hoops

15	B. Patrick	Gosforth	Full Back
14	J. Pollock	Northern	Right Wing
13	I. Tindle	Northern	Right Centre
12	R. W. Breakey	Gosforth	Left Centre
11	J. S. Gustard (Capt.)	Gosforth	Left Wing
10	D. Johnson	Gosforth	Stand Off
9	M. Young X	Gosforth	Scrum Half
1	C. White	Gosforth	Prop
2	R. Cunningham	Gosforth	Hooker
3	J. Bell	Gosforth	Prop
4	T. C. Roberts	Gosforth	Lock
5	S. Bainbridge	Gosforth	Lock
6	I. Richardson	Gosforth	Flanker
7	R. Anderson	Gosforth	Flanker
8	G. Smallwood	Northern	No. 8

Replacements:

16	W. Telford	Alnwick
17	T. Bell	Alnwick
18	I. Pringle	Morpeth
19	I. Ramage	Gosforth
20	P. Holden	Northern
21	C. Dixon	Tynedale

Touch Judge:

D. G. Crossley Bucks. Referees' Society

X Indicates International

MESSAGE FROM MR. J. A. SIBLEY

THORN EMI are pleased to be associated with the Rugby Union County Championship and Divisional Championship. Both of these tournaments are important for our leading players to gain experience in representative competition as stepping stones towards international recognition.

If today's Thorn County Championship Final lives up to the high standard set last year in the mud at the Vale of Lune, when Gloucestershire went down to the strong Lancashire side, then I am sure that everybody present will feel that they have had value for money. And it is value for money that we believe you will obtain from buying or renting the many THORN EMI products featured in this programme.



DIRECTOR & COMPANY SECRETARY
THORN EMI LIMITED

MESSAGE FROM TONY BODLEY

Gloucestershire, who have dominated the County Championship during the last decade, obviously intend to stay right at the top during Thorn's sponsorship of the competition.

After losing last year's magnificent final against a Lancashire team who achieved all manner of new peaks in 1980, the West countrymen hope to go one better today against Northumberland.

In fact if they succeed an even bigger battle is expected after the final whistle. There is now something tangible to display - the handsome Thorn Trophy - for victory. Where will it go?

Gloucestershire, confident after last year's near miss have already worked out a rota for Clubs to display the Thorn Trophy in their showcases, but Steve Gustard, the competitive Northumberland captain, suggests there will be no disharmony after the match as he will be taking the trophy back with him to Newcastle.

They have a strong case as they beat the defending champions Lancashire 9 - 7 at Gosforth in November and managed to upset Surrey 12 - 6 in the semi-final without really playing well.

It is no surprise that the finalists come from the two areas where the Championship really means something. They cannot understand the attitude of the other areas who wedge in county fixtures on any convenient Wednesday afternoon or squeeze them in under floodlights.

They stage their matches proudly on Saturdays. All the games generate tremendous enthusiasm. If anybody stands at Redruth for a Cornwall-Devon game or somewhere like Otley for a Yorkshire-Lancashire confrontation, the theory that the only passion in Rugby is found at Cardiff Arms Park is shown up as just so much nonsense.

And the intense rivalry will persist no matter what boundary changes the faceless civil servants in Whitehall force upon us all. My own county Middlesex do not even exist officially. Tell that to Northumberland because they lost 19-6 to them two years ago at Twickenham!

If all other counties adopted a similar approach to the North and South-West, the current proposals to downgrade the championship would have been stifled at birth.

Let's hope today's game matches the standard of last year's epic at the picturesque Vale of Lune ground even though it had rained non-stop for a week.

RUGBY CORRESPONDENT - DAILY EXPRESS

ACTION PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN FROM LAST YEAR'S THORN
COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL



BILL BEAUMONT captain of the victorious Lancashire team supported by COLIN FISHER left and FRAN COTTON as he holds aloft the Thorn Trophy.



PETER WILLIAMS The Lancashire fly half makes the break which gave
KEVIN O'BRIEN his second try.



PETER KINGSTON sets up an attack for Gloucestershire



P. WOOD Gloucestershire makes a break supported by MIKE RAFTER, as ROGER CREED moves in for Lancs.



R. HESFORD (Gloucestershire) wins a line out and deflects to PETER KINGSTON.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

"In Gloucestershire, Rugby Folk believe in themselves"

Those words were originally written by the great forward and administrator, John Kendall-Carpenter, as part of his contribution to this year's Gloucestershire RFU Handbook.

I make no apology for quoting them, because they could equally well apply to the players from Northumberland, who we welcome to Kingsholm today.

Our visitors come here as Northern Group Champions, and the achievements of players from that particular Group in the last few years, are too numerous, and too well-known, for me to detail here. Indeed, if any part of the country values its County Rugby as highly as we do here in the South West, it is the Northerners who do so.

We can be sure, therefore, that today's Final will have all the ingredients expected of a good game of Rugby - high-quality skills, good sportsmanship and commitment among them. I, for one, am looking forward to the game enormously.

May I also say a word about today's Sponsors? The Thorn Organisation deserve the thanks of all Rugby people, for the magnificent support which they are now giving to the game.

Last year's Final - the first to be called the Thorn County Championship Final - was a memorable one, and everyone hopes this year's match will be at least as good.

Thanks again Thorn! (We'll try to make the occasion worthy of your generosity.

G. E. Cullimore,
President, Gloucestershire RFU

NOTES

Welcome to the Big One!

It is an undeniable fact that, notwithstanding the counter-attractions in today's crowded calendar, the County Championship Final remains one of the most important, and keenly anticipated, event on the English Rugby scene. Surely, no one would disagree that the two Groups represented in today's game - the North and the South West - can take a great deal of the credit for the continuing prestige of the Final, and of the Championship in general.

In both these Groups, to play for one's County is still an honour to be sought after. Players, officials and supporters all combine to maintain the status of the County game, and the quality of Rugby seen in both these areas is as high as anyone is likely to see outside the international scene itself.

Now that the future of the County Championship is - yet again - under the microscope, it seems entirely appropriate that the 1981 Final should be played here at Kingsholm, the scene of so many memorable County matches over the years, and surely England's most famous ground, outside Twickenham.

Gloucestershire RFU extends grateful thanks to the Gloucester club for their co-operation in staging this important game. It's worth pointing out that Gloucester have had to rearrange a fixture against no less a club than Bridgend to do so.

And that speaks for itself.

Invaders from the North

Today, Gloucestershire contest their 25th County Final, Northumberland their 5th. Gloucestershire are looking for their 14th Championship, while Northumberland will be doing all they can to win their second.

That sort of statistic doesn't mean a lot, however. County Rugby takes very little account of past performances, and is no respecter of personal or team reputations. Anyone who was at the Vale of Lune Final last year will agree that any team that can beat Lancashire must be a team to be reckoned with.

Furthermore, the Northumberland side is built around the Gosforth Club, and we know a bit about them in this neck of the woods, so it doesn't seem likely that Gloucestershire's task today will be one whit less difficult than it was last year.

In fact, Northumberland's record of success in the County Championship goes back even further than Gloucestershire's. They won the title as long ago as 1891, by beating the Midlands at Coventry. Gloucestershire did manage a semi-final in 1891, losing to Lancashire (!), but didn't appear in a Final again until 1902, when they lost 9-3 to Durham.

It appears that Devon were the West Country heroes, in those days. They did, in fact, beat Northumberland in the Final, in Newcastle in 1899. Devon were the stumbling block again in 1912, when they beat Northumberland at Devonport. The most recent Final contested by today's visitors was in 1936, when they lost 13-6 to Hampshire.

Gloucestershire's first Championship was gained as the result of a win over Yorkshire in 1910. The 13th was in 1976, when Peter Butler helped to beat Middlesex 24 points to 9.

Many past and present players and officials will well remember the last time Gloucestershire and Northumberland met. It was in the Semi-Finals of 1970-71, and although Gloucestershire eventually squeaked home by 9 points to 6, it wasn't without an uncomfortable amount of anxious moments.

On paper, and otherwise, today's match looks evenly balanced. In fact, all looks set fair for an enthralling game.

Let's sit back and enjoy it.

Thanks to Thorn

This is the second season in which the County Championship has been sponsored by the Thorn Group of Companies, and although verbal shorthand still tends to omit the word 'Thorn' from the 'County Championship', who can really deny such generous benefactors the right to attach their name to the competition which they most liberally support?

Indeed, Thorn, who also sponsor the Divisional Championship, are a force to be reckoned with in English Rugby, these days. The whole question of industrial sponsorship may still ruffle the feathers of a few die-hard purists, but there's no denying that the game would be much the worse without it.

Last year's Thorn County Championship Final was a memorable game, in spite of very bad weather, and, one has to admit, the better team won, and won well. Any sponsor who puts the amount of finance and effort into their sponsorship as Thorn do, deserve some good Rugby for their money. The best thing that could happen today, is that the occasion proves to be a good advertisement for Thorn, and a good advertisement for Rugby as well.

Anyone who still thinks of Thorn as 'the electrical firm', will have their eyes opened by glancing through this programme. The Group's field of endeavour is very wide indeed, and constitutes a major force in British Industry.

Long may Thorn remain so. Any commercial enterprise which becomes so thoroughly infected by the Rugby disease as Thorn have, deserves to prosper.

On behalf of all English Rugby Men everywhere, Thorn - we salute you. And give you our grateful thanks.

A word from Gloucester

The Committee and Members of Gloucester RFC would like to extend to everyone here today a very hearty welcome. A Thorn County Championship Final is about the most important match which any Club ground can aspire to, and is always a memorable occasion. We are therefore very proud to be asked to stage the 1980-81 match.

The last time the Final was played at Kingsholm was in 1975, when Gloucestershire beat Eastern Counties by 13 points to 9. The following year, the title was retained with a 24-9 win over Middlesex, so perhaps there's an omen there, somewhere.

Perhaps we might be forgiven for inserting a small 'commercial'. There has been a great deal of good Rugby seen at Kingsholm this season, and there's still plenty of time for a great deal more - including matches against Bath (February 14th), Northampton (Friday March 6th) and Orrell (March 21st), so if you're in the area, why not come along? We'd be delighted to see you.

Meanwhile, our best wishes for an excellent and closely-fought Final.

PETER ARNOLD