

# EXETER RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB



Affiliated to the R.F.U. and Devon R.F.U.

COUNTY GROUND, EXETER

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*Team Colours:* ALL BLACK

DEVON CUP WINNERS 1971-72-73-76-78-80

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME 20p

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SEASON 1980-81

# EXETER v GLOUCESTER

Kick Off 3.00 pm    Touch Judge Devon Society    Referee R. Mayo (Bristol Society)

## EXETER

15 Bob Staddon \* o  
14 Steve Williams  
13 Steve Donavan \*  
12 Phil Loder  
11 Nick Bagge \*  
10 Steve Webb \* (Capt.)  
9 Jon Mears  
1 Chris Mills \* o  
2 Bruce Friday \*  
3 Trevor Harris \*  
4 Ian Cathery  
5 Pete McIntyre  
6 Simon Day \*  
7 Steve Lewis \*  
8 Mike Cathery

Replacements Paul Baxter \*  
Paul Hayman

\* County  
o Regional

## GLOUCESTER

15 Paul Ford  
14 Bob Clewes \*  
13 Paul Taylor \*  
12 Richard Mogg \*  
11 Pendraig Conway  
10 Colin Pryce  
9 Steve Baker  
1 Gordon Sargeant \* +  
2 Kevin White  
3 Steve Ashmead  
4 John Fidler \*  
5 John Brain  
6 John Gadd  
7 Mike Longstaff  
8 Mike Teague

Replacements Tony Durkin

\* County  
+ International

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## EXETER v GLOUCESTER

Today for the final club game of 1981 we invite Gloucester to the County Ground. Arguably the strongest opposition of the season, certainly one of the best teams in the country, it is perhaps fitting that the Kingsholm club should complete the season for us. It adds interest in as much it is also a Merit Table game, even if the clubs involved in next year's John Player Cup have already been decided (of those in the present Merit Table that is, it is theoretically feasible that Exeter University our Devon Cup opponents next Thursday evening may also be in next season's John Player competition). Gloucester are top of the South West Merit Table and no doubt aim to keep it that way. Bristol lost their chance by losing to Bath last week which allowed the latter club to finish fourth at the expense of Plymouth Albion, who must now wait another season. Exeter are lying third in the Merit Table and would no doubt like to finish the season on a high note. There would be no higher note than beating Gloucester.

By Gloucester's own standards they have had a fair season both in terms of results and players receiving national recognition. It almost goes without saying most if not all are county players including many 'reserves' in the Gloucester United side who are also playing Exeter - the 'A' side - it is hoped the 'A' side is stronger than when playing Bristol United and that Gloucester United are not as strong as their Bristol counterparts. In the South West Merit Table, en route to the top Gloucester have beaten Bath twice, Bristol at the Memorial Ground but losing to Bristol at Kingsholm (unusual ?) In the John Player competition they reached the quarter finals drawing 9-9 with London Scottish but losing the game through the away side scoring a try ruling. If they had won, their semi-final opponents would have been Leicester soon to contest the final with Gosforth. It may refresh some people's memories - or whatever - to know that Gloucester humbled the Midlands side 31-4 earlier in the season, not a claim many clubs can lay hold to and bearing in mind Leicester are England's most successful club this season. It is hard to lose the tag of being an all forward team but anyone who has seen Gloucester this season will realise the invalidity of such an idea and when beating Leicester not all the 31 points could have come from the forwards and/or Peter Butler. It is interesting however to note that the leading try scorer is a forward - Steve Boyle with a very impressive 18 tries, a number most backs would feel well pleased with and better than many clubs threequarters tally. Sharing this position is also Bob Clewes who holds the club record with well over 30, so by his standards a no more than average number. In taking the record some years ago he surpassed Arthur Hudson's tally - a legend in the club - whose son Gordon is President of the club. However, comparisons are often difficult because in this instance the number of games each man played to achieve their records were quite different - Arthur Hudson playing far less games. In addition of course, tries can be equally shared so that for example, a back division could score 70 tries between them yet the highest need be no higher than 10, yet in another team two backs could score 20+tries each, the rest being relatively barren. Of course there are clubs where neither situation occurs. In any event Steve Boyle and Bob Clewes will no doubt be looking to make it into the 20 try tally. As a lock it may be even some kind of record for Steve Boyle - to compare with Bristol's Nigel Pomphrey who of course also plays in the back row as well as lock. Leading points scorer is either Peter Butler (inevitably?) or 'new comer' Paul Ford who has been contesting the full-back position with some success, son of Peter Ford - the ex International who seemed to play for Gloucester for ever. At the time of writing the team is unknown but no matter what combination, there will be no doubt a plethora of county players together with some representative players making for a traditionally strong team. Phil Blakenay since his injury in the international season has been unavailable and his future is unsure, but no doubt fellow prop Gordon Sargeant who gained international honours this season will be playing - assisted by either Under 23 prop Steve Ashmead who is in the England party to tour the Argentine. Gloucester would seem to be more than well served in the front row. Perhaps accompanying Steve Boyle as lock will be John Fidler also going to the Argentine with England. Recognition at last - and well deserved. To complete the pack who all have senior representative status could be Under 23 back row men Mike Teague and John Gadd. The Exeter pack will have had their fair share of large packs over the past week or so. The Gloucester



backs will no doubt be out to prove they are more than an obligatory appendage to make up the numbers and several have played at high representative level. Steve Baker scrum-half, recently represented England Under 23 ranking well with his back row colleagues and of course we all know Richard Mogg - and if we don't the Gloucester supporters will inform us in no uncertain terms. Tremendously loyal to their team and quite well known vocally. No doubt they account for a little of the playing record which stands at P50 W38 D2 L10 points for 920 against 529. Quite impressive at an average of approximately 20 points a game although someone did remark they need 80 for the 1,000 points. Perhaps they will see today's game as preparation for next week's Graham Reeve 7's when they will again be at the County Ground along with other major clubs in the South West. They were also last year's beaten finalists with Bath although there was not much in it, really it was David Trick and Richard Mogg - imagine scoring three tries in one match and losing. However, all that is next week. Lets get today over first.

Well Exeter nearly made it a memorable Easter against major opposition - winning 12-7 against Bedford last Saturday but losing 11-17 to Moseley Easter Monday - the difference being two simple penalties in front of the posts. Against Bedford although Bedford had technically a good pack with plenty of possession and an inspiring captain Under 23 flanker Graham Phillips, they seemed to lack commitment which is what Exeter had in abundance. The East Midlands side had very speedy wings one of whom scored an excellent touch-line try from 40 yards but seemed disinclined to use them. Exeter got back into the game and as if to catch up with Chris Mills after a good run by John Hoskin and well backed by the back rows John Lockyer found himself with the ball under the posts and scored. Exultation and no doubt Trevor Harris and Bruce Friday will be trying even harder to even things out in the front row union. Against a vastly different Moseley to the side that played us in the John Player Cup, Exeter went ahead after a fine passing movement and Mike Bleasdale scored obviously delighted with himself. When we should have gone further ahead after a glorious break by Steve Webb the reverse happened and sloppy tackling enabled Moseley to go the length of the field and score. So at half time with a strong wind against us it was 7-7 instead of conceivably 11 or 13-3 to us. However, that's rugby and to add salt two easy penalties made it 13-7. Then came one of the best individual tries seen at the County Ground this season or perhaps for several seasons. That enigmatic Celt Steve Webb ran from inside his own half broke the defence superbly and then sold some tremendous dummies to three players at once before crossing near the posts. Then of course, he missed the conversion to bring everybody down from euphoria. In this instance hyperbolism seemed justified, but for Steve Webb's peace of mind Moseley scored another good try to add to their first one, otherwise the missed conversion would have assumed 'unjustified' importance. That was that - the writer makes no apology for writing in more detail than normal for matches already reported, but after the disaster at Taunton a double victory over Easter would have been tonic indeed. In the Moseley programme reference was made about the size of their pack in the Cup game and that hope was expressed that the Moseley pack would not be so large and intimidating - amen to that. If anything they were more aggressive, collectively bigger, still superb at ruck and maul and with two players making come-backs flanker Dave Warren absent for a very long time and Al Recardo back after suspension. Both were key players, played very well ably assisted by Chris Gifford who wasn't originally down as scrum-half. He made the ninth forward - and perhaps the difference - it must be comforting to have so much talent fighting for a first team place. No doubt Gloucester's Steve Baker will be out to create just as favourable an impression if he is playing - scrum-halves seemed to have been in ample abundance at Kingsholm in recent years. No doubt whoever Exeter find themselves playing they could all find first team places in most teams. Unfortunately the pack - and team for that matter - will find themselves again without captain Tim Woodrow who is still injured after the Bristol game with a faint chance of playing in the Devon Cup next Thursday. Tim has made a tremendous impact on the team since Christmas and his own game has improved considerably obtaining possession in the lineout against bigger teams and inspiring the team generally. He will be sorely missed and he certainly ends his tenure as captain on a high note (excluding the injury). Bob Staddon returns for



his 'last' game and intends to retire at the end of the season (again). Whatever, there can be few better footballers who have given such service to Exeter and despite his protestation he will be difficult to follow and people shouldn't really try. Everyone has their own style but for younger players benefit, most good players practice, practice ..... John Lockyer will be carrying on in order to add to his try total, but also to stop Bruce Friday smiling all the time. More seriously competition is what it's all about - said Paul Kennedy getting up from another argument, with Trevor Harris looking the other way and Chris Mills smiling benignly. Not many front rows have bettered any combination of them all season - great. For today's game Messrs Mills, Harris and Friday do battle (?) and in fact the pack is the same as against Moseley - therefore our 'Canadian' friend Ian helps out again with his brother Mike a veteran of several years - in the back row. When Mike goes to South Glamorgan Institute next October he will be missed greatly but it will be a great experience for him. They'll soon recognize his hair. Peter McIntyre completes almost a fairy tale season coming from Bideford to finish off his rugby and ending up being Tim Woodrow's right hand man - or left hand man. Although he is certainly not fairy like and when Peter grins the opposition are non-plussed for a moment. Cinderella comes to mind. Another relative newcomer is flanker Steve Lewis who at first when Brian Morgan was here before Christmas was perhaps on the periphery of the first team. Now he is very much an established player, has made considerable impact since Christmas and been a composite member of a fine back row. Seems to play so much better against better opposition as well as a leading try scorer he can be a very useful additional kicker. Simon Day who with Steve is the highest scoring forward - not quite in the same category as 18 try Steve Boyle - is the calming influence in the back row - who have scored 22 tries between them. No doubt he is also thinking about the 7's team next week. The backs have two changes plus one positional Phil Loder reverts back to centre instead of Mike Bleasdale with Bob Staddon as full-back. John Hoskin was unfortunately injured in the Bedford game so Steve Williams retains his place. The handling and defence will certainly have to be good against Gloucester. John Mears plays instead of injured Kevin Summers who certainly wasn't match fit against Moseley to do himself justice. John will certainly help with the kicking. Both are superb club men if totally opposite in approach. Perhaps the epitome of club men is again another newcomer Phil Loder who has had to take over from Bob Staddon an unenviable task, revert to centre which was not always helpful, revert again to the 'A' when Phil Treseder and Steve Donovan were playing and never a complaint. Excellent tackler, realistic and 100% commitment an example to more experienced more 'talented' players. A good foil to his co centre today debonair Steve Donovan who will be eager to score against Gloucester today and improve on his try tally this season. Nick Bagge whose legs seem to go on for ever and has a deceptively lengthy stride will be eager to remain top try scorer against his experienced opposite number. Perhaps if he had played more regularly and been used better he could be in 20+try tally. There's always next season. Steve Williams must remember wistfully when he was top try scorer. Substitutes include our esteemed coach Paul Baxter with the other props needed against Gloucester United. Not quite sure whether Paul would like to be called upon or not, but he will nevertheless be a rival for the Gloucester side in vocal support. Everybody must yell today and give the supporters something to shout about. Leading scorer prior to this game is Steve Webb with 231 points well ahead of everybody, John Mears follows with 60 odd but only in a dozen or so games, Nick Bagge has 12 tries, John Hoskin 9, Simon Day and Steve Lewis 8 apiece (still) Steve Donovan 7 and Mike Cathery 6. Let us hope some improve their scores today. The record stands at P42 W23 D2 L17 points for 682 against 555.

A good close season is extended to everybody. This is probably the last programme of the season as no doubt Devon will organize the Cup programme and the Graham Reeves 7's are a separate entity. If the Devon programme does become a club programme then the writer will issue good wishes again - and summarize some of the above. God forbid. Thank you to all readers, but certainly to Jack Challenger's secretary, Barry Gunter and Jack himself.

A very warm welcome is extended to all Gloucester players, committee and supporters and hope they will enjoy themselves in the clubhouse afterwards. They usually do and will probably do the same next week also.

Terry Davies.