

**Rugby Football Union**



**THORN EMI**

**CHAMPIONSHIP**

**NORTHUMBERLAND**  
**V**  
**GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

16-19

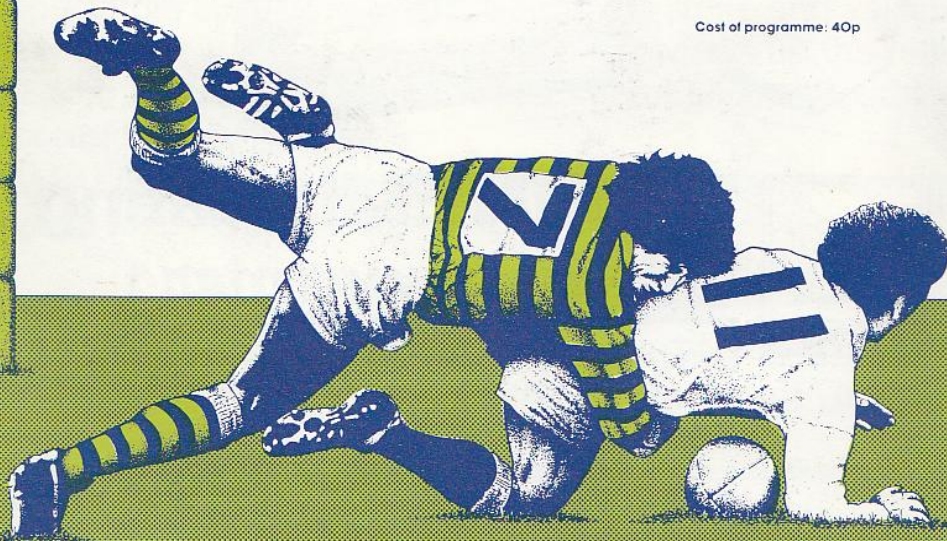
**Saturday 22nd October 1983**

**COUNTY GROUND**

**Gosforth**

**KICK OFF 2.30 p.m.**

Cost of programme: 40p



*For the notes in this and many previous programmes we are indebted once again to John Pargeter, Associated Sports Editor of the Newcastle Journal, who generously allows us to trespass upon his time. The excellent action photographs are also kindly supplied by The Journal.*

## **From John Pargeter**

When the County Championship system was changed, many in the North East viewed it with a jaundiced eye.

Who was the spoil-sport who was planning to take away "our fun" one could almost hear. "We like playing Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cumbria, Cheshire and Durham. We have played them for 60 years. Why change it?"

Thus the new league system began with only lukewarm support, not that the numbers dwindled. It was simply that supporters were not quite sure what to expect.

What is more, the new plan was announced just after Northumberland had carried off the County Championship by that remarkable gritty performance when defeating Gloucestershire at Kingsholm.

The next season led to the new league system inauguration, so that results determined in which league a county would be placed. Northumberland were not enamoured because they had to beat Yorkshire by 11 points to go into Division I. They won by only 19-12, so Yorkshire went into the premier league, Northumberland into Division II.

They were quick to prove that this was an injustice for, after losing in Cornwall, they defeated Kent and Durham, then trounced Hertfordshire in the play-off by 47-6 to gain promotion to Division I.

Suddenly the new system didn't look so bad. It had, in fact, caught on. Northumberland, however, found it much tougher going, their old rivals, Yorkshire, beating them in the opening match two weeks ago at Otley by 14-10 in a match memorable in many ways for its tremendous enthusiasm, and above all for the sporting attitude of the crowd. There was not a single murmur when kicks were taken, which, sadly, cannot be said at many matches these days!

This afternoon there is a repeat of Northumberland's last triumph against Gloucestershire, but with the venue reversed here at the County Ground at Gosforth.

Gloucestershire began with a 20-0 win away to Surrey, so it is all to play for today, and remember Gloucestershire won the title last season with a 19-7 victory over Yorkshire!

**NORTHUMBERLAND** (12)16

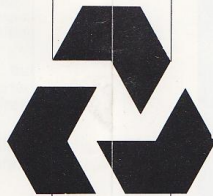
- 15. **S. MACRAE** (Northern)
- 14. **J. STOREY** (Gosforth)
- 13. **R. W. BREAKEY** (Gosforth)
- 12. **W. TELFORD** (Alnwick)
- 11. **J. POLLOCK** (Gosforth)
- 10. **D. JOHNSON** (Gosforth)
- 9. **G. STURGEON** (Tynedale)
- 1. **C. DIXON** (Tynedale)
- 2. **T. BELL** (Alnwick)
- 3. **J. CURRY** (Gosforth)
- 4. **T. C. ROBERTS** (Wakefield)
- 5. **S. BAINBRIDGE** (Gosforth)
- 6. **S. EDWARDS** (Gosforth)
- 8. **G. SMALLWOOD** (Gosforth)
- 7. **S. BYRNE** (Gosforth)

**Referee:**  
**R. QUITTENTON**  
**Touch-judges:**  
**T. R. PARLETT    A. REAY**

**GLOUCESTERSHIRE** (6)19

- 15. **J. HOGG** (Bristol)
- 14. **A. MORLEY** (Bristol)
- 13. **R. KNIBBS** (Bristol)
- 12. **R. MOGG** (Gloucester)
- 11. **J. CARR** (Bristol)
- 10. **S. BARNES** (Bristol)
- 9. **R. HARDING** (Bristol)
- 1. **M. PREEDY** (Gloucester)
- 2. **S. MILLS** (Gloucester)
- 3. **P. BLAKEWAY** (Gloucester)
- 4. **J. FIDLER** (Gloucester)
- 5. **S. BOYLE** (Gloucester)
- 6. **J. GADD** (Gloucester)
- 8. **R. HESFORD** (Bristol)
- 7. **M. RAFTER** (Bristol) Capt.

*Match Balls kindly donated  
by Stan Seymour*



**National Westminster Bank PLC  
IS PLEASED TO BE ASSOCIATED  
WITH THIS EVENT**

## ***Frightening Figures?***

Today's contestants represent the two great strongholds of County Rugby, the South West and the North.

Gloucestershire, however, can point to by far the most successful record, in that they have won the national title 14 times in all, and have appeared in another 12 finals, whereas Northumberland have won it only twice, and have been in only four other finals.

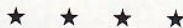
So, just in case those figures proved too unpalatable for "home" supporters to read, here are the teams which met in that memorable final – the penultimate under the previous system in which Northumberland won at Gloucester:

**NORTHUMBERLAND:** B. Patrick (Gosforth); J. Pollock (Northern), A. Tindle (Northern); R. W. Breakey (Gosforth); J. S. Gustard (Gosforth) capt.; D. Johnson (Gosforth); M. Young (Gosforth); C. White (Gosforth); R. Cunningham (Gosforth); J. Bell (Gosforth); S. Bainbridge (Gosforth); T. C. Roberts (Gosforth); I. Richardson (Gosforth); G. Smallwood (Northern); R. Anderson (Gosforth).

**GLOUCESTERSHIRE:** P. E. Butler (Gloucester); L. G. Dick (Cheltenham); P. Cue (Bristol); P. Taylor (Gloucester); R. R. Mogg (Gloucester); D. P. Sorrell (Bristol); P. Kingston (Gloucester); A. Sheppard (Bristol); K. Bogira (Bristol); G. A. F. Sargent (Gloucester); J. H. Fidler (Gloucester); N. J. C. Pomphrey (Bristol); M. Rafter (Bristol) capt.; R. A. Hesford (Bristol); P. A. Wood (Gloucester).

With nine minutes left, Northumberland were trailing by 3-6, but then came a four-minute spell which brought two tries, one converted by Malcolm Young, who after the match announced his retirement from county rugby.

Roberts scored the first try after a high kick by Patrick, and Pollock got the second after Young and Bainbridge had split the defence. Johnson converted one.



Northumberland have only one more match in their group of Division I and that is against Surrey on the London Irish ground on November 12th.

Depending upon the outcome of today's encounter, and the Surrey match, will depend who and where Northumberland figure in the play-off on November 26th, i.e. whether they play to win the title, stay in Division I, or to avoid relegation.

Keep your eyes on The Journal . . . it could mean another nail-biting home match!