

**Rugby Football Union**  
 **THORN EMI**  
**CHAMPIONSHIP**



**GLOUCESTERSHIRE**  
**V**  
**KENT**

**Saturday 13th October 1984**

**BRISTOL F.C.,**

**Memorial Ground,**

**Filton Avenue, Horfield,**

**Bristol, BS7 0AQ**

**KICK OFF 3.00 p.m.**

Cost of programme: 30p



### **Gloucestershire**

Last year's victors, Gloucestershire, pictured at the first THORN EMI County Championship Final at Twickenham.

## **DAVID FROST THE GUARDIAN**

### **A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER**

County rugby, we are often reminded, is not everyone's cup of tea, but those of us brought up in its intense loyalties, its excitements, and its humour know how much good it has done for English rugby and are deeply grateful for the support THORN EMI gives to the County Championship.

My own involvement started early when, just out of school, I was asked to play in a Cornwall trial. At the moment I received the invitation I was in Cheshire and, after spending the whole of the Friday night sitting up in a series of trains from Birkenhead to Redruth, I not surprisingly played thoroughly badly. But the experience of playing with or against such current or future internationals as Keith Scott, Bob Kennedy, Jim George, John Kendall-Carpenter, Squire Wilkins, and Vic Roberts was the stuff to fire ambition.

The intensity of feeling among Cornishmen for county rugby was marvellous to behold. No club games were played on the afternoons of County Championship matches, so that all players were free to join the hordes of spectators ringing the fields at Redruth, Camborne, or Penzance. One got totally caught up in the heady atmosphere.

Subsequently I moved to Manchester as a journalist and inevitably became enmeshed in Lancashire's dedicated commitment to striving for the County Championship. Five consecutive Saturdays were devoted to Championship football – a true campaign of endeavour.

For me the personal climax to all this up-bringing came in 1969 when Cornwall faced Lancashire in the final on a vibrant spring day at Redruth. Cornwall, who had won the Championship only once, in 1908, almost did it in 1969, but in the end Lancashire, schooled by John Burgess and captained by England's present coach, Richard Greenwood, just got home 11–9 thanks to a spectacular late try by Tony Richards.

How times have changed. In 1984–85 neither Cornwall nor even Lancashire are in the top flight of the THORN EMI Championship. Yet that 1969 final remains one of the most exciting games of rugby I have seen at any level.

There were many other memorable battles under the old system: Cumberland and Westmorland's heroic efforts at Kendal, for instance, to check Yorkshire's formidable international backs – men like Peter Thompson, Frank Sykes, and Phil Horrocks-Taylor – and Durham's clashes against all and sundry with Jim Collard chasing under Mike Weston's howdo-God up-and-unders.

It was with some misgivings therefore that those of us who had grown to love the old system greeted the new formula introduced the season before last under the sponsorship of THORN EMI. Yet there can be no denying that the new arrangement has brought benefits. The break away from the old area groupings meant fewer one-sided matches for the stronger counties, and it gave weaker counties the opportunities to meet counties from outside their area. A county like Devon no longer had to face the prospect, year after year, of getting nowhere because of Gloucestershire's dominance in the South-west.

These two aspects of the new formula were seen most clearly last season when Somerset, freed from the frustration of playing all their early games under the shadow of Gloucestershire, actually reached the final – in which, by a nice turn of fate, they met, and were defeated by, Gloucestershire.

There were further misgivings when it was decided to break with tradition and to stage the final annually at Twickenham. Previously the final had been held on the home ground of one of the finalists, and the enthusiastic crowds packed into these smaller grounds had repeatedly created the most lively and marvellous atmosphere. We feared that a Twickenham final would not attract a big crowd and that the spectators would be lost in the gauntness of Twickenham's lofty stands. It seemed that the old atmosphere would be missing.

Last March, however, our fears were proved groundless. The THORN EMI final drew a crowd of 22,000 to Twickenham, and the supporters of Gloucestershire and Somerset brought their own vivid West country atmosphere to Headquarters for a truly memorable match.

Let's hope the 1984–85 county season continues in that same vein.

## **THORN EMI COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP**

### **GLOUCESTERSHIRE'S WELCOME TO KENT.**

It gives me great pleasure to welcome our visitors, Kent, to the Memorial Ground. It is seven years since we last met and that was in a Semi Final.

I hope our visitors enjoy their visit to Gloucestershire and that today's game gives pleasure to everyone.

Our thanks go to the Bristol F.C. for all their arrangements today.

I. W. Pearce, President.

Today's playing kit supplied to Gloucestershire RFU by courtesy of  
John Mansfield Limited.

### **We're off again!**

It's a long, long trail that starts winding, once again, today. One which Gloucestershire may be well used to traversing, but which doesn't get any easier as the years go on. As Mike Rafter remarked, at the County Victory Dinner and Dance during the Summer, we've got to beat both Yorkshire and Somerset just to head our Group in Division 1 this season.

I'm sure that Mike was referring to recent history when he made his comment, and didn't intend to underestimate Kent in any way at all. Newcomers to Division 1 they may be, but they got there on pure merit, and will certainly be out to prove that they now occupy their rightful place in Rugby's County hierarchy.

They have some historical justification for that view, too. As long ago as 1891 they were runners-up to Lancashire, and they won their first Championship in 1897, when they beat Cumberland at Carlisle.

Kent were there, or thereabouts, for decades after that, culminating in their Championship in 1927, when they beat Leicestershire at Blackheath by 22 points to 12. It's nice to see them back in the upper echelons, and last season's results would seem to indicate that they won't be anyone's pushovers.

In fact, they came through last year's campaign unbeaten, and for the most part, in fine style. They beat Hertfordshire 18—8, Cheshire 35—18, and our old sparring partners from Cornwall 8—6. They then had to face the tough Durham side, who had beaten both North Midlands (13-3) and Warwickshire (25-9) in the Promotion match, and did that small thing by 17 points to 15.

This argues considerable determination, and should provide uncompromising opposition for a Gloucestershire side which only includes nine of the players who beat Somerset in last season's Final.

Of course, the other side of that particular coin is that there are several Gloucestershire players who will be out to prove a point or two, and keep their places in the later matches, so there shouldn't be any lack of commitment in today's game.

The scene seems set, therefore, for an enthralling encounter. Perhaps, as Confucius said on one memorable occasion, we should just lay back and enjoy it.

Thanks to THORN-EMI

It's my pleasant duty, once again, to thank, most sincerely, THORN-EMI for their continuing sponsorship of, what should be, Rugby's premier competition, excepting only the Internationals.

I believe that THORN-EMI's sponsorship contract is approaching the end of its course, and I, for one, hope that the whole thing can be renewed for another term. However, whatever decisions are finally made, surely THORN-EMI deserve the gratitude of all Rugby people everywhere for their input into the Great Game.

It seems to be fashionable, in some quarters - not least the much-discussed 'Burgess Report', to 'knock' the County Championship. Personally, I couldn't disagree more. Surely, players must have more loyalty, and more commitment, to their County than they can have to a nebulous Divisional system, which can inspire few people, and bears little relationship to anything, other than pretty lines drawn on maps. Over the past few seasons THORN-EMI have done much to prove the truth of that contention, and we thank them for it.

## THORN EMI COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

### GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Colours: White Shirts and Shorts

15	P. Cue	(Bristol)	Full Backs
			Threequarters
14	A. J. Morley	(Bristol)	Right - Wing - Left
13	J. Watson	(Bristol)	Right - Centre - Left
12	S. Hogg	(Bristol)	Left - Centre - Right
11	J. Carr	(Bristol)	Left - Wing - Right
10	S. Barnes	(Bristol)	Half - Backs
			Stand Off
9	R. Harding	(Bristol)	Scrum
			Forwards
1	M. Preedy	(Gloucester)	Prop
2	S. G. F. Mills	(Gloucester)	Hooker
3	A. Sheppard	(Bristol)	Prop
4	J. Orwin	(Gloucester)	Lock
5	A. Blackmore	(Bristol)	Lock
6	M. Rafter (Capt.)	(Bristol)	Blind Side
7	D. Pegler	(Wasps)	Open Side
8	R. Hesford	(Bristol)	No. 8

Replacements:

16	S. Baker	(Gloucester)
17	S. Overall	(Cheltenham)

† International

Touch Judge: M. Morgan Bristol Referees Soc.

### KENT

Colours: Dark Blue Shirts and Shorts

15	G. Walters	(Old Shootershillians & Blackheath)
14	K. Purchase	(Lewisham & Blackheath)
13	R. Bodenham (Capt.)	(Old Brockleians & Blackheath)
12	L. Cokell	(Old Shootershillians & Blackheath)
11	M. Gregory	(Askeans)
10	N. Colyer	(Old Juddian & Blackheath)
9	G. Williams	(Maidstone & Blackheath)
1	P. Essenhigh	(Medway & Blackheath)
2	R. Howe	(Old Beecehamians & Blackheath)
3	R. Pascall	(Beckenham & Gloucester)
4	P. McRae	(Askeans)
5	D. Hursey	(Charlton Park)
6	M. Willden	(Gravesend & Blackheath)
7	M. Skinner	(Blackheath)
8	S. Hill	(Sidcup & Blackheath)

Replacements:

16	S. Peet	(Askeans)
17	C. Read	(Westcombe Park)

Touch Judge: M. G. Barnes Kent Referees Soc.

Referee: L. M. Prideaux (N. Midland)