

**JOHN SMITH'S
MERIT TABLES**

GLOUCESTER V. HEADINGLEY

SATURDAY
29th MARCH, 1986
Kick-off 3 p.m.



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Kingsholm

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GLOUCESTER

(Cherry & White)

Full Back

15. T. Smith

Three Quarters

14. R. Mogg

13. R. McLean

12. P. Taylor (Capt.)

11. J. Breeze

Half Backs

10. M. Hamlin

9. M. Hannaford

Forwards

1. P. Jones

2. K. White

3. R. Pascall

4. N. Scrivens

5. J. Etheridge

6. J. Gadd

7. M. Longstaff

† 8. M. Teague

REPLACEMENTS

16. R. Williams

17. G. Mann

HEADINGLEY

Full Back

15. D. Lowther

Three Quarters

14. J. Eagle

13. A. Laycock

12. P. Johnson

11. M. Joyce

Half Backs

10. A. Moran

9. S. Worrall

Forwards

† 1. P. Huntsman

2. T. Sinclair (Capt.)

3. A. Machell

4. R. France

5. A. Fraser

6. N. Hargreave

† 7. P. Winterbottom

8. K. Higgins

REPLACEMENTS

Referee: R. HARDING (Devon Society)

† International

Good luck to one special team from another!



Richard Cound

BMW in Gloucestershire

As I Was Saying . . .

. . . before I was so rudely interrupted, there IS life after the John Player, and quite a lot of it is taken up by John Smiths Merit Table considerations. Our old friends from Headingley are certainly contributing to that preoccupation.

The combination of horrific weather — just at the wrong time of the season — and away draws in the Cup has deprived us of some fascinating matches, and hasn't been helpful as far as the Merit Table is concerned: it would, for example, have been useful to have beaten Nottingham.

When we all went into hibernation, the situation was that Gloucester was top of the table, with Nottingham breathing down our necks. That hasn't changed, and we now find ourselves with today's game and the visit to Sale, a bit later, in which the matter will be sewn up, one way or another. Sale are bonny fighters, and they won't be doing us any favours, but before we even think about that, we have to get past the lads from Leeds.

Headingley are, of course, always heartily welcome, but I don't remember a game between us with so much riding on it, which makes today's match a bit more important than the average Easter encounter.

All of which is fine, but I hope that the occasion doesn't get to the players to such a degree that the open running for which these games have always been noted, goes by the board. It probably won't if Headingley have anything to say about it.

So it's 'Happy Easter' to the Yorkshiremen. Great to see them again, and we all hope they enjoy their visit something immoderate. We probably can't run to chocolate eggs, but there should be adequate compensation for that sad oversight around the various bars.

Just one thought, Yorkshire is, of course, the home of John Smiths ale. Which, for my money, should give Headingley a life membership of Merit Table 'A'.

The Bogey Ground Strikes Again

What is it about the London Scottish/Richmond ground that always seems to produce unsatisfactory Cup results for Gloucester? Remember that numbingly boring draw against Richmond a few years ago?

I couldn't get along to the London Scottish game myself, and I don't believe in making judgements on hearsay, so perhaps the fewer comments from me the better, although the whole thing seems to have been depressing from several points of view.

After our great run last season, however, and the high hopes we all had, we must send our fervent 'bad luck' messages to the players. It was a bad way to go out.

Well Done Glyn!

Now to more cheerful things. It was great to see hooker Glyn Manns selected for the South West Under 23 squad last week. Time he had some recognition. It also seems likely that one or two other Gloucester lads might have made it had they not been forced to call off because of the JPC commitment.

A special thought, perhaps, for Tim Ford, who cried off the Squad, only to lose his place to the now-fit Jim Breeze for the Cup game. You wins some, you loses some Tim!

Fancy a Spot of Old Time Dancing?

Because, if so, I'd get away from Kingsholm before about 8 o'clock, if I were you.

If, on the other hand, you wouldn't mind an Easter rave-up, then stick around. The Complex, this evening, will resound to the echoes of another of the world-famous Players Discos, held in aid of the Tour Fund.

The Florida Tour is, of course, now almost imminent, so it might be one of your last chances to support the lads, and for a mere £1.50, it's a cheap way of doing it.

Members can get tickets beforehand — and it would make life easier if you do — from entrepreneur Jeremy Bennett, or any player you chance to buttonhole.

Welcome Back!

Nice to see our list of wounded being shortened considerably. Malcolm Preedy, Nick Price and Richard Mogg have all had run outs, and some or all of them might even be playing over Easter, for all I know.

Malcolm and 'Moggy' will pardon me if I give pride of place to Nick — after all, we lost him before the season started, which was a blow after his magnificent form last season.

It's good to see all of you back, lads. It would probably be unworthy of me to quote one official (who had better remain anonymous) who opined that it is amazing what an approaching American Tour does to hasten recovery. Perhaps the medical profession should do some research into this hitherto unsuspected phenomenon.

And, before I leave the subject, good wishes to 'mine host' the Skipper. We all hope that John Orwin stops pulling hamstrings before he starts pulling pints.

Now — Where Were We?

One thing about having lost interest in the Cup is that we do, at least, know where we go from here.

First of all, a little more detail about the John Smiths Merit Table. I gather that it is now a two-horse race, the thoroughbreds in question being Gloucester and Nottingham. If we win today, and also beat Sale, that's the end of the matter, and no-one can catch us. If we lose either, then it's more complicated, and Nottingham could pip us at the post.

This assumes that Nottingham win all their remaining matches, and they do have some tricky ones to come.

It wouldn't be a bad consolation for the Cup trauma, would it?

Returning to more bread-and-butter matters, the next home First XV game is on Monday (3.00) as ever was, Birkenhead Park are the visitors, and they usually give us a bright match, fitting the holiday season.

One attractive fixture which the JPC situation has now resolved for us, is that we're away to Moseley next Saturday, April 5th. Not far to go, and they always give us a good welcome at the Reddings.

But one of the highlights of the Kingsholm season comes on Saturday April 12th, when Neath will be the visitors. It would be nice to see Jonathan Davies, who returned from the Sydney Sevens covered in glory, and we mustn't forget 'Superboot' Thorburn either.

Neath can claim to be the most attractive side in Wales, and you won't want to miss their visit.

There are other good things coming up too, so the season isn't dead yet.

United

Don't forget, either, that the United take on Moseley second string here at Kingsholm, next Saturday. With the 'walking wounded' making their way back, there will be a fair few good players around, so it would be worth your time to come along, if you don't want to make the trip to Birmingham.

We extend a special welcome today to the members of the Mini-Rugby Sections of Old Richians and Saintbridge F.P. R.F.C.'s. The under 12 teams of these clubs are playing for the "Kingsdale Morris Challenge Ball" the game will be 20 minutes each way kick-off at 2 p.m.

It is hoped these youngsters who could well be the stars of tomorrow enjoy the experience of playing on the hallowed turf of Kingsholm.

Tailpiece

Here's a nice little Easter poser for you, especially since we will soon be staring the cricket season in the face. Old hands will probably know the answer, but many people won't and it could be a good way to win the odd pint or so.

The question is: who was the last England Cricket Captain to play Rugby for Gloucester?
Answer on Monday. Have a good week end.

PETER ARNOLD.

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