

**JOHN SMITH'S
MERIT TABLES**

GLOUCESTER V. LEICESTER

SATURDAY
6th DECEMBER, 1986
Kick-off 3 p.m.

Sponsored by

SparPlas



FOUNDED 1873

GLOUCESTER RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

Kingsholm

PRESIDENT:
CANON H. M. HUGHES B.A.

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME 20p

The Winner of today's
Official Programme
Draw will receive
£5 from

Tyre Sales
Tyre Sales (Bham) Ltd.
12 Kingsholm Rd
Gloucester, G1 3AG

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Tigers by the Tail

Grab a tiger by the tail and you can't let go, they say. That's as may be, but our annual visit from 15 Tigers all at once is something we wouldn't let go if you paid us to.

Of course, the Gloucester lads could be forgiven for feeling a bit tigerish themselves, just at the moment. Having deservedly seen off Bath, on their own patch, they could well be regarding Leicester as a tasty dessert.

That wouldn't be wise. Even the regrettable fact that the Divisional Championship has deprived Leicester of half-a-dozen first-choice players doesn't make our honoured visitors anyone's pushover. One thing you've never seen is a weak Leicester side.

There's another factor which is not irrelevant, too. Today's game counts towards the John Smith's Merit Table 'A'. We *need* to win it, while I have no doubt at all that the Tigers badly *want* to.

The last few years have seen some memorable encounters between our two great Clubs. You'll be well aware of all that, and I don't need to go into details here. Last season was sufficiently remarkable, in that we actually won both games — by 15 points to 9 at Aylestone Road, and 15-10 at Kingsholm. However, results in these games have never been predictable; how does one explain, for example, that in 1984/5 we won at Kingsholm, 37-15 and then came badly unstuck at Leicester, 27-6?

So I'm not quite daft enough to make any predictions today. Except one, perhaps — and that is that everyone will have a great time, on and off the field.

And why not? No team in the country is more welcome to Kingsholm than Leicester, and it's great to see them again.

Sparplas Again

If the Leicester game is a permanent attraction on the Kingsholm scene, it's equally true to say that the generous Sponsorship regularly supplied by Sparplas at this match has become just as much a fixture. And we're duly and sincerely grateful for their continuing support.

There's no doubt that the continued expansion of our major local replacement window company is something of a phenomenon. As Sparplas Marketing Services Manager, Barrie Knight writes: "Isn't it good to see a local company growing and growing at a time when the gloom and doom merchants are still spreading despondent messages!"

Barrie has some right to his euphoria too. As he says, "Against all the national predictions, Sparplas are forging ahead in a big way."

There are now thirteen Area Sales Offices throughout the West Midlands, the West Country and Central and Southern England, controlled from the Company's Cheltenham HQ. The tie-in with Bowater Industries PLC, which we announced on the last occasion that Sparplas gave us their support, has helped in no small measure.

An expanding company obviously means good news on the employment front. The Sparplas workforce now runs into the hundreds, and the Sales Force alone counts for almost 100 of those.

But Sparplas obviously believe in the old adage about 'all work and no play'. While we're grateful for their backing, we can't claim exclusivity in that respect. The Company also has a great record in their support for golf and racing, for example.

It's nice to see the distinctive Sparplas Bus at the ground today. And why not? "If you've got it," as Racquel Welch used to say, "Flaunt it!"

So our welcome is as warm as Sparplas' own double glazing. Thanks again, chaps! We're sure that your continued presence at the Leicester game goes a long way towards ensuring that Gloucester's rugby community thinks first of Sparplas when they're thinking replacement windows.

The Draw is Drawing on

December 19th — one week next Friday, and therefore only one home United match away — sees the Big Draw Night in the Clubhouse, when the veritable cornucopia of prizes offered in the Grand Social Club Christmas Draw is to be distributed to the lucky ticket holders.

That's always a great night, and John Beaman is expecting the usual healthy crowd. Unfortunately, there are one or two other happenings happening on that evening, so he inention is to make it a 'Members Only' affair. Sorry about that, but you'll want to buy your drinks in comfort, either to celebrate your good fortune, or to lament your lack of it.

Of course, the whole thing is irrelevant if you haven't bought any tickets. And the more you buy, the pleasanter the evening of December 19th is likely to be. Better take you chance to invest a little more, don't you think?

And, by the way, if you see Syd — tell him.

Saturday Night is Disco Night

Before Draw Night, however, there's another noteworthy event. The Players are running one of their highly popular discos in the Complex, next Saturday, after the Bath v. United game right here.

Proceeds will go towards the Players' Tour Fund, which was obviously fairly well cleaned out by the Florida excursion. Admission is peanuts, and Jeremy Bennett or any player will be able to give you full details, sell you a ticket, and generally minister to your needs.

Well why not? It isn't a bad way to usher in Christmas.

Toulouse

As I foretold last week, tickets for the Toulouse game on January 31st will be on sale today. All stand tickets cost £3.00, and for the moment, Centre Stand will be reserved for Patrons, at the rate of one ticket each. So if you're a reverend Patron and want to bring a guest or three, then, just for once, you'll be in the Wings.

Ground tickets are on sale at £2.00 (£1.00 for Juniors and Senior Citizens) and these can also be obtained for cash at Gordon Hudson's or Alan Brinn's sports shops.

I'm sure there will be a big call for seats, so it wouldn't be a bad idea to do something about it today.

West Hartlepool

I'm afraid I still don't have full details about the arrangements for the West Hartlepool John Player game on January 24th. What I *do* know is that British Rail do intend to run a train, sufficient support being forthcoming. They also intend to set a deadline, beyond which, if enough of us are not getting off our bums and trekking North, the train will be cancelled.

Let's face it, the distance involved means that rail is about the only practical means of getting there, so there doesn't seem any reason why we shouldn't fill their puffing billy for them. At a price of £12.00, it isn't a bad offer.

United Next Week

As I say, next week we have a visit from the Bath second string to face our United, and there isn't any First XV game to act as competition, so perhaps our super reserve side may get the attention they deserve. Serious events in the Bath club over the past couple of weeks will mean that their lads will be busting a gut to succeed where their seniors failed, so the game will certainly be worth watching.

After that, we're into the Christmas campaign — Coventry on the 20th, Lydney on Boxing Day, Newport on the 27th, all at home. Then we have Merit Table engagements against Moseley, away, on New Year's Day, and London Scottish at home on January 3rd.

Tailpiece

Some of us were concerned when Nick Marment went off last Saturday, following a bang in the face. Quite unnecessarily, as it turned out.

The Doctor in Charge (who shall remain nameless to protect his Hippocratic Oath), tells me that he asked Nick if the injury hurt.

After some jaw-wagging, the injured party replied "No — only when I bite!"

"That's all right", replied the Doc. "You can turn out against Leicester — just as long as you don't bite anyone!"

Restores your faith in the NHS, doesn't it?

PETER ARNOLD.

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