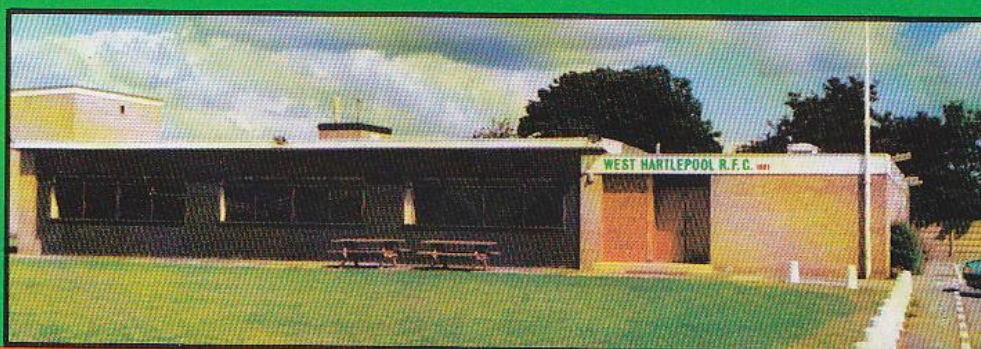
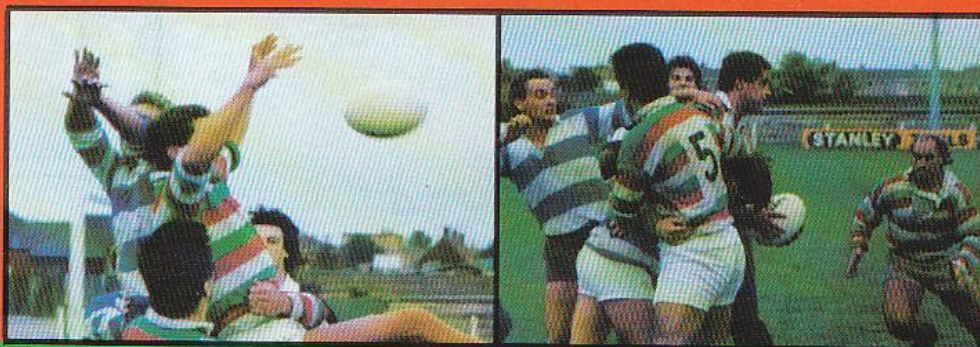


West Hartlepool R.F.C.

Season 1986/87



John Player Special Cup—3rd Round
WEST versus GLOUCESTER
SATURDAY
24th JANUARY 1987





John Player Special Cup

FROM THE TOUCH

In recent times we have played virtually every one of the Senior Clubs in the country, at the turn of the Century, we travelled far and wide, to the Midlands, South and South West and Wales but our paths have never before crossed with the current John Smith's Merit Table Champions, Gloucester. We are delighted that that gap will be filled this afternoon.

The Club, and the County of a similar name, have held a most prominent place in the Rugby World. Their Cup exploits are contained elsewhere in the programme, the County relying tremendously on the Gloucester club, have won the Championship six times and finished runners-up six times, since 1970.

How's this for a list of recent internationals? - Phil Blakeway with 22 caps between 1980 and 1985, Steve Boyls a visitor here with Woselay twice in recent times, Mike Burton, that prolific points scorer Peter Butler, John Fidler, Peter Kingston, Steve Mills, Mike Pready, Mike Teague, John Watkins, Chris Williams.

Gloucester experienced a difficult start to the season. An enormous injury list contributed greatly to ten defeats in the first couple of months of the season. Obviously we began to take more notice of their results after the draw at Twickenham - a comfortable win at Rosslyn Park and at London Irish but their 19-9 win at Bath, followed by the 41-6 victory over Leicester, albeit on a Divisional day, suggested they were well and truly back to form.

Having lost at home to Newport, and then losing at Woselay in the John Smith's Table "A" (a result that meant they were struggling towards the bottom of the Table) they beat London Scottish 15-9 in the same competition three weeks ago to take some of the pressure away.

Subsequently they won at Leicester 14-12 in Table "A" while their trip to Wasps last weekend fell foul of the weather (surprise, surprise).

Our own form has been patchy, it was a surprise to lose at home to Metropolitan Police after seemingly being in control at the half time stage. We can still win "C" if we win our four remaining games, though we would certainly "swap" the Title this season for one of the two promotion places in a couple of seasons time.

Stockton and Billingham certainly deserve our thanks for their efforts last weekend, allowing us valuable match practice when virtually every club was idle.

Once again we would like to express our thanks to Yuill's and Whitbread's for their continued sponsorship of our John Player games this season.



A HISTORY OF THE "CUP"

We regard the introduction of the National Knockout Cup as one of the chief reasons we have been able to make such a rapid progress from one of a number of Durham sides of similar ability to one of the prominent sides in the North (Merit Champions 1983-4; 3rd 1979-80 and 1984-85). West won the Durham Cup in 1970, and were the first County entrants to the Competition. Our win over Headingley, and the close game against Sale the following year were ammunition enough for a vigorous Fixture Secretary.

Any impact we have made in what has become the John Player Special Cup (Quarter Final in 1982-83) pales to insignificance when looking at Gloucester's record, the winners of the first ever Cup.

1972	Final	Gloucester	17	Moseley	6
1978	Final	Gloucester	6	Leicester	3
1982	Final	Gloucester	12	Moseley	12 (a.e.t. title shared)

There was one hiccup! The South West Merit Table is a complicated affair and Gloucester did not qualify for 1983-84 Cup, largely because they did not play fixtures against the Cornish Champions (it's 250 miles away) and struggled against Bristol and Bath.

That has not occurred since, in 1984-85, they began with an easy 29 - 0 win over Richmond in the Third Round, another London side Saracens lost by a similar margin, followed by Harlequins (31-12), three home ties incidentally, followed by a fourth - semi final against holders Bath.

Bath's 12-11 win was their first win at Kingsholm for 17 years. A crowd of 10,000 saw Gloucester score two tries to one but full back Tim Smith who scored both tries missed six of his seven kicks at goal - shades of our 16 - 14 defeat by Bristol in 1983.

Last season Gloucester once again began at the Third Round stage, beating Bristol 7 - 4 and then travelling to Saracens, winning 13 - 6. They fell at the Quarter Final Stage 12 - 8 at London Scottish, having to play the final 30 minutes with 14 men as Brain, their lock, was sent off by Terry Friend - the referee from that Bristol game!

From next season, the John Player qualification will depend on positions in the national structure. It seems likely that the John Smith's Merit Table "A" Champions of 1985-86 will continue to be among the favourites for the Cup each year, though the likes of Bath, Leicester, Wasps and Nottingham will have something to say about the final destination of the Cup.



Our own performances have been patchy but obviously this is an extremely difficult competition, and one in which Northern sides have made little impact in the last decade.

1971-72	West	17	Headingley	10	
	Halifax	8	West	0	
1972-73	West	3	Sale	9	
There was then a gap before we made our next appearance in the Cup, after finishing third in Northern Merit Table.					
1980-81	Waterloo	17	West	0	Third round
1982-83	West	24	Morpeth	3	
	West	27	Northampton	3	
	Cambourne	3	West	21	
	West	18	Wasps	12	
1983-84	West	14	Bristol	16	Quarter Final
	Aspatia	3	West	20	
	West	6	Morley	4	
	Orrell	13	West	6	
1984-85	West	9	Moseley	12	Third round
1985-86	West	3	Moseley	33	Third round
1986-87	West	22	Morley	6	
	West	17	Solihill	10	

A quick glance at these results indicates that the draw has been very kind to us over the years. This is our seventeenth game in the Cup and we have played twelve at home. Nine wins in that time with the major disappointments being our defeat by Bristol, the eventual winners that season, and the heavy defeat by Moseley last year.

Those who have kept the BBC tape of the Bristol match still expect one of these kicks to go over, but it has to be said that Bristol were most impressive in winning 20-3 at Coventry in the semi-final and even more so in their 28-22 win in the Final against Leicester at Twickenham.

There are several interesting ties this season, though no really big clashes in the mould of last season's Gloucester v Bristol. Within the North, there are some intriguing matches. The clash up the road at Gosforth is a repeat of the Gosforth - Waterloo Final ten years ago. Sale and Orrell will inevitably be close. That's two Northern sides through but what of the other three?

Vale of Lune are the only side travelling - to Moseley! We certainly found their pack a handful in the later stages of last season's tie, but the Vale of Lune will take heart from their recent Cup exploits in Lancashire, although they went out at West Park in the early stages this season!

Liverpool St Helens play one of the country's emerging clubs, Lichfield who are now making a regular habit of reaching the Third Round. Wakefield entertain Harlequins, a game of endless possibilities! Wakefield won at Rosslyn Park last season before losing at home against Nottingham. How about this one for a home win, although this has not been one of Wakefield's best seasons?



John Player Special Cup

Third Round

Saturday 24th January 1987

K.O. 2.15 p.m.

WEST HARTLEPOOL

GLOUCESTER

Green, Red and White

Cherry & White

Derek Boyd (Capt)	15	Nick Marment
Steve Hackney	14	Jim Breeze
Paul Stacey	13	Richard Mogg
John Groves	12	Paul Taylor
Owen Evans	11	Nick Price
Mike Boyd	10	Nick Haslin (Capt.)
Tia Williams	9	Richard Williams
Phil Lancaster	1	Peter Jones
Ian Parnaby	2	Kevin Dunn
Paul Flowers	3	Richard Pascall
John Dixon	4	Craig Guest
Dave Mitchell	5	John Etheridge
Ian Grint	6	John Gadd
Mark Baggs	7	Ian Smith
Stephen Black	8	Mike Teague

Replacements

Fred Short	Lloyd Gardner
Mark Willis	Kevin White

P 27 W 20 D 1 L 6 632 338 P 30 W 17 D 0 L 13 568 400

Referee

Tony Trigg (London)

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