



EBBW VALE

RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

Season 1987-88

Eugene Cross Park



WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 14th 1987 KICK OFF 7.00 p.m.

EBBW VALE V GLOUCESTER

A BRITISH GAS CHALLENGE MATCH

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME 30p

WELSH BITTER

EBBW VALE

Arwel Parry	15
Brian Thomas	14
Mike Davies	13
Huw Williams	12
Andy Griffiths	11
Rhys Harris	10
Nigel Osborne	9
Paul Knapp	1
Brian Powell	2
Malcolm Sibthorpe	3
Neil Jones	4
Wayne Matthews	5
Neil Robinson (Capt)	6
Mark Spiller	8
Denzil Earland	7

Replacements

Mike Jones
Phil Easley

v

GLOUCESTER

Paul Mansel
Derek Morgan
Paul Taylor
Richard Mogg
Jim Breeze
Mike Hamlin
(Capt) Marcus Hannaford
(International) Malcolm Preedy
Glyn Mann
Richard Pascoll
Nigel Scrivens
John Brain
Paul Ashmead
Jeremy Bennett
Ian Smith

Replacements

Lloyd Gardener
Kevin Dunn

Referee: Mr. W. D. Bevan, Clydach, Swansea

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CLUB NOTES ...

The links between Gloucester and Welsh clubs are treasured this side of the border and as tradition and club pride are regarded highly in Wales a visit by Gloucester is always special. They are, of course, among the very greatest English clubs. Kingsholm is a rugby citadel and some of our recent visits there are recounted on the back page article. Exciting occasions they were too.

Gloucester's first fixture this season was at Swansea where they won 19-6. They have beaten Pontypridd at Kingsholm, 26-19, lost 22-13 at Glamorgan Wanderers and a week ago lost at home 10-8 to Pontypool. That was a close one, and so apparently was Gloucester's unusual defeat (12-10) at Bedford. We play there on Saturday.

Wins over Coventry (39-3) and Bristol (21-16) indicate the current strength and potential in the Gloucester side, but whatever the record anything can happen in this fixture, and often does!

Against Pontypridd last Saturday we should have established a much bigger half-time lead. A lot of pressure from the pack was not converted into points and the visitors suffered in the same way after the break. We certainly deserved to win but it was too close for comfort — again!

The forwards were splendid, but the backs as a unit failed to impress. However, our home record was kept with Arwel Parry scoring all the points in the 13-9 victory.

Ceri Jonathan and Ian Watkins are Wales 'B' replacements in France next Saturday and we congratulate them on their selection. The same applies to Brian Thomas, Des Parry, Robert Stephens and Paul Knapp who have been chosen by Breconshire for the match against the U.S. Eagles at Brecon on October 21. Many Ebbw Vale supporters will be there to cheer them and we remember it was at Brecon that we first spotted Des who joined us in October 1979.

Stand tickets for our match with the Eagles are available and so are tickets for the eve of game Choir concert at the Leisure Centre. Next Friday's Vice-President's Dinner at The Lever Hall, 16th October 1987. Guest Speaker: Ray Gravell British Lions, Wales, Barbarians and Llanelli 7.30 p.m. for 8.00 p.m.

On the Wednesday after we play the Eagles we entertain Newport (7 p.m.) and next Saturday (17th) the 1st XV play at Bedford.

Finally, Gwent Police reminds every driver that a spate of car thefts has broken out. Please lock your car, close the windows and remove ignition keys. Don't leave valuables in vehicles — and TAKE CARE!

COVER PIC: A favourite picture. Ebbw Vale v Pontypridd April 1986. Ian Williams (injured at Gloucester a year ago), gleefully watches Steve Lewis do The Twist. Photo by courtesy of "The Gwent Gazette."

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celtic
NEWSPAPERS

CLOSE SHAVES AT KINGSHOLM

Sometimes we cross the border to play a game in England, say in the Midlands, and everybody on the bus forgets where the ground is. There's a new driver who hasn't been farther than Raglan, you stop to ask a native and he directs you to the soccer ground.

There are cities and towns in darkest England where they need missionaries because more watch soccer than rugby there. You can't say that about Gloucester. If you ask in Gloucester where the ground is you end up in Kingsholm — even in August.

Most Welsh clubs, and every English club, travel to Gloucester more in hope than expectation. The pretty scenery, the happy chat in the bus, the Saturday afternoon or Wednesday evening pleasure of being in a coach full of rugby friends — these contented moments all disappear when we catch sight of The Spire.

Below that spire are hundreds of Gloucester rugby supporters either giving thanks for their latest win, or praying for another. It follows then, that coming away from Kingsholm with a win is like winning the pools or drawing Raquel Welch in Postman's Knock. And when you win there a year later, even meeting Raquel on a desert island pales into insignificance. Well, almost.

Catching Gloucester on an off-day is as likely as catching malaria in Iceland. And like all great clubs whatever side is fielded in their colours, represents a past full of tradition and history.

When we played at Kingsholm in October 1985, Gloucester had won five and lost six, and a few days before had been beaten 43-6 at the Harlequins. Which is a bit like losing 43-6 to Iceland. We had won five and lost five so the only advantage to either side appeared to be that of playing at home — Kingsholm in that case.

We hadn't won at Gloucester since — was it when Henry Tudor was in our side and Willie Jones dropped four-point goals for Gloucester? Some said we had never won there, and anyone over 60 believed them.

The bogey was broken and we won 22-19 with Andy Griffiths making his debut on the wing and kicking a penalty goal at the right moment. Clive Burgess got a try and we had a penalty try, but Gloucester got three tries to our two. A close run thing.

We should have played Gloucester at home last season but we asked if we could go to Kingsholm so that we could balance our home and away fixtures against English opponents. They agreed, off we went and lo and behold we won again, 9-7. An even closer run thing.

Everything went wrong for us last October except the result. We arrived depleted and then had to replace Andy Griffiths and Phil Easley. History was made because the replacements were two brothers, Chris and Denzil Earland.

We were 7-6 down when our flanker, Ian Williams, suddenly began to walk off the field. Was he sent or was he pushed? Was he fed up? Did he have a call of nature to answer? Just what the hell was Turkey up to?

Poor chap, he was suffering from concussion and didn't know whether he was at Kingsholm or back home in Trefil. Inconsiderate Ian left his mates a point and a man down at Gloucester because all our replacements were on. It's a pity Mrs Earland hadn't turned up as well.

The seven forwards rose to the occasion and when Colin Watkins dropped a goal we were 9-7 up with fifteen minutes to go. The final whistle was a long time coming but the scoreboard didn't change and another cracking game was history.

The last time Gloucester played here they won 24-15 and by three tries to two. Which means that in the last three games between us they have scored seven tries to our four.

It was very different the last time we defeated Gloucester at Ebbw Vale. To mark the departure of Clive Burgess to Italy we won 45-18 and we still can't believe that scoreline. Not against Gloucester.

Our visitors wear jerseys coloured cherry and white. They wear them with pride just like our players think red, green and white the best. Gloucester is a real rugby club from a real rugby city. Big forwards have provided them with great success but among their backs we always enjoyed watching was Richard Mogg and they have some good ones this season we shall have to note — and mark — with care.

There's no way we'll ever beat Gloucester with seven forwards again, and we don't want to try. Let this match be injury free because both squads have a long season ahead with important games pending.

And may Ebbw Vale and Gloucester keep playing the only game that matters and as long as that famous spire stands.

R.E.L.

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