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GLOUCESTER RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

30p
**OFFICIAL
PROGRAMME**

GLOUCESTER v BRISTOL

Friday
5th February, 1988

Kick off 7 p.m.

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NICE TO SEE SOME FRIENDLY FACES

We seem to have been so engrossed with such taradiddles as Leagues, Cups, demeriting and unfamiliar Welsh pugilists, that the arrival of Bristol has gone almost unnoticed. Which is a great pity, because the Gloucester-Bristol game has been, and should be, one of the most anticipated matches in the Kingsholm calendar.

Indeed, Bristol doesn't seem to be getting the credit it deserves, generally speaking, this season. After all, the club is providing one player and a replacement to the England side, they are happily through to the Fourth Round of the John Player, and, after a stuttering start, they aren't doing at all badly in the Courage Clubs Championship.

You'll remember that the game at Bristol got us off to a good start in the Championship. Having disposed of Coventry by 39 points to 3 at Kingsholm, we went down to the Memorial ground for our first away League fixture, and came home 21-16 to the good. Tonight's visitors will certainly want to set the record straight on that.

Last season, at Kingsholm, Gloucester lost about the only boring Bristol game I've ever seen, 12-3, and also went down at Bristol, in a much better affair, 17-10. So Bristol did the 'double' last season, and we have one match to go to return the compliment this evening.

Of course, I assume that Bristol will be without John Webb and 'Corky' Harding tonight, but one can't read too much into that. Added to the usual keenness with which this game is played, there is the thought that both sides will be looking for a hard work-out preparatory to next Saturday's Cup games. To be fair, Bristol's mission against Richmond looks easier than ours against Wasps, but no one takes any Cup game lightly. Certainly, whatever the turn of events at Kingsholm next week, we wish our visitors all the best for their assignment.

The trouble is, that Wotsit's Law would probably mean that we get drawn together if both sides win, and I'd rather leave that to the Final.

All those considerations apart, however, Bristol are as welcome tonight as ever they were. And nobody has ever been more welcome. Have a good visit chaps.

PLAY THE SYSTEM

Terry Tandy asks me to repeat the apology I made in the Cross Keys programme, relating to the fact that some wrong bums got on to the wrong seats at the Orrell Cup game. He assures me that the difficulty won't occur again.

Apparently, the problem arose when some holders of unreserved seat tickets were told they could sit anywhere. And did. This was due to a misunderstanding which has now been sorted out.

To make it easy, if you have a reserved and numbered seat, then you'll find the appropriate number on one of the red seats. If you have an unnumbered ticket, then you're asked to sit anywhere you like on the wooden benches. So now you know the system.

TICKETS FOR WASPS

Stand tickets for the Wasps game are available to Patrons this evening, from the Caravan behind the main stand. After tonight, anyone who wants 'em can have 'em, on a first-come, first-served basis.

As a matter of fact, I'm told that the £3.00 reserved seats have nearly all gone, so any Patron who hasn't got one, would be advised to get his skates on this evening. There are plenty of £2.50 unreserved seats, at the moment, though.

The reason for the restriction and the rapid take-up is that Wasps have eagerly snapped up their entire allocation. This isn't too surprising, really - they've always been one of the better-supported London sides.

There are no Ground tickets, as usual on such occasions. That means that, as we're expecting a big crowd, anyone who likes to 'do it standing up', would do everyone a favour if they came along a bit early and avoid blocking off Kingsholm Road.

And - I suppose I should remind you of what you probably already know - that it's the rules of the Competition which makes everyone pay. It's not the Club trying to make a bit extra.

DOUBLE HEADER LOOKS ON

We can't be absolutely definite, but at the time of writing, it looks as if the idea of making the Wasps game count for both League and Cup may become a reality. Both clubs have agreed to the proposal, and it now only remains for the Competition Committee to rule on the matter.

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DAVID I. ROBINS M.Inst. T.T.

If they do give the idea the thumbs up, it could lead to a fascinating state of affairs in the event of a draw after normal time.

These days, the Cup tries and away rule doesn't apply until after ten minutes of extra time each way. In fact, the official description is 'a replay over ten minutes each way, starting immediately.'

That means that, if we have a draw after the normal 80 minutes, the score at that point will become the result as far as the Courage Clubs Championship is concerned. The score after extra time becomes the Cup result, and decides who goes through to the next round.

Well — it's different, ennit?

HAIL AND FAREWELL TO BT'S MARTIN

British Telecom have been sponsoring the Gloucester-Bristol game for three seasons now, and we're eternally grateful for that fact. It also makes good sense for BT to chose this particular occasion, enabling them, as Roger Lindsey puts it, to "invite customers from both ends of Severnside District to see the match."

There is a tinge of regret about tonight's happenings, however. This will be the last time that our Customer Service Area Manager, Martin Mahoney, will be acting as host for this event. He retires at the end of March.

Giving up work doesn't mean giving up rugby, however, and we have assurances from Martin that he will continue to be one of our more devoted supporters. Indeed, he might have more time to indulge in such pastimes.

It hasn't been an easy three years to be at the helm of the Gloucester and Swindon Area, and that has been Martin's role since the areas were changed. Developments have been dramatic, some disruption has been inevitable, and growth has exceeded expectations. This last year, for example, has seen the biggest demand for telephone connections so far, amounting to almost 30% above the initial forecasts. By the time Martin retires, his staff will have connected over 34,000 exchange lines in a twelve-month period. In total, he has seen the number of customers climb from around 250,000 to well over 300,000.

That, as they say, ain't hay, and Roger Lindsey asks me to state publicly that BT are profoundly grateful to Martin Mahoney for, with the full support of his staff, "placing us firmly on the path to achieve the tough customer service targets the business has set itself for the immediate future."

At Gloucester RFC, we'd like to thank Martin Mahoney for his past support, look forward to its continuation, and wish him a long and incredibly happy retirement.

Meanwhile, we also hope that his sponsorship swan-song is a truly memorable one for all concerned.

COMPLICATIONS ABOUND

Difficult to set out an accurate calendar of forthcoming events, at the moment, without knowing if we're going to win our Cup match (What am I saying? Of course we are!).

I can point out, however, that we shall be visiting Bath on February 20th, and that United are down to entertain Moseley on that very day. I could also remind you of that intriguing English v. French Students game, right here on March 15th. That's the one which includes Oxbridge players as well as 'Redbrick'.

It will also soon be time for our Colts side to take the field again. They visit Lydney on February 23rd, and entertain Nuneaton on March 2nd. It's not long 'til the County Cup Final, either.

Quote a lot to look forward to. See you around.

UNCLAIMED PRIZES

Last I heard, John Beaman still had some unclaimed Christmas Draw prizes. I believe there's a list posted in the Clubhouse, unless they've all been appropriated by now.

And, while you're investigating the matter, why not buy a lottery ticket or three?

TAILPIECE

Knowing Marcus Hannaford's views on sartorial elegance, I take it that Gloucester will not be taking the field tonight clad in red noses, frogmen's flippers and ballet girls' tu-tus, 'Comic Relief' day or not.

But you never know. If the Orrell kicker can come equipped with little piles of sand to tee up the ball, St. Andrew's style, then anything can happen.

PETER ARNOLD



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TALKING RUGBY with Terry Phillips

The Citizen rugby writer Terry Phillips on the news from Kingsholm - in every Gloucester RFC programme.

Cross Keys took swift action after the violence during last Saturday's match at Kingsholm by banning one of their own players.

There were a number of unnecessary challenges during the match, thought to be the first meeting between the clubs for 64 years, and Welsh club Cross Keys clearly showed their concern by launching a full investigation through their committee this week.

And to their credit Cross Keys, who have not had a player sent off since 1984, have disciplined centre Geoff Howells, who kicked Gloucester's Damian Cummins as he lay on the ground.

Cross Keys are keen it should remain an internal matter, but it seems they have banned Howells.

And Howells, a former Newport and Pontypool centre who joined Cross Keys this season, has also apologised for his actions.

"I took outside pressures onto the pitch with me and just completely lost my temper," says Howells, "There was no provocation and I can only apologise to everybody concerned."

"I will not play first class rugby again this season. Instead I want to play in third or fourth team games and start enjoying it again."

Cross keys were booed off the Kingsholm pitch at the end of last Saturday's game, but their actions this week and Howells' apology show they are not a club to harbour indiscipline.

Wasps are the visitors to Kingsholm in the John Player Cup next Saturday when Liverpool Society official Freddie Howard will be the referee.

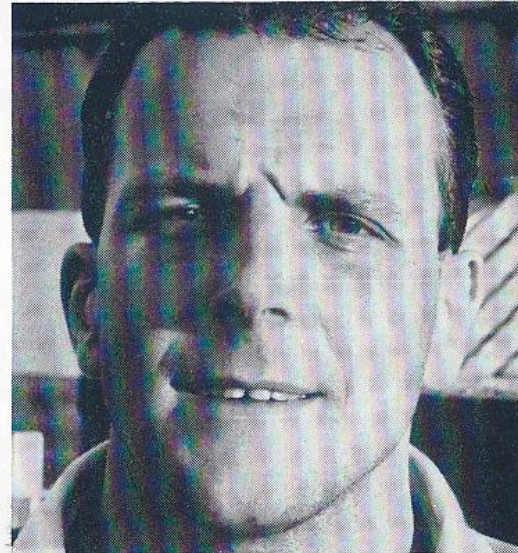
And Gloucestershire are blessed with a trio of international referees — Roger Quittenton (Sussex) will be in charge of the Gordon League v Waterloo match and Colin High (Manchester) will be in the middle for Berry Hill v Harlequins at Lakers Road.

The match against Wasps will be Gloucester's sixth successive home match — they were due to face Aberavon away before the draw gave them a home tie in the John Player Cup — but the Cherry

and Whites do have a tough trip coming up. They travel to play Bath on Saturday, February 20.

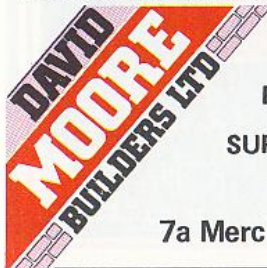
Courage Clubs Championship:

National Division One	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Leicester	7	7	0	0	138	73	28
Nottingham	10	4	1	5	138	136	23
Bristol	8	4	1	3	146	92	21
Gloucester	7	4	1	2	119	81	20
Bath	8	3	1	4	107	112	18
Moseley	8	3	0	5	110	123	17
Waterloo	4	4	0	0	72	38	16
Wasps	5	3	1	1	74	64	15
Coventry	6	1	1	4	70	145	10
Orrell	4	1	1	2	54	65	8
Sale	6	0	0	6	50	145	6
Harlequins	3	0	1	2	34	38	4



Gloucester's Nick Marmont switches position tomorrow and tries his hand on the wing. King's School master Marmont is normally a full-back, but with Tim Smith in such terrific form Marmont cannot claim the first team spot and the selectors have asked him to play on the wing for United against Bristol United away tomorrow to see if his natural pace can be used to good effect.

"We felt it worth a try," said Gloucester team secretary Mike Nicholls. "If the move works it would give us an extra option."



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