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# GLOUCESTER RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

**30<sub>p</sub>**

**OFFICIAL  
 PROGRAMME**

## GLOUCESTER

v

## BATH

Friday  
 17th February, 1989

Kick off 7 p.m.

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### TOUGH AT THE TOP

If, as they keep telling us, Courage Club Championship placings are an accurate yardstick for measuring the relative merits of participating teams, we are entitled to claim that tonight's game is a confrontation between England's two strongest sides. It's just a pity that it has to be played when the demands of the International season has deprived us of the company of several players whose influence might have been crucial to the result.

'Twas ever thus, however, and although Bath have suffered more in this respect than Gloucester, no one has ever doubted the strength in depth upon which our visitors can call.

Gloucester Old Boys know all about that. Somewhat unexpectedly, they found themselves entertaining Bath United, a few weeks ago, and were pleased to note that the visitors had brought a full-strength side along to Horton Road.

For most of the game, it looked as if Old Boys were going to pull off a famous victory, but the preponderance of First Class experience in the Bath side told in the end, saving the situation with two breakaway tries in the closing stages.

And, after last week, who are Gloucester to complain about leaving things late?

The recent history of Gloucester/Bath games is too well known to need amplification by me, but we should remember that Bath are one up on us this season, having won a fairly tight affair down at the Recreation Ground in September. An awful lot of beer has flowed over the bridgework since then, but few of us would deny Bath's claims to be able to field the best side in England, and after the Llanelli game, probably in Wales too. If you see what I mean.

So, as always, Bath are extremely welcome, and we wish their England contingent, not forgetting our own Mike Teague, a highly successful day out tomorrow. We'll be rooting for them.

### THANKS TO NATWEST

Our generous Sponsors, this evening, are National Westminster Bank. By no means for the first time for Gloucester v Bath. We're properly and sincerely grateful for their continuing support.

One of the reasons that NatWest started to sponsor this particular match was that their Gloucester operation used to be administered from Bath. The Severnside Region, is based in Bristol, nowadays, but they still continue to select the Bath match for their support, which shows they know a bit about Rugby, as well as finance.

NatWest still have branches in Eastgate and Westgate Streets, as well as in Hucclecote, and at the Cattle Market, but one or two things have changed since last year. Perhaps the most significant is that they now operate a Cheltenham and Gloucester Business Centre, covering both towns, but based in Cheltenham. That organisation is managed by Harry Richards, who I'm told, is along this evening.

So is Vernon Pritchard, who is based in Westgate Street, but administers all the Gloucester Branches. If memory serves, this is Vernon's second spell with us, and it's good to see him back. He has replaced our old friend John Melhuish, who has now retired, but who, I note, still manages to win prizes in our '400 Club' Draw.

One 'new face' to these occasions is Deputy Regional Director, Arthur Williams, and we'd also like to welcome, once again, Sales Manager for Personal Banking Services, Mike Sparrow, who has been with us before.

We may have one or two Small Business Advisors along too. This is a relatively new concept for NatWest, but Richard Boase advises me that most branches now have such executives, ready, willing and very able to dispense good advice to anyone who needs it.

But, whoever our visitors are, banker or customer, we hope that they all have a highly enjoyable evening, far away from the cares of overdrafts and second mortgages. Thanks again NatWest!

### UP FOR THE CUP

... and you can't get much 'upper' than Wakefield. As everyone in the civilised world now knows, that's where we're bound next Saturday for our Quarter Final match.

One of the problems of playing on a Friday evening is that all the bits and pieces which go to make up your programme have to be with the printers a little bit early, so I'm, afraid that I don't have any real details about tickets. However, Wakefield's attractive College Grove ground has, I'm told, a capacity of about 4,000, and a stand which reflects that situation, so it looks likely that 'sitting down' tickets will be in short supply.

As for travel arrangements, coaches will be leaving Kingsholm for Wakefield at 9.30 a.m., and will depart for home at around 6.00 p.m. The cost will be £6.50. So at least you now have one method of getting there.

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

### NOT SO EASY

Personally, I don't share the euphoria, which some people have been expressing, regarding this as an 'easy' draw. Wakefield are, at the moment, sitting second to Plymouth in Division Three of the Courage Clubs Championship, having won seven of their eight games. In fact, if the rules had been the same last season as this, they would have been promoted to Division Two already.

They beat Gosforth on their own pitch a couple of rounds ago, and although the Newcastle club isn't the force of old, they aren't exactly pushovers. Furthermore, the Yorkshire side can display some excellent pedigree. They have Mike ('Burglar') Harrison, who was Captain of England only a very short time ago, as well as ex-England player Bryan Barley at centre. Their full back is Ray Adamson who is an England Tourist. And there isn't a lot wrong with their pack, either.

Furthermore, they have ground advantage, which could be considerable, remembering that we don't really have a record of looking comfortable against so-called 'lesser' clubs, especially when we have to travel any distance. Remember Southend? Lewes? West Hartlepool?

There will also be a great deal of Yorkshire pride and grit, with crowd support of an order which matches our own.

On paper, of course Gloucester should win it, but it would be fatally easy to trip up. As far as I know, the two sides have never met, so they won't know as much about each other as the other sides still left in the competition do. Which in my — extremely humble opinion — means that this is really a difficult game to forecast.

It's one of those 'can't win' fixtures actually. If Gloucester come away victorious, everyone will shrug their shoulders and wonder what else could have been expected. If we lose, it will be a giant-killing act akin to Aspatia putting it across Moseley.

One way and another, the lads would appreciate your support. Hope you can make the trip.

As for the other matches, I suppose Bristol away to Bath must be the intriguing draw of the round. We are under no illusions about the strength of tonight's visitors, but Bristol were the last side to beat them on their own ground, and they're going well at the moment.

Harlequins, with their knack of coming good at the end of the season, should put it across Nottingham at the Stoop, easily enough, but there's just a chance that Dusty Hare could kick Wasps out of it at Welford Road.

But, you never know at this stage of the Cup.

### MARCHING ON

And so into March, pausing on the way to remind you that United have Rosslyn Park here next Saturday, followed by Cheltenham on the 28th.

Our next home First XV game is against the improving Northampton side, on March 3rd, which is, again, a Friday evening match. After that, we have a string of away games, starting with the important, and highly difficult, trip to play Harlequins on March 11th in the Clubs Championship. Another game when your support would do the boys a power of good.

### NICE GESTURE

The lads from Waterloo must have been heartily sick after losing in the last minute, last Saturday, but they shrugged it off in a truly sportsmanlike style. I have the authority of a couple of them to wish Gloucester well for the rest of the Competition, in fact they say they will be rooting for us, hoping we go all the way this season, if only so they can say they were beaten by the winners.

A very nice gesture, under the circumstances, I thought.

### WATCH THE GANGWAYS

Sorry to keep harping on about it, but as there is likely to be a lot of people here this evening, I'd better remind you to keep passages and gangways clear this evening, so that the Fire Officer doesn't have a fit of the vapours.

Mr. Mayor, Sir — this means you. Wheelchair or not.

### TAILPIECE

I always like to recount some of the pithier comments heard around the ground during the match, and I'm indebted to John Hiley — Oly Cryptians Prop Forward extraordinary — for the one he heard last Saturday.

"The trouble with this ref." someone remarked, "is that he's only biased to one side!"

Well — he was entitled to his opinion, I suppose.

PETER ARNOLD



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## TALKING RUGBY with . . . The Citizen sports editor Terry Phillips

Bath put their unbeaten record on the line tonight when they come out to face Gloucester in front of tonight's big crowd.

They have not lost in 37 matches — a run, stretching back to last Easter, which includes draws against Toulouse and Newport.

But while Bath would hate to lose their record to South West rivals Gloucester tonight they are adamant it is not their intention to go through the season unbeaten.

Team coach Jack Rowell insists they have a double target — the Courage Clubs Championship and the Pilkington Cup and they are not worried about win records.

Gloucester have also put together a useful run with seven successive victories and only one defeat in their last 13 games.

And tonight two in-form teams clash for what hopefully will be an exciting game.

The loss of Mike Teague and Ruari Maclean from Gloucester's ranks and Simon Halliday, Stuart Barnes, Andy Robinson and Gareth Chilcott from Bath will make no difference to a fierce confrontation this evening.

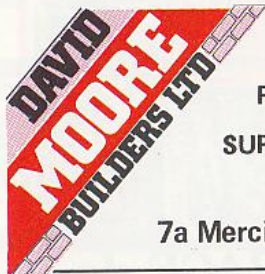
Both teams face difficult Pilkington Cup tests next Saturday, although Gloucester are confident they can negotiate their quarter-final tie against Wakefield away.

Bath, though, have a far different proposition in their South West clash with Bristol at the Recreation Ground.

Before they can turn to Cup exploits both Gloucester and Bath must battle it out at Kingsholm tonight — and Gloucester would love to warm up for the Wakefield trip by ending the unbeaten run of their great rivals.



*Full-back Tim Smith in possession for Gloucester with Waterloo centre Paul Jenkins (12) hanging on grimly, during last Saturday's Pilkington Cup tie at Kingsholm when the Cherry and Whites won 19-16 thanks to a last gasp Tim Smith try and conversion.*



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