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CLUB**

President: Canon H. M. Hughes BA.

V
BATH

Saturday, September 23rd 1989
Kick-Off 3.00pm



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NATWEST

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3 H/T 0

- Replacements:**
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J. Hawker

(I) — International

[illegible]

Today's Match Ball sponsored by
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13 F/T 6

- Replacements:**
S. Knight
V. Ubogu

Referee: F. HOWARD (Liverpool Society)

TOUCH LINES

by

Peter Arnold

AH! BUT WHICH IS WHICH?

I imagine that just about everyone would say that today's game features the best side in the country. You'll notice, however, that I'm not saying which side that is.

On the other hand, if you're not a Wasp, or possibly a Harlequin, you might be prepared to concede that *both* England's sides are on view today, certainly on last season's evidence.

This early in the year, we don't have much more evidence than that to go on. Bath have certainly won their games in style, so far, but against fairly mixed opposition, and with somewhat variable sides. The Rumanian outfit, Steaua, who they beat last Saturday, are fundamentally an army side, I'm told, and as England showed last May, Rumanian rugby isn't the force it was, just at the moment. Bath's strength, in international club terms, will be better tested if they succeed in their efforts to bring Toulouse and Toulon to the Recreation Ground later in the month.

Gloucester's unbeaten record isn't as impressive as our visitors, thus far. 32 points on Swansea sounds good enough, until you realise that Swansea scored 29 themselves. On the other hand, did you notice that they beat Bristol last Saturday?

Our performance against Pontypridd had some encouraging features. Playing with a full handful of regulars absent, for one reason or another, the standards of ball control were remarkable in such absolutely filthy conditions, when the ball must have felt like a bunch of demented elvers.

It's a shame, in some ways, that today's League fixture does have to be played so early in the season, and, I suppose, it's another plank in the platform of those who maintain that the only way to have a 'proper' League is to play it on a home-and-away basis. Nevertheless, that's the way it is, and today's result will undoubtedly have a significant bearing on the whole Courage Clubs Championship situation for the season.

We'll know in an hour or two's time, and I'm certainly not going to predict the outcome of this one.

We should have a good game of football, however, and it's a pity that we can't have more than 7,500 people here to watch it. Even in the days

before our welcome visitors reached their present level of eminence, everyone always enjoyed Gloucester and Bath games, and it's very good to see them here again.

THANKS TO NATWEST

National Westminster Bank PLC's generous sponsorship of our Bath match has become almost as traditional as the game itself. We're delighted to welcome them here again, and heartily thank them for their generosity.

Even though NatWest has been my bank since the days of the quill pen and abacus, I must admit that I didn't realise that they are the largest Bank in Britain, with some 3,200 branches, nationwide (if they'll pardon the expression). With that sort of local involvement, it's hardly surprising that, according to Richard Boase, my ever-efficient informant, National Westminster have a very wide and balanced programme of sponsorship, largely based on community needs.

In our case, they regard Gloucester RFC as very much part of the community. In Bath, they are sponsors of the Bath Festival, and Corporate Members of the support group for the city's old and famous Theatre Royal. If 'all the world's a stage', then NatWest are certainly playing a leading role today.

The Bank is certainly well represented locally. We have eight branches in Gloucester and Cheltenham, including one in the Royal Hospital. Harry Richards is the Chief Manager, ably assisted by Cyril Davies, and Stephen Jones, while Vernon Pritchard looks after Gloucester — his second term in our fair City, if memory serves — and Peter Hornby in charge at Eastgate Street. Chris Obbard has recently been appointed Regional Sales Manager for the whole Severnside Region, and I have a feeling he was here last season. If so, welcome again, and congratulations on your appointment, Chris.

Times have certainly changed since the days when one needed several stiff scotches before having the nerve to visit one's bank manager, and my own experience is that the NatWest people are unfailingly helpful. If, like me, you are in business for yourself, you might like to know that there is a specialist Business Centre at Suffolk Road,

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And if you're a NatWest customer, don't forget that you can drop in to Eastgate Street on Saturday mornings. Very handy, that.

DIVISION

Congratulations to Malcolm Preedy, Kevin Dunn, and John Etheridge on their selection for South and South West Division's warm-up game against Leinster. Scarcely more muted congratulations to Mike Hamlin, Marcus Hannaford and Richard Pascall on being asked to grace the benches.

And, don't forget, it will be Keith Richardson's first test as Coach to the Divisional side. Best of luck to him, too.

KEEP CLEAR

The eyes of the Gloucestershire Constabulary are very firmly upon us, today, so it behoves all of us to be on our very best behaviour. That means, among obvious things like not clambering all over the roof, making sure that all stairs and gangways are kept strictly clear. We've already taken a big enough cut in our attendance, and we don't want anything more along the same lines.

300 CLUB

I was, quite rightly, taken to task by Terry Close, the other evening, for not having mentioned the 300 Club, so far this season. I'm happy to rectify the omission, and to remind you that numbers are being taken fast, and that you have no chance of sharing the loot, if you're not a member.

Ask in the Social Club. Any committee member will be pleased to point you in the right direction.

TAKING ON THE EXILES

Congratulations to Berry Hill and Drybrook on their progression in the Pilkington Cup, last Saturday - although it's pity that Berry Hill moved on at the expense of Lydney.

But what is it about the Forest sides and the Celtic Fringe? By entertaining the improving London Scottish side, 'Hill' have the unique record of playing all three Exiles teams in the Cup over the

past two seasons. They have beaten London Welsh twice, and Welsh have to play Drybrook.

Odd, isn't it?

HOME SEASON

After today, our next four First XV fixtures will all be at home, starting with Exeter, next Wednesday. Then, having seen off Pontypridd, we take on the other Ponty - Pool of that ilk - next Saturday.

On Wednesday, October 4th there is the very attractive fixture against British Police, part of the Gloucestershire Constabulary's 150 Years celebrations. A week after that, we have Exeter University. So there's plenty to look forward to.

BELATED WELCOME

Rather at the last moment, we had a visit from a delegation from our German Twin Town, Trier, last Saturday for the Pontypridd game. It was headed by Helmut Shroer, an old friend who is now the Oberbergermeister of that most attractive City. This was Helmut's third visit to Kingsholm, and listening to him during the game, he has become surprisingly knowledgeable about things.

He was accompanied by, among others, his attractive wife Gisele, who'd never seen a rugby match in her life, but enjoyed the whole thing hugely.

In a rather nice gesture, the party presented Peter Ford with a nice gold medallion to commemorate their visit.

How's that for international relations?

SHOW YOUR COLOURS

Don't forget the Shop. Nice new range of goodies, I'm told.

TAILPIECE

Did you notice that the Lions v. France match is no longer part of the French Revolution Anniversary celebrations? Apparently, the relevant authorities have withdrawn their co-operation because of the French RFU's support for the South African tour.

That's their excuse. Personally, I think the real reason was because they couldn't find enough old ladies with knitting to fill the Parc des Princes.



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TALKING RUGBY with Steve Fraser



Gloucester United skipper Dave Spencer is driving home to his players the pride of playing for the Cherry and Whites — whether it be at first or second team level.

"It is a proud moment pulling on a Gloucester shirt and it's great to see lads coming from their local clubs to join us," says Spencer.

"And they can be sure that if they are good enough they will be given the chance to play.

"Just look at the team we put out against Clifton in midweek when many players were given the chance to play first team rugby."

Centre Ian Rodden from Stow-on-the-Wold and lock Sean Bryan both made first team debuts for Gloucester, while young players like Neil Matthews, Tony Windo and Greg Koyse were given another chance to make progress.

And while we are on the subject of the 27-19 win against Clifton The Citizen has an apology to make to Dave Spencer.

Our sports editor Terry Phillips covered the match and unfortunately made an error — giving a try to Paul Ashmead instead of 'Spanner'.

"I don't score too many, I can't afford to give them away," says Spencer. Sorry Dave!

While Spencer is leading United with great effect, six Gloucester players were celebrating their call-up for the South West match against Leinster in Ireland next midweek.

Mike Teague and Marcus Hannaford are both ruled out by injury, but Gloucester provide four of the front five.

Malcolm Preedy, Kevin Dunn and Richard Pascall are in the front-row, while John Etheridge links up with Bath's John Morrison in the second-row. Ian Smith is in the back-row and Mike Hamlin at fly-half.

And among the replacements is former Lydney and Gloucester scrum-half Julian Davis, now with Bristol.

The selection is a tribute to all of them and with England manager Geoff Cooke going out to watch it is a chance to impress the selectors.

Today's big match is vital to both clubs, but for one player it is a special moment.

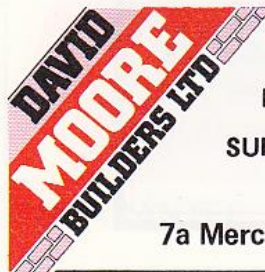
Scrum-half Lloyd Gardiner makes his Courage championship debut this afternoon in the biggest match of his life — and it is only his 26th full first team appearance.

Gardiner has played exceptionally well as reserve to Hannaford over the last three seasons and the selectors have great confidence in his ability.

Get behind him and the rest of the team during today's clash of the South West giants.



Dave Spencer



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