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PROGRAMME 1989-1990

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The GODFATHER column

It is with great pleasure this afternoon that we welcome the players, officials and supporters of Gloucester to the North East for the first time in thirteen years for a fourth round Pilkington Cup-tie full of interesting possibilities. Gosforth and Gloucester are old rivals who fought out two titanic struggles in the old John Player Cup in the late 1970's about which more is written elsewhere in this programme. For the present they are regarded as second only to Bath in the English rugby stakes. They currently lie second to Bath in Courage League One having inflicted on them their only league defeat. In the league they were surprisingly well beaten at Wasps in October (for which they gained ample revenge a fortnight ago) and have been held at home by Saracens. In addition to Bath they have lowered the colours of Moseley, Rosslyn Park, Bedford, Leicester and Bristol. Last year too they finished runners up to Bath and went out to their West Country rivals in the semi-final of the cup. Captained by England B International Mike Hamlin, they have an outstanding pack and in No 8 Mike Teague possess one of the most influential and respected figures in international rugby. They are coached by Keith Richardson and their visit today will enable Keith to renew his acquaintanceship with the Patrick family – he was a contemporary at Westmoor Grammar School, Seghill(!) and Loughborough Colleges of Derek Patrick, Harvey's smarter elder brother.

For Gosforth the prospect of facing Gloucester even a month ago would have been a nightmarish one. However setting aside last Saturday's debacle the improvement in our performances since the opening minutes of the game at Headingley has been quite remarkable and whilst we must inevitably remain outsiders with the bookies we can harbour genuine hopes of upsetting the form book. The fact that Gloucester have retained their position amongst the elite of the English game whilst we have allowed our position to decline bears testimony to the strength of the game in the South West and the support they receive from their local clubs who remain a constant and willing source of new players. Although Dave Campbell's proposals for an area side based on Gosforth foundered on the lack of support from the key clubs in the county a degree of support for the principle emerged during our 'merger' talks with Northern and in the wake of the county's limited success in the autumn. Sadly the response to the courageous words of support from John Atherton and Jim Coulson at the recent Referee's Society Dinner served to emphasise that the old prejudices remain and that the goodwill needed to re-establish club rugby as a major force in the North East is a long way off.

Whatever the outcome of this afternoon's game we will have broken new ground by hosting the match at the magnificent Gateshead International Stadium. Whilst by and large our arrangements with Percy Park have worked well it was felt that a crowd of anything between 1,500 and 5,000 couldn't be satisfactorily accommodated at Preston Avenue. Gateshead has staged major rugby matches previously – notably the North v All Blacks game in 1983 – and has rather ludicrously been overlooked as a venue for next year's World Cup. The stadium boasts facilities that cannot be matched on any club ground in England and possesses a management team that displays such enthusiastic support for 'outside lets' that the logistical problems associated with staging a major event at short notice seem trifling.

With Harlequins and Wasps already out of this year's cup, Bath and Gloucester must be most people's favourites to reach the final subject to the vagaries of the draw. Nevertheless Bristol, the third member of the South West triumvirate remain a difficult side to beat whilst Leicester cannot be underestimated in the cup especially as they appear to have the easiest passage into the quarter-final draw.

Finally may we welcome this afternoon's match referee, Mr D L Thomas of the North Midlands Society. May we also welcome and extend our thanks to Pilkingtons for their support of the competition in general and this afternoon's game in particular and of course to Brian Reed MBE for once again stepping in at short notice to host the game.

Godfather today was Kingsley Hyland.

GOSFORTH

Green and White Hoops

15	Full Back	J WHISKER
14	Right Wing	D BRIGGS
13	Right Centre	F SHORT
12	Left Centre	C LESLIE
11	Left Wing	G SPEARMAN
10	Fly Half	A MARKHAM
9	Scrum Half	D WALKER
Forwards		
1	Front Row	M FRASER
2		R PARKER
3		P FLOWERS
4	Second Row	K WESTGARTH
5		T ROBERTS
6	Back Row	P SMITH
7		N FRANKLAND
8		S BAINBRIDGE
16	Replacements	
17		

Matchball
kindly donated by
Dixon Sports

NEXT HOME MATCH
NOTTINGHAM
17th FEB K.O. 2.30pm

REFEREE
Mr D L Thomas
North Midlands Society

TOUCH JUDGE
Mr M Common

GLOUCESTER

Cherry and White

T SMITH	Full Back	15
D MORGAN	Right Wing	14
R MOGG	Right Centre	13
D CASKIE	Left Centre	12
J BREEZE	Left Wing	11
M HAMLIN (Capt)	Fly Half	10
M HANNAFORD	Scrum Half	9
Forwards		
M PREEDY	Front Row	1
K DUNN		2
R PASCALL		3
N SCRIVENS	Second Row	4
J BRAIN		5
J GADD	Back Row	6
I SMITH		7
M TEAGUE		8
L GARDNER	Replacements	16
J HAWKER		17

The 'Decider' . . . for the time being!

Gosforth may have lived in the past for a year or two, but not since the 1950's have they been so concerned with the future!

Their ambitious plans are dealt with elsewhere, so it is my pleasure to look back chiefly as far as Gloucester are concerned, and to draw attention to the fact that Gloucester were the very first club to win what was then the RFU Knock-out competition (with no trophy or awards) way back in 1972. They won it again in 1978 and shared it with Moseley four years later; Gosforth have won it twice, in 1976 and 1977.

As far as today's contestants are concerned, this can be looked upon as a 'decider' in that it is their third meeting in the competition, and they have each won one. When Gosforth recorded their second triumph they beat Gloucester on their way to the final by 3 – 0 at Gosforth and the following year, when defending the trophy, they lost by 10 – 19 at Gloucester who went on to win that final!

They were memorable but bruising cup-ties which neither will want to recall with any great satisfaction, so let it be written at the very outset . . . let's hope this third encounter will leave pleasant memories.

Roger Uttley, Gosforth's most famous player of the 70's era, missed both the Gloucester cup-ties through injury, but they still won in 1977 when the teams were:-

Gosforth: B Patrick; J S Gustard, J K Britton, H Patrick, S Archer; R W Breakey, M Young, Capt; C White, D F Madsen, A I Cutter, T C Roberts, J Hedley, I Richardson, P J Dixon, D Robinson.

Gloucester: P Butler; R Clews, R Jardine, D Pointon, R Mogg; C Williams, P Howell; G Sargent, S Mills, M Burton, S Boyle, P Winnel, J Watkins, Capt, E Pinkney, J Haines.

There were three Gosforth changes and a positional switch for the second encounter which Gloucester won:-

Gosforth: B Patrick; J S Gustard, H Patrick, S Archer, A Moore; R W Breakey, M Young; C White, D F Madsen, J Bell, T Roberts, J Hedley, P J Dixon, J Butler; D Robinson. Bob Anderson went on as a replacement.

Looking further back, it is astonishing to realise that when Gosforth qualified for the first competition in 1972, they were drawn away to Halifax and, failing to appreciate either the prestige or the importance of the event, they played it off as a normal club fixture and were dismissed by 13 – 9. While they had a super spell in that same season, winning 20 matches in a row, they went out the following year to Morley; the next season Coventry knocked them out, and then came the disaster before their triumphs which saw them hit the national headlines.

It was season 1974/75 when they went to Bedford where they looked outright winners only to have a player sent off and they crumbled to a defeat which at last awakened their ideas to the importance of the competition and led to their successive victories at Twickenham against first Rosslyn Park and then Waterloo.

Gosforth are still the only North club to have won the national trophy, and they are extremely proud of that. They are in the middle of a transitional period at the moment, but the North can rest assured they will do their very best to uphold regional prestige as they prepare to enter the 1990's intent upon putting the club back into the national limelight.

Interesting that the last time Northumberland met Gloucestershire in the County Championship was in 1983 at the County Ground when Gosforth had nine in the North XV and Gloucester seven with Gloucestershire. Those teams make intriguing reading:-

Northumberland: S MacRae (Northern); J Pollock, R W Breakey (Gosforth), W Telford (Ainwick), J Storey; D Johnson (Gosforth), G Sturgeon; C Dixon (Tynedale), T Bell (Ainwick), J Curry (Gosforth), T C Roberts (Wakefield) Capt, S Bainbridge, S Edwards, G Smallwood, S Byrne (Gosforth).

Gloucestershire: S Hogg; A Morley, R Knibbs (Bristol), R Mogg (Gloucester), J Carr; S Barnes, R Harding (Bristol); M Preedy, S Mills (Gloucester), A Brooks (Lydney), S Boyle, J Fidler, J Gadd, M Teague (Gloucester), M Rafter (Bristol) Capt.

Gloucestershire won by 19 – 16.

by John Pargeter