



THE

GLOUCESTER RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

President: Canon H. M. Hughes BA.

v

SWANSEA

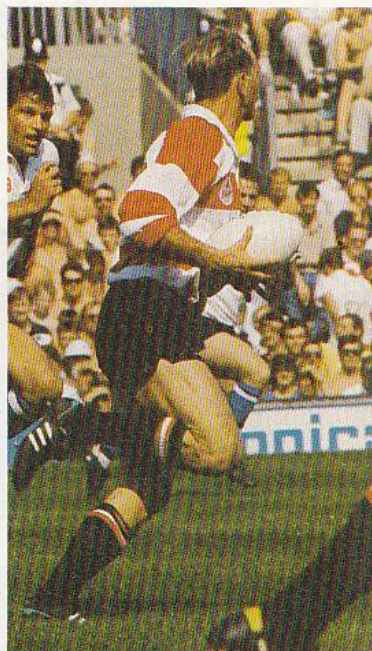


Saturday, September 1st 1990
Kick-Off 3.00pm

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TOUCH LINES

by
Peter Arnold

THE MOST FRIGHTENING THING IN THE WORLD

Anyone who has ever been called upon to write anything will know the truth of the old contention that 'the most frightening thing in the world is a blank sheet of paper'. After one manages to get those first few words down, everything becomes a bit easier.

The period before the first match of the season is a bit like that. One has spells of unreasoning optimism, and equally unjustified doubt, all the permutations and combinations are considered, and in the end, the mind just goes blank and resolves to wait and see what happens.

In my case, that particular syndrome is especially marked this time around. After last season's excitement, elation and eventual disappointment, when we ran to whole gamut of emotions, we don't really know what to expect. Not that we ever do at this point.

However, we couldn't be enduring our opening-match nerves in better company, and no one can say that we start with an easy one. Swansea always provide a stiff test for anyone, and it's not a bad thing to judge future probabilities against performances against such distinguished Opposition. Having said that, the scorelines of the last three Swansea-Gloucester games read 19-6, 35-13 and 32-29, all to Gloucester. And two of those games were at Swansea. In the period before that, things weren't nearly so clear cut.

But at the start of a new season, anything can happen. The Swans will be out for a good start, and we all know what the advent of a League structure can do to a side, whether you are considering keenness, fitness, or sheer bloody-mindedness. We're well in to that particular experience now, while the Welsh clubs have it all to prove, and it will be fascinating to see whether they seize the opportunity to improve standards in the way that some English clubs have.

Anyway, it's good to be back. Especially with such welcome visitors.

THANKS TO HARTLAND MOTORS

The distinction of sponsoring our first match this

season goes to Hartland Motors, and it's nice to see such old and valued supporters of the Club 'getting on to the score sheet' so early in the proceedings. You'll also note that they have a very descriptive advertisement elsewhere in this publication, so I must try not to be repetitive.

I'm aided in that endeavour by the helpful (and appropriately named!) Tony Driver, to whom I'm indebted.

He starts by pointing out that interest rates and things don't make this a very easy time for anyone in the motor trade. Nevertheless, Hartland, with their highly comprehensive range of Renault cars and commercial vehicles — in fact they cover the whole Renault scene — are weathering the situation well, in the face of a lot of highly active competition.

Indeed, they must be held in high esteem by Renault, because at the beginning of this year they were designated as an official Renault Fleet Centre, and there are only 45 of those about.

That's a good feather in the cap of the firm's new Board of Directors which has the benefit of Tony Field as MD and Robert Thomas as Sales Director.

One thing which pleases everyone at Hartland a lot is that, over the past three years, they have supplied 25 Master Van coaches to the Variety Club of Great Britain, who are, of course, one of the country's leading and most active charitable organisations.

We're obviously very grateful to Hartland Motors for their continuing support and generosity, and do have to acknowledge that we aren't the only local organisation to benefit in this way. The Mercia Road firm also sponsor local schools training programmes, which is something we would all wish to applaud.

Still — it's an afternoon off, today, for Hartland and their guests. We hope they're all having a great time.

CLIFTON NEXT WEDNESDAY

It's a long time since Clifton appeared on our First XV fixture list, and it's nice to see them back after a break of some years. They are, after all, one of Gloucester's very oldest opponents, going back

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almost to the Club's 'Day One'.

After that, we have a 'dry spell' of five away matches, and I do assure you that no one dislikes that more than Fixture Secretary, Mike Nichols, as anyone who heard his lucid and very informative exposition of the subject at this year's AGM will corroborate.

Boiling it all down to essentials, it's the arrival of the Welsh National League which has put the puss among the poultry. It was always going to be difficult to retain our traditionally strong list of Welsh fixtures, and it's to 'Nick's' everlasting credit that he's been able to hang on to every one of them, with the exception of Llanelli, who, it appears, were due to drop out for this season anyway.

Of course, it does make for a baptism of fire for the lads. Swansea's visit today is followed by the daunting trip to Neath next Saturday, and if you want a day out, I recommend you go along. Neath's hospitality is great, in my experience, matched only by that of Pontypridd who we visit on September 15th.

Anyway, it's not a bad stiffening-up operation for our first Courage League game of the season, away to Leicester on the 22nd.

One good thing about the situation is that we do have a great chance to assess the United's talent with a tough set of home matches against Nottingham, Pontypool and Bath over the same period, by comparison an introduction just about as tough as the First XV's start to the season.

And don't forget — the United have the stimulus of their own unofficial league competition this season, which should add a great deal of spice to the whole thing. No doubt there will be more about this as the season progresses.

WELCOME, NEIGHBOURS!

There has been so much publicity given to the new Hospitality Boxes over the close season that anything I say here is likely to be superfluous. Nevertheless, I would be remiss if I didn't welcome those public spirited companies who are already in residence.

The first two to move in are opticians Norvilles and the Original Holloway Society, and you can't get two finer old Gloucester institutions than that. We hope everything is to their satisfaction, and thank them profoundly for their initiative.

It's hoped that nine more such companies will be joining them very soon indeed, just as soon as the paperwork is completed. There are others who seem likely to participate, but there's still room for one or two more, if you think your firm might be interested.

WELL DONE MATT!

We get so used to congratulating players on some distinction or other, that it's particularly nice to be able to offer humble felicitations to a local referee. In case you hadn't heard, our old friend Matt Bayliss has been given an All Blacks v. French XV game to handle, and I'm sure he'll do it admirably. Garth Cromwell only just missed out on an International panel spot before he retired, and it would be good if Matt could go just that one step further. Best of luck mate!

THE USUAL NOTICES

Always several things to say at this time of year, and you'll know them as well as I do. Like, for instance we're always looking for agents to help sell our Lottery tickets, and at the same time, make a little bread for their own clubs or organisations. Terry Tandy will give full information.

Similarly, the 300 Club organisers are salivating for your contribution, and would be very happy if you won it all back — and then some — as the season progresses. Any Social Club Committee Member will point you in the right direction.

And don't forget John Beaman in the Club Shop. He'll be very happy to kit you out for the new season if you like to pay him a visit.

INTERNATIONAL TICKETS

You'll also be aware that applications for International tickets have to be in very early each season. This year, by September 30th, so if you want to apply, get in touch fairly quickly.

TAILPIECE

I'm thinking of giving this job up. The competition from Keith Richardson is getting a bit stiff. I thought his piece in the Pilkington Cup Final Programme was great, and his coverage of the Cheltenham Cricket Festival certainly enriched an already enthralling cricket season.

All this and coaching the side too! The man's a ruddy genius.

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TALKING RUGBY with Mike Harris

Every Gloucester Rugby Club supporter and player was desperately disappointed when the final two matches last season left the club empty handed.

But the players are determined to go one better this season and win one of the titles which so narrowly eluded them in April and May.

To prepare the squad for this season's bid for honours the club sent 35 players on a gruelling six day training trip to the Netherlands last week.

Although several key players were unavailable for the trip, those who did go worked very hard and found the training and match practice extremely worthwhile.

Defeat against the Dutch national side by 18-7 was disappointing because the Gloucester team did not perform to anything like its potential.

But the side was playing in temperatures soaring into the 90s after four days of exhausting training sessions and some poor refereeing did not help.

The two other matches in Holland resulted in comfortable victories for the first and second choice teams and the selectors learnt that there are many new and recent recruits to Kingsholm who should ensure continued first division status for the club.

The early season loss of the suspended John Gadd and the injured Jim Breeze is a blow but Gloucester's strength in depth is reassuring.

The players will certainly be going all out for success this season and home league ties against Nottingham and Bath give them a chance to avenge last season's crushing defeats.

With the players ideally prepared for the start of the season and with the Kingsholm crowd behind them there is no reason why Gloucester should not trouble any side, including Swansea today.

1990 COLTS XV FIXTURES	
SEPT.	6 Coventry A
	12 Moseley H
	19 Clifton H
	26 Forest of Dean H
OCT.	3 Hereford A
	10 Lydney H
	17 Nuncaton A
	24 Bath H
	31 Clifton A
NOV.	6 Northampton A
	14 Worcester H
FEB.	13 Cheltenham H
	20 Nuncaton H
MAR.	27 Lydney A
	6 Bath A
	13 Moseley A
	20 Coventry H
APR.	27 Worcester A
	3 Solihull H
	13 Brixham A

PLAYING RECORD

1990 FIRST XV FIXTURES		1990 UNITED XV FIXTURES	
SEPT.	1 Swansea H	SEPT.	1 Glamorgan Wdrs A
	5 Clifton H		8 Nottingham H
	8 Neath A		15 Pontypool H
	11 Stroud A		22 Bath H
	15 Pontypridd A		25 Cheltenham A
	22 *Leicester A		29 Credenhill A
	26 Newport A	OCT.	6 Bedford A
	29 Ebbw Vale H		13 Northampton A
OCT.	3 Exeter University H		20 Wasps H
	6 *Moseley H		27 Rugby A
	13 Plymouth H		30 New Zealand Yugoslavs H
	16 Cheltenham H	NOV.	3 Pontypool A
	20 *Wasps A		10 Leicester H
	27 *Nottingham H		17 Bristol A
	31 South Wales Police H		21 Cinderford H
NOV.	3 Bristol H		24 Saracens H
	10 *Rugby Park A	DEC.	1 Leicester A
	17 *Saracens H		5 St. Pauls College H
	24 Pilkington Cup 3rd Round A		8 Cardiff H
DEC.	1 Leicester H		15 Coventry H
	8 Rugby Cup A		22 Newport H
	15 Coventry A		29 Moseley A
	22 Exeter A		
	26 Lydney H	1991	
	29 Bridgend H	JAN.	5 Bath A
1991			12 Harlequins H
JAN.	1 Moseley A		19 Newport A
	12 London Scottish H		26 Nottingham A
	19 Blackheath A	FEB.	1 Bristol H
	26 Pilkington Cup 4th Round A		9 Coventry A
FEB.	1 Newbridge A		13 Newport H.S.O.B. H
	9 *Bath H		16 Clevece A
	15 Newport H		19 Cheltenham H
	23 London Irish H		23 Rosslyn Park A
MAR.	2 Pontypool A		27 Moseley H
	9 *Northampton A	MAR.	2 Nuncaton H
	12 Lydney A		9 Northampton H
	15 Aberavon H		16 Richmond A
	23 *Orell H		23 Orell A
	26 Cheltenham A	APR.	6 Garndiffaith H
	23 New Brighton H		13 Rugby H
APR.	1 Elyde H		20 Sale H
	6 Bedford A		27 London Irish A
	13 Bristol A		
	20 Bath A		
	27 *Harlequins H		

* John Courage Club League Fixtures

FIRST XV	P	W	D	L	F	A	UNITED XV	P	W	D	L	F	A
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