



FOUNDED 1873

THE
**GLOUCESTER
RUGBY FOOTBALL
CLUB**

President: Canon H. M. Hughes BA.

v
ABERAVON



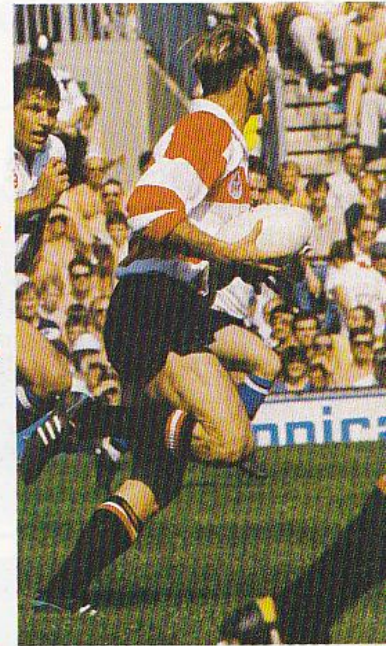
Friday, March 15th 1991
Kick-Off 7.00pm

KINDLY SPONSORED BY

PLUMB CENTER 



OFFICIAL SPONSORS OF THE
GLOUCESTER RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB



The Winner of today's
Official Programme
Draw will receive £10 from



1a Kingsholm Rd

50p.
Official Programme

728
Lucky Number

TOUCH LINES

by
Peter Arnold

NORMAL SERVICE HAS BEEN RESUMED

Followers of the Welsh International side will be heaving a collective, and heartfelt, sigh of relief that their unhappy season is over. We're quite pleased about it, too, because it means that the strength of our one remaining Welsh fixture of the season won't be diluted by players being called to higher things. Gloucester may be without Mike Teague and Kevin Dunn, but Aberavon should, as the great Jim Hickey used to intone, 'play as programme'.

Which will probably set us a formidable task this evening. Our very welcome visitors are sitting very comfortably, second only to Newport in Division One of the Heineken League, and should attain their rightful spot in the Premier Division next time round. Sure — League Rugby, as we have reason to know, throws up some considerable surprises, but a Premier Division without Aberavon in it looks decidedly odd from this side of the Severn.

We didn't have the pleasure of playing them last season so we can't really make first-hand judgement's, but it's worth remembering that, although they failed to qualify for the top echelon of the League, they did only just miss out on the Schweppes Cup Final, losing 12-6 to Bridgend in the Semi-Final.

It's good to see Aberavon back at Kingsholm, a visit which will stir the memories of many Gloucester supporters. Remember the problems we used to have with Alan Martin?

I don't have the pleasantest of memories of trips to Port Talbot. Every time I've travelled that road, Rugby-bound or otherwise, it has poured with rain, and this evening's forecast doesn't seem to be that good, at the time of writing. We certainly hope that the warmth of the welcome Aberavon find here will more than cancel out any shortcomings in the weather, and that everyone thoroughly enjoys their visit. Come again soon.

THANKS TO PLUMB CENTRE

(not to mention WORCESTER HEAT SYSTEMS)

It's nice when old friends come back for another visit — and even nicer when they bring a new friend with them. That's precisely what's happening this evening.

Our own outpost of Plumb Centre, based in Cole Avenue, is generously sponsoring the match this time round, following up a similar exercise they performed for the Coventry match last season. What's more, they're being assisted in this praiseworthy endeavour by Worcester Heat Systems Ltd. and the combination of these two organisations puts us in very high-powered company indeed.

Plumb Centres are a part of Wolsley Centres Limited, who just happen to be the largest plumbing and heating merchants' business in the UK. The latest figures I have show them selling 25,000 boilers, 1.6 million radiators, 25 million pipe fittings, 350,000 pairs of taps, 140,000 shower mixers and 10,000 miles of copper pipe in one twelve month period. Which isn't exactly peanuts however you measure it. You'll probably be aware of their 'own label' range of products which covers everything from a simple tool to a complete 'flat pack' kitchen or bathroom.

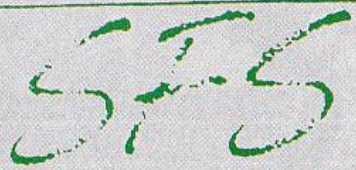
The Western Region of the organisation is based at Worcester, which may not be totally unconnected with the very welcome assistance they are receiving from Worcester Heat Systems this evening. That organisation employs over 400 people, most of them working at a new £10 million manufacturing plant, acknowledged as just about the most modern in Europe.

All these resources are concentrated on producing combination boilers, in which they have an enviable record of innovation. What's more, although they insist on top quality, they are equipped to produce one boiler per minute, which is an awful lot of boilers.

In fact, the company's '9.24' model is Britain's best-selling combi. Just to rub the point home, they also make the '350', which delivers three gallons a minute, is the world's most powerful model, and seems ideally suited to expel the mud from the Gloucester pack, whatever the state of the pitch. Wonder if their marketing people have thought of that?

This whole exercise is the brainchild of our old friend Bill Beamish, no stranger to wearing the cherry-and-white strip, and who has an awesome reputation as a coach at Longlevens. So much so,

S · E · L · E · C · T



FEEDS & SEEDS

By appointment to GRFC and also suppliers of grass seed to Cinderford and other Rugby Clubs

* Suppliers of all lawn seeds *

* Large or small orders catered for *

Contact Bob Osborne on 0452 76511
or 0860 590330 (Car)

that it would be a big surprise if a few of his products weren't performing out on the pitch this evening.

Bill always enjoys himself at Kingsholm, and we're quite sure he will tonight, only more so. We thank him and his staff and guests for their support (to say nothing of Worcester Heat Systems, of course), and hope they have a whale of a time.

HALF A LEAGUE, HALF A LEAGUE . . .

I don't have to tell you that Gloucester are sitting around halfway up Division One of the Courage League, but the rest of the season could open up tantalising prospects. Last Saturday's game did, after all, complicate things a bit.

At 3.00 pm on match day, no one would have been confident of Wasps chance of winning at Bath. And Leicester's defeat at Bristol was a real turn-up for the book. Bearing that in mind, take a look at the remaining League fixtures.

Gloucester still have to face Orrell, Bath and Harlequins, all at Kingsholm, with a trip to Bristol thrown in for good measure. On March 23rd, while we're entertaining Orrell, Harlequins have to visit Leicester, which will be something of a sort-out, while Bath travel to Nottingham, which as we know, isn't easy. Wasps are at home to Northampton, which Gloucester have just proved is no walkover.

We play Bath here on April 6th, then on the following Saturday, while we visit Bristol. Bath are at home to Rosslyn Park, while Harlequins entertain Moseley, which shouldn't give either of them too much trouble. However, on the same day, Nottingham are away to Northampton while Wasps have to travel to Orrell, so anything could happen.

Then, on April 27th, while we're at home to Harlequins, Leicester travel to Moseley, Orrell visit Nottingham, Wasps are at home to Bristol, and Bath are away to Saracens.

Quite frankly, my mathematics aren't up to the

permutations and combinations involved, but it could well be that, as last season, the League won't be decided until the final Saturday. And Gloucester could just — just — be in with a shout.

It depends, to a large extent, on what happens elsewhere, but those three games at Kingsholm are looking increasingly vital.

Coronary time again!

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

The season may be entering its final stages, but the old ground still has a packed programme of events to look forward to.

As already mentioned, we have the vital Orrell game next Saturday, but before that, I see that the Colts are down to entertain Coventry on Wednesday. Then, on the 26th, there is the County Cup Final — Clifton v. Berry Hill — and that should attract a good crowd. Then we're into the Easter games, welcoming New Brighton on the Saturday, and Fylde on Bank Holiday Monday.

One attraction which isn't quite so forthcoming is the scheduled visit to Cheltenham, League commitments have forced our hosts to postpone things, and the game will now take place on April 16th.

TAILPIECE

Talking to a few blokes about the departure of John Brain and Richard Pascal the other day, one of our number, who had partaken of a pint or two, commented:

"Brainer going to Bedford? His father must be turning in his grave!"

I mention the fact for the benefit of regulars of the 'York House', who probably aren't aware that their jovial landlord has become one of the undead. Perhaps he has to return to his coffin by dawn.

ONE FIRST CLASS TEAM SUPPORTING ANOTHER



Lloyds
Bank

THE THOROUGHBRED BANK.

TALKING RUGBY

with
Peter Arnold

There are those who consider that a sports journalist's life must be one long holiday, but be that as it may, Mike Harris is off on a 'proper' break for a few days, so you'll have to endure a second dose of Arnold, this time round. The Management ask me to state that no refunds will be considered.

I'm quite glad of the opportunity, actually, because I can now express more of an appreciation of Mike Teague's season's efforts than would be practical within the confines of the usual 'Touch Lines' spread.

After the Lions tour of Australia, headlines abounded. They used phrases like 'Mighty Mike', 'Iron Man Teague' and so on. Not only was he the official Man of the Series — in spite of playing in only two of the Tests — but he achieved the status of a folk hero too.

It was a good lesson in just how ephemeral such fame can be. He was criticised, in some quarters, for touring South Africa, and returned from that trip with an aggravated injury which put him on the sidelines for quite a period. People complained because he wasn't turning out, inferring that his injury was more diplomatic than real. 'Teague's finished' was a remark I heard on more than one occasion.

The National Selectors didn't lose faith — quite — but it was a close-run thing. Last season, in the absence of Dean Richards, Mike played at No. 8, and rather unfairly, got a lot of the blame for the Grand Slam defeat by Scotland. Again, the wiseacres wrote him off.

At the start of this season the competition for the No. 6 shirt was intense. John Hall was making a big impression wherever he played, and Mickey Skinner was putting in some of the best performances of his not inconsiderable career.

Not unreasonably, under the circumstances, the Selectors needed convincing about Mike Teague, and he started his international season in the 'B' side. Just what the decision would have been if Hall had not been injured is anyone's guess. He didn't really deserve to be dropped, but at least the mishap solved the dilemma.

You won't need reminding about what has happened since. Mike Teague has proved to be an integral part of the most fearsome pack England has fielded for some time. More: there have been times when his strength and speed have saved England's bacon, and, although his two tries have attracted all the publicity, in the long run his tenacity in defence has proved at least as important.

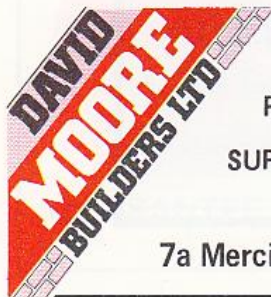
Even when the Irish forwards were giving the England eight a torrid time, as one reporter wrote "the reassuring figure of Teague, socks rolled down, was always there."

To have played in only the second England side to have gone through a Championship unchanged is a significant laurel for his brow. To have played such a crucial part in it is an achievement not equalled by many. Mike Teague has now attained the status of rather more than just an International player. Geoff Cooke himself is on record as saying that "No one in the world can live with Mike Teague the way he's playing at the moment".

Tomorrow's game against France is the culmination of Mike's finest home season. If he does well at Twickenham, then surely his name is already written down for the World Cup squad.

That's for next season, of course. But would you like to bet against 'Teaguey' turning out for England *against* Gloucester on September 14th, right here on his beloved Kingsholm?

You'd be a brave man if you did.



ALL TYPES OF BUILDING & REPAIRS UNDERTAKEN
PLUMBING AND CENTRAL HEATING DECORATING
SUPPLIERS & INSTALLERS OF MOST KITCHEN FURNITURE
& APPLIANCES

7a Mercia Road, Gloucester.

Tel: 0452 414000