

FIRST DIVISION

RUGBY

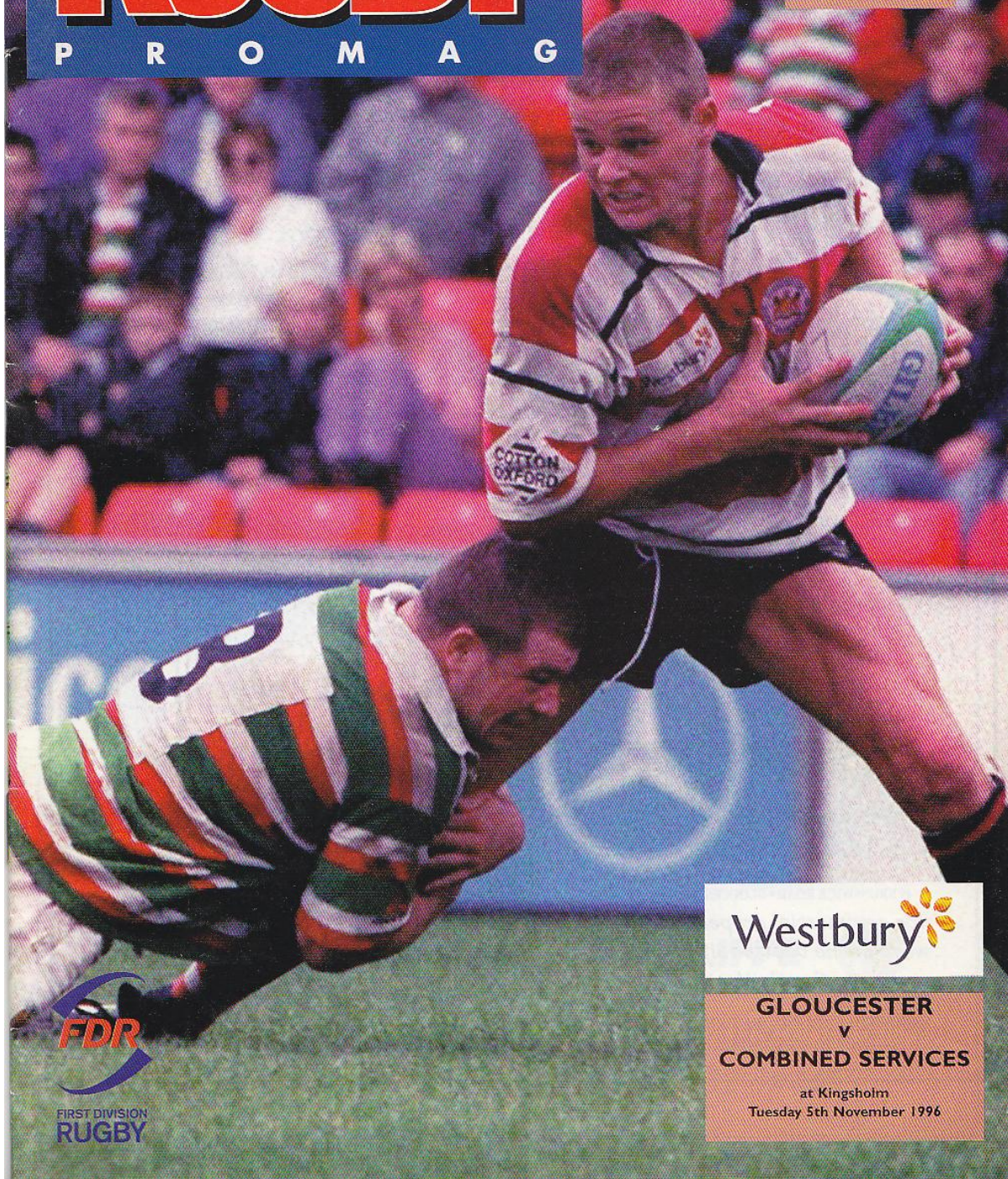
P R O M A G




FOUNDED 1873

Vol 1/8

£1.00



FIRST DIVISION
RUGBY

Westbury 

**GLOUCESTER
v
COMBINED SERVICES**

at Kingsholm
Tuesday 5th November 1996



FOUNDED 1873

Tuesday 5th October 1996 Kick-off 7.30pm

GLOUCESTER

Cherry & White

COMBINED SERVICES

15	Nick Paisley	Full Back	Rob Abernphay	16
14	Paul Holford	Right Wing	Brian Johnson	15
13	Don Caskie	Centre	Howard Graham	14
12	Nick Smith	Centre	Mark Botten	12
11	Mike Lloyd	Left Wing	Spencer Brown	11

10	Martyn Kimber	Outside Half	Paul Knowles	10
9	Laurie Beck	Scrum Half	Simon Pinder	9

1	Trevor Woodman	Prop	Seb Stewart	1
2	John Hawker	Hooker	Jewels Brammer	2
3	Warwick Bullock	Prop	Bernie Williams	3
4	Richard Ward	Lock	Dave Dahinton	4
5	Mark Cornwell	Lock	Andy Newsham	5
6	Bill Nicholas	Flanker	Pete Curtis	6
7	Andy Stanley	Flanker	Simon Boote	7
8	Scott Edwards	No.8	Bob Armstrong	8

16		Replacements	Nick Bartlett	16
17	HART		Martin Wooltorton	17
18			Pete Taylor	18
19	Powles		Dean Holder	19
20			Paul Livingstone	
21			Ian Morgan	

Referee

S Hardman (Somerset)

(I) International
* Captain

Touch Judges

B Mullis (RFU)

A Taylor (RFU)

50
100
150
200
250
300
350
400
450
500
550
600
650
700
750
800
850
900
950
1000

17

19

✓

✓

✓

✓

11

Breath of Fresh Air

Peter Arnold

A 'Friendly' !

A naked and unadorned, true-blue, copper-bottomed 'Friendly' !

No Leagues, no Cups, no Conferences, no points at stake. Nothing. Just two sides playing for the fun of it, although there will be some pride at stake, especially among the ranks of our very welcome and respected guests. It's all a breath of fresh air, in this most tension-ridden and confusing of seasons.

Of course, we're no strangers to Services rugby at Kingsholm. All sorts of chaps from the Armed Forces have played here, for every conceivable reason. They haven't all been playing for the other side, either: not by any means. Indeed, there was a time when so many RAF players were turning out in cherry-and-white that they were known by some as '633 Squadron', and sung out on to the pitch to the strains of the 'Dam Busters March', or at least, as close an approximation thereto as various denizens of the Shed could manage after pre-match lubrication in the 'Jockey' and elsewhere.

There were some good players among them, too. First and foremost, I suppose, would be John Orwin who skippered the RAF, Gloucester and England from the lock-forward position. One mustn't forget Chris Williams, either, Gloucester and Gloucestershire outside-half, who also played for England, and was the last No.10 from Gloucester to get into the England reckoning before Mark Mapletoft.

You'll probably also recall one Mr. Lazenby, who came back and saw us last season, playing at full-back for Walsall in the Pilkington Cup tie just before Christmas. The

lights failed, as I recall, but that was probab coincidental.

It's a cause for regret that the earthquake which has hit Rugby Union has tended to sideline the Services game. The Inter Services tournament used to be a significant part of the English season, and there were always some good players on view. No quarter was ever asked or given in those matches, and Twickenham always had a sizeable crowd for them. I suppose that it's going to be just another casualty of the root-and-branch reorganisation which is taking place at the moment, as far as public esteem and awareness is concerned, but I can't imagine that the Services themselves will let their rugby decline to any extent. It's too important to them, at all levels, for that.

It certainly wouldn't if our old friend, Tony Mason, was still involved. That's Air Vice Marshal Tony Mason, to the uninitiated. He used to be very much the man in charge of the RAF side, and had a lot to do with airmen coming to Kingsholm. He was also a member of the Referees' Committee at Twickenham, and I can think of a very well-known ref. who had his entry to the International panel delayed by a season after he sent one of Tony's RAF players off at Kingsholm. Another coincidence, of course.

Tony has now retired, but I wouldn't be a bit surprised if he were here this evening. If so, "Greetings" Tony ! We don't see enough of you these days !

Anyway, let's just lie back and enjoy the evening. Such events don't come around all that often in these overcrowded days.

Welcome to the Combined Services. Have yourselves a thoroughly enjoyable time with us. We certainly intend to enjoy your visit.

Ian Tucker

Peter Arnold

The news of the tragic death of brilliant Oxford University centre, Ian Tucker, will have struck a chord with many Gloucester supporters, because only a few years ago, we were close to having a similar catastrophe happen here at Kingsholm. You may remember an evening 'friendly', similar to this one, when an Exeter University player was stretchered off with a broken neck. That did not, thank God, result in a fatality, but it could have easily done so.

As in the tragedy at Saracens, there was no suggestion of foul, or even rough, play. The injury was the result of a perfectly fair tackle which went wrong. No one to blame. Just a sad twist of fortune.

The whole thing is a lesson to all of us. We all cheer and shout as loud as we can, and are thrilled and entertained by the skills and - yes, I'll say it - bravery which we see out on the field, week by week. But the margin for error is frighteningly small, and we shouldn't forget that.

Such tragedies are extremely rare, and everything which can possibly be done to avert them is, I am certain, done, but the very rarity of such events only brings the whole thing home to us when they do occur.

I'm sure you'd like me to offer the sympathies of everyone at Gloucester RFC to the friends and family of Ian Tucker. We're just another rugby club, after all, and the phrase 'there but for the Grace of God...' keeps running through my mind.

Our sympathies will also go to Oxford University, and the players who knew and played with Ian Tucker. Neither should we forget the Saracens club. No one was to blame, but their respective seasons will have been blighted, anyway.

I hope the relevant authorities will be investigating the tragedy, and that any lessons which can be learned from it will be put into practice.

COACHES

As you will have noticed, the month of November is almost entirely devoted to away games. And at least a couple of them are vital, to wit, the Courage fixtures against West Hartlepool and Orrell.

The lads could certainly do with your support on those occasions, and Bob Barge is just the bloke to make it easy for you to provide it. He'll be running coaches to both games: West Hartlepool on Saturday next (assuming they can raise a side!), and Orrell on Saturday, November 16th. Details are as follows.

West Hartlepool: Coach leaves Kingsholm at 8.00 am, price £14.00

Orrell: Coach leaves Kingsholm at 10.00am, price £7.50

After that we have another friendly. Against Wakefield, who are by no means negligible opposition, and who play an attractive, lively style which is always worth watching. The coach for that one leaves at 10.00am and will cost £7.50.

I think that gets just about all of our treks up into the Arctic Circle out of our hair. Unless the Cup draw throws another one up, of course, and knowing our traditional luck in such matters, it just might.

NEW SHOP

I don't know what my mate Matthew Holmes from the Citizen is doing dabbling in rugby matters. His major responsibility, I'm told, is to concentrate on news from around the Barton and Tredworth area, and perhaps Katie Coker should have a word with him about trespassing on her preserves.

Be that as it may, I notice that Matt's byline appeared over the Citizen story about the proposed new Club Shop, which is, whatever he says, to be established in a temporary building in the car park, pending more permanent arrangements.

There's no doubt that Alan Townsend and John Beaman could do with more space for their astonishing range of rugbiana. The new arrangement will make it much easier for the likes of us to procure our essential supplies, and I assume, we won't have to wait until we get into the ground before we patronise our own hypermarket, and opening hours need no longer be confined to match afternoons. Which can't be bad.

None of that, however, stops you patronising the shop in the meantime. And Christmas is only seven weeks away from tomorrow, would you believe.

Where has this year gone to ?

CHANGES

Peter Arnold

We've had quite a little flurry of date changes for various matches lately, so I thought I'd better spell them out for you.

By now, you'll know about the Orrell game being shifted to Saturday, November 16th. You may not, however, have caught up with the fact that our home game against Newbridge in the Anglo-Welsh Conference has also been moved, from Wednesday, December 4th to the more sensible date of Saturday, November 30th.

One more change: Bristol have requested that our scheduled League visit on Saturday, 28th December be delayed by 24 hours to Sunday, December 29th. I believe the change has something to do with the match being played on someone-or-other's soccer ground. That will make a change, and the delay gives you just that much longer to emerge from your Christmas cocoon and start thinking about important things.

Anyway, to sum up:

ORRELL Courage League, Away is now to be played on Saturday, 16th November.

NEWBRIDGE Anglo-Welsh Conference, Home, moves from Wednesday, December 4th to Saturday, November 30th.

BRISTOL Courage League, Away, moves from Saturday, December 28th to Sunday, December 29th.

All clear ?

ONE EYED ?

The other Sunday, the eminently sensible and readable, Paul Ackfield, writing in the 'Sunday Telegraph', summarised the ways in which Courage League One clubs had spent their influx of money,

with the emphasis on the players they had purchased. He wrote about Gloucester, thus:

"Who needs money when you have passion and 12,000 one-eyed folk to cheer you on? Coach Richard Hill believes in youth and forward planning. Reward was a win over Wasps."

Nice to see that someone has noticed. But the Wasps game will assuredly not be the only reward. We trust.

Talking about things seen in the Press, I note that Bath have changed their name. They are now no longer 'Bath Football Club', as they have been since time immemorial, but now wish to be known as simply 'Bath Rugby'.

We can only applaud the insertion of the word 'Rugby', why delete 'Club'? Don't they want to be known as a club any more ? Interesting.

Anyway, round yer, they'll always be just 'Barf'.

TAILPIECE

You'll know about the GODS production of 'Up and Under', due to open for four nights next week at the New Olympus Theatre. John Godsell, ex-Bristol Harlequins prop-forward, and (extremely) jovial Landlord of the pub next door to the theatre, knows a good thing when he sees it, and is hoping to get into the act, so to speak.

For the run of the show - 13th to 16th November - he intends to change the name of the pub from the 'Vauxhall' to the 'Wheatsheaf', that being the name of the hostelry featuring in 'Up and Under'. Obviously, he intends to dress the pub accordingly.

Incidentally, you can get tickets for the show right here. They only cost a fiver, which could be considerably cheaper than spending the evening in the Wheatsheaf, and nearly as much fun.

How Rob Gough Sees It

Spurs have their White Hart. Lord's has its Tavern. Even the Palace of Westminster has its St. Stephen's Bar. Here we have the Kingsholm Inn, known with enormous affection, by generations of rugby followers - and others - as 'The Jockey'.

The Landlord of that estimable establishment, spiritual home of both the Shed and 'Shedhead', has a unique opportunity to keep his finger on the pulse of the opinions of the dyed-in-the-wool Gloucester supporter. The present incumbent, Rob Gough, an old rugby man himself, certainly does that. It makes sense, therefore, to ask him to share his perceived wisdom with us occasionally.

Here are his latest thoughts on things in general.

This season appears to be in the same mode as last season, battling for survival in Division One. This must be the main focus, to allow the younger players to gel.

The European and Anglo-Welsh Leagues do add some interest, but highlights our short-comings. We have improved slightly on last year but many of the other sides have improved faster, mainly due to the money being invested in them.

Against Wasps recently we got 'stuck-in' and played it Gloucester's way, getting amongst them. The tackling was good and the attitude first-class, spurred on by excellent support from the Gloucester supporters. Also, may I add, how sorry I was to see Kevin Dunn sent off for foul play and being booed off the field. The sending off was sufficient punishment. He has done a lot for Gloucester R.F.C. and local rugby in general, which the crowd seemed to forget.

On to the French teams that have visited Kingsholm. There was a time when sides feared to come to Kingsholm, but not any more! Against Begles we had enough possession to have won the game handsomely, but failed to break the oppositions defence. Then, to 'cap it all,' our tackling was terrible, and our support play was weak.

Against Bourgoin our scrummage left a lot to be desired and our attitude was not

right on the day. Individual skills to break down a defence is all about confidence, and it's an area that needs to be worked on.

The supporters know the players are trying, but where is that little bit extra which is needed to batter the opposition into submission.

Good luck to all the players who have joined Gloucester recently. We do need players who are proud to put their shirt on and to play for a club which is steeped in history of fair, but hard, aggressive play, sadly missing on a consistent level

Certain people's attitudes have not been right. We have a large squad and players who are given the chance to play. 1st XV Rugby must be looking to make their mark. We can only play how we are allowed to play, but I do feel some players are just going through the motions, and not really enjoying the game.

It is said that 'money is the root of all evil.' Perhaps that is why there is nothing to be happy about.

Good luck to Richard Hill, the players and his coaches. Motivation is the key word. When success does come they will have earned it.

Rob Gough

Ed Martin

Now for some real trivia. It all revolves around the teams who are unbeaten at Kingsholm. The list is relatively short and includes the national teams of England and New Zealand who have both faced Gloucester.

Among the other sides that have a 100 per cent record against Gloucester at Kingsholm are Bucharesti (2 visits), Begles (2) and a string of other teams from overseas that have come here once - and won.

That leaves teams from England. So, take out of the equation two clubs that came here last century and subsequently turned professional 100 years ago, Salford and Dewsbury - both visited once and won their encounter with Gloucester - and you are down to a couple of teams.

Twenty-three years ago, the Public School Wanderers came to Kingsholm for their only visit. The date was Wednesday March 27, the result was Gloucester 21, Public School Wanderers 35.

The only other English team to have a 100 per cent record at Kingsholm - and, again it is a "representative" side - is Combined Services.

Their only visit to Kingsholm was in early December 1924 when they won 21-0. To rub salt further in the "wound", of the 100 per cent teams at Kingsholm, Combined Services is the only English side this century to hold Gloucester scoreless (Salford won 8-0 in April 1895 and Dewsbury won 7-0 in December 1891).

Basically an "all star" team made up of players from the Army, Royal Air Force and Royal Navy, Combined Services were due to play here on Wednesday November 24, 1993. Alas, the weather had something to say about that and the high winds caused the cancellation of the match. So, will Combined Services join Bucharesti and Begles as being the only team to have played at Kingsholm twice and still have a perfect record?

* * *

Alas, the newspaper reports of the game in 1924 are not on microfilm - the Citizen "football final"

editions in years between the wars were, alas, never microfilmed. But rummaging around all the newspapers clippings from over the years that have survived, I came across a clipping with a Service flavour.

The Citizen of March 18, 1950 reports of a "most unusual procedure" ...

"It was a most unusual procedure for Gloucester to have to borrow a player from their opponents at Kingsholm last week," the report reads. "The Royal Air Force, however, were quite pleased about it, because it enabled their selectors to take a look at a man whose form they wanted to see, but whom they could not find room for in their team.

"Gloucester's predicament was brought about by a series of unlucky incidents. It was anticipated that Vivian Davies would be unable to play owing to influenza although his letter was not received until Saturday morning when it was found that David Davies was unavailable."

It appears that as a precaution, the club contacted Gordon Cumming who was then stationed at RAF Halton. He agreed to return to Gloucester to play in the match. However, due to what the Citizen describes as "a misunderstanding", Cumming failed to arrive for the match, leaving Gloucester a man short.

"Gloucester accepted the R.A.F.'s offer of the services of T. Buckthought, their spare man," the paper reported. "He appeared quite successfully." There is a sidebar to this story. A week later a short article appeared in The Citizen under the headline "A Good Turn".

"Gloucester did a good turn for T.V. Buckthought, the Royal Air Force spare man, who played for the City at Kingsholm the week before last," the report said. "The R.A.F. selectors wanted to see him in action.

"This week they picked him for today's final match of the inter-services tournament against the Army. In the R.A.F. side he is back in his proper position in the pack. For Gloucester he played wing threequarter"